FINANCIAL TIMES
HTSI
7 DECEMBER
2024



ALL SHOOK UP

How HARRIS DICKINSON seduced Hollywood

PLUS THE JOY OF DARTS, SUITE SEYCHELLES, THE WORLD'S BEST FOOD MARKETS, HOW TO FUTUREPROOF YOUR CASTLE, CUT-ABOVE COOKIES

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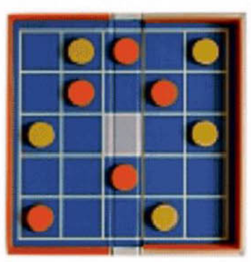
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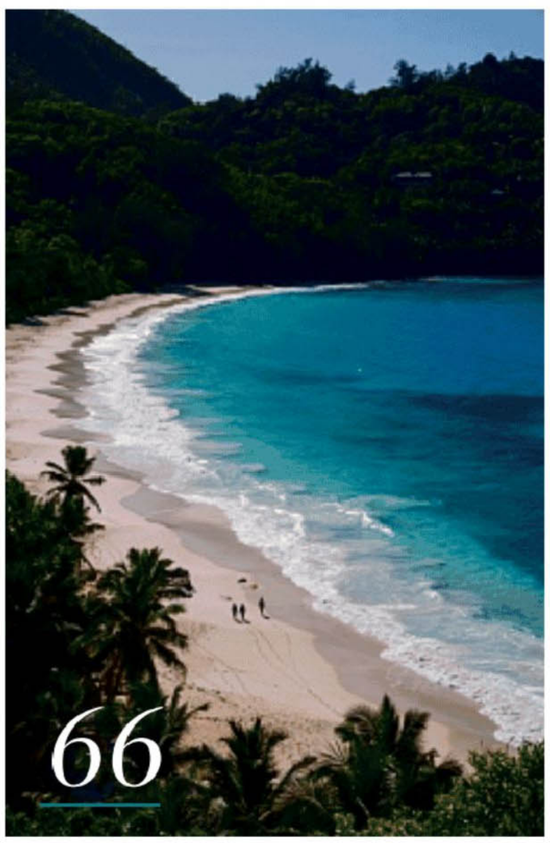
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HARRIS DICKINSON wears STONE ISLAND wool-mix jumper, £760. PRADA cotton shirt, £640. Rings, Dickinson's own



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PHOTOGRAPHS: ANNA NIELSEN. CHRIS KONTOS. MARK ANTHONY FOX

All products in the magazine are available to buy from each brand's website or store, unless otherwise stated

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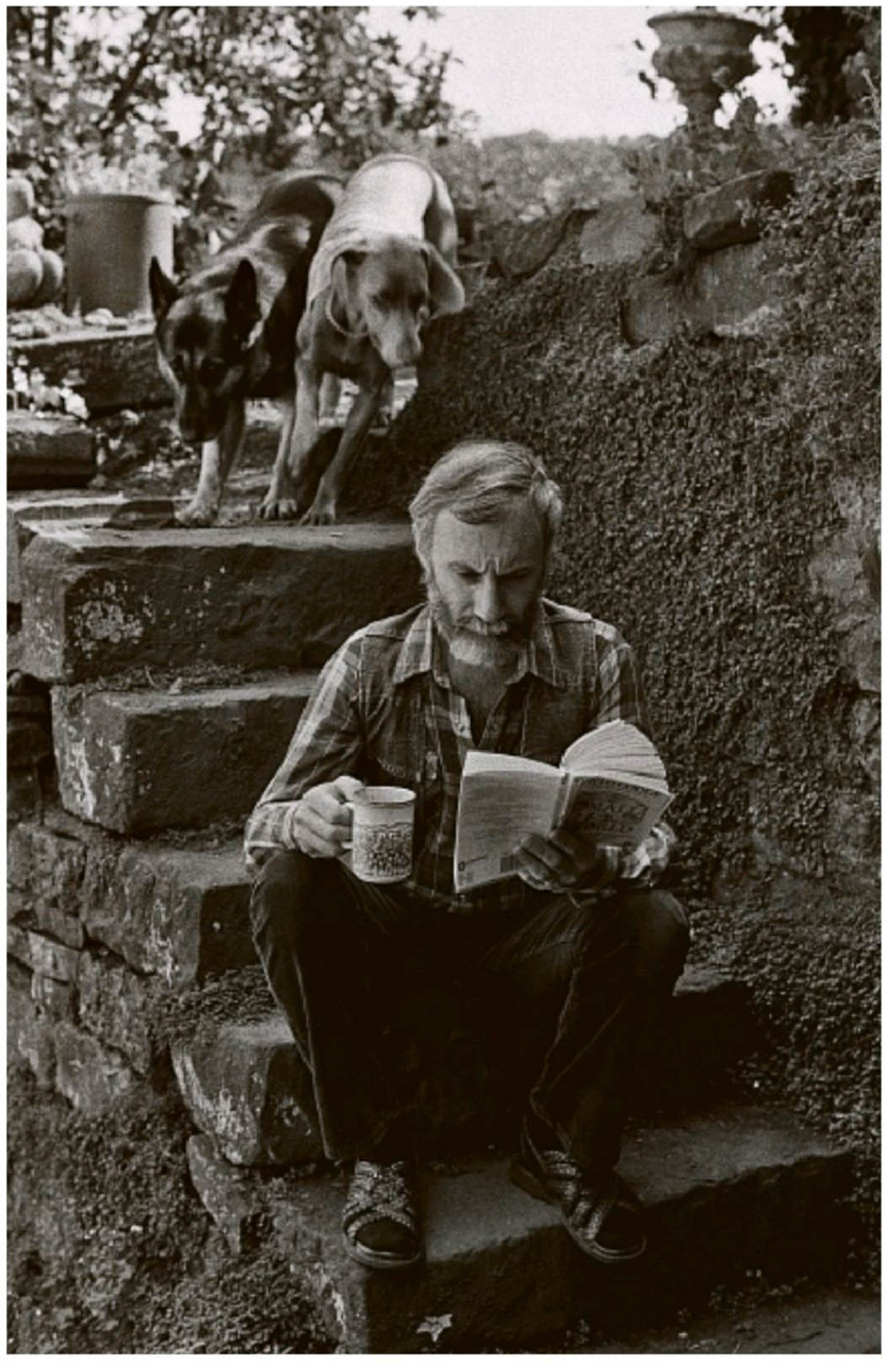
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OPENING SHOT





PAGE TURNER

Photographs of people reading, taken over a lifetime, in a new book

Since the 1950s, David Hurn has been photographing people as they read, capturing them absorbed in their books in every corner of the world, from Arles to Qatar. He has caught moments snatched with a novel in the front seat of a car, children crouched over picture books in the middle of a park, and women reading outside cafés. He has pictured them in offices as others type in the background, and lounging in the back of exercise classes.

The project has been a quieter obsession to accompany his other work as a documentarian, which has seen him cover the Hungarian revolution and the changes sweeping post-industrial Wales. And now, for the first time, the photographs have been collected into a book. Taken over a period of 70 years, they form a paean to the total immersion that reading can offer. In one picture, taken in the Wye Valley in 1986, a man sits on some steps engrossed in David Lodge's campus romance *Small World*, entirely unaware that a pair of dogs are about to bound past him. **BAYA SIMONS**

On Reading by David Hurn is published by RRB Photobooks at £35

From left: Jane Fonda, Norway, 1972. Tintern, Wales, 1986

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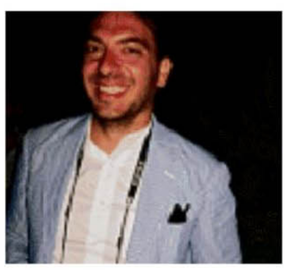
LAURENCE WALKER

Since training at Toni & Guy and Sassoon Academy in London, the hair stylist has worked on more than 500 fashion shows and with brands including Louis Vuitton, Chanel and Tom Ford. For our cover shoot this week, he styled the hair of British actor Harris Dickinson. "He's grown out his buzz cut, which gave us more room to play with shapes – sometimes neat slicked back or a broken texture – generally adding youth and playfulness to the shoot."



DAISY LAFARGE

The Glasgow-based artist and author has written poetry, fiction and non-fiction, and published reviews and essays on ecology, art and literature. In this issue, she takes cues from Emily Brontë on how to dress for the elements. "It was a thrill to think about the significance of outerwear in *Wuthering Heights*," she says. "I only wish I'd found a way to mention Anne Brontë's perfect white cotton stockings, as seen in the Brontë Parsonage Museum."



CHRIS KONTOS

In 2013, the Athens-born photographer launched *Kennedy Magazine* – a "biannual journal of curiosities" that has profiled creatives such as Tina Barney and Thurston Moore. In October he opened a natural wine bar called Kennedy Vins, one of several bars in Athens he shot for this issue. "The city keeps surprising me after all these years; there are so many corners to explore and spots that change depending on the light and time of day. It never gets boring."



SOPHIE GREEN

From Aladura Spiritualist churches to banger racing, the photographer explores the "often-overlooked margins of British culture". Her work has been exhibited at The National Portrait Gallery and the V&A. For this issue she shot the Betfred World Matchplay darts tournament in Blackpool. "The atmosphere and enthusiasm of the fans were infectious. I even met a newlywed couple who had chosen the competition as their honeymoon destination – that says it all!"

PHOTOGRAPHS: © DAVID HURN/MAGNUM PHOTOS (2)





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PHOTOGRAPHS: BRUNO STAUB. MARILI ANDRE

Right: Harris Dickinson shot by Bruno Staub (page 50)



Some breakthrough stars don't announce themselves immediately. It's only when you've seen them in two projects that you begin to grasp their range. Those old enough may recall Daniel Day-Lewis's explosive cinematic entrance, playing both the priggish Cecil Vyse (*A Room With a View*) and the feral street punk Johnny (*My Beautiful Laundrette*) in two poles-apart but perfectly judged performances that arrived in the same year. I felt similarly when watching Harris Dickinson in *Triangle of Sadness*, which found him playing a vapid posh-boy model on a disastrous cruise. I couldn't believe he was the same actor I had seen in the tiny independent, *Scrapper*, portraying a working-class father facing up to his responsibilities years after having abandoned the family home.

It doesn't help that Dickinson is so very pretty, he finds himself inevitably being typecast. And probably he will be more so since his latest film *Babygirl*, an erotic drama with Nicole Kidman that puts him firmly in the category of the Hollywood heartthrob. Louis Wise meets him as he makes this latest career leap, and finds out why he remains so determined to do things on his own terms (page 50). He's currently got his pick of projects, plus his own production company through which he has directed a first feature. I will be fascinated to see where things go.

Are you familiar with this week's Aesthete, Mr Bingo? The illustrator and artist became famous for his Hate Mail, a service via which he would send postcards, on request, to strangers. They were fabulously rude. He has since built up a cult following and become a public speaker. He also took a year off and wandered naked around the world. Given his strident reputation, I was surprised to discover in our story that he is as vulnerable as he is funny (page 25). I recommend you look at his Instagram @mr_bingstagram, if you need a laugh.

DICKINSON IS SO PRETTY, HE FINDS HIMSELF INEVITABLY BEING TYPECAST

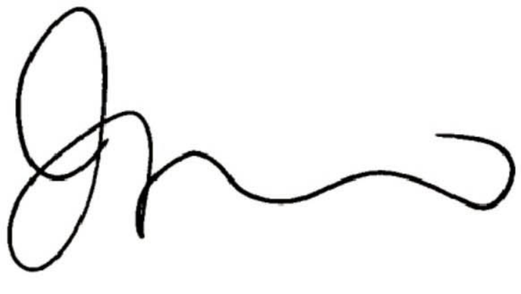
Are you a darts fan? The very British pastime played in pubs up and down the country has long lacked the slick commercial glamour that is offered by more established sports. Recently, however, a wider fanbase has been accruing around its players, inspired by young mavericks such as Luke Littler, the teenage darts prodigy who made headlines when he reached the world championship final last December. In the run-up to this year's tournament, Rosanna Dodds followed the game and its exuberant champions in an attempt to understand why it has captivated a new generation (page 70). A combination of kebabs, free-flowing alcohol and fancy costumes all seem to play their part.

On a more sophisticated note, we tour the growing bar scene in Athens, a city that has been the centre of an extraordinary resurgence (page 74). Chris Kontos is the man spearheading the natural wine renaissance, as well as nurturing new neighbourhood hangouts. Chris Cotonou is the man getting to the heart of the story. ■**HTSI**

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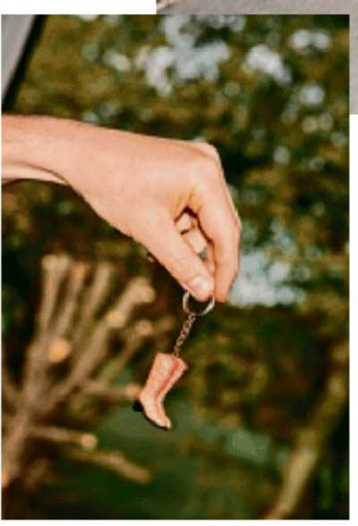
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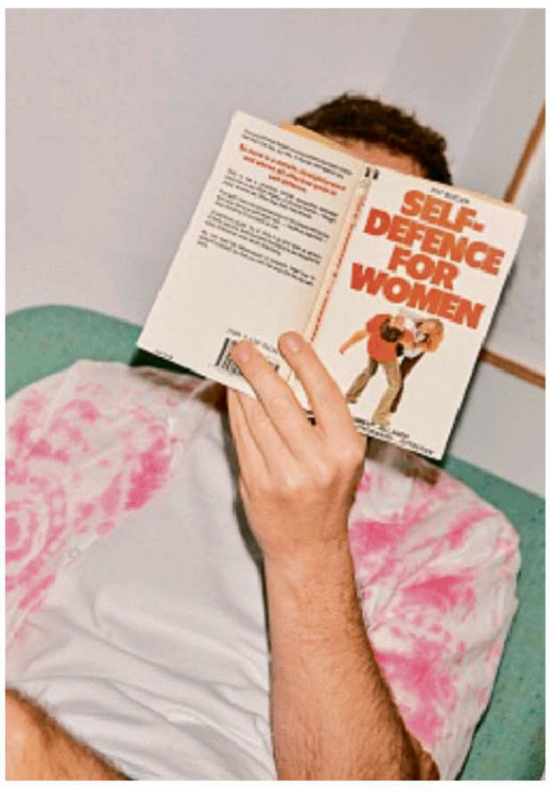


Above: Mr Bingo at his studio in London. Left: the pink cowboy boot keyring given to him by his friend. Below: with a favourite recent read

Mr Bingo

The artist and speaker on postcards, litter picking and the joy of being nude

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **JOSHUA TARN**



MY PERSONAL STYLE SIGNIFIERS are shorts. Any shorts. All year round. I like wearing shorts because: they make me feel like I'm never at work; they make me feel casual and like I'm not taking life too seriously; they feel like the opposite of people who have to dress up in a suit; they make you feel you're always ready for action, to move fast, to get things done; it annoys and upsets people, especially on cold days. My legs are my only attractive bit so I like to expose them at all times in an effort to attract a partner.

THE LAST THING I BOUGHT AND LOVED was a painting of a drinking glass by the artist Jay Cover. I used to be in the same warehouse of studios as Jay, and annoyingly he and a fair few other arty mates of mine have left London and chosen to have a quieter life by the sea. Buying the painting was a nice excuse to go and see them when I picked it up.

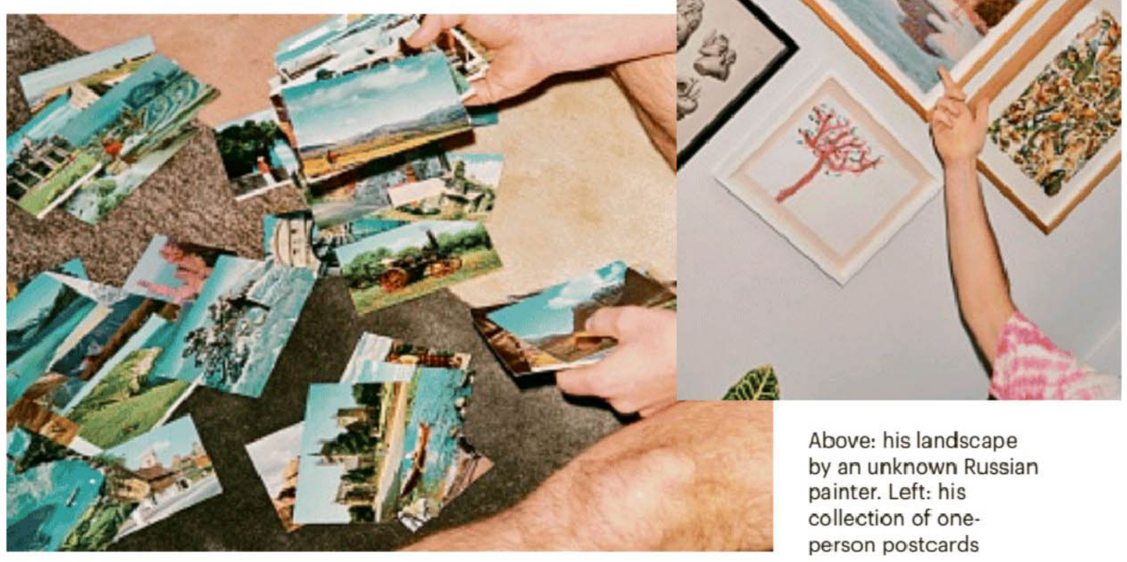
THE PLACE THAT MEANS A LOT TO ME is the South West Coast Path, which covers the perimeter of Devon, Dorset and Cornwall. It's 630 miles long and last year I walked it alone, all in one go. Definitely one of the best things I've ever done in my life; it's hard to explain why. A feeling of total freedom with a little bit of purpose, connected to nature, alone but never lonely. There are a few nudist beaches on the path, too. In fact I did a fair amount of naked hiking last year in Portugal, the Canary Islands and also California, where I ended up living on a nudist resort for a couple of weeks.

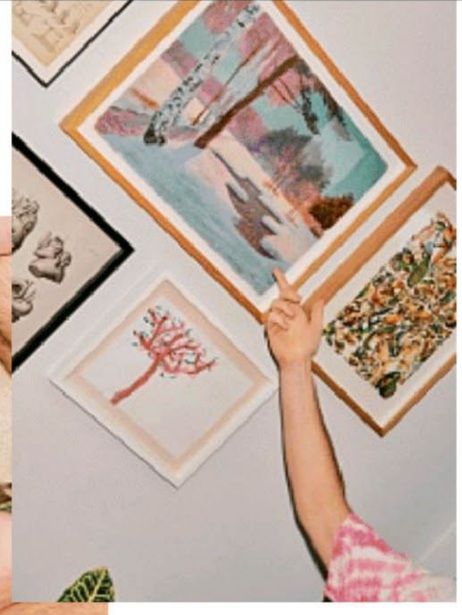
THE MOST IMPORTANT THING I LEARNED WHILE LIVING AS A NUDIST was that clothes are such a big part of how we immediately assess and judge someone. Without them, people are more reliant on what you say to work out who you are. It's pretty much the freest state you can be in. In California, I ended up playing a naked game of water polo with some senior naturists. They took the game really seriously and one of them told me off for not knowing the rules. I remember thinking, "We're NAKED, hitting a ball over a net, in some water. This is really, really silly; how can you be taking this so seriously?"

THE BEST SOUVENIR I'VE BROUGHT HOME is a landscape painting on a bit of scrap wood by an unknown Russian amateur painter. I bought it for £3 from a stranger in a car park at a local flea market called Barakholka Levsha, on the outskirts of Moscow. The thing I like about art is you don't have to explain why you like something, you just like the look of it, and that's enough. I don't think any of the art in my flat has any meaning, it's just stuff I like.

LIVING AS A NUDIST IS PRETTY MUCH THE FREEST STATE YOU CAN BE IN

THE BEST BOOK I'VE READ IN THE PAST YEAR is *Self-Defence for Women* by Pat Butler, a 1982 guide to beating the shit out of a moustached man who's wearing flares and boots with a significant heel. Attack methods are rated from one star (may not be strong enough to disable the opponent) to two stars (could kill). In the section on how to defend yourself with an umbrella, it reads, "To conclude the movement, slash the end of the umbrella across the face of your opponent. It might help identify him later."

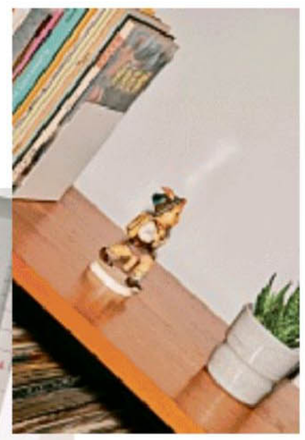




Above: his landscape by an unknown Russian painter. Left: his collection of one-person postcards



Above: tucking into a pizza in his studio. Below: several pairs of shorts, his style signifier







I LIKE POSTMEN BECAUSE THEY WEAR SHORTS ALL YEAR ROUND



Above: his empty fridge. Above left: his 1950s Hummel figure. Left: cycling past his shop on Amwell Street in Islington

THE PODCAST I'M LISTENING TO is *Real Survival Stories* by Noiser. Sixty-four episodes in and I'm obsessed: it's the only podcast I mark the days of the week by as it comes out every Thursday and I genuinely look forward to it. It's about people who fuck up in the wild and are forced to fight for their lives in order to survive. I always listen to it on headphones, usually while walking, and the ultimate scenario is when I listen to it whilst out hiking alone and vulnerable, closer to the idea of things going wrong and closer to me ending up in a future episode.

MY STYLE ICON is no one really: I'm not interested in fashion or style. I like postmen because they wear shorts all year round.

THE BEST GIFT I'VE GIVEN RECENTLY was some Sad Fuck chocolate (pictured below) to a depressed friend. I should mention that this is also my own chocolate (available in my shop in London). I also sent a particularly good WhatsApp message yesterday to a group I'm in. Five out of six members of the group replied with a laughing/crying emoji. I can only assume the sixth member was too busy to read it or had passed away.

AND THE BEST GIFT I'VE RECEIVED was a pair of miniature pink cowboy boots on a keyring last year from my mate Mills, who bought them from a car-boot fair for 20p. I attached them to my rucksack and they travelled around the world with me and changed colour, faded by about 345 days of sunshine. The gift was already good to begin with, but it became extra sentimental by keeping me company on an adventure. Another favourite was from a man called Shane who came into my shop. He handed me a West German Hummel figurine of a boy hiking, which he'd embellished with a giant (and quite realistic) handpainted clay cock. The skill and craft involved was of an exceptional standard.

I HAVE A COLLECTION of postcards with one person in them. I've been collecting them for more than two decades and have a small selection of them on display in my shop. It's probably the most important exhibition in London (the world?) right now. I speak about collecting them on stage and on the internet a lot, so strangers send me ones they've found on a weekly basis to add to my collection, which is amazing. My favourite one is of a woman standing alone in a red skirt, in this incredible white landscape of travertine terraces in Pamukkale, Turkey. I love all of them though – people alone in vast landscapes. I see a lot of myself in them.

THE BEST WAY TO SPEND £20 is to give it to someone who needs it more than you.

I DON'T HAVE ANY GROOMING OR WELLBEING GURUS. I don't consider myself beautiful enough to waste time with grooming, so my gurus are ugly, funny people who have had to develop a personality to get noticed.

A WAY TO MAKE ME LAUGH is to ask me who my grooming and wellbeing gurus are (see above).

IN MY FRIDGE YOU'LL ALWAYS FIND nothing. I don't cook or really spend time at home. Like the love from my mother, my fridge is cold and empty.

I'VE RECENTLY DISCOVERED that I don't want to be a monk. I once decided to live with some nuns in silence for a week as an experiment and found the whole thing terribly boring and a waste of time.

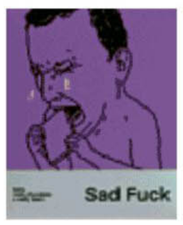
THE THINGS I COULDN'T DO WITHOUT are constant attention and admiration from strangers. It really spurs me to carry on making stuff.

AN OBJECT I WOULD NEVER PART WITH is my bike. It's taken on many incarnations over the years (mainly when it gets nicked), but the meaning remains the same with each one. I didn't really get into cycling until I was 30. Fifteen years ago, I started to suffer from pretty acute anxiety and panic attacks following a divorce. I discovered that going for a bike ride was helpful. I bought a secondhand town bike and it became my saviour: it was my friend, something I could get on and "ride off" the anxiety to an extent. Thankfully, my anxiety has gone now, but the bike is still a constant thing in my life, a faithful old friend. Now its main purpose is to get from A to B. If I can, I'll do every journey by bike or foot. Everyone thinks cycling in London is dangerous (and it is), but for me the benefits outweigh the risk.

ON MY INSTAGRAM "FOR YOU" PAGE you'll find women with large breasts in tight tops. Also street fights, muggings, violence, natural disasters, plane turbulence and cute animals.

THE ONE ARTIST WHOSE WORK I WOULD COLLECT IF I COULD is no one. I'm not interested in high-value art.

MY FAVOURITE LOCATION is Hartland Quay Hotel in north Devon. Basic rooms, basic food, all on its own on the most spectacular bit of coastline, metres from the cliff edge and the sea. I love remote, unpretentious hotels because influencers and wankers don't go there. Only wholesome, down-to-earth outdoors types who probably hiked there and are more likely to be sweet and interesting people. Paradoxically, I am of course putting myself in this category, which now makes me a wanker.



THE BEST BIT OF ADVICE I EVER RECEIVED was from someone in my litter-picking group who showed me how to rest the portable bin on your hip, which makes it more comfortable over sustained periods of time, especially as it gets heavier with the weight of the litter. ■HTSI

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TREND

THE FULL BRONTË

Let "wuthering" weather guide your wardrobe this winter, writes author *Daisy Lafarge*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **KAYLA CONNORS**
STYLING BY **ABBY ADLER**
MODELS **ALIZA JARMON** AND **RAFFAELE GIOLLI**

LOUIS VUITTON wool sleeveless blazer with leather details, £4,100. RALPH LAUREN COLLECTION wool jumper, £1,000. Silk georgette skirt (just seen), £5,900. MARGARET HOWELL MHL wool hood, £95. Vintage leather belt, stylist's own



ALAÏA wool draped body, £1,190, wool Bubbles gloves, £1,370. PROENZA SCHOULER wool bouclé dress, £1,535, and matching blanket (worn as skirt), £990

Models, Aliza Jarmon at Elite and Raffaele Giolli at Lis Rutten. Hair, Kei Terada at Julian Watson Agency using Balmain. Make-up, Lynski. Casting, Ben Grimes at Drive Represents. Photographer's assistant, Ariel Mihaly. Stylist's assistants, Emeline Tavern and Grayce Cooper. Production, Parent



Right: PRADA wool bouclé outerwear jacket, POA. JOE MERINO merino-wool Joe vest, €120. FERRAGAMO waffle-stitch cotton T-shirt (just seen), £355. Vintage cotton Levi's jeans, stylist's own. Necklace, model's own

Winter in Haworth, some time in the 1840s. Emily Brontë steps off the wild and windswept moor where she has spent the day walking, and into the warmth of the family parsonage. She kicks off her pattens, the wooden overshoes that protect her cloth slippers from the elements, but finds the weather has got to them anyway. They are soaked through, and she trails damp footprints behind her. Mud splatters the hem of her dress (I picture it as a thick, heavy silk because the Brontës' father insisted on this material; he was terrified that, in an era of open-flamed gas lamps and stoves, dresses made of a more flammable fabric would lead to disaster). In addition, Emily wears a winter bonnet and a heavy wool cloak; sufficient to have kept her warm, perhaps, but not entirely weatherproofed. The Brontës certainly knew what it was to be overwhelmed by the elements, in spite of one's best efforts.

I am imagining this scene not only because it's the season to reread *Wuthering Heights* (nor only as a new adaptation is incoming from director Emerald Fennell), but also because, at the outset of my 14th winter in Scotland, I am faced once again with preparing my wardrobe for the months ahead. And, living at the edge of the Yorkshire moors, the Brontës understood better than many how our environment shapes our everyday life.

Emily borrowed "wuthering" from her local West Yorkshire dialect, an adjective that would be poorly replaced by any word in standard English. The novel opens with Mr Lockwood, a faint-hearted southerner, encountering this term for the first time: the name of Mr Heathcliff's dwelling, he learns, describes "the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather". It is a place of "pure, bracing ventilation" that leaves what few trees and hedges survive there "craving alms of the sun". Accordingly, coats, cloaks and furs recur through the novel, designating not just social class but also whether a character is capable of refinement or instead belongs to wild, unrepentant nature. After all, readers' first glimpse of Heathcliff, as a mysteriously orphaned child, is as he emerges from Mr Earnshaw's bundled-up coat. There's something foreboding about this coat; it protects but it might also contaminate, as if it brings something from the outside in.

The novel is testament to the richness that comes from paying deep attention to the elements. We may not all be endowed with Brontëan literary genius but we can all heighten our awareness of the environment and draw something from it.

Dressing is integral to this. Over the years I have learned that the pleasure of cold-weather clothing lies in attuning myself to the specifics of where I am. I find the east coast of Scotland drier but windier, lashed by icy gales from the North Sea that make maximum coverage a priority. Edinburgh is also graced with the lingering *haar* that can blanket the city in thick sea fog for days at a time. There, I favour an old suede Creenstone that covers me from chin to ankle. Conditions on the west coast are different: more rain but less wind, and a tendency to be temperate and muggier if also more volatile, thanks to the warming Gulf Stream. In Glasgow, boots and jackets to slick off the rain and *dreich* are a priority.

We can formulate our delicate "winter palette" with a glance out of the window: grey and dark skies, sombre browns and the occasional snowy white. But even once the autumn leaves have fallen, a short walk shows that winter is not only muted and monochromatic. There is the indigo of heather, the deep green of holly, the bright red of yew berries and rosehips and the eerie yellow stars of witchhazel. In Scottish Gaelic, terms for colour move through scales of shininess, saturation and hue, weaving a richer vocabulary for plotting the interplay of weather and landscape: "gorm" and "glas" both refer to shiny greens, but "gorm" is bluish and saturated while "glas" is grey and unsaturated. Both may be used to describe vegetation, metals, seas and eyes, but their accurate deployment depends on how much attention we are paying.

THERE IS A RICHNESS IN PAYING DEEP ATTENTION TO THE ELEMENTS

Attuning is an ongoing process: the season never stands still, and there is always more to see. The trick, as Emily knew, is to be prepared for unpredictability, but perhaps not so insulated that the elements can't touch you at all. ■HTSI

Daisy Lafarge's latest book, Lovebug, is published by Peninsula at £10.99



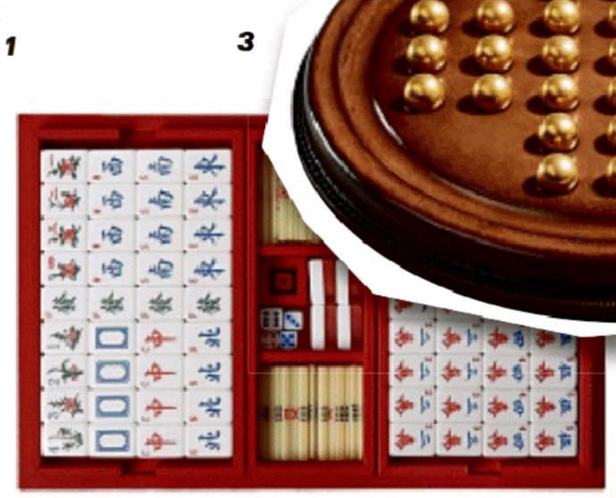
GUCCI wool/acetate gabardine sportswear blouson, £2,550. PRADA wool jumper (worn as scarf), POA. MARGARET HOWELL MHL wool hood, £95. BRIONI cotton and cupro velvet trousers, £850. JOHN LOBB suede leather loafers, £1,220

SHOPPING

DIVERSIONARY TACTICS

Playful puzzles and games for holiday downtime. By *Aylin Bayhan*



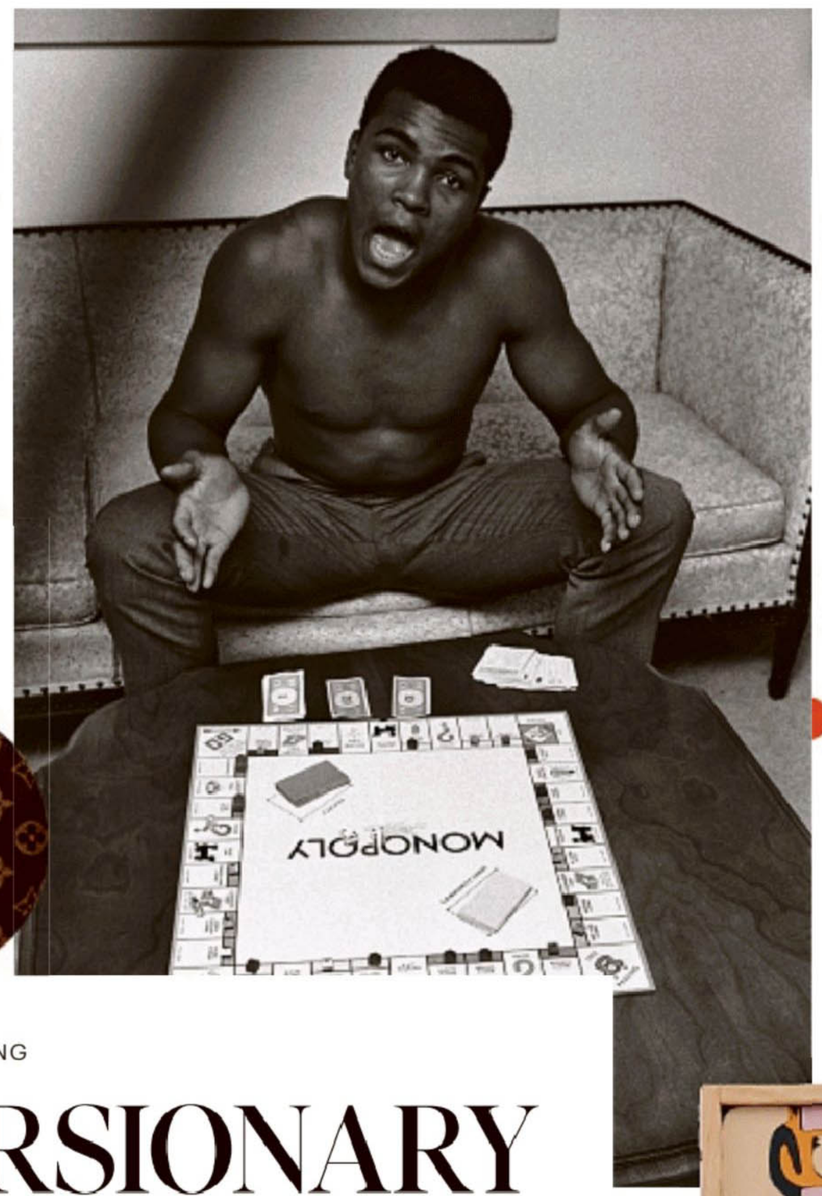


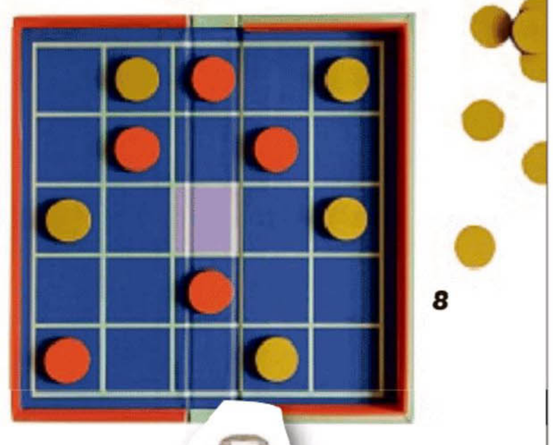




























The inspiration. Muhammad Ali plays Monopoly in 1963. **1.** ART OF PING PONG wood ArtTable wall-mountable ping-pong table, £1,129. **2.** GIOBAGNARA leather mahjong set, £2,415. **3.** BERLUTI leather solitaire game, £4,000. **4.** PRADA leather dominoes set, £2,300. **5.** HERMÈS oak Atout d'Hermès games table, £94,000. **6.** KIKKERLAND wood four-in-a-row travel game, £14. **7.** FENDI oak, beechwood and Plexiglas Roma tower game, £3,100. **8.** REMEMBER wood and cardboard seega board, £22, notanotherbill.com. **9.** NOBLE MACMILLAN leather and wood boules set, £260, abask.com. **10.** LOEWE leather 16 Animali board game, £1,000. **11.** BOTTEGA VENETA leather skipping rope, £1,710. **12.** ARMANI CASA ashwood, eco-leather and metal toboggan, $5,020. **13.** LORO PIANA leather Finnish skittles set, £3,140. **14.** ASPINAL OF LONDON leather Monopoly set, £1,595. **15.** RALPH LAUREN HOME leather and steel Westover playing card set, £315. **16.** MONTBLANC x JAMES PURDEY & SONS metal poker set, £6,600. **17.** LIBELLUD Dixit board game, £29.99, amazon.co.uk. **18.** SOUTHBANK CENTRE birch and beech wood Stickadoo game, £40. **19.** LOUIS VUITTON wood and cowhide James ping-pong set, £1,490. **20.** WILLIAM & SON leather liar dice set, £620

PHOTOGRAPH: STEVE SCHAPIRO/CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES



The *Butler* Did It.

RAFFLES

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SHENZHEN MACAU ISTANBUL DUBAI DOHA BAHRAIN MAKKAH WARSAW PARIS LONDON BOSTON

MEMBER OF All

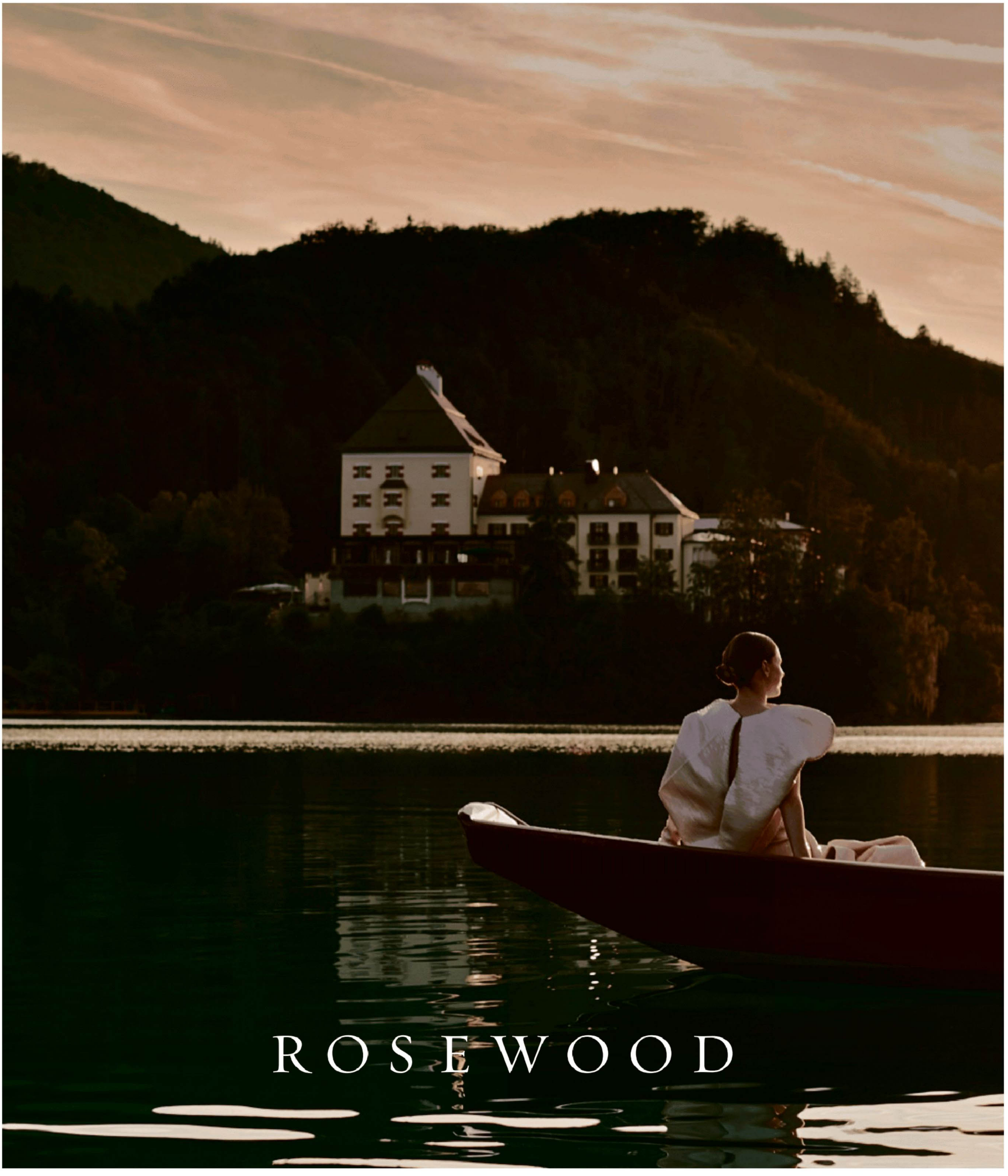




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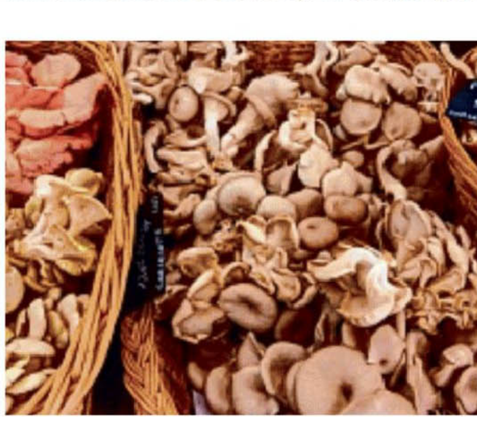
A VEGETABLE STALL AT TORVEHALLERNE, COPENHAGEN

SHOPPING

THE WORLD'S BEST FOOD MARKETS

FT writers and editors choose their favourite places to stock up on great local produce

Madrid
MERCADO DE SAN MIGUEL
Mercado de San Miguel, Madrid's first to focus on gourmet food, opened in 1916 in a spectacular cast-iron structure near Plaza Mayor. The gourmet emporium is a celebration of the Spanish larder, with more than 30 stalls offering a range of produce, from Galicia's famed fresh fish and seafood, to olives, cheese, cured meats and top-notch tapas. It's worth popping in if only to perch at one of its wine bars with a glass of cava and a plate of boquerones. It's chaos, but that is part of this *mercado*'s (and Madrid's) charm. **NIKI BLASINA**



MERCATO DEL CAPO, PALERMO

Palermo
MERCATO DEL CAPO
Founded during the Arab domination of Sicily, Mercato del Capo remains one of the more multicultural corners of the city. Here you can find Nigerian textile traders rubbing shoulders with burly fishmongers expertly filleting tunas, or sample myriad olives and cheeses from the island's hinterland. My grandfather taught me to come early, and make a beeline for the cart selling steaming slices of *sfincione* (a focaccia-like bread served with oregano, anchovies and caciocavallo cheese). **BEN MARINO**

Dijon
LES HALLES DE DIJON
Inspired by the designs of one of the city's most famous sons, Gustave Eiffel, this Dijon market is a vaulted, ironwork theatre of Burgundian gastronomy. Four days a week, Les Halles hums with local producers selling Charolais beef for the classic bœuf à la bourguignonne, giant wheels of Comté cheese from the nearby Jura, as well as the wines, more cheeses, chickens, mushrooms (above), snails and mustards for which the region is famed. **JOHN THORNHILL**

London
CHAPEL MARKET, ISLINGTON
Chapel Market is part of my life, my identity. It's always felt under threat but never died – it really is the place where everyone knows your name. It is where you go for last glimpses of a mixed London community with some good veg and excellent chat. Now there is a farmers' market too, but it's the old-fashioned "normal" market that gives me the most joy and the avocados I can actually afford. **JULIET RIDDELL**

Los Angeles
GRAND CENTRAL MARKET
For more than a century, Grand Central Market in Los Angeles's downtown historic district has celebrated the city's many food cultures under one roof. While legacy vendors such as China Cafe (c1959), best known for its huge bowls of wonton soup and off-menu egg rolls, reign on, in recent years a host of new businesses has been welcomed into the fold, from Lucky Bird, the market's first and only stall dedicated to fried chicken and its accoutrements (read: waffles dripping in syrup) to award-winning smashburgers at For The Win. Not to be missed: the all-day breakfast burritos at Jose Chiquito. **INÈS CROSS**



Lyon
LES HALLES DE LYON PAUL BOCUSE
One of this famously gastronomic city's largest markets (above) opened in 1859 and was renamed after the late chef Paul Bocuse, a native son, in 2006 following a total renovation. Today it covers three floors with more than 13,500sq m, and is home to 54 stalls and restaurants. Don't miss Mons *fromager*, one of the best cheesemongers in France; Patisserie Seve for a sticky pink tarte aux pralines; and Bobosse for Lyonnais charcuterie like plump pistachio-studded fresh sausage. Great eats on the spot include Baba La Grenouille for frogs' legs en persillade and Chez Les Gones for local comfort food like quenelles de brochet (pike dumplings). **ALEXANDER LOBRANO**

Valencia
CENTRAL MARKET
At this, one of the biggest food markets in Europe, more than 1,200 stalls sell everything from fresh fruit, meat, cheese and live eels. Forage for a picnic lunch, admire the stained-glass windows or spend the afternoon sipping cold beer and eating a loin sandwich at Richard Camarena's Central Bar. **SALLY HICKEY**



SINGAPORE'S EAST COAST LAGOON FOOD VILLAGE

Singapore
EAST COAST LAGOON FOOD VILLAGE
"Peaceful" is the last word most would use to describe Singapore's hawker markets. That's why locals often skip the more famous ones in the central area for East Coast Lagoon Food Village, in one of the city-state's largest beach parks. There you can find food-market staples including satay, sugar-cane juice and Hainanese chicken rice, plus seafood specialities such as chilli crab and fried oysters, all served with ocean views. **TAYLOR NICOLE ROGERS**

Paris
MARCHÉ DE L'AVENUE PRÉSIDENT-WILSON
Dubbed the chicest market in Paris by *Le Figaro*, this lively open-air market is

PHOTOGRAPHS: ENGIN KORKMAZ/ALAMY. HEMIS/ALAMY. IMAGEBROKER.COM/ALAMY. NICK GLEITZMAN/STOCKIMO/ALAMY



HILO FARMERS' MARKET, HAWAII

popular with Parisian chefs for the exceptional quality of stands such as Le Bar à Patates, which specialises in potatoes, mushrooms and fresh herbs, and La Bergerie du Mesnil, run by Sandy Brown McKeen, an Irish farmer who lives in Normandy and produces exceptional yoghurt, cream, milk, and meat. La Maison Priolet is also renowned for its game and high-quality poultry. A variety of food stands serve food to eat on the hoof, such as grilled Lebanese bread and Breton crêpes, plus juicy rotisserie chickens that make for a great picnic or fast meal in a holiday flat. **AL**

Trebinje, Bosnia and Herzegovina
GREEN MARKET

Under the deep shade of century-old plane trees, dotted across the central town square, market traders from surrounding villages sell local produce. Bellows cheese made in an identical way since the 14th century, renowned Herzegovinian wine, honey, medicinal herbs and prosciutto are just a few of the delights on offer. After food tasting and shopping, visitors sit in the cafés on the square to cool down with a lemonade and enjoy people-watching. **TATJANA MITEVSKA**

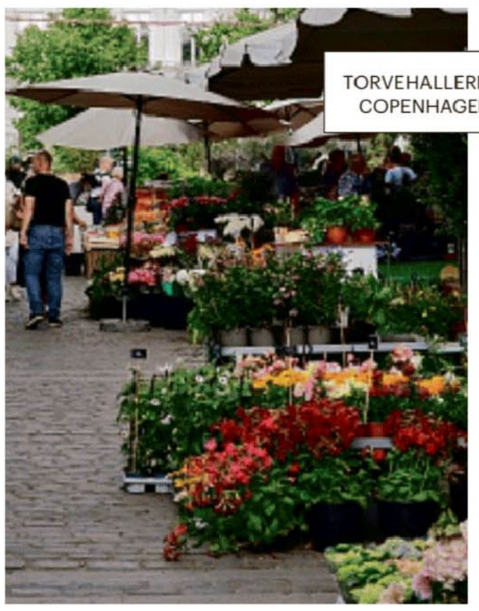


Tokyo
TSUKIJI OUTER MARKET

Tsukiji (above) has got everything, from unctuous otoro to the ethically questionable (but legal) whale skewers. Try a hearty bowl of beef intestine and miso stew at Kitsuneya. Then head to Iroha for mochi topped with giant strawberries, especially if the Amaou variety is in season. For post-prandial coffee, grab a cup of City Blend at John Lennon's go-to shop Yonemoto. **KRISTINE CHING**

Big Island, Hawaii
HILO FARMERS' MARKET

With more than 200 vendors selling everything from passion fruit to poke bowls, this indoor-outdoor market is a vibrant must-experience on Hawaii's Big Island. With special sections for tropical plants (orchids and anthuriums are abundant), macadamia nuts and artisanal oils, as well as colourful sarongs and hand-carved wooden accessories, this is a one-stop-shop. Be sure to sample the fruits of the season – white pineapples, thimble berries, strawberry papayas, guavas – and the local Kona coffee, preferably on Wednesdays and Saturdays when the market is particularly popping. **CHRISTINA OHLY EVANS**



TORVEHALLERNE, COPENHAGEN

Copenhagen
TORVEHALLERNE

The glass-walled market hall in the centre of town offers a taste of Copenhagen's culinary prowess. Both a food market and an incubator for chefs, Torvehallerne is home to more than 60 restaurant stalls and purveyors of artisanal food and drink, flowers, plants and kitchen tools. Danish specialities are plenty: rows of smørrebrød with kaleidoscopic toppings, artfully folded pastries and dense rye breads. Cuisines from around the world are also well represented, from Spanish tapas to Mexican tacos to Chinese crêpes. Though on a cold day, it's the fresh pasta at Il Mattarello that really makes my heart sing. **NB**

Nîmes
LES HALLES DE NÎMES

Nîmes' elegant 19th-century glass-and-steel market pavilion was replaced by a modern cement structure in the 1970s, but this did nothing to dent the passion of the food-loving Nîmois. Visit Nadal, a century-old coffee roaster; Les Fromages de Sylvain, for his excellent selection of cheeses and wonderful sense of humour; and the new stall selling brandade de Nîmes, the creamy garlicky salt-cod preparation that's the city's best-known dish. Plan on lunch at La Pie Qui Couette, a counter-seating, lunch-only restaurant that's hugely popular for its *cuisine du marché* menu, but get there early. **AL**

Herceg Novi, Montenegro
GREEN MARKET

Tucked away in one corner of the old stone town, this small market offers an unusual mix of high-quality continental and Mediterranean food. Located at the entry of Montenegro Boka Bay, it is supplied by tropical fruit grown in villages on the coast, such as fortunela, oranges, pomegranate, lemons and kiwis, as well as fresh seafood. Farmers from villages in the mountains surrounding the town bring traditional authentic produce such as the renowned prosciutto from Njeguši, potatoes from Kruševice, goat's cheese, wild asparagus and wild garlic. **TM**

Adelaide
ADELAIDE CENTRAL MARKET

This is in my hometown, and it certainly beats more renowned markets like La Boqueria. It's a combination of great food stalls, particularly Asian, veggie shopping for the ordinary person and lot of foodie-type stalls. It's a tale of a market that can provide a focus for a city and enrich it – and a tale of the integration of the various tides of immigrants from Italy and Greece in the postwar period, Vietnamese, Cambodians and Lebanese in the 1970s and '80s and Chinese and Indians more recently. **TONY TASSELL**

Philadelphia
CLARK PARK FARMERS' MARKET

West Philadelphia converges with Pennsylvania's yeoman tradition at the Clark Park Farmers' Market. Every Saturday, Amish farmers hawk their produce across from West Philly and East Kensington businesses selling pound cakes or seafood. One can enjoy new Philadelphia favourites Nilaa Coffee, Aaji's Kitchen or Lost Bread or just as easily buy preserves and cheese from a family-owned farm, in a space that is testament to Philadelphia's shifting yet venerable culinary scene. **AIDEN REITER**

Dubrovnik
GRUŽ HARBOUR MARKET

This is the largest and cheapest market in the city, with its home in the garden of the Gundulić summer villa. Locals come early in the morning to buy fresh fish straight off the boats from the Elafiti islands. Farmers from Dubrovnik's Konavle suburb sell a wide selection of their organic produce here throughout the day. Traditional local delicacies such as dried figs, candied orange peel, extra-virgin olive oil and quince jelly are also available as souvenirs for visitors. **TM**



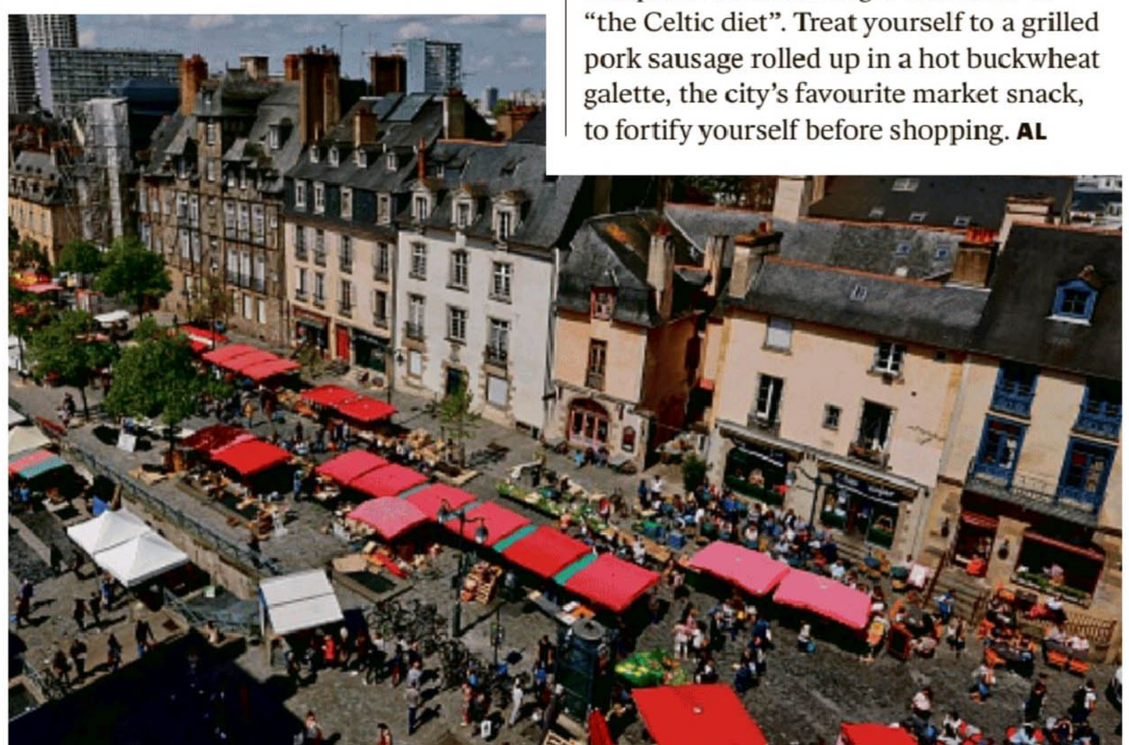
A FRUIT STALL AT BELGRADE'S KALENIĆ MARKET

Belgrade
KALENIĆ PIJACA

This is the most popular and the best-stocked food market in the Serbian capital. Located in Vračar in the heart of the city, it is named after Vlajko Kalenić, who donated the land on which it was built almost a century ago. A vast variety of produce, from home-distilled brandy rakija, kaymak cheese and fruit and vegetables to cured meats and spices, is on display on stalls where sellers and buyers haggle, joke and even sing. Many locals tell me they change their walking routes just to enjoy the splendid site of colourful stalls full of fragrant produce. **TM**

Rennes
MARCHÉ DES LICES

Described by the preeminent Breton chef Olivier Roellinger as "the best larder in Brittany", the second-largest food market in France (below) was founded in 1622. Some 300 stalls sell everything from seafood landed only hours earlier to Roscoff onions, big snowy cauliflowers, dozens of apple varieties, honey and other foods that comprise what Roellinger describes as "the Celtic diet". Treat yourself to a grilled pork sausage rolled up in a hot buckwheat galette, the city's favourite market snack, to fortify yourself before shopping. **AL**



PHOTOGRAPHS: DESTINATION RENNES/JULIEN MIGNOT. KIYOSHI OTA/BLOOMBERG. RICHARD CUMMINS/ALAMY. VÉRONIQUE DURRUTY/GAMMA-RAPHO VIA GETTY IMAGES

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CRIMSON SNAPPER AT SYDNEY FISH MARKET

Sydney
FISH MARKET

The largest market of its kind in the southern hemisphere is a cornerstone of Australia's gourmet tourist trade, with a vast array of fresh fish and seafood on show – including oddities like blood cockles and Moreton Bay Bugs – and sushi, oysters, fish and chips and lobsters served on site. The famous blue-coloured market building, located in Pyrmont to the west of the centre of the city, is set to move next year but only by a few hundred metres into a new purpose-built facility. **NIC FILDES**



Athens
EXARCHIA FARMERS' MARKET

Every Saturday in Athens, the historic anarchist district of Exarchia hosts a farmers' market (above), which runs along Kallidromiou under the famous graffitied steps. Musicians play traditional Greek music as sellers flaunt their wares: olive oil, honey and an assortment of fresh fish, herbs and vegetables. While Exarchia has been gentrified over the past few decades, and police tensions have amplified since the building of a new metro station nearby, the market remains a touchstone in the neighbourhood: a place where students, anarchists, artists and academics meld with tourists. **LUCINDA SMYTH**

Delhi
CHANDNI CHOWK

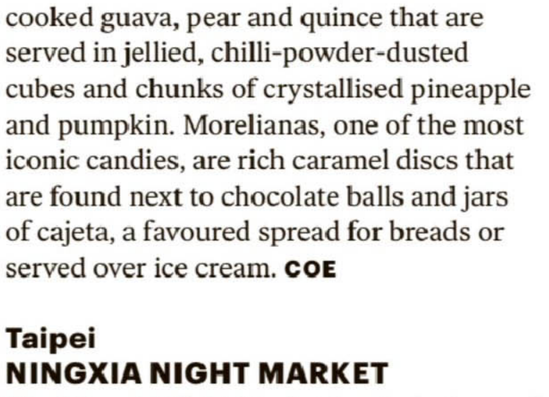
This bustling Old Delhi bazaar is a maze of streets and narrow alleys, with the iconic Red Fort at its eastern end. Enormous piles of cardamom and cloves, dried fruit and nuts, Kashmiri saffron and every imaginable street food – curries, roti, samosas and kebabs – send smells wafting through the thick air. Of special note are the stalls offering sweets including mango-stuffed kulfi, crispy fried jalebi and Karachi halwa. **COE**

Mexico City
MERCADO SAN JUAN

A favourite of Mexico City chefs, Mercado San Juan is packed with every ingredient you might need, and plenty you don't. Stalls in the downtown market sell everything from pitaya, clams and cacao fruit to dozens of varieties of chilies. It's also a frequent stop for food-tour groups ogling a selection of more exotic choices, including an array of protein-packed scorpions and crocodile meat. For the less adventurous, there are plenty of wine and cheese options. **CHRISTINE MURRAY**

Melbourne
QUEEN VICTORIA MARKET

The aroma of frying doughnuts and brewing coffee wafts over the market as tourists and locals alike pick through acres of fresh fruit and vegetable stands. The bustling meat, seafood and cheese halls are chock-a-block with people trying tastes of Australian and farther-flung specialities. Officially opened in 1878, the "Queen Vic" draws 10 million visitors annually. More than 600 food and non-food stalls are open five days a week, and there's a weekly night market focusing on street food, live entertainment and crafts. **BROOKE MASTERS**



Livorno
MERCATO DELLE VETTOVAGLIE

The 1890s Liberty-style market (above) of the Tuscan port city of Livorno is a vibrant and down-to-earth place to savour torta di ceci (chickpea flour flatbread), fresh oysters shucked on the spot or acciughe alla povera (fresh marinated anchovies). Visit speciality food shops (one is devoted entirely to prized Livornese hens' eggs), then ogle the stalls showing off the Ligurian Sea's bounty while you plan dinner – the earlier you arrive, the better. **EMIKO DAVIES**

Morelia, Mexico
MERCADO DE DULCES

For anyone with a serious sweet tooth, this sprawling, sugar-filled mega-market is worth a detour. Start a market tour with the local delicacy ate (ah-tay) – slow-cooked guava, pear and quince that are served in jellied, chilli-powder-dusted cubes and chunks of crystallised pineapple and pumpkin. Morelianas, one of the most iconic candies, are rich caramel discs that are found next to chocolate balls and jars of cajeta, a favoured spread for breads or served over ice cream. **COE**

Taipei
NINGXIA NIGHT MARKET

The Ningxia Night Market is relatively small compared to the island's other sprawling competitors, but it is mighty. Its oyster omelette shop is famous and well worth a visit, but if you want to avoid the queues, there are plenty of other treats to indulge in. Seek out the deep-fried taro balls, stinky tofu and the unsung hero of desserts: the ice-cream wrap with peanut candy shavings and coriander. Go hungry, leave full. **ELLIE OLCOTT**



TAIPEI'S NINGXIA NIGHT MARKET



Seoul
GWANGJANG MARKET

Thousands of eateries comprise this sprawling soul-food mecca (above), offering everything from kimchi dumplings to steaming bowls of bibimbap and noodles that are perfect for slurping, grilled meat and mung-bean pancakes. Pull up a plastic stool in the food court and absorb the energy of the many hawkers – and a sea of voracious eaters savouring local delicacies. The market features an area dedicated to clothing and home goods as well, and it's the ideal place to buy an exquisite silk *hanbok* (traditional Korean dress). **COE**

AN AFGHAN-MANTU DUMPLING VENDOR AT THE NIGHT MARKET IN QUEENS, NEW YORK

Queens, NYC
NIGHT MARKET

A highlight of the New York summer is the Queens Night Market, a nocturnal festival attracting more than 60 independent food and art vendors. Located in Flushing, it begins in April, and continues until October. From early evening until midnight, visitors can sample street food from across the globe, and unlike many glossy food-stall markets, the food vendor prices are capped at $6. Check out the Trinidadian bake and shark from Caribbean Street Eats or curry crab at Trini Treats, or the arepa sampler at Arepalicious. **MADISON DARBYSHIRE**

Oaxaca, Mexico
PASILLO DE HUMO

A stroll down the Mercado 20 de Noviembre's "smoke corridor" is an immersive experience. The market itself is famed for stalls selling tlayudas – giant, crispy tortillas with beans, local cheese, and other toppings. In its dark, sweltering smoke passage, sellers display an assortment of meats they will chargrill and put into a tortilla for you. A word of warning: you might take the smell with you. **CM■HTSI**

PHOTOGRAPHS: ALANA DIMOU. BRIAN BILLS/QUEENS NIGHT MARKET. FRANÇOIS LOCHON/GAMMA-RAPHO/GETTY IMAGES. JOSE MARIA HERNANDEZ/ALAMY. STOCKINASIA/ALAMY

ART DIR: PAUL MARCIANO PH: NIMA BENATI © GUESS?, INC. 2024

GEORGINA
for
GUESS





LOUIS VUITTON


Photography by Sølve Sundsbø
SOPHIE BILLE BRAHE
1000 Madison Avenue New York

STYLE

TAILORED TO HER

Looking for a fresh take on women's suiting? These four designers have got the right fits. By *Sara Semic*



RÓHE WOOL TAILORED JACKET, £740



Right: LIBEROWE wool tweed cropped Raja jacket, £1,100, and duchesse satin Vera mini skirt, £480. Below: RÓHE viscose and silk Backward blazer top, £640, and viscose and silk textured trousers, £440. Bottom: GALLELLO ATELIER cashmere and silk Angelina tuxedo dress, £12,900



When Talia Loubaton came up with the design for her Raja jacket, she hadn't intended to start a clothing brand. Inspired by the traditional sherwani menswear styles she saw during a trip to Jaipur in 2018, she was initially looking to make a version for her own wardrobe. "What struck me was the simplicity of the silhouette," says the Paris-born designer. "It reminded me of some cuts from the '70s, and I've always been really into fashion from that era."

The jacket (£1,200), featuring an elegant Nehru collar, velvet-trimmed flap pockets and a slightly darted waist, has since become a signature style of Liberowe, the women's tailoring brand Loubaton launched in 2021. Drawing on '60s and '70s French films such as *Manon 70* as well as ceremonial Indian attire, Liberowe's collection of tailored separates blurs the lines between day- and eveningwear: sleek bouclé-tweed shift dresses, cotton-poplin shirts with vampish lace-trimmed collars and peplum jackets in sumptuous red velvet and black silk (shirts from £480). The majority of pieces are manufactured in London using ultra-fine fabrics (some of the brand's wool and tweed comes from the same factories as Chanel's). The label is steadily gaining ground: direct sales of the Raja jacket have increased by almost 200 per cent in the past year.

"With every collection I'm thinking, how can I make a nice blend of something masculine with something feminine, or combine something from the Orient with the Occident," says Loubaton, who specialised in knitwear at Central Saint Martins. "I'm always trying to merge different antipodes."

Liberowe is one of a number of new tailoring-focused labels. Copenhagen-based Bonnetje, founded by Maison Margiela alums Yoko Maja Hansen and Anna Myntekær, cuts up old men's suits and splices them into feminine, slightly offbeat creations, while Rohé in Amsterdam has become a word-of-mouth hit thanks to pieces such as "backward" blazer tops (£640) and tailored jackets with extra-large vents (£640), which delicately straddle the line between classic and avant-garde.

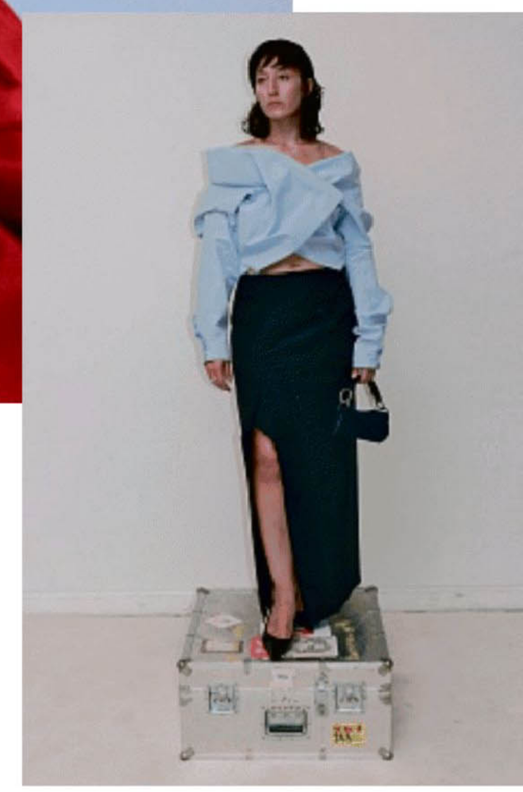
"I love the challenge of going back to a classic suit or classic coat and making it different somehow," says Argentinian-Italian designer Veronica de Piante, who launched her namesake label of contemporary tailoring, outerwear and knitwear in 2022. Produced in family-run factories in Italy as well as in collaboration with the social enterprise SEP Jordan, de Piante's offering melds a certain Italian *sprezzatura* – inspired by her Milanese upbringing and "seeing all these elegant people in their beautiful, tailored suits" – with a love of '90s minimalism: leather belted trench coats, pinstripe wool jackets with nipped-in waists and tailored minidresses and skirts (from £860) in flattering crepe.

"I'm not the type of person to stand in front of my wardrobe and put an outfit together," says de Piante. "I'm quite lazy. I don't want to think about it too much. But if I throw on my Charlotte trench or a beautifully cut blazer, I feel polished. I feel comfortable walking into any situation."

The lack of good skirt suits was part of what spurred Stacey Gallello to launch a made-to-measure tailoring house last year. "When I was looking to fill my personal tailoring needs, it was all very masculine, and the designs offered for women were kind of an afterthought based on the menswear," says Gallello, whose sophisticated skirt suits hark back to the polished style of silver-screen sirens Grace Kelly and Audrey Hepburn (from £5,000). "There was a great offering of boxier blazers and trousers, but I really wanted to lean into a more feminine silhouette."

"I WANTED TO LEAN INTO A MORE FEMININE SILHOUETTE"

Inspired by the archives of Gallello's husband's grandfather Dominic Gallello, who worked as a pattern maker for Christian Dior in the 1950s, Gallello



Above: BONNETJE bonded-cotton shirt, €1,200, and wool skirt, €960. VENCZEL x BONNETJE leather bag, €830



LIBEROWE WOOL TWEED PEPLUM JACKET, £1,500, AND VERA MINI SKIRT, £480



PHOTOGRAPHS: ALEXIS MARK/KRISTOFFER LI. LIBEROWE. NATELLA KISELEVA. STEPHANIE OONK


JESSICA McCORMACK
Diamond Jewellery

Atelier aims to fill the gap between ready-to-wear and haute couture. Each piece is handcrafted in its Venice atelier by a master tailor and sold via trunk shows in London, Paris, St Tropez and Riyadh as well as private appointments. "I feel like we talk about craftsmanship a lot but it's this really abstract concept," says Gallello, who plans to open a salon in London. "We are trying to go back to that era of the 1950s couturier's atelier and connect clients with those artisans."

ALTHOUGH OF A MORE bohemian aesthetic, Copenhagen-based La Bagatelle has a similar ethos. "After years of working in fashion magazines I saw the effect of mass production and over-consumption and wanted to contribute something different," says Malene Malling, who worked as a magazine editor and publisher before launching the label three years ago. Using unique textiles such as 100-year-old Indian embroidered silk and 1930s vintage Chinese cotton as a starting point, each piece is made by independent tailors in Copenhagen.

"Tailor-made pieces feel so gentle on the body, and I love the fact that the limitation of fabric means that for most styles it is only possible to do a few of each," she says. Her clothes, such as drapey wool jackets with sloped shoulders and needlecord trousers with elasticated waists, have a soft, easy elegance, designed for women who lead "full and real lives", she says. "The La Bagatelle wardrobe has to look and feel special but at the same time, the clothes have to 'work'."

LA BAGATELLE KODO-CORDUROY BLIXEN JACKET, $1,400



For de Piante, it's the simplicity and timelessness of tailoring that makes it so excitingly ripe for reinvention. "Growing up, my mother was always obsessed with blazers, and I used to think, 'God, how boring!'" she admits. "But I've now realised that all you really need is a good jacket or a good coat to feel dressed." ■**HTSI**

PHOTOGRAPH: KAT IRLIN

Below: VERONICA DE PIANTE leather Blaire jacket, £3,455, and leather Avery trousers, £2,850



JEWELLERY

SLIDE AND CHIC

Cowboy-core dominated fashion this year. There's a Western note in jewellery too. By *Ming Liu*

The bolo tie, a staple of Western neckwear, recently returned to the catwalks at Martine Rose and Louis Vuitton along with 10-gallon hats and rodeo shirts. But, rather than sporting rhinestones, things are getting precious: the bolo's braided leather cords have been replaced by adjustable precious-metal strands and blinged out with diamonds. Enter: the slider necklace.

Beyoncé channelled frontier attitude in February when she paired an all-white Prabal Gurung look with De Beers's Prelude necklace from its Metamorphosis collection. Looped through a line of classic diamonds, the diamond-set slider was topped with a 10.05ct pear-shaped yellow diamond, accentuated with white, rose and yellow gold. The singer again chose De Beers to usher in her *Cowboy Carter* album, posing with the Dewdrop necklace with a pavé-set slider. In the house's latest high-jewellery collection, Forces of Nature, the slider features once more, most notably in the Spirituality Sautoir, featuring a pair of coiling white-gold horns that top a detachable 3.01ct cushion-cut diamond (it doubles as a brooch).

A large part of the slider's appeal lies in its versatility. Worn either as a choker or a sautoir, left to drape across the clavicle or adorn a backless look, a slider necklace offers a wealth of styling possibilities. "It's up to the wearer to figure out what the best version is on them," says Pierre Rainero, Cartier's director of image, style and heritage, whose new Cartier Libre Tuttitutti necklace features a zingy chrysoprase slider that glides along a twisted gold chain topped with tassels of diamonds, chrysoprases and onyx beads. Celebrity stylist Nicky Yates, whose clients include Naomi Ackie and Felicity Jones, agrees: "They offer great versatility for looks with different necklines."

Sliders have long been popular as transformable jewels, dating back to the 19th century. Cartier's archives hold a 1906 Lavallière necklace with a knot-like motif and detachable pendants that may be worn as a brooch, and a 1952 twisted gold number that has no clasp and is simply tied around the neck. But perhaps the most evocative predecessor to today's slider is Van Cleef & Arpels's iconic 1950 zip necklace, comprising a bejewelled fastener that can be zipped up and down the neck, or fully closed to transform into a bracelet. Engineered over more than 10 years at the suggestion of the Duchess of Windsor, the piece is believed to have been inspired by Elsa Schiaparelli.

That same deference to transformation is at the heart of Chanel's new high-jewellery collection, Haute Joaillerie Sport, thanks to a push-button slider that glides along a necklace. Comprising white gold, diamonds, onyx and black lacquer, the necklace's slider button is topped with a 5.19ct diamond that can be positioned to create either a double-row choker or a sautoir. As Patrice Leguéreau, the late director of Chanel's fine-jewellery creation studio, explained: "This collection is refined and streamlined to create jewellery that embraces the body's anatomy in the same way as sportswear."

WEAR IT WITH "A TAILORED BLAZER AND NOTHING UNDERNEATH"



From left: CHAUMET rose-gold and diamond Bee My Love pendant, £5,860. DAVID YURMAN silver and diamond Petite X Lariat necklace, $675. PIAGET rose-gold and diamond Possession pendant necklace, £9,850

But the new slider styles are not just for red-carpet rodeos. The latest diamond-set gold slider in Piaget's Possession line has a delicate carved gold finish to match its vintage-style gold chain. Chaumet offers a slider interpretation of its popular Bee My Love necklace, the ends of the rose-gold chain set with gold and diamond honeycomb motifs. Meanwhile, New York's Marli has recently incorporated diamond and gold sliders in the rings and necklaces of its LIFE collection.

At Pomellato, stylish Iconica sliders are ringed with a trio of either peridot, blue topaz or Pyrope garnet. The Italian house subtly leant into the Western theme last year when it unveiled a lariat-style Catene Milano high-jewellery necklace. Peppered with diamond rings along its gold, rope-mesh chain, a central clasp can be fixed to move up and down the piece, while a swivelling and diamond-pavé hardware-style jewel dangles from the end. Meanwhile, Carolina Bucci's scarf mesh necklace riffs off the slider design, updated with rings that the wearer can add or remove according to their whim.

The slider's multiwear appeal makes the design feel right for now, whether in service of the cowboy craze or merely as a hard-working piece in your jewellery box. Yates suggests it can even replace a top. Wear it with "a tailored blazer and nothing underneath", she counsels. "I'd opt for a delicate chain with a subtle gemstone slider to keep it clean and contemporary." ■**HTSI**



Above: CHANEL white-gold, diamond, onyx and black lacquer Haute Joaillerie Sport necklace, POA

Left: MARLI rose-gold and diamond Spinning Cravat necklace, £7,800



Left: DE BEERS yellow-, white- and rose-gold, and white- and yellow-diamond Prelude necklace and brooch, POA

Right: CAROLINA BUCCI white-gold and black silk Pinched Woven Scarf, £26,570

POMELLATO rose-gold and diamond Catena Milano necklace, POA

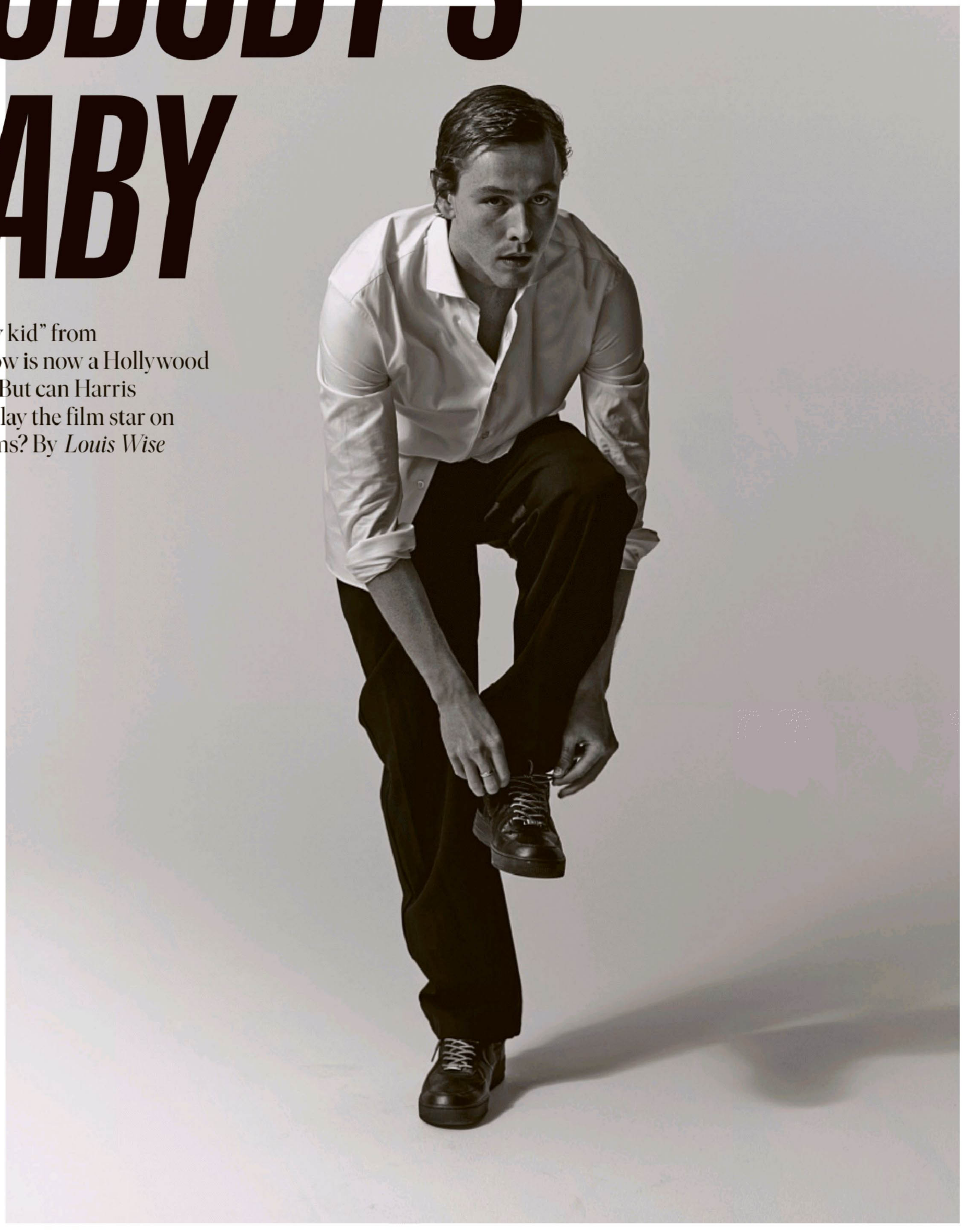
Left: CARTIER white- and yellow-gold, diamond, onyx and chrysoprase Tuttitutti necklace, POA


PALACE
STUSSY

NOBODY'S BABY

Photography by *Bruno Staub*
Styling by *Julian Ganio*

The "chubby kid" from Walthamstow is now a Hollywood heartthrob. But can Harris Dickinson play the film star on his own terms? By *Louis Wise*



This page: PRADA cotton shirt, £640, and wool trousers, Dickinson's own. Throughout: rings and NIKE leather shoes, Dickinson's own

Opposite page: PALACE cotton-mix jogging bottoms, £128, and polyester beanie, £38. STONE ISLAND Econyl puffer jacket (on chair), £1,320, and Econyl gloves, £210. FALKE cotton socks, £16. Vintage STÜSSY sweatshirt and UMBRO England jersey, both stylist's own



MARTINE ROSE x SUPREME cotton hoodie, £178. KENT & CURWEN cotton-mix trousers, £350. Vintage POWELL PERALTA: PUBLIC DOMAIN cotton T-shirt, stylist's own

"BABYGIRL IS NOT THAT KINKY. THERE'S NOT ONE HARNESS, NOT ONE WHIP, NOT ONE GAG"

Carl grins and pouts on demand for a casting, went viral, and it's an apt calling card for Dickinson: it shows his willingness to play up the tension between his pretty-boy good looks and his wonkier tastes. Anybody expecting *Babygirl* to cement Dickinson as this season's smouldering lead man should know that the actor wants no part in it. "'I don't want to be sexualised! Have some respect!'" the actor mock-moans of his current status. "'How dare you reduce me to a thirsty... *thing*!'"

Dickinson is sitting in the small square office of his production company in east London. He sports long brown hair, a brown chequered sweater and lilac combats that, he realises, are stained with mustard. Whereas photographs and films show him as classically beautiful – think renaissance prince stranded in a skate park – in real life he is moony, goofy, forever working an elastic band around his hands.

Babygirl may well confound people as it probes the subjects of female desire, power and domestic happiness. Dickinson is perfectly cast as Samuel, a suave oddball: handsome, surprising and hard to read. "I loved working with Harris," says Kidman. "He is so intuitive, open and tender. He has so much depth and range, and a willingness to explore. He is an old soul." Adds Reijn: "He has a unique quality of being incredibly vulnerable and confident at the same time. He has a very authentic sense of humour and a super-fast brain."

"I am proud of it, and I am interested in the conversations that have come up around it," says Dickinson. Early descriptions of it as an "erotic thriller" seem to miss something though. "I think it's got an erotic part and a thrilling part," he says. "But I think 'erotic thriller' reduces it a little bit. When we started the film, my constant fear was, are we hitting tropes? Are we doing things that are just an expectation of this genre, whatever this genre is? And how do we evade that? So much of it is based on what we've seen, or what we've consumed. I was always trying – and Halina was – to reroute that, and trying to find the humour and the nuance."

What's more, he claims, "it's not that kinky" (although there's the odd thing that happens that could surely pass the test). There's "not one harness, not one whip, not one gag". Ultimately, he says, "forget the power dynamics: it's just about two people connecting in this weird way. I kind of treated it like any other..." He searches for the word, then laughs in relief. "Love story! Yeah. It is."

In person, Dickinson is amiably wilful. "I'm not great with authority," he admits sheepishly. "I don't like being told what to do by anyone. Even my people around me know that, and they try to come at it from different angles. I do what I want to do."

Dickinson's mother was a hairdresser, his father a semi-professional boxer and a social worker; he has three siblings. Owing to his mother's work, there were always women in the kitchen talking and gossiping. "My family are all very good storytellers... and I've grown up with very different understandings of what you can do, and who you can be." He believes his mother also wanted to be an actor, "and she got advised against it. So I think that's why she was always very supportive."

As a teenager, he was conflicted. "I didn't enjoy school very much, I didn't love college very much. I didn't finish college..." For a while he was torn between pursuing

Seven years ago, Harris Dickinson was at the ceremony for the 27th Annual Gotham Independent Film Awards, an early pitstop in Hollywood's awards season. Dickinson, an unknown 21-year-old from Walthamstow, east London, was nominated in the Breakthrough Actor category for his role as a closeted teen in the Brooklyn drama *Beach Rats*. He took his mother as his date.

The only issue came when they realised that Nicole Kidman was there as well. "Mum was a little bit tipsy, and she said, 'I've got to go speak to her,'" says Dickinson, now 28. "And she made a beeline. I was like: 'Oh my God.' I didn't see my mum for, like, 10 minutes..." Eventually Mrs Dickinson resurfaced. "She said, 'Nope. Couldn't find her anywhere.'" I said, 'That was probably for the best. Sit down. Have your dinner.'"

Today, Dickinson's mother would have a lot more to say to Kidman – her son has just made a film where the actress falls head-over-heels for him. *Babygirl*, directed by Holland's Halina Reijn, is a witty, weird, roleplay-themed romance between Kidman's Romy, a high-flying, high-profile CEO, and Dickinson's Samuel, the maverick intern who locates her secret desire to be subjugated. Antonio Banderas, Sophie Wilde and, memorably, a large glass of milk co-star.

The film has got buzz: Kidman won Best Actress for her performance at the Venice Film Festival in September. It's also another significant gear-shift for Dickinson. Following that first success with *Beach Rats*, he has worked consistently ever since, accumulating parts in *Maleficent: Mistress of Evil*, *The King's Man* and *The Iron Claw*. Charlotte Regan directed him as a feckless single father in her acclaimed British indie, *Scrapper*, in 2023. "Harris is just incredible," she says. "As soon as you see him on screen, you're like: yes, this is a film I want to see and a character I want to be with."

Fashion has come calling too – for the past 18 months he has been a face of Prada. "Harris is a wonderful young actor," say designers Miuccia Prada and Raf Simons, who work on Prada's menswear together. "We believe that his talent and personality are a perfect match for us."

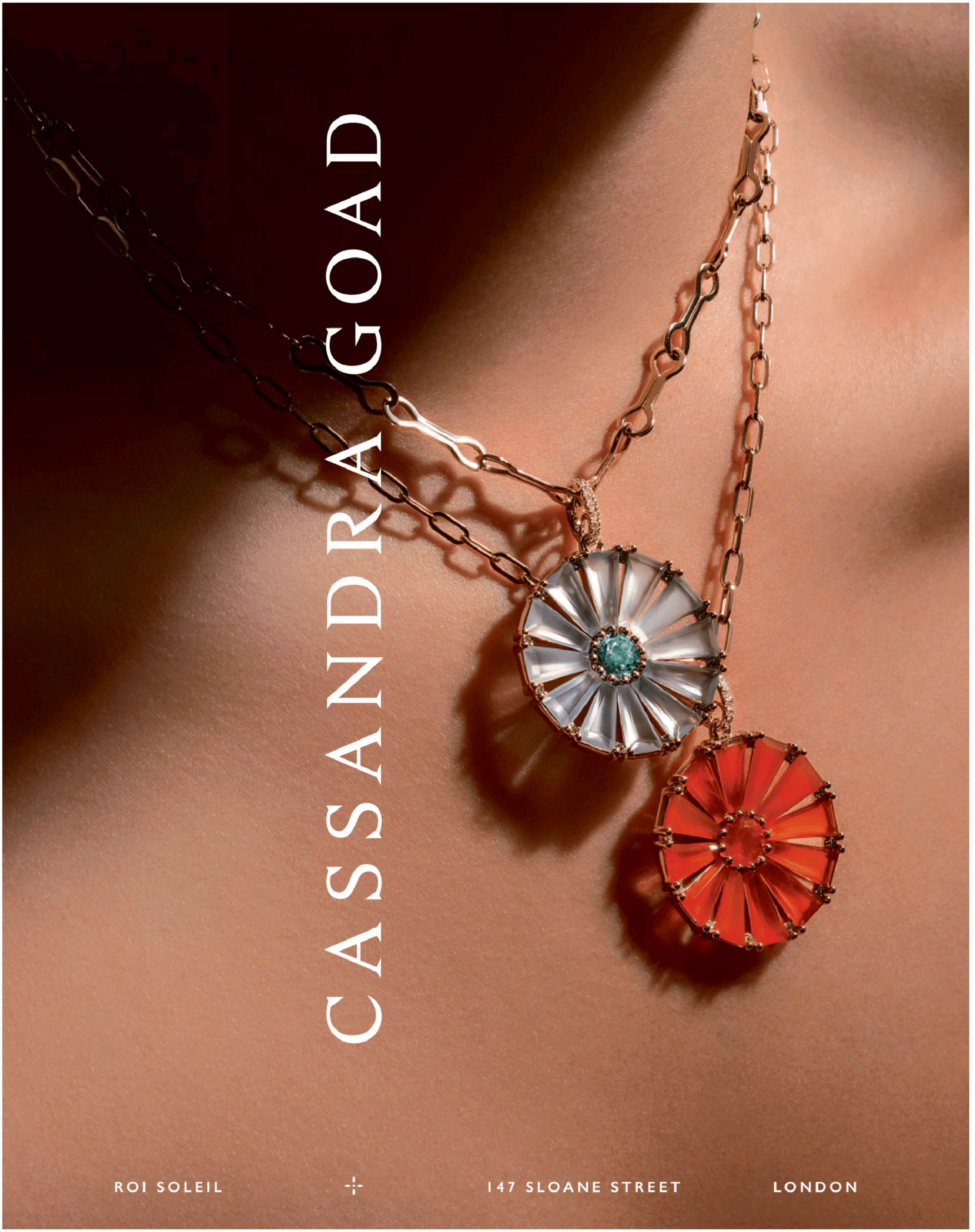
Most, however, will recognise him from Ruben Östlund's 2022 satire *Triangle of Sadness*, where he played Carl, a stunningly gormless model whose trip on a luxury cruise ends in chaos. An opening scene of the film, where

HERMÈS
nylon and
cotton blouson,
£4,403. KENT &
CURWEN cotton
trousers, £490.
Vintage UMBRO England
jersey, stylist's own



This page: HERMÈS cashmere flannel trousers, £1,536. STONE ISLAND wool beanie, £200. Vintage POLO RALPH LAUREN cotton rugby top, stylist's own

Opposite page: STONE ISLAND wool-mix jumper, £760. PRADA cotton shirt, £640. BURBERRY wool trousers, £1,290


GOAD
SSANDRA
CAS
ROI SOLEIL
147 SLOANE STREET
LONDON



Left: KENT & CURWEN wool jumper, £575. PALACE cotton-mix jogging bottoms, £128. FALKE cotton socks, £16. Vintage UMBRO England jersey (just seen), stylist's own

Hair, Laurence Walker. Make-up, Ciara O'Shea. Photographer's assistants, Sinclair Jaspard Mandy and Joe Petini. Digital operator, Bruno Conrad. Stylist's assistant, Mitja Olenik. Production, Town Production

"HARRIS IS SO INTUITIVE, OPEN AND TENDER, AND HAS A WILLINGNESS TO EXPLORE. HE IS AN OLD SOUL" — NICOLE KIDMAN

acting and being in the Marines – he was in the Marine Cadets, the precursor to joining the corps. The Marines? For somebody who doesn't like authority? "Well, it was hard for me! Exactly. I was always being told off!" Looking back, he says, "I don't really know why I did it... I was intrigued by it as a group, as a tribe. I wanted structure. Maybe I was looking for identity. I was also a bit fat."

At the same time, he went to "an amazing theatre school outside of normal school. It was run by actors, and it was just normal people. Working-class peers." Eventually, he says: "I found my own way."

Aged 19, Dickinson went to Hollywood to do pilot season with no professional CV to speak of, using the money he'd saved from working in a hotel bar. "I just wanted to work. I wanted money. I was watching films and I wanted to be in them. I was like: 'Why am I not in that film?'" The irony being, he points out, that he didn't get any jobs from two years of doing pilot season, and only finally got the role in *Beach Rats* when he returned home, self-taping the audition in his bedroom. When he was then nominated at both the Gothams and the Independent Spirit Awards "it was a fairly accelerated thing, but it felt like it was the perfect time, because it was like, 'Great!' About time I got a job, you know?"

Previous profiles in the British press have fixated on Dickinson's working-class upbringing, as though he were a unicorn in an industry filled with privileged Etonian types. When I mention class to him, his shoulders drop. "I feel like all I've ever been asked about is class. And for a while, it was like, hang on a minute, why am I a spokesperson? But clearly I don't mind talking about it, because I've always launched into tirades about it. So it's probably my own fault, because I'm passionate." That said: "I don't like sitting there and being like, 'Oh! I've had it hard,' and all of this shit. Because I've been incredibly lucky as well." More positively, he does believe that things are changing. "I think opportunities are increasing, and people are getting better access to the industry. I think we're in a culture where everyone is holding everyone accountable. There's no room to hide."

Dickinson is already writing and directing his own films. "Acting is amazing, but there are times when you're waiting around a lot, and I think my mind prefers to not wait around." His debut, shot last summer, has yet to be given an official title or a release date. "It's about this guy called Mike who is on and off the streets, essentially battling his own trauma and his behaviour. I've put a lot into it. I'm excited to get it out there," he says. "It's grounded in social realism, and it's heavily researched. I spent a lot of time with that community, with certain causes. I've had people close to me deal with certain issues in the film." The main aim, he says, is simply understanding. "I think we've very quick to label someone an addict, or lazy, or destructive, when clearly we're having a mental health crisis. And particularly men, for some reason, fall between the cracks in homelessness more than women."

Post-interview, he is heading to a pub quiz in east London. He lives around there, with his new fiancée, the pop singer Rose Gray. "I'm engaged to be married," he says. They don't have a date set yet, but, "I'm excited". His level of fame is bearable at the moment – he doesn't get recognised so much. "It's growing a little bit, but I don't mind. Normally people are very nice."

He tries to be sanguine about what is around the corner (he already has a tribe of fans who call themselves the Dickheads). "You can only fight it for so long," he says. "I was talking to Andrew Garfield, who said that when he got super-famous from *Spider-Man*, he grew a beard and he dressed badly, and he rejected it so much... But I don't find that to be in line with my morals about self-love. I mean taking care of yourself – loving yourself, in a way. I was a really chubby kid," he reminds me, "and I didn't like the way I felt. I fought hard to not be a little chubby kid any more. I wanted to be... a smooth little criminal!"

As we get up to leave, I note how many tattoos Dickinson has. Small scrawls proliferate all over his body – on his knuckles, his arms, and "some awful ones" on his legs. He has been accumulating them since the age of 19, doing a handful of them himself. "That's a 59," he explains of one. "That's a horseshoe. That's a diamond. That's a mistake – I didn't finish that one. That's Donnie Darko..." He's partly dismissive about them. "It's like scribbling. They're shit tattoos, I know." But he is obviously proud of them too. He even offers to give me one as well. "What do you want?" he says, suddenly flashing that wide, incorrigible, slightly scary grin. "'Babygirl?'" ■HTSI



Beach Rats (2017)



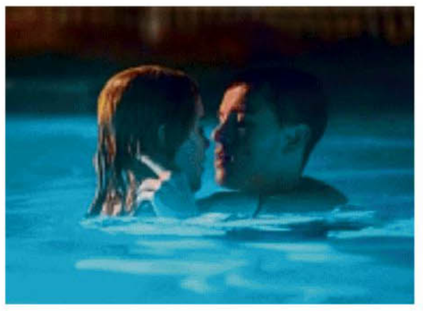
With Charlbi Dean in *Triangle of Sadness* (2022)



With Lola Campbell in *Scrapper* (2023)



The Iron Claw (2023)



With Nicole Kidman in *Babygirl* (2024)

PHOTOGRAPHS: ALAMY (4), CAPITAL PICTURES

Photography by *Mark Anthony Fox*

EASTNOR'S EDEN

A temple of high Victoriana, Eastnor Castle has inspired kings, clerics, *Succession* and now a line of furnishings created by its youngest châtelaine. By *Harriet Quick*

The Dining Room at Eastnor Castle. The motifs on the handpainted and gilded coffered ceiling, dating from 1848, are being reproduced on a Watts 1874 three-panel mural for The Eastnor Castle Collection





Left: Eastnor Castle was designed to create the impression of a medieval fortress guarding the Welsh Borders. Below: Imogen Hervey-Bathurst in the Gothic Drawing Room. Bottom left: the Long Library has some 5,000 books and 17th-century tapestries now adapted by Watts 1874 to wallpaper designs

"WE DON'T DO LITTLE FLOWERS – WE ARE ALL ABOUT SCALE – AND MY GOD DOES EASTNOR HAVE SCALE!"



Looks can be deceptive. From the outside, Herefordshire's Eastnor Castle, designed by architect Robert Smirke in a Norman revival style, is imposing – brutal even – all 4,000 tonnes of stone and turrets. Yet on the inside is a mind-boggling mélange of gothic, Italian renaissance and regency baronial styles. Between the handpainted coffered ceilings, the Pugin scheme in the Gothic Drawing Room, multi-panel tapestries and marquetry, every surface is dense with decoration.

Built for the 2nd Baron (Lord) Somers between 1810 and 1824, the house bears the imprint of successive generations and has seen both glory days and dormant decay. Today, Imogen Hervey-Bathurst, daughter of owner James Hervey-Bathurst, is masterminding the castle's next chapter – and making its sensorial overload a calling card. She grew up at Eastnor, and in 2023 became director of what is now a visitor attraction, wedding venue and film location (the castle featured in season one of *Succession* as a location for Shiv and Tom's wedding), having formerly worked as director of investment research at Stanhope Capital.

One bold new venture is the creation of wallpapers, tableaux scéniques and textiles with specialist maker Watts 1874, the soft furnishings and interior decoration business set up by architects George Frederick Bodley and Thomas Garner in partnership with George Gilbert Scott junior. "Eastnor is highly immersive, it is about the design and the experience, and I felt part of the retelling could be through creative collaborations," explains Imogen, now in her late 30s and one of three sisters (Isabella and Nancy), with two half-sisters (Stella and Minna) as well.

The Gothic Drawing Room was redecorated in 1849 and features early gothic revival architectural detail. Its Brussels tapestries are being blended into a mural wallpaper design by Watts 1874


CAROLINA BUCCI
FIRENZE
carolinabucci.com





Watts 1874, which has long adorned grand schemes including Ham House in Surrey, Powis Castle in Wales and the University of Oxford's Bodleian Library, has proved the ideal partner. "It is a big undertaking. People normally associate collaborations as reproductions, but at Eastnor we don't have samples or an archive so the patterns and details are taken directly from the rooms," says Imogen of the meticulous process involving geometric calibration cameras and digital mapping. The technology allows 3D features – such as the coffered ceiling in the Dining Room – to be turned into trompe-l'oeil 2D wallpapers, 17th-century mythological seascape tapestries in the Long Library (originally from a palazzo in Mantua) into scenic murals, and a Trastámara painted leather screen in the Great Hall to be translated into papers and fabrics.



Edge of page: Watts 1874 Trastámara Copper, printed on cork. Above: the Great Hall and (right) its panelled ceiling. Left: the State Bedroom with embroidered silk panels from the Royal School of Needlework and 19th-century wallpaper with an "S" motif for the family name, Somers Cocks

Launching at the Déco Off design festival in Paris in January, the Watts 1874 x Eastnor Castle Collection, which comprises digital as well as hand-blocked papers and fabrics, will be primed for private residences, hotels, restaurants and clubs – plus anyone clamouring for unabashed opulence. "We don't do little flowers – we are all about scale, historically designing for huge properties and churches – and, my God, does Eastnor have scale!" says Marie-Séverine de Caraman Chimay, managing director of Watts 1874 and a fifth-generation Scott. Her grandmother resurrected the firm in the postwar years when the decoration industry was still on its knees.

The threads between Eastnor and Watts 1874 (which previously had two arms to the business – ecclesiastical/ceremonial and interior decor) twist back through time and personalities. The firm's creative director Fiona Flint worked with Imogen's mother, Sarah Hervey-Bathurst, on a series of bespoke wallcoverings in the 1990s. In the research, Flint identified further original Watts decor at the castle.

Imogen herself became aware of the brand at a dinner party sitting next to Robert Hoare, CEO of the ecclesiastical business, Watts & Co. She later visited the atelier in Westminster. "It was an amazing old building full of young people from Central Saint Martins. There were pieces for the Vatican and coronation robes that were all handmade. We talked about the architect Pugin, who worked on the castle, and I felt an instinctive connection," says Imogen who then met Robert's sister, Marie-Séverine, at the Chelsea Harbour showroom for textiles and design where she recognised some of the patterns at Eastnor.

Imogen takes me on a tour of the castle's grand rooms; she is not hidebound by tradition or the weight of history. Her own childhood was not "grand" or princess-like. "We

"THERE IS PATTERN EVERYWHERE – IT IS INSTANTLY INSPIRATIONAL"



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lived in a flat on the other side of the castle with its own entrance so in that way it was not dissimilar to living in a London apartment," she says. "The grand rooms had fallen into disrepair after a long period lying dormant, land had been sold off and loads of things put away. My grandparents lived like church mice, with buckets and drips and wartime blackout curtains. They simply did not have the means to restore it."

The romanticism of Eastnor stems from the lives and passions of Imogen's ancestor the 3rd Earl Somers and his Anglo-Indian wife, Virginia. They lived a proto-bohemian life in a circle that included William Thackeray, Julia Margaret Cameron, Virginia Woolf and artist George Frederic Watts, and also travelled extensively, picking up art and antiques along the way. "He was a big collector, random in his taste and must have burnt through a fortune," smiles Imogen. But the earl's indulgences may prove gold. The artefacts and furnishings including 17th-century Venetian furniture, renaissance portraiture and tapestries provide Watts's creative director, Fiona Flint, with a seemingly infinite treasure trove of ideas.

"There is pattern everywhere, notably in the Pugin scheme in the Gothic Drawing Room but also in embellished textures in wood, stone, wall and lacquer. For me, it is instantly inspirational – a feast," says Flint, who is reimagining elements for contemporary taste including a scenic wallpaper featuring a beautiful horse digitally "extracted" from a tapestry in the Staircase Hall. Border patterns, dappled with repair threads and intricate marquetry work, have also caught her eye.

The second significant wave of restoration started in the 1990s when Imogen's parents set about bolstering the castle's reputation to boost the private-hire business and visitor attendance. "My father inherited the house and, with my mother, took a big risk to resurrect and rediscover it. But it was her introduction to Bernard Nevill that got things underway. He was an interesting character: a professor of textile design [at the Central School of Art & Design, the Royal College of Art and St Martin's School of Art] tutoring designers including Ossie Clark and Zandra Rhodes while designing for Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Balmain. Essentially, he was a complete contrarian and he loved unlovable things! The scenes in Uncle Monty's London house in *Withnail and I* were filmed at his house," says Imogen.

Given free rein, Nevill and Imogen's mother would head to country sales and Lots Road Auctions, buying tapestries and commissioning giant mirrors to transform and enlarge the once spartan Staircase Hall with layered rugs, Venetian dragon benches and a dragon chandelier from the Corsini Palace. "They wanted every room to feel lived in and really used," Imogen explains of the overhaul, with new papers and fabrics commissioned (Flint worked on the project) and artworks and furniture (many older than the castle itself) rearranged and pulled out of storage. The opulent Dining Room with its gilded ceiling was enlivened with blue curtains and upholstery, the Little Library with a Watts strapwork linen wall covering that is also being reprised.

Imogen, as the next-generation châtelaine, is determined to breathe new life into Eastnor. The decorative partnership is one tranche of a rebrand that will also see a dragon replacing a deer in the heraldic logo and a series of cultural salons and events being staged at the castle. Her father, James, meanwhile, continues to run the privately owned castle and estate with operations in tourism, entertainment, hospitality and real estate as well as forestry and farming.

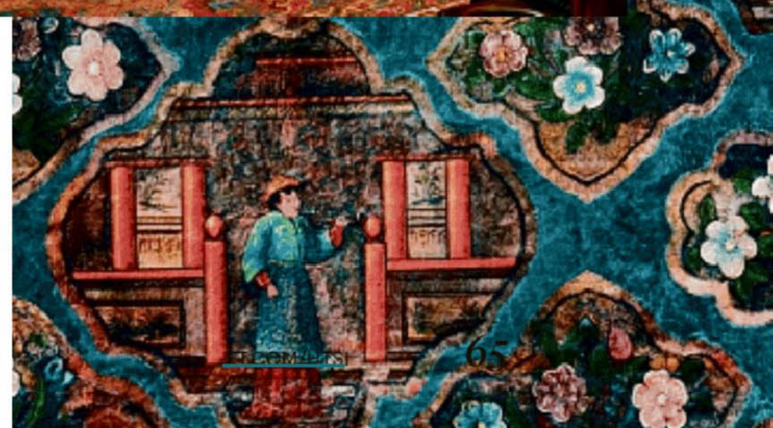
There is also a steady income from Land Rover that runs off-road driving experiences on the Estate. Indeed, you can order a new Defender in the colourway Eastnor Green. Revenue from events and location hire is less predictable, explains Imogen. In the preservation and future proofing of castles, a bold imagination is required. With the Watts 1874-Eastnor offering, one might find oneself dining out on the other side of the world pleasantly discombobulated by a large swath of the castle's decorative history. ■ **HTSI**

eastnorcastle.com, watts1874.co.uk

Above left: Eastnor is encamped behind a lake. Above right: the Villiers linen wallpaper in the Billiard Room is reintroduced in the new Watts 1874 collection. Below: the Staircase Hall. The 17th-century Venetian benches have bases of carved dragons. Edge of page: Watts 1874 Trastámara Old Teal, printed on cork







Blanc space



LVMH's über-hotel has arrived in the Seychelles. *Maria Shollenbarger* is the first to check it out

The Seychelles. You wake up here, in this archipelago set roughly halfway between Madagascar and the Maldives in the Indian Ocean, sit up from the abundance of featherdown and fine Egyptian cotton that swaddles your giant bed, and look out through the floor-to-ceiling glass panel that is your bedroom wall. If you're clever, you'll have left the shades up, because Mother Nature, as she is wont to do in equatorial places like this one, has curated a morning horizon that's as gorgeous as a Rothko, the mineral-blue skin of the sea stitched to the cloudless apricot sky in a straight, bright cobalt seam.

Walk across the sprawling sleeping area of your hillside villa – done almost entirely in variations on intricate white latticing, like the world's chicest, most sumptuously furnished birdcage – and slide back one of the several glass doors. From the teak deck next to your 12m-long pool, you can admire the dense canopy of poinciana and cinnamon trees, hugging the steep incline all the way down to a ribbon of ivory sand.

The turtle doves are just beginning their call-and-response, the pretty pipe chorus of the jungle. The surf thumps faintly on the sand far below. A lone fruit bat circles lazily in the sky. Behind is your gleaming white eyrie, all smooth surfaces, soft indulgences, cold minibar and controlled climate. In front of you is a 65-million-year-old wilderness: warm, wet, buzzing and clicking.

Cheval Blanc Seychelles is the brand's first "Maison" in Africa, the newest property in LVMH Hotel Management's most exclusive portfolio, which opened exactly one week ago. The now six properties that make up the Cheval Blanc portfolio – the name taken from the French château acquired in 1998 by LVMH chairman Bernard Arnault – are never referred to as "hotels" or "resorts". They are Maisons, and their calling card is excellence in the *art de recevoir*.

When the Cheval Blanc brand was launched in 2006, expectations were vertiginously high: the luxury-goods conglomerate with arguably the most comprehensive understanding of the desires of the world's most discerning (or at least its richest) consumers was bringing the sum of its expertise to bear on luxury hotel management. Good wasn't going to cut it; it was going to have to be, as Monsieur Arnault himself told *HTSI* in October 2021, "the best".

And the Cheval Blanc Maisons have been right up there, known for their high-spec interiors, sublime food and conspicuous LVMH brand synergies, from the Guerlain-branded spas to the Celine Cabas totes in the concept boutiques to the wine lists. The brand's first property, Cheval Blanc Courchevel, opened its doors in 2006, but the real buzz erupted in 2013 when Cheval Blanc Randheli, the first full resort, opened in the Maldives in 2013. It was followed a year later by the takeover of Hôtel Saint-Barth Isle de France, on Flamands Beach.

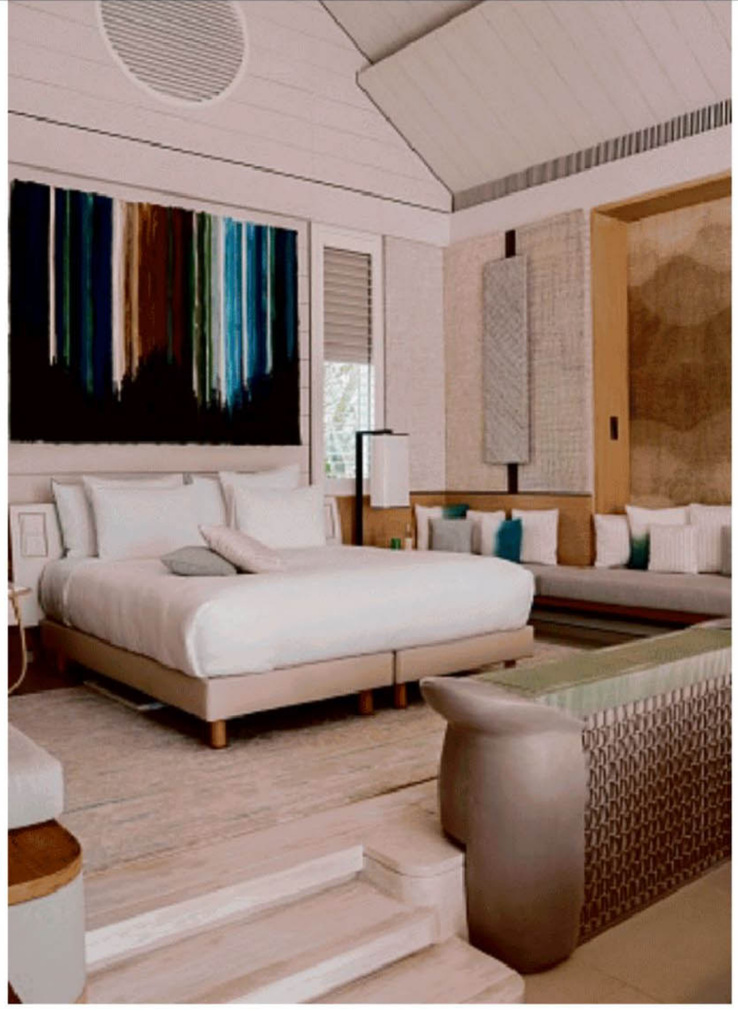
And so it went, in St Tropez (2019), then a Paris flagship (2021), involving a massively costly and ambitious rehabilitation of La Samaritaine, the historic department store on the Seine. And now here.

Photography by *Anna Nielsen*

The sun deck at Cheval Blanc Seychelles' beach club, Sula. Opposite page: one of the Maison's hill villas

Knuckle Collection, Whoopsie Daisy Diamond Necklace and Sun Charm Pendant.

ANNOUSHKA.COM





Above: the master bedroom and (bottom left) salon of a beach villa. Right: Mizumi, Cheval Blanc's Japanese restaurant. Bottom right: a view of the bay from a hill villa's infinity pool

The Seychelles is one of travel's great castaway paradigms – barefoot luxury writ in extravagant cursive, often by extravagant resorts with extravagant price tags (the North Island resort, managed by Marriott's Luxury Collection, commands over €10,000 per night at Easter). Its beaches are some of the most swooned over in the Indian Ocean; its landscapes overflow with rare and spectacular flora; its world-class fly and ocean fishing are catnip to the gentleman adventurer. It's the right Africa for a Maison, in short. And while it has been some years since the Seychelles was in the sights of that highest stratum of the globetrotting beau monde, Cheval Blanc is betting on having a halo effect that retrains attention on its raw beauty.

It's a pretty, 40-minute drive from the airport to Anse Intendance beach, where Cheval Blanc now occupies the site of the former Banyan Tree resort. Anse Intendance is laughably picturesque. It's public, like all beaches here, but access is sufficiently minimal, and rocky, that punters are relatively few. (It's also unprotected by reefs, and occasionally gets quite big surf; wonderful for lulling one to sleep, if not so much the place for rookie swimmers.)

The entrance drive winds past an enormous lagoon. At its far end is a tiny, pretty Creole cottage, the only structure preserved from the previous resort; it now houses Mizumi, Cheval Blanc's Japanese restaurant. The villas – 52 in total – are variously set along the sand's edge, secreted in sunny pockets in the rainforest, or perched on a ridge overlooking the whole bay. The varied inventory is conceived to please the diverse clientele: Brits, Europeans and Russians plump for beach access, Saudis and Emiratis for privacy. (North Americans, the brand's largest market, apparently "just want the sun", says general manager Sebastian Gillard.)



THE SEYCHELLES IS ONE OF TRAVEL'S GREAT CASTAWAY PARADIGMS

Cheval Blanc Paris was designed by Peter Marino, the long-time LVMH collaborator who (kind of) adapted his strident, high-gloss boutique aesthetic to haute hotel-suite requirements. For the Seychelles, the management tapped Jean-Michel Gathy, who designed Randheli in the Maldives. With more than a dozen Aman, One&Only and Four Seasons resorts across Asia, the Middle East and the Indian Ocean to his name, Gathy was the right man for the job "because he doesn't go around just doing Jean-Michel", says CEO of Cheval Blanc, Olivier Lefebvre. "He has the same mandate we do, to respect and integrate the local vernacular, traditions and landscape." He's also "crazy good" at contending with tricky topography, which the site presented in abundance.

All the villas are enormous – number 26, where I slept, measures 235sq m high on the ridge – and what feels like acres of wall are replaced with glass. The notable exceptions to all the white, ivory and stone are the unique fabric installations that hang above each bed – the work of Joël Andrianomearisoa, the Malagasy artist who in 2019 was the first to ever represent Madagascar at the Venice Biennale. Dense, rough-edged, they jump out from the walls, as captivating and almost as alive-seeming as the views. "The idea here was to create a response to the nature outside – that landscape, that horizon," Andrianomearisoa says. "The works are a reflection of it, but dreamier and more emotional."

Good design is important, but so equally is delivering diversion. And when the guest database comprises Roger Federer, the Prince and Princess of Wales and countless universe masters, tech lords, A-list celebrities and the merely fabulously wealthy in between, that's no small mandate. Besides the spa, there are padel courts, a surf simulator and a movement pavilion next to a huge gym. Le Carrousel, the indoor-outdoor kids' club, appears to have amusement-park aspirations.

And then there is the food. Throughout November, LVMH Hotels flew in taskforces from various Cheval Blanc and Belmond properties to critique their way through every experience, and it paid off. There are five restaurants: Le White and Le 1947 are brand regulars, respectively handling casual all-day dining and gastronomy. But the allure of Mizumi – a wide-ranging Japanese menu with continental embellishments, served in the tiny historic house – is fairly irresistible. At Sula, the beach club, a brief, perfect menu of crudi, salads and open-fire grill gives way on Thursday nights to a family-style feast of revisited Creole fare.

Which brings us back to the destination itself – that elemental backdrop onto which Cheval Blanc is projecting its brand of extreme exclusivity. Lefebvre and the team acknowledge that the challenge of building to such rarefied expectations, wherever Cheval Blanc does it, lies in ensuring each property comes alive through connections to the place and the people. This Maison's design is wonderfully open to the Seychelles' raw beauty. Here's hoping the soul of the place will eventually be, too. ■HTSI

Maria Shollenbarger travelled as a guest of Cheval Blanc Seychelles; from $1,680, chevalblanc.com



STATE OF THE DART

The sport once seen as a boozy hobby is now a global enterprise with record audiences, star players and big winnings. *Rosanna Dodds* finds out how it hit the bullseye



Photography by *Sophie Green*



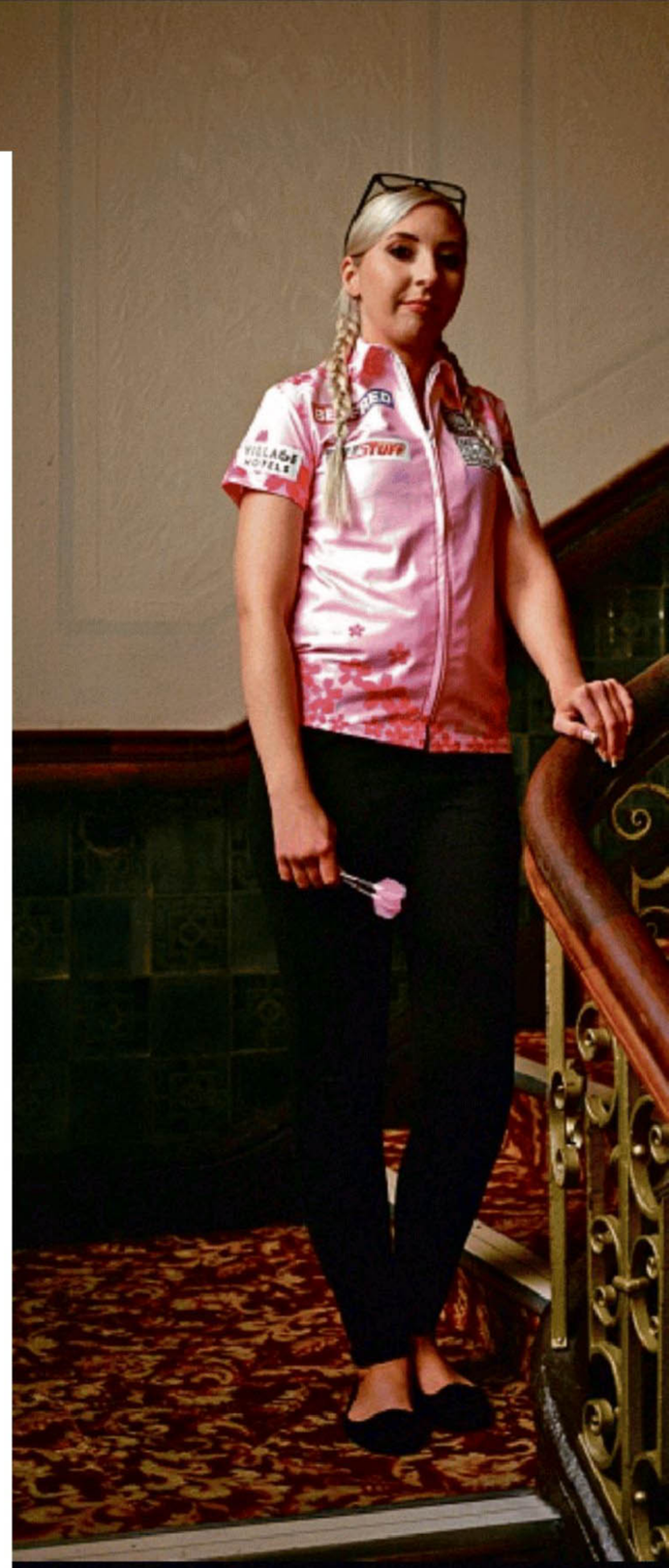
The hero of the story is a 17-year-old boy. Raised in Warrington, north-west England, he likes kebabs, video games and Manchester United Football Club. He's a normal teenager, cheeky as they often are. But, above all, he knows how to play darts.

The world came to know Luke Littler at the end of 2023. A string of surprise wins allowed him to qualify him for the World Darts Championship, the most prestigious event in the sport's calendar. Viewers watched intently as Littler, then 16 but suspiciously old for his years, beat a succession of darts legends. He thrashed a po-faced Matt Campbell, Canada's number one. He knocked out his childhood hero, 57-year-old Dutchman Raymond van Barneveld. With every win, another naughty smile. "Who wants to see me get another kebab!?" he cried out to his new fans. More than one million people now follow him on Instagram.

The teenager met his match in British player Luke Humphries, in a final watched by 4.8 million people – the highest Sky Sports has seen for a non-football event. Both will take part in this year's World Championship at Alexandra Palace next week: odds-on the record is broken again.

Littler is just the cherry on a cake the Professional Darts Corporation (PDC) has been baking for decades, however, part of a drive to bring in new audiences and build players from the ground up. What was once considered a boozy hobby is now a global enterprise and a rightfully respected sport. In 2023, viewing figures for the World Championship were up by more than 33 per cent; the year prior, they increased by almost half. Affiliated tours have launched in Australia, Scandinavia, North America, Africa and Asia, although England remains the motherland (darts as we know it started in British pubs). Bigger sponsors have allowed the annual prize fund to more than double in the past decade, creating more incentive for players to play well. "Some of the best darts you will ever see are being thrown right now," says darts historian Patrick Chaplin.

Five months after his famous debut, Littler is at London's O2 Arena for the Premier League Darts play-offs. Also in the running are former world champion Michael Smith, reigning Premier League champion Michael van Gerwen and Humphries. All stand to win £275,000, the second-biggest prize of the season. The stadium's backstage area is packed





Top left: Irish darts player Katie Sheldon. Left: Luke Humphries, winner of the 2024 Betfred World Matchplay. Opposite, top row, from left: Fallon Sherrock at Blackpool's Winter Gardens. The crowd in Blackpool. An attendee of the competition. Bottom row, from left: a spectator in Blackpool. Spectators dressed as Oompa-Loompas outside Winter Gardens. Luke Littler beats Nathan Aspinall in March

PHOTOGRAPH: CHARLES MCQUILLAN/GETTY IMAGES


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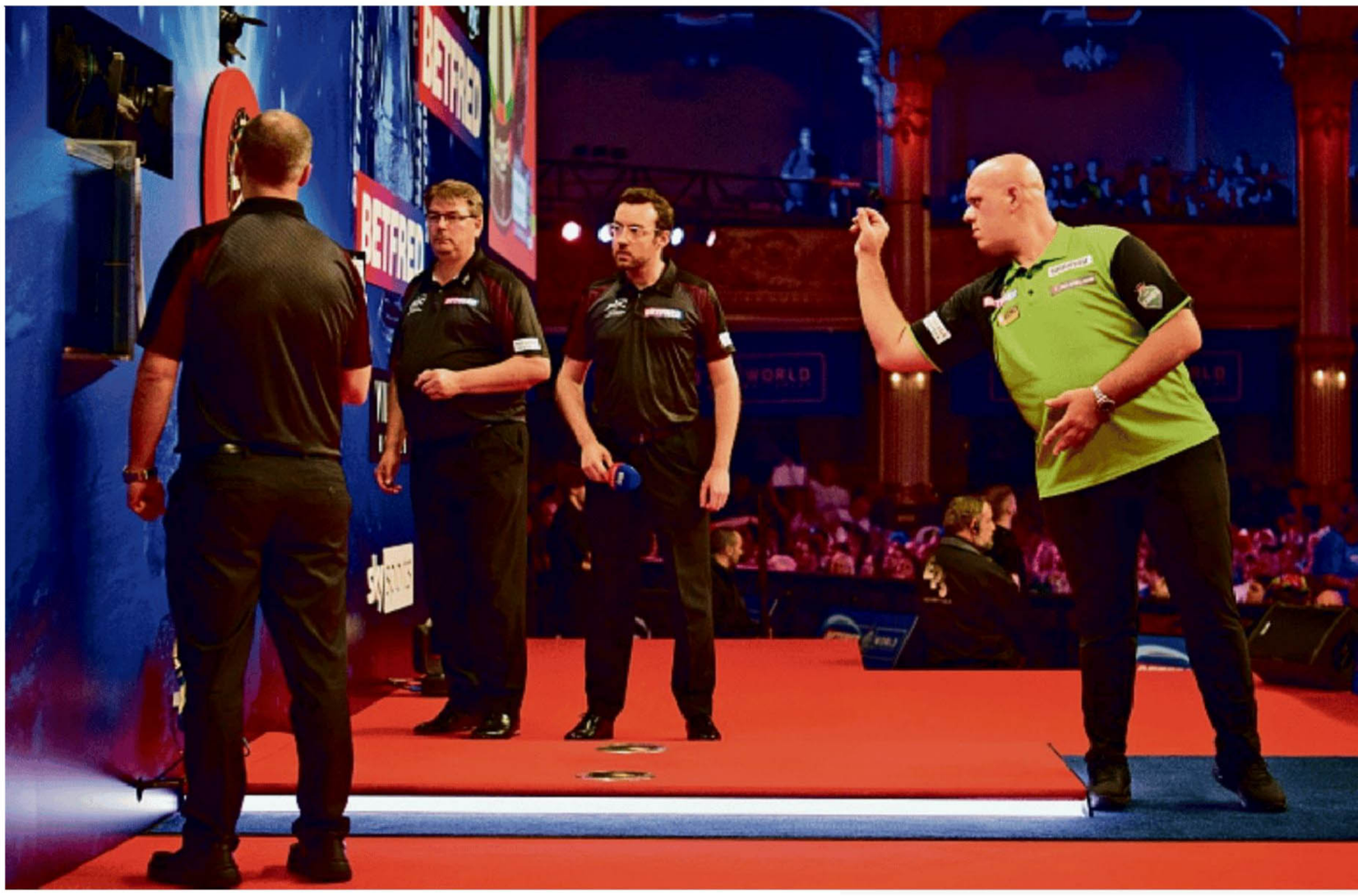

LET'S PLAY DARTS


BETFRED
WORLD


BARS & CAFES
EMPRESS COFFEE BAR & BISTRO
FLORAL LOUNGE
VENUES
OPERA HOUSE
EMPRESS BALLROOM
PAVILION
ARENA







with reporters, punters and news outlets. Most of them are here for Littler, who has even been filming for children's TV channel CBeebies. I find him eating a supermarket sandwich in his dressing room, for once looking like a normal teenager.

"I don't really look at who the favourite is – I just try and win," a pink-cheeked Littler says to his lunch. In person the player has none of his on-stage bravado. He has earned hundreds of thousands worth of prize money over the past few months, but still considers himself to be "the same person" – he only pines for a Volkswagen Golf.

At the other end of the spectrum is 35-year-old Dutchman van Gerwen, who has adult braces, a bald head and all the braggadocio you'd expect from winning the Premier League seven times. "Don't take too long," he barks at the beginning of our slot; his primary concern is thinking about how to "smash 'em". Even his management team are told to "piss off" (but hang around politely). Does he have many friends in the tournament? "I'm a loner," he says.

By 7pm The O2 is pumping with chants and oddly dressed fans; since the early 2000s, silly outfits have apparently been requisite, though no one seems to know why. There are young men in banana suits, Mario costumes and monk robes. "Oy, oy, oy!" they coo. There are also numbers of women, families and couples. All fumble happily into the arena, which is dotted with "180" signs – the highest score you can earn in a single turn. To win, two players take it in turns – three darts at a time – to amass 501 points exactly. The winners of the two semi-finals tonight are the first to do this 10 times. For the final, it's the first to 11.

It's the evening everyone hopes for: Littler knocks out Smith; Humphries beats van Gerwen. The remaining two players begin a polite fight to the death: Littler wins the first two legs; Humphries takes the next two. So on, so darts. But in a moment that makes an elderly man jump out of his chair, Littler scores 180 twice in a row. To close the leg perfectly – known as a nine-darter – he needs to score 60 (he does), then 57 and, finally, a 24. The roof blows off. Littler sails through the last few legs, and the world number one is beaten by a boy who can't legally order a pint.

"SOME OF THE BEST DARTS YOU WILL EVER SEE ARE BEING THROWN RIGHT NOW"

But this is darts, a game in which anything can happen. "Anyone in the top 32 can beat each other," says British player Nathan Aspinall, currently ranked seventh globally. Winning comes down to "whoever's got the grit between their teeth that week". Humphries, who almost quit the sport after a mid-game anxiety attack in 2019, says the game is "80 per cent mental, 20 per cent natural ability". "That's the difference between the elite league players and the players who are close to being elite," he says.

The Premier League Darts play-offs drew in a record crowd of 14,000 fans, the final event in a 16-week run that – despite a 10 per cent price hike this year – sold 99.1 per cent of tickets. While Littler has no doubt expanded the audience, the party-going appeal is also obvious; add four proficient players to that atmosphere, and it's even more compelling. "The world is not a particularly pleasant place," says Matchroom founder Barry Hearn. "When you go to the darts, you forget all that. You have your chants. You have a drink. But the key element is that you're watching brilliance."

Hearn, who was the PDC's chairman for 20 years and could sell ice to polar bears, is widely credited with transforming the sport. The 76-year-old is enjoying his semi-retirement with regular games of golf – "I don't get busy, darling" – but is as passionate about darts as he was two decades ago. (He still serves as the PDC's president, but it's more of an advisory role.) Hearn describes being invited to Circus Tavern, the original home of the World Championship, in the late '90s: "600 people having a pint, a cigarette, a terrible pizza." To anyone else it might've looked like "fat blokes throwing darts". To Hearn, it was a pot of gold.

The issue Hearn faced was changing how the sport was perceived. "Certain people looked down their noses – they missed the point," he says. The first thing he did was work on "narrative", creating nicknames for players and introducing walk-ons to involve the crowd. But the difference from other sports was that the players – what Hearn calls the "crème de la crème" – were "ordinary people". And these are people now earning millions. "The weakness of the Olympics," he says, "is that it doesn't change lives other than make you famous for five minutes. You can't eat a gold medal – you'll break your bloody teeth. What you've got to do is get out there and make some cash, change your life, create a legacy."

Littler, who started playing darts when he was two years old, trained at St Helens Darts Academy, part of an increasing number of youth clubs around the country. Academy founder Karl Holden, who also owns a darts shop in the town, says attendance has increased threefold in the past two years. As for the shop, 90 per cent of trade originally came from "people who played darts in pubs"; now Holden sees four times as many children coming for full set-ups, some of whom have Bentleys waiting outside. He recently bumped into Littler at a retail park in Warrington; there was a 500-person queue waiting for him. "You see that with football superstars; you don't see it with darts."

You might ask where all the women are. As it stands, 128 PDC players can compete in professional tournaments: all of them are men. Events are open to both sexes, but women haven't had much luck qualifying. A Women's Series was created in 2020 "for serious female players who wanted a women-only environment", says PDC chief executive Matthew Porter, but admits that it's "probably not the top female players of today who will be the major beneficiaries". "As women, we're kind of 10 years back – [darts] was always seen as a man's sport," says Buckinghamshire-born Fallon Sherrock, who narrowly missed out on qualifying this year. "It's slowly getting there."

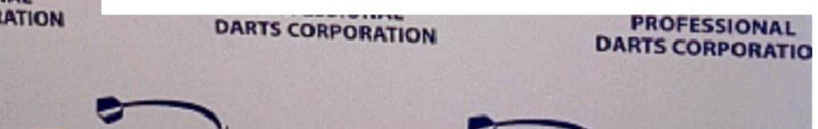
In mid-July, the gang is back together in Blackpool for the Betfred World Matchplay, a nine-day event at the Winter Gardens. By Sunday, only Humphries and van Gerwen are left in the competition: Littler was knocked out by van Gerwen on day three. It's the beginning of a bad run for Littler that will continue until November, when he wins the Grand Slam of Darts, a feat that makes him a millionaire. Still, the competition is exciting. "You hope he's going to win because he's so good," says Chaplin. "But you won't be disappointed if he's beaten."

There is also controversy in the women's half of the competition. As one of the few transgender players in the sport, Dutch player Noa-Lynn van Leuven has experienced abuse from fans – and players – questioning her right to play in the Women's Series. Van Leuven finishes fifth at the World Matchplay, but will be back for the World Championships.

The World Matchplay is not the most prestigious event in the calendar – total prize money is £800,000 – but it's one of the most historic. Blackpool has been home to the tournament since its inception in 1994. "Ask 100 dart players what their favourite event is; 99 of them will say the World Matchplay," says Porter. "It's got that heritage and history, that little bit of throwback darts." Under the gilded ceiling of the Winter Gardens – also home to Blackpool's historic ballroom dancing scene – fans of all different ages scribble messages on signs. The theme tonight is apparently Hawaiian, but there are also Shreks, sequin cowboy hats and an entire family dressed as hockey players.

The game starts off evenly. But when Humphries is at eight legs to his opponent's six – first to 18 wins – van Gerwen fluffs an easy opportunity to close the gap. Here is where the mental games come into play. Every time Humphries wins a leg, the Dutchman responds by pummelling the board crossly, appearing to cry "bullshit" when he misses. "He's fuming," says a man in an Oompa-Loompa costume, shaking his head. Van Gerwen equalises, but it isn't enough; Humphries beats him by three legs.

Dusk has fallen when people start shuffling out of the Winter Gardens. The atmosphere is completely free from tension. A couple of older women in novelty T-shirts walk past clutching takeaway pints. "What's the plan now?" asks one. "Get pissed," says the other. The crowd have their favourites, but it's all about technical excellence. As Hearn concludes: "No one hates anyone in darts." ■HTSI



Opposite, top row, from left: Blackpool's Winter Gardens. Dutch player Noa-Lynn van Leuven. The crowd in Blackpool. Bottom row, from left: 2024 Betfred World Matchplay champion Luke Humphries. An attendee dresses up. Flights for sale at the event. Top right: Michael van Gerwen steps up



Diporto in Athens' Varvakios market. Opposite, from left: Nonda Pappa from Epta Martyres, George Michelis from Pure Spirit Wines, Nikolaos Symeonidis from Habiba, Athina Delyannis and Chris Kontos from Kennedy Vins

Crushing it under the Acropolis

Chris Cotonou finds out how Athens emerged as the coolest wine scene in Europe. Photography by *Chris Kontos*

Chris Kontos has opened a natural wine bar in Athens. This is big news in the Greek capital, because whatever project Kontos undertakes is apparently a measure of where the city is heading, culturally speaking. His photography is partly responsible for shaping the image of "New Athens": confusing, chaotic, magical. He is also the founder of *Kennedy Magazine*, a biannual journal sold from Tokyo to New York, a DJ and, as of October, the owner of Kennedy Vins, a wine and listening bar in the downtown area.

"This is the most rewarding thing I've done," Kontos tells me in the weeks before its opening, empty wine boxes piled haphazardly behind him. "I felt so proud putting the bottles on the shelves. This place is going to be an extension of me: the wines I like and the music I want to listen to."

I first met Kontos three years ago when I was writing a story about Athens' *rebetika* music – folk sounds of the Greek underworld that have recently become popular – and needed direction. Even then, he had a reputation as a modern George Katsimbalis, the late Athenian editor immortalised as the *Colossus of Maroussi* by Henry Miller. Kontos knew all the best addresses, among them wine bars like Oinoscent and Heteroclito near Syntagma Square, which opened in 2012 and is, apparently, "the place that made Greek wine relevant".


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9

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Today those bars have been joined by a new generation of bar owners and sommeliers, who together have made natural wine a widely accessible proposition.

"Previously, the reputation of wine in Greece was that it was cheap and for getting drunk at the taverna," says Kontos. "I now see young people going out for wine, or for a meal with their favourite wines, instead of the cocktail bars. This was never before a thing in Athens."

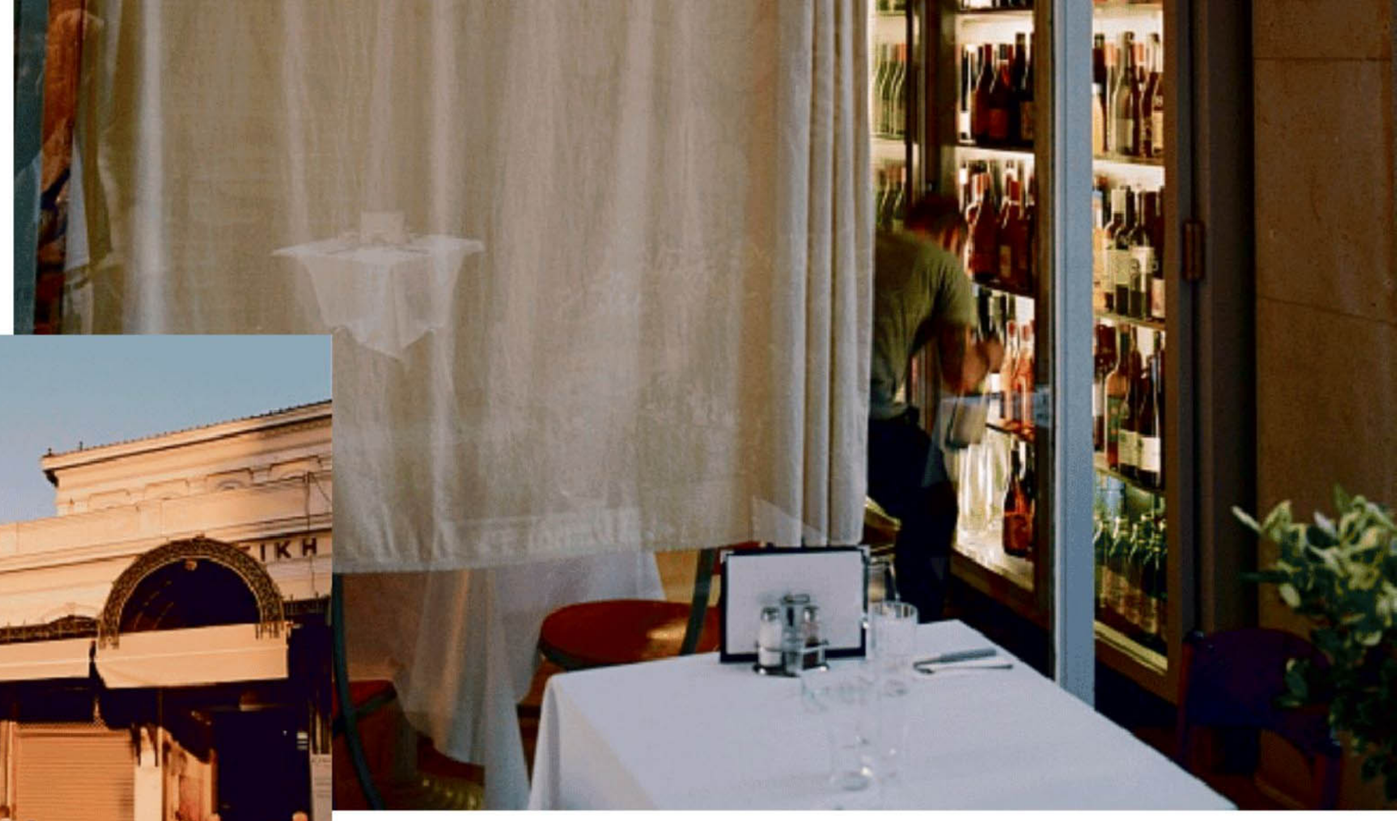
This is because, unlike in Paris or London, Athenian wine bars are more neighbourhood hangouts, not just for the connoisseur. Among the revellers are the city's answer to beanie-wearing creatives (whisper it: hipsters) – many in their 30s or 40s – plus students, older aficionados and a flourishing generation of Greeks returning home after the financial crisis. The latter are chiming with Athens' renaissance in arts and dining, inspired by the city's resilience, a gradually improving economy and a growing expat community that has been lured to the city for its affordability and entrepreneurial spirit.

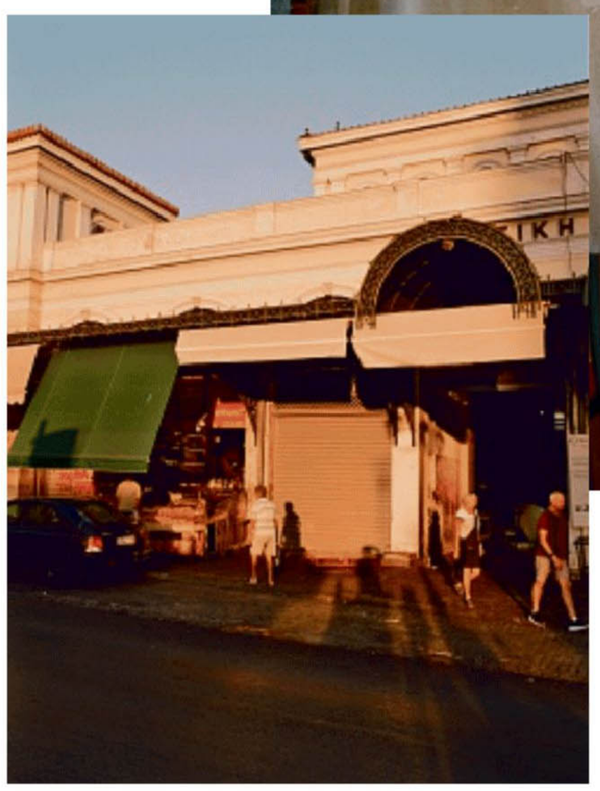
And so the most popular bars have thrived as after-hours community outposts to meet, gossip, do business, flirt and play. The decor is generally modern and sleek, drawing from the Parisian natural wine scene (many owners, including Kontos, had their formative wine experiences in Paris). But there are often nods to *kafenion*, traditional Greek coffee houses, too: low seating, scattered plants and rustic stained walls.

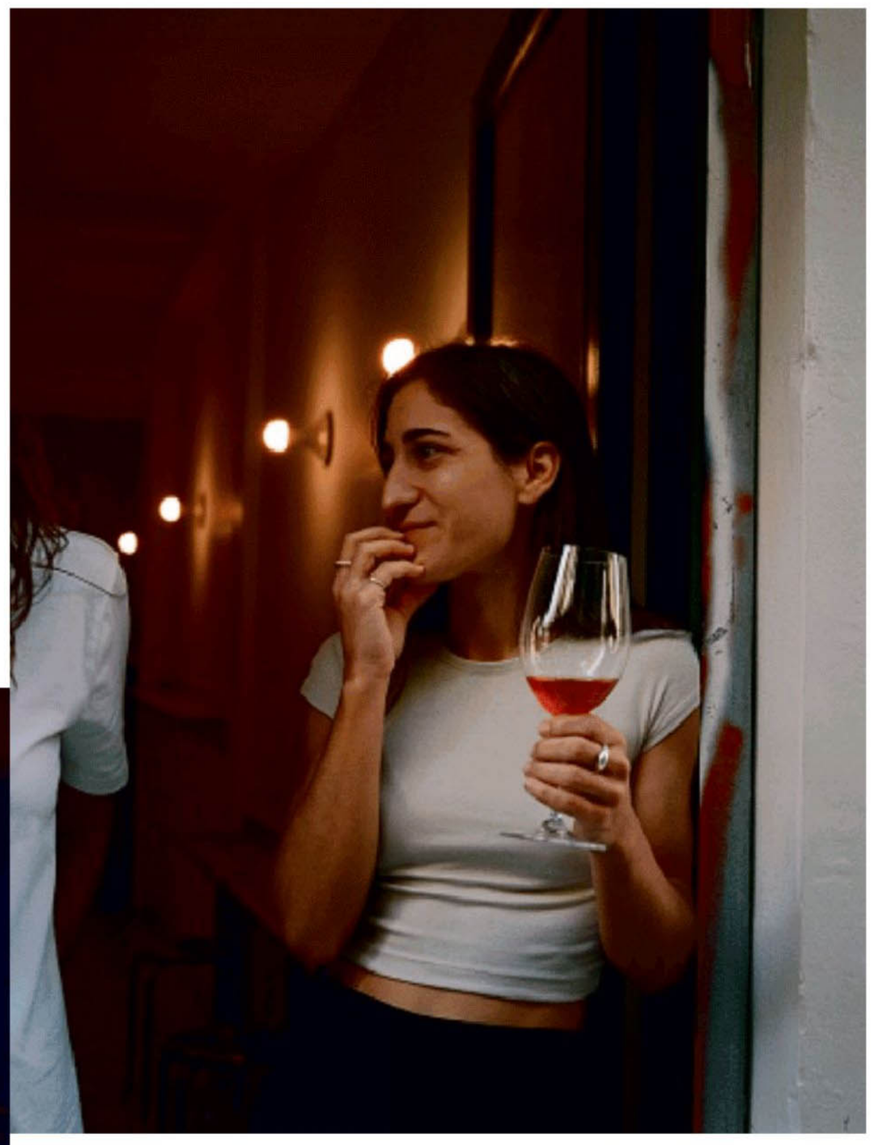
Even in the middle of winter, revellers spill out into the street if space is scarce: it's still mild enough to sit out, and the daytime is not so punishingly hot. The scene is diverse. And because many of the bar owners have lived abroad, there's a wealth of influences. A few, like Kontos, focus on foreign natural wines; others champion Greek producers. Some openings also reveal how Athenian neighbourhoods are changing. The most popular bars stretch from Epta Martyres in Neos Kosmos to Materia Prima in bohemian Pangrati. Gamay and Tanini Agapi Mou are both in alternative Exarchia – a district previously associated with anarchism.

The growth has led to a thriving community: many of the owners, sommeliers and producers are now friends and collaborators. "We should be supporting each other," says Kontos. "We are unique in our own ways." I meet with Vasileios Bakasis, director of Gallina, a restaurant that has caused a happy commotion in the city. "They don't just have the best wine list in Athens, but in Europe," Kontos insists. Based near the Acropolis, it serves modern and traditional dishes for up to 60 guests – generally creatives and business types – alongside a

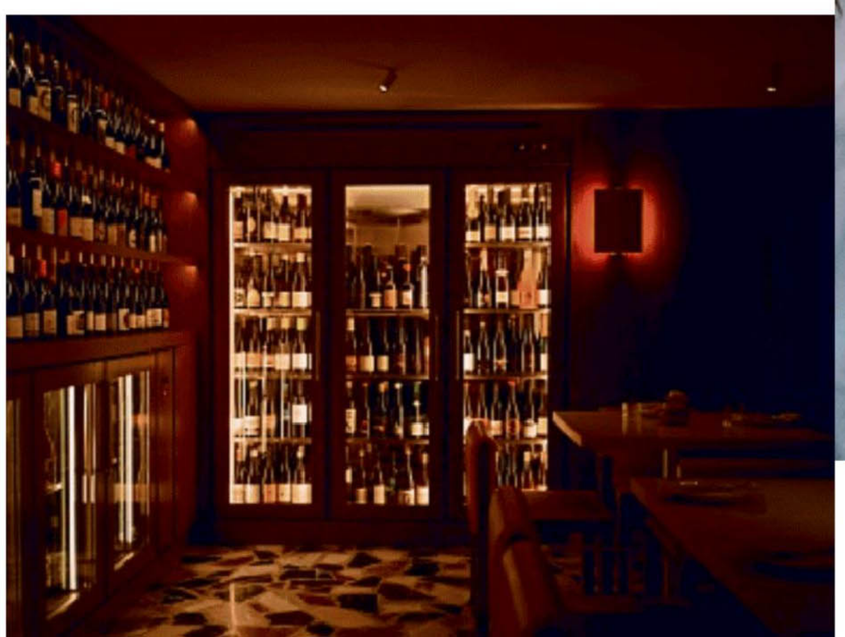
Above and right: Wine is Fine on Vissis Street. Below: the city's Grand Central Market. Bottom right: Elpida Lykoudi of (bottom centre) Gallina restaurant, near the Acropolis







"I SEE YOUNG PEOPLE GOING OUT FOR WINE – THIS WAS NEVER BEFORE A THING IN ATHENS"



JOE SNOW

Snow or no snow



Scan for
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Collection

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Luxury Merino Wool Essentials for Men

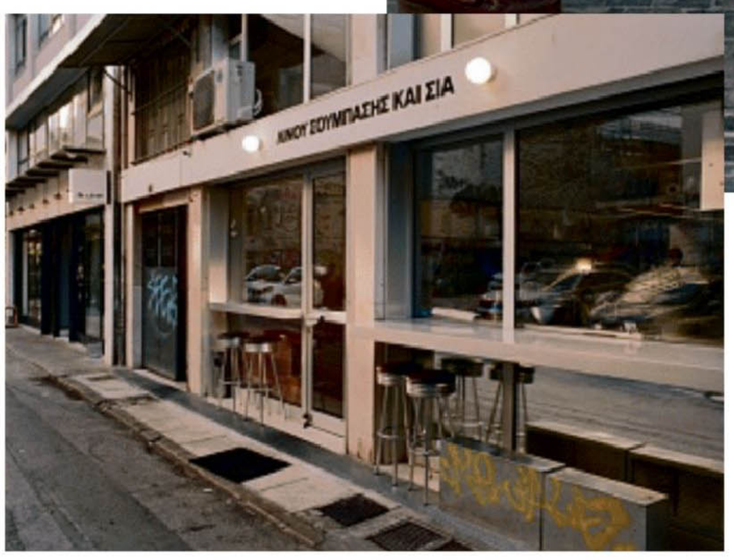


"THEY DON'T JUST HAVE THE BEST WINE LIST IN THE CITY, BUT EUROPE"

rare collection of contemporary Greek art and custom-made marble furniture. Bakasis reminds me that Athens' most popular restaurants are now "*gastrokafenio*", a mix between bistros and traditional tavernas. Many prioritise quality wines, and Gallina even has a wine director.



Above: Epta Martyres in Neos Kosmos. Right: Chris Kontos's Kennedy Vins. Below: restaurant and bar Linou Soumpasis Kai Sia



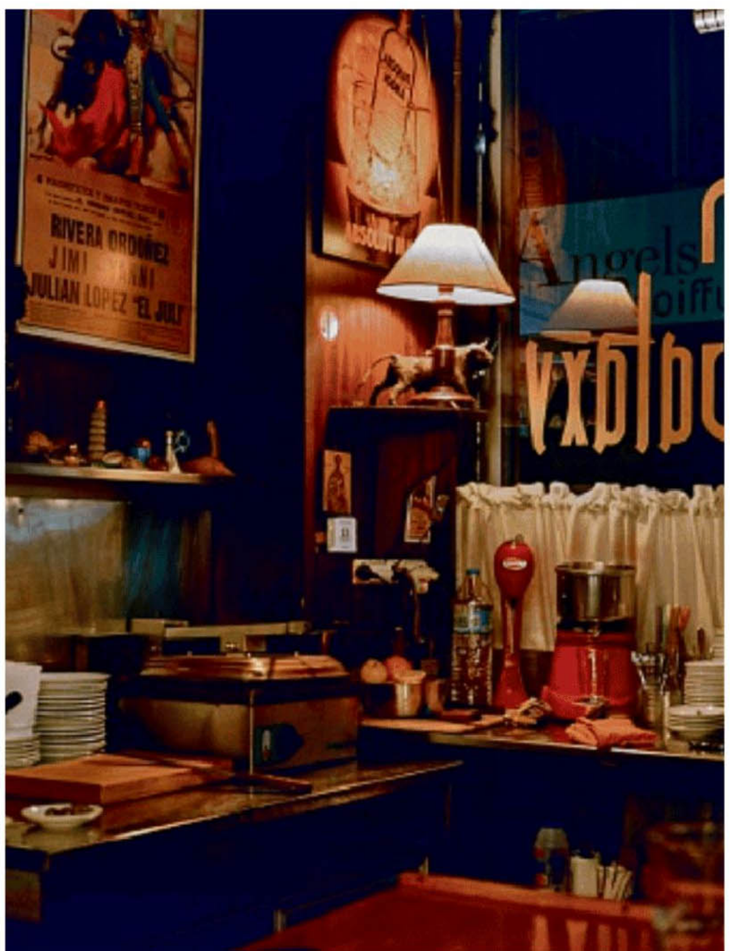
The most identifiable pioneers of this movement in Athens are themselves French: Thomas Brengou and Rafael Wallon-Brownstone from the rightfully popular Wine is Fine. Their bar on the corner of Vissis Street transports one to the Marais with a chic crowd, some of them expats, spilling into the narrow roads. "We're serious about the food," says Brengou, whose menu of Gallic-inspired classics is prepared by local chef Stavros Chrysafidis. "Raf and I are from Paris, where there are millions of wine bars with different identities: that's what we want to see in Athens. It was more traditional when we arrived. Now we find young skateboarders and fancy people beside one another."

Kontos also introduces me to the colourful Nikolaos Symeonidis, the man behind the @habiba.wine Instagram account (and a part-time model for Lemaire). Symeonidis makes his own wine under the Hotline 33744812190 label, organises parties around Athens with mostly German natural wines, and recently took a residency at the Mona hotel. "Athens is multisensory, and so is the scene," he tells me. "Music and wine go together. It's exciting because it feels new, and unrestricted by the traditions of other places."

Next year, Symeonidis will open a bottle shop in the city called Hotline; he also intends to start an international wine fair with other bar owners. "Natural wine allows us to act consciously, create a culture, and hopefully inspire the next generation of Greeks," he says. "We should all come together. I would be happy if Athens had hundreds of new wine bars."

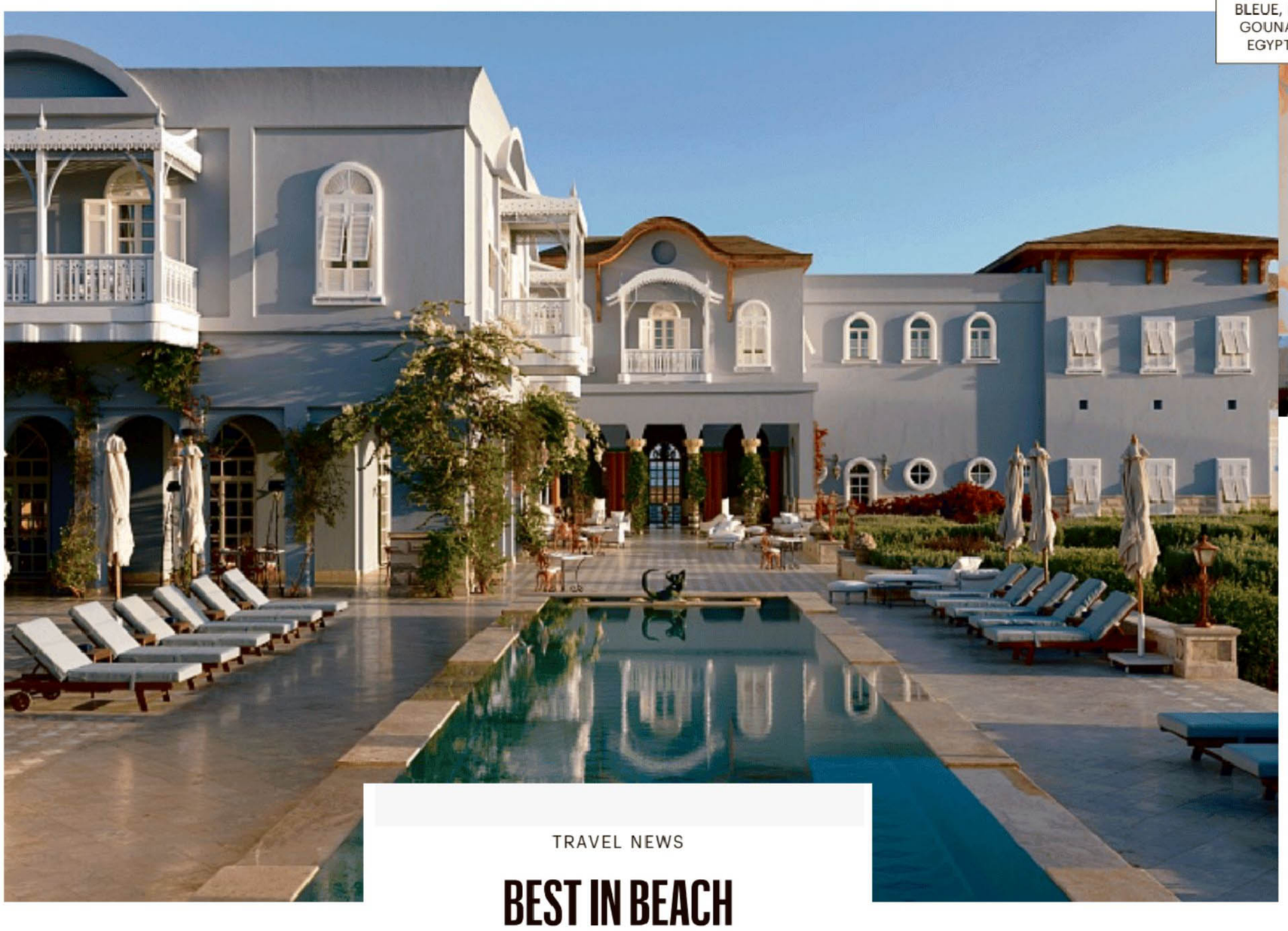
Kennedy Vins is now open, and displays a mosaic of tasteful ideas from Kontos's travels around the world, but especially France and Japan. "I wanted it to have the practicality of Japanese spaces," he says. Snacks – charcuterie, canned fish and bread for mopping up oil – are served on Service Projects plates with his Kennedy logo. There is a room at the back where Kontos will conduct "listening sessions" using high-end audio equipment (his vinyl cartridge costs €4,000 alone).

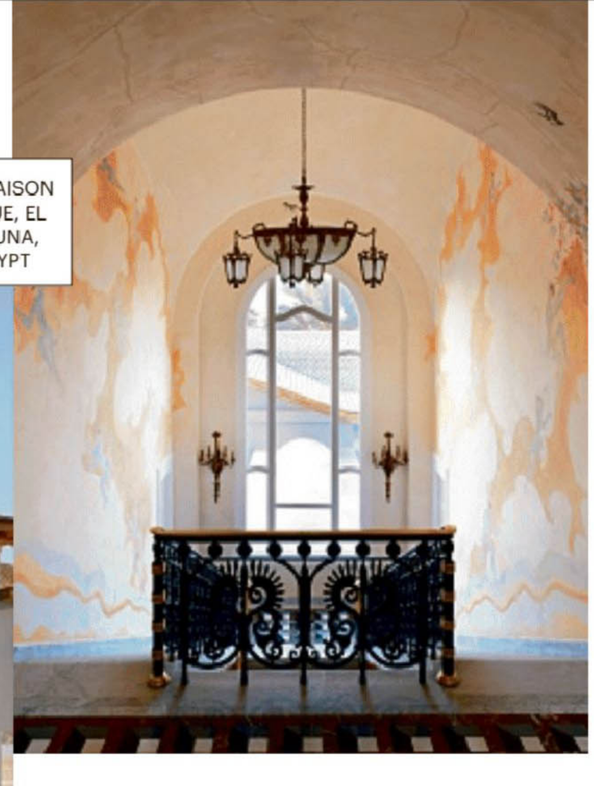
Both Athenians and travellers stop by. In the winter off-season, when the bustle of tourism has slowed down a little, the city's wine bars thrive as cosy warrens for entertainment and seasonal dining. But it is the stirring Greek *filoxenia* (hospitality to strangers) that makes the community so accessible and explains why these bars are becoming the centrepiece of Athenian social life for tourists as well as locals. "I want anyone who comes here to feel at home," Kontos says finally. "Not just Athenians." ■**HTSI**





Above: the church of Panagia Grigorousa is at the heart of the downtown area, a stone's throw from where bars like Heteroclito, Wine is Fine and Kennedy Vins are. Left: inside Galaxy bar, near Syntagma station





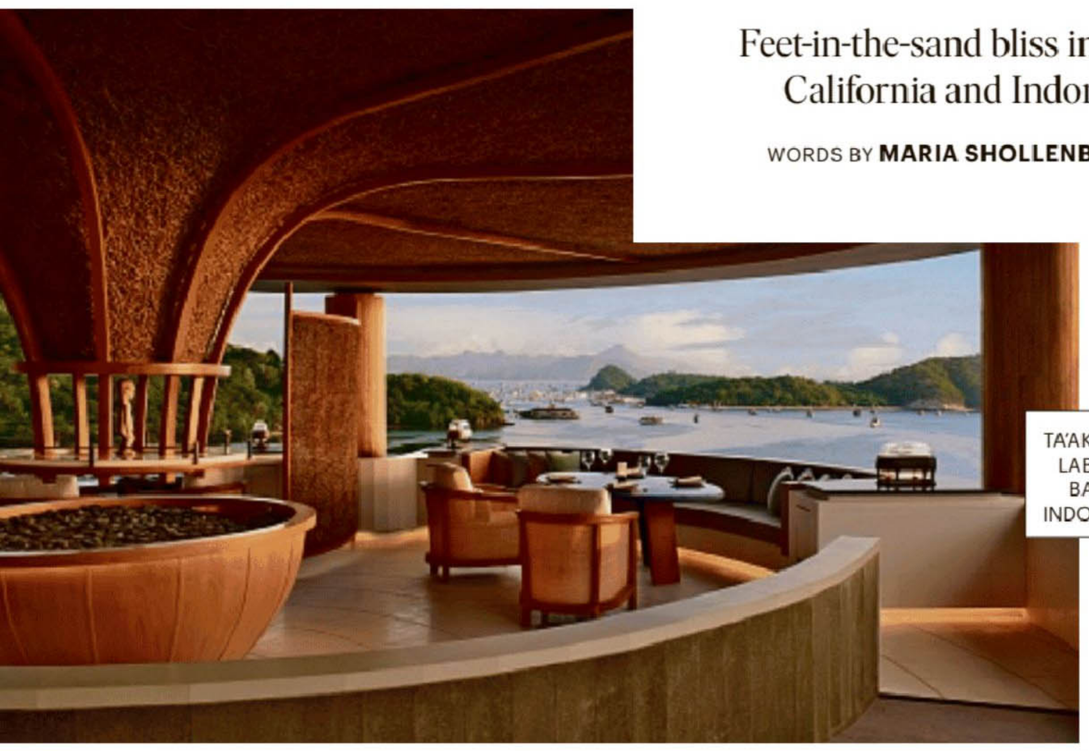
LA MAISON BLEUE, EL GOUNA, EGYPT

TRAVEL NEWS

BEST IN BEACH

Feet-in-the-sand bliss in Egypt, California and Indonesia

WORDS BY **MARIA SHOLLENBARGER**



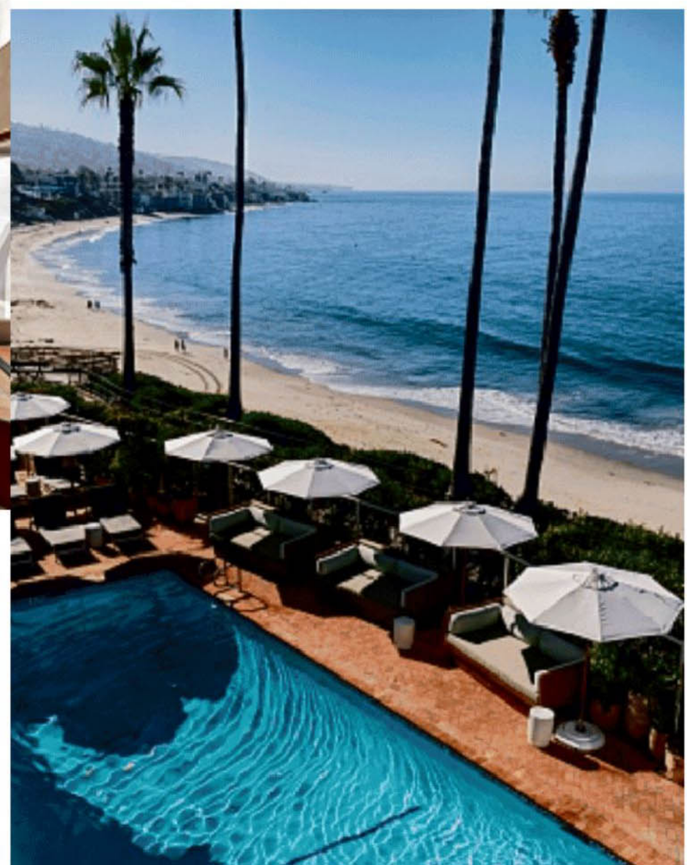
TA'AKTANA, LABUAN BAJO, INDONESIA



CASA LOMA, LAGUNA BEACH, CALIFORNIA

Top: the pool at La Maison Bleue. Right: the beachside pool at Casa Loma in Laguna Beach

THE DESIGNERS LOOKED TO LAGUNA'S HISTORY AS AN ARTS HAVEN AND A BASTION OF SURF CULTURE



A FRANCO-EGYPTIAN GEM ON THE RED SEA
LA MAISON BLEUE, EL GOUNA, EGYPT

El Gouna, north of Hurghada, is one of Egypt's less-familiar holiday enclaves. But Cairenes (and in-the-know travellers) flock to second homes here – it's one of the region's best kitesurfing spots, as well as the place to graze on tiradito and Lebanese mezze at budding nightspots. Its hotels run the gamut: but the standout for 2025 is La Maison Bleue, an El Gouna stalwart that's undergone a total refresh.

It first opened in 2011, a 13-suite villa designed by Franco-Egyptian architect Olivier Sednaoui, with interiors by the late, great interior designer Amr Khalil and gardens by French landscape designer Louis Benech. La Maison Bleue feels, truly, like a holiday home, albeit a really lavish one. "Folly" isn't too far off the mark as descriptors go, given the colourfully tiled columns, oculus windows and façade painted a pale grey-blue that's more Provençal than Pharaonic. There's a wild mix of decorative-arts epochs, ranging from Byzantine to Ottoman to art deco. The suites have balconies overlooking the hotel's small lagoon and private beach and, beyond, the sea; their enormous dimensions are softened with suzanis, portraits and framed prints, and ornate Egyptian-glass chandeliers and sconces. The equally spacious spa has a hammam and just two treatment suites. Chef Vincent Guillou, who has put in produce gardens and a greenhouse (the latter houses a chef's table, for light vegetarian lunches), majors in the kind of francophile refinement you'd expect, but he also turns out a koshary if something local and low-fi is more your thing. There's nothing stuffy here; the prevailing mood, possibly thanks to the sheer generosity of space, is one of intimate ease. But, if that's still too crowded for you, the hotel's vintage motorboat and four-room yacht are at the ready to take you off to Shadwan or Tawila, semi-deserted offshore islands, to live the castaway dream for a day. *From $400, egyptbeyond.com*

LABUAN BAJO'S LUXE NEW STAY
TA'AKTANA, LABUAN BAJO, INDONESIA

Fifteen years ago Laubuan Bajo was a small and fairly ramshackle village, known primarily as the gateway to the Komodo archipelago. Cut to 2024, and its streets, now largely free of potholes, are home to boutiques and eco-lodges, taquerías and craft coffee houses. New to town is Ta'aktana, whose suites and villas tumble photogenically across 40 acres of jungly hillside to a private beach. The suites come in at a minimum of 69sq m and the seven overwater villas – Ta'aktana is the only central Indonesian resort to offer them – measure 185sq m with equally generous wraparound terraces. A full spa, Olympic-sized pool and five restaurants round out the picture; but the ace in the resort's pocket might be its access to the communities of remote Manggarai villages in the island's centre, where textile production and ritual dancing go on much as they have have for centuries. *From about £400, marriott.com*

BEACH, BLANKET, BINGO
CASA LOMA, LAGUNA BEACH, CALIFORNIA

Laguna Beach is the Southern California beach town ideal, famous for its attractions both urbane and natural. Do the pristine coastal paths and designated marine parks outnumber the art galleries, or vice versa? Hard to say; but one thing that Laguna Beach hasn't had many of on its storied boardwalk is cool hotels. Casa Loma, fresh off a multimillion-dollar renovation, sings with style thanks to the efforts of Venice Beach-based design firm Electric Bowery. For inspiration the designers looked to Laguna Beach's history as an arts haven and a bastion of surf culture. Handmade tables and headboards owe their sinuous forms to surfboard-shaping traditions; bedlinens come from Italy, and the organic cotton robes from Guatemala, with an overall effect that reads strongly Beach Boho. They seem to have thought of everything, from Casa Loma Radio, the dedicated radio station (flip on that Tivoli Model One in your room and have a listen), to the tapestries, murals and direction signage commissioned from Texas-based muralist and text artist Joe Swec. Plus balconies overlooking the Pacific and beach club-style service throughout. *From $499, casalomalagunabeach.com* ■ HTSI

@mariashollenbarger

PHOTOGRAPHS: CHRIS MOTTALINI (2). MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL. THÉRÈSE VERRAT AND VINCENT TOUSSAINT (2)



LEICA ZM 11

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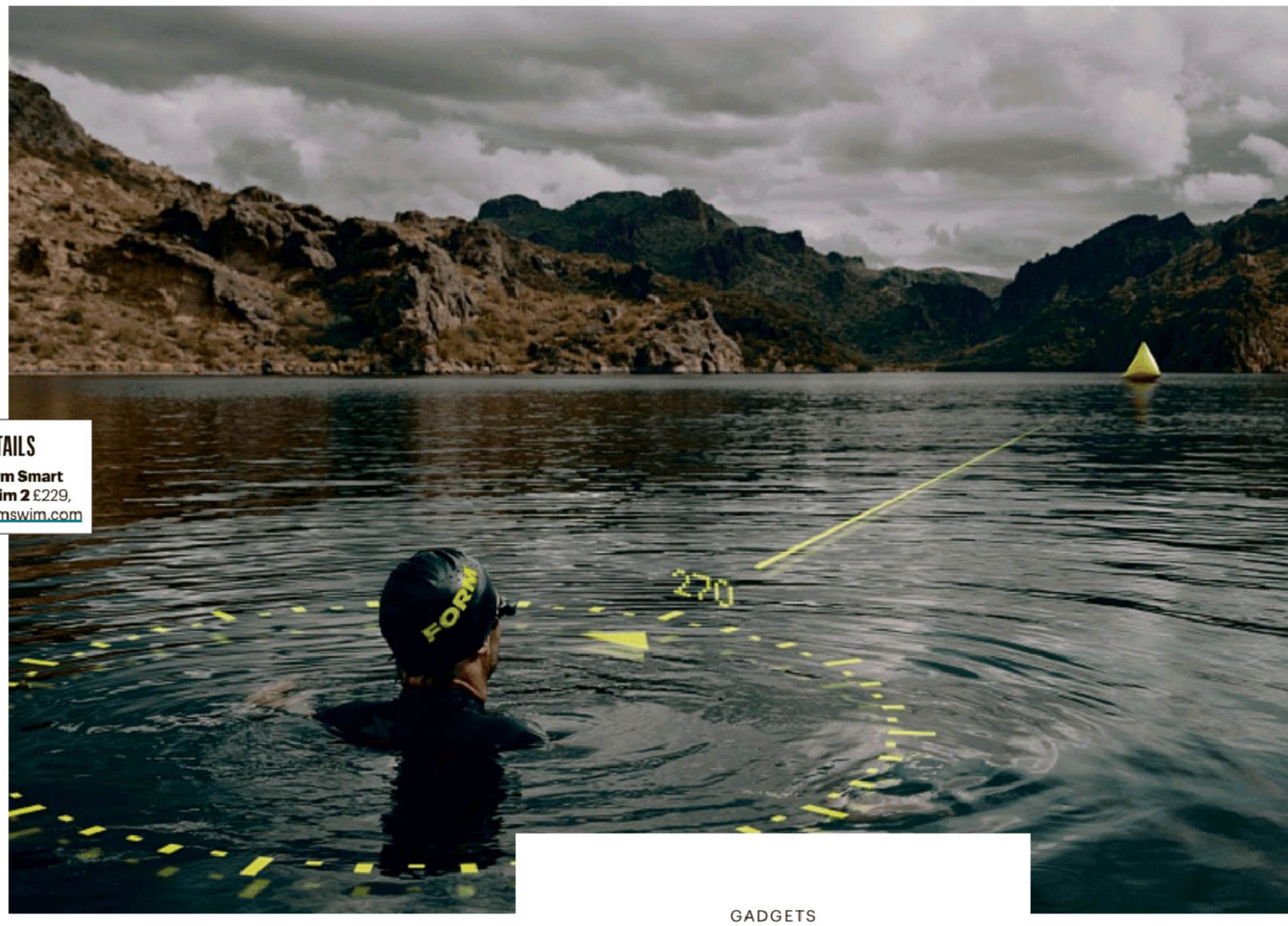






Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play



DETAILS

Form Smart Swim 2 £229, formswim.com

Augmented reality is about putting helpful information into our field of vision. Apple's Vision Pro may currently be the most sophisticated example of this on the market, but this pair of goggles might just be the most useful (if you're a swimmer, anyway). Why? Well, you'll probably be wearing goggles in any case, so it's no more cumbersome. The information it displays (distance, time, heart rate, etc) is genuinely useful. It's not distracting (after all, there's not much else to look at when you're swimming) and other swimmers won't find it annoying.

It succeeds the Smart Swim 1, launched in 2019, but builds on almost 15 years of development by Vancouver-based Dan Eisenhardt (a former competitive swimmer) and his firm, with assistance from the swimming team at the University of British Columbia. It has improved silicone eye seals, mirrored lenses for use indoors and out, and an anti-fog coating – but it's really all about the display, which projects gentle yellow text fairly centrally into your line of sight from a small, integrated pod that sits around your left or right temple (you choose). That pod also has a couple of buttons (scroll, select) to switch between stats, and an adjoining heart-rate monitor that nestles against your head.

THERE'S NO FIDDLING WITH YOUR PHONE AT THE POOLSIDE – JUST SWIM!

The Form app is central to setting up dashboards of information that you might want to see during (and after) your swim, but there's no fiddling with your phone at the poolside – just swim! Later, you can go back to the app to pore over the graphs and celebrate accordingly.

Yes, it's at least 10 times the price of some Speedo Vanquishers, and you'll be paying for a subscription on top for features such as SwimStraight (an in-display compass for open water swimming), custom workouts and coaching to help position your head correctly. But it's all so thoughtfully executed that ambitious swimmers will deem it money well spent. ■HTSI

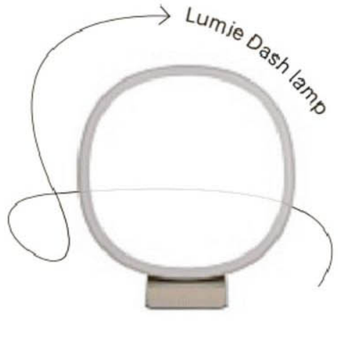
@rhodri

GADGETS

THE SIGHT STUFF

Five gadgets for seeing clearly

WORDS BY **RHODRI MARSDEN**



LIGHTEN UP

Therapeutic lamps aim to lift your mood and improve your energy levels, but for maximum effect you need to crank them up, at which point they can become rather dazzling. This dinky new lamp from Lumie, the size of an outstretched hand, brought a little ray of realistic sunshine to my basement office; an ophthalmic expert was consulted for its tech, so you get a spectrum as close to natural light as possible and a high CRI rating (95+) for better perception of colour. There's a button to dial the light level up, another to dial it down, and that's that. I've no idea whether my urge to have an afternoon nap dissipated because of the Dash or for some other reason, but my working conditions certainly felt a lot less murky. *£179*



BRIGHTER EYES

So much attention is paid to the camera spec of new smartphones that quieter innovations happening under the hood are often forgotten. It's well established that phone screens are no friend to our eyes, with their high-energy blue light and propensity to make us stare at them for long periods of time. So Honor's newest (and thinnest) foldable has an "Eye Comfort Display" with dynamic dimming, reduced screen flicker, a switchable blue-light filter and, most notably, a "Defocus Eyecare" option that, in some apps including YouTube, simulates the effect of wearing defocus glasses by using AI to add gentle on-screen blurring to your peripheral visual field. These changes make very little difference to what you see, but are designed to reduce eye fatigue. *£1,699.99*



HOW TO BE WELL READ

This Android tablet comes with a dedicated button to activate what TCL calls VersaView; when you press it, you're then given the choice of a standard screen mode, "colour paper" mode (a low saturation display with softer colours) and "ink paper" mode (which simulates a black and white, e-ink e-reader). It's cleverly done: icons are properly restyled to match your new environment, and it's evident that (for example) long web articles are more pleasant to read when the garishness of the accompanying images and adverts has been dialled down. There is also the tablet's Eye Comfort Mode, which filters out blue light and adjusts the screen's colour temperature to help reduce eye strain. *£399*



UNIVERSAL EXPERT

Two firms, DwarfLab and Seestar, have locked horns to make astrophotography more accessible to amateur stargazers (in my case, exceedingly amateur). The only extras required with the Dwarf 3 are a tripod (a standard camera tripod is fine) and a smartphone (all the telescope's features are controlled via app). It makes complete sense that a device with advanced optics and sensors could calibrate itself to the night sky and line up precisely with the app's sky atlas, but that moment still feels faintly magical; planets, stars and nebulae can then be selected and photographed, with the camera stacking images in real time to create superb results. During the day it can double as a wildlife camera, automatically tracking and snapping your chosen subject. *£400*



Far right: Karachi biscuits from *Crumbs* by Ben Mims. Near right: Crumbl's Confetti Milkshake cookie and (below right) Fried Ice Cream cookie. Below left: Last Crumb's Better Than Sex cookie



EATING

SMART COOKIES

From Cöödies to Crumbl, these biscuits are genius, says *Ajesh Patalay*

Recently I visited a shop in south London called Cöödie that looks like an Apple store but actually sells biscuits. The wife of one of the owners happened to be helping out that day and took me through the options: sobrassada, Mahon cheese and honey; hoisin, white and ruby chocolate; brie, pear and pecan nut; dark chocolate and basil; cheddar and bacon. This last one was particularly delicious: a bit salty and smoky with a lingering smack of cheese. The wife told me she worked as a dentist – the irony of her peddling cookies on her day off wasn't lost on us. But even the strictest dentist would find it hard not to endorse cookies as good as these.

Cöödie (@coodielondon) is the brainchild of four London-based Spanish friends who previously worked in aviation and hospitality. They shared an obsession with cookies and felt the available options were dull. The name is a portmanteau of "cookie" and "foodie" with two umlauts thrown in for visual impact and phonetic mischief. "A cöödie is a person who has an ardent or refined interest in cookies, and who eats cookies not only out of hunger but also as a hobby," they told me.

In the hands of chef Cristina Garcia, who hails from Bilbao, the kitchen has become a hub for experimentation. Currently in development are creations made with spicy mango, beetroot, mascarpone and a cookie based on torrija trufada (a Spanish-style caramelised French toast). Also on the cards are wine evenings where cookies will be paired with sweet and sparkling wine.

Cookies have come a long way. Those of us with a sweet tooth increasingly hunger for cookies that are bigger, brighter and bolder. Historically, of course, cookies were mostly the preserve of weddings and holidays. But with the spread of industrialised products like baking powder and chocolate chips in the 1950s, they became home baking favourites all year round. More recently, bakeries such as Levain in New York have fuelled an interest in cookies that are more like mini desserts, alongside a growing appetite for versions with almost raw cookie dough interiors.



Crumbl (crumblcookies.com), which launched in 2017, became the fastest-growing chain of dessert shops in the US last year (with more than 1,000 stores). Its ascent can be attributed to the look and size of its cookies (some are more like cakes than biscuits) and its weekly rotating menu of new flavours that drop on TikTok to Crumbl's 9.6mn followers and lead to queues around the block. Flavours include caramel shortbread featuring Twix, fried ice-cream, chocolate-covered pretzel pie, pink velvet cake and confetti milkshake.

The even more exclusive Last Crumb in Los Angeles (lastcrumb.com) promises "the gold standard" in gourmet cookies, crafted by a head baker whose identity remains secret. The core collection costs $140 for 12 and includes flavours such as "Better than Sex" (chocolate chip), "The James Dean" (Oreo milkshake) and "Donkey Kong" (banana cream pie).



At this time of year, cookie parties are also a phenomenon in the US. Long tables are covered in parchment paper, a grid marked out in Sharpie pen and names added for guests to arrange their home bakes. "It's become a huge spectacle with crazy colours and shapes," says food writer and former *LA Times* columnist Ben Mims. "People go round with boxes, either to take cookies home as gifts or sample themselves. And people vote on the best." Mims's new book, *Crumbs: Cookies and Sweets from Around the World* (Phaidon, £34.95), is a bible of 300 options with the emphasis on cookies from across the globe that may be less familiar to western audiences. These include Karachi biscuits from India that look like terrazzo tiles, are made with candied papaya and custard powder (for eggy richness) and contain hints of rose water or cardamom. "All the things you want from a new cookie that has actually been around a while," says Mims. Another option is the Swiss chräbeli, which is shaped like a bear claw, has the crisp shell and soft chewy interior of a French macaroon, and is flavoured with anise and kirsch. While Mims' favourite is the diamond-shaped Algerian makroud, a date-filled semolina cookie that looks like a Fig Newton, is deep-fried and coated in honey and sesame seeds.

"A CÖÖDIE IS A PERSON WHO EATS COOKIES AS A HOBBY"

To claim first prize at a cookie party, however, my bet is on the khanom kleeb lamduan, a flower-shaped shortbread cookie from Thailand whose floral musky caramel flavour derives from the smoke of a scented candle (or tian op), which you can purchase online. A cookie you smoke in a box? Now that takes the biscuit. ■HTSI

@ajesh34

CHOCOLATE CHIP WALNUT COOKIE BY LEVAIN





ST JAMES'S SHOPPING LIST



BERRY BROS & RUDD
From left: Beyoncé's SIRDAVIS Rye Whiskey, £79 for 70cl. NO.3 Vesper Martini bottled cocktail, £30.50 for 50cl. SAMAROLI 1997 Caroni rum, £1,500 for 70cl

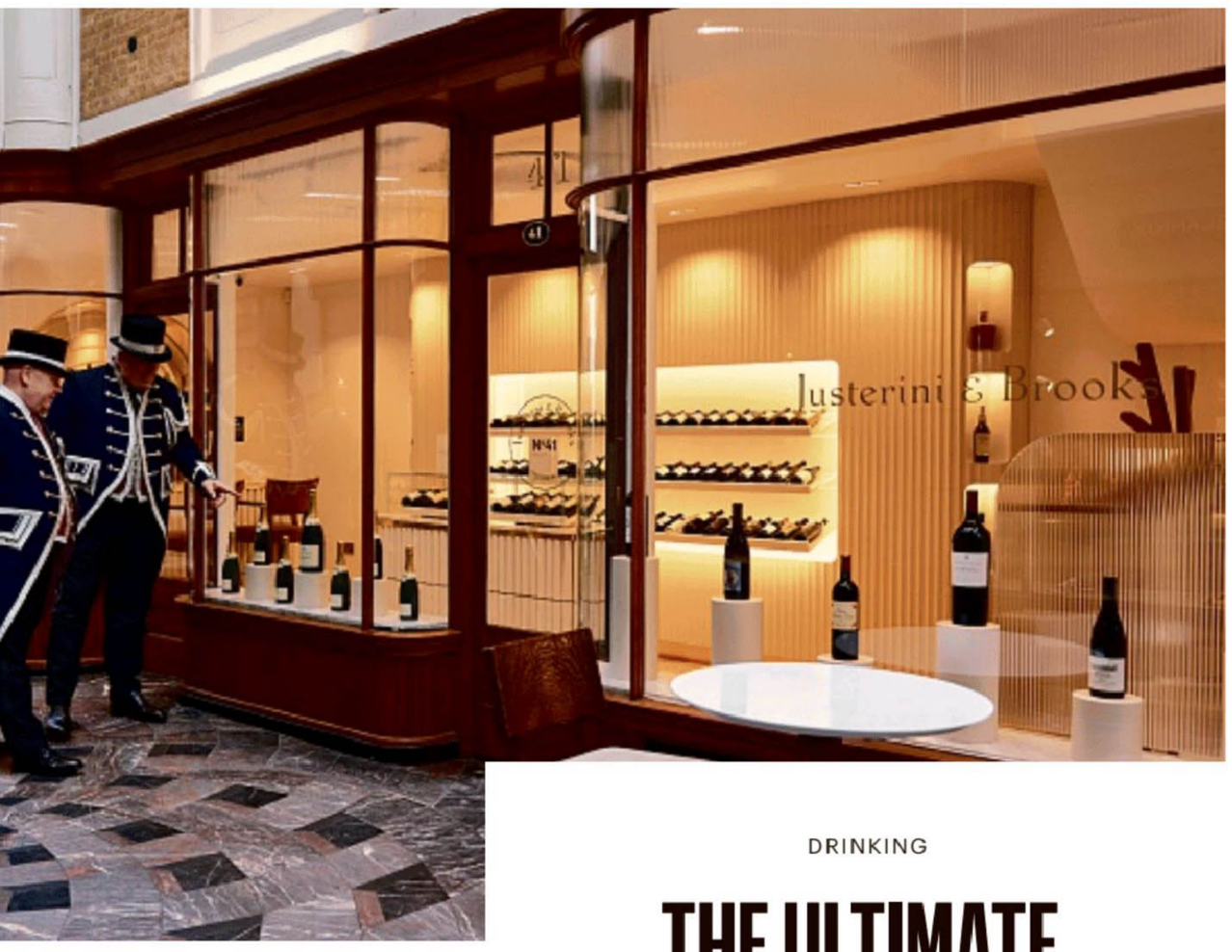


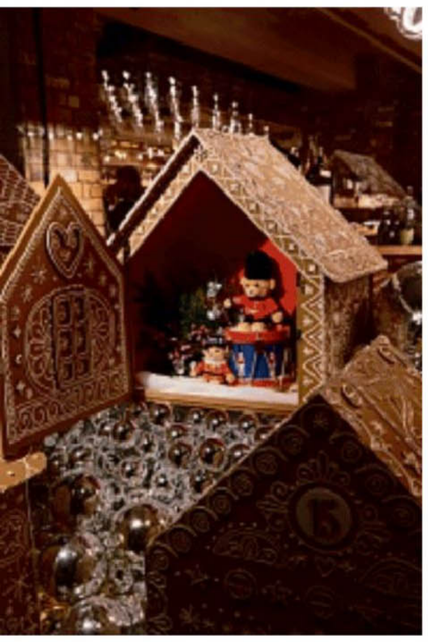
JUSTERINI & BROOKS
From left: JUSTERINI & BROOKS 275th Anniversary Bourgogne, £22.70 for 75cl. JUSTERINI & BROOKS 275th Anniversary Wine Case of Barbaresco Crichët Pajé Roagna 2016, Echezeaux Grand Cru Domaine du Comte Liger Belair 2013, and Château Lafleur Pomerol 2016, £5,400 (limited edition of 30)



HEDONISM
From left: AMARGO Chuncho Bitters, £13 for 7.5cl (essential to an authentic pisco sour). Miniature BLANTON'S Single Barrel Bourbon, £35 for 5cl. CITIZENS OF SOIL 2023 Small Batch Andalucia extra virgin olive oil, £30 for 50cl



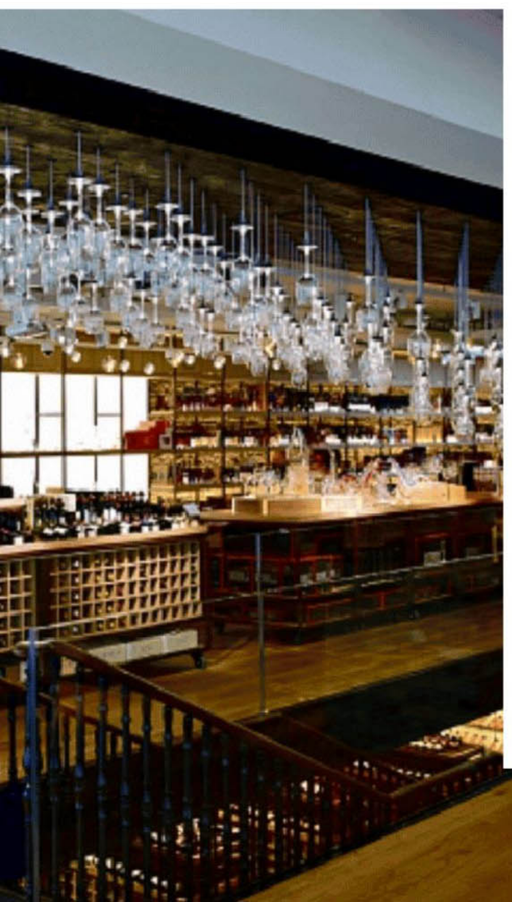




THIS YEAR'S CHRISTMAS WINDOW AT HEDONISM WINES

PHOTOGRAPHS: BERRY BROS & RUDD. KIRA TURNBALL. SIMON BAJADA. THOMAS ALEXANDER

Top: Justerini & Brooks's wine boutique and tasting room in Burlington Arcade. Top right: the Berry Bros & Rudd spirits shop. Below: Hedonism Wines, Mayfair



DRINKING

THE ULTIMATE BOTTLE SHOPS

Mayfair's most esteemed wine merchants have had a makeover. All the more reason to browse, says *Alice Lascelles*

Even the most ornery Scrooge would have to admit there's something magical about St James's and Mayfair in December – all the twinkly lights and extravagant window displays make it feel like a Christmas card. For wine and spirits lovers, it's a destination that's now more attractive than ever.

London's oldest wine and spirits merchant, Berry Bros & Rudd, has been supplying drinks to famous patrons including Byron, Winston Churchill and the British royal family for more than 300 years. Its new star turn is its spirits shop, just a few doors down from the wonderfully creaky old HQ, stocking more than 1,000 bottlings, from rare whiskies through to the latest tequilas (some not available online). "We find wine sales tend to be a bit more transactional," says BBR's creative director Geordie Willis, "whereas spirits shoppers like to linger – they are very engaged." The store's restful oak stave-clad interior and bookshop-like displays are deliberately designed to encourage browsing.

BBR has long been famous for Scotch, but its selection of Japanese and American whiskies is also good – try Beyoncé's new creation SirDavis (£79), a meaty rye whiskey, which was co-created with Glenmorangie's Dr Bill Lumsden. Rum is a strong hand: highlights include exclusives from Foursquare, Barbados and a Samaroli bottling of 1997 Caroni (£1,500), a Trinidadian "ghost distillery".

In the Reserve – a strong room with the really rare stuff – you'll find recherché Macallans and old Chartreuse. At the other end of the scale, the signature Berry Bros aprons (£45) have also been proving popular souvenirs. The store hosts regular "barrel-top" tastings, ticketed evening events and, for Christmas, King's Ginger Liqueur and mince pies on tap.

Just up the road in Burlington Arcade, Justerini & Brooks's new "boutique" drinks shop and wine bar is styled in a similar manner to the Manolo Blahnik and Ladurée shops that surround it. The wine and whisky selection is concise. It's where you might drop by in search of a nice bottle to take to a dinner party or have a post-shopping glass of champagne. The two-seater deco-style bar – plus a few more tables outside – serves a regularly changing selection of wines by the bottle and glass (from £13 for a glass of house champagne up to £75 for a glass of 2005 Château Palmer).



Upstairs on the first floor, overlooking the arcade, a 15-seater room furnished with ochre velvet banquettes, marble tables and herringbone parquet can be booked for wine tastings (from £500). And the tiny cellar downstairs is a brightly lit shrine to some of Diageo's top drams (Diageo owns J&B), where you can ogle the likes of the Brora Tryptich, Port Ellen Prima & Ultima 40yo and several rare Johnnie Walkers (available for tasting, by appointment, POA). J&B is also currently in the process of revamping its headquarters on St James's Street – the newly refurbished cellars will reopen for tastings and dinners in 2025.

The Christmas display at Hedonism Wines in Mayfair has been known to stop traffic – this year's kerbside extravaganza is a fantastical gingerbread village. Inside, the theatre continues; I don't know where else you can admire nebuchadnezzars of Sassicaia, vanishingly rare Japanese whiskies and a vertical of Château d'Yquem going back to 1811, all within the same four walls. New for this year is a vault in the basement displaying the unicorns of the red wine world: Romanée-Conti, Leroy, Pétrus, Lafite. Its champagne list has recently been expanded to encompass secret handshake growers like Georges Laval and Chavost. And the sake list is good too – the beautiful umeshus by Umeshuya (Torotoro No Umeshu, £50) would make a lovely present. There are daily in-store tastings, and 48 wines available to try from an enomatic machine. And occasional wine dinners – a table for 14 was laid by the jeroboam display when I last visited. Hedonism is agile at gifting: the team can advise, wrap and ship to more than 30 countries. And just 10 minutes' walk away is its new-look wine bar, The White Horse – a cosy spot where you can enjoy that Christmas bottle for £30 corkage, by the light of flickering candles. ■HTSI

@alicelascelles

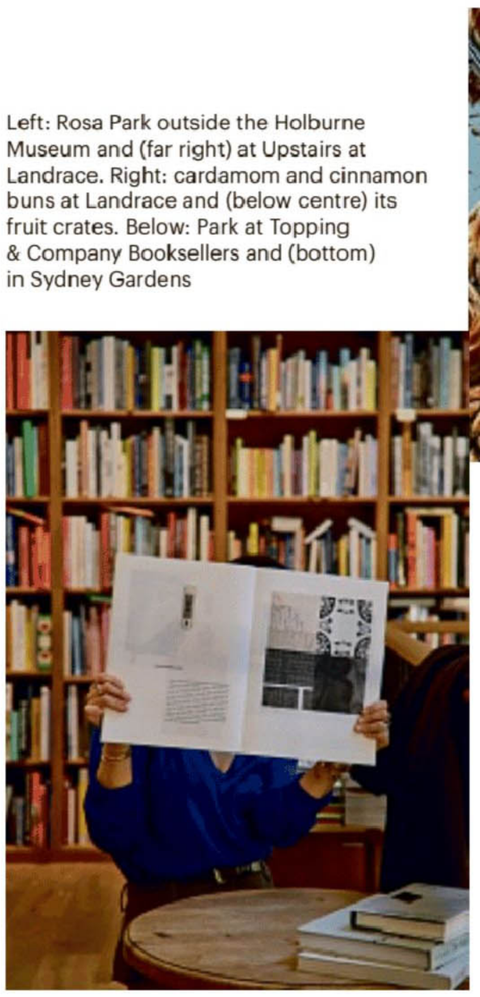
DAILY IN-STORE TASTINGS INCLUDE 48 WINES TO TRY BY ENOMATIC MACHINE

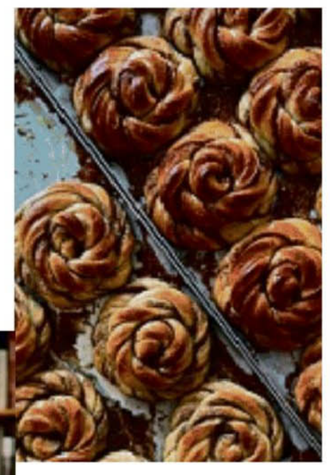
THE WHITE HORSE, OWNED BY HEDONISM WINES



HOW TO SPEND IT IN...









Left: Rosa Park outside the Holburne Museum and (far right) at Upstairs at Landrace. Right: cardamom and cinnamon buns at Landrace and (below centre) its fruit crates. Below: Park at Topping & Company Booksellers and (bottom) in Sydney Gardens

Bath

Gallerist Rosa Park meanders through the bookshops and bakeries of her home away from home

INTERVIEW BY **CLARA BALDOCK**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **BILLAL TARIGHT**

BATH MAKES ME FEEL CALM – AND I'M NOT A CALM PERSON

I spent 10 years in Bath, which is the longest I've lived in one place. I was born in Seoul but moved to Vancouver with my family when I was eight. I cut my teeth in fashion and beauty marketing in New York before moving to Bristol to do a masters in literature. Not long after, I took a trip to Bath, the next city over: it was a foggy day, and I remember chomping on a Bath bun – they're very dry and not particularly delicious – and being absolutely charmed by the city. My jaw dropped when I got to the Royal Crescent and wondered who lived there. I moved here after completing my studies.

The city is elegant and timeless, and has influenced all aspects of my life and work. It's evident in the visual language of *Cereal*, the magazine I founded with my partner, Rich, and in the programming and identity of Francis, the gallery I established here in 2018. I now live in LA, where I've opened a second gallery, but I shuttle back and forth. Hand on heart, I prefer Bath. Unlike LA, where you get in your car to drive two blocks, Bath is made to be walked around – I miss meandering and pottering.

A walk I always do without fail is from Sydney Place, where I have a flat, to Sydney Gardens – the only remaining Georgian pleasure garden in the UK, I believe – and up to Bathwick Fields, which is part of the Bath Skyline Walk. It feels like you're deep in the countryside; in spring you can forage for wild garlic in the nearby woodland, and in the autumn get pears, quince and apples from the orchard. There's one bench I always sit on that has the most beautiful view of the city.

What I love most about Bath is that there aren't a lot of environmental stressors: the buildings look the same by law, so there is an underlying foundation that's predictable and familiar. It makes me feel calm – and I'm not a calm person. My first stop is always Landrace – it's my favourite bakery in the world, and has a lovely restaurant and wine bar upstairs. I go there for bread, pastries, breakfast and coffee – although I also get my coffee from Society Café and Colonna. Christmas begins when I've had my mince pie and picked up my panettone.

The handful of other restaurants I like all serve modern British food – it's tougher to find diversity in cuisine here. The Beckford Bottle Shop & Bistro serves your typical small sharing plates. Down the road is its sister restaurant, Beckford Canteen, which is good for lunch and dinner. Walcot House is very reliable: it's big, so you can normally get a reservation, and the quality of the food is wonderful – they always tell you the name of the farm the ingredients come from. And while I'm not a pub gal, if I ever fancy a Sunday roast I go to the Marlborough Tavern.

Bath has some of the best independent bookshops. My favourite is Topping & Company – it looks right out of a movie with rolling staircases and piles of books. They offer complimentary tea and biscuits, which I enjoy while browsing cookbooks (even though I don't cook). I also love Persephone Books, which reprints mainly women writers, the children's book section at Mr B's Emporium, and Bath Old Books for anything second-hand: it's run as a co-op and is very old-school – they offer handwritten receipts.

There are also some amazing design stores including Berdoulat and 8 Holland Street – how wonderful that there's a guesthouse above. And I love the Atelier Ellis showroom, which is repainted every season to present its new colours. Cassandra, its founder, recently created a custom red colour for the walls of the gallery.

My flat is across the road from the stunning Holburne Museum, so I will always pop in – of course, my American friends only know it as Lady Danbury's house in *Bridgerton*. I've really enjoyed the museum's programme since its director Chris Stephens arrived; he's bringing in more modern artists, such as Henry Moore and Mr Doodle, a multidisciplinary artist from Bristol.

I think if I were to go to Bath 30 years from now, it would still be the same: like any city, it changes, but it never lets go of its core truths. ■**HTSI**



BAKED COD AT BECKFORD CANTEEN

BARS, CAFÉS & RESTAURANTS

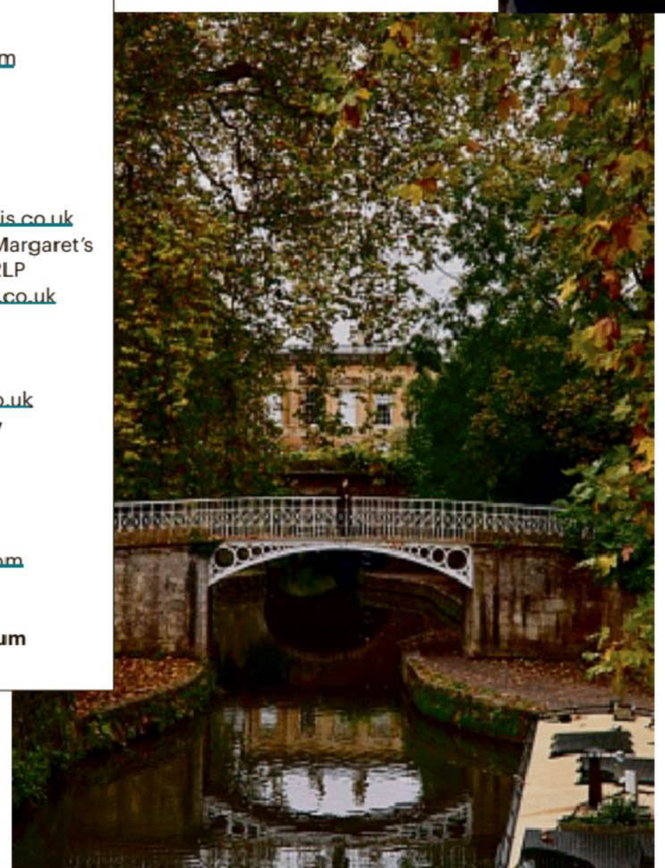
The Beckford Bottle Shop & Bistro beckfordbottleshop.com
Beckford Canteen beckfordcanteen.com
Colonna colonnacoffee.com
Landrace landrace.co.uk
Marlborough Tavern marlborough-tavern.com
Society Café society-cafe.com
Walcot House walcothousebath.com

SHOPPING

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Persephone Books persephonebooks.co.uk
Topping & Company toppingbooks.co.uk

CULTURE

Cereal readcereal.com
Francis Gallery francisgallery.com
The Holburne Museum holburne.org



PHOTOGRAPHS: BETH DOHERTY. LANDRACE

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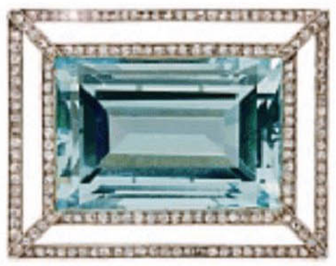
Fine Jewellery, Carl Fabergé, Works of Art



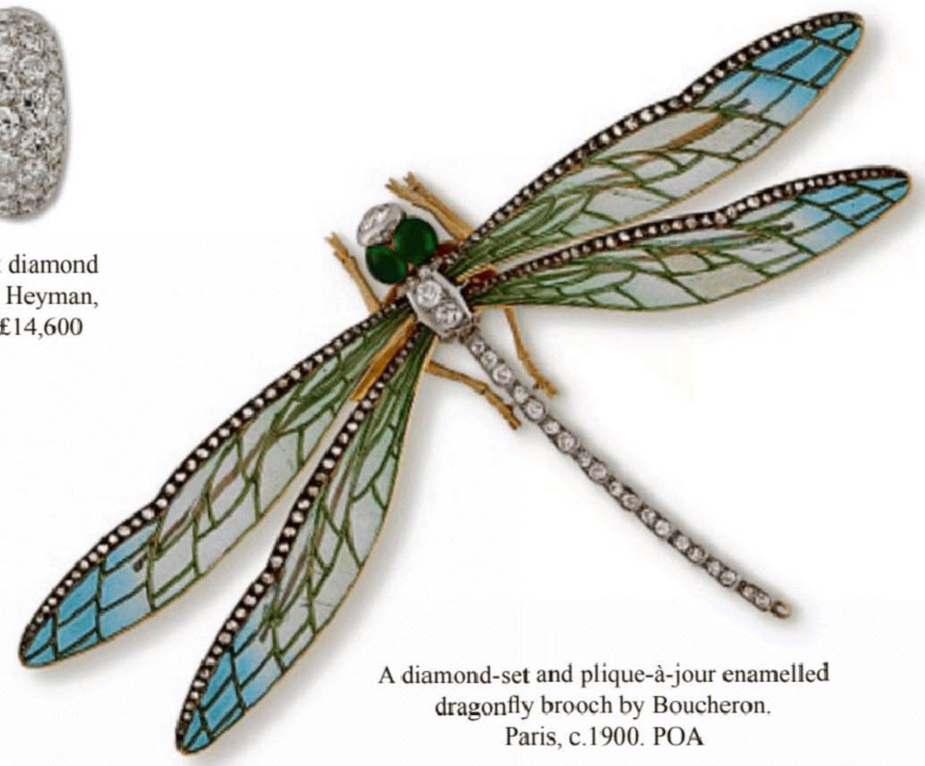
A sapphire and diamond cross pendant. English, c.1910. £16,000



A pair of brilliant-cut diamond set earrings by Oscar Heyman, New York, c.1950. £14,600



A Siberian aquamarine and diamond set brooch by Carl Fabergé. St. Petersburg, c.1908. £60,000



A diamond-set and plique-à-jour enamelled dragonfly brooch by Boucheron. Paris, c.1900. POA



A pair of gold, enamel and opal earrings by Georges Fouquet. Paris, c.1905. £45,000



An aquamarine briolette pendant mounted with diamonds. c.1910. £9,600



A diamond and chrysoprase egg pendant by Carl Fabergé. c.1900. £40,000



An Art Deco diamond ring centred with a Russian emerald. English, c.1920. £15,000



A platinum mounted ring set with five amethysts. English, c.1920. £6,250



A ruby and diamond ring by Tiffany & Co. New York, c.1935. £85,000



A seven-stone sapphire ring bordered with diamonds. English. £14,000



A platinum and diamond ring, centred with a 1ct diamond. £16,500



An archaeological style gold necklace by Robert Phillips. London, c.1870. £25,000



Peridot and green tourmaline briolette pendants mounted with diamonds. £1,500- £1,700



A diamond-set brooch containing three opals. English, c.1900. £5,750



A pearl and diamond-set brooch by Tiffany & Co. New York, c.1900. £9,750



A pair of gold-mounted cufflinks set with cabochon peridots and aquamarines. £3,600



A black opal and diamond brooch. English, c.1905. £14,750



A diamond-set anchor stick pin by Cartier. c.1920. £7,500



A multi-gem stick pin by Lacloche. French, c.1920. £3,750



A gold love token engraved 'With you life is sweet', with a diamond set spoon containing a diamond sugar cube. £4,500

All shown life size

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