Esquire

SPRING AND STYLE

HAWAIIAN SHIRTS, DEEP SEA WATCHES, GREY TRAINERS, PROPER CAMERAS, ASPARAGUS, TABLE TENNIS, SUNROOFS, INVISIBLE SOCKS, THE JOYS OF THE LIDO, TINTED SPECTACLES, ORANGINA AND WHY YOU SHOULD GROW A BRO FLOW

IAN MCEWAN ON FILM

THE MARQUIS DE SADE

KYLIE'S BACK

HAVE WE REACHED PEAK BEER?

ROD STEWART: OUT TO LUNCH

FICTION BY PETER BRADSHAW

TOM PB'S EPIPHANY

DAVID BECKHAM'S SHIRT-TAILS

YORKSHIRE VS THE WORLD

+

World Exclusive

HARRY & MEGHAN: THE HONEYMOON PICTURES

Style & Substance | May 2018 | £4.35


8
MADE

CARTIER.CO.UK

Cartier

SANTOS DE CARTIER COLLECTION

Chris Pine

armanibeauty.co.uk

GIORGIO ARMANI

the classic

the new
exclusive fragrance

ARMANI
code

#FollowYourCode


Christian Dior
ATELIER

DIOR

dior.com - 020 7172 0172

GUCCI

gucci.com


CLASSIQUE 7147
HISTORY IS STILL BEING WRITTEN...
BONAPARTE
NAPOLÉON


Breguet
BREGUET
SWISS EMAILLE GRAND FEU
NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE (1769-1821)
ICONIC BREGUET CLIENT – WWW.BREGUET.COM
Breguet
Depuis 1775


12
OMEGA
9
3
Railmaster
CO-AXIAL
MASTER CHRONOMETER
6
SWISS
MADE

MY CHOICE

RAILMASTER
MASTER CHRONOMETER

OMEGA

LONDON • Bond Street • Oxford Street • Regent Street
Sloane Street • Royal Exchange • Bluewater • Brent Cross
MANCHESTER • St Ann Street • Trafford Centre
LEEDS • Commercial Street • BIRMINGHAM • Bullring
GLASGOW • Buchanan Street

PRADA
EYEWEAR

Contents

Regulars

46

62

86

40

Scott Frances/Otto | Seth Armstrong | Lucky if Sharp

Style


POLO
RALPH LAUREN

Contents

Culture

109

111

Features

Getty | Lucky if Sharp


EMPORIO ARMANI
ARMANI.COM - EA2070
DESIGNS INTERIORS IN SAO PAULO.
CLIMBS ROCKS NORTH OF RIO.
Follow @emporioarmani

Contributors

Peter Bradshaw p.144 The contributing editor turns his hand to fiction this month. "I wrote my short story, *Holiness*, because I have always been fascinated by Pope Benedict XVI's retirement," he says. "How do you renounce infallibility and rejoin ordinary humanity, with all its vanity and cruelty? By getting into the movie business, of course." Bradshaw is chief film critic for *The Guardian*.

Michael Smith "It was a great adventure for me to go and explore the beer culture of Manchester," says Smith, "one of the cities at the leading edge of the current beer renaissance. One unintended consequence of my trip to the Manc metropolis is that I've been listening to the Happy Mondays in our small flat all month like a displaced Northerner in his forties trying to relive his youth, much to the irritation of my wife." Smith now runs an off-licence in Hastings.

Paul Wilson "I'm always a bit on edge interviewing novelists," says Wilson, who meets Ian McEwan on page 102. "I mean, I get paid for writing too, but those lot have a way with words that wins Booker Prizes and moves people's souls. Plus, they know everything. I needn't have worried about McEwan: lovely man, wears his learning lightly and happy to confirm — correctly — that David Cronenberg's *The Fly* is a masterpiece." Wilson is an *Esquire* contributing editor.

Ben Machell "As a Yorkshireman, I've always felt equal parts proud and exasperated when it comes to my county's sense of exceptionalism," says Machell. "When I heard that plans for a Yorkshire national football team were afoot, my first instinct was to wince: it sounded so tinpot and hubris-baiting. But having spoken to the fans, players and chairman powering this project, I've completely changed my mind. It's mad, but brilliant." Machell is a writer for *The Times*.

Seth Armstrong This month, *Esquire*'s fashion pages take a painterly turn, with winning depictions of the forthcoming royal honeymoon from the brush of Los Angeles-based oil painter, Armstrong. "Being from California, I'm not very accustomed to dealing with British Royalty," he says. "I guess Meghan and I have that in common." Armstrong has also worked for Jay Z, Christie's and Mr Porter.


DG2193J 488/87
DOLCE & GABBANA
#DGVENEZIA
@rafflaw
SHOP ONLINE AT DOLCEGABBANA.COM

Esquire

Alex Bilmes
Editor-in-Chief

Deputy Editor
Johnny Davis

Creative Director
Nick Millington

Fashion Director
Catherine Hayward

Entertainment Director/ Associate Editor
Tom Macklin

Photo Director/ Managing Editor
Henny Manley

Style Director
Charlie Teasdale

Features Editor
Miranda Collinge

Content Director
Will Hersey

Chief Copy Editor
Brendan Fitzgerald

Deputy Style Editor
Finlay Renwick

Copy Editor
Josh Bolton

Art Director
Lisa Barlow

Senior Designer
Lauren Jones

Designer
Drew Burns

Assistant Commissioning Editor / Assistant to the Editor-in-Chief
Rachel Fellows

Fashion Assistant
Emie James-Crook

Editors-at-Large
Giles Coren
Andrew O'Hagan
Will Self

Food Editor
Tom Parker Bowles

Music Editor
Alexis Petridis

US Correspondent
Sanjiv Bhattacharya

esquire.com/uk

Digital Editor
Sam Parker

Deputy Digital Editor
Nick Pope

Digital Writer
Olivia Ovenden

Social Media Editor
Laura Raphael

Contributing Editors

Tim Adams / Ben Anderson / Tom Barber / Richard Benson / Kevin Braddock / Peter Bradshaw Mick Brown / Ed Caesar / Colin Crummy / Dan Davies / Martin Deeson / Geoff Dyer Mark Ellen / Ekow Eshun / Matthew Fort / Andrew Harrison / Mark Hix / Michael Holden Danny Kelly / Richard T Kelly / John Lanchester / Jeremy Langmead / Tim Lewis Ben Machell / Kevin Maher / Simon Mills / Ben Mitchell / Philip Norman / Russell Norman Max Olesker / Michael Smith / Stephen Smith / Will Storr / David Thomson / Paul Wilson

Contributing Photographers

Mert Alas and Marcus Piggott / Gregoire Alexandre / Carin Backoff / Michael Bodiam / Tomo Brejc Chris Brooks / Dan Burn-Forti / Alan Clarke / Tom Craig / Pelle Crepin / Ana Cuba Matthew Donaldson / Simon Emmett / Chris Floyd / Neil Gavin / Jon Gorrigan / Rick Guest Frederike Helwig / Nadav Kander / Luke Kirwan / Jesse Laitinen / Chris Leah / Dan McAlister Angela Moore / Benedict Morgan / Josh Olins / Terry O'Neill / Martin Parr / Ash Reynolds Kourtney Roy / Christoffer Rudquist / Martin Schoeller / Steve Schofield / Philip Sinden / Peggy Sirota David Slijper / Juergen Teller / David Titlow / Benni Valsson / Tom Van Schelven / David Vintiner Ellen Von Unwerth / Jooney Woodward / Greg Williams / Paul Zak

Contributing Fashion Editors

Olie Arnold / Allan Kennedy / Mark McMahon / James Sleaford

ESQUIRE INTERNATIONAL EDITIONS

Editors: **Vladimir Konstantinov** Bulgaria **Liang Zhaohui** China **Alberto Sanchez Montiel** Colombia **Jiri Roth** Czech Republic **Kosta N Tsitsas** Greece **Kwong Lung Kit** Hong Kong **Yurij Serebryansky** Kazakhstan **Kiju Shin** Korea **Alberto Sanchez Montiel** Latin America **Jason Tan** Malaysia **Matthew Baxter-Priest** Middle East **Arno Kantelberg** Netherlands **Maciej Gajewski** Poland **Sergey Minaev** Russia **Milan Nikolic** Serbia **Norman Tan** Singapore **Jorge Alcalde** Spain **Steve Chen** Taiwan **Satiya Siripojanakorn** Thailand **Togan Noyan** Turkey **Alex Bilmes** United Kingdom **Jay Fielden** United States **Luis Veronese** Senior International Editions Editor

recycle

BREITLING

1884

AIR

SEA

NAVITIMER 1

LAND

Esquire

Alun Williams
Managing Director

Managing Director Luxury & Fashion
Jacqueline Euwe

Managing Director Beauty
Jacqui Cave

Fashion & Luxury Client Director
Miles Dunbar

Director of Motors
Jim Chaudry

Director of Watches & Jewellery
Anna O'Sullivan

Head of International Fashion & Luxury
Lee Brown

Watches & Jewellery Manager
Shannon Hollis

Client Director Personal Finance
Jacquie Duckworth

Director of Travel
Denise Degroot

Director of Homes
Julia Goodwin

Business Manager
Gemma Thompson

Client Direct Director
Emma Barnes

Senior Project Manager
Camilla Weston

Project Manager
Will Ville

Creative Solutions Art Director
Tanja Rusi

Creative Solutions Associate Art Director
Leo Goddard

Head of Digital Marketing
Seema Kumari

Head of Consumer Sales & Marketing
Matthew Blaize-Smith

Production Director
John Hughes

Production Manager
Joanne Keogh

Head of Subscriptions
Justine Boucher

Marketing Manager
Vicky Chandler

Subscriptions Marketing Executive
Victoria Greenwood

Advertisement Production Controller
Paul Taylor

Head of PR and Communications
Debra Johnson

Deputy Head of PR and Communications
Ben Bolton

Italian & Swiss Agent (+39 02 66 19 3142)
Alessandro Caracciolo

HEARST

President and CEO James Wildman
Chief Operating Officer Claire Blunt
Chief Operations Director Clare Gorman
Chief Agency Officer Jane Wolfson
Marketing and Circulation Director Reid Holland
Hearst Brand Services Director Judith Secombe
Chief Digital Officer Paul Cassar
HR Director Surinder Simmons

Hearst Magazines International

Senior Vice-President, General Manager and Managing Director Asia and Russia
Simon Horne

Director of International Licensing and Business Development **Richard Bean**
Senior Vice-president/Editorial and Brand Director **Kim St Clair Bodden**
Deputy Brands Director **Chloe O'Brien** Fashion/Entertainment Director **Kristen Ingersoll**

Hearst Magazines UK,
72 Broadwick Street, London W1F 9EP
editorial +44 20 7439 5000 / advertising +44 20 7297 3480; visit esquire.com/uk

Access Hearst Magazines UK website at hearst.co.uk © A publication of Hearst Magazines UK.
Issue: May 2018 | Published: 24 April 2018 | ESQUIRE, ISSN 0960-5150 is published 10 times per year by Hearst Magazines UK. By permission of Hearst Communication Inc. c/o USACAN Media Corp at 123A Distribution Way, Building H-1, Suite 104, Plattsburgh, NY 12901. Periodicals postage paid at Plattsburgh, NY. POSTMASTER: send address changes to ESQUIRE c/o Express Mag, PO box 2769, Plattsburgh, NY 12901-0239. Magazine printed by Wyndham Roche, Victoria Business Park, Roche, St Austell, PL26 8LX. Cover printed by The Westdale Press Limited, 70 Portmanmoor Industrial Estate, East Moors, Cardiff CF24 5HB. Magazine distributed by Frontline Ltd, Peterborough, tel: 01733 555161. Conditions of sale and supply: ESQUIRE shall not, without the written consent of the publishers first given, be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of by way of trade except at the full retail price of £4.35 and shall not be lent, hired out, or otherwise disposed of in a mutilated condition or in any unauthorised cover, by way of trade, or affixed to or as part of any publication or advertising, literary or pictorial matter whatsoever. MSS and illustrations are accepted on the understanding that no liability is incurred for safe custody, but ESQUIRE cannot consider unsolicited material for publication. All characters in any fictional story are purely imaginary and no reference or allusion is intended to apply to any living person or persons. ESQUIRE is fully protected by copyright and nothing may be printed wholly or in part without permission. ESQUIRE is a member of the Independent Press Standards Organisation. We abide by the Editors' Code of Practice and are committed to upholding the highest standards of journalism. If you think we have not met those standards and wish to make a complaint please contact complaints@hearst.co.uk or visit hearst.co.uk/hearst-magazines-uk-complaints-procedure. If we are unable to resolve your complaint, or if you would like more information about IPSO or the Editors' Code, contact IPSO at ipso.co.uk. Subscriptions and back issues: the standard subscription price (BAR) for 10 issues of ESQUIRE is £43.50, based on the basic cover price of £4.35. For new and renewal orders, ring 0844 322 1762* or visit hearstmagazines.co.uk. Lines are open weekdays 8a fm–9.30pm; Saturdays, 8am–4pm | For existing subscription enquiries, change of address and back-issue orders for ESQUIRE ring 0844 848 5203*, email hearstmagazinesuk@subscription.co.uk or write to ESQUIRE, Hearst Magazines UK, Tower House, Sovereign Park, Lathkill Street, Market Harborough, Leicestershire LE16 9EF. Please quote your subscription number in all correspondence | We regret that free gifts, supplements, books and other items included with the magazine when it is sold in the UK are not available with copies of the magazine purchased outside the UK | *BT landline calls to 0844 numbers will cost no more than 7p per minute; calls from mobiles and other networks usually cost more.


Tod's Boutique: 2-5 Old Bond Street, Tel. 020.74932237 • London
Roberto - 2018
TOD'S
TODS.COM

Editor's Letter

The editor. In his dreams. (Pathetic, really)

THE GREAT SUMMER FILMS ARE BEST APPRECIATED IN WINTER. That's summer films as in films set in the summer, rather than films that are released during the summer, which are summer movies, and typically have nothing at all to do with balmy heat and bronzed bodies and erotic yearning and the rest of it. (An exception is *Jaws*, which is one of the best ever summer films, as well as the first ever summer movie; he's not Steven Spielberg by default.)

You can see a summer film any time. There is no bad moment to re-watch *Body Heat*. Or *Do the Right Thing*. Or *The Green Ray*. (Or *Caddyshack*.) But their spells are cast most powerfully when it's cold outside, when the thirst for light and heat can be temporarily quenched by images of attractive young people in bathing suits, sizzling.

The film that has sold more fortnights in Italy than any since *Roman Holiday*, Anthony Minghella's dazzling *The Talented Mr Ripley*, was a hit for many reasons. But I can't help thinking that the fact it was released in the depths of the winter of 1999, treating cinemagoers in chilly northern climes such as ours to sunkissed golden couple Jude and Gwyneth cavorting on Ischia, might have had something to do with it.

Another case in point: *Call Me by Your Name*, the most summery summer film of the winter just gone. A poignant, if somewhat decorous love story set in northern Italy during the summer of 1983, Luca Guadagnino's film is refreshing chiefly as an unashamed celebration of male carnal desire at a time when male carnal desire is rarely celebrated unashamedly, if it is celebrated at all. But also for another reason: it wasn't the best summer film of winter 2017 — that was *The Florida Project,* obviously — but it was definitely the best dressed.

The lovers in *Call Me by Your Name*, statuesque twentysomething Oliver and coltish teen Elio, are played by Armie Hammer and Timothée Chalamet. Both are resplendent in their summer wardrobes, Hammer a postgrad Apollo in blowsy print shirts and short satin shorts and Chalamet, a pouting, tousled beauty, in Lacoste polo shirts two sizes too big for him, old Levi's cut off at the knees and turned up just so, plus knackered tennis shoes.

Both men looked as lovely as a Tuscan sunset. But it's the Chalamet wardrobe I appreciated most keenly. That faded Talking Heads T-shirt, those printed shorts, those dusty espadrilles... It all looked strangely familiar. I might have mentioned this as I walked out of the cinema:

"That Timmy Challyberet cuts quite the dash, doesn't he?"

"You *would* say that," said my companion, a little churlishly I thought. "He dresses exactly like you do on holiday!"

(She was ignoring, as was I, the memorable final scene, in which Chalamet is suddenly transformed into early Marc Almond. If everyone is very lucky, perhaps I'll try that this year?)

Now, it hardly needs saying that I'm no summer style icon, no Mastroianni or McQueen. But ageing polo shirts and ancient jeans I can do. And, in fact, I have been doing, each July or August, since about... since about the summer of 1983. (I had a couple of years off for bad behaviour and terrible trousers around 1990, when I went all Ravey Davey Gravy, but I'm feeling much better now.)

I'm not claiming this look — if it can be said to be anything so considered as a "look" — as daring. It is crushingly conventional and strikingly lacking in imagination and as bourgeois as two weeks in the Luberon. And yet, still, it is easy and flattering, and while I would never claim to be able to carry it off with the inimitable panache of young Chalamet, it has served me tolerably well over the years. If you, like me, are crushingly conventional and strikingly lacking in imagination — and quite fancy two weeks in the Luberon — then I commend it to you.

(If you haven't seen *Call Me by Your Name* then I commend that to you, too. Though not with the enthusiasm that I commend *The Florida Project* to you, with the caveat that the latter is about children living in poverty, so possibly less handy for men's style tips. Shame.)

But I'm getting ahead of myself. This issue is concerned with spring. Summer is still a way off. And the question of what to wear in spring, especially the British spring, is not so easily answered with an old T-shirt and last year's trainers. Happily, then, the magazine is full of new stuff to buy. Hawaiian-style shirts for barbecue days; loafers for every occasion; lightweight summer suits. Also: what to drink, the best diving watches, why you need a table tennis table in your life, how to party like a Swede and the shirt off Picasso's back. And a thing about Monsieur T Chalamet's barnet. (I don't think he's even French, really. Although maybe he is? Oh, who cares when he looks that delish?)

Regular *Esquire* readers might notice that our Style section has had a crisp makeover. The section is under new management — Johnny Davis and Charlie Teasdale are now its sharp-dressed editors — and it has added attitude, with even more erudite writing on grooming, cars, tech, travel, food and trousers. (For a stern corrective to all this stuff about fancy clobber, turn to Giles Coren's column on page 33. How to put this? He's less sold on fashion than some of us.)

As for the spring/summer looks from the leading megabrands, who better to model them for us than their Royal Highnesses Harry and Meghan? Somehow, clearly by mistake, we've secured world exclusive access to the honeymoon of the year. More than that, we've been able to style the newlyweds in some of the sexiest get-ups of the season. Surely this is a story that ought to appear in *Hello!* or the Mail Online, not Britain's most stylish and sophisticated men's magazine? Who sanctioned it, I don't know. Heads will roll in the palace press office, that's my prediction. It'll be like Tudor times all over again, only without the ruffs. Ruffs being, well, not very summer 2018. Or maybe they are? What would I know? I'm a crumple-collared polo shirt man, myself. □

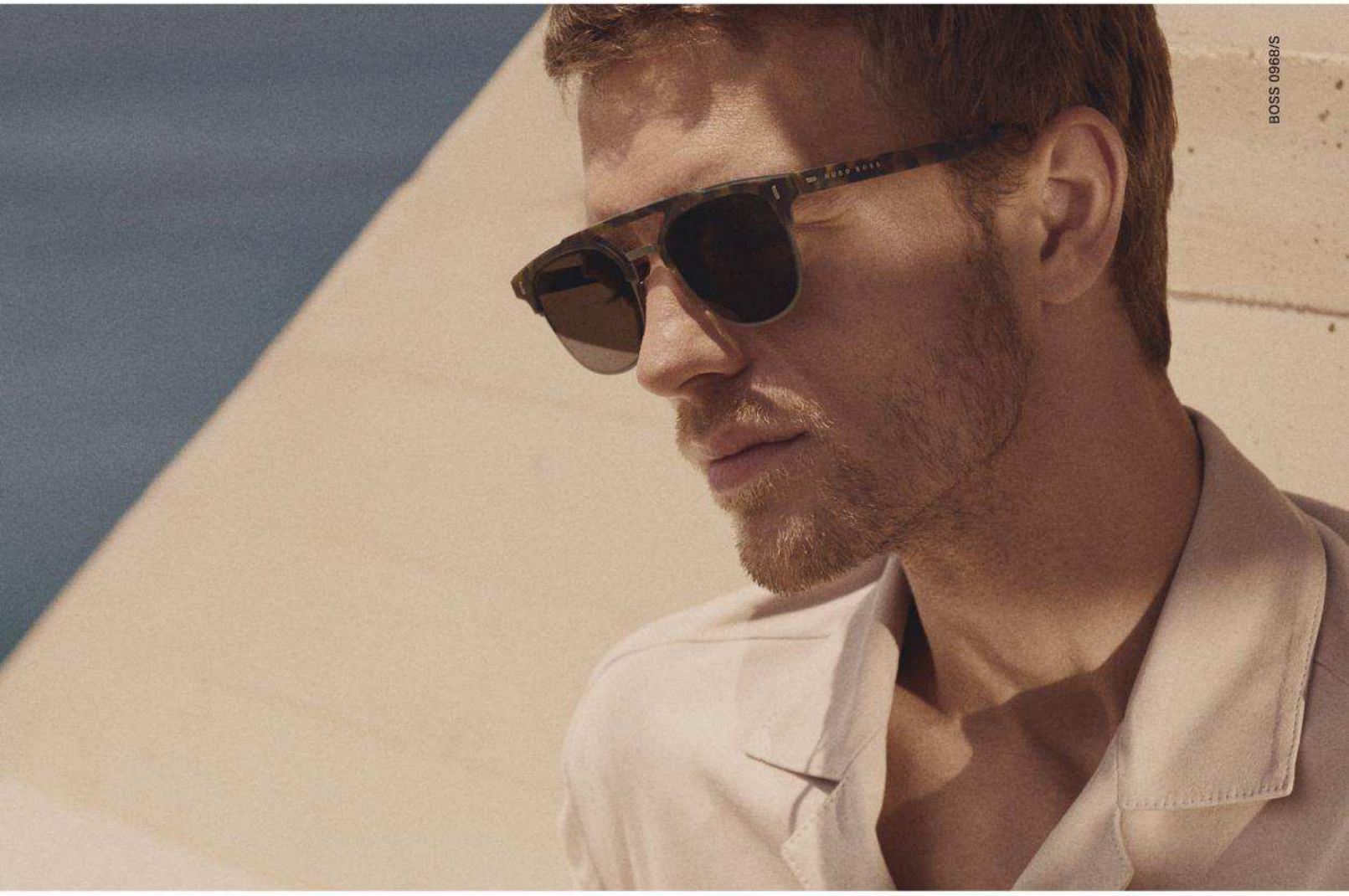
Alex Bilmes

RADO.COM

RADO HYPERCHROME AUTOMATIC CHRONOGRAPH
HIGH-TECH CERAMIC. SERIOUSLY SCRATCH RESISTANT.

RADO
SWITZERLAND

TIME IS THE ESSENCE WE ARE MADE OF



BOSS
HUGO BOSS
eyewear

BOSS.COM

Self Examination

Each month, Esquire commissions an unsparing inspection of Will Self's body. This month: teeth

Photograph by Dan Burn-Forti

WHERE TO START WITH THE TEETH? I mean to say, while they aren't with us (usually) from the very beginning, they have a nasty way of outlasting us at the end. Yes, yes, I know they're made of dentine not bone, but they do nonetheless seem like the bits of the skull that have thrust their way through our skin. And — not to piss on your miserable, fleshy parade or anything — as a man grows older, his gums begin to recede, almost as if his skull were emerging into the full white light of his own bodily dissolution.

So, I'd better begin with my mother's teeth, which were an absolute puzzle to me as a child. From time to time, and without warning, she'd push out the bottom row of her teeth. That's right: she'd push them out so that they distended her lower lip, as if she were wearing some sort of tribal lip plug. We children would recoil, shocked, so shocked, we dared not ask her what the fuck was going on; we had to piece it together over the years — spotting something lurking in a glass on her bedside table, and tubes of something called Steradent in the bathroom cabinet — until we were old enough to realise that, gulp, she wore dentures. When I was much older, mother told me her teeth had all been taken out when she was in her twenties, and that this was not unusual for the Forties, when a dentist would often say to a patient: "Listen, your teeth are dreadful, and it's going to be another half-century before there's genuinely effective and painless dentistry. So, why don't I just ether you up to the gills and whip 'em all out?"

Frankly, I wished they'd whipped out my father's teeth as well. Jesus! They really were appalling: little greenish-brown nuggets of decay set at crazy angles in his crumbling gums. He would've qualified many times over for that volume beloved of *The Simpsons*, *The Big Book of British Smiles*; yet I never remember him complaining of pain, or difficulty chomping and, of course, I never remember him going to the dentist. Mum took us to the dentist, which must have been like an Orthodox Jew visiting a pork butcher so far as she was concerned. Our →

Self Examination

dentist was French and went by the moniker Mrs Uren. You can imagine what hilarity this induced; how we chortled — until the drill started to whine. Gentle readers under 40, who do not know a time before fluoridated water and effective anaesthesia, kindly look away from the page at this point.

Oh, man! It really hurt. And such was my sugary lust — I remained a stranger most nights, let alone mornings, to the brush — that I must have had the majority of my milk teeth filled before they fell out. (Or were removed via a string-and-door method that had been in use since the Ptolemaic dynasty ruled Egypt.) When we complained about Mrs Uren's heavy-drilledness, mother would say, "Many dentists are thwarted sculptors." A statement that — along with the plate-pushing noted above — pretty much sums up her bizarre character. But to be fair to Mrs Uren, she realised early on that there wasn't much room in my mouth for adult teeth, so she took out four of my back molars as soon as they poked their crowns above the gums. Aged 12, I looked like Plug in "The Bash Street Kids", and while I may still have something of an overbite, no one mistakes me for Janet Street-Porter. (Or at least, not in daylight.)

I wish I could say that wisdom did indeed coincide with the teeth that grew into those spaces but the sad fact is that I didn't begin to look after my teeth properly until I was in my late twenties. It seems surpassing weird (and even faintly tragic), that quite a number of rather attractive young women were prepared to place their mouths against mine during this period, and even insert their tongues between my grimy lips. Nowadays, the possessor of a full range of TePe flossing brushes, an electric rotary toothbrush, and any number of decay-preventing, whitening and breath-freshening mouthwashes, I bemoan their fate as I carry on sweetly breathing, for it seems I have the teeth of Dorian Gray: while my face withers around them, they remain sinisterly white and youthful. Actually, white they may be, courtesy of Mr Kyaw, my dentist and his hygienist assistant, but youthful is a bit of a stretch.

I've had tens of thousands of pounds of treatment over the years: fillings, extractions, root canals, crowns... and more crowns when those crowns have fallen out. The only thing I haven't done is join that sad caravan of western European, middle-aged folk and make for Budapest where the best and cheapest dental implants known to man are cunningly inserted against a backdrop of former Austro-Hungarian imperial grandeur.

Why so much dental work? Well, as I say, wisdom didn't come with the teeth, and although I started looking after my poor fangs eventually, no amount of dental care, whether amateur or professional, can vitiate the effects of a veritable mother lode of refined sugar. There's my hopeless addiction to chocolate (I once considered buying shares in Green & Black's, safe in the knowledge that my purchases alone would ensure corporate growth), and there's also my equally relentless bruxism.

People who've shared my bed in recent years tell me the sound is as loud and abrasive as a cement mixer, or possibly one of the old-school drills Mrs Uren once used on me. Yes, for years now, I've been drilling into my own teeth with my own teeth, a kind of auto-dental-cannibalism. Some believe tooth-grinding happens because, lacking the necessary vitamins, the grinder unconsciously decides to obtain them from his own dentine. I had a dentist years ago who encouraged me to take zinc supplements, but this had no effect whatsoever: on and on I ground. I now wear a mouthguard like a sportsman, which only emphasises quite what an effort my sleeping life is.

Anyway, there's a rough poetic justice in all of this: to slumber is always to die a little. The only question is, will I manage to make it to the grave with any of my teeth left? Or, will my skull be disinterred by some archaeologists of the distant future, only for them to class me — on the basis of my flat and eroded gnashers — among all the other extinct ruminants. □

People who've shared my bed in recent years tell me the sound is as loud as a cement mixer... I've been drilling into my own teeth with my own teeth


PRADA.COM
PRADA
BLACK
PRADA
BLACK
THE NEW EAU DE PARFUM
PRADA

For us, innovation must always serve function. For example, raising our bezel by 2mm has improved the grip. Just a little.

When you care about watches, just a little matters a lot.

#GoYourOwnWay

Aquis Date

ORIS
HÖLSTEIN 1904

Visit the POP UP LONDON
41 South Molton Street
London
W1K 5RP

Man & Boy

Giles Coren on fathers (him) and sons (Sam, aged five). This month: dressing like a man

THANK GOD, NEITHER OF MY CHILDREN GIVES A SHIT ABOUT CLOTHES. My seven-year-old daughter, Kitty, is a sticky-haired, gap-toothed ragamuffin and hard as nails. She lives in leggings and a hoodie, goes hard at life and has the scars and broken bits and bobs to go with it. She's not anti-dresses — she'll scrub up for a party if my wife insists — she just doesn't give a shit. There was never any nightmarish "pink phase" and she doesn't want to be a princess or a fairy. Sure, she'll turn 14 or 15 and suddenly want to go to everything dressed as a Russian prostitute, but one virtue of being an older dad is that with a bit of luck I should be long dead by then.

Sam's the same. He's got a ninja outfit that he wears for fighting other ninja and a Spider-Man costume that he puts on to play Spider-Man. But there's none of that wearing-it-all-the-time shit you see with so many other small boys. Indeed, the day his friend Barney pitched up at the school gates in a Superman outfit, Sam beckoned me down to his level to whisper, "Barney's an idiot, dad. If Superman had to go to school, which he doesn't, he'd go dressed as Clark Kent, wouldn't he?"

Damned right he would, boy, and going around dressed as Clark Kent — except when the world absolutely positively needs you to be Superman — is a bloody good principal to adopt as you grow older. I am not telling you necessarily to wear a two-button blue suit at all times, with a white shirt and a red tie, side-parting and glasses, although that is unquestionably a very good look.

What I mean is that when a man gets dressed he should →

Photograph by Dan Burn-Forti

Man & Boy

follow the Clark Kent *principle*. You should say to yourself, "I can do anything and I fear nothing. I am strong, clever and brave. I have nothing to prove. So now I'm going to cover my awesome nakedness in some simple, modest way and go about my business."

Nothing a man wears should "say" anything about him at all. The sneer of cold command in his eye should do all that. Any man who wears anything intended to attract attention, send a message or display personality — I'm thinking about a pocket handkerchief, a designer name, a distressed jean, any sort of hat — only gives away the worthlessness of his being, the vanity of his endeavour, the weakness of his body, the feebleness of his brain and the corruption of his soul.

Dressing as a man is easy and simple. Do it right, Sam, and all will go well with you. But get it wrong and you are dead to me.

So, wear shirts when you are older, Sam. T-shirts are for children and the beach. After 18, never leave the house without a collar and buttons. Unless you have to fly through the air, bringing succour to the weak and defeating the forces of evil. Or if you have to play football or something.

But never wear a short-sleeved shirt, Sam. Short-sleeved shirts do not exist. Unless you are a cricket commentator or a mathematician on the US space programme. In either of which cases, I applaud you.

And never wear a tie. Serial killers and bankers are the only people left who wear ties and it's a toss-up which of those two I less want you to end up being. Also, you'll probably have my 17-inch neck, which means that with a tie on you'll look like Reggie Kray (or, if you wear glasses, as I sometimes do, like Ronnie).

Sunglasses: never. Unless you are a motorcycle cop or a pilot. Ugly men wear sunglasses because they think it makes them look rough-hewn and manly. But it just makes them look like ugly men who've lost their guide dog.

Hats: no. Sorry. Not ever. Including cycle helmets. Cycling is dangerous and a bit silly. If you must do it, then at least die like a man.

Shoes are for walking. Or running. You need a stout pair of black ones for weddings and a pair of Converse for anything that involves sweating. That is all the shoe you will ever need. If you're thinking about a handmade pump, stitched from a single piece of ostrich leather with the name of some Milanese child-molester stamped on the tongue in gold, then I refer you to my earlier point about ties, in which I referenced serial killers and bankers.

Do not have a haircut. By which I don't mean, do not *get* your hair cut. You have to do that. But do not have it cut into a "haircut". Wear it either short and convenient or long and filthy. Like a man. But please not layered and wavy, clean and blow-dried, or tied up in any way. Even your fucking sister doesn't do that. You blimming namby.

So, look, Sammy, it's simple. Just carry on as you are. Carry on not giving a fuck. Clean clothes that fit is all. Nothing more. Because to care for even a second about your outfit, to give even a moment to wondering whether this hat might set off your cheekbones or that "piece" might go well with that one, is to be off down a road of designer labels and bespoke bumholery that ends with monogrammed silk shirts and handmade suits lined with the skin of unborn panda cubs, bare feet in crocodile loafers, zigzag hair shavings under a pony tail, Sanskrit tattoos, platinum timepieces, tinted contact lenses, nipple rings and all the other trappings of a sad and empty life enslaved to the androgynous tosspot-ery of the fashion conspiracy.

You can't fly through the air in clobber like that, Sam. You can only stand on the end of a high building in it, looking at yourself and wondering where it all went wrong. So that when you finally throw yourself off it, people will look up and go, "Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No! It's some twat who pissed all his money away on wanker's clothes and is about to go splat!" □

Never wear a short-sleeved shirt. Short-sleeved shirts do not exist. Unless you are a cricket commentator or a mathematician on the US space programme. In either of which cases, I applaud you

HAMILTON

AMERICAN SPIRIT ▪ SWISS PRECISION

hamiltonwatch.com

100 YEARS OF
TIMING THE SKIES

KHAKI X-WIND
AUTOMATIC SWISS MADE


BOLLINGER
1829
AY
FRANCE
CHAMPAGNE
BOLLINGER
R.D. 2004
EXTRA BRUT
ELABORÉ PAR BOLLINGER - AY - FRANCE
PRODUCE OF FRANCE
CHAMPAGNE
BOLLINGER
R.D. 2004

Edited by Charlie Teasdale and Johnny Davis

Style

New look for spring

Fashion, grooming, cars, design, gadgets, food, travel, watches and some very loud shirts

Floral printed silk shirt, £725, by Dolce & Gabbana →

Pattern pending

Get ready — a wave of loud, boxy shirts is set to break this summer

Popular culture is peppered with cool dudes in loud, short-sleeved shirts: Nicholas Cage in *Raising Arizona*, Christian Slater in *True Romance,* di Caprio in *Romeo + Juliet*, Depp and del Toro in *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, heck, even Ace Ventura knew what was cool. It seems odd then that the trend for brash, boxy, arm-baring shirts should take so long to materialise. But it's finally here for spring/summer 2018, and the options are abundant. Hailing from Honolulu, Hawaii (with a little help from Chinese and Filipino immigrants who settled there), "Aloha shirts" first appeared in the early 20th-century and traditionally feature geometric prints of flora and fauna indigenous to the South Pacific, but it's all changed now. A slew of brands have taken the Hawaiian trend to new heights with prints featuring koi carp, eagles, desert vignettes, Romanesque tiles and even comic strips. Essentially, the gloves are off... so go wild.

White logo-illustration print poplin, £575, by Prada

Peach Hawaiian print viscose, £140, by Levi's Vintage

Blue Fuji print cotton, £180, by Gitman Vintage @ End Clothing

Midnight palm print viscose, £215, by Paul Smith

Grey/navy floral print, £130, by Albam

Green Oriental print, £390, by Emporio Armani @ Harrods

Pink/black bird print linen, £225, by Burberry

Tropical flower print viscose, £30, by Topman

Green print viscose, £110, by Ralph Lauren @ Mr Porter

Black/red logo-floral print viscose, £1,180, by Louis Vuitton

Pink goldfish print viscose, £165, by Sandro

Red/blue printed silk, £730, by Gucci @ Matches Fashion

Blue/white striped cotton, £85, by Tommy Hilfiger Menswear

Off-white Mexican print écru cotton, £135, by YMC

White floral print viscose, £25, by River Island

Green/blue viscose, £280, by Acne Studios @ Mr Porter

Lucky if Sharp | See Stockists page for details

Daily express › An ‘approachable’ Ferrari designed to be used every day? That’ll be the new Portofino. By *Will Hersey*

Roof up (top right), or roof down, the Ferrari Portofino maintains its impeccable lines

The interior has taken a leap forward and much work has been done on upgrading its usability, but to anyone who sees this as the cuddly Ferrari, it's also brutally, devastatingly, life-changingly fast

Ferrari Portofino

Engine	3.85-litre V8 twin-turbo
Power	592bhp
0–62mph	3.5secs
Top speed	199mph
Economy	26.9mpg
Price	From £166,180

Some people will try to tell you this isn't a "real" Ferrari. You'll recognise them from the urge to run away after just a few minutes in their company.

The reasons they'll give will have something to do with the new Portofino — which replaces the California T as Ferrari's "entry-level" all-rounder — being comfortable, adaptable, flexible and easy to drive. That it is designed for enjoyment, has a contractable roof that transforms it from a coupé to a "spider" in 14 seconds, can fit humans (albeit small ones) in the back seat and has a boot that can hold three cabin trolleys with the roof down and can fold and adapt to take skis or golf clubs, if you're that way inclined.

That it is just as capable of nausea-inducing acceleration as it is of relaxed pootling, preferably while driving along ocean-side boulevards wearing a flailing neckerchief and guffawing loudly at nothing in particular. To most of us, of course — the ones who don't memorise engine displacement statistics — these sound uncannily like attributes.

It's longer, lighter, lower and more powerful than its predecessor, with a deliberately more aggressive look that also points to its sharper dynamics and improved 3.85-litre V8 engine. The interior has also taken a leap forward and much work has been done on upgrading its usability, but to anyone who sees this as the cuddly Ferrari, it's also brutally, devastatingly, life-changingly fast. On the limit it may not match the Ferrari flagships, but why should it? And how many owners will care? To create a supercar capable of wearing so many hats so well is impressive enough.

Ferrari says that 85 per cent of the California Ts it has sold are used every day. It's hard to imagine a day of the week when you wouldn't find an excuse to drive this one, too. ☐ *ferrari.com*

The joke's on us › Fashion is uglier than ever and it has to stop. By *Jeremy Langmead*

Loco for logos: Vetements delivered a surprise hit package with its 'ironic' DHL-liveried 'workwear' collection

"I'm as mad as hell and I'm not gonna take this anymore." Not words that usually kick off a style column, I know, but I saw Bryan Cranston in *Network* at the National Theatre. Based on the 1976 Sidney Lumet movie, the play is about TV anchor Howard Beale who, depressed by falling ratings and cynical network owners, has a nervous breakdown on air. Sick of all the "bullshit", his "mad" mantra is soon taken up by his show's now growing audience.

I mention this because this month I'm quite furious, too. I've become an unhappy concoction of Howard Beale, Larry David, Victor Meldrew and those two old guys in the box in *The Muppet Show*. This is mostly down to spending 10 days on a no-carbs, no-booze, no-fun health regime. I hated it. This lack of everything I enjoy has caused me to vent my (purified) spleen on some of the absurd items currently all the rage this spring. It's normal for the fashion world to present downright ridiculous clothes occasionally — it would be letting us down if it didn't — but every few years it throws up a torrent of silliness that makes you question your sanity, as well as your age.

Until recently, if someone said you looked like a joke, you'd be rather indignant. Yet today that may well be a compliment as some of the world's most influential fashion houses charge a lot of money for clothing that takes irony a tad too far. Of course, this is all part of a subversive take on fashion by a new breed of designers questioning traditional style codes beloved of the establishment and who are playing around with elevating the humdrum into something covetable (long the case with many art forms, such as Duchamp and his urinal), but this an expensive joke to wear for one season or two. Vetements, for example, offers its take on a certain delivery company's uniform with a "DHL" logo'ed T-shirt first shown in 2016 that will set you back £485 in 2018. DHL is so thrilled by its unexpected arrival on the fashion scene it has offered customers the chance to win one.

Today, it seems you can either dress as a joke, or a billboard

From top: sports day chic by Gosha Rubchinskiy; a new direction for Liam Payne; huge dragon print shirt by Balenciaga

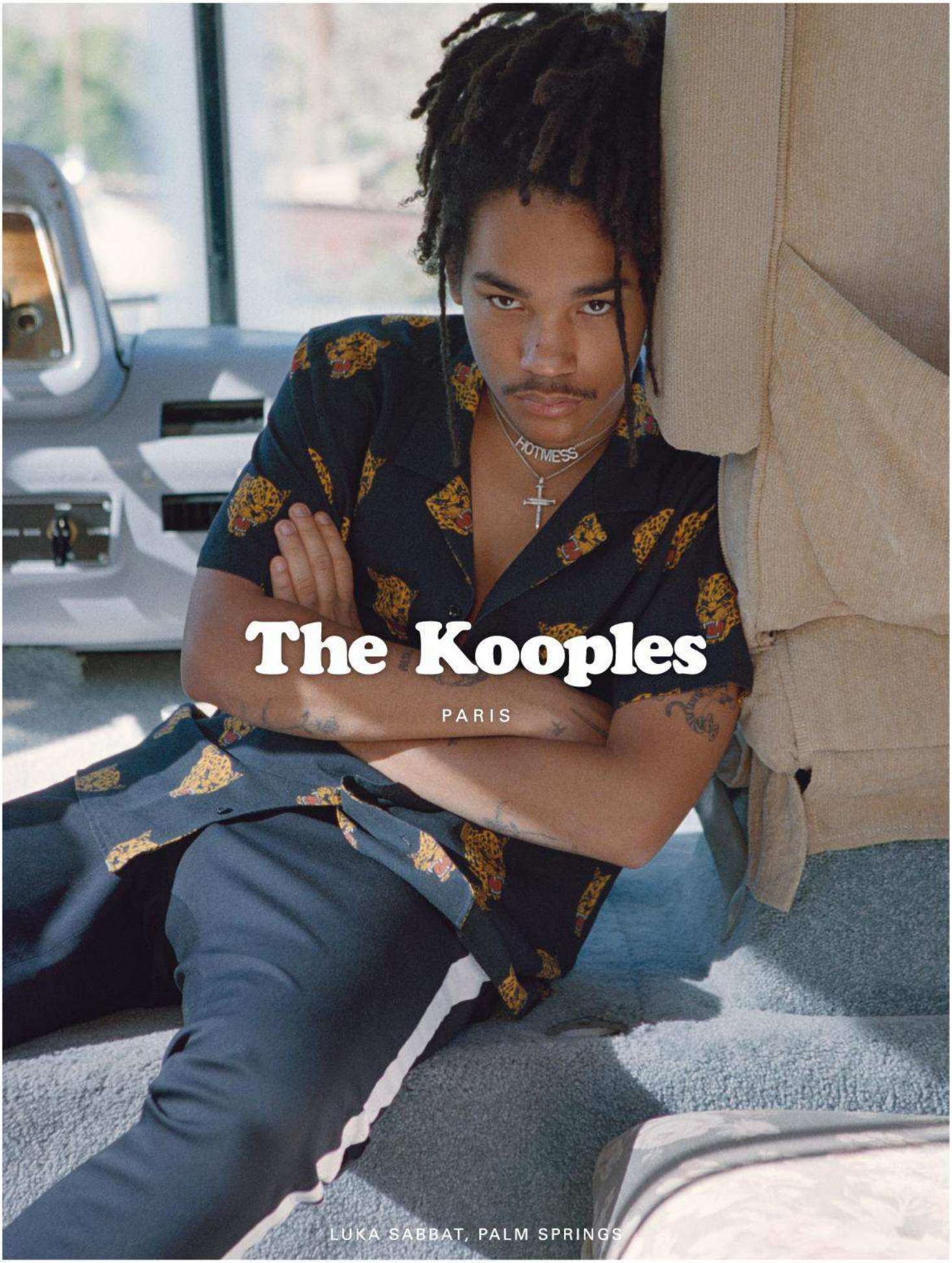
Vetements designer Demna Gvasalia is also behind the commercial success of French brand Balenciaga. From it you can purchase humorous items for less amusing prices: sock trainers (as you might guess, an unsettling hybrid of sock and trainer) for £495; massively over-sized cotton-poplin shirts, designed to drown the wearer and featuring a giant green dragon print, for £875; and a leather tote bag modelled to look like a plastic supermarket carrier, for £855.

Other irony comebacks this year include the bumbag — or fanny pack, as they call it in the US (*sniggers quietly*) — which to give it a point of difference to last time it was in fashion is now worn like a gun holster between shoulder and waist rather than just around the waist. To see how not to do it: Google pictures of ex-One Direction's Liam Payne wearing his. Payne's current guise is absurd: he is trying to look *Straight Outta Compton* when in reality he's straight out of *The X Factor*. Bad-ass(hole).

I know it's not just me who's a little bemused by the current bonkers-ness. I came across a recent menswear shoot in *The Guardian*. Shot in a dreary airport, the very miserable-looking model was made to parade in a striped bowling jacket and shirt teamed with tiny satin shorts (basically exaggerated underpants) and white sports socks worn under black leather sandals. Unsurprisingly, it wasn't long before it popped up on someone's Instagram feed, soon joined by lots of crying-with-laughter emojis. As well as the following witty comment from the writer Caitlin Moran: "This is how you dress if you've had all your clothes stolen by bullies and Miss gets you something out of the lost property basket." To look that silly and unhappy would cost you nearly £3,000.

As if that wasn't bad enough, fashion brands are again emblazoning logos on their products. The logo, last embraced so heartily in the Nineties, is big, brash and bold again. Today, it seems you can either dress as a joke, or a billboard. Maybe it's everyone else who is as mad as hell, not me. □

Getty | See Stockists page for details



The Kooples

PARIS

LUKA SABBAT, PALM SPRINGS

The cast iron kitchen › Add some weight to your diet with the manliest cookware around

① Black cast aluminium 4.5L Nordic kitchen pot, £190, by Eva Solo; *finnishdesignshop.com*

② Black cast iron skillet, £130, by Finex; *boroughkitchen.com*

③ Black cast iron 2.2L mussel pot, £100, by Staub; *staub-online.com*

④ Black cast iron 27cm baking stone, £22, by KitchenCraft; *johnlewis.com*

⑤ Black cast iron double-handled 30cm grill pan, £230, by Finex; *boroughkitchen.com*

⑥ Black cast iron 8L oval cocotte, £340, by Staub; *staub-online.com*

⑦ Black cast iron 24cm balti dish, £130, by Le Creuset; *lecreuset.co.uk*

Set design: Maya Angeli

IT TOOK US 128 YEARS TO GET THIS RICH.

To us, it's the experiences we share that make you truly wealthy. Which is why we've spent over a hundred and twenty-five years travelling the globe, embracing different cultures and perfecting our recipe.

San Miguel Especial. As rich in experience as it is in flavour.

EXPLORING THE WORLD SINCE 1890

Clean living › Why men don't care about housework. And why we should. By *Tom Dyckhoff*

Every day a mystifying ritual takes place in my home. If aliens were observing, how puzzled they'd be. We wake up. All is calm. All is neat. One hour later, the flat abandoned by its occupants for work, school or nursery, our home's décor is transformed. We rock a more post-apocalyptic look. An entire back catalogue of *Mr Men* books is strewn hither and thither. Ketchup streaks obscure the dining room table; fat globules splatter kitchen surfaces; piss, for that is what it is, pools around the loo. The sink groans under perilous piles of dirty crockery and — inexplicably — Mr Potato Head's body parts (a child has decided we do not have *enough* washing up to do). The Incredible Hulk appears to have rummaged, grumpily, through my children's box of plastic dinosaurs, for the box is now emptied, its contents redistributed to every corner of the flat.

And then, at the end of the day, when everyone's back from work, school, nursery, *Mr Men* books are collected, Mr Potato Head is reassembled, fat splatters are wiped, piss is mopped up. We go to bed. All is calm. All is neat. And repeat.

In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir called housework Sisyphean. Instead of Sisyphus heaving a boulder up a mountain only for it to tumble back down again, ketchup is smeared on dining room tables every morning, only to be wiped up, only for ketchup to be smeared on dining room tables every morning, only to be wiped up. You get the picture.

And — this being de Beauvoir's point — it is mostly Sisyphean for women, as much today as when she wrote it in 1949. Because housework is a chore generally disliked, it is a rather unforgiving indicator of domestic power relations between, and among, the sexes. In the first accurate study done, in 2015, on the division of labour at home, US sociologist Natasha Quadlin reported that "nearly three-quarters of our respondents thought that the female partners in heterosexual couples should be responsible for cooking, doing laundry, cleaning the house and buying groceries... nearly 90 per cent... thought that heterosexual men should be responsible for automobile maintenance and outdoor chores."

Cohabiting same-sex couples repeat the behaviour of straight couples. Three-quarters of same-sex partners divided tasks along "more masculine" (bin emptying) and "more feminine" (ironing) lines, with the "more feminine" partner again doing more. A year later, the UK's Office for National Statistics revealed women did 60 per cent more of the cooking, cleaning, childcare and tidying up at home. And (so much for young radicalism), the figure was even higher for couples aged 26 to 35.

#MeToo and #TimesUp notwithstanding, there are few areas of life feminism has not altered over the past 50 years. Housework, though, is one of them. Men, we are slobs. Well, you are. I'm a neat freak, but I'll come to that later. Most statistics show gaps in earnings between men and women, though still evident, have been narrowing since the Sixties. Housework has narrowed too, only far, far more slowly. An Oxford University global study in 2016 of the past 50 years showed that where feminism was more advanced, men got off their lardy arses more. Places with better gender equality — Scandinavian countries, as usual — split housework more equally, though unequally all the same.

In the UK, time spent on housework declined for women from 219 minutes a day in 1961 to 122 minutes in 2005; and doubled to 48 minutes for men. Italian women, though, are still doing 221 minutes a day; Spanish women 190 minutes. Maybe the men are busy with their siestas. Most countries, though, have seen a slow down in equalising housework between the sexes since the Eighties. The very fact that housework is generally disliked, and not subject to legislation, means that change in how it is apportioned is more sluggish. Those doing less tidying up (ie, men) are less inclined to volunteer more labour. And if they do, they expect, and get, more praise for doing it. And so women around the world issue a weary collective sigh: "Oh, just give the J Cloth to me."

Note, though, from that Oxford University study, how time spent doing housework in total is declining. Either cleaning equipment is getting more efficient, or we're just doing less. We're just doing less. Our homes are getting messier and dirtier. As more of us work longer and more exhaustingly in each household, so there is less and less time for what Mrs Beeton called "household management".

What else could explain the publishing phenomenon that is Marie Kondo? Eight million books sold around the world in 40 languages; all basically telling you to put your knickers away. *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*, which commands that you get rid of stuff that doesn't bring you joy has spawned a legion of imitators. Book charts are cluttered up with bestsellers feeding on the fact that we've forgotten how to manage a home: *A Monk's Guide to a Clean House and Mind*; *Goodbye, Things: On Minimalist Living*; *L'Art de la Simplicité: how to Live More with Less*; and my favourite title, *The Gentle Art of Swedish Death Cleaning: how to Free Yourself and Your Family from a Lifetime of Clutter*. I succumbed to *Mary Berry's Household Tips and Tricks: your Guide to Happiness in the Home*. Who else but my surrogate mum Mary is going to tell me how often to turn my mattress (every six months)?

There is a germ of truth behind Kondo's success. Messy homes make us more unhappy. Plenty of research suggests there is a correlation between mental state or wellbeing and tidiness or cleanliness at home. A recent study from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), found a relationship between high cortisol, the stress hormone, and the clutter and disarray of our homes. You can almost see cortisol draining out of the faces of the newly decluttered on

Britain's Biggest Hoarders. "I have been saved!" Or the excuses for men madeover by the Fab Five on Netflix's new hit, *Queer Eye*. Before: domestic chaos, embedded anger, their hairy man caves and sweaty boxer shorts symptoms of toxic masculinity. After: tears, neatly arranged socks, moisturiser, happy partners, the potential for more sex. Everyone's happy. For now, at least.

Ah, but here's the rub. Kondo's book suggests that men basically don't *care* as much as women about a tidy home. Another bestseller, Stephen Marche's *The Unmade Bed: the Messy Truth About Men and Women in the 21st Century*, agrees, and there is some research to back it up. That UCLA report found the link between stress and mess stronger in women. Men feel less bothered by mess. They value cleanliness less. Women get more anxious the more dishes pile up in the sink. Men do want it tidy (-ish), they just don't want to do the tidying.

Much of this, though, is thanks to learned habits. Drummed into women from an early age, and for centuries before her, is the assumption that she *will* look after the home. If a woman is depicted on TV or a film in a messy home — evidence for the prosecution, every *Bridget Jones* movie — her life is in crisis, she is supposedly less of a woman. She is judged. If a man is depicted on TV or a film in a messy home, he is just being a man. He is excused. Men are not allowed to have an interest in the home. They are not men if they do. Women are expected to. They are not women if they don't.

I'm weird. I'm a neat freak. My hero in this regard is the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard, whose 1957 book on the centrality of the home in human culture, *The Poetics of Space*, asks at one point, "how can housework be made into a creative activity?" I wonder if he ever used that line on Mrs Bachelard. Getting out the Pledge, he writes (OK, I'm precis-ing; philosophers prefer real beeswax), transports you to "a higher degree of reality", connecting you metaphysically to the thingness of things, something close, in our understanding today, to Zen or mindfulness. Dusting the contours of your dining table grounds you, connecting you to everyone everywhere who ever did or does the same. "The housewife wakens furniture that was asleep." Ah, house*wife*. I'm sensing Bachelard never met de Beauvoir on the Boulevard Saint-Germain, or, if he did, they disagreed about the dusting.

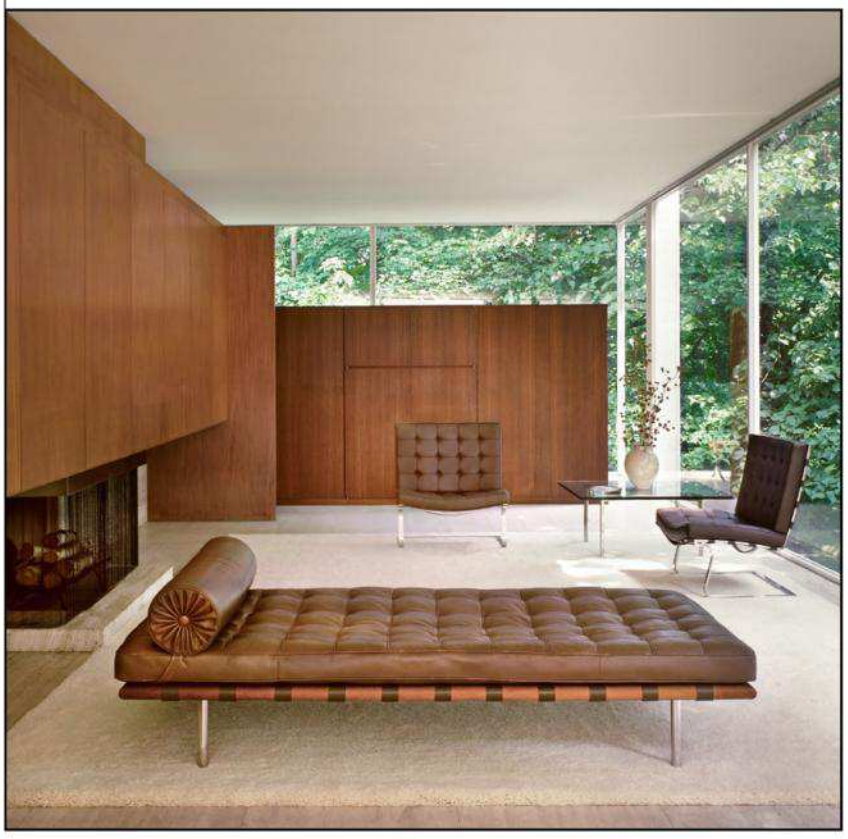
Bachelard goes on to tell the story of Bohemian-Austrian poet Rainer Maria Rilke, whose cleaning lady didn't turn up one day. Luckily, Rilke was prepared. He put on "a big apron and little washable suede gloves to protect one's dainty hands", and set about scrubbing his apartment like a dervish. "Well, yes, I felt moved, as though something were happening… which touched my very soul." One wonders whether he kept it up the next day. And the next.

So, yes, I actually like housework. There, I've said it. I like cleaning. Probably because I grew up with two older sisters and a mum who was *definitely not* going to be scrubbing the floor while I sat on my arse, feet up, watching *Hong Kong Phooey*. Don't hate me for it. I like the feel of a duster under my digits. I adore ironing (the joy of a crisp pleat!) I even do the cooking. Marie Kondo can teach me *nothing*. There are few things in life more satisfying than running a Kärcher condensation vacuum over steamed-up windows. I don't mind doing the toilet bowl, such is my talent for disassociation and compartmentalising (I know, potential serial killer). I told you, weird. My wife hates cleaning, but then she changes the oil in the car engine. She also does more of the childcare, and bakes cakes. I do not. And in our home, nobody does the darning. We have holes in our socks.

So you know what I'm going to say. Straight or gay or whatever: the secret of every relationship is compromise. Yadda yadda. But compromise which way? One school of thought says get messier. Marche in *The Unmade Bed* proposes "apathy is the most progressive and sensible attitude". Women, accept the dirt. Abandon the yoke of inherited gender roles! Turn a blind eye to those empty Stella cans. The other school of thought? Mine. And Bachelard's. And the Fab Five's. Men, put on your Marigolds. Do the damn dishes. Pick up your own greasy Y-fronts. What are you, 14? Be a nicer person. Women, feel free to do some DIY and change the oil in the car, too. Divvy up the chores however you like. Just do it fairly, or it'll only end in tears. And then divorce. And then spending too much time with those cans of Stella. Especially you lot in Finland, where *90 per cent* of couples argue over housework. Jeez. Leave some time for fighting about sex and the remote control, won't you?

PS: I am available for hire. Dab hand with a J Cloth, me. □

Breathing room: despite research establishing a correlation between untidiness and increased stress levels, men — the author aside — are less inclined to strive for a pristine household



Scott Frances/OTTO

49 other shades also available › Dial down your summer wardrobe with a pair of grey trainers

There are a lot of colourful clothes in this issue of *Esquire*, and even more in the shops this spring. That's why we suggest you consider a pair of grey trainers, the understated antidote to the exuberance on show elsewhere. They look good with just about anything. Our pick is this pair by Swedish brand CQP but Common Projects, John Lobb, Grenson and Oliver Spencer (as well as Adidas, Nike, New Balance, and Reebok) all sell smart grey trainers, too.

Granit grey Racquet Sr suede trainers, £260, by CQP

See stockists page for details


TOMMY.COM
TOMMY HILFIGER
LEWISHAMILTON
Official Team Partner
AMG
PETRONAS
MOTORSPORT

Timberland®

TIMBERLAND.CO.UK


LET'S
FLEX

Really hot mess › New gastro pub from the Gymkhana people is set to be all the Raj

Clockwise from top left: from the Brigadiers' menu, Indochinese chili chicken gem cups; dry tandoori masala rib eye steak; and owners Karam, Sunaina and Jyotin Sethi

First there was Trishna in Marylebone (Michelin star in 2012), then came Gymkhana in Mayfair (voted Britain's best restaurant in 2014), followed by Hoppers in Soho (two-hour queues when it opened in 2015).

This month, the family behind Britain's best Indian restaurants — brothers Jyotin and Karam Sethi, and sister Sunaina — launches Brigadiers, an Indian barbecue restaurant and upscale pub, at Bank in the City of London. Inspired by colonial army mess bars where off-duty soldiers went to unwind, there will be pool tables, on-demand live sport, beer and food spanning nuts, crisps and paratha rolls to whole roast suckling lamb biryani for around £60 per head.

"Our grandfather was a Brigadier in the 4th Gurkha Rifles Regiment," Karam Sethi tells *Esquire*. "We've channelled this experience of the mess taverns across the seven rooms in Brigadiers. It's as much about the drinks as it is the food: beer and whisky. We worked with Derbyshire's Thornbridge Brewery to create a session pale ale called 4th Rifles."

There will also be two cocktails — on tap. "A nitro-espresso martini, served like a milky stout, and a cask-handled Buffalo Trace Old Fashioned. The Pool Room is going to have a fine whisky vending machine," he says. "It's going to be a lot of fun."

At Brigadiers, you can pop in for pint and a snack and spend a tenner, or hire the private dining room and spend considerably more. "Brigadiers is going to be somewhere for all people and all events, which is an approach that's completely new for us," Karam says.

Then again: beer, sport, curry — it's a no-brainer, right?

"We're quietly confident it's going to be received well."

Yup, us too.

brigadierslondon.com

JKS Restaurants

BY APPOINTMENT TO
HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES
MANUFACTURER AND SUPPLIER OF FOOTWEAR
CROCKETT & JONES LIMITED, NORTHAMPTON

CROCKETT
& JONES

MADE IN ENGLAND | SINCE 1879

Cranleigh

An unlined, summer Chelsea boot
Made in England using the finest suede
& featuring our 'City' rubber Sole

CROCKETTANDJONES.COM

The two-tone revival › Summer's hottest watch trend? The answer is black and white

Clockwise from top:

Polished steel 42mm Autavia Calibre Heuer-02 automatic chronograph on polished steel bracelet, £4,850, by Tag Heuer

Stainless steel 43mm TimeWalker Manufacture chronograph on brown leather strap, £4,400, by Montblanc

Black ceramicised aluminium 42mm Chronomaster El Primero 1969 on black rubber strap, £7,200, by Zenith

Stainless steel 43mm Alt1-C/ WH-BK automatic chronometer on brown vintage leather strap, £4,895, by Bremont

Stainless steel 43mm Navitimer 8 B01 chronograph on black alligator leather strap, £5,900, by Breitling

Stainless steel 42mm Intra-Matic 68 Autochrono on black leather strap, £1,930, by Hamilton

Set design: Maya Angeli | See Stockists page for details

Grab yourself some sun

Free prescription sunglasses

Book an eye test at specsavers.co.uk

Specsavers®

Free tinted prescription UV lenses in second pair: Ends 30 September 2018. Cannot be used with other offers. Second pair from £69-£169 ranges, to same price range or below and to the same prescription with free tinted prescription lenses and UV filter – usually £24. **£69-£169 ranges:** standard 1.5 single vision lenses included in both pairs. Varifocal/bifocal: you pay for the lenses in your first pair only. **£169 Fineform and Rimless ranges:** standard 1.6 single vision lenses included in both pairs. Varifocal/bifocal: you pay for the lenses in your first pair only. All lenses scratch-resistant. Extra Options available at an additional charge on both pairs. Excludes safety eyewear. SKU 30518407.

The Mercedes-Benz X-Class.
First of a new kind.

For those born to lead, not follow.
mbvans.co.uk/xclass

Mercedes-Benz

Rod Stewart and wife Penny Lancaster, out to lunch, Paris, March 2018

How the other half shops

What was Rod thinking?

By *Simon Mills*

Oh, Rod. You plonker. You only went and let your missus get you ready, didn't you? You asked Penny (Lancaster, aka Mrs Rod Stewart) to help you select a get-up for a lunch date at The Ritz in Paris and she got you all gussied up like a lottery-winning dinner lady on her way to an Andrew Lloyd Webber matinee. A national newspaper cruelly suggested the "Maggie May" rocker might have been channelling Mrs Doubtfire.

What was Rod wearing exactly? And more the point, what was he thinking? A forensic, head to toe examination of the clotted cream nightmare reveals an off-white shearling bomber jacket, a chunky cable-knit Aran roll-neck, greige drainpipe jeans and matching leather ath-luxe trainers. Accessories include a Mulberry handbag (clearly one of Penny's), a bizarrely incongruous black rosary and a full head of frosty highlighted hair that may have been the work of a village salon trying to achieve a Princess Di blow wave.

Individually, each item is OK. The winter cream palette is on-trend. The jacket is very Gunter Sachs, Gstaad lothario glam, the shoes are contemporary Parisian homme branché. But put together? Worn as an ensemble? As one's wife might? Non. Jamais.

The overall effect on the peacocking, arse-wiggling dandy they used to call Rod the Mod is, frankly, emasculating. Rod has always been in touch with his feminine side, but affecting the high street stylings of a blowsy, Swiss soccer mom is not where men's fashion (or dignity) is heading right now.

Penny will have, no doubt, advised, gently curated and enthusiastically approved the combination in the walk-in wardrobes of the marital hotel suite. ("You look great darlin'!" "You sure, Pen? Are you sure this handbag and sweater don't make me look like that Nolan Sister on the *Loose Women* panel… or a tranny Emma Thompson?" But really, Rod should have shown his wife exactly who wears the designer trousers in the relationship. He should have 86'ed the handbag, ditched the crucifix, swapped the trousers for a darker shade and then had a serious look in the mirror before strolling out in that Dorothy Perkins jumper.

How did this surrender to his better half's tastes develop? In truth, Rod's penchant for gender fluidity, at least in his wardrobe, has been going on as long as there have been ladies in his life. And there have been a lot of ladies. Through the Seventies, Eighties and Nineties, Rod dated (or married) variously, Dee Harrington (model), Kimberley Conrad (*Playboy* model), Teri Copley (model/actress), Vicki-Lee Valentino (model), Helen Fairbrother (model), Michelle Johnson (actress), Susan George (actress), Caprice Bourret (model), Alana Hamilton (actress/model), Kelly Emberg (model), Kelly LeBrock (model/actress), Kara Meyers (model), Rachel Hunter (model)… before finally settling down with Penny Lancaster (model).

Throughout this purple period, Rod always preferred women's company, spending hours and hours with his conquests and lovers, mostly in five-star accommodation, making experimental explorations of their wardrobes. Marcy Hanson (model/actress), whom Rod dated in 1977, remembers how Stewart would put on her underwear "and run up and down the hotel corridors in it". Rod also spent two years with Britt Ekland, the Swedish model-turned Bond girl who liked to put makeup on him ("thick black rings around my eyes. I looked like a tart") and dress up in comically his 'n' hers ballet outfits compete with over the knee socks and white leotards. "Every man should have a Rudolf Nureyev period," said Rod.

Back when he was in his lithe and priapic twenties this must have been great fun, but now that Rod is a grown man, he appears to have traded free spirited cross-dressing for the asexual duds of erstwhile breakfast TV presenter Anne Diamond. So where did Rod go wrong?

Our wives and girlfriends, they do things differently when it comes to clobber. We need and value their advice and wisdom on pretty much everything — except our clothes. Given the chance, they'll dress us up like famous men who have been dressed up by their wives and girlfriends.

Why? The Wag's tendency is to go with the vagaries and colourways of fashion. They're into the newest tones, the latest "it" bags and the hoiked or dropped skirt length. We are more about the rebooting of classics; the subtle nuances, semantics and details of just four or five basic items. You can't really apply one model to the other. Just as you can't simply shrink and pink men's clothes for the female market, you can't retro-fit a female sensibility to men's clothing.

There's a tactical element at play also. When a woman styles up her man in comfy, feminised, asexual garb like Rod's big jumper, she is administering a sartorial gelding, a public de-rock 'n' rollisation wrapped up in a poncy sheepskin jacket. Those immaculately matching trousers and sneakers send out a message to other women that says "he may once have been an international swordsman, but now he's off the market." □

Wenn

Customs made › The perfect carry-on grooming cabin kit

Hell is being forced to dig around for loose bottles in your luggage at the security check. No, wait, hell surely is having to throw away a barely opened — and eye-wateringly expensive — fragrance because it is over the maximum 100ml legal requirement. Either ordeal is the precursor to a crappy journey, so pack your carry-on kit the smart way. You need little bottles of the best stuff to cover all the bases, and never bother with shower gel or shampoo — if your destination hotel doesn't provide it fresh each day in its bathrooms you probably shouldn't be staying there.

Top row, from left:

Cannabis perfume oil, £38/9ml, by Malin+Goetz

Travel whitening mint toothpaste, £3.75/25ml, by Marvis

Hydrating lip balm, £21/10ml, by Tom Ford

Herbal deodorant roll-on, £23/50ml, by Aesop

Bottom row, from left:

Facial fuel energizing face wash, £9.50/75ml, by Kiehl's

Max LS power V instant eye lift, £43/15ml, by Lab Series

Blackseed hair wax, £28/50g, by Oliver J Woods

Essential anti-ageing day cream, £257/50ml, by Sisley Paris

Grooming oil, £27/50ml, by Lab Series

See Stockists page for details

Russell&Bromley

LONDON

NEW GEN2 IRONS

FASTER BALL SPEED
HIGHER LAUNCH
LONGER DISTANCE
LARGER SWEET SPOT
MORE FORGIVENESS
INCREASED ACCURACY
INCREDIBLE FEEL

"PXG'S NEW IRONS ACE THEIR DEBUT AFTER THREE YEARS IN DEVELOPMENT."

– Erik Matuszewski, *Forbes Magazine*

SCHEDULE A FITTING

PXG

PXG.COM/ESQUIRE | 0 800 066 9449

Nobody makes golf clubs the way we do. Period.™

Oscar Isaac goes halves for his Esquire cover shoot, December 2017

Becks playing for the shirt at Kent & Curwen's flagship store, Covent Garden, London, 2017

Half in, half out > What the tuck is Beckham playing at?

By *Charlie Teasdale*

When the crown prince of menswear speaks, the villagers must listen. The saying goes that "three's a trend", but if David Robert Joseph Beckham OBE is caught wearing the same thing just a couple of times, it becomes a global retail event. He is the über-influencer. In the past, thanks to DB, the UK has suffered extensive droughts in ripped denim and Adidas Superstars, while who can forget the great baker boy hat famine of 2014?

So creative is Beckham that he has recently unveiled the "third way", a method of wearing one's shirt tucked both in and out. He has created Schrödinger's shirt, and it's a gift unseen in recent times. Becks has been cooking it up for a while (our research shows him half-tucking as far back as 2006) but he seems to have doubled-down recently and that means you have to as well.

Doing something so clearly contrived is tricky, but Becks pulls it off, and you can too. Maybe it's best constructed with eyes shut, allowing an element of chaos. Or perhaps you should get someone else to half-tuck it in for you (not a co-worker; that way lawsuits lie). A good idea would be to try the half-tuck beneath some light knitwear first, but if you do stick a jumper on top make sure it's a V-neck and the shirt collar is skew-whiff as well.

Going into summer, one thing to note is that Gucci's Alessandro Michele has been half-tucking his T-shirts. Bear it in mind for the warmer days, but wait for Golden Balls' green light, obviously.

The half-tuck on parade at the Louis Vuitton x Supreme AW '17 collection show

❶

New resolutions › Five cameras that take better photos than your smartphone

Your phone is fine for Instagram and pictures of your pets: the quality of cameras in smartphones has increased exponentially over the last few years (and some are now seriously good). But they still fall short of professional models when it comes to functionality, power and the ability to separate you from the herd. Do yourself, and your photos, a favour this summer and upgrade to a proper piece of kit, designed for adults. You won't look back.

❷

❸

❺

❹

1. Olympus OM-D E M10 Mark III

Small, light and packed with powerful features, this is an excellent choice for anyone who wants to make their first step to a "proper" interchangeable lens camera. Fast autofocus and tilting touchscreen to accommodate users from fully automatic to manual. £700; *olympus.co.uk*

2. Leica CL 18mm F2.8

Leica can lay claim to having invented the 35mm compact camera a century ago. Its latest CL pairs new features like programmable controls and an 18mm pancake lens with discreet, palm-of-your-hand craftsmanship to remind you why it's still the street photographer's favourite. £3,150; *leica-camera.com*

3. Panasonic Lumix DC-G9

For a compact camera system, the body of the G9 is actually pretty hefty, though the lenses you attach to it are smaller than DSLR equivalents. The upside is that this dustproof, weatherproof and splashproof model will take the knocks. £1,500; *panasonic.com*

4. Fuji X-E3 18–55mm f2 8-4 OIS

The latest addition to Fuji's line in mid-range, rangefinder-style cameras now adds a touchscreen and Bluetooth capability. It has shrunk the size of the body slightly, too, without scrimping on the classic styling. £1,130; *fujifilm.eu*

5. Canon EOS 6D Mark II

The big plus here is the viewfinder that covers 100 per cent of the frame, letting you see all the shooting information without taking your eye off the action. Great for portraits and landscapes, with excellent depth and clarity to the latter. £2,000; *canon.co.uk*

Lucky if Sharp

The only way is ethics: Asket's website openly declares the brand's 'Specialty Cottons Factories' in Reguenga, Portugal, employ 70 workers earning around €800 per month each

Conscientious objects › Asket leads the way in ethically focused fashion brands

It would be a push to say fashion can be sustainable — properly so — but some brands are bucking the tradition of perpetual consumption and newness. Asket, based in Stockholm, makes luxury essentials akin to Sunspel and James Perse, and lists the various production costs of its goods on its website. For example, a cotton sweatshirt is broken down as follows: fabric, £14.10; labour, £8.90; transport, 40p; giving a total of £23.40, which is then bumped up to £75 to make a profit. Asket claim the market equivalent would sell at £135. (You can definitely buy a sweat for less, but at least they're being honest.)

"[People] have been concerned about the origin of the food we eat for quite some time," says Asket co-founder August Bard Bringéus. "It's only natural that we've started to demand more transparency when it comes to what we wear." That transparency is extensive. Asket's website has images and information on all the factories it uses, and shows what hours its employees work and even how much they earn. Asket's 300 chino-makers in Milan, for example, work eight-hour shifts and take home €1,400 per month on average.

"With the constant race to stand out from the crowd and convince us to buy more, we've started spinning out of control and there's a bullwhip effect across the whole value chain," Bringéus says, "from the final garment all the way back to the cotton seed. Everywhere you look, [brands] are forced to cut corners, and customers are kind of the same. We're intrigued by a €10 price tag for a T-shirt, instead of asking ourselves how it's possible that a garment, made on the other side of the world, sold in a heavily-marketed, expensive retail location, can sell for less than a lunch."

Asket will have just one permanent collection (each product, however, is subject to continuous customer feedback-led tweaking) and is planning to operate solely online. The footprint is small, but many brands with bigger feet are toeing the line, too. Stella McCartney recently expanded its sustainable, animal welfare-conscious luxury brand to include menswear. Gant is now pushing a green agenda, utilising dumped plastic recovered from oceans in its Tech Prep shirting collection. Elsewhere, the H&M group has announced that it is moving towards fully-sustainable production.

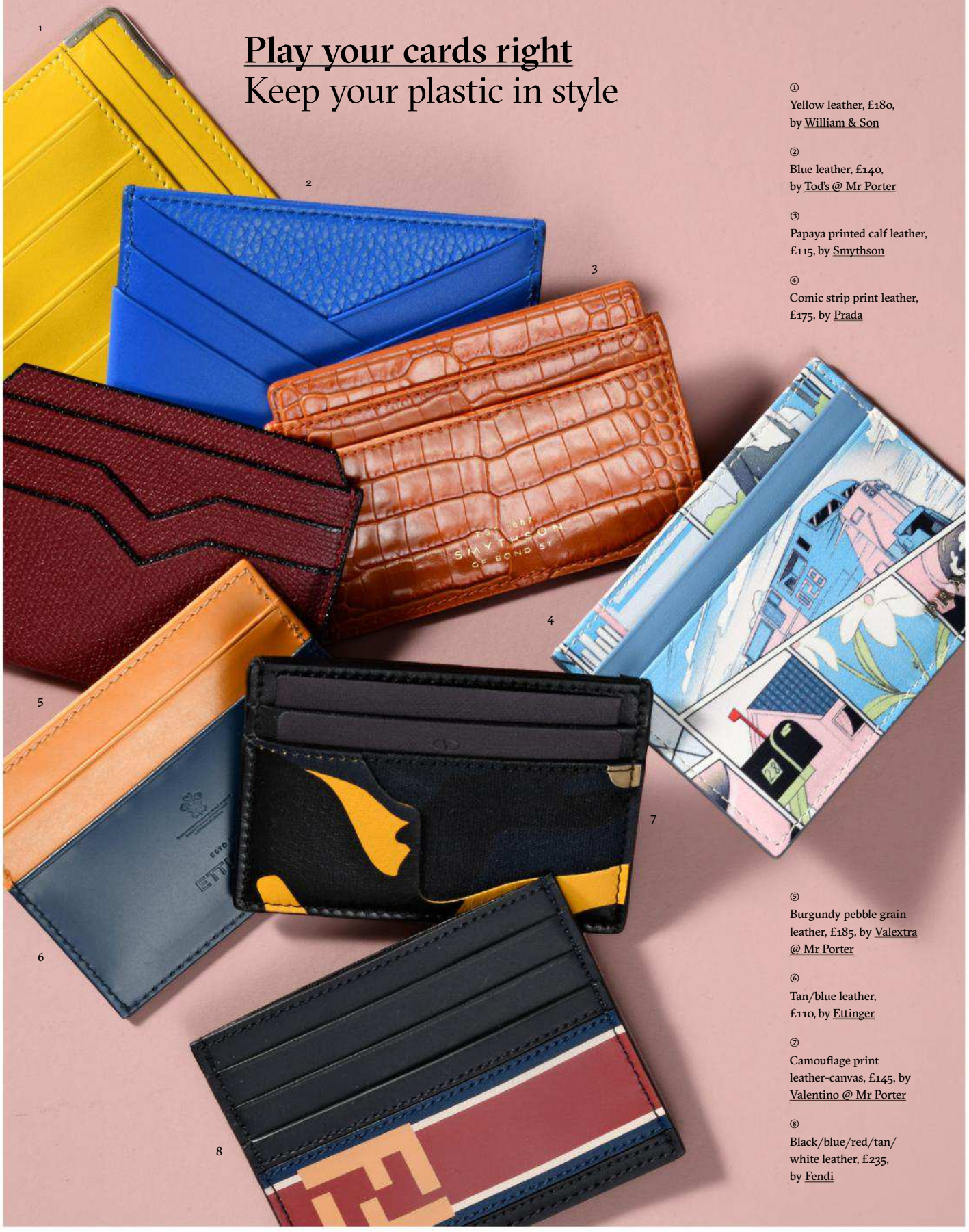
Is Asket's transparency setting a precedent? "I think traditional brands that rely purely on either high frequency or high value buying will have a tough time," predicts Bringéus. "Instead, the brands that address the growing customer concerns and invite people to become part of the change will come out stronger. There's a network effect to it; the more brands that provide transparency and set a higher social and ethical standard, the more customers will start seeing that higher standard as a requirement."

We all need to be a bit more woke, and even if it's just a drop in the ocean, a green flash in the fashion pan, then surely that's better than nothing, right? Besides, Asket sells chinos, sweats and knitwear. It's not like they're getting all high and mighty about diamante cowboy boots.
asket.com

Lucky if Sharp


VICTORINOX
95/96 New Bond Street, London
SHOP ONLINE AT VICTORINOX.COM
FUNCTIONALITY IS
PART OF OUR FAMILY
#MyVictorinox
@Victorinox
MAKERS OF THE ORIGINAL SWISS ARMY KNIFE | ESTABLISHED 1884

Play your cards right
Keep your plastic in style



① Yellow leather, £180, by William & Son

② Blue leather, £140, by Tod's @ Mr Porter

③ Papaya printed calf leather, £115, by Smythson

④ Comic strip print leather, £175, by Prada

⑤ Burgundy pebble grain leather, £185, by Valextra @ Mr Porter

⑥ Tan/blue leather, £110, by Ettinger

⑦ Camouflage print leather-canvas, £145, by Valentino @ Mr Porter

⑧ Black/blue/red/tan/white leather, £235, by Fendi

Lucky if Sharp | See Stockists page for details

It's funny to think, not so long ago
I had two children and now I have four.
We were two completely separate
families coming together. Life was about
to get much fuller, for both of us.

More schooling.
More queuing for the bathroom.
More painting of nails and
learning how to plait.
More listening to whatever
it is they listen to.
More pocket money and
teaching them the value of it.
More love, more everything.

If your life is full of life, join HSBC Premier with no monthly current account fee.

To qualify, financial and other eligibility criteria apply.*

Visit your local HSBC branch or call 0800 432 0704.

HSBC UK
Premier

Together we thrive

CURRENT ACCOUNT SWITCH GUARANTEE

fscs Protected

*HSBC Premier customers must pay their annual income into their account and meet either: 1) Savings or investments of at least £50,000 with HSBC UK or 2) Individual annual income of at least £75,000 and one of the following products with HSBC UK: mortgage, investment, life insurance or protection product or 3) Qualify in another country.

Lines are open 8am to 8pm weekdays and 10am to 3pm on Saturdays and Sundays (closed on Bank Holidays).

Issued by HSBC Bank plc, 8 Canada Square, London E14 5HQ. AC46293

The Accidental Cook › Asparagus and girolle risotto.
By *Russell Norman*

Photographs by Dan Burn-Forti

Serves four

Ingredients

- 8 slender English asparagus spears, woody ends discarded
- 150g girolles, dusted but not washed
- 2 medium onions, peeled and finely diced
- 1 small celery stalk, peeled and finely diced
- 1.2 litres vegetable stock, hot
- 350g carnaroli rice
- A glass of dry vermouth
- Extra virgin olive oil
- 75g unsalted butter
- 120g Parmesan, grated
- Small palmful thyme leaves, picked
- Large pinch flat parsley leaves, chopped
- Flaky sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

Method

① Heat the stock in a large saucepan and keep it simmering. Put a couple of glugs of olive oil in a separate large, heavy-based saucepan and place over a low heat. Sauté the onions and celery with a good pinch of salt. Continue for 10mins, until they take on a glossy, translucent appearance.

② Add the rice and mix to coat each grain. Turn up the heat a little and add the vermouth.

③ Add a ladleful of hot stock and gently stir. Continue to do so slowly and gently, making sure the mixture never absorbs all the liquid and is always very slightly submerged. Add more stock, little by little, and repeat for the next 10mins.

④ Meanwhile, cut the asparagus into 3cm pieces. Mix into the risotto and stir gently for 5mins, slowly adding stock as necessary. Add the girolles and thyme. Stir well, but carefully so as not to crush the mushrooms, cook for another 5mins or so, then test the rice for doneness. It should have a little resistance between your teeth but should not be hard. Remove from the heat.

⑤ Add the butter and Parmesan, folding them carefully into the risotto until absorbed. Serve on warm plates with the parsley and a light twist of black pepper.

"Asparagus inspires gentle thoughts," wrote Charles Lamb in the 19th century. When I moved last year to a dilapidated farmhouse in Kent, I had visions of living the rural idyll in which I pictured haystacks, sunshine, cider and Morris dancing. The reality is, of course, very different.

Firstly, I didn't realise there would be such a spectacular amount of mud. It is absolutely everywhere. Even a short trip to the village to get half a dozen duck eggs or some home-made fudge can result in the sort of mud bath you'd expect on the battlefields of Ypres, or a weekend at Glastonbury. Ours isn't the sort of house where shoes are removed at the door, so a day of modest outdoor activity can result, come evening, in quite an alarming carpet of beastly oomska over pretty much everything.

Secondly, with a great garden comes great responsibility. Having the space to cultivate vegetables, something I have hankered after all my adult life, means I have had to finally put my money where my mouth is and grow some (ahem). This is no mean task. I remember looking fondly at packets of seeds in garden centres and thinking how easy it must be to pop them into the soil, watch them sprout, and harvest the bounty a few months later. Not a chance. No one tells you about weeding, turning, composting, putting little trays in the greenhouse for a month, choosing the right location, planting at the right time, pest control, netting... It's exhausting and seems to have turned me, by stealth, into my grandfather.

This is a busy time of the year for us gardeners. Spring is where the hard work is done and my biggest challenge, one that won't bear fruit, so to speak, for another year, is asparagus. Quintessentially English, unmistakably seasonal, asparagus is tricky to grow. You have to put year-old dormant plants (known as crowns) into deep trenches surrounded by ripe manure, tend them through the spring with fish, blood and bone, protect them with fences while they grow and then mollycoddle them in the winter with a blanket. And they don't like slugs, snails, beetles or frost.

I'll let you know how my home crop has fared this time next year. Meanwhile, thank heavens for Cobrey Farms in Herefordshire where Wye Valley asparagus is always available early in spring. I first made this month's recipe when living in Venice last year. It was a 14-month, self-imposed exile, researching and cooking for my new book.

While buying some beautifully slender asparagus from Rialto Market (grown on the nearby island of Sant'Erasmo) the grocer Paolo suggested I took some girolle mushrooms, fresh from the woody mainland, and made a risotto. The result was stunning: earthy, robust and fragrant, the delicate mushrooms proving perfect bedfellows to asparagus. If you struggle to find early girolles, this risotto works wonderfully with St George's mushrooms, also called mousserons, and usually on UK market stalls in April. ☐

Russell Norman's new cookbook Venice: Four Seasons of Home Cooking (Penguin Fig Tree) is out now

Parmigiano Reggiano cheese, £4.95/125g, from La Fromagerie; *lafromagerie.co.uk*

NEW ICE CREAM

IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE

LOWER CALORIES* | HIGH IN PROTEIN | BIG ON TASTE

#IMPOSSIBLEPOSSIBLE

*CONTAINS 38-57% LESS CALORIES THAN SIMILAR ICE CREAM PRODUCTS

Ivory/crimson technical mesh T-shirt, £50, by Tracksmith

Blu Mediterraneo Chinotto di Liguria shower gel, £32/200ml, by Acqua di Parma

White/citron in-ear wireless headphones, £150, by Bose SoundSport

Plastic-stainless steel water bottle, £25, by Eva Solo @ Trouva

Black webbing-trimmed canvas holdall, £765, by Gucci @ Mr Porter

Pearl grey Egyptian cotton towel, £12, by The White Company

Black polyester-elastane shorts, £70, by Nike

Black/green cotton socks, £25, by Nike

Grey/black technical mesh trainers, £115, by Nike @ Mr Porter

Fit for purpose › Nine ways to freshen up your workout kit

The contents of a man's gym bag tell a lot. Do you stuff old socks, too-tight shorts and a ragged sweatshirt into a dog-eared duffel? Or is yours a more meticulous approach to activewear? The latter, we hope. Nothing says, "Yeah, I lift" like sharp new fitness kit, which is why we've focused our ultimate gym bag on stylish, high-tech fabrics, tomorrow-ready tech and do-it-all trainers.

See Stockists page for details

Words by Finlay Renwick Photograph by Aiala Hernando


1
2
3
4
5
6
7
FAMILY BAR

Who are you wearing? › Open your eyes to new shades from under-the-radar brands

Choosing sunglasses must be approached with the utmost reverence, while considering a number of important factors: Do I like them? Do they fit my face? Do they suit the clothes in my wardrobe? And, most vitally, does every other Tom, Dick and Alessandro already own the same pair? Because nothing solidifies the burning shame of buyer's regret quite like sitting in a beer garden full of men wearing the same shades. Covering the lesser-travelled ground of summer optics, we've picked the most well-crafted, stylish and exclusive sunglasses that money can buy: "Oh these? Just a little Japanese brand... you've probably never heard of them. Mine's a lager top."

① Green acetate/alloy frame with grey lens, £370, by Eyevan 7285 @ Auerbach & Steele

② Black acetate frame with grey lens, £425, by Kirk Originals

③ Cognac tortoiseshell frame/titanium clip-on with green lens, £425, by Lunetterie Générale @ Liberty London

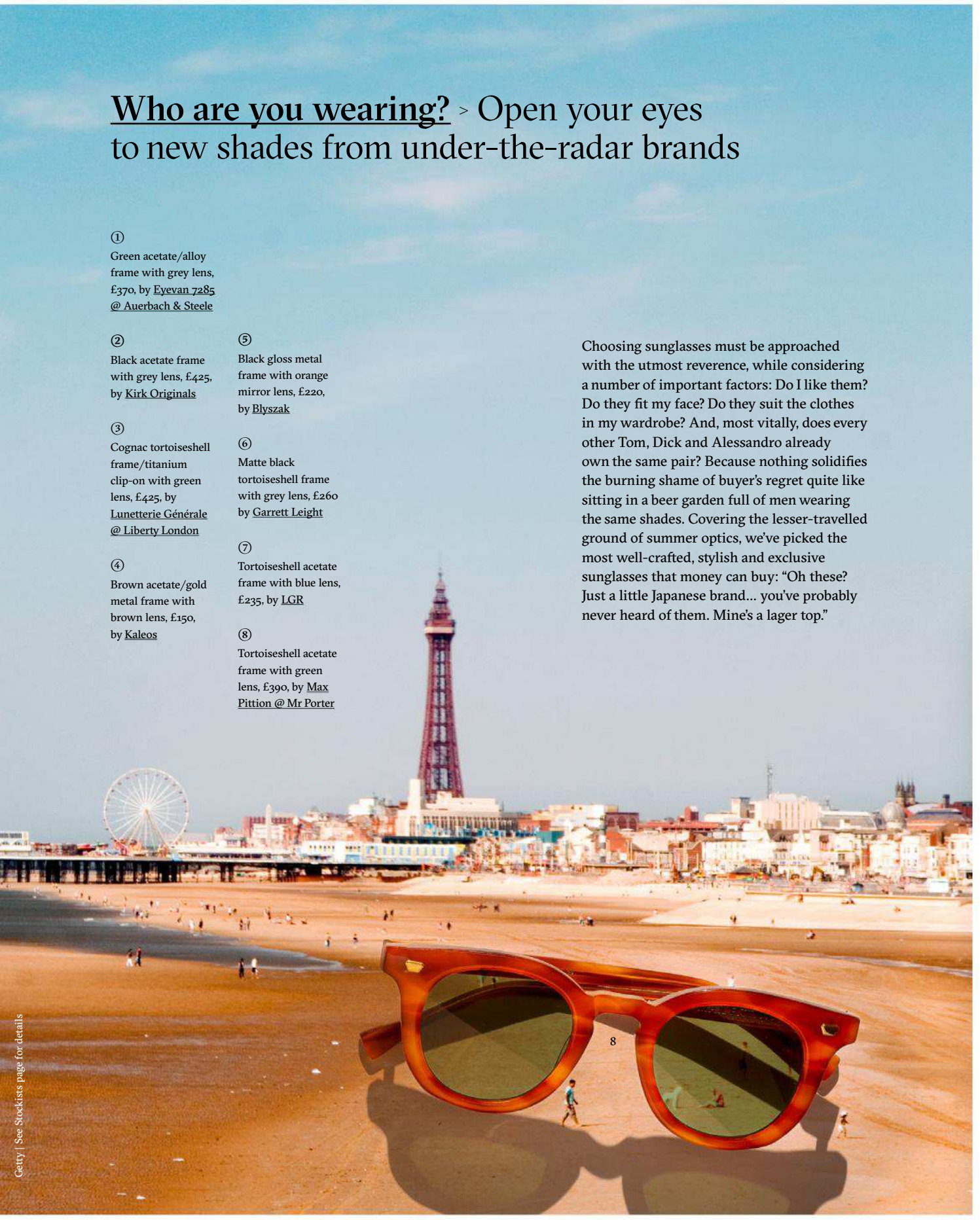
④ Brown acetate/gold metal frame with brown lens, £150, by Kaleos

⑤ Black gloss metal frame with orange mirror lens, £220, by Blyszak

⑥ Matte black tortoiseshell frame with grey lens, £260 by Garrett Leight

⑦ Tortoiseshell acetate frame with blue lens, £235, by LGR

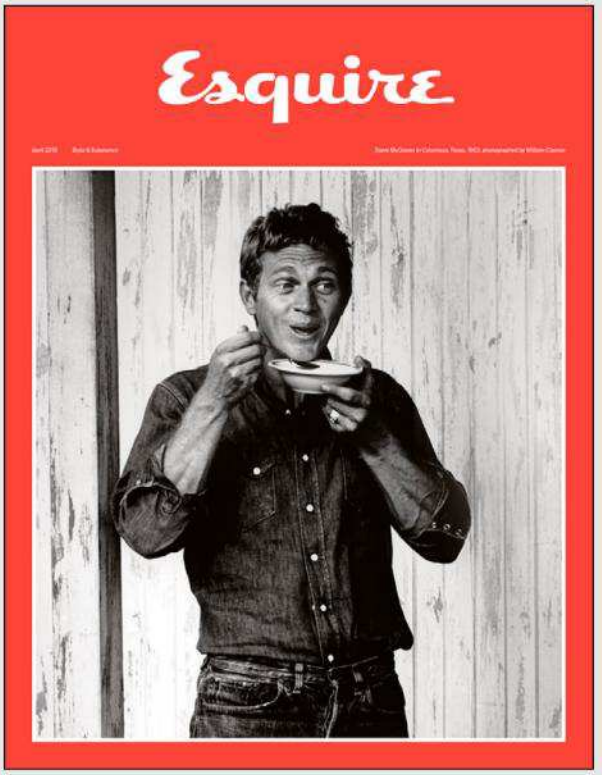
⑧ Tortoiseshell acetate frame with green lens, £390, by Max Pittion @ Mr Porter



Getty | See Stockists page for details

Words by Finlay Renwick Photograph by Peter Langer

Subscribe to Esquire



Five issues for just £9.99

GIFT WORTH £30

+ RECEIVE

ESPA Muscle Rescue Balm worth £30

This rejuvenating balm is the ideal pre- or post-workout treatment to soothe tired muscles and revive the mind, and can be used on all areas of the body. Whether you keep a tube in your gym bag for use on the go or apply throughout the day to help clear your head, this clever combination is an instant revitaliser

To subscribe, visit:

hearstmagazines.co.uk/eq/may2018

or call 0844 322 1762 and quote offer code IEQ11406

Culture

Film / Music / Books / Television / Art

Golden girl: Kylie Minogue talks to Esquire about cyborgs, Prince and turning 50 on page 76

Still spinning them around

Kylie Minogue celebrates turning 50 with a new album and her 18th — 18th! — arena tour later this year. But first, an exclusive sit-down with Esquire...

I started young, with no experience in the music industry. But I was very famous. So that was a bit strange.

I remember being on-set for the "Can't Get You Out of My Head" video and looking at the monitor and we just went [whispers], "God, it's really good." To get everything to work in harmony to become something greater than its parts, that takes luck.

My mum revealed that she was doing transcendental meditation when I was born. I thought, "Well, it was 1968, it kinda makes sense."

When I got the part in *Neighbours*, there was one phone in the house. I got the call and there was no one at home. I think I celebrated with the dog.

I went to Minneapolis. Prince was suitably normal and weird enough. If he was perfectly normal, that would have been weird.

I've not been raised with religion. My faith is in humanity, and people, and believing in a higher realm.

I was in Santiago last year, and this guy says, "I gotta tell you, your song is the first song I ever learned." I said, "Did you learn it on guitar?" He said, "No. It's the first song I *learned*." "Oh, the first song you learned the words to?" He answered, "Yeah, it was 'The Loco-Motion'." I love hearing these stories.

I don't know where the clown side of me came from. A friend calls me an amusement park. He's like, "Uh-oh, it's open, every ride's open, here we go... she's off." But when the park is closed, there's nothing.

I think I'll be asked less of the age-related questions with the tone I was asked a few years ago, because of everything that's happening at the moment. I know they're asking because of sexism and ageism, as I'm a woman in this industry, but the more you're talking to me about it the more you're perpetuating it. I'm bored of the question.

I look like my mum. I am my mum. I get the movement from my mum, she was a dancer. I don't get singing from my mum. She can't hold a note.

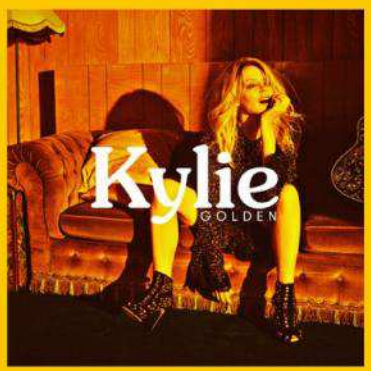
On the *Fever* tour, I came up on a riser in a cyborg suit at the start, and there's a bloke who has to press the button to release the thigh panels, the chest panels and the face reveal. One night nothing happened and I was trapped. I was thinking, "This would be so Spinal Tap if they just take me back down again." They had a back-up plan: a dancer came over, in character, and lifted the things and I got to the microphone. People were none the wiser.

I'm sure that my business acumen came from my dad. When we were bought up t's were crossed, i's were dotted.

***Grease*.** My brother [Brendan], sister [Dannii] and I would recreate the routines as kids. I wanted to be Olivia Newton-John, obviously. My sister played Rizzo in an arena tour of *Grease the Musical* years later and that says it all about the two of us. I'm the blonde one, and she's the dark, tough one.

—

Kylie Minogue's album Golden is out now. Her UK tour begins on 18 September



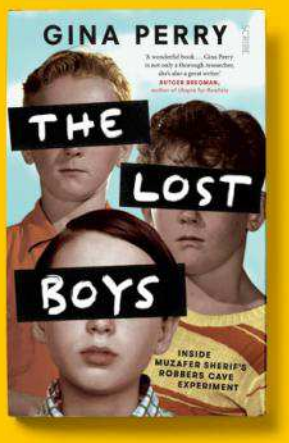
Netflix please, we're British

The channel's latest series is glossy, gripping, yet decidedly homespun

The opening credits of *Safe* have all the hallmarks of a Netflix classic. Plumes of smoke unfurl across a screen, revealing glimpses of scenery and objects that are likely to be crucial to twists to come — a ball discarded in the grass, a white picket fence, the edge of a swimming pool — while a gritty blues-rock number plays over the top.

Then the first cast name comes up — yes, Michael C Hall, star of *Dexter*, sounds about right — followed by some less familiar names, including French actress Audrey Fleurot, and

The Lost Boys (Scribe) by Gina Perry is published on 26 April



Michael C Hall, centre, and Marc Warren, right, in thrilling new Netflix series Safe

Hannah Arterton, who you think is probably the sister of Gemma (she is). But wait, don't these houses look mock-Tudor? Isn't it all a bit less Laurel Canyon and more Surrey Hills?

Because, despite being the brainchild of New Jersey-born writer Harlan Coben, *Safe* is a decidedly British affair. The script comes from Bafta and Emmy-winning screenwriter Danny Brocklehurst and the whole thing is made by the production company behind BBC hit *Happy Valley*.

Michael C Hall is actually playing a Brit, Tom Delaney, a paediatric surgeon who is trying to uphold his late wife's dying wish of keeping their two teenage daughters out of harm (and other than an early wobble, where he appears to say he's "got uh fing" to go to, his accent is pretty watertight).

When 17-year-old Jenny (Emma James-Kelly) goes missing with her older boyfriend Chris (Freddie Thorp) at a house party, Tom hacks into her mobile phone and discovers messages that make him fearful that something heavy is about to go down, or perhaps already has.

So far so Liam-Neeson-comeback-vehicle, but where *Safe* gets good is in how it subverts genre expectations. It's all very well protecting your kids, but what if they aren't the victims of brutality, but possibly its cause? As one character has it: "The facts are these: parties, drugs, and someone winds up dead." But who? And by whom? And why? In private housing estates like the one in which *Safe* is set, the gates of which form the final image of those opening credits, far from locking danger out, they could well be keeping it in.

—

Safe launches on 10 May

Lord of the flaws

A fascinating book explores a Golding-esque experiment with a rogue methodology

In the summer of 1954, a group of psychologists drove two busloads of 11-year-old boys to two separate cabins in the Robbers Cave State Park in Latimer County, Oklahoma. Each group of a dozen or so youngsters spent the first few days unaware of the existence of the other, or of the fact that they were about to participate in one of the more controversial experiments in the nascent field of psychology.

For their camp counsellors were not in fact counsellors, but "participant observers" in a study being conducted by a man they believed to be the camp's caretaker, but who was, in fact, a renegade social psychologist, Dr Muzafer Sherif, who wanted to prove that fierce group loyalty and enmity could be both induced and reversed.

Australian author Gina Perry heard about Sherif's Robbers Cave project when she was finishing her previous book about Dr Stanley Milgram's even more notorious obedience experiments (in which subjects were asked to administer electric shocks to what they believed to be other participants), but the facts of the case were too juicy to pass up. Gangs of boys pitted against each other in a lawless wilderness? If it weren't for William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, which came out the same year, you'd think you couldn't make it up.

Perry's investigation into the details of the experiments is forensic — occasionally to a fault — but what she unearths about the erratic way in which it was conducted, the egos involved (at one point a "counsellor" threatens the "caretaker" with a plank of wood), and the casual disregard for the boys themselves, many of whom were not aware the camp was an experiment until they were recently contacted by Perry, is fascinating and not a little chilling.

"It seemed to me that what happened at Robbers Cave wasn't a test of a theory so much as a choreographed enactment," writes Perry, "with the boys as the unwitting actors in someone else's script."

Discover the Luxury Destination for
Town and Country Living

BY APPOINTMENT TO
HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
GOLDSMITHS & SILVERSMITHS
WILLIAM & SON
LONDON

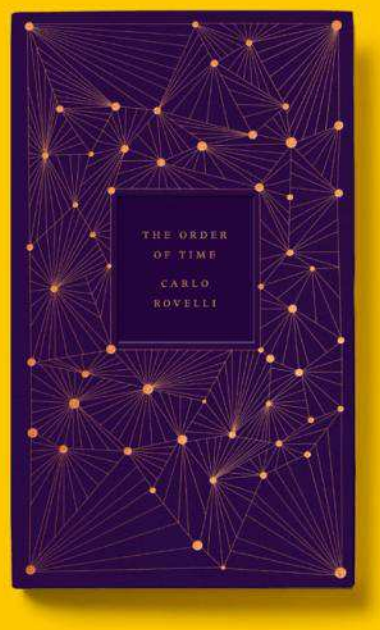
WILLIAM & SON

LONDON

WILLIAMANDSON.COM

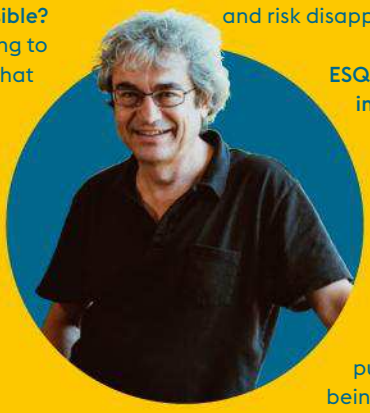
Time gentlemen, please

A quick (or was it?) chat with physics superstar Carlo Rovelli



Do your eyes start to glaze at the mention of quantum gravity? Then you haven't met Carlo Rovelli. The Italian scientist's first book, *Seven Brief Lessons on Physics*, was a runaway hit — a digestible introduction to head-spinning concepts. His new book is called *The Order of Time* (with Benedict Cumberbatch on audiobook duties, just FYI). He gave us some of his.

ESQUIRE: Is time travel possible?
CARLO ROVELLI: "Look, going to the future is easy — that's what we do all the time. That's our life. And jumping to the far future is certainly possible, it's just an issue of money: if we build a spaceship and go near a black hole and come back, we come back in the future. But going to the past is a different story."



ESQ: What got you hooked on the concept of time in the first place?
CR: "I was puzzled about time since I was 16. Mostly because I was that generation in which you had to take hallucinogenic drugs, and take LSD, and I had this incredible experience of being out of time. Then I discovered that there's this field of physics where there are open questions about 'What is time?' and that resonated with my adolescent confusion. So I decided it would be wonderful to spend my life studying these sorts of things."

ESQ: Were you worried this book would be too dense?
CR: "Yes. Very much. The *Seven Brief Lessons* had this huge success and I was afraid of writing anything else. The rock band second album theory. I wrote about time because time has been a constant concern in my life. I've spent 30 years going around this question. So I decided to do a book which is more difficult, which goes more in-depth, and risk disappointing people."

ESQ: Do you think it's important to write with a sense of humour?
CR: "Yes, I do. Science often is on the defensive — it has to prove that it's believable and rational. But I think science writing has been exaggerating trying to keep it dry and purely rational. We human beings are also driven by emotions, so what drives scientists is feelings and emotions, and what drives people's curiosity is the same thing."

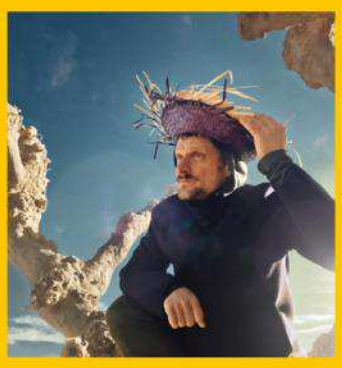
ESQ: How do your colleagues respond to that approach?
CR: "One of the best reactions I got was from David Gross, who is a Nobel Prize winner, one of the greatest American physicists and an enemy of me in terms of science direction — we have insulted one another more than once publicly — and he wrote an email to me saying, 'This is fantastic. Thank you for communicating the way I myself view science in such a wonderful way.' It was a completely positive appreciation."

ESQ: What do you consider a waste of time?
CR: "Oh Facebook. There's no doubt. It's a black hole, Facebook. It's absorbing everybody's time and energy into an illusion of communicating with the planet, which is not true. You're just communicating with a teeny fraction of humanity."

ESQ: Is there another book in the pipeline?
CR: "No. It was a lot of energy to write this one and my job is not to be a writer. My job is to be a physicist and I have things I still want to do."

—

The Order of Time (Allen Lane) is published on 26 April



House party

Innovative oddball DJ Koze has a new album, and everyone's invited

When is a vocal from Róisín Murphy not welcome? Never, that's when. And so firmly does Stefan Kozalla, aka DJ Koze, concur that he's got her doing the honours twice on his new album, *Knock Knock*. There she is on the hypnotic "Illumination", and again on the seductive and mysterious "Scratch That", though she's in good company: Kozalla's other vocalists include Speech from Arrested Development and Lambchop's Kurt Wagner. But even when his collaborators are unwitting, Kozalla's remixes are a phenomenon — creating sounds to which Bon Iver's Justin Vernon, sampled on "Bonfire", would approve.

—

Knock Knock (Pampa Records) is released on 4 May

Carlo Rovelli words by Rachel Fellows

Melrose placed

Edward St Aubyn's cult novels finally land on the small screen

"Unless something seems almost impossible to say," Edward St Aubyn, author of the five quasi-autobiographical Patrick Melrose novels, told *Esquire* in 2011, "there doesn't seem to be any point in locking yourself in a room for years on the verge of a nervous breakdown trying to say it." Perhaps David Nicholls, the author of *One Day* and *Us*, felt similarly when he was charged with adapting St Aubyn's novels for a five-part series, *Melrose*, which makes its debut this month (though he'd be too polite to say so).

The difficulties of the subject matter of the books are hard to deny — young Patrick Melrose is sexually abused by his sadistic father and turns to heroin as a young man, leading inevitably to a spiral of decline. But they're also pin-sharp, funny and — there's no other way to say it — fun. It's an unlikely balance that St Aubyn achieves and Nicholls is more than capable of matching, though he will no doubt be glad that the script ended up in the hands of Benedict Cumberbatch, whose knack for suppressed angst and stony-faced English wit should make for a perfect Patrick. We can't wait.

—

Melrose starts at 9pm on 13 May on Sky Atlantic and Now TV

Contemporary daddy under stress

Eighteen years late, and right on time, an acclaimed author returns. By Alex Bilmes

I don't suppose it was inevitable that Matthew Klam's debut novel would be about early promise unfulfilled. That it would be concerned with a career that has conspicuously failed to achieve its potential. That it would have something to say about the trauma of a return to obscurity after a period of glorious success.

I don't suppose, either, that Klam's book had to be about a once popular and celebrated author of semiautobiographical stories — stories that mined his sexual indiscretions for dark laughs, his relationships for harsh truths about the modern condition — years later searching the wreckage of his life for the material that might make up a new work: a male confessional about the professional, financial, marital, parental and erotic degradations of a has-been literary star.

I don't suppose *Who is Rich?* had to be that kind of book, at all. It could have been a sweeping historical romance set against the backdrop of war. Or a dystopian sci-fi, or a crime thriller, or a fantasy epic for kids. But it makes sense that instead of any of those things, it is a riotous sex comedy narrated by a basically well-meaning, or at least not entirely monstrous, but nevertheless horribly compromised and destructive American white guy. A solipsistic, depressed, adulterous, drunk, 42-year-old, heterosexual father of two, who also happens to be a blocked writer. His name is Rich Fischer, and he is the hero and narrator of *Who is Rich?* (And that awkward title might be the only false note in the book.)

Eighteen years ago, Matthew Klam published his first and, until recently, only book. *Sam the Cat and Other Stories* was a collection of comic-satirical dispatches from the frontline of the disordered suburban male psyche. The stories in it had originally appeared, over the previous seven years, in *The New Yorker* magazine, each one greeted with resounding applause. They established their author, born in 1964, as a new star in American fiction, almost a sensation. Lorrie Moore, the doyenne of *The New Yorker* short story writers, has written that Klam's fiction "set the pages of the magazine on fire."

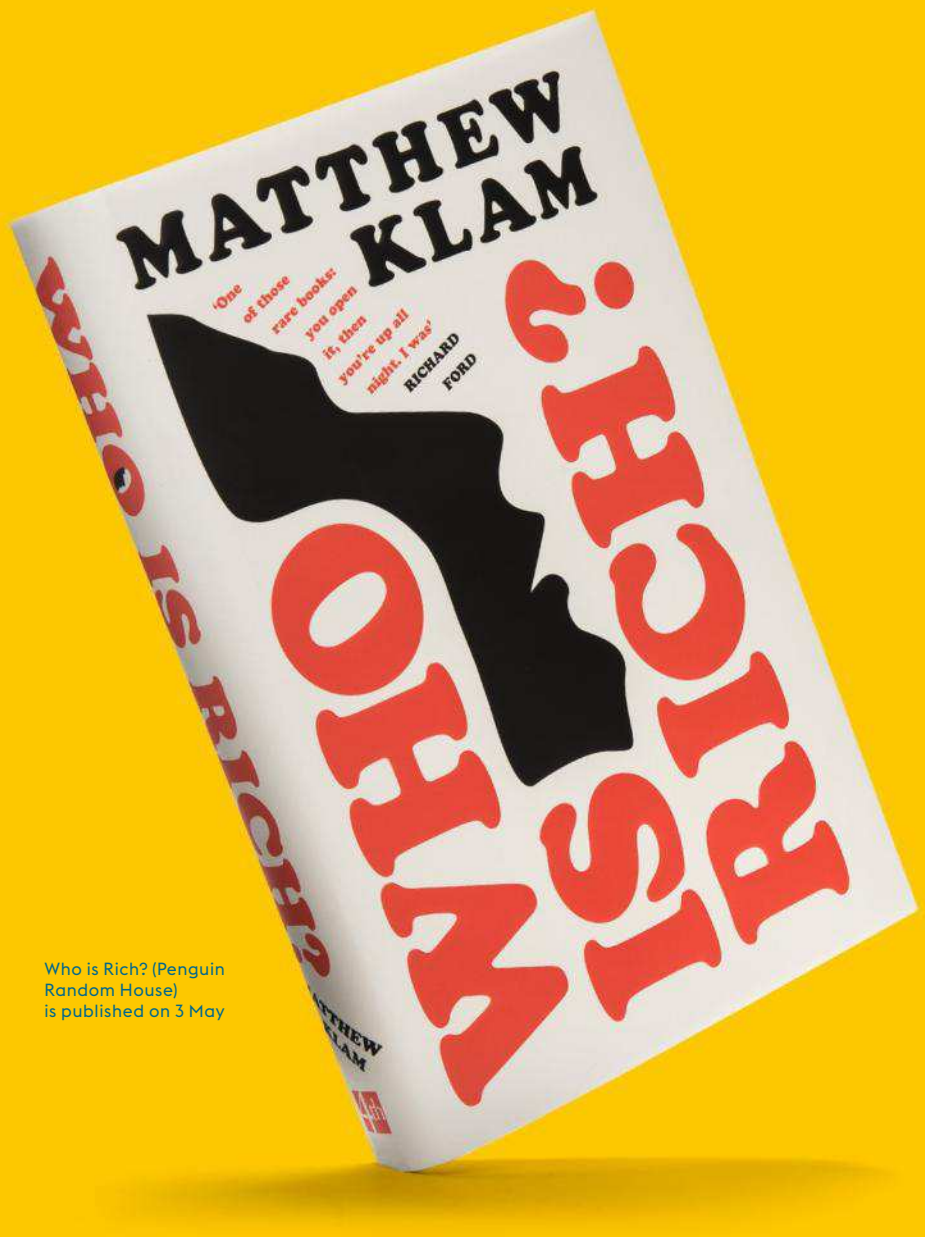
In 2018, a novel about the struggles of a white male adulterer better be good. This is

"You walk into a supermarket or a restaurant, your girlfriend goes in first and you're looking at her ass. And you say to yourself, 'Isn't that the most beautiful ass? That's mine. It's beautiful.' Like it's going to save you. An ass isn't going to save you. What's it going to do? Hide you from the police?"

That's from "Sam the Cat", the title story of the collection, the one that sets the tone. It is about a young man who surprises himself by falling hopelessly in lust with another man he sees in a bar.

"I went home and shut my eyes and tried to sleep, except there was this guy, the guy who looked like a chick, walking around the party in my mind. I watched him walk up to the bartender, I saw him reach into his front pocket to get money, and I saw how his round butt stuck out a little — somebody stop me."

Klam's fiction gives voice to the male id, in the male idiom. His stories are written with clarity and economy, and great skill. Plus jokes. If you are a man — or if you know a man — you will instantly recognise



Who is Rich? (Penguin Random House) is published on 3 May

the sweaty aroma of honesty that rises from his pages, the pungent tang of truth that gives his work its bite. They haven't dated a bit, the stories in *Sam the Cat*, because men are still selfish and horny and hopeful and frustrated (and drunk) and we are still, mostly, well-meaning and self-defeating. We make terrible decisions.

Deservedly, *Sam the Cat* brought Klam awards and recognition. He was mentioned in the same sentences (like this one) as David Foster Wallace and George Saunders and Jonathan Franzen. His book was optioned for a movie by Cameron Crowe. He published more stories, to still more acclaim, and signed a lucrative book deal for a follow-up collection. And then…

nothing. Klam went quiet.

He felt, he has said since, that he had no more stories in him to write. Also that the voice of Sam the Cat — and that book was nothing if not a voice, his voice — had failed to develop. He sounded the same in his thirties and his forties as he had in his twenties. This seemed to him a failing.

"If I were a girl I'd fuck 10 guys a day," says Sam. "I swear. I'd never want to be a girl, though, for they have the worst deal in history."

That was published in 1993. We are in a moment now when the complicated extracurricular sexual entanglements, the career failures, the financial woes, and any other tribulations of privileged white heterosexual men (hair loss? dodgy knees?) are not necessarily the stuff of prize-winning literary fiction. They're not even the stuff of polite conversation.

In 2018, the lifestyle hassles of spoilt white dudes are subordinate to the problems of everyone else. In 2018, we are woke. So a novel about a priapic Caucasian adulterer, one that offers empathy rather than scorn, might be seen to be somewhat out of step. If it is to succeed, especially with the bien-pensants — the likeliest readers of literary novels — it'd better be good. This one is.

We meet Rich Fischer in the summer of 2012, at a summer arts conference at a seaside college town in New England, where he is teaching cartooning to mature students. Rich was once among the most fêted comic book writers of his generation, but he "peaked too early and failed to live up to his potential." Now he is an illustrator for a magazine — "august, old-fangled" — that sounds a bit like *The New Yorker*. Which wouldn't be so bad, perhaps, except that "illustration is to cartooning as prison sodomy is to pansexual orgy."

Rich is depressed, even suicidal. His marriage, to the beautiful Robin, mother of his two young children, is in the kind of slump from which it seems a marriage might never recover. The sex is barely even cursory. "With the exception of my tongue on her clitoris every who knows when, she didn't need to be touched. She had vibrators for that. I think she mostly thought of what I did as a way to save batteries."

Rich's monologue is like that. Disconsolate ruminations on the boredom and frustrations of quotidian, middle-class existence, redeemed by zingers. Redeemed, too, by Rich's essential OK-ness, his bumbling humanity. He really loves his kids, except when they are preventing him fulfilling his potential. He really appreciates Robin, except when he really resents her. His attitude: sorry not sorry. At one point he watches as nubile young women with full breasts fool around in the sunshine, reflecting: "Four more days. Then I could go home and choke my wife."

Family, monogamy, parenthood, domesticity: all are examined, all are rejected, all are embraced. Rich wants out, but he could never imagine leaving. Unless he could start a new life, perhaps, →

with Amy, with whom he is having a secret romance. The tall, unhappy wife of an abusive billionaire, Amy is 41 years old, with three kids, one of whom is seriously ill. She is a philanthropist, an activist, a do-gooder. "She believed in prayer and public service, a certain godliness, and, even so, couldn't stop herself from texting me photos of her naked butt."

Rich thinks he loves Amy. Then again, maybe he doesn't. "I wasn't even sure if I liked her, although maybe I liked her. But did I like her because I was lonely and she was hot and rich? Or was it because I didn't get any sleep and had brain damage from speaking baby language? Or because Robin's booty had snapped back into shape but touching it was still a no-no?"

The book has some wonderful comic set-pieces. A softball match turns ugly. There is a memorable sexual encounter, conducted on heavy opioids, in the bed of a woman with a badly broken arm, to the soundtrack of "Gangnam Style": "She hugged and kissed me. I didn't know whose drool was whose. She tried swallowing my face. I fought back as best I could."

Klam's fiction gives voice to the male id, in the male idiom. It has the sweaty tang of truth

Shortly afterward, Rich remembers that his wife, back home with the kids, "was alone and sleep-deprived and doing the best she could." Charitably, he continues, "I forgave her." A paragraph later, he charitably forgives himself, too. "Sex deprivation had made me desperate, half-blind and irrationally prone to fantasy, impulse, isolation and cruelty… I lived in a sticky web of communal adaptations, minimisations, moderations. It made me cuckoo."

"All the jealousy and heartache and secret negotiations," he sighs at one point, considering his affair with Amy, "all for a hidden spooge in the dark."

"Contemporary daddy under stress" is how Rich characterises the genre of comic he imagines writing, to get himself out of the mess he's in. Is that the genre that *Who is Rich?* fits into? Is it just a self-pitying trawl through the usual middle-aged miseries, albeit a very funny one? An apologia for all the shambolic deadbeat dads?

I think it's more than that. It's a pointed portrait of the delusions of the point one per cent. (Amy is friends with Dick Cheney.) It's a satire of adult education. It's a portrait of the triumphs and disasters of modern fatherhood, and the pram in the hall. It's a How We Live Now novel, one of the best to come along in a while.

In a profile in *New York* magazine last summer, Klam explained that, contrary to legend, he hadn't actually disappeared in the Noughties, after the publication of *Sam the Cat*. He'd known where he was the whole time. He'd been living with his wife, bringing up their daughter, teaching, and trying to write. He'd begun and abandoned something, and then something else. He'd started work on the book at hand, and worried it was no good. Then he'd been told it was no good. Then he began to believe it was maybe good.

There's another cartoonist in *Who is Rich?* A younger model, Angel Solito, who is riding a wave of fame and success. Solito's bestselling graphic novel is a semiautobiographical account of the appalling depredations of his childhood as a refugee to the States from Latin America. It is a harrowing narrative of violence, squalor and loss. Solito's story is important, and valid, and it's right that he should tell it. But, as Rich reflects, "until the day people stopped wishing they could cram their spouse into a dumpster, my story was relevant, too."

After his final coupling with Amy, he is determined to make something of his infidelity. "I'd done it, I'd popped a stranger. It was time to get to work, to use my debasing experiences for the purposes of artistic advancement, in a half-true story imbued with the mysterious behaviour of actual humans, their bad decisions and perverse yearning that somehow delight us."

Yep, that pretty much nails it. What a trip Klam's novel is. What a blast. What a hoot!

Artwork 'I Loved You from the First Moment I Saw You', published in David Shrigley's new book, Fully Coherent Plan

Not so sexy Beast

British writer-director's debut drama has teeth

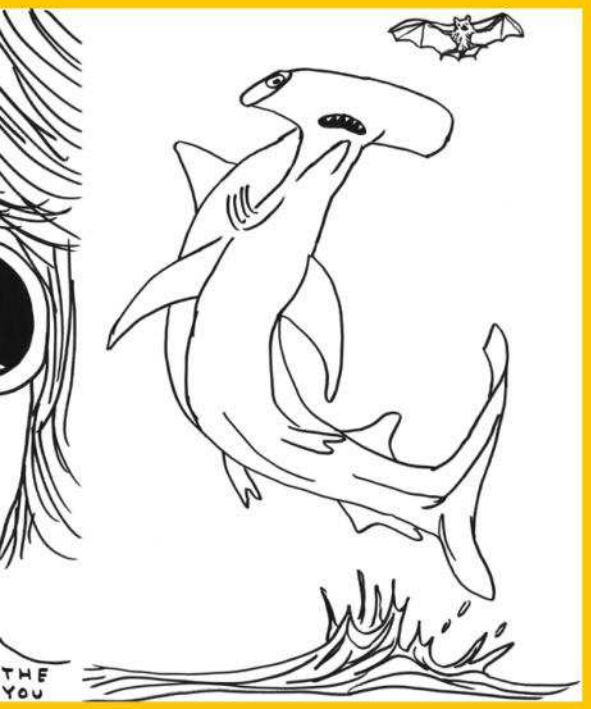
You are aware of the concept of the "meet cute". A serendipitous first encounter, often charmingly awkward, between two movie characters who will go on to fall in love. Katharine Hepburn steals Cary Grant's golf ball, Hugh Grant spills orange juice on Julia Roberts' shirt… Hilarity — and romance! — ensue.

This is not how Moll and Pascal cross paths in *Beast*, the startling feature debut of British writer-director Michael Pearce. *Beast* is not that kind of movie. It's a romance, certainly, but twisted and defiled.

Early morning on a hillside by the sea, twentysomething Moll is being sexually assaulted by a man she's just

The world in his hands

Concerned about the breakdown of society? Fear not: David Shrigley has a plan



David Shrigley has always been difficult to categorise. His scrappy, scratchy, annotated line drawings seem too surreal for him to be labelled a cartoonist, while also too humorous and self-satirising for him to be readily accepted into the ranks of contemporary artists. Does Shrigley care? Almost certainly not, as his new book, *Fully Coherent Plan* makes clear.

Over 250 pages, Shrigley draws angry faces, sinister cats, and small, flaccid penises in order to present ideas for a better society that range from absurdist satire to just plain old absurd. "I invite you to imagine a plan for a new and better society where everything is very coherent and makes a lot of sense and nothing is confusing or awful," writes Shrigley, though, of course, he intends nothing of the kind. In satirising the language of theorists and bureaucrats — the lists and diktats in this book recall both landmark political manifestos and also those "no heavy petting" signs you used to get in swimming pools — Shrigley points politely towards the ridiculous and arbitrary nature of the societal strictures by which we all abide and from which he seems so blissfully free.

—

Fully Coherent Plan (Canongate) is published on 3 May; Shrigley is also the guest director of this year's Brighton Festival, 5–27 May, *brightonfestival.org*

met in a nightclub. Pascal happens upon them while out killing rabbits. (And other things?) Handsome, rugged, blond, he fires off a warning shot and Moll's attacker flees. Pascal notices a cut on her hand and says he'll treat it. What we know, but he does not, is that the wound is self-inflicted. The previous evening, Moll had deliberately sliced herself with a broken glass. She is a troubled woman with a violent past. Spoiler alert: her future's not too sunny, either.

Pascal drives her home. Along the way they are stopped by the police. Although they've only just met, she lies about how long they've been in each other's company, apparently to prevent him being arrested for poaching. It's a curious thing to do for a number of reasons, not least because a murderer is on the loose, suffocating teenage girls by stuffing their mouths with earth. Look at Pascal's nails. Man could use a scrub.

At which point, the seasoned serial-killer-thriller viewer emits an exasperated sigh. Oh, please! Not another drama in which the plot is sparked by the brutal slayings of pretty young women, necessitating the circulation of photos of pale, unclothed female corpses in police station interview rooms, and all the other tired tropes of this increasingly threadbare genre. Oh, wait! And said crimes might have been perpetrated by a hunky psycho with sexy eyes? No, really: tell us more.

Johnny Flynn and Jessie Buckley in superior British thriller Beast

Is *Beast* another one of those exploitative wallows in human misery? No, it's better than that. Gorgeously photographed — at times, one wonders if the swooning treatment of such grisly material is almost *too* tasteful — and directed with crisp assurance, it develops into a penetrating investigation into a disturbed psyche (Moll's), a film both nightmarish and, disconcertingly, grounded in a recognisable reality.

If it does, at times, threaten to slip into hysteria, still it is anchored by terrific performances: Geraldine McEwan, as Moll's monstrous mother; Johnny Flynn as Pascal; and especially Jessie Buckley, as Moll, the small-town beauty with the wild, coppery hair. Battered by her lovers, belittled by her mother, bullied by her siblings — and yet, somehow, not defined by her victimhood. Moll is a memorable heroine and Buckley does her proud.

What will linger longest, though, of Pearce's film, is his portrait of the peculiar hell of suburban bourgeois English society, in this case on the Channel Island of Jersey, which is made to feel hellishly insular and, yes, suffocating.

These people don't need a serial killer to bury them alive. They're already six feet under.

—

Beast is out on 27 April

Beast words by Alex Bilmes

What happens next

A new show at the V&A presents the worrying future of the world in 100 objects

Abu Dhabi's planned zero-carbon community 'Masdar City', below, and Rotterdam's crowdfunded yellow bridge, bottom left, are two designs featured at the V&A's latest exhibition

It is becoming clear that the safeguarding of the future of the planet is probably best not left to politicians — especially the current lot, with their extra-itchy index fingers — which leads to the question of: well, then who? This is the fundamental theme that underlies *The Future Starts Here*, a new exhibition at the V&A in London which gathers together various solutions to issues both present and imminent, from oil slicks and DNA decoding to the rise of the robots and the human colonisation of space.

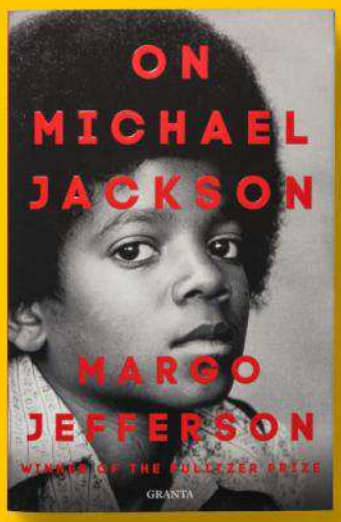
These solutions, which range from the intriguing to the borderline whacko, come from environmentalist product designers, like Hong Kong-based Cesar Harada whose robotic ship, "Protei", detects and deals with oil sheens, and inquisitive artists like Heather Dewey-Hagborg, who has created facial portraits of WikiLeaks leaker Chelsea Manning based only on samples of her DNA. They also come from citizens, like the good people of Rotterdam, who crowdfunded a cheery yellow footbridge to connect the north of the city to the down-at-heel centre, in a bid to give it a new lease of life.

And, of course, they come from technocracies. A predicted "highlight" of the exhibition will be Facebook's Aquila aircraft, a solar-powered high-altitude drone which is all part of Facebook's "efforts to bring affordable connectivity to unconnected regions around the world," and is in no way related to the relative internet saturation in the developed world and Facebook's need to create new markets and collect untapped user data in order to fulfil the needs of rapid and rabid capitalist expansion. No siree.

The future is coming, but this show will make you ponder more carefully in whose hands we should put it.

—

The Future Starts Here runs from 12 May to 4 November at the V&A, London SW7; *vam.ac.uk*



Quote of the month

A word on one MJ from another

"In retrospect, the crotch clutch seems at once desperate and abstract. It is as if he were telling us, 'Fine, you need to know I'm a man, a black man? Here's my dick: I'll thrust my dick at you! Isn't that what a black man's supposed to do? But I'm Michael Jackson, so just look but you can't touch.' It wasn't real, it was symbolic. Not a penis but a phallus."

Pulitzer Prize-winner Margo Jefferson on the move that launched a thousand groin strains, from *On Michael Jackson*, her 2006 commentary on his life and cultural influence, published in Britain for the first time to coincide with what would have been the King of Pop's 60th birthday in August. Jefferson, who picked up a National Book Critics Circle Award in America for her 2015 memoir *Negroland*, combines stark analysis with a sensible amount of perspective and compassion in the revised edition, which is too opinionated and short to be a biography, yet is also neither an attack nor apologia. Rather, it is a startlingly forthright consideration of what drove Jackson then and what drives our thinking of him now.

—

On Michael Jackson (Granta) is published on 3 May

On Michael Jackson words by Rachel Fellows

All hail the not-so-brainless blockbuster

A triumvirate of elevated action flicks are on their way

It used to be that when the Oscars were but a hazy memory and all the serious, heavyweight award-bait films had left the screens, one could count on a golden few months of brain-holiday. The release schedules would be full of indie flicks with micro marketing budgets, half-baked B-movies with somewhat more substantial ones because they boast a star-on-the-wane, and multi-million-dollar, multiplex mega-trash that could pay for the whole of Leicester Square to be painted in strawberry jam if the film's promotion required it.

No more. The traditional quality/trash cycle in the cinemas has started to soften, as epitomised by the rise of the not-so-brainless blockbuster, three cast-iron examples of which are out this month.

First up is Marvel's *Avengers: Infinity War* (out 26 April), which crams so many superheroes into one film as the Avengers team up with the Guardians of the Galaxy to defeat everyone's favourite lantern-jawed super villain, Thanos (Josh Brolin), that the poster looks like Michelangelo's "Last Judgement".

Next comes *Deadpool 2* (out 15 May), which shows once again why Ryan Reynolds might just be the sassiest thing in Hollywood right now, playing the pock-marked, potty-mouthed anti-hero as he assembles a new crew of cronies — including *Atlanta* alumna Zazie Beetz as Domino. Their foe? A new lantern-jawed super villain, Cable, played by, whaddayaknow, Josh Brolin (seriously, doesn't anyone have Ron Perlman's number?).

The identity of the bad guy in *Solo: A Star Wars Story*, a prequel to the 1977 film (out 24 May), hasn't yet been revealed but to be frank who cares, as all eyes will be on the goodies. Not just Alden Ehrenreich, tasked with capturing the Fordian twinkle, but also Emilia Clarke as his new love-hate interest, Qi'Ra, and *Atlanta* creator and all-round tortured genius Donald Glover as smuggler Lando Calrissian.

Yes they're glossy, yes they're expensive, but the early summer blockbuster has morphed into something smart, sharp and challenging. Expect to salivate, cogitate, but in no way vegetate.

Chadwick Boseman, Chris Evans, Scarlett Johansson and Sebastian Stan are just some of the stars fighting for screen time in Avengers: Infinity War

By Royal Appointment

The newlyweds of the year in the styles of the season

Illustrations by
Seth Armstrong

Fashion by
Catherine Hayward

Gucci

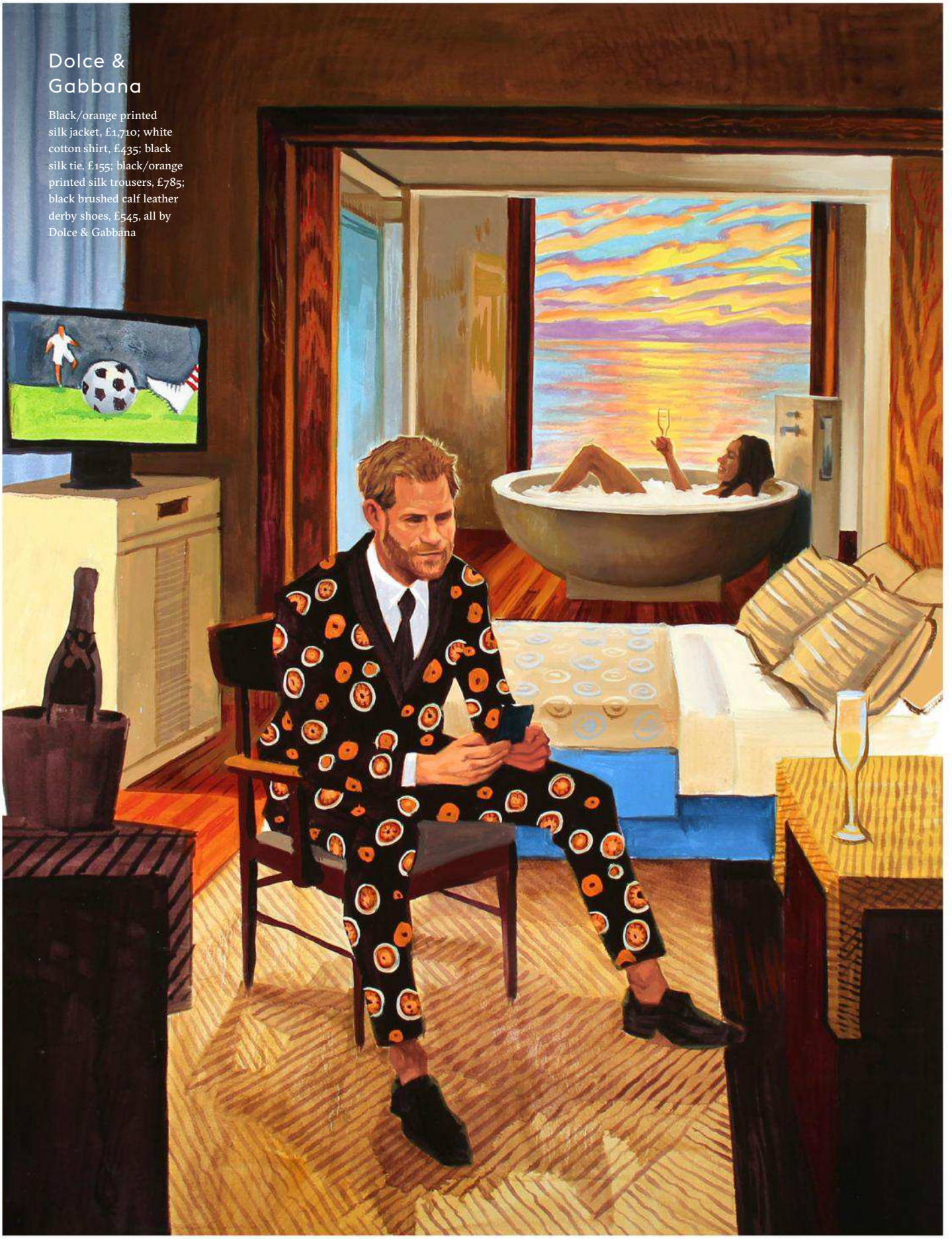
Pink gabardine jacket, £1,310; pink gabardine shirt, £355; pink silk tie, £145; pink gabardine trousers, £435; black/brown leather moccasins with tiger head detail, £715; sand ribbed cotton socks, £85

Mint green silk-crêpe-wool short sleeved jumpsuit, £2,690; multicoloured crystals/cream glass pearls/metal necklace, £1,710; multicoloured crystals/cream glass pearls/metal necklace, £2,070; black patent leather high heeled shoes, £675; blue cotton socks, £270

Beige/ebony leather-canvas carry-on, £2,070; brown/green/red leather-canvas suitcase, £3,160, all by Gucci

Dolce & Gabbana

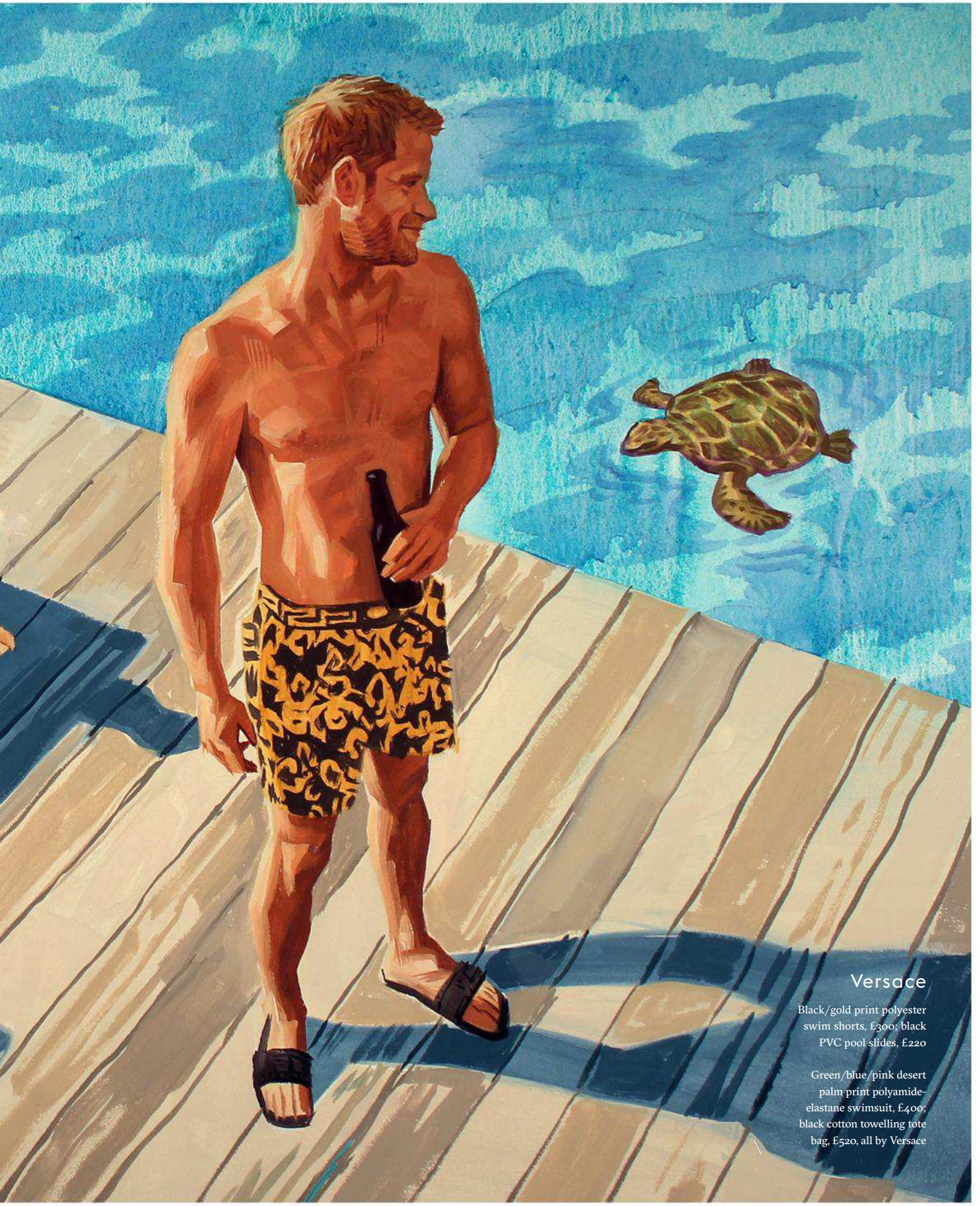
Black/orange printed silk jacket, £1,710; white cotton shirt, £435; black silk tie, £155; black/orange printed silk trousers, £785; black brushed calf leather derby shoes, £545, all by Dolce & Gabbana



Prada

Beige/burgundy striped mesh-cotton top, £470; grey gabardine-nylon shorts, £255; black leather studded sandals, £610; black/grey nylon socks, £130; blue comic print leather bag, £1,220

Blue/pink/black printed cotton sleeveless shirt, £1,160; blue/black denim shorts, £790; black leather belt, £495; black/brown studded leather shoes, £795; black/white nylon socks, £140, all by Prada



Versace

Black/gold print polyester swim shorts, £300; black PVC pool slides, £220

Green/blue/pink desert palm print polyamide-elastane swimsuit, £400; black cotton towelling tote bag, £520, all by Versace

Giorgio Armani

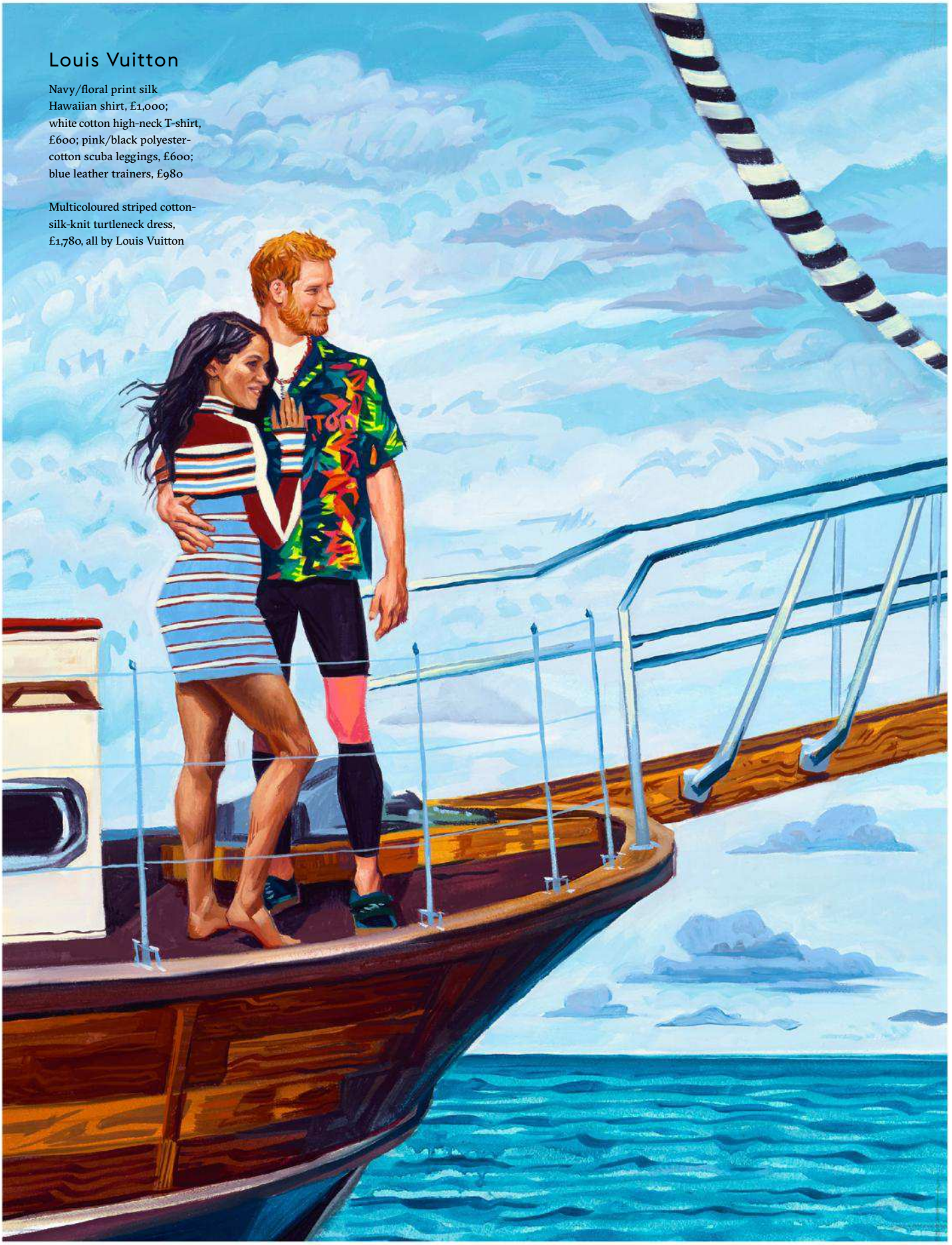
Blue cotton seersucker jacket, £900; green silk pocket square, £80; blue cotton seersucker trousers, £1,100; grey suede derby shoes, £720

Black halterneck cropped jumpsuit, £1,650; pink silk organza skirt, £860; pink/black patent leather handbag, £1,700, all by Giorgio Armani

Louis Vuitton

Navy/floral print silk Hawaiian shirt, £1,000; white cotton high-neck T-shirt, £600; pink/black polyester-cotton scuba leggings, £600; blue leather trainers, £980

Multicoloured striped cotton-silk-knit turtleneck dress, £1,780, all by Louis Vuitton



See Stockists page for details

Craft Beer Supernova

Are Britain's drinkers drowning in the unstoppable flow of independently curated, micro-batch beers and ales? Have we had a skinful of hipster hops? Not in Manchester, the city enthusiastically leading the modern beer renaissance, where *Michael Smith* finds very exciting (and strong) new things brewing

Photographs by *Baker and Evans*


BRUT
SAVOUR
2016
SPARKLING BEER
BRUT
BROOKLYN
LAGER
RED
RYE
Tripel Burner
WU GANG
CHOPS THE TREE
BROOKLYN
LAGER
355 ml/35,5 cl
THE FIVE POINTS
BREWING CO
FIELD
DAY
CITRUS
PALE
Extra Stokey Bitter
THE KERNEL
BRASSERIE
LONDON
BIÈRE DE SAISON
5.2% ABV
THE WILD BEER CO
Millionaire
SAVOUR
CRISP & ZESTY
BRITISH
SAISON
THE FIVE POINTS
BREWING CO
LONDON BREW
FIVE POINTS
PALE
URBAN
FARM
HOUSE
REDCHURCH
CLOUDWATER
DDH IPA Enigma Chinook
THE FIVE POINTS
BREWING CO
5

HAVE WE REACHED PEAK BEER? It's a question I've asked myself a lot over the last year, often on Friday afternoons, when a bewildering array of the stuff arrives in crates to the off-licence my wife and I own on the south coast. Ordering new stock has become increasingly perplexing, and I've had to cultivate my gut feeling for how demand shifts, selecting ever-changing orders from the limited editions, one-offs and collaborations between small, cutting edge artisan brewers in Britain, Scandinavia and America. These beers often sell out as fast as I order them, and then disappear, never to be offered again, popping in and out of existence like a shimmering web of quantum particles.

Sticking with the particle physics analogy, beer seems to be making a quantum leap at the moment. A new plateau is being marked out, a glorious new normal that didn't exist years ago. It's how it must have been when Dom Pérignon accidentally invented Champagne, tasting his botched wine, nearly falling off his seat, shouting, "Come quickly! I am drinking the stars!"

Each week, there may be a new marshmallow stout from Omnipollo in Stockholm, like drinking the most luxurious chocolate cake; a hazy IPA from Manchester's Cloudwater Brew Co, hopped so vividly it makes the back of your tongue zing; a juicy pale ale from Verdant, a Cornish brewer which has come from nowhere to be the hippest name in craft brewing in a year, thanks to its carefully nuanced beers as refreshing as freshly squeezed breakfast juice.

Last year, the number of UK breweries rose above 2,000 for the first time since the Thirties, with new breweries up by 64 per cent since 2012, reversing 70-plus years of much-criticised consolidation in the industry. Smaller breweries continue to reap the rewards of a tax break introduced in 2002 by then-chancellor Gordon Brown, paying 50 per cent less beer duty than larger rivals. While rising demand for craft beer has created more competition and seen big brands either buy up existing names (America's Anheuser-Busch InBev, the world's largest brewer, bought Camden Town Brewery for £85m in 2015) or launch their own (Hop House 13 lager, introduced by Guinness owner and drinks conglomerate Diageo in 2015) in an effort to join the trend, young breweries continue to launch new beers every month.

Demand for some of these blink-and-you'll-miss-them masterpieces has reached such fevered extremes I've learned to be at my laptop at the precise time my various beer suppliers post their new lists online each week. When I get the email, I ring immediately (and repeatedly) to a permanently engaged number. After finally getting through, they'll say they are very sorry but all the Omnipollo, Cloudwater and Verdant has sold out. Again.

The situation is even madder in America where a handful of beers, like Pliny the Elder from California or Heady Topper from Vermont, are so in-demand they'll never find their way onto mine, or anyone else's, wholesale list. They don't even get out of the brewery, let alone the country. Brewed in tiny quantities, they excite such hysteria that on the day of release buyers queue around the brewery fence: by lunchtime all the fresh beer's sold. In the same way most Bordeaux lovers accept they will likely never drink a Château Mouton Rothschild, I've resigned myself to accepting I will probably never taste, let alone purchase a pallet of, Heady Topper.

Not that I really need to. There's an embarrassment of riches on our doorstep. Recently, I received a one-off collaboration between Cloudwater and an obscure Danish brewery called Dry & Bitter; one sip and I instantly knew this beer was perfect. My mate came in later that day wondering what to buy. "Get this one! It's like… it's like…" I struggled to describe its next-level, future-perfect quality. "It's like Batman's car!" He texted me that night, excitedly telling me he agreed. We didn't tell anyone else about this beer, it had a low-key label and I stashed it in a quiet corner of the fridge. Between us over the following week or so we drank most of the crate, referring to it thereafter only by our codename: Batman's Car.

Batman's Car was a very fine but by no means unique example of the new kind of beer that's largely been driving the current surge: "double dry hopped" or "New England" style pale ales and IPAs, that insanely juicy, hazy style you've probably come across that seems halfway between a hoppy modern ale and a foodie version of Fruit Salad chews and Lilt soft drink. People go crazy for the stuff, and whenever I get a load in the shop it's like feeding time at the zoo. As with most desirable artisan products it's not cheap: the good gear is around six quid a can, but no one seems to mind and customers regularly buy 40-quid selections.

In America, a handful of craft beers are so in-demand they don't even get out of the brewery, let alone the country. Brewed in tiny quantities, they excite such hysteria that on the day of release, buyers queue around the brewery fence: by lunchtime all the fresh beer's sold

As both a craft beer believer and a shopkeeper whose business is currently buffeted along by the unrelenting novelty and excitement of one-off and small-batch brews, I keep wondering (and worrying) if the wave's going to break any time soon. Can brewers keep on upping the ante indefinitely, or is the uncharted deliciousness of these beers approaching its upper limits? Will the novelty wear off?

I WAS THINKING ABOUT THIS WHEN I WENT TO MANCHESTER, one of the cities leading the current craft brewing revolution, to gauge where we're at as a beer culture, and what might be coming next. Not least from the aforementioned Cloudwater Brew Co which, since it was established in 2014, has more than any other defined the new direction beer has taken in the UK. Its DIPAs (Double IPAs up to nine per cent ABV) were instant classics brewed in Britain and ever since it has been running with the baton. Recently voted second-best brewery in the world by America's most influential craft beer site RateBeer, Cloudwater last year made national headlines when a London pub priced pints of Cloudwater Double IPA at £13.40. (Connoisseurs pointed out this was misleading as it should really be served in half- or third-pints due to its nine per cent alcohol strength.) So in-demand are Cloudwater's limited-edition batches of beer, I'm over the moon when I get my hands on a case or two, but loads inevitably fall through the net. They have a tap room in Manchester in the railway arches at the back of Piccadilly Station, a place talked about in reverential tones, and I couldn't wait to drink at this font of wisdom.

Dave Alexander | Additional beers from Borough Wines

Port Street Beer House in Manchester's Northern Quarter serves artisan beers brewed in Bradford, Macclesfield and Leeds

I wiled away the pleasant train journey through the Midlands alongside the early industrial relics of the Grand Union Canal, browsing the website of my favourite clothes shop, Oi Polloi, the Manc emporium for the bloke who likes clever, well-considered functional clothing. Its site is a treasure trove, and I soon got sucked into an essay by Eddy Rhead about post-war Italian design: "Italian design works best when it's aimed at the masses. You can keep your ostentatious Ferraris and your unaffordable Dolce & Gabbana, I'd much rather drive around in an old Fiat 500 with a fresh pair of white Superga on my feet, maybe stop off at a bar for a cheeky Cinzano, then tap out a couple of chapters of a novel on my portable Olivetti Valentine."

Halfway through reading, it struck me that a knowledgeable essay on the history of post-war Italian architecture and design was unusual to find on a clothes shop's website, before it dawned on me it was a very Manchester thing to find on a Manchester clothes shop's website. It is the city that in the 1790s built the first factory, a vast cotton mill in Ancoats that became the template for functional industrial design for the century to come. Then 180 years later, it gave us Factory Records, with the clarity and precision of Peter Saville's record sleeves, and the exposed steel girders, cats' eyes on the dance floor and black and yellow warning chevrons of the Haçienda club, where Manchester's industrial functionalism was re-imagined as something hedonistic, glamorous and democratic — the spirit of the city itself.

Suddenly, it made perfect sense that Cloudwater's intelligent design aesthetic would emerge from here. Instead of a skull and crossbones or some other try-hard rock 'n' roll affectation on your beer can, here is a drink in a bare aluminium tube, adorned with a sparse white label with a restrained flourish of painterly colour, boxed off in a tight rectangle in the middle, the name Cloudwater in a supremely sensible sans-serif typeface below it.

Aside from the amazing juicy flavours they've created, the brewery's aesthetic packaging was a breath of fresh air when Cloudwater Brew Co launched four years ago. Beer was at a stage where the spurious heritage branding of Bishop's Fingers or Hobgoblins had been superseded by that equally inauthentic tattoo/graffiti/Harley-Davidson look that still puts me off even the best American craft beers. Cloudwater ditched all that, taking its name from a Zen Buddhist phrase *unsui*, "cloud, water", used to describe a wandering novice who has undertaken training "to drift like clouds and flow like water". Everything about a can of Cloudwater says here is a thinking man's beer. This is beer as a design for life, the kind of craft beer Le Corbusier might drink.

Excitement rose in the pit of my stomach as I stepped out of Piccadilly station into an unfamiliar world of trams, canals and massive brick buildings. In my hotel room I turned on the oversized plasma screen, serendipitously to ITV3 and a shot of the big, foamy head on a nut-brown pint of traditional Northern bitter being poured by a scowling, much younger Jack Duckworth: "What's up with you tonight? You've got a face like a gas man's mask," said a youthful, surprisingly sexy Bet Lynch, big Eighties' gold earrings and bigger Eighties' gold hair, and it surprised me to find I fancied her now we were the same age. Next to the TV was a framed black and white historic photo of the area behind the hotel showing a chimney with the word Boddingtons in white letters down its side. No wonder they make great beer here these days, this city is steeped in the stuff. It oiled the wheels of the world's first industrial metropolis, flowing like a canal through its working class culture and mythology. I wanted a pint made in this capital of beer. I left the unpacking and made a beeline for the Northern Quarter. →

Small Vic Secret Pale by Cloudwater Brew Co, a young brewery at the heart of Manchester's craft beer revolution

I HEADED FIRST TO THE PORT STREET BEER HOUSE, a tiny little pub I'd heard good things about from its instrumental role in the Independent Manchester Beer Convention, one of the UK's most forward-thinking craft beer festivals. Happily, even though this pub may be a contemporary craft beer Mecca, it maintains the tradition of Northern boozers: friendly drinkers of varying stripe all happy to be in it. I got a stool by the bar in the middle of the convivial throng and instantly felt at home. Looking over the casks and kegs, I was pleased to see beer from small Northern artisan breweries — Bradford, Macclesfield, Leeds, some I'd heard of, some not. Living on the south coast, it was a very pleasant novelty.

For the first beer of my adventure I fancied something from Track, a Manchester brewery I'd never tried. The pub had on its session pale called Sonoma. "Do you want it on keg or cask?" the barmaid asked, a question I'm not used to. As owner of a small bottle shop stocking mainly cans and a couple of beers on keg, I presumed (wrongly) that craft beer comes in little plastic kegs, while real ale had to be cask-conditioned, not expecting the modern stuff to come hand-pulled from those lovely big old wooden hand pumps, too. "Is it nice on cask?" I asked, incredulously. "It's gorgeous on cask," she said, "give it a go." "Why not?" I said, not sure what to expect.

That sweet golden nectar wet my thirsty lips, and like a minor epiphany, made me instantly reevaluate my ideas about what craft beer could be. Something about it being pulled in the old-fashioned way, giving a warmer, flatter beer, brings rounded, mellow depths to the flavour I would never expect from modern pales, which often as not are all about a big juicy slap round the chops, sometimes at the expense of the subtler flavours inherent in the marriage of malt and hops. This beer seemed to pull off balancing both. I scrabbled around well-worn, go-to descriptions of modern pales: fruit salad, yes; grassy, floral notes, yes; resiny note of pine, yes, slightly. It did all the modern things but what made the Track so interesting was I could also taste the complexity of traditional hops. It was like craft beer in real ale's clothing — The Stone Roses' first album snuck in between The Beatles' catalogue. This beer transcended the disconnect between real ale and craft beer, distilling the history of Northern brewing culture into one pint.

Obviously, being warmer and less fizzy than keg beers, but also intriguing and totally delightful, it was gone before I knew it. For the sake of comparison I got a half of it from the keg which was indeed lovely, more like the grapefruity juice bombs that fly out of my shop: refreshing, sharp, but what I've come to expect. The cask version seemed unique, though, and I found myself thinking about it the whole time I was in Manchester (and even later, back at home down south, I wished I could taste it again).

On the barmaid's recommendation, I went off to sample another hand-pulled pale that was fresh as a daisy in a grassy field at The Smithfield Market Tavern, the Blackjack Brewery pub around the corner, which again combined a thirst for the highest caliber of artisan beer with the welcoming vibes of a proper pub. The Northern Quarter has no shortage of cocktail lounges with as much character as trendy hotel lobbies, but what I loved about its beer culture is that it's still squarely anchored in the city's pub culture: it's central, sacred, part of the warp and weft of old Cottonopolis, where beer is a sacrament with the pub the temple. True, the Smithfield might be the kind of boozer that has imperial milk stouts as rich as Christmas cake on tap, but boozer it squarely was. This is exactly the balancing act Manchester pulls off so well and for me makes it such a special place.

This city's come up with the coolest, cleverest take on that most quotidian, industrialised product, beer, transmuting it into a refined gourmet speciality that can rival fine wine in its subtlety and deliciousness, but still retain its accessible, democratic quality. In a lot of ways, the redefinition and ascent of Manchester over the last 30 years is a good analogy for the redefinition and ascent of beer.

"The Cloudwater I've come to drink and the city that produced it are metaphors for each other," I thought to myself in that tipsy way as, lost, I searched for the tap room behind Piccadilly station, taking wrong canal bridges, led on by a sliver of light emanating from the almost-shut concertina doors of an abandoned-looking railway arch, the only clue I was nearing my goal…

Manchester has come up with the coolest, cleverest take on that most quotidian, industrialised product, beer, transmuting it into a refined gourmet speciality that can rival fine wine in its subtlety and deliciousness, but still retain its accessible, democratic quality

Setting foot in the Cloudwater tap room, I sensed immediately I was on hallowed ground: the tall, narrow railway arch going back deep like a church nave, clad in corrugated white metal sheeting, gently lit with soft white light. Eight or nine of the world's best beers were on tap at the sparse white bar, and more variations of them in minimalist white cans in the large white minimalist fridge by the Scandinavian-style tables. I felt as if I was somewhere on the last leg of a journey between Ikea and heaven. I bought a pint, a double dry hopped pale made with Ekuanot hops, sat down and, gazing up at the huge oak barrels stacked in graceful, simple geometry along the corrugated nave walls, fell strangely silent.

I WOKE UP IN THAT HAPPY, forgetful place, eyes still shut, chuffed to be wrapped up in my bed at home, grateful for the extra minutes of slumber before my toddler barged in. When I opened my eyes, they stung, and I was surprised to recognise the plush, neutral hotel room, all the lights still on. "Shit, I'm in Manchester." I still had my clothes on. I felt my head throb. Then I noticed the opened can of Cloudwater IPA El Dorado on the bedside table. I shook it to find it had about three sips out of it. I had to laugh to think I'd travelled from Hastings on some bong-eyed grail quest to drink this stuff, and here it was, wasted on the bedside table with barely one swig gone from it, and me equally wasted in jeans, trainers and a crumpled shirt.

I looked at my notepad to piece together what had happened. The notes, exponentially spidery and more incoherent as the evening wore on, ended with me sitting in silence admiring the barrels in the Cloudwater tap room. The broad brushstrokes of the evening came back: chatting to the lads running the bar over the following beer or two, enjoying the conversation a lot; one of them used to run the pub in Salford every Manc I'd asked had told →

From left: Café Beermoth on Brown Street, Manchester; The Marble Arch Inn on Rochdale Road

me I must visit (I ran out of time), and he had a great overview of the city's beer culture. I wish I could remember more. Maybe I loved being at this font of wisdom a bit too much. The bar had two DIPAs on that night, both eight or nine per cent game-changers Cloudwater is most famed for, brewed specifically for its third anniversary and, obviously, beers I was most looking forward to sampling. The problem is they're so juicy and tasty and easy to drink, you forget they're strong enough to sedate a horse, and you down them like a thirsty child necking a smoothie. Funny fragments came back to me throughout the day, including a listen to L Ron Hubbard's album, and later on, an answer to my peak beer question — but more of that later.

A few flat whites, paracetamol and a restorative fry-up/smashed avocado combo at a fashionable all-day brunch joint later, I was ready to leave the charmed circle of the revitalised city centre and cross over to the wrong side of the ring road, into an urban landscape of as-yet-ungentrified red-brick warehouses and light industrial units, the way the heart of Manchester must have looked before Factory's Tony Wilson and Peter Saville reimagined it. I traversed the forlorn, windswept road through parts of town tourists like me fear to tread, looking for one of the jewels in Manchester's beery crown, The Marble Arch Inn. The Marble Brewery was there at the start — many would argue it *was* the start — of Manchester's craft beer renaissance. It certainly has the most handsome pub.

Sitting in a nook on an old oak armchair, sipping an Earl Grey IPA, admiring the mosaic floor sloping from the front door down to the bar (in the old days, beer barrels were rolled down it), and the fine emerald tile work above the roaring fire extending up the wall to an ornate Arts & Crafts ceiling where flowering hops wound around words like Ale, Porter and Whiskies in intricate arabesques, I thought how easy it is to get swept up in the novelty of craft beer, forgetting the rich history it draws on. There's a story about Marble and Boddingtons that illustrates the point: when Boddingtons' owners decided to move its brewery in Strangeways to Wales, Mancunians stopped drinking the beer. Marble decided to brew a beer as close as possible to the original Boddingtons recipe, from before it started mucking about with it in the Seventies, streamlining it, smoothing out its renowned bitterness into something more creamy and bland, the beer Melanie Sykes advertised, the can you could find in every corner shop fridge. Marble still makes its Manchester Bitter but, interestingly, its head brewer set up Cloudwater shortly afterwards, resetting all expectations of what beer can be with those crazy DIPAs. As much as these beers are driving off confidently into the future, there's always one eye on the rear view mirror.

"IF I HAVE SEEN FURTHER, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants," Sir Isaac Newton said of his revolutionary scientific discoveries. Many things on my trip — the Track Sonoma on cask, the Smithfield tavern, Manchester Bitter in the Arts & Crafts pub — had suggested this was also true of craft beer, but just how profoundly the glories of the past affect beer at its most cutting edge hit home as I sat in Café Beermoth, over in the glitzy part of town. While drinking and pondering my chalice of Cantillon, a Belgian classic, one of the most revered and romanticised beers in the world; like Proust and his madeleine sponge cake, the flight of ideas evoked by this most beautiful of beers nudged my memory, and I remembered the most important thing I'd learned, and temporarily forgotten, in the Cloudwater tap room the night before...

Café Beermoth is a remarkable establishment where upon entering I'd been presented with a 10-page menu, consisting mainly of hard-to-find,

‘We’re nowhere near peak beer,’ the Cloudwater barmen told me in no uncertain terms. ‘That plateau you’re on about is just a bit of time to take stock. We’re still in the foothills, looking up at the mountain. We’re just getting started’

esoteric styles of beer that play around with wild yeasts. I’ve been to bars in London and Brussels with long beer menus, but never one with the front to present an encyclopaedic list almost exclusively made up of aromatic saisons and sours, though Beermoth also has a vast range of weird, frontier-territory, rustic concoctions made by bearded, vegan alchemists in the back roads of Oregon or Vermont.

These beers represent a different stream to the juicy pales already mentioned. If those DDH pales are the bright lights and busy action shimmering on the surface of contemporary beer culture, then wild beers are the shadier depths, a dark magic few people know about and fewer understand. Sour, musty, almost cider-like, they are fermented with often ambient yeasts, the microfauna floating in the air of the local ecosystem the beer’s brewed in, finding its way into the liquid of its own accord and fermenting spontaneously. Saisons, called farmhouse ales in America, are somewhere between ales and sours, brews that have picked up wild yeasts such as brettanomyces along the way, bringing a funk and complexity you might euphemistically describe as “barnyard-y”. “Brett” as it’s known, was traditionally regarded as a taint in beer and wine, a micro-organism that got into the nooks and crannies of old oak barrels and was impossible to get rid of; it has, however, long been the secret ingredient in a few of the world’s great wines and beers, some of the best Rhônes and Burgundies, and Orval, a Belgian ale brewed in a Trappist abbey riddled with the stuff.

This is brewing as mysterious alchemy, beer at its most artisanal and trickiest to get right, a labour of love for the brewer, an occult art known only to initiates and therefore beer at its rarest and most expensive; connoisseurs’ beer. In my shop, they’re also a bastard to shift, but I love them and make a point of stocking them, knowing they’ll stubbornly gather dust — fortunately, improving all the while, in some cases for decades — until some weirdo surprises me by buying a dozen bottles.

At Café Beermoth, I ordered that bottle of Cantillon, a sour often called the Champagne of Brussels, arrived at by the subtle blending of one-, two-, and three-year-old spontaneously fermenting lambics to create a second fermentation in the bottle, resulting in a gueuze that to me is a much more beautiful drink than Dom Pérignon’s invention. Eleven quid for a standard-sized beer bottle, a beer that came with its own chalice, into which flowed an elixir of life; a beer that by some improbable miracle made itself in curious ways in the dusty baroque attic of a brewery in Brussels.

As I drank it, tasting sherbet and honeycomb, I remembered the Cloudwater staff telling me about their favourite customer, a bloke in a Stone Island jacket who always drank their newest DIPA, and also generously shared the various Cantillons he’d bring back from weekends in Brussels. The man only ever seemed to drink Cloudwater DIPAs and Cantillons, one of the world’s best modern beers and one of the world’s best ancient ones. I wish he’d been in the night I was there. How did he get it so right?

Then I remembered more. The Cloudwater barmen had decisively answered my question to them about whether we’d hit peak beer. They became serious, even earnest: “We’re nowhere near peak beer,” I was told in no uncertain terms. “That plateau you’re on about is just a bit of time to take stock. We’re still in the foothills, looking up at the mountain. The vision here at Cloudwater is a long term one, a 20-year, even 30-year one. Look at all these barrels here, man,” one gestured at the barrels filling the vault. “These are all old oak Burgundy barrels for ageing beer in.”

The significance slowly dawned on me. My first love was wine, Burgundy in particular, and on closer inspection the barrels were stamped with names like Mersault, Gevrey-Chambertin, Vosne-Romanée, the noblest wines of Burgundy, the kind you cannot help but fall in love with. I was in awe. I wasn’t just looking at barrels to keep beer in, I was looking at time, evolution, the alchemy of the ageing process, and the promise of perfection; in these ancient oak wine barrels, I was looking at the future of English beer.

“I just thought these were all beer barrels with stuff fermenting in them for a couple of weeks,” I’d said.

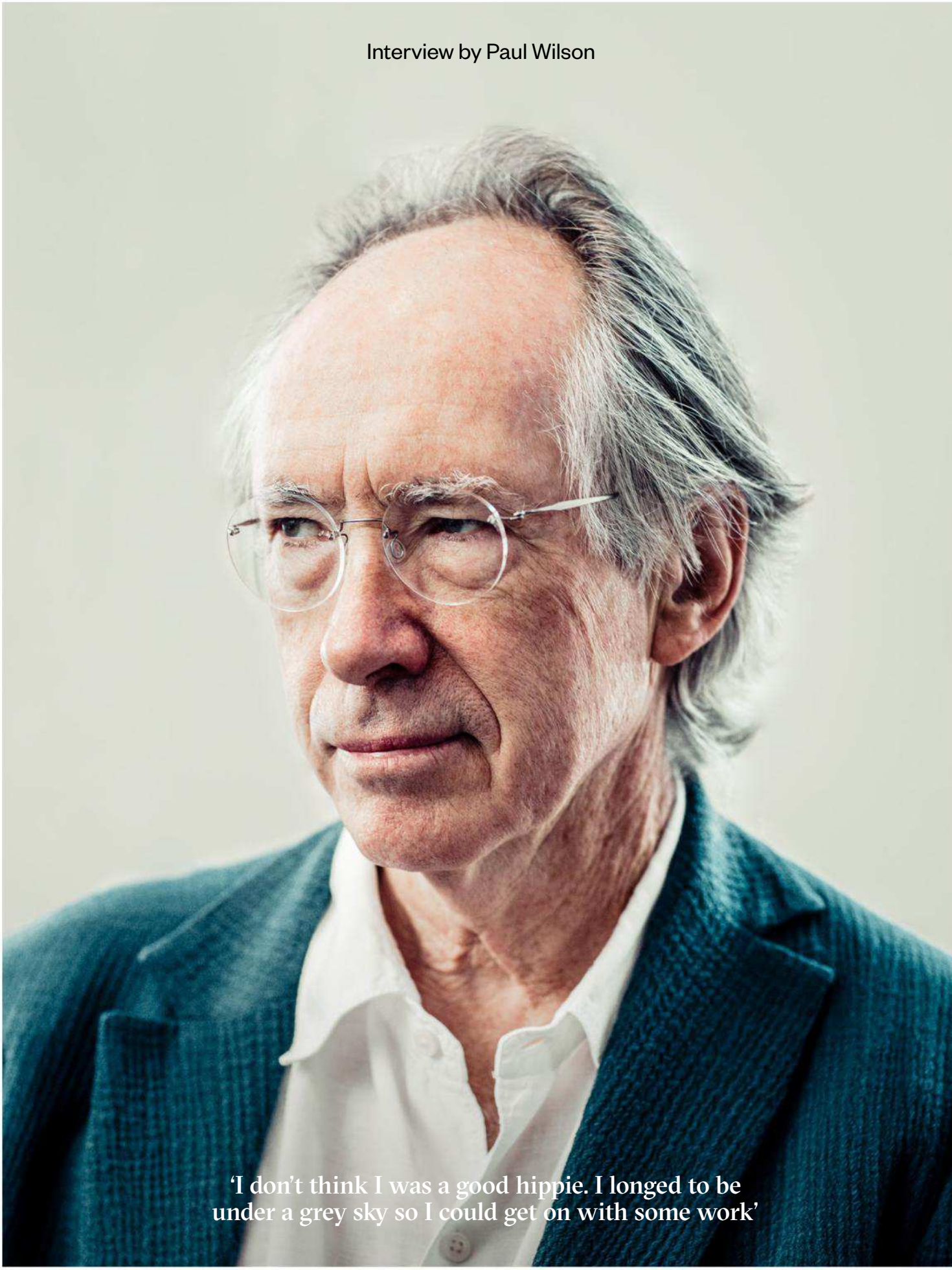
“No, there’s beers in these barrels that’ll stay there for years, soaking up all those rich Burgundy depths; each barrel will end up making something a bit different, some might have a bit of wild brett living in there, giving a bit of funk, and we’ll blend a bit of this one with a bit of that one, an old one with a young one, just like they would do somewhere like Cantillon, finding out by trial and error what the most amazing combinations are, till we’re making something amazing and totally new, reinventing what they’ve been perfecting at places like Cantillon or Orval for hundreds of years.

“Imagine it,” he’d continued. “This ancient art they’ve always had in Belgium but with all these mad new juicy flavours we’ve got into nowadays! No one knows what’ll come out of it yet, but we do know it’ll be a very different beast from that DIPA you’re drinking now, and we know it’ll be gorgeous. We’re nowhere near peak beer. We’re just getting started.” It was just about the best answer I could have hoped for.

A little while later, Manchester’s post-industrial skyline was receding from the train window as we pulled out south over what must have been Cloudwater’s arches, beneath which its Burgundy barrels were ageing beers of the future. Time for a can of beer from those I’d procured from various spots around town — for research purposes, of course. I chose Pompettes, a collaboration between Cloudwater and Brasserie du Mont Salève, a microbrewery new to me, from Lyon, France. Expensive, it was the one in the tap room’s big white fridge the barmen seemed most excited about. I opened it as Stockport gave way to the rolling North West countryside, savouring every mouthful, a hint of wild yeast in its mellow, gentle farmyard funk giving way unexpectedly to vivid strawberries and cream on the finish.

The veil momentarily lifted and I got a brief glimpse of the mountain peak those visionaries back under the railway arches have their sights set on. I’d never tasted anything quite like it before. I wondered what their most cutting edge beer might taste like in 2020, 2030 or 2040. I’m over the moon to tell you, I have absolutely no idea. □

Interview by Paul Wilson



‘I don’t think I was a good hippie. I longed to be under a grey sky so I could get on with some work’

Ian McEwan

Writer, 69

MY GENERATION has been extraordinarily lucky: increasing prosperity, technological optimism. I was the first person in any direction of my family to go to university, or even stay on at school past 16. And as a writer, I lived through that moment where publishing cast off its rather dusty, constrained gentlemanly quality. My children will struggle hard to have as many opportunities. I do worry about that. The whole idea of work is up for grabs, an ongoing discussion among radical economists. Automation and AI are coming and to do nothing about them is not a choice.

THE LAST TIME I WENT ON A MARCH was about a year ago. There was a women's march with a very anti-Trump atmosphere. I hadn't planned to go, but I was with my wife and we saw it and stepped into it and were surrounded by people we knew. It was a nice feeling.

IT IS A BIT OF A PROBLEM that the machine that was once your typewriter is now a portal to practically everything. Two-and-a-half hours on Wikipedia used to be called "wilfing" — what I'm looking for. But I can be mid-sentence in a novel and think, "I need information". In the Eighties, that would have been visiting a library. Now it's 90 seconds. So it balances out.

I'VE NEVER BEEN UNWELCOME on the set of a film I've worked on, but it's somewhat pointless being there as a writer if things are going well. You're the only person without a job.

I'M A BIT FEEBLE ON PERSISTENCE, so I will often watch about seven episodes of a TV series and no more. I watched nearly all of *Breaking Bad* and thought it was a work of genius. That did not impel me to watch all of it.

YOU HIT YOUR SIXTIES AND SEVENTIES and there is the danger of becoming less thought-rich. The brain is not as muscular as it was. There is a slow brain death and no amount of Sudoku is going to get you off the hook. The thing you want to keep alive more than anything in the mental realm is curiosity. As long as you've got active hunger about things in the world, then if you can't remember something, you can find out. If you lose your hunger for finding out, you might as well go somewhere and sunbathe. That is what I'm determined to avoid.

I LOVE BEING A GRANDAD. Wonderful to see consciousnesses blossom.

IN MY MID-FORTIES, I COULD STILL PLAY A GOOD GAME OF SQUASH and I had the illusion I had the same body as I had when I was 28. Although all that was ruined for me on the 40th anniversary of the four-minute mile, when the fathers of the boys at my sons' school ran a mile on the very same track at Oxford. I used to do a pretty good mile, just over five minutes. I thought, "I'm going to show these bastards." We went off at a real lick and I ran myself into the ground: seven-and-a-half minutes. Yet I still played a good game of squash. In terms of subjective feeling, I didn't feel much different than in my mid-twenties.

IF THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIKING AND WALKING, it's intent. Hiking in cold weather and in mountains, you can't afford not to be extremely well-equipped.

ACROSS ENGLAND AND TO SOME EXTENT WALES, every village is connected by a footpath. Still. You can drive 20 miles out of London and be on the North Downs on a footpath that has been trudged for maybe 1,000 years. You can't find that in the States. It's all fences and "Keep out" signs until you get to a national or state park. I've come to value the sense that "this is your country and you can walk through it." Admittedly only on footpaths, but still there is a sense of connection to the land. The psychogeographic tingle is important, and I don't get it in Upstate New York.

FOR ABOUT SIX MONTHS IN 1972, I WAS ON THE HIPPIE TRAIL in a bus with two American friends. Kabul, Kandahar, Iraq, Mazar-i-Sharif, Jalalabad. I don't think I was a good hippie. I longed to be under a grey sky so I could think straight and get on with some work.

I HAVEN'T WRITTEN ALL THE SCREENPLAYS FOR THE FILMS of my novels because I was busy writing other novels. I did so with *On Chesil Beach* because now I'm in the position to choose, which is a rather nice position to be in.

MY LATE FRIEND CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS once said to me, when I asked about happiness, that his ideal was "to work all day on my own in the knowledge that I will be spending the evening with interesting friends." That's the perfect balance. Cooking and knowing someone is coming to eat. Round about 7pm, some music, a sharp knife, red wine, an ancient chopping board. It's a moment for turning off. My two sons are very competitive about who makes the best roast potatoes. I do.

READING SEX MANUALS IN MY TEENS, the word "enter" I thought was hilarious. "Enter."

I WROTE A SEQUEL TO *THE FLY*, *Flies*. I still think it's one of the best things I've written. I love *The Fly*. It earned its horror. When Jeff Goldblum's jaw comes off, it's for a reason. I wrote the sequel for Geena Davis. I made sure it was science-based. What happens is Davis gives birth to twins, they grow up into two perfectly horrible American teenagers, and all the time you're thinking they are flies. Sure enough, slowly, they turn into flies. But, some disagreement occurred, I don't know the details, between Davis and 20th Century Fox. They each own half the concept of *The Fly*, and neither can move on it without the other's permission. This is what happens in Hollywood.

I CAN GET BY WITHOUT READING REVIEWS [OF MY NOVELS] any more. Don't need to do that. It's easier to read reviews of your films. With a film, so many people are involved that if the film is being pissed on, all the pee is being spread around 200 people. □

On Chesil Beach is in cinemas on 18 May

Portrait by Sophia Spring

Edited by
MIRANDA COLLINGE

Breton shirts! Municipal lidos! Tasselled loafers! Massive sunroofs! Ryan Gosling! Yes, we're calling it: spring is here, and to celebrate we bring you our 20-page guide to getting the best out of the most propitious season of them all. So, put your tinted sunglasses on and get ready for the Esquire Spring Style Special...

SEE GREAT NEW ART IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS

If, as Mark Twain had it, golf is a good walk spoiled, outdoor art is a good walk heightened: a chance to take a stroll around a beautiful landscape that just so happens to have some striking and important exhibitions plonked in the middle of it. This spring, there's a better haul than ever, stretching the length of the country. Up in Scotland, Phyllida Barlow will be unveiling a new work, "Quarry", to mark the 10th anniversary of Jupiter Artland, the revered sculpture park outside Edinburgh (and if her majestic and witty pavilion at last year's Venice Biennale is anything to go by, it'll be a knock-out). Meanwhile, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, at which James Turrell's "Deer Shelter Skyspace" is worth the trip alone, will be hosting an exhibition of Italian artist Giuseppe Penone — and what that man can't do with a tree and a block of marble isn't worth doing. Even London is getting a dose of headline-grabbing al fresco art, when the grand-daddy of large-scale outdoor installations, Christo (above), opens a show at the Serpentine Gallery, complete with a gigantic floating tomb of oil drums in the middle of the Serpentine lake. Boom.

Phyllida Barlow's site-specific commission 'Quarry' will be unveiled on 12 May at Jupiter Artland, Bonnington House Steadings, Edinburgh EH27 8BY, *jupiterartland.org*; 'Giuseppe Penone: a Tree in the Wood' opens 26 May at Yorkshire Sculpture Park, West Bretton, Wakefield WF4 4LG, *ysp.org.uk*; 'Christo and Jeanne-Claude' opens 20 June at Serpentine Gallery, Kensington Gardens, London W2, *serpentinegalleries.org*

LIGHTEN YOUR SUIT FOUR WAYS

1. SEERSUCKER

The benefits of seersucker are abundant. Its texture allows for easier air flow around your body, plus it doesn't catch the light like other fabrics. It also has a bit of stretch, so it's more comfortable, and works when the jacket is less structured (as summer tailoring should be).

2. CHINO

A common misconception is a chino suit must be beige but labels as such as Pal Zileri and Canali attest, it doesn't. It just needs to be cotton. The original beige is especially preppy — à la Benjamin Braddock — if that's the end goal, but those in unorthodox colours like dark green or ochre bring an added touch of Italian insouciance.

3. LINEN

Lots of pitfalls here but the key is to avoid anything too pale and baggy. You don't want to look like you're in a cult, or own a set of Mallorcan wine bars. Look for a linen suit to be cut slimmer than usual. It will also crease easily (unless you get something in a linen-silk or linen-cotton mix), though it is by far the best fabric for keeping cool.

4. UNLINED

Our pick of the four styles: the lack of lining means the jacket will drape better and feel more like you are wearing another, slightly thicker shirt — although that will give off a more casual, leisurely vibe. If the weave of the fabric is loose, such as a hopsack, then air can circulate with ease.

1

1. Blue cotton seersucker suit, £790, by Gieves & Hawkes. Navy/white striped Ami de Coeur long-sleeved T-shirt, £180, by Ami. Brown suede loafers, £420, by Tod's

2

2 . Beige Italian cotton chino jacket £300; matching trousers £160, both by J Crew. Blue cotton-linen grandad shirt, £155, by Sunspel. Black leather Jimmy sandals, £385, by Saint Laurent

Snappy dresser: Jean-Paul Belmondo

3

3. Beige linen-wool-silk deconstructed suit, £2,860, by Brunello Cucinelli. Ecru knit polo shirt, £165, by Sandro. Dark brown polished leather derby shoes, £530, by Church's

4

4. Petrol blue wool-silk-linen Kei travel suit, £1,350, by Canali. Pale blue cotton shirt, £195, by Alfred Dunhill. Navy/cream striped silk-linen-blend tie, £135, by Drake's @ Mr Porter. White leather-mesh trainers, £420, by Maison Margiela @ Mr Porter

Getty | See Stockists page for details

FEEL BETTER ABOUT YOUR LIFE BY LOOKING THROUGH ROSE-TINTED GLASSES, LITERALLY

Tortoiseshell-acetate frame with pink lens, £275, by Oliver Peoples Pour Berluti

Gold metal frame with blue lens, £145, by Ray-Ban

SCRAP THE BBQ AND THROW A SWEDISH MIDSUMMER PARTY

HERE'S CHEF NIKLAS EKSTEDT — AT WHOSE FAMED STOCKHOLM RESTAURANT, EKSTEDT, EVERYTHING IS COOKED IN, ON, OR AROUND FIRE — TO TELL YOU HOW:

"Midsummer is a festivity that goes way back in time, long before Christianity. It is held on the weekend closest to the summer solstice and this year it will be Saturday, 23 June. It's a little bit debated exactly where it originates, but it's definitely a celebration of flowers and fertility and summertime. It's a late, long lunch, outside, with music, drink and food. Christmas is for family, but Midsummer is for friends. You definitely have more hangovers after Midsummer."
(See left and right for what you'll need.)

HERRING

"Always in Sweden when there's a celebration there's herring. We don't have much of an imagination. Depending on where in Scandinavia you are, you have a different version of pickled herring: in Stockholm it's clear with onion and pepper, and in Northern Sweden it's more fermented and you eat it with flatbread and raw onions and sour cream. I like it all."

GRAVADLAX

"You don't forget gravadlax: cured salmon. That's very important."

NEW POTATOES

"Boiled. With dill."

MEAT

"Next you have grilled food, usually cooked outside on a coal barbecue. You save up and get something special, maybe some kind of beef or veal. At my house, we usually do lamb — racks, or half a lamb butchered up into pieces. We flavour it with fresh herbs, fry it in oil in a cast iron pan and put the pan into a fire of birch wood."

ASPARAGUS

"We grill the spears over the fire, raw."

STRAWBERRIES

"At Midsummer, all Swedes want potatoes, strawberries and asparagus, but they're not always there in time. It's tabloid news if the strawberries can make it. Traditionally, it's strawberries and cream, but we do mixed sugars: basil, mint and pepper."

DRINK

"You think?! We're Swedes. When I was growing up, it was beer and aquavit. Nowadays, you see young people drinking summer wines — Gewürztraminer and rosé — but I don't think we could get my dad to drink rosé. I do a little bit of both: schnapps with the herring, then beer, then a glass of red wine."

SONG

"At Midsummer, there's a lot of singing. A lot of singing. The songs are mostly about spring, and alcohol: "empty the glass", or "drink it straight up", that kind of thing. Then there's a really strange one about dancing like a frog. It goes back to taking the piss out of the French, I think. I love Midsummer but I think it is one of those traditions where foreigners are like, 'What the fuck?' I even feel it myself sometimes."

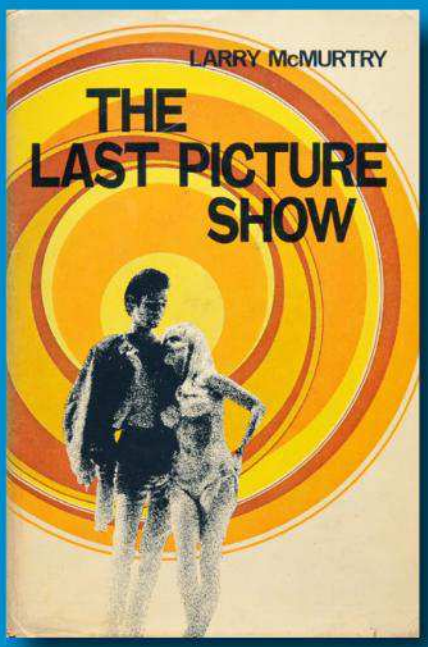
– Ekstedt, Humlegårdsgatan 17, Stockholm; *ekstedt.nu*

A bit *Inherent Vice*, a bit *Miami Vice*, a bit *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City*, this spring's in-demand shades are large of lens, bold of frame and tinted in slightly debauched, but very cool, semi-transparent red, amber, blue and green. Once the trademark of gonzo reporter Hunter S Thompson, the tinted lens has been repurposed by Tom Ford and Gucci among many others. The choice for the fashion-forward — plus people who like to wear sunglasses inside.

Yellow acetate frame with yellow lens, £190, by Gucci

White metal/acetate frame with green lens, £290, by Fendi

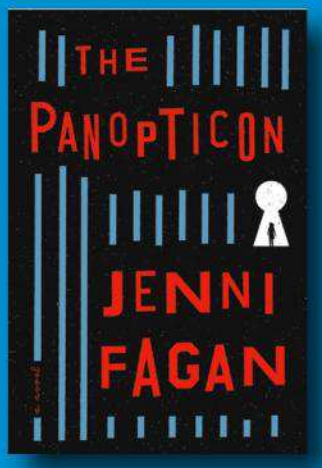
PACK A SUPERIOR BEACH READ



THE LAST PICTURE SHOW BY LARRY MCMURTRY (1966)

Recommended by
TOM PERROTTA

McMurtry is better known for *Lonesome Dove*, but I prefer *The Last Picture Show*, his melancholy novel about a dying Texas town in the Fifties. It's a funny, soulful, and surprisingly sexy portrait of people trapped in the middle of nowhere, trying to make the best of their limited opportunities. As an added bonus, you can watch Peter Bogdanovich's wonderful film adaptation, one of the classic works of American cinema in the Seventies.
Tom Perrotta's new novel, Mrs Fletcher (Scribner Book Company) is out now



THE PANOPTICON BY JENNI FAGAN (2012)

Recommended by
IRVINE WELSH

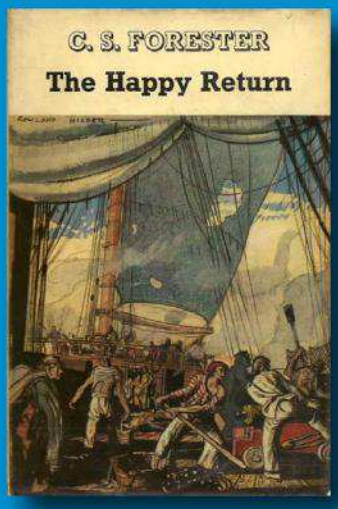
I think that this is already a modern classic, though it's only a few years old. Set in a dystopian Britain, it is about a young woman with a difficult past who is now owned by the state, fighting a war against the authorities to assert her sovereignty and preserve her sanity. It manages to be both harrowing and uplifting, a masterful debut novel from one of the best writers around right now.
Irvine Welsh's new novel, Dead Men's Trousers (Jonathan Cape) is out now

AS ENDORSED BY A SUPERIOR WRITER

THE HAPPY RETURN BY CS FORESTER (1937)

Recommended by
WILLIAM FOTHERINGHAM

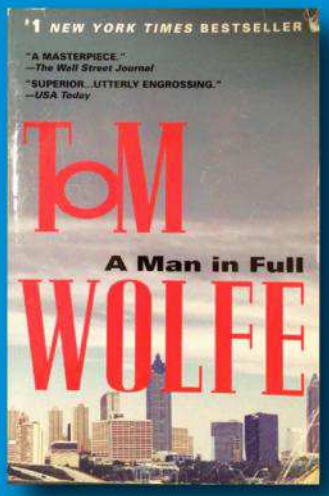
The best of the Horatio Hornblower series: escapist in a gung-ho Napoleonic War way, elegantly written with a slow burning central love affair between a feisty woman and an emotionally retarded naval officer. It's based in the Caribbean which would make up for whatever the British weather could throw at me. For a Greek beach, I'd cool down with Nicholas Monsarrat's WWII Battle of the Atlantic epic *The Cruel Sea* (1951).
William Fotheringham's new book, A Sunday In Hell (Yellow Jersey Press) is out now



A MAN IN FULL BY TOM WOLFE (1998)

Recommended by
TIBOR FISCHER

Probably the greatest living writer in the English language, Tom Wolfe published his novel *A Man in Full* in 1998, when it received some esteem, but not, in my opinion, enough. More entertaining than most of his "literary" competition, Wolfe charts the fortunes of two men in Atlanta, one a successful businessman, another a very unsuccessful warehouse worker. Think you've read about prisons or business meetings before? Not until you've read this. I was profoundly green with envy.
Tibor Fischer's new novel, How to Rule the World (Corsair) is out now



Paul Newman, centre, and Robert Redford, right, team up in a table tennis doubles match on the set of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, Durango, Mexico, 1968

Getty

GET A TABLE-TENNIS TABLE

...ESQUIRE'S TIM LEWIS JUST DID

My peak as a whiff-whaffer came when I was 13. It was 1987-ish and there was a craze for table tennis at my school. The second the bell rang for a break, even before the teacher had stood up, we were organising four desks into a rectangle and jamming two polypropylene chairs between the legs to fashion a net (of sorts). Our classroom was transformed into a Sino-style ping-pong hothouse, the only sounds the hypnotic pock-pock of ball on bat and the anguished yelp of a fluff or near-miss.

We'd play for 15 minutes mid-morning, another hour at lunch and then until home time. And we got pretty decent. We switched from exclusively backhand to primarily forehand, our high-toss serves swooped, kinked and dipped; we experimented with different grips for the bat, and were merciless at exploiting the gap in the net where the chairs didn't meet and the random bounce that came from landing the ball on the line where the tables came together.

I thought about this intense period of my life recently as, 30 years on, I went shopping for a table-tennis table (mid-life crises take many forms, don't judge). It wouldn't be true that I hadn't thought about ping-pong in three decades: there was a holiday in France with university friends where we did little else and a period when I was courting a girlfriend where we'd go to the local leisure centre and hire a table, until those games started getting a bit too competitive.

Professionally, table tennis comes up (disproportionately I'd say) in interviews I've done. Authors, especially, seem to love the sport: Howard Jacobson wrote a novel about a precocious ping-pong champion; Jonathan Safran Foer told me all Brooklyn novelists played. The sport seems to draw in the cerebral and the obsessive. The chef Heston Blumenthal is both of those things and has become so besotted with table tennis he's bought a robot that fires balls at him at 100mph, and has engaged a coach. He complains that no one bats an eyelid about having a tennis lesson, but practising with a ping-pong coach provokes open derision.

I'm with Heston. Not long ago, two burly men grunted and puffed, hauling a big slab of table to my door. After considerable fucking-around-on-the-internet — shout-out for Ben Larcombe's Expert Table Tennis blog — I went for a Butterfly table topper for around £200. You can certainly spend a lot more and Larcombe coos over the sports car lines of the Killerspin Revolution SVR, which is 10-times the price. But one thing I learned from the jerry-rigged tables at school is that the design and dimensions of the playing surface do not really matter.

So, bring on the midlife crisis. As Foer grandiosely wrote, "If I didn't spend so much time playing ping-pong, I would have a much fuller life. But I would have no life."

TRAVEL GURU TOM BARBER'S ADVICE:

TAKE A SHORT SPRING BREAK

(NB: not a 'SPRIIIING BREEEEAAAAK!')

Not to be confused with the boorish bacchanalia so beloved of American students that is Spring Break, the "Short Spring Break" is a thing of wonder, particularly when craftily utilising timely bank holidays to extend holiday allowances. Head to any of these urban legends to put the bounce into your spring.

BOLOGNA, ITALY

WHY?: Because this is the under-rated capital of Italy's most under-rated region, Emilia-Romagna. At once fabulously wealthy and subversively socialist, Bologna is home to Europe's oldest university and a large student population (always fun), glorious architecture and food fit for the gods. (Tip: never order "spaghetti bolognese" — it's a culinary crime to locals who actually eat tagliatelle al ragù.)

WHY IN SPRING?: Petrolheads' mecca "Motor Valley" — home of Ferrari, Lamborghini, Maserati and Ducati — is nearby, so in spring you have no excuse not to rent a convertible supercar for the day and tackle — top down, naturally — the region's winding hillside switchback roads.

WHAT TO DO: Eat. A lot. And locally. You may have heard of some of the regional specialities, such as cheeses and hams from Parma, balsamic vinegar from Modena, tortellini pasta, etc etc.

WHERE TO STAY: Bologna's Achilles heel might be her accommodation, but Art Hotel Novecento is a half-decent boutique hotel in the heart of the action. *art-hotel-novecento.com*

WHERE TO EAT: The secret is to dine anywhere without an English language menu, because that signifies a true locals' haunt. The problem? There are hundreds of sensational ones to select from. Let's just go with Da Cesari for its sublime rabbit ragù. Mamma mia... *da-cesari.it*

ATHENS, GREECE

WHY?: Because unlike a couple of years ago, the Greek capital mercifully now no longer resembles a powder keg of political resentment about to blow sky-high. Sure, you still might want to avoid singing the praises of the EU (or Germany) too loudly, but on the whole the city is back to its crazy, breakneck best and living life for the moment.

WHY IN SPRING? As all you classicists out there will of course know, Athens bakes hotter than Hades in high summer. If you want to explore the city that almost single-handedly invented Western culture without losing half your body weight in sweat, spring is the perfect — and advisable — time.

WHAT TO DO: Get existential at the new Plato Academy — the Digital Museum, constructed on the site of the great thinker's original school of philosophy — where you can learn about his theories through interactive displays. Probably best not attempted on an ouzo hangover. *plato-academy.gr/en*

WHERE TO STAY: AthensWas. No, that's not some Platonic musing, rather the best place to stay in the city, with pretty decent rates and a rooftop bar/restaurant with views across to the neighbouring Acropolis. *athenswas.gr*

WHERE TO EAT: Found, appropriately enough, in the city's port, Piraeus, Athens' finest fish restaurant is Varoulko Seaside. Owned by legendary chef Lefteris Lazarou, this is the place to eat exquisite Greek dishes such as sea bass with stamnagathi, a type of chicory specially imported from Crete. *varoulko.gr*

Ellen Rooney/Robert Harding | Getty

TEL AVIV, ISRAEL

WHY?: Barely 100 years old, Tel Aviv is about the hottest city on the planet right now; a tech hub spawning start-up billionaires by the bucketload and somewhere with a hugely infectious sense of energy and raw potential. If all this youthful exuberance gets a little exhausting, head to Jaffa, a 3,500-year-old working port mentioned in the *Bible* that has since been swallowed up by the city and which has fun flea markets to explore.

WHY IN SPRING? Because despite having a lovely beach on which to cool down, summer is *scorchio*. Tel Aviv has one of the best spring weather climates anywhere, and it's only a four-and-a-half-hour direct flight from London.

WHAT TO DO: If you can tear yourself away from the beach and bars, there's some place called Jerusalem situated 45-minutes eastward. For a blast of historical culture like no other, we strongly recommend taking a guided day trip of the Old City to gain a greater understanding of, well, pretty much everything.

WHERE TO STAY: The Norman is a modernist gem of a building sited in a Bauhaus architectural city. Think seriously slick service, excellent grub and a killer rooftop bar with views out to the Med. *thenorman.com*

WHERE TO EAT: Abraxas North. Staff with serious attitude serve food straight on to the paper tablecloths — accompanied by knives and forks, if you're lucky — and it'll be some of the most downright sensational Middle Eastern-style grub you'll eat anywhere. *40 Lilienblum Street*

Tom Barber is a founder of the award-winning travel company originaltravel.co.uk

MAKE-BELIEVE YOU'RE AWAY ON HOLIDAY THROUGH THE POWER OF A CAREFULLY SELECTED BEVERAGE

RAKI

A similar flavour to ouzo, but less sweet and bracing, especially as this Turkish spirit is enjoyed with water (in a 1:1 or 1:2 ratio). Dilution brings out the aniseed flavour and turns the clear liquid cloudy — nothing like a party trick to slip guests into holiday mode.
Yeni Raki Ala (47% ABV), £35/70cl; *masterofmalt.com*

KIR ROYALE

Why have plain fizz when you could create a grown-up Ribena, as enjoyed in France with a sweetening Crème de Cassis spike to your pre-prandial? Top one part blackcurrant liqueur with three parts sparkling wine (use bubbly of the moment Crémant; made by the same method as Champagne but costing far less).
Berry Bros & Rudd Crémant de Limoux by Antech (12% ABV), £10/75cl; *bbr.com.*
Gabriel Boudier Crème de Cassis de Dijon (20% ABV), £10/50cl; *sainsburys.co.uk*

VERMOUTH AND SODA

This year's Aperol Spritz or Porto Tónico, ie low alcohol, easy-drinking, refreshing and difficult to mess up. This fortified wine is enjoying a comeback so hop on the bandwagon early, boosting a dry white varietal with soda and a slice of citrus over ice. Our recommended Chazalettes ceased production in the Seventies, but is back with a bang in time for spring.
Chazalettes & Co Vermouth di Torino Extra Dry (18% ABV), £23/75cl; *masterofmalt.com*

ORANGINA

From a glass bottle. Over ice. Done.
(0% ABV), £10/dozen 25cl; *thomasridley.co.uk*

BE MORE GOSLING

There's a video that started circulating on YouTube in 2011. You may have seen it. It shows a small group of men in the middle of a Manhattan street — mostly wearing dark shirts and T-shirts and those ill-fitting khakis of which Americans are so fond — two of whom are involved in a fight as they occur in real life and not in movies, all sleeve-grabs and awkward stasis.

Then all of a sudden, sauntering into the centre of the shot, comes someone new. Someone different. Someone, as the amateur videographer whose shaky phone-camera-work we are enjoying observes, "from the movies". Unlike the rest of the men, one of whom is wearing a scarf and carrying an umbrella, the newcomer is all tropical Technicolor, wearing a bright blue baseball cap, a striped tank top reminiscent of a bottle of Matey bubble bath, and turned-up track pants. He looks ridiculous. And also, like a miracle. Ryan Gosling is here to save the day.

The arrival of Gosling into the middle of that New York street tussle is, in many ways, like the arrival of spring itself after the dreary months of winter. Rousing, slightly unfathomable, and bringing hope that, yes, somehow, everything is going to turn out fine. So who better to channel as you embrace this month's compendium of ideas and suggestions from us to you of ways in which you can mark the change of season and make the most of your spring?

But spring isn't about being proscriptive. Spring is a time for joy. For boldness. For as-yet-undashed optimism. So, if you take one thing away from this issue, take this: Be More Gosling. Pop your collar! Flash your clavicle! Wear a necklace! Fold your sleeves up in a funny way! Do a J Alfred and wear your trousers rolled! Look into the sun! Smile! Enjoy your privileges and don't take life, or yourself, too seriously (when the street fight footage went viral, Gosling was the first to acknowledge the preposterousness of "the guy from *The Notebook*" sticking his oar in). Also, if you can manage it, be extremely charming and good looking. Spring isn't here to stay, so make like Ryan and enjoy your time in the sun.

The life of Ryan: Gosling saving the day for mankind yet again, Los Angeles, 2017

DE-PRISSIFY YOUR PICNIC

GO TO A DELI, AD LIB, ENJOY

Come picnicking season, forego fancy hampers and cobble together your own. Soho institution Lina Stores (*linastores.co.uk*) will be opening a restaurant this summer but the shop (left) is always a solid bet, while capital newcomers include Covent Garden's Petersham Nurseries (*petershamnurseries.com*) and market stall queen Isidora Popović's first permanent home, Popina (*popina.co.uk*), in Mayfair. Elsewhere, The Goods Shed (*thegoodsshed.co.uk*) by Canterbury West station perpetually has the critics fawning, and there's also Gog Magog Hills Farm Shop (*thegog.com*) outside Cambridge, award-winning Blacker Hall Farm (*blackerhallfarmshop.co.uk*) in Wakefield and, further north, Edinburgh's oldest Italian deli and wine merchant Valvona & Crolla (*valvonacrolla.co.uk*).

Most dive watches never get to plumb the depths of their potential, and the likelihood is you'll go no further than a deep-end pool dip on holiday this year. But it's important to know that if you did take a proper plunge, your watch would be up — or down — to it. Here are five of toughest divers:

Probable depth to which your watch will ever descend

5M

100M

BR V2-92 41MM STEEL HERITAGE BY BELL & ROSS

The newest member of Bell & Ross's Vintage collection will see you right for a spot of snorkelling, or some intermediate scuba. £3,350

500M

PELAGOS 42MM TITANIUM/STEEL BY TUDOR

The Black Bay is commonly agreed to be Tudor's coolest diver, but the Pelagos is a few hundred metres tougher and perfectly handsome, too. £3,160

600M

SPORT COLLECTION LIMITED EDITION 46.9MM TITANIUM BY GRAND SEIKO

Seiko has a rich history of deep water excellence, but pieces from the Grand Seiko wing offer horological heft as well as under-the-sea grit. £10,000

1,200M

SEAMASTER PLOPROF CO-AXIAL CHRONOMETER 55MM X 48MM TITANIUM BY OMEGA

A reissue of a Seventies Omega icon, the Ploprof is built for the briny deep, as the chunky helium release valve on the side of the case suggests. £8,800

ENGINEER DEEPQUEST HYDROCARBON 43MM BY BALL

We can't think of a reason why you would find yourself at a depth of 3,000m this spring, but if you do, and you're wearing Ball's impressive DeepQuest, you'll know what time it is. £3,200

3,000M

ADD DEPTH OF CHARACTER TO YOUR WRIST

WITH A NIFTY NEW DIVE WATCH

Getty | Dan Welldon | Lucky if Sharp | See Stockists page for details

TOUGH GUYS DON'T WEAR INVISIBLE SOCKS, BUT THAT'S EXACTLY WHY YOU SHOULD

Grey/white ankle socks, £23.50 for three pairs, by Stance

It's astonishing that something could be so divisive. You might think in the age of Kardashians, Southern Rail and Martin Shkreli that we would talk about something else, but the *Esquire* offices recently played host to a heated debate on the use of invisible socks, the little cotton booties you wear when you want to go bare-ankled without nuding-up your full foot. One camp, let's call them the "macho traditionalists", argued that these socks are an abomination, taking the position that if Hemingway and his ilk would have balked at the idea, then so should we. The other side of the argument, the side with which you, dear reader, should be aligned, is that they make sense. Logical, sensible sense.

If you want to wear your loafers, tennis shoes, or even your derbies with a bare ankle then surely you should do it in the way that guarantees maximum comfort and minimum foot-sweat and blisters? It's like if you prefer to wear women's underwear. You feel good, as does the contents of said underwear, and no one knows a thing. But if your thong rides up and someone cottons on, then you might have a few tricky questions to answer, and sadly, the same goes for invisible socks.

The moles of the menswear milieu, they are bloody good at what they do, but should remain in the shadows, because damn, are they ugly. No man looks good in a pair of un-shoed invisible socks. Partly because of the weird, pointy, ballet-pump shape they give your foot, but mainly because they expose the lie. Everyone will know how logical and sensible you are, and there's nothing sexy about logic and good sense. In fact, it might be worth wearing a thong, just in case you need to distract everyone at short notice.

TAKE THE PLUNGE

AND MAKE A SPLASH AT YOUR MUNICIPAL LIDO, DECREES STEPHEN SMITH

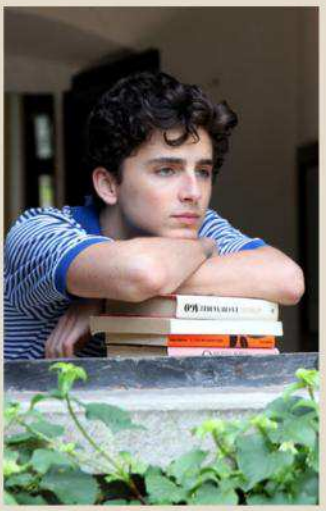
In John Cheever's short story *The Swimmer*, a man leaves his friend's house and breaststrokes home through the pools of his neighbours, squelching from one backyard to the next. The film *Death in Venice* finds Dirk Bogarde's declining aesthete on the Venetian lido, weeping over an exquisite, unobtainable youth. What of our own bathing fleshpot, the *British* lido, a monument to Thirties modernism and outdoor recreation? It's redolent of breezy changing huts and bobbing corn plasters. But our rivieras of reinforced concrete are as beguiling as anything the continent has to offer. Like an orchid that blooms for only minutes a year, the lido's allure lies in the golden moment when the rare prerequisites for a good time are all in alignment: sunshine, a day on the lam, and a slather of petroleum jelly and lanolin.

After years of decline, the lido is being clasped to our goosepimply breast. Students of architecture admire its graceful lines, which echo the art deco design of great liners and hotels. And its spartan enchantments have been embraced by writers including Roger Deakin and Kate Rew. Not only that but the lido, even more than the gym or bootcamp, is the playground of the alpha male. I once essayed a length or two of Parliament Hill Lido alongside Alastair Campbell. I wasn't alongside him for long: he took an indecent pleasure in caning me. But whisper it: the hard men of the baths, the triathletes and Channel swimmers, thrash up and down the lanes in cosseting wetsuits. If you'd like to get one over on them, simply show up in your briefest budgie smugglers.

Getty | Allstar | See Stockists page for details

GO TO GREAT LENGTHS AND GROW A 'BRO FLOW'

Perhaps inspired by the rocky Renaissance curls of Michelangelo's *David* or, in all likelihood, the more contemporary wavy styles of actors Timothée Chalamet and Adam Driver, for spring/summer an increasing number of men are embracing the "Bro Flow". But even the au naturel look needs work. "Obviously you need to grow it," says Joe Mills, founder of Joe & Co barbers. "Then get it shaped up around the edges so it doesn't look like you don't care. After that, visit your barber every two to three months and use a styling cream for thick hair or, for finer hair, a sea salt spray to add texture." Easy. You've got a movie star hairline, right?



LOSE YOUR LACES

AND FIND YOUR FEET (TANNED ANKLES AVAILABLE SEPARATELY)

1

SLIP-ON

As well as men's style hall of famer the horsebit loafer, Gucci, over the last two seasons, has lionised the backless slip-on. Its popularity suggests another icon has been born.
Black leather, £495, by Gucci @ Mr Porter

2

NEAPOLITAN

If you could only have one of these six, this sleek, slightly pointy one is the way to go. It speaks of fragrant Florentine courtyards and Rivas on the water, though Brits do make the best. Dark brown leather, £525, by Crockett & Jones

3

TASSELLED

Second only in silliness to the kiltie, the tasselled loafer is more than just a shoe, it's a statement: "these loafers have little leather earrings, and there's nothing you can do about it."
Navy leather, £350, by Church's

4

DRIVER

Thanks to the success of Tod's Gommino model, the driving shoe has become synonymous with luxurious style. (Best to avoid bold shades, and absolutely cannot be worn with socks).
Grey suede, £360, by Tod's

5

ESPADRILLE

The perfect holiday shoe, good for hopping over rock pools, sundowners on the terrace and even on especially louche dress-down Fridays. Neutral colours, though, please.
Navy suede, £125, by Russell & Bromley

6

PENNY

The most classic loafer is quintessentially American. Paul Newman and JFK were fans and often seen wearing them. Best with cropped chinos, à la Newman.
Burgundy leather, £595, by JM Weston

1

2

3

4

5

6

The Life Picture Collection/Getty | Lucky if Sharp | See Stockists page for details

Golden days: Run-DMC and the Beastie Boys coordinate their dookie chain game, 1987

INVEST IN GOLD JEWELLERY

SAYS ESQUIRE'S FINLAY RENWICK, WHO MIGHT PLUCK UP THE COURAGE TO DO THE SAME

A spring ritual as certain as daffodils blooming, swallows migrating and rugby boys sporting gym shorts and flip-flops (why do they do that?), I look down at my fingers and wrists, unadorned, and think: can I get away with wearing jewellery yet? Not a watch; jewellery, specifically gold: rings, bracelets and necklaces.

While the rules around men's fashionable expression continue to loosen and blur, jewellery beyond a watch and a no-nonsense wedding band is still seen as questionable, even taboo in normal, non-Milanese life. Turn up for work on a Monday with signet rings and count the minutes until you're asked about your newly-formed crime syndicate or English-themed pub in Marbs. Call it British self-awareness or perennial embarrassment, but reinvention of style often feels like an arduous process.

I don't own a Brexit pub on the Costa del Sol, but I do harbour dreams of being the kind of raffish, slightly edgy sort who can get away with rings on three fingers and a gold pendant on my neck, especially now that the fashion world is in the grip of an obsession with both the Eighties and ostentation as a whole. Showing off is cool again — minimalism is dead.

Perhaps the trick is to start small: one ring, easy does it. Or maybe it's a thicker skin and a fuck-you attitude. As with most things clothing (and otherwise), confidence breeds, well, more confidence, in yourself and those around you. Haters included.

Maybe this is my year. Gold *is* in right now, after all. Here goes.

SPRING-SPECIFIC RULES TO FOLLOW,

COURTESY OF STYLE POET SIMON MILLS

Clockwise from left: partners in fighting crime Sonny Crockett (Don Johnson) and Rico Tubbs (Philip Michael Thomas) in TV series Miami Vice (1984–'90); Matt Damon and Jude Law in warm weather dressing catalogue The Talented Mr Ripley (1999); Steve McQueen and Faye Dunaway on the set of The Thomas Crown Affair (1968)

When TS Eliot wrote about April being "the cruellest month" in *The Waste Land*, I'm pretty sure he was musing not on the pathos of a change of seasons underscoring the author's own advancing years, the ennui of a reduced libido and the lament of lost loves bringing into sharp focus the inevitable, inexorable slide towards dessication and decrepitude, but actually, the very tricky problem of "nailing" one's spring/summer wardrobe.

Eliot bemoaned the myriad problems a man faces when "breeding lilacs out of the dead land" ie, making the jump from the dour, heavy equipment of wool overcoats to the dainty weightlessness of *Miami Vice* pastels. "Winter kept us warm…" Eliot wrote, "Summer surprised us." Clearly a reference to the warp and weft of seasonally adjusted trouser material and the journey from brogue to loafer.

April, May and June are indeed the cruellest months for a man's attire because, despite the entirely predictable meteorological cycle of weather growing ever temperate and a sartorial modification being required, the capriciously tepid onslaught of a British spring induces in us a sense of mild panic. Summer ensembles are easier-going but harder to pull off. One minute it is cold and grey, the next the sky is blue and the sun is shining. One day every inch of us is all butch, wrapped up and murdered out like Jason Statham in a Cold War shoot-'em-up, the next we are denuding our joints and extremities — elbows, wrists, ankles, napes, sternums — like a care-free, polo-shirted, sockless, push-biking Armie Hammer.

Winter is for hibernating, graft and isolation. Spring and summer are for indolence, sex and flirting. ("Love and sun are feminine," muses Jules in Truffaut's New Wave classic *Jules et Jim*.) But the transition is not always a smooth and painless seduction. In the colder months, we can conceal our blotchy, flabby imperfections behind an insulating carapace of down, scarves, boots and high-necked woollens. Warm weather attire — lighter, thinner, made from less material and more peacocking colours — can be cruelly exposing, leaving us and our various flaws and blemishes nowhere to hide.

Hot weather posed few problems for our grandfathers. They wore the same thing — suit, shirt, tie, waistcoat — all year round, simply removing a jacket or rolling up a sleeve when the sun was shining; taking off a sock and turning up a trouser hem when it was time for a paddle. But sometime in the Eighties, things (and trousers) changed. Cheap air fares and package holidays democratised international travel. Young British men could suddenly afford to get proper tans, eat paella and wear lime green espadrilles. George Michael became the first pop star to wear shorts on *Top of the Pops*.

Modern, fashionable types began to dress to match the summer lifestyles to which they

Getty | Alamy

aspired (or actually achieved): boho-ish Ibicencan whites and LA electric blues; the powder pinks of the art deco stucco on Miami's South Beach; the salty bone clapboard of Hamptons holiday homes; the posh, French grey of a Cote d'Azur château; the Aperol umber and chilled rosé of the Italian Riviera. These are the Caprese salad and Neapolitan ice cream colours of summer that gently feminise and Euro-ise us once the temperature rises above stand-offish and heads towards priapic.

But before you go full Sonny Crockett with your lemon scoop necks and eau de Nil linens, be warned. A man needs to be extra careful with pastels. Tonally and culturally speaking, there is fine line between Billionaire Boys Club and the paddock at the Chelsea Flower Show; and a wannabe Pharrell is only an erroneous pleat and an uninformed belt choice away from a blowsy Titchmarsh.

So, on the right, a few rules.

SWERVE COTTON KNITWEAR

It will look fine in the shop but will turn into heavy, saggy, baggy, belly hammocks after one wear. Merino wool has "memory" and is much more flattering and lighter.

SLEEVES

Make like Ryan Gosling and learn to roll up your shirt sleeves in a crisp fold line and ordered manner that takes the wide French cuff above your elbow... but no higher. No guns on show, please.

BEWARE OF BISCUIT-COLOURED SUITING

Anything from Rich Tea to Digestive. It's frumpy, fattening and daytime TV presenter-ish. More Geoffrey Boycott than Don Draper.

LOOK LIKE YOU BELONG

So, when in Rome, wear expensive loafers with no socks, Dickie Greenleaf double-breasted blazers and knitted ties. If you are in Santa Eulària des Riu, Ibiza, assume the loose-fitting, white-on-white, hippy jim-jams of the older locals.

IT'S ALL ABOUT FIT

So, no *Towie* tight pants in July. Go roomier, lighter and unstructured. Have your trews and blazers maintain a certain cut and dash that suggests the hand of a tailor not a drunken mail order.

SHORTS

Leave the cargo cut-offs for hiking and let Juergen Teller's boys have those yellow, Seventies porno star, high-cut jobs to themselves. Best to stick to a plain, flat-fronted Bermuda cut.

MIAMI VICE

The muted, pastel-toned "cocaine cowboy" style affected by undercover cops Crockett and Tubbs in TV show *Miami Vice* was a huge menswear moment back in 1984 and it's a big look again in 2018, too. Only a little less roomy... and no parachute shirts.

DENIM

Thanks to Timothée Chalamet in *Call Me by Your Name*, jean jackets are pale and washed out. Denim trousers are faded and light blue.

UNDO THAT SHIRT

Just one more button.

For many Britons, spring is a line in the sand; a time for urgently shaking off six months of gloom and embracing things that seemed unthinkable just a few weeks before. Eating outdoors, ordering jugs of Pimm's and wearing insubstantial footwear in temperatures that would have other Europeans still in puffer jackets.

It's a panicky form of hedonism that goes some way to explaining why Britain has the highest incidence of convertible car ownership in Europe.

Except, the trouble with actually owning a soft-top is there are only seven days in our calendar year on which they actually make sense. The rest of the time it's all leaky roofs, rubbish boot space and permanently unkempt hair. Not to mention a megaphone announcement to the world that your mid-life crisis is officially underway. Far wiser to take advantage of the increasing number of models which offer the panoramic — or unfeasibly large — sunroof.

As a kid, even the most basic car sunroof held exotic associations. A glimpse not only into the sky but into the future. A part of the car you were allowed to touch without causing a pile-up, they existed for no other function than pleasure. Best of all, if they were the fully sliding type (and your dad was in a good mood), you could stick your head up through them. That's a level of nostalgia that doesn't go away.

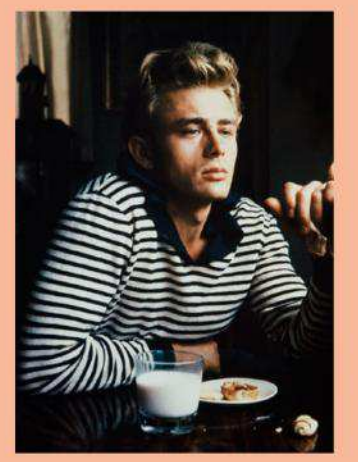
Today, these windows of wonder can stretch as wide and long as the roof and can be found on cars as small as the Audi A1 or as big as the Range Rover Velar, which offers fixed or sliding options. Sitting in one for the first time can bring out the eight-year-old in all of us. Only now we can reach the pedals.

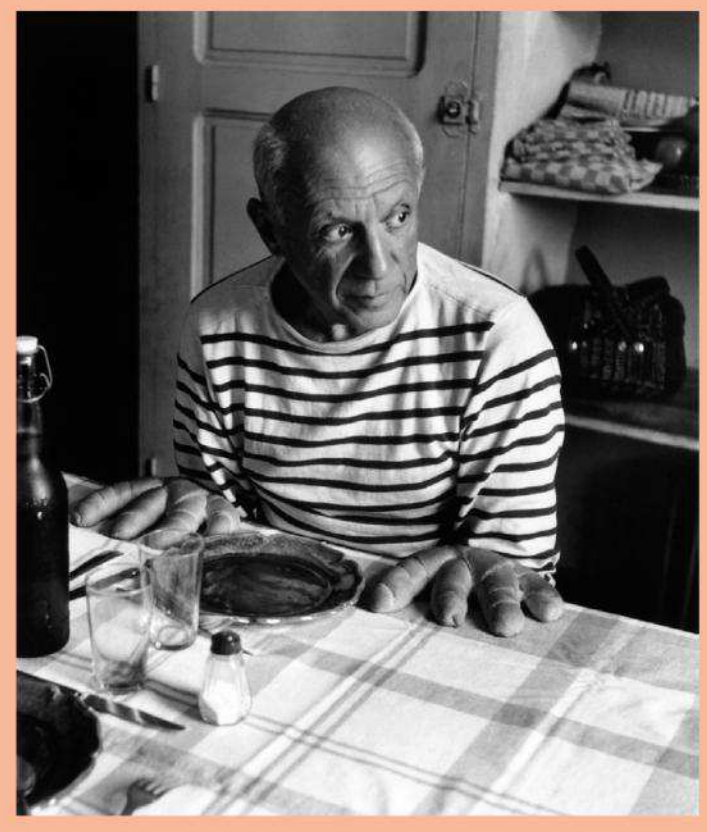
LET THERE BE LIGHT

ALL HAIL THE SUNROOF

Getty | Robert Doisneau/Gamma-Rapho | Sanford Roth/Rapho

WEAR A STRIPED BRETON T-SHIRT URGES JEREMY LANGMEAD





Great Bretons: Pablo Picasso, Vallauris, France, 1952; top right, James Dean at the home of photographer Sanford Roth, Los Angeles, 1955

The classic Breton sailor's shirt (the French Navy's *marinière* or *tricot rayé*) can look so damn good — and doesn't have to cost a fortune as everyone from Gap to APC to Junya Watanabe has made them. It will appear stylish under a blazer, will spruce up chinos, and get you in the holiday mood if worn with a pair of pale chambray shorts. And if you're worried that you may look a little too Jean Genet, fear not: Ernest Hemingway wore them, as did Pablo Picasso (check out the famous Robert Doisneau shot, left) and, if he floats your boat, so did James Dean.

So, the question is: do you have to forego the Breton top because wearing one is like being a member of a club you didn't necessarily ask to join, or do you begrudgingly shove it back in the bottom drawer for another couple of years along with last autumn's unworn harem pants? It's strange how the sexes deal with the problem in such different ways. When girls bump into each other wearing a similar "fashionable piece" they look delighted, check out who paid the most, and think nothing more of it; us men, on the other hand, wince, sarcastically utter "good times", and either remove or cover up the offending item straightaway.

One word of warning, however: as tempting as this season's summer classics are — navy blazers, white trousers, Breton tops and lightweight cotton-knit fishermen's sweaters — don't put them all on at once. You'll end up looking like Osgood Fielding III in *Some Like it Hot*. And he ended up sailing into the sunset with Jack Lemmon. Good times.

STAY INSIDE AND WATCH THE RAIN ON NETFLIX, THAT IS

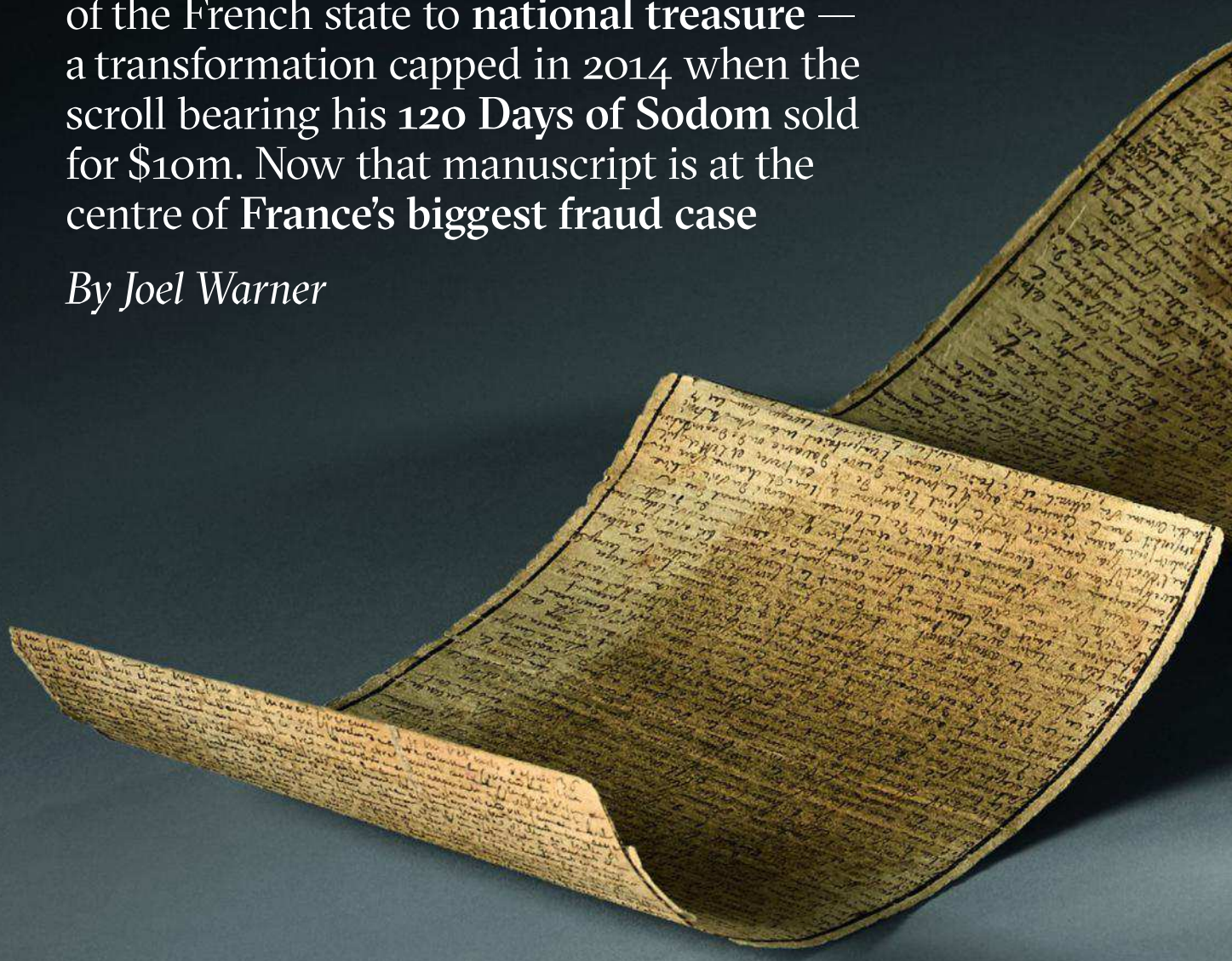
If the vicissitudes of spring weather weren't troubling enough, Netflix is shortly to launch *The Rain*, an apocalyptic Danish drama about a deadly virus transmitted by — you guessed it — rainfall which has wiped out most of Scandinavia's population. The series follows two siblings who emerge from their secret bunker six years after the killer showers have occurred and must fight for survival while also doing all that teenage stuff like finding out who you are, falling in love, and being generally unreasonable. It's Netflix's first original drama from Denmark, coming hot on the heels of its first German foray, the creepy sci-fi series *Dark*, and suggesting that Netflix users are not afraid of a subtitle or two. (Or they're actually Danish. Or German.) If spring hasn't fully sprung yet, consider *The Rain* a worthy — if not life-or-death — reason to stay indoors for a bit longer. □

The Rain launches on Netflix on 4 May

The Sadist's Revenge

During the last days of the Ancien Régime, imprisoned in a fetid cell atop the Bastille, a depraved aristocrat composed **the most blasphemous novel ever written**. But in death, the **Marquis de Sade** has gone from enemy of the French state to **national treasure** — a transformation capped in 2014 when the scroll bearing his **120 Days of Sodom** sold for $10m. Now that manuscript is at the centre of **France's biggest fraud case**

By Joel Warner



The original manuscript of The 120 Days of Sodom. Joining pages end to end, the Marquis de Sade wrote 157,000 words in three weeks and hid the scroll inside the wall of his cell in the Bastille while imprisoned there in 1785

EMERGING FROM THE MORNING FOG shrouding the art galleries and boutiques of Paris's 7th Arrondissement, the police arrived at the Hôtel de La Salle at 9am on November 18, 2014. Once home to the author of France's code of civil law and, after that, sundry dukes and duchesses, the 17th-century mansion was now the headquarters of Aristophil, an upstart investment company founded by Gérard Lhéritier, the son and grandson of a plumber. In just over two decades, the then-66-year-old Lhéritier — the "king of manuscripts", as he'd been dubbed by the local media — had amassed the largest private collection of historical letters and manuscripts in the country, effectively cornering the market. Among his 130,000-odd holdings were André Breton's original *Surrealist Manifesto*, love notes from Napoleon to Josephine, the last testament of Louis XVI, and fragments of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The bulk was housed in Aristophil's Museum of Letters and Manuscripts, around the corner on Boulevard Saint-Germain. But Lhéritier's marquee acquisition rested inside a custom-made glass display on the mansion's ground floor: a yellowed, fraying parchment, four-and-a-half inches wide and nearly 40ft long, densely covered on both sides with 157,000 ornately handwritten words so minute they are virtually illegible without a magnifying glass. Composed in a prison cell by Donatien Alphonse François, better known as the Marquis de Sade, *The 120 Days of Sodom* has been variously described as "one of the most important novels ever written" and "the gospel of evil". Lost for more than a century and smuggled across Europe, it became one of the most valuable manuscripts in the world when Lhéritier purchased it for €7m (£6.2m) in March 2014 — a year that happened to mark the bicentennial of Sade's death, as well as the final stage of his two-century-long reevaluation. An exhibition in Aristophil's offices was timed to coincide with a nationwide series of events that would culminate in December.

Lhéritier, a somewhat stout and diminutive man with thinning grey hair, in a well-tailored suit and tie, was with a few employees discussing a recent reception he had attended at the residence of then-president François Hollande when his assistant rushed in to inform him that the police were downstairs.

Dozens of other agents were simultaneously raiding Aristophil's museum, the offices of several Aristophil associates, and Lhéritier's villa in Nice. While the officers seized company documents, financial records and computer hard drives as potential evidence, the French courts froze his business and personal bank accounts.

Lhéritier stood accused of duping nearly 18,000 clients out of $1bn (£716m). The claim, if true, would make him the architect of the largest Ponzi scheme in French history.

"THE EXTENSIVE WARS THAT LOUIS XIV had to wage throughout the course of his reign, while exhausting the state's finances and the people's resources, nevertheless uncovered the secret to enriching an enormous number of those leeches always lying in wait... It was toward the end of this reign... that four among them conceived the unique feat of debauchery we are about to describe... The time has come, friendly reader, for you to prepare your heart and mind for the most impure tale ever written since the world began..."

So Sade began *The 120 Days of Sodom* on 22 October, 1785, while imprisoned in the Liberty Tower of the Bastille. Scattered around him were assorted personal effects, a privilege afforded to inmates of his stature: stacks of books on everything from the existence of God to the history of vampires, packages of Palais-Royal biscuits, bottles of lavender cologne, and one wooden dildo crafted, for personal use, to the Marquis's precise specifications.

Born to a noble family in 1740, Sade had spent his life mired in scandal: he narrowly dodged a bullet fired by the father of one of his servants, slashed a beggar and poured hot wax into her wounds, and offered to pay a prostitute to defecate on a crucifix, to give a small but representative sample. In 1777, Sade's powerful mother-in-law, Madame de Montreuil, understandably sick of his antics, secured an arrest warrant for the marquis signed by her friend Louis XVI. Sade was locked away on no charges. By the time he began *The 120 Days of Sodom*, he had been jailed for eight years. Working by candlelight in the Bastille had rendered him nearly blind. Nonetheless, he wrote, "it is impossible for me to turn my back on my muse; it sweeps me along, forces me to write despite myself and, no matter what people may do to try to stop me, there is no way they will ever succeed.

The 120 Days of Sodom tells the story of four aristocrats who abduct 16 boys and girls between the ages of 12 and 15 and subject them

Below left: Gérard Lhéritier, founder of the 'belles lettres' investment society Aristophil, with the Marquis de Sade's infamous manuscript in 2003
Below right: a scene from the 1975 film Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom, directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini

The 120 Days of Sodom has been variously described as 'one of the most important novels ever written' and 'the gospel of evil'

Rex

to four months of what would later be called, after the author, sadistic rape and torture. The novel begins with paedophiliac priests and golden showers, and things only degenerate from there, to incest, bestiality, coprophilia, necrophilia, starvation, disembowelment, amputation, castration, cannibalism and infanticide. By day 120, the château is awash in bodily fluids and strewn with corpses. Sade wrote every evening for 37 days, joining pages end to end to form a single scroll, and hid the obscene and blasphemous manuscript in the wall of his cell.

On 3 July 1789, Sade was forcibly transferred to a mental asylum outside Paris after using the funnel from his pissing tube as a megaphone to denounce his captors. Eleven days later, an insurgent mob stormed the Bastille; the French Revolution had begun. Sade was released a year later, amid the upheaval. Calling himself "Citoyen Louis Sade", he dabbled in politics before being arrested again in 1801 at the age of 61. Sade spent his final years back in the asylum. He went to his grave believing *The 120 Days of Sodom* had been destroyed in the sacking of the Bastille. "Every day," he wrote of the missing work, "I shed tears of blood."

TWO YEARS BEFORE LHÉRITIER'S INDICTMENT, as a troop of Napoleonic guards played an imperial march and women made up to look like 18th-century courtesans sipped Champagne with government ministers, Aristophil's founder stood behind a podium at the Hôtel de La Salle and welcomed his guests to the brand-new "pantheon of letters and manuscripts". Recent reports that the outfit was in trouble were nothing but unfounded "attacks", he said. "A successful company provokes jealousies, desires, questions, and creates opponents... It is a permanent struggle."

Lhéritier had laboured for years to reach such heights. As a working-class boy from Meuse, in northeastern France, he dreamed of living by the sea in Nice. After an unexceptional military career, he settled into a modest family life and a job at an insurance company in Strasbourg. He launched a company on the side, investing in diamonds, but it went bankrupt in 1984. He married and had two children, then divorced in 1987.

On a trip to Paris, Lhéritier visited a stamp shop in hopes of finding a gift for his son. Inside, he spotted a small envelope bearing the words *"Par ballon monté"* that, he learned, had been sealed during the 1870 Prussian siege of Paris and flown over the invading armies via balloon, one of the first letters ever sent by air. It cost 150 francs (less than £15). He felt like a "gold digger who discovers a vein," Lhéritier later wrote. He started Valeur Philatéliques, trading in rare Monégasque stamps. French authorities charged Lhéritier with fraud for allegedly inflating their value; in March 1996, he spent two weeks in prison, though he was later acquitted. According to *Intimate Corruption*, the 2006 book Lhéritier wrote about "the Monaco stamp affair," he was the victim of a government conspiracy.

Lhéritier was already on to his next venture. In 1990, he founded a third company called Aristophil, fusing words for art, history, and philology. The operation remained relatively small until 2002, when he acquired a series of letters written by Albert Einstein discussing the theory of relativity. Lhéritier paid the auction house Christie's $560,000 (£375,000) for the lot, a fraction of what he figured a serious collector would be willing to spend. But finding such a buyer would take time.

Instead, Lhéritier devised an alternative business model: he divided the ownership of the letters into shares, a common practice in real estate but largely unknown in the rarefied world of antiquarian books and manuscripts. That once out-of-reach market would now be open to schoolteachers, clergymen, shopkeepers and anyone else who wanted to make a tax-exempt investment in the country's literary heritage. For as little as a few hundred euros, they could become part-owners of this history-changing correspondence, or if they preferred, letters by the hand of Cocteau or Matisse. The shareholders would →

have the option to sell their stake back to the company after five years. In the interim, Aristophil would insure and safeguard the letters while promoting them through exhibitions in its newly opened Museum of Letters and Manuscripts, thus boosting their value. Independent brokers promised returns of 40 per cent. Soon the mere involvement of Aristophil at an auction would send bids skyward. It was the start of a bull market in letters, drawing out manuscripts that had been mouldering in châteaux libraries for generations.

France's antiquarian book and manuscript shops are concentrated in the Paris neighbourhood of Saint-Germain-des-Prés. Down cobblestone alleyways, behind doors marked *Livres Anciens* and *Autographes*, historical letters and signed first editions were long bought and sold by those who shared a love of the written word, and deals were sealed with a handshake. Now these treasured works were being packaged and traded, owned by people who rarely saw their acquisitions or ran their fingertips across the paper. They had become investment vehicles like any other, and the old guard was up in arms.

From his stylishly appointed shop a few blocks from Aristophil's headquarters, Frédéric Castaing watched Lhéritier's rise with disgust. The grandson of a celebrated antique dealer, and the son of the proprietor of Maison Charavay, the oldest and perhaps most respected manuscript shop in the world, Castaing was the biggest name in the letters market. Until Lhéritier came along.

"Their sales arrangements were an absolute vulgarity," Castaing, his hair swept up in a striking pompadour, said of Aristophil when I visited his shop in November 2016. "Baudelaire plus 12 per cent, Victor Hugo plus 12 per cent." He had a special hatred for Jean-Claude Vrain, a book dealer whom Lhéritier had tapped to help price his offerings. Some say the discord began with a dispute over politics. Others say Vrain's flamboyant ways simply represented everything Castaing despised. In 2005, before ever meeting Lhéritier, Castaing published a crime novel, *Rouge Cendres* (*Red Ashes*), about a shady attempt to corner the Parisian letters market, with one of the main villains, Augustin, modelled on Vrain. "In the [auctions], he never sat down like you and me, in a silence of good taste," he wrote of Augustin. "No, he'd stay on his feet at the back of the room, he'd speak harshly at everyone and he'd bid like one orders a café crème."

Castaing, who frequently spoke out against Lhéritier, was hired to handle a major sale by the esteemed Hôtel Drouot in 2012. The auction was an abject failure: 49 of the 65 lots went unsold. Lhéritier, it turned out, had told his associates not to bid. Castaing later found copies of the auction catalogue on his shop's doorstep every morning for a week — the *belles lettres* equivalent of a horse's head in his sheets.

The year before, the French government had declared that a series of letters written by former president Charles de Gaulle that had been purchased by Aristophil and divvied up among investors in fact belonged to the state. When staff under Aurélie Filippetti, the newly appointed minister of culture, reviewed the letters turned over by Aristophil, they discovered that Lhéritier had given them photocopies. Once confronted, he relinquished the originals, but Filippetti would not forget the affront.

Around the same time, Belgian authorities launched a fraud and money-laundering investigation into Aristophil in Brussels, where the company had opened a second Museum of Letters and Manuscripts. And in December 2012, the Autorité des Marchés Financiers, France's independent financial trading regulator, issued a warning about investing in

By the Seventies, Sade was seen as a man ahead of his time, a muse of the Surrealists and a forerunner of Freud

Right: Hugues de Sade, a descendant of the 18th century marquis, with a chair belonging to the nobleman in a cell at Chateau de Vincennes where he was briefly imprisoned in 1763
Far right: Imaginary Portrait of the Marquis de Sade (1866) by H Biberstein

unregulated markets like letters and manuscripts. A year later, reports emerged that for the first time ever, Aristophil declined to buy back some of its investors' manuscripts at the expected rate of return. (Lhéritier's lawyer says there was never a guarantee to repurchase.)

Yet if Lhéritier was worried, he didn't show it. The opening gala at his new headquarters was like a thumb in the eye of his enemies. He had won €170m in the EuroMillions lottery the previous November — the biggest jackpot win in French history — and invested some €40m of his winnings in Aristophil. And he was preparing to make his most audacious acquisition yet.

SADE WAS WRONG: *The 120 Days of Sodom* was not lost in the siege of the Bastille. It was discovered by a young man named Arnoux de Saint-Maximin, who spirited the rolled-up parchment out of the crumbling prison and sold it to the Marquis de Villeneuve-Trans. Villeneuve-Trans's descendants hid the manuscript in their Provençal estate for more than a century, ultimately selling it to a German collector in 1900. In 1904, the Berlin sexologist Iwan Bloch published a few hundred copies of Sade's previously unknown novel, ostensibly for scientific purposes.

The scroll returned to France in 1929, when it was purchased by Charles and Marie-Laure de Noailles, patrons of the European avant-garde movement who traced their ancestry to Sade. The Noailles allowed a Sade authority to borrow the manuscript and produce a more accurate version of the text, which he published via limited subscription to avoid censorship. The family then kept the scroll in a library cabinet, breaking it out for readings when entertaining luminaries like Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí.

"I remember when intellectuals would come to visit, it was always a special moment to show them the manuscript," says Carlo Perrone, the Noailles' grandson. "We would take it out of the box three or four times a year. It was not something we showed everybody." In 1982, Perrone, then in his twenties, received a panicked call from his mother: the manuscript was gone. She'd lent it to a close friend, the publisher Jean Grouet, who'd smuggled it into Switzerland and sold it for roughly $60,000 (£35,000).

The buyer was a department-store magnate, Gérard Nordmann, owner of one of the largest private collections of erotica in the world. Perrone travelled to Switzerland to retrieve the manuscript, offering to buy it back. But Nordmann refused, telling Perrone, "I will keep it for the rest of my life."

After a lengthy legal battle, France's highest tribunal ruled that the manuscript had been stolen and ordered that it be returned to the Noailles. But Switzerland, which hadn't yet ratified the Unesco convention requiring the repatriation of stolen cultural goods, disagreed. In 1998, the Swiss federal court ruled that Nordmann had purchased it in good faith.

The manuscript's author, meanwhile, was enjoying a cultural resurgence. By the time the French ban on his books was lifted in the Seventies, Sade was seen in some circles as a man ahead of his time: muse of the Surrealists, forerunner of Freud, even prophesier of the Holocaust. With his works now published by the distinguished Bibliothèque de la Pléiade and Penguin Classics, the "Divine Marquis" had entered France's literary pantheon.

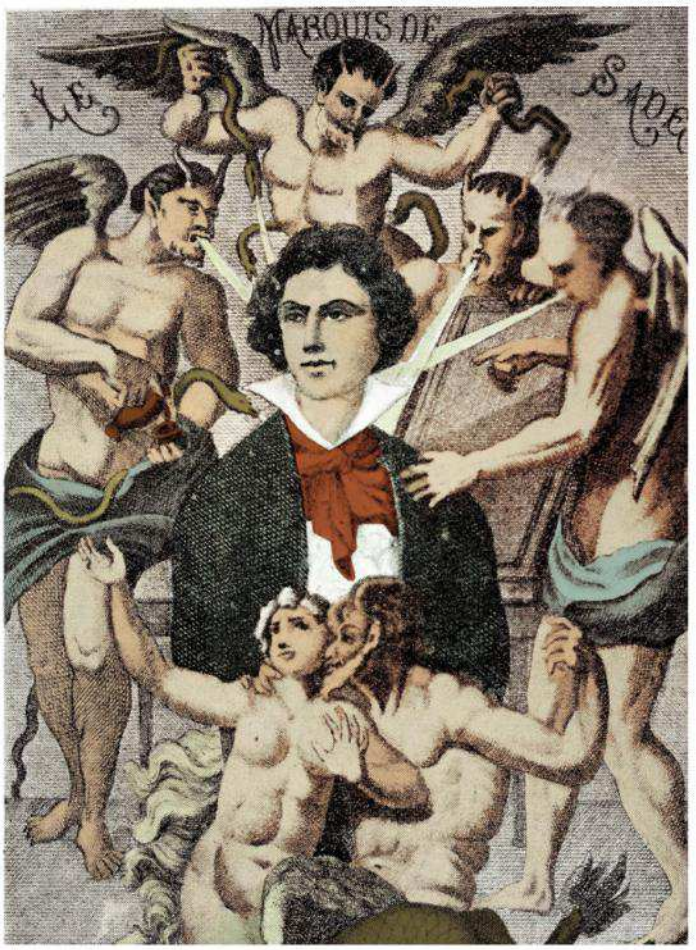
For generations, the Sade family refused the title "Marquis" because of its notorious associations. Today, Hugues de Sade, a direct descendant, sells wine, spirits and beer under the brand Maison de Sade. "He must be looking up right now from his grave, smiling," Hugues told me, sitting in his flat on the outskirts of Paris, where a bronze of his famous ancestor's skull enjoys pride of place on his coffee table. He is holding out hope for a Sade-themed line of Victoria's Secret lingerie.

Nordmann remained true to his word: he kept *The 120 Days of Sodom* for the rest of his life. After his death in 1992 and his widow's in 2010, Nordmann's heirs put his collection of erotica up for sale. Sensing an opportunity, Bruno Racine, the director of the National Library of France, with the backing of France's Commission of National Treasures, lined up roughly €3.6m (£3m) in private donations to buy the historic scroll in 2013. The sellers agreed to share the proceeds with Perrone and his family.

Two days before the deal was to be finalised, the Nordmanns backed out. Maybe, as Perrone would later tell the French press, the courtroom battles were still too fresh for the family to make a deal involving the manuscript's former owners. Or maybe the Nordmanns had an inkling they could hold out for a better offer. Not quite a year later, in March 2014, Lhéritier announced that he'd purchased *The 120 Days of Sodom* for $10m (£6m). The bulk of the proceeds went to the Nordmanns and to Perrone and his family. The rest covered taxes, fees, and, presumably, a hefty commission for Vrain, the mastermind behind the deal.

Lhéritier, accompanied by a television news crew, chartered a private jet to claim his prize. He offered to donate the manuscript to the National Library after exhibiting it for five to seven years, in exchange for a significant reduction in his company's tax obligation. The →

Getty



National Library was on board with the agreement, but Filippetti's Ministry of Culture, still smarting from the de Gaulle episode, declined. "Suspicion against the sustainability and integrity of Aristophil led the state not to proceed with this proposal," Racine, whose term as National Library director ended in 2016, told me in an email.

The Musée d'Orsay asked to borrow the scroll for its blockbuster exhibition "Sade: Attacking the Sun," opening that October. Lhéritier refused, believing that if he loaned the manuscript to the museum, which operated under the authority of the minister of culture, he might never get it back, thereby losing it to the French government without the benefits of his original offer. Instead, a month before the museum's show, he mounted his own exhibition. Perrone did not attend. "My relationship with Lhéritier was not that friendly," he says.

Two months later, the police showed up at Lhéritier's door.

"FILIPPETTI AND SOME MALICIOUS PROSECUTORS thought that the manuscript would be submitted free of charge after Aristophil's destruction," Lhéritier told me through a translator. "They placed a bomb in the heart of Aristophil and its museums and it exploded."

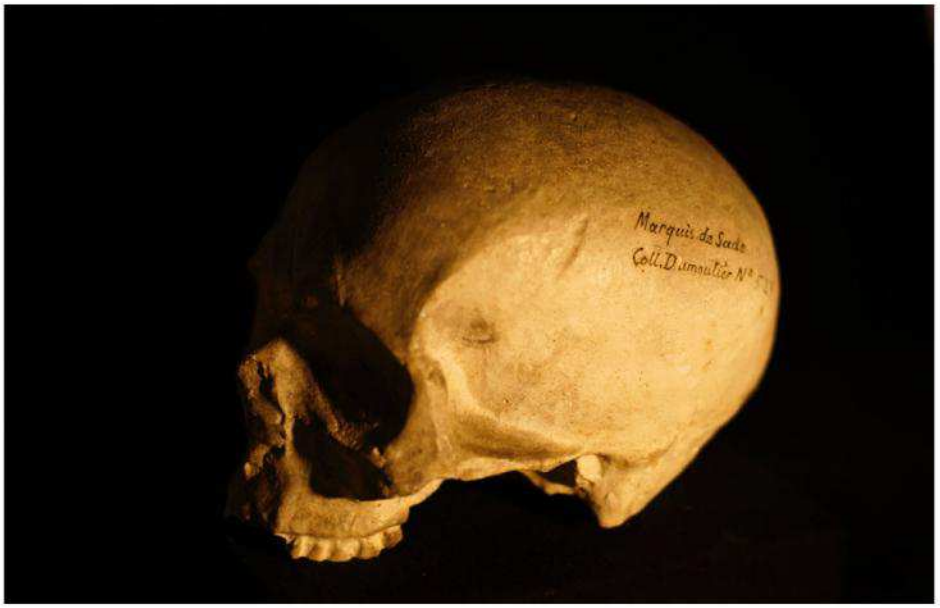
Lhéritier is sitting at his dining table in his fortress-like stone villa in the hills above Nice, wearing a cobalt blue suit with a plaid open-collared shirt and matching pocket square. In the bright white light coming off the Mediterranean on this warm December 2016 day, he looks older, more tired, than he appears in even relatively recent photos. This is the first time Lhéritier has spoken at length publicly about the rise and fall of Aristophil since he's come to be regarded as France's Bernie Madoff.

Agents in the country's consumer affairs and fraud prevention division, leery of Aristophil's unusual business model, spent years investigating the company. Interviewing Castaing and other sources in the manuscript market, they concluded that Lhéritier built Aristophil as an elaborate shell game. According to lawyers representing the company's former clients, Lhéritier and his colleagues considerably overvalued Aristophil's holdings while using new investments to pay off old ones and make new purchases so that the operation would appear sound.

Financial investigators referred the case to the French public prosecutor's office, which ordered the raids in November 2014. Four months later, an investigating judge indicted Lhéritier, according to multiple news accounts, on charges of fraud, money laundering, deceptive marketing practices and breach of trust. (Lhéritier's lawyer would not comment on the specific charges.) He now faces up to 10 years in prison.

Authorities also reportedly indicted three

Gérard Lhéritier faces 10 years in jail, on charges of fraud, money laundering, deceptive marketing practices and breach of trust



A plaster mould of the Marquis de Sade's skull made in 1814, the year he died, now stored by La Musée de l'Homme, Paris

Aristophil associates: Vrain, an accountant, and one of the company's directors. (Vrain would not comment on any charges.) Employees continued to operate the museum and *The 120 Days of Sodom* exhibit for several months without pay, even though the collections were under government seal.

The courts tied up Lhéritier's lottery winnings, his properties (although he's still allowed to live in his £3.6m villa), his three racehorses and his two hot-air balloons. The only reason Lhéritier has any money at all is thanks to his son, Fabrice, to whom he'd bestowed a portion of his EuroMillions windfall.

Out on £1.8m bail, Lhéritier now spends his days preparing for his criminal trial, the date for which has not yet been set. In his timber-ceilinged villa, which features indoor and outdoor pools and a dramatic view of the sea, the divorcé shows me photos of his children and grandchildren among the elegant antiques and paintings in gilded frames. In the bathroom, an electronic toilet boasts a heated seat and a self-opening lid, the ultimate throne for the son and grandson of a plumber. It's a charmed existence, but a far cry from the bustle of Aristophil headquarters and the buzz of Paris auction houses.

"The guy's objective goal in life is not money; it is respectability," says his lawyer, Francis Triboulet. "But now everyone has abandoned him." Yet Lhéritier remains confident. "It might take two or three years, but they aren't going to get me," he says. When I ask how many years in prison he thinks he'll receive, he makes a circle with his fingers: zero.

According to Triboulet, Lhéritier cannot be convicted of fraud because Aristophil never

Tomas van Houtryve / VII / Redux / Eyevine

guaranteed it would buy back investors' manuscript shares. Its contracts simply stated that investors could offer to sell back their shares to the company after five years. As for the 40 per cent returns shareholders expected from their investments? The overzealous promises of independent brokers, not company policy. Anne Lamort, the former president of France's booksellers syndicate, has long suspected Lhéritier was up to something, but concedes that the government's case against him isn't particularly strong. "I think it is very difficult to prove fraud or the exaggerated manuscript estimates," she says. "There is no objective measure and no witnesses."

If Aristophil was a hoax, Triboulet says, why would Lhéritier have invested millions of his lottery winnings into the company? "It's the first time in my life that the main victim of a system which is alleged to be a fraud is considered the main fraudster of the business." But rumours swirl about that lottery jackpot. Some believe Lhéritier bought the winning ticket from somebody else to legitimize his spending — an old trick of Boston gangster Whitey Bulger. (Lhéritier vehemently denies there was anything improper about his lottery win.)

"I brought to the general public, to the working class and others, all of the artists of the School of Paris and the great celebrities of the humanities," he says. Powerful interests in the ministries of culture, finance, and justice were out to destroy him, he claims, because he threatened the cultural status quo and dared to flaunt his success. "In order to live happily in France, you have to live hidden," he says.

For his part, Hugues de Sade largely agrees. "He is someone who was able to find his niche and exploit it in a very intelligent way," Hugues says of Lhéritier. "But in France, we always criticise people who succeed. We like to gain money, but we don't like to talk about it."

There's something appealing about Lhéritier's tale, the way this outsider upended the exclusive world of letters through pluck, innovation and good fortune. But then I remember all the people who believed in this man. With interest, Aristophil owes approximately £1.1bn to its nearly 18,000 investors. That includes Geoffroy de La Taille, an actor and father of five who along with his wife invested €180,000 in the company, figuring the earnings would help his family through the lean times between roles. And Robert Cipollina, a motorcycle racer turned small-business owner in Avignon who planned to use the returns on his €35,000 investment to buy a new car. He changed his mind in 2014, deciding the profits would go to his children as he lay dying from leukemia. "I would prefer to have my dad back, but I also don't want them to have his money," Aude Nehring, Cipollina's daughter, told me angrily when I visited her and her family in Germany. "What is going on here? Do we have a chance to get the money back?"

Selling off Lhéritier's assets wouldn't come close to making his investors whole. Seeking alternatives, some of the alleged victims have formed associations and filed lawsuits against ancillary businesses linked to Aristophil, like its banks and notary. For now, they have little to show for their investment save for a contract produced by a company that no longer exists.

Lhéritier doesn't spend much time pondering Aristophil's investors. While he expresses sympathy for their troubles, he maintains that he is not to blame. "I would tell the clients to address themselves to the authors of this destruction, not to me," he says. "There is only one thing to say to the clients, and I have said this since the beginning: they have to be patient and confident. Their collections still exist. They haven't lost anything."

AFTER BEING HIDDEN AWAY for almost three years, *The 120 Days of Sodom* emerged from its vault late last year. In a second-floor gallery in the modernist Parisian citadel that houses the Drouot auction house, the scroll was rolled up and placed on a pedestal, surrounded by other treasures confiscated from Aristophil. Aguttes, the Parisian auction company that won the contract to store and sell the company's holdings, announced last November that the liquidation of the collection would start on 20 December with a blockbuster sale.

Then, on 18 December, the French government declared *The 120 Days of Sodom* a national treasure. When the auction begins on a cold and dreary afternoon two days later in one of Drouot's largest halls, the auctioneer steps up to the podium and explains to the packed crowd that the designation means the manuscript will be removed from view while the state works to negotiate a fair market price.

Minus its star attraction, the auction proceeds desultorily. Onlookers spill out into the hallway; video screens display offers in dollars, pounds, yuan and other currencies; news cameras zoom in on bidders whispering, mouths covered, into their cell phones, gesturing subtly to the auctioneer when the price is right. But there is little drama. Even Vrain, conspicuous as ever in a wide-brimmed hat, remains seated for most of the sale, avoiding the sort of ostentatious displays that so incensed Castaing. (The latter isn't in attendance, preferring the intimacy of one-on-one sales and refusing to take financial advantage of the debacle.)

Vrain, who hasn't spoken to Lhéritier since the raids, dismisses criticisms he's faced because of his connection to Aristophil. "I have run my business the way I have wanted to," he told me when I visited his bookshop the year before. "Some people like me; some people don't. I don't give a shit." The few times Vrain does bid, he walks away with several of the biggest sales of the auction: an original Balzac manuscript for $1.5m (£1.075m), a calligraphic edition of an Alexandre Dumas drama for $100,000 (£71,500). But many of the lots fail to meet even the low end of the valuation the auction company had assigned, let alone the inflated prices Aristophil's clients paid for them. Nearly one third go unsold.

As the auction wraps up, several longtime Parisian book and art dealers gather downstairs at L'Adjuge, the auction house's café, to reflect on what just transpired. "It was a black sale!" declares Serge Plantureux, who specialises in photographs. "The atmosphere was like a funeral." Anne Lamort agrees that the sale didn't go well as she sips her coffee. And this was only the first and most notable of the Aristophil auctions; Aguttes has promised roughly 300 more over at least the next six years to liquidate all 130,000 items Aristophil had amassed. "There will be a paralysis effect for the next 10 years," Lamort predicts.

Everything — Lhéritier's claims that his empire was built on real value, the investments of his clients, the stability of the shaken manuscript market — hinges on these auctions. Judging from the first sale, everyone involved has reason to worry.

But the one-time king of manuscripts continues to deny any responsibility. "I am furious after this auction," he wrote in an email. "The choice of Aguttes as auction manager is a humbug." He believes the auctioneer wasn't experienced enough in manuscripts, and that it was foolhardy to mount such a high-profile sale less than a week before Christmas. "My old customers will lose a lot of money." Lhéritier insists that his letters are worth the prices he promised because the age of handwritten documents is coming to an end. "People have boxes and boxes of letters" in their basements, he says. "These are completely hidden treasures."

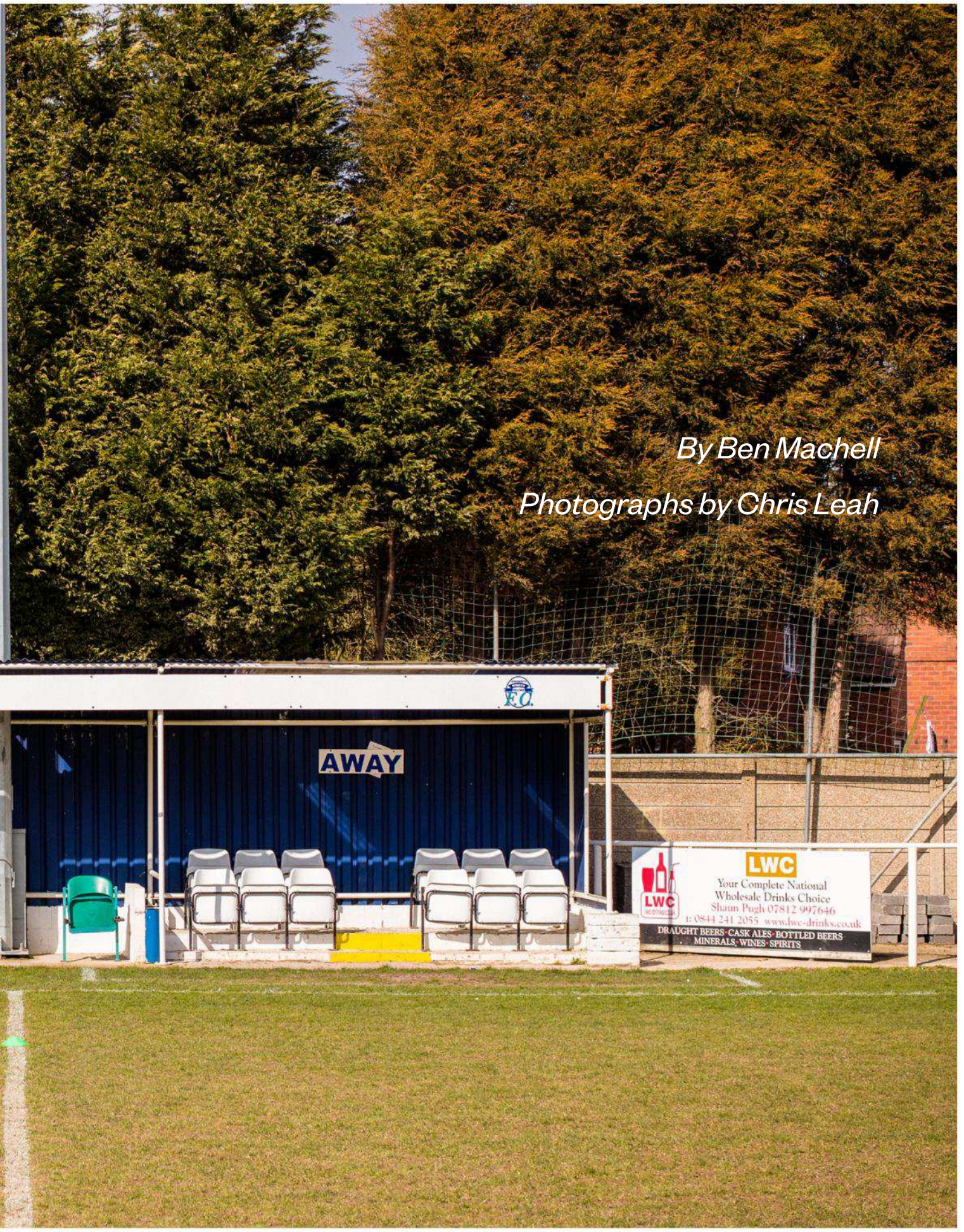
One treasure that probably won't ever reach Lhéritier's predicted value is *The 120 Days of Sodom*. While it now seems likely to end up in the National Library of France, without a public auction or bidding war, it's doubtful the manuscript will fetch the $10m Lhéritier paid in 2014, much less the $15m (£9m) for which he sold it to 420 Aristophil investors. In the end, *The 120 Days of Sodom* may belong to all of France — and to no one.

Perhaps, Lhéritier muses, the scroll really is cursed: "Maybe if I hadn't touched the manuscript, Aristophil would still be here." He says this with a laugh as he sits in the rooftop restaurant of a high end Nice hotel, drinking an espresso in the brilliant sunshine and looking out over the sea. He admits he's never thought too hard about the deeper significance of Sade's scandalous opus, never intensely contemplated the dark, insidious corruption it describes. He never finished reading it. □

Match of the Dales

With a Halifax warehouse manager as chairman and a joiner from the ninth tier of English competition as its first-ever goal-scorer, a new team representing Yorkshire is proving that to compete in international football you don't need Premier League superstars — or even a country. Is this the story of a pub side getting ideas above its station, or the first step towards independence from the UK for God's Own County?

The newly formed Yorkshire Independent Football Association (Yifa) welcomes visiting international teams at Hemsworth Miners' Welfare Football Club ground in West Yorkshire



By Ben Machell

Photographs by Chris Leah

From left: Yorkshire team founding chairman Phil Hegarty; fans watch the players in their March win against the Indian Ocean side Chagos Islands; the 2018 Yifa squad

AT THE START OF THIS YEAR, on a cold, grey Sunday afternoon, Jordan Coduri carried out a deliberate political act. He scored a goal. A lean, rangy midfielder, he raced onto a perfectly weighted forward pass, timing his run to break the opposition's offside trap before bringing the ball down with his right foot. With three defenders racing to catch up, Coduri let the ball bounce twice before twisting his body and unleashing a low left-foot finish that beat the keeper's lunge by no more than half an inch. "Then all I heard was a massive roar," he remembers. "I was mobbed immediately."

One fan found his way behind goal, fists pumping wildly. Pyrotechnic flare smoke began to drift across the pitch. Coduri acknowledged his achievement with a single raised arm. It was a moment he had never imagined possible. He had just scored his first international goal; more than that, just scored Yorkshire's first international goal. "Nobody can take that away from me," says the 25-year-old, who is, in fact, a joiner from Halifax. "It's written down in history." As he jogged back to his half, a chant rose up in low, slow unison: "Yoooork-shire. Yoooork-shire. Yoooork-shire."

This, obviously, doesn't make any sense. Yorkshire cannot have an international football team for the simple reason that Yorkshire is not a country. But to Coduri, his teammates and the 627 people who'd made their way to the compact ground of Hemsworth Miners Welfare FC in Pontefract, this was only a detail. Paperwork. Nothing that couldn't be sorted out. Before kick-off, an honour guard of young mascots took to the pitch waving large white rose banners. For the national anthem, the crowd and players sang "On Ilkla Moor Baht' at". At least, that had been the plan: the PA system packed up so they had to skip it.

The opposition was Ellan Vannin ("Isle of Man" in Manx). The Isle of Man is not a country either, but again, this didn't seem to make it any less of an international fixture. They had a smart red and gold kit, were cheered on by a handful of fans with Manx flags and even boasted a proper mascot, Magnus, a large, tailless cat in red dungarees. The game ended in a 1–1 draw, Coduri's goal levelling things in the second-half. "It was a good result," says Coduri, who plays club football for Penistone Church FC, a semi-professional Barnsley side recently promoted to the ninth tier of English football. "We all knew what we were representing."

But what were they representing? What, in fact, were they playing at? Because at any other point in British history, a bunch of unpaid footballers and pyro-waving fans attempting to pass this spectacle off as an "international" fixture might be seen as a form of bizarre parochialism; perhaps even slightly tragic. But then, this is Britain in 2018. Ordinary people are increasingly used to the idea that their political destinies are in their own hands. In the 2014 Scottish independence referendum, just under 45 per cent of the country expressed its wish to leave the United Kingdom and go it alone. Two years later came the UK Brexit referendum, powered, in part, by the mantra of "taking back control". Now there is increasing pressure on Westminster to allow other British regions to do just that. Last year, for the first time, the Manchester region was granted a so-called metro mayor, with genuine powers over local issues: Andy Burnham MP was elected.

"And as a result, he's probably a more important person in national politics now than when he was on Labour's front bench," says Jonn Elledge, who covers local governance for the *New Statesman*. Set against this backdrop of populism and localism, all bets are off.

This time last year, there was no Yorkshire team, but 45-year-old Halifax warehouse manager Phil Hegarty got to thinking, what if there was? "I'm the sort of person who, if I think of something, I do it," he says, with a cheerful, unfussy air. That said, he hadn't any experience in birthing new footballing nations. "I've been a teacher abroad, I've worked in welfare, I've done all sorts. For the past two years, I've been in a warehouse driving a forklift truck," he says, grinning. "But I've done nothing to prepare me for this."

It wasn't the first time Hegarty had toyed with the idea, often having pub chats where he and his mates picked a hypothetical Yorkshire XI — your Fabian Delphs, your Kyle Walkers, your James Milners, your John Stoneses — only this time something was different. There was

a political backdrop. Last year, Yorkshire was locked in a tussle with Westminster over devolution. It still is. The government, understanding there were practical as well as political advantages in devolving small amounts of power to parts of the UK, proposed a series of region deals, which would see cities like Leeds and Sheffield granted metro-mayors operating in a similar way to Burnham's Manchester. The deal for Sheffield City Region had been done, but most local councils across Yorkshire would rather see the old ceremonial county exist as a big, meaty, single devolved bloc: a large chunk of the country containing over 5.3m people, operating as a political whole. This so-called "One Yorkshire" deal is not what Westminster offered and not what Westminster wants. But it is very, very much what most of Yorkshire wants. In December, a referendum in Doncaster and Barnsley asked people if they wanted to join the Sheffield City Region, or push for a Yorkshire-wide deal. In both towns, over 80 per cent of voters wanted to be part of a devolved Yorkshire.

In March, 18 of Yorkshire's 20 council leaders signed a letter to Local Government Secretary Sajid Javid telling him, effectively, to get a move on. There was something slightly medieval about it, a whiff of northern barons limbering up for a fight. Under these circumstances, the emergence of a national Yorkshire football team is more political weathervane than it is novelty.

HEGARTY, AND THIS IS IMPORTANT, IS NOT A CRANK, not one of those secession-obsessed flat-cap crazies occasionally encountered in Yorkshire. By all appearances, he is a fairly normal bloke who likes football and feels the same as lots of people living in Yorkshire.

"It's the condescending nature of British politics towards the regions, this feeling that people, especially working class people, can't be trusted to make their own decisions," he says. "There is a real feeling of being fed up with that. People want to start making decisions about what happens where they live, and not have some remote Sir Humphrey Appleby type making decisions for them."

Time and again, he says, the powers that be have done their best to slice and dice Yorkshire into smaller, weaker parcels. Even the government's City Regions proposal felt to many like a policy of divide and conquer. "If you keep breaking these cultural and historical units down again and again, people forget who they are." A football team, Hegarty reasoned, might help remind them. After a standing army, nothing demonstrates political legitimacy like an international football team. "With all the devolution stuff, it seemed like a natural step."

He created a Twitter account for his Yorkshire International Football Association (Yifa). He read about an organisation called Conifa (Confederation of Independent Football Associations), a governing body, founded in 2013 and based in Luleå, Sweden, for international sides that do not have Fifa membership. Most of Conifa's international sides do not have Fifa membership because, technically, they are not countries. Instead, they are teams representing repressed minorities, de facto nations and stateless peoples. Tibet has a team that plays in Conifa competitions. So do the Rohingya people of Myanmar, and Greenland, Western Armenia, Iraqi Kurdistan, Darfur plus a host of exotically named places — Cascadia, Occitania, Székely Land, Raetia — because they don't officially exist outside the hearts and minds of their players and fans. Currently top-ranked by Conifa is Panjab, a UK-based team representing the Punjabi diaspora. Number two is Padania, a region of Italy that Mario Balotelli's brother plays for. Third is the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The Isle of Man, clearly a tidy team, sits at number four.

Hegarty accepts that grumbling about the problems facing Yorkshire people — the low rate of per-capita public transport spending in Yorkshire relative to London, for example — suddenly seems a little petty when you consider the plights of some Conifa members.

"You look at the Rohingya people, and they face oppression and death on a daily basis. So yes, we can't put our claim to be a minority region in the same pile as that," he says. In terms of being accepted for Conifa membership, two things that pretty much guarantee membership are already being a de facto nation (like Tibet), or having a unique language, (the Isle of Man). Yorkshire ticks neither box. "We were in a weak position from the beginning."

Hegarty and the Yifa were undaunted and put together an application which, among other things, pointed out that while Yorkshire doesn't technically have its own language, it does have a dialect. "A very old and distinguished dialect," says Hegarty who, for the first time, sounds a bit like he's having to spin things out. "Not a form of English, particularly." They cited Yorkshire's Nordic heritage (the team's nickname is "The Vikings"), but more than anything they emphasised the simple fact that people from Yorkshire identify intensely with being from Yorkshire.

In 2014, a survey about identity by Dr Pete Woodcock, a politics lecturer at the University of Huddersfield, found that while around 15 per cent of people identified as being solely Yorkshire, another 40 per cent said they felt more Yorkshire than English. To literally everyone in the UK, this is not news. We all know Yorkshiremen love talking about being from Yorkshire more than anything else. But to Conifa? This was brand new information. Absolute gold, and they lapped it up.

"When we received the application, we were a bit surprised," says Sascha Düerkop, the general secretary of Conifa who talks with a technocratic matter-of-factness. "Because we had never heard of Yorkshire. I asked them to →

justify a bit more what was so special about Yorkshire. And the most surprising and convincing fact was that it is a region with a simple majority of people who identify with Yorkshire more than the UK. This was very surprising to us, but also a strong argument for them being included.

"If we have a political agenda — which we don't — but if we have any, it's that we are basically asking people, 'What do you identify with?' And if there's a significant amount of people who identify with an entity then, no matter what political status it has, we give them the platform to represent that entity through international football."

In January this year, less than six months after the idea occurred to him, Hegarty was chairman of a Conifa-affiliated international football team.

A TEAM, OF COURSE, NEEDS PLAYERS. And a manager. And fans. At the end of 2017, Yorkshire appointed Ryan Farrell as head coach. A former semi-pro player, primary school teacher and now academy coach at Bradford City, he was, like many people, initially sceptical about the project. But a friend suggested he apply for the job, so he chanced his arm. "There was no real interview process," he says. "It was just a case of having a sit-down chat with Phil. We got on really well and we went from there."

Farrell selected a squad of players from local lower-league teams: Ossett Albion, Athersley Recreation, Frickley Athletic. Jamie Vardy, Danny Rose and Aaron Lennon did not register an interest in turning out for their county, but the door is always open. "If they wanted to get on board and it was something they believed in and were passionate about, that'd be great," says Hegarty, brightly. "They would be really welcome in the team."

For now, the most experienced player in the team is the captain, Patrick McGuire, who began his career at Bradford City before a string of local non-league sides. Primary school teacher McGuire is 30, barrel-chested, with heavy stubble and a sleeve tattoo. He's found learning about Yorkshire's Conifa opponents illuminating. "I'm the school's geography coordinator, so I've got to be clued-up on certain things," he says. "It's surprising how many non-league footballers are teachers."

The fixture against the Isle of Man was the first time he'd felt nervous about a football match in a very long time, he says. "It was like being at a proper football game again. Big build-up, proper atmosphere, you could see the buzz around the ground."

Owing to bad weather, McGuire estimates the Yorkshire side had "about 15 minutes" of training together before the match, and because it took place on a Sunday, quite a few of the team had played for their clubs the day before. "I thought, I'll have a go and if my legs say no then they say no. Luckily, I got through it fine."

In fact, McGuire provided the assist for Coduri's goal. He says he's particularly proud to captain Yorkshire given that, while he was born in Bradford, everyone else in his family comes from Lancashire. "I'm a massive black sheep," he says. "I've always copped a lot of stick at family dos and stuff. But I'm a mouthy lad. I can give it back."

It's not all banter, though. Being a Yorkshire international genuinely means something to those who are. "It's a good way of putting Yorkshire on the map, plus as players it's a platform for us, especially the younger lads," McGuire says. "There were quite a few scouts at the game against Ellan Vannin and it's great for them if they're looking to rise up the football pyramid. I said to the lads that because of all the media attention this is getting, there are going to be more and more players who are going to want to get into this. I've had loads of messages from guys asking me to throw their names into the ring. I've told them that the shirts are ours to lose now. We'll have to fight to keep them."

THE PROSPECT OF WATCHING TATTOOED primary school teachers and lanky young joiners fight for Yorkshire is, undoubtedly, part of the appeal. The Yorkshire football fans who feel disenfranchised by and alienated from Westminster politics are just as likely to feel disenfranchised by and alienated from top level football.

Ian Smith, 33, runs Yifa's East Yorkshire supporters' club. At weekends, he sells matchday programmes at Hull City. But he's exasperated with his Championship club. "At Hull, we've got players on stupid wages, and you're sat there thinking, how can you justify that? And then you see the Yorkshire lads just proper grafting and actually playing for pride as much as anything."

This pride also serves as bonding agent. Back in 2015, before making a speech in Yorkshire, a hot mic caught David Cameron joking about his hosts: "We thought people in Yorkshire hated everyone else," he said. "We didn't realise they hated each other so much." And it's sort of true.

"There's very little common ground when it comes to football in Yorkshire, with the exception that most of us hate Leeds," Smith says. Now, suddenly, there's a team everyone can get behind. "I've got lads who go to Hull messaging me asking when the next Yorkshire game is. It was surreal at the Isle of Man game, because you could see everybody coming together. There were Leeds flags, Barnsley flags, people in different club colours. Everybody was united. It was a brilliant atmosphere."

Harry Baker is 18, and runs the Yifa supporters' branch in Cleckheaton, just south of Bradford. "It's a kind of standard local

Yorkshire town," he says. "It's not a place you would go on holiday, if you know what I mean?' He pauses, perhaps to think of something more positive to say. "We've got the world's biggest Indian restaurant. It's absolutely massive."

Baker rounded up 10 of his mates to come to the Isle of Man game, which meant he ended up running the supporters' club by default. The youngest member is 13, the oldest in his forties, "but most of the membership is around 17 to 19," he says. "What I've heard from a lot of people is that there is a growing disillusionment with the FA and with modern football. Ticket prices are becoming unaffordable for working class people and you can't sit where you want and you can't stand."

Without making assumptions for Baker's cohorts, he, at least, has been thinking about the wider politics underpinning all this. "I've heard a lot of people saying this shows the UK is becoming more insular, and that Yorkshire will want to become independent soon. I don't think that's the case at all." Rather, he thinks people want a bit more autonomy, "a regional parliament. Because when you look at the differences in spending, we do feel a bit like we are being left behind."

Hegarty says he spent the day of Yorkshire's first game in a state of constant motion, doing interviews, making sandwiches and Cup-a-Soups for the players. The important thing, however, was that it actually happened.

"I think that until the first game was played, there were a lot of wry smiles and a few winks behind my back," he says. "I'm still coming across people I told about the concept four months ago, and they're asking 'whatever happened to that idea?' And when I tell them that we're established and that we've played our first game, they are quite taken aback."

Yorkshire's second game took place at the end of March, against the Chagos Islands, officially part of the British Indian Ocean Territory. The Chagossians were evicted from their string of tropical atolls between 1967 and 1973 by the British — to allow the United States to construct a military base — so they are a diaspora team. Before the fixture, which Yorkshire won 6-0, the Chagos Islands had played 10 matches, three of which were friendlies against the Principality of Sealand.

If you don't know, Sealand is a naval abandoned fort, a 5,920sq ft offshore platform seven and a half miles off the Suffolk coast. It is not a Conifa member, and its applications have always been rejected, not least on the grounds that nobody actually lives there. "You can just buy a 'passport' online," says Düerkop, mildly exasperated. "Obviously, we don't accept such joke teams."

Having an international football team does not automatically mean that the world will take you more seriously. And however enthusiastic Yorkshire's fans are right now, it might only take one unlucky hiding at the hands of Greenland for the novelty to wear off. But that hasn't happened yet. The plan for now is to play more games, rise up the Conifa rankings, compete in Conifa world cups and European championships and maybe even host one. There is also the stated ambition of a showcase fixture against Catalonia.

"I believe they're very selective about who they play against, but you never know — watch this space," Hegarty says. Given the fact that, last October, the Parliament of Catalonia attempted to unilaterally declare independence from Spain, the prospect of the two football teams meeting as equals would be provocative to say the least. It's a tantalising prospect not just for the knowledge that a forklift truck driver from Halifax has, because of a little gumption and stubbornness, found himself at least tangentially involved in high international affairs.

Hegarty, for the time being, is simply happy that his team exists. "All the political and sporting stuff aside, I did spend a lot of time asking myself, why am I doing this? But after the first game, I got my answer," he says.

"It was seeing everyone's reaction. It might have been only 627 people but they were all behind the team. We had kids out there, mascots flying flags, and it just meant something really special to them. It made their eyes light up. It made their souls come alive. And for me, that's a massive reward. If I can bring a little bit more of that to Yorkshire, I'll be very happy." □

From left: Yifa's 25-year-old midfielder Jordan Coduri, who scored the team's first international goal on 28 January, against Ellan Vannin; the Yorkshire side in action against Chagos Islands; the county's banner hangs pitch-side

‘I’ve never been big on moderation’

What happened when we sent Esquire’s gluttonous food editor to a German health clinic for a nine-day fast, with instructions to keep a hunger diary? Put down your knives and forks and get ready for an unexpected epiphany

By Tom Parker Bowles

Portraits by Dan Burn-Forti

IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME. Like most things do, in the soft, dying light of an epic Friday lunch, fuelled by boozy optimism and three-bottle bravado. "I heard about this place," I say to the editor, "a health clinic in Germany, where you go without food for days on end. Weeks even. You know, Jesus and his jaunt to the desert. And Gandhi. A physical form of prayer. Brings you closer to God and all that."

He raises an eyebrow and takes another glug of wine: "And what, may I ask, has increased spiritual awareness through physical deprivation got to do with you?"

Good point. But like a slack-bellied Bear Grylls, I've come prepared. "Well, you know me, your indolent, sybaritic, exercise-averse food editor who makes those Lotus Eaters look like the Temperance League on starvation Sunday." He nods.

"And you know how I hate all that New Age bullshit about wellness; and those homeopathic quacks, and the bastard snake oil salesmen sugar-coating dodgy diets and miracle cures in a shiny glaze of quasi-scientific claptrap." He nods again, and rolls his eyes.

"Well, throw in some Tibetan bloody bowls, a few leeches, plus tubes jammed up your arse, and what do you get?" By the look on his face, a mental image that puts him off his pudding. But still.

"And you know how I really love a wurst, and a roasted pork knuckle, and a stein or two of beer, and... hey, shall we get a sticky? Excuse me, is your Poire William chilled? Yup? Brilliant, we'll have two large ones. Anyway, the expenses will be minute, too. No going to the bottom of the wine list or caviar binges. I just get bloody soup. And..." the editor holds up his hands. "OK. Fine. Fine. Anything to shut you up."

So, a few weeks later, after reading widely (well, mainly Wikipedia) about the role of fasting in religion (Ramadan, Lent and Yom Kippur); avian migration (the hummingbird weighs a mere five grammes and uses two grammes of fat to travel non-stop more than 1,000 kilometres, which is useful to know next time I'm planning to soar from New York to Mexico City); and general health (there is a huge body of hard scientific evidence supporting the positive effect that fasting has upon the body), I step off the plane in Zürich. And I am scared. Very scared indeed.

Day one

I feel like a convict, sleepwalking towards my lethal injection. Nine days without proper food. I don't think I've done nine minutes. My whole existence is built around what I throw down my throat. My pissed-up lunchtime bravado has long gone. About to commence the drive from Switzerland to Germany, that Martin Sheen line from *Apocalypse Now* keeps running through my head: "I was going to the worst place in the world. And I didn't even know it."

I take one last loving look at airport café food that would usually fill me with disgust. Over-boiled eggs, soggy sandwiches, flaccid chips all take on an impossibly romantic hue. Hell, I even lust after a Whopper. I sit in silence as we cross the border into South Germany, looking longingly at wurst hauses and bier halles, and wondering, for the tenth time that hour, what the hell I am doing here. I've never been big on moderation.

An hour later, we arrive at the Buchinger Wilhelmi clinic. It sits high up on the shore of Lake Constance, in the ridiculously pretty city of Überlingen. In the distance, the Alps frame the horizon. The clinic is clean, smart and discreet. And quiet. So quiet. Not so much talk as murmur. But where's the security and CCTV, and the airport scanners, checking for illicit carbs? This is all so, well, civilised. And friendly. And tidy.

The clinic was founded by Dr Otto Buchinger, a medical officer in the German Imperial Navy who contracted severe rheumatic fever and had to retire at 40, and faced life in a wheelchair. But after a friend advised him to try a three-week cure, things changed. "I was weak and thin," he wrote, "but I could move all my joints again." His health improved, he became a convert, and expert, and opened his first fasting clinic in 1920 with his daughter Maria and son-in-law Helmut Wilhelmi. Buchinger Wilhelmi opened in 1952.

But there are no stern faces here, no rules, save the main doors are locked at 11pm. And no booze. You can even smoke, as long as you stick to the designated area. I'd rather imagined, a few weeks back, that this would be some magnificent gonzo adventure, where I'd play the freewheeling, iconoclastic journo, taking on the unsmiling German anti-pleasure police. A sort of posh Randle McMurphy, skipping over barbed wire fences to feast upon whole roast chickens while laughing in the face of joy-hating Nurse Ratchetts. I'd fight the system, show them that they may starve my body, but they can never break my soul.

How wrong I am. The staff here, at every level, make the Four Seasons look like Fawlty Towers. They exude warmth, charm, and a fundamental softness, a tranquillity that wafts through every part of this sprawling estate. My room is small but neat and comfortable, with a balcony and view over the lake and Alps. Plus there's a desk, large leather reclining chair, decent bed and bathroom with large tub. Each morning, between seven and nine, I am to go for a blood pressure check and weigh-in with my nurse. Apart from that, you can do as little or as much as you want. If you're fasting, everything is done for you. So, in the interests of a little journalistic contrast, I make fine use of my last day as a serious eater. And 20 minutes later, I'm sat behind a rubbish, greasy pizza the size of a wagon wheel. With a few foaming steins of beer to wash it down: may as well build up for the fast ahead. I waddle back and collapse into bed. This will be a blast.

Day two: weight 81.7kg

Digestive rest day. Which means veggie food (very good, for tucker sans fat) to slip gently into the fast. Snow is falling heavily and I wander down to see the nurse. My fellow guests are reassuringly varied: model-thin Parisians passing in a cloud of scent; large Germans in

Rooms at the Buchinger Wilhelmi health clinic have views across Lake Constance and to the Swiss Alps, encouraging calmness and tranquility for visitors, far from the stresses of modern urban life

I go off for a long walk past chocolate box-pretty villages. Everywhere that I look, there are taverns with foaming beer and plump dumplings. Food, winking, leering and taunting. My head starts to ache

bathrobes; scrawny Brits in gym kit; smiling Italians in spa casual. And every variation of the above. All smile, munificently. I eat a bowl of fruit in silence, before meeting Dr Martine van Houten, who has been assigned to me. She's the sort of doctor you would feign illnesses just to go and see, dry and funny and pragmatic. Her eyes gleam with good health.

"Fasting is not a diet," she says, seemingly reading my mind. "Of course, you can use the technique of fasting to implement losing weight. But fasting is a way of opening up, of reaching a different physical state. Fasting is a mosaic of a lot of things. And the art of the fast is not in how long you can do it. For you, six days is perfect. But the art is as much in the re-feeding, the coming out of it, as it is in the fast itself." The basic proposal for me is six days of fast; one day preparation; two days at the end, re-feeding.

We talk for a bit and she senses my cynicism. "I think you should approach this with an open mind. And try lots of the therapies. You never know, you might actually enjoy them," she says. She puts me down for meditation, shiatsu, osteopathy, psychotherapy... and sound massage, with Tibetan bloody singing bowls.

"Why not put me down for the leech therapy, too?" I say, only half in jest.

"You want to try that?" she asks. Dear God, no.

Before I leave, she makes one thing clear: "This is very much a medical clinic. There are some very ill people who come here with very specific needs. They often come back again and again, and we have scientifically proven results for the likes of arthritis and diabetes. Although a few people might use it to tick off their spa list, this is a clinic."

She gives me a few tips. "Drink, drink, drink. At least 1.5 litres per day, more if you can. And move. Exercise. But do it in third gear. Give your body a chance. Slow down. Oh, and communicate. Let the nurses know how you feel. Don't suffer in silence."

She gives me magnesium to counter any excess uric acid, and alkaline pills that help battle the same thing, before I go off for a blood test, a lunch of mashed potatoes and vegetables, and a long walk past handsome baroque churches and chocolate box-pretty villages. Everywhere that I look, there are taverns with foaming beer and plump dumplings. Food, winking, leering and taunting. My head starts to ache. The prospect of nine more days, however comfortable, fills me with gloom. One last dinner: three potatoes, baked, with braised fennel. I chug about three litres of water and fall asleep, sad, hungry and hopeless. I can't even be arsed to dream.

Day three: 81.4kg

The headache's worse now, thudding, bouncing around my bonce. It's snowing again. I drink a litre of water. See the nurse. Trudge back and stare out at the fat flakes coming down. At 11am, a carafe of Glauber's salt, a laxative draft. It tastes bitter, washed down with fresh raspberry juice. And that's it. I'm officially entering my fast. An hour later and those salts have passed through me like, well, a dose of salts.

Lunch arrives in my room, a small bowl of golden vegetable broth. It's good but over in about eight sips. My headache is now near unbearable. Caffeine withdrawal, apparently, plus about 25 years of excess, all fighting to get out. The snow has stopped and I gaze out at all the neat little houses with their neat plumes of smoke coming from their neat chimneys, and imagine them sitting down at tidy tables to eat bread and meat and drink beer. Living like normal folk. A boat glides across the water. There's probably a snack bar on that, too. With crisps and bratwurst with fresh mustard. I try to concentrate on the new Robert Harris. But all those lunches at The Ritz and in smoky Munich bars don't help. I move on to Anthony Powell; *A Dance to the Music of Time*... the first three books. Too many parties and boys cooking plump sausages in their rooms.

A nurse comes in and for my afternoon rest straps me into a warm liver compress, a hot water bottle supposed to stimulate blood in the liver, and "give your vitality a strong boost". It's perfectly pleasant. Only five more hours until my next bowl of broth, now taken in the salon. Alone. I can't face chit-chat at the best of times. By now, I'm feeling positively hermit-like.

I'm still obsessing about food. Or the lack of it. But the hunger isn't overwhelming, rather receding by the hour. My evening broth is slurped in moments but already, the taste is cleaner, clearer. The headache still rages. I slump back to my room and slip into a deep, hot bath with Widmerpool and Duport. And a cup of apple peel tea. Good shit, that apple peel tea. I drink three cups, then some camomile. And fall asleep about 9pm, into a deep, dark sleep with violent, worrying dreams that I remember for a moment as I wake up, gasping for breath: death and →

This is an alien experience, my primary urge softened from roar to whisper. And this stillness is infectious. Exercise. Reading. Thinking. Admittedly about what a Sichuan hot pot would taste like right now

chaos and a feeling of utter helplessness. Then they disappear. I wake up to pee at about 3am, then plummet back into the vicious abyss.

Day four: 80kg

I feel a little better today. The headache's still there but softer, more discreet. The sun is out once more and I swim in the lovely heated outdoor pool. I emerge, pink and steaming, like a fresh-boiled leg of ham. Then an hour of osteopathy where I'm poked and pushed and manoeuvred by Herr Lutz, a splendidly tranquil man who works magic, despite putting gloved hands deep into my mouth and pressing hard. I emerge floppy and happy, to a cup of herb tea. Next thing I know, I'll have hot glasses stuck to my back.

Lunch is a glass of apple juice. But it's only when I've finished that I realise I feel no hunger. At all. This is an utterly alien experience, my primary urge softened from roar to whisper. And all this stillness is infectious. Exercise. Reading. Thinking. Admittedly about what a Sichuan hot pot would taste like right now, but the interest is objective, intellectual even, rather than driven by my base needs.

I surrender to my liver compress and gaze out the window. My test results are fine, save for bad cholesterol which is a bit high. And booze, too. (Tell me something I don't know.) The headache has now gone, and I actually look up and smile at my fellow guests. A walk along the lake and into town. I gaze into butchers and bakeries, but remain utterly unmoved, feeling as if I'm sitting behind glass, a voyeur without the perverted thrill. Where I expected raging lust for food, instead it's as if all my appetites have been surgically removed. I'm not even tempted to stray. Carrot soup for dinner. Slurp it back, with gusto not glee. It's there, I eat it, it tastes good. But my visceral connection with food, usually embraced way too lustily, has slipped away. More herb tea and off to bed with Anthony Powell.

Day five: 80.2kg

I actually leap out of bed today — and not because I'm running late. Into a 6am meditation class. As ever, I get it wrong; fold my knees under me before realising I cannot sit for one minute like, this, let alone one hour. I also need a pee. When you're drinking five litres of water a day, you spend more time peeing than eating. Anyway, utter silence, save the cacophony of empty tummies — clicks, growls, roars. The cynic inside me sneers, but soon, he is ushered out, to be replaced by a genuine sense of wellbeing. Oh Christ, I actually said wellbeing. What's going on?

My first enema, while not pleasant, is hardly *Last Tango in Paris*. A nurse, a litre of warm water, a lubed-up tube and well, you can guess the rest. Gravity does its job three minutes later. After that, as I sit, gazing out over the ever-changing lake, the sun breaks through the clouds and I suddenly feel a surge of pure bliss through my veins. I burst into tears, for no reason at all, suddenly ecstatic to simply be alive. Curiouser and curiouser. More amazing still, I go for a run in the gym. The sense of inner calm is pervasive and all encompassing, the strain and worries of the outside world stripped away. The luxury of doing absolutely bugger all. Of course, this place is hardly cheap. But no more expensive than any five-star hotel. A wondrous hike in the hills (still no chat; come on, I'm English), a bowl of pumpkin broth and to bed with Chicago architects and serial killers in Erik Larson's book *The Devil in the White City*.

Day six: 79.8kg

I dream in 4K. I feel alive, strong, happy, clean. Like a fella in a RightGuard advert. I want to splash cold water on my face, in slow motion, before leaping onto my bike and slicing through the rush hour traffic for a big, manly board meeting. Then I remember I'm naked. And not usually given to these fitness driven flights of fantasy. I try to remember what hunger felt like. It's like meeting an old school friend in the street after 10 years or so, and wondering what the hell you ever saw in him. Food, the very centre of my life, has become as emotive as a glass bottle of mineral water. I only drink the juice and sip the soup as something to pass the time, and break up the day.

Then two things happen. First, the taste of honey, which arrives with my morning tea. Instead of stirring in the half teaspoon, I lick it off. My taste buds recoil, then roar their delight. Whoa, baby, this shit is strong. Suddenly, desire comes back into sharp focus, and a craving crawls up from my gut. It's like coming out of black and white and into Technicolor. My own Yellow Brick Road. But the moment, visceral, intense, almost erotic, quickly passes. Just like the moment, an hour or so later, when I walk past the cinema from which the scent of warm popcorn drifts

Grooming: Natalya Chew

out. Suddenly, I'm whisked back to the Chippenham ABC cinema of my youth, with the cold damp loos and sticky carpets and tattered, creaky chairs. It's like a bullet train to my past, so evocative is that scent.

As usual that night, we queue up like supplicants at the altar, awaiting our body and blood, a pellucid tomato broth, sweet and softly spoken. Then to bed with Vladimir Nabokov's autobiography. I feel my clarity of mind will suit the brilliant clarity of his prose but, like his beloved butterflies, it flits from my grasp and I fall asleep. No dreams tonight.

Day seven: 78.6kg

Before I know it, the end is drawing near. The daily schedule has become smooth, and comfortably worn. Nurse, swim, juice, rest, walk (through deep snow and trees that crackle with ice), run, soup, bed. Today's enema seems as normal as brushing my teeth — well, with a little more anal penetration, but you get my drift. Soon, the experts say, I'll "grieve for the simplicity of life on autopilot". And this really is luxury, doing nothing, having to speak to no one, cleaned not just in body, but in mind: *mens sana in corpore sana*. It's blissfully selfish, though undoubtedly inspiring. I speak to guests who come year after year, with chronic arthritis and Type 2 diabetes and all manner of other ailments. I'm no scientist but these people are all successful, rational people who passionately vouch for the gentle effectiveness of this treatment. Non-invasive, no drug regimes, just sitting back, chilling and not eating for a while. Like a physical MoT, a reboot, a spring clean. It's not about starvation, rather a time to slow down, look around, wake up and smell the herbal tea. My final fasting dinner is celery soup with dill, two things I'd usually cross a continent, on my bare knees, to avoid.

The spa clinic's heated outdoor swimming pool where the author whiled away the hours between bowls of broth and his daily regimen of wellbeing treatments

Day eight: 77.8kg

Breaking the fast. I feel like I'm losing a friend. "Every fool can fast," said George Bernard Shaw, "but only a wise man knows how to break a fast" — not his most elegant epithet, but the break is as important as the fast, they say. After a blissful hour of shiatsu, I swim my lengths and return to find a bowl of warm apple purée, sprinkled with cinnamon. It fills my mouth, silken and seductive. Saliva rushes in, my jaw pauses, momentarily shocked. The strange sensation of mastication, my solo sojourn rudely interrupted by solid food. Not the heavenly choirs I expected to sing in my mouth, but interesting. Something new. I'm still not hungry. I eat it because it's there.

My last rest, then an apple, sliced and chewed slowly. The crisp crunch of the apple, that explosion of sweetness. I chew as if testing some exotic new species. I only manage half, hunger not so much blunted as broken. There's soup for dinner plus a certificate and a celebratory candle. I've made it. And I'm sad. I eat mechanically, with pleasure but not joy.

Day nine: 77.2kg

I'm out, and back in the world of the chewing. Breakfast of porridge with apple, grapes and cinnamon. And two prunes. Again, the flavours are generous and clean, yet I eat it as if in a bubble. And get bored, leaving half of it.

Lunch is good. Chicory salad, with a sharp dressing, splendidly bitter. Then buttery mashed potato with spinach; can't eat it all but it's good to have the butter back. Is this it, I wonder? Do I return home a teetotal vegan with a penchant for shiatsu? Will I ever love greed again? God, I'll be a bore. Still, I don't half feel sprightly — thinner, happier, less pissed off.

I have one final talk with Dr Eva Lischka, the head of the clinic. "I fast twice a year, for seven to 10 days," she says. "And have done so for 34 years. The psychological effects are huge. If you're a little stressed, or little things make you angry, you do the fast. And it's like switching on a light." She smiles. "You are now motivated to deal with the problems."

The weight loss part of the fast now seems trite, as Dr Lischka continues, "I think one of the biggest benefits is psychological, the improving of the mood. People who have lost children, partners, have low energy, all manner of diseases... they come to us, and take away one of the few things they have left... food.

"But after four days here — fasting, seeing psychotherapists, having treatments and exercising and everything else — they are totally changed," she says. "It's not only the fast but the exercise routine, the relaxation. Prevention is the most important medicine."

I get up to go. "Remember, man has been fasting for a long time," says Dr Lischka. "Ancient man had to go out to look for food. And often, for many days there was nothing, save those internal reserves. He needed a clear head to hunt on an empty stomach, otherwise he wouldn't survive."

My last treatment is Tibetan bowl sound therapy. Really. I lie down in a darkened room, and have metal bowls set atop me. Despite looking like the percussion section of a Buddhist band, any vestige of stress rides the waves of sound away. I have never felt happier, more content. And less of a twat.

Day 10: 77.2kg

I'm off. Leaving the stillness and calm behind. I'll miss the lake and the steaming pool, the silence and the time to sit and stare. "After fasting, your body can be compared to an empty house," I was told by Raimund Wilhelmi, one of the third generation of family to run the clinic. He's charming and funny, miles removed from a spewer of dogmatic dogma. "The old carpets and wallpaper have been removed. And now have to be improved with new ones. Only then will you be able to live in this house more healthily and more comfortably." I float back to the airport, glide through and onto the plane. Where I eat a piece of salami. It tastes dumb, coarse and over seasoned. Well, it is British Airways, but still. I gulp back more water.

A few days later and the greed is back. Of course, I slip back into old ways as the days go by. I can't say I'm a new man, either. But I'm now going to spinning classes. Trying to eat and drink a little less. Slowing things down. It was a brief glimpse into another existence: quieter, more civilised, slower and unselfish. I went there in jest. And left in love. □

Fiction

Holiness

By Peter Bradshaw

Illustration by Jun Takahashi – Digital imaging by Eric Heintz

ONLY CREATIVE REASON CAN SHOW US THE WAY. That is what I have always lived by, and it is a modification, in fact a secularisation, of my mentor's great maxim, which in its entirety reads: *only creative reason, which in the crucified God is manifested as love, can really show us the way*. As I reflect on the events of the past few years, these words seem very appropriate.

My first meeting with him involved a crisis of protocol. Of course, I knew that former US presidents must always be addressed as "Mr President". But how to address the emeritus Pope Benedict XVI, formerly Joseph Aloisius Ratzinger? Incredibly, it was not a problem that occurred to me until we were brought face to face, near his residence, the Mater Ecclesiae monastery in the Vatican Gardens. In my bewilderment, my stammering mortification, I instinctively truncated the traditional honorific, blurting out the single word "Holiness" and making a deferential, slightly teutonic inclination of the head: a mannerism I stuck to in his presence after that. Something in this improvised form pleased him. He smiled. It was rare for him to do so.

I myself am not a cradle Catholic. My mother was a member of the Church of England, in which I was christened and confirmed in the conventional way; my father had no faith and used to joke: "First time I was in church they threw water over me, second time confetti, and the third time, old boy, it will be earth!"

In fact, he was cremated.

I went up to university in the late Nineties to read divinity and it was there that I found that I enjoyed writing poetry. I, in fact, never had a girlfriend and was very shy, due to my ugly and absurd monobrow, a grotesque disfigurement that I had learned to live with. I was received into the church and on graduating I became a teacher in a Catholic boys' school in the Midlands, but continued to publish poems, one of which emerged in a Catholic literary magazine. I can hardly remember the poem now. It was called "Balance". There was some imagery comparing the outstretched arms of Christ during the crucifixion to the level positioning of scales. A callow piece of work. I have all but forgotten it.

Yet something in this poem caught the attention of the Pope Emeritus. And it was when I was attending a conference for Catholic schoolteachers in Vatican City in 2012, that I was passed a note. A young priest appeared in the auditorium where I was hearing a lecture on the Neocatechumenal Way. He discreetly leaned from the aisle into the row where I was seated, and handed me a folded sheet of paper. Then he vanished.

This message gave me to understand that Benedict himself had read my poem, was aware of my attendance at the conference and wished to see me. It was an honour not to be taken lightly.

The hour of our meeting came at 5pm. I was to meet the former pontiff in the garden and was conveyed to his presence by his private secretary who withdrew as soon as we caught sight of Benedictus, after signalling that I should continue to walk towards him alone. The man himself was seated under a plane tree, reading. I bowed, kissed the ring which he held out, and then sat in the chair opposite to which he gestured. At close quarters, I could see how silvery and silky his hair was, with that yellowy look that some old people's white hair gets. His skin itself was very unlined and the eyes fierce and clear.

"Where are you from, David?" he asked, with a surprisingly strong German accent. I replied: "Newcastle in England... Holiness."

"Ah," returned Benedictus. "The hometown of my old friend Basil Hume. A great man."

A brief silence settled on the conversation.

"I was very impressed by your poem, David," he said at last, holding up what appeared to be a xerox. I was about to say how moved I was by his interest, when Benedictus held his hand up sharply, displeased by what he clearly felt was my shrill false modesty. "And I should like you to read some creative work that I have written."

At this, he produced a bound volume of typewritten pages and gave them to me. "Take this to your lodgings. Read it overnight, and come back here tomorrow at five, after your lectures. At that time, we can perhaps have some tea and you can give me your honest opinion."

Then he rang a small silver bell, which summoned the priest whom I had seen before. This young man appeared instantly, and I was silently given to understand that I should go with him. I tried to say some sort of farewell, but Benedictus was already looking away from me, reading a *Bible* bound in white calf, and he did not acknowledge my departure.

Only after an unbearably tense two hours of lectures was I permitted to return to my tiny cell-like room, and open the document that his Holiness had given me. What on earth could it be? An epic poem? A novel?

At first, I thought that it was a play. But no. What I took to be stage directions were written all in capitals, and though the dialogue was aligned to the left margin in the normal way, the character names for each speech cue were centred on the page. There were phrases like "C/U" and "INT NIGHT".

Benedictus XVI had written a screenplay. The first scene, over the credits, apparently showed the exterior of an American high school. There were to be swarms of teenage boys and girls going up the steps into the building: evidently the beginning of a school day. All expensively dressed. Some truant groups were lackadaisically hanging about to the side, some boys speaking flirtatiously to girls, some throwing frisbees, some furtively using soft drugs. All these details His Holiness had specified, along with a pop song on the soundtrack: Avril Lavigne's "Sk8er Boi".

Then the camera was to pick out two particular characters: twin boys — His Holiness described them as "hotties" — dressed far less expensively than the others, carrying skateboards, looking nervous and trying ingratiating little smiles at the young people who were to be their fellow pupils. The next shot was to be these boys' own point of view: various fellow pupils staring directly at them, catching the camera's gaze briefly, with expressions of derision or incredulity, but parting to let them through as the boys move towards the steps.

I was only two pages into the script but I just had to set it down on the bare desk at which I was sitting, next to my spartan single bed, and place my hand onto my forehead. A hot dizziness all but overwhelmed me. What could His Holiness mean by this? I flipped back to the beginning and for the first time read the title page: *Double Trouble*.

In the bottom left-hand corner of the page was His Holiness's own name, Benedict XVI and his Vatican address: there was a single, landline telephone number. Thoughtfully, I left the manuscript where it was, walked over to the open window and looked out onto the hot Roman night. The thought of reading the entire text daunted me more than anything in my life: I remembered the feeling I used to have as an undergraduate when I was about to embark for the first time on *The Confessions of Saint Augustine* or Thomas à Kempis's *The Imitation of Christ*. The same anticipation that a mountaineer must feel, lacing his boots at base camp. I took a deep breath and returned to my desk, carrying a glass of water with me, and continued to read.

AFTER AN HOUR-AND-A-HALF, I was finished: in every sense. I was emotionally exhausted. Wrung out. I had laughed, I had cried, I had gasped with astonishment, and at the climactic scenes I had literally risen from the chair with my fists above my head and cried out: "Yes! Yes! *Yes*!" — so audibly that there were derisive replying calls from the street outside.

It was a remarkable story. The two twins, named Caleb and Ethan, were new arrivals, having been homeschooled by their parents until the age of 15. One was brilliant at science and naturally successful with girls, the other gifted at humanities and hopeless with girls, and with an unsightly monobrow, very similar to mine: a veritable giant caterpillar above his eyes. But Caleb, the scientific one, invents a pheromone after school in the chemistry lab which makes people irresistible to the opposite

sex. It has the effect of making the headmistress, or "principal", Mrs Golobiowski fall in love with Ethan; and she is the mother of Julie, the girl who has started dating Caleb.

What an uproarious situation!

But now Caleb reveals that the chief ingredient for the antidote to his pheromone is a phial of human tears of genuine sorrow for another's misfortune. Physical pain or self-pity will not do. So he contrives a situation in which Ethan tells Mrs Golobiowski about the death of his mother the previous month — which is incidentally why it is that their homeschooling has come to an end — and she begins to cry. Ethan thoughtfully dabs the tears away with a handkerchief, conveys the damp article to Caleb who wrings it into an eyedropper and decants the precious substance into her morning coffee. Her condition is cured.

Meanwhile, Julie's own twin sister, Helen, has heard Ethan's story, having been passing the corridor at the time, and fallen in love with him out of compassion. There is a double wedding scene. Credits — and then His Holiness had contrived an amusing "post-credits sting" during which the school's ageing, hideous janitor is shown curiously dabbing some of the pheromone on himself, with a gorgeous blonde cheerleader about to meet him in the corridor.

The following afternoon I met His Holiness in a state of high excitement.

"So. What are your views?" he rasped in his deep German accent, without any preamble, as I sat down and placed his manuscript on the table.

"Well, Holiness," I said, a little breathless, "I think it's lovely, almost Shakesp… "

"No, no," he said impatiently. "I mean what are your views on *casting*?"

I was nonplussed: "Well, I don't really…"

"I'm thinking Susan Sarandon for Mrs Golobiowski," he said. "What do you think?"

"I… that…"

He looked at me shrewdly. "You think there might be an availability issue? You could be right."

He sipped his tea.

"And the twins? Who do you like for the twins?"

My mouth opened soundlessly, goldfish-style, and His Holiness went on speaking, his voice gaining a deeper and more gravelly severity: "I think the Paul brothers. Logan and Jake. You realise they are completely *massive* on YouTube?"

Again I could not think of anything to say, and again His Holiness directed a piercing glance at me, displeased, but evidently respecting the courage I was showing in disagreeing with his view.

"You worry that they have no experience in acting?"

"Well, I…"

"But that is just the *point*. They have no experience in acting and that is precisely what gives us an advantage when it comes to negotiating their *fee*. And, of course, in dealing with them on location. Of course, much of that is down to the *director*. I was thinking that Patty Jenkins would have a real feel for the material."

He leaned back, nodding slowly and sagely. "Anyway," he said, "take this script and shop it around town. Trust me. They'll be biting our hands off for this one."

He dismissed me with a flick of the hand and returned to read his calf-bound *Bible*. But while I was walking away, he called me back with a guttural, throat-clearing grunt, and said, "There is something else. I was thinking of playing the janitor myself."

He met my stupefied gaze briefly, and then with a lift of the chin silently dismissed me again.

I had to leave for home that afternoon. The screenplay was in my hand luggage as I boarded the flight and never left my side in the days and weeks to come. On my return to London, I could think of nothing more than to send the script to an old university contemporary of mine, now working in television, with whom I was acquainted on Facebook. I excised the author's name from the title-page, scanned it into my MacBook Air and emailed it over to him, with a rather sheepish covering note. The response came with staggering swiftness. My friend had shown the screenplay to a colleague of his, a producer in Los Angeles, who apparently simply went mad for it.

"There is no author name on the coversheet. Is it you? I bet it's you. You dark horse!"

I could say nothing, other than to agree on a meeting in London when his contact was overbriefly.

"I think we can get Donald Sutherland for the janitor!" this man said excitedly at the beginning of our discussion, as the three of us sat at the end of a large polished conference table with bowls of Jelly Babies, and film posters up on the walls. He added: "With Donald Sutherland in the picture, we can get all sorts of Canadian funding. Sutherland's a *lock*!"

Something in my face must have alarmed them, because my friend said: "You had someone else in mind for the caretaker?"

"Ah, no."

"No one?"

"No."

"No one at all?"

"No."

The meeting concluded amiably enough. I telephoned His Holiness's office repeatedly but was unable to get through to him, unable to ask if he was content to let the production go ahead on this basis. I assumed he might want to use a pseudonym, so I let my own name go on the credits. My fee was enormous. I tried to find some way of forwarding the money to His Holiness but there seemed to be no way of achieving this.

When the final day of principal photography came around, we were on location in Vancouver and the time came to shoot the credit-sting scene with Donald Sutherland, the only star name we had managed to attract. But just as we were all set up, my friend — now the executive producer — scurried up and whispered intently that Sutherland had fallen sick and all the Canadian funding had fallen through. But the good news was that there had been a new tranche of cash from German and Italian sources, contingent on "new casting". Round the corner, in janitor's uniform, and carrying a steel bucket and mop, came Benedict XVI, his face set in a very grim expression.

"Holiness!" I couldn't help myself saying it, but he refused to meet my eye; he walked on past me, his steel bucket clanging.

His scene was not a success. Our teenage cheerleader tried gamely to impersonate someone who would find him attractive in some sort of absurdly drugged state. But His Holiness simply refused to perform the moment where he has to run away from her. He just stood there, fixing his young co-star with a piercing stare.

The film itself was released straight to download and His Holiness was not credited — and not recognised. It came out under a different title. I am reluctant to say which. But it continues to be a commercial success and I have always donated my income direct to a Catholic charity, though His Holiness himself rebuffed any attempts at contact. My guilt and shame were almost unbearable.

Then one week ago, as the advent season began, I made a decision to renounce my worldly existence, to give all my money and goods away and live austerely at a monastery in remote Belgium. And just as I was making the final donation online, a strange and wonderful thing happened. Nothing less than a miracle.

I could feel tiny hairs fall from above the bridge of my nose and they showered like cherry blossom in a sudden breeze. A mass of little black flecks, like a murmuration of starlings falling through the air. The pattern those hairs made on my computer keyboard was a depiction of divine grace. I got up and looked into my bathroom mirror.

My monobrow had gone. Touching the exposed skin I felt a smoothness that no shaving or waxing had ever been able to achieve. I felt whole again. And the blessed duality and balance of those eyebrows would always remind me of His Holiness's great work. And its original title. □

UP AND THEN DOWN

Pal Zileri

Taupe suede jacket, £1,360; grey checked wool suit, £1,660; beige silk polo shirt, £515, all by Pal Zileri. Pale blue leather Bruton document holder, £390; pale blue leather Bruton 48-hour bag, £1,680, both by William & Son. Camouflage print MW60 wireless headphones, £500, by Master & Dynamic

Menswear goes underground

Photographs by
Ash Reynolds

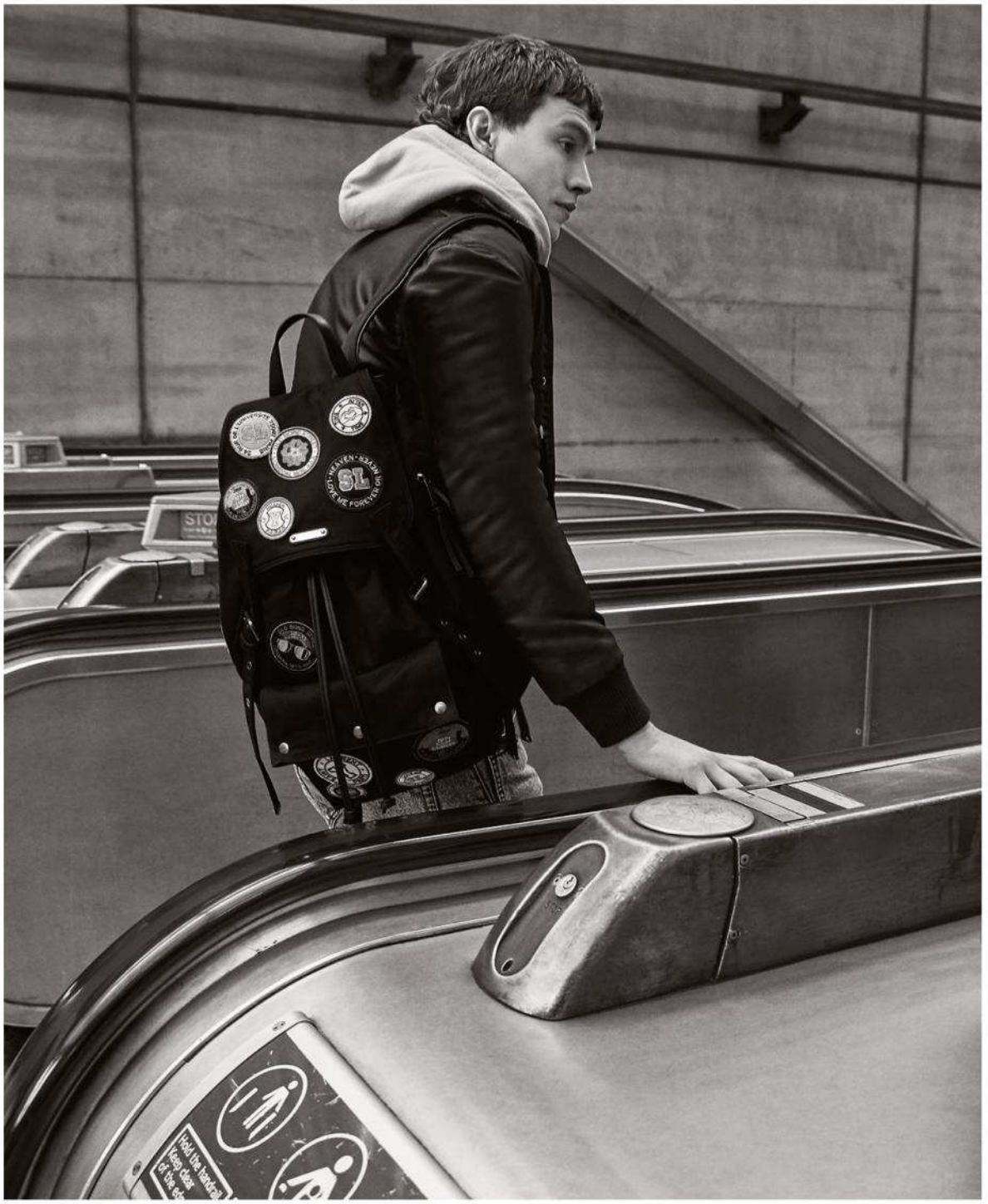
Fashion by
Catherine Hayward

Polo Ralph Lauren

Navy pinstripe linen jacket, £495; white/blue striped cotton-linen shirt, £95; blue/red striped silk tie, £110; navy pinstripe linen trousers, £215, all by Polo Ralph Lauren. Gold/caramel Martin spectacles, £110, by Komono

Brunello Cucinelli

Navy waxed suede safari jacket, £4,460; white/blue striped cotton-linen shirt, £390; navy garment-dyed linen-cotton-gabardine trousers, £520; brown suede-leather backpack, £2,830, all by Brunello Cucinelli



Saint Laurent

Black nylon aviator jacket, £1,365; lemon yellow cotton-fleece hooded sweatshirt, £475; black washed denim jeans, £475; black gabardine patched backpack, £1,280, all by Saint Laurent

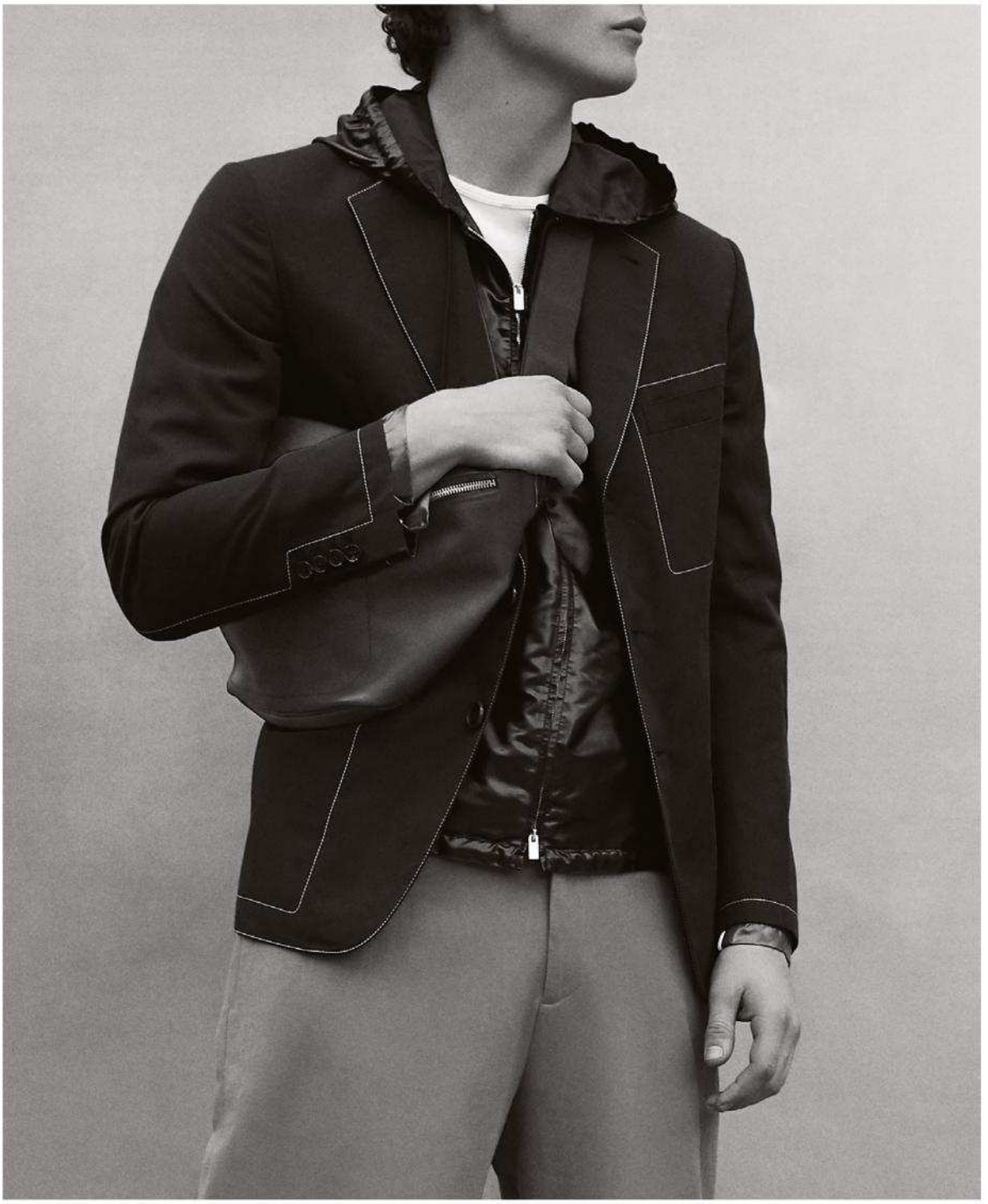
The Kooples

Grey/red/black checked cotton-blend belted coat, £430; blue denim jeans, £165; blue/black/grey leather trainers, £165; black nylon weekend bag, £190, all by The Kooples

Dior Homme

Black wool-nylon bomber jacket, £1,600; black wool trousers, £590; black grained leather backpack, £1,700, all by Dior Homme

Photographer's assistant: Neil Payne | Fashion assistant: Emie James-Crook | Digital operator: Joe Stone | Intern: Omar Balde | Grooming: Paul Donovan @ CLM using VO5 | Model: Sid Ellisdon @ Models 1 | See Stockists page for details



Hermès

Maroon serge jacket, £2,200; burgundy/blue Toilbright technical fabric hooded jacket, £2,010;
white cotton T-shirt, £210; stone cotton-linen trousers, £560; navy leather cross-body bag, £2,520, all by Hermès

Directory › Get on the straight and narrow now spring's here, with contrasting stripes in muted grey and striking peach tones

Grey/white striped denim jacket, £50, by Topman

Grey/blue striped cotton-wool jumper, £295, by Kent & Curwen

Blue denim 511 jeans, £65, by Levi's

Off-white leather trainers, £80, by Pretty Green

Stainless steel 38mm Khaki Field Mechanical watch on green textile strap, £375, by Hamilton

Lucky if Sharp | See Stockists page for details

Light brown linen blazer, £425, by Sand Copenhagen

Dark green/white/peach striped viscose shirt, £25, by River Island

Peach cotton T-shirt, £12, by River Island

White denim 511 jeans, £70, by Levi's

Brown leather loafers, £280, by Brooks Brothers

Stainless steel 43mm Artelier Calibre 113 watch on grey leather strap, £4,700, by Oris

LIFESTYLE ESSENTIALS

Carlos Santos Shoes

Portuguese master shoemakers since 1942, Carlos Santos is internationally renowned for producing extremely elegant shoes, which range from classic models to casual and sporty ones. The luxury brand draws inspiration from the contemporary man's lifestyle, one who is fashion-aware, who pays attention to details and seeks exclusiveness.

—

Facebook/Instagram: *@carlossantosshoes*
Website/Online store: *santosshoes.com*

Kyrö Distillery

Like most good ideas in Finland (and half the population), the concept for Kyrö Distillery was first conceived in a sauna. Their 100 per cent wholegrain rye spirits have won awards around the world. Kyrö Napue Gin's local wild botanicals root its flavour in the very heart of Finnish nature. Enjoy over ice, with cranberries, a twig of rosemary and tonic.

—

kyrodistillery.com
Purchase from: *thewhiskyexchange.com*

Kick-start your hair growth journey now

"My hair is so much thicker... less falls out in the brush," @RissieBlog. Proven to give you thicker, faster-growing hair, It Really Works Vitamins are packed with 22 essential nutrients including Biotin, vitamin A, C, D, and E, iron, zinc and a vitamin B complex proven to enhance the thickness and health of your hair.

Take the 90 day challenge now and get a full refund if you don't love your results.

—

itreallyworksvitamins.com

Hornbilly Apparel

From the bench press to the beach party, never before has fitness and fashion been more important for the modern gentleman. Introducing Hornbilly Apparel, a new fashion label from London, looking to blaze a new trail in men's fashion and become the preferred clothier of the well-built gentleman. It's on a mission to end ill-fitting shirts for the muscular gent.

—

hornbillyapparel.com

LIFESTYLE ESSENTIALS

Modern Suiting

Imagine your suit fitted like a glove. Imagine it wowed everyone you met; at the office, on the street, and at your wedding. Imagine your wife's smile in admiration. Imagine that your boss noticed too; he'd give you more respect, a raise, a promotion. Imagine a suit could do that. The right one can!

—

modernsuiting.com
Use 'ESQUIREUK10' for 10 per cent off.

GWC Watches

Megir Flyover. Four variations. £59. Gilchrist Watch Co is home to a hand-chosen, trend driven and affordable collection of timepieces for the modern gentleman.

—

Shop the collection at *gwcwatches.com*.
Use code 'ESQMAY' for 10 per cent off.

NPS Shoes

British-made footwear is among the best quality in the world; combining over 130 years of traditional craftsmanship and tooling with the latest technology and materials, NPS continues to produce high-quality footwear. To maintain this undisputed quality, NPS footwear will always be hand-made from start to finish in the UK.

—

Visit the website to see the full range:
nps-shoes.com

Seeking: single eligible gentlemen

Bowes-Lyon Partnership is an exclusive London matchmaking agency. We offer a discreet and bespoke dating service for busy, successful and refined people. For a limited time, we are offering complimentary memberships to eligible gentlemen, to introduce to our successful and attractive female members.

—

Call 0203 866 4440 or email
caroline@bowes-lyonpartnership.co.uk
bowes-lyonpartnership.co.uk

Fidir

Fidir is inspired by the hillscapes of the Scottish Highlands and Islands. We create men's clothing and accessories to capture our love for this special corner of the world. Fidir wallets are designed with simplicity in mind. Made from leather, our wallets feature linings with artwork painted by Highlands-based artist Hermione Gibbs.
Available in green and blue; £55.

—

fidirstore.com; @FidirStore
Use code 'ESQ10' for 10 per cent discount

IT'S BACK!

Esquire TOWNHOUSE

Returns 11–14 October 2018

10–11 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH







Our 2017 event starred cyclist Mark Cavendish, TV producers Charlie Brooker and Annabel Jones, actor Cillian Murphy, fashion designer Sir Paul Smith, actor Vince Vaughn and comedian Russell Brand

Britain's most stylish magazine brand comes to life over four days at London's most exclusive pop-up members' club. Interviews, performances, masterclasses, drinks, supper clubs, fitness sessions and more, from style to sport, tech to travel, food to film and beyond.

Be first to hear about the full programme, ticket release and special offers.

Sign up now at:

esquiretownhouse.co.uk

Elevated style Taupe suede jacket, £1,360; grey checked wool suit, £1,660; beige silk polo shirt, £515; brown leather shoes, £385, all by *Pal Zileri*. Pale blue leather Bruton document holder, £390; pale blue leather Bruton 48-hour bag, £1,680, both by *William & Son*. Camouflage print MW60 wireless headphones, £500, by *Master & Dynamic*

Stockists

A
Acne Studios available @ mrporter.com
Acqua di Parma acquadiparma.com
Aesop aesop.com/uk
Albam albamclothing.com
Alfred Dunhill dunhill.com
Ami amiparis.com

B
Balenciaga balenciaga.com
Ball ballwatch.com
Bell & Ross bellross.com
Blyszak blyszak.com
Bose SoundSport bose.co.uk
Breitling breitling.com
Bremont bremont.com
Brooks Brothers brooksbrothers.com
Brunello Cucinelli shop.brunellocucinelli.com
Burberry burberry.com

C
Canali canali.com
Church's church-footwear.com
CQP c-qp.com
Crockett & Jones crockettandjones.com

D
Dior Homme dior.com
Dolce & Gabbana dolcegabbana.com
Drake's available @ mrporter.com

E
Emporio Armani available @ harrods.com
Ettinger ettinger.co.uk
Eva Solo available @ trouva.com
Eyevan 7285 available @ auerbach-steele.com

F
Fendi fendi.com

G
Garrett Leight garrettleight.com
Gieves & Hawkes gievesandhawkes.com
Gitman Vintage available @ endclothing.com
Grand Seiko grand-seiko.com
Gucci gucci.com
Gucci available @ matchesfashion.com
Gucci available @ mrporter.com

H
Hamilton hamiltonwatch.com
Hermès hermes.com

J
J Crew jcrew.com
JM Weston jmweston.com

K
Kaleos kaleoseyehunters.com
Kent & Curwen kentandcurwen.com
Kiehl's kiehls.co.uk
Kirk Originals kirkoriginals.com
Komono komono.com

L
Lab Series labseries.co.uk
Levi's levi.com
Levi's Vintage levi.com
LGR lgrworld.com
Louis Vuitton louisvuitton.com
Lunetterie Générale available @ libertylondon.com

M
Maison Margiela available @ mrporter.com
Malin+Goetz malinandgoetz.co.uk
Marvis available @ harveynichols.com
Master & Dynamic masterdynamic.co.uk
Max Pittion available @ mrporter.com
Montblanc montblanc.com

N
Nike nike.com
Nike available @ mrporter.com

O
Oliver J Woods oliverjwoods.com
Oliver Peoples pour Berluti oliverpeoples.com
Omega omegawatches.com
Oris oris.ch

P
Pal Zileri palzileri.com
Paul Smith paulsmith.com
Polo Ralph Lauren ralphlauren.co.uk
Prada prada.com
Pretty Green prettygreen.com

R
Ralph Lauren available @ mrporter.com
Ray-Ban ray-ban.com
River Island riverisland.com
Russell & Bromley russellandbromley.co.uk

S
Saint Laurent ysl.com
Sand Copenhagen sandcopenhagen.com
Sandro uk.sandro-paris.com
Sisley Paris sisley-paris.com
Smythson smythson.com
Stance stance.com
Sunspel sunspel.com

T
Tag Heuer tagheuer.com
The Kooples thekooples.co.uk
The White Company thewhitecompany.com
Tod's tods.com
Tod's available @ mrporter.com
Tom Ford tomford.co.uk
Tommy Hilfiger Menswear uk.tommy.com
Topman topman.com
Tracksmith tracksmith.com
Tudor tudorwatch.com

V
Valentino available @ mrporter.com
Valextra available @ mrporter.com
Versace versace.com
Vetements vetementswebsite.com

W
William & Son williamandson.com

Y
YMC youmustcreate.com

Z
Zenith zenith-watches.com

Photograph by Ash Reynolds

Object of Desire

No 79 > Hermès Cavour travel bag

Purveyors of the finest silks, saddles, ties, scarves and luxurious curios you don't strictly need (but really want), Hermès recently unveiled the Cavour, the weekend bag — or *sac de voyage* — of your gilded dreams. Light, durable and handcrafted from canvas and soft, matte Sombrero calfskin leather, the elegant, trapezoid-shaped carry-on is perhaps less concerned with serving all your stowage needs with myriad pockets and cubbies, and more about having you look as potently and effortlessly Parisian as possible. It will, however, offer just enough storage for a couple of nights in the city, a quick business trip or a weekend in the country. What more could you want from a travel bag?

£5,630; *uk.hermes.com*

Words by Finlay Renwick Photograph by Dan McAlister

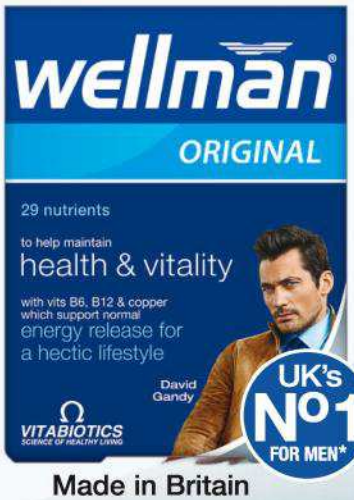
wellman®

Live life well®

WELLMAN.CO.UK

"I've been taking Wellman since my twenties to support my health and hectic lifestyle."

David Gandy



Made in Britain

Available at selected Holland & Barrett and MET-Rx stores, and online at www.hollandandbarrett.com and www.metrx.co.uk

*UK's No1 men's supplement brand. Nielsen GB ScanTrack Total Coverage Unit Sales 52 w/e 2 December 2017.

VITABIOTICS

louisvuitton.com

Tambour Horizon

Your journey, connected.

LOUIS VUITTON