USA \$3.00 Canada C\$3.50

INTERNATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

SATURDAY 3 DECEMBER / SUNDAY 4 DECEMBER 2022

### Women of 2022

by Jamie Lee Curtis, Abigail Disney, Elif Shafak and many more

LIFE & ARTS



## Russia gathers 'shadow fleet' of oil tankers

- Ploy to thwart western curbs on sales
- Rise in anonymous vessels recorded

DAVID SHEPPARD AND CHRIS COOK — LONDON POLINA IVANOVA — BERLIN

Russia has quietly amassed a fleet of more than 100 ageing tankers to help circumvent western restrictions on its oil sales after its invasion of Ukraine, shipping brokers and analysts say.

Shipping broker Braemar estimates that Moscow, which relies heavily on foreign tankers to transport its crude, has added more than 100 ships this year, through direct or indirect purchases. Energy consultancy Rystad said Russia had added 103 tankers in 2022 through purchases and the reallocation of ships servicing Iran and Venezuela, two coun-

tries under western oil embargoes. The Kremlin's push to assemble what the oil shipping industry calls Russia's "shadow fleet" is an attempt to overcome new international curbs on the country's oil. These include an EU ban on seaborne imports, which comes into force on Monday, and a new global price cap of \$60 per barrel, which the bloc backed yesterday and is part of a broader G7 initiative.

Traders say the shadow fleet will reduce the impact of such measures but will fall short of eliminating it.

The punitive EU and G7 measures are expected to cut Moscow off from a large part of the global tanker fleet because

insurers such as Lloyd's of London will be barred from covering vessels carry-ing Russian oil — whatever their destination — unless it is sold under the price cap scheme. But Russia has long said it

will not deal with any country enforcing

the ceiling, a stance that means it may refuse to supply oil under the conditions

set by the west.
Instead it aims to use its new fleet to supply countries such as India, China and Turkey that have become bigger buyers of its oil as Europe cuts back.

The largely anonymous tanker purchases can be tracked by the big increase in unnamed or new buyers appearing in registries. The tankers are nerally 12-15 years old and would be expected to be scrapped in the next few years, said Anoop Singh, head of tanker research at Braemar. "These are buyers that we, as longstanding brokers, are not familiar with," Singh said. "We are confident that the majority of these vessels

are destined for Russia. Andrei Kostin, head of Russia's stateowned bank VTB, appeared to confirm the push in October by saying that the country needed to spend "at least one trillion roubles" (\$16.2bn) for "the tanker fleet's expansion". The Kremlin did not respond to a request to comment on the tanker purchases yesterday. Reports & analysis page 2

### First steps Dent in China's authority after rare unrest over Covid strategy



State officials guard a Beijing area in lockdown. Widespread protests against Covid restrictions have exposed the vulnerability of China's ruling party. Humbling of Xi, Page 6

### Art against tyranny

Simon Schama

LIFE & ARTS



#### **Snow business**

### Style for the slopes

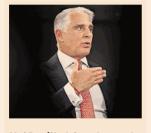


Surviving the holiday season Enuma Okoro



The best reds Jancis Robinson LIFE & ARTS





#### UniCredit strives to meet Orcel's pay expectations

The Milan-based lender is looking for ways to raise the salary of its star chie executive Andrea Orcel after he told colleagues he wanted a bigger reward total remuneration was €6.7mn last year, including a €4.8mn sign-on bonus, one of Europe's highest, Last December Orcel was awarded €51.4mn in compensation after Santander's 2019 decision to withdraw its offer of the chief executive's job. Pay rise sought ▶ PAGE 12

#### Subscribe in print and online www.ft.com/subsusa

Tel: 1 800 628 8088 For the latest news go to www.ft.com

© THE FINANCIAL TIMES LTD 2022

Francisco, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Singapore, Seoul,



### Fed under pressure to sustain rate rises after US adds more jobs than expected

The US economy added more jobs than expected in November in a sign that demand for new workers remains strong despite the Federal Reserve's efforts to cool the economy.

Non-farm payrolls rose by 263,000 last month, compared with an expected 200,000. Despite those gains, the unemployment rate remained steady at 3.7

The US dollar index jumped 0.8 per cent on release of the data, because o expectations that the figures would add to pressure on the Fed to keep raising interest rates. The S&P 500 stock index fell 1 per cent and US government bonds sold off sharply, sending yields higher. The two-year Treasury yield, which moves with interest rate expectations, rose 0.11 percentage points to 4.37 per centatone point.

The labour market right now is both a blessing and a curse," said Simona Mocuta, chief economist at State Street Global Advisors. "Obviously you don't want really bad things to happen in the labour market, so it's good to see that job creation continues. On the other hand, it complicates the Fed's job.

The US central bank is trying to damp economic activity by rapidly raising tion running at multi-decade highs.

Consumer demand has already started to ease, the housing sector has weakened and the technology sector has suffered a wave of job cuts. However, the economy more broadly has showed resilience, despite the Fed's benchmark

policy rate closing in on 4 per cent. "We've now created 10.5mn jobs since

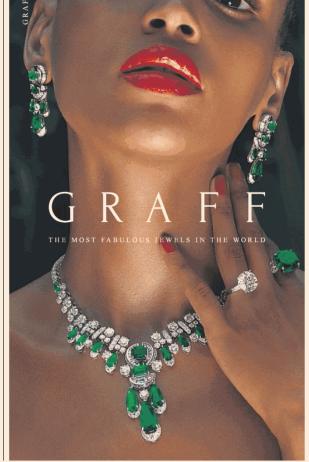
I took office, more than any administration in history at this point in the presi-dency," Joe Biden said yesterday, as he signed Congress's bill to avert a looming rail strike that had been scheduled to hit

"Things are moving," the US president added. "They're moving in the right direction as we go into the holiday season. The Americans are working The economy is growing. Wages are rising faster than inflation. And we've oided a catastrophic rail strike.

The Fed has signalled it will end its run of 0.75 percentage point rate rises and move to a half-point rise in December, even as it targets a higher level of rates than expected next year. Many officials have indicated the benchmark policy rate might in time hit 5 per cent. Day in the markets page 16 The Long View page 20

### **World Markets**

STOCK MARKETS				CURRENC	CIES					GOVERNMENT	BONDS		
-	Dec 2	Prev	%chg	Pair	Dec 2	Prev	Pair	Dec 2	Prev	Yield (%)	Dec 2	Prev	Ch
S&P 500	4057.20	4076.57	-0.48	\$/€	1.047	1.049	€/\$	0.955	0.954	US 2 yr	4.35	4.28	0.0
Nasdaq Composite	11401.26	11482.45	-0.71	\$/£	1.222	1.227	£/\$	0.819	0.815	US 10 yr	3.58	3.57	0.0
Dow Jones Ind	34321.59	34395.01	-0.21	£/€	0.857	0.855	€/£	1.166	1.170	US 30 yr	3.61	3.68	-0.0
FTSEurofirst 300	1751.99	1754.46	-0.14	¥/\$	135.475	135.930	¥/€	141.890	142.543	UK 2 yr	3.37	3.30	0.0
Euro Stoxx 50	3977.28	3984.50	-0.18	¥/£	165.496	166.744	£ inde	x 80.039	78.669	UK 10 yr	3.15	3.10	0.0
FTSE 100	7556.23	7558.49	-0.03	SFr/€	0.986	0.985	SFr/£	1.150	1.152	UK 30 yr	3.49	3.40	0.1
FTSE All-Share	4138.81	4141.04	-0.05	CDVDTO						JPN 2 yr	-0.03	-0.03	0.0
CAC 40	6742.25	6753.97	-0.17	CRYPTO		De	. 2	Prev	0/ aha	JPN 10 yr	0.25	0.25	0.0
Xetra Dax	14529.39	14490.30	0.27	Bitcoin (\$)		16910		16976.38	%chg -0.39	JPN 30 yr	1.49	1.51	-0.0
Nikkei	27777.90	28226.08	-1.59	Ethereum		1277		1276.08	0.10	GER 2 yr	2.09	2.01	0.0
Hang Seng	18675.35	18736.44	-0.33	Ethereum		12//	.32	12/0.00	0.10	GER 10 yr	1.85	1.81	0.0
MSCI World \$	2741.08	2720.89	0.74	COMMOD	ITIES					GER 30 yr	1.68	1.71	-0.0
MSCI EM \$	978.30	972.29	0.62			De	c 2	Prev	%chg				
MSCI ACWI \$	635.51	630.92	0.73	Oil WTI \$		81	.39	81.22	0.21				
FT Wilshire 2500	5296.26	5299.47	-0.06	Oil Brent \$	;	86	.84	86.88	-0.05			Prices are lates	t for editio
FT Wilshire 5000	41355.71	41380.36	-0.06	Gold \$		1803	.15	1753.50	2.83			Data provided by I	Morningsta



#### INTERNATIONAL



WEEK IN REVIEW

### Biden prepared to talk with Putin about ending Ukraine conflict

US president Joe Biden has said he is "prepared to speak with" Vladimir Putin about the war in Ukraine if Russia's leader shows an interest in bringing the nine-month conflict to an end.

"I am prepared to speak with Mr Putin if in fact there is an interest in him deciding he is looking for a way to end the war," Biden said, adding that he would do so only after consulting Nato allies.

The remarks, made in Washington during a summit with French president Emmanuel Macron, mark the furthest Biden has gone in expressing openness to discuss the war with Putin. He said he had "no immediate plans" to contact Russia's leader, adding that he had not seen any indications from Putin that he was willing to bring the war to an end.

#### Germany signs long-term deal with Qatar for liquefied natural gas

Qatar is to provide Germany with liquefied natural gas under a long-term supply deal that marks a big step forward in efforts by Europe's biggest economy

to wean itself off Russiangas.

Under the two sales and purchase agreements signed by state-owned QatarEnergy and US group ConocoPhillips, about 2mn tonnes of LNG will be sent to Germany annually for at least 15 years, with deliveries expected to start from 2026.

The deals are the first long-term agreements for LNG supplies to an EU country since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February. European countries have been wary of striking such deal despite seeking substitutes for Russian pipeline gas, as they attempt to move away from fossil fuels.

#### Aung San Suu Kyi held in jungle prison camp, says former adviser



Aung San Suu Kyl, 77, the deposed Myanmar leader, is being held by the military junta in isolation in a hut at a prison camp in a jungle clearing, according to Sean Turnell, her former economic adviser and one of the few people who has seen her since last year's coup.

### Trump is denied special review of documents seized from his home

Donald Trump is not entitled to have a special master review of hundreds of documents seized from his Mar-a-Lago home in Florida by federal investigators, a US appeals court has ruled.

Lawyers for Trump, who is running for president again in 2024, had argued that some of the documents were covered by executive or attorney-client privilege. The search in August uncovered more than 100 documents "marked confidential, secret or top secret", amid a trove of 13,000.

The ruling came less than two weeks after the

The ruling came less than two weeks after the Supreme Court said the US Treasury must hand over six years' worth of Trump's tax returns to a congressional committee investigating his conductin office. Fossil fuel revenues

### EU reaches deal on Russian oil price cap

Ceiling of \$60 a barrel for purchases agreed after Poland drops objections

**HENRY FOY** — BRUSSELS

EU member states have agreed to implement a \$60 ceiling on global purchases of Russian oil after Poland dropped its objections to the long-debated deal aimed at denting the Kremlin's fossil full revenues.

Warsaw had delayed agreement on the cap after demanding a lower ceiling to further erode Moscow's income.

Its backing means the bloc will have the initiative in place before December 5, when a ban on imports of Russian seaborne oil into the EU comes into force.

The cap, which is set to be adopted by

G7 countries and some allies, is designed to keep Russian oil flowing to countries such as India and China, but at a lower profitto Moscow.

It is intended to have global reach because Russian oil importers, who rely on insurance cover and shipping services from companies based in the EU and other G7 countries, would need to observe the price ceiling.

However, Russia has said it will not sell oil to any country participating in the cap, and India and China have so far not said they will implement it. Russia is expected to rely on tankers

prepared to operate without western insurance, though traders have warned its exports may drop if it cannot access enough vessels.

Russia's oil is already trading at a large discount to international benchmark "We can formally agree to the decision," said Andzrej Sadoś, Poland's permanent representative to the EU, adding that the official publication of the legislation would probably take place over the weekend. The agreement follows months of negotiations.

The cap is lower than the European Commission's initial suggested price of as high as \$70, following demands from Poland and other member states for it to be reduced. Yesterday, benchmark Brent crude was trading at around \$86.

Warsaw gave its approval after Brussels agreed to speed up work on a new package of sanctions against Moscow, which would include measures proposed by Poland.

"We wanted to be absolutely sure... that we are working on a new, painful, expensive for Russia, package of sanctions," Sadoś said. 'We wanted to be absolutely sure that we are working on a new, painful, expensive for Russia,

package of

sanctions'

The cap agreement also includes a provision that the ceiling be regularly reviewed to ensure it is "at least 5 per cent" below average market prices for Russian oil.

The price-capping initiative has been

championed by the US, which is keen to ensure Russian oil continues to be exported to avoid a global shortage that would spark a surge in crude prices.

The US hopes India and China will still be able to use the existence of the price cap to negotiate larger discounts.

Some EU states had initially demanded a price level of as little as \$30, but Brussels officials feared this would see Moscow cut back exports.

see Moscow cut back exports.
Oil and gas flows are likely to account for 42 per cent of Russia's revenues this year, around Rbs11.7tn (\$191bn), the country's finance ministry has said.
Additional reporting by David Sheppard

#### Ukraine. Arms contracts

### War exposes 'hard reality' of west's capacity

Governments have been slow

to sign longer-term weapons

deals to accelerate production

JOHN PAUL RATHBONE AND SYLVIA PFEIFER — LONDON STEFF CHÁVEZ — CHICAGO

Nearly 10 months into Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the allies that have backed Kyiv's war effort are increasingly concerned by the struggle to increase ammunition production as the conflict chews through their stockpiles.

At stake is not only the west's ability to continue supplying Ukraine with the weapons it needs, but also allies' capacity to show adversaries such as China that they have an industrial base that can produce enough weaponry to credibly defend against possible attack.

"Ukraine has focused us . . . on what really matters," William LaPlante, the Pentagon's chief weapons buyer, told a recent conference at George Mason University. "What matters is production. Production really matters."

After sending more than \$40bn of military support to Ukraine, mostly from existing stocks, Nato members' defence ministries are discovering that dormant weapons production lines cannot be switched on overnight. Increasing capacity requires investment which, in turn, depends on securing long-term production contracts.

The US has sent about a third of its stock of Javelin anti-tank missiles to Ukraine and a third of its stockpile of anti-aircraft Stinger missiles. But it has little prospect of being able to replace these quickly. "There's no question that... [supplying Ukraine] has put pressure on our defence industrial base," Colin Kahl, US under-secretary of defence for policy, said last month.

The UK has turned to a third party,

The UK has turned to a third party, which it has declined to identify, to restock its depleted stores of next generation light anti-tank weapons (NLAWs). "There are some really hard realities that we have been forced to learn," James Heappey, armed forces minister, said in October.

Weapons stocks in many continental European countries are worse. When France sent six Caesar self-propelled



In demand:
a Ukrainian
soldier in
Donetsk fires
an anti-tank
missile, many
of which have
been sent by
western allies

howitzers to Ukraine in October, it did so only by diverting a Danish order for the artillery. There are two big reasons western nations are struggling to source fresh military supplies, say defence officials and corporate executives.

The first is structural. Since the end of the cold war, these countries have reaped a peace dividend by slashing military spending, downsizing defence industries and moving to lean, "just-intime" production and low inventories of equipment such as munitions, as combating insurgents and terrorists did not require the same heavy weaponry needed in high-intensity land conflicts. Ukraine has changed that assump-

Ukraine has changed that assumption. During fighting in the eastern Donbas region this summer, Russia used more ammunition in two days than the British military has in stock. Under Ukrainian rates of artillery consump-

tion, British stockpiles might last a week and the UK's European allies are in no better position, said the Royal United Services Institute think-tank in London.

"The west has a problem with constrained defence industrial capacity," said Mick Ryan, a former major general in the Australian army. "A major expansion programme will be required if the nations of the west are to rebuild the capacity to design, produce and stockpile... large quantities of munitions."

The second factor is bureaucracy.

The second factor is bureaucracy. Governments say they are committed to bigger defence budgets, yet amid so much economic uncertainty they have been slow to write the multiyear procurement contracts that defence groups need to accelerate production.

A senior European defence official said: "No company wants to invest in a second factory line to boost production without long-term, contractual certainty. Will Russia still be a threat in five years and, if not, will governments still be buying arms from the companies?"

This lack of certainty is on both sides of the Atlantic, say executives. Saab, the Swedish defence and aerospace company which makes NLAWs and Gripen fighter jets, says it has talked to several governments about orders but progress on signing contracts has been slow.

on signing contracts has been slow.
"When it comes to order intake directly connected to Ukraine . . . very little has emerged or happened," said Saab chief executive Micael Johansson. "I am sure it will come . . . but the contracting procedures are still quite slow."

Britain's BAE Systems also says it is

procedures are still quite slow."

Britain's BAE Systems also says it is "in talks" with the UK about ramping up output of a number of munitions, while US defence companies have similar complaints about the lack of a clear "does and simple" from Weshiards.

"demand signal" from Washington.
"They are in a situation of 'show me
the money'," said Mark Cancian, senior
adviser at the Center for Strategic and
International Studies in Washington.
"What they [the companies] are worried about is that they'll expand capactity, then the war will end and the defence department will cut the contracts."

Kathy Warden, chief executive of Northrop Grumman, said the Pentagon's procurement procedures, which give a "very choppy demand signal" to build up stockpiles but only after a conflict quickly depletes them, are not a model that makes sense if the aim is sustained investment in production.

Some defence manufacturers are already producing at full capacity, with shifts running 24 hours a day. "When we have a clear understanding of what the demand signal is going to be . . . we are willing to fund expansion of capacity," said Frank St John of Lockheed Martin, which makes Himar artillery rocket systems and Javelins.

Western officials say supplying Ukraine has not jeopardised their own military readiness, while Russian military shortages are far worse. Moscow is having to source artillery shells and drones from North Korea and Iran.

Yet, while there is a near-consensus across Nato, companies can proceed only once they have more certainty. Additional reporting by Felicia Schwartz in Washington



FINANCIAL TIMES 330 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10013

Subscriptions and Customer Service
Tei: +1800 628 8088
uscirculation@ff.com, www.ff.com/subsuAdvertising
Tei: +1917 551 5040
usds@ff.com
Letters to the editor
letters adlitor@ff.com
Security a popolyments

Published by F.T. Publications Inc. 330 Hudson St, New Yori NY 10013, USA; Tel: +1 917-551-5000:

Printed by Blue Island Newspaper Printing, Harvey, IL Evergreen Printing Company, Bellmawr, NJ Bay Area Production Services, Fremont, CA

Published daily except Sundays, New Year's Day

Good Friday, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Day and the day after Christmas Day.

US subscription rates, 1 year \$406. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY and at additional mailing offices; Post-Master. Send address changes to F.T. Publications Inc., PO Box 469, Newburgh, NY 12551; USPS number, 190640; ISSN# 0884-6782.

© Copyright The Financial Times Limited 2022. All rights reserved. Reproduction of the contents of this newspaper in any manner is not permitted without the publisher's prior consent. Financial Times' and 'FT' are registered trade marks of The Financial Times Limited. The Financial Times and its journalism are subject to a self-regulation regime under the FT Editorial Code of Practice: www.ft.com/editorialcode

Reprints are available of any FT article with your company logo or contact details inserted if required (minimum order 100 copies). One-off copyright licences for reproduction of FT articles are also available.

available.
For both services phone +44 20 7873 4816, or alternatively, email syndication@ft.com

'Campaign of terror'

## Threatening packages sent to Ukrainian missions globally

CHRISTOPHER MILLER — KYIV Barney Jopson — Madrid

Ukraine's foreign ministry has spoken of a "well-planned campaign of terror and intimidation" after more than a dozen threatening packages, some containing explosive devices and animal parts, were sent to the country's foreign diplomatic missions.

The Ukrainian embassy in Madrid has been targeted twice in the past three days. A "bloodstained package" was sent to the mission yesterday, said the foreign ministry. Two days earlier a letter sent to the ambassador, Serhi Pohoreltsev, exploded in the hands of an embassy employee as he handled it. He suffered minor injuries.

Sponish government offices and the

Spanish government offices and the US embassy in Madrid also received similar items in recent days.

The Ukraine foreign ministry said that after "the terrorist attack in Spain, sealed packages were delivered to the embassies in Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Croatia, Italy, Austria, the con-

sulates general in Naples and Krakow, and the consulates in Brno. There are animal eyes in the packages. The packages themselves were soaked in a liquid the colour of blood and had a corresponding smell," it said.

Spanish police cordoned off the embassy yesterday for security reasons as they conducted investigations and searched the premises, the ministry added.

Spanish authorities said on Thursday

that at least five other letters containing explosives were sent within the country, including to the offices of Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, on November 24, the defence minister and the US embassy.

The foreign ministry said the entrance to Ukraine's diplomatic mission in the Vatican had also been vandalised, and the embassy in Kazakhstan had received a bomb threat.

had received a bomb threat.
"We have reason to believe that a wellplanned campaign of terror and intimidation of Ukrainian embassies and consulates is taking place," said foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba. PM speech

## Finland warns democracies against being 'naive' on China

NIC FILDES — SYDNEY

Finland's prime minister has warned democratic countries to "stop being naive" about China, saying it is essential that they reduce their technological and energy dependency on authoritarian regimes.

Sanna Marin argued at the Lowy Institute think-tank in Sydney yesterday that countries such as Australia and Finland had to forge "common lifelines".

Finland applied to join Nato following Russia's invasion of Ukraine this year and Marin said she expected the Nordic country to become a full member and participate as a security provider.

Her comments follow a Nato meeting in Bucharest where economic measures aimed at containing the "challenge" posed by China were discussed.

The US is trying to persuade more

The US is trying to persuade more countries to ensure that critical supply chains are no longer reliant on China and to place curbs on the export of essential products, such as minerals and semiconductor manufacturing equip-

ment, to the country. Marin, who met the leaders of New Zealand and Australia on a trade tour of the Pacific this week, said that Russia's invasion was "a war and fight concerning what is going on in the world" and that democratic values needed to be defended.

"This is the time to stop being naive, also when it comes to China," she said.

The premier insisted this did not mean "we close all the doors and windows" to trade with China. Beijing was still an important partner on issues such as climate change, but it was important for democratic countries to have "strategic autonomy" in important sectors.

Australia is presenting itself as an alternative to global industries keen to secure different supply lines to reduce dependency on China for critical minerals such as lithium and rare earths.

als such as lithium and rare earths.
Anthony Albanese, Australia's prime minister, met Marin yesterday to discuss Canberra's free trade deal with the EU. Marin said the changing global security environment was drawing Australia and Europe closer together.

#### INTERNATIONAL

## World Cup fans shrug off negativity over host nation

Supporters look beyond controversies and welcome event's compact nature, stadium alcohol ban and crime-free streets

SIMEON KERR AND JOSH NOBLE - DOHA

Souq Waqif, the busiest market in the Qatari capital Doha, is the unofficial focal point for the Fifa World Cup, a place for visiting supporters to mingle, take selfies, drink tea and engage in good-natured sporting debate.

From Argentina fans in blue-andwhite Arab headdresses to Cameroonians wearing capes embroidered in their national colours of red, yellow and green, supporters have crowded into its narrow streets and alleys, creating something of a football United Nations

"Going down to the souk, you see all the people walking around from 32 dif-ferent nationalities," said Paul Williams, who had travelled to Qatar to support

Wales. "It's been absolutely fantastic." The run-up to the Qatar World Cup was dominated by western media scru-tiny over the Gulf state's unsuitability as a host, corruption claims and its human rights failures, notably its ill-treatment of migrant workers and intolerance of homosexuality.

The tournament's opening days appeared to confirm the worst fears, with technical glitches locking fans out of stadiums, supporters arriving to find their accommodation unfinished, and a high-profile dispute over whether players should wear the rainbow armbands that promote diversity.

Yet many fans in Oatar have shrugged off such controversies. After spending large sums of money to travel to the Gulf, they have preferred to let the foot $ball-including\ thrilling\ matches\ such$ as Saudi Arabia's shock win over twotime champions Argentina and Australia's surprise progress to the knockout stages — eclipse concerns over human rights and any difficulties in buying alcohol in the Muslim society.

"I just think there's been a lot of scare mongering in the media," Terry John, another Wales fan, said of the negativity that surrounded the tournament. "We've had a fantastic time."

The unprecedentedly compact World Cup, with seven of the eight stadiums within the capital of the Gulf monarchy of 3mn people, has transformed the fan experience compared with previous tournaments. Even the city's new 76km light railway system has become a place for fans to meet and swap stories.

The condensed schedule has allowed visitors to cram in numerous games in a few days. Some World Cup regulars are beginning to look at the host cities for the 2026 tournament – spread over the US, Canada and Mexico - and groan at



'The relative lack of alcohol means I'm also not worried about my parents, who are in their seventies'

Fan clubs: Moroccans in Doha. Below, an England supporter

have been possible if the host had been

one of Europe's footballing powers. Omar Taysir, a Jordan-based student draped in the Palestinian flag, said the authorities had been welcoming and his entry to the country seamless compared with previous struggles to enter the UK on a scholarship.

Other fans have reported how this World Cup has felt safe, compared with their visits to other big cities for football events. "We've not been worried about crime such as pickpockets," said Benjamin Lim, 42, a lawyer from London. "And the relative lack of alcohol means I'm also not worried about my parents, who are in their seventies

Away from the football, visitors have been able to enjoy some of Qatar's tourist attractions, from "dune-bashing" in a 4x4 across the desert, visiting Doha's museums and the carnival atmosphere inthesouk

Amin Chhaiba, a 27-year-old Moroccan-Italian, said he escaped the "fog and cold" of Bologna after securing tickets to seven World Cup matches in four days. "It's a family friendly environment, a good place to bring kids," he said.

the prospect of hours spent in airports. Fil Sollof, a company director from England, has been able to take in 10 World Cup matches in nine days. "W here for football, so we're either in the stadium watching matches, watching matches in bars or sleeping," he said. Qatar's eleventh-hour decision to ban

the sale of alcohol around stadiums drew negative headlines, with booze generally seen as central to football fans' match day experience. Yet many in Qatar say it has contributed to a aggressive tone around matches and a family friendly atmosphere.
"It isn't such a bad thing we don't have

alcohol [at stadiums]," Williams said.

For those in the corporate hospitality suites, the alcohol rule change has had no impact: fine wines and cold beers have been readily available before, during and after matches. Chauffeur driven cars have also been on hand to zip guests from one game to the next, enabling the well-heeled to binge-watch football in

Oatari officials are mindful that there is still much to do for the World Cup to be deemed a success. There have been empty seats at some matches, warnings over crowd control, including a surge of people at one fan zone, and the confisca-tion of pro-LGBT+ hats and flags the authorities interpreted as political.

The Hayya app required to enter Qatar has also suffered glitches, causing some supporters to miss flights. In the United Arab Emirates, where many fans have based themselves, check-in staff said some people were not able to board each Doha-bound flight owing to documentation problems.

Qatar hopes fewer games in the knockout phase of the tournament that begins on Saturday will free up hotel and hospitality space for those fans already there or arriving, enhancing the World Cup experience further.

Abu Gĥasem, a Sudanese expatriate, also pointed out that Qatar's visa regime meant more visitors from the "global south" were able to attend than would

### Indonesia orangutan dispute grows after academics banned

MERCENES PILENT - SINGAPORE

Eighteen Indonesian non-governmen tal organisations have launched legal action against the government as a disagreement over endangered orangutan numbers escalates into a broader rebellion against curbs on academic

Amnesty International Indonesia, Greenpeace Indonesia and the Indonesian Caucus for Academic Freedom are part of the group that submitted a legal objection letter to the Ministry of Environment and Forestry on Thursday over undermining independent scientific research in south-east Asia's biggest economy.

The catalyst was the banning of five academics in September who challenged the government's claims that orangutan populations in the country were growing. The ban exposed a worsening prob-

lem in the country as NGOs, academics and scientists report tightening govern-ment control of the environmental narrative and increasingly onerous requirements on conducting research that might be critical.

Indonesia, home to one of the world's largest tropical rainforests, is a crucial environmental battleground. The clampdown comes as President Joko Widodo, who won plaudits for his suc-

cessful hosting of the summit of G20 leading economies last month, courts more foreign investment to grow the

\$20bn towards Indonesia's green transition on the sidelines of the summit.

"This is much larger than the five of us being banned by the ministry. It is indicative of a broader issue where independent science is being constrained by the government," said Serge Wich, profes sor in primate biology at Liverpool John Moores University and one of the banned academics. "It is getting worse."

The letter is the first step in a process in which the ministry has 10 days to respond to the signatories' demands. These include withdrawing the ban, publicly apologising, ending interference in science and holding meetings to reach a consensus on endangered ape populations. If the demands are not addressed adequately, the matter will go to the presidential office and potentially after that to court

The environment ministry did not respond to a request for comment

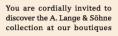
What makes this especially interesting is that the letter is from Indonesian groups. This has generated strong feelings by Indonesians and our case was seen as a breaking point," said Erik Meijaard, a Dutch conservationist and another of the banned researchers.

Born in Saxony. At home around the world.





Giving German craftsmanship a distinctly global perspective, the new LANGE 1 TIME ZONE connects the world: In addition to the main dial that displays home time, the watch has a smaller auxiliary dial to indicate the current time in any of the world's 24 time zones. A small arrow points at the currently displayed time zone on the rotating city ring and indicates whether summer time applies there. With assets like these, the LANGE 1 TIME ZONE answers the questions of a connected world by purely mechanical means. www.alange-soehne.com





#### INTERNATIONAL

## Ramaphosa sofa cash scandal threatens ANC grip on power

President's political career in doubt after damning report into theft at his reserve

JOSEPH COTTERILL — JOHANNESBURG

Cyril Ramaphosa seemed so confident in his position as South Africa's president last week that he jetted off to the UK to enjoy the pomp of a state visit, as nominations poured in at home to reelect him as leader of the ruling African National Congress.

Days later, the presidency of a man who pledged to resurrect the fortunes of Africa's most industrialised nation was on the brink as friends battled to persuade him not to resign, and old foes circled, over a damning report into a bizarre theft from his own game farm.

Ramaphosa's ANC colleagues will meet over the weekend to discuss his fate after a frenzied 48 hours when it seemed likely he might quit.

His presidency was thrown into turmoil late on Wednesday by a parliamen-tary report that concluded he may have broken the law over the 2020 theft of \$500,000 that was hidden inside a sofa at his Phala Phala reserve. The report concluded he should be investigated for possible impeachment over the issue, prompting calls from opposition parties for him to stand down.

It would be an abrupt end for the trade unionist turned businessman, who as a drafter of South Africa's democratic constitution appeared to be a safe pair of hands after the state looting under Jacob Zuma, whom he ousted in 2018. Without Ramaphosa, "a group of criminals" would return to power in Africa's oldest surviving political movement and the country would "become a banana republic", James Motlatsi, one of his oldest friends, warned yesterday. Even if he survives and South Africa

avoids a return of the kind of state capture Zuma presided over, the hit to Ramaphosa's reputation may still spell doom for the ANC in 2024 elections, 30 years after it first gained power.

"His whole presidency was one of renewal and clean-up and his platform for being re-elected as ANC leader was that he's the best of the lot. That's completely blown out of the water here," said Sithembile Mbete, a political scientist at the University of Pretoria.

The scandal that could end Ramaphosa's political career has been bubbling for months, led by accusations of a cover-up levelled by Arthur Fraser, a former spy chief under Zuma. Many at first saw the outlandish claims of wads of cash being hidden in a sofa as the ravings of a Zuma acolyte, except for the fact that as part of his quest for unity in the party, Ramaphosa had also made Fraser his head of prisons.

As several investigations began, Ram-aphosa's few clarifications, including that the cash kept on the farm was legiti mate proceeds from selling buffalo, baffled South Africans more than they enlightened. The saga culminated in a parliamentary report on Wednesday that concluded he should be investigated for possible impeachment

South Africa's main opposition par-ties have since called for the president to step down. To buy time, Ramaphosa's allies have pushed for a legal challenge to the report, saying it overstepped its remit and was lacking in evidence

Yet others say Ramaphosa's inability to reveal basic details of the burglary is what has made this investigation so damaging, such as, in the report's words, the "substantial doubt about the legitimacy of the source of the currency

The president may also want to avoid a court battle over the scandal, whether out of respect for the legal process or fears of how his enemies in the ANC



State visit: Cyril Ramaphosa with King Charles at Buckingham Palace on Tuesday. Below, the president's Phala Phala South Africa

would use it. Dale McKinley, an independent analyst, noted how Ramaphosa had never sought to use the courts to slow down the investigations. While he would have been attacked by his detractors in the ANC had he done so, "he probably also felt confident he could beat the charges", McKinley added.

Ramaphosa had come up against a more rigorous parliamentary process to remove a president than Zuma faced, McKinley also noted. Parliament strengthened its ability to investigate alleged presidential misconduct after 2018 largely because Zuma's dodging of multiple no-confidence votes exposed gaps in accountability. If Ramaphosa leaves, the fight will focus on how long the institutions rebuilt from the ashes of state capture can outlast the ruling

party's return to chaos

ANC's electoral trump card ... They may be authors of the ANC's electoral

obituary in

2024'

'He was the

majority in the next election. "He has artificially extended the life of the ANC in power," said William Gumede, chair of Democracy Works, a civic foundation. "Without him, we'll be talking about the ANC going below

civic think-tank, said that those pushing

for Ramaphosa's exit in the ANC could live to regret it. "He was the ANC's elec-

toral trump card, because his own popu-larity far exceeds that of the ANC," he

added. "They may be authors of the

ANC's own electoral obituary in 2024." Ramaphosa is credited with deliver-

ing the ANC its national election victory in 2019. But analysts say he slowed

rather than stopped the slide in the

party's popularity. In local polls last year the party's vote share fell below half for the first time.

Surveys suggest it could lose its national

40 percent of the vote.

"If he goes, there's going to be an interim period [between now and the 2024 election of the old state capturers grabbing what they can . . . but the good

people will also fight back." Zibi said the departure would cause soul-searching among business and labour groups that believed in his ability to renew the ANC. "They have avoided imagining a future where the ANC is not the centre of national consensus. They

are ill-prepared for what comes next." Yet Phala Phala has barely registered with the poorest, who are more preoccupied with petty graft in ANC heartlands. As Mbete said: "What's sad is that South Africa and its issues are going to take a back seat to the machinations of

North Korea. Dictator's dynasty

### **Unveiling of daughter** fuels succession talk

Nine-year-old Kim Jue Ae has attended important events with her father recently

When North Korean state media published photos of Kim Jong Un at the launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile last month, it was not the fear-some Hwasong-17 "monster missile" that captured the world's attention, but a young girl in her little red shoes.

Kim Ju Ae, the North Korean dictator's second child, accompanied her father to the launch in mid-November. It was the first time state media had shown images or confirmed the identity of any of Kim's children, prompting specula-tion that the nine-year-old may have been identified by Kim as his successor.

She held her father's hand as they nspected the ICBM and its 22-wheel transporter erector launcher, before overseeing the launch together from a siteon theoutskirts of Pyongyang. A week later she appeared again,

accompanying her father to thank sol-diers, scientists and officials at a ceremony during which the transporter erector launcher was itself awarded the title of "DPRK Hero".

"When you look at the way she is

being treated by the generals and her father in the photos, she is being pre-sented not just as a daughter, but as a princess," said Go Myong-hyun, senior fellow at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies in Seoul.

"Kim Jong Un is trying to normalise his regime's image by adopting the trappings of European-style monarchy."

Born in 2013, Kim Ju Ae's name was first revealed to the world by NBA leg-end Dennis Rodman, a friend of the North Korean leader. Shortly after her image was released, South Korea's National Intelligence Service confirmed that she was the daughter of Kim Jong Un and his wife, Ri Sol Ju.

In contrast to the wives and partners of Kim's predecessors and many communist leaders in other countries, Ri makes regular public appearances alongside her husband. The couple are thought to have a son born in 2010 and another daughter born in 2017.

Kim Ju Ae's public debut comes at a time of acute tension on the Korean peninsula, following a record number of North Korean missile launches.

The Hwasong-17 has a range of up to 15,000km, putting the US mainland within striking distance. At last month's ceremony, Kim boasted that his scientists and engineers had "made a wonderful leap forward in the development of the technology of mounting nuclear warheads on ballistic missiles".

Experts said it was more likely that, rather than anointing Ju Ae as his suc-cessor, Kim wished to send a message to North Koreans and the outside world about the permanence of his nuclear programme and his regime

The photos of Kim and his daughter

at the ICBM launch site were clearly intended to bolster his image as the  $father\ of the\ people\ and\ the\ nation,"\ said$ Rachel Minyoung Lee, a senior analyst at the Open Nuclear Network in Vienna.

"The main reason, however, seems to have been to highlight the necessity of nuclear weapons programmes for the security of future generations, and Ju Ae likely was meant to represent future generations."

That message was reinforced by a front-page editorial in North Korea's state Rodong Sinmun newspaper, which described the nuclear weapons as "monuments to be passed down to our descendants for generations to come".

Lee added: "Kim wants to show that the country has no intention of slowing down, let alone giving up, his nuclear and missile programmes."

Kim's regime features several high-

profile women, even as ordinary North Korean women suffer systematic discrimination and abuse. They include foreign minister Choe Son Hui, Kim's wife, Ri, and his sister, Kim Yo Jong, a senior official who recently likened the US to a "scared barking dog" for its opposition to the ballistic missile tests

The increasing prominence of Kim Yo Jong, who this week described South

When you look at the way she is being treated, she is being presented not just as a daughter, but as a princess'

Korea's president, Yoon Suk-yeol, as a "political moron" who would suffer a violent death", has led some analysts to suggest that she could succeed her brother or rule as a regent if he died or was incapacitated before his son, a more likely successor, reached adulthood.

"In the case of illness or an emergency situation, Kim Yo Jong is likely to be a strong candidate to take over because in North Korea bloodline is more important than gender," said Park Young-ja, a research fellow at the Korea Institute for National Unification in Seoul.

"From the long-term perspective, however, the North is still a military and totalitarian society and the regime's male-centred character is strong. So women can take part in the transitional period in a temporary process, but if the male lineage grows up in good health, it is more orthodox for a member of the male bloodline to become the leader."

Christopher Green, a senior consultant for the International Crisis Group, said it was "entirely possible that Kim Jong Un believes Ju Ae is the most temperamentally appropriate of his chil-

dren for high political office". But he noted that before assuming power Kim and his father before him had "taken on very significant portfolios in the government and had to 'prove themselves, including in some way demonstrating military bona fides".

He added: "The race to take over North Korea still has a long way to run." Additional reporting by Kang Buseong



Raised profile: Kim Ju Ae and Kim Jong Un are cheered by troops - KCNA/Reute

### Contracts & Tenders

FOR SELECTION OF SOLAR POWER DEVELOPERS FOR SETTING UP OF 1256 MW ISTS-CONNECTED SOLAR PV POWER PROJECTS IN NOIA THROUGH TARRIF BASED COMPETTIVE BIDDING (TEGD) PROCESS (TRANCHE-I) ON BUILD OWN OPERATE (B-O-D) BASIS UNDER SCHEME FOR FLEGRITH IN GENERATION SCHEDULING OF THERMALH/PTOR POWER STATIONS THROUGH SHOULD CHARLE STATIONS THROUGH SHOULD CHARLE STATIONS THROUGH SHOULD CHARLE STATIONS THROUGH SHOULD CHARLE STATION SCHEME FOR FLEGRITH IN GENERATION SCHEDULING OF THERMALH/PTOR POWER STATIONS THROUGH SHOULD CHARLE STATIONS THROUGH SHOULD CHARLE STATION SCHEME STATIONS THROUGH SHOULD CHARLE STATION SCHEME SCHEME

All configends, adding, amendments, lime edensions, etc. to the RIS will be hosted on our websites <a href="https://www.hsratel-dectonictendecom-libidors should regularly visit our websites to keep themselves updated.">https://www.hsratel-dectonictendecom-libidors should regularly visit our websites to keep themselves updated.</a>
Note: RECPOLIC reserves the right to cancel or modify the process without assigning any reason and without any liability. This is not an offer.

without any liability. This is not an offer. Chief Executive Office

REC PowerDevelopment

Asean summit

### IMF chief cautions Asian leaders on 'exceptional' uncertainty

EDWARD WHITE — SEOUL WILLIAM LANGLEY — HONG KONG RYAN MCMORROW — BEIJING

The IMF has warned Asia's leaders and central bankers to prepare for "exceptional" uncertainty as China's zero Covid policy hurts its economy and inflationary pressures from Russia's invasion of Ukraine hit the region.

China, the world's second-biggest economy, is forecast to grow at its slowest pace in about three decades as Beijing tries to navigate an exit from President Xi Jinping's policy of eliminating all coronavirus cases.

Consumer sentiment among the country's 1.4bn people has been battered by relentless lockdowns and travel restrictions, exacerbating a severe property sector slowdown and the fallout from rising global inflation.

At an Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit in Singapore, Kristalina Georgieva, IMF managing director, said the outlook was "exceptionally uncertain" and "dominated by risks", including global financial tightening.

In a separate speech to the International Finance Forum in Guangzhou, Georgieva said how Beijing calibrated its "Covid strategy" to mitigate the economic impact would be "critical". She suggested more action by central

government would "safeguard" China's financial stability following "welcome" support for the property sector. Georgieva also urged fiscal support for vulnerable households and strengthening social safety nets to boost consumption.

The IMF head's comments came at a key moment for Xi and the ruling Communist party after China was rocked by protests over the weekend against gov

ernment efforts to control record Covid-19 cases and against censorship. In recent days there have been signs

that Beijing is changing its anti-pandemic approach. Heavy-handed restric-

#### We have been filing advice for lifting Covid controls for months, and now we finally got the approval'

tions have been partially lifted in some cities. Central government health offi-cials have pledged to boost vaccination rates among the elderly. There are signs that state propagandists are easing concerns about the dangers of the virus.

In China's southern commercial hub of Guangzhou, restaurants have reopened to eat-in diners and shoppers are flocking back to shops after a long lockdown. Schools are said to be reopening. Three Guangdong government offi-

cials said Beijing had allowed the southern province to enact reopening policies with expanded decision-making power.

"It's happening now in Guangzhou [the provincial capital]," said a health official. "We have been filing advice for lifting Covid controls for months, with all kinds of details, and now we finally got the approval from Beijing.'

Public transport and other buildings no longer require proof of a recent negative Covid test to enter. Most of the city's testing sites have been dismantled, leaving residents who still want to test waiting at hospitals and paying for testing. Guangzhou also exempted from centralised quarantine some close contacts so they could stay at home.

See FT Big Read



#### FT BIG READ. CHINA

After the protests this week, the limitations of the zero-Covid policy have been exposed and the aura of strong authority that the Communist party has constructed around its leader has been punctured. By Tom Mitchell, Thomas Hale, Sun Yu and Edward White

or Chinese football fans watching World Cup matches on television, the first sign there was something amiss was when they realised they could hear the crowds in the stadium, but could not see them on their screens.

As nationwide protests against President Xi Jinping's draconian zero-Covid policy gathered pace last weekend, the censors decided it was too embarrassing to see fans enjoying themselves in crowded stadiums in Oatar, with no one wearing a mask. So after every goal, Chinese television feeds focused only on the players and coaches on the pitch and ignored jubilant fans embracing each other in the stands.

It was just one of the many absurdities that, alongside three years of constant lockdowns, mass testing and detention centres for the infected, finally caused public frustrations to boil over.

Just six weeks ago, Xi won an unprecedented third term in power and seemed to cement his position as China's most powerful leader since Mao Zedong. But over the course of a few days, the aura of strong, competent authority that the Chinese Communist party's propaganda apparatus has painstakingly contructed around Xi over the past decade has been punctured.

At one of the higher profile protests in Shanghai on November 26, crowds called on Xi to "step down". Other chants heard across the country echoed a lone anti-Xi protester who unfurled a banner on an overpass demanding "freedom not lockdowns" in the run-up to the 20th party congress in October

As one student protester in Shanghai told the Financial Times: "The protests made people realise that Xi isn't omnipotent.

"Zero-Covid is only a surface prob-lem. The real problem is there is no constraint on the state's intrusion of private citizens' rights," added the student, who asked not to be named for fear of police reprisals. "This is the first time meaningful protests happened and it wasn't an easy decision to join them. It won't benefit me if I am identified . . . But I felt I should support the pursuit of freedom. I also felt compelled to participate in an event that might make the country a better place.

More ominously for Xi, the relatively small-scale protests and vigils that received the most attention – generally involving dozens or hundreds of people masked a much broader rebellion at thousands of residential compounds across the country. People who had been forced to remain in their homes for days or weeks refused to obey confinement

### An explosive winter

That portends a potentially explosive winter Covid outbreak in a country with 1.4bn people and low vaccination rates among the elderly. In a worst-case scenario, China would experience a replay of the "exit wave" chaos that overwhelmed Hong Kong in February only on a scale 200-times larger and with a far inferior nationwide medical infrastructure compared with that of the former British colony.

In early November the central gov-ernment issued a list of 20 measures that suggested it was not abandoning zero-Covid, but which did relax many of its controls. Inconsistent implementa-tion of the guidelines initially frustrated those hoping for a return to normalcy.

Over recent days central and local authorities appear to have decided they cannot hold back the tide of people surg ing out of their locked-down residential compounds. Their bias is now towards



## The humbling of Xi Jinping

ever greater relaxation, which could 'Zero-Covid include isolation at home for confirmed is only a cases and close contacts — rather than surface being sent to hospitals or centralised facilities. Chen Long at Plenum, a Beiproblem. jing-based research firm, says the trend is towards "zero-Covid in name only". The real This has coincided with a shift in problem is messaging from senior officials, includthere is no ing vice-premier and Covid tsar Sun Chunlan, that "Omicron's pathogenicity has geometrically decreased compared constraint on the

state's

private

citizens'

rights'

intrusion of

with previous strains" of the virus. Such optimism may prove misplaced. Hong Kong's spring outbreak was driven by Omicron, as was Taiwan's more recent and far better-managed exit wave. Taiwan still experienced a 0.2 per cent death rate. "China can't tolerate a death rate like Taiwan's," says one Beijing-based adviser to the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

The new messaging could also confuse people who accepted Xi's previous warnings that Covid was a "devil virus" that only an "all-out people's war" could vanquish.

"According to the 20 measures, the overall direction is to loosen up," says Yu Jie, a China expert at UK think-tank Chatham House. "However, over the past three years the government's rhetoric has been 'this virus is lethal' and we were insisting on lockdowns to protect life. This has really caused confusion across society.

The protests had petered out by midweek as police began to track down participants. Chen Wenqing, a former state security minister who now heads the party's internal security apparatus, vowed to "resolutely crack down on the infiltration and sabotage activities of hostile forces as well as illegal and criminal activities that disturb social order social stability must be ensured".

But even if the unrest can be stamped out as quickly as it flared, it will go down as a remarkable moment in modern Chinese history and evidence that the country's much-vaunted "social stabil-

ity" is much more brittle than it seems. "It's hard to know, refracted through social media, the scale of what we're see ing," says John Delury, a Sinologist at Yonsei University in Seoul. "But you've got at least half a dozen major cities seeing political street protests of the kind that just is not part of Chinese life and hasn't been for decades.

"I don't know if people can appreciate just how unusual this is in a Chinese context," he adds. "To hear these spontaneous groups chanting 'we want free-

in Shanghai earlier this week, after protests that bega



dom', singing protest anthems and ironically using patriotic songs to protest the lockdowns - it's astonishing.

Lance Gore, a China expert at the National University of Singapore, agrees that "it's hard to assess—it's widespread but how deep this goes we don't know.

'Xi should learn something from this," adds Gore, who attended university in Beijing in the mid-1980s — a time of economic, cultural and political ferment that culminated with mass prodemocracy protests and the Tiananme Square massacre in the spring of 1989. "He's not God. He can't control everything. He needs to learn that modern government involves negotiation, compromise and give-and-take."

The death of Jiang Zemin, the former

who guided China out of its post-Tiananmen torpor, added to the sense of week's developments.

Jiang, whose passing at the age of 96 was announced by state media on Wednesday, was no political liberal. Under his leadership, the party continued to crush dissent. But he also presided over a period of relative cultural openness, at least compared with the control-freakery that have defined Xi's decade in power.

### A tower fire

The humbling of Xi began on the night of November 25 when hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of protesters marched on government headquarters in Ürümqi, the capital of the northwestern Xinjiang region where 10 people had died a day earlier in a residential tower fire. Both on the streets of Ürümqi and online, people blamed pandemic con-trols for impeding residents' escape from the inferno and firefighters' arrival
– allegations strenuously denied by municipal officials.

The denials did not matter because,

even if true, most people simply did not believe them and had had enough of

Over the following two days there were vigils and protests in dozens of cities and university campuses to mourn the victims of the Ürümqi tragedy. In Shanghai people gathered along a road named after Xinjiang's capital.

The largest and most violent unrest appeared to occur on November 27 in Tuhan, the pandemic's epicentre, as large crowds roamed the city, pulling apart fences, penning people inside residential compounds and workplaces.

"Protesters tore down metal barriers president and party general secretary around shops and residential comJust six weeks pounds," says one participant, who estimated that tens of thousands of people were involved. "Residents who ago, Xi won an third term in were released joined us and we went to release more people and neighbour-hoods together." power and seemed to Some of the protests were notable for cement his position as

China's most

powerful leader

since Mao. But

discontent over

Beijing's Covid

his authority

into question FT montage: AFP/Getty

'It's hard to

know the

scale. But

you've got at

least half a

dozen cities

seeing street

protests of

that just is

not part of

and hasn't

been for

Chinese life

the kind

policy has called

flashes of wit and humour, as people called out the absurdity of a system they previously dared not criticise openly.

When it was suggested that the pro-

tests were being instigated by "foreign forces", a participant shot back with: "What foreign forces, Marx and Engels? Was the Ürümqi fire caused by foreign forces?" If police or campus authorities seized blank paper held up by protesters

— a protest against censorship first popularised in Hong Kong — they so times improvised by pretending to hold up imaginary pieces of paper. In Shanghai, one person said people sneaked past the police cordon around the protest zone "by telling them they needed to do Covid tests nearby". It was not long before police cottoned on to the ruse.

But many protesters say the initial sense of liberation they felt last weekend faded quickly as police flooded likely gathering places to prevent more

A second person who attended the Shanghai protest says it was disheartening that there was not more support across the country

He has since come to realise that "China is a huge machine, not a normal modern country; many poor and unlucky people become fuel to keep this machine running". A third person in Shanghai – a student – agrees that she too felt "very disappointed" about conditions in China. But she also felt hopeful, adding that "I can see the

### Obituary

### US lawyer who took on wrongful convictions

**Eleanor Jackson Piel** Civil rights lawyer 1920-2022

Eleanor Jackson Piel became a lawyer because classmates told her she could not get into law school. "So of course I applied," she said in an interview published by the University of California, Berkeley law school. "Imagine this being my motivation! Because Barney

Schapiro said I couldn't!"

The school's acting dean also tried to dissuade Piel, rejecting her application because "females always had nervous breakdowns", she recalled. But Piel got in anyway and was the only woman in her graduating class. Decades later, the New York Times would call her "the courts' most elegant pain in the neck".

Piel, who has died aged 102, applied her trademark persistence to fighting wrongful convictions as a criminal defence attorney in an era when many female lawyers were relegated to working as secretaries.

Born in Santa Monica, California, in 1920, Piel was the daughter of a Protestant concert pianist and a Jewish doctor from Lithuania. Her father faced per-sistent anti-Semitism, and was expelled from a local beach club after members discovered his Jewish heritage. Piel's mother forbade her from publicly identifying herself as Jewish.

"I was upset about the fact that people didn't like Iews, when I was half Iewish, and then I had my mother being anti-Semitic," Piel told Berkeley. "It just didn't seem fair."

Piel said that sentiment inspired her to advocate for victims of injustice. She originally planned to do so as a journalist after graduating from the University of California at Los Angeles, but her father refused to pay for her to continue

As a young female lawyer in the 1940s, Piel struggled to find a firm to hire her. She opened her own in 1948 and practised alone for most of her career, doing all her research and preparing exhibits herself.

Working as a clerk in the federal district court in San Francisco fresh out of law school, she sided with Japanese Americans interned by the US govern-ment during the second world war who were indicted for not reporting for the military draft. She went on to prosecute war crimes in Tokyo.

Piel also defended white school

teacher Sandra Adickes, who was arrested after trying to dine with her black students at a segregated lunch counter in Mississippi. Later, she took on the case of 13-year-old maths prodigy Alice de Rivera, who was denied admission to a prestigious New York high

school because of her gender. On her wedding day in 1955, she convinced a judge to throw out murder cases against three of her clients. She married Gerard Piel, the late publisher of the magazine Scientific American and had one daughter and a stepson.

One of her most famous victories was in the case of the so-called "death row brothers" William Riley Jent and Earnest Lee Miller. In 1979, they were convicted and sentenced to death for the murder of a Florida woman. The victim, unidentified until five years later, was found strangled and burnt in a game

Piel represented Jent and local public defender Howardene Garrett represented Miller in their appeal. Together, they asserted that police and prosecutors arrested the brothers because they were "available and disposable young men". Authorities "solve[d] the case by conjuring their own murder story out of thin air", Piel later wrote.

Piel got a judge to stay their execution at the last minute, and later secured their release through a plea deal. Jent



Piel practised when many female lawyers were relegated to secretary

On her wedding day in 1955, she convinced a judge to throw out murder cases against three of her clients

and Miller consistently claimed that they were innocent. But the case meant that the man thought to be the actual killer was never charged, a fact Piel was angry about for decades.

She has been an inspiration to thousands of lawyers dedicated to justice, said Christina Swarns, the executive director of the Innocence Project, a nonprofit that works to overturn and prevent wrongful convictions, "She will not

After 10 years of work and aged 78, Piel had one of her last great victories. Her client Vincent Jenkins, later known as Warith Habib Abdal, had spent 17 years in prison for a rape that he did not commit. Piel paid \$3,000 out of her own pocket to have evidence retested, eventually discovering that his DNA did not match that of the assailant.

Piel took cases well into her nineties. She still made time to encourage young lawyers and made frequent visits to St. John's University School of Law in her adopted home of Manhattan, said John Barrett, a professor there. "She always was blow-the-crowd-away awe-some," Barrett said. "She was the lawyer and person we all wanted to be." Taylor Nicole Rogers





## THE GLOBAL BOARDROOM

6th Edition: Strategies for a new geopolitical and economic reality

7-9 December 2022 • Digital Conference

COP27 outcomes, energy security, emerging markets and more to be covered at The Global Boardroom

Speakers include:



**Jens Stoltenberg** Secretary General, NATO



**Alberto Fernandez** President, *Argentina* 



Mary Robinson Chair of the Elders; Adjunct Professor of Climate Justice, Trinity College, Dublin



Angie Gifford Vice President, EMEA, *Meta* 



Roland Busch President and CEO, Siemens



**Yasmin Kumi**Founder and CEO, *Africa Foresight Group* 



Register now: ft.com/tgb

Scan here to register for free

Platinum Partner



Silver Partners



















### The FT View



FINANCIAL TIMES

Without fear and without favour?

ft.com/opinion

### A glimmer of hope in treating Alzheimer's disease

#### Dementia drug research, diagnostics and delivery require more investment

Neuroscientists are celebrating this week's publication of the firmest evidence so far of a treatment that slows the terrible, inexorable descent into dementia caused by Alzheimer's disease. Lecanemab, developed jointly by Eisai of Japan and Biogen of the US, reduced the rate of cognitive decline by an average 27 per cent in a clinical trial with 1,800 early-stage patients.

with 1,800 early-stage patients.

The enthusiastic response of Alzheimer's experts — who are using terms such as momentous and game-changing — is understandable. For decades researchers have failed to find a way of altering the personality-destroying course of the disease. More than 50mn people worldwide are living with dementia and the number is projected to exceed 150mn by 2050.

The trial is an encouraging demonstration that the disease can be treated by removing beta-amyloid, the gungy protein that gums up the brain as Alzheimer's progresses. It should inspire an intensified drive to develop drugs that work better than lecanemab and can be prescribed to millions.

Patients and their families should, though, bear in mind its limitations. Lecanemab slows the progression of dementia by a small but significant extent and there are some indications the benefit will become more marked when patients take it for longer than the 18 months of the clinical trial. But it is far from stopping Alzheimer's in its tracks, let alone curing the condition.

several other features will hold back widespread adoption. Lecanemab is not taken by mouth but has to be infused into the patient every two weeks. Diagnostic tests — brain scans and/or lumbar punctures — are required to determine eligibility for treatment. And the drug is not a simple chemical but an

antibody, expensive to develop and produce. It is likely to cost well above \$10,000 a year per person.

To intensify the big efforts pharmaceutical researchers are already making to develop better Alzheimer's drugs, they will require more funding from the public and private sectors, as well as charities. The 2022 pipeline has 119 medicines in clinical trials that are designed to slow or reverse the underlying process of neurodegeneration.

ing process of neurodegeneration.

The success of lecanemab's clinical trial ought to encourage other projects to remove amyloid deposits from the brain. There is huge scope, too, for exploring quite different mechanisms that might work well on their own or in combination with anti-amyloid drugs. These include removing tau (another toxic protein associated with Alzheimer's), reducing cerebral inflammation and enhancing the brain's capacity to flush out harmful molecules.

Most Alzheimer's drug candidates are not discovered by pharmaceutical comIt should inspire an intensified drive to develop treatments that work better

panies but in academic labs and biotech businesses. Lecanemab originated with BioArctic, a small Swedish company that collaborated with Eisai and then Biogen to take it through clinical trials.

A healthy flow of future drugs that

than lecanemab

and can be

millions

prescribed to

A healthy flow of future drugs that could make a real impact on Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia will depend on nourishing the scientific roots of research and then helping promising projects across the "valley of death" from the labs where they begin life to larger drugs groups whose medical, marketing and manufacturing muscle can guide them through the regulatory process and introptients

tory process and into patients.

Lecanemab may indeed become a game-changer – but the world needs to invest enough not only in the R&D pipeline but also in building up a broadbased infrastructure of dementia diagnostics and treatment facilities. An ageing global population makes the economic case for this. The reward will be healthier brains for hundreds of millions in decades to come.

**Opinion** Religion

### UK's sea of faith remains, but its tides are changing





#### Chine McDonald

f everyone who ticked the "Christian" box in last year's census were to actually turn up to church on Sunday, there wouldn't be nearly enough pews, let alone biscuits to go round after the service. This is despite the fact that, according to data released this week, the number of people in England and Wales identifying as Christian has dropped to less than half the population, at 46 per cent, down from 59 per cent a decade ago and 71 per cent in 2001.

ago and 71 per cent in 2001.

The National Secular Society was quick to jump on these figures as evidence of a changing tide. "It's official," said its chief executive, "we are no longer a Christian country." But anyone who needed the census data to show them that has not been paying attention. Christians who mention to colleagues on a Monday morning that they were at church the day before will

## What the census doesn't capture is these quiet ripples of the numinous; the quest for meaning

tell you the look of mild perplexity or indifference with which they are met.

Christianity — that is, practising Christianity — is not the norm, but the exception. In the UK, the faith has been perceived to be in decline since at least the 19th century. It was, after all, in 1867 that Matthew Arnold's poem "Dover Beach"described the "melancholy, long, withdrawing roar" of the "Sea of Faith", "retreating, to the breath of the night-wind".

The decline in the number of people

The decline in the number of people describing themselves as Christian is not even the most interesting story. Despite decades of the theory predicting the decline of religiosity — the so-called secularisation thesis — people still cling to what sociologist Linda Woodhead has described as "magic", the belief in the supernatural, the non-rational and the practice of associated

The "non-religious", or "nones", now make up 37 per cent of the country, according to the latest Census. Our own research at Theos took a closer look at this fascinating group.

The non-religious are not a monolith but instead comprise three roughly equal groups: "campaigning nones", for whom non-religiosity is a cause; "tolerant nones", who don't believe but do see a cultural, social or ethical value in religion; and "spiritual nones", who believe and do as many spiritual things as the religious but dislike the label.

The decline in religious affiliation is a purely western phenomenon. Europe, Australia, Canada and now even the US may report fewer people identifying with Christianity. But globally, and among some of the world's most populous nations, religious belief — Christianity, Islam and Hinduism — is vibrant and growing. By 2050, all the world's major religions are set to be bigger in number than they are now.

Internationally, a Christian is much more likely to look like me (a black woman) than the Archbishop of Canterbury. According to figures from the Pew Research Center in 2015, there are 2.3bn Christians in the world — a third of the world's population — while 1.8bn (24.1per cent) are Muslims.

As we make our way through the Pacific Century and China plays an increasingly important role on the world stage, we will need to pay more attention to religion. In spite of the government's best efforts to stop it, the number of Chinese Protestants has grown by an average of 10 per cent each year since 1979.

Closer to home, I wonder what the census results would have shown if people were instead asked to report the number of times they had been inside a local church building: whether for weddings or funerals, Easter or Christmas services, parent and toddler playgroups or debt centes, food banks or warm spaces for those struggling with the cost of living and energy bills.

While significant numbers are disaffiliating from Christianity, Arnold's "Sea of Faith" that once was "at the full" continues to make small, modest waves up and down the country. I speak to a neighbour over a cup of tea, who unprompted tells me about their ricky relationship with their upbringing in the Church; how they no longer go but still believe. I speak to a friend with a young family who finds their way to love, community and faith via playgroups and more cups of tea.

What the census doesn't capture is these quiet ripples of the numinous; the quest for meaning that is the raison d'être of religious groups. Since the pandemic began, people have been asking questions and searching for meaning; an attempt to assuage the existential angst and collective

As sociologist Peter Berger has said, the common critique of secularity "is that human existence bereft of transcendence is an impoverished and, finally, untenable condition". Perhaps this is the reason I don't see religious curiosity disappearing any time soon.

The writer is director of Theos, the religion and society think-tank

### Letters

Email: letters.editor@ft.com
Include daytime telephone number and full address
Corrections: corrections@ft.com
If you are not satisfied with the FT's response to your complaint, you can appeal
to the FT Editorial Complaints Commissioner complaints commissioner@ft.com

### Here's a solution for those pupils struggling with Mandarin

Yuan Yang exposes a hole in Britain's education system by pointing out that "the UK's lack of China competence is itself a threat to the nation's security" ("If the UK is to understand Beijing, it must speak to it", Opinion, November 19).

MI5 and the FBI have both identified China as the biggest long-term threat to our economic and national security.

Despite China being our greatest foreign policy challenge, Yang notes that only "about 300 undergraduates leave British universities with Chinese degrees, a number that has slightly declined over the past decade".

This woefully inadequate resource is set to deteriorate, as the number of Alevel candidates for Mandarin has fallen by 60 per cent in the last five years from the already minuscule level of 3,334 in 2019 to 1,349 this year.

There are several reasons. Language learning is in decline generally and the problem is compounded by the perception that Mandarin is an especially difficult language. Moreover, the A-level cohort is dominated by native Chinese speakers, so for a nonnative speaking Brit, taking Mandarin can be ruinous for grades.

With more than 100mn students of English in China, the long-term result of this imbalance is that the Chinese know more about us than we know about them; that gives them a competitive advantage.

The Higher Education Policy Institute think-tank recently proposed supplementing the current language offering at A-level with a new course on Chinese Civilisation, covering history, culture, society and economy, to be taught in English. This parallels the situation in the classics, where A-level students can choose between studying Latin or Classical Civilisation taught in English. Introducing this less intimidating option could lead to higher numbers going on to study the language at university. So Yang is right when she says that "rather than ban the (Confucius) institutes, the UK should compete with a better offer". Tim Clissold Hong Kong

### Spy's witnessing of torture was nothing of the sort

In her otherwise interesting travelogue "Great Escapes" (Life & Arts, November 19), Anne Sebba maligns Special Operations Executive (SOE) organiser George Starr for allegedly mistreating his courier, Anne-Marie Walters. Sebba writes that Starr "did not like having women in his group", when his longest serving colleague, radio operator Yvonne Cormeau, served with him happily from August 1943 to August 1944.

Starr praised Cormeau in dispatches to London and in postwar interviews, and Cormeau's daughter informed me that her mother had been proud to serve with Starr. Sebba adds that when Walters, who served with Starr for barely one month, "reported him for serious misconduct — accusing him of witnessing the torture of French collaborators and German POWs — her femininity was used against her".

In fact, Walters accused Starr not of witnessing but of directing torture. At the Court of Enquiry in February 1945 into Starr's conduct, Walters admitted that she had been mistaken in believing he was in command of the Maquis resistance unit that committed torture. She testified: "I did not know he was not head of the Maquis . . . I therefore considered him responsible for allowing these tortures . . . I agree that what I said might easily be construed as an accusation against Hilaire [Starr's code-name]."

Starr had intervened to obtain the release of prisoners "knowing they were absolutely innocent and the victims of mass hysteria and

My book They Fought Alone: The True Story of the Starr Brothers, British Secret Agents in Nazi Occupied France (Penguin Press) quotes the verdict in Starr's month-long trial: "The Court finds that each and every one of these detrimental allegations are wholly and utterly unfounded and false."

King George VI awarded Starr the Military Cross for "exemplary gallantry", a rare distinction for an undercover operative. Charles Glass Florence, Italy

#### Achievements of an empire belie horrors of its collapse

Peter Frankopan, in his review of Ryan Gingeras's *The Last Days of the Ottoman Empire* and Diana Darke's *The Ottomans* (FT Books Essay, Life & Arts, November 5), writes as though he were describing differing perspectives on the same topic. But Darke's book is on the Ottoman Empire's achievements, Gingeras's on the horrors of its collapse.

Life under the Ottoman bureaucracy was not always utopian and the empire's expansion into eastern Europe and the western Mediterranean did not rely on gentle persuasion. As



Taylor Swift's 'Anti-Hero' is the perfect three-minute Spotify song

Frankopan notes, "slavery" was a key element of the Ottoman Empire, but that's a word with a broad range of meanings. Even Martin Luther (On War Against the Turk, 1529) complained that some Christian peasants preferred being a "slave to the sultan" to a serf on the land of the local Christian prince.

the land of the local Christian prince.
The sultan's bureaucracy assumed responsibility for the wellbeing of its citizens in ways that were quite different than the contemporaneous Christian rulers to the west.

Jews and Christians made up the majority of the Ottoman Empire's population prior to its conquest of Egypt in 1517, and the empire's massive bureaucracy kept diverse faiths living largely in harmony for centuries.

That and other successes of Ottoman rule deserve the attention that Darke gives them. They don't make the brutal violence associated with its collapse any less horrible. Alec Fisken

Alec Fisken Seattle, WA, US

### Animal lover's advice to richest man in Florida

I read with alarm Jemima Kelly's magazine piece "In the court of Mar-a-Lago" (Life & Arts, November 26) and her description of what happened to the beautiful iguana shot by Thomas Peterffy, one of the "Trumpette" members of Mar-a-Lago, Donald Trump's private club and the former procider to the programment of the pro

president's primary residence.

I would like to invite "the richest man in Florida" — as Peterffy is described by Kelly — to make a significant donation to Nature

Conservancy or World Wildlife Fund — and to get a copy of joel Sartore's *The Photo Ark* and look into the eyes of his compelling portraits of animals.

Then, the next time he crosses paths with an iguana, maybe he can grab his iPhone and take a photo of its face — or better yet, give it a name. Elizabeth Hammond

Nevada City, CA, US

### Your Turkey coverage — a rarity in the western press

Even this diehard Istanbullu who often thought the best part of Ankara to be the journey back to Istanbul was moved by Laura Pitel's tribute to Turkey's capital as a liveable and likeable city ("Ankara's spirit of spontaneity", House & Home, November 26).

Pitel is moving on after six years as Turkey correspondent, and your readers owe thanks to her — and to your newspaper — for the wellbalanced and good-humoured commentary on the difficult travails Turkey is going through in our time.

Reporting on Turkey with criticism where it is due without succumbing to Turkey-bashing remains a rarity in the western press.

With best wishes and success to Pitel in her future endeavours and supreme luck to her successor if one is assigned to the same posting, which is likely to get even more challenging as Turks struggle to make their country more liveable and likeable in the coming — hopefully post-Erdoğan — era.

Deniz Eröcal

Paris. France

### The density of Dylan and songcraft of the best pop

It was nice to read John Gapper ("Swift is perfect at the three-minute Spotify song", Opinion, FT Weekend, November 26) giving Taylor Swift's "Anti-Hero" its due as the perfect three-minute Spotify song.

But it's not all about length. There's complexity too. Swift's songs blend the narrative density of Dylan (which she derived from Country and Western) with the crystalline songcraft of the best pop. It's that tension which makes her so compelling.

Is Swift the new Mozart? No, although the lyrics of Mozart's arias are boring by comparison. And he would never have rhymed "friends" with "revence".

Professor Michael Spitzer Professor of Music, University of Liverpool Liverpool, UK

### ENO is not the only victim of the arts council cuts

John Fisher's comment on the English National Opera ("The free seat policy is one reason we'll miss the ENO", Letters, November 11) is fair enough but very London-centric.

It has passed without comment that the Britten Sinfonia has also lost all its funding. This is in spite of it being the only classical orchestra based in the East of England, its outstanding record of commissioning new music, and its extensive outreach programme.

It is a decision that is quite extraordinary. David Brief Norwich, Norfolk, UK

### The Addenbrooke's robot says a lot about the NHS

Your article "Hospital innovators offer cure for NHS crisis" (Report, November 26) on how Addenbrooke's hospital in Cambridge is seeking ways of improving productivity, highlighted the use of robotic surgery. By reducing recovery times such technology is helping Addenbrooke's cut waiting lists

as well as improving patient outcomes. However, what the report didn't mention is that the robot in question was provided by charity following an appeal. Addenbrooke's Charitable Trust (ACT) raised the funds as they did for its predecessor and have just completed an appeal for its successor. The NHS would not fund it, being unwilling to pay the upfront capital expense. The benefits of reducing waiting times and getting people back to work, particularly important given today's labour shortages, seems to have been missed in the calculation.

Charities play a vital role, but if the NHS is to harness technology for the national benefit of patients and the economy it needs to take a longer-term and broader perspective on capital investment.

Keith Wade

Former Trustee & Treasurer Addenbrooke's Charitable Trust Saffron Walden, Essex, UK

### If pilots rely on iPads, what happens if they crash?

I was intrigued by Mark Vanhoenacker's enthusiastic endorsement of his iPad and its role in the cockpit, almost like having a second co-pilot (View from the Cockpit, Travel, November 12).

However, I found that the word "crash" was conspicuous by its absence — not a plane crash, of course, but the possibility of his iPad crashing. What happens then? Does he have the back-up printed manuals somewhere under his seat?

I also wonder about musicians who are increasingly using foot-activated iPads. What's their back-up — an exceptional memory I presume.

Morris Zand

Geneva, Switzerland

#### A sausage roll never tasted better

I'd like to congratulate Ravinder Bhogal on creating the world's best sausage roll recipe (Spectrum, November 26). Never tasted a better one. Justine Brian

Justine Brian London SE11, UK

OPINION ON FT.COM
The green tech tussle where America has
cash and Europe has rules
EU governments see US clean energy
subsidies as a threat, not an opportunity
writes Alan Beattle

### Opinion

### Enough longtermism – we need to think about the present



e need to start worrying about what kind of world we are going to leave behind for Keith Richards" is the funniest line I've ever heard on global warming. And no doubt the indestructible Rolling Stones axeman will outlive us all. But the quote, which became a social media meme, has a serious side too. It encapsulates our hallowed obsession with the future — that securing it for generations to come, or even just for "Keef", is paramount.

The ethical view that people living decades, centuries and millennia from now are as important as those today is called "longtermism". It is also a crucial

tenant of effective altruism, the newish philosophy that has been thrust into the news recently thanks to a follower named Sam Bankman-Fried, of FTX infamy. This so-called impartiality across generations is why the likes of Professor William MacAskill argue that "influencing the long-term future is a key moral priority of our time."

is it though? As Groucho Marx is often attributed with saying. "Why should I care about future generations. What have they ever done for me?" But to pose this question more seriously these days is heretical — imagine doing so at the recent COP27 climate conference.

The only other public challenge I've heard to the idea that the future trumps everything was a heartfelt plea years ago that has stuck with me ever since

that has stuck with me ever since.

I was working on a consulting project for one of the world's largest sovereign wealth funds. It was in a small country, so the role of the fund was hotly debated, both in government and on the streets. Naturally there were the usual appeals to children's grandchildren and

a golden forever devoid of want. But to my surprise several parliamentarians said, hang on a minute. We have holes in our roads, now. We have underfunded hospitals, now. We have slums with no sewage, now. Why are we hoarding money for the year 2100?

They might have added: "Besides, our country may not even be around then." We were in a volatile part of the world. But uncertainty is universal. Why do we devote so much effort to an unrealised future with a massive deviation in possible outcomes when events with a 100 per cent probability of occurring exist today? When I value a company, distant earnings are worth less than the same profits made in the near term.

Or imagine we incurred huge costs in 2019 worrying about the welfare of the 11bn people the UN predicted would be alive in 2100. The latest estimate from Washington university now is for 8.8bn in that year. Oops! More than 2bn future people have just vanished.

Of course the future matters. It's just that the present matters more. Today's humans are not a means to an end they are the end. Thankfully most politicians recognise this—if only because great-grandchildren cannot vote. In this energy crisis as costs soar, for example, our crucial fight against climate change is taking a breather so we can heat our homes while we actually live in them. That makes sense to most people.

Today's humans are not a means to an end – they are the end. Thankfully most politicians recognise this

But how are such trade-offs to be made? Here again the longtermists are somewhat lost, mostly because the study of population ethics is, according to one philosopher, "notoriously difficult". Theories come to dead ends. Take the two most obvious approaches to future human welfare. The one known as totalism strives to maximise the total

quality of life in the world — measured as the number of humans multiplied by their average welfare. Trouble is, you can keep adding people with average wellbeing until earth is fit to burst.

Alternatively, we could aim to maximise the average quality of life — irrespective of how many people there are. This leads to even worse outcomes. A single very happy human is supposedly a better result than 8bn merely happy ones. Mathematically, it would be fine to replace horribly painful lives with just horrible lives given the improvement in average welfare. No need to add any above average lives at all.

Philosophers, politicians, and environmentalists are not the only ones who need to put the long run into perspective. Business leaders also risk ignoring what is happening under their noses. FTX wanted to distract us with its future do-goodery. Likewise big tech firms have spentthe past decade spending billions of dollars on long-duration projects with questionable pay-offs. Many banks advertise their net zero

aspirations while destroying their current shareholder value — the ultimate definition of unsustainable.

Perhaps that is why investors often prefer now to later, taking dividends rather than market value gains, when they should be agnostic between them. Or why American firms outcompete European ones — the former are willing to take risks, blow up, learn their lessons and start over. Say what you wish about US chief executives and their supposedly myopic share option plans, the nation's long-run equity returns speak for themselves. There's a reason why living in the moment — mindfulness — is all the rage

If we are shorter term than we think, let's not be afraid to admit it. Much of the world needs our attention right now — not in 100 more trips round the sun. I'll wager that Keith Richards can look after himself.

The writer is a former head of responsible investment at HSBC Asset Management and previous editor of Lex

The first black person to lead a party in Congress must unite his colleagues to secure a comeback in 2024, writes *Lauren Fedor* 

hen Hakeem Jeffries was growing up in Crown Heights, a working-class neighbourhood in Brooklyn, his congresswoman was Shirley Chisholm, a New York politician who in 1968 became the first black woman elected to the US Congress. In 2012, Jeffries was elected to represent the same area.

This week — on what would have been Chisholm's birthday — Jeffries made history of his own when he was unanimously elected as House Democratic leader. He becomes the first black person to lead a political party in Congress and the successor to Nancy Pelosi.

Speaking on Capitol Hill, Jeffries

Speaking on Capitol Hill, Jeffries invoked the memory of his predecessor. "I stand on the shoulders of people like Shirley Chisholm and so many others as we work to advance the ball for everyday Americans," he said. "Because that is what Democrats do."

Pelosi, 82, enthusiastically endorsed him, saying "a new day [was] dawning" and it was time "for a new generation to lead the Democratic caucus"

lead the Democratic caucus".

On Capitol Hill, Jeffries, 52, has long been seen as a rising star and skilled communicator. But after Democrats narrowly lost control of the House last month, he faces a tough uphill battle to regain the chamber in 2024, and to keep his party united in the face of Republican opposition.

His colleagues nevertheless say the former litigator is up for the Job. Chuck Schumer, the Democratic Senate majority leader who is also from Brooklyn, praised Jeffries this week, noting their shared trajectory from modest New York upbringings to the halls of power.

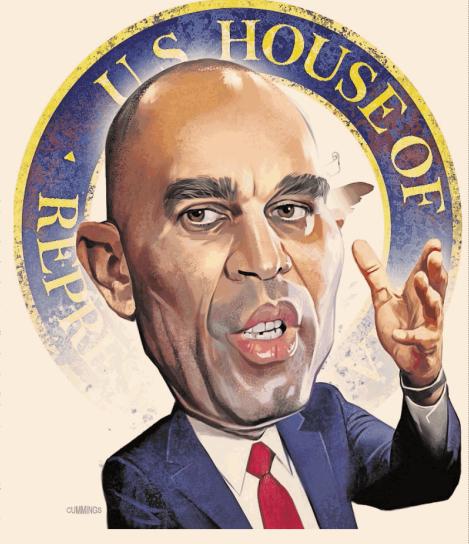
"When you're from Brooklyn, you learn quickly traits like persistence and serious mettle," Schumer said. "It's a crowded place and a diverse place. You learn how to work with all kinds of different people. You learn how to stand your ground. You learn to not take things personally."

Jeffries was born in 1970, the child of a social worker and a substance abuse counsellor. He attended state schools before studying political science at the State University of New York at Binghamton. In his final year, the acquittal of the police officers who beat Rodney King and the ensuing riots in Los Angelest series which the total science of the state of the st

les inspired him to pursue politics.

Adrian Fenty, the former mayor of Washington DC who was roommates with Jeffries in graduate school, described him as having a "quiet intensity", adding: "There wasn't much that he wasn't the best at."

After law school, Jeffries joined one of New York's top law firms before becoming an in-house litigator for Viacom and CBS. While there, he worked on a lawsuit stemming from Janet Jackson's "wardrobe malfunction" in the 2004 Super Bowl halftime show. He married Kennisandra Archiegas-Jeffries, who works for a major labour union, and they have two sons. Following two unsuccessful attempts, he was elected to the New York state legislature in 2006. "He was just a very studious, intelligent, and nimble legislator, and he really



Person in the News | Hakeem Jeffries

# Big tent Democrat aiming to retake House

stood out to be a natural leader," said Grace Meng, the New York congresswoman who met Jeffries in Albany. In 2012, he made it to Congress, and six years after that, he was chosen to chair the House Democratic caucus, putting him on the fast track to leadership.

Jeffries was thrust into the national spotlight in 2020 when Pelosi named him as one of seven impeachment managers who acted as prosecutors in Donald Trump's first impeachment trial. During this, he notably invoked another Brooklynite — rapper Notorious B.I.G. "If you don't know, now you know," Jeffries responded to a Trump defence

attorney asking, "why are we here?"
Colleagues commend Jeffries for his
"big tent" approach to uniting an often
fractious party, and point out he was
unchallenged in his bid for leader as evidence of his collegiality. But he is not
without his critics. Alexandria OcasioCortez, the New York congresswoman,
reportedly considered supporting a progressive primary challenge against him.

Other left-leaning Democrats paint him as part of the establishment, flagging that many of his campaign contributions came from Wall Street.

But Terri Sewell, the Democratic congresswoman from Alabama, called Jeffries a "pragmatic progressive" and said that he had a "unique" ability to

'He was a very studious, intelligent and nimble legislator, and he stood out as a natural leader'

engage across the ideological spectrum. "That is, I think, his genius," Sewell said. "His ability to not only listen but invite and provide a safe space for all ost to air our concerns or grievances, but at the same time coming out of it with a policy that we can all get behind."

With the Democrats in the minority, however, Jeffries will also need to con-

tend with more obstructionist Republican lawmakers who have already vowed to block their priorities and launch a spate of investigations into the Biden administration

Allies say Jeffries has a record of reaching across the political aisle, pointing to the friendship he forged with former Republican Georgia congressman Doug Collins in order to push through prison sentencing reform legislation. But he has been icier in his approach to Kevin McCarthy, the Republican who is likely to become Speaker of the House.

However, top of Jeffries' new to do list will not be bipartisanship, but defeating Republicans at the ballot box in 2024. "His challenge is getting to 218," said Gregory Meeks, the Democratic congressman from New York, referring to the number of House seats required to clinch the majority. "His strengths are what will help lead us that way."

lauren.fedor@ft.com

## Balenciaga's shock tactics look juvenile now

John Gapper All Consuming

igh fashion often straddles
the boundary between tradition and transgression,
and nobody does so more
daringly than Demna
Gvasalia, creative director of Balenciaga. "Sometimes people get offended
by certain things... but there is a rea-

ciaga. "Sometimes people get offended by certain things... but there is a reason for those things when we do them. It's never accidental," he told the FT earlier this year. Balenciaga had a different story this week after it faced protests from its

week after it faced protests from its "brand ambassador" Kim Kardashian and others over an advertisement showing children holding teddy bears in bondage gear. "It was never our intent to include [child abuse] in our narrative," said the Kering-owned luxury brand as it apologised.

Presumably not, but Demna (his professional name) has a record of provocation, including dressing adult models in latex fetish bodysuits and marching them across the floor of the New York Stock Exchange for a recent collection. Given that, and his habit of being photographed in a Balenciaga couture inktinted, polyurethane face shield, you start to get the picture.

I am willing to accept, bizarre though it is, that the glimpse of an extract from a US Supreme Court ruling on child pornography in another Balenciaga ad was accidental. It sued the production company involved, claiming it had "associated Balenciaga with the repulsive and deeply disturbing subject", but dropped legal action on Friday.

But the bears are another matter. Balenciaga hired Gabriele Galimberti, an Italian photographer who had published an artistic volume of photos of children from more than 50 countries with their toys. It got Galimberti to photograph child models holding plush bear handbags from a Demna runway show, with the bears dressed in fishnet tops, leather harnesses and chains.

Demna did not direct the ad and it does not appear to have occurred to anyone present that combining images of children and sadomasochism was a step too far. That is inexplicable, but it is the kind of blunder that happens in an avant-garde world where aesthetic and moral conventions are often airbrushed out of the picture.

Balenciaga is now trapped in a media storm, with Kardashian "re-evaluating" her relationship, and Tucker Carlson of Fox News accusing it of "promoting kiddie porn and sex with children". That is an exaggeration but it was careless enough, and has a long enough record of transgressive posing, for there to be an uncomfortable degree of truth.

There is a certain inevitability about the scandal, for escalation is built into fashion. It follows Kering's parting of ways with Alessandro Michele, creative director of Gucci, whose designs revived the brand in 2015 but had lately begun to feel repetitious. Designers have to keep extending the aesthetic boundaries to avoid being discarded.

That is a trap for Demna, whose style of transgression has been around for a long time. Vivienne Westwood and Malcolm McLaren were selling punk bondage gear on the King's Road in London more than 40 years ago. The New York Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute describes one suit as "an extension of the sadomasochistic look they promoted for its shock value".

The limits to this approach in the 21st century is that little remains particularly shocking apart from violence and sexual taboos that are there for very good reasons, such as child abuse. The consumer's palate is so jaded that latex suits and masks on adults hardly raise an eyebrow.

Indeed, shock advertising itself feels outdated. It was used by fashion brands including Benetton and Calvin Klein in the 1990s but some, such as Mark Wahlberg clutching his crotch in underwear, looks quite tame now and the rest fall victim to the essential problem. Once you have shocked people, it takes a bigger outrage to do so again.

"The Benetton ads began with mildly controversial images and messages in 1984 and gradually escalated their deliberate shock value until 1991 and 1992," one study found. Benetton started out with the heartwarming All

The consumer's palate is so jaded that latex suits and masks on adults hardly raise an eyebrow

the Colours in the World multiracial campaign and by the end was using images of a priest and a nun kissing, and a graveyard amid the Aids epidemic.

It worked for a time by hitting young people with rebellious messages, but the impact eroded. One survey of students in 2003 found that shock advertising attracted attention and remained in their memories, but another a decade later concluded that "shock advertising has become obsolete" because it no longer shocked.

Shock has clearly reached its limits for Balenciaga, which will be closely scrutinised for any repetition of the flasco. Demna does not like to justify himself. "I am not the kind of person that goes into a conversation with the audience," he has told the FT. If he wants to avoid a difficult conversation with Kering, he should be careful.

But that is not Demma's style. The evidence suggests that he will carry on pushing boundaries and risking offence. He is far more than a provocateur but his originality comes with a dash of outrage. Balenciaga will struggle to have one without the other.

john.gapper@ft.com

Top reads at FT.com/opinion

 Doesn't anyone do due diligence any more?

Investors fail to ask enough questions before handing over cash, writes Brooke Masters  It is time for central banks to revisit the 2 per cent inflation target
 The right goal for advanced economies might be 3 per cent, writes Olivier Blanchard

**ADVE** 

# NIKKEI ESG Management Forun

Despite rising uncertainty, there are some lodestars to guide us forward. ESG management practices are one of them. As the economic and humanitarian crisis unfolds, achieving greater sustainability and justice in governance and society has never looked more challenging but necessary.

One vital space in which to follow the future of delivering on ESG is the Nikkei ESG Management Forum.

"Founded in 2018, the forum has served as a critical platform promoting dialogue between corporations, institutional investors and thought leaders about all matters related to ESG," says Naoto Yoshida, president and chief executive of Nikkei Business Publications Inc., which manages the Nikkei ESG Management Forum.

Hosting study sessions and open conferences on ESG issues in Japan throughout the year, the Nikkei ESG Management Forum acts as a hub for corporate members and participants to share knowledge and learn about the latest in sustainable management practices. Renowned speakers are invited to provide their insights and help implement comprehensive ESG strategies.

In fact, the Nikkei ESG Management Forum has already contributed significantly to elevating the ESG agenda in Japan in recent years, most notably in two areas: climate-related disclosures and ESG investment practices.

Through its publications and study sessions, the forum has raised awareness of TCFD (Taskforce for Climate-Related Financial Disclosure) recommendations in Japan since 2018, long before the standard became widely known. The forum has also hosted regular study sessions for member companies, inviting Kunio Ito, professor of Hitotsubashi University and chair of the TCFD Consortium, as a speaker.

More about Nikkei ESG Management Forum, please visit the following URL.

https://on.ft.com/3yoemBx



#### Nikkei ESG Management Forum Membership Changes





Regular opinion exchange breakfast sessions (exclusive to special members), with speaker Kunio Ito, Hitotsubashi University CFO Education and Research Center.





### **Special Members**





Management Forum Ends

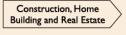


Forum Starts





SUNTORY





**Daiwa House** 





MITSUBISHI ESTATE





**₹** SEKISUI HOUSE







**O**HISAKA



**SARAYA** 

SEKISUI 'TORAY'









Orchestrating a brighter world NEC

**Panasonic** 



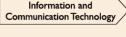


Transportation and Warehouse





SAGAWA



**ITOCHU Techno-Solutions Corporation** 

N

NTTDATA



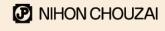






AUCNET INC.

Marubeni









MITSUBISHI HC CAPITAL

MUFG Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group





















Services and











3 December/4 December 2022 ★ FTWeekend 11

SEMENT

## Members

Taking action on environment (E), social (S) and governance (G) issues around the world.



# Companies&Markets

FINANCIAL TIMES

Braun in the dock 'Full legal reckoning' sought as Wirecard trial kicks off - PAGE 14

**Hidden burden** FTX founder's fund provided shelter as bourse faced hit of up to \$1bn - PAGE 15

## UniCredit seeks to meet chief Orcel's demand for pay boost

Turnround reward eyed • Stock up 45% in tenure • €6.7mn earned last year



Supporters of Andrea Orcel, pictured, say he should be paid more like Jamie Dimon, the JPMorgan Chase boss, who received \$34.5mn last year - Francesca Vojci

SILVIA SCIORILLI BORRELLI — MILAN OWEN WALKER AND STEPHEN MORRIS LONDON

UniCredit is seeking to boost the pay of chief executive Andrea Orcel after he told colleagues he wants a bigger reward for turning round the Italian bank, according to people familiar with the

Milan-based UniCredit is trying to reconcile the expectations of shareholders and Orcel, a star investment banker whose pay demands have previously caused controversy.

Orcel was awarded €51.4mn in com-pensation in January this year after suing Santander for withdrawing a 2018 offer for him to become chief executive. The Spanish bank had second thoughts over the appointment because of Orcel's pay demands to move

Orcel's total remuneration was €6.7mn last year, including a €4.8mn sign-on bonus, one of the highest ackages in Europe and more than double that of his predecessor Jean Pierre

But Orcel's supporters say he should be paid more like Jamie Dimon, the JPMorgan Chase boss, who received \$34.5mn last year.

They point to UniCredit's superior share price performance and the money Orcel sacrificed after returning to the workforce following his departure from UBS.

At UniCredit, Orcel's pay expectations have involved the human resources team and external advisers who will be tasked with shareholder outreach, according to one person close to the

The issue was "extremely sensitive",

the person said. UniCredit did not comment Another person familiar with the matter said: "He knows how much he's worth," adding that the CEO's remuner-

ation was "definitely an issue". Under EU rules, Orcel's bonus is capped at two times his fixed pay of

A third person familiar with the matter said: "Andrea always preferred a higher [bonus target] and higher carrot to be more aligned with shareholders." Another person said that Orcel would like to double his fixed pay to allow for a higher bonus if he met more stretching targets.

UniCredit has recently begun a round of shareholder meetings ahead of the annual general meeting in the spring. At the 2021 AGM, UniCredit only narrowly

'Andrea always preferred a higher [bonus target] and higher carrot to be more aligned with shareholders'

won shareholder support for his pay with 42.7 per cent of shareholders including the single-largest investor BlackRock voting against the group's remuneration policy.

However, the support grew in 2022, and some shareholders are in favour of boosting the chief executive's pay, especially in light of the superior performance of the bank's stock compared

UniCredit shares are up more than 45 per cent since Orcel became chief executive last April, outperforming most European rivals.

The bank's hard-charging chief exec-

utive has made returning €16bn of capital to shareholders by 2024 a pillar of the new strategy he announced last December.

It is on track to distribute €3.75bn via dividends and purchases of its own shares this year, raising alarm bells at the European Central Bank, which has pushed for more caution.

The bank told the Financial Times that it expected to make a record net profit of €4.8bn and generate over €6bn of organic capital this year, adding that "both are best in the peer group"

In a report to investors published in March as the bank tried to head off another revolt, UniCredit wrote that it had reviewed "the potential of raising fixed pay to create head-room" for a higher bonus, but Orcel had "indicated his preference to the board that his fixed compensation remain

### **InfoWars founder Jones** files for bankruptcy

STEFF CHÁVEZ — CHICAGO

Alex Jones, founder of the far-right US website InfoWars, has filed for bankruptcy after being ordered to pay almost \$1.5bn in damages to the fami-lies of victims of the Sandy Hook school

The families sued the media host for his repeated false claims that the 2012 Connecticut massacre, in which 20 children and six teachers were killed, was a hoax.

In his personal Chapter 11 filing in Houston, Jones estimated his assets to e worth between \$1mn and \$10mn and liabilities ranging from \$1bn to \$10bn, with 50 to 99 creditors to be paid.

The move comes after a Connecticut jury in October awarded eight families of the Sandy Hook victims, as well as an FBI agent who responded to the shooting, a total of \$965mn in compensatory damages. The next month, Jones was ordered to pay a further \$473mn in punitive damages.

The verdict in Connecticut followed a similar one in Texas, in which a jury awarded almost \$50mn in damages in August to the parents of one child killed in the shooting.

InfoWars filed for bankruptcy protec-tion in April, also in Texas, amid multiple defamation lawsuits brought over the same false claims. The move was widely interpreted as a potential way for Jones to limit his financial exposure The families' lawsuit alleged that

worth between \$1mn and \$10mr media platforms, Jones's InfoWars still

in his Chapter 11 filing, Alex Jones estimated his

assets to be

continue to do so.

attracted an audience In the past month, there were 7.7mn visitors to the InfoWars website, according to data from internet analytics company Similarweb.

Jones used his Sandy Hook conspiracy theory to attract listeners and for finan-

cial gain. Jones has spent years falsely

telling the listeners of his far-right radio

programme that the shooting was staged by anti-arms plotters and that

said he had apologised and would not

Despite his claims and legal troubles,

as well as being banned from big social

the victims' families were actors. During the trial that resulted in the \$1.5bn award to the families, Jones conceded that the massacre did happen but

On the day of the October judgment, Jones said there "ain't no money" to cover the damages and that he would file an appeal.
Families suing Jones have argued that

they had been harassed and faced threats as a result of his lies.

An attorney for Jones did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

### Wall Street braced for smaller bonuses after miserable year

Wall Street is bracing for huge bonus cuts after a dismal year in which deal-making has dried up and investment banking revenues dropped by half.

Final decisions have not been made at most banks, but it is already clear that last year's bumper payouts will not be repeated. At that time, the big banks were flush with profits from record dealmaking and struggling to retain staff.

The situation is worst for bankers who work on mergers and acquisitions, and initial public offerings. JPMorgan Chase, Citigroup and Bank of America are all contemplating slashing those bonus pools by 30 per cent, people familiar with the discussions said.

The pools for fixed income, commodities and currency traders are likely to be closer to flat, because those divisions had much better years than traditional investment banking, they said.

However, Goldman Sachs, which recently announced plans to merge its investment banking and trading divisions, is contemplating firmwide bonus

set, but Goldman's leadership opened discussions by warning traders of "small" decreases, one person familiar with the talks said.

Morgan Stanley has not yet set bonus pool numbers, but its net revenue is down 10 per cent year on year.
At Jefferies, the boutique investment

bank, chief executive Rich Handler and president Brian Friedman were blunt in a recent memo to staff: "This is going to be a more difficult compensation season at Jefferies, just like it will be for every

firm in our industry."

JPMorgan, Bank of America, Citi, Goldman, Jefferies and Morgan Stanley declined to comment.

Cuts at the big banks are likely to be mirrored across the industry.

New York state comptroller Thomas DiNapoli warned in October that this year's bonuses would fall 22 per cent or more from last year's huge payouts. At that time, he said the pre-tax profits of New York City's securities industry had dropped by more than 50 per cent in the first half of the year. Since then, global M&A activity has suffered through its

Travel & leisure

### Florida prepares to compromise on Disney's 'Don't Say Gay' punishment

CHRISTOPHER GRIMES ORLANDO, FLORIDA

Florida lawmakers are working on plans to reverse a move that would strip Disney of its right to operate a private government around its theme parks, potentially resolving the fallout from the "Don't Sav Gav" controversy that dragged the entertainment giant into the culture wars.

In April, the Florida legislature voted to dissolve Disney's 55-year-old special tax district following a public feud between Ron DeSantis, the state's governor, and Bob Chapek, then Disney's chief executive, over a new state law restricting discussion of LGBTQ issues in classrooms.

The set-up allows Disney to tax itself to cover the costs of providing water, power, roads and fire services in the area, known as the Reedy Creek Improvement District. The special district is seen as essential for the theme park operator to maintain high stand-

State lawmakers are working on a compromise that would allow Disney to keep the arrangement largely in place with a few modifications. Some believe the return of Bob Iger as CEO last month

will help pave the way for a resolution, according to people briefed on the plan. Randy Fine, the Republican law-

maker who drafted the law to end Disney's control over the 25,000-acre Reedy Creek property, said Chapek's removal from executive office last week improved the chances that "something will get sorted out" over the district.

"It's easier to shift policy when you don't have to defend the old policy." Fine said. "Chapek screwed up, but Bob Iger doesn't have to own that screw-up."

Since returning to Disney, Iger has steered clear of criticising Florida for a bill that he had warned would "put vulnerable, young LGBTQ people in jeop-ardy" when it was introduced in Febru-

Iger's full-throated opposition to the legislation, dubbed "Don't Say Gay" by critics, put pressure on Disney to reverse course this spring and come out against the bill after initially refusing to take a stand. The vacillation helped to fuel a sense that Chapek was struggling to make big calls as CEO.

At a town hall meeting with employees on Monday, Iger said he was "sorry to see us get dragged into [the] battle" over Reedy Creek and needed time to

"get up to speed" on the issue. "What I can say [is] the state of Florida has been important to us for a long time and we have been very important to the state of Florida," Iger said. "That is something I'm extremely mindful of and will articulate if I get the chance."

Iger struck the right tone for reaching a compromise, said an influential figure in Florida state politics. "That was a good olive brand message to Disney

employees and the state of Florida," he said. "It was a diplomatic kind of mes-

Tax officials and lawmakers have warned that dissolving Disney's private government threatens to shift an enormous financial burden to taxpayers and potentially transfer a \$1bn debt load to the state.

The Reedy Creek legislation was



Disney staff at a rally against the Florida 'Don't Say Gay' bill - Alisha Jucevic/E

drafted hastily this spring, just

as DeSantis began making national headlines for his war on "woke" Disney an unprecedented attack from a Flor ida governor on the state's largest employer. Disney's economic clout, along with a team of 38 lobbyists, has allowed it largely to get its way in Florida for more than half a century.

Chapek angered DeSantis for opposing the education law, which had outraged Disney's LGBTO employees at its Florida parks and throughout the company. He also halted Disney's political contributions in Florida and delayed a plan to relocate thousands of employees to the state.

But circumstances in Florida — and inside Disney — have changed since then. Chapek was fired by the Disney board last week and Iger, who ran the company for 15 years and is a known quantity in Florida, is back in the job. DeSantis won re-election as Florida governor in November, catapulting him into frontrunner status for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination.

The law passed this spring "is a tax increase", said Linda Stewart, a Democratic state senator who represents part of Orlando, where Disney World is based. "I don't think [DeSantis] understood how badly this could go for the state of Florida and the counties and the She said a potential compromise

under discussion would bar Disney from building a nuclear power plant or an airport on the property, rights granted to the company by Florida in 1967 that it is unlikely to use. More significantly for DeSantis, there

is also discussion of allowing the governor to appoint two members to the Reedy Creek board. "These compromises can be done with the least amount of impact," Stewart said. "We can't let the governor look like he lost."

The law removing Disney's special status does not go into effect until next summer, giving the parties time to negotiate. A draft compromise bill is already being drawn up by a Republican senator, lawmakers say.
"It seems like Disney and the legisla-

ture have motivation to make a deal. Nobody wants a train wreck," said a source involved in Florida politics who asked not to be named.

Disney declined to comment. A spokesperson for DeSantis and Reedy Creek did not respond to a request for comment.

### Blackstone's Breit is no 2007 redux but episode raises issues

The Top Line Robin Wigglesworth



property investment vehicle to limit withdrawals has triggered a mild case of PTSD among some financial crisis survivors. Are they right to hyperventilate?

There are good reasons to be concerned over how the \$125bn Blackstone Real Estate Income Trust will perform in a less benign economic and financial environment.

But it should be noted that recent headlines actually show off some of the property fund's better aspects.

Whatever you may think about Blackstone, they're not dummies at 345 Park Avenue. Blackstone executives know that a vehicle designed to buy huge portfolios of illiquid real estate and to be offered to rich retail investors is a recipe for disaster if they can withdraw their money whenever they want.

That is why Blackstone imposes clear

and transparent limits on how much investors can withdraw from Breit and has been open about the fact that this is not a liquid investment portfolio à la mutual fund. Occasional illiquidity is a feature, not a bug. Permanent limits are spelt out, as are full suspensions that can and will go up whenever Blackstone feels that it is necessary.

It is hard to see how this could spiral into a "liquidity mismatch" doom loop, where investor withdrawals force firesales of hard-to-shift property assets and spur further redemptions.

Blackstone can in practice turn Breit into a closed property trust at will and reopen for redemptions when it wants. This is not Blackstone itself suffering liquidity issues and it is certainly not a redux of the summer of 2007.

But it is also obviously not good news. The fact that it is happening at a time when Breit's headline gain this year is still about 9 per cent is

disconcerting. Sceptics had assumed that the crunch would first come when more realistic property valuation marks and falling rents sour Breit's performance and curb its regular distributions to investors. Withdrawal limits will probably accelerate things.

As JPMorgan analyst Kenneth Worthington pointed out, while a bank run" scenario is hard to envisage, capping redemptions will deter others from putting money into the fund and risks encouraging more investors trying to pull their money.

In theory, with \$1.4bn of cash in hand, a \$7.9bn credit facility, real estate debt investments of \$9.9bn that can be sold to raise money, the recent sale of a 50 per cent stake in MGM and ongoing rental income, Breit can soldier through two years of maximum allowed outflows without being forced to sell assets, JPMorgan estimates.

However, borrowing more money to

It raises questions as to whether more fickle retail investors should have easy access to private

market

funds

meet redemptions and likely taking a loss on dumping big chunks of its debt investments will hurt Breit's performance and probably stoke withdrawal requests. For Blackstone, the consequences could be painful.

Breit has been a major component of the company's growth in recent years, especially in fee terms, where it now

accounts for almost a fifth of earnings. This episode raises questions as to whether more fickle retail investors no matter how rich - should have eas

access to private market funds like this.
Even when they are appropriately structured, there are many ways it can go wrong. That is a concern for the entire alternative asset management industry, which has followed Blackstone in aggressively trying to sell their wares to rich individuals rather than just institutional investors.

robin.wigglesworth@ft.com

### Cook's charm resolves Twitter spat but not China dilemma



Tim Cook Chief executive Apple

Tim Cook was already battling one of the biggest disruptions to Apple's crucial supply chain operations in China since the onset of the global pandemic when the tweet tirade

In a flurry of more than a dozen tweets on Monday, Elon Musk launched a broadside against the world's most valuable technology company, questioning the Apple chief's commitment to free speech. Musk, who bought Twitter for \$44bn in October, rallied his 120mn followers to support a "revolution against online censorship in

Cook was able to placate the erratic billionaire within two days. Soon Musk was tweeting again, calling the whole thing a "misunderstanding" and thanking Cook for a personal tour of Apple's headquarters, known as Apple Park.

A former Apple veteran of more than 10 years was not surprised by Cook's diplomatic nous.

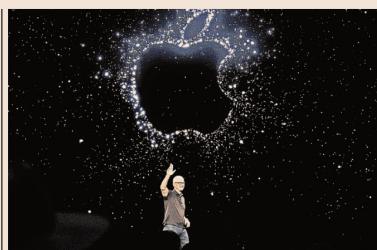
"I'm sure Tim charmed him," the erson said. "He wanted to hear [Musk] out. And I'm sure Tim gave his perspective. "That's what Tim does: he rolls up

his sleeves and fixes problems. He's not into big public disputes, whether it's a PR dispute or something more contentious. That's not his MO. He's

Cook's low-key, behind-the-scenes manoeuvring since taking over from Steve Jobs in 2011 has been instrumental in solidifying Apple's position as the world's large

His role as Big Tech's calm elder statesman has been put to the test over the past month amid huge disruption at the world's largest iPhone factory in Zhengzhou, China, which has been hit by violent protests over stringent Covid-19 policies.

The chaos at the Foxconn-owned



'I'm sure Tim charmed him. He wanted to hear [Musk] out. And I'm sure Tim gave his perspective'

plant, known as "iPhone City", forced a rare warning from Apple in November that high-end iPhone shipments would be "significantly reduced" ahead of the holiday period.

It is, perhaps, Cook's greatest test yet. The iPhone might capture less than a fifth of global smartphone sales, but it takes 80 per cent of the profits. Under Cook, Apple has grown by about \$2tn.

The first trillion dollars came from Jobs and [Jony] Ive, the next trillion came from what Tim Cook has done, said John Sculley, Apple's CEO before Jobs returned in the late 90s. "He does it in a quiet way and doesn't draw attention to himself, but he does a remarkable job."

In the past five years, Alabama-born Cook's pragmatism has enabled Apple to avoid major tariffs under President Trump; his consumer privacy arguments earned him allies in Brussels amid widespread anti-tech sentiment; and Apple's investments in China allowed production to keep largely running during the pandemic.

A week into Biden's tenure, Cook penned a letter praising the president's actions to protect immigrants brought to the US as children. It is the type of move that earned him an invite to Thursday's White House dinner honouring French president Emmanuel Macron.

"His best skill is just understanding

the need to take care of everyone being multidisciplinary and not having a favourite," said Steve Wozniak,

Apple's co-founder. Cook's role as a diplomat represents something of a third act. His first triumph was drawing up Apple's manufacturing operations in China after Jobs lured him to Cupertino, from PC-maker Compaq, in 1998. Cook has also built a \$74bn business in the country — far more lucrative than any of its Big Tech rivals.

Inside Apple, Cook's contributions are recognised as just as important to the success of the iPod, iPhone and iPad as that achieved by its famed designer Ive.

"When you hold an iPhone in your hand, the names that come to mind immediately are Steve Jobs and Jony Ive, but the contributions Tim Cook has made are just as relevant," said Sculley. His second big achievement has

been solidifying the iPhone as the world's aspirational brand of choice. Cook has extended Apple's reach into new media and services, and laid the foundation for expanding its footprint into the finance, automotive and healthcare industries.

Cook's steady hand, handsome dividend policy and massive buyback scheme has earned the trust of Warren Buffett, who refers to Cook as "Apple's brilliant CEO" in his letter to

Soft skills: Apple chief executive Tim Cook on stage at the company's California headquarters

shareholders. Never an investor under Jobs, Buffett is now Apple's largest single shareholder with a stake worth some \$140bn, representing more than 40 per cent of Berkshire Hathaway's

None of this success was predicted. A significant book on Cook's early tenure, *Haunted Empire*, published in 2014, described him as "painfully out of touch" and Apple as "more limited in what it could do than ever before."

The idea that Apple would be outpaced by the likes of Samsung became such a trope that satirical website The Onion once envisioned a heavily perspiring Cook on stage in Cupertino under the headline: "Apple unveils panicked man with no ideas".

While Cook's success has been clear, part of his legacy is currently at risk as the wisdom of concentrating Apple's assembly operations in China comes under close scrutiny following the workers' revolt at Zhengzhou.

Apple's smooth manufacturing operations have underpinned its growth for the past two decades, but with China accounting for 95 per cent of iPhone production, investors are now questioning what his Plan B is.

The optics of Apple's diplomacy with Beijing have also come under focus as wider protests have rocked the country in recent weeks.

When Apple recently imposed limits in China on the use of AirDrop — an iPhone feature being used to share information by protesters - Florida governor Ron DeSantis accused Apple of siding with Chinese leader Xi Jinping's crackdown, while Missouri Senator Josh Hawley wrote directly to Cook: "Under your leadership, Apple has time and again assisted the Chinese Communist party in surveilling and suppressing the basic human rights of the Chinese people."

Cook had a chance to clarify on Thursday when a journalist confronted him in Washington, asking whether he supports Chinese citizens' right to protest. His response suggested his diplomatic skills were reaching a limit: he ignored her. Patrick McGee

### **BUSINESS** WEEK IN REVIEW

### Adidas race rap

 A top Adidas executive received a "final warning" last year over repeated "inappropriate and unacceptable" remarks about diversity at the sportswear group. Chief sales officer Roland Auschel was the subject of a compliance probe after a string of staff complaints, people told the Financial Times. While rebuked by the board, he still received a 26 per cent increase in his bonus and a contract extension

▶Jack Ma, the Alibaba founder who has largely disappeared from view since he criticised Chinese regulators two years ago, has been living in central Tokyo for almost six months, amid Bei-jing's crackdown on China's technology sector.



■The Qatari owners of French champions Paris Saint-Germain are targeting a valuation of more than  $\epsilon$ 4bn in talks with potential investors that would set a new benchmark for a football club and boost expectations for others on the market.

► HSBC agreed to sell its Canadian business to Royal Bank of Canada for \$10bn, as the lender scales back its global network outside Asia amid pressure from its largest investor to break up. The transaction hands RBC more than 780,000 customers.

 Facebook and Instagram parent Meta was fined €265mn by Ireland's privacy watchdog over its han-

Alibaba's founder Ma has been living in Tokyo for almost six months amid the crackdown on China's technology sector

dling of user data, bringing the total amount the technology giant has been fined by European regula tors to nearly €1bn.

 British engineer Rolls-Royce said it had successfully tested using hydrogen instead of conventional jet fuel to power a modern aircraft engine on the ground in a first for the aviation industry.

 Juventus was plunged into crisis after the entire board and the chair of the Italian football club resigned amid an investigation into its finances.

 Swedish payments group Klarna, once Europe's most valuable tech company, said it hoped to start making profits again for the first time since 2020 within the next year, despite reporting a net loss of SKr2.1bn (\$200mn) for the third quarter.

 Barclays announced that chief executive C.S. Venkatakrishnan has been diagnosed with non-

€4<sub>bn</sub> Valuation targeted by PSG's Qatari owners in investor talks €265mn Fine handed to Meta by Ireland's privacy watchdog over use of data

Hodgkin's lymphoma and will be undergoing treat-

ment for the next 12 to 16 weeks in New York

Nestlé acknowledged that the acquisitions of Palforzia, a peanut allergy medication purchased for \$2.6bn two years ago, and Freshly, a meal kits business acquired in 2020 in a deal valuing the start-up at \$950mn, had been misjudgments.

▶ Former Credit Suisse chief executive Tidjane Thiam defended his record at the Swiss lender despite a litany of crises since his departure.

 Chris O'Shea, the head of British Gas-owner Centrica, warned that more UK retail energy suppliers would probably go bust this winter, with some that are "struggling for cash" already likely to be trading while technically insolvent.

### Visa bosses given bonuses despite missed targets

PATRICK TEMPLE-WEST — NEW YORK

Visa executives have received millions of dollars in bonuses this year despite missing a crucial performance target that the company said it could have met were it not for the war in Ukraine.

In its annual proxy voting report, Visa said its executives missed a "transactions growth" target linked to annual bonuses, although they exceeded other financial targets. Despite this, its board said it decided not to adjust bonuses.

The board's compensation committee determined the annual payout was appropriate, "especially in light of the ongoing events in Russia and Ukraine and their impact on the company's busi-

All of the goals "were designed to be challenging", the company said. The transaction growth bonus target was added in January, "prior to the war in Ukraine and the unforeseeable impact that this action would have on the company's business", the filing stated.

Chief executive Alfred Kelly received a \$6.2mn bonus for 2022, the company said. Overall, Kelly was paid \$28mn this year, including annual and long-term bonuses, which was down from \$30mn

According to a proxy report filed in April, rival Mastercard paid chief executiveMichael Miebach \$16mn in 2021, up from \$9mn in 2020.

In March, San Francisco-based Visa ioined with Mastercard and American Express to suspend operations in Russia after its invasion of Ukraine. Transactions related to Russia accounted for about 4 per cent of net revenue at Visa and Mastercard, data provider Morningstar said earlier this year. Visa has excluded Russia from its financial reports since April.

"We are compelled to act following Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, and the unacceptable events we have witnessed," Kelly said at the

Visa did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Its annual meeting is scheduled for January 24, when shareholders will have an opportunity to vote on executive pay.

In the face of other macroeconomic pressures and slumping stock markets, other companies have also adjusted pay plans to help executives earn bonuses.

### Defence start-up Anduril raises \$1.5bn

The nature

has changed

contractors]

going to be

able to meet

procurement

of warfare

and [large

are not

RICHARD WATERS — LONDON

efence technology start-up Anduril has raised nearly \$1.5bn in the secondbiggest venture capital round of the year in the US, marking a milestone for young tech companies trying to break into the notoriously difficult field of defence procurement.

Anduril said the investment valued it at \$7bn, excluding the new cash it is raising, up from \$4.2bn 18 months ago, It comes at a time when giant investment rounds, which were a feature of the recent venture capital boom, have all but dried up, while many start-ups struggle to avoid "down rounds" that force them to accept lower valuations.

Anduril was founded five years ago by Palmer Luckey, who sold his previous start-up, virtual reality company Oculus, to Facebook for \$2bn at the age of 21.

Luckey said he had set out to build a large defence company based around new technologies such as AI and drones because many Silicon Valley companies under pressure from their workers, had turned their back on the Pentagon.

"The big tech companies in the US were largely refusing to work with the [Department of Defense]," he said. "You have all this incredible technology tal-

There's never been a point in US history where that's how things were." Tech start-ups have struggled to sell to the military because of the defence industry's long purchasing cycles and the challenge of earning enough trust to win sizeable contracts.

ent that's just inaccessible to the DoD.

"They were laughed out of Silicon Val-ley, a lot of people didn't believe it could be done," said Katherine Boyle, a partner at Andreessen Horowitz, an Anduril investor. "The nature of warfare has changed fundamentally and the [large defence contractors] are not going to be able to meet the procurement needs."

In the strongest sign yet that the Pen tagon is turning to the software and AI capabilities of new defence companies, Anduril this year won a contract from the US Special Operations Command worth nearly \$1bn to act as a systems integrator on a counter-drone project.

Luckey said that, along with contracts with different branches of the US military, the company worked with "half a dozen Nato allies" and had "hundreds of millions" of dollars in annual revenue.

Anduril is known mostly for autonomous systems such as drones, as well as surveillance towers used for border

## 'Full legal reckoning' sought over Wirecard

Court to begin dissecting collapse, with ex-chief and associates facing fraud, embezzlement and manipulation charges

OLAF STORBECK - MUNICH

From Thursday, two-and-a-half years after one of Europe's most spectacular accounting scandals unravelled, a criminal court in Munich will start dissecting the collapse of Wirecard.

Three former senior managers of the disgraced German payments company, including chief executive Markus Braun, will be facing charges of fraud, embezzlement, and accounting and market manipulation in a trial that is expected to continue into at least 2024.

Wirecard, once worth €24bn and hailed as one of Europe's most successful technology start-ups, collapsed in June 2020 after disclosing that half of its €2bn in annual revenue and €1.9bn in corporate cash were a sham. The implosion sent shockwaves

#### 'Confidence in Germany as a financial hub has been shattered'

Matthias Hauer, CDU lawmaker

through Germany's financial and political establishment.

In the dock alongside Braun will be Stephan von Erffa, head of accounting, and Oliver Bellenhaus, boss of a Dubal based subsidiary at the core of Wirecard's outsourced Asian operations.

"I expect that the defendants will face the full force of the law," Matthias Hauer, an MP for the Conservative CDU who sat on the parliamentary inquiry committee, said, pointing to the "massive social and economic damage" that white-collar crime was causing. "Confidence in Germany as a financial hub has been shattered. Rebuilding it will require a full legal reckoning."

The trial will take place in the pre-

The trial will take place in the precincts of one of Germany's largest prisons, opened in 1894, in a high-security courtroom five metres underground and protected by a bombproof ceiling. Built for trials of terrorists and mobsters in 2016, it is connected to the cells by a network of tunnels and is a 20-minute drive from Wirecard's former headquarters.

On Thursday, prosecutors will read out 89 pages of charges, alleging that Braun was the head of a gang that orchestrated a complex, multiyear fraud that included deceiving auditors with fake documents, using doctored accounts to convince banks and bond-holders to provide more than €3bn in debt, and siphoning off at least €255mi in corporate cash, mainly through loans to sham business partners.

Three prosecutors led by Matthias Bühring will read in turn, having practised the task extensively over the past few weeks, according to people familiar with the matter.

Bühring has been in charge of the investigation since it was triggered by a criminal complaint from Chris Hohn, activist short seller and manager of \$24bn of assets at The Children's Investment Fund, a month before the insolvency.

Prosecutors expect that reading out all the charges will take five hours. This year five more court days are scheduled, with Braun and Bellenhaus, who are still in custody, expected to give their opening statements. Von Erffa, who was released on bail in the summer of 2021, would remain silent "for now", according to his lawyer.



In the dock:
Markus Braun,
who was boss of
Wirecard, is
accused of
leading a gang
that staged
a complex,
multiyear scam

Wirecard stock

Replaces Commerzbank in Dax

3 Police raid Singapore office 4 Announces \$1bn SoftBank deal

 Hires KPMG for independent audit

6 KPMG unable to verify third-party profits

Braun arrested

Says €1.9bn cash missing

Says it will file for insolvency 2018 19

The first witnesses are to be summoned from January.

"After the first few days, the hearings could turn into a slow grind," said Matthias Jahn, a Frankfurt law professor and criminal judge at Frankfurt higher regional court.

He noted that Germany's criminal code stipulated that all evidence needed to be directly evaluated in the courtroom. In the US and other jurisdictions, judges could focus on key documents

0

0

and facts, but in Germany, "every email and every document that is potentially relevant needs to be introduced into the hearing. This procedural approach worked well for the straightforward cases of the 19th century, but struggles to cope with hugely complex cases of our times". The relevant legal rules date from 1879.

Like all criminal court proceedings in

Like all criminal court proceedings in Germany, the Wirecard case will not involve a jury. It will be decided by a panel of three professional judges and two "lay" judges — members of the public deputised for the duration of the trial. The trial will start with a reserve bench of two professional and two "lay" judges who will attend every hearing and can take over should one of the original judges become unable to continue.

The panel is headed by presiding judge Markus Födisch, who started his career with Bavarian law enforcement in 2001 and from 2012 to 2019 held a senior position at the Munich public prosecution office.

During their 21-month-long investigation, prosecutors held 450 interviews with witnesses and suspects, sifted through 42 terabytes of data, raided 40 properties, and sent out 90 requests for co-operation to foreign colleagues. At the core of the investigation was Wirecard's outsourced payments processing operations in Asia — the so-called third-party acquiring business, known as TPA. On paper, Wirecard was co-operating with three businesses, in Dubai, Singapore and Manila, which generated €1bn in annual revenue and all of the group's profit.

'After the

first few

days, the

hearings

could turn

into a slow

Matthias Jahn,

law professor

grind'

In theory, the TPA business had €1.9bn in Wirecard cash tied up in escrow accounts, first in Singapore and later in Manila.

After the Financial Times in October 2019 exposed that large parts of the TPA business appeared fraudulent, it became clear that bank statements were forgeries: the escrow accounts and billions in cash did not exist. After months of investigations, both Wirecard's administrator and Munich prosecutors concluded it was a sham, existing only on spreadsheets compiled to hoodwink auditors, investors and creditors.

Braun, who denies the charges, vehemently disputes that the TPA business was fake. He argues that a criminal clique around Jan Marsalek, Wirecard's second-in-command, and Bellenhaus created a "shadow structure" and redi-

 $rected the TPA\ proceeds\ into\ their\ own \\ pockets\ without\ his\ knowledge.$ 

Braun's lawyer Alfred Dierlamm one of Germany's most renowned white-collar crime specialists — points to payments of millions of euros between the TPA partner companies and shell companies, some of which were controlled by Bellenhaus and based in the British Virgin Islands.

Dierlamm has previously accused prosecutors of not investigating the origin and purpose of those payments, and hence not getting to the bottom of the case.

Authorities reject Dierlamm's view, arguing that the payment flows he observed represent round-tripping transactions — circular flows of money used to make the whole system more credible.

Dierlamm did not respond to a request for comment. The prosecution office declined to comment.

Prosecutors face several obstacles in bringing a conviction.

The inner circle at Wirecard relied heavily on the Telegram messaging app, and the bulk of their conversations have been lost. In official emails there is little trace of the fraud, and there is no smoking gun showing that Braun knew the TPA business was a sham.

Moreover, a number of key suspects will not be present in Munich, the most prominent being Marsalek. He was directly in charge of the TPA operations and has been on the run since June 2020, with German law enforcement assuming he is hiding in Russia.

An ex-Wirecard employee who was in charge of the potentially fraudulent Manila-based outsourcing partner was reported dead in the Philippines shortly after the company imploded.

The case against Braun may hinge on testimony by Bellenhaus. A sports-car enthusiast who ran a Wirecard unit at the heart of the company's fraud from his flat in Dubai's Burj Khalifa skyscraper, he voluntarily travelled from the emirate to Munich, via Switzerland, after the insolvency. There he turned himself in to prosecutors, knowing he would remain in police custody, according to people familiar with the matter.

"Mr Bellenhaus intends to continue his co-operative behaviour as chief witness during the trial," his lawyers said in a press release, saying their client would "take responsibility" for his actions.

However, when first giving testimony, Bellenhaus made factually incorrect statements, according to people familiar with the case. He also belatedly disclosed a private foundation in Liechtenstein where he had stashed away some €4.5mn of Wirecard cash.

Bellenhaus was in emotional distress and lacked access to files and his calendar to ensure the accuracy of his statements, people familiar with his defence said.

While some of Bellenhaus's oral testimony has been backed up with hard evidence — for instance the claim that von Erffa faked documents — a lot could not be independently verified and is disputed by Braun, according to documents seen by the FT.

Jahn said: "The whole case is monstrously big."

More than 20 former insiders are also in the crosshairs of criminal prosecutors.

"Any verdict might come with the caveat that it could be preliminary,"

### Pharmaceuticals. Dementia

### Swedish scientist behind Alzheimer's treatment has big ambitions

Lannfelt played vital part
developing drug that shows
promise with the disease

JAMIE SMYTI

As Japanese drugmaker Eisai this week presented data confirming it had developed the first drug to slow cognitive decline in Alzheimer's patients, the audience at a conference in San Francisco burst into applause.

Among those in attendance was Lars Lannfelt, a little-known Swedish scientist who invented the groundbreaking drug, known as lecanemab, and will make a fortune if it is approved and successfully marketed.

BioArctic, the company he cofounded in 2003 with Pār Gellerfors, struck a licensing deal on the monoclonal antibody therapy with Eisai in 2007, entitling it to hundreds of millions of dollars in milestone payments and royalties on lecanemab sales.

About 55mn people live with dementia worldwide and Alzheimer's disease accounts for up to 70 per cent of these cases, according to the World Health Organization. Analysts forecast the drug could generate sales of up to \$10bn a year, a prospect that would transform BioArctic, as well as Eisai and its partner on the drug, US biotech Biogen.

"It is nice to have money but this is not what has been driving me. It has been the science and the opportunity to build a Swedish company," the 73-year-old told the Financial Times. "We want to be a fully-fledged pharmaceutical company: that is our ambition."

Shares in BioArctic, which has just 75 employees, have more than tripled in value since Eisai disclosed in September that lecanemab slowed the rate of cognitive decline in early-stage Alzheimer's patients by 27 per cent.

The Stockholm-listed company is

now worth almost \$2bn and is rapidly recruiting staff, with the ambition of selling the drug in Nordic countries where it owns the rights to lecanemab.

Lecanemab could be approved in the US as early as January under the US Food and Drug Administration's accelerated approval pathway. But significant hurdles remain, including satisfying physicians' concerns about its safety

and whether the clinical benefits justify the risks caused by side effects.

Investors also need convincing that Eisai will not repeat the mistakes of its partner Biogen, whose shares plunged last year after the botched launch of an Alzheimer's drug called aducanemab.

Biogen initially priced a year's treatment of aducanemab at \$56,000 despite concerns among some health experts who warned that there was little conclusive evidence of its benefits.

This week's presentation of data on lecanemab at the Clinical Trials on Alzheimer's Disease conference in San Francisco, along with publication of a peer reviewed article in the New England Journal of Medicine, was a positive development, analysts said.

"Is it a cure? No. Are we there yet? No. But the data set is clean and shows a clear benefit," said Evan Seigerman, analyst at BMO Capital Markets. "Based on these data, we are highly confident in lecanemab's approval and eventual Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) reimbursement."

A decision by CMS, the US federal agency administering national insurance schemes, to restrict insurance coverage of aducanemab to people undergoing the clinical trials damaged that drug's commercial prospects. Despite the euphoria in San Fran-

Despite the euphoria in San Francisco, some researchers and investors remain cautious about lecanemab, a drug that targets sticky plaques called beta amyloid that build up in the brain. The therapy, they say, produces only "moderate" clinical benefits compared with a placebo and can cause serious side effects including brain bleeds.

The deaths of two patients on lecanemab, who were also taking blood thinning drugs, have also raised ques-



Lars Lannfelt: 'We want to be a fullyfledged pharmaceutical company'

tions over whether large numbers of patients on anticoagulants may eventually be excluded from the treatment.

"I suspect that the lack of demonstrable clinical effectiveness will mean that lecanemab will not be taken up widely within healthcare systems around the world," said Robert Howard, professor of old age psychiatry at University College London. Lannfelt argues that a 27 per cent

reduction in the rate of cognitive decline is clinically significant and enough to approve and launch the drug. He said the trial results also confirmed a contentious theory known as the amyloid hypothesis, which holds that Alzheimer's is primarily caused by the build-up of plaques in the brain.

"It is well proven that amyloid beta causes Alzheimer's disease as much as HIV virus causes Aids. I think it's the same level of evidence," he claims.

Many researchers disagree that amyloid beta is now proved to be the "primary cause" of Alzheimer's, saying rather that it is a complex disease with many contributory factors.

It was Lannfelt's discovery in the early 1990s of a mutation in the gene responsible for amyloid beta that helped establish a link between sticky plaques and Alzheimer's. Almost a decade later while working as a researcher at the Karolinska Institute — a Swedish medical body — he unearthed another genetic mutation linked to amyloid-beta aggregates called protofibrils, rod-like structures that are a key target of lecanemab. Named the "Arctic mutation", it led to the discovery of the monoclonal antibody mAb158, which became lecanemab.

"We founded BioArctic in 2003 based

"We founded BioArctic in 2003 based on this idea," said Lannfelt, who owns 33.5 per cent of BioArctic shares but controls 49.3 per cent of the biotech's voting rights.

If lecanemab turns into a commercial success, Lannfelt said BioArctic would use the proceeds to develop drugs targeting Parkinson's disease and other disorders of the central nervous system. Despite his age, he said he wanted to continue working at BioArctic as long as he could contribute with research.

"You can't change your lifestyle at this age," said Lannfelt, adding that he would indulge himself by buying an electric car.

Crypto. Corporate disaster

## Bankman-Fried's hedge fund spent up to \$1bn shielding FTX



Alameda shouldered burden when client's leveraged bet risked a big loss for exchange

JOSHUA OLIVER AND KADHIM SHUBBER Hedge fund Alameda Research stepped in to shelter FTX from a loss of up to

\$1bn after a customer trade on the crypto platform blew up last year, highlighting the deep and longstanding links between Sam Bankman-Fried's digital asset companies.

Alameda in early 2021 shouldered FTX's burden when a client's leveraged bet on an obscure token tore through buffers designed to shield the exchange from sustaining losses when a trade goes bad, according to people with knowledge of the matter.

The incident, which has not been previously reported and came more than a year before FTX collapsed into bankruptcy, shows how when one pillar of Bankman-Fried's crypto conglomerate came under stress, he would shift the weight to another, treating the businesses that were portrayed publicly as separate as if they

were one group.

It also shows how the ties between Bankman-Fried's proprietary trading company and his FTX crypto exchange acted as a ballast long before this year's digital asset market turmoil — when Alameda itself was bailed out with billions of dollars of loans from FTX as its other lenders retreated.

The deep relationship between FTX and Alameda — highlighted by these mutual bailouts — lies at the heart of a corporate disaster that has left potentially millions of creditors out of pocket, destroyed a business once valued at \$32bn and triggered multiple investigations spanning the world just as Bankman-Fried's crypto empire once

MobileCoin spike ruptures FTX safety shield

FTX lent to traders so they could make big bets on crypto with just a small initial outlay, known as trading on

If the traders made losses, FTX would automatically sell the cash or margin they had put up, thereby protecting the

Bankman-Fried had touted FTX's "unique" liquidation engine, which he argued was a safer way for exchanges to manage risk. The 30-year-old had pushed legislators in the US to adopt FTX's system, potentially opening it out

to non-crypto markets. The system included a fail-safe: it incentivised large trading groups to take over trades where the initial margin was almost wiped out.

But on the riskiest, most thinly traded tokens, only Alameda was willing to serve as that last line of defence.

In April 2021, a crypto token called Coin — used for payments in the privacy-focused messaging app Signal — suddenly spiked in price from about \$6 to almost \$70, before crashing back down again almost as quickly.

The wild moves came after a trader on FTX had built an unusually large

position in the little-known token Two people familiar with the matter

shift the weight to another

said that, when the price rose, the trader

used the position to borrow against it on FTX — potentially a scheme to extract

Alameda was forced to step in and

FTX. The trading company's loss on this deal was at least in the hundreds of

millions of dollars, the people said, and as high as \$1bn, according to one of the

people, wiping out a large share of Alameda's 2021 trading profits.

The trading group's role as a backstop

to FTX on bad trades was reversed

roughly a year later when Alameda faced trouble with its borrowing from

In June, the crypto sector suffered a ascading credit crisis sparked by the

failure of the stablecoin, terraUSD.

As other lenders pulled back, FTX stepped in to lend billions of dollars

to Alameda, leaving the exchange

dangerously exposed to the trading

company, according to a letter from

Bankman-Fried to former employees

In the letter, Bankman-Fried said

Alameda's liabilities to FTX increased by billions of dollars last spring as "most

of the credit in the [crypto] industry

[was] drying up at once".

and a financial statement he prepared.

sume the trader's position to protect

dollars from the exchange.

Ties that bind: when one

pillar of Sam

Fried's crypto

conglomerate would come

under stress,

he would

On the

riskiest.

most thinly

tokens, only

was willing

to serve as

that last

line of

defence

Alameda

Bankman-

An Alameda financial statement that Bankman-Fried drafted alongside the letter puts the trading group's total liabilities to FTX at \$10bn by the time his companies collapsed into bankruptcy.

Analysis of blockchain transactions by the research company, Nansen, provides additional evidence that FTX acted as a lender of last resort for

Alameda held a large stock of FTT, a crypto token issued by FTX itself, which it had used as collateral for loans.

Nansen's analysis shows large transfers of FTT from several crypto lenders throughout June, which appears to be the return of collateral as lenders retreated from Alameda.

From mid-June into July, the Nansen analysis identified \$4bn of FTT transferred from Alameda to FTX, which analysts wrote could have "been the provision of parts of the collateral

that was used to secure loans". The heavy lending from FTX to Alameda — and their reliance on the exchange's own FTT token — proved to be a fatal weakness for Bankman-

Fried's empire.

In early November, a report from crypto news website Coindesk revealed the large FTT position on Alameda's balance sheet, prompting rival exchange Binance to announce plans to sell roughly \$600mn of the token,

knocking the token's price.

At the same time, concerns about the company's financial health sent FTX clients rushing for the exits, demanding billions of dollars in deposits back from the exchange.

The crisis surrounding the exchange hammered the price of FTT and two other tokens with close links to Bankman-Fried, solana and serum, wiping \$9.5bn off Alameda's balance sheet, and forcing the two companies into bankruptcy.

Our global team gives you news and views 24 hours a day

### Ructions send shockwaves through stock and bonds of Coinbase

HARRIET CLARFELT — NEW YORK SCOTT CHIPOLINA — LONDON

Coinbase's stock and bonds have been knocked by the collapse of FTX, which has sparked renewed concerns about the outlook for the US-listed cryptocurrency trading venue.

Over the past month, Coinbase's bonds maturing in 2028 have tumbled more than a tenth in price with investors demanding an elevated 14 per

cent yield to purchase the debt.

The bonds are now priced at just 59 cents on the dollar, a big discount compared with 93 cents at the start of 2022.

"Given where the debt is trading, it would imply distressed valuations. said John McClain, portfolio manager at Brandywine Global Investment Management, which owns Coinbase's bonds.

The failure of Sam Bankman-Fried's \$32bn empire has also rattled Coinbase's equity valuation with its Nasdaq-listed shares plummeting by around a fifth over the past four weeks to change hands at \$45 apiece.

Coinbase's stock, which traded at almost \$369 at the height of the crypto bull run last November, is down 82 per

cent for the year to date. Coinbase's direct exposure to FTX is small – limited to just \$15mn on deposit

#### There is 'an apathy and a lack of appetite to own anything crypto-related as a fixed income investor'

with the Bahamas-based exchange, according to the company, but the sharp falls highlight growing scepticism about the future of the crypto industry.

Moody's Investors Service this week called FTX's collapse a "credit negative" for Coinbase, saying its "implosion" would "radically transform the crypto ecosystem, further shaking trust and raising doubts around [the industry's] ongoing prospects."

The "shockwaves" created by FTX's

bankruptcy last month will hit Coinbase's client engagement and trading volumes, Moody's predicted, threatening to weaken the company's

profitability even further.

Coinbase is dependent on revenues from trading, which have shrivelled as crypto token prices have slumped.

The company in June announced plans to cut a fifth of its then-workforce,

amounting to over 1,000 people. In the third quarter, Coinbase posted a loss of \$545mn compared with a net profit of \$406mn a year earlier.

A spokesperson for the exchange said

Coinbase is in a "strong position", adding that it has no "meaningful

Coinbase's current bond prices reflect an apathy and a lack of appetite to own anything crypto-related as a fixed income investor," said McClain.

Shares in other crypto-focused groups like bitcoin investor MicroStrategy and investment firm Galaxy Digital have also fallen sharply in recent weeks.

Commodities

### World's largest gold ETF plans to use non-UK vaults for first time

The world's largest gold exchange traded fund is to store some of its inventory outside London for the facilitating further expansion.

The \$52.5bn SPDR Gold Trust (GLD) has held all its bullion in HSBC's London vaults since its inception as the first physically backed gold ETF in 2004.

However, it is now adding a second custodian, JPMorgan, utilising the US bank's vaults in Zurich and New York, as well as in London.

"[GLD] was a market innovation in 2004, which put us in a position of being a market leader," said Joe Cavatoni, principal executive officer of World Gold Trust Services, the sponsor of the fund. "It's now almost 20 years old and we have found a new way to innovate

GLD is a major player in the bullion market, accounting for more than 25 per cent of all assets held by gold ETFs.

At the peak of the gold rally in July 2020 when prices rocketed to record highs above \$2,000 a troy ounce, the fund's holdings topped 1,200 tonnes,

making it a bigger owner than the central banks of either Japan or India.

It still holds more than 900 tonnes. despite outflows from gold funds as the price has softened to \$1,800 per troy ounce. JPMorgan and HSBC are the world's leading bullion banks. Cavatoni said no client had asked for

their assets to be moved out of London or away from HSBC and there were no issues with capacity at HSBC's vault.

He said the decision to bring JPMorgan on board was not driven by financial considerations.



Gold prices rocketed to record highs above \$2,000 a troy ounce in 2020

There was no cost impact to investors. with custody fees embedded in the 40 basis point annual management fee.

However, Cavatoni said that from a risk management perspective we can see some benefits" from increasing the diversification of storage sites.

GLD's bullion is insured by HSBC but the bank has a standard force majeure clause in place that means it is not responsible for loss caused by terrorist attacks, wars or acts of God.

The decision to bring a second custodian on board "is not about something necessarily happening to the gold," Cavatoni added. "The insurance that the industry holds at a vault level is based on what they feel is adequate to cover the likelihood of an event. It's a factor but it's not the driving factor

He added: "It gives us the ability to grow, to talk to our clients and ensure that we do have in place some diversification away from just a single provider." HSBC said it was "pleased to continue acting as a custodian for the World Gold Council's SPDR Gold Trust".

JPMorgan, alongside HSBC and several other banks, already acts as an authorised participant for GLD.

Commodities

### Shale pioneer Hamm excoriates US-Venezuela oil deal as 'desperation'

DEREK BROWER — NEW YORK

Shale pioneer Harold Hamm has hit out at the US's oil deal with Venezuela, saving it marked a new sign of "desperation" from the administration of Joe Biden as it tries to beat back fuel

The US last week said it would allow supermajor Chevron to restart some operations in Venezuela, more than three years after Donald Trump's administration imposed sanctions on the country's oil sector.

The move could help free up more global crude supplies amid an energy crunch triggered by Russia's invasion of

"This Venezuelan deal, that's a good example of the desperation that this administration is dealing with," said Hamm, the outspoken shale billionaire who founded Continental Resources and previously advised Trump on energy policy.

Battling a surge in domestic fuel

prices that has fanned rampant inflation across the US economy, the Biden administration has released oil from the emergency federal stockpile, implored Saudi Arabia to supply more crude and called on shale producers to increase drilling.
But Hamm said Biden's earlier pledge

to transition from oil and end fracking on federal lands had stymied the onceprolific shale patch.

"They know what they did. They

know they took the federal lands off the table," Hamm said in an interview.

'You certainly do not need more of this foreign oil coming from a communist country like Venezuela'

"Thev know better and shame on them . They want to put oil and gas out of business."

Biden previously said US operators were still sitting on as many as 9,000 leases on federal lands and in October lashed out at the companies for not drilling more to lower domestic pump prices, saying their bumper profits were a "windfall of war".

The administration "has not stopped or slowed" US output, Biden said at the

time, adding that the country was on track to hit record production in 2023.

But Hamm said the administration was still doing "everything it can from a regulatory standpoint to block the industry".

Federal agencies had blocked Continental Resources from drilling, he said. "They're using the worn-out tactics anytime you're not telling the truth, blame it on someone else."

US oil output plunged in 2020 as the coronavirus pandemic oil crash triggered a wave of shale bankruptcies. Production has recovered to just over

12mn barrels a day, down from the record high of 13mn b/d hit in 2019.

The shale tycoon said he expected further inflation as long as shale production remained depressed.

"You have to understand where diesel comes from and you can't make it out of tar," he said, in a reference to Venezuela's ultra-heavy bituminous oil, which needs to be blended with lighter

grades and requires extensive refining. "You need more [shale] and you certainly do not need more of this foreign oil coming from a communist country like Venezuela," he added.

### On Wall Street

### Making money from money will be difficult for Twitter





aking money from money is not nearly assimple and riskless as people like to think it is. In fact, Wall Street has always been a

very dangerous place. Financial companies are forever taking risks that they think they can manage, only to find out, often too late, that they cannot. Just ask the former executives, as I have, of Bear Stearns, Lehman Brothers, or Merrill Lynch.

Orperhaps Sam Bankman-Fried, who has a lot of explaining to do about the business of trying to make money from  $money after the collapse of his {\it crypto}$ exchange FTX.

The story of GE and its late chief executive, Jack Welch—once of an icon of capitalism before the conglomerate's fall-provides further testimony.

Welch loved the business of making money from money at GE Capital, the conglomerate's financearm. And why not?Withaminimalamount of labour of technology, Welch could arbitrageGE's triple A credit rating by borrowing  $in expensively-only slightly more than \\ what it cost the US government to$ borrow - and lend it out day in and day outata sizeable spread, often with valuablewarrantstoboot

"Ithoughtitwas easier than bending metal," Welchtold me in one of our many conversations before he died in 2020. "Fooling with money. Get bright people. Find an edge. It was easier to make money.Itwas a home run."

For many years, it was easy for GE to make money from money, certainly during Welch's 20-year tenure as the

chiefexecutive of GE, right through the stock market crash of 1987 and the bursting of the dotcom bubble in 2000.

By the time Welch retired from GE in September 2001, GE Capital was contributing 40 percent of GE's earnings. That percentage would grow to some 50 per cent under Welch's chosen successor, Jeff Immelt.

Then it all came to a brutal, sudden end. Although much of the world was focused on the riveting meltdown occurring on Wall Street throughout much of 2008, in the non-bank bank world, a similar story was being written at GE Capital.

In the weeks before the collapse of Lehman Brothers in September 2008, GE Capital was itself in financial distress.

If GE came asunder in finance, that should be a warning for possible new entrants like Elon Musk

For years, it had depended mostly upon theusually reliable short-term unsecured commercial paper market for

its funding needs. With something like \$150bn outstanding, GECapital was once the largestissuerofcommercialpaperinthe world. That was fine until September 2008 when Immelt discovered that the market for commercial paper had dried upand GE could no longer rollover its considerable balances.

Immelt quietly sought help from Henry Paulson, the UST reasury Secretary. "This stunned me," Paulson wrote in his 2010 memoir, On the Brink. "IfGE couldn't sell its paper, what did that mean for other US companies?'

Paulson also told me that the symbolismofGE"goingdown" would have been monstrous. "This was American capitalism. GEwas America," he said. In his own 2021 memoir and in subsequently dispute Paulson's recollection, claiming GE never had a

problem rolling over its commercial

Butto try to stem how the financial crisiswas affecting GE, Immelt decided to raise \$15bn in new equity—something he pledged only weeks earlier he would not do. Thanks to that and a reluctant

decision by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation to allow GE to participate in the same lines of credit and governmentguaranteesthe agency was affording traditional banks, the group avoided what surely would have been a Lehman-style bankruptcyfilingforGE Capital.

Years later, of course, Immelt decided toridGE of its finance arm. And GE, under new leadership, will be breaking itself up into three companies, starting in

If GE came as under in the mone business,thatshouldbeawarningfor the possible new entrants into finance like Elon Musk.

 $The\,new\,Twitter\,owner\,suggested\,in$ early November that his social media networkshould get into the business of making money from money. Perhaps Twitter users could send each other money using an account established through paying for verification on the network via app stores, he noted.

Inotherwords, maybe Twitter could ecome, you know, a bank, perhaps with less regulation than a Main Street lender. "And then add debit cards, checks and whatnot and . . . just basically make the system as useful as possible," the world's richest man said. "And the more useful

andentertainingit is, the more people What could possibly go wrong?

William Cohan is a former investment Rise and Fall of an American Icon

#### The day in the markets

#### What you need to know

 Wall Street stocks and Treasuries slide after robust US Jobs report Dollar climbs as employment rises more than expected in Novembe Equities trading in Europe muted while Asian indices inch lower

Wall Street stocks fell yesterday and the dollar strengthened after hotter than expected US jobs numbers added to pressure on the Federal Reserve to maintain its tough stance on inflation.

The benchmark S&P 500 Index fell 0.4 per cent, trimming earlier losses, while the tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite declined 0.7 per cent.

Both indices had climbed in the week after Fed chair Jay Powell dropped a strong hint that the central bank would slow its interest rate rises later this month.

Hopes of an early Fed "pivot" on nflation were dented yesterday, however, when data showed US non-farm employment increased by 263,000 last month, far higher than the 200,000 rise forecast by economists polled by Reuters.

Better news for American workers is bad news for markets. "A 0.75 percentage point rise in December has re-entered the debate," said Steve Blitz, chief US economist at TS Lombard, referring to a jump in expectations for a 0.5 percentage point Fed rise.

"These are extraordinary numbers for this point in the cycle," Blitz added. "The economy remains strong, demand for labour remains strong and we are nowhere near having established a softness in the economy that's going to deliver a deceleration to the base inflation rate."

Markets update



A measure of the dollar against six other leading currencies slipped 0.1 per cent as traders rethought their bets that the Fed would slow its interest rate rises when it meets later this month.

Nov 28

Source: Refinitiv

"The pace of US hiring alongside other measures of labour market activity such as vacancies and wage growth remain too high for the Fed's liking," said Hussain Mehdi, strategist at HSBC Asset Management, "With this in mind and amid broader US economic resilience and sticky core inflation, we think speculation of a Fed pause as soon as the January-February meeting is unjustified."

two-year yield — sensitive to interest rate expectations — rising as much as 10 basis points to 4.35 per cent as prices of the security fell.

Dec 02

The benchmark 10-year yield gained as much as 7bp to 3.59 per cent.

Across the Atlantic, stocks were muted. with the pan-regional Stoxx Europe 600 falling 0.2 per cent and London's FTSE 100 closing flat.

In Asia, Hong Kong's Hang Seng index fell 0.3 per cent and the CSI Index of Shanghai and Shenzhen stocks lost 0.6 per cent. George Steer

	2005	O	•	<b>*</b>	-2	
	US	Eurozone	Japan	UK	China	Brazil
Stocks	S&P 500	Eurofirst 300	Nikkei 225	FTSE100	Shanghai Comp	Bovespa
Level	4057.20	1751.99	27777.90	7556.23	3156.14	113055.04
% change on day	-0.48	-0.14	-1.59	-0.03	-0.29	1.92
Currency	\$ index (DXY)	\$ per €	Yen per \$	\$ per £	Rmb per \$	Real per \$
Level	104.476	1.047	135.475	1.222	7.038	5.234
% change on day	-0.241	-0.191	-0.335	-0.407	-0.577	0.916
Govt. bonds	10-year Treasury	10-year Bund	10-year JGB	10-year Gilt	10-year bond	10-year bond
Yield	3.576	1.849	0.247	3.148	2.903	12.259
Basis point change on day	1.060	3.800	0.030	5.100	1.000	-9.100
World Index, Commods	FTSE All-World	Oil - Brent	Oil - WTI	Gold	Silver	Metals (LMEX)
Level	417.62	86.84	81.39	1803.15	22.14	3964.40
% change on day	-0.38	-0.05	0.21	2.83	2.67	1.04
Yesterday's close apart from: Curr	rencies - 16:00 GMT; S&P, Bove	spa, All World, Oil - 17:00 G	MT; Gold, Silver - London pm	fix. Bond data supplied by T	ullett Prebon.	

## **FINANCIAL**

### Moral Money Forum

### **HOW CAN ESG** PLANNING HELP YOUR BUSINESS?

of business. Our free-to-read FT Moral Money Forum reports offer a clear picture of the

To learn more and sign up, visit forums.ft.com/moral-money-forum

Advisory Partners:

## Main equity markets S&P 500 index





### Biggest movers

	Enphase Energy	5.96	Kbc
	Solaredge	4.88	Thyssenkrupp
	Huntington Ingalls Industries	4.09	Ucb
•	Albemarle	3.51	Schindler
	Northrop Grumman	3.41	Fresen.med.care
	Eqt	-4.05	Oci
2	Fortinet	-3.79	Ses
	Synopsys	-3.35	Sanofi
	Paypal Holdings	-3.35	Telecom Italia
	Wells Fargo & Co	-3.25	A.p. Moller - Maersk B
	Deteror della	FT-00 CMT	December of the Committee of the CTCF

Thyssenkrupp	3.48
Ucb	3.1
Schindler	2.59
Fresen.med.care	2.4
Oci	-2.5
Ses	-2.42
Sanofi	-2.08
Telecom Italia	-2.0
A.p. Moller - Maersk B	-1.80
Based on the constituents of the ETSE Eurofi	ret 300 Eurozon

Eurozone

	UK	
3	Associated British Foods	5.04
8	Rolls-royce Holdings	3.8
5	Hargreaves Lansdown	2.2
9	Antofagasta	2.0
1	Natwest	1.7
6	Intermediate Capital	-1.9
2	Harbour Energy	-1.83
8	Вр	-1.7
6	Melrose Industries	-1.5
0	Ashtead	-1.4
ne		

### Wall Street

Biopharma group **Anavex** surged off the back of promising clinical data related to Anavex-2-73, its experimental treatment for early-stage Alzheimer's disease.

A mid-to-late stage study showed that the drug had met its primary and secondary goals, with "statistically significant results", improving cognition and function compared with a placebo.

The company now planned to meet regulatory authorities "with an aim to bring this therapy to patients in Europe, Asia-Pacific and the US" it said

Boeing rallied following a report in the Wall Street Journal that said United Airlines was close to a deal to order dozens of 787 Dreamliners from the aircraft maker.

An agreement could be reached as soon as this month, said people familiar with the matter.

American Outdoor Brands, a provider of products and accessories for outdoor enthusiasts, jumped after chief executive Brian Murphy predicted net sales for its fiscal 2023 year "could exceed prepandemic fiscal 2020 levels by as much

For its most recent quarter, net sales slid 23 per cent year on year to \$54.4mn but in line with expectations — while earnings of 29 cents per share edged past analyst estimates. Ray Douglas

### Europe

News that Norway's **Dof** would petition for reconstruction proceedings with the Hordaland district court sent the provider of offshore and subsea services plummeting.

The move followed the failure of the group to obtain approval of a proposed restructuring at an extraordinary meeting last month.

The planned overhaul includes a substantial conversion of debt into equity that would significantly dilute the shareholdings of existing investors Swiss contract pharma group

Polypeptide slid after warning that it would "not be able to meet its financial guidance for 2022" and expected "a material decline in profitability versus the

This was because of an "adversely mpacted" production schedule affected by "technical and manufacturing process issues that also required the temporary suspension of two manufacturing lines" in the fourth quarter.

Italy's DeA Capital, the family holding company of De Agostini, surged on plans for its largest shareholder to take the investment group private.

The buyer, owned by the Boroli-Drago family, was seeking to purchase shares at €1.50 each — a 31 per cent premium on Thursday's closing price. Ray Douglas

Signs that investors were looking to put their money back to work sent fund manager Premier Miton rallying.

Mike O'Shea, chief executive, said it had "been encouraging to see a recovery in assets under management" since the end of its fiscal year in September, adding that he had "seen a return to net positive flows into our funds during the first two

nonths of the current financial year". In a further indication that investor entiment was turning. AJ Bell rose sharply after Jefferies upgraded the

Analysts forecast growth in the directto-consumer market where AJ Bell was "competitive on price" and had "launched Dodl, which targets the smallest selfdirected investors".

Helping to achieve this expansion was the platform's push to raise brand awareness — a move expected to bear

fruit from 2024, said Jefferies Online fashion retailer Asos slid following news that Katy Mecklenburgh, its interim chief financial officer who

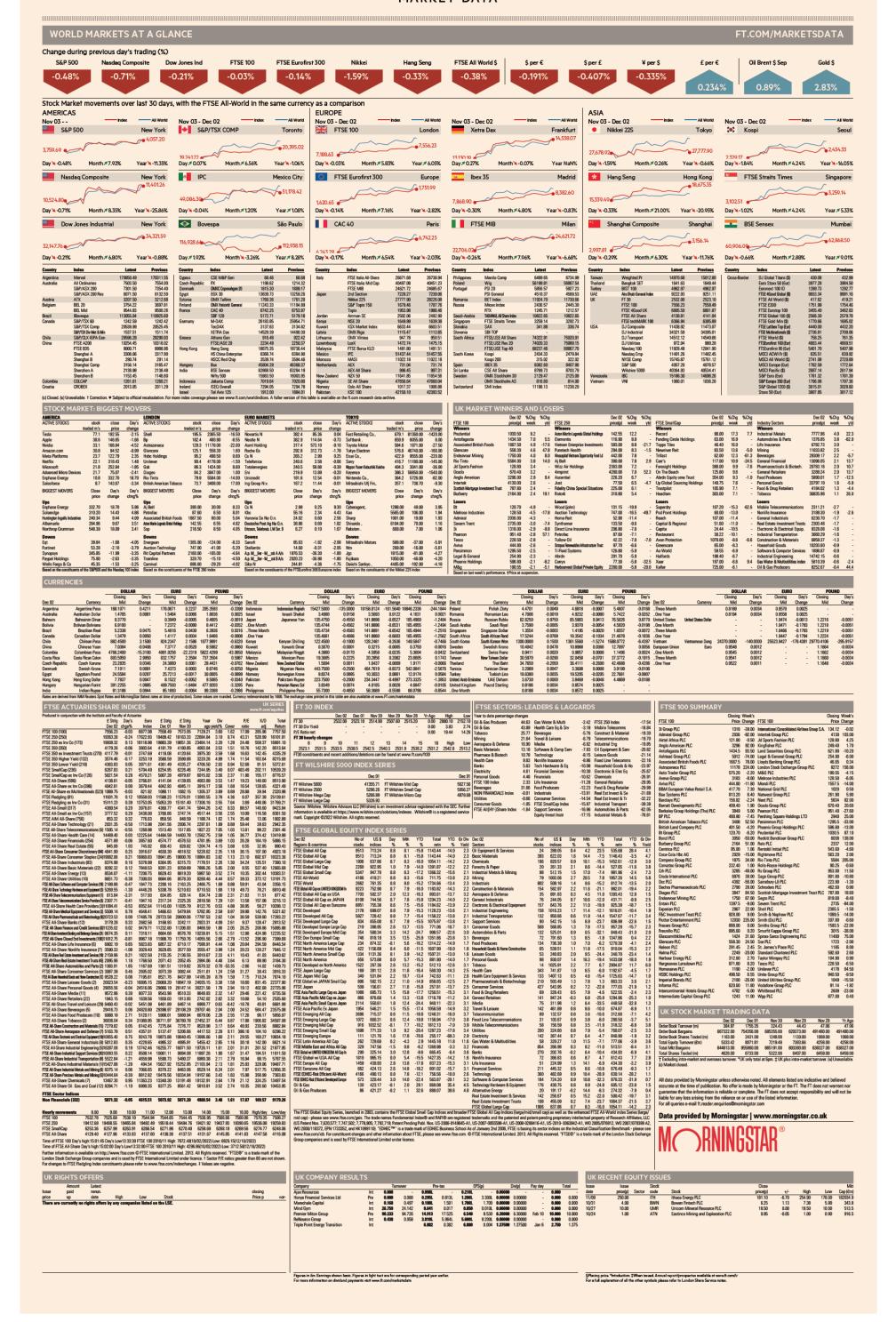
replaced its previous CFO in October. ould be leaving to take up a new role at Softcat, a provider of IT tech and service.

The update came a day after it was revealed that Asos had changed the criteria for its annual executive bonus scheme. Ray Douglas



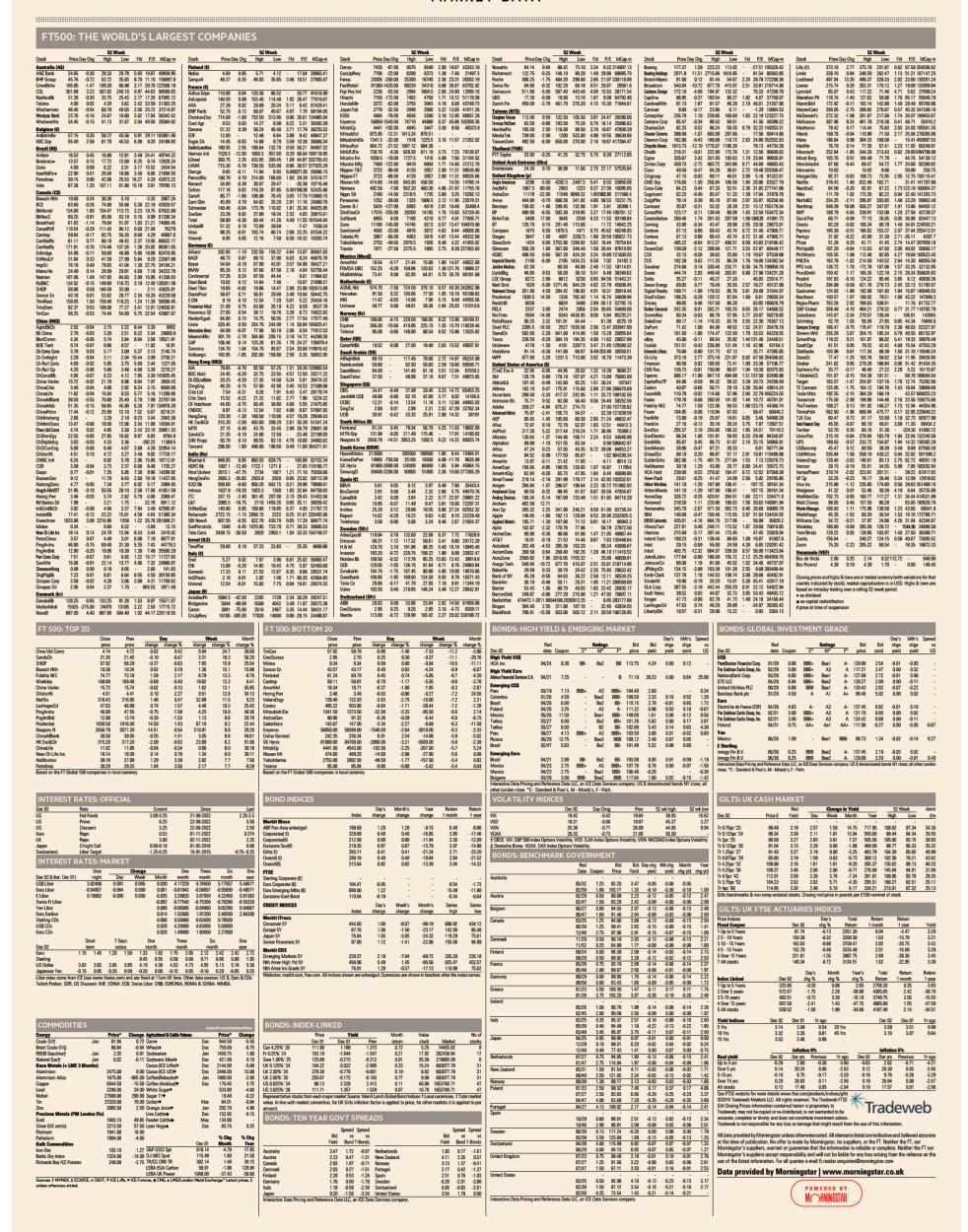
WHITE & CASE

#### MARKET DATA



★ FTWeekend 3 December/4 December 2022

#### MARKET DATA



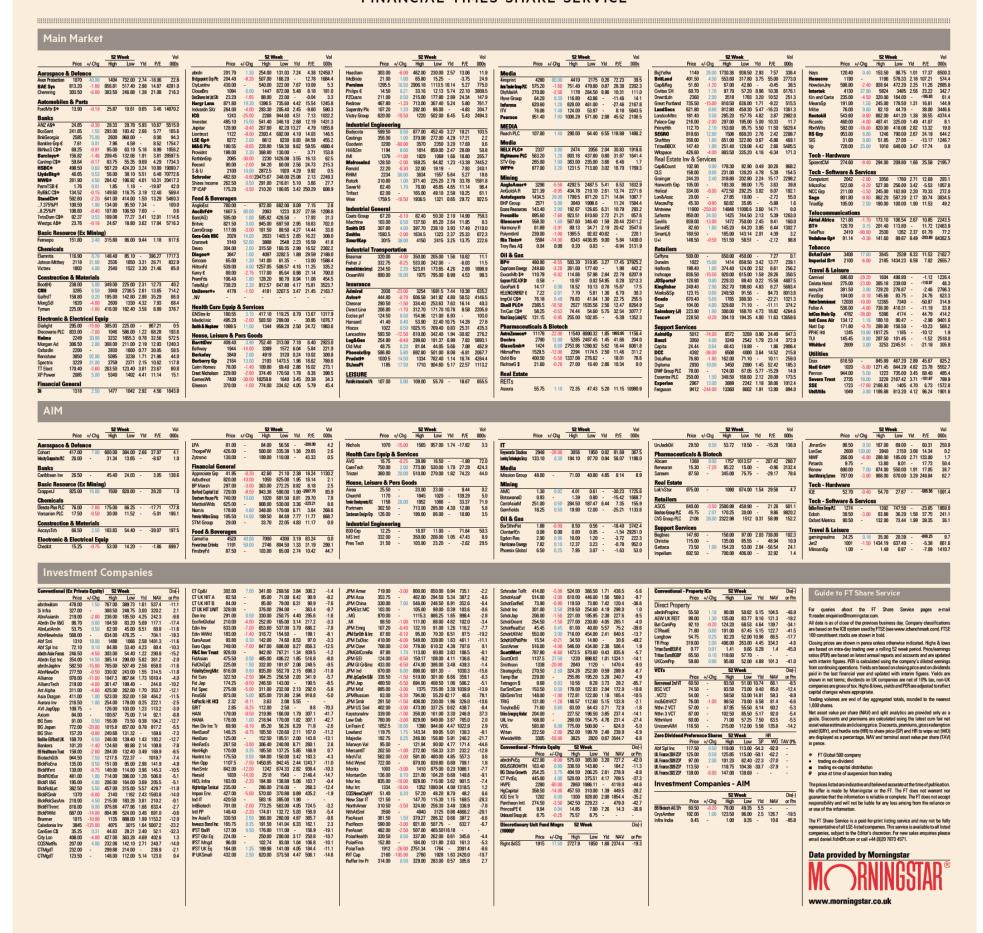
### **Equity Research from Morningstar**

Make confident investment decisions powered by our independent global insights and a consistent methodology across our qualitative and quantitative universes.



3 December/4 December 2022 ★ FTWeekend

#### FINANCIAL TIMES SHARE SERVICE



### **FTWeekend**

# Start your weekend thinking

Read things differently with the weekend's clearest view on the world, plus uncover the new and noteworthy in art, culture, style and travel.

Pick up your copy this weekend or subscribe online at ft.com/subscribetoday



### **FTWeekend**

Twitter: @FTLex



#### John Lewis/Abrdn: aisle see you downstairs

Some call it the Waitrose Effect. In the UK, the presence of the upmarket grocery chain lifts prices of nearby homes. Perhaps Waitrose owner John Lewis Partnership hopes the same halo will hover over 1,000 rental homes it plans to build in a £500mn project with fund manager Abrdn.

John Lewis hopes to build 10,000 homes over the next decade. The aim is to help reduce a shortage of affordable housing in the UK. That chimes with the communitarian spirit of the employee-owned business. It also reflects John Lewis's need to find new income sources while repurposing

redundant property.
Insurer Legal & General already has a
£264mn portfolio of affordable housing. Alternative asset managers such as Blackstone have been charging into rental housing too, though with less of an explicit social mission.

The timing is good. Rents have soared, up nearly 12 per cent year on year in August. Buy-to-let landlords, queezed by higher costs, are quitting the market. In the year to August, 76,000 buy-to-let mortgages were

redeemed, says Savills. For Abrdn, which manages £52bn of real estate in its portfolios, this joint venture makes sense. It already has about 30,000 rental properties on its books in Europe, mostly in Germany.

Abrdn is wrestling with the problem that it is a medium-sized fund manager in a world of giants. It believes institutional clients will clamour for dependable single-digit yields on offer from rentals. Presumably, those will climb over time. Association with the trusted John Lewis brand should help. John Lewis needs some help of its own. Poor footfall at Waitrose brought

a first-half pre-tax loss of £99mn, a reversal from a profit the year before.
The partners talk about doing good things. They are also seeking a medium-term business opportunity. John Lewis should remember that

renting out UK dwellings is an entirely different business to selling saucepans.

#### Ulta: sitting pretty

"My lip gloss is cool/My lip gloss be poppin," sang Lil Mama in her early 2000s hit song "Lip Gloss". The cosmetically themed tune also aptly sums up the state of US retail in late

Inflation-weary consumers are cutting back on discretionary spending to focus on essentials such as fuel and food. But they are still happy to splurge on small luxuries such as lipsticks. Despite weakening consumer confidence, sales of beauty products are booming. That has made specialist retailer Ulta Beauty one of the few winners in a sector marred by inventory pile-ups and profit warnings. The stock is trading at a record high

after climbing more than 13 per cent this year. It has outperformed the S&P 500, down 15 per cent, and the S&P

500 retail index, down 27 per cent. Ulta's latest results underscore the company's allure, Like-for-like sales jumped close to 15 per cent during the third quarter. That growth comes on top of a 26 per cent increase in the year-ago period. Margins grew and



The stylishly minded are advised to look in the mirror before leaving the house and remove one item. In the world of disposable fast fashion, it is likely to end up in a landfill site. Last month, fashion

representatives met at the UN Climate Change Conference to discuss waste reduction. The volume of garments created makes change difficult. A report from the US National Institute of Standards and Technology notes that fashion brands produce twice as much as they did 20 years ago. Much of that is comprised of cheap garments in the near \$100bn fast fashion market.

About 50bn items of clothing are estimated to be thrown away within one year of production. Recycling is labour-intensive. It is far easier to use new plastics. The result is vast piles of

helped drive a 12 per cent rise in net income for the period. Ulta is in something of a sweet spot.

The return of large social gatherings are driving demand for beauty products. At the same time consumers are trading down. Instead of splurging on a big-ticket item, they are treating themselves to \$20 lipsticks.

It is not only make-up that is popular. Ulta saw haircare, skincare and fragrances sales surge. Customer spending went up across all income levels, with mass and prestige products clocking double-digit sales growth.

Ulta's winning streak can continue. The company has raised its full-year sales and earnings guidance. At about 21 times forward earnings, the company's valuation remains onable. Walmart trades on 24 times

Beauty is in the eye of the investing beholder. Those who worry the shares have peaked should stick around.

#### **Elon Musk/Twitter:** distraction economy

Elon Musk says he will install a Neuralink computer chip in his brain once they become available. Lex believes a version of brain-computer interface already exists for the tech entrepreneur via his tweets. The daily stream of jokes and company updates offer an insight into his shifting priorities. Twitter, his most recent acquisition, appears to be taking up more of his time than ever.

This week. Musk has tweeted about Twitter 55 times, Tesla 14 times and SpaceX twice, A similar breakdown

unwanted polyester. In the US, the volume of waste generated by textiles has grown almost 10-fold between 1960 and 2018, according to the Environmental Protection Agency Two-thirds of it will go to landfills, where it will sit for decades. Wool decomposes in a matter of months, putting nutrients back into the earth. Polyester is not biodegradable.

Fast fashion brands promis change. Yet analysis of 10,000 fast fashion items by the Royal Society for Arts, Manufactures and Commerce last year found the majority were still

made from new plastics.
Industry solutions include labgrown fibres. Reduced consumption would have a bigger impact. Instead of taking one item of clothing off before leaving the house, the solution is not to buy it in the first place.

occurred the previous month, shortly after the Twitter acquisition was made. Compare that with late June, just before Musk attempted to abandon his Twitter bid. Then he tweeted about Twitter eight times, Tesla 15 times and SpaceX 12 times.

Musk uses his Twitter account as a source of free advertising for his companies. From the moment he made a bid for Twitter, investors in Tesla worried about their chief executive's already stretched attention. Musk attempted to soothe those worries in May by claiming he spent less than 5 per cent of his time on the proposed Twitter acquisition. Tesla, he said, was on his mind 24/7. Investors were unconvinced. Since Musk's Twitter bid was announced in April, Tesla's share

price has fallen 43 per cent.

Tesla is a \$610bn company. SpaceX, which is private, was last valued at \$125bn. Twitter was purchased for \$44bn. Yet it requires disproportionate attention. Musk's acquisition saddled it with \$13bn of debt and the company last reported an annual profit in 2019. Most of its revenue comes from advertisers, a group that has reduced spending after concerns about content moderation. Without further cost cuts or a large source of new revenue, such as payments, interest costs may exceed free cash flow in 2023.

Musk is an impressive multitasker. But investors in Tesla should remain wary of Twitter's ability to monopolise



### Relief rally faces big tests as dangers lurk in recession reality

### Katie Martin

### The Long View

his is a very special time for those who believe that if you've been good all year, a man will appear laden with gifts. He's writing a list, he's checking it twice (subject to data protection requirements). Yes, Jay Powell is coming to town.

Yet again, markets are in the grip of

excitement about the prospect that the US Federal Reserve chair will finally deliver the change of heart that investors have yearned for throughout 2022. Inflation in the US has come slightly off the boil with the annual rate running at a relatively tame 7.7 per cent in the most recent reading. That might, just maybe, lay the groundwork for the Fed to take a more tentative approach towards raising interest rates. So far this year, it has increased rates at a ferocious pace, laying waste to pretty much every

long-only fund manager on the planet. The only investors left toasting the end of a rip-roaring year are hedge fund managers who have been bullish on the dollar and negative on government bonds. The year-end drinks are on them with their double-digit returns and

slightly smug grins. For everyone else, this year has been a humbling experience with stocks crumbling and bonds failing to provide the usual counterbalance. But with that slight pullback in inflation helping stocks and other risky markets to recover, Powell added further fuel to the fire this week when he said in a speech to the Brookings Institution that slowing down the pace of rate rises could happen as soon as the December meeting".

Commerzbank described this formulation as "six magic words" that overshadowed all of Powell's more hawkish utterances at that event.

Already, the bank noted, investors had swung towards expecting a half percentage point rate rise on December 14, a step down from the three-quarterpoint increments we've now seen four times in a row. But now, investors are more confident in that view and are wondering whether rates might in fact fall by the end of next year.

November was, in an otherwise terrible year, pretty good. If you had managed to tear your eyes away from the crypto train wreck (summary: Sam is sorry), you would have seen gains in everything from stocks and credit to commodities. Deutsche Bank cast an eye across 38 assets and found that 35 were up on the month. That is "the highest number so far this year and makes a change from the prevailing mood".

#### Bear market rallies look and smell very similar to proper rallies, right up to the point they unravel

The S&P 500 index of big US stocks climbed more than 5 per cent while the Stoxx Europe 600 was up nearly 7 per cent. Buoyed also by hopes for a soften-ing in China's zero-Covid strategy, the ang Seng jumped nearly 27 per cent, the biggest ascent since 1998. Deutsche pointed out. Sure, all these indices are

way down on the year. Still, a win's a win. Seasonal patterns, at this time of year known as the Santa Rally phenomenon, could help to waft this along further. Skylar Montgomery Koning, an analyst at research house TS Lombard, warns loudly that this year's Santa Rally narrative has some serious challenges.

"User beware," she wrote. Still, "psychology plays a role", she added. "Money managers are judged on annual calendar year performance. Because of the propensity for equities to rally as the end of the year approaches, investors who have lost money have an appetite to chase the rally upwards while those who

have made money are more likely to settle their books.

Are fundamental investors convinced? "We're a grinch," said Michael Kelly, head of multi-asset at PineBridge Investments. "We're not participating in this bear market rally." (That's a no, then.) Generally conservative long-only fund managers are "playing hedge fund manager", Kelly said.

When the long-anticipated US recession really starts to bite next year, stocks will drop back to earth, in his view.

"I've never, never seen so many people convinced that someone else is going to keep the market rallying and that they're going to get out before it all goes

wrong," he added. "Good luck on that." The difficulty, of course, is that bear market rallies look and smell very similar to proper rallies, right up to the point at which they unravel and risky March and in July — and it feels like we're doing it all over again now. It is unusual for fund managers to be

as downbeat as they are now even after the MSCI World index of stocks has cranked up 12 per cent in two months.

But, after the gruelling year investors have had, it is perhaps little wonder some are waiting for something to go horribly wrong before 2023 kicks off.

Others may be heading for a collision with reality, particularly if they under estimate the Fed's resolve to vanquish inflation, particularly in light of yesterday's robust US employment data.

"Recent inflation data triggered

euphoria and expectations of a more extravagant Christmas (ie, smaller rate hikes)," wrote Elwin de Groot. hikes)," wrote Elwin de Groot, Rabobank's head of macro strategy. "This suggests markets may have to learn the hard way, when it turns out that the number of presents under the Christmas tree is not as expected."

katie.martin@ft.com

THIS NOTICE CONTAINS IMPORTANT INFORMATION THAT IS OF INTEREST TO THE LEGALAND BENEFICIAL OWNERS OF THE SUBJECT SECURITIES. IF BENEFICIAL OWNERS ARE IN ANY DOUBT AS TO THE ACTION THEY SHOULD TAKE, THEY SHOULD SEEK THEIR OWN FINANCIALAND LEGALADVICE, INCLUDING AS TO ANY TAX CONSEQUENCES, IMMEDIATELY FROM THEIR STOCKBROKER, SOLICITOR, ACCOUNTANT OR OTHER INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL OR LEGAL ADVISER. IF APPLICABLE, ALL DEPOSITORIES, CUSTODIANS AND OTHER INTERMEDIATIES RECEIVING THIS NOTICE ARE REQUESTED TO EXPEDITE THE RE-TRANSMITTAL TO BENEFICIAL OWNERS OF THE SECURITIES IN A TIMELY MANNER.

If you have recently sold or otherwise transferred your entire holding(s) of Bonds (as defined below), you should immediately forward this document to the purchaser or transferee or the stockbroker, bank or other agent through whom the sale or transfer was effected for transmission to the purchaser or

NOTICE TO THE HOLDERS

Bell Group N.V. (in liquidation)(in bankruptcy) (the "Issuer")

A\$75,000,000 11 per cent. Guaranteed Convertible Subordinated Bonds due 1995 (CH000575151) (the "1995 Bonds")

A\$175,000,000 10 per cent. Guaranteed Convertible Subordinated Bonds due 1997 (XS0000001247) (the "First 1997 Bonds")

GBP75,000,000 5 per cent. Guaranteed Convertible Subordinated Bonds due 1997 (GB004901711) (the "First 1997 Bonds")

(together, the "Bonds" and, the holders of the Bonds, the "Bo onally guaranteed on a subordinated basis by The Bell Group Ltd (in liquida ("TBGL")

("TBGL")
This notice is given by Madison Pacific Trust Limited as trustee for the Bondholders (the "Trustee"). Reference is made to (i) the Trust Deeds dated 20 December 1985, 7 May 1987 and 14 July 1987 constituting the Bonds (as amended from time to time, the "Trust Deeds") and (ii) the Trustee's previous notices to the Bondholders (the "Trustee's Notices").

All terms and expressions used but not otherwise defined in this notice shall have the meanings given to them in the Trust Deeds or the Trustee's Notice NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that:

- following the First Interim Distribution Date, the Trustee still holds (in addition to the Retained Amounts) USD6,770,932.24 in respect of the 1995 Bonds, AUD9,045,270.62 in respect of the First 1997 Bonds and GBP2,247,276.53 in respect of the Second 1997 Bonds (the "Unclaimed Funds") which (subject to the permitted retentions and deductions under the Trust Deeds) were due to be distributed to Bondholders whose Bonds are not held in the ICSDs but who have not yet come forward and identified themselves to the Trustee and authenticated their Bonds ("Unidentified Bondholders"). For reference, the Unidentified Bondholders
- represent: 59.02% of the 1995 Bonds; 21.12% of the First 1997 Bonds; and 13.19% of the Second 1997 Bonds;
- the terms of the Bonds and the Trust Deeds provide that the Unclaimed Funds (together with the portion of any future distributions attributable to Unidentified Bondholders) must be held, pursuant to Condition 9 of the Bonds, on trust for the Unidentified Bondholders until the expiry of ten years (in the case of principal) and five years (in the case of interest) from the "Relevant Date" (as defined in the Condition 8 of the Bonds);
- the Trustee considers that there is significant ambiguity in the meaning of the definition of "Relevant Date" and accordingly considerable uncertainty as to how or whether Condition 9 of the Bonds applies in the current circumstances where the Bonds will not be redeemed in full and there are Unidentified Bondholders. Specifically, there is doubt as to whether the Relevant Date can ever occur in the current circumstances where the Issuer is insolvent and accordingly will never pay 100% of the amounts due on the Bonds and Coupons. It is accordingly unclear how long the Trustee would be required to retain the Unclaimed Punds and what might be required to happen to them if the Unidentified Bondholders cannot be identified;
- further, the Issuer has asked whether the time periods in Condition 9, which Bondholders have to present their Bonds and Coupons before they become void, should
- the Trustee has been asked by the Issuer to consider proposing amendments to the terms of the Bonds and the Trust Deeds in connection with these matters to resolve the uncertainty and ambiguity referred to above, as well as shortening the time periods under Condition 9 noted above. The amendments would require approval by the Bondholders (of the relevant series of Bonds) by way of Extraordinary Resolutions in accordance with the terms of the Trust Deeds. A draft of the possible form of the Extraordinary Resolutions (including an initial proposal for the substance of the amendments) is set out in Schedule 1 to this notice (the "Draft Amendments");
- the extraordinary Resolutions (including an initial proposal for the selectable of the amendments) is set out in Sciencial 1 on this flower of the flight Court in London (the "Court") for directions in relation to the form of any amend before it is able to act on them. The Trustee therefore proposes to prepare and file an application (the "Application") with the Court (the "Proceedings") is directions (the "Directions") (a) in relation to the meaning of the definition of "Relevant Date"; and (b) that the Trustee would be acting properly and in according to the control of the court of
- although the precise details of the Proceedings are to be finalised, the Trustee's preference is that at least one Bondholder would come forward and agree to make aurough the precise octants of the rrocecumgs are to be manused, the triusee's preterience is that at least one Bondanoider would come roward and agree to make arguments in support of the Directions and the Draft Amendments. The Trustee, consistent with its duties and applicable case law, would ensure that the interests of all Bondholders are represented before the Court, including by presenting such arguments as may be reasonably available to the Unidentified Bondholders whe (being unidentified) will necessarily not be able to take part in the Proceedings themselves;
- ndholders have any feedback on the Draft Amendments, or would like to discuss joining the Proceedings and making representations to the Court, they are ed to contact the Trustee (contact details below) before 20 December 2022.

tondholders may wish to refer to http://www.bgnv.cw/ for further detail on the bankruptcy of the Issuer and the distributions made by the Curatore

The above communication is made without prejudice to any and all of the Trustee's rights under the Trust Deeds, all of which are expressly reserved. The Trustee provides the information above for the information of Bondholders, but makes no represent near two curracy or completeness thereof and cannot accept any liability for any loss caused by any inaccuracy therein. The Trustee expresses no opinion as to the action (if any) that Bondholders should take in relation to the matters set out above. The Trustee makes no recommendations and gives no legal or investment advice herein or as to the Bonds generally. Bondholders should take and rely on advice or information provided to the Trustee, statements as to the legal position included in notices issued by the Trustee relating to the Bonds or otherwise or the views of the Trustee relating to the Bonds or otherwise or the views of the Trustee expressed herein or otherwise.

ISIN numbers appearing herein have been included solely for the convenience of the Bondholders. The Trustee assumes no responsibility for the suse of such number and makes no representation as to the correctness of the numbers listed above.

By the Trustee: on Pacific Trust Limited 17th Floor, Far East Finance Centre, 16 Harcourt Road, Admiralty, Hong Kong Email: agent@madisonpac.com

### NIKKEI **ASIA** The voice of the Asian century

Mauna Loa's plume reaches North America

### Total column kg per sq metre x10-5 sulphur dioxide 0 Nov 30 Dec 1 Mauna Loa US US Dec 2 Dec 3 Mauna Loa

Six-hour forecasts from Nov 30 Sources: Copernicus ECMWF; USGS Follow @ffclimate on Instagram

Circle size - total volume erupted (km<sup>3</sup>) 0.63 0.4 0.2 0.00

Volcano's eruptions since 1843

Area covered by lava (km2)

2000 1900

Get the business insights you need to succeed in Asia Visit asia.nikkei.com



Whisky galore A Hebridean tasting tour by tall ship - PAGET

Follow us on Instagram @ft\_weekend



Supreme Court justice who knows what it's like to walk through the world just like us. Justice Brown Jackson rallies the ambitious and encourages all of us to continue organising for liberation outside of the judicial system. Renee Bracey Sherman is the founder and

executive director of We Testify, an organisation dedicated to the leadership and representation of people who have abortions

cial black woman who had an abortion, I have little confidence in the Supreme Court's interest in protecting my constitutional rights — I'm not alone, as confidence in the court is at a historic low — but with the addition of Justice Brown Jackson, my wish is that our voices will be heard and our stories

It means a great deal to have a

Francesca Bellettini CEO, Saint Laurent Fashion's steady hand By Jo Ellison

reflected in decisions.

It's the quiet ones to whom you should really pay attention. In a year of fashion bombast, Francesca Bellettini has continued to lead Saint Laurent, where she has been the CEO since 2013, towards extraordinary growth. Saint Laurent achieved an outstanding third quarter with revenue of €916mn, up 40 per cent, and she's done it without a murmur of any fuss. There have been none of the sudden creative exits, branding snafus or apologias that have ricocheted around some other Kering buildings. Ask her what the secret to successful executive leadership is and she'll tell you she's obsessed with balance: in global markets, between categories or in the ratios of mens to womenswear. And although she manages the house in which pret-a-porter was invented, she's been careful to check the inventory hasn't been overwhelmed by streetwear trends. As one of the vanishingly rare female executives in fashion, it's refreshing to see a woman who wears the label so damn well. But keep a close eye on the unassuming Italian. I wouldn't be surprised to see her make a major move in this, her decade year.

Jo Ellison is editor of HTSI



Iane Fraser CEO, Citigroup Committed visionary By Laura Noonan

Jane Fraser didn't just break through Wall Street's glass ceiling when she became chief executive of one of the world's biggest banks, she blazed through it in a blast of colour. Since taking the top job in 2021, Fraser has continued to wear pink suits and floral dresses and espouse the leadership style that long marked her out among a peer group of women trying to emulate their male rivals in one of the oldest

"Empathy is not a sign of weak-ness... it can create a competitive edge," she wrote last year. Almost two years in, Fraser's worldview that differences should be embraced rather than trampled upon is permeating the 220,000-strong workforce she leads. Its investment bank, traditionally a hard-charging environment where punishing hours were worn as a badge of honour, recently opened a hub in Málaga to offer better work-life balance to junior staff.

Laura Noonan is the FT's financial regulation editor

Continued on page 2

Written by Abigail E Disney, Jamie Lee Curtis, Marina Silva, Beth Mead,

Above: Serena

Michelle Yeoh

Matviichuk.

and Oleksandra

Portraits by Jaya

Williams,

Christiane Amanpour, Marina Abramović, Nicola Sturgeon and many more

magazine's Women of the Year issue reaffirms this every December by exploring achievement across cultures, industries and artistries. For 2022, we again commissioned entries by some of the world's most powerful women. But we also sought contributors

who could speak to their subject's influ-

ence in diverse, even unexpected

We put together this list, which is unranked, in collaboration with FT journalists from dozens of international bureaux, former women of the year and readers like you. It is a celebration, of course, but also a way of interrogating the ways in which power and influence

are changing. What Marina Abramović writes of seeing Anne Imhof's performance art -"I had just witnessed something important" - could easily apply to watching every one of the 2022 Women of the Year lead, work, imagine and create.

editor of the Financial Times

### The Leaders

Oleksandra Matviichuk Chronicler of war crimes By Olia Hercules

When Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, my parents, who live in Kakhovka, immediately went into the streets. They were two of many millions. Instead of flower-bearing locals, Russia faced a strong, freedom-loving nation that refused to surrender.

In response, Russian troops have wrought cruel physical and psychological warfare: bombings, rape, torture, deportations. Oleksandra Matviichuk,



a 39-year-old lawyer and human rights activist, has doggedly gathered evidence of war crimes in Ukraine through the Center for Civil Liberties, which she leads. The CCL has recorded 27,000 war

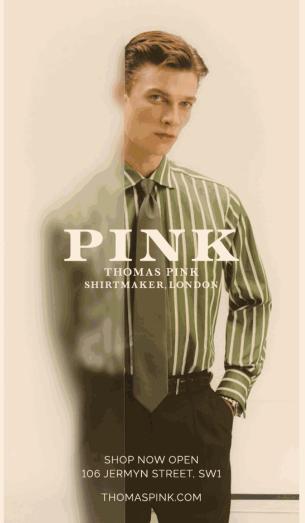
crimes by Russian troops since 2014, from the shelling of schools and maternity hospitals to torture and executions. In October, her organisation received the Nobel Prize. Matviichuk has confronted the worst atrocities perpetrated against our people and turned those horrors into action. This work is painful, painstaking and deeply necessary. When so many have closed their eyes, she has insisted we bear witness. For this she is a modern hero.

Olia Hercules is a Ukrainian chef and writer based in London. Her latest book is 'Home Food'

Ketanji Brown Jackson US Supreme Court justice Jurist with a human touch By Renee Bracey Sherman

Across the United States, we beamed with pride as the Honourable Ketanji Onyika Brown Jackson became the first black woman to ascend to the highest court in the nation in its more than 230year history. With her curly sisterlocks, deep brown dimpled cheeks and poetic name meaning "lovely one", she is an inspiration for black girls who dream of reaching the highest branches of leadership - and evidence for elders that their advocacy towards black liberation has brought visionary change.
But she is more than a symbol. She is a

brilliant legal mind who uses the law to elevate the experiences of marginalised people, giving us renewed hope in an institution stacked against us. As a bira-



### A lexicon of Life & Arts

We bounced over powderclad "pillows" that looked like giant

### marshmallows' Travel, page 6

'Le Carré fulminates against the **Etonian oik** leading the charge to perdition' Books, page 10

I wanted to play roles that were **empowering** for young black women' Letitia Wright, page 12

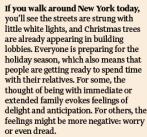
'Hockney's paintings worked

### transformational

magic over homophobia' Simon Schama, page 20

'Musk's nightstand conjured the image of a lonely

man-child Jo Ellison, page 21



Even those of us nostalgic for past gatherings may also feel a sense of caution about what might arise when the family gets together again.

No matter how old we get, there is nothing like family to remind us that we are still hosts to multiple versions of ourselves, some of which we've tried to overcome, others of which return to take over our adult selves, despite our best efforts. Most of us love our families, but that doesn't mean we always love being around them. Yet we still idealise the notion of biological family, trying to recreate some greeting-card image of warm eggnog, delicious fruitcake, and playful and loving interactions, while ignoring issues or problems. I wonder if it would make a difference to our lives and relationships if we were more open about the complexity of our family set-ups.

John Singer Sargent's ethereal 1899 painting "The Wyndham Sisters: Lady Elcho, Mrs Adeane, and Mrs Tennant" is a handsome example of the American painter's work. It is a luminous and enchanting image, almost otherworldly. The three sisters it depicts were part of the top rank of British society and this painting shows them in their house in the heart of London's Belgravia. They sit on a lush sofa, and in their voluminous, delicate cream and white dresses they look like figures on a heavenly cloud. Above them is a stately portrait of their mother, overlooking her virtuous, seemingly perfect progeny as they bathe in a flood of light.

The sisters are each staring in different directions and it is only the one in the middle who gazes directly at the viewer. She reclines effortlessly into the sofa, her open-armed posture sensually rebellious and slightly provocative. It is not surprising to learn that she is the youngest sister. The eldest sits dutiful and protective behind the other two.

The painting is an image of a constructed reality of a family. And it reminds me that many of us have also experienced the dissonance between a somewhat fictionalised public representation of our families and the less-than-perfect realities we experience behind closed doors.

less-than-perfect realities we experience behind closed doors.

I can't help but wonder what each of these women really felt about their

Wyndham

Sisters' (1899)
by John Singer

Sargent - Almy



### How to survive the season

THE ART OF LIFE ENUMA OKORO



Above: 'The

lives, about each other and about having to sit for such an idealised portrayal. With siblings who grow up together, it is customary for each to be informally but fixedly assigned some role in the family system: the spoilt one, the difficult one, the reliable one, the peaceful one, the selfish one — the list is endless. And often the ways we are defined in our families become labels we spend a good portion of our adult lives wrestling with, trying to determine their validity or lack thereof. When we return to those same family systems for even a short length of time, those roles are easily resumed or triggered.

It could be wise before heading into family gatherings to remember that our families can have storylines for us that may not fit who we understand ourselves to be, or are trying to become. And to have some small strategy or plan for dealing with that, even if it's just vowing to step away before anything escalates, repeating a mantra quietly to ourselves, or for the more dire situations, a friend or therapist on speed dial.

I am deeply moved by the 1888 painting "The First Mourning" by William-Adolphe Bouguereau. It is an imaginative rendering of the first human experience of grieving the death of a family member. In an undeniable echo of the Pietà, Adam and Eve grieve over the death of their son Abel, murdered by his older brother Cain.

son Aber, instructed by his other brother Cain.

Most artistic depictions of Cain and Abel focus on the fratricide. This image focuses on the aftermath of the loss, the grief of those mourning a family member. Abel is shown lain over Adam's lap, while an inconsolable Eve buries her head in Adam's chest. Adam's left hand covers his heart as though to contain a breaking, while his other falls protectively but weakly across his wife's back. It is a family worn out by grief but trying to muster some semblance of strength.

No matter how cheer-filled or robust our family gatherings might be, the holidays are some of the most painful times for families who have lost one or more of their own. Regardless of how much time may have passed, there can be a terrible sense of absence when everyone is gathered but the one.

If this is not our own misfortune, these are the months in which we might reach out to those we know who will endure this sort of pain. Part of the grace and generosity of the holiday season comes from holding space for those families still in the midst of mourning.

There are two other elements of this

There are two other elements of this difficult painting about family dysfunction not shown but inferred.

The first is that there are members who are estranged from families for all sorts of reasons. We don't see Cain, but we know the back-story. Part of the fallout of his crime was that he was banished and left to wander the earth for the rest of his life, without a true sense of home, deeply burdened. The second element is that this painting, with Abel's death at its centre, illustrates the painful reality that families are not always safe places for their members. There should be room for this to be acknowledged without shame or fear in this season, and in all seasons. Sometimes it means we must foster communities beyond blood ties that become equally like family to us.

In 2018, the photographer and conceptual artist Hank Willis Thomas reimagined the work of Norman Rockwell's "Four Freedoms". Rockwell is perhaps the quintessential artist of a certain mid-20th-century American idealism, especially in his early work. In "For Freedoms", Thomas, with the help of photographer Emily Shur, created a series of images offering a different perspective on American life.

There is nothing like family to remind us that we are still hosts to multiple versions of ourselves

One of the series of photographs in the reimagined works is "Freedom From Want". In Rockwell's original 1943 painting, an elderly white couple stand at the head of a dinner table. The grandmotherly figure sets down a large golden-brown turkey. Around the table are happy faces of people of all ages. It seems a family of generations has come together to celebrate. But none of them are looking at the food being served. They are all beaming enthusiastically at one another as though it is pure joy to be together.

In Thomas's versions, the white couple at the head of Rockwell's table is replaced with couples of other ethnic groups and sexualities. The people around the table are also of mixed racial and ethnic heritage. Thomas's depiction suggests a more inclusive table, both a literal one and a figurative one: the works provoke a larger dialogue around issues of inclusivity and justice in the US, questioning who has access to certain freedoms, opportunities and lifestyles.

opportunities and lifestyles.
Sometimes we have to make the decision to create healthier and safer chosen families than the ones we have been born into. Whether we focus on it or not, the holidays offer us a chance to consider who our family is, and with whom we really feel at home.

enuma.okoro@ft.com; @Enuma0koro

### Women of the year

### The Leaders



Amina Gingold

Continued from page 1

Karen Lynch CEO, CVS Health Strategist of trust By Mary Schapiro

The person redefining healthcare in America isn't a doctor but a woman who has navigated the system as a patient, caregiver and CEO. In February 2021, amid an unprecedented pandemic, Karen Lynch became CEO of the largest US healthcare company, CVS. As the pandemic exposed critical gaps, she made healthcare far more accessible and convenient, driven by her belief that we must rethink the way we deliver it by placing patients at the centre and

treating the whole patient, head to toe.
Thanks to Karen's leadership, CVS has become one of the most trusted resources for care, administering about 80mn Covid vaccines, supporting more than 2.8mn patient visits via the CVS walk-in service MinuteClinic and committing to mental health. I am honoured to work with this determined, empathetic and visionary leader transforming healthcare across our communities.

Mary Schapiro is vice-chair for Global

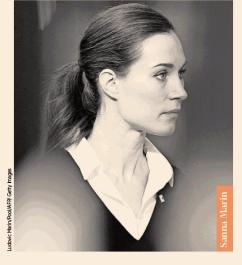
Public Policy at Bloomberg and a CVS board member

Sanna Marin Prime minister, Finland Fearless leader By Laura Bates

Since becoming the world's youngest elected leader, aged just 34, Marin's political expertise as a former city council leader and minister of transport and communications has been clear in her decisive governance. This year, she has led calls for sanctions against Russia, pushed for Finland's entry to Nato, deftly negotiated coalition politics and continued to spearhead an efficient response to Covid-19. Yet a fellow politician called her a "sales girl" and an incredulous Davos moderator once asked her how governing a femalecentric coalition worked. (Marin responded: "It works like in any government. We have meetings and w decisions. We don't meet in a female locker room.") Outrage over videos of her partying proved we're more intolerant of female leaders dancing than of male ones who boast about grabbing



yna Bashir/The New York Times/Redux/eyevine



women by the pussy. "In every position I've ever been in," Marin has said, "my gender has always been the starting point." Let's hope her refusal to be cowed by such double standards will help retire them for good.

Laura Bates is the founder of the Everyday Sexism Project. Her latest book is 'Fix The System, Not The Women'

Francia Elena Márquez Mina Vice-president, Colombia People's champion By Marina Silva

Francia Elena Márquez Mina once said she prefers to be called by her full name so that everyone knows the surnames of her mother and ancestors. That tells you everything about this Afro-Colombian woman, who even as a teenager committed herself to the defence of her community and the river that runs through



its territory. She saw, in her journey, that she was in fact defending all of humanity, other forms of life and planet Earth. Great is the strength of those who know and value their origin. Lawyer, environmentalist, vice-

Lawyer, environmentalist, vicepresident, Francia represents all the people who have been silenced during the five centuries in which the history of the Americas was written with black and indigenous blood. Her presence on the political stage tells the world that we exist, both as a denunciation of the slavery that has marked us and as the seed of our hope for abundant life on earth. Her voice announces a future dreamt by our ancestors, where we can all, with dignity, taste the best flavours of life.

Marina Silva is a Brazilian congresswoman-elect and former environment minister

Mia Mottley
Prime minister, Barbados
Engineer of democracy
By Sharmaine Lovegrove

In January, after Mia Mottley won a landslide re-election victory, she told the Financial Times that she believed in "moral strategic leadership". That is apparent in everything she does, making her one of the most formidable leaders of her generation. A lawyer who trained at the London School of Economics, Mottley won her first political seat at 28. At COP26 she made clear that the failure of industrialised states to meaningfully invest to halt climate change was catastrophic. Her speech was as inspiring as it was humbling, and citizens globally were gripped. This year her "Bridgetown Agenda" to reform the international financial system offers real, practical solutions. Her ability to speak truth to power is also apparent at home, where she oversaw the birth of Barbados as a republic. Mottley expects this term as premier to be her last; whatever she does next, the world is lucky to

Sharmaine Lovegrove is managing director of Dialogue Books and a Hachette board

Continued on page 19

### Lunch with the FT Zarifa Ghafari

'They sold Afghanistan to the Taliban'

At 24 she became a rare female mayor in a highly conservative province of Afghanistan — and a repeated target for assassination. Over pani puri in London, the politician-turned-activist tells *Anne-Sylvaine Chassany* about America's long 'game' in her country, the battle for female education and the day militants tried to blow up her car

arifa Ghafari says it became clear she could no longer trust her driver when Taliban militants tried to blow up her car with a rocketpropelled grenade.

I forget the loud dining room, a fork-

I forget the loud dining room, a forkful of curry suspended in mid-air. She had already had her doubts, my guest explains. A year earlier, in March 2020, a hit squad had targeted her after the driver, Masoom, had parked the car and left to run an errand. After that she had hired an armoured vehicle and five bodyguards for her 45km commute from Kabul to the town where she worked as mayor. On the day of the RPG attack, one of the bodyguards was driving her and her flancé, while Masoom was transporting the rest of the team; despite her order that he should stay behind as back-up, he had overtaken her vehicle.

"So we are driving like hell, so fast... Then once again, we are under attack and we need a clear road to getout," she says. It was Masoom's job to do that. "He should have told the body-guards to come and clear the road. Or he could have cleared the road with his car. But instead he was putting the car in front of mine, he was blocking my car."

Not for the first time, I am reminded that life-threatening danger has been a predominant feature of Ghafari's young existence. The Afghan politician-turned-activist, who at 24 became a sensation by being appointed top official of the conservative Wardak province, is a product of America's longest war: an educated woman who overcame family and tradition to achieve a position of power—and a survivor.

The RPG assault was one of six occasions she skirted death. Her hands are covered with burn scars caused by a suspicious gas explosion in her flat in 2019. As a young girl she was also twice severely injured by suicide bombers on her way to school. In November 2020, her father, a commander in the then western-backed Afghan army, was shot dead in front of her family home in Kabul. "Terror attacks made me Afghan," she writes in her memoir. Zarifa. But, she tells me, "Idon't remember being afraid . . . I really don't."

Ghafari is interested in her driver's story because, she says, it shows why many of her countrymen ended up joining the Islamist insurgents against the Kabul-based government, intensifying the chaos of the US exit from Afghanistan in August 2021. When the Taliban took over Wardak two months before that, she stopped employing Masoom, partly because she was no longer able to return to the province, and he grew bitter, she says.

and he grew bitter, she says.

"He starts from being so proud of working with me to 'the government is not doing well' to 'I feel abandoned' and then going to a position where he praises the Taliban, meets them, has fun and prays with them."

prays with them."

In London to draw attention to her country's humanitarian crisis and the plight of Afghan women under Taliban rule, my guest exudes poise — her voice cuts through the noise of the rowdy customers who have packed the India Club. Ghafari wanted Indian food and I chose the 71-year-old establishment near her hotel in the West End: this London institution has long served the Indian intelligentsia but is now under threat of eviction.

But the moment we emerge from the steep flight of stairs and pick our way through the Formica tables of the dining room, I see that my choice, while not short of charm, is a mismatch. Wearing a long pink silk dress and coat, flowery headscarf and golden high-heeled shoes, Ghafari is dressed for a setting grander than the India Club.



INDIA CLUB 143-145 Strand, London WC2R 1JA

Vegetable pakora	£
Paneer butter masala	£7.7
Egg curry	£7.5
Pilau rice	£
Paratha	£
Mango chutney	£0.6
Gulab jamun	£4.50
Ras malai	£4.5
Soft drink x 4	£1
Total	£

s soon as we are seated, she orders, in Hindi, panipuri to share. She says she longs for her favourite dish, which she associates with Panjab university in Chandigarh, in the foothills of the Indian Himalayas, to which she won an Afghan scholarship at 16.

When the starters arrive — tiny crispy balls of flour with brown chickpea sauce on the side — she requests more generous portions. I must look clueless because she directs me: "You crack it on top, put water [sauce] in it, put it all at once in your mouth." She demonstrates, closes her eyes and remarks: "They're not doing it spicy here. In India it just burns your mouth."

There is no lassi or chai because the kitchen has run out of yoghurt and milk—"Indian tea without milk is not Indian tea," Ghafari jokes. We settle for Cokes to accompany our main dishes—paneer butter masala for her, egg curry for me, with naan and rice.

Ghafari was born in Kabul in 1994, the eldest of eight children, to parents who at times supported, at times resisted her getting an education. Before 2001, with girls' education banned under the first Taliban regime, they sent her to a clandestine school, risking their lives in doing so. After the US-led invasion, Ghafari's father was transferred to Paktia, a Taliban stronghold near Pakistan. There her parents barred herfrom going to class after a suicide attack aimed at the school nearly killed her. She attended in secret and ended up in hospital after being caught up in a bombing that killed the provincial governor.

that killed the provincial governor.

Back in Kabul, her parents refused to let her go to Khost university, in eastern Afghanistan, because it would have meant living alone. She had been ready to give up until she learnt about the scholarship in India. When she won it, her father relented.

After graduating in economics, she could have remained in Chandigarh, a city she loves for its architectural order and cleanliness. But despite the danger, she chose to return home, bound by the responsibility to give something back to her country, she says.

"That's where I belong," she says. "When I lost my dad, for the first few seconds, I was cursing myself. I was cursing my family, I was cursing my people. I was like, 'What the hell is this country?' But after a few seconds I realised: it's not just me going through this, it's millions of people in this country. It's not this country, it's all the things forced on us. My mom lost her dad when she was three, and I lost mine when I was 26... We have been going through the same story for decades."

About two years after returning from India, Ghafari applied for the mayoral position in Wardak, her father's home province. She beat the other candidates – all men – in written and oral tests. But her appointment, signed by president Ashraf Ghani, whose government was growing impotent and isolated in Kabul, caused violent protests. She was only able to take up her post nine months later.

During her tenure, she continued to cause a stir simply by upholding the law, trying to get business owners to pay their licence fees and sacking corrupt civil servants. Most of her constituents, however, remained out of reach in Taliban rural strongholds. By spring 2021, the insurgency was carrying out nightly raids near her office. Ghafari was transferred to the defence ministry in Kabul.

Our mains arrive — not everything fits on our table so we are forced to annex the empty one next to us. My western palate is thankful for the egg curry's mildness.

When the Taliban seized Kabul in the chaotic summer of 2021, Ghafari used her connections abroad to fly her family to Germany. By then she had received the International Women of Courage Award from the US State Department under Mike Pompeo. Six months later, a refugee in Düsseldorf in search of a mission, she decided to go back home.

Keeping her family in the dark except her fiancé Bashir Mohammadi, who had fled with her to Germany – she received assurances from the Taliban administration that she would not be arrested at the airport. The new rulers in Kabul were most likely amenable because they were trying to get the west to lift sanctions and unlock billions of dollars in reserves (the sanctions are still in place). But it could have been a trap. Travelling with a film crew (Netflix released a documentary on her life last month) and the British journalist who was co-writing her memoir, Ghafari bet that her international profile would protect her. When she landed in Kabul, she drove directly to her father's grave and posted a picture on social media.
"I was like, I am back home. I'm here.

"I was like, I am back home. I'm here. I'm here for my people and my country. It's nothing political. I'm so happy I'm here. That's it."

here. That's it."
She describes the joy her return gave to the family and former colleagues who had stayed behind. But her trip also sparked controversy among Afghan exiles who felt she was compromising with the new regime. "I left my country for my family. So when I felt they were safe, I returned," she explains. "And I faced so much hatred, especially from those in the US, the UK or Europe . . .

Can you imagine?... They called me a Talib!" She adds: "I always say that I have not left Afghanistan for ever. It's not a question of whether I ever go back ... It's my home. I don't really need to clarify why I went."

During her few days back in Afghanistan, she discovered what she describes as the "Taliban twilight zone". The poverty was shocking and women's rights had massively retreated. But aspects of life, notably security, had improved for ordinary Kabulis. In her memoir, she quotes her uncle as saying, "If we had foreign support, this regime would be better than the Ghani government."

Ghafari is scathing about the 20 years of US intervention. "It was not a 'war on terror'. It was war to produce more terrorism," she says. "They [US forces] destroyed entire villages. And if you asked, they would say, 'There was one or two Taliban."

In Afghanistan's perennial woes she sees the traces of constant foreign interference. She describes Washington and foreign policy since the Soviet Union invaded the country in 1979 as "the game". It consists of pitting ethnic tribes and local warlords against one another, she says, and culminated in Donald Trump's deal with the Taliban in February 2020 ahead of a US withdrawal. "We were so hopeful. And then once again the Taliban rose and they signed a deal with the Taliban. They sold Afghanistan to the Taliban."

The killing of Ayman al-Zawahiri, the leader of al-Qaeda, in a US drone attack in Kabul in July shows that the game is still on, she says. The US is not only supporting the mujahideen forced into exile, she claims, it is also, she contends, fuelling the activities of Isis-K, a jihadi movement threatening the Taliban's grip on Afghanistan. There is no evidence of the latter, but who could blame her for being suspicious?

Washington's "biggest mistake" in

Washington's "biggest mistake" in 2001 was to bring the warlords to power, Ghafari tells me. They had

helped the Americans push the Taliban back into the mountains, but once part of the government they recreated local fiefdoms, engaged in illegal businesses and fos-tered corruption, she says. Meanwhile, Hamid Karzai, president until 2014, earned the epithet of "mayor of Kabul" because it became increasingly unsafe for him to travel outside the capital. In Paktia in 2004, Ghafari saw his helicopter turning away, unable to land after coming under heavy fire from Taliban fighters.

She says it is unfair to compare president Ghani, who fled Kabul as the Taliban were about to seize the capital, to Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who stayed in Kyiv after Russia invaded this year. "Ghani was all alone, telling everyone that a deal with the Taliban meant losing everything. But everyone was calling him a coward," she says. As part of the US-brokered Doha agreement, the government was to free 5,000 Taliban prisoners. Ghani resisted; the US stopped sending money. "The entire world is supporting Zelenskyy,

including Nato, the US, Europe," she says. "Millions of dollars are going into that country. In my country, in the last three months [of US presence], there was no salary for soldiers."

y now, our desserts have arrived. "You eat this," Ghafari says, gesturing at the ras malai, spongy cheesy morsels bathed in sweetened milk, cardamom and saffron — the highlight of our meal. Two round deep-fried gulab jamun in rose syrup elicit less enthusiasm, as they arrive cold.

"The Taliban are a fact," Ghafari writes in her memoir. I ask whether she intends to engage with the regime. "If 'm trusted on that level, by women, by my people, then I'm ready to — because someone needs to talk. Someone needs to start it. Someone needs to listen." The Taliban leadership is divided over the issue of women's education, she says. The supreme leader is opposed, but a majority of Taliban supporters are fine with it, she believes.

I suggest she has always liked to test the boundaries imposed on her, by her family and society, despite the risks. "I always love to challenge the challenges," she says, and laughs. "I love this sentence. I don't know where I learnt it. I don't think I learnt it anywhere. It's mine. It's properly mine."

The conversation turns again to Ghafari's father, with whom she fought a lot.

'The entire world is supporting Zelenskyy, with millions of dollars going there. In my country, in the last three months [of US presence], there was no salary for soldiers'

As she speaks, her headscarf slips off, revealing a haircut a lagarçonne and fine silver earrings. He was "the most important person" in her life, she says, holding back tears. "During childhood, I was not able to understand my dad. I was like, 'Why are my brothers are allowed this, but not me?" She recalls that when she asked for private tuition after not being allowed to attend university, she was told the family could not afford it. But two of her brothers got extra tutoring to prepare for exams.

Ghafari made peace with her father shortly before he died. He "saw and understood that I could handle everything myself and I could make him proud too," she says. Her relationship with her mother, however, remains difficult. "If you put me and one of my brothers in front of my mom, she will never choose me."

Even out of Afghanistan, she still fights family and tradition. "Nowadays I'm trying just to focus on myself, my life," she says. "I feel I have sacrificed everything for my family. That's enough. I am not doing it any more. Back to my mission, back to my country, back to my work, back to my future."

Anne-Sylvaine Chassany is the FT's world news editor



## A guide to dressing festively

lease can you tell me where
to find festive outfits that
feel elegant and not like a
Christmas decoration?
Also, I have an actual office
party, so a pointer or two on that
would be gratefully received!

The festive season is upon us and there are many bonkers sleeves, cut-outs, fringes, bows and diamanté details to contend with right now. If you don't want to look like an overgrown toddler, read on.

I love a bit of drama at Christmas

I love a bit of drama at Christmas (well, in my ouffit, at least). As I have suggested in previous columns, before you consider what to wear you should be super-clear on the venue, how you're getting there, whether you're seated or mostly standing, and what the temperature expectations are. You want to be in the right gear for your environment.

First, you really must have a beautiful coat to go over your party outfit. If you are tall (over 5ft 6in), go for full length, as this will work with any hem — and you will be in no danger of looking like you're putting the bins out in the rain. Raey's leopard coat (£895, matchesfashion.com), Tove's Mio (£995, tove-studio.com) and Rebecca coats (£995, tove-studio.com) or Anine Bing's Hunter coat (£855, eu.aninebing.com) are all winners. Teddy coats are everywhere and surprisingly versatile too. Go plain and neat (even John Lewis has a good one!) and relish the cosy hug they give you.

If you're petite, I would suggest a knee-length coat, which works with any hem that sits above it, or pair it with a slim trouser à la Audrey Hepburn. That is always chic. Try Harris Wharf, Hugo Boss, or Zadig and Voltaire.

When it comes to the outfit itself, I like to start by focusing on a key fabric. Perhaps home in on velvet or satin, silk faille or cashmere. Sequins are also a Christmas stalwart. And with good reason — they do everything in one fell swoop. Sparkle and silver-screen glamour? Done. They are, however, awful for the environment, so please consider renting or buy vintage.

There are a few sequin options at rental site Hurr — I like the gold Stella McCartney dress (rent from £184. hurrcollective.com). Wear it with a blazer and ankle boots or matching sandals. Mulberry's loose-fitting Kelsey sequin maxi (pictured) could be worn with a blazer, or you could dress it down with a fine jersey top underneath (rent from £70, hurrcollective.com). Keep accessories plain and let the dress do the talking. Depending on where you're going, you could wear a long leather boot with either of these — as tight on the leg as possible. Manolo has a suede shape that is very sexy (£1,075, net-a-porter.com) and has the added benefit of keeping your legs warm. If you want a cheaper alternative, LK Bennett does a great sock boot (£367 on sale, lkbennett.com). Finish the look with the iconic lip bag from Lulu Guinness: this fun Perspex style has been in her range since 2008 (£206 on sale, luluguinness.com).

If you want something special, you

If you want something special, you can always opt for a simple but interesting skirt. I love Raey's pink recycled tulle confection, which comes in mint and yellow too (£525, matchesfashion.com). I would always use a knit with this type of skirt, so that you can squash it gently into the

waistband.
Ensure that it
has a ribbed
hem — a charcoal
one from
NavyGrey (£180,
navygrey.co) would
work well. Lisa Yang,
Loulou Studio, Allude,
Alabaste Cashmere and
Joseph also offer great knit
options. Add a necklace such as this
sparkly choker from Dries Van
Noten (£295, harveynichols.com) or
its equally fantastic earrings (£295,
harveynichols.com).

If you have a shorter neck, choose an open-neck or V-neck style, and wear your hair up. Don't fancy a tulle skirt? Rixo's easy Kelly skirt (£235, rixo.co.uk) comes in various prints and iterations, the latest of which has a feather trim. It suits curvy shapes well, as it's cut on the bias.

A feather adds a whimsical feel to any party outfit and always conjures up the Roaring '20s for me. If you have a small bust and narrow shoulders, dress the skirt up with a puff-sleeve top such as Isabel Marant's Giamili bouclé peplum sweater (£525, net-a-porter.com). Or dress it down with a tee or simple knit.

How about a jumpsuit for that office party? It's always a solid alternative to a suit. The Seashell jumpsuit from Bevza (pictured) is best for taller women with smaller busts and broader shoulders (£711 on sale, bevza.com) — spaghetti straps and soft cups can't really deal with full busts.

ally deal with full busts. For a more formal option, look to

ch as this
Van
s.com) or
ss (£295,
k,
neck
p.
xxo's
.co.uk)
i
ch

Clockwise from top: Dries Van Noten crystalembellished gold-tone hoop earrings and silvertone choker; Mulberry Kelsey dress, from a selection to rent at Hurr Collective; Bevza Seashell jumpsuit stretch corset
jumpsuit is pure
class (£1,095,
galvanlondon.com).
Slip a loose blazer on
top and add a strappy
sandal, ankle boot or
simple court shoe. For
alternatives, see
Melissa Obadash,
Norma Kamali
and Saloni.
If you still hanker
after a dress, Roland
Mouret's fit-and-flare
draped stretch style flatters
both straight and curvy figures, plus it

Galvan, Its signature

both straight and curvy figures, plus it semi-covers the dreaded armpit area (£650, rolandmouret.com). Another option is a lemon-yellow form-fitting stretch jersey dress from Richard Quinn (£700, matchesfashion.com). Team it with Swarovski's incredible Lucent necklace (£840 on sale, swarovski.com) and a silver, gold or purple shoe. If you can't let go of the comfort factor completely, then opt for a co-ord: knitted two-pieces, silky pyjama suits, loose velvet suits. Try Dea Kudibal's Falula velvet blazer (£289, featherandstitch.com) with the accompanying trousers (£239, featherandstitch.com). These can be made party-ready with strong accessories. I promise.

Wishing you a merry time whatever you end up wearing!

Anna Berkeley is a personal stylist who has worked in the fashion industry for more than 25 years. Every month, she answers readers' questions about fashion and what to wear. Email her at anna.berkeley@ft.com



**Anna Berkeley** 

is priced at £110. Both are billed as 100 per cent cashmere. What makes the price of one sweater more than 30 times higher than the other? Are they worthit? "The products are not the same," says

"The products are not the same," says Simon Cotton, chief executive of Scottish textile company Macnaughton Group Limited and former chief executive of storied knitwear purveyor Johnstons of Elgin. "But they are not as different [as the prices suggest]."

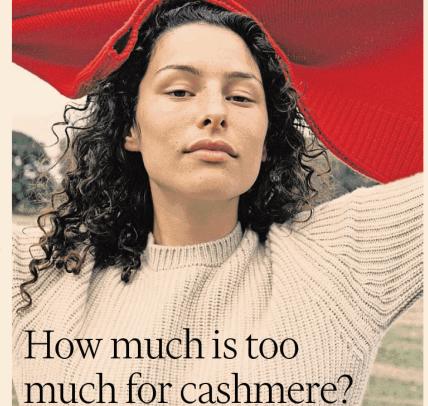
A jumper sourced from cashmere

A jumper sourced from cashmere goats in inner China or Mongolia, and spun and manufactured in Europe, is going to cost more to make than a jumper whose fibre came from Pakistan or Iran and is spun and manufactured in China, knitwear specialists say. But there is also a mark-up — sometimes as much as four to five times the cost of making it — that some luxury knitwear brands put on their products. And some of those brands cut corners — particularly in the way a piece is "finished", or designed — that makes them not much better than those on the high street.

In other words, paying a high price for a knit is no guarantee that you're getting a good one. My own experience buying cashmere and wool bears this out: the best sweaters in my wardrobe — by which I mean the warmest, hardestwearing ones that have best retained their shape — are not the ones I paid the most for.

So how do you find a good, long-lasting knit, and know you're paying a fair price? First, don't expect to find a have-it-forever jumper on the high street. While you can absolutely find good value there — big brands have economies of scale that smaller brands lack — you won't find the best quality. Cheaper cashmere tends to have shorter fibre lengths, of 30mm or less, so it is more likely to pill continuously.

mery to pill continuously.
"It's the difference between being able
to wear it twice, and it looking terrible,
versus being able to wear it for a lifetime," says Buffy Reid, founder of British knitwear label &Daughter, which
sources all its yarn in the UK and Ireland



Textiles | Cashmere jumpers
can range in price from sub£100 to the high four figures.
Are you getting what you're
paying for? By Lauren Indvik

with cashmere fibre lengths of 38mm or more. Its cashmere jumpers are priced from £375-£385.

With cheap cashmere, shortcuts are also often taken during the carding, washing and milling processes — meaning darker, lower-quality fibres might be mixed in, and then bleached, damaging the hair. Or the yarn will be spun at a lower tension and rapidly lose its shape. "It's like a rope, which is made strong through its twists," says Reid. "If it's twisted loosely and there are not many twists in it, it will create a loftier, more luxurious-seeming garment, but it

Clockwise from main: &Daughter crewneck, £425, and-daughter. com; Uniqlo jumper, £110, uniqlo.com; Loro Piana sweater, £3,440, net-aporter.com won't be very strong. When you touch it in store, it will feel incredibly soft, but it also means in two weeks time, it will look like rubbish."

Professionals say they can "feel" good wool and cashmere, and Scottish label Barrie, which knitwear designers at rival brands repeatedly claim is "the best", would be a good place to train your hand. The Row is another name that repeatedly crops up, though designers and makers marvel at what they see as an enormous

what they see as an enormou mark-up for such simple designs.

A kilo of high-quality Scottish or Italianmilled cashmere yarn — enough to make two to three basic crewneck jumpers, depending on the ply count — costs about £170. As a rough guideline, any amount over £600 for a jumper is simply mark-up, says Catherine Morrissey, president of New York-based knitwear spe cialist White + Warren. But designers say additional allowances should be made for design elements such as embellishment, intar sia, panelling and handknitting, which can require considerable design and production work and can justify

four-figure price tags.
When shopping for
knitwear, start by
weighing it in your
hands. Unless it's
designed as an
ultrafine layering

piece, a jumper should have a nice heft to it — the heavier the jumper, the more yarn used — and should be well-finished around the collars, cuffs and armholes (check the inside for loose threads and unfinished seams too).

Avoid knits that feel "soapy" or too soft — tell-tale signs that the fibres have been mixed with acrylic or have been bleached or spun too loosely. A hardwearing sweater with good tension will immediately snap back into place if you stretch it. Be wary of knits that feel too lofty" or airy — while they can be beautiful and wonderful to wear, they can

quickly lose their shape and require more maintenance.

As a general rule, brands that are "vertically integrated" — meaning they sell in their own stores and not through a department store or boutique — tend to offer better value because they don't have the same retail mark-up.

Looking for the most sustainable option? Check the product tags for certi-

fications such as the Good Cashmere Standard (for cashmere) and Responsible Wool Standard (for wool). Or opt for jumpers containing partly recycled content (100 per cent recycled is likely to wear out quickly, but if it is mixed with a stronger wool, it should hold up

pretty well).

If you're really concerned about sustainability — and want a jumper that will last — you're bet-

ter off avoiding cashmere and choosing a hardier material such as organic cotton or lambswool. Cashmere is pricey because it is scarce: made from the longest, softest hairs under the belly of a cashmere goat, it takes seven to eight goats a year to produce enough material to make one jumper, whereas one merino sheep can produce

enough fibre to produce five to six. On Kering's Environmental Profit & Loss statement, animal fibres — of which wool and cashmere make up the lion's share — have the highest environmental footprint of all the group's materials after leather. That's not only because it takes so many cashmere goats to produce one sweater; it's also because the dramatic overcrowding of goats in China and Mongolia has led to large swaths of desertification on

Another idea, then, might be to learn what "good" cashmere and wool feels like – and then buy it second-hand.

Modern Menswear

trunkclothiers.com

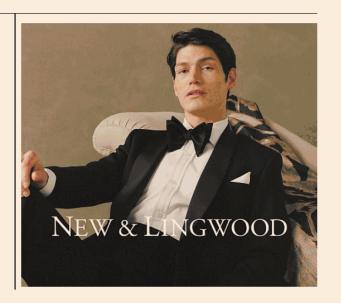
London - Zürich



TRUNK



RODRIGO SUEDE TRAVEL SLIPPERS
www.laportegna.com



Retail | Energy prices and

rail-strike threats add to

London's high-street woes,

writes Annachiara Biondi

fter two holiday seasons spent without her family because of Covid-19, London-based interior designer and stylist Khaoula Karaweigh, 27, is looking forward to spending this Christmas with her loved ones.

"This year is a bit more of a treat, so I'm definitely spending more money on gifts and decorations," she says while browsing Christmas wreaths for a client at Selfridges on a late November afternoon. Some of that extra budget will come from not turning the heating on for as long as possible. "I will buy a big blanket and a hot-water bottle instead, it's much cheaper to heat yourself than the whole room," she explains.

With soaring energy bills and inflation hovering above 11 per cent, many other UK shoppers are thinking of costsaving ways of celebrating Christmas this year. Debbie May, 48, who was shopping beneath the starry lights dangling above London's Oxford Street with her daughter Jody, 23, has lowered her gift budget from £1,000 to £600. Bushra Khan, 20, is cutting the number of gifts she is buying for each person from five to one. "It's just going to be too expensive, I can't afford it any more," she says. Friends Carol, 72, and Diane, 75, both say they are planning to spend less, buying fewer gifts per person and, in some

'The actual volumes purchased will be falling. In effect, people are going to pay more to get less'

cases, choosing cheaper brands. "It's definitely because of the cost of living," they agree while browsing baubles in

Liberty's Christmas Shop. These adjustments don't sound radical, but they will have a considerable cumulative impact on the country's overall Christmas spending this year. Adam Cochrane, retail and luxury equity research analyst at Deutsche Bank, expects the UK's discretionary retail spend will decrease nearly 5 per cent this holiday season compared with last year, the worst decline in more than

While inflation and high energy prices are problems shared across Euro shoppers will be particularly afflicted as the country struggles with a wider set of economic issues resulting from Brexit and higher interest rates. In London, Christmas shopping is expected to be disrupted by train and retail strikes.



## Shoppers rein in seasonal spending

From top:

West End.

for the FT

by Sandra

Selfridges and

Regent Street

photographed

"In the Christmas season people are going to spend more on food and groceries, but that's mainly inflation-driven. The actual volumes that will be purchased will be falling," says Patrick O'Brien, UK retail research director at GlobalData. "In effect they are going to pay more to get less." According to O'Brien, overall value spending on nonfood in the UK in the fourth quarter will be down 11.2 per cent, with clothing one of the areas to suffer the most.

Consumers this year have started shopping earlier, spreading the cost of holiday gifting over a couple of months.

This is the case for Maisie, 27, and Alfie,

29, who started Christmas shopping in September, "a lot earlier" compared with previous years. The young couple will only be buying gifts for children, a tradition they inaugurated after the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In a challenging holiday season, luxury continues to be an outlier. Deutsche Bank expects luxury goods sales in the UK to rise around 10 per cent in the fourth quarter over last year. Although their less affluent customers are cutting back, luxury companies can continue rely on the highest spenders to safeguard their sales.

"They change the product mix a little bit, so there are less entry-level products on display and they tilt their sales mix towards the higher products," says Deutsche Bank's Cochrane. "Secondly, if you have a higher product you put a 5 to 10 per cent price increase on it and you can offset some of the volume lost at the lower end."

Karaweigh, the interior designer I met at Selfridges, is organising Christmas decorations for a family of wealthy clients. There will be no need of cost-savings measures there. "My clients, they are spending a lot," she says. "For them, it's all about luxury and big brands."

### Second-hand gift guide

Holidays | Pre-owned is stylish and sustainable, says Carola Long

ne of my favourite recent gifts was a china ornament of a cat in a dress. The words kitsch or eccentric don't quite cover this cat's quizzical expression and "Grey Gardens meets abandoned toy shop" vibe it needs a category all of its own. Crazy-nalia, perhaps.

I like this strange, second-hand *objet d'art* because it amuses me, it's unique and I don't think it cost the person who gave it to me very much because they got it from a junk shop filled with curios,

not high-priced collectibles. Clearly this was a high-risk present, but given the low price and the fact its environmental impact was minimal, it was worth the gamble. With maximalism returning to interiors, something second-hand could be a chance to practise the lost art of the high-stakes object that might delight or dismay.

Obviously this is not a good strategy for everyone, though, which is where a safer option comes in. Those who want to buy secondhand on a high budget could go for the classics, but make them preloved: a Max Mara coat. Chanel costume iewellery or handbag, something "old Céline" from a curated site such as reluxefashion.com. Is your giftee party-minded? Vintage '80s and '90s costume jewellery is having a moment, in particular crystal and gold, which you can find on the website of experienced jewellery collector Susan Caplan (susancap-lan.co.uk) or 1stdibs.com.

Fashion and lifestyle books are also a winner, especially as there might even be time to leaf through them over the holidays. Fuelled by sherry and mince pies, one can soak up inspiration for January interiors projects from books such as Haute Bohemians (£51.43,

> ▼ Susan Caplan 1980s crystal

and gold plate

susancaplan

abebooks.co.uk), which features decadent houses, or mentally transport to the poolside scenes in Slim Aarons' A Place in the Sun, with no cost of living crisis in sight (£35.22, abebooks.co.uk).

You could also let happen stance guide you and find something such as an intriguing photography book in a local Oxfam. I regret not buying a £3 book I spotted called *The Queen's Dolls' House* by Lucinda Lambton, which depicted charming miniature furniture and even a Lilliputian cricket bat and ball.

Or perhaps something secondhand-adjacent, such as vouchers to get cashmere mended or a tired handbag reinvigorated (therestory, com). Even better if it's someone you live with, organise their holey jumpers to be mended and sent back to them (try collingwoodnorrisdesign.com). I would be very pleased if someone did this for me.

# The preloved wish-list



£160. 1stdibs.co.uk





▼ Hermès 1971 silk scarf,

**▼** Chanel brooch,

£352, 1stdibs.co.uk







▲ Majolica cherry bowl, ▲ Cushion cover, £41, vinterior.co.uk ◀ Max Mara cashmere coat, £800 reluxefashior













JESSICA MCCORMACK

JESSICAMCCORMACK.COM



### Travel



Canada | As the big resorts grow more crowded, British Columbia's

backcountry huts are in demand. Matt Carr discovers ski-touring heaven

he howl of the helicopter's engines subsided as it climbed away from us, eventually cresting a lofty ridge and disappearing over the horizon. It left us sprawled across a mound of skis, bags and food supplies. clinging on with every available limb like a company of Gore-Tex-clad spider crabs to prevent loose items from being blown away. At last we unclenched, dusted ourselves off and began to take stock of what would be our surroundings for the week.

A handful of log cabins linked by a network of roughly hewn paths were tucked into a clearing, surrounded by old-growth larch and pines, in an otherwise empty valley. Some of the snowsmothered cabins served as sleeping quarters and food storage, and in the centre was the main lodge, Boulder Hut, from whose chimney emerged a wispy pillar of wood smoke. Following the smoke upwards with my eyes, I could see that we were close to the top of the dead-end valley, surrounded on three

Here there were no lifts, no snowcats. Just the 12 of us, the air in our lungs and the skins on our skis

sides by high ridges. To the north lay a frozen lake, beyond which the valley opened to reveal hundreds of peaks stretched as far as the eye could see.

Across the mountains of British Columbia, backcountry huts like this are enjoying a surge in popularity. Unlike most refuges in the European Alps, they aren't designed as staging posts on the way to climbing a particular peak or completing a multi-day trek, nor are they bases for heli-skiing. Rather, they are places for groups of friends to hole up in the wilderness, usually for a week, climbing the surrounding slopes using skins attached to their skis or splitboards, then riding fresh powder on the way back down.



After a couple of years cooped up by the pandemic, a dozen friends and I had come to Boulder Hut, about 130 miles south-west of Calgary, for what we hoped would be an old-fashioned sort of ski adventure. If first impressions were any indicator, we were off to a promising start: we seemed to have flown back in time and landed in the pages of an unpublished and extremely snowy Hemingway novel.
After the 10-minute helicopter flight

in from Kimberley, a small town and ski resort, we were well beyond the limits of phone reception; satellite WiFi was available only in case of emergency. Mobile phones were stowed and swiftly forgotten. Guest sleeping quarters were simple and comfortable, if not luxurious: two dorms of six single beds with duvets, cosy wood burners and plenty of space to hang stuff up. An adjacent cabin housed the five staff, including the two guides, Brent Peters and Stephen "Chipie" Windross, and manager Kevin Ostlund.

Over an introductory bowl of soup, Brent explained that we had Boulder Hut's 15,000-acre "tenure" (government-owned land which the operator pays an annual fee to use) all to our-selves. Here there were no lifts, no snowcats and no helicopters. Just the 12 of us, the air in our lungs, the power in our thighs, the skins on our skis and almost twice as much terrain as Whistler-Blackcomb (North America's largest lift-served ski area) to explore. On our





From top: Boulder Hut: the ski area has almost twice as much terrain as Whistler-Blackcomb, North America's largest lift-served ski area; fuelling up with breakfast; on a steep pitch between the trees. All photographs by Tom Wilson

first afternoon, after a thorough safety briefing and avalanche transceiver training, we had time for a few hours of skiing to warm up the legs. We zigzagged excitedly up to a gladed zone above the hut called The Roll, where we managed three powdery laps, beginning at the gentle Jelly Roll, getting a little spicier with Sushi Roll and turning up the dial with Rock & Roll.

Boulder Hut was built in 1984 by Art Twomey, a mountaineer and filmmaker, and his partner Margie Jamieson. Together they led a lobbying campaign that culminated in the establishment of St Mary's Alpine Park, which would then grow into the Purcell Wilderness Conservancy – 500,000 acres of protected land in which we now found ourselves. The work they began continues to this day through Wildsight, an NGO whose mission is to protect wilderness areas in British Columbia and raise awareness of issues that threaten them.

Twomey had originally come to BC from the US in the late 1960s, building Ptarmigan Lodge further down the same valley in 1969. He and Jamieson would earn their living from Ptarmigan Tours, an adventure travel outfit centred around backcountry skiing there, but which also took its customers on adventures all over the world, in kayaks, on horseback and on mountain bikes. They eventually moved the ski opera-tion up-valley to Boulder Hut to be closer to the best skiable terrain. Our visit being in midwinter, we spent

a lot of time in the forest, sheltered from the wind and with the trees providing contrast and better visibility on flatlight days. For me, raised on a diet of wide-open slopes above the tree line in the Alps, this was an eye-opening experience. On a run called Cardiac we found long and steep pitches between widely spaced old larches. On Bighorn Bash and Stent we bounced over powder-clad "pillows", which looked like enormous white marshmallows that had fallen out of the pocket of a passing giant.

One of our favourite routes back to the hut at the end of the day was via Hey Jude and Come Together: a rollercoaster series of picturesque plunging pitches that wound their way down through cliff bands and ice falls.

The number of ski touring lodges has grown steadily since the first batch — including Boulder Hut — opened in the 1980s. Today, 32 outfits (some of which run multiple lodges) exist in British More ski-touring lodges in **British Columbia** 

Easiest access: Callaghan Country's Journeyman Lodge A dozen miles from Whistler as the crow flies, Journeyman Lodge Is much easier to get to than many BC huts. Guests can walk the eight miles from the nearest road on skis or snowshoes, or there are once-a-day snowmobile transfers. Add in the private rooms (rather than dorms), a creekside sauna and the fact that visitors can come for a couple of nights rather than a whole week, and you have an ideal entry-level option for those looking for a taste of backcountry-lodge life. From CA\$268 per person per night, including full-board and luggage transfer, plus a

CA\$150 reservation fee per room. callaghancountry

Most secluded: Mallard Mountain Lodge (right)

maximum of six guests, plus a guide and cook, and a 48-mile helicopter flight in, it doesn't get much more remote than this. Mallard caters to ski tourers of all levels, including newcomers, for whom it offers a number of "introduction to alpine touring" weeks. From CA\$4,539 per week including catering, guiding and helicopter transfers, or CA\$3,975 self-catered. The helicopter transfers depart from Valemount about 200 miles north of Kamloops.

Most choice: Golden Alpine Holidays Boasting four lodges in adjacent valleys north of Rogers Pass (on the Trans Canada Highway between Revelstoke and Golden), GAH has something for all kinds of back-country skiers and splitboarders. The area's distinctive pillows and fluted ridges have featured in various North American ski movie productions over the past decade — if Eric Hjorleifson and Chris Rubens are names that mean anything to you, there's a good chance you'll have seen their exploits in these parts. Their newest lodge, Sentry, is also one of the more luxurious, with private bedrooms, WiFi and a yoga centre. Access is via helicopter from a roadside staging post near Rogers Pass. A week's trip, including guiding, catering and helicopter

For more options see: backcountrylodgesofbc.com

transfers costs from CA\$3,250. gah.ca



Our days at Boulder Hut followed a

"alpine"). I was fascinated to see guides Brent and Chipie at work, conducting assessments of snow stability as we climbed, digging pits, incessantly plunging their poles into the snowpack, using thermometers to check the snow's temperature at different depths. This I found to be one of the more illuminating elements of a ski-touring trip, in comparison to lift-served off-piste skiing or heli-skiing, where you enjoy more downhill skiing but are less likely to have time to learn about the craft of moving safely in the mountains.

Lead guide Brent was nonetheless ambitious and, like us, was eager to get into some of Boulder Hut's more committed terrain, of which there was plenty. The high point to our skiing endeavours, in every sense, was summiting Grace Peak, at 2,600m, on top of which there was just enough space for us all to click carefully into our pin-toe touring bindings (a much more delicate operation than stepping into a pair of alpine bindings) and enjoy a fabulous view of the Purcell range, the Selkirks in the west and the Canadian Rockies away to the east.

We skied down its splendid northeastern flank, through creamy powder that had remained protected from the wind, savouring every turn that much more because of how hard it had been earned, and relishing the feeling of having the entire mountain to ourselves.

i / DETAILS

Matt Carr was a guest of the British Columbia tourist board (hellobc.com) and Boulder Hut (boulderhutad ventures.com). A week at Boulder Hut Including helicopter transfers, accommodation, full-board and guiding costs from CA\$3,670 per person, based on a full lodge of 12 guests

### **POSTCARD** FROM...

MADRID

i / DETAILS

the New York Times

For details of the Teatro Real's youth progra see teatroreal.es/en/young-spirits. The opera house (which has an ornate interior in contrast to its serious facade) is usually open to visitors for daytime tours from 10am to 3.30pm, entry €8

Raphael Minder is the FT's Central Europe correspondent, based in Warsaw. He was previously a correspondent in Madrid for

s soon as the silver curtain went down on Aida, hundreds of members of the audience rushed upstairs to the salons of Madrid's opera house to drink beer and dance to a live DJ. From Verdi's "Triumphal March" to Corona's "Rhythm of the Night" without leaving the building. Three days before welcoming King

Felipe and Queen Letizia for the opera's official opening, the Teatro Real was hosting a special "youth preview" limited to people between 18 and 35 years of age, who got a discount price and an invitation to the "after opera". As well as a DJ in the ballroom and several bars, four make-up stands offered guests the chance to evoke some of the opera's characters Started last year, this youth initiative is spearheading the institution's attempt to develop a new generation of opera lovers.

From London to New York, other opera houses are also targeting a ounger audience, either by offering them discount tickets for Saturday matinees and specific evenings, or by combining the opera with a full night out. In Los Angeles, for instance, the opera house sells an "aria package" to people between 21 and 40 that includes five operas and three after-parties, as



well as free drinks and snacks during

"We're working hard to bring young people to the opera," says Ignacio García-Berenguer, the Teatro Real's director. "I think that we're also reducing bit by bit opera's image of elitism. Young people can see for themselves that opera is the most complete musical experience possible."

For the cast of Aida, a younger audience provided rapturous applause from the first aria onwards. The Italian conductor Nicola Luisotti said he was also grateful for the opportunity to show younger people that there was

Young people can see for themselves that opera is the most complete musical experience possible'

more to culture than what they watch on their mobile phones. "The world is full of fake things, but here there are no tricks," he says. "We are living in a time when people, especially younger ones, see a video and think it's all true, so that the video has become something like the new God. But I think opera is closer to God: this is our art, our instruments, our voices — nothing else just small things that put together become much more powerful."

Although perhaps not every selfie-taker in the audience experienced a divine connection to Verdi's Egyptian trumpet march, only very few spectators used the intermission to escape *Aida* before its sorrowful ending.

The evening was also a chance to fill Madrid's opera house with a differently dressed audience, argued fashion designer Alejandro Gómez Palomo who was wearing a zebra-striped shirt and whose Palomo Spain clothing brand has been worn by pop stars including Madonna and Beyoncé. "I love to see hipsters and skaters wear what they feel makes them look great for an opera night," said the 30-yearold designer, who has joined the Teatro Real's youth committee after staging a fashion show in the historic building, which opened in 1850. "It's nicer to watch opera next to two 18-year-old

girlfriends in lovely skirts than the

The seats for this youthful Aida premiere cost between €14 and €34 and the Teatro Real will now stage four previews per season reserved for younger people. Thanks also to an earlier initiative to sell 5,000 tickets during the course of the season at a discount youth price, the Teatro Real

usual old ladies."

has already reduced the average age of Madrid's opera audience over the past decade, from 59 to 54. In fact, were it not for the discount

price, marketing specialist Elena Gómez told me she would not have considered visiting the Teatro Real. Asked afterwards whether she now felt enthusiastic enough about Verdi's music to pay more next time to see nother of his operas, Gómez replied 'a bit more", but her friend disagreed: Culture and entertainment need to be affordable."

Our conversation was interrupted by the DJ pumping up the volume once more and urging the partygoers to leave their side tables and return to the dance floor. The disco ball and strobe lights were not exactly a match for the pyramid scenery of *Aida*, but it was nice to end the night on a joyful note after the tragedy of the opera.

Raphael Minder

Scotland | Guided by an expert in flavour perception, this Hebridean voyage goes deep into the science of

Scotch. By *Tim Moore* 

ow take your clips off and tell me what happens." There are 22 of us huddled in the Flying Dutchman's dim, gently swaying saloon, the harbour lights of Oban winking through our starboard portholes, medical clamps fixed to every nose but Professor Barry Smith's, A honed appreciation of single-malt whisky will have to wait: with nostrils liberated, we crunch down on our previously insipid jelly beans and unleash a flood of gaudy flavours.

For Smith, whisky connoisseur and founding director of the Centre for the Study of the Senses at the University of London, this introductory experiment lays bare those unexpected overlaps in



the human palate, demonstrating how taste is really all about smell. Over the coming days, he will nobly endeavour to hotwire and fine-tune our sensory perceptions, even as they are assaulted by regular overloads of extremely strong brown alcohol and the deleterious influence of tackling volatile seas aboard an ageing tall ship.

Our inaugural guided tasting begins with a 14-year-old Oban ("heather and orange peel on the nose — a bit jangly") and ends, two hours later, with a double dose of Glenfarclas ("more harmonious finer, a little retroussé"). "If you still sleep," says Smith, bidding us to bed, "listen to the shipping forecast." Aries Groenveld, our young Dutch skip-per, smiles broadly through his beard: You definitely won't sleep after that."

A brewing storm that promises force 9 gusts and six-metre waves has obliged him to completely reroute our distilleryfocused voyage around the Inner Hebrides, yet Groenveld warns — with sea-soned understatement — that we will still find it "pretty fresh". "These are challenging waters in any conditions," he says, happily. "Plenty of areas that the Royal Navy still class as unnavigable." For a tall ship, the Flying Dutchman is

rather a small ship. The two-masted, 40-metre vessel started life in 1903 as a Dutch fishing boat, evolving 18 years ago into a cosy 12-cabined passenger carrier. My bunk-bedded quarters, tight up near the bow, are especially bijou. I share them with a retired newspaper lawyer who, by sheer force of proximity, becomes a friend. The cabin floor isn't big enough for four feet: if one of us is out of our bunk, the other is confined to his.

My splendid journey up to Oban from

London on the Caledonian Sleeper w it transpires, more than just the fulfilment of a long-held wish: the experience delivered invaluable acclimatisation to capsule living in an unsteady environment. After my train-based shower/ toilet combo, our cabin's tiny all-in-one en suite held no surprises. I'd even sneaked in some vital preparatory research courtesy of the Caledonian Sleeper's extensive single-malt list.

Sailing south-west out of Oban the next morning, any cask-strength cobwebs are swiftly blown clean away. Groenveld hoists a forward sail to stabilise the Flying Dutchman as an eyestreaming wind picks up and the deck begins to tilt and roll. Waves of fog and heavy rain smear out the view; silhouettes of low-slung islands ghost by like mist-bound battleships. I join wheyfaced refugees in the wood-panelled saloon and try to fix my eyes on the horizon, which won't keep still and regularly disappears. Ropes whip against the vith an echoing crack. Ball-bearing raindrops clatter the windows. My anti-nausea medication draws me into uneasy slumber.

I come round in a different world: bright white lighthouses on bright green headlands, double rainbows spanning a jaunty blue sea dotted with ferries and trawlers. As the sun goes down, we pass beneath the strange but imperious trio of smooth grey bell-jar mountains that stand guard over Jura, promoted from last stop to first under our redrafted itinerary. "Extremely unget-at-able" was how George Orwell described the



# A tasting tour by tall ship

island where he wrote most of 1984, and even today, getting here is a two-ferry job that deters casual visitors.

Boggy, barren and beige, Jura has only 200 inhabitants, most occupying the whitewashed, slate-roofed cottages that line the darkening shore at Craighouse its only significant settlement. On the far left stands the island's only significant employer, its name writ large in black capitals on a white wall: Jura Distillery.

There are no free berths at the

Craighouse jetty, so Groenveld drops anchor in the mercifully calm bay. Our vening routine is already established: a hearty meal magicked together by Sian Dickson, our Mull-based cook, dispatched with gusto in the companionable, pub-like saloon and then cleared away with co-operative good cheer. Everyone pitches in with a bit of light washing-up; with nowhere to hide, pitching out isn't really an option. Then it's Barry Hour: our nightly session with the professor and his clinking stash of high-end firewater.

Smith, who is a frequent broadcaster (appearing on the BBC's MasterChef and The Kitchen Cabinet), makes an engaging mentor, at ease both with blithering whisky-dunces like me and the Scotch ophile doctors and chemists who dominate a tour that's been organised in partnership with New Scientist magazine. This evening's party piece is a bowl of wasabi nuts. "That whisky burn can really shout down the 600 or so volatile molecules that give a Scotch its flavour, and it's caused by your trigeminal nerve



Clockwise from top: the Flying Dutchman a anchor by Bunnahabhain Distillery, Islay; a dram at the Caol Ila distillery on Islay; viewing the copper stills at the Jura Distillery; Jura at the end of the rainbow: tasting the whisky in Bruichladdich's maturation warehouse; Professor Barry Smith, founding director of the Centre for the Study of the Senses at the University of

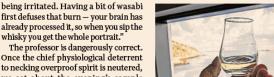
All photographs by Adrian



suitably dramatic environment. every other we visit, is like some steamstills with extruded condenser arms that taper up to the lofty rafters, their precious output fed back down into polished brass "spirit safes" with glazed inspection chambers. Our party falls into a reverent silence. For those who worship whisky, this is a cathedral.

ing with dusty casks. Our guide lowers a through a barrel's bunghole and draws forth a column of golden liquid. "I hope you've all had a good breakfast," she says, neatly dispensing the first generous measure, "because this is proper cask strength." We've all taken full advantage of Dickson's bounteous morning buffet, but it's no match for 57 per cent alcohol. I'm coughing even drinking fetches £700 a bottle.

In the afternoon we set sail, or at least start engine: unhelpful winds mean I sadly won't be seeing canvas hoisted in anger for the rest of my trip. Islay is right next door but a world away, green and plumply fecund, full of people, life and distilleries. We drop anchor in front of one of the most esteemed. Bunnahabhain, the name once again writ large on the seawall. Ahead lie more shore runs



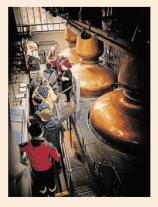
Once the chief physiological deterrent to necking overproof spirit is neutered, we set about the evening's sample drams with reckless gusto, stumbling gaily across the four quadrants of whisky's flavour wheel: richness, light-ness, dry fruit, fresh fruit. The volubility of our own tasting notes, and their poetry, rises conspicuously as the night progresses. "Honeysuckle and green figs!" blurts a Canadian doctor. "Sucking a pebble on the beach!" my cabinmate declares, in eureka tones. I'm just about sorting out smoke from peat, but my own flavour wheel is still very wob-bly, and some of the references echoing about the saloon are entirely baffling Do irises even smell? Does iodine?

In the morning, the Flying Dutchman's rib dinghy ferries us in groups to the distillery's jetty. The staff don't get many drop-ins, so our tour is a pleasingly impromptu wander through peb-bledashed plant rooms filled with heat, noise and home-brew odours. The initial phases of whisky production involve mixing industrial quantities of loch water and barley — 26 tons of the latter every week at Jura, delivered by lorries off the ferry — then fermenting it to an 8 per cent "small beer" in giant cylinders. When the magic happens, it does so in a

The distillation hall at Jura, as with super-lab: vast, bulbous copper

We take communion in a sepulchral warehouse stacked floor to distant ceilvalinch — in effect a huge pipette before the guide tells us the stuff we're





After a hearty meal it's our nightly session with the professor and his clinking stash of high-end firewater

in the dinghy, more post-breakfast drams and light-headed tours at three distilleries, more tasting tips. At Bunnahabhain I am taught to sniff

a whisky from the far side of the glass, thereby muting the otherwise dominant alcohol aroma; at Bowmore, the second oldest Scotch distillery on earth, I learn the importance of adding a few drops of water to break the surface tension and liberate those all-important volatile molecules; at Ardnahoe, a distillery so new its whisky is not yet old enough to sell, I redouble this liberation by warming the glass in my hands and keeping my mouth open while I sniff the contents. (I also hear myself saying "a lot of peat on the nose".)

Along the way I come to learn that no matter what the blurb on the bottle might say, the loch water, the spring barley, the Hebridean sea air and all the rest of it have at best a token influence on the end-product. Beyond the smokiness that so many whisky drinkers seek out largely imparted by malting barley in a peat-fired kiln — the clear, 70 per cent distillate that is whisky's virgin state tastes similar wherever it comes from. with micro-idiosyncrasies that only an industry expert could detect. The

alchemy takes place in the barrels, in super-slow-motion. From colour to taste, a whisky is almost entirely defined by what sort of cask it's been stored in, and for how long. It's all about the wood.

This fundamental is hammered home on my last evening, when the Flying Dutchman is visited by Georgie Crawford. Smith introduces her as "the doyenne of the whisky industry", an Islayborn authority on the production and appreciation of Scotch, currently setting up a major new distillery on the island from scratch. The highlight of Crawford's compelling address, complemented with another battery of drams, is a side-by-side tasting of two whiskies made from identical "base liquid", with one aged in an ex-bourbon cask and the other in a sherry barrel. Seven years on, the sensory distinctions are profound: it's chalk and cheese, if chalk tasted of vanilla and tropical fruit, and cheese of dates and Christmas pudding.

Whisky's decisive element is a matter of hard biochemical fact, yet many of our onboard empiricists look a little crestfallen, reluctant to cast aside the romantic origin myths that have clearly drawn some of them here. "But what about the heather in the peat?" asks a doctor from Cincinnati, in plaintive tones. "What about the Hebridean terroir?"

Looking back at the Flying Dutchman for the last time, an ageless vision of portholes and lofty rigging out on the lonely waters of Bunnahabhain Bay, I understand what makes this adventure click. Old boats and old whisky are all about traditional skills and seasoned wood, arcane worlds lived out before bygone backdrops, ruled by gifted obsessives who speak in ancient riddles. I have seen distillers draffing out, and sailors twisting the yard, and I have learnt their ways.

Well, some of them. On the sleeper back to London, I raise a 12-year-old Glen Garioch to my freshly educated nostrils. "Toffee apples on a crisp day," say the tasting notes in the menu, but my nose isn't listening. "Whisky," it says. I warm the glass in my hands, tip in a capful of mineral water and sniff it from the other side. "OK, unpeated whisky." As I'm jiggled to slumber in another snug little walk-in wardrobe, I take comfort in Barry Smith's sotto voce confession. "I shouldn't say this," he'd murmured one night in the saloon, "but I have a very hard time with any whisky trying to let it not smell like sawdust and raisins."

Tim Moore was a guest of New Scientist Tours (kraken.travel) and the Caledonian Sleeper eper.scot). The seven-night trip costs from £2,399 per person, with departures planned for September 10 and 23, 2023. Private berths on the Caledonian Sleeper from London to Oban (changing at Crianiarich on to a regular service for the final 42 miles) cost from £175 one-way

## **Books**

# Unhappy families

Essay | Simon Sebag Montefiore's entertaining

history of the world is told through the dynasties

that helped shape humanity, writes Ian Morris

lenty of world histories have come out in the past few years, but this one is different. It is a family history of the world — not a global history of families, tracing how conjugal unions evolved from the loose alliances common among hunter-gatherers through the rigid patriarchy of peasant societies to the bewildering variety of 21st-century residential groups, but instead a history of the world as illus-trated by the lives of particular families

trated by the lives of particular families. Simon Sebag Montefiore, whose past books include a vivid history of the Romanov family, begins with the oldest known named individual, an account-ant called Kushim, who lived in the third millennium BC Middle East.

As he moves forward through time, the geographical scope of *The World: A*Family History steadily widens. By
1150BC, the story has expanded to include King Wuding of China's violent, ancestor-worshipping Shang Dynasty, who ruled along with his favourite wife

By 800BC, we are hearing about King Alara of Kush, who is thought to have married his sister and built mudbrick pyramids in what is now Egypt and Sudan. In the sixth century BC, we join the greedy Alcmaeonids of Athens; around 300BC, we meet King Chandragupta and his mother in India; and by the second century AD, we find ourselves in Tikal at the court of the bloodthirsty Maya clan of Yax Ehb Xook, or 'First Step Shark".

By the 19th century, Sebag Monte-fiore's narrative has become truly global, drawing in characters from Kamehameha of Hawaii with his 30 wives and 500-pound girlfriend/adviser Kaʻahumanu, through King Ghezo of Dahomey, whose 3,000 "wives" fought in his army, to England's Victoria and her prudish yet passionate husband Albert, whose 42 grandchildren went on to populate thrones all over Europe. One extraordinary story follows another, all of them extraordinarily well told. It is hard to stop turning the pages — and that is just as well, since there are well over a thousand of them.

One of the commonest criticisms of world histories such as Jared Dia-mond's Guns, Germs, and Steel or Yuval Noah Harari's Sapiens is that they are all about the vast impersonal forces of

geography and evolution, hardly having room for the very important persons who actually made history happen. Sebag Montefiore's family-centred alternative is the perfect antidote, revel-ling in the peculiarities and downight ling in the peculiarities and downright perversities of its all-too-human cast.

A large part of the challenge facing the author is that the nature of our evidence changes so much over time. Until just a few centuries ago, many of our sources were written by and most were written for rich, educated men. This requires him to focus largely on a narrow elite of wealth and birth, but he tries hard to give voice to premodern women — so hard, in fact, that our per-spective perhaps becomes distorted in

two different ways.

One involves the kind of women we hear about. "The greatest glory of a woman," the Athenian Pericles is sup-posed to have said, "is to be least talked about by men" — which means that good girls tend to be lost to the histo-

The women who make it into Sebag Montefiore's pages form something of a catalogue of deviants, constantly betraying, torturing and/or doing to death their kinsfolk. Whether Olympias of Macedon or Catherine the Great really were as alarming as men said remains open to debate, but the ways men chose to write about women mean that we hear more of monsters such as Messalina, who — it is claimed — made the Roman emperor Claudius's life so thoroughly miserable, than of delightful people like Julius Caesar's daughter Julia, who shared wedded bliss with Pompey the Great until she died in

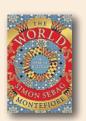
Among the few things we do know about Julia, however, is that when she married Pompey she was just 14 while her new husband was 57. This is a second way in which the exceptional women who feature so strongly in the first 600 or so pages of *The World* might mislead us. Through most of history, most marriages — even happy ones —

were mindbogglingly patriarchal.

Take Julia's father. When not busy conquering Gaul, subverting the Roman constitution, murdering scores of rivals, reforming the calendar, penning a two volume work on Latin grammar and composing some of the crispest prose ever written, Julius Caesar found time to



Footprints preserved in volcanic ash, in Laetoli, Tanzania, dating back 3.7mn years – Alamy



A Family History by Simon Sebag Monteflore Weldenfeld & Nicolson £35/ Knopf \$45, 1,344 pages

seduce the wives of almost every leading man in Rome, father a bastard with an Egyptian queen and fornicate with slaves beyond number. And yet Caesar's wife had to be above suspicion; and when she failed to meet his standards,

Sebag Montefiore's families are overwhelmingly unhappy. Straightforward marital misery, like Napoleon's neglect of his Empress Josephine, is the least of it. I quickly lost count of the husbands beating wives, wives murdering husbands, and parents of both sexes killing inconvenient children.

But my vote for the most broken home in history goes to that of Temüjin,

the Mongol boy who grew up to be Genghis Khan. His father, Yesugei, kidnapped his mother, Hoelun, from her original husband, impregnated her, and named Temüjin after a man he had killed. Yesugei and Hoelun then forgot Temüjin when they moved from one camp to another and didn't get around to going back to retrieve him for a year. Yesugei's fellow tribesmen then mur-dered him, threw out Hoelun, stole her animals and left her to starve.

Temüjin supported her by trapping rats. Before long he had murdered his half-brother, his blood brother and the men who had kidnapped and raped his fiancée, before graduating to multi-

scheming to get back into power, is por-

Though much of the history is unre-lentingly grim, Hochschild finds heroes

who stood up against the tide of hatred

and violence. Kindly and gentle Eugene

Debs spearheaded union efforts and ran

five times for president in the early

trayed as a bigoted warmonger.

ple millions of unfortunates from the Pacific to the Volga, harvesting their souls "as lines of writing are effaced from paper", according to a

However, the regularly repeated fac-toid that Genghis was so active in the bedroom that his blood now runs in the veins of 16mn people seems to be wrong. According to a paper published in 2018, it was the migrating Mongols en masse not one sex-mad murderer, who spread the Y chromosome C3\*-star cluster all

Although Tolstoy thought that each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way, Sebag Montefiore's all tend to be unhappy in rather similar ways. No one who has watched television dramas such as Succession, or read any Shakespeare, will be surprised to read that the families of the rich and famous are awful. But where dramatists work their magic by showing us how these crazed families are bound together by loves sick and twisted as it might be — almost as strong as their hatreds, Sebag Montefiore's families have fewer redeeming features. As the book went on, I regularly found myself wondering why some of them didn't murder each other even sooner.

Taken individually, Sebag Monte-fiore's vignettes are fascinating, albeit often in a disturbing kind of way. But

My vote for the most broken home in history goes to that of Temüjin, the boy who grew up to be Genghis Khan

taken collectively, the hundreds of horror stories might wear down almost anyone's faith in human nature.

"Leaders who can trust no one usually trust family," the author tells us near the end of the book, but he makes it hard to see why. There seems to be no end to the poisoning, adultery and incest, not to mention the flaying and burning; and if the book has a real shortcoming, that is perhaps it. "There is such a thing as too much history," Sebag Montefiore

It was not always obvious, as family story piled on to family story across 1,250 pages, what each new example added, other than just moving the narrative forwards. The book might have benefited from a leaner focus, with a smaller number of examples chosen to make explicit a tighter set of themes.

The World begins with a set of almost million-year-old footprints excavated on a beach at Happisburgh in England in 2013, which appear to belong to a family; and even older footprints from Laetoli in Tanzania, dating back 3.7mn years, might also belong to residential and/or kinship groups.

There is no doubting that the family is

the central institution of human history, and Sebag Montefiore's overview of its most recent five millennia is entertaining and consistently interesting. However, it apparently led him to no concrete conclusions. This enjoyable book is well worth reading, but there must be more to say.

Ian Morris is professor of classics at Stanford University and author of 'Geography Is Destiny: Britain and the World, a 10,000 Year History' (Profile)

### A dark period of 20th-century America

Historian Adam Hochschild shines a light on the 1910s when questioning the status quo meant vicious reprisals. **By** Brooke Masters

f you think the political situation in the US now looks terrible, Adam Hochschild is here to remind you things have previously been much worse. American Midnight, his new book about the US domestic scene in the

years during and just after the first world war, describes a society that more patriotic histories generally gloss over.

Riven with racial and ethnic prejudice, 1910s America was obsessed with suppressing union activism and political dissent by any means necessary. Hochschild describes vicious lynchings mass arrests and systematic abuse of prisoners, all justified first by the exigencies of the great war and then fears of

Best known for his 1998 book Kina Leopold's Ghost, which introduced many western readers to the horrors of Belgian rule in what is now Congo, Hochschild has developed something of a speciality in delving into dark periods of orld history. He forces read front the abuses and remember those who had the courage to fight against militarism and speak up for the powerless and dispossessed, from the British antislavery movement to antiwar activists in the first world war.

Disturbed by "the toxic currents of racism, nativism and contempt for the rule of law" that have boiled up in contemporary politics, he focuses this time on an era when workers, black Americans and free thinkers faced vicious reprisals for daring to question the unfair status quo. "By examining closely another period in which they engulfed the country, we can understand them more deeply and defend against them in

the future," he writes. Hochschild's villains are the politicians and bureaucrats who furthered their careers by persecuting leftists and exaggerating the threat they posed. Among the worst was Mitchell Palmer, who, as attorney-general, presided over warrantless arrests and show trials that purportedly targeted dangerous comnunists but swept in hundreds of illiter ate immigrants. Ralph van Deman brought home military tactics used against independence fighters in the Philippines, including spying and waterboarding, and used them against



Midnight: a Violent Democracy's Forgotten Crisis by Adam Hochschild Mariner Books \$29.99

labour activists and dissenters. Albert Johnson spearheaded racist legislation that closed America's doors to Asians and eastern Europeans for decades.

Better known American figures also come off badly. Hochschild highlights the failings of Woodrow Wilson, who as president talked loftily of international freedom while

spreading segregation and permitting a draconian crackdown on dissent at home. He vaguely questioned subordinates such as postmaster general Albert Burleson, who refused to deliver leftist ublications, but did nothing to rein them in. Theodore Roosevelt, who was

out of office and

1900s as the nominee of the socialist party. In 1920, he garnered more than 900,000 votes, the most ever for an American socialist candidate, even though he was in prison for sedition because of his opposition to the war. Kate Richards O'Hare, known as "Red Kate", was a mother of four who barn stormed the country throughout the decade, when she wasn't in jail, drawing thousands to hear her calls for a better. fairer society. And Emma Goldman, the

'Red Kate' speaks to a crowd in front of the St Louis court house, National Women's Suffrage Day, May 2 1914 - Alamy

anarchist writer who challenged traditional gender roles was eventually  $expelled from \, the \, country.$ 

These vivid portraits made me wish that Hochschild had spent more time explaining how Americans pulled themselves out of their swamp of violence and repression. He gives readers brief flashes of hope - for example, when Supreme Court justice Oliver Wendell Holmes changed his mind and issued a ringing dissent defending the right to unpopular political opinions in Abrams v United States in 1919 and when Louis Post, who briefly served as acting Labor Secretary, in 1920 refused to allow mass deportations of alleged anarchists.

But the ebbing of the anti-immigrant and anti-leftist tide is almost anticlimactic. Attorney-General Palmer overplayed his hand with predictions of a mass communist uprising in May 1920 that failed to materialise, and public attention turned elsewhere.

By 1921, Republican president War ren Harding, who is generally considered a political nonentity or worse, felt able to call a halt to the violent repression of socialism and let the movement's leaders go. Many of the rights and protections that they had been seeking were enacted into law in the 1930s as part of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. One can only hope that today's reaction-ary politics will be followed by a similar

Brooke Masters is the FT's US investment and industry editor



OTTO R. NORLAND

#### THE MAGIC OF MERCHANT BANKING

My Years in the City of London

A personal and candid autobiography by former managing director of HAMBROS BANK once a central figure in world wide financing of shipping and shipbuilding

£26.00 on amazon.uk



### Nilanjana Roy

the woes

### Reading the world



scathing, sometimes tender. Often the lightness runs alongside heartbreak, as with the 2020 Booker-winning writer Douglas Stuart's two novels, Shuggie Bain and Young Mungo. The Canadian-American author Ruth Ozeki, also a Zen Buddhist priest, tackled the subject of grief after a parent's death with a touch of uplifting magic in *The* Book of Form and Emptiness. And Mumbai-based novelist and poet Jerry Pinto pulls off a funny and wry coming-of-age novel, The Education of Yuri, about a boy yearning to be a writer in

with a refreshing sense of

humour: sometimes dry and

1980s Bombay. Earlier this month Percival Everett was awarded the Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse prize for comic fiction for The *Trees*, his Booker shortlisted novel that addresses America's history of lynchings with brutally effective humour. As Peter Florence, the chair of the jury. said, "Comedy can entertain, can mock, can tease out our compassion and empathy . . [The Trees] can lighten the most atrocious darkness and tell truths in ways that begin to make sense of the absurdity of life." Like previous winners — including Helen Fielding and Terry Pratchett – Everett received champagne, a complete set of PG Wodehouse and will have a pig named after his winning book, a nod to Wodehouse's fondness for including dastardly porcine kidnappings in his plots.

In a sea of literary awards, it's striking that the Wodehouse prize is one of only a few awards for comic literature in the UK. As a child, reading Saki, Jonathan Swift and PG Wodehouse, I thought (erroneously) of Britain as the natural home of funny writers. Wodehouse's novels about eccentric members of the peerage had an almost feverish following among Indians of a certain generation, and I read my

40 Songs,

One Story

way through the canon when I was young. I remember loving the author's ability to embrace a permanently sunlit silliness in perfectly turned sentences. "What Wodehouse writes is pure word music," the late Douglas Adams said. It takes one comic genius to recognise another.

In 2002, the writer and politician Shashi Tharoor wrote a paean to Wodehouse for the Guardian, in which he noted the author's huge popularity in India: "It was only natural that Indians would enjoy a writer who used language as Wodehouse did playing with its rich storehouse of classical precedents, mockingly subverting the very canons colonialism had taught Indians they were supposed to venerate." That popularity has subsided as a new generation turns to TikTok and more contemporary authors; elsewhere in the world, Wodehouse is half-forgotten or seen as a strange relic of the past.

Writers have long been wise to the prejudices that surround humour — too often dismissed as shallow entertainment. Comedy often celebrates life's joys, and writing about happiness is far harder than its opposite. In a 2014 discussion with Adam Kirsch in the New York Times, Leslie Jamison, one of the sharpest essayists of our time, said: "It's more interesting to read about something being wrong than everything being right. Happiness threatens the things that every writing workshop demands: suspense, conflict, desire."

It is still rare to discover literary fiction that turns to comedy for the sake of comedy. But humour is increasingly being deployed to lighten, or underline, serious subjects. This year's Booker winner, Shehan Karunatilaka, brilliantly showcased the subcontinent's capacity for black humour in the face of civil war and unremitting gloom in The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida, where the ghost of a photographer sets off to investigate his own death. "We [Sri Lankans] specialise in gallows humour and make jokes in the face of our crises," the author has said. "Laughter is clearly our coping mechanism.'

Perhaps we have finally begun to cast aside what Martin Amis refers to in his autobiographical 2020 novel *Inside Story* as "the intellectual glamour of gloom"; perhaps we are ready to enjoy the pleasure – and versatility – of humour again.



## Human interest

A discerning biography of the Australian-American writer Shirley Hazzard

illuminates the alchemical interplay of her life and fiction, writes Lucy Scholes

o one should have to read it for the first time," the biographer and translator Francis Steegmuller declared of his wife Shirley Hazzard's meticulously constructed penultimate novel, *The Transit of Venus* (1980), many pages of which Hazzard revised up to an astonishing 30 times. I felt something of the same reading Brigitta Olubas's simi-larly deft biography of the Australian

Today, Hazzard remains all too widely under-read. In part, perhaps, because she wasn't exactly prolific. While her stories were published regularly in The New Yorker, her novels appeared only sporadically. The Transit of Venus took her over a decade to write, after which her readers had to wait another 23 years for the National Book Award-winning The Great Fire (2003). Not that their patience wasn't rewarded. Her fiction is interested in the moral choices people make, what they will and won't sacrifice for love, and how individuals are buffeted by the forces of history. If her prose so cool, her vision so humane, one might mistake her novels for melo-



A Writing Life by Brigitta Olubas Virago £25/Farrar Straus and Giroux \$35,576 pages

Shirley Hazzard:

dramas. Instead, they're masterpieces. At first glance, the pairing of biographer and subject isn't an obvious one. Olubas is a professor of English at the University of New South Wales, Sydney, who's penned a scholarly monograph on Hazzard and edited volumes of her essays and short stories. Hazzard, meanwhile, was an autodidact who spent her entire adult life pushing against her national origins — or, as Olubas elaborates, "obscuring, refashioning, and forgetting where she had come from." What a delight then to discover that this biography is lambent, discerning, deeply intelligent and empathetic.
Though raised in Sydney, where she

with her family - her father Reg, whose job as Australian trade commissioner, enabled the move, her sister Valerie and their mother Kit — to Hong Kong in 1947. This early break from Australia was a watershed moment in the 16-yearold Hazzard's life, an experience through which she first grasped the weight of history that would later haunt her two masterpieces: The Transit of Venus, the story of the lives and loves of two Australian sisters in postwar Eng-land; and *The Great Fire*, which is also intimately concerned with the aftermath of the second world war.

In Hong Kong, Hazzard got a job with a British intelligence unit, and fell in love with a British Army officer. Eighteen months later, the couple were separated when Valerie developed tuberculosis. She. Hazzard and Kit — a woman of mercurial moods and an expert in emotional terrorism; Hazzard later described their relationship as making her feel "like a caterpillar at the mercy of a nasty child with a pin" — had to return to Australia so that Valerie could be treated.

was born in 1931, Hazzard relocated

cern with truth underpinning her work, a point where the public and private meet in the experience of poetry, humanity, civility, even love.' that sends one greedily back to the sub-ject's work, better equipped to appreciate the richness on display. Would it cast such a spell over one unfamiliar with Hazzard's fiction, I'm not sure; but for those of us who've already pledged our allegiance to Hazzard's genius, there's wonderment in these pages.

### In the name of love

Ludovic Hunter-Tilney **on** Bono's account of his rise from working-class Dublin lad to rock star activist

transparency, with a preference for the undisclosed rather than the vaunted

truth, interests that drew her to him, which she shared."

They remained devoted to each other until his death in 1994, splitting their time between Manhattan's Upper East

Side and Europe — namely in Hazzard's beloved Italy (she'd fallen in love with

the country when, after a bad break-up in the mid-1950s, she took a UN post in

Naples for a year). Theirs was an enchanted existence in more ways than

one; what Olubas describes as the "final

dramatic transformation confirming

that [Hazzard] had left behind her

This is a rich and detailed account of a

cosmopolitan life, but the book is illu-minated by Olubas's understanding of

the elemental, almost alchemical inter-play between Hazzard's lived experi-

ence and her fiction. Olubas reads Haz-

ssionate sensitivity, detecting what

zard's diaries with a searching and com-

she describes as the "novelistic quality"

to Hazzard's "public engagement, a con-

stant tying together of threads of obser-vation and significance and moment to

form a scene of integrity a private reference point. There is always a larger con-

This is one of those rare biographies

obscure background".

ords matter. I can use too many of them," Bono writes in one of the 576 pages of his autobiography. The statement is self-deprecatory, but for the reader — dizzied by the U2 frontman's prolixity, his outpouring of superlatives, metaphors and adjectives — it smacks of a boast. Bono can use too many words, and by goodness, he will.

They are at least his own words. Unlike many rock memoirs. Surrender is not ghosted. It charts the life of the singer with one of the world's biggest bands in 40 chapters, each titled after a U2 song. We watch Bono and his bandmates go from Dublin lads enamoured with punk rock and charismatic Christianity to stadium giants with estimated album sales of over 150mn. We also follow our expansive author as he turns into a celebrity activist, raising billions by lob bying the rich and powerful to alleviate poverty and Aids in Africa.

The book is most engaging in its early stages, chronicling young Paul Hewson's upbringing in a working-class Dublin neighbourhood. His full nickname, bestowed on him by a childhood friend, was Bono Vox of O'Connell Street. The Latin translation of "good voice" was unintended: the moniker was adapted

from the name of a hearing-aid shop. In those days, the Hewson with the good voice was Bob, Bono's opera-loving father, an amateur tenor.

When Bono became a professional singer, Bob would snipe that his son was "a baritone who thinks he's a tenor". In opera, tenors are heroes, with baritones typecast as buffoons or villains, "One of the great put-downs and pretty accu-

rate," the younger Hewson admits. Put-downs were common in their relationship, which was holed below the waterline by the death of Bono's mother. Iris, when he was 14 in 1974. He poignantly describes himself as having few memories of her: "The simple explanation is that in our house, when she died. she was never spoken of again."

This is the silence at the heart of Bono's loquacious book. It sets the stage for an intriguingly unstable emotional dynamic, similar to the fraught fatherson relationship that Bruce Springsteen described in his excellent memoir Born to Run. But Bono does not muster the same psychological depth. He tells us about suffering attacks of rage, yet opts to skate past them. He writes at length and with affection about his wife Ali, a childhood sweetheart he started dating soon after his mother's death. But the difficulties in what has evidently been a strong and successful marriage provoke some maddeningly imprecise flights of prose, "She was all the women I needed but fortunately/unfortunately not all at could never be known." And so on.

U2 are his alternative family. Their rise takes place over hundreds of pages at a strangely rapid clip. One moment they are thrilled to be playing London's small Marquee Club in 1980, the next they are stealing the gargantuan stage at Wembley during Live Aid in 1985.

Famous names multiply as the band's profile grows alongside Bono's humanitarianism. When he asks, "So where is God?", the reader's impulse is to head to the index. Somewhere between "Gates, Bill" and "Gorbachev, Mikhail", right? But no. He turns out to be elsewhere. "God is with the poor and the vulnerable, and God is with us if we are with them," writes Bono, a life-long Christian with a yen for third-way solutionism.

Improbably effusive descriptions mount up, from the "wonderful mischief" of Pope John Paul II to the "superwomen" who were 1990s supermodels. Discussing his identity as an "artist slash activist slash investor", Bono declares that: "You might say I'm flying a hot-air balloon over some very interesting ter-rain." But it gets harder to spot the interesting terrain as the hot air intensifies.

Ludovic Hunter-Tilney is the FT's pop music critic

### Tencent's challenge in China

Lulu Chen's book charts how WeChat's success has created a dilemma for Pony Ma's tech empire. By Ryan McMorrow

t is perhaps Beijing's greatest tool for surveillance and control -WeChat. The widely popular "eve rything app" boasts over a billion users who use it to scroll through social posts, pay for food or scan the pandemic-related health codes required to enter restaurants or parks.

WeChat's success has turned its wner, the internet platform Tencent, into China's most important private company with a market value of \$360bn and the biggest challenger to the tech giants of Silicon Valley. But it has also pitched Tencent into a perilous world where technology and business run up against the demands of authoritarian politics. This was recently made clear when Tencent shut down thousands of user accounts for sharing images of a rare Beijing protest attacking President Xi Jinping as a "dictator and traitor"

Maybe that is why Tencent has done little to open up to the outside world. The Shenzhen-based company rarely divulges information about itself. Its founder Pony Ma remains mostly an enigma. Lulu Chen seeks to change that with her book Influence Empire, the first English language deep dive into the company's origins, expansion and its

What emerges is the story of a nerdy



Empire: The China's Tech Ambition Hodder & Stoughton £25, 256 pages

kid in love with astronomy who moved on to programming just as the information age dawned on China. Starting out with pagers, Ma moved on to instant messaging, eventually striking gold by copying and adapting a foreign instant messenger service, writes Chen, a reporter for Bloomberg.

Pony's ability to pivot and encourage competition has made him arguably China's most successful entrepreneur. Unlike his nearest rival for that crown, Jack Ma, he is reticent and thoughtful. Those traits have helped him remain at the helm of Tencent. While Jack has been forcibly silenced by Beijing, Pony "has made a career of hiding behind the scenes", writes Chen.

Tencent has two core competencies: capital and traffic volume, the company's president Martin Lau told Chen. This has helped it to become one of the world's largest tech investors, particularly in Chinese start-ups. But, while that may please shareholders — who now own a portfolio of shares worth over \$150bn - it has also become a bit of a liability as Beijing becomes wary of  $Tencent's\,empire\,building.$ 

executives had already spent years adapting to shifting political winds. Unable to get approval for a video game in 2018, Tencent remade it entirely with input from China's military recruitment arm. The more nationalist result was approved by the censors and went on to Tencent's most damaging concession

Yet, as Chen makes clear, Tencent

to the government is the escalating censorship and surveillance of WeChat, For journalists working in China, it is increasingly clear that everything writ-ten in WeChat is monitored. The app has also become central to the govern ment's zero-Covid policies, allowing authorities to circumscribe citizens movement.

The challenge for Tencent is that the closer it gets to Beijing, the more wary the outside world becomes of the company, jeopardising its global expansion. If the company becomes a symbol of Beijing-guided techno-authoritarianism, some may start to think twice about accepting its money.

As Chen notes, "Pony's conundrum is how to propel Tencent into the future while appeasing his political masters a delicate manoeuvre with unimaginahle stakes."

She suggests its future may lie with drawing closer to Beijing by becoming "one mighty all-knowing yet obedient company" so officials don't have to play whack-a-mole keeping hordes of other

Ryan McMorrow is the FT's China corporate tech correspondent

### Books

ohn le Carré was a published author for 60 years, but an intelligence operative for just six. In 1958, after Oxford and a brief stint teaching at Eton, he was recruited by MI5 before moving across to MI6. Assigned under diplomatic cover to West Germany, he loved the country but not the job and quit in 1964 once the success of his third book, The Spy Who Came in from the Cold, turned him into the star of a new generation of thriller writers.

When he died in 2020 at the age of 89, he had written more than 20 novels and his reputation was matched only by his sales figures. The two books reviewed here are the first of note to appear since his death, and in different ways they allow us to re-evaluate the relationship between the ex-spy and his fiction.

Abandoned as a child by his mother,

Abandoned as a child by his mother, and with a comman for a father, le Carré had learnt early on that betrayal and love go hand in hand: he was himself informing on his fellow students for the security service when he was barely out of his teens. He would probably therefore not have been surprised by The Secret Heart, a kiss-and-tell by a former lover writing under the pseudonym of "Suleika Dawson". Along with the spilled beans and lashings of sex typical of the genre, her memoir brings out an important truth about him: a man who was a spy relatively briefly lived like one for most of his life.

In September 1982, when he met Dawson, le Carré was 50, at the height of his powers, and a household name. He had been married a decade to his second wife, Jane, who would remain with him until his death (outliving him only by a few weeks). Dawson was, in her own words, "a tall blonde city girl not long out of college and generally up for anything". She was working in audiobooks when le Carré came into the studio one day to read Smiley's People; a boozy unch followed. Their second meeting, nearly a year later, kick-started an affair that lasted many months.

Dawson describes the exhausting tradecraft he imposed on their assignations: the cut-outs and cover stories, encoded addresses and false trails. Never stop the taxi outside the house, never reveal your real destination. Nicknames, which imply possession and exclude outsiders, came easily to le Carré: he does not take long to dub Dawson "Our Sue". As for the "Cow", best not to ask. His own nom de plume was a mystery whose origin he claimed to have forgotten. He would surely have appreciated hers, with its deft nod to Max Beerbohm's comic heroine Zuleika Dobson.

A keen observer with a razor-sharp memory, le Carré was also a mimic, who did the late Queen in "a respectful but scrupulously accurate falsetto", Harold Macmillan's "patrician drawl" and music-hall mockney, all in the course of a single meal. Acting came easily to him. One morning on holiday he headed out for a walk with a newspaper under his arm. When Dawson pointed out that it was old, he saluted her with it and left; when he came back, it was gone. The episode puzzled her until she realised he had been rehears-



## Writer, lover, father, spy

Two contrasting books reveal the enduring connection between John le Carré's

fiction and the years he spent working as a secret agent. By Mark Mazower

The Secret Heart — John le Carré: An Intimate Memoir by Sulelka Dawson Mudlark £25, 352 pages

A Private Spy: The Letters of John le Carré edited by Tim Cornwell

Above: John le Carré in Greece in 1964, the year after the publication of 'The Spy Who Came in from the Cold' – Jean-Caude ing a scene that duly appeared in his

nextbook.

Amuch less racy read, A Private Spy is a valuable collection of letters that ranges from le Carré's school years — prep school, then Sherborne — to his final days. The volume is beautifully edited by Tim Cornwell, one of his sons, who himself died tragically young earlier this year, and enlivened by some of le Carré's own excellent cartoons. Although there is perhaps too much professional correspondence, there are a few gems, such as the fabulously lethal put-down le Carré pens to the head of stakeholder relations at Novartis — big pharma was a late bête noire. Brexiters were another, and his very last letter fulminates against the "Etonian oik" leading the charge to perdition — Boris Johnson.

The letters selected here say nothing about Dawson, nor — with the important exception of the messy love triangle that ended his first marriage – very much about the other numerous romances that were clearly so vital to him. What

they present is an uneasy man who hid behind words. Affable with chums from school, university and "the Office", he tends to be archly self-conscious with fellow writers, as though fearful they will see through him. Endearments to his two wives — Ann Sharp, whom he married in 1954, and then Jane — can sound forced. Genuine tenderness is reserved mostly for his brother, his sons, his beloved stepmother and — after a long gap — his mother.

Le Carré's fraudster and war profiteer father Ronnie, the bane of his life until he died in 1975, was always a case apart. A gift for a writer and a curse for a son, Ronnie was declared bankrupt when le Carré was five and long-suffering Olive fled, leaving her two boys to Ronnie's dodgy entourage of grifters, "lovelies" and strongmen. It was a rackety upbringing and the anger never really vanished. Literary success offered if not redemption, then some measure of security and revenge, and when Ronnie protests his son's revelations to a journalist from the Sunday Express in 1965, le

Carré pens a stiff reply and signs off with a chilly "Yours ever". Which, as he knew better than anyone, he was. His escape into a life of letters had

His escape into a life of letters had begun in the late 1950s, when he was a young MI5 desk officer with a Home Counties commute, an unhappy wife and kids in tow. His boss John Bingham was no mean thriller writer himself. He provided le Carré with his friendship and encouragement as well as his literary agent and his publisher; in return, le Carré gave him immortality in the persona of George Smiley, the ruminative, ageing anti-Bond who serves as a touchstone of virtue in a fallen world.

Bingham's daughter Charlotte would later turn those years into light comedy in MI5 and Me — surely the funniest book ever about the security service. But le Carré had more serious aspirations, and his first novel, Call for the Dead



A 1997 self-portrait by le Carré

showcased his astringent blending of the personal and political.

The early works had an existential starkness, depicting espionage as a lethal business of pointless cock-ups run by bumblers deluding themselves (as he once put it) with "Little England fantasies". He took a wrong turn in The Naïve and Sentimental Lover in order to recount the breakdown of his first marriage: a flawed but revealing novel, it was panned for leaving the spies behind. Once back in the world of intelligence, the letters chart the growing recognition of his achievement and clarify key influences on his prose. Dickens in particular recurs as a point of reference, a pioneer in the alchemy of turning childhood pain into great entertainment: le Carré's 1986 masterpiece A Perfect Spy — written during his affair with Dawson — has much of Dickens in the theatricality of its characters, the sheer range of the story and the virtuosic brio of the telling of it.

The genre le Carré's name was identified with was a device not a passion. "Spying," he confided in 1993 to Mikhail Lyubimov, a former KGB officer he had befriended, "is a subject that increasingly bores me." What it offered was a way for him to explore the universal

MI5 trained him in interrogation: has anyone done dialogue as hand-to-hand combat better?

human themes that beset him — the impossibility of trust, the precariousness of intimacy, the endless search for love. If Dawson's memoir reveals a man guarded even in his most unguarded moments, the letters show how fiction gave him a route into the tangled recesses of his own heart.

recesses of his own heart.

What won him readers was the brilliance with which this personal psychic quest allowed him at the same time to anatomise the "theatre of manners" of the deeply odd country he called his own. He was a member of that misfit generation born too late for the war and too early to be able to leave it behind. Class was an all-importantimposture he understood from inside: the posh schoolboy had a "pure Irish" grandmother who had been a lady's maid. MI5 trained him in interrogation: has anyone done dialogue as hand-to-hand combat better? MI6 showed him England turned inside out. When a careers officer asks young Pym in A Perfect Spy: "Do you like abroad or hate it?", the response comes back instantly: "Abroad is super."

At home, on the other hand, the conmen and the idiot toffs were rampant, then and for ever. Ronnie's headquarters he dubbed the Reichskanzlei (evoking Hitler's Reich Chancellery); Eton, his erstwhile employer, he reviled for churning out what he described as the Herrenvolk (master race) whose delusions of empire had laid the country low. The real enemies were within. If England loved him, this meant it was always capable of betraying him too.

Mark Mazower directs the Columbia Institute for Ideas and Imagination in Paris

### Think global, act 'glocal'

re you an investor looking to make a buck from the shift to clean energy? Or would you like to launch your own green start-up? Perhaps you have zero interest in business and just want to know how to make a difference to a gathering global climate crisis.

There is an answer for everyone in a new and pleasingly diverse list of climate change books, but first a word about the one that you are likely to see first in a bookshop: The Climate Book "created" by Greta Thunberg (Allen Lane, £25). The Swedish activist has not

written this handsomely presented book herself. Instead, she has persuaded the likes of Margaret Atwood, Naomi Klein and Thomas Piketty to join a team of more than 100 writers, activists and researchers who have each written an essay on climate change.

Some succeed more than the others, and the total package is unlikely to reveal much that anyone with a serious interest in the topic does not already know. But it is an attractive Christmas present for those seeking an overview of the problem and how some thinkers would deal with it.

Many of Thunberg's contributors regard business, and indeed 21st-century capitalism, as more of a cause than an answer to a warming planet. But Columbia University's Pro-

But Columbia University's Professor Bruce Usher makes the opposite case in his book, Investing in the Era of Climate Change (Columbia University Press,



By Pilita Clark

\$27.95/£22). Usher has been investing in climate change ventures since 2002, when the green investment opportunities were far less attractive than they are today. He argues that the falling cost and rising competitiveness of wind power, solar farms and other clean energy sources is good news for capitalists and the climate alike.

More than half of all emissions can be eliminated by renewables, energy storage and electric vehicles, he says. And there is plenty of evidence that countries can decarbonise and maintain economic growth.

For those who already run a business, or hope to, the UK's Juliet Davenport has written The Green Start-up: Make Your Business Better for the Planet (Heligo Books, £16.99).

Davenport knows of what she speaks. She founded Good Energy, a pioneering supplier of renewable electricity, more than 20 years ago, and became that rare thing: a female energy company chief executive. She stepped down as CEO last year and now chairs a solar power group that is believed to be the first of its kind to list on the London Stock Exchange with an all-female board.

Her book is full of practical tips for eco-conscious entrepreneurs, covering everything from the dos and don'ts of raising start-up money to managing culture clashes like the one she confronted after taking over a company that was largely run by men driven almost entirely by commercial priorities. Merging this group with her gender-balanced, climate-committed staff took a lot of effort, and it is real-life stories such as this that make the book invaluable reading.

Many of Thunberg's contributors regard business as a cause of a warming planet

Another guide to real-life climate action comes in The Big Fix: 7 Practical Steps to Save Our Planet by Hal Harvey and Justin Gillis (Simon & Schuster £20/\$28.99). Though written primarily for US readers, its main message applies well beyond American borders: it's not enough to go vegan or cut out flying. Wider systemic change is needed and by focusing on the main policies needed to achieve this, individual "green citizens" can make a difference.

Finally, the influential US thinker and prolific author Jeremy Rifkin has a new book, **The**  Age of Resilience: Reimagining Existence on a Rewilding Earth (Swift Press, £20).

Rifkin's earlier titles — The End of Work, The Third Industrial Revolution, The Green New Deal — have attracted fans in government departments and bookshops alike. In his new work, he returns to a familiar theme: what he calls the "efficiency imperative", or the relentless quest to consume and discard natural resources to increase material wealth.

This concept underpinned what Rifkin calls the age of progress. But now, in an increasingly alarming world of warming temperatures and global pandemic, he thinks humanity is shifting to an age of resilience that could transform our relationship with the natural world and each other.

How might this play out? Rifkin

How might this play out? Rifkin sees a future of sweeping economic and social shifts where productivity gives way to regenerativity and gross domestic product to quality-of-life indicators. Consumerism, corporate conglomerates and globalisation all wither, while "eco-steward-ship", high-tech co-operatives and "glocalisation" flourish.

The book will undoubtedly prove beguiling for many readers, even as it infuriates others. It is rarely different for a writer who has spent decades warning of the need to address environmental problems that the human species caused and is still struggling to fix.

Pilita Clark is the FT's business

### Found in translation

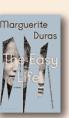
An English edition of Marguerite Duras's 1944 novel is an overdue opportunity to rediscover her work. By John Self

ood career move," said Gore Vidal on the death of Truman Capote; but in truth, most writers when they die slip all too easily from public notice. The French author Marguerite Duras (1914-1996) has never been as widely read in English as she deserves to be: she's best known for her 1984 novel *The Lover* and her screenplay for Alain Resnais's 1959 film

The publication of this, the first English translation of Duras's second novel *The Easy Life* (1944), by Emma Ramadan and Olivia Baes, is therefore both a welcome discovery and a chance to remember her work generally.

In contrast to its title, The Easy Life is a hot, intense book, throwing us into the fervid life of 25year-old Francine in the village of Les Buyues in south-west France.

"Jérôme walked back to Les Bugues broken in two," she begins. Jérôme is Francine's uncle, and her brother Nicolas has just violently beaten him, at Francine's provocation, after she told him that Jérôme has been spending nights with Clémence, Nicolas's adopted sister and the family maid. Clémence, you see, is also Nicolas's lover, and preg-



Life
by Marguerite
Duras,
translated
by Emma
Ramadan and
Olivia Baes
Bloomsbury
£12.99/\$18
208 pages

The Easy

nant with his child. Francine spilled the beans to Nicolas about Jérôme and Clémence "only because I was alone while they were together", and now it becomes clear that Nicolas's attack will have a cataclysmic effect not only on Jérôme, but on the rest of the family too.

The narrator's mother and father appear only rarely, as symbols of order in a family of "dreamers" and "degenerates" where "chaos had won out". Mostly the stage is cleared for the younger generation and their temptations: Francine and her would-be lover Tiène; Nicolas and his friend Luce ("for years now



For a range of recommendations — from economics and politics books to fiction and food & drink — by

[they] had wanted to know the taste of each other's mouths").

But just when passion seems to be taking over, we find that the shocks aren't finished yet. The first part of the book ends with a kick, and the second replaces the external frenzy with Francine's internal wrangling as she undergoes an existential crisis — "if I could open myself up and cleanse myself of bitterness..."—which

leads to yet another tragedy From all this you may sense that there is at times an over-ripe-ness to *The Easy Life* which betrays Duras's young age: she was 26 when she wrote it. But the ungovernable emotions that flood the pages are authentic. Duras helped to popularise the French trend for writing from life, though unlike this year's Nobel winner, memoirist Annie Ernaux, Duras's experiences were mostly shaped into fiction. In the year prior to writing *The Easy Life* she had undergone exceptional distress: the death of her younger brother, the stillbirth of her first child and the imprisonment of her husband in Buchenwald.

The intensity of the mature Durassian tone is present here, even if the book lacks the "dépouillé" (stripped-back) style of her later works. Raymond Queneau read it for the publisher Gallimard, considered it "muddled" but published it anyway, convinced that Duras had a true writer's voice. You can see what he meant: The Easy Life, despite the chaos, is not just a valuable insight into the development of a great writer, but an intense experience in its own right.

hen did you last revel in the glory of a night sky undisturbed by light pollution, with the Milky Way glowing gently between thousands of twinkling stars? Decades ago, in my case — and many urban inhabitants of our increasingly overlit world would have to answer "never".

Astronomers, concerned about the scientific and aesthetic implications of growing light pollution, started a "dark skies" movement in the 1980s. Their calls for curbs on excessive illumination have been taken up by ecologists such as Johan Eklöf, a Swedish bat scientist, who argue that the impact on wildlife and biodiversity may be as serious as better known factors such as habitat loss, climate change and overuse of agricultural chemicals.

Eklöf expresses his fears with cogent clarity in The Darkness Manifesto. He starts with his personal distress as he sees nocturnal wildlife dwindling in the Swedish churchyards where he has spent 20 years observing bats, hedge-hogs, moths and other insects through

dusk and into the night. Then Eklöf takes his argument around the world. Baby turtles are disorientated by the bright lights of seaside developments as they hatch on tropical beaches. The navigational instinct of migratory birds is confused as they fly at night over land that was once lit only by the moon and stars but is now a glaring grid of cities and suburbs. Bright lights exert a fatal attraction on insects through a "vacuum cleaner effect"; an extreme example is the Luxor Sky Beam in Las Vegas, which pulls them in from as far as Arizona more than 100 miles away.

Insects - essential food for many other animals and pollinators for plants

— are particularly vulnerable to light pollution, Eklöf shows. About half of insect species are nocturnal, requiring predictable darkness to feed and find a mate. Many navigate by the pale glow of the moon and stars, while artificial light disrupts the hormonal systems that control their growth and reproduction.

"There's a whole world out there gov erned by small changes in natural light, ecosystems that are woken up and set off by different times and programmed by different light intensities and wave lengths," Eklöf writes. "One animal falls asleep, another animal's work begins and chains of events, hormone cycles and behaviours begin and end when the light shows exactly what time of day it is, in what to us are sometimes very subtle ways."

Motorists have been aware of declining insect numbers for a couple of decades through the "windscreen phenomenon" – a reduction in the number of

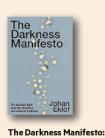


Above: grasshoppers swarm a light off the Las Vegas Strip, July 2019 — Bridget Bennett/AFP/Getty

## Let there be less light

Clive Cookson on how our bright cities and

suburbs are harming the world's wildlife



How Light Pollution Threatens the Ancient Rhythms of Life by Johan Eklöf, translated by Elizabeth DeNoma

flying creatures splattered on the car's front window, headlights and bumpers. At first some scientists doubted the validity of the windscreen evidence was it perhaps the result of changing car design or driving habits? But entomologists are now convinced that light pollution is contributing to a huge insect die-off around the world, threatening a mass extinction of life on Earth in conjunction with other environmental factors driven by human activity, including global warming, changing land use and

chemical pollution. Eklöf is at his best when writing about wildlife, in a style that is sometimes elegiac and often urgent. (Plaudits to his translator Elizabeth DeNoma.) Later in the book he examines people's fear of the dark and greed for light, which may be natural for a diurnal species like ours but which we indulge to excess. For Eklöf darkness means far more than the mere

absence of light: "Darkness is a phenomenon in its own right . . . yet it still seems infinitely more difficult to define than light." He revels in it — both pitch blackness and the more nuanced dark of a moonless night outdoors or the subtleties of semi-darkness that Junichiro Tanizaki memorably explored in his 1933 meditation In Praise of Shadows.

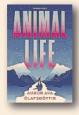
Now light-emitting diodes are replacing the incandescent bulbs and fluorescent tubes that dominated the 20th century. LEDs are not only more energy efficient but also far more capable of being controlled in a way that could reduce their adverse effects. In reality, Eklöf points out, the opposite is happening. The low cost of LEDs has led us to blast ourselves with more light than ever.

A global campaign against light pollu-tion is gathering pace. Several countries and regions are introducing regulations to curb excessive illumination. At the same time, remote dark sky sites are attracting more tourists and residents keen to experience the nights that nature intended. But the world needs to accelerate its embrace of darkness. To quote Eklöf's concluding phrase, carpe noctem.

Clive Cookson is the FT's science editor

### Northern souls

Set during a stormy Icelandic winter, this evocative story of self-discovery is leavened by glimpses of humour amid the darkness, writes Mia Levitin



**Animal Life** by Auður Ava translated by Brian FitzGibb Pushkin Press £9.99, 192 pages

he word "light" appears 175 times in the latest novel by prizewinning Icelandic author Auður Ava Ólafsdóttir. It's an unsurprising obsession for a book set in Reykjavík around the winter solstice, when "the sun appears over the horizon just before noon but then vanishes again at

Ólafsdóttir's novels tend to involve self-discovery via a voyage. In *Miss Ice*land, the heroine and her gay best friend travel to Denmark in 1963 in the hope of finding a more progressive society. *Hotel Silence* is about a suicidal man buying a one-way ticket to a war-torn country, where he finds a new lease on life. In Butterflies in November, a woman takes a friend's deaf-mute son on a road-trip around Iceland's Ring Road after winning the lottery. The Greenhouse features a young man tending to grief in the gardens of a remote monastery.

The protagonist of *Animal Life*, Ólafs-

dóttir's seventh novel and the fifth to be translated into English, stays put. Dóm-hildur (Dýja) is a midwife who has delivered 1,922 babies to date; she is named after her great-aunt Dómhildur, nicknamed Fífa, part of a long maternal line of midwives. The paternal line are undertakers, so there's a family tradi-tion of handling people "when the light comes on" and "when the light goes of".

It's the week before Christmas and an 'explosive cyclogenesis" is forming in the ocean. Dyia's sister, a meteorologist. calls her with periodic updates on the storm's approach. The extreme weather is attributed to climate change: "Unusual, unnatural and unpredictable are her go-to adjectives when describing unparalleled weather," Dýja says of her sister.

"She recently added unprecedented."
With no children of her own, Dýja plans to work on Christmas Eve. She lost a baby 16 years ago, although her feel-ings about the stillbirth remain stoically unspoken. Unlike Butterflies in Novem ber, which is interspersed with flash-backs, the back story is not expounded. Instead, we get excerpts from Fífa's papers, including letters from a long-time pen pal, a midwife in Wales.

Not much happens in Animal Life in the way of plot. Dýja tries to make sense of the contents of a box bequeathed by great-aunt Fífa, which contains three unpublished manuscripts in which she is "trying to understand humans". One, titled Animal Life, is prescient in its ecological warnings. Fífa shared the emotional restraint

now shown by her grand-niece: "Didn't [she] write anything about fears, long-ings and desires?" Dýja's sister asks. When an Australian tourist rents the flat above Dýja's, hope flickers that he might turn into a love interest. Their flirtation stalls, alas, at talk of weather

Ólafsdóttir has said that she aims "to elevate everyday experiences — even to give them a religious dimension". Dýja ruminates on life and death alongside play-by-plays of food preparation. The author also displays what Umberto Eco referred to as a "giddiness of lists", including lists of the etymology of the word for midwife in various languages and songs containing the word "born". Just as Don Giovanni catalogued his 2,063 conquests, Dýja's enumerating the babies delivered and scaffolding her worldview with facts suggest an impetus to order a chaotic world.

 ${\it Animal Life} \ is \ smoothly \ translated \ into$ English by Brian FitzGibbon, with a charming quirkiness retained in words such as "pipsqueak". As a professor of art history, Ólafs-

dóttir's descriptions of light can be lovely, and her wry humour peeks through in places. "David Attenbor-ough's series help many women to relax at birth," Dýja says. "Even though the undertone might be the extinction of animals and plants and humanity's last days on Earth."

The novel lacks the narrative thrust of its predecessors, however. The reader, like Dýja, struggles to see the light at the end of the tunnel of a box of unpublishable writings, and may be disappointed by Fífa's chapter Conclusions. "On the contrary," Dýja finds, "chaos reigns

### Diversions

### **CHESS LEONARD BARDEN**

2022 has proved a vintage year for English senior chess, half a century after the Fischer v Spassky match that triggered a global boom and, for a while, made England the world No2 chess nation behind the former Soviet

Earlier English team golds in the world 50+ and 65+ and the European 50+ set a high barrier for John Nunn individual championship in

Assisi, Italy, but the eminent author of 30 high-class books and former top-10 grandmaster rose to the occasion and triumphed in a tense final round last Saturday.

Nunn scored 9/11, winning all his six games with White and converting in the logical style of his best vears. He sacrificed his queen for checkmate in round three, and refuted unsound play energetically in round five. It was a



highly competitive event of 192 players, and victory almost escaped the 67-yearold from Bude, Cornwall.

Nunn lost in round eight to Jens Kristiansen, but the Dane blundered to in a drawn bishop ending. A Fide online report gives fuller details, plus photos from the award 2497

Alistair Hill v Kayden Troff, Abu Dhabi 2016. White to move. How did the English amateur checkmate the US Solution, back page

### **BRIDGE PAUL MENDELSON**

At times of national crisis, we must all work extra hard to achieve our goals . .

West led Q♥, overtaken by East's A♥; 6♥ returned. The easy method to nine tricks would be the club finesse but, if it loses — as it does here – declarer goes down immediately, losing K🏚 and four heart tricks. Is there a more labour-intensive line that might provide additional chances?

round, knowing that East is now void in hearts, but that winners. South can now

new host going ahead (2,4)

everyone's welcome, any tir

3 Quiet in class! (5)

see bird (4)

6 Moderate a tale about

tackling vile criminal (9) 7 Instrument's seize-up curtailed task (5)

8 Next real trip is not in this

WH Smith perhaps (9) 17 When nursing bad back

and improvised (2-6) 20 Jerk's always turning up

morning's first papers with

22 Runs away taking member's

getting in round with alcohol

computer stuff (4.2) 24 Sharp intake of breath ove

king's command (5) 25 Complete non-drinker's

content removed (5)

heartily zonked (4)

21 Person who delivers

mate (7)

Dealer: South Game All South West 1C 1H 3NT NB

cashed and, the suit having

divided 3-3, 4♦ is also a winner. Declarer throws a club from hand.

hand, and 7♠ is led. When West plays low, South finesses with J. This wins, and K. can be cashed as the ninth trick.

had failed, then declarer club finesse. Crucially. that lazy play should be a

### **POLYMATH 1,207 SET BY AARDVARK**

- 1995 fully computer-animat-ed film produced by Pixar
- (3,5)
  5 Senility, especially when seen as an opportunity for travel, education, etc (5,3)
  11 Body of Muslim scholars Islamic sacred law and theol-
- ogy (5)

  12 Long coloured threads expelled in a stream from an aerosol can (5,6)

  13 Boy hero of the 1876 adventional transport by Model Tunion
- ture novel by Mark Twain 14 Mixture of enzymes secreted
- by the small intestine (7)

  15 Wayne, frontman of the
  1960s pop band The Mind-16 Hypothetical group of Eurasian language families (9)
- asian language raffilles (7)

  18 Fine pottery veined with
  gold upon blue (5,6,4)

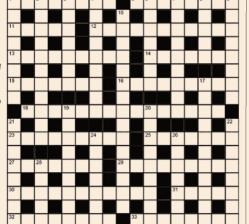
  23 Belgian city, site of the 1708
  battle in the War of the
  Spanish Succession (9)

  25 French marthematician who
  invented the enonymous
- invented the eponymous scale, used as a measuring device (7)
- character in the Blandings Castle stories by P. G. Wode-29 Lively Provencal open-chain
- 30 Variety of black grape grown in Spain, used to make Rioja
- 31 Convex moulding with a cross-section in the form of a quarter-circle or ellipse (5)
  32 Native or inhabitant of Scandings (2)
- dinavia (8) 33 Manager of Manchester United FC from 1981 to 1986

- Supporting stick with a crosspiece at the top like a crutch (3,5)
- 2 French actor who married the actress Simone Signoret in 1951 (4,7) 3 Large spiny lizard-like rep-
- New Zealand (7) Cocktail containing Scotch whisky and Drambule (5,4)
   Dutch scientist, 1629-95, who founded the wave theory of
- Broad sandy bridleway in
- Hyde Park, London (6,3)

  B Edwin Hardy \_\_\_\_\_, English fashion designer and royal dressmaker (5)

  The science of genetic improvement especially by provement, especially by selective breeding (8)
- 10 Producer of the musical Show Boat which premiered on Broadway in 1927 (7.8)
- on Broadway in 1927 (7,8)
  17 Living in or on the soil (11)
  19 Australian male swimmer,
  born 1982, winner of five
  Olympic gold medals (3,6)
  20 Moss-like plant which grows in moist ground, also called a
- Threepwood, fictional 21 Palladian hall in Norfolk built for Sir Robert Walpole (8)
  22 Capital and largest city of
  Sierra Leone (8)
  24 Tiny uninhabited Caribbean
  - island belonging to Antigua and Barbuda (7) 26 Traditional Hindu form of patterned decoration, espe cially on floors or doorsteps
  - mammal related to the mon-key, common in Madagascar





You can now solve our crosswords in the https://app.ft.com/crossword/crossword\_index

### return and wins the third

**CROSSWORD 17,268 SET BY ZAMORCA** 

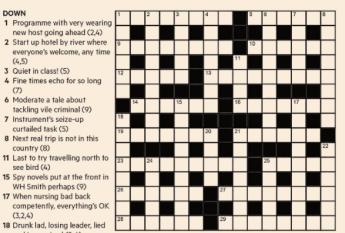
### ACROSS

- Efficient by virtue of assuming nothing (8)
- 5 Rock and roll band leaders with macho clothing (6)
- 9 Just a Minute's still broadcasting (6,2)
- 10 Mars perhaps has energy feeding living organism (6) 12 Worry boy's ignored, being
- different (5) 13 Conduct live audio-visual interviews, initially filling time (9)
- 14 Queen ordered nice fruit (6) 16 American former President's heading off, crossing Louisiana state (7) 19 Idea to reform system in
- 21 Mothers' Union takes on lies concocted for healthy breakfast cereal (6)
- 23 Fixed gin cocktail and threw it 25 Test sample of barista's tea
- 26 Unabashed, zebra stravs close to lion (6) 27 Bandage is not ultimately stopping pain (8)
- responsibility, keeping record 29 Pitched apartment failed to

## safely try an extra

alternative line. At trick 4, she lays down A♦ and leads 7♦. When West plays low, she finesses with J♦. If East wins, no damage is done, since East cannot lead hearts. When J $\blacklozenge$  wins, K $\blacklozenge$  is 5♠ is now played to A♠ in

If either of the finesses would have the time, and no option but, to risk the



Solution 17,262



You can now solve our crosswords in the new FT crossword app at

# 'Acting is a tool to teach people

Letitia Wright | The star of 'Black Panther: Wakanda

Forever' and 'The Silent Twins' tells Enuma Okoro

about choosing films with a positive impact

Right: Letitia Wright, star

of 'Black Panther' sequel

Below: Chadwick Boseman

NAACP Image Awards - Eku

hugs Wright at the 2019

Wakanda Forever'

n the opening scene of the recently released *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*, the African princess Shuri is seen walking quickly and anxiously around her lab. As the smart-

est person in the kingdom, an expert in science and technology, she is trying to find a cure for her dying brother, T'Challa. He will not survive, and the torch of Black Panther will be passed down to her.

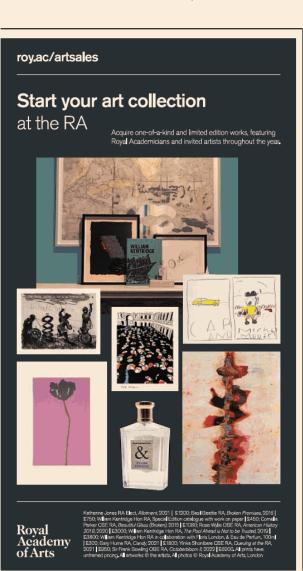
For Letitia Wright, the 29-year-old British-Guyanese actress who plays Shuri, the experience of making the film involved a similar inheritance. Having starred in the first Black Panther alongside Chadwick Boseman, she found herself taking the lead role following the

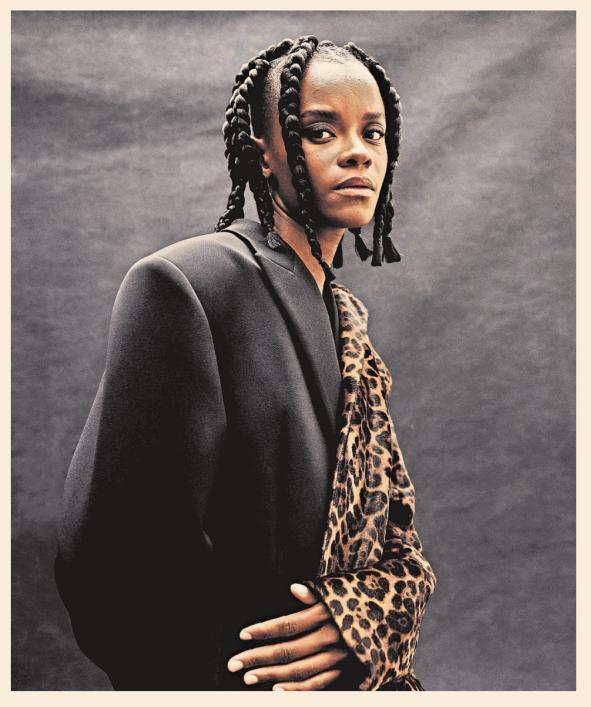
Born in Guyana, Wright moved with seven, and grew up in Tottenham, north London. It was there she began practising changing her accent so she could fit it in her new surroundings. One could say it was her first foray into acting Now, two decades and many awards later, she is having a golden moment, with three movies released concurrently this season in which she has the leading role: Wakanda Forever, The Silent

When we talk, I am her third interview in a row and although she is

actor's untimely death in 2020. "I've seen it as a responsibility and an opportunity to honour [Boseman], and to honour the ways in which the first film had an impact on our world," her family to the UK when she was

obviously tired, there is an impressive focus that comes through in her Shuri has been a gift for her career, but meant for young girls around the world.





"I went to set playing Shuri in the first film just excited about being a part of such a cool story. I thought that being a princess in an African nation was the coolest thing ever — I didn't realise that being a princess in an African nation plus a tech genius was the coolest

As well as boosting her career, playing Shuri opened her eyes to the sphere of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

"Seeing the reaction from the audiences and the young people around the world really allowed me to see the importance of STEM, especially for young women, and how much this role has empowered them to know there is a place for them. [Film] is a beautiful industry where we need more women's

But when I suggest that Wakanda Forever really feels like her movie, she immediately balks at the idea.

"I've not really seen it like that . . . It is clearly a collaborative and an ensemble space. I never see myself like that in any of my films, even when I'm the quote unquote 'lead', because it takes a village to make a movie."

This respect and admiration for her cast mates feels characteristic of Wright. Her focus is less on personal fame and acclaim and more on the quality of her craft and on projects she feels make a necessary impact in the world. But what she can't deny is that because of her talent, she is experiencing a remarkable career moment.

Having been nominated for an Emmy for *Black Mirror* in 2018 and a Bafta for Steve McQueen's Small Axe last year, she has now been nominated by British Independent Film Awards for her role in *The Silent Twins*, her second movie of the festive season. Watching the film, it is easy to discern the range of Wright's acting skills and to understand why she is currently at the centre of the

publiceye.
Agnieszka Smoczynska's movie, which Wright co-produced, is based on the non-fiction book by Mariorie Wallace about June and Jennifer Gibbons, identical twins who were born in 1963 and raised in Wales, and only spoke to one another. At the age of 19 they were institutionalised at Broadmoor Hospital for 11 years. Wright stars as June Gibbons alongside Tamara Lawrance as Jennifer. For Wright, the movie is a fascinating glimpse into the creative minds of the sisters as well as a deeply sad account of the horrific







Above, from top:

Wright with

Lawrance, left,

in 'The Silent

Twins': with Danai Gurira.

left, in

'Wakanda

'Small Axe'

Forever'; Wright

starred in Steve

(2020) — Lukasz Bak/ Focus Features; Eli Adé, BBC, McQueen Limited/Des Willie

treatment they endured as they were misunderstood and misdiagnosed.

"I love how creative they are. I love the fact that they just wanted to be writers, and the storyline focuses on the ways in which they tried to make that a reality," Wright says. "And I love that we get to educate our audience on the ways in which sometimes as a society we misjudge people. And when that's done, there are consequences. And the consequences are that people miss out on life."

In Aisha, also released last month, Wright plays a young Nigerian asylum seeker caught in Ireland's immigration system. All three characters - Shuri,

June and Aisha — have a visceral inner strength, despite their different and complex circumstances and the respec tive emotional or mental stability of

Although Wright had dreams of being basketball player, she was deeply affected at age 14 by the 2006 movie Akeelah and the Bee, about a gifted African American girl from south Los Angeles who competes in a national spelling bee. Wright says the film taught her about the power of representation and ignited something in her about being a part of what acting could do to viewers.

"[Watching] Keke Palmer in *Akeelah* and the Bee was a turning point for me . I saw myself in the character she played . . . I felt understood and empowered. The fact that her character wasn't stereotypical. Her whole aim was just to be the best at spelling, and they made a whole movie about that. And she was black. I wanted to play roles that were like that, that were empower ing for young black women.

Today, Wright selects roles by considering how she can fully inhabit a character and the positive impact that those characters might have in the world.

"There's an integrity that I try to have with my parts," she says. "I have a love and respect for the craft [of acting] because it's a tool to teach people something or to exchange with people in a way that's really intimate. I care about storytelling and l care for how I make people feel when they watch something of mine. I don't want to waste your time.'

In 2020, during the pandemic, Wright went a step further, creating her own production company, Threesixteen, to make projects like the ones she has chosen to act in. She admits that not every project will become a blockbuster, but considers it more important to invest fully in her work and to leave her audience with something to think about.

"If at the end of the day, I can go home and feel like: that was really meaningful and, OK, not many people saw it, but I really poured my heart into it, then that's success to me," she says. "Even if you don't like it, even if you say 'that wasn't for me', there's something you have to take away. Something about my movie or my TV show has to make you walk away thinking about something. If it doesn't, then I've failed."

'Black Panther: Wakanda Forever' and 'Aisha' are in cinemas now. 'The Silent Twins' is in UK cinemas from December 9

## Icons of the streets

Architecture | Street furniture is often the most

overlooked form of design but it defines our lives

– and is rapidly changing. By Edwin Heathcote

n between us and our architecture exists a landscape of public objects which, though solid, familiar and seemingly ever-present, remains strangely invisible. Who really notices the shape of a street light, the clusters of communications boxes, the text cast into manhole covers or the way people use a bench?

The erosion and privatisation of pub-lic space and the decline of the high street or main street has been much discussed. But street furniture, arguably the most public and civic of architectures, remains curiously unexplored. And it is rapidly and radically changing The British street stalwarts of my childhood in the 1970s, the telephone boxes, newspaper kiosks and public lavatories are fast disappearing, overtaken by changes in technology or undermined

by municipal spending cuts.

They are being replaced by a very different layer of public infrastructure, much of it to do with surveillance and control: street cameras and CCTV, big chunks of concrete and steel to stop truck bombs, seating designed to be inhospitable to the homeless, bus stops the prime function of which is to advertise to passing motorists. Street furniture has become an expression of alienation rather than amenity.

When Baron Haussmann smashed his way through medieval Paris in the 19th century, creating the formal city of avenues and elegant apartment blocks, he

created an in-between landscape that mediated between the scale of the urban block and the human body. There were street lights and pissoirs, newsstands and benches, drinking fountains and advertising columns, an infrastructure of industrial iron which made the city between the buildings a more comfortable and accommodating place.

These urban objects even had their own portraitist. Photographer Charles Marville, who documented the changes in the Paris cityscape and the grandeur of the new architecture in the 1850s and  $60s\,also\,meticulously\,shot\,these\,objects,$ most notably the elaborate street lights, as if they were figures in the city, giving them the dignity of cast-iron citizens.





His photos of this infrastructure of public objects were exhibited around the world, promoting Paris as the ideal

Photography developed in parallel with the boom in street furniture: through photographs we understand the growing impact of street furniture on metropolitan life. As cameras evolved, street photography, snatching images of urban life, Cartier-Bresson's decisive moment, emerges as a form.

So often, it is the contrast between the fixed solidity of a street fitting and the mobility of the body which makes the shot. Stanley Kubrick started as a New York snapper and his 1945 shot of a dejected newspaper seller has it all; the headlines ("Roosevelt Dead"), the shock, the ennui, the ephemeral, the words and the face. The kiosk becomes a miniature theatre. Likewise in Helen Levitt's magical 1988 shot of a family stuffed into a phone booth, the contrast between squishy bodies and inflexible box becomes farce.

In other instances furniture replaces the body, acting as a stand-in. For André Kertész in the 1920s, the chairs of Paris parks become memories of a conversation, temporary traces of the bodies that earlier inhabited them. For Richard Wentworth, in 2001, the iron railing with a glove impaled on it becomes both display and surrogate hand, a strange and slightly sinister juxtaposition of two shiny black objects. The brilliant Vivian Maier and Saul Leiter found beauty in the banal: a doll in a trash can, the boiled-sweet colours of traffic lights seen through rain drops on a window.

These are things in dialogue with us, a world of objects made visible through our noticing the small interactions and the striking juxtapositions. Today, J Wesley Brown brilliantly captures the



contrast between the aspirational messages of the ads which are now the raison d'être of bus shelters with the condition of those taking shelter, the desolate, the bored, the poor, the unseen. Here too the shelter becomes a Beckettian stage of endless waiting.

In a manner, the bench is the apotheosis of urban life, the city's most democratic place and a forum from which to watch life happen. In a commercialised public arena in which we have become recognised as consumers and customers rather than citizens, the bench remains an unalloyed public good. Yet even here we find the seats subdi-

vided so that they become inhospitable to the homeless or the otherwise horizontal. Associations with queer cruising accelerated the decline of public lavatories as prurient councils looked for excuses to shutter them. A recent campaign saw London's last surviving gaslights saved from conversion to cheaper LED and illustrated how emotionally attached we can become to the these fittings. They make our collective space.

The early days of the pandemic saw some curious anomalies, including benches taped off like crime scenes lest



André Kertész's 'Broken Bench' (1962); Kertész's 'Champs Elysèes (Chairs of Paris)' (1929); a 'parklet' in the Tribeca neighbourhood of Manhattan; Helen Levitt's 'New York phone booth' (1988) — Estate of André Kertész, New York Times / Redux / Eyevine, Helen Levitt Film Documents LLC/Arles Festival

people should congregate. Then out-doors was declared better than indoors and the streets filled with new types of furniture. There were garden sheds repurposed as dining booths and streets temporarily pedestrianised by restaurants. And it gave a huge boost to "par-klets", those hybrid bench/planter/ pedestrianisation devices originally developed in San Francisco as a witty way of recolonising parking spaces.

Elsewhere though a new layer of com-munications kit has begun to clog our pavements. 5G masts as thick as tree trunks, mysterious pressed metal boxes clustered in groups, broadband boosters, air quality monitors, speed cameras, traffic cameras, a whole panoply of things that might make communication easier in the ether but which coagulate into ugly streets in which pedestrians are squeezed into ever tighter spaces.

Street furniture was once a form of branding; grand cast-iron street lights, elegant railings and fountains a marker of public prosperity. Think of London's lipstick-red post and phone boxes, Parisian metro signs, New York's helm-eted hydrants. These small things define public life.

But now even Paris has succumbed to the commodification of street furniture. The city's new newsstands lack the chaotic energy of the originals, the handbillpasted Colonnes Morris replaced by illuminated versions carrying backlit ads for cosmetics rather than theatre and cabaret programmes. The beautiful Wallace drinking fountains still work, unlike London's, which are mostly dry and clogged up with leaves and fag ends. Their replacements, the bottle refill stations, which could have been beautiful civic moments in the public realm, instead manifest as garish plastic water-coolers like idiot urban emoiis.

Yet many of the things in our streets continue to give pleasure and make the city richer — from the bouquiniste stalls lining the Seine in Paris to the hot dog and coffee stands in New York, which light up the streets before the day has started. Benches, bins and Belisha beacons are as much characters in the city as we are. Street furniture, that smallest and most public of architectures, continues to evolve, to shift in purpose and emphasis, defining and reframing our streets while we continue to walk on by, barely noticing.

'On the Street: In Between Architecture' by Edwin Heathcote is published by HENI



## Celebrity chats need a new script

### **UPSTREAM** FIONA STURGES

he new BBC2 series *Louis* Theroux Interviews. delivers some surprising facts about its celebrity subjects. Who knew that the actor Judi Dench bought her home from the proceeds of a butter advert and hates being called a national treasure? Or that Stormzy, the rapper who appeared at Glastonbury in a stab-proof vest made by Banksy, hosts regular Bible study groups at his home?

Theroux is a documentarian who made his name meeting figures on the margins of society, embedding himself with neo-Nazis, porn stars and survivalists. By contrast, Louis Theroux Interviews . . . is a decidedly mainstream project in which he gets acquainted with established figures from the worlds of film, music and entertainment (other guests include musician Yungblud. comic Katherine Ryan and adventurer Bear Grylls).

Yet there is something unusual, even radical, about this programme which shows famous people in their own habitats, introducing us to their families and fielding serious and searching questions about their lives. The series comes at a time when the celebrity interview appears, if not quite in decline, then stuck in its ways.

For years, The Graham Norton Show

(on the BBC) and The Jonathan Ross Show (on ITV) have had the stranglehold on televised celebrity encounters, sweep-ing up all available A-listers for sofabound, ratings-busting, Friday-night chats revolving around whatever film/ album/book they happen to be hawking at the time. The formats of both shows

have remained unchanged since they were launched, although where they were once aimed at the post-pub crowd (Norton keeps a well-stocked bar on his show), now producers are more interested in social media, mining episodes for their meme-able moments

The situation is hardly better in America, where the chat show is a daily ritual, delivering brief and wilfully bland conversations with Hollywood's crème de la crème, and where even the hosts appear to be tiring of the format. After 19 seasons, The Ellen DeGeneres Show breathed its last earlier this year while Trevor Noah is soon to retire from The Daily Show. James Corden, who masterminded the wildly popular and undeniably fun Carpool Karaoke segment, is also taking his leave from The Late Late Show after eight years in the job.

While chat shows strive to entertain viewers, there is little interest in providing meaningful insight into their subjects - instead, well-rehearsed anecdotes and promotional puffery are the order of the day. No wonder audio is streets ahead of television when it comes to in-depth conversations. The BBC Radio 4 series Desert Island Discs has survived decades of restructuring to



Louis Theroux with Judi Dench

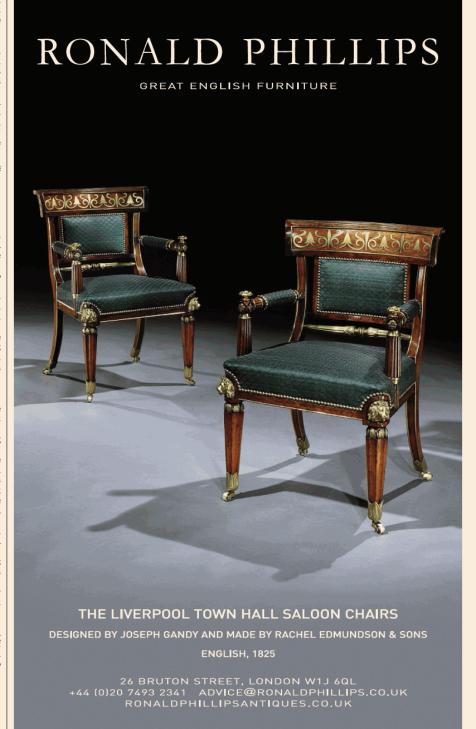
become a broadcasting institution - an invitation to appear on it is now seen as a reward for years of service, up there with getting an OBE. The rise of podcasts over the past decade has also brought an uptick in long-form interview series, with comics Adam Buxton and Marc Maron leading the charge with conversations that dig deep and often stretch to well over an hour.

Theroux's new series comes hot on the heels of his hugely successful podcast Grounded with Louis Theroux, a long-form interview show born out of its host's desire to remain productive during lockdown. The series was notable for tackling difficult subjects — FKA Twigs dised her experience of domestic abuse while Ruby Wax revealed how she spent years loathing Theroux for his succes

It feels significant that, after retiring from his late-night talk show, David Letterman hightailed it to Netflix to make My Next Guest Needs No Introduction, an interview series where conversations with guests, among them Barack Obama, Kim Kardashian, George Clooney and Jay Z, run at an hour a piece. (Next year brings a one-off special in which he talks to the Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy in a Kviv metro station.)

Perhaps the most striking thing about both Letterman's and Theroux's shows is the spirit of co-operation and openness in which they are approached by their interviewees. There is a sense that these figures, several of whom are known to guard their privacy, appreciate a longer format which allows for a nuanced and rounded portrait. None of them needs the publicity, but naked promotion isn't the point. The aim is to pull back the curtain, and, just this once, tell us who they really are.

BBCiPlayer in the UK. 'My Next Guest Needs No Introduction' with David Letterman is on Netflix



### Arts

Film Festival of India in Goa, Raphael Abraham finds noisy hits and controversy but also quietly eloquent dramas

efore every film at this year's International Film Festival of India (IFFI), a brief introductory montage showed a peacock proudly unfurling its colourful plumage. It was a fitting image for the event in Goa, which showed off what the country has to offer cinematically, with exemplars from many of its 28 states and a willingness to tackle historical events and contemporary issues. But attracting attention can also mean inviting criticism - and this proved to be the case

Few Indian spectacles are complete without the occasional glittery song and dance number and this was very much to the fore during the lavish and lengthy opening ceremony. A far cry from the sober affairs that inaugurate European film festivals, the opening was loud and splashy, its psychedelic stage show combining an India's Got Talent aesthetic with earnest speeches from government ministers (IFFI receives substantial state backing) and its own fair share of peacocking. Love Sonia actress Mrunal Thakur got things off to a glit-tering start before Bollywood superstar Varun Dhawan stole the show with a thrusting, gold-lamé-clad foray into the

But when the lights dim, the films must do the talking. This they did eloquently and in a Babel-worthy multitude of tongues. In its 53rd edition, IFFI lived up to its international billing with 280 films from 73 countries, among them highlights from festivals earlier in the calendar such as Spanish filmmaker Carla Simón's Berlin Golden Bear recipient Alcarràs and the Venice prizewinner *No Bears*, made by imprisoned Iranian dissident Jafar Panahi

But more novel and enticing for



## Land of multitudes

for eign attendees was the opportunity to sample the diverse domestic flavours at the Entertainment Society of Goa in Panaji.

First stop onscreen was Kolkata, birthplace of India's master film-maker Satyajit Ray and now the setting for Anant Mahadevan's *The Storyteller*, a charming and worldly-wise comedy adapted from one of Ray's myriad short stories.Veteran actor Paresh Rawal stars as Tarini, a mildly curmudgeonly Bengali creator of fiction who is hired by a wealthy but chronically insomniac Gujarati cotton mogul (Adil Hussain) to tell him bedtime tales ("He sells cotton, I spin yarns"). What begins as a study of gently clashing cultures (Tarini

smuggling fish into his host's vegetarian home, secretly feeding his cat) gradually reveals its claws, digging into questions of authenticity, deception and plagiarism

What would the urbane Ray have made of the maximalist RRR? SS Raiamouli's Telugu-language historical epic, already a domestic smash, continues to become a worldwide hit, raking in north of \$100mn with its mix of stylised violence, revisionist history and chest-pounding proclamation of Indian unity. At IFFI it played to a giddy crowd that whooped through its outré action sequences, hyperkinetic dance numbers and cartoonish depiction of British Raj officers as oafish panto villains (think

Indiana Iones's Nazis snarling the King's English). The latter seems to reflect a wider recent trend among Indian films and streaming series that tackle history with a new assertiveness, emboldened no doubt by the nationalist fervour eeping India since the rise of prime minister Narendra Modi's BIP party.

At least two new films at IFFI demonstrated this trend. Khudiram Bose is a hagiographic portrait of the freedom fighter whose attempt in 1908 to assassi nate a British judge resulted in the death of two British women. Shakily assembled on a visibly low budget, it allowed no room for nuance and showed none of RRR's wit or guile by presenting a pofaced and one-sided version of history.

Vivek Agnihotri's *The Kashmir Files* meanwhile is an unsparing account of the persecution of Hindu Kashmiri Pan-dits in the early 1990s. Its graphic imagery and three-hour running time have not prevented the film from becoming a hit at the Indian box office, buoyed by praise from Modi himself, but has met with resistance in other countries — it was briefly banned in the United Arab Emirates earlier this year and remains so in Singapore for its "provocative and one-sided por-

trayal of Muslims".

At the IFFI closing ceremony, Israeli jury president and film-maker Nadav Lapid caused a minor diplomatic incident by labelling it "a vulgar movie inappropriate for an artistic competi-tive section of such a prestigious film festival" and expressing surprise at its inclusion. He optimistically expressed his belief that "the festival can surely accept also a critical discussion, which is essential for art and life" but inevitably a furious backlash on social media followed, Israel's ambassador to India, Naor Gilon, stepping in, unbidden, to apologise on Lapid's behalf.

Fewer in number were films that tack-led contemporary issues. One outlier was Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury's *Lost*, a Kolkata-set thriller that charts a female journalist's investigation into the disappearance of a young theatre actor accused of Maoist terrorism. As a genre piece, its over-reliance on well-worn tropes — endless confused forays down dusty backstreets despite the presence

From above: Priyanandanan's 'Dhabari Quruvi'; SS Rajamouli's 'RRR'; Anant Mahadevan's 'The Storyteller', which is adapted from a short story Satyajit Ray; Avinash Arun's 'Three of Us'





determination to surpass his "pedestrian" father leads him into trouble and eventually a transcendent break from

of Google Maps; key plot words scrib-bled on notepads and vigorously underlined - but its professional female lead

(Yami Gautam) and willingness to probe institutional corruption were refreshing. Most urgent was the reminder of India's alarmingly high rate

of disappearing persons - a child is reported missing every eight minutes.

Female protagonists were also front and centre in *Dhabari Quruvi*, the

anguished tale of a 15-year-old village girl trying to rid herself of an unwanted pregnancy. Priyanandanan's film would

have been remarkable enough for promoting the idea of a young woman's right to choose — a notion controversial in Kentucky, let alone remote rural Ker-

ala. Even more noteworthy was the cast ing of only indigenous tribal actors – a first for any Indian movie.

More rural drama, albeit one of far

lower stakes, lay at the centre of the soufflé-light fable *Kurangu Pedal*, set in the 1980s summer holidays in a village

in Tamil Nadu. Again there was a touch

of Ray discernible in the Apu-ish figure

of the 12-year-old boy Maari, whose thirst for cycling adventure and

'Three of Us' is made with

touching humanism and

an eye for understated humour and poignancy

That the influence of Ray was still keenly felt 30 years after his death and 2,000km from his home town was reinforced by two sprawling walls of posters on the festival grounds proclaiming "The One and Only Ray". The polymath auteur's own work as a graphic artist was also on display in *Other Ray*, a documentary paying homage to the film-maker's less storied work as a designer of everything from film posters and book jackets to advertising and children's literature. The fact that the screen was filled with a constant array of images and still only seemed to scratch the surface of his output justified the film's awed narration.

The considerable task of following

this reverential celebration fell to Three of Us, with which it was paired in a double bill. Any connection to Ray was not made explicit, but this delicate Hindi-language drama rose to the occasion regardless. Made with touching humanism and an eye for understated humour and poignancy by cinematographer turned first-time director Avinash Arun, it was led by the gently luminous Shefali Shah as a middle-aged Mumbai woman with the beginnings of dementia who takes her amiable husband on a journey to her past and her coastal childhood home in Vengurla, just north

Here was a film that displayed all the grace and subtlety that were sometimes missing in other parts of the festival, a clear sign that Indian cinema continues to deserve the world's attention - and not only when it shouts loudest.



### FROM BEIJING TO VERSAILLES THE V.W.S. COLLECTION

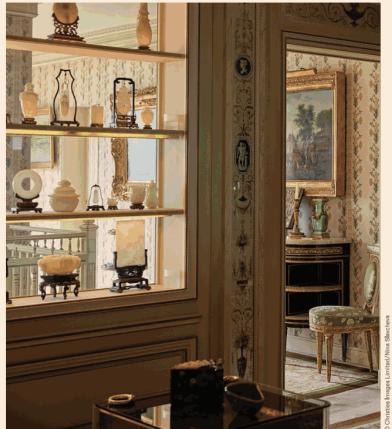
AUCTION · 13 December, 3pm & 14 December, 11:30am

VIEWING · 8 - 14 December · 9 Avenue Matignon · Paris 8e

CONTACTS · Asian art : Camille de Foresta · cdeforesta@christies.com

Furniture & works of art : Simon de Monicault · sdemonicault@christies.com

+33 (0)1 40 76 84 24



View of the main living room decorated by Daniel Pasgrimaud

Auction | Private Sales | christies.com

CHRISTIE'S

### Review

POP

Blackpink

The FT and the world's biggest girl group are an obvious match. But the last time the Pink 'un reviewed Blackpink, the result wasn't so peachy. The show in 2019 was stilted. A twostar write-up caused one of the South Korean act's hardcore fans, known as Blinks, to track your correspondent down to tell me I was a "dirty pig".

This week, Blackpink were back in London to play two nights at the O2 Arena. Thousands of Blinks waved pink heart-shaped light sticks. Meanwhile, the FT's porcine critic slipped incognito into row K, block 110, notebook and poisonous pen at hand.

Since their last visit, the K-pop titans have cemented their position as the nonpareil girl group of their time, notching up billions of streams and multiple world records in pedantic categories like "most viewed video on

YouTube in 24 hours". The song that got all those views, "How You Like

That", was the show's opening number.
The foursome held a pose on a raised platform at the back of the stage, a crop-topped, miniskirted tableau of tilted shoulders, hands on hips and steady stares. Then they sashayed forwards amid screams and a fanfare of beats. Countless phone screens were lofted to record the presence of Jennie, Jisoo, Lisa and Rosé

An elite product of K-pop's Motownlike factory-line, Blackpink observe a division of labour. Jisoo and Rosé sing; Jennie and Lisa rap. The lyrics are polyglot, while the music is derived from globally sourced components. There are hip-hop chants, big booming basslines, EDM peaks, Bollywood-style melodies and the sugar-rush of precisely engineered, addictive hooks.

Some miming took place, but there was also actual singing. The music was a similar mix of live and pre-recorded, with a band bringing a real-time energy to the songs. Fourteen dancers added extra spectacle to the quartet's formation dancing. The choreography was a slick take on street dance. The

four members of Blackpink were in constant motion, shifting patterns according to whoever was taking the lead vocal at any moment.

The staging was much more cohesive than before. Sparkling hits such as "Pink Venom" glittered and banged like the fireworks that periodically erupted from the stage. Ballads such as "Tally" were muscular. Solitary spots for each Blackpink vocalist were well integrated into the rest of the set.

The singing was on the thin side, although the songs didn't need vocal embellishment: they are designed for maximum catchiness, a quicksilver quality that can't reveal the effort that goes into it. This entertaining gig had it in spades. It also had a human element. evident when Rosé's microphone broke during the final song, "As If It's Your Last". The show had to go on, and so it did with much merry corpsing from the foursome, more relaxed in manner than their stage-managed K-pop background might suggest. Jisoo gave a cheerful thumbs up at the end. On this occasion, the Pink un can reciprocate.

Ludovic Hunter-Tilney blackpinkmusic.com

Arts

ealers spend a lifetime gambling on the immortality of their artists; few leave their own monuments. An exception is Ernst Beyeler, the Swiss railway worker's son who started his Basel gallery in the 1940s, made a fortune trading blue-chip names, was befriended by Picasso and Giacometti, and in 1997 built the Fondation Beyeler to house the works he kept for himself.

If there is a more feel-good museum experience than the Beyeler, I have yet to encounter it. An outstanding collection and must-see exhibitions (Edward Hopper in 2020 and Goya in 2021 were beacons during the pandemic) are housed in Renzo Piano's long, luminous glass and stone building set in the exquisite park of the baroque Villa Berower.

For this autumn's 25th anniversary show, it begins with a cup of stale black tea, the surface a jagged mouldy membrane, enormously enlarged and photographed at aerial view to suggest the broken crust of the earth's surface. Hanging in the foyer, Wolfgang Tillmans's 'Chaos Cup'' from 1997 — it's the same age as the museum — wittily introduces a birthday greatest hits parade. Turn left and you meet Rousseau's fauxjungle "The Hungry Lion Throws itself upon the Antelope" and Brancusi's streamlined marble abstraction "Bird". Turn right for Matisse's sensuous arabesque cut-out "Blue Nude" and Miro's hallucinatory ladder to the sky "Landscape with Rooster". Each, like Tillmans, reconsiders how reality can be represented and distorted into a new expression of truth.

When it opened, I enjoyed the Beyeler as the apogee of bourgeois Swiss pleasure. But over the years, the paradise in the park has come to embody something more, as Beyeler's insistence on "proven works", almost all European and American, stands at odds with major modern art museums focused on the global 21st century and concerns with post-colonialism and gender. The Beyeler launched only three years before Tate Modern, but it belongs to a different world, asserting modern art's specific historic place, in contrast to the pluralistic, hierarchy-free mash-up of 21st-century culture. How valid is this approach, and can it last?

Ernst Deyeler's vision of painting and sculpture in harmony with nature and architecture is uplifting, calming and supremely confident. The voluptuous saturated hues of Rothko's square and oblong blurs in "Untitled Red, Orange" echo the building's rich porphyry columns. The expansive view towards cornfields and low hills from the daybright spaces is repeated in Van Gogh's airy "Wheatfield with Cornflowers". In fading light, Ellsworth Kelly's huge folded aluminium sail "White Curves" has a ghostly presence among the trees.

Monet's immersive "Nymphéas" triptych faces the Beyeler's own actual lily pond – this one presided over by Thomas Schütte's appealing, water-spitting "Hare" (2013). With human hands and an ear flopping forward, the four-metre



## 25 years of a peerless museum

Fondation Beyeler | The Basel gallery marks its

anniversary with a show of masterpieces from

Kandinsky to Whiteread. By Jackie Wullschläger

bronze animal, its craggy form mirrored in the water amid scattered leaves and trailing reeds, is as beloved a part of the collection as the Monets, which is important: Beyeler died in 2010, but his collection is not standing still. He chose its ancestors and it is fascinating to watch their DNA threading through the works the Fondation has acquired since: an argument for contemporary art as a continuum with modernism.

Rachel Whiteread's collapsing shed, "Poltergeist" (2020), an eerie shell of a shelter in found wood and metal, painted bleach-white, is a late iteration of postwar sculpture's fragile/solid constructed/deconstructed aesthetic. Disaster has torn through the edifice, but it remains upright, light bounces off the spiky fragments: it has survived. There's an affinity with Giacometti's pareddown figures, precariously maintaining human presence. Beyeler called "Walking Man" "the veritable trademark of the Fondation Beyeler".

In the collection catalogue, art historian Gottfried Boehm says the foundation "pays tribute to the experience of a generation... centred on great, heroic, classical modern art" and Beyeler's belief in "the singularity and enduring appeal of the individual work". There are no quotas or gap-filling, though women artists have dominated recent acquisitions. There are rooms in the anniversary show devoted to Marlene Dumas' seeping,

discomforted figures, and to Tacita Dean's chalk-on-blackboard panorama "Cumulus" (2016), which picks up in monochrome a conversation with Monet's reflected clouds: play of light and shadow, time unfolding, the ephemeral and the tetrnal. Beyeler's spirit still guides: he "distrusted programmes, manifestos and theories", and barred minimalism and "works of an expanded artistic concept in the sense of, for example, Joseph Beuys or more recent installation art".

Sure taste paid off. Invited to take his pick from Picasso's studio in 1966, Beyeler garnered key works which became the core of the Fondation's permanent Picasso retrospective-in-miniature. It ranges from "Woman" (1907), a large oil study for "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon", to "Reclining nude playing with a cat" (1964), parodying Manet's "Olympia" and starring an exuberant Jacqueline Picasso.

In the 1950s Beyeler scraped and borrowed to find \$4,500 for Kandinsky's "Improvisation 10", an important 1910



From top: the museum's luminous glass and stone building, designed by Renzo Piano; Kandinsky's 'Improvisation 10' (1910), bought by Ernst Beyeler for \$4,500 in the 1950s – Mark Niedermann

marker in the journey to abstraction — mountain path, houses, fortress on a rock, rainbow are still distinguishable within a panoply of rushing forms. He waited decades for the perfect follow-up: in 1990 he bought "Fugue" (1914), an explosive composition entirely about chords of colour, for \$20.9mn, then a Kandinsky record. The seller? New York's Guggenheim, which deaccessioned the painting to raise funds to enlarge its holdings of minimalism.

enlarge its holdings of minimalism.

Beyeler's decisions give modernity as unfolded here a distinctive flavour: historic grandeur, a concentration on masterpieces. Although Boehm claims "the Beyeler collection itself confirms the gap opening up between the modern art of the past, whose side it takes, and the modern art of the present day, which it excludes", this does not mean rejecting the contemporary. The Beyeler is bang on message spotting today's landmark works within significant careers such as "Poltergeist", Whiteread's turning point from casting in favour of constructing and assemblage.

Director Sam Keller says he seeks to "open up new perspectives and promote

Ernst Beyeler's vision of painting and sculpture in harmony with nature and architecture is uplifting

a dialogue" with Beyeler's legacy. Louise Bourgeois and Gerhard Richter, "unexpected intermediaries . . . invoking the modernist tradition", joined the collection in 2012. Keller is also a genius at innovatively refreshing history. In the anniversary show, Duane Hanson's lifesize hyperrealist multimedia sculptures keep comic company with famous residents. "Woman with Child in Stroller" ambles towards Giacometti's "Walking Man". "Old Lady in Folding Chair" sits alongside "Madame Cézanne in a Yellow Armchair", each woman resigned yet forceful. "Window Washer" is about to start cleaning a vast floor-to-ceiling pane givingon to the garden.

pane giving on to the garden.

Inscribed on the collection's catalogue cover is Monet's modest hope when he began painting Rouen cathedral: "It might turn out well, if the sunshine lasts." At the Beyeler after 25 years, the sun is still shiming.

To January 8, fondationbeyeler.ch

### THE LIFE OF A SONG LOVING ARMS

Bone Machine, he dedicated the track "Whistle Down the Wind" to Tom Jans. "Tom who?" would have been the reaction of many. Jans's story appeared to be that of a stereotypical music business casualty. With rock-star looks and musical talent, he achieved moderate success in the early 1970s in a duo with Mimi Fariña, Joan Baez's younger sister, supporting the likes of Cat Stevens and James Taylor. The pair's album, however, and his subsequent solo releases, were commercial flops despite critical plaudits.

n Tom Waits's 1992 album

Then, after vanishing for several years, he was seriously injured in a motorcycle accident in Los Angeles in 1983 and died a year later, aged 36, reportedly of a drug overdose.

Yet despite Jans's career disappointments and sad end, he wrote one great song, which has proved to be his lasting memorial. He composed the ballad "Loving Arms" after splitting with Fariña, both musically and romantically, and moving to Nashville in 1972 to work as a songwriter for Almo/Irving, the A&M label's publishing affiliate.

It is a bittersweet ballad about someone who abandons a relationship for freedom but regrets it, as the chorus relates: "Tve been too long in the wind/ Too long in the rain/ Taking any comfort that I can/ Looking back and longing for/ The freedom of my chains/ And lying in your loving arms again."

The song was first recorded in 1973 by Kris Kristofferson and Rita Coolidge, the then husband and wife duo producing a charming but low-key rendition. Later that year, however, Dobie Gray offered a more expressive version, including a ringing guitar motif, that became a minor hit in the US and Canada.

Jans himself tried to capitalise on this success by recording "Loving Arms" for his first solo album. Again, a pleasant delivery, but here was a great song awaiting a great singer. This duly arrived in 1974 when Elvis Presley unashamedly stole Dobie Gray's guitar motif and added the emotional tone the song cried out for. Originally an album track, it was posthumously released as a single in 1981 and reached the UK top 50 and the US country chart's top 10.

Petula Clark and Olivia Newton-John followed with unremarkable versions, but when soul singer Etta James



Singer and songwriter Tom Jans

recorded it in 1975 she gave the chorus a gentle bluesy feel and shed restraint on the third verse in a captivating rendition.

James perhaps inspired fellow soul singer Millie Jackson to even greater heights months later, in what is perhaps the pre-eminent performance of the song. The track, on her Still Caught Up album, was recorded in a studio to sound like a live recording, with Jackson giving a spoken introduction over a tinkling plano and "audience chatter", and rousing applause added at the end. This artifice works, enhancing the electricity of Jackson's delivery. From the power of the opening line to the sensational rasp and reach in the third verse, it is soul singing at its finest as she wrings every emotion from the lyrics.

Two years later Tanya Tucker became the first country star to record the song, transforming it into a more up-tempo number. Numerous mainstream singers also took it on.

including Demis Roussos (1978), Vince Hill (1980) and Elkie Brooks (1982).

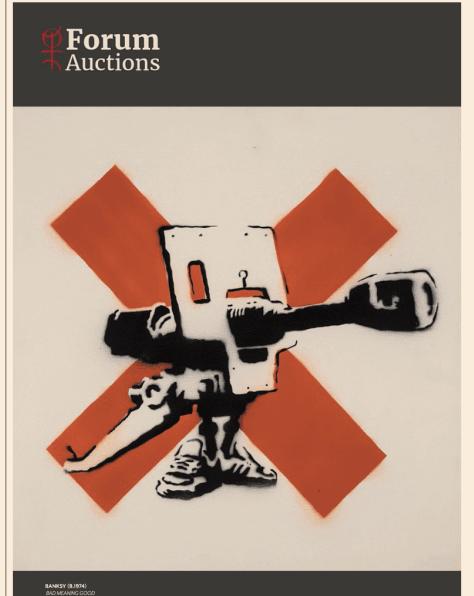
Country artists did not return to it until 1998 when the Dixie Chicks restored its original form, with pristine harmonies over violin and acoustic and pedal steel guitar.

Another striking interpretation did not arrive until 2014 but it was worth the wait. Duo Paul Heaton and Jacqui

Abbott (formerly of The Beautiful South) imaginatively used the Grimethorpe Colliery Band as accompaniment. Abbott's voice and sympathetic brass and piano proved a magical and poignant combination.

"Loving Arms" was performed at Jans's funeral, and Waits's tribute eight years later was fitting. "Whistle Down the Wind" is one of his finest ballads and as he said at the time: "It was the kind of song that Tom Jans would have written. He was there in spirit."

Charles Morris
More in the series at ft.com/life-of-a-song



The British Sale

editions@forumauctions.co.uk | +44 (0)20 7871 2640

www.forumauctions.co.uk

### Arts | Collecting

## Women telling tales

Hannah Khalil | Her new play at the Globe updates

the story of Scheherazade and the Arabian Nights

with multiple female voices. By Sarah Hemmina

he is surely the greatest exponent of the cliffhanger: Sche-herazade, the heroine of the One Thousand and One Nights, the collection of Middle Eastern folk tales. Night after night, her seductive storytelling persuades the tyrannous King Shahryār — who has embarked on a grisly plan of punishing his wife's infidelity by marrying then murdering a virgin a day — to spare her life (and with it, the lives of all those brides to follow her) until the next

But what if? What if her creative powers threatened to run dry? That's the conundrum imagined by playwright Hannah Khalil.

"All the women behind her in line for the king's bloody wed-bed-and-behead revenge will be wanting her to succeed," she points out. "So what if they got together and started writing stories for Scheherazade?... Scheherazade's writers' room."

The result is *Hakawatis*, Khalil's mischievous new take on the story at Shakespeare's Globe, in which a handful of female writers set about supplying Scheherazade with a ready stream of narratives. "Hakawati" means story-teller in Arabic and Khalil's play invites the audience into this furnace of creativity as five women spin stories for Scheherazade, who remains an unseen but exacting presence. In the spirit of the project, Khalil has commissioned three new stories from female writers of Arab heritage (Hanan al-Shaykh, Suhayla El-Bushra and Sara Shaarawi) to sit alongside some of the traditional tales - creating, in essence, a writers' room of her own.

The show, directed by Pooja Ghai in a co-production with Tamasha, is in part a celebration of the art of storytelling and the great oral tradition in Arabic culture. In the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse – the bijou replica Jacobean thea-tre that sits alongside Shakespeare's Globe — the tales will unfold by candlelight, as stories have for millennia.

But it's also a tribute to the impor tance of collaboration — particularly in theatre. Khalil has no truck with the idea of the lone artistic genius sitting in a garret crafting masterpieces. "I've had so many conversations with writers – particularly male – who say, 'Hannah, you need to direct your own plays.' And I'm like, 'Why? Why would I do that?' e reason I write for theatre is because of that experience of collaboration: more brains is better."  $% \label{eq:collaboration} % \label{eq:$ 



Several of the tales collated in versions of the One Thousand and One Nights have found their way into western popular culture — most notably Aladdin which is a fixture on the British stage as a pantomime. But Khalil had something very different in mind.

"I was really excited about the stories we don't know, not the ones we do," she says. "And about trying to undercut what a western audience's expectation is for an Arab character or an Arab story. So from the start I wanted it to be something that would turn this idea of it being for children on its head — because it never was. Those stories are dark and sexual and cheeky and kind of daring: you have lots of interesting female characters who serve themselves and who have sexual desires and needs."

With the opening of the show, Khalil will briefly unseat the house playwright as she will have two plays running simultaneously: her family show *The Fir*Tree in the large open-air theatre and Hakawatis indoors. Both draw on her own storytelling traditions.

Khalil was born in London to a Pales tinian father and an Irish mother, and



"telling stories is huge in both those cultures," she says. "I've been massively influenced by writers like Conor McPherson, Marina Carr and Owen McCafferty — so many brilliant Irish playwrights who employ storytelling. There are fewer well-known plays by Palestinian writers, but again storytell-ing is really key in those plays."

Khalil's parents moved to Dubai when she was just a year old, then to Jordan.



Clockwise from above: Hannah Khalil photographed at the Globe for the FT by Tereza Červeňová; Roann Hassani McCloskey and Nadi Kemp-Sayfi at reĥearsals for 'Hakawatis';

Kemp-Sayfi as Akila the writer

She returned to London as a teenager, with her mother, when her parents divorced. Her experience of not fully belonging in any one place has infused

"I often meet Arabs who are like, 'Oh, you're a bit pale,' or 'Your Arabic's not good, is it?'" she says. "And in Ireland I sound English. So I feel I'm not quite accepted in either place . . . Salman Rushdie wrote a beautiful essay called 'Imaginary Homelands' about his experience of feeling in-between. He talks about how if you've got a foot in two places, but you don't fully exist in either, it gives you a privileged perspective." To date, most of Khalil's writing has

drawn on the Middle Eastern half of her roots: her 2016 play Scenes from 68\* Years offered snapshots of daily life in Palestine; A Museum in Baghdad, staged by the Royal Shakespeare Company in 2019, featured a British archaeologist and an Iraqi museum director; her 2017 play The Scar Test focused on the women detained in Yarl's Wood immigration centre. Key to her work has been a fierce desire to debunk stereotypical depic-tions of Arab people, particularly women, in western culture.

"It's that idea of women who are

'The reason I write for theatre is because of collaboration: more brains is better'

Muslim, women who come from the Arab world, brown women, being subservient and demure and at the whim of men. I don't see it. Not the people in my family, not my friends. I just don't think it's true . . . I want to write roles for the really brilliant Arab women I know."

Her focus is the way the women in the story individually and collectively write a different future for themselves. She would like to emphasise the wider lesn from that: for her, what drama can do is to help to break down barriers and unseat preconceptions.

"It's anything that can make us see 'the other' as the same as us," she says. "We're in a really precarious place everywhere at the moment and if there's one thing I want the play to be saying it's that we are not powerless. Violence isn't the only power. That cliché — the pen is mightier than the sword. I really believe a group of people who come to see a play can be inspired to action together. Otherwise I don't think I'd write for theatre.'

'Hakawatis' runs to January 14. 'The Fir Tree' runs December 15-31, shakespearesglobe.com

### Buoyant mood and million-dollar sales in Miami

The Art Market Christie's poised to break Goya's auction record; Reuben family collection buys Bacon; expanded space for Stephen Friedman gallery. By Melanie Gerlis

This market is ridiculously resilient in the face of other realities," said USbased gallerist Sean Kelly at Tuesday's VIP opening of Art Basel Miami Beach. Describing himself as "already very happy" with the pace of sales, these included work by his gallery's new signing, Missouri-born artist Anthony Akinbola, whose "White Bronco" (2022), a large-scale wall work made from the durag hair cloths often worn by people in Africa and the diaspora, sold immediately for \$35,000. Seven-figure sales were reported

on opening day, including "We Mourn Our Loss #2" (1997) by Kerry James Marshall, which sold for \$2.8mn (Jack Shainman Gallery) and a 1998 Agnes Martin for \$7mn (Pace Gallery). Hauser & Wirth reported a sales total of more than \$18mn by midday. Visitors included the tennis legend Venus Williams and rock musician Jon Bon Jovi.

"I thought the optimism could be tempered because of the economy and the recent happenings in the crypto space, but people are still supporting the market," said London-based art



adviser Janna Lang, "This is the week that American and Latin-American collectors turn up for." Her highlights included a solo booth by the Nigeriaborn Ruth Ige at Stevenson gallery (priced from \$14,000), where sales were quickly made.

Art Basel Miami Beach runs until Saturday.

Christie's will field its biggest Old Masters offering for a decade as part of its 2023 Classic Week in New York, which returns in late January after experimenting with a springtime slot

The works, spanning more than 400 ears and with a combined estimate of about \$80mn, are dominated by a pair of 1805 portraits by Francisco Goya of a Rioja-region mother and her eligible daughter (complete with a marketfriendly lapdog). The paintings will be auctioned together for \$15mn-\$20mn on January 27 and, as they have already been backed by a third party, will make a public record price for the Spanish artist, which currently stands at \$7.8mn.

Andrew Fletcher, Christie's global head of Old Masters, notes the artist's quick brushstrokes within a more traditional format, which "perfectly describe Robert Hughes's maxim that Goya was the last Old Master and the first modern painter", he says.

A separate auction on January 25 consists of 86 works from the financier JE Safra, no stranger to the salerooms.

His latest offerings are topped by JMW Turner's watercolour "The Splügen Pass" (1842), valued between \$1.5mn

and \$2mn. Estimates for Safra's works start around \$20,000 and the collection will have no reserve, meaning that they will sell at any price. In practice, the auctioneer begins bidding at 50 per cent of a work's low estimate and, if there are no bids, will halve the price again. This is rare though, as bargainhunters normally pile in from the start. "'No reserve' encourages competition and every extra bidder gets you another percentage on the price," Fletcher says.

London collector and curator Lisa Reuben has revealed that she was the buyer of Francis Bacon's charged painting of his friend and artist rival, Three Studies for Portrait of Lucian Freud" (1964), for \$28mn (\$30mn with fees, est \$30mn-\$40mn) on

As the work's only bidder at the auction at Sotheby's New York, Reuben - who bought over the phone - notes

Left: Goya's portrait of María Vicenta Barruso Valdés (1805), on sale at Christie's in January Below: 'White Bronco by Anthony Akinbola



that despite the huge totals from the latest seasons of sales, demand was stretched after the mammoth Paul Allen auction at Christie's the week before, which included another Bacon triptych. Estimates were punchy this season, a deterrent to lively speculative bids.

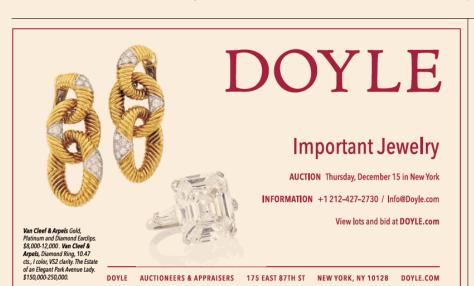
In contrast, when Reuben's Bacon painting was previously auctioned in 2011, it had a relatively inviting £7mn £9mn estimate, which helped take it to £23mn (with fees, then equivalent to \$37mn).

Reuben confirms that the painting has been added to the collection she is building for her family, including her businessman father Simon Reuben and his brother David. She describes Bacon's first triptych of Freud as "part of a fascinating love story". Last year, she bought Freud's 2002 painting of another fellow artist, David Hockney, for a fee-inclusive £14.9mn (est £8mn-£12mn, Sotheby's).

London's Stephen Friedman gallery is expanding to Cork Street — a move that replaces Friedman's three spaces in Old Burlington Street, where he started out in 1995. The new building, at 5-6 Cork Street, should open in autumn 2023, after a redesign by David Kohn Architects. Among its features are a new mezzanine floor, a library and a courtyard garden, which will have sculptures — and a café.
"There will be a calm space, in the

middle of London's art world, to share ideas and rebuild a community," Friedman says. He says he was inspired by the "palpable energy" of London Gallery Weekend, a galvanising annual event (its third edition will take place on June 2-4 2023).

His new space is on the more classic west side of Cork Street — the previous incumbent was Saatchi Yates, which opened there in 2020 but now moves to Bury Street in St James's. Friedman's landlord, the Pollen Estate, wants to restore Cork Street to its historical art-world glory. Frieze has a gallery hub at number 9, which opened in 2021, while Goodman Gallery was the first on the revamped road when it opened its London space on the east side in 2019.





NORDIC WINTER EXHIBITION



# Spectrum

Life&Arts

LONG READS | INTERVIEWS | IDEAS

## Women of the year

## The Heroes

By Toyin Ojih Odutola, Ann

Cairns, Lyz Lenz, Christiane

Amanpour, Beth Mead

Amina Mohamed and more



Serena Williams Tennis player Singular champion By Toyin Ojih Odutola

Serena specifically requested I create a drawing of her for the National Portrait Gallery in DC. I was thrilled — "ecstatically terrified" is how I'd describe it. We had a Zoom to find out what she liked and didn't like about other portraits and photographs of her. Then I spent a day with her at her house in Florida to take reference photos. I was very conscious of all the unfair projections thrown at her over the years. I think that's why she has such a good poker face on and off the court, because she had to contend with all of that

Something I realised is that she is very kind, very funny and very private. So I didn't want to reveal anything that was unnecessary; there had to be a space within the portrait just for her, not for any of us, not even for me as the artist. She has an incredible smile and sense of

lulia Maloof Verderos



humour: I saw a joy there that tran scended all of the projections.

I grew up witnessing her excellence and magnificence from afar. The Williams sisters' presence was so profound Grand slam win after grand slam, we'd never seen anything like that! What they represented for me, and I think for a lot of people, was beauty. On the court and off, when you see them carry themselves with such grace, it leaves an indelible impression.

After I finished the portrait, Serena announced she was stepping back from tennis to focus on her family. Motherhood often goes unappreciated, but its also inextricable from society: mothers are not a luxury! So many people, especially women, have to grapple with having definitions placed on them. I think it





Portrait by Jaya Nicel

Mahsa Amini is the spark that lit a fire in Iran, and her name will live on through the movement she inspired

will be a blessing for us to witness whatever it is that Serena decides to do next.

Toyin Ojih Odutola is an artist

Amanda Blanc CEO, Aviva Executive on a mission

Amanda Blanc is a thoughtful, grounded person who is really in tune with the people around her. I recall listening to Amanda on a panel at the Global Investment Summit, discussing sustainability and green finance. She spoke passionately about how climate change affects people's lives. I loved her human

approach.

Amanda is also a committed supporter of the 50% Club, the campaign I serve as global chair that calls on CEOs and chairs of the world's biggest companies to boost female representation in senior leadership. As one of just a handful of female CEOs in the FTSE 100, Amanda recently called for gender equality targets to be included in the financial system's climate change commitments, asking for urgent action at COP27.

Amanda's always thinking about other people, and I really like that about her. She's from Wales and I get a sense he Welsh are proud of who they are. Amanda has much to be proud of.

Ann Cairns is the executive vice-chair of Mastercard and global chair of the 30% Club

Jamie Fiore Higgins Author Teller of uncomfortable truths

Jamie Fiore Higgins was one of the most senior bankers at Goldman Sachs before she quit in 2016, after 17 years. It is rare for someone of her ilk to blow the whistle on the corporate culture of an institution as powerful as Goldman, given the financial and social incentives to stay quiet. But in her memoir Bully Market, published this year, Fiore Higgins says that when she joined the bank, she found a "racist, sexist and intolerant

environment", a place where traders joked about charting the physical measurements of female analysts.

Fiore Higgins, who has four children, was told not to talk about them at work; that she was "too motherly". One colleague told her she'd only been promoted because she was a woman. Others mooed at her after she pumped breastmilk for her baby and left a toy cow on her desk — this after she'd been advised not to pump at work. When she received a bonus that finally gave her the financial freedom she had been waiting for, shequit.

Goldman officials have disputed her account, but if Fiore Higgins' book spurs them to raise standards, she will have done Wall Street – and future female bankers – a great service.

Gillian Tett is an FT Weekend Magazine columnist and the FT's US editor-at-large

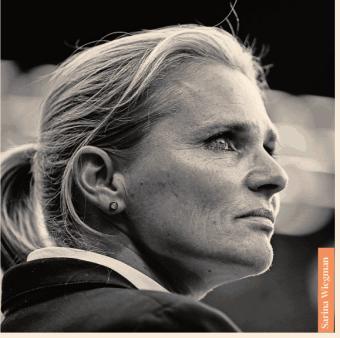
Rebecca Gomperts
Doctor
Defender of abortion rights

By Lyz Lenz

Rebecca Gomperts knows something that has taken the rest of us too long to understand: we don't save our lives by begging, pleading, debating or march-







Paula Kahumbu

ing in the streets with signs. We save our lives by fighting with absolutely everything we have. After the reversal of the US Supreme Court ruling ensuring the right to an abortion, Gomperts' telemedicine service Aid Access is offering women the basic healthcare being denied them in states like Texas by providing medical abortion pills by mail.

Even before that, the Dutch doctor has been fighting for years for a basic human right — the right for women to choose the trajectory of their lives. She has used everything from drones to boats and the mail to offer women access to a safe abortion. Through her work, Gomperts is not only saving lives, but is providing us with a model for how to stand up to injustice. She does not equivocate or compromise. She is a blueprint for how to fiercely fight for our lives.

Lyz Lenz is the author of "Belabored: A Vindication of the Rights of Pregnant Women"

Rina Gonoi Former soldier Silence breaker By Kana Inagaki

In a country where many women suffer sexual harassment in silence, Rina Gonoi made a different choice. With courage and stoic determination, the 23-year-old launched a public campaign this summer, demanding truth and a formal apology from Japan's military after she was sexually assaulted by drunken male officers during training last year. After facing months of stonewalling, evasion and anonymous threats, the Ground Self-Defence Forces acknowledged in September that Rina's allegations were accurate, and four male officers apologised to her in person.

officers apologised to her in person.
Sadly, Rina's case is only the tip of the iceberg, and complaints brought forward since then suggest that groping, unwanted kissing and other acts of sexual harassment are rampant in an environment where female military officers are still a tiny minority.

Rina says it doesn't have to be this

Rina says it doesn't have to be this way. At the age of 11, she was inspired when she was rescued by a female SDF officer following the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. Her dream job was quickly shattered by the reality she faced and she will not rejoin the military, but she is hoping that her campaign will improve working conditions for future generations of female officers. To them, she says: "You're not alone. I felt very lonely as well but the only thing I could do was believe in myself."

Kana Inagaki is the FT's Tokyo bureau chief

Women of Iran Freedom fighters By Christiane Amanpour

In September, a 22-year-old from the north-west Kurdish region of Iran arrived in Tehran with her family. She was snatched off the street by the "morality police" for allegedly failing to wear the hijab correctly. The next time her parents saw her, she was in a coma. Her death on September 16 led to nationwide protests. Mahsa Amini is the spark that lit a fire in Iran, and her name will live on through the movement she inspired. Girls, young women and their allies, including men, have taken this tragedy and turned it into something unprecedented. They are protesting for basic human rights that Iranian women have been denied for too long: dignity, personal bodily autonomy, the freedom to live safely in their own country.

The headscarf is not a fundamental pillar of Islam. When it is forced on women, it's a control mechanism, whether used by the Taliban in Afghanistan, by the religious leaders of Iran or across the Arab world. Amini's arrest and death symbolised the government invading and assaulting a woman's personal space. In demanding freedom, protesters and journalists have been arrested, put in solitary confinement

Continued on page 19

## Spectrum

## Women of the year

## The Creators

Written by Jamie Lee Curtis, Sinéad

Gleeson, Rosalie Chiang, Marina

Abramović, Horatia Harrod, Elif

Shafak and Yomi Adegoke



Michelle Yeoh Actor Real-life superhero By Jamie Lee Curtis

Michelle Yeoh has SUPER POWERS! Not the fake Marvel kind but the deeply human ones. She is small in stature but big in talent. From our first meeting, it was a love affair, and like all good lovers we fell into each other, fought, made up and laughed, boy did we laugh. She's an intricately detailed performer, incredibly well prepared and then in the moment, wide-open like the wind. I've never had another scene partner like her. She's a cyclone of talent that is finally getting her much-deserved due. What most people don't know is that she's generous, gentle and kind, and loves her children, her friends and her family with the same fierceness with which she performs. She gives everyone, everywhere, all at once 100 per cent of her spirit and love and I can't imagine a better person to be number 1 on a call sheet, movie poster or honouree list. She is simply THE BEST!

Jamie Lee Curtis is an actor, producer, children's author and activist who costarred with Yeoh in 'Everything



Tsitsi Dangarembga Author and activist Inspirational scribe By Elif Shafak

Novelist, playwright and human rights activist Tsitsi Dangarembga is a brave, inspiring voice in literature. She is the author of the first book by a black Zimba-bwean woman to be published in English, and her latest novel This Mournable Body was shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 2020. Her writing embodies an unflinching examination of difficult issues, including the impact of colonialism and patriarchy. A writer working at the intersection of gender, race, colonialism and class, she is not only drawn to stories but also silences. This year, Dangarembga was given a suspended jail sen-tence for taking part in a peaceful protest

in Harare demanding political reform. In her powerful new essay collection Black and Female, she says, "I am an existential refugee. I have been in flight since



When Eilish stepped out on to the main stage, she was diminutive against the huge backdrop

I left the womb." She is also a fighter. With her words she turns pain into resilience, anger into power and injustice into a fight for dignity, equality and freedom. Coming from Turkey, this struggle ates with me. Zimbabwe should be proud of having a writer like her.

Elif Shafak is a novelist

Billie Eilish Voice of a generation

There was a time when being a woman in music meant fighting for space and legitimacy, of trying not to wilt under the male gaze. We've all scoured festivalbills-as-opticians'-charts only to find female performers lurking in tiny print at the bottom. This year, two of the world's biggest music festivals were headlined by a woman, and the youngest ever to do so at both. Billie Eilish became a Glastonbury and Coachella headline act, seven-time Grammy winner, Bond-theme performer and Oscar winner all before hitting the US legal drinking age. When Eilish stepped out on to Glastonbury's main stage, she was diminutive against the huge backdrop, clad in baggy, don't-body-shame-me clothes. Fierce

and ebullient, she sang of abusive men, name-checked Roe vs Wade and held the multidemographic crowd in the palm of her hand. We finally got to "see [her] in a crown/making 'em bow", wondering where she'll go next.

Sinéad Gleeson is a writer and the editor of "This Woman's Work: Essays on Music

Annie Ernaux bv Horatia Harrod

After first reading Annie Ernaux, I went to a bookshop and bought everything they had by her: half a dozen white-jacketed English editions, all published in the UK in the past few years; the French have known Ernaux for decades. Her subject in most of her 20-odd books is the stuff of her life, excavating her memories and trying to reproduce the feeling of living with absolute fidelity.

She's written acute, devastating volumes about her parents (A Man's Place, A Woman's Story), about the steam-rollering effect of desire (Simple Passion), about the abortion she had illegally in 1963 (*Happening*, a book some thought lay behind the decision to give Ernaux the Nobel Prize for literature this year, the year of the overturning of Roe vs Wade). Reading her reaffirms that the events of our lives, which in the living of them may not feel significant, do have weight. Our memories and experiences are all we have, and we should value them.

Horatia Harrod is a senior editor at FT Weekend and a former Booker Prize judge



Anne Imhof Explorer of darkness By Marina Abramovic

I used to live in Amsterdam a long time ago. I had forgotten about the traffic; this is an old city and the roads are constantly being repaired. I took a car to Anne Imhof's solo show at the Stedelijk Museum and was seven minutes late. This is very embarrassing to me because I'm always on time. I was instructed to come to the staff entrance, where I met a group of curators. I found myself in front of a wall of industrial lockers and my first reaction was to put inside the heavy bag I was carrying. I felt someone touch my shoulder. "This is the work of Anne Imhof," they whispered. "Here is where the exhibition starts." It was my second embarrassment of the day. I apologised and entered the show with an open mind.

In Imhof's live performances, she mostly turns to dance rather than the performance-art community. Beautiful, fit bodies with strong, charismatic identities are her preference. I always feel the presence of modernity in her work and it

attracts a young audience.
The Stedelijk was the first time I'd seen her work without live elements. This image stays with me: snow, communist buildings empty of life and the face of Imhof's collaborator and life-partner Eliza Douglas smiling, arriving half-naked on a horse then disappearing again, only her erect nipples indicating how

I left feeling I had witnessed something important — something that's happening right now with the humans in this world. I was also left with a strong feeling of beauty, sadness, melancholy and loss.

Marina Abramović is a performance artist



Meghan Markle Voice at the storm's centre By Yomi Adegoke

Meghan Markle has become a symbol of resilience for many silenced women. Specifically speaking, for women of colour and, even more specifically, mixedrace and black women. Her experience within the royal family resonated with those who have had to navigate histori-cally white, elitist institutions that are, at best, not built with them in mind and, at worst, outwardly hostile.

The royal family is an establishment largely maintained through silence and complicity. It's this, in part, that makes Meghan's choice to use her voice so pow-erful. This year she launched a podcast, Archetypes, where she interrogates the labels used to contain and inhibit women — fitting, given the projection and smears she has endured from the press. For the black community in particular, it was hard to watch her demonisation by the British media and public. But seeing her come into her own, and use her platform to speak about what matters to her, has sent a message even louder than she may have intended.

Yomi Adegoke is the author of books including the forthcoming 'The List'

Domee Shi Director Animator of interior lives By Rosalie Chiang

When I first saw the synopsis of *Turning Red* I was shocked, because it didn't feel like any other Pixar movie I'd seen. The character I play, Meilin Lee, is a 13-year-old Asian-Canadian girl growing up in Toronto in the early 2000s. The story is essentially writer-director Domee Shi's childhood — with the addition of a giant red panda. Domee is such a gutsy, brave person. She started at Pixar as an intern in 2011, and by 2018 she'd directed a short film, *Bao*, which won an Oscar. With Turning Red she's made a film that explores what it's like to go through periods and puberty - subjects that



others are too scared to even talk about. Working with Domee for four years was an honour. Not only is she the first woman to direct a Pixar movie, she's made a film that looks and feels really different from those that have gone before. Rather than the smooth, flowy feel of most CGI films, *Turning Red* has a choppier, fresher feel. As Domee told an interviewer, she was "raised with one foot in both eastern and western art and culture" — and that really shines through. The fact that it's about an Asian-Canadian girl, directed by an Asian-Canadian woman, is so great. Since it came out, I've had many Asian Americans and Asian Canadians come up and say, "Thank you, this has never been done before, I feel so represented." The fact that Domee has achieved that

Rosalie Chiang is an actor who played the lead in 'Turning Red'



## Spectrum | Food & drink

y pick of seasonal reds, priced from £8.49 to £50-plus, offers real character and value. Note the disparity of price in bargains from Bordeaux and Burgundy respectively. Interestingly, Tesco are listing quite a few reds with obvious ageing potential. See, for example, offers from Chapoutier and Luis Felipe Edwards (LFE). Pinot Noir, including red burgundy, predominates because it goes so well with turkey and sweetish trimmings but there are plenty of north Rhôneish Syrahs too. Santé.

Carmim, Monsaraz Reserva 2020 Alentejo 15% Underpriced, oaked blend of mainly local, Portuguese grapes. £8.49 Lidl, part of their Christmas Wine Tour while stocks last

The Misfits Cinsault 2021 Western Cape 12.5% Super-fruity nose — almost strawberry. The sort of light, sweetish red Parisians call glou glou. £9 Tesco

M Chapoutier 2020 Côtes-du-Rhône Villages 14.5% Incredibly serious, ageworthy wine for the price, from an excellent Rhône vintage. Buy it by the case! £9.50 Tesco

Domaine le Roc, Les Petits Cailloux 2019 Fronton 14% Characterful local speciality from just north of Toulouse. £9.95 The Wine Society

Ch La Gravière 2018 Côtes de Bourg 14% Lively oaked Merlot with some Cabernet Sauvignon from a well-priced appellation on Bordeaux's right bank. £10.50 The Wine Society

Sagesse Rouge 2020 Pays d'Oc 14% Mark Savage MW blends this, and an equally good white version, with great care every year. Mainly Bordeaux grapes. £10.75 or £22 a magnum Private Cellar

Journey's End, Family Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 2020 Coastal Region 14% This South African seems underpriced considering the oak regime. £11 Tesco

Salvaje del Moncayo, La Garnacha 2019 Ribera del Queiles 14% Old Grenache vines at 810m deliver sweet, transparent pleasure. £11.49 Majestic

# Enjoy the best reds this holiday

### **Iancis Robinson**

Wine

Château Laulan 2018 Francs Côtes de Bordeaux 14% Rich, ready and rather St-Émilion-like! Excellent value. £11.99 MJ Wine Cellars

Discovery Pinot Noir 2020 Arbois-Pupullin 13% Only very lightly Pinot; delicate fruit from Jura in one of Sainsbury's more interesting wines. £12 (reduced from £14 until December 13)

Dom Mourchon, Tradition 2020 Côtes-du-Rhône Séguret 14.5% My favourite of Mourchon's certified organic 2020s for current drinking. £12.50 The Wine Society, and £14.99 Averys from December 10

Tbilvino Saperavi 2020 Georgia 13% The firm Georgian grape here fashioned into something already attractively approachable. £12.99 Adnams

Château Pesquié, Edition 1912m 2020 Ventoux 14.5% Certified organic wine named after Mont Ventoux's elevation in the southern Rhône. £12.99 Majestic

Dom des Garriguettes, Tradition 2021 Côtes-du-Rhône 14.5% Certified biodynamic grower. Bursting with fullthroated life. £14.25 Stone Vine & Sun

Wente Vineyards, Beyer Ranch Zinfandel 2020 California 14% Lots of fun and no exaggeration, with the sweet spice of the American oak.£14.95 The Wine Society

LFE Marea Syrah 2020 Valle de Leyda 14.5% Ripe-but-leathery true Syrah nose. Serious Chilean answer to the northern Rhône. Needs food. £15 Tesco

Mount Edward, Earth's End Pinot Noir 2020 Central Otago 14% Agreeably sweet and fruity before a dry finish. Good-value NZ red for current drinking. £16 M&S

Maturana San Francisco 2021 Maule, Chile 13% A thoroughly artisanal red to drink without food. But far from simple. £16.50 Corney & Barrow

Manzanos, El Piadoso Gran Reserva 2014 Rioja 13.5% Good savoury freshness dominates the sweet fruit. £16.99 Waitrose

Alpha Estate, Xinomavro Single Vineyard Hedgehog 2019 Naoussa 14% Unnecessarily heavy bottle. Pure, sleek, minerally fruit. Should confound preconceptions about Greek wine. £17.50 The Wine Society

Ch La Brande 2016 Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux 13.5% Very respectable claret that could be enjoyed now or in five years.£17.75 Yapp Bros

Begude, Esprit Pinot Noir 2021 Haute Vallée de l'Aude 13% Really convincing special selection from the hills of Limoux. Burgundy, eat your heart out! £17.99 Majestic

Moschopolis, Aíora 2021 Greece 13% Blend of Syrah with Greek grapes. Great balance and fun to drink. £17.99 MJ Wine Cellars

Cosme Palacio, Glorioso Gran Reserva 2015 Rioja 14% Masses of





M Chapoutier 2020 Côtes-du-Rhône Villages is from an excellent vintage. Buy it by the case! class and interest per penny.

Beautifully balanced mature Rioja. £19

The Wine Society

Pago El Espino, Cortijo Los Aguilares 2018 Sierras de Málaga 14% Mainly Petit Verdot blend sculpted near Ronda in Andalucía. Ambitious and most unusual. £19.95 Tanners

Louis Latour 2019 Côte de Beaune Villages 13% No one would be disappointed to secure this true red burgundy at this price. £20 Tesco

Lonely Vineyard Montepulciano 2017 Eden Valley 13.5% Quite a find! This southern Italian grape seems quite at home in South Australia. £20.95 Corney & Barrow

Ch Haut-Vigneau 2018 Pessac-Léognan 13.5% Sister property to Ch Carbonnieux. Good price for classic Graves freshness. £21.40 Haynes Hanson & Clark

Marziano Abbona, Papà Celso 2021 Dolcetto di Dogliani 14.5% Real bite and pure Piermonte. Bring on the raw meat! Super-tangy. £21.95 Lea & Sandeman

Dom Elodie Balme 2020 Rasteau 15% Very fresh and rich with lovely energy and a hint of pepper and tannin. £21.95 Lea & Sandeman

Domaine Sylvain Pataille 2018
Marsannay Rouge 13% The star of
Marsannay delivers yet again. Real
artisan red burgundy. £23.50 The Wine
Society.

Dom Poulleau 2020 Bourgogne Côte d'Or 13.5% Rather beautiful red burgundy for immediate drinking. And not ridiculously expensive. £23.99 MJ Wine Cellars

Ch La Tour de By, Médoc 2015 13.5% Notably fragrant. Well melded and already a fine claret. £24 Tanners

Joan d'Anguera, Altaroses 2020 Montsant 14.5% Super-sweet palate entry but then very refreshing in a sort of marmalade way. Exciting and easy to like. £24.50 The Sourcing Table

Franco Conterno, Cascina Sciulun

**2020 Langhe Nebbiolo 13.5**% Barolo without the wait. Bone dry finish. *£25.49 Bancroft* 

Domaine Verzier, Empreinte 2020 St Joseph 13% Beautiful north Rhône Syrah! Not unlike a Jamet Côte Rôtie. £26.50 Stone Vine & Sun

Scorpo Estate Shiraz 2019 Mornington Peninsula 14% Saline, minerally and recognisably varietal without any exaggeration. Australian answer to Côte Rôtie. £28.50 Haynes Hanson & Clark

Dom Boris Champy, Altitude 377 2019 Bourgogne Hautes Côtes de Beaune 13.5% Subtle, fresh, classic red burgundy. Great stuff! £29.25 Haynes Hanson & Clark

Marrone 2018 Barolo 14% Very energetic! Long and lively. Should be served reasonably cool. £35.95 NY Wines of Cambridge and others

Pax Syrah 2020 North Coast 12.5% California wine that boasts French freshness, though with less mid palate than, say, a fine St-Joseph. £37.50 The Sourcing Table

Crissante 2018 Barolo 14.5% Very subtle, appetising aroma. Already approachable with a bone-dry finish. Delicate and lots of fun. £39 Tanners

Sato, Pisa Terrace Pinot Noir 2018 Central Otago 13.5% Wonderfully exuberant sweet, raspberry NZ fruit with some complexity. Beautifully precise. £40.50 The Good Wine Shop

Domaine Guyon, Les Bons Ores 2017 Chorey-lès-Beaune 13.5% Complete, richly textured but not sweet fruit. Just right for current drinking. In a Burgundian context this is fair value. £42 Berry Bros & Rudd

Dom Genot Boulanger, Vieilles Vignes 2017 Pommard 13.5% Very pure, if light-bodied, mature red burgundy from a notably approachable vintage. For fans of nuance and classicism. To be enjoyed with food that's not too assertive; turkey would do it. £52.68 J&B

 ${\it More stockists from Wine-searcher.com}$ 

## Women of the year

## The Heroes

Continued from page 17

and undergone interrogation. The authorities have opened fire on the streets, killing untold numbers. Human rights organisations report beatings and torture. Sham trials and executions are threatened

One never knows where uprisings will lead in an authoritarian state. But the Iranian Nobel laureate Shirin Ebadi told me that democracy will come to Iran through the gates that these women have opened. The only question is when.

Christiane Amanpour is chief international anchor at CNN and PBS, and has covered Iran for decades

Paula Kahumbu Conservationist Advocate for wildlife By Amina Mohamed

Paula Kahumbu has been a voice for conservation for a long time and has done transformational work. Her "Hands Off Our Elephants" campaign drew attention to the threat of their extinction in Kenya and convinced people across a very broad spectrum, including at the highest political levels, to support conservation. Her efforts, together with others', have had a direct impact on the increase in the number of elephants in our country: the population has doubled since the late 1980s. Paula's advocacy has created more awareness in the global community of the responsibility that we all have for the conservation of wildlife and particularly elephants. She believes they don't belong to any individual country, but that we hold them in trust for humanity and for the future.

Paula has the ability to look at conservation issues as a whole, identify the priorities — where the dangers are real, where extinction is a real possibility — and address them. Many people are





capable of doing the advocacy. She is unique in raising issues and providing possible solutions too. She's a serious thinker and a pragmatic person. She is also a pioneer who chose a field that is not comfortable for many women. I have a lot of respect and admiration for Paula.

Amina Mohamed is a former Kenyan cabinet secretary and ambassador to the UN

MacKenzie Scott
Philanthropist
Transforming giving
By Abiaail E Disney

It is tempting to compare MacKenzie Scott's unique practice of generosity with that of her ex-husband, Jeff Bezos. But such a comparison is only useful in telling us the source of Scott's billions, and maybe in helping understand just what a miraculous anomaly she is. Scott doesn't donate or endow, she gives. She gives mindfully, generously, humbly and with only her short essays on Medium—laced with the poetry and literature that have formed her compassion—to pass for fanfare.

With blistering speed, she has given

With blistering speed, she has given away money anyone else would need lifetimes and staffs of thousands to distribute, over four years and counting. In the process, Scott has used her writing to advance a vision of society that demands better of us all.

Her essay announcing her first set of gifts was momentous for me personally, and I hope for anyone regardless of the wealth they hold. In it, she acknowledged that wealth accumulation is not an individual but a collective accomplishment, and that power, therefore, should not accrue only to those who benefit from it.

Abigail E Disney is an Emmy-winning documentary filmmaker, activist and philanthropist

Sarina Wiegman Head coach, England women's football team Visionary manager By Beth Mead

Sarina Wiegman told us that we had made her squad for the European championships this summer by giving us a golden ticket that read: "Congratulations! You're going to the Euros!" It was a golden ticket for a golden summer with an incredible human and an incredible woman.

Sarina played over 100 times for the Netherlands in her career, and was their manager when they won the Euros in 2017. She has been a game-changer for us as a team. She is caring and understands exactly what her players need. We always know where we stand with her and she makes football feel simple. The aura she has is so important. During the storm of the Euros, she kept us steady. Before the final against Germany, she told us: "We don't have to win — we just really want to."

The effect she has had on football in this country — a first major England trophy since the men's team won the World Cup in 1966 — is incredible. She took over the team just nine months before the Euros. But her impact isn't limited to us as a team, a whole nation respects what she has achieved. She is a strong human being who has had a huge influence on us as women. It's a unique ability to have that kind of effect on so many people.

Beth Mead is a striker for Arsenal and England. She was top scorer at Euro 22 and voted player of the tournament

## The Leaders



Scott McIntyre/The New York

Continued from page 2

Sherry Rehman Climate minister, Pakistan Negotiator with grit By Nicola Sturgeon

At COP27 last month, Sherry Rehman gave a powerful account of the devastating floods in Pakistan, highlighting the injustice at the heart of climate change. "The bargain made between the global north and global south is not working," she told us. Through the power of her argument, she forced developed countries to listen.

Her negotiating skills, her pragmatism in navigating the blocks that developed countries put in her way

Luis Robayo/AFP/Getty Imag



Above: Oleksandra Matviichuk Portrait by Jaya Nicely and her campaigning voice were instrumental in the progress on loss and damage at COP27.

Her moral authority, representing communities suffering the effects of climate change, led to the groundbreaking agreement to establish a fund that has given renewed hope to many in the global south. I have no doubt that Sherry will continue in her campaign for climate justice, for global financial reform and for the vital funds required to secure a future for those parts of Pakistan that will suffer the impact of this year's floods for a long time to come.

Nicola Sturgeon is first minister of Scotland

## Spectrum



know a poem can't stop a tank. But the reverse is also true. As I'm writing this, the streets of China and Iran have been alive with infuriated, chanting crowds, so tired of being institutionally deceived and robbed of any personal agency or inde-pendence of mind that they are prepared to risk arrest and imprisonment rather than be silenced by regimes demanding obedience to lies.

"Culture wars" ought not to be con-fused with the laborious woke-baiting that has become the default position of populist media in the west. The men's revolt in Iran is a culture war; Ukrainian resistance to the militarised fantasies of Russian imperialism is at root also a culture war, a refusal to accept Vladimir Putin's contention that their nation's language and history are a delusion. It is not accidental that one of the most powerful weapons that the actor-writer President Volodymyr Zelenskyy leading Ukraine has at his command is the gift of candid human com-

Growing up in the 1950s, my babyboomer generation assumed that the screamers of hate, the destroyers of culture, had gone with the war. "Well, boys," our school history teacher confidently proclaimed around 1958, "we don't really know what the rest of the 20th century has in store for us, but you can at least be sure of this: religious oppression and rabid nationalism are

When, in that same year, Boris Pasternak won the Nobel Prize for Dr Zhivago, we thought that even the adamantine rock face of Soviet authoritarianism could somehow be cracked open just far enough for truth, memory and a faint breeze of freedom to be admitted. Even if Pasternak was demonised as an enemy of the Soviet people and forced to decline the prize, we believed that, sooner or later, light would return, as for a while, 30 years later, it did. Becoming a historian was, we thought, a vote of confidence in the victory of the Enlightenment. When the civil rights movement in the US flowered in the 1960s, we bought into Martin Luther King Jr's conviction that "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice".

Often enough, though, it snaps. Four days after he spoke those words in 1968 at the National Cathedral, Washington DC, he was murdered in Memphis.

My new BBC2 television series is the fruit of sombre, late-life reflection that the History of Now was prefigured in the History of Then; that what we had imagined to be things of the past have returned to shadow the present and future. Shrieking, whether online or on platforms, is back; hate is sexy and stalks the world as "disruption".

So those old battles need to be refought, and with the help of the unlikely weapons that once opened eyes and changed minds: the soft power of culture - poetically charged words, images, music, all of which can, in some

Havel to Ai Weiwei to argue that culture is our most powerful weapon circumstances, exert a force beyond the workaday stuff of politics. Culture can

ness of official propaganda. What Václav Havel, in his most original and penetrating text, called "the power of the powerless" is capable of putting despotisms on the back foot, simply by being in sync with the sim-plest and most natural human instincts. Authoritarians can mobilise their heavy artillery of terror, torture, imprisonment and persecution; but in the end, Havel argued, they are not that well equipped to fight the asymmetric battle between lies and truth. Havel believed that the vast majority of people are not content to be forever walled within a prison of falsehood, where the price of material security and domestic safety is the unconditional surrender of personal freedom.

For a while, perhaps many decades, punitive disincentives against disruptive truth-speaking can prevail, espe-cially when reinforced by visceral appeals to tribal loyalty: the demonisa-tion of hate figures (such as George Soros) said to personify foreign manipulation. In the end what Havel calls the "trapped air"— a natural human wish to

hair), listen to unauthorised music, all the small acts of social defiance — can build into a rising tide of disgust.

When Czech police infiltrated the underground concerts of the Plastic of paper as a symbol of defiance during People of the Universe in the 1970s – concerned, as their saxophonist Vratislav Brabanec remembered, that the music was some sort of "black illness" that would grow and generate disaffection — they only guaranteed more risible contempt. But there was a price. In 1976 the band was jailed for months, a wound Brabanec says you carry for ever. Why the wound? "Because I was innocent," he says over his morning beer. "I was jailed for playing the saxophone." But from such ostensibly minor slaps

of repression, barely registering on the scanner of state security, outrage can swell, gather and finally erupt into uncontainable mass disobedience. This happens, above all, when local family life, and especially the lives of children, become the collateral casualties of authoritarian brutality. In Iran, the death in September of Mahsa Amini, arrested for inadequate hijab covering, was taken as a cause for personal freedom by girls and women throughout the country. In China, the screams of a woman unable to escape a blazing apartment in Urumqi when the building door was barred and locked in an excess of Covid confinement, became the cries of an instantaneous mass movement of revolt.

> Perhaps the most agonising detail in Picasso's "Guernica" is the image of a mother cradling a dead child in her arms; the Pietà of civilian bombing. In Episode 2 of *History of Now,* one of the surviving children of the horrifying white supremacist bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, in September 1963, Dale Long, revisits the church, and his own traumatically poignant memories of the carnage. It was the spilling of children's blood - among other murders and assaults — that led Nina Simone to compose the song of righteous rage "Mississippi Goddam". When some southern states banned it for the pro-fanity of its title, that only anointed the song as the jazz anthem of the civil rights movement.

> In May 2008, a devastating earthquake in the western Chinese province of Sichuan took the lives of 69,000. More than 5.000 of the victims were children, buried in the collapsing structures of their schools. The losses were

especially unbearable for parents who had had to obey the official one-child policy. The artist Ai Weiwei responded with a gesture of poignant mourning covering the walls of the Haus der Kunst in Munich in 2009: the 9,000 backpacks of "Remembering", some of them spelling out in Mandarin the words of a grieving mother: "For seven years she lived happily on this earth." But his reaction went well beyond tragic empathy, as searingly shown by another installation, exhibited later than "Remembering" but already under way at the time of that work's conception.

When the earthquake struck, Ai was artistic consultant in the design team building the "Bird's Nest" stadium for the 2008 Beijing Olympics (a role he subsequently repented, feeling compromised into an exercise in "patriotic edu-cation"). Familiar with the chronic corruption in kickback relationships with local and central authorities, Ai suspected that shoddy building practices had been responsible for the needless deaths of the children, a suspicion borne out when he visited the disaster site.

Meeting with a brick wall of silence from officials, not least about the families of the bereaved, Ai launched a citizens' investigation mobilising 100 vol-unteers to hunt for information in the traumatised community; "to remember the death and show concern for the living; to shoulder responsibility for find-ing out every child's name and placing it

The affronted authorities responded with arrests, confiscation of the volunteers' notes and erasure of phone photos. But none of this stopped Ai from conceiving and executing the most powerful work of contemporary art to arise from calamity: at once a poetic medita tion, a document of what happened, who and what had been responsible, and an act of resistance against oblivion. (That last resolution Ai inherited from his father, the poet Ai Qing, who suf-fered the depths of degradation during the Cultural Revolution and shared the hole in the ground that was his prison dwelling with his son, who still keeps a photo of the dugout on his phone.)

Scouring scrapyards, Ai recovered nearly 200 tons of buckled rebars: the steel reinforcing rods meant to maintain the integrity of concrete, which had failed so disastrously during the earthquake. Each of them was hammered by a small army of workers and assistants back to factory-fresh form, giving the title "Straight" to a work that was about the obstinacy of the truth.

Dimly, the authorities began to understand what they were up against and reacted with their routine savagery. In August 2009, when he was trying to testify on behalf of one of the volunteer investigators, Ai was waylaid in his hotel room and beaten so brutally that he needed surgery to treat a brain

None of this slowed the work down. While he was recovering, the piece came into shape. Hundreds of the straight-

ened rebars were laid out on the floor, piled up in places to mimic the heave of a rolling, seismic wave of death. You stand before this assemblage — beautiful and terrible – and feel shaken, unsafe. On the gallery walls surrounding the piece Ai pinned lists of names — thousands of them - of the dead, marked in memory despite the best efforts of Chinese officialdom to consign them to oblivion. "Straight" is the "Guernica" of our young, bloodied century, and no textual history could possibly recover, as this masterpiece does, the enormous weight of the event's catastrophe.

But the lightness of art can shift history too, subtly, yet decisively. I sus-pect the last thing David Hockney would want for his California paintings of the 1960s would be for them to be seen as manifestos of gay liberation. But, over time, they worked transformational magic on homophobia nonetheless, possibly because they were, in the first instance, celebrations of personal pleasure bathed in Angeleno radiance. Formally, "Peter Getting Out of Nick's Pool" (1966) is not just a perfect composition but a candy-box history of representational styles: Modernist angularity broken by spaghetti-ripples, but at its centre the original Greek coinage of beauty itself made tangible in the male nude. It is a very clever picture and yet also disarmingly artless: an oasis of innocent joy delivered to a dark, furious and still largely unwelcoming world.

Who could possibly take exception? Nearly six decades on, the answer is, alas, plenty of folk. Sixty-eight countries around the world criminalise homosexual acts, some with capital punishments including stoning. Among the prohibiters is Qatar, where police have obliged football fans at the World Cup to remove any item of clothing (or flag) with rainbow decoration and where Fifa threat-ened to penalise team captains should players have the effrontery to wear "One Love" armbands. It's safe to say the father of the suspected shooter at the

Over time, David Hockney's paintings worked transformational magic on homophobia

who killed five and wounded 18 last month, whose main concern was whether his son might be gay, is probably unmoved by the swimming pools of David Hockney. Of course, there are limits to what activist art and culture can do. More

LGBTO nightclub in Colorado Springs

heartening, however, are the demonstrations - from one end of the world to the other — of how their eloquence and visionary power can actually affect con-tested outcomes. There's no doubt that Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, originally published in 1985 but given new life in popular culture by television, played a part in mobilising votes in reaction to the Supreme Court's overturning earlier this year of Roe vs Wade's protection of abortion rights.

Referendums held to restrict abortion rights further all failed, even in conservative states such as Montana and Kentucky. Artists are under no obligation to be political, Atwood says in an interview for *History of Now*, but none can escape the imprint of their times. "I write about potentially unpleasant futures," she says, "in the hope that they will not become real."

When the worst does materialise, some writers become even more determined to have their voice heard. Rachel Carson was herself dying when *Silent Spring* was published in 1962. Her books on the natural history of the oceans had become million-copy bestsellers precisely because they translated scientific knowledge into poetically rich storytell-ing. As fiercely analytical as was her attack on the effect of chemical pesticides on the food chain, it was the opening fable of that birdless silence falling on the countryside that gripped the reader and changed minds

My father, a great storyteller in his own right, understood the uniquenes of Carson's marriage of literature and science when he read passages from Under the Sea Wind to me while we were still living on the Essex coast. Swimming along with Scomber the mackerel, I understood, even then, that humans were not a breed apart from nature but an inseparable part of it. Which was the lesson, as it turns out, on which all our futures now depend.

All the stuff of mainstream history -

wars, revolutions, economies — is becoming a subset of the engulfing, elemental question: the fate of the earth; what humans have done to it and what they may yet do to repair and redeem the damage.

We are running out of time. But what we have not vet exhausted is what, in the end, makes us human: the great storehouse of visionary imagination. If, at the eleventh hour, we have what it takes to pull off the greatest escape act in the human story, it will not be databanks or algorithms that will have got us there, but something like a poem, a novel, a painting or a song.

'Simon Schama's History of Now' is airing on the BBC. He is an FT contributing editor

be able to speak one's mind in a café, dress as one wishes (including visible From above: in Beijing last do this because it can connect with human habits, needs and intuitions in weekend, a protester holds ways that expose the inhuman hollowup a blank sheet

From China to Ukraine, the world is fighting battles once thought to

have been won. Simon Schama looks to writers and artists from Václav

a demonstration over zero-Covid measures; demonstrators dressed as characters from 'The Handmaid's Tale' march Supreme Court to protest the appointment of Brett Kavanaugh in 2018; Ai 'Straight', made retrieved from

2008 Sichuan

earthquake





# Life&Arts



### SNAPSHOT

'Youth of Kyiv' (2022) by Fabian Ritter Photographer Fabian Ritter is a member of Germany's Docks collective, whose aim is to "suspend and question the classic egocentric perspective of documentary photography". For his latest photo-essay Youth of

For his latest photo-essay Youth of Kylv, Ritter spent three weeks with the young people of the city, who are learning to "live in their new normality as best they can," writes Ritter. And as "the first theatre rehearsals take place", along with the "first reunion at the bathing lake, the first concert to benefit the Ukrainian military", and the young boys in this picture keep on riding their skateboards, life demonstrates its endless capacity to adapt.

Dylan Neri

Fabian Ritter's 'Youth of Kyiv' is showing at the Fotoraum Köln from December 9 to January 8, 2023

# The bedside manner of Elon Musk

Jo Ellison

Trending



As red flags go, this was a pretty big one. Quite apart from the fact that he was basically inviting armed police to shoot him dead in the street — and who would have blamed them? The whole look was deeply unsexy. His relationship with the toy long outlasted our relationship.

I recalled this dark moment in my

I recalled this dark moment in my junior history with a shudder this week while examining the inventory displayed on Elon Musk's nightstand, a subject presented in a Twitter post earlier this week with the caption "My bedside table". The tableau revealed four open cans of caffeine-free Diet Coke, an unfinished bottle of water, a Buddhist amulet apparently used as an aid for meditation, a replica Revolutionary war-era pistol in a box decorated with the Emanuel Leutze painting "Washington Crossing the Delaware" (1851) and a handgun, understood to be a copy of one from the video game Deus Ex: Human

Now, I'm no Luke Edward Hall, but when it comes to the art of projecting taste and personality into my decorative surroundings, I would argue that abandoning a few unfinished cans beside my pistol of an evening is probably not what interior design gurus have in mind. Commentators were quick to point out that his bedside table featured what seemed to be an even greater offence than the presence of a Diamond Back .357 handgun beside his pillow: the surface top was covered in unsightly water stains. Even Musk seemed a little shamefaced about

the whole arrangement: "There is no excuse for my lack of coasters," he wrote in the comments field.

Nevertheless, as a glimpse into the mind of one of the great technological provocateurs of recent times, the tweet offered an unexpected portal. Musk's nightstand immediately conjured the image of a lonely, very thirsty man-child, suspended in the forever fantasy that he might one day rule the world. Furthermore, for a man who has been three times married and sired 10 children, the table gave off a ferocious smack of "single". The internet has since been occupied with making tragic nightstand memes.

Rather like the power desk, the bedside table offers its own story for psychological evaluation. But where the power desk is a public tool on

Unlike other bits of status furnishings, the nightstand exposes our frailer, older, more decrepit selves

which to project status among one's peer group, the bedside table is more intimate, a tiny vestibule of quiet neuroses, thwarted ambitions and psychic ills. My own, for example, features a towering pile of highly curated books still awaiting my attention, a small porcelain dish in which collect discarded hairclips, an inhaler, a vat of gummy, full-strength melatonin (for the "jet lag") and an except ment of clast realizer.

assortment of adapter plugs. Unlike other bits of status furnishings — our bookshelves, desk tops or kitchen cabinets — the nightstand exposes our frailer, older, more decrepit selves. My husband stores a lifetime's supply of ear plugs, as though he were living through the Blitz on our no-through road, while

I remember my father's bedside table featuring a buffet of indigestion tablets which he monitored as closely as those

Beefeaters mind the crown jewels. Musk's bedside table offers fresh insight into his public image in the world. But does he identify with Washington, championing freedom and democracy with his flintlock pistol, or Page, the villainous protagonist of *Deus Ex*, in search of immortality and willing to sacrifice the lives of billions in order to achieve that goal? According to Wikipedia, *Deus Ex* is a role-playing franchise about "the conflict between secretive factions who wish to control the world by proxy, and the effects of transhumanistic attitudes and technologies in a dystopian near-future". No wonder Musk must guzzle golden cans of Coca-Cola if he's going to bed with two such extreme totems of progress on his mind. At least both factions can be clearly represented through their choice of weaponry. Nothing helps an American sleep more soundly than the knowledge he's got a pistol by his head.

"When I became a man, I put away childish things", says Shakespeare's Prince Hal as he recognises the weight of responsibility that must come with taking on the crown. But maybe he also had a nightstand where he could pile discarded cans of soda and secrete his treasured toys?

However superhuman we tell ourselves we are, the bedside table is the last repository for all our very human sorrows, our loneliness, addictions, our shifty sinuses, our bloated guts. That they reveal the detritus of human failing turns out to be quite reassuring. Even when that failing is forgetting to put a coaster underneath one's drinks cans or pretending to be Elon Musket while waving a toy gun.

jo.ellison@ft.com

# Are you listening to the FT Weekend podcast?



This week, we speak to two FT journalists who have been reporting on the efforts to trace thousands of stolen art objects from Nigeria known as the Benin Bronzes. These are scattered throughout western museums and universities, but for years nobody knew what was where.

which stymled the prospect of their return to Nigeria. The FT's Aanu Adeoye and Josh Spero Join us to discuss how a new digital project is helping to trace them, and how the debate on the looted artworks is changing.

We also talk to author Benjamin Lorr about supermarkets and

their secrets. Our listeners challenged us to make boring topics interesting, and Ben is here to tell you: the supermarket is not what it seems! Listen by searching 'FT Weekend' wherever you get your podcasts, or at ft.com/ftweekendpodcast

# When politics wasn't a team sport

### Janan Ganesh

Citizen of nowhere

t has all been downhill in America since the first six presidents. Western civilisation was never the same after ancient wisdom gave way to the sentimental Gospel.

way to the sentimental Gospel. Roosevelt should have stayed out of that damn fool war in Europe and the Pacific. People are breeding too much. The state must stop them.

I like Gore Vidal so much that I involuntarily smile when I see the spine of his essay collection *United States* in my bookcase. Even before his dotty late phase, though, he was a reactionary kind of liberal. If his 1968 debates with the conservative William Buckley still grip us, it is because of the two men's underlying oneness, not the superficial Democrat vs Republican framing.

Best of Enemies, James Graham's otherwise fine play about the duel of the drawlers, might have made more of this. I fear much of the audience leaves with the sweet notion in their heads that Vidal would today have been a woke ally. The play wants to suggest that his showdown with Buckley was a trailer for the culture wars, the partisan spite, of now. I have come

around to the opposite view.

The debates marked the end of something good, not the start of something ball. It was the last time being politically hard-to-place was normal.

Put it this way. If you tell me what you think about, say, the return of the Benin bronzes, I can infer with some confidence your views on public spending, the EU, rail strikes, immigration, working from home, climate change, Meghan Markle and

much else. Nothing connects these subjects. It should be possible to be a small-government Remainer who thinks imperial loot is better off in western museums and who loses sleep to visions of a burning planet. But such a person would stand out now. To take a more concentrated example, lots of people should be anti-lockdown and pro-vaccine mandate. How many do you know?

I have aired Ganesh's First Law of Politics before, but allow me a recapitulation. People do not work out their beliefs and then join the corresponding tribe. They join a tribe and infer their beliefs from it. The

The sense of belonging is what hooks people, not the thrill of pursuing a thought on its own terms

sense of belonging, the group membership, is what hooks people, not the thrill of being right or pursuing a thought on its own terms. Politics has become a team sport, goes the line on this. But even that is too kind. Sports fans are sardonic and irreverent about their own team. It isn't so central to their identity as to require consistent adherence.

We have lost all sense of how weird it is to seek connection with others through politics. And how new. Watching Buckley and Vidal is a reminder of a less needy age. The former had his own credentials as an apostate of the right: his loose line on marijuana, his Catholicism, his Spanish-speaking intellectualism. Nor was the audience at the time much easier to place. Millions of whites were pro-New Deal and anti-Civil Rights in a way that stumps modern notions of

"progressive" and "conservative".
Noting the change since then is simple enough work. Accounting for it is trickier. One theory suggests itself. The rise of politico-cultural blocs more or less tracks the decline of church membership, trade unions and marriages that go the distance. An atomised population began to cast around for other kinds of belonging, didn'tit?

The mid-20th century voter was heterodox, yes, but heterodox in the way that someone with strong roots could afford to be. With such a firm social anchor, there was less need to seek emotional security in a political tribe. As I've used two metaphors for the same thing there, let us keep them coming. A rudder, a bedrock, a cornerstone, a north star: people used to find these things in their personal relationships. In their church, family, factory or town. As modernity scrambled those things, mostly for the good, the need to subsume oneself into a group was going to have to be met some other way.

That turned out to be politics. We

That turned out to be politics. We live with the wicked results all the time now. The perverse consequences of ostensibly desirable change: Buckley would call this a conservative insight. And I, though a Vidalist, always thought he won those debates.

ianan aanesh⊘ft con



20 May 2023 Join us in Washington, D.C. & Online

The ideas festival of our age returns to Washington, D.C. on 20 May 2023. Don't miss out on this stimulating day where the FTWeekend paper comes to life, with everything from debates and tastings to live performances.





C'boe





# HARRY WINSTON

JEWELS THAT TELL TIME

HARRYWINSTON.COM

# House&Home

PROPERTY SUPPLEMENT OF THE YEAR

Costa del Sol Why foreign buyers are flocking to Marbella and Málaga—SPAIN PROPERTY PAGES

Follow us on Instagram @ft\_houseandhome



# Perfectly imperfect

Pristine is passé – today's restorations embrace a new aesthetic of preserving and celebrating the scars and quirks of the past, writes Helen Barrett

uistokatu 4 is a 19th-century mansion the colour of calamine lotion, one of several around Helsinki's chic southern tip. Like many grand old houses, its history is about upheaval: glamour, prestige, fortunes found and lost, years of dereliction. This mansion's future is assured. Two

years ago Puistokatu 4 was bought, rescued and had a renovation commissioned by a charitable foundation. This week, it reopened as a climate-change research centre. But rather than a pristine restoration job, Puistokatu 4 wears its history on its sleeve. Its new owners have preserved the physical traces left by its long-dead inhabitants and placed

them centre stage.
This imperfect restoration has been a long, forensic and expensive process. But evidence of the mansion's history was as valuable as time and money to its new owners, says Sarlotta Narjus, specialist architect and managing director of the

Finnish practice Sarc, who led the work. Narjus and her team upgraded the mansion to high ecological standards, with new insulation and 21st-century services. But at every turn, the scars of the building's past interrupt the newly plastered surfaces. It is anything but bland. Interior doors showcase some 130 years' worth of paint: 10 layers revealed in strips, from 19th-century



steel greys to mid 20th-century green to various shades of white.

The attic has been converted into a modern office, but gnarly, 130-year-old timber beams have been left in a sea of blond wood. Wall graffiti, possibly from when the house was used briefly as a school in the early 20th century, is exposed, while a tatty staircase from the same era remains in place, its steps still bearing the indents of the hundreds of children who shuffled up and down.

Projects like Puistokatu 4 are part of a small but growing restoration trend that seeks to protect the history and collective memories of buildings, rather than obliterate them, says Pete Collard, an



architectural curator at the Royal Institute of British Architects in London.

"There's a sense of a new aesthetic where you are wearing the past; you are being open about the provenance of a building, its history and previous uses -and you are making all that visible."

"There's a groundswell of interest in the idea of taking something on from the perspective of being sustainable, and that that should be more prevalent than looking at things from a material

aspect," says Collard. "Whereas once it was all about building new, there's a genuine interest in reusing materials to be as sustainable as  $\frac{1}{2}$ possible. It makes a far more interesting structure and architectural language."

In London, Collard has explored the trend for imperfect restorations as curator of Long Life, Low Energy: Designing for a Circular Economy, a new exhibition at Riba's galleries that charts recent efforts

'A straight upgrade would have been much easier and cheaper; you don't need nearly so much labour'

to retrofit and reuse old buildings. It includes commercial projects, such as the refurbished Battersea Power Station, now a glitzy shopping mall with interiors that showcase the chipped tiles and scarred brickwork of its industrial past.

Another example is Grade-I listed Clandon Park House in Surrey, a great house destroyed by fire, currently undergoing a restoration by the National Trust that will conserve its burnt state with a new roof and terraces. The Trust says it wants to offer an "x-ray view" of how historic country houses were built, though critics argue Clandon should be restored to perfection, Baroque plasterwork and all.

Back in Helsinki, Puistokatu 4's show-pieces are the 19th-century wall and ceiling decorations, which have been only partly repainted and restored: elaborate, Nordic-nouveau designs found battered by damp and years of neglect. "They were more or less rotten in many places," says Narjus. For their 21st-century life, sections still bear

those scars of scuffs and overpainting.
They are beautiful pieces of work, commissioned in the 1890s by Puistokatu 4's second owners: Ida Aalberg, the most celebrated Finnish actress of her era, and her lawyer husband Lauri Kivekäs. Such was Aalberg's enduring fame that she was memorialised in Helsinki's Kaisaniemi Park in 1972 with a

sculpture near the national theatre. According to my guide at the house few letters survive between Aalberg and her husband, with Kivekās writing to his wife on tour in Paris urging her to make her mind up on the designs. They had commissioned the paintings as part of their own restoration. The previous — and first — Puistokatu 4 owner allowed the mansion to be nearly wiped out by fire in 1886.

Tracing fingertips over the layers of history exposed at Puistokatu 4 is an extraordinary feeling. But the work was more difficult, time-consuming and

Continued on page 2



# Daniel FEAU

(From top) The restoration of

Clandon Park

House in Surrey, destroyed by fire in 2015, will

conserve parts of its burnt state; rendering

of a courtyard house built

within existing

ruins at Phoenix House, Berkshire; detail

of damaged

ceiling decorations at

Puistokatu 4

in Helsinki

PARISIAN LUXURY REAL ESTATE

NEUILLY-SUR-SEINE - SAINT-JAMES €19,700,000

This magnificent property comprises an 1000 sqm late 18th century main house (five bedrooms) and three self-contained pavillons. The 2400 sqm plot boasts a 1700 sqm landscaped garden planted with centennial trees. With a swimming pool and a 7-car garage. Ref: 5332248

Anne-Laure ANTOINE

al.antoine@danielfeau.com

+33 1 84 79 83 30

CHRISTIE'S

## The real point of digital nomads



**Joy Lo Dico** 

**Perspectives** 

unnily enough, predictions that ome true tend to be more memorable than those that don't. In 1964, the science fiction writer Arthur C Clarke spelt out a vision for the future in a broadcast for the BBC's *Horizon* programme. Clarke said he

could see that "it will be possible . . . perhaps only 50 years from now, for a man to conduct his business from Tahiti or Bali just as well as he could from London".

In September, Indonesia obliged. Its province of Bali entered into a collaboration with Airbnb's Live and Work Anywhere campaign and the government adapted its visitor visas to allow remote work for six months, with no local income tax due.

Digital nomads were welcome. The epithet "citizen of nowhere" was meant to be an insult but they are now sought after. Sunny climes in Southern Europe the Caribbean, the beached fringes of Asia send rival siren calls to them, fluttering their new digital nomad visas for attention. (Them? Maybe they are us too — the grounded who've forgotten we don't have to live like this.)

The proposition is simple: you, your laptop, your Northern European or US pay cheque, the lightest of loads for the journey and the promise of beaches, cafés, fast internet and beautiful new people. Who would want to be a citizen



FTWeekend

of somewhere, treading the same streets each day, the burdens of your home nation on your shoulders, when this awaits you?

In recent years, it was the super-rich who had an easy ticket into European countries through golden visas, though their reputation has been tarnished by Russian bling. But the digital nomad is conceptually cleaner — young, free and full of idealism and potential. Portugal boomed off the back of the

D7 visa, introduced in 2007 for passive income earners. It is introducing a new digital nomad visa for non-EU citizens, as is Spain, traditionally a little more sceptical of the outsider. Croatia, Greece and Malta all have them up and running. Malaysia wants you too, particularly if you work in IT and digital content creation. Bermuda's scheme has a chirpy slogan, "Work from Bermuda".

Of course not everything works out that way. Some have suggested that

Indonesia might be a perfect place to hide out if you're running a crypto scam — it doesn't extradite to the US. After the FTX collapse, how's the Bahamas' reputation doing? Clarke had foreseen the

possibilities of freedom, but perhaps not that it would be women as much as men doing business from abroad nor the further social changes of the past 50 years. Dress codes have evolved so

you don't have to wear a collar and tie; we don't start families until later in life; and mortgages in richer countries are beyond the reach of average salaries. Portugal's new visa scheme asks for a salary of €2,800 a month. That would pay the rent in London but maybe one would like to eat too. Nor will Clarke have spotted the

power of envy, of an upstart start-up generation showing off on Zoom to the worn-down office workers left behind. The draw of Bali is as much about

being "elsewhere" as "nowhere".

Though that "elsewhere" also has reason to be suspicious. Residents complain that the nomads force up rents and fragment communities and, in some cases, behave disrespectfully (the bars near the temples of Bali have turned into an all-night party zone).

The locals will also know that outsiders have been given an advantage: digital nomads are playing a game of arbitrage. Their wages are

Portugal's new visa scheme asks for a salary of €2,800 a month. That would pay the rent in London but maybe one would like to eat too



Bali is the latest place to lure digital nomads with visa schemes – Airbnb

predicated on the original place of work and, in some cases, gain a favourable tax status. The citizen of somewhere cannot do that. Too much has been invested, the roots go too deep to just up and move.

There's long been suspicion between the two sides. Early nomads — the Scythians, the Huns — were considered barbarians by settlers, who had walled themselves into a place and installed

systems: first irrigation, then taxes. Pastoral nomads were beholden to little other than the flight of birds, the appetites of sheep and the curvature of the earth. The modern ones map on to the course of the undersea internet cables. Nomadlist, a website for travellers, ranks destinations by broadband speed. Lisbon and Canggu in Bali are at the top, while Mexico City and Timișoara, Romania — where tech

is booming — make the top 10. But key to this surge in visa offers is the exchange. The modern nomads arrive with caravans loaded with skills and knowledge. They leaven the local economies with their overseas money

and make peripheral places important. Still, intrinsic to the deal is what is on offer to them. You can, as Clarke predicted, do business from anywhe but that's not the point: the digital nomad is trading those things for the experience of real life again, somewhere interesting, somewhere new — the one thing they cannot get from sitting on a laptop.

smooth blocks - a little like virtual

Lego. That, the team says, reduced some time and labour costs. The real stone

portal has since been built in a stonema son's workshop, ready to be transported to the site to form part of the new house. "You could do this work if you had stonemasons and architects on site, but now with a laser scanner, we can scan,

get a digital inventory and bring every-

thing into the workflow," says Wilton. "Suddenly we can arrange materials much more quickly."

"One of the reasons we wanted to col-laborate on Phoenix House is that new

tools have meant architects can under-stand what's there already and make it

work for the project in a direct way. We couldn't do that before."

Follow Joy @joy\_lo\_dico

### **Inside**



**Brighton rocks** Five beautiful homes for sale in the East Sussex city by the sea Page 4



The bully of the bush Robins have a brutish reputation; but are they simply misunderstood? Page 5



Shop for Conran Items from the late designer's country house go up for auction



Christmas luxe redux How to reuse and recycle everyday objects for your festive decorations

Page 6



The miracle of muck

A well-tended compost heap is a  $magical-and\,climate-friendly-thing$ 

## Perfectly imperfect

Continued from page 1

expensive than it would have been had the owners commissioned a pristine refit, says Narjus. Before work could start, it involved an exhaustive historical review of the site, including documenting how Aalberg and Kivekäs lived in the mansion; how they used its rooms and remodelled it to their tastes

"A straight upgrade would have been much easier," says Narjus. "And cheaper; you don't need nearly so much labour and you don't have to find specialist craftspeople."

Reused materials also serve to show

case environmental credentials — in Puistokatu 4's case, a visual, perhaps even self-conscious, reflection of its new owners' work on the climate crisis, and the priorities of the scientists and researchers who will work there.

"Our guiding principle was 'cherish the incomplete' — ecological reconthe incomplete' — ecological reconstruction instead of building something new," says Anna Herlin, head of development for Puistokatu 4's co-owner, the Tiina & Antti Herlin Foundation. The organisation was established in 2014 by the family behind the Kone Corporation makers of elevators, and one of Finland's biggest companies.

Herlin took the decision to buy and restore the derelict mansion, and commissioned Narjus to upgrade it. "We wanted to show that we're interested in continued environmental progress, rather than to come up with superfancy premises for just another philan-thropic foundation," she says.

In Gloucestershire, architects Donald Insall Associates are upgrading Wood chester Mansion, a Gothic revival-style house begun in 1857 but abandoned by builders halfway through construction seemingly after its owners lost interest. It is now in the hands of a private trust and is being restored to its incomplete, flawed condition.

But Collard points out that most pri-vate residential projects of this type are backed with corresponding private wealth, so remain scarce "because the economies of smaller-scale construction work against many people".

Nevertheless, he has found several examples for the Riba exhibition. One is Phoenix House, an ambitious net-zero residential project by CSK Architects. Initial excavation works have begun on a Berkshire hilltop overlooking Windsor Castle and 25 miles to the west of London. The house is likely to be finished in 2025.

CSK's client is Andrew Try, whose family has owned the land since the





1930s. Like Puistokatu 4, the site has a history of destruction and resurrection, hence Try's choice of name for the house.

The architects have drawn up plans and last year gained approval in the pro-tected "greenbelt" — for what CSK partner and director Dido Milne affectionately calls "a bit of a Frankenstein [monster]" — a courtyard house built with, and within, the site's existing ruins.

Like Narjus, the CSK team adopted a

guiding principle: "form follows life cycle" — meaning the character of the house would be determined by extensive use of reclaimed materials.

"Dido's bringing in the whole circular economy," says Try. "What have we got here? We've literally got piles of stones. It was self-evident that we should put those things together."

"In the home counties, the majority of clients just want a nice new house," says Matthew Barnett Howland, a CSK director and head of research. "Andrew is quite enlightened." Try describes his project as "romantic".

First, the team submitted a pre-appli-

cation inquiry for a traditional country house, but were steered away by planners. The current, more radical design was approved because it was an

exemplar for the local authority's netzero carbon targets, says Milne. "Plan-ners didn't want a pastiche, they wanted something that reflected a unique set of circumstances," says Barnett Howland.

That is an understatement: the site's history reads like British architectural history in microcosm.

Try's land was once an iron-age fort, a

Roman camp and later a medieval chapel. A vast, chunky pile built in the 1760s called Gloucester Lodge once stood here. In the 1870s, the house was renamed St Leonard's Hill and given a neo-Gothic makeover. Three British prime ministers lived here, including William Pitt the Elder.

In 1926, the disgruntled son of its then wner blew it all up with dynamite after an inheritance row. According to Try, Walter Gropius and Maxwell Fry drew up plans for sleek Modernist buildings too radical for the local planning authorities. It has lain in ruins — stones from the explosion still scattered around the hill — ever since, with a crumbling colonnade at what was once

the rear of the house still standing. "I thought, we've got all this stuff here anyway, so why can't we just use it?' says Try, who says he is "getting his hands dirty", cleaning old bricks and stone work himself.

Technology has made a complicated building process easier. "It would have been hard even just 10 years ago to accomplish a design like this," says Oliver Wilton, professor of environmen tal design at the Bartlett School of Architecture at University College London.

Working with the Bartlett school, CSK extracted, collected and made an inventory of the abandoned Gothic masonry, creating a "digital quarry" of scanned stones. From that, they built a virtual stone arch using design technology, mixing scanned rough stone with

"And the material is free of charge," adds Barnett Howland, who points out that the methods are nothing new. "Spolia [repurposed stone and fragments from buildings] is a tradition – you just have to look at Rome. "Though we reckon it is about 10 per cent more expensive to make this frame out of reused stone than it would be to build out of new stone shipped in." (From top) The Imperfect restorations use less carinteriors of the refurbished bon and reduce the need for new materials, though their labour intensiveness and the need for specialist skills con-Battersea Power Station, now a

residential and shopping complex, retain the chipped tiles and scarred brickwork of its industrial past; interior doors at Puistokatu 4 showcase 130 years' worth of

tributes to them being more expensive than building afresh or pristine restoration work. In the UK, the tax system is stacked against refits, with VAT charged at full rate on many refurbishment projects. The lower VAT rate on new builds means it is often cheaper to demolish and start again. Both Puistokatu 4 and Phoenix House are boutique restorations paid for by wealthy clients. What else needs to paint — Backdrop Productions: Joel Haap change for imperfect restorations to

appeal to more people? One challenge is the stubborn idea that second-hand materials are somehow inferior, says Milne. "Across all society, there are ideas about perfection and imperfection — what is 'nice', what is considered ageing. We haven't even accepted that in our own faces and bodies, so there is a huge cultural shift that has to happen first." But she is optimistic. "People want to

do things they can be proud of, with prestige attached. There aren't many examples around. Maybe in 50 years' time the market may be asking for this." "All building work gets cheaper the more people do it," says Collard.

As Puistokatu 4 begins its new life as a centre for climate change research, Narjus says her biggest fear is that she has done too much work: "That we would end up with a building that looked new."

"But mostly, we didn't want to make Puistokatu 4 a museum, forever trapped in the 1800s."

"Long Life, Low Energy: Designing for a Circular Economy" is at Riba until April 1. Puistokatu 4 is open to the public: puistokatu4.fi/en/about/

# Bits and baubles

Interiors | Simple is beautiful -

and plastic-free is essential.

Selected by Roddy Clarke



decoration by Raj Tent Club Handmade fron aspen wood in raitentclub.com

▼ Christmas tree

▲ Noel bell by Sharland England £24 A tree decoration made from handwoven rattan. sharland england.com



▲ Miracle on 34th Street wreath by Ronny Colbie £105 Made in London from locally sourced foliage. ronnycolbie.com



'I thought,

this old

here

brick and

stone work

anyway, so

just use it?'

why can't we

we've got all

▲ Palmito baubles by The Colombia Collective £59 for fou



variety of colours available via homewares app Narchie.

£90

▼ Stocking by

Woven Shapes

Handmade in a



### House & Home

Spain property | Demand is high on the Costa del Sol, encouraged by new fiscal incentives for the yacht set. By Zoe Dare Hall

hen Zsolt Kigyossy recently sold his Budapest-based games development company, he could have chosen anywhere to enjoy early retirement with his wife and two children, who are aged 12 and 15. Hungarian winters didn't appeal, so instead the family has relocated to Marbella on the Costa del Sol.

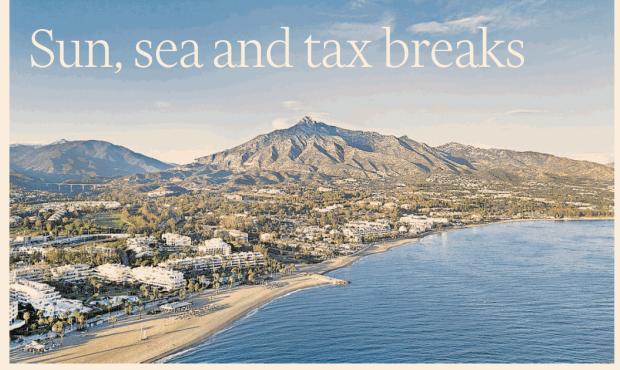
"I had money to spend, so why not spend it on something fantastic?" says Kigyossy, 54, who will move soon into two penthouse apartments that he is combining into one at Epic Marbella, a new Fendi-branded development where properties start at €4.5mn.

People don't come to Marbella to make money. They come to spend it and to enjoy life," he says. "There's nothing better than sitting in a *chiringuito* on the beach with a cold beer and freshly grilled fish."

Foreign demand for property in Spain hit an all-time high in the third quarter of this year, according to Spanish land registry data. And the Costa del Sol has emerged as a particular haven, espe-cially among Scandinavian buyers. Spanish Notaries' figures show the number of Swedish buyers in Málaga province - which includes the Costa del Sol – in the first half of the year was 36 per cent up year-on-year to 1,102, according to analysis by Mark Stücklin at Spanish Property Insight Data Hub.

In Marbella, home to most of the coast's super-prime properties, including beachfront estates on the Golden Mile priced €30mn-plus, sales in the first three months of the year were 65 per cent higher than a year before, reaching their highest number since 2004

The fact the European Central Bank's interest rate rises last month were widely anticipated "may have encouraged buyers to get ahead of the curve", Stücklin says — though some estate agents say their international buyers rarely use financing, especially if they want to take advantage of the golden visa scheme, available to non-EU nationals who spend more than (an unmortgaged) €500,000 on property.



There is a new fiscal incentive that is encouraging wealthy European buyers to consider the southern Spanish coast, however. Andalucía is the only Spanish region, outside of Madrid, to overturn its wealth tax (impuesto de patrimonio) in a move to attract high-earners to relocate there.

Since September 20, anyone who is a tax resident in Andalucía and has worldwide assets above €700,000 receives a 100 per cent deduction on the

The region also recently scrapped its inheritance tax (IHT), which means that anyone (resident or not) who inherits Andalucían assets of up to €1mn is no longer liable to pay IHT. For 39-year-old Swede Mikael Johans-

son, who recently moved from London to a €3.3mn villa in Nagüeles near Marbella's Golden Mile and who runs several social enterprise businesses, the tax break comes as a windfall. "We had factored wealth tax into our financials, so it's a welcome surprise," he says.

Agents, meanwhile, are divided over how much impact it will have on encouraging buyers in Andalucía. "I've had no one specifically mention the wealth tax issue, and it's only aimed at full-time residents, not second-home owners, who still make up the majority of foreign buyers there," says Barbara Wood, founder of buying agency The Property Finders. There is also talk of Spain introducing a new "solidarity tax" next year for those with a net wealth above €3mn, which would cancel out the benefits for some.

But for the wealthiest buyers, the

tax break brings sizeable savings.

Foreign demand for property in Spain has hit an all-time high; in Marbella (above) sales in the first three months of the cent higher than a year before; (left) a five-

bedroom villa in Marbella, €3.875mn, through

Assuming no other assets, someone with €3mn taxable wealth — which means €4mn assets (including property), as residents get a €1mn allow ance — would previously have paid €31,500 a year in wealth tax. For someone with €20mn, their annual wealth tax bill would have been €400,000.

Mike Trezise, a tech entrepreneur from Cardiff who is due to move into an apartment at Epic Marbella soon, describes the tax overhaul as "lifechanging". "I've spent a lot of time in



### i / BUYING GUIDE

Spain is launching a new digital nomad visa allowing non-EU citizens to live in the country for up to five years and pay lower tax (15 per cent for the first four years).

Between April and June, the average Property price in Málaga province was €2,016 per sq m, up 9 per cent on the year before, according to Spain's Ministry of Development. The number of sales was up 60 per cent over the

for a resale or new-build Spanish property, including a 6-10 per cent

Marbella in recent years, but I've never been able to become resident due to the onerous tax system, in particular wealth tax," he says. Still, some HNWIs may bristle at the prospect of completing the Modelo 720 form to claim their rebate, thinking of it as a way for the tax office

to keep tabs on the wealthy.

Scrapping the wealth tax is a good marketing move, says Carlos Rodriguez, co-managing director at Sierra Blanca Estates, developers of Epic Marbella and an adjacent scheme of five Karl Lagerfeld-branded villas (one of which recently sold for €15mn). "People will view Andalucía as tax-friendly. Portugal has been great at selling itself on that score. Now we need to do the same in

Spain," he says. Málaga city, too, is growing in popularity among high-budget buyers pelled by the likes of Google and Citigroup opening hubs there. The city is hoping for a further economic boost if it wins its bid to host Expo 2027. Apartments at Sierra Blanca Tower, a new beachfront development, are selling for €12,000 per sq m, 30 per cent more than their launch price three years ago. "That price is unheard of here. It proves there's a market. We need more products like

it,"says Rodriguez.

Whether it's the superyacht and champagne buckets-on-the-beach scene that draws buyers or the coast's less ostentatious charms, fiscal breaks will always play second fiddle to th pleasures of a beautiful coastline,

"Wealth tax or not," says Johansson,
"buyers will always come to this region as it's such a beautiful place to bring







### LEGACY OF LIFESTYLE

For 50 years, Quinta do Lago has established its reputation as one of the most desirable locations for prime real estate and a world-leader in luxury lifestyle. In its semi-centennial year, there is no better time than now to invest in this world-class destination.

Surrounded by three immaculate golf courses, including the €7 million upgraded South Course, world-class sports and fitness hub, The Campus, and sublime gastronomic experiences, in Quinta do Lago, a luxurious lifestyle of wellness is enjoyed beside a protected coastal nature reserve and the breath-taking shores of Portugal's Algarve.

With its sustained investment securing the future for generations to come, Quinta do Lago's stunning properties and coveted plots are now available for discerning buyers looking to make a truly life-changing investment in a timeless destination.







### Sotheby's CONCIERGE AUCTIONS

Knight Frank

Widi Reserve, North East of Bali. Never Before Listed for Sale. No Reserve.



## 100+ Island Protected Archipelago with Exclusive Development Rights

### **ONLINE AUCTION 8-14 DECEMBER**

The Widi Reserve is a coral atoll archipelago boasting 100+ uninhabited, pristine tropical islands, fringed by 150km of white sand beaches, thriving coral reefs, & private, deep-sea, nutrient-rich waters. Now, a once-in-a-generation opportunity to conserve & sustainably develop one of the most intact coral atoll ecosystems by acquiring interests in PT. Leadership Islands Indonesia is available for your bid price.

CASOTHEBYS.COM ENOUIRIES +1 646 760 7823 #CASOTHEBYS

SEE AUCTION TERMS & CONDITIONS

LISTED BY

JLL HOTELS & HOSPITALITY GROUP, BROKER, #L3007326E NIHAT ERCAN, BROKER, #R021965J & JULIEN NAOURI, #R003905I

Property and Opportunity details provided by seller or others; buyer to verify.

### House & Home

# Hot property Brighton

By Madeleine Pollard



### ◀ Flat, Sussex Square, £1.2mn

Where In Kemptown, to the east of the city centre. Depending on traffic, it is a 10-15 minute drive to the train station, and 35 minutes to 1 hour to Gatwick airport. What A three-bedroom groundfloor flat within a Grade I-listed adapted for wheelchair access and comes with a garage. Residents of

than 5 acres of private garde in the middle of the square, complete with a tunnel that leads Why The building was once h to Thomas Read Kemp, the architect of the original Kemp Town, a 19th-century Regency architecture residential estate encompassing Sussex Square, Lewes Crescent, Chichester Terrace and Arundel Terrace. Who Mishon Mackay

### Converted church, Queen Mews, £1.75mn

Where On Queensbury Mews,

Just under 20 minutes to Brighton's central train station, which serves London and Gatwick airport. The airport is a 35 to 55-minute drive. depending on traffic. What A two-bedroom, two-

bathroom contemporary home, converted from a 19th-century Gothic church. It has an open-plan living area and glass stairs that lead to a mezzanine floor, where the main bedroom is located. On the lower-ground floor is an en-suite guest bedroom with a sun tunnel. There is a decked roof terrace off the kitchen. Why True to its original Gothic style, the property features lancet and rose windows with stained glass, pointed arches and a vaulted ceiling. The altar has been converted into a bar.





### £2.25mn

Where On Marine Parade in the lively Kemptown neighbourhood, overlooking Brighton's seafront. It's a 35-minute walk or a 10-minute drive to the central station, which has direct trains to London Victoria and London Blackfriars. The drive to Gatwick airport takes between What A Grade II-listed Regency-era

and five bathrooms arranged over four storeys and a lower groundthe rear and a balcony to the front

with sea views.

Why On the lower ground-floor
level is a self-contained onebedroom apartment, which has its own street entrance. Who Sotheby's International



◀House, Withdean Road, £3.65mn

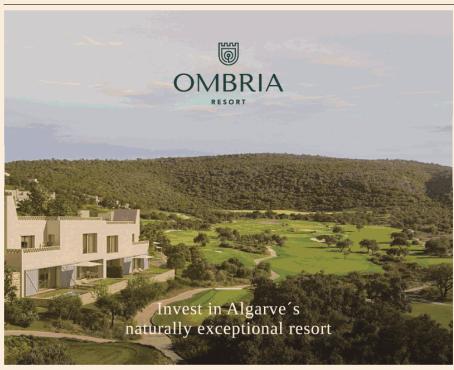
Where Just over 2 miles north of What A four-bedroom, four-storey detached house with 4,828 sq ft of living space including five reception rooms and five bathrooms. There is also an airconditioned gym, bar, home cinema, recording studio and roof terraces with views of both the South Downs and Brighton. Why The building was designed by John Pardey Architects and ominated for a Riba award in 2017. /ho Hamptons



### ◀ House, Roedean Road, £4mn

Where In the east of Brighton, within walking distance of the Marina. Brighton's main train station is 20 minutes by bicycle. What A six-bedroom, sevenbathroom Art Deco-style house measuring 9,456 sq ff. It features a library, lift, wine-tasting room, bar, games room, gym and steam room Outside is a sun deck, hot tub, heated pool, walled kitchen garder and south-facing garden.

Why Floor-to-ceiling windows and glass doors allow for expansive east-to-west views of the Marina







Found at the heart of the Algarve, only 25 minutes from Faro airport and spectacular beaches, enclosed by nature reserves and picturesque, white-walled villages, at Ombria Resort we infuse nature and lifestyle in perfect harmony. An unspoiled setting, inspired by local architecture, culture and landscape. An oasis woven around trees that have shaded the sunshine for generations.

Discover a destination that offers a diverse portfolio of naturally exceptional properties. A timeless lifestyle inspiring our 18-hole golf course, 5-star hotel managed by Viceroy Hotels & Resorts (opening Spring 2023), spa and many exclusive facilities and services.

 $\textbf{Oriole Village Pre-sales just launched:} \ \textbf{Fully furnished apartments, townhouses and villas of 1 to 4}$ bedrooms | Frontline golf views | Permanent Residency | Pre-sales prices from €575,000

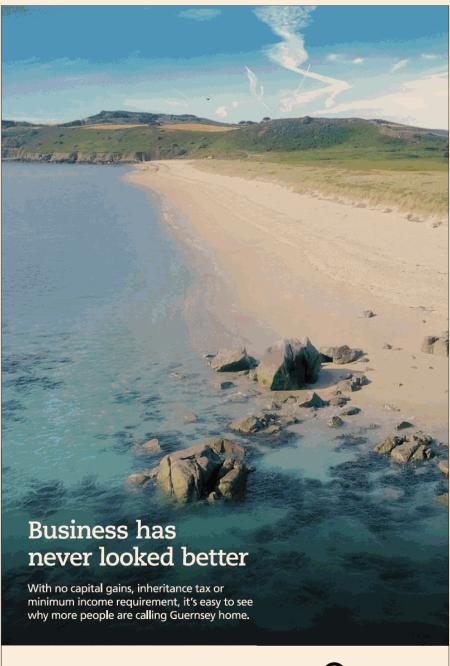
Viceroy Residences: Fully furnished 1 and 2-bedroom branded apartments | Owners have access to all the Viceroy hotel's facilities | Guaranteed net yield of 5% per year for 5 years\* | From €711,500

Alcedo Villas: Limited collection of 3 to 7-bedroom custom villas | From €2,750,000

All Ombria Resort properties qualify for the portuguese Golden Visa Program

T. +351 289 413 901 . sales@ombria.com \* Terms & conditions apply, visit ombria.com to view disclaimer ombria.com







To start your journey, call the Locate Guernsey team on +44 (0)1481 220011, email enquiries@locateguernsey.com,





A better life for you

## Mean tweets



**Jonathan Guthrie** 

### **Nature therapy**

Robins have a hard life, sticking out the British winter when food is scarce and territorial border disputes regular. But do they really kill each other?

hat better way to send Nature Therapy readers festive greetings? By picking robins as a topic, we ensured our illustration features the bird that is also decorating millions of British Christmas cards. The motif is particularly appropriate this year. High energy prices mean this will be a hard winter for Northern Europeans. And robins are tenacious

cold weather survivors.

The European robin is the unofficial national bird of the UK for two main reasons. First, they have pretty, red shirtfronts. Second, British robins are confident around people. Their continental cousins are not. The real answer to the question "who killed Cock Robin?" is: a French bloke with

a shotgun.

With a little patience, you can tame a robin. The Liberal statesman Lord Grey used to walk around his garden with one perching on his hat. When I am digging, our garden robin generally swoops down to forage for worms and

grubs. It hops about confidingly a foot

or so from my boot cap. When robins aren't feeding, they are singing lustily. Most garden birds do not do so at this time of year. They are concentrating on keeping warm.
So am I. It is chilly in our house and

my corner of the office. I was researching this article puzzling over the reason why so few British robins migrate to warmer countries — when a colleague from

Facilities came by.
"We'll turn the heating up," she said, surveying my coat and scarf. "But it takes a little while. You could always hotdesk in the newsroom for a bit. It's warmer there."

"No thanks," I said. Where might I end up if I abandoned my sought-after desk on the mezzanine, with its commanding views of the traffic lights and easy access to the cake trolley on Wednesdays? A janitor's cupboard on

Level Minus Two, perhaps?

"People are territorial, aren't they?" my colleague observed. So are robins. Breeding success depends on holding a



I attempted to replicate Lack's research by making decoys. "Nice Christmas decorations," said



territory that produces enough worms and insects to feed a couple of broods per year. Most male territory holders therefore cling on through the winter, taking on all challengers. A proportion of females do the same thing.
This creates a fearsome metabolic

challenge. Every day, small birds need to consume almost their own body weight to stay alive. In winter, natural prey is scarce and energy expenditure is heavier. You can help robins survive by feeding at ground level with mealworms and fat pellets, says Adrian Thomas of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

Robin mortality is very high. There are some 7.3mn robins in the UK, according to Tom Stewart of the British Trust for Ornithology. My own rough figuring suggests they may produce around 30mn tiny, cinnamon-spotted eggs per year. Around three-fifths of those eggs turn into fledglings, of which around a quarter survive their

first year.

After that, the cohort halves every year. If you are a wild robin, your

chances of reaching the grand old age of 11 is around one in 7,000, I calculate. That fluffy robin in your garden

needs to be as hard as nails. Hence occasional articles in newspapers and country magazines "exposing" the "nasty" robin. Robins are fighters, it is true. But I think the establishing factoid of these pieces is codswallop. It alleges that a tenth of male robins are killed every year by other robins. This claim apparently originates from a 1984 doctoral thesis I could not find online or in print catalogues.

I am more persuaded by David Lack, whose funny, erudite monograph The Life of the Robin is a must-read for anyone interested in this bird. After years of field studies, the ornithologist concluded it was rare for robins to kill one another. Singing, displays of red plumage and a few well-aimed pecks resolve the majority of border disputes.

Lack's robins knocked the sawdust out of stuffed birds he placed in their territories. A head on a wire was all that remained of one of them. But living adversaries fly away. They do not stick around for further drubbings.

I attempted to replicate Lack's research, painting a couple of hen's eggs with robin livery and attaching cardboard wings and tails. "I hope you aren't proposing to put those on the Christmas tree?" asked my wife.

"No. This is a serious scientific experiment," I told her loftily, gluing pointy little beaks and beady eyes to the eggs.

Then my son appeared. "Nice decorations," he said.

"They aren't really decorations," I replied.

"Sure they are," he said, "Believe in yourself, Dad!"

The garden robin did not believe in my decoys, though. It ignored them. Perched on our fence, they looked weirdly bright and clumsy compared with the mercurial little bird.

It probably thought they were Christmas decorations.

The robin did sing volubly in response to a recording of another bird played through a Bluetooth speaker. Proponents of the Thug Robin Hypothesis imagine the message is, "Come and have a go if you think you're hard enough."

But to my mind, the bird was only repeating the old motto: "What I have, I hold."

Jonathan Guthrie is the head of Lex



## Pacaso<sup>®</sup>

Holiday home ownership for  $\frac{1}{8}$  the cost.

pacaso.com

### House & Home

# From humble to hedonistic

Interiors | The contents of Barton Court, Sir Terence

Conran's home, are up for auction – and reveal the

designer's very different sides. By Serena Fokschaner

arton Court, a sprawling, redbrick Georgian house in Berkshire, was the hub of Sir Terence Conran's private and working life. It is easy to picture the designer and founder of the Conran Shop walking its long corridors, pausing to tweak a shelf display before retiring indoors with a sketchbook and his hallmark, smouldering Montecristo cigar in hand.

The contents of Barton Court are up for auction at Bonhams on December 14: a remarkable life distilled into 392 lots. Hedonistic pieces — inlaid humidors, champagne buckets — evoke a charismatic man, dapper in his deep conflower "Conran blue" shirt. But for fans — and anyone interested in the history of design — the humbler possessions tell the more important story. Chunky glassware, stoneware pots or the copper saucepans that dangled over the Aga attest to a life-long conviction that well-made, unpretentious objects can improve all our lives.

can improve all our lives.

Bonhams' global director and deputy chair Harvey Cammell compares the sale to a "visual walk-through of everything that fascinated Conran. That's why it's so interesting — visually and intellectually. You get a sense of his creativity and his love of craftsmanship, whether it's a Thonet chair or a turned bowl, of what he was all about," he says.

"At weekends, Terence would sit with a layout pad and 2B pencil and just draw – tables, chairs, storage, bookcases, bits and bobs," recalls his widow Lady Victoria Conran. Naturally, he had a favourite perching place. The futuristic, fibreglass and leather Karuselli chair by Finnish designer Yrjo Kukkapuro was issued in 1964 – the same year in which Conran opened Habitat. The design and homewares store paved the way for an empire of interlinked businesses – in architecture, publishing, design, hospitality and urban regeneration.

Buying Barton Court in 1971 was an equally bold move. The former boys' school of 32 rooms was in a ramshackle state. "He said it smelt of smacked bottoms . . . It was ludicrously large, but Terence liked the proportions and the large rooms, which he could fill with things," says Lady Conran.

The walls were painted in white or blue with the addition of simple ply shelves for "squillions" of books — on cooking, gardening, art, cigars, wine. And that is how it pretty much remained for the next five decades.

An exacting boss, Conran was nonetheless quick to encourage new makers who shared his ambition: to take design out of the studio and into people's homes. "He had a Presbyterian streak. He'd get irritated by people who designed things and thought 'that is it'. He wanted people to know how to make things," says Lady Conran. When Sean Sutcliffe, then a recent graduate of Parnham Furniture College, turned up one day for a chat, Conran offered him a studio space in the former stable block. Benchmark Furniture — a co-venture between the two — produces furniture for private and public buildings, including Westminster Abbey. What Conran liked best was having a workshop next door that produced real things.

"He'd rattle off drawings and a few days later they were translated into maquettes, before being put in production," says Cammell. Much of the furniture at Barton Court was made next door.

The hands-on making principles of the Arts and Crafts movement, combined with the meritocratic ethos of the Bauhaus, informed Conran's singular approach. Plain, simple, useful, were his watchwords. A birch ply table (lot 202), based on a cardboard box, is a case in point. Conran once described it as "the best thing I've ever designed". But his co-directors didn't agree and so it remained a prototype.

Visitors to London's Design Museum

Visitors to London's Design Museum — founded by Conran as the culmination of his quest to educate through objects — will know "The Head of Invention" sculpture by Sir Eduardo Paolozzi that looms over the courtyard. The two met when Paolozzi taught Conran at the Central School of Art and went on to collaborate on furniture — such as a string and metal chair that was given to Picasso by furniture maker Toby Jellinek, a friend of Conran's. Picasso liked itso much he ordered two more.

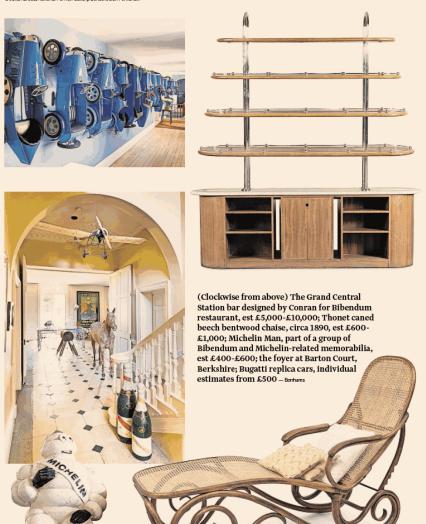
Another Barton Court regular, the painter Francis Bacon, joined Conran and Paolozzi in the clay modelling session which produced the glazed sports car and small heads that feature in the auction. A set of felt-tip sketches by Patrick Caulfield were done while the artist was blindfolded, after a boozy lunch. The late restaurateur Antonio Carluccio (who married Conran's sister Priscilla) gave the Conrans 11 walking sticks that he had whittled himself. None of this was trophy art, amassed to impress, but souvenirs of longstanding friendships.

Although he might have rankled at the term, Conran was the first to create the concept of "lifestyle retailing". At Habitat there were room sets and chic assistants instead of the arid showrooms and clipboard-wielding salesmen of his youth. Generosity was the theme: willow baskets piled to the rafters, tactile merchandise heaped on trestle tables.

The idea came from the jostling ironmongers and market stalls of France, where the family had a home in Provence. "Terence pretended not to like shopping. In fact he loved nothing more than truffling around a brocante, spotting unusual things," says Lady Conran. It was Conran, after all, who brought the garlic press to the UK. Other discoveries



(Above) Sir Terence Conran photographed by Julian Broad, 2011; Conran's desk, est £3,000-£3,500





— sturdy carafes, pâté moulds — roadtested in the family kitchen, brought an affordable version of French élan to Britain — which suited Conran's egalitarian leanings. He introduced good design to the high street.

design to the high street.

It was a French neighbour who sold him his collection of model Bugattis. With typical ingenuity, Conran mounted them on the hallway wall so that they greeted visitors like blue sentinels, "a brilliant counterpoint", says Cammell, to the classical architecture or the wooden saddler's horse that loomed over the setting. "The house was full of those juxtapositions—it was beauty and utility that inspired him, not financial value," he adds.

Restaurateuring appealed because it reconciled two aspects of a complicated persona — the creative and the showman. Early ventures, such as The Sounkitchen and Neal Street Restaurant — a collaboration with art dealer John Kasmin — were designed on a shoestring: white walls and tiled floors enlivened with menus by David Hockney or cutlery by David Mellor.

By the 1990s, Conran had the funds to invest in buzzy, see-and-be seen eateries — Quaglino's, Pont de la Tour which helped transform Britain's hitherto risible culinary reputation. Of course he supervised every aspect—

'The problem with Terence is that he wants the whole world to have a better salad bowl,' joked Kasmin

commissioning Allen Jones to paint a blazingly colourful mural for Mezzo or designing the Art Deco-esque Grand Central Station bar unit at Bibendum, where you might find him savouring a postprandial cognac.

Lady Conran remembers how he might turn up at a restaurant or shop unannounced, "much to everyone's dismay". The drape of a linen tablecloth would be scrutinised, the cutlery finessed. There was always "a right and a wrong way" to do things, she says. If this sounds dogmatic, it is because

If this sounds dogmatic, it is because he clung to the idea that good design is life-enhancing. He railed against the shoddy, the fussy and the fake. (John Kasmin once joked: "The problem with Terence is that he wants the whole world to have a better salad bowl.")

You can draw parallels with William Morris's dictum, "Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful". Yet while Morris's labour-intensive wares were only accessible to the moneyed, Conran really did put design on the shop shelf. At Barton Court he was able to make that happen.

# The holly, the ivy and the Brussels sprouts

 $Christmas \mid Use \ recycled \ and \ natural \ ingredients \ to \ create \ your \ own \ inventive \ and \ eco-friendly \ wreaths, \ trees \ and \ table \ settings. \ By \ \textit{Sharon Smith}$ 

s Christmas approaches, many objects and materials that you have to hand can be repurposed as tree decorations, wreaths or table settings.

You could be saving money but at this

time of waste and excess — and a lot of plastic — you'll also be doing your bit for the planet, says Darren Stobbart, founder of The Plantman & Co. Stobart's company provides plants and greenery to corporate clients, including at Christmas. Nothing is wasted because the materials are either composted or reused for someone else, he says.

Recycling just takes a bit of imagina-

Recycling just takes a bit of imagination. Hedgerows, tea sets, feathers, fruit and veg can all be turned into decorations with a touch of originality.

Linda Cottee, a florist and colleague of Stobbart, is no stranger to personalising clients' Christmas wreaths with bizarre ingredients, including her own: "I put purple Brussels sprouts into my own wreath one year just because I love them."

Abi Pickersgill, head gardener at the National Trust's Belton House in Lincolnshire, says it is easy to make your own eco-friendly wreath. Just make a wire hoop or buy one from a florist, cover it with moss from your garden, bind to the hoop with more wire, and poke in leaves and berries foraged from hedgerows.

Then, like Cottee, insert personal touches as required.

If you do not want to make your own wreath, florists such as Hampshire-based The Real Flower Company can supply sustainable decorations—and wreaths made with dried flowers can be reused year after year.

can be reused year after year.
Environmentalists would argue that a truly eco-friendly Christmas would exclude a tree altogether due to the distance they can travel and the likelihood that they end up in landfill. However, if you do have a tree, Stobbart has suggestions to make it last longer.

At home, he prefers a Nordmann fir for its good needle retention, bought from a local nursery about two weeks before Christmas Day. It needs to be positioned away from radiators and stood in water that is regularly topped up. Thankfully, says Stobbart, most Plantman & Co clients ignore the eighth-century tradition for a Christmas tree to be hung inverted from the ceiling, leaving it impossible to water — although he did once install an upside-down tree for advertising agency M&C Saatchi.

John Warland, Chelsea Flower Show medal-winning garden designer, and team member at The Plantman & Co, says that you can choose an artificial tree or wreath without feeling that you are trashing the environment — as long as it is used for at least seven years, according to the Carbon Trust. And it need not look second-rate.

"If you buy a high-quality artificial tree or wreath that you're going to use for a few years then it's not going to go into landfill each year, and you can embellish it with real cones and berries and lights," he says. "If a business puts a tree up in November and it has to stand until January 1, it makes sense to use an artificial one rather than have to change a living tree three times."

Stobbart is seeing an increasing number of clients using organic materials such as lemon and apple slices, cinnamon sticks and dried chillies as tree decorations. It's a trend he



Making decorations with fir branches and dried fruits – Getty Images/(Stockphot

welcomes: "I won't put tinsel on trees even when people ask for it because it's ugly and plastic. If a customer does insist on it I'd charge them double," he jokes.

Food items are a traditional choice dating back as far as the 16th century, says Pamela Smith, national gardens and parklands consultant at the National Trust. "Early Christmas tree decorations were very practical, consisting of food, drink, warm clothes and

'Early tree decorations consisted of food, drink, warm clothes and money, which children shook free'

money, which children were encouraged to shake free."

But, says Warland, that can look rather dull. You need to liven them up without turning to tinsel. The answer is lighting, and plenty of it, he says. Make sure you choose LED lights, which are considerably more energy efficient than traditional incandescent lightfulls.

But you can have a stunning centrepiece even without a tree. Smith brings a new purpose to her family heirlooms every year, turning an inherited serving dish and cups into decorations by filling them with pine cones, lights and sprigs of ivy and holly.

ofivy and holly.

Smith makes her own wreaths by bending two coat hangers into a diamond shape for the frame, and wrapping them in old tea towels cut into strips to stick greenery in to. She forages for twigs, berries and leaves, barters with neighbours for cuttings, and adds seashells from holidays. Starting her foraging in autumn, she keeps fallen leaves moist by spraying them with sun lotion, which doesn't leave the same sogginess that water would.

Pickersgill says you can make your wreath from early December: "They look after themselves because the weather is cold and wet and they're often outside."

Stobbart applauds such inventive sustainability. His own tree baubles this year will be food recycled from one of his client's displays.

his client's displays.

"I'll have my coloured lights and leftover gingerbreads from a display we're doing at the London Marriott hotel County Hall," he says. "Hopefully they won't be stale."

### Property Gallery

International





### Thinking of buying a ski home?

READ KNIGHT FRANK'S NEW SKI PROPERTY REPORT

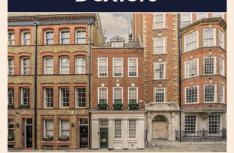
By drawing on the knowledge of our extensive research and agent network, the report provides valuable insights into current property market conditions across the French and Swiss Alps, as well as the major resorts across Colorado. The team is on hand to talk you through the reports findings, so please get in touch if you have any questions, or you can scan the QR code below to download the report. We'd love to help.

Knight Frank International roddy.aris@knightfrank.com +44 20 3918 7222



England

## **Dexters**



ed between Buckingham Palace and the Houses of Parliament, an townhouse with five bedrooms, a grand drawing room and a terrace iin the renowned Birdcage Walk Conservation Area, energy rating f.

s Westminster 020 7590 9570

£4,500,000 @@dextersestateagents

**Dexters** 

Dexters Islington 020 7483 6373

@@dextersestateagents

£5.000.000

## **Dexters**



Chelsea, London

Dexters Chelsea & Belgravia 020 7590 9500

@@dextersestateagents

£8,500 pw

## **Dexters**



Mayfair, London

Dexters Mayfair 020 7590 9595

£5,000 pw

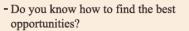
@@dextersestateagents

## **DECK THE HALLS** IN NORTH NORFOLK



bookings@meetyouatsix.com www.meetyouatsix.com

### The 7 Biggest Mistakes **London Property Buyers Make**



- Do you know the most successful negotiation techniques for achieving the lowest price possible?

To discover the SEVEN most expensive mistakes London property buyers make and how to avoid them, simply request your complimentary copy of The Insider's Guide To Acquiring £1m to £100m Property in London.

For Your Free Copy of The Book, email info@mercuryhomesearch.com, visit www.insidersguidebook.com or call +44 (0) 203 457 8855 now.

# FOR SALE BY AUCTION SANDBANKS

allsop



LOT 33: A VACANT PRIME LOCATION ON SANDBANKS WITH DIRECT WATER FRONTAGE AND UNIQUE VIEWS

- Freehold house on a site extending to approximately 2,863 sq m (30,817 sq ft) On the market for the first time in over 21 years Planning permission granted for a new house extending to over 9,000 sq ft Benefits from rarely available alipway and boat store

ONLINE AUCTION SALE: THURSDAY 15TH DECEMBER 2022

Contact: Jourdan Prowling 020 7344 2675 jourdan\_prowling@allsop.co.ulk

1. Where a guide price for range of prices) is given, that guide is the minimum price of which, or range of prices within which, the seler might be prepared to sell on the date of which the the property can be seld. 3 bits the guide price and the reproperty can be seld. 3 bits the guide price and the reserve price may be subject to change up to and including the day of the outlon. All areas quided are approximate. Buyer fee are project be and all bits. Tuther change may apply. Prices enter to the Cardisino of Sick.



BEAUTIFUL PROPERTIES FOR SALE ACROSS FRANCE www.leggettprestige.com



· SARDEGNA· FEUDI DELLA MEDUSA WINERY & LUXURY RELAIS

UNIQUE INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY ING 71 HECTARES DOM 41 HECTARES OF VINEYARDS **FULLY EQUIPPED WINE PRODUCTION** AND BOTTLING LINE

+372 562 11 817 project@feudidellamedus





OLD GREENWICH, CT · Modern Living on The Water Custom built LEED-certified compound is a true oasis with over 300 feet of water frontage, pool, guest house, boat house, spa and deep water pier.

ModernLivingOnTheWater.com | \$35,000,000 A. Miller M+1 203.912.9233 & E. Mosher M+203.705.9680

GREENWICH BROKERAGE | 2 SOUND VIEW DRIVE, GREENWICH USA

HOULIHANLAWRENCE.COM

MAYFAIR



House & Home

'Sweet things out of corruptions'

Worms, veg peelings, crumpled tax forms and your
grandmother's DNA – all can be tossed on to the
nourishing eco-marvel that is the compost heap

n the eve of the UN's world soil day this Monday, I would like to announce the meaning of life, the universe and everything. Forget "42", Douglas Adams' "meaning" in *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. The true meaning is "compost".

Compost gives me absurd pleasure, partly along the lines of Walt Whitman's 1856 poem "This Compost"

"Behold this compost! behold it well: ... What chemistry! ... It grows such sweet things out of such corruptions ..."

"Corruptions" such as rotting apple cores, dead mice, scrumpled tax demands and coffee grounds transformed, by gardeners and their microbial helpers, into nourishment for a beautiful, productive and resilient garden. Better still, compost-boosted soil locks up carbon, prevents desertification and reduces the effects of drought. A virtuous circle.

When the Indian cotton dressing

When the Indian cotton dressing gown inherited from my grandmother wore out, I added it to my compost heap along with grass cuttings, vegetable peelings, tea leaves and other detritus from daily life. Seven months later, it had transmogrified into a rich, dark plant feast, bolstered by my

garden-loving grandmother's DNA.
On top of the pleasure of adding ancestral DNA to the garden, there is the grubby, pleasing process of making the heap by layering "brown" material such as straw, egg boxes and ancient natural-fibre dressing gowns with

"green" material like grass cuttings and vegetable peelings.

On a warm summer's day, the earthy scent signalling that the heap is working materialises in hours. Millions of microorganisms, as well as familiar friends such as worms and slugs, get to work on compost, and a fungi-like bacteria called Actinomycetes is the

one that gives off the scent of success. In the 30 years that I've been making compost, 2022 has proved one of the more challenging, mainly because of the low rainfall, which meant less fresh grass for the compost. This was made worse by our new policy of leaving about two-thirds of the garden unmown until late July, which was good for the wildlife but rubbish for the compost heap.

By the time we strimmed the long grass in July it was hay, and so we set it aside to use in layers between green waste. Except there was little or no green waste, and we produce so little vegetable waste that the compost heap remained dry and dormant through most of the summer.

A hose pipe ban persuaded me to wait for the rain rather than water the heap. When the rain finally arrived, the grass grew enthusiastically and the clippings brought the heap to life with gusto. Within 24 hours the whiff of sulphur signalled that the heap would have turned into a slimy sludge if we hadn't restacked and aerated it with layers of hay, egg boxes and a motheaten cashmere jumper.

The second problem came when Someone put the wrong kind of leaves on the heap: leaves from our huge tulip tree that are so big and have such thick cuticles that they take years to rot. Wisteria leaves, on the other hand, of which we have an immense number, are thin and small and rot down easily. The evergreen oak tree's leaves are collected with the mower, which means that they are ready-chopped and mixed with grass cuttings, and therefore rot readily.

Dedicated composter makers pee on the heap, as I do, to accelerate the process, inspiring one witty friend to refer to my "compist" heap. Sadly, my husband "forgets" to pee on the heap, which is a shame because the hormone and acidity levels of male urine are said to be more beneficial than those of female urine. Either way urine contains nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, the key elements in commercial fertiliser. Which is why some gardeners pee directly around plants.

Our other liquid plant food comes

Our other liquid plant food comes from our rat-resistant Can-o-Worms wormery, where we put fish bones, cooked vegetables and anything else that might attract vermin. Egg boxes and bog roll tubes are added because worms like living in them when they're not chomping through the compost

(not that they "chomp" in a conventional sense because they have no teeth). They are sensitive souls with five hearts and an inability to cope with chilli, lemon or cold. Wormeries encourage sentimentality about these creatures.

In winter the worms stop working unless their house is moved inside. When the wormery is working well, I get about a half a litre of nutrient-rich "worm tea" a week. Diluted at about 10:1 it makes excellent foliar feed for flowering plants rather than salads.

Non-composting friends are polite but clearly repelled by the wriggling activity of the wormery — as much as they are bored by chat about compost heaps — but I challenge anyone not to be seduced by composting once they've witnessed the magic of turning muck

Worms are sensitive souls with five hearts and an inability to cope with chilli, lemon or cold into climate-friendly compost. It's a process as magical as the transformation of Cinderella's pumpkin.

transformation of Cinderella's pumpkin.
And while garden compost-making
may seem a feeble tool to help mitigate
climate change, every little helps. After
all, according to the UN's Food and
Agriculture Organization, if food waste
was a country, it would be the thirdhighest emitter of greenhouse gases
after the US and China.

A couple of years ago, I met two of the compost world's great romantics, Henrietta Courtauld and Bridget Elworthy, known collectively as The Land Gardeners. Their lavishly illustrated new book *Soil to Table* is a paean to composting, English cut flowers and recipes. They work around the world but their main composting base is at Althorp Estate in the UK's Midlands (Diana, Princess of Wales's childhood home). With the help of soil scientists in Austria and the UK, they began experimenting with compost making in 2012 and now produce

making in 2012 and now produce
"Climate Compost inoculum" to help
make lively, nutrient-dense

compost in a similar way as conventional compost accelerators/inoculums/ activators such as Garotta. A good source of lucid advice on accelerators and composting in general is the Royal

Horticultural Society, the trusted backbone of UK gardening. Its main site and its Campaign for School Gardening section have handy documents on composting. According to the organisation, younger gardeners are more inclined than older age groups to start composting, which is a shame

given how easy and rewarding it is.
Another gardening charity, Garden
Organic, also offers excellent
composting tips. Years ago it gave me
the title "Compost Master" when I
completed its composting course.

I was proud of the title but then discovered that it had competition from Yale's more impressive-sounding "composter in residence". So I was delighted that when I tried to search for that term online, Google refused to accept it and changed it to "composer in residence".

"Soil to Table" by The Land Gardeners, £35, all proceeds to the social enterprise Farms to Feed Us Jane Owen is an FTWeekend contributing editor and a Compost Master

Robin Lane Fox returns on December 17





A compost heap in Wales (not the writer's own)



Jane Owen

On gardens



Home | Books | Fashion | Jewellery | Beauty

# Holiday Gift Guide



Yinka Ilori photographed by Antonia Adomako for the FT



# BVLGARAI

### Holiday Gift Guide

# 'I ask everyone for

# a list of presents'

Yinka Ilori | The British

Nigerian designer shops

for ready-made accessories

at Dover Street Market

in London and buys bespoke

pieces from artisans

look for Christmas gifts that allow people to celebrate and create memories together; something inclusive that will bring them joy over and over again

over and over again.

I went to a karaoke bar in Liverpool recently and it was cool to see people singing and having a laugh. So a karaoke machine with three or four mics is on my list for my five-year-old niece.

One year I bought her a keyboard and microphone set, and whenever I'm not feeling great, I watch a video of her singing and playing on Christmas morning. It never fails to lift me up.

I also have three young godchildren, and that's where I spend the most money. Sometimes when adults open presents, everyone crowds around and it can feel like a big performance. But my niece and godchildren are young and fun, and I know they are going to be super-excited about unwrapping anything Ibuy for them. The older children love

films and want to be independent, so I will buy them a mini-projector. It's cool and affordable, and they can put it away and

bring it out again.

There are seven in my immediate family: mum, dad and my brothers, but I rarely buy specific presents for them now that we are older. All of them are kind of fussy. My mum in particular has her own tastes; she really knows what she wants. So I ask everyone for a list of their top 10 presents and we have a

lucky dip, so no one is disappointed.

I tend to send vouchers to my extended family in Nigeria. But when I am in Nigeria, present-buying means taking them fabric shopping. We buy a mixture of Dutch wax prints, Swiss voile lace, which is an incredible handwoven cotton material with beautiful diamanté additions, and perhaps some aso oke fabric, handwoven by loom and often worn for weddings.

For friends and loved ones in the UK, I love jewellery. It may be a personalised and bespoke ring or pendant, not following a trend but something with effort put into it. Designers like me are always thinking about how to personalise things, and I'm lucky to know artisans who can make bespoke gifts for me.



One of my favourite places to shop for

ready-made jewellery is Dover Street

Market in London, where they have an

array of independent designers and makers. I started collecting watches two years ago and I love it, particularly a

brand called Alabaster. They make a

model with spikes around the face, which is not really wearable, it's more a piece of art. It's just the kind of thing I

might give. Or buy for myself. I started Yinka Ilori Homeware two years ago during the pandemic, at a time

Yinka Ilori photographed for the FT by Antonia Adomako

house. Collectively, we were forced to be present and turn homes into a place of joy, love and sanctuary. That had never happened before. So I started designing homeware because I wanted to feel the same way.

At my pop-up shop in Shoreditch, the products are about wellbeing, fitness,

At my pop-up shop in Shoreditch, the products are about wellbeing, fitness, memories and games. My favourite is a traditional Nigerian strategy game called Ayo, handcrafted in wood and played by two people.

I remember seeing people playing it

I remember seeing people playing it under trees in Nigeria, with a glass of palm wine. It's such a joyful, socia game, so I wanted to translate that with colours and patterns. I've tried to reim-

When I am in Nigeria, present-buying means taking family fabric shopping'

agine it in a way that will encourage people in Britain to play it. Although confession: I can't play it.

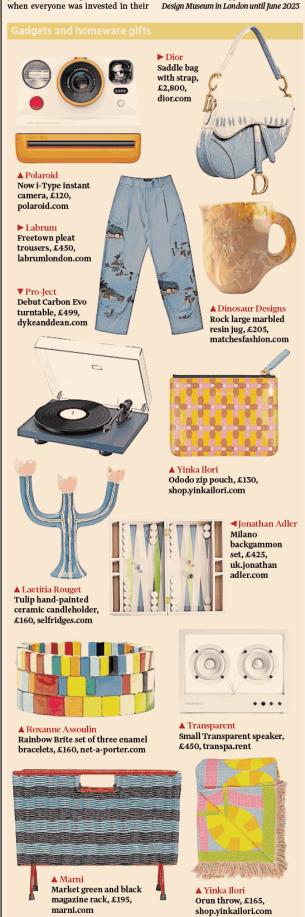
The best present I have ever received?
That was from my niece — a drawing of herself, her house and my sister, which she sketched on the back of my HMRC [tax] bill. I just had it framed and put it up in my studio. That bill feels a lot better to look at now.

### As told to Helen Barrett

Yinka Ilori is a British-Nigerian multidisciplinary designer who grew up in Islington, north London. He opened his eponymous studio in 2015, and his design work can be found in interiors, hotels and retailers.

Yinka Ilori's pop-up shop runs until January 3 at 9 Club Row, London E1. 'Yinka Ilori: Parables for Happiness' is at the Desian Museum in London until June 2023





# 'We start to

# buy in June'

Jody Williams and Rita Sodi | With more than 200

people to give to, planning begins early for the

New York restaurateurs, who focus on foodie gifts

ody: We really look forward to the holidays. Between our per-sonal world, here in New York City, our world upstate and our companies and our restaurant family, there are probably more than 200 people to consider.

Rita: It's a nice opportunity to say thank you, to everybody, for all of the work, for their friendship. Jody: We start to think about the holi-

days sometimes as early as June, and always by August. If you need 200 pieces of Perbellini Panettone or pandoro or 200 magnums of champagne,

you need to plan.

We also like to be ready for those spontaneous moments when somebody shows up around the holidays, and edibles work really well. Whether it's Pumpkin Linzer Cookies or "tinybars" from Té Company, or ordering your favourite stollen or Talbott & Arding's fruit cake. We might order two dozen, three dozen, because we know they are always appreciated. Or a great gift is a case of clementines or satsumas. We want to give people handfuls of them.

We tend to give a lot of food-related gifts because that's where our head is at: at the table, in the kitchen, at food markets, eating, reading about eating, travelling to eat. I mean, all roads go there. And we like giving gifts people

can use and share with other people.

For example, Little Ram Oysters can ship oysters and they have a great oyster shucking video, so I would put that together with a beautiful set of oyster knives from Erica Moody. If you got an oyster knife and a dozen oysters, that's a moment. That's true of the pan-

doro too: you open the box and you douse the top with powdered sugar and shake it up. And so it's a more soulful gift. We sometimes give truffles. Someone

once gave me a huge truffle - I was just awed by it. So we started putting truffles in a jar of rice, or truffles in with some fresh whole eggs, and giving people truffles. That's something that's a little challenging to source but which you might want to have in your kitchen. Fried eggs



Jody Williams, left, and Rita Sodi photographed by Tonje Thilesen for the FT

with truffles on it. That's a good Christmas morning or a lazy lunch.

For close friends and family, last year we got into cashmere — we found this blanket from Loro Piana, it was beautiful - or it might be beautiful cable-knit cashmere socks. And we will buy 20 pairs of them. And Rita is probably hoping she gets to keep them all.

R: The best thing about Christmas is being together — to spend all day around the table chatting. Before Christ-mas everything is a little crazy – people stop by to say hi, everybody's festive. It's a beautiful time of year.

J: Christmas Day is just us together we give everybody a break from us! We have spent it mostly in the city, but this year we will be going upstate, to our place just outside Hudson.

R: Christmas Day is a feast. J: We do New York smoked fish — we go to Russ & Daughters and Sable's for the white fish salad, bagels, caviar. We have brown bread, onion, tomato, fresh squeezed orange juice: a blend of blood oranges and tangerines.

Rita's good at preparing the cellar so there's all kinds of things to drink and she bakes cantucci. We just get up and startdrinking and eating.

R: Breakfast champagne! And chest-nuts, definitely, and building a fire. J: And then a big meal that lasts a day. J: I hope this Christmas that somebody might get me a wood-burning hot

tub.I have a space for it.
R: She means me when she says, "I

hope somebody will give it to me."

J: Whereas Rita just shops for herself, so it's hard. I've already got a stack of seven boxes here. Though Rita would

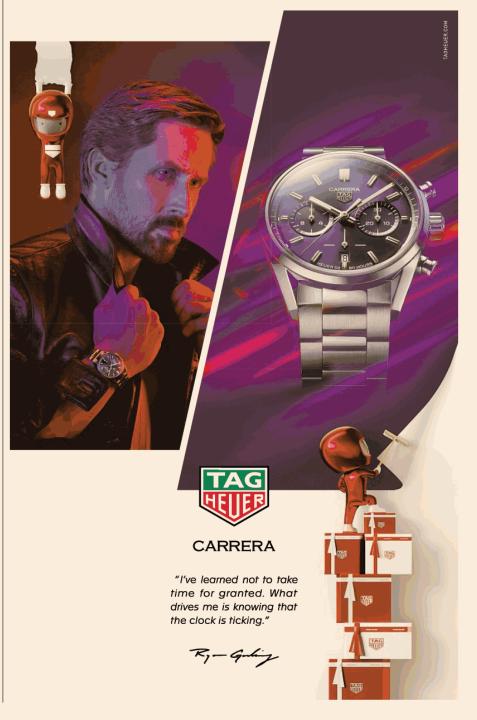
say they are not for her but for us.

R: She's like, "Oh, I bought these [for you]." And after, she uses it. Yeah. OK, so you bought for me but you use it?

J: Yeah, I do a little bit of that. As told to Hannah Marriott

Jody Williams and Rita Sodi are co-chefs and co-owners of Via Carota, an Italian trattoria in New York's West Village





# 'I typically

# make a very

# targeted list'

Tata Harper | The skincare founder buys online

and in New York City, then ships everything in

tataharperskincare.com

▲ Crown Affair The Brush No. 002,

\$62, goop.com

incense set, £320, goop.com.

◀ Maison Margaux

.com

Green & Gold and teapot set. £415, maison margauxltd

advance of celebrations in her native Colombia

am going to be spending Christmas in Colombia, where I was born and lived until I moved to the US aged 23. My three children (14, 12 and 10) and I will stay with my mum and stepdad in their house just up the coast from a town called Barranguilla. I have a really big family, two sisters and 37 cousins who have kids.

Where we are from in Colombia we love doing this thing called Novena de

Aguinaldos in the days leading up to Christmas, where people get together and read a passage from the Bible or something about the coming of Jesus. It's a big celebration with chanting, dancing and people getting together in their front yards. I was raised Catholic, and I'm not practising now but I live by a lot of those principles. I try to be a good human and give positive vibes.

On Christmas Day, we get together at my aunt's house,

which has a big outdoor pavilion and a pool where we swim at night. There will be a very Colombian type of dinner, say coconut rice, filet mignon, turkey and sauces, and the fancy dinnerware with the gold plate and the crystalware comes out. After dinner, we open gifts for about two hours, then there



Above and left: Tata Harper photographed for the FT by Luisa Opalesky

lots of dancing and partying, and friends start appearing at the after-party til about 4am. Colombia is very musical and people dance a lot, whether it's salsa or merengue.

ELIXIR MIX

▲ Westman Atelier

Vital skincare complexion drops £50, westman-atelier.com

Lion's mane elixir, \$38, us.foursigmatic.com

and am very targeted. I live in New Canaan, Connecticut and do a lot of shopping online, but maybe two weeks before Christmas I would come to New York City, go to Bergdorf's, and then see my own products because there's always such an enthusiasm for them. In Colombia, people are beauty maximalists — they love it so, so much. It's similar to Korean culture in the sense that we're obsessed with beauty and have tons of steps. Typically you would know what someone is into, what skin type they are, and masks and body lotion are always a hit. Make-up is trickier because it's so personal, and I don't even buy much make-up myself.
Instead I go for things such as essen-

tial oils, a fragrance humidifier and those electrical styling brushes that give a home blowout. My nieces, who are about 13 and 14, love curling irons and straighteners and I've also given them clip-in hair extensions. For the person who has everything, not a close family member, I have given candles, body oil, a special blend of tea or chocolates from French chocolatier Patrick Roger.

I like the Assouline books of all the

different cities. My mum collects them and when the publishers come out with

a new city, I get it for her. Adding to someone's collection is a good gifting method. She also loves to collect little silver spoons and porcelain bells and I have an aunt who loves coins, which feels really personal.

Some of the best gifts I've received are cashmere socks, bathrobes and pyjamas but one year I was given matching polyester pyjama sets for me and the family, and you couldn't even go to bed in them without feeling like you're cooking inside. For cashmere, I love Elder States-man and for pyjamas Royal Highnies.

I'm a pretty busy person, but I'll be able to switch off on Christmas Day. I spend a lot of time managing my time so that I don't feel overwhelmed. Because I am a former industrial engineer, I am very structured, and that's the only way to do it so that you can accomplish a lot of different things.

As told to Carola Long

▼ Nurse Iamie Super-Cryo duo

massaging orbs, \$59,

nursejamie.com

Tata Harper co-founded her eponymous skincare brand in 2010, with a focus on natural formulas. She lives in New Canaan, Connecticut with her three children, and her products are formulated and produced on a 1,200-acre Certified Organic farm in Vermont. In September, Tata Harper Skincare announced the sale of a



▼ Westman Atelier The Brush Collection, £526,



Giving my own brand's clothing might be truly out of convenience but I also think it's a nice gesture. A lot of my friends want to support me, but I feel weird taking money from them, so I feel it's an easy way to give my art to my friends without a monetary exchange. When it comes to gifts, I also like to go

against the grain in terms of true consumerism and give something with a lit-tle education behind it. I love to give something that is sustainable, some-

thing that can change the way someone is consuming products on a daily basis.

People are always giving candles, so why not give a refillable candle that's a little bit more Earth-friendly without bad fragrances or toxic chemicals? Everything is so much about gifting for the sake of giving and consumerism, but I feel there is a healthier way to consume.

As told to Annachiara Biondi

Hillary Taymour launched Collina Strada in 2008. In 2019, the brand was named a CFDA/Vogue Fashion Fund finalist

grand-seiko.com

love giving gifts but I am kind of a last-minute person so, unless it's a very dear-to-my-heart person or a really significant event, like a 40th birthday, I don't really plan. I went to the book fair in New York a couple of weekends ago and I got a few gifts there. I will collect things along the way to Christmas, but the chunk of it it's going

during the holiday season, including people who work in our factories and our seamstresses. I give a lot of clothes. Whether it is thrifted clothes or Collina Strada clothes, it's in my nature. When I was three or four, my parents got me a pair of leggings that were printed to look like denim, so essentially they were the first jeggings. This outfit that I got for Christmas was my favourite thing ever;



■ Redoux Misfit Spirulina

botanical bar, £11, strada.com

▲ Cold Picnic

Deadstock Me

rug, \$120, coldpicnic.com

You 2 hand-tufted

▼ Tim Teven Rectangular vase, €250, timteven.com

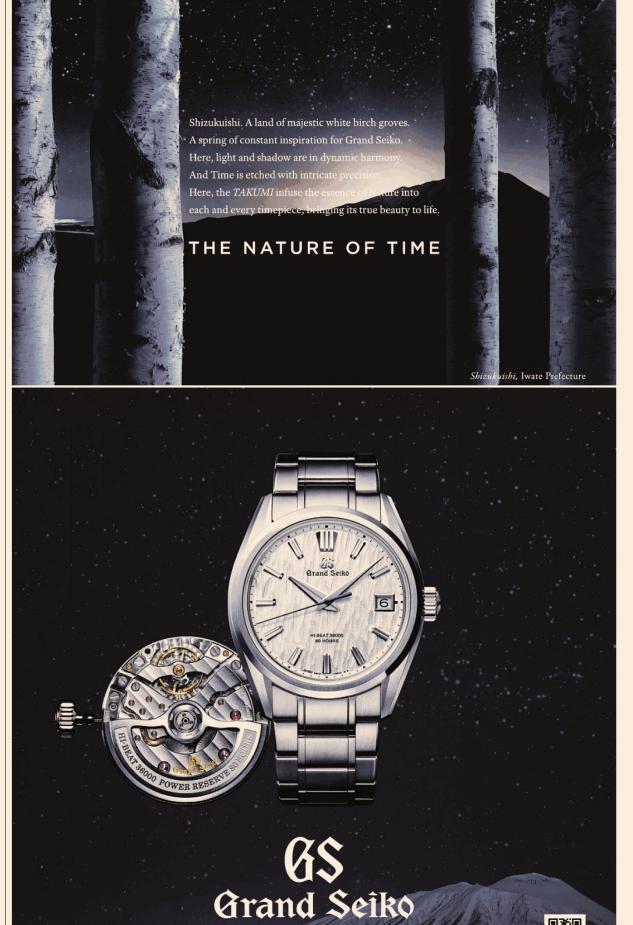
REDOUX

**►** Modern Candle & Grow kit, basil herb

garden, \$40,

bespoke

post.com



Evolution 9 Collection SLGH005 Mechanical Hi-Beat 36000 80 Hours Caliber 9SA5

# 'Why not a

# skateboard?'

Brendon Babenzien | Skate,

snow or surf - any board will

do to open up a world of

creativity for a youngster,

says the J.Crew designer

e actually don't have any plans yet this year. We celebrate Christ-mas, which comes pretty quickly right after Thanksgiving, so this year I think we'll stay close to home. Our holidays won't be terribly eventful. I like the slowdown, but if my wife Estelle had her way, we'd travel on every holiday. Her position would be that the experiences are more valuable than anything you'd getout of a box.

We'll take some time to go out to the east end of Long Island. We have a home there that's predominantly a summer place, but we go year-round. Other than that, we have a pretty large extended family in the form of friends in Brooklyn, so we'll probably spend time with a

bunch of those people, a series of din-ners or nights at different people's homes. We'll be at our house one night and then somebody else's another night, that kind of thing. All of our friends' kids have grown up together.

Things definitely change with kids because you're kind of reliving the holiday wonder through your children's eyes and experiences. I've always been kind of a freak for the holidays and I've stayed in that childhood mentality.

I spent a lot of time when I was young just getting together with our closest friends and going to the local bar or whatever. We had this tradition that really started in high school into our early twenties where a group of us went to one friend's house every year to play games or whatever. When you're in high school or college, those holiday breaks are so incredibly meaningful, because you're still in this naive space, right? You're still kind of a kid, but you're old enough to go out on your own and do stuff.

Which gifts are the most memorable changes over time, but, if I'm remembering this correctly, I got a bicycle that I really wanted at some point when I was really young. We didn't have a lot of money when we were young, so that was a big deal. I think that's kind of what led me to start working really young. started at a surf and skate shop when was 13, which was the best job ever and changed my lifestyle as a young person.



Brendon Babenzien photographed for the FT by Tonje Thilesen

I worked there until I was 21. That shop was kind of a cultural centre, especially around the holidays. My mom was known for sending a big tray of her cookies to the shop every year - it was

something people waited for.
I'd recommend gifting a surfboard, skateboard or snowboard to somebody who might even show any remote interest in that. That usually means younger people. Open up that world to them, because those three activities have given me so much in my life. Not just the actual events of skating, surfing or snowboarding, but the community around them. With skateboarding, especially when you're quite young, you're surrounded by people that are different and creative and interesting. You learn about art and you learn about

music and sometimes you learn the wrong thing by hanging out with some of these people, but there's constant learning.

It sounds so cliché to get a scarf for Christmas, but the Joshua Ellis cashmere scarf we sell at J.Crew is the best one I've ever come across. Joshua Ellis is a fabric mill and for my money, might be the best in the world at cashmere. I work with them every season. The quality of the scarves is so high but they aren't precious. They don't feel like you really have to look after them but they're so soft. They make an incredible gift.

As told to Adam Wray

Brendon Babenzien is a clothing designer and enthusiastic surfer/skater based in Brooklyn, New York. He is the men's creative director of J.Crew and runs the American casual brand Noah, which he cofounded with wife Estelle Bailey-Babenzien in 2015. Previously, he was the creative director of skate brand Supreme



# 'I tend to be very practical – my success rate is pretty high'

Yoon Ahn | For the Tokyo-based designer, Christmas Day is just another working day - but that doesn't stop the celebrations and gift giving

hristmas is not a holiday in Tokyo, where I live, and the end of the year is one of the busiest times for us. Christmas is just a working day. We put more emphasis on bōnenkai, which is a Japanese end-of-the-year celebration. We usually throw a party for the office to say thank you for working really hard this year and then we drink and have dinner together. The holiday break comes after that, in the new year.

But we do have a little office celebration throughout Christmas Day too, like drinks and a little food. Japan has its own traditions, so for example on the 24th or the 25th we usually eat fried chicken and strawberry shortcake. I think it's something that comes from really good KFC marketing. It's so fun to me because it's so random, but it's one of those cultural things that we do because it becomes part of our lives.

When I was little, Christmas was big. It was something that my parents were really good at. When I lived in Korea, we would have our own celebration, then e would join my grandparents and all the cousins would come.

When it comes to gifts, I think my success rate is pretty high because I tend to be very practical. Yes, it's the thought that counts, but when people give me random things, sometimes I don't know what to do with them. So I'm always trying to see how a gift can be part of a person's life in a way that it's not going to go to waste.

I know a lot of people that wouldn't go out of their way to buy the NuFace eye and lip enhancer, but if they receive it, they'd be so happy to try it. I found a



Yoon Ahn photographed for the FT by Sayuri Murooka

very cute cat-shaped AirPod holder from Loewe. I have a lot of cat lovers around me, so I think that would make a really good gift. The espresso machine from Anza Coffee is really interesting too. All people around me drink coffee so they can use it, but it's also really aesthetically pleasing. It looks neutral, so it will go with anyone's taste.

I love getting things that I wouldn't buy myself but when I have them I really appreciate them. Houseware things for example, I'm not a big shopper in that area, so if someone gives me a really great espresso machine or a beau tiful vase from an artist, I'm like, "Oh,

The gifts I really hold on to are the ones that someone made. One time, my mum sent me a huge crochet blanket as a Christmas gift, but it was actually crooked, it was kind of swirling to the

side. She was laughing about it. She told me, "I just started doing crochet and I messed it up, but I didn't have time to make a new one, so here." But that's not the point. She actually spent hours making that blanket to give it to me. Things like that I really appreciate because I know that it's not just something that people picked up [from a store]; it's something that they made for me and it's not something that I can replace with another thing in the world.

As told to Annachiara Biondi

Yoon Ahn and her husband Verbal founded Ambush in 2008. Ahn has been creative director of Dior Homme jewellery since





# CHAUMET

### Holiday Gift Guide



have four siblings and when we were young we always used to stay with my aunt in what is now called Cumbria. She had a beautiful house in the country and always had a white Christmas tree — a fir tree, 15 feet tall at least, lime-washed with three layers so it was completely white with real candles in it. My uncle used to stand by with a cane with a sponge on the end and a bucket, so as soon as there was a fire, he'd put it out [laughs].

I did try, one year, doing the lime wash [on my own tree], but it was such a palaver. So now I use a silver birch because the white really shows the decorations. I live on a farm, so I get it here.

To decorate the tree, I put the lights on first, then use loads and loads of sprayed allium heads. We obviously have tons here — Schubertii are the biggest, some can be 45cm across, then Christophii which is middle-sized, and Purple Sensation which is small.

I harvest them in August, spread them out to dry in the attic, and then roll them in a silvery paint in a shallow tray. And afterwards I'll wrap them up individually in tissue paper to save for next year. Then I add [ornaments] in the Sarah Raven
photographed
for the FT by
Lucy Ranson

shapes of fruit and vegetables. There are
candles everywhere, and lots and lots of
fairy lights, because of the twinkle.
So it's fragrance, twinkle and candles

So it's fragrance, twinkle and candles—and the last element is scent. I always buy 10 stems of lilies, Casablanca or Ortentals, for the hall. There are two or three trays of hyacinths, and paperwhites, and tangerines and pomegranates in bowls. I love that graphic abundance, and with the citrus and flowers there's a medley of smells.

Two of us are cooks, two of us aren't. One of my daughters spent some time in Oman, so she'll probably

do loads of aubergine-y things, and we have a goose.

And the night before [Christmas] we'll make bellinis and have lots and lots of smoked fish and maybe some pickled fish, herring, some buckwheat for a lovely crunch, and there will be crème fraîche or sour cream, and lots of pickles. And we always make an ice cream meringue cake with tons and tons of stem ginger in it.

My children still have stockings, I'm afraid. There will be five to six, maybe up to 10 things in them. We all pile on to the sofa or one bed, and everybody opens their things. Then we go for a long walk and eat at about three, watch a movie and go to bed.

I've already started on the stockings. I've got my daughters some pomegranate Santa Maria Novella soaps, and they'll get one or two clothes things, and then something to do with their creativity — the architect will get some amazing crayons I found in Paris — and a book or two each. I really don't want anything to be chucked away, so I would rather get less, and absolutely nothing plastic.

nothing plastic.

My husband and I, two years running, both [accidentally] gave each other the same thing we'd given each other the year before. He gave me these beautiful reclaimed tiles from Italy, twice, and I gave him a barn owl box twice. It was quite an achievement.

quite an achievement.

The best gifts I've received have been pictures. My friend Arthur [Parkinson] gave me a beautiful painting of dahlias

'For the person who has everything, it's nice to promise to take them to dinner here on this day'

last Christmas, painted by a friend of his. I love things made by my family. One year my daughter did me a huge, beautiful, Greek tablecloth she embroidered with the word "mush", because I call my daughters mush, and it hangs behind my desk.

For the person who has everything, it's nice to promise to take them to dinner here on this day, or a subscription to something like Kew Gardens. So you're giving time.

giving time.

As for what I'd like — I am crazy about the glassblower Michael Ruh, he has some juice glasses in the most amazing range of colours. I broke several of them and would love some more. The best thing would be a trip. I love surprises. One year my husband gave me a trip to see wildflowers in Greece; that would be my absolute favourite.

### As told to Lauren Indvik

Sarah Raven is a British gardener, writer, teacher and author. She has been running gardening, flower arranging and cooking courses around the country and at Perch Hill, her farm in East Sussex, since 1999





SCAN TO DISCOVER MORE ABOUT OUR EXCLUSIVE SEASON'S OFFER: You will receive one free PURITY GIFT SET with each AGE-DEFY order\*

\*Offer valid until January 8, 2023

www.cliniquelaprairie-hh.com





admits to being a last-minute

present buyer – so this year she's

using an app to help her plan

am bad at planning and usually leave everything until the last  $minute.\ Every\ year\ I\ get\ caught\ out.$ Last year, I even forgot to buy a present for my husband. So this

year, I have started compiling a list on a to-do app on my phone. Every time someone in my family says they like something, I capture it.

My parents were born in China, so Christmas is not such a big thing for them-we tend to have a big celebration with them at Chinese new year instead. But my husband is French, and Christmas and all its rituals are very

important to my in-laws. When I emi-grated with my parents from China to France in the 1990s, they started to buy me presents at Christmas.

I was about five when they first did the whole thing with a tree, and I was like. "Oh my God, France is such a great

The first time I opened a present, my hands were shaking. Santa was a concept I had known nothing about before then, but I really believed. I think it turned out to be a Barbie doll. Young children are very innocent

It's very important to give gifts that

Sandrine Zhang Ferron photographed for the FT by Adomako

you have thought carefully about, not just something you bought online in a rush. I don't like mass-market products; I look first for quality, and second for something that will be well used. For my parents, it's all about practi-calities. They live in a cold house, so

high-quality fleece jackets will be a good choice. They would probably never spend the money to invest in quality, so I'm looking forward to buying them jackets that will last.

Or I might give my mother a cast-iron pan that will last her for ever and she will remember me whenever she uses it.

And a hamper full of all the food she used to have in China and loves the most: Chinese confectionery, biscuits shaped like a panda, and special tea that she can't find near her home in France, but which I can buy in London's Chinatown.

I will buy shoes from Veja for my

mother-in-law. I like that they are not a commercial brand and they use sustainable materials. I want to encourage the older generation to buy things that look good, are good for the planet and don't cost too much.

I live in Highbury in north London, so I'm surrounded by small independent shops. Wandering around is a great way to discover homeware. I like Search & Rescue on Stoke Newington's Church Street, which stocks a great mix of candles, vintage homeware and cosmetics. On the same road is Know & Love, where I bought a bag made in Kenya

from recycled materials for my cofounder, Leslie Fournier. And there's a beautiful children's clothes shop called What Mother Made where I buy things made to order.

My daughter is two, so she will receive books, and perhaps tools to help her express her creativity in crafts. I like to make her small bundles of books tied in a bow, which I buy from second-hand shops. It doesn't matter if they are in an imperfect state; she doesn't care, right? And it's good to reuse books.

My best piece of advice is to remem-ber that gift-giving is not about the money you spend. My husband and I don't spend more than £100 each on each other's gifts. Now we have our daughter, spending time with her grandparents is very special for her and for them. So I will select a photo, one for each set of grandparents, as their very special present.

### As told to Helen Barrett

Sandrine Zhang Ferron was born in China and moved to France as a child. She is co-founder and CEO of London-based Vinterior, an online antiques and collectibles marketplace founded in 2016







TIFFANY&CO.





THE ARTISAN OF EMOTIONS - SINCE 1860

PRECIOUS LACE







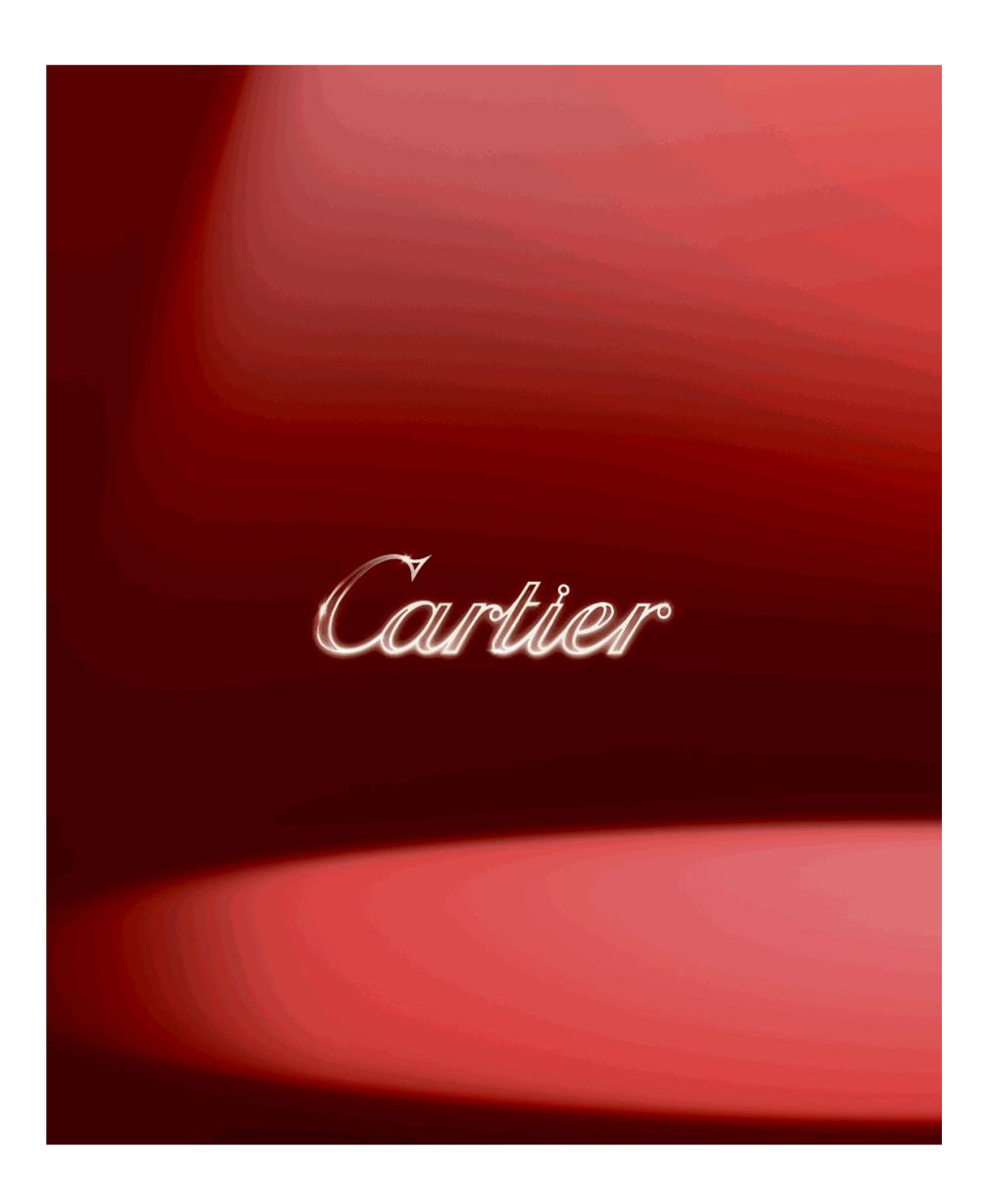
# $BVLGA_{\scriptscriptstyle{\mathsf{ROMA}}}I$

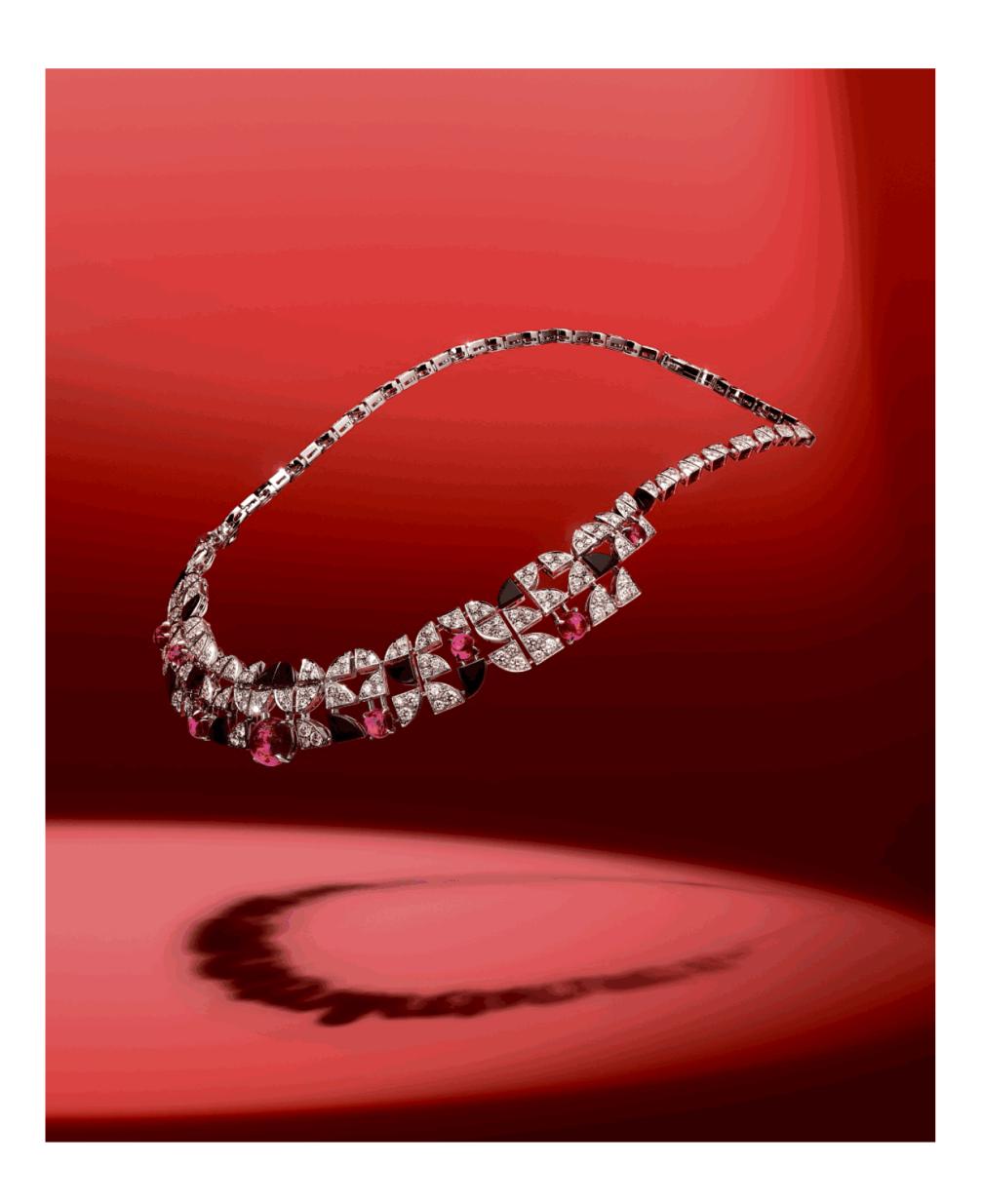
SERPENTI



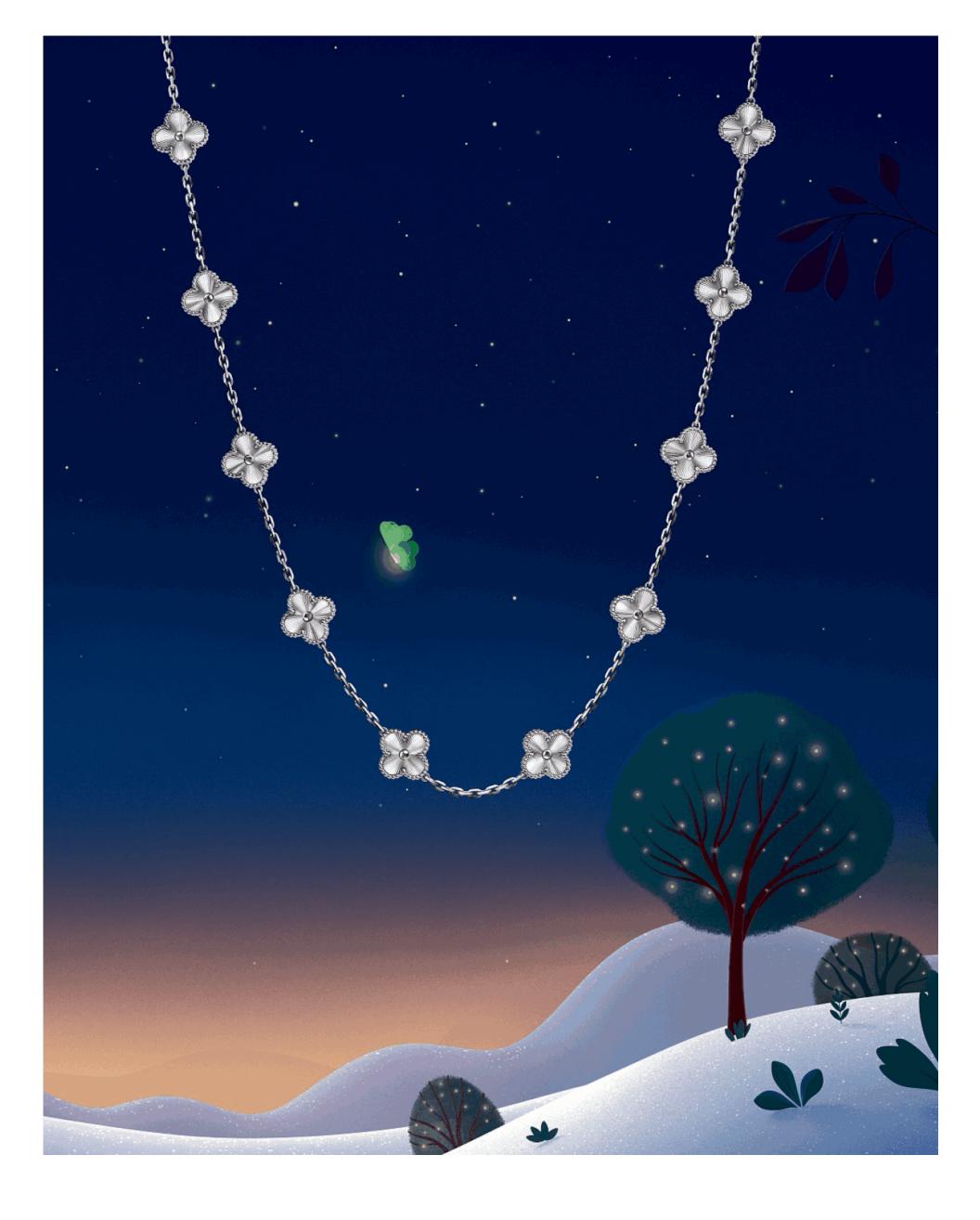


# DIOR

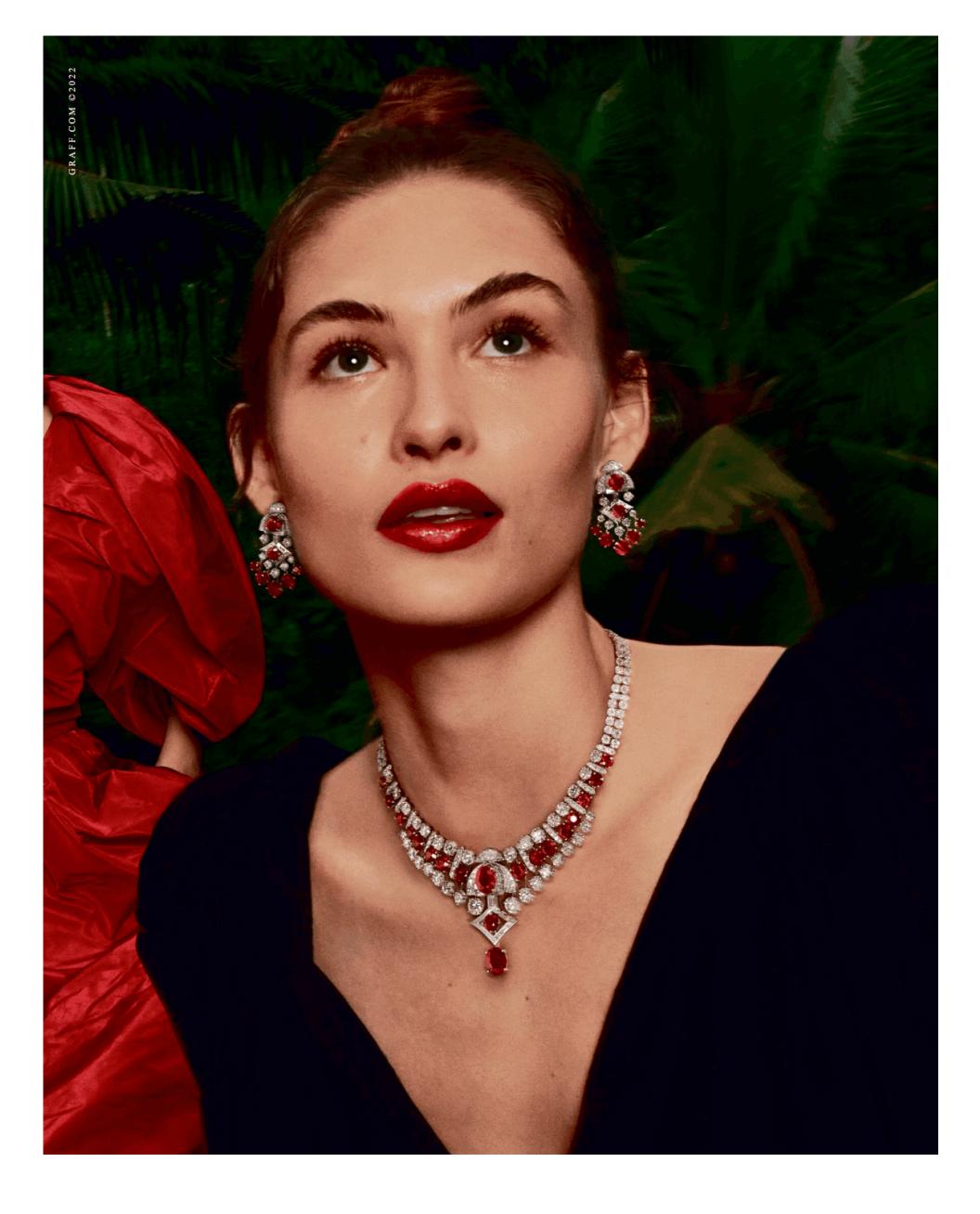
















#### REGULARS

17 OPENING SHOT The extraordinary archive of Judy Glickman Lauder

21 EDITOR'S LETTER Jo Ellison gets into skiwear

23 THE AESTHETE Master pâtissier Cédric Grolet talks taste

46 THE CAUSE How a US industrialist created the UK's most vibrant photography hub. By Louis Wise

74 TRAVELISTA Maria Shollenbarger picks destinations for ski nirvana

75 TECHNOPOLIS Rhodri Marsden starts up great gadgets for the car

77 DRINK Fancy an olive-oil Martini? Alice Lascelles goes extra virgin

**77 FOOD** Ajesh Patalay tries his hand at icing

78 HOW TO SPEND IT IN... KARACHI Artist Osman Yousefzada's guide to the capital

#### THE FIX

# 27 IT'S ALL IN THE JEANS

Investing in designer denim makes more sense than ever, says Simon Chilvers

28 SUPER HYDRATION Rosanna Dodds selects the best body serums

31 LACE IS MORE 16 ways to wear gossamer. By Aylin Bayhan

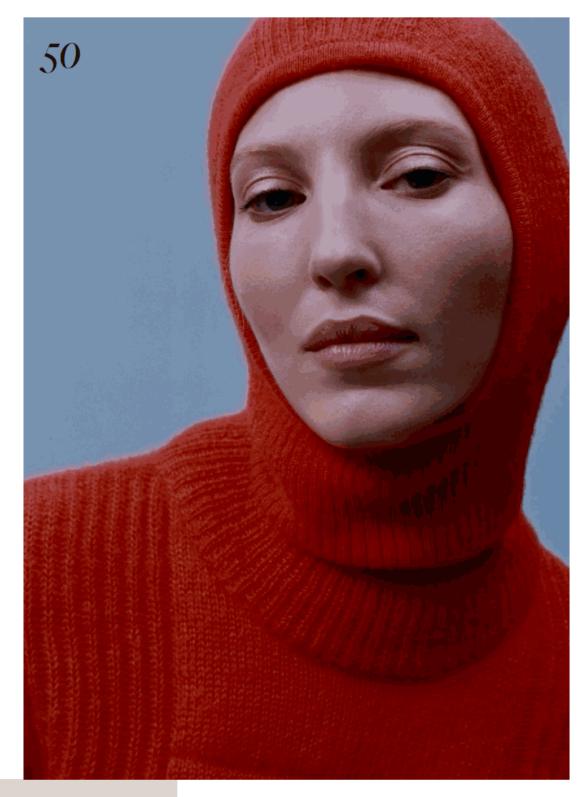
33 GLAD RAGS The rag rug channels fresh cosmopolitan cool. By Louise Long

34 MAGIC BEANS Cartier revives an icon for the modern woman. By Avril Groom. Plus seed-inspired jewellery, picked by Jessica Beresford

37 GLOW AND TELL The new-generation artists embracing neon. By Victoria Woodcock

43 JUST FOR KICKS Grace Cook meets Salehe Bembury, the man behind the world's hottest shoes







ELLA RICHARDS wears MAX MARA wool-mix sweater, £510, nylon-mix skirt, £485, wool balaclava, £150, and wool gloves, £115. HUNTER recycled polyester boots, £175, and nylon pouch, £30. HERMÈS skis, £13,300



All products in the magazine are available to buy from each brand's website or store, unless otherwise stated





# **FEATURES**

#### 44 CAN YOU CHANGE YOUR GENETIC FATE? Are the signs of ageing really inevitable, asks Rebecca Newman

50 THE POWDER AND

THE GLORY Skiwear slides into high fashion. Words by Jessica Beresford. Photography by Billy Ballard. Styling by Benjamin Canares. Models, Ella Richards and Anass Bouazzaoui

56 AT HOME WITH MONSIEUR A Inside graffiti legend André Saraiva's postmodern Paris pad. By Benjamin Dane

## 62 BODYGUARDS INC

Vassi Chamberlain investigates the business of close protection

## 66 STRANGER THINGS

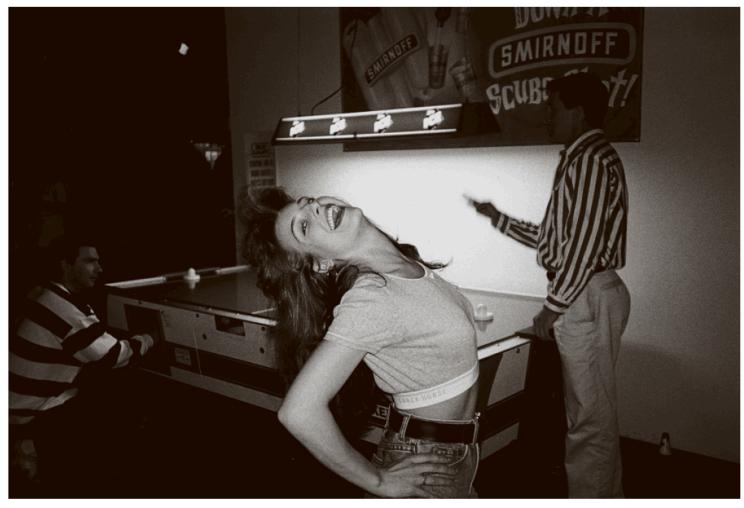
Artist Hernan Bas opens his cabinet of curiosities. By Victoria Woodcock

#### 70 WHERE BIKERS DARE Simon de Burton takes on the mother

of all motorcycle rallies



# **OPENING SHOT**



# **GLICKMAN'S CLICKS**

Judy Glickman Lauder called herself a "family documentarian". Now her extraordinary archive is getting its own show

As the daughter of a doctor who loved taking photographs in his time off, Judy Glickman Lauder spent her childhood immersed in image-making: helping her father in the darkroom, going on field trips, posing for photographs. It wasn't until her own children had left home that she began to think of herself as more than a "family documentarian", and to use photography as "a way to discover and express myself". Glickman Lauder began collecting and taking photographs seriously, becoming known for her images documenting Holocaust sites and survivors.

Now in her 80s, Glickman Lauder has donated nearly 700 of the photographs she has collected to the Portland Museum of Art. The bequest features many of the greats of the 20th century, from Richard Avedon to Dorothea Lange, Gordon Parks and Nan Goldin, as well as her own photographs. The images reveal particular facets of Glickman Lauder's life and interests: New York City's "non-stop energy, diversity", Jewish history, "women by women" and the fight for civil rights. "Some people say that when one photographs, it's almost like every photograph is somewhat a self-portrait," she says. "I think that in collecting it is too." BAYA SIMONS

Presence: The Photography Collection of Judy Glickman Lauder is published by Aperture at £40, and on show at the Portland Museum of Art, Maine until 15 January

Above: Suzie, Bahama Beach Club, Portland, Maine, 1996,

# CONTRIBUTORS



# **LOUISE LONG**

The writer and photographer has a particular interest in how "heritage informs the present" and recently launched a publication, Linseed Journal, which looks at the "entanglement of culture and place". This autumn, a trip through Scandinavia set her off on a voyage of discovery with the rag rug, which she writes about in this issue. "It is the everyday virtuosity that delights me - its gathering of textures from all corners of our lives."



# **BENJAMIN DANE**

The Danish writer and editor covers topics ranging from art and design to politics. He also secretly believes himself to be the best amateur pasta chef in Copenhagen. For us he visited the home of artist, hotelier and entrepreneur André Saraiva, who refuses to work before 1pm: "It was completely out of the question to do the interview before well into the afternoon. Being a freelancer myself, he might inspire me to sleep in a little more often."



# **JERRY-LEE BOSMANS**

The Dutch artist specialises in 2D graphic art recognised for its "lively colour palette, geometric design language and playful compositions". He illustrates Rebecca Newman's piece on the use of epigenetics testing to assess the effects of ageing. "What I liked about this artwork was the freedom I was given and the abstract approach to a complex subject," he says. "I worked with almost every colour of the rainbow."



# **ELLA RICHARDS**

With a star-studded family tree, the British model and granddaughter of rock legend Keith Richards is following in the footsteps of her mother, Lucie de la Falaise, and grandmother, Anita Pallenberg, who were both models. She made her runway debut at 16 for Calvin Klein and has since walked for Burberry, Chanel and Fendi. She worked with photographer Billy Ballard and HTSI's fashion editor Benjamin Canares for this week's ski shoot.



"BEAUTY LIES IN THE DETAILS OF THE GRANDEST STRUCTURES, AND THE FINEST."

ORA ÏTO,
CREATOR OF SHAPES, WEARS THE
VACHERON CONSTANTIN TRADITIONNELLE.







LOUIS VUITTON

### **EDITOR'S LETTER**

EDITOR Jo Ellison (jo.ellts

DEPUTY EDITOR Beatrice Hodgkin (beatrice.hodgkin@fl.com)

CREATIVE DIRECTOR Rasha Kahil (rasha.kahil@ft.com)

STYLE DIRECTOR

Isabelle Kountoure (tsahelle kou

FEATURES

EXECUTIVE EDITOR Tim Auld (ttm.auld@ft.com)

ASSISTANT EDITORS

Jackie Daly (jackte.daly@ft.com) Louis Wise (louts.wtse@ft.com)

Lauren Hadden (lauren hadden@ft.com)

EDITORIAL COORDINATOR

Clara Baldock (clara.baldock@ft.com)

JUNIOR EDITORS nna Dodds (rosanna.dodds@ft.c Baya Simons (baya stmons@fl.com,

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Sara Semic (sara.semtc@ft.com,

FASHION FASHION EDITOR

Benjamin Canares (benjamin.canares@ft.com) FASHION COORDINATOR

Aylin Bayhan (ayltn.bayhan@ft.com) ART

ART DIRECTOR

Carlo Apostoli (carlo.apostolt@ft. DEPUTY ART DIRECTOR enna Parry (morw

PICTURE EDITOR Katie Webb (katte.webb@ft.com) PICTURE RESEARCHER Paula Baker (paula.baker@ft.co

SUBEDITORS

CHIEF SUBEDITOR Kate Chapple (kate.chapple@ft.com) DEPUTY CHIEF SUBEDITOR

Alexander Tyndall (alexander.tyndall@ft.com

SUBEDITOR Helen Bain (helen.batn@ft.c JUNIOR SUBEDITOR

Chris Allnutt (chris.allnutt@ft.co

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Vivienne Becker, Jessica Beresford, Bella Blissett, Simon de Burton, Adeela Crown, Aleks Cvetkovic, Delphine Danhier, Aimee Farrell, Kate Finnigan, Maria Fitzpatrick, Nick Foulkes, Chloe Fox, Alexander Fury, Julian Ganio, Francesca Gavin, Laila Gohar, Flona Golfar, Ben Grimes, Alice Lascelles, Giovanni Dario Laudicina Rhodri Marsden, Evens JP Mornay, Nicola Moulton Rebecca Newman, Michelle Ogundehin, Ajesh Patalay, Charlene Prempeh, Tamara Rothstein Fergus Scholes, Victoria Woodcock

> ASSOCIATE EDITOR Lucia van der Post (lucta.vande

TRAVEL EDITOR Maria Shollenbarger (marta.shollenba

US CORRESPONDENT

Christina Ohly Evans (christina.ohl

GLOBAL DIRECTOR, LUXURY & WEEKEND ADVERTISING Dorota Gwilliam (dorota.gwtlltam@ft.com) COMMERCIAL SALES & PRODUCT EXECUTIVE Isaac Peltz (tsaac.peltz@fl.com)

> Denise Macklin ADVERTISING PRODUCTION John Lee

WWW.FT.COM/HTSI TWITTER.COM/HTSI O INSTAGRAM.COM/FTHTSI FT.COM/NEWSLETTERS

EDITORIAL ENQUIRIES +44(0)20-7873 3203 ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES 800-446 3905 Imagazine is printed by Evergreen Printing Compi for, and published by, The Financial Times Ltd, racken House, 1 Friday Street, London EC4M 9BT

n activity that requires the harnessing of aluminium rails, plastic bootees and copious layers of quilting is not an obvious arena for cutting-edge

fashion. Even so, the outerwear business is now a ferociously contested market for the makers of fashion apparel. That skiwear has been so successfully absorbed into the mainstream says much about our changing wardrobe and our desire for clothes designed for utility, work and leisure. The down jacket is now as commonplace in the supermarket as it is among polar explorers. In particular, snow-wear, with its technical specifications, has become a competitive area for material innovation. There's also a ready bunch of clients wanting to look the part on the black run. As Jessica Beresford reports ("The Powder and the Glory", page 50), the global outdoor apparel market was valued at \$33.54bn in 2021, and every brand from Isabel Marant to Armani now produces ski capsules and "high-performance" collections.

As a non-skier (too old, too malcoordinated, too frightened), I can only admire it all from the position of fashion critic. And there have been some magnificent moments. Few things can beat the chic of Audrey Hepburn's ski outfit in Charade. A chocolate-coloured wool ensemble, worn with matching fur hat and jacket, the costume was designed by Hubert de Givenchy and is so immaculate that even decades after the film's release it still looks exquisitely modern. At the other end of the scale, Roger Moore's acid-yellow ensemble with red-accent detail, in which he is chased in The Spy Who Loved Me, is "a bold choice", to put it mildly. A more demure and arguably comfortable Bond, Daniel Craig opts for minimal cashmere by N Peal and Vuarnet goggles to outwit his adversaries in Spectre.

Skiwear is possibly more fun when it nods towards the outrageous: Princess Di in a huge plaited headband or Ivana Trump in a silver all-in-one with a grin as big as her beehive. Our fashion shoot in this week's issue celebrates the snow set's more peacocking personalities (page 50). Shot by Billy Ballard and styled by Benjamin Canares, it's rainbowbright and playful. You might want to practise before heading out, however, as these looks will certainly get you noticed.

Elsewhere in this issue, we've got homes, art, food, elevated denim and graffiti artists. I've lusted over the butter-coloured kitchen of André Saraiva ever since seeing

FEW THINGS CAN BEAT THE SKI-CHIC OF AUDREY HEPBURN IN CHARADE

an image of it earlier this summer. Saraiva - perhaps better known by the trademark tag "Mr A", which he has painted some 300,000 times the world over - moved into his loft-like space overlooking the Place des Vosges in the wake of the pandemic. Previously owned by the architect Richard Rogers, and later remodelled by the architect Emanuela Frattini Magnusson, the apartment has

enjoyed an illustrious history. Rather than try to force his own imprimatur on the space, Saraiva's gentle renovation has tried to recreate its former aesthetic (page 56). I'm sure a psychologist would have much to say about a graffiti artist who decides not to desecrate his personal space with his own signature. But I can only applaud Saraiva's decision to try to reclaim so many gorgeous interior details.

And the icing on the cake? Well, the biscuit, actually. Last week I had the strange pleasure of going to Harrods, which has been transformed by Dior into a gingerbread palace. From the store windows to a "wonderland" in the basement, the Kensington retailer is currently in the guise of giant biscuit. The confection might have been inspiration for Ajesh Patalay who, it so happens, has spent time finessing his icing skills for his column (page 77). And while plans to recreate a miniature world in time for Christmas may be somewhat ambitious, a box of bespoke iced biscuits would be just as delicious. ■HT\$I (i) @jellison22

For the best of HTSI straight into your inbox, sign up to our newsletter at ft.com/newsletters



GOLD, PEARL AND DIAMOND CHARM, £3,500 (PAGE 34)

and the Glory" (page 50)



# Born in Saxony. At home around the world.





Giving German craftsmanship a distinctly global perspective, the new LANGE 1 TIME ZONE connects the world: In addition to the main dial that displays home time, the watch has a smaller auxiliary dial to indicate the current time in any of the world's 24 time zones. A small

arrow points at the currently displayed time zone on the rotating city ring and indicates whether summer time applies there. With assets like these, the LANGE 1 TIME ZONE answers the questions of a connected world by purely mechanical means. www.alange-soehne.com

You are cordially invited to discover the A. Lange & Söhne collection at our boutiques





# Cédric Grolet

The pastry chef talks tattoos, snowboarding in the Alps and Tahitian vanilla

INTERVIEW BY CHRISTINA OHLY EVANS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY FRANCESCA BELTRAN





Top: Grolet at home in Paris. Above: his essentials – notebook pen, AirPods. Left: staples in his fridge

Y PERSONAL STYLE **SIGNIFIERS** are tattoos, Nike sneakers, and oversized T-shirts, often with a lot of colour because that reflects my personality. I think a casual style - and being comfortable in the kitchen - is the way to go. The tattoos serve as special souvenirs from the places I've been. I started getting them when I was younger whenever I went on a trip - such as my sleeve, which is in the Māori style, from Tahiti. I also have tattoos that reflect my work, such as the rolling of dough or the fruit trees that inspire my creations.

THE LAST THING I BOUGHT AND LOVED was a special birthday dinner for friends in Bali. We ate delicious burgers on the beach, with our feet in the sand.

THE BEST SOUVENIR I'VE BROUGHT HOME are vanilla beans from Tahiti. These beans are so floral, and I've developed several new pastries for my bakery Cédric Grolet Opéra and Le Meurice. I like to use one main ingredient – for example, my Vanilla Flower cake is a mix of vanilla ganache, vanilla almond biscuit, vanilla milk jam and vanilla cream. And my Vanilla Bean is a trompe-l'oeil pastry that you cut into to reveal a variety of textures.

is Les Lapins Ne Mangent Pas De Carottes (Rabbits Don't Eat Carrots) by journalist Hugo Clément, which looks at climate change and biodiversity. I also published my own book this year, Flowers. It took me more than a year to complete, so it's been incredible to see it come to fruition.

IN MY FRIDGE YOU'LL ALWAYS FIND water and fresh fruits and vegetables. I'm very careful about my health and what I eat, so I tend towards unprocessed things. I like to have fresh juices in the morning, especially pineapple juice, so I always have that on hand. If I'm in London, working at my patisserie at The Berkeley, however, I'll usually just wait until I get to their kitchens, as the juice there is amazing.

MY STYLE ICON is the New York-based artist Daniel Arsham. I love his art, film and architecture work — and his subject matter, which is often in a state of decay. And then his personal style — the way he wears workwear clothing, and even his sneakers... it all just works.

THE FESTIVE TRADITION I MOST LOOK
FORWARD TO is returning home to my
family for the holidays. Once we're all
together again, we just chill out for
four straight hours and eat bread and drink
hot chocolate. It's a delicious and simple
time, but it's about connection. It's also
when we like to have the special bûches
de Noël cakes of my childhood.

I DON'T LISTEN TO podcasts because I am very focused on my work and, although I know that TV, social media and podcasts are great sources of knowledge, I prefer not to be influenced by other people's ideas.

THE BEST GIFT I'VE GIVEN RECENTLY is a gold Cartier Love bracelet to my girlfriend,

"MY INTERESTS ARE LINKED BY THE REQUIREMENT FOR EXTREME PRECISION IN THEIR EXECUTION"



Astrid-Olivia. I like to think that I am good at giving thoughtful presents, but this one was special because it was the first important show of my love for her.

AND THE BEST GIFT I'VE RECEIVED is a two-day camping trip in the jungles of Bali for a special celebration. My friends took me and we snorkelled, and ate and slept outside. It was a special time because of the company and also because we were all away from technology and focused on our time together.

版× RUDIMENTAL 编组 THE LAST MUSIC I DOWNLOADED was by Brown Sugar. I like music that starts out slow and builds to a faster tempo to give good vibes and

> positive energy. I am always listening to music - while I am exercising, relaxing at home and, of course, cooking. At my café you'll always hear chill music like "Something About You" by Elderbrook and Rudimental. It just sets the right tone.

ONE OF

THE PLACE I AM EXCITED TO GO TO NEXT is to Megève or Praz-sur-Arly this winter, to snowboard with friends. I am looking forward to any trip, anywhere, that involves snowboarding, but the French Alps are always my favourite for the terrain.

I HAVE A COLLECTION of pastry books and books about sports cars. I have a lot by noted French chefs and friends such as Pierre Hermé, Christophe Adam and Alain Ducasse, and also books about Formula 1 and, specifically, Lamborghinis, which I am obsessed with. Books about watches are another interest. All of these interests are linked by the requirement for extreme precision in their execution.

THE THING I COULDN'T DO WITHOUT is my exercise routine. I like to go to the gym at the Hôtel Plaza Athénée before work and this time allows me to focus. If I am not feeling creative or positive, I'll just work out to feel

better. One hour of cardio and weights with my trainer per day is a necessity for me.

I'VE RECENTLY REDISCOVERED Jean-François Piège's Le Grand Restaurant, in Paris. The cuisine and his technique are so precise, but nothing is ever fussy. The marble and wood panelling and the sculptural glass ceiling make this room very special. I had lobster cooked right in front of me - in the Parisien pavé cooking style - with which I drank a Domaine de la Grange des Pères 2008.

THE LAST ITEM OF CLOTHING I ADDED TO MY WARDROBE was a pair of Travis Scott x Nike sneakers. I'm a big fan of sneakers generally, but these are a collector's item, and they haven't come out of the box yet. I like their cream-white colour with touches of brown and red, and I think it's the rarity factor that makes them so cool.

AN INDULGENCE I WOULD NEVER FORGO is frothy cappuccinos. The mix of espresso and steamed milk with a sprinkling of chocolate is one of life's great pleasures.

> THE BEST BITS OF ADVICE I EVER **RECEIVED** were from my family when I was growing up. I was taught to be respectful and polite to everyone, and my mother told me to always bring flowers because they make people smile. Another important influence was Alain

Ducasse, who suggested that I cut back on the sweetness of desserts and focus instead on the natural

flavours of the fruits and other ingredients I use. This has made all the difference.

MY FAVOURITE ROOM IN MY HOUSE is my wine cellar, which is a sort of separate space as part of my kitchen. I had a niche designed to hold 10 racks of wines, mostly from Bordeaux. I particularly love good reds from Saint-Joseph and Saint-Émilion, but I also have bottles of Ruinart and Billecart-Salmon, as well as white and rosé wines. I find it a serene place to be.

MY FAVOURITE BUILDING is Château La Coste in the South of France. The architecture by Tadao Ando and Renzo Piano, and work by artists like Louise Bourgeois and Ai Weiwei - it's perfection, as are the food, the wine. the olive groves and the service. Marina Bay Sands in Singapore is also incredible - a feat of engineering, with the world's longest elevated pool spread across the roof of its three buildings.

THE GROOMING STAPLE I'M NEVER WITHOUT is SVR Cicavit+ cream for my tattoos. I put it on every morning to preserve their colour as they tend to fade over time. It's also extremely moisturising and provides SPF50+, too. £12.50, uk.labo-svr.com

MY GROOMING AND WELLBEING GURUS include Anastasia, my personal trainer who I met via the app TrainMe, and also my barber Thomas at Le Barbutier, who is very important to my overall style. I have been going to him for three years, and he is always available, which is a help with my hectic schedule. Le Barbutier, 11 Rue des Pyramides, 75001 Paris (+336-2302 6516)

IN ANOTHER LIFE, I WOULD HAVE BEEN a soccer player or a Formula 1 race-car driver. I love the athleticism and commitment in both of these sports.

THE PLACE THAT MEANS A LOT TO ME is the Loire Valley. I grew up there, and I love to go fishing with friends in its rivers, especially the Rhône. This is when I feel most at peace. At the age of 13, I began working in my grandparents' hotelrestaurant in Andrézieux-Bouthéon, and it's where I learned to cook and make pastry, so it will always be home. ■HT\$I



Top left: one of Grolet's car books on his "cloud table". Top collection, Above: his style icon Daniel Arsham. Right: in his living room. Below: part of his wine cellar. Far right: his grooming staple



Right: his bathtub, with Marrakech Below: stores



24

SVR

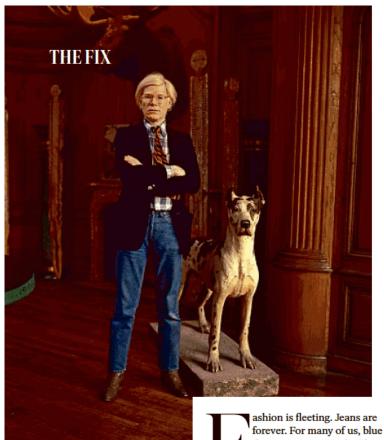






FT.COM/HTSI





Above: Andy Warhol in 1980. Above right, from left: jeans by Brunello Cucinelli, £650, Louis Vuitton, £1,500, and Maison Margiela, £520

denim trousers are the ultimate base; a blank canvas that offers flexibility both in what you can do in them and what you can put with them. They are the most democratic of garments (Levi's says its first blue workwear iean was created on 20 May 1873) and are championed by everyone from presidents (Barack Obama) to artists (Andy Warhol did screenprints of his). They have a knack for eliciting WARHOL IS adoration from their wearers (a pair of THE ULTIMATE excavated Levi's from the 1880s recently **PIN-UP FOR** HOW TO sold at auction for \$76,000). They also look fantastic with a wealth of other

top and pair of jeans." Warhol is the ultimate pin-up for how to wear jeans and look semi-professional no one has ever looked better in a tie with

"There is nothing more timeless than a tank

wardrobe classics: trench coats, striped

and black overcoats. As Bottega Veneta's

creative director Matthieu Blazy puts it:

shirts, white T-shirts, navy sweaters

that has served as inspiration for designer Brunello Cucinelli, who also has a fondness for vintage Levi's: in the '60s, he used to wear them with a blue one-and-a-halfbreasted jacket. Today, he can wear the luxury denim he's developed at his own brand. "I've always loved jeans in any combination," says Cucinelli. "My favourite outfit is always jeans worn with a jacket, tie and elegant shoes. I almost feel that it's such a special garment that I'd leave mine as inheritance." The Italian designer has also recently added snow-washed jeans to his successful denim offer to apparently entice the millennials.

At Cucinell's London flagship store on New Bond Street, jeans are super-light, feel pre-loved and come in a range of fits

**WEAR JEANS** 

(priced from about £480). A new ergonomic shape is my favourite in the changing room, although the "leisure" fit - a slightly roomier cut - sits nicely around the thighs and hips

before tapering towards the ankle. You can't argue with the fact that the brand's tailoring expertise makes for excellent construction.

As someone who lives in vintage Levi's, I have considered that designer jeans on a cost-per-wear basis can reap good returns while usually boasting a flattering cut. At Maison Margiela, a pair of mid-blue jeans, styled with a striped shirt, fit perfectly; ditto at Prada, where a slightly darker denim version sits just right. Both would work dressed up for day or night. (Prada's incoming 2023 jeans look particularly great.) Loewe's have a slight rip and are a bit roomier (the brand's creative director Jonathan Anderson has almost never taken a catwalk bow in anything other than jeans).

Grace Wales Bonner has used denim ever since starting her namesake label. "Denim has always felt like an essential fabric when building a wardrobe and has been a returning element in our collections," she says. "In the past few seasons, we have explored the combination of denim and artisanal woven fabric in organic cotton, made in Burkina Faso. I like a jean with a little volume and slouch in the cut, a slightly tailored sensibility," she adds.

There are definitely two camps with luxury jeans: thoughtful, well-cut classic styles alongside those with a fashion twist, such as with cargo pockets (Givenchy), super-baggy (JW Anderson and Louis Vuitton), logoed (Versace) and textileembellished (Junya Watanabe). Either way, I am buoyed. Long live the jean. ■HT\$I



# Super hydration

Rosanna Dodds rounds up the best body serums

It's been the year for butt masks, boob creams and body contouring. But while some might look to more extreme corners of the booming bodycare market, others have settled on simpler pleasures: serums - fast-absorbing liquids that, much like their face-focused

equivalents, are designed to tackle a variety of concerns. When U Beauty launched its Super Body Hydrator earlier this year, it sold out twice within the first month. The serum, says

Caroline Sands, VP of product development, "is clinically shown to provide 48 hours of sustained hydration after just one application". It does this by harnessing long-chain hyaluronic acid, a molecule that can absorb and retain more than 1,000 times its weight in water. Similar technology is used in the equally popular serum by Nécessaire, which combines

five different weights of hyaluronic acid with protective ceramides. Once you go below the

décolletage, skin becomes much thicker. For many, that means the skin can withstand more potent doses of active ingredients. That goes for hydrating serums - see U Beauty and Nécessaire's use of hyaluronic acid - or products geared towards smoother skin (try RéVive, Paula's Choice or REN Clean Skincare). Looking

for more targeted application? Typology's Purifying Body Serum fights blemishes with an easy pipette.

I personally enjoy the ritual of a body serum, ideally applied before bed, with a hint of fragrance. For that I opt for Sisley's Beautitying Emulsion, which restores the skin's natural glow with black rose, camelina and white ginger. ■HTSI

From top: REN Clean Skincare AHA Smart Renewal Body Serum, £37, PAULA'S CHOICE 5% Niacinamide Body Serum. £34. RÉVIVE Supérieur Body Nightly Renewing Serum, £165. U BEAUTY The Super Body Hydrator, £118. NÉCESSAIRE The Body Serum, \$45. SISLEY Black Rose Beautifying Emulsion, £122. TYPOLOGY Purifying Body Serum, £26



# Château Haur Batailley



"All the variety, all the charm, all the beauty of life is made up of light and shadow." Léon Tolstoï





FT.COM/HTSI



41 Cadogan Gardens 1 South Molton Street Harrods | Liberty | Harvey Nichols 0800 138 1659

annoushka.com



Ambushka



SOUKIE MODERN x ANTHROPOLOGIE, SIMILAR FROM

\$1,400

GALLERY, COURTESY OF

Above right: Coffee at 180, 2022, by Betty Wood, Below: progress for Reclaim the Void in the Ngalia Western RAGS

The scrappy, resourceful rag rug is channelling fresh cosmopolitan cool. By Louise Long

he rag rag is unique for being ubiquitous. From the High Atlas Mountains to the Scandinavian archipelagos, countless cultures harbour traditions of rugs woven from upcycled fibres - fragments from bedsheets and tablecloths, food sacks, sails and shirts.

Whether braided or coiled, hooked, pegged or prodded, the craft of making one is as versatile as the language it adopts: a clootie to a Scot, peggy to a Yorkshireman, or proggy to a Northumbrian. Self-taught textile artist Betty Wood, from Northumberland, recalls a pink rug in her grandparents' bedroom and another by the fireplace of her Auntie Nelly - "not a fancy colourful one, but one made with burlap sacking and old clothes", she says. "It would be switched out periodically."

Step into a Scandinavian summerhouse. meanwhile, and your feet are likely to encounter the striped weave of a Swedish rya, or Finnish ryijy. On a June morning on Finland's shores, you are just as likely to witness the annual carpet wash, where rugs are scrubbed in salt water before being left out to dry. Helsinki retains dozens of "washing piers" or mattolaituri along the Baltic Sea, with some hosting chic waterfront cafés and bars. Familyrun Finarte, Finland's foremost rag-rug brand, continues one of the world's oldest rag-rug lineages that dates back at least to the 18th century. Finarte co-founder and self-proclaimed "colour designer" Eija Rasinmäki has spent five decades breathing new life into the classic ryijy design, weaving from her mill in Oitti.

"It's such meaningful work because you are carrying a tradition from one generation to another," she says. Bespoke pieces (from €650) are popular with international buyers, including New York



interior designers, hotels in Hawaii and the BVIs, a former curator of MoMA and even Woody Allen. Finarte is now planning weaving workshops and a competition for young designers. "This is a huge trend," says the company's CEO Larissa Immonen, "upholding all the values that are important in the 21st century - we value handicraft, we value recycled materials and tradition, and we want to revive it."

In Morocco, a shift from nomadic pastoral life and the corresponding scarcity of sheep wool since the 1960s have sparked new iterations of the Berber or Amazigh carpet-craft. Boucherouite rugs are woven instead from found or upcycled natural and synthetic fibres, with

"IT'S EASY TO **GET LOST IN** LOOPS"

designs liberated from the strict geometry of traditional woollen rugs. Concentric lozenges, lightning streaks and

dizzying scarps are conjured in vivid colour. In 2010, New York's Cavin-Morris Gallery hosted Rags to Richesse - a turn of the tide for the boucherouite. Even if there are now lots of mass-produced models, the show's co-curator, Gebhart Blazek, promises that "a family-structured craft culture is still very much alive in Morocco... retaining its greatest strength - the playful creativity at its core."

Also catering to a growing international audience is Palm Springs store Soukie Modern, with a collection of both vintage and modern boucherouites (priced around \$30 per sq ft), including designs by co-owner Taib Lotfi, a self-described "rug addict" of Berber descent. Revival Rugs (with operations in the US, Turkey, Morocco, and India) began buying vintage boucherouites in 2019, inspiring a new "Denim" range (from \$109). "Rag rugs solve many of the questions we ask before we bring something to market," says cofounder Ben Hyman. "Is it beautiful? Is it useful? Is it good for the environment? Does it carry cultural heritage?"

Betty Wood has discovered closer ties to her Northumberland heritage through a her father to share stories of his own grandmother's rug-making. Now based in Toronto. Wood draws equally on the illustrative rug-hooking heritage of Nova Scotia, including floral motifs and scenes of Atlantic fishing life. Her hung pieces (from C\$750, about £480) are "the antithesis of fast culture: slow, labour-intensive art", she says. "It's easy to get lost in loops of yarn or the ASMR of cutting fabric strips."

Detroit-based artist Eleanor Anderson has also elevated the rag rug to the gallery wall. She uses a double-weave method on a floor loom, transforming strips of cotton and filled fabric tubes into a 3D patchwork extending up to 15 feet. "I like to work at an architectural scale," she says. In the age of screen culture, "people's eyes are hungry for a human hand at work".

Galvanising the hands of thousands of rug-makers around the world is Reclaim the Void, a work of cultural activism with the Ngalia people of Australia's Western Desert: "a country pockmarked with holes... where the injury in the earth stays forever", says the project's cultural custodian, Kado Muir. Set to be installed in 2024, Reclaim the Void aims to cover an extinct mining pit with thousands of circular rag rugs, stitched together to recreate an original indigenous painting.

"We've been slow to acknowledge the pain done to our indigenous brothers and sisters," says creative director Vivienne Robertson. "So we've offered people an everyday way of saying sorry that's very accessible - everybody has a sheet in their cupboard. The project is symbolic." The rag rug has never wielded greater soft power: to comfort and unite, to protect and seal - and even to heal. ■HTSI

recent turn to weaving - a prompt for



THE FIX

Top right: a rug by Gebhart Blazek, Above: REVIVAL RUGS Mosaiikki rag rug, from €115







f you were the creative director of a grand Paris jewellery house looking for an iconic new motif, the humble coffee bean wouldn't be top of your list. Yet it was for Cartier's Jeanne Toussaint, creative director and working partner of Louis Cartier, back in 1938. Its Grain de Café jewellery – jingling with little bean shapes in yellow gold with convex polished backs, textured, ribbed fronts, and many tipped with a diamond – became a playful favourite in the war years and on through the '50s and '60s, worn by stars of the day from Grace Kelly to Audrey Hepburn.

It then disappeared from Cartier's oeuvre – to finally return now. The new, currently six-piece Grain de Café collection, just launched this week, is as playful as its forebear and intended, as the original was, to be part of a woman's daily wardrobe rather than preserved for special occasions.

"Jeanne insisted on what modern women wanted, in a jewellery world then dominated by men," says Pierre Rainero, Cartier's image, style and heritage director. "She saw that women wanted bigger-volume daytime jewellery to go with suits in thicker materials for the working world. We already Cartier's new Grain de Café revives a classic design beloved by Grace Kelly. It will speak to the modern woman too, promise its creators. By *Avril Groom* 

had everyday motifs, such as the nail — originally a square-headed horseshoe nail from the late 19th century and later the curved carpenter's nail of Juste un Clou — so it wasn't unfamiliar as an idea." Europe was also under the shadow of impending war and the design was, he says, "perhaps

an attempt to lighten the

THE DESIGN mood, just as comic

BEGAN AS musical theatre flourished at the same moment".

TO LIGHTEN The decision to

THE MOOD"

The decision to reintroduce the motif now is not, says Rainero, due to

today's interest in midcentury design with its emphasis on yellow-gold jewellery, nor current economic and political instability: "We make our own way rather than following trends – but something in the air may enter the equation." In recent years Cartier has placed growing emphasis (especially in the area between high jewellery and more manufactured ranges such as Love



Above: Grace Kelly wears a artier Grain de Café necklace, 1956. Left: yellowand white-gold and diamond Grain de Café ring, £11,800

ROSE-GOLD, OBSIDIAN AND DIAMOND Left: Vanessa Kirby wears yellow- and white-gold and diamond Grain de Café necklace, £40,800, bracelet, £40,800, and ring, £6,150

or Clash) on its heritage in gold-led jewellery, alongside the diamond and platinum art deco and belle époque styles with which it is so associated.

THIS IS IN FACT SOME of Cartier's most creative jewellery, now under the domain of Marie-Laure Cérède, the creative director of watchmaking who has recently added this area of jewellery to her remit. She has hopes that Grain de Café will be received like the fine-jewellery range Cactus, which was launched in 2016 and also surprises, based on a fat, round little succulent that in nature sports bright starry flowers, and created with gold, diamonds and coloured stones.

"It's not so formal," says Cérède.

"You can stack and mix pieces for everyday, though technically our gold work has the same standards and savoir faire as high jewellery."

Each bean — slightly more elegant than the original — is suspended independently from a delicate-looking but strong chain that weaves a white and a subtle yellow gold. This was the hardest technical part, says Cérède, "because the same chain that must hold a ring rigid has to sit flexibly in a necklace".

The beans move a little, and rattle lightly as they do. Apart from diamonds, the only stone so far is deep obsidian, creating very realistic, shiny, grooved "beans" on a double ring, one of the two rose-gold pieces. Asked what comes next for the range, both Rainero and Cérède smile inscrutably but promise extensions to the collection in the new year, with the second phase launching next June. "Louis Cartier always said 'a good idea is another idea' – ie, where can we take this?" says Rainero. If 1950s additions to the original, midcentury styles are anything to go by, stones from faceted, coloured sapphires to opaque turquoise or coral will feature.

Meanwhile, the pieces are satisfyingly substantial and handcrafted-looking, with a price range starting from £6,150. They are available at selected Cartier flagship stores but the best place to view them is unquestionably the famous Rue de la Paix boutique in Paris, just reopened following a two-year renovation including a new, semi-circular five-storey atrium and a top-floor invitation-only "residence". Every detail as finely thought through and crafted as this latest collection. **■HTSI** 



# CLASSIC WEEK

ART FROM ANTIQUITY TO THE 20TH CENTURY

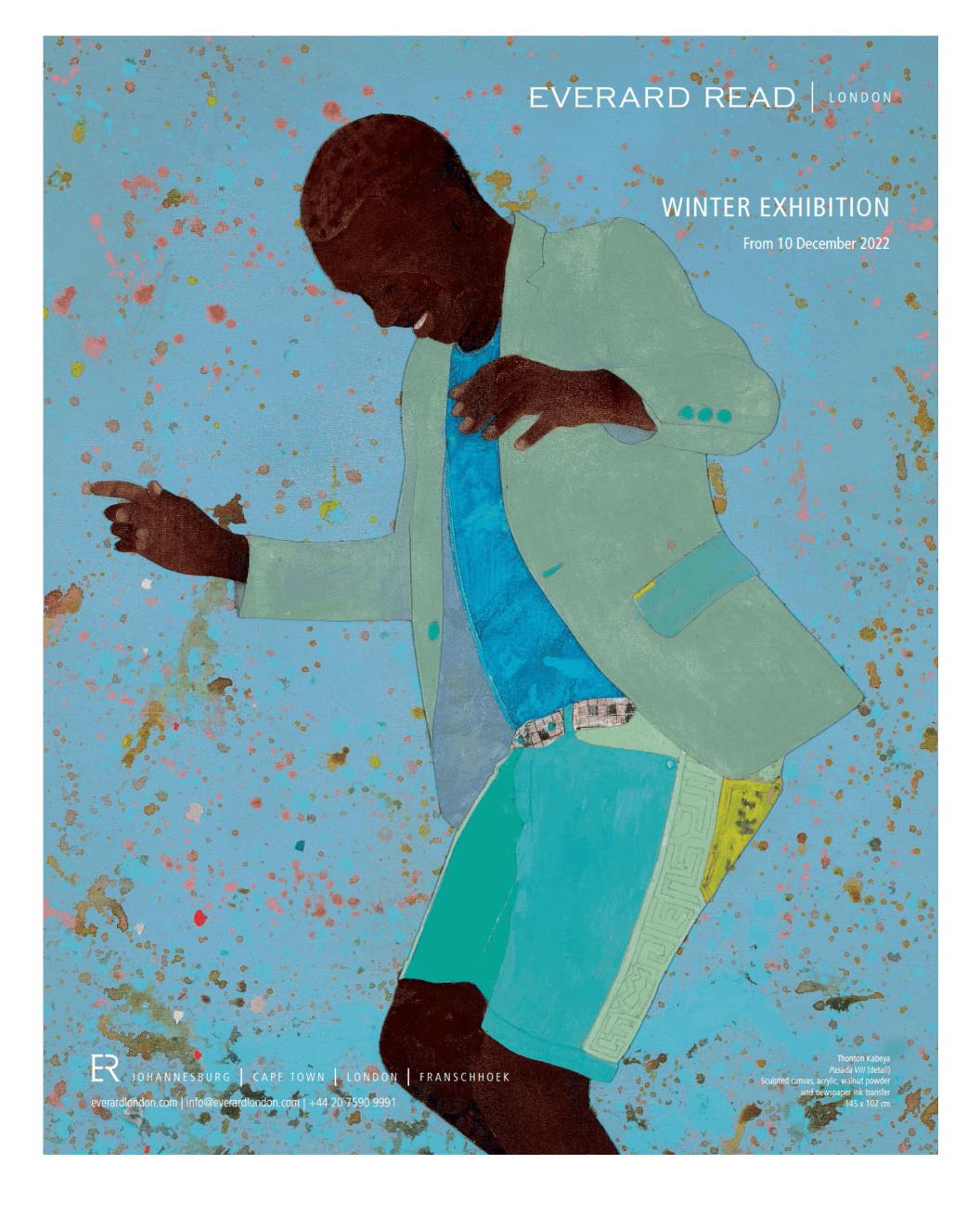




**AUCTIONS** · 25 November – 15 December 2022 · London and Online **PUBLIC VIEWING** · 2–15 December 2022 · 8 King Street · London SW1Y 6QT **LIVESTREAM** · 8 December 2022 · From 6:30pm BST · christies.com

Other fees apply in addition to the hammer price. See Section D of our Conditions of Sale at the back of the Auction Catalogue

CHRISTIE'S



\_ ARTS

# **GLOW AND TELL**

An illumination of artists is having fun with neon. By Victoria Woodcock

LOVEIS

WHAT YOU

WANT, 2011 BY TRACEY EMIN

Below: how

much can I take?, 2020, by

Douglas Gordon

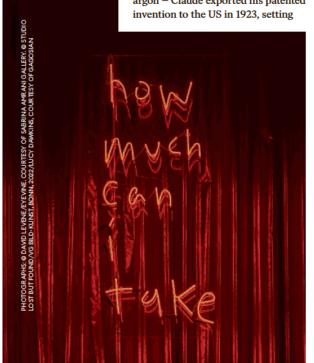
eon was used as the sign for forbidden pleasures - from ice-cream parlours to strip clubs," says Turner Prizewinning artist Douglas Gordon. "It is seductive, and at the same time there's a warning... It represents danger, both visually but also chemically. The arcing electricity will fry you to death for inappropriate thought..."

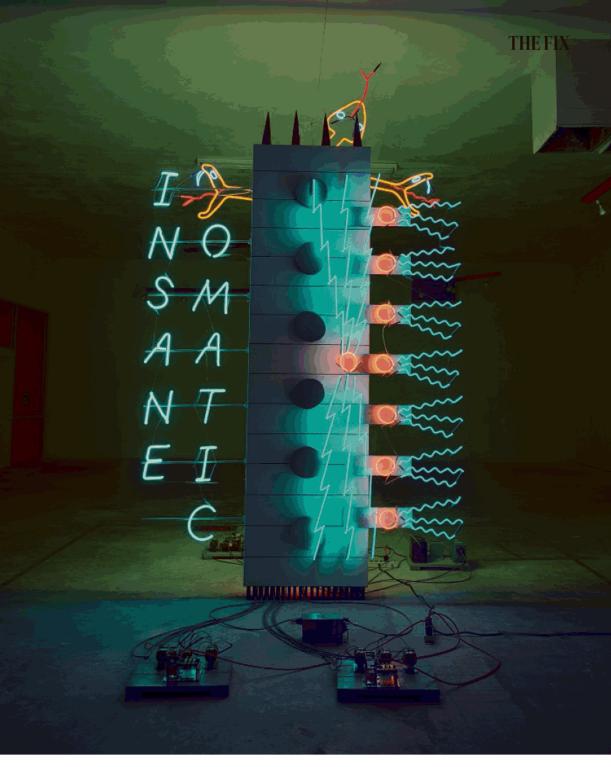
Gordon is one of a number of contemporary artists who use neon - from Tracey Emin's handwritten sentences to Mary Weatherford's canvas and strip

> lighting combinations. It first made its mark in the art world in the 1960s - pioneered by the likes of Joseph Kosuth and Bruce Nauman - and its presence at the moment is particularly playful. At September's Armory Show in New York, a smattering of neon ran from Emin's pulsating pink How it Feels to the joyful textpattern mash-ups of Marinella Senatore advising us to Dance First Think Later and Chilean

colourless gas that glows red when placed in an electric field - was discovered in 1898 by British chemists Morris Travers and William Ramsay. "The blaze of crimson light from the tube told its own story," wrote Travers of the curious natural phenomenon that was first manipulated into neon lighting by French engineer Georges Claude in 1910. After creating different-coloured lights with different gases - including mercury vapour and argon - Claude exported his patented

artist Iván Navarro's tunnel-like illusion. The chemical element neon - a





alight a neon craze that forever changed the cityscape, beginning with his effervescent signage for the Packard car dealership in LA. "Neon is the only piece of modernism that left Paris, skipped New York and went straight to LA," says Weatherford. Photographer and artist Steve Fitch has documented the neon landscape of the American West since the 1970s, most recently in the book Vanishing Vernacular (while also creating his own neon artwork).

Old-school neon lighting flickers evocatively between the nostalgic and the sleazy. It's seaside towns and candy floss. Retro diners and the Blackpool Illuminations. Liquor and cocktails. Soho. And Girls. Girls. For artists working today, these are tropes waiting to be taken in a new direction, as they both play with its lowbrow associations and transcend them.

"Bending light is so powerful and magical," says LA artist Lisa Schulte, who runs Nights of Neon in a vast 20,000sq ft studio and has been making retro-style signs for the film and TV industry for the past 40 years. Her own sculptures,

meanwhile, combine driftwood and other organic material with predominantly white neon. "I want to show a different face of neon than the typical palm tree or flamingo, to take it in a direction that shows the beauty of this light source."

"Sublime and serious at the same time," is how Mostyn art centre director Alfredo

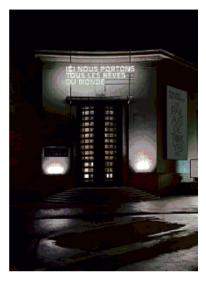
"IT IS THE MOST **POETIC WAY** TO EXPRESS INTENSITY OF **EMOTION** 

Cramerotti describes Cerith Wyn Evans's bright-white hanging clusters of poetic lines, currently on show in the Welsh gallery. While they appear abstract at

first, "some of the new forms are taken from ancient scripts. It's a way of writing in 3D".

"It's the least deadpan way to take in information," suggests Douglas Gordon of the medium. For Richard Jackson, neon is a counterpoint to the "high-minded secret language that has been around since minimalism, that only people in the art world or with an education can understand. I would like everyone to get something from my art," says the 83-year-old Californian artist, whose current show at Hauser & Wirth Zurich

Above: Insane-O-Matic, 1987, by Steve Fitch. Below: Ici Nous Portons Tous Les Rêves Du Monde, 2021, by Joël Andrianomearisoa, on the façade of Paris's Palais de Tokyo





Top right: Nefertiti (Black Power), 2018, by Awol Erizku. Above: Big Pig, 2009, by Richard Jackson. Below: Disposable Mementoes (Dolphins), 2018, by Shezad Dawood

"Neon offers the most poetic way to express intensity of emotion," says Madagascan artist Joël Andrianomearisoa. "Light and electricity can be unreliable and frustrating at my home in Antananarivo, so it's perhaps not surprising that I have become fascinated by it. For me, it is a symbol of hope." His works have graced the façades of Paris's Palais de Tokyo and Prague's Kunsthalle, and featured in the recent Noor Riyadh festival of light and art.

For British-Pakistani artist Shezad Dawood, neon is linked with childhood memories of Karachi, where "the evening haze would seemingly pulsate and radiate with neon signs, from Sufi shrines to kebab shops". His recent display at Frieze London featured works from his Disposable Mementoes series, combining neons of marine species with painting and collaged beach towels and sarongs to question the ecological impact of coastal tourism. Ethiopian-American multimedia artist Awol Erizku uses neon to reference Hong Kong's streets or ancient Egypt, while also highlighting issues of race and identity. His piece Nefertiti (Black Power) is currently on view at the Sainsbury Centre in Norfolk.

When self-titled "Punjabi Liverpudlian" and "radical feminist" Chila Kumari Singh Burman illuminated the front of Tate Britain with a joyful mish-mash of rainbow-coloured drawings in November 2020, her intricate glowing imagery was inspired by her Indian heritage — from martial artists and dancers to Hindu goddesses, a tiger and her dad's ice-cream van. It became a public beacon

when the museum was closed. "I knew we were heading into a dark tunnel; I wanted people to feel there was light at the end," says Burman. Currently, her work is on view at Bordeaux's CAPC Musée d'Art Contemporain and in Doha, as part of Britain's cultural exchange during the World Cup.

Burman uses LED-based "silicone neon", as well as glass. But for Gordon and his neon fabricator Kerry Ryan — who founded London workshop Neon Specialists in the 1980s — LED is not true neon at all. "At the end of the day, LED is a plastic light," says Ryan, who saw the neon-sign business suffer when the new technology first came on to the market about 15 years ago. "There are some good LED ones now, but neon is completely different. There's no comparison, even from a distance. It gives neon a bad name."

OTHER CREATIVES, HOWEVER, see positives to LED signage. Scottish artist Robert Montgomery began making his often-sitespecific, poetic text works in neon but has since "pioneered a more energy-efficient and ecological alternative", he says. "I've developed an LED made from recycled PVC, and low-consumption LED lights that can be powered from solar panels. At the same time, I'm trying to keep the romance of old, classic neon." His LED piece on semi-permanent display at the contemporary art centre La Condition Publique in Roubaix reads: "Love is the revolutionary energy that annihilates the shadows and collapses this distance between us."

But it's the drama and danger of crafting "true" neon that is a major draw for Gordon, who first happened upon "one of the last, great neon workshops" next to the dole office in his hometown of Glasgow. "I went in and this old fellow was in there, lighting bits of newspaper off his burning cigarette, sticking them into the glass pipe and turning on the gas," he recalls of a process that today is no less hands on but is slightly less hazardous — there's a general move in the industry to phase out the use of mercury, says Ryan, while Senatore states she uses "glass tubes with mercury-free gas mixture".

"The equipment for bending neon is exactly the same as it was in the 1920s," says Ryan. At his Hackney showroom, he demonstrates how the glass tubes are heated over a naked flame and then bent by hand while blowing into the tube, so that it doesn't collapse. "All our glass comes from Murano," says Ryan. While clear glass is used to show off the distinctive red glow of pure unadulterated neon, the glass tubes



also come in a range of "true, beautiful, deep, luminous colours — cobalt blue, ruby red, sunflower yellow, emerald green. So if you mixed green glass with the red gas, it would give you an orange. Red glass with a blue gas like argon gives you purples and violets". He opens a metal briefcase to reveal the full spectrum, including one he calls "Tracey pink", after Emin.

This month, Gordon is showing new neon works in London at Gagosian's Davies Street gallery. *Neon Ark* is based around

NEON IS PLINKED WITH DAWOOD'S WITH MEMORIES OF tHE KARACHI CO.

a series of text-based pieces: snippets of song lyrics, they prompt the viewer to come up with the next line. In collaboration with Ryan, Gordon has orchestrated a

live neon-making demonstration at the gallery, creating a spectacle to chime with the city's Christmas lights.

But the workshop also highlights the craft of the medium at a critical time. "Nearly all my glass-benders are now aged between 60 and 70," says Ryan. "There are no young glass-benders even on the horizon." To master the craft involves an eight-to-10-year apprenticeship, and to this end, Ryan is in the final stages of setting up a neon workshop and training facility in a former nightclub in Margate. Schulte, meanwhile, is establishing a scheme with the Museum of Art and History, in Lancaster, California; she plans to gift it her entire neon estate - some 4,000 pieces - "with the promise that they will set up a school to teach this art form". The glow must go on. ■HTSI



# There's no doubt you've seen our work.

But you would never know.

We provide personalised solutions to hair loss and hair thinning. Using our exclusive surgical and non-surgical procedures, we have the unique ability to restore your hair with unparalleled results.

For a private consultation call + 44 (0) 20 7823 2020



Making hair restoration an art for more than 30 years.

10 Grosvenor Place, London SW1X 7HH

www.meshkati.co.uk

contact@meshkati.co.uk



VICTORY IS A STATE OF MIND



LOUIS VUITTON





# LIVE WELL

Beautiful contemporary apartments at The Broadway, with exclusive residence facilities and stunning views towards historic Westminster.

You could choose no better place to be, brought to life through Orchard Place at The Broadway, a new city culture and contemporary wellness destination that is set to reinvigorate Westminster.

This blended lifestyle ecosystem, curated with stylish simplicity, will be unlike any neighbourhood in London, creating an enriched every day for contemporary urban living.

Live. Work. Move. Shop. Eat. Play.

Apartments from £1.75m\*



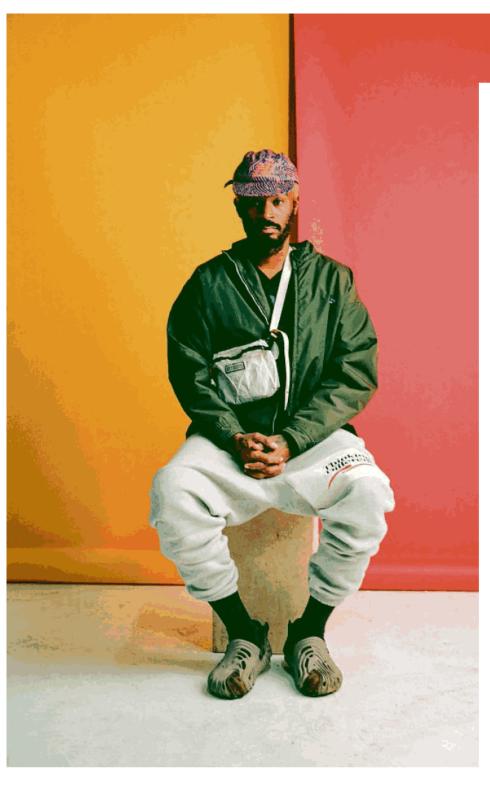
FOR ALL ENQUIRIES

enquiries@northacre.com +44 (0) 207 349 8000 orchardplace.london/live





\*Prices correct at time of publication



\_\_ STYLE

# **JUST FOR KICKS**

*Grace Cook* meets Salehe Bembury, the man behind the world's hottest sneakers



'm in a nine-and-a-half-hour queue to check out," read a WhatsApp message last summer from a friend. He was trying to get his hands on a pair of tangerine-coloured Crocs. A few minutes later, another text. "Scratch that. Site crashed."

That a pair of \$85 rubber slingback clogs ignited such an online frenzy might seem incredible to some. Ordinarily they're worn by chefs, gardeners and kindergarteners. But these Crocs were the handiwork of 36-year-old Salehe Bembury, the New York-born footwear designer behind sell-out sneakers at Versace and Yeezy. He turned the clog's signature chunky shape into

a three-dimensional rendition of his own thumbprint, to look completely sci-fi, and today the shoe garners resale hikes of up to 400 per cent on StockX. According to Crocs, the shoe had the brand's fastest ever sell-through and engaged a customer "who had not considered Crocs" before.

"It was a first for me, and a first for Crocs," says Bembury, who is not yet accustomed to his front-of-shop status — he's an independent designer who has become a brand in his own right. In September, 400 people stood in line for a meet-and-greet at a Crocs event. "In my head, I've always been a hired assassin... I never saw myself as someone who puts his own name on things."

Bembury, who lives in Los Angeles, is a trained industrial designer who began his career in 2009 at multibillion-dollar American mass-market brand Payless, which sells \$15 sneakers. From there, he hopped from in-house gigs at Cole Haan and Greats before landing a job at Yeezy to design men's footwear in 2015. There he helped to mastermind the Boost 350 V2 and Boost 750 styles.

He describes his work as a "love letter to sneakers". Growing up in New York, as a kid he waited in lines excitedly for shoes, and delighted in them for their ability to "make you feel like you were cool, that you could get the girl, or dance better", he smiles. "They always made me feel special."

In 2017 he started working at Versace; his debut sneaker, the Chain Reaction, turned the Italian house's jewellery signatures into a sculptural sole. Then New Balance approached him for a collaboration, which he did while still working at Versace. "He walked us through this whole 100-page storytelling deck of what his vision was," says James Lee, a senior footwear designer at New Balance. It included a tale about how he got lost on a hike in Los Angeles, and how he wanted to create a shoe to combat this. "At the end, he pulled out this 574 sample and blew into the heel and it made a noise... he'd hot-glued a whistle to it," laughs Lee. "We were all sitting there like, 'Woah, what on earth just happened?" New Balance decided to invest 18 months into prototyping Bembury's musical design. It became the 574 Yurt, an urban-looking trail shoe with a rock-shaped sole - and a functioning emergency whistle. It sold out.

Bembury's name is rare in an industry dominated by heritage labels. Famous sneaker designers such as Tinker Hatfield at Nike "tend to [remain] working in-house", says Jack Stanley, a consultant and former senior editor of Hypebeast. Bembury has become visible because his signature is unique and his references broad-ranging, with an aesthetic that sits between *The Magic Roundabout* and *Monsters, Inc*, set in a colourful, space-age version of *The Great Outdoors*. "Brightly coloured, nature-inspired, futuristic footwear might sound niche," says Stanley. "But Bembury has tied it

Above left: shoe designer Bembury. Above right: SALEHE BEMBURY x CANADA GOOSE Expedition parka, £1,595. Right: SALEHE BEMBURY x ANTA SB-01 sneakers, \$120





Above, from top: the sold-out SALEHE BEMBURY x NEW BALANCE 574 Yurt trainers. SALEHE BEMBURY x NEW BALANCE 2002R "Water be the Guide" trainers. \$150

together into a coherent look. It's wearable, with just enough weirdness."

Bembury has since cultivated a loyal coterie of fans – more than half a million people follow him on Instagram – and since quitting Versace in late 2020, he's released further sneakers with New Balance and Vans, clothing with Canada

"IT'S

WEARABLE, WITH JUST

WEIRDNESS"

ENOUGH

Goose and cushions with Studio Proba. He has even turned down Nike. All without actually launching a namesake brand. He does, however, have Spunge, his own retail site where he

plans to drop his own products and collaborations. "It's really an opportunity for me to make whatever I want," he says. "If I want to make a chair, it'll make sense."

He says there's "no game plan", but he knows his audience is "curious and interested... I just want to have a dialogue with them."

Who knows which path he'll

Who knows which path he'll tread next. But one thing's for sure: sneakers are just his first ascent. **EHTSI** 



# Can you change your GENETIC FATE?

Until recently we thought the signs of ageing were inevitable. Epigenetics could prove us wrong, says *Rebecca Newman* 

ILLUSTRATION BY JERRY-LEE BOSMANS

e've had antioxidants. We've had paleo, keto and hormetic stressors. But those are small fry compared to epigenetics, the latest watchword of the wellness industry, which is currently being slapped onto supplements, face creams and most anything related to longevity. Epigenetic tests are also offered at top-end Swiss-clinic health programmes, or via a kit you spit into at home.

According to market-research firm IMARC, the global anti-ageing industry is projected to be worth \$93.1bn by 2027, and billions of this are pouring into epigenetic research. The promise is that by understanding our epigenetics we can stay feeling young and even reverse the signs of ageing. So what is it?

"DNA is no longer your destiny," says Professor David Sinclair, the geneticist co-director of Harvard's Sinclair Lab, bestselling author and messiah of the longevity movement. "Twenty per cent of our future health is prewritten, determined by our genes, but the other 80 per cent is within our control."

Sinclair argues that while the genes that make up your DNA are fixed, the environment around your genes (epi means "outer") is not. Factors such as stress, pollution or diet can cause changes in this environment that lead to changes in DNA methylation (where methyl molecules stick to the DNA, like barnacles on a ship), causing parts of the genes to switch on or off. By analysing the patterns in the methylation – the epigenome – it is now possible to

uncover how your genetic expression may be going awry, and the future health risks you could be storing up.

In his book *Lifespan: Why We Age and Why We Don't Have To*, Sinclair asserts that much of the dilapidation we think of as ageing (ranging from poor eyesight to dementia) is actually epigenetic disruption – your genes being switched

off/on when they shouldn't be. "The exciting part," he continues, "is it can be reversed." He's not suggesting some Benjamin Button scenario: we are not going to revert to our teenage selves. Thank goodness. It's about reversing damage, and living healthy lives for longer.

Clinique La Prairie, the state-of-the-art Swiss health clinic overlooking Lake Geneva, is among several using epigenetic testing to calculate biological age, predict the effects of ageing – such as chronic diseases and cognitive decline – and determine the reversible impacts of our daily choices on genes. "Because it gives personalised insights, epigenetic testing is the perfect preventative medicine tool," says Olga Donica, Clinique La Prairie's head of innovation. Exposures to negative or even apparently positive factors affect each of us differently. For example, it may be that for me, fasting and intense exercise are brilliant for my



"EIGHTY PER

**HEALTH IS** 

CONTROL"

CENT OF OUR

WITHIN OUR



epigenome, maintaining an environment where my DNA functions exactly as it should, but for you they may cause harm. "Epigenetic testing tells us which levers we can pull to have the most positive effect," says Donica. "You might suspect you don't eat enough fruit and vegetables. But if I can measure the impact your diet is having on you, and show you that unless you change things, you may die younger and face increased risk of disease, then you will listen."

By combining patterns of biomarkers, Clinique La
Prairie also offers to tell you how "aged" your physiology
is. I'm 43. But my biological age is 50. It's sobering.
Literally. It transpires that my epigenetic patterning has
been particularly damaged as a result of tobacco/air
pollution and alcohol (that would be my 20s, living it up
in central London). And the tests give persuasive insight
into how particularly susceptible I remain to damage from
alcohol. Even quite small quantities disrupt my epigenome,
and if I care about living life better, for longer, when it comes
to sinking that early evening Negroni, basically — don't.

nalysis of my test results shows how my diet can help fortify the detoxification mechanisms in my liver. I need to eat more sulforaphanes (such as cruciferous veg like cabbage and pak choi, as well as kale), spices (such as turmeric and cumin) and high-quality protein, as well as pomegranate and sources of the polyphenol compound resveratrol (such as dark grapes and peanuts). And I need to limit sugar. Supplements with chlorella and moringa extract will also help my liver to metabolise toxins, as will regular saunas. The doctors at Clinique La Prairie also recommend I buy some air filters. Through better daily detoxification, I'll be able to repair some of the damage, reducing the risk factors of anything from cancer to diabetes and heart disease.

#### **GENE GENIES**

WHERE TO GO, WHAT TO TRY

#### CLINICS

Chenot Palace Weggis Seven-day Advanced Detox, from about £4,745, chenotpalaceweggis.com Clinique La Prairie Seven-day Master

Detox Programme, from SFr17,200
(about £15,410) plus epigenetic tests for about £1,750 each, cliniquelaprairie.com
Lanserhof Sylt Seven-night Basic Cure,
€2,903 (plus accommodation from €4,130), with epigenetic test at €96, lanserhof.com

## HOME KITS

Bio-Synergy DNA & Epigenetics Testing Kit, £219, bio-synergy.uk

Wellgevity Epigenetic Bio-Age Testing Kit and Report, from £1,130, wellgevity.com Dam DNA Test Pro + Epigenetic, £169.99, damhealthshop.com

## FACE CREAMS

Augustinus Bader The Rich Cream, from £69, augustinusbader.com Estée Lauder Advanced Night Repair Eye Supercharged Gel-Creme, £52, esteelauder.co.uk Meder Beauty Salva-Derm Cream, £96, mederbeauty.com

Olay Regenerist Day Cream, £15.74, boots.com

# SUPPLEMENTS

Altrient C Liposomal Vitamin C, £49.96, abundanceandhealth.co.uk Artah Deep Detox, £32, artah.co De-liver-ance, £23.99, loveyourliver.com Such diagnoses vary between individuals; one patient at another clinic shares that epigenetic tests revealed they should eat more organ meats to help detoxify their liver, and not to use perfume or scented candles, which can further challenge detoxification pathways.

On Lake Lucerne, wellness retreat Chenot Palace Weggis last year launched its Molecular Lab for Optimal Living, which

EPIGENETIC TESTS ARE ALREADY USED BY THE NHS focuses on epigenetics in the pursuit of "increased mental and physical performance". In a model they suspect may become commonplace (such as part of national health services or other common health screenings), they offer clients epigenetic tests every six months in order to tailor health

programmes and monitor how well any interventions are working. Chenot is also researching the interaction between epigenetics and dementia.

Professor Jonathan Mill, head of complex disease epigenomics at Exeter University, is more circumspect. But while he doubts the value of tests to improve lifestyle choices - "You could argue you don't need to spend money on an epigenetic test to know that smoking is bad for you", and he suggests the notion of biological age is too vague at the moment to be meaningful - he sees huge potential when it comes to diagnostics. In particular, Mill's lab is looking at early detection of neurodegenerative disease. "If we can tell someone they are at the early stages of Alzheimer's before they are symptomatic, the benefits of lifestyle or therapeutic interventions might be much greater. Once symptoms appear it can be too late to do much about it." It's reassuring to know that if you are at early-stage dementia, there are practical steps that can be taken to mitigate its acceleration, from diet and brain exercises to medication.

Epigenetic tests are already used by the NHS in early-cancer detection and treatment. And with investors — including Jeff Bezos — collectively putting billions into epigenetic start-ups around the world (biotech start-up Altos kicked off with \$3bn of investment from Silicon Valley backers), the research is fast evolving. Every expert I speak to is clear that science will mature rapidly, and there's something of a race to own the space. Says Donica: "A good comparison is with genetics. Before we sequenced the genome, we didn't have a sense of all the uses it could have, and now genetics inform so many parts of medicine."

Home epigenetic kits already proliferate, variously testing different amounts of biomarkers (and hence with varying costs). Often these tests recommend supplements in reaction to results, frequently marketed by the makers. Sinclair advises caution: "To date, many commercial offerings overestimate their claims." He is launching a test-kit and lifestyle-advice company, Tally Health, next year.

Clearly, the advantage of clinics like Chenot or La Prairie is how their doctors use epigenetic results alongside a panoply of other tests, such as hormones, vitamin levels, microbiome, and offer a full gamut of medical interpretation and advice. You aren't alone in your kitchen wondering whether to trust the results or what action to take. But the cost disparity is significant.

Of products sold as epigenetic, face creams are a notable area, with brands including Augustinus Bader, Olay and Meder Beauty having created products that promise to alter the genes responsible for ageing. Notably, Estée Lauder has put micro-signalling molecules into its Advanced Night Repair, with a view to epigenetically promoting collagen. "It's a real target for skincare companies," says aesthetic doctor Sophie Shotter. The jury is out on their efficacy; no expert wanted to be on record commenting about specific brands.

What sounded impossible a few years ago is starting to become real. In 2020, Sinclair's lab said it had reversed age-related vision loss in mice, announced via a cover story in *Nature*. "We're studying it in primates now, and next year we hope to try it in the first human," says Sinclair. "I compare this moment to when the Wright brothers started flying: they knew they could, but nobody thought it was possible. Scientists can see that we can control the pace of ageing, but so far most of the rest of the world doesn't know what is to come." 

HTSI

# Frame and FORTUNE

Bern Schwartz was a US industrialist who pivoted to becoming a photographer. The gift of his archives to the Bodleian Libraries creates a vibrant new hub. By *Louis Wise* 

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BERN SCHWARTZ

omewhere inside Oxford's austere Weston
Library, a vast, deep outpost of the city's
Bodleian Libraries that holds a fair chunk of its
13 million items, figures from the gloriously
mahogany mid-1970s come to life. Angela
Rippon, the newsreader, prances gaily in a
chiffon dress; Margaret Thatcher smiles as only
she can. David Hockney stands pensively beside a portrait
of his own father, while Rudolf Nureyev sits in his chair,
slightly tense. King Charles III, then Prince of Wales, grins
in a carefree way not seen much in the five decades since.

"He is an unusually good-looking young man, betterlooking than I thought from his pictures" read the notes on the royal sitting, which took place in March 1977. They are by Bern Schwartz, the businessman who made a surprising and successful late conversion to professional photography. He assures us that the future king has a "very, very warm

manner"; Charles's only request was that he not be called "Prince". "In America, he's called 'Prince' all the time," records Schwartz. "Just as if someone was calling a dog."

These are the brightest traces of the Bodleian Libraries' latest big acquisition. They have been given Schwartz's entire archives – a time capsule of 1970s portraits,

negatives, faded typewritten notes, thank-you letters and Schwartz's favoured camera (a Hasselblad medium-format) – alongside a gift of £2mn by The Bern Schwartz Family Foundation, now headed up by his three children and a family friend. If the Foundation has already given gifts and prints to various non-profit institutions, as part of its aim to preserve Bern's legacy, this is its biggest cash donation ever. It has allowed the Bodleian to hire a curator of photography for the very first time, who will be able to marshal a huge and disparate holding that ranges from William Henry Fox Talbot's personal archive to extensive photography of the anti-apartheid movement.





"It's going to make us an institution that's as well regarded as the V&A or the National Portrait Gallery for photography," says Phillip Roberts, the man who has been hired as the Bern and Ronny Schwartz Curator of Photography. In the library's hushed low-lit rooms, he unpacks the archive — much of which, such as the sitting notes and correspondence, has not been seen before. The gift will also lead to other archive acquisitions (he is in final-stage talks for four more) and several photography exhibitions; the archive itself will go on show in 2025.

The gift also preserves the legacy of Schwartz, who went from being a penniless youth in the Great Depression to a very rich man who got to photograph John Gielgud and Golda Meir, Margot Fonteyn and Edward Heath, "Kiwi [sic] Te Kanawa" and Cardinal Basil Hume. Not bad when you consider that he had his first proper lesson in photography in 1973, when he was nearing 60. The notes from his classes with the great Philippe Halsman are in the gift too, plus correspondence typed up by Schwartz's ever-supportive wife Ronny. "To have the notes and the negatives from the working process... that's what makes it really special," says Roberts.

Bern Schwartz was born in New York City in 1914 and raised in Allentown, Pennsylvania. His father died when he was 18, forcing him to immediately get to work. It was hardly a propitious time - but it was also the end of Prohibition, and the young Schwartz got a job selling beer trays to a newly alcoholic nation. It led to many successful business ventures for a man who seems to have mixed suave, calm charm with a whirling restlessness. Eventually Schwartz would buy a textile manufacturing company in 1954, which led to him making a substantial fortune; he sold it to Standard Oil of Indiana in 1968. The Schwartzes began to split their time between La Jolla, California and London; it was also now that Bern could start photographing in earnest. He had always loved it: he bought his first Kodak aged 14. Soon, Schwartz used his contacts to get sittings in London, and the results would go so well (Thatcher used

Above: Lady Diana Cooper. Above left: Schwartz (on left) with photographer Philippe Halsman. Left: King Charles III (then Prince of Wales). All photographed in 1977



# THE CAUSE



a portrait for an electoral campaign) that new sitters would appear by word-of-mouth.

"He wanted his pictures to be a 'visual biography' of the person," says his son Michael. "He wanted the person to be engaged in expressing themselves, and to show their greatness." To him and his siblings, it was obvious the archive should go to the Bodleian Libraries. "It has been around for a few hundred years," he says. "Chances are the photography is in good hands."

Both Michael and



Roberts affectionately use the same term to describe Schwartz's approach: tunnel vision. He seems to have needed it to court and cajole his famous faces. According to his notes, most meetings seem to start by someone saying how busy and tired they are: Henry Moore is "harassed", Zandra Rhodes is "quite drowsy", Rudolf Nureyev is "exhausted". In fact, the ballet superstar looks "like a walking zombie" after a round of endless performances and partying. Hockney, meanwhile, forces Schwartz out of his comfort zone, as the photographer tries to incorporate the artist's own painting of his parents into the shot; countless negatives show how the two work together. Yet somehow, the sitting always seems to end in effusive thanks and invitations to tea. Schwartz's means of seduction vary, but it's notable that the Prince of Wales, Nureyev and Lester Piggott are each asked if they like "body surfing",

a late passion of his discovered in California. Broadly, they do.

THE PRINCE OF WALES, NUREYEV AND LESTER PIGGOTT ARE EACH ASKED IF THEY LIKE "BODY-SURFING"

There is another touching comment in Schwartz's notes on the Prince. "I also told him about my philosophy of life," says the photographer. "That no matter what age I died, whether it was next year or when I was 100, I hoped that I would die young and that this meant just exercising and keeping

very involved in activities." The following year, in November 1978, Schwartz was due to be in Rome to photograph the new pope, John Paul II. However, the 64-year-old abruptly had to cancel in order to fly back to California to have treatment for pancreatic cancer. Six weeks later, on 31 December, he was dead. Michael, who was 30 at the time, eventually decided to interview many of his father's business colleagues and family members to find out the source of his extraordinary drive. One told him that "working with Bern, you had a sense of satisfaction, because you felt like you were building something". The large cache at the Bodleian Libraries suggests he's set to keep doing the same. 

HTSI





# A bag to suit the adventure

THE SUIT CARRIER HOLDALL by BENNETT WINCH





We seek adventure without hindrance. To make the cumbersome practical and surround the valuable with the rugged. The Bennett Winch Suit Carrier Holdall combines a garment bag and duffle in a single piece of luggage hailed as the smartest way to travel.





Our British made Suit Carrier Holdall is a system of two parts. The removable outer garment bag is made from waterproof 24oz bonded canvas and the inner holdall from a lightweight 18oz twill. In addition, military grade cotton webbing, solid brass hardware and Tuscan leather trim ensure both are built for the long haul. Gone are the days of taming cheap suit bags in high winds held only by an exposed hanger. Whether you're heading to a wedding, business overseas or on foot through the wilds, the Bennett Winch S.C Holdall is a bag built to suit the adventure.



THE POWDER AND THE GLORY

As fashion's biggest houses embrace the skiwear market, *Jessica Beresford* finds out how luxury snowsuits slalomed into our wardrobes

Photography by Billy Ballard

Styling by Benjamin Canares

Models *Ella Richards* and *Anass Bouazzaoui* 



Right: Anass wears ROBYN LYNCH x COLUMBIA upcycled nylon Bubble jacket, £810. MONCLER GRENOBLE nylon down-filled jacket, £1,020, and technical fabric jumpsuit, £950

Opposite page: Ella wears JIMMY CHOO nylon JC degradé puffy coat, £1,550, wool-knit sweater, £415, nylon JC degradé Varenne phone case, £625, nylon JC degradé Laya soft tote, £950, and nylon JC degradé mittens, £315. MACKAGE nylon quilted Aeryn trousers, £420



he act of getting ready for skiing can be as exhilarating as the actual task. Hitting the slopes brings with it delicious sartorial possibilities: all-in-ones, big puffer jackets, cosy knitwear, as well as goggles, gloves and hats. Diana, Princess of Wales, famously exercised her style cachet on the ski field, wearing scarlet or blue suits with nipped-in waists by American-Austrian brand Head, or a black-and-pink ultra-'80s one-

piece by Kitex. Lady Gaga, as Patrizia Reggiani in House of Gucci, sports a figure-hugging red jumpsuit with a furry hat and goggles in the Alpine town of Gressoney-Saint-Jean.

But it's Alfred Hitchcock's 1945 film Spellbound, in which Gregory Peck and Ingrid Bergman head down the mountain in tailored jackets, louche trousers and jauntily tied scarves, that has inspired Dior creative director Maria Grazia Chiuri. "I always remember it for the incredible beauty of this black-and-white ski run," she says. The designer launched the house's dedicated ski collection DiorAlps last year, translating the house codes with a distinctly retro and sporty flair. "I have always liked skiwear and especially that unmistakable style that combines protection, comfort in movement, and fashion. And just think how many garments that come from skiwear have become part of everyday wear - down jackets or anoraks, jumpers, balaclavas... The list goes on."

Skiwear is a burgeoning part of the global outdoor apparel market, valued at \$33.54bn in 2021 by Euromonitor International. And luxury brands are increasingly investing in winter sportswear: last year Louis Vuitton launched a dedicated skiwear line that lends a futuristic look to snow attire, as did Isabel Marant, bringing a bohemian sensibility to the slopes. Chloé joined forces with heritage ski brand Fusalp in 2020, and Chanel has had Coco Neige, its après-ski range, in its stable since 2018. Other brands include Fendi, Dolce & Gabbana and Moncler's Grenoble line.

One of the smaller yet highly successful names in this luxury realm is Perfect Moment, the brand founded by filmmaker Thierry Donard in Chamonix, France, in 1984. Initially positioned as a technical-sportswear offering, it has, since 2010, been geared towards a more fashionfocused clientele. Its popularity has been buoyed by Catherine, the Princess of Wales, influencer Chiara Ferragni and a collaboration with Goop. Nick Jonas and Priyanka Chopra Jonas took a minority stake in the company in July.

Perfect Moment is one of Net-a-Porter's key skiwear brands, selling intarsia merino bodysuits, bootcut ski salopettes and metallic puffer two-pieces, as well as on Mytheresa, where it sits alongside heritage ski brands Bogner and Fusalp. "Sexier silhouettes tend to be very popular, and customers are not afraid of colours and fun patterns," says Tiffany Hsu, Mytheresa vice-president of womenswear. "We also do well with retro influences."

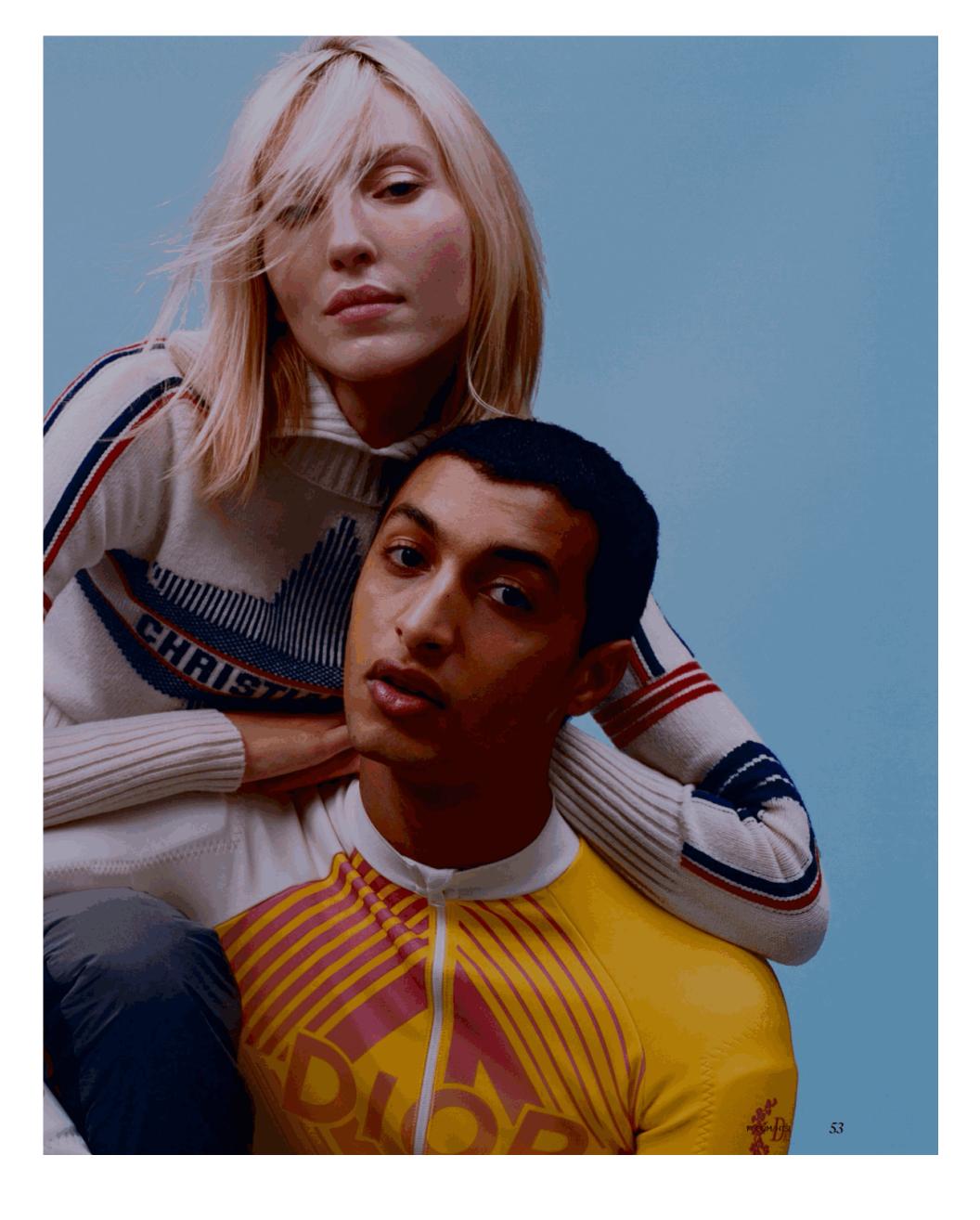
Hsu also notes that the growing category isn't limited to functional wear: "We do a lot of après ski and winter boots for clients who live or travel in sub-zero climates." This, too, is evident at Dior, where the collection includes technical kit as well as snow-white handbags and quilted snow boots - which wouldn't do so well past the bounds of the chalet. "The collections of a house like Dior, regardless of what goes on the catwalk, must include a series of offerings that are restitution of what is life, the activities, the tastes of today's women," adds Chiuri. "And anyway, skiwear today is not only what we wear in the mountains; it can be an attitude that complements the way we dress in the city."

Alexa Chung once told HTSI that on a trip to Verbier in Switzerland one year, she had researched "cool" skiing outfits before going, pulling together a look that included an Argyle jumper and a neckerchief. A self-confessed novice on the slopes, she ended up "tumbling down the mountain", and arriving at lunch with "mascara down my face and a soggy jumper". Maybe getting ready for skiing is, in fact, better than the actual event? ■HTSI

Right: Ella wears DIORALPS wool knit and cashmere sweater, £1,600, and technical taffeta quilted ski trousers, £2,050. Anass wears DIOR technical water-repe fabric Alpine skiing

jumpsuit, £1,850







### **Andrew Gifford**

John Martin Gallery

www.jmlondon.com

6 – 11 December

4, Cromwell Place South Kensington London, SW7 2JE

Tues – Sat 10 – 6, Sunday 12 – 4pm

Ancient Scots Pine Canopy I, Glen Tanar Estate, 2022 oil on canvas, 57 x 55 ins (145 x 140 cms)

Below: Ella wears LOUIS VUITTON polyamide boat-neck one-piece, £825, polyamide ski bib, £3,100, ruby half boots, £1,140, snow mask (in hand), £925, and nylon maxi bumbag, £1,610. LOQUET gold chain, £110, gold pendant, £500, and gold and sapphire paw charm, £260





Left: Anass wears DOLCE & GABBANA satin jacquard coat, £2,350, jersey T-shirt, £850, and satin jacquard trousers, £1,700. HUNTER recycled polyester Wanderer boots, £150. YETI stainless-steel bottle, £50

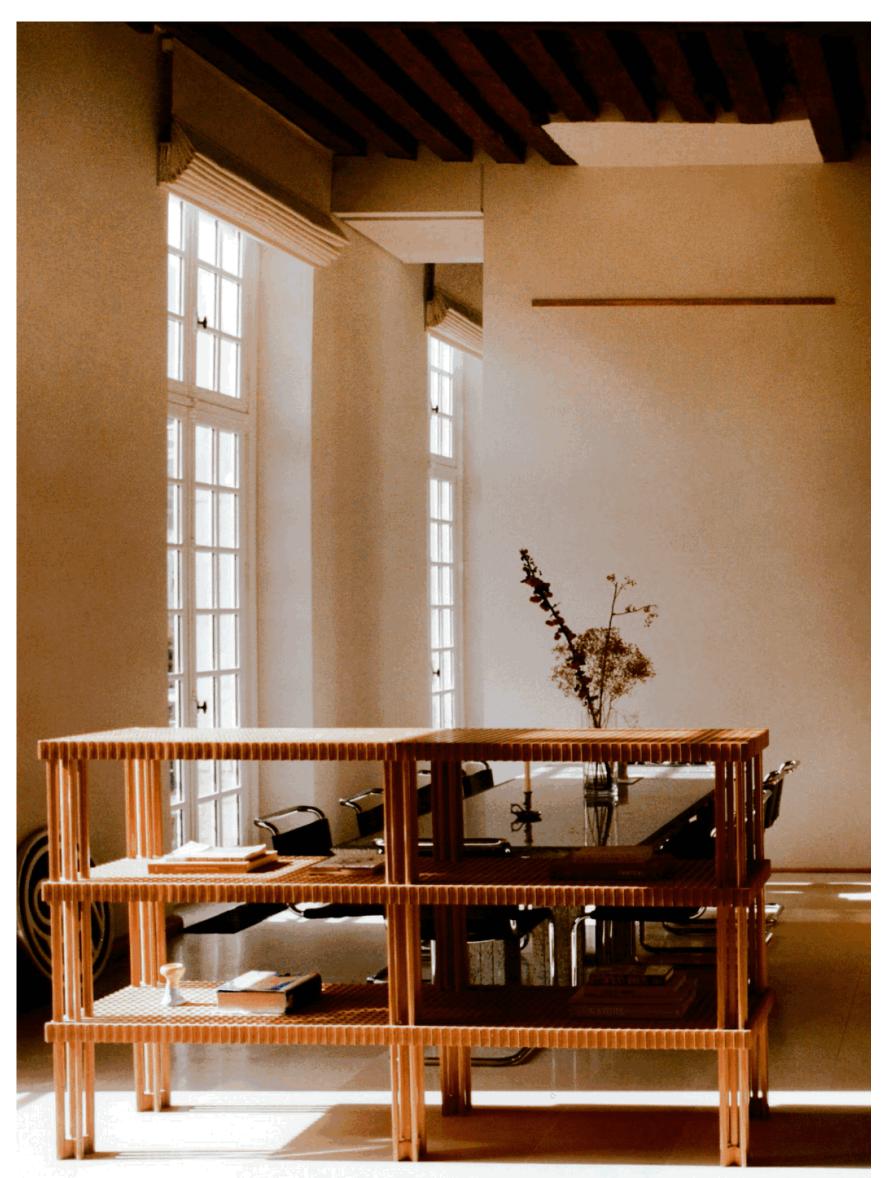
Below: Ella wears ROKSANDA x FILA polyester coat, €1,295. GUESS recycled polyester Active top, £65. BRUNELLO CUCINELLI taffeta trousers, £2,050. CHLOÉ leather and knit Nikie ankle boots, £1,003

Models, Ella Richards at Kate Moss Agency and Anass Bouazzaoui at Supa. Casting, Tiago Martins at Ben Grimes. Hair, Hiroki Kojima at Caren using Oribe. Make-up, Dan Delgado using Jones Road. Photographer's assistants, William Richards and Stephen Elwyn Smith. Stylist's assistant, Ady Huq



Above: Anass wears ISABEL MARANT nylon Ficaja puffer jacket, £495. GIORGIO ARMANI NEVE wool scarf, £350. ALLY CAPELLINO recycled PET Harvey convertible tote/backpack, £125



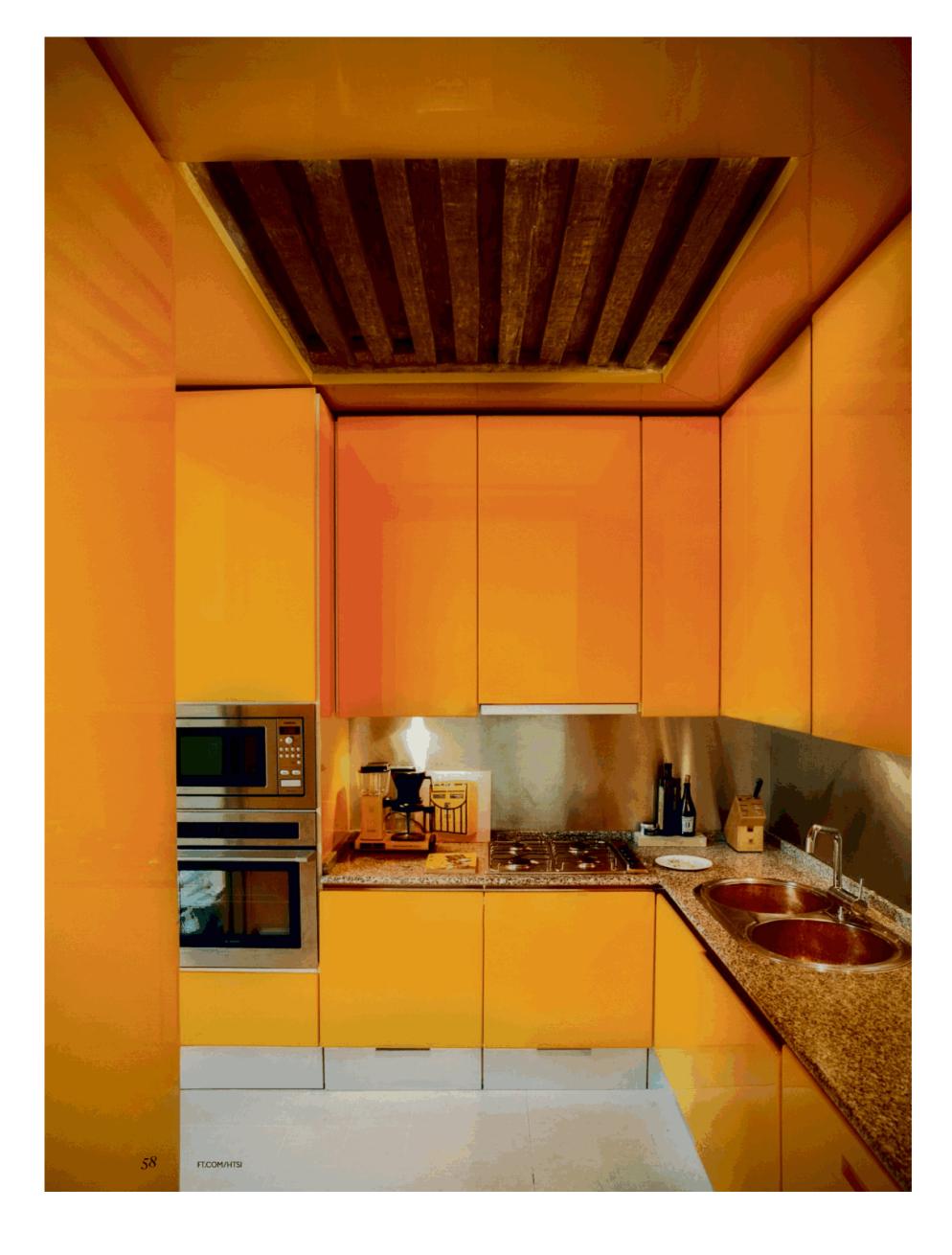


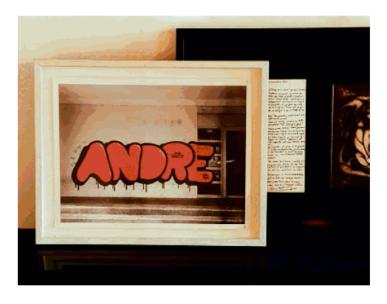
Right: André Saraiva's apartment on Place des Vosges, with artwork (right) by Oda Jaune and (left) a Gianfranco Frattini shelving unit

# ATHOMEWITH MONSIEURA

Graffiti artist André Saraiva is channelling a postmodern spirit in his "magical box" of an apartment. By *Benjamin Dane* 

Photography by Matthieu Salvaing





or almost a decade André
Saraiva has lived by one rule:
never work before 1pm. The
51-year-old artist, hotelier
and entrepreneur typically
spends the mornings relaxing
in his Le Marais apartment
overlooking the Place des
Vosges, the oldest planned
square in Paris, known for its
perfectly symmetrical shape,
vaulted stone arcades and
Louis XIII-style architecture.

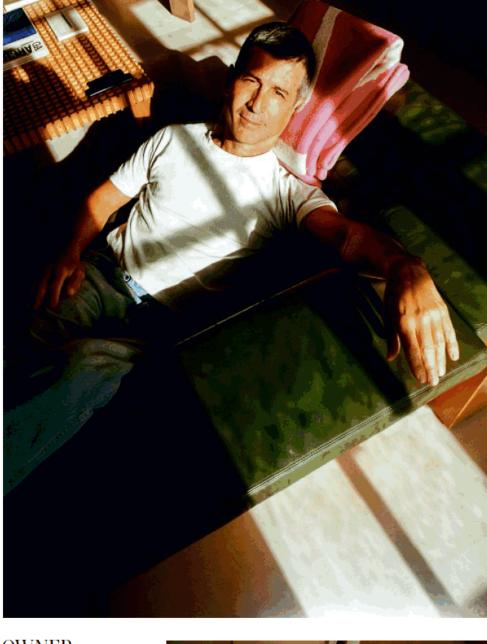
Given the grand exterior, most of his guests are surprised as they climb the spiral staircase and enter the small, modest front door of his home only to find a loft-like space. It's simplistic and distinctly postmodern, with an airy feel that has been created by a series of six French doors and white walls that soar to a two-storey height. "Stepping inside feels a bit like opening a magical box," says Saraiva as he walks me through his home. "Traditionally, most older apartments in Paris have a series of smaller rooms and corridors but when I moved here in 2020 after living for 10 years in New York [he continues to split his time between Paris, New York and Lisbon], where even the bathroom had no doors, I had come to really enjoy living in a big, open space and I wanted that same feeling here."

Born in Uppsala, Sweden, to Portuguese parents in 1971, the artist moved to Paris aged 10 and started graffiti at 13. He is known to many as Mr A or André: he invented his signature tag in 1989, a top-hatted animation that has since become his trademark - he's painted it more than 300,000 times. His first solo show was in Paris in 1990, and he has since been exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, Parco Museum Tokyo, and The Hole gallery in New York. He is also the owner and operator of several exclusive nightclubs in Paris and a co-owner of the Amour Hotels in Paris and Nice. Added to that are the nightclubs, bars and restaurants he's created in New York, Tokyo, Shanghai and LA.

Saraiva left New York in the wake of the pandemic, and was initially convinced that his return to Paris would be brief. But a few months on, when returning to the United States seemed impossible for the foreseeable future, he began searching for a permanent place. "I didn't want to move back in with my mom," he says.

One of the most eye-catching elements of his new home is a bright yellow lacquered box with wood ceilings, around 4m high and wide. A vibrant standalone kitchen, it was created as a room within a room by the architect Emanuela Frattini Magnusson, who remodelled the

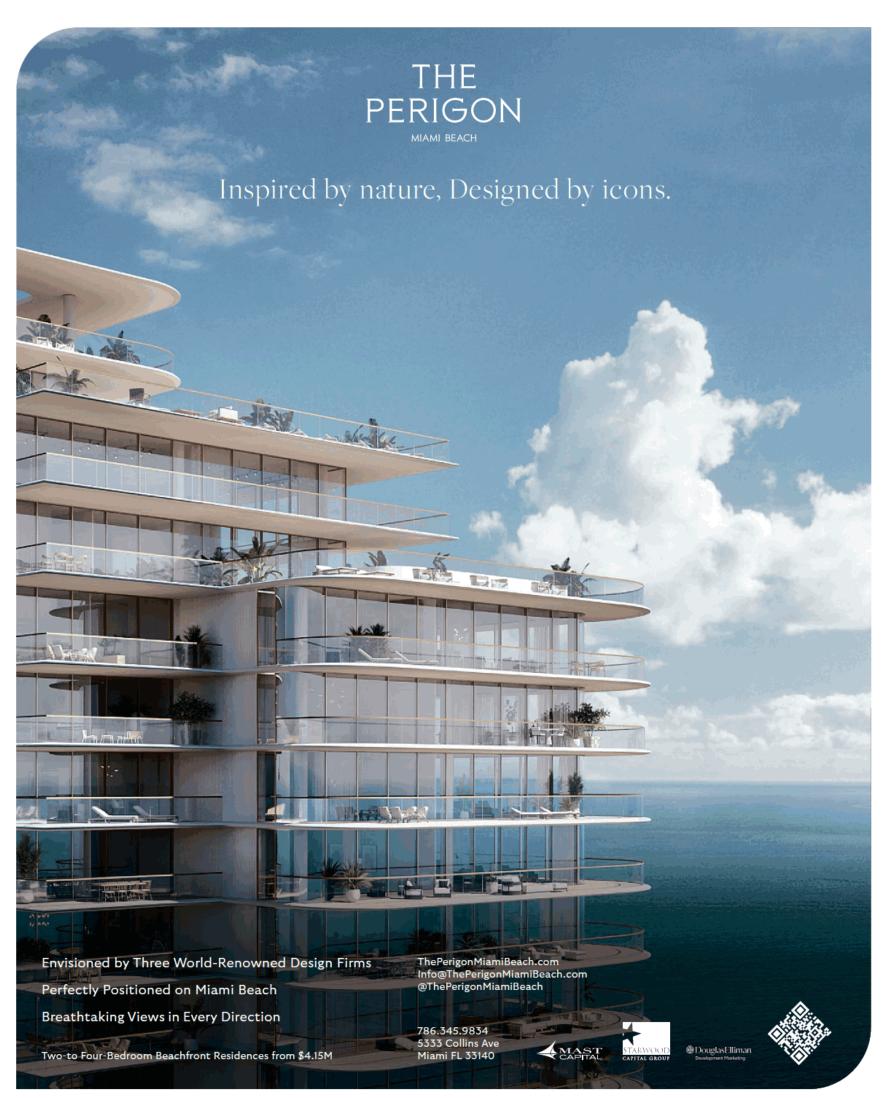
Far left: the Emanuela Frattini Magnusson-designed kitchen. Above: a photograph by Saraiva beside a letter by Pierre Molinier to André Breton. Right: the artist in the living room. Below: the view over Place des Vosges. Below right: the custom-designed library and office



## FORMER OWNER RICHARD ROGERS KNOCKED DOWN THE OLD WALLS IN THE '70S







All images and designs depicted herein are artist's conceptual renderings, which are based upon preliminary development plans, and are subject to change without notice in the manner provided in the offering documents. All such materials are not to scale and are shown solely for illustrative purposes. ORAL REPRESENTATIONS CANNOT BE RELIED UPON AS CORRECTLY STATING THE REPRESENTATIONS OF THE DEVELOPER. FOR CORRECT REPRESENTATIONS, MAKE REFERENCE TO THIS BROCHURE AND TO THE DOCUMENTS REQUIRED BY SECTION 718.503, FLORIDA STATUTES, TO BE FURNISHED BY A DEVELOPER TO A BUYER OR LESSEE. EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

apartment as a second home for a private client in the late 1980s. Shortly after Saraiva moved in, he was visited by his friend Willo Perron, the French-Canadian creative director and designer whose list of clients includes Drake, Rihanna and American fashion brand Stüssy. A few days later, Perron sent Saraiva a few photographs on Instagram along with the message: "Isn't this your apartment?" Saraiva instantly recognised his yellow kitchen, which had been photographed for the book *Designing with Wood* by Carol Soucek King in 1995. He was so taken with the aesthetic throughout, he set out to recreate the interiors.

"Luckily, some of the furniture had been left here when I moved in and then I began searching on eBay and through auctions for other pieces from the photos," says Saraiva. He stumbled upon one of the rarer designs – a custom-made wooden shelving unit by Italian architect Gianfranco Frattini (Emanuela Frattini Magnusson's father), inspired by his famous Kyoto coffee table – at the Parisian auction house Hôtel Drouot. When the courier came by to deliver it, he was told that this was the same address where he had picked it up several years prior. It now stands exactly where it was, dividing the living room and the dining area, which has a big granite table surrounded by black leather and chrome dining chairs by Marcel Breuer – both identical to the ones that can be seen in the original photography.

t would be almost impossible today to get permission to turn a 17th-century Paris apartment into a loft, says Saraiva. It was in fact the late British architect Richard Rogers — one of the designers of the city's Centre Pompidou and a former owner of the flat — who knocked down most of the old walls to create the open layout during the 1970s. The only partitions that remain segregate the living room at one end of the space and the bedroom at the other. Tucked in between is a small office with a wooden ladder used to climb a bookcase that stretches from the doorway, across the space, and up to the ceiling, while two retractable wooden doors close off the office from the rest of the apartment.

The office space was custom-made by Parisian woodworkers, who also handcrafted the bedroom's walk-in closet and sculptural lamp. "I love the fact that almost every single element of the apartment has been specially made," says Saraiva as we enter the bedroom closet, pointing out the drawers where the detailing extends to cut-out handles and hand-carved joints. "The woodwork is probably one of the things I appreciate the most."

The wooden shelving in the living room is a showcase for pieces from Saraiva's vast collection of art and design, which includes his own works and memorabilia — among them an old, empty spray can. Also in the mix is a chalk drawing by his idol Keith Haring, originally made for the New York City subway, a large nude photo of Vivienne Westwood by Juergen Teller, and a selection of smaller





#### HE WAS SO TAKEN WITH THE AESTHETIC, HE SET OUT TO RECREATE THE INTERIORS

pieces. "I like to surround myself with things I have a personal connection to – it feels comfortable and brings back memories," he says. "The only person represented here that I haven't met is Keith Haring – but he was perhaps the artist who inspired me the most."

Asked what he looks for in a purchase, Saraiva shrugs: "I wouldn't call myself a collector." But he does enjoy the hunt for vintage designs and owning a few pieces that would probably attract the envy of declared collectors — including an original kitchen module by Le Corbusier and a 1950s Jean Prouvé school bench. "I guess it's become a bit of a game for me, but for this apartment I liked the idea of showing respect to the people who put so much attention into the details."

While Saraiva has settled in Paris, he leads a transient life. He has a second home in Lisbon, where he likes to surf in the summer, and is in the process of building a second atelier. He feels a special connection to Portugal — his parents fled the country in the 1970s to escape the Salazar dictatorship. They reunited in Paris before seeking asylum in Sweden where Saraiva was born. "My mom has always told me that I was conceived in Paris but born in Sweden," he says.

He now has a French and a Swedish passport, after the family moved back to Paris when he was 10, where he attended high school in Le Marais – in what was a working-class neighbourhood in the 1980s. It was there he got into graffiti, later hosting parties at nightclubs and finally breaking into the art scene. Although much has changed in this culture-defining district, which is now home to hip boutiques and art galleries, Saraiva is still able to recognise parts of his old, gritty neighbourhood. "In a city like New York, you can leave and come back a year later, and your old neighbourhood might be completely unrecognisable," he says. "Here, maybe a store has closed and another has opened but it feels the same. When I walk in the Marais, I still see all my old hangouts and run into friends from back in the day. Moving back here really felt like coming home."

Saraiva has a penchant for nostalgia. As a teenager he would go to Place des Vosges after school to hang out and smoke cigarettes. There he would look up at the ornamented façades of red brick and stone and say to himself: "One day, I will live in one of those apartments." C'est la vie. **BHTS**I



Top: Saraiva lies on Tekla sheets in the bedroom. Above: artworks by (from left) Keith Haring, Man Ray and Jon Naar surround the Jean Prouvé bench. Below left: blue Medicom Mr A Ball by Saraiva. Below: Cini Boeri sofas and a Gianfranco Frattini coffee table in the living room



## BodyguardsInc

Everyone's got protection these days. But what does the job entail, how much should you pay and how do you find a good one?

Vassi Chamberlain meets the real CPOs to find out what they're made of

n the surface, Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck's honeymoon tour of Europe looked really rather romantic. But look closer at the paparazzi pictures and a theme quickly emerges: the couple were never without a bodyguard or two. From the streets of Milan to the shores of Lake Como, a compact, smoothheaded chap in a safari jacket tracked their every footstep. When the couple arrived in Paris, the entourage came along for the ride. J-Lo likes a security detail: she even has one accompany her to the gym. Affleck is said to be less than enthused, but the heavies went on honeymoon regardless.

They are not alone. The past couple of years have seen a surge in private security firms offering personal protection services. Squint at any celebrity photo and you'll undoubtedly spot a figure lurking near the star, from Jennifer Lawrence (who has employed a succession of absurdly handsome giants) to the Beckham children. The Duke and Duchess of Sussex are never without theirs either. King Charles, meanwhile, is inevitably accompanied by Major Johnny Thompson, the kilted TikTok sensation who first served as bodyguard to Queen Elizabeth II and is now the King's equerry. Emperor Augustus created the Praetorian Guard (the first historical record of humans employing bodyguards) to shield himself and his family from assassination, kidnap, robbery and, of course, the general public. Centuries later, the private security industry is booming.

"It has massively evolved," says a British spy who spoke to me on condition of anonymity. "Twenty years

ago, it was unusual to see security so blatantly out in the open; there were connotations of mercenaries. Now it's a professionally sophisticated and wide-ranging industry." He estimates the business of protection has grown by at least 500 per cent in the past two decades, and that private security teams are now so commonplace they even accompany government officials when they travel to red-list countries: "It's so the police don't have to do it. They've got more urgent matters than the protection of diplomats." Other clients, such as oil-company employees working in difficult regions and war reporters, employ corporate teams to look after them. "I know some members of the press find it irritating at first," adds the source. "But they soon get used to staying alive."

War veteran Lt Col Tim Spicer, who served in the Falklands and Northern Ireland, founded Sandline International, a private military company, on retiring in 1994. In 2002, he set up private security firm Aegis Defence Services (engaged by the US government in both Iraq and Afghanistan). "No one calls them bodyguards any more, that's old hat. They're now known as CPOs [close protection officers]," he says. "I wish I could tell you the majority of these guards are status symbols, but they are not: the threat is real."

Apparently, the proliferation of rich lists published by newspapers and magazines is partly to blame for the increase. "They are databases, shopping lists for criminals," says Spicer. Social media has also inevitably made clients more vulnerable. "The number one question with a potential client should always be 'What is your online profile?" Spicer continues. "Celebrities reveal too much, then they think, 'I need protection.' But if you have proper procedures (ie, keep your presence minimal), you don't actually need a bodyguard."

An experienced CPO will set you back from about £800 a day, or £80,000 per annum. Expect to pay between £150,000 and £500,000 for a residential security team, where at least two officers stay overnight in your house. "Bandits have become braver," says Will Geddes, the founder of International Corporate Protection (ICP), who has seen a surge in "house invasions". "They like it when people are home. It means they can force you to open a safe, or just steal whatever watches and jewellery you happen to be wearing." Furthermore, that's merely entry level: if you want drone surveillance or video mapping of your property, the bill can easily reach £1mn per annum.

Once employed, a CPO's duties are wide-ranging. "They have to map, search, protect and drive," says Spicer. "They have to visit premises in advance of the client, and conduct research on every employee they might come into contact with." In addition, they need to be trained in evasive driving techniques, such as short-radius turns and high-speed cornering. And if the CPO is unarmed (which in the UK they are), they should carry pepper spray, expandable batons, a Taser and driver armour protection.

Assorted celebrities and their entourages, many of whom may be bodyguards (due to their secretive nature, this isn't always confirmed): top row, from left: Madonna, September 2022. Harry Styles, 2020. Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez, July 2022. Middle row, from left: Hailey Bieber last month. Lady Gaga, 2021. Bella and Gigi Hadid at Milan Foshion Week, 2018. Bottom row, from left: Naomi Campbell at Paris Fashion Week, June 2022. The then Duchess of Cambridge with her protection officer Sergeant Emma Probert, 2019. Jennifer Lawrence, 2015



### RED SAVANNAH



#### GRAND TOUR OF EUROPE BY PRIVATE JET

12th – 24th September 2023

#### LONDON I PALERMO I SANTORINI I DUBROVNIK I VENICE

Just 15 travelers will have the opportunity to join this all-inclusive Grand Tour exploring Europe's most coveted destinations, traveling by all-first-class private jet and hosted by British-American aristocrat, Viscountess Hinchingbrooke.



**LAUNCH PROMOTION:** The first four guests will receive complimentary first-class round-trip air from their choice of airport in the United States. (Conditions apply).



+1 855 468 5555 REDSAVANNAH.COM/PRIVATE-JET

Top row, from left: King Charles with his equerry, Major Johnny Thompson, September 2022. Roman Abramovich, 2011. Bottom row, from left: Zendaya, March 2022. Elon Musk, 2019

Will they take a bullet for you? Yes: it's always implicit that it's the CPO's job to protect the client with their own bodies. "You're not much of a bodyguard if you don't guard someone with your own body," says Geddes, who recruits from a diversity of backgrounds: former special forces, elite military, royalty and specialist protection (RaSP), specialist police units and qualifed professional civilians. "How many you need depends on how desirable a target you are."

eddes' team will assess your threat level based on the information you give them, as well as where your live, who your family is and so on. One bodyguard, or a "solo formation", means you are considered a relatively low danger level. "If you only see one," Spicer adds, "then they are mostly doing it for show."

(The new trend in the music business is to hire friends and bouncers as security, known in the field as "buddyguards" – someone large and intimidating but with little or no training.) Two bodyguards, or the "deuce formation", is effective for entering or leaving a building or vehicle; three bodyguards (the "triangle formation") is good for crowded areas. The "quartet formation" is sometimes used by "despots and villains". The "Star of Texas formation" (five guards) along with the "Star of David" (six) are the safest protection. It means a CPO is never more than one to three metres away from the client – the kind of protection afforded to monarchs and presidents.

It's not all about formations and triangles. The bodyguard has also become a trophy for the hubristic and the vaunting. "Rich people get them to do their

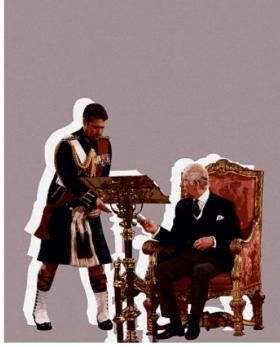
dirty work for them," says one source.
"The daughter of a billionaire we were monitoring would get her father's team to evict friends from the family's superyacht when she grew bored with them."

I speak to a woman who, because of her husband's very high-profile job, now

lives with round-the-clock protection. "It's for our own wellbeing, we have no choice," she says. "Our children were scared at first, but what surprised me was how after a couple of months it all felt very normal." The family has eight bodyguards with them at all times when at home, with another four stationed outside. Friends always tease her about which one she's going to have an affair with. "We all have conversations together and share jokes, so a close relationship naturally develops. I can totally see why that might happen, when you are one on one and they are responsible for your safety."

In her case, however, ubiquity has created more of a friendship. When her daughter went vintage shopping recently, she noticed her detail rifling through racks of coloured tutus behind her. "She told me she burst out laughing and whispered to them, 'What are you doing, you look ridiculous.' Poor things, they were just trying to blend in, but they looked so out of place." The familiarity that naturally develops means you start looking out for them too. At Christmas last year, the family put on costumes and took the guards breakfast and presents. "They are seeing our lives in such an intimate way. It is going to be a mental exercise for all of us when we no longer need them."

The more famous starry bodyguard is a red herring. "The ones who get snapped standing near a celebrity looking









## "WHAT SURPRISED ME WAS HOW AFTER A COUPLE OF MONTHS IT ALL FELT VERY NORMAL"

slick and buff are usually not bodyguards, at least not properly trained ones," says Geddes. One celebrity clan, he says, "have been through more bodyguards than they've had hot dinners – they go for looks. It's like a celebrity version of 'show and tell'." Geddes says he always tries to match clients with protection officers who have similar physical traits to them so they don't stand out. "I always quote my favourite line in *The Bodyguard*, where Whitney Houston, on first meeting Kevin Costner, says: 'You don't look like a bodyguard.' He replies: 'This is my disguise.' As soon as A-listers understand the difference between the real deal and the 'show and tell' types, some will only hire ex-Secret Service. A client of mine said it was like going from driving a Ford Fiesta to a Porsche 911. There's no comparison."

For those in the market, Spicer and Geddes advise against hiring from anyone other than a Metropolitan Police-vetted establishment; holding a Security Industry Authority licence is a legal requirement to do the work in the UK. "The last thing you want is a Trojan horse," says Spicer. "A cheaper unit that hasn't been officially sanctioned. Because the next thing you know, you are robbed and it was your security guards who let their friends through your front door."

And while private security is mostly a male profession, women CPOs are on the increase. Catherine, the Princess

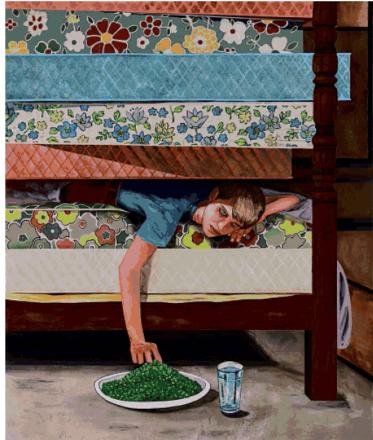
of Wales's protection officer for the past 12 years has been Sergeant Emma Probert, a member of Scotland Yard's protection squad who is trained in martial arts and reportedly always carries a 9mm Glock pistol and a Taser when escorting the Princess. William, the Prince of Wales recently decorated her with the Royal Victorian Order for services to his family. "If I needed protection," says the former spy, "I would probably go with an all-female team because they're more strategic." He mentions a California-based private security company where two-thirds of the client base is female. "If you are in confined places like bathrooms and tour buses, women feel safer with women."

And not only women, it seems. Libya's late ruler Muammar Gaddafi surrounded himself with 40 green-uniformed female bodyguards, known as The Revolutionary Nuns, to deter Arab gunmen. The late former model Anna Loginova – who was killed during a car-jacking – ran a Moscow-based female-only team to protect Russian billionaires.

There is, though, another rival for the stereotyped macho CPO. "There's been a surge in demand for close protection dogs," says Spicer. "I even saw an ad for them in the back of *Country Life* the other day. Actually, a normal one that barks loudly should also work a treat." **EHTSI** 







Hernan Bas fills his artworks with extraordinary personal ephemera. As he opens a new exhibition, *Victoria Woodcock* takes a look in his cabinets

Photography by Josh Aronson

iami-based painter
Hernan Bas's vitrinelined library in his
Little Havana studio
space is overflowing
with curiosities and
bibelots. But lately,
the obsessive collector
has slowed down. A
bit. "I ran out of space,"
says the 44-year-old,
ruefully. "Plus my boyfriend, Peter, was sort of done
with my maximalist approach to life."

Across the top of the cabinets marches a menagerie of taxidermy birds and a pig-like javelina. Encased inside are various found photographs, a vintage fighter-pilot mask from the 1930s, a ceramic Loch Ness monster and a shelf of German papier-mâché Halloween pumpkins from the 1800s. "I think I had 19 of them, but then my brother got me one for Christmas last year and it didn't fit in the cabinet. You reach a limit. Like, how many ghost photos do you need? I have eight, that's enough." These collections of "oddities" and "weird trinkets" are all tied into Bas's idiosyncratic artistic universe. The pumpkins feature in one of Bas's paintings from 2014, alongside ghosts made from bed sheets.

For the past 20 years, Bas has created intricate and intriguing paintings of winsome young men, usually in fantastical or surreal settings. They have varied from vibrantly lush, bird-strewn Florida landscapes (*Tropical Depression*, 2015) to rooms of Memphis Milano design furniture (*Memphis Living*, 2014). Each features a lexicon of curious motifs: flamingoes and snakes and spooky houses; a shark or a giant clam shell.

"If I need a vase for the background, I'll literally go to 1stdibs and find one," says Bas. Other times, his

Left: Hernan
Bas in his Miami
studio. Above:
Conceptual
Artist #11
(Performance
based, his work
centres on
discomfort)
- one of Bas's
new paintings





research takes him elsewhere. "A couple of years ago, I was making a painting that involved a guy holding a hammerhead shark, which led me to all these weird Pinterest pages called Hot Guys Holding Fish... completely clothed hot guys. Holding fish."

Bas's new exhibition has just opened at Victoria Miro. The artist first showed with the London gallery in 2004 the same year he was included in the prestigious Whitney Biennial in New York, then the youngest artist in its history. Today his work is in museum collections across the US and he's represented by several heavyweight galleries, including Perrotin and Lehmann Maupin. "He's just got better and better as a painter," says Glenn Scott Wright, a director at Victoria Miro. "When we were talking about this new show. Hernan said, 'I want to do a series of large, museum-quality paintings' - and that's what he's done." The new exhibition works are both a continuation of his practice and a departure. The male figures remain on the cusp of manhood, but there's less angst, less languor. His imagined characters are cast as artists in a series titled The Conceptualists. Gently teasing about the characters' high-minded artistic pursuits (such as only painting with water from Niagara Falls), the works are amusing but not mocking, arch but tender.

Each character in The Conceptualists has a history. When Bas talks about them, it's as if they are people he knows. "He's really into Egyptology," he says of Conceptual Artist #5, who spends his time gilding his dying houseplants. "I literally have dreams about these characters and what they would do - and I realised that they had been getting more and more involved in eccentric activities. It dawned on me that if you just called them artists, they'd get a free pass to be as eccentric as they please."

In an accompanying limited-edition book, artist and writer Linda Yablonsky has created further backstories. "I basically gave her carte blanche," says Bas of the texts that imagine names, histories and habits for the figures. "Sometimes I just gave her the title of the painting and she ran with it. In a way, the book becomes a conceptual project in and of itself." A key inspiration for the new work was the 2019 mock-documentary Waiting for the Artist. "It's Cate Blanchett as Marina Abramović, and it is one of the funniest things I've ever seen in my entire life," says Bas. In his own gentle dig at performance art, Conceptual Artist #9 creates a car-park stage set of homemade spaceships, while #8 has a land-based practice of marbling countryside puddles with food colouring.

Florida. Both his mother and his musician father emigrated from Cuba to the US. One of six siblings, he spent his first six years living in a place he refers to as "a bizarre, backwards world of middle-ofnowhere woods that informed a lot of my weird interests in the paranormal. I dragged that with me in spirit to Miami." At high school, he studied life drawing and painting, "but I became more of a photo geek", he says. He went to art college in New York, but was asked to leave after a term for not turning up. "I think I'd had my fill," he recalls, "and, being a little Holden Caulfield weirdo, I just wanted to do my own thing." Back in Miami - "I was broke and had nowhere else to go" - and without access to a photography studio, he began to draw.

"At that time, he was incredibly shy," remembers Scott Wright, who was introduced to Bas's work in the late '90s by major Miami collectors the Rubells. "Usually if I call an unknown, unsigned artist and say I'd like to come to their studio, they jump at it. But with Hernan, it took about two years to get hold of him, and then when he finally agreed to meet me, it was at a snooker bar in downtown Miami, at midnight. It was the weirdest studio visit. It was a whole process to get to know him and to look at the work."

The star of this new exhibition, suggests Scott Wright, is the nearly 5m-wide diptych titled Conceptual Artist #7. "Compositionally, it's an amazing painting," he says of the cat-strewn interior scene that alludes to Andy Warhol's 1950s artist book 25 Cats Name Sam and One Blue Pussy, and centres on a man dyeing one of the cats blue. "In my mind, this guy's obsessed - as am I to some extent - with that book," says Bas, whose additional Warhol references include a Brillo box and a red sofa - the type on which Warhol was often photographed at the Factory. The painting's silver-leafed windows are a homage to the silver walls of the famous New York hangout.

Some of Bas's work fizzes with an erotic undertone. While some of his previous series have explicitly explored



Above left: Bas's cabinet of curiosities. aturing some of his 19th-century papier-mâché pumpkins (top left). Above right: Bas in front of his painting Miami, FL, January 19, 1977 8:45 AM. Left: Conceptual Artist #7 (A Warhol enthusiast, his 26th studio mate completes the



#### "YOU REACH A LIMIT. LIKE, HOW MANY GHOST PHOTOS DO YOU NEED?"

the queer experience, he adds: "I don't necessarily always think of the characters as gay, although people are wont to say that." He has talked in the past about how, growing up, he developed "a weird connection between otherworldly and paranormal activity and homosexuality the idea of being of the other world in a bizarre way." Of the new paintings he says, "There's a bit of semiautobiography in all of them."

Bas's words in his artist's statement could equally be said of himself: "My characters have entered into a phase of self-acceptance. Their unusual interests aren't in the shadows any more, and they appear to be comfortable in their curious self-made worlds." It's a change that stems, he says, from the death of his mother in 2020. "I just had this moment of, like, consequences be damned. Risks are the name of the game. I think I can still push myself a lot more."

Next up is a show at Lehmann Maupin in New York, which opens on 11 May. For the first time, Bas will continue this series in a new set of paintings. "I've been wanting to do this series for so long that I have a huge backlog of ideas," says Bas, who is in his studio from around 11am to 7pm most days. He's currently renovating his Miami home - a 1930s building on the edge of Little Havana - and recently finished renovating the Vancouver house he and his partner bought in March this year.

In terms of design, Bas says he's leaning towards "a lot of Shaker furniture" at the moment. "And, like most art kids, I'm still a sucker for all that Memphis Milano '80s stuff." In his studio there's a circular-shaped First chair by Memphis designer Michele De Lucchi, while on the wall there's a Warhol silkscreen of Joseph Beuys. He also has a few individual prints from Warhol's 25 Cats, while the book as a whole is on his collector's wishlist. "Now, if I splurge on anything, it's typically art," says Bas. His latest purchase, from a "random auction house", is a "weird crown by a self-taught artist called Eugene Von Bruenchenhein, who lived in a shack in Wisconsin and made little thrones out of chicken bones and stuff like that. It's really strange." It certainly feels like it has a place in the Hernan Bas universe. But strange, as we both agree, is definitely a good thing. ■HT\$I

Hernan Bas: The Conceptualists is at Victoria Miro, 16 Wharf Road, London N1, until 14 January. Paintings, \$325,000-\$750,000; works on paper, \$30,000-\$60,000



## Where BIKERS DARE

On a trans-Alpine motorcycle rally from Austria to Monaco, *Simon de Burton* and his fellow riders are tested to their limits

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TOM KAHLER

Above: Royal Enfield rider Charlie Thomas takes in a lake view in the Swiss Alps on the Great Malle Mountain Rally arrel-chested amateur rugby player Patch McMeekin doesn't look like a man who takes fright easily, but he admits it was "pretty scary" to spend two hours wrestling his 10-year-old Royal Enfield through the foot-deep, ice-covered potholes littering the floor of the pitch-dark Tunnel de Parpaillon. That said, no one who entered the inaugural Great Malle Mountain Rally was looking for an easy ride. And organisers Robert Nightingale and Jonny Cazzola did advise against taking the optional route through the 500m tunnel, which was built by the French army in 1900, 2,600m up the side of the Col du Parpaillon.

Such situations chime with the "prepared to get lost" mantra that underlies Malle London, the firm founded by the pair in 2012 as a small-scale manufacturer of adventure-based, fit-for-purpose motorcycle luggage. The business has subsequently developed a whole new strand staging light-hearted competitions for "inappropriate motorcycles". The inaugural event, the Malle Mile Festival in 2014, was held in the grounds of Kevington Hall in London and attracted around 50 riders. Eight years later, the festival — now held in the grounds of Grimsthorpe Castle in Lincolnshire — draws closer to 1,000 entrants (and even more spectators) and is just one of a calendar of live events. Others include an annual beach race, the

Scotland-to-Cornwall Great Malle Rally (the longest and largest event of its type in the UK) and, as of this year, the Great Malle Mountain Rally – 1,200 miles from the start of the Alpine range in Austria to its end near Monaco, all covered on small roads and serpentine passes. While it's a journey that any reasonably organised motorcyclist could arrange for themselves, Malle offers the convenience of a turn-key package that takes care of everything from getting an entrant to the start line to organising nights under canvas and providing decent food – and providing back-up should things go wrong.

I signed up for the mountain rally within days of it being announced. Ordinarily I would have ridden from home to the start on my own machine, but commitments in southern Italy the morning after the rally ended made that impractical. Happily, Malle will arrange motorcycle hire for those who don't want to bring their own (at a cost of about £1,000) and for me they sourced a new Royal Enfield 650 Interceptor, which was ready and waiting when I arrived in Innsbruck, a half-hour ride from the start of the rally at the majestic Schloss Friedberg.

Nightingale has become known among Malle fans for his easy but deceptively persuasive manner – and he puts it to good effect when researching the rally routes. He seeks out remarkable buildings in remarkable places before assuring their initially bemused owners that it



really would be a good idea to welcome dozens of motorcyclists to spend the night on the premises in bell tents – and that they might like to lay on a lavish supper too. He clearly goes to some trouble to assess the dynamics of each team of riders, a process that begins the evening before the start. For this event there are around 70 of us taking part, with people from all walks of life – from a film-set builder to a fund manager, and a chemist to a PlayStation art director – all bound by the common thread of seeking adventure on motorcycles.

By the time the small groups of riders roar off out of the gates of the Schloss at three-minute intervals, the bonds have already been established, camaraderie is building and the adrenaline is flowing. The first day's ride is 189 miles to the overnight stop at Castel Katzenzungen in South Tyrol, a route that takes us up the Colle Isarco and into the Dolomites via the Sella Pass — a journey of breathtaking views and unbeatable riding roads.

It's beautiful but gruelling. By the time we reach Castel Katzenzungen (home, incidentally, to a single, sprawling grape vine that is said to be the oldest in the world) it has become apparent that the trip is going to be anything but a relaxing holiday. "It is already hard to compare what I expected with the reality," says Gorana Pecotić, a Croatian-born doctor based in Malta who has entered the event with her partner, Alexandra Pace, a designer, who is riding a BMW F 750 GS. "We only got into motorcycling during lockdown in 2020," she says, "so I knew a ride like this would be a big challenge — I just didn't realise how much of a challenge. We've driven through the region before by car, but the constant hairpin bends, the terrain and the changing weather conditions are all things we have never experienced on motorcycles."

he couple's state-of-the-art machines have removed the variable of unreliability, and plenty of other riders have chosen to make the trip on modern bikes – but others have adopted the early Malle thinking. Phil Hammond, for example, trailered his heavily customised 1979 Honda CBX all the way from his home in San Sebastián to the finish line in Monaco before riding it the 400 miles to the start.

It proves to be a bad decision, because the bike's engine fails at the start of day two, leaving Hammond's friend Simon Askew to ride the rest of the rally without him on his highly modified Honda Dominator.

The prize for the most inappropriate machine of all, however, should probably go to Malcolm "Mally" Barnes and his pillion-passenger wife Amy. He has driven his 888lb Honda Rune cruiser all the way from Madrid and, despite the bike's near six-foot wheelbase and value as a rare collector's piece, manages to amaze other rallyists by making light work of the switchbacks and many battered tracks that form much of the route. "Most Runes sit in heated garages as part of highly polished collections,"





Top left: the author on the Furka Pass. Above: one of dozens of serpentine Alpine passes included in the route. Left: Malle co-founder Robert Nightingale waves bikers off at the Maloja camp beside Lake Fils. Below: bell tents set up beside the Berghotel Chäserstatt, at 1,777m above sea level

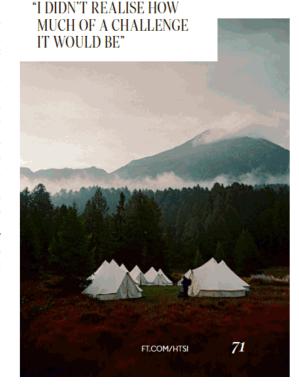
says Barnes. "I thoroughly enjoy annoying other owners by getting mine filthy dirty and riding it on the type of roads it was never intended to see." There is respect, too, for 37-year-old private equity fundraiser Joel Gindill who has entered the rally on his Ducati-based DB25, a recently acquired limited-edition race replica built by Surrey-based customising house deBolex (starting price £38,000) that he had ridden only 300 miles before the start.

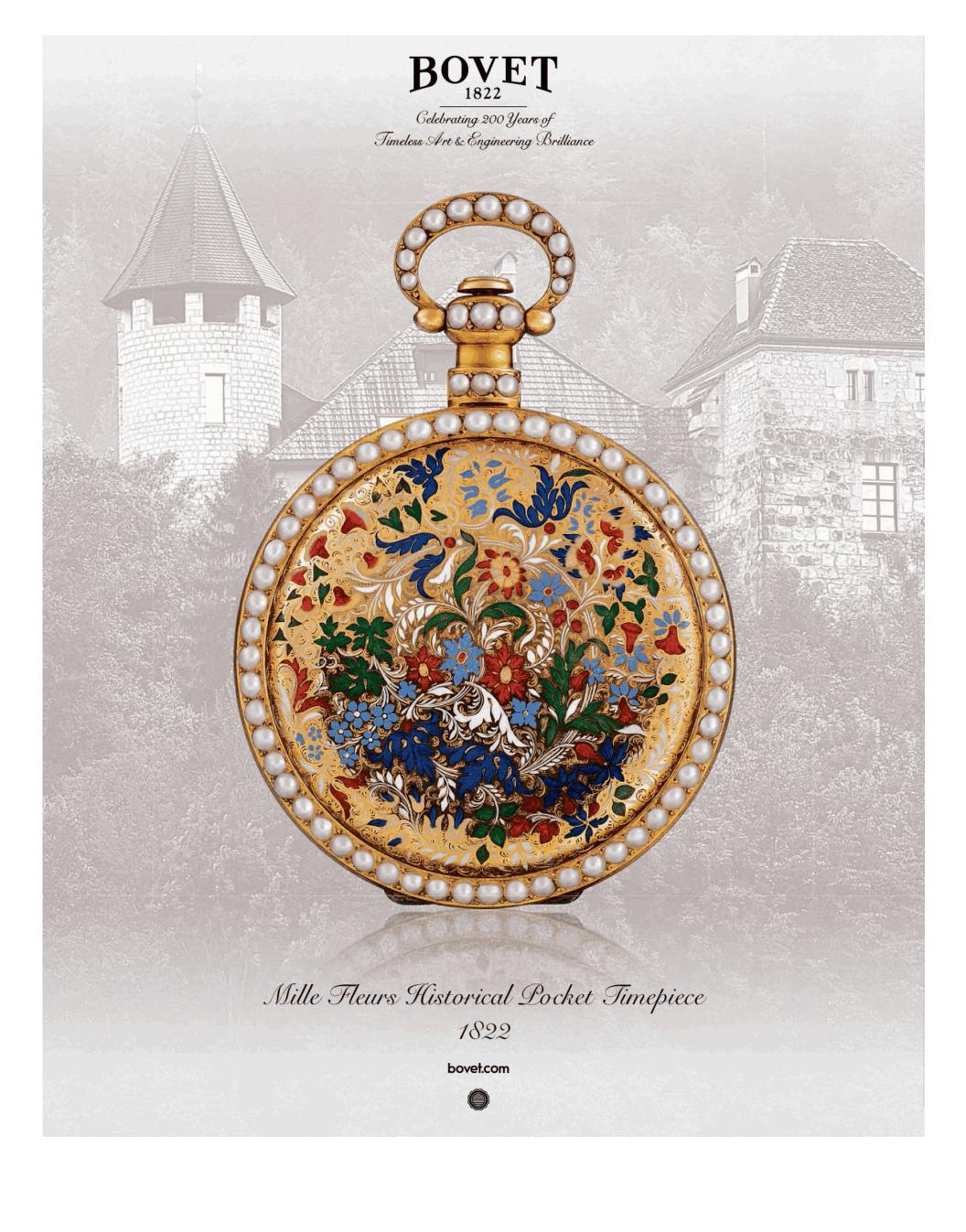
Whether tackling the fog-shrouded Furka Pass in Switzerland (scene of the famous car chase in the Bond film *Goldfinger*); sleeping by Lake Sils at the Maloja camp near St Moritz; traversing four miles of gravel hairpins to reach the Berghotel Chäserstatt where we sleep surrounded by snow-capped mountain peaks, or making the final, sun-drenched descent towards the finish line in Monaco, everyone agrees that this has been the six-day adventure of a lifetime. And even though McMeekin had those scary two hours in the Tunnel de Parpaillon, he applauds not only the trip but what the firm's other events are achieving.

No surprise, then, that the announcement of upcoming rallies in the desert and to the Arctic Circle raises a cheer that could probably have been heard back at the start line in Austria. 

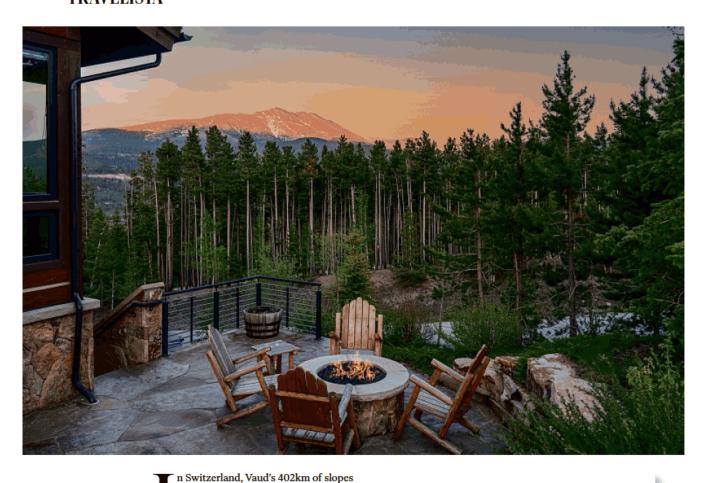
HTSI

The Great Malle Mountain Rally 2023 costs from £2,290, mallelondon.com









Left: Onefinestay's Epic Retreat in Breckenridge, Colorado. Below: the restaurant at Villars



**80 PER CENT** OF THE NANSEN TERRITORY HAS NEVER **BEEN SKIED** 

which sleeps 10 comfortably (and 12 at a pinch). In Breckenridge are the Bear's Den, which is equipped with rec room, gym and a cover-worthy chef's kitchen; and the timber-clad, rather

six bedrooms versus the Den's eight, but a ski-in, ski-out proposition, with its own rec rooms and huge en suites. If Vail or Beaver Creek is where it's at for you, they've got addresses there too. one finestay.com, from £2,410 per night

#### **ENJOY AN ALPINE RESET**

throughout the winter, with personal "muscular awakening" sessions, stretching,





**EXPLORER'S** 

brotastically named Epic Retreat - just

And if spa, not slope, is your winter goal, you might look to Clinique Nescens, semi-hidden away in the low Alps between Lausanne and Geneva, Michel Revbier (he of the brilliant La Réserve hotels) has

outfitted his 29-suite clinic with state-of-the-art preventive and non-invasive medicine technologies, from hyperbaric chambers to infrared saunas. The Cure Reset is this winter's big offering, a seven-day programme that harnesses all of it, along with nutritional consultations and one-onone supervised movement. But you want to ski too, you say? Reybier has you covered, at Crans Ambassador, his Alpine ski resort, which hosts three-day ski and fitness boot camps

yoga, massages and scrubs alongside some very solid Crans-Montana runs. michel reybierhospitality.com; Cure Reset from



are once again fully open, spanning mint territory from Jura up into the Alps. The resort town of Villars is only an hour and a half by car from Geneva; it caters to all types of traveller, from families with young kids to daredevils keen to carve. The Villars Palace (anno 1912) spent many decades under the aegis of Club Med, before being acquired by two private investors with exactly zero hospitality experience between them, who also snapped up two other hotels, all of them now assembled as the Villars Alpine Resort. On the 10th of this month, the Palace re-emerges post a comprehensive renovation. The 125 rooms are bright and contemporary, likewise the restaurant, bar and expansive Kaea spa; and the skiing and train station are both within walking distance. villarspalace.ch, from SFr559 (about £497)

#### "SLOPE TO SEA" IN GREENLAND

Here's one next April for the heli-skiers with some time (and cash) on their hands: a "slope-to-sea" expedition along the west coast of Greenland, aboard EYOS Expeditions' MV Nansen Explorer, led by the most medalled men's skier in US history. Bode Miller. Individual cabins can be booked for the week-long expedition, which moves from Maniitsoq (considered one of



#### COOL-OFF IN COLORADO

cabin for seven nights, all-inclusive

Onefinestay began around a decade ago as a clutch of very lovely houses and flats in London, which gave their guests all the privacy of a holiday let with hospitality staff and a concierge. Over the years it's expanded to points further-flung, both urban (Los Angeles, Rome) and holiday (Barbados, Mykonos). This winter Onefinestay debuts a new tranche of chalets across Colorado's most desirable ski towns: there's the contemporary five-bedroom, three-level Poma Lodge North, just outside Steamboat Springs,

the most remote heliskiing destinations on

Earth) north to Disko Bay. Miller will be

joined by World Extreme Skiing champ

Chris Davenport and Doug Stoup, a polar

guide who's pioneered skiing in Antarctica.

Some of the runs stretch to over a mile; 80

will visit has never been skied. The bucket-

list nature of that terrain, along with the

calibre of the guiding, goes a way toward

justification of the admittedly eye-watering

cost. eyos-expeditions.com, from €60,000 per

per cent of the territory the Nansen Explorer

TRAVEL NEWS

Winter wonderlands

Colorado chalets, curative retreats

and a "slope-to-sea" expedition

in Greenland

WORDS BY MARIA SHOLLENBARGER

NANSEN EXPLORER



#### **TELL US A STORY**

I'm still to experience the parental hell of keeping a child amused on long car journeys, because my son is nine months old and falls asleep as soon as the engine starts. But the Yoto Mini is designed to do just that primarily as a storytelling device, but with "no microphone, no camera, no ads". It's exceptionally cute, with a tiny, chunky-pixel display and tactile dials that double as buttons. Stories come on cards that pop into a slot at the top, while the buttons can trigger a daily Yoto podcast or a couple of kid-friendly radio stations. An accompanying app helps parents tailor the experience for their child, and can play any Yoto stories if (God forbid) the Mini has accidentally been left at home. Yoto Mini, £59.99, uk.yotoplay.com



#### A MATTER OF RECORD

Rather like travel insurance. dashcams are one of those things you end up wishing you'd bought when it's too late. Given that their main job is to capture proof that an accident wasn't your fault, they need to be unobtrusive and reliable, and the Miofive ticks both boxes. It adheres neatly to the windscreen behind your rear-view mirror with cabling tucked away in the trim, has a 140-degree field of view and produces crisp video along with a wealth of real-time trip data (time, speed, GPS). The built-in AI is a little oversensitive, audibly warning of "sudden turns" when I did no such thing (honest) but that's easily muted in the settings. I hereby resort to the cliché: "small price to pay for peace of mind". Miofive 4K UHD Dash Cam. £150. miofive.com



#### COOL AS YOU LIKE

In case you were planning on squeezing this refrigerator into your Smart Fortwo, I should stress at the outset that it's a bit of a hulk, although a 40-litre version is also available. It can be powered by your car (DC 12V/24V), a solar-power supply or standard 110-240V, so it doubles nicely as a minifridge (or mini-freezer) when you're not on the road and can be easily wheeled to and fro. The target temperature is adjustable from 20°C (slightly pointless) down to -20°C, and on its Max setting (ie, rapid cooling) it got down to fridge temperature from a standing start after 20 minutes of gentle whirring. There's also an Eco mode for foodstuffs not in imminent danger of perishing. Outsunny 501 Car Refrigerator, £349.99,



#### SUCK IT UP

A battery-powered garage workhorse (no faffing around with extension leads from the front room to the car out the front door), this compact and portable hoover doubles, trebles, quadruples as an all-purpose dirt sucker, a wet vacuum for messy spills (although it's not capacious enough to be used as a water pump), a leaf blower and general-purpose inflator. You charge the removable battery as you would an electric drill's, and on full power it made short work of elderly garage cobwebs and unpleasant car-boot detritus. The filter is a cinch to clean, and there's a familiar bundle of attachments that are all destined to be mislaid or trodden on, but hey, that's 21st-century cleaning for you. Bosch AdvancedVac 18V-8, £119.99, bosch.co.uk



n-car audio occupies two distinct worlds. One is about raw power, earth-shaking bass and accidentally setting off the alarms of cars parked nearby. That's quite easily achieved: chuck a subwoofer in the boot and crank the volume. The other is about pursuing the kind of optimum audio quality you might have at home, and that's a little more tricky.

French audio brand Focal is well known for its high-end studio and home speakers (its floorstanding Sopra model will set you back around £16,000 a pair). In 2019 it launched a new speaker cone made out of recycled, non-woven carbon fibre that they dubbed the Slatefiber, and incorporated it into a couple of its popular hi-fi and studio monitors. Now it's introducing them into cars, with these PS 165 component speakers and their co-axial brothers, the PC 165s. The eminently reasonable price (given their pedigree) puts them in direct competition with the JL Audios and Hertzes of this world.

The woofers measure a standard 6.5in (165mm) for maximum compatibility with a range of vehicles, and they're driven by a

four-channel inline amp that is pretty much plug-and-play. If sheer volume is your thing, you won't be disappointed: they provide 80W RMS/160W peak output, which in testing meant Michael Bublé singing way, way louder than you could ever want or need (NB: not my choice). If you're more appreciative of delicate, breathy vocals or

THEY'LL DO VOLUME OR DELICATE BREATHY VOCALS the sheen of a string section, then the separate tweeters of this composite set deliver those exceptionally well, too. Of course, you're ultimately at the mercy of

your vehicle and its structure.

Certain models (old BMWs are prime culprits, I'm told) will never do justice to quality speakers, while badly installed ones will push sound in strange directions, delivering perfect sonic clarity to your drinks holder while leaving passengers wondering what all the fuss is about. But a pair of Focals, installed by someone who knows what they're doing, gives you the best chance of prime audio fidelity on the motorway, freeway or autoroute. 

BHTSI



A gold pendant centred with a diamond-set bound nugget, engraved 'As this gold is pure so my love is sure'. £4,500



BY APPOINTMENT TO HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN JEWELLERS WARTSKI, LONDON

diamond-set eye, the pupil a heart shaped sapphire, engraved 'Think of me when this you see'. £4,500

Established 1865

#### 60 St James's Street, London SW1A 1LE

Fine Jewellery, Carl Fabergé, Works of Art



A platinum mounted diamond-set bow brooch by Marcus & Co. New York, c.1930. £23,000



A platinum ring set with baguettes and a triangular cut diamond by Bulgari. c.1955. POA



A pair of cabochon sapphire and diamond cluster earrings. English, c.1900. £16,500



BY APPOINTMENT TO H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES
JEWELLERS
WARTSKI, LONDON

A gold mounted pendant set with peridots, an aquamarine and a drop pearl. c.1900. £12,000



Provenance: Catherine Elizabeth, Viscountess of Galway (1783-1862). English, c.1840. £65,000



A pair of diamond-set 'day' and 'night earrings, the tassels detachable. English, c.1950. £19,500

A platinum mounted sapphire and diamond-set ring, c.1920. £34,000



A gold openwork target brooch centred with a coral heart pierced with a diamond-set arrow by Cartier. French, c.1960. £10,800



A diamond, sapphire and emerald-set brooch

A pair of amethyst gold mounted cufflinks. English, c.1950. £2,500



A clover brooch set with chrysoprase, diamonds, and a ruby by Carlo and Arthur Giuliano. c.1900. £14,000



saltwater pearls. English, c.1925. £19,000



A pair of lilac guilloché enamel cufflinks



An 'Apple of my Eye' ring set with diamonds and centred with red jasper. £6,000



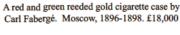
A diamond-set seven stone sapphire ring. English, c.1920. £14,000



A forget-me-not brooch set with sapphires, the label reading 'Ne M'oubliez pas'. By Van Cleef and Arpels, Paris, c.1950. £15,000



A diamond-set four leaf clover tie pin. French, c.1900. £6,500

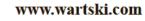


All shown life size

A spherical tie pin set with emeralds and diamonds. English, c.1920. £3,600



A platinum mounted ring centred with 2.02 ct diamond. £29,500



wartski@wartski.com

Tel +44 (0) 207 493 1141

@wartski1865

BISCUITEERS PADDINGTON BISCUIT TIN, £40

CAPEZZANA EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL, £42.50 FOR 70CL



DRINKING

#### Oil be there

Alice Lascelles finds out why the mixologist's favourite ingredient is a dash of extra virgin

Is your Martini lacking a little something? It could be olive oil - the ingredient that's making a surprise appearance on cocktail lists from New York to Copenhagen this season. "A greatquality olive oil can add texture to a drink, as well as the flavour of the oil, be that green and grassy or peppery," says Max Venning of London bar Three Sheets, which has showcased olive oil in everything from Martinis to fizzes.

At Crispin bar in Spitalfields they make an Olio Martini using a technique known as "fat-washing", which imbues the drink with the flavour of the oil and a subtle, silky texture without turning it into an alcoholic slick. "We blend five parts London dry gin with one part Citizens of Soil olive oil and freeze it overnight," explains manager Jason Patrick Glynn, "Then we crack the top, fine-strain the gin, stir it with cold green tea, a little dry vermouth and garnish with a dot of olive oil and a lemon twist." I had a go at this recipe (which you can find online at ft.com/htsi) at home, and it's delicious and easy to make.

Temple bar in NYC uses a similar fatwashing technique for its Olive Oil Martini. But instead of green tea they stir their gin with a blend of dry and sweet white vermouths, garnishing with an olive or two. Ruby in Copenhagen offers a Scarlett Negroni made with olive-oil-washed Tanqueray No Ten, saffron, yuzu sake and Bèrto bitter. At NoMad London's new bar Common Decency, an Old Fashioned is made with olive-oil-washed bourbon, stirred down with cobnut-infused rye, chocolate bitters and maple syrup.

A Martini can also be very good with just a few jewel-like dots of oil droppered on top. The savoury Caprese Martini at The Umbrella Workshop, London (pictured top), is inspired by the Italian salad: it sees vodka, gin and dry vermouth stirred down with La Tomato, a crystal-clear tomato liqueur, then

anointed with basil-scented olive oil. Bog-standard cooking olive oil won't cut it. For cocktails it must be the best; single estate, extra virgin and,

preferably, the current vintage so the flavours are as lively as possible. Two of my favourite Tuscan producers are Fontodi, whose picante oils are grassy and intense, and Capezzana, whose organic, unfiltered oils have a

soft, almost chamomile-like note. The 2022 vintage, on release right now, "is shaping up to be the best in Italy since 2018", says Elizabeth Berger, founder of frantoi.org, a retailer specialising in single estate and single variety olive oils. Berger is keeping orders for the new vintage open for FT readers until 4 December - so stock up to make an unlikely, but exciting, addition to your drinks cabinet. **EHTSI** (a) @alicelascelles



Left: "Mardi Gras" biscuits rom Celebrate With Kim-Joy. Right: "bouquet Biscuiteers (in Biscuiteers Book of Iced Gifts)

hen it comes to icing biscuits, what makes a good icer? Artistic ability for sure. Attention to detail. And patience - not just for managing the preliminaries such as mixing the icing colours and filling the piping bags (often cited by professionals as the least enjoyable

parts) but also for decorating itself, which can take several hours depending on the time required for the icing to dry. It also helps to have someone like Agnese Basova on hand to prep and guide you through every stage of the process.

Agnese is a studio icer at the Pimlico store of Biscuiteers, where today she is giving me a masterclass in icing. As well as tutorials, Biscuiteers - the London-based company whose headquarters in Colliers Wood is known as the Ministry of Biscuits - turns out bespoke biscuits for brands such as La Mer, Cartier and Chanel, and hand-ices about 10,000 biscuits each day as part of its regular collection. This includes Beatrix Potter characters, a "Get Well Soon" first aid kit (stocked with biscuit pills, ointments and a thermometer), and a gingerbread bride and groom. It currently has a bespoke Dior collection to coincide with the brand's festive takeover at

Harrods (from £15 for one).

I END UP

WITH WHAT

LOOKS LIKE

**EVIL TWIN** 

PADDINGTON'S

Today's class is just for me. But the two-hour sessions (£90) are usually group activities, mostly for beginners and catering to everything from kids' birthday parties to hen dos. The upside of learning this way is that the biscuits are

baked and the royal icing mixed and ready to go, either in piping bags (for outlining) or squeeze bottles (for flooding). All I have to do is follow Agnese's lead. Joining us briefly is Harriet Hastings, founder of Biscuiteers, who acknowledges a huge surge of recent

interest. The Great British Bake Off may have played a part but she reckons it's also down to a wider phenomenon of people wanting to learn a craft. "People come from Australia to do our icing classes," she says.

Today I've got three vanilla biscuits to ice: one of a cluster of balloons; another of a lit candle on a sponge cake; and the third of Paddington Bear, I'm struck by how quickly I make progress. Sure, you need a steady hand to pipe the outlines. And you have to judge the speed of piping against



EATING Piped dreams

> Bottom left: the Biscuiteers Dior exhibition

Ajesh Patalay nozzles

up to put his biscuit-icing

skills to the test

the consistency of the icing and the pressure on the bag. But I'm a quick study, and at times I feel like an expert calligrapher, piping out curves and lettering. Of course, my confidence is my undoing. Attempting Paddington's face, I mess up completely and end up with what looks like his evil twin. More cack-handedness turns the birthday-cakeshaped biscuit into an Amnesty International logo: the candle looks as if it is wrapped in barbed wire (not candy stripes) and rising out of a bleeding mattress (not a jamoozing cake). Nonetheless, I'm awarded a "Certificate of Brilliance" and get to eat the results. I can't complain. I've also had a blast, particularly doing the flooding.

For those looking to progress at home, Cookie Canvas (DK Ltd) by American biscuit-decorator Amber Spiegel and Baking with Kim-Joy (Quadrille) by the Great British Bake Off finalist are excellent primers. Not only do these books provide recipes for good, all-round biscuits robust enough to send in the post, but you also find tutorials on techniques that deliver big results with minimal skill. These include feathering (running a cocktail stick through wet icing) to create hearts and flowers, and lacework constructed out of a simple grid with dots. Cookie Canvas is particularly good on themed biscuits, which range from floral-patterned baby rompers to dinosaur eggs cracking open to a cable-knit hat and mittens ("almost too cute to eat"). Spiegel is also worth seeking out on YouTube as one of many icers whose videos have become a popular form of therapy: it turns out watching biscuits being decorated can be profoundly relaxing. ■HTSI



77

## HOW TO SPEND IT IN...



y connection to Karachi has been as part of the diaspora. I first travelled there with friends I'd met as a student at SOAS in London. I had grown up in a closed, patriarchal Pashtun community in Birmingham. By 15, I still hadn't been into the centre of town. My parents had migrated from a

very rural northern village close to the Afghan border, so these urban Karachiites really enriched my knowledge of Pakistani culture. The women were far freer, Sufi music was integral and the poetry of Ghalib and Faiz opened the door for me.

Karachi reminds me of Rio - it's a living, breathing metropolis of some 20 million people, right on the Arabian sea, so there's an ocean breeze and cool evenings. It's a one-time provincial fishing village that became the capital after partition in 1947. It remains a port; it's where my parents travelled to board a plane to London - my dad in the '60s and my mum in the '70s. To me, it's much more cosmopolitan than any

other place in Pakistan, full of entrepreneurial spirit. Its sheer scale and diversity means it is pretty progressive and welcoming; that's perhaps also why it's also seen as dangerous and a place of ethnic strife. Television shows such as Karachi Kops do little to abate that image.

Karachi is often called "the city of lights", largely because of the vibrant nightlife of the '60s and '70s when there was a sophisticated cabaret and music scene. Since Muslims were banned from buying alcohol in 1977, the social life has shifted; now it's much more focused on people's homes. The best way in is to have a connection - mine was Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, an award-winning director who can throw a mean dinner party, and even let me hold her two Oscars. But I love going to restaurants too. One of my favourites is Okra in the commercial district, Zamzama. The food has a slightly Mediterranean flavour, which is more traditionally Pakistani at lunchtimes, and the owner, Ayaz Khan, has become a mentor to many young chefs in the city. Lots of expats go there - it's a bit of a scene. They do a kick-ass bread-andbutter pudding, and you can bring your own wine. I also go

The artist Osman Yousefzada on where to be and what to see

INTERVIEW BY AIMEE FARRELL PHOTOGRAPHY BY NADIR SADDIQUI

in Pakistan's capital



a carpet

Zainab Market

Burns Road Karachi Café Flo 1 26th St, Block 4 Clifton (+9221-358 30018) Okra okra.com Waheed Kabab Ho

SITES, GALLERIES & MUSEUMS **Canvas Gallery** @canvasgallerykhi Frere Hall Fatima Jinnah Rd, Saddar Civil Lines Indus Valley School of **Art and Architecture** indusvalley.edu.pk/home Koel Gallery koelgallery.com NAPA napa.org.pk TDF Ghar dawoodfou

HOTELS

**Ambiance Hotel** 

ambiancehotels.net

CAFÉS AND RESTAURANTS

SHOPS Zahra Ebrahim Zainab Market Abdullah Haroon Rd, Saddar Karachi

Left: Osman Yousefzada at the city's National Performing Arts. Right: Okra restaurant Below: an exhibition



"LOTS OF EXPATS GO TO OKRA - IT'S A BIT OF A SCENE"

to Café Flo. It is a little taste of France in Karachi, with white linen tablecloths and a leafy outdoor terrace. It's run by Florence Villiers, the daughter-in-law of popular singer Noor Jehan who was probably the Édith Piaf of Pakistan. I always order the tuna tartare - it's amazing. For traditional Pakistani food I go to the Village Restaurant, one of the oldest in Karachi. They grill all the food in front of you, and everything is served on tin plates with elegant earthenware finger bowls. Burns Road, which was recently pedestrianised, is the street food mecca. Everywhere you look there are bun kabab coming out of ovens and skewered chickens being barbecued over open fire pits. Don't miss Waheed Kabab House's chapli kababs.

I usually stay at the Ambiance Hotel, a small, quiet place in a converted house in the centre of Clifton. I work from a studio space at Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture in a building that was earmarked for demolition but moved, brick by brick, to Clifton. It's now a beacon of 19th-century

> colonial Karachi in a modern area. Then there's TDF Ghar - a 1930s bungalow with a beautiful café and a rooftop with incredible city views. These sites are a throwback to a British colonial era when Victorian and Edwardian designers were in a game of architectural oneupmanship with the Mughals they had deposed. Also worth a visit for the architecture alone is NAPA, the National Academy of Performing Arts. It stages performances in what was once a Hindu gymkhana, a kind of sports and social club with stables and vast dining rooms.

> There's a thriving contemporary art scene spearheaded by women. Canvas Gallery, founded by Sameera Raja, is an airy, modernist space that champions artists such as Salman Toor, whose work explores the experience of queer brown people. At Koel, director Noorjehan Bilgrami blends art with craft in hand-block printed textiles and cushions. For interiors, I love architect turned furniture designer Zahra Ebrahim, who uses historic marquetry techniques to create the lighting and tableware on display in her Korangi showroom.

For people-watching as much as shopping, visit Zainab Market, a traditional craft bazaar where you can buy everything from Kashmiri carpets costing tens of thousands to trinkets for 10 rupees.

There are hand-embroidered shawls, bedlinens and leather jackets - it's a microcosm of Karachi, a place where ancient and modern culture collides. ■HTSI

Visit @artists\_emergency to support Yousefzada's Pakistan Flood fundraiser art sales

78

FT.COM/HTSI

**Tiger's Eye**Anchored • Rooted
Balanced • Determined



DUCRU-BEAUCAILLOU

THREE CENTURIES OF BEAUX CAILLOUX\* IN SAINT-JULIEN



BEGIN YOUR OWN TRADITION



#### **ONLY HUMAN**

A STORY ABOUT SKILL

"At Patek Philippe, it can take years to train our skilled specialists. It is one of the reasons we do not make more watches than we produce today.

We are not magicians. At our family-owned company, everything we do relies on the skills and creativity of our people. Very human skills which cannot be rushed or replaced.

Only humans can accept the challenge to always be at the edge of what is possible."

THIERRY STERN
PRESIDENT, PATEK PHILIPPE



