

WEEKEND JOURNAL.

EUROPE



A tasteful passion

The wine lovers who are buying their own vineyards

Watches: A special report on the big trends at Baselworld

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The go-to designer for
the rich and royal

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La Verrière landscape.

COVER, La Verrière owner Nicole Rolet.
Photograph by Jean Cazals.

WEEKEND JOURNAL

EUROPE

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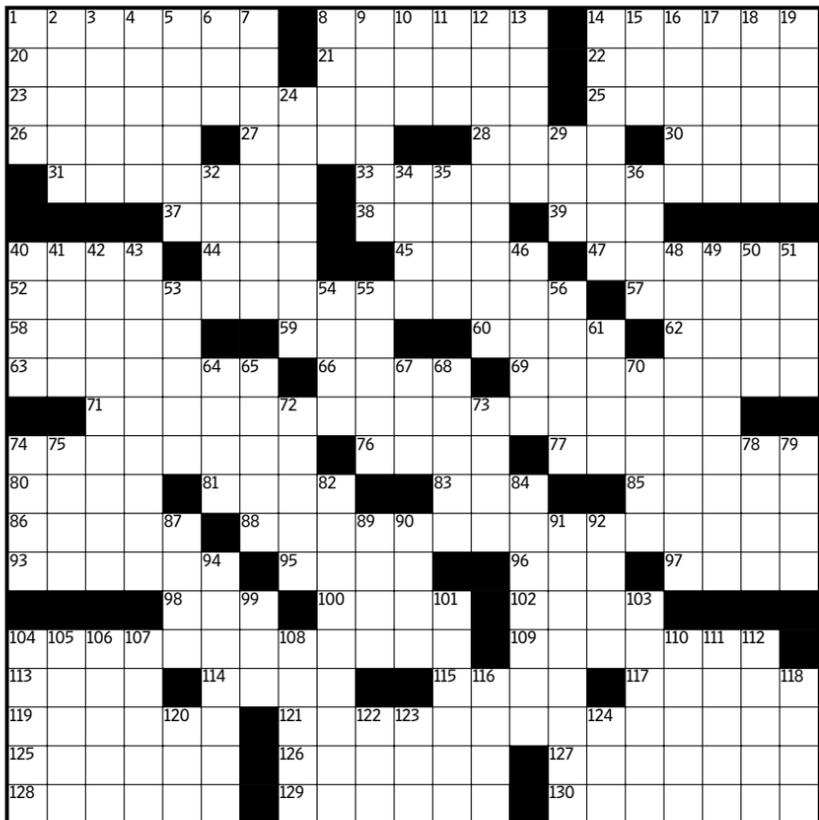
Urushi bowls set with
chopsticks, spoon and spatula
by Tsuyoshi Kotaniguchi on
show in Berlin.

Björn Schmiemel

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❖ Fashion

Inside a jet-set designer's atelier

EVEN IN THE jet-set crowd at the Paris fashion shows, Giambattista Valli's front row stood out last week. It was lined with European socialites, from Greek shipping heiress Eugenie Niarchos to Russian oligarch Alexander Lebedev and his son Evgeny.

On Style

CHRISTINA BINKLEY

In the six years since he launched his own fashion house, Mr. Valli has become a go-to designer for the rich and royal. Producing confections of silk satin, cashmere and tulle that have been compared to Rolls-Royce sedans and have prices to match, he has dressed clients from Queen Rania of Jordan to Sarah Jessica Parker.

But it's not just the glint off his chic clientele that has kept Mr. Valli afloat. Behind the scenes, he's been busy fending off the challenges of a tough luxury economy. Last month, the company he had recently assigned to produce and distribute his collections, the Mariella Burani Fashion Group, buckled under its debt and was forced to cease operations. One week before his fall 2010 show—and shortly after he had landed a 30% increase in orders for his fall pre-collection from the previous year—he needed to find a new way to get the clothes sewn and shipped.

Mr. Valli says his ties within the tight-knit fashion industries of Italy and France will get him over the bump. He buys fabric personally at textile factories in Como and has been working with the same apparel-production factories—albeit via middlemen like Burani—since he was the creative director at Emanuel Ungaro. So he called up the factories and cemented agreements to continue working with him. Then he announced, on the morning of his show, that he will produce his dresses, suits, gowns and shoes himself this season, using cash from his own operations.

His efforts to work around a manufacturer's troubles are an example of what it takes to be an entrepreneur in today's luxury business. Mr. Valli runs both the business and creative sides of his company. He has a side job designing Moncler Gamme Rouge—the outerwear maker's most luxe line—and he formerly designed Iceberg sportswear on the side.

At a time when design houses are starting to trade again—witness deals just this week by Phillips-Van Heusen to buy Tommy Hilfiger and by OpenGate Capital to buy Nicole Farhi, as well as the European Bartel family's Lanvin stake in December—Mr. Valli might have turned to private equity for help.

But the 43-year-old designer says he has no intention of loosening his grip on his company, which he owns. "I love to take risks," he says. He noted that his label is young: "I'm still developing the Giambattista Valli DNA," he says.

Although the fashion runways may appear to overflow with luxurious options for shoppers, few of these designers home in on such a small, extremely high-end customer base with the same precision. Even those that provide clothes at that quality level also do accessories, cosmetics and scents to reach a broader audience.

"I think I've built up my own space in the fashion world," Mr. Valli

says. "It's very important to know your customer and to stay loyal to them." He gets plaudits for his grand evening wear and well-cut, deluxe suits with exquisite detailing on top of very clean lines. He often mixes sheer fabrics with heavier ones and uses very expensive materials.

Like Chanel's collections, his clothes draw customers from age 20 to 70, says Colleen Sherin, Saks Fifth Avenue's women's fashion director, who says they appeal to "the woman with a jet-set lifestyle."

Mr. Valli's recent fall 2010 show closed with a long gown that ended dramatically in a giant bundle of fluffy fabric below the knees. It will retail for about €20,500. In the past week, says a spokeswoman, the fashion house has sold eight of the gowns (three in Europe and five in North America).

Mr. Valli has lived in Paris for 13 years, but he grew up in Rome and says he considers himself to be more Roman than Italian. He is never seen in public without a string of ancient pearls around his neck—found for him in India by an old friend, the jewelry designer Luigi Scialanga, whose pieces are often worn by Valli clients.

Last week at Mr. Valli's elegant Paris atelier near the Rue St. Honoré, heiress Bianca Brandolini de Adda stopped in for a fitting. A member of Italy's Agnelli-Fiat clan, Ms. Brandolini said later that she never travels without one of Mr. Valli's dresses. "All my friends" wear his clothes, she said.

Mr. Valli, however, doesn't always live the lifestyle of his clients. Last week, he wound up taking the Paris metro to his own runway show.



Giambattista Valli.

Kate Barry



He's a fan.



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❖ Dance

BY SARAH FRATER

COMPARED TO THE luxurious auditorium of London's Royal Opera House, its backstage offices are much more ordinary. Desks overflow with paper and potted plants wilt, and the tired décor is basic office beige. Yet this workaday space is spot on for meeting Leanne Benjamin, the Australian-born ballerina whose on- and off-stage lives are as much of a contrast as the Opera House itself.

Ms. Benjamin, 45 years old, rushes in late, with wet hair and a buzzing cell phone. It is past five, and she has been rehearsing "The Judas Tree" all afternoon with Cuban star Carlos Acosta and British dancer Edward Watson. In the morning, she got her 6-year old son Thomas ready for school, dropped him off and then headed to her own dance class—a daily ritual for a dancer. During our interview her husband Tobias calls to check supper arrangements.

"We've just rehearsed the rape scene," says Ms. Benjamin with something between a shrug and a shiver. "I had to have a shower."

"The Judas Tree" was created by the renowned British choreographer Kenneth Macmillan in 1992, the year he died and Ms. Benjamin joined the Royal Ballet. It is a bleak work set on a modern-day building site—a long way from the pretty steps and tidy tears we usually see in classical dance.

Is she unnerved by its strong themes and unflinching style? "Well, it's not Swan Lake," she laughs. "It's an exceptional role and emotionally draining. You feel as if you have exhausted yourself."

Ms. Benjamin has been with the Royal Ballet for almost 20 years, after shorter stints at Birmingham Royal Ballet, English National Ballet and the Deutsche Oper Ballet in Berlin. She has seen dancers and directors come and go, and witnessed some of the company's most creative and fallow of times. She is also one of its few members to have worked with Kenneth Macmillan when she was dancing in Berlin in 1991 and he was staging one of his ballets for the troupe.

"Kenneth cast me in 'Different Drummer,'" says Ms. Benjamin. "It was priceless to work with him. It has stayed with me all these years."



Left, principal dancer Leanne Benjamin at the Royal Opera House in London; below, Ms. Benjamin and Edward Watson in the Royal Ballet production 'Qualia' at the Royal Opera House.

Beyond 'Swan Lake'

Ballerina Leanne Benjamin tackles dramatically demanding work

MacMillan soon after suggested Ms. Benjamin join the Royal Ballet, something she didn't think a good idea at the time. "By then, I'd danced with three ballet companies, and I'd have to start again for the fourth time," she explains. "Although I'd trained at the Royal Ballet School [in the early 80s], I didn't know anyone, and the Royal Ballet had some great dancers at that point. And I'd been a princi-

pal dancer [ballet's highest rank], and the Royal only offered me a senior soloist position. Kenneth rang me and said 'Of course you'll be made a principal'."

MacMillan eventually won Ms. Benjamin over, and as he predicted, she was promoted to principal within the year. It is a position she has held ever since, making her the Royal Ballet's most senior dancer. You wonder how she sustains her position, especially with the demands of family life.

Ms. Benjamin says that older ballerinas aren't as unusual as we think. She cites her late mother-in-law Georgina Parkinson, the former ballerina and teacher at American Ballet Theatre, as one of several dancers who performed into their forties. Antoinette Sibley, Lynn Seymour, Merle Park, Lesley Collier and Monica Mason—the Royal Ballet's current director—are others whose age-defying careers stretched from the 1960s to 1980s.

"They danced during an extraordinary time," says Ms. Benjamin. "Kenneth was making new ballets, and so was Frederick Ashton. Jerome Robbins and

Bronislava Nijinska were staging their ballets for the Royal. If you are creatively engaged, it's easy."

However, she is quick to acknowledge that she has a small body that has aged well. "I am lucky," says Ms. Benjamin, whose slight physique and youthful complexion little hint at her age. "I've had no major injuries, and I came back quickly from having a baby, although I've only one."

"But I also work hard," she emphasizes. "I do a daily class, even when I'm not performing, and new work has come my way. If you are creatively fed, you stay interested, and can bring more to a ballet than when you are young."

Ms. Benjamin's decision to step back from the classics, the Swan Lakes and Sleeping Beauties, has also extended her career. Instead, she focuses on the dramatically demanding MacMillan repertory, and the new work being made by such choreographers as Christopher Wheeldon, Kim Brandstrup and Wayne McGregor.

Another factor working in Ms. Benjamin's favor is that she now has a regular dancing partner, the

33-year-old Edward Watson. "I went through years of having no one in particular," she says.

"When you are small, you get passed around as you're easy to lift. But you don't get the chance to build a rapport with another dancer, or take risks, or make a ballet your own."

Given Ms. Benjamin's clear-eyed understanding of her place in dance, you would assume she has an exit strategy as well thought through. However, if she does, she gives little away. "I like the daily class. I like preparing myself. I like the process, the routine, my colleagues," she reflects. "And I've been asked to dance some extraordinary things next season. But I don't want to be in the studio for the rest of my life and I don't want to battle my body. I think you just wake up and know it's time. I'm not afraid of change."

Leanne Benjamin dances "The Judas Tree" at the Royal Opera House March 23-24 and April 14; www.roh.org.uk.

—Sarah Frater is a writer based in London.



Johan Persson / ArenaPAL (L), Corbis (R)

Arbitrage Patek Philippe Calatrava 6000G

City	Local currency	€
London	£14,700	€16,338
Frankfurt	€16,410	€16,410
Paris	€16,490	€16,490
Brussels	€16,650	€16,650
New York	\$26,753	€19,434

Note: Prices of a men's watch in white gold, plus taxes, as provided by retailers in each city, averaged and converted into euros.



Bali's coffee country

BY JOHN KRICH

CONSIDERING HOW MUCH of it I've consumed over a lifetime, it seemed remarkable that I had never seen coffee—meaning the actual bean on the bush. But here I was in Bali, whose coffee-growing region seemed to come, in the Balinese manner, with so much more: mountain views, temples and terraces. So I decided to make coffee country a day-trip destination from the island's capital, Denpasar.

Even the gas stations along the way come with piped-in, tinkly gamelan music. Small-town main streets are lined with delicate, statuary-festooned temple compounds, and the roadside stands along the way are mostly seasonal ones for durian and jackfruit.

Seeing this is an island, no matter which road you follow, you'll eventually get to the sea (with a brooding volcano or two in between.) My chosen path aims to the north for Bedugul and beyond. But things start to get interesting at Pacung, where the views of rice terraces open up and then climb toward, or through, a breathtaking line-up of black peaks. As it turns out, Bedugul isn't much but a sprawling wet market. Just over an hour from Denpasar's limits, the place feels like a way station in Nepal or the lower Andes, quite a shock after a morning's loll in the tub-warm waves of Jimbaran beach. It doesn't take long for microclimates to change on Bali.

I get another surprise when my driver makes a wrong left turn at the market junction. Instead of heading farther uphill toward Munduk, this road ends at the entrance to Eka Karya Botanic Garden. Founded in 1959, it offers 157 hectares of luxuriant, shadow-dappled high-altitude forest preserve, including numerous stands of birch. There are temples and traditional houses hidden here and there, along with obligatory rose and orchid displays. There's also a kiosk that sells herbal remedies—based on Usada, or Balinese healing—that are derived from native plants.

But I'm after another sort of potent plant, the kind that brings a buzz to wake me each morning. Before reaching coffee country proper, the landscape is dominated by strawberry farms. Then the road toward Bali's north coast veers west in a precipitous rise along a ridge with magnificent views of two adjacent, elongated lakes, the larger Danau Buyan, that form the island's eerily quiet heart.

And soon enough, the first billboard announcing "Bali Coffee" points to a road that leads farther up into thick mists, then down the

backside of the ridge. On a clear day, the downward spiral of hairpin turns must offer stunning views of this round bowl of a valley. But it's tough in the fog to clearly identify any of the local agriculture. Fortunately, a relatively new sign directs my driver to turn down a long driveway to the Munduk Moding Plantation. Billed as a "nature resort and spa," the place turns out to be a single, Dutch-style manor house, splendidly remodeled with four rooms up top, looking out over an infinity-style pool and its five hectares of working coffee farm (mundukmodingplantation.com).

But I still don't see any of the prized crop until the staff leads me along stone steps that make a circular path around the property. At long last, I've got beans to both sides of me, and these are in the raw, not freeze-dried or in measured espresso packets. All I have to do is lift the shiny leaves of these pleasant shrubs to see clumps of the green buds that have given humanity so much inspiration. How can so nerve-jangling a fruit come with such comfortingly pretty white flowers?

At the end of the trek, I'm joined by co-founder Made. While sipping from his plantation's best brew, he explains that he and a Dutch partner invested six billion rupiahs (\$640,000) not merely to turn a profit from tourism but also to help save his home region's coffee tradition, hurt by a falling water table (coffee is a thirsty crop) and a long stretch of weak coffee prices over the past decade. Locals say that coffee, originally brought by Dutch colonizers, is slowly being replaced by more lucrative crops such as decorative flowers.

His coffee seems to go down very smoothly, until he informs me that what I am drinking is actually *kopi luwak*, a rare treat. Brewed from beans gathered by neighboring farmers from the feces of a local, coffee-addicted species of civet (the pulpy part of the berry is digested, but the bean passes through whole), it's renowned for its lack of bitterness. (The beans do get a rinse before roasting.) I don't even realize until it's too late that I might have just downed some of the world's most expensive java.

Made's recommendation for a homemade coffee-roasting operation leads way down to the valley bottom. But after a sprint through a sudden late-afternoon downpour, I'm told the backyard operation is closed for a full-moon festival—one of the common, if charming, hazards in touring an island that operates on its own celestial calendar. But the well-publicized Ngring Ngewedang—an outdoor hill-top complex that features local coffee and snacks, and translates roughly as "enjoying coffee"—is open.

A patio and covered tables command a great view from a strategic turn in the road. Down a path from the café is a shack devoted to coffee roasting, which is done over a wood fire as the beans roll in a crude and very rusty tumbler that reminds me of a big lettuce dryer. An energetic young couple wait under a patch of thatched shade to raise oversize pestles and take up the vigorous pounding in a stone mortar that takes the place of an electric coffee grinder here. The result is a powder that concentrates every kick from the high-octane Robusta variety; the sample I finally get to sip is blastedly strong.

—John Krich is a writer based in Bangkok.



Kopi luwak at Munduk Moding Plantation, before and after rinsing; above, coffee beans at the end of flowering season.

Kate Friend (2)

A back-label approach

BERNARD MAGREZ IS the outsider. Admittedly, on first impressions you wouldn't think so. First there is the pin-stripe suit, the uniform of choice among the wine trade's well-heeled. Then there is the aristocratic demeanor, the sense of money, power and entitlement. His portfolio of vineyards covers 35 at the last count, including Château Pape-

plies the new marketing skills to bolster the brands in his drinks distribution business William Pitters. In 1980 he creates the Malesan wine brand, one of the first French super-market wine brands. It flies off the shelves, and in 2003 he sells it to the Castel group. Two years later he sells his distribution business to the Marie Brizard group.

Mr. Magrez starts buying vineyards, at first in Bordeaux, where, among others, he acquires: Château Pape-Clément, Château La Tour Carnet and Château Fombrage. Then he buys further afield in the Languedoc Roussillon, Spain, California and Argentina. Then even further, in Uruguay, Morocco and Japan. His philosophy is transparency, to empower the consumer with more information.

With that in mind, I thought it might be opportune to explain the complexities of Bordeaux to the uninitiated. To understand the region it is best to think of it as being defined by water. The Dordogne and the Garonne flow north westward, meeting to form the great expanse of the Gironde estuary. On the Left Bank lies the Médoc, home to perhaps the most enthralling interpretation of the Cabernet Sauvignon grape produced anywhere in the world. For lovers of Médoc its villages read like a Who's Who of Bordeaux's aristocratic lineage: Margaux, St-Julien, Pauillac and St-Estèphe. Stylistically, these wines seduce often with a powerful spine of blackcurrant and cedar wood, married with violets, perfumed berries and rose petals.

Across the Dordogne on the Right Bank, lie soils more suited to the production of Merlot, heavily infused with limestone, clay and sand, where its two great appellations Saint-Emilion and Pomerol offer a more unctuous, velvety, approachable wine. It is here that a trio of upstarts, Pétrus, Ausone and Cheval Blanc, enjoy unofficial First Growth status.

I recently tasted through several vintages of Mr. Magrez's Château Pape-Clément, a Château that has been criticized for its modern approach to winemaking with an emphasis on a fuller, more extracted flavor. Despite this I was impressed. Sure, there was a lot of oak on the nose, particularly in the case of the '06 where it expressed a honeyed character. But generally, I found them to have good structure, firm tannins and a pleasing, aromatic nose. Not sure about the back label though, especially that photograph.

Wine

WILL LYONS

Clément and Château les Grands Chênes; and finally there is the CV—a resume of more than 40 years spent plying his trade in Bordeaux.

But look more closely, speak to the man, taste his wines and you start to get a different impression. There's the back label for starters, complete with information on the blend of the wine, in addition to his photograph that he insists is glued onto every bottle. There is the appointment of Michel Rolland to all his estates, with the ubiquitous consultant's controversial philosophy of picking late to achieve a riper, rounder flavor. But most of all there is a belief in the consumer. That the consumer should be given as much information as possible when buying a bottle of wine. That the consumer should be flattered, catered for and indulged. In short, that the consumer is always right. Amid the ancient vineyards of France's wine industry this is unusual, believe me.

"My king is the consumer," says Mr. Magrez, who is now in his early 70s. "I made my first wine for the consumer. In Bordeaux it wasn't usual to put back labels on the bottle. But I did some research that found the average purchase took around 18 seconds and 28% of people looked at the back of the bottle. The consumer wants to know what they are purchasing. So we gave them as much information as possible and the proof is in the pudding. In the supermarket, sales are 20% higher."

Mr. Magrez has a love affair with supermarkets. It all started when as an ambitious young man he took a Greyhound tour of the U.S. with Ohio-based marketing expert Bernard Trujillo. On that trip he traveled from supermarket to supermarket in the company of the entrepreneurs behind Carrefour, Ralley and Auchan.

Returning to Bordeaux, he ap-

DRINKING NOW

Château Pape Clément
Graves Grand Cru Classé, Bordeaux
Vintage: **2006**
Price: about £60 or €66
Alcohol content: **13%**

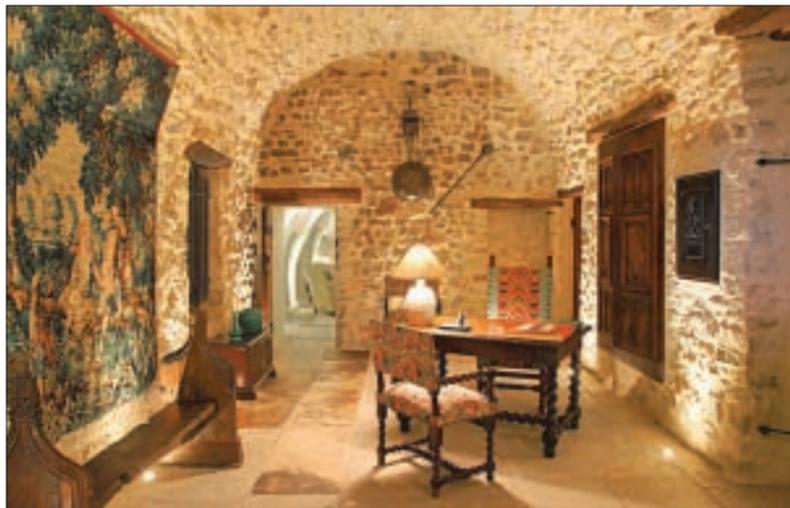
Oak dominates the nose in an appealing, honeyed character in this blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot. But it's not over extracted: There are plenty of firm tannins, which give it a rounded structure with plenty of grip on the palate.



❖ Pursuits



Jean Cazals for The Wall Street Journal (3)



Above, the Chêne Bleu vineyard in Provence, owned by Xavier Rolet and his wife, Nicole. At left, exterior and interior views of La Verrière, the converted medieval priory owned by the Rolet family and the chateau of Chêne Bleu.

A true passion

Having made their fortunes elsewhere, a new breed of vineyard owners cultivate anew

By Bruce Palling

OWNING THIS VINEYARD gives me the greatest satisfaction I have ever had outside of my own profession," says hotelier Georg Rafael, who co-founded Regent International Hotels and sold his Rafael Group Hoteliers to the Mandarin Oriental in 2000. While still working in the industry, he purchased 10 hectares of the finest vineyards at Mount Veeder in California's Napa Valley and released his first vintage earlier this decade. "Every time we drink our own wine we think we are in heaven."

Mr. Rafael is part of a new breed of vineyard owners who after having made their fortunes outside the wine industry are now cultivating vineyards—not just as a status symbol like the next yacht or a passing fancy but because they are caught up in the thrill and the mystique of creating their own great wine.

Of course, there have always been the stratospherically rich, like the Rothschilds, François Pinault and Bernard Arnault, who between them own half of the most acclaimed vineyards in Bordeaux. (Châteaux Lafite Rothschild, Mouton Rothschild, Latour, Cheval Blanc and d'Yquem). These "pinnacle vineyards" are valued at as much as €700 million to €800 million.

The new breed of vineyard owners are bankers, dotcom millionaires, hoteliers, ac-

tors and pop stars—ranging from Cliff Richard in Spain and Gérard Depardieu in France to Sam Neill in New Zealand. And while these people have frequently attained their success through a rigorous focus on the bottom line, they are cultivating their latest pursuit with a passion that often outweighs profit as their prime motivation.

The 72-year-old Mr. Rafael, who is now based in Monaco, began by selling his grapes to leading producers such as Robert Mondavi, Freemark Abbey and Kendall-Jackson, and then kept some back to create his own label in the late 1990s. "Don't even ask me what it has cost. I have hired great people to run it, but there was not enough volume as we sold off three-quarters of our crop to other producers." Last year, his 29-year-old son Marc relinquished his hotel career to oversee the entire operation, running it as a professional business with dedicated equipment and cellars (www.rafaelvineyards.com). "We have always focused on making a high-quality product but until now it has really been a hobby for my father," Marc Rafael says. "Now that I am working here full-time, we intend to establish Rafael Vineyards as a successful, boutique, family-owned brand."

In Provence, almost under the shade of Mont Ventoux, state-of-the-art vineyard Chêne Bleu has emerged in the past 15 years,

thanks to the labor and tenacity of the head of the London Stock Exchange, Xavier Rolet, 50, and his wife, Nicole, 46. Centered on La Verrière, a stunning farmhouse complex that was a fortified priory during medieval times, the Rolets have planted and revitalized 24 hectares of traditional Rhone grape varieties to produce a range of boutique wines under the Chêne Bleu label (www.chenebleu.com). This isn't a holiday wine project: The top reds from 2006, the estate's first vintage, retail in London for £65 a bottle and are served at Sketch and other leading restaurants such as Aubergine and Nobu. The Rolets have painstakingly restored what was a ruin for 50 years. "The inside of the house had completely collapsed and because it was used as a migratory animal shelter, the floors were covered with six or seven feet of hardened sheep dung," Mr. Rolet explains.

Parts of the vineyard, which straddles four regional appellations, including Gigondas, were beyond repair. However, their winemakers, including Zelma Long, the American consultant and former oenologist at Robert Mondavi, have revitalized the 40-year-old vines. They are now in the process of gaining biodynamic status for the vineyard.

The Rolets say they are in it for the long haul. "We thought this was a diamond in the rough, partly because of the altitude and the

mineral complexity," Mr. Rolet says, admitting that his task has only just begun. "I don't expect our wines to reach their maturity for 15 to 20 years. Deep down, besides my love of wine, it is the challenge because you never stop learning or improving and you never get there. Perhaps our great-grandchildren will."

Elsewhere, Irish property developer Paddy McKillen, 54, has spent substantial sums on an existing Provençal vineyard just north of Aix-en-Provence with the goal of producing excellent commercial organic wines rather than an exacting boutique operation. Château La Coste (www.chateau-la-coste.com), which he has owned since 2003, has 120 hectares of vineyards, an existing classical mansion and wine-making infrastructure, but the latter has been replaced with stunning semi-circular sheds commissioned from Jean Nouvel, France's leading contemporary architect. Inside, the hi-tech vats and equipment are state of the art. Chief winemaker Matthieu Cosse boasts that the advanced technology at Château La Coste is akin to controlling an A380 Airbus with your little finger to produce "fly-by-wire wine."

"We have the most modern vineyard in all of Provence but it is strictly non-interventionist," Mr. Cosse says. "When it actually comes to controlling the yeasts and making the wines, we still make all the key decisions ourselves." This is only phase one of the opera-



Jean Cazals for The Wall Street Journal (top 2); Il Cantante (bottom 2)

Clockwise from top left: the two most popular wines produced by Château La Coste—a red and a rosé; designed by French architect Jean Nouvel, the stylish structure housing the wine-making facilities for Château La Coste, owned by Irish property developer Paddy McKillen; Mick Hucknall, right, with his winemaker Salvo Foti, left; Mr. Hucknall's vineyard on the slopes of Mount Etna in Sicily.

tion. Mr. McKillen has quietly commissioned Frank Gehry, Renzo Piano and Norman Foster to create a hotel, arts center and sculpture park on the site. Mr. McKillen avoids speaking to the press, although his sister Mara, who lives near the estate, says, "Paddy would say that Château La Coste is simply about the land, the wine and the team of people who are involved in making it."

Meanwhile, Nicholas Coates, 51, a former managing director in charge of European high yields at the Royal Bank of Scotland, has teamed up on an equal-partnership basis with old friend Christian Seely, in a quest to create Britain's greatest Champagne-style sparkling wine. Mr. Seely, 49, is managing director of AXA Millésimes, which controls several leading Bordeaux châteaux, such as Châteaux Pichon Baron and Suduiraut, plus Quinta do Noval, one of the greatest Port houses, and a leading Hungarian Tokaji Aszú called Disznók.

"I didn't feel that I could take my career any further as I had got to the top of that particular tree in Europe and had no desire to go and inhabit another one," Mr. Coates says of his departure from the banking world in 2007.

Instead, just three kilometers from Mr. Coates's house on the South Downs in Hampshire in southern England, the duo purchased in 2008 a long lease on a five-hectare dormant

vineyard that has near identical soil DNA to that in Champagne. Since then, they have leased and planted a further 10 hectares with Pinot Noir and Chardonnay grape varieties. With the technical know-how and resources of Mr. Seely, approximately 25,000 bottles

'... I don't think that a vineyard has to be a rich man's folly,' says Christian Seely. 'It can be a perfectly viable business.'

have already been produced and will be released later this year. If the operation proceeds as planned, Messrs. Coates and Seely say they hope to eventually produce nearly 10 times this amount annually.

"I put in quite a few hours, but the big difference is that I don't have to get up at five in the morning and return after 10 at night," Mr. Coates says. "My commute is 25 seconds across a rose garden to get to my office, which is a converted piggery."

He concedes there are other advantages with this change of career. "If I want to go and see my daughter play netball or my son playing rugby, I can just do it," Mr. Coates ex-

plains. "So I have far more flexibility. I'm not convinced that I work less but it is so much more pleasurable having lunch at home with my wife most days plus I feel much healthier and it is an incomparably better way of life.

"What I am doing is not the hobby of an idle rich banker—it feels very real," he continues. "In fact, a lot more real than when I was spending my time raising £5 billion to support a leveraged buyout. I quite like the thought of being at the bottom again. I really did believe that there was another tank of fuel in there."

Mr. Seely is optimistic about the commercial viability of the operation. "I have quite a lot of experience making vineyards profitable at all levels so I don't think that a vineyard has to be a rich man's folly. It can be a perfectly viable business. The foremost thing to get right—the *sine qua non*—is the vines have to be planted in the right place. I am convinced that there are terroirs in England that are capable of making wines of truly superlative quality."

Mick Hucknall, lead singer of British pop group Simply Red, bought a small farm that included a 20-hectare vineyard on the slopes of Mount Etna in Sicily in 2001 with an Ital-

ian friend. Mr. Hucknall was intrigued by the fact that the grapes were all native to the region and had a distinctive taste because of the volcanic ash in the soil. The jewel in the crown, Mr. Hucknall says, is the 12 hectares of his red wine called "Il Cantante Etna Rosso," which produces 1,200 cases annually. He believes it has great potential to age. "We are selling it for around €30 a bottle in Germany, the U.S.A. and Japan," Mr. Hucknall says. "Until now, we have been a bit student-like about the whole thing, what with major distractions like touring and having a two-year-old daughter. However, having been on the edge with just my big toe in the water, we are now diving in and going for it." His co-owner lives on the site and employs professional winemakers to advise them when it comes to the key decisions around vintage time. Mr. Hucknall intends to make more frequent visits to the site in the coming year.

The idea of it being for commercial gain doesn't seem to have entered Mr. Hucknall's mind. "It is love and passion. We won't see any real return for two or three more years," he says. "If you were going to get involved in wine for a financial return you would be better off buying a few cases of Châteaux Pétrus and Latour and leaving them in a cellar for 10 years."

—Bruce Palling is a writer based in London.

A future team of rivals?

Young stars may just have the moxie and the muscle to produce missing drama

THE SINGLE-HANDED dominance of Tiger Woods these past 13 years—he won his first major, a Masters, in 1997—has blotted golf's collective memory of the joy of rivalries. Mr. Woods's own putative ri-

unless one player ascends to Tiger-like supremacy, could come shootouts we'll enjoy for years.

Golf-fan nirvana would be a reprise of the era when Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer, Tom Watson, Lee Trevino and Johnny Miller were going at each other: some up, some down at various times, but all future Hall of Famers. Today's crop of young stars may just have the moxie and the muscle to produce that kind of drama.

Compiling a list of the world's most promising young players is a perilous if irresistible task. It's best looked at as an actuarial exercise. A few young guns included in the golf

media's periodic roundups of sure-fire superstars always make it, and others don't, but nobody knows who's who until years later.

Nine years ago, for example, the consensus list of can't-miss stars looked like this: Ty Tryon, Matt Kuchar, David Gossett, Charles Howell III, Aaron Baddeley, Adam Scott. Of those, only Mr. Scott has gone on to become a superstar, albeit a sporadic one. Messrs. Kuchar, Howell and Baddeley have enjoyed solid if unspectacular careers on the PGA Tour. Messrs. Tryon and Gossett no longer play regularly in the Show.

But hope springs eternal when it comes to young players, and the It crowd of the moment is headlined by a pair of adorable mop-heads, Rory McIlroy, 20, of Northern Ireland and Rickie Fowler, 21, of California. Mr. McIlroy, who turned pro in 2007, is already ranked No. 9 in the world despite having won only one tournament so far, last year's Dubai Desert Classic on the European Tour. But his swing, his golf smarts and his consistency make him a young contender for the Hall of Fame. He came within a hair's breadth of winning the European Tour's money title last year and has joined the U.S. Tour for 2010. Mr. Fowler turned pro last fall after a stellar amateur career. The former dirt-biker's daredevil charisma sparks as much chatter as his game, although he has posted two second-place finishes in only 10 official Tour starts as a pro.

Of the four other players who seem to have the most potential, two are American: Dustin Johnson, 25, with three Tour wins and Anthony Kim, with two. So far this year, Mr. Kim is working harder on his game than he ever has (he finished second at the recent Honda Classic) and clearly has deep talent to tap into. He made 11 birdies in the second round at the Masters last year, tied for the most in one round ever.

Martin Kaymer, 25, of Germany and Ryo Ishikawa, 18, of Japan are the kids with the most experience actually winning tournaments. Mr. Kaymer, ranked eighth in the world, has five wins on the European Tour. Mr. Ishikawa, who has six wins in Japan, skipped the limited-field CA Golf Championship in Miami so he could fly home to be at his high-school graduation.

Possibly the greatest golfer of this generation will not turn out to be one of these favorites. It could be Michael Sim of Australia, 25, who was last year's Nationwide Player of the Year and is off to a hot start this season as a PGA rookie. Or Jamie Lovemark, 22, a college sensation frequently compared to Mr. Fowler in press reports, but who failed to make it through the PGA Tour's qualifying school in December. Or another American rookie, Alex Prugh, 25, who has three top 10s in his first six starts on Tour this year.

Or an even more obscure player like Noh Seung-yul, 18, of South Korea, who two weeks ago won the Maybank Malaysian Open in Kuala Lumpur to become the European PGA Tour's second youngest champion ever. The youngest was Danny Lee, now 19, of New Zealand. The truth is, one never knows. Nine years ago Camilo Villegas of Colombia, now 28, appeared on nobody's list of future world stars, but two weekends ago at the Honda Classic in Florida, he won his third PGA Tour event.

Golf

JOHN PAUL NEWPORT

valry with Phil Mickelson has been a long, disappointing sputter. But Mr. Woods's recent absence from competition has focused attention on the next generation of players, out of which,



RICKIE FOWLER

A southern Californian, and a former dirt-biker, he was a No. 1-ranked amateur and starred at two Walker Cups. Joined the Tour this year.



MARTIN KAYMER

From Düsseldorf, he was 2007 rookie of the year on the European Tour. He lost two months last year after a go-kart accident, but still finished third for the season.



RYO ISHIKAWA

He would have played in Florida last weekend, but he had to go back to Japan for his high-school graduation; youngest player ever to crack top 100 money winners.



ANTHONY KIM

A native of Los Angeles with a reputation as a free spirit, he starred in the 2008 Ryder Cup and tied a Masters' record for birdies in a round last year.

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Humor in Hopelessness

The best book on quitting smoking was written by neither a physician nor an ex-smoker but by a middle-age businessman in Trieste who was finally unable to break the habit himself. His name was Ettore Schmitz, changed for publishing purposes to Italo Svevo—standing for the Italian Swabian—and the book, a novel, is called “Zeno’s Conscience.” The work of a pessimista bonario, or good-natured pessimist, it is a comic masterpiece, ranking with “Don Quixote,” “Tristram Shandy” and perhaps four or five other comic novels in world literature.

Svevo’s subject is the weakness of the will, or abulia, and how a dreamy nature has little chance up against the temptations set out by the amazing and obdurate reality of life. In “Zeno’s Conscience,” Zeno Cosini, an unexceptional Trieste businessman, pits his will against the enslaving habit of smoking, the complexities of courtship, the delights of philanthropy, the discipline required by business, and loses every time, yet cannot quite be said to go down in defeat.

Now recognized as a great book, “Zeno’s Conscience,” Svevo’s third and final novel, completed when he was 61, was published at the author’s own expense, as were his two earlier novels. In Italy the book was greeted by tepid and dismissive

reviews. “Zeno’s Conscience” caught on owing to the odd coincidence that James Joyce, 20 years younger than Svevo and then working for Berlitz in Trieste, happened in 1905 to have been hired to give English lessons to Svevo and his wife, who were going to live in England to run a branch of the family’s marine paint business. Joyce read the novel in 1923 and suggested his former pupil send copies to T.S. Eliot, Ford Madox Ford, Gilbert Seldes, Valery Larbaud and Bernard Cremieux.

The suggestion was the making of the novel. The two Frenchmen ran a special issue of *Le Navire d’Argent* devoted to “Zeno’s Conscience,” while in Italy Eugenio Montale wrote an essay in praise of the novel. Svevo’s reputation was made, at least among the cognoscenti. He luxuriated in his *succès d’estime*, until his death in an automobile accident five years later—with his last breath he is said to have asked for a cigarette—but it was only posthumously that his novel attained its status as a modernist masterpiece.

What is modernist about the novel is the passivity of its hero and Svevo’s method of telling his story through the introspection of a charming neurotic. “Zeno’s Confessions,” in fact, takes the form of an autobiography written at the bidding of a psychoanalyst

to whom Cosini has gone for help with his smoking problem. One of the best things about smoking, Cosini has come to understand, is that the last cigarette, the one before quitting, is always the best, knowledge of which encourages endless quitting if only for the pleasure of yet another final cigarette. Cosini, we learn, has been quitting smoking with some regularity since he was 20. In the same paradoxical way, Cosini discovers that having a mistress, for all its complications, improves his marriage, turning him into a more attentive husband and father.

Not for nothing is Cosini named Zeno. Zeno of Elea (born c. 490 B.C.) was the man who invented Zeno’s paradoxes (“Achilles and the tortoise” and others). Extended examples of the paradoxes that dominate Cosini’s life make up the substance of the novel. He proposes marriage to three different sisters, all within an hour, and is accepted only by his third choice, who turns out to make the best wife of all. Through negligence he forgets to sell a stock, whose price rises impressively. Cosini is a serious hypochondriac, yet healthy people all around him die. But, then, the hypochondriac suffers more than the person who is genuinely sick, he notes, for the man with imaginary illnesses can never hope to find a cure.

In reading Zeno Cosini’s account of his life, we perceive that

we are in the company of a man with a philosophical turn of mind and a taste for oblique but never less than interesting generalizations, many based on his chiefly rocky experience with women: “A woman believes herself entitled to everything from her first lover,” Cosini notes. “That’s how women are,” he reflects. “Every day that dawns brings them a new interpretation of the past. Their lives cannot be very monotonous.” He holds that all unloved



Ryan Inzana

women “complained of great wrongs and small with the same fervor.” As for Freud’s great question—“What do women want?”—Zeno provides the best if still highly qualified answer yet: “For men it was difficult to understand what women wanted because at times women themselves didn’t know.”

Svevo was at first stimulated by the ideas he found in reading Freud, and “Zeno’s Conscience” is the way he put these ideas to the test. In the end, they all fail, for Freudianism is at least as useless

in answering the riddle of life as any other philosophy or guide. In the novel, Zeno’s psychoanalyst, after reading his autobiography, declares him—surprise! surprise!—a victim of the Oedipus Complex, that common cold of psychoanalysis. Zeno quits his therapy and goes back to his cigarettes. He forgives his analyst for failing to realize that “unlike other sicknesses, life is always fatal. It doesn’t tolerate therapies. It would be like stopping the holes that we have in our bodies, believing them wounds. We would die of strangulation the moment we were treated.”

What finally qualifies “Zeno’s Conscience” as a masterpiece, which is to say a timeless work, is its author’s refusal to accept clichés, abstractions, pseudoscientific explanations about the meaning of life or expert instruction on how to live. Life, as played out in “Zeno’s Conscience,” remains a riddle with no solution in sight. Like H.L. Mencken, George Santayana and Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, good-natured pessimists all, Italo Svevo, far from getting grim or glum about the situation, laughs at our hopelessness and enjoys the show, and so, while reading his splendid novel, will you.

Mr. Epstein’s latest book, “*The Love Song of A. Jerome Minkoff and Other Stories*,” will be published this summer by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

‘Zeno’s Conscience’ takes a wry look at life’s paradoxes

Planes, Trains And Miseries

No one pretends anymore that it is fun, or even pleasant, to fly on any airline these days. It is a task—a travail, from which French linguistic origins the word travel is most appositely derived—to which few can possibly look forward.

And yet, for all its shortcomings, the process of wandering anywhere in the First World remains an experience that is an order of magnitude more acceptable—and, crucially, many orders of magnitude more survivable—than is endured by most of the rest of the traveling world. For the planet’s poor—which means the vast majority of humanity—the simple business of getting from place to place is almost invariably a savage and insufferable nightmare, unsafe and unsanitary, run by incompetents and regulated by crooks.

Carl Hoffman, a courageous and interestingly untroubled man from Washington, D.C., has done a great service by reminding us, in “*The Lunatic Express*,” of this abiding truism: that the world’s ordinary traveler is compelled to endure all too much while undertaking the grim necessities of modern movement. Mr. Hoffman spent a fascinating year going around the world precisely as most of the world’s plainest people do—in the threadbare conveyances of the planet’s billions.

So he headed across the Andes crammed inside half-welded and smooth-tired buses. He sardined himself into the creaking fuselages of the notoriously unsafe airlines of former Soviet-bloc banana republics. He sweated on Indian or African railway trains (the Lunatic Express of the book’s title is the nickname of a train in Kenya) that were filled to bursting—though with the numbers occasionally reduced as passengers gasping for fresh air had their heads lopped off by passing bridges. He slept on the bilge-water-stinking hammock-decks of ferries, in the Philippines and the Ganges tributaries, that tip over more regularly than cattle outside Wisconsin college towns, and with the accumulated drownings of thousands.

I confess that I did not expect too much of this book. I fancied it to be either a mere travel stunt or a maudlin or misanthropic adventure story by an updated hipster version of Paul Theroux. It was neither. Mr. Hoffman, a man whose persona is colored by some matrimonial tensions, an eye for the ladies and a fairly predictable tincture of middle-age angst, manages to be both brave and compassionate as he lurches

on his near-interminable journey from his home turf in the Adams Morgan neighborhood of Washington to the Gobi Desert and back again.

He learns enough about himself en route to satisfy the travel-writing theorists, true, and this can be a little tedious. But—more important—he learns along the way a

great deal about the habits of the world’s peripatetic poor, and he writes about both the process and the people with verve and charity, making this book both extraordinary and extraordinarily valuable.

Mr. Hoffman is perhaps at his most powerful when he abandons himself to the simple squalor of his journeying—as here, when he is on a ferry in Indonesia, on passage from Jakarta to Sarong by way of the alluringly named towns of Surabaya, Banda Neira and Fak Fak: “The more I shed my American reserves, phobias, disgusts, the more [my fellow-passengers] embraced me. In the weeks ahead I would accelerate what had started gradually over the miles. I would do whatever my fellow travelers and hosts did. If they drank the tap-water of Mumbai and Kolkata and Bangladesh, so would I. If they bought

tea from street-corner vendors, so would I. If they ate with their fingers, even if I was given utensils, I ate with my fingers. Doing so prompted an outpouring of generosity and curiosity that never ceased to amaze me. It opened the door, made people take me in. That I shared their food, their discomfort, their danger, fascinated them and validated them in a powerful way.”

He had a habit of noticing countless things, as the best of traveling writers do. Among the most fascinating, and at first, puzzling, was that at a certain point in his journey he was all of a sudden—the American traveler in exotic lands—not being noticed. Beforehand, whether on that Indonesian ferryboat or on buses in Senegal or mutatas in East Africa or jammed into the slow expresses in Bihar, he was the center of a small whirlwind of curiosity. But then it all evaporated—at the very moment he arrived in the deserts of western China.

He had flown in to Urumqi and had made plans to get himself to Hohhot on the way to Ulan Bator, and yet one day he found

in an instant that no one now paid the slightest attention to him. It was as though in China, unlike everywhere else, he didn’t exist.

He was, of course, in Chinese eyes no more than a barbarian, an uncouth and vulgar interloper to whom no attention should properly be paid. And insofar as all official Chinese policy toward the outside world will from now on be made according to that single precept of institutionalized disdain—more especially now that China is so successful, so powerful and so rich—Mr. Hoffman’s slim book is rendered even more valuable than, as a simple travel account, it might at first appear.

It is a wise and clever book too, funny, warm and filled with astonishing characters. But it also represents an important exercise, casting an Argus-eye on a largely invisible but un-ignorable world. It is thus a book that deserves to be read widely.

Mr. Winchester’s “*Atlantic: The Biography of an Ocean*” will be published next year.

The Lunatic Express

By Carl Hoffman
(Broadway, 286 pages, \$24.99)



❖ Top Picks

ENO offers opera treat

LONDON: “Katya Kabanova” was Leos Janáček’s sixth, and many think his best, opera. Since it premiered in his native Czechoslovakia in 1921, this tale of the ruin of a passionate, but browbeaten bourgeois wife in a Russian provincial town has become a favorite of British opera companies. David Alden’s splendid new production for the English National Opera, performed straight through without an interval, captures the poetic drama and pathos of the piece and, for once, justifies the ENO’s policy of singing in English.

This is chiefly to the credit of the stunning American soprano, Patricia Racette, making her ENO debut in the title role. Not only is her warm, burnished tone as radiant as her occasional smile, but also I could hear and understand every word she sang of Norman Tucker’s serviceable translation of the composer’s own libretto. Ms. Racette’s physical acting style ends in a spectacular, swan-dive suicide leap, which substantiates the scorn you feel for her weak husband (John Graham-Hall), weedy lover (Stuart Skelton) and hideously vile mother-in-law, Kabanicha, deliciously played



Alfie Boe as Vanya Kudrjas and Anna Grevelius as Varvara.

Clive Barda

like the Disney witch in “Snow White” by Susan Bickley.

We know a good deal about Janáček’s inspiration for his operatic adaptation of the famous Russian tragedy, “The Storm” by Aleksandr Ostrovsky. Oddly enough this tale of

adultery by a woman destroyed by having too much love to give (and Janáček’s most tender, lyrical score) was inspired by the composer’s completely platonic devotion to a happily married lady.

All too often “Katya Kabanova” is

set in drab post-Revolutionary Russia, which misses something essential captured by Jon Morrell’s striking 1930s costumes, namely the middle-class anxiety, as well as the pinched, dreary, small-town lives led by Kabanicha, the widow of a merchant, and the son who is terrified of her. The detailed, rich realism of the costumes (originally made for a 1995 production at the Dallas Opera) contrasts elegantly with Charles Edward’s abstract sets that look like giant Russian Constructivist paintings.

Mark Wigglesworth conducts Janáček’s emotionally wrought music with precision as well as passion; and the supporting cast is exceptionally strong. Clive Bayley is just short of outrageous as the sadistic, rich merchant, Dikoy, as he abuses his needy nephew, Katya’s lover. Anna Grevelius as Varvara, the orphan brought up in Kabanicha’s household, who encourages Katya’s adultery, simply sparkles with rebellion, as she goes to meet her own lover, Vanya Kudrjas, the schoolteacher, handsomely sung and sweetly acted by Alfie Boe.

—Paul Levy

Until March 27
www.eno.org



Diego Giacometti’s ‘Cat Butler’ (circa 1965). Price: €75,000.

Courtesy of L’Arc en Seine, Paris

Maastricht’s Tefaf shows steady sales

AS BUYERS BROWSE 263 galleries in search of collectable gems at the European Fine Art Fair, known as Tefaf, in Maastricht, sales have been solid for works ranging from the ancient to

Collecting

MARGARET STUDER

the contemporary.

At Jean-David Cahn AG of Basel, a Roman marble head of a young boy from the 1st century B.C. was quickly sold for 240,000 Swiss francs (€165,388). “We have a growing number of young collectors who have discovered the timelessness of ancient art and its reasonable prices,” Director David Cahn says.

Chinese art specialists have among the most lavish stands. At the entrance to Dutch dealer Vandervan & Vandervan Oriental Art, three heavenly kings look frightening in full body armor wielding weapons as they chase away evil spirits. From the Tang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.), the larger pottery warrior sold for €500,000 and two smaller ones for €300,000 each. At London dealer Ben Janssens Oriental Art, a charming pottery pond filled with ducks from the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.) was purchased at around €20,000; and an 18th-century white jade perfumer for around €80,000. “Jades are doing particularly well,” Director Mr. Janssens says.

Old master paintings, for which the fair is famous, are on their traditional steady path with Bernheimer-Colnaghi of Munich and London selling “David and Bathsheba” (1534) by Lucas Cranach the Elder, a charming scene of Bathsheba as an enchanted David looks down from a castle wall (price: €5.3 million).

Turning to the contemporary: at L’Arc en Seine of Paris, Swiss designer Diego Giacometti adds a humorous touch with “Cat Butler” (circa 1965), a dutiful bronze cat on its hind legs with outstretched bowl waiting for his master (sold for around €75,000). Among works sold at London photography specialist Michael Hoppen Gallery is British photo artist Simon Norfolk’s image of 21st-century conflict featuring a pile of smoldering paper documents burnt in an Iraq museum (sold for €8,500).

Shore’s haunting pictures

ROME: The American artist Stephen Shore is the photography world’s great prodigy. Born in 1947, Mr. Shore sold his first photographs to the Museum of Modern Art when he was 14 years old. In the 1970s, he embarked on a cross-country tour, taking an extended series of color photographs with a large-format camera, resulting in gorgeous, haunting, dire images of late Cold-War America.

Many of the big-name photographers of our time—from Andreas Gursky and Thomas Struth to Cindy Sherman—are in some sense the artistic descendents of Stephen Shore. However, Mr. Shore’s work isn’t nearly as well known. A touring exhibition, currently at the Museo di Roma in Trastevere, of more than 150 of his photographs from the 1970s and ’80s, called “Biographical Landscape,” tries to rectify the situation.

Seen in New York City, where Mr. Shore was born, and where he cut his teeth as a teenage member of Andy Warhol’s legendary Factory, these

photographs, showing faces and buildings from remote corners of North America, can have an archaeological quality. In Rome, surrounded by the sepulchral splendors of several civilizations, we notice the ravishing colors rather than the old-fashioned clothes or blank small-town stares.

While he seems to have drained away the feeling from the people in his photographs, Mr. Shore has an uncanny ability to register what could be called the emotions of buildings. A remarkable photograph, described as “Union Street, Rockport, Maine, July 23, 1974,” shows a small, shingled house in a light that is both merciless and flattering—we know we are seeing the house at its best, but that only emphasizes its shabby modesty.

Some of Mr. Shore’s work has a Pop Art ruthlessness—like his photograph of a half-eaten McDonald’s meal in a place called Perrine, Florida. But at his best, he detects a soulful aura around his mundane sub-



Stephen Shore

Stephen Shore’s ‘Horseshoe Bend Motel, Lovell, Wyoming’ (1973).

jects—including himself, in a 1976 self-portrait. Staring out at us from his bed, he seems to be a daydreaming what has actually come to pass—

his emergence as a great artist.

—J.S. Marcus

Until April 25
www.museodiromaintrastevere.it

Adrian Noble’s ‘Hedda Gabler’ rises to the challenge



Nobby Clark

Rosamund Pike as Hedda Gabler.

ENGLAND: Often referred to as “the female Hamlet,” Henrik Ibsen’s “Hedda Gabler” is difficult for even the most experienced stage actresses. Rosamund Pike, with only a handful of theater credits to her name, confidently rises to the challenge in Adrian Noble’s touring production, expected in London this spring.

Mr. Noble’s production subtly captures the nuances of the days when women had no option but to conform to the claustrophobic social mores of Victorian society. Marrying beneath herself, Hedda—whose bohemian *joie de vivre* is at odds with the status quo—struggles with the confinement of married life.

From the outset, Ms. Pike’s Hedda is irritable, brash and sardonic; boredom seeps from every pore. There is charm and humor to her performance, too, particularly in the scenes where she chats with Judge Brack.

Robert Glenister as Hedda’s naive husband, sensitively portrays a man

oblivious to his wife’s follies. Tim McInnerny is a calculating Judge Brack, a closet leech, whose sees through Hedda’s steely veneer, while Colin Tierney as the relapsing alcoholic writer, Loevborg, still under Hedda’s spell, plays his vulnerability subtly.

Anthony Ward’s sparse set, complete with eerie red backdrop, is a constant reminder that tragedy and bloodshed are never far away.

Not everything rings true. There are moments that would benefit from more direction and the tempo of the second act is a little metronomic, but this is something that one hopes will be righted before the production reaches London.

Until March 20, Richmond Theatre (www.ambassadorickets.com)

March 22-27, Theatre Royal Nottingham (www.royalcentre-nottingham.co.uk)

March 29-April 3, Oxford Playhouse (www.oxfordplayhouse.com)

—Elizabeth Fitzherbert

time off

Amsterdam

art
"Tulips in Amsterdam" shows prints and drawings of tulips from the 17th and 18th centuries, including a rare tulip book created by Jacob Marrel between 1637 and 1639.
Rijksmuseum
Until June 1
☎ 31-20-6747-000
www.rijksmuseum.nl

Antwerp

fashion
"Black" examines the fashion history of the color black, showing paintings, costumes and contemporary fashion by designers such as Ann Demeulemeester, Givenchy (Riccardo Tisci), Chanel and Gareth Pugh.
Modemuseum
March 25-Aug. 8
☎ 32-3-4702-770
www.momu.be

design

"Delheid 1828-1980" illustrates the history of the Belgian silverware manufacturer with silver objects, photographs, design sketches and gypsum molds from the 19th and 20th centuries.
Zilvermuseum Sterckshof
March 23-June 13
☎ 32-3360-5252
www.sterckshof.be

Baden-Baden

music
"Anne-Sophie Mutter" presents the German violin virtuoso in a Brahms Violin Concerto with the London Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Ludovic Morlot.
March 20, Festspielhaus, Baden-Baden
March 21, Rosengarten, Mannheim
March 22, Philharmonie, Munich
March 24, Laeiszhalle, Hamburg
March 25 Stadthalle, Hannover
March 26 Konzerthaus, Dortmund
www.anne-sophie-mutter.de

Berlin

design
"Katachi: The Subtle Form from Japan" displays 100 contemporary product designs from Japan, including lacquered dishes, bamboo lamps, paper fans, wooden bowls and iron teapots.

Bauhaus-Archiv Museum für Gestaltung
Until May 2
☎ 49-3025-4002-0
www.bauhaus.de

royalty

"Luise—The Life and Legend of the Queen" shows paintings, sculptures and historical documents exploring the life of the popular Prussian queen (1776-1810).
Schloss Charlottenburg
Until May 30
☎ 49-3319-6940
www.spsg.de

Bern

art
"Edward Burne-Jones—The Earthly Paradise" brings together 100 paintings and drawings, furniture and glass windows by the master of English Symbolism.
Kunstmuseum Bern
Until July 25
☎ 41-31-3280-944
www.kunstmuseumbern.ch

Brussels

art
"Symbolism in Belgium" tracks the evolution of Symbolism through Belgian artists such as Fernand Khnopff, Félicien Rops and Jean Delville.
Museum of Modern Art
Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium
March 26-June 27
☎ 32-2-5083-211
www.expo-symbolisme.be

Copenhagen

photography
"Collection of Prints and Drawings—Photographs" showcases iconic works from the history of photography, including works by Man Ray, Albert Mertz, Sigmar Polke, Wolfgang Tillmans and Dash Snow.
Statens Museum for Kunst
March 27-Aug. 29
☎ 45-3374-8494
www.smk.dk

Ghent

opera
"Eugene Onegin" brings the Tchaikovsky opera based on the book by



The Hague AEGON art collection

Above, Katinka Lampe's 'Untitled (50077)' (2007) on show in Rotterdam; below, 'butterfly-chair' (1956) by Sori Yanagi for Tendo Co., Yamagata, shown in Berlin.

Alexander Pushkin to the stage, directed by Tatjana Gürbaca and conducted by Dmitri Jurowski.
Vlaamse Opera
☎ 32-7022-0202
March 23-April 25
www.vlaamseopera.be

London

dance
"Ballet Nacional de Cuba" presents "Swan Lake" and a mixed bill entitled "Magia de la Danza," showcasing the Cuban dance company accompanied by a full live orchestra.
Sadlers Wells
March 30-April 10
☎ 44-0844-4124-300
www.salderswells.co.uk

art

"Christen Købke: Danish Master of Light" shows a selection of 40 works by the Danish painter (1810-1848), including landscapes, portraits and Danish national monuments.
National Gallery
Until June 13
☎ 44-20-7747-2885
www.nationalgallery.org.uk

theater

"Mrs Warren's Profession" presents Felicity Kendal directed by Michael Rudman in the title role of this George Bernard Shaw play contemplating the hypocrisy and constrained morals of Victorian society.
Comedy Theatre
Until June 19
☎ 44-20 7369 1731
www.thecomedytheatre.co.uk

Milan

opera
"Tannhäuser" stages the Wagner opera under the unusual direction of La Fura dels Baus conducted by Zubin Mehta and featuring Robert Dean Smith and Georg Zeppenfeld.
Teatro alla Scala
Until April 2
☎ 39-02-8618-27
www.teatroallascala.org

Paris

art
"Lucien Freud" shows about 50 works by the British artist, including large-size paintings, a selection of graphic works and photographs of the artist's London studio.
Centre Pompidou
Until July 19
☎ 33-1-4478-1233
www.centrepompidou.fr

art

"Meijer de Haan (1852-1895) The Hidden Master" is a retrospective devoted to the 19th-century Dutch painter, alongside work by his students Joseph Jacob Isaacson, Louis Hartz and others.
Musée d'Orsay
Until June 20
☎ 33-1-4049-4814
www.musee-orsay.fr

Rotterdam

art
"Kate, Bob & Luca—Katinka Lampe" displays portraits by the contemporary Dutch artist, who was fond of big color areas and minutely painted details.

Kunsthall
Until May 30
☎ 31-10-4400-301
www.kunsthall.nl

Stuttgart

art
"Brücke, Bauhaus, Blauer Reiter" shows a selection of Expressionist art by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Edvard Munch, Max Beckmann, Kirchner, Alexej von Jawlensky, Franz Marc, Emil Nolde and others.
Staatsgalerie
Until June 20
☎ 49-711-4704-00
www.staatsgalerie.de

Vienna

music
"Gustav Mahler and Vienna" celebrates the 150th birthday of the Austrian composer, exploring various phases of his life and his musical circle of friends.
Theater Museum/Palais Lobkowitz
Until Oct. 3
☎ 43-1-5252-4346-0
www.theatermuseum.at

Warsaw

opera
"Elektra" is the Polish premiere of Willy Decker's production of the Richard Strauss one-act opera, conducted by Tadeusz Kozłowski.
Teatr Wielki
March 24-31
☎ 48-22-8265-019
www.teatrwielki.pl

Source: ArtBase Global Arts News Service, WSJE research.



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