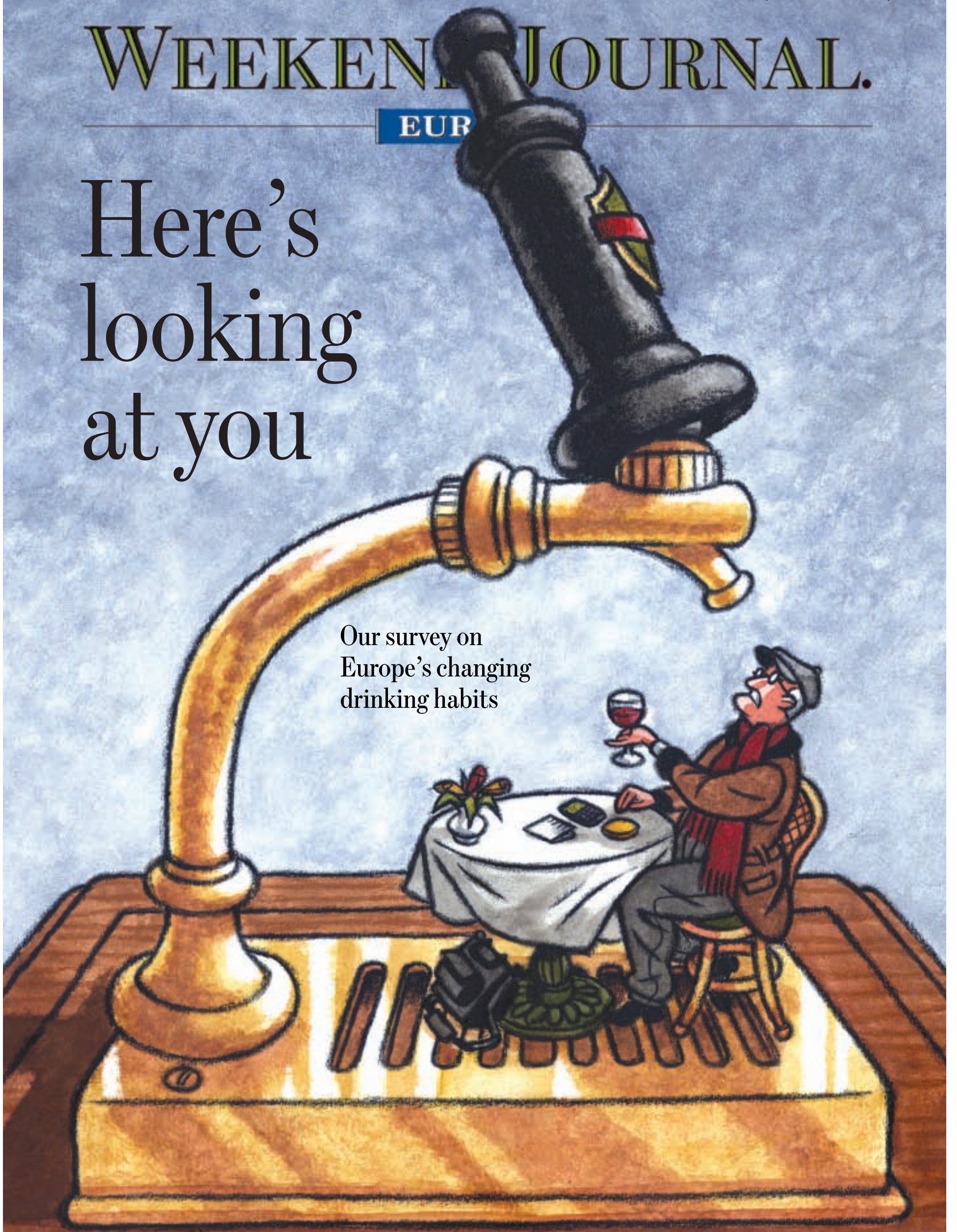


# WEEKEND JOURNAL.

EUR

Here's  
looking  
at you

Our survey on  
Europe's changing  
drinking habits



New cookbooks from top chefs | Spending Nobel Week in Stockholm



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## WEEKEND JOURNAL

EUROPE

Craig Winneker EDITOR  
Fahire Kurt ART DIRECTOR  
Kathleen Van Den Broeck ASSISTANT ART DIRECTOR  
Matthew Kaminski TASTE PAGE EDITOR

Questions or comments? Write to wsje.weekend@wsj.com. Please include your full name and address.

## THE JOURNAL CROSSWORD / Edited by Mike Shenk

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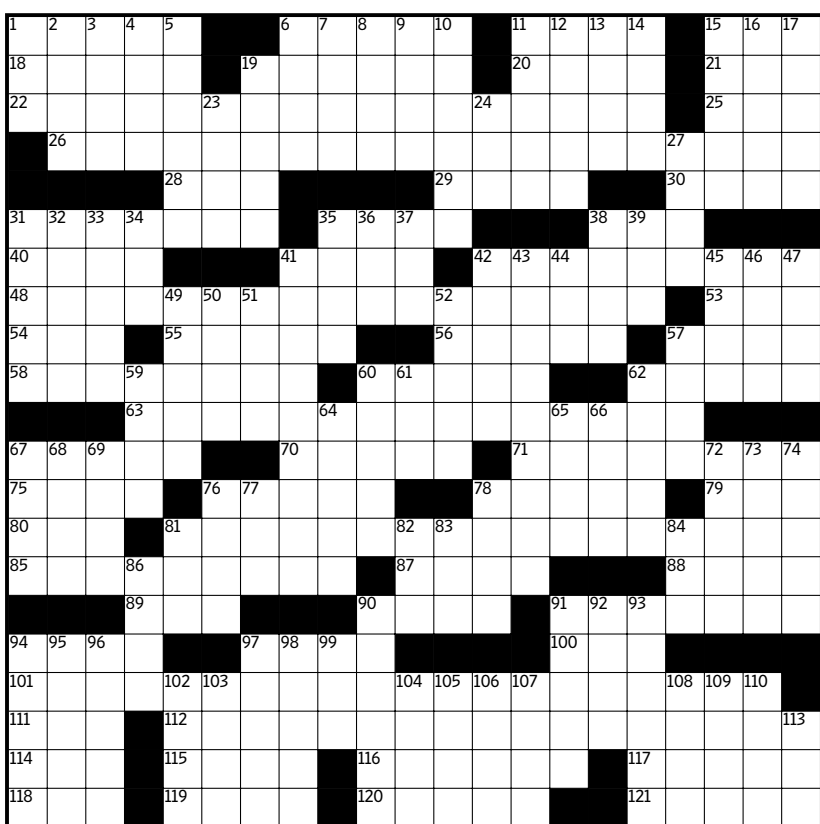
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### Last week's solution



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WSJ.com/WeekendJournal



❖ Fashion

# A deal-hunter's guide to the galaxy

**T**HE DEEPEST AND broadest retail discounting in living memory is creating a quandary for consumers: There are so many sales people don't know where to start—or when to hold off.

Brands from Lands' End to the haute Bottega Veneta are cutting prices on rarely discounted staples,

## On Style

CHRISTINA BINKLEY

and fashions are on sale for as much as 80% off. The next few weeks present especially rich shopping opportunities, as stores are trying to clear space for spring shipments that will begin arriving in mid-January, and designers want to clear their warehouses of fall looks that retailers didn't want. Yes, the fashion calendar is crazy—and you can take advantage of it.

The discounts are deeper and earlier than usual because nervous lenders have been quick to call defaults on designers' business loans, says Bill Wagner, a banking and financial workout attorney with Baker & McKenzie in New York. In order to raise cash, clothing manufacturers aren't waiting until next season to sell extra current-season goods to discounters such as T.J. Maxx; they're doing it now. For the fashion industry, "this is a grab to get cash any way you can," Mr. Wagner says.

"It's almost like high-end retailers are competing with the Loehmann's/Filene's outlets these days," says Elita Ng, who launched a discount-tracking Web site, DealDivine.



com, in October to assemble coupons, sales and discounts on everything from fashion to technology.

If you're a bargain-hunter, there are plenty of places to begin. But it pays to be picky. Haute brand Bottega Veneta knocked 30% off the price of its intrecciato woven bags, selling them for roughly \$1,000—a real deal if you're a Bottega fan. Still, with sample sales and discounters selling current-season looks for up to 80% off, I'm turning up my nose at most fashion discounts of less than 50%.

Timing is everything. Consider the black wool Balenciaga coat that was selling recently for 45% off at Neiman Marcus. Is that a good deal? To some extent, this depends on whether you can live without the coat. It could sell out at that price.

Yet the price could go somewhat lower. It's not until department stores sell fashion and accessories at 70% off, in general, that they're selling them at around the wholesale price they paid. After hitting that level, department stores often ship unsold goods to off-price

stores such as Ross Dress for Less and Century 21.

The fact that more manufacturers this fall are selling directly to off-price stores means that it can be especially worthwhile to look at discounters these days. Shoppers report seeing the likes of Prada, Missoni and Helmut Lang in the ultra-low-priced "Runway" sections of T.J. Maxx stores. "With department stores canceling orders, we're getting additional brands," says Laura McDowell, a T.J. Maxx spokeswoman. "They have excess product. They know we pay our bills on time and we can't return the product."

Off-price stores near wealthy business or residential enclaves are likely to get the best stuff. Richard Jaffee, a retail analyst with Stifel Nicolaus in New York, recently saw Cartier, Tag Heuer and Breitling watches at the Filene's Basement near Union Square in New York. Cen-

tury 21 has a well-stocked store near Wall Street in New York. Loehmann's "Back Room" in Miami is particularly full, Mr. Jaffee says.

Tourist zones get more traffic and therefore more goods. For years, I've found extraordinary bargains at the Saks Off Fifth outlet in Las Vegas. Bob Brvenik, president of outlet-mall developer Prime Retail, says his company's malls are chock-a-block with luxury goods. The Baccarat outlet at Prime's Orlando mall recently received a \$40,000 crystal chandelier, priced at 40% off.

Sample sales—direct from designers—are a cornucopia of price-slashing deals. Daily Candy ([www.dailycandy.com](http://www.dailycandy.com)) often reports on local sample sales. In New York, check out Soiffer Haskin and Clothing Line—both in the Garment District. Register with the Web sites of your favorite stores and brands. They'll let you

know about "pre-sales," when you can get the deals before the masses.

Among resale shops, which take in gently worn cast-offs, the Society of Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York is sometimes called the "Bergdorf Goodman" of thrift shops. Its "designer room" recently teemed with luxury goods, including a black and white Carolina Herrera evening gown for \$350; a gray tone-on-tone Armani jacket for \$150; and, for \$1,200, a full-length Givenchy mink coat. "We've had an exceptional year this year," says store manager Anita Askienazy.

WSJ.com

Big-time bargains

Listen to Christina Binkley discuss shopping for deals, and share your tips for finding bargains, at [WSJ.com/Fashion](http://WSJ.com/Fashion)

## Do-it-yourself decorating

BY ELVA RAMIREZ

**T**HIS DECEMBER, as in years past, Vena Cava designers Lisa Mayock and Sophie Buhai will set aside time to craft handmade holiday accessories and gifts.

Homemade items are creative and meaningful, say the designers, who last month were named runners-up for the Council of Fashion Designers of America / Vogue Fashion Fund award, which recognizes new and emerging talent.

Making your own wrapping paper, for instance, "ends up being cheaper," Ms. Mayock says, "but it doesn't really have anything to do with money." Rather, she says, "it's fun and personal. It can be tailored to each person."

Ms. Mayock has created her own wrapping paper for the past few years. She arranges old photographs of friends into a collage, using a colorful magazine image as a backdrop. She then runs the collage through a color copier. While there are usually trims and ribbons lying around her studio, she likes to finish packages off with twine from the hardware store.

The designers also shared some ambitious gift ideas that they haven't yet created. Ms. Mayock says her father has a col-



Sandy Nichols

lection of silly '80s T-shirts with animals and weird motifs. "It would be really awesome to cut them up and make them into a quilt," she says.

Ms. Buhai said that this year, she is considering making someone a custom chessboard of cardboard coated with a clear lacquer. The pieces would be checkers or poker chips covered with paper and a drawing or written label. "It's a trompe l'oeil chessboard all made out of paper," she says.

On a smaller scale, Ms. Buhai suggests personalizing a deck of cards by putting collages on the backs of the cards. She would incorporate newspapers, old photos or little doodled messages.

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# Secrets of the world's most celebrated chefs

BY RAYMOND SOKOLOV

**F**AR ABOVE THE CHAOS and vulgarity of the TV food shows, the world's real top chefs reign over a handful of remarkable restaurants from Spain to Tokyo. They and their underchefs produce elegant, costly food, yes, but also, increasingly, their kitchens are hotbeds of invention, of science-based experiment and of theatrical new forms of service at the tables of alert diners expecting the same surprise and creativity that art collectors look for in a great painter.

This fall, several of these masters have opened their kitchens and their minds to our view in cookbooks offering lavish, sometimes uncookable records of the thrilling stuff they've been turning out during the past few years of tumultuous change and advance. They know that most people, even most committed gastronomes, will never be able to eat in their hideously over-subscribed dining rooms. At the most celebrated of these temples of the edible, El Bulli north of Barcelona, Ferran Adrià gets two million emailed requests for the 80,000 places available during the half year he serves the public.

Thomas Keller's per se in New York and Heston Blumenthal's The Fat Duck at Bray-on-Thames near London's Heathrow Airport are similarly besieged. So they and their confreres at the chef summit have turned to books as a way to share their discoveries, or what might be called the joy of their cooking, in words and pictures. We've picked eight of these books to call to your attention, because they give an idea of what these chefs do that gets them all the fame and also because their books show the way the wind will soon be blowing in ambitious kitchens from Dubai to Dubuque.

Actually, instead of one wind, we have detected two weather systems. There is the French system, becalmed somewhere over the Seine, making rain over Paris, leaving the rest of the world unaffected, although the low-lying fog below prevents people on the ground from noticing their isolation. Pierre Gagnaire is the arch example of the fogged-in French master chef. All his long career, he has been receiving critical kudos from his own countrymen. His food, when I ate it in Paris some years ago, was fabulously intricate, derived straight out of the practice of the previous generation of nouvelle cuisine French chefs.

In his new book, modestly titled "Reinventing French Cuisine," a recipe called "Le Noir" epitomizes the book's provincial fascination with the exotic for its own sake. Here is a dish obviously built around the color black. It includes black venere rice, black Sarawak pepper, black radish with quetsches and a black turnip jelly colored with squid ink. There is more, much more, including a fiddly black-and-white checkered assemblage, black-olive meringues and, yes, the main ingredient, sweetbreads. Quetsch, the Frenchless reader might deduce from the text, is a plum, but nowhere does it say that they are dark blue plums that turn almost black when cooked. Alain Ducasse's book has similar problems of French exceptionalism.

If you want an explanation for France's loss of influence in the culinary world in the past 20 years, these



books will show you how a great food culture got trapped in its own bubble, while foreigners who admired the French food of the '70s and '80s learned all its maneuvers and gave it a future on their home ground.

The other two French chefs in our list of authors escaped the mother country and adjusted to the future they found abroad. Eric Ripert runs a superb seafood restaurant in New York based on French principles but full of global ingredients and ideas he picked up while traveling. The unself-consciously eclectic menu at Le Bernardin could not have been produced in France with the cosmopolitan verve Mr. Ripert acquired by living in our melting

pot. His book will demonstrate as no book has before how the French system of kitchen organization can be adapted to a modern restaurant.

Joël Robuchon is an even greater example of the French refugee from French limitations. He started with the enormous advantage of being the pre-eminent food intelligence of his era, but you can see how far he has taken his genius if you are lucky enough to eat at his only "gastro-nomic" restaurant outside Asia, which is in the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas. Each dish in the ever-changing tasting menu is a little universe of food reshaped, with French ideas, for a global palate.

"The Complete Robuchon" is a

lesson from the master. He shows you how to cook something practical, with very clear directions, but he sneaks in something brilliant or unexpected, a trick any boy can do, with ease—and dazzling effect. Take the mixed vegetable potage, which pumps up a leek and potato soup with thin strips of sautéed leeks, carrots, celery and turnip. Easy. Smart.

But Joël Robuchon is not a radical. He does not attempt to expand the vocabulary of cooking with the high-tech appliances and high-concept recipes associated with Ferran Adrià, Heston Blumenthal, Grant Achatz and Thomas Keller. Their fascination with lab equipment, with gels and foams, with Mr. Wizard stunts like reconstituting an olive as an olive-seeming ovoid of pure olive taste, has earned them the unwelcome group monicker of molecular gastronomers. And while they are interested in science and razzle-dazzle, they each harness the gee-whiz stuff to create startlingly delicious food that makes the fuss and cost of worshipping in their shrines worth the detour.

Mr. Adrià has been documenting his world-beating discoveries in a series of obsessive tomes. The current one is Adrià light. It is really a souvenir book for people who have eaten monkfish liver fondue with ponzu and white sesame-flavored kumquat or for the wanna-dines who can get a vicarious glimpse of what it will be like to drive up that winding cliff road to Cala Montjoi.

Messrs. Keller, Achatz and Blumenthal have also wrought extravagant documentaries of their path-breaking procedures. In "Under Pressure: Cooking Sous Vide," Mr. Keller has limited himself to a single but very important subject, the brave new world of low-temperature cooking in a vacuum. Sous vide lets him poach vacuum-packed short ribs in a mechanically circulated water bath until this tough cut is tender but medium rare, instead of stringy, as it would be if braised at the much higher temperature traditional cookery would require. Fish can be cooked at precisely the temperature he hopes to raise it to, without applying a much higher direct heat, as we yahoos without a four-figure sous vide rig have to do.

So if you are unlikely to buy one for your home kitchen, why do you want to read the dauntingly detailed recipes in Mr. Keller's wonderful book? Because they will show you exactly how one of the great kitchens of our day does its thing.

Mr. Keller does not flaunt his originality. His menus at the French Laundry and per se, although spectacular, do not play the "creative" card with fanfare. Grant Achatz of Alinea is a flaunter supreme, although only as a cook from behind the scenes of his Chicago restaurant Alinea. From the funhouse entry-

way to the surreal spring-loaded service tools to the completely off-the-wall ingredient combinations so cunningly disguised and transmorphed, Alinea is an evening of theater, puppet theater in which the customer is the puppet and Mr. Achatz is the puppet master. In foodie circles, his status could not be higher. And for Alinea adepts it will hardly matter that the 100 recipes in "Alinea," which reflect the restaurant's actual practice with complete (alleged) precision are beyond the reach of any normally equipped reader.

Heston Blumenthal is another kettle of chef, an ordinary British kid, sports-minded, who fell into the foodie rabbit hole at lunch in the once-supreme French restaurant L'Oustau de Baumanière at Les Baux while a schoolboy on vacation with his parents. He continued his culinary education on further trips to France, eventually selling his car to pay for the travel. With the barest of funding, he opened The Fat Duck in a tiny dump in a London suburb, where the world now lines up to eat his eccentric food, half lab experiment, half perfumed with the nostalgic flavors of his childhood.

"The Big Fat Duck Cookbook" is the biggest (4.5 kilograms with box), the most expensive (£100) and the most flamboyant (four brightly colored silk marker ribbons, uncountable full-page color illustrations and gatefolds, mainly caricatures of Mr. Blumenthal gliding through a dreamland of foods) cookbook in a bumper year.

But like its author, who turns out to be a clear and even affecting writer, there is gravity holding the rocket in orbit. In the back, you will find deadly serious essays on such matters as the effect of heat on meat protein or "ice cream science," by himself and his entourage of university food scientists along with detailed rundowns on new kitchen tools such as refractometers. But all of this is stagesetting and infrastructure for the recipes with the wacko names, the sci-fi techniques and the eureka tastes and flavors.

Consider Mr. Blumenthal's "nitro-scrambled egg and bacon ice cream with pain perdu and tea jelly"—breakfast reinvented as dessert. It began with the realization that ice cream flash-frozen with liquid nitrogen looks lumpy, like scrambled eggs, and went on to become an ice cream made from a deliberately "scrambled" (overheated by traditional criteria) ice cream that was then "blitzed" into fabulous smoothness with a hand blender. There's more: the pain perdu (French toast) radically improved by sous vide. The candied bacon. And on and on, until the lucid and humane explanation Mr. Blumenthal provides makes you want to call Bray immediately to get a table at the earliest opportunity, which is two months from now. Meanwhile, there's the book.

## Wisdom and wizardry

Raymond Sokolov's field guide to navigating the new cookbooks.

**Alain Ducasse and Sophie Dudemaine**  
**Ducasse Made Simple by Sophie**  
Éditions Ducasse, 203 pages, £19.99  
Michelin's favorite native son stoops to conquer the home cook with some very French recipes interpreted by a French TV cooking star.

**Ferran Adrià**  
**A Day at El Bulli**  
Phaidon, 528 pages, £29.95  
For the two million queued-in diners who fail to get a rez at the world's most famous and farthest out eating place, an obsessive photo essay showing 24 hours at the enchanted cove where Mr. Adrià presides north of Barcelona.

**Grant Achatz with Nick Kokonas, Mark McClusky, Michael Nagrant, Michael Ruhlman, Jeffrey Steingarten**  
**Alinea**  
Ten Speed, 396 pages, £35  
You can almost taste the puffs of lavender and other acts of edible wizardry that have made boy-wonder Achatz an icon of invention. 100 detailed recipes for gasping at, but don't even think about cooking them at home.

**Eric Ripert and Christine Muhlke**  
**On the Line**  
Artisan, 239 pages, £20  
Mr. Ripert, the chef at Manhattan's top fish house, Le Bernardin, and the journalist Ms. Muhlke take us behind the scenes and show how a great food-delivery machine works, from larder to reservation desk.

**Heston Blumenthal**  
**The Big Fat Duck Cookbook**  
Bloomsbury, 529 pages, £100  
With three Michelin stars for his small Thames-side hyperbistro, the amiable Mr. Blumenthal tells all, in a fantastical collection of cartoonish illustrations, science lectures and steroidally imaginative recipes such as "gold, frankincense and myrrh."

**Joël Robuchon**  
**The Complete Robuchon**  
Knopf, 813 pages, £25  
Our choice for the best living culinary intelligence shows he can infuse even the most basic dishes with new life, thanks to his generous way with chef's ideas that work for plebes and for the little touches of genius that ennoble the commonplace. An encyclopedia of winners for the amateur cook.

**Pierre Gagnaire with Jean-François Abert**  
**Reinventing French Cuisine**  
Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 199 pages, £25.95  
A long career at the top of the French restaurant scene recounted with self-satisfaction and recipes that show, in their provincial preoccupation with local trends, why France has lost the lead in high-end cuisine.

**Thomas Keller, Jonathan Benno, Corey Lee and Sebastien Rouzel, with Susie Heller, Michael Ruhlman and Amy Vogler**  
**Under Pressure: Cooking Sous Vide**  
Artisan, 295 pages, £50  
The great man demonstrates how the revolutionary technique of slow, low temperature cookery known as sous vide (under vacuum) works wonders of tenderness and visual brilliance. All it takes is a vacuum bagger, a circulating water bath with a very precise thermostat and these provocative recipes.



# Nobel Week in Stockholm

By J. S. MARCUS

Special to *The Wall Street Journal*

**M**OST EUROPEAN CITIES mark the beginning of winter with gingerbread, mulled wine and outdoor Christmas markets. In Stockholm, you can tell December has arrived by a long line of parked limousines that can mean only one thing: The Nobel laureates are in town.

Limousine gridlock starts this weekend, when festivities surrounding the awarding of the Nobel Prizes kick off. First presented in 1901, in accordance with the last will of Alfred Nobel, the Swedish inventor of dynamite, the prizes recognize achievements in chemistry, physics, medicine, literature and economics; they are presented by the Swedish king every year on Dec. 10, the anniversary of Nobel's death. (On the same day, the Nobel Peace Prize is presented in Oslo, an arrangement that dates back to a time when Norway and Sweden co-existed in a union.)

The white-tie ceremony in the Konserthuset, Stockholm's concert hall, is closed to the public. But the occasion recently has spawned a host of related celebrations and events, both public and private, that have transformed Stockholm's "Nobel Day," as Swedes call it, into Nobel Week. The events include a major concert and lectures. In addition, the laureates visit local schools and attend any number of private parties and receptions.

"It's a scientific and cultural festival," says Michael Sohlman, executive director of the Nobel Foundation, first set up in 1900 to manage the assets of the Nobel estate. Mr. Sohlman—whose grandfather was the main executor of Alfred Nobel's will—describes the week as a mixture of "lectures, discussions, and meetings" that revolve around individual laureates' public talks and Nobel Lectures, given in a few large halls around town.

With the exception of the literature lecture, held in a smaller space in the Börshuset, the city's old Stock Exchange near the Royal Palace, the lectures do not require tickets or reservations and are open to the general public (see the full program at [www.nobelprize.org](http://www.nobelprize.org)).

Some 20% of the Swedish population watches the awards ceremony on television, Mr. Sohlman says. After the presentation comes a lavish



The Nobel Museum in Stockholm's Börshuset; right, Nobel chemistry prize winner Aaron Ciechanover signs the underside of a chair at the museum's café in 2004; below, cellist Yo-Yo Ma performs at the 2005 Nobel Prize Concert.

televised banquet in Stockholm's City Hall, attended by the laureates, their friends and family and members of the Swedish royal family, the government and the various Swedish academies that actually choose the prizewinners. Traditionally a small group of Swedish students, chosen by lottery, also attends. After the banquet, students host a closed party for banquet guests, to be held this year at Stockholm's Royal Institute of Technology.

The role of the public has increased greatly in the last few years with the establishment in 2005 of the annual Nobel Prize Concert, attended by ordinary concertgoers and broadcast on national televi-



Jan-Olav Weidlin

sion. Held on Dec. 8 at the Konserthuset, the concert, presided over by the Royal Family, features the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra and a visiting international musical guest, with the laureates themselves as the guests of honor.

This year, English conductor John Eliot Gardiner and the Monteverdi Choir, an ensemble specializing in baroque music, will be joined by both the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic and Sweden's Eric Ericson Chamber Choir. The program will include Dvorak's 7th Symphony and Mozart's Great Mass in C minor.

"It's very natural to have a concert celebrating the laureates," says Stefan Forsberg, executive director of the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic. Mr. Forsberg, who has been instrumental in establishing the concert as an annual event, describes the concertgoers as a mixture of "our regular audience, and people traveling from other parts of Sweden and Europe."

Mr. Forsberg points out that the Konserthuset—home to the Nobel ceremony since 1926, and built in a graceful style unique to the period known as Swedish classicism—was actually constructed with the prizes in mind. The classical concert is a counterpart to a pop concert held in Oslo on Dec. 11 in honor of the presentation of the Nobel Peace Prize.

The Nobel Museum, which opened in the ground floor of the Börshuset in 2001, offers visitors a



AFP

multimedia education on the history of the prizes and the life of Alfred Nobel, but is most notable for its documentation of the lives and careers of the laureates themselves.

This winter the museum is also hosting a temporary exhibition about Swedish film and theater director Ingmar Bergman, chronicling his staging of works by Nobel literature laureates like Albert Camus and Eugene O'Neill. In addition,

there is a small exhibition about this year's laureates.

In recent years, the museum's café has turned into a permanent meeting point between the laureates and the general public. As part of their many duties, the laureates make an appearance at the café and autograph the undersides of the café's chairs. Flip one over at any time of year, and you will find souvenirs left by recent winners.

## Trip planner: activities for non-laureates

### Where to stay

First opened in 1874, the Grand Hotel (☎ 46-8-679-35-00, [www.grandhotel.se](http://www.grandhotel.se)), across from the Royal Palace, has been host to Nobel laureates since the first prizes were awarded in 1901. The hotel has spectacular public rooms, including the Cadier Bar, which features a stylish update on a Belle Époque interior. Double rooms start at 2,600 Swedish kronor (about €250).

The Lydmar Hotel (☎ 46-8-22-31-60, [www.lydmar.com](http://www.lydmar.com)) has individually decorated rooms, from the classical to the contemporary, located right on the water next to the city's fine-arts museum, the Nationalmuseum.

Double rooms are 3,500 kronor.

### Where to eat

Mathias Dahlgren, one of Sweden's best-known chefs, opened his eponymous new restaurant last year in an annex to the Grand Hotel. The restaurant, which specializes in what Mr. Dahlgren, 39, describes as "modern Scandinavian" cuisine, has a formal dining room with one sitting per night, and a more informal "food bar," where nearly half the tables are saved for walk-in guests. (☎ 46-8-679-35-84, [www.mathias-dahlgren.com](http://www.mathias-dahlgren.com)).

Located in Norrmalm, the heart of Stockholm's shopping district, Restaurant 1900, specializing in Swedish and Scandinavian

cuisine, opened last fall. The menu includes modern takes on traditional dishes, incorporating influences from around the world. The bar stays open until 2 a.m. on weekends (☎ 46-8-20-60-10, [www.r1900.se](http://www.r1900.se)).

### What to do

Be sure to take a walk along the Strandvägen, a waterfront promenade lined with elegant townhouses.

Also explore the Djurgården, an island park with museums and waterfront cafes. Skansen, the open-air museum founded at the end of the 19th century, is home to one of the city's best outdoor Christmas markets ([www.skansen.se](http://www.skansen.se)). —J.S. Marcus



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# Europe's changing drinking habits: more beer, less wine, few regrets

By Adam Cohen

**E**UROPEANS ARE SUPPOSED to sip wine in sidewalk cafés, not guzzle beer like American college students. But Europe's relationship with alcohol is changing. Countries like France and Italy, where good wine is considered a birthright, are seeing a surge in beer drinking among young people. In many countries, the traditional glass or two at mealtimes is giving way to a new culture of binge drinking.

To study the issue, the Wall Street Journal asked market-research firm GfK to poll Europeans about their drinking habits. In 13 European Union countries, plus the U.S., Russia, Turkey and Switzerland, GfK asked more than 17,000 people to describe how often they drink, what they drink and how alcohol affects their lives.

Many of the results were surprising.

Almost one-third of respondents in Western Europe said they never drink alcohol. In Italy, 53% of those surveyed said they are teetotalers, while in Turkey, a predominantly Muslim country, 83% said they don't drink at all.

Italy, however, was also among the countries with the largest group of frequent drinkers, with 16% of respondents saying they drink alcohol at least once a day. The Netherlands led this category, with 17% saying they drink at least once a day. In Russia, Poland and Sweden, all vodka-making countries, only 1% of respondents said they drink at least once a day.

"It's hard for me to accept that there are this many teetotalers in Europe," said Mark Hofmans, a managing director in GfK's Brussels office who analyzed the survey results. "But we are seeing a trend where there are some people who never drink and some people that when they drink, they drink a lot."

This trend is creating worries in several European countries where alcohol-related social and health problems are on the rise. In the U.K., where the yard of ale was invented, concerns about pub brawls and other alcohol-fueled problems pushed the government in 2003 to strengthen laws against so-called anti-social behavior. France and the Netherlands are among the European countries that increasingly are worried about alcohol abuse among young people. Legislators in both countries are weighing whether to raise their minimum legal drinking age to 18 from 16.

The survey showed that while young people in most European



## Our survey on how—and how much—people drink alcohol

countries are drinking less frequently than their parents and grandparents, they are consuming more alcohol each time they drink. In France, 25% of respondents over 50 said they consume alcohol at least once a day, while only 3% of the respondents between the ages of 14 and 29 drink

at least once a day.

At the same time, 43% of the French survey respondents aged 14 to 29 said they consume five or more drinks before they become impaired (which the survey defined as "meaning you have lost some physical or mental control or judgment"). Among French respondents over 50 years old, 21% gave the same answer.

"For French people of my generation, drinking wine with meals is important," said Jean-Pierre Maillard, 68, a retired astronomer who lives on the outskirts of Paris. "Beer is a category of liquid with no culture."

The country with the largest share of heavy younger drinkers is

Belgium, where 56% of the respondents in the 14-to-29 age range said they need five or more drinks before they are impaired. In the U.S., 33% of the younger respondents gave the same answer. By contrast, only 20% of young Swiss respondents and 29% of Germans said they consume more than five drinks before they are impaired.

With the combination of high-frequency drinking and little variation in consumption patterns across age categories, the Netherlands scored as the heaviest-drinking country in the survey. In total, 40% of Dutch respondents said they can consume five or more drinks before they are impaired, the highest level in the survey.

"It is very accepted to drink in a harmful way here," said Esther van den Wildenberg, who studies the marketing of alcohol at the Dutch Foundation for Alcohol Prevention, a nonprofit advocacy group. "In southern European countries you see that people drink around meal times, but in the Netherlands there is more binge drinking."

Turkish respondents were at the opposite end of the spectrum—though those Turks who do drink also do so heavily, with 38% saying they have five or more drinks before they are impaired.

In addition to drinking habits at the national level, the survey also looked at differences in the way men and women drink in each country. Broadly speaking, women are more moderate drinkers than men, according to the data. In Western Europe, 40% of women said they never drink, while only 22% of male respondents said they are teetotalers. In Central Europe, 48% of the women surveyed said they never drink, while 24% of the male respondents gave the same answer.

The highest share of female teetotalers outside of Turkey (where 92% of women said they never drink) was in Portugal, where 72% of the women surveyed said they don't consume alcohol. At the opposite end of the spectrum, only 16% of Swedish women and 20% of Dutch women said they never touch alcohol.

"Swedish women have always partied as much as the guys, but I think there is still a difference when a woman gets drunk in public," said Agneta Stureson, 28, a Swede who works at the European Parliament in Brussels. "For a man, it is more accepted."

Women also seem to be more responsible—or perhaps less-remorseful—drinkers than men, according to the survey results. Asked whether they are worried about how alcohol affects their personal relationships, 15% of men said "yes," while only 10% of the women surveyed gave the same answer. In Central European countries, however, slightly more women (13%) than men (12%) said they are worried about alcohol affecting their personal relationships.

Italian men (43%) and women (39%) were the most worried overall about how alcohol affects their personal relationships. Swedish men (6%) and women (1%) were the least worried.

Other categories showed men consistently are more troubled by how alcohol affects their lives.

Asked whether they are worried about how alcohol affects their work, 13% of men said "yes," while 8% of the women surveyed gave the same answer. Italian men (38%) were the most worried

### How the survey was conducted

In the survey, conducted on behalf of The Wall Street Journal by GfK Custom Research Worldwide, 17,343 people in 17 countries were interviewed in August, September and October. Respondents were randomly selected for a nationally representative sample. The minimum age varied by country, from 14 to 18. The interviews were conducted face-to-face in Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden and Turkey; by telephone in Belgium, Greece, Switzerland, the U.K. and the U.S.; and online in the Netherlands.

**Population surveyed:** Western Europe, 10,035 (Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden,

Switzerland, U.K.); Central Europe, 2,953 (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland); Russia, 2,091; Turkey, 1,303; U.S., 961. Regional-result numbers were weighted to reflect relative populations.

**Margin of error** is +/-1 percentage point for the full survey; +/-1.2 pts for Western Europe; +/-1.4 pts for Central Europe; +/-2.2 pts for Russia; +/-4.4 pts for Sweden and Switzerland; and +/-3.1 pts for all other countries.

**The survey consisted of five questions.**

**Q1.** On average, how often do you consume a serving of any type of alcohol? **a.** never; **b.** less than once a week; **c.** once a week; **d.** a few times a week; **e.** once a day; **f.** two to four times a day; **g.** more than five times a day

**Q2.** If you drink alcohol, what is your

preferred drink? **a.** beer; **b.** wine or sparkling wine (including champagne); **c.** cordials/fortified wine or liqueurs;

**d.** distilled spirits like gin, vodka, whisky, etc., with no mixer; **e.** cocktails, drinks (spirits mixed with water, juice, etc.) or alcopops (like Bacardi Breezer)

**Q3.** When you drink alcohol do you become more: **a.** friendly; **b.** funny; **c.** amorous; **d.** belligerent; **e.** depressed; **f.** reckless; **g.** unchanged; **h.** tired

**Q4.** How many servings of alcohol (a mug of beer, a glass of wine or cocktail, a shot of spirits) does it take before you become impaired? **a.** 1; **b.** 2; **c.** 3; **d.** 4; **e.** 5; **f.** more

**Q5.** Are you worried about how alcohol affects...? (answer yes or no for each category) **a.** your personal relationships; **b.** your job; **c.** your physical health; **d.** your budget

Turn the page for a snapshot of the statistics, and see more survey results at [WSJ.com/Europe](http://WSJ.com/Europe)





Top, beer is becoming more popular with younger drinkers; above, in many countries, however, people still prefer the occasional glass of wine.

about alcohol's effect on their jobs, while Greek women (34%) edged out Italian women (32%) in this category.

Men also are more worried than women about how alcohol affects their health. Among the men surveyed, 26% say this is a concern, compared with 20% of the female respondents.

Italians again proved the most worried nationality in this category, with 57% of men and 52% of women worried about how alcohol affects their health. Spanish men (7%) and women (5%) were the least worried among those surveyed.

"You hear more and more about drunk driving and accidents in Italy and I think it is making people more aware about the harmful effects of drinking," said Riccardo Foa, 33, a financial analyst in Turin.

It's surprising that Italians are so worried about their health, given that recent scientific studies have shown that moderate consumption of red wine can help ward off heart disease and some types of cancer. But Italians aren't drinking as much red wine as they used to, the survey showed. In fact, across Europe, drinking preferences are changing markedly.

In Italy, where wine has been made for thousands of years, 88% of respondents over 50 years old said their favorite tippie is wine. But among Italians aged 14 to 29, only 29% prefer wine, while 43% say beer is their favorite drink.

Preferences are also changing in France, another historically wine-producing region. Here, 68% of those over 50 say their favorite drink is wine, while only 24% of those aged 14 to 29 gave that response; most French young people (29%) chose beer as their favorite drink.

The survey suggested that drinkers generally shift to wine from beer as they get older. But France and Italy, where the overall survey results showed wine is still more popular than beer, soon could follow other classical wine regions such as Spain and Portugal, where beer drinking has overtaken wine.

"Beer seems to be the trendy drink among young people," said GfK's Mr. Hofmans. "On the one hand you might have some savvy marketing to young people, but there also might be a desire to defy traditions."

In historically beer-making countries, including the U.K., Belgium and the Netherlands, drinkers now prefer wine to beer, the survey showed. In Russia, where vodka is supposed to flow like water, 35% of drinkers say their favorite drink is beer, while just as many respondents (30%) say they prefer wine as do hard liquor. Germany and the Czech Republic were among the few countries where the results were true to stereotypes. Respondents in both countries, where lagers and pilsners have been made for centuries, still prefer beer to wine.

## That's the drink talking



The wine urges me on, the bewitching wine, which sets even a wise man to singing and to laughing gently and rouses him up to dance and brings forth words which were better unspoken.

—Homer, *'The Odyssey,'* 8th century B.C.



A man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry.

—Ecclesiastes 8:15



O God! That men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains; that we should, with joy, pleasance, revel, and applause, transform ourselves into beasts.

—William Shakespeare, *'Othello,'* 1604-05



I drink when I have occasion, and sometimes when I have no occasion.

—Miguel de Cervantes, *'Don Quixote,'* 1615



Eat not to dullness, drink not to elevation.

—Benjamin Franklin, 1731-1759



Upon the first goblet he read this inscription, monkey wine; upon the second, lion wine; upon the third, sheep wine; upon the fourth, swine wine. These four inscriptions expressed the four descending degrees of drunkenness: the first, that which enlivens; the second, that which irritates; the third, that which stupefies; finally the last, that which brutalizes.

—Victor Hugo, *'Les Miserables,'* 1862



Work is the curse of the drinking classes.

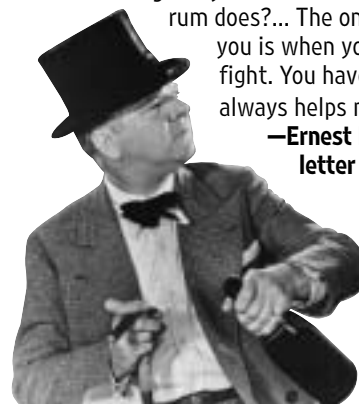
—Oscar Wilde, attributed



I have drunk since I was fifteen and few things have given me more pleasure. When you work hard all day with your head and know you must work again the next day what else can change your ideas and make them run on a different plane like whisky? When you are cold and wet what else can warm you? Before an attack who can say anything that gives you the momentary well-being that

rum does?... The only time it isn't good for you is when you write or when you fight. You have to do that cold. But it always helps my shooting.

—Ernest Hemingway, letter to Ivan Kashkin, 1935



Candy is dandy but liquor is quicker.

—Ogden Nash, 1931



During one of my treks through Afghanistan, we lost our corkscrew. Compelled to live on food and water...

—W.C. Fields, *'My Little Chickadee,'* 1940



I like to have a martini/two at the very most. After three I'm under the table/after four I'm under the host.

—Dorothy Parker, attributed



I drink my champagne when I'm happy and when I'm sad. Sometimes I drink it when I'm alone. When I have company I consider it obligatory. I trifle with it if I'm not hungry and drink it when I am. Otherwise, I never touch it—unless I'm thirsty.

—Lilly Bollinger, 1961



I spent a lot of money on booze, birds and fast cars. The rest I just squandered.

—George Best, attributed



I'd rather have a bottle in front of me than a frontal lobotomy.

—Tom Waits, 1977, quoting Dorothy Parker



To alcohol! The cause of—and solution to—all of life's problems.

—Homer J. Simpson, 1997



# Here's look

Major findings from our s



## "I never drink"

32% Europe  
83% Turkey  
53% Italy  
33% France  
26% U.K.  
18% Germany  
14% Sweden

28% Men  
43% Women

34% Age 14-29  
30% Age 30-49  
42% Age 50+

## "I drink..."

### Once a day

7% Europe  
12% Netherlands  
11% Italy  
10% Greece  
9% France  
7% U.K.  
5% Czech Republic

7% Men  
2% Women

1% Age 14-29  
3% Age 30-49  
7% Age 50+

### Two to four times a day

3% Europe  
6% France  
5% Netherlands  
4% Italy  
3% U.K.  
3% Spain  
2% Germany

2% Men  
0% Women

0% Age 14-29  
1% Age 30-49  
2% Age 50+

## "I get impaired after this many drinks"

### Men

3% One  
7% Two  
16% Three  
12% Four  
41% Five or more

### Women

7% One  
13% Two  
22% Three  
12% Four  
16% Five or more

### Age 14-29

4% One  
9% Two  
19% Three  
11% Four  
35% Five or more

### Age 30-49

4% One  
10% Two  
20% Three  
13% Four  
32% Five or more

### Europe

5% One  
12% Two  
20% Three  
14% Four  
28% Five or more

### France

6% One  
13% Two  
25% Three  
13% Four  
30% Five or more

### Netherlands

1% One  
8% Two  
20% Three  
18% Four  
40% Five or more

### U.K.

7% One  
13% Two  
18% Three  
14% Four  
30% Five or more

## That's the drink talking

Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink.  
—Isaiah, 5:11



We were to do more business after dinner; but after dinner is after dinner—an old saying and a true, 'much drinking, little thinking.'  
—Jonathan Swift, 1712



I drink Champagne when I win, to celebrate...and I drink Champagne when I lose, to console myself.  
—Napoleon Bonaparte, attributed



# king at you

survey on drinking habits



## Age 50+

6% One  
10% Two  
18% Three  
12% Four  
23% Five or more

## Germany

5% One  
13% Two  
25% Three  
15% Four  
27% Five or more

## "When I drink alcohol, I become more..."

### Funny

24% Europe  
41% Germany  
38% Portugal  
31% Hungary  
23% France  
12% U.K.

### Friendly

15% Europe  
36% Russia  
29% Greece  
22% Spain  
15% France  
5% Germany

### Amorous

3% Europe  
6% Sweden  
5% France  
  
7% Greek men  
1% Greek women  
  
7% Hungarian women  
1% Hungarian men



## "My preferred drink is..."

### Cocktails or alcopops

7% Europe  
20% Turkey  
12% Netherlands  
10% U.K.  
8% Sweden  
8% Spain  
7% Germany

6% Men  
13% Women

14% Age 14-29  
9% Age 30-49  
5% Age 50+

### Beer

36% Europe  
51% Czech Republic  
49% Spain  
48% Germany  
35% Belgium  
27% U.K.  
25% Italy  
16% France

50% Men  
21% Women

48% Age 14-29  
37% Age 30-49  
28% Age 50+

### Wine or sparkling wine

40% Europe  
62% Italy  
50% France  
44% Netherlands  
38% U.K.  
30% Russia  
24% Spain

20% Men  
48% Women

22% Age 14-29  
32% Age 30-49  
42% Age 50+



I have taken more good from alcohol than alcohol has taken from me.  
—Winston Churchill, attributed



Gonna get drunk don't you have no fear / I want one bourbon, one scotch and one beer.  
—John Lee Hooker, 1966



Some writers take to drink, others take to audiences.  
—Gore Vidal, 1981

Illustration: Sean Kelly; Photos: AFP, Newscom



Erica Burchett/The Wall Street Journal

# Bubbly at their very best

**E**VEN IN THESE difficult times, in the next few weeks many people will splurge on that once-a-year Champagne—Dom Pérignon, Cristal and the like. And why not? As luxuries go, these aren't totally out of bounds and, in their own way, they make a statement about our collective determination to put aside the sometimes painful past and renew our optimism about the

## Tastings

DOROTHY J. GAITER  
AND JOHN BRECHER

future. Better times are ahead—and, by gosh, they are starting with the popping of this cork!

At the same time, if you're going to spend \$100 or more on a bottle of bubbly this year, we can understand that you want to make sure it is money well spent on a truly special bottle. So we tasted all of the more widely available "prestige Champagnes," as they're called, and we are delighted to report a surprise outcome that is appropriate to leaner times.

We have been drinking—and enjoying—these top-of-the-line Champagnes for many years, both before we began this column and in regular blind tastings ever since. Made with classic Champagne methods with classic Champagne grapes (Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier) in France's classic Champagne region, and then aged for years on their sediment to give them extra dimensions, they are often wines of significant character and tremendous complexity.

While Champagne producers and some wine writers warn every year that prices are sure to spike on these, that hasn't happened. The prices we paid for the most popular names were virtually the same this year as two years ago and, in fact, have barely risen in eight years, when adjusted for inflation. There are probably many reasons for that—there is actually quite a bit of prestige Champagne out there, and supply and demand seem to be in nice balance—but one possible explanation is that right now there is also so much excellent sparkling wine available from all over the world at great prices. Cava from Spain, bubbly

from the U.S., even sparkling Shiraz from Australia—there are more bubbles than ever in the market.

We have drunk just about all of the fancy Champagnes at one special occasion or another and we have found something to like about almost all of them—the gravitas of Bollinger R.D., the elegance of Veuve Clicquot. We've been concerned about the ever-more-elaborate packaging of these wines—this year's prize goes to Gosset Célébris, with a tall, round box that opens like curtains parting for a play. We worry that the money going into the show should be going into the wine instead.

Still, what we have said in the past is that the quality of the wines has remained consistently excellent. Is that still true? To find out, we bought the most recent release (or, in some cases, the most widely available vintage) and tasted them in blind flights over several nights. In the case of these wines, the most recent release is generally about a decade old because they've been cared for at the winery, gaining texture and depth, for a long time. That's one reason they are so expensive.

As always, the wines were interesting and quite good. Overall, they were not as impressive as they have been in the past. A few tasted a bit sweeter than we'd like or expect and some, oddly, even had an unpleasant oakiness. At \$100 and more, we expect these wines to have elegance and finesse and that was lacking in some. We were disappointed with the Dom Pérignon and Louis Roederer Cristal, which were both good but lacked the type of presence that you'd expect in their price range. Interestingly, those were the youngest wines we tasted—the Dom was from 2000 and the Cristal was 2002. Perhaps they should have been held back for a longer time, to pull themselves together better. Then again, perhaps these relative youngsters weren't built to be long-distance runners like the others in

their class because of their new popularity among the younger set. Both of these have been among our favorites for many years in other vintages, but we would not recommend these releases.

We'd also steer clear of another old friend, the Perrier-Jouët Fleur de Champagne (we had the 1999), which simply wasn't very pleasant (so much so that we bought a second bottle, which was only slightly better).

So which would we recommend? First, remember this: If there is a particular bubbly that brings back special times and memories, that's always going to be the most delicious to you, regardless of what anyone says. John proposed on bended knee 30 years ago next year with Cristal in elegant, etched Champagne glasses that had been a gift to his parents on their wedding day. Our wedding Champagne was Taittinger. We bought 18 bottles for the 17 adults in attendance to enjoy with toasts and dinner. We touched a drop of Salon Le Mesnil to Media's lips seconds after she was born and Taittinger to Zoë's. These Champagnes will always be special to us. However, the wines in the index are the ones we'd look for at the moment. Each has a distinct personality, and each is special in its own way.

And that brings us to our surprise favorite. To us, an outstanding sparkler isn't just wine with bubbles, but a wine in which the bubbles themselves are integral to the taste, just one aspect of a wine that is both celebratory and sometimes cerebral, with a sense of place that comes from ripe fruit and almost chalklike minerality. In our tasting, one wine stood out for hitting all of those notes just right—the unusual mixture of lemony acidity, earthy mushrooms, yeast, rich ripeness and bubbly personality.

And surprise of surprises, it was the only wine in the entire group that cost less than \$100: Charles Heidsieck "Blanc des Millénaires Blanc de Blancs" 1995. The 1990 vintage was our best value in a tasting of prestige Champagne in 2003. At the time, it cost about \$75. Now it's about \$90. As these things go, this wine, which sat on its lees for more than a decade, is a serious bargain.

We hope you have a sparkling holiday season.

## The Prestige Champagne index

In a blind tasting of the more widely available prestige Champagnes—the special and expensive wines that are showcases for Champagne houses—these were our favorites. In each case, we tasted either the newest release or the release that is most widely available. All of these are Brut, which means they are dry (the Bollinger is Extra Brut). The prices listed here are generally representative, but prices on these vary tremendously. It's worth shopping around.

VINEYARD	PRICE	RATING	COMMENTS
<b>Charles Heidsieck 'Blanc des Millénaires Blanc de Blancs' 1995</b>	\$89.95	Delicious	<b>Best of tasting and best value.</b> A significant wine, with gravitas, like a big upright bass, humming soulfully down deep but making you want to swing at the same time. Good bubbles and a ripe acidity that add life and lift. Great fruit, mushrooms and a long, yeasty finish. Serious wine at a seriously good price.
<b>Bollinger R.D. 1996</b>	\$194.97	Very Good/Delicious	Dark, rich, golden color, with languid bubbles—and that's how it tastes, too. Classy wine, big yet filled with life. We love R.D., but be prepared: This is not a light-hearted wine, but a thoughtful one, the kind of wine with which to reflect on the past year.
<b>Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin La Grande Dame 1998</b>	\$149.95	Very Good/Delicious	Classy and elegant. Brioche, honey, great acidity and ripe fruit, all in proportion, with a clean, fresh finish and particularly lovely bubbles. A lovely lightness about it. Clearly a wine of terrific pedigree. In our blind tastings over more than a decade, this is the only top Champagne that has been among our favorites every time. It's a can't-miss wine.
<b>Billecart-Salmon Blanc de Blancs 1998</b>	\$140*	Very Good/Delicious	Toast, roasted almonds and plenty of lemon, with a touch of oily weight yet clean and crisp. A complete wine. Very interesting and different, with a nice balance of yeast and liveliness. You could drink it all night, both with and without food. We also liked Grande Cuvée Brut 1996 (\$249.99).
<b>G.H. Mumm Cuvée R. Lalou 1998</b>	\$150*	Very Good	Mumm's new entry into this category— replacing René Lalou, last made in the 1985 vintage—is celebratory and fun, with bracing acidity and a particularly lovely, long finish. Not as elegant as some; the bubbles are a bit aggressive at first, but then they calm down and deliver a real crowd-pleaser.
<b>Krug Grande Cuvée Brut Nonvintage</b>	\$149.95	Very Good	Rich and authentic, very much the real thing, with some mushrooms, a hint of lemon curd and a thought-provoking depth from age. It's a bit somber, but beautifully made. This has been a favorite of connoisseurs—and other winemakers—for many years because it gets everything right but isn't showy.
<b>Nicolas Feuillatte Palmes d'Or 1997</b>	\$109.95	Very Good	We disagree about this just about every year and, once again, Dottie found it sober, relaxed, elegant and wise, while John found it somewhat clumsy, with tutti-frutti overtones. In any event, it's clearly a wine of some weight and presence.
<b>Pol Roger Cuvée Sir Winston Churchill 1998</b>	\$199.95	Very Good	A longtime favorite. Rich and round, with great acidity and some floral notes, Well-balanced and satisfying. Serious wine that demands attention. A Champagne for Champagne lovers.

Note: Wines are rated on a scale that ranges: Yech, OK, Good, Very Good, Delicious and Delicious! These are the prices we paid at wine stores in New York. \*We paid \$165 for Billecart-Salmon and \$135 for Lalou, but these prices appear to be more representative. Prices vary widely.

### WSJ.com

Holiday cheers  
Watch John and Dottie  
taste and talk about  
prestige Champagnes, at  
[WSJ.com/Tastings](http://WSJ.com/Tastings)



# Drinking in a different era

PROHIBITION WENT INTO effect on January 16, 1920, and blew up at last on December 5, 1933—an elapsed time of twelve years, ten months and nineteen days,” H.L. Mencken wrote shortly after ratification of the 21st Amendment to the U.S. Constitution eliminated the 18th Amendment. “It seemed almost a geologic epoch while it was going on, and the hu-

## How’s Your Drink?

ERIC FELTEN

man suffering that it entailed must have been a fair match for that of the Black Death or the Thirty Years War.”

The demise of Prohibition, exactly 75 years ago, is something of a cause for celebration, and it will be treated as such with Repeal Day parties in Washington, Chicago, New Orleans, San Francisco, New York and elsewhere in the U.S. The trend got started a couple of years ago, when Oregon bartender and blogger Jeffrey Morgenthaler promoted the anniversary as an informal holiday suitable for quaffing. You could say the goal of the cocktail crowd has been to make Repeal Day a sort of Cinco de Drinko.

Not that we want to celebrate the sort of drinking that went on during Prohibition itself. In her 1933 indictment of modern manners, “No Nice Girl Swears,” Alice-Leone Moats summed up the case against Volstead-era boozing: “No longer is drinking an art with Americans; once they drank for the taste, but now they drink only for the effect. The more quick and fatal the liquor, the better they like it.”

The frantic gulping of that age has long since given way to more civilized drinking, but Prohibition’s legacy continues to affect how, what and where we drink. As Martini scholar Lowell Edmunds writes of



On Dec. 5, 1933, crowds in New York City mark the end of Prohibition.

America, “It was Prohibition that finally made us a gin-drinking nation.” There were practical reasons for the change: Whiskey takes years in a barrel to be palatable. But take neutral spirits straight off a still, doctor them with some juniper oil, and you have something that can go to market right away. The current American passion for vodka is an evolution of the gin-centered tastes established during the ’20s.

Since speakeasies might be raided, most Americans did their drinking at home. Not only did this turn the cocktail party into an American institution, but it encouraged distaff drinking. Before Prohibition, reputable women didn’t step into saloons. But once cocktails migrated to hearth and home, women joined in the fun. And for some women, a willingness to entertain cocktails coincided with a willingness to entertain other illicit pleasures. Lois Long—who wrote the “Lipstick” column on nightlife for the New Yorker—described her speakeasy days

bluntly: “You never knew what you were drinking or who you’d wake up with.”

Temperance advocates had argued Prohibition would usher in an era of sober moral rectitude. When it didn’t quite work out that way, public opinion began to turn against the dregs. They joined those who opposed Prohibition because it had handed new and oppressive powers to the federal government. Charles Lindbergh’s father-in-law, Dwight Whitney Morrow, won a Senate seat from New Jersey in 1930 running as a Republican against Prohibition. He argued that it had caused Americans to “conceive of the Federal Government as an alien and even a hostile Power.”

And yet, it was finance that finally did Prohibition in. As the nation sank into the Depression, tax revenues dwindled. The prospect of capturing all the liquor excise taxes that had for a decade been missing (and, in effect, had gone into the pockets of bootlegging mobs) was al-

luring to Democrats and Republicans alike. Pierre du Pont lobbied his fellow plutocrats to support repeal in the vain hope that liquor taxes would replace income taxes. But the New Dealers saw repeal as creating a vast pile of money with which to fund expansive new government programs. Not only did Prohibition and its enforcement increase the size and scope of the federal government, but so did Prohibition’s repeal.

The first state to ratify the repeal amendment was Michigan, on April 3, 1933. Just six months later, the 21st Amendment was pushed over the top by, of all places, Utah, an indication of just how wide and deep the national disdain for Prohibition had become.

What to drink this Repeal Day? In the “Stork Club Bar Book,” published a little over a decade after Repeal, Lucius Beebe describes the drinking habits of the Prohibition-era Yalies who would pop into New York for a weekend. A dozen undergraduates would take a single room

## Commodore Bedroom (for 2)

120 ml gin  
60 ml orange ice  
15 ml fresh lemon juice  
2 dashes orange bitters  
2 dashes Angostura bitters

The only “orange water ice” I could find at my local supermarket was in a mixed-flavor assortment of Breyers “Pure Fruit Bars.” One orange ice-pop, broken into chunks, is just right for two drinks. Shake all the ingredients vigorously with ice, and strain into cocktail glasses. Garnish? They didn’t do garnish up in the Commodore bedrooms.

at the Commodore Hotel. “As many as fifteen were able to spend the night in such an apartment,” Beebe writes, “with a maximum of discomfort and minimum of cash outlay.” Hangovers would be treated by scrounging up a few quarts of gin, “calling upon room service for an appropriate quantity of orange water ice,” and mixing the two in the wastebasket. The result was the Commodore Bedroom.

The challenge is to make this memento mori of Prohibition palatable without losing what Beebe called its “rough-and-ready” character. I had luck adding some fresh lemon juice and a liberal application of orange bitters and Angostura.

Just don’t drink too many of them. One would hate to tarnish the triumph being celebrated on Repeal Day.

Mr. Felten is the author of “How’s Your Drink?: Cocktails, Culture and the Art of Drinking Well” (Agate Surrey). Email him at [eric.felten@wsj.com](mailto:eric.felten@wsj.com).

## Wine Notes: Building a case that can’t lose

BY DOROTHY J. GAITER AND JOHN BRECHER

I AM LOOKING for a business gift of wine—specifically, I would like to buy a case of an impressive wine, something with a wow-factor (this gift is intended as a special thank you). My budget is roughly \$1,000.

—Edward Robert McGowan, New Orleans

Even in these tough times, some people will want to splurge on a gift for a special friend or client. Our suggestion to Mr. McGowan was a mixed case of midrange Bordeaux from the 2005 vintage. This gift shouts “wow.” It was an outstanding vintage and the wines are consistently good and age-worthy. To give you an idea what a case could include, consider these, with generally representative prices for each bottle: Gruaud Larose (\$70), Smith Haut Lafitte (\$85), Beychevelle (\$70), Grand-Puy-Lacoste (\$110), Lascombes (\$95), Clerc Milon (\$75), Duhart-Milon (\$63), Giscours (\$75), Bahans Haut-Brion (\$75), Brane-Cantenac (\$70), La

Tour Haut-Brion (\$75) and Lafon-Rochet (\$53). With a case like that, you should get a discount of 10% to 20% at many wine stores.

Among this case of wines, which are still very young, we’d most highly recommend Bahans Haut-Brion from Pessac-Leognan, which is classy and elegant, with all sorts of structure and amazing fruit that’s tightly wound and exciting. Our second favorite is Brane-Cantenac from Margaux, which might make you want to cook a steak as soon as you smell it. We also especially like a longtime favorite, the big Gruaud Larose from Saint-Julien, and also the earthy Giscours from Margaux. Each of the 12 has so much in common but is so different—what a terrific present. If you want to give a memorable present this year and a case of these is too expensive, one, two or three bottles would still be a treat. And if you’d like to get a copy of our column about a more-reasonably priced case of wine as a present—a mixed case of 2007 Beaujolais—drop us a note at

[wine@wsj.com](mailto:wine@wsj.com).

I just finished reading your column on Beaujolais. Since buying a case of this wine as a gift or otherwise will probably result in some bottles remaining unopened for a while, I am wondering if you might consider doing a column on unexpected results from aging wines that were not supposed to be aged.

—Andrew Rasiej, New York

It’s funny you should ask, and we’ll tell you why. Over the years, we have written several columns about the joys of losing bottles in the back of the cellar and drinking them long after they were “supposed” to be drunk. One of the first columns we wrote, more than a decade ago, was about how much we enjoyed older red wines from Louis Martini winery. We bought them in our youth and, because of their very low prices and simple labels, didn’t consider them classic choices for cellaring. But we happened to keep some around for no good reason and, man, were they good in their golden years. We’ve had the same mar-

velous experience with all sorts of wines, red, white, sparkling and sweet. What we’ve often said is that, if wine isn’t mistreated, it’s a lot tougher than you think and can reward you far longer than you might expect, like a Mars probe that should have stopped transmitting years ago.

This is what happened just the night before we received this letter: We had finished a tasting of big red wines and were watching “Desperate Housewives.” Dottie’s back was hurting. So John went to the wine closet to rummage around for something that might cheer her up. He came across a half bottle of Robert Pecota Moscato d’Andrea from 1997. We’ve written often about this lovely sweet wine. And while it’s true that sweet wines often age beautifully (Château d’Yquem is what we laid down for our daughters when they were born), we wouldn’t have guessed that the Pecota, which is light, charming and low in alcohol, would go the distance. It was still in our cellar only because we simply never got around to drinking it. We opened it and it was delicious.



Awesome. It tasted like the essence of apricots, peaches and apples, all in a light, almost ephemeral package that finished with a lusty earthiness. Dottie said it was just what the doctor ordered. We’re not sure it was better than it was a few years ago, but it certainly hadn’t suffered from the years.

Truly, we think that most people who have a wine cellar would tell you that one of the greatest pleasures of a large collection is “losing” wines that you really don’t plan to age and then being surprised and charmed by their longevity some years later.

# 'Australia': down-under and over the top

**A**USTRALIAN aboriginals believe that everyday reality coexists with an infinite state of being called the Dreamtime. Baz Luhrmann does his own version of that dualism in "Australia," an epic adventure, starring Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman, with outsize ambitions and a 165-minute run time. The film's reality is far from everyday, what with romance, murder, a

## Film

JOE MORGENSTERN

cattle drive, a stampede, the outbreak of World War II and a Japanese air raid on the city of Darwin. Yet it's almost naturalistic in comparison to the magic realism reserved for Nullah, a mixed-race aboriginal boy, and for the ancient culture that claims him.

Sometimes Mr. Luhrmann seems to be living in a Dreamtime of his own; his movie is all over the map. But what a gorgeous map it is. The too-muchness, like the too-longness, befits the Northern Territory's vastness. In its heart of hearts "Australia" is an old-fashioned Western—a Northern, if you will—and all the more enjoyable for it.

The action begins as a cross between a spaghetti Western and a comedy of manners. Nicole Kidman's ultra-twee Lady Sarah Ashley flies from England to Australia, where her husband has been running a remote cattle station; her purpose is to sell the property, which has been hemorrhaging cash, and bring her husband home. Hugh Jackman is the raffish Aussie cattle drover who meets her on her arrival, then joins forces with her against his better judgment. (He's a drover named Drover. If that isn't movie-mythic, what is?) Soon Sarah finds herself repurposed into an apprentice drover, English-saddled and constantly addled by Drover's rough-hewn ways. The mismatched lovers-to-be drive 2,000 head of cattle through lunar landscapes (imagine a desiccated "Red River" with red dirt) accompanied by Nullah, the story's narrator, sawed-off shaman and, in a very real—i.e., magical—sense, its soul. (Mandy Walker did the spectacular cinematography.)

Nullah calls Sarah Mrs. Boss, "the strangest woman I ever seen." She is definitely strange, insisting on good manners as if etiquette were the key to Outback survival.



Nicole Kidman in the epic 'Australia'; below, Sean Penn in 'Milk.'

Ms. Kidman also makes her very funny: I particularly enjoyed Sarah's scrambled retelling, for Nullah's benefit, of "The Wizard of Oz," and her halting rendition of "Over the Rainbow." (Both the story and the song figure as importantly as "Pinocchio" did in Steven Spielberg's "A.I.") Hugh Jackman can be amusing, too: Drover displays his impressive musculature for Sarah's benefit while rinsing himself off on the trail. Mostly, though, he's manly, attractive and not terrifically interesting. Russell Crowe famously had first dibs on the role, so it's tempting to wonder how he might have played it, but I would have settled for some of the extravagance of Mr. Jackman's work as Wolverine in the "X-Men" series. Or, come to think of it, the lustiness of Robert Mitchum's sheep drover in Fred Zinnemann's grand Australian opus "The Sundowners."

In "Australia's" scheme of things, young Nullah, descended from a tribal elder called King George, becomes the child that neither Sarah nor Drover ever had; Brandon Walters, in his film debut, plays him with an eerie proficiency that made me wonder if Jackie Coogan had aboriginal blood. (King George is played by David Gulpilil, the aboriginal star of Nicolas Roeg's 1971 classic "Walkabout.") But Nullah can be a problem child, endear-



© Focus Features

ing and insufferable in equal measure. He narrates in a studiously picturesque pidgin English that may reflect the period accurately but still sounds ghastly to modern ears: "Grandfather teach me most important lesson of all—tellem story." (Nullah is a passionate advocate of story in a film beset by severe storytelling lapses; four credited writers, including Baz Luhrmann, haven't created a coherent script.) He has superpowers when they're needed—this kid could have been the greatest cowboy of all time—but they are so sweeping that you're surprised he has problems at all.

The film's treatment of aboriginal culture is reverential, or earnest to the point of self-parody. No Stone Age cliché goes unturned—walkabout, boomerangs, doodlings on the didgeridoo. No mountain or promontory—no water tower, for that matter—goes unsurmounted by a silent, stork-legged aboriginal warrior wielding a spear. Yet earnestness triumphs in the end, for "Australia" has serious things on its mind and, like "Hawaii" long before it, gets serious things said. Nullah belongs to Australia's "stolen generation," mixed-race aboriginal children who became victims of state-sanctioned kidnappings when they were torn from their outback families to be trained as domestic servants. If there was ever a seamless way to combine that somber theme with the entertaining—and equally

earnest—exploits of Sarah and Drover, Mr. Luhrmann and his colleagues didn't find it. What they did find was a symbolic way for the heroine and her reluctant hero to expiate the racist sins of a nation's past.

## 'Milk'

Gus Van Sant's "Milk," with Sean Penn as Harvey Milk, opens on the late gay activist and San Francisco supervisor dictating into a tape recorder. The year is 1978, and the words are taken from a tape, full of foreboding, that Milk did in fact dictate shortly before he, and the city's mayor, George Moscone, were shot to death by a former supervisor, Dan White. The sequence is an enthralling example of minimalist acting—we're pulled in by a voice hardly raised above a murmur, and by barely varied tones that somehow convey deep feeling. And we stay in through the all-too-brief span of Milk's career, from his start as a community organizer to his victory as the nation's first openly gay candidate to win a major political office. More than acting, though, Mr. Penn's performance is a marvelous act of empathy in a movie that, for all its surprisingly conventional style, measures up to its stirring subject.

It's a performance that made me think, surprisingly enough, of Forest Whitaker's brilliant work as the mad Ugandan dictator Idi Amin in "The Last King of Scotland." Not that Milk was mad, any more than he was African; the salient quality in his public life was his bountiful humanity, coupled with a canny instinct for finding or creating political opportunities. But Amin had previously been the subject of a superb documentary, just as Milk's life and career had been celebrated in Rob Epstein's "The Times of Harvey Milk," which won the Oscar it deserved in 1984. In Sean Penn's case, as in Forest Whitaker's, inspired acting both complements and transcends a filmed record of real life.

The feature film gives us a man—a gay man, a courageous man—in full. After Harvey Milk settles into his elected office, Mayor Moscone tells him, with as much affection as annoyance, that he's beginning to sound like Boss Tweed or Mayor Daley. "I like that," Milk re-

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## Opening this week in Europe

- Australia Hungary
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- Burn After Reading Belgium, France
- Lakeview Terrace Belgium
- Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa Estonia
- Rachel Getting Married Finland
- Religulous Netherlands
- Vicky Cristina Barcelona Netherlands
- Zack and Miri Make a Porno Bulgaria

Source: IMDb  
WSJ.com subscribers can read reviews of these films and others at [WSJ.com/FilmReview](http://WSJ.com/FilmReview)

plies, ever the outgoing personality. "A homosexual with power. That's scary." It isn't scary, though; it's thrilling at first, and then, as will surely prove true of another community organizer recently risen to power, remarkably normal. The truly terrifying figure in the piece—and another stunning performance—is Josh Brolin's Dan White. He's a hater whose derangement is entirely ingoing, and beyond his own reach until it bursts out.

## 'Twilight'

Attention, all 13-year-old female readers of this newspaper: Run, do not walk, to the nearest multiplex playing "Twilight," the screen version of Stephenie Meyer's best-selling potboiler about a principled vampire and the teenage girl who loves him. Others needn't run. Or walk.

The bleached-faced bloodsucker, Edward Cullen, attends high school in Forks, a singularly gloomy little town in Washington state; he's played by the young English heart-throb-in-the-making Robert Pattinson. Edward first meets his inamorata, Bella (Kristen Stewart), when she moves to Forks, where her father is police chief, from her mother's house in Phoenix, where she had managed, fatefully, to avoid getting a tan. In a film that has the courage of its absurdity but not much else, Mr. Pattinson gets the best of what passes for style. He's been fitted out with an upswept rat's-nest hairdo, along with a thin coat of clown-white makeup, and photographed with special attention to his cantilevered brows and his gift for growing a gaze into a glare or, when the occasion demands it, a leer. Ms. Stewart, on the other hand, hasn't been directed so much as permitted, or maybe incited, to indicate anxiety by spitting out her lines in a rat-tat-tat that can be borderline unintelligible.

Not that "Twilight's" fate hangs on intelligibility. It hangs on fangs that aren't bared, and on a bloodlust that isn't indulged. Edward is, as he explains to Bella patiently, the vampire equivalent of a vegetarian. Like ordinary people living on tofu, he and his family restrict their diet to animal blood, though they still consider the human variety a treat to die for. Indeed, the movie pushes undead abstinence while its director, Catherine Hardwicke, indulges in klutzy extravagance that misfires as often as it fires—a Cullen family baseball game is to howl at—and gets little blood pounding until the climax, when Edward clashes with the slaving scion of a carnivorous vampire family in some no-tofu kung fu for the custody of Bella's soul. "Twilight" has targeted the collective soul of teenage America, and will surely have its way.

## Arbitrage

### The price of Monopoly

City	Local currency	€
Hong Kong	HK\$116.60	€11.90
New York	\$15.17	€11.99
London	£13.65	€16.35
Tokyo	¥3,079	€25.71
Rome	€28	€28
Frankfurt	€30	€30
Paris	€31.99	€31.99
Brussels	€32.33	€32.33



Note: Classic edition board game by Parker Brothers; prices, including taxes, as provided by retailers in each city, averaged and converted into euros.





*For the ongoing collection of life.<sup>SM</sup>*

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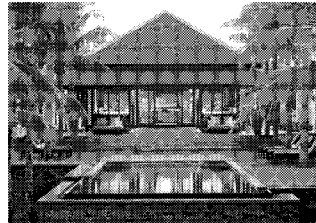
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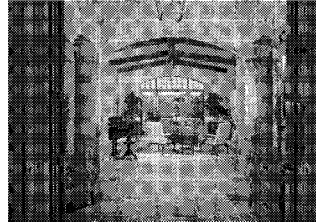
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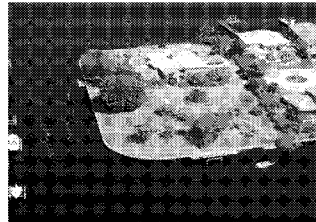
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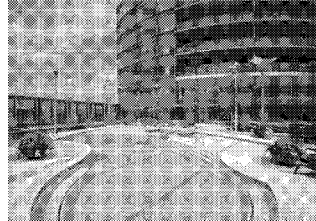
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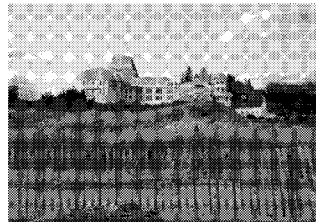
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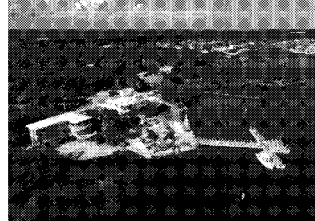
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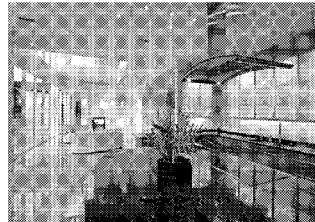
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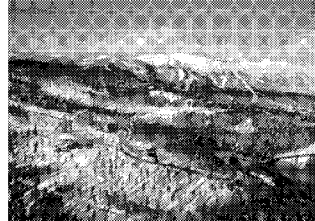
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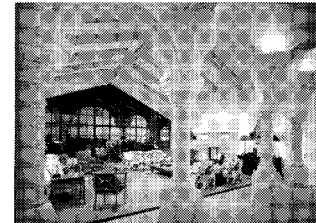
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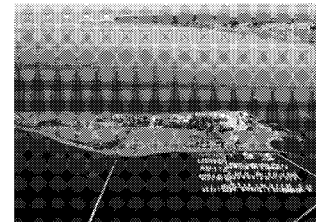
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## ❖ Top Picks

# At Courtauld Gallery, more Turner mastery

### London ■ art

The Courtauld Gallery has recently been left nine magnificent J.M.W. Turner (1775-1851) watercolors by the late collector Dorothy Scharf, bringing the number of the gallery's Turner holdings to 30. These new acquisitions are augmented by loans from the Tate and private collections in the Courtauld's new show, "Paths to Fame."

Turner was a virtuoso. At an astonishingly young age (some of the earliest pictures in this show were done when Turner was 18 and 19 years old) he had already achieved mastery of line and color, could draw fluently with his brush and, even in watercolor, produce prodigiously detailed images. His subjects were found in his travels around Britain—he made his first sketching tour when aged 16—and the continent, where he first went in 1802.

The son of a Covent Garden barber, Turner was driven by the ambition to be famous, and this show takes its title seriously. He orchestrated his own career: Recognizing his own precocity, he entered the Royal Academy Schools at 13, and had a watercolor accepted for the RA show only two years later. He was quick to see the value of prints as self-promo-

tion—advertisements for his talents, by disseminating his art to a wide audience—so that the accurately rendered topographical "Chepstow Castle" (the picture in this show made when he was 18), was already the engraver's model for the second print to be made after his work.

And don't miss, in Room 12, the special display of other British watercolors from the Scharf Bequest, featuring some superlative works by Richard Wilson (1714-82) and Thomas Jones (1742-1803), along with a Gainsborough, a Constable and a startlingly modern-looking Edward Lear. —Paul Levy

Until Jan. 25  
☎ 44-20-7848-2526  
www.courtauld.ac.uk

### London ■ theater

A touching moment at the omnibus press night of Alan Ayckbourn's trilogy of plays, "The Norman Conquests," occurred when Kevin Spacey, artistic director of the Old Vic, led the frail playwright into the center of the historic theater, specially reconfigured in the round for these plays, to acknowledge the audience's standing ovation. It was well-deserved.

No living British playwright (excepting possibly Michael Frayn) is such a mas-



'Chepstow Castle,' circa 1793, by J.M.W. Turner, on show in London.

ter of stagecraft; and the expensive temporary alterations to the theater were essential. "Table Manners," "Living Together" and "Round and Round the Garden" are three aspects of a single drama, and every exit in one play (we later realize) is an entrance in another.

Only six actors are required for the plays, all set in a Victorian house during a July weekend, the first in the dining room, the second in the living room and the third in the garden. Director Matthew Warchus moves the characters with no hurry, but lightning speed, so that there are no longeurs, even when all three plays are performed in a day that lasts from 11 a.m. to 9.30 p.m.

Mr. Warchus also brings out the dark side of the 1974 comedy. The deft dialogue points up the ultimate inability of either sex to understand the other—especially married couples.

Stephen Mangan's Norman is a bundle of contrary traits, a bearded, shock-headed, big-eyed, loping-gaited hippy seducer, with the manners and morals of a big sloppy puppy—but an incongruously boring career as an assistant librarian. He's married to Ruth (the superb Amelia Bullmore), a cool but capable-of-hysteria businesswoman.

The plays begin with Norman planning an illicit weekend with his wife's un-

married sister, Annie, sympathetically played by Jessica Hynes, who rarely complains about having given up her own life to look after their mother, who never appears on stage but is nevertheless a menacing presence.

Annie's and Ruth's brother Reg and his wife, Sarah, come along, summoned to look after Mother for the weekend. Paul Ritter plays Reg as a thin man in a not quite stylish safari suit, capable both of rapid wisecracks and long Pinteresque speeches. Amanda Root's gloriously febrile Sarah learns of Annie and Norman's plan and puts an end to it, but is herself all too easily seduced by Norman.

In fact Norman's sole conquest this weekend is his own wife Ruth, and he has to seduce her as well with his universally irresistible mantra, "I love you. All I want is to make you happy."

—Paul Levy

Until Dec. 20  
☎ 44-870-060-6628  
www.oldvictheatre.com

### Amsterdam ■ art

Scribblers, daubers and cheaters. That's how Dutch visitors to one of the first Cobra exhibitions in 1949 described the artists showing their new works at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. The harsh colors, the childlike images, the

rough brushwork—everything offended the art lovers.

The Cobra movement was founded in Paris in 1948, named for the three cities in which the artists were based: Copenhagen, Brussels and Amsterdam. This highly experimental group wanted a completely new approach to art after the catastrophe of World War II. Only the innocent viewpoint of a child could give painting a fresh start, they argued.

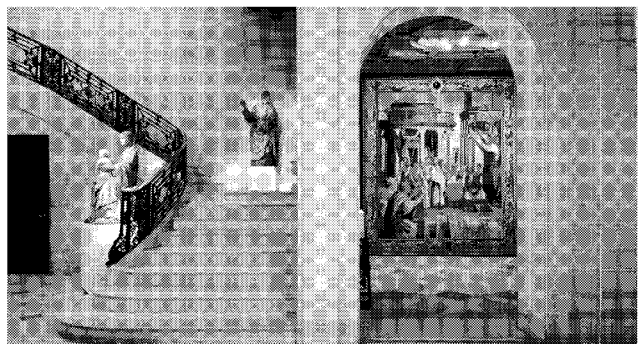
The Cobra Museum in Amstelveen, a suburb of Amsterdam, marks the 60th anniversary of the founding of the movement with its exhibition, "Scribblers Daubers Cheaters." The show is full of "childlike" images in its wonderful collection of paintings, graphic art and sculptures. The Dutch artist Constant's "Fauna" (1949) shows a yellow sun with mouth and eyes, a blue flower, a giant butterfly in blue and pink and a strange fantasy animal in black-and-white. Danish artist Carl-Henning Pedersen made an evocative "Aftenlandskabet" (Evening Landscape) as early as 1943, with yellow, orange and green birds and a rudimentary human figure with long arms and a big head, just as a child would draw it.

—Willem Bruls

Until Jan. 25  
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www.cobra-museum.nl

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## London sales showcase British art

INTERNATIONAL auction houses in London go very British next week, when U.K. art from the 18th to the 20th centuries will be under the hammer.

A series of sales will feature paintings, watercolors, drawings and sculpture by artists ranging

£400,000-£600,000.

Sotheby's has Churchill's painting "Flowers" (early 1930s), a colorful bouquet in a glass vase, which is expected to fetch £80,000-£120,000.

Both Christie's and Sotheby's will feature paintings by Laurence Stephen Lowry (1887-1976), who Christie's international director Jonathon Horwich describes as the "quintessential English artist."

Lowry earned his living as a debt collector and his art focused on the working man. His canvases are filled with small figures on their way to work, enjoying their days off or watching football. At Christie's,



'Walking Couple,' 1976, by Lynn Chadwick; estimate: £18,000-£25,000.

Lowry's "A Removal" (1928), which shows an eviction taking place, is estimated at £300,000-£500,000; his "Going to the Mill" (1959), with people hurrying by a factory, at £200,000-£300,000.

Sotheby's also has the compelling painting, "Girl on a Terrace," by Patrick Caulfield (1936-2005), the canvas in electric blue except for the seated and pensive girl's head and top and the white of a burning candle (estimate: £300,000-£500,000).

Among sculptures on sale next week are bronzes by Lynn Chadwick (1914-2003), notably a faceless, striding couple estimated at £18,000-£25,000 at Sotheby's.



## You Needn't Be Introspective to Write an Engaging Memoir

Westport, Conn.

Christopher Plummer is a courtly, gently ironic man, not as egotistical as advertised (but how could he be?), not as tall as imagined (sorry, Mr. P.), with a beautifully modulated voice and an accent that veers between Montreal and Mayfair. Because this interview about his memoir "In Spite of Myself" (Knopf) is taking place in a library, it serves everyone's interest that Mr. Plummer—who when he chooses can be heard on Mars—hold on to that good cheer and low volume. All very easily accomplished by avoiding the Von Trapp trap.

In other words, one must understand that while Mr. Plummer achieved stardom in 1965 playing an Austrian naval officer opposite Julie Andrews in "The Sound of Music," he's played far more kings (Lear, Henry II, Henry V, Richard III, Oedipus and Herod) than captains.

"The other day someone called me from a magazine to do an interview and I said, 'Did you read the book?'" recalled Mr. Plummer. "And she said, 'Oh, no—just 'The Sound of Music' part.' After 60 years of a career that's gone all over the place. . . . That's when I get bored and loathe it and strike out against it."

He reminisces about the movie that dare not speak its name, as well as about wine (lots of it), women (lots of them) and song

(did someone say "Edelweiss"?), in his terrifically engaging book.

"I have a passion for words. That has always been in me, and I wanted to see if I could come up with some interesting phrases. I wanted to make people laugh a little and to tell some good stories," said Mr. Plummer, who writes with particular verve of his privileged childhood in Montreal as the great-grandson of Canadian Prime Minister Sir John Joseph Caldwell Abbot, and the only child of a

highly cultivated and doting divorcee. His early ambition was to play concert piano—a great way to meet girls—and in fact young Christopher did have some talent. But playing Mr. Darcy to raves in a high-school production of "Pride and Prejudice," ah, that was the ticket. It sent Mr. Plummer on his frequently wayward way.

"I found out that I had a less dull life than I thought. I never kept a diary because I can't bear people who did, but I didn't need to as it happened. It all came back very quickly—all the fun moments even though I was drunk for a lot of them." Not for nothing was the guy dubbed Liquid Plummer.

The unexamined life may or may not be worth living; Mr. Plummer, who'll be 79 later this month, thinks it's utterly worth chronicling. "The book wasn't meant as a sort of terrible catharsis and not meant to be terribly revealing," he

said. "I've read too many actors' autobiographies. When they get self-indulgent and it's 'me, me, me,' and psychoanalysis sort of overwhelms every page, I'm sorry, I'm lost because I don't think it's our duty to do that. We burden the public enough with our presence."

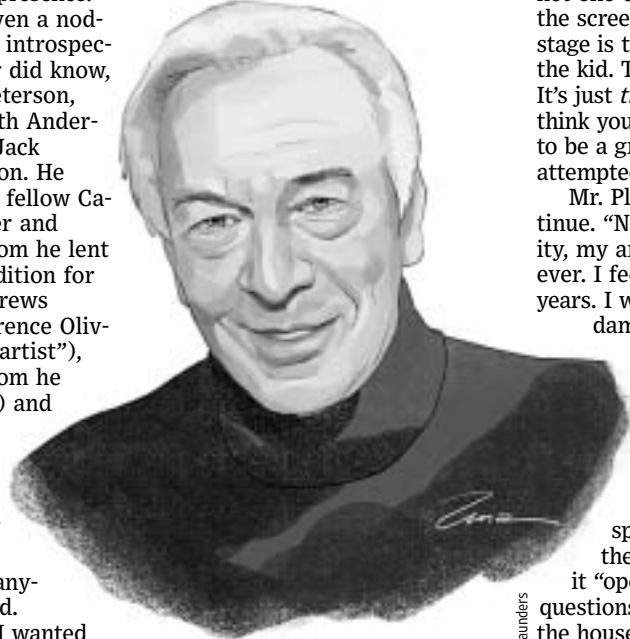
If he doesn't have even a nodding acquaintance with introspection, well, Mr. Plummer did know, among others, Oscar Peterson, Katharine Cornell, Judith Anderson, Roddy McDowall, Jack Palance and Rex Harrison. He serves up stories about fellow Canadians William Shatner and Donald Sutherland (whom he lent money to get to the audition for "M\*A\*S\*H"), Julie Andrews (whom he adores), Laurence Olivier ("a wonderful bull artist"), Natalie Wood (with whom he was hopelessly smitten) and Sean Connery.

But the desire to share some memories was only part of the impetus for "In Spite of Myself." "People don't think of theater actors anymore," Mr. Plummer said.

"That's another reason I wanted to write the book. Most young people today don't have a clue about the theater. They don't go because it's much too expensive. They're grown up on films and now video and all those awful games."

In fact, Mr. Plummer, the winner of two Tonys, has always had far better fortune and far greater acclaim on stage than on screen. He puts it down to an accident of birth. "My timing is pretty good

in the theater, but in life, uh uh," he said. "I always felt I was from another era and that I had missed the boat. If I had been a performer in the '30s, my film career would have been a lot better. I would have been part of the Les-



Zina Saunders

lie Howards and the Ronald Colmans and that crowd."

Because of his role as the unbending martinet in "The Sound of Music," "I kept being cast in the mold of the stuffy, haughty young man, boring as bejesus," said Mr. Plummer, who isn't one for mincing words. "Thank God my leading-man career did not last. I couldn't wait to become a character actor."

The road to Hollywood is paved

with stage performers who swore they'd just do that one silly little movie, then return straightaway to The Theater, only to be seduced by the apparent charms of smog and the Santa Monica Freeway. To his everlasting joy, Mr. Plummer is not one of them. "I don't knock the screen when I say that the stage is the man and Hollywood is the kid. This is not knocking film. It's just true," he said. "I don't think you can even be considered to be a great actor if you haven't attempted the great roles."

Mr. Plummer's attempts continue. "Now, as I'm reaching senility, my ambition is stronger than ever. I feel younger than I have in years. I want to play all those goddamn parts," he said, mentioning Captain Ahab in a particular production of "Moby-Dick," Malvolio, Volpone—and "Prospero, I suppose, is inevitable."

Mr. Plummer, who speaks of his memoir in theatrical terms—he talks of it "opening in Canada" and questions whether it "will bring the house down"—is gratified by the response to it. Still, "even if I'd written a great book, an important book and maybe the Nobel Prize hovered," he said, "it isn't a patch on the extraordinary excitement of a live audience when everything works, when you can hold them in your hand for a little while."

Ms. Kaufman writes about culture, the arts and creative personalities for the Journal.

## Can Pacquiao Beat De La Hoya?

By Gordon Marino

The annals of the sweet science are replete with smaller-vs.-bigger matchups—e.g., Stanley Ketchel vs. Jack Johnson, Billy Conn vs. Joe Louis, and Sugar Ray Robinson vs. Joey Maxim. On Saturday night at the Las Vegas MGM Grand, it will be David and Goliath redux, when Manny Pacquiao (47-3-2; 35 KOs) and Oscar De La Hoya (39-5; 30 KOs) meet at the 147-pound welterweight limit.

Mr. Pacquiao, a ferocious southpaw, is widely regarded as the best pound-for-pound pugilist in the world today. The 29-year-old native of the Philippines is a full four inches shorter and, at his natural weight, probably 15 pounds lighter than the 35-year-old Mr. De La Hoya. Mr. Pacquiao, WBC lightweight champion, hopes that a victory will make him the next De La Hoya—that singular fighter who can transform a boxing contest into a sports happening.

Analyst Larry Merchant, who first suggested this pairing, observed: "We don't have a Super Bowl or World Series. So we need fights that will pull in boxing fans, ex-fans and nonfans. Over the last decade, Oscar De La Hoya has been the one who was, by far, most capable of doing this. And he is trying to do it again with this fight."

The lead-up to this contest has not been entirely upbeat. There are raw feelings between Mr. Pacquiao's trainer, Freddie

Roach, and Mr. De La Hoya, who used to be trained by Mr. Roach.

Over his career, Mr. De La Hoya has gone through cornermen like Yankee owner George Steinbrenner used to go through managers. He explained: "It is nothing against the trainers. I exhaust their knowledge and then I want to learn something new. I have to feel as though I am picking up something fresh. Otherwise I get bored. My new trainer, Ignacio Beristain, has been helping me with a lot of new moves."

The trainer in Mr. De La Hoya's bout against Floyd Mayweather was Mr. Roach. After the fight, which he lost by a split decision, Mr. De La Hoya complained that his left shoulder locked up so that he couldn't use his jab as much as he needed to. Recently, however, the former champion said the problem wasn't his shoulder but that his trainer "didn't have a game plan."

A bespectacled, pacific-looking man in his late 40s, Mr. Roach is a former fighter who has trained 22 world champions. He suffers from

Parkinson's disease brought on by the sport that he holds sacrosanct. His knowledge and concern for the men he sends into the fray have made him one of the most beloved trainers in this parlous game. But there is no love lost between Mr. Roach and his former star pupil. "Oscar," said Mr. Roach, "always finds someone else to blame. We had a perfect game plan against



Manny Pacquiao poses in front of a promotional poster.

Mayweather and it was working, but he didn't carry it out."

In boxing, a good big man almost always beats a good smaller man. When a power puncher like Mr. Pacquiao moves up in weight, his blows seldom carry the sting that they did against smaller opponents. But Mr. Roach argues that the fact that Mr. De La Hoya is well past his prime is more significant than his superior size. Having trained Mr. De La Hoya, Mr. Roach

claims: "I know Oscar's weaknesses and I am certain that Manny, with his great speed and athleticism, will be able to exploit them."

Mr. Roach is mum about the particulars of his strategy, but he did note that when a right-handed boxer like Mr. De La Hoya fights a southpaw like Mr. Pacquiao, he needs to be able to throw a lot of straight right hands. According to Mr. Roach: "At 35, Oscar is far along the downside of his career. And he can't pull the trigger with his right anymore."

Great fighters have great hearts. Sometimes that greatness of heart translates into remarkable nobility outside the ring. A profoundly humble warrior who grew up in abject poverty, Mr. Pacquiao is a consummate sportsman who never has a bad word to say about his opponents. While seemingly made of steel in the ring, he is a soft touch outside of the arena. Indeed, he has been so generous in supporting charitable projects that Mr. Roach worries: "Manny might just give away everything that he has earned." An icon in the Philippines who will almost certainly go into politics when he retires, Mr. Pacquiao brings government and commerce to a standstill in his homeland when he boxes. Speaking of his date with Mr. De La Hoya, he revealed: "This fight means everything to me. I am training harder for it than any other fight."

A veritable force of nature with

inordinately powerful legs, Mr. Pacquiao has a number of ring nicknames: "Pac Man," "Kid Dynamite" and "the People's Champ," but also "the Executioner." He earned his stellar reputation by thrashing three Mexican future Hall of Famers: Juan Manuel Márquez, Marco Antonio Barrera and Erik Morales. Says Mr. De La Hoya: "Manny is a dangerous young lion. He's very strong and quick. He throws punches the whole time and from every possible angle."

One knock against Mr. Pacquiao is that he takes too many blows. A consultant to Mr. De La Hoya for this bout, Angelo Dundee, Muhammad Ali's former trainer, commented: "Manny is a terrific and exciting fighter, but he is there all night to be hit." Mr. Pacquiao confided: "I know Oscar is powerful. I have been working on my defense a lot. On not coming straight in and being more careful, taking more angles and moving my head." But when I asked him if he was dreaming at night about the fight, Mr. Pacquiao said: "I see myself going toe to toe with Oscar. Throwing punches from every place. I'm a warrior and you know that is how I like to fight, toe to toe."

It will be interesting to see whether the Executioner follows his instincts or Mr. Roach's game plan when the bell tolls in Las Vegas on Saturday night.

Mr. Marino writes about boxing for the Journal.



# time off



## Amsterdam

### art

"Thanks to Rembrandt" presents rarely exhibited 17th-century drawings from the Dutch Golden Age, including paintings by Peter Paul Rubens, Anthony van Dyck, Jacob van Ruisdael and Rembrandt, alongside four watercolors by Jacob Cats.

Rijksmuseum Amsterdam Schiphol  
Until Feb. 9  
☎ 31-20-6747-000  
www.rijksmuseum.nl

### fashion

"It's All Glamour and Glitter" shows evening bags and purses from the last 100 years.

Tassenmuseum Hendrikje  
Until March 1  
☎ 31-20-5246-452  
www.tassenmuseum.nl

## Barcelona

### art

"BAC! 08 Wake Up! IX International Festival of Contemporary Art in Barcelona" includes conferences, workshops, interactive art exhibits, video installations and fashion shows.

Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona  
Until Dec. 28  
☎ 34-93-3064-100  
www.cccb.org

## Berlin

### photography

"Modernity's Non-Synchronism: Studio Photography from Baldomero Alejos, Ayacucho-Peru (1902-1976)" shows a selection of 100 studio portraits by Peruvian studio photographer Baldomero Alejos, depicting the people of the Ayacucho region.

Ethnological Museum  
Until Jan. 11  
☎ 49-30-2474-9888  
www.smb.spk-berlin.de

### photography

"Ruth Jacobi: Photographs" showcases 70 photographs by Ruth Jacobi (1899-1995).

Jewish Museum Berlin  
Until Feb. 8  
☎ 49-30-2599-3300  
www.jmberlin.de

### photography

"The Picasso with the Camera" exhibits 120 sports images capturing 14 Olympic games and other international competitions by German press photographer Heinrich von der Becke (1913-1997).

Sportmuseum Berlin  
Until March 29  
☎ 49-30-2400-2162  
www.stadtmuseum-berlin.de

## Bern

### science

"Albrecht von Haller (1708-1777)" shows anatomical wax models, scientific instruments and a video installation alongside 18th-century paintings related to the life of Swiss botanist, medical scientist and poet Albrecht von Haller.

Historisches Museum Bern  
Until April 13  
☎ 41-31-3507-711  
www.bhm.ch

## Brussels

### art

"Brussels, Territory of Convergences" presents paintings, sculptures and



Above, 'Mulatto,' 1923, by Eemu Myntti, in Helsinki; top, evening bag, 1950s, in Amsterdam.

video installations by 10 young French artists who have settled in Brussels, examining the essence of the city.

Musée d'Ixelles  
Until Jan. 29  
☎ 32-2-5156-424  
www.francekunst.be

## Copenhagen

### art

"Kara Walker" exhibits drawings, paintings, shadow puppetry, video animation and light projections by American artist Kara Walker (born 1969).

Kunstforeningen Gl Strand  
Until Jan. 18  
☎ 45-3336-0260  
www.glstrand.dk

### archaeology

"The French Connection—100 years with Danish architects at the French School of Archaeology in Athens" presents photography, tools and original drawings illustrating the work of Danish architects at French archaeological excavations on the Greek island of Delos between 1908 and 1914.

Thorvaldsens Museum  
Until Feb. 1  
☎ 45-3332-1532

www.thorvaldsensmuseum.dk

## Ghent

### design

"100 years Demeyere, Made in Belgium—the Art of Cooking" showcases stainless steel cooking utensil design by the Belgian Demeyere company.

Design Museum Gent  
Until Feb. 8  
☎ 32-9-2679-999  
design.museum.gent.be

### art

"Flemish Tapestries for the Duke of Burgundy, Emperor Charles V and King Philip II" brings together a selection of 15th- and 16th-century Flemish tapestries, including works from the Patrimonio Nacional of Madrid, several Spanish cathedrals and major European museums.

Kunsthal St. Pieters Abbey  
Until March 29  
☎ 32-9-2439-730  
www.gent.be/spa

## Hamburg

### art

"The Amusement District as a Source of Fashion Ideals: Japanese Wood-

cuts" exhibits 40 Japanese 18th-century woodcuts of women in amusement districts wearing elaborate kimono and opulent hair decorations.

Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe  
Until Feb. 15  
☎ 49-40-4281-3427-32  
www.mkg-hamburg.de

## Helsinki

### art

"Mika Waltari and Artist Friends" presents 200 works by artists who were of importance to Finnish novelist Mika Waltari (1908-1979).

Ateneum, Museum of Finnish Art  
Until Jan. 18  
☎ 358-9-1733-6401  
www.ateneum.fi

### photography

"Tomer Ganihar—Channel of Light" shows six photographic series by Israeli photographer Tomer Ganihar (born 1970).

Helsinki City Art Museum—Tennis Palace  
Until Jan. 25  
☎ 358-9-3108-7001  
www.taidemuseo.fi

## London

### art

"Nicholas Hlobo—Uhambo" exhibits the tactile sculptures and drawings of South African artist Nicholas Hlobo (born 1975).

Tate Modern  
Dec. 9-March 1  
☎ 44-20-7887-8888  
www.tate.org.uk

### fashion

"Magnificence of the Tsars" exhibits two centuries of uniforms and dress for emperors and officials from the Imperial Russian court.

Victoria and Albert Museum  
Dec. 10-March 29  
☎ 44-20-7942-2000  
www.vam.ac.uk

## Madrid

### history

"Spain, 1788-1814: Illustration and Liberalism" presents art and architectural and historical documentation illustrating the political and cultural transitions in late 18th- and early 19th-century Spain.

Palacio Real de Madrid  
Until Jan. 11  
☎ 34-91-4548-700  
www.patrimonionacional.es

## Paris

### art

"Passion at Work, Rodin and Freud collectors" shows a selection of Egyptian, Greek and Roman antiques from private collections of the French artist Auguste Rodin (1840-1917) and the Austrian psychiatrist Sigmund Freud (1856-1939).

Musée Auguste Rodin  
Until Feb. 22  
☎ 33-1-4418-6110  
www.musee-rodin.fr

## Stockholm

### architecture

"Tabula Rasa—Transformations of Chinese Neighborhoods" presents 21 photographs taken by French-Argentinian photographer Boris Svartzman during travels through China.

Arkitekturmuseet  
Until Dec. 7  
☎ 46-8-5872-7000  
www.arkitekturmuseet.se

## Turin

### design

"Dream: Cars of the Future Since 1950" shows 54 historic prototype cars alongside audiovisuals, including virtual reality presentations, illustrating the development in conceptual Italian cars since 1950.

Torino Esposizioni  
Until Dec. 28  
☎ 39-011-2182-13  
www.torinoworlddesigncapital.it

## Zurich

### art

"Dawn Mellor" shows the 120-part portrait cycle "Vile Affections (2007-2008)" as well as numerous new large-scale drawings and a wall painting by Dawn Mellor (born 1970) deconstructing the cult of celebrity with black humor.

Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst  
Until Feb. 8  
☎ 41-44-2772-050  
www.migrosmuseum.ch

Source: ArtBase Global Arts News Service, WSJE research.