



PrivatAir
THE MAGAZINE

WINTER 2015

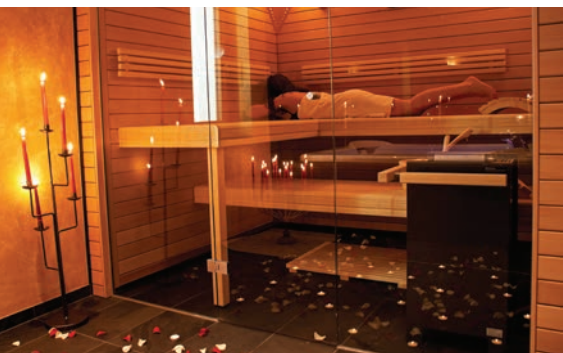


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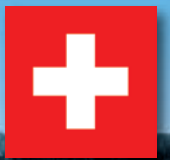
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Flower hours

SURYA Solar Deity Collection by Frédéric Jouvenot

Frédéric Jouvenot founded his eponymous watch brand in 2008 with the launch of the ACE (Automatic Chronograph Evolution) with a winding mechanism that is completely visible from the face side. His first concept watch was followed by the Helios Solar Deity collection, which received a Watch Award at the 2011 Geneva Time Exhibition. Frédéric Jouvenot has consolidated his activities under a private limited company, FJ Design LLC. He is the CEO and oversees all product development. The marque's talented creator is now extending his Solar Deity collection with the Surya line, an intricate design aimed at women. The Surya Solar Deity was officially presented for the first time in February 2014.

F

FREDERIC JOUVENOT

HAUTE HORLOGERIE

S W I T Z E R L A N D

www.fjouvenot.com fj@fjouvenot.com

The Surya, named after the Hindu God of sun, welcomes a world first in jewellery: a flower dial with 12 jumping petals indicating each hour. The petals reveal the time in an unique mechanical complication entirely conceived and created by Frédéric Jouvenot. This new concept in horological-thinking is instantly visible on the dial and animated by the blossoming of a flower in a different colour at both midday and midnight.



*Surya White Gold, swiss made, 54 diamonds with a total weight of 2.15 carats.
Dial with 12 green tsavorites or 12 pink sapphires. On this model,
five petals pivoting towards their green side indicate that the time is 5 am.*



Five petals pivoting towards their pink side indicate that the time is 5 am.

Simple to read yet fitted with a complex mechanism, the Surya has two faces, corresponding to the day and night cycles. For the first time in watchmaking history, a watch displays the time without conventional hands, numerals or disks. Each hour is represented by a concentric-circled flower petal, i.e. starting from the centre and radiating towards the edge of the dial. The twelve petals show the path of the sun on the dial while indicating the hour just passed and the one to come. At midday and to represent daylight, the petals are all either green or pink (depending on the model). In turn, the dial represents the sun at its zenith. As time passes, the petals darken in a clockwise order. The dial gradually darkens and announces oncoming night. Midnight displays twelve dark petals reflecting light in the night. To mark the return to daylight, the petals successively lighten up towards midday, thus completing the full 24-hour cycle. Reading the time remains instinctive. Each hour remains in its conventional position. The minutes are indicated by a central cartridge fitted with an index which completes a full revolution on the fixed minute disc. The display maintains the conventional angular gap of a watch. The whole design mechanism is carefully placed in its central casing (12 mm in diameter, 5 mm in height) which contains some one hundred micro-mechanic parts, including twenty-four rubies to activate the hour's jumping petals. An example: at 3.30 pm, the first three petals are black and the minute indicator points to 6 o'clock, as on a conventional dial. The traditional angular gap between 3 o'clock and 30 minutes is thus maintained. Here lies the great feat accomplished by Frédéric Jouvenot: maintaining a conventional reading of the dial with a revolutionary hour display system. For the white gold Surya model, the watch bezel is decorated by a setting of 54 diamonds with a total weight of 2.15 carats. Furthermore, and rather rare in the jewellery world, a particular technique of *suifage* of green tsavorites or pink sapphires allows these precious or fine stones to be distinguished in three dimensions on the dial, following the natural curve of the petals. The crown is also enhanced with a tsavorite, or respectively a pink sapphire, in the shape of a cabochon. The cut and shaping of the precious or fine stones is extremely difficult to process since they require to be adjusted to the hundredth of a millimetre inside the dial. This technique required several months of extensive work. The result exceeds all expectations: the marriage of colours, materials and shapes in the creation is magical. The automatic winding movement follows watchmaking tradition and includes a screw-adjusted balance and movement bridges decorated and engraved with rhodium-plated *côtes de Genève*.





 ROBERTO COIN

GARDEN COLLECTION



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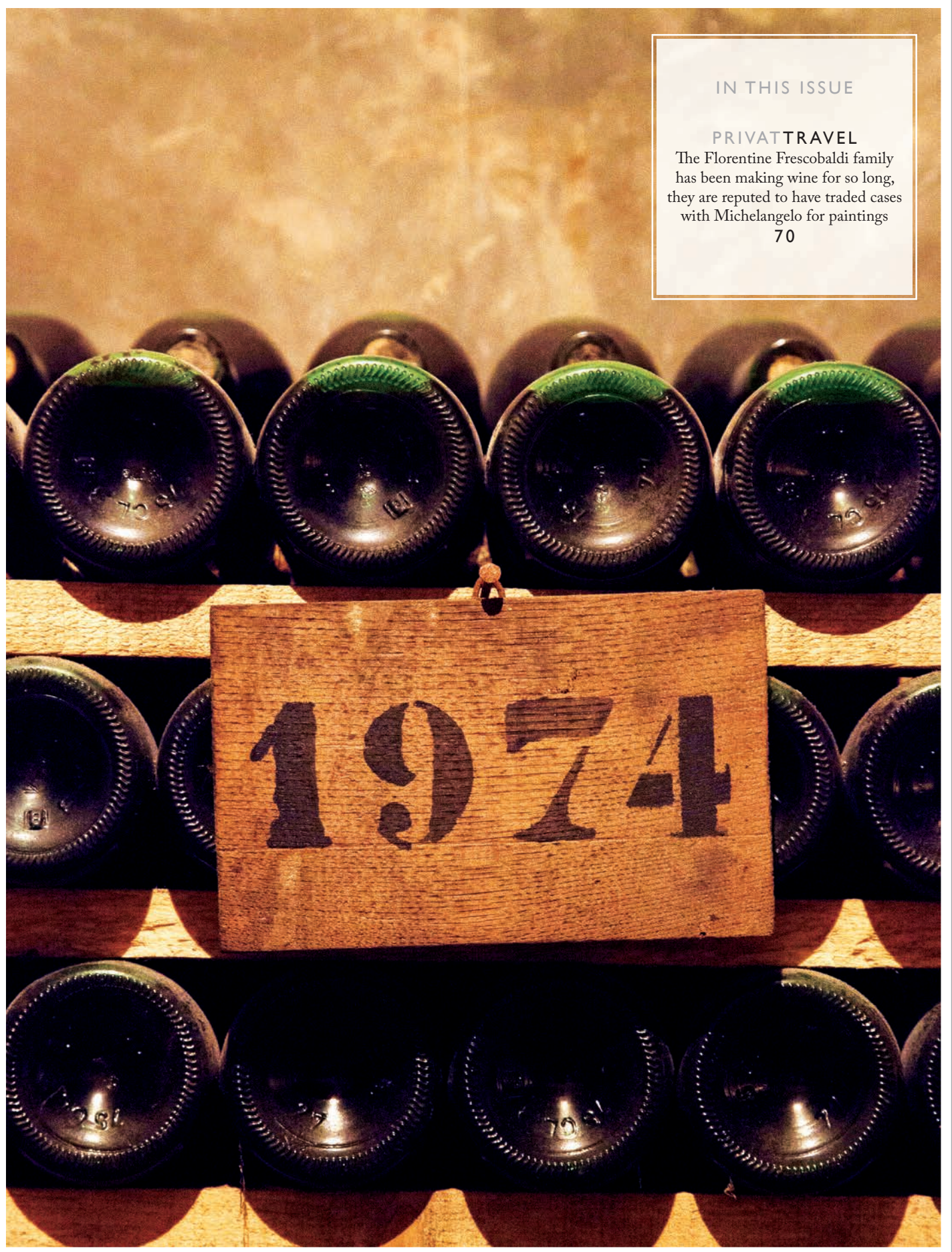


PHOTO © PIETRO PAOLINI



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Cover: ski tracks on a mountainside. Image © Getty

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Beaucoup,
Passionnément,
À la folie.



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Contributors

1



2



3



1 ZOE DARE HALL

A former arts editor, Zoe switched to writing on property when overseas markets were taking off in the pre-crash Noughties. She now writes for the *Financial Times*, *Sunday Times* and *Daily Telegraph*. Her favourite thing about winter, she says, is 'the pre-Christmas atmosphere in central London at about 4pm when it's dark and the Christmas lights are in full glow.'

2 BEN QUINTON

Ben fell into professional photography by accident after coming up with a loose idea based around a trip to Scotland to do some climbing. The project was a resounding success, and at the tender age of 24 he's already shot for the *Telegraph*, *Guardian*, *GQ* and *Monocle*. 'I'm not much of a winter fan,' he confesses. 'I'd much rather watch snowy weather from indoors with a hot coffee and a fry-up.'

3 TOBY SKINNER

A one-time sports writer, Toby cut his teeth editing *Time Out* magazines in Beijing, Shanghai and Singapore. He is currently the editor of *N* magazine, for Norwegian Air. 'I love snowboarding, although the snow generally has the effect of turning me into a giddy child,' he says. 'Whether it's snowmobiling through a glacial valley or sledging down hills, snow makes me feel fresh, free and alive.'

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WINTER 2015

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IRERI



Foto: A. Punt

She Wears It Well

The world's original supermodel

Style In the late 1940s, Simone Micheline Bodin was a red-haired, freckle-faced rail worker's daughter from Brittany modelling in Paris, when couturier Jacques Fath told her, 'We already have a Simone; you look to me like a Bettina.' Fresh-faced and spirited, the newly christened Bettina became the modern 'face of Fath' before going on to pose for a host of legendary designers including Coco Chanel, Christian Dior and Lucien Lelong. She became muse to Hubert de Givenchy, with whom she created the campy, ruffle-sleeved Bettina blouse in the early 1950s. She was the original supermodel, dubbed 'the most photographed woman in France', with a correspondingly rich and varied love life. Now, at the age of 89, her life and career is celebrated in an elegant homage of 50 pictures by the likes of Irving Penn and Robert Doisneau at the Galerie Azzédine Alaïa (18 rue de la Verrerie) in Paris's Marais district, through until 11 January.

PHOTO © GEORGES DAMBIER, PARIS, 1953

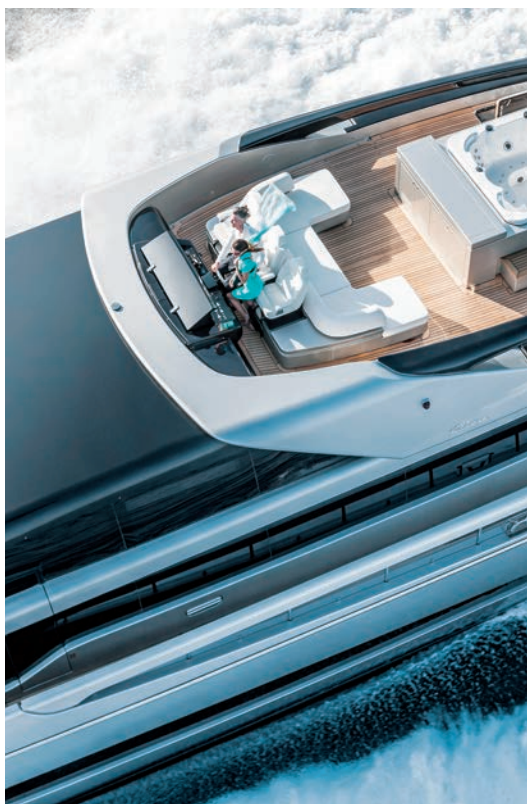


WALL TO WALL ART

Art You could call the youthful and charming Aida Mahmudova the Azeri ambassador for art. It's not an official title, although she could probably make it so if she wished, given that the graduate of London's Central St Martin's college of art is also the niece of President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan. She is the driving force behind the country's nascent art scene: she runs the not-for-profit organisation Yarat (meaning 'create'); its platform for young artists, Artim ('progress'); and Yay Gallery ('share'). In only three years she has commissioned some 80 projects, including persuading Dutch artist Florentijn Hofman to relocate his giant travelling rubber duck from Victoria Harbour in Hong Kong to Baku. The Yay also partook in the 2013 Venice Biennale, with a pavilion that included Farid Rasulov's installation of a living room completely covered in fabric printed with a traditional Azeri carpet pattern, *pictured right*.

Mahmudova's latest endeavour is the Yarat Contemporary Art Space, housed in a converted Soviet-era naval headquarters overlooking the Caspian. 'For centuries Baku has been a site for exchange and creativity,' she says. 'Our art centre will extend this within a contemporary context.' It will launch in March 2015 with a special exhibition by New York-based Iranian visual artist Shirin Neshat.

A few months later, Mahmudova will inaugurate the country's first public art fair. And an Azerbaijani Biennale? That, she says, is next on her list. yarat.az



A Family Expansion

Yachting With a founding story that dates back to 1842, when a devastating storm on Italy's Lake Iseo gave a young craftsman named Pietro Riva the chance to make his name salvaging and repairing a community's wrecked fishing boats, the yacht company that today bears his name has always traded on its heritage.

However, its latest vessel is the Riva 122' Mythos which, at 37m, is the largest model ever to come out of the boat yard, marking the brand's commitment to size rather than history for the first time in its 172 years.

Designers have loaded the Mythos to the hilt with all the frills one would expect from a luxury super-yacht: a deck-top Jacuzzi, large main-deck sun-pad, salon and dinette with panoramic windows, a lower deck with five spacious cabins, a bathing platform and two garages – one for the tender, one for the jet ski. They have also traded the unmistakable mahogany-finish hull and decking for a silver-painted, light aluminium hull.

The Mythos debuted at the 55th Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show in October. Present was Alberto Galassi, CEO of the Ferretti Group, which owns the Riva brand. 'It is as if a new child or a new travel companion has joined our Riva family,' he told the press. The 122' Mythos won't remain the biggest Riva for long as the Italian builder has already announced a limited-edition, fully custom range, starting with a 164-footer (50m), already under construction for a client.

riva-yacht.com

Adventure

Cabin Fever

Mount Elbrus is a twin-peaked dormant volcano in the far south-west of Russia, on the border with Georgia. At 5,642m, it is Europe's highest mountain. It was first scaled by General Georgy Emanuel in 1829 as part of an Imperial Russian Army expedition. By taking scientific measurements, gathering a few animals and rocks, and marching about waving his tricolour flag, he hoped he would pacify local tribesmen and Turkic mountaineers who threatened to join forces and break Russia's control of its southern frontier. Surprisingly, he succeeded, appeasing the disgruntled clansmen and reaching the lower peak of 5,621m in the process.

Nearly 200 years later, Elbrus remains a notoriously difficult ascent because of its extreme geography and severe climate – a permanent ice cap and 22 glaciers consistently hamper expeditions. But one thing has got cushier, and that is the base camp accommodation. Opened in September 2013, LEAPrus 3912 is an Italian-designed mountain hotel that replaces a hut destroyed by fire in the 1990s. Looking like an art installation or the refashioned body of a Boeing 737, it's an incongruous addition to the slope, but it provides a luxurious alternative to the bare-bones shelter climbers previously used for overnight acclimatisation.

The four modular fibreglass cabins, or Living Ecological Alpine Pods (hence LEAP), were manufactured in Turin, before being transported tube by tube to Mineralnye Vody, the closest airport to the volcano. LEAPrus 3912 operates as a hotel, open to the mountain-climbing public. It is the first phase in a series of projects intended to encourage tourism in the region.

You can read more about the project and a diverse range of other examples of minimal, low-impact and isolated abode architecture in a recently released book from the German publisher Taschen.

Cabins by Philip Jodidio is out now, €49.99





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passionate person, an aesthete or a collector.*



Before 54, was No.44

Nightlife There was *54*, the 1998 homage to the party-in-nightly-installments that was New York's Studio 54, but not many clubs get films made about them. Then again not many clubs share the pedigree of Annabel's, the London nightclub that is the subject of a new documentary, *Annabel's: A String of Naked Lightbulbs*, executive produced by no less than Sir Ridley Scott (*Blade Runner*, *Alien*, *Gladiator*).

Founded by Mark Birley, the son of a society portrait painter, Annabel's debuted at 44 Berkeley Square in 1963. The timing was perfect: it was the year of the Beatles, the dawn of the miniskirt, the era of the Pill. Although Annabel's was floated on old money, Birley had an eye for new talent and trends, and he was quick to accessorise his club's country house aesthetic with the latest thing, whether it was music imported from Broadway record stores, gilt-edge live performers (Ella Fitzgerald, Ray Charles, Tina Turner, Diana Ross all came and sang) or leggy models in Biba. Richard Nixon and Aristotle Onassis came, and so did Frank Sinatra, Jack Nicholson and Elizabeth

Taylor; the Beatles were refused entry (because they weren't wearing shoes) and Shirley Bassey was barred for kicking the maitre d' up the backside. It is, famously, the only nightclub ever visited by Britain's Queen (she drank a gin martini with no lemon).

Last year the club reached its half century, hence the new film, which takes the form of current and former staff, members and friends reminiscing and paying tribute to Birley, who died in 2007. Although some say Annabel's charms have waned under current owner, fashion tycoon and restaurateur Richard Caring, appearances suggest it remains London's top playground for the rich and starry. Lady Gaga played two recent private gigs at the club and she pops up in *Naked Lightbulbs* alongside fellow talking heads Anna Wintour, Naomi Campbell and the long-standing belle of 'Bel's, Kate Moss. These days British blue-bloods are outnumbered by Russian oligarchs, Middle Eastern potentates and Asian billionaires at the basement tables, but that's just the new London zeitgeist.



TOP: Princess Michael of Kent watches a fashion show at Annabel's in 1980.

ABOVE: the club's sentrybox-like entrance at 44 Berkeley Square, in London's Mayfair

Been There, Done That

Ian Schrager created the legendary NYC nightclub Studio 54 before pioneering the concept of the boutique hotel – so what is he doing partnering up with Marriott?

You've had so much success with your own properties, why team up with Marriott?
I got started in the hotel business with my good friend and partner Steve Rubell and together we invented the boutique hotel. Nobody had put everything together and raised it up to another level like the way we did. I wanted to do something on a much larger scale and with bigger impact. I sought out Marriott to launch the Edition because I think they are the biggest and the best.

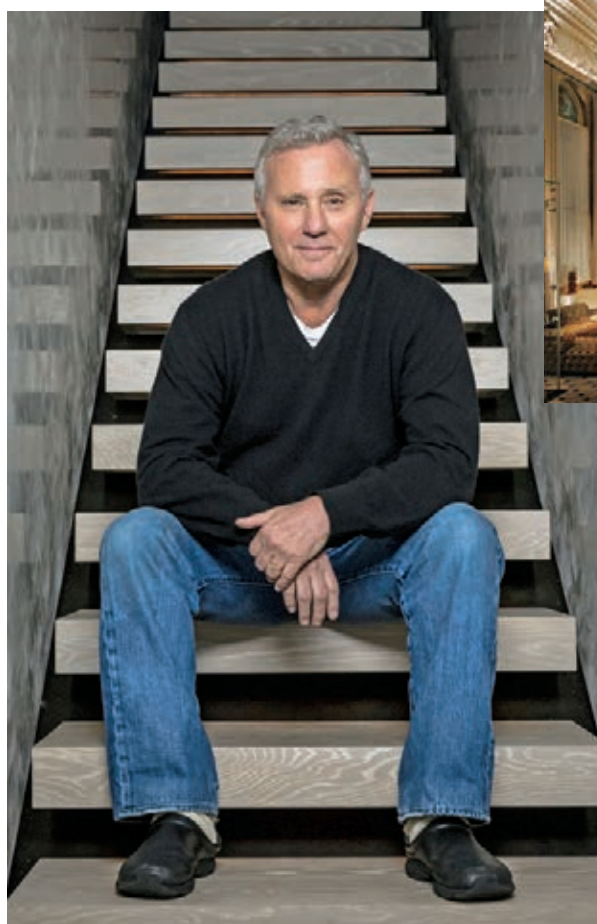
The latest Edition opening was last month in Miami Beach. Has it all gone to plan?
I'm very happy. Quite frankly it could be the best thing we've ever done.

What's the essence of an Edition hotel and how is it different?
It's not just about design, but the way it makes you feel. It's about how all the various parts work together; the way it lifts your spirit. It's the level of sophistication and the excitement in the air that makes it completely different.

Why Miami?
Miami has come of age. It's now an international, 24-hour gateway city that stands on a par with Paris, New York, London and Tokyo. It's no longer a seasonal beach resort that only attracts people from the north-east looking for warm weather. It has great art, architecture and fashion, with restaurants that are as good as anywhere in the world. I wanted to create a new hotel for a new Miami.

How important is hotel nightlife?
There's nothing more boring than a traditional hotel bar or restaurant. When somebody goes to Miami, they're entitled to have the best of what Miami has to offer right in the hotel. When people go to a city, they want to go where people in the know go. So it's very important that locals embrace the property.

There are already Editions in London, Istanbul and now Miami. How many are planned?
Over a hundred. We're working on 18 right now. We were slow at the beginning because we



HERE: Ian Schrager, 68 (left), opened his third Edition hotel in association with Marriott in London (lobby, top) in 2013 with a typically A list-heavy party (above)

'If you're always looking over your shoulder you never get any peace because there is always somebody there'

launched in the middle of a great recession but now we're really picking up steam.

Do you study the competition?
I'm curious about what's going on in the market but at the end of the day I'm marching to my own drumbeat. If you're always looking

over your shoulder you never get any peace, because there's always somebody there. I've learned a long time ago not to do that.

We hear that you've written a book that comes out in spring...
Actually I have a few books. The first primarily focuses on the body of work, followed by a pictorial on Studio 54 [the NYC nightclub Schrager founded] and then an autobiography.

Has there been a price to pay for success?
I was very focused on becoming successful and very hungry and motivated. I think because of that I missed out on a lot; mostly my personal life. I'm happily married now; I have a great family. But don't feel bad for me! I've been there, done that and got it all out of my system.
Interview by Michael Keating



AKRIVIA

GENÈVE



“ For me as a watchmaker, a tourbillon will always remain one of the most challenging and beautiful types of escapement mechanisms to create – and this is the reason why it is at the heart of my first AkriVIA timepiece. I was also fascinated by the combination of a tourbillon with the more rare variety of chronograph called a ‘monopusher’. ”

Rexhep Rexhepi, founder of AkriVIA

WWW.AKRIVIA.CH

RAINFOREST RETREAT

Resort • The lily pond is the first thing you see of the Four Seasons Sayan after walking the wooden bridge suspended above the Ayung Gorge. It sits on top of the lobby, which is a futuristic, elliptical, three-storey building, more suited to a *Star Wars* film than a five-star Balinese resort. But otherwise this is an environment that is not so much science-fiction as utopian. From the edge of the pond it is possible to appreciate the vast scale and beauty of the property: hibiscus and palm-fringed paths weave through tropical gardens bounded by terraced rice paddies in one direction and the roaring Ayung River in another. Harder to spot are the

resort's 42 luxurious villas, which are discreetly dotted around Sayan's 18 acres. Each of these is prefaced by its own meditation area and small pond, with a stone staircase that leads down to the front door. Walk through the villas, with their rich teak furniture, Balinese artwork and exotic hand-crafted fabrics, for an outdoor living area, private pool, and secluded, lush garden fragrant with jasmine and frangipani. In some cases, as with the opulent three-bedroom Royal Villa, the gardens present sweeping views of the river and rice fields.

In such surroundings, days pass by languidly, although there are options for jungle hikes, treatments at the spa villa or Indonesian cookery

classes. Should anyone feel the need to leave the resort, the town of Ubud, Bali's artistic and cultural centre, is a 20-minute drive away.

Sayan is even more enchanting at night. There are two restaurants: Ayung Terrace, perched above the gorge and specialising in refined Indonesian cuisine, or the Riverside Cafe, where dining is illuminated by flickering candles and lanterns set in the adjacent pool. Former *chef de cuisine* to the Qatari royal family Jocelyn Argaud has recently overhauled the menu at the latter, serving simple, exquisitely prepared French-inspired food with ingredients from the hotel's garden. *Claire Martin*
fourseasons.com





LOBBY TALES

Nobis Hotel, Stockholm

The Nobis currently ranks 10th of 158 hotels in Stockholm on booking website TripAdvisor. Posters praise its superb location, views over neighbouring Normalmstorg Square and decor by award-winning Swedish design studio Claesson Koivisto Rune. The few critical voices tend to focus on the small, almost claustrophobic nature of some of the guestrooms. Lucky they weren't in the building on 23 August 1973. Then, this late 19th-century, bourgeois, dressed-stone block was a branch of

Kreditbanken when career criminal Jan-Erik Olsson walked in and attempted to rob the place. The alarm went up, the police appeared, and Olsson retreated to the bank's inner vault with four hostages. Police snipers took up position on adjoining roofs as negotiators began their work. Olsson called up the prime minister, Olaf Palme, and said he would kill the hostages if he didn't get three million Swedish Kroner, two guns, bulletproof vests, helmets and a fast car.

On 28 August gas was fired into the vault and Olsson surrendered. The unharmed hostages claimed to have been more frightened of the police than their captor during the ordeal. It became obvious that they had formed a positive relationship with Olsson, despite fearing for their lives. This hostage-captor empathy was soon given a name:

Stockholm Syndrome.

Visitors to the hotel's fitness centre today will note the complimentary mineral water as well as the circular marks on the marble floor showing where police drilled through to gas the bank vault.

THE FINEST OF DRINKS

Champagne can be even more wonderful if you look beyond the grandes marques, says Nina Caplan

'Great Champagne may or may not extend your life, but it makes it more worth living'

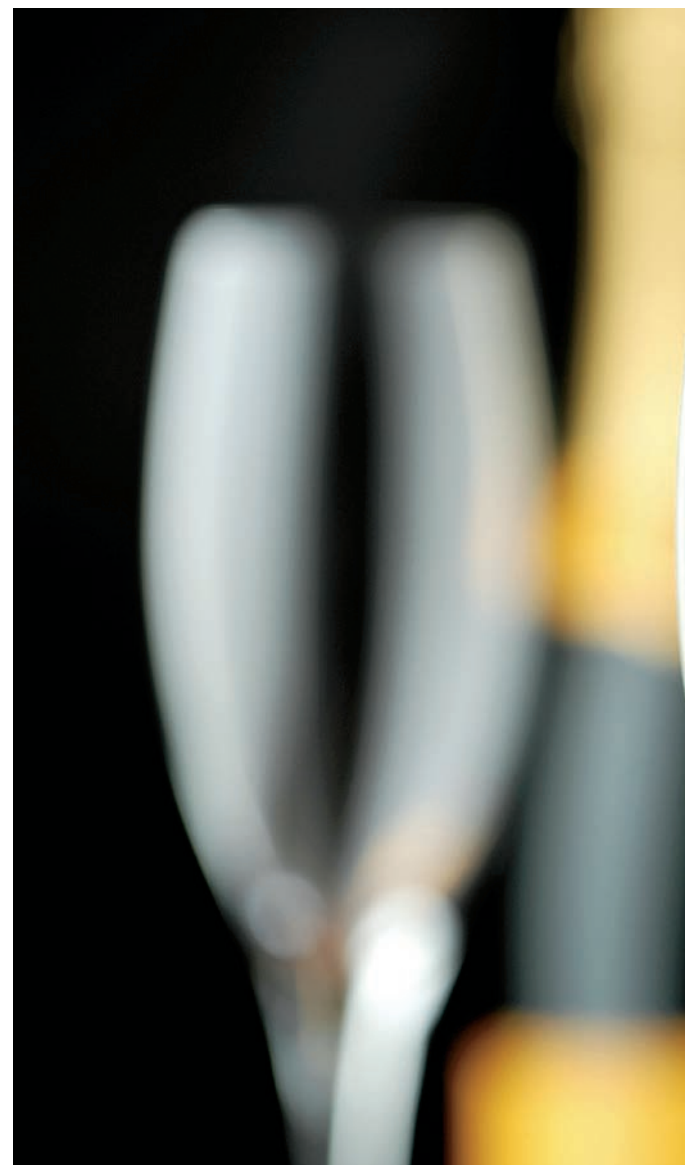


Nina Caplan is the Fortnum & Mason Drink Writer of the Year 2014

IT IS THE SEASON to be jolly, and there has rarely been such an effective aid to conviviality as Champagne. There are bubbly rivals: Spain has cava and Italy Prosecco; Australia and New Zealand make sparkling wines, as does Argentina; even England now makes some rather fine fizz. Yet the world's first fine wine, once served at the coronation of France's kings, still rules supreme and no celebration is complete without it.

Anyone who wonders at the Champenois' ability to charge a small fortune for a wine because it contains carbon dioxide – a substance free, last time I checked, every time you or I exhale – is missing the point. Champagne is supposed to be three things: consistent, delicious and expensive. The rules that Dom Pérignon, that conscientious monk of legendary palate, put in place in the late-17th century were intended to ensure the first two; the manpower, equipment and time required in production dictated the third.

Champagne is world-famous, but most people, if asked, will name the same five or so brands. These are the *grandes marques*, labels of such corporate muscle that they send millions of bottles hurtling annually across the globe. Take Moët & Chandon (owned by super luxe brand Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy): the non-vintage is probably on sale in your corner shop, while Berry Bros in London, which opened while Dom Pérignon was still alive, sells the 2002 Moët & Chandon rosé that bears his name for £285 a bottle. Moët has vineyards in Australia, Argentina, China and elsewhere, making experimental fizzes, some of excellent quality; in Champagne, it cultivates 1,150 hectares of the three permitted grapes (Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier and Chardonnay), but the company also buys in other Champenois grapes – as the world's largest purveyor of Champagne, producing 25 million bottles a year, it needs to. Careful blending ensures that on consistency, it can't be faulted, but if you want the hat-trick of Champagne requirements, it pays to look elsewhere.



It's not that I don't love the best of the great names, Bollinger, Roederer, Ruinart and Taittinger in particular. But I will give up a great deal of consistency for something delicately faithful to its roots; more expensive than it might be (but not than it needs to be) and harder to source than the unicorn. Where to look is among a select group of small grape tenders concentrating on expressing their own individual patches of chalky, rained-upon soil, via their own, usually hand-picked fruit. These are the makers of grower Champagnes: hard-working *vignerons*, whose stars include Benoit Tarlant of Tarlant in the Marne Valley; Anselme Selosse of Jacques Selosse, working exclusively with Chardonnay on small plots in a handful of villages; Olivier Collin of Ulysse Collin and Francis Egly of Egly-Ouriet, who creates wonderful toasty wines around Ambonnay, south of Reims.

None of them court the press and none can compete with the big boys in marketing spend –



but none of this is a problem as their small production and growing cohort of devotees mean they don't need to. These are wines with real personality: the hazelnut toastiness of Egly-Ouriet, the juicy, mouth-filling fruitiness of Ulysse Collin or the delightful toasty richness, like good brioche spread with honey, of Tarlant's exquisite wines have little in common with the polite correctness of many grandes marques. Selosse's wines, meanwhile, are in a class of their own, as their price tag (starting at £80) indicates.

Of other grower Champagnes I have tasted recently, a few stand out, as particularly scintillating guests at a dinner party will: Champagne Pierre Peters for its lemony minerality; Gratién, from further north, for its lusciousness, rounded and warm with apricot; the wines of Eric Rodez (an eighth generation Champagne-maker and the Mayor of Ambonnay) for their

fresh, bright appeal. The winemakers' determination to express the individual possibilities of their own grapes and their own land is, paradoxically, the one thing they all do in an identical way.

Champagne is a wonder drink – I am with the father of wine writing, the late André Simon, who pointed out that if we spent the money that currently goes on defence on free Champagne for everyone, we could really call ourselves a civilised people. A bottle was opened in the Simon household each day at just that hour. It wasn't necessarily finished, but those bubbles, rising into the air on an exhalation of warm bread and citrus, sparkling minerals and soft chalk, surely made the master a better writer and a better man. And he lived to 93. Great Champagne may or may not extend your life, but it certainly makes it more worth living.



DRINKING WITH
HEMINGWAY

Chicote, Madrid

Hemingway came to Madrid in 1937 during the Spanish Civil War. He was chasing redemption and a lithe, 28-year-old blonde by the name of Martha Gellhorn with whom he was set on having an affair far from the sight of second wife Pauline, back home in Key West. He made his base at the Hotel Florida on Plaza de Callao, where he'd type the articles he would send to New York while the building shook to a soundtrack of incoming ordnance: 'tacrong, crong, cararong' – Hemingway liked his sound effects.

He also liked Chicote, which was a roomy cocktail bar just along the Gran Vía where international correspondents and off-duty combatants gathered to get drunk on camaraderie and blow off steam in boisterous fashion: it was where a girl from the press office once did a striptease she called 'The Widow of General Mola' and an inebriated militiaman got himself shot dead for spritzing guests with an insecticide spray-gun full of lavender water.

One of a bunch of short stories Hemingway wrote in those months in Madrid is set almost entirely in Chicote, 'the best bar in Spain, certainly, and I think one of the best bars in the world.' Chicote, he writes, is where all the best-looking girls in town showed up, where you dropped in to find out who was in town, where the waiters were pleasant and the drinks, well, they were wonderful: 'If you ordered a martini it was made with the best gin that money could buy.'

The Florida is long gone but Chicote survives: thrives, even. The martinis are still well made, while the chances of getting shot these days are considerably less.





PRIVAT
PROPERTY

Prime Pistes

Looking to invest well in a luxury winter property? The ski resorts with the greatest returns might not be where you think, says Zoe Dare Hall

IF YOU WERE GOING TO PUT YOUR MONEY in the ski resort that has seen the highest property price rises in recent times, you would probably look to somewhere Swiss and glitzy, like Verbier, perhaps. Or maybe somewhere American: Aspen, possibly, where half of Hollywood heads for its powder.

On either score, you'd be wrong. According to global property consultancy Knight Frank's new Prime Ski Property Index – which charts property prices from June 2013 to June 2014 – the smart money is in Queenstown, New Zealand. Home to the jagged peaks of the Remarkables and the magnificent expanses of Lake Wakatipu, Queenstown, on South Island, is New Zealand's premier ski resort. Property here rose by 24.8 per cent during that 12-month period, far ahead of Colorado's Aspen and Vail, which came next with 20.7 per cent rises, while Verbier was in ninth place with a measly five per cent growth.

Queenstown may not have the name recognition of the top European and US resorts but it is where many pros come to train outside the Northern Hemisphere's season. It is also where a great many European and American expats living in Hong Kong or Singapore, plus a lot of Australians, flock from June to October for the appealing combination of a blazing sun and Arctic-cold slopes.

'The jagged peaks are for extreme skiers only, but behind them are three sunny bowls where the terrain is quite benign and family orientated,' says Arnie Wilson, former editor of *Ski + Board* magazine, who has ploughed the snow just about everywhere in the world. 'What surprises Northern Hemisphere skiers is that the best sun is on the north-facing slopes. And as you only tend to find basic youth hostels near the ski fields, all the accommodation and après-ski scene takes place down in the town.'

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PREVIOUS SPREAD:
*Queenstown, New Zealand,
 against the snow-covered
 backdrop of the Remarkables.*
 THIS PAGE: *the town's appeal is
 year round with the mountains,
 lakes and rivers making it a hub
 for adventure sports*



The buzz survives the snow-melt, with Queenstown also enjoying a reputation as a year-round hub of adventure tourism. There are reckoned to be more than 200 high-octane sports on offer, as well as four world-class golf courses, bike and jazz festivals, and regional wine tourism.

‘There is so much to do here in winter and summer, it’s easy to get people to fly out and see me,’ says 27-year-old Sarah Lewis from York, England, who moved to Queenstown four years ago. She lives in Frankton, just outside the central district, where, she says, ‘we get non-stop sun – and we’re close to the lake with views of the Remarkables.’

Layne Harwood, Knight Frank’s Auckland-based agent in New Zealand, chose Queenstown as the location for his holiday home, a lodge on a two-hectare site 15 minutes from downtown. It cost around US\$1.9m. ‘We bought it purely for holiday and lifestyle reasons. We loved the year-round outdoor activities, the golf and the skiing, and the scenery – the lakes, mountains and vineyards. Summer in Queenstown is actually busier than winter.’

There is more than a lifestyle incentive, though, to investing in New Zealand. The country’s economy is buoyant with foreign capital and low interest rates, and Queenstown, in par-

ticular, is seeing all of its vital statistics on the up. Tourist numbers are at their highest ever (just under three million in 2014), with the biggest leaps being in arrivals from Hong Kong, Taiwan, India and – less predictably – Brazil. The population is on the rise too, up by 57 per cent since 2001, with one in three Queenstown residents originating overseas. That has led to a surge in both property development and big infrastructure projects, such as the expansion and upgrade of the Remarkables ski field.

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Apartments in downtown Queenstown; each is set over five levels with nine bedrooms and an outdoor spa – ‘for that post-big powder day in the mountains,’ says Layne Harwood. Equally, it is possible to find three-bed apartments with mesmerising views from around US\$1m at Queenstown Lakes in a high-quality new development such as The Club, which has 41 apartments in a lakefront residence.

Although right on the water, The Club is only a 10-minute walk or two-minute drive from central downtown. ‘People want to be in the centre of town where you get the best sun, views and buses to the ski field. If a development has all that, it sells out quickly,’ says Larissa Lynch from New Zealand estate agency Bayleys.

The growth potential of resorts such as Queenstown owes much to rising wealth in the East. The Chinese make seven million ski visits a year, according to Savills, and a ski chalet with good rentability is increasingly seen as an important addition to the property portfolio among China’s high-earners.

‘We are seeing the emergence of skiing as a recreation in Asia. You’d only need one per cent of Chinese to ski and they’d be the biggest ski

ski resort of Nozawaonsen, have increased tenfold in the last year, according to Holiday Lettings. Powder apart, value for money may be one explanation. One vast ‘private ski-in, ski-out boutique lodge’ there, sitting at the foot of the Karasawa slope, sleeps 30 and rents out from around €648 a night. The sort of high-end chalets with built-in decadence that are found in places like Courchevel or Zermatt are a rarity, but in Hakuba entrepreneurial Brit Eloise Sutton-Kirkby and her Australian partner Bernie Schiemer are paving the way with One Chalets, a collection of ultra-

luxurious pads whose Bond-style gadgetry includes the latest far-infrared saunas, home automation systems and glass-topped pool tables.

Back in New Zealand, Queenstown’s diverse charms ensure the resort attracts everyone from drop-in tourists to long-term investors, adrenaline addicts to wine lovers. And it will, of course, always have great views. ‘You feel completely spoilt waking up to this scenery every day,’ says homeowner Sarah Lewis. If the latest ski property prices are anything to go by, it seems a few people are in the market to spoil themselves.

‘People want the best sun, views and buses to the ski field. If a development has all that, it sells out quickly’

market in the world,’ says Yolande Barnes, Savills’ director of world research. ‘China has huge potential – although resorts aren’t yet big on the Chinese agenda as they still associate rural with poverty.’

Other Asian nations have no such prejudices, and some of these countries also boast nascent ski scenes. Pyeongchang in South Korea – host of the 2018 Winter Olympics – is one to watch, according to Knight Frank, although still very much in its infancy when it comes to luxury homes. Japan has more of a ski tradition. Resorts such as Niseko are known for having some of the best powder in the world and private snow fields that offer a unique ski experience, where you are, ‘pretty much dragged up the slopes by a tractor, then can sink into a natural hot spring afterwards,’ in the words of Yolande Barnes.

Holiday rental enquiries for Japan’s main island of Honshu, which includes the country’s premier



HERE & BELOW:
The living room space at one of the apartments in The Club complex at Queenstown Lakes



PRIVAT
STYLE



Dandy in the bedroom

*They are the suit you wear to bed – Josh Sims charts
the unexpected return to fashion of pyjamas*

PHOTOS © REX FEATURES



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FOR

SACHA ROSE TO BECOME managing director of the company run by his father, and established by his grandfather Lou in 1926, must have been an exciting prospect. But perhaps, back in 2005, its product gave him, as a modern man, pause for thought. Pyjamas? ‘They’ve had their moments of being cool but also of being very uncool, of being considered granddad-ish,’ he says.

Rose is the boss at Derek Rose, arguably the best-known maker of pyjamas, albeit in what he acknowledges is ‘a very tiny, niche market’. Much of what he sells is in the classic style, in crisp blue or white cotton, with a lapel, piping along the edges and three pockets, a style that also accounts for the bulk of sales in the industry at large. But Rose is thinking differently: the company’s latest line is fitted and functionalist. Cuts are lean and decoration is minimal, and there are curved hems, a magnetic closure on the trouser fly and just one pocket on the jacket. Small details maybe, but a giant leap for pyjamas.

‘Nobody has been asking for this,’ says Rose. ‘Nobody has said that having a button fly is annoying, but then nobody said, “Get rid of the buttons on my mobile phone and give me a touchscreen.” It’s a punt on our part, if you like. But it’s been hugely successful for us so far. It makes pyjamas cool.’

Contrary to public perception and, furthermore, contrary to the oft-reported notion that women do not find men in pyjamas sexy, sales to the 25- to 45-year-old age bracket are, as Rose puts it, ‘bigger than you might imagine’. Pyjamas really aren’t as close to dying out as you might think, he says, and suggests they might even be enjoying something of a comeback thanks in part to the popularity of retro-chic TV shows such as *Mad Men*.

Of course, pyjamas’ roots go way back beyond the streamlined stylings of 50s America. The word derives from *pae* and *jamah*, Hindi words meaning ‘leg’ and ‘covering’, and these things were worn throughout India and greater Asia for at least two centuries before Western colonialists discovered them. Appreciating their practicality over the traditional nightshirt, by the 1870s the fashion-forward British Victorian gentleman had become a keen advocate of pyjamas. Within 20 years, they were a sleeper hit across the land: winter-weight pants-and-jacket pairings in silk or wool had routed the nightshirt from the nation’s beds. By the 1930s pyjamas had become the staple attire for men’s nightwear across the Western world, with styles in cool cottons, calico or cosy flannelette, depending on the season.

Their popularity was greatly enhanced when style icon Cary Grant sported pyjamas for scenes in several movies, including *Indiscreet* (1958), and Marlon Brando wore them in *A Streetcar Named*

PREVIOUS PAGES:
Paisley-printed Italian silk pyjamas by Derek Rose; serial pyjama wearer Cary Grant in the 1952 film *Room for One More*.
ABOVE: Marlon Brando sports pyjamas with slip-on shoes for *A Streetcar Named Desire*, while Jimmy Stewart looks louche in pale blue in *Rear Window*

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'If you're an aesthete then a T-shirt and boxer shorts just won't do'

Desire (1951) – yes, Stanley Kowalski, the embodiment of sweaty machismo, wore PJs. Incapacitation proved the perfect opportunity for Jimmy Stewart to lounge in both light blue and brown pyjamas in *Rear Window* (1954) and Paul Newman to hobble around in a plum-coloured pair in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1958). In each instance, both men suggested there was a certain devil-may-care attitude to a man who would wear pyjamas all day because, well, he could – a notion later imbued with a definite loucheness by the likes of Noël Coward and Hugh Hefner.

The counter-culture of the late 1960s put paid to all that as pyjamas came to represent the generational old guard. 'Those times were all about getting free and getting naked,' says Rose. 'Shedding your nightwear was all part of your liberation, and perhaps the origin of pyjamas' stigmatisation. I think we're more relaxed about such things now and are happy to decide what we wear in bed for ourselves.'

Simon Maloney, marketing director of the Jermyn Street shirtmakers New & Lingwood, which has garnered notice for its signature skull & crossbones-print pyjamas, argues that it is another societal shift, a recession together with a renewed, perhaps connected interest in nesting, that is driving a reappraisal of pyjamas. 'People want to be comfortable at home, and frankly pyjamas are great to put on just to wear around the house. But people also want to feel smart at home, even in bed, he says – and what could be smarter to sleep in than what is, after all, a kind of coordinated two-piece suit?

'If you're an aesthete then a T-shirt and boxer shorts just won't do,' Maloney adds. 'Pyjamas' supposed fuddy-duddiness is actually part of their appeal for some, in the way that we've seen a similar re-uptake of braces and bow-ties. A lot of our customers also wear smoking jackets, because they want to, not because they're going to a fancy-dress party. They're the kind who insist that their pyjamas have a drawstring waist. For them even the idea of elastic is considered rather *infra dig*.'

Such fans revel in, for example, Derek Rose's use of two-ply yarn and an intricate weaving process to

achieve a high sheen and bold colour for those regimental stripes, or the mother of pearl buttons and Italian cloths. Such fans – who include the likes of artist Julian Schnabel, who has taken to wearing pyjamas all the time – might even be onto a way of life that those lounging and sleeping in merely their underwear are missing out on.

'Pyjamas are stylish, but they are also a form of indulgence,' Rose says. 'They're really just about looking good for yourself, or for yourself and your partner. And if a man has the time to care about himself in that way, then he's a lucky man.'



ABOVE: swashbuckling skull & crossbones-print pyjamas by New & Lingwood of Jermyn Street in London

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ROGER W SMITH



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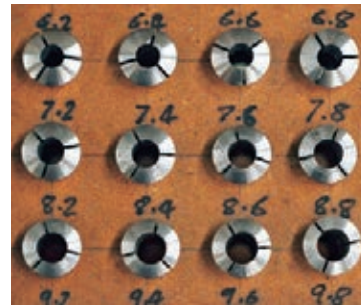
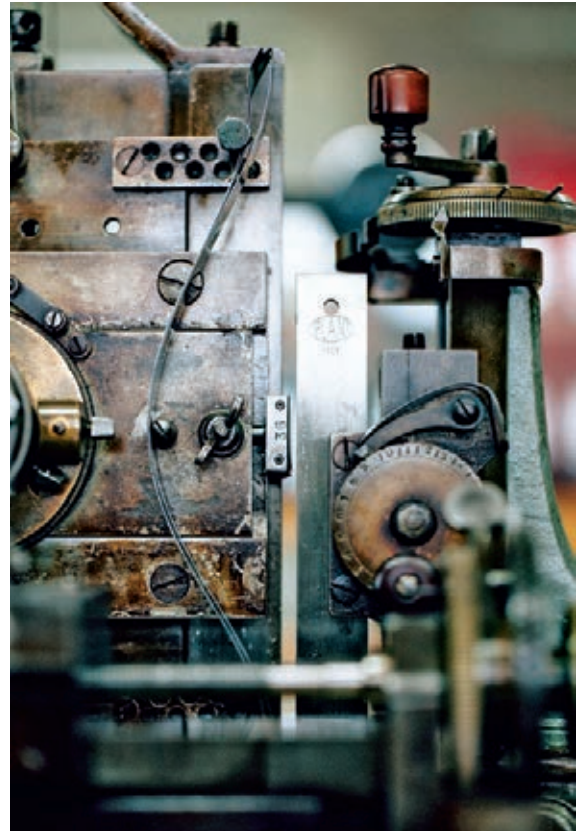
Perfect Timing

Josh Sims meets Roger W Smith, the master watchmaker who crafts every single component of his timepieces by hand

Photography by Greg Funnell



HERE: Roger W Smith makes every single component of his watches by hand then pieces them together



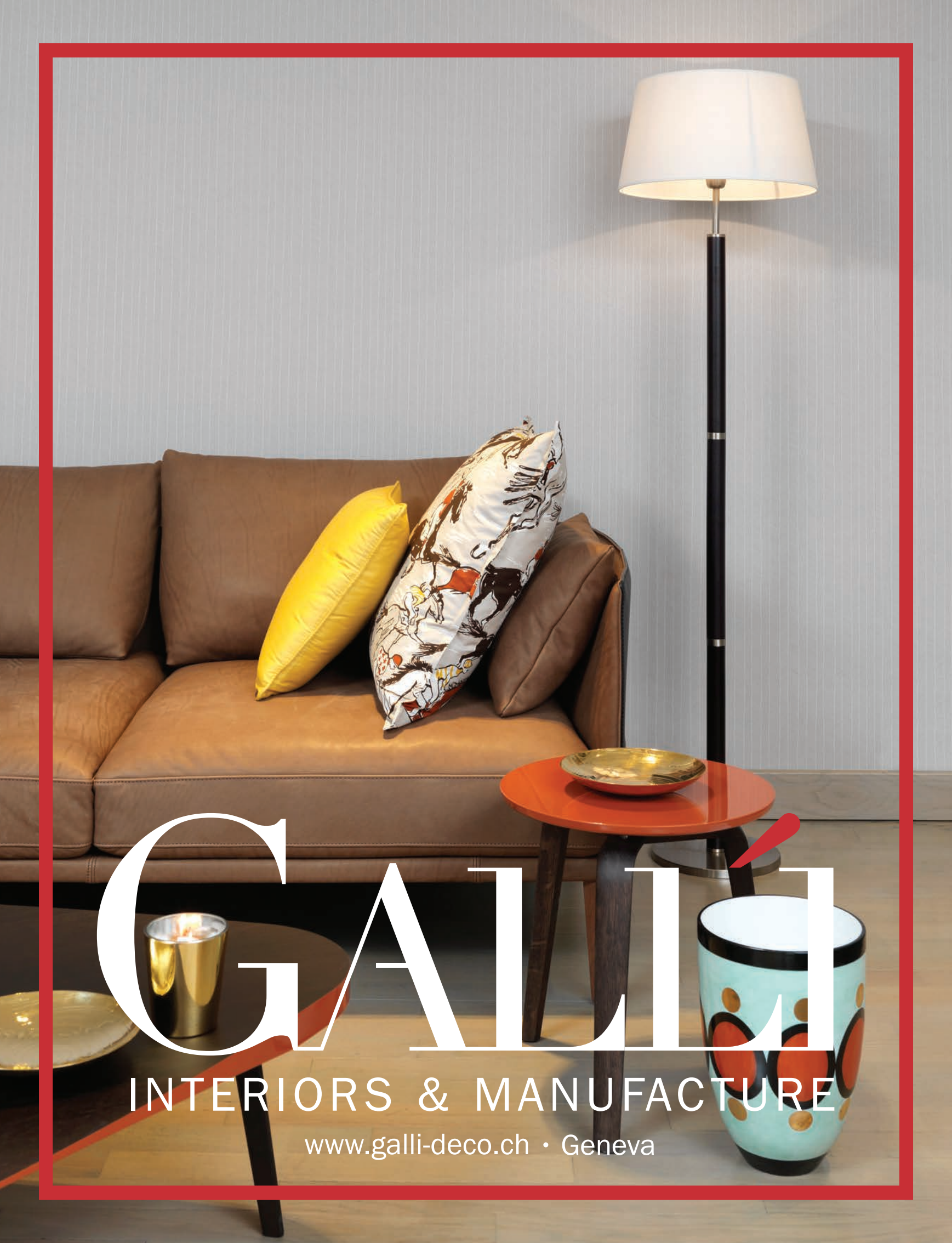
'IT'S NOT A LABEL I REALLY THINK ABOUT, I JUST GET UP EACH day and try to make watches you can't find anywhere else,' says Roger W Smith with slight embarrassment. The question was, how does it feel to be called the world's best watchmaker? 'I'm certainly proud to be one of the smallest watchmakers,' he jokes. He is talking output rather than height. 'Companies tend to announce their annual increase in production as though it was a recognition of doing well, but if I made 20 watches in a year then I'd know something must have gone down in quality for me to be making that many.'

Twenty watches may sound like a small number, but this master craftsman produces just 12 luxury watches a year from his small studio in the Isle of Man. There is an eight-year waiting list for one of his timepieces but the high demand isn't simply down to the elegance of the finished product, it's also Smith's total passion for watchmaking that makes them so desirable. He makes every single part of every single watch by hand, having also mastered each of elite horology's specialist decorative skills. Not one screw is imported, not one part farmed out. It is an impressive feat for someone who once worked part-time doing repairs for mass-market British jeweller H Samuel.

He did, he admits, have something of a useful education. Having no interest in school ('I could never see the point'), it was his father, an antiques collector, who suggested he consider watchmaking. Aiming high – very high – Smith decided he would make a pocket watch for the late George Daniels, often acclaimed as the greatest watchmaker of the 20th century. Some 18 months of midnight toil followed. Finally Smith approached Daniels with his offering. He was told it was not a bad effort – or words to that effect – and asked to try again.

And that is how, at the tender age of 19, Roger W Smith became George Daniels' first and only apprentice. When Daniels died, in 2011 aged 85, he bequeathed all of his watchmaking tools to Smith. 'I can pick up those tools and still think what great watches were made with them,' he says. 'They're a reminder, too, not to stray. Like Daniels, I want to make watches that fit into the great watchmaking tradition. My watches won't keep better time, and it's true that a handmade cog is probably no better than one stamped out by a machine, but using only traditional techniques and materials means those watches will be around for hundreds of years. I wouldn't be happy with anything less.'

Staying true to what he calls the 'Daniels Method', a combination of



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HERE: at present there are only around 50 people in the world who own a Roger W Smith watch, which are made at the rate of just 12 a year

learning, craft and determination, to create the best possible watch, Smith has already produced world-class pieces. He's even engineered an improvement on Daniels' industry-changing co-axial escapement mechanism – in part by radically lightening it – and an escapement style of his own characterised by a raised barrel bridge, jewels in gold chatons, silver dials and gold hands.

Earlier this year, Smith unveiled a watch created for Downing Street's campaign to promote British talent and craft abroad. When the collaboration was first announced, many considered Smith to be an odd choice – his small studio on the Isle of Man couldn't be further away from the pomp and drive of Westminster's economy-boosting campaign. But no one denies that his Great Britain watch is one of the finest examples of haute horology in the world, and there are some who call it the most complex dial ever made by hand. It is also a beautiful nod to patriotism: it has a one-off movement and 34 parts that make up a subtle suggestion of the Union Jack on the dial, though it does not, he jokes, feature a bulldog, nor chime *Rule Britannia*.

'It's an unusual way to show that Britain still has its innovators – after all, watchmaking doesn't typically fit in with ideas of Britishness,' says Smith.

'Though I do like to think that our once world-famous watchmaking tradition will be recognised again. Some now claim to be making "British" watches, but the movement, the heart of the watches, is Swiss. Probably, the reality of the industry is that the core knowledge has gone. I went down an unusual road that gave me a very deep insight into watchmaking that you can't get any other way.'

Smith's prices start at six figures, a reflection of their ingenuity and artistry. That is, of course, if you get the opportunity to appreciate it. However, Smith is considering upping his production to 15 pieces a year. Possible perhaps, he says, in a decade's time, thanks to the fact that he is now training up his own apprentice.

Interestingly, most of Smith's clients have created their money through managing or starting some sort of manufacturing business of their own. 'I don't think that's any coincidence,' says Smith. 'There's something in my story they understand and perhaps appreciate – a counter to the otherwise frenetic world we live in, seeing someone use their hands to produce something. Perhaps they appreciate the effort that went into my training. Or perhaps they just know that modern watches are all mass-produced and feel, as I do, that they lack that something special.'

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PRIVAT
DINING

The New Italian Ambassador to Turkey

Chef Massimo Bottura revels in taking traditional Italian cuisine in new directions – this time it's all the way to the shores of Asia, writes Jenni Muir

Photography by Ben Quinton





MASSIMO BOTTURA IS THE 52-YEAR-OLD chef whose Osteria Francescana in Modena is currently ranked third on San Pellegrino's famous list of the world's best restaurants. The world now flocks to the small northern Italian city to eat, and Bottura has become its most famous son. He always dreamed of exporting

his take on Italian cuisine but always said it had to be the right city; a city, as he put it, 'eager to understand what Italian food is but, more importantly, what Italian food can be'. Nineteen years after opening Osteria Francescana, this year Bottura finally cut the ribbon on his first restaurant outside Modena. The new venture, called Ristorante Italia, is not in Rome

or Milan, New York, London or even Sydney, but the city that straddles two continents, Istanbul. 'I didn't choose Istanbul,' says the chef, 'it chose me.'

'[Eataly founder] Oscar Farinetti and the Zorlu family came to Modena and proposed the idea to me,' explains Bottura. They wanted him to take the empty space on the top floor of Eataly's Turkish outpost in the swanky Zorlu Center in the Bosphorus-side neighbourhood of Beşiktaş. 'Once I visited Istanbul, I fell in love,' Bottura says. 'There seems to be a great appreciation in this city for what we are doing in contemporary cuisine right now. This is not to be taken for granted – incredible things can happen when there is energy and enthusiasm. It is very exciting for me to see the rich, culinary cultures and traditions of a city that is so focused on looking forward, while not forgetting the past.'

*'I didn't choose Istanbul,'
says Massimo Bottura,
'it chose me'*



That could be a metaphor for Bottura's approach to Italian food. The dishes at Ristorante Italia are not as conceptual as those made famous at Osteria Francescana, rather they offer a new take on Italy's most classic and best-known recipes – 'with small tweaks and twists of fate,' says Bottura. 'We hope to add value to the public's perception of the Italian kitchen and to have our guests fall in love with Italy for the second time, even if they are in Istanbul.'

Ristorante Italia's menu offers a considered tour of the chef's home country, from the plate of lobster inspired by Sardinia and Sicily, up through Campania (pasta with anchovy pesto) to Piemonte

*PREVIOUS PAGE:
Bottura and chefs sample
dishes in the kitchen;
Istanbul, site of the chef's
new venture.*

*ABOVE: Bottura on the
terrace at Ristorante Italia
in October 2014*

(steak tartare with hazelnuts, capers and olives) and the Veneto (roast sea bass). Bottura's home turf of Emilia-Romagna, in northern Italy, features in dishes of poached egg with 36-month Parmigiano Reggiano cheese, asparagus and balsamic vinegar, and tagliatelle egg pasta with hand-chopped beef ragù.

By contrast, Osteria Francescana is renowned for fantastical creations such as 'Memory of a Mortadella Sandwich', 'Pollution' (a seafood dish designed to look like a dirty riverbank), and 'Oops! I Dropped the Lemon Tart',

all of which feature in Bottura's recent art-of-the-chef tome, the wryly titled *Never Trust a Skinny Italian Chef* (Bottura has not an ounce of flab

'In Italy there are three things you don't mess with: the Pope, football and your grandmother's recipes'



on him). In it he explains how his aim has been to explore Italy's culinary identity critically, with irreverence and irony. 'Italian food is internationally appraised and yet often it seems still to be stuck in someone's grandmother's kitchen,' he says. 'It is as if Italian food is not allowed to evolve. In Italy there are three things you really don't dare mess with: the Pope, football and your grandmother's recipes. We did take on those recipes and traditions and it's been a great journey.'

Even so, Bottura thinks the widespread love of Italian food has made it more difficult for him to get his ideas across. 'It has been very hard for me to move the Italian kitchen forward in Italy, and even after all these years – nearly 20 – and with three Michelin stars, there are still people who are sceptical about what we are doing. This is a problem for a

contemporary chef who is influenced by music, art and the cross-pollination of ideas!'

Sharing ideas is very important to him, and *Never Trust a Skinny Italian Chef* is more a meditation on creativity and the evolution of Bottura's cuisine than it is a cookbook – though the author also sees it as a book about Italy and his love for its ingredients and traditions.

When he is travelling, Bottura loves to meet chefs who are cooking Italian food. 'Sometimes to see something clearly you need to turn it upside down,' he explains. 'There are many excellent Italian restaurants abroad, especially in Asia. Japan, Bangkok and Hong Kong, for example, have some of the most precise and clean Italian food around. They pay great attention to detail and respect traditions. In Latin America there is yet



OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM TOP, CLOCKWISE: *Bottura in the kitchen*; *gnocchi di seppia* (cuttlefish and potato gnocchi in a tomato soup); *pasta e fagioli* (ravioli stuffed with Parmigiano and Ricotta); *lasagne di polpo*. THIS PAGE: *plating up vitello tonnato, a veal tenderloin with a tuna fish mayonnaise, sour mixed vegetables and veal juice*

another take on the Italian kitchen with many generations of immigrants who moved there. The mix of cultures and traditions fascinates me.'

He was particularly dazzled by a 2005 visit to New York's iconic Four Seasons restaurant where for the first time he tasted the classic Italian-American dish Caesar salad. 'The Italian maître d' prepared the dressing at our table, adding the ingredients one by one and emulsifying them as effortlessly as if he was combing his hair. Nothing will ever top that theatrical production.'

On returning to Italy he found he was still thinking about the way that salad dressing had cast a spell over the world and decided to devise his own version of Caesar salad. In it, the eggs are cured rather like bottarga [salted, cured fish roe] and used grated, like Parmesan, while the cheese

is made into crisp wafers to replace the croutons. Instead of Romaine lettuce, it features myriad punchy leaves and herbs, plus faux gelatine leaves made from mustard leaf and mustard oil. 'If you know the ingredients of a Caesar salad, it all makes sense,' says Bottura. 'If you don't, then all you see is chaos... All the original ingredients are present in different shapes and forms. Every bite offers a discovery: pure flavours, singular and defined, naked and dressed, Italian and American combined.'

It's no surprise that many of New York's top chefs and restaurateurs have gone crazy for Bottura, many publicly hailing him during his recent US book tour. Which is some contrast to his former experience of America when Bottura was in his thirties and worked in a SoHo Italian cafe (he subsequently married American Lara Gilmore, a part-time bar



THIS PAGE: the decor at Ristorante Italia is elegantly understated: slate-gray walls, dark wood and charcoal leather, with classic white table settings. The location is the high-spec Zorlu shopping centre, also home to an Apple Store and the new Raffles Istanbul

waitress he met on his first shift there). In a neat completion of the circle, this October saw Bottura invited to collaborate with Danny Meyer's Shake Shack on a limited-edition burger. 'I was excited to bring the flavours of my beloved Emilia-Romagna – cotechino sausage, Parmigiano and balsamic vinegar – to Madison Square Park so that they could be enjoyed in an American way,' says Bottura. 'It is a memory I will dine off for years to come!'

His rocketing international profile has gifted him with a sense of great responsibility. 'The most important thing to remember is that people are coming to you for an experience,' he says. 'Hopefully it will be one they never forget. We noticed a different kind of client at Osteria Francescana after our third [Michelin] star, and again after we were voted number

three in the world's best restaurants. Instead of coming to judge our cuisine, they are coming to enjoy it.'

Back in Istanbul, Bottura has returned to Ristorante Italia to launch the new season menu. Then his publicity schedule takes him to London, Amsterdam, Australia... Is he not a little tired of being asked the same questions over and over again? 'I never tire of being asked questions,' he says. 'I love curiosity and the opportunity to share my ideas with the public, especially young chefs. I hope to inspire and encourage chefs to throw away the recipe and use their minds, their emotions and their memories to create a new kitchen – Italian, American, Turkish or other. I always say: "Leave a window open for a little poetry to seep into your everyday life." If you can do this, then great things can happen to you.'



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PRIVAT
LIFE

The Diary Writer

*Andrew Humphreys meets a
novelist whose diaries are as
fantastic as any fiction*

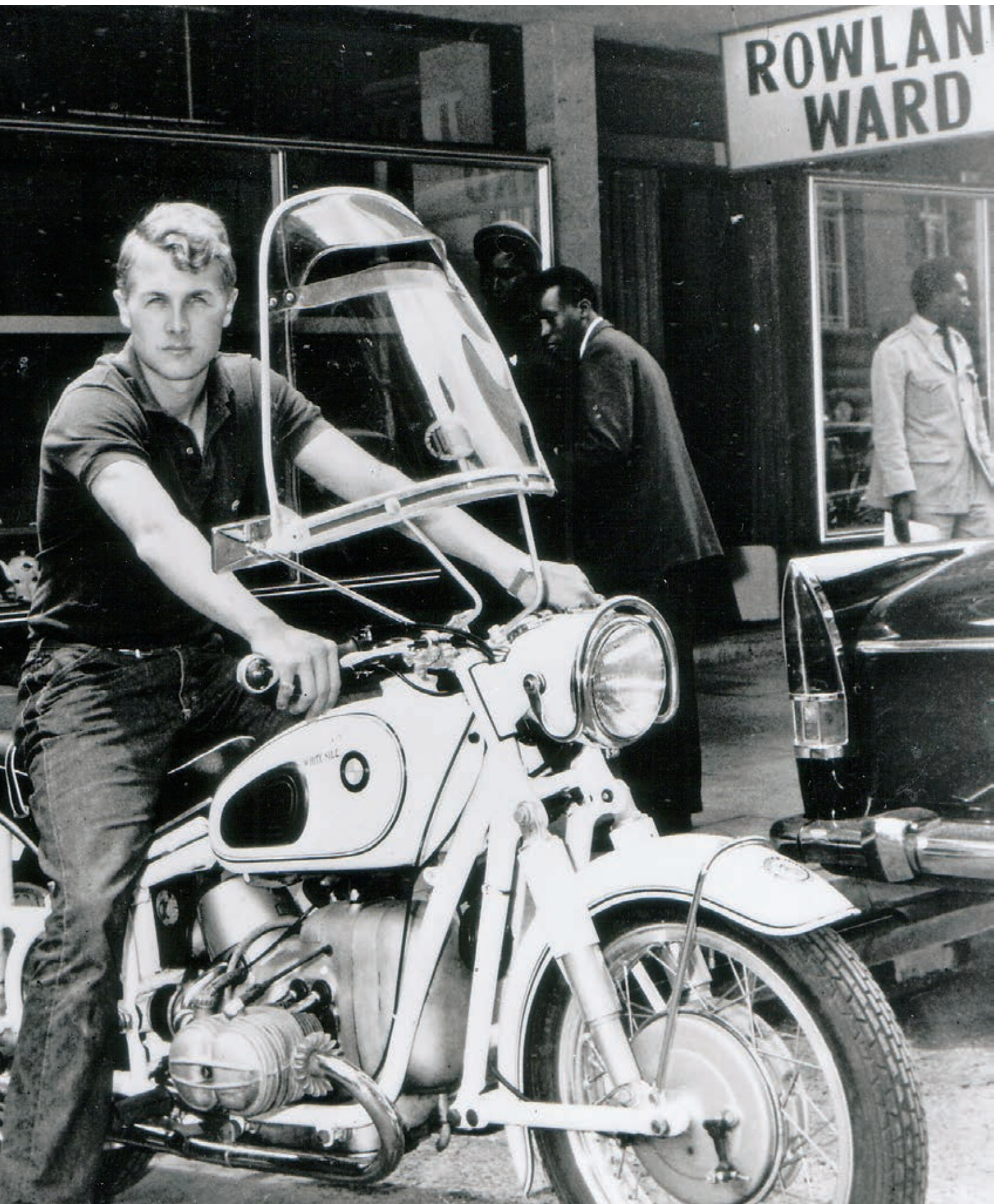
DO YOU KEEP A DIARY?' asks John Hopkins. As it happens I do, on and off, when I remember. It's to remind me and my wife of places visited, people met, things seen, the sorts of things that go to make up a life – our lives, anyway. Important to us, but I can't imagine sharing my diaries with anyone else. Unlike Hopkins. But then his is a life far less ordinary.

October 11, 1961

Today at breakfast came an announcement that threw our visit into turmoil. 'Boys, last night I got word that a big contingent of Somali raiders is on its way here. They're going to steal my cattle and burn this place down. We've got to fort up, collect guns and call in the neighbors, and defend ourselves. I hope you know how to shoot because tonight you're going to be in the front line.'

This is from Hopkins' *The White Nile Diaries*, recently published by IB Tauris. It's the edited record he kept of a journey he, aged 22, and his friend Joe McPhillips, 24, Princeton graduates both, made in 1961 from Rome via Sicily to Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Sudan to Kenya, riding a white BMW motorbike, which they'd christened the *White Nile*.





The adventure lasted four months. Then, after a brief spell teaching in Paris, the pair relocated to Morocco, where Hopkins spent the next 17 years enjoying life, associating with the high priests of American Beat literature.

In such circumstances it would have been criminal not to have kept a diary.

It may be as the result of having meticulously reread his old journals while preparing them for publication, but at the age of 75, Hopkins' recall of the events of over half a century ago is precise and meticulously chronological. Over coffee, at the corner table of a vast and empty hotel dining room in Oxford, England, near where he now lives, it turns out he is also a beguiling teller of stories.

'I grew up in the state of New Jersey outside of New York,' he says. 'I didn't know what I wanted to do after college, but one of the few pieces of advice my father ever gave me was, "Don't work on Wall Street, son." He'd spent most of his life there and had never been happy or successful. So my friend, Joe McPhillips, and I had this idea we'd go to South America and buy a coffee plantation. Well, we went down there to this beautiful village up in the Peruvian jungle where you could grow coffee and make lots of money, and we had a great time trying but in any event the coffee dream evaporated and we went back to New York.'

It's here that the White Nile diaries begin – specifically, at the famously busy Oyster Bar at Grand Central Station. Just a few weeks after getting back from South America, Hopkins was sharing cherrystones and bluefish with a fellow Princeton Ivy Club member when this friend showed him a letter. It was from an old Ivy alumni who was offering an open invitation to 'anyone from the Vine' to visit him on his 47,000-acre cattle ranch at the foot of Mount Kenya in Africa. Within a short space of time Hopkins and Phillips were pulling away from New York harbour aboard the Italian Line vessel the *Saturnia*, headed for Naples.

There was no big hurry to get to Kenya and the pair spent some time 'seeing what Italy was all about'. To stretch out their money they took a job they saw advertised in the *Rome Daily American* and spent the next three months in luxurious indolence on the Gulf of La Spezia, at the seaside villa of the blind English critic and essayist Percy Lubbock, who was willing to pay to be read to.

When the urge to be back on the road caught hold again, Hopkins and McPhillips took a train up to Munich and bought themselves a motorbike. Why go all the way to Germany to buy a bike? 'Well, we looked at the Italian Ducatis and all those bikes and they looked fast but they didn't look reliable and, of course, BMW has a reputation for being absolutely reliable. We needed reliability on this trip because, believe me, we weren't mechanics.' At the time, says Hopkins, most BMWs were black so when they

spotted a white model sitting in a showroom they knew that was the one for a ride to Kenya, a journey that would involve following the White Nile.

'So we bought this beautiful bike and went over the Alps – a fantastic feeling of freedom – down through Italy, back to Naples, Palermo, and over into Tunisia. We arrived in North Africa the day that war broke out between the French Foreign Legion and the Tunisian Army in a dispute over the French seaport of Bizerte.'

After hearing a rumour that the US Sixth Fleet was en route to Tunis to extract all American citizens, the pair decided not to hang around. 'The last thing we wanted was to be sent home on a battleship, so we said, "To hell with Carthage," and we jumped on the machine and roared off into the desert.' Such impetuosity almost came with a high price. Halted at the Libyan border because they didn't have the necessary *carnet de passage* for the bike, rather than return to Tunis they rode back a few miles and decided to circumvent the border post by going round it. 'I wonder if that desert sun didn't addle our brains,' Hopkins wrote afterwards in his diary. Pushing the bike through sand bowls between crescent shaped dunes, with the heat burning through the soles of their shoes and all sense of direction lost, they were suddenly surrounded by armed men. They were a posse of Tunisian vigilantes out for blood. Fortunately, it wasn't Americans they were hunting, and once two US passports had been produced the pair were escorted back to the desert highway. 'I still think to this day if we'd been French and had French passports they would have killed us,' says Hopkins.

PREVIOUS SPREAD:
Joe McPhillips, standing,
and John Hopkins astride
the White Nile.

BELOW: McPhillips in
Tangier.

OPPOSITE: Diarist John
Hopkins in Tangier



PHOTOS © COURTESY OF JOHN HOPKINS

'I still think to this day if we'd been French and had French passports they would have killed us'



Rather than being chastened by the experience and returning to Tunis to secure the necessary bit of paperwork, the boys decided to run the border. They eased up to the guard post again at a steady 10mph, manoeuvred their machine around the barrier and then gunned it. Hopkins was driving, McPhillips was riding pillion. Hopkins says he remembers hearing pop, pop as they roared away, but it was only 30 miles later when they pulled over he realised McPhillips had been shot in the right shoulder near the base of his neck. An inch to the left and he would have been dead.

‘So anyhow,’ says Hopkins, 53 years later and a father three times over, ‘on we went and made it all the way to Cairo. During that time – and my boys can’t believe this – but I didn’t make a single call home. My boys went on their gap year and my wife was on the phone the whole time.’

What he did do is write a series of long letters home, which were kept, and which helped with the writing of *The White Nile Diaries*. ‘I did not include in those letters the time I nearly got murdered in the Tunisian desert, or Joe getting shot in the back. If I had my mother would have hired Air Force One to come over and retrieve us.’

The blissfully ignorant Mrs Hopkins never despatched the presidential plane and John and Joe did, eventually make it all the way down to Kenya on their motorbike.

We had Peru in common, but where I went looking for coffee Burroughs went looking for drugs

There they met up with Mr Sam Small, who had sent the letter of general invitation to the boys of the Ivy Club Princeton. Unfortunately, he turned out to be nuts. ‘It was the most beautiful ranch you’d ever seen, Sam had 40 dogs. Forty dogs! But poor guy, I think he was a closet queen and an alcoholic, and when he saw us two young Princetonians travelling the world together having the time of our lives, I think he just sort of went berserk.’ The threat of a raid by marauding Somalis, as recorded in that October 11 diary entry, was just one fantasy of his unhinged mind and soon after the boys arrived he hid himself in an outbuilding and went on a drinking binge. They couldn’t coax him out and, feeling uncomfortable about the situation, they quit the ranch and headed for Nairobi where the *White Nile* was crated up and air freighted to Paris.

All of this would have been enough adventure for any one life. But neither Hopkins nor McPhillips had any desire to return to New York. They stayed for a while in Paris, but after Africa they found it cold, expensive and crowded. In a life as blessed as theirs, they were never going to have to wait long for things to change and sure enough, a Princeton connection brought them into the circle of an American Moroccan whose father was one of the founders of something called the American School of Tangier. ‘So again we

hopped on the *White Nile* and sped off to Morocco. We went to teach at the American School, not knowing what to expect but intending to stay a year. Anyhow, I ended up staying 17 years and my friend McPhillips stayed the rest of his life. He died there seven years ago.’

For an aspiring writer, which Hopkins was, Tangier was the right place at the right time. Throughout much of the 20th century its *laissez-faire* ways had provided refuge for Westerners who fell outside the bounds of conventional society back home. They would wash up in this North African port city where, providing they were discreet, they could indulge their desires for fleshy sins or druggy oblivion without fear of harassment. Among their number were several giants of American literature, including Paul Bowles, William Burroughs, Truman Capote and Tennessee Williams.

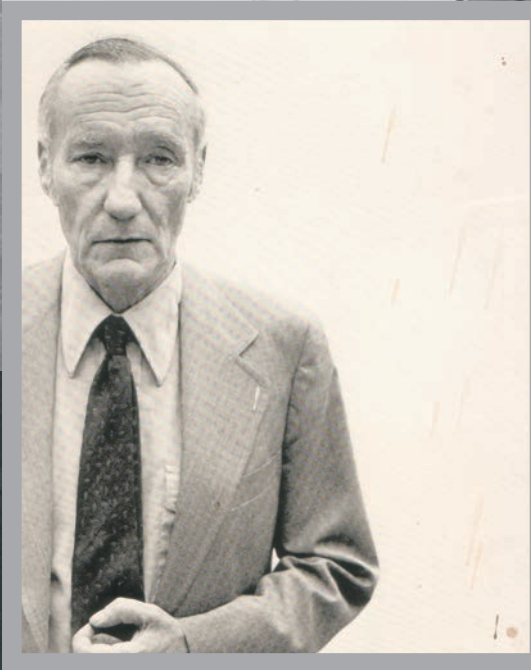
‘I would have never met all these writers if I’d been in Paris or London or New York – they’re too big. But in Tangier you can meet everybody at one cocktail party, it was that small.’ The dandyish Bowles became a mentor, poker-faced Burroughs a friend. Hopkins remembers meeting Burroughs for the first time at Bowles’s apartment: ‘He was sitting there on the floor dipping his hands in a pot of *majoun*, a sort of hashish candy. Later, with a friend of mine we went to a restaurant for dinner and there’s Burroughs sitting by himself. We got to talking. We had Peru in common – Burroughs had been to Peru and we’d been to the same places, but where I went looking for coffee he went looking for drugs.’

Unsurprisingly, given the environment, there was a novel embarked upon, which was sent to a publisher but rejected. ‘It’s still sitting on the shelf, which I think is where it belongs,’ says the septuagenarian Hopkins, wise with hindsight (he has since gone on to have six novels published). But there were other perks: as the only heterosexual writer in Tangier at the time, he claims, in terms of women he had the field to himself. (He married Ellen Ann Ragsdale of Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1979. Best friend Joe McPhillips, meanwhile, had come out of the closet in Tangier – ‘like Superman coming out of the phonebooth’.)

Hopkins’ years in Morocco are recalled in *The Tangier Diaries 1962–1979*, first published in 1997 and due to be republished in 2015. It may not be a part of the canon of great American literature of the 20th century like Bowles’s *The Sheltering Sky* or Burroughs’ *Naked Lunch*, but to my mind it’s a lot more fun. A portrait of a bunch of libertines and eccentrics pursuing mythic and outlandish lives in the sun, it’s full of gossipy and surreal entries, such as this one for 22 March, 1979: ‘The Countess de Breteuil’s seamstress who has undergone a mastectomy uses her false breast as pincushion’. The *White Nile* features in an episode in which Beat poet Brion Gysin, riding pillion, loses a toe in a fast-moving scrape with a truck.

The bike, ultimately, came to a tragic end: ‘Joe wrecked it in the Moroccan desert. Just like he later wrecked my car.’

‘That trip we took by motorcycle,’ says Hopkins, ‘you wouldn’t want to take today. You wouldn’t want to go through Libya, Sudan would be very dicey, Juba was a sleepy little town with one Greek shop and that was it.’



FROM TOP LEFT,
CLOCKWISE: John Hopkins
with writer Paul Bowles;
Paul and Jane Bowles, an
unconventional couple – both
were gay and lived in adjacent
flats with their lovers; William
Burroughs; a younger Burroughs
and companion in a Tangier cafe



A MOMENT IN TIME

The elegant new EKSO Watches Gallery in Paris was born out of Ekaterina Sotnikova's love for unique watchmakers. The space showcases the most flamboyant watch designs and intricate engineering work

Thirty-year-old Russian Ekaterina Sotnikova is a devotee of artisan watchmakers and their lovingly crafted pieces. This passion led her to open the EKSO Watches Gallery in 2011, where she showcases exceptional horology and flamboyant design.

The gallery is the first and only of its kind and sits near to the Champs Élysées in Paris. Its prestigious eighth-arrondissement postcode means the gallery welcomes some of the industry's finest, and Ekaterina features excellent independent watchmakers and start-up niche brands. An exclusive few are showcased in the gallery, including: Andreas Strehler, Bovet Fleurier, Kari Voutilainen, Ludovic Ballouard, James Pellaton, the Grönefeld brothers, Maîtres du Temps and Vianney Halter. These luxury brands all ooze expertise and great design.

'After studying economics, I decided, three years ago, to really live out my passion for watches and to make them my career,' says Ekaterina. When describing her space, the word gallery is certainly deserved, since this venture devotes itself to the art of watchmaking in all its forms.

Ekaterina, having signed up to Geneva's Fondation de la Haute Horlogerie (The Fine Watchmaking Foundation), has even tried to put together a complicated mechanism. She is dedicated to understanding the craft and desperate to use her watchmaker's loupe – spending her days examining the inner workings of watches, opening them up to learn about their mechanical features and complexities.

Ekaterina is fully involved in the process, and with the same passion she shows when searching for rare pieces, she champions the designers themselves. 'I wanted to make these artists known and to showcase their creations, like a master painting. That is where the idea of creating a "watch gallery" came from,' she explains.

It is with pride and affection that she talks about her new role as a privileged interlocutor with the artists she has



chosen. Each of the designers she showcases shares a belief in the original values of a fine watch, which inevitably reflects the wonderful styles of their native lands.

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‘I wanted
to make these
artists known and
to showcase their
creations’



Opposite page:
Ekaterina Sotnikova

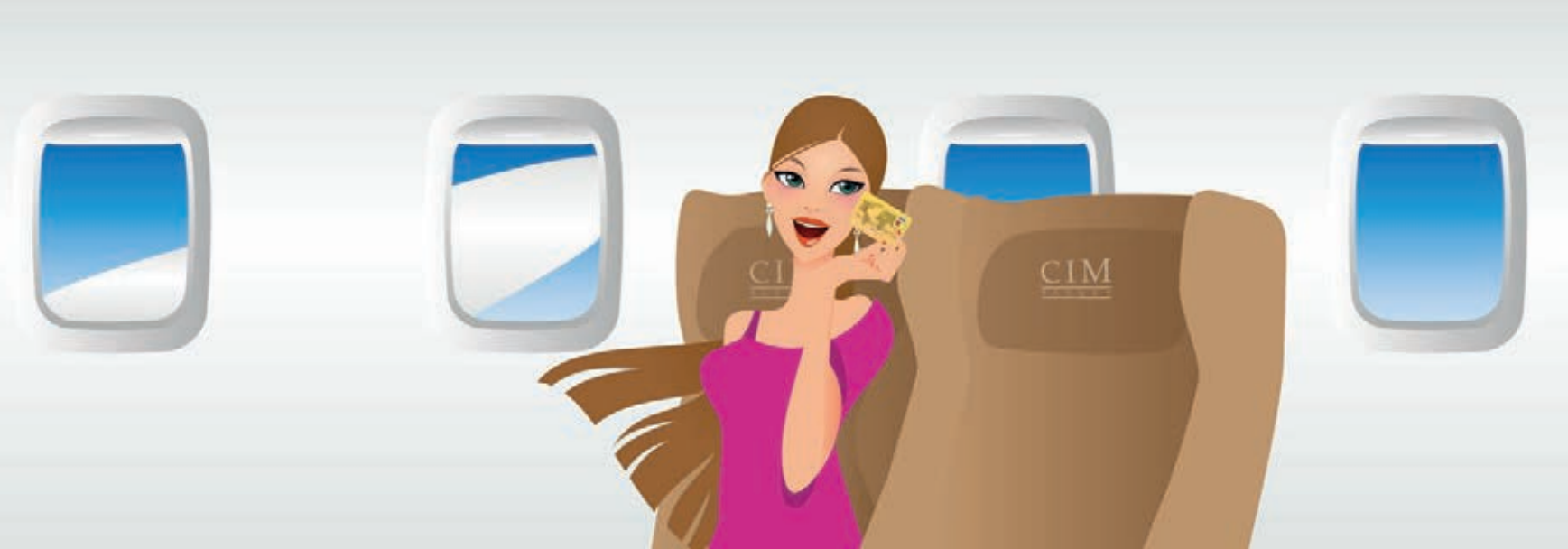
This page, clockwise
from above:
*EKSOWATCHES Gallery,
Parallax Tourbillon
by Grönfeld, Antiqua
by Vianney Halter,
Amadeo Fleurier –
Peacock – by Bovet*





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PRIVAT
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MR MATHEWS' FEELING FOR SNOW

Canadian Paul Mathews is the world's pre-eminent ski resort designer, with more than 400 projects under his belt. He shares with Toby Skinner the principles of creating the perfect piste

Portrait by Shayd Johnson

RUSSIA'S 2014 WINTER OLYMPICS site was built almost completely from scratch. It's a story that started a decade earlier with Canadian Paul Mathews in a private jet flying over the Western Caucasus. After two hours scouting for a site, he'd seen nothing, much to his hosts' frustration. But then, from 12,000m up, he caught sight of a small access road, a river, a gentle plateau, steep hills and bowls. 'Whoa, whoa, whoa!' he said. 'Turn this plane around.'

Until Mathews saw it, Rosa Khutor (Rosa's Hut) was just an empty stretch of mountain. Following \$165m of investment, it became the most important ski resort on the planet for a couple of weeks last February.

You may not have heard of Mathews, but he might just be the most influential person in the world of skiing. Since starting his Ecosign firm in 1975 and making the fledgling resort of Whistler in British Columbia his first project, he has designed more than 400 resorts in 39 countries and helped create five Winter Olympic alpine resorts. If you are a regular skier, it is almost certain that you've skied on a resort conceived at least in part by Mathews and his firm. His gift, he has said, 'is seeing things that



PREVIOUS SPREAD:

Sun Peaks Resort, Canada, where Ecosign has acted as project planner since 1992.

THIS PAGE: Paul Mathews, photographed for PrivatAir magazine in October 2014.

OPPOSITE: Hemsedal Village in Norway, designed by Ecosign

other people can't see... and not being afraid to tell the truth, even when it's not what my clients want to hear.'

Ecosign's work stretches from Trysil and Hemsedal in Norway to Zermatt, Laax and Courchevel in the Alps, Niseko in Japan, and many of the new resorts in developing countries in Asia and Eastern Europe. The company has helped bring skiing to destinations as unlikely as Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Macedonia and Turkmenistan.

Conceiving masterplans for resorts and ski areas, Ecosign's specialists might rejig a lift network, as in Courchevel; redesign the structure of the town, as in Trysil; or create an entire resort from scratch, as with Rosa Khutor and, more recently, Changbaishan in eastern China.

'We do it all,' says Mathews over the phone from Canada on a Sunday morning, one of the few times we're able to catch him. He spends half the year travelling and can often be found in helicopters ('I've recently been flying round Serbia in military helicopters,' he says). He's just back from Tokyo and about to head to Switzerland where, among other things, he'll work on a masterplan for the Jungfrau-Grindelwald ski area. He's straight-talking and happy to share his encyclopaedic knowledge of the world's ski resorts, even if we're interrupting his breakfast.

While Ecosign is the undoubted leader in a niche industry, Mathews insists it is still 'sort of' a boutique firm. 'There are only 25 of us and it's still very personal to us, because mountains need a soft touch. Giant architecture firms like Aecom [the world's largest, with 1,370 architects] have tried doing ski resort design but, frankly, they're lousy at it.'

What Ecosign has done from the start is create resorts that work on a 'human scale', which is something of a mantra. 'To us, a classic ski resort is



'Mountains need a soft touch. Giant architecture firms have tried doing ski resort design but, frankly, they're lousy at it'

a place that's nice to stay at: where you can ski in and ski out; where there's little or no traffic; where you can get great food easily; and which is in keeping with the environment. I can't stand those purpose-built French ski factories – it feels like man dominating nature, and you don't leave the city to be trapped in a monstrous high-rise.' A typical Ecosign resort has underground parking, a village feel, accommodation right on the slopes, and none of his pet peeve: steep, icy exterior staircases.

A keen skier and self-confessed tree-hugger, Mathews studied forest ecology and landscape architecture at Washington University in the early 1970s. After spending a winter season in Zermatt, he was impressed by being in a resort with no cars, and started fixating on the environmental insensitivity of many American ski resorts. 'You'd see bulldozers and power lines, and every family needed three car parking spaces for their trip. There was a brutality and an environmental

insensitivity about a lot of the design.'

He was soon drawn to the fledgling resort of Whistler, north of the border near Vancouver: 'I just loved the place: the powder, the beer and the Canadian girls – not necessarily in that order.' Still, Whistler back then was very different to the way it is today. Lifts and runs had been designed by ski instructors on summertime hikes, cars ruled and there was little in the way of ecological awareness in the layout of the pistes.

His first job, in 1975, was working on a parking and skier staging analysis for Franz Wilhelmssen, the man behind Whistler's launch as a ski resort in 1966. After further commissions for Hemlock Valley Resort and Mount Washington in British Columbia, by 1978 he was back at Whistler to create a masterplan along with architect Eldon Beck, who designed the new

HERE: *Ecosign's work includes design on no less than five Winter Olympic resorts, including Sochi 2014. The company is now working on the overall venue masterplan for the Bokwang Phoenix Park, pictured, for the 2018 Winter Olympics, to be held in Pyeongchang, South Korea*







Whistler Village. Their vision was of a pedestrian-friendly space, inspired by Swiss mountain villages, which emphasised community and sensitivity to the mountains. It was a pioneering concept and one that has not only won countless awards but planted the idea that a resort can be seen as a single holistic vision, from the car parks to the slopes to the slopeside Jacuzzis.

Underlying the plan was the environment. The pistes Ecosign planned moved with the soil, and straw and seed were planted on the ground to prevent erosion. Mathews hired biologists to inventory the mountain's flora and fauna, and planted trees that mimicked the glading found in nature. Though it's a difficult thing to quantify, he claims to have improved Whistler's ecological integrity tenfold. 'It was,' he says simply, 'about respect for the mountain and not being a knucklehead. We've proved with Whistler that you can develop a large ski resort sensitively.'

That led to more commissions in British Columbia, then Idaho and Washington, before Ecosign latched onto the Japanese ski resort boom of the mid 1980s, which saw the number of resorts in that country swell from 200 to around 700 in the space of just a decade. In 1989, Mathews 'broke' Europe, with a masterplan for Laax, Switzerland, which involved a few classic pieces of Ecosign resort planning: creating a pedestrian-orientated central village and merging ski operators to improve efficiency.

So how does the process of creating a masterplan work? It usually starts with satellite images to map the terrain, assessing solar radiation levels and finding areas with just the right amount of slope to produce good snow. New software, originally developed for the forestry industry, can calculate exactly where the best snow will be and where the sun will be strongest.

The usable slopes are colour-coded: flat runs are white, beginner runs are green, intermediate yellow and expert blue, while slopes that are too steep are marked red. Foresters and surveyors then head up the mountains on snowmobiles or in helicopters, armed with GPS to work out exactly where the pistes will be and where trees need to be removed. Once that's done, the team will place transparent onionskin paper over the maps and draw plans in pencil, the same way they have since Ecosign started in the 70s. It's a process that can take six months. Actually creating the pistes can take years.

According to Mathews, 'The technology has improved and we've improved, but at its core the process has been the same all the way.' Still, ski resorts have changed and almost entirely for the better, according to Mathews. Lifts are three times faster than they were in the 1970s, and the

snow cannons significantly more effective, meaning that skiers can go further. The joining of ski areas to create mega-areas – see the likes of France's Les Trois Vallées, with 493km of pistes – is, he says, 'good for everyone – for skiers and for the environment, because you don't need a car any more to find new places to ski.' Today, Ecosign is working to reduce the number of cars going to ski resorts, full stop – Mathews is proud, for example, that 70 per cent of international visitors to Whistler now no longer rent a car.

While the environment is at the centre of a lot of what Ecosign does, it's also about common sense. When he had a brief to redesign Hemsedal in Norway in 1995, he noticed that 'monster traffic jams' formed as people drove to the 10,000 beds in farmhouses scattered around the place. 'The ski centre was on the side of the mountain. It was all very precarious, so we recommended they build the village at the bottom of the mountain, with centralised parking and new units on the piste.' The traffic problems virtually disappeared, and the number of skiers visiting each year has almost doubled, from around 350,000 to around 680,000.

In Trysil, the largest ski resort in Norway, he told them to get rid of the T-bars and bring in six-seater lifts, and to build a huge underground car park at the bottom of the village, which would turn the area around the bottom of the pistes into a ski in/ski out area. Since 1996, skier numbers have gone from 400,000 to 800,000.

There's still plenty of work being done on ski resorts in Europe but, says Mathews, 'For the most part, the European Alps and North America are saturated; there aren't enough skiers to expand much. I'm looking at a lot of resort development in the Balkans, and the new frontiers of Russia, India and China.'

Mathews and Ecosign are already doing the planning for the alpine area of the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea, and are currently consulting with Beijing over a bid for the 2022 Games.

'The process of creating a resort,' he says, 'is immensely complicated. But the goal is simplicity and fun. The most satisfying thing for me is getting a pair of skis on and skiing the pistes like everyone else. That's really what it's all about.'

ABOVE: one of Ecosign's most recent projects, which are increasingly in Asia, is the Changbaishan Four Season Destination Resort in China, which opened in November 2012



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PRIVAT
TRAVEL

The Super Tuscans

The Frescobaldi family has been making wine in the Tuscan hills for over 700 years, but as Sarah Warwick discovers, tradition is nothing without innovation

Photography by Pietro Paolini



W

HILE MANY OF THE WORLD'S MOST

prized landscapes rely on their untamed wildness for visual appeal – unconquered peaks, deserted beaches, pristine lakes – in Tuscany the very opposite is true. The hillsides ridged in multicoloured stripes, avenues lined with cypress trees and late-summer fields dotted with pale moons of baled hay are all the result of centuries of nurtured cultivation. This is a beauty that owes as much to the toil of humankind as it does to nature.

In just such a landscape, on a hillside an hour's drive east of Florence, sits an ancient family home surrounded by wide lines of leafy vines, which in the afternoon sun glow a gentle gold. Closer up, it's possible to see that beneath the burnished canopy the vines are heavy with dark red grapes.

It is undoubtedly a handsome scene but there is little to suggest that this tranquil idyll is the seat of one of the most important luxury brands in the world, or that in these simple avenues of fruit are the roots of wealth and power.

This is Castello di Nipozzano and it belongs to the Frescobaldi, who have been making wine in Tuscany for 30 generations. Now one of the world's best-known and most respected brands, it is still very much a family business. Current president is Lamberto Frescobaldi, 51, while his sister Diana, 44, oversees the increasingly important culinary arm. Dressed in the muted tones of deceptively casual designer wear, today they are welcoming a select few visitors to the house – although 'house' is an entirely inadequate term for this thousand-year-old fortified residence with its high-ceilinged stone rooms and succession of interlocking inner courtyards.

Frescobaldi records date back to the early 1100s, when the family was composed of moneylenders and bankers. 'One of the most important families in Florence,' says Diana, proudly. 'But then we lent money to the English crown and didn't get it back, so we went bankrupt and that was the end of the banking.' They started in wine production in 1308. 'We didn't send the Brits any for quite a while,' she laughs.

By Renaissance times the family vines were supplying some of the best tables in Europe, including those of Henry VIII, the Vatican and, reputedly, artists Donatello and Michelangelo. However, traditionally they were never exclusive, explains Diana, and Frescobaldi wines – sold in two-litre bottles – were drunk by rich and poor alike.

There is little to suggest that this idyll is the seat of one of the most important luxury brands in the world





PREVIOUS PAGE:
*vines on the Ornellaia
estate, nourished by
the Tuscan sun.*
LEFT: *Diana and
Lamberto Frescobaldi.*
THIS PAGE: *the family's
1,000-year-old
fortress-turned-winery,
Castello di Nipozzano*

‘Until the 1960s most peasant people would only have eaten meat once or twice a year, so wine was an important source of calories,’ she says. In the Italy of the early 20th century, adds Lamberto, the average Italian drank 120 litres a year. ‘Workers would have a dinner of vegetables and bread dipped in wine.’

It was their father, Vittorio, who turned a successful agri-business into a world-leading brand, Diana explains. ‘Before him, it was about quantity rather than quality, but he changed that.’ Together with two of his brothers, Vittorio jettisoned other farming to focus purely on grapes. A collaboration with leading Californian vineyard operator Robert Mondavi (a son of Italian immigrants), whose technical improvements and marketing strategies brought worldwide recognition for the wines of the Napa Valley, increased the Frescobaldi profile.

The maturation of the brand coincided with an enthusiasm for a specific new kind of Tuscan wine: the Super Tuscan. This was the name given to a particular group of high-quality wines that emerged in the late 1960s, when a group of winemakers went against the orthodoxy, as prescribed by the Denominazione di origine controllata (or DOC), to create new, high-quality vintages using non-traditional blends of grapes, including, heretically, French grapes.

Their cult following was a lucky break for the Frescobaldis, whose estates were already planted with various Gallic strains, a legacy of one of Lamberto and Diana’s ancestors, a Frenchwoman who had married into the Frescobaldis in the 1800s, bringing with her a dowry that included two estates – Fresano and Pomino, still owned by the family – and valuable knowhow. ‘She knew how to plant estates,’ says Diana.

Back to today and down in the cool cellars beneath the Castello, young winemaker Eleonora Marconi is sampling one of the company’s leading brands, Mormoreto, made with the descendants of those French grapes. Sucking it straight from the cask with a giant, glass pipette, she pours it into a glass, which she hands around. Despite its youth (this is a 2013 vintage), its distinctive berry-like taste is already in evidence, and also a hint of spice, which Marconi says comes from the blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and around five per cent Merlot, the latter ‘like a pinch of pepper on your food’.

Despite being partly destroyed by the Germans during World War II, the Castello’s cellars contain a serious collection, some of it dating back to 1864. Certain piles of bottles are hung with a wooden plaque marked with a particular year. Lamberto flips one of these labels to reveal a name: all members of the family, he explains, get a cache of the best stuff, dating from the nearest year to which they were born. ‘The boys get 500 bottles, the girls just 100,’ says Lamberto, wincing slightly in acknowledgement of the sexism of the tradition.

There are stacks marked with dates in the 1950s and 60s for his and Diana’s generation, and others labelled in the 80s and 90s for the family’s current crop of children, the potential next generation of Frescobaldi wine growers.

‘At the moment they’re not really interested in the company,’ says Diana. ‘One lives in London, another in Brussels, mine [who are aged six and eight] are too young.’ All the family shareholders are educated in wine, but to become working members of the family business, the next generation will need



ABOVE: company MD Giovanni Geddes da Filicaja with the grapes. RIGHT: sampling the end product with Eleonora Marconi.

OPPOSITE: in the cellars at Ornellaia (top) and Nipozzano (bottom left); the impressive family tree





at least a master's in winemaking, followed by suitable work experience in wineries – 'you can't just improvise these days'.

The more immediate future, though, is all about food. In partnership with a Turkish-based international restaurant group, the family has opened its first restaurant in London, in Burlington Place, Mayfair. Naturally, it's called Frescobaldi.

'Producers are working more closely with restaurateurs than ever before,' says Diana, whose £3.5m baby this is. Reports of its regional Italian menus, courtesy of Chef Roberto Reatini, formerly of Zafferano and Shoreditch House, and its extensive wine list (naturally) have been positive since its November opening, and another string of locations are already planned, in Hong Kong, Miami and Zurich, all places, according to Diana, where the Frescobaldi brand is strong.

The family certainly has friends and support in all the right places: upstairs at the Castello the corridor walls are hung with photographs of Frescobaldi Snr posed beside heads of state from Bill Clinton to Queen Beatrice of Holland. Beside them, a letter bearing the personal hand and prodigious underlining of 'Camilla PB', states: 'Thank you so much for the eight cases of Chianti – they were delicious!'

Two hours' drive from Castello di Nipozzano, in the famous coastal province of Bolgheri, where some of Tuscany's best wine is made, is another of the Frescobaldi estates, Ornellaia. Its high-quality output – a bottle of 2011 Le Serre Nuove, Tenuta dell'Ornellaia will set you back around £400 – is attributed in part to the seaside location, which not only ensures a fairly constant breeze through the vines but also acts 'as a mirror' for sunlight.

A few steps away from the estate's main house is the winery: its 1980s-style geometric concrete facade is in notable contrast to the older, rustic architecture. Even so, there is no hint as to the vastness of the operation until one is inside. There, the building opens out into vast halls filled with giant stainless-steel vats, each of which can hold from 45,000 to 250,000 litres, or the proceeds from one to five hectares of grapes per vat.

'We employ 90 people year round,' explains Lamberto. 'In the harvest time that goes up to 160, round the clock.' While Castello di Nipozzano showcased the heritage, Ornellaia is all about the big business of modern winemaking.

Although the fermentation process is basically unchanged since the Romans, the last 30 years have seen major developments in commercial production. Lamberto explains: 'These days wine-making has moved on from chemical processes [of the mid-20th century] towards physics. Nowadays we use heat and cold to moderate and to avoid bacteria: the wine is very pure.'

Out in an area of the wine fields called Belleria is the symbol of the estate, an old flowering ash (in Italian, *orniello*) that stretches its branches over the vines. Beneath these the family have erected a wooden platform that they use for tastings. Raised a couple of metres off the ground, it acts as a pleasing viewpoint taking in the vast vineyards and the sea beyond. Diana points out the islands offshore: the largest is Corsica; the smallest Gorgona, a prison island. It's on the latter that Lamberto has set up a small vineyard, with a hectare of vines, and has been helping prisoners to make their own wine. This seems extraordinary – like Donatella Versace running a



local-authority sewing bee, or the CEO of Rolex teaching disadvantaged kids how to tell the time.

Lamberto shrugs off the comparison. Unlike other big brands, where good management and shrewd judgement can mean the difference between success and failure on the world stage, in wine, he explains, one is a farmer first, which means other factors – 'the aspect, the climate, people' – can mean everything. 'You can be as careful if you like, but if you don't get the weather...' Hail or too much rain can kill off a year's harvest in a day; on the other hand Cabernet Sauvignon grapes turn to raisins without any rain. Only the right balance of

ABOVE (FROM LEFT): Geddes da Filicaja with Fernando, Diana and Rosario Frescobaldi. RIGHT: supersized bottles of one of the family's Super Tuscans, Mormoreto

The seaside location ensures a constant breeze and also acts as a mirror for sunlight

sunshine, moisture and breeze will ensure a good vintage. 'Most of all, you always need luck,' he says.

If that's true then surely the Frescobaldis must have been one of the luckiest families around. But I have another theory. Where many of us would be sitting happily on our laurels, raising a glass to our fame and fortune, the Frescobaldis are hard at work wondering how they can keep improving. Which is why, after 700 years, they're still on top.



CANTINE DI FRESCOBALDI
MORMORETO

CANTINE DI FRESCOBALDI
MORMORETO

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1888

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PRIVAT
AIR

PrivatAir: the Big Picture

*Charlotte Pénet charts the course of PrivatAir's
20 years as a commercial operator*





A

AS PRIVATAIR, ONE OF THE KEY global players in business aviation, celebrates its milestone anniversary, it is hard to think back just two decades to when the company consisted of no more than four aircraft. PrivatAir was set up in 1977 by the family-run Latsis Group to fly its family members, senior management and valued clients across the globe.

THE MILESTONES

PrivatAir made the leap from a private business to a commercial operator in 1995 when the company received its Swiss Air Operator Certificate. 'We hadn't anticipated at the time what a challenge this cultural shift would be,' says Greg Thomas, PrivatAir's President & CEO, a man gifted with the hindsight of 20 years with the firm. In the past, PrivatAir had little concern for costs, but when the company became a commercial operator, it was vital to spend time building up and refinancing the fleet in order to make the business viable. And when, in 1998, an order for two Boeing Business Jets (BBJ) was made, this marked not only a significant investment step, it also differentiated PrivatAir as the first commercial operator with such aircraft in its fleet.

In March 2001 the PrivatAir Group was formed. The company began to offer direct routes across the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and unlimited operations to the US. In 2002 PrivatAir made an exciting move: to operate business class-only long-haul scheduled services for major airlines, under joint branding. The first route was launched for Lufthansa on 17 June 2002, a six-days-a-week business-class-only service between Dusseldorf and New York. The risk paid off; this first partnership was a great success. And so PrivatAir's Scheduled Services division was born, offering airlines a

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: excellence in customer service is paramount for PrivatAir; the company's BBJs; PrivatAir's President & CEO Greg Thomas

unique, flexible long-haul ACMI (aircraft, crew, maintenance and insurance) programmes. Contracts followed with Swiss International Air Lines, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, Gulf Air and, most recently, ECAir (Equatorial Congo Airlines, the Republic of the Congo's national airline) and SAS (Scandinavian Airlines). The services also attracted corporations such as Procter & Gamble and Airbus. Scheduled Services is one of the pillars of the business that sits perfectly alongside PrivatAir's two other key divisions, Business Aviation (offering clients a service that covers all aspects relating to a private jet: from jet charter, to aircraft sourcing and sales, to aircraft management and ground services) and PrivatTraining (training crews to meet the highest standards of safety, security and service in the industry).

The motivation behind it all is, in Thomas's words, 'to take the best practices of the commercial airline industry and to add the flexibility of business aviation, as well as exceptional standards of service. The business aviation industry is considered by its big commercial aviation brother to be a world of rich cowboys who fly small planes and bypass the rules. We thoroughly enjoy proving the contrary.'

THE VALUES

Over time, PrivatAir earned a reputation for its excellent safety standards, outstanding customer service, innovation and flexibility. 'Safety and security come first, of course,' says Thomas. 'In the aviation industry we're heavily regulated and safety issues are big news. But frankly, I would say that safety should be the priority in any industrial business. There are people involved. It should be a given.' Always keen to go the extra mile, PrivatAir seeks to exceed industry requirements.

'Our reputation for excellent service has been built up over many years and is central to our brand identity'

The company was once again granted the EBAA Safety of Flight Awards in recognition of 50 years or 100,000 flight hours without an accident.

'Our reputation for excellent service has been built up over many years and is central to our brand identity,' says Victor Grove, Senior Vice President, Selection, Training & Customer Service. 'We constantly seek to surpass expectations, in order to provide an exceptional experience. We take a very personal approach with our clients, and this is a differentiating factor for our brand.' PrivatAir showed its commitment to customer service when it created the PrivatTraining division. 'By building up the expertise and training capacity in-house, the company can ensure that the



TOP: PrivatAir becomes the first commercial operator to land a BBJ in Antarctica.

ABOVE: PrivatAir has a reputation for its excellent safety standards, outstanding customer service, innovation and flexibility

highest standards of service are upheld by all staff,' explains Grove.

As well as a passion for excellence and supreme standards, PrivatAir has a strong pioneering spirit, illustrated by the company's long list of firsts in the industry. One of these, known internally as 'Project Penguin', saw PrivatAir become the first commercial airline to land a BBJ in Antarctica on a runway of ice. A team of pilots, engineers and salespeople worked on the mission for over a year, carrying out in-depth theoretical analysis and intense preparation. It

was a daring decision – no BBJ had ever been subjected to such landing conditions, and the pilots could only rely on a visual approach. 'A fantastic challenge and a definite career highlight,' was Captain Dennis Kaer's feedback. PrivatAir's executive team shared the adventure. 'To be on that plane with friends and colleagues who had all worked so hard was a unique experience,' says Thomas. 'When the wheels took grip and the aircraft safely decelerated, it was a moment of sheer relief and joy for us all.'

STEERING THROUGH CHANGING SKIES

Looking back over his past 20 years with PrivatAir, Greg Thomas reflects that its history is a mix of successes, challenges and some frustrations. 'There have been the highs and lows of the global economy, the unpredictable events that change everything, such as 9/11, the frustration of seeing providers higher up the industry value chain who take fewer risks yet earn easier returns,' says Thomas.

Despite the ups and downs of the market and the impact of events in the global economy, growth has been a constant. Since the industry slow-down in 2008, this has involved more of the 'adapt or die' approach and the exploration of new markets. "When we couldn't find all the business we wanted in Europe, we went to get it in Africa and the Middle East," says Thomas.

The company's ability to adapt – to seek out new revenue streams and to explore less obvious routes – has been paramount in steering through the storms. This meant thinking outside the box and venturing into different worlds. 'I was fortunate to know some people in the football business,' says Victor Grove, an ex-professional football player. 'I started going along to events, meeting a lot of sports people. That's how it works. Before we knew it we were flying the England team to Trinidad on our 767!'

As well as transporting some of the world's most famous footballers across the globe, PrivatAir put its fleet to good use by launching luxury air cruises in partnership with leading travel agencies. It was such a success that this has now become a regular activity. 'We seek out companies that share our notion of what customer service is all about,' says Nathalie Beuchard, Director of Charter Sales at PrivatAir. 'Here we call it our *Service d'excellence*, and we make sure that among our partners, the same standards apply.'

Combining forces with like-minded companies is a strong part of PrivatAir's business ethos, which bring us to PrivatAir's latest exciting venture. In 2012 the company initiated the creation of an alliance of eight major European business aviation operators, called AirClub. 'It's a project to ensure that the best operators stand out in this fragmented and increasingly challenging industry,' says Christian Hatje, Senior Vice President Business Aviation for PrivatAir and Chairman for AirClub. 'Together we serve our clients better, providing the highest standards of safety and service, and we all grow as a result.'

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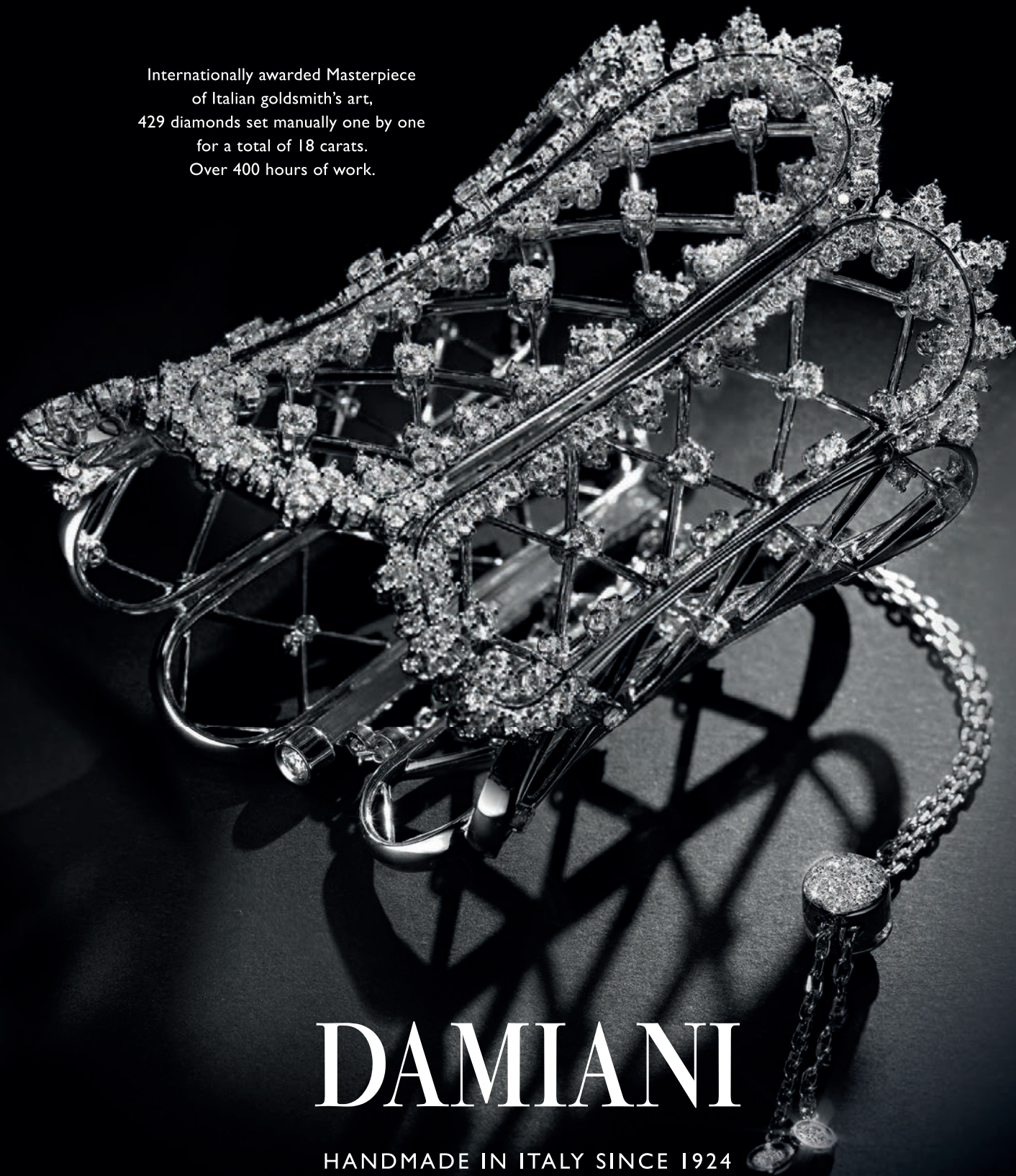


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