

# WEEKEND JOURNAL.

FRIDAY - TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24 - 28, 2010

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## Pajama party

Bedtime clothes we want to wear all day

CLAUDETTE COLBERT  
in Paramount Pictures

P1090-1404

John Kobal Foundation/Getty Images

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'With often no sign on the door, and zero PR, these bars rely on word of mouth.'



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Illustration by Jean-Manuel Duvivier

## A late, late Christmas feast of diamonds

## [ European Life ]

By LENNOX MORRISON IN PARIS



No matter how late you've left it to buy the Christmas feast, it's unlikely to be as late as the just-in-time model pursued in Paris.

There's a perceived decline in standards of home cooking here and frozen ready-meals chain Picard is so ubiquitous that a culinary commentator recently bellowed "the deep freeze generation." Nevertheless, tomorrow morning street markets will be bustling with people who've risen early and braved icy temperatures to precision-shop for the festive board. Apart from the *Bûche de Noël*, a gooey Yule log cake, few purchases are specifically Christmassy. It's more about an excuse for a gastronomical splurge.

Some treats are ordered in advance, such as the most luxurious cheese board of the year. But while this makes for earnest, queue-clogging consultations with the cheesemonger in early December, other favorites—such as oysters—are selected just hours before landing on the table. Rather than a chore to be dispensed with as swiftly as possible, food shopping is seen as part of the celebration itself. With nary a soupçon of official prompting, citizens go to great lengths to achieve the level of cuisine Unesco has officially recognized as part of France's cultural heritage.

Like most expats here, we've acquired the gourmet impulse and this year forayed a little further afield in search of "the diamonds of cuisine."

Last week in a small market town in the Charente in southwestern France, we followed homemade road signs to the *Marché aux truffes* (truffle market). The signs led into the lobby of the

village hall scented with the aromas of the woodland floor. In a chilly room wooden tables were set up as stalls and 30 or so men and women in anoraks stood guard over squidgy black objects. Few buyers were in evidence. On our arrival, everyone glanced in our direction.

Although the truffles were wrapped in checked tea towels and more than one seller had earth under their fingernails, a sense of serious deal making was in the air. Next to top-notch electronic scales were handwritten cards indicating prices of up to €850 per kilo. The asking price per kilo for "winter truffles" from Charente-Maritime was €300, for black Périgord truffles it was €650. Once poetically referred to as "*La belle ténébreuse*" (mysterious beauty), today truffles are more commercially spun as "black pearls" or "French caviar."

After I'd explained why I was taking notes, vendors invited me to inhale their wares. They explained that hunting is now usually done with dogs rather than hogs. While pigs have a natural ability to sniff out truffles, they also want to eat what they find. A few customers were buying minuscule quantities for their own consumption, but there were evidently bigger buyers in the room as well. In mid-conversation with a vendor, I was politely asked to make way for a silver-haired man in a city coat and hat. Negotiations were sotto voce and sales seemed to be cash only. But this still isn't discreet enough for *trufficulteurs* (truffle farmers) who deal on the "parallel market." According to the newspaper *Sud Ouest*, go-betweens for Michelin-starred restaurants arrange roadside rendezvous with farmers selling truffles out of their car boot.

The secret plantations where one man and his dog forage for underground treasure seem a world away from the flurry of Paris markets on Christmas morning. In our neighborhood, the bak-

eries fire up their ovens and remain open until the last baguette is sold, bringing the joy of fresh croissants to fortify us for the last-minute cook-in.

## Shivering for art's sake

A Vancouver-based landscape artist who depicts forest clearings in the snow once revealed to me that the most crucial part of her painter's kit is a thermal vest and long johns. In Paris, there's a highly specialized squad of artists who each year don Bhutan woolly hats and fingerless gloves to paint outside. Their aim? To earn seasonal pin money painting nostalgic scenes on the plate glass windows of bakeries and restaurants.

As I write, some of these artists are still at work, perched on stepladders on the pavement. Christmas decorations go up later here than in London, Berlin or New York but also remain in place longer. The plastic figure of Santa Claus is often still scaling the wall of our bakery when it's time to send out Valentine cards.

## A popping good time

At a neighbor's festive get-together in Paris we were regaled with chilled Champagne and a gargantuan seafood platter. It was a shock, however, when at the children's table a bottle of Champagne was also popped and 12-year-olds and younger started toasting each other.

It turned out to be Champagne, a French-made fizzy drink for youngsters that is 99% apple juice but sold in a bottle that looks like the real thing and opens with an authentic pop. A website for French parents also suggests a homemade version. This involves wrapping foil around the top of a lemonade bottle and DIY champagne-style labels naming the vintage as Château KEVIN or SAM-pagne. Cheers to safeguarding the gastronomic heritage!

Next week,  
J. S. Marcus in Lisbon.

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Please include your full name and address.

## PROFILE

# Still clowning around

He may be 82 years old, but Pierre Etaix is back on stage and touring until September

By Tobias Grey

In the pantheon of slapstick artists Pierre Etaix is the second-oldest kid still on the block. The 82-year-old Frenchman, who is two years younger than his great friend and comedic contemporary Jerry Lewis, has made a triumphant return to the stage with his new music-hall-inspired show "Miousik Papillon," which is touring France until next September.

The show's success has capped a fine year for Mr. Etaix, who shot to prominence during the 1960s as the director/star of four delightful French movies, written in tandem with screenwriter Jean-Claude Carrière. "The Suitor," "Yoyo," "As Long as You're Healthy" and "The Great Love" wedded delicious observational wit with unexpected physical comedy.

For the last 20 years, all of these movies and other work by Mr. Etaix, including his Oscar-winning short "Happy Anniversary" (1962) and satirical documentary "Land of Milk and Honey" (1971), had dropped out of circulation because of a complicated legal battle over rights. The dispute first made headlines two years ago, when 50,000 people, including Woody Allen, David Lynch and Jean-Luc Godard, signed a petition supporting Mr. Etaix. This resulted in the much-needed restoration of Mr. Etaix's films, which were re-released in French cinemas last July to great acclaim.

"Jerry Lewis once told me that God isn't tender with comics," says Mr. Etaix, with the wry chuckle that has become his trademark reaction to the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune that he has suffered in his career as an entertainer.

Dapperly dressed and lean as a runner bean, Mr. Etaix has lost none of the old-world charm and child-like delight at making people laugh that made his sad-eyed dandy such a compelling presence in films like "The Suitor" and "Yoyo."

We are sitting in the crowded living room of Mr. Etaix's two-bedroom flat, a stone's throw from Paris's red-light district of Pigalle. The walls are covered in Mr. Etaix's paintings and drawings of famous clowns, such as his idol Charlie Rivel, the Spanish circus artist who was once asked by Charlie Chaplin: "Is it you who imitates me or I who imitates you?"

Though he is an accomplished artist, musician, magician, dancer, actor, author, playwright screenwriter and director, Mr. Etaix says he is first and foremost a clown. Mr. Etaix, who was born in the industrial town of Roanne in central France, performed his first clown entrée at the age of 15 and has continued to work on and off as a clown ever since. He and his first wife, the Algerian-born clown Annie Fratellini, opened France's first National Circus School in 1973.

"The level of devotion is similar to that of a concert pianist," he notes. "But whereas a pianist only has to focus on one discipline, a clown has to master several: acrobatics, dance, juggling, magic, music—anything that can help to build a number. I think it really is the hardest school there is because it requires daily work over years and years."

In 1954, Mr. Etaix's skills as a gagman and clown brought him to the attention of France's reigning king of cinema comedy, Jacques Tati, who employed the younger

man to help him develop his film "My Uncle." For the next four years Mr. Etaix worked for Tati as a draughtsman, gagman and ultimately as an assistant director on "My Uncle."

An offshoot of this famous encounter was that Mr. Etaix befriended a young up-and-coming French screenwriter, Mr. Carrière, who had come to meet Tati one day in his office. With Mr. Carrière, who has since gone on to have one of the most glittering careers of any French screenwriter, Mr. Etaix began to develop some film ideas around his love of slapstick.

"We worked together like the old American gagmen did," says Mr. Etaix, who cites Buster Keaton, Chaplin and Laurel and Hardy as major influences. "The departure point was always from an observation of something we'd seen or that we'd experienced, which we would then broaden until things often took on a surrealistic appearance, something that was totally independent of our wishes."

But for Mr. Etaix the hardest

**'A pianist only has to focus on one discipline, a clown has to master several: acrobatics, dance, juggling, magic, music.'**

—Pierre Etaix

thing was coming up with a convincing character for himself to play.

"I struggled for a long time," he says. "When I first hooked up with Carrière I was wearing an oversized jacket, a baggy pair of pants and played an accordion. The day everything clicked for me was when an artist said 'If [Corsican crooner] Tino Rossi did what you did, it would be hilarious.' That's when I came up with the idea for this Tino Rossi-type character of a social gadfly in a tuxedo."

With the four features and three short films they wrote together Messrs. Etaix and Carrière broke the mould of French screen comedy, which had never embraced slapstick before. "Slapstick requires a lot of resources if it's to be done properly," notes Mr. Etaix. "You need time and money. I've always had to make do with a little of both. But I'm not going to complain: I did what I wanted to do. Carrière and I always thought that if we liked doing something, then others would like it too."

He was proved resoundingly right last month when a boxed-set of his restored works was released by Arte Editions in France. So far over 30,000 units have been sold and according to Odile Etaix, Mr. Etaix's second wife, Arte is struggling to keep up with the demand.

But Mr. Etaix refuses to dwell on the new-found success of films he made over 40 years ago. He is much happier focusing on a new film project he has in the works with the ever-present Mr. Carrière.

"It's a film about homeless people, a subject that doesn't really seem to bother anyone today, but that is an absolute gold mine for a comic like myself," he says. "The question is whether we'll get to complete it. Time is short for me now. At least I'd like to try."



Pierre Etaix at his home in Montmartre.

## FASHION

# What not to wear in bed

## [ Style ]

BY TINA GAUDOIN



An acquaintance of mine whom I have always admired recently wrote a book charting her decline from glamorous, successful editor-in-chief at a glossy American homes magazine to (with apologies to Evelyn Waugh) a jobless, middle-aged and loveless writer living in a New York suburb. I mention this not only because "Slow Love" by Dominique Browning is a great book, but also because in Browning's book, pajamas loom large. In fact, her book is actually subtitled "How I Lost My Job, Put On My Pajamas & Found Happiness," and her interest in her own employability decreases in inverse proportion to the amount of time she spends in her pj's. I should point out here that she doesn't become less employable because she goes to meetings in her pajamas; rather she finds herself wanting to go out less and to spend time at home in her pj's more. This turns out to be meaningful on two levels, and applicable to you and me on at least one. For the ex-EIC, her pajamas symbolize her desire to do something different with her life, to not re-enter the frenetic, shark-laced waters of the New York magazine publishing world; pj's are also, as she so ably proved, the western world's best answer to a grown-up security blanket. For the record, her pajamas were, and probably still are, fantastic—she buys them from Brooks Brothers; I highly recommend buying the cotton frame striped pajamas (\$79.50) and the cashmere robe (\$1,700) or, for a British alternative, try Derek Rose.

Inevitably pj's are sodden with symbolism of the kind that we might like to forget—Tennessee Williams's testosterone-fueled Stanley, Evelyn Waugh's buffoonish war hack Boot and, a little lower down the literary food chain, the angst-ridden, undateable Bridget Jones.... But the fact is that what you wear to sleep in is important and becoming more so, mainly because the lines between what we wear in bed and what we wear out of bed are increasingly blurred. In fact, our love for pajamas has spawned a whole new genre of clothing—the somewhat cringingly named "loungewear," about which, more later.

First, the history. When the British colonized India, they also colonized pajamas. Hitherto the baggy garments with drawstring waists, often made of silk or light cotton, had been worn by both sexes mainly of the Sikh religion. The word itself comes from the Persian word "payjama," which means either footwear or leg garments. Trust the Brits to take something unisex, flowing and, if I may say so, somewhat effete, and turn it into something butch and square shaped. There's no word on when the Brits began to make their pj's out of tartan flannelette, but you can be sure that the Victorians will have approved of the entirely sexless, shapeless garments that left much to the imagi-



Clockwise from left: my-Wardrobe.com; Ruth Mastenbroek; Toast; Toast; Gap

Clockwise from far left, wide-legged terry jumpsuit by Juicy Couture (£157); scented bathrobe by Ruth Mastenbroek (£120); faded floral silk gown (£195) and hand-knitted slipper socks (£29), both by Toast. Right page, women's cotton framed striped pajamas (\$79.50) and cashmere robe (\$1,700) both by Brooks Brothers; silk velvet gown (£175) by Toast; plaid pj's in varying weights by Gap (£22).

nation. Coco Chanel legendarily changed our perception of pj's when she created the "lounging pajama" in the '20s, made, of course, of silk. Later, during the Second World War, women really took pajamas to their hearts and beds, the former because there was presumably nothing else to cuddle up to and the latter because, well, it was jolly cold without heating, wasn't it?

The golden ruling for modern day pajama wearing is "don't think like a Victorian." In other words, if you are the owner of a regular pair of flannelette or cotton pj's (and I have nothing against these, particularly those at Toast, £55), then don't go to bed with them done up to the last button; leave the top undone and wear a cute vest underneath, like Gap's cashmere shell (£49.50) in camel, gray or rose.

If I had my way though, all pj's would be sold in interchangeable pieces, which chimes with another golden rule, "don't wear your pajama tops and bottoms together." I know that sounds strange, but stay with me here. There is nothing sexier or cooler than a female (or a male for that matter) in a pair of baggy, drawstring pj pants paired with a long-sleeved, or even short-sleeved, fitted T-shirt-style top; or a female in an over-

sized pajama top with a pair of shorts, leggings or briefs underneath. To effect this look, I must again direct you to Gap, which to my mind has cornered the market in affordable, sexy sleep and "loungewear." Try their plaid pj's, which they make in varying weights, from £22, with a long-sleeved, gray, seamless tee for £12.95. Other alternatives include the White Company's gray, striped flannel pj bottoms, from £24.00, with a "Natalie" lace-trimmed cami, £28; and Calvin Klein's "City Stripe" pajama pants in blue, paired with their long-sleeved Essential satin top, £33.

We all know that dressing gowns aren't sexy. If you must wear one, then buy Toast's beautiful, faded floral silk gown lined in cotton voile, which fits below the knee and has ¾-sleeves, for £195; or their cozy, silk velvet gown for £175. British perfumer Ruth Mastenbroek has created a scented bathrobe, £120. I haven't tried it, but I like the concept. One should smell good at bedtime and not just for the obvious reasons. It's a lovely idea—the concept of being able to slip into something not just more comfortable but beautifully scented too. Dressing gowns are, of course, best worn with nothing underneath them and accessorized with thick woolen or

cashmere socks: see Toast's hand-knitted slipper socks, £29. A better option on the warmth front is a large slouchy cardigan. This only works if you are dedicated to keeping it especially for bedtime. Walking the dog or playing golf in the same cardigan that you use for a cover up in the evening isn't good feng shui, not to mention hygienic. I save my worn-out or moth-holed cashmere pieces for bedtime. Alternatively, I recommend splashing out on Ralph Lauren's Black Label cashmere—try the cable circle cardigan, £810—or Zadig & Voltaire's "Duffy" cashmere cardigan, £341.

The interesting breakthrough (if such a term could and should be applied to nightwear versus serious things like a malaria-free Africa) is loungewear. Such is its popularity, loungewear could actually be designated a time slot, like teatime or bathtime. Lounging is that precious time between the moment you come through the door from work, desperate to cast off your heels, suit and whatever else has confined you during the day, and the moment you actually get to slip between the sheets. There is a whole new wardrobe attached to this tiny but important slice of leisure time, which involves clothes that aren't quite pj's, but then again, not

quite clothes to be much seen in public in. Juicy Couture pretty much did in the idea of going out in your leisurewear by stigmatizing velour to the extent that most of us cannot even look at it. If you still can (and I will confess to giving it new consideration on the grounds that it's so bad it's good), then try their wide-legged terry jumpsuit, £157. If the idea of chic lounge appeals (and why wouldn't it?), I am going to draw your attention once again to Gap and tell you that if you only buy one thing from a Gap store this season (or if you only buy one thing this season), it should be their wonderfully warm cashmere jogging bottoms in gray or black, £79.50. Alternatively, Ted Baker's "Ancolie Hareem" pants in gray, £45, or Marks & Spencer's cashmere pajama bottoms and hooded top from their Autograph range, £99 each, will do the same job.

Before I end my extensive analysis of nightwear, it is my duty to draw your attention to a new product which could soon be reaching our shores. I recently received a press release from New Jersey, alerting me to a new brand called PajamaJeans. The name is self-explanatory. Will it catch on? I wonder? Seasons greetings. Here's to a wonderful and, of course, stylish 2011.

FASHION



Coolhunter

Canada Goose

Readers, I was wrong and I'm not too big to admit it. When I said a couple of months ago that Canada Goose parkas were nice, but they had Sarah Palin potential, or words to that effect, a number of you asked whether I was a CG wearer myself. And, if I wasn't, how I felt qualified to comment. Touché.

I knew about CG, of course, from New York, where the natives, tired of tourists in their shiny Moncler, cast about for another brand that could ward off the chill of Manhattan's sub-zero winters, whilst looking chic and somewhat rugged. Over there, CG is the parka of choice for both sexes. Why? Well it's got enough street cred to bury many of the other brands.

It really is made in Canada and is created to be worn in some of the iciest places on the planet (that obviously includes much of its eponymous birthplace during the winter months). It's the parka of choice for the Canadian and U.S. coast guards, scientists of the American National Science Foundation in Antarctica and the Canadian Special military operations.

Is it warm? Indubitably. Must be the combo of duck down and the techie poly-cotton outerwear—at least it must be in the case of mine, the Kensington, which is, I confess, the most flattering slim-line but superwarm piece of outerwear I have ever owned. The coyote-fur ruff round the hood is unzippable, if you are so inclined. I wasn't and I have no complaints. Well maybe one...such is the rabid demand for CGs one cannot be as choosy as one might like over color or style. I took the gray (it was all there was left in Paragon Sports in



Canada Goose Inc.

Canada Goose's Kensington parka in steel color, insulated with 625-fill-power white duck down and featuring a two-way adjustable, fleece-lined down hood with a removable coyote-fur ruff.

NYC in early December). Ideally I would also own it in black or navy, which looks more grittily appropriate for the urban working week. Now I come to think of it, that's more of a compliment than it is a complaint.

www.onebelowzero.com

—Tina Gaudoin

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## FOOD &amp; WINE

## The winter aperitif

## [Wine]

BY WILL LYONS



A good aperitif should stimulate the taste buds and create a sense of anticipation in equal measure.

That first drink of the day or evening is for many people, I suspect, their favorite. A good aperitif will tickle the appetite, intrigue the taste buds and leave the imbibing reaching for a second glass. The crucial balancing act is mixing just the right amount of alcohol to relax the recipient and inspire conversation without inadvertently being over-generous.

Too much alcohol is almost always a bad thing, and a first drink that overwhelms the palate with an enormous slug of spirit can leave the drinker with taste buds blunted and just about capable of distinguishing a slice of bread from a portion of ice cream.

Of course for half the year the aperitif looks after itself. When the sun shines, all that is needed is lots of ice, a large glass, a measure of gin, slice of lemon and plenty of tonic water. If a gin and tonic doesn't take your fancy, there are myriad alternatives, from chilled Champagne to a glass of dry white wine, preferably one with an alcohol level not above 11% such as a Sancerre from the Loire or a Grüner Veltliner from Austria.

In Britain, Pimm's No. 1 Cup is a popular choice, mixed with gin and lemonade and served in large jugs decorated with slices of orange, lemon, apple, cucumber and a sprig of mint.

But at this time of year, with snow on the roads, bitter winds and long, dark nights, that first drink of the day is a little harder to call. I spend an awful lot of my time begging those mixing my drinks not to add ice, for when the temperature drops, the aperitif is as much about warming the body as it is about refreshment.

This is where the winter aperitif comes in, and it can throw up all sorts of problems for the uninitiated. I find the family of brandies based around Cognac and Armagnac a little fierce on an empty stomach. They are far better as di-

gestifs. Whisky with two fingers of tepid water can work very well, but nothing too complicated or heavy. A light, smooth Speyside blend such as J&B Rare is ideal, as it is sweet and soft enough not to overwhelm. A peaty, smoky Islay malt is perhaps a step too far.

Lighter red wine such as Beaujolais, cool-climate Pinot Noir or Chinon from the Loire can be served with snacks, but the drinker only needs one glass before the acidity demands food. Mulled wine, or Glühwein as it is known in Germany, is popular for outdoor gatherings. The tradition dates back to the Middle Ages, when the quality of wine was immeasurably improved by the addition of spices and local honey. These days, the sweetness is tempered by adding whole oranges peppered with cloves, while a drop of brandy in the brew gives it more weight.

The Jura region in France produces one of the most intriguing winter aperitifs, in the form of Vin Jaune, a pale-yellow white wine not unlike a sherry. Made from the Savagnin grape variety, according to "The Oxford Companion to Wine," the grapes are picked well-ripened and then fermented as normal.

They are then left to age in old Burgundian barrels for around six years. As the wine evaporates and oxidizes, a film of yeasts forms, adding complex flavors. The result is an unusual aperitif with flavors of ginger, walnuts and spice, most notably the earthy character associated with turmeric. It's also very moreish.

Tawny ports, served in a small wine glass, have a drier, nuttier taste than vintage port and can work as an evening aperitif. But perhaps the best choice is a glass of sherry. I prefer something searingly dry, such as a fino, served lightly chilled with a bowl of almonds.

As a thumbnail guide, sherries are best understood in descending order, with fino at the top, being the lightest in color and body, and darker, weightier oloroso at the bottom. In the middle are amontillados. Cream sherries are sweet and are primarily produced for the British market. But it is to olorosos I turn at Christmas, when a glass of rich, dark wine has just the right amount of nutty sweetness to lift the spirits.



Daniel Rose at Spring in Paris.

## A dinner-time surprise

## [Food]

BY BRUCE PALLING



There are a number of hugely talented young chefs in Paris who are offering dinner without giving any hint or clue as to what

they will actually serve. Two of the most prominent examples are Passage 53 and Spring, while another exciting new establishment, Saturne, appears to be about to embrace the concept too. Passage 53 opened last year and immediately won a Michelin star in the 2010 Guide Michelin, and Spring, which re-opened in the summer, must surely be in line for one too.

What is the background for the "Menu Surprise"? With the current primacy given to fresh and local ingredients, chefs wish to be able to offer whatever ingredients appeal to them most at the market. If there is no set menu, they are free to offer what they want on the day. If one has confidence in a chef to deliver genuine surprises, it is hugely entertaining for the diners too.

Passage 53, like other examples, such as Yam'Tcha (+33-140-26 08-07), is quite small, with only a couple of dozen covers. Located in the slightly seedy Passage des Panoramas (popular with 19th-century courtesans), Passage 53 ([www.passage53.com](http://www.passage53.com)) is little more than a plain narrow space with a single row of tables along one side, and a cylindrical staircase to the kitchen above. When it began in April last year, the intention was for it to be a Néo-Bistrot, with a value for money approach offering traditional bistro dishes with a twist. This completely changed within three or four months, thanks to chef Shinichi Sato, 33 years old, who has trained at the three-Michelin-star L'Astrance and Pierre Gagnaire, plus Spain's Mugaritz. The maitre-d and co-owner is Guillaume Guedj, son-in-law of Hugo Desnoyer, the most famous butcher in Paris, which is one reason why the produce is so outstanding. Mr. Sato was becoming

bored with his conventional dishes, which won acclaim, but were hardly earth-shattering. Instead, he began surreptitiously placing creative alternatives on the menu, such as veal carpaccio with yuzu lime and soy sauce; oysters with green apple; citron caviar and grilled calamari with cauliflower puree and shavings of fresh cauliflower. Suddenly, everyone was clamoring for these dishes and ignoring the classics, so a decision was taken to scrap the Néo-Bistrot approach and simply do an eight-course Menu Surprise. The menu now changes daily, but some signature dishes such as the admirable calamari dish remain. Other highlights include oysters with smoked haddock, apple and caviar; a quarter of a Cévennes onion interleaved with thin slices of chorizo; and a slice of Poullarde de Bresse chicken on mashed potato, slow cooked egg and shavings of white truffle. This is cooking of the highest order in a beguilingly simple environment, surrounded by coin, stamp and trinket shops.

Spring, the recently re-opened restaurant of Chicagoan Daniel Rose, is marginally more conventional but also genuinely manages to surprise with his no-choice mystery menu ([springparis.blogspot.com](http://springparis.blogspot.com)). Located near the Louvre in a narrow street, you have to buzz on a door of this former skateboarding shop to be admitted. The cosmopolitan approach is reinforced by the five kitchen staff, who hail from the U.S., France, Australia, the Ukraine and Senegal.

The dinner menu follows precisely the same path as at Passage 53—half a dozen mystery dishes, though strong hints may be gleaned by sitting at the bar, as I did, and simply watching the chefs at work. Mr. Rose did a year at the Paul Bocuse Culinary School in Lyon before spending time with Yannick Alléno, at the three-star Le Meurice in Paris. Again, there is a precision in his flavorings, which veer between Asian-inspired small plates such as scallops with cylindrical celery and cabbage with lemon jelly, to robust versions of grilled pigeon with foie gras. The set lunch is an array of dishes in-

spired by bouillon and 19th-century menus, and also changes daily. There are still occasional hiccups in service and seasoning, but overall, there is a feeling of tangible excitement in the air, which may explain why it is also booked out for months ahead.

The final example of this new approach is Saturne, a restaurant and wine bar that opened two months ago and is far more radical in its culinary approach (+33-42-60-31-90). Sven Chartier, whose grandfather was Swedish, abjures all imported products, sauces, spices additives and preservatives in his endeavor to create utterly fresh dishes. The main restaurant was taken over for a festive event, so I was only able to eat in the 16-seat bar, but this was assured and purposive cuisine—raw sardines with salmon eggs, raw scallops with a variety of citric juices and zest, and lightly smoked mussels with leeks and radish. He currently has two no-choice four-or-six-course dinners but wants to abolish written menus altogether ("I hate menus") and focus on the best daily ingredients. At present, if he devises a new dish, he will keep it for a week before changing it for another one.

Mr. Chartier admits to being overwhelmed by his immediate success but is confident of carving his singular path. There is something very absolutist about his approach, which includes only stocking so-called natural wines (without preservatives or additives) and only using French-derived products to create the design of the restaurant (with the sole exception of English-made light fittings). The inspiration here is definitely the forage/natural cuisines of Denmark and Sweden, and although Mr. Chartier is only 24 years old, I have no doubt that he will make a large impact.

The added attraction of the menu surprise is that staff levels and costs can be better kept under control when the chefs know precisely how much of each ingredient they have to order. The ambitious nature of these restaurants means that margins are tight, but their popularity shows every sign of growing.

## Drinking Now

## Gonzalez Byass Matusalem

Oloroso Dulce Muy Viejo Sherry

Vintage: Aged for 30 years

Price: About £16 or €18

Alcohol content: 20.5%

Sweet sherry has an appalling reputation but if there is one exception to the rule, this is surely it. Considering the wines that have gone into this blend have been aged for an average of 30 years and are all sourced from the Gonzales Byass estate, it is remarkably reasonably priced. In the glass, the wine is a deep, gloopy, golden brown with a nose rich in Christmassy scents such as raisins, walnuts and sweet, dried fruit. Texturally, it is quite heavy but there is a refreshing burst of dryness in the mouth before the final sensation of warm, complex sweetness. Many prefer to serve this with pudding or cheese, but it can work very well as an aperitif, particularly on a bitterly cold day.



## FOOD &amp; WINE

# Secret bars offer whimsy galore

BY JEMIMA SISSONS

Friday night in London's Chinatown, and its heart, Gerrard Street, is abuzz with the usual post-pub and theater crowds perusing menus and seeking quick bowls of noodles to soak up their excesses.

Nestling between two of the street's gaudily fronted restaurants, Far East and the unassumingly named Chinese Restaurant, is a door, spattered with paint, weather-worn and anonymous. But push it back and climb the stairs, and you enter another world; a plush bar, kitted out with hints of Chinoiserie—a nod to its location—a bar made out of a piano, and lampshades made from teapots.

This is the Experimental Cocktail Club, one of the growing number of secret, speakeasy-style bars opening around Europe (13 Gerrard Street).

What sets these bars apart is their discretion, often with no sign on the door and zero PR, relying on word of mouth instead. What unites them is a desire to bring back the craftsmanship of the cocktail and serve premium drinks to customers who care more about an excellent bartender and what he has to offer than being seen in the right place. Rather than the ubiquitous mojito, expect to see plenty of homemade bitters, infusions and dark spirits.

The bars tend toward eccentricity, with whimsical decor or interesting locations, such as club owner Nick House's new project opening this spring, which will be at the back of a fully functioning flower shop next to Selfridges in London, and called simply No Name. Many also have a strict table/no-standing policy, so they aren't crammed with the after-work crowd rubbing shoulders at the bar.

The inspiration for the Experimental Cocktail Club, the brainchild of a group of young Frenchmen, came from the speakeasies of New York, such as La Esquina, a taco restaurant with a secret underground bar and restaurant, and PDT (Please Don't Tell), a hot dog restaurant, from which a telephone booth grants entry to a tiny, taxidermy-filled bar.

The friends opened their first bar in 2007, the Experimental Cocktail Club in Paris's 2nd arrondissement (27 rue Saint Sauveur). This was followed by Curio Parlor in 2008, complete with vegetables in glass cabinets, more stuffed animals, a fish skeleton on the wall and black curtains across the windows (16 rue des Bernardins). They opened their third in Paris, the Prescription Cocktail Club, last year (23 rue Mazarine). There is no list or table booking, and entry is at the doorman's discretion.

"We always say we are not trying to do better but different," says founder Romee de Goriainoff. "I think people are bored of members' clubs—ours are unofficial members' clubs; if we think you are cool, or you will have a good time, you will get in. It's for people who just want to go out and have a good drink. We provide a place where social links happen."

Another such place is Door 74. Located on a historic street in the center of Amsterdam (actual address secret, one must call the reservation number, +31-634-04-5122, to get the whereabouts and book a table), the only indicator that the bar is open is that a green light is on outside. Ring the bell and enter and you will find bar manager Timo Janse rustling up creations such as Night Alchemy, which includes blended Creole bit-



Clockwise from top left: A bartender at Purl concocts a 'Mr Hyde's Fixer Upper'; Back Lounge at Callooh Callay; cocktails (from left to right)—Jamaican Pogo, Autumn in Normandy, Renaissance—at the Experimental Cocktail Club in London; NinetyEight is a secret world of cocktails and candy.

ters, eau de vie, rum and passion fruit syrup set alight and cooled down with Ben & Jerry's ice cream:

"We only reserve to the number of seats we have, then we close the list," says Mr. Janse. "I think it works because we dedicate a lot to quality and there is a constant level of service but we also keep it fun. It is not a cut-and-paste bar."

Also lying low is Purl, which opened in London's Marylebone this year ([www.purl-london.com](http://www.purl-london.com)). In a basement below a corner shop, it harks back to a golden age of cocktails, and with Prohibition posters, upturned crates and a bashed piano makes many nods to the speakeasies of 1920s America. Drinks include Mr Hyde's Fixer Upper, a mixture of rum, homemade cola and orange bitters, served in a smoke-injected, wax-sealed potion bottle surrounded by a fog of Lapsang Souchong.

With this serious approach to cocktail artistry in mind, the owners' new project, opening in March in another hard-to-find location in Central London, will have a cocktail tasting

room in which flights of historic cocktails will be served "Our thing is all about experiential drinking," says Tristan Stephenson, one of the owners. "I want people to walk down the steps, and for a second, believe they could be in a different era."

Also reliving the past, in terms of the cocktails, at least, is Nightjar (+44-20-7253-4101). Hidden between two sandwich shops on City Road in London's Shoreditch, it used to be a "dodgy Russian club," according to owner Edmund Weil, who started it after pursuing his dream of opening a bar with fiancée Roisin Stimpson. The only indication of a club is the doorman. Once in, there are live music, discreet booths and the moody atmosphere of a secret drinking club.

"A speakeasy gives people a feeling of privacy and discretion, I think it is a symptom of what people want," says Mr. Weil.

With a drinks menu spanning decades and printed on playing cards, it targets the serious cocktail connoisseur. Drinks from the Prohibition list include Between the Sheets,

combining Cognac, rum, Cointreau, sugar and lemon, and Remember the Maine, a lethal concoction of Bourbon, sweet vermouth, cherry brandy and absinthe.

At bar Callooh Callay ([www.calloohcallaybar.com](http://www.calloohcallaybar.com)) around the corner, another young couple, Richard Wynne and Kate Crutchley, last month opened a secret bar called Jub Jub (both names are taken from Lewis Carroll's nonsense poem "Jabberwocky"). Membership is granted to people they "think are cool, and share our attitude" and comes in the form of a door key.

Here, the visitor must first find their way through a wardrobe, through two velvet curtains and up some stairs before using the door key to enter a room adorned with stuffed flamingos. Emphasis is on playfulness, secrecy and great drinks.

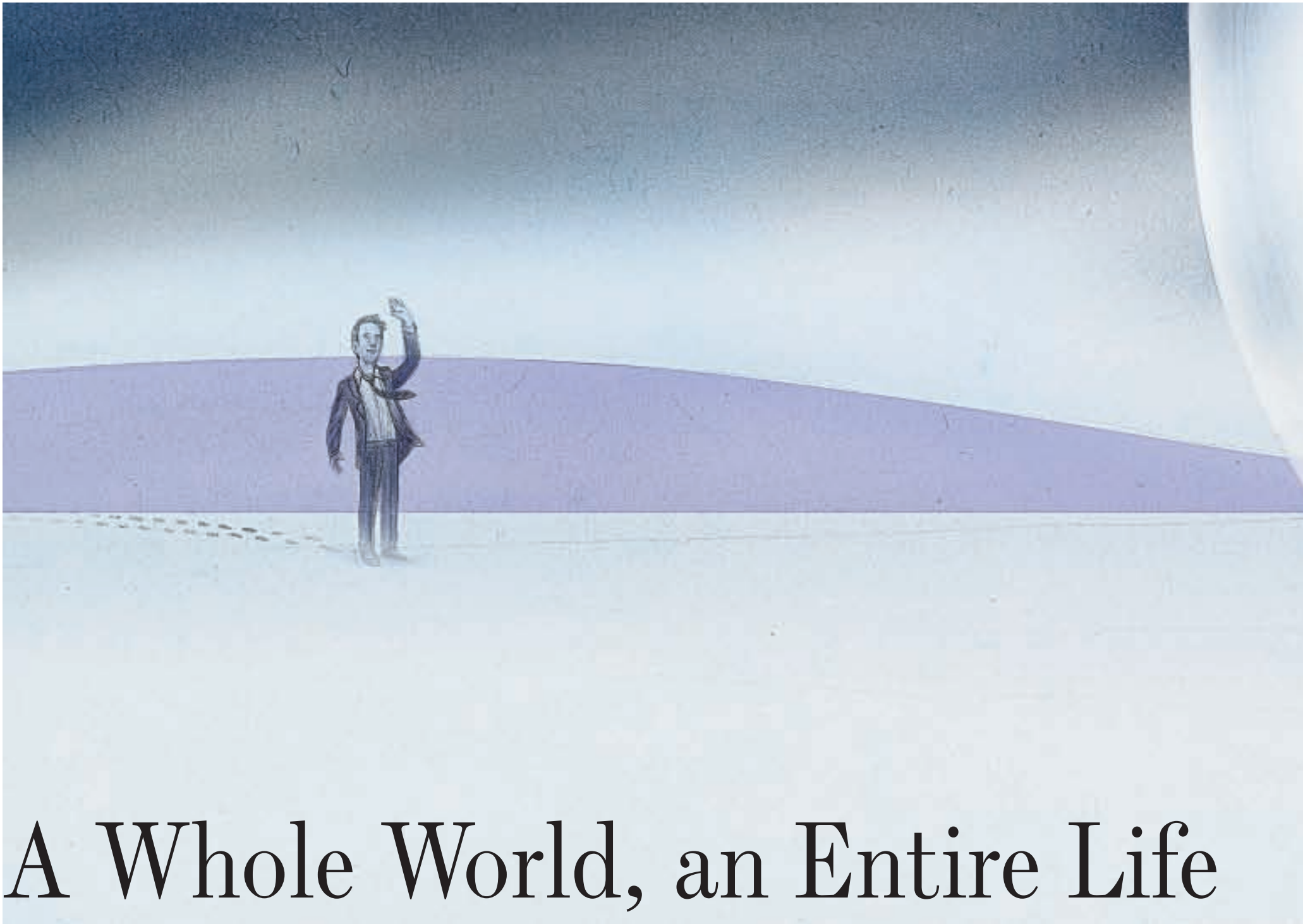
Last month, instead of a cocktail list, they had a chart of flavors, moods and types of spirit, and tick boxes next to them, and the perfect drink was made to order for each guest. "However we are a bit like the 'Fight

Club," says Mr. Wynne of the club. "The first rule is: don't talk about it."

If many are about a serious and studious approach to cocktails and reinventing the bar as we know it, some are just about having fun. At NinetyEight, near Old Street in East London, an unassuming blink-and-you'll-miss-it staircase leads to a basement ([www.ninetyeight-bar-lounge.com](http://www.ninetyeight-bar-lounge.com)). Yet rather than being dark and moody, this one is a riot of bohemia, a sort of Louis XIV meets Alice in Wonderland. Here, shots are served along the bar on a tortoise on wheels with a tray on top. Bowls of sweets jostle for bar space with plastic toys and apothecary bottles of home-made infusions (including one made with bulls-eye sweets, mint and Bacardi).

"When I used to go into sweet shops as a kid, I'd be transported into another world and forget all my problems," says owner Kath Morrell. "Here I want to provide a snug wonderland break, where people are transported to another place. I call it my bar duvet."

## FICTION



# A Whole World, an Entire Life

Short stories can be long on meaning. Here, a collection of them make up one poignant Christmas tale written by Alexander McCall Smith exclusively for Weekend Journal. Illustrations by Jonathan Burton

**1** Some years ago a newspaper invited its readers to write a short story in less than 100 words—a couple of lines, really, no more. Not much more than that, said the paper, was needed to portray a whole world, an entire life. Several hundred readers rose to the challenge. Brief stories of great poignancy were received. Some stories were extraordinarily moving: So few words could say so much about what it was to be human. People were born, grew up, fell in love and died—all within the compass of a few sentences.

**2** As in this example: A talented young man went to university and became a lawyer. He specialized in intellectual property matters and was much in demand. He married a woman who was an advertising copy writer. They had two boys. Their marriage faltered. There were regrets. He learned a lesson one Christmas.

**3** One could add so much, of course, to these bare bones; in the first place about him. He was called Andrew and he was the son of a Scottish doctor. The doctor was a man of scholarly tastes and an enthusiasm for the works of Walter Scott. They lived in a house in East Lothian, within sight of the curious conical hill known as Berwick Law. From his bedroom window on the first floor of their house the boy could look out at the hills of Fife in the distance across the cold waters of the Firth of Forth. In winter these hills were an attenuated blue; in summer they were parceled out into bright squares of green that were fields of wheat or barley.

**4** Andrew did well at school, having a talent for mathematics and languages. He was popular too, and a strong rugby player. Girls liked him, and as a teenager he was never short of invitations to parties. He played the trombone in the school orchestra and was good enough for the school's brass teacher to say to him: "You could be a professional musician, you know, Macmillan; you have the ability. If you'd practice—which I rather doubt."

Andrew was pleased with the compliment, but laughed at the remark on the need to practice. "Who practices enough?" he asked.

"Precisely my point," said the music teacher.

"I've decided to be a lawyer," said Andrew.

The teacher nodded. How dull, he thought; how utterly predictable. But he did not say this, of course.

**5** He went to the University of Aberdeen, where he studied law. He did well and won a prize for an essay he wrote on the development of copyright law. One of his professors said that it was the best thing he had read on the subject for years. Andrew, proud of both the prize and the praise, gave a copy to his father who tried to read it but could not concentrate on the argument.

"I don't see how anybody could find this remotely interesting," he confessed to his wife.

"Double Dutch," she said.

**6** He did his training with a firm of lawyers in Edinburgh. Afterward they sent him for a year to their office in London

and then, on secondment, to an associated firm in Hong Kong. They watched him: He was undoubtedly clever and had a good way with clients. He was also a particularly hard worker, being prepared to spend every evening, more or less, at work. When he was in Hong Kong he had a camp bed installed in his office so that he could work until 11 or 12 at night and not worry about getting home. There was not much to go home to, anyway: a one-bedroom flat near the racetrack, with not much of a view and a kitchen that was barely used in all the time he was there. He had no girlfriend because he did not know where he would find the time to have a social life.

"What a waste," one woman said. "Look at him. What a waste."

"Is he interested?" said her friend. "Do you think he's ..."

"No. I mean yes. Yes, he's interested. No, he's not."

"What a waste."

"You've already said that."

"Well, so what? People repeat themselves. It's only in stories and plays that the dialogue is perfect."

**7** He returned to Edinburgh, where he set up a new intellectual property department in the firm. He became a partner—one of the youngest partners in the firm's history. He bought a flat in an expensive street in the Georgian New Town. He had no furniture and so he engaged an interior decorator to furnish it for him. She said to a colleague: "The flat's perfect now. He gave me a generous budget and I was able to pick up some really good stuff. Now the only thing that the place lacks is a woman."

"What's holding him up?"

The decorator shrugged. "Selfishness? Plenty of people these days are content with their own company. It's nothing more than that, I suspect."

"Work? Money?"

"Could be."

**8** An advertising copy writer came to consult him. She had composed a slogan for a car firm and had won an award for it. It was very pithy, and very clever, and a target, too, of envy. An agency in London picked it up and used it for its client—a major manufacturer of luxury cars. The copy writer in Edinburgh, who was called Anna, saw her slogan being used in glossy magazines all over the world.

"They're making money out of my idea," she said.

Andrew noted something down on a pad of paper. "We must establish exactly when you first developed this idea," he said. "These things can be tricky."

He looked at her and noticed, for the first time, the color of her hair, which had a tinge of strawberry to it. He thought it very attractive. At the age of 16 he had had a first girlfriend with hair that color. She lasted for six weeks, which was quite long for a teenage romance. He had heard that years later she had married a farmer and gone to live near Melrose.

At the end of the appointment he looked at his watch. "Lunchtime. Could I get you a bite at the bistro downstairs?"

She took her diary out of her bag and paged through. As she did so, she thought: Why am I going through this pretense? Of



## FICTION



course she wanted to have lunch with him. She wanted to marry him. It was an absurd thought, but it seemed to her to be completely inevitable that she would marry this man.

**9** They were married at St Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh. They had a reception in the Caledonian Hotel and then went to Thailand for their honeymoon. He was stung by a jellyfish while swimming—an excruciatingly painful episode, but it did not ruin the trip.

“My poor darling,” said Anna. “A jellyfish! People forget how serious these things can be.”

“It could be worse,” he said stoically, but then: “Oh god, it hurts. It hurts like a thousand hot needles.”

She bought a large quantity of silk and had it made into dresses by a tailor in Bangkok. Scotland seemed to be part of another world.

**10** She returned to work and was busy, but not as busy as he was. He was elected to the committee of an intellectual property law association and began to travel regularly to Brussels. The firm acquired clients in Paris. The work flooded in.

She became pregnant. Twin boys were born—Alastair and Joe. She was mildly depressed after the birth; he did not handle her weepiness well and spent more and more time in the office. She was kept busy with the boys and gave up her job in the advertising agency. “You don’t need to work,” he said. “We’re not short of money.”

She wanted to say: “That’s not the point.” But so much of what we want to say

we cannot, for one reason or another.

**11** By the time the boys were five, he had been elected president of his intellectual property law association. This brought him even more prestigious clients. The firm now had an office in New York, where it represented the interests of British and continental clients. He went there every month, sometime for as long as 10 days at a time.

**12** She met a friend from university days whom she had not seen for some time. They agreed to meet for lunch at a café in Dundas Street. The friend told her about her marriage, that had lasted all of three years. “I hardly saw Jack,” she said. “He spent much of his time abroad. I had an affair, I’m ashamed to say. Well actually I’m not ashamed. It was the best thing that ever happened to me. He was a pilot—a fantastic skier. Olympic standard.”

Anna looked at her friend. “I envy you,” she said. “You needn’t feel ashamed in my view. Why should you?”

“And you?”

“I never see him.”

They were both silent. The friend reached out and took Anna’s hand briefly in a gesture of solidarity.

**13** She decided to leave him. “He barely noticed it,” she said. “I went out and rented a flat. I took the boys. I don’t think it made any difference to him, frankly. He had his work, which was the real problem. Maybe it would have been different if it had been another woman. It wasn’t. It was work.”

**14** The boys, now seven, missed their father. He saw them on Saturday mornings and took them to the zoo or to the museum. He bought them expensive toys: radio-controlled model helicopters. The helicopters crashed because they did not know how to fly them. He bought them replacements. The replacements crashed.

“Don’t keep buying the boys helicopters,” she said.

He interpreted this as a criticism, and was irritated. “Shut up,” he said.

**15** With Christmas coming up, he took the boys to play football. There was a spell of mild weather, and there were other parents with their children in the park. They kicked the ball about and he fell in the mud, picking himself up, the three of them laughing.

“Don’t go away, Daddy,” one of the boys suddenly said.

He stood quite still. There were clouds scudding across the sky. There was a vapor trail.

**16** They left the park and went for lunch at a restaurant in town. There were throngs of people doing their Christmas shopping, laden with parcels, distracted, sated. He looked at the boys, sitting opposite him at the table. His boys. They look like me, he thought.

“So what do you want for Christmas?” he asked brightly once the waiter had taken their orders.

One of the boys was looking out of the

window, lost in a daydream, as children so often are. The other met his father’s gaze, and frowned.

“So?” he prompted. “What do you want?”

The boy stared at his father. “Your time,” he said.

He caught his breath. Had he misheard? A helicopter?

“Your time,” the boy repeated.

“Did Mummy tell you to say that?” he asked.

The boy shook his head. “Nobody told me. It’s what I want. That’s all.”

**17** He drove them back to their mother’s. Usually he left them over at the door and left straight away. Her life was her business. His was his.

But now he said, “Can we talk?” She shrugged. “If you want to. Is there a problem with the boys?”

He closed his eyes. “I want to say ...”

“Well?”

He reached out and put his arm around her. He felt her recoil slightly, as if in surprise. But she did not push him away.

**18** “Where do I begin?” he asked. “It depends what you want to say.”

“Everything,” he said. “I want to say everything.”

Would she listen to him? Was it too late?

She had guessed his question. “No, it’s not too late. It never is.”

## TRAVEL



Age Fotostock

Bottom Bay in Barbados.

# The great Christmas escape

Spending the holidays in Barbados, where the weather outside is anything but frightful

By SARA CALIAN

As I prepare the turkey for our Christmas dinner with 15 family members and friends, and search for hats, coats and gloves to help my three children brave London's freezing temperatures, I am wistfully recalling our Christmas escapes to Barbados, where our children hardly wore shoes for two weeks.

For two consecutive years, we jumped on a plane to the Caribbean island, where we enjoyed postcard-perfect beaches, temperatures that never fall below 20 degrees Celsius and activities ranging from feeding monkeys to watching horse races. Some days we forgot about Christmas altogether; on others, we visited Father Christmas, listened to carols and enjoyed Bridgetown's spectacular Christmas-tree lights.

"There isn't the big commercialization of Christmas in Barbados," says Marion Ashworth, a 47-year-old property developer who took her 3-year-old daughter and 5-year-old son on a family Christmas holiday there two years ago. "People weren't selling us big plastic toys and tinsel all the time."

Even though Christmas isn't in your face in Barbados, there are plenty of ways to celebrate. On Christmas Day, the Hilton Hotel (<http://www.hilton.co.uk/barbados>) serves a wonderful buffet lunch,

with all the traditional—and not so traditional—trimmings (135 Barbados dollars, or €50, for adults; half price for children 6-12; and free for children under 5.) During our meal, which included red snapper, shrimp and local Baja food such as sweet bread, we were entertained by jazz and blues singers, as Father Christmas gave each child an age-appropriate toy. The hotel's decorations also satisfied any nostalgia for red ribbons and shiny ornaments. After lunch, we were treated to a festive Christmas parade, with clowns walking on stilts, a person performing acrobatics and ladies dancing with parasols.

The Crane Hotel ([www.the-crane.com](http://www.the-crane.com)) also offers a Christmas twist to its renowned Sunday gospel brunch and live steel-pan-music buffet brunch and lunch. The brunch was a classic affair, with bacon, sausages, made-to-order omelettes and fresh fruit, as well as Bajan specialties, such as coconut bread and pumpkin fritters with chili sauce (BB\$57 for adults, half-price for children 3-12 and free for those younger). Thanks to a local friend's advice to book the early brunch on the Sunday before Christmas, we were able to snag a table outside, where we soaked up the sun and a spectacular view of Crane beach, which has perfect boogie-board waves.

For me, these were the best

Christmases, with no cooking, no dishes and a swim in the warm Caribbean water. While some of the restaurants we ate at on the island were nothing to write home about (our most frequented eatery was a local flying-fish sandwich stall at Pebbles beach), these two dining experiences were highlights.

Another of our favorite nights out was spent at blues-and-jazz restaurant Waterfront Café ([www.waterfrontcafe.com.bb](http://www.waterfrontcafe.com.bb)) in Bridgetown,

**Even though Christmas isn't in your face in Barbados, there are plenty of ways to celebrate.**

where you can listen to a steel-pan band or local jazz singers while dining on delicious dishes like spicy shrimp in curry coconut sauce and calypso seafood—seared shrimp, scallops and seasonal fish with a spicy tomato broth (main courses starting from BB\$28).

During the day, we rented a car and drove around the island, stopping along the way at some of Barbados's various and varied beaches, which are all open to the public. Access to the beach is a right of way for every Barbadian and many of the private seafront properties must pro-

vide a public route across their land to the ocean. This can make for good people watching, with the beaches at famous hotels like the Sandy Lane—where the Beckhams, Sting and Mick Jagger stay—open to anyone.

On the rugged east coast, the beaches are wide and windy, and the Atlantic Ocean produces waves perfect for surfing. If you aren't up for riding the waves, you can spend hours watching others try their hand or wander off to search for fish in tide pools or for shells on Bathsbeba. When you get hungry, the tin-roofed Soup Bowl Café, named after a surfing spot, serves fish, chips and beer (from BB\$22). The south- and west-coast beaches are calmer, with kilometers of white sand; in the north, the coral and sandstone cliffs rise out of the sea beautifully, but there is no place for children to swim safely.

But visitors should save their energy for a swim with the turtles—one of the top events for families in Barbados. There are more than a dozen boat companies that take tourists swimming with the hawksbill and leatherback turtles. These trips can cost as much as BB\$170 a person, including either lunch or dinner. Since my children weren't strong swimmers at the time of our visit, we opted instead for a trip to the Barbados Wildlife Reserve, where we saw giant tortoises feeding and green monkeys practi-

cally touched our heads as they whizzed around the natural mahogany woods. We also saw pink flamingos and colorful parrots.

Another day, we went to watch horse racing at the Barbados Turf Club. Tickets can be purchased for just BB\$10 for outdoor seat and or as much as BB\$100 for air-conditioned, indoor views. We went for the cheap seats and bought multiple ice-cream cones to keep everyone happy in the heat.

To complete our Barbados Christmas holiday, we visited two churches representing two different cultures on the island. For a taste of the local Bajan Christmas, we saw the two singing trees at the People's Cathedral, a Pentecostal church that offers a series of Christmas services depicting the life of Jesus with Bajan-gospel singing. For a more traditional English service, we tried St. James Parish Church, the oldest Anglican church in Barbados, founded in 1628.

While the St. James Service offered a taste of old world tradition, we didn't have to go far to remember we were nowhere near Europe. The day after Christmas, we walked along Bathsbeba beach and watched a tall Rastafarian surfer emerge from mountains of waves and white foam. As he glided onto the beach and snatched up his surfboard, he turned to us and said, "Now that's what I call a white, white Christmas."

## HOMES

## Finding your own place in Fes

By PAUL AMES

"On holiday?" asked the young man, toweling down after a steam in the neighborhood hamam. "You should come and live here in Morocco, it's the best place to be, peaceful and the sun always shines."

I hesitated to agree, but then I'd just been prodded, pummeled and scrubbed by a one-eyed, monolingual masseur with an impish grin and long bushy beard who soon made me regret that I hadn't learned the Arabic word for "gently." By the time my tormentor had brought a second glass of sweet mint tea and the therapeutic effects of his robust rub down began to engender a warm, fuzzy glow, my outlook mellowed.

As I strolled back through the feast for the senses that is the Fes medina, watching the fading sun bathe the countless minarets in golden light, it was easy to see why a growing number of westerners are setting up home in Morocco's spiritual and cultural capital.

"I was looking for somewhere culturally very different and this place just seemed extraordinary. Fes has this kind of essence about it, it grabs you and holds you," says Mike Richardson, a former London maître d' who moved to Fes four years ago. Mr. Richardson now runs the Café Clock, which has developed as a social hub for the expat community and hip young Fassi, as the city's inhabitants are known. It serves up exhibitions of Arab calligraphy, live Gnawa music and cross-cultural cuisine including the notorious camel burger.

Dating back to the 8th century, the old city of Fes is the Arab world's largest intact medina and is believed to be the biggest car-free urban area on the planet. Clustered around the great Al-Qarawinyn mosque, this tangle of tiny alleys, dark tunnels and exuberant souks was long viewed by Europeans as a remote and exotic destination. Ryanair's opening of direct, low-cost flights a few years ago to over a dozen cities on the other side of the Mediterranean has made Fes accessible. With an abundance of affordable traditional courtyard-houses, Fes suddenly found favor with westerners seeking a place in the sun.

"There was a gold rush," says David Amster, the American director of the Arabic Language Institute in Fes. "It got way out of control. Some people bought houses after only being in the city for three hours," adds Mr. Amster, who has lived in the medina since 1996. "It was like meeting somebody in a discotheque; you talk for a while and then wake up married, a mistake. Fes doesn't suit everybody ... if you're interested in partying or fun in the sun, Fes is not the place."

Instead, Fes is a time capsule. Despite the countless satellite dishes clinging to the flat rooftops and the souks selling cell phones, Paul Bowles's description of 1950s Fes as "a medieval city functioning in the 20th century," still holds resonance. Lose yourself in the maze of medina lanes and you pass traders and artisans working in tiny storefronts: carpenters knocking together gaudy bridal thrones around the Nejjarine square; metal workers hammering at copper plates in the Seffarine; dazzling displays of olives, spices and citrus alongside baskets of live snails and the occasional camel's head in the R'cif food market.

Before Morocco won its indepen-

dence in 1956, Fes was a divided city. Arabs mostly lived in the old medina, Fes el Bali, and its 13th-century offshoot Fes Jdid, which also enclosed the Jewish quarter or mellah. Europeans inhabited the broad avenues of the Ville Nouvelle, built outside the city walls after France took control of the country in 1912. As the French departed, rich and middle-class Moroccans abandoned the medina to move into their spacious apartments and plush colonial villas.

Many of the dars and riads—elegant traditional homes built around patios, fountains and gardens—were divided up among poor families. They could enjoy carved cedar-wood ceilings and walls adorned with intricate mosaics of zellige tiles even though they were squeezed into single, sometimes squalid, rooms. Many such families now aspire to sell their homes to outsiders.

"They dream of selling this place so they can move into modern apartments in the new suburbs," explains Hafid El Amrani, whose restoration company is working on an early 19th-century dar currently inhabited by seven families. "Ideally, they'll find somebody who will buy the whole place for €220,000, perhaps to turn it into a guest house."

The work is being financed by a government fund that is helping poor local families restore historic homes in the medina. Mr. Amster says over 500 of the 9,000 courtyard houses (they are called a riad when the central patio includes a garden, a dar if not) have been restored and taken over by outsiders—either foreigners or Moroccans from outside the medina—to be used as vacation homes, boutique hotels or full-time residences.

Mr. Amster's own website offers advice on how to buy and restore a house, from the bureaucratic requirements for bringing funds into Morocco to tips on negotiating a good price with local craftsmen ([www.houseinfoz.com](http://www.houseinfoz.com)).

"When I first came to Fes, there were no other foreigners living in the medina," says Mr. Amster, who has since restored three traditional homes. "I came here to teach, but it was very difficult to find a place to rent in the medina, so I bought a massriya (an independent apartment within a traditional house). It needed some work and lots of patience, but you could see from the beginning that it was stunning."

The upsurge of interest in traditional homes has been a boon for the carpenters, painters, tile makers and other craftsmen of the medina whose skills were in danger of dying out. Although the recession has taken some of the fizz out of the Fes real estate market, locals complain that prices are still up to three times what they were before boom. Bargain hunters can still pick up a small dar ripe for renovation for less than €30,000 or a riad with guest-house potential for €150,000.

Many adopted Fassi look with concern at Marrakech, claiming that the much greater influx of foreign residents and tourists there has changed the nature of the southern city.

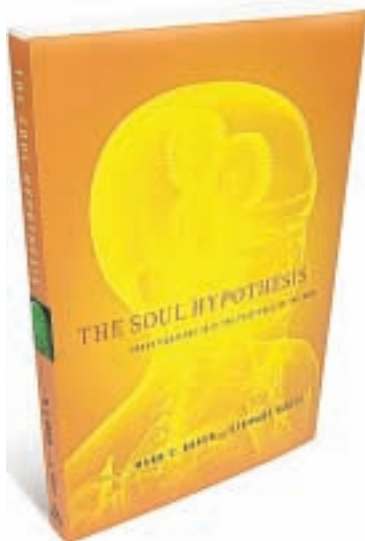
"Fes is not a pleasure ground like Marrakech, which is getting hen parties and stag parties. I just don't think Fes is ever going to have that sort of thing going on," says Mr. Richardson, the café owner. "The people coming here are looking for a more intellectual pursuit; they want it to be authentic. Anyway, the medina is big enough to swallow us all."



Clockwise from top: Menzeh room with zellige tiles and hand-carved plaster, colored with original pigments; doorway with wall fountain during renovation at rental Pasha Baghdadi Massriya; the same doorway after renovation.

## BOOKS

## What Lies Beneath



**The Soul Hypothesis**  
Edited by Mark C. Baker  
and Stewart Goetz  
Continuum, 294 pages, \$19.95

BY ANDREW STARK

Woody Allen may have jauntily cheated on his metaphysics exam by looking into the soul of the student sitting next to him, but for most philosophers the soul has been frustratingly hard to locate. Some ancient thinkers concluded that it had to be a “shade”: a kind of shadow that remains of us when we die. Others conceived of it as an “essence,” a distilled, concentrated version of the self. And still others pondered the possibility that it is more like a “breath,” an animating life force.

These are revealing ideas and metaphors. Among other things, they show a perennial struggle to find physical terms to describe

something nonphysical. The philosophical essays collected in “The Soul Hypothesis” seek, in a more up-to-date way, to reconcile the soul with the physical world. Given our secular age, however, the soul that the book’s contributors defend is a stripped-down version.

While older thinkers were looking for a grand soul—the source of immortality, the seat of character, the spark of life—the book’s “soul” consists of only two qualities: the human capacities for voluntary action and mental consciousness. What worries the contributors is that even such a chastened soul—many of us would simply call it “the mind”—seems to have no place, or defensible existence, in the physical world that modern science describes.

The mental and the physical, of course, differ profoundly in their nature, and this difference is what makes it hard for science to accommodate the idea of voluntary human action. How can a purely mental event—say, the desire to talk to a friend on the phone—cause us to dial a number and start talking? Contributor Robin Collins quotes the philosopher Jerry Fodor on this point. It is impossible, Mr. Fodor observes, to see how the incorporeal can affect the corporeal “without violating the laws of the conservation of mass, of energy and of momentum.”

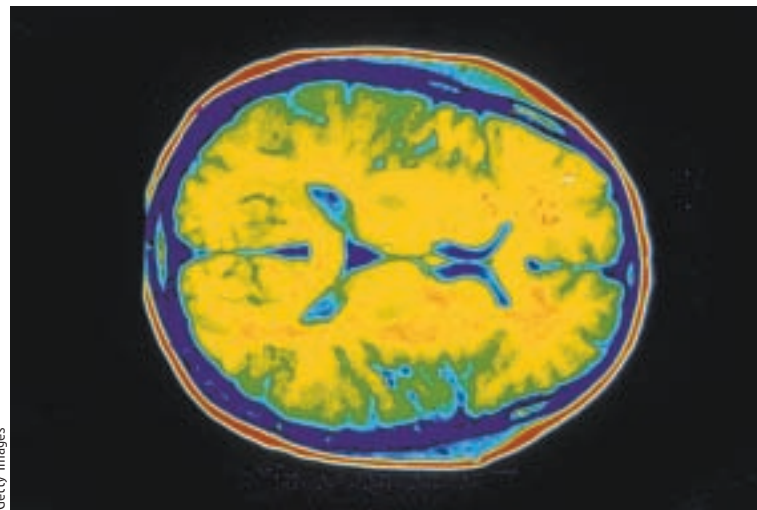
Sooner or later, the contributors to “The Soul Hypothesis” warn, scientists will pinpoint the exact three neurons whose firing accompanies the thought of our deciding to make a phone call or, if you prefer, deciding to get up and get a beer from the refrigerator. As ever more such micro-couplings are observed, we will—so scientists tell us with unseemly glee—gradually come to see that our cherished conscious life is

nothing but a long series of electrical impulses, not an autonomous realm of free will and free thought. Co-editor Mark C. Baker cites the psychologist Steven Pinker, who finds it plausible to say that neural “activity in the brain” simply “is the mind.”

The book’s contributors set out this scientific challenge fully and engagingly, but they also expose its fallacies. They note, for instance, that even if two things differ in their essential nature, as do mental thoughts and physical actions—or legislatures and laws—there is no reason why the one can’t cause the other. As David Hume argued, what establishes our idea of cause and effect is the regular “conjunction” of two events. That a physical act regularly follows a mental decision suggests, as co-editor Stewart Goetz writes, that the one is “causing” the other and that voluntary human action exists.

Likewise, if two things accompany each other, they need not be identical. An idea that occurs to our conscious mind, even if it is accompanied (or preceded) by brain impulses, is not reducible to them. It is precisely because our thoughts—the idea of a friend’s conversation or a beer’s taste—so profoundly differ, in their essential nature, from electrical impulses that the activities of the mind will always be something apart. Thus our mental life, the book’s contributors argue, will never be fully translatable into the actions of neurons and synapses. As contributor Daniel N. Robinson argues, there will always be something left out.

“The Soul Hypothesis” performs yeoman service in rescuing the human capacities for consciousness and voluntary action from scientific challenge. But it leaves us with a



Getty Images

larger question. For the ancients, the soul was a consolation for mortality, offering a sense that something of us survives after we depart and that what we lose by dying may not be all that significant. Can the book’s stripped-down soul do the same?

Perhaps so, in a limited way. We might realize, upon reflection, that many of our conscious experiences do not involve anything we ourselves act to bring about. They would happen anyway, even without us. Think of the winning lottery numbers we’ll check this evening, the elevator Muzak we’ll hear tomorrow or the World Series we plan to watch next year. Perhaps there is some comfort to be had in the fact that much of what would otherwise be the busy activity of our mental life will still unfold, even when we are no longer around to be conscious of it.

Relatedly, much of what we do to shape the world—the way it is different from our having been here—lies

beyond our consciousness. We take the last carton of milk at the corner store, unaware that we cause the guy behind us to drive four miles to the supermarket, where he runs into his long-lost girlfriend; they marry and have a child who grows up to discover a cure for cancer. Every day, each of us does things that move the lives of others—provoking thoughts, tipping decisions—in ways we know nothing about.

For most of us, the footprint that our actions leave upon the world will never come fully to our own consciousness. What exactly, then, do we ourselves lose on the day when that footprint shrinks to zero? Obviously something, if not everything. But we shouldn’t feel too aggrieved. Even the souls imagined by the ancients only mitigated the sense of loss that mortality threatens. They never banished it altogether.

—Mr. Stark is a professor of strategic management at the University of Toronto.

## Price and Punishment

**The Illusion of Free Markets**  
By Bernard E. Harcourt  
Harvard University Press,  
328 pages, £22.95

BY JAMES GRANT

Free enterprise is not so free, and the prison American population is immense. On these indisputable facts University of Chicago Prof. Bernard E. Harcourt builds a disputable theory. Says he: The very idea that markets ought to be unregulated—that they can even be free—is in no small way responsible for America’s teeming jails.

You rub your eyes. Chicago was the academic home away from home of Friedrich Hayek, the individualist philosopher and economist who sang the praises of the free market that Mr. Harcourt says not only doesn’t exist—no argument there—but couldn’t, hasn’t and shouldn’t.

Untrammelled, free-range capitalism is a myth, the author contends. Just as the 18th-century Parisian grain market was regulated to within an inch of its life, so is the 21st-century Chicago Board of Trade. The first chapter of “The Illusion of Free Markets” is filled to overflowing with the comparative details of the two regulatory arrangements—you never imagined that there was so much to say about Commissioner Emmanuel Nicolas Parisot, the investigator and exam-

iner for the Saint-Antoine district of Paris in 1739, and his confrères. “In all markets,” the author concludes, “the state is present. Naturally, it is present when it fixes the price of a commodity such as wheat or bread. But it is also present when it subsidizes the cultivation or production of wheat, when it grants a charter to the Chicago Board of Trade, when it permits an instrument like a futures contract, when it protects the property interests of wheat wholesalers.” So there is no free enterprise, Mr. Harcourt insists, only the fable.

### Is there a connection between the ideal of an unregulated economy and a large prison population?

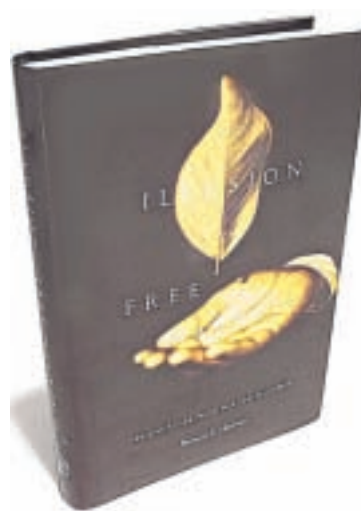
These days more than a few capitalists would partly, ruefully agree. Pick up this newspaper on any given day and see for yourself. Thus on Dec. 16 shares in Visa and Mastercard plunged in response to the possible imposition of a new, consumer-friendly structure of debit-card fees. And who was going to do the imposing? Not the credit-card companies themselves but the Federal Reserve, which regulates them. Between the new financial-reform legislation, Dodd-Frank, and its predecessor, Sarbanes-Oxley, the average American CEO must be starting to feel as

if he or she were working for the government instead of the stockholders.

Then there’s the American prison population, more than two million strong in 2008, fully 1% of the adult population and orders of magnitude higher than the numbers locked up in any other rich country. It’s a scandal upon which Conrad Black, the formerly imprisoned British-Canadian press baron, eloquently commented on the occasion of his early (and provisional) release from jail last summer: “America’s 2.4 million prisoners, and millions more awaiting trial or on supervised release, are an ostracized, voiceless legion of the walking dead; they are no one’s constituency.”

The tissue connecting unfree enterprise with filled-to-overflowing prisons is the “illusion” of free enterprise, Mr. Harcourt says. Though markets must be—always have been—regulated, he argues, Americans have swallowed the Rotary Club chestnut to the contrary. No fewer than 71% of American respondents to a pollster’s question assert that the free-market economy is the best economic system under the sun. Yet, Mr. Harcourt marvels, these same people “live in a place that operates the world’s biggest, most expensive, government-run, interventionist prison system that incarcerates more than one out of every hundred adults in the country.”

Which is to say, in the author’s



own words: “Neoliberal penalty and its earlier iterations have fertilized the carceral sphere.” Mr. Harcourt writes in two languages. The first you have already recognized as a serviceable kind of American. The second, just quoted, is the tongue indigenous to the race of college professors who inhabit Planet Tenure. One can tease out some meaning from this tribal patois, but only with application.

And after you have finished the transliteration, what have you got? For one thing, an introduction to the school of legal thought that holds that crime is an economic affront—“a class of inefficient acts.” Thus rape is a crime, the theorists hold, because it bypasses the “market” for marriage and the “market”

for dating. On Planet Tenure, the Ten Commandments seem to have not made much of an inroad.

Nor has the price mechanism, that wonderful contrivance—not invented but somehow evolved—with which buyers and sellers determine how much is produced, where it is sold and what price it should fetch. Do you ever wonder why your supermarket seems never to run out of Brillo, beer, hamburger or Mr. Clean, among other staffs of life? What human agency coordinates production and consumption in this semi-free and semi-regulated economy? In America, on Planet Earth, price discovery is that coordinating power.

I wonder whether Mr. Harcourt isn’t trying to make easy things hard. America’s fabulously productive economy is, nowadays, heavily regulated. Indeed, I expect that Jay Gould, the regulation-resistant railroad titan (1836-1892), would hardly recognize it if he were brought back to life for a quick inspection. Yet, perhaps he would also agree, the capitalist essentials remain intact. Perhaps the “illusion” of perfectly free markets represents the American people’s collective aspiration to have less government and more liberty. As for the iniquity of the American prison system, the writer to read is Conrad Black.

—Mr. Grant, the editor of Grant’s *Interest Rate Observer*, is the author of “Money of the Mind,” among other books.

## REVIEWS

## Comic Christmas crackers

London: Vestiges of the 12-day celebration of Christmas still remain in Britain, especially in its strong Christmas entertainment traditions. For kids, there's the ritualized cross-dressing silliness of the pantomime. For grown-ups, there's the frenzied, often absurd, usually transgressive, tightly plotted, double entendre-laden farce.

Lucky London boasts two terrific examples of the genre, of which the more side-splitting is the National Theatre's "Season's Greetings" by Sir Alan Ayckbourn. Directed in rip-roaring raucous mode by Marianne Elliott in a cutaway house designed by Rae Smith according to Sir Alan's explicit stage directions, part of the fun is watching the cast carefully pick their ways around non-existent, but very convincing, room-separating walls.

So elaborate are the stage directions that you can read the script for this macabre suburban family Christmas gathering as a novel. But it's so much funnier played by the comic geniuses the NT has assembled: Above all tower Catherine Tate, even whose own unmissable TV show hasn't prepared us for this exquisite tour de farce, and Mark Gatiss, of the TV comedy "League of Gentlemen." He plays a childless, ineffectual doctor, who hates kids be-

ing given toy guns, and annually bores everyone rigid with his hours-long puppet show, for which he has made the marionettes, scenery and written the dialogue. The destruction of his "Three Little Pigs" and his theater makes you laugh till your sides hurt.

He meets his match in gun-toting Uncle Harvey (David Troughton), who believes that kids adore watching violence, but who can't distinguish between shoot-'em-up Westerns and the real thing. Katherine Parkinson plays a very pregnant, much put-upon Patti. Removing her large, drunk husband, Eddie, from the armchair in which he's passed out is one of the two funniest scenes. Slapstick is a crucial element of farce as well as of pantomime—and when it's as graceful as in "Season's Greetings," it is as artful as a Shakespeare soliloquy. It's Chekhov, though, who ought to be invoked, for there is a strain of melancholy that anchors all Sir Alan's comedies. Here, Ms. Tate's hilarious failure to consummate an affair with a handsome house guest does nothing to make her own marriage more satisfactory.

The master of farce is Georges Feydeau, and his "A Flea in Her Ear" at the Old Vic, directed by Sir Rich-

ard Eyre in the late John Mortimer's translation, ought to be the supreme example of the genre. Tom Hollander doubles with impressively rapid costume changes, as the impotent bourgeois businessman, Chandebise, and as Poche, the hapless drunken flunky of the brothel punningly named the Coq d'Or.

But naughty language is precisely the trouble. When Mortimer's script was first played in the mid-60s, with stage censorship still enforced by the Lord Chamberlain's office, its jokes seemed breathtakingly rude—the revolving bed in the bordello the height of mischief. But today the humor feels reliant on stereotypes and pointless politically incorrect ruses. Freddie Fox is wonderful as young Camille, whose tongue cleaves to the roof of his mouth, but now it just seems childishly cruel to make jokes about a speech impediment. Rob Howell's glorious Coq d'Or set, and the fantastic ensemble discipline, nearly succeed where the play fails—in making this a night to remember.

—Paul Levy

*Season's Greetings* until March 13  
[www.nationaltheatre.org.uk](http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk)  
*A Flea in Her Ear* until March 5  
[www.oldvictheatre.com](http://www.oldvictheatre.com)



Tom Hollander plays Poche, above, and Chandebise.



An illustration from Carl Gustav Jung's 'The Red Book,' p.105 (1919).

## Jung's well-Red mental journey

Zurich: Long considered the holy grail of psychology, Carl Gustav Jung's (1875-1961) "The Red Book" is finally on show at the Museum Rietberg, just a few tram stops away from the bank vault where it was buried for more than 20 years. A revelation for scholars, the book shows how the use of creativity can help man overcome deep personal crises.

"O my soul, o my soul, where are you?" This is the opening line of Jung's diary series, which he started on Nov. 12, 1913, shortly after the breakup with his mentor and friend Sigmund Freud over a controversy about the nature of the unconscious. The lament reflects the Swiss psychiatrist's grief over the loss of friendship and insecurity about his own view of psychology. But the question also shows Jung's willingness to embark on a quest to regain his soul.

The venture would change Jung's life and with it the course of science, ultimately leading to his founding of analytical psychology. From 1914 to 1930, Jung transcribed the most captivating ideas from his

diaries into "The Red Book." It was first published in 2009, after Jung's relatives allowed the book to go into print, even though he had made no such provisions in his will.

The red, leather bound folio, which looks like a medieval volume, is richly illustrated with wondrous creatures and written in difficult-to-decipher gothic script, partly in Latin and German. While Jung said "to the superficial observer, it will appear like madness," scientists consider it Jung's most vital achievement. "The Red Book is the most important work in Jung's oeuvre," said Sonu Shamdasani, who edited the book and curated the exhibition.

The University College London history professor says it "was through this [book] that [Jung] developed his distinctive contributions to psychology and psychotherapy [as] he spent the rest of his life attempting to translate the conceptions...into a language acceptable to a medical and scientific audience."

Although the first edition of the facsimile reproduction and transcription of Jung's original 300-

page "Red Book" has already been sold out, the book is anything but a bedtime read. It can leave outsiders puzzled as to how Jung managed to distill his theory of the collective unconscious and the archetypes from the assault of images and emotions that tortured him for years.

The chapters in "The Red Book" start out with shocking or challenging statements from fantastic figures that rose from Jung's unconscious and are accompanied by meticulously drawn paintings, often showing wild animals such as snakes or imaginary figures. In the book, Jung tries to understand the remarks of these symbolic inner figures and attempts to reconcile them with his rational mind, thereby regaining an inner emotional balance.

The exhibition aptly reflects how Jung, already in his early days, tapped his own creativity as a painter, sculptor and writer to express himself, although he never considered himself an artist.

—Goran Mijuk

Until March 20  
[www.rietberg.ch](http://www.rietberg.ch)

## Beautiful science by royal appointment

Versailles: Were there a prize for the most beautifully designed and displayed exhibit of the year, the winner would surely be "Sciences and Curiosities at the Court of Versailles." The splendid show documents the enthusiastic royal support for scientific research and experimentation during the reigns of Louis XIV, XV and XVI, making the case with some 400 paintings, drawings, engravings, books and—most importantly—late 17th- and 18th-century scientific instruments and scale models as exquisitely crafted as they were ingenious. The Enlightenment, and seafaring explorers, engendered wondrous discoveries in the fields of agronomy, anatomy, astronomy, botany, cartography, chemistry, ge-

ography, geometry, medicine, physics and zoology, among others, and a lot of the action took place around Versailles. Louis XIV founded the Academy of Sciences in 1666, and passionate amateur Louis XV collected scientific paraphernalia the way his forebears amassed painting and sculpture.

In the show's prologue, a 360-degree film swoops and zooms around the palace, adding animated drawings of historic moments, including the first demonstration of a hot-air balloon by the Montgolfier brothers in 1783 and the 1746 experiment with an "electrical machine" in the Hall of Mirrors, when a human chain of royal courtiers, standing arms apart and touching fingers, got a de-

licious little shock.

The electrical machine itself, a large glass cylinder with brass fittings, is on show, along with portraits of the protagonists on cocoa-brown walls, terrestrial and celestial globes, microscopes, telescopes, a magnificent model ship with 110 miniature cannon, Louis XV's gorgeous astronomical clock and his giant black rhinoceros (now taxidermied), a gift from the governor of Chandernagor in 1769. Fittingly, small high-tech screens are used throughout the show, discreetly blending with the flawlessly lighted, almost breathtakingly elegant presentation.

—Judy Fayard

Until Feb. 27  
[chateauversailles.fr](http://chateauversailles.fr)



An aerostatic experiment performed at Versailles on 19 Sept., 1783, by Etienne de Montgolfier, with the king, queen and royal family in attendance.

## ART &amp; AUCTIONS



Installation view of Francis Alÿs's 'Patriotic tales,' Mexico City, (1997).

## Art brews in Brussels

By CRAIG WINNEKER

The three gigantic, gleaming, copper bulb shapes that dominate the entrance hall of the Wiels Contemporary Art Centre in Brussels are not the latest Damien Hirst or Jeff Koons installation, though they possess a similar capacity to flabbergast. No, these are antique brewing tuns, left in place after an intensive restoration effort turned the building that houses them, the former Wielemans-Ceuppens brewery, from a crumbling ruin into the city's most vital art museum.

Built in 1930, this sleek, modernist landmark towers over its grim industrial environs on the south side of Brussels. On one side are rail yards and marshy, overgrown vacant lots; on the other, neighborhoods badly in need of urban renewal and only just beginning to glimpse it. The reinforced concrete structure, designed by Adrien Blomme, was once the largest brew hall in Europe—a monument to the beer-making craft in a country with a hearty appetite for it, built at a time when companies began making architectural statements with industrial structures. Brewing operations had stopped in the late 1980s, and throughout the 1990s Brussels cultural community leaders were looking for ways to save the building by developing it for retail or corporate use. It wasn't until 2005 that work began on restoring the building as a contemporary-arts space.

Now, three years after its opening, Wiels is hitting its stride, and staking out a place in the art world's premier league. The museum's current major exhibition, "Francis Alÿs: A Story of Deception," is a joint project with London's Tate Modern and New York's MoMA. Artistic Director Dirk Snauwaert considers it the first full realization of the museum's potential.

The institution's unusual home, says Mr. Snauwaert, defines its mission and gives it more freedom than other museums on Brussels's somewhat staid visual-arts scene. "One of the main themes of our project is to give life to this incredible space," Mr. Snauwaert says. "I always say that one of the most important artists of our program is the architect

of our building."

Wiels has no permanent collection (not counting those copper kettles). Instead, at any one time most of its three main exhibition floors are given over to one artist or one artistic idea. The roster changes every few months, so the building is constantly re-inventing itself. "The challenge for us is to have always at least one artist, one key figure of today in a really well-made survey exhibition," says Mr. Snauwaert. "Close to the artist, the way he works and thinks. Not an academic, historical museum show. No 'He was born then and now he's making this.' We don't do linear, chronological shows."

That's what separates Wiels from the other, more traditional museums located in Brussels's geographical and cultural center. "We're in an industrial zone, we're between the train tracks and a canal," Mr. Snauwaert says. "We don't have the pressure of playing into the cultural-industrial prerogatives, which are numbers and prestige."

That doesn't mean the exhibitions are less than blockbusters. During its first three years Wiels has mounted major shows by Luc Tuymans, Mike Kelley and Felix Gonzalez-Torres, among others. The current Alÿs exhibition will be on until Jan. 30.

Born in Belgium in 1959, Mr. Alÿs has been based in Mexico City since the mid-1980s. In many of his works he walks through a landscape and captures on videotape or film reactions to various provocations and manipulations.

In "Sometimes Making Something Leads to Nothing" (1997), he pushes a block of ice through the streets of Mexico City for five hours until it melts. In "The Green Line" (2004) he meanders through Jerusalem with a leaking can of green paint, tracing the demarcation line drawn after the 1948 Arab-Israeli war and recording interactions along the way. In "Re-enactments" (2001), he buys a 9mm pistol in a shop and then has himself videotaped walking through crowded Mexico City neighborhoods holding the weapon until he is arrested, 12 minutes later; Mr. Alÿs then convinced the Mexican police to stage a re-enactment of the incident, which is projected alongside the "original"

(which, of course, is also staged).

But Mr. Alÿs is more than just the art world's answer to "Candid Camera." This show reveals the dizzying range of his works, from video, film and slide projections to paintings, sculpture, found objects and sounds. His "Le Temps du Sommeil" (1996-present) is a series of more than 100 miniature paintings on wood blocks, a mesmerizing dream diary. Other works feature toy machine guns with film reels for ammunition magazines.

The non-linear layout of the Wiels building (and similar mindset of its director) is well suited to the Alÿs show. There are no numbered galleries or routes to follow. You keep having to double back on yourself to get to new spaces. Your wandering, much like that of Mr. Alÿs, forces you to reconsider each work as you see it from different angles or in new contexts. "Francis is working in circles," Mr. Snauwaert says. "His whole work is one spiral."

Another focus at Wiels is the artistic process itself. To that end, the museum sponsors several artist-in-residence programs. Mr. Snauwaert says his inspiration was New York's P.S. 1 project, where "there was almost no difference between the artist's studio and the presentation space. The distance between the place where something is made and where it is presented is very small."

Amsterdam-based Maartje Flier-voet is one of the current artists-in-residence, who occupy small studios in the brewery's former grain silo. Her small exhibition, "Fffh, Ssszhh—or—Fffh, Cchzzz," which runs through Dec. 26, is housed in a gallery annex. The works explore the physical and temporal space occupied by books; the exhibition's title replicates the sounds made by the touching of paper.

Ms. Flier-voet says she was inspired by her time at Wiels to explore how her own works from the past could co-exist with ones she made for her residency—"how the association between the works could somehow create a means of presentation."

That interaction between the artistic process and the finished product is at the heart of every Wiels show. The whole place is a work in progress. [www.wiels.org](http://www.wiels.org)

## Posters promote ski escapes

[ Collecting ]

By MARGARET STUDER



Vintage ski posters make a colorful splash on the wall.

On Jan. 26, Christie's South Kensington will host "The Ski Sale," with around 180 posters from European, Russian and American resorts.

Christie's is the only major international auction house to hold an annual auction dedicated to ski posters. "Ski resort posters are a very popular area, but the supply is short," says Christie's poster specialist Sophie Churcher. "These posters are becoming more and more difficult to find. Demand is very strong for striking and bold Art Deco images."

Vintage posters generally range from the late 1890s to the 1960s with the best prices usually achieved for the Art Deco period of the 1920s and 1930s, Ms. Churcher says. Art Deco is characterized by clear, forceful lines; and, more often than not, by strong color accents that stress a joy of life.

Posters were made to hang as advertisements for a short period; and then they were often destroyed. As a result, only a very limited number of early posters have survived, Ms. Churcher explains. Designed to hit the eye with a clear message, they oozed fun, sporting challenge and after-ski glamour in a world of mountainous, beautiful landscapes far away from cities and their daily stress.

To achieve posters with impact, "the best artists were used," notes Ms. Churcher. They included poster artists who remain great today such as Switzerland's Emil Cardinaux (1877-1936), Martin Peikert (1901-1975), Alex Walter Diggelmann (1902-1987) and France's Roger Broders (1883-1953).

Cardinaux, a pioneer of poster art, created one of the earliest and greatest ski posters of all time in "Zermatt" (1908). It is a grand view of the fabulous Matterhorn in a golden glow, a mysterious image of a magnetic mountain that today continues to draw masses of visitors world-wide to the small town of Zermatt resting at its feet.

Luxury resorts in Switzerland and France are the most popular for top collectors. Among them

Ms. Churcher lists the Swiss mountain towns of St. Moritz and Gstaad, as well as France's Chamonix.

For years, Cardinaux's "Palace Hotel, St. Moritz" (1920), an image of glamorous ladies relaxing by a skating rink at this hotel mecca for the well-heeled, was a top poster at Christie's sales. It brought, at its peak in 2004, a world auction record for a ski poster at £23,900.

In 2008, however, Cardinaux's work was topped from the Christie's ski auction pinnacle when a Russian poster from 1952 by an anonymous artist fetched £36,500 against an estimate of £600-£800. It depicted a skier with racing number 21 straining for the win with red flags flying in the background.

Often ski posters are bought as pictorial images of where happy holidays are spent. Ms. Churcher remembers a buyer who picked up a poster at auction that was an exact replica of what he saw outside his chalet window.

The condition of pieces is an important factor in deciding what they buy. Nevertheless, says Ms. Churcher, collectors don't expect a poster to be perfect and today restoration methods are good. In the online auction catalog, each item has a link to a condition report.

Among the posters at auction is "Winter Sport in Italien" (circa 1930), designed by Austrian-Italian graphic artist Franz Lenhart. The poster depicts a powerful image of a handsome man in shirt sleeves pelting down a perpendicular slope, symbolizing the joys of sun and snow (estimate: £1,500-£2,000).

Another, "Sports d'hiver" (circa 1930) by Broders shows fashionable skiers in bright pullovers against white snow emerging from a train with the vista of Mont Blanc in the background (estimate: £4,000-£6,000). While Diggelmann's "Chateau d'Oex" (circa 1930) shows a woman in a striking yellow top holding her skis amid breathtaking mountains (estimate: £2,000-£3,000).

And in "Gstaad" (1950) by Peikert, a glamorous skier shoots down the mountain sending up a wave of snow in her wake (estimate: £2,000-£3,000). "Winter Sports in Zermatt" (1935) by Switzerland's Jean Gaberell dramatically shows skiers ploughing through deep snow leaving a rugged trench that leads to the majestic Matterhorn (estimate: £3,000-£5,000).



Left, Diggelmann 'Chateau d'Oex' (circa 1930) is estimated at £2,000-£3,000, while Lenhart's 'Winter Sport in Italien' (circa 1930) is estimated at £1,500-£2,000

## CULTURAL CALENDAR

**Amsterdam****■ MUSIC**

"Concertgebouw Christmas Matinée" presents the Concertgebouw Orchestra with chief conductor Mariss Jansons and soprano Eva-Maria Westbroek, performing Wagner's "Wesendonck-Lieder" and Beethoven's 7th Symphony. Concertgebouw  
Dec. 25  
☎ 31-20-3051-010  
www.concertgebouwkerk.nl

**Brussels****■ ARCHITECTURE**

"Sverre Fehn: Intuition, Reflection, Construction" showcases 26 projects by the architect, including his design for the Norwegian pavilion for the 1958 World Expo in Brussels. BOZAR  
Until Feb. 20  
☎ 32-2507-8200  
www.bozar.be

**Berlin****■ ART**

"Visiting (1) Sammlung Majerus" displays a selection of contemporary works from the Luxembourgian collection Majerus, including art by Tim Berrios, Sven Johne and Alicja Kwade. Kunstsaele Berlin  
Until Jan. 29  
☎ 49-30-8180-1868  
www.kunstsaele.de

**Genoa****■ THEATER**

"Circumnavigando Festival" stages theater, performance art, comedy and contemporary circus performances in the streets and public spaces of Genoa. Various locations  
Until Dec. 31  
☎ 39-10-8600-232  
www.sarabanda-associazione.it

**Helsinki****■ MUSIC**

"Traditional Christmas Concert" uses the exceptional acoustics of Helsinki cathedral to stage a festive performance by the young choir of the Cantores Minores, performing Bach and Brahms seasonal music. Helsinki Cathedral  
Dec. 25  
☎ 358-9-687-7720  
www.cantoresminores.net

**London****■ MUSIC**

"Viennese Christmas Concert" presents the London Concertante chamber orchestra, performing works by Brahms, Strauss, Mendelssohn and others. St. Martin in the Fields  
Dec. 28  
☎ 44-20-7766-1100  
www2.stmartin-in-the-fields.org

**■ FAMILY**

"Scrooge's Grotto" invites children to a post-Christmas meeting with Ebenezer Scrooge of "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens, to share grievances, disappointments and cheers for the holidays. The Museum of London Docklands  
Dec. 27-Jan. 1  
☎ 44-20-7001-9844  
www.museumindocklands.org.uk/

**Lisbon****■ DANCE**

"Swan Lake" presents the Russian State Ballet with 70 dancers performing their energetic version of the classic ballet choreographed by Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov. Coliseu dos Recreios  
Jan. 1  
☎ 351-21-3240-580  
www.coliseulisboa.com

**Munich****■ FESTIVAL**

"Tollwood New Year's Eve Party" closes the annual winter festival with a series of DJs and live bands, leading the celebration into traditional midnight waltzing and beyond. Tollwood Winter Festival Theresienwiese  
Dec. 31  
☎ 49-89-3838-500  
www.tollwood.de

**Prague****■ ART**

"Metropolis" presents the installation premiered at the Shanghai Expo this year, showcasing Czech street art with works by Masker, Pasta, Tron, Skarf, Cryptic 257 and Point.

DOX Centre for Contemporary Art  
Until Jan. 30  
☎ 420-7741-4543-4  
www.doxprague.org

**■ MUSIC**

"Prague Winterfestival" presents a program of classical music, opera and ballet performances, including "Don Giovanni," "Othello," and "Tosca." Various locations  
Jan. 2-7  
☎ 420-2225-1407-1  
www.praguewinterfestival.com

**Rome****■ ART**

"The World Upside Down of Chagall" offers 130 paintings and drawings, some of them previously unseen, from

international collections, exploring Marc Chagall's personal representation of an upside down world. Museo dell'Ara Pacis  
Until March 27  
☎ 39-0606-08  
www.arapacis.it

**Stockholm****■ PHOTOGRAPHY**

"Fashion!" exhibits about 200 prints by 51 international photographers, exploring the evolution and impact of fashion photography on art history. Fotografiska Mueet  
Until Jan. 9  
☎ 46-08-50-9005-00  
en.fotografiska.eu

—Source: WSJ research



Top, Amélie Kourim of 'Cirque Solo' in the Circumnavigando Festival, Genoa; above, Point exhibits at Metropolis in Prague.

FRIDAY NIGHT, SATURDAY MORNING

Elisabeth Kreutzkamm-Aumüller looks for peace

The owner of the Kreutzkamm bakery in Dresden and mother of four talks to The Wall Street Journal Europe about how she starts her weekend.

For 185 years, Elisabeth Kreutzkamm-Aumüller's family has been baking the quintessential German Christmas pastry: the stollen, a loaf-shaped cake with dried fruit and covered with sugar. Despite its Germanic roots, stollen is also popular in other latitudes and her company distributes the popular dessert—particularly in November and December—to 58 destinations.

Notable clients of the Kreutzkamm bakery have included Walt Disney, who in the 1950s used to give a stollen as a gift to his staff and family. Her bakery only interrupted operations after World War II, between 1945 and 1950, when her father was a prisoner of war but has been running non-stop throughout its history.

Weekends for Ms. Kreutzkamm-Aumüller, who belongs to the fifth generation of this family-owned business, are anything but quiet, particularly at this time of year. "Whenever I am not fulfilling my first job as mom with four children, I am working in my bakery, which is quite a struggle during the Christmas season. As you can imagine it is not really cozy and calm at this time of the year," she says.

Weekend pleasures

I battle against the clock during the week, from getting things done in my company, to giving my kids the attention they need. But

on the weekend, I don't have to battle against time. I enjoy waking up, reading 10 pages of a book and then going back to sleep. If you wake up and you know you don't have to do anything, I find that pleasurable. I am currently reading a big book about Dresden from the period of the German Democratic Republic up to the reunification entitled "Der Turm" (The Tower).

Life around kids

We meet friends during the weekend but we don't have a routine as a lot of activities are based around my children. Even our meals because I let them choose what they want, which is mostly pasta. I always try to find out what my kids want to do. I have a daughter who loves horse riding, so I join her at the stable on the weekend.

I have a son who plays the tuba and he performed in a concert last weekend. It was an orchestra of about 40 children playing trumpets and lots of blowing instruments playing Christmas songs, which was beautiful.

Favorite restaurant

We love to have brunch at the Villa Marie, which is a lovely restaurant in an old villa by the Elbe, and it is next to a beautiful bridge that is called the Blue Wonder. It is an Italian restaurant, which serves everything from Vitello Tonnato to pasta to meat and fresh fish. The kids love pasta and I enjoy the fish and meat dishes [like] sour and sweet sardines, salmon, lamb or chicken.

Family hangout

We live in a very nice villa with a huge garden on the river, so we spend our time outdoors in our garden playing soccer with the kids. [We] take the bike for a tour in the direction of Saxonian Switzerland or we walk the river banks with the dogs. We love to spend time at home, as my husband and I are both working very hard and so being at home with our family is peaceful.

Outdoors

I [also] love to spend time outdoors, walking [our two] dogs, running and playing with the kids, and in the last years I [have become] more and more a driver for the kids. Where we live people come for vacations, so it's like having holidays in our own back garden. I need peace or otherwise I won't make my daily program during the week.

Cinema getaways

The weekend before last we watched "Rapunzel" ["Tangled"] and this weekend we saw the new Narnia movie. As the Villa Marie is around the corner of the movie theater we mostly combine brunch and movies.

Visitors

My children always have friends who want to stay over but I limit the sleepovers from Mondays to Fridays. Sometimes I wake up and I find eight children around my table, so I don't want them visiting on a Saturday or Sunday when I want to have time for my family.

Ms. Kreutzkamm-Aumüller was speaking with Javier Espinoza.



Mareike York

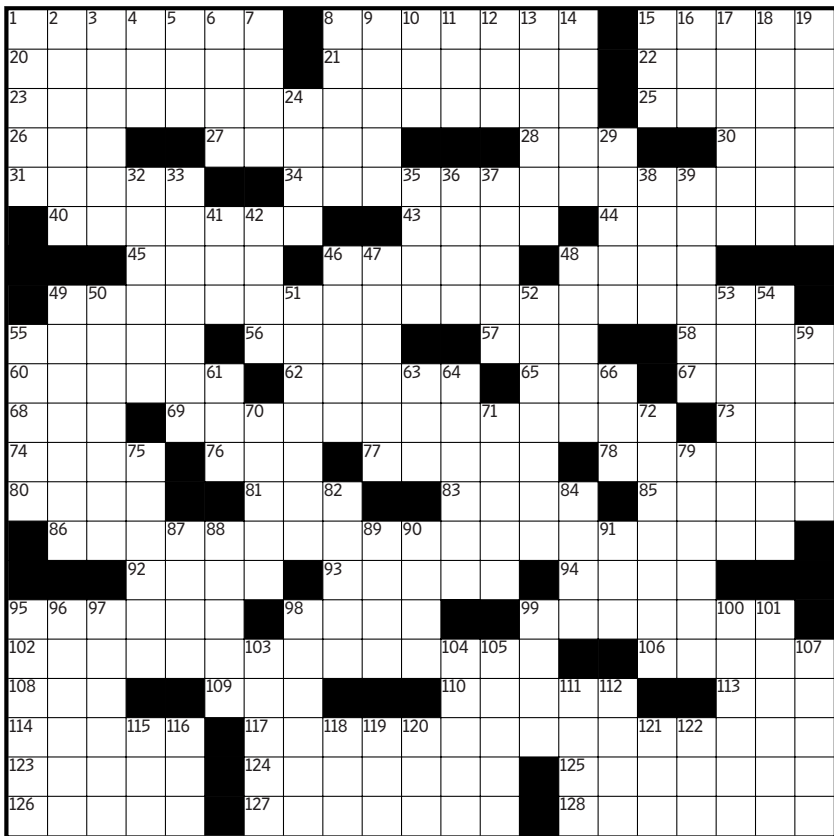
THE JOURNAL CROSSWORD / Edited by Mike Shenk

Across

- 1 "15-Down is TAT," e.g.
8 Catalog for high spenders
15 Chipotle Mexican Grill choices
20 Bars in bars
21 1499 stop for Amerigo Vespucci
22 Become acclimatized
23 Leather accessory for ING's logo?
25 Rich dessert
26 Dilettante's love
27 Sinker
28 Petition
30 Work in a bed
31 Birds on Canadian dollars
34 Visit to farm country?
40 Grindstone part
43 Gillian's role on "The X-Files"
44 Blows one's top
45 Done to \_\_\_
46 Compact
48 Schooner fill
49 Comparable to an unexpected amount of money in an account?
55 Grant's "Houseboat" co-star
56 Its national emblem includes a khanjar dagger
57 Treasury Dept. agency

- 4 Author McEwan
5 Board source
6 \_\_\_ out (made, but barely)
7 Move, for short
8 Comb
9 Emmy-nominated role for LeVar
10 History book nos.
11 One of the moons of Uranus
12 Term from tennis, golf or poker
13 Carol snippet
14 "\_\_\_ luck!"
15 Skin pic
16 Brouhaha
17 Server on skates, perhaps
18 Click a "Don't send me email" checkbox
19 Stock units
24 "Natural Affection" playwright
29 Use a prayer rug
32 Closed in on
33 Like inverted pentagrams
35 Home of Minot AFB
36 8 on the Beaufort scale
37 China's Chou \_\_\_
38 De Matteo of "The Sopranos"
39 Seek help from
41 Cub Scout group
42 Maker of many bricks
46 Challenge for ESL students
47 Looked after
48 Grounds
49 Crush, e.g.
50 Of little consequence
51 Obama's original chief of staff
52 Two wood
53 "Perseus With the Head of Medusa" sculptor
54 Characteristic to a particular field
55 Carnival craft
59 Chapeau supporters
61 Common article
63 Encouragement for Manolete
64 Negligent
66 Outpaced
70 Fired up
71 Game in which each player has four pawns
72 They'd rather roughhouse than play house
75 Tie
79 Semihard cheese
82 Instruments setting
84 Make like an angry cat
87 Historic caravel
88 Alec's "Beetle Juice" co-star
89 "...a \_\_\_clock scholar"
90 "It hurts!"
91 "\_\_\_ Lazy River"
95 "If you say so..."
96 Arizona rival
97 Real bargains
98 Stowe villain
99 Power tool brand
100 Christmas, in Rome
101 Foundation, of a sort
103 Pancreas, for one
104 Pancreas, for one
105 Reacts to a haymaker
107 Hills
111 One of Emeril's Big Easy restaurants
112 Trade
115 Online exchanges, for short
116 Put down
118 Bananas Foster ingredient
119 Put away
120 Many-armed org.
121 "Boardwalk Empire" carrier
122 REM researcher's tool

Hark! Who Goes There? / by Gabriel Stone



Down

- 1 Toaster output
2 Repeat mindlessly
3 Clay, for one

Last Week's Solution



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