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WEEKEND JOURNAL.

EUROPE

Advantage Roddick

Gunning for glory at the U.S. Open



Wine: Reflections on Champagne | Food: Reinventing Dutch cuisine

Contents

3 | Design

Designing a more perfect union ▼



Oslo Opera House designed by Snohetta architects.

4-5 | Food & Wine

Reinventing Dutch cuisine

Wine: Reflections on Champagne

8 | Travel

Teen scene on tour

9 | Golf

How clubs compete to host a PGA Tour event

6-7 | Cover story Tennis

Roddick's last stand

A final try for glory at the U.S. Open?



Andy Roddick during a training session ahead of the Australian Open tennis tournament earlier this year.

COVER, Andy Roddick photographed by Marc Hom/Trunk Archive.

10 | Top Picks

Much delight at Edinburgh's art festival ▶

Arvo Pärt's fourth symphony

Collect: Prints by Picasso and other greats



'Framed' (1992) by William Wegman.

11 | Books

The Kaiser's Jihad

12 | Time Off

Our arts and culture calendar

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EUROPE

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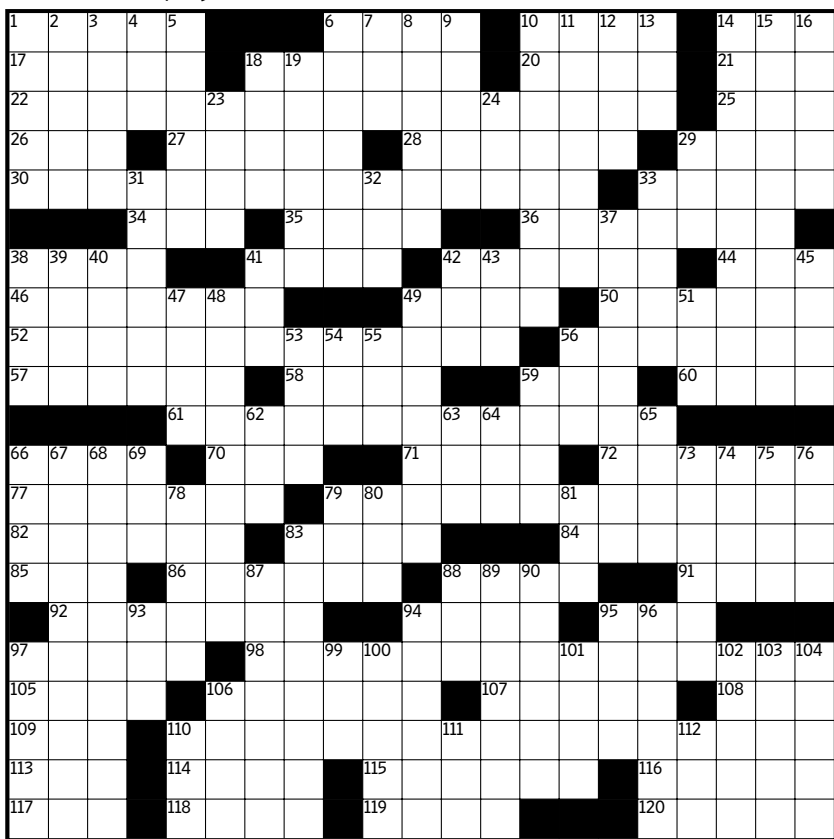
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THE JOURNAL CROSSWORD / Edited by Mike Shenk

Across

- 1 The same size
- 6 Jolt, e.g.
- 10 301, to Diocletian
- 14 Overalls part
- 17 Dough
- 18 Terrifying
- 20 Small batteries
- 21 Words with pickle or pinch
- 22 Congressional debate topic
- 25 Hannover-to-Berlin direction
- 26 Calais coin of old
- 27 New parent, for one
- 28 Doughboy's headgear
- 29 Move cautiously
- 30 One on a mission
- 33 Havens
- 34 Connections
- 35 Wharton course catalog listing
- 36 "The Vitruvian Man" artist
- 38 Small stream
- 41 Be devout, in a way
- 42 Athletic prodigy
- 44 Go out
- 46 Case for an attorney
- 49 Bakery window display
- 50 Mason, for one
- 52 Freudian force
- 56 Stark
- 57 Sculpted trunks
- 58 Continental cash

Freeze Zone / by Elizabeth C. Gorski



- 59 German city on the Danube
- 60 Mount south of Olympus
- 61 Hot weather refuge, and this puzzle's theme
- 66 Cartoonist Addams
- 70 Trailer park sights
- 71 Breezy film
- 72 Navel units?
- 77 Boxer Héctor
- 79 "King Lear" and "Othello" have them
- 82 Hold protectively
- 83 "Carrie" setting
- 84 Sympathize with
- 85 Cherished
- 86 Admit to the priesthood
- 88 Star light?
- 91 Red ink
- 92 Mrs. Malaprop, vis-à-vis language
- 94 Designer Wang
- 95 Fury
- 97 Bibliography abbr.
- 98 Peary and Amundsen, e.g.
- 105 1930s heavyweight champ
- 106 Cherished
- 107 Puts away
- 108 Snitch
- 109 Blowup: Abbr.
- 110 Cling Free target
- 113 Cards, on scorecards
- 114 Buffalo's county
- 115 Shade garden staples
- 116 Occupied
- 117 Paul Anka's "___ Beso"
- 118 Electoral district
- 119 Former runway stars?
- 120 Demean
- 5 Get closer to
- 6 "Battlestar Galactica" prequel
- 7 Galena, for one
- 8 Like some church services
- 9 Make part of the mix
- 10 Battery terminals
- 11 ___ City, Philippines
- 12 Haul
- 13 British verb ending
- 14 Sight-restoring innovations
- 15 Trophy makers, at times
- 16 They may be drawn
- 18 Much-criticized org. in 2005
- 19 Devon cathedral city
- 23 Machine rotators
- 24 Small bill?
- 29 Golfer Woosnam
- 31 Fragrant flowers
- 32 Kittenish
- 33 Succotash beans
- 37 Encyclopedia start
- 38 Absorbed
- 39 "You never had ___ good"
- 40 About six trillion mi.
- 41 Delt neighbor
- 42 Petunia, for one
- 43 "You there!"
- 45 La ___ Tar Pits
- 47 Bonbon, to a Brit
- 48 Unisex
- 49 Usher's handout
- 51 GATT successor
- 53 Some are shocking
- 54 Rapa ___ (Easter Island, to natives)
- 55 Directional suffix
- 56 Space bar's neighbor
- 59 Potentially insulting
- 62 Lacto-___ vegetarian
- 63 Mechanical wheel
- 64 One of the "Big Four" record companies
- 65 Boorish
- 66 Letters on Gagarin's helmet
- 67 Loose-fitting garment
- 68 Pricy gift for Yo-Yo Ma
- 69 Woebegone
- 73 Boat bar
- 74 Skinny
- 75 They're sometimes fragile
- 76 Estonia and Latvia, formerly: Abbr.
- 78 Pull
- 79 Half of hex-
- 80 Youngest son of Arthur and Molly Weasley
- 81 Small amphibian
- 83 Repeated by rote
- 87 Moment of silence?
- 88 Wall St. overseer
- 89 Radio buttons
- 90 State of southern Mexico
- 93 Formal address
- 94 YouTube uploads
- 95 Robert of "The Sopranos"
- 96 Bilingual Muppet on "Sesame Street"
- 97 Very big
- 99 Dernier ___
- 100 Geek Squad members
- 101 Sarge's charges: Abbr.
- 102 Christensen of TV's "Parenthood"
- 103 Fee schedule listing
- 104 "Gypsy" composer
- 106 Gillette brand
- 110 Put in stitches
- 111 D-Day transport
- 112 Truck part

Last Week's Solution



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Designing at the peak

Norway's Snohetta architecture firm marries business savvy with artistic inspiration

By J. S. MARCUS

LOW-TECH MEETS hi-tech in the Oslo offices of Snohetta, Scandinavia's premier architecture firm. Housed in an open-plan former warehouse on the edge of the Oslo fjord, the firm greets visitors with an improvised light fixture, comprised of 600 water-filled plastic bags suspended from the ceiling in an undulating pattern. Meanwhile, in a secluded room, a robotic arm, installed last year, is busy making 3-D prototypes associated with the firm's diverse projects around the world.

"We are the only architects who have this," says Snohetta's founding partner and principal, Norwegian architect Kjetil Trædal Thorsen, of the robot, manufactured by the German firm KUKA for use in the auto industry. Snohetta uses the prototypes, explains 52-year-old Mr. Thorsen, the way an artist might use preliminary studies for a final painting.

What Snohetta also has—and what just about every other large and midsize architecture practice lacks these days—is momentum. Founded in 1989, Snohetta, named after a Norwegian mountain, burst onto the architecture scene in 2002, with the opening of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, a modern-day revival of the ancient world's most famous library. Their current roll began in 2008, with the opening of the acclaimed Oslo Opera House, and culminated in July with the commissioning of a much-publicized extension to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. This summer, the firm was also awarded a commission to redesign New York City's Times Square, and construction is finish-

ing up in lower Manhattan on the National September 11 Memorial Museum Pavilion, a multi-use visitor center built directly on the site of the former World Trade Center.

Using what Mr. Thorsen likes to call an "organic" approach, Snohetta combines a deep respect for a building's location with a harmonic and often stripped-down use of materials. In addition, Snohetta routinely incorporates artists in the very early stages of a project, rather than seeking them out later to decorate a building after it is finished. The result is a style of architecture that is both distinctive and tranquil, and often seems like an antidote to the self-conscious experiments and brash monumentality that have characterized much of the world's recent building spree.

This year, a few months before beating out several Pritzker-Prize-winning architects for the San Francisco commission, Snohetta launched an in-house consulting wing, called Snohetta Design, which plans to extend the firm's activities beyond architecture. The goal, says Martin Gran, CEO and managing director of Snohetta Design, is "to brand what [a] building is supposed to house." Mr. Gran, 38, previously worked at global advertising giant McCann Erickson, where his clients included MasterCard.

During a meeting this July with Messrs. Thorsen and Gran, the two seemed to be speaking different languages. Mr. Gran may talk about "the power of branding" inherent in a successful building like the Oslo Opera House, while Mr. Thorsen, when referring to the Opera House's predominant use of

marble, talks about the "homogeneous continuation of material."

In conversation, the effect is jarring but one of Snohetta Design's inaugural projects, an ethereal 3-D logo for Snohetta's King Abdullah Center for Dialogue, currently being designed for a site just outside Mecca, Saudi Arabia, demonstrates how business savvy and artistic inspiration can come together in common purpose.

Branding may have its limits, concedes Mr. Thorsen. The September 11 Memorial Pavilion, which sits atop an underground museum by another architecture firm, needs to respect the project's commemorative function. And even the new San Francisco museum extension offers some branding challenges, he says, because of the need to respect the 1995 original building by Swiss architect Mario Botta, whose postmodernist approach of incorporating previous

eras' architectural styles is just about the opposite of what Snohetta is trying to do. "Postmodernism was never my agenda," says Mr. Thorsen, who describes the wave as "reinventing replicas."

"It's not easy," says Mr. Thorsen, of the joint task before Snohetta Design, and the architects themselves, as they try to create a new project that does justice to Mr. Botta's popular building, while carving out an identity for itself. "But then again, architecture never is," he adds.

The Snohetta building will be part of a \$250 million expansion, says the museum's director, Neal Benezra, which was initiated to house the contemporary art collection of Donald and Doris Fisher, founders of the Gap chain of clothing stores. Mr. Benezra says Snohetta was chosen after a selection committee visited Oslo this summer and saw the Oslo Opera House in person. Made up of

several complementary levels of white Carrera marble, which seem to rise up collectively out of the Oslo Fjord like a geometric iceberg, the building proved to be "the tipping point for us."

American architect Craig Dykers, Snohetta's New York-based principal, is also excited about the challenge of working with Mr. Botta's building. "It's a very strong piece of architecture," he says. "Making expansions means that you're entering into a marriage. And I prefer to have a strong partner."

Mr. Dykers, 48, doesn't see the firm's recent successes as altering its essential nature. "We have a funny name," he says, speaking by phone from New York. "People don't easily remember it, so fame isn't tailored into who we are. Most people remember our buildings before they remember us."

J. S. Marcus is a writer based in Berlin.

Snohetta combines respect for a building's location with a harmonic use of materials.



The planned National September 11 Memorial Museum Pavilion.

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The Netherlands finds its flavor

A growing trend toward seasonal, homegrown produce is helping to reinvent Dutch cuisine

BY J. S. MARCUS

IN MUCH OF the food world, seasonal cooking means succumbing to nature's whims. Local soil dictates what's on the menu, even if that means no tomatoes for much of the year, and hardly a trace of the tropics. The seasonal ideal, however, runs into what can be called natural opposition in the Netherlands, where the best-known local produce is the hydroponic tomato, grown in heated industrial greenhouses without a speck of soil.

At a typical Albert Heijn supermarket, the country's dominant chain, there is essentially one sea-

son: refrigeration. In chilled, shiny aisles, plastic packages of strawberries, bell peppers and tomatoes of every conceivable size show off the best of Dutch greenhouse technology every day of the year. Marjan Ippel, an Amsterdam food writer and food trend analyst, is not impressed.

"Even now in summer, supermarket tomatoes are hard and tasteless," says Ms. Ippel, who grows her own vegetables in her houseboat's nearby floating garden. This year she has begun to organize what she calls "underground farmers' markets." Using Twitter, Ms. Ippel brings together local micropro-

ducers who want to bypass supermarkets entirely.

Ms. Ippel is part of a growing number of Dutch foodies who are taking a hard look at the country's booming agriculture industry, where nearly two thirds of all fruits and vegetables are produced in greenhouses without any soil.

"A grass-roots movement is grow-

"We draw a circle around a supermarket," he says, explaining how he matches farmers with stores.

Another corporate renegade is Quirijn Bolle, who worked for Ahold, the Dutch supermarket conglomerate and owners of Albert Heijn and Stop & Shop, an American grocery chain. Two years ago, Mr. Bolle opened an upscale supermar-

started Marqt for them."

For many of Holland's seasonal food advocates, an important source of inspiration comes from chef Jonnie Boer, whose three-star Michelin restaurant, De Librije, located in the small city of Zwolle, uses produce, fish, and meat from the Dutch heartland as the building blocks of a radically inventive cuisine.

"We do it the old-fashioned way," says Mr. Boer, of his collaboration with a local farmer, who provides nearly all of his fruit and vegetables. "With soil," he says.

For Mr. Boer, whose restaurant made its first appearance this year on the celebrated "S.Pellegrino World's 50 Best Restaurants" list, compiled by the U.K.'s Restaurant magazine, the wider discovery of homegrown Dutch produce has led to the growing interest in Dutch fine dining. The Netherlands now has over 90 Michelin-starred restaurants, only slightly fewer than gourmet bastions like Belgium and Switzerland.

"Ten years ago," he says, "Everyone was saying that the Dutch don't have a cuisine, they don't have good products, they don't have good cooks. I knew it wasn't that way."

In 2008, Mr. Boer opened up a nearby luxury hotel, housed in a refurbished 18th-century women's prison, and an adjoining restaurant called Zusje, where many of De Librije's experiments migrate after a season or two on the menu. Within six months of serving its first meal, Zusje received its own Michelin star.

A standout seasonal dish now on offer at De Librije is a dessert called "Gin & Jonnie," which relies on the trace of sweetness in local cucumbers.

Even though he is the leading voice of Dutch seasonal cooking, Mr. Boer doesn't want to give up on greenhouses entirely, deferring to that other traditional local product—Dutch ingenuity.

"There is no value in not using a greenhouse," he says, speaking in the private dining room of De Libr-

'We have found a new beetroot,' says chef Jonnie Boer. 'When you eat it raw out of the greenhouse, it tastes like a cherry.'

ing in the Netherlands," says Willem Treep, a former employee of Unilever, the Anglo-Dutch food-industry giant. In 2009, Mr. Treep and his Unilever colleague Drees Peter van den Bosch, left the corporate food world behind and started a local produce distribution network in central Holland.

"We have strict rules for what kind of produce we sell," says Mr. Treep, 35 years old. "It has to be locally produced in the ground," which means, he explains, grown in an area 40 kilometers from a point of sale.

ket called Marqt in Amsterdam's trendy Oud West neighborhood, where he tries to specialize in offering exactly the opposite as Albert Heijn. Now he has three stores, located in Amsterdam and Haarlem, and he anticipates opening 20 more across the country.

"There are still farmers in Holland," says Mr. Bolle, contrasting traditional methods of planting in fields with heated greenhouses. "They are smaller, and they pay a lot of attention to growing. We



De Librije's 'On the Rocks': goose-liver 'on the rocks' with goat's cheese and lightly smoked beetroot; at left, a waitress at De Librije serves home-made chocolates; top, restaurant De Kas.

Jan Bartelmsman



Above, Marqt; at right, Marqt founder Quirijn Bolle.

ije. "Local' in Holland means greenhouses." He is also open to new varieties of seeds, not just heirlooms, like many seasonal advocates.

"We have found a new beetroot," he says, "When you eat it raw out of the greenhouse, it tastes like a cherry."

Holland's other three-star Michelin chef, Sergio Herman, also relies on personal connections with local farmers to find the best produce, and he will also go into the greenhouse as a way to maintain local food sourcing in the winter months. At Oud Sluis, Mr. Herman's restaurant near the Belgian border, not far from Bruges, you can find tropical fruit on the menu in winter, but the rest of the time, local fruits and vegetables have pride of place.

After recently discovering the carrots of a Dutch farmer near Amsterdam, Mr. Herman was moved to invent a new dessert course called "Bugs Bunny," which features carrot cake, carrot ice-cream, and carrot chips flavored with cumin. "The taste is so different," he says of the carrots. "If you eat them one time, you will never eat the other ones."

Greenhouse technology is not to blame for a lack of taste, says Olaf van Kooten, a professor of Horticulture at the Wageningen University, the leading agricultural research institution in the Netherlands. The problem, he says, is that industrial growers sell their products by the kilo, so there is an incentive to increase the level of water, which can dramatically decrease the taste. He refers to the "watery tomato strike" in Germany in the 1990s, when Germans, who make up Dutch agriculture's largest market, rebelled against the products coming out of Dutch greenhouses.

He says that Dutch horticulture has managed to create the most productive greenhouse technology in the world, but that it is only now coming around to developing ways of increasing actual taste. He believes that the growing trend toward sea-



sonality among selective consumers may lead to an even wider Dutch demand for better tasting produce.

Greenhouses are the star attraction at the Amsterdam restaurant De Kas, which actually means "greenhouse." The restaurant, which opened 10 years ago, is also an important trendsetter in Holland's seasonal cuisine movement. Housed in the city's former municipal greenhouse, the stunning interior is presided over by potted fig and olive trees, and guests are encouraged to walk through the restaurant's private greenhouse, where heirloom tomatoes and several kinds of basil regularly appear on the single set-menu meals.

In season, up to 80% of the restaurant's produce comes from its own greenhouses and gardens, says owner Gert Jan Hageman, a chef who gave up his Michelin-starred Franco-Italian-style restaurant in Amsterdam to open De Kas. But Mr. Hageman isn't averse to serving tropical fruit in winter, or looking for the best new seed varieties com-

ing out of Dutch horticulture.

Marije Vogelzang, who opened a new Amsterdam seasonal restaurant this summer, called Proef, draws the line at tropical fruit. "We never use anything like pineapple or coconut or avocado," she says, noting that her original ambition was to source all her food within five kilometers of the restaurant. However, she adds, "One thing that I cheat on is lemon. I love lemon in every dish."

A conceptual designer, Ms. Vogelzang initially used food in her installations. A catering business then led to the new restaurant, where even the cocktails are seasonal, she says, citing this month's "Full Frontal Flower Shower," featuring local elderberry syrup, gin and fresh peas and edible flowers.

"I wish the restaurant was in California," she says, admitting that "Full Frontal Flower Shower" will soon have to come off the menu, in spite of its popularity. "It's such a shame when summer has passed."

J. S. Marcus is a writer based in Berlin.

Reflecting on Champagne

CHAMPAGNE, PERHAPS more than wine from any other region, is bound up with its association of celebration. As an aperitif, it lifts the spirit; served at a drinks gathering, it brightens the mood; and for many the popping of a champagne cork is in itself a signal

ing of rubble that is made up of sand, lignite, marl, loam and clay. This provides the vine with plenty of drainage, which is an important factor in a wet, northern climate influenced by the Atlantic Ocean.

One house whose style of wines reflects the terroir is Bollinger, which makes champagne of a mouth-filling, yeasty, firm character with tremendous depth. The house can trace its origins back to 1829, when Jacques Bollinger, the youngest son of a noblewoman from Württemberg in Germany, went into business with Paul Renaudin and the Comte de Villermont to form the champagne house Renaudin, Bollinger & Cie. At the time, Germany was an important market for champagne, and many Germans, including Johann-Josef Krug, were coming to Reims to set up business. The young Bollinger was very much the driving force behind the business, expanding both the domaine and the area planted under vineyard. He married the Comte's daughter, Charlotte de Villermont, and they had two sons, Georges and Joseph. In 1884, the house received the Royal Warrant as purveyors of champagne to Queen Victoria. Control eventually passed to Georges's son, Jacques Bollinger, and he married Elizabeth Law, who became the now-legendary Lily Bollinger.

Aunt Lily, as she was affectionally known, took over the day-to-day running of the vineyards when her husband Jacques died in 1941. It was a time of war, and her remarkable drive led her to oversee the domaine often by foot or on her bicycle. In addition to helping out with the harvest and wine-making process, she also had a keen eye for publicity. In 1961, she gave perhaps the single most famous quote ever to be uttered on champagne, when she said of drinking Bollinger: "I drink it when I'm happy and when I'm sad. Sometimes I drink it when I'm alone. When I have company I consider it obligatory. I trifle with it if I'm not hungry and I drink it when I am. Otherwise I never touch it, unless I'm thirsty."

One wine worth trying is the R.D., which stands for recently disgorged, a concept unique to the house. The wine itself is Grande Année, Bollinger's vintage champagne, which is left to mature for more than a decade, giving it a more complex, nuanced flavor. The 1996 is one of the house's most exceptional examples and one of the finest I have had the good fortune to taste.

Wine

WILL LYONS

to start the party.

And yet I find a visit to the Champagne region is often one of the most profound and sober experiences. I first visited Reims as an undergraduate, where, in between appointments at various champagne houses, I took time out to visit the Monument aux Morts, a tribute to those fallen in the battles that have enveloped the city. A short walk away is the spot where General Eisenhower set up his headquarters and on May 7, 1945, signed the surrender of Nazi Germany with Alfred Jodl, commander-in-chief of the Wehrmacht.

But it was a few years later, walking through the vineyards just north of Epernay in the Marne Valley, that I became aware of the historical significance of a landscape that saw the destruction of thousands of young men in World War I. Describing the Battle of Champagne in his 1916 book "Vive la France," American war correspondent Edward Alexander Powell wrote: "Hell holds no horrors for one who has seen that battlefield. Could Dante have walked beside me across that dreadful place, which had been transformed by human agency from a peaceful countryside to a garbage heap, a cesspool, and a charnel-house combined, he would never have written his 'Inferno,' because the hell of his imagination would have seemed colourless and tame. The difficulty in writing about it is that people will not believe me. I shall be accused of imagination and exaggeration, whereas the truth is that no one could imagine, much less exaggerate, the horrors that I saw upon those rolling, chalky plains."

Today those chalky plains are planted with vines that produce more than 200 million bottles of sparkling wine a year. The chalky plains also play a key role in giving champagne wines their distinctive depth of flavor. The soil consists of a chalk subsoil, topped by a cover-

DRINKING NOW

Bollinger R.D.
Ay, France

Vintage: 1996

Price: about £150 or €185

Alcohol content: 12%

Disgorged on Oct. 15, 2007, this comes from an exceptional vintage, some say the best in more than 60 years. Taut, with powerful acidity, it has fresher top notes of lemon, with a buttery, nutty taste on the palate and a wonderful freshness.





Left, Andy Roddick serves to Robin Soderling of Sweden during the semifinals of the BNP Paribas Open on March 19, 2010; above, Roger Federer returns a shot against Andy Roddick during the Sony Ericsson Open on April 3, 2008, in Key Biscayne, Florida.

BY MATTHEW FUTTERMAN

AS THE U.S. OPEN begins on Monday, Andy Roddick will be celebrating his 28th birthday. He will also be facing what could be his last shot at glory. When Mr. Roddick last won the U.S. Open—in September 2003—he appeared primed to carry on an 80-year tradition of American tennis champions that stretched from “Big Bill” Tilden to Pete Sampras. By the end of that year Mr. Roddick, with his fierce, 130-mile-per-hour serve, had become the youngest American player to finish a season with the number one world ranking. Tens of millions of dollars in endorsement deals with Lacoste, American Express, AT&T and others would follow.

By February of 2004, though, Mr. Roddick had dropped to number two. He was soon eclipsed by the sport’s two reigning male stars, Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal. Since Mr. Roddick’s U.S. Open win in 2003, Messrs. Federer and Nadal have won 23 of the 27 Grand Slam tournaments, an unrivalled stretch of dominance. Mr. Roddick has never won another Grand Slam.

Early this spring, there was talk of a comeback. Mr. Roddick captured the Sony Ericsson Open in Miami in March, his first major tournament victory since 2006. Returning to Wimbledon this year as a sentimental favorite after losing a heartbreaking final in 2009, Mr. Roddick was upset in the fourth round in five sets to 82nd-ranked Yen-Hsun Lu of Taiwan.

Weeks later, the pain of the loss was still raw. “I’ve been pointing to that tournament for a long time, since last year when you’re close enough to taste it,” Mr. Roddick said in an interview with *The Wall Street Journal* before a World Team Tennis match in New York in July.

After a lackluster spring in Europe,

Mr. Roddick has had a disappointing summer filled with early exits. Earlier this month, he slipped out of the top 10 for the first time since 2002. Blood tests revealed he’d been suffering from a mild case of mononucleosis.

Now Mr. Roddick is quieting whispers that he might be at the end of his career. “I’m going to throw a stat at you,” Mr. Roddick said defiantly after a straight-set loss to Frenchman Gilles Simon in Washington, D.C., earlier this month. “The average age of a top 100 player on tour is 27, so define end.”

Here’s one way to define it—the average age in the top five is 24.6. Last year it was 23.2, and since 2005 it has never been higher than 23.6.

In part, Mr. Roddick has been cursed by bad timing, hitting his prime just as Mr. Federer, once an inconsistent hot-head, was figuring out how to marshal his immense talents, and as Mr. Nadal was coming into his own. Mr. Roddick has lost four times to Mr. Federer in Grand Slam finals, including last year’s five-set loss in the finals at Wimbledon, in which Mr. Federer won the final set 16-14.

Mr. Roddick may also have emerged at exactly the wrong time for a player whose greatest weapon is a booming, flat serve that can be difficult to see, much less return. Just as Mr. Roddick was getting good, the

powers that be in tennis were getting worried about the effects of new racquet and string technology that made serves boom harder than ever. Players with blistering serves but few other talents on the court—Goran Ivanisevic was often cited as a culprit—were often dominating tournaments on the slick grass and hard courts, the game’s fastest surfaces. If something wasn’t done to slow the game down, officials feared, matches would become little more than serving contests.

In 2002, Wimbledon altered its grass, creating a thicker, more durable turf that slows the ball down and allows it to bounce higher, rather than skid, and baseliners have ruled ever since.

Jim Curley, tournament director at the U.S. Open, said organizers began slowing their own courts down in 2002, adding extra sand to the paint, and did so again before the 2003 tournament to make the court fair for baseliners and serve-and-volleyers alike. Argentine Juan Martin Del Potro, who has a rifle-like serve, beat Mr. Federer in last year’s final, demonstrating that a fast server can still do plenty of damage on the surface. But Mr. Del Potro, when healthy and on, also has a true all-around game.

“We’re trying to come up with a fair field of play for the integrity of

A return to form?

After years of struggle, it could be the final triumph for Andy Roddick at the U.S. Open



getty images (3)

Reign of Spain

Not just Nadal—six others are in the top 25

BY MATTHEW FUTTERMAN

IT HAS BEEN an awfully good year for Spanish sports enthusiasts. Spain won its first World Cup in South Africa. Cyclist Alberto Contador won his third Tour de France. Rafael Nadal won his sixth French Open and his second Wimbledon, and is the favorite to take his first U.S. Open.

But just as tennis is only a part of Spain's takeover of international sports, Mr. Nadal is merely the best-known member of one of the best generations of tennis talent any country has ever produced. As of this month, Spain had seven men ranked among the top 25 in the world.

"I think God said, 'From 2005 to 2010, Spain is going to have great athletes,'" Fernando Verdasco, currently eighth in the world, said after a victory earlier this month.

Mr. Verdasco's faith aside, Spain's tennis success is no accident. Its roots stretch back 30 years, according to Fernando Soler, who works with Mr. Nadal as the global head of tennis for IMG Worldwide, the New York-based sports and entertainment management firm that represents Mr. Nadal. Mr. Soler said Spain has benefited from a confluence of events and geography.

First, a handful of solid, if not spectacular, players from the 1970s through the 1990s decided to become coaches. That gave Spain a critical mass of tennis expertise that could be disseminated to developing players. Javier Duarte helped develop Alex Corretja and now works closely with No. 39, Tommy Robredo, while

José Perles works with No. 16, Nicolas Almagro.

In addition, Spain's mild climate allows outdoor play 11 months of the year, making it a favorite spot for small tournaments on the satellite professional circuits. That lets young Spanish players test their mettle cheaply, "so they can see if they have what it takes to play professionally," Mr. Soler said.

Finally, while the Spanish Tennis Federation, based in Barcelona, has continued to expand its programs, private clubs have sprouted in Spain's major cities, especially in Madrid, Valencia and Barcelona. The last is home of the world-famous Sánchez-Casal Academy, founded by former top player Emilio Sánchez.

However, Spanish women haven't been as dominant lately as the Spanish men. At No. 24, María José Martínez Sánchez is the only Spanish woman in the top 25, a decline from the days of Arantxa Sánchez Vicario and Conchita Martínez, suggesting that the rush of male talent may have more to do with happenstance than any programmatic changes in the country's tennis operations.

Mr. Soler doesn't expect success of the magnitude Spanish men are enjoying to last forever. Football will always grab the best athletes, he said, and a youth champion with Mr. Nadal's natural talent has yet to appear on the Iberian horizon. "There's a lot of talent that you cannot build," Mr. Soler said. "It's a process, where over a number of years, everything sort of came into place."



Left, Roger Federer (left) holds the trophy after winning the men's final against Andy Roddick at Wimbledon in 2009.

the competition," said Mr. Curley. He said that Mr. Roddick has complained to him, on occasion, that the courts have become too slow.

"It would have been tough for Sampras to do what he did with slower courts and higher bounces," said Jimmy Arias, a top American in the 1980s and now an analyst on

game, and a third-round loss at Roland Garros. Wimbledon brought the fourth-round upset, followed by surprising losses in the first two summer hard-court tournaments.

The year's low-point for Mr. Roddick came earlier this month in Washington during the loss against Mr. Simon, a 25-year-old French-

serves into the net. In the second set, he smacked a ball over the stands and out of the stadium.

Five days later, Mr. Roddick withdrew from the Rogers Masters in Toronto, one of the biggest events of the North American hard-court season, citing illness, and days later revealed the mild case of mono.

Sam Querrey, the American ranked 21st in the world, who counts Mr. Roddick as a friend and a mentor, said Mr. Roddick isn't as aggressive as he once was, and his serve no longer seems so intimidating.

"After playing him five or six times, I'm used to the pace, I'm used to the patterns," Mr. Querrey said. "You get a little more confidence."

With his rivals closing in, Mr. Roddick is hoping for one last burst at the site of his greatest moment, on the surface where he has always been most comfortable.

"In a 64 draw there's going to be 127 losers and one winner," he said. "That's just the facts of our sport. You learn to get over it and you get back out there."

Sophia Hollander contributed to this story.

Andy Roddick has been cursed by bad timing, hitting his prime just as Roger Federer was figuring out how to marshal his immense talents, and as Rafael Nadal was coming into his own.

the Tennis Channel.

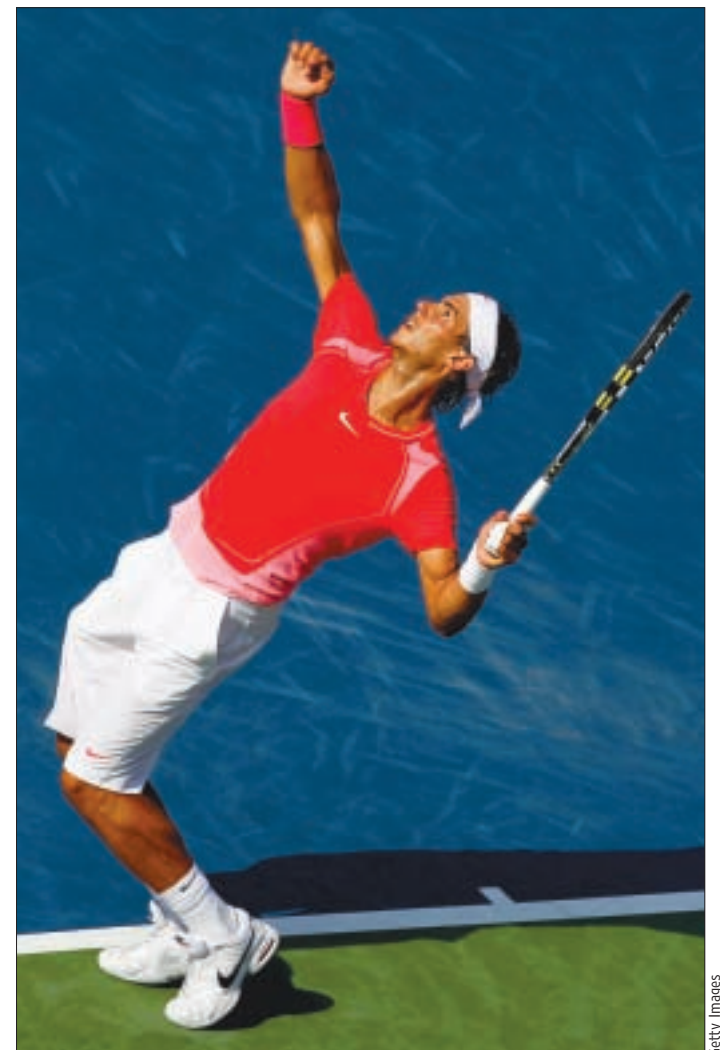
Mr. Roddick's victory in March in Miami got people thinking that a late-career surge might be on the horizon. He bested Mr. Nadal in a tie-breaking third set in the semifinal after consecutive drubbings on every surface in the past two years. "I thought it might be a career-altering victory," said Cliff Drysdale, the former Australian pro and long-time analyst.

But then came the major clay-court tournaments, which have rarely been kind to Mr. Roddick's

man ranked 40th in the world.

"It used to be you could only beat Roddick on his serve in a tiebreaker or perhaps one game each set," said Mr. Simon, ranked sixth in the world before knee injuries. "When he decided to wait, I was more consistent. When he decided to play more aggressive, he made errors."

Mr. Roddick was at a loss to explain his performance. "I honestly don't think it would have mattered who I played tonight," he said. From the first points in the match, it was clear he was off, pounding first



getty images

Rafael Nadal of Spain serves to Philipp Kohlschreiber of Germany during the quarterfinals of the Rogers on August 13, 2010 in Toronto, Canada.

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Setting the scene for teens

Luxury hotels offer diversions for younger guests, while giving their parents a break

BY JEMIMA SISSONS

LEAVING THE SLEEK confines of the Four Seasons in Canary Wharf, our taxi whisks us into the heart of east London. We whistle past boarded-up shops, churches, low-income housing and playgrounds. Soon, run of the mill graffiti gives way to vibrant displays of street art. Vast colorful letters cover whole walls. Art student and stylist Mae Shummo, 24 years old, our tour guide for the day, informs us that the letters are by a famous street artist called Eine, and goes on to describe the local street art scene in more detail.

I am on a "Gen Y" tour package with my 17-year-old niece Emily Sissons, who is visiting London from near Newbury in Berkshire. Offered by the Four Seasons in Canary Wharf to families staying there, tour company Urban Gentry offers an insider's tour of east London (www.fourseasons.com). For those who don't know the area, the guides provide invaluable insights as well as a safe pair of hands for thrill-seeking teenagers.

This is part of a new trend for luxury hotels around the world, offering fun and inventive diversions for teenagers to enjoy, while giving parents a break. These range from playing a gladiator in Rome, to a club tour of East Berlin, to being a Hollywood starlet for the day, and can cost anywhere from about €50 for a single activity or treatment to about €500 for an all-inclusive package.

Our package, which includes a Saturday-night stay for two adults and one teenager, breakfast and a three-hour Urban Gentry tour at £460, begins a few days before, with Kevin Caruth from Urban Gentry calling Emily and asking her about her interests to tailor-make the tour. Her answer? Fashion, fashion and more fashion. Oh yes, and jewelry. And a bit of street art.

As we edge our way into the heart of the fashionable East End, Emily films the whole thing on a tiny video camera provided by the Four Seasons as part of the package. We come to the neighborhood of Hoxton, where gallery owners, designers and artists all mingle. First stop, past the iconic White Cube art gallery in Hoxton Square, is Hoxton Boutique. Emily is window-shopping today, and here there is plenty to look at. A bold Marimekko dress at £165 catches her eye. "Ah, the last teenager I took here on a tour—an American girl—bought one for her prom," says Ms. Shummo. Emily rifles through an eye-catching display of rings on the counter—eagle heads, treasure chests and fluorescent flowers.

We walk down Shoreditch High Street and into Redchurch Street. Emily pokes her head into Studio 1.1 gallery, showing an exhibition of pieces of paper with pencil lines and dots. "Er, what's that meant to be?" she asks. As we pass some Victorian flats, Ms. Shummo explains that this was the first social housing in London.

Our next stop is at nearby colorful jewelers Tatty Devine. Quirky necklaces with brightly hued birds, roller blades and images of artists Gilbert and George are hung around the candy-colored shop. Emily decides on a blue glittery necklace with her name on it. We then come to Brick Lane—famous for its bagel shops and curry houses. Emily devours a cream cheese and smoked salmon bagel, fuel for the next shop: Beyond Retro. As we weave our way through the throng, Ms. Shummo narrates the history of Brick Lane to Emily about the Huguenot refugees who settled here in the 17th century, followed by Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe in the late 19th century and then Bangladeshi immigrants in the 1970s. "It shaped the area into what it is today," she says.

In the store, Emily indulges in some serious dressing up. "I don't do hats," she says nervously, as our guide picks out a wide brimmed straw number. "Oh yes you do," says Ms. Shummo, in an affectionate, big-sisterly way.

Last stop is Laden Showroom—a modern fashion boutique. Emily loves a pretty floral number, but says she will save it for when she comes back with her friends, and "I can be the tour guide for the day."

—Jemima Sissons is a writer based in London.



Above, tour guide Mae Shummo (right) shows teenager Emily Sissons some of the street art in the East End of London; below, Emily in vintage heaven, trying on clothes in Beyond Retro, near Brick Lane.



More teen tours

Hotel de Rome, Berlin

Perfect for all young night owls over the age of 14, the Hotel de Rome will organize a club tour of Berlin, offers lessons in DJing from leading club owners in the city, and will even teach the art of graffiti. Teenagers can let out their creative side and design their own "milk-berlin bag"—a staple in the city. However, the more historically minded are also offered tours of World War II bunkers. www.roccofortecollection.com

The Peninsula, Beverly Hills

Aspiring actresses can star in their own film for the day with an Emmy-nominated producer. They will be followed by a film crew and the day's activities are turned into a professionally produced DVD to take home, and budding singers are given lessons by a leading voice coach. www.peninsula.com

Hotel de Russie, Rome

The Hotel de Russie in Rome will take your teen on a tour of the famous ancient sites of Rome such as the Forum and Capitol Hill, before being dropped off at the "gladiator school" at the start of the Appian Way. Here, teens get to dress up in full gladiator garb, before being taught how to fight with authentic weapons such as a "rudis," a training sword. www.roccofortecollection.com

The Peninsula, Bangkok

Teens can take part in educational activities such as a folkloric river trip and making handmade Thai souvenirs. Budding gastronomes are offered lessons in authentic home cooking and the art of healthy juicing. www.peninsula.com

One and Only, Cape Town

For more aesthetically minded teens between the ages of 12 and 16, the hotel spa offers specialized treatments, such as a Youthful Balance Facial, or a Teen Face and Back treatment. www.oneandonlyresorts.com

Anassa, Cyprus

Similarly to the One and Only in Capetown, the luxurious Thalassa spa offers bespoke skincare programs for teens with problem skin, using The Organic Pharmacy range. The focus is on teaching teens how to care for their skin, using gentle healing and chemical-free products. www.anassa.com

Athenaeum, London

The hotel now offers a Kid's Concierge, who is dedicated to providing tailor-made diversions for children of all ages. These can range from securing a private box at the latest West End show, to a trip to see the Harry Potter "Hogwarts" house, or a private limo tour of the capital's hottest nightclubs. www.athenaeumhotel.com



Athenaeum Hotel in London

Clubs vie to host PGA competition

FOR 40 YEARS, the PGA Tour's annual landfall in the New York City area occurred at Westchester Country Club, about 32 kilometers northeast of midtown Manhattan. The pros (most of them, anyway) loved playing on the club's classic Walter Travis-designed West Course, dating from 1919, while both they and their spouses loved hanging out in the Big Apple. Among those who won at Westchester are Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer, Johnny Miller and Ernie Els. Pádraig Harrington won in 2005 by rolling in a 65-foot eagle

Golf JOHN PAUL NEWPORT

putt on the final hole. For a variety of reasons, however, the Tour has recently ditched Westchester as its permanent home in New York, creating an intriguing competition among other area clubs to get in on the action. "We have a good, deep, rich, long history in the New York City area, which we want to continue," said David Pillsbury, the Tour's executive vice president of championship management. "And there is certainly no shortage of classic and/or iconic courses to chose from."

Westchester is among those courses. Mr. Pillsbury called it a "magnificent venue." But in recent years some of the club's members had grumbled about having to sacrifice play on the course for a couple of weeks every summer. More significantly, attendance and television ratings for the tournament there had been dwindling. Partly that was because Tiger Woods didn't much care for the course and seldom played, and partly because the tournament's date on the calendar, either the week before or the week after the U.S. Open, discouraged other pros from competing, as well.

The Tour revised its strategy to make the annual New York tournament the first stop in its newly created, end-of-season FedEx Cup Playoff series. Westchester got the first playoff spot, called the Barclays, in August 2007. Mr. Woods did not show. The following winter the Tour announced that henceforth the opening FedEx Cup Playoff venue would rotate among several courses in the New York area. Essentially, it would create something similar to the rota of courses that serve as venues for the British Open.

Ridgewood Country Club in New Jersey, with 27 holes designed by A.W. Tillinghast, hosted the 2008 event and is doing so again this week. Last year, Liberty National, a new course on the waterfront across from the Statue of Liberty and the lower Manhattan skyline (an "iconic" if not classic course) played host. Next year, the tournament goes to Plainfield in New Jersey, a Donald Ross masterpiece from 1921, and for 2012 returns to Westchester, to finish out the Tour's current contract with that club.

After that, nothing is set in stone. "Our goal is to create a permanent rotation of four or five courses, possibly just three, over the next 10 to 15 years," said Mr. Pillsbury, adding that the Tour hopes to announce the schedule early next year.

Ridgewood is a favorite to remain in the rota. Liberty National is, too. The thick rough, narrow fairways and small but severely undulating greens at Liberty were highly unpopular with the players last year, but television loved Liberty for its New York Harbor backdrop and the club intends to make significant "adjustments" (to use Mr. Pillsbury's word) to the course before the Tour would return. Another thing Liberty National has going for it: Bob Diamond, the president of title-sponsor Barclays, is an active member.

Plainfield, after its trial run next year, is an obvious candidate for inclusion in the rota, and Mr. Pillsbury said that Westchester remains "a possibility." Mr. Pillsbury would not mention the names of the several other courses the Tour has been talking to, but he did confirm that Essex County Country Club, not far from Ridgewood in New Jersey, is among those under consideration.

"It's been sort of like a long courtship," Essex President Dennis Petrocelli told me Thursday. "They've been sending a lot of people out here for the last year or so, but we've actually been talking for much longer than that."

The course itself, originally designed by Mr. Tillinghast in 1925 and subsequently improved by Seth Raynor, Charles Banks and (most recently) Gil Hanse, has long since passed muster with the Tour, Mr. Petrocelli said. "We play at about 7,100 yards for members, and the Tour might want to add some new tees to take it another couple of hundred yards. But I've been surprised by how mostly they aren't trying to make it harder, but to bring in a great mix of holes and to make it

A view of the fifth green during the first round of the Barclays tournament at the Ridgewood Country Club in August 2010.



more interesting and fun for the players and the fans," he said. The uphill 14th hole, for instance, might be shortened to around 300 yards to play as a drivable par-four.

Logistics are another matter. Most of the Tour site inspections recently have had to do with crowd accommodation, parking, food service

possibilities, and finding spots for corporate hospitality and scoring tents. "You don't realize until you're involved how complicated putting on one of these tournaments is," Mr. Petrocelli said.

For the club, the primary advantage of hosting a tournament would be the recognition. "That would be a

real achievement for a club like ours, and actually very important when it comes to retaining members, getting new members, attracting outings and so forth," he said. "Even if, in the end, we don't get the tournament here, the buzz about our being in contention makes it all worthwhile."

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❖ Top Picks

Art festival offers a garden of delight

EDINBURGH: In the past, the Edinburgh Festival has had difficulty assimilating the visual arts. In the early days, they were part of the International Festival, but conflicts arose and were smoothed over, and now there is an official Art Festival, which has made its first ever commissions—including three “art-works.”

One of these is 2001 Turner Prize winner Martin Creed’s musical staircase at the Fruitmarket Gallery (until Oct. 31). The show is called “Down Over Up,” and focuses, according to the gallery website, “on stacking and progression in size, height and tone—stacks of planks, chairs, tables;... series of paintings; and works which use the musical scale.” This last is the staircase, which appeals to the child in each of us, as we walk up the staircase and create an ascending scale, or do the reverse, or hop around on it to play “Chopsticks.”

But Mr. Creed is a serious artist. His new art book, “Martin Creed: Works” (Thames & Hudson £36) shows how he uses simple materials, such as ordinary chairs, to create a realm in which reality seems to be transformed by conceptual rules, such as stacking in order of size, but is transformed in a different way by breaking these rules unexpectedly, and often humorously.

The blockbuster of the Art Festival is “Impressionist Gardens” in the National Gallery Complex (until Oct. 17), with Renoir, Van Gogh, Monet and all the usual suspects represented. It’s a bit like a surfeit of chocolates, but there are a few unusual flavors, such as Arthur Melville’s cabbage garden, Gustave Caillebotte’s dahlias and Armand Guillaumin’s nasturtiums.

The one unmissable attraction takes some getting to, is best booked in advance, is open only Thursday-Sunday, and also involves some long walking. But it’s worth the trouble to see the fabulous contemporary sculpture garden called Jupiter Artland, in the grounds of Bonnington House outside Edinburgh. There are what seem to be acres of grassy ridges and large water features—in fact eight landforms, a connecting causeway, and four lakes—in Charles Jencks’s earthworks, called “Life Mounds.” Their theme is sexual reproduction, at the cellular level. But that’s not the only thrill of this extraordinary collection of (mostly) specially commissioned, site-specific sculptures by high profile living artists. Two of the greatest works are exceptions. Anish Kapoor’s “Suck,” which looks



‘Leaf line’ (2005) by William Wegman.

like a whirlpool, was already made, but when Mr Kapoor chose the site for it, he realized he’d have to bar the entrance to it (to keep out rabbits and careless children alike), so covered it with a 5-meter high cast iron cage. Likewise Antony Gormley had already made the giant crouching figure modeled on his own body—1,170 corten steel elements and 1,019 steel balls welded together. However, when it came to sit-

ing the piece, called “Firmament”, Mr. Gormley transfigured it by placing it on an elevation on the horizon, so that through it you can see a wondrous landscape against the sky.

Just opposite the Fruitmarket Gallery is the revamped City Art Centre, which, until Oct. 24, is showing two American photographers. William Wegman’s “Family Combinations” consists of large format Polaroid prints of Weimaraner dogs do-

ing amusingly mysterious things. Downstairs “Edward Weston: Life Work” is a major survey, the biggest ever to come to the U.K. It has 117 prints from Weston’s (1886-1958) long career, and, I think, justifies his place as a modern master of photography. Even more than the nudes, I loved the near-abstract compositions of fruit and vegetables.

—Paul Levy
www.edinburghfestivals.co.uk

Arvo Pärt returns to form with fourth symphony

It has taken Estonian composer Arvo Pärt the best part of 40 years to pen a new symphony, his fourth. ‘Los Angeles’ is the result of a long journey, both musically and personally, since his Symphony No. 3 was less than welcomed by the then-Soviet authorities.

This could go some way to explaining why the new piece has been dedicated to Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the Russian oligarch with political ambitions, who is now in a Siberian prison. While Mr. Pärt’s work is often seen as otherworldly, it curiously continues to rattle more than a few cages.

Performed by the Los Angeles Philharmonic and conducted by Esa-

Pecka Salonen, the piece is in three movements, most of which are glacially slow. Scored for strings, harp and percussion, its rhythms are structured around the words of the Orthodox Christian prayer the “Canon of the Guardian Angel.”

Fixing the music to word patterns has resulted in a series of angular rhythms, where Mr. Pärt’s strings almost play out a musical Morse code. Meanwhile, harmonically, the piece uses his distinctive minimalist tintinnabuli style, but here the chords overlap each other, creating occasional, but complex dissonances.

For me, “Los Angeles” feels like it completes a circle for Mr. Pärt, as he

has found a structure to tie together the harmonic loose ends derived from serialism from his last symphony. And by setting the music to a text, he has derived a rhythmic bedrock for the work, which contains patterns, but at the same time doesn’t feel formulaic.

While Mr. Pärt has sometimes been linked with the East Coast minimalists, this work sees him more to be a distant cousin of the West Coast contingent such as Terry Riley, or La Monte Young’s “Theater of Eternal Music.” And like their pieces, while the music is pretty sparse, it is worth taking time to get used to it, like being in a Japanese rock garden.

—Paul Sharma



‘Madonna’ (1895) by Edvard Munch; sold for £1.25 million in July 2010 at Bonhams, London.

Auctions offer prints by the greats

PRINT AUCTIONS IN September will offer a striking range of powerful images.

Collecting MARGARET STUDER

Spanning 500 years of printmaking, the sales include limited-edition works by the greats of the genre. Among them will be Rembrandt van Rijn, Edvard Munch, Pablo Picasso, Max Beckmann, Henri Matisse, Marc Chagall, Richard Hamilton, Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein.

Three of Picasso’s greatest prints spearhead a large collection of the artist’s graphic works at Sotheby’s in London on Sept. 16. His haunting “La Femme Qui Pleure” (1937), a weeping woman with her mouth set in a silent scream, depicts the suffering of victims bombed in the Basque town of Guernica during General Franco’s regime (estimate: £500,000-£700,000). His provocative “La Minotaure-machie” (1935), showing a huge creature with a bull’s head and human body poised before a girl holding a candle as a peace offering, is expected to fetch £400,000-£600,000. His “Le Repas Frugal” (1904), a couple sitting pensively before a cheap bottle of wine and little food, symbolizes companionable poverty (estimate: £120,000-£180,000).

In the same sale will be a number of prints by Munch. A version of his “Madonna” (1895-1902), an iconic femme fatale, is estimated at £350,000-£450,000. At Bonhams in July, another version of this famous image fetched £1.25 million, making it the second most expensive print in the world, behind Munch’s “Vampire II” (sold in 2007 for around £1.26 million). Sotheby’s also will offer in September a version of Munch’s vampire image, a woman with long, red hair reminiscent of blood brushing her lips on a man’s vulnerable neck, estimated at £400,000-£600,000.

Christie’s dances to a lighter tune in London on Sept. 15 with Matisse’s “Jazz” (1947), a print album with bold forms, embodying the rhythm and dynamism of jazz music (estimate: £100,000-£150,000). There is also a brighter look at the erotic in Lichtenstein’s “Thinking Nude, from Nudes Series” (1994), a playful look at a reclining blond who is deep in thought (estimate: £25,000-£35,000).



Arvo Pärt.

Lorenz Of Arabia

By David Pryce-Jones

The Ottoman Empire took its time to die. Hovering around the death bed, the Great Powers of the late 19th century—Russia, France, Germany and Britain—were eager to have a share of the spoils and fearful that others might pre-empt them. None was so eager or so greedy as the German emperor, Kaiser Wilhelm II.

A grandson of Queen Victoria, the kaiser nonetheless found the British a “hateful, lying, conscienceless people of shopkeepers.” He especially resented that they were ruling India. In the course of visiting Turkey and its Arab provinces, he fantasized that he could build an empire out of these lands, a German counterweight to British India. This foolish and neurotic fellow has much to answer for. Sean McMeekin, a professor at Bilkent University in Ankara, Turkey, now produces a charge sheet, and it is detailed and instructive.

The first step in the kaiser’s policy of expansion was to build a railway from Germany to Constantinople, eventually terminating in Baghdad, with an extension to the Persian Gulf. This great engineering feat, begun in 1903, was intended to carry German merchandise on German rails, but its military purpose was clear—to establish German hegemony in Ottoman lands. But intervening mountain ranges in eastern Turkey made for slow progress and

prevented the railway’s completion in time to help fulfill the kaiser’s ambitions before war broke out in August 1914.

In Turkey itself, in the prewar years, revolution was in air, complicating the Germans’ calculations. The Young Turks, conspirators with an army background, rebelled against the sultanate and pushed for constitutional reforms, forming the government in 1908. Still, they were uncertain

The Berlin-Baghdad Express

By Sean McMeekin
(Allen Lane,
496 pages, £17.99)

how to modernize and preserve the empire. In the crisis of 1914 they were pressured into an alliance with Germany, and this alliance brought about the collapse that they had hoped to avoid.

For Germany, the Ottoman alliance was a help, but not enough in itself. Facing Russia in the east and Britain and France in the west, Germany simply did not have the manpower or the means to fight on multiple fronts. Complex strategies of subversion were devised instead. They were to pay off in one notorious case, when the Germans, in 1917, sent Lenin in a special train to launch the Bolshevik Revolution and take Russia out of the war. The Germans encouraged Zionism, too, in the belief that Germany

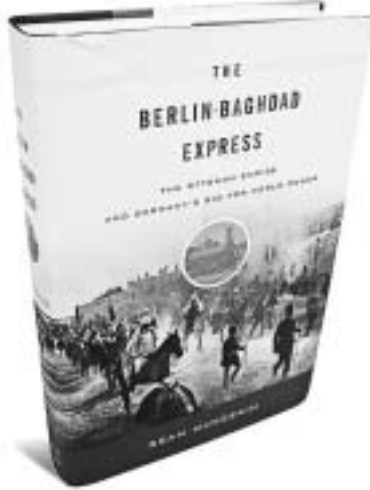
could recruit the loyalty of persecuted Russian Jews.

The strategy of subversion that most interests Mr. McMeekin in “The Berlin-Baghdad Express” was the kaiser’s plan to foment rebellion among Muslims living under British rule. Toward this end he pushed for a Grand Jihad, the aim of which was to revive the figurehead of a Sultan Caliph, to whom all Muslims of the world would show loyalty. If Muslims in Egypt and India could be persuaded to rise and free themselves from their colonial masters, the kaiser believed, the British Empire would lose its prize possessions and the British could not win the war.

In charge of this Grand Jihad was Baron Max von Oppenheim, a rich dilettante, an Arabist and an Anglophobe who knew how to excite the kaiser with the news that all Muslims were looking to him for leadership. Urged by the Germans, Ottoman sheiks, all of them Sunni, duly issued fatwas ordering Muslims to kill infidels. Mr. McMeekin makes it plain that this gave Turks license for the mass murder of Armenians and Greeks, the infidels and enemies within reach. The impact of the fatwas was dissipated by the absurd fact that they had to exempt infidels who were allies, namely Germans, Austrians and Hungarians.

Meanwhile, Oppenheim put out a mass of printed propaganda and sent German agents fanning out to one Muslim ruler after another, urging each to pursue jihad. As

Mr. McMeekin shows, these agents had experience of the Muslim world; they were usually linguists, explorers and scholars, at least as impressive and as hardy as Lawrence of Arabia on the Allied side. To their dismay, though, Oppenheim’s agents discovered



that the position of Sultan Caliph was of no more interest in the broad Muslim world than the position of Holy Roman Emperor was in Christendom.

What really mattered to the Muslims, as Mr. McMeekin puts it, “was superior force in theatre, pure and simple.” The Shia Grand Mufti of Karbala gave the Germans a solitary success by signing up for jihad, but the emir of Afghanistan, the shah of Persia and the religious dynasty of Sanussi in Libya were among those waiting

to see which side would ultimately win the war before committing themselves. Of course, Muslim leaders were delighted to be propositioned by German agents and in return for subsidies and armaments made the airiest promises of support, exactly as they were doing with the British, playing one side off against the other.

Sherif Hussein of Mecca, Mr. McMeekin notes, was the most skillful of all these blackmailers. Head of the Hashemite family and engaged in tribal rivalry in Arabia, he had made sure to send his sons to treat with Oppenheim while also testing what the British might give him. The price he extracted from Britain was kingdoms for himself and for two of his sons, and he was duly rewarded with them when the war ended.

In addition to bringing to life a fascinating episode in early 20th-century history, “The Berlin-Baghdad Express” contains several timely lessons and cautionary tales. Purchased loyalty is worthless. Western countries may possess superior military force, but they are outwitted time and again by diplomacy as practiced by Muslim leaders. Lastly, there is no such thing as global Islamic solidarity—jihad is an expedient, not a belief system.

Mr. Pryce-Jones is the author of, among other books, “The Closed Circle: An Interpretation of the Arabs.”

Adoption Dispatches

By Eileen Daspin

When Scott Simon, the host of National Public Radio’s “Weekend Edition” in the U.S. and his wife, documentary filmmaker Caroline Richard, decided to adopt a baby from China, they were like many couples who had gone before them. Having tried to start a family in the traditional manner, they hadn’t achieved traditional results. They had also tried and failed at what Mr. Simon calls

Baby, We Were Meant for Each Other

By Scott Simon
(Random House,
180 pages, £12.69)

“wizardly” things done in laboratories. Finally, the Simons had looked at each other across a field of figures scratched on the back of an envelope and asked: “Why are we doing this? There are already children in this world who need us right now. We sure need them.”

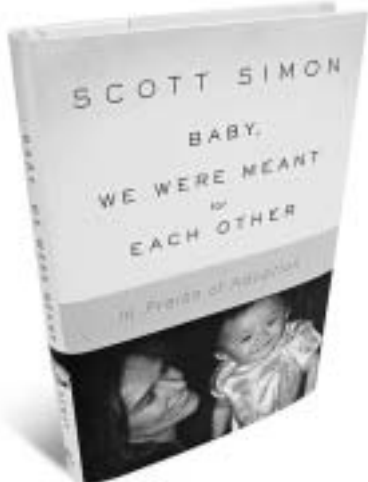
Mr. Simon relates the story in “Baby, We Were Meant for Each Other,” his portrait of adoption as he and others have experienced it. Having made their decision, the couple embarked on a journey that eventually brought into their lives Feng Jia-Mei, or Excellent-Beautiful, a young girl now known as Elise. In the paperwork the Simons received from Chinese officials notifying them that they had been matched with an infant, Jia-Mei was described as smart, active, funny, hungry,

energetic and impatient—adjectives that Mr. Simon notes remain accurate today. Within a few weeks, the couple was embracing the baby in a nondescript building in central Nanchang. Holding her close, the Simons laughed and cried as Elise burbled up breakfast, fear and phlegm. And like that, the Simons were a family.

A little background for those who aren’t familiar with Chinese adoption. In an effort to curb population growth, China in 1978 introduced a one-child rule. The unintended effects of this policy have been well documented: Because Chinese culture values boys over girls, there has been a tidal wave of infant girls abandoned by their parents and a corresponding surge in orphanages. (Other insidious effects of the law include forced abortions and infanticide.) In the early 1990s, American families looking to adopt abroad embraced China, which by then had developed an efficient, albeit lengthy, adoption protocol. By contrast, adoption in some other countries can be a haphazard, costly affair that may or may not result in an actual adoption.

As the mother of a girl adopted from the Jiangsu province as a baby, I know the trials of the process and its ultimate rewards. More than 50,000 children in the U.S.—almost all of them girls—have been adopted from China over the past two decades. And cottage industries have sprung up around the phenomenon. There are websites like Chinaspout.com, where T-shirts, pic-

ture books, plush panda bears and other items are peddled under the guise of maintaining the adopted children’s ties with their Chinese ancestors. Parents in many cities can sign up their little ones for classes in Mandarin, fan dancing, calligraphy and other ancient arts. Then there are “heritage tours” to guide Chinese children and their families on a “Roots” like return to the motherland.



Plenty of books have been written about making the trek to China in search of a child—for some reason, a disproportionate number of parents who have adopted from China have been journalists, and many naturally wanted to write about their experiences. Adopting from China is arduous and baffling and frustrating, sometimes even humiliating. It’s expensive and time-consuming. It also offers a peek into a society that not so long ago was closed to

Westerners. Plus, bingo, in the end, the persistent are rewarded with the miracle of a child to love.

“Baby, We Were Meant for Each Other” joins the chorus of books—including Karin Evans’s “The Lost Daughters of China” and Jeff Gammage’s “China Ghosts”—echoing those themes. But Mr. Simon, who has adopted a second Chinese girl, Lina, also takes a wider view, wondering: What prompts people to adopt in the first place? How do adoptive families compare with more traditional families? How do adoptees fare in the world? To explore these questions, he intertwines observations about his own experience and the stories of other adoptive parents and adoptees, among them several of the author’s notable friends.

We meet “Freakonomics” co-author Steven Levitt and his wife, Jeanette, who looked to China and adopted a girl after the death of their year-old son from pneumococcal meningitis. “I never predicted that I would be able to love this ‘stranger’ so quickly, but I did,” Mr. Levitt tells the author. “It changed the way I think about genes, nature versus nurture, and the way we are wired to love our children.” The couple has since adopted another Chinese girl and has a biological son and daughter as well.

Mr. Simon also talks to Chris Leonard, a name that probably isn’t familiar—he is in his 40s and lives in North Carolina, where he works for a furniture manufacturer. Mr. Leonard grew up knowing that he was adopted. Much later, at the prodding of his

wife, he went in search of his biological parents—and discovered that his father is menswear designer Alexander Julian (a friend of Mr. Simon’s). Mr. Julian had a dalliance when he was “a charming local bad boy,” as the author puts it, with a young woman. Unbeknownst to Mr. Julian, she became pregnant, decided to have the baby and then gave him up for adoption. The tale is circuitously told, but its ultimate message is that Mr. Leonard’s reunions with his biological parents were happy events.

Despite several sections relating the adoption experiences of others—and they are almost uniformly positive, as might be expected in a book subtitled “In Praise of Adoption”—the bulk of “Baby, We Were Meant for Each Other” concerns Mr. Simon and Ms. Richard’s personal story. A single wise truth emerges from the book: Adoptive families are pretty much like other families, with the same woes and thrills—and maybe with an extra overlay of anxiety. But the anxiety may be beneficial, in the end. “Adoptive parents work harder because they don’t assume their children’s reflexive love,” Mr. Simon writes. “Maybe it forces us to say what we are too scared and shy to state when it is easy, in more conventional families, for so much to be assumed.” The tie that binds? Adoption itself.

Ms. Daspin and her husband, Cesare Casella, live in New York and are the parents of 9-year-old Chen Yu Casella.

time

off

Amsterdam

photography

"Foam 3h: Eva Marie Rødbro—Lone Stars" showcases photographs and video work by the Danish photographer, made in a snapshot style during her travels in Texas in the 1980s.

Foam Fotografiemuseum
Until Nov. 3
☎ 31-20-5516-500
www.foam.nl

Berlin

art

"Long Night of the Museums" opens the doors to over 100 of Berlin's museums until the early morning hours, offering special night tours, concerts, dance performances, theater shows and exotic late night menus.

Various museums
Aug. 28
☎ 49-30-2474-9815
www.lange-nacht-der-museen.de

art

"Transient Spaces: The Tourist Syndrome" concludes a two-year project with an exhibition and talks by 25 contemporary artists from 17 countries, including Timothy Moore, Alex Aurien and Federico Baronello.

Neue Gesellschaft
für Bildende Kunst
Aug. 28-Oct. 10
☎ 49-30-6153-03
www.ngbk.de

Brussels

music

"Klara Festival 2010" presents a mix of traditional and modern classical music with a focus on the works of Gustav Mahler featuring Simone Kermes, the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Lipkind Quartet and others.

Various locations
Sept. 7-17
☎ 32-2-5489-595
www.klarafestival.be

Bremen

photography

"Goetz Diergarten" shows a series by the German photographer exploring ordinary architecture captured in un-

usual compositions: German facades, Belgian beach huts, British beach buildings and European subways.

Weserburg Museum
für Moderne Kunst
Until Oct. 31
☎ 49-4215-9839-0
www.weserburg.de

Cambridge

art

"John Brett: Intimate Portraits" offers a view of less familiar pre-Raphaelite drawings and paintings by the British artist, of family members and friends.

Fitzwilliam Museum
Sept. 14-Nov. 28
☎ 44-1223-3329-00
www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk

Copenhagen

art

"Bob Dylan: The Brazil Series" premieres about 40 canvases painted by the American artist, depicting scenes in Brazilian locales.

Statens Museum for Kunst
Sept. 4-Jan. 30
☎ 45-3374-8494
www.smk.dk

Dresden

art

"The Young Vermeer" presents three early works by Vermeer: "Diana and Her Companions," "Christ in the House of Martha and Mary" and "The Procuress," alongside works by contemporaries of the Dutch painter.

Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister
Sept. 3-Nov. 28
☎ 49-3514-9146-79
www.skd.museum

Hannover

art

"Children: Representations around 1900" offers a variety of art depicting children from the turn of the last century until the beginning of World War I, including art by Käthe Kollwitz, Emil Nolde, Edward Munch and August Macke.

Sprengel Museum
Aug. 29-Jan. 23
☎ 49-511-1684-3875
www.sprengel-museum.com



'Undercurrent (red)' (2008) by Mona Hatoum, shown in Berlin; bottom, Simone Kermes at Klara Festival in Brussels.

© Mona Hatoum

art

"Charles Avery: Onomatopoeia" exhibits 40 works by the Scottish artist, consisting of ink, pen and charcoal drawings.

Kunstverein Hannover
Aug. 28-Nov. 7

☎ 49-5113-2459-4

www.kunstverein-hannover.de

London

theater

"Clybourne Park" is a play by American playwright Bruce Norris about a 1959 middle-class neighborhood and its reactions to the first black family moving in next door. It is directed by Dominic Cooke and features Martin Freeman, Lorna Brown, Lucian Msamati and others.

Royal Court Theatre
Until Oct. 2
☎ 44-20-7565-5000
www.royalcourttheatre.com

carnival

"Notting Hill Carnival" will bring a million people, over 100 colorful floats and 40 static sound systems with music to the streets of London to celebrate Europe's biggest carnival.

Notting Hill
Aug. 29-30
☎ 44-20-7727-0072
www.thenottinghillcarnival.com

music

"Hendrix in Britain" opens the former apartment of Jimi Hendrix, now offices of the Handel House museum, to the public, presenting images, video, objects and music to commemorate the 40th anniversary of his death.

Handel House Museum
Until Nov. 7
☎ 44-20-7495-1685
www.handelhouse.org

© Andreas Komminenz

Paris

music

"Jazz à la Villette" celebrates innovative and experimental jazz at the Parc de la Villette and other venues around Paris, featuring among others Archie Shepp, Aethenor, Dave Douglas, Gil Scott-Heron, Marc Ribot, The Roots and Alice Russell.

Various venues
Aug. 31-Sept. 12
☎ 33-1-4484-4484
www.citedelamusique.fr

Santiago de Compostela

music

"Muse" conclude their European rock-music tour in support of their 2009 album "The Resistance," with a final performance in London.

Aug. 27, Festival de Xacobeo
Sept. 4, Lancashire County Cricket Club, Manchester
Sept. 10-11 Wembley Stadium, London
www.muse.mu

Zurich

design

"Charlotte Perriand: Designer, Photographer, Activist" presents furniture designs and photography created by the French architect and designer.

Museum of Design
Until Oct. 24
☎ 41-43-4466-767
www.museum-gestaltung.ch

Source: WSJE research

