WEEKEND JOURNAL.

FRIDAY - SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8 - 10, 2010

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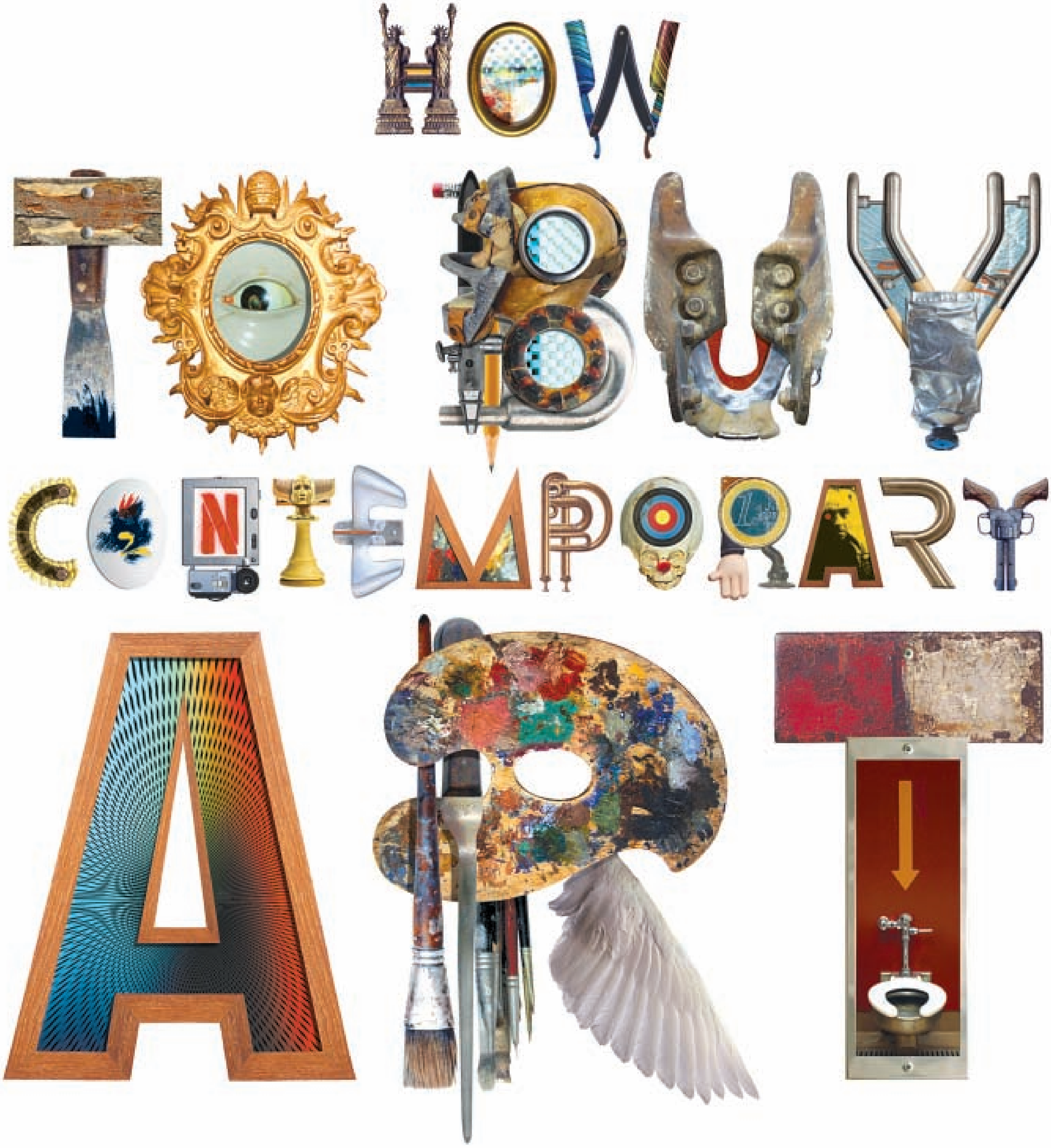

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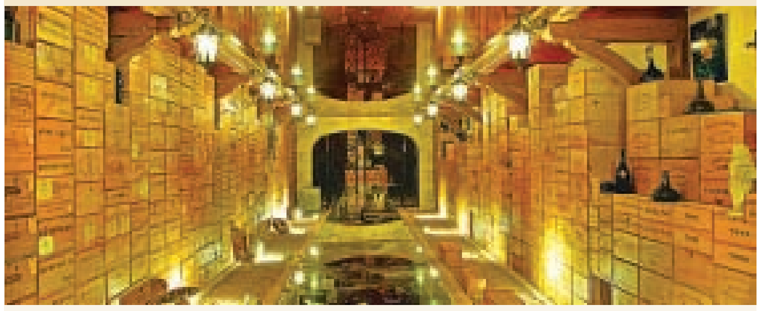

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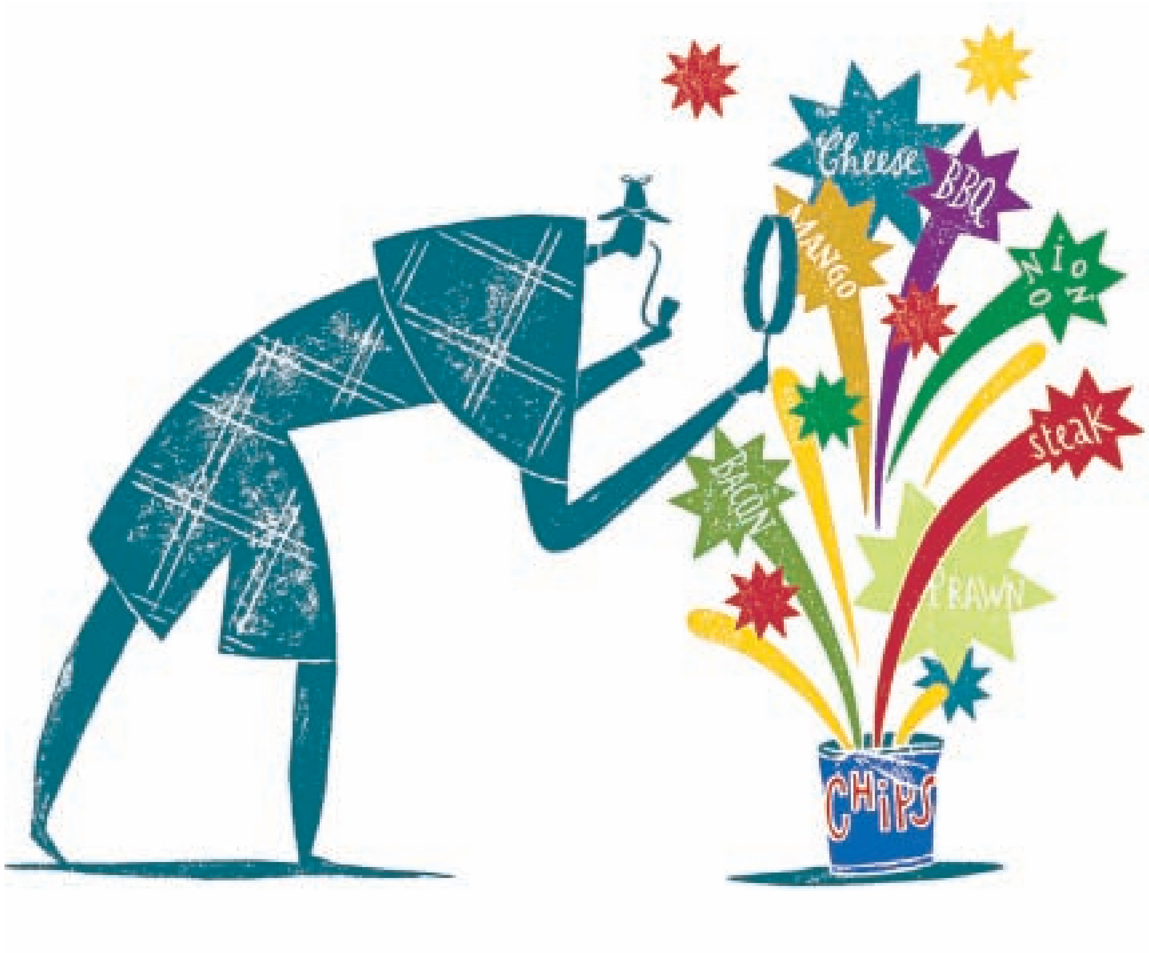


illustration by Jean-Manuel Duvivier

Britishness acquires an extra crunch

[European Life]

By Sam Leith in London

Not long ago, a competition was launched over here in the U.K. to design a new flavor of crisps—or "chips," as most continental European readers will know them. It was won by Emma Rushin of Belper in Derbyshire. She suggested "Builder's Breakfast," a flavor that would capture in crisp form the delicious mingled flavor of eggs, bacon, sausage, beans, buttery toast, fried mushrooms, tomato and black pudding.

The result was described by one critic as tasting of "stale fried egg and nothing else." Emma won a £50,000 prize. She was rewarded, I feel, for the idea rather than the execution.

To London's urban Arcadia, the crisp packet and bus stop are what the lyre and fleece were to its Hellenic predecessor. The modern Corydon sports with Golden Wonder in the shade. So it is Britishness squared to combine our national breakfast with our national snack. While the breakfast abides, the crisp is restlessly reinvented.

In the supermarket round the corner from my house in dismal Archway, North London, for instance, the front shelves are now piled high with another novelty: "Walker's Extra-Crunchy."

Crunchiness—you might think—is the point of entry for crisps: the necessary, if not sufficient, condition of crisp-dom. What crisp isn't crunchy? Yet already, the crunchiness of my ordinary crisp seems somehow wan, somehow average. It tastes insufficiently crunchy, for no other reason than that Extra-Crunchy has entered the world. It turns to ashes in my mouth.

That, my friends, is the plan. Many millions of pounds of marketing budget have been devoted to achieving it, under the auspices of their parent company's awesomely named "impulse sales director."

Walkers—the Coca-Cola of crisp companies, though they are actually owned by Pepsi—are at the forefront of the incessant search for fried-potato novelty. They celebrated the World Cup, if that's the word, by producing flavors corresponding to national teams in the competition: Edam, Garlic Baguette, Haggis, Barbequed Kangaroo, etc.

It's the idea of the new flavors, rather than the fact of them, that really matters. The history of Anglo-American modernity can be mapped in crisps. It is a history of ceaseless, demented innovation: the first time a blue twist of salt was included; the arrival of ready-salted (the sliced bread moment); the cheese-and-onion Tayto; the invention of prawn-cocktail powder; crinkle cut, thick cut, square cut, jacket on, "gourmet," kettle fried...

When I was a boy I remember being extremely exercised by the existence of what my contemporaries understood to be hedgehog-flavored crisps. It was some time later that I discovered that this was a clever piece of marketing. They didn't actually use hedgehogs.

Some of these milestones tower above the other. One imagines a crisp scientist, for instance, holding the world's very first Pringle aloft with an expression on his face like the apes beholding the monolith in "2001: A Space Odyssey."

What we're seeing here is late capitalism in action. Rather than identify a demand and supply it, these people are in the business of creating demand. Like a shark that needs to keep swimming to keep breathing, for the snack food manufacturer, to sit still is to die.

There's a certain heroism to that. There's not much in the way of variations you can play on the old slice-spud-and-fry-in-hot-oil routine. And yet, behold. In their unobtrusive way, we should regard crisp manufacturers as no less ingenious than Steve Jobs and his team at Apple.

Autumn leaves

Oh all right, then: hullo autumn in London. Make yourself comfortable, if you must. For Shelley, the "leaves dead" of this season were "yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red," which is what I suppose you call poetic license. Actually, they are brown and soggy, and the wild west wind doesn't shift them. They mulch on the pavement in big splats the color of stewed tea, causing pensioners to fall over and break, trains to stop and to those with less than 20/20 vision, they are indistinguishable from dog doo, making the latter near-impossible to spot. Autumn is the season of pavement roulette.

'Franzenfreude'

What a face we Brits present to America sometimes. No sooner is Jonathan Franzen's new book greeted in his native land with hurrahs, than our newspapers fill with articles moaning limply that he's overpraised. Then he comes over for his launch to find we've printed the wrong book by mistake, and 80,000-odd copies will have to be pulped. He's late for his key national radio interview after spending 45 minutes in the drizzle waiting for a limo that never shows up. And at his launch party, somebody steals his glasses off his face and vanishes, leaving a $100,000 ransom note. Already, the word "Franzenfreude" has entered the language.

He can take heart that underlying our national need to inconvenience and humiliate successful Americans is a sense of being second-best. The ransom demand, let it be noted, was in dollars.

Next week,
Francis X. Rocca in Rome.

The artistic renaissance of Jean Giraud

By Tobias Grey

Stephane Reamel for The Wall Street Journal; Jean Giraud Moebius (bottom)

The French comic-book artist Jean Giraud's labyrinthine *oeuvre* provided Leanne Sacramone, a curator for the Fondation Cartier in Paris, with a unique challenge. "I don't think I've ever seen such a diverse and prolific body of drawings," says Ms. Sacramone. "It took about eight months just to sift through everything."

At his redbrick house in Montrouge, a working-class suburb just south of Paris, Mr. Giraud giggled at the memory of Ms. Sacramone rooting around in his cellar, blowing the dust off his old notebooks.

The Fondation Cartier exhibition, which opens Oct. 12 and lasts until next March, is Mr. Giraud's first major solo show to be mounted in France. Over 150 drawing boards and drawings will be on display, as well as a specially commissioned eight-minute 3D animated film, co-directed by Mr. Giraud, based on his comic strip "La Planète Encore."

Up until now Mr. Giraud, who is 72 years old and looks remarkably like a less sour version of the American actor Larry David, has never received the kind of artistic acclaim in his homeland as he has abroad, where his influence has been recognized by creators as multifaceted as Hayao Miyazaki, George Lucas and Federico Fellini.

In France, Mr. Giraud remains best known as the co-creator of a successful, long-running comic-book series, "Les Aventures de Blueberry," about the travails of a hard-drinking, Indian-sympathizing, stalwart U.S. cavalry officer, called Mike Blueberry. But away from home, he is hailed as "Moebius," an artist capable of drafting the most fantastic flights of imagination onto paper. Mr. Giraud's adoption of the strange-sounding pseudonym, which he appropriated from the mathematical strip of the same name, marked an artistic renaissance that gathered pace in the mid-1970s and hasn't flagged since.

"Creation obliges an artist at a certain point to surprise themselves so as to be able to surprise others," says Mr. Giraud. "Even when you reach a certain level of success, there's still this desire to break the established rules and be a bit of a delinquent."

Whereas the "Blueberry" saga required Mr. Giraud to root all of his drawings as realistically as possible in the Wild West and not overstep his creative mandate as an illustrator, with Moebius, Mr. Giraud felt there were no limits to what he could achieve. With science-fiction comic-book series like "The Airtight Garage" and "Arzach," Moebius earned not only critical praise but also substantial sales. This was especially true in the U.S., where "Métal Hurlant," a monthly comic magazine melding dark fantasy and erotica that Mr. Giraud helped found in 1974, became a big underground hit when it was translated from French into English under the title "Heavy Metal."

As a teenager studying applied arts in Paris, Mr. Giraud had absorbed a number of different influences, including surrealism, symbolism and the realist style of 19th-century illustrators like the Englishman Arthur Rackham. But it was Virgil Finlay, a 20th-century American science-fiction and horror illustrator, who really fired Mr. Giraud's imagination as a young man: "What I liked so much about Finlay was I could see straight away that he was able to balance working for commission and was still able to inject a subversive vision of the world into his work."

It was during a trip to Mexico in 1956 to visit his mother, who had been divorced from his father, that Mr. Giraud discovered marijuana. "I was turned onto it by some artists," says Mr. Giraud, who was 16 at the time. "They would use grass occasionally for their work to explore different states of consciousness and to get rid of preconceived ideas and internal barriers. I used it a bit like that for many years. It was both effective and a waste of time because I spent a long while trying to work out exactly what dose I needed to give myself a creative push without going over the top and de-connecting from reality."

Mr. Giraud finally decided to give up marijuana 10 years ago, when he embarked upon one of his most self-referential comic-book series, "Inside Moebius," in which he and all of his most famous comic-book characters collide in a storm of witty banter. "I wanted to write a journal about giving up smoking [marijuana]," says Mr. Giraud. "In fact, I really surprised myself, because after three days I didn't even think about smoking grass anymore."

Mr. Giraud says he has always enjoyed being well looked after. "That's why drawing and doing comic books have always been a comfort," he says. "When you are invited somewhere like Los Angeles or Japan, the ticket is bought for you, the hotel is picked out, someone sends along a taxi, even a limousine. I love all that."

"It's true," says his wife Isabelle Giraud, who helps run the couple's independent publishing company, Moebius Productions. "All his life he's been like that."

"And sometimes you get fed up," notes Mr. Giraud. "You see that it's not good for me."

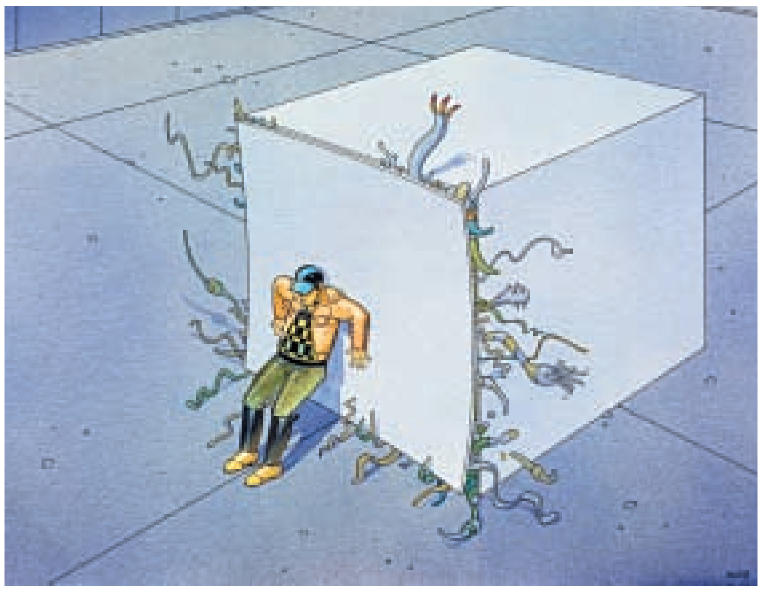
"No, it's not good," agrees Mrs. Giraud.

"When you love someone truly, then you don't encourage the things which make them weaker, even if it is a bit painful," adds Mr. Giraud.

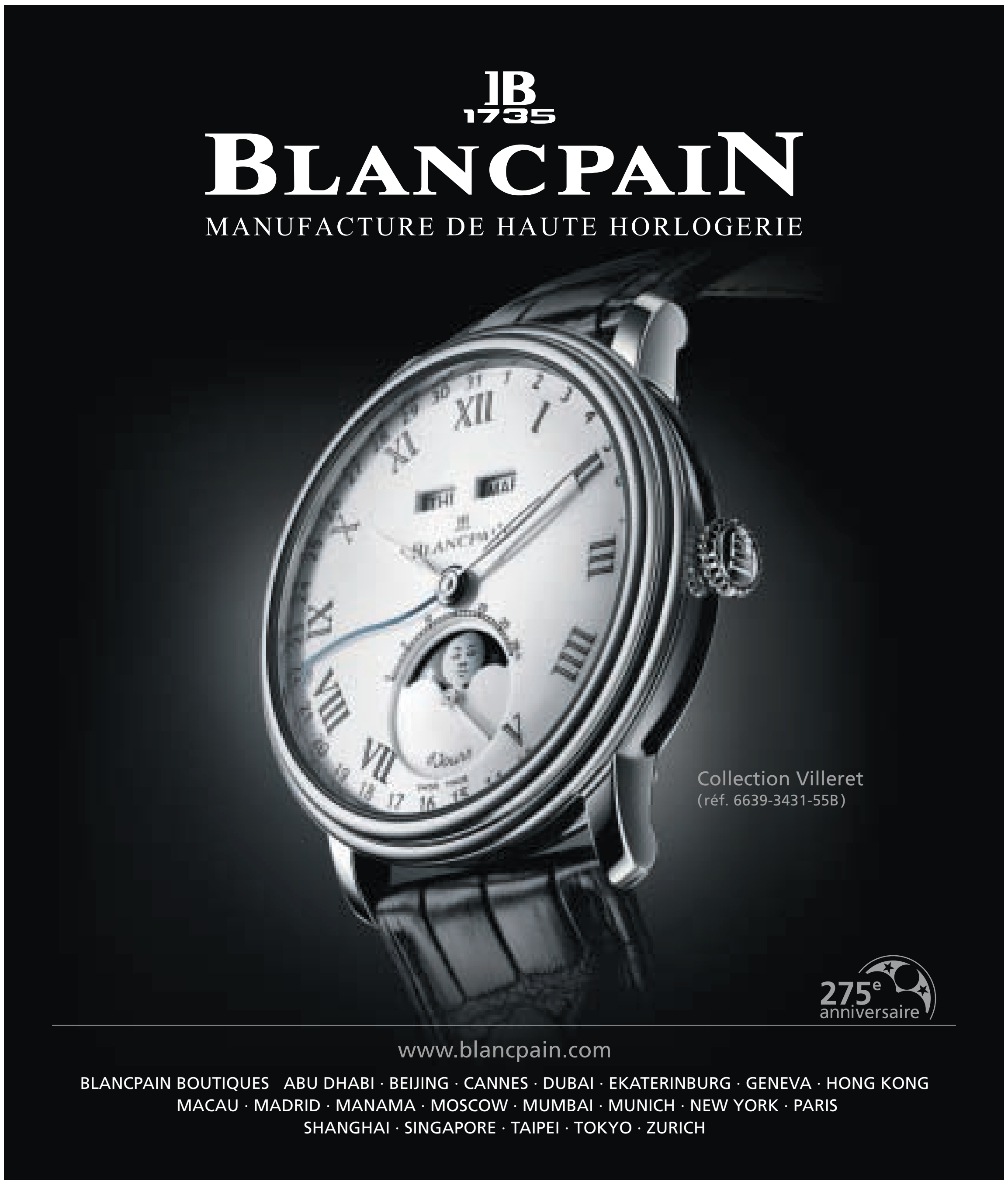
"Yes," agrees Mrs. Giraud.

This conversation takes on an added poignancy in light of Mr. Giraud's battle with cancer. "For the moment, I'm doing everything I can to avoid a second lot of chemotherapy by using therapies which are not at all recognized but have proved effective in the past," says Mr. Giraud. "But they're no surer than recognized medicines."

Remarkably, Mr. Giraud isn't in the slightest bit bitter about his illness. "On balance I've been very, very lucky," he says.



"Emptiness Overflowing (Moebius, Containing the Real, 1994)"



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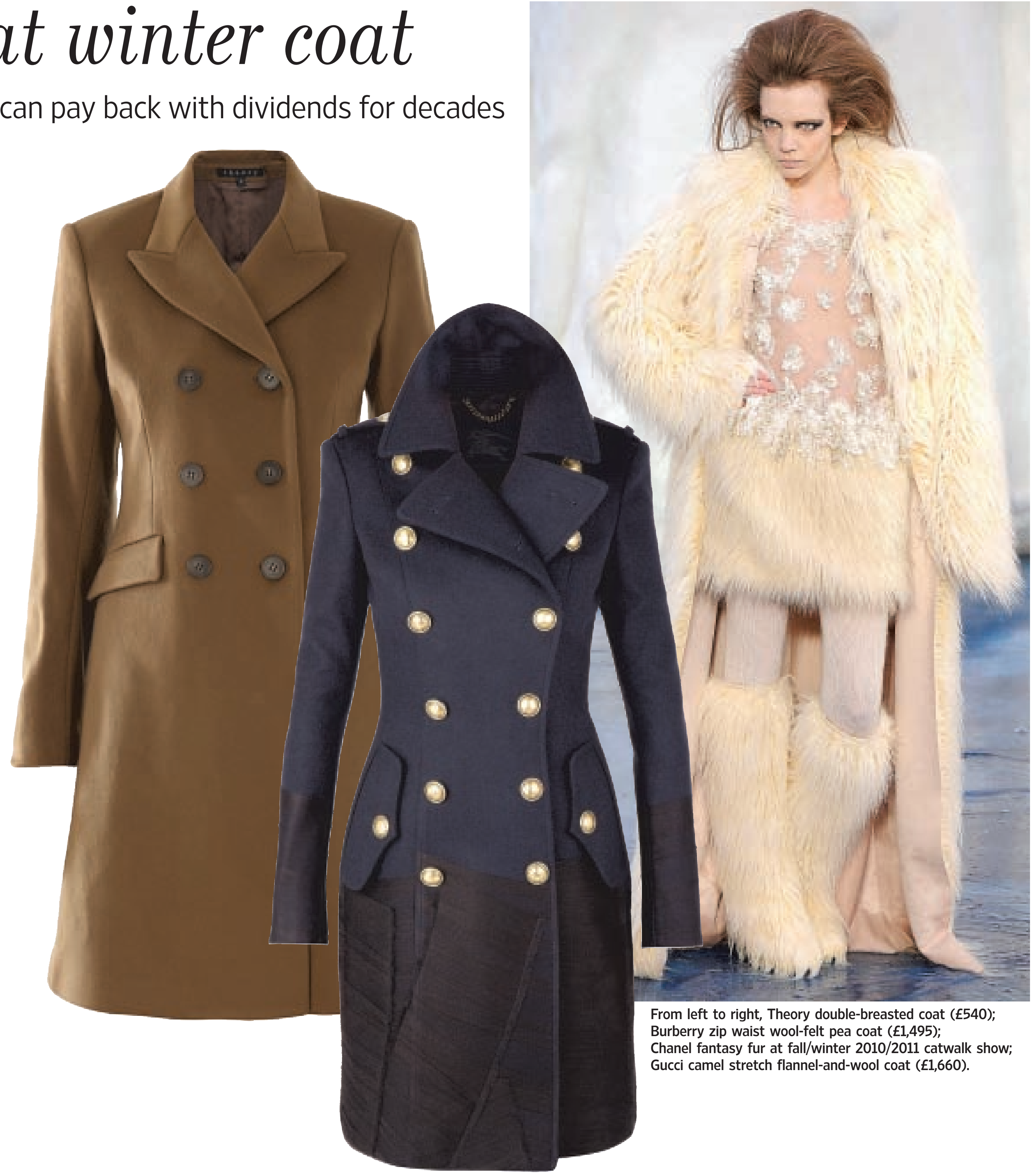
The great winter coat

An investment that can pay back with dividends for decades



From left to right, Theory double-breasted coat (£540);
Burberry zip waist wool-felt pea coat (£1,495);
Chanel fantasy fur at fall/winter 2010/2011 catwalk show;
Gucci camel stretch flannel-and-wool coat (£1,660).

L-r, www.matchesfashion.com; Burberry; Chanel

[Style]

By Tina Gaudoin

You remember when I said (two columns ago) that upon occasion you should take my advice (and disregard the rest)? Readers, this is one of those moments. I'm here to save you not only from yourself but also from the caustic remarks of others, who next year will regard that huge, cumbersome shearling coat you are considering spending a fortune on as so very "last year."

I understand the impulse. It's all very "Top Gun," this cropped-sheepskin-flying-jacket business; but as so often is the case, an iconic item worn by regular mortals like you and I suddenly becomes, well, just another expensive coat that from certain angles can add far more "bulk" than you might ordinarily consider acceptable. When buying a new coat two things matter: silhouette and longevity. A coat should tick one of those two boxes, preferably both (unless we are talking big, bulky and furry—more on that later). Warmth is important of course, but that's just common sense, of which I am quite sure you are amply possessed.

A coat is often the most important thing in a fashion editor's autumn/winter wardrobe. Why? Well it's cold at those shows. So cold that often one doesn't remove one's coat all day, rendering all that time you put into thinking about what to wear underneath null and void. During fashion weeks, the coat is often the single most important signifier of your overall look. Not wearing a coat signifies something too—either that you are wearing thermals under that silk sheath dress or that you have a driver waiting outside each show with the motor running. Coats finish an outfit. Shoes and bags help, but they are just part of the package. A coat is the full monty—an investment which will, if you buy the right one, pay back with dividends, potentially for decades.

As far as coats go, it's really Burberry, Gucci and Chanel's winter, shearling flying jackets withstanding. I don't think Burberry designer Christopher Bailey will object to my saying that he's always had a bit of a thing for the armed services. This jives of course with Burberry's early *raison d'etre* of supplying waterproofs to men in the trenches (hence, trench). In particular, Bailey's menswear collections often have a chic "battle-ready" feel to them, and this autumn winter that conceit found its way very successfully onto the women's catwalk.

What Bailey is so good at is the marriage of the old and the new—his lightweight woolen-mix pea coat with big brassy buttons and a tulle webbing is a masterpiece of modern technology mixed with old-fashioned tailoring and stout eye-catching hardware, £2,195. If you are looking for a pulled-together vibe with slightly quirky cool overtones, this is it. Slightly more conventional is his ¾-length felt pea coat with a zipper at the waist, £1,495. For the record, said zipper will unzip and convert the coat to a short, snappy jacket. I know. I've tried it. Shop online for Burberry—their site works. They really are at the cutting edge of Internet fashion technology. For the first time this September, live streaming and some pretty snappy fulfillment allowed customers to buy directly online as the clothes came down the catwalk. (The clothes take approximately seven weeks to arrive).

Part of a magazine editor's job is to "run through" racks of clothes with stylists before they go out on a photo shoot for the magazine. As such, in my previous role as editor in chief of WSJ magazine, I literally "ran through" hundreds, if not thousands, of outfits. The process sharpens the eye, so that one knows when one sees a standout piece. Gucci's camel ¾-length, stretch flannel-and-wool coat, £1,660, (which, fyi, you will see on the cover of October's issue of WSJ magazine) is the real deal. Chic, sleek and with an ingenious stretch mix, this is the "city" coat of the season. I'm not yet convinced that everyone "needs" a neutral-colored coat—but that might just be because I can't see any shade of caramel working if one has young children or a lifestyle that includes using public transport. If, on the other hand, you are limo'd or even drive yourself to work, looking for a fabulous coat for a particular occasion or you want to switch up the darker color palette in your wardrobe, then this is most definitely a "must-have" item.

Which brings me to the most important element of fashion—fun. He might not look like he does, but fewer in the fashion industry have a sharper, more wicked sense of humor than Karl Lagerfeld. His collections for Chanel rarely miss the opportunity to cast a wry smile at the vagaries of fashion. His genius is that he takes the joke and renders it wearable, creating iconic, desirable pieces season after season. This autumn, he turned his attention to the idea of fake or, as he called it, "fantasy" fur—his own personal commentary on saving the planet.

To showcase the concept, Lagerfeld created a frozen tundra complete with imported icebergs (just the tips) upon and around which his fantasy-fur-clad models strode (or in some cases later in the show, splashed). Fur made its way into and onto everything including bags, the traditional Chanel boucle jackets, boots, shoes and ingenious knitwear. What made most sense, though, were the coats and outerwear from shaggy to shorn in everything from brilliant white to mixes of grey, dark brown and white. Here's where the silhouette bit comes in: You have to be prepared to think bear-suit, Chanel style. Short bomber jackets with vast cozy hoods start at around £1,385. If you can't swallow the whole trend, try the beige fantasy-fur gilet, £550.

So can you spend less and still get a great coat? I think it's worth laying out as much as you can on such a key item. There are great coats to be had, though, if you comb through carefully. At Gap, for example, there's a gray check car coat for £79.50; at Theory, a smart, ¾-length, burned-camel colored double-breasted wool, £540. Zadig & Voltaire have given great coats a modern twist, with their grey wool mix, which fastens with a large snapper in front, £475; and Joseph's khaki suede and long-haired lambskin, £1,190, is ageless. (I've had my black version for at least eight years).

You could of course for the price of a small second-hand car (around £4,400) buy the most extraordinary coat of the season. Louis Vuitton has created a truly flattering shearling by ingeniously stripping tightly cropped mouse-gray sheepskin onto leather to create a wonderful cord-like effect on their form-fitting knee-length Crombie. But that would just be showing off.

FASHION

Gucci

High-waisted jeans make a comeback

By Ray A. Smith

Women heading into stores now to buy their cold-weather wardrobes are likely to feel a sense of trouser déjà vu: High-waisted pants are back.

High-waisted pants and shorts have turned up in the fall 2010 collections of designers including Akris, Calvin Klein and Chloé. They're part of some designers' overall embrace of more grown-up looks that also include suits and full, below-the-knee skirts and dresses. And they mark a big shift away from the dangerously low, hip-hugging, low-rise pant styles that have been popular in recent years.

There's a broader pants revival occurring in women's fashion, with designers giving trousers more of a starring role in their collections. But the new high-waisted style may be a risky bet for fashion companies. While the trousers didn't start showing up on runways in earnest until this year, the style has appeared in stores since 2007, especially in the collections of high-end denim brands such as 7 For All Mankind. But they haven't been big sellers. Celebrities including Jessica Simpson and Mischa Barton were early adopters of the high-waisted jeans trend—and quickly earned critical drubbing for it. Some women complain that the style is unflattering and disdainfully dub the duds "mom" jeans.

But some women are embracing the style, which was last popular in the 1970s. They say it is refreshing after so many years of super-short dresses and skirts and skinny low-rise pants. "The lower-waist thing lends itself to that muffin top look," said 27-year-old Gwendolen Pulka, a telecom consultant in Chicago, referring to the term used to describe flesh spilling over a pair of low-rise pants. "I was into the lower waist when I was in college but I think a higher waist is more flattering. They make people look leaner. It's a slimming look."

But Ms. Pulka, who owns about four pairs of high-waisted pants, also conceded that she is slim and tall and can probably pull off the look more than "a lot of other people can." Indeed, some style advisers say that high-waisted pants can give very slim women a flattering, curvy shape.

But for many women, high-waisted pants can be tricky to wear. With low or regular-waisted pants, women can hide whatever extra they might have around the middle by wearing an untucked top. But the point of high-waisted pants is to show off the waist, which means tucking in the shirt.

Still, some stylists say the pants can work for those women whose stomachs aren't totally flat. "Women with small tummies can rejoice in the cinching power of a well-made, tailored high-waisted pant, as they can suppress a small bulge," says Lloyd Boston, author of "The Style Checklist: The Ultimate Wardrobe Essentials for You." "Careful with fabric choice though," he warns. "Silks and ultra-soft fabrics can highlight stomach areas in a non-flattering way." Instead, he recommends fabrics like wool.

Another issue: Some high-waisted pants can make hips and the buttocks look wider and longer than they actually are. Wearing high-waisted pants with a jacket can hide that issue. Representatives for designers pushing higher-waisted pants say some of their interpretations are more streamlined, with less puffiness than previous iterations.

The high-waist styles being sent down the runway this year vary, from roomy, flowing versions with wide legs as seen at Marc Jacobs' runway show in New York last month to slimmer, more tapered versions at Stella McCartney earlier this week in Paris. Both shows were highlighting looks for spring 2011.

Retailers say they are excited about pants for fall in general but concede that high-waisted trousers could be a tough sell for some women.

"I really think it's for a contemporary customer and also a junior customer, a younger customer," said Nicole Fischelis, fashion director at Macy's, which is carrying high-waisted pants.

Designers have certainly made pants missteps in the past. Some envelope-pushing styles, including voluminous harem pants and leather shorts, have not caught on.

Joanna Manganaro, women's editor at Stylesight, a fashion-research firm, said that while high-waisted pants aren't "necessarily for everyone at the moment," she does expect them to eventually trickle down beyond the super slim "uberfashionistas" already wearing them. "We will see them at retail in pleated versions that are more flattering and forgiving for all shapes and then I don't see any reason why they shouldn't be adopted more widely."

What's more, some designers have added versions into collections carried at stores that aren't as high as the ones they sent down the runways.

Coolhunter

The Guernsey

I grew up wearing Guernsey sweaters. On the east coast of England, where the wind whips viciously off the North Sea across the dykes and broads, "that sweater" was often the only thing that stood between me and early hypothermia, balanced as I was either in the saddle or on the side of a wooden dingy, skimming across the water. Nelson (another Norfolk man) also loved the Guernsey, first popularized by fishermen from that island and then allegedly promoted by Sir Walter Raleigh (governor of Jersey), who flogged them to Newfoundland. Whilst I'm in historic flow, it is also said that Mary Queen of Scots wore a pair of Guernsey stockings to her execution. But don't let that put you off. As Arthur Eldridge, co-owner of Guernsey Woolens Ltd. says, "they are very smart, very warm and they have become kind of a cult item." Eldridge supplies the Desert Rats 7th Armoured Division with their oatmeal-colored Guernseys, the Tank regiment (black), the Intelligence Corps (V-necked army green) and the Mercian. "In Afghanistan, its warm during the day and chilly at night. The Guernsey really does the job," says Eldridge. Beware imitations. A real Guernsey is 100% wool, made with yarn spun to a certain specification and weighing in at about one kilo. Anything made outside the isle of Guernsey is, well, quite obviously not the genuine article; "some," expostulates Eldridge, "are not even made entirely of wool." To buy a Guernsey online is to enter the world of online shopping circa 1970. I know the Internet was at that point supposedly being put to dastardly use by the Pentagon, but go online and you'll see that the idea of stylish visuals and chic interfaces have not yet made it to the Guernsey manufacturing community. No matter. Because once you own a Guernsey, you will never look back and, to borrow from Scarlett O'Hara, you will "never go cold again."

guernseyjumpers.gg; Prices start at around £70.

—Tina Gaudoin

Arbitrage

TAG Heuer Grand Carrera

City	Currency	€
London	£3,500	€4,009
Brussels	€4,200	€4,200
Rome	€4,200	€4,200
Frankfurt	€4,200	€4,200
Paris	€4,200	€4,200
New York	$5,900	€4,251
Hong Kong	HK$46,343	€4,305

Note: Prices of a chronograph calibre 17RS with silver dial watch, plus taxes, as provided by retailers in each city, averaged and converted into euros.

TAG Heuer

The subdued side of Sardinia

Autumn brings the grape harvest, golf tours and serene sailing conditions to the Costa Smeralda

By Cristina Slattery

As October descends on Sardinia, the soul of the Costa Smeralda, a 55-kilometer-long stretch of northeastern Sardinia's rocky coastline, becomes more authentic. Author D.H. Lawrence once wrote that Sardinia was "left outside time and history" and, indeed, outside of peak tourist season, Sardinians return to many of their ancient ways.

As the grape harvest begins, so too do autumn festivals celebrating cultural and gastronomic delights such as the beloved chestnut. Sailing, yachting and golf also become more inviting, as the climate turns more moderate. With average sea temperatures of between 20-23 degrees Celsius, sailors discover that they have the "Caribbean-like clear blue bays [to themselves] with no other boats," says Sergio Contu, owner of Boomerang Charters, which rents sailboats and yachts.

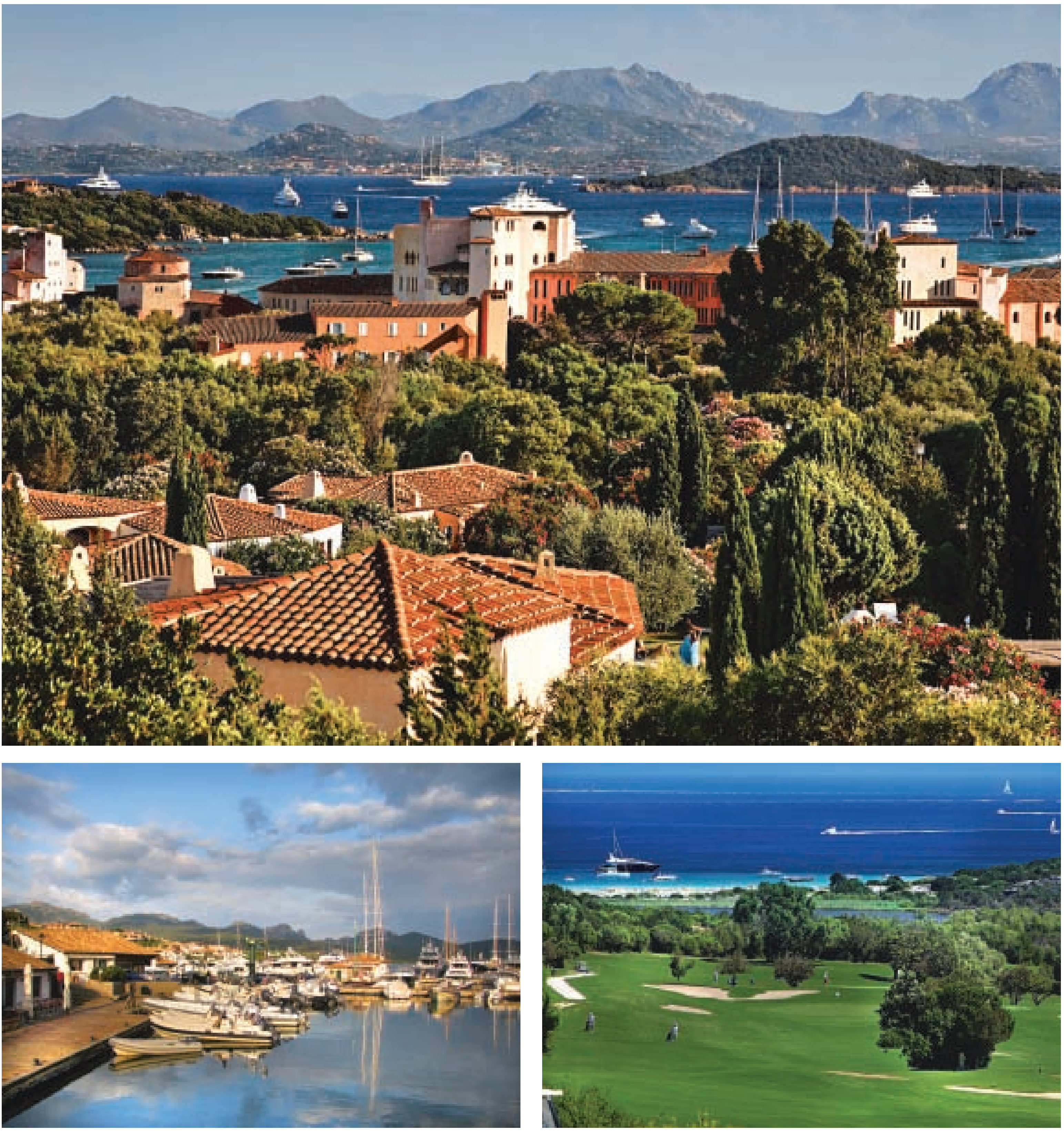
In the 1960s, seeing the potential of the northeastern corner of the island as a vacation spot for the wealthy, Karim Aga Khan, a philanthropist and the spiritual leader of Shia Imami Ismaili muslims, led the development of the Costa Smeralda, a consortium that enforces strict rules so that all buildings within its purview are constructed in harmony with the environment. The consortium holds annual meetings of homeowners who maintain properties here. Owners of villas, hotels and shops appear to have tacitly agreed that man-made beauty should never outshine, but rather complement, nature.

The Costa Smeralda's rose-colored rocks are like sculptures that frame the blue-green water from which the area gets its name. This geologic backdrop is what gives the Costa Smeralda such dramatic beauty, and it is this beauty that has attracted Italian high society and international glitterati for decades. In contrast to the jagged granite of the hillsides, the lines of most structures within the Costa Smeralda, including the lovely white Stella Maris church, are smooth.

Porto Cervo village, the focal point of the Costa—a montage of pinks, tans, yellows and oranges—includes the five-star Cervo Hotel (www.hotelcervocostasmeralda.com, rooms start from €285), which is perched above Porto Cervo's Old Marina (Porto Vecchio). The Cervo Hotel is open year-round while others often close for part of the year. Its low-key ambience and personalized service are reasons it is a favorite of celebrities.

High-end boutiques including major Italian brands, such as Gucci, Missoni, Prada, Versace, abut the hotel; and the yachts, for which the Costa Smeralda is known, are found below. Porto Cervo's New Marina, 10 minutes away by water taxi, is the location of the discreet, modern clubhouse of the Yacht Club Costa Smeralda. More motor yachts and sailboats occupy this harbor.

In October, calas—small bays that dot the Costa Smeralda and the small offshore islands of La Maddalena and Caprera—will be free of the pleasure craft that make otherwise idyllic settings such as Tahiti Beach on Caprera less serene in the searing heat of the summer. La Maddalena has a new harbor with 600 berths for yachts that were constructed as part of a hotel, conference and residential complex called Porto Arsenale La Maddalena.


Clockwise from top, Alamy; Paolo Costanzi; Ralph Mitterbauer

Clockwise from top, view of the Cala di Volpe in Costa Smeralda; the course at Pevero Golf Club; and yachts and sailboats docked in a harbor.

Exploring the waters off the Costa Smeralda is a unique experience. Enzo Barretta, owner of Ottava Isola, or "Eighth Island," a floating barge with sand on the floor and gourmet food, will pick you up directly from your boat to dine at his restaurant. Open through mid-October, Ottava Isola (www.ottavaisola.it) serves up meals of shellfish and pasta ending with mirto, a Sardinian digestif, that rival fine dining found on land. If catching one's food is appealing, operators such as Sardinian Fishing, based in Cannigione, just north of the Costa Smeralda, will take those interested in deep-sea fishing out to see what's biting throughout the autumn. (www.sardiniafishing.it)

On land, golf gets into full swing this month at Pevero Golf Club (www.golfclubpevero.com), which Oct. 9-11 is hosting the 20th anniversary of the Audi Quattro Cup and Oct. 15-16 is hosting the Italian Rolex Final. As golfers approach the 15th hole of the Pevero course, the island of Tavolara, a grey limestone massif, rises up from the horizon. The bay of Cala di Volpe's blue-green waters are visible below; Mediterranean vegetation, immaculately cared for by gardeners, and the nearby granite hills, complete the surroundings. Constructed in 1972, Pevero was designed by American golf course architect Robert Trent Jones, Jr. Marco Maria Berio, the club's head professional, calls the course "a gem."

For wine lovers, at Vigne Surrau, a 10-minute drive from Porto Cervo, the grape harvest will be under way, and the cellar is open for tours. Vigne Surrau (www.vignesurrau.it), owned by members of a local Arzachena family, reflects a trend in private ownership of wineries as opposed to the cooperatives of the past. Anna Maria Fara, who works for the winery, explains that a visit to Vigne Surrau in October is usually "the most calm for the visitor who is really interested in tasting our wine." She says that despite the fact that autumn is the busiest period for those who work there, the employees "usually have more time for those who want better explanations of wines and wine making."

A series of grape varieties were planted commencing in 1998, including Sardinia's best known, the Cannonau red grape and the Vermentino white grape. In this northern part of Sardinia known as Gallura, of which the Costa Smeralda is a part, Vermentino flourishes, finding its natural habitat in this rocky, arid and wind-swept terrain. According to Jessica Ball, a master sommelier of the Associazione Italiana Sommelier, who is based in Rome, "the ubiquitous granite of the Gallura region confers a flinty back-bite on this aromatic fruity and fresh white wine. This flintiness combined with the grape's natural freshness, together with the correctly created alcoholic level, results in a wine which is perfectly balanced."

In 2009, the owners of Vigne Surrau opened a light-filled modern winery that was constructed against a luxuriant backdrop of a sea of vines. There is also a small art gallery in the cellar showcasing the work of Sardinian artists.

Few tourists, get the opportunity to experience its slower autumn pace. Those who do choose to come in October may find the loneliness of the beaches enchants them, and that the quiet of the autumn season is a welcome antidote to the stresses of non-island life.

Daniela and Joe Borroni, Italians who live near Atlanta, have been visiting the Costa Smeralda annually for more than 30 years. The advantage of coming now, Mr. Borroni says, is that "it is less expensive and the locals are more prone to relate to tourists in a friendly way."

MICHELIN
Main Cities of Europe
RESTAURANTS & HOTELS
2010
3000 hotels & restaurants
Includes 44 cities in 20 countries
Practical information for leisure and business use
ZAGAT
London Restaurants
2011

Michelin (L); Zagat (R)

Battle of the red books

With Zagat gaining ground, is Michelin still the No. 1 guide?

[Food]

By Bruce Palling

In this era of instant information, how much shelf life is left for annual restaurant guides, such as those published by Michelin and Zagat?

This week in New York, both Zagat and Michelin published their 2011 guides, with general consent about the top establishments. However, these conclusions are reached by entirely different criteria—in the case of Zagat, purely by reader surveys; Michelin, solely on the opinion of their anonymous inspectors. Only five years ago, the century-old Michelin Guides merely covered a handful of countries in Europe, but now they have expanded into the U.S. and the Far East. By contrast, Zagat is the most comprehensive in North America, though they are starting to cover Europe and Asia.

Jean-Luc Naret, the world-wide head of Michelin Guides, has spearheaded the group's global diffusion and is unashamed about his motives to become the definitive world brand for restaurant guides. “I receive letters from heads of state, government ministers and mayors of cities urging us to bring Michelin Guides to their countries,” he says. “We always look at the same things—the potential of the restaurants, whether they have ones deserving of stars and also are there enough foodies out there to go and buy them. And, of course, whether it makes sense for us in the long term.” Although the U.S. is an area for expansion, already the Michelin Guides to Las Vegas and Los Angeles have ceased publication because the demand wasn't there.

Tim Zagat, co-founder of his eponymous guides, says their approach is superior to that of Michelin. Approximately one-third of their guides are devoted to lists and indexes of the different categories, timings, prices and locations of the restaurants. “We really started with the view that if you had thousands of people voting on restaurants, you would be more accurate than any one person could be. You can also break out a lot of numbers that are important,” he says. “We both more or less agree on the very top places, but food, service, cost and decor all have different weights depending on what you are doing. Most of the time, you are not looking for that very top restaurant. If you are taking young children out, you may want minimal decor and low cost, whereas if you are going to the movies, you want the right location and speed of service.”

> ‘We have been hearing about the beginning of the end of Michelin for more than a decade.’

Mr. Naret retorts that their inspectors also receive considerable feedback from the public and that 95% of the responses endorse their opinions. While Michelin doesn't update their annual guides online the way Zagat does, he claims that they are ahead of the game in other ways.“We have just launched a Twitter campaign in the U.S., where our inspectors tweet after their inspections, and our Facebook site has only just started and already has 5,000 followers,” he says.

But as Zagat makes inroads, does Michelin still have paramount credibility? In France, food writer J.P. Géné thinks they do: “We have been hearing about the beginning of the end of Michelin for more than a decade, especially when a three-star chef ‘returns’ his stars. Michelin is still the most reputable guide and the main point is that it is still the most respected one by the chefs themselves.”

In London this year, the Ledbury was the only one-star restaurant to be promoted to two stars. Late last month, the Zagat guide promoted it to 29/30 for cuisine, only the second U.K. restaurant ever to receive such an accolade. What impact did these awards have on the Ledbury and chef Brett Graham? “We were already on the rise before the second star, but it probably helped with our lunch trade and increased our bookings by 5-10%,” Mr. Graham says.

Has the top Zagat award made a difference? “It will definitely strengthen our business with tourists and Americans, but last Saturday night we had 130 people on the waiting list, so it's difficult to tell how many of those heard about us from either Zagat or Michelin,” he says. However, Mr. Graham agrees that Michelin is the most important and is impressed with their thoroughness. “They made 12 anonymous visits before giving us the second star.”

But what is the future of these guides? Zagat says it now receives more revenue from their iPhone and iPad apps than they do from online subscriptions; Michelin, meanwhile, charges to upload their guides, but still offers them free online. Derek Bulmer, the retiring head of Michelin U.K., said in a rare interview he thought the biggest challenge was going to be from bloggers and online sites that offer instant information, as opposed to Michelin, which only updates annually. “One curious thing to remember about Michelin Guides is that the whole rationale behind them is not to make money, but to promote the name of Michelin as a tire company.” It seems to work because although Mr. Bulmer says the turnover of the maps and guide division of Michelin is less than 1% of its business, it generates half of Michelin's overall publicity—and that's not just among foodies.

The future of Malbec

[Wine]

By Will Lyons

Back in the 13th century, Malbec was the toast of the town. It was the grape variety of choice for royal households, Papal courts and the landed classes who enjoyed quenching their thirst on the “black” wine. The grape was planted widely in French wine regions such as the Loire Valley, where it was known as Côt, and in Bordeaux, before eventually finding its home in Cahors, in southwest France.

But over time its popularity waned, eclipsed by varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah. By 1956, when Bordeaux was particularly hard-hit by frosts, it was virtually forgotten, consigned by some as a poor-quality blending partner. In Cahors, however, it produced a deep, tannic purple-black wine that can be unapproachable in youth, but with time produces wines deep with flavors such as black cherry and ripe fruit. It was through producers such as Château du Cédre in Cahors that I was first introduced to its charms. Paired with the local food, duck breast or foie gras and a large slice of bread, it makes for a wonderful winter glass of wine.

The story of Malbec doesn't end in the southwest of France, where for the last 20 years it has been enjoying a glorious retirement. No, retirement never suited Malbec; having tasted the cup of fame, albeit more than 600 years ago, it was determined to reach those heights once again. Opportunity came in the guise of Argentina, where its success as a single varietal has been nothing short of astonishing. Not that it was easy—as recently as 1990, the amount of Malbec planted in Argentina had fallen from 50,000 to 10,000 hectares. Today, Malbec is one of the most important grape varieties in Argentina, where a number of winemakers have managed to derive a style that is richer and riper than those found in France. The warm days, cool nights and the long growing season allow the grape to ripen more fully, producing a softer style with notes of jam, leather and dark chocolate.

One winemaker who has been at the forefront of Malbec's renaissance in Argentina is Hervé Fabre. Born in Bordeaux, Mr. Fabre was one of the first winemakers from overseas to recognize the potential the grape variety had in Argentina. Chile was his first stop in South America but he found nothing there that he thought was truly original. In Argentina, though, Mr. Fabre was surprised by the quality Malbec achieved. In Bordeaux, Malbec was mainly used to add color to the wine, but the climate isn't warm enough for it to ripen consistently. Foreseeing its potential, he began buying up a number of sites with old vines. Back then, Malbec was being used as a blending variety, but Mr. Fabre was sure of its potential as a single varietal.

Interestingly, Mr. Fabre believes that having established itself on the international markets as a single varietal, Malbec is now ready to carve out a niche as a variety that can create a reputation as a key component in producing high-quality blends.

I recently had the opportunity to taste through some of the blends he has been producing in Argentina. Now at this stage, I have to declare an interest. I do enjoy Malbec, but in small doses. I need to be in a Malbec mood, if you know what I mean. It's a big wine, frequently 14.5% alcohol, and sometimes a little overwhelming; so what I am looking for is a blend that freshens the variety. I found that in Vinalba's 2009 Reserva Malbec-Cabernet Franc blend. The Cabernet Franc gives the Malbec a little freshness and an almost menthol character, which I liked. I also found it blended well with Cabernet Sauvignon, which gave it a tighter, more savory bent. With Touriga Nacional, a grape variety more commonly planted in Portugal's Douro Valley, it takes on a little more sweetness. Blended with Syrah, it felt a little lighter, with the Syrah really dominating on the nose. We also tasted a Malbec blend from 1996 that was alive with floral and plum characters, illustrating just how long this variety can cellar. Mr. Fabre now has plans to blend Malbec with other grape varieties such as Tannat and Tempranillo. If they prove successful, who knows? Perhaps Malbec's best days are yet to come.

Drinking Now

Viñalba Gran Reserva Malbec
Lujan de Cuyo, Argentina
Vintage: 2008
Price: about £15 or €17
Alcohol content: 14.5%

This wine is the flagship of Hervé Fabre's range and is planted on vines that he says are more than 67 years old. It gives some indication as to how good Malbec on its own can be.
The overall character of the wine is one of super concentration, with a soft, supple texture.
The tannins are very fine and the nose is floral, with an overwhelming smell of violets. If it has a downside, I would argue the alcohol is a little high; a couple of glasses of this wine and you really start to feel it. The counter argument, offered by Mr. Fabre, is that if he made wines that were lower in alcohol, they would be harder, higher in acidity and have slightly greener tannins. In short, the wine would be more difficult to drink and wouldn't offer such an immediate appeal.

Oysters come back in vogue

In the ebb and flow of popular food culture, these mollusks are once again enjoying a renaissance

By Will Lyons

In Falmouth, October marks the beginning of the oyster season. For centuries, this small fishing village on the southwest coast of England has welcomed seafarers and fisherman to dredge its wild oyster beds, which lay dotted along the silt flats of the Fal estuary. Their prize is the native or flat oyster—a sweet, delicate, saucer-shaped mollusk much sought after by the Romans, whose historian Pliny the Elder recommended them for improving the complexion.

Today, it is their taste—an experience that lays somewhere between the sea bed and the salty water—that attracts thousands of visitors to the Cornish village of Falmouth.

Next weekend, the rivers around the Fal estuary will be flooded with small oyster boats, known as Falmouth working boats, powered by sail or hand-pulled, looking to dredge the many oyster beds that lie beneath the waters. (For oystermen fishing in the Port of Truro Oyster Fishery, engines are prohibited, by decree of ancient laws put in place to protect the natural ecology of the river beds and the oysters.) Once the fishermen have collected their haul, the oysters will be purified for 36 hours before they are sold to customers across Europe, a practice that will continue until the end of the season in March.

It is part of a renaissance of the British oyster, says Nick Hodges, executive head chef at the Flying Fish restaurant at St. Michaels Hotel in Falmouth. "Oysters are back in vogue. We've gone through times when their popularity has dwindled, but now they are very much a prize possession again," says Mr. Hodges, whose grandparents farmed oysters. "Even on a local basis, they are on a lot more Cornish menus now. We now export much more to the European market, something we were not doing a few years ago."

There are two main kinds of oysters found in the British Isles: the flat, or native, oyster (*Ostrea edulis*), most famously grown among the beds in Whitstable, Colchester and Helford; and the rock, or Pacific, oyster (*Crassostrea gigas*), which was introduced commercially into Britain in the 1960s.

Although they are smaller, the native oysters are widely regarded as tasting superior, with a more delicate, metallic note. Rock oysters, meanwhile, are characterized as having a rough shell and a teardropped shaped. They tend to have a sweeter, more salty flavor and are meatier in texture. According to Drew Smith, author of "Oyster: A World History," oyster fossils can be found in England's Portland stone, which dates back to the Jurassic period, making them one of the oldest foodstuffs in the world.

> 'Now they are associated with the food of the wealthy, but that wasn't always the case.'

While the British may have some of the oldest evidence of oysters known to us today, all of the major seafaring nations, including France, Spain, Portugal, Japan and the U.S., can boast an oyster culture.

In France, the oyster beaches at Cancale in Brittany have been supplying Paris since the court of Francis I in the 16th century. France is now the world's largest oyster producer and consumer, fuelled by the oyster beds in Normandy, which produce the vast majority. This is followed by Brittany's northern coastline and, further south, the Loire and the Arcachon Basin. There, they grow both the rock oyster and the rarer Belons (*Ostrea edulis*), which possess an intense mineral flavor.

In the U.S., the most widely grown oyster is the Eastern oyster (*Crassostrea virginica*), which is farmed down the East Coast and Chesapeake Bay. This is followed by the Kumamoto oyster (*Crassostrea sikamea*) in Japan, a tiny thimble-shaped oyster grown in the Pacific Northwest.

With such a myriad of different species and flavors, buying oysters is, in many respects, almost as complicated as buying wine. The taste is derived from the water where the oyster is grown, as opposed to the oyster itself. This is because the oyster is constantly sieving water for its food, thus taking on the various characteristics of the water it inhabits. For example, a cold-water oyster will have a firmer texture than a warm-water oyster, which will generally be saltier. The taste can range from briny to possessing buttery, mineral and seaweed characteristics. Some oysters have even been described as having a nutty or vegetal characteristic.

In recent years, the fashion has been to eat oysters raw, served on a bed of ice. The connoisseurs argue that they should be eaten accompanied by nothing, as the flavor is derived from where the oyster is grown. But a drop of lemon or Tabasco is still favored by many.

Chef and food writer Valentine Warner, author of "What to Eat Now," who will be opening this year's Falmouth festival, says that previously, oysters were served cooked, a trend that is coming back. "Now they are associated with the food of the wealthy, but that wasn't always the case. Once they were eaten by all and almost looked down on," he says. "We went through a period of oysters being supped from the shell, but now there is a return to cooking them. As a general rule, if they are really good, I wouldn't do anything to them at all.

"But when you do want variety, one of the dishes I like is to deep fry. To do this, one has to take the oysters out of the shell, flour them, dip them in evaporated milk and then roll them in crumbs and oats, and serve with a barbeque sauce in a big golden pile of crispy, crunchy fat," Mr. Warner says. "They are also delicious stuffed inside game birds or popped in a beef pie."

That view is echoed by Mr. Hodges, the chef at Falmouth's Fly-

Left page, an assortment of Cornish, Hampshire, French and Irish oysters; this page, clockwise from top left, the village of Helford, fishermen gathering oysters, and the town of Falmouth and its harbor.

Jean Cazals for The Wall Street Journal (6)

ing Fish. “The purists will always serve oysters as naturally as possible,” he says. “There is no doubt that 75% of our sales are served on a little bed of sea salt on a slice of lemon. But the other natural option is to serve them with a slice of lime and just a very fine dice of fresh chilli.”

Historically, oysters weren’t sought just for their taste. Another attraction was their high nutrition levels. Low in fat and calories, oysters are naturally high in protein, zinc, magnesium and calcium, as well as containing levels of vitamin A,B,C and D.

Mr. Smith, the author, argues that a dozen oysters can amount to less than 100 calories, but are worth as much in protein as 100 grams of steak and contain as much as calcium as a glass of milk. He adds that only liver can equal an oyster in terms of the levels of iron and copper it delivers into the diet, and spinach in terms of folic acid.

Despite this, Britain’s oyster beds have a long way to go if they are to match the output of the mid-19th century, when companies in Whitstable sent more than 50 million tons of oysters to London. Since then, the impact of two world wars and a series of harsh, frozen winters in 1947 and 1963 all but wiped out the native stocks. Mr. Smith also argues that moorings and shore management were given over to richer fraternities of yachtsmen.

In Falmouth, the river beds and oyster stocks are still governed by ancient laws that protect the natural ecology of the riverbeds. Oystermen are prohibited from using engines, instead having to use sail-powered or hand-pulled dredges.

Leslie Angel, an oyster fisherman who will be dredging on the rivers surrounding Falmouth next weekend, admits that after growing in recent years, the yields have decreased, a factor he puts down to a variety of factors, such as weeds and pollution. “We farm about eight to 10 tonnes a year,” he says. “I would say stocks are decreasing. There are a number of different factors why, from the quality of the summer to the harshness of the winters and even the amount of rainfall. Some of the old fisherman used to say the oysters liked lightning even; that when it would strike, it would make them spawn. But we haven’t had lightning down here for a long time, so maybe they are right.”

Falmouth Oyster Festival runs from Oct. 14-17. www.falmouthoysterfestival.co.uk

A guide to oyster varieties and pairings

OYSTER VARIETIES

European Flat Oyster
(Ostrea edulis)
This oval or pear-shaped oyster, also known as the Belon, has been a native of Europe for centuries. First cultivated by the Romans, it is now found along the western European coast, from Norway to Morocco; the northeastern Atlantic; and the Mediterranean Basin. Although smaller, these oysters have a more delicate, metallic taste.

Pacific or Rock Oyster
(Crassostrea gigas)
One of the most intensely cultivated oysters in the world, it was first introduced to European coasts and British Columbia in the 1960s, following the decline of the native stock. Fast growing, it has spread across the globe. Sweet tasting and rich, its shell has a tear-dropped shape and is rough to the touch.

Kumamoto Oyster
(Crassostrea sikamea)
This oyster was first cultivated in the Ariake Bay on the southern Japanese island of Kyushu. It is now widely found on the West Coast of the U.S. Smaller than most oysters, they have a more subtle, more refined flavor. Their flesh is pronounced by a creamy, buttery texture, while their shell is deep and bowl-shaped.

Atlantic Oyster
(Crassostrea virginica)
Otherwise known as the Eastern, Gulf or Bluepoints, this variety of oyster is most commonly found along the Atlantic Seaboard of the U.S. and the Gulf of Mexico. It is perhaps best known for its thick, deeply cupped shell, a factor that encourages many chefs to serve it in a half shell.

Olympia Oysters
(Ostrea lurida)
A very small oyster, barely exceeding two inches across, this variety is native to the West Coast of America, where its popularity in San Francisco during the Gold Rush almost led to their extinction. Today, they are strictly protected. Rowan Jacobsen, author of “A Geography of Oysters,” has described their flavor as “unmistakable sweet, metallic, celery salt.”

WHAT TO DRINK WITH OYSTERS

Perhaps the most famous pairing with oysters is Champagne—the drier and meatier, the better. Personally I would opt for a forceful house style, such as Bollinger or the bone dryness of Pol Roger.

Author Drew Smith, in “Oyster: A World History” argues that wine is, in fact, a very difficult match for oysters, as the “complexity of texture in an oyster usually far outweighs the skills of any vintner.” Mr. Drew suggests Calvados, a shot of Guinness (anything more is simply too much) or an Islay whisky. He also suggests sherry, perhaps a fino or an oloroso.

For my own part, I would recommend the dry, flinty flavors associated with white Loire or perhaps the steeliness of Chablis. I also like a glass of Muscadet to wash down half a dozen oysters. If the oyster is cooked, the creaminess of an aged, oak Chardonnay will suffice, whereas if it is part of a wider recipe, such as game pie, opt for a meaty red.

COVER STORY

How to buy contemporary art

Course teaches serious collectors to buy what they love and to put financial return aside

By Andrew McKie

Few human impulses are as personal and as mysterious as the urge to collect, but the advice given by the financier and collector John Pierpont Morgan on the subject remains the most straightforward. Whatever you choose to collect, he suggested, simply buy the hundred best examples, and then stop.

This is sage counsel since, as any collector will tell you, stopping is the tricky bit of the process. But what of the rest of us, who have more limited resources than Morgan and want to know not how to stop, but where to start?

Next week, the doors will open on the Frieze Art Fair, which brings together more than 170 galleries in Regent's Park in London and pulls in hundreds of aspirant collectors. In preparation for this annual event, the Whitechapel Art Gallery in the city's East End runs a course advising those who are keen to get what the brochure calls "the inside track on how to collect contemporary art."

The course fee of £595 is enough to suggest that the participants (around 20 of them) are fairly serious in their ambitions, but they are a varied bunch. The current financial climate has winnowed out the ranks of bankers hoping that their bonuses might kick-start a collection to rival that of Charles Saatchi.

This is just as well, for if there is one consistent piece of advice that almost everyone addressing the course offers the students, it is to buy what you fall in love with, and not to concentrate too much on the potential for financial return. But the contraction of the global art market during the past two years doesn't erase the memory of the spectacular rise in prices (by more than 80% between 1995 and 2006), and of the public appetite for contemporary art, over the previous two decades.

In her lecture on the first night of the course, Iwona Blazwick, the gallery's director, points out that the boom in British contemporary art can be dated precisely. It began in 1988 with the Freeze exhibition in an empty warehouse in Docklands that was organized by Damien Hirst while he was still a student at Goldsmith's College, and ended with the massive sale of his work at Sotheby's two years ago, on the day that Lehman Brothers collapsed.

"So the Young British Artists began in a recession," she points out. "In fact, if it hadn't been for that, which meant that spaces lying empty, the 'do-it-yourself' attitude of the Frieze artists might not have happened."

Afterward, looking round the Whitechapel's current show, drawn from the collection of the Greek dairy magnate Dimitris Daskalopoulos, there is a sharp reminder of those days, in the form of an early (and uncharacteristic) collage by Hirst, featuring books, shells and a wooden door stop.

Today, the East End has some 10,000 artists and many galleries operating from formerly industrial spaces. Last Saturday, I joined the course members on a minibus visiting studios and galleries such as MOT International, housed in a half-empty tower block, and the Bow Arts Trust, a self-sustaining charity that provides some 200 studios, some in short-life former council housing, and others next to a gallery in a converted nunnery.

It's a tight squeeze to get everyone into some of the studios. "This is a terrible space," says Patrick Brill, who works under the name Bob and Roberta Smith and is our first stop. "It's called Cell Studios and you can see why: there are bars on the windows. But it's a fantastic location, and I have an enormous space in Ramsgate where I can make large sculptural pieces."

Here, Mr. Brill produces smaller, text-based work. He says that a relationship with those who collect his work isn't particularly important—"What matters is the money, which sounds glib, but it makes a difference and keeps my family going." This honest message is backed up by a painting on board behind him that reads "I like buying art from artists that are still alive."

But the connection between artists, galleries and buyers matters more to others, and becomes rather a theme through the day. "It's not just a transaction," says the sculptor Owen Bullett, while Doug White, with whom he shares a studio, claims that it varies with the work. "For practical reasons, with large-scale work you often have to install it yourself," Mr. White says. "And of course you're often willing to offer more to someone who really engages with your practice."

> 'I think living with works of art is very different from seeing them in exhibitions or museums.'

The artist David Batchelor has found a similarly productive relationship with the corporate world, and the floor of his bright, orderly studio is covered with huge, color-coded piles of electrical cable, which was acquired from the waste material at Bloomberg. "They get turned into large spheres like the rubber band balls," he says. He gets asked if he'd like to make a really big version. "I'd love to, but they're really difficult to make, and even small increases in size create huge differences in weight."

Paul Hedges, director of the Hales Gallery, which is showing a vast installation of hanging beads by the artist Hew Locke, admits such physical considerations matter. Perhaps unsurprisingly, he says that the first question he would ask a potential client is "How much space have you got?"

But he assures one of the participants that he enjoys building relationships not only with his artists, but his customers. "I'm very happy to let someone pay £100 a month if necessary," he says, "if I can see that they love the work and it gets it out there."

Jenny Tomlinson, an operations manager at an oil company, already collects, and has come on the course to learn more. "You may start with prints or limited editions," she says. "But I'd really like to see a scheme of borrowing and lending similar to the way children lease musical instruments."

Mr. Hedges offers another suggestion of where to start: "Film has no storage issues and is interesting and often cheap." Mr. Locke's work, which will be sold as an edition of three, with the materials and instructions for their assembly, is certainly unlikely to find a home in a domestic setting. This is even more true of the work on show at White Cube, one of the leading commercial galleries, which represents many of the biggest names in conceptual art. The students traipse through 350 kilograms of confetti made of bronze, which has been sprinkled across the gallery floor by the Belgian artist Kris Martin.

Simon Lee, who has turned to collecting (particularly the work of the cult artist Billy Childish) after a successful 30-year career as a salesman and entrepreneur—"I invented opt-out email marketing," he jokes—and who asks more questions than any of the other students, thinks that it's impressive. But he remains resolutely practical. "It's great," he says, "but I don't see how this could be bought by a private collector. How would you show it?"

Some of these questions come to the fore at a round table discussion at the home of the collector Dominic Palfreyman in Little Venice. Mr. Palfreyman, a former investment banker, is the founder of the Felix Trust for Art, which initiates and supports, among other projects, social sculpture, installation and performance art.

His house, however, is dominated by an extensive and stunning collection, mostly comprising prints, photographs, drawings and paintings. "I think living with works of art is very different from seeing them in exhibitions or museums," he says. "You need things that you're happy to look at all day, each day, every day. And so the art that I collect is a very small slice of the art that I like."

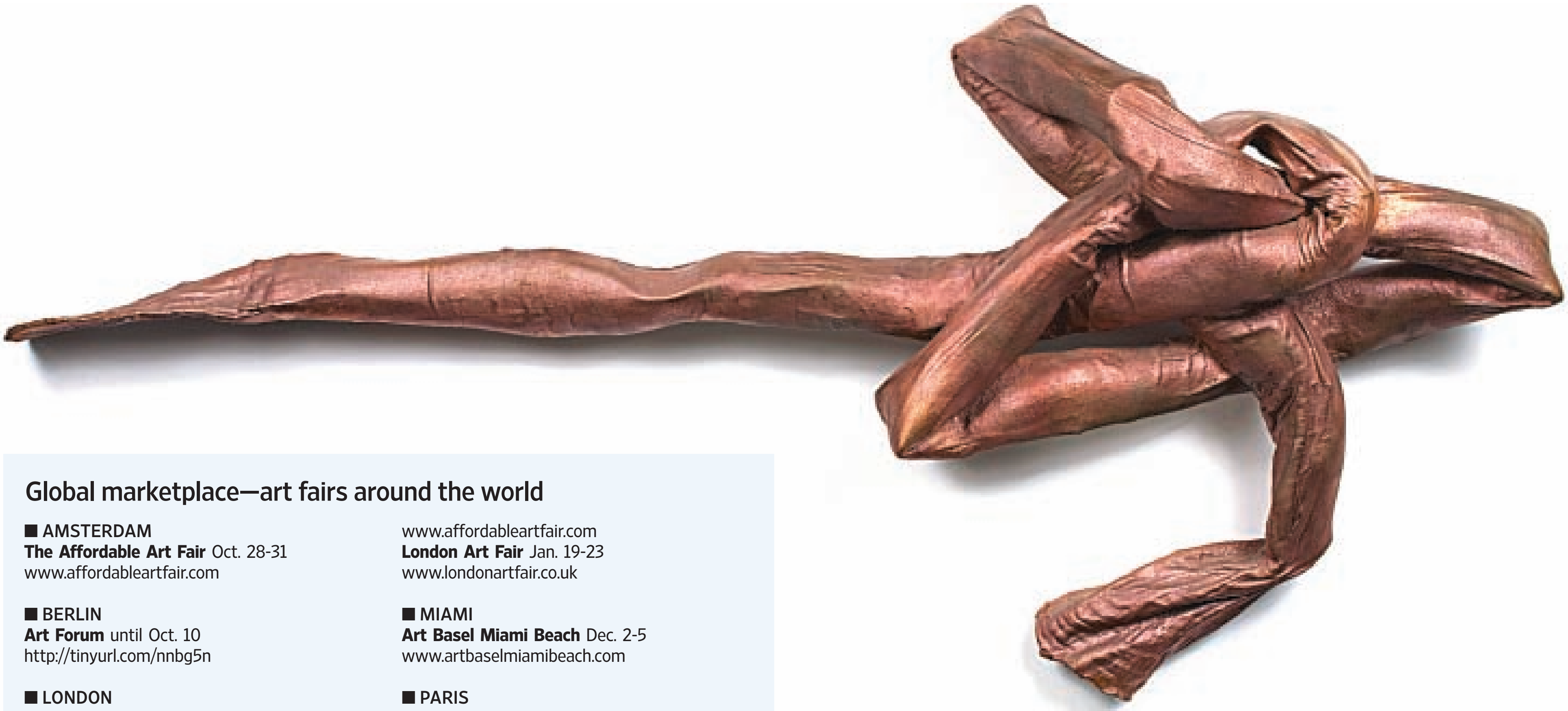
Stuart Evans, a lawyer who has built up major collections of contemporary art both personally and for public spaces, says that he hasn't made that distinction. He and his son John, with whom he now collects, have already acquired work by Doug White, melted recycling bins, which they installed at Evans senior's law firm, Simmons & Simmons. "And you bought another piece from him while I was away," Mr. Evans reminds his son.

"Yes, well the difference is that you have a committee that you have to run things past, while I don't," he replies.

That, at least, is a freedom that those on the course enjoy as well. Tomorrow they will visit Christie's, to learn how work is sold at auction, and next week they will have a tour of Frieze. If there were an end of term test, I suppose it should be this: Will they get their wallets out?

Collecting Contemporary Art at the Whitechapel Gallery; whitechapelgallery.org

COVER STORY



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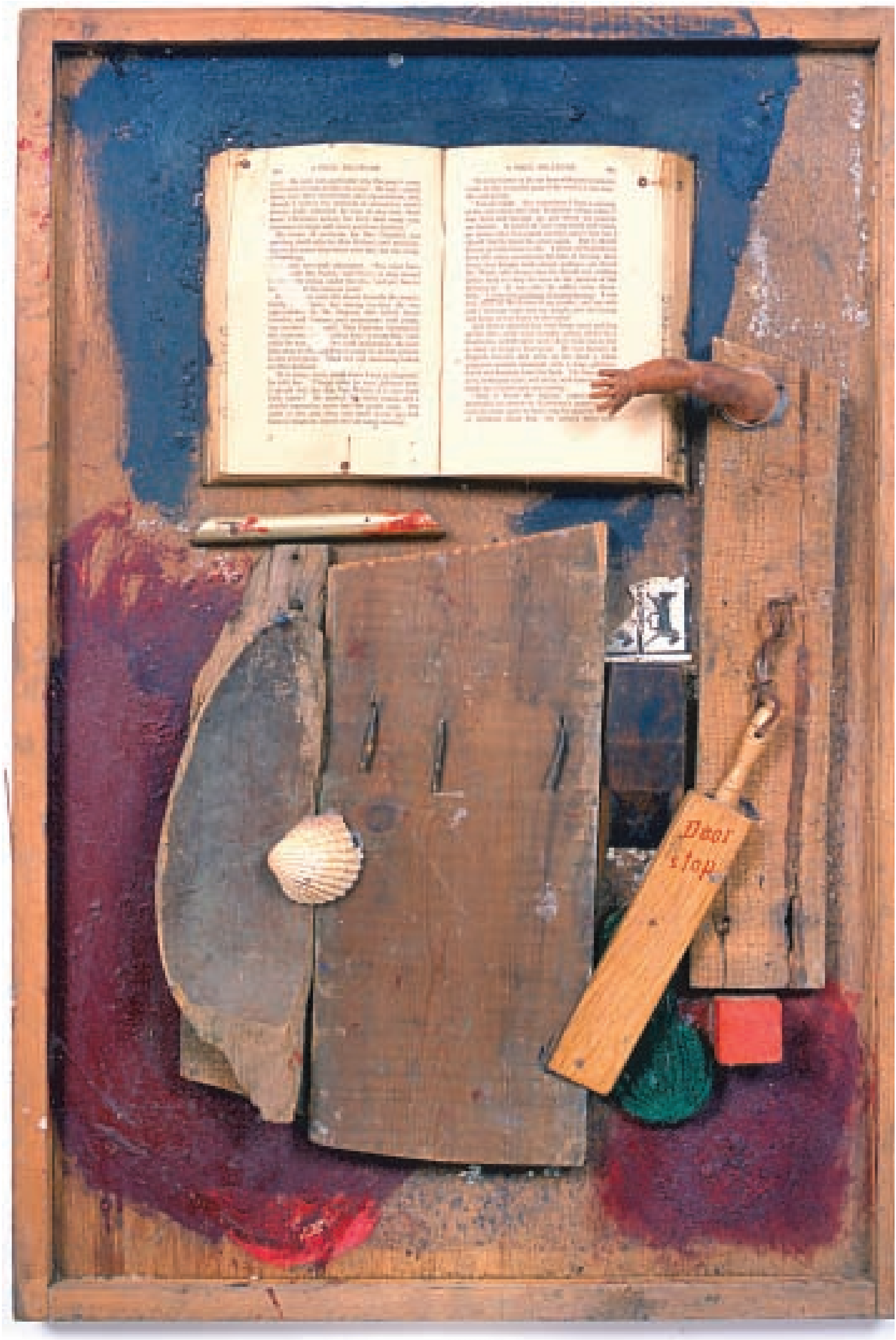

Clockwise from left page: Andrew McKie and other course members at the home of collector Dominic Palfreyman (photo behind him by Elger Esser); 'Très' (1976) by Lynda Benglis at the Whitechapel Gallery; Damien Hirst's Untitled (Collage 2) (1985), also at Whitechapel; the course visits White Cube gallery, which exhibits an installation of copper pieces by Kris Martin; David Batchelor at his studio, showing a design for a light sculpture.

Clockwise from top left: Robert Leslie for The Wall Street Journal; courtesy of Whitechapel Gallery (2); Robert Leslie for The Wall Street Journal (2)

The evolution of the wine cellar

Julian Abrams/Image courtesy of Candy & Candy.

Above, a Champagne wall, designed by Candy & Candy, within the formal dining room of a Mayfair mews house in London;
bottom right, an extensive private cellar in Poitiers, France.

By Jemima Sissons

Wine cellars, once hidden away, have now come above ground and are increasingly a must-have for those who can afford them.

"Wine cellars are no longer relegated to dusty basements and are now center stage," says interior designer Joanna Wood, who specializes in fitting European wine cellars into clients' homes. "They are now beautifully lit, with wine wonderfully displayed and not left to moulder."

For Ms. Wood, and many in the industry, they are a vital status symbol in a well-dressed house—this means his and hers bathrooms, a media room, a spa and, for a growing number, a fabulous wine cellar—or wine "room," as they are increasingly being called as they lose their subterranean status.

"It used to be a damp basement, wine piled up on the floor," says Alex Michelin, of property design company Finchatton. "There has been an evolution." And evolution comes at a price, with some of the glitziest coming in at the high six figures. But as Ms. Wood adds, "this is often only a fraction of the cost of the wine."

Stephen Williams, managing director of the Antique Wine Co. (www.antique-wine.com), says that there has been a cultural shift: "Fifty years ago, the main market for wine was aristocracy living in manor houses, where parents and grandparents would lay down wine to mature." He adds that the world today is a lot more cosmopolitan and international: "There are a lot more young people with money who are interested in wine. Consequentially, people are much more open-minded in how to enjoy and share wine. Instead of being hidden away, they are now integrated as an additional entertainment feature, in many cases they are total destinations."

Indeed, many have become something akin to a private club, or a boys' room, complete with humidors, leather armchairs and entertainment systems.

In a recent £150,000 project in Manresa Road in Chelsea, London, Finchatton created a room for 3,000 bottles, the shelves carved out of Macassar ebony and lined in leather. Fiber optics light the room with independently controlled areas for red wine, white wine and Champagne. There is also a walk-in tasting area, complete with a vast array of decanters, lead cutters and bottle openers.

One £50,000 project by Taylor Howes Design (www.taylor-howes.co.uk) in the Algarve region in Portugal very much combines a dual function of practicality and socializing. "Increasingly, people don't just want to go down, grab a bottle of wine and leave," says managing director Karen Howes. "There we created a high-level seating area where guests can sit at a table and appreciate a great bottle of wine pre- and post-dinner."

In another project in Wimbledon by cellarmakers Smith and Taylor (www.smithandtaylor.com), the £100,000 room contains a bespoke humidor and a section dedicated entirely to Dom Pérignon, with bottles that appear to be floating, suspended on metal cradles, framed on either side by shelving specifically designed to store them in their original coffret (gift boxes).

The type of house people want to live in has also changed. "People want fewer, larger rooms. But they want them to be special," Mr. Michelin says.

"Cellars have become part of the dining room," says Ms. Wood. "Formal dining rooms are less necessary than 10 years ago, and very often they serve a dual functionality, such as storing wine."

At the Grand Hotel du Cap Ferrat (www.grand-hotel-cap-ferrat.com) in the south of France, designer Pierre-Yves Rochon has created a private dining and wine salon complete with mood lighting, fabulous art and seating for eight; center stage is the vast collection of vintage Château d'Yquem and Château Lafite Rothschild, dating from 1799.

In a Smith and Taylor project in Belgravia, the £200,000 dining wine room is flanked with 1,200 bottles that "float" on metal rods, all framed by eight large format bottles—from Magnum to Melchior—all against a mirrored background.

Another reason for the shift to more ingenious ways of storing wine is technology. The traditional wine cellars were located underground as there was a constant temperature. Now technical advances mean that you can create a microclimate anywhere, with conditions fit for every type of wine, in virtually any room in the house. It also means LED lighting and touches such as an electronic sommelier, which will scan and log all your wine and tell you where it is located in the room, and also acts as an inventory and gives up-to-date tasting notes.

At the other end of the spectrum, some are even using their wine collections as works of art. One Chinese client in Mayfair has asked Smith and Taylor to create a display of 67 bottles of Château Mouton Rosthchild, each label designed by a different artist. "The client is giving way to the practical to achieve a display, and at this stage, it now becomes an interior design issue," says Managing Director Sebastian Riley-Smith.

What's clear is that the fusty image has gone, and there is an added element of fun to many of the wine rooms. One Antique Wine client in Connecticut has six cellar rooms, each room designated for specific regions, including Champagne, Burgundy and Italian. When he wants to choose a wine, he presses a button, at which point a painting on the wall moves so guests can see through to the wine cellar, the cellar then fills with dry ice, the region he has chosen lights up and in he goes to choose his bottle.

In property developers Candy & Candy's One Hyde Park in London, one client is developing a secret room, which is only accessed when you pass your hand over an electronic radar on a specific point on the wall. The room is spectacularly lit, with the owner's initials on the floor. In another Candy & Candy project in Mayfair, a double level refrigerated, backlit Champagne wall has been built, "designed to be dramatic," designer Martin Kemp says.

Wine rooms, have, of course kept up with the times. In the wine cellar in Connecticut, there are laser beams to protect the liquid investment, which the insurance company insisted on. One Middle Eastern client in London has such valuable bottles (some at £40,000) that an inner sanctum, which cost £150,000, has been built into his wine room, complete with bulletproof glass.

As Mr. Riley-Smith says, "There has been a massive growth in prosperity and a good wine collection, housed in an amazing wine room, is increasingly a good bellwether of social status."

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Learning to ‘Pack a Punch’ in 150 Pages

By Jeffrey A. Trachtenberg

Shortly before finishing his most recent novel, “The Humbling” (2009), Philip Roth sat down with a yellow legal pad and drew up a list of the historical events he had lived through, knew well and hadn’t yet written about. One of the words he wrote down was “polio.” Several days later, he glanced at the pad again. This time, he circled the word polio.

When Mr. Roth, 77, was growing up in Newark, N.J., in the 1940s, polio’s ability to cripple and even kill without warning was one of the greatest fears. What would have happened, he wondered, if an epidemic had struck his neighborhood?

On Oct. 5, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt will publish “Nemesis,” the fourth novel in the author’s quartet of short novels that includes “Everyman” (2006), “Indignation” (2008), and “The Humbling.”

In “Nemesis,” Mr. Roth tells the story of Bucky Cantor, an athletic, javelin-throwing 23-year-old who is a playground director in the summer of 1944 in Newark. Not eligible to serve in the armed forces because of poor eyesight, Bucky becomes a devoted gym teacher. A fellow teacher falls in love with him, and the two appear to have a bright future.

But after a polio epidemic breaks out during the summer, Bucky quits his playground job at her request to join her at a camp in the Poconos. The story then takes a brutal turn.

Early in his career, Mr. Roth would write through an entire novel on his typewriter and then go back to polish it. Now, he says, the computer has made it so easy to make changes that he typically writes five pages and then rereads them. “If it’s too poorly written, I back up and rewrite,” he says. “Not so that it’s necessarily polished and finished, but so that I can decently go ahead.”

When he’s working on a book, he writes every day. He’s satisfied with a single page, although he’d rather have more. “If I have less than a page, I want to slit my throat,” he says.

He writes in New York City and in rural Connecticut, where he also lives. When he’s deeply into a project, he’ll usually start to write at 9:30 in the morning and work until 4 p.m. or so, when he takes a break to exercise. If he’s in the country, he’ll sometimes go back to work after dinner for an hour or two, typically looking over that day’s work.

The work itself is still hard, he says. Perhaps 10 to 15 days a year he simply decides that he’s not getting anywhere and gives up. Mostly, however, he prefers to struggle on in hopes of getting something written down that advances the story. If he quits, he says, he knows he’ll have to face the same problems the next morning.

Mr. Roth says he doesn’t map out the whole story in advance. While he has some inkling as to what may happen next, he basically “feels my way going forward. The book educates me as I write.”

As he thought about the story for “Nemesis,” Mr. Roth remembered how much he and his friends had loved their summer playground director, somebody who directed their games and looked out for them. The kids were in his charge, but they weren’t his kids. He was right in the heart of the action, susceptible to the same risks as the children around him. As Mr. Roth puts it, “The danger was in his face.”

Many of Mr. Roth’s works are flavored by autobiographical details, and occasionally he has heard that people he has written about have been upset. But the process of turning a real person into a character is more complex than most people think, he says.

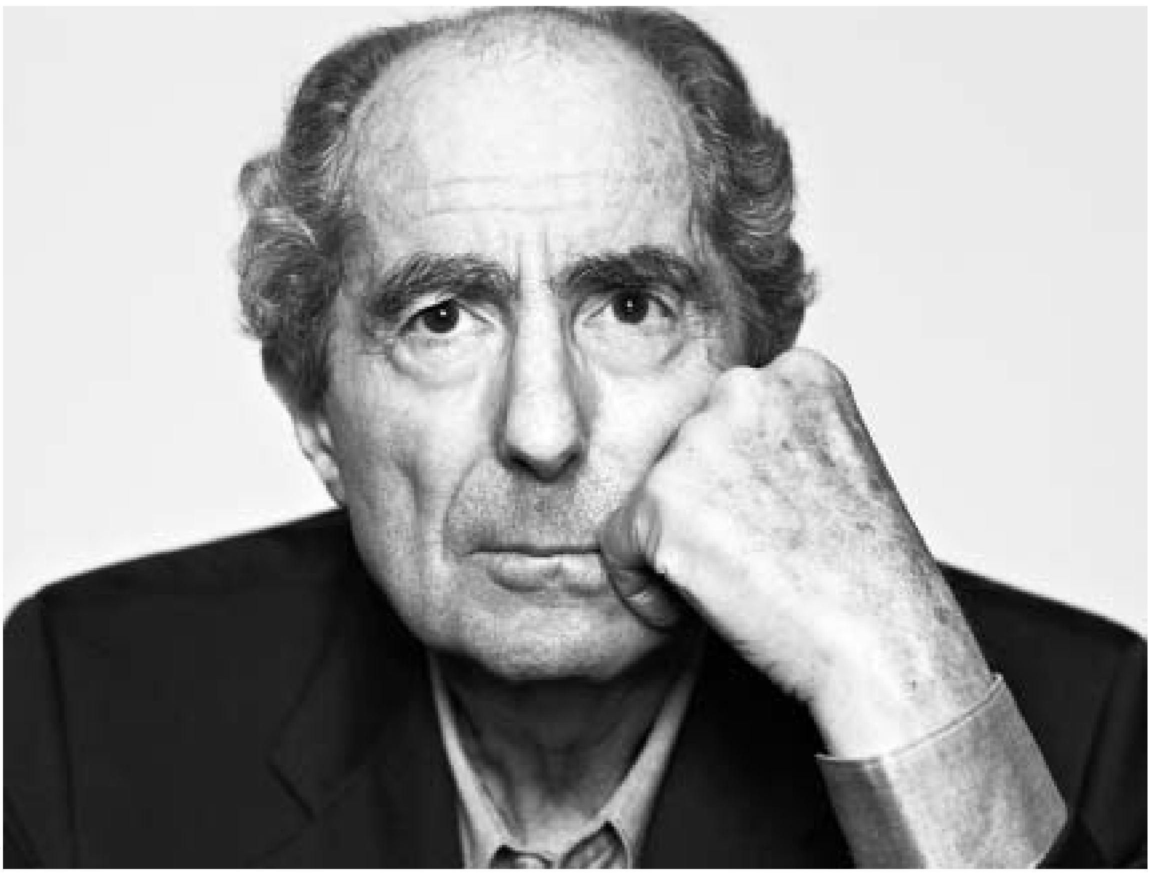
“The person is a model who then develops into somebody,” he says. “You may begin with a real person, but you have to come to inhabit that character yourself, and at that point, at least the way I do it, you leave the real person behind.”

Mr. Roth began to think seriously about writing shorter novels about six years ago. He admired the shorter work of Saul Bellow, and at one point discussed it with him. “I said, ‘How do you do it? I know how to write a novel, and I like the amplification that goes into writing a novel, but how do you pack a punch in just 150 pages?’ ”

Mr. Roth started with “Everyman,” where he says “the punch was death and disease.” In the second book, “Indignation,” a “boy screws up and winds up getting killed.” In “The Humbling,” says Mr. Roth, “The guy loses his acting power and then he altogether loses his power and does himself in.”

The short novel, he says, requires different skills, which he didn’t realize when he began the series. “You have to be able to compress and condense,” he says. “That’s the skill, to condense and pack a punch at the same time.”

All four books, he adds, are about suffering. “The nemesis is that which you can’t conquer,” he says. “Do you have one?”



Brigitte Lacombe for The Wall Street Journal

PHILIP ROTH working on a manuscript in December 1968.

The Keystone to John Updike’s Imagination

By Anthony Paletta

Fifty years ago, Harry “Rabbit” Angstrom slipped into the 1955 Ford sold him by his father-in-law, who was “ashamed of his daughter marrying somebody who had nothing but a ’39 Nash he bought for $125 in the Army in Texas in 1953.” He drove aimlessly south, fleeing the deadening pressures of marriage and fatherhood, never intending to “ever see Brewer again, that flowerpot city.” Rabbit, of course, did return to his Pennsylvania home, just as surely as John Updike, who began his novel “Rabbit, Run” “with no thought of a sequel,” repeatedly returned to his famous flawed hero and his town of Brewer, the fictional analogue of Updike’s own childhood homes in the area of Reading, Pa.

Updike made frequent sojourns to the setting of his youth, with an ultimate return in 2009, as some of his ashes were scattered on his parents’ simple flat gravestone in the Robeson Evangelical Lutheran Church in Plowville. Last weekend, at the inaugural conference of the John Updike Society held at Alvernia University in Reading, others followed almost literally in his footsteps. Its theme—“Updike in Pennsylvania”—was both a neat declaration of his eternal resting place and abundant fodder for three days’ scholarly inquiry.

The conference, drawing over 120 scholars, teachers and enthusiasts, from Northern Ontario to Yokohama, Japan, sought to examine the tangled knot of an author’s relation to his hometown, which in the case of Updike offers as much cord for unraveling as the Christmas lights of Reading so integral to his memories. Two tours took in the sights of Updike’s youth.

A remaining wall from the poorhouse that was the inspiration for the setting of Updike’s first novel, “The Poorhouse Fair,” can be found in Shillington, a tidy Reading suburb where Updike spent his early childhood. The sturdy 1812 Plowville farmhouse where he lived from ages 10 to 18 inspired “The Centaur” and “Of the Farm”; his second cousins now live there. The Plowville church features a prominent “Tothero” grave, a common area name borrowed for coach Marty Tothero of “Rabbit, Run.”

Reading itself, which “loomed for a Shillington child as an immense, remote, menacing, and glamorous metropolis,” is a remarkably recognizable Brewer, with its depiction over the Rabbit series offering a nearly perfect rendering of the actual city’s respectable past, attempts at renewal and hardscrabble present. The scars are evident—the “pedestrian mall the city planners put in the broadest two blocks of Weiser to renew the downtown supposedly” has now been reopened to traffic, but they are lined with bland bank buildings and discount stores on the sites of formerly grand department stores. St. Joseph’s hospital, where Rabbit’s daughter is born, is identical in name and seeming location to its real-life model.

It’s a loss for Reading that Updike is no longer present to observe the Goggleworks arts complex, housed in a former goggle mill, especially to imagine how one of this fall’s offerings, “Yogi Bear,” might take a place in the sequence of movies shown in Brewer in the novels, from those that Rabbit saw (“2001: A Space Odyssey”) to those that he did not (“Honeymoon in Swampland”).

There is no need to speculate about how Updike achieved such fastidious detail; not only his novels and short stories but separate conference panels of family members and high-school classmates provided ample testimony to Updike’s longstanding links to home. Michael Updike, his son, recalled the “nine-hour trip to Pennsylvania every summer for a week.” The children fondly related sleeping in the Plowville barn with their grandparents during these visits.

As the descriptions of Brewer, that “torpid hive,” or any look at Updike’s writings would suggest, this nostalgia is inevitably complicated by darker realities. Author Ann Beattie, one of the keynote speakers, described Updike’s work as featuring “the loftiest imagining slamming into the highest brick wall”; these abrupt disappointments and obstacles are evident in his inspirations as well. Mary Weatherell, Updike’s first wife, declared it “disconcerting” to be “described with added qualities that were not true of me” in her perceived fictional portraits. Of “Couples,” an exceptionally adulterous novel even by Updike’s standards, she said, “I read it once and I think I’ll never read it again.” Updike’s son Michael described “Of the Farm” as a “damning account of my grandmother, and her conniving, manipulative ways.” Amid a weekend of stories of the unfailing kindness of Wesley Updike, Michael also wondered why “my father didn’t respect his father more.”

Yet the past exerted a clear lure, with Updike visiting and remaining in correspondence with both Pennsylvania family and friends. One former classmate recalled finding Updike, the summer after his first year at Harvard, bouncing a basketball in downtown Reading—the ball still in its bag. His returns to high-school reunions were frequent—the last in 2005—where, as panelists recounted, he was always eager to hear stories, “the dirtier the better” (no surprise there). Panelists and attendees offered tales of Updike’s faithful and courteous correspondence, delivered on postcards and displaying an unfailing wit and grace. In speaking of the church of his baptism, he wrote to the current pastor of “the stained glass windows burned into my brain like the pieces of paradise.” Many cards offered simpler thanks—“tell Jim I still use his garden tools and they’re great.”

To a certain extent, there’s no question that the conference title and events stacked the deck in declaring home a vast influence in Updike’s work. Scholars offered caveats about the limits of attempts to precisely map inspirations; Updike’s Pennsylvania novels are not merely a family history and high-school yearbook under different names (no more than his Massachusetts novels are a Kinsey study of his neighbors’ infidelities). Yet with Updike, when it comes to Pennsylvania the convergence between autobiography and output is unusually strong.

One conference panelist, Sylvia Mathé of the Université de Provence, pondered the inconceivability of Updike “being born in the West.” No, as was observed of a character in his late short story “Lunch Hour,” for Updike “the basic treasure of his life was buried back there, in the town of Olinger, and he kept trying to uncover it.” And as was evident last weekend, where Updike has finished his prospecting, others have now taken it up.

—Mr. Paletta is an editor at the Manhattan Institute’s Center for the American University.

Brass Beds and Broomsticks

By Meghan Cox Gurdon

When parents kiss their children good night and say, “Sleep tight,” it’s a fair bet that neither party realizes that the phrase originated in the era of straw-stuffed mattresses. Before the invention of spring mattresses in 1865, bedding would have been suspended by rope lattices that, when they sagged, could be tightened with a key. This is the sort of historical oddity in which Bill Bryson delights, and “At Home: A Short History of Private Life” is stuffed with them.

Did you know, for instance, that the 19th-century vogue for brass beds grew not from anyone’s fondness for the metal but from the way a smooth, hard surface discourages climbing vermin? While we’re on the bedroom theme, consider: If your pillow is six years old (the average age of a pillow, according to Mr. Bryson) “one-tenth of its weight will be made up of sloughed skin, living and dead mites, and mite dung—or frass, as it is known to entomologists.”

Readers who enjoyed Mr. Bryson’s apparently inexhaustible supply of nifty facts in such previous books as “A Short History of Nearly Everything” (2004) or “The Mother Tongue” (1991) will be happy to find the author’s pen as nimble and his narrative persona as genial as ever. This time Mr. Bryson uses his own house as a framework for exploring the origins of domestic objects and customs that most of us take for granted.

Mr. Bryson is an American, but he and his family live in an old Church of England rectory in rural Norfolk. One day, as he tells it, he was hunting for the source of a leak when he found himself up on his own roof. Before him spread the verdant, nubbly English countryside, and with the force of epiphany it occurred to him how little he knew about the ordinary things and practices of life. On the land he surveyed, generations had risen and fallen since long before Roman times, eventually producing a society in which forks have four tines (not three); in which women wear brassieres (which alas were not invented, as schoolboys claim, by one “Otto Titzling”); in which the word “cabinet” denotes both a cupboard and a coterie of government advisers. What were the stories behind these seeming mundanities?

At Home: A Short History of Private Life
By Bill Bryson
(Doubleday, 544 pages, £20)

Mr. Bryson discovered—and, in these pages, he clearly enjoys relating—that many commonplace objects have fascinating pedigrees. “The history of household life isn’t just a history of beds and sofas and kitchen stoves, as I had vaguely supposed it would be,” he explains, “but of scurvy and guano and the Eiffel Tower and bedbugs and body-snatching and just about everything else that has ever happened. Houses aren’t refuges from history. They are where history ends up.”

The book is divided by item, area or room, though each chapter heading is really only the starting point for a jolly Brysonian ramble. “The Dining Room,” for example, quickly moves from home-base to the practice of tarring and feathering, the opium and tea trades, and the massacre of women and children in the 1857 Sepoy Rebellion in India, before circling back to the dinner table and the question of why anyone would need a fish knife, ever. A chapter called “The Fusebox” begins with the enforced blackouts in World War II Britain and proceeds to a lively discussion of the attributes of tallow, wax, spermaceti and other materials (including dried dung) that were used for lighting ahead of Edison’s invention.

One recurrent theme is the way that ideas and money have traveled back and forth across the Atlantic, and Mr. Bryson makes us very aware of the poignant simultaneity of America’s rise and Britain’s decline. Among other things, we learn about the inadvertent sacking of landed English families, bloodlessly achieved through a combination of death taxes (imposed in 1894), agricultural crisis and the emergence of a class of Americans rich enough to buy anything they liked. It was during the Gilded Age that the Folger family began acquiring first folios of Shakespeare’s plays and the Mellons, Fricks and Carnegies began to fill their mansions with furniture and paintings from the cash-starved great houses of England.

It seems almost unsporting to say so, but though Mr. Bryson ushers us through every manner of interesting thing, “At Home” doesn’t really go anywhere. There is no overarching argument or point. The effect, after reading it, is that of having been at a dinner party with a delightful raconteur, a man whose diverting anecdotes gradually silence the table.

And indeed, like a loquacious dinner guest who has one too many glasses of wine, near the end Mr. Bryson almost spoils his own effect. For in his closing paragraphs, amazingly, he suddenly lectures us on . . . carbon emissions!

“Today it takes the average citizen of Tanzania almost a year to produce the same volume of carbon emissions as is effortlessly generated every two and a half days by a European, or every 28 hours by an American,” we are told. “We are, in short, able to live as we do because we use resources at hundreds of times the rate of most of the planet’s other citizens.”

Retrofile/Getty Images

Yes, after 450 pages packed with fascinating topics, from the decimation of country parsonages to the miracle of hydraulic cement (it made the Erie Canal possible)—after discovering worms in the sturgeon at Samuel Pepys’s table and dressing with Beau Brummell, after reading of man’s long struggle to tame sewage and prevent cholera—we are asked to hang our heads in shame at the units of carbon we emit. It’s a disappointingly modish note on which to end an otherwise charming book.

—Mrs. Gurdon is a frequent contributor to the Journal’s books pages.

Adam Smith’s Wealth of Ideas

By Jeffrey Collins

Having dined with Adam Smith on a number of occasions, Samuel Johnson once described him “as dull a dog as he had ever met with.” Smith’s biographers might be inclined to agree. The most celebrated political economist in history led a remarkably quiet life. Born in the sleepy Scottish port of Kirkcaldy in 1723, he was raised by his widowed mother and lived with her for much of his life. He studied at the University of Glasgow (which he loved) and at Oxford (which he loathed). Only once in his life did he travel outside of Britain. He wrote few letters and burned his personal papers shortly before his death in 1790. Even his appearance is a mystery. The only contemporary likenesses of him are two small, carved medallions. We know Adam Smith as we know the ancients, in colorless stone.

Adam Smith: An Enlightened Life
By Nicholas Phillipson
(Allen Lane, 346 pages, £25)

It is a measure of Nicholas Phillipson’s gifts as a writer that he has, from this unpromising material, produced a fascinating book. Mr. Phillipson is the world’s leading historian of the Scottish Enlightenment. His “Adam Smith: An Enlightened Life” animates Smith’s prosaic personal history with an account of the eventful times through which he lived and the revolutionary ideas that inspired him. Adam Smith finally has the biography that he deserves, and it could not be more timely.

Smith’s fame, of course, was made by the “Wealth of Nations.” The book appeared in 1776, a good year in the annals of human liberty. Its teachings are so fundamental to modern economics that familiarity often dulls our appreciation of its brilliance.

Smith constructed his masterpiece on a few ingenious insights into the workings of a commercial economy. Where his contemporaries calculated national wealth in terms of gold or agricultural output, Smith measured “opulence” by the flow of consumable goods. The division of labor would accelerate the production of goods, he argued, and render manufacture ever more efficient. The division of labor itself was best determined by markets of self-interested individuals. Markets, in turn, operated best when freed of regulation and interference, thus allowing the value and price of both commodities and labor to align themselves.

Each conclusion led inexorably to the next. Smith relentlessly vindicated the value of free markets and of the individual economic freedom that made markets work. As a manifesto against protectionism, economic planning and grasping rentier behavior, the “Wealth of Nations” has never been bettered. Still, the book is often read in arid isolation, as merely a prophetic anticipation of more modern economic theory. Mr. Phillipson, by contrast, vividly describes the historical circumstances that shaped the “Wealth of Nations.”

Adam Smith
An Enlightened Life
Nicholas Phillipson

Smith’s favorable account of luxury and consumption spoke for Britain’s increasingly affluent middle class and its delight in the dawning age of manufactured gadgets. His attack on monopolies directly targeted at the era’s crony capitalists, notably the oligarchic tobacco kings of Glasgow. His rejection of protectionism was partly an assault on the British Empire itself, which was struggling to keep its burgeoning American colonies pinned under the imperial thumb.

Mr. Phillipson also provides a lucid account of Smith’s broader philosophical ambitions, which were much more expansive than the “Wealth of Nations” alone might suggest. Smith’s famed lectures and his other great book, “The Theory of Moral Sentiments” of 1759, ranged widely over politics, law, ethics and aesthetics. Inspired by his friend, the skeptic David Hume, Smith swept aside all timeless or divine notions of moral and political order. In his view, society emerged from the historical experience of a needy species driven to create conditions in which property, affection and opinions alike could be stably exchanged. Manners and morals, like goods, thus had an “economy.” The material and moral economies were, indeed, linked, in that a rising material prosperity helped to encourage civility and taste. Mr. Phillipson reconstructs Smith’s intricate system with erudition and imagination, often from student notes of Smith’s long-lost lectures, which he had delivered in both Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Modern conservatives are fond of claiming Smith as an intellectual forebear, but they are only partly right to do so. Like Hume, Smith was a religious skeptic. Morality, to him, was not natural or divine law but a set of mere conventions, a law we give to ourselves. Unlike Edmund Burke, who knew him, Smith scorned the European aristocracy and had little time for English constitutional traditions.

Nevertheless, Smith’s conservative side does emerge in Mr. Phillipson’s biography. As a reformer, Smith valued prudence and gradualism. Statesmen, he wrote, should establish not “the best system of laws” but the “best that the people can bear.” He found the French taste for revolutionary cataclysm repellent. And if Smith’s economic ideas affronted the paternalism of the traditional Tory party, they were eventually taken up by William Pitt the Younger, the late-18th-century prime minister who is now seen as one of the fathers of free-market conservatism.

Smith’s was a complex legacy, and in reading about it one is struck by its uncanny relevance. When the “Wealth of Nations” appeared, Britain staggered under massive war spending and a colossal national debt. Bad loans blighted banks across the country. Several had collapsed, leaving their investors ruined. Gold bugs abounded. In the face of international competition, well-connected manufacturing interests clamored for protective tariffs. The times called for Adam Smith, and his theories worked to stabilize and liberate the British economy as it entered the industrial age. If we need a reminder of his achievements, and of late it appears that we may, Mr. Phillipson has given us a superlative one.

—Mr. Collins, a professor of history at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario, is currently a visiting fellow at Cambridge University.

Are these really six of the best?

With its notable omissions, this year's Man Booker Prize shortlist is as eccentric as ever

By Paul Levy

PETER CAREY
Parrot and Olivier in America
C
TOM McCARTHY
Howard Jacobson
The Finkler Question
ROOM
Emma Donoghue
PICADOR
DAMON GALGUT
IN A STRANGE ROOM
THE LONG SONG
ANDREA LEVY

Above, books on the Booker Prize shortlist; left, author Peter Carey.

Corbis; top, Man Booker Prize

Next Tuesday at a dinner at London's Guildhall, one fortune-favored novelist will be richer by £50,000 for winning the 2010 Man Booker Prize. It's a big deal for the winner in another way: Last year's door-stopper historic novel "Wolf Hall" by Hilary Mantel has now sold half a million copies in the U.K. alone. In some ways, it's been a vintage year for fiction by those eligible for the big prize—British Commonwealth and Irish writers—as I can say with the authority of one who read most of the 13-strong longlist.

As ever, though, some of the judges' decisions seem downright perverse. This year, for example, they omitted from consideration not only Martin Amis's "The Pregnant Widow" (in which he was, I admit, not in top form) but also Ian McEwan's "Solar," a comic masterpiece as fine as any book on the shortlist. When making their shortlist, the judges, chaired this year by the retired Poet Laureate Sir Andrew Motion, also chucked out the riveting, best-selling "The Slap" by Christos Tsiolkas and a thrillingly imaginative novel by David Mitchell, "The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet."

Over the years, Man Booker judges seem to take on a pack mentality, and you could probably predict this year's winner just by studying past form. But who really deserves the prize?

Only one of the six shortlisted books seems unworthy to me. At the time of writing, Emma Donaghue's "Room" is the bookie's joint third choice (at 6:1) to scoop the pools. So maybe I am wrong to find this Canadian author's Josef Fritzl-inspired tale of a woman kept prisoner with her child cloying and meretricious. The story is told from the point of view of the brave little chap, 5-year-old Jack, who has never known any part of a world outside the 12-foot square room in which his "Ma" and he are incarcerated. What spoils the narrative for me is the captives' private language, a higher baby talk in which their environment consists of objects—Wardrobe, Rug, Plant, Room itself—personified simply, and cheaply, by capitalizing their initial letters and dropping the definite article.

I tried to enjoy Andrea Levy's "The Long Song," the life story, during and after the final years of slavery, of the narrator, a mixed-race girl called "July," born on a Jamaican sugar plantation in the 19th century. It's a terrific adventure story, where the good guys win (her middle-class son actually "publishes" the book). My problem is with the phlegm, pus and gore Ms. Levy relies on to make the reader feel how bad things were in the bad old times. It's just not necessary to linger over the consistency of bodily fluids to make you sympathize with a bleeding man, or to stick your finger in a wound to know that it hurts. In an odd way, I felt that this was a kind of narrative padding, a bit of nasty diction to plump up a thin tale, and detracted from its inherent importance and dignity.

South African Damon Galgut's "In a Strange Room" is a quiet little book about three journeys made by a young man in search of love and someplace to call home. He longs to put his backpack down forever, though we never learn enough about him to say why he's assumed the burden in the first place. The novel's virtue is its delicacy; its fault, its inconsequentiality—especially compared to his shortlisted 2003 book, "The Good Doctor."

Howard Jacobson's "The Finkler Question" is an extended Jewish joke. Julian Treslove, the sole non-Jewish member of a trio of friends, is mugged. In the slightly too-long course of Talmudic argument of this otherwise tremendously enjoyable novel, he convinces himself that the assault was motivated by anti-Semitism and that he, therefore, must be Jewish. His friend Sam Finkler is a high-profile philosopher and TV personality. Julian comes to identify all Jews with Sam's success and think of them as "Finklers"—thus the title of this reflective, touching book.

Even though it's the bookies' favorite (at 10:11 at the time of writing, when a sudden rush closed betting) Tom McCarthy's "C" is the most daring work on the shortlist. Depending on your tolerance for experimental prose, it is a charming—or bewildering—picaresque ramble through the time just before World War I until just after it. It ends in Egypt, with some of the flavor of Lawrence Durrell when he's good, confected with a little science fiction. Told in the third person, the protagonist eventually emerges as a savant somewhere on the autism spectrum, a drug addict with an affinity for radio waves and specialized sexual tastes. The narrative is in three sections, told against the remarkably exotic, sometimes creepy family background of a father who runs a school for the deaf on the estate where the mother manufactures silk. The joy of this totally weird book lies in the concrete detail of Mr. McCarthy's writing—at such rewarding odds with the underlying fantasy. I love it.

Still, I'd personally give the prize to the Australian-born, American resident Peter Carey, who has already won the prize twice, for "Oscar and Lucinda" (1988) and "True History of the Kelly Gang" (2001). "Parrot and Olivier in America" re-imagines the circumstances of the writing of the French aristocrat Alexis de Tocqueville's 19th-century "Democracy in America." In Tocqueville, Mr. Carey said (on the Man Booker Prize website), he saw "the very things that were scaring me to death in my American life; the dumbing down of culture, the reign of a frightening uneducated and intellectually incurious president."

Tocqueville's ideas might have been Mr. Carey's starting point, but the characters he has created are so vivid and complex that the reader cares more about, and is more interested in, the relationship between this Frenchman whose parents suffered under the Terror and his eccentric, superbly drawn English servant, than about the push and pull of Jacksonian democracy that dominates the American part of their story. Mr. Carey is a real artist, and it's all just part of the teeming world he has so ambitiously—and successfully—created.

Courtesy of Chahan Gallery, Paris

'Primal Sun' (1974) by Tony Duquette.

All the beauty under one tent

By Emma Crichton-Miller

On Wednesday, the fourth edition of the Pavilion of Art and Design opens the flap of its glamorous tent in London's Berkeley Square to all comers. As art collectors, dealers, admirers of fine craft and design and curious passers-by step inside, they will be greeted by stands displaying beautiful objects ranging from outstanding single pieces of furniture by Modern and Contemporary masters and exquisite artist-made jewelry to sensuous ceramic pots and paintings by Cezanne and Egon Schiele.

Nearly all these pieces have been created since 1862, the birth date of Italian industrial manufactured furniture, says Patrick Perrin, one of the fair organizers. Since then, Mr. Perrin avers, "there has been fundamentally no break in creativity, style and purpose in design and the decorative arts." So confident is he, moreover, of the particular kind of beautiful object that is the focus of his fair, that since last year's fair, he has extended invitations to galleries specializing in Modern Art. This autumn, he has added those specializing in Tribal Arts. A magnificent Middle-Period Benin bronze head, for instance, will be available from Entwistle Gallery.

For visitors, however, the most obvious innovation this year will be a specially created stand, just immediately inside the entrance to the fair, dedicated to the work of this year's graduates from London's Royal College of Art. For many of these students, fresh from that renowned incubator of innovation, this is their first encounter with one of the worlds in which their objects—and the skills and imagination which have created them—might make their way. As Will Shannon, who will be showing small silver models under bell jars—one outcome of an intensive investigation of furniture design, recycling and reindustrialization in the city—expresses it: "This fair sums up what I aspire to—not to be making multiples, but to be showing progressive thought, one-off pieces, and for people to accept that they are buying into an idea, part of my world."

Over the four years since the Pavilion's first appearance as "DesignArt London" in 2007, running concurrently with Frieze Art Fair, it has made a name for itself as a showcase for the best available postwar and contemporary design and decorative arts. Last year the organizers, fair directors Mr. Perrin and Stéphane Custot, drawing on 14 years' experience of running sister fair, the Pavillon des Arts et du Design Paris, introduced Modern Art to the mix, convinced a continental approach to the "beaux arts," ncompassing design, fine and applied arts, would also appeal to a London audience.

The inspiration for the inclusion of the young designers came from Nigel Coates, maverick architect and designer, and chairman this year of the judging panel of the Moët-Hennessy-PAD London Prize for best piece of design or decorative art, and Janice Blackburn, collector, curator and a judge last year. "I said to them," explains Ms. Blackburn, '"I think you should give me a stand to show new, young, designers."' Messrs. Perrin and Custot agreed.

Mr. Coates and Ms. Blackburn have made the selection from this year's RCA graduates on the basis of their "creativity, originality and excellence." Ms. Blackburn says: "The objects have got to be well-made and almost all are one-off pieces—they had to have something to sell, and it had to be unique."

Most of the 17 students have participated in one or other of the "platforms" in the Design Products department; Marta Mattsson is a jeweler, however, and, Maria Constantinou, an architect. All are thrilled at this opportunity to meet a new public, to discuss their work and to be introduced to the pick of the world's dealers. As Mr. Coates points out, "It is particularly difficult for young designers to plot a path between design and art. On the one hand design has reached art status, on the other there is very little industry in the U.K. for designers to collaborate with. It is up to the designers to exploit the context they find themselves in."

The stand will be hard to miss. Besides Mr. Shannon's bell jars, there will be David Amar's marvelously eccentric table, "Raymond," (named after experimental French writer Raymond Queneau), Yuya Kurata's ingenious "Stool for Two," Azusa Murakami's sleek porcelain "Implements for Eating Hamburger" and Harry Thaler's witty glass object, "Hang It on the Wall."

Ms. Mattsson has made the most extraordinary hand-sized jewelry objects, "Beetlejuice," out of a real beetle, cut in half, lacquer, silver, resin and steel with yellow cubic zirconias spilling out like the imaginary blood. "I wanted to be a biologist when I was younger," she explains, "but I was always also interested in the contrast between something beautiful and something fearful, like squashing a beetle." Ms. Constantinou's poetic piece "Preserved," a cube created from resin and shellac, with the impression inside of an architectural pillar as if preserved in amber, is the magical relic of an extended architectural project to devise a health spa on the Thames that would genetically modify malarial mosquitoes to cure the immune diseases of an ageing population. "All the designs and analysis were about bringing nature back closer to the people—and I used those designs and ideas to create my sculpture."

If that seems intellectually almost too rich to digest, Karen Price's exquisite delicate peeling bowls called "Paper Porcelain" offer an extended meditation on the history of porcelain and the quest to create the thinnest possible porcelain. Ms. Price devised an original system of painting layers of liquid porcelain onto a mould, a bit like papier maché. "Post-modernism is about rejecting tradition, but I am interested in traditions and in processes and transformations, whether in materials or in societies, and in questioning why a process exists," she says.

Ms. Price is aware that what she and her peers bring to the fair are objects untainted by commercial pressures, created out of the luxury of free thought, and, though thrilled by the opportunity to show, she is anxious about how the design world generally is driven by the scramble for publicity and how it isolates itself from the general public. As a caution to herself, Ms. Price adds, "When I was at Middlesex [University] doing my first degree, integral to the whole course was the question 'Why this object?'"

This is a question that might be usefully pinned above this fair for all of us object-lovers to ponder.

Appreciating Italian art

[Collecting]

By Margaret Studer

Italian 20th-century art will be highlighted at auctions in London next week.

Both Christie's (Oct. 14) and Sotheby's (Oct. 15) will hold sales devoted entirely to modern and contemporary Italian art. They will take place along with major general contemporary art auctions timed to fit in with collectors flocking to the Frieze Art Fair (Oct. 14-17).

The 21st century has seen continual growth in the Italian art market, says Christie's specialist Mariolina Bassetti. "There are not great fluctuations, but solidity."

Online art-market researcher Artprice calculates that €100 invested in 1998 in the work of Lucio Fontana (known for his slash paintings) had an average value in July 2010 of €427. Piero Manzoni (monochrome, wrinkled paintings) performed even better, with average value rising to €1,396 for the same period, as has Alighiero Boetti (embroidered, colorful world maps), whose work appreciated to €1,159. Other popular artists may have had a slower acceleration, but they are still on an upward trend, with sculptor Marino Marini rising to €177, and Giorgio de Chirico, to €171.

"There is still a lot of potential in the Italian art market," says Ms. Bassetti. She explains that the 20th-century Italian market rose from a low base because it wasn't promoted in Italy; and international awareness has only taken off in the first decade of the 21st century. Christie's presale combined estimate for the 45 lots in next week's sale is £14.3 million to £20.2 million.

Sotheby's specialists expect that this October the sale will realize in excess of £12 million, above the realized total in October 2009 of £7.4 million.

On the catalog cover of Christie's Italian sale is what Ms. Bassetti describes as a "fantastic, very rare" monochrome painting by Manzoni, "Achrome" (1958-59), with a totally white surface that represents virgin space (estimate: £1.35 million-£1.85 million). Manzoni died of a heart attack before the age of 30. As a result, the number of Manzoni works that come on the market is limited.

Both auction houses will have examples of Marini's famous sculptures of horse and rider. At Christie's will be "Cavaliere" (1951), a dramatic image in which a puny man begins to tumble from the back of a powerful horse, symbolizing human vulnerability (£1.2 million-£1.8 million). Marini is quoted in the catalog as saying of his work, "I no longer have the intention of celebrating the victory of a hero. I would like to express something tragic, almost the twilight of humanity." Sotheby's will auction an earlier and more tranquil "Cavaliere" (1947), featuring an unperturbed rider firmly seated on a horse's back (estimate: £700,000-£900,000).

Fontana also features at both houses. At Sotheby's, a monumental "Concetto Spaziale, Attese" (1959), a green and gold slashed canvas with five cuts, is appearing on the market for the first time in more than 40 years (estimate: £2 million-£2.5 million); and another, "Concetto Spaziale, Attese" (1965), in rich red paint with 10 slashes that seem to dance on the surface, is estimated at £1.6 million-£2.2 million). Contrasting with these abstract works will be Fontana's figurative "Woman with Flowers" (1948), a colorful ceramic sculpture of a classical beauty (£400,000-£600,000).

Next week's general contemporary art sales also include Italian artists. On Wednesday, Phillips de Pury will auction "A Sunday in Rivara" (1992) by the irreverent bad boy of contemporary art, Maurizio Cattelan. The piece comprises knotted sheets that can dangle from any top-floor window like a prop from a prison break (estimate: £400,000-£600,000).

Moving away from the Italian scene, Sotheby's will offer next week works from the collection of Jerry Hall, American fashion model and former wife of Rolling Stone Mick Jagger.

Marino Marini's 'Cavaliere' (1951) is estimated at £1.2 million-£1.8 million.

Christie's Images Ltd. 2010

France's brilliance in 1500

Paris: As if the splendid new Monet retrospective at the Grand Palais weren't enough, another superb show has just opened beside it, in the other half of the Galeries Nationales in the vast exhibition hall. "France 1500, Between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance" is the first exhibition to focus on the artistic effervescence in France at the turn of the 16th century—a long-overlooked period that was, as the show brilliantly demonstrates, much more than a simple transition.

After the end of the Hundred Years' War, during the reigns of Charles VIII (1483–98), Louis XI (1498–1515) and Anne de Bretagne, who was wife to both, France was already a meeting ground for the most important artistic currents of the North and South—realism and oil painting techniques from Picardy, Flanders and the Brabant; innovations in perspective and the influence of newly rediscovered antiquity in Italy. Along with the two kings and their queen, there were nobles, prelates and rich merchants also commissioning artists and architects. Among the most important was Good King René, a bon vivant who reigned in Provence with a slew of titles including King of Naples and Sicily, and filled his court with artists, musicians, poets and scholars.

The show brings together more than 200 works—paintings, sculptures, tapestries, stained glass, illuminated manuscripts, coins, medal and precious objects—of such exceptional quality that the impact is breathtaking. The immediate impression is the brilliance of color—ruby reds, sapphire blues, emerald and lime greens, sunflower yellow—not only in the paintings and stained glass but also in the scores of illuminations in manuscripts and early printed books, from small Books of Hours to desk-sized tomes, that are one of the show's strong points.

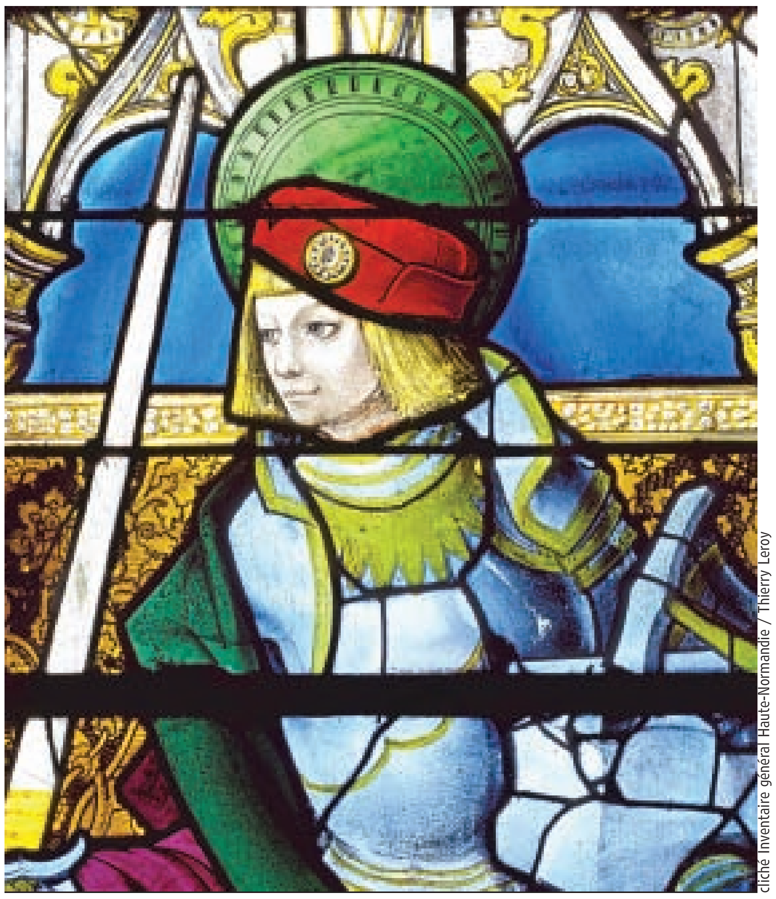
Aside from Leonardo da Vinci, with "La Belle Ferronière" (c.1495-97), most of the artists here are unfamiliar to the general public, but this is the place to meet them—Jean Fouquet, Nicolas Froment, Jean Poyer, Girolamo Pacchiarotti) (known as Jérôme Pacherot), the Master of Moulins, now almost unanimously identified as Jean Hey, and many others.

The Master of Chaource (probably Jacques Bachot), working in Champagne, is credited with the stunning lifesized stone figure of Saint Martha (c. 1510–15), whose slender face and delicate hands seem almost miraculously real. The very young, almost impossibly lovely "Notre Dame de Grasse" (c. 1470), looking away from the infant on her knee who so closely resembles her, is an anonymous work from the Languedoc region, as is the young Madonna (c. 1500) whose child is touching her cheek in a quintessential infant's gesture perfectly captured in stone.

Attributed to Pacherot and the atelier of Michel Colombe in Tours, the marble tomb of the young children of Charles VIII is a masterpiece of elaborate ornamentation, with putti, dolphins, mythological scenes and imaginary creatures surrounding the small sleeping figures of the toddler princes who died in 1495 and 1496, aged three and one.

—Judy Fayard

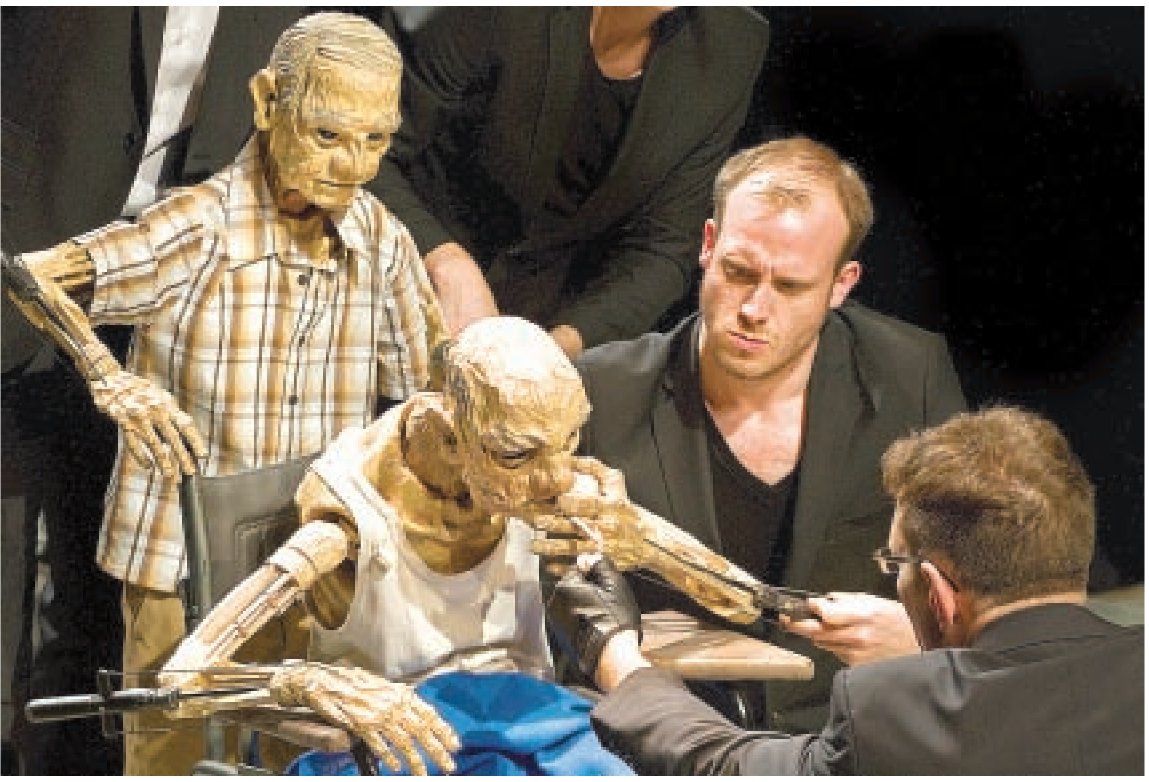
Until Jan. 10
www.grandpalais.fr



'Saint Adrien' (circa 1510).

cliché Inventaire général Haute-Normandie / Thierry Leroy

Lifelike puppets in 'Or You Could Kiss Me' transfix



From left to right, Adrian Kohler, Tommy Luther, Mervyn Millar and Basil Jones.

Simon Annand

London: The people who brought us "War Horse"—the hit play that mixed actors with life-sized horse puppets—are back with a new production at the National Theatre. This time, the puppets are humans.

"Or You Could Kiss Me" is a love story about two South African men named A and B. Their lifelong love affair is portrayed by two pairs of puppets—one young and one old—created and manipulated onstage by puppeteers from the Handspring Puppet Company. The story is based on the lives of the company's founders, Adrian Kohler and Basil Jones, who are partners in work and in life, and who help guide the puppets onstage.

Carved of wood, the nearly life-sized puppets are often transfixing. After meeting on a beach in an early scene, they dive and swim through the air as if splashing in the ocean. Toward the end, as a frail B is dying of emphysema, the puppets reach across the dinner table to touch each other in a particularly moving scene.

But it is hard at times to feel much intimacy between the lovers when they are constantly surrounded by half a dozen taller and bigger puppeteers supporting their arms, legs and heads. In the opening scene, A pushes B onto the stage in a wheelchair that is trailing a can of oxygen, and you notice the physical contortions of all the puppeteers needed to make this happen as much as you do the frail and beautiful puppets. The puppeteers in "War Horse" were less intrusive, most likely because they were partly obscured by the much larger puppets

Because the puppets in "Or You Could Kiss Me" cannot talk, the puppeteers talk "for them, to them, about them, and even across them," as author and director Neil Bartlett notes in the script. This at times feels chaotic. It is hard to tell who is talking to whom in some scenes.

The most satisfying moments come when the puppets and their masters are silent, and the audience is allowed to admire their graceful movement.

—Jeanne Whalen

Until Nov. 18
www.nationaltheatre.org.uk

Bieito's muted 'Carmen' brings a fresh vision

Barcelona: If you love classical music, then you love Georges Bizet's "Carmen." A flop when it premiered in Paris in 1875, the opera quickly installed itself as one of the most popular in the repertory. With its unabashed depiction of Seville low-life, and top-heavy with irresistible hits like the "Toreador Song," the opera was seen as a perfect fusion of the realistic and the hummable. After more than a century as an opera-house workhorse, the music may be as lovable as ever, but actual productions aren't always very likable. Enter Spanish director Calixto Bieito.

Mr. Bieito comes from Spain's Burgos region, but lives in Barcelona, where he has staged plays and operas, of competing degrees of notoriety, for more than a decade. Unlike Europe's German-speaking directors, who use a metaphorical scalpel to get beneath the accrued surfaces of repertory mainstays, Mr. Bieito seems to prefer real scalpels. His productions are shamelessly violent, rather than sturdily analytical, and audiences enjoy watching them, and then enjoy booing them. What a surprise, then, to behold his muted production of "Carmen" at Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu. Based on a 1999 outdoor staging at a Spanish music festival, and then recreated at different venues in northern Europe, Mr. Bieito's "Carmen" now gets its much-enhanced debut at a Spanish opera house.

There is a dash of the salacious here (Carmen, who is supposed to be stabbed by her lover, Don José, has her throat slit instead), but it is outweighed by an abundance of old-fashioned dramatic imagination. Set in a drab Franco-era Spain, Mr. Bieito's production allows us to see the opera as if for the first time.

The transfer to Spain's most prestigious opera house has its benefits. The opera's band of smugglers is treated to a full stage of real cars, and the singers themselves can play to one of Europe's most garish theater interiors. But the most powerful moments are accomplished with minimal means. The chorus is transformed into a raucous crowd—and the audience into the procession of bullfighters—by a simple rope stretched across the front of the stage. And Carmen herself becomes the evening's sacrificial bull, and a ghost in the making, thanks to a pink dress, which anticipates the final bloodletting.

—J. S. Marcus

Until Oct. 17
www.liceubarcelona.cat

Béatrice Uria-Monzon as Carmen and Roberto Alagna as Don José.

A Bofill

FRIDAY NIGHT, SATURDAY MORNING

Tony Hall relishes a rare moment of silence

The Royal Opera House chief executive talks to The Wall Street Journal Europe about how he starts his weekend.

With the new opera season well under way in London, Tony Hall is eagerly working on new projects. After watching Disney's 3D film "Bolt," Mr. Hall was inspired to make opera available in 3D; the Royal Opera House has now partnered with technology company RealD in California to produce Carmen in this new dimension. And later this winter, Mr. Hall is putting together a "people's opera," involving about 1,000 locals in Purfleet, Essex, in eastern England. But in between productions and projects, you can find the former BBC News CEO at home in Oxfordshire, drinking a cappuccino or eating a curry—depending on the time of day.

What does your weekend look like?
Quite often my weekends, like evenings, are spent on work. Sometimes we have "First Nights" over the weekend, so my wife and I—and sometimes my son and daughter—might come along on a Saturday night. ... There are weekends when the world of opera and ballet intervene, and those are wonderful.

How do you start the weekend?
If I am not at a show on Friday night, I get home about 8 p.m. Friday night is curry night and perhaps watch a movie on TV or some comedy.

What are your routines?
My wife and I get up quite early [7 a.m.] on the weekend. We have a little back terrace outside our house and, in the summer, we have a cappuccino and read newspapers there. I have a personal trainer who comes every Saturday morning to do exercise with me at 9 a.m. for an hour and a half of torture. She has exercises to develop muscles, and it is quite a rigorous program with weights and gym boards. I start off extremely grumpy but the treat is to have a cup of coffee when she is gone. We are lucky to have a local bookshop [Bell Street Bookshop in Henley on Thames] where they know all about books—so a cup of coffee and going to buy a book there is just absolutely brilliant.

Open spaces
I walk a lot with my wife. I have to walk somewhere in mud, away from towns. Where we live in Oxfordshire, we can get out into woodland very quickly and I love that. I love it because of the stillness and being away from people, which I find immensely relaxing. I also love Dorset, which is stunning. In West Dorset especially, you have the combination of beautiful countryside and coast. The smell and sight of the sea I just love, and I need to have that fix.

Gardening
We have a tiny back garden and ever since I had a couple of eye operations a little while ago, I love seeing the garden full of flowers, particularly in the summer. We have an allotment where my wife and I grow the world's most expensive vegetables, if you look at the amount of time we spend on trying to get a courgette to grow. This autumn, the great experiment is potatoes and I am hoping we are going to have lots of home-grown potatoes. There is nothing quite like bringing back broad beans that you have actually grown yourself, even if you can only get a handful grown from all the effort.

How do you separate work and fun?
It's difficult to separate them and some people might say that's a problem because if you enjoy the world in which you work—and I really do—then it's quite difficult to switch off. I enjoy immensely doing things in my free time that have to do with work. During my free time I also read newspapers voraciously.

Are most of the things you do in your free time related to work?
I have other things I do. I love watching films and TV. I use the BBC iPlayer to catch up on programs. ...I plan what I want to see in the week because I don't get home until late. ... On a holiday [to Italy], I took out a DVD of a program that first came out in the late 1960s by Kenneth Clark, called "Civilization," which I wanted to see again.

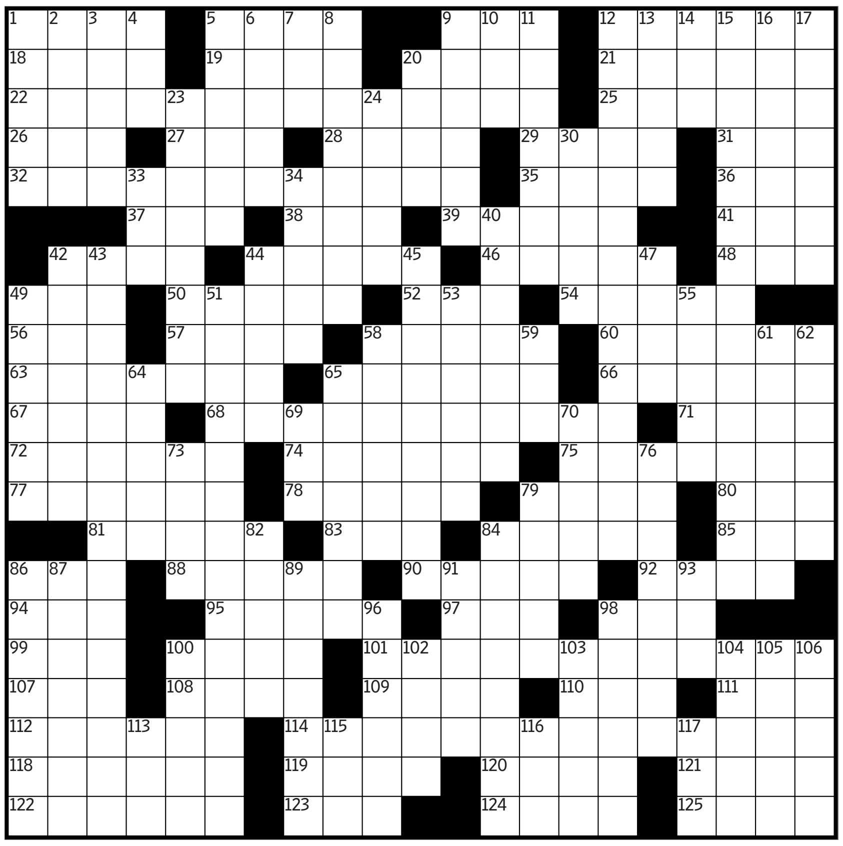
What do you wish you could do more of during the weekend?
Sort things. I like to have things in order. My wife and children dread me going around the house with black plastic bags, chucking out rubbish, and I quite like doing that.

—Mr. Hall was speaking with Javier Espinoza.

Andrew Testa for The Wall Street Journal

THE JOURNAL CROSSWORD / Edited by Mike Shenk

Unreality TV / by Randolph Ross



Across

1 Smurf who wore red clothes
5 "Baby Doll" director Kazan
9 Siamese sound
12 Consistent with, as one's beliefs
18 Busy working
19 Tolled
20 "Los Caprichos" artist
21 Con man
22 Reality show about folk-dancing homemakers (with "The")?
25 Stock identifier
26 OS X runner
27 It's inspired
28 1953 Leslie Caron film
29 Compared to
31 Co. led for decades by David Sarnoff
32 Reality show about U.S. unemployment?
35 Edward Jones Dome squad
36 Caesar suffix
37 Important time
38 Single
39 Home of a biblical queen
41 Inside shot?
42 "South Park" boy
44 "The Lion King" baddie
46 Role for Julie and Audrey
48 Yadda yadda yadda, in three letters
49 Dickensian cry
50 Weapons for Olympians
52 Delta Shuttle stop in NYC
54 Potala Palace location
56 End for elephant or serpent
57 Speaker in Cooperstown
58 Brother of Robin and Maurice
60 "Bonanza" setting
63 "Only the Lonely" singer
65 Like the Palace of Versailles
66 ___ out (overdid the computerese)
67 Diamond with a Golden Globe
68 Reality show about an Atlantic City cobbler?
71 Enjoyed a magazine
72 "See ya!"
74 Blocks legally
75 "Jurassic Park" attackers
77 After-dinner order
78 Really reverent
79 ___-Honey (candy brand)
80 Number of Hills of Rome
81 Bridge positions
83 Where to find Larry and John King
84 Toughness
85 "Is it ___ so? Then I defy you, stars!": Romeo
86 Phone-text-with-pictures letters
88 Way, out West
90 Showy flowers, for short
92 Does the wrong thing
94 Fill up
95 Roots (on)
97 Six-foot bird
98 Refrain syllable
99 ISP option
100 Chinese intro
101 Reality show about a nasty child custody case?
107 Post-op destination
108 Break cover?
109 Yen
110 Roth plan
111 Cyberchortle
112 Free speech restricter
114 Reality show about cooking for the Finest?
118 Ring of color
119 Shot in the arm
120 Go ballistic
121 Against
122 To a point
123 Khan who was married to Rita Hayworth
124 Orwell's alma mater
125 Hammer part

Down

1 Toscanini's birthplace
2 Coach's best
3 King or queen, for example
4 Canaries setting: Abbr.
5 Beethoven opus
6 Michelle's predecessor
7 Powerful bunch
8 Crow's-feet, e.g.
9 They start with pitches and eventually get scores
10 Daisy center
11 Spendthrift
12 Reality show about great mortgage deals?
13 Speckled horses
14 Erstwhile Mideast state: Abbr.
15 Reality show about vicious corporate raiders?
16 Service carrier
17 Like much Whole Foods merchandise
20 Bream breather
23 Snoods
24 Expand
30 Good thing to kick
33 "The Crying Game" star
34 "The moon was a ghostly galleon" poet
40 Warm places
42 Italian Riviera city
43 Reality show about huge Winter Games competitors?
44 "Buch der Lieder" poet
45 "Mister Ed" star
47 Part of an Alimetaphor
49 Like Jaime Sommers
51 Reality show about a housing development escapee?
53 Comprehends
55 Seven-time French Open champ
58 Rennes resident
59 USN clerk
61 Honeybunches
62 Contributes
64 Fantasy author Andrews
65 Small bone
69 D.C. VIP
70 TV journalists Burnett and Andrews
73 Boss Tweed taunter
76 Carpenter's aid
79 Make pricier, in a way
82 Reddish-brown minerals
84 "Ditto"
86 Supplemental insurance plan
87 Lash application
89 "Copy that"
91 Dirty old man
93 Bleachers call
96 Peter Pan rival
98 Deep dish
100 Poker declaration
102 The Coasters' record label
103 Legalese, e.g.
104 Unassisted
105 Rich dessert
106 "The MacGuffin" author Stanley
113 Circumstance
115 Last name in Thimble Theatre comics
116 Dieter's no-no
117 Talk, talk, talk

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

Last Week's Solution

A	B	L	E	■	N	A	D	E	R	■	P	A	M	■	N	O	T	F	A	R
N	E	I	L	■	E	L	E	N	I	■	A	R	E	■	A	F	R	A	M	E
I	A	M	B	I	C	P	E	N	TAM	E	T	E	R	■	B	V	I	TAM	I	N
T	D	B	A	N	K	■	R	I	O	B	R	A	V	O	■	A	T	O	N	E
A	S	S	■	E	T	A	■	O	R	E	O	S	■	C	O	L	O	R	■	■
■	■	■	C	R	I	B	S	■	E	R	N	■	S	T	R	U	N	G	U	P
■	O	L	D	T	E	S	TAM	E	N	T	■	S	H	A	R	E	■	A	R	I
T	R	E	S	■	■	A	P	S	O	■	S	TAM	E	N	S	■	S	N	A	G
E	R	A	■	T	O	L	E	T	■	C	O	P	S	E	■	D	I	A	L	S
R	I	V	E	R	G	O	D	■	H	A	L	E	■	■	A	I	D	■	■	■
I	N	E	V	E	R	M	E	TAM	A	N	I	D	I	D	N	T	L	I	K	E
■	■	■	I	K	E	■	■	A	V	I	D	■	C	E	N	T	E	R	E	D
M	E	S	A	S	■	N	I	L	E	S	■	M	A	T	E	Y	■	W	E	D
I	R	A	N	■	W	O	V	E	N	■	M	A	R	E	■	■	V	I	N	Y
N	I	N	■	O	R	C	A	S	■	A	U	G	U	S	TAM	A	I	N	E	■
G	E	TAM	O	V	E	O	N	■	E	N	S	■	S	T	A	L	E	■	■	■
■	■	O	P	E	N	S	■	B	U	N	C	H	■	S	R	I	■	T	N	T
A	B	N	E	R	■	T	H	E	R	U	L	E	S	■	I	T	S	W	A	R
B	E	I	R	U	T	■	A	TAM	O	M	E	N	T	S	N	O	T	I	C	E
I	N	C	A	S	E	■	N	A	P	■	I	N	E	E	D	■	A	C	H	E
T	E	A	S	E	D	■	A	X	E	■	N	A	P	E	S	■	N	E	O	S

CULTURAL CALENDAR

Amsterdam

■ **ART**

"Illusions of Reality: Naturalist Painting, Photography and Cinema, 1875-1918" showcases work depicting the lives of ordinary people.
Van Gogh Museum
Until Jan. 16
☎ 31-2057-0520-0
www.vangoghmuseum.nl

Bilbao

■ **ART**

"Lazkano: Architecture into Nature" presents a retrospective of the Spanish artist alongside drawings inspired by architecture and landscapes.
Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao
Until Jan. 16
☎ 34-94-4396-060
www.museobilbao.com

Brussels

■ **ART**

"Francis Alÿs: A Story of Deception" offers iconic works and new pieces by the Belgian artist, using diverse mediums including video and sculpture.
Wiels
Oct. 9-Jan. 30
☎ 32-2340-0050
www.wiels.org

Geneva

■ **ART**

"Félix Vallotton: from Print to Painting" shows 120 works by the Swiss artist, including preparatory drawings, woodcuts, lithographs and oil paintings.
Musée d'Art et d'Histoire
Oct. 7-Jan. 9
☎ 41-2241-8260-0
www.ville-ge.ch

Glasgow

■ **MUSIC**

Sheryl Crow tours with her Grammy Award-winning blend of pop, rock, folk and country music, promoting her latest album "100 Miles from Memphis."
Oct. 11, Clyde Auditorium, Glasgow
Oct. 12, Apollo, Manchester
Oct. 13, HMV Hammersmith, London
More information at
www.sherylcrow.com

Helsinki

■ **MUSIC**

Lady Gaga returns to Europe on "The Monster Ball Tour," flaunting pop tunes and outrageous outfits.
Oct. 13, 14, Hartwell Arena
Oct. 16, 17, Spektrum, Oslo
More information at
www.ladygaga.com

London

■ **MUSIC**

The London Symphony Orchestra and Sir Colin Davis present Dvorák's "Violin Concerto" and Janácek's "Glagolitic Mass," featuring Anne-Sophie Mutter on violin and Krassimira Stoyanova performing soprano.
Barbican Hall
Oct. 10, 12
☎ 44-20-7638-8891
www.barbican.org.uk

■ **ART**

"The Unilever Series: Ai Weiwei" presents the 11th commission for Tate Modern's Turbine Hall.
Oct. 12-May 2
☎ 44-20-7887-8888
www.tate.org.uk

■ **ART**

"Turner Prize 2010" shows the Turner Prize-nominated works by Dexter Dalwood, Angela de la Cruz, Susan Philipsz and The Otolith Group.
Tate Britain
Until Jan. 3
☎ 44-20-7887-8888
www.tate.org.uk

2010 Kevin Mazur

Lady Gaga returns to Europe on 'The Monster Ball Tour'.

Malaga

■ **ART**

"Toys of the Avant-Garde" exhibits puppets, dolls, games and furniture created by artists such as Pablo Picasso, Giacomo Balla, Marcel Duchamp, Alexandra Exter, Paul Klee, Joan Miró, Alexander Rodchenko and Oskar Schlemmer.
Museo Picasso Malaga
Until Jan. 30
☎ 34-9024-4337-7
www2.museopicassomalaga.org

Paris

■ **PHOTOGRAPHY**

"Larry Clark. Kiss the Past Hello" displays 200 original prints in a retrospective of works by the American photographer and film director.
Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris/ARC
Until Jan. 2
☎ 33-1-5367-4000
www.mam.paris.fr

■ **ART**

"Service of the Tzars" showcases over 150 objects and paintings, uniforms and weapons from the State Hermitage Museum, documenting the history of the Russian Imperial Guard.
Musée de l'Armée
Oct. 9-Jan. 23
☎ 33-1-4442-3877
www.invalides.org

Prague

■ **ART**

"Monet to Warhol. Masterpieces of the Albertina Museum and the Batliner Collection" presents 80 rare artworks by René Magritte, Max Ernst, Jean Dubuffet, Yves Klein, Francis Bacon, Andy Warhol and others.
National Gallery Prague
Oct. 13-Jan. 7
☎ 42-02-2430-1111
www.ngprague.cz

—Source: WSJ research

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