

# CITY A.M.

No. 75 — THE MAGAZINE — APR 19

## JOIN THE CLUB

OUR NEW MEMBERS' PROGRAMME WILL OPEN THE DOOR TO RESTAURANTS, BARS AND SHOPPING EXPERIENCES IN THE CITY AND BEYOND — SEE P36



### TRAVEL

How climate change is challenging the decades-old rules of the industry

### LIVING

Nap rooms and fermenting clubs in the chic new office of design agency Fjord

### FOOD&BOOZE

Top chef Tom Kitchin invites Olympic superstar Chris Hoy for lunch to discuss eating and winning



## THE BIG INTERVIEW: PAUL WHITEHOUSE

The Fast Show star talks about the BBC's war on comedy and the simple joys of fishing



## IT'S BETTER ON THE INSIDE

How to get the most from City life, from the best new restaurants to our exclusive City AM Club for savvy professionals





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## EDITOR'S LETTER



**C**ity A.M. has always been an exclusive club. Both the daily newspaper and this magazine are self-selecting, appealing to a discerning reader who cares about both finance and the finer things in life. Today, we're making that exclusivity official by launching the City AM Club. Working in partnership with more than 50 brands, we'll be using our unique insight into the City lifestyle to offer our readers access to events and opportunities at their favourite restaurants, bars, shops and more.

The City has changed almost beyond recognition in the 10 years I've worked here – buildings have shot up, there's been an explosion in quality places to eat, the drinking culture has calmed down a bit. But one constant has been the reassuring presence of City AM, always there to help you through your morning, providing the knowledge you need to hit the day running, and offering advice on how to make life in and around the Square Mile a bit more fun.

Armed with your City AM Club card, the Square Mile will be your oyster, both during the working day and after hours. Turn to P36 for a full rundown of what you can expect. I hope to see you on the inside.

Elsewhere in this issue we catch up with TV legend Paul Whitehouse, fresh from rehearsals for the new *Only Fools and Horses* musical, who talks about how comedy has changed during his years in the industry.

We send food writer Josh Barrie into Soho to find out if it retains the magic that's made it London's pleasure capital for hundreds of years. And we travelled up to Scotland where top chef Tom Kitchin invited Olympic legend Sir Chris Hoy for lunch at his Michelin-starred restaurant. Change may be afoot at City AM, but you can always expect the same great magazine.

– STEVE DINNEEN

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE



**Above:** Fast Show star Paul Whitehouse; **Below from left:** Noodles at Taiwanese restaurant Din Tai Fung, reviewed on P35; Plates from Blow, as seen in our interiors section; **Cover illustration:** Mike Driver

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# CONTRIBUTORS



**TOM KITCHIN** is one of the country's top chefs, having won a Michelin star aged just 29. He has appeared on Saturday Kitchen, The Great British Menu and as a judge on Masterchef. He invites his old friend Chris Hoy for a slap-up lunch at The Kitchin (P20).



**MARK HIX** is *City A.M. Magazine's* regular food columnist. His restaurants include HIX Oyster & Chop House, HIX Mayfair, HIX Soho, Tramshed and Hixter Bankside. He talks about what makes British cuisine special on P24.



**SCARLET WINTERBERG** is *City A.M. Magazine's* luxury travel columnist. Each issue, she shares insider tips and frequent flyer information to help you get the best from your work trips. This month, she welcomes the return of supersonic travel on P72



**MELISSA YORK** is deputy editor of the magazine and an award-winning property journalist. On P86 she looks at the last few available houses to buy for non-nationals in some of Europe's top cities (P82), and asks what makes a well-designed restaurant on P86.



**JOSH BARRIE** is a food writer and restaurant expert. In this issue he argues that the death of Soho as London's premier dining district has been greatly exaggerated. He takes you on a tour of the city's hedonistic epicentre on P26.



**SIMON THOMSON** is *City A.M. The Magazine's* booze expert, specialising in dark spirits. He also writes film and theatre reviews for *City A.M.* – all of this when not pursuing a career in legal policy. Read his article on Macallan's 72-year-old whisky on P30.

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# FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Stories from the world of arts, technology, design and luxury goods



Mark Dawson, author of the international hit *Sleepers*, self-publishes and hosts podcast *Mark Dawson's Self-Publishing Formula*

in 40 different languages, from Afrikaans to Welsh." The most successful ebook of all time is EL James' *50 Shades of Grey*, but others include *The Martian* by Andy Weir (now a film starring Matt Damon), and *Codename Villanelle* by Luke Jennings (adapted for TV as *Killing Eve*).

Authors self-publish for a variety of reasons, and not just because they're not good enough to be picked up by a traditional publisher. LJ Ross, author of 10 bestsellers, started writing on maternity leave and never looked back; Rachel Abbott, another bestseller, is a 'hybrid author' who self-publishes *and* has a traditional contract; Mark Dawson, author of almost 30 thrillers, had a deal with Macmillan before embarking on self-publishing. The three authors have over eight million book sales between them.

Dawson, who has become a self-publishing guru with a popular course and podcast on the subject, says he now refuses offers from traditional publishers. He relishes being in complete creative control, hiring an editor, PR and cover designer who's illustrated for John Le Carre and Stephen King.

The main reward for being a one-man-band is financial; once an agent, editor, PR and illustrator have taken their cut and printing costs are taken into account, most authors are left with six to eight per cent of the royalties. Under KDP, authors get 70 per cent, or 60 per cent if they want to be published in paperback.

"If you've got a deal these days, one of the first questions a publisher will ask you is, 'what's your platform?'," says Dawson. "In other words, 'How many people are on your mailing list, following you on socials, what can you do to help us move books?' Which is fine, but my response to that is, 'I'm giving you 85 per cent of the cover price, why aren't you doing that better than I can?'"

When it comes to what sells, genre fiction is the only game in town. Romance tops the charts, followed by mysteries and thrillers, but even niche concepts can find an audience. Dawson says he knows of an author who specialises in 18th century Scandinavian romance novels, yet has found a thriving audience online thanks to targeted Facebook ads, and now makes around £50,000 a month.

Self-publishing also allows authors to control when they publish; Dawson's most recent book, a festive thriller called *Twelve Days*, was written in a month and published in time for the Christmas rush. "If I said to Penguin Random House 'I've got this book, I want to get it out for Christmas, you've got six weeks', they would laugh at me."

But everything is possible with self-publishing. Everything apart from convincing your mates you're a published author, that is.

## DO IT YOURSELF

Self-publishing is big business, and some authors are making millions, by **MELISSA YORK**

**E**veryone knows that getting a book deal is hard. Proclaiming you're a published author is instantly impressive, like getting a film optioned or a play staged. There are so many people who have to green-light it on its way to being offered up for public consumption that it must have some objective merit, right?

Well, fewer people than ever would agree. This is largely down to Amazon, the largest

bookseller in the world, which has upended the publishing industry and contributed to the demise of the bookshop. But it hasn't just democratised the sale of books, it's also given would-be authors easy access to a global audience of readers through its self-publishing platform Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP). It also faces competition from Apple's iBooks Author app and Kobo Writing Life (KWL). But for now, Amazon remains the whale in the self-publishing pond.

The number of authors choosing to self-publish is growing year-on-year, according to Darren Hardy, manager at KDP UK. "Anyone with an internet connection and an electronic file of their manuscript can have their book published and made available to customers all around the world in a few clicks. Books can be published through KDP





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# CAN ROBOTS MAKE ART?

For millennia humans have been the primary producers of art. Could that be about to change?

asks **STEVE DINNEEN**

**E**ver since the first caveman painted his genitals on a wall, we've had a very human-centric idea of what constitutes 'art'. Most philosophers agree that nature isn't art, for instance, although if Plato is to be believed, art may be the mimicking of nature. Nietzsche's take on the matter is typically succinct: "Nothing is beautiful, only man... The domain of aesthetic judgment is therewith defined."

Thousands of years of philosophy converges upon the idea that art is a human endeavour. But this carbon-based hegemony is being challenged by our silicon cousins, with a new wave of artificial creators churning out weird and wonderful insights into the digital mind.

Earlier this month an AI called AICAN, alongside its human creator Dr Ahmed Elgammal, exhibited a series of haunting portraits in New York's HG Contemporary gallery. These inkjet creations featured a series of semi-abstract human forms, with fleshy masses resembling heads emerging from strange, feathery capes. One looked a bit like a Damien Hirst skull, while others were closer to Francis Bacon's tortured faces.

Some have reportedly sold for five-figure sums, although they are not, I hazard, great works of art. The glitchy, repeating backgrounds recall those psychedelic monstrosities churned out by Google's DeepDream neural network, a learning machine that projected its bias towards eyes, dogs and kittens onto every picture fed into it. AICAN's revenue is a mere pittance compared to the work of Obvious, a Paris-based group of artists who trained an existing open-source algorithm to "study" works by the Old Masters and produce a portrait of the (fictional) Edmond de Belamy, which sold last year for a frankly obscene \$432,500.

A little closer to home, works by Ai-Da the world's first "ultra-realistic humanoid AI robot artist" have, alongside their uncanny creator, gone on display at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. This silicone-skinned robot, complete with 3D-printed gums and teeth, "sees" its sitter through cameras and uses its metal hands to sketch them. The results are a little basic, but it's a better doodler than me, so who am I to judge?

"AI has the potential to change and challenge how we see ourselves, and therefore how we understand aesthetics," says Aidan Meller, the gallery director hosting Ai-Da's show.

"We would certainly call the drawings produced by Ai-Da 'art'. If we wanted to be a bit more specific, Ai-Da and her sketches are contemporary art, within the realms of robotic art, computer art, and conceptual art. We need to look at how we define and understand what 'art' means. The more we



unpack what robots are, what art is, and what humans are, the more meaningful this discussion becomes. Humans love to reflect critically on art and culture, and AI will increasingly be included within those conversations."

It's not just the visual arts that are under scrutiny from artificial intelligence. Tech company OpenAI recently announced a new

text-generation algorithm that's able to mimic writing styles and produce original content. Feed it a paragraph from a novel and it can finish the chapter. Give it the top line of a news article and it can generate the entire story, complete with statistics and quotations. The problem is, the algorithm has no idea if what it's writing is true - it simply trawls through its vast database of content and produces something that's structurally and grammatically similar.

This, it hardly needs pointing out, is problematic, given present concerns over "fake news". There's only so much disingenuous content a roomful of Russian trolls can churn out, but give them an algorithm and the internet is their oyster. For now the code remains under lock and key while OpenAI works out its potential ramifications. Whatever decision it comes to, this robot literature is doubtless a taste of things to come.

"We hope the next stages in AI-created art include increasingly robust and engaged dialogues between human and machine, which considers wider philosophical concepts and ethical dilemmas," says Meller. "We anticipate art-loving humans will embrace AI art in the same way they did the camera and video. AI art has the same potential - it is up to us how we use it."

I, for one, welcome our new robot overlords.



From top: Robot Ai-Da being created; A 'painting' by AI AICAN, which exhibited in a New York gallery



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Philip Krim, co-founder and CEO of Casper, one of the firms disrupting the mattress market



# THE PRICE OF A NIGHT'S SLEEP

How Casper, Eve and Emma turned the mattress industry on its head, by **JOSHUA SIMS**

**Y**ou can't listen to a podcast or walk down an Underground platform without someone trying to sell you a new mattress. It wasn't always so: until recently, people replaced them just once every 12 years.

But that's changing, with direct-to-consumer brands with cosy names like Casper (US), Emma (Germany), and Simba and Eve (UK) shaking up the industry, now accounting for more than one in four mattress sales, up from practically zero five years ago. These so-called 'mattress in a box' companies say they represent better value for money, keeping their product simple, with a one-size-fits-all approach and no expensive retail real estate. Following the lead of furniture-makers like Made.com, Eve Sleep manufactures its products on-demand, using third-party manufacturers in the UK.

Of course, to deliver a mattress in a box, you have to be able to squeeze it into a portable package, something most of these brands achieve by doing away with the bulky springs that form the backbone of a traditional mattress. Advances in vacuum packing has helped with deliveries, but more

important are advances in foam technology, with aerated cold foam, visco-elastic memory foam, anti-bacterial foam and breathable, pressure-distributing foam all coming together in a big, foamy sandwich, which is far cheaper than inserting coiled metal between organic fibres.

The real expenditure is on all that promotion: in an industry that has typically spent just 2.7 per cent of revenue on promotion, 43 per cent of Simba's workforce is dedicated to sales and marketing. These companies clearly know the power of branding, acting more like tech start-ups than retail firms, positioning themselves as something akin to Apple for the exhausted.

So is manufacturing mattresses a licence to print money? It appears to be for Casper: since its conception in 2014, it's sold \$600m worth of the things, with around \$275m of that coming in last year alone. Eve Sleep racked up losses of £19m in 2018, but saw its revenue jump 132 per cent to £27.7m. Simba, meanwhile, hopes to achieve a valuation of between £500m-£1bn by 2020. But with an estimated 220 online-focused retailers, it's a crowded market.

"These new players' focus so far has been on convenience and affordability," says

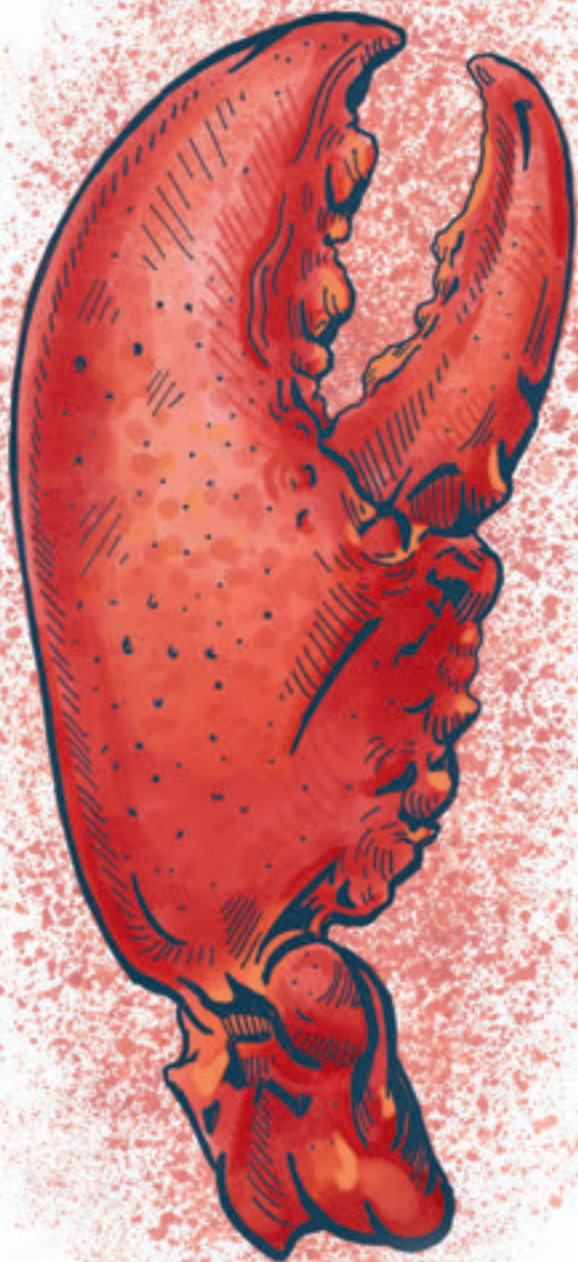
Alexander Green, analyst for market research firm IBISWorld. "They're very marketing-driven and they are forcing more traditional manufacturers to respond. They are shaking up the market."

It is, in fairness, a market ripe for the shaking. Mattresses fit in with the zeitgeisty demand for sleep monitors, sleep aids and sleep coaches. There's an Arianna Huffington and Tim Cook-led backlash against the 'sleep is for losers' attitude that, until recently, prevailed in many boardrooms. Getting our eight hours has become the latest health push for a 24/7, phone-addicted society. That combination of convenience, affordability and consumerism has made buying a new mattress an irresistible proposition to many, with the global market value projected to grow from \$27bn last year to \$43bn in 2024. The UK mattress market is this year expected to rise beyond £1bn for the first time.

"Historically consumers have had low interest in buying a mattress," says Eve Sleep CEO James Sturrock. "But by improving the product - the way it looks, the way it's sold - and by creating brands that are cool, mattresses are now the kind of thing people are talking about down the pub."

# BUSINESS LUNCH

The best places to eat in and around the City of London, from hip new openings to long-established staples



## CRISPIN, WHITE'S ROW

**WHAT IS IT?** An odd, modernist building jutting from the ground like a jagged tooth just round the corner from Liverpool Street and Spitalfields Market. It's the latest venture from Dominic Hamdy and Oliver Hiam, the pair behind Aldwych coffee shop Lundenwic, and Borough Market's gourmet scotch egg merchant Scotchtails. Crispin is a 70-cover cafe that's open from 7.30am for breakfast and (excellent) coffee, and serves seasonal dishes for lunch and dinner.

**WHO WILL IT IMPRESS?** People looking for a place that's the antithesis of the stereotypical "stuffy" City restaurant. It serves small sharing plates, has orange wine on the menu, and one of the owners curates the playlist at a "listening bar" where customers can chill out to records from his personal label Tessellate. The interior design is as modernist as the building, including some beautiful framed posters designed for the restaurant's regular tasting events.

**WHAT ABOUT THE FOOD?** It's clearly a labour of love, with a small menu offering simple but excellently cooked dishes. It changes regularly but when we were in there was a divine crab tartine on homemade bread, some decadent wild garlic arancini, a simple but delicious pork rib eye in a pepper and hazelnut sauce, and – best of all – a steaming plate of freshly made spinach and ricotta ravioli, cooked with the perfect amount of bite.



The modernist exterior of Crispin; the design ethos is continued through to the chic interior

**DESSERT?** Yes, more of the same: simple and well prepared. The buttermilk panna cotta with honeycomb and toasted buckwheat is a fascinating combination of flavours and textures that we highly recommend. You should finish things off with one of those great coffees.

**SET MENU?** Usually when we order "one of everything" in a restaurant we feel a little greedy, but here it's an option on the menu (£24pp) and we highly recommend you take them up on it.

**WHERE:** White's Row, E17NFR  
**EMAIL:** [bookings@crispinlondon.com](mailto:bookings@crispinlondon.com)  
**WEB:** [crispinlondon.com](http://crispinlondon.com)



## BRAWN, COLUMBIA RD

**WHAT IS IT?** A small-plates restaurant next to the famous Columbia Road flower market. It's been a mecca for foodies since it opened in 2015 and we can confirm it's still an absolutely smashing place to eat and drink. It's the progeny of chef-owner Ed Wilson, one of the bona fide geniuses of the London food scene, serving unfussy, precise takes on modern European classics.

**WHO WILL IT IMPRESS?** Anyone who knows food: this is a destination restaurant disguised as a cosy neighbourhood dining room. It's also,



The cosy dining room at Brawn, where you could happily while away an entire afternoon

quite simply, a lovely place to spend a few hours: a light, whitewashed former warehouse made cosy through use of warm materials. Save this one for a client who appreciates life's finer things.

**WHAT ABOUT THE FOOD?** Brawn has one of those menus that leaves you salivating for all the things you couldn't order. We started with an obscenely gooey burrata with hazelnut salsa verde radicchio, which we're still fantasising about a week later. Crab with calcots (somewhere between a spring onion and a leek) is an absolute joy, while clam and cuttlefish with fennel is a riot of colour and texture. Elsewhere there's some of the best pappardelle in this great city of ours, which you'll find lurking beneath a mountain of parmesan. Brawn also has a very decent wine list, long enough that you'll want to get the waiters involved. After much deliberation we went for a sharp, acidic Alsatian number called *Le Verre Est Dans Le Fruit* – highly recommended.

**DESSERT?** Oh yes. Baked custard with rhubarb and pistachio is among the finest ways we've ever rounded off a meal. "Chocolate, olive oil and sea salt", meanwhile, is presented like a hand grenade swimming in a little puddle of oil. Properly rich and indulgent.

**SET MENU?** Nope. Expect to pay around £150 for two people.

**PHONE:** 020 7729 5692  
**WHERE:** 49 Columbia Rd, E2 7RG  
**WEB:** brawn.co

## YEN, HOLBORN

**WHAT IS IT?** Yen is both the official currency of Japan and a fine dining restaurant at the bottom of a luxury housing development on The Strand. As such, it's quite a clinical environment, albeit grand and high-ceilinged. Our favourite part is the little window through which you can watch the chefs make traditional soba noodles by hand. It's what the restaurant is famous for, with Yen's 'director of soba' trained by the 'master of soba' Mr Takahashi Kunihiro in Yamanashi, Japan.

**WHO WILL IT IMPRESS?** Parisians – the original restaurant is in St Germain des Pres – and noodle nerds. Also, people who enjoy delegating their dinner choices to someone else: there are so many 'chef selections' on this menu, it's a wonder he gets anything else done.

**WHAT ABOUT THE FOOD?** Those soba noodles – served with hot or cold broth and a choice of toppings – are fresh, springy and really something to shout about. They feature on both the a la carte and omakase menu, which changes daily and can be paired with a mixture of European wines and sake. Top-grade sushi and wagyu deliver what they promise, but the most delightful dishes come off the grill; aubergine with white miso and shrimps; chargrilled eel with tareyaki (their spelling, not ours) sauce; and seared sirloin nigiri.

**DESSERT?** Keep it simple with a fruit platter or sorbet, or commit to a



A selection of Yen's extravagant and delicious cocktails – careful if you're there for lunch

traditional dessert with a yuzu cake – bouncy and citrusy – or a selection of wagashi sweets. There's also a bigne, a hangover from Paris: French choux pastry shot through with matcha creme.

**SET MENU?** For lunch, there's a £39 bento box that's a great way to try a bit of everything, including an assortment of starters, tempura, sushi and soba, finished with a fruit selection.

**PHONE:** 020 3915 6976  
**WHERE:** 5 Arundel Street, WC2R 3DX  
**WEB:** yen-london.co.uk

## MALIBU KITCHEN

**WHAT IS IT?** The Ned is Soho House's outpost in the City, a 252-bedroom hotel and member's club surrounding the renovated building's original Grand Banking Hall, and containing no fewer than eight restaurants. Of these, Malibu Kitchen is the healthiest option. The purest expression of west coast clean living outside of California, it serves a mostly plant-based, gluten-free and raw selection of dishes. Whether deliberately or not, it's situated on the opposite side of the dining hall to the tempting stacks of reuben sandwiches at Zabler's Deli.

**WHO WILL IT IMPRESS?** This place will be an instant hit with anybody who has ever used the word 'detox' without flinching, but Malibu Kitchen's fascination with superfoods doesn't come at the expense of indulgence. There's a beef fillet and a cheeseburger on the menu if you want to get down with some calories. With such a range of cuisine, this is where hangovers come to be cured.



Malibu Kitchen's extravagant coconut salad, which is a guaranteed crowd-pleaser

**WHAT ABOUT THE FOOD?** There's the forbidden rice bowl (which despite the name they will voluntarily serve you). It's a sumptuous and colourful poké-style dish served with kale and fermented veg. Or try the courgette ribbons for a fresh and lighter alternative to pasta that won't send you into a mid-afternoon carb coma. Padron peppers seasoned with rocks of sea salt the size of your fist are a go-to starter, and while your future self will thank you for a cold-pressed broccoli and cucumber juice, you should still check out the menu of Californian wines.

**DESSERT?** Vegans get a raw chocolate cake, which is more of a ganache really, served with a raspberry puree on top of a biscuity base. There's also a range of homemade ice creams and sorbets, as well as a seasonal Malibu sundae.

**SET MENU?** No, but every Tuesday, for £25, you can get two tacos, a side and a dessert, with one of Soho House's famous Picante de la Casa cocktails.

**PHONE:** 020 3828 2000  
**WHERE:** 27 Poultry, EC2R 8AJ  
**WEB:** thened.com



Phoebe Fox at  
Hej Coffee,  
Bermondsey  
by Tim Boddy



# THE LAST SUPPER

Star of new drama *Curfew*, **PHOEBE FOX** tells us what she'd eat for her last meal on earth, from her mum's carbonara to treacle pudding 'straight from the tin'.

**I** grew up in Brentford in south-west London. My mum is a really great cook and my dad had this kind of culinary awakening when my mum went away to work for six months. To start with, he fed us spaghetti bolognese every day for two weeks and then even he got sick to death of it. He ended up being a really good cook. The other defining thing from my childhood was both my parents giving up meat. Things were quite different back then for vegetarians. Today you can buy great meat-free food everywhere and it's delicious, but back in the mid-90s I remember awful things like stuffed marrow, and lead-ups to Christmas where we ate nut-roast every Sunday.

I've become vegetarian again in the last couple of years. It was a social conscience thing, really – we all know eating meat is one of the worst things we can do for the planet but we choose to ignore it.

The transition has been fairly easy, maybe because I did the hard work back when I was a kid. It's actually made me a better cook because I had to step out of my comfort zone. I was a very angry cook for about a year when I was trying to make European food, but it got better when I started to look further afield. Now I make lots of curries and Middle Eastern food. I'm good at tasty stuff but not really high-end stuff. I like cooking things that all fit into one pot because I really hate washing up.

Filming, of course, can knock everything out of whack. I just finished shooting *Curfew*, which as the title suggests is all shot at night, so for five months I was eating my main meal at 2am. You find yourself stuffing in a Krispy Kreme doughnut at 5am and you think 'what am I doing?' – your body hates you and

your digestive system is so angry.

My last supper is quite boring I'm afraid. I was really racking my brain for things that I love, and I kept coming back to the same dishes. Nostalgia is the thing that tastes best, so it's all stuff from my past. For a starter, I'd go for proper Mexican guacamole made in a pestle and mortar with a really punchy salsa and home-made tortilla chips. It reminds me of my husband – he's American and he introduced me to proper Mexican food. I thought I'd tried it all before until I actually went to Mexico and realised that London's take on the cuisine is all twisted and wrong.

For my main, I'm going for my mother's spaghetti carbonara, even though I don't eat meat any more. I'll always love it, it reminds me of her, it reminds me of being a kid, plus any kind of cheesy, pig-based carbs is a winner. It's the kind of thing that will make me buckle if I see it on a menu. I ate ham over Christmas, so I'm not the perfect vegetarian.

I didn't even have to think twice about dessert – it would be treacle pudding with custard. I'd happily eat it out of the tin, although I can hear my mother's voice saying 'out of the tin?' and being really disappointed. When we were young, my mum had a habit of announcing that she had dessert for us and would emerge from the kitchen with stewed apples, so me and my dad would go out for tins of treacle pudding and Ambrosia custard.

I'd wash it all down with a nice bottle of red. I don't know what, I usually leave the wine to my husband, but something very expensive, especially as my pudding came out of a can.

● *Phoebe is currently starring in Curfew on Sky One, airing on Friday evenings at 9pm*

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Above: Tom and Chris discuss the science of nutrition; Opposite: Sir Chris has kept in shape since his retirement; Pictures: Greg Sigston

# CHEF'S TABLE

This month, superstar chef **TOM KITCHIN** cooks lunch at his Edinburgh restaurant, The Kitchin, for Olympian **SIR CHRIS HOY**

## STARTER

Orkney scallop with sea kale in a lemon emulsion

**TOM KITCHIN:** So our connection is your parents, who have been eating in the restaurant for a long time, your sister as well, and you're all massive foodies. I mean, *really* big foodies.

**SIR CHRIS HOY:** If I'm back in Edinburgh and I've got a night off, this is always the place we come – if we can get a table, of course. Normally, after the tasting menu with the wine pairings, you'll come over and say 'do you want to see the kitchen?' and I can barely walk straight, so it's nice to see the place without the fog effect.

**TK:** I love sport, any kind of sport. Watching you over the years and then to have you in, as a restaurateur that's a really proud moment, when people you admire walk into your restaurant.

**CH:** But the success you've had with the restaurants, that's you putting in the graft. You haven't just put your name to it, it's been the hard yard, you're still here on the ground.

**TK:** What did you eat when you were training?

**CH:** As an athlete, food is central to your performance, but it's often seen as a means to an end, it's fuelling for a purpose. But for me it was more than that. It was something I looked forward to at the end of a hard day's training, it was the highlight of the day for me. Particularly in training camps which can be in the

middle of nowhere, there's nothing around the hotel, nothing to do, so if the hotel food was average or bad, it made that training camp tough to get through.

**TK:** When you were preparing for the Olympics, what's the longest you'd be away from home?

**CH:** It was 10 weeks for the Sydney Olympics, but that was the only time in my whole career we had a chef. Not travelling with us, but the hotel's chef in Brisbane said that as long as we gave them 24 hours notice, we could have whatever we wanted and it was like Christmas Day every day. Initially you go for usual stuff, then you try to test things like 'can you get us haggis?' and he's like 'well, give us two days.'

You need energy to fuel the body, so carbs do that, then you need protein to repair damage, then the right vitamins and minerals to help the body operate efficiently. For the road guys, it's more of a science because every gram of extra body weight they have to carry up a 10k climb in the Alps. For track, it's more about the power you can produce.

**TK:** So you and Sir Bradley Wiggins would have a different diet?

**CH:** Very different, yeah. We never really calculated calories because you'd sit and eat until you couldn't eat anymore because it was better to have too much and be carrying weight into a race than not eating enough and not having the fuel.

**TK:** So that must have been a real challenge when your career stopped, to not become a house? ►





From left: Scottish wagyu braised beef cheek, truffle mash and bone marrow; Orkney scallop with sea kale in a lemon emulsion; Pictures: Greg Sigston

► **CH:** You see it all the time when athletes retire, but my appetite depends on what I'm doing. If I'm not doing that exercise, I don't tend to have that same hunger. But I do find myself just grazing and I need to remind myself that I'm not an athlete anymore and I need to be more mindful. The biggest change is alcohol because I used to not drink for 11 months of the year, only when I had a month off. Now, not being an athlete, if I want a glass of wine or beer I can, but I'll put the weight on. But I do love red wine, it's one of my passions.

**TK:** After everything you've put your body through, I think if anyone deserves a glass of red wine, it's you.

**MAIN**

Scottish wagyu braised beef cheek, truffle mash and bone marrow

**TK:** So how do you keep fit now?

**CH:** For me, it's about using the time I've got, so I can get a lot done in 45 minutes on the static bike in the gym.

**TK:** The last three years I've really got into the gym and it's helped me so much in my mind space and dealing with business and stress. I try to take the kids to school at 8am then go to the gym before arriving at the restaurant just before 9am, where I'll remain until as late as midnight. I'll have a break in the afternoon where I'll pick the kids up and drop them at football training. Edinburgh's a great city for that because if you know where you're going, you can get around pretty fast.

**CH:** When I was living in Edinburgh, I used to go out on my track bike on this flat road near the airport with no through-traffic, a quiet strip of tarmac. I used to do sprints and standing starts on there. Every now and again you'd see someone go past with a dog or in their car staring at these guys sprinting up and down on these bikes and they'd think we were crazy. Once, I was doing some pretty grim interval sessions, and after each set you'd get off the bike and collapse and lie at the side of road. This old



At the Olympics they passed me the British flag but it slipped right out of my hand. I had hand gel on and I was desperately trying not to drop it

guy came up to me and was like 'you OK, sonny? Do you want me to call an ambulance?' And I'd be like 'No, it's OK, this is normal.'

**TK:** So when do cyclists normally retire?

**CH:** Just before 30. The road guys tend to go a bit longer, but for sprinting, mid-20s is your peak. I was 36 in London so I was properly old. After Beijing, the British cycling coaches said if Chris makes it to London, we haven't done our job properly, we should be bringing through younger talent. I remember hearing that and thinking, right, I better get there and prove them wrong.

**TK:** But it was the big one to get to London?



**CH:** It was, I probably would have retired if it hadn't been in London. To compete in front of a home crowd was something else. Carrying the flag with one arm is the challenge. Right before I went into the stadium, they passed me the flag and I'd just put a big dollop of hand gel on, because you're about to compete so you don't want to pick up a bug. The flagpole slipped right out of my hand, so I was desperately trying to dry it because I couldn't hold the thing. You're given all these rules about what to do, but as soon as I walked into the stadium everything went out of my head; the confetti cannons, David Bowie playing, to me, that moment was enough. I felt like whatever happened after that, it was worth it.

**DESSERT**

Rhubarb, yogurt mousse and orange meringues

**TK:** If you look at what goes into the success of a chef or sportsperson, it's a similarly long journey. As a young chef you think 'I'm going to go to London at 18, I'm gonna go to Paris at 21', and there are times when you think 'I can't do this, it's too hard, I want to go home'. I'm sure you've been through so many of those moments, but something keeps driving you on.

**CH:** People look at the end result, the gold medal performance and think 'you made it look easy'. You look at this beautiful restaurant, the food always comes out looking perfect and it seems calm and relaxed...

**TK:** You're like a swan gliding along, with the legs going furiously underneath.

**CH:** The hard work continues all the time as well. Once you get up there, it's even harder to maintain it.

**TK:** It definitely takes a certain mindset, the ability to win a gold medal and go, 'Right, let's do it all over again in four years.'

**CH:** The only way is down. At the centre of it, though, is love for what you do.

● To book *The Kitchin* go to [thekitchin.com](http://thekitchin.com) ■





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MY LIFE IN  
**RESTAURANTS**  
 MARK HIX

# WE LOVE BRITISH CUISINE, BUT WHAT EXACTLY IS IT?

Our columnist explores what we really mean by 'British' and muses on how our place in the world is shifting around us

**T**here's often confusion over what British cuisine actually is. Food writers and critics years ago labelled some restaurants "modern British" but often, on close inspection, they use French poultry and foie gras alongside out-of-season imports, the only true British ingredients being a handful of herbs or some Welsh lamb. I got serious about British food when I started writing books on our regional and seasonal cuisine. The more I researched, the easier I found sourcing fantastic produce grown and reared in the UK; farmers and producers ended up coming to me, hoping I'd mention them. Twenty-odd years ago many hotels and restaurants would just order an ingredient from a supplier and not really be too bothered about its provenance which, more often than not, was French or Italian as they were way ahead of the game compared to our producers.

The tables have now turned. Foodies and chefs want to know where their gear is from, and it's often a dinner party talking point. Our farmers are growing and rearing as good if not better produce than our continental counterparts. Even our cheeses – including those made by my mate Alex James – are up there with the best in Europe.

British cooking had a shocking reputation for many years, and quite rightly: a lot of

restaurants and fast food chains simply didn't give a damn about what they served. When I first moved to London 38 years ago, you had to have done a stint in France or Switzerland to cut the mustard.

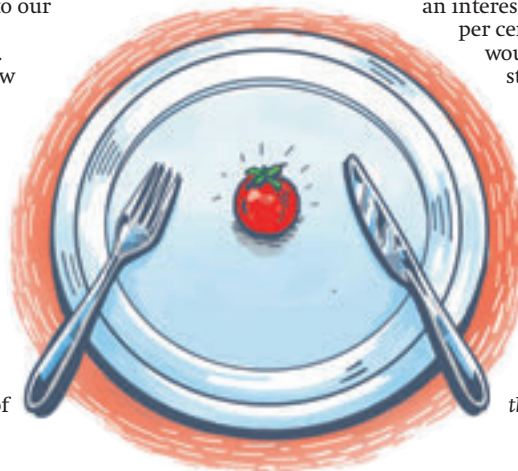
Now it's a different story and London is one of the gastronomic capitals of the world.

So what is British cuisine? We all know about roast beef and Yorkshire pudding and Lancashire hot pot and steak and kidney pie, but to my mind these are a bit of a red herring, with most having pretty exact analogues abroad: the French do a good impersonation of shepherd's pie in the form of Hachis Parmentier, for instance. Likewise Chester Pie has a strong resemblance to the American lemon meringue pie, as does Trinity burnt cream and creme brûlée.

For me, British cuisine is based on ingredients grown or reared in the UK, prepared and cooked with very little done to them. It's easy to compile an interesting menu these days using 95 per cent British produce, which

would have been an uphill struggle 30 years ago. All of this puts Britain and its producers in good shape for a certain event that's about to happen – or not, who knows? – but which I refuse to name, lest I spoil your afternoon.

● Mark is owner of a restaurant empire including HIX Soho, Hixter Bankside, Tramshed and HIX Oyster & Chophouse. City A.M. Club members can get 20 per cent off their final bill at all of them





Mathieu Bitton with the Leica M10-P

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# WHY REPORTS OF SOHO'S DEATH HAVE BEEN GREATLY EXAGGERATED

Despite spiralling rents, modern developments and competition from Hackney, Peckham and Brixton, Soho remains the beating heart of London's dining scene, says **JOSH BARRIE**

**W**hen Casanova arrived in London in 1763, Soho was his first port of call. It was a place riddled with opium dens and brothels and coffee houses and restaurants, the place you went for cheap rent, good

food, great drugs and the best parties.

It's been the first port of call for hedonists and sybarites ever since, and while today there are far fewer brothels (and, to the best of my knowledge, no opium dens), it's always been regarded as the undisputed heavyweight of the London dining scene, whether you're looking for a refined pre-theatre meal or debauched late-night excess.

But in the last few years that hegemony has been challenged. Today's hip young things are as likely to hang out in Brixton or Peckham or Hackney, each of which boasts a selection of the finest restaurants in the country. In east London in particular, young progressives spend unfathomable sums on small plates and organic wine. It seems like every week another hypebeast restaurant opens in Clapton or London Fields or Dalston.

In Soho, meanwhile, rising rents are driving out smaller businesses and replacing them with slick, private equity-backed behemoths. There's a prevailing wisdom that Soho is losing its edge, becoming dull and

modern, that its best days are behind it. Even Stevie Parle, owner of Soho's Pastaio, has reservations: "I worry that it's getting a little too straight, in every sense: too heterosexual, too conventional. The rents are so high now that it's bound to lose its alt-scene in the next few years, with only the most people-pleasing operations able to survive."

Despite these very real issues, however, Soho still has a *spark*, a certain *je ne sais quoi*, setting it apart from everywhere else. It's the master of easy, old school hospitality, where wit and charm are prized over concept and edginess. Shoreditch has many things going for it, but a stool at the bar in a restaurant that doesn't accept reservations isn't for everyone.

Quo Vadis chef patron Jeremy Lee says Soho's magic lies in its ability to reinvent itself for each new generation: "Old spots that have stood the test of time – the Wolseley, The Ivy, J Sheekey – mingle with the new. Maverick elegance sits side-by-side with the rough and tumble of the few remaining drinking dens." He points to The French House, which has just reopened to critical acclaim; Berenjok, which is getting rave reviews; and Cafe Boheme.

And then there's Rambla, Blanchette, Bocca di Lupo, Kiln, Bob Bob Ricard, Nopi, Darjeeling Express, Le Bab, Cricket, Barrafina, 10 Greek Street, Bao, Social Eating House, Ember Yard, Hoppers, Dum Biryani House, Yauatcha, Blacklock, Coya. That's a wild list of ►



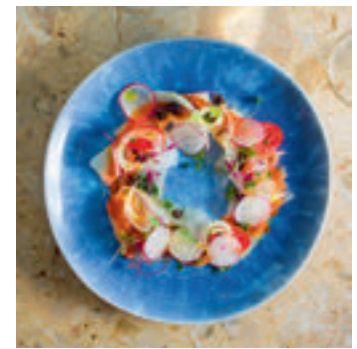
**Above:** Rik Campbell and Will Bowlby, co-founders of Indian sensation Cricket; **Left:** Some of the innovative dishes at Cricket; **Right:** Lina Stores' head chef Masha Rener with a selection of her dishes; **Below:** Brewer St's magnificent Kiln, and one of its cockle dishes







**Left:** Victor Garvey from the highly-regarded Rambla on Dean St; **Below from left:** The famous Quo Vadis sign in Soho; the ground floor restaurant at Quo Vadis; The interior of Rambla on Dean St; The Sea bream crudo at Rambla



► restaurants for a city, let alone one relatively small district.

“I love Soho,” says Rik Campbell, co-owner of Indian restaurant Cricket. “It’s the centre of the world because London is the capital of the world and Soho is the centre of London. There are so many great restaurants in such a small area and it’s always busy. I live in Hackney and I’m often asked when Cricket is going to open east. Unfortunately it’s becoming increasingly competitive, with many restaurants there overpriced, trying to make up for the lack of lunch trade. We’ve already seen closures this year.

“Soho is all hustle and bustle, still a bit gritty and debauched but at the same time very elegant. It’s also accessible for those coming from out of London, be it the suburbs or internationally. Soho is still number one on both a restaurateur’s and consumer’s hit list.”



Part of Soho’s enduring appeal lies in its storied, chequered history. There are restaurants here that have been around longer than some London boroughs. August Kettner, Napoleon III’s private chef, opened Kettner’s Townhouse in 1867, back when Soho was still a Huguenot stronghold and Queen Victoria was the reigning monarch. King Edward VII would go on to court his

mistress there; Sir Winston Churchill was a regular fixture at the bar, as was Oscar Wilde.

The French House, home of London’s finest boozy lunch, is over 100-years-old. Contrary to its present name, it was set up by German immigrant Christian Schmitt as York Minster in 1891, when it provided refuge to hordes of writers, actors, poets, and musicians, Sylvia Plath among them. L’Escargot launched in 1927, with a list of diners that included Coco Chanel, Ralph Richardson, and Elton John. These names alone tell you everything you need to know about Soho.

In the 1960s Carnaby Street became the centre of the world for music and fashion. David Bowie got his big break at The Jack of Clubs on Brewer Street; the Rolling Stones played their first gig at the Flamingo Club; my uncle played *his* first gig at Ronnie Scott’s. He wore a brand new pair of shoes, but, owing to the pain of fresh leather, removed them while sitting at the piano, only for a young Mick Jagger to make off with them (at least that’s the way he tells it).

During those years Soho famously attracted the Kray twins, who extended their empire out of the East End and bought The Hideaway and The Arts Theatre Club. Deals were done and punches were thrown, and apparently the cocktails were very good.

“It’s always been my favourite

neighbourhood in London,” says Ben Chapman, of award-winning Kiln fame. “It has a swagger that’s more permanent than fashionable. I like the anonymity of Soho come nightfall. I see the same people every morning working in the guitar shops and coffee bars, the same guy scrubbing the pavement every Tuesday. Then when evening comes, you can disappear into a bar and you won’t see anyone you recognise the whole night.”

Victor Garvey, owner of Rambla, agrees: “A lot of the people who write off Soho have only been there on a Saturday night when it can get pretty gaudy. Come at 9am, or mid-afternoon, and you see a village; the mailman doing his rounds, bars putting out the empties, the homeless guy on Dean Street serenading people at pavement tables. Soho’s really alive. For the visitor it can feel like another planet, this mash-up of quaint village and pulsing metropolis; for me, it’s just home.”

There will always be trendy new areas, little pockets of this great city that are flavour of the month before passing the baton to somewhere new. But Soho abides. It will survive the rising rents, the housing developments, the increased competition, and emerge something new and sparkly. There will be imitators, but there’s only one Soho. ■



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# WHISKY BUSINESS

The world's biggest Scotch brand celebrates its new distillery with the release of a 72-year-old single malt that will set you back \$60,000 a decanter, says **SIMON THOMSON**

**W**hen you think of 72-year-olds, you tend to think of people: Steven Spielberg, Joanna Lumley, Cher, Sylvester Stallone, Jane Birkin, José Carreras, your nan, and three-fifths of living US presidents. You probably don't think of whiskies, but here it is, in all its glory, the most ultra of ultra-premium spirits, The Macallan 72 Years Old in Lalique.

The Macallan has released this remarkable, extremely limited edition whisky to celebrate its new distillery and visitor experience, which opened in June of last year. The Macallan 72 Years Old is the oldest single malt the distillery has ever released, and the fact that it even exists borders on the miraculous.

Whiskies aging in a barrel in Scotland evaporate at a rate of one to three per cent a year. From three 500 litre barrels, The Macallan were able to decant just 600 bottles, suggesting that in total almost three-quarters



The Macallan's £140m new distillery that blends into the hillside like the Teletubbies' home

● The Macallan 72 Years Old single malt will be rolled out globally from late 2018 and through 2019, and will be limited to 600 decanters worldwide, priced at \$60,000 each.

**WHISKY MAKER'S NOTES:**

- **ABV:** 42%
- **Colour:** Golden amber
- **Nose:** A delicate peat starts, leading to a soft, aged oak smoke. A body of refreshing citrus lemons and green apples, with a background of vanilla pods and raisins, with the smallest hint of ginger.
- **Palate:** Delicate peat smoke combines with a soft vanilla, and a surprising sweet oak smoke. A gentle wood spice combines with a delicate peat smoke, which gradually fades to leave a viscous mouth coating of citrus fruits and subtle green apples.
- **Finish:** Medium and fruity, with a sweet oaky mouth feel.

of the spirit was lost in the “angels’ share”.

Distilled in the period immediately after the Second World War, drinking this “first of the Boomers” spirit is a profound experience. Lighter in both colour and flavour than you might expect, it’s not dry or intensely woody, but delicately poised, with sweet oak, a body of green apple and citrus, and a lingering trace of peat. But perhaps more than the taste, it’s the thought of drinking something that has been so carefully nurtured over seven decades – something so scarcely obtainable – that makes the deepest impression.

Whisky has been produced on The Macallan’s Speyside estate, at Craigellachie, north-east Scotland, since 1824. Using small stills to concentrate flavour, and lengthy maturation in mostly ex-sherry, European oak casks, to build fruity complexity, The Macallan is now the third largest producer of Scottish single malt by volume, selling 907,000 cases in 2017.

The company positions itself as a luxury brand, and now dares to imagine that it has transcended the spirits category to sit alongside the likes of Ferrari or Rolex. This is not fanciful thinking: The Macallan has captured the attention of whisky collectors and investors, and come to dominate the market for rare whiskies, where bottles are sold at auction for truly eye-watering prices.

Easter Elchies House is the sandstone, spiritual home of The Macallan. Built in 1700, and located at the heart of the estate, it showcases an eclectic assortment of memorabilia, including a framed certificate from Guinness World Records for the “most expensive whisky sold at auction”, which was a bottle of 64 Years Old Macallan, sold in 2010 at Sotheby’s in New York, for £291,125. The certificate seems horribly outdated today, as last November – just eight years later – a new record was set, when a bottle of The Macallan 1926 60 Years Old sold at auction by Christie’s in London for £1.2m. Such sales create a buzz around the brand that

fuels enthusiasm for The Macallan’s exclusive Rare Cask, Exceptional Single Cask, and M ranges, and have helped propel the company to become the most profitable brand of single malt Scotch. Its image is further burnished by savvy marketing, like a recent product placement deal with Netflix.

Confidence that the public were interested in the brand was a major impetus for the building of the spectacular new £140m distillery, which allows the company to expand its production, but also offers an interactive experience for visitors, which some have referred to as “Malt Disney World”. A masterpiece of ecological design, the vast building – in parts the height of St Paul’s from floor-to-ceiling – is cut into the hillside, with a grass-covered roof that invites comparison with Hobbiton or Teletubby Land.

The packaging for The Macallan 72 Years Old is befittingly beautiful; a broad crystal decanter, handcrafted in Alsace by the master glaziers Lalique, who have worked in partnership with the distillery for more than a decade. A sine wave runs around the circumference of the bottle, an evocation of the new distillery’s gently undulating roof. The architectural quotations are repeated in the presentation case, designed by Burgess Studio and built by the Royal Warrant-holding cabinet makers NEJ Stevenson. It folds out into a sprawling and impractical – but visually sumptuous – inverted miniature of the distillery’s flyaway wooden ceiling.

“The Macallan 72 Years Old is an incredibly rare single malt defined by years of dedication and craftsmanship,” says Nick Savage, The Macallan Master Distiller who oversaw the final years of the whisky’s maturation and its bottling. “As the oldest whisky we have ever bottled, this is a momentous occasion to commemorate our new distillery. Although delicate throughout all aspects, it provides an intense experience that acknowledges the distinguished history of The Macallan.”



**Ingredients:**

- 30ml Darjeeling infused Bombay Sapphire
- 20ml Martini Riserva Speciale Rubino
- 15ml Campari
- 10ml Roots Tentura
- 5ml Montenegro Amaro
- 10ml Lustau East India Solera

**Method:**

- Stirred

**Glassware:**

- Vintage Nick & Nora

# HOW TO MIX AN ELEPHANT'S PROGRESS

Mrs Fogg's Maritime Club mixologist **SKIRMANTÉ VOSYLIŪTĒ** on how to concoct this twist on a Negroni. Words: **MELISSA YORK**

**T**he Negroni is about as classic a cocktail as they come. One third gin, one third vermouth and one third campari, it's the perfect Italian short drink. How can it be bettered? Mrs Fogg's Maritime Club and Distillery, which has just opened in Broadgate Circle by Liverpool Street Station, has taken on the task and come up with something exotic and spicy.

It's part of the chain of cocktail bars inspired by Jules Verne's *Around the World in 80 Days*, in which inventor Phileas Fogg sets off on his ambitious adventure, but finds out a railway route he was planning to take in India doesn't exist. Instead, he hires an elephant to travel the 50 miles to the next trainline, meeting his future wife Aouda, the Mrs Fogg behind the City bar's name, along the way.

In homage to her heritage as the daughter of a Bombay Parsi merchant, its mixologists have created An Elephant's Progress, a spiced twist on the classic Negroni using Darjeeling tea-infused Bombay Sapphire gin.

Mixologists at Mrs Fogg's are well-versed in such

tales so they can regale them to guests, who are often Jules Verne fans, or just drinkers looking to get into the spirit of Victorian London.

"Any cocktail that has equal parts of each ingredient is hard to balance," says mixologist Skirmantė Vosyliūtė. "With a hint of cinnamon that comes from Roots Tentura and a silky touch from Lustau Indian solera sherry, you can taste the flavours on the back of your tongue long after you've finished the drink."

Martini Riserva Speciale Rubino stands in for sweet red vermouth; Roots Tentura is a rich, earthy spirit with notes of peppermint and French vanilla, giving a sweet and spicy aroma; Lustara East India Solera is a creamy sherry that adds body; and Amaro Montenegro provides the bittersweet ending, mixing cherry notes with the citrusy aftertaste of orange peel.

"You can also add a little piece of chilli to make it more intense, add in a splash of coffee liqueur or a spoonful of strong espresso, or simply buy sea salt chocolate and have a little bite with a sip. It's amazing how much something small like that can change the taste of the cocktail completely," says Vosyliūtė.



Mrs Fogg's Maritime Club mixologist Skirmantė Vosyliūtė rustles up a spicy An Elephant's Progress cocktail; Pictures by **Greg Sigston**





A bottle of Mortlach 47 Year Old, available exclusively from Justerini & Brooks

# A TASTE OF HISTORY

Discover the best kept secret in whisky with Justerini & Brooks

**S**uppliers to every British monarch since 1761, Justerini & Brooks is known by discerning collectors as one of the finest wine and spirits merchants in the world. Renowned for its unrivalled knowledge, passion and personal service, Justerini & Brooks now sources wine and spirits for connoisseurs in 49 countries, offering an astonishing portfolio of over 3,000 wines and some of the world's rarest and most collectable whiskies. Founded and still based in St. James's, London, it remains the only name those in the know turn to when they want the very best.

With unparalleled access to the great Scottish distilleries, Justerini & Brooks already offers some of the finest and rarest whiskies in the world. Its expertise in whisky stretches back through generations, when Justerini & Brooks pioneered a new breed of blended whisky in the late 20th century and brought J&B Rare to the market, making it one of the most iconic global whisky brands of the modern era.

Fuelling a new-found appreciation of fine whisky internationally, Justerini & Brooks has been at the forefront of the whisky world ever since, with an unmatched portfolio of rare bottles with impeccable provenance for the serious whisky collector. It is also celebrated for its access to a selection of impeccably crafted and excellent-tasting precious natural cask

strength Scotch whiskies from a range of distilleries.

Now to mark its 270th anniversary this year, Justerini & Brooks is celebrating in style with the launch of the Mortlach 47 Year Old single malt, the oldest ever bottling direct from Mortlach distillery. Part of the Singing Stills series, the range of rare single cask expressions is drawn from the final three casks of 1971, an unexpected delight for whisky lovers who appreciate bold flavours and exclusive discoveries.

With a retail sale price of £10,000, fewer than 100 bottles of this exceptional whisky will be made available worldwide for only the luckiest collectors. Whisky connoisseurs can register their interest with Justerini & Brooks, which will exclusively oversee a global online registration on [justerinis.com/mortlach1971release](http://justerinis.com/mortlach1971release) ending at 6pm on the 23 April when the Mortlach 47 Year Old will finally be made available. A seamless addition to the finest whisky collections around the globe, the extremely limited Mortlach 47 Year Old is being released exclusively by Justerini & Brooks for those who truly value the craft of this unique distillery. Authentic in character, Mortlach 47 has a velvety body with notes of honey, hot toasted wood and dark chocolate with a buttery smoothness, a prelude to a delicate, lightly perfumed finish.

Hailing from a region generally known for its smoother, gentler style of whisky, Mortlach's stunning bold and complex

flavours bridge the gap between mellow and smoky. Previously considered one of the best kept secrets in Scotch and treasured by serious whisky epicureans worldwide, Mortlach was the first legal distillery in Dufftown, the heart of Speyside, and has been a name cherished by whisky aficionados for nearly two centuries.

Known as 'The Beast of Dufftown' for its explosion of elegant flavour, Mortlach is precisely 2.81 times distilled, through six stills of differing silhouettes. Devised in 1897, the intricate process known mysteriously as 'The Way' creates the thick, rich character that defines Mortlach and has helped make it one of the most decadent and elusive single malts available.

With the release of Mortlach 47 Year Old, Justerini & Brooks offers serious Scotch collectors a rare opportunity to become part of a whisky legacy and own a truly exceptional bottle from this remarkable distillery. For 270 years, Justerini & Brooks has brought the most exquisite wines and spirits to those who value the finest things in life and refuse to compromise on quality. Now this is your chance to taste the extraordinary.

● For the chance to buy the Mortlach 47 Year Old, available exclusively from Justerini & Brooks, register before 6pm on 23 April at [justerinis.com/Mortlach1971Release](http://justerinis.com/Mortlach1971Release). Justerini & Brooks, 61 St James' Street, SW1A 1LZ, call 020 7484 6400 or email [justbrookorders@justerinis.com](mailto:justbrookorders@justerinis.com).



**Clockwise from top:** The incredibly crafted xiao long bao, which each have 18 folds, a mark of high quality; the glass box inside which an army of chefs make the dumplings; the delicious wonton noodles in Sichuan sauce

# REVIEW

## DIN TAI FUNG

5 HENRIETTA ST, WC2E 8PTE

Precision-engineered dumplings come at the cost of soul, says **STEVE DINNEEN**

**E**ight years of writing restaurant reviews has not yet propelled me to culinary stardom. Nobody has asked me to be a judge on *Celebrity Bake Off*. *Masterchef* has never called.

But I do have one claim to fame: I star in the staff training video for Taiwanese dumpling sensation Din Tai Fung.

It happened in 2017, when I was in Taipei writing a piece on the city's food scene. In between eating sea anemones and giant, gelatinous fish eyes and rancid "stinky tofu", I dropped into a dumpling restaurant in a shopping mall at the foot of Taipei 101, once the world's tallest skyscraper. I was a bit put out: I was jet-lagged and rain soaked and the place had all the personality of a provincial Pizza Express.

But I was enlivened by its dumplings, each one a perfect package of pork and prawn, a delicate sculpture destined to last only minutes in this cruel world. I gorged myself, ordering one of everything and then some more, my excitement bordering on the priapic. A film crew, which just happened to

be making a staff video that day, spotted the bedraggled but ruggedly handsome Westerner consuming his bodyweight in dumplings and asked me to say a few words; I can't remember what those words were, exactly, but I'm sure they continue to motivate xiao long bao-makers to this day\*.

For the uninitiated, Din Tai Fung is a phenomenon, an *institution*. It began life in 1958 as a cooking oil merchant, before branching into dumplings in the early 1970s. It trundled along for 25 years, making fans of the locals, before embarking on a frightening global expansion, colonising Japan, Singapore, China, Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Australia and the US. It won Michelin stars. Tom Cruise went there to learn how to roll dumplings. It is, ladies and gentlemen, a *thing*.

There are now 119 of them in 14 countries, including one in Covent Garden, which saw five hour queues when it opened at the end of last year. Which is weird, because the blueprint for this global dumpling-making machine is resolutely, determinedly uncool. Its restaurants are vast, canteen-like places with strip lighting and flyaway furniture. Covent Garden has 250 covers spanning two gigantic floors. In pride of place is a glass box filled with masked chefs working up some serious RSI rolling out dumpling after dumpling after dumpling, dreaming of a time when they might be free from their glass prison, children and tourists peering at them like they're animals in a zoo.

It's the kind of place that should be utterly uncondusive to an enjoyable meal. But, my gosh, the dumplings are good.

They're precision-engineered, each round, squat xiao long bao featuring at least 18 folds, considered to be a sign of exceptional

quality (dumpling nerds will tell you there should be at least 12 folds, so 18 is going over and above). Bite into one and it bursts like a delicious pustule, releasing a mouthful of hot broth. The prawns crunch. The pork is aromatic.

At first the menu seems intimidatingly long, but it's essentially the same few ingredients remixed into different formats. Whether you're eating xiao long bao, jiao zi (cocoon-shaped dumplings), shao mei (the bell-shaped ones), or wontons, the default ingredients are pork and prawn, with a handful of more outre options including truffle, crab, angled gourd, and chocolate and red bean.

Everything is disciplined and refined. String beans with minced pork and dried shrimp are *exactly* oily enough. The noodles have *precisely* the right amount of bite, the steamed buns are the *ideal* combination of fluffy and doughy. There are no idiosyncrasies. There is no showmanship. Instead there is cold, hard science. Din Tai Fung has mastered the dumpling equation, perfected the xiao long bao algorithm. This isn't an eccentric Ferrari purring off the tarmac of Maranello, it's a gleaming iPhone rolling from the conveyor belt, correct in every regard. It's the ultimate consumerist dining experience, every detail weighed and measured, all fat trimmed away. It is the xenomorph of restaurants, a perfect culinary predator, cold and calculating and delicious and it will eat you for fucking breakfast.

I take some credit for this: that training video is clearly paying dividends.

\* I've never actually *seen* this video, because I don't work for Din Tai Fung, but I believe in my heart that it is utterly inspirational.

● To book, go to [dintai fung-uk.com](http://dintai fung-uk.com)





**Y**ou might have noticed there are a lot of dragons in this issue of the magazine. This is because today we launch the *City A.M. Club*, our new membership programme for readers who want to get the best out of this great city of ours. The dragon is our logo because this fearsome creature has a long history with the City of London. Look around and you'll find a cast iron sculpture of one at each of the 13 main routes in and out of the Square Mile. The dragons, designed by the architect JB Bunning in 1849, act as guardians of the City, part of the fabric of the oldest part of London.

That's how we see ourselves at *City A.M.*: part of the fabric of the Square Mile, a familiar and welcome sight to hundreds of thousands of workers. The *City A.M. Club* is a way of engaging with these men and women, the driving force behind the UK economy, on a far deeper level than we've been able to before. Members will gain access to exclusive events throughout the City and beyond – whether you're interested in food and drink, luxury shopping or international travel, there's something for you. Let me introduce you to just some of the benefits that await...

**HARRY OWEN**  
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER  
CITY AM MEDIA GROUP

## EATING

One of our favourite places to eat in the City is **M RESTAURANT**, a temple to fine food and drink, including some of the world's best steak. Club members can expect a three month complimentary M membership, giving you access to VIP lounges at both the City and Victoria



Wagyu tartare at M Restaurant

restaurants – worth £250 – as well as 30 per cent off events and private dining, 50 per cent off wine all day Monday and 50 per cent off cocktails on Fridays. **HIX RESTAURANTS** are another London staple, and members will receive 20 per cent off their final bill at HIX Soho, Hixter Bankside, Tramshed and HIX Oyster & Chophouse. Scottish stalwart **BOISDALE** is another Club partner, offering some fantastic perks including access to its members' only terrace, 20 per cent off your lunch bill, and 30 per cent off events. Indian fine dining group **CINNAMON COLLECTION** will be offering members a tour of the kitchen as well as various complimentary cocktails and starters. At the new **NOBU SHOREDITCH** Club members will be able to sample an exclusive seven course Omakase dinner, carefully curated just for us. The City's most exciting new venue **THE NED** is offering a complimentary upgrade and early check-in at its hotel as well as discounts on food across its ground-floor restaurants. Jason Atherton's fine dining palace in the sky **CITY SOCIAL** is offering free champagne as well as discounts on your drinks bill from Monday-Wednesday. At Bank's wonderful **1 LOMBARD STREET** you can get a cool 25 per cent off food and cocktails on weekday evenings. At ultra trendy small plates restaurant **MBER** you will receive 15 per cent off your final bill all day, every day. Or if the cuisine of Peru is more up your street, you can save 20 per cent on your final bill at **LIMA** or **FLORAL**.



Eat prawns for less at Hix restaurants

## LUXURY SHOPPING

Few brands have such a reputation for excellence as German camera-maker **LEICA**. *City A.M. Club* members will get access to a two-for-one discount on Leica's exclusive Bitesize Workshops held at the Leica City Store. Members will also get discounts on corporate photography workshops and receive a 10 per cent discount on purchases at the City Store. Another company with a long pedigree in its industry is luxury coffee machine manufacturer **JURA**. Club members will receive a fifth off the purchase of any of Jura's range, as well as be in line for a complimentary Cool Control milk cooler worth £95. Our exclusive leatherware partner **MONTBLANC** is offering one of its fine leather card holders for Club members when they spend £300 or more. You can't



The world's top camera-maker Leica in in the Club

speaking about luxury shopping in the City without a mention of the Square Mile's premier shopping destination **THE ROYAL EXCHANGE**. Club members will receive 15 per cent off at bespoke gift, bangles and fine bone china store Halcyon Days, and 15 per cent off bath and body purchases at grooming brand Bamford. Swiss company **VICTORINOX** may be most famous for its multi-tool pocket knives, but this outstanding retailer has more to offer. If members spend £100 in-store they can receive a



Shop till you drop at The Royal Exchange

complimentary travel pillow, slim flight USB drive or knife assembly workshop. Alternatively they can get their knife engraved for free. If you're into shooting then the name **JAMES PURDEY & SONS** will already be familiar. This maker of fine shooting equipment is offering 20 per cent off its branded clothing and a free copy of its book *Purdey: 200 Years of Excellence* with every purchase over £200. Our eyewear partner **TOM DAVIES** is offering a free eye test to all members of the *City A.M. Club*.



MEI UMΞ

CINNAMON COLLECTION

MNKY HSE

HIX



Ekte.

THE NED LONDON

LIMA

NOBU HOTEL LONDON

LOMBARD STREET RESTAURANT · BAR · BRASSerie

Swingers

CITY SOCIaL

YAUATCHA



LA DAME DE PIC LONDON

FRANCO'S LONDON



MAESTRO DOBEL TEQUILA



BØREALIS RESTAURANT

ROTUNDA

STK LONDON

BOISDALE



CITY A.M. CLUB

# RESTAURANTS LIFESTYLE EVENTS

The City AM Club is a new and exclusive membership programme designed specifically for you - London's professionals. Access a unique and thoughtfully curated experience - from discounts, to added value, events and networking in your favourite restaurants and across leading lifestyle brands. The City AM Club is designed to match your lifestyle and take you through the week - morning till midnight.

**Its Better On The Inside** - are you in?

JOIN THE CLUB TODAY  
VISIT [CITYAMCLUB.COM](http://CITYAMCLUB.COM)

**£240** per year





DRINKING

The City may not be the ‘three pints at lunch and three before home’ kind of place it once was, but people still need to kick back at the end of a hard week. Nothing, of course, says ‘weekend’ quite like tequila. The good folk at **MAESTRO DOBEL** are offering Club members an unbeatable 50 per cent off Dobel Diamante cocktails at Boisdale restaurants. Alternatively, you can receive a complimentary Dobel Diamante Spiced



Berry Bros & Rudd wine school

Old Fashioned at Boisdale of Belgravia when you order from the two course Supper & Live Music menu. If you’d rather drink fine spirits from the comfort of your own home, try field-to- bottle distiller **ARBKIE**, which is offering Club members 15 per cent off all of its products. **LONDON DISTILLERY CO.** is offering discounts on its tours as well as 10 per cent off the price of its bottled spirits, whether you’re shopping online or in the distillery. If you’re more of a beer person, take advantage of the 25 per



Greet the weekend with Maestro DOBEL tequila

cent discount on both products and tours at the **WIMBLEDON BREWERY**. This local institution creates some of London’s finest ales and lagers from its SW19 brewery. Or perhaps you’d prefer to relax with a fine Bordeaux, courtesy of **BERRY BROS. & RUDD**, which is offering a complimentary case of wine if you invest £250 per month, a free bottle of champagne if you spend £250, or a card pre-loaded with £10 if you pop in for an in-store tasting session.

FASHION



Look the part thanks to Turnbull & Asser

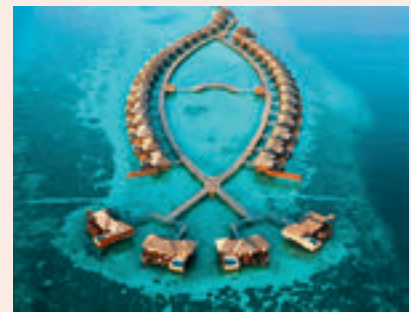
**TURNBULL & ASSER** is the definitive British shirtmaker and dresser of such esteemed figures as Sir Winston Churchill, Charlie Chaplin, James Bond and The Prince of Wales. The shirtmaker has three London stores, including the heralded 1903 Jermyn Street flagship. Benefits to clients include a free tie or pocket square (depending on your purchase) and the ability to call one of Turnbull & Asser’s master tailors out to your office to measure up you and your colleagues. If you’re worried about our oceans – and let’s face it, you should be – you could call on the services of **NAECO**, a luxury swimwear company that uses plastics salvaged from the seas to create its tailored shorts. Club members can enjoy 25 per cent off all purchases. Another fantastic brand adding flair to the commonplace is **NICCOLÒ P.**, which is bringing a tailored look to the polo shirt. Each polo is made using cotton knitted in a region of Italy renowned for fine textiles, and its fabrics are all custom-dyed, giving its customers a huge range to choose from. You won’t find a finer polo, and if you spend more than £100, Club members will also receive a complimentary T-shirt. If you’re in the market for footwear, we have you covered. Fine bootmaker **CROCKETT & JONES**, established in 1879, is giving away a shoe tree with every purchase, guaranteeing your new pair of shoes will last (almost) as long as the company itself.



Crockett & Jones make the City’s finest shoes

EXPERIENCES

The modern consumer market isn’t just about things – people also want experiences, and the City A.M. Club is able to offer these in spades. We have partnered with **GHS**, owner of a portfolio of independent hotels that reaches every corner of the globe. Whether you’re going to Italy, the Maldives, the US, Spain or Poland, you will qualify for complimentary upgrades, early check-ins and discounts on your bookings.



Stay in the Maldives with GHS

If you want to stay in the know, your Club card will get you a complimentary membership to Urbanologie, worth £100. This ‘VIP lifestyle app’ will keep you in the loop with the latest information on hip hangouts, pop-ups, bars, restaurants and events. Petrolheads will appreciate the benefits on offer from **DREAM COLLECTION**, a lifestyle brand that lets you drive the car of your dreams, be it an Aston Martin DB9 Volante or a Lamborghini Huracan. Members can get a 10 per cent discount



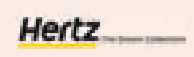
Drive a Lambo with Dream Collection

on any car for a weekend away. If you want to stay closer to home, we have also partnered with **SWINGERS**, the high-end crazy golf experience in both the City and the West end. You and three friends can enjoy 50 per cent off a round of crazy golf, plus 50 per cent off house wine, beer and the cocktail of the month every Sunday and Monday. **ROYAL BERKSHIRE** shooting school, meanwhile, will let members bring a friend to any one or two hour lesson.



TAYLOR & HART

TOM DAVIES



# CITY A.M. CLUB IT'S BETTER ON THE INSIDE



# FOOL'S GOLD

As he prepares to star in a West End musical of Only Fools and Horses, comedy legend **PAUL WHITEHOUSE** discusses fishing, mental health, and the state of British comedy. Words: **STEVE HOGARTY**; Portraits: **GREG SIGSTON**

**L**ast year, Paul Whitehouse appeared alongside his lifelong friend Bob Mortimer in *Gone Fishing*, a BBC Two show in which the comedians travelled the riverbanks of the UK in search of rare species of fish. In contrast to an increasingly bleak news cycle, it was relentlessly genial television, uncomplicated, familiar, cheerful and good-natured.

Both men had recently undergone surgery for heart conditions, and watching them cast off and chat about fishing lures, triple bypasses and scotch eggs was something approaching meditation.

"We can't quite comprehend why it's become so popular," Whitehouse tells me, at the studio where he's rehearsing his role in the West End musical version of *Only Fools and Horses*. He's thin, smiley and bright-eyed, and punctuates his speech with small bursts of infectious laughter. "People seem to get something from watching us fish. A sense of calmness. The programme comes from a very genuine place. It's not a contrivance, what you see is exactly how it happens in real life."

One of the greatest character comedians of a generation, Whitehouse is an on-screen chameleon best known for the slate of characters he played on the classic sketch comedy series *The Fast Show*, which he created with his longtime writing partner Charlie Higson. Like very few have managed before or since, the catchphrases he and Higson coined have left an indelible mark on the national psyche. Decades on, the refrain of "suits you sir" can still be heard in Moss Bros fitting rooms up and down the land.

His first collaboration with Bob Mortimer was when he and Higson wrote for and performed in Vic Reeves' *Big Night Out*, a gig they landed shortly after the career-launching success of Harry Enfield's Stavros and

Loadsamoney characters, who appeared on the variety show *Saturday Live* in the late 80s. "Loadsamoney did so much for me and Charlie," says Whitehouse. "Suddenly it was like 'oh these two idiots that Harry knows, they aren't *entirely* stupid'."

The comedian went on to write and star alongside Harry Enfield in *Harry Enfield & Chums*, and later *Harry & Paul*, along the way accruing a small pile of BAFTAs for his trouble. But in his languorous fishing show, lurking in the reeds with his bait bag and rod, Whitehouse finally does away with the wigs and prosthetic noses. He's unembellished and unguarded for the first time.

"I've been asked to do fishing programmes for years and I've always resisted, because it's my time away from all the nonsense. My dad taught me how to fish when I was five years old, and I do sometimes wonder," Whitehouse adopts a mock-dramatic tone. "*Did I do it to please father?*" He laughs abruptly, pleased at having thrown a psychoanalytical softball.

"So I was a bit reluctant initially," he continues. "And also you have to be grown up. In comedy you never have to behave like a grown up. So it was very strange saying things like," he switches voices again, to something between Packham and Attenborough, "Now this is the home of the native brown trout." Another burst of laughter.

The less sedentary pace of an *Only Fools and Horses* musical will be more familiar territory for the comedian, though he jokes that the role of Grandad means he doesn't have to move around all that much. The musical is the unfinished final project of the long-running sitcom's creator John Sullivan, who died in 2011. His son Jim took up the mantle and brought the project to completion with the help of Whitehouse and the musical talents of Chas Hodges, who died in September of 2018. ►





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► “This show is Jim’s way of celebrating everything his dad has made,” says Whitehouse. “And now it’s honouring Chas, too, who contributed a number of songs to the project before he died. It’s become even more poignant as we’ve been working on it.”

As well as performing on stage, the Welsh-born, London-raised Whitehouse has penned many of the show’s musical numbers. “The director CJ Ranger worked with Harry Enfield and me on our live show, where we did some improvised musical stuff,” he says.

“She felt I would be able to bring something to this – she was a lot more confident in my abilities than I was, to be honest with you. I didn’t think I would be capable of doing this, but she saw something in me, musically.”

If Whitehouse is nervous about reviving a beloved sitcom routinely voted the nation’s all-time favourite, it doesn’t show. But his reverence for classic comedy does, and he reels off the shows and comedians that shaped his childhood with a certain doe-eyed nostalgia: Monty Python, Peter Cook and Dudley Moore, and Dick Emery to name a few. “It’s hard to overestimate the impact they had on people of my generation. They were massive, they really were, and they were so influential.

“And there’s such an affection for *Only Fools and Horses*, too. It’s remembered so fondly. It’s a kind of dysfunctional family, isn’t it? There’s Del looking after his younger brother. He’s taken on the role of father and mother, he’s the carer, which feels very current. There’s a lot of drama, it’s not just gag after gag, and the relationships are fraught. It’s sentimental, but not mawkish, because John always undermines it, pulls the rug from under the sentimentality with a joke. It’s a very working class thing. You can’t dwell on self-pity.”

Just as beloved by its fans, *The Fast Show* often walked the same line between unexpected sincerity and straight-up comedy. I mention a sketch from the show’s sentimental farewell episode, in which



Paul Whitehouse in character as the drunken old fart Rowley Birkin in hit sketch comedy *The Fast Show*



Whitehouse plays the incoherent, brandy-nosed drunk Rowley Birkin, telling meandering wartime stories from his smoke-stained Chesterfield. Rather than ending with his usual punchline, “I’m afraid I was very, very drunk”, he turns the catchphrase on its head and hits the audience with a sobering tale of lost love.

Whitehouse snaps into character. “She had a... *very long neck*,” he laughs.

“Yeah, a lot of people remember Ted and Ralph, but the Rowley Birkin one was unexpected. There he was, and you can never quite understand what he’s saying as he recalls this romantic and intrepid life he’s led, and then it suddenly takes this dark turn. I remember Bob saying to me shortly afterwards, he’d been watching it and thought, ‘Oh, here he goes, he’s really going for it.’”

“I did a bit of Rowley the other night actually,” Whitehouse continues, “at Harry Hill’s charity fundraiser, *Comedians Sing The Christmas Hits*. You know the Mud song, *Lonely This Christmas*? In the middle of the live version he slurs his way through a spoken word section. Well I gave it a bit of the [incomprehensible Rowley Birkin] and it went down well. It was a bit of a relief, because Reeves had just dropped his trousers, so I had a difficult act to follow.”

Whitehouse also flexed his acting chops in Armando Iannucci’s 2017 satire *The Death of Stalin*, in which he played a bit part as the statesman Anastan Mikoyan. “Everyone lived in such fear of Stalin that they couldn’t even rescue the bloke,” he

“

It’s sentimental, but not mawkish, because John always undermines it, pulls the rug from under the sentimentality with a joke. It’s a very working class thing. You can’t dwell on self-pity.

says. “It’s an amazing story. These despots and tyrants, they cast a spell on people. Though it’s not like I know many. Apart from Harry, of course.”

In 2015 Whitehouse wrote and starred in the four-part BBC Two sitcom *Nurse*, based on his Radio 4 comedy of the same name and about an overstretched mental health practitioner and her patients, played by Whitehouse in various degrees of makeup. The taboo around the topic was only just beginning to lift, and though today the show’s themes are more commonplace, the series wasn’t picked for renewal. For Whitehouse, the decision represented a shift in focus for the BBC, away from the kind of comedy he wants to create.

“It was a bit galling to say the least,” says Whitehouse. “Let me just get up on my soapbox for a minute. When we did *Nurse*, mental health was a big issue, but now ►



► it's much bigger. The BBC axed it after one series of four episodes. Esther Coles is brilliant in it, she's really underrated, and we thought it was a way of looking at some mental health issues that wasn't too grim. At the time you'd only see these serious, hour long documentaries around mental health issues, and fuck me, those are a difficult watch. But there's humour, even in mental illness, from the people who suffer from it and also from the poor buggers who work in it. That's a tough, tough job."

Whitehouse's own mother worked in the profession. "She was a nurse in, well, in those days they called it a mental hospital. As you can imagine it was pretty grim, she told me a few tales."

"So we were disappointed with the BBC's response. I think we were ahead of the curve with Nurse. Everyone's talking openly about mental health now, we've even got Wills and Harry banging the drum for it, so in a way we were vindicated. I spoke to [comedy writer and BBC television producer] John Lloyd about this. In the current climate his stuff would have struggled to be successful, things would have been axed after one series and that would have been that. You wouldn't have had Blackadder.

"The BBC, and I say the BBC because I like the BBC and I wouldn't necessarily want to go anywhere else, should commission two series of everything. Give writers the chance to take risks and try things out. The Fast Show needed a series to get on its feet. And

“

Comedy doesn't sell like drama does. The risks the BBC take are now in drama, it's all dead kids and that, isn't it?



Paul Whitehouse stars alongside his lifelong friend Bob Mortimer in *Gone Fishing*, which returns to screens this year

so did *Only Fools and Horses*. Unfortunately that's not the climate any more.

"When Harry and I did *Story of the Twos* [the channel's 50th anniversary special], we were able to plunder and mine and pay homage to all of this wonderful stuff that the BBC and the licence fee allowed to develop. So be careful what you wish for, all those people slagging off the BBC. They don't take too many risks any more, and mainly – I promise I'll shut up in a minute – mainly because comedy doesn't sell like drama does. The risks the BBC take are now in drama, it's all dead kids and that, isn't it."

The door opens, Whitehouse is summoned back to rehearsal, and from the next room we hear the Peckham-twang of Tom Bennett's best "Rodney, you plonker". The BBC may have turned its back on his brand of comedy, but Whitehouse hasn't, and he's come up with some ingenious ways to get his shows to air. "We took our fishing show, me and Bob, to factual. We thought we'd have a better chance of getting it made there, because it was about heart disease and fishing, you know."

And if the audience just happens to have a laugh? Well, that suits him just fine.

● *Only Fools and Horses* is showing at Theatre Royal Haymarket. Tickets are on sale now. ■

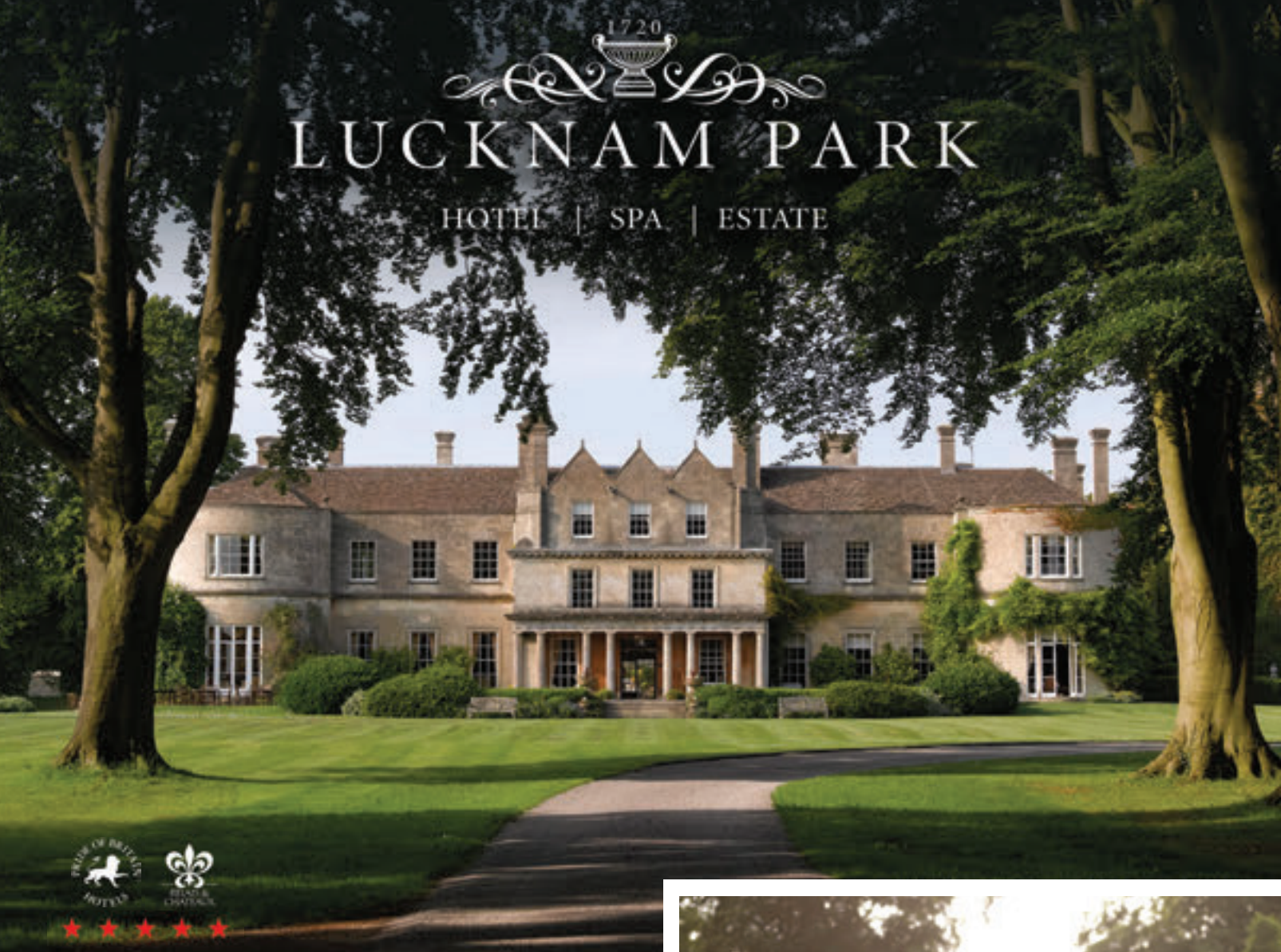


1720



# LUCKNAM PARK

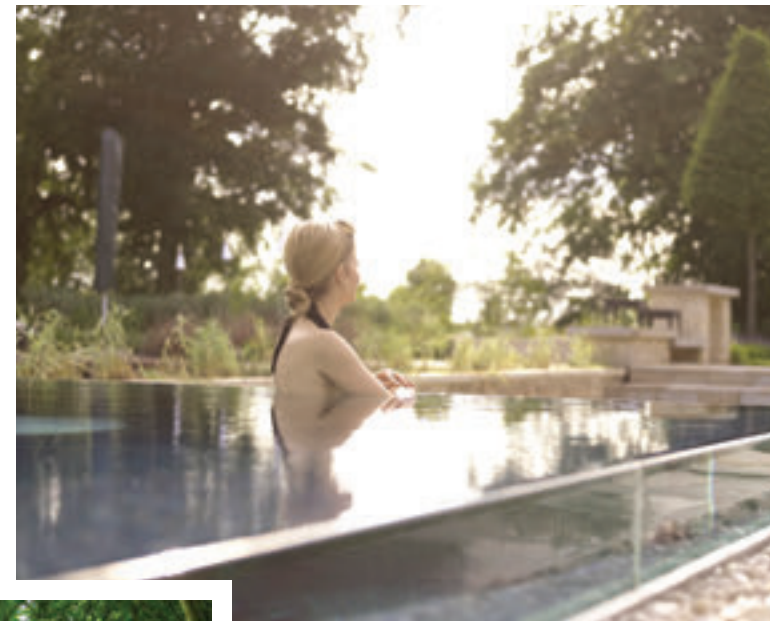
HOTEL | SPA | ESTATE



## Lucknam Park

### FIVE-STAR INDULGENCE

Located near the historic city of Bath, Lucknam Park is a magnificent Palladian mansion dating from 1720. Maintained as a family home until 1988, it then opened its doors as one of the UK's top country house hotels. Set in 500 acres of listed parkland and beautiful gardens, Lucknam Park has been lovingly restored to the elegance and style of the past era. The distinguished hotel boasts 42 individually styled rooms and suites, Michelin star dining in Restaurant Hywel Jones, casual all day dining in The Brasserie, an award-winning spa, equestrian centre with 35 horses, cookery school, family play facility and a three bedroom country cottage. Lucknam Park is truly one of England's finest hotels, providing 5-star luxury at every turn. To book, please call 01225 742 777 or visit [www.lucknampark.co.uk](http://www.lucknampark.co.uk).





# CHAMPAGNE POL ROGER



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# WATCHES

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## TAG, YOU'RE IT

### CARRERA CALIBRE HEUER 02T TOURBILLON NANOGRAPH

As with supercars, road bikes and golf clubs, carbon fibre is now stock in trade for high-end sports watches – be it in alluringly cosmetic sheet form or a forged hunk of lightweight armour. But if TAG Heuer is to be believed, F1's favourite material need no longer be limited to bulky cases or bezels. The new (deep breath) Carrera Calibre Heuer 02T Tourbillon Nanograph proves pure

carbon's mettle for all manner of tricky mechanical components. In this case, the trickiest of all: the balance spring. Visible here in black, of course, ticking at the heart of a whirring tourbillon carousel.

The dial's openworked hexagon motif is for good reason: it's the molecular arrangement of pure carbon atoms, in both of the man-made forms that make up the spring's composite. Namely, cylindrical 'nanotubes' and their unrolled, sheet-form

'graphene' allotrope, synthesised in a laboratory at TAG's La Chaux-de-Fonds factory. A complex series of chemical and gaseous baths and reactions grow the composite at a molecular level to bestow the balance, which oscillates four times a second, with qualities of antimagnetism, shock resistance and isochronism that far outstrip traditional steel alloys or silicon.

You're looking at nothing less than the future of mechanical horology.



THE GRANDER THE STAGE.  
THE BIGGER THE BATTLE.

TWICKENHAM 01.06.2019



#GLORYAWAITS



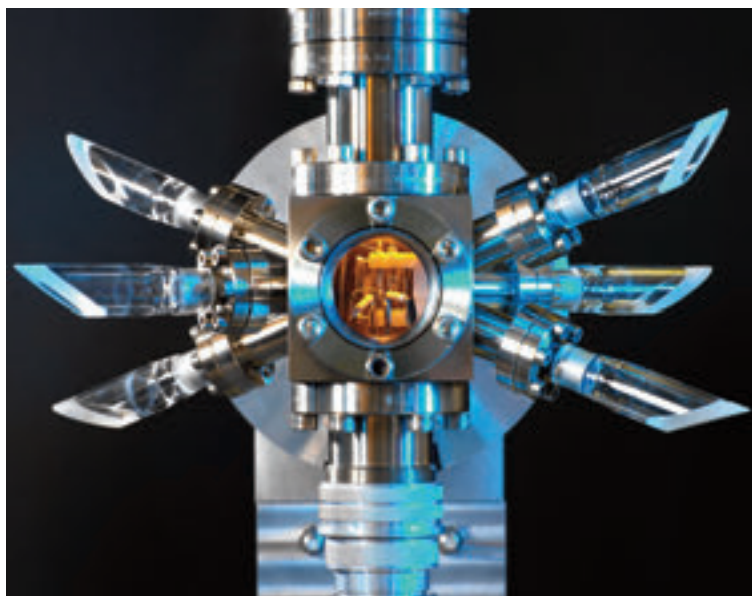
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OFFICIAL TICKETING PARTNER



# WHAT'S TICKING?

From the world's most accurate clock to a Spitfire parked up in Geneva, we bring you the latest in the world of watch news



## IWC GOES FOR SILVER

It was probably the most Instagrammed thing at January's Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie trade show, and it wasn't even a watch. So why was MJ271, aka the 'Silver Spitfire' parked up on IWC's stand in a vast convention centre by Geneva airport? It's all down to the watchmaker's history making pilot's watches for the RAF during and after WWII (as well as the Luftwaffe it should be said, but Switzerland is neutral, remember). Flying point for IWC's new formation of 'Spitfire' models is a Timezoner designed specifically to accompany two pilots flying that very aircraft from 1943 around the world later this year: the co-founders of the world's first Spitfire training school, Boulton Flight Academy.

● Follow their progress at [silverspitfire.com](http://silverspitfire.com)

## A SLICE OF SAXONY IN MAYFAIR

Say 'fine watchmaking' and most will immediately think of Switzerland. But the tiny mountain village of Glashütte near Dresden is home to one of the finest watchmakers in the world: A Lange & Söhne, whose hand-finished mechanics and precision are up there with Patek Philippe. Up until December, the only way of experiencing the magic of a Lange timepiece on Bond Street was by visiting German jeweller Wempe's London outpost at the 'New' north end. In partnership with the 'uhrmacher', Wempe has now cut the ribbon on a monobrand boutique at the 'Old' end, no. 38. An ingenious use of space across two floors, the exacting approach of A Lange & Söhne is reflected in each and every detail, from the use of natural stone reflecting the mining heritage of Glashütte's Erzgebirge mountains to its German-silver accents. Do visit, and ask to see the Datograph chronograph: poetry in motion.

● Go to [wempe.com/en](http://wempe.com/en)



## Clockwise from top left:

The new optical clock from the National Physical Laboratory; the Silver Spitfire that graced the IWC stand at Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie; The Roger W Smith Series 1

## HOLD ON A SECOND

Thanks to the ongoing efforts of scientists inside a mundane building just outside Twickenham, the world's definition of a second is set for a re-adjustment within a decade. The length of a second will remain the same, but the National Physical Laboratory's tests using 'optical' strontium atomic clocks rather than the usual 'microwave' caesium atomic clock could yield precision of one ten-millionth of a second every century. Or, to put it in real-world terms, GPS satellite tracking within a single centimetre. The best caesium clocks – first pioneered by NPL in 1955 – are currently capable of measuring one second (or the duration of 9,192,631,770 switches between two excited states of the caesium 133 atom) to 16 decimal places. By interfering less with the ion itself, optical clocks are already making measurements at 18 decimal places. As part of our scientist's efforts to keep the UK at the forefront of timekeeping technology, a next-generation ion trap, designed for the ytterbium ion atom, is now operational at NPL and expected to offer even better performance.

● Check out their work at [npl.co.uk](http://npl.co.uk)

## ISLE TIME

Roger W Smith has been the poster-boy for British watch-making for decades. He first set-up shop on the Isle of Mann in 1998, moving from Manchester to join Dr George Daniels as the legendary watchmaker's first and only apprentice. Smith has, at the rate of just 10 watches a year, singlehandedly pushed the envelope of purist horology, fine hand-craftsmanship and micro-engineering in luxury form; he was even included on the Queen's list of honours last year. Now entering his third decade on the Isle, Smith has set himself up in a new workshop. We can't wait to see the results.

● Visit [rwsmithwatches.com](http://rwsmithwatches.com)



# SPACE, TIME, CONTINUUM

It's 50 years since the Eagle landed and Omega became the 'Moonwatch' – **ALEX DOAK** goes in search of the timepieces that have been to infinity and beyond

**T**here's no denying it: despite a 'cosmic microwave background' temperature of minus 450°F, space is hot right now. We've seen Commander Chris Hadfield croon along to Bowie's Space Oddity from the International Space Station (ISS), Tim Peake's Union-Flag-adorned exploits, the footage beamed back by the Mars Rover, the success of the Rosetta probe, which the European Space Agency managed to land on a 4km-wide asteroid travelling at 135,000kmph.

At the commercial end of the space spectrum, we have Richard Branson and his Virgin Galactic outfit, which will soon be whisking the first space tourists to zero gravity for six minutes – at a rate of \$41,667 per minute. Elon Musk is being subcontracted by NASA through his SpaceX rocket programme alongside Boeing Starliner to bring manned missions back to US soil and stop relying on Russia's Soyuz workhorse. Meanwhile, Amazon tycoon Jeff Bezos is soon to be stealing a march on Branson with his cheaper Blue Origin project.

Yup, space is hot alright, and this year's 50th anniversary of Apollo 11's moon landing is about to send things stratospheric. But putting the Cold War politics of the Space Race aside, what this fresh dose of cosmic nostalgia brings is not only much-needed global perspective in these times of international unrest and environmental crisis, but also a startling reminder of how rudimentary the technology was back then. What once looked like the future now looks like the first Star Wars: innocent, scuffed-up, and a long, long time ago.

There's a photo that's often used to illustrate the

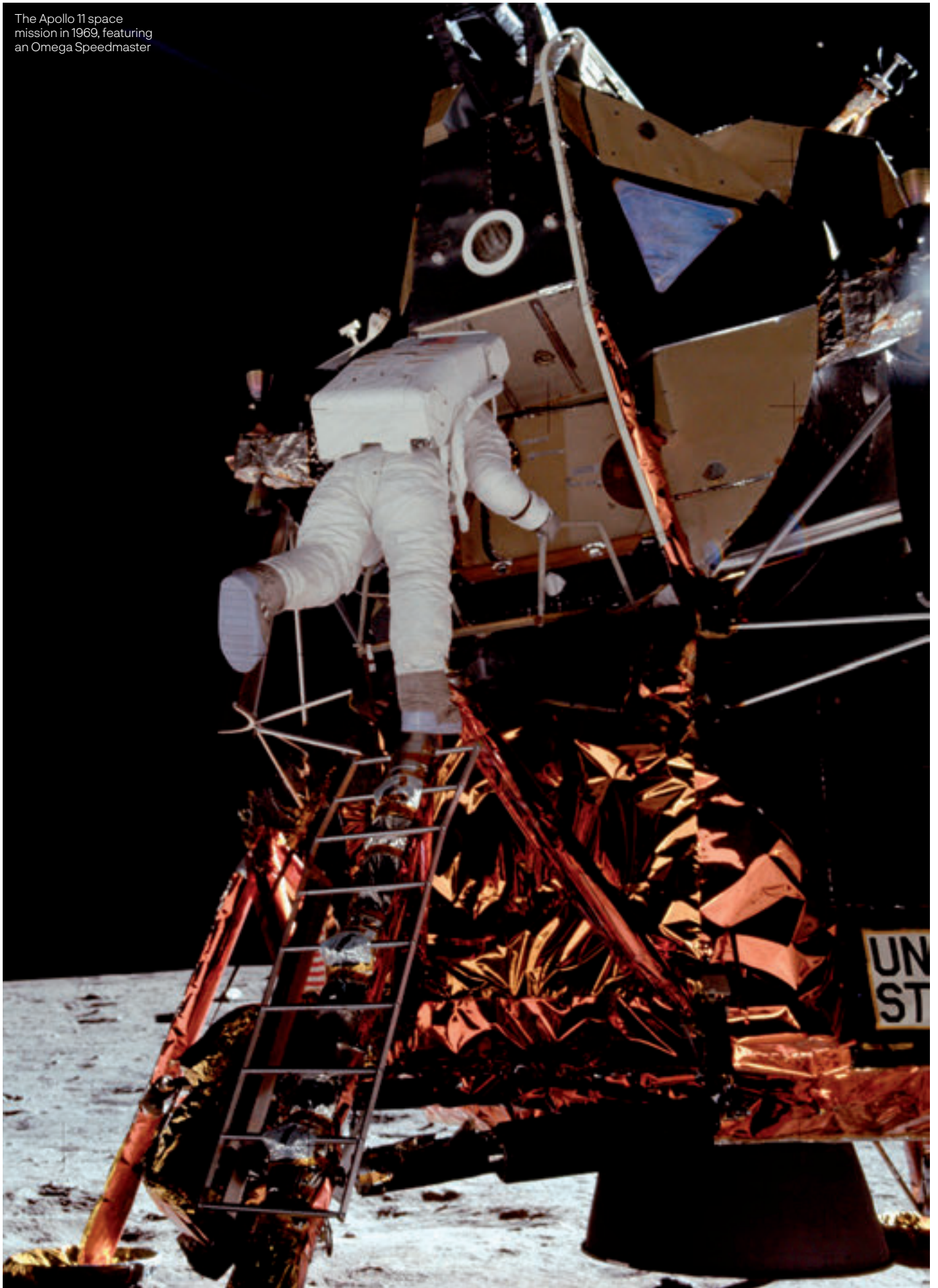
sheer human graft involved in shooting a pressurised dustcan into outer space and back safely: the Apollo programme's lead software engineer, standing next to the towering stack of hand-written code that took Man to the Moon (that engineer was Margaret Hamilton, in case you were wondering). Or there's the oft-wheeled-out fact that the Apollo 11 lunar module possessed as much computing power as a Casio calculator.

For the purposes of these pages, what's arguably more extraordinary is that the NASA-certified instrument strapped over every astronaut's suit was powered and programmed by mechanical technology dating back over a century. What's more, Omega's Speedmaster – still mechanical, still hand-wound, still based on centuries-old horological principles – remains standard-issue kit for NASA's finest to this very day. It's difficult to imagine a more ringing brand endorsement than that.

"The Speedmaster Professionals worn by the astronauts were, with the exception of the Velcro straps used to fit around the outside of our spacesuits, not modified by NASA – they were the same watches bought and cherished by Omega fans around the world," writes last-man-on-the-Moon Gene Cernan in the foreword of Speedmaster catalogue raisonnée, 'Moonwatch Only'. Moreover, "the Speedmaster Professional chronographs remained virtually unchanged throughout the entire Apollo program – no other piece of mission-qualified equipment can make that claim."

So how did the Speedmaster end up the wristwear of spacemen? It's not the commercial relationship you may expect – in fact Apollo programme's boffins bombarded 10 market-leading stopwatch-function ►

The Apollo 11 space mission in 1969, featuring an Omega Speedmaster





► ‘chronographs’ with all manner of punishing tests in 1964, before awarding coveted “Flight-Qualified By NASA For All Manned Space Missions” status to the only one still ticking by the end.

Under pressure from domestic watch brands, citing the importance of ‘Buy American’, NASA’s quartermasters have been forced back into the lab on a number of occasions, only to emerge every time with the same conclusion: Switzerland’s beloved ‘Speedie’ really is the most precise, reliable, rugged and readable chronograph going. And yes, it really does have to be mechanical – LCD screens, quartz crystals and lithium batteries don’t mix with the sub-sub-zero conditions of outer space.

The Omega-NASA love story is a marketing man’s dream – from Ed White’s historic spacewalk in ‘65 over the blue expanse of Planet Earth, to Buzz Aldrin bounding around the Lunar surface in 1969, to Jack Swigert timing the critical 14-second thruster burn that safely re-entered the stricken Apollo 13 craft; all featuring the trusty Speedmaster. It’s a heritage that’s even inspired Omega to recommence manufacture of the legendary Calibre 321 in time for Apollo 11’s 50th anniversary this year – the beautiful movement that walked the Moon before being upgraded to the rather more agricultural 861.

Being elite-grade pilots however, NASA and USSR/Roskosmos’s spacemen were all used to wearing a precision timepiece. It was and continues to be essential kit for any airborne professional. So ‘flight-qualified’ or not, look carefully and there’s always a watch of note strapped to that space suit. If it’s not an Omega, then it’s likely to be the astronaut’s personal choice – and like everyone’s watch, it speaks volumes of the man it’s strapped to.

Captain Walter Schirra was clearly a NASA man through and through, as he had a Speedie of his own back in 1962, when he wore it to orbit Earth six times in Sigma 7. But two other Swiss watchmakers had already pipped Omega to the post that very same year.

Until eight years ago, TAG Heuer had no idea that the first NASA man to orbit our planet, John Glenn, was wearing one of the sports brand’s stopwatches as he hurtled overhead in Friendship 7, eight months prior to Schirra. The oversized precision timer was fitted with elastic bracelets for Colonel Glenn to wear over the sleeve of his spacesuit – now showcased at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum in all its make-do-and-mend glory.

By May of 1962, it was Scott Carpenter’s turn to contribute to NASA’s exploratory Mercury programme, piloting his Aurora 7 capsule around the Earth three times. On his insistence, it would be his Breitling Navitimer keeping watch, its logarithmic slide rule having already earned official recognition from the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association. Carpenter was clever, though: he anticipated the discombobulating effect of witnessing several sunsets and sunrises in less than a







Clockwise from far left: Jack Swigert wearing his Rolex GMT-Master; Buzz Aldrin wearing his trusty Omega; Ed White, once again sporting an Omega timepiece; a Fortis watch, once favoured by Russian Cosmonauts, aboard the ISS

day and insisted on retrofitting his Navitimer with a 24-hour hours hand. The amount of teeth on the normal 12-hours hand's gear wheel was doubled and the dial re-printed up to '24', et voila: Breitling had its very own product to market off the back of Space Race delirium, the Cosmonaute. Still highly covetable and collectable, but sadly, no Smithsonian fame for this Swiss watch: Carpenter immersed his arm while floating on his capsule waiting for his helicopter recovery, his original was damaged and never seen again.

Whether it's the bottom of the Mariana Trench, the top of Everest or beyond the earth's atmosphere, you can invariably guarantee the involvement of that other Swiss giant - Rolex. Omega may have won NASA's prestigious 'Snoopy' prize (yes, as in the cartoon dog) by performing faultlessly aboard Apollo 13, but Jack Swigert had actually borrowed Commander Jim Jovell's Speedmaster - his own choice of wristwear was always a surprisingly flashy gold version of Rolex's GMT-Master. Like Breitling's Navitimer, the GMT-Master was already endorsed by aviation as Pan-Am's official cockpitwear but unlike the Cosmonaute, keeps things clear by separating out a third 24-hours 'home' hand and keeping 12-hours 'local' time as normal.

And what of Russia? As you'd expect from the Soviet era, Senior Lieutenant Yuri Gagarin was loaded into the Vostok-3KA capsule for his historic flight of 1961 wearing a state-manufactured watch. A basic 17-jewel 'Sturmanskie' from the First Moscow Watch Factory, which eventually settled on its 'Strela' chronograph as the cosmonauts' equivalent of the Speedmaster.

After twenty years, despite stealing several marches on the Yanks, even Roscosmos had to admit Russia's watchmaking wasn't up to scratch, switching to Swiss-made. Ultra-affordable, no-nonsense Fortis to be precise, which in 1994, after endurance tests bordering on sheer destruction, the Russian Federal Agency's Star City Training Center chose as official equipment aboard Mir. The Euromir 1 crew even made a Fortis the world's first self-winding chronograph to be worn in open space during preparations for docking with the Space Shuttle Atlantis.

With the dissolution of the USSR, and therefore Mir, Fortis found a new home in space: ISS - occupied continuously by humans since Expedition 1 delivered the first astronauts in 2000. The very first experiment on board, in 2001, was to test the global synchronisation of wristwatches from space. Fortis took part in the development of a new radio-controlled signal in cooperation with the European space agency (ESA), the German agency for air and space travel and DaimlerChrysler.

Wearing an analogue watch today may seem defiantly anachronistic and status-symbolically luxurious, but next time you feel the need to justify your recent expense, simply point skywards: if it's essential to the guys up there, it's certainly good enough down here. ■







WOMEN'S HOUR

LAURA MCCREDDIE-DOAK

# DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER, AGAIN

After years of restrained wristwatches, we are now seeing a revival of maximalism, with diamonds galore

**F**ashion has a habit of swinging between extremes – from maximalism to minimalism, femininity to masculinity, short to long. Watches, by contrast, seem to adopt a longer view. Trends develop rather than dramatically shift; in keeping with the nature of the medium, things evolve over time. That is until this year.

Every January, the world's watch press descends on a nondescript building near Geneva airport to spend four days ascertaining what people will be putting on their wrists during the year ahead. Generally speaking, Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie will feature a bunch of watches with blue dials, a handful of brands flirting with bronze and a tonne of things that are only incrementally different to the previous year (Richard Mille excluded – his testosterone-charged collections are guaranteed to raise eyebrows; this year, his new watches were inspired by the candy colours of a bag of sweets).

Only this time, everyone forgot to get the memo. Out of nowhere, diamonds were inlaid into absolutely everything, a marked change of pace from last year's subtle, gender-neutral pieces.

Patek started it back in October when it launched its updated Twenty-4, with diamonds as standard. But compared to what was going on at SIHH, Patek was positively restrained.

Never one to shy away from a precious stone, Piaget excelled itself by taking its iconic Altiplano and completely covering it in sparkles. The dial was snow-set, and there were baguettes on the bezel and to delineate the

small seconds, all totalling a not-to-be-sniffed-at 6.5cts. Also opting for the 'more is more' philosophy was Cartier. Although the big story was the additions to the Santos collection, over on the women's side its watches were paved to the max, from the The Panthère to the Baignoire. It even swapped the tiny gold balls in last year's Cartier Révélation d'Une Panthère for 1,000 of the precious stones, which glide down the dial to create the face of a panther, holding for a brief moment before disappearing as the diamonds fall to the bottom of the dial. It's a dramatic trick, the precise mechanisms of which Cartier is remaining tight lipped about.

Others deployed diamonds with discretion. Jaeger-LeCoultre opted to add another circle of larger diamonds to the bezel of its Rendez-Vous, which now boasts 126 of the things. But it's on a leather strap, which is ideal for daily use – it would be rude to leave a girl's best friend for best now, wouldn't it?

● *Laura McCreddie-Doak is one of the country's foremost experts on women's watches and jewellery*



Patek's beautiful Twenty-4, which comes with diamonds as standard and may have kickstarted the trend



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Dress: Whistles, Trainers: Claudie Pierlot, Bag: The Kooples, Bracelet: Monica Vinader, Earrings & Ring: Bimba y Lola

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CANARY WHARF  
LONDON





# THE JAPANESE ART OF TIME

Grand Seiko: a relentless quest for precise timekeeping from the pinnacle of Seiko Watch Corporation's watchmaking

**G**rand Seiko believes the art of watchmaking is to measure time with enduring precision without sacrificing exquisite design detail. This is the very essence of every Grand Seiko watch. Since ancient times, the Japanese have sought to express light and shadow in everyday life, believing there are countless nuances between dark and light. This sublime aesthetic is brought to life with the case on every watch hand-polished to give a mirror-like smoothness that responds to the movement of light and creates infinite expressions to reflect this Japanese aesthetic. With leading technology, durability and legibility, even in low light, every Grand Seiko is still handmade in Japan by elite craftsmen and women. Priced from £2,750 to £50,000+, all showcase the Japanese precision

intrinsic to the Grand Seiko, whether powered by mechanical, quartz or spring drive movements.

To be truly considered a 'manufacturer' watchmaker in the Swiss-French sense, all work must be performed in-house and Grand Seiko proudly designs, makes and assembles each component of every watch in their own premises with their own expert team. For over half a century, Grand Seiko have now made by hand some of the most precise timepieces ever created.

### 3 DECADES TO PERFECT

In 1969, Seiko Watch Corporation revolutionised watchmaking forever with the first ever quartz watch. Within a decade, they had also produced the first LCD digital watch and the first solar analogue watch, yet their pursuit for perfect timekeeping remained relentless.



Above: The Grand Seiko is the most prestigious brand in the Seiko range. The Grand Seiko is still handmade in Japan and is priced from £2,750 to more than £50,000.

Inspired by these horological advancements, a young Seiko engineer called Yoshikazu Akahane became determined to create a watch to combine the beauty of traditional mechanical timekeeping with the advanced precision of quartz, without batteries, light, radio waves or any other power source or signal. After nearly thirty years of hard work, more than 600 prototypes and countless setbacks, Grand Seiko unveiled the ground-breaking exclusive Spring Drive movement reinventing every aspect of the watchmaker's art, showcasing the ultimate integration of technology and craftsmanship.

Today, every Grand Seiko beats with one of three different movements or 'hearts' - each designed, created and made in-house, earning Grand Seiko the title of a true 'manufacture' in the Swiss-French meaning.

### THE 3 HEARTS MECHANICAL

Grand Grand Seiko mechanical watches are renowned for their remarkable accuracy, with anywhere between 200 and 300 individual parts requiring the detailed craftsmanship and attention to detail the brand is celebrated for. To this day, movements are adjusted by hand by Grand Seiko's elite watchmakers to tolerances of one hundredth of a millimetre.

### QUARTZ

Although most of the world's quartz movements are products of automatic assembly, the Grand Seiko's 9F quartz movement is assembled entirely by hand. Redefining the quartz watch with an incredible accuracy rate of just ten seconds a year, the watch requires two expert craftsmen to work at the same time, with one

assembling the date indicator while a second in charge of the movement.

Incredibly, the hour and minute hands are then stacked in parallel within a space of 2mm with just 0.2mm between each hand, requiring a breathtakingly steady hand and pincers that are polished several times every day.

### SPRING DRIVE

At the forefront of watch technology, Grand Seiko's ground-breaking and exclusive Spring Drive combines both mechanical and quartz watchmaking for the best of both worlds. It generates energy in the same way as a luxury mechanical watch but with an electronic regulator to ensure a startling level of precision.

### GRAND SEIKO POPS UP IN LONDON

Japanese aesthetics and outstanding accuracy. Treasured by watch collectors around the world, these exclusive Grand Seiko qualities can now be discovered in person at the London Pop-up Boutique in Watches of Switzerland Oxford Street this March and April.

● Grand Seiko Pop-Up Boutique: Watches of Switzerland, 439 Oxford Street 26th March - 14th April





# A STALLION IN THE SNOW

The new Ferrari GTC4Lusso is a four-seater, all-wheel drive statesman that can still shred just about anything from the traffic lights. **ADAM HAY-NICHOLLS** drives it through the Swiss Alps.







The Ferrari GTC4Lusso, one of the best all-round, practical supercars cars in the world





Top: The picturesque Gstaad scenery; From left: The Ferrari GTC4Lusso; The Ultima Gstaad presidential suite

I'm perched at the cosy bar of Gstaad's Hotel Olden, absorbing the heat from the log fire, having just fired a Ferrari from the middle of Italy deep into the Swiss Alps. Fittingly, this place is owned by Bernie Ecclestone, Formula One's diminutive tsar emeritus. In a respectful nod to the landlord I order a restorative; something short, bitter and overpriced.

Gstaad has long lured high society to live and play. It has the musky scent of the tax-dodging 1970s crooner, though in recent decades they've been outnumbered by the oligarchs, adding extra glitz to what was an effortlessly glamorous winter destination. Nevertheless, Julie Andrews, who has resided here for 50 years, still calls it "the last paradise in a crazy world". Despite the abundance of Louis Vuitton and Hermès stores and scarcity of, say, greengrocers, the wealth is kept discretely from view behind the thick walls of traditional chalets and farmhouses and the soundtrack is that of cowbells rather than rap music. By all means order methuselahs of fizz, but if you want to spray them at your friends go to St Moritz.

The Ferrari GTC4Lusso is a suitable car, therefore, in which to swagger into town. It's a Ferrari, so people know you're rich and used to the limelight, but it's dressed down as if to say 'I'm not signing autographs today'. Whereas a two-seat mid-engined Ferrari flashes its décolletage for the

paparazzi, the front-engined 2+2 says 'I'm with the family, please don't take pictures'. As well as four seats, it's got all-wheel-drive which helps to keep its 681 horsepower from catapulting you off an icy road. And it's the only Ferrari with a ski-hatch.

It is a true Grand Tourer therefore, thoroughly at home along Switzerland's Grand Tour; a 1,000-mile route winding its way throughout the land-locked country, past 22 lakes, 12 UNESCO World Heritage Sites and five epic alpine passes.

Four hours after leaving Ferrari's Maranello HQ I emerge from the Great Saint Bernard Tunnel and immediately start to take notice of the speedo. I'm probably naïve in thinking this, but I've stretched the legs of many a prancing horse on its native roads under the assumption the Carabinieri would agree that's cool. In Switzerland, a country where motor racing is banned,

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Gstaad has long lured high society. It has the musky scent of the tax-dodging 1970s crooner, though in recent years they've been outnumbered by oligarchs

speeding is not cool. Famously, in some cantons, they'll fine you according to your income. I heard of one Ferrari driver who was billed 200 grand for doing 80mph through a village. Whatever the reality of my writing fees, to the eye of the rozzers this car has a payday bullseye on it. In taking the most winding thread of snow-lined tarmac towards the Bernese Oberland, though, it would be pretty daft to find the limits of the GTC4Lusso's abilities, so I set the traction to Ice and relax into the sleepy burble of this easily awoken V12.

Its four-wheel-steering makes the trip almost telepathic. This system was first seen on the blistering F12tdf and has been adapted for this car, aiding agility so you don't need to saw at the wheel through switchback mountain roads. The immeasurably clever four-wheel-drive, first created for the FF from a blank sheet of paper and using not one but two gearboxes to keep the profile of the car as low as possible, has been further refined for the GTC4Lusso. It's only the V12 which packs this system, not the turbocharged V8 model, so the former is the pick for white-out missions like this.

My twinkling destination is easily identified by the quad-turreted Palace Hotel which rises above the town like a Disney castle. Michael Jackson once offered to buy the Palace, but was turned down. It served as the backdrop to 1975's *The Return of the Pink Panther*, Inspector Clouseau making an exhibition of himself in its legendary GreenGo nightspot. Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor, Prince Rainier and Grace Kelly, they all visited. Madonna and Valentino are regular guests at its New Year's Eve party. I've stayed before too but, sadly, the very narrow season in Gstaad means it's closed for my visit on this occasion. So, too, is the upstart newcomer opposite, The Alpina, which is reached through a long underground tunnel reminiscent of a Bond lair, and is packed with Tracy Emin neons and Richard Hambleton installations. Starting at £670-per-night, it's slightly more expensive than The Palace and attracts a younger crowd. But it's not as contemporary or as expensive as where I'm staying.

The boutique Ultima Gstaad may look decidedly ordinary from the outside – a large and unadorned chalet on the roadside at the edge of town – but inside it's big on luxury and not on understatement. It's as though a modern mega-yacht designer went to work on an 18th century galleon. The lobby's centrepiece is a massive crystal chandelier and a glass grand piano decorated by Alec Monopoly (one of two in the world; the other is owned by Alicia Keys). The bar and restaurant will feel homely to the Monte Carlo set. The menu satisfies a Cipriani palate. My £1,000-a-night suite is cosier, with wood-panelling and reindeer skins on emperor-size beds, sultry lighting, a 'faux' fire (it uses steam and lights), David LaChapelle and Gérard Rancinan prints, and a terrace long enough for championship bowling.

The hotel's most impressive boast is its swimming pool which looks like a nightclub, with the water oscillating between emerald and navy, and big chrome spheres floating on top reflecting the Saharan black marble and abundant orchids. There's also a huge outdoor Jacuzzi. Somewhat alarming to the untrained eye, although perhaps not to the regular Gstaad



Above: The Ferrari GTC4Lusso chilling in the ice; Below: The handsome dash with 10-inch info-screen

demographic, its spa has an en-suite plastic surgery clinic.

The Ultima also has a complimentary Mercedes Maybach at guests' disposal, but I'll rely on the Ferrari. It's also the closest hotel to the cable cars and, with the GTC4Lusso's ski hatch and cavernous 800-litre boot, you can take the whole family directly to the lifts – just 10 minutes away – with no need to rely on hotel transport.

Gstaad isn't terribly high but it does have a lot of slopes – 135 miles of them, to be precise. And if, like me, you enjoy narrow forest routes that are just the right gradient to go flat-out all the way to the bottom, this place rewards.

There are also some institutions here that keep the flame of old money alive. Visiting the Gstaad Yacht Club is something I'd longed to tick off the list. As incongruous as it sounds, it was established beside the Grand Bellevue hotel as a yacht club without a boat or drop of water in sight. Among a long list of the great and the good, it was a favourite haunt of jet-set hero Roger Moore.

The Yacht Club is slightly easier to get into than the Eagle Ski Club, a restaurant set high upon the private Wasserngrat

mountain. Membership is £25,000 a year and there's a three-year waiting list, which you have to be invited to join. Most members are King-this and Prince-that. Of course, Sir Rog was a permanent fixture and now it's the court of his son, restaurateur Geoffrey, who's far posher than his father ever was.

That's probably because he attended the Institut Le Rosey, the £100,000-a-year boarding school which has a winter campus in Gstaad. Among the Rothschild, Metternich, Borghese, Radziwill and Rockerfeller-heavy alumni are Julian Casablancas and Albert Hammond Jr of post-punk band The Strokes. Gstaad isn't a terribly rock n' roll crucible, I venture. It's about as far as you can get from the needle-piled doorways of New York's Lower East Side.

But what a place to park a Ferrari. Sure, it's clothed in Italian couture, but it's the kind of car that, given half a chance, would trash your hotel room and chuck the Bentley Continental GT – its closest competitor – six storeys into the swimming pool below.

The looks are not to everyone's taste. Personally, I love it. I love the quirkiness of

the shape. I love that it's unusual and individual and built to be more than just very fast. It has the romance that a lot of Ferraris have lost this century due to the cars being sculpted by science geeks rather than artists. It's a shooting brake in the old coach-built sense, though totally forward-looking; an estate supercar. People call it 'the breadvan' like it's an insult. As any petrolhead will tell you, the Ferrari 250GT SWB 'Breadvan', a one-off 250GT-based fastback from 1962, is one of the most valuable cars ever made.

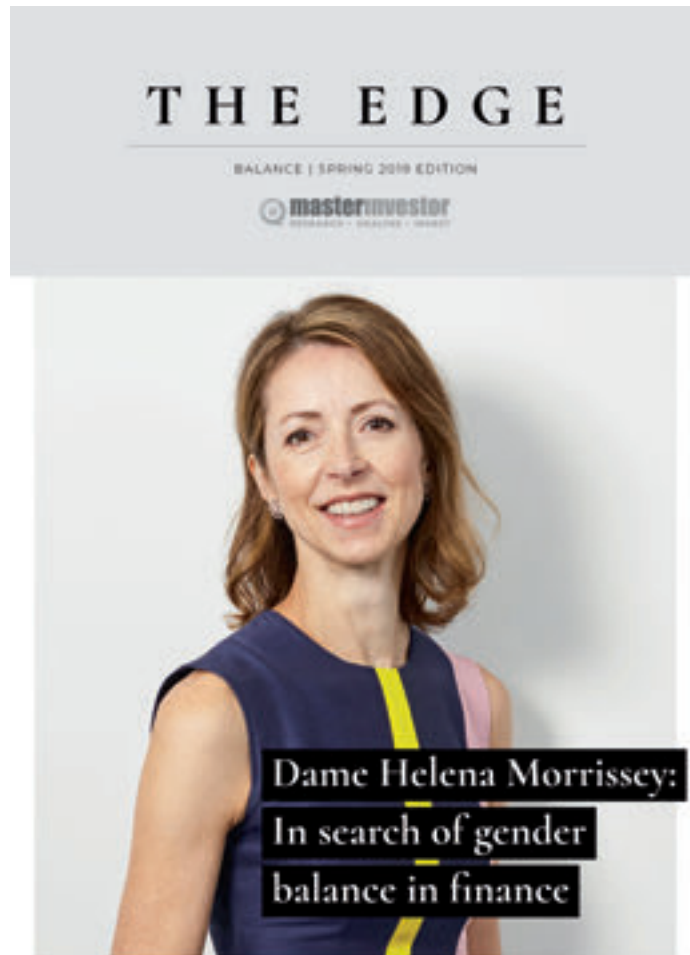
I leave Gstaad to join Route 11 of Switzerland's Grand Tour, a picturesque cruise towards the capital, Bern. The Ferrari takes just 3.4 seconds to hit 62mph. On the few bits of road that have a clear view more than 30 metres ahead, I nail the throttle and pass traffic in an instant. The inside of this car is as big a step forward in styling over its predecessor as the exterior tweaks. Outside, it looks more aggressive. Inside, it's elegant and refined. The 10-inch integrated central screen is the most attractive of any Fezza's infotainment systems and the processor runs eight-times faster than the FFs.

I skim ravines and wind the windows down to take a lungful of Scots pine. After an hour, Lake Thun heaves into view and I follow the lakeside road around from Spiez to Interlaken. The breathtaking landscape of the Alps is appreciated all the more by the panoramic glass roof, an £11,500 option best enjoyed from the rear seats, which beat the Bentley on leg-room. After a coffee stop in Interlaken, I take to the north shore of the cobalt-coloured lake, letting the V12 wail through tunnels and hug the rugged slopes that line the Seestrasse.

The lakeside chalets and Oberland houses grow denser as I reach Bern, surely one of the prettiest capitals in Europe. Albert Einstein developed his Theory of Relativity while living in here, and I can picture him zipping through the picturesque landscape in the Ferrari sporting that famous, manic grin. That's certainly the look I was sporting for my duration behind the wheel. ■







# IN SEARCH OF GENDER BALANCE IN FINANCE

**JAMES FAULKNER**, Editor in Chief at Master Investor interviews **DAME HELENA MORRISSEY**. Read the full interview in the Spring issue of *The Edge* at [masterinvestor.co.uk/magazine](http://masterinvestor.co.uk/magazine)

**JF:** Hi, Helena, and thanks for taking the time to speak with Master Investor. Figures show that women are much less likely to invest than men are. Does psychology play a role here, because men are traditionally seen as risk takers whereas women are seen as more risk averse?

**HM:** My own experience is that women tend to be risk aware – not necessarily afraid of taking risks but more aware. When it comes to personal finances, women often feel that they’re not understood, the language used is either very complicated or very patronising.

Often, even very smart, highly educated, professional, high-achieving women tell me, “No, actually, I hand all that over to my husband or my partner”. Unfortunately, that often means that women are, in later years, quite vulnerable financially and the statistics suggest that women in the UK, when they reach the age of 65, have a pension pot only one fifth of the size of the average man. Not just one fifth less than, but one fifth of!

**JF:** So, what do we need to do to make investing more accessible to women?

**HM:** We need to make it more relevant and recognise that it’s not a question of “build it and they will come”. If we were all just making rational decisions, then we would all be investing very wisely from a very early age, but that’s not how people operate. We often prefer to have short-term gratification, we like to get involved with things that we’re interested in and I think we need to make finance more relevant and appealing.

One idea is connecting what it means for you, in the way that, for example, we look after our health. More people these days than ever before exercise and eat sensibly, not because they don’t love cake, but because they know that in the long term it’s not going to be great if they eat lots of cake. We need to get finance into this sense of being an everyday thing.

**JF:** Why are women having such a bad time in financial services do you think? What is it

about financial services that’s not appealing to women?

**HM:** Well, I think there is that sort of chicken-and-egg problem, the fact there aren’t many women there already. I speak to young girls at a lot of schools and universities who don’t even think of applying because the image is just alienating. They think of it just as a masculine, male-dominated environment; in lots of ways it is very rational to think that. I personally believe that having more women is not only important culturally, but that it can help us change things for the better. We need better balance and I do encourage people to think, not just in terms of what their image, is but also to not make the mistake of thinking that you have to have a maths degree!

📍 *Come and join us at The Master Investor Show 2019, Saturday 6 April, Business Design Centre, London. Book your free ticket using code: CAMIWD at [masterinvestorshow.co.uk](http://masterinvestorshow.co.uk)*

# TRAVEL

## FUTURE SHOCK

How global warming is changing the face of the travel business, P64

## TAHITI

How this paradise island's guest-houses are overtaking its hotels, P68

## FLY SUPERSONIC

How faster-than-sound travel is making a long-overdue comeback, P72



### TUMI ALPHA 3 COLLECTION [UK.TUMI.COM](http://UK.TUMI.COM)

"I want to get away / I want to fly away..." It's amazing it's taken this long for a travel company to snap up Lenny Kravitz as a brand ambassador, but that's exactly what Tumi has done to promote its superlative new Alpha 3 collection.

It's a rugged collection designed to last the distance whether you're jetting off for a

weekend in Cannes or a month in the Australian outback.

The luggage is all made to Tumi's usual high spec, using the company's ultra-durable ballistic nylon, meaning you can relax when some trigger-happy baggage carrier tosses it onto the carousel. Inside are pockets galore, and some pieces come with a built-in USB port to keep your gadgets charged while you're on the go.

The cases are also compatible with Tumi's accent kits, which allow you to personalise your luggage with tags, a handle, monogram patches and zip pullers, in a choice of sunrise orange, metallic pink, silver, cherry and Atlantic blue (£90 each).

The larger Worldwide Trip Expandable 4 Wheeled Packing Case will set you back £1,275, while the Extended Trip Expandable 4 Wheeled Packing Case costs £1,095.



# GLOBAL WARNING

Many of the world's most popular tourist destinations are at risk of destruction at the hands of rising seas. **DOUGIE GERRARD** looks at the issues facing an industry at the gates of change.

**O**f all the terrible transformations threatened by climate change, our descendants may not deem the effect it had upon the tourism industry among the most consequential. If people are fighting for clean water or living precariously in floating villages, they probably won't shed a tear at the demise of cheap flights to Alicante. In the shorter term, however, many of us may soon find ourselves affected by irreversible changes to our favourite destinations, some of which are already beginning to manifest.

The most authentically apocalyptic symptom of climate change is the possibility that rising sea levels will swallow entire nations whole. The worst damage will be inflicted in the Pacific, where scientists have identified nine low-lying island nations that could be either fully or partially consumed within the next 80 years. This list includes the Maldives, Fiji, and the Seychelles; small countries that are economically reliant on tourism. But the impact won't be limited to remote islands – the 26-inch rise in sea levels projected by the year 2100 threatens popular destinations across the world. New Orleans, probably my favourite city on earth, may well vanish into the Louisiana swamp within the next century. Miami faces the same fate, as

do Osaka, Shanghai and Rio de Janeiro.

The question of how the travel industry will adapt is a thorny one, because it involves a multitude of considerations – financial, ethical, planning – that pull in often opposing directions. To illustrate: all climate scientists agree that something momentous and terrible is happening to the Alps, where 2,100km of the so-called 'eternal' snow zone – the endless miles of snow cover that spreads across roughly a quarter of Switzerland – have melted since 2005. But warming produces all manner of weather extremities, including intense cold snaps that increase seasonal snowfall. And so, as the Alps melt, ski resorts are enjoying some of their most successful seasons in recent memory. Climate change is not without its ironies.

"People have been telling me 'you'll be out of work soon' for ages," says Angus Kinloch, manager-director of travel company Skiline. "But it seems to me that wetter, colder winters equal more snow, and that's what we've been getting." Aren't those 2,100 lost kilometres a concern? "Of course – from a global standpoint. But it'll mostly affect the lower lying resorts, and they're already using a lot of fake snow there." The crucial thing, he says, is that they aren't seeing any drop in demand, or projecting any ►

An icebreaker moves through increasingly fragmented Arctic waters, which are now opening up for smaller vessels









Above: An aerial view of the Great Barrier Reef, which has suffered a gigantic collapse in the last two years due to rising sea temperatures

► overcrowding issues for put-upon resorts. It isn't that he's unconcerned by climate change – in fact, he prefaces almost every point by saying how awful it is – but there is the 'industry perspective' and then there is the 'human' one.

Even if Alpine skiing were to go the way of the dodo, the effects of climate change would still be felt more keenly in poorer countries than Switzerland, where tourism forms a greater and less fungible segment of the economy. As tourist attractions shrivel, or sink, or are trampled by over-visitation, areas that rely upon them are going to have to adapt, and fast. In Peru, where tourism is the third largest industry, there is one example of how this increasingly necessary adaptation might work. The Pastoruri glacier was once a major attraction: a momentous, hulking slab of blinding white ice, so bright that visitors were advised to wear sunglasses upon approaching it. It has shrunk by more than half in the past two decades, and what remains is a slightly emaciated thing; a glacier only a third of a mile long, its famed brightness somewhat diminished by the large stretches of sullen brown rock that sit either side of it.

As a result, the number of people willing to schlep into central Peru to see Pastoruri is dwindling fast, down two thirds from the 100,000 per year recorded in the 90s. Faced with the devastation of a mountain economy dependent on glacier tourism, locals have launched an ambitious ecotourist rebrand, introducing a 'climate change route' where travellers are invited to observe Pastoruri heave its final wheezing breaths while solemnly reflecting upon the planet's ruin. If you're optimistically

minded, you might see this as a heartening story of ingenuity and resolve. But while it may work for a time, Pastoruri itself won't be saved: the melt is irreversible, and it is likely to disappear entirely within a decade.

Also in peril is Australia's Great Barrier Reef, one of the wonders of the natural world and a huge source of tourism – but as much of half of the 1,400 mile colony has collapsed in the last two years, the once-vibrant reefs now bone-grey skeletons devoid of animal life. Further heatwaves threaten to destroy the UNESCO World Heritage site forever, with changes in temperature of just one or two degrees enough to upset the delicate balance.

A handful of companies have been able to capitalise on the warming of the oceans. The Northwest passage – the enormous winding route above the North American continent – was once inaccessible, but thawing in the past half-century has meant that in summer it is largely free of sea ice. The inaugural cruise of the Crystal Serenity ship in 2016 took more than a thousand people through

the passage (the first time tourists had made the journey), much to the chagrin of Greenpeace and climate experts concerned about the environmental impact. It has since been discontinued, though the passage is likely to see more tourism soon enough.

The popularity of ecotourism has exploded in recent years, to the extent that there is now an 'eco' element to nearly 20 per cent of all holidays. Its advocates argue that it offers a way of combining enjoyment with ethics – or delivering "memorable interpretative experiences to visitors that help raise sensitivity to host countries' political, environmental, and social climates", as per the International Ecotourism Society's website.

But it suffers from a reputation of being the remit of 'gap yah' self-discovery types, or wealthy westerners laundering guilty consciences through the purchase of local knitwear. Even its champions are sceptical of its ethical pretensions: Stephen Boyd, a professor of tourism at the University of Belfast, caveats his endorsement of ecotourism as "in general, a responsible form of travel" with a concern about its capacity to adapt to increased demand.

"In the future, the only way it will be economically viable is if it's done on a much bigger scale," he says. "But if that happens, you'll see a lot of the negative impacts of mass tourism – trampling, crowding, altering the ecosystem. It can't deal with those numbers and still be ecological."

Another issue plaguing ecotourism is 'greenwashing', shorthand for the cynical pursuit of profit under the insincere guise of eco-friendliness. If your resort serves locally sourced food but avoids hiring local workers,

“

Peru's Pastoruri glacier, a major source of tourism, has shrunk by more than half in the past two decades and it is likely to disappear entirely within the next 10 years





Above: The Swiss Alps, where 2,100 kilometres of the so-called 'eternal' snow zone has melted since 2005



Clockwise from top left: The ice field in the Arctic, which is now accessible to smaller tourist ships for the first time; The Louisiana bayou, which could swallow New Orleans in coming decades; Peru's Pastoruri glacier, which has shrunk by more than half in the past two decades



Half of the 1,400 mile Great Barrier reef has collapsed in the last two years, the once-vibrant reefs now bone-grey skeletons devoid of animal life. Further heatwaves could destroy it forever

or installs energy-efficient lightbulbs while pumping its wastewater into the ocean, that's greenwashing. Leo Hickman, whose book *The Final Call* looked into the reality of nominally Fairtrade travel, tells me that ecotourism is beset by greenwashing because of an absence of "universally agreed definitions about what it means". This definitional vagueness means that companies can masquerade as moral while pursuing policies that should merely be standard practice.

It also means that some unlikely destinations could feasibly lay claim to the ecotourist label: as Hickman points out, due to a quirk of economies of scale, high-rise hotels in Benidorm often have a far lower per capita water use than many ostensibly ecologically-minded ones. Should stag-dos in Benidorm be considered ecotourism?

As the reefs die and the glaciers melt, the tourism industry could end up acting as a canary in the global warming mine: it needs to adapt, to offer solutions, to find common ground, and it needs to do it soon. ■





# SEA SHARP

As French Polynesia courts the next generation of tourist,  
its traditional guesthouses are leading the charge.

By **DAMIEN GABET**





**D**ixons in Heathrow Terminal 5 has most of the latest MacBooks for sale. They're all synchronised to play the latest iOS screensaver demo on repeat. You know the routine: wafer-thin slices of aluminium lined up with OCD precision, beaming Hubble-definition colours that are unnaturally beautiful. My five minutes in store was a glowing, near-flight-missing, paean to screen addiction.

Is it any wonder? Preternatural displays like this are irresistibly attractive. Nature, all still and sun-dependent, simply does not stand a chance anymore. Aldous Huxley's acid-fuelled descriptions in *The Doors of Perception* couldn't match the dazzle I saw

in Dixons. If Turner were alive today, he'd draw inspiration from Westfield Stratford City, not coastal Thanet.

It wasn't until a full week later, having island hopped round French Polynesia, that I thought of this moment again. I was bobbing around in the sea as the sun set over Rangiroa, the largest atoll in the Tuamotu archipelago. The way the light hit the water gave it a metallic varnish, like an electrical current passing through mercury. Between chrome and shadow, amorphous blobs of purple and orange made me doubt depth and form. Above, a young crescent moon pierced the darkening sky, as if the tip of a French manicure had compromised new navy tights. A ragged purple of palm trees ran halfway to the horizon.

The kaleidoscopic beauty of it all was

enough to make me laugh. Or perhaps it was a sense of relief? In a hue-ty contest to end them all, nature had got its shit together and given Silicon Valley both barrels. I was delighted and humbled. Travelling for more than 30 hours in four planes suddenly felt worth it. To boot, this intimate moment with the heavens and earth somehow helped to salve my monster jet lag. Back ashore, at the family-run guesthouse I was staying in, owner Jean-Frédéric called me in for dinner.

Definitively exotic, Tahiti and its surrounding islands are thought of back home as the preserve of moneyed honeymooners and heads of state. The price of flights reflects the air miles you must commit to from Europe, while a water bungalow (a Tahitian invention by the ►





► way, don't believe The Maldives) will set you back a pre-2008 bonus. Speaking to friends about the trip, ultra-luxe resort The Brando invariably came up in conversation. Cited as one of the best hotels in the world, it's known for its eco-credentials and guarantee of privacy, being the sole resort on Tetiaroa island. A three-bedroom villa costs nearly £11,000 a night.

But there is another way. Mere mortals, or indeed those looking for a more 'authentic Polynesian experience', can stay at one of many pensions de famille; 'guesthouses' in English. Such accommodation packages, found on the Tahiti tourist board's website, come in at around £1,500 for 10 days: Airbnb prices. To make visiting the end of the earth even more attainable, French Bee, which describes itself as 'the first long-haul, low-cost airline', launched flights from Paris this summer that have near-halved the price of getting to Papeete, the capital. One-way tickets, via San Francisco, start at £455pp.

On Rangiroa, there are two guesthouses of note. The simple but well-appointed Raira Lagon – minutes from the airstrip – is where

I had my harlequin vision. Down the road at Relais de Joséphine, a grand dame proprietor holds court every evening, her Cartier watch jangling as she projects savoir faire around a terrace filled with guests enjoying aperitifs. The food here is a happy coupling of Polynesian ingredients and nostalgic Parisian know how. Accompanying it, we drank a bottle of Vin de Tahiti, a tropically nosed white made on this very atoll. It's the only vineyard in French Polynesia.

Besides the 'charme et raffinement' advertised at the entrance, I found this a convivial place: long-tabled and solo-traveller friendly. No Blairs or billionaires.

It's from one of these guesthouses that you can embark on a lagoon tour. Paati Excursions – comprised of a team of jaunty local lads, all related – took us from the nearby port to their collection of family-owned atolls, an hour's boat ride away. Then I laughed again. Nerves, I think. If the Flat Earth theorists are right, this string of sandy commas are the powdery edge of the precipice. I felt giddy being so far from

civilisation, in a way that only Gulliver would understand.

We alighted in shallow water and made our way to shore for some freshly macheted coconut. Something to energise us for the upcoming hour of fun we spent snorkelling down a strait with a theme-park current. Baby blacktip sharks and their Pride-coloured prey joined me for the ride.

The lunch served afterwards was the Paati boys' cooked coconut bread on a barbecue fuelled by coconut husks. This was served with a salad of carrot, cucumber and raw mahi-mahi, gently blanched in a citric coconut-milk sauce, with spicy rice on the side. The boys got guitars out and sang a few folksy numbers while their lilting audience sipped Hinano, the ubiquitous local beer.

Before big-brand hotels arrived in French Polynesia, guesthouses were the only option. Initially serving a local market, they then accommodated the first wave of tourists from France in the early 1960s. The influx, created by the opening of Faa'a airport in 1961, prompted more families to commodify



Clockwise from main: The Society Islands lagoon in Bora Bora; Otemanu; and beach huts of Moorea; Previous page: Water bungalows in Bora Bora

their homes. Today there are 400 or so open for business, with a significant proportion owned by French expats.

One such is the superlative Vanira Lodge, found in Teahupoo village at the south of Tahiti. While its owner – another chic madame de Paris – might be stretching the guesthouse definition, her utopian plot has a homely feel. A collection of nine eco-bungalows sit with a yoga studio amid tropical gardens cut into the mountainside. The view from my terrace framed the lagoon and reef, assets that make Vanira the billet of choice for pro surfers who come to ride the world-famous Teahupoo break.

I liked Michael the moment I met him. He picked us up from the lodge for our ‘surf safari’ in a rusted wreck of a Renault, speedometer smashed, side mirror swinging. Once a pro surfer, he now captain’s Teahupoo Excursion Taxi Boat. It takes tourists out to watch boarders brave the vast glassy barrels on this notorious break. I got in the car, he high-fived me, cranked the volume on the radio, then pootled downhill.

Onboard, Micheal was in his element: a man with scruffy bleached hair in a trucker’s cap and Oakley’s, choosing to pump the Red Hot Chili Peppers from his portable hi-fi.

Clichés are permissible, even pleasing, when the context is new – and this was fresh to me. Between nonchalantly navigating boat-busting waves, his time was spent jokingly lifting scorecards for each attempt. Strictly Come Surfing.

At the south-eastern end of Tahiti there are no roads. Intrepid ramblers can tackle mountain passes that lead them through precipitous rainforests. For soft adventurers, there are sandal-worn walkways along the littoral. Part two of Michael’s safari took us down one such track, eventually leading to an atmospheric lagoon and a rope swing. After some graceless aquabatics on my part, Michael served his homemade ginger and passionfruit rum punch, while telling us about moonlighting as an actor. His chef d’oeuvre was playing impressionist painter Gauguin in a biopic on his controversial years in Tahiti.

Nothing about my motor skills suggests I’d be good at surfing, and yet I gave it a go. After a remarkably good lunch at naff-but-fab Beach Burger we were picked up by Pascal Luciani. He’s the man in charge of the annual Billabong Pro competition, but does private lessons. For ease, we went to nearby Taharuu Beach (complete beginners should travel north to Papenoo).

Sure enough, I was to surfing what Michael is to car care, and found myself unable to even kneel atop the board. I left the more nimble to it and relished the view instead: black sand, mist, and a backdrop of emerald mountains covered in metamorphic ridges that cast shadows in all the right places. Silicon Valley’s got some work to do. ■

- **Tahiti Tourisme UK** [tahititourisme.uk](http://tahititourisme.uk)
- **Air Tahiti Nui** is the national carrier to French Polynesia with departures from Paris 4-7 times weekly, with connecting flights available from London. Rates start from £1,885pp return for Economy Class seats, London-Papeete via LAX. [airtahitiniui.co.uk](http://airtahitiniui.co.uk)





## FREQUENT FLYER

SCARLET WINTERBERG

# FEELING SUPERSONIC?

Grab a gin 'n' tonic and prepare for speeds of up to 3,800 miles per hour with the new breed of sound-barrier busting air travel

**W**e don't like to think that progress can come to a halt, that things can become slower, less efficient, less powerful. But that is what happened to commercial aviation when Concorde was retired in 2003. Imagine streaking across the sky from London to New York in five hours, breaking the sound barrier as you try not to spill vintage champagne down your Savile Row suit. Now we have to put up with the A318 from London City to JFK, which takes the best part of ten hours with a touchdown in Shannon.

Mercifully, a new dawn approaches. I have taken great delight in following the progress of US startup Boom Supersonic, which has been working to bring back supersonic flight with a Mach-2.2 (1,451mph) airliner that's safer than ever before. Earlier this year, Boom announced it had won another \$100m in funding to take a half-size prototype of its first aircraft, Overture, to the skies later this year.

Capable of travelling at more than twice the speed of sound (Mach 1), it will have a range of 5,180 miles, meaning it will be able to take 55 passengers from London to Vancouver, or Tokyo to San Francisco, in about four hours. That's quicker than I can clear my inbox after a day of meetings.

Boom even says that tickets will cost about the same as business class today. How will it achieve this when Concorde fares were so much more? It says a 30 per cent efficiency improvement to the airframe and engines will mean it guzzles less fuel, immediately making the concept more viable. Richard Branson is an investor and Japan Airlines is vying to be

the launch customer in 2025, which is good enough for me.

There are other contenders racing to deliver supersonic flight. Nevada-based Aerion Supersonic has joined forces with Lockheed Martin to create the ultra-fast AS2 business jet that will feature a "Boomless Cruise". This innovation, which involves travelling at Mach 1.2 (roughly 1,000 mph) will mean the plane won't have to fly over the sea (sonic booms cause buildings to shudder) and will open up new city pairings. Its first flight is on track for 2023.

Boston's Spike Aerospace is also hoping to win the battle for "low boom" technology with its S-512 business jet seating 18 passengers. This will have truly futuristic interiors – instead of windows, it will sport full-length high-definition screens showing either a real-time view of the sky beyond, a movie or your Key Note presentation. The S-512 can even be customised with conference rooms, double beds and five-star bathrooms with showers. Why you'd want to rush to get to your destination, I don't know, but London to New York would take just 3.3 hours.

If all this talk of supersonic is getting your heart racing, then you'll need a pacemaker in preparation for Boeing's hypersonic craft. So far just in the concept phase, if it gets off the ground engineers are dreaming of speeds of Mach 5 (3,800 mph), which is apparently as fast as us Earthlings will ever need (our planet isn't big enough to warrant faster travel). G-force ascents will push you back in your seat for 12 minutes and, once cruising, you'll see the inky blackness of space above. Now that's a commute I want to be on.

● *Scarlet Winterberg is a seasoned business traveller. There is nothing she likes more than sipping champagne while staring through an aeroplane window*





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# GOING TO IBIZA?

Once a renowned party island, Ibiza is enjoying a reputation overhaul. Nobu's latest hotel opening is leading the charge. By **ADAM HAY-NICHOLLS**





The pool at Nobu Hotel Ibiza Bay, set on the island's spectacular and exclusive Talamanca beach

Ibiza is the Benjamin Button of sunny escapes; its evolution is backwards. Most Mediterranean islands were playgrounds of the privileged before becoming gap-year Gomorrahs. Ibiza has gone the other way, and the changing scene is evidenced by a wave of chic new resort openings. Yet there is still debauchery to be found, of a kind: I consumed no less than 40 courses during my two-night stay at gastronomic haven Nobu Hotel Ibiza Bay.

In my defence the plates were quite small, but it was a marathon of eating nonetheless. The growth of Nobu as a global boutique chain is a recent development, but it has been leading the way in Japanese and Peruvian-influenced cuisine for a generation. While it's the other way around for every other developer, here we have a hotel built around its restaurants. Food is the focus, and the tranquil infinity pool and Talamanca Bay view witnessed as soon as you enter the lobby merely enhances it.

Sea air gives me a reliable appetite, so I climbed aboard a Princess V58 motor yacht before lunch and set course for nearby Formentera. The hotel's cleanly designed four storeys are a handsome vista as I sail away for the southern island. Balearic relaxation is best achieved with a chill-out EDM playlist, an Esky full of rosé and, if you have the means, a flybridge vessel.

The hotel's highly Instagramable light-filled atrium instantly puts guests in holiday mode, and after a morning on the boat London seems a galaxy away. Nobu Ibiza Bay's 152 airy rooms and suites, mainly white with nautical hints of aqua and gold, provide a stylish refuge from the sea and sand, and each boasts a glass-fronted balcony, many with private jacuzzis, from which you can survey the sun-loungers. There's also a Six Senses Spa designed to maximize serenity, repair scorched skin, or restore limbs following last night's superclub.

Primarily, it was my jaw muscles I'd come to give a workout. Chambao is Ibiza Bay's laidback feet-in-the-sand chiringuito beach restaurant, ►





Your very own Princess V58 motor yacht can be chartered through the hotel, should you wish to take the party out on the high seas.



► custom-made for those hopping off a yacht. Let the feasting begin: Corvina ceviche, mussels in Albariño, lobster with papaya and mango, creamy paella, beetroot and ricotta salad, and seabass that arrived minutes ago from the harbour, all washed down with a bottomless jug of sangria.

There are two swimming pools, one of which is considered more child-friendly, and there is a kids' club which does a terrific trade; indicative of Ibiza's burgeoning clientele of moneyed young families. At night, the pools are illuminated purple and onto the grown-up side spills the hotel's bar and Peyote, an earthy dining spot offering modern Mexican cuisine designed to be shared. Run independently from Nobu, it has sister properties in Mayfair and Dubai.

My party delves into a never-ending stream from Peyote's kitchen, which features aguachile de camarón, braised short rib and grilled sea bass tacos, and thinly-sliced ginger-cured yellowtail served with huitlacoche (a Mexican truffle grown on organic corn). Peyote also boasts the largest line-up of tequilas and mezcal on the island, so it would be rude not to try the margaritas. The ones with tamarind on the rim add extra punch.

It's the herbs, spices, fruits and vegetables which impress here just as much as the meat and fish. The restaurants also use edible flowers, and I accompanied a couple of Nobu's chefs to the north of the island to its floral delicatessen, a pioneering initiative called Ibiza Punica. The plantation is



With moonlight providing little clue as to the paradise outside the windows, we could be back at Nobu Park Lane

colourfully-packed with geraniums, carnations, marigolds and aromatics. The chefs pluck lavender to add sweet and spiciness to salads, and calendula petals to serve with rice, providing a naturally perfumed tang.

While its other restaurants have a Latin beach vibe, the hotel's fine dining room eschews any décor that might distract from the food. With moonlight providing little clue as to the paradise outside the windows, we could be back at Nobu Park Lane. I've always considered Nobu as a bit like McDonald's for rich people; a worldwide chain found in almost every jet-set city, with speedy service, seating so close you can hear everyone else's conversation, same décor, same menu. It's a reassuring constant for those that lack time and imagination. But this is unfair on Ibiza Bay. The space isn't big on visual atmosphere, but it has heart in the form of its open kitchen and the skilled team therein, who are transferred from

country to country to train and work across Nobu's 39 properties. And though many of the Ibiza Bay's dishes are mirrored by those other 38 menus, others are unique and brilliant, making full use of the local area's bountiful seafood and produce. Padrón peppers, red tuna, and garlic prawns from Formentera are among the cameos. Fish might be the main thing on the menu across the whole island, but the standout dish for me was Rubia Gallega rib-eye with yuzu truffles and crispy onions. As for cocktails, is there a better martini than Matsuhisa's? It's Ketel One with Hokusetsu sake and ginger.

In just 12 months Nobu has put itself top of the island's hot list as a food destination. Ibiza's ascendance continues with a W and a Six Senses resort, both opening in the next two years, though they'll struggle to match the verve of Ibiza Bay's cooking, as well as the way it balances immaculate luxury with barefoot nonchalance. The island might be going upmarket, but on Talamanca Beach a natural carefree spirit remains.

● Rates at **Nobu Hotel Ibiza Bay** start at €630 (approx. £550) per night, based on double occupancy. The hotel is a member of **Small Luxury Hotels of the World**. For more information and/or to book please visit: [nobuhotelibizabay.com](http://nobuhotelibizabay.com).

● Yacht hire from **Smart Charter Ibiza** and **Boatsetter** can be arranged through the hotel. Prices range from €850 to €18,000 per day.



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# LIVING

## LAST RESORT

This could be your last chance to buy your dream ski chalet in the Alps – P82

## DESIGNER DISH

The interiors trends top restaurants will be dining out on in 2019 – P86

## RAISE THE ROOF

The sky's the limit when it comes to building on top of existing homes – P94



### THE LOST HOUSE £4,500 A WEEK, KING'S CROSS

As if to coincide with the David Adjaye exhibition at the Design Museum celebrating his iconic monuments, this house designed by the British architect is now available to let – for £18,000 a month.

The three bedroom modern mansion on Crinan Street, King's Cross, was commissioned by an American couple who bought the house 10 years ago and it's the

first time it's been on the market since.

Adjaye, who is well-known internationally for the Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington DC, created a unique home with a host of unusual features spread over £3,600sqft. These include three 'internal gardens', which are light wells with glass walls that open out onto the sky to bring natural light and fresh air inside. They're also filled with plants, ponds and even koi carp. The tenant won't need to

know anything about raising a fish family, though, as carp maintenance is covered in the cost of the rent.

"The landlords are flexible, it can be furnished or unfurnished; they've got a lovely dining table that fits well in the space so they can leave bits and pieces if the right applicant comes along," says James Somers, head of central London lettings at UK Sothebys International.

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**DAVID SAVAGE 'HEDGE' COFFEE TABLE**  
 FROM £7,000, [FINEFURNITUREMAKER.COM](http://FINEFURNITUREMAKER.COM)

Tom Dixon meets the Blair Witch Project in this limited edition coffee table that its maker says "captures the beauty of the natural shapes of our hedgerows". Each unique piece is crafted from holly and walnut. Designer David Savage, who is based in Devon, says the table celebrates the hedgerows at a time when they are under threat, and the table may one day act as a museum for these "natural chaotic shapes".



**BEOSOUND EDGE**  
 £2,900, [BANG-OLUFSEN.COM](http://BANG-OLUFSEN.COM)

Inspired by the shape of the one pound coin, the Beosound Edge is both a speaker and an ominous, minimalist disc, which its creator, the acclaimed lighting designer Michael Anastassiades, boldly describes as

“an unbroken circle of clarity and beauty”. With no apparent buttons, the entire speaker can be rolled forwards or backwards to increase or decrease the volume. When you approach, a touch interface appears on its aluminium rim, vanishing again as you walk away. Truly alien, and utterly alluring.



**RUARK R5**  
 £999, [RUARKAUDIO.COM](http://RUARKAUDIO.COM)

The latest model from British audio brand Ruark, and a scaled down version of its flagship R7, the R5 is a stylish and versatile little speaker. It's capable of connecting to devices over Bluetooth and wi-fi, while also compatible with the ancient media format known as “compact disc”.



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# BUY NOW OR FOREVER HOLD YOUR PEACE

Why are some European countries becoming hostile to second home owners? **MELISSA YORK** investigates.





What you had, essentially, was people living in cities who said ‘there are enough second homes in the mountains, we don’t want any more’. But in the mountains, you had these people involved in construction and tourism all saying we need to build to maintain business in these communities

**T**he winds of change are sweeping through Europe, and it’s not just around national borders and general elections you feel its icy chill. It’s even creeping into the places where you’d quite like to buy a holiday home. Restrictions on second home buyers are starting to take hold in certain oversubscribed pockets of Europe, with estate agents posting ‘last chance to buy’ listings not just for new developments, but for entire towns and resorts.

There are a variety of reasons why a country may want to restrict second home buyers – a large number of which will be foreign – and each one has its own way of tackling the problem. Here in the UK, talk of foreign buyers ‘parking’ their money in property ‘vehicles’ in prime addresses has increased the scourge of absentee landlords, while making ‘ghost towns’ out of previously buzzing places, which has a knock-on effect on an already-struggling high street.

Research by online estate agent HouseSimple saw the number of empty homes rise last year to over 205,000 in the UK, representing £50bn of vacant property. London accounts for the largest portion of these – 20,237 long-term empty homes in 2017 – while the City of London saw the second biggest spike in the country with an increase of 229 per cent. While this is only 0.9 per cent of the total UK housing stock, according to estate agent Savills, it creates resentment at a time when first-time buyers are struggling to get onto the ladder.

In response, the UK government has allowed local councils to levy a 100 per cent council tax premium on owners of empty homes, and the previous government notoriously slapped a one per cent surcharge on stamp duty on second homes to raise revenue for the public purse; a move many housebuilders – who rely on foreign investment to placate banks – have decried ever since. “I think it’s the general view that it’s not enough to deter foreign buyers, when the level of stamp duty is already high,” says Savills’ Jeremy Rollason.

But there are some countries in Europe that have come up with more drastic measures to prevent their towns becoming glorified bank vaults for the super-rich. The most notorious of these is Switzerland where entire districts – or cantons – are banned from building any more housing and/or letting non-Swiss residents buy property.

This is down to two pieces of legislation, the Lex Koller and the Lex Weber. Laws restricting foreign buyers in Switzerland have existed since the 1960s, but the Lex Koller in 1983 capped the number of foreign-owned properties at 1,500 a year. Two years ago, the Lex Weber came in, which stated that, once the number of second homes in a canton reached 20 per cent of the total stock, all construction on new housing should stop. This was the result of a 2012 referendum that was just as divisive as Brexit, with an even narrower result: 50.6 per cent voted in favour.

“What you had, essentially, was people living in cities who said ‘there are enough second homes in the mountains, we don’t want any more’. But in the mountains, you had these people involved in construction, development and tourism all saying we need to build to maintain energy and business in these communities,” says Rollason, who heads up a specialist ski department in Savills, which sells chalets in the Alps.

“One can only imagine the *raison d’être* behind calling the referendum in the first place was that Switzerland is known for its lakes and mountains... and they wanted to preserve them for future generations.”

In urban business centres – such as Geneva, Bern and Zurich – the market is practically closed to non-nationals, while in popular rural resorts, such as Verbier – where the number of second homes exceeded 50 per cent at the time of the referendum – there is nothing new being built. And that rule about restricted supply increasing demand? Not always true. In Zermatt, where property is exclusively for Swiss residents, prices have fallen over the past five years “not because of lack of demand, but because you can’t sell to a large percentage of would-be buyers so they’re relying on the Swiss market.”

On top of that, under-developed resorts have been allowed to waive restrictions, such as Andermatt, which is the only canton where neither Lex Koller nor Lex Weber applies. As a result, prices have steadily risen there and it’s seen a boom in development, with some calling it ‘the next Verbier’.

Then, just to complicate matters further, the cantons can set their own income tax rate, so you might get a steal on a ski chalet in one canton, but be paying up to 40 per cent in tax, while in others, the chalet might be expensive but you’re paying 7.5 per cent tax. “Most people shopping for property in Switzerland, particularly at the high end, won’t have one advisor, they’ll have several, and they’ve got a tax specialist, a legal advisor and a property advisor,” says Rollason.



You could need specialist help to buy in the Austrian Alps soon, too. It’s a particular stickler for enforcing an EU directive that only allows EU citizens to buy property in EU member states. Some countries – the UK, France, Italy – have chosen to be more lax about this particular rule, but not Austria. This has serious implications for Brits buying ski chalets post-Brexit. We are the third biggest buyer in Austria, after German-speaking Swiss and Dutch-speaking Swiss (possibly because they have trouble buying in their own slice of the Alps). Branson Atterbury, the marketing director at Austrian real estate company Kristall Spaces, hopes this, plus the fact there are three times more home-owning Austrians in the UK than home-owning Brits in Austria, will prompt them to cut Brits a special deal post-Brexit. If not, all is not ►



► lost: foreigners can set up a holding company for the ski apartment – at a price. “I have lots of people buying in Austria who are not EU citizens – from Norway, North America, Kazakhstan, Africa – so what we do is, for £1,000, we set up an Austrian company, a local limited liability company. In fact, as long as it’s registered in the EU, that company can buy the apartment as long as you’re the main shareholder.”

So while there’s a gaping loophole, there are also likely to be unconditional requirements: to let the property out, for example, when you’re not living in it. Developers like Kristall Spaces say they have to address local concerns over ‘cold bed syndrome’ to get planning permission, but have a separate operating company to rent the apartments out for British buyers, who are often reluctant landlords.

“We have to be incredibly careful how we plan a project and it has to work hand-in-hand with the community over there. We insist that most of our apartments must be rented when the owner is not there, so it supports the tourist industry and it doesn’t create housing that’s pushing out the locals,” says Atterbury. “They benefit, too, because you’ve got generations of Austrians still teaching tourists to ski and serving in restaurants who’ve got more customers out of it.” It also helps that half of the business is Austrian-owned, by farmers-turned-hoteliars, who are “very much a part of the ski culture.”



Tourism isn’t always encouraged, though. In Barcelona, many think visitor numbers have got out of hand, destroying once famous areas like Las Ramblas. The popularity of short term let websites, such as Airbnb, hasn’t just hurt the hotel industry, it’s also led to a number of private landlords turfing out long-term tenants to profit from the higher daily yields they can obtain by renting out their property to tourists. This has dramatically limited supply of private lets, leading to unaffordable rents. “[Local government] stopped giving out tourist licences for properties about three or four years ago and the main reason is that local residents have been squeezed out of the city centre,” says Rod Jamieson, a director at Lucas Fox, a Barcelona-based estate agency.



Above: An apartment on sale at Chemin de Creux, Verbier, for CHF 9.7m. Call Savills Ski 020 7016 3753

This means that second home buyers in Barcelona that planned on letting their property out to tourists and business travellers are having to find long-term tenants or leave the property empty when they’re not there. The penalty for letting on a short-term basis with no tourist licence is severe, around £60,000 if you’re caught, according to Jamieson. “It’s quite well-enforced now and they usually rely on neighbours making complaints. It’s got stricter and stricter. A couple of years ago, you’d get a warning first, but now it’s no messing, they really clamp down.”

A healthy second home market is generally beneficial for local markets, but house prices in Barcelona fell 7-10 per cent last year, something Jamieson puts down to the much-publicised Catalonia independence row. Though there’s a two-year moratorium on tourist licences, a long-term strategy was

devised last year to split Barcelona into four zones; once licences have expired in the central zone, they won’t be renewed; in zone two, they will maintain the current number of licences, but won’t issue new ones; in zones three and four, which are quite far inland, there will be a limited number of new licences issued.

To underline the fact that tourism is the source of this resentment, no such measures are being trialled in Madrid, Spain’s capital, because many short term visitors are business travellers or diplomats. And it doesn’t solve anything to lay the blame solely at Airbnb’s door, either: “They have adapted to the local regulations, and want to work with local government to be more transparent about who actually owns these properties so they can make sure the people on their website have a tourist licence and are doing things legally,” says Jamieson.

As more cities in Europe seek to wrest control of their housing from a wealthy, globalised population that travel more frequently than ever, will this have the adverse effect of decreasing the amount of housing available for locals? Similarly well-meaning efforts to identify landlords of second homes have only led to buyers retreating behind offshore companies.

“The more you keep a foreign buyer out, the more ways they find of trying to get in, as demonstrated in Austria; they will find ways to circumvent that legislation,” says Rollason from Savills Ski. “You can have control over how that property is classified or used, but I don’t think you should prevent a foreigner being able to buy a nice property in Vienna, for example, because you’re in danger of not only discrimination, but artificially controlling the market.”

This could be the beginning of Europeans taking back control of their housing, or it could simply end up being a failed experiment that briefly restricts holiday homes to the savvy, well-heeled few. ■



Above: A CGI of a Kristall Spaces development in Fieberbrunn, Austria, [propertysaleaustria.co.uk](http://propertysaleaustria.co.uk)

PAIPAÏ large settee. Design: LucidiPevere.



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# DESIGN TO DINE

If your restaurant doesn't go viral on Instagram, does it exist at all?

Words: **MELISSA YORK**

**T**he restaurant business is tough in London. One day, your no-reservations policy has punters queuing out of the door; the next, you've closed and been replaced by a Chipotle. To stand out from the crowd, the restaurant scene has become an arms race in jaw-dropping interior design and social media has only fuelled this fire. Woe betide anyone who actually needs to use the ladies' bathroom in Sketch; the free publicity Mayfair's long-standing restaurant has received for its lurid egg loos must have paid for David Shrigley to design the dining room several times over.

You could be forgiven for thinking you'd seen it all once you've seen Damien Hirst's mermaids at SexyFish, but what new paradigms does 2019 have in store for London's design-conscious diners?

It certainly won't be a quiet one, according to Shayne Brady and Emily Williams, co-founders of BradyWilliams Studio, the designers behind Brigadiers in Bloomberg Arcade, Taiwanese teahouse XU and seafood chain Wright Brothers.

"We're noticing a desire for designs that are polar opposites", Brady says, citing maximalism and minimalism across its upcoming projects. Eclecticism is another -ism to watch out for; in plain English, this means mixing antiques with modern pieces in a mismatched mosaic of mastication. "This is a trend we included when designing the interiors at Floral Court – pairing an antique lamp with a bespoke console table

with a Rosso Levanto marble top for a subtle eclectic vibe," adds Williams.

Another trend that's set to continue is greenery, or biophilic design, using natural materials and plants to bring the outside in, as celebrated in such restaurants as Sky Garden on Fenchurch Street, the roof of Caso do Frango in Borough, and the orange uplit tree on the terrace of Sushisamba in the City.

"Bringing aspects of nature and greenery into our projects has become a huge trend and is no doubt set to continue as the social consciousness for sustainability grows," says Brady.

Eco-consciousness has also birthed another design feature that's probably here to stay: open kitchens. As we become more concerned with where our food comes from and how it's prepared, chefs have been drawn out of the kitchen and into the centre of the dining experience. Open kitchens are practically mandatory in London restaurants these days; the best seats in the house at Israeli restaurant Palomar in Soho, for instance, are considered to be the ones around the bar, where you're so close to the pass you can see every pomegranate that falls onto the kitchen floor. Smokestack in Shoreditch can also get a bit sweaty as diners watch burly, tattooed chefs cook over flames mere metres away.

Food presentation can also be incorporated in a more refined way; David Collins Studio – a prolific firm that has designed some of London's most iconic dining rooms, from The Delaunay to The Wolseley – says ►

**Left:** The refurbished Roux at The Landau at the Langham Hotel, including the new counter;

**This page:** Kerridge's Bar & Grill in The Corinthia hotel, with a glass-fronted wine cabinet both designed by David Collins Studio





► it was recently invited back to Roux at The Landau in The Langham hotel to add a counter diners could sit around while food is prepared in the middle. Similarly, its grand interiors for Tom Kerridge's new restaurant in The Corinthia hotel has joints of meat and aubergines hanging from butchers hooks, and game lit up inside chrome cabinets.

"We want to have more of a visual connection with what we're eating and know about the provenance," says Simon Rawlings, creative director of David Collins Studio. "People are more interested in what they're putting into their bodies and that visual connection with the product is something that you get everywhere now. In the new food hall we created for Harrods, it's about bringing the food preparation to the foremost and allowing people to be more connected with the produce."

The popularity of sharing concepts – where diners eat from numerous small plates, like tapas – has influenced the shape of tables, such as the circular tables at Nobu Berkeley Street that are designed to accommodate more plates. When the world-renowned sushi chef first arrived in London in the late 90s, his restaurant was the toast of the town and the central banquettes were the place to be seen.

These days, selfies next to eye-catching, outlandish design features are currency on visual platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat and Pinterest. The flower walls outside Dalloway Terrace, the Churchill Arms and private members' club Annabel's have garnered thousands of posts, and the newly-opened Brasserie of Light on the first floor of Selfridges, with its outsized glittering Pegasus hanging from the dining room ceiling and overlit, pink marble bathrooms, is the definition of Insta-ready.

This isn't a trend that all interior designers are happy to follow, however. "We don't design photographs, we design interiors," says Rawlings. "If a restaurant wanted that, I would challenge it all of the time. A lot of the spaces I go to that have an Instagrammable moment, you turn your back on it and you're in a very unpleasant space. A lot of effort has gone into that and everything else is forgotten about. Inevitably, you'll get there to see the one thing and it will be an anti-climax."

"I love, love, love Instagram," he adds. "But what I also love about spaces that don't have that Instagrammable moment is that I'm getting different perspectives of a restaurant through different eyes. Someone



Above: The acoustically amazing Spiritland on the South Bank;  
Below: The bathrooms at Brigadiers by BradyWilliams Studio

“

A lot of the spaces I go to that have an Instagrammable moment... a lot of effort has gone into that and everything else is forgotten. Inevitably, it'll be an anti-climax

might photograph a wine glass while someone else might photograph the door handles, rather than the same picture over and over again, which does it no justice."

Good restaurant design, he says, will match the food with the decor in close collaboration with the chef and proprietor to create a cosy space – with flattering lighting, of course – that tells a very specific story about the restaurant.

There are few more specialist examples than Spiritland, a restaurant, bar and live music venue, with a cultural programme that has featured stars like Jarvis Cocker and Irvine Welsh, at the bottom of the Royal Festival Hall. Its aesthetic is described by co-founder Patrick Clayton-Malone as "a 1970s chat show crossed with Wes Anderson" and was specifically designed with sound in mind.

Its older sibling – a cafe/bar/work space of the same name in King's Cross that opened in 2016 with one of the chefs from Bethnal Green's award-winning Brawn – has a world-beating sound system, but a more casual vibe. The South Bank iteration has a formal dining room as well as all the musical bells and whistles, so needs to accommodate a clientele that may want to actually hear themselves speak.

"One of the bugbears with going to restaurants is it's just so loud," says Paul Noble, a music consultant who founded Spiritland with Clayton-Malone and Dominic Lake, themselves founders of Canteen and Merchants Tavern in Shoreditch. "It's deafening when you put

people and cutlery together – so we wanted to create something akin to a cinema or theatre where you walk in and it's immediately relaxing on your ears."

This involved a specialist treatment – insulation described by Clayton-Malone as "like a spray papier-mache, it's quite fluffy" – on the ceiling with a suspended element that the restaurant can angle and customise to the room, as well as decibel-reducing acoustic flooring and wooden panels on the walls that are designed to absorb mid-range noise.

This is all part of the plan to improve evening options for Londoners who want to eat, lounge and enjoy live entertainment in one place, or simply don't want to choose between a conversation and live music. It's currently the venue that's open latest on the South Bank and sees itself as part of the solution to London's so-called nightlife crisis, deemed so pressing by London Mayor Sadiq Khan that he's appointed a tsar for it in City Hall.

"It's quite hard to find somewhere to go at night, unless you're a member of a private club. You're stuck with not many options after dinner other than loud, late night, stand-up drinking," says Noble. "It's on everyone's lips at the moment, this experiential element, and the fact that London's nightlife has been a hot topic over the last two years. More people are trying to make these multi-use spaces work that can move from daytime to the evening."

Conversely, hotels are eager to entice people in at lunchtime and are turning to design cues to create a different atmosphere from lunch to dinner, including lowering the lighting, putting tablecloths on, and changing tableware.

While trends come and go, there seem to be two fundamental shifts in London's cultural dining scene that are here to stay: food theatre and experiential dining. "I don't believe that the average customer is going to leave remembering the colour of the chair or what the light fixture looked like," says Rawlings, "what they will remember is the *feeling*, the atmosphere of the space. We're here, alongside the chef, to create experiences." ■

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# OFFICE SPACE FJORD

Behind the scenes of the globe-spanning design consultancy's new London studio. By **STEVE HOGARTY**; Photos by **GREG SIGSTON**







A DJ booth with vinyl decks sits in one corner of The Pit, and is wheeled out every few weeks for casual office gatherings after 'town hall meetings'

**B**efore Accenture Interactive moved in, the company's Farringdon offices were the disaster recovery site for Goldman Sachs. In the event that the bank's Canary Wharf premises were suddenly rendered inoperable or inaccessible, the staff could be relocated here to ensure uninterrupted service.

These days it's the London office of design consultancy Fjord, one of two agencies here under Accenture Interactive, the world's largest digital agency and the marketing arm of the global professional services giant Accenture. In contrast to the building's bleak past life as a bunker for bankers, the place is now alive with designers milling about its bright social spaces, fermenting their own kombucha and tending to peace lilies between client meetings.

"The fermentation club took on a life of its own," says Abbie Walsh, managing director of Fjord UK and Ireland. She gestures to a couple of screw-top mason jars on a shelf, packed with pickles. "It's such a hot topic. The team came up with the idea, and now they meet once a fortnight to create all sorts of fermented things."

Moonshine for the office party? I suggest. "Strictly non-alcoholic," says Walsh. "We're all about pickling, just not your liver."

Founded in 2001, Fjord survived the bursting of the dot com bubble on the strength of its early client list, which included Orange, Nokia and the BBC. It was, in founder Olof Schybergson's own words, "a particularly bad time to start a new company focused on innovation and digital service design". But in the years that followed, Fjord expanded across the world and into almost 30 cities, with a portfolio of clients that touches all five continents. In 2013 the studio was acquired by Accenture Interactive, and in 2018 it moved into its new 11,452 sqft lodgings in Farringdon, bordered on one side by Farringdon Road and on the other by the train station.

"The place was completely empty when we moved in, with very low ceilings that we had to take out," says Walsh. "It was a big design process to make it fit for purpose. We'd been in a much smaller place before in Margaret Street, which we'd outgrown, but at the same time we'd learned a lot about what we needed from an office space."

Set across two levels, the new premises has room enough for 100 people to work. A laid-back café atmosphere permeates the communal spaces, especially in the entrance lobby, where a handful of designers sit on banquettes and work on laptops, and several large, commercial-grade espresso machines line one wall.

"There was a training day, so that everyone could learn to make a coffee," says Walsh.

Floor to ceiling windows run the length of the minimalist and informal lobby, bathing the room in natural light. "They're a key feature in terms of how we're mirroring the old studios opposite us on Farringdon Road, and inviting in the ►





**Above:** Boticelli, a robotic artist invented by designers at Fjord; **Left:** Espresso machines in the entrance lobby

► heritage of the area. The River Fleet flows beneath Farringdon Road too. We're inviting that sense of flow into the building."

The route from outside to inside has been carefully considered, and Fjord worked with architect Jenny Jones to ensure that every aspect of the office served not just the requirements of the team, but maintained a sense of flow from the moment you enter. It was a design brief that began with moving the front door about 15 feet to the left.

Past the entrance and at the end of the lobby is a 'slow stair', a long and shallow staircase that meanders one way and then another, like a river, before spilling out into the large communal kitchen and event space called The Pit – "the heart and soul of the studio" as Walsh describes it – around which are various meeting rooms, quiet booths and project areas.

The only interruption to this lucid flow through the building was a pillar. "We moved the entrance, but then this is the first thing you see," Walsh gestures to a stubborn girder. "When we tried to get rid of it, it turned out that this thing is holding up the entire building, all the way down to the foundations. So we had to learn to love it."

While Fjord was founded in London, the studio's original co-creator is from Helsinki, and this Scandinavian heritage is reflected in its stripped-down decor. Besides gallery pieces showcasing the company's artwork, the vials of half-fermented kombucha and the odd smattering of colourful detritus pinned to the walls by designers, the studio is all clean lines, cool daylight bulbs and pinewood. "Design needs a bit of headspace and clarity of thinking," says Walsh. "So there's lots of different types of spaces, from full collaboration to quiet contemplation, and everything in between."

Customisable meeting areas can be expanded or collapsed with moving walls and furniture on wheels. A makers space equipped with craft materials, soldering irons and a huge printer for posters is situated just behind the staircase. And living plants are used throughout the office to create indoor gardens that improve mood.

"There are some studies that prove that having real plants inside the workplace has a huge impact on mental health," says Walsh. "So that's why the plants are here, not just to look green and pretty. Equally, having an animal in the workplace is also supposed to be good for mental health. So we've got a dog, called Bob."

“

The room is illuminated by a huge sodium spotlight, like the ones that light up motorways. When switched on it turns everything an alien shade of yellow



I find the little black Frenchie snoozing in a corner. He's got a slight dandruff problem and snores heavily. "Whenever there's a really important client workshop, Bob will always get in, because he can smell the snacks. Then he has to be rescued."

Dotted about the studio are meeting spots with varying degrees of soundproofing, from phonebooth-sized cubbies that block out just enough sound to take a call, to more experimental noise-isolation rooms, intended to encourage creativity and collaboration. The strangest of these rooms is illuminated by a huge sodium spotlight, like the ones that light up motorways. When switched on it turns everything an alien shade of yellow. You can doodle all over the walls, there are no chairs, and only a ballet-style railing to lean against as you wait for inspiration to strike.

Does it work? "Well, it certainly helps people switch moods," says Walsh. "And sometimes that wall is completely covered in writing, like a serial killer's hideout."

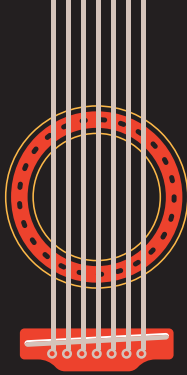
Even the more prosaic of the meeting rooms have been designed with the latest psychological theories in mind. The 'cookie' room is so called for its round table. "Some research has been done about the best shape for a table for a meeting, and apparently a round table is most conducive to collaboration." And the dark painted walls of the library are naturally calming.

"It's a digital switch off room. You can have a little snooze in here if you want," says Walsh. "Although I've not yet caught anyone doing that. The view along this side of the building overlooks the station too, which creates a completely different feel to these rooms. It's very popular for one to ones, or career conversations."

Space design is becoming a big part of what Fjord does for its clients, and so its guiding principles start here, at the studio. "A big part of what we tell our clients is that they need to have the right spaces in order for their teams to fulfil their potential," says Walsh. "Naturally we apply that to ourselves too. We wanted to make sure this place was as conducive to creativity as possible." ■

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# THE ONLY WAY IS UP

When you can't build outwards, build upwards. How the trend for sky-high extensions is transforming our rooftops, by **STEVE HOGARTY**

**U**sing the latest geospatial mapping software, property consultancy Knight Frank found that over 40,000 new homes could be built on top of London's existing buildings, without altering the city's skyline or protected views.

According to the new study, the volume of unused airspace in Zones 1 and 2 is equivalent to eight Burj Khalifa towers. With all of that room overhead, it's no wonder that those looking to expand are increasingly moving upwards, rather than outwards. The sky, it seems, is not the limit after all.

"Putting an extra storey or two on top of existing residential buildings is becoming very popular," says Guy Stansfeld, design director at architect and design firm 318 Studio. "Especially in London, where your options are fairly restricted. You can go down into the basement, out into the garden, if you're lucky, or you can go up. But your ability to do something strange or unusual is often very limited, if we're talking about the typical terraced house. The planning system often requires that you do something conventional."

Still, a growing number of flat owners are looking to more ambitious upwards expansion projects, with radical designs that go way beyond the usual plain dormers and Velux skylights. These extensions both maximise the use of space, and can be striking

architectural features at the same time.

"A lot of people are really trying to get away from the typical loft conversion," says Grant Straghan, director of North London based architectural studio, DeDraft. "Depending on the property, you can start to explore the potential for a whole range of materials better suited to the setting, rather than going for the usual slate, exposed guttering and downpipes."

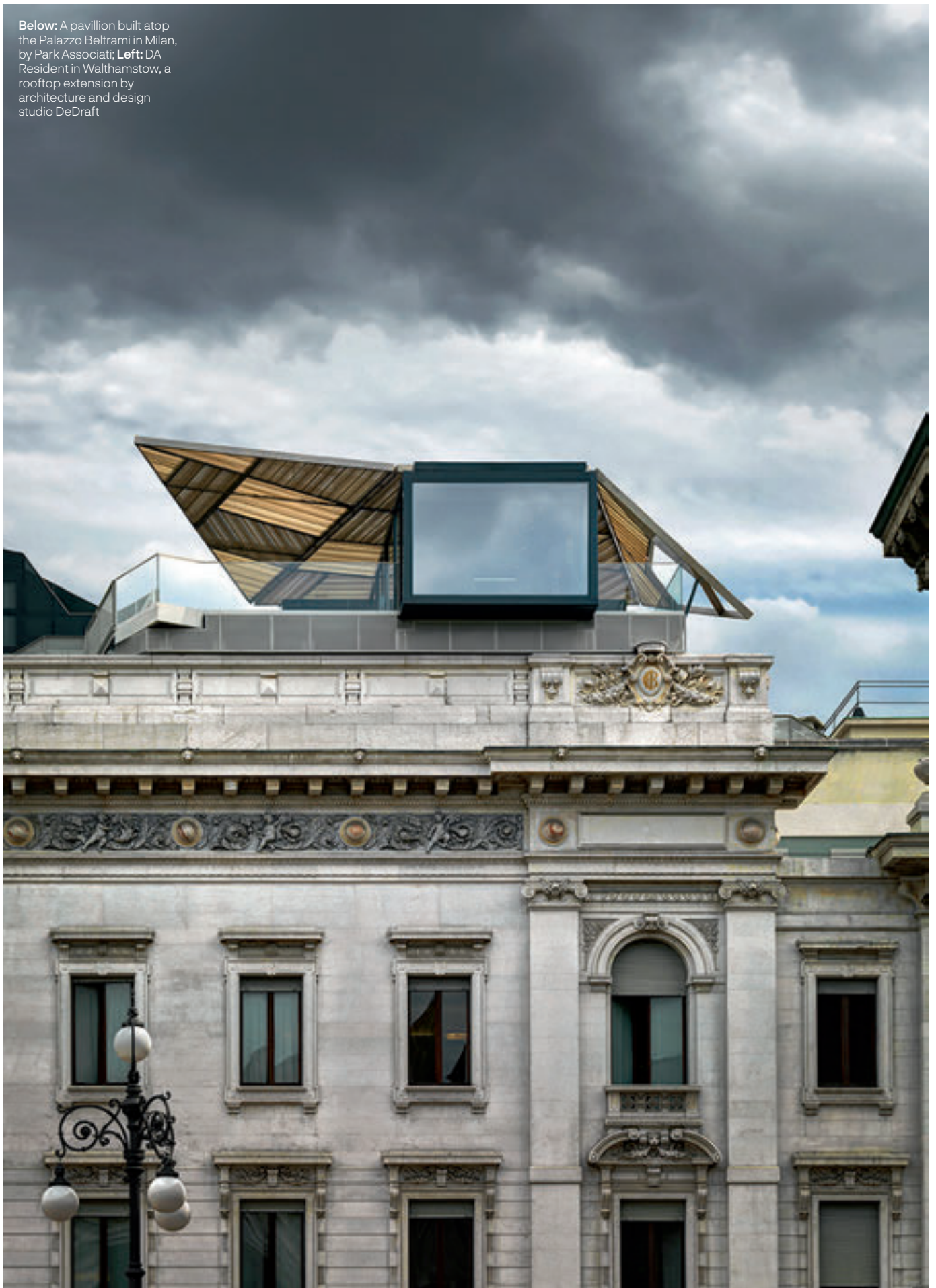
DeDraft's 24sqm rooftop extension in Walthamstow (pictured above) is clad in cor-ten weathering steel, which over the course of the weeks following its installation (and with the help of British weather) went from its original metallic grey to a striking, burnt-orange patina.

"Within a week it had started to rust," says Straghan, of the material. "Even the installer's fingers weathered it when it was still in sheets on site. Within three months it had become the colour you see now."

The cladding will continue to develop, eventually turning a darker shade of red to match the property's existing tiles, becoming "more sympathetic to the roof materials of the existing property." The finished project is one of many such eye-catching extensions seen dotted around the rooftops of north London.

"Since finishing that job," says Straghan, "we get a lot of enquiries from people who say that they don't want a bog standard loft. The trend is really drifting away from that kind of conversion."

Below: A pavillion built atop the Palazzo Beltrami in Milan, by Park Associati; Left: DA Resident in Walthamstow, a rooftop extension by architecture and design studio DeDraft





# THE CANDY COLOURED MIRAGE

North Korea's capital Pyongyang is a strange, retro-futuristic playground. In this extract from his book *Inside North Korea*, **OLIVER WAINWRIGHT** writes about his time there.

**I** spent a week in Pyongyang in July 2015 and discovered that the capital of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea isn't the monotonous grey world that you might expect. There were space-age scenes of hoverships and conical mirrored-glass hotels clinging to cliff-tops, with a decidedly retro style, as if taken straight from the Jetsons or the pages of a Dan Dare comic.

The North Korean interior is a fascinating stage set, a precisely choreographed world where an idealised image of power and order is played out. It operates as a tool to command emotion, devotion and obedience, employing theatrical architectural devices to elicit a sense of wonder and veneration of the country's leaders. And it is a phenomenon that extends far beyond the bounds of the room alone, to the wider formation of the city itself – with urban space conceived as a contained interior, through which the country's unique attitude to space, power and ideology can be understood.

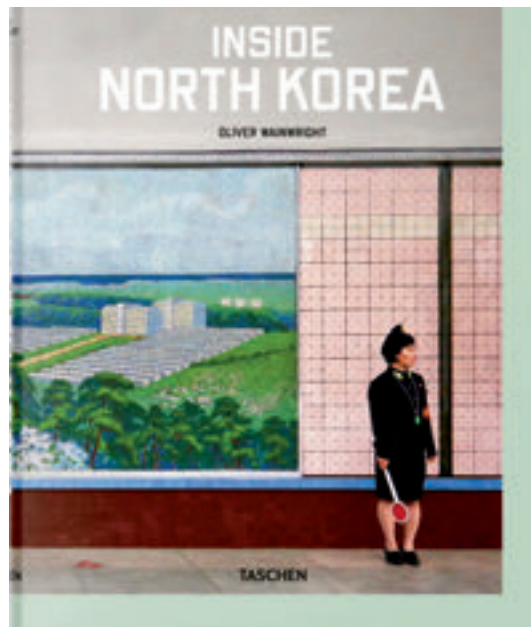
When you're standing at the top of the Tower of the Juche Idea, below the 20-metre-high red glass flame that rises from a great golden base, the North Korean capital of Pyongyang stretches out beneath you as a pastel-coloured panorama. It is a rolling field of tower blocks painted in terracotta and yellow ochre, turquoise and baby blue, punctuated by the novel silhouettes of landmark buildings designed with a distinctly sci-fi air. It looks as if someone has emptied a packet of candy across the city, sugary pastilles jumbled up with jelly spaceships.

The white concrete teepee of the Pyongyang Ice Rink rises behind the sweeping green-tiled roof of the Grand People's Study House, looking on to the vast expanse of Kim Il Sung Square. The mirrored-glass pyramid of the Ryugyong Hotel stands across the river from the billowing silver flower of the May Day Stadium, while the wavy roof of a leisure centre ripples in the foreground, next to the red armadillo's shell of the Central Youth Hall. A group of women stroll along the new riverside path, their glittery lace parasols sparkling in the afternoon sunshine.

It is only when I left Pyongyang that it became clear that this image of jolly prosperity is confined to the showcase capital alone, that the "great garden of Juche

architecture" is a bubble for the privileged few. On the three-hour journey along a crack-riddled road heading south to the border, during which I barely passed another vehicle, I got a glimpse of how the rest of the country lives. Abandoned factories stand rusting next to crumbling concrete apartments, without the cheerful pastel hues. I passed a scene of ragged children playing in the river, while shaven-headed men in striped prison uniforms toiled in the fields beyond, watched over by soldiers. Outside the pleasure dome, in zones off limits to foreign visitors, most of the socialist fairyland still suffers from frequent power shortages, chronic food insecurity and deteriorating standards of healthcare and education – realities that are safely obscured inside Pyongyang's candy-coloured mirage.

● *Inside North Korea*, published by Taschen, is out now priced £40, [taschen.com](http://taschen.com)





**Above:** The view from the top of the Tower of the Juche Idea in Pyongyang; **Below, left to right:** The East Pyongyang Grand Theatre; Locker rooms at the Rungrado May Day Stadium; A lounge at the stadium with the "optimistic" inclusion of the Fifa logo; The Changwang Health and Recreation Complex, where you can reach the top of the diving board via a lift







## THE BACK PAGE

STEVE HOGARTY

# JOIN THE BUG BANQUET

Plummeting insect numbers are threatening nature itself. One way to save them? By convincing people to eat them.

**A**s the philosopher Nicolas Cage once screamed in the celebrated 2006 remake of *The Wicker Man*, “the bees, the bees, oh god, oh no, not the bees, they’re stinging me, the bees, they’re in my eyes.” The famous line, delivered with all the gravitas of Gielgud himself, was a shrewd commentary on humankind’s often fractious relationship with nature, especially when it’s stinging us in the eyes as we’re dragged towards our fiery death by pagan sex cultists.

But in the war on bugs, it seems we humans are having the last laugh. Bees are vanishing into thin air, insect populations are in decline, and climate change is to blame. Spiders are too sweaty to build webs. Bluebottles are too lethargic to repeatedly bounce against windows like they used to. Butterflies are being blown into mangles by unpredictable new jetstreams. It would be funny, if the total and imminent collapse of the global ecosystem weren’t so sad. Climate scientists say bugs are the canary in the coalmine. Canaries, who live on a diet of bugs, are presumably next in line. Whatever eats canaries – cats, I suppose – should be very concerned indeed.

In a dark twist worthy of Shyamalan, the only way that insects may be able to save themselves from total annihilation is to flutter onto our dinner plates and into our bellies, where we can keep them nice and safe. Once the preserve of jungle-bound D-list celebrities, insects are fast becoming the cuisine of choice for eco-conscious snackers, but while demand for protein-rich roach-burgers is rising we’re still a long way off seeing insects on the menu around the City.

You might guess that’s because, despite the involuntary groans of pleasure Noel Edmonds let out as he bit down on the thorax of a deep fried Bolivian

short-horned grasshopper, most people find insects revolting. But you’d be wrong. One in five Britons surveyed last year say they’d happily eat a worm if asked to, and we can only suppose there are many more Britons who would eat a worm unprompted. I would even hazard, knowing Britons, that at least one of them had a mouthful of half-chewed worms while they were being asked the question. So if we’re not being squeamish, then what’s the issue with swapping a plate of buffalo chicken wings for a greasy pile of hot, squirming, paprika-seasoned grubs?

Simply, insects just aren’t that tasty, and people are less motivated by boring environmental concerns than by the far more fun and immediate task of appeasing their stomachs. If the looming climate apocalypse isn’t enough to convince people to make the switch to a perfectly serviceable vegan burger, then it would take the Earth being smashed into pieces by an asteroid before anyone would consider eating a nugget made of mashed-up woodlice.

Rather than convince anyone on tedious ethical grounds, which nobody enjoys thinking about, it would be far more effective to raise the profile of insect-derived food as aspirational and sexy. Get Gwyneth Paltrow to eat a fistful of ants during an interview with Ellen. Create a new bank holiday on which we’re all supposed to track down and eat a ladybird. Once insects have infested the public consciousness, it won’t be long before Smith & Wollensky is serving up earwig tartare alongside its Kansas City cut bone-in sirloin, and the world is saved.

As Nicolas Cage said, “Killing me won’t bring back your god damn honey.” But perhaps farming, killing and eating bees on an industrial scale just might.

● Steve Hogarty is a food critic, optimist and insect correspondent for *City A.M.*

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