# WEEKEND JOURNAL.

# Special relationship

Why the World Cup is much more than just a global football competition

Fashion: Football fantasy design | Wine: Vibrant South African wines

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# WEEKEND JOURNAL.

 
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# \* Fashion

#### By J. S. MARCUS

*Milan*  **I** N MILAN'S HIGH-FASHION shopping district, the "quadrilatero d'oro," or golden rectangle, just about all the designers are playing the same game—buy my clothes, they seem to say, and you, too, can look like a fashion model. But not Dirk Bikkembergs, the German-Belgian designer, who opened up his first flagship store here last year.

One of the legendary "Antwerp 6," a group of fashion students who helped put Belgium on the fashion map in the 1980s, Mr. Bikkembergs, now 51 years old, has translated a quirky obsession with football into a fashion empire. His new multilevel store, which is meant to resemble a fantasy version of a football player's luxury apartment, is a personal manifesto for an alternative approach to men's fashion. Instead of professional models, Mr. Bikkembergs uses real athletes, including former Italian national player Fabrizio Ravanelli, in his advertising and fashion shows, and he tests out his designs on his own football team, F.C. Bikkembergs Fossombrone, based in the central Italian town of Fossombrone, where his samples are produced. His store is filled with professional football boots, TV screens showing football matches, and emphatically masculine touches, like his fictional football player's real Porsche.

It's a fantasy that finally has less to do with football than fashion, as Mr. Bikkembergs seeks to turn his back on the pretenses and poses of the catwalk. In his couture line, he converts the male athlete's body into a fashion template, creating clothes that are as rigorously masculine as they are tightfitting. And he has found just the right home in fashion-mad, football-mad Milan, where, during hard times for high fashion, Mr. Bikkembergs's new store is one of the few venues with a buzz.

Mr. Bikkembergs's fantasy-filled version of football will compete with the real thing this month when Milan's Men's Fashion Week overlaps with football's biggest event, the World Cup, held this year in South Africa from June 11-July 11. Mr. Bikkembergs says he will have a World Cup theme at his own June 18 Milan show, where he will debut his spring and summer 2011 collection.

He also plans to attend several World Cup matches. Will it be difficult for him to prepare for his show, one of the most important of the fashion calendar, and jet back and forth to South African stadiums? "Don't worry," he says, speaking in the second-floor fantasy "gym" of his Milan flagship store. "I'm very organized."

It has been almost 10 years since Mr. Bikkembergs first turned his fashion sensibilities to football. when he gathered the Milan fashion world in the city's San Siro stadium to see his 2002 spring and summer collection. And arguably, some in the fashion world have followed his lead. Dean and Dan Caten, the Milan-based Canadian twin fashion designers, also stress their connections to the Italian football world in their label, Dsquared2 And Milan ads for Mr Bikkembergs's new store, which feature athletes in underwear and athletic shoes, compete for attention with Giorgio Armani ads fea-



# Fantasy football fashion

Designer Dirk Bikkembergs is building a clothing niche on his passion for the beautiful game

turing Portuguese soccer star Cristiano Ronaldo, who is also stripped down to his underwear.

Mr. Bikkembergs believes that he was there first. "I made the connection," he says, looking back over the past decade. "Football stars are the new heroes. This is what young guys want to be."

Interestingly, the designer who is based in London, and whose company retains offices in Antwerp—doesn't describe himself as a typical football fan. "I don't need to go to football matches to do my job," he says, in spite of his cache of world cup tickets.

Mr. Bikkembergs oversees three labels, including his main line, Dirk Bikkembergs Sport Couture. After leaving fashion school, Mr. Bikkembergs began to show men's and women's collections in Paris, but his attention drifted toward Milan—and toward a concentration on a men's line. "I could feel that real men's clothes were in Milano," he says of his Paris years. "I could really feel it."

In Paris, he recalls, he first made a name for himself, but he also realized the limits of the Paris fashion scene. "I am not the kind of designer who is doing these niche things, like a lot of designers in Paris. [They work] for a small amount of very selective people—I see myself as a global thing."

His success at blending football and fashion had led him to think about South America as a future market. "I know that the whole of South America is waiting for me," he says. "I am not looking to China like everyone else. But South Americans will definitely go for it—they like that kind of man." He describes his ideal customer as "not an arty man, not a man who is working in an office, but a sporty man. I want to give him his clothes."

This year, Mr. Bikkembergs

launched his third-generation professional football boot, the Capitano. According to Mr. Bikkembergs's press representative, many professional players wear Mr. Bikkembergs's boots, including Sébastien Squillaci , a player with FC Sevilla and a member of the French national team. Mr. Squillaci will wear Mr. Bikkembergs's second-generation boot, the Tirosegno, during the World Cup.

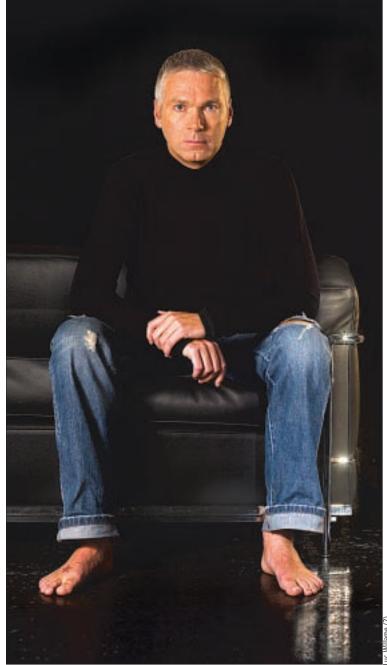
Mr. Bikkembergs is planning versions of his Milan flagship store in other cities, including London and Paris, but for now Italy remains his most important market—which is unusual, he says, for a designer who grew up in Germany and studied in Belgium.

"Here in Italy, it's all about Giorgio [Armani] and Gianni [Versace] and Dolce [& Gabbana]. You know what I mean? To get in on all this is quite an achievement. I'm very happy with that." He invokes the hit Frank Sinatra song "New York, New York"—"If I can make it there, I can make it anywhere," he sings. In fashion, he says, "if you can go to Italy as a non-Italian and make it, then you are rock and roll."

Mr. Bikkembergs made compromises along the way. A few years ago, he discontinued his women's line. "Listen to me," he says. "If I do men's and women's wear, I don't exist. It would [mean] working 24 hours a day, every day. At a certain moment, I woke up and said, 'Who is this guy, working, working, working?' My [women] customers were hysterical. I said it's my personal choice. I am the owner of the company—I want to live."

And he doesn't worry about breaking into the U.S. market. "I know that the Americans are not into it," he says of his football-infused fashion template. "But I am sorry—I cannot please everybody. It is a passion thing."

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



Dirk Bikkembergs; above, the facade of his flagship store in Milan.

## \* Food & Wine

# A fresh take on Lyon's fare

## Chef Nicolas Le Bec mixes world-fusion with local cuisine in his market-style brasserie

#### By Lanie Goodman

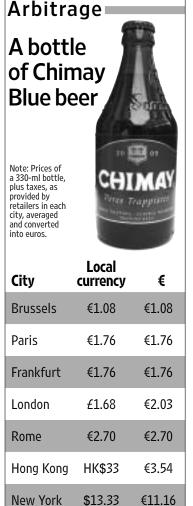
Lyon, France **7** OU WON'T FIND Rue Le Bec on the street map of Lyon. No one actually lives there, except for the pets of the restaurant's chef. Expect a few rabbits, housed in a small wooden cabin at the back end of Rue Le Bec, and some mascot sea bream, circling in a strictly decorative blue-lit fish tank near its gigantic open-plan kitchen.

But this sprawling multilevel futuristic brasserie does indeed live up to its name. With a bakery, florist, butcher, fresh-produce shop, a book nook, fumoir, a wine bar and a cavernous restaurant, dreamed up by Michelin two-star maverick chef Nicolas Le Bec, it is more like a stacked village street than a simple eatery.

The concept: a postmodern worldfusion take on traditional Lyonnais bouchon cuisine-named after the small, homey bistros where straw plugs were used as bottle stoppersthat comprises charcuterie and pork dishes such as andouillette, offal such as sheep's trotters and poultry from the local Bresse region.

For a do-it-yourself meal, you can also buy almost anything you eat or drink on the menu from the on site butcher, baker and fishmonger-a slab of Charolais beef, oysters or prepared finger food. Even the porcelain china used in the restaurant can be purchased starting at €2.50 at the exit of the restaurant, where dishes are stacked in wooden crates, market-style.

"It's hard to bring quality to vol-



ume," says Mr. Le Bec, the 37-yearold chef, who just pocketed the 2010 Palme d'Or de la Restauration and was also elected "Entrepreneur of the Year" by the CGPME, a private French business organization. "The elite gastronomic-star system is beginning to bore me a bit. I'd rather cook for ordinary people with modest budgets," Mr. Le Bec says.

Not exactly what you'd expect to hear from a young chef in a city with a veritable Milky Way of shining Michelin stars-20 in all, including Paul Bocuse's holy trinity. But ever since his arrival in Lyon in 2000, Mr. Le Bec hasn't stopped shaking up the culinary scene. Along with his blonde good looks and dynamic boyish enthusiasm, he's known to be disarmingly direct and a model of professionalism.

After training with Jean-Pierre Vigato, Alain Passard and Jacques and Laurent Pourcel, he was named head of cuisine at the Cour des Loges (a stylishly restored Renaissance house turned luxury hotel-restaurant in Old Lyon), where he feverishly tested his new ideas. By 2002, the then 27-year-old newcomer from the Paris suburbs was elected "Chefof the Year" by prestigious restaurant guide Gault Millau.

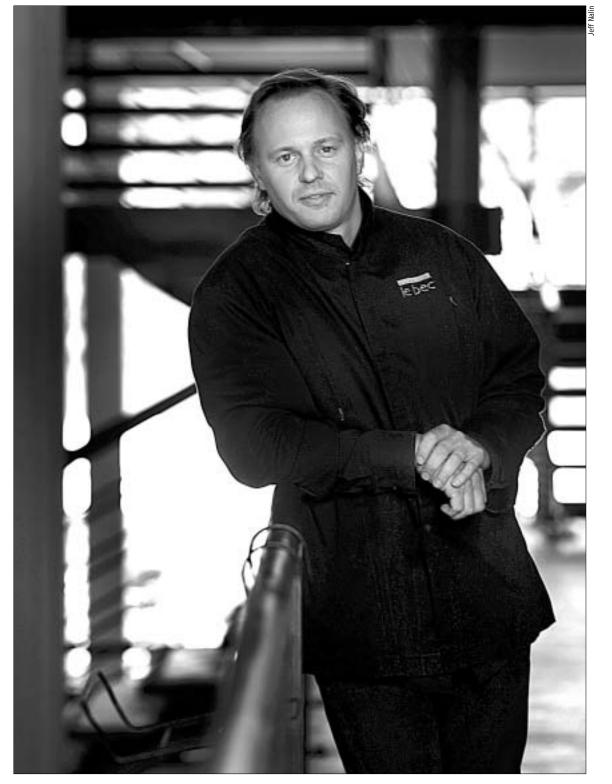
Mr. Le Bec launched his own eponymous restaurant in 2004, a cozy gastronomic haunt near Lyon's central Place Bellecour. Next came a conceptual bistro, Espace Le Bec, featuring "strange products from faraway places" such as creamy mozzarella burrata and palm oil, at Lyon's Saint Exupéry airport, which opened last vear (www.nicolaslebec.com).

The chef's latest visionary food emporium, Rue Le Bec, clearly required some imagination.

Housed in a former 2,800-squaremeter salt-works warehouse, the brasserie complex sits alone at the end of a deserted riverside road, surrounded by cranes, half-finished buildings and a wide gash of construction sites. When glimpsed from a distance at night, the sleekly curved facade looks something like a glowing black and red UFO.

Rue Le Bec is one of the first operational enterprises in Lyon's ambitious €780 million Le Confluent development project, located near the old rail yards on the tip of the Presqu'île (peninsula) at the juncture of the Rhône and the Saône rivers. The 150-hectare industrial site, currently among the largest urbanrenewal projects in Europe, will include new homes, offices, public spaces, shops and leisure facilities.

Judging from the humming activity, the location hasn't seemed to deter the locals, who flock to the restaurant for Sunday brunch for a gargantuan buffet of goodies, from Gillardeau oysters to freshly baked waffles with Nutella. The daily clientele is a predictably mixed crowd: young professionals wolfing down a quick Caesar salad at lunch hour: students munching on gourmet tomatoand-mozzarella pizzas; hand-holding glam couples sipping on Côtes du Rhône at the impressively-stocked mezzanine wine bar, and a fair share of well-heeled Lyonnais families



with kids in tow, tucking into a leisurely three-course meal. Prices range from €7.50 for salads to €25 for a copious platter of duck foie gras.

"You feel like you're sitting in a giant market like Les Halles [in Paris], not in a restaurant," says hotelier Nicolas Malzac-Heimermann. "You take your wife out to dinner and ask the florist in the stall nearby to bring you a personalized flower arrangement right over your table."

The attractive "street" decor (grey iron garden tables, towering plants, and gas lamp-style lighting, colossally high ceilings and an 800-square-meter riverside outdoor terrace) creates an airy, though noisy atmosphere, but the real draw is the food. The menu features a wide choice of hot and cold shellfish, fish, tripe, poultry, charcuterie and international cuisine, plus a chalkboard menu of daily specials. Highlights include starters such as a generous heap of fresh string-bean salad with shallot cream and Parmesan, or the mouthwatering glazed duck and leek nems, an original take on Vietnamese fried spring rolls.

In addition to Lyon's traditional offal, including pig's head with lentils there are also surefire crowdpleasers like the tender braised Black Angus beef with Blue Bell French fries, or roast Limousin lamb with white flageolet beans and garlic. The desserts are simple and satisfying, ranging from classic crème caramel and baba au rhum with whipped cream to a feather light sugarless dark-chocolate mousse and homemade ice cream. No detail is overlooked, from the fresh floral arrangement on the table to the immaculate high-tech kitchen, equipped with a wall of different ovens for tandoori, steaming, pizzas and barbecue.

"If I hadn't been a chef," says Mr. Le Bec, "I would have been an airplane pilot, a surgeon or a professional military man. I like rigueur, precision."

#### LYON'S RISING STARS

**Maison Clovis** Lebanese chef Clovis Khory has become the toast of town ever since his stylish, intimate restaurant was awarded a Michelin star in March, just three years after opening. Mr. Khory arrived in France in 1993 with no formal training as a chef but apprenticed with some of the region's finest chefs (Philippe Gauvreau of Lyon's La Rotonde and Marc Veyrat in Veyrier-du-Lac). His original cuisine is all about subtle craftsmanship with the freshest ingredients. From the postage-stamp-size itchen comes exquisitely prepare dishes: a foie-gras crème-brulée appetizer, warm homemade smoked salmon on a checkerboard of eggplant caviar, lobster with truffle risotto and ceps, and delectable desserts such as a cubed brioche French toast-style with fresh pineapple . The sober chic decor (pure clean lines in pink, mauve and charcoal, whimsical cloud light fixtures) is the perfect match for Khory's cuisine—rigorous, refined, exuberant and flavorful. www.maisonclovis.com

## **Restaurant Les Loges**

Even now, Mr. Le Bec says that his

independence may ruffle a few feath-

ers in Lyon's cherished culinary peck-

ing order ("You won't catch me be-

longing to any gastronomic associa-

tions," he says with a grin), but he's

the first to admire Bocuse for his

generous spirit and superb cuisine.

Le Café-Epicérie Since Nicolas Le Bec's departure from the Cour des Loges, 28-yearold chef Anthony Bonnet has forged his distinctive contemporary spin on local specialities, presiding over the gastronomic Les Loges (set in a stunning inner courtyard surrounded by towering Renaissance pink arches) and the convivial Café-Epicérie next door. Raised in a family of charcutiers in Lyon's nearby countryside, Mr. Bonnet is the real deal. The affordable cozy café offers a great choice of startcreamy and smoky black tea; beef, duck and rabbit pâté, or delicious, homemade foie gras, served in kilner preserve jars. The copious main courses—a tender slab of Simmental beef served with black truffle mashed potatoes, free range Limousin pork, or andouillette sausage with chitterlings—are the ultimate comfort food. But don't miss dessert: Tiramisu with raspberries and mascarpone, or the fresh pistachio cream topped with dark chocolate. www.courdesloges.com

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Clockwise from top left: Chef Nicolas Le Bec; his restaurant, Rue Le Bec, in a village-market-like setting; the brasserie, located on the tip of Lyon's peninsula, serves traditional cuisine infused with foreign influences.

"But personally," Mr. Le Bec says, "Iwas more influenced by grandmother's country garden recipes from Brittany and various ideas I picked up from international food malls."

These days, the globetrotting chef has several projects in the works including a restaurant at the Hotel Shangri La in Peking, which opens in September 2010, and another in Paris's Garnier Opera House, which he plans to call "The Phantom," expected to open in 2012.

"Traveling is my only form of relaxation when I'm not cooking," he says. "In China and South America, there's a real openness, energy and welcoming attitude. Global fusion is here to stay on our planet, and[the French] aren't exactly the leaders," he says.

"Nicolas Le Bec has a strong personality and ambition," says Lyonnais Michelin three-star chef Georges Blanc, "but his individualism serves him well. He's running his own show, and why not? He's bringing new ideas to Lyon in a new neighborhood and is totally in sync with what's going on today."

Still, Mr. Le Bec is hoping to change the image of the food capital of France from the heavy rich regional classics to a reinvention of ageold recipes infused with foreign influences. "Cooking is a lot like football. Lyon is known all over the world for its football team, and I'm trying for the same spirit-performance, teamwork and a cross-cultural mix of dishes. You don't need to speak the same language to have great results." *—Lanie Goodman is a writer based in Nice.* 



# A Cup drinking challenge

T ALL STARTED as an excuse to drink good wine during the 1998 World Cup in France. A few of us had decided to attend the tournament, but before we jumped in the car we had to work out where we were going to watch

#### Wine WILL LYONS

those matches for which we didn't have tickets. France doesn't have many pubs, and for my Anglo-Saxon friends the thought of watching their beloved England team in a Parisian café didn't appeal. And it was beer they were after, in this wine-drinking country; warm and flat, not the strong, gassy lager served on the Continent.

But being in France, I thought it would be an opportune time to introduce my friends to the glories of French wine. A challenge spices things up and we wine writers are always looking for a little pointer to help decide what to drink. The premise is simple: to drink a wine from the region where the football match is being played. It worked gloriously well 12 years ago. Bordeaux was easy-zippy, white Sauvignon Blanc or brooding Claret. Paris was a little tricky. We flirted with the idea of rosé-- the Parisian café drink of choice--but in the end opted for Champagne.

I would be lying if I said it worked well when Japan and South Korea hosted the tournament in 2002. We made a halfhearted attempt to explore Sake and even Japanese whisky but eventually gave up. But in Germany, four years later, it was game on! German Riesling, with its mouthwatering acidity, purity of fruit and intensity of flavor, is ideally suited to summer drinking.

That summer, as Italy cruised to a fourth championship win, we drank Riesling from the Mosel when England played Paraguay in Frankfurt; dry, smoky Silvaners during England's match with Trinidad and Tobago in Nuremburg; and light, fruity Spätburgunders from the Ahr when Sweden were the opposition in Cologne. It was glorious and in many ways provided a vintage year for this particular challenge.

Once again this summer there will be no shortage of good wines to taste. When I first heard South Africa was hosting the event, my thoughts immediately turned to

wine. In many ways, as in 2006 in Germany, the tournament has arrived at a time when the host country's wine industry is on an upward curve. There is a vibrancy surrounding South Africa's wines at the moment, noted recently at the London Wine Trade Fair, where the country's stand was one of the largest. I visited South Africa twice in 2008 and came away hugely impressed with what I tasted from the vinevards nestled around the towns of Stellenbosch, Franschhoek and Hermanus. Since the end of apartheid, a generation of winemakers has traveled extensively and brought back to the Western Cape ideas and practices from around the world. The upshot is that some world-class red wines are being produced, as well as superb Sauvignon Blanc, Chenin Blanc and Chardonnay.

One snag is that the winegrowing region is almost entirely centered around the Western Cape, so in the spirit of the challenge, only fans who are following teams playing in Cape Town have a chance to take part in the early rounds. This is good news for the fans of France, Italy, Portugal, England and Holland, whose teams are all playing their group matches in Cape Town's Green Point Stadium. But German supporters will have to make do with South African beer which isn't bad, as lager goes.

For matches with a lunch-time kick-off, head to the Cape Town suburb of Constantia to seek out some zippy, figgy Sauvignon Blanc. Klein Constantia, Steenberg, Buitenverwachting and High Constantia are the producers worth seeking out. Klein Constantia also has a very drinkable Riesling.

Stellenbosch, Franschhoek and Paarl are the main regions from which to source the bulk of your wine. As a rule of thumb, the vineyards around Stellenbosch are the best. Here, the Pinotage grape variety rules but I would urge you to look further afield and seek out some Chardonnay, Merlot, Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon. I am a particular fan of the Bordeaux blends: Among my favorite producers are Kanonkop, Kaapzicht, Meerlust, Moreson, Rustenberg, Thelema and Vergelegen.

Further afield, down in Hermanus, lies Hamilton Russell Vineyards, run by Anthony Hamilton Russell. These are premium wines perhaps best left to the latter stages of the competition if your team has a chance of winning. Good luck and happy drinking.

# DRINKING NOW Vergelegen Chardonnay Reserve Stellenbosch, South Africa Vintage: 2008 Price: about £15 or €18 Alcohol content: 13.6% One of the Cape's oldest wine farms, dating back to 1700. Winemaker Andre van Pensburg's

farms, dating back to 1700. Winemaker Andre van Rensburg's Chardonnay is powerful with notes of butterscotch and tropical fruit flavors. But there is a nice structure to it with plenty of grip on the palate.



# \* World Cup

# Facing the impending sense of dread

### The World Cup inspires something more complex than chest-thumping

By Matthew Futterman and Darren Everson

A S THE WORLD CUP begins Friday in South Africa, the football intelligentsia around the globe is debating not how their team will prevail—but the reason for its inevitable flop.

"We're on our third captain this year and Rooney looks knackered," Luke Smith, a 28-year-old official member of England's support club, fretted this week. Never mind that Wayne Rooney, the team's star striker, has been playing quite well. "It's like we're destined to lose out again."

Unlike other high-profile championship events, the World Cup inspires something more complex than chest-thumping. It is the nature of football that the ball rarely finds the goal, except on behalf of the opposing team, and that the events of a mini-second can infect a nation for decades. Ahead of it, in the hearts and minds of fans around the world, there develops a sense of dread, of impending doom so great that the faithful tend to start bargaining with higher powers: If only we don't lose to Germany, plead the English.

Such pessimism is wise. The World Cup is the most prized trophy in sports. Yet it is also the hardest to win. Since 1930, only five nations have managed to prevail on foreign soil. The World Cup "is manifestly and regularly unjust," says David Goldblatt, the author of "The Ball is Round: a Global History of Football." As a result, he said, "Football culture in both its popular and elite forms is better at finding problems than solutions—reasons not to believe than to believe."

Ground zero for dread this year is England, the nation that invented football but has won its top prize only once—54 years ago. In the past, it has been knocked out of the tournament by such football weaklings as the Soviets and the U.S., as well as by stalwarts ranging from Portugal and Brazil to Uruguay and Argentina.

Its particular nemesis is Germany, which has twice eliminated England from the World Cup along with other humiliations in European tournaments. To Englishman Brian Larkin and millions of his countrymen, there is dark comfort in expecting more of the same. "Twenty-two men running around a field kicking a bag of air," Mr. Larkin said. "Then Germany wins on penalties."

This year, there is plenty to feed British pessimism, despite a high world ranking and a recent streak of brilliant wins. This winter, captain John Terry lost the captain's armband when the news broke that he'd had an affair with a teammate's girlfriend. Then came a spate of injuries. And is Coach Fabio Capello, an Italian, the right man for the job? Finally, the team itself sounds less than confident. "With [the conditions] on our side and the quality in our squad and a little bit of luck, who knows?" said Mr. Terry upon his arrival in South Africa.

Brazilians have won a record five World Cups and reached seven finals. Like Kobe and LeBron, the stars are referred to by singular names—Pele, Cafu, Lucio. And by many accounts, Brazil is favored to win again. Yet in Brazil, past success is precisely the reason to expect failure. The country has so many world class players to choose from that the debate over who should make the team typically never gets resolved, says Junior Silva, a sales clerk. National team coach, Dunga, made the debate even more intense this year by leaving off the roster international stars such as Ronaldinho, who plays for Milan, in favor of lesser known players, who might better congeal as a team.

In the noisy 25 de Marco shopping district in downtown Sao Paulo, pre-tournament anxiety is palpable among shoppers and sales clerks crowding the bins of clown-sized yellow glasses frames, plastic horns and T-Shirts. Rogerio Junqueira, who was looking to pick up some collectable national team stickers for his son, worries that that the big salaries Brazilian players earn these days playing in European leagues has un-



dermined their will to play with heart for the national team. "When you look back, we had players who left their blood on the field," Mr. Junqueira said. "Now, they're likely to ask 'How many millions of dollars will I get if I leave some blood on the field?' No, I'm not confident this year."

Italy is the reigning World Cup champion. But its fans are no more optimistic than they were four years ago. The team is largely the same, after all, which makes the players four years older. "I don't think I've ever felt so pessimistic about their chances," says Massimo Cusano, a 27-yearold office manager in Vancouver and former Florence resident, whose parents are from Italy.

Argentines' ample national pride tells them they're destined to win, but their fatalistic minds tell them they won't, mainly because of the oneman telenovela guiding the team, Diego Maradona, a recovering cocaine addict. Mr. Maradona has promised to do a striptease in downtown Buenos Aires if Argentina wins, but it seems probable that "El Diego" will be exposed long before then by his volcanic personality, hostile dealings with the media and odd tactical notions. "There's no doubt he knew how to play like a champion," says Luis Rinaldi, a fan following the sportscasts from South Africa in a sky-blue and white draped Buenos Aires café. "Still, you look at this team sometimes and shake your head and ask, 'What kind of coach have we put in charge here?' It is definitely a test of our faith in Diego."

-John Lyons, Jonathan Clegg, David Luhnow and Ben Cohen contributed to this article.

# \* World Cup

# Discovering a sense of national unity

By John Carlin

The COMING TOGETHER of the world's most racially fractured nation around the rugby World Cup final of 1995, defined by the iconic image of a euphoric Nelson Mandela handing the trophy to South Africa's white captain, François Pienaar, was one of the happy stories of the 20th century. Clint Eastwood's film "Invictus" (2009) records it for posterity, dramatizing President Mandela's political skill in transforming the violent game of rugby, for decades a symbol of division and hatred, into an instrument of unity and reconciliation.

Today, the football World Cup tournament, the most popular sporting event on the planet, kicks off in South Africa. The temptation, to which numerous commentators have succumbed, is to imagine that this is going to be 1995 all over again, that history has stopped and once more sport will help heal a racially wounded nation. The impulse is encouraged by one strikingly inverted parallel: The South African rugby team of 15 years ago had just one black player in the team; the soccer team of 2010 has one white one.

Not so. History hasn't stopped. South Africa is a different country, one in which the race question isn't nearly as critical as it was one year into Mr. Mandela's presidency, when the country's democracy was young, fragile and menaced by the threat of far-right terrorism. Then, creating a sense of common nationhood was the government's paramount concern. Today, South Africa has lost its epic singularity; its problems, while pressing, are humdrum ones shared by dozens around the globe: fighting poverty, corruption, crime, disease; strengthening a rickety public education system. There are plenty of guns but no armed movements battling for secession. The sense of national unity is as strong as it is in most countries and everyday relations between the black majority and their white compatriots are in the main cordial, respectful—even cheerful.

Those visiting fans who have made it their business to scrutinize South African news reports of late will be surprised, especially if they happen to have followed the drama generated by a young man called Julius Malema. In recent months, he has acquired a measure of global prominence unimaginable had the World Cup not placed South Africa under such a disproportionately large spotlight.

The most controversial figure in South African politics today, Mr. Malema, 29 years old, is the president of the Youth League of the African National Congress, the ruling party to which Mr. Mandela has belonged for close on 70 years. An avowed "Marxist-Leninist," though despised and detested by South Africa's Communist Party, he has made good money in private business, benefiting from the dubious allotment of local government tenders. He has been spotted driving a Mercedes-Benz, a Range Rover and an Audi; he sports a Louis Vuitton handbag; he owns a home in one of Johannesburg's more affluent neighborhoods. When asked on South African television six months back whether he was a property owner, he replied, "No," shortly after conceding that he owned a house.

In another contradictory twist, what propelled Mr. Malema into the



international glare was the murder two months ago of Eugene Terreblanche, the spiritual leader of the practically defunct AWB, the far right Afrikaner Resistance Movement. The global media, revealing a predisposition to view South Africa through a black-white prism, went berserk, warning of an impending racial war. Mr. Malema, a fan of Zimbabwe's despotic leader Robert Mugabe, served a useful purpose in propounding this theory. Among other race-hate theatrics, he had recently resurrected a song popular in Nelson Mandela congratulates South African rugby team captain François Pienaar after South Africa won the Rugby World Cup final against New Zealand 1995 in Johannesburg.

#### South Africa is a different country, one in which the race question isn't nearly as critical as it was one year into Mr. Mandela's presidency.

the anti-apartheid days, the lyrics of which enjoined the black population to "kill the farmer, kill the Boer."

Yet, in a measure of how out of tune Mr. Malema and much of the news media are, no farmers or Boers (a common term for the Afrikaner sector of the white population) were killed in the aftermath of Terreblanche's death. Nor did the Boers themselves resort to the spate of revenge killings that many had regarded as inevitable. President Zuma, who had the Mandelalike grace to commiserate personally with Terreblanche's grieving relatives, ordered Mr. Malema to submit to an ANC disciplinary hearing, among other things for having breached the party's core principle of "non-racialism." Mr. Malema received a fine, a warning that if he erred again he would be expelled from the ANC and ordered to take a course in anger management.

Meanwhile, anger is most definitely not the prevailing mood on the South African street these days. Cars in Johannesburg, Africa's richest city, are ablaze with South African flags. (Look inside and the drivers are white as often as they are black.) Everyone, whether they are football-mad (as most black people are) or not, is rooting for the South African national team in the World Cup. Come the games, a global TV audience will see that the crowds in the stadiums offer a fair reflection

> of the country's racial mix. A white Johannesburg lawyer made the telling point in a conversation two weeks ago that, while recognizing "the oceans of cultural difference" that separated him from many black people, he felt a deep bond with all his compatriots. This was something black members of the ANC used, sometimes grudgingly, to observe during the years they were obliged to live in exile. They would say that on coming across a visiting white South Afri-can, even a "Boer," in a pub in London, say, they found themselves immediately striking up a patriotic rapport. A recent encounter at Madrid airport brought home the point.

> A black South African and an Afrikaner, both around 40 years of age, began talking at a bar prior to boarding a flight to Johannesburg. It was thanks to the Afrikaners, the people of chiefly Dutch extraction who ran the apartheid state, that black men like this one had no right even to a vote until 1994. But the two men chatted about the World Cup, business and politics with amiable ease, revealing not a hint of historical resentment or racial stress. The thought struck that the black South African would have been unable to

connect as easily with a Nigerian, a Rwandan or a Mozambican; the Afrikaner wouldn't have found as much in common with a Dutchman, an Englishman or an American.

François Pienaar, the 1995 rugby captain and an ardent admirer of Mr. Mandela, liked the anecdote when it was told to him over lunch in Cape Town recently, prompting him to recall how a few days earlier, upon arriving from London at Johannesburg airport, a black security guard had greeted him with a "Hello, my captain!"

"The point is," said Mr. Pienaar, "that today we are absolutely South Africans. We are. I never get a sense that we are not. Never."

That could change, though, as Mr. Pienaar conceded when he said that South African politics found itself at a "crossroads;" that after the World Cup fun was over, a battle would resume within the ANC between the Malema camp, whose mix of half-baked Marxist rhetoric and race-tinged populism appeals to disaffected youth (60% of under-35s in South Africa are unemployed); and those "real leaders," as Mr. Pienaar calls them, who carry the Mandela flag of principled "nonracialism."

Yet, the Malemas will have it tough. Contrary to much received opinion, it is more of a challenge to divide the races in South Africa than it is to unite them. Anyone who doubts it, should ask the black player in the 1995 rugby team, Chester Williams, and the white player in the 2010 soccer team, Matthew Booth. Mr. Williams is married to a white woman; Mr. Booth, to a black one. Each couple has two small children. —John Carlin is the author of

"Playing the Enemy: Nelson Mandela and the Game that Made a Nation."

# \* World Cup



# Football face-off

Gerard Baker reflects on the age-old rivalry between England and the U.S.

HEN THE England football team lost to West Germany, as it then was, in the Mexican heat of a World Cup quarterfinal in 1970, a British commentator managed to wax philosophical about the national tragedy.

We shouldn't be too upset that the Germans had beaten us at our national game, he said. After all, we beat them at their national game twice.

It was a joke, of course. Honestly, a joke. But like all jokes it had a point. That an entire nation should be moved—even in jest—to seek consolation for a sporting defeat in victory in two World Wars tells you much that you need to know about the most watched, most passionately absorbed sporting event on the planet.

All sports, of course, when played out on an international stage, become metaphors for geopolitical competition. The U.S. had its "Miracle on Ice," the improbable ice hockey victory over the Soviets at the Olympics in 1980, which presaged a rather larger Cold War victory a decade later.



Wayne Rooney of England battles for the ball with Oguchi Onyewu of the U.S. during the international friendly match between England and the U.S. at Wembley Stadium on May 28, 2008, in London;

England captain Bobby Moore is lifted by his team mates as he holds aloft the Jules Rimet trophy after winning the England versus West Germany final in the 1966 World Cup.

But football is in a league of its

When the FIFA World Cup opens

own when it comes to substituting

today in South Africa, it will be

much more than a quadrennial com-

(spiritual head coach of the German

national team,1830-1945) had ever

actually suited up in cleats and shin

guards, he might have modified his

famous dictum and asserted that

football is a continuation of war by

brave wounded soldier ever writhed

so violently or screamed so loudly

as an Italian striker tripped by a

stray foot just outside the penalty

box. But the world's premier interna-

tional sporting competition repre-

sents the opportunity to replay-

with a similar level of intensity-the

confrontations, skirmishes and bat-

tles that define a nation: a score-set-

tling exercise in which 22 absurdly

overcompensated men in uniform

get the chance to right the wrongs

of misfortune and relive the tri-

tomorrow against the U.S. national

team in Rustenburg, just outside Jo-

hannesburg, more than three points

the opening round of the contest.

It's not even a decisive, win-or-go-

home match. It's merely the first

game in a protracted phony war, the

group stage of the competition,

which lasts two weeks. If the form

book holds, and whatever happens

on the field tomorrow, both England

and the U.S. are very likely to

with a recent history that is some-

what at odds with their historical self-

Group C are Algeria and Slovenia,

and try as he might, the average En-

glishman cannot get terribly worked

up (or summon a single relevant his-

But this is America, longtime friend, occasional foe, distant rela-

The official record states that, in

their previous meetings England

has enjoyed a comfortable advan-

torical fact) about either nation.

tive, superpower usurper.

image, it is much more than that.

But to the English, a proud people

For one thing, the other teams in

progress to the second round.

So when England takes the field

Officially, it's just one game in

umphs of an entire people.

will be at stake.

Perhaps not war, exactly. No

petition for sporting supremacy. In fact if Carl von Clausewitz

athletics for politics.

other means.

tage—having won seven and lost two of their nine meetings in inter-

national games. But to the English that's an incomplete scorecard. It doesn't take into account the hefty defeat of 1776 (an early showing for the Tea Party crowd); the late winner the U.S. scored in 1781; the thumping victory on away soil the English achieved in 1812; the repeated own goals in 1956-when the U.S. managed to beat England, France and Israel, altogether; or that very long game that lasted from the late 19th to the early 20th century and which resulted-after overtime and penalty kicks-in England finally ceding its crown as Political, Economic and Military World Champions to the ill-bred upstarts from across the Atlantic.

Then there are the cultural scores to settle: the defeat represented by all those GIs who stole away our women while our men were off fighting in the Second World War; the terrible trades that saw us give the U.S. Jane Austen and Charles Dickens while we got John Grisham and Dan Brown; or the deals whereby the U.S. got Cary Grant and Bob Hope, and we got Madonna and Gwyneth Paltrow.

And on it goes. Almost every week now the newspapers are full of new humiliating reminders of England's eclipse at the hands of America. Last month it was the ignominy of British troops in Afghanistan placed for the first time under a U.S. general. In February it was Cadbury, the makers of the only culinary delicacy in which England could muster any pride—delicious, creamy milk chocolate, forced into the barbarian arms of Kraft, a highly successful American purveyor of synthetic cheeses.

But revenge is at hand! The beauty of the World Cup, and especially this game, is that it's a marvelous opportunity to demonstrate one small piece of lingering English superiority.

This "showdown" between England—three lions on their shirts recalling the glory days when the sun never set—and the Americans white teeth a-gleaming—is in fact a made-for-history moment to score one back for the old country.

It's the one darned thing they know they can beat America at. When the draw for the World





It is a score-settling exercise in which 22 absurdly overcompensated men in uniform get the chance to right the wrongs of misfortune and re-live the triumphs of an entire people.

Cup groupings was made in South Africa last December, there was unsuppressed giddiness in England at the wonderful hand the country had been dealt in Group C: an unchallenging saunter through the opening phase of the tournament before the rigorous tests of Brazil, Argentina and Spain in the elimination rounds.

The Sun—the pitch-perfect articulator of English jingoism—spelt out on its front page the names of the four rivals in the group, highlighting the first letter of each: "England Algeria Slovenia

"England, Algeria Slovenia, Yanks—EASY" "Best English Group Since the

Beatles," said another headline. They knew it was a gift because

Americans of course don't even play the game. For a start, calling it "soccer" shows how alien it is. In England, as in the rest of the world, it is called football, reflecting, the locals like to think, the fact that it is a game involving a ball, played predominantly with the foot—rather than with the hand, arm, head, shoulders, and 1,200 pounds of padding, as is the case with the American version of the game of that name.

The Brits have grown tired of hearing how football is finally catching on in the U.S.: they send an emissary like David Beckham to promote it, and all they discover is that Americans are much more interested in his Posh wife.

And yet, the awful, ineffable truth is that, even as they thump their bare chests, don the red-andwhite war paint and get ready to lord it over the Yanks just this once, the worm of doubt is eating at the badly depleted English national selfconfidence.

The national superiority complex is actually cruelly misplaced when it comes to football. Having lost the colonies, an empire, global leadership and half of the Rolling Stones, the idea that England is a great footballing nation has been a birthright for the Queen's subjects, a heady concept allowed to enter and suffuse the English consciousness.

They do indeed like to consider it their national game. But the fact is that in the past 40 years England has enjoyed as much success in the World Cup as it has in the World Series.

The country did manage, memorably, to win one World Cup—in 1966, almost two generations ago. But it was played on home turf, at Wembley Stadium in London, against—who else?—the Germans. And victory was assisted, even the most die-hard of fans will admit, by a dodgy refereeing decision that deemed a questionable goal valid.

Of the other 14 World Cups, England failed to qualify for three; it reached the semifinal in 1990, and other than that has never advanced beyond the quarterfinal.

England's claim to global excellence in football is roughly equal to that of the Kansas City Chiefs—both were World Champions 40 years ago and have never been near a final since.

Also gnawing away at the collective English sporting consciousness this weekend is the terrible memory of that infamous World Cup in 1950, when England actually contrived to lose 1-0 to the U.S. in Brazil.

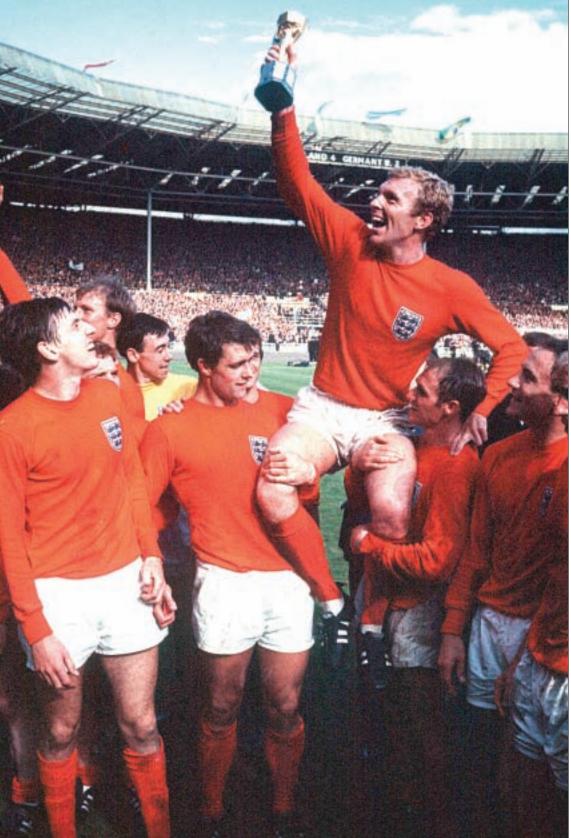
That defeat was itself taken in the popular English consciousness as the surest sign yet of the nation's inexorable decline.

A similar result tomorrow—especially when English hopes are riding high in a sporting contest for once would quite possibly have a similarly devastating effect.

But, hey! There's still cricket.

► See full World Cup coverage, including live blogs, at WSJ.com/WorldCup





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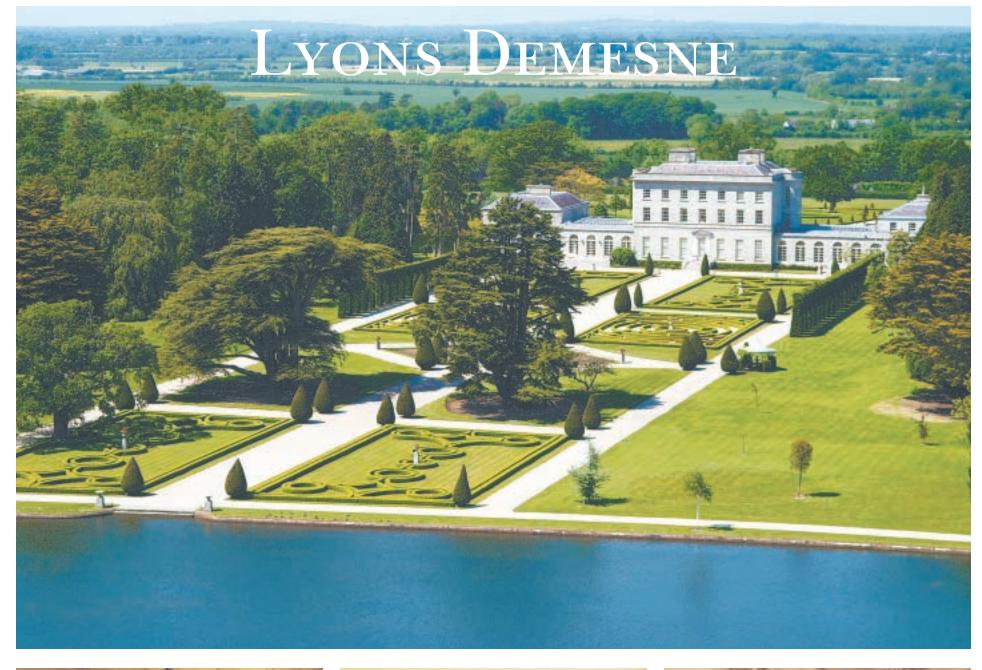
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120 East 70th Street. Architecturally important 6-story neo-Federal-style townhouse. 16 rooms, 11' ceilings, 9 BR, 9 baths, 8 fireplaces, 3 terraces, elevator and garden. WEB: 0016387. **\$28,000,000**. Louise Beit.

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building with additional air rights. The 4 story building consists of ground floor retail and 3 floor-through, 2 BR, 2 bath apartments. Great opportunity for investor or live/invest. WEB: WJ0135215. \$4,950,000. Steve Weber.

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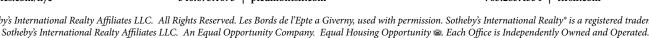
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# \* Top Picks

**PARIS:** Stellar performances by Thomas Johannes Mayer as Wotan and Katarina Dalayman as Brünnhilde, beautifully supported by Philippe Jordan conducting the Paris Opera Orchestra and a solid cast of principal singers, make Wagner's "Die Walküre" at the Opera Bastille a memorable event, despite a wildly uneven production.

German baritone Mayer, who was scheduled to sing only three performances at the end of the opera's run in June, took over at the last minute on opening night for an ailing Falk Struckmann. Mr. Mayer is a fine actor with an elegant voice and such a natural stage presence that his Wotan, a melancholy philosopher king of a deity trapped by towering ambition, raging pride, love for his children and a scornfully jealous wife, almost steals the show. His scenes with his daughter, Swedish soprano Dalayman's powerfully sung and emotionally captivating Walkyrie Brünnhilde, are superb. American tenor Robert Dean Smith and German soprano Ricarda Merbeth are excellent, if slightly overshadowed, as the ill-fated, incestuous twins Siegmund and Sieglinde; and Austrian Günther Groissböck's polished-brass bass rings



deep and true as Sieglinde's brutish husband Hunding.

While director Günter Kramer's staging of "Das Rheingold" in May, which launched this first full Ring Cycle at the Paris Opera since 1957, got a mixed bag of cheers and boos from the audience, this "Walküre" provoked a storm of disapproval. It's set in undefined modern times, with costumes that range from military camouflage, berets and bayonets to Sieglinde's embroidered white Heidi dress. The action veers all over the place, from static and stilted to incongruous, with Sieglinde twirling romantically amid a clutch of dead bodies left over from an earlier massacre, and on to a lovely lyrical moment in a flowering orchard. It's never easy to deal with the third-act Ride of the Valkryies,

by now an operatic cliché that always risks being a parody of itself, but here Mr. Kramer has gone right over the top looking for a new angle, with Valkyrie nurses scrubbing up bloody nude male cadavers lying on mortuary tables and returning them to life. Memorable indeed.

–Judy Fayard Until June 29 www.operadeparis.fr

# Garsington stages hits

GARSINGTON, ENGLAND: In its last season at Garsington Manor before it moves down the road to its new home at Wormsley next year, Garsington Opera has racked up two hits. Its revival of John Cox's "Figaro" (with wonderful casting of the four principal roles) is even better than the 2005 original. And its British première of Rossini's "Armida" is a triumph. It only remains to see whether it completes the hat trick with Daniel Slater's new production of Britten's "A Midsummer Night's Dream," opening June 17.

"Armida" is taken from Tasso's tale about the Crusades, in which a sorceress, Armida, seduces a Christian knight, Rinaldo, to undermine his army's siege of Jerusalem. As it's so politically incorrect, Director Martin Duncan has ingeniously made the Christian knights samurai warriors, costumed the 12-strong female chorus in pink cami-knickers and dressed the dozen male chorus in Spiderman (or similar) bodysuits, wearing their underpants over them. Designer Ashley Martin-Davis has also constructed abstract, strong-colored sets, and choreographer Michael Popper has drilled the entire cast in precision hand and body gestures that make it all magically distant from contemporary concerns.

Conductor David Parry's orchestra glories in Rossini's delicious. fiendishly difficult score. This killer piece has only a single diva, but she has to sing enough for two-which Jessica Pratt did admirably-and no fewer than four tenors play six roles. There is even a gorgeous tenor trio, which may well be the only one in all opera. One, Bogdan Mihai, has to launch into coloratura passages with hardly any warm-up; another, Victor Ryan Robertson (Rinaldo) sang even better the longer he was onstage.

–Paul Levy Until Julv 3 www.garsingtonopera.org

# New designs star in Basel

DESIGN MIAMI/BASEL will celebrate the classic to the quirky.

In Basel June 14-19, the event features international galleries specialized in limited-edition modern and contemporary furniture, lighting and designer objects. There will be two pre-20th-century specialists among the 32 exhibitors.

#### Collecting MARGARET STUDER

The fair runs parallel to Art Basel, the world's leading contemporary and modern art fair (June 16-20). "There is a crossover with collectors attending these fairs, as they now more than ever, want to invest in both art and design," says Paris dealer Patrick Seguin, who will showcase unique furniture created by French modern design pioneers Jean Prouvé and Charlotte Perriand

Dansk Mobelkunst Gallery of Copenhagen, Zurich and Paris will bring pieces by Finn Juhl, the first modern Danish furniture maker to be recognized internationally. His masterful wood and leather "Chieftain Chair' (1949) is widely regarded as a masterpiece (price: €70,000).

London's David Gill Galleries will add a quirky touch with French-based designer Mattia Bonetti's "Happy Birthday" (2007), a 120 cm x 120 cm wood-and-aluminum cabinet designed as a kitschy gift-wrapped package in pink and light blue (price: £60,000).

The U.K.'s Carpenters Workshop Gallery will have some weird offerings including Dutch designer Sebastian Brajkovic's "Lathe IX" (2010), a black, silk-embroidered couch (price: €26,000).

Separately, at historic Sudeley Castle in the English Cotswold Hills, auction house Sotheby's has a selling exhibition in association with Carpenters Workshop. The partially-ruined castle, once the royal household for Queen Katherine Parr, the last wife of Henry VIII, is a wonderful backdrop for contemporarv design (until Aug.1). The works range in price from £10,000-£250,000. In the top price category is "Pouring Jug" (2008-2010), a monumental bronze vessel out of which pours black molten cubes, by the Dutch cutting-edge designer Studio Job. Meanwhile, Quittenbaum of Munich will hold a major modern-design auction on June 15 with nearly 400 lots, featuring furniture and lighting from notable designers such as Memphis of Milan, Shiro Kuramata, Frank O. Gehry and Ron Arad.



'Chieftain Chair' (1949) by Finn Juhl; price: €70,000.

# **DISTINCTIVE PROPERTIES & ESTATES**



# Jewish History Told Through Japanese Art

By Paul Levy

Netsuke are matchbox-size carvings of animals, people, or plants, usually in ivory or boxwood, used as toggles to fasten purses and the like to the belt of traditional Japanese costume. Edmund de Waal is a successful potter and academic in London. In his extraordinary and category-defying book, "The Hare with Amber Eyes: A Hidden Inheritance," Mr. de Waal traces the fate of 264 of these tiny sculptures, a collection he inherited in the 1990s following the death of his great-uncle Iggie's Japanese boyfriend.

In so doing, Mr. de Waal—the grandson of a Viennese Jewish convert to Anglicanism married to a Dutch Mennonite convert, and the son of an Anglican priest who became Dean of Canterbury comes to appreciate that the history of his grandmother's Jewish family is a paradigm for the history of Europe in the last century.

His grandmother was the Baronin Elisabeth von Ephrussi. The Ephrussis were almost in the Rothschild league, and in 1883 married into that better-known Jewish dynasty. But they began near Odessa. in the shtetl of Berdichey (where Joseph Conrad was born, Sholom Aleichem lived, and Honoré de Balzac got married), when Chaim Efrussi changed his forenames to Charles Joachim and, cornering the world market in wheat, started the family bank. Soon the 19th century patriarch "did a Rothschild" and sent his sons to Paris and Vienna. By 1871 there was the Hôtel d'Ephrussi on Paris's smart new rue Monceau and Palais Ephrussi on Vienna's new Ringstrasse; patents of nobility were not long coming. This generation sharedle goût Rothschild, and their vast new residences had gold everywhere—so typical, says the author, that "Monceau" was 1870s Parisian slang for nouveau riche.

The third generation produced the first hero of this exquisitely crafted book. Baron Charles d'Ephrussi (1849-1905)—banker.

#### The Hare with Amber Eyes: A Hidden Inheritance Edmund De Wall

(Chatto & Windus, 368 pages, £16.99)

collector, critic, editor of the Gazette des Beaux-Arts and friend and patron of Degas, Manet, Monet and Renoir-was one of the models for Proust's Charles Swann. We know about him. too. from the Goncourt Journals, where we also get a whiff of the poisonous miasma of anti-Semitism that was only mildly disconcerting to the French Jewish hautebourgeoisie until its full stench was released with the arrest of Alfred Dreyfus in 1894. Charles never married; he was one of the lovers of another grand Jew, Louise Cahen d'Anvers (until she gave him up for the 16-year-old future King of Spain, Alphonse XIII).

Charles and Louise's favorite pastime was shopping, particularly in the romantically convenient back room of the art dealer Philippe Sichel, who specialized in the Japonisme craze sweeping Paris. Charles, like his lateral descendant Mr. de Waal, loved art you can touch: It was natural for him to assemble the netsuke collection and, with his supremely fine eye, choose exceptional examples.

Meanwhile in Vienna, Charles' favorite cousin, the scholarly Viktor, had to take over the family bank, as elder brother Stefan had eloped with his own father's Russian-Jewish mistress. In 1899 Viktor married Emmy Schey von Koromla. As a wedding present, Charles gave them "a black vitrine with green velvet shelves, and a mirrored back that reflects 264 netsuke."

Viennese anti-Semitism was different from the Parisian variety. During the Dreyfus affair, the French Ephrussi were vilified almost daily, especially by Charles's painter friends, of whom Degas and Renoir were the least pleasant. But Vienna was a Jewish

city. "By the time of Viktor and Emmy's marriage," Viktor's greatgrandson tells us, some "71 perc ent of financiers were Jewish, 65 per cent of lawyers were Jewish, 59 per cent of doctors were Jewish and half of Vienna's journalists were Jewish." Assimilated or not, there was an epidemic of suicides among the Ephrussi's Jewish friends: "Schnitzler's daughter, Hofmannsthal's son, three of Ludwig Wittgenstein's brothers and Gustav Mahler's brother," is

Mr. de Waal's melancholy tally. When World War I started the trilingual children of the Ephrussi clan were bewildered. Among the upper classes

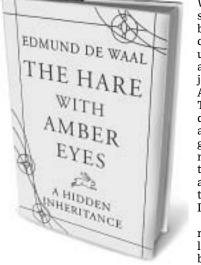
there was a genuine pan-Europeanism, their particular citizenships being almost inciden-

tal. Viktor, though, was a loyal subject of the Emperor. Mr. de Waal is very good at portraying how it felt to live in Vienna through World War I. When Austria became a republic, Viktor was still too patri-

otic-and too well integrated-to heed warnings to move the bank's assets to Switzerland. Vienna under Anschluss made the anti-Semitism of Drevfus' Paris look trivial—neighborhood thugs broke into the Palais Ephrussi and took what they fancied; the Gestapo took the rest, and confined Viktor, Emmy and her maid, Anna, to two rooms. The Ephrussis got to Emmy's family's estate in Kövesces in Czechoslovakia just as that country was about to disappear, and Emmy killed herself

Of the next generation, Mr. de

Waal's great-aunt Elisabeth settled in Tunbridge Wells and became churchy; great-aunt Gisela married a Spanish Jewish banker, and the two fled Madrid and the Civil War to settle in Mexico,



where after World War II she worked briefly as a cleaner; great uncles Iggie and Rudolf joined the American army. There is a wonderful story about how Iggie became the next owner of the netsuke, and repatriated them to Japan. I won't spoil it. One of the morals of this lovely, gripping book has to do

with the Jewish question. Though Mr. de Waal doesn't say so explicitly, he—the son and grandson of Anglican clergymen—has found his own Jewish identity, and in a fashion that discredits disputations about Jewish maternal descent and such history-ignoring tosh. Has Mr. de Waal only just discovered the saga of his family in the writing of this volume? Or has he known it all along? Such art is concealed in the writing that it doesn't matter a bit.

*Mr. Levy is a writer based in Ox-fordshire.* 

#### John Heilpern

In a blissfully funny, vintage Monty Python sketch, there is a soccer game between Germany and Greece in which the players are leading philosophers. The always formidable Germany, captained by "Nobby" Hegel, boasts the world-class attackers Nietzsche, Heidegger and Wittgenstein, while the wily Greeks, captained by Socrates, field a dream team with Plato in goal, Aristotle on defense and—a surprise inclusion—the mathematician Archimedes.

#### **Soccer and Philosophy**

Edited by Ted Richards (Open Court, 408 pages, \$21.95)

Toward the end of the keenly fought game, during which nothing much appears to happen except a lot of thinking, the canny Socrates scores a bitterly disputed match winner. Mayhem ensues! The enraged Hegel argues in vain with the referee, Confucius, that the reality of Socrates' goal is merely an a priori adjunct of non-naturalistic ethics, while Kant holds that, ontologically, the goal existed only in the imagination via the categorical imperative, and Karl Marx—who otherwise had a quiet game-protests that Socrates was offside.

And there, in a philosophical nutshell, we have the inspired essence of the delightfully instructive "Soccer and Philosophy," a surprising collection of essays on the Beautiful Game, written by soccer-loving loonies who are reallife philosophers, whose number includes the book's editor, Ted Richards. Soccer purists, incidentally, who were born in England (like myself) prefer not to refer to soccer as soccer. It is football—as cricket is cricket. Even so, there is something for everyone in this witty and scholarly book.

For those of you who remain bewildered by the mysterious global appeal of the world's most popular sport, for example, I can guarantee that this book will bewilder you even more—but in a good way! Attend to the enduring dictum of the working-class Sophocles of England, the legendary former manager of Liverpool Football Club, Bill Shankly. One of the book's essays quotes from his line: "Some people think football is a matter of life and death. I am very disappointed in that attitude. I can assure them it is

much more serious than that." For those worried by dubious behavior on Wall Street, see the splendid essay "How to Appreciate the Fingertip Save," in which Edward Winters quotes the guiding principle of Albert Camus the existential novelist who played goalkeeper as a young man in Algeria: "All that I know of morality I learnt from foot-

ball." Or, for those who believe that the irresistible universality of the game will be breaking through in America any day now, see the essay "The Hand of God and Other Soccer . . . Miracles?" in which Kirk McDermid cites St. Thomas Aquinas' identification of the crucial elements that make an event truly miraculous.

**Postulates Of the Pitch** 

Robert Northcott discusses Kierkegaard's concept of anxiety in relation to penalty shots, but

right now the Danish philosopher's thinking is best applied to England's dark, neurotic fear of what would be a thoroughly deserved national disgrace should the United States beat England in the teams' opening World Cup match on Saturday.

Is there, perhaps, one too many high-flown footballing phi-

Inany high-hown lootbahing philosophy in the book? There is. (And there isn't.) The claim that Nietzsche would have been an enthusiastic supporter of the London club, Arsenal, is curiously speculative when everyone knows that he would have rooted for the steamrollers of Europe, Inter Milan. Another of the essayists—raving about the artistic skills of one of the greatest footballers of our time, Cristiano Ronaldo—calls on the aesthetics of Plato and Aristo-

tle to ponder: "Is Ronaldo a Modern Picasso?" To which we might be tempted to respond: "Maybe so. But could Picasso bend it like
Beckham?" The answer to that is exactly where the authors of "Soccer and Philosophy" work we to hat bink

where the authors of "Soccer and Philosophy" want us to be: thinking in fresh and intriguing ways about the game we thought we

knew. "The Loneliness of the Referee," Jonathan Crowe's wonderful essay, is particularly appealing to all who, like myself, yell irrational abuse at that ultimate despot and strutting God of the stadium, the ref. But only when his unbelievably blind decisions go against us. Mr. Crowe first re-

minds us that the existential philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre was an avid student of football—see his "Critique of Dialectical Reason," where he remarks with undeniable wisdom: "In a football match, everything is complicated by the presence of the other team."

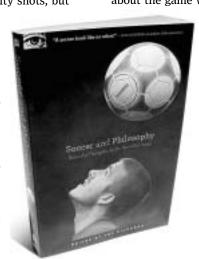
But it is to Sartre's earlier works, "Being and Nothingness" and "Existentialism and Humanism," that Mr. Crowe appeals, revealing the loneliness of the referee in a new and sympathetic light. The referee's ordeal is that he alone bears responsibility for his decisions and therefore the mortal fate of the game. Yet the referee who errs badly is within the rules of the game, because the rules of the game allow him to err badly. His irreversible blunders are final.

Think, if you will, of the fatal decision of poor Jim Joyce, who last week made the worst umpiring call in baseball history and ruined Armando Galarraga's perfect game. But, unlike the forgiving, sweet baseball fans of the Detroit Tigers (and the guilt-ridden, tearful Mr. Joyce), the football fan is so passionately committed to the game—the only true game—that he never forgives or forgets (and the lonely referee never explains). Ergo, the referee's rationale: I whistle, therefore I am.

That does not help me much, actually. It helps the referee. It helps us understand his confident, fallible power. But from the fan's point of view, the secular religion of football is all about mad, obsessive love and awesome bias, it is about irresistible skill and glory and, yes, a certain divine, beautiful transcendence. All the rest, according to the rewarding "Soccer and Philosophy," is thinking aloud enthusiastically. Or, put it this way:

"Goooooooooooooooaaaaaaaa !!!!!!!!!"

*Mr.* Heilpern is the author of "John Osborne: The Many Lives of the Angry Young Man."



# 

#### Lugano music

"Progretto Martha Argerich" showcases Argentinian pianist Martha Argerich and a selected group of international performers playing works by Gershwin, Liszt, Mahler and others. Various locations around town Until July 1 **☎** 41-91-8039-581 www.rsi.ch/argerich

#### Madrid

photography "PhotoEspaña2010" presents 69 exhibitions, including 327 artists from 41 countries such as Harold Edgerton, Helen Levitt, Juergen Teller, Jeff Wall and Roman Signer. PhotoEspaña Until July 25 **a** 34-9136-0132-6 www.phe.es

#### Manchester

music Norah Jones brings her blend of jazz, folk and soul music to Europe in promotion of her latest album "The Fall." June 11, Bonnaroo festival,

Manchester June 21, Manchester Apollo

- June 24, L'Olympia, Paris June 29, Forest National, Brussels
- July 1, Roemersteinbrunch, St.
- Margarethen
- July 2, Tollwood Festival, Munich July 3, Montreux Jazz Festival
- July 5, Museumsufer, Bonn
- July 7, Gent Jazz Fesitval
- More dates at www.norahjones.com

#### Munich

#### art

"Realism—The Adventure of Reality" displays explorations in reality depicted in art from the 19th century to the present with work by Gustave Courbet, Edward Hopper, Gerhard Richter, Andreas Gursky and others. Kunsthalle der Hypo-Kulturstiftung Until Sept. 5 **a** 49-8922-4412

www.hypo-kunsthalle.de

#### Paris art

"As Dreamers Do" presents 71 works

of British art in the 1960s by 45 artists, including paintings, drawings, sculptures, and prints by Richard Hamilton, Bridget Riley, Peter Blake, Richard Smith and others. Centre Culturel Calouste

Gulbenkian Until Oct. 2 **☎** 33-153-2393-93 www.gulbenkian-paris.org

#### Strasbourg

art "Richard Deacon—The Missing Part" showcases 40 sculptures by the British artist in a retrospective retracing 40 years of work. Museum of Modern and

- Contemporary Art
- Until Sept. 19
- ☎ 33-3-8823-3131 www.musees-strasbourg.org

#### Venice

art "Louise Bourgeois: The Fabric Works" shows relatively unknown works by the French-American sculptor, made of fabric between 2002 and 2008.

- Fondazione Emilio e Annabianca Vedova
- Until Sept. 19 **a** 39-41-5226-626

## www.fondazionevedova.org

#### Verona

opera "Arena di Verona Festival 2010" is an annual festival featuring several operas including "Aida," with a special performance by Plácido Domingo. Fondazione Arena di Verona June 19-Aug. 30 **☎** 39-045-8005-15 www.arena.it

#### Warsaw

art "Ars Homo Erotica" explores homosexuality and homoeroticism in art throughout history, with works from antiquity up to the present day. The National Museum in Warsaw Until Sept. 5 **☎** 48-22-6211-031 www.mnw.art.pl

Source: WSJE research

#### Bilbao art

"Taurus: From Myth to Ritual" presents more than 200 works depicting bulls from the Bronze Age to the present day, including art by Goya, Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró and René Magritte. Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao

**a** 34-9443-9606-0

## Copenhagen

"Margit Brandt Design: 1965-1980" shows clothes, drawings, photos and The Danish Museum of Decorative Art Until Sept. 19 -1856-56 a 45-33

#### "Through a Glass Darkly" presents the world premiere of the stage adaptation of Ingmar Bergman's film by Jenny Worton, featuring Ruth Wilson. Almeida Theater Until June 5 ☎ 44-20-7359-4404 (box office)

- art "The Surreal House" shows an installa-

featuring work by artists such as Sal-Horn and Edward Kienholz. Barbican Art Gallery Until Sept. 12 ☎ 44-20-7638-4141 www.barbican.org.uk

#### art

works from the 15th century to contemporary art on themes of suffering, compassion, devotion and belief. The Courtauld Gallery

June 17-July 18 ☎ 44-20-7848-2526

# www.museobilbao.com

fashion shows from 1965-80 by the Danish designer and her husband, Erik. www.kunstindustrimuseet.dk

#### London theater

Until Aug. 8 **☎** 49-30-24 34-590

Amsterdam

Rijksmuseum June 17-Sept. 13

Berlin

art

photography

late Helmut Newton.

Museum für Fotografie June 12-Jan. 30

www.smb.spk-berlin.de

"6th Berlin Biennial" showcases con-

ists confronting depictions of reality

Various locations around town

and fiction in the mass media.

temporary art by 45 international art-

**a** 49-30-3186-4825

**☎** 31-20-6747-000

www.rijksmuseum.nl

ries "Dutch interiors" by Joan Miró,

Dutch masters Hendrick Sorgh and

Jan Steen that inspired the work.

alongside works by the 17th-century

"Alice Springs" displays 250 portraits

and fashion images by the wife of the

art

Tate, London 2010/DACS 2010

bb6.berlinbiennial.de

- "Miró & Jan Steen" showcases the se-
  - Until Oct. 5

## design

www.almeida.co.uk

vador Dali, Marcel Duchamp, Alberto Giacometti, Louise Bourgeois, Rebecca

tion by architects Carmody Groarke,

"Blood Tears Faith Doubt" juxtaposes

## www.courtauld.ac.uk

#### Norah Jones on tour in Manchester. Top, 'Concert for Anarchy' (1990) by Rebecca Horn, in London

