FRIDAY - SUNDAY, OCTOBER 31 - NOVEMBER 2, 2008

WEEKEND JOURNAL.

EUROPE

Minimalist comforts

Belgian home design explores the cutting edge's softer side

The perfect Halloween potion | Adrià on cooking's creative process

Contents

WSJ.com

Blood lust
Why vampire stories are swarming Hollywood and bookstores.
WSJ.com/Lifestyle

War story
Iraq-themed plays put audience members in the action.
WSJ.com/Lifestyle

Taking root
China's cities are putting a new emphasis on parks and green spaces.
WSJ.com/Asia

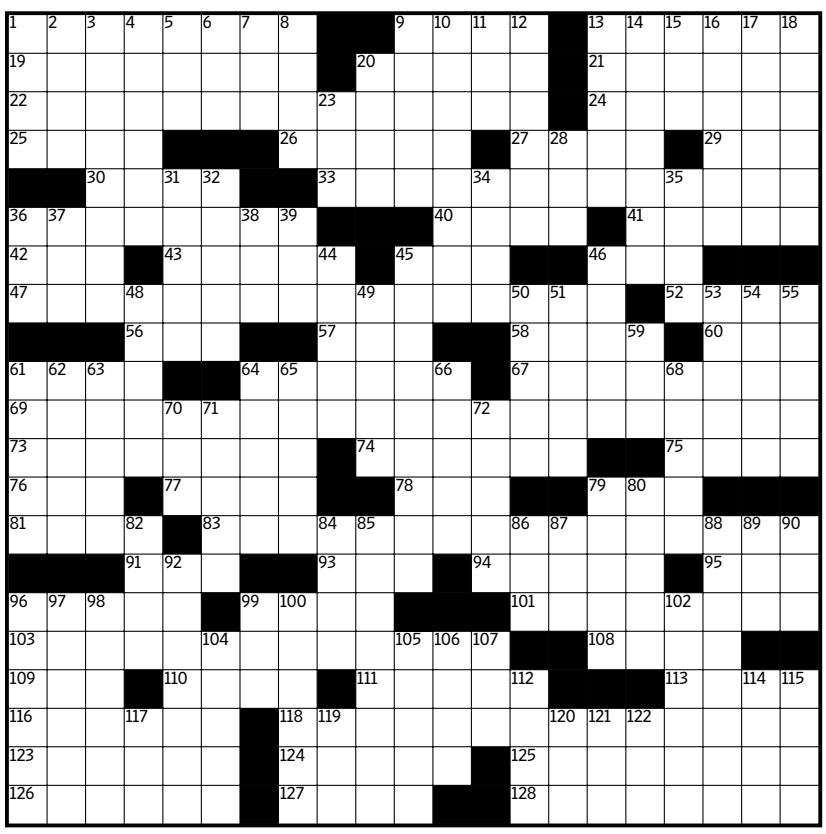
WEEKEND JOURNAL
EUROPE

Elizabeth Blackshire — EDITOR
Craig Winneker — DEPUTY 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

Election Headlines / by Todd McClary, Craig Kasper & Andrew M. Greene



Across

1 Sizes up
9 "Because Freedom Can't Protect Itself" org.
13 Twisty race
19 Toscana tongue
20 Campaign manager?
21 Party nibble
22 Candidate Scheherazade...
24 Temple of Abydos honoree
25 Surprisingly agile
26 Reeds' speeds
27 Tempura veggie
29 Pump purchase
30 From the top
33 Candidate Benny Goodman...
36 Exclaimed
40 Catania lies at its foot
41 Hyphens, in some emoticons
42 56-Across bigwig
43 1983 Pritzker Prize winner
45 Charlemagne's realm: Abbr.
46 It may be trite and true
47 Candidate Charles Eames...
52 "Smooth Operator" singer
56 Gitmo mil. branch
57 Moviefone owner
58 A month of Sundays
60 Post-Breathalyzer charge, for short
61 In a frenzy
64 Harrison, for one
67 Lofty
69 Candidate Orville Redenbacher...
73 Two-time choice for People's Sexiest Man Alive
74 Long-winded protest
75 Haggis ingredient
76 Unfriendly
77 1968 U.S. Open champ
78 GOP opponent
79 "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque" author
81 Compete with a caber
83 Candidate Eeyore...
91 Rumpus
93 Horace's " ___ Poetica"
94 Gratifies fully
95 For example
96 Fail in a crisis
99 Utah lily
101 Sherrill Milnes, for one
103 Candidate Gingerbread Man...
108 Lord's lackey
109 Convenience store fixture
110 Sport always played right-handed
111 Last word of South Carolina's motto
113 Winglike parts
116 "Shut your trap!"
118 Alexander Graham Bell/Thomas Watson race...
123 Fiesta feature
124 Caribou hunter
125 Book in a theater
126 Marsh growths
127 League of Women Voters founder
128 Like some lead chemistry?

Down

1 Lends a hand
2 Scale interval
3 "Spider-Man" director
4 Comic Boosler
5 Anger or avarice
6 Down
7 Widths of some spaces
8 Do a washday chore
9 Settle on, as a plan
10 Black-and-whites
11 Quarterback Dawson
12 Tony
13 Curl one's lip at
14 Layered entree
15 Singer DiFranco
16 Slow movements
17 Codeine, e.g.
18 Jobs for janitors
20 Pinnacle
23 Synaptic activity scan: Abbr.
28 Spectra producer
31 Improvements
32 John's ode to Yoko
34 Some Fr. martyrs
35 Sister acts?
36 Surveillance tool, for short
37 Vitamin label letters
38 Reuters rival
39 It bears Hamilton's portrait
44 Designer Mizrahi
45 Grades
46 Awaits a verdict, perhaps
48 Heated Hot Pockets
49 Monopoly buy
50 Phillies pitcher Adam
51 Extreme suffering
53 Orly send-off
54 A-student's antithesis
55 Rink figure
59 Autumn mo.
61 Sphere
62 "The Gondoliers" gondolier
63 Sanctions
64 De Klerk's presidential predecessor
65 Input, as data
66 Colorado's ___ Park
68 Trip odometer button
70 Mud bath setting
71 Network equipment giant
72 Sonnet segments
79 Jury makeup
80 Ruby's longtime spouse
82 Benefit
84 Sauce brand since 1937
85 Resolves, as differences
86 Researcher's place
87 "Respect for Acting" writer Hagen
88 Recently
89 Salon offering
90 Peacock feather feature
92 Even with
96 Purse parts
97 Looker
98 "Puppy Love" singer
99 It's shot at 30 Rock
100 Steamy
102 Shipping inquiry
104 Minuscule amounts
105 Footnote abbr.
106 Trilby material
107 Pendulum direction
112 Nobel Peace Prize ceremony setting
114 Der ___ (Adenauer nickname)
115 North Carolina university
117 Funny fellow
119 ___ tear
120 One from Berlin
121 Longtime Atlanta Braves broadcaster
122 Tolkien creature

WSJ.com

Crossword online
For an interactive version of The Wall Street Journal Crossword, WSJ.com subscribers can go to
WSJ.com/WeekendJournal

Last week's solution

O	V	E	R	■	E	R	O	D	E	■	T	U	B	B	S	■	B	A	J	A
C	E	R	O	■	V	A	D	E	R	■	U	B	O	A	T	■	O	M	A	R
T	R	U	🧍	C	A	P	O	T	E	■	B	E	N	N	Y	G	O	O	D	🧍
E	S	P	I	A	L	■	R	O	S	T	E	R	S	■	N	U	R	S	E	D
T	E	T	A	N	U	S	■	U	T	E	■	■	A	G	E	S	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	S	A	L	🧍	R	U	S	H	D	I	E	■	H	E	D	G	E	
S	P	L	A	T	T	E	D	■	■	T	E	A	■	T	H	E	N	E	W	S
C	O	I	F	■	E	D	E	N	S	■	E	D	O	U	A	R	D	🧍	E	T
O	R	V	I	S	■	G	L	E	E	M	■	A	R	P	S	■	E	D	N	A
O	N	E	N	O	T	E	■	R	A	E	■	■	O	S	A	K	A	■	■	■
T	O	R	E	R	O	■	🧍	F	R	E	D	🧍	N	■	G	A	R	B	L	E
■	■	■	R	E	R	I	G	■	■	T	U	G	■	R	O	O	M	I	E	S
S	H	O	O	■	A	S	O	U	■	S	E	L	M	A	■	S	E	G	O	S
H	E	R	🧍	N	H	E	S	S	E	■	L	E	A	V	E	■	N	O	N	E
I	A	C	C	U	S	E	■	C	O	P	■	■	R	E	G	A	T	T	A	S
A	D	H	E	M	■	I	N	G	M	A	R	B	E	R	G	🧍	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	B	A	T	E	■	■	S	H	E	■	S	T	I	C	K	O	N	
A	S	W	E	L	L	■	A	W	E	S	O	M	E	■	I	T	H	A	C	A
B	A	R	R	Y	🧍	I	L	O	W	■	N	O	R	🧍	M	A	I	L	E	R
E	V	E	R	■	A	D	O	R	E	■	D	A	N	T	E	■	P	E	A	K
L	E	N	S	■	C	O	N	K	S	■	A	N	E	A	R	■	S	S	N	S

The suit that says VIP

MAITRE D'S ARE expert decoders of social rank. When I dine with CEOs at Michael's in New York or Spago in L.A., we score the best tables. On my own, I wind up seated near the kitchen doors.

Unless I wear my St. John suit.

It is very understated, with no logo. The navy blue knit tank dress hits at the knee. A zipper up the front of the jacket adds a modern edge, but the look is timeless.

On Style
CHRISTINA BINKLEY

That is what St. John is famous for—and it is why the brand is often disdained by the trend-conscious fashion cognoscenti.

Yet when I wear my suit, maître d's snap to attention, sales clerks rush to assist me and people I barely know offer me favors.

What is it about the cut of certain clothes that signals "VIP"? Men's Brioni suits and Charvet shirts are famous for it. Bottega Veneta and Akris have it. Their head designers can tell you the fabric cost the moon and the tailor apprenticed for three years, but it's more difficult to define what conveys the effect of Somebody. As with pornography, you know it when you see it. Delivering that cachet—that power—is the promise of the luxury business.

It was curiosity about these questions that led me into the boutiques on Fifth Avenue in the summer of 2007, shortly after I began writing this column. Comfortably middle-class, I had shopped for years at the likes of Saks outlet Off Fifth, Banana Republic and Zara. My mom raised me to believe clothes should be comfortable and practical, not frivolous.

At Versace, I tried on a $1,100 white cotton blouse with ruffles down the front. I exited Versace as I had entered—empty-handed and skeptical.

Just up the avenue at the St. John boutique, a salesman helped me select a half-dozen jackets and dresses. The ensembles cost a couple thousand dollars apiece—a steep price, but only a third the cost of similar outfits at high-fashion brands like Chanel and Akris. My salesman arranged it all in a vast dressing room and hovered outside the door. An hour later, I emerged from the store with the most expensive items of clothing I have ever purchased. I felt shock, shame, pleasure: The suit hadn't even been on sale.

The cost of luxury can seem outlandish—particularly now, in an uncertain global economy. Clothes are particularly hard to value. While cars and high-tech gadgets—Maseratis, Audemars Piguet watches and first-generation iPhones—offer not only performance but the cachet of a visibly rich item, clothing does less to convey what you spent on it. Clothes get stained and snagged, and they go out of style quickly.

But clothes also have the power to transform you. Clothes "can be used to beguile, seduce, mock, lie and deceive," semiotics professor Marcel Danesi says in his book, "Of Cigarettes, High Heels, and Other Interesting Things." He adds, "Criminals can dress in three-piece suits to look trustworthy." Designer Marc Jacobs this year was asked to leave a Chelsea art gallery when an employee mistook him for a homeless man. The iconic designer's clothes apparently signaled "soup kitchen."

Hector Mata for The Wall Street Journal

Christina Binkley's **St. John outfit** (above) has a transforming effect.

Most important, clothes can speak the secret language of status. In one of my early forays in my St. John suit, I dropped my kids at school on my way to work. A mom I've known for two years stopped me outside the building and exclaimed, "Wow. What do you do for a living again?" At the office, a colleague complimented my suit and asked, "Did it cost $1,000?" (I dissembled. If only.)

My suit and I got on a plane and drew the attention of a passenger in an ostrich-skin baseball cap and matching boots. It was Pete Rose. The baseball legend wound up telling me where I could get boots just like his—flipping open his cellphone to display the number for Friedman's Shoes in Atlanta. "All the athletes shop there because he has big sizes," Mr. Rose confided.

As a woman at midlife, I find that if I want notice, I must command it. Waiters can be slow to respond to my black Banana Republic pantsuits. But they "ma'am" my St. John. Store clerks glide over to offer coffee while I browse. Maitre d's offer hangers for my jacket. Is it my imagination, or do New York cab drivers pick me and my St. John over other hailers during rush hour?

At New York's fashion week last February, I sat outside the Bryant Park tents in my St. John, talking on my cellphone. A photographer began shooting pictures of me.

I don't think people recognize the label. My suit doesn't have the boxy shape, tweedy fabric and decorative touches of the traditional St. John's suit.

But the suit does have a good fit, strong workmanship and non-trendy style. Glenn McMahon, chief executive of St. John Knits Inc., says my jacket is known as the "Angelina" after former St. John model Angelina Jolie. Spun, dyed and knit in Irvine, Calif., St. John's signature wool-blend yarn has a patented twist that gives the garment memory so it doesn't wrinkle in suitcases or get baggy when worn. It can be "blocked" into a new size or shape, if mine should change. As a result, my suit rarely needs dry-cleaning, and looks as good at the end of the day as it did at sunrise.

These days, getting value for money is more important than ever. But spending money on hot designers doesn't guarantee you'll impress others. My green-gray Marni suit, which cost about $675 at the brand's Milan outlet, garners compliments but no restaurant-table upgrades. My cropped Stella McCartney jacket, $304 on sale at Barneys, has led to no adventures.

But recently, a friend gave me several hand-me-down Chanel jackets and they, like my St. John, stop sales clerks in their tracks.

Email Christina.Binkley@wsj.com

WSJ.com

Cost-conscious
What makes luxury worth the price? Weigh in, at WSJ.com/Runway

Tricks of the Trade: Skimping on the primping

By Ellen Byron

AS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF of beauty magazine Allure, Linda Wells has tested many products provided by cosmetics companies. But when it comes to her own daily beauty regimen, Ms. Wells is a penny-pincher. She saves her splurges for a few key items.

To wash her face, Ms. Wells uses Olay Daily Facials cleansing cloths, which cost about $8 a pack. "I don't really like facials, plus they're a lot of money," she says. "These do the work of a facial—you just scrub it all over and you're done."

Ms. Wells also uses a mass-market moisturizer that costs little more than $20: L'Oréal's Skin Genesis with an ingredient called Pro-Xylane. And she avoids expensive sunscreens because "you want to use a lot of it—I believe in globbing it on every hour when I'm outdoors," Ms. Wells says.

When it comes to hair care, drugstore brands suffice. "You can definitely scrimp on hair products," says Ms. Wells, who usually uses Sunsilk and Pantene products. "There's only so much that shampoo can do for your hair."

But splurging on a great haircut is a must, Ms. Wells says. Back when her paychecks were much smaller, Ms. Wells still sought high-end hairdos. "You just get your hair cut by the assistant to the great haircutter," she says.

Ms. Wells makes another big investment in makeup, especially high-quality foundations such as Giorgio Armani Luminous Silk (about $58) and Clé de Peau Refining Fluid Foundation ($100-plus). "It's a combination of getting great texture, sheerness and pigment distribution in the product," says Ms. Wells. "And matching your skin is really hard to do in a drugstore."

She does scrimp on mascara, though. Several drugstore brands are "great," she says. "And I like the fact that I can throw it away when it's old and not feel guilty."

Still, sometimes a novel product tempts Ms. Wells to break her own rules. "I love the Lancôme oscillating mascara—these motorized wands are really fun, and they work well," she says.

Holy sites and demonic traffic mark vivid Konkani coast

By Niraj Sheth

TWENTY KILOMETERS north of Mangalore I get my first glimpse of the ocean. To get a better look, I stick my head out of the driver's window, feel the sun on my face—and hear a knee-quaking horn blasting from the oncoming truck hurtling toward us in our lane. I slam the brakes, pull to the shoulder and let the 10-wheeler pass.

It's business as usual on the sublime, occasionally terrifying Konkani coast.

Tucked along the Arabian Sea on India's western shore, and located mostly in the tech-centered state of Karnataka, the region has its own language and pace and a seashore that has largely escaped tourist development. What the region lacks in hotels, travel infrastructure and calm-inducing roads it makes up for in unspoiled, breathtaking sea vistas and an ever-present sense of spirituality.

The best way to experience it is to take the flight from Mumbai (about 75 minutes) or Bangalore (one hour) into the sleepy town of Mangalore, then drive north along a 225-kilometer stretch of two-lane National Highway 17 to the seaside state of Goa, a popular tourist destination. (Mangalore makes a good starting point because one can explore the interior before taking the trip up the coast.) My friend Hannes and I made the trip in an auto-rickshaw—the three-wheeled vehicle powered by a scooter engine—which is ubiquitous in India. An Indian nonprofit had organized our trip, part of a charity race, for foreigners who want to experience India in a quintessentially Indian vehicle.

But no vehicle, domestic or foreign, could have made us feel secure from the perils of this road. We encountered potholes the size of craters and roads dangerous beyond our wildest expectations. Pedestrians and livestock crossed at will; oncoming traffic drove straight at us, only to swerve out of our lane at the last possible second. More judicious travelers will want to rent a car and hire an experienced driver.

In Mangalore, steel-and-glass shopping malls have made incursions, but the city's charm is in its shrines. A taxi takes us from our hotel to Kadri Mandir, a 10th-century Hindu temple just minutes from the city center. We enter the temple's open-air grounds and immediately notice that the racket of street traffic stops at the temple gates. Families and lone worshippers walk barefoot among the shrines and water gardens.

At a far edge of the grounds, we ascend worn stone stairs and find a crowd gathered around a small alcove and an idol of Ganesh, the elephant-headed Hindu god for auspicious beginnings. A stream bubbling around the holy statue cascades into the floor; temple lore predicts the stream will never stop flowing. I follow the worshippers inside. Perched cautiously on rocks to keep our pants dry, we pray and take a sip from the stream, continuing a centuries-old ritual.

Getty Images

Niraj Sheth/The Wall Street Journal

Alamy

India Picture

On the grounds' highest level we find the temple's centerpiece: three ancient bathing pools. Four boys splash about in them, shaded by the stone temple walls, while birds chirp in the trees. I wonder what history these walls have seen, and the city 100 meters behind me seems far away.

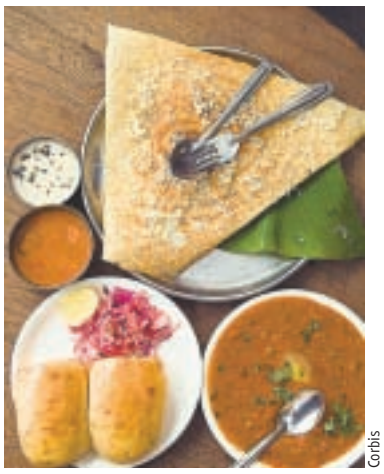
Inland from Mangalore are the Western Ghats, the ethereal mountains that are the setting of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, the ancient Hindu epics. Pilgrims travel to the Ghats from across India to worship at temples and holy sites from the first millennium. Among the most famous is the Hindu shrine at Shravanabelagola, where the 18-meter-tall statue of a saint erected in the 10th century is considered the world's largest structure made from a single stone. Nearby, at the Jain temple at Moodabidiri, nearly a thousand hand-carved pillars line the temple's ground floor; supposedly no two are alike, although wear-and-tear makes it hard to tell for sure.

Out of Mangalore, before the highway hits the coastline, it winds through a countryside of factories and universities that supply many of the high-tech workers employed in the gleaming office towers in Bangalore to the east.

Clockwise from top: An **elephant** blesses a worshipper at a temple; **masala dosa,** a signature dish in the town of Udupi; a beach on the **Konkani coast**; the shrine at **Shravanabelagola**; the auto-rickshaw used by the author. Facing page: the **Kadri Mandir** temple in Mangalore.

Then, the Arabian Sea pops into view on our left, disappears and reappears just meters from the road. Lighthouses and traditional fishing communities dot the beach. To the east, dark backwater mingles with palm trees. We stop where the highway traces a thin line between the two bodies of water. Storm clouds hang overhead; the air smells of rain. We take a photo. A thunderclap announces an Indian downpour, and in it we continue our journey.

Small roads lead off the highway to secluded beaches where, during the monsoon season of June to September, warm water is too rough for swimming. Far away from crowded, commercialized Goa, the beaches here lack most amenities. Even restrooms can be hard to find, so it pays to plan ahead. We stop at a beach where our only company is a gnarled local fisherman. With little more than a bored look at us, he throws a fishing line into the waves and waits under the noontime sun.



Corbis

Later, we stop at Udupi, a town known for its cuisine and the Shri Krishna temple, one of India's most sacred, where we head first. Unlike calm Kadri Mandir, Udupi is chaotic. As at most Hindu temples, visitors have to take off their shoes before entering. We find a crowd of slippers, sandals and sneakers around a sign reading: "At your own risk." Hannes and I look at each other and give our shoes to the shopkeeper next door, for a rupee (about two cents) each.

The dimly lit main building holds a number of idols, most garlanded with flowers and smelling of incense. But what's most striking is the air conditioning—highly unusual among India's sweltering places of worship. In nooks throughout the temple, groups of friends and families pray, talk softly, or just take a break from the heat. Outside but still on temple grounds, we head around the corner of the shrine and come face to face with an elephant believed to harbor the spirit of Ganesh. I walk to the gate of the elephant's pen with a two-rupee coin in my hand. The elephant ambles up, takes the coin with his trunk and pats my head. I've been blessed.

At one of Udupi's many restaurants for lunch, we order a masala dosa, a thin pancake filled with spicy vegetables and served with different curries and coconut paste to tame the spice. It's the dish to order in Udupi: Restaurants in Mumbai often boast about their "Udupi-style" dosas. Despite the coconut, the dosa burns in the mouth and all the way down. I break into a sweat. It's delicious.

We stop for the night at Murdeshwar. Continuing the next day, we finally reach the interstate border crossing into Goa, and it starts to rain. The Goan guard won't let our auto-rickshaw pass through unless we pay 150 rupees—a bribe. Unwilling to argue or wait indefinitely, we talk him down to 100 rupees and pay. With my shirt already soaked, I get back into our vehicle and look over my shoulder as the coast fades into the distance and the timeless past.

WSJ.com

Sublime, scary road
Watch a video of Niraj Sheth's trip to Karnataka, India, at WSJ.com/Travel

PhotoIndia.com

Trip planner: To the coast

Getting there

From Mumbai, take Indian Airlines, Jet Airways, or Air Deccan. From Bangalore, fly Jet Airways, Kingfisher Airlines or Air Deccan. Kingfisher Airlines also flies from Goa.

Travel agents can arrange a car with a driver to take you along the coast. Expect to pay 12 rupees (about 18 Euro cents) per kilometer, or a total of 3,500 rupees (about €53) including driver fees, for the ride from Mangalore to Goa.

Where to stay

Stay at the four-star Gateway Hotel in Mangalore on Old Port Road for a dash of luxury at an affordable price. The rates start at 4,000 rupees (plus tax) for a double-occupancy room. The hotel is part of the Taj chain of luxury Indian hotels (☎ 91-824-2420420; www.thegatewayhotels.com/index.htm).

On the road to Goa, stop halfway in Murudeshwar and stay at the three-star RNS Residency. The hotel sits on a peninsula jutting into the ocean, making for a wonderful sunset view from the room balcony. Rates start at 2,000 rupees (plus tax) for a double-occupancy room with air conditioning (☎ 91-8385-260060; www.naveenhotels.com/rnsyatrinivas.html).

Where to eat

Be sure to have seafood in Mangalore, known for its fish fry and fish curries. Try some at the Kudla Family Restaurant on Balmatta Road for about 500 rupees a person.

On the way north on National Highway 17, make a stop at the Hotel Kushi near Santhekatte (about five kilometers before Udupi). Sample the masala dosa—an Udupi favorite and often quite spicy. Have as much as you want. It shouldn't cost more than 300 rupees for a meal.

In Proust, learning the savage lessons of pretty pictures

By Erich Eichman

IN HENRY JAMES'S "The Ambassadors" (1903), Lambert Strether, an American visiting the Continent, looks out on the French countryside one day and marvels at its beauty. The soothing scene on a sunny afternoon, a few hours by train from Paris, makes him feel as if he is walking inside the frame of a landscape he had once seen at an art dealer's gallery back in Boston. When two figures, a man and a woman, suddenly appear to his sight, managing a little boat along the bend of a river, he thinks to himself that they "had been wanted in the picture" all day, and now they drifted into it charmingly, intimately: "What he saw," James writes, "was exactly the right thing."

As Strether looks closely, though, he recognizes a friend of his, a young American man, a kind of ward that he has been asked to look out for on his travels, and an older, married French woman, also a friend. Until that moment, Strether has assumed the relations between the two to be chaste. He is shocked to discover that they are not.

But the real shock is for him to grasp—American innocent though he may be—that what is beautiful may not be good or pleasing or right or (with due respect to Keats) true. Handsome figures in a perfect setting may be engaged in illicit relations and acts of deceit. Europe itself, for all its cathedral charms and high civilization, may countenance practices that would outrage the New England mind if only it could see.

In Marcel Proust's long novel "In Search of Lost Time" (published in several volumes between 1913 and 1927) well-bred people in perfect Old World settings show themselves similarly capable of deceit and irregular relations—and of cruelty, pettiness and stupidity. And Proust routinely likens figures or episodes in his story to works of art—to convey a theme or produce an ironical contrast. In "Paintings in Proust" (Thames & Hudson, £25), Eric Karpeles sets color reproductions alongside passages from "In Search of Lost Time," allowing the reader to immerse himself in Proustian sentences—subtle, sardonic, amusing—and to study the painting that serves as the pivot of the passage or its point of accent. In one notable instance—Jamesian in its way—an artist's handiwork leads to a disastrous misreading of life and the downfall of a character more sophisticated than Strether but no less susceptible to moral confusion.

Anyone who has devoted any time to reading "In Search of Lost Time" will be grateful for the chance, at last, to look closely at the painterly sources of so many allusions. But there is no need to know the novel or its characters to admire the prose or the visual display, or to grasp the interpenetration of the two. One quality of "In Search of Lost Time"—tedious to some, seductive to others—is that its narrative voice is ruminative, devoted to searching out perennial truths more than to driving a story forward. A single Proust paragraph, whether snatched from a comic incident or a bittersweet reverie, is a world unto itself and pleasurable in isolation.

Mr. Karpeles reminds us of the blending of sea and sky at the beach resort of Balbec—a splendid confusion of color and shifting light that infuses the young narrator's experience of a summer holiday. It is neatly captured by Whistler in "Crepuscule in Opal" and by Proust, less neatly though no less enchantingly, in hundreds of words that mention Whistler in passing. Elsewhere we see Venice shimmering in a Turner painting—only to be told by Proust that the city lost exactly this magical aura when he was visiting there. When the narrator brings his beloved Albertine to his Paris apartment, the family housekeeper, ever suspicious, holds up a lamp that misses "none of the still visible depressions which the girl's body had made in the counterpane," reminding him of "Justice Shedding Light Upon Crime," by Prud'hon; and across the page we see a painting, from 1808, in which a winged figure, torch in hand, points at a man who skulks away from a scene of violence.

Scala/Art Resource

Detail from **Botticelli's** 'The Trials of Moses' (1481-82) in the Sistine Chapel.

There are many more such references, each made vivid by Mr. Karpeles's matchings of text and art. They sometimes display aristocrats mocking a style that does not conform to their restricted tastes. (Of a Manet still life: "Three hundred francs for a bundle of asparagus! A louis, that's as much as they're worth, even early in the season.") But the painting that matters most, in "Paintings in Proust" and in the novel itself, is one that occasions a Strether-like error in a man who does not have the excuse of being innocently American.

The man is Swann, a connoisseur and a frequenter of Paris's aristocratic houses, who finds himself ensnared by Odette, a woman of low origins and dubious virtue. Most of the novel's first (and most famous) volume will track Swann's infatuation, his doting foolishness, his jealousy, his self-abasement. What has happened? He has read into Odette qualities much greater than those she actually possesses—because she has reminded him of a figure from a Botticelli fresco.

"The similarity enhanced her beauty," Proust tells us, and allowed Swann to "estimate at her true worth a creature whom the great Sandro [Botticelli] would have adored." Like Strether, Swann confuses aesthetic pleasure with a judgment of value, and he pays for the error with a ruinous misalliance in which deceit will play a part. Edmund Wilson, in "Axel's Castle," describes Swann acting "ridiculously and tragically" when he finds an identity between a 15th-century masterpiece and a 19th-century courtesan. Swann's attachment to Odette sends him down into a grasping bourgeois milieu whose inhabitants, by the end of "In Search of Lost Time," will rise to seize the commanding heights of French society.

And now, there before us, thanks to Mr. Karpeles, is the fatal Botticelli in color reproduction. The central figure in "The Trials of Moses" (1481-82), from the Sistine Chapel, is indeed beautiful. She wears gold and white and stands in a graceful, leaning pose. It is impossible to look at her lovely face and not swoon like Swann. And it is hard not to think: Lives have been ruined in less interesting ways.

Koji Kondo; below, a scene from the **Wii Music** videogame.

WireImage

Newest from a game maestro

By Jamin Brophy-Warren

MANY PEOPLE HAVEN'T heard of Koji Kondo, but they've probably heard his music. The lilting, Latin rhythms of the theme for Super Mario Bros., one of the most successful videogames of all time with more than 40 million copies sold, were Mr. Kondo's first solo project at Nintendo more than 20 years ago.

Since then, the theme has spread to orchestral arrangements and cellphones, where it's been on Billboard's ringtone chart for more than four years and outlasted pop singles from Britney Spears and Green Day.

Now, Mr. Kondo's work is re-entering the public eye with Wii Music, a new Nintendo game that allows Wii game-console users to play along with popular tunes and make their own rhythms as well. The game, which came out last week, features several tunes by Mr. Kondo, now the head of Nintendo's sound department, including his themes from the Mario and Zelda series.

Mr. Kondo's work, known for its sunny tones, was an early standout in videogame music. The Mario theme "had a musicality to it. It wasn't just sound effects. It changed moods," says Marty O'Donnell, audio director and partner at Bungie Studios, who scored the best-selling "Halo" franchise. "They were careful to have sound design that didn't clash."

Born in Nagoya, Japan, Mr. Kondo, 47 years old, grew up listening to jazz pianist Herbie Hancock and the film music of "The Pink Panther" composer Henry Mancini. He was particularly interested in the work of Sadao Watanabe, a Japanese saxophonist who played both Latin and jazz and whose style presaged Mr. Kondo's. He attended Osaka University of Arts, where he composed music with the synthesizer and learned "the academic aspects of art." Seeking a place where he could continue to study music, Mr. Kondo joined Nintendo's team in 1984 as sound-effects composer, a year after the Japanese company began to sell the Nintendo Entertainment System.

Almost immediately, Mr. Kondo was pulled into the Super Mario Bros. project by a rising producer named Shigeru Miyamoto. A few years earlier, Mr. Miyamoto successfully designed Donkey Kong and was working on a follow-up. "When I started at Nintendo, there weren't a lot of people who knew music," says Mr. Miyamoto, now the creative head for Nintendo.

Mr. Kondo composed several iterations of the Super Mario Bros. theme, with Mr. Miyamoto making the final decision. "With Super Mario Brothers, a game [in] which Mario cheerfully jumps around the brightly colored playground, I wanted to compose sounds and music which reproduced that atmosphere," says Mr. Kondo.

Since then, Mr. Kondo has scored dozens of games, including the popular Legend of Zelda, Super Smash Bros., and Super Mario Galaxy. That's made Mr. Kondo a celebrity in the videogame world. At last year's Game Developer Conference in San Francisco, fans and industry onlookers lined up more than an hour before he delivered a rare stateside address on "Painting an Interactive Musical Landscape." Orchestras such as Play! and Video Games Live, which tour with videogame music, also play his songs.

Mr. Kondo's in-house position at Nintendo sharply contrasts with the scoring procedures of many other big-budget titles. Usually, studios hire an outside contractor as a composer who often creates the background accompaniment but doesn't work in close concert with the development team.

Part of what makes Mr. Kondo's works novel is how his music interacts with what's on-screen. In the Super Mario Bros. series, for example, the track will change when the character makes certain movements. When a player is running out of time, the tempo speeds up and, in Super Mario World, a note of percussion adds more bass to the accompaniment when Mario mounts his dinosaur companion Yoshi.

In the mid-1980s, those techniques were revolutionary, says Karen Collins, research chairwoman at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada, and author of "Game Sound." She adds, "A lot of composers were doing basic loops they'd write in 16 or 24 bars. But Kondo created different structures rather than a 16 bar loop—you might have eight bars followed by a bunch of different sections."

For Wii Music, Mr. Kondo was overall supervisor, selecting the pieces and researching copyright issues. "As this was my first experience developing a music game, I was able to study a lot and got involved in more aspects of making games than before, such as the design aspect of the game and sequential things." Unlike other music games like Rock Band or the Dance Dance Revolution series, which rely on players pushing buttons in time with the music, Wii Music allows actual music creation. Players pick an instrument and then shake the Wii's remote controller at their own rhythm to create the accompaniment.

Mr. Kondo is surprised that the theme he created has become so popular. Nintendo of America only last summer told him about the ubiquity of the ringtone in the U.S. "It was just unthinkable that a game's music would be treated how it is today."

Nintendo

Avoiding the frightful with Satan's Whiskers

How's Your Drink?
ERIC FELTEN

HALLOWEEN HAS BECOME a pre-eminent cocktail occasion, and I have a horror of the drinks commonly put forward for spooky sipping. For starters, there is the unfortunate reliance on frightful shtick, such as green drinks that bubble, served up in beakers and laboratory flasks. But for the most part, the problem is just lousy drinks—a devilment I hope we can exorcise with a classic cocktail that's dying to become the drink of the season.

Some Halloween party advisers can't help but suggest the sanguinary Bloody Mary. And just in case that name is insufficiently hematic, Finlandia vodka suggests a variation made with lime vodka that it calls Vampire Juice. Not bad, but not particularly successful at the witching hour—the brunchy old Bloody isn't exactly designed for consuming after 6 p.m.

Others push the candy theme. Three Olives Vodka is flogging "ooey-gooey" recipes for "candy cocktails." Its recipe for the Jolly Rancher using a green apple-flavored vodka is hopelessly sweet. The rest of the Three Olives Halloween lineup displays the sort of gimmickry that plagues the holiday's cocktails. Not only is there the Gummy Worm Martini, made from—ugh—mango vodka, raspberry vodka, blue curaçao and Sprite, but the Tootsie Roll, an abomination assembled out of something called "chocolate vodka," Amaretto, and chocolate syrup.

Nor is there a shortage of drinks with pumpkin themes or flavors making the rounds. Among them: the Jack-O-Tini (bourbon, sour-apple schnapps and cranberry juice), the Jack O'Lantern (tequila, Baileys and Kahlúa), and—riffing on the Spanish word for pumpkin—the Calabatini (Herradura tequila, Monin pumpkin spice syrup and half-and-half). Alas, I prefer to eat pumpkin pie, not drink it.

The folks at liquor giant Brown-Forman have been seeing how many of their brands they can jam into one cocktail shaker. They came up with a Vampire Kiss Martini using Finlandia vodka, Korbel sparkling wine and Chambord liqueur, and a Candy Apple Martini using Chambord and Finlandia together with Tuaca liqueur.

All of the above strike me as more tricks than treats. But not every drink promoted for Halloween this year is doleful—a remarkable development that is, in a way, some of the best evidence yet that the quality of cocktails is on the rise. Bacardi has a slate of drinks for the occasion, with hardly a stinker in the bunch. The Witches Brew—made with rum, fresh lime juice, St. Germain elderflower liqueur, simple syrup and a little pomegranate juice—may be a bit sweet, but that is fixed by dialing back the liqueur and the sugar syrup. And particularly clever is a rum version of the classic Ward Eight. The century-old original was made with rye whiskey, lemon juice, orange juice and grenadine; substitute aged Bacardi 8 rum for the whiskey, and you get a PsychWard 8.

But it was at a bar called Bourbon, in Washington's Adams-Morgan neighborhood, that I recently enjoyed a cocktail born to be the official drink of Halloween—a 1920s classic called Satan's Whiskers. The name comes from what was once a common exclamation (when such interjections employed more than four letters). Harry Craddock's 1930 "Savoy Cocktail Book" included two recipes for Satan's Whiskers: one "straight," the other "curled" (a variety that suggests the drink did boffo box office). The recipes had in common gin, sweet vermouth, dry vermouth, orange juice and orange bitters. The remaining ingredient—one or another sort of orange liqueur—made for the difference in nomenclature. Add Grand Marnier and you get a straight Satan's Whiskers; use orange curaçao and the whiskers are curled.

The bar manager at Bourbon, Owen Thomson, makes a killer Satan's Whiskers, and achieves it by ever-so-slightly tweaking the original recipe. Craddock called for using equal parts of the gin, vermouths and juice, with a half-part of the orange liqueur. And that may be the best call when using orange curaçao. But Mr. Thomson found that in using Grand Marnier, equal parts made for a better, more balanced drink. It is a cocktail he likes to make for people who think they don't like gin. "If they like Satan's Whiskers," Mr. Thomson says, they'll enjoy its cousin, the Bronx, and "then you're almost at a Martini or Martinez."

Make the Satan's Whiskers at home and you will be tempted to use juice out of a carton. That way damnation lies (or at least an unsatisfying cocktail, which is plenty bad enough). You really must squeeze fresh oranges, preferably blood oranges, for the drink to work at all.

Stick with the Grand Marnier version of the cocktail. Or try a fresh variation by using Cointreau Noir, a new type of Cointreau that, like Grand Marnier, has a brandy base.

One last point on the drink: Don't forget the orange bitters, and avoid the mistake of substituting Angostura. Happily, orange bitters are becoming more and more available.

Dylan Cross for The Wall Street Journal

Satan's Whiskers

15 ml gin
15 ml dry vermouth
15 ml sweet vermouth
15 ml freshly squeezed orange juice
15 ml Grand Marnier
1 dash orange bitters

Stir with ice until bitingly cold and then strain into a stemmed cocktail glass. Garnish with orange twist. For a variation, substitute Cointreau Noir for the Grand Marnier.

Building a course by hand, open to all

East Canton, Ohio

IN MOST RESPECTS, the Clearview Golf Club here is like other midrange daily-fee facilities in Northeast Ohio. The course is a bit bare in spots but has excellent, large greens and rolling terrain. The atmosphere is welcoming and homey. On most days you can find an old dog named Lady in the pro shop, asleep near the stove. The top weekend

Golf Journal
JOHN PAUL NEWPORT

green fee, including cart, is $39.

But one thing differentiates Clearview not just from its neighbors, but from every other course in the U.S. It was designed and built and continues to be owned by an African-American, William Powell. When I arrived for a visit recently, Mr. Powell, 91 years old, was sitting in a golf cart talking to friends beneath the maple trees near the clubhouse. Earlier that morning he had done some mowing on a tractor.

From the day Clearview opened for play in 1948, all but a single-digit percentage of the clientele has been white. "That's who plays golf," explained his daughter, Renée Powell, an LPGA Tour player from 1967 to 1980 and now head pro at the club. (Her brother, Larry, is the course superintendent.) Mr. P, as the regulars call her father, is beloved. "I can't say enough about the Powell family. They have been nothing but gracious and kind to all of us members," said Loretta Gerber, a regular for 43 years in the women's tournaments started by Mr. Powell's late wife, Marcella.

But it didn't take long, after I sat down to talk about the history of the club with Mr. Powell, for memories of the anger and indignations he has suffered to surface. "Tell this gentleman that we had some problems back in those days," he said, turning to Reggie Holmes, the former Detroit Lions defensive back who hails from nearby Alliance, Ohio, and who also happened to be visiting that day. "Nobody under 70 years old has

William Powell at his course, the Clearview Golf Club.

Karen Schiely/Akron Beacon Journal

any inkling how racist this country was," Mr. Powell continued without waiting for an answer.

Mr. Powell grew up in tiny Minerva, 15 kilometers down the highway. He said his family was the only black one in town, and in 1935, he was captain of both the high school's football team and its golf team. He learned golf while caddying at the local country club, with assistance from a white doctor there who gave him tips and loaned him equipment.

Access to courses was not a big problem when competing on his high-school team. He also played for the team at traditionally black Wilberforce University in central Ohio. But playing on his own was a different story.

He particularly remembers being humiliated at one tournament he entered as an individual when he was 16. Organizers delayed the start of play for two hours trying to figure out a way to ban him. When he won the qualifying round, they changed the format for the first regular round so that he would not be paired with the favorites. When he then shot the low score in that round, they did the same before the second round. Hands visibly shaking from the stress, he finished third. "There should never be that much pressure on any kid to have to prove that he is the best," Mr. Powell said.

Off the golf course, and away from home, the indignities mounted. Serving in England during World War II, Mr. Powell supervised 1,100 trucks that loaded the ships ahead of the D-Day invasion of Normandy. Yet one day a well-intentioned English woman offered him a pillow to sit on because she had been assured by white GIs that black people had tails. Later, guarding German prisoners, he was stung to note that they received better gear, better food and more attention from the USO than he and his fellow black soldiers did. Back in Ohio after the war, he was turned down for a G.I. loan.

In 1946, Mr. Powell bought a derelict dairy farm with the financial backing of two African-American doctors from Canton and set to work on his field of dreams. "I wanted a place where I could play and anyone could play, open to all, without regard to race, creed or color," he said.

Most of the back-breaking work at the course was done by hand. He cleared the pastures of chest-high brush, dug up fence posts and hauled away stones in wheelbarrows. When it came time to plant the fairways, he sowed the seeds by walking up and down the would-be fairways.

He finished the first nine after two years of labor, all the while supporting his young family with a night-shift job at the nearby Timken ball-bearing plant.

"People thought he was crazy, and he was crazy, I guess," said Renée Powell. "But what you have to understand about my father is that he had a passion for golf, just like Ben Hogan and Byron Nelson and Sam Snead had a passion for golf. Those men were about my father's age and had been exposed to the game through caddying, just like he was. But they had a place to play and he didn't, so he had to build his own course."

For 16 years after the first nine opened, he kept working at Timken so he could buy out his investors and acquire an adjoining plot. By 1978, working much the way he had on the original holes, he had expanded the course to a full 18 holes.

Racism hasn't disappeared. Regulars report to Ms. Powell that some locals still refer to Clearview as the "n— nine," and its business is anything but robust. But in recent years Mr. Powell's accomplishments have been honored. The National Golf Foundation gave the Powells its Jack Nicklaus Golf Family of the Year Award in 1992, the Tiger Woods Foundation established a scholarship named for him and his wife, and this summer Renée Powell, who has traveled extensively outside the U.S. promoting golf, received an honorary doctorate from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. A plaque near the first tee certifies Clearview as an Ohio historical site.

But none of this guarantees the course's survival, particularly given the overbuilt golf market and current state of the economy. The best hope for that may lie in the course's growing stature as a pilgrimage site, and the nonprofit foundation the family has set up to preserve the course.

During my visit I met an African-American businessman from Denver who had brought his grandson to meet Mr. Powell, and a communications professor, Todd Allen, from Geneva College in Pennsylvania who concludes his annual civil-rights bus tour of the South with a stop at Clearview.

"The purpose of our trip is to help people learn about the past so they can return to their communities to do something. That's just what Mr. Powell did," Mr. Allen said. "Denied the opportunity to play the game he loved, he did something about it, by creating a place that was open to everyone. That epitomizes what the civil rights movement was all about."

Email golfjournal@wsj.com.

London focuses on ancient and modern Asian art

ASIAN ART IS ON display and for sale at the 11th annual Asian Art in London, which began Thursday and runs until Nov. 12. A guidebook with all the events and locations can be downloaded at www.asianartinlondon.com.

Chinese and Japanese art dealer Sydney L. Moss will inaugurate new galleries in Queen Street with "Such Stuff as Dreams Are Made On," 80 netsuke from the collection of Swiss businessman Willi G. Bosshard. Netsuke are miniature sculptures of animals, sea creatures or mythical figures that Japanese men used to fasten a pouch to their kimono sash. Collected during 40 years of Mr. Bosshard's business travels for Nestlé, the fascinating little objects are made from ivory, wood or silver. An enormously alive, ivory rat with bulging eyes hunched over a chili pod from circa 1740-1760 costs in the region of £80,000.

Collecting
MARGARET STUDER

Virginia Sykes-Wright, longtime director of Asian Arts in London, says she has no illusions about the overall art market in the present economic climate. But she says "the quality Chinese antique market still appears to be spot on, Japanese antiques are undervalued and Indian and Islamic are doing quite well."

Sam Fogg of Clifford Street includes in his exhibition, "The Art of Enlightenment: Buddhist Manuscripts from the Himalayas, China, Japan and South-East Asia," a very rare 218-page illuminated Indian manuscript from around 1191 illustrated with miniature divinities (price around £300,000). Mr. Fogg says the existence of this document was previously unknown.

Clifford Street's Eskenazi gallery is always worth a visit. The gallery is showing Chinese ceramics and stone sculpture, including a pair of glazed earthenware shoes from the 6th-7th centuries and a sandstone panel depicting musicians from the 9th-10th century. Eskenazi says prices in the show range from £15,000 to £150,000, with a glazed earthenware jar with mysterious faces from 550-577 in the six-figures.

Sydney L.Moss

Ivory rat **netsuke** from circa 1740-1760, for sale at Sydney L. Moss gallery for about £80,000.

Combining the old with the new is an exhibition of photographs by Hong Kong contemporary photo-artist Caroline Chiu at Rossi & Rossi of Clifford Street. Titled "Gods and Monsters," the show presents 20 unique Polaroid images of antique Himalayan sculpture. A fearsome image of the Buddhist divinity Acala brandishing a sword is priced at $8,000.

Fine jade is very much in demand. At Bonhams auction on Nov. 6 will be a rare 17th-century white jade scepter from the Imperial Chinese Court estimated at £200,000-£300,000. The scepter, featuring peony blossoms and a dragon, symbolizes longevity.

Rare and archaic jades on Nov. 4 at Christie's will include a dramatic white jade 18th-century wine pot with a spout in the shape of a phoenix head and a dragon-head handle (estimate: £200,000-£300,000), and a princely shield-shaped yellow jade belt hook from 206 B.C.-8 A.D. (estimate: £100,000-£150,000).

A top lot at Sotheby's Chinese works of art sale on Nov. 5 will be one of the largest recorded Buddhist gilt bronzes from the Xuande period (1426-1435) of the Ming dynasty that ruled China from the 14th-17th century (estimate: in excess of £2.5 million).

Belgian home design explores the cutting edge's softer side

By Helen Kirwan-Taylor
Special to The Wall Street Journal

Leather Lounge Chair 04 by Maarten Van Severen; right, **Crossed Legs Chair** by Fabiaan Van Severen.

Antwerp, Belgium

FLASHIER DESIGN centers like Paris and London and cities in Scandinavia are better known than Belgium for interior design. But in-the-know shoppers, who have long visited the country for cutting-edge fashion, are finding that Belgian furniture design is at the forefront of today's "rough luxe" trend—modern and minimalist shapes made with soft and earthy textures and materials.

Belgian designers are creating sleek forms while using natural materials such as linen, wood and stone, and natural colors like grey, beige and white. It's a cool, clutter-free look without being stark or cold—a hazard often seen with Italian design. "It's real, it's solid and it's comfortable," says London-based interior designer Ilse Crawford.

It's a style that reflects the way Belgians live. A Belgian home is often a traditional stone row house renovated with sleekly modern fixtures and decorated with an uncluttered mix of antiques, chrome and glass. The elegance is in the mix, which balances the traditional and the cutting edge to the homeowner's individual taste.

"The fact you can't tell who a house is 'by' is a great tribute," says Paris-based art dealer Patrick Perrin. "The days of walking in and naming the expensive designer are long over."

Belgium is also a well-off country that likes its comforts, says Wim Pauwels, publisher of Beta-Plus Publishing, a company whose heavy photographic books depicting Belgian homes are collected by designers. Luxury is in, but flashiness is a faux pas. "Basically Belgians don't like to show off," says Antwerp architect and designer Vincent Van Duysen. "We are discreet, down to earth, and we like things to be durable and timeless."

But this center of the surrealist art movement has an appreciation for the avant-garde. Belgian fashion stars like Ann Demeulemeester and Dries Van Noten broke new ground with their experimental designs—although they still were wearable, well made and reasonably priced.

For furnishings, too, prices are lower than in France or Italy because of the Belgian no-nonsense approach to design. "First, we try to be cheaper by making everything here," says Sebastien Feldbrugge, founder of Antwerp-based Feld, a design production company. "We also tend to look into production and then make things—rather than choose a design and then go out and try and get it produced."

Like the best of Belgian fashion design, the furnishings market is centered on Antwerp, a port town 40 kilometers north of Brussels. Here one can find a subtle mix of cutting-edge modern design and antiques from the 17th to the early-20th century. Quality is high for the price; the area has been a center of textile and carpet making since medieval times, and furniture is handmade and finished. And since a wide variety of stores are located near each other downtown, it's easy to make a weekend shopping trip to outfit your house.

Designers such as Ms. Crawford, Michael Maharam of the New York design company Maharam, and London-based designer Caroline Paterson all say they go to Antwerp regularly to buy fabrics, upholstery, carpets and other elements for clients. "The quality is the best I have ever seen," says Ms. Crawford.

For my weekend in Antwerp, I started by visiting the two doyens of Belgian style: Mr. Van Duysen and Axel Vervoordt, an antiques dealer and decorator who lives in a castle outside of Antwerp. The two men often collaborate, mixing modern and antique looks.

Mr. Vervoordt calls his style "sophisticated poverty"—it looks humble and sparse, but upon closer examination one can see the quality of the individual elements. His refurbished, pared-down 14th-century castle 25 minutes outside of Antwerp is open to visitors by appointment, and many of the objects there—from Roman and Egyptian antiquities to 18th century furniture to Zero art from the 1960s—are for sale.

Mr. Vervoordt also has a retail space called Kanaal, about 10 minutes outside of Antwerp. A former distillery turned malting complex, the building has been stripped down to the bare wooden boards, cement floors and exposed brick. Kanaal alone is worth the trip to Antwerp: More than 10,000 objects are displayed over four floors, including Mr. Vervoordt's 90-piece furniture collection.

Mr. Vervoordt's designs look and feel traditional, but by being overscaled and covered in loose, plain linen, they appear modern. They are also more flattering to modern interiors than the rigid upholstery of Italian companies.

What you won't find in his collection are sharp edges, bright colors, artificial materials or superficial decoration. Mr. Vervoordt, 61, is all about humility. "One's home shouldn't be rich or opulent," he says. "My furniture is about understatement. I'm interested in good living, not showing off."

The range includes several sofas (average price is €5,000), coffee tables, beds and outdoor furniture. Classic pieces include the Brian Sofa, a low, deep sofa (€7,000 with slipcovers) and Howard Medium, an exaggeratedly long daybed (€3,140) (www.

At Feld: Archipi table by Marco Schmidt and Oasis sofa by Bram Boo.

Elisabeth Broekaert for The Wall Street Journal (Lounge Chair, Feld and Kanaal)

Gargantua Table, with adjustable benches, designed by Dirk Wynants for Extremis.

Designer **Vincent Van Duysen's** living room, with furniture by Axel Vervoordt and the **Atelier** long wooden table, his own design.

Alberto Piovano

axel-vervoordt.com).

Mr. Van Duysen, meanwhile, designs simple and clean furniture almost devoid of detail for producers WOW, B&B, Poliform, Cappellini, Bulo and Obumex. His designs are for sale at many of the shops around town, including Isola, where his high-tech streamlined leather chair for B&B retails for €1,000; and Donum, where his rustic pots with wooden lids for WOW retail for €125.

At his own townhouse in Antwerp, he uses linen-covered sofas and club chairs by Mr. Vervoordt, paired with his own design for a simple, unfinished wooden table called the Atelier Table, produced by Home St-Paul, a craft-based furniture manufacturing company in nearby Bruges. Pale wooden floors, nearly colorless plaster walls, natural linen curtains and a single light bulb in the ceiling complete the spare but textured look (www.vincentvanduysen.com).

Follow a visit to Kanaal with a trek on foot through Antwerp's cobblestone streets to the many design and antique stores—all of Antwerp can be crossed on foot. Start on the Vlaamse Kaai, where many boutiques and cafes are located. Here are a few of the shops that best represent the Belgian style.

Kaai Design

This contemporary design store sells Belgian as well as Italian, French and German furniture. On prominent display was the delicate, organic leather Lounge Chair 04 (€3,959) by the late Maarten Van Severen, the last piece he produced before he died in 2005. Mr. Van Severen was one of the most powerful purveyors of the Belgian style, and often called the original minimalist—or rather, an "essentialist."

Also prominently positioned was Xavier Lust's slick but sculptural S table for MDF Italia, in three different finishes. The wooden top model is €2,805 (☎ 32-3-248-77-44; Vlaamse Kaai 45; www.kaaidesign.be).

Divani

It looks like a boring sofa shop but up two flights of stairs and tucked to one side are pieces by the exceptionally talented Fabiaan Van Severen, the brother of Maarten Van Severen.

His Fold & Profiles screen looks almost handmade (€958), and his cross-legged chairs, made from a single plate of stainless steel for the company called May 17, have a rugged, handmade quality (€395). Divani offers a huge range of choice including boxy sofa systems from the Dutch company Gelderland, which retail for €9,000 (☎ 32-3-238-39-98; Vlaamse Kaai 35-39; www.divani.be).

Left, Borne seat by **Jules Wabbes,** at Kanaal. Above, a kitchen by British designer John Pawson for **Obumex.**

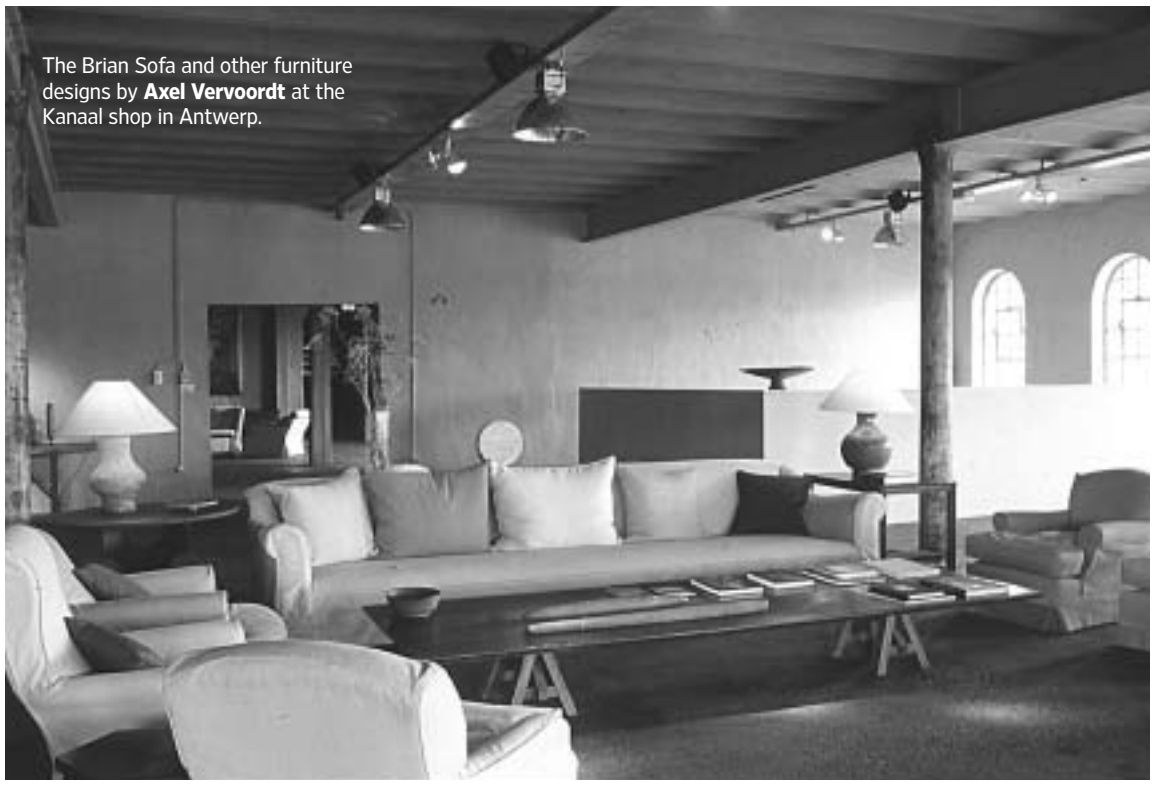
Donum

Donum, Antwerp's trendiest shop, sells many recognizable Belgian brands, including When Objects Work. Most impressive was their outdoor collection stylishly displayed in the back courtyard. Their best selling outdoor Belgian brand, director Jos Peters says, is Extremis, a company founded in 1994 by Dirk Wynants. Working with star designer Xavier Lust, Mr. Wynants has had hit after hit with tables like PicNik, an all-in-one table made of powder-coated aluminium (€3,200); Gargantua, a round wooden and stainless steel table (€4,000); and Bronco, a series of polyethylene stools (€140) based on cowboys and campfires (☎ 32-3-231-39-18; Hopland 47; www.donum.be).

Magazyn

The little shop owned by Thomas Haarmann, a former art director for Ligne Roset, is dedicated to the Belgian lifestyle. It opened last spring and sells a hodgepodge of beautifully packaged items including soaps, handbags, pashminas and scented candles. Though some of the items, including ceramic plates from France, are sourced abroad, they are assembled in a "Belgian" way, which Mr. Haarmann describes as "traditional and very relaxed." New products include handmade ceramic bowls (from €50-€500), linen tablecloths (from €175) and key holders by Vincent Van Duysen for €250 (☎ 32-3-226-66-06; Huide-

Please turn the page



The Brian Sofa and other furniture designs by **Axel Vervoordt** at the Kanaal shop in Antwerp.

Design file: names to know

SOME BELGIAN DESIGN companies now getting international attention:

Honeycomb shelving by Clive Wilkinson, produced by **Quinze & Milan.**

When Objects Work

Founded by Béatrice de Lafontaine in 2001, When Objects Work produces everyday household objects by Belgium's leading designers. The look is minimal but solid, and most pieces are still made by hand. Among their best sellers is John Pawson's bronze sand-filled bowl (www.whenobjectswork.be).

Extremis

Extremis was established in 1994 by designer Dirk Wynants. The company now produces witty and practical outdoor furniture by him and other designers. Top sellers include Sticks, a semitransparent room divider made of glass-fiber rods (www.extremis.be).

Bulo

A high-end experimental office furniture company founded in 1963, Bulo is famous for its Carte Blanche series, in which they invite designers from all disciplines—including fashion designers Ann Demeulemeester and Dirk Bikkembergs—to produce a product that interprets the office. They've had the most success with Jean Nouvel's well-balanced executive Normal collection, and the sleek, aluminum-legged H20 series by Bataille Ibens (www.bulo.com).

Quinze & Milan

Founded in 1999 by artist-designer Arne Quinze and Yves Milan (who has since left the company), this multidisciplinary company makes a range of modern furniture, including the "Primary Pouf 01"—a foam cube in bright colors that works as a stool or table—and the Honeycomb shelving system by Clive Wilkinson. This is an example of a younger style now emerging from Belgium that is cutting-edge yet practical (www.quinzeandmilan.tv).

Bataille Ibens

Architects Claire Bataille and Paul Ibens started their Antwerp practice in 1968 and are widely credited with sparking the international interest in minimalism. They are characterized by high-tech but comfortable design lacking in superfluous decoration. They design interiors and commercial spaces as well as products for Wow, Bulo and Obumex (www.bataille-ibens.be).

Xavier Lust

Xavier Lust is one of the first Belgian designers to achieve international recognition—for his stackable Extra chair made by Driade in 2004. Known for his sculptural metal furniture, including the elegant Banc bench for MDF Italia, he now works with brands such as De Padova, Driade, Moroso and Extremis. He also designs monochrome high-tech interiors (www.xavierlust.com).

Danny Venlet's Easy Rider chair, produced by **Bulo.**

Glenn Sestig Architects

Belgium's hottest architect, Glenn Sestig is the man behind the Molotov Lounge in Antwerp, voted the Best New Club of 2005 by Wallpaper Magazine. He designs everything from fashion stores (including the very trendy Verso in Antwerp) to hotels (www.glennsestigarchitects.com).

Danny Venlet

Raised in Australia, he opened his own studio, Venlet Interior Architecture, in 1991 in Brussels. He's the most decorative of the Belgian designers—his forms are sensual but, as is typical with Belgian design, toned down. His design projects range from private mansions, lofts, bars and restaurants all the way to showrooms and offices of large companies such as Timberland or Siemens. He also designs lighting and furniture for Bulo, Viteo and Coro (www.venlet.net).

Designers add comfort to minimalism

Continued from previous page
vettersstraat 38/40, Nieuwe Gaanderij 23; www.magazyn.be).

Obumex

This is a refreshing alternative to the Bulthaup or Boffi kitchens one now sees around the world. Working with designers like Maarten Van Severen, Jean De Meulder, Vincent Van Duysen and John Pawson, Obumex produces a large range of elegant and beautifully crafted kitchens that somehow manage to feel contemporary without looking overly technical. Clients choose their favorite design concept—in the case of Mr. Pawson's kitchen, they can expect no handles or any decorative details—and the kitchens are made to their precise measurements from scratch, for prices beginning at €50,000 (☎ 32-3-238-00-30; Leopold de Waelplaats 20; www.obumex.be).

Flamant

A Belgian chain started 25 years ago and now run by three Flamant brothers, it ticks the boxes with its neutral linens, home accessories and decorative furniture. Here you can find anything from floppy sofas (from €2,500) to candles, paints and picture frames. In Antwerp the shop is also a gathering place for well-heeled middle-aged women who frequent the café/bar upstairs (☎ 32-3-226-77-60; Lange Gasthuisstraat 12/14; www.flamant.com).

Libeco Home Stores

Many of Axel Vervoordt's linens for upholstery come from Libeco, which was founded in 1860. It's always chock-a-block with Flemish housewives buying sheets and fabrics for curtains and upholstery. They offer many ranges of sheets (at around €288) from heavy rustic linens to delicate floral patterns.

They stock a huge range of heavy natural linens at a fraction of what they cost abroad—and they will ship at a nominal fee of €25 in Europe (☎ 32-3-232-39-09; Steenhouwersvest 51; www.libecohomestores.com).

Den 18 Vintage & Antiques

This is one of the most popular antique stores in Antwerp; it mixes Belgian antiques with 1950s pieces and Eames furniture. Make this a starting point on Kloosterstraat—a short street, about two blocks—which is packed with antique stores selling decorative pieces such as mirrors and wall sconces that people like Mr. Vervoordt use to add detail to a room (Kloosterstraat 18 & 24).

Other antique stores worth checking out for their eclectic blend of antiques, decorative objects and funky ornaments include Barbara Annaert (Kloosterstraat 36; www.barbara-antiques.com); 63 Kloosterstraat (www.63kloosterstraat.com); and Full Effect (Kloosterstraat 44a; www.fulleffect.be).

Feld

Founded by Sebastien Feldbrugge, this design company offers good selection of contemporary, well-made Belgian design. Among its best known products are the boxy, minimal lacquered Bench and Table by Antwerp-based architects Claire Bataille and Paul Ibens (€2,270). The Antwerp showroom isn't always open so it's advisable to call ahead (☎ 32-3-281-26-21; Ernest Van Dijckkaai 34; www.feld.be).

Trip planner: design city

Where to stay

For the full Antwerp design experience, check into one of the city's many boutique hotels. De Witte Lelie, a townhouse with 10 rooms, is still considered the most chic, although it looks slightly dated despite new ownership (€295; ☎ 32-3-226-1966; Keizerstraat 16-18; www.dewittelelie.be).

Others hotels recommended for their design value include Hotel Julien, a historic building in the middle of Antwerp filled with mid-century design classics (€165-€270; ☎ 32-3-229-0600; Korte Nieuwstraat 24; www.hotel-julien.com); and Hotel Banks, which opened this spring, a bright, modern hotel that makes clever use of space in the middle of the shopping district. It's reasonably priced between €75-€200 a night (☎ 32-32-012720; Steenhouwersvest 55; www.hotelbanks.com).

Where to eat

Cafés and bars fill the city, but for the full Belgian design experience, I recommend the slightly formal but extremely elegant Sir Anthony Van Dyck, which is in a back alley overlooking a beautiful courtyard, and was originally renovated by Axel Vervoordt in a classic, formal style. The food is pan European and the portions are generous (€65; ☎ 32-3-231-61-70; Vlaeykensgang Oude Koornmarkt 16; www.siranthonyvandijck.be).

The very popular Dome, in an art nouveau building, is another favorite. Designed by the Belgian Jean de Meulder, it is is a good example of understated but stylish chic (€90; ☎ 32-3-239-9003; Grote Hondstraat 2; www.domeweb.be).

Belgium is of course the home of fine chocolates. Step into Günther Watté, a charming chocolate shop and café that is unique to Antwerp. A chocolate and nut bar will cost you €10 (Steenhouwersvest 30; www.watte.be).

—Helen Kirwan-Taylor

Ferran Adrià on cooking as art

By Katy McLaughlin

Chef **Ferran Adrià** (right) with a staff member in the kitchen of El Bulli. Right, caramelized **pumpkin seed oil.**

FERRAN ADRIÀ, of El Bulli restaurant, two hours north of Barcelona, is widely regarded as the world's most creative chef. El Bulli, open for six months out of the year, receives two million requests for the 8,000 reservations it takes each year. Each night, it serves a single, 35-course $300 menu with food inventions that have included foams, frozen airs, powders and hot gelatins.

In recent years, the art world has begun to treat Mr. Adrià as one of its own, raising the question of whether a chef can be considered a true artist. In 2006, Mr. Adrià won the Raymond Loewy Foundation's Lucky Strike award, a top design award shared by Karl Lagerfeld and Philippe Starck. Last year, Mr. Adrià was invited to participate in Documenta in Kassel, Germany, an art exhibit to which 100 top contemporary artists are invited every five years. Next year, Vicente Todolí, the director of London's Tate Modern museum and Richard Hamilton, an artist considered the father of "pop art," will publish a book about Mr. Adrià's participation in Documenta.

We sat down with Mr. Adrià in Los Angeles while the chef was promoting his latest book, "A Day at El Bulli: An Insight into the Ideas, Methods and Creativity of Ferran Adrià," out this week in Europe, which positions Mr. Adria's work as an artistic quest. In a two-hour long conversation—translated here from Spanish—we asked Mr. Adrià, who refers to himself as a "chef" and a "creative" interchangeably, the kind of questions one might ask a painter or sculptor: What are his influences, how does he fit into the bigger cultural picture—and why does he hate the name of the movement he started?

Q: The terms you use for your food—deconstructionism, minimalism—and the way you talk about the restaurant's different "periods" sound like art-speak. You publish catalogs of your "works" like artists do. Is your cuisine art?

In 2007, I was invited to Documenta. It was very controversial, because it was the first time a chef had been invited. Do I belong there? I don't know. I wanted to know what relationship I have in the world of art.

I thought about it for an entire year. I analyzed and thought about my work and thought about art, about what my role was in the art world. Ultimately, I realized, I'm a cook. So what we did was we invited two people each day out of the [more than 750,000 people] who were attending the [100-day] exhibition and we flew them to El Bulli for a meal.

A cook can be as artistic as you want, but you can't be in the art world. Because what we do is ephemeral. It's not moveable. It can't be in a museum.

Q: Avant-garde cooking—sometimes called "molecular gastronomy"—has been around for about 15 years and lots of other chefs are now doing it. Has it gotten harder to be original?

It is much, much more difficult now than 10 years ago. In the book, we have a chart of how we developed our philosophy. These are our big ideas. You can see that we don't have huge ideas after [the mid-1990s].

I wouldn't say it is more difficult because other chefs are now following Ferran. Because our idea is to create, which means not copying. There are very few people in cuisine in the last 25 years who have created something totally new. There are two big global culinary congresses in Spain each year—in Madrid and in San Sebastián. For the last two years, there were no important new ideas.

Other menus have soups, salads, entrees. Our menu has one Minimalism idea, one Deconstruction, one Sixth Sense dish—those play on the intellect. We can't do a menu of all foams. We have to come up with new techniques, new production methods and new philosophical lines of thought.

Q: Your goal is to create not just new dishes but totally new ways of experiencing food. How do you balance the quest for something new with the need to give your audience a point of reference?

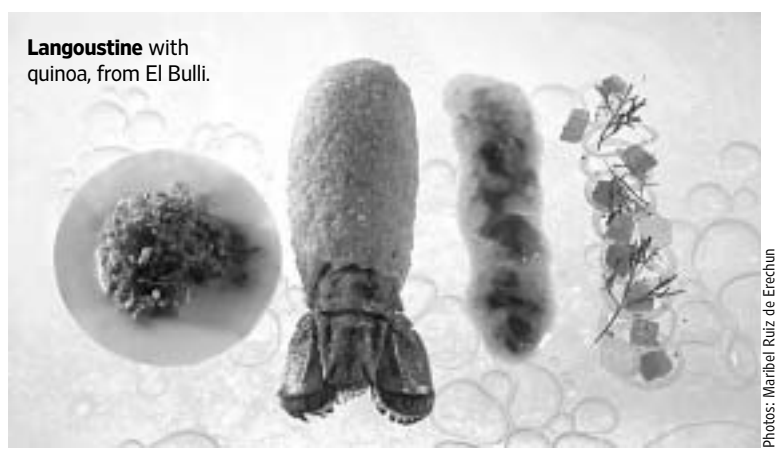
In July, Miguel Barceló, the artist who is a friend of mine, was coming to the restaurant to eat with two friends from Mali, where he has a house. I expected two artist friends of his. But the men who came were wearing traditional Mali costume—they were the guards at his house. They had never been outside of Mali.

They sat down and started eating everything. Highly praised modern artists sometimes come in and they don't like the food at El Bulli, but these two tribesmen from Mali loved it. It was the ultimate proof that we should never pre-judge what someone will think of our creativity. Creativity takes first place. Offering a reference point takes second stage.

Q: You were 13 when Francisco Franco, Spain's dictator since 1936, died, and 16 when Spain returned to democracy in 1978. You are a Catalan, sharing a cultural identity with artists including the architect Antoni Gaudí, and surrealist painters Joan Miró and Salvador Dali. Can we credit time and place for your inherent rebelliousness?

No. I was too young to remember the Franco era. I'm a Catalan but I'm a Spaniard and a European, too. I really believe that my creativity has everything to do with the economic situation in my country. This would never have happened in a poor country. I understood early on that haute cuisine is impossible as a business, especially the way we do it. We're closed for six months a year. We serve 50 people a day during our season. El Bulli runs at a deficit.

But for the last 10 years, we lived through an economic boom in Spain that let me do lucrative consulting work. For United Biscuits, it was on developing new fruit juices and biscuits. For Pepsico, it was the whole snack category, but focusing mostly on a rosemary-and-garlic-flavored chip. I consulted to create Fast Good, a chain of fast casual restaurants in NH Hotels in Spain. There is the El Bulli hotel in Seville. Those are not my own businesses; I was a paid consultant on all of them.



Langoustine with quinoa, from El Bulli.

Photos: Maribel Ruiz de Erechun

Two years ago we created a fund that will ensure that El Bulli can run for the next 30 years. Now with the economic crisis that is developing, I'm sure we wouldn't have been able to do this.

Q: I'm surprised to hear you say being Catalan is not an influence on your work. You were raised speaking a language that was banned in public settings—a good primer for a rebellious career.

On a sentimental level, I'm a Catalan. There's a special feeling between me and other Catalans or people from Barcelona. But what I really am is a child of Nouvelle Cuisine from France. It was born and consolidated in 1973. Then, Arzak [Juan María Arzak, the Basque chef at Arzak in San Sebastián] started a Spanish identity for nouvelle cuisine in Spain. That influenced me. We started by doing a Mediterranean version of nouvelle cuisine—we were one of the first haute cuisine restaurants to use extra virgin olive oil, believe it or not. Then, in 1994, we left the Mediterranean trope and began to create our own language.

Q: You didn't go to culinary school or college. Does a lack of formal education hinder or help you?

I think it was an advantage not to have an intellectual or culinary foundation. It forced me to ask why for everything. Why do we drink coffee in the morning and then eat eggs and not the other way around? The why is cultural. That may be obvious, but sometimes it's not that evident. I'm always trying to explain things.

See this chart? [Points to a flow chart in his book that identifies four areas of investigation from which new ideas can emerge.] This took me a year to create. I thought this was normal in any discipline. I took it to conferences, for design or art, and showed people this and they said, "Wow, that's something very different." I had no idea that everyone didn't make one of these. I didn't have an intellectual foundation; my creativity came from virgin curiosity.

Q: I hear you don't like the term "molecular gastronomy."

That term gives people the impression that our food is produced by science in a way that other food is not. But look at bread: There are scientists who specialize in flour characteristics or fermentation. There are fully automated factories to make bread. Bread is true molecular gastronomy.

Meanwhile, we employ 45 people to serve 50 guests—it's far from technological. The term I like is "Tecnoemocional." I don't know if you need to translate that to English, because the term Nouvelle Cuisine was never translated. It combines "techno" and "emotional."

Q: What's the hardest thing about what you do?

Coming up with the ideas. There's no time for it. Cooking is the only discipline in which the creative person also has to produce and do the marketing. Imagine if the fashion designer John Galliano had to go to the factory every day and make it work, then also had to do a fashion show every single day. When would he have time to create?

At El Bulli, we've made a model that makes it possible to create. Other chefs need to realize that they can't have six months off each year, have this incredible team of five guys—some of the best chefs in the world. El Bulli has an interesting economic model—the restaurant is a laboratory for ideas, with other businesses supporting us financially. But this model only works if you're one of the first in the field.

Q: You say it's harder and harder to create new ideas and that the financial crisis could put an end to big-money consulting jobs. Are you afraid of not being able to stay on top?

I'm always asking myself, "Are we actually going to be able to be creative next year?" But I'm not scared of not being able to do it. Because at least I have the books [Mr. Adrià and his associates have published 15 books, such as the 8,000 page General Catalogue, which documents all dishes made at El Bulli from 1983 to 2005]. And I can say, well, look at that, I did it. Our creative ego is covered.

The financial crisis doesn't really affect me. I don't have any businesses. I've left [consulting] because my future is in the kitchen. El Bulli is not a business—what kind of business runs at a loss? I could have 30 restaurants all over the world, but I don't want them. I probably spend less money a year than you do. I don't have children. When I'm at the restaurant six months a year, it's like living in a monastery. I don't want to get phone calls on this cell phone while I'm here visiting Los Angeles or talking to you. The only one I would answer is when my mom calls.

My luxury is that I've bought my freedom. It's a huge privilege for a creative to be able to live like this.

A Cultural Conversation with Alaa al Aswany / *By Emily Parker*

The Writer Speaks Out on What Plagues Egypt

New York

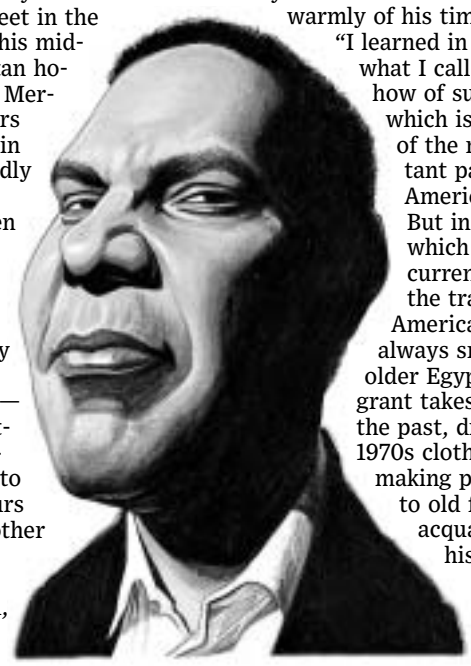
Egyptian writer Alaa al Aswany may well be the best-selling novelist in the Arab world. He is also a dentist. "You cannot make a living from literature in Egypt," he says. "Everybody has to have another profession—including Naguib Mahfouz, who was a Nobel Prize winner. And he had to work as a civil servant until the age of retirement."

This is a copyright problem, he explains. "You have to have the system to protect the copyrights of the writers, which does not exist. And I believe to a great extent it's political, in the sense that the dictatorships in the Arab world do not want, do not feel very comfortable with, the idea of an independent writer. Because an independent writer is going to earn money through his writings. And he is going to be outspoken, and he is going to be a kind of headache for the dictator."

The problems with copyright are only one symptom of a serious malady. "In Egypt, you see, our disease is the lack of democracy. . . . Poverty, injustice, even corruption, fanaticism and even terrorism could be serious complications of the disease. There is no way to cure the symptoms and complications without curing the disease."

Today, Mr. Al Aswany no longer needs to be a dentist. "Now I can quit. I have been a best-selling novelist in the West, and I earn enough money now." But "it's very useful for me to keep this profession," he explains. "Because it's a wonderful way to get in touch with the people. . . . I listen to them, they come to my clinic to talk, and we become friends."

Mr. Al Aswany, born in Cairo in 1957, is clearly a collector of stories. We meet in the restaurant of his midtown Manhattan hotel. He orders Merlot and answers my questions in polite and mildly accented English. But when we are later joined by friends, one his and one mine, he easily assumes the role of listener—quiet, thoughtful and apparently content to wile away hours peering into other people's lives.



Ismael Roldan

His breakthrough novel, "The Yacoubian Building," set in Cairo and published in Arabic in 2002, became an international hit. "Chicago," just out in the U.S., takes place in America and has already made best-seller lists in Europe. The novel is set against the backdrop of the University of Illinois histology department. The novel explores the various challenges faced by Egyptian immigrants and students making their way in Chicago.

Mr. Al Aswany, who has a master's in dentistry from the University of Illinois at Chicago, speaks warmly of his time in the U.S. "I learned in America what I call the 'know-how of success,' which is really one of the most important parts of the American culture." But in "Chicago," which is set in the current decade, the transition to American life is not always smooth. One older Egyptian immigrant takes refuge in the past, dressing in 1970s clothing and making phone calls to old friends and acquaintances in his homeland. "Egyptians began their experience of immigration in the late '60s. Before that, it was not something you could think about. . . . Because they were all the time very linked to the land." Mr. Al Aswany says a very successful surgeon in Chicago told him, "I am here, comfortable. But I will never be happy. You are in Egypt, you are not comfortable . . . but at least you'll have some moments you could be happy."

Some of Egypt's current woes may go back to Gamal Abdel Nasser, president from 1954 to 1970. Mr. Al Aswany stresses that Nasser was "a great leader" who changed society in a very positive way, giving many poor Egyptians opportunities for education and decent lives. But "he did not apply real democracy." The writer says that Nasser left a "dictatorship machine" on, ready for the next person to get in the driver's seat.

When it comes to the practice of religion, Mr. Al Aswany describes a different past. "The Egyptian interpretation of Islam was wonderful, very liberal . . . it was never a burden for us." He says that "beginning from the '80s, you had an invasion by another interpretation." Where did this come from? "Saudi Arabia," he says. "We call this the Wahhabism."

* * *

Mr. Al Aswany says that in Egypt, there are two struggles. "There is a visible struggle for democracy, and there is another struggle, very parallel to the first one—between the Egyptian tolerance and the Wahhabism." In Mr. Al Aswany's novels, the outcome of such struggles is not always pleasant. Still, he claims to be "very optimistic" about the future of his country. He describes Egypt as very "energetic," and the people as "much wiser than we think."

He points to the success of his books as evidence. "My books are having all kinds of topics that make a fanatic person unhappy. And I'm selling, I'm the best-selling novelist! When I sign in Egypt, most of my readers are young students, and most of the women are veiled."

Mr. Al Aswany describes how "Chicago" was first published in episodes in Al-Dustour (The Constitution), an independent, opposition newspaper in which he writes a column. He says he called 20 men and 20 women who he knew had read his work. He asked: Do you think the sexual scenes were too much? "The result was very interesting. Twenty women out of 20 said no, you don't have to change anything, because it was very useful for us to feel how these women were suffering."

Out of the 20 men, five said the scenes were too much, but that was because they didn't feel comfortable about their wives reading them. "These men, they don't read for themselves. They read and they imagine: What about if their wives would read this? A female reader is a normal reader. She reads, she does read a novel.

"This is Egypt, I think. This is the real Egypt," he says. "And that's why I'm optimistic."

Ms. Parker is an assistant editorial features editor of the Journal.

When Kid Sizes Come With Adult Prices

By Christine Rosen

In times of economic crisis, with thoughts of thrift in our minds, it is amusing to come across the hyper-consumerism of only the day before yesterday. Catalogs for kids, in particular, are now almost self-parodies of vanished excess. Case in point: the Pottery Barn Kids catalog that arrived in my mailbox the other day. Known for its comfortable couches and well-crafted consoles, Pottery Barn, like several other major U.S. retailers, has branched out into children's furniture and accessories. The children's spaces depicted in these pages—cocooned in "cuddle plush" fabrics and cheerful patterns—are marketed as havens in a heartless world. If we are what we buy, what do these catalogs tell us about ourselves?

Childhood is a social invention. Historians trace its development to the Renaissance, when children ceased to be viewed as miniature adults and were deemed worthy of formal education. Children also became status ambassadors for their parents. As historian F.R.H. DuBoulay noted, members of the emerging English middle class in the late Middle Ages invested their new wealth in "larger homes, with additional rooms for privacy, in portraits of themselves and their families, and in their children through education and clothing. The surplus of money made it possible to use children as objects of conspicuous consumption."

Today the merchandizing of parental hope has reached such extremes that we barely register it as unusual when a company insists that our children should live in well-appointed rooms. Restoration Hardware's "Baby & Child" catalog encourages you to "create a warm and soothing sanctuary for your little one." The sanctuary it imagines is like a royal apartment, with textured Belgian linen, drapery, chandeliers and satin-stitched sheets.

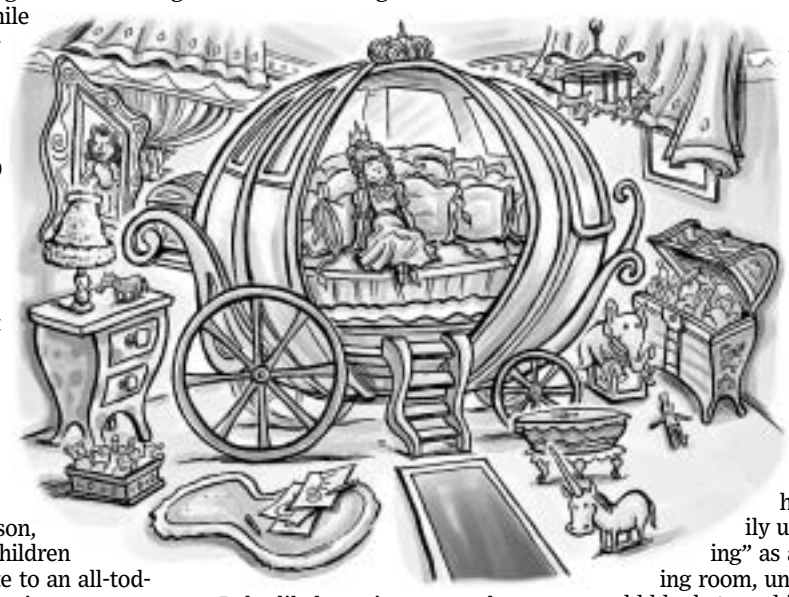
> Could a return to thrift better family life?

Evidently it is no longer enough to raise one's children with a modicum of good manners and a sense of purpose. To the many hopes that "helicopter" parents now pile on their offspring, we can add the obligation to live in the midst of tasteful décor—décor that mirrors Mommy's and Daddy's impeccable sensibilities, of course.

This impulse isn't new or entirely bad, of course. In "The Decoration of Houses" (1897), Edith Wharton and Ogden Codman devote a chapter to the design of the nursery and schoolroom. Wharton laments the "superfluous gimcrack" and floods of "bric-a-brac" that dominated children's rooms in her day. "The daily intercourse with poor pictures, trashy 'ornaments,' and badly designed furniture may, indeed, be fittingly compared with a mental diet of silly and ungrammatical story books." Wharton refuses to pander to childish tastes: She suggests Bronzino's portraits of the Medici babies and a few reproductions of Italian frescoes for a child's walls, for example, all meant to surround children with objects of quality.

As Wharton well understood, the home is where children are socialized and where their taste is first cultivated—or corrupted. Thus the most surprising thing about our contemporary kids' catalogs is the near-absence of grown-ups in them. In a 127-page orgy of must-have items in the PB Kids catalog, only two adults appear. One is a stylish-looking mother cooking in her kitchen while her daughter, bedecked in a crisp, monogrammed apron, checks the knobs on her own $900 gourmet kitchen. The other adult in the catalog is clearly an afterthought—an airport employee at the curbside check-in kiosk for Air France. Barreling toward him with their personalized wheelie bags are Austin and Madison, two precocious children evidently en route to an all-toddler getaway in Paris.

The height of neo-Gilded Age kiddie excess is perhaps Posh Tots, a Web site where parents can indulge their little darling's need for a $47,000 "Fantasy Coach" bed shaped like the pumpkin coach in Cinderella or the more economical "Chuckwagon Toddler Bed" for $13,995. ("Please note that bedding, frying pan, pot, and lantern are not included.") Posh Tots even offers a range of outdoor playhouses that are the price of a year's tuition at a private college. The subtext of many of these products is an oxymoronic parental longing for safe adventure. Posh Tots features an "Adventure Baby" bedding series where, for $600, you can buy crib bumpers and blankets with scenes from the Serengeti. Yet Adventure Baby likely cruises around a room stocked with hand sanitizer and every possible child-safety device.



Chad Crowe

Other manufacturers appeal to parents by swaddling naked consumerism in the language of global awareness and sophistication. I expect that junior really doesn't care that the beauty of Lillehammer is captured in his $40 rugby shirt. But his parents do—because it signals something refined about their own taste.

Yet families seem to show little taste for spending time together. They sit down together for meals far less often than they did 10 years ago, and even when Mom, Dad and the kids are under the same roof, each family member is plugged into his or her preferred means of electronic entertainment or communication.

And so there just might be an upside to the economic downturn. The current crisis could inspire a return to thriftier, old-fashioned practices that also bring unexpected social benefits: Cooking food for our families rather than eating prepared meals on the run, for example, is cheaper and good for the health of the family unit. Going "camping" as a family in the living room, under a tent built of old blankets and in-house ingenuity, will yield childhood memories far richer than solo "adventures" in fancy bedrooms. It is our time, not our money, that we should be spending.

Ms. Rosen is a fellow at the Ethics & Public Policy Center in Washington.

ZEN VIDA

MALLORCA

INFO@ZENVIDA.COM

ZENVIDA.COM

A RARE OPPORTUNITY TO ACQUIRE A TIMELESS MASTERPIECE IN AN OUTSTANDING LOCATION

Appliances and fixtures by Armani Casa | Bega | Dornbracht | Gaggenau | Geberit | Valli & Valli | Viessmann
Home entertainment systems by B&O [five] | Siematic gourmet kitchen | Breathtaking executive home office
Captivating bedrooms [five] | Flawless Asian inspired design | Located in the prestigious Son Vida neighbourhood
Magnificent dining room | Outstanding interiors handcrafted by Swiss artisan | Sophisticated security features
Stunning living rooms [two] | Widespread use of over 100 tons of granites and tropical woods | Recently completed

Blink

Private jet transfer arranged by Blink at prices significantly lower than existing private jet alternatives. flyblink.com

MJC Associates
Calle San Miguel 30, 5-1
07002 Palma de Mallorca
Spain
+34 971 579957
zv@mjcassociates.net
mjcassociates.net

Savills International
57 Berkeley Square
London W1J 6ER
United Kingdom
+44 (0)20 7016 3740
jleverett@savills.com
savills.co.uk/abroad

mjc associates

savills

Special Advertising Section

Demand remains high for Europe's most historic homes

By **Catherine Bolgar**

HISTORIC homes, where the walls whisper tales of the past, are highly prized rare pearls.

Guillaume Féau, owner of the Féau & Cie in Paris, installs or restores period wood paneling in homes around the world. He sees three types of clients: those who want architecture of, say, the 18th century, as a background to a modern décor; those who want a mix of history and modernity; and those who want everything authentic to the period.

People in the last group, he says, are not as numerous as the others, but "they buy the best, and they do it very seriously."

He sees an increase in interest in period living. "About 10 years ago, we were doing eight rooms a year. Now we're doing 80," he says.

Here is a sampling of outstanding period homes around Europe:

France

Most of the historic chateaux in France, dating to the 16th and 17th centuries, tend to be near Paris, says Maria-Anna Burger, co-founder of Burger Sotheby's International Realty in Cannes. In the south, "it was mostly just fishing villages, until the 18th century, when the English and Russians started coming to the Cote d'Azur," she says.

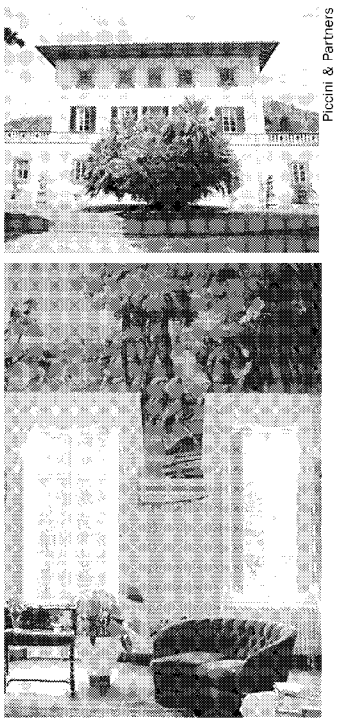
There are exceptions. Last month, Indian billionaire Vijay Mallya, chairman of United Breweries, bought the only residence on the island of Sainte-Marguerite, off the coast of Cannes. It was offered in a price range around €40 million. The property called le Grand Jardin, or Great Garden, is made up of three buildings, the Governor's House, Metayers House and the Tower, and interest was high from prospective buyers.

The legendary "man in the iron mask" was imprisoned there by King Louis XIV. A tower on the property dates to the 6th century, and the estate's walls were built by order of Cardinal Richelieu.

U.K.

Buyers of period homes in the U.K. are diverse, ranging from landed English gentry to Russian and Indian billionaires, says Will Matthews, country house agent for London-based global property consultancy Knight Frank.

He sees a handful of buyers who want a property from a specific period, such as Georgian architecture. "Some people are adamant about retaining period features," he says, "or, if those features have been removed, they go in and put them back."



Piccini & Partners

Frescoed walls and ceilings adorn a 17th-century hilltop villa in Lari, near Pisa.

One property that came on the market in September is Aldworth House in Surrey, some 40 miles southwest of London, built in 1869 for Alfred Lord Tennyson, who chose the site for its views and seclusion. With seven bedrooms, six baths, a pool and a helicopter hangar, it is receiving offers over £10 million (€13 million).

Spain

Historical properties are among the most difficult to sell, says Artur Stabinski, managing director of Fincas Exclusivas, an affiliate of Christie's Great Estates, based in Barcelona. At the same time, "prices of really unique properties don't go down," he says. In general, sellers of such rare properties prefer to wait rather than discount.

Mr. Stabinski sees history-minded buyers mostly from the northern part of Western Europe, though some also are Spaniards. Most try to maintain the period ambience in the décor. "They have the huge TV screen, but it's completely hidden until they want to look at it," he says.

Historical properties close to the sea are rare, Mr. Stabinski says. But only 10 minutes from the Mediterranean, between Girona and Figueras, lies a 12-bedroom 15th-century €6 million home covering 1,600 square meters. Most of the rooms maintain the period style, including a perfectly preserved — and still functional — 15th-century kitchen.

Just south of Barcelona, on the seafront near Sitges, a 15th- century hermitage, comprising 10 bedrooms and 10 bathrooms is listed at €3.3 million. The building was a hospital in the 17th century and turned into a church in the 18th century — it still has a chapel inside. In the post-war years, cultural icons such as Salvador Dali gathered there.

Italy

In Tuscany, Siena and Florence were at the heart of the Renaissance. The confluence of architecture, art, culture and history makes Tuscany a magnet for people seeking period living, says Giorgio Piccini, owner of Piccini & Partners, an affiliate of Christie's Great Estates in Florence.

Despite the global financial crisis, buyers are still coming, mostly from Russia, India and Switzerland, he says. Russians seek large villas near the coast, with many bedrooms and a big pool — the highest luxury target. Indians and the Swiss gravitate toward the oldest Tuscan-style homes.

Frescoed walls and ceilings adorn a 17th-century hilltop villa in Lari, near Pisa. With 12 bedrooms and 10 baths in 1,000 square meters, the home is listed at €7 million. In Chianti and also with a chapel (from 1584), Villa Strozzi, listed at €18 million, dates to the 18th century, though it was previously an Etruscan, and then a Roman, settlement. The Strozzi family was a historic enemy of the powerful Medicis.

❖ Top Picks

Barbara Bloom

'Safe,' 1998, by Barbara Bloom, on show in Berlin.

Installing an identity

Berlin ■ art

The American artist Barbara Bloom (born 1951) is known above all for her wit. Starting in the 1980s, Ms. Bloom captured the attention of the New York art world with a series of prankish installations featuring photography, sculpture and a range of found objects.

Her best known work is a room-size piece called "The Reign of Narcissism" (1989). It presented a pageant of objects, like crockery and furniture, often labeled with Ms. Bloom's signature or profile and even included her tombstone, with the year of death left open. In spite of the title and the omnipresence of the artist's imprint the installation was actually rigorously impersonal—hence the joke, and a certain attendant sinisterness, which came from the impression that in promoting a superficial aspect of her identity, Ms. Bloom had actually erased it.

Some of the objects from "The Reign of Narcissism" are on display in "The Collections of Barbara Bloom," a vast, fragmentary retrospective at the Martin-Gropius-Bau. In bringing together work from three decades, Ms. Bloom shows her era if not exactly her age. She has what must be called a late Cold War sensibility, which combines a boundless reverence for the past wonders of Central Europe—obscured during her formative years by Europe's ideological divide—with an American baby-boomer's fascination with fame. In an in early photograph called "Goethe's Corridor," taken in East Germany in 1977, Ms. Bloom displays a series of narrowing door frames from a hallway in Weimar's Goethe Haus museum. By drawing us into a tunnel of compelling, but cut-off historical spaces, Ms. Bloom creates something very beautiful—we are aware of plank floors and traces of objects beyond the doors—but full of melancholy, as the constricting view seems to echo our own inability to possess the past. —J.S. Marcus

Until Nov. 9
☎ 49-30-254-89-0
www.berlinerfestspiele.de

London ■ opera

Ian McEwan is a terrific choice as librettist for composer Michael Berkeley's new Music Theatre Wales opera, "For You," performed at the Royal Opera House. The acclaimed writer understands how to construct a genuinely operatic plot, with misunderstandings causing hubristic reversals of fortune, all in heightened dramatic form—just like several of his novels, from "Saturday" and "Atonement" to "On Chesil Beach."

In "For You," Charles, a composer with a sexual appetite as large as his ego (sung by Alan Opie, whose rich baritone makes up for his nasal diction), first humiliates a randy female horn player (a bravely bottom-baring Rachel Nicholls) for playing a wrong note, then forgives and seduces her. Meanwhile his rich wife is canoodling with the surgeon who is about to operate on her cancer; and the Polish maid, Maria (Allison Cook, whose sinister body language steals the show), sees everything.

Maria, who is obsessed by Charles, misunderstands his distressed chatter as a profession of love for her, and an encouragement to murder his wife in her hospital bed. She does the deed, but leaves a clue that incriminates Charles, thus giving her complete power over him.

To this ingeniously simple plot Mr. Berkeley has fitted music that contrasts chaos—such as the complex and enjoyable prelude, a riff on an orchestra tuning up—with the sort of lyrical order, exemplified by Maria's hymn to her native Poland, based on a striking melody that recurs several times.

After its première in London the show moves to Cardiff and Durham; then next summer to Brecon and Mold in Wales, Birmingham and Oxford.

—Paul Levy

Nov. 1 and 2
☎ 44-20-7304-4000
www.musictheatrewales.org.uk

Munich ■ art

Indian filmmaker Amar Kanwar's three-part video installation at the Haus der Kunst, called "The Torn First Pages," documents violent protests over the past two decades in the Union of Myanmar, formerly known as Burma.

The exhibition's title refers to a law imposed by the country's military dictatorship that forbids the publishing of any work without a first page containing government propaganda. Mr. Kanwar was inspired by a Burmese book seller who tore the first pages out of all the books and magazines he sold and was subsequently jailed for his actions. Each of the 19 screens in the installation represents one torn page—one small story of courage in the face of military dictatorship.

In the first section of the piece, one of the screens runs a film called "The Face," which shows a close-up of camera-shy General Than Shwe, the head of the Burmese military dictatorship. He doesn't allow his photograph to be published in the country he rules; showing his face on the screen is an act of political defiance.

Mr. Kanwar, born in 1964 in New Delhi, has established a distinctive voice, producing several films that explore the relationship between politics, violence, sexuality and justice. This work is complicated and requires some background knowledge about the situation in Burma. But it is important as both political argument and artistic statement.

—Mariana Schroeder

Until Nov. 9
☎ 49-89-211-27-115
www.hausderkunst.de

time off

Amsterdam
art
"For the Love of God" is a platinum cast of a human skull encrusted with diamonds by British artist Damien Hirst exhibited with his selection of 17th-century art exploring death.
Rijksmuseum
Until Dec. 15
☎ 31-2067-4700-0
www.rijksmuseum.nl

Antwerp
art
"Heads on Shoulders—Portrait Busts in the Low Countries, 1600-1800" presents busts of prominent figures and mythical heroes.
Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen
Until Dec. 14
☎ 32-3-238-78-09
museum.antwerpen.be/kmska

Barcelona
art
"Rodchenko: The Construction of the Future" shows 250 works by the Russian artist Alexander Rodchenko (1891-1956), including constructivist paintings, photography and posters.
La Pedrera
Until Jan. 5
☎ 34-9024-0097-3
www.caixacat.es/cccc

Basel
art
"Delicious Things from Cairo!" shows 150 objects of ancient Egyptian art, such as colorful mosaic glass from the Ptolemaic period, collected by the Swiss coffeehouse owner Achille Groppi (1890-1949).
Antikenmuseum Basel und Sammlung Ludwig
Until May 3
☎ 41-61-2011-212
www.antikenmuseumbasel.ch

art
"Venice From Canaletto and Turner to Monet" exhibits 150 oil and watercolor paintings of Venice.
Fondation Beyeler
Until Jan. 25
☎ 41-61-6459-700
www.beyeler.com

Berlin
art
"Dionysus—Metamorphosis and Ecstasy" illustrates the Greek god of wine Dionysus. Many of the works haven't been on show for decades.
Antikensammlung-Pergamonmuseum
Nov. 5-June 21
☎ 49-30-2090-5577
www.smb.spk-berlin.de

Bilbao
art
"All the Histories of Art: The Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna" exhibits masterpieces from one of the oldest museums in the world, ranging from Egyptian and ancient art to 18th-century paintings.
Guggenheim Museum Bilbao
Until Jan. 18
☎ 34-94-4359-000
www.guggenheim-bilbao.es

Cologne
art
"Artist Couples—Love, Art and Passion" shows works of famous artists influenced by their lovers, including works by Camille Claudel and Rodin, Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera and Gabriele Münter and Wassily Kandinsky.
Wallraf-Richartz-Museum & Fondation Corboud
Until Feb. 8
☎ 49-221-2212-1119
www.museenkoeln.de/wallraf-richartz-museum

© Adgp, Paris

'Rues Desprez et Vercingétorix—La Femme' (1966), by **Jacques Villeglé,** on view in Paris; below, 'Nana négresse' (1971) by **Niki de Saint Phalle,** on view in Cologne.

Dresden
music
"Jazz Days Dresden 2008" features the Swingle Singers, Hot Club d'Allemagne, Paul Kuhn Trio and Didier Lockwood Trio.
Nov. 1-16
☎ 49-351-4540-304
www.jazztage-dresden.de

Dublin
art
"In Praise of Shadows" explores shadow plays with models of theaters, drawings, collages and photos.
Irish Museum of Modern Art
Nov. 5-Jan. 4
☎ 353-1-6129-900
www.imma.ie

Düsseldorf
art
"Reiner Ruthenbeck" is a retrospective of the large, space-related work by the German sculptor (born 1937).
Kunsthalle Düsseldorf
Until Jan. 11
☎ 49-211-8996-243
www.kunsthalle-duesseldorf.de

art
"Diana and Actaeon: The Forbidden Glimpse of the Naked Body" explores erotic art with works by Courbet, Klimt, Picasso, Mapplethorpe and others.
Museum Kunst Palast
Until Feb. 15
☎ 49-211-8992-460
www.museum-kunst-palast.de

Edinburgh
history
"Heroes—19th-Century Self-Help Role Models" shows portraits of the people who were promoted as role models by the Scottish author Samuel Smiles (1812-1904) in his book "Self-Help."
Scottish National Portrait Gallery
Until Dec. 7
☎ 44-131-6246-200
www.nationalgalleries.org


© VG Bild-Kunst, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen

Frankfurt
art
"Watercolors from the Städel Museum Collection" exhibits art from the 15th century to today, including works by Albrecht Dürer, Aart Schouman, Paul Cézanne and Claes Oldenburg.
Städel Museum
Until Jan. 4
☎ 49-69-6050-980
www.staedelmuseum.de

Liverpool
photography
"Recollections: Photographs of Philip Jones Griffiths" shows images of British life in the 1950s and 1960s by Welsh photojournalist Philip Jones Griffiths (1938-2008).
National Conservation Centre
Until Feb. 22
☎ 44-151-4784-999
www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/conservation

London
art
"Paths to Fame: Turner Watercolours" shows works by British artist J.M.W. Turner (1775-1851), ranging from a view of Avon Gorge made when he was 16 years old to the monumental watercolors of his maturity.
Courtauld Gallery
Until Jan. 25
☎ 44-207-872 0220
www.courtauld.ac.uk

fashion
"Billy: Bill Gibb's Moment in Time" shows fashion and photography from British designer Bill Gibb (1943-1988).
Fashion and Textile Museum
Until Jan. 16
☎ 44-20-7407-8664
www.ftmlondon.org

art
"Renaissance Faces: Van Eyck to Titian" exhibits 70 portraits by masters such as Raphael, Titian, Botticelli, Van Eyck, Holbein and Dürer.
National Gallery
Until Jan. 18
☎ 44-20-7747-2885
www.nationalgallery.org.uk

Paris
art
"Jacques Villeglé, la Comedie Urbaine" presents works by French mixed-media artist Jacques Villeglé (born 1926).
Centre Georges Pompidou
Until Jan. 5
☎ 33-1-4478-1233
www.centrepompidou.fr

Parma
art
"Correggio Parma" is an exhibition of Renaissance painter Antonio Allegri, better known as Correggio (circa 1490-1534), including the ceiling frescoes of Parma's cathedral, San Giovanni's church and his masterpiece, "Madonna With St. Jerome" (1522).
Galleria Nazionale
Until Jan. 25
☎ 39-521-2333-09
www.gallerianazionaleparma.it

Prague
photography
"Bohumil Stastny: Photographs"(1905-1991) shows the work of the Czechoslovakian photojournalism pioneer Bohumil Stastny.
Galerie Josefa Sudka
Until Jan. 4
☎ 420-2575-3148-9
www.upm.cz

Vienna
art
"Routes through Modern Art: From French Impressionism to Abstract Expressionism" presents art by Paul Klee, Marc Chagall, Käthe Kollwitz, Pablo Picasso, Sam Francis and Alberto Giacometti.
Albertina
Nov. 7-Feb. 8
☎ 43-1-5348-30
www.albertina.at

Source: ArtBase Global Arts News Service, WSJE research.

WSJ.com

What's on
WSJ.com subscribers can see an expanded version of the European arts-and-culture calendar at WSJ.com/Europe