

WEEKEND JOURNAL.

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Blue skies ahead

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Barbara Tina Fuhr Editor
Beth Schepens Deputy Editor
Brian M. Carney Books Page Editor

Carlos Tovar Art Director
Elisabeth Limber Weekend Art Director

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TRAVEL GUIDE: ESSAY

Have modern travelers lost their way?

Alain de Botton reflects on religious pilgrimages and what today's secular voyager can learn from them

Few activities are nowadays more venerated or form the subject of more involved daydreams than going traveling. Alongside love, travel lies at the heart of secular notions of happiness, though, unlike love, it is generally assumed to be a straightforward process entailing few conceptual or philosophical conundrums. To follow the travel pages of magazines, the chief hurdles center around how to identify good hotels, find things to do after dark and learn the whereabouts of small and authentic restaurants.

Religions have shown a surprising degree of sympathy for our impulse to travel. They have accepted that we cannot achieve everything by staying at home. Nevertheless, unlike secularists, the religious have singularly failed to see the business of traveling as in any way straightforward or effortless. They have insisted with alien vigor on the profound gravity of going on a trip and have channeled the raw impulse to take off into a myriad of traditions and rituals, whose examination could prompt us to reflect on our own habits and sharply alter where and how we decided to travel next.

The differences between religious and secular attitudes to travel begin with their contrasting methods of choosing a destination. Here modern man is encouraged not to overcomplicate matters. Travel agents see themselves as responsible for negotiating discounts on trans-Atlantic flights and arranging for rooms with sea views in Rimini, rather than palpating the souls of their customers. The desire to journey is meant to bubble up of its own accord, like the appetites of the stomach. The travel industry asserts rather than explains the importance of its destinations, implying that we would be bizarre for deviating from its prescribed lists, for remaining indifferent to the call of the temples of Angkor Wat or the trails of Machu Picchu. The media presents us with a revolving array of images of foreign lands, from which we are expected to make swift and untroubled choices, concluding, for example, that the time has now come for us to see the fjords of Norway or the Terracotta army of Xi'an, the Day of the Dead in Mexico or the Sheraton Full Moon Resort & Spa on Kaafu Atoll in the Maldives—for reasons that we might stumble to account for in any detail.

Religions have felt unable to take such a lighthearted or hazy view. In so far as they have blessed the idea of travel, it has solely been in relation to its perceived capacity to usher in certain forms of cure. For the medieval Catholic church, pilgrimages were a therapeutic and medicinal activity.

The idea was to go to the shrines of long-dead saints and, while making bodily contact with these, beg for a cure for a variety of physical and mental ailments. Though we no longer believe in the divine power of journeys to cure toothache or gall stones, though most of the problems motivating pilgrimages are now more appropriately addressed by a visit to a clinic, we can still hang on to the idea that certain parts of the world possess a power to address complaints and can effect change with



'Pilgrims on Voyage to Mecca' (1861) by Leon Belly.

a force that would be unavailable to us if we remained in our own homes. There are places that, by virtue of their remoteness, vastness, climate, chaotic energy, haunting melancholy or sheer difference from our homelands, exert a capacity to salve the wounded parts of us. These sites, valuable rather than holy, help us to recover perspective, reorder our ambitions, quell our paranoias and remind us of the interest and obliging unexpectedness of life.

Though we intuit this at a general level, we lack, as yet, a tradition of approaching travel from a properly therapeutic perspective and so of analyzing landscapes according to their benefits to our souls. We lack atlases of destinations with which to treat our neuroses. There are as yet no psychotherapeutic travel agencies, no experts in both neurotic disorders and tourism, in the psyche and in the hotels, nature trails, museums, hot springs and bird sanctuaries of six continents.

The medieval Catholic church appreciated, with a clarity we find hard to muster, that when we want to derive value from a place, being physically there is only one part, and perhaps not the most important, of the process. What matters is also how we anticipate the journey, how we arrange ourselves internally as we approach our objective, what mode of transport we opt for and how we later structure and reinforce our memories of what we have seen. These apparently secondary matters may in the end determine as much about the psychological effectiveness of our trips as the comparatively brief amount of time we spend in the destina-

tions themselves.

The medieval church kept a tight grip both on where pilgrims went and what they did and thought about each day as they made their way there. It appended a veritable program of education to every stop along the way. The same controlling spirit evident in the church's schedule of prayers or in its program of Holy Days of Obligation was discernible in its curation of travel liturgies. It sought to buttress otherwise fleeting and forget-

We lack, as yet, a tradition of approaching travel from a properly therapeutic perspective and so of analyzing landscapes according to their benefits to our souls.

table sensations by giving its pilgrims prayers and songs, it urged them regularly and publicly to rehearse their motives for traveling and equipped them with distinctive garments to help them mentally separate themselves from their ordinary lives, hoping all the while to fashion a supreme and lasting spiritual lesson out of their journeys across the physical world.

If Catholicism didn't mind leaving us on the open road for unusually long periods, it was because it identified a spiritual benefit in the very act of being away from home, in untried surroundings, disoriented, adrift, lonely and reliant on the charity of strangers. Its central figure had himself stressed that he

was a pilgrim on this earth and advised all who followed him to remember the illusory nature of their apparently stable material possessions, their homes, their jobs and their status. One's only true refuge was God and all substitutes were to be recognized as fragile and unworthy. As St. Augustine described the lives of the faithful: "They live in countries of their own, but simply as strangers... every fatherland is a foreign land... They spend their existence on earth but their citizenship is in heaven."

Being on the open road helped to enforce the moral of the argument. A pilgrim walking to Santiago from his home in Sussex would have been shaken from all routines and complacent assumptions. The barbarous sounds of French and Spanish, the din of new cities, the alarming smells emanating from bowls of *sopa de ajo*, the gangs of griffon vultures that circled over the steep gorges outside the village of Burguete, the days spent silently walking along forest trails and along river paths, all would have had the power to rouse a pilgrim from his torpor, to make him question himself, revisit periods of his past and, as the Church fervently hoped, make him newly aware of the sincerity of his attachment to God.

We don't have to be Christians to relate to this dynamic, we need only have occasionally sensed while on a journey the promise of change and the opportunity for self-examination opened up by a move away from familiar points of reference. Though home is honored as an anchor of identity, there are also disturbing ways in which it can fix us unhelpfully to a version of ourselves we no longer wish to side

with. The familiar curtains and pictures subtly insist that we shouldn't change because they don't, our well-known rooms can anaesthetise us from a more urgent, necessary relationship with particular questions. It may not be until we have moved across an ocean, until we are in a hotel room with peculiar new furniture and a view onto a motorway and a supermarket full of products we don't recognize that we start to have the strength to probe at certain assumptions. We gain freedom from watching the take-offs and landings of planes in a departure lounge or from following a line of distant electricity pylons from a train making its way across a barren steppe. In the middle of a foreign landscape, thoughts come to us that would have been reluctant to emerge in our own beds. We are able to take implausible but important leaps, encouraged by the changes around us, from the new light switches to the Cyrillic letters blinking in illuminated signs on awnings all around us.

Being cut loose from the habitual is the essential gift of travel, as uncomfortable as it may be psychologically fruitful. Catholicism took our feelings of dislocation and placed them at the heart of its thesis as to the spiritual benefit of pilgrimages. Without accepting the church's analysis of where our real home lies, we may nevertheless be inspired by its approach to the value of feeling like a lonely outsider. As much as any destination, it is these isolated periods in untried hotel rooms, in paleozoic canyons, in disintegrating palaces and empty service-station restaurants that facilitate the underlying point of our journeys.

TRAVEL GUIDE

New island charm in Thailand

By EMMA-KATE SYMONS

A Russian tycoon with reputed political connections, a beautiful young French actress canoeing with her actor beau at a candlelit outdoor dinner overlooking the sea: One could be excused for thinking this exclusive beach resort is in St. Tropez or Malibu. But this is Koh Kood, or Kood island, a remote haven of rainforests, mangroves, waterfalls and pristine beaches in the southeastern part of the Gulf of Thailand, near the Cambodian border.

Thailand's tourist industry has bounced back since last year's bloody Bangkok protests caused a dip in arrivals. Fresh waves of visitors are discovering the charms of islands previously known only to adventurous backpackers. Since the opening of its first five-star eco-resort, Kood island is becoming a favorite with paparazzi-fatigued pop stars and the rich and environmentally aware from Mumbai to New York, London, Frankfurt and Moscow. Further south in Thailand, the better-known pleasure isle of Koh Samui, a traditional haunt for young, party-hard, budget tourists, is transforming into a magnet equally popular with holidaymakers looking for an upscale beach experience.

Soneva Kiri (www.sixsenses.com/soneva-kiri) is on Thailand's fourth-largest, yet relatively undeveloped, island, part of the Koh Chang Marine National Park. Six Senses group unveiled its eco-hideaway on Kood island just over one year ago. Six Senses Chairman and Founder Sonu Shivdasani says in a phone interview from Shanghai, you can "leave your Manolo Blahniks and Jimmy Choos behind"; here even the uber-rich go barefoot in (designer) shorts and polos. Or as one New York guest says, what made her fall in love with this resort was its "rustic charm" and "shabby chic"—five-star style, of course.

Mr. Shivdasani describes Soneva Kiri as "remote but accessible." And it is, if you take its swanky eight-seater private Cessna from Bangkok international airport. Guests are delivered within one hour to a private airstrip at a small island five minutes by boat from the resort entrance. The more circuitous, but cheaper, route starts with a Bangkok Airways flight to Trat. This is followed by a car ride for more than one hour to the Gulf, and a one-hour speedboat trip. The journey is not unpleasant, but it takes the better part of a day, thus dissuading many of the sun-starved tourists from northern Europe descending en masse on Thailand at this time of year. It is this relative inaccessibility that keeps Kood island the sleepy, pristine place it is.

Soneva Kiri's 29 villas are mostly hidden in the subtly landscaped jungle foliage, and no neighboring resorts are in view. Guests can cocoon in the vast self-contained villas, with private pools and beaches, and the option of in-room dining and spa treatments. The spa offers an extensive menu of wellness services, from tamarind body polish, chakra balancing and Thai massage yoga to inner child healing and forgiveness therapy.

The pride of the sustainable resort is its zero-emissions "eco-villa." This green luxury prototype is built from local materials like rubber wood, stone, mud and coconut. The villa is energy self-sufficient thanks to its wind, water and solar-power

systems. Waste water is recycled using gravity and a discreet reed bed, while the private swimming pool is cleaned simply by plants.

Generally, everywhere in the resort lighting is minimal, and at this temperate time of year, none of the public areas of the resort use air-conditioning. Villas are built from local timbers and bamboo where possible or eucalyptus harvested from plantations and renewable pinewood. The resort reservoir stores all rainwater, drinking water is treated on the compound, there is no dry cleaning and the electric buggies that serve as the resort's chief mode of transportation are powered with solar energy.

Does all of this amount to "intelligent" luxury by the beach, as Mr. Shivdasani says? Certainly, the added value is there for those willing to pay more for their green vacation, with subtle five-star frills, most evident in the food.

The cuisine is traditional Thai, international and fusion. Dinner at the View, the dress-down, fine-dining restaurant, begins with a refreshing beetroot, pineapple and melon shooter. It is followed by peanut-crusted Australian lamb, with potato and mushroom *massaman*, crispy shallots and curry foam, aptly described by chef Adam Gaunt-Evans as "a great Thai dish, beautifully deconstructed." Sommelier Morris Dash has collected more than 450 labels from New Zealand Sauvignon Blancs and Rieslings to Italian reds and premium French Burgundys and Bordeaux, as well as Thai red blends from Khao Yai National Park.

At the Dining Pod the bravehearted can experience the spectacular views afforded by "tree pod dining" at five meters above ground in an "open cocoon" rattan tree house. Getting there requires using safety winches and dishes arrive in baskets attached to a cable.

For a contrast to the calm of Kood island, sun seekers should opt for W Retreat Koh Samui (www.starwoodhotels.com/whotels), which opened a few months ago on Thailand's more well-known Koh Samui. The 75-villa resort is pitched at the global trendsetter with designer attitude and a penchant for partying. The motto is "day is for relaxing, night is for celebrating," and guests can choose from four bars—W Lounge on the beach terrace, SIP for sunset cocktails and dancing with live deejays, Woo Bar and Tonic Bar for the post-party recovery. SIP takes the prize for the most hallucinogenic nightspot in this neck of Samui. Its resin stools, reminiscent of a moonscape, glow at night in an array of psychedelic colors.

Another recent addition is the elegant Banyan Tree Koh Samui (www.banyantree.com/en/samui), which presents a less frenetic roster of social events for guests. Situated at Lamai Bay on the southeastern coast of the island, it offers 88 villas, built into the hill's terraces with a private pool each. At the Rainforest Spa, clients can undergo a series of hot and cold water therapies such as steam, "bucket drench therapy" and "ice fountain."

For a total wellness vacation, an award-winning upmarket spa resort worth a look on Koh Samui is Kamalaya (www.kamalaya.com). Apart from the usual detox, yoga and massage, there is a strong spiritual element. The spa has its own prayer grotto, a cave that was formerly a Buddhist monk's retreat.



Top, Kamalaya Wellness Sanctuary; Banyan Tree, Six Senses Resorts & Spas/Herbert Yipma

From the top, Kamalaya Wellness Sanctuary; The Edge Restaurant at Banyan Tree Samui; Tree Pod Dining at Soneva Kiri.

TRAVEL GUIDE



Clockwise from top left, Sardinian coastline; Porto Rafael; Isola dei Gabbiani.



Clockwise from left: Prisma Bildagentur AG/Alamy; Travelshots.com/Alamy; Fausto Molinas/Alamy

In search of a billionaire's paradise

BY AUDE LAGORCE

Spoiled by nearly 8,000 kilometers of shimmering coastline, Italians know a thing or two about beaches. Yet when summer beckons, it is not to the rocky coves of the Amalfi coast or to the endless sandy shores of the Adriatic that they retreat to *far niente*. Instead, in a flurry of pink polos and nautical shorts, the smart set hop on a ferry toward an island bathed in golden light: Sardinia.

The draw of Sicily's more rustic sister is deceptively simple: sun-baked hills, crescent-shaped beaches nestled at the end of dirt roads and the clearest water this side of the Caribbean. No wonder the Aga Khan fell in love. The billionaire Muslim prince took one look at the island 50 years ago and decided then and there to carve out a corner of paradise. Unfortunately, today, come June, tacky soccer players and gold-digging TV starlets and rich playboys mostly haunt the 55-kilometer stretch of coast, known as Costa Smeralda, that the Aga Khan once thought of as his exclusive retreat.

But for a taste of the untouched beauty he first laid his eyes on, one need only head west 30 kilometers, to the unassuming village of Porto Rafael. There are no hotels, just low-built stone villas glimpsed from behind heavy, wooden gates, plus a jewel of a piazza framed by white-washed walls smothered in bougainvillea. The tiny beach is mere meters from the outdoor tables. Nightlife consists of ordering a chilled glass of *mirto*, a local liquor made of myrtle, and watching the sun set on Maddalena archipelago in the distance.

There are no resorts in Porto Rafael, but fret not: Sardinia is dotted with discreet luxury villas to rent. A good place to start your search is Immbolsarda (www.immobilsarda.com) or Sardinian Villas (www.sardinianvillas.com). If it's a hotel you're after, because pamper-

ing is the order of the day, then descend upon the five-star Hotel Capo d'Orso (www.hotelcapodorso.com), located a few kilometers outside the village of Palau. The Aga Khan would not have complained: the hotel's spacious rooms and suites are scattered throughout a lush private park of wild olive and juniper trees, all sloping gently toward the wind-sheltered bay of Cala Capra. The interiors are streamlined and elegant, with enormous beds dressed in demure white and yellow linen, and flanked by pleasantly cool terracotta floors.

When it's time for a dip, a salt-water pool awaits you; it's good for thalassotherapy, though too small for laps. Open-water folks will never be at a loss for choice, however, with two sanded private beaches. The spa is only open to hotel guests and excels at water treatments that focus on firming and slimming. Two must-do treatments: the salt-and-Sardinian-lavender scrub and the al fresco massage, replete with an astonishing view of the sea. For the sportier set, an array of activities are on offer, including sailing excursions and daily cruises to the islands of the archipelago. Those who prefer to stay on land can saddle up and saunter along an easy trail toward the bear-shaped rock, Capo d'Orso, which dominates the bay.

As for food, a generous buffet served on the shaded terrace makes for a fine start to the day, and the hotel's two restaurants serve contemporary Italian fare that makes the most of flavor-bursting Sardinian produce, though Il Paguro, with its crustacean tank, is more focused on seafood. Hotel restaurants of this caliber are hard to tear oneself away from, but it would be a crime not to have at least one meal at the Michelin-starred La Gritta, a low-key, family owned eatery perched on a cliff just outside Palau. Go at lunch for the killer views or at night to relax on the candle-lit terrace. For a whiff of authenticity, select the *pane*

carasau, the signature Sardinian flat bread that comes drizzled with olive oil, rosemary and salt flakes. First dishes, or *primi*, include stuffed calamari, chunky toasted bread piled with mullet roe or spaghetti with clams. The portions are small enough to contemplate a further course, such as sea bass baked in a salt crust. The creamiest lemon sorbet makes for a refreshing finale.

In between meals, make the most of the spectacular beaches of northern Sardinia, which make up in natural beauty what they may lack in amenities. There are dozens to choose from, each with a distinct personality: "Le Saline," south of Capo d'Orso, is a series of tiny coves that are particularly pleasant on windy days, while Costa Serena, west of Porto Rafael, is popular with families for its shallow lagoons in which children can safely play and hunt for tiny white crabs. Just beware that finding the beach you've set your heart on can turn into a bit of an adventure, as road signs are sometimes lacking. So start the day with an open mind, a car not afraid of dirt and a good map. And accept that, despite your best intentions, you may end up lost or at a dead end. When it happens, get out of the car, stretch and inspect the bushes for blackberries. Nature's special gift to disgruntled drivers, they grow only in the most remote of spots. Now pick the most shriveled ones on display: they will be the sweetest.

Or you can play it safe and drive to the well-signed Isola dei Gabbiani, near Porto Pollo. The bay, divided by a thin strip of land, is one of the world's most famous kite-surfing spots, though it's perfectly suitable for windsurfing too. The beach, several kilometers long, is a walker's paradise. Even in August, one can easily find a deserted spot for a dip, and, on a clear day, Corsica towers in the distance. This is a beach where you want to go for the day, because, as the late afternoon

sets in, the Baja California vibe picks up and the isthmus comes alive. Dreadlocked boys swap their kite boards for drums, dads drop BlackBerrys to wrestle their sons in the sand and sea brems hiss on the barbecue. Grab a drink and reconnect with your hedonist roots.

Later, drive to Li Espi (www.liespi.it), an eco-friendly guesthouse oozing Mexican hacienda; it opened less than 10 years ago by avid kite-surfer Marcello Ippolito. The dozen rooms make a good, if spartan, base, but the heart of this place is its outdoor restaurant, which every night serves a traditional Sardinian feast. Come ravenous for *zuppa Gallurese*—layers of bread and cheese combined in a creamy béchamel sauce—and

porceddu—suckling pig barbecued on an open fire. This is the true cuisine of the region of Gallura, where meat and cheese, not fish, form the staple of the diet. For centuries, the locals feared the sea, which only ever brought invasions, and thus built their villages on mountain flanks.

San Pantaleo, on the road from Arzachena to Porto Cervo, is just such an example. There is a town square, a pretty Roman church and an imposing fig tree. In its shade, errant cats nap. Around the corner from the piazza, a small shop called Petra Sarda sells handmade earthenware in shades of ochre and gray. The objects are simple, imperfect. And yet, as do pockets of this island, they inspire dreams and flashes of a different, more Sardinian life.

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our guide had told us to expect a surprise around every corner. Turns out deserts have corners.

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TRAVEL GUIDE

Rediscovering a sense of adventure

From African stargazing to artistic getaways, travelers are yearning for old-fashioned exploration

By JEMIMA SISSONS

There is a mood of cautious optimism among travelers and tour companies this year, as the market shows signs of improvement following a difficult few years.

Value, even within the luxury market, will remain at the forefront of people's decisions when it comes to choosing their holiday—not just in a monetary sense, but in a physical and educational sense as well.

"People are not flaunting their wealth; it is all about having out-of-the-world experiences," says Simon Mayle of International Luxury Travel Market, an annual trade event in Europe and Asia. Deprivation vacations and luxury boot camps look set to rise in popularity, as does cultural tourism, with a particular focus on art and literature.

Michelle Grant of Euromonitor International, the market-research group whose key trends for 2011 include stargazing in Africa and off-the-beaten-track Latin America, adds that people are now looking to meet personal goals and accomplishments

while on holiday. "It is the search for a unique experience where you reap benefits as well, such as climbing Kilimanjaro," says Ms. Grant. "People this year are looking to take their bucket-list holidays."

There is also a yearning for old-fashioned exploration. "We have seen the need for retro holidays that involve slowly retracing the steps of the great explorers," says Tom Marchant of luxury travel specialists Black Tomato. "It is a backlash against the culture of immediacy."

Ethical concerns are also influencing travel decisions, as people seek out new and inventive forms of eco-tourism that combine a modern sense of luxury with a green ideology.

Technological advances are hot on the agenda for travel companies, as consumers increasingly look toward apps and social media for their travel needs. Meanwhile, many hotels are coming up with new ways of enticing guests in an increasingly competitive market, from sensory experiences to innovative forms of retail.



Artclusive Japan includes trips to the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo.

Portrait of the artist as a tourist

Consumers are also set to broaden their horizons with vacations focused on culture, in particular on art. A collaboration between luxury travel company Cox & Kings and London's Royal Academy offers trips ranging from the pictures and palaces of St. Petersburg, led by RA lecturer Colin Bailey, to Peruvian treasures, led by David Drew. The tours will give clients access to hidden art

collections and talks by curators. Art in Japan, meanwhile, is the focus of new venture Artclusive Japan, which tailor-makes trips, including tours of the Tokyo art scene, visits to artists' studios and advice on how to buy art. Black Tomato will be offering literary trips that focus on how a region has inspired literature, drawing on the experiences of top authors. "A lot of people are increasingly tying day-to-day passions with travel," says Mr. Marchant.



Above, the Namibian night sky; below, a telescope on display at the Sossusvlei Desert Lodge.

Out of Africa

As people pursue more experiential holidays, stargazing safaris in Africa, where some of the clearest skies in the world are to be found, are on the rise. At the Sossusvlei Desert Lodge in the heart of Namibia's Namib Desert, an observatory comes complete with a Meade LX200 computerized GPS telescope so guests can learn about the night skies. Surrounded by wilderness and with over 330 days of sunshine a year, the skies are perfect for stargazing. "It is so dark and quiet," says resident astrologer Kate Lee. "You hear the call of wild animals like jackals and some will come right up to the observatory, look in shock and run away. There are more stars than most people think existed." Guests can expect to see with twinkling clarity the Milky Way, as well as the Magellanic Clouds and Southern Cross constellation. "People get really excited and like to sleep with the skylight open at night and watch the shooting stars," says Ms. Lee. At the boutique Sanctuary Baines' Camp in Botswana's Okavango Delta, guests are given an educational "cosmic safari" of the skies around the boma (bonfire) by the camp manager. After the lesson, they can take a star bath: A vast zinc bubble bath under the open sky, where they can revise what they learned.



Above, the Pantanal wetlands in Brazil; below, a salt field in Bolivia.

Off the beaten track

Latin America has been identified as a top destination this year across the industry, with Euromonitor predicting at November's World Trade Market that adventure holidays would be particularly popular.

"Flight searches for Chile have doubled over the last 12 months, while year-on-year searches to Argentina have increased by a massive 162%," says Gareth Williams, chief executive of flight-comparison website Skyscanner. "We would expect the popularity of these destinations to continue well into 2011."

Travelers are looking for out-of-the-way destinations, with Brazil's Pantanal, northern Colombia, Pueblos Mágicos in Mexico, the salt flats of Bolivia's Salar de Uyuni and the Atacama Desert all high on the intrepid traveler's agenda. A crop of new hidden luxury resorts includes Relais & Châteaux's Ponta dos Ganchos near Florianópolis, Brazil.



TRAVEL GUIDE

Green acres

Eco-tourism is a sector that continues to grow, as consumers become increasingly conscious about the environmental impact of travel. Large companies are investing in green initiatives and the industry is developing new ways for travelers to vacation in style while remaining ecologically aware. Six Senses, the original "barefoot luxury" company, which started 16 years ago in the Maldives and now has 14 resorts, is aiming to become carbon neutral by 2020. Some of its latest initiatives include an eco-villa in Thailand, powered entirely by solar energy and water.

At the Baros resort in the Maldives, the destination's first eco-diving resort has just opened. Here, guests can enroll in a course to gain a certificate that qualifies them to help EcoDive teams monitor reefs across the globe. Other imaginative options include ecological river cruises in Peru offered by luxury group Aqua. Spas are also entering the green market. The U.K.'s first certified eco spa, Titanic Spa in Huddersfield, is housed in a carbon-neutral mill, the pool is chlorine-free and salt regulated, and there are photovoltaic solar panels for energy. In France, La Gree des Landes eco spa was designed using "bioclimatic" architecture, with roofs covered with plants, southwest-facing windows that utilize natural light and thermal solar panels to help heat water. It also plants one tree for every stay by a guest; dead trees are left as refuges for animals and insects.



Cayenne Grill restaurant at the Baros eco-resort in the Maldives.



Lonely Planet's City Guide apps, like this guide to Melbourne, Australia, are popular.

It's an app world

In a world increasingly dependent on smartphones, travel apps are becoming an essential tool for people on the go. According to a survey by research group Compete, 34% of travel apps are aimed at helping people find information about the local area, such as restaurants and entertainment as well as maps, while 29% help customers check reservations and 25% are used to reserve rooms. Some luxury hotel chains such as Mandarin Oriental and Four Seasons offer apps, although at the high-end, most customers are using the feature to discover the local area rather than book rooms, as face-to-face is still important in this sector, says Christoph Oberli, vice president of e-commerce at Mandarin Oriental. Applications from guidebooks like "Lonely Planet" are particularly popular, as are more unusual ones such as Tipping Tips, which tells travelers how much to tip in each country. Euromonitor predicts that 50% of Europeans will use smartphones to make travel reservations and/or find information by 2015. Social media such as Twitter and Facebook also continue to grow as a medium for marketing and booking holidays. Delta Air Lines Inc. launched the airline industry's first Facebook reservations page in August. Other big players in the market are Lufthansa AG and Tripadvisor, with strong Facebook presences. Resorts are also getting in on the act, with Vail Ski Resort in Colorado shifting more than 80% of its advertising spending from print media to online channels, including Twitter and Facebook.



Left, SoMa perfume, made for the Shanti Maurice resort; above, a James Small insider belt, sold exclusively at the W Hotel in London.

The sweet smell of luxury

As hotel chains compete to shift rooms, many companies are coming up with inventive ways of branding. At the Shanti Maurice resort in Mauritius, owner MPS Puri worked with perfumer Tammy Frazer to create an aroma that recalled the early morning scents of the island's flora, something guests could associate with their holiday. "Scent is a hugely important part of the memories we form and we wanted to create something that associated the location to the hotel," says Mr. Puri. "There is something primordial about it." The perfume is sprayed around the hotel, in rooms and on towels, and guests are given a solid scent to take home with them. Le Méridien chain has also created a sensory experience in all of its hotels. Working with hip New York perfumer Le Labo, they have created a signature scent evocative of forest groves and old books. Adding to the earthy feel, the elevators play a soundtrack featuring the chirp of crickets in the morning and a crackling fire at night. Hotel chains are also looking to increase their profile by offering new and unusual things for sale. W Hotels works with local style gurus and trendsetters, offering one-off pieces exclusively in the hotel shops. At the new W in London, opening in February, East End designer James Small has made a range of reversible belts, from £400. At the St. Petersburg W, opening in March, guests will be able to purchase oversized chain-link necklaces from Behnaz Sarafpour for \$175. Morgans Hotel Group, which includes the Mondrian in Miami, Los Angeles and San Francisco, has giant vending machines in some of its hotels from which you can buy everyday essentials such as a Ferrari, a Paul Smith toothbrush or a retro Ouija board.

Dieting and deprivation

Extending last year's "transforccations" trend, more people are expected to seek more austere and extreme forms of self-improvement breaks this year. At the Ranch in Malibu, Calif., which was launched in September by ex-realtor Alex Glasscock, guests can count on a rigorous program of exercise and diet, with women expected to lose up to eight pounds and men 10 pounds during their weeklong stay. Guests, including Hollywood celebrities getting into shape for the red carpet and CEOs looking to let off steam, are encouraged to relinquish their computer and mobile phones, and only check in at home for emergencies. At \$5,600 a week, the daily routine typically involves 10 hours of exercise, including a five-hour hike; a strict vegetarian diet of 1,200 calories a day; and inspirational talks in the evening to keep guests going. In the foothills of the Dolomites at Palace Spa Merano, guests pay from €4,170 a week to shave off the pounds through a specially designed health program that includes a punishing regime of exercise, a 36-hour detox and under 1,000 calories a day. (For the less extreme, there is a biolight option, at 1,200 calories a day.)



Afternoon classes at the Ranch in Malibu, Calif., include TRX training shown here.

Left page anti-clockwise from left: Steve Bloom Images/Alamy; & Beyond; Ted Levine/Corbis; Natphotos; ArtClusive Japan. This page clockwise from top: Baros, Maldives; Lonely Planet; The Ranch at Live Oak Malibu/Mark Adams PkTures; Tammy Frazer; W Hotels/James Small.

TRAVEL GUIDE

A coffee break in Guatemala

Travelers can explore quaint boutique plantations in the highlands near La Antigua

By JAVIER ESPINOZA

Time has stopped at the Finca Los Nietos. Located just seven kilometers outside the colonial city of La Antigua in the central mountainous highlands of Guatemala, this tiny coffee plantation caters to those looking for a more intimate experience than a big coffee factory tour.

A strong cup of coffee produced on this boutique farm and good company from the Keilts, the Cuban-American family who bought this piece of land a couple of years ago, delights visitors from abroad. As tourists sip their brew, the sun glows brightly over the green highland valley and the volcanoes in the distance. This is perhaps the closest to heaven coffee lovers might ever be.

On this crisp morning, Grace Keilt-Freyre, the daughter of owners Raúl and Christina, introduces guests to the farm, which boasts 200 different types of flowers and plants, ranging from cacti to tropical fruits, on less than a hectare of land. The farm grows Arabica coffee, which usually produces its best quality bean in higher altitudes, Ms. Keilt-Freyre explains. "We are at about [1,500 meters] above sea level, just right for our Arabica coffee plants," which take seven years to fully mature, are sensitive to low temperatures and prefer a little shade.

Finca Los Nietos harvests four different types of Arabica coffee plants, mostly distinguishable by the leaves. One, for example, is called the *Cobán*. "With this particular plant, it is a little easier to distinguish the bean itself, which is about two sizes bigger than the rest of the beans that we have on the farm," Ms. Keilt-Freyre tells her guests. "The particular types of Arabica coffee plants that we have on the farm produce coffee for up to 10 years."

As guests walk through the farm, their attention turns to two-liter red plastic Coca-Cola bottles hanging on some of the trees. The bottles have been painted red to lure a specific pest known among the farm employees as *el borracho*, or the drunk, an insect that proves a nightmare for coffee growers. "It will eat the bean and leaves, basically taking over and turning the plant black," she says.

Inside the Coca-Cola bottle hangs a smaller bottle that is filled with rubbing alcohol to attract the insects with its smell. "The bottom of the Coca-Cola bottle is filled with a little soapy water. The pest simply gets in and cannot get out. The plastic bottles that we hang here and there on the farm are simple, yet super effective in keeping our coffee plants healthy," Ms. Keilt-Freyre explains to bemused tourists.

Thanks, in part, to these bottles, Finca Los Nietos has been able to produce up to 360 kilograms of roasted coffee in the past year. "[This] would mean we have roughly 1,000 plants," she says.

Due to the farm's small size, each ripe red bean is picked individually. For roughly every two kilograms of red beans they pick, Los Nietos makes nearly a fifth of a kilo of Mayan roast, which it sells for about €5.

Ms. Keilt-Freyre now shows off the farm's tiny despulpadora, or pulp-remover machine. A big metal wheel on the inside spins so fast it pops the slimy green beans out of the pulp. The pulp then falls into



Clockwise from top, La Antigua, Guatemala; Finca Los Nietos co-owner Christina Keilt; and different stages of roasted coffee beans on display.

small orange bins at the bottom of the machine and the beans fall onto a separate table. "At the end of the day, we have to spend a couple of hours going through and picking the red of the slimy beans," she says. "This is one of the many times we have to clean the beans. We also pick beans that are stuck to the pulp. Those are no good either, as they have been probably infected."

The beans will then sit in water to get rid of their slimy outer layer for approximately two days. They are then washed thoroughly and when they are clean, the beans are put up on the roof where they will dry for about 20 days. Once dry, the beans are called *café con camisa* because they have a paper-thin outer layer, or T-shirt, that needs to come off the beans before they are finally roasted.

The farm has come a long way. At the start of the 1990s, a couple from the U.S. purchased the land, which at the time was used as a dump, and turned it into a community project that gradually developed into the property seen today.

The new owners of Finca Los Nietos, which translates as "farm of the grandchildren," have made it their priority to use and reuse every single bit of what the farm produces—including its worms.

Tourists are now standing before a huge pile of what locals call the red flirt. The worms live, eat and reproduce in coffee pulp, a result of the waste of the coffee beans. Every eight days the worms are fed with new pulp. This is then turned into fertilizer that feeds the trees. It takes about two months for the tank to fill up and that is when half of the fertilizer is taken out to dry. The worms are then moved to the other side to keep them in the tank. "It's all done by hand," Ms. Keilt-Freyre tells slightly nauseated onlookers.

The tank was ingeniously built on an incline so that "worm tea," the black liquid produced by the worms, falls into a hole. The liquid is then used to spray on the trees' leaves to keep bugs away. "It's fabulous for the plants," she says. "The point is to use everything."

Java junkies can also visit other



farms in the vicinity. Some of them have a longer history in making coffee, such as the 140-year-old Finca Filadelfia, which offers weekday tours and is located 150 meters north of San Felipe de Jesús church in San Lorenzo el Cubo. Another, Finca La Azotea, which is located just outside La Antigua, hosts the Coffee Museum, which takes visitors through the process of growing coffee with an interactive tour, while seeking to preserve the dying lifestyles of indigenous populations in Guatemala.

To explore the highlands and the plantations, visitors should choose nearby Antigua as their base and plan to rent a car to get around. The former Guatemalan capital is a color-

ful destination, filled with lively bars and beautiful antique shops. Once a great center of power in Central America, La Antigua, or Old Guatemala, is an ideal destination for church lovers (it has about 38). Period buildings, such as the former convent of Las Capuchinas, offer a great insight into the history of the country. A massive earthquake virtually destroyed the city in 1773 and many of the ruins, such as those at San José el Viejo, aren't to be missed.

Susan Hirsch, who recently visited the city from Maine, says she instantly fell in love with the place. "Antigua is a vibrant warm city with the added charm of almost impossible to traverse cobblestone streets."

TRAVEL GUIDE: FOOD & WINE



A seaplane taking diners to the Berowra Waters Inn direct from Sydney Harbour.

Anson Smart

A broadening of the mind

[Food]

BY BRUCE PALLING



We inevitably encounter interesting and different culinary experiences when not in our natural habitat.

This is especially true when you come, as I do, from a dusty Australian country town with not one decent restaurant for 100 kilometers in any direction. My defining food memory is eating a black olive for the first time while picnicking in the abandoned gold fields of central Victoria with the family of an artist who had lived in Europe. That was 45 years ago, but the texture and unique earthy flavor, and the sheer exoticism of the experience is still vivid.

With no routine to be shackled by, traveling also means you inevitably eat with new people in new restaurants or kitchen tables, experiences that help shift you out of your comfort zone. It wasn't until I moved to Melbourne that I had my first authentic rectangular-shaped pizza, plus a spaghetti marinara that still remains a benchmark experience. And a huge number of later encounters came through my time as a foreign correspondent. In Indochina in the early 1970s, the sizeable population of Corsicans running the drug trade and other more legitimate trading pursuits meant that it was possible to eat superb, simple French cuisine in Saigon, Phnom Penh and even Vientiane. A subsequent African posting didn't broaden my culinary horizons—I still recall a 10-course meal at a hotel in Bulawayo which included savory fish croquettes, spaghetti Italien, Scotch eggs, roast beef and steamed syrup pudding with custard, all for the equivalent of less than \$3. But when I moved to London in 1973, I made my first connection with Michelin-starred establishments, especially in France, thanks to a lasting friendship with a *Le Monde* foreign correspondent. And with practice, it really was possible to comprehend why a particular place

had one, two or three stars.

The key experiences for me, though, were two back-to-back assignments I had in the late '80s to cover the food scene in Melbourne and Sydney, and then do the same thing in California's Santa Barbara/Venice and the Bay Area/Napa Valley areas. After a considerable absence from both places, it was fascinating to return and experience the culinary revolutions then happening on both sides of the Pacific.

When I left Australia in the early '70s, the only Asian cuisine was cheap Cantonese and one or two Indian places, while French restaurants were of the simple bistro variety or pastiches of grand hotel dining. What a difference two decades made! The first revelation was the ingredients and the second that Asia was now making its presence felt in a new concept called Pacific Rim cuisine. Suddenly, prawns could appear in a European restaurant with Asian spices or cooking techniques. And lunch at Berowra Waters Inn, then Australia's most sublime restaurant, precariously perched on the side of a river gorge an hour or more north of Sydney, drew moneyed people by water plane direct from Sydney Harbour (I love the story about four people who once skimmed in, only to have a massive row with the boatmen before flying off again—they didn't have a reservation). But it isn't only personal travel that enhances one's food memory bank: The house Champagne was Bollinger, which must have flown halfway around the globe and even the profound Moss Wood Cabernet had to travel more than 2,000 miles from Western Australia to make it there.

Modern air travel (and the International Date Line) meant that I had a farewell New Year's Eve lunch overlooking Bondi Beach and New Year's Eve dinner at Chez Panisse in Berkeley, Calif., less than 24 hours later. As part of the festivities, a waiter, wearing a propeller on his baseball cap, bobbed around tables pouring out free Château L'Évangile '82 Bordeaux from an Imperiale (six-liter bottle). It may have been costly infanticide,

but it indicated the whacky sort of fun that Chez Panisse provided.

This was an entirely different approach to food than in eastern Australia. There, it was experimentation on a wide level done with gusto and abandon; California was far more precise and academic. Chez Panisse allowed me to sit in on one of their weekly assessment sessions. They had a handful of brilliant foragers (many with doctorates) who would submit typed, single-spaced reports on some new product or other from an outlying region. Buried in the detail would be biographical comments such as "these farmers settled here after the 1905 pogrom in Russia"; I adored this attention to irrelevant detail and painstaking research on the actual products. Further south, in Beverly Hills, Wolfgang Puck had shown commendable style by producing designer pizzas at Spago and equally creative fusion cuisine at Chinois in Santa Monica.

California cuisine was in its prime, thanks to the sparkly alliance a decade earlier between Chez Panisse founder Alice Waters and the self-taught genius of chef Jeremiah Tower. Suddenly, there was a premium on absolutely fresh ingredients grilled or given a light touch so that they sang on the plate. (Given its inspiration from Provence, perhaps it should have been called Caliterranean.) Since then, the over-rated nouvelle cuisine rose and fell, replaced by molecular cuisine, which is now being overtaken by Nordic Cuisine.

None of this would be possible without travel—both for ingredients and techniques, and, of course, equally important, curious diners. At least two jumbo-jet cargo planes deliver Thai ingredients to London each week and there are even larger amounts of British shellfish and prime beef going to Continental Europe every day, while foie gras, cheese and prime vegetables from the Rungis Market in Paris are shipped across the English Channel. Nearly five decades on from that Tuscan olive consumed in Australia, all foodies have reason to be grateful for the growing debt we owe to travel.

Exploring the wine route

[Wine]

BY WILL LYONS



Today, wine tours are big business, as vineyards, regional trade bodies, tour operators and travel agents increasingly see them as an important component in generating revenue and marketing noise. It's all a far cry from when I started adventuring along the wine route.

Back then, as a curious undergraduate, I attempted my first wine tour up Portugal's Douro Valley, where, backpack slung over my shoulder and girlfriend in tow, we set off—only to be invariably met by poor food, extreme heat and unreliable trains. Thankfully, the wine was delicious.

Nowadays, the Douro is peppered with luxury hotels replete with infinity pools, spas and restaurants, which, I'm told, offer a wider variety than the menus I encountered, which were built around a stable of meat, rice and fries. The Yeatman, recently opened by Taylor, Fladgate & Yeatman, which owns Taylor's port, is a case in point, offering exceptional views from its position in Vila Nova de Gaia overlooking Oporto. Further up the river at Quinta da Romaneira, one can take a swim above the vineyards in luxurious splendor.

The encroachment of high-end luxury into the world's vineyards isn't uncommon; we now have golf hotels in Bordeaux (Golf du Médoc Hotel & Spa); Frank Gehry-designed hotels in Rioja (Starwood's Marqués de Riscal hotel) and renovated Dutch colonial mansions in South Africa's Constantia Valley (Steenberg Hotel).

There are also a swathe of travel companies offering a range of holidays from wine and opera to wine and golf, and even wine and sailing. For more than 20 years, Arblaster & Clarke has offered a range of wine tours of regions as far afield as Australia and South Africa, often in the company of an expert guide. They have the advantage of neatly packaging everything together and gaining entry into wineries and estates, such as one of Bordeaux's first growths, that would

otherwise not be possible.

But like too much wine, too much luxury or organization can sometimes be a little too much, and as the summer wears on, I hanker after a more personal approach involving a car, a map and a battered suitcase, throwing the best laid plans out of the window and simply just exploring.

France is a great country to get started. Both Bordeaux and Burgundy have driving routes that cut through some of the country's most scenic and illustrious vineyards.

In Burgundy, the Côte d'Or is a thin, 30-mile strip of land that begins at Chenôve, just south of Dijon, and ends in the villages beyond Santenay. Running through the middle is the N74, or the *route des Grands Crus*, which passes through 24 of the area's 33 grand cru wine regions, taking in such names as Chambertin, Clos de Vougeot and Romanée-Conti.

Late autumn, when the leaves have turned a honeyed, soft ocher, is the best time to go. A good tip is to leave the main road for one of its tributaries; at certain elevated points, where the lanes meander up the side of the slope, one gets the sensation of floating amid the vines. The villages one stumbles across are peppered with numerous cellars offering their wine for degustation—they are well worth a stop as you never know what discoveries you might make.

Bordeaux has a similar route—the D2—a road that runs through the Left Bank commune of the Médoc, sweeping through some of the most famous appellations in the world, such as Margaux, Saint-Julien, Pauillac and Saint-Estèphe. Reservations are crucial in Bordeaux, so it is best to telephone or write in advance to the chateaux you would like to visit.

Completing the triumvirate is Champagne, where both Epernay and Reims have a number of houses, such as Mumm, Pommery and Canard-Duchêne, that welcome visitors with or without appointments. In Epernay, one can leave the car behind and stroll down the avenue de Champagne where Moët & Chandon has more than 25 kilometers of chalk cellars dating back to 1743. Most houses offer the casual visitor a guided tour of the cellars followed by a glass of something bubbly.

Drinking Now

Mantineia Nasiakos

Semeli, Greece

Vintage: 2009

Price: About £13 or €15

Greece isn't a country one immediately associates with wine making, even though there is evidence of vine cultivation stretching back to the late Neolithic age. At first glance, one could be forgiven for thinking it is too hot and dry. But altitude, sea breezes and indigenous grapes have all contributed to a lively wine scene, which in modern times really started to take off around the mid-1980s. This particular white wine has won many awards for its fresh, zippy character. Produced from grapes grown at around 650 meters above sea level, it sits in the glass with a luminous yellow, green hue. The nose is lemony with a flowery scent, but the overall character of the wine is marked by its tingling acidity and lively, long finish.



TRAVEL GUIDE



Losing oneself in Bermuda

Gentle, sleepy and subtropical, the island resembles a well run, distinctly middle-class country club



By WILLIAM LYONS

Every night as dusk descends on the thin, fish-hook shaped collection of atolls that make up Bermuda's western elbow, the oldest cast-iron lighthouse in the world flickers into life.

From where it stands, towering 75 meters high above the Southampton Parish of the island, its beam stretches forward in a brilliant column of white, illuminating the shoreline and dancing across the Atlantic, where it can be seen for more than 60 kilometers.

Since 1846, the rhythmic white flash of Gibbs Hill Lighthouse has provided comfort to sailors navigating the treacherous reefs that line its western Atlantic coast.

In 1953, shortly after her coronation, Queen Elizabeth II paid a visit to the lighthouse, built next to a signal station once operated by the British army. Pausing to take in the view—a spectacular vista overlooking a large body of water known as the Great Sound that stretches east toward Hamilton—she would have seen a landscape first colonized by Elizabethan adventurers.

Today, Bermuda is once again a destination for adventurers looking to make their fortune. The juniper-made sloops may no longer navigate the oceans between Europe, the West Indies and America, but if the mercantile trade has withered, the age of re-insurance and international finance has grown, helping swell the economy of this 54-square-kilometer enclave to an estimated €4.3 billion.

Look behind the pastel-colored shops, whitewashed stepped roofs and manicured gardens of the capi-

tal city, Hamilton, and there are dozens of offshore companies domiciled on the island that have provided Bermuda with a sophistication quite unlikely in such a romantic hideaway. Amid the pink-hued beaches, the hidden coves, coral reefs and the heavy, perfumed scent of freesias and oleander, one also finds the sort of bustling restaurants, wine bars, corporate hotels and golf courses one would expect from an island that boasts the headquarters of companies such as Bacardi Ltd. and insurance brokers

Bermudians like to dress up. Jacket and tie is de rigueur for many restaurants.

Hiscox Ltd.

And while one can spend hours whiling away the time on one of its flag-ship beaches such as Horseshoe Bay, Somerset Long Bay or Tobacco Beach, there is a quiet formality to the island.

Bermudians like to dress up. Jacket and tie is *de rigueur* for many restaurants, and on a working week day, it isn't uncommon to see islanders wearing the national dress: blazer, city shirt and tie, Bermuda shorts, long, dark socks and brogues.

On the week we visited, in mid-December, the temperature averaged a pleasant 16 degrees Celsius. Warmed by the Gulf Stream, the island sits in the mid-Atlantic more than 1,600 kilometers north of the Caribbean, just a couple of hours flight from New York and roughly

six hours by plane from Europe. It is the combination of the gentle, sleepy, subtropical atmosphere, (there are no rental cars here, only mopeds, buses and taxis) and the character of a well-run, distinctly middle-class country club that pervades many of its hotels, which attracts so many to its shores.

This began with the regular visits of American writer Mark Twain in the late 19th century and continued after World War II, when the lure of tennis parties and cocktails on the lawn attracted English playwright Noël Coward, who set up home on the island. A stream of well-known stars followed, including David Bowie and Hollywood's husband-and-wife team, Catherine Zeta-Jones and Michael Douglas, the latter whose mother is Bermudian.

Sport takes up a large swathe of culture on the island. For the active traveler there is golf, hiking, fishing, diving, windsurfing; for the less adventurous, one can enjoy some snorkeling amid the intimate coves and miles of shallow, calm, turquoise sea.

Below Gibbs Hill Lighthouse sits an 18-hole par-3 golf course adjoined to the Fairmont Southampton, a large pastel-colored hotel perched on the highest point of the island. With more than 500 rooms, many with spectacular views over the Atlantic, the hotel, under the guidance of general manager Norman Mastalir, is a good place to unwind for a few days.

The golf course was designed by Theodore Robinson and meanders across a procession of steep inclines, with a series of bunkers and lakes. Speeding from hole to hole in one of the carts, it is hard not to get distracted by the ocean views.

Top, sailing at Cambridge Beaches Resort & Spa; above, Gibbs Hill Lighthouse.

TRAVEL GUIDE



If this isn't enough, there are seven other 18-hole courses on the island.

Afterward, one can relax in the sumptuous Willow Stream Spa, and from the hotel's large outdoor Jacuzzi, watch the sun set and night sky emerge. Or one can sit at the bar with a Rum Swizzle, a cocktail some describe as Bermuda's national drink, or a Dark & Stormy. The Fairmont Southampton also has its own private beach overlooked by the obligatory tennis courts.

A little more exclusive is Cambridge Beaches Resort & Spa, which sits on a 12-hectare peninsula on the western tip of the island in the rural parish of Somerset. Secluded in landscaped rolling gardens, guests receive their own cottage with private gardens and sea views. It goes without saying that it has its own private beach.

Close by is the Royal Naval Dockyard, which, along with the historic town of St. George, on the other end of the island, is a reminder of the island's rich naval history. The Royal Naval Dockyard was a major western Atlantic outpost for the British Royal Navy until 1951, when the navy left and most of the land was acquired by the local government.

Today, it is one of the island's most popular tourist attractions, with an art center, craft market and the usual eateries and souvenir shops. Walking around the 30-hectare dockyard, one cannot fail to be impressed by the sheer size and scale of the development, when it was built in the early 19th century. The dockyard also houses Bermuda's main cruise berth and can be a hive of activity in the summer.

For a smaller sailing experience, catch one of the fast ferries across



From top to bottom, Fairmont Southampton Golf Course; aerial view of Cambridge Beaches Resort & Spa; and a room at the Fairmont Southampton.

to Hamilton, where one can dine in style overlooking the port at the Harbourfront Restaurant. In town, and less formal, the Pickled Onion is a fun first-floor restaurant with a balcony overlooking the harbor.

The more adventurous can try cycling across the island on Bermuda's only railway line. The 34-kilometer track was laid between 1926 and 1931, and was considered to be one of the world's most expensive railway lines to build. The railway only operated for 17 years before the arrival of the motor car rendered it obsolete. Today, it has been transformed into a rather attractive walking and cycling path, which can be followed to Scour Hill

Fort & Park, built in the late 19th century to defend the Royal Naval Dockyard. The fort, an enormous engineering project involving the excavation of a dry moat above a large, inclined dip, was protected by two 64-pound guns. Only one cannon remains today and it has never been used.

As we left, a yellow-breasted kiskadee set off from the cannon, ascending in a great arc over the water, soaring high above the hook-shaped archipelago of the Great Sound toward the distant outline of Gibbs Hill Lighthouse, the beat of her wings thankfully undisturbed by the sound of gunfire. A reminder of the gentle side of this island.



Mutrah Corniche in Muscat, Oman.

Muscat's old-world charm

[Off the Beaten Track]

Though often overshadowed by more modern Middle Eastern hotspots like Dubai and Abu Dhabi, the ancient port city of Muscat, Oman, retains an old-world charm. Online editor **Brittany Hite** on what to see and do in the legendary home of *Sinbad the Sailor*.

What to do: This country is one of the safest in the Middle East, and Omanis are known for their friendly demeanor. Start the morning by mingling with fishermen selling their catch at the fish market in Mutrah. Even if you've no plans to buy, vendors will greet you with a smile and an "al salaam a' laykum," or "peace be with you." Continue along the Corniche down to the Mutrah Souq, buy traditional scarves, frankincense or gold. Beyond the souq, pass the Mutrah fort built in the 16th century and a number of watchtowers nestled among the mountains and cliffs overlooking the sea. Head down to Muscat proper, the old part of town, where you can walk right up to the gates of Sultan Qaboos's palace, and see traditional Omani artifacts at the Bait Al Zubair museum (Muscat; ☎+968-2473-6688; www.baital-zubairmuseum.com). The museum, like many other businesses, closes from the hot hours of 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. While everything is closed, head up to Qurm's free public beach, but use discretion: Most Omanis are too polite to say anything, but if there are many local residents around, the polite thing to do is play it on the conservative side in choosing swimwear. Marvel at the Grand Mosque, inaugurated in 2001 as a gift to mark the 30th year of the sultan's reign. It can hold 20,000 worshipers and is home to a giant handmade Persian carpet that took 600 Iranian weavers four years to complete. Foreigners are welcome to visit but must be covered: Long sleeves and long pants or skirts should be worn, and women must cover their hair. Note that Muscat is spread out, and cabs here are both quite expensive and not metered. Riders must negotiate prices with drivers beforehand, and tourists will inevitably be charged a premium. Time and money can be saved by simply renting a car, which can be done at the Seeb In-

ternational Airport. Prices start at about 15 rials (€29) per day.

Where to eat: For a quick snack, grab a chicken shwarma and one of a dozen or more flavors of "juice," a milkshake-like concoction, at the Fastfood N Juice Centre (Mutrah Corniche, ☎+968-2432-0750), where you can dine outside on picnic tables just across the street from the waterfront. If the place is packed, don't fret; similar establishments on either side are nearly as good. After a day out at sea spotting dolphins, snorkeling or scuba diving, mingle with other seafarers at the Blue Marlin (Muscat; ☎+968-2473-7288), the on-site restaurant at Marina Bander al-Rowdha that serves a range of seafood. For a nice evening dinner, head to Mumtaz Muhal (Qurm; ☎+968-2460-5907). The food is rumored to be the best Indian in town and service is impeccable, but the real draw is the restaurant's perch atop a hill overlooking the Qurm Nature Reserve. Dinner is complemented by live musical performances, complete with a sitar player. Call ahead to reserve a table by the windows. For a romantic evening, check out the restaurant at the Chedi hotel (Al Khuwair; ☎+968-2452-4400; www.ghmhotels.com). Serving up a variety of Arabic, Mediterranean, Indian and Asian dishes and an extensive wine list, this venue features dim lighting with tables overlooking the hotel's well-manicured courtyard.

Where to stay: Muscat has its fair share of fine hotels and resorts. Shangri-La's Barr Al Jissah Resort and Spa (☎+968-2477-6666; www.shangri-la.com) includes three hotels in one massive complex on secluded cliffs along the water: the more family-friendly Al Waha, the business-oriented Al Bandar and the luxurious six-star Al Husn. The resort has a private beach and more than 20 restaurants and bars on-site. Rates range from around 190 rials per night at Al Waha to 320 rials at Al Husn. Other upscale hotels include the InterContinental Al Bustan Palace (Muscat; ☎+968-2479-9666; www.ichotelsgroup.com), where rooms start at 150 rials, and the Chedi, from 570 rials (Al Khuwair; ☎+968-2452-4400; www.ghmhotels.com). Those traveling on a budget can find more basic offerings near older parts of the city.

TRAVEL GUIDE



Coasting high in Provence

BY LANIE GOODMAN

In the late 1950s, when Provence was still an uncharted destination, writer Lawrence Durrell rhapsodized about an enchanted landscape—vines that were “glittering silver-green bundles, or softly powdered by the gold dust of the summers,” set against a “taut wind-haunted blue sky,” where the “great wines of the south sleep softly on the French earth.”

Fortunately, some things never change. A half-century later, despite the inevitable gentrification and post Peter Mayle craze for Provençal pleasures, there are still pockets of spectacular countryside, bordered by emerald grass or sniff-and-swoon pungent lavender fields, lush vineyards and burnished blue lakes. And in some of these miniature medieval perched villages—a cluster of stacked houses, honey-colored stone churches with forged-iron bell towers, shaded squares and flower-lined narrow streets—there still isn’t a designer boutique in sight. Nor will you find any nouveau rustic cafés jam-packed with pastis-sipping tourists draped in their white linen finery. Even celebrities strut around the local markets undisturbed, sampling the olive oil and goat’s cheese. You’re on your own here.

Here are of some of the best offerings, far from the glitz and traffic snarls of the coast:

Northernmost on the itinerary, at the foot of the gray limestone peaks of Mont Ventoux, sits the hilltop sleepy hamlet of Crillon le Brave, once home to a long line of dukes and to Brave Crillon, the favorite general of Henri IV. Next to the tiny village’s church, the hotel, which bears the same name, is a sprawling property of seven small 16th- and 17-century stone village houses connected by a maze of little paths. When the British owner, Peter Chittick, launched his country hideaway back in 1989, it was a simple 11-room inn; now it has expanded to 32 rooms and suites. Each is a different shape and size; all are done in soft beiges, with dove-gray walls, terra-

cotta tiles and furnished with plump armchairs and sofas. The most sought-after: La Tour, a vast split-level suite in a 12th-century tower outfitted with a pair of side-by-side claw-foot tubs facing a bay window with a spectacular view.

Guests lounge by the small heated pool, carved into the rock, or duck into the mini spa next to the pool deck. But sooner or later everyone drifts to the cool leafy terrace for another eye-popping panoramic vista. Another draw is the terrace restaurant, headed by Provençal-born Philippe Monti, whose flavorful market-fresh cuisine includes starters like homemade foie gras steeped in Baumes de Venise wine, and hearty main dishes like rabbit with truffles.

Above all, the atmosphere at Crillon le Brave is friendly and unpretentious. Off-season packages feature everything from a five-day crash course in Provençal cooking and French-language classes to seasonal truffle hunting, or participating in a grape harvest combined with a wine-tasting extravaganza.

If you visit just one among the countless top-notch vineyards in the Lubéron region, perhaps the most surprising is Château La Coste, situated north of Aix-en-Provence, in the poky agricultural village of Le Puy Sainte-Réparate.

Glimpsed from the road, the colossal 1,500 square-meter curved shed of silver, glinting in the dazzling sunlight, smacks of a surreal UFO that has landed the middle of a vast field of vines. Designed by French architect Jean Nouvel, the winery is strictly state-of-the-art, with three underground levels of towering stainless steel vats and a complex computer-regulated system to assure the most gentle methods of fermentation. The organic grapes are harvested and sorted by hand, yielding a wide range of biodynamic wines.

Art aficionados and designer hounds can hide out in stylish private villas at Domaine des Andéols, near Apt, which resembles a lovely but deceptively Provençal-style hamlet of “guest houses” in weathered ocher stone, surrounded by



A dish served at Hotellerie Les Gorges de Pennafort; top, Couvent des Minimes.

lavender and an olive grove. You won’t find hand-stitched flowery quilts or dried lavender sachets under your pillow, but you’ll be surrounded by priceless works by Warhol, Arad, Araki and Noguchi.

When owner Olivier Massart, head of a Paris fashion agency, transformed his family property in the tiny village of Saint-Saturnin-des-Apt into a unique hotel in 2003, he decided to use more than 400 pieces from his enormous private collection of contemporary art and furniture. Each of these nine multi-level houses—some with private stone pools and sundecks—has been named according to theme. They range from the kitschy “La Maison Voyageurs,” with a stuffed Bengali tiger, mock-tortoise sofa and giant live palm in the living room to the high-ceiled zen-white Maison Blanche, filled with only white furniture (a Barcelona banquettes by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, a marble table by Florence Knoll) and Plexiglas chairs by Philippe Starck. A more flamboyant favorite is “La Maison Rouge,” with scarlet Pucci-designed furnishings, a crimson lacquered bed, and gleaming red resin floors.

More a retreat than a classic hotel, guests can take in all the lavender-y splendor on horseback riding excursions through the countryside or laze at a dreamy pool. The domain’s

adjacent restaurant (for guests only) is under the direction of Michelin-starred chef Guy Martin, whose ever-changing dinner menu features simple country cooking, but anyone can drop in for a three-course lunchtime picnic (seasonal vegetables galore, barbecued meats and grilled fish) served under an enormous plane tree.

Another nearby option, set back on a lush hilltop near Apt, the recently-opened La Coquillade, is an eco-friendly 28-room neo-Provençal bastide with sleekly-designed spacious rooms (the split-level “honeymooner’s” suite has its own pool and hammam), built on a 30-hectare vineyard with an ultra-modern wine cellar, Caves Aureto. Owned by Swiss entrepreneur Andreas Rihs, the hotel has postcard-perfect vistas of the sun-drenched countryside, but the star attraction is 32-year-old chef Christophe Renaud. Expect exquisite creative combos of “forgotten” rare vegetables, organic meats and whimsical desserts like banana egg rolls with Espelette pepper and passion fruit sauce, served on the bistro terrace restaurant or at the gastronomic Le Gourmet.

Northeast of Apt, hidden away in Mane, a tiny village between Manosque and Forcalquier, is the Couvent des Minimes, an elegantly restored 17th-century Franciscan convent, surrounded by terraced

gardens, cypresses and fruit groves. Opened in June 2008, this stylishly minimalist 46-room hotel also features France’s first spa run by the l’Occitane brand with an exclusive line of natural beauty products infused with fragrant local lavender, verbena, rose and lemon. The deeply comfortable rooms have sweeping views of the countryside.

You dine in a vast vaulted white-washed cloister or in the shady inner courtyard, while talented chef Philippe Guérin dishes up tasty regional specialties: Try the red mullet with lemon confite, olives and almonds, the Sisteron lamb topped with mascarpone sauce served with purple artichokes, and strawberries with basil and olive ice cream for dessert. This is deep Provence in all its stark beauty and authenticity (the quintessential Provençal writer, Jean Giono, was born just down the road). If ever you tire of lazing by the peaceful pool, the local outdoor market, a 10-minute drive away, is a must for that killer rosemary honey.

Finally, after working up a gargantuan appetite hiking through the rugged trails of the Gorges de Verdon, make a beeline south for Hotellerie Les Gorges de Pennafort. At the foot of red ocher cliffs in a forest of green oaks, this pretty 16-room stone blue-shuttered Provençal farmhouse, run by native-born Varois Michelin starred chef, Philippe da Silva, is the place for guiltless gorging on generous and artfully authentic cuisine. Plan to linger a while at the table, since meals begin with a few delicate amuse-bouche and end with a true fanfare of heavenly desserts.

Work it off at the pool, which looks out onto the cliffs and a pond, replete with wild ducks and swans, then indulge in a body scrub with sea salt, sugar and Mediterranean fruit at their new mini-spa. It’s the restful flipside of the buzzing coastal scene, but if you must join the oily bronzing hordes, packed together in rows of striped sun beds *comme des sardines*, know that the beaches of Cannes and St. Tropez are less than an hour’s drive away.

TRAVEL GUIDE: FASHION

Luggage: An open and shut case

When buying bags, look for sturdiness and the ability to stand out in a crowd

[Fashion]

By Tina Gaudoin



My luggage recently took an extended vacation in New York without me. We had, as you might expect, planned to travel on the same flight, but British Airways had other ideas. We were reunited three days later, and one of us was in perfect order. No thanks to BA, but thanks to a tip I received about eight years ago from a seasoned Italian traveler who claimed she had never once damaged or permanently lost her suitcase. Why? Well, she explained, her luggage was a set of tangerine-colored Mandarin Duck suitcases on wheels. I remained unconvinced until my friend pointed out that her baggage neatly satisfied the twin tenets for superior luggage (and so much else in life): sturdiness and the ability to stand out in a crowd. Her cases were made of the tough, techno-nylon fabric for which Mandarin is famous. And

To have luggage you are proud of is to start a trip as you mean to go on. In many places, it is still a passport to better, more attentive service.

though the color—a particularly muddy shade of orange—might not be to everyone's taste, it would most certainly attract the eye of the resolutely ambivalent baggage handlers, whose job it is to rescue the vast swathes of bereft luggage that swirl around the airport conveyors of the world daily. If you are traveling commercial or without the help of "special services" to locate your luggage for you, investing in good bags is vital. The science is straightforward—spend as much as you are able to and buy from companies that have a longstanding reputation as *malletiers* of excellence. In case you are wondering, my luggage isn't orange, but it is an usual shade of khaki (with army connotations) and it is also, by you've guessed it, Mandarin Duck.

It isn't difficult to buy good luggage, but with almost every major fashion brand attempting to "have a go" at small and large leather goods—recognizing quite rightly that that is often where the money is to be made—it is important not to be swayed by the vagaries of fashion. Choose from a few brands with a reputation of excellence and go from there.

Rule 1. Carry-on is key.

You won't get upgraded if you have the "right" bag, but you will feel pretty smug when you notice that everyone else on the plane has the "wrong" bag—by that I mean one that won't close, is unbearably heavy and is too bulky to fit under the seat or in the overhead bin. I shy away from dic-

tates, but in this case, people, here are the options:

Bottega Veneta's Scarabee convertible bag in light iridescent leather (£2,450): Amazingly light, stylish and capacious, you could pack a baby elephant in here—well, OK, maybe a couple of kittens and a hair dryer. In any case, the bag can be ingeniously shrunk with the help of a couple of sturdy fasteners, should you want to use it as a handbag on vacation. The zipper fastens for security (I have twice had items stolen in flight); the bag will pack flat should you want to pack it on your return (because you had to have that handbag from Prada's Via Montenapoleone store); and because it is soft and pliable, depending upon what you put in it, it will double as a pillow (I know, because I've used mine for this and many other purposes, including a footrest.) It seems like a crime to subject such a work of art to the rigors of air travel, but designer Tomas Maier creates his bags for serious use, and they look all the better for some serious wear. He travels with the Cabat (also his design), but he's a bloke and probably only carries an iPod and a Kindle, plus the lack of a zip makes me nervous...

It used to be that the flash of a Birkin at the airport would be enough to confirm your chic cred. Nowadays, though, everyone including the Duchess of York and Martine McCutcheon carries a Birkin. Far better to use what one friend calls the "intellectualized It Bag"—the Hermès Shadow 40

(price upon request). Roomy enough for a light laptop, a book and any number of other sundries, the Jean Paul Gaultier-designed Shadow is a showstopper. If you need to ask where the missing hardware is, then it's not for you.

If you want to spend less (and it's reasonable that most of us might), try Anya Hindmarch's classic Carker bag, £850. The new navy, shiny-leather version with enamel studs gives the bag an edgy feel (I know it's only a bag and one shouldn't be pantheistic, but this is the Michelle Obama of handbags—modern, practical and serious, with some "street" thrown in for good measure). The front pocket can be locked and the zippered pocket inside is huge.

Rule 2. Rolling bags are cool.

There are some columnists who shall not be named for whom the rolling bag is as common as, well, Stansted Airport. If you, like me, are apt to travel minus check-in luggage, then a roller is vital. (Tip: Pack lingerie at the bottom; then when you come to remove your laptop for screening, your most personal of items won't be revealed to the world.) I love Prada's luggage and, having used it for years, I can vouch for its sturdiness and resilience. Their new lettering service—which will bespoke label a backpack, trolley or shopping bag in either saffiano leather or a camouflage print with your own multicolored initials and graphic motif—is getting a lot of attention. The concept is simple, but as with so many other things,

Prada has done it first and done it so well that interlopers will have their work cut out to better it.

Rule 3. Suitcases should be seen and sturdy.

For all their ubiquity, it is unlikely that there will be many Louis Vuitton suitcases on the carousel. Vuitton improves with age and they are still one of the supremos in the luggage world. Nothing gets the attention of airline staff more effectively than the sight of a stack of battered Vuittons. A couple of years ago in Milan, I was traveling with Marie Claire editor-in-chief Joanna Coles and her fashion director (and Project Runway judge), Nina Garcia. Whilst Coles and I struggled to haul our own cases onto the conveyor, Garcia stood to the side, stared pointedly at her Vuittons and, as if by magic, an airline official leapt over the check-in desk to load them for her. Invest in an Alzer 70 to begin with; it is a medium-sized, hard-sided case. At £3,850, it is a good start to a collection that you can leave to your children.

I've written about Goyard before and there isn't a better stealth luxury brand out there. Less obvious than LVMH (and thus not to everyone's liking), Goyard's soft luggage is peerless—and relatively rare, so it has standout potential, particularly when it is an Goyard Ambassade 24h (price upon request), into which, I am reliably informed (though I don't own one), you can fit "almost anything."

Mandarina Duck thinks of ev-

erything—fabulous color, shoe and laundry bags, dividers for shirts and lighter clothes, extendable handles for transportation, wheels that work and, most importantly, a light, durable frame covered in nylon and polyurethane (they do leather too). Try their work trolley case with zipper front pockets, which comes in a myriad of colors and sizes. A large suitcase will start at around £250-£300.

Sir Edmund Hillary used Globe-Trotter suitcases on his first Everest ascent, so a trip to Sydney on a 747 should be child's play. Luxurious, carefully crafted examples of fine British workmanship, these cases are iconic (they also improve with age). If Paddington Bear had a younger, chicer sister, this is what she would have been carrying. A 28-inch suitcase with wheels from their Original range is £520.

You'll notice that I have omitted here many of the ubiquitous luggage brands. This isn't because I don't approve of them; it is because I think (somewhat bizarrely perhaps) that one's luggage should have a personality. Generally speaking, travel should be fun, even in these days of heightened security, smaller seats and astronomical travel taxes. To have luggage you are proud of is to start a trip as you mean to go on. In many places, it is still a passport to better, more attentive service. Like a good man (or woman), a great suitcase might cost you a lot, but it should be with you forever. If you lose heart, you can always turn it into a coffee table. The suitcase, that is.



Clockwise from left, Bottega Veneta's Scarabee bag in light iridescent leather (£2,450); Prada backpack in camouflage print with bespoke lettering (£590); Goyard's Ambassade 24h bag (price upon request); and a Mandarin Duck work trolley case (£310).

TRAVELER'S TALE



Illustration by Florian Bayer

Pilgrimage to the tip of Denmark

An essay on an unexpected journey and the end of love by J. S. Marcus

One hot Saturday morning in July, in the year 2000, I left my stuffy Berlin apartment with a single change of clothes in my backpack. I didn't quite know where I was going; I just knew that I was leaving.

Nearly seven months into a seven-year relationship—an imperfect relationship, which started out hopefully and ended badly, a marriage and divorce in all but name—I had a premonition. Not of how things would turn out, but that I needed a break. An afternoon off, I thought, as I brushed my teeth. Or, I reconsidered, while deciding how many CDs to take, a whole day.

In spite of the heat, I decided to bring along a jacket, then an extra T-shirt, then another pair of shorts. The toothbrush was the nail in the coffin, the key in the ignition. An hour later, I was sitting in a train, heading west, smelling the Prussian countryside through the open windows of an old German train compartment.

At first, I did actually have a plan: to go to Hamburg. But when I got off the train, Hamburg was even hotter than Berlin. I sat on the platform, watching crowds head in all directions. Not Hamburg, I thought, I need to go on. I walked over to the train station's store-size newsstand and beheld the travel section.

In the land of wanderlust, these travel sections are always fully stocked. Nearly every one of Europe's destinations, major and minor, has its own glossy magazine, with ageless photos showing off its particular pleasures. The beaches, the mountains, and the cobblestone streets—they all shot through me, then sank and rumbled.

I counted the Deutschmarks in my wallet, and the dollars back home, and aimed for a

dog-eared copy of a magazine called "Dänemark." A few pages later, and I found something: a tiny spit of land and a large-print description of a natural wonder. At the very tip of Denmark's tip, the waters of the North Sea and the Baltic visibly meet in an apparently endless straight line. The tip, it turned out, had a name—as easy to read, and hard to pronounce, as an IKEA chair. Skagen.

Travelers, I know now, fall into two categories: the fugitive and the pilgrim. I was running away that day—from the truth, as it turned out, slowly approaching from a horizon years away, that this relationship couldn't last—but Skagen's miracle, at what felt like Europe's version of Lands' End, let me feel like I was running toward something.

The trip up through Jutland took a dozen hours, until I finally reached Skagen just before midnight, with the summer sun about to leave the sky.

I found a sign at the train station, which led me to a bed-and-breakfast near the harbor, and called my friend on the harbor pay phone. Ready to unleash all the details of my adventure, I got the answering machine. I reeled off the Danish names I had seen from the train and tried to make a joke.

The next day, I woke up in a place I had never been—a place, indeed, I hadn't known about until the day I arrived—and put on my clean clothes.

Skagen turned out to be wildly beautiful—part fishing village, part resort, with yellow houses and red-tile roofs, and shimmering water on three sides. But I was there for another reason.

The sun shone that day, and Skagen's squat yellow buildings glowed. I rented a bike and rode against the wind, in search of a line in the water.

The wind was stunning, exhausting, like a wind tunnel. I would later read on the train home that Jutland was famous for being windy. I would also read that Skagen was famous for its Paris-mad Danish painters, who got through the white summer nights with Left Bank abandon.

The bike took me across Denmark's tip, then up to the spit, which had a name that reminded me of Old English literature rather than new Swedish furniture—Grenen. I walked out to very edge and stared.

In what did look like a straight line, waves came from the left and the right, and crashed against each other. It really was like two oceans, two shorelines, meeting up over missing land.

The site was extraordinary, but it wasn't mine somehow. Everyone else was Danish, it seemed, and I was a stranger who had taken a few trains and rented a bike.

I missed what I had run away from: the newfound ordinariness that the relationship had given me. I got back on the bike and headed south, and kept heading south over the next day, until I was back where I started.

I opened the door of my apartment, expecting hot, stale air, and instead I found my friend, making himself at home. The summer days filled up with the kind of cozy steadiness that makes you want to stay where you are forever. I didn't know quite what to call it, so I called it love.

It turned out those two bodies of water weren't really the North Sea and the Baltic, as the German travel magazine had promised—they were the "Skagerrak" and "Kattegat," two subordinate straits. The ordinariness I had craved on the Danish beach, and miraculously found when I got home, gradually faded, flattened, until there was

nothing left but two human beings, crashing against each other.

I still live in Berlin, but on my own, and I still check out the German travel magazines, with a little more wariness and the same old longing. And I have managed to reclaim that site on the beach at Skagen—the Grenen miracle. It happened to me, too, so it is mine, like my long-lost friend, who has gone his own way.

Where the sea and sky merge

In the final decades of the 19th century, Paris had the Left Bank, and Denmark had Skagen, the remote fishing village where a generation of Scandinavian artists and intellectuals spent their summers and completed some of their best work. The breakthrough came in 1874, when a young painter named Michael Ancher, fresh from art school in Copenhagen, made his way north by carriage, and fell in love with a local girl. Michael and Anna Ancher gathered around them some of the most original artistic figures of their time, including writer Georg Brandes and composer Carl Nielsen. You can still find traces of them in Skagen, especially at the Skagen Museum, which has an impressive collection of the whole group, known as the Skagen Artists. Influenced by the French Barbizon School and later by the Impressionist movement, the artists captured the particular conditions of Skagen, where water on three sides creates a special incandescence. A favorite motif of Peder Severin Krøyer (1851-1909), probably the movement's most accomplished painter, was the summer beach at dusk, which Danes call "the blue hour," when the sky and the water seem to merge.

HOMES

Modern among the McMansions

Rather than play it safe, an ex-Google couple built a different kind of Silicon Valley luxury home

By Nancy Keates

Silicon Valley is known for its risk-taking entrepreneurs, who upon striking gold frequently wind up lavishing some of their riches on safe architecture—McMansion-sized replicas of Mediterranean villas or French châteaux.

Hidden at the end of a long driveway next to a French villa, the approximately 743-square-meter, six-bedroom home of ex-Google executives Olana and Zain Khan and their two young boys is unabashedly contemporary. There's no shortage of drama: a flat-roofed, L-shaped exterior is fronted by a geometric pool of water with fountains coming from travertine walls. At the entry, glass walls give a view inside to a main living area and then all the way through the back of the house, where a large glass sliding door can open the room to a rectangular limestone patio and swimming pool outside.

The vast, main living room, where mother-of-pearl speckled terrazzo floors sit 5.7 meters below a mahogany-sided ceiling, is crossed by a frosted glass bridge with see-through railings that floats overhead, connecting two wings of bedrooms. It feels a little like an airy hotel lobby—inspired by the couple's request for a casual, resort feel, said architect Bob Swatt of Bay Area firm Swatt Miers. "The idea was those gorgeous hotels in Hawaii with great furnishings, where you take your shoes off and have a Mai Tai," he says.

The couple met working in the early days of Google, back when they recall the company being small and casual. Mr. Khan, 37, started at Google in 1999. Known simply as the "Ops Guy," he graduated to managing a global team of IT people before leaving in 2006. He now works for a hedge fund and as an IT consultant. Ms. Khan, 35, joined the company in 2000 after a stint at Netscape. The manager of a global sales support team, she also left around 2006 and now works as chief operating officer of Pro-Founder Financial, a company designed to help entrepreneurs get access to capital from their communities.

The couple initially bought a 1924 Spanish-style house on University Avenue in Palo Alto and hired an architect to design a new, similar-style house on the property. But as they went through the design process they realized they wanted lots of windows and big open spaces.

After spending time looking at magazines and researching on—where else—the Internet, the couple decided to hire Swatt Miers, which specializes in contemporary homes. "We were really excited about being able to build modern," said Ms. Khan, who is expecting her third child. "We like big, open spaces where the kids as they grow up can feel independent but can still be within hearing distance."

Since a modern house wouldn't fit into the context of their Palo Alto neighborhood, they looked around for more suitable property. They bought their current lot five years ago and tore down the dilapidated 1950s Art Deco home that was there. Located on a hill, with no other homes visible, the property allowed them to build a dramatic house with minimal landscaping.

The couple, who moved in Sep-



tember, declined to comment on the cost of the land or construction. The property was listed for \$7.2 million (€5.3 million), and the value of the land was assessed at \$7 million by the county. Contractors estimate an upscale modern home that size in the area would cost about \$800 per square foot (€6,300 per square meter).

The artwork is exotic: gold flecked Buddhas from Thailand and carved African figures; a camel on wheels is from India. But much of the inspiration is from close to home. Mr. Khan modeled the dining-room chandelier, with milk bottles hanging from metal cords, on a piece at Calafia, a Palo Alto restaurant owned by the former chef at Google. The idea for the terrazzo floor comes from a recycled glass counter at Equinox in Palo Alto, where Ms. Khan exercises. A red-and-black bamboo patterned mural on a wall in the master bathroom is similar to a design Mr. Khan saw on a poster at Café Epi in Palo Alto. Ms. Khan had long wanted a floating glass bridge like the one at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

The audio-visual room downstairs rivals those in some commercial buildings; it controls the advanced wireless system, all the satellite and sound system equipment and the 60 solar panels on the roof. The lights, TVs, blinds, pool, security cameras, alarms and climate controls can be adjusted from an iPad anywhere in the world. Mr. Khan elected not to do the wiring. "I didn't want to be the IT guy at home," he said. Ms. Khan added: "He didn't want me yelling at him when the Internet went down."

Such advances can have their drawbacks. During a recent stay, Ms. Khan's father, David Hirsch, was in the guest bedroom when suddenly all the lights went out. It turned out that his daughter and son-in-law, assuming he and his wife were asleep, "turned off the house for the night," with the iPad. "It's a very exciting house," he said.



Top, the main living area; Olana and Zain Khan under a chandelier Mr. Khan modeled on a piece at a Palo Alto restaurant owned by the former chef at Google; the couple's approximately 743-square-meter, six-bedroom home.

BOOKS

The Long History of British Disdain for America

By RICHARD B. WOODWARD

Anti-Americanism among the British has a lineage that crosses party lines and social rank. The French are usually regarded as America's most contemptuous ally, a distortion prevalent since 2003, when they sat out the Iraq invasion and U.S. congressmen deemed it patriotic to rename a McDonald's staple "Freedom Fries." French disdain is comparatively recent, however, and evenly directed at all other countries. The British have felt superior to America over a longer span of time and, as one's closest friends can be one's harshest critics, have not been shy about naming America's faults.

In 1832, only a year after Tocqueville published the first volume of "Democracy in America," Mrs. Frances Trollope was acclaimed in England for her less optimistic views of the experiment in self-government. "Domestic Manners of the Americans," a record of her travels around the U.S. in 1827-28 (future novelist Anthony in tow), abounds in insulting, and no doubt accurate, observations about local customs. A typical zinger: "I hardly know any annoyance so deeply repugnant to English feelings, as the incessant, remorseless spitting of Americans."

Fictional Americans have not fared much better. The Tory wing of English novelists (Evelyn Waugh, Kingsley Amis) has tended to portray characters born on the other side of the Atlantic as bumptious and grasping, as Dickens did in "Martin Chuzzlewit"; the political left (Graham Greene, John le Carré) has often made Americans either dangerously idealistic or dangerously cynical. Greene's "The Quiet American" is handily quoted by British pundits whenever U.S. troops intervene in a foreign land.

Worries about America's growing industrial and military strength over the course of the 20th century

united Britons of all castes. Almost as painful to them as the gradual loss of empire after World War II was the awareness that the U.S. was becoming the main (and perhaps sole) alternative to their former authority. The zeal for communism among well-born British intellectuals, from the Cambridge spies in the 1930s to young Trotskyites such as Christopher Hitchens in the 1960s, was driven in no small part by a wish to thwart America's sway over the Britons' own land as well as the globe.

Patrick Wright's "Passport to Peking" (Oxford University Press, 591 pages, £20), an acerbic and fair-minded study, examines an obscure historical episode from 1954, when left-wing sympathizers from the Labour Party set off to visit Mao's China, a trip that would likely never have taken place if not for what Mr. Wright calls the "affronted patriotism" of the British in the face of American power. The motley array of travelers included Clement Attlee, the former prime minister; Aneurin Bevan, his health minister; artists Stanley Spencer and Paul Hogarth; classicist Rex Warner; philosopher A.J. Ayer; and planeloads of trade unionists and members of Parliament.

All were motivated by a belief that friendship with leaders of the new communist state might help to secure a place for Britain between the Soviet Union and the U.S., the Cold War's two superpowers. In a chapter titled "The Charms of Anti-Americanism," Mr. Wright writes that, "despite being abjectly dependent on American loans and aid through the Marshall Plan," the members of the British left believed strongly that their country "should under no circumstances be reduced to behaving like a bloc-minded stooge of its American paymasters." Disapproval of the trip by



JOHN BULL VS. UNCLE SAM A Nicholas Garland cartoon for the Daily Telegraph in 1994.

Churchill's Conservative government had only stiffened the group's resolve to go.

The result, in Mr. Wright's artful telling, is social comedy with a rueful edge. Most of the British pilgrims were blissfully ignorant of China—of its geography and traditions—and so interpreted the unfamiliar through their own history. The word "Victorian" pops up repeatedly in the travelers' journal entries when they refer to China's quaint decor and customs. Class rifts soon opened up among the pilgrims, notably between Spencer, a religious painter who spoke like a plumber, and the cultivated Ayer, an Etonian celebrated for his philosophy of logical positivism. Habits from home were hard to break. Spencer disliked the Chinese delicacies that were served and asked for fish and chips. Wherever the group landed, the first question from the alcoholic Warner as he disembarked was: "Where's the bar?"

The Chinese had learned from the Soviets how to walk visitors down the sunny side of a street, making a point of showing off their

country's supposed achievements. Even so, the British were not simply "useful idiots," in Mr. Wright's view. Many went home disheartened. The rhetoric of the "new China" seemed as divisive and rigid as Stalin's had been. One delegation of the British refused to toast Mao unless their host, Premier Chou En-lai, toasted the British queen.

Attlee's hopes of finding a middle path between the Soviets and the U.S. were less than successful. Pravda, with typically perplexing logic, attacked this traveler to China as somehow trying "to curry American favor," while George Meaney, the president of the American Federation of Labor, denounced such junkets as "wining and dining with Communist murderers."

The leftists' flirting with China in the 1950s reflected a more widespread longing among the British to assert a certain independence from their America allies. The challenge of how to keep one's friends at arm's length has been a nagging dilemma for Britain since World War II. Harold Macmillan, serving

as a liaison between Churchill and Roosevelt in North Africa, argued in a well-known 1943 dispatch for an approach as cunning as it was pragmatic. "You will find the Americans much as the Greeks found the Romans," wrote the future prime minister. "Great big vulgar, bustling people, more vigorous than we are and also more idle, with more unspoiled virtues but also more corrupt."

The timing of Mr. Wright's book cannot be accidental. Parallels with today are hard to overlook. As some on the British left in the 1950s resented the Truman-Acheson-Eisenhower-Dulles-led crusade against communism, so has a sector of the British public in the past decade hoped to opt out of the Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld-led global "war on terror."

Anti-Americanism has not lessened with the Obama presidency or the Cameron prime-ministership. The decision to continue standing by the U.S. in Afghanistan and Iraq has soured a vocal British minority against both of their political parties and deepened the impression that the White House, not Downing Street, calls the shots. Wealthy Americans and Russians now own all or parts of the English soccer clubs Manchester United, Liverpool, Arsenal and Chelsea, a development that has alarmed some loyalists who feel caught in a replay of the Cold War.

British resentment at U.S. dominance and distrust of American motives isn't likely to go away, especially on the left. Only if, as some have predicted, the 21st century turns out to belong to China—alas, too late for Attlee & Co.—will the special relationship regain its luster, as Americans hunker down with the British and join in feeling dominated together.

—Mr. Woodward writes frequently about the arts for the Journal and other publications.

Rock of Ages

The Planet in a Pebble
By Jan Zalasiewicz
Oxford, 256 pages, £16.99

By BRIAN SWITEK

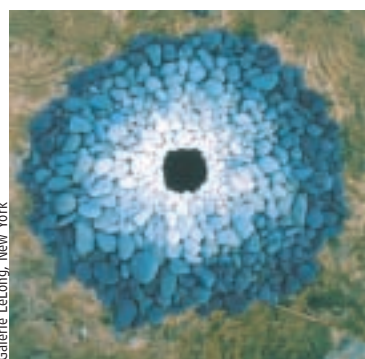
William Paley's "Natural Theology" (1802) begins by juxtaposing a mundane natural object with an intricately designed product of human craftsmanship. Paley, an English Christian apologist, writes: "In crossing a heath, suppose I pitched my foot against a stone and were asked how the stone came to be there, I might possibly answer that, for any thing I knew to the contrary, it had lain there for ever." If Paley stumbled across a timepiece, however, even a cursory inspection would reveal the hand of an intelligent agent. The arrangement of parts pointed to an artificer. The humble stone had no such stories to tell.

Paley was not much interested in geology. The purpose of his "watchmaker analogy" was to provide a way of detecting the power and will of a Creator in nature. Paley's stone was merely a foil by which the intricate complexity of the watch could be highlighted. A geologist, however, would not have taken such a

dim view of the rock. Though still a nascent science early in the 19th century, geology allowed naturalists to look at the landscape through the lens of Deep Time and address questions about the age of the Earth and its formation.

As seasoned geologists know, even the tiniest rock contains within it myriad narrative threads relating to the history of our planet. You just have to know what to look for. Now, more than two centuries after Paley kicked his stone aside, it has gained an advocate in geologist Jan Zalasiewicz. "The Planet in a Pebble" is what the title suggests: an attempt to extract the Earth's story from a small rock, in this case a smoothed, blue-gray pebble, streaked with white, found along the Welsh coast where Mr. Zalasiewicz has spent much of his career.

Carl Sagan famously said, "We are starstuff," and in the same way so is the pebble. The elements inside our bodies and those inside the pebble can be traced back about 13.7 billion years to the initial Big Bang that gave the universe its character. Even though the pebble itself is of more recent origin—having eroded out of its parent strata in a Welsh cliffside



EYE OF THE BEHOLDER Andy Goldsworthy's 'Pebbles Around a Hole' (1987).

within the span of human history—Mr. Zalasiewicz uses the chemical components contained within it to trace the origins of the universe, our solar system and our planet.

In these early chapters, almost any pebble would have been served—the vestiges of these large-scale, ancient changes are detectable in almost all rocks. Yet Mr. Zalasiewicz's choice of pebble shapes the latter half of the book in a particular way.

Many of the events that gave the pebble its unique character transpired more than 400 million

years ago. At that time, during the Silurian period, the matter that would eventually form the pebble was a patch of muck on a deep, anoxic sea bottom, where life was essentially nonexistent. Yet the pebble does preserve signs of life. Mr. Zalasiewicz chips into the pebble to reveal the remains of tiny marine organisms that flourished near the ocean surface before drifting down to the harsh bottom waters.

Among the most remarkable of the tiny fossilized creatures Mr. Zalasiewicz excises from the stone are graptolites—an entirely extinct variety of oceanic drifters that formed intricate, communal chains. By studying these creatures, we gain a window into long-vanished ecosystems as well as a tool for scientists to use in divvying up slices of geological time.

Like the strings of tiny fossils embedded in the rock, lines of physics, chemistry, biology and history run through "The Planet in a Pebble." Thanks to Mr. Zalasiewicz's deft storytelling—and his policy of always keeping the pebble in sight—the book succeeds in steering readers through material that might have left them feeling like William Paley out on the heath stubbing his toe. We learn, for instance, that the

mineral grains inside the pebble were eroded off the long-lost continent of Avalonia more than 600 million years ago, and, more recently, around 420 million years ago, tiny crystals of fool's gold (pyrite) settled on the ancient mud to fill in the body cavities of tiny animals whose bodies had sunk into the muck. And, despite its seemingly static nature, the pebble did not remain in one place. Baked by the heat of the earth, the stone's parent rock layer underwent a journey that took hundreds of millions of years, pushed along with the changing continents and thrust up into what is now the Welsh coast.

Although the records contained within the pebble are often incomplete and are not always preserved in high fidelity, they still allow us to feel the rhythms of planetary change. "In some ways the pebble is like one of the new computer chips," Mr. Zalasiewicz writes, "tightly packed with more information than one could ever surmise from gazing on its smooth surface."

—Mr. Switek, a research associate at the New Jersey State Museum, is the author of "Written in Stone: Evolution, the Fossil Record, and Our Place in Nature."

ART & AUCTIONS



Neil Mason



From left, swivel bracelet in 18-carat gold (2004) and a brooch in titanium and 18-carat gold, with platinum dots fusion inlay (2009), both by Jacqueline Mina

With a twist and a turn

Jeweler Jacqueline Mina transforms gold into art

BY EMMA CRICHTON-MILLER

Standing in the padded vault of Goldsmiths' Hall in London, Jacqueline Mina, an artist-jeweler, holds a beautiful spiraling gold necklace up to the light.

"About 12 years ago I was brought onto the 'Meet the Ancestors' television program to advise on some jewelry they had found in an early Roman sarcophagus in Spitalfields, London." One of the historians on the documentary had suggested that a particularly fine necklace had been made from spun gold. However, Ms. Mina, known for her technical expertise, had her doubts. Experimenting herself, she concluded that the necklace could only have been formed from twisting a strip of gold into a tube and then rolling it out into wire.

Ms. Mina found herself entranced by the barley-sugar twists the strips produced before they became tubes. "I am always playing around with metal. I wound it tight and I then unwound it, which gave a fluid, strange, helical twist to it like the inside of a shell."

This encounter gave rise to a whole series of pieces—earrings, necklaces and even a tiara—which will form part of a major exhibition of this artist's work called "Dialogues in Gold," on show Jan. 31 through Feb. 26.

The exhibition selects the finest pieces from the past 30 years of Ms. Mina's career. One of Britain's foremost and highly influential artist-jewelers, Ms. Mina, born in 1942, participated in the great emancipation of jewelry that began in the 1950s. From an artisanal skill, in the hands of artists such as John Donald, Gerda Flöckinger, Andrew Grima and Helga Zahn, jewelry became increasingly recognized as a legitimate medium of creative expression.

With the founding in 1962 of Ms. Flöckinger's pioneering course in experimental jewelry at Hornsey College of Art, the notion became established that an artist could work in jewelry as ambitiously as in painting or sculpture, inspiring successive generations of independent makers.

Having studied silversmithing and embroidery at Hornsey (there was no jewelry course in 1957), Ms. Mina was offered a place in 1962 at the Royal College of Art so long as she studied jewelry. "I had no view

of jewelry, I was only interested in form," Ms. Mina recalls, but she had so set her mind on the RCA that "I could, and would and did adapt!"

She had seen the groundbreaking International Exhibition of Modern Jewelry in Goldsmiths' Hall in 1961, and had been tremendously impressed by the Gulbenkian Collection of Lalique jewelry. "Modernism had obscured a whole era of design history," she explains.

At the RCA she began to develop her original, focused way with techniques and materials; "I was working very much with texture, using wax casts." While the main focus of the New Jewelry movement shifted in the 1970s toward the use of non-precious metals and increasingly daring conceptual designs, Ms. Mina preferred to invent freely, within the fundamental disciplines of goldsmithing, experimenting constantly with techniques, but endeavoring to produce something beautiful.

This show opens with work in titanium begun while she was teaching at the RCA, in 1981, and to which she has returned recently: "The color is interesting. In a flame, it passes through a dark spectrum and an iridescent spectrum." Another on display is a recent beautiful green shimmering piece, gently curved, combines titanium with platinum and gold. "To me that's a piece of sculpture," she says.

Ms. Mina is most well known for her innovative approach to platinum. Invited by Ayrton Metal Co. in 1983 to run a workshop at the RCA using the material, she subsequently developed a technique called fusion inlay, where she creates sheets of gold and platinum (fragments or mesh or dust) fused together. She then textures these through a rolling mill, using cut paper, or emery, or by pressing the material onto steel molds to create distinctive lines and curves, before cutting into shapes. Two particular experiences—at the Nicholas P. Goulandris Foundation Museum of Cycladic Art in Athens, and the Fortuny Museum in Venice—have between them fed her imagination. The Cycladic pieces combine a spare, abstract beauty with the warmth of human suggestion in their curves. The influence of Fortuny's exhibition on textiles has been filtered through Ms. Mina's discovery of platinum gauze, made out of very fine threads of platinum,

which can be hammered into platinum sheets or fused with gold to create a brocade effect. These pieces are subtle, elusive and painterly. While Ms. Mina does use precious stones—either gems she is given by clients or vintage stones like moonstone, opal or labradorite—what marks out her work is the intuitive play in metal of concave and convex, edge and center, form and decoration, mobility and stillness. It was for these virtues that she won the Jerwood Prize in 2000, with, among other pieces, an ambitious necklace in gold and platinum, with many small, folded, pointed leaf forms.

This year will see a succession of exhibitions celebrating the artist's work, in advance of her 70th birthday next year. Ms. Mina is one of an extraordinary generation which is also being celebrated in Electrum Gallery's 40th anniversary spring show, "Past, Present, Future," which runs April 22 through June 4.

Founded in 1971 by Barbara Cartlidge, a jeweler, curator and writer, the gallery has consistently championed the most innovative work of both British and European makers. "It was a wonderful, blooming time for this kind of work," Ms. Cartlidge says of the gallery's early years.

To honor her contribution, Electrum, now owned by Contemporary Applied Arts, has invited Ms. Cartlidge to curate a show of seminal pieces by makers such as David Poston, Fritz Maierhofer, Susanna Heron, as well as works by leading contemporary jewelers such as Bryan Illsley, Charlotte de Syllas, Gerda Flöckinger, Wendy Ramshaw and David Watkins.

Supporting the present, the gallery will also be showcasing the work of three younger artists. Maria Malitsi continues the tradition of challenging conceptual work, while Yoko Izawa's colorful textile pieces make precious the cheapest nylon and Daphne Krinos develops consistently new variations on ancient forms and materials.

The gesture to the future lies in a parallel online exhibition of very new makers and a window installation by Mademoiselle Robot blogger Laetitia Wajnapel.

While it may be hard to recapture the heady excitements of the early New Jewelry movement, the tradition of adventurous, exploratory work continues.

Making a big impression

[Collecting]

BY MARGARET STUDER



A Pablo Picasso in love adds romance to benchmark impressionist and modern art auctions in London next month.

Sotheby's evening sale Feb. 8 will be led by "La Lecture" (1932), a sensuous painting of his lover Marie-Thérèse Walter blissfully asleep in a chair, a book open on her lap.

"Picasso's iconic paintings of Walter reign supreme as the emblems of love, sex and desire in twentieth century art," enthuses Sotheby's catalog, about the bright, happy, colorful images.

The artist first saw Walter on the streets of Paris in 1927 when she was 17 years old and Picasso was 45. As she later described their encounter, he took her by the arm and said, "I am Picasso. You and I are going to do great things together."

As Picasso was married to the Ukrainian-Russian dancer Olga Khokhlova at the time, he met secretly with Walter for many years. Khokhlova separated from Picasso in 1935. Picasso ended his relationship with Walter after meeting photographer Dora Maar in 1936. Maar, who became his new lover, inspired dramatic, sad and distorted paintings very much in contrast to those of Walter.

"La Lecture," which is expected to fetch £12 million-£18 million, is a "wonderful celebration of lyrical feeling," says Philip Hook, Sotheby's senior director of impressionist and modern art. Although it is appreciably smaller than "Nude, Green Leaves and Bust" (1932)—a work also featuring Walter that, at \$106.5 million, brought the highest price ever for an art work at auction last May at Christie's New York—the estimate "is on the cautious side, but we prefer it that way," Mr. Hook says, adding that works from the 1930s are probably the "most desirable" of Picasso's long career.

Sculpture at auction did well in 2010, led by Alberto Giacometti's "L'homme qui marche I" (1960), a bronze figure of a lonely man walking, which last February at Sotheby's London, fetched a re-

cord £65 million for sculpture. In Sotheby's sale next month will be a bronze male bust by Giacometti from 1957, which is estimated at £3.5 million-£5 million. It is part of a celebrated series of sculptural portraits of the artist's younger brother Diego, who acted as his primary model for head and bust sculptures in the 1950s and 1960s.

Another sculptural highlight at Sotheby's will be Marino Marini's "L'Idée del cavaliere" (1955), one of the artist's famous depictions of horse and rider. Monumental in scale at a height of 220 centimeters, it is hand-painted (estimate: £3.7 million-£4.5 million).

Giovanna Bertazzoni, Christie's London director of impressionist and modern art, points out that seven of the top 10 prices paid at auction last year were in the impressionist and modern art sector. Of those, she notes, six sold for more than \$50 million. "The category continues to engage new collectors," says Ms. Bertazzoni. "There is tremendous demand for the rarest and the best."

Heading Christie's impressionist and modern art sale Feb. 9 will be a still life with sunflowers by Paul Gauguin, estimated at £7 million-£10 million. Painted in Tahiti in 1901, the sunflowers have a wild yet decadent feel. The painting has been exhibited at more than 20 major museum exhibitions, including the artist's first landmark retrospective at the Grand Palais, Paris, in 1906.

Meanwhile, a wonderfully colorful and tranquil scene of boats on the water, "Bateaux à Collioure" (1905) by Fauve painter André Derain is estimated at £4 million-£6 million. This vibrant piece has been in the same collection since around 1960.

Christie's will follow its impressionist and modern art sale with a 31-lot surrealist auction with a total pre-sale value of £18.8 million-£27.5 million, the highest pre-sale estimate for any auction of surrealist art at Christie's. Olivier Camu, who heads the sale, says surrealism is a "vibrant collecting category" due to a new appreciation of it by traditional collectors of contemporary art.

A leading highlight will be René Magritte's "L'aimant" (1941), or "The Magnet," a beautiful nude with long, blond hair leaning on a rock flanked by a curtain, estimated at £3.5 million-£5.5 million.



In Tahiti in 1901, Paul Gauguin painted "Nature morte à L'Espérance," which is estimated at £7 million-£10 million.

REVIEWS

Inspiring imperial collections

Paris: To celebrate the opening of its new permanent collection and its new enlarged exhibition space, the Pinacothèque de Paris is offering a double-header of a temporary show, "The Birth of a Museum," with works from two historic private collections that provided the foundations for two important museums: the Romanov Collection at the Hermitage in Saint Petersburg and the Esterházy Collection at the Beaux-Arts in Budapest.

Peter the Great was the first major Romanov collector. Turned resolutely toward the West, he traveled through Europe and brought back to his new capital in Saint Petersburg the arts of the Renaissance. Alexander I defeated Napoleon, but he visited Josephine just before she died in 1814, and later bought part of her art collection. His brother and successor Nicolas I bought the collection of her daughter Hortense, among many others. But neither brother was a match for their grandmother Catherine the Great, who cut a swath through Europe in the late 18th century—aided by experts including the Encyclopedist Denis Diderot—buying entire collections wholesale.

Among the Romanov riches here

are Ghirlandaio's superb "Portrait of an Old Man" (circa 1515-20), Domenico Fetti's penetrating "Portrait of an Actor" (1620-23) and Rembrandt's "David and Jonathan" (1642).

The barons and princes of the Hungarian Esterházy family, which traces its origins to the mid-13th century, came to prominence in the service of the Hapsburg Austro-Hungarian empire. In the 1760s, the Esterházy family became the patrons of composer Joseph Haydn, and an annual Haydn festival is still held in the family chateau in Eisenstadt. Nicolas I was also a serious art collector, and his grandson Nicolas II even more so, buying and commissioning paintings all over Europe. By 1815 his collection contained some 1,150 paintings, 3,500 drawings and 50,000 engravings; he opened his galleries to the public twice a week. But his extravagant lifestyle left the family with huge debts, and in 1870 his successors sold part of the collection to the Hungarian state.

The works here from the Budapest museum are even more impressive than the Romanov treasures. The stars are two Raphaels—"Portrait of a Young Man" (1503-04) and a "Virgin and Child with the Infant

John the Baptist"—along with other superb Italian works, including Bernardino Luini's stunning "Virgin and Child with Saint Catherine of Alexandria and Saint Barbe" (circa 1522-25).

From Spain comes Murillo's enchanting "Holy Family and the Infant Saint John the Baptist" (circa 1668-70), with Joseph working at his carpentry table and Mary doing needlework as she watches the children play. Among a score of Flemish, Dutch and German works, Jan Steen's crowded and festive "A Joyous Company" (1673-75) is rich with delightful details, including a toddler violinist and a litter of kittens.

The Pinacothèque's nascent permanent collection is a puzzling amalgam of 15th- to 20th-century works from private and institutional lenders, organized by subject, starting with a 1660-70 Flemish scene of a fox in a hen house beside a 1992 Miquel Barceló "Rabbit and Chicken." Many names are prestigious, but quality is uneven. It's a work in progress.

—Judy Fayard

Until May 29
www.pinacothèque.com

'Portrait of an Actor' (circa 1620-23)
by Domenico Fetti.



Vladimir Tereshchenko, Leonard Kheifets, Yuri Mubodkovets/ The Hermitage Museum



Anna Madeley as Suzanna and David Wilson Barnes as Max in 'Becky Shaw.'

A blind date with 'Vanity Fair'

London: Gina Gionfriddo's "Becky Shaw," now playing at the Almeida, is a fast-paced, sassy, tense American comedy about a blind-date disaster. The play has come via fringe festivals and theaters in Louisville, Ky., New York and Boston. Someone who has seen every production told me this was the best of the three casts. It has only one original American actor, David Wilson Barnes, who gives a cracking performance in the key role of the driven financial adviser, Max—and I see no reason why this hugely enjoyable play shouldn't be a commercial success and transfer to the West End.

I confess I was puzzled by the title, as I couldn't help but think of Becky Sharp, Thackeray's social-climbing "heroine" in "Vanity Fair." But the first half seemed to be a screwball comedy, updated with lots of sex and even more four-letter words in the fizzing dialogue.

This Becky, played by Daisy Haggard, is a ditzy blonde whose over-

bite at first seems bigger than her brain, and the picture of innocence, as she turns up in an unsuitable scanty dress for her date with Max. It has been arranged by Suzanna (the delicately beautiful Anna Madeley), a grad student in psychology who was brought up as a sister to Max—though they tumble into bed in the first scene; and by her hastily married new husband, Andrew (the winsomely handsome Vincent Montuel), a radical feminist ("Pornography makes Andrew cry," Suzanna boasts). There is another fine performance by Haydn Gwynne as Suzanna's invalid, still-randy mother.

Younger than Suzanna, Andrew is a wannabe novelist in a dead-end office job, where Becky temps for him. Becky has broken with her family, who have twice rejected the black men with whom she was having affairs. On her blind date with Max, they are held up at gunpoint by a black man; Max gets over it quickly—too quickly for Becky and

the others' febrile sensibilities. Max accuses Suzanna: "You set me up with a desperate woman." Suzanna ripostes: "Wait. You think I set you up with someone who isn't good enough for you?" and Max responds: "I don't think that. That is a fact." Now we are in Thackeray-land.

Ms. Gionfriddo acknowledges "Vanity Fair" and says in her author's note: "Also, I was puzzling over the many novels I read in college named after female characters that are (a) destroyers, (b) victims of destruction...Most often, they are both; their terrible reversals wrought by sexual indiscretions and attempts to climb into a higher social class."

Peter DuBois directs this, as he has the earlier productions. Here, he has the advantage of a marvelous revolving set by Jonathan Fensom that makes the scenes change seamlessly, almost liquidly.

—Paul Levy

Until March 5
www.almeida.co.uk

Orozco proves that size isn't everything

London: At Tate Modern just now is a massive show by the Mexican conceptual and installation artist Gabriel Orozco. It's accompanied by not one, but a pair of Tate-published books—a monograph by curator Jessica Morgan in the "Modern Artists" series (£14.99), as well as a hefty catalog edited by Ann Temkin (£24.00).

Some of the work on display is in the Tate permanent collection. Indeed, I would say Tate owns the best work in the show, "Carambole with Pendulum" (1996). This is a modified billiards table, covered with green baize, as is normal, but oval rather than rectangular and without pockets—a feature of carambola, where players score points by "caroming" their cue ball off the opponent's cue and object balls on a single shot. Here, two white balls sit on the table, while a single red one is attached by a string to the ceiling, so as to form a pendulum whose arc nearly

touches the table only at a single point. In the corner of the room are some cue sticks. While I was there, one young man selected a cue and had several goes, one successful, at getting a white ball to strike the red at the arc's crucial point.

Bravo. It was very amusing. So is the "Modified Citroën DS" (1993), in which the archetypal French car has been split lengthways into three parts, with the middle removed and the remaining two joined to make an even more aerodynamic object than the original—from some vantage-points it resembles a gigantic dart. Likewise, the 1994 welded handlebars-to-seat "Four Bicycles (There is Always One Direction)" is playful and charming. But these are in the show's largest room with "Until You Find Another Yellow Schwalbe" (1995), 40 chromogenic color prints of a bright yellow motorcycle photographed against differing back-

grounds. I defy you to claim you aren't bored after the first 20.

The 48-year-old Mr. Orozco has his precedents, starting, of course, with Marcel Duchamp. There are sculptural objects with shapes reminiscent of Constantin Brancusi; beautiful wavy-line drawings that recall Sol LeWitt; fabrics and scraps that bring to mind the work of Eva Hesse; and a human skull with diamond shapes drawn on it in graphite, "Black Kites" (1997), earlier and superior to Damien Hirst's exploitation of the same idea. There are several works here—including "Lintels" (2001), scraps of pressed "dryer lint" debris hanging on a series of parallel washing lines—that echo the work of the late Barry Flanagan.

My verdict: much ado about not very much.

—Paul Levy

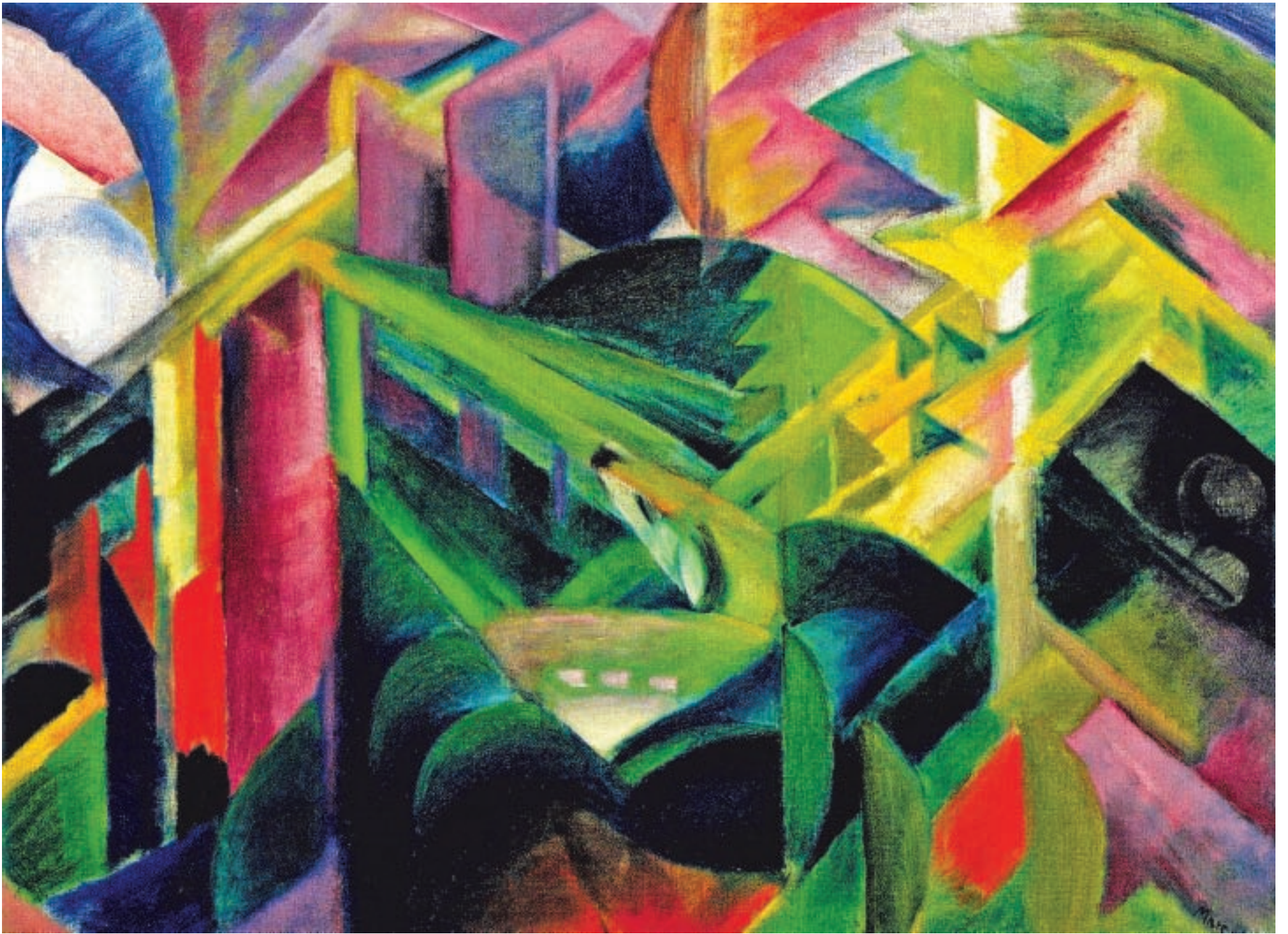
Until April 25
www.tate.org.uk



Tate Photography/ Courtesy of the artist and kurimanzutto, Mexico City

Gabriel Orozco's 'Chicotes' (2010).

CULTURAL CALENDAR



Above, Franz Marc's 'Deer in a Monastery Garden' (1912), is on display in Vienna; below, 'The Ill-humored Man' (1771-1783) by Franz Xaver Messerschmidt is exhibiting in Paris.

Amsterdam

■ ART
 "Stepping out in Montmartre: Prints of Cafés and Theatres" shows works created by Vincent van Gogh during his stay in Montmartre alongside posters, prints and theatre programs by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen and Henri Gabriel Ibels among others.
 Van Gogh Museum
 Feb. 11-June 5
 ☎ 31-20-5705-200
 www.vangoghmuseum.nl

Barcelona

■ ART
 "The Otolith Group: Thoughtform" presents experimental and avant-garde films by the British art collective The Otolith Group, founded in London in 2002 by Anjalika Sagar and Kodwo Eshun.
 Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA)
 Feb. 4-May 29
 ☎ 34-93-4120-810
 www.macba.cat

Birmingham

■ MUSIC
 "Band of Horses" tours Europe with its Grammy Award-nominated rock, promoting its most recent album "Infinite Arms."
 Jan. 28, O2 Academy, Birmingham
 Jan. 30, O2 Academy, Bristol
 Feb. 1, Manchester Academy
 Feb. 3, O2 Academy Brixton, London
 Feb. 4, De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill
 Feb. 7, Aula Magna, Lisbon
 More European dates at
 www.bandofhorses.com

Bonn

■ ART
 "Arp, Beckmann, Munch, Kirchner, Warhol: Classics in Bonn" exhibits 120 20th- and 21st-century works, including those by Man Ray and Hans Arp.
 Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland
 Jan. 28-March 27
 ☎ 49-2289-1710
 www.kah-bonn.de

Frankfurt

■ ART
 "Specific Objects Without Specific Form" shows installations, photography and sculpture by Felix Gonzalez-Torres.
 MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst
 Jan. 29-April 25
 ☎ 49-69-2123-0447
 www.mmk-frankfurt.de

Istanbul

■ PHOTOGRAPHY
 "New Landscapes" exhibits 11 images by Chinese photographer Yao Lu, often showing piles of garbage distorted to resemble traditional Chinese art.
 Istanbul Modern
 Until May 22
 ☎ 90-212-3347-300
 www.istanbulmodern.org

London

■ OPERA
 "Die Zauberflöte" stages Mozart's fairytale with Joseph Kaiser, Kate Royal and conductor Sir Colin Davis.
 Royal Opera House
 Feb. 1-26
 ☎ 44-20-7304-4000
 www.roh.org.uk

■ ART

"Susan Hiller" displays a survey of work by the contemporary American artist, including early assembled post-card images and video projections.
 Tate Britain
 Feb. 1-May 15
 ☎ 44-20-7887-8888
 www.tate.org.uk

Paris

■ ART
 "Franz Xaver Messerschmidt" shows a selection of portraits by the German sculptor, including some of his famed expressive "character heads."
 Musée du Louvre
 Until April 25
 ☎ 33-1402-0531-7
 www.louvre.fr

■ CARS

"Retromobile" displays highlights from a century of racing machines with more than 300 cars, boats, motorbikes, accessories and collectors' toys.
 VIPARIS Porte de Versailles
 Feb. 2-6
 ☎ 33-1767-7120-6
 www.retromobile.fr

Vienna

■ ART
 "Dynamics! Cubism/Futurism/Kineticism" explores the art movements that flourished in Vienna between 1919 and 1929, including work by Frantisek Kupka, Robert Delaunay and Fernand Léger.
 Lower Belvedere
 Feb. 10-May 29
 ☎ 43-1-79557-0
 www.belvedere.at

—Source: WSJ research



Top, Städtischen Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich; Musée du Louvre/Pierre Philiberto.

FRIDAY NIGHT, SATURDAY MORNING

Tremayne Carew Pole finds his yin and yang

The founder and publisher of "A Hedonist's Guide" talks to The Wall Street Journal Europe about how he starts his weekend.

Tremayne Carew Pole likes opposites, enjoying either a quiet weekend in his native Cornwall or a hectic, partying one in London, where he lives and works. "They are both extremes," explains the 36-year-old head of the luxury city-guide series. "You have to have your yin and yang. If you don't take some rest, then you burn out partying quickly. As we get older, unfortunately it is much more difficult to party all the way through the weekend."

What do you do on a Friday night? [My wife and I] normally leave work and jump in the car to drive to Cornwall, which is where I am from. [Sometimes] we have an early supper in London and then drive at 8 p.m....You are in Cornwall by 11:30 p.m. and [still have] time to have a couple of drinks with whomever you are staying with. [Or] we stop on the way and find a nice little local pub to have dinner in. We bring the pub guide with us....[Other times, we] stop off at my sister-in-law's pub, the Kingham Plough. She was Heston Blumenthal's sous chef for a while at the Fat Duck and produces an exquisite take on British Revival cooking in a charming pub setting.

What do you do in Cornwall? I love having friends to stay, albeit at my parent's house. It's a beautiful house that is open to the public and although Antony has been in my family for nearly 300 years, the

house and garden, which were visited by 100,000 people last year, is today managed by the National Trust. There's quite a lot of space there and the countryside there is so beautiful, it is worth taking people there. The important thing is not to burn out on the first night because if you all get together and haven't seen each other for a couple of months, the drinking can go on late into the night and then the next day you feel awful.

What is your Saturday morning like? Those with children are up quite early on Saturday. Otherwise, we would normally get up at about 9:30 a.m. and head out for a long walk somewhere. We are quite close to the coast. There is a cliff path that runs seven miles from a beautiful spot with a 12th-century chapel. The road goes through little Cornish fishing villages and dramatic cliff scenery. For lunch, we go to a local pub. None of them is spectacular. But there is a little restaurant with a view of the cliff tops, which serves very fresh fish and it looks out over the sea with big glass windows.

What about the rest of the day? After lunch, depending on whether it is summer or winter, we will head to the beach. We take the children rock pooling and do a bit of surfing. There is also an opportunity to go sailing down by the river. And then Saturday night, we normally have a big dinner, which would be at home. We have 20 people around the table with a lot of good food and drink, late-night conversations and maybe a game of billiards. We just unwind and re-

lax. That goes on to 3 or 4 a.m.

When you stay in London, how do you spend your weekend? Friday night in London is party night. Because we are getting older, Sundays don't give you enough time to recover if you go out on Saturday night. We have dinner somewhere in London. I am a member of the Ivy and the food there is absolutely fantastic. I have some friends who run Barrafina and Quo Vadis, so maybe we go to dinner there or try somewhere new about town. Being the publisher of a restaurant guide, it is always good to try new places and to see what up-and-coming places you really like.

Underground parties There are a lot of underground parties that go on that you find out through websites or Facebook that are aimed at a 30-something generation....Jezebel is one of the clubs that organizes parties in old film studios in northwest London. Fatboy Slim and Kanye West came along to play at one of those parties recently. After dinner, we jump in a cab and head across town wherever the party is. You then go home at 5 a.m.

And the next morning? By Saturday morning you are in a lot of pain. Saturday is a total write-off. You revive yourself with a bit of brunch at midday. I live on the King's Road, so I end up going somewhere like the Bluebird and have some Eggs Benedict and a Bloody Mary.

—Mr. Carew Pole was speaking with Javier Espinoza.



Charlotte Carew Pole

THE JOURNAL CROSSWORD / Edited by Mike Shenk

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|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Across | 25 Shining example | 35 Like highlighter colors | 47 ___ favor (Spanish plea) |
| 1 Retired | 26 Prayers | 36 Crime against a butcher? | 50 Crime at Burger King? |
| 5 Juan's wife | 27 Contest that takes seconds | 39 Bart's grandfather | 54 "Think nothing ___" |
| 11 Not right? | 29 Word after quick or dim | 42 Less than any | 55 May stone |
| 18 Ladies of Spain | 30 Whip up | 45 Inordinately | 57 Paper in a pot |
| 20 Celtic folk singer McKennitt | 31 Simple skating jump | 46 Corp. money minders | 58 1,852 meters |
| 22 Most of the time | 34 Boolean operator | | 60 Holmes work assignment |
| 23 Crime of an overattentive attorney? | | | |

Crime Spree / by Randolph Ross

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
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| 61 Bausch's business partner | 4 Motel chain with a sunrise logo | 53 Bandleader Xavier | 97 Clothing brand with a spinnaker logo |
| 64 Crusader Rabbit's tiger pal | 5 National Mall liners | 56 Turned down | 99 Complete a sentence |
| 66 Something to build on | 6 Conciliatory gesture | 59 Largest college fraternity, familiarly | 100 Santa alias |
| 67 It makes the cut | 7 Post antonym | 62 Soft surface | 101 "The Sound of Music" song |
| 69 Crime committed by Yentl? | 8 Anthem contraction | 63 Roulette bet | 102 Alpine goats |
| 72 Memorable role for Liam | 9 Glass beer mug | 65 Big place in California | 104 Natalie of the Dixie Chicks |
| 75 Sics one's lawyer on | 10 Rings | 68 Sinuous swimmer | 105 Paragraph starter |
| 77 Fictional Georgia plantation | 11 Swimming unit | 70 Prominent periods | 106 iPod output |
| 78 Hambletonian Stakes gait | 12 Middle of a Caesar boast | 71 Some clinic work | 108 2000 U.S. Open champ Safin |
| 80 King Amonasro's daughter | 13 Exposing | 73 "Zip-___-Doo-Dah" | 110 Gunpowder, for one |
| 81 Inadvertently reveal | 14 Muse often depicted with a lyre | 74 Red-to-pinkish | 111 Tach nos. |
| 84 One for the road? | 15 Crime of selling flying carpets? | 76 "Norwegian Wood" instrument | 112 Cook book |
| 85 Winner of two Emmys as Denny Crane | 16 Sunburn soother | 79 Yorke of Radiohead | 113 Make an assertion |
| 87 "...baked in ___" | 17 Trust with, temporarily | 81 Escapade | 114 MIT subjects |
| 88 Crime committed by carpet installers? | 19 Primer pooch | 82 Foil cousin | 116 MIT degrees |
| 93 "I didn't know that!" | 21 Consent preceder | 83 "The Taming of the Shrew" setting | 118 Guinness Book suffix |
| 94 Tear | 24 Hydrocarbon suffix | 86 Santa ___ winds | 120 ___-Mart |
| 95 Hubbub | 28 Soprano Lehmann | 89 Rods' counterparts | 121 Fighting mood |
| 96 Tony Stark's alter ego | 31 Fashionable | 90 "___ le roi!" | 122 Asian holiday |
| 98 Powder container | 32 Company with the motto "Wir leben Autos" | 91 Fleischer and Onassis | |
| 99 Crime on a party boat? | 33 Short-lived particles | 92 Henry VIII's desire | |
| 103 "Money" novelist Martin | 36 World of tabbies | | |
| 107 Latin lover's statement | 37 Fashionable | | |
| 109 Oxygen-dependent organisms | 38 "I'll come to thee by moonlight" poet | | |
| 110 School skipper | 40 Do some poaching | | |
| 112 Diamond figure | 41 Uruguay's Punta del ___ | | |
| 115 Royal address | 43 ___-Locke, Florida | | |
| 116 Protein's cousin | 44 Starbucks order | | |
| 117 Chilled | 46 Assaults | | |
| 119 Crime involving a gold digger? | 47 Farmers' market unit | | |
| 123 Gallic greeting | 48 Gulf state | | |
| 124 Slandered on the stump | 49 Crime committed by insomniacs? | | |
| 125 Improv performance | 51 Continental charge | | |
| 126 "Draw me" ad offering | 52 Crowd sound | | |
| 127 Keys | | | |
| 128 Regarding | | | |

Last Week's Solution

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