

WEEKEND JOURNAL.

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The art of giving

Get ready for Christmas with our guide to the season's best gifts

FASHION

Tina Gaudoin on the rules that make the perfect present W6

GADGETS

Why we are all going to be seeing in 3D this festive season W10

BOOKS

In the year of the e-reader, print is still heavyweight champion W16

GIFT GUIDE: ESSAY

WEEKEND JOURNAL.

The gift guide issue

Searching for the right present can take the joy out of Christmas, so let Weekend Journal help.



4 | Homes

Gifts that will outshine your Christmas tree.



6-7 | Fashion

Tina Gaudoin on the rules of giving good gift.

8-9 | Jewelry

Some presents improve with age. Plus, keep time in style.

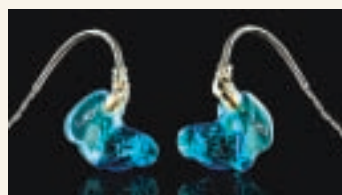
10 | Gadgets

Experience the festive season in 3D.



12 | Food & Wine

How to keep the connoisseurs content.



14-15 | Bespoke

From tattooed shoes to jeweled underwear, tailor-made gifts go a step further.

16 | Books

Why print will never go out of fashion.

17 | Essay

The perils—and joys—of finding the right present.

18 | Books

Interviews with the Pope.

19 | Design

Stay cool in the Sahara.

20-24 | Culture

Behind the scenes of the Royal Shakespeare Company, a modern take on the Old Masters and a Soviet satire becomes an opera.



23 | Friday night, Saturday morning

Director John Tiffany on singing and skyping.

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Present and correct

A true gift is for life, not just for Christmas

BY LENNOX MORRISON

When Sigmund Freud was casting around for the perfect gift for his grandchildren, the father of psychoanalysis decided to give them something with long-lasting gratification—the rights to his work.

Earlier this year, grandson Lucian acknowledged that for 33 years, from the age of 17, he benefited from this private income. His grandfather's thoughtfulness presumably helped free him to focus on his art and thus paint the remarkable portraits which depict so vividly what it means to be human.

Whether a gift is intended to transform a life, or merely light up a moment, there's an art in deciding what to give and how to present it.

For splashy giving, it's hard to trump Catherine the Great of Russia. Famously generous, she presented her lover Count Grigory Orlov with the Marble Palace in St. Petersburg, the nearby Gatchina country estate and several hundred serfs.

But now that feudalism is out of fashion, how's a world leader meant to make an impression? A peek at the records kept by the White House, specifically by the Protocol Gift Unit, reveals how the G-20 set handles these delicate decisions. The latest list of gifts received by the president is from 2008, when German Chancellor Angela Merkel brought not only a black Mercedes mountain bike but, with Teutonic thoroughness, a kit of spare parts. Italy's Silvio Berlusconi handed over a dozen ties from luxury neckwear house E. Marinella of Naples. And, given that George W. Bush was then in office, French President Nicolas Sarkozy hit on the notion of a brown leather Hermès saddle.

The trick, it seems, is to pick something from your own gross national product. Adopting that principle on an individual basis, one is led—reluctantly, but inevitably—to the concept of making your own gifts. All very well, for instance, for Oscar Wilde, whose young sons were no doubt entranced by the stories he wrote for them about "The Happy Prince," "The Selfish Giant," et al. And from my own childhood, I recall the moment of wonder created by the Japanese academic billeted on our family for Christmas by the British Council. His present looked like a bundle of very ordinary sheets of paper until he transformed them into swans, boats and flowers, and I learned a new word, *origami*.

But not everyone is skilled at handicrafts, and in the 1950s, a woman who turned for inspiration to a homemaker's bible such as George Newnes Ltd. of London's "Better Home Making" might have felt daunted by finicky instructions on how to make "a shampoo cape for the girl who washes her hair at home" or "for a friend who goes much to dances: a long-handled back powder-puff."

Looking at the section "Gifts the children can make," the pre-Wii generation was expected to know the difference between blanket-stitch and plain running stitch, and to be able to embroider flowers and leaves onto Hessian.

Nowadays youngsters don't even need to handwrite their wish list to Santa Claus—all that's required is



20th Century Fox/Everett Collection

'Miracle on 34th Street' (1947), John Payne, Maureen O'Hara, Natalie Wood, Edmund Gwenn; opposite page, 'The Adoration of the Magi' (circa 1833-36) by Jean Pierre Granger.

an email to sites such as northpole.com.

Back in 1938, in his poem "Christmas Shopping," Louis MacNeice wrote bleakly of how "the great windows marshal their troops for assault on the purse" and of stressed last-minute shoppers negotiating "swing doors and crowded lifts and draperied jungles."

Today, with so many purchases made by scroll and click, it feels deliciously retro to take a stroll down Sloane Street, ride the Metro to Sèvres-Babylone or head for the Kurfürstendamm.

Whether a gift is intended to transform a life, or merely light up a moment, there's an art in deciding what to give and how to present it.

However, not all gift buying is as simple as making a choice and schlepping it home. When Richard Burton finally secured the 69.42-carat South African diamond he knew would be just the ticket for his then-wife Elizabeth Taylor, it was on a very particular condition. The seller, luxury house Cartier, who'd only just acquired the pear-shaped jewel at auction for a record \$1.05 million, insisted on the right to display it for a certain period in two of their stores. Several thousand people a day duly trooped past the "Taylor-Burton" diamond.

With a price tag of only a few dollars, but to Elvis Presley fans of dazzling significance, is the guitar he received on or around his 11th birthday. Apparently Elvis would have preferred a bicycle but doting mother Gladys was fearful he'd be run over and a guitar was less ex-

pensive. With help from his uncles and from a young revivalist pastor, Elvis picked up a few chords and was soon playing for the "special singing" part of the church service.

In some cultures, the highly ritualized nature of gift giving poses hazards—use both hands to present gifts in China or Japan, but right hand only in Arab countries. In Scotland, if you're likely to be the first person across the threshold of a house on Jan. 1—a first footer—it's very bad form to come unequipped with a present, preferably something black—a lump of coal will suffice.

At any latitude it's prudent to avoid a present that could be construed to carry a whiff of criticism. For instance, when handing over a year's gym subscription, it's best to stress the sumptuousness of the spa, rather than the effectiveness of the weight-loss program.

Given the foregoing, it can be distinctly helpful when tradition dictates what's expected of you. In Japan, for instance, on Valentine's Day, it's women who give men chocolates and a month later, on White Day, the male recipients reciprocate with a gift of higher value. For the literal-minded, it might well be something white—marshmallows, lingerie, roses—with appropriate wrappings.

The ultimate gift-opening moment, however, was in Ancient Roman times when, the story goes, Cleopatra of Egypt, seeking political support from Rome, commanded her servants to present an oriental carpet to Julius Caesar. Unrolled at his feet, the carpet turned out to contain Cleopatra herself. She became his mistress.

Picking the perfect moment is crucial. Earlier this month, when Russia's Vladimir Putin popped over to Sofia to talk about a gas pipeline, Bulgarian Prime Minister Borisov handed him a Karakachan

GIFT GUIDE: ESSAY



puppy in mid-press conference. Although Putin dropped a kiss on the pooch's muzzle, he appeared a trifle nonplussed to be left holding it for so long. And rightly so. Confronted by TV cameras, animals are wont to react with undiplomatic naturalness. It's precisely to avoid such sticky moments that Queen Elizabeth II never steps out on official business without a lady-in-waiting.

Animals are, of course, onerous to receive. It's perhaps surprising therefore that Queen Elizabeth II once saw fit to present General Charles de Gaulle of France with a Corgi dog; that breed of which the British royal family is so fond and yet which is notorious for nipping footmen's ankles.

The perfectly human inclination for one's generosity to be recognized was well understood in 18th-century Scotland, where donors' names, addresses and the amount "mortified" for "upkeep of the poor," for instance, were painted directly onto the walls of churches—and in some instances can still be seen today.

At St. Cuthbert's in Edinburgh, on deciding to erect a board of names, the Kirk Session expressed the hope that "the said mortifications, being conspicuously inscribed in gold characters may be a motive to others to follow the example of the mortifiers."

As the daughter of a Church of Scotland minister, I benefited in childhood from a more enlightening message. Summoned to my father's study—along with my brother and sister—we were presented with a silver sixpence each (pre-decimal currency and a fabulous amount to a small child.) It being neither Christmas, nor a birthday, we were puzzled. Dad explained that it was "pure grace," not the least dependent on good behavior; a theological lesson I've retained to this day.

An oft-heard secular homily—"It's the thought that

counts"—is put more lyrically by the Chinese—"To walk a thousand li and present a swan feather; the gift is light but the friendship is solid." The saying stems from a long-ago story about a man from the provinces who is tasked to deliver two swans as a precious offering to the emperor. On the long journey he tends to the birds with care. Nearing the capital, however, he sets them into a lake to wash their plumage and they fly off, leaving only feathers. Undeterred, he wraps a single feather in a cloth inscribed with a poem featuring the line, "Gift is light, but the respect is genuine." Far from being offended, the emperor rewards him for dedication to fulfilling his mission.

This happy ending leads to a logical coda: the art of receiving. In this age of cyber "thank you" cards (okay, I admit it, I've done it too), a gracious handwritten letter is so rare that it is in itself something to be cherished.

At the White House, quite apart from any expression of gratitude, democracy demands that the "circumstances justifying acceptance" are also noted. In the instances given earlier, the reason logged in each case was, "Non-acceptance would cause embarrassment to donor and U.S. Government."

Meanwhile, for all of us, the Internet facilitates the ultimate no-no: calculating the cost of a gift. This Christmas, should your true love send you a partridge in a pear tree and all the other items in the medieval carol, then a glance at the Christmas Price Index kept by the PNC Financial Services Group of Pennsylvania will reveal the cost of all goods and services, including maids a-milking, pipers piping and drummers drumming.

No doubt Sigmund Freud, author of "The Psychopathology of Everyday Life," would be able to explain our impulse to know.

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GIFT GUIDE: HOMES

Designers offer a bit of pizzazz

This season introduces pieces for the living room that are appealing, homey and multifunctional

By J. S. MARCUS

For the better part of the past decade, skies were sunny for Europe's star designers, who were able to transcend the usual confines of their discipline—the home and the office—by competing with, and often outshining, architects and sculptors. Then came 2008's economic downturn. Suddenly years' worth of daring experiments earned a place in our communal time capsule, rather than in someone's gallery or living room.

Now, Europe's top designers are regaining their footing, just in time for Christmas, and the trees of the last few difficult years are bearing very appealing, very homey and decidedly multifunctional fruit.

"The year is coming to a good end," says Munich designer Konstantin Grcic, who says that the last few "dry" years have made designers "more considerate" and their clients more discriminating. "Consumers are very careful about what they buy and what they don't buy," says Mr. Grcic, who will be honored as DesignMiami's Designer of the Year next week. "If they buy something," he says, "they want to treat themselves."

A jewel of an object to find under the Christmas tree is Mr. Grcic's Blow table (around €2,600), a shimmering hand-blown work of Murano glass, produced by U.K. design firm Established & Sons and Italian glassworks Venini. "I wanted to do a piece of furniture that intrigued me," says Mr. Grcic, whose previous experiences with glass, including a series of bar glasses commissioned by Absolut Vodka, "were on a very industrial scale."

The table, made of a pear-shaped base and plank-like surface, works next to a bed or a sofa, he says, but also "could be used outdoors."

Inside and outside come together in one of the fall season's most celebrated new launches—Hella Jongerius's Bob garden club chair (€2,150), designed for Kettal, Barcelona's outdoor-furniture specialists, who also work with Patricia Urquiola and Marcel Wanders. The chair's water-resistant materials "are made for outdoors," says Kettal vice president and co-owner Alex Alorda, "but you can have it indoors too."

Kettal "more or less wanted an iconic piece," says Mr. Alorda, of his firm's first-time collaboration with Ms. Jongerius, one of the pioneers of contemporary Dutch design, who recently relocated to Berlin.

About to start limited production in time for a select group of pre-Christmas orders, the chair, whose lightweight appearance belies its elegance and comfort, is available in black and white, with light-green armrests. In mid-January, it goes into wider distribution and will be relaunched at the Milan Furniture Fair this spring in a range of colors. A matching ottoman costs €950.

Iconic is also the first word that comes to mind when you think of the classic Eames Lounge Chair (€5,385), with its Santos Palisander wood shell, leather cushions and sculptural ottoman (€1,885). First launched in the 1950s, the chair has stayed a constant seller for its European manufacturer Vitra—meanwhile Europeans themselves have grown steadily taller. This year Vitra updated the height of the classic design by several centimeters, increasing the com-



Clockwise from top: Iittala; Marimekko; Vitra/Marc Eggiman; Alessi; Konstantin Grcic; Alessi

Clockwise from the top, Kastehelmi bowl, designed by Oiva Toikka; Socks Rolled Down stemware, designed by Anu Penttinen; Lounge chair and ottoman, designed by Charles and Ray Eames; Alessi 24h Sentence Maker wall clock, designed by Marti Guixé; Blow table, designed by Konstantin Grcic for Established & Sons in collaboration with Venini; and Alessi Scoiattolo nutcracker, designed by Andrea Branzi.

fort level while preserving the dimensions. "The clothing and car industries update sizes," says Eckart Maise, Vitra's chief design officer, when asked to explain Vitra's rationale; "it took three years" to get the exact proportions right. Lounge Chair buyers can now visit Vitra's campus in Weil am Rhein, Germany, and select the particular grain of their chair's veneer, then watch the piece being made on the premises.

Words rather than colors set apart the work of Catalan designer Marti Guixé, who created a wall clock for Alessi this year called 24h Sentence Maker (from €90), which replaces numbers with words like "desire," "art" and "Guixé"; the clock hands then connect the two words into a sentence thanks to an

"is" placed in the center of the dial. A companion clock, called Blank (from €90) allows you to fill in your own words. "I prefer content to shapes," Mr. Guixé says.

This season, Alessi also launched a whimsical, squirrel-shaped nutcracker (from €70) by master Milan architect and designer Andrea Branzi.

Italy and Finland mark the two poles of European design, but a new stemware series from Marimekko seems to combine Italian fantasy with Finnish form. Socks Rolled Down (from €29), created by young Finnish designer Anu Penttinen, features brash colored layers and functional shapes.

Meanwhile, Iittala, Finland's other design powerhouse, has brought

back the Kastehelmi series of textural glass tableware (from €25) first created in the 1960s by Oiva Toikka. Decorated with glass droplets, the series, which was phased out in 1989, has been relaunched in clear and apple-green versions.

For a taste of what's new in Swedish glass design, check out the new Orrefors Carat series of crystal bottle stoppers (from €29) from Lena Bergström. The skyline-like pieces, made out of cut glass and named after great cities, can be used for any kind of bottle, but Ms. Bergstrom suggests you use them "to bling your favorite liquor bottles."

Bling of a more restrained nature can be found in Bang & Olufsen's new portable BeoSound 8 docking station (7,695 Danish kroner or

€1,030), which can accommodate an iPod, iPhone or iPad. The black-and-white design is complemented by colored speaker-covers.

If you want to send a card instead of a gift, but still want the signature of a great designer, Stockholm's Designgalleriet has commissioned individual Christmas cards from many of Europe's best-known design personalities, including the Swiss-based Polish architect-designer Oskar Zieta, Venetian designer Luca Nichetto and Helsinki's Ilkka Suppanen. Each card sells for 1000 Swedish kronor (€105), with proceeds going to the Red Cross.

The one-of-a-kind cards, some of which are rendered in leather or crystal, should long outlast this year's holiday season.



HERMÈS SADDLEMAKER - HERMÈS WATCHMAKER



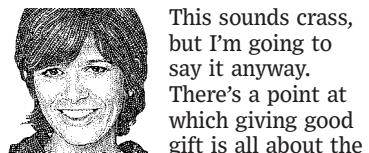
ARCEAU SKELETON
Steel case, openworked mechanical self-winding movement, alligator strap
Crafted by Hermès watchmakers in Switzerland

GIFT GUIDE: FASHION

Giving good gift: The rules

[Style]

BY TINA GAUDOIN



This sounds crass, but I'm going to say it anyway. There's a point at which giving good gift is all about the money. I'm not necessarily saying that the more expensive the gift is, the better; but there's little doubt that if you want to give something meaningful, special and individual, in most cases you are going to have to pay for it. Yes, yes, I've heard all about the gifts that take the form of handwritten note cards: "I the bearer promise the recipient 10 hours of back rubs/a week at Amanjena/a new car in the spring." One acquaintance even booked a table at El Bulli for his birthday the following year and offered it to his wife as "their Christmas gift." Make no mistake, this sort of laziness or ineptitude (I'm being kind here, because really it's extreme selfishness) doesn't go unnoticed. A poorly gifted female isn't just scorned, she is scorched. Don't pretend you don't know what I'm talking about. The secret of giving good gift is, of course, to buy for the recipient what you would most like to own yourself. When it comes to the opposite sex, the tricky part is working out equivalencies. You might, as a member of the male species, quite like an Aston Martin DB9; your female partner will not, but she will almost certainly appreciate like for like in diamonds. An Armani tuxedo might be on your list; whilst on hers, it would be more likely to be the Michael Kors gold jersey gown pictured here. An old hunting print is unlikely to be her choice, but a modern-day photograph shot by a top fashion photographer would tick the box. If the equivalency principle doesn't work for you, then the other alternative is chic, classic understatement mixed with a quirky element of surprise (i.e. buy more than one thing—but make sure each piece is "the ultimate"). If you are doing this, then include something humorous (see Lyn Harris's wallpaper below). Taking this approach does, of course, require doing one's homework, or relying upon a journalist to do it for you. In which case, you can almost certainly guarantee that what the journalist recommends will also be on her Christmas list.

Hermès Avalon 'H' blanket, £790. You will know if she already has it because even you can't miss that H logo. If she doesn't have it, buy it. If she does, move on to Hermès china.

Chanel's 31 Rue Cambon, 200 ml, £170. One of Chanel's Les Exclusifs range, and named for Chanel's couture atelier, it smells like old silk, pearls, oil paintings, the back seat of a vintage Bentley and well....good taste.

Michael Kors barley stretch matte-jersey fishtail gown with paillettes, £6,875. Quite simply, the dress of the season. Kudos to you if you can be among the few to obtain it (there's only one left in the designer's shop on London's Bond Street as I write). Available also throughout Europe in selected stores and, of course, in the designers designated home city: New York. Where is Concorde when you really need it?

Vanessa Bruno navy rabbit fur jacket, £1,050. To co-opt an old song lyric, there's more rabbit than in Sainsbury's on the streets at the moment. But not all lapin is a fabulous shade of blue and crafted by the French designer. Très chic.

Goyard Palace trunk, £6,875. Luggage makers of the moment (but also since 1853), that Goyard logo is the mark of a seasoned traveler; touted by European royalty, American presidents and, supposedly, even Arthur Conan Doyle.



Lyn Harris's floral wallpapers - Triple Sea Fig in Yellow, £75 per roll. A handwritten card is permitted with this one—it offers up the name of the wallpaper hanger you have engaged to paper the interior of her wardrobes or dressing room with this print.



GIFT GUIDE: FASHION



Fitflop's Mukluk tall sheepskin boots, £199. These sheepskin boots have an ergonomically crafted sole and are supposed to thermoregulate, keeping your feet at the right temperature during flights, working off the post-flight bloat when you land. Not that you are insinuating she ever bloats.

Vintage 1983 Rolex Day Date with burnt orange lacquer dial, £12,700. It would be bad manners to not buy her a vintage Rolex at some point. Very few of these, with the brightly colored enamel dials, find their way to the market: the theory being that most are lying among vast secret collections.



'Blue Elephant and Temple, Dungarpur, India, 1999,' £7,500, Michael Hoppen Gallery. Vogue photographer Tim Walker has a painter's eye. His fantastic tableaus often feature fashion as almost an afterthought, and sometimes not at all; but always with a sense of humor.

Tim Walker/courtesy of Michael Hoppen Contemporary; Fitflop: The Vintage Watch Company; Purdev.

Purdey 20 Bore, £83,425. Is shooting the new shopping? I'm going to resist namechecking anyone here, royal or otherwise, but if it is, then Purdey suggest a bespoke 20 Bore Over and Under Game Gun.



Anna Valentine's cuffs, from £295. Cuffs have been around for a while now, but few are as stylish as AV's. Buy these and you'll really look like you know what you are doing.



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GIFT GUIDE: JEWELRY

All that glitters this Christmas

Whether it's vintage or modern tribal, a classic or statement piece, it's hard to go wrong with jewelry

By JEMIMA SISSONS

From fun, affordable jewelry to serious investment pieces, there is something out there for even the hardest to please of festive receivers this year.

One big theme is "ethno-chic"—bold, tribal-inspired shapes and motifs. But those looking for something more flamboyant and ladylike have plenty to choose from in the form of exuberant cocktail rings and "Man Men" inspired earrings, as well as colorful pieces with a bit of humor injected into them. As jeweler Kiki McDonough says: "In these slightly challenging times, these pieces provide something cheerful and uplifting." For a present that is guaranteed to stand out, vintage is the way to go. Many retailers offer modern and accessible ways to acquire such pieces, whether selling them online or offering reworked vintage jewelry. "The quality of a lot of the vintage pieces is incredible in terms of attention to detail and production, and also because many of the pieces really sum up what people are looking for in the way of statement jewelry," says Bridget Cosgrave, buying director at U.K. retailer Matches. "Also, the appeal is that each piece is unique, so clients like the fact that they are buying into special pieces that nobody else will be wearing."

A certain impending royal wedding is already being forecast to further dictate trends: "What's nice is that Kate Middleton doesn't have a diamond ring," says jeweler Solange Azagury-Partridge. "People don't always have to have a diamond, and I think it's great if it means people will now look to other stones. After all, traditionally, diamonds were only there to enhance rather than be center of attention."

Here is an overview of the biggest trends this season.

Tribal

This is all about the mixing of textures and materials, and large, statement pieces, designed to take center stage in an outfit. Big, bold shapes are the order of the day in Erickson Beamon's collection for Kinder Aggugini, which includes leather link bracelets combined with gold, and a Masai-inspired necklace, £1,000. Noor's collection includes a dramatic neck-lengthening Riviere necklace, crafted from jet beads and pavé diamonds, £22,620, and a matching cuff, £14,825. Wright & Teague's Nuba collection—which includes sculptural breastplates and necklaces—takes its inspiration from Africa and uses strong geometric shapes. Fine engraving draws its inspiration from tribal markings, and hand-forged collars are inspired by the grasses of the savannah.

Vintage

One fashion reference that refuses to go away is "Mad Men" and it hasn't escaped jewelry either. Erickson Beamon's Bosa Nova collection comprises sparkling, brightly hued earrings, designed with the company's trademark sense of drama and fun, and inspired by the neat '60s cocktail hour look. These are standout, dressy pieces, designed to be worn with a nipped-in dress and painted nails. Huge vintage-inspired cocktail rings are also an enduring trend. Again, Erickson Beamon has some beautiful pieces, comprised of bright crystals and floral motifs. Calleija



fine jewelry and Kiki McDonough have some similarly dazzling offerings, packed with multicolored gems.

Original or updated vintage is also fashionable. Violet Vintage Jewellery sources original vintage jewelry from markets and then reworks them for a contemporary twist or simply polishes them so they look as good as new. They also sell vintage-inspired pieces that are more economical. Florence B—worn by actress Sienna Miller—also restores and updates vintage jewelry into beautiful pieces. At Matches' online boutique, you can find stunning vintage pieces by Susan Caplan, such as Chanel clip-on earrings, £408, and a dramatic Yves Saint Laurent gold necklace, £750—the advantage of these pieces being that you will have something that is one of a kind and hard to source.

Unisex

This look is for the younger, edgier or more fashion forward. Increasingly, designers are making unisex jewelry, or else similar collections

for both men and women, such as jeweler Stephen Webster's Boyfriend collection. His daughter's boyfriend inspired him: "My daughter and her boyfriend dress in exactly the same way," says Mr. Webster. "I could never do the same—it's part of that whole thing of borrowing each other's clothes, definitely a modern trend. Added to this is the fact that a lot of my men's jewelry was being bought by women, so this new collection is smaller versions of men's pieces."

Amsterdam-based designer Buddha to Buddha also creates chunky statement pieces that look great on any wrist. Dominic Jones launched his collection with model Alice Dellal in 2009. His Tooth and Nail collection—worn by the likes of Beyoncé and Rihanna—comprises silver knuckle-duster-style rings, dagger pendants and a gold geometric square ring. At Solange Azagury-Partridge, her outré Hotlips collection—lips crafted out of precious stones—has just been extended to include fabulously colored cufflinks.

Nature

Flora and fauna is a continuing theme. Serpents have been a particularly enduring presence, with examples at David Morris, Theo Fennell, Asprey and Bentley & Skinner. Marni has some beautiful necklaces with delicate leaves in shimmering metal. Van Cleef & Arpels has a dazzling array of fauna-inspired jewels, from a dragonfly brooch (from £10,000) to a pretty butterfly diamond ring, £21,200. Graff also has nature-inspired pieces, such as beautiful peacock brooches and diamond rings in the shape of a swan (prices available upon request). Moussaieff has some stunning floral pieces in yellow gold and purple titanium.

Humor

Whether it's an antidote to the recession, or just the need for some light relief from fashion that takes itself too seriously, many designers are injecting a big dose of fun into their pieces. "I like word play," says jeweler Solange Azagury-Partridge, whose offerings include an engage-

ment ring with a carrot on it (£1,800) and a "Ball Crusher" ring, with talons curled around a huge pearl (£9,800). Stephen Webster's latest collection is a Seven Deadly Sins set of rings, including the lust ring, made of 18-carat white gold, white diamonds and a central tanzanite, £98,000. "I don't want to make comedy jewelry, but I like irony, it makes you smile," says Mr. Webster. Also look to Alexander McQueen's warrior skull rings for something irreverent and fun.

Cuffs

The perfect accessory to a party frock, the right cuff is a stand-alone piece. Aurélie Bidermann (available on net-a-porter.com) has created a web-like lace cuff from 18-carat gold, £1,075. Isabel Marant has added statement semi-precious stones to create a fun, colorful piece, £235. Lanvin has gone edgier, with a crystal, metal and python offering, £1,140; while Van Cleef & Arpels offers a simple gold Jackie O cuff in yellow gold, £16,300.

GIFT GUIDE: JEWELRY

Keeping time in style

By J. S. MARCUS

The buzz has been building for over a year now. Last October, Omega watches, a Swatch Group brand, announced a special limited-edition version of its Seamaster Planet Ocean diver's watch. Named in honor of a stronger-than-steel metal alloy, and distinguished by a ceramic bezel, the "Liquidmetal" watch (£3,580) was produced in a numbered series of 1,948 pieces, commemorating the year of the Seamaster's initial launch. In the throes of its first full-fledged Christmas season, the watch is a must-have for lovers of tough-guy timepieces—but you may need nerves of steel to find one. Many dealers have waiting lists, and an Omega spokesman recommends going directly to its small number of brand boutiques.

The limited-edition watch has been around for a generation, says Geoffroy Ader, Sotheby's European head of watches, based in Geneva. "The limited-edition concept was invented by Mr. Hayek," says Mr. Ader, referring to Swatch Group's founder Nicolas Hayek, who is thought to have saved the mechanical Swiss watch industry in the 1980s with the plastic Swatch watch. Though initially associated with seasonal variations of the already varied Swatch, limited-edition watches now extend to the upper reaches of the luxury market, and make an ideal gift for the watch lover who has almost everything but the coveted serial number of the latest limited release.

On Saturday, just in time for the pre-Christmas rush, Swiss watchmaker Cabestan and Italy's Ferrari will launch the limited-edition Scuderia One—though you may be stuck with a sports car in the deal. Available only to Ferrari customers, and produced in a series of 60, the watch will sell for €300,000, according to Cabestan's owner, Timothy Bovard. The American entrepreneur, who is based in France, says the watch—a collaboration between watchmaker Jean-François Ruchonnet and Flavio Manzoni, Ferrari's head of design—will be available with red or yellow markings on the drums.

Limited editions on their own often fail to create a sense of occasion,

says Fabio Bertini, general manager of Milan's Pisa Orologeria, the fashion capital's leading high-end watch dealer. "Limited editions play a very interesting and appealing role" in the watch trade, he says, "but only if they are justified." Pisa, says Mr. Bertini, teams up with makers like Patek Philippe and Vacheron Constantin "to celebrate a precise moment in our and our partners' history." In 2008, Pisa launched its new Patek boutique, with a 50-piece edition of the classic Calatrava watch, and next month Pisa will debut its new 12-piece Vacheron Constantin Pisa Americano, only available in its multibrand Milan store (€23,300).

Geoffroy Ader says these kinds of collaborations between a brand and a retailer often have great resale value. He cites the 2003 Patek Philippe series, issued to celebrate the 125th anniversary of German watch dealer Wempe, pieces of which have almost doubled in value since the launch. Limited-edition watches are especially popular in Asia, says Mr. Ader, and the Asian market has been responsible for the dramatic success of Ball, the century-old Swiss watch brand, which is attracting worldwide attention this year for its shock-proof Spacemaster Orbital watch (£3,000). Kevin Kouch, Ball's Swiss-based general manager, says you can play golf while wearing the watch, limited to 999 pieces, without worrying that all that motion "will block the rotor." However, he cautions, the majority of these watches are reserved for the Asian market.

South of the Alps, Anonimo, the Florentine watchmaker, has brought out a stylish, innovative piece called the Notturnale, with a case made of "drass"—a stainless-steel, in-house compound—and gold. The 200-piece, limited edition sells for around €5,200. If you want to combine simplicity, luxury and scarcity, go to Paris's Chronopassion for a special Richard Mille RM 10 watch, with a sleek black-and-blue color scheme and titanium case, created exclusively for the Rue Saint-Honoré boutique. Founded in 1999, Richard Mille watches typically run between €55,000 and €500,000, says Chronopassion owner Laurent Picciotto. The 50-piece RM 10 is a relative bargain at only €52,000.



Left page, clockwise from top: Riviere necklace by N.oor; 'Ball Crusher' ring by Solange Azagury-Partridge; Susan Caplan vintage Chanel earrings; Citrine cocktail ring by Kiki McDonough.

This page, from top, Lanvin Geode wood, metal and brown crystal cuff; Perlée cuff by Van Cleef & Arpels; Susan Caplan vintage gold tone bracelet; Lust ring from Seven Deadly Sins collection by Stephen Webster; diamond peacock brooch by Graff; and Swarovski-crystal flower-button earrings by Erickson Beamon.



From the top, Lanvin; Van Cleef & Arpels; Matches Fashion; Stephen Webster; Erickson Beamon; Graff Diamonds



Omega Ltd.; Ball Watches (bottom)

At left, Ball Spacemaster Orbital watch; above, Omega Seamaster Planet Ocean diver's watch.

GIFT GUIDE: GADGETS

3D gadgets descend on Christmas

BY NICK CLAYTON

Step into any electrical store and you can't escape the way TV manufacturers have designated this to be the 3D Christmas. There are plenty of sets vying for attention, none of which are definitively the best; although, in this area, plasma screens currently seem to have the upper hand over LCDs.

More exciting are the other devices starting to overcome the obstacles inherent in 3D technology. With much of the content, for instance, originating in the cinema, a projector seems a natural way to view it. The LG CF3D shows 3D in a form that can be viewed using inexpensive, lightweight polarizing glasses.

Although high-definition camcorders are relatively commonplace, the first consumer 3D camcorder, the Panasonic HDC SDT750, has only appeared recently. And for anybody who is regularly stuck in a hotel room with nothing more than CNN for company, the HP Envy-1195ea 3D multimedia laptop could be a welcome gift, provided they've got the shoulders to lug it across the airport concourse.

Outdoors, bringing a birds-eye view from the ground, the DraganFlyer X6 is perhaps the ultimate remote-controlled toy, although it has plenty of serious uses. A pair of Zeal Optics Transcend GPS skiing goggles, meanwhile, will make any serious skier desperate to get on the slopes to try out its real-time display of speed, altitude and location.

Outside the realm of multidimensional offerings are a couple of other notable gadgets for the home. The audiophile will appreciate the Harman Kardon GLA-55 multimedia speakers, which are as loud as they look, while coffee lovers will envy the compact Miele CM5100 free-standing coffee machine, with its variety of easy-to-use programs. Meanwhile, the diamonds around the edge of the £5 million Stuart Hughes iPhone 4 could just solve the phone's infamous aerial problem.



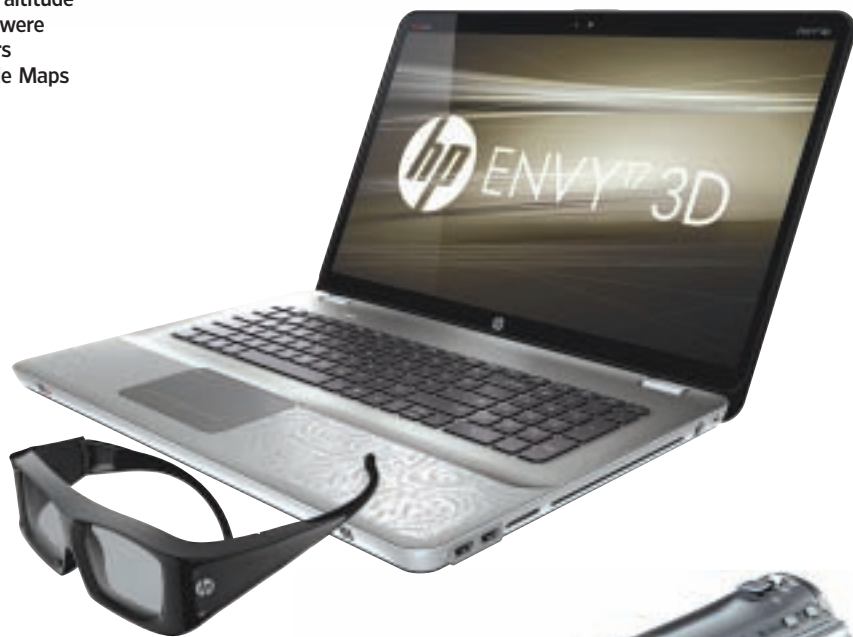
▲ Harman Kardon GLA-55 multimedia speakers; around £500. Love or loath their looks, plugged into a computer they'll render game effects, movies or music at room-shaking volume. The sound quality's not bad either.



▲ DraganFlyer X6 remote-controlled helicopter; £21,000, including training. More than just a big boy's toy, this rugged aircraft is capable of serious aerial photography, with attachments for infrared or high-definition video.



▼ Zeal Optics Transcend GPS skiing goggles; £450. Smart LCD technology displays data—from speed and altitude to your exact location—as if it were floating on a screen two meters ahead. You can even use Google Maps to plot your off-piste route.



HP Envy 17 3D laptop; from £1,559. Sharing the looks, high-quality sound and processing power of the rest of the magnesium-alloy-built HP Envy range, this ups the multimedia ante with a stunning 17-inch HD display and is the first laptop to use ATI's 3D technology. The downside is that, for all its perks, it's heavy. ▼

LG CF3D projector; around £11,000. This full HD 3D projector can easily throw a bright, high-contrast picture up to five meters wide, using "passive" technology, the same as found in cinemas. ▶



▶ Panasonic HDC SDT750 camcorder; from £999. Not only is this the first consumer 3D camcorder, but it's also an extremely capable 2D device. Footage shot through the converter adds a dimension for 3D TV owners, provided they're aware of the zoom limitations of the technology.



Stuart Hughes iPhone 4 handset; £5 million. If everything else seems second best, how about this iPhone 4 covered in 500 diamonds? Two have already been sold to a businessman in Australia, proof perhaps of the continuing strength of its economy. ▶

Miele CM5100 Barista freestanding coffee machine; from £999. The Miele CM5100 fits all the functions of a coffee-shop machine into a compact space. Go from beans, water and milk to a tall, skinny latte at the touch of a few buttons. ▶



Clockwise, Air 2 Air, Hewitt Packard; Panasonic; Miele; Stuart Hughes; Harman Kardon; LG; Firebox

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GIFT GUIDE: FOOD & WINE

For the oenophile who has it all

[Wine]

BY WILL LYONS



What does one buy the wine lover who has everything? It's a perennial problem for anyone who lives with an avid oenophile.

You may well answer wine, but in reality a purchase of a case or special bottle of wine is fraught with risk. Much of one's love of wine comes from the practice of collecting and discovering, of trawling through wine merchants' catalogs, picking up bits of gossip, recommendations, discovering little-known wines and much under-rated vintages. A cellar is a personal collection, in many cases made up of parcels of wine that signify certain anniversaries and dates that are significant in the buyer's life. To get it right, one either has to buy a wine lover a niche wine they haven't already discovered or something so spectacularly special they will be forever in your debt. But, of course, there is always the danger of getting it wrong. If you are buying for the wine lover, it is far better to steer clear of wine altogether and opt for something a little more unusual. The world of wine accessories is nearly as fascinating as the world of wine itself. From spiral cellars to crystal decanters, there is an abundance of wine paraphernalia to keep the most demanding of connoisseurs content. Below are some of my top wine gifts that will, I'm sure you'll agree, delight the wine lover who has it all.

Large NeoFresh V292 cabinet, from £3,200. Storing wine in a modern, centrally heated house can prove problematic, especially if it is fine wine that needs to be cellared for a few years before drinking. If the temperature rises and falls by more than 10 degrees Celsius, it can spoil. Wine also doesn't like strong light and benefits from humidity. Eurocave's storage cabinets solve all these problems, with the benefit of not requiring the expense and trouble of constructing a cellar. ▼



Spiral Cellars (cellar); Around Wine (other)



▲ **Crystal Design Wine Sceptre, £100.** A handy gadget for anyone wanting to chill their wine without the fuss or inconsistency of an ice bucket. The stainless-steel rod retains a constant temperature for up to an hour when inserted, from the freezer, into a bottle.

Le Nez du Vin aroma kit, from £21.50. There are a range of kits, capturing six to 54 smells and scents in little bottles, which help wine lovers identify those complex notes such as raspberry, toast, hawthorn and blackberry. ▼



▲ **Riedel Vinum Bordeaux wine glass, £20 each.** When it comes to wine glasses, Georg Riedel is the most influential man in design and the Vinum Bordeaux is his signature glass. Although created for Bordeaux, the glass is enormously versatile and will service most wines.

▲ **Screwpull LM-400 corkscrew, £80.** The latest model from Screwpull is one of its easiest to use, removing the cork in a simple up-and-over motion. It can also handle all types of cork, including synthetic and plastic. ▶



◀ **Riedel Eve decanter, £375.** I never thought I would need a DVD to teach me how to pour wine from a decanter, but that is exactly what one gets with the Riedel Eve—a towering, snake-like decanter almost preposterous in its shape and guise.



▲ **Spiral Cellar, from £9,200.** If space is a premium, what better way to treat the wine lover than with a house for his collection? Designed in 1977 by Georges Hanois, this watertight, cylindrical system can safely store up to 1,500 bottles.

A bountiful harvest

[Food]

BY BRUCE PALLING



Have modern foodies ever had it so good? Not only are there increasingly more useful gadgets to acquire, but it has never

been so easy to find new recipes on the Internet, purchase out-of-print (and newly published) food books and buy fresh ingredients from a growing list of suppliers. New food trends have enriched our options for eating out, from pop-up restaurants in Britain to the *néo-bistrot* movement in France to the rise of Nordic cuisine and the small-plate revolution. Cookery schools offering professional-level courses to average Joes are now in abundance in Italy, France, Britain and Spain. With so much bounty, where do you begin when looking for gifts? Here's my list.

Thermomix, £857. Used in many European restaurants, this combination machine is probably the most multitasking kitchen item ever devised. It can weigh, steam, puree, chop, mix, knead dough, peel garlic and even operate as a water bath for *sous-vide* preparations.

On Rue Tatin cookery school; five-day courses, from €2,000. Food writer Susan Herrmann Loomis holds weeklong classes each month at her home near Rouen in Normandy. Lessons, for a maximum of eight people, include journeys to local markets and specialist producers. In the spring and summer, she also does one-day courses in Paris.

Olio di Cosimo olive oil; three 250 milliliter bottles for €45, plus packaging. Paolo Pasquali has set new standards in the quality of olive oil in association with the Culinary Institute of America. His personal oil, "Olio di Cosimo," comes from his Renaissance villa in Tuscany, which also doubles as the world's first Oleoteca, or olive-oil resort.

Fäviken; €30,000 for 12 people for the weekend. This 8,000-hectare estate is the ultimate Christmas hideaway for dedicated foodies. Magnus Nilsson runs one of the great Nordic cuisine restaurants in this remote Swedish location, where there is also ice fishing, trekking and hunting.

Japanese Knife Company knives; set of four, £2,906. Jay Patel has commissioned a handful of sets of four "JKC 73 Layer" knives. For the technically minded, they have 3% carbon content and 18% powdered chromium, plus dashes of silicon, cobalt, tungsten, manganese and nickel. They have an edge sharper than a ceramic knife and are some of the most beautiful kitchen objects you will see.

"Noma: Time and Place in Nordic Cuisine"; £35. The definitive account by chef René Redzepi of what is now deemed to be the best restaurant in the world. Apart from the astounding illustrations of his dishes, Mr. Redzepi explains his path from a young molecular-inspired chef at El Bulli to his ground-breaking dishes in Copenhagen.

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GIFT GUIDE: BESPOKE



Clockwise from left, Giambattista Valli crocodile ankle boots; Miller Harris bespoke perfume; Ultimate Ears; Berluti tattoo shoes; Delfina Delettrez Kama Sutra Cufflinks; and Christian Astuguevieille sofa for CoutureLab.

One step beyond the ordinary

From tattoo shoes and jeweled boxers to tailor-made perfume, bespoke items make a gift memorable

By JEMIMA SISSONS

The annual dilemma of buying something unique for loved ones can threaten to take all the joy out of the festive season. As the word "luxury" becomes increasingly overused, people are looking instead to one-off, bespoke items that go a step further.

For Mauro Durant, creative director of CoutureLab, the artisan retailer that sources original pieces from unusual designers, people are changing the way they shop. "Our clients are looking to stand out," he says. "So many things are mass-produced, more and more people are requesting bespoke and want individuality. More than 70% of what we sell can be bespoke or commissioned as special projects." Although CoutureLab has a flagship store in London's Mayfair, the bulk of its customers shop online for anything from stunning Anish Kapoor cufflinks and python-skin belts to sofas and artwork.

When one Swiss-based client panicked that someone might wear the same dress to a royal wedding she was attending in Greece last summer, Mr. Durant specially commissioned a £12,000 one-shoulder *trompe l'oeil* dress from Mary Katrantzou, which Mr. Durant personally delivered to her on the Greek island where she was staying, after having secured the services of a local seamstress in case alterations were required.

For another client, who was puzzled over what to buy her brother, a keen collector of rare copies of the Kama Sutra, Cou-

tureLab offered bespoke cufflinks by Delfina Delettrez of intertwined couples, crafted in gold. She commissioned the whole range, at a cost of £15,000.

Bespoke can offer an element of surprise and fun. At shoemakers Berluti, the in-house artists will, for an additional £330, tattoo an image onto its £970 Piercing shoe. One customer had the family crest tattooed on the toe, while another client chose red lips. Singer Bryan Ferry asked Berluti to paint his shoes green and tattoo a skull onto the front: "I thought they were rather rock 'n' roll, so would be great on stage. They've been on stage a lot since then," Mr. Ferry says.

Savile Row tailors Richard James is also catering for the hard-to-buy-for man. Perfect for stocking fillers, for £65, boxer shorts are given a personal touch, with Swarovski crystal monograms for an additional £5 per initial. Or starting at £95, design your own cashmere socks with initials or a name, in a choice of 15 colors, or embellish them with Swarovski. The tailors also offer bespoke cashmere jumpers. "I ordered my third Richard James six-ply cashmere sweater one month ago," says Godfrey Hutchinson, a London hedge-fund manager. "I love being able to choose from the extensive color range, and having the sleeve length fitted for me perfectly is an added bonus."

One of the latest additions is Richard James's bespoke attaché case, which is made from dyed deerskin and comes in six colors. These can be tailor made to chosen width, depth and extra pocket inserts. Priced from £2,250, they can be mono-

grammed on the clasps.

Of course, Richard James offers a full range of bespoke suits too. The strangest request? "One customer asked for a specially adapted pocket on the inside for his gun," managing director Sean Dixon says.

As the perfect complement to the specially adapted suit, how about a shirt with one cuff bigger than the other, to accommodate an extra large Rolex? This was just one of the requests at French luxury menswear house Zilli during its recently launched bespoke shirt service. After a fitting in one of its shops in Paris, Cannes, London or New York, the client can choose

'One customer asked for a specially adapted pocket on the inside for his gun,' Sean Dixon of tailors Richard James says.

from more than 300 fabrics, as well as colors for buttons, button-hole stitching and whether to personalize the button with his name. Three weeks later, the shirts are delivered to your doorstep in a silk pochette and box. According to Arnaud Corbin, Zilli's U.K. director, these are for the kind of men who repeat order: one Russian customer ordered 65 in one go at a cost of £600 each (the custom shirts cost as much as £900 each).

For women willing to spend £8,000 and endure a year's waiting list, London-based

perfumer Lyn Harris, of Miller Harris, will create the ultimate gift: your own tailor-made perfume. This involves months of consultations in which Ms. Harris will talk to you about your favorite smells, memories and places, and together you will devise your very own scent. Those looking for a more affordable—and instant—present can get any message they like engraved onto one of Miller Harris's beautifully ornate, 100-milliliter glass bottles filled with the perfumer's ready-made scents, which start at £64 and can be engraved for an additional £60.

Elsewhere, fashion designers are also offering fully bespoke services. Paris-based Giambattista Valli, who has dressed the likes of Queen Rania, Penelope Cruz and Mischa Barton, is about to open his first stand-alone store in Paris, where he will be customizing clothes. If you like a particular item of clothing, but want it in a fabric to match your shoes, or if you love a jacket but want three-quarter length sleeves instead, he will alter to order. He has also designed a range of four must-have shoe shapes, which can be ordered in whatever fabric or tone you desire, starting from €3,000. "We have to redefine what luxury means," says Mr. Valli. "Today, this means offering something more."

But for those less sartorially minded, there are other options. Keen cyclists with an artistic flair have their own bespoke choices. For €499, at Swedish company Bike By Me, you can design your bicycle online in any combination of crazy hues, even if this means one orange wheel, one blue, a green frame and red handlebars. Starting at

GIFT GUIDE: BESPOKE



Clockwise from top left, Anya Hindmarch bespoke jewelry boxes; Richard James boxer shorts with Swarovski crystal monogram; Giambattista Valli coat; Richard James attaché briefcase; and mix and match at Bikes By Me.

£500, Lunar Cycles of the U.K., sources vintage bikes, restores them and then allows you to design them in any way you like, from handle bars and seats to frame color. "The custom-built bike becomes part of the customer's identity," owner Sam Parks says.

For music lovers, California-based company Ultimate Ears offers custom built earphones, which are molded to your ear shape. Originally designed for the music industry, so musicians could hear themselves on stage, they are used by sound technicians and musicians (including 50 Cent, Arctic Monkeys and Avril Lavigne) for the crystal-clear sound (the company claims the sound is equivalent to £40,000 speakers). After an audiologist local to you takes a mold of your ear, the impressions are then sent to the laboratory in Irvine, Calif., where they are made by hand, and start at \$399.99. You are free to design the outside of the earphones however you like—one rap star had £30,000 worth of diamonds put on his, and a sound engineer with a sense of humor had his filled with beer so they frothed up when he rocked his head.

However, for one step beyond bespoke, Anya Hindmarch in London offers a personalization service that puts the "p" in personal, allowing you to get a message in your own handwriting printed onto a vast array of products, starting from a £65 keyring to the pricier Ebury handbag, cufflink boxes, wallets and tote bags. Items can be given a humorous twist: One woman wrote this message on the iPad cover she bought for her husband for Christmas: "There are three of us in this relationship."

Anya Hindmarch jewelry boxes are also given a special edge, with the drawers lined in photographs that have been carefully printed onto satin. For her own husband, Ms. Hindmarch made a "Hangover box" complete with pictures of him in full revelry on the inside, and drawers labeled "Aspirin" and "Alka Seltzer."

One Anya Hindmarch client had messages from all her grandchildren printed onto £40 leather bookmarks, which with the customization cost her £300 each.

Anya Hindmarch also offers a made-to-measure wallet service to meet demand from men who wanted their wallets to fit their bespoke suit pockets perfectly.

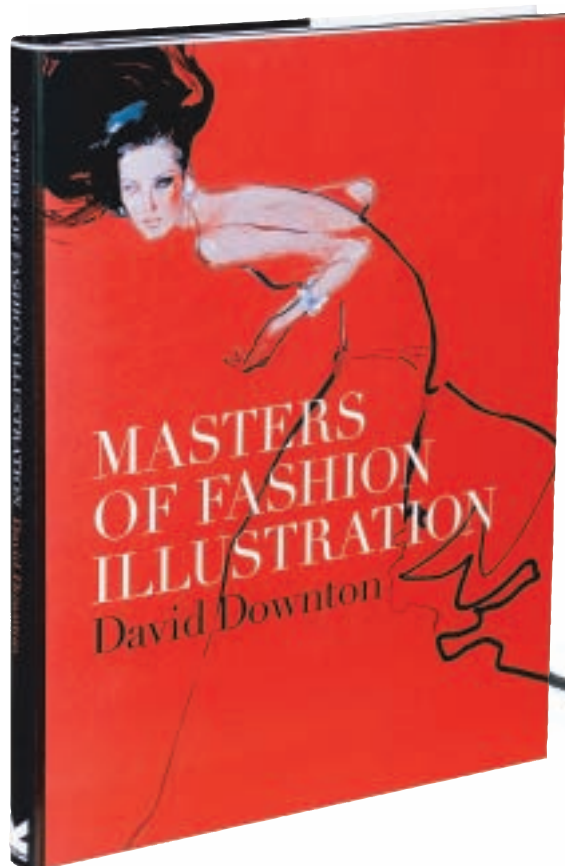
The service has even been known to play cupid. When architect Jake Thompson wanted to propose he did so with a two-way journal (a reversible leather book) on which he had meticulously worked out what he wanted to write. On one side he embossed Sophia James, the maiden name of his wife-to-be, and on the tabs were embossed "church" and "field nearby." On the reverse side of the journal it read her would-be married name "Sophia Thompson" and the tabs read "husband" and "children." He had also embossed two quotes in his handwriting: "See you at the church, don't be late" and on the other side, "Can't wait to grow old with you."

She said yes. "My now-wife has always been a huge fan of Anya Hindmarch," says Mr. Thompson. "So when I saw the bespoke store on the way to work one morning, it seemed the perfect way to propose and definitely helped in her saying yes."



Clockwise from top left: Anya Hindmarch; Domenico Pugliese for The Wall Street Journal; Giambattista Valli; Richard James; Bikes By Me. Opposite page, clockwise from top left: Giambattista Valli; Miller Harris; Ultimate Ears; Berluti; Delfina Delettrez; CoutureLab.

GIFT GUIDE: BOOKS



Books to furnish a coffee table

Fortunately for traditionalists, there is a plethora of attractive volumes with heft to showcase at home

BY ANDREW MCKIE

As what now seems to be called the “gifting season” approaches, you may be hoping to receive an iPad, Kindle or Sony Reader. This has been the year of the e-reader, and there is certainly something to be said for packing hundreds, even thousands, of titles in less space and with less weight than a trade paperback.

But there’s no denying that words on a screen lack the solidity of the real thing. Books do furnish a room, as the novelist Anthony Powell said, and fortunately for traditionalists, publishers continue to produce handsome volumes with the necessary heft to dominate a coffee table.

Two of the most natural subjects for such books have always been art and fashion, and the two are elegantly brought together in “Masters of Fashion Illustration” (Laurence King, £30), by the illustrator David Downton, whose work frequently appears in *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar*. Mr. Downton’s own stylish drawings—which are, as you would expect, well represented here—are a delight in themselves. But the book also gives excellent accounts and examples of the work of earlier designers and illustrators (including such figures as Andy Warhol, who began his career drawing shoes, and Bob Peak, now best known for posters for films such as *My Fair Lady*).

Proof that photographs can be more fantastical than drawings is offered by the pictures in “Isabella Blow” (Thames & Hudson, £29.95), a tribute to the fashion stylist, who died in 2007. As well as photographs of Blow’s highly idiosyncratic outfits,

there are selections from her letters, essays by writers such as Daily Telegraph fashion director Hilary Alexander and an introduction by Philip Treacy, the milliner who created her bizarre hats. A more detailed account of Blow’s often tragic personal life is given in “Blow by Blow” (HarperCollins, £20), by her husband, Detmar, from which one can conclude that she would have fit perfectly among the subjects of “Café Society” (Flammarion, £45), by Thierry Coudert, an illustrated account of the relationship between socialites, artists and their patrons between 1920 and ’60; a proto-jet set both documented and embodied by figures such as Cecil Beaton and Cole Porter.

In “Savile Row: The Master Tailors of British Bespoke” (Thames & Hudson, £45), James Sherwood provides an account of the origins of that classic style, and of the evolution of men’s tailoring—as well as a guide for potential customers. Those who want, instead, an account of the progression of a craftsman-based luggage company to an international couture house will get plenty of value from the enormous “Prada: Creativity, Modernity, Innovation” (Prada, £90). A look at both the history of classic design and its likely future is the subject of “Couture in the 21st Century” (Harrods, £40), in which some of the leading names in the field, including Giorgio Armani, Paul Smith and Oscar de la Renta, talk about the influence of figures such as Dior and Yves Saint Laurent. The essays are accompanied by stylish portraits by Rankin.

If your interests tend more toward pure design than designer labels, the essential book, as usual,



Top, David Downton’s ‘Masters of Fashion Illustration’ book and a 2008 illustration of Dita Von Teese sitting for ‘Pourquoi Pas?’ wearing a dress by Christian Lacroix Couture; above, D&AD’s book ‘Everything is Made.’

promises to be the annual production of D&AD, which gathers together the best advertising, art direction and graphic design of the year under the title “Everything is Made” (Taschen, £35), emblazoned across the cover in the characteristic watercolor of the artist who works under the name Bob & Roberta Smith. No less distinctive is the collection put together by the Scottish writer and

painter Alisdair Gray, “A Life in Pictures” (Canongate Books, £35). Though best-known for his fantastic novel “Lanark,” Mr. Gray worked for many years as a portraitist, and provides a typically distinctive and opinionated account of his life, times and acquaintances in words and pictures. For a similarly racy account of life in the art world, and particularly in the louchier areas of London’s East

End, Laura K. Jones’s “A Hedonist’s Guide to Art” (Filmer, £15) brings together essays by more than 60 artists, dealers, critics and gallerists.

As always, some of the best fine-art publications—often with the advantages of being both affordable and offering genuinely scholarly insight—are the catalogs of major exhibitions. One of the year’s highlights was undoubtedly the Hermitage Amsterdam’s “Matisse to Malevich” (Hermitage Amsterdam, €29.95), though there have also been two major exhibitions on the work of Bronzino. From New York’s Metropolitan Museum, there is a catalog of the artist’s drawings (Yale University Press, \$60) and, for those who cannot get to Palazzo Strozzi’s show in Florence, which won’t travel, Mandragora has produced “Bronzino, Artist and Poet at the Court of the Medici” (Mandragora, €40).

Two quite different books deserve a mention among the year’s best. A contemporary reminder of the power of the image, and of what a good photographer David Bailey is, comes in his excellent collection of photographs of troops in Afghanistan, entitled “Heroes” (Thames & Hudson, £24.95), sales of which will contribute to the charity Help for Heroes.

And if only something truly impressive will do for your coffee table, and you’re fluent in fourth-century Greek, you could do worse than order the facsimile of the “Codex Sinaiticus,” which has been produced by the British Library and Hendrickson. The list price is \$799, but for that you get a faithful reproduction of the oldest complete Bible manuscript known, weighing in at 25 pounds. Heavyweight in every sense.

GIFT GUIDE: ESSAY

Why presents needn't be turkeys

Clothes maketh the man look stupid if he doesn't know what to buy his loved ones at Christmas

BY SAM LEITH

It is more blessed to give than to receive, or so the Bible tells us. Receiving has its compensations too, mind you—particularly if you have wealthy, generous, tasteful friends. And as much as it's a pleasure to give a thoughtful gift, don't you find your brain goes blank at this time of year?

I am probably not alone among heterosexual men in having more or less literally no sense of style and a profound aversion to shopping for clothes. Also, I don't know how to wash jumpers. I have therefore come to depend on Christmas for the annual replenishment of my wardrobe. It rarely lets me down. But giving clothes, for me, is another matter. If you don't care too much about clothes (pleased though you may be to be given nice ones), you are BOUND TO FAIL buying them for people who do care about them. You court a kindly, if stiff, smile on Christmas morning, and the disappearance forever into the back of your sister's wardrobe of something you thought rather stylish.

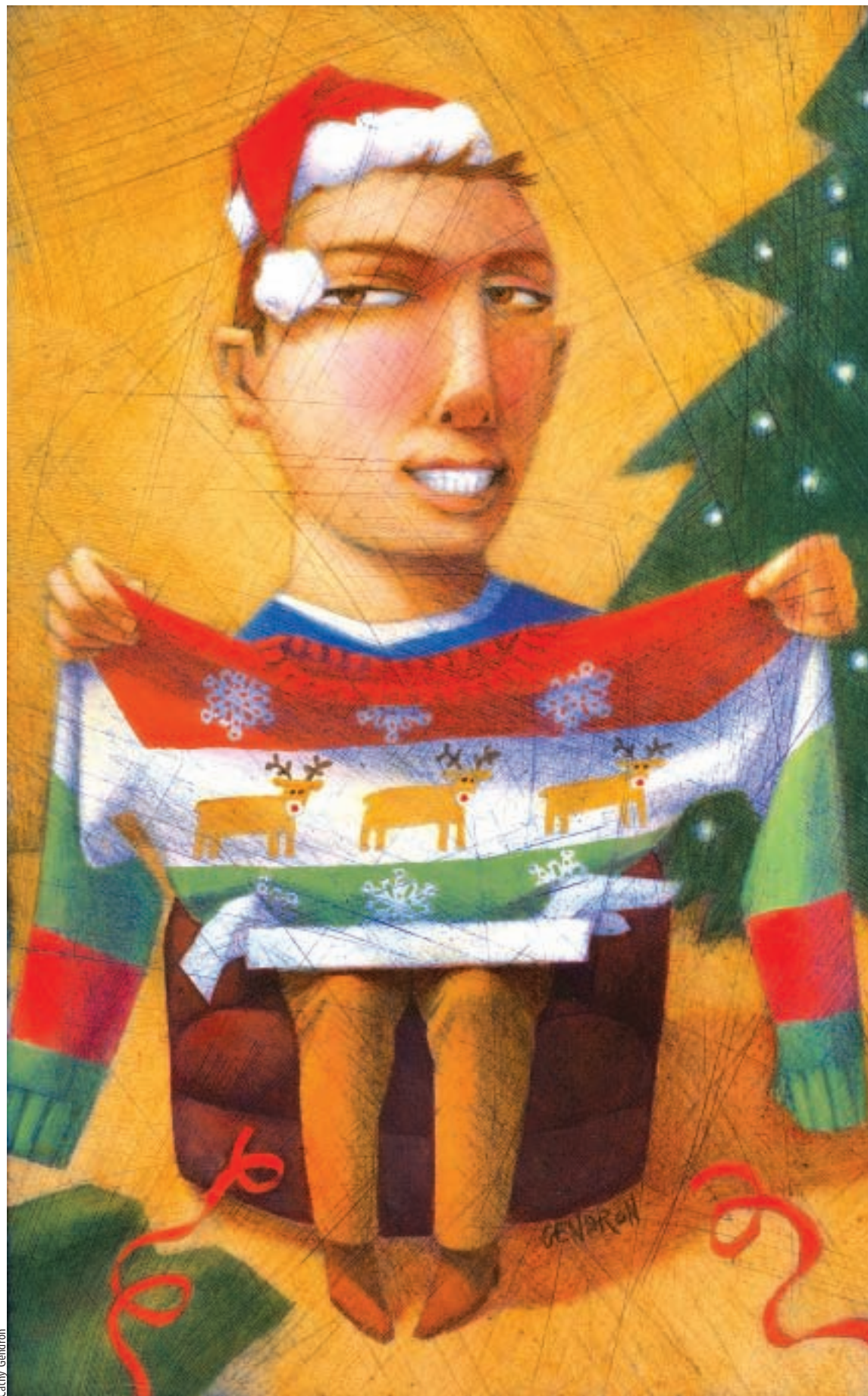
Giving paintings or posters is also high-risk. You will notice if they don't appear on the wall, and if they don't appear on the wall, well, what's

Gifts that give the more ephemeral pleasure of an experience can be among the best.

the point of them? As for books, the well-chosen book is bliss. But Christmas gift books don't, as a rule, make good Christmas gifts. If you're buying a book for somebody else, it should pass the test of being one that you would buy for yourself. If you've actually read it, you're sharing something you like, not something you guess they will like: That's a whole different thing.

Not everybody, I know, agrees with me, but for my money you can never go wrong with kitchen equipment. A good well-weighted knife, a banneton for proving bread, an egg-coddler, a heat-diffusing ring, a meat thermometer—these sorts of things may not scream of glamour, but two of my dearest possessions are my big Le Creuset casserole and a vintage ceramic mixing bowl, both presents from my fiancée. These are gifts that give pleasure month in, month out. Gifts that give the more ephemeral pleasure of an experience can also be among the best. I love to give friends and family theater or concert tickets—and if you can afford them, get three or four and go with them. That gift goes both ways. This Christmas, being nine years old in my head, I would desperately like tickets for "Batman Live," but I can't imagine anyone will want to come with me.

The key thing in present-buying is a dab of originality. An old girlfriend once threw a complete tantrum, with tears, after every single member of her family, without exception, gave her a scarf for Christmas. Hard to blame her. More stoical was a friend whose father was a notorious meanie. Christmas reached its heart-breaking nadir when my friend, not yet in his teens, saved his pocket money up to buy his father a nice silk tie. His father grunted ap-



preciatively when he opened it. When my friend came to his own present from his father, though, he found himself the proud possessor of a bag of mixed nuts with the logo of a now-defunct airline on them.

Certain clichés seem, thank goodness, to have gone by the wayside. I don't believe that a soap-on-a-rope in the shape of a giant golf ball (such as I gave my late grandfather every Christmas throughout the 1980s) is regarded by anyone anywhere as an acceptable present now, irony or not. But others survive. Moms generally receive multiple scarves, fathers will be given more sets of cufflinks than they have shirts and grandmothers will be bombarded with bath salts. It's as if we imagine all our mothers

have cold necks, our fathers are constantly wearing double-cuffed shirts, and our grandmothers do nothing all day long but soak like prunes in lilac-scented baths.

What was the worst present I ever got? Hard to say. Ordinarily, I like jumpers, but the several-sizes-too-big jumper that had three great blocks of color in horizontal stripes so my shoulders were bright green, my tummy was bright white and the area from my hips to my knees bright red? I looked like a particularly unthreatening Italian nationalist. Or there were the heel-wheels: a pair of roller-skate wheels you were supposed to clip onto the heels of your shoes. They would light up when you scooted across the floor,

apparently, so as to be the envy of your friends in the playground. I was 35 years old.

The incident that sticks in my mind, though, concerns my brother. As a boy he gave our grandmother a coffee-table book about cats one Christmas, inscribing a greeting on the flyleaf. The following Christmas, he got it back, with her greeting to him inscribed on the following page. She was getting a bit forgetful, and had taken to selecting presents for people by pottering around her house and picking out something she thought they'd like. And she was right. He did like cats. He both gave and received, so was twice blessed. And in the age of austerity, perhaps that points the way forward.

Naughty or nice

Do

Remember what you got them last year. It's surprisingly easy to associate someone with a particular type of present and buy it twice in successive years. That dressing gown won't have worn out yet, and its recipient will think: "So, I'm Dressing-Gown Guy, am I?"

Be sensitive about what you spend. Extreme generosity can be covertly aggressive. A thoughtful present will never make its recipient feel rotten; but an enormous one, when they've only been able to afford something modest in return, can.

Stick to the rules. If, in your large family, you've agreed to play "Secret Santa," it's not fair to announce on Christmas morning that you "couldn't resist" getting everyone something. The same applies to agreed spending limits.

Give things you've made: paintings, paperweights, marmalade.

Drop hints. But drop them in such a way as to make people feel clever and thoughtful for having noticed. Take care not to drop them with more than one hintee present; by the time you open your third tennis racquet, you'll be in all sorts of trouble.

Bother to wrap presents. It is a colossal waste of paper—so the thrifty can be applauded for reusing wrapping paper—but it shows you've made an effort. And there is pleasure in trying to guess; witness the following "Star Wars" joke: Darth Vader: "I know what you're getting for Christmas, Luke." Luke: "How?" Darth Vader: "I have felt your presents."

Don't

Leave price tags visible. It is the easiest of mistakes to make, and it just looks a bit slapdash. Also, if the tags show something massively reduced, you look like a cheapskate.

Give children whose birthdays fall near Christmas a "combined gift." They will feel swizzed.

Take offense when someone wants to return a present you've given. Much better your ego takes a small hit, and they replace the ethnic poncho with something they might wear, than it languishes in their closet making them feel guilty. With clothes, it's sometimes kind to include the receipt in a sealed envelope along with the present.

Recklessly re-gift. Of course it's fine to pass unwanted gifts, like unwanted children, on to new homes where they'll be happier—but it is worth making sure that the flyleaf of that book doesn't say "To Sexy Dave, Love From Auntie Margery, Xmas 1989" before you give it to your wife.

Buy yourself any big ticket item that your dear one may have possibly already bought you. If you've been talking about new dining-room chairs, WAIT AND SEE! There's always January.

Donate to charity in lieu of giving a present. The self-satisfaction with which you announce that you've sponsored a goat in Rwanda on their behalf is insufferable. Why should they forgo presents to make you feel good? Ask people, if you want, to sponsor a goat on your behalf rather than give you a gift.

BOOKS

War Hero, Diplomat, Author, Impostor

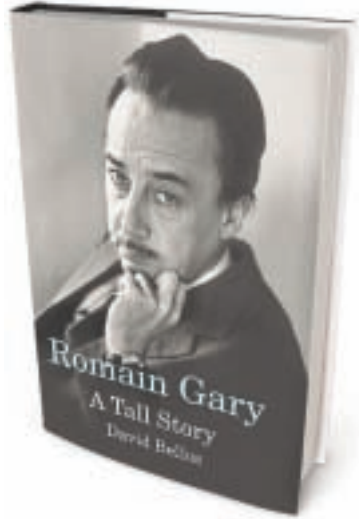
Romain Gary: A Tall Story
By David Bellos
Harvill Secker, 528 pages, £30

BY RICHARD LEA

Romain Gary's life is the kind of bittersweet adventure his legions of readers would relish. Indeed, he fashioned the early part of his own extraordinary story into a world-wide bestseller, "La Promesse de l'Aube," which has never been out of print since it was first published in 1960. Brought up by a single mother, this Polish Jew became a French war hero, a bestselling novelist and a diplomat, winning the Goncourt prize twice, marrying a Hollywood star and ending his life with a shot to the head.

His latest biographer, the translator and academic David Bellos, avoids the obvious temptation of this dramatic yarn and rejects the task of pinning down Gary's "true identity." Instead, in "Romain Gary: A Tall Story," he paints a compelling portrait of a man who was "Russian, and also Polish as well as being completely French . . . a Jew, but also Catholic . . . a man of great charm, and also a boor and an oaf," always keeping a close eye on a remarkable literary career that reached its apotheosis with the creation of Gary's outlandish literary alter-ego, Émile Ajar.

Mr. Bellos begins conventionally enough, with chapters charting Gary's birth in 1914 as Roman Kacew in Vilna, now part of Lithuania, his



mother's separation from his father and her determination to move to France at the earliest available opportunity. This was Gary's first great stroke of luck, for otherwise Gary would have lived as a Pole, or as Mr. Bellos puts it, "died as a Jew. There were very few thirty-year-old males of Jewish extraction left anywhere in Poland and none at all in Lithuania in 1945." According to Gary, his mother suffered from "galloping Francophilia" all her life, and made sure he learned French alongside the Russian, Polish and Yiddish bequeathed to him by his multilingual home town. Polyglot immigrants were "ten a penny" in the cosmopolitan atmosphere of interwar Nice, but Gary's Jewish roots caught up with him in 1939, when he failed a French Air Force examination because he was "too re-

cently naturalized" and instead of the glamour of flight, he became a gunnery instructor.

The outbreak of World War II was Gary's second great stroke of fortune, without which his life as a published writer would have been highly unlikely and his career as a diplomat impossible. When news of France's surrender reached Gary in June 1940, he made an illegal dash to Algiers and fetched up in Britain, where he became one of only five men in his squadron to survive the war, and was awarded the *médaille de la Libération* in 1945.

Meanwhile, Gary was waking up in the middle of the night to write his first novel, "Forest of Anger," which was rushed into print in an English translation at the end of 1944. This story of Polish resistance to the Nazi occupiers in the woods around Wilno follows a 14-year-old boy, Janek, as he learns the harsh lessons of war. Published in a rewritten version in French the following year, "Éducation européenne" was enough to gain Gary a glowing review in Albert Camus's newspaper, the *Prix des Critiques* and entry into the world of French letters.

Here Mr. Bellos breaks off from the thrust of Gary's life to consider his politics, his writing and his troubling relationship with sex. A well-judged chapter examines Gary's prodigious sexual appetite, his unconventional marriages with the British journalist Lesley Blanch and the American actress Jean Seberg, as well as his many affairs, his constant frequenting of prostitutes and his predilection for teenage girls. Mr. Bellos

balances his sympathy for a man whose pursuit of sexual satisfaction never brought him happiness with the suggestion that Gary's inability to imagine that women might find sex work humiliating is "a stunning failure of empathy in a man who was acutely sensitive to human suffering in every other sphere."

A prize-winning translator himself, Mr. Bellos is fascinated by the repeated transformations Gary performed on his own works as he managed parallel careers as a writer in English and in French. A 15-year career as a diplomat culminated in a posting to Los Angeles as Consul General, while Gary published a series of novels crowned by "Les Racines du Ciel," a page-turning African adventure that won Gary the Goncourt in 1956; and his untrustworthy memoir of his life so far, "La Promesse de l'Aube." Stung by criticism of his French, Gary switched to English for his next three novels, before returning to French during the writing of the vicious Holocaust comedy "La Danse de Gengis Cohn" as his marriage to Jean Seberg began to disintegrate in 1966. Mr. Bellos conjures up the intensity of Gary's compositional process with an examination of his almost illegible manuscripts. Words seem to have "poured out of the man" until the stream "slows down, spreads out, loses its direction." Gary simply puts a "thick diagonal line through a page or two and starts over, from the top," a habit that goes some way to explaining the contrast between his striking openings and his sometimes over-hasty conclusions.

Perhaps the most extraordinary episode of Gary's extraordinary life began in 1973, when, according to the testament he published after his suicide in 1980, the author decided that his latest novel, "Gros-Câlin," was incompatible with "the notoriety, the weights and measures, according to which my work was judged." This story of a lonely civil servant, which charts his mental disintegration through its increasingly contorted syntax, was submitted for publication as the work of an unknown French writer living in Brazil calling himself Émile Ajar. Within the year "Gros-Câlin" was running off the shelves and rumors that it might win the Renaudot prize, traditionally reserved for younger authors, forced Gary/Ajar to instruct his publisher to withdraw it from contention. Ajar's second novel, a story of 14-year-old Algerian boy living in Paris called "La Vie Devant Soi," went one better. With the press in hot pursuit of its mysterious author, this runaway bestseller was awarded the Goncourt prize.

Terrified of being unmasked as a fraud, loaded up with anti-anxiety drugs and increasingly distressed by Seberg's gradual disintegration, Gary still managed to write five books in the five years before his death. For Mr. Bellos, after writing and rewriting 27 novels in a career spanning 35 years, Gary's death was the ultimate act of self-determination, the final full stop for a writer who, as he wrote in his suicide note, had "at last said all that I have to say."

—Mr. Lea is a writer and editor for Guardian Books.

The Pontiff Speaks

Light of the World
By Peter Seewald
Ignatius Press, 219 pages, \$21.95

BY FRANCIS X. ROCCA

"The monarchy's mystery is its life," the English writer Walter Bagehot wrote in 1867. "We must not let in daylight upon the magic." A turning point in the history of the British crown, according to some observers, was the 1969 BBC documentary "Royal Family," which showed Queen Elizabeth and her relations engaged in TV-watching and other activities of ordinary folk. The broadcast endeared the royals to millions but may have helped to dispel the larger-than-life aura on which their prestige depended.

Will future historians of the papacy say the same about "Light of the World"? Based on six hours of interviews with Pope Benedict XVI conducted in July of this year by the German journalist Peter Seewald, the book offers a rare portrait of a reigning pontiff, presenting him as insightful and eloquent—and pious of course—but also all too human.

Benedict confesses to TV-watching of his own: the evening news and the occasional DVD, especially a series of movie comedies from the 1950s and 1960s about a parish priest sparring with the Communist mayor of his Italian town. Despite such pleasures, the pope finds that his schedule "overtakes an 83-year-old man" and reports that his "forces are diminishing," though he makes it clear that he still feels up to the demands of his office.

When it comes to recent controversies, Benedict voices gratitude to

journalists for recently exposing the clerical sex abuse in several European and Latin American countries. He goes on to claim that "what guided this press campaign was not only a sincere desire for truth, but . . . also pleasure in exposing the Church and if possible discrediting her." While there is doubtless much truth to such a statement, blaming the messenger is the last thing an image consultant would advise a leader to say in a crisis—which suggests that the image of Benedict that appears here is as uncensored as Mr. Seewald claims.

Likewise, concerning the uproar that greeted Benedict's 2009 decision to lift the excommunication of Richard Williamson—the ultra-traditionalist bishop who turned out to be a Holocaust denier—the pope sees evidence, in the press, of "a hostility, a readiness to pounce . . . in order to strike a well-aimed blow." In this case, Benedict concedes that he made a mistake—that he would not have readmitted Bishop Williamson to the Catholic Church had he known about his statements on the Nazi genocide. "Unfortunately," he tells Mr. Seewald, "none of us went on the Internet to find out what sort of person we were dealing with."

Benedict also concedes that "maybe [the Vatican] should have" called for an immediate world-wide investigation of clerical sex abuse following the scandals in the U.S. in 2002. Recalling the violent protests that greeted his 2006 speech in Regensburg, Germany, in which he quoted a medieval Christian emperor describing the teachings of Muhammad as "evil and inhuman" and "spread by the sword," Benedict confesses to naïveté. He gave the speech, he says, "without realizing



that people don't read papal lectures as academic presentations, but as political statements."

Disappointingly, Mr. Seewald never asks Benedict about the much-discussed case of a pedophile priest who was reassigned to pastoral work on Benedict's watch as archbishop of Munich in 1980 and who later molested children again. Church officials have said that Benedict did not approve the reassignment, and there is no evidence to suggest that he did; but readers of "Light of the World" might have been grateful to receive that assurance from the pope himself and an expression of regret for the tragic error.

Clearly the Vatican, during Benedict's papacy, has struggled to manage its "public relations," a term the pope himself adopts here. In one respect "Light of the World" may appear to be the latest false move: Over the past several days—ever since the Vatican newspaper ran certain passages ahead of publication—Benedict's comments in the book on the use of condoms have occasioned furor, confusion and mockery. In fact, the pope made a highly nuanced statement—that the use of condoms in illicit sexual activity, when intended to prevent the spread of AIDS, "can be a first step" in the practice of sexual morality. But, naturally, the

press pounced, to use the pope's own word.

By speaking to Mr. Seewald so informally on matters of such importance, the pope may be seen to be collaborating in his own diminishment. And yet, on the evidence of the book itself, Benedict's decision to participate in the interviews was deliberate and principled. "Standing there as a glorious ruler is not part of being Pope," he tells Mr. Seewald. "Is it really right," he asks later, "for someone to present himself again and again to the crowd in that way and allow oneself to be regarded as a star?" People, he acknowledges, "have an intense longing to see the Pope" but only because he is "the representative of the Holy One." No one, he says, should "refer the jubilation to oneself as a personal compliment."

Benedict's self-humbling may be part of the "purification" and "penance" that he says the sex-abuse scandal has demanded of the church. Perhaps, too, he sees demystifying the pope—though not the papacy itself—as a contribution to the "new understanding of religion" that he sees emerging in the secular West: a "real faith in the Gospel" untainted by the mythical, archaic and irrational.

We are so used to hearing leaders profess how "humbled" they are whenever they attain honor and power that our first impulse is to be skeptical when Benedict describes himself as a "little" pope, by comparison with his predecessor, Pope John Paul II. Yet his self-exposure in these pages is evidence of his sincerity and could prove a key to the ultimate success of his reign.

—Mr. Rocca is the Vatican correspondent for Religion News Service.

DESIGN



Matali Crasset's daring Dar Hi

By LANIE GOODMAN

At first glance, Nefta, a sleepy agricultural village at the foot of a palm-tree oasis in southern Tunisia, might seem like an improbable place for an upscale, contemporary-style boutique hotel bedecked with sleek minimalist furnishings and eye-popping rainbow-colored walls. The town, 23 kilometers from Tozeur, is a cluster of modest, cube-shaped, flat-roofed, ochre-clay houses, and you'll still find local farmers leading their donkeys down the dusty streets.

"I wanted to develop a small hotel in the desert where you could slow down, take the time to reflect and enjoy simple things," says Matali Crasset, a French interior and industrial designer, who, at age 45, is making her first foray in the world of architecture with Dar Hi. "Nefta is only a two-hour-and-fifteen-minute flight from Paris, but you feel like you've arrived at the end of the world."

Now, after four years of construction, the 17-unit Dar Hi, an experimental eco-retreat and spa located at the edge of the golden dunes of the Sahara, officially opens Monday. It is perhaps Ms. Crasset's most ambitious project to date. Every detail—from the gently curved structure of the building to the babouche rack, where guests shed their shoes for brightly colored slippers—was masterminded by the designer.

"The idea was to collaborate with the local artisans and not import anything, including our own logic," she explains. "It was really exceptional to invent everything from scratch—something I rarely get to do with my other partners. It was like constructing a spinal cord, where every vertebrae interconnects with another. The hotel becomes a platform, a place for potential development."

Known for her playful-verging-on-wacky multifunctional, modular furniture and home accessories, Ms. Crasset (who worked five years with Philippe Starck at Thomson Multi-

media in Paris before opening her own studio in the city in 1998) says she always tries to get people to use objects and spaces in their own way. Call it an interactive tease. For an emergency nap, for example, she invented a cylindrical, tufted-felt "snoozing stool," which comes with a rollout mattress inside and a lid that turns into a "do not disturb" sign. Some more recent creations include a moonbeam-powered lamp and an overhead kitchen chandelier that changes colors in reaction to the food set on the table.

The exterior has a distinctive 'Star Wars' feel, which is hardly surprising, since the movie was shot in the neighboring village.

Ms. Crasset's initial venture into hotel design came earlier this decade, with the Hi Hotel in Nice. Opened in 2003, this artsy, 38-room high-tech haven features nine conceptual themes. Among them, the "Technocorner," equipped with a sliding curtain/movie-screen partition for viewing a video while soaking in bathtub.

For the Dar Hi project, her enterprising young hotelier partners, Patrick Elouarghi and Philippe Chapelet of the Hi Hotel, were eager to explore an alternate form of hospitality that would be "more extreme" than on the traffic-clogged, glitzy seaside Riviera. "When we brought Matali to Nefta, a place we'd often visited on holiday," says Mr. Chapelet, "we showed her the property on the hill, overlooking the dunes, then asked her to imagine a new kind of house. She came back with her proposal, which included futuristic little houses on stilts with enormous bow windows that float over empty space. From there, we

gave her carte blanche." Messrs. Chapelet and Elouarghi together invested €2.5 million on Dar Hi.

The designer worked closely with a Tunisian architect, Mohamed Nasr, and used the locally sourced palm wood for everything from the framework of the buildings to tables, chairs and kitchen utensils.

The elevated independent units, which start from €340 per night and include full board and two spa treatments in the price, feature orange and azure daybed mattresses against a wall of glass, with a sweeping view of the palm grove and desert beyond. The shower is tucked behind the bed ("to allow for the maximum amount of space"). "I wanted a living space that was half open, half closed," she says. Under the stilts of each unit is an outdoor lounging area, shaded by the building, like a subterranean village.

Inspired by the cave dwellings in the neighboring village of Matmâta, the "Troglodyte" suites, for example, look like they've been dug out of the rock. Inside, it's a veritable swelter shelter of cool respite from the blazing sun and a circle of light shines in from up above, illuminating the inner patio and the cave's lilac and yellow walls. Meanwhile, the curvy "Dune" units reflect the desert landscape, "as if you'd fall into a sand dune if you opened the door," Ms. Crasset says.

Dar Hi's exterior has a distinctive "Star Wars" feel, which is hardly surprising, since the movie was shot in the neighboring village and the set is still a tourist attraction. "One important objective was building a facade that would blend with the environment," says Ms. Crasset, whose trademark bowl-cut pageboy is reminiscent of Joan of Arc. "We didn't want the hotel to be an imposing contemporary structure that would stand out and be viewed by the local population as some kind of UFO."

These days, Ms. Crasset continues to juggle small-scale creations with large-scale ventures. Her recently designed sleek set of pastry tools are *de rigueur*—think a hybrid whisk and a



Top, Dar Hi eco-retreat and spa located in Nefta, southern Tunisia; above, French interior and industrial designer Matali Crasset.

snazzy Forges de Laguiole cake knife and slicer, inspired by Parisian confectioner chef, Pierre Hermé.

For her next major project, the Hi-Matic, the designer again partners with Messrs. Chapelet and Elouarghi, for an entirely different concept: transforming a Paris two-star hotel into budget bed and breakfast, which can only be booked online at €100 a night. Located in the lively Bastille quarter, this 42-room country-cabin-in-the-city hotel (slated to open in

April 2011) will target a young hip crowd, who will breakfast on organic goodies sold in vending machines.

But Ms. Crasset's quietly provocative nudge to encourage an alternate way of living ("why should a chair be just a chair?") goes beyond questions of style and price range. "I design places for people who are curious and want to experience something out of phase with their daily rituals," she muses. "Maybe that's what real luxury is all about."

THEATER

Age shall not wither her

By PAUL LEVY

The Royal Shakespeare Company is lucky. This week it began showing off to the public its renovated main Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon and the (now-connected by a colonnade) smaller Swan Theatre. It all cost around £113 million, and it managed to complete the three-and-a-half-year capital works on time, just before the 6.9% reduction in their operating budget forced upon them by the U.K. government cuts. Not only that, but the company gets to keep, at least until after the 2012 Olympics, its popular Courtyard Theatre, which served as the prototype and test-laboratory for the changes made to the main building.

The RSC's not short of revenues. While the RST and Swan remain more or less dark until early March, the Courtyard—until Jan. 30—has a new musical, "Matilda," based on Roald Dahl's story, and there is an RSC ensemble season at London's Roundhouse from Nov. 30-Feb. 5, featuring such hits as director Rupert Goold's stormy "Romeo and Juliet" and performances such as Kathryn Hunter's weird, unforgettable Cleopatra and Katy Stephens as a glorious Rosalind in "As You Like It."

Next year is the company's 50th birthday. I've been coming to Stratford-upon-Avon since 1963, when I saw Sir Peter Hall's cycle of history plays, "Wars of the Roses" with Ian Holm, Dame Peggy Ashcroft and David Warner, and few years have gone by when I haven't made the pilgrimage to Shakespeare's birthplace to see what is usually an outstanding production of his plays. Though fortunate to have been here during the RSC's glory days, I have to admit there were plenty of things wrong with the theater itself; and even if you don't love some architectural aspects of the change, most of the old problems have been solved, while keeping the valuable, beautiful "heritage" elements of the 1932 building—such as the teak flooring and Art Deco light fittings.

This week at the press opening of the transformed facilities, artistic director Michael Boyd announced the highlights of the RSC's 50th birthday season, which lasts from April 14-Nov. 5, with two ensemble companies of actors playing across both theaters. Mr. Boyd will himself direct a new "Macbeth," and the celebrated Mr. Goold directs "The Merchant of Venice," both at the RST. Mr. Goold is preparing his production now, and tells me that, though he usually does his own research and seldom requires the services of a dramaturge, he is "working with John Logan" (the young American playwright who wrote the Tony-winning "Red" about Mark Rothko). "It's still very secret," Mr. Goold teases, "but it will have an American aspect."

Both auditoriums (all three if you count the Courtyard) now have deep thrust stages. This is partly because we know that Shakespeare's own theaters were constructed in this way that surrounds the actors with the audience on three sides. Mr. Goold says that one problem with proscenium-arch productions was that he had "come to realize that they need to have one big theme or concept, such as 'Richard III' on crutches or the 1950s-style 'Comedy of Errors' [in 1978]. It has to be a bold statement, made in broad brushstrokes. Directing



Clockwise from top, the new Royal Shakespeare Theatre auditorium; the transformed theater entrance; an exterior view from Clopton Bridge.

and acting on the thrust stage is much easier, as you don't have to worry so much finding a style, and it's easier to create a spectacle in this dynamic space."

On the old stage, not only was it difficult (as one of the RSC actors, Nicholas Asbury pointed out) to "do" subtle, but there was also the fact that in the 1,400-plus-seat house, some of the cheap seats at the top had poor sight-lines and acoustics. "And," Mr. Goold says, "these seats were filled by schoolchildren and young people who were put off going to the theater by this experience." The 1,040 seats of the new auditorium all have good sight lines, and the distance from the stage to the furthest seat has almost been halved, from 27 meters to 15 meters.

The acoustics are amazing, as Mr. Boyd proves by whispering from all three sides of the stage—we could all hear him clearly. What's more, as RSC actor Keith Osborn tells me (standing on the 32-meter

viewing platform of the new tower, where we surveyed the landscape of the four counties we could see on this clear day): "It has been engineered so that it does not have a sweet spot." The sweet spot is the supposed single point on the stage from which the actor can be seen and heard from anywhere in the auditorium. And, as Mr. Osborn claims and Mr. Boyd demonstrates practically, it does seem to be true that you can hear and see equally well from every seat.

The Tower was built partly to replace the original 1879 Shakespeare Memorial Theatre water tower gutted by a 1926 fire; partly, says the RSC, "as a good reference point for those trying to locate or navigate the building"; and partly to make it possible to see so much of the bard's hometown. There is a stunning view of his birthplace; of Holy Trinity Church, where he is buried; and over the wall surrounding New Place, where there is a Tudor knot

garden I've not noticed before. I could see the Malvern Hills and the Cotswolds, and even the Forest of Arden was visible if you knew in which direction to look.

Other changes for the better include adding several innovative exhibition spaces that show mastery of high-tech visual media, doubling the number of ladies' lavatories (to 47), four bars, the Riverside Café and Terrace, and the culinarily ambitious Rooftop Restaurant, which has 150 covers and great views over the River Avon, as do the balconies of the 15 new dressing rooms.

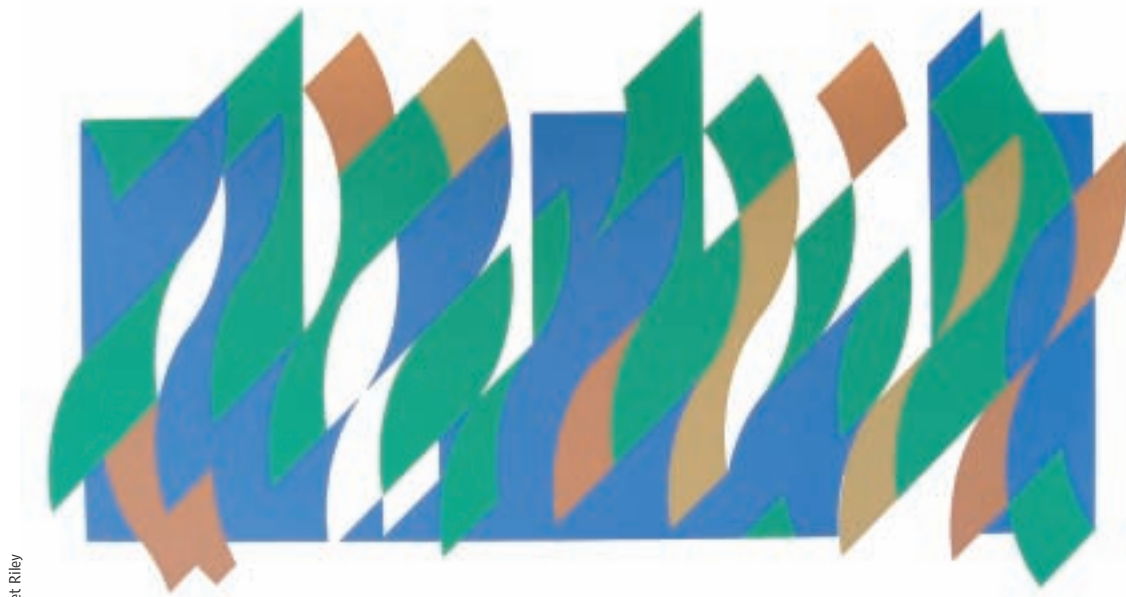
At the Swan in 2011, Mr. Boyd promises we should see "Shakespeare's 'lost play,' 'Cardenio,' reimagined and directed by Gregory Doran." There will also be a reprise there of David Greig's superb "Dunsinane," which premiered this year in the RSC season at the Hampstead Theatre, plus a production of Philip Massinger's "The City Madam," directed by Dominic Hill;

and David Farr will direct Harold Pinter's "The Homecoming," one of the six plays the late playwright did with the RSC.

Later in the birthday season at the RST Nancy Meckler, the American-born director who has worked with the Shared Experience company and is a veteran of three RSC productions, will direct "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Anthony Neilson will direct a revival of "Marat/Sade: The Persecution and Assassination of Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton Under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade."

I was staggered by the original Peter Brook RSC production in 1964 with Glenda Jackson, Patrick Magee and the late, greatly loved Ian Richardson, "whose ashes," Mr. Boyd says, gesturing toward the center of the house, "are buried under the front row seats." Every theater needs its ghost, after all, and this has one in its very foundations.

ART & AUCTIONS



Bridget Riley

'Arcadia 1 (Wall Painting 1)' (2007) by Bridget Riley.

The beauty of geometry

Bridget Riley's paintings reveal the abstract in the classical

BY ANDREW MCKIE

The girls who stayed smart 40 years ago, according to Stephen Sondheim's song "The Ladies Who Lunch," were "rushing to their classes in Optical Art, wishing it would pass." Op-Art may not be the hottest trend in painting now, but it hasn't entirely passed away and, in her 80th year, its best-known and most original exponent, Bridget Riley, remains very smart indeed.

Her intelligence is apparent in the small show that opened this week at the National Gallery in London, which brings together five paintings from the permanent collection with a selection of Ms. Riley's own work, including two large murals painted directly on to the gallery's walls. These will be painted over when the exhibition ends next May. That is hardly unknown in contemporary galleries—the work of Sol LeWitt being the obvious example—but it is radical at the National, which holds no work produced after 1900. But the purpose of this exhibition is to demonstrate that Ms. Riley's geometric forms do relate to the history of the Western canon, and the cleverness of the case she makes is its most interesting feature.

Of course, Ms. Riley trained in the distant days when art students (even those at her alma mater, Goldsmith's College, later the nursery for British conceptualism) were expected to be able to draw, and to have a familiarity with the work of obscure fuddy-duddies like Raphael and van Eyck. Indeed, the first painting the visitor sees is a perfectly competent copy of the latter's "Man in a Red Turban," which secured Ms. Riley her place at Goldsmith's. And in the execution of the drapery, it is possible to see evidence of her central thesis that the planes, geometry and rules of color composition present in the work of the Old Masters show that abstraction, at some level, has been part of art since long before the purely abstract painting of the 20th century.

The notes that the artist has provided beside the five pictures she has chosen—Mantegna's "Introduction of the Cult of Cybele to Rome" and Raphael's "Saint Catherine of Alexandria," both painted in the first decade of the 16th century, and three studies by the *pointilliste* Seurat for his painting "The Bathers at Asnières"—provide an excellent account of what to notice about their composition. Her explanation of the

harmonic envelope in the Raphael, in particular, and the way in which it emphasizes the circular movements of the eye across the canvas, is a fine lesson in how to look.

That, too, is the object of her own work: to concentrate the viewer's attention on looking at pictures. This needs saying in an art gallery more than you might imagine—according to a study conducted at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2001, the median time spent looking at a work of art is 17 seconds. And certainly, on the bench that allows you to look at two paintings on facing walls, the monochrome "Composition with Circles 7" and the sail-like blocks of "Arcadia 1," you become

'It's like a composer—he not only gives you things to listen to, but you also begin to hear things which are not actually there'—Bridget Riley

conscious not only of the rhythms and underlying geometry of the work, but of the act of looking.

The circles, as Ms. Riley explained at the press view on Tuesday, are "the one thing that all my work has been about. It's like a composer—he not only gives you things to listen to, but you also begin to hear things which are not actually there." That effect is noticeable in two of her monochrome visual illusions also on show, "Black to White Discs" (1962) and "Arrest 3" (1965), the latter of which hangs opposite Mantegna's painting. But for all Ms. Riley's excellence at noticing pictorial effects, there is really nothing much in common between the optical swirls of her picture and Mantegna's imitation of a bas relief beyond their chromatic range and illusion of depth.

The musical analogy, however, is telling. With her black-and-white pictures, I find myself reminded of nothing so much as the minimalist music of Steve Reich, which depends not only on repeated phrases, but the way in which the ear responds by finding or inventing new patterns and points of emphasis. Apparently Ms. Riley listened to Bach while devising the circles. She has also spoken of the influence of Mondrian's late painting "Broadway

Boogie Woogie."

Talking about "Arcadia 1," Colin Wiggins, the exhibition's curator and the gallery's director of education, said that there had been much discussion about whether to fix the descriptive label on the wall itself (they did), since the white of the background breaks into the central rectangle. He drew parallels with Poussin's "Triumph of Pan" (1636), also in the gallery's collection and one of the works Ms. Riley picked for a show she curated there in 1989, and about which she talks very interestingly in a film on view at this show. But the viewer is much more likely to think of "The Dance," Matisse's painting of 1910—the mural, in cerulean blue, leaf green, rose ochre and terracotta, has an almost identical palette. I found it extremely interesting, though, to discover that Ms. Riley worked out this composition with cut-out shapes of paper, since Matisse adopted the same practice in old age. One can trace the development of this particular mural by comparing four studies in gouache on paper, and the similar "Blue (La Réserve)," executed more conventionally in oil on linen, which are also on show.

Ms. Riley, who was once a trustee of the gallery, offers insights into its collection and the approach of artists that are well worth having, and has produced work that is as attractive and intelligent as her analysis. But she does not entirely get away from the central difficulty of a show that presents abstract contemporary work beside that of traditionalist painters. At one point, the National's director, Nicholas Penny, asked Mr. Wiggins rather doubtfully: "Can we call Seurat an Old master?" Since Dr. Penny's speciality is the Renaissance, I imagine he would say no. But Seurat's paintings, though very clearly drawing deliberate attention to the practice of painting, are nonetheless traditional enough to have, for example, a subject other than the surface of the paint.

Ms. Riley's insights are fascinating and useful, coming as they do from an artist analyzing how paintings are constructed, and to what end. I have always liked her own pictures, and the ones in this show are well worth going to see. But to see them beside Raphael is to undermine their effect. Interesting though the structural mechanics are, they begin to look like scaffolding next to a Gothic cathedral.

Commemorating a love tale

[Collecting]

BY MARGARET STUDER



The next two weeks of London fashion and jewelry auctions has a soft spot for love affairs, opulence and centuries of style.

On Tuesday, Sotheby's will offer jewelry from the collection of the Duchess of Windsor. The pieces document the famous love story in which King Edward VIII of England abdicated his throne on Dec. 11, 1936, to marry the American divorcee and socialite Wallis Simpson. He lived abroad and assumed the title of Duke of Windsor.

Throughout their time together, the couple commissioned jewels from the great European jewelry houses. "They used jewelry to commemorate their relationship," says David Bennett, chairman of Sotheby's jewelry in Europe.

In the sale will be a diamond bracelet by Cartier that supports nine gem-set crosses, each representing special moments in the Duchess's life between 1934 and 1944 (estimate: £350,000-£450,000). One cross is a reminder of an assassination attempt against the duke when he was still king, with an inscription "God save the King for Wallis." Another is inscribed "Our marriage Cross" for that event in 1937.

An emerald, ruby and diamond heart-shaped brooch with a crown on the top by Cartier commemorates their 20th wedding anniversary in 1957 (£100,000-£150,000). Further Cartier pieces include a striking brooch from 1940 shaped as a flamingo ablaze with rubies, sapphires, emeralds, citrines and diamonds (estimate: £1 million-£1.5 million); and, carrying the same estimate, a very realistic onyx and diamond bracelet from 1952 formed as a stalking panther, with deep green emeralds creating frightening eyes.

On Wednesday, Christie's will offer jewels worn by Winifred, Duchess of Portland (1863-1954), one of the great beauties of her time. In the catalog, the Duchess is pictured at the turn of the century, dripping in jewels as she attends major ceremonial events. Her sumptuous, diamond and natural pearl brooch (circa 1870) is estimated at £500,000-£700,000. The duchess's opulent diamond

festoon necklace (circa 1870) will also be featured (estimate: £400,000-£600,000).

Christie's annual "Fashion Through the Ages" sale takes place Thursday, featuring couture clothing, historical dress, handbags, luggage and costume jewelry from the 17th century to the present day.

Collectors are looking for "anything that turns heads," says Pat Frost, head of Christie's textiles and costumes department in London, adding that "fashion is an accessible area for collecting. Everyone has an opinion on fashion. You don't need a lot of background knowledge."

In this sale, my favorite item is a pair of 18th-century embroidered, green silk lady's shoes protected by equally beautiful pattens, overshoes worn outside to elevate the normal shoe above mud and dirt (estimate: £5,000-£6,000). They make today's stilettos look terribly tatty. Very dashing is an 18th-century, French gentleman's shirt and trousers that look as if the owner was up for a naughty tryst (estimate: £2,000-£4,000).

The 20th-century's most appealing designers are prominent in the Christie's sale. A superb sapphire-blue, velvet evening gown with a deep cut-out back from the 1930s by Elsa Schiaparelli is estimated at £3,000-£5,000; a simple, slick safari suit with short pants from the 1970s by Yves Saint Laurent, at £2,000-£4,000; and a micro-mini dress from the 1990s with red hexagonal breast plates and a printed plush velvet draped skirt from Gianni Versace, at £2,000-£3,000.

Christie's follows this sale with "Elegance: The Luxury Sale" on Dec. 8-9. In it, says Ms. Frost, "we have things you don't need, but want to have." They include desired accessories, small jewelry items, watches and René Lalique glass objects that make for Christmas presents.

A highlight of the Elegance sale will be more than 50 Hermès bags in virtually every color of the rainbow and dating from the 1960s to the present day. This year, Ms. Frost has more crocodile Hermès bags on offer, "They are the most sought after," she says. "If you have a crocodile bag, it gives out an extra signal that you are a V.I.P." The Hermès bags on offer range in estimate from around £1,200 to £32,000.

A pair of 18th-century silk shoes, protected by pattens (estimate: £5,000-£6,000).



Christie's

REVIEW



'Dog's Heart' reveals human heart

Soviet-era novella turned opera shows humanity's complexity in an absurd and eccentric production

BY JEANNE WHALEN

In 1926, Soviet authorities banned "A Dog's Heart," a novella that satirized the communist regime's attempt to create a new kind of world populated by new Soviet citizens. In the book, an upper-crust professor adopts a stray dog and decides to experiment on him: he takes the testicles and pituitary gland of a dead, drunken Bolshevik and implants them into the dog, transforming it into a crude human being with horrible manners and an immediate affinity for the Soviet system.

The man-dog, Sharikov, soon begins terrorizing the professor. He floods his luxurious flat, pontificates about Friedrich Engels and aligns himself with the communist functionaries trying to annex part of the professor's flat. Eventually, Sharikov denounces the professor to the authorities as a counter-revolutionary. Fed up, the professor removes Sharikov's human body parts and turns him back into a dog.

The book's thinly veiled criticism of the new Soviet system helped ruin the career of author Mikhail Bulgakov, whose work thereafter was largely suppressed. Not until 1987 was "A Dog's Heart" finally published in the Soviet Union. Now, Russian composer Alexander Raskatov and British director Simon McBurney have turned Bulgakov's story into an opera that is running for a limited time at the English National Opera.

The opera is Mr. Raskatov's brainchild—it was he who chose "A Dog's Heart" as the storyline—but it is Mr. McBurney's vivid staging that makes the production worth seeing. The dramatic, shifting geometry of the set, the film clips and Soviet graphics projected onto the stage, and the intensely physical performances are what linger after the final curtain



Top, Steven Page as Professor Filipp Filippovich, Peter Hoare as Sharikov; above, puppeteers maneuver a skeletal Sharik.

drops. Unusually for an opera, it is the plot and the drama that dominate rather than the music.

This is a first foray into opera for Mr. McBurney, who is best known as the founder of the experimental theater company Complicite. "Very few operas I find dramatically successful," he says, adding that the "brutal production restrictions," including short rehearsal periods, also made the genre unattractive to him. But Mr. McBurney says he agreed to work on "A Dog's Heart" after developing a rapport with Mr. Raskatov, and out of fondness for Bulgakov, whose story he found "brilliantly dramatic, and very, very funny."

Mr. Raskatov is new to opera, too. Born in Moscow in 1953, he left Russia during the tumult of the post-Soviet collapse, finally settling

in Paris. He's best known for completing, in 2007, the unfinished Ninth Symphony of the late Russian composer Alfred Schnittke.

His avant-garde score for "A Dog's Heart" is laced with Russian folk music and militaristic, revolutionary notes. This is contemporary music, and there are few soaring arias or lyrical passages. In the opening scene, a singer giving voice to the dog snarls and barks through a megaphone. "This is an absurd and very eccentric production—I really wanted it to be this way," Mr. Raskatov says. "I wanted to find this energy, this fearsome energy that existed in the Soviet Union of the '20s and '30s." Set in 1925, the opera opens with an emaciated dog (a skeletal puppet operated by several puppeteers) struggling through the

snowy streets of Moscow. When the professor finds the dog, he takes him home and nicknames him Sharik, the Russian equivalent of Spot or Rover.

Played by Steven Page, the professor is a famous surgeon who lives in a grand flat with servants and caviar. Nancy Allen Lundy plays his maid with great comic effect, springing to his aid with exaggerated leaps and bounds. Soon, a band of proletarians from the local housing committee barges in to demand that the professor give up one of his seven rooms so that someone else might live in it (a common occurrence in the early Soviet years, when the flats of the upper classes were seized and converted into communal apartments). The professor dismisses their request, and asks them to take their muddy ga-

loshes off of his expensive carpet. His disdain for the unwashed masses shows the complexity of Bulgakov's story: no one is black and white. The professor, while defending himself against the lunacy of the new communists, is also privileged and snobbish, and, like the communists, convinced of his authority to create a new life.

The scene where the professor turns Sharik into a man is full of comic blood spurts and flying testicles. The humanized dog gives himself the last name Sharikov and gets a job as a cat catcher, "to bring hygiene to the streets of Moscow." He continues to sleep in his dog basket, but dons a grubby suit, finds a girlfriend and pals around with the professor's enemies—the Soviet housing committee. Peter Hoare is wonderful as Sharikov, playing the role with such grotesque physicality that we feel his animal core. He jumps on the table, strums a balalaika and gets a roomful of respected physicians to sing a dirty limerick with him, horrifying the professor. After attempting to rape the maid, he chases a cat around the apartment and demands drink: "I want more f---ing vodka! Give me more f---ing vodka!" he growls.

In one of the most dramatic scenes, the professor seizes his creation and drags him back to the operating table. The floor of the stage tilts up to create a kind of ramp that is quickly covered by a white tarp. When the doctor and his assistants cut Sharikov open, a stream of blood runs down the stage. Later, when the police arrive to investigate reports of Sharikov's murder, they find Sharik the dog walking on all fours. "Talking is not proof of being human," the professor tells the investigators. "The animal is now turning into an animal again."

FRIDAY NIGHT, SATURDAY MORNING

John Tiffany skypes, shops and sings in the choir

The theater director speaks with The Wall Street Journal Europe about how he starts his weekend.

Since "Black Watch" first opened to international acclaim in 2006, director John Tiffany hasn't had much down time. With the London revival of the play opening at the Barbican Theatre this Saturday, hot on the heels of an inventive production of J. M. Barrie's "Peter Pan" at the National Theatre of Scotland and another U.S. tour for "Black Watch," it doesn't look like that will be changing any time soon. The Glasgow resident, instead, relishes the rare free moments—singing David Bowie with his choir, skyping with his partner and reading his favorite restaurant reviews in bed.

How do you start your weekend?
I tend to work quite a lot during the weekends. My weekend can often be about two hours on Sunday.

How do you cope with that?
It's quite a punishing schedule, but at the same time, a lot of it is social. If you're going to be hosting any event or a performance or having dinner with people after a performance, it is work but it's also social: food and a glass of wine would be involved often.

What's your perfect Sunday?
It's waking up nice and early-ish, making sure that I haven't gone to bed too late—waking up without a hangover, that's the best start to a Sunday. Sunday morning Radio 4 is fantastic, so it would involve "Broadcasting House" and then it's "The Archers." During that

time, I will be getting up, doing washing, reading the paper.

Popping down to the local shop
I've also got a fantastic shop at the bottom of my street which makes fresh bread on a Sunday morning and sells absolutely fantastic, really big, Scottish organic eggs. I would often pop down there and get some nice bread, or I would make some breakfast with nice coffee, and then pop out into town to do a bit of shopping. I go for a walk along the river Kelvin, which is a beautiful walk.

Skype sessions
My partner lives in Melbourne, so often Sunday mornings could involve an hour or two of skyping, which is an amazing thing. I was very worried when my partner moved...about the relationship, but when you can see somebody's face, it does feel like you are able to communicate. I can carry the computer around the kitchen, and he gets very annoyed with me when I grind [coffee] beans.

Singing with the Sirens of Titan
I am also a member of a choir in Glasgow called the Sirens of Titan, after the Kurt Vonnegut Jr. book. I haven't been recently, because I have been so busy, but it's from 4 until 6, and we sing for fun. I love singing and I used to perform quite a lot, but now as a director, you just tend to watch other people perform and tell them what to do. It's lovely therapy for me on a Sunday to be part of this choir and be told what to do. We do songs from Carmina Burana to David Bowie. It's not a Christian

choir and, in fact, is far from it—it's quite a subversive choir, though we rehearse at the Wellington Church, part of Glasgow University. The choir is mainly about getting together and singing, and not about performing.

What else do you do?
The only time I get to watch a bit of TV is Sunday evening. Recently I saw the modern adaptation of "Sherlock Holmes," which I think is fantastic. I also love things like "The Wire," [and] catching up on "Glee"...I also can easily dip into a "CSI" or "Law & Order." The other thing that I love to do on a Sunday afternoon, which feels really naughty, is go to the cinema. We have a fantastic, independent cinema called the Grosvenor, with old leather seats like first-class cinema-going. They also have a bar and you can get a nice glass of Rioja in the cinema.

Obsessive rituals
I read [Britain's] Observer. I pop out to the news agents next door and pick a copy up. This has become almost an obsessive ritual now. One of my favorite things to read in the Observer is the restaurant review by Jay Rayner. I love reading about these restaurants that I won't ever have the time to go to. Sunday nights are sacred in that I will try to be in bed at 10 o'clock because I love listening to "The World Tonight" on Radio 4. I keep the restaurant review to read in bed on Sunday nights like a treat so I can go to bed dreaming about these restaurants.

—Mr. Tiffany was speaking with Javier Espinoza.



Newsquest Media Group

THE JOURNAL CROSSWORD / Edited by Mike Shenk

- Across**
- 1 Stinger sale. e.g.
 - 9 Blessed with talent
 - 15 Windows forerunner
 - 20 Dom's portrayer in "Inception"
 - 21 Dress grandly
 - 22 Alley Oop's girlfriend
 - 23 Be very certain
 - 26 Snoo on stage
 - 27 Pageant accessory
 - 28 Thanksgiving leftovers
 - 29 Green on JetBlue
 - 32 Trick-taking game
 - 36 Masked drama
 - 37 Classic Pontiac muscle car
 - 38 Rodomontade, quixotic, stygian and the like
 - 44 Committed an NFL penalty
 - 46 Item with 21 spots
 - 47 Casus (war justification)
 - 48 Easter treat shaped like a chick
 - 49 With 70- and 85-Across, insufficient to be useful
 - 54 117-Down's opposite
 - 56 Deg. for a graphic designer
 - 57 It may be between here and there
 - 58 Highlander's hillside
 - 59 Home heater

Dollars to Doughnuts / by Brendan Emmett Quigley

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- 61 Speedy mammals
- 63 Author of the autobiography "Open"
- 66 Yoked, say
- 68 Elite group
- 69 Stood up
- 70 See 49-Across
- 72 Sports figures
- 73 Thanksgiving leftovers
- 74 Starts gently
- 75 Foot Locker buys, familiarly
- 77 Ezio Pinza and Samuel Ramey
- 78 A top seed may earn one
- 79 "At Last" singer James
- 81 "The Lord of the Rings" baddie
- 82 British band with the 1991 #1 hit "Unbelievable"
- 83 Helium's atomic number
- 85 See 49-Across
- 90 Fashion designer Elie
- 92 "Heck!"
- 95 They call the shots
- 96 Under any circumstances
- 97 Budget rival
- 103 Org. with a Pollution Prevention Grant
- 104 Julianna (sleepwear brand)
- 105 Bank, at times
- 106 How to deliver a reprimand
- 108 Site of Muhammad's tomb
- 111 GM cars of the 1990s
- 113 Guitar pedal effect
- 114 Taft's foreign policy
- 121 Word on a three-sided sign
- 122 Lash out at
- 123 Betrayed fear
- 124 Lucy's little brother
- 125 Cartoonist Dik
- 126 Layabout's forte
- 5 "Heck!"
- 6 "We'll teach you to drink deep ___ you depart": Hamlet
- 7 Craigslist posts
- 8 Hits that go up
- 9 "Places please!"
- 10 Because
- 11 Way to sway
- 12 Jerry's pursuer
- 13 Weaken
- 14 Off ingredient
- 15 Rob of "Numb3rs"
- 16 Event where "Roll Over Beethoven" might be played
- 17 Warwickshire welfare
- 18 Maker of Regenerist products
- 19 It may divide a board
- 24 Where Interstate H-1 runs
- 25 Em, e.g.
- 29 Ottoman official
- 30 Lebanon symbols
- 31 Make bootees
- 33 She duetted with Justin on "The Only Promise That Remains"
- 34 I ___ Tenori (Domingo, Carreras and Pavarotti)
- 35 Show based at 30 Rock
- 39 Whence "The Office," with "The"
- 40 Novel that takes place on June 16
- 41 Start a snooker game over
- 42 Bests
- 43 Bursts of energy
- 45 Czars, e.g.
- 50 Blows one's top
- 51 Tuneful
- 52 FDR veep John ___ Garner
- 53 Coup participant
- 55 Weapons with a stun setting
- 59 2010 World Series champs
- 60 "The proper task of life," to Nietzsche
- 62 Case brought to court
- 63 Garmin screen
- 64 Is a big success
- 65 Nickname of the 1967 NFL Championship Game
- 67 He's seated between Ginsburg and Kagan
- 69 "The Sound of Music" figure
- 71 Farm gathering
- 76 Acknowledges in passing
- 80 Gillette brand
- 84 Plays reveille
- 85 Office plant
- 86 Business ltr. add-ins
- 87 Baker's supply
- 88 Puts back
- 89 Aid in waiting
- 91 H5N1, familiarly
- 93 Fauxhawk application
- 94 Jargon ending
- 98 Aquatic nymphs
- 99 Add just before the deadline
- 100 Compass spinner
- 101 Beat a path
- 102 Fixed a rug
- 107 Noodle dish
- 108 Year of King Philip I of France's birth
- 109 Where it all began
- 110 Character with a whalebone leg
- 112 Acapulco affirmative
- 114 Olive in the funny papers
- 115 Its anthem is "Hatikvah": Abbr.
- 116 Bogota bruin
- 117 54-Across's opposite
- 118 Advanced deg.
- 119 Rapper ___ Flip
- 120 Rushing meats.

Last Week's Solution

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CULTURAL CALENDAR

Antwerp

■ ART

"Lonely at The Top: Parallel Doors of Perception" presents art installations by Antonio Jose Guzman, an Dutch-Panamanian audiovisual artist, examining topics such as DNA and migration. Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen (Muhka)
Until Jan. 30
☎ 32-3-2609-999
www.muhka.be

Baden Baden

■ ART

"Eerie Realities" presents 30 life-size, lifelike sculptures by American artist Duane Hanson depicting everyday workers, alongside 20 large-format works by American photographer Gregory Crewdson. Museum Frieder Burda
Nov. 27-March 6
☎ 49-72-2139-8980
sammlung-frieder-burda.de

Barcelona

■ ART

"Let Us Face the Future: British Art 1945-1968" shows 88 works by Francis Bacon, Henry Moore, David Hockney, Richard Hamilton and others. Fundació Joan Miró
Nov. 27-Feb. 20
☎ 34-934-4394-70
www.bcn.fjmiro.es

Edinburgh

■ MUSIC

"Vampire Weekend" concludes its European tour promoting its latest album "Contra," sharing the stage with Arcade Fire in Dublin.
Nov. 28, Corn Exchange, Edinburgh
Nov. 29, O2 Academy, Sheffield
Dec. 1, Brighton Centre
More European dates at
www.vampireweekend.com

London

■ MUSIC

"Love Story" is a new musical based on the novel by Erich Segal, composed by Howard Goodall, featuring Emma Williams, Michael Xavier and Peter Polycarpou.
The Duchess Theatre
Nov. 27-April 30
☎ 44-844-5791-973
www.duchesstheatre.co.uk

■ ART

"Bloomberg New Contemporaries 2010" offers works by 49 emerging contemporary artists working with film, sculpture, photography, painting, animation and performance.
Institute of Contemporary Arts
Until Jan. 23
☎ 44-20-7930-3647
www.ica.org.uk

Paris

■ TOYS

"Vilac, 100 Years of Wooden Toys" celebrates the history and creations of the Vilac toy company, forged from the woods of France's Jura forest for children around the world.
Musée des Arts Décoratifs
Until May 8
☎ 33-1-4455-5750
www.lesartsdecoratifs.fr

Stuttgart

■ ART

"Hans Holbein the Elder: The Grey Passion in its Time" explores the masterpiece painting "The Grey Passion" in the context of contemporary works by artists such as Martin Schongauer and Albrecht Dürer.
Staatsgalerie
Nov. 27-March 20
☎ 49-711-4704-00
www.staatsgalerie.de



Jean Tholance/Musée des Arts Décoratifs/Vilac

Vilac toys on display at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris as part of 'Vilac, 100 ans de jouets en bois.' Clockwise from top left, Babar driving a car, Laurent de Brunhoff, 1987; milkmaid on a tricycle, 1977; Yabon frog pull toy, 1991; stackable Snoopy, 1989; small race cars No. 1, 3 and 4, 1987.

The Hague

■ ART

"Nests" sees Dutch sculptor Auke de Vries envision his "perfect building," the Mercedes-Benz Museum in Stuttgart.
Haags Gemeentemuseum
Nov. 27-Feb. 13
☎ 31-70-3381-111
www.gemeentemuseum.nl

Vienna

■ JEWELRY

"Contemporary" showcases designers from Austria shortlisted for the "Eli-gius" Austrian Jewelry Design Award.
MAK-Österreichisches Museum für Angewandte Kunst
Until Feb. 27
☎ 43-1-711-36-248
www.mak.at

■ PHOTOGRAPHY

"Window Shopping" examines the evolution of shop windows in Vienna, with images by August Stauda and others.
Wienmuseum Karlsplatz
Nov. 25-March 13
☎ 43-1-5058-7470
www.wienmuseum.at

Warsaw

■ DANCE

"Cinderella" sees the Polish National Ballet perform choreography by Sir Frederick Ashton for Prokofiev's ballet.
Teatr Wielki, Opera Narodowa
Nov. 27-Dec. 23
☎ 48-22-826-50-19
www.teatr Wielki.pl

Zurich

■ DESIGN

"Jewels of Light" explores the history of the chandelier from 17th-century crystal creations to modern plastic fixtures.
Museum Bellerive
Dec. 2-March 27
☎ 41-43-4464-469
www.museum-bellerive.ch

—Source: WSJ research

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