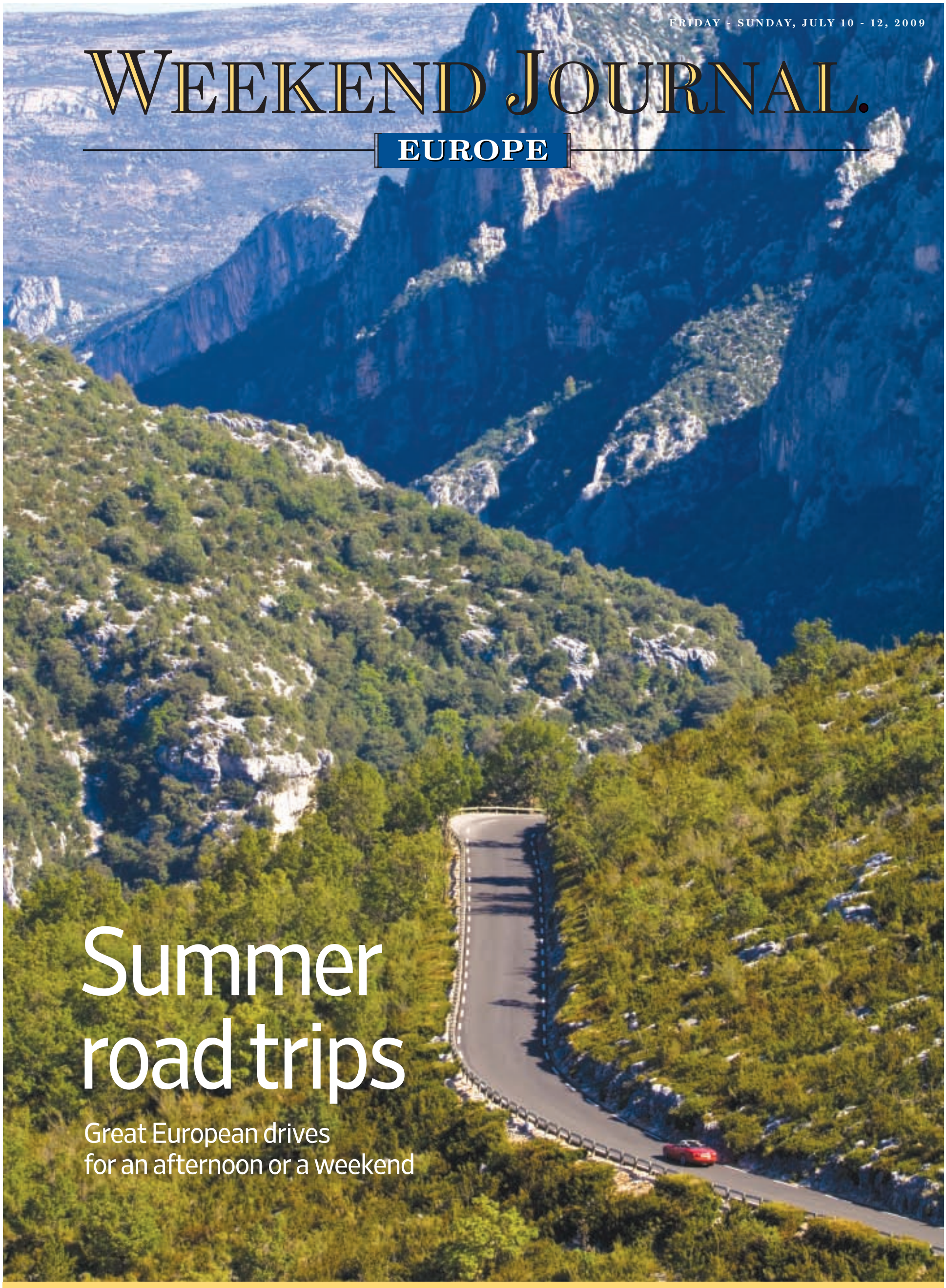
FRIDAY - SUNDAY, JULY 10 - 12, 2009

WEEKEND JOURNAL.

EUROPE



Summer road trips

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for an afternoon or a weekend

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On cover, the Grand Canyon du Verdon, in Provence. (Photo: Alamy)

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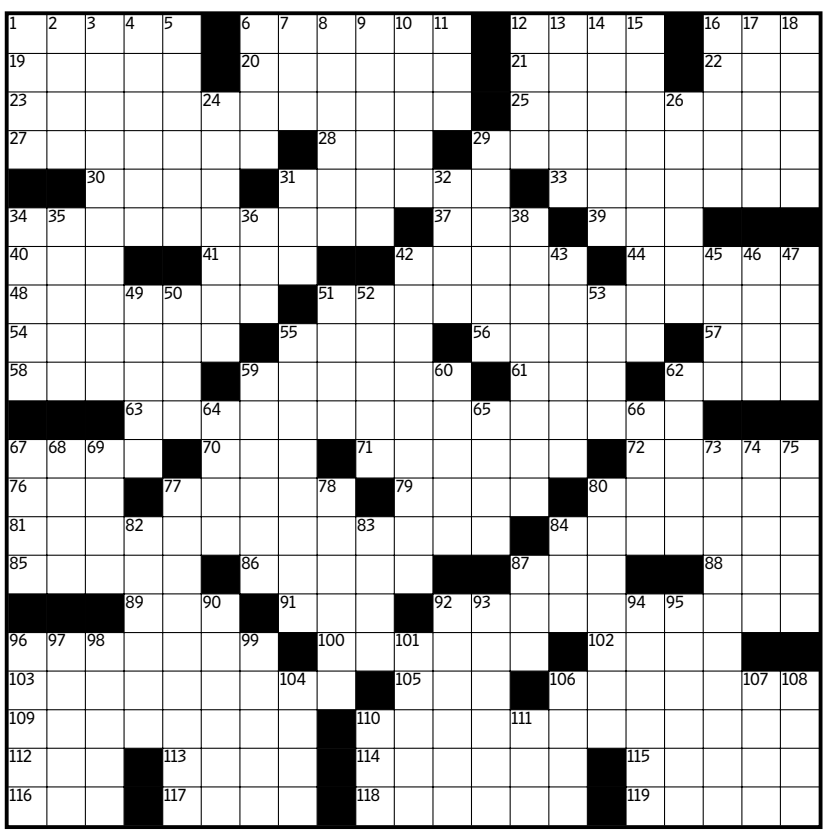
THE JOURNAL CROSSWORD / Edited by Mike Shenk

On the Waterfront / by Brendan Emmett Quigley & Francis Heaney



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Last Week's Solution

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Of Birkins and BlackBerrys: Top style books

Ellen Weinstein

On Style
CHRISTINA BINKLEY

STYLE BOOKS CAN be more than "how to wear this, how not to embarrass yourself in that." If you define style broadly, there is nary a corner of our lives unaffected by style, from the cars we drive to how we text.

The symbols that enable us to recognize, for better or worse, class, wealth, education, eccentricity, even a sense of humor—that's style. It's not just that an Hermès Birkin bag identifies a woman as rich and style-conscious; the uplifted cadence that makes a statement sound like a question is a style of speech that identifies the speaker as 20something. Is a person who lives in a Tudor home more conservative than someone who lives in a post-modern loft? Style is the way we interpret each other, usually unconsciously, through how we look and behave.

Books that poke fun, advise or otherwise shed light on style have been piling up on my desk. My favorites are those that help determine when we're interpreting all those signals correctly and how we can send the signals we want. Here are some of my recent picks:

I have been BlackBerrying with both thumbs since reading "How Not to Act Old: 185 Ways to Pass for Phat, Sick, Hot, Dope, Awesome, or at Least Not Totally Lame," by Pamela Redmond Satran (HarperCollins). Until I read this book, which is due out in August, I hadn't actually realized that texting with one's index finger is a sign of age. It also hadn't dawned on me that it was possible to "Facebook old" (or even to use Facebook as a verb). Ms. Satran's take on the latest generation gap is as insightful as it is entertaining—a comic blend of advice and anthropology that skewers both young and old.

The book is arranged as a series of rules, such as "#54 Don't Fear Rap," in which Ms. Satran offers nine "easy listenin'" songs, including Soulja Boy's "Crank Dat Dance" and Ludacris's "Midnight Train." In a section called "15 Cool Dead Famous People," Ms. Satran suggests it is OK to name-drop Abraham Lincoln, Coco Chanel and Kurt Cobain in the same sentence.

By the way, your Birkenstocks are OK again: Rule #183 lists eight items of hipster gear that even oldies can wear, including Ray-Bans with prescription lenses and, yes, orthopedic sandals from Germany.

Our culture worships youth. Why not learn to speak the language, even if you're not a native?

As long as we're mocking young and old, let's ridicule the rich. With astoundingly poor timing, "The Official Filthy Rich Handbook (How The Other .0001% Lives)" by Christopher Tennant (Workman Publishing) came out last year, just before the recession. Public fascination with consumerism has since turned to rage at the haves who left so many others having not.

That's too bad, because as Bernie Madoff heads off to do 150 years in a new set of pinstripes, it seems timely to poke fun at the luxury life he once led. Sure, it may re-stimulate your anger, but they say that laughter is the best therapy.

The types described in the book's "Preppy Handbook"-style mock profiles, such as "The Speculator" ("Money's just a way of keepin' score") and "The Impresario ("Money ain't a thang, it's everything"), have real-life counterparts on our front pages today. Members of Congress or the SEC may want to consider Mr. Tennant's top picks for the best countries best to stash your cash in—Liechtenstein, the Marshall Islands, Monaco and Liberia.

If you prefer a total lack of irony, "Style Evolution, How to Create Ageless Personal Style in Your 40s and Beyond," by Kendall Farr (Penguin Group) offers advice practically worth sticky-noting on your computer monitor. "The softer a woman's body becomes, the more structure she needs in her clothes." Truer words were never writ.

Author and stylist Ms. Farr picks up where "How Not to Act Old" leaves off—without the humor. "What does it mean to have reached middle age in a time of celebrity adulation, youth obsession, stripper culture and the Real Housewives franchise?" she asks.

"For starters, it means you are likely to be confused and frustrated when you shop for new clothes."

Boomers created our youth obsession, so it's ironic that they (and the Gen-Xers who followed) might now need a book to deal with it. This is a dual pep talk and primer for those of us whose style hasn't evolved since our first full-time job. As with any fashion book—and fashion itself—the trend-conscious elements of this one will have a shelf life of only a few years. But the classic parts will remain. For instance, when buying a scarf, be sure the exposed ends are nicely finished.

With little concern about age, Bridget Brennan, chief executive of a consulting company called Female Factor, suggests that many businesses are missing out by not catering to women. In "Why She Buys, The New Strategy for Reaching the World's Most Powerful Consumers" (Crown Business), Ms. Brennan is all about commerce as she observes, "If the consumer economy had a sex, it would be female. If the business world had a sex, it would be male. And therein lies the pickle."

Ms. Brennan attributes the success of the Wii gaming device to Nintendo's smart catering to women's sensibilities. I concur, having in my household refused all manner of evil gun-toting videogames and then caved to the Wii device based on its purported athletic offerings. No bloody death toll? I'm in.

Women care about details, Ms. Brennan argues, hilariously dissing a BMW salesman's sorry attempt to sell her a car with flimsy cup holders.

This book isn't groundbreaking. Procter & Gamble realized decades ago that women make most consumer decisions. But Ms. Brennan explores the marketing opportunities offered by trends such as delayed marriage, divorce and coddled kids—all of which leave women making even more buying decisions.

She argues that women are more likely to describe a product or service to friends—and to feel a sense of obligation to spread the news. "I love your new dress," a woman says to her friend. "Bloomingdale's!" the friend responds. Are we a marketer's dream, or what?

Weirdly, there's also business acumen worth absorbing in "Bringing Home the Birkin: My Life In Hot Pursuit of the World's Most Coveted Handbag," by Michael Tonello (William Morrow). I expected to dislike this book, or at least to yawn as I skimmed it, but it turned out to be a snarky, real-life adventure tale that I could barely put down.

As Mr. Tonello pursues a career as an Hermès re-seller on eBay, he encounters romance, espionage, tragedy, even thugs. Great literature it doesn't attempt to be. But it sheds light on the limited-edition luxury business that Hermès and its brethren would prefer to keep shrouded.

The business concept, in a nutshell, is enforced scarcity. Anyone who has placed her name on a handbag waiting list should digest this: "What a RESERVED sign on a croc bag in the window told me was (a) they definitely had a Birkin and (b) I needed to add about a grand to the formula to ensure they would crack and sell it to me," Mr. Tonello writes.

If ever there's been a must-read book about the deeply non-frivolous role of fashion in our lives, this is it: "Love, Loss and What I Wore," by Ilene Beckerman (Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill). Deceptively simple and artfully illustrated, it's actually a saga, yet short enough to be digested over aperitifs. Starting with her 1940s childhood, the author recalls with startling detail the clothes she wore at key and mundane events in her life. "The spring after my mother died, my father took me to B. Altman's department store on Fifth Avenue to buy a dress for my thirteenth birthday," she writes.

It's a quite a feat to combine a tragedy and a shopping trip in a single sentence. With that, Ms. Beckerman's closet of lovingly home-sewn clothes begins to become a store-bought wardrobe that will fuel her through dating, marriage and a full life.

Mother of invention: Björk's live album

By Christopher John Farley

SEVEN YEARS AGO, when Björk was pregnant, she decided it was a good idea to also prepare for the delivery of something else: a concert album.

The Icelandic singer-songwriter had been recording her concerts for years, but had never gotten around to going through all the material she had compiled. "I decided to use my nesting hormones to go through 10 years of live recordings," she says.

Ísadóra, Björk's second child, was born in 2002. Her new live album, "Voltaic," a CD/DVD set that was inspired by some of the archival work she did during her pregnancy, was released last week. The album features songs that Björk performed during her Volta tour in 2007.

The 43-year-old singer makes music that melds edgy beats with dreamlike lyrics. She's known for her whimsical, sometimes provocative ideas, whether in fashion (she famously wore a dress shaped like a swan to the 2001 Academy Awards) or in music (she drew criticism from Chinese authorities for performing her song "Declare Independence" in Shanghai in 2008 and saying "Tibet" at the close of the number).


Bernhard Kristin/ILC

Björk says her songs often arrive in two parts—the melodies come to her first, and then she searches for the right words to match. The melody for "Hyperballad," one of the songs on the new live set, haunted her for some time before she finally wrote it down. "It's good when you have that kind of trust with your subconscious that you can not try to catch a melody or hunt it and if it comes back it means it's good enough," she says.

She believes that melodies are ancient things, "buried deep in our genes," and are found, not created: "Melody is the most intuitive part of the work for me. I just try to let them happen." Words are harder. She will sit with a cup of tea and try to summon up lyrics. In recent years, she's been inspired by E.E. Cummings. One track on the new release, "Sonnets/Unrealities XI," draws from his poetry. "If I was like a hundred-times better poet I would write like him," she says.

Iceland has been hard hit by the global downturn, and Björk has traveled across the country to motivate her fellow citizens to start small "home-grown" companies. "Artists never know when or if or where their next idea is going to come from," she says. "In recession times, the experience of being an artist is helpful to people to try to inspire them."

Johnny Depp and Marion Cotillard in 'Public Enemies'; below, an 'Ice Age' critter.

Universal Pictures

'Enemies': Arresting, remote

Film
JOE MORGENSTERN

MICHAEL MANN'S "Public Enemies" never lacks for interest, or interesting info. Back in the 1930s, we learn, the FBI was simply called the Bureau of Investigation before being formally Federalized. Mr. Mann uses the movie to conduct his own investigation of an era when J. Edgar Hoover and his agents were locked in self-promotional combat with self-mythologizing criminals. This gangster drama, starring Johnny Depp as Public Enemy Number One, the bank robber John Dillinger, and Christian Bale as Dillinger's G-Man nemesis, Melvin Purvis, is marvelously detailed and meticulously crafted, an elegant evocation of Depression-era America and its fascination with crime. What the movie lacks is any sense of elation—it's joyless by choice—although moments of passion burst through the prevailing gloom like muzzle flashes in the night.

Mr. Depp's performance sets the tone. Don't look for Johnny Depp the entertainer. The sly eccentric who gave "Pirates of the Caribbean" its whimsical soul is nowhere to be found. This time the actor gives himself, heart and head, to a portrayal of a tightly disciplined not-so-bad guy who speaks in terse zingers ("What's on your mind?" his lawyer asks. "The electric chair," Dillinger replies), who comes to enjoy the public's adulation, and struggles to reconcile the risks he runs for money, plus a generous measure of fame, with the love he feels for his beautiful girlfriend, Billie Frechette (Marion Cotillard). It's an impressive performance, rather than an exciting one, and for a while Mr. Bale's work is of a piece—his Purvis seems to be Dillinger seen darkly in a mirror. All too often, though, the G-Man sounds and even looks like the Dark Knight, voice stuck in breathy mutterings, eyes burning beneath a fedora carapace.

The one consistent source of delight is Ms. Cotillard, who won an Oscar last year for her performance as Edith Piaf in "La Vie en Rose." Watch closely what she does and you still won't know how she does it—her scenes are the dramatic equivalent of Ricky Jay's card tricks. It's abundantly clear, though, that an actress of singular skill has created a complex character—smart, forthright, fearless and yet touchingly tender—out of relatively little screen time. Billie Frechette tells Dillinger that she's half American Indian; this has allowed Ms. Cotillard to transpose any trace of her own French accent into enchanting new keys. Yet I could almost hear echoes of Piaf singing "Mon homme" in Billie's poignant exclamation to a Chicago cop who's been roughing her up: "When my Johnny finds out how you slapped around his girl, you know what's going to happen to you, fat boy."

John Dillinger was a purposeful criminal, and Michael Mann is a purposeful director. That's not to equate the career categories, only to say that Mr. Mann makes movies with distinctive looks (often dark) and distinctive perspectives (often distant). Several set pieces serve as reminders, if any are needed, of his virtuosity: a trackdown in an apple orchard; a precision-planned jailbreak; a playful interlude involving J. Edgar Hoover in a newsreel. Best of all, he does a bravura dramatization of the FBI's botched attempt to capture Dillinger and his gang at a rustic lodge in northern Wisconsin.

To find tonal variety in the moral and visual darkness of "Public Enemies," Mr. Mann and his masterful cinematographer, Dante Spinotti, chose high-definition digital equipment, which shines in low-light situations, instead of using film, which needs more light but yields greater nuance. The results can be sumptuous, as well as shadowy; an overhead shot, in blacks and browns, of the Dillinger gang entering a bank; a nighttime media circus, 1930s version, lit by news photographers' flares; a remarkable re-creation of the FBI's ambush outside Chicago's Biograph theater, where Dillinger went to see a Clark Gable gangster film called "Manhattan Melodrama." The scene inside the theater is fascinating too; Dillinger connects intensely with Gable's Blackie Gallagher, whose personality is as exuberant as Dillinger's is muted. Yet our connections with "Public Enemies" remain abstract. The darkness and the distance kill the fun.

Twentieth Century Fox

'Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs'

If you think it was tough being a mammoth in the Ice Age, imagine how it was for two mammoths forced to carry the lion's share of the plot in the first two "Ice Age" films. Fortunately for them, if not for the cause of enlightenment, "Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs," conflates the planet's history by 65 million years so that Manny and Ellie, who are about to become parents, can share the screen, however warily, with a couple of T-rexes and other denizens of the Cretaceous period. The producers' decision makes commercial sense. There's only so much drama to be found in Ice Age creatures, and only so much visual variety to be found in ice. But the strategy, like the series' latest edition, soon melts down. "Ice Age" continues to depend heavily, and I mean heavily, on those trudging mammoths, and on a couple of squirrels—the previously adorable Scrat having been given a girlfriend—who work their acorn routine to death.

The movie is pleasant enough for kids and will surely play to large numbers of them during the summer: If 80% of success is showing up, the main component of box-office success is filling a need. But there's also a sense of ineptness in a script that constantly reaches, with only modest success, for amusing things that the mammoths and their friends can do.

WSJ.com

Opening this week in Europe

- **Adventureland** Hungary
- **Crossing Over** Turkey
- **Last Chance Harvey** Greece
- **Moon** U.K.
- **Public Enemies** Hungary
- **Rudo y Cursi** Netherlands
- **The Limits of Control** Czech Republic
- **The Proposal** Estonia
- **The Reader** France

Source: IMDB

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'Humpday': A dare too far

By Michelle Kung

SEATTLE-BASED filmmaker Lynn Shelton may be a happily married mother of one, but the 43-year-old writer/director of "Humpday"—a comedy-drama about two childless thirtysomething friends (Mark Duplass, Joshua Leonard) who are drawn into a sexually charged dare—had no problem identifying with her film's antsy male protagonists. (The film opens in limited release this weekend.)

"In my film, these two dudes may be the main characters, but what I'm really exploring is the universal idea of the self—learning how to be true to the vision we have of ourselves, and how we're constantly disappointing ourselves as we get older," says Ms. Shelton. "It's like when Mike Leigh gets asked about only making films about women. He always replies that he's just making movies about people, and that's exactly how I feel."

In the movie, Mr. Duplass plays Ben, who is settling into married life and working on having his first child. His sedate life is interrupted when his artsy, carefree pal Andrew arrives unexpectedly. Both men are jealous of each other's lives. Despite the fact that both are straight, neither is willing to back off from a dare to act in a gay pornographic film together because each man wants to prove that he is edgier than the other.

Shot in true independent style over 10 days for a shoestring budget, "Humpday" was born out of Ms. Shelton's desire to work with Mr. Duplass, an actor/filmmaker known for his cinematic experimentations with "Mumblecore," a film genre known for its ultra-low budgets and focus on personal relationships.

Ms. Shelton, who has "no relationship with the traditional film industry," also waited until she had the funds to self-produce the film, so she wouldn't have to worry about making it commercially viable.

The director, who has made several other small-budget films, also made the decision to have her actors improvise all of their lines, though she did spell out each scene's emotional arc for them.

"Instead of rehearsing, we talked things out, and then I turned on two cameras," says Ms. Shelton, who adds that she was limited, because of cost, to only two or three takes per scene. "I'm usually pretty hands off because I know I'll be able to exert my narrative control in the editing room later on," she says.

Mr. Leonard, best known for co-starring in "The Blair Witch Project," says he appreciated Ms. Shelton's approach.

"Even though there wasn't a script and Mark and I didn't know the film's ending when we started, shooting the film in sequence helped us find the emotional beat of our characters," says Mr. Leonard. "I'd love to make more money and to work with the Johnny Depps of the world, but I'll also never want to give up the excitement, and old-fashioned, punk-rock feel of making a real down-and-dirty film like 'Humpday.'"

Magnolia Pictures (2)

Actors Mark Duplass (left) and Joshua Leonard in 'Humpday'; above, the film's director Lynn Shelton.

The bohemians' rhapsody

Courtauld Gallery show traces the Bloomsbury Group's influence on modern interiors

By Paul Levy
Special to The Wall Street Journal

IF YOU VISIT THE Roger Fry bequest at the Courtauld Gallery in London's vast Somerset House anytime during the summer, you'll find a cluster of (mostly American) students hovering around the work of the Bloomsbury painters: Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, and Fry himself. The students are invariably fascinated by the work and lifestyle of that group of people who (as the anonymous wit said) "lived in squares but loved in triangles" in the early 20th century. This coterie of close friends included powerful intellects allied to great talents. Virginia and Leonard Woolf, Lytton Strachey, John Maynard Keynes and E.M. Forster, and the critics Clive Bell and Fry, were influenced—some more, some less—by the Cambridge philosopher G.E. Moore.

The Bloomsbury artists, however, had another, more practical aspect to their work. The Courtauld's splendid exhibition, "Beyond Bloomsbury: Designs of the Omega Workshops 1913-19," which runs until Sept. 20, lifts them out of the context of the Bloomsbury Group of bohemian artists and intellectuals.

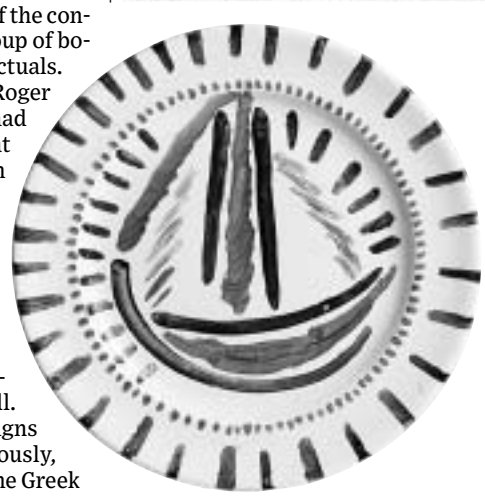
In the summer of 1913, Roger Fry (who from 1904-10 had been curator of paintings at the Metropolitan Museum in New York) founded the Omega Workshops, which produced wares for the Omega "brand" from designs by Fry, Bell and Grant, as well as Wyndham Lewis, Frederick Etchells, Henri Gaudier-Brzeska and Winifred Gill. Fry required that the designs were produced anonymously, with only the brand logo, the Greek letter "omega" in a square.

The company premises at 33 Fitzroy Square in Bloomsbury were both a working studio and showroom. Clients could buy smaller items, order work ranging from clothing to furniture, rugs, linens and ceramics in a large variety of designs—or even commission an entire interior. The shop was unique in London, because artists' designs were sold directly to the customers, who included the Woolfs, Forster, George Bernard Shaw, H.G. Wells, W.B. Yeats and swanky, but unconventional socialites such as Lady Ottoline Morrell, Maud Cunard and Gertrude Stein.

Fry's intention was to oppose mainstream, stuffy Edwardian domestic interiors by marketing new, exciting objects for the home. In 1913 he told a journalist that "it is time that the spirit of fun was introduced into furniture and into fabrics. We have suffered too long from the dull and the stupidly serious."

What his artists and craftsmen replaced these objects with was astonishing, even by today's standards. For example, one of the prize objects in the show is a "Painted silk stole with a pair of confronted peacocks at each end." In fact this wispy, delicate, 105-by-217 centimeter length of fine white chiffon is almost completely abstract, the peacock's bodies being hatchings instead of blocks of color. There are no black outlines at all, and the wings and tails are drawn in bold, thick, angular lines of primary colors, making a typically dynamic pattern.

The Courtauld Gallery, London (2)



The Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Above, clockwise from top: an Omega Workshops design for a peacock stole; a rug by Vanessa Bell; a painted plate, attributed to Duncan Grant. Right, Roger Fry in the Omega Workshops.

As the show's catalog puts it, the stole "makes no concessions to functionality as an item of clothing. Whether worn like a scarf or flung over the shoulders, this extreme piece of wearable art does not so much enhance or flatter the wearer as turn her into a mobile Fauve painting."

There are many books (and many more Ph.D theses) about how the Bloomsbury artists and critics transmitted to the English-speaking world French movements in the arts, especially those of Post-Impressionism (a term invented by Fry) and their affinity for Matisse. But it was Japanese poet and essayist Yone Noguchi (father of sculptor Isamu Noguchi) who, visiting the Omega in its first winter of 1913-14, noticed the strong alliance of much Omega work with Japanese styles and techniques, combined with motifs and perspectives taken from Cubism. You don't get much more avant-garde than that.

Even today these look radical, though also very much to our contemporary taste. This is especially true of the textiles that are the major part of this glorious show. Few art historians rate Fry very highly as a painter; but as a designer he could be superlative. His printed linen design "Amenophis" (loaned, as are many of the exhibits, by the Victoria and Albert Museum) is a stunning, dense, repeating pattern of overlapping blocks of subtle colors, with the most satisfying post-modern blues and reds imaginable, but is actually taken from a less successful painting. Other knockout fabrics, which one imagines the V&A could market easily today, include "Pamela," "Margery," "Mechtilde" and Bell's extraordinary design of geometric palm leaves and splodges of color, called "White."

Though it had a bit of a pacifist political agenda, Omega managed to stay open through World War I, but finally had its closing-down sale in 1919. When you look at the items in this show, you'll be amazed by the resonances with modern domestic interiors—and by how these designs from the second decade of the last century still look bolder than many of their descendants.

Spink

Coins featuring Tiberius (left) and Alexander the Great.

Change worth believing in

THE MARKET FOR collectible coins seems to be bucking current economic trends with a number of successful auctions in recent months.

"We have a bedrock of collectors with steady incomes," says coin specialist William Mackay at Spink, a London house that started trading coins in 1703.

The attitude of collectors, according to Tom Eden of London coin auctioneer Morton & Eden, is "with little return on investments, what's wrong with putting money into your hobby?"

Collecting
MARGARET STUDER

When Nomos AG—a Swiss dealer that concentrates on the high-end market—held its first public sale ever in Zurich on May 11, few lots remained unsold and many soared above estimate. An ancient, fifth-century coin from the Sicilian city of Naxos—on the front a profile of a dignified Dionysos, the god of wine, and the same subject on the reverse tipsily looking into his wine glass—fetched the highest price ever for a Greek silver coin at 914,500 Swiss francs (estimate: 400,000 Swiss francs). A sculpturally beautiful silver coin from Lycia (440-430 B.C.) with the head of a goddess, possibly Aphrodite, fetched 61,360 Swiss francs (estimate: 18,500 Swiss francs).

At Spink's large 600-lot March sale, 96% of coins were sold. A gold coin with the profile of Tiberius, emperor of Rome from 14 A.D.-37 A.D., sold for £12,750 (estimate: £7,000-£8,000). A silver coin depicting Alexander the Great wearing a helmet covered in panther skin and ornamented with bull's horns (circa 304-297 B.C.) went for £9,300 (estimate: £5,000-£6,000). On June 25, Spink's sale of ancient, British and other coins also recorded a sale-lot rate well in excess of 90%.

Collectors love a story, and Morton & Eden's sale on June 9 had a beauty. A hoard of 400-year-old coins probably hidden at the beginning of the English Civil War were found by builders working on a site in Oxfordshire in 1980. Having no idea of their value, the builder gave the coins to his 10-year-old grandson who was already an enthusiastic collector of stamps and seashells. They stayed in a shoebox for decades until the now-grown-up grandson thought they might finance his forthcoming marriage. He sold the 57 gold James I coins for £76,360 (estimate: £50,000).

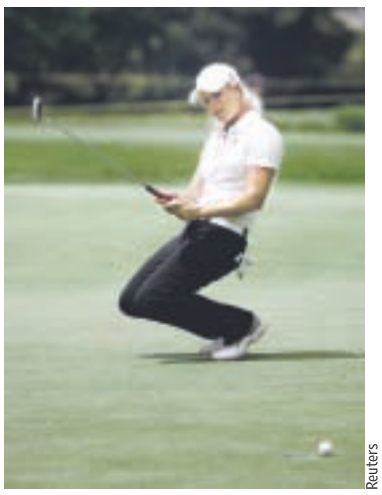
Bonhams next week will hold a sale of coins ranging from the ancient world and onwards (July 15). A highlight will be an English pattern silver coin from 1818 with the head of George III and on the reverse an image of St. George killing the dragon (estimate: £6,000-£8,000).

Women's golf goes holistic

By Hannah Karp

Lynn Marriott, left, and Pia Nilsson coach a client; right, Suzann Pettersen at the Sybase Classic LPGA event in May.

Christian Als/Berlingske for The Wall Street Journal



Reuters

EVER SINCE ANNIKA Sorenstam, one of golf's winningest players, stepped away from competition in December, many of the other players on the LPGA tour have been acting a bit strange.

Suzann Pettersen has been counting obsessively out loud as she walks down the fairway. Italy's Giulia Sergas has been pretending to snowboard while waiting for her turn. Finland's Minea Blomqvist has been attempting to channel Ms. Sorenstam's spirit, mimicking her posture, tempo and facial expressions. And this April at the Kraft Nabisco Championship in Rancho Mirage, Calif., Brittany Lincicome sang and whistled country songs by Keith Urban and Sugarland after nearly every shot. She won the tournament—her first major victory.

"Everyone probably heard, but it really helped me take my mind off my bad shots," says Ms. Lincicome, who has been singing on the course ever since.

As the U.S. Women's Open kicks off in Bethlehem, Pa., golf fans can thank Ms. Sorenstam's longtime mentor, Pia Nilsson, and her coaching partner, Lynn Marriott, for the increase in odd behavior on the greens. Now a regular presence at tour events, the duo has picked up nearly 20 new tour clients since the retirement of Ms. Nilsson's star pupil last year. Together, they help players win with a "holistic" approach that's based on who each client is as a "whole person."

Instead of focusing only on a player's stance or swing, Ms. Nilsson and Ms. Marriott say they take players' spiritual, social, physical, mental and emotional needs into account as well, suggesting remedies that often have little to do with technical golf and have included listening to iPods, playing Sudoku, jumping up and down or staring up at the trees during downtime on the course.

"We know teachers and coaches are wondering what we're doing," says Ms. Nilsson, who notes on their Web site that she hates cocktail parties, loves the color blue, makes her own cereal and has kept stats on the number of ice cream cones she eats each summer. Ms. Marriott enjoys gardening, values kindness, hates "when things are messy" and does her spiritual rejuvenating in Sedona, Ariz.

Traditionalists may balk at the pair's hippie-dippie philosophy, but both come from serious golf backgrounds. Ms. Nilsson played golf at Arizona State University, spent five years on the LPGA tour and nearly 10 years as the head coach of Sweden's national women's teams, where she met Ms. Sorenstam.

Ms. Marriott directed education at ASU's golf course and worked for years as the LPGA's director of teacher training. Their 10-year-old golf school in Phoenix, named Vision 54 for the idea that any player has the potential to birdie every hole on the golf course for an 18-under-par round of 54, accepts both pros and amateurs, charging $300 per hour and more than $2,000 for a three-day course.

Before taking on new clients, Ms. Nilsson and Ms. Marriott like to observe a player in competition and then ask questions like "What do you love most about the game?" "What are you aware of during swings?" and "What are you saying to yourself after shots?"

The last question is key. Ms. Nilsson and Ms. Marriott are part of a growing camp that believes ignoring or bottling up emotional impulses may do more harm than good.

Admired for her steely composure on the course, Ms. Sorenstam nonetheless says she struggled with "butterflies" at tournaments. Ms. Nilsson saw her take creative steps to harness her nervous energy, such as writing inspirational notes to herself on the bill of her cap or visor that she could read when the pressure mounted, and repeating mantras like "fairway green" when she hit shots she didn't like. Through it all, the coach says Ms. Sorenstam had an exceptional knack for "managing her mind."

That's why when Ms. Sorenstam retired from the Tour in 2008, many were surprised to see the world's top woman golfer walk away from tournament play. Her goal was to translate 72 LPGA tournament wins—including 10 majors—into a livelihood building golf courses, a golf academy, a foundation and starting other business ventures.

"Tour professionals need to make sure that they have more meaningful roles than just being a golfer," says Ms. Nilsson, who says she avoided giving Ms. Sorenstam concrete career advice but was constantly asking her how she wanted to be remembered—either five years down the road or the Monday following a tournament.

No two players get the same prescription. Ai Miyazato called Vision 54 in 2007, a year after getting her tour card, when she began having problems with her driver. To help get her performance back on track, the coaches suggested that Ms. Miyazato change her behavior off the course instead—giving her tips on everything from how to spend her days off and how to talk to the Japanese media.

"I rarely talk about my bad shots in interviews now and I always try to take in all the good things that happened in a round," says Ms. Miyazato, who now signs her name: "Ai 54." (She finished tenth in the U.S. Women's Open in 2007 and fifth in the Women's British Open a year later.)

Marcy Hart, who joined the LPGA tour in 2001, called Ms. Nilsson and Ms. Marriott in March last year because she was struggling with her putting. Their recommendations: She should try counting to 10 several times after every shot and then recite funny lines to her caddy from her favorite movie, "Meet the Parents."

"Initially it caught me a little off guard that they weren't going to teach me how to swing the golf club," recalls Ms. Hart. As for the movie-line suggestion, she says, "I thought, 'Really? Wow, I always thought you were supposed to stay focused.'"

But Ms. Hart saw immediate results, going five-under par for eight holes in her next tournament, which she had never done before. She then took Vision 54's three-day program in November.

On Ms. Hart's recommendation, Ms. Lincicome, 23, decided to seek the pair's help this spring before the Kraft Nabisco Championship. During her initial 30-minute consultation, Ms. Nilsson and Ms. Marriott suggested she sing or whistle with her caddy to help herself recover mentally from bad shots. Ms. Lincicome said she thought the idea sounded "really funny" but decided that Ms. Sorenstam's coaches of all people "must know what works."

She says the technique helped her win the tournament—her first major victory—and the next week she spent two full days at their school in Phoenix.

Ms. Sorenstam says she has spoken with Ms. Nilsson at least several times a month over the past 20 years and considers her a close friend and sounding board, but points out that Vision 54's simple "stay-in-the-moment, stay-positive" philosophy is no replacement for a swing coach.

"I still use the same guy," she says.

THE OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP

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THE OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP

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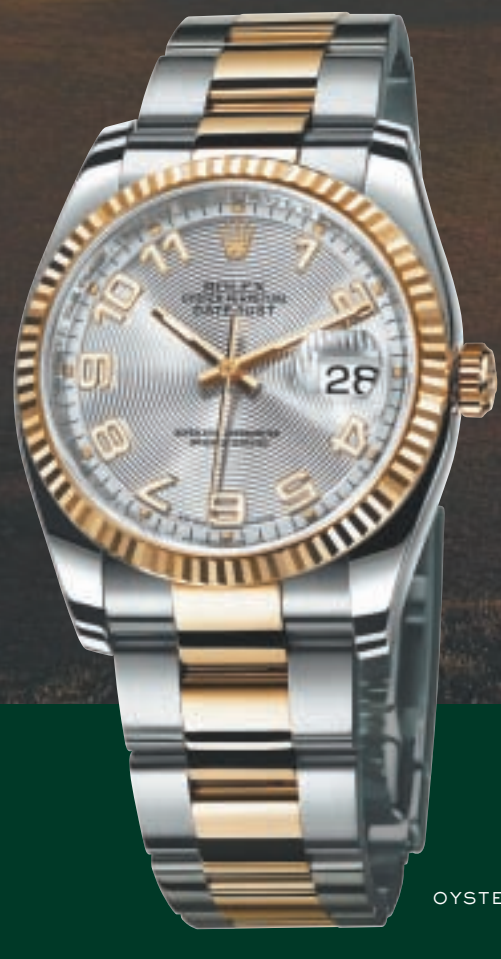

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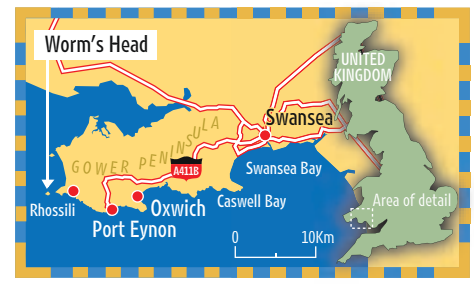
Summer road trips



Fasten your seat belts, it's going to be a sunny ride.
On the next three pages we look at six great European driving excursions

Italy: Over the river, to the sea

There are faster, more direct ways to travel from northern Italy to the Ligurian coast, but none is quite as enchanting as the drive through Val Trebbia. The route takes you through a region unfamiliar even to many Italians, with green forests, quaint mountain towns and a deep river canyon.

Leaving Piacenza, take SS45 west toward Bobbio. This single-lane state highway will bring you all the way to Genoa. The town Rivergaro marks your entrance into the Trebbia valley. In 218 B.C., Hannibal's armies dealt Roman soldiers a crushing defeat here as the Carthaginian general pressed into Italy. In the years since, time seems to have forgotten this valley, equally disconnected from the city behind you and the beachside bustle ahead.

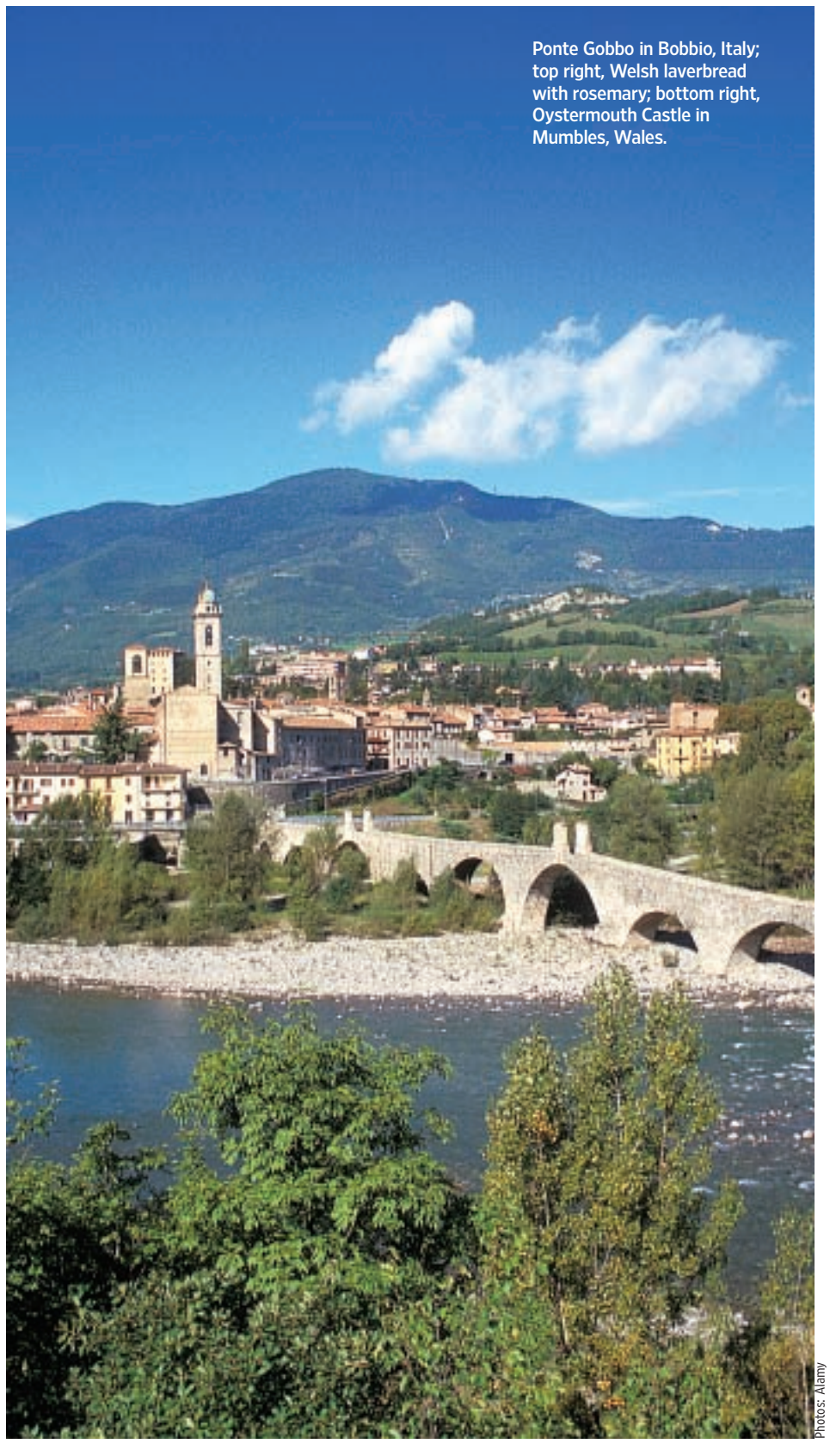
Roughly 40 minutes later you'll reach Bobbio, a well-preserved medieval town. The abbey, founded by St. Columban around 612, boasted one of the most important libraries in Europe in the Middle Ages. You can visit Baroque and Romanesque churches, Palazzo Malaspina and the striking Ponte Gobbo, an arched stone bridge that stretches nearly 300 meters across the valley.

After Bobbio the SS45 enters its most spectacular stretch: an 11-kilometer series of curves and turns through a narrow, verdant canyon that leads to Marsaglia. The clear blue Trebbia River snakes along far below, lined with sandy banks that boast a touch of color here and there where bathers have spread towels to escape the heat. Driving with the windows down, you can appreciate distinctly cooler temperatures, the sharp smell of pinewoods and fleeting hints of riverbank barbecues.

At Marsaglia, turn off the SS45 for a brief detour up to Brugnello, a pedestrian-only mountaintop village where rough-stone buildings all have intricately carved wooden doors and shutters. The Hotel Ristorante Rocca Rosa serves excellent Porcini mushroom pasta, homemade bread and Bonarda, a local sparkling red wine.

Not long after Marsaglia the SS45 begins to weave down the Apennines toward the sea. Small towns with increasingly modern buildings spring up, the air grows warmer and somehow heavier, as if leaving the valley means an oppressive return to reality.

—Aaron Maines



Ponte Gobbo in Bobbio, Italy; top right, Welsh laverbread with rosemary; bottom right, Oystermouth Castle in Mumbles, Wales.

Photos: Alamy

Wales: Worm's Head or bust

Dylan Thomas, Swansea's most famous son, once described his breezy, boisterous birthplace as an "ugly, lovely town." The eastern approach to the city—a three-hour zip down the M4 motorway from London—is certainly more the former than the latter, but as you round the tidal sweep of Swansea Bay, steel works and oil refineries give way to the golden beaches, precipitous cliffs and rolling countryside of the Gower peninsula.

The gateway to the Gower is Mumbles, a former Norman stronghold and fishing village now better known for its mile of salty pubs. After visiting the 13th-century Oystermouth Castle, drive along the windy, hedgelined South Gower road to the hamlet of Penmaen.

Here you have a choice of two spectacular hikes. The coastal walk leads to a jagged promontory offering dramatic views of Three Cliffs and Oxwich bays. The other option is to head up Cefn Bryn, a sandstone ridge known as the "backbone of the Gower." After some gentle rambling, drop down into the sleepy village of Reynoldston for a pint of prawns—or something stronger—at the lively King Arthur Hotel.

Then drive past the ruined castles and sleepy farmsteads that dot the A4118 to Rhossili, a blustery village at the western end of the peninsula. This is the Gower at its wildest and windiest. Hang-gliders haul themselves off the towering Rhossili Down while seals and surfers bob in the shadow of Worm's Head—an emerald green outcrop that is accessible only at low tide.

You can walk all the way to the serpent-like head, along the "rubbery, gull-limed grass, the sheep-piled stones, the pieces of bones and feathers" so vividly described by Thomas. Or you can admire the awe-inspiring views from the reasonably priced Worm's Head Hotel, where you can sample local specialities like laverbread (seaweed) and cockles. Both taste better than they sound.

—Gareth Harding

France: Backwoods Riviera

When the temperatures climb, do like the Riviera locals and head for the hills, up into the tranquil breezy backcountry, an itinerary that will take you from the northern Var to the Alpes de Haute Provence. Expect a wild landscape of green valleys, lush vineyards, miniature medieval villages and honey-colored stone churches with forged-iron bell towers, which abruptly changes into rugged canyons and postcard-perfect lavender fields.

From the Nice airport, drive west on A8 and exit at Les Arcs-sur-Argens (pick up some excellent crus classés at Château Sainte Roseline, a winery housed in a 12th-century cloister surrounded by a rose garden, with a Baroque chapel next door with contemporary works by the likes of Chagall and Giacometti), then take the D10 north to past Lorgues through a forest of green truffle oaks. The route turns into D557 about 15 kilometers before the tiny village of Aups—winter truffle headquarters—but the market is worth a stop even off-season to pick up some local truffle or mill-ground olive oil, and the local restaurants serve grated white summer truffles on salads and seafood.

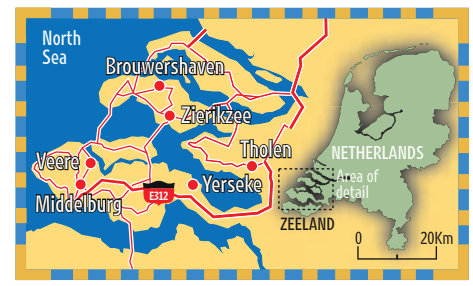
Then head north on D957. The scenic road borders the sapphire waters of the Lac de Sainte Croix, up to windy perched town of Aiguines and make a sharp right on D19 (don't miss the fairy-tale castle with multi-colored towers). You've arrived at the Grand Canyon du Verdon, France's little Wild West, laced with dramatic cliffs, deep ocher gorges and emerald waterfalls. The spectacular scenery makes up for harrowing stretch of hairpin turns on the one-lane road of the Corniche Sublime for about 30 kilometers. Then loop around to the left to along the other side of the cliff, la Falaise des Cavaliers, to D71, which borders the Grand Canyon.

This will take you back to D952, which snakes up to the lovely village of Moustiers Sainte-Marie. Built up on a towering rock face, with a deep crevasse joined by little bridges, Moustiers is well worth a stop. Pick up some of the village's famed faïence—white ceramics with delicate arabesques of birds and flowers—made from the fine local clay. Best bet: l'Atelier Bondil.

You can dine and spend the night at the nearby stone manor, La Bastide de Moustiers, Alain Ducasse's country auberge surrounded by fruit groves and vegetable gardens, set back in the valley below, with superb authentic Provençal cuisine.

The following morning, head 15 kilometers southwest on D952 to Riez, then take the narrow country road D6 for about 14 kilometers in the direction of the Plateau de Valensole. Even before you roll down your windows and inhale, the lavender fields are so fragrant that you might swoon. After reaching the village of Valensole, continue for about 15 kilometers on D6 to Manosque. Cross through the village and then take direction Volx to Mane, approximately 28 kilometers northwest. Stop for lunch on the shady terrace at the Couvent des Minimes, a pretty 17th-century Franciscan convent revamped into a hotel, spa and restaurant, set back on a quiet road just east of the village. *—Lanie Goodman*

Lac de Sainte Croix at Aiguines, France; below left, a lavender field on the Plateau de Valensole near Puimoisson, France; below right, a windmill near Goes, in Zeeland, the Netherlands.



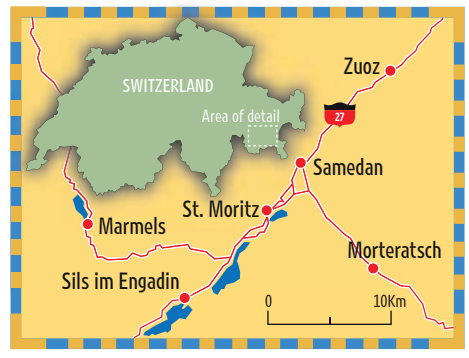
Switzerland: Valley high

With average altitudes of 1,500 meters above sea level, Switzerland's Engadin Valley feels more like a plateau—until you look up at the 3,000-meter mountains surrounding you. The 100-kilometer long valley follows the Inn River, between the Maloja Pass, used since Roman times, and the Austrian border. Dotted with towns and villages ranging from modern resorts to isolated hamlets, the Engadin is blessed with sunny days when the rest of Switzerland is stuck with drizzle.

The Engadin's most famous destination is St. Moritz, winter playground for the superrich, where summer attracts sports-minded families who come for the kite surfing on one of the nearby lakes. But the most beautiful is arguably Zuoz, a perfectly preserved Renaissance village, with frescoed houses and the occasional herd of cattle passing along its cobblestone streets. The Castell Hotel Zuoz, housed in an early 20th-century resort, is the top address in town, but you can also rent apartments in centuries-old farmhouses through the tourist office.

The most scenic way to reach the Engadin is by one of the mountain passes open only in summer, like the Fluela Pass, which connects Davos to the valley, or the Albula pass. (Summer snowfalls sometimes close the passes down for the day.) With Zuoz as your base, go northeast on the main valley road toward Austria for the Lower Engadin, where villages sit on high terraces, and the valley itself grows narrower and wilder. Or go southwest toward Maloja, where the wide mountain valley is as straight as an airport runway, and you feel that you're driving across the top of the world.

If you make the trip a weekend, a great place to stay on your second night is Sils, the lakeside village where philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche spent the most productive years of his writing life. (The house where he lived is now a museum.) The Engadin is known for its pastry chefs, and the local specialty, Engadiner Nusstorte, a cake-like pecan pie, varies from village to village. Pick up at a slice in Sils at Grond Café. Switzerland celebrates its national holiday on Aug. 1, and at nightfall the Engadin's mountains are alight with "Höhenfeuer," signal fires used to communicate before there were roads. *—J.S. Marcus*



Top, the Nietzsche House in Sils, Switzerland; above, the annual mussel festival in Yerseke, Netherlands.

Netherlands: Zeeland paradise

There are few parts of Europe with such an intricate interplay between land and water than the southwestern corner of the Netherlands. Under endless skies, skinny fingers of land are divided by North Sea inlets or broad river estuaries. High dunes protect fields of wheat or flax on polders reclaimed from the waves. Roads through Zeeland province flirt constantly with the water, hugging the coastline or following the crest of dikes that offer immense views across the delta.

Set out from the little fishing harbor of Yerseke, center of the region's shellfish trade. Arrive in time for lunch for some ultra-fresh mussels or oysters from renowned restaurants like the Oesterbeurs or Het Reymerswale. Cross the canal and pass the two whitewashed windmills in Wemeldinge before heading east. The road runs along the south bank of the Oosterschelde estuary, a national park teaming with birds and sea life. Pause to listen to the clatter of the jackdaws in the idyllic hamlet of Kattendijke before heading into elegant Goes with its great Gothic church, café-lined market square and a harbor surrounded by 17th-century merchant houses.

The back roads to Middelburg pass herds of black-and-white Friesian cattle grazing the polders. Nazi bombing devastated Middelburg in 1940, but the restored downtown recalls the provincial capital's golden age as a 17th-century trading hub.

Next stop: the seaside. Zeeland boasts over 70 kilometers of sandy beaches with quaint resorts like Westkapelle, Vrouwenpolder or Domburg. All have stands selling seaside snacks, such as raw herring or deep fried mussels. Turn inland along the N287 passing the medieval Westhove Castle—surely the country's poshest youth hostel—and head to Veere. This pearl of a town was once a pirate haven, but was cut off from the sea by flood defenses in the 1960s that formed a tranquil lake appreciated by the yachting set.

You'll see the skyline of Zierikzee rising up from the polders long before you arrive. This is one of the best-preserved maritime towns in the Netherlands. Stroll in past medieval city gates, rows of red-roofed fishermen's cottages and lavish brick town houses.

—Paul Ames

❖ Travel

Above, Turku Castle; below right, the Water Tower in Hanko.

Alamy (2)

Finland: The Turku trail

From old castles that recall Sweden's 600-year history in Finland to the Soviet Union's military conquests in the Nordic country, this drive threads together Finnish history and culture. You'll depart Helsinki for Hanko, the country's most southern city, and round off the journey in Turku, Finland's former capital and oldest city.

Take the Ring I Road west out of Helsinki and hop onto Highway 51. From here it's roughly 130 kilometers southwest to Hanko. Before heading into Hanko's city center, visit the Front museum near the village of Lappohja on Road 25 on the outskirts of Hanko for an exploration of Finland's World War II history (www.frontmuseum.fi).

For something lighter, take Highway 51 all the way into picturesque Hanko to visit some of the best beaches in Finland. The Water Tower in the city center offers great views of the Baltic Sea and Hanko's marina.

Before leaving Hanko and heading northwest around 150 kilometers to Turku, have lunch at "The House of the Four Winds." The seaside café is known for its cakes and cookies and has a tasty pork chop steak with mushroom cream sauce.

To reach Turku from Hanko, take Road 25 to Tammisaari, Road 52 to Salo and then Highway 18. Turku, which dates to around 1230, served as Finland's capital from 1809-12 until Russia took control of Finland and Czar Alexander I wanted the capital moved to Helsinki. Among the highlights in this city is the Lutheran Cathedral, an important place of worship for Finland's practicing Lutherans. The impressive medieval church, located in the town center, features a patchwork of masonry styles, some of which date to the 13th century.

Turku castle, another must-visit, once served as an important administrative hub for the Swedish Crown. It's located at the Turku harbor about three kilometers from the heart of the city. After checking out the castle's dungeons, it's a pretty easy walk to Svarte Rudolf or one of the other charming restaurant boats nearby for lunch or dinner on the River Aura. Try the pan-fried herring with mashed potatoes.

—Spencer Swartz

Arbitrage

The price of baby-sitting service at a luxury hotel

City	Local currency	€
Frankfurt	€17	€17
Brussels	€20	€20
Rome	€20	€20
London*†	£20	€23
Paris	€25	€25
New York*	$35	€25
Tokyo	¥3,892	€30

*Exclusive of an additional transportation fee †Four-hour minimum Note: Per hour; prices, including taxes, as provided by hotels in each city, averaged and converted into euros.

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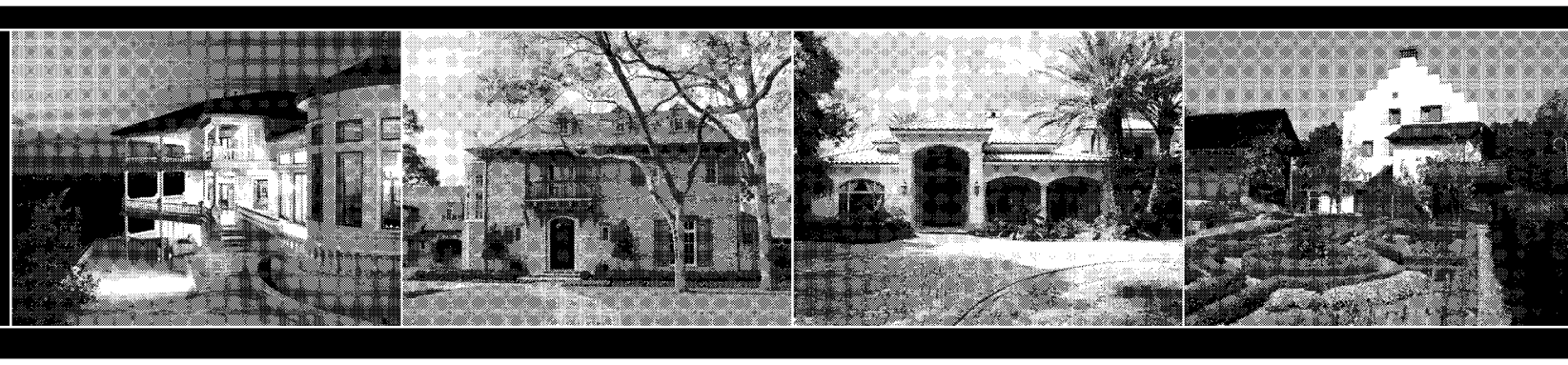

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SWITZERLAND, CH | FR 3,580,000
WEB ID: FARQ44
The baronial villa has more than fifteen rooms and 400 square meters of residential space.
Ginesta Immobilien
Yolanda D. Schärli — +41 44 910 77 33

NEPTUNE BEACH, FL | $2,990,000
WEB ID: DJPQ44
Oceanfront on Barrier Isl. 2 fireplaces, decks, porches & pool. Seperate 2bd cottage. 4 bay garage.
Watson Realty Corp.
Janet Palmer — 904.545.8830

GREENWICH, CT | $2,975,000
WEB ID: SLMQ44
The Lyman Mead house circa 1855. Italianate architecture. Lovingly maintained and improved.
Greenwich Fine Properties
Kathy Adams — 203.661.9200

CHICAGO, IL | $2,181,035
WEB ID: KMVZ44
The Ritz-Carlton Residences, 88 distinctive condos with legendary service & finest finishes.
Rubloff Residential Properties
Jane Shawkey — 312.242.5980

HUDDLESTON, VA | $1,963,000
WEB ID: ZIBZ44
Luxurious 12,000SF home on 12 ac. w/pool, majestic views, & sited minutes to Smith Mtn. Lake.
Long & Foster® Real Estate, Inc.
JoAnn VanVechten — 540.420.1013

luxuryportfolio.com

LUXURY PORTFOLIO®
FINE PROPERTY COLLECTION

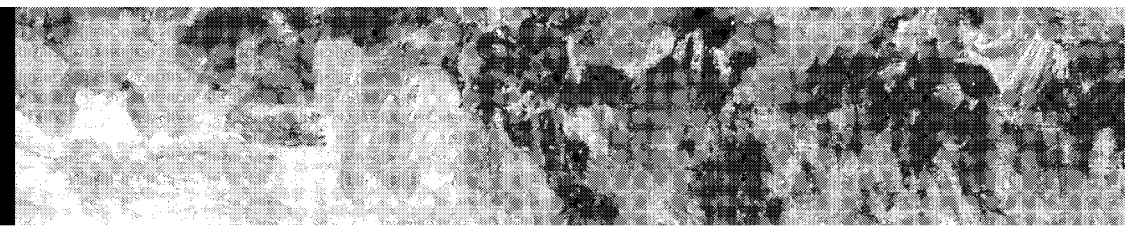
MANHATTAN, NY | $1,699,000
WEB ID: VBQQ44
Penthouse Perfect! Completely remodelled 2-BR/2 BTH w/private terrace. Views in every room.
Halstead Property, LLC
Kimberly T. Hastie — 212.381.2240

LONGBOAT KEY, FL | $1,599,000
WEB ID: ZPOQ44
Sophisticated beach house in the maintenance -free coastal enclave of Conrad Beach.
Michael Saunders & Company
Terri Derr — 941.356.6694

NEW ZEALAND | PRICE UPON REQUEST
WEB ID: OYFZ44
Trophy deer hunting estate on 1,015 acres. High producing unit, successful business.
Harcourts International LTD-New Zealand
John Millar — +64 27 274 6099

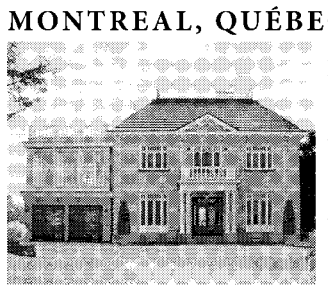
WAIPARA, NZ | PRICE UPON REQUEST
WEB ID: BFOQ44
Internationally renowned boutique winery, distributed globally. Luxury private residence.
Harcourts International LTD-New Zealand
Simon Rowland-Jones — +64 21 925 389

Sotheby's
INTERNATIONAL REALTY



sothebysrealty.com

MONTREAL, QUÉBEC



An estate comprised of two renovated mansions resplendent with rich architectural details. These grande dames of classic heritage Montreal architecture offer luxury and grandeur. Sold together or separately. **$15,750,000 CD.** Liza Kaufman.

Sotheby's International Realty Québec
514.232.5932 | sothebysrealty.ca

MONT TREMBLANT, QUÉBEC

Camp Cocoon. Magnificent 4,000 sf log home crafted w/ quality materials. Spacious interior, 3 fplcs, cathedral ceilings, oversized kitchen. On 10 acres with private access to lac Ouimet. Fully furnished. **$2,800,000 CD.** Herbert Ratsch & Melanie Clarke.

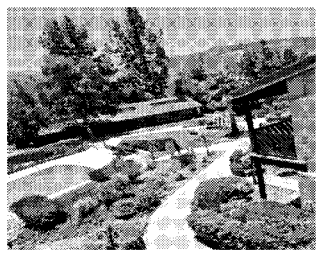
Sotheby's International Realty Québec
819.429.9019/ 450.694.0678 | sothebysrealty.ca

CAMBRIA, CA

Stunning 117 acre ranch with commanding ocean views, Monterey pines and vast meadows just two minutes to the beach and town. 10,000 sf main residence, guest house, barn & room for horses. Development potential. **$9,900,000.**

Wilson & Co. Sotheby's International Realty
866.543.7727 | WilsonandCoSIR.com

SAN DIEGO, CA



Magnificent mini resort on lush rolling greens with mature oaks creating a scenic yet tranquil setting. 31 units & private 3,000 sf Villa, banquet halls, fitness center, pool, spa, tennis, golf. Income producing w/ 62 unit entitlement. **$12,000,000.** Connie Ziemann.

Coast Sotheby's International Realty
866.886.1826 | CoastSothebysRealty.com

MANSFIELD, CT

Stunning post and beam residence on 12+ idyllic acres. Craftsmanship throughout exquisite 4,700 sf timber frame with 3 BR & 3.5 baths. Estate-like property w/ 2,600 sf barn, tree farm, fish-stocked ponds, New England stone walls & river frontage. **$1,795,000.**

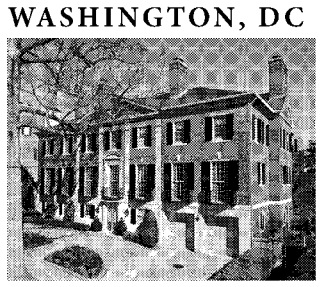
Gustave White Sotheby's International Realty
401.849.3000 | gustavewhite.com

MYSTIC, CT

55 acres of rolling terrain with magnificent rock walls & views of Mystic River. Perhaps the most appealing undeveloped parcel of land in New England. Nestled between casinos and the sea, midway between Boston and New York. **$7,500,000.** Les Bray.

William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty
860.912.8167 | wpsir.com

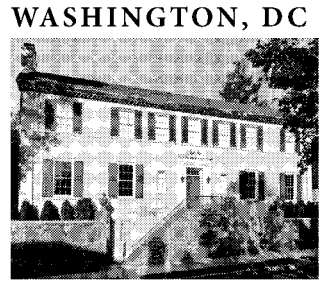
WASHINGTON, DC



Exceptional Georgian Revival situated just off of Embassy Row on coveted Whitehaven Street. Magnificent space for entertaining inside and out. **$20,000,000.** Alyce Rideout. Arideout@ttrsir.com and Carrie Carter. Ccarter@ttrsir.com.

TTR Sotheby's International Realty
202.588.8787 / 202.421.3938 | ttrsir.com

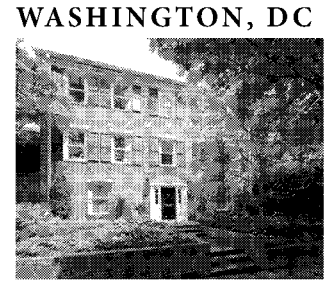
WASHINGTON, DC



This 1923 Georgian style residence in Kalorama has been recently transformed. Formal living and dining rms each offer wonderful symmetry with equal sized 25'x18' rms. 6 BR, 5.5 baths. Private rear terrace and 2 car garage parking. **$4,995,000.** Michael Rankin.

TTR Sotheby's International Realty
202.271.3344 | ttrsir.com

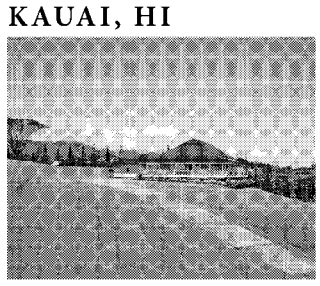
WASHINGTON, DC



This sophisticated detached Georgetown residence has been extensively remodeled. Center hall opens into principal rooms which lead to a rear garden and pool. State-of-the-art Boffi kit. 5 BR, 4.5 Waterworks baths. 1 car gar prkg. **$4,200,000.** Michael Rankin.

TTR Sotheby's International Realty
202.271.3344 | ttrsir.com

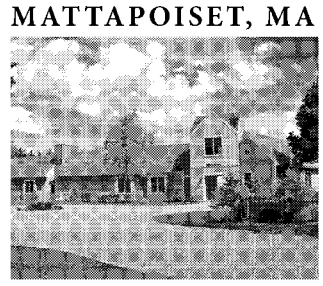
KAUAI, HI



33 acre private estate with ocean, mountain and river views. Includes guest house, tennis court, Japanese tea house, citrus orchard, gardens, ponds, and stream. **$7,900,000.** Debra Blachowiak. (R) Debra@sleepinggiant.com.

Sleeping Giant Sotheby's International Realty
808.639.2437 | sleepinggiant.com

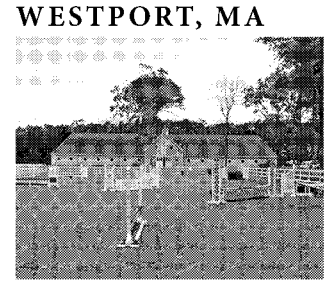
MATTAPOISET, MA



Island, waterfront estate. Newly renovated 4 BR, 3.5 bath contemporary & separate guest house on 3.16 acres in Mattapoisett harbor. 1,000' of shoreline & expansive lawn from house down to beach. Close to village, golf, marinas. **$2,900,000.** Bette Hamilton.

Olde Dartmouth Sotheby's International Realty
508.996.6562 | oldedartmouthSIR.com

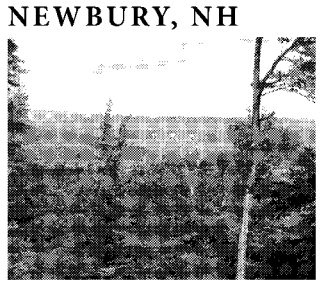
WESTPORT, MA



State-of-the art equestrian facility w/ 5 BR residence on 20 acres, only 1/4 mile from the ocean. Barn w/ radiant heat, 20 box stalls & indoor arena. Grounds with 12 paddocks, outdoor ring, an acre grass field & miles of bridle trails. **$2,800,000.** Bette Hamilton.

Olde Dartmouth Sotheby's International Realty
508.996.6562 | oldedartmouthSIR.com

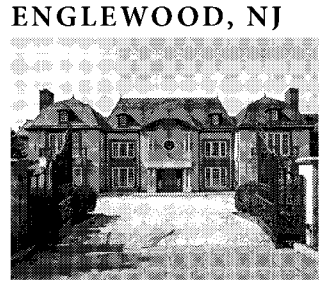
NEWBURY, NH



Lake Sunapee cottage and separate private 50 acre parcel in Dartmouth Region. 360° views including Mt and Lake Sunapee. 1 hr to international airport. **$1,625,000.** Stephanie Wheeler. Stephanie.wheeler@sothebysreallty.com

New London Agency Sotheby's International Realty
603.526.4050 | newlondonagency.com

ENGLEWOOD, NJ



Once in a lifetime. Palatial estate, minutes to Manhattan. Magnificent detailing throughout with uncompromising craftsmanship. Includes indoor & outdoor pools, tennis, basketball & putting green. Price upon request. Frances Aaron & Miriam Finkel.

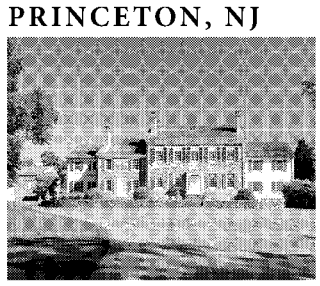
Prominent Properties Sotheby's International Realty
201.707.5426 / 201.741.0467 prominentproperties.com

HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP, NJ

Breathtaking 16 room Georgian-style manor recalls the balance & symmetry of country houses built in the gracious eras of old. Paneled archways, crown mouldings, marble & Brazilian cherry flrs & 3 fplcs. Mins to town & NYC/Philly/DC trains. **$2,950,000.**

Henderson Sotheby's International Realty
609.924.1000 | HendersonSIR.com/146675

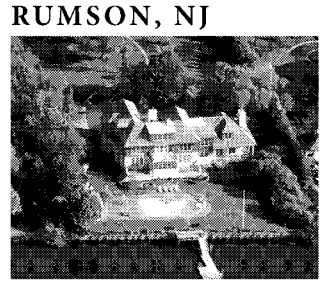
PRINCETON, NJ



"Tusculum." An allée of Zelkova trees welcomes you to Princeton's most historic estate. Built in 1773 by Rev. John Witherspoon, signer of The Declaration of Independence & sixth president of Princeton University. 1 mile to town center. **$8,975,000.**

Henderson Sotheby's International Realty
609.924.1000 | HendersonSIR.com/1383

RUMSON, NJ



Waterfront paradise. Magnificent waterfront estate nestled on 1.7 private acres features gated entry, 6,200 sf main house, 3 BR carriage house, pool, cabana and deep water dock. A true oasis! **$3,750,000.**

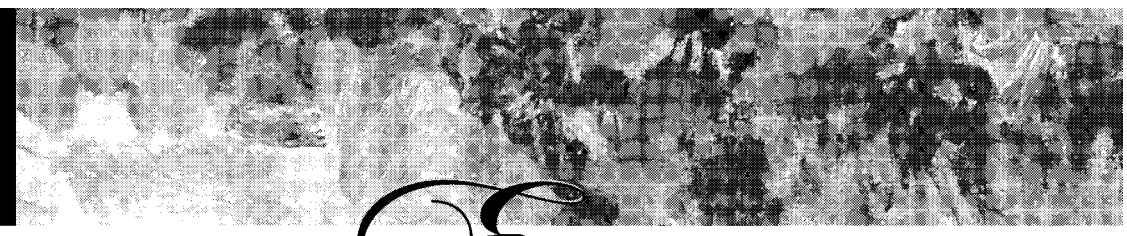
Heritage House Sotheby's International Realty
732.842.8100 | heritagehousesothebysrealty.com

LAS VEGAS, NV

Palms Place Penthouse. Stunning design and immaculate attention to detail in this spectacular penthouse on the 56 floor. Enjoy the private spa surrounded by walls of glass. World-class amenities. Direct access to the Palms casino. **$4,900,000.** Gene Northup.

Dyson & Dyson Sotheby's International Realty
866.497.0300 | dysonsir.com

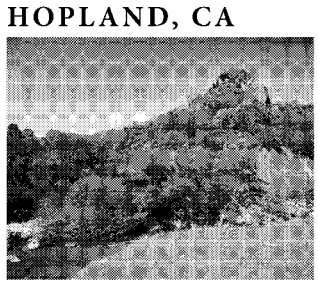
Sotheby's
INTERNATIONAL REALTY



Every home is a masterpiece.[SM]

sothebysrealty.com

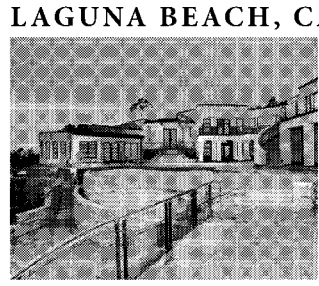
HOPLAND, CA



Wine Artisan living presents an exclusive ranch property for recreational owner, rancher, developer or investor. 2,300+ acres of wildlife, riding trails and more. 14 legal parcels & approx 50 acres of plantable soil. Price upon request. Dominic DeVincenzi.

People & Properties Sotheby's International Realty
925.791.4247 | ppsothebysrealty.com

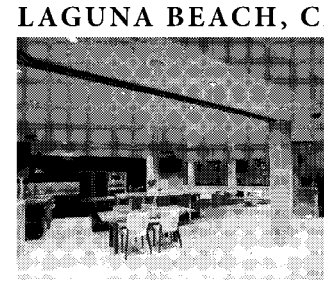
LAGUNA BEACH, CA



Spectacular sprawling contemporary estate nestled on 11.89 acres of natural coastal hillside overlooking the vast Pacific. 11,000+ sf. Two garages for a 16+ car collector, 75' diameter motor court, expansive terraces for outdoor entertaining. **$22,950,000.**

Coast Sotheby's International Realty
866.600.1400 | CoastSothebysRealty.com

LAGUNA BEACH, CA



Newly crafted world-class contemporary with close-up views of Emerald Bay. Sophisticated elegance with cutting-edge international style. Privately gated in North Laguna. Offered at **$3,995,000.** Chris Guziak.

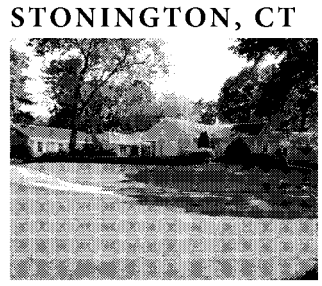
Coast Sotheby's International Realty
949.285.0509 | 382Ledroit.com

NORTH STAMFORD, CT

Windermere on the Lake. Enjoy maintenance free living with resort style amenities in this truly "green" community on 75 acres. Includes gatehouse, pool, clubhouse, tennis crt, walking trails & lake w/ dock. Roger Bartels architecture. **$2,499,200.** Nancye Fritz.

William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty
203.247.5134 | wpsir.com

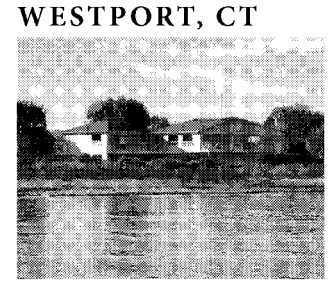
STONINGTON, CT



"Crossover" is a 20 acre estate less than 2 miles from historic Stonington Borough. Trophy 5,000 sf country manor with manicured grounds, specimen trees, pool & pool house, tennis court, pond and a 3 BR guest house. **$3,950,000.** John Ragsdale.

William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty
860.235.9110 | wpsir.com

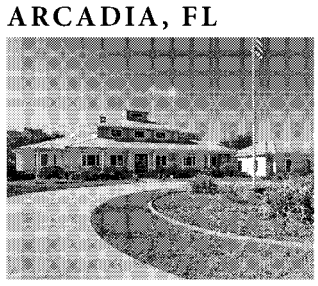
WESTPORT, CT



Spectacular water views, listen to the sea, watch regattas, take a seaside walk, kayak off your own beach! It's a way of life that takes away cares as soon as you cross the "little white bridge" onto this private island. **$4,995,000.** WRG Homes.

William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty
203.227.1246 | wpsir.com

ARCADIA, FL



True Florida ranch of almost 200 prime acres. Approx 120 acres of income producing orange grove with Vernia on swingle root stock oranges! Another almost 80 acres of pasture & well maintained 4 BR, 4.5 bath home with pool and 3 car garage. Gwen Heggan. **$5,599,000.**

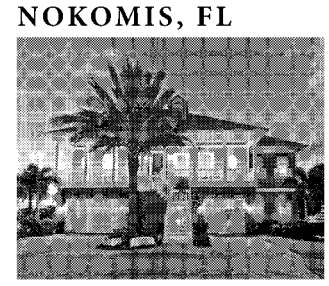
Signature Sotheby's International Realty
941.468.1297 | signaturesir.com

BOCA RATON, FL

Imagine life in a private metropolitan resort. Woodfield Country Club w/ golf, tennis, lagoon style pool & premier fitness center. Sparkling clean home in "A" rated school district. 5 BR, 4 bath, office & 3 car gar. Virtual tour. **$1,489,000.** Maureen Chaves & Linda Weisberg.

Nestler Poletto Sotheby's International Realty
561.706.0618 / 561.716.4912 | npsir.com

NOKOMIS, FL



Captivating Intracoastal estate skillfully sited to maximize a boater's lifestyle. 4 BR, office, game rm, theatre/hobby/or 5th BR, 4.5 baths, 3 car garage, water views, protected boat storage, all new seawall w/ lift & boat basin. **$3,495,000.** Terry Herschberger.

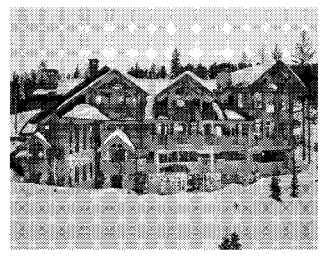
Signature Sotheby's International Realty
941.468.8439 | signaturesir.com

YORK HARBOR, ME

"Riverbank Cottage" is one of the rare few in coveted York Harbor w/ its own dock affording unobstructed ocean access. The home has been meticulously updated to the highest standards, while preserving the classic charm of its 1896 origins. **$3,495,000.**

Anne Erwin Sotheby's International Realty
207.363.6640 | AnneErwin.com

WHITEFISH, MT



This spectacular residence is adjacent to Chair 3 at Whitefish Mtn Resort on 1.34 acres with 14,958 sf capturing views of the ski slopes and Flathead Valley. Offered furnished, turn-key. **$20,000,000.** Stephanie Skinner & Misty Retz.

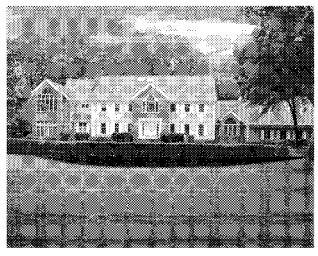
Glacier Sotheby's International Realty
406.862.1750 | glaciersothebysrealty.com

WHITEFISH, MT

Access the amenities of Whitefish Hills from this gentle 20 acre tract. Blanchard Lake access and equestrian trails in this gated community where privacy is assured. Easy building site with good forest. Price upon request. Pat Donovan.

Glacier Sotheby's International Realty
406.261.6200 | glaciersothebysrealty.com

MILLSTONE TOWNSHIP, NJ



A showcase custom property on 3.5 meticulous acres of gardens, lawns and mature trees near Princeton and the shore. This gorgeous and well-appointed Colonial features expanded gourmet kitchen with direct access to tiered deck and pool. **$1,999,000.**

Henderson Sotheby's International Realty
609.395.0444 | HendersonSIR.com/232036

MONTGOMERY, NJ

Five decades of superb stewardship by the present owner transformed a late 1800s New Jersey farmhouse and much of its 47.53 acres into a country estate of inestimable comfort and beauty. Minutes to Princeton and NYC/Philly/DC trains. **$8,500,000.**

Henderson Sotheby's International Realty
609.924.1000 | HendersonSIR.com/166602

OCEAN CITY, NJ

Spectacular lagoon front home with 3+ BR & 3.5 baths on 90'of water frontage. Superior quality and meticulous craftsmanship throughout. Includes boat slips and dock. **$2,499,000.** Burton Wilkins.

Goldcoast Sotheby's International Realty
609.399.2500 | GoldcoastSIR.com

LAS VEGAS, NV

A residence of historical significance and home to many of the world's most renowned guests, this secure estate resides on 4 golf course lots and encompasses over 24,000 sf including a main house, garden & guest house. **$4,890,000.** DaleT8@cox.net.

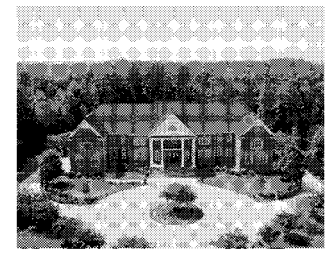
Dyson & Dyson Sotheby's International Realty
702.498.0050 | dysonsir.com

SARATOGA COUNTY, NY

Stone Bridge Farm. A world-class breeding and training facility on 92 acres. Foaling facility on 98 acres & broodmare & yearling farm on 235 acres. Georgian Neo-classical estate w/6 addt'l houses. Sold separately or together. **$3,000,000 to $18,000,000.**

Select Sotheby's International Realty
518.490.1768 | SelectSothebysRealty. com

WILLIAMSBURG, VA



Premier estate! Magnificently presented on 10 acres of mature hardwoods and gardens, this 16,000+ sf Georgian estate is wonderfully private. Located in The Vineyards, minutes from Colonial Williamsburg and other historic sites. **$5,750,000.** Charlotte Turner.

Sheeran Sotheby's International Realty
757.784.4317 | sheeransothebysrealty.com

Courtesy Le Consortium

'Ghost Float' (2004), by Amy O'Neill, outside London's Parasol Unit Foundation for Contemporary Art.

Now playing at Parasol: artists who love a parade

LONDON: Parasol Unit Foundation for Contemporary Art—wacky name, wacky but ambitious new public artspace—is in Islington. Its garden currently contains a sculpture by Amy O'Neill called "Ghost Float" (2004), part of the stimulating show, "Parades and Processions: Here Comes Everybody." Ms. O'Neill's float is covered entirely in white vinyl bands and ribbons, but without drum majorettes or beauty queens waving to the crowds from it, it looks like an object designed by some alien culture for a completely mysterious purpose.

Organized groups of people going somewhere in a linear formation, usually for a religious purpose, must be as old as any religion of which we have historical documentation (the catalog could have shown a little more intellectual rigor in this respect).

It's a nifty idea, though, to put together a show about the phenomenon that omits the usual suspects: Instead of flagellating Spanish penitents there is Jeremy Deller's "A Social Parade" (2004) showing people in San Sebastian frolicking. Instead of a Ku Klux Klan march, we get Mr. Deller's "Veteran's Day Parade, the End of the Empire" (2002) with kids in military uniforms holding a cross topped with an American flag.

There is much to amuse in this good-sized, good-natured exhibition. Rachel Hovnanian's photograph "Simone's Gloves" (2009) is a nicely framed picture of some implausibly long (about 160cm) evening gloves.

But I most enjoyed Francis Alÿs's untitled 2002 installation and film depicting the temporary move of the Museum of Modern Art from 53rd Street to Long Island City, in which the artist persuaded MoMA to place reproductions of some of its most well-known works of art (along with the artist Kiki Smith) on handheld wooden palanquins and process over the Queensboro Bridge, their path strewn with rose petals and followed by a Peruvian brass band.

—Paul Levy

Until July 24
www.parasol-unit.org

For mix of opera and mythology, Aix marks the spot this summer

AIX-EN-PROVENCE: Ancient mythology is the theme of this year's music festival in Aix-en-Provence, starting off with Richard Wagner's "Götterdämmerung," the final installment of the festival's four-year presentation of the composer's "Ring of the Niebelungen" (co-produced with the Salzburg Easter Festival).

Above, Gerd Grochowski as Gunther (left) and Ben Heppner as Siegfried in 'Götterdämmerung.'

By far the best and most coherent production of director Stéphane Braunschweig's four-part version here, the nearly six-hour "Götterdämmerung" (until July 12) is a tour de force led by the Berliner Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Simon Rattle. But if the orchestra—playing the Ring for the first time in 40 years—is the supernova of the show, it is well served by a cast of superb singers, including bass-baritone Gerd Grochowski as a debonair and oddly sympathetic Gunther; Russian bass Mikhail Petrenko as a cigar-puffing, villainous Hagen; Swedish mezzo-soprano Anne Sophie von Otter holding her own as Waltraute, a role that might have been too big for her voice; and especially Swedish soprano Katarina Dalayman dominating the stage as Brünnhilde. Canadian tenor Ben Heppner sings a near-perfect Siegfried, although his portrayal of country-bumpkin innocence occasionally verges on cartoonish.

French director Olivier Py plays havoc with ancient Greek legend in his stylized, all black-silver-and-white, modern-dress version of Mozart's "Idomeneo" (until July 17). In the original, Idomeneo, King of Crete, is caught in a tempest at sea while returning home from the Trojan war, and he promises Neptune that, if he and his ship are saved, he will sacrifice the first person he sights on shore; that turns out to be his own son, Idamante, who is in love with the captured Trojan princess Ilia. But in place of captured Trojans, Mr. Py gives us black African boat people being abused by Cretan soldiers with Hamas-Hezbollah balaclava masks and assault rifles; a Princess Ilia in blackface; and ballet interludes for some gory, blood-smeared and amateurishly choreographed instant replay of scenes already sung. It's all set on sections of metal scaffolding constantly being pushed, pulled and spun around by black-clad stagehands.

But a terrific cast—including American tenor Richard Croft in the title role, French tenor Yann Beuron as Idamante, Belgian soprano Sophie Karthäuser as Ilia, and French soprano Mireille Delunsch as Electra—sings Mozart's beautiful score so valiantly that all is not lost.

Composer Jacques Offenbach took great liberties with the legend of "Orpheus in the Underworld" (until July 20) too, but to delightful comic effect. Instead of racing down to Hades to rescue his abducted wife Eurydice, Offenbach's Orpheus—a philandering second-string violinist—would far prefer to leave his equally unfaithful spouse to the devil, but he's forced to go after her by Public Opinion—a 1940s-style gossip columnist armed with a Speed Graphic camera. Offenbach was poking lots of lyrical fun at Napoleon III and Second Empire Parisian society with his 1858 operetta, and here a cast of enthusiastic young singers from the Aix festival's European Academy of Music has a wonderful time portraying Jupiter, Juno, Venus, Cupid and Mercury (whizzing around on a bike with winged training wheels) and their fellow Olympians as they storm down to have a helluva lot of fun in Pluto's realm.

—Judy Fayard

www.festival-aix.com

Elizabeth Carecchio (2)

Above, a scene from Jacques Offenbach's 'Orpheus in the Underworld.'

Up on the roof: Linz exhibition reaches for the sky

LINZ: "Höhenrausch" or "Thrill of the Heights" is the last of a three-part exhibition series celebrating Linz's status as European Capital of Culture 2009. The first part put art in the city's shop windows; the second used abandoned tunnels under the city. This exhibition, staged by the Offenes Kulturhaus (better known as OK) museum spreads out on the Austrian city's rooftops.

Seeing the show's 25 installations requires an unusual ascent. Atelier Bow-Wow (Japanese artists Yoshiharu Tsukamoto and Momoyo Kaijima) built a wooden stairway and connecting paths called "Linz Super Branch" (2009), which lead from the OK attic to the roof. The 69 stairs plus ramps and paths connect the museum with the adjacent roofs of the Ursuline Church, a parking garage and shopping center.

Spanish artist Maider López recycles a Ferris wheel to create "High Wheel" (2009). Visitors ride it for two minutes, or about 10 revolutions, with a great view of Linz. The artistic element emerges when a video of the red-and-green ride eliminates the structural elements (red) through use of a red camera filter, leaving the gondolas (green) floating through the air like flying saucers.

Fiona Tan's 'Tilt' (2003).

Several works take off on a balloon theme. In "Lightness, the Way to Let You Lighter" (2000), by Taiwan artist Shih-Yung Ku, a video projection on a kaleidoscopic screen shows a man blowing up a balloon until it becomes so large it transports him into space. The same artist's "Bubble Man" (2006) is the result: a huge balloon with a figure clinging to it. Austrian artist Martin Music uses 5,000 helium balloons (weather permitting) to rise to the occasion in his performance piece called "Music in the Sky 2" (2008). Indonesia's Fiona Tan photographs people suspended from balloons. In her video "Tilt" (2003), a baby in a harness attached to a bunch of white balloons rises laughing to the ceiling, while the viewers hold their breath.

There are other works of whimsy. "Paradise Garden" (2009) is Mali Wu's answer to the convent herb garden. In this version the herbs are growing the roof of the 17th-century convent building. With "Rain Dance" (1998-2009), American artist Paul DeMarinis taps out a series of tunes using water. Visitors participate by walking under a succession of musically attuned shower heads using umbrellas, which act as sound resonance chambers. Singin' in the rain is optional.

—Mariana Schroeder

Until Oct. 31
www.ok-centrum.at

A Cultural Conversation / *With Agnès Varda*

Memories Without Tears

By David Mermelstein

Santa Monica, Calif.

How apt that the filmmaker Agnès Varda chose a house near the sea in which to sit for an interview about her latest, maybe final, motion picture: "Les Plages d'Agnès" ("The Beaches of Agnès"), which opened last week in New York and Los Angeles.

The film—a documentary, like all her work for the past 15 years—is something of a summing up, a cinematic autobiography that touches on Ms. Varda's most famous films, her marriage to the French director Jacques Demy and a lifelong desire to explore and prod—all seen through the prism of the beaches (literal and metaphoric) that have demarcated her extraordinary life.

The Brussels-born Ms. Varda, now age 81, remains the stout, grandmotherly figure film lovers will recall from "The Gleaners and I" (2000), a playful and profound meditation on consumption and waste.

Her new film (which she prefers to call a "hybrid" rather than a documentary, because of some whimsical set pieces) is more inward-looking, but there is nothing sentimental about it. Tears are unwelcome even in Ms. Varda's most downbeat films, such as "Vagabond" (1985), a riveting account of a female drifter's demise, or "Le Bonheur" (1965), in which a mother's death barely affects her family's happiness.

"It's a collage, a free-association of ideas," Ms. Varda said of "Beaches" over afternoon tea, her signature short bob evoking a monk's tonsure, with gray at the crown giving way to reddish-brown bangs. "I introduce many people I love—friends, advisers, talent—but there are others I didn't mention, like Bernardo Bertolucci, whom I've known since he was 21. It's not that this one is important, and this one is not. It's the fluidity of memory, in and out."

She eschews categories. "I think we should get rid of genres," she said. "I always did documentaries and features. Documentaries teach you a lot: to look at people, to get inspiration, knowledge, courage. Even people who want to do fiction should do documentaries."

Ms. Varda, whose family fled Belgium for France during World War II, began her career as a still photographer in the late 1940s, shooting actors on stage. But though her photos are accomplished, she hungered for something more.

"I found photography too silent," she said. "I wrote my first film like people do poetry and put it in a drawer, not thinking I could realize it." The film was "La Pointe Courte" (1954), which alternates between two narratives—one intimate, the other collective. But the picture's milestone status rests on its anticipation of the French New Wave later that decade.

Ms. Varda has little patience for labels. "I'm not part of anything and never was. I had no training in filmmaking and was not even a cinephile," she said, noting that she had seen fewer than 10 movies (among them "Snow White" and "Children of Paradise") when she made her first.

Yet she never lacked for confidence. "The minute I finished that film, I was a filmmaker," she said.

But "La Pointe Courte" did not make money, and Ms. Varda, having started at the top as the writer-director of a full-length

Zina Saunders

film, had nowhere to go but down—or so it seemed until Alain Resnais, who edited the picture, suggested an alternative route: making shorts. By her own count, Ms. Varda has filmed 17 of them, from three to 30 minutes each. She kept making them even after achieving lasting fame with the feature "Cleo From 5 to 7" (1962), her Palme d'Or-nominated, real-time chronicle of a pop singer awaiting the results of a biopsy.

Beyond her own work, Ms. Varda is best known for her relationship with Jacques Demy, the writer-director of "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg" (1964). "It was a strong love affair," she said of their 30-year bond, which eventually resulted in marriage and two children. "Sometimes difficult, but a strong one, yes."

The relationship, which ended with Demy's death in 1990, even surmounted a split in the early 1980s when the couple lived in California. "A couple is a big adventure, and some adventures have adventures within the adventure," said Ms. Varda, attributing the union's longevity to a lack of competition between the two filmmakers.

"We got the same recognition even though we were not doing the same kinds of cinema," she said. "Besides, we couldn't be in competition because I couldn't do what he did, even as I admired his films. And he felt the same."

Demy was reported to have died of a cerebral hemorrhage brought on by leukemia, but Ms. Varda acknowledges in her new film, almost matter-of-factly, that he died of AIDS. "I spoke of it before, but not on film," she said, explaining what changed. "There was no hope then. You were condemned to die. You don't discuss that. The mentalities are different now."

In the wake of her husband's death, Ms. Varda honored him as only she could—through film. "Jacquot de Nantes" (1991), "The Young Girls Turn 25" (1993) and "The World of Jacques Demy" (1995) together compose a thorough, intimate and deeply felt portrait of the man she loved, and whose memory she continues to tend dutifully.

Ms. Varda suggests that "The Beaches of Agnès" may be her final feature-length film, but that doesn't mean she'll stop creating. Since 2003, she has crafted installations that unite in a single construct still and motion photography. "I turned into an artist," she said with mock pride. "I'm doing different things. I'm investigating what audiences can get from images and sounds not in a movie theater."

Those familiar with this filmmaker's oeuvre can't doubt her sincerity—just her ability to part from what is essentially her life's work. Ultimately, she confides a certain satisfaction in her generation's durability.

"Looking back, I'm impressed that some of these old guys and me didn't stop," she said, specifically recalling not just Mr. Resnais, but also the directors Claude Chabrol, Eric Rohmer, Jean-Luc Godard and Jacques Rivette, all of whom continue to make movies. "We are still inquiring about cinema. Still working, still searching."

Mr. Mermelstein writes for the Journal on film and classical music.

A Histrionic Horror Show

By Lance Esplund

New York

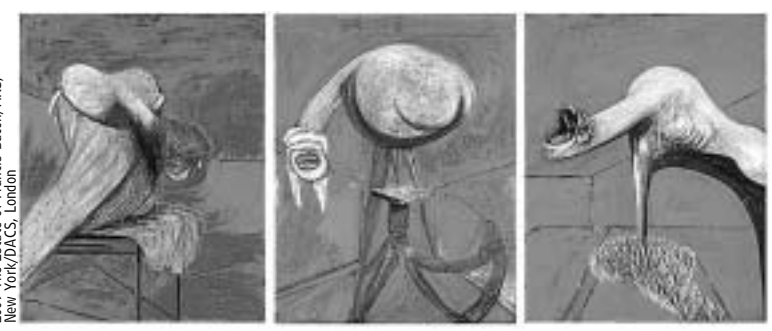
You do not have to be squeamish to dislike the paintings of Francis Bacon (1909-1992), the Irish-born British artist who painted crucified sides of beef; screaming popes and apes with gaping mouths; headless bodies, bodiless heads; and contorted, copulating figures who resemble balls of flayed and knotted flesh. Your aversion to Bacon's work may lie in how, not what, he painted. Perhaps you, like me, favor formal coherence over stilted melodrama. The French painter Balthus, who considered Bacon a great friend, never cared for his work. Aligning Bacon's grotesqueries with those of Lucian Freud, Balthus said in a 1994 interview, "The idea of craft is taken away. And what has been given is that strange taste for horror."

> Francis Bacon's melodramatic, incoherent art.

Bacon's "strange taste for horror" is on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where the artist is being honored with a centenary retrospective of some 65 paintings and an equal number of archival items. The exhibition, which originated at the Tate Britain, has transformed one of the Met's most prestigious suites of galleries into something closer to an amusement-park funhouse. Bacon worked almost exclusively from photographs, and along with the gory and sexually overt scenes he painted is a densely installed gallery devoted to the artist's sources: mostly magazine clippings and photos—including scenes of eroticism, violence and athleticism—as well as some sketches and Eadweard Muybridge's photographic studies of humans and animals in motion.

Bacon is considered by many art-world aficionados to be one of the most significant and influential artists of the 20th century. But his significance seems largely due to the "prescience" with which many critics and historians credit him. Bacon is a standard bearer for current art world tendencies—tendencies that include the slick, photorealistic smudges of Gerhard Richter, the sensationalist videos of Bill Viola, and Jenny Saville's monstrosities of flesh. Perhaps instead of being lauded for being prophetic, Bacon should be singled out for influencing artists to take the path of least resistance.

In the early 1940s, Bacon made his name as an angst-ridden, self-taught figurative painter in Blitz-bludgeoned London. A Surrealist as much as an Expressionist, Bacon shunned abstraction and, after World War II, believed that the world needed nothing less than a viciously honest figurative art that mirrored man's brutality. His macabre, psychosexual paintings merge blurred, cinematic effects (after the Futurists) and rites of torture (after the martyrdom of saints). Unfortunately, Bacon was first and foremost a calculated illustrator prone to mannerisms, hyperbole and histrionics. His art skims the surface of the human condition, never getting to the real business of psychological portraiture.



2009 The Estate of Francis Bacon/ARS, New York/DACS, London

'Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion,' c. 1944.

The show opens with "Crucifixion" (1933) and "Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion" (c. 1944), the painting that launched Bacon on the London scene. "Crucifixion," possibly influenced by Rembrandt's and Soutine's sides of beef or Chardin's "Ray," is a black-and-white painting of a crucified, surrealistic shape—a white form that resembles a ghostly skeleton or an X-ray. "Three Studies" is a triptych (a common format of Bacon's). Each of its three panels contains a monstrous phallic form, baring teeth, that occupies the center of an orange ground.

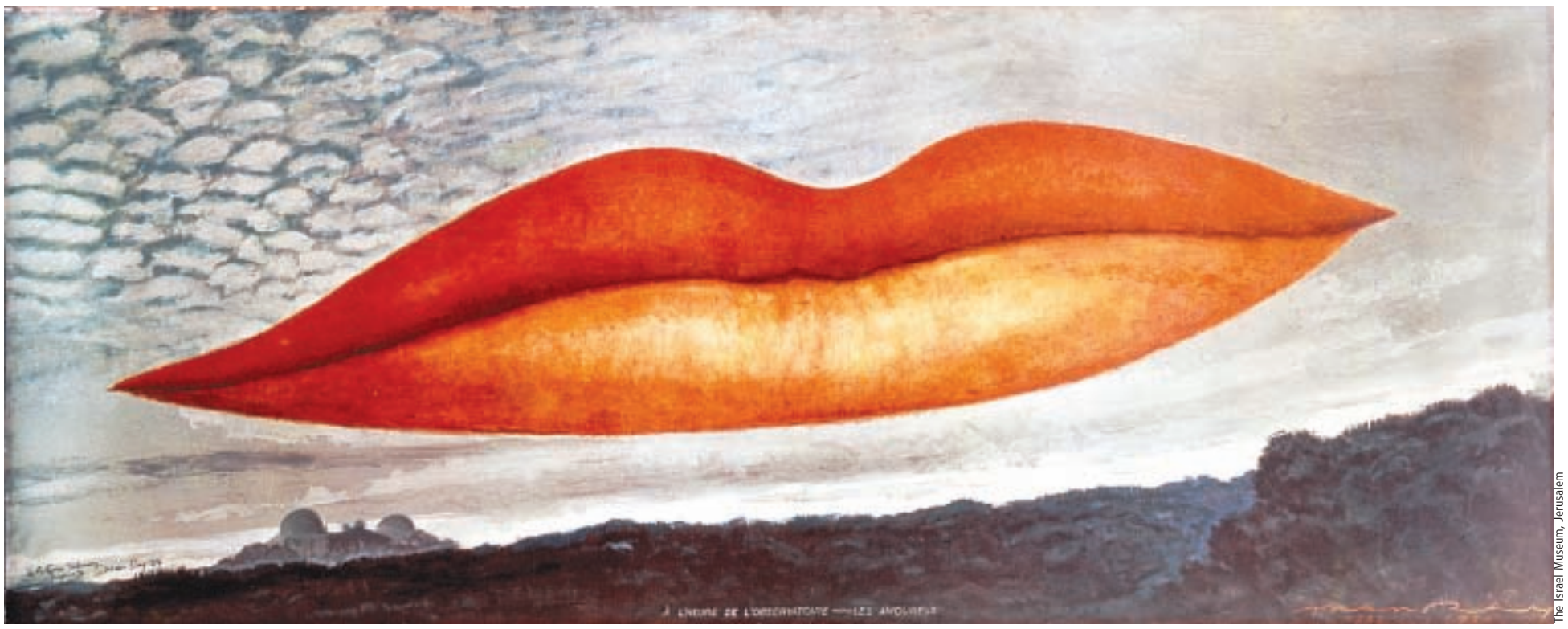
Many of Bacon's paintings isolate the action or figure, as if on a stage or in a circus arena, within a single-colored void—a technique later seen by some as a harbinger of Pop art. The large, bold, flat planes of color—red, orange, yellow, black, gray, pink or mint-green—are Bacon at his best. These are the colors of pills and waiting rooms; and Bacon can give medicinal, almost bodily fluid weight to these hues. Here Bacon comes closest to some of the religious art he emulates, that of the Byzantine era, in which fully formed Madonnas, for instance, are held in tension within the flat, gold leaf ground. But Bacon's forms remain caricatures that have no volume, weight or tension in the plane. Bacon's paintings of figures, rather than explore an idea about isolation, tend merely to leave the paintings feeling empty.

The show, organized in loosely chronological order, continues through Bacon's homosexual lovers, wrestlers, murderers, self-portraits and portraits. His paintings very loosely inspired by van Gogh and those made after Velázquez demonstrate virtually no understanding of what these masters were doing.

Despite variations in subject or approach, Bacon's work tends to follow the same strident path from 1933 through 1991. Often, while walking through the exhibit, I felt that the single greatest problem was that Bacon abandoned his figures too soon—that he could not nail them, or his own feelings about them, down. I believe that this ambivalence, fueled by his misunderstanding of the artists he looked up to, forced him to rely on artifice and theatrics. In the end, Bacon's forms are formless, aborted—stillborn—as if the artist had left them out in the cold. Their sense of isolation and abandonment feels not like an exploration of the frailty of the human condition but, rather, like a shortcoming of the artist himself.

Mr. Esplund writes about art for the Journal.

time off



The Israel Museum, Jerusalem

Amsterdam
photography
"Massimo Vitali" shows the large scale works of Italian photographer Massimo Vitali (born 1944).
Foam
Until Sept. 9
☎ 31-20-5516-500
www.foam.nl

Avignon
festival
"Festival d'Avignon 2009" includes international contemporary drama and dance performances.
Festival d'Avignon
Until July 27
☎ 33-4-9027-6650
www.festival-avignon.com

Barcelona
art
"Mistaken Identity by The Hilton Brothers" exhibits 65 photgraphic works by the American artist duo The Hilton Brothers.
La Casa Encendida
Until Aug. 30
☎ 34-902-4303-22
www.lacasaencendida.es

Basel
art
"Franz West" presents 18 sculptures and installations by the Austrian artist Franz West (born 1947).
Fondation Beyeler
Until Sept. 6
☎ 41-61-6459-700
www.beyeler.com

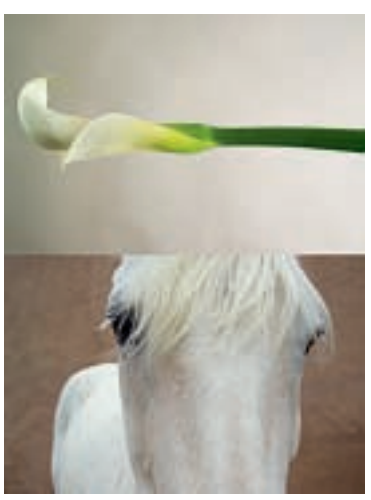
Berlin
art
"Free within Limits: Fashion, Photography, Underground in the GDR 1979-89" explores East Germany's fashion subculture.
Kunstgewerbemuseum
Until Sept. 13
☎ 49-30-2664-2304-0
www.smb.museum

Bonn
art
"Christ Imagery Among Artists in the Rhine/Ruhr Region—Moderns Rediscover the Sacred 1910-1930" examines portraits of Christ by German artists.
August Macke Haus
Until Sept. 13
☎ 49-228-6555-31
www.august-macke-haus.de

Brussels
art
"Fading" shows 40 works by contemporary Belgian artists, including paintings and photographs by Luc Tuymans (born 1958), Michael Borremans (born 1963), Cindy Wright (born 1972) and others.
Ixelles Museum
Until Sept. 13
☎ 32-2-515-6421
www.museedixelles.be

Budapest
photography
"Robert Capa" presents over 200 images by the Hungarian war photographer (1913-1954).
Ludwig Museum
of Contemporary Art
Until Oct. 11
☎ 36-1-5553-444
www.ludwigmuseum.hu

Dublin
music
"Haydn: A Bicentenary Celebration" presents an original autographed score of one of Austrian composer Joseph Haydn's (1732-1809) cello concertos and several first editions of his published works.
Chester Beatty Library
Until Aug. 2
☎ 353-1-4070-750
www.cbl.ie



Top, Man Ray's 'Photograph of Observatory Time—The Lovers' (1932-34/1964), in Helsinki; above, 'Xwhy' (2005) by the Hilton Brothers, in Barcelona.

Edinburgh
art
"Paul & Nusch Eluard and Surrealism" displays works by surrealist poet Paul Eluard (1895-1952), highlighting his friendship with his wife Maria Benz, known as Nusch (1906-46).
Scottish National Gallery of
Modern Art and the Dean Gallery
Until Sept. 27
☎ 44-13-1624-6336
www.nationalgalleries.org

Helsinki
art
"Surrealism and Beyond" explores the history and ideas of Surrealism with a selection of work by Man Ray (1890-1976), Max Ernst (1891-1976), Francis Picabia (1879-1953), Salvador Dalí (1904-89) and others.
Tennis Palace Art Museum
Until Sept. 22
☎ 358-9-3108-7031
taidemuseo.fi

London
history
"Henry's Women" shows personal objects and portraits of Henry VIII's wives, including a lock of Kateryn Parr's hair and a music book written for Anne Boleyn by one of her alleged lovers.
Hampton Court Palace
Until Aug. 3
☎ 44-2031-6660-00
www.hrp.org.uk

Madrid
photography
"China: Portrait of a Country (1949-2008)" illustrates the history of China with images by 88 photographers.
Casa Asia Centre
Until Oct. 31
☎ 34-91-4202-303
casaasia.es

art
"View and Plan of Toledo" exhibits the painting "View and Plan of Toledo" by El Greco (1541-1614), alongside his works "Saint Sebastian," "Saint Andrew and Saint Francis" and "Saint Bernard."
Museo Nacional del Prado
Until Nov. 1
☎ 34-91-3302-800
www.museodelprado.es

Montreux
music
"Montreux Jazz Festival" stages performances by Marianne Faithfull, BB King, Lily Allen, Steely Dan, McCoy Tyner Trio, Jamie Cullum, George Benson, John Fogerty, Seal, Grace Jones and others.
Montreux Jazz Festival
Until July 18
☎ 41-900-800-800
www.montreuxjazz.com

Nice
music
"Nice Jazz Festival 2009" features concerts by Sonny Rollins, Alain Clark, Tracy Chapman, BB King, James Taylor, Chick Corea and others.
Nice Jazz Festival
July 18-25
☎ 33-8926-8362-2
www.nicejazzfestival.fr

Paris
art
"Laurent de La Hyre 1606-1656" displays 30 drawings by the French Baroque artist Laurent de la Hyre, founder of the French Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture.
Musée du Louvre
Until Sept. 21
☎ 33-1-4020-5050
www.louvre.fr

art
"Max Ernst, 'A Week of Kindness'—the Original Collages" shows works by German Surrealist artist Max Ernst (1891-1976) from his famous collage novel "A Week of Kindness," published 1934 in Paris.
Musée d'Orsay
Until Sept. 13
☎ 33-1-4049-4814
www.musee-orsay.fr

Perugia
music
"Umbria Jazz Festival 2009" includes performances by Paolo Conte, Steely Dan, Simply Red and others.
Associazione Umbria Jazz
Until July 19
☎ 39-075-573-2432
www.umbriajazz.com

Rotterdam
music
"North Sea Jazz Festival 2009" includes performances by BB King, George Benson, Duffy, Burt Bacharach, Charlie Haden and Seal.
Until July 12
☎ 31-900-1010-2020
www.northseajazz.com

Stockholm
music
"Stockholm Jazz Festival 2009" features The Blind Boys of Alabama, Joss Stone, Little Feat, Allen Toussaint and others.
July 15-July 19
☎ 46-8-4403-090
www.stockholmjazz.com

Venice
art
"Robert Rauschenberg: Gluts" exhibits a selection of 40 sculptures by the American artist Robert Rauschenberg (1925-2008) made up of found metal objects such as gas-station signs and auto parts.
Peggy Guggenheim Collection
Until Sept. 20
☎ 39-041-2405-411
www.guggenheim-venice.it

Vienna
dance
"Impulstanz 2009" presents contemporary dance performances, including Rosas group with Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker in "The Song," Chris Haring and liquid loft & Jin Xing Dance Theatre staging "Lovely Liquid Lounge," Ultima Vez & alt-rock band dEUS in "NieuwZwart" and others.
July 16-Aug. 16
☎ 43-1-5235-558
www.impulstanz.com

Source: ArtBase Global Arts News Service, WSJE research.