











CHANEL



A close-up, profile view of a person's head and shoulder, looking out over a vast, calm blue ocean under a clear sky. The person's hair is wet and slicked back, and their skin is glistening with water droplets. The overall mood is serene and luxurious.

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PHOTO © HAMID SARDAR-AFKHAMI





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COVER: image  
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WINTER 2016

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## A QUIET PLACE OF YOUR OWN

For as long as there have been cities, there have been people who dream of leaving them. American writer Henry David Thoreau was one of the first to write of this yearning for the wilds in *Walden*, his 19th-century love letter to simple living. He spent two years in solitude in a cabin he built with his own hands in Walden Pond, Massachusetts. But can a stay in a cabin (even one as chilly-looking as the example above, in Kulusuk, East Greenland) make natural philosophers of the citizens of today's fast-paced, tech-obsessed world? Internet entrepreneur and back-to-nature guru Zach Klein thinks so. Turn over to read more.



# Cabin fever

*Dreaming of fleeing city life and going back to basics in the wilderness? One new book has all the inspiration you need, writes Louisa Johnson*



ETHAN SCHLUSSLER BUILT HIS FIRST treehouse at the age of 12, hammering together a modest platform with no roof. He managed to place it 6m high in a birch tree near his mother's cabin in Sandpoint, Idaho, in the surrounds of the majestic, 6,588km<sup>2</sup> Kaniksu National Forest. It's still there today – a constant reminder of his boyhood imagination and sense of adventure. For most of us, when we hit adulthood and real life gets in the way, that childlike, optimistic feeling

that you can achieve anything is often the first thing that fades away. Not so for Schlusser.

'A lot of people have dreams; then they get a job and have a family,' he says. 'And then they get to be 40 or 50 and suddenly they realise all their dreams just fell by the wayside. I didn't want that to happen to me. Twenty years from now, I didn't want to be like, "Why didn't I ever build a treehouse when I had the chance?" I just decided right there: I'm gonna do this.'

So, the contractor decided to build a grown-up version of his treehouse. He found the perfect tree, a tall, healthy western larch, and started sketching designs for a dwelling some 10m in the air. As well as a sturdy, hexagonal, 30m<sup>2</sup> platform, Schlusser added a railing, roof and even a little porch. But the most distinctive element came after three months of climbing up and down the treehouse's tall steel ladder. His knees hurt and he was bored. So Schlusser decided to



build an elevator. When a friend suggested a pedal-powered lift, he instantly knew he could do something creative with his mother's old Diamondback bike. He counterweighted it with an old black water tank on pulleys.

'I intentionally ignored the rest of the world. I did no research,' says Schlussler. 'I wanted to build it entirely from my own ideas. If you're not looking at a book telling you how to do it, then every possibility is open to you.' It is with no detectable shred of irony that this comment is written in the story of how he built his tree-house, one of 10 case studies in a new book called *Cabin Porn*.

Don't let the publication's salacious title put you off. *Cabin Porn* – subtitled 'Inspiration for Your Quiet Place Somewhere' – is indeed full of seductive material, with 200 extraordinary cabins to drool over. But it's the curves of ancient stone lodges, the nakedness of stripped-back wood and jaw-dropping remote locations that's set to arouse those aching to leave the stresses of fast-paced city life behind.

It started as an online scrapbook, a way for founder Zach Klein, co-founder of Vimeo and CEO of DIY.org, and friends to share ideas. In the introduction to his book, Klein writes, 'The American tradition of cabin-building was born when the country was being settled and was largely wilderness. The cabin is essential to our national narrative. I do not seek that fantasy. I'm not trying to tame or conquer or settle anything. What primarily interests me is being close to nature. As Americans become increasingly urbanised, we're becoming unfamiliar with the joys of being in nature. We need "a quiet place somewhere" to balance out our life experience. It's necessary for sustainable happiness.'

One of the 21st century's top internet entrepreneurs, Klein spent six years building online communities, but in 2010 he felt it was time to build one offline. 'I wanted a place for a bunch of friends to be outdoors, where we could be less preoccupied with our professions and more reliant on each other,' he says. That place is Beaver Brook, a smattering of cabins tucked away in a densely forested area above the Upper Delaware Valley, about two hours north-east of New York City. Klein and his friends – none with any prior experience – built it all from scratch themselves five years ago. It's still thriving, now with a school where you can stay and learn building techniques. It's where Klein says he still spends his happiest weekends. 'The more we migrate to a technical world, the more sublime nature is to behold,' he says. *Cabin Porn (2015), edited by Zach Klein, is published by Particular Books, £20*

*'I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived' – Henry David Thoreau*



GO OFF GRID: DISCONNECT WITH THE OFFICE AND RECONNECT WITH YOURSELF

1

**INFORM**

Make sure everyone knows you won't be in the office and be clear that you will be somewhere with no mobile signal (ie, completely uncontactable).

2

**DELEGATE**

This is the perfect chance to see how the business can cope without you – and give others the chance to step up. Plan ahead and share your workload.

3

**A LITTLE FIB**

Even if you're not going out of the country, you're still on holiday. If you tell colleagues you're abroad, they'll be less inclined to get in touch.

4

**TOUGH CALL**

Switching off is easier said than done. Only check your phone at the end of the day so any tricky issues don't ruin your time with friends and family.

5

**NEW TESTS**

You don't have to teach yourself to build a cabin from scratch, but taking on a new challenge outside your usual work/life balance will be rewarding.





## A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME – WITH RIMOWA

The 1920s marked the beginning of modern air travel and the golden age of Hollywood. In 1919, Hugo Junkers presented the world's first all-metal commercial aircraft. It was made using the aircraft aluminum alloy discovered by Alfred Wilm in 1906. In 1950, RIMOWA presented its suitcase with the unmistakable grooved design made of the same material – at the time, it was the lightest suitcase in the world. RIMOWA was a real pioneer in the sector, starting the trend for lightweight luggage back then.



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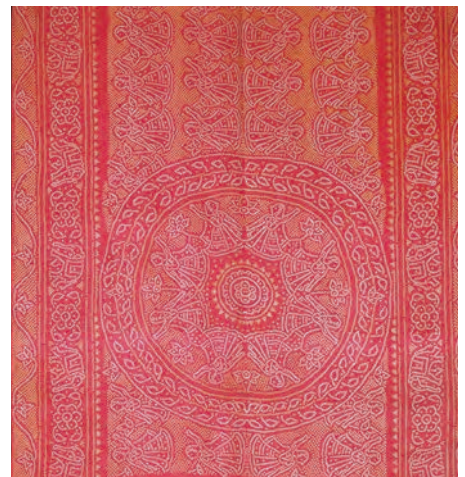


# Material wealth

*The V&A shows how India's history is tightly interwoven with its fabrics*



A room at the V&A's *Fabric of India* exhibition is devoted to a striking appliquéd cotton wall hanging (below). Measuring 17m in length, it's a colourful procession of elephants, warriors on horseback and Hindu gods. Not the kind of thing one might easily misplace, but incredibly, in 1990 this extraordinary piece was found abandoned in a messy heap outside a warehouse in Brooklyn by art appraiser Jerome Burns. He took it home, but on realising it was far too large for his walls, gave it to London's V&A, which established that it was a rare 20th-century work from Gujarat. This is just one of some 200 pieces that trace India's rich textile history from the third century to today, from the simple indigo-dyed fabrics of rural Rajasthan to an 18th-century chintz-covered portable palace and from ornate and exotic temple hangings to *khadi*, a handwoven fabric favoured by Gandhi since it freed Indians from high-priced British clothes during the struggle for independence in the 1930s. *Until 10 January, vam.ac.uk*







## For your eyes only

*Luxury superyacht La Sultana could be yours for €22m. If you can find the owners, that is. Claire Bennie attempts to uncover the secret life of this former Soviet spy ship*

ABSOLUTE PRIVACY SEEMS TO BE THE prime concern of La Sultana Group. A quick look at the luxury hotelier's website confirms it – 'Authentic, Unique, Confidential' is their tag-line – but I didn't really need telling. I've been trying to get hold of the owners of the famous La Sultana Marrakech and La Sultana Oualidia hotels for weeks to talk about their latest product. Fittingly, considering their radio silence, it's a former Soviet spy ship that has been spectacularly transformed into a graceful superyacht. Finally, just as I was about to threaten MI5 tactics, a spokesman agreed to share *La Sultana's* story. But they still wouldn't give me any details about the owners.

The 65m-long vessel was built in Varna, Bulgaria, in 1962. *Aji Petri*, as she was christened, started life as a Black Sea passenger ferry carrying cargo and people between the ports of Odessa, Sevastopol, Istanbul and Yalta. But in 1970, as the political landscape of Eastern Europe began to change, the Soviet navy commandeered her. Officially she was used as an environmental research ship, but in reality *Aji Petri* was sent to the North Atlantic Ocean to spy on the US and UK. After the fall of the USSR, she was assigned to a Bulgarian shipping company and resumed service as a passenger ferry

between Istanbul and Yalta, until 2007, when the owners of La Sultana Group, looking for a spectacular restoration project, discovered her.

'They read about *La Sultana* in a newspaper and thought that she was ideal to transform into a luxury yacht,' says Paul Charles, spokesman for La Sultana Group. 'They immediately knew it made perfect sense to create an iconic, beautiful and very comfortable yacht.' The inspiration for the project, Charles tells me, was Aristotle Onassis's *Christina O*. This Canadian anti-submarine River-class frigate was launched in 1943 and used as a convoy escort during the Battle of the Atlantic and took part in the D-Day landings. Onassis bought her after the war and converted her into a luxury superyacht named after his daughter. When *La Sultana's* owners heard her remarkable history, they knew they could create something just as impressive.

It took seven years and an incredible 1.2 million hours of labour to turn *Aji Petri* into *La Sultana*. 'It was a challenging project,' says Charles. 'We wanted to introduce state of the art technology but also maintain some of the original features and the history of the yacht. It was a massive technological feat; the entire aluminium superstructure was rebuilt according to its original shape and

completely re-riveted. Over 80% of the deck plates were replaced and all the decks were completely redone in ipe wood [also known as Brazilian walnut] to blend tradition and modernity.'

Other comfortable updates include the helicopter hoisting area, relaxation area and a seawater Jacuzzi that involved the whole bow having to be raised. There's also a hydraulic door so guests have a swimming platform with direct access to the sea. Inside, there's a similar feel and focus on design as at *La Sultana's* two properties in Morocco. 'There's an emphasis on exceptional craftsmanship and traditional Moroccan design,' says Charles. 'As in the hotels, there's the same use of highest quality materials such as marble, fine fabrics and wood panelling. The yacht has an interesting artwork collection including a striking piece by artist Jilali Gharbaoui and a unique sculpture made of seashells that used to be on display in the Hermès store in Paris.'

The kind of person that *La Sultana's* owners would like to see purchase this little piece of history? 'She's an iconic yacht worthy of someone who wants to enjoy sailing her.' So Ben Ainslie. Or maybe James Bond. I'm sure he'd have better luck finding who to hand the cash over to than me. [lasultanayacht.com](http://lasultanayacht.com)







## Jazz in the city

*When music's biggest stars came to Paris in the 1960s there was only one place to stay: La Tremoille. There are still plenty of reasons to visit today, says Imogen Rowland*



**WHAT IS IT ABOUT PARIS AND JAZZ?** With a Kir in one hand, a Gauloise in the other and the soundtrack of gypsy jazz or the rich tones of a saxophone in the background, you wouldn't want to be anywhere else. Although Django

Reinhardt had a hand in putting the city on the map in the late 1930s, it was in the 50s that some of the genre's biggest stars really started coming here. Legends such as Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong famously visited to put on a number

of exclusive concerts. One of the most iconic images that captured the spirit of the scene was of the duo in 1960 – a black and white photograph published in *Paris Match* magazine of the two waving from the balcony above Hotel La Tremoille's entrance while their jazz ensemble belted out blues hits on trombones and trumpets from the street below.

They were likely staying here while filming a scene from their 1961 movie *Paris Blues*, with Sidney Poitier and Paul Newman. Hidden away in Paris's 'Golden Triangle' (the designer-lined streets between the Champs-Élysées and the Seine), La Tremoille is as chic as can be, and it's still the place for jazz lovers to stay. That picture of the two music icons hangs in pride of place in the hotel's foyer, and they also lend their names to two suites. But best of all, some 55 years after they were photographed here, the strains of jazz still sound within the hotel, now on the weekly Bubbles and Jazz evenings held every Thursday, hosted in the hotel's Louis<sup>2</sup> Lounge bar. It sounds like the perfect excuse for a long weekend to us.

[tremoille.com](http://tremoille.com)

## Case study

*A new exhibition at the Grand Palais in Paris looks at Louis Vuitton's journey from humble birth to brand royalty*

**FEW OF US COULD CLAIM THAT THE** decisions we made as teenagers would turn out to be the best of our lives. But when, in 1837, a 16-year-old arrived in Paris to begin an apprenticeship in trunk-making – a skill in high demand thanks to the taxing nature of 19th-century travel – little did he know that 178 years later he would still be synonymous with the finest luggage in the world. His name? Louis Vuitton.

It wasn't the only bold move Vuitton was to make in a high-flying career that saw him swap a quiet childhood in Anchay in eastern France for life as a designer working in the French

capital. After 17 years learning his trade under successful craftsman Monsieur Marechal, he established his own workshop in 1854, and won commissions from Napoleon III's wife, Eugénie de Montijo – then Empress of France – who asked him to make luggage as beautiful as the fashions it was going to store. His work quickly became renowned among the French elite, and has since gone on to conquer the world.

From his original trunks, carefully crafted to withstand the hardships of vintage travel, to the supple leathers and innovative designs of more recent years, Louis Vuitton's creations have long been considered works of art by the fashion



world, so some might say the new exhibition at the Grand Palais in Paris, which will pay homage to the brand's legacy, is long overdue. Running from 4 December until 21 February 2016, the show, entitled *Volez, Voguez, Voyagez* ('Fly, Sail, Travel'), will trace Vuitton's journey through the label's iconic designs. The exhibition has been collated by Olivier Saillard, renowned design historian and custodian of some of the world's finest fashion collections at the revamped Palais Galliera. [grandpalais.fr](http://grandpalais.fr)



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# 'Ice is so much more than just frozen water'

*Josh Sims meets ice chef Micah Melton, a man on a mission to make cocktails worthy of Michelin stars*



MICAH MELTON WORKS A 100-HOUR week and often turns to booze. Is he a city trader? A junior doctor? No, Melton is actually a bartender at the Aviary in Chicago, and used to finishing his working day at 4am. More than this, though, as head of the restaurant's drinks operations, he is challenging the way that people think about cocktails, blurring the lines between the kitchen and the bar, and looking at flavour profiles in a drink as a chef does in a dish.

'Traditionally bartending has long been about modifying a classic cocktail,' says Melton, who, unusually for his profession, went to culinary school. 'That approach still has its place, but I'm more interested in thinking of the flavours you find in that dish and making them in liquid form.'

That might mean, for example, basing a cocktail around a cheese plate – Melton has recently used blue cheese for a cocktail, as well as introducing derivatives from parsnip, sweet pea and other vegetables. Not that these make for a

healthy meal in a glass; Melton ensures that they remain very alcoholic. 'The customer has to trust you not to take things too far. Nobody wants a drink that tastes of beef stock,' he smiles.

But he is not joking when he says that his cocktail menu currently offers 38 different varieties of ice, with the Aviary now employing three people just to prepare it each evening. 'There's a huge opportunity to think of ice as being more than frozen water,' says Melton. 'The industry has considered ice in terms of clarity, purity and shape, but always within the parameters of a classic speakeasy-style cocktail. There's not much progressiveness in that. Ice is a way of playing with flavours rather than just a means to mellow a drink. It can actually change the drink radically over time as it melts – you get several experiences out of the same glass.' Ice, he adds, is multi-sensory too – from its texture, to, according to how it's cut, its sound as you stir.

Slightly tongue in cheek, Melton has been dubbed the world's first 'ice chef'. Inventiveness in making cocktails – or mixology, as it has rebranded itself – has been on the up for over a decade now, but Melton has been pushing

ingenuity to levels such that, he hopes, it can only be a matter of time before cocktail creation is considered a specialism on a par with, say, pâtisserie. 'I'm just waiting for the day when Michelin recognises the fact and makes the work more legitimate,' Melton says. 'The work is certainly gaining credibility. People are considering bartending as a career now, which probably hasn't happened since Prohibition.'

Small wonder, given the breath of the materials to play with, thanks not only to a boom in craft distilleries but a new appreciation for humbler brews. Melton is as much an expert in beer as he is spirits. 'OK,' he says, 'so we still probably only sell six beers each evening, but there's no reason why beer can't be paired with a menu any less than wine.'

Of course, a beer, no matter how tasty, is unlikely to have the same fanfare or drama as a well-executed cocktail. And while Melton's work is all about pushing the boundaries of taste, he also sees an interesting future in ever more experimental ways of presenting cocktails, including edible glasses. That's only going to add to his work load, but he doesn't mind.

'I love what I do, even though, as I get older, the hours get a little bit more difficult,' he admits. 'That said, I think now I actually function better on less rather than more sleep. So I'm in the right job.'

## MELTON YOUR MOUTH: MICAH'S FINEST COCKTAILS



### UP THE ICE ANTE

Horchata of Marcona almond  
Oat whiskey  
Peach brandy  
Amaretto  
Ice in the shape of poker chips  
Add nutmeg, cinnamon, Angostura, peach, black cardamom ices



### LEVELS

Tequila  
China China  
Pineapple juice  
Lemon  
Allspice smoke  
Top with floating passion-fruit snow



### IN THE ROCKS

El Presidente (rum, Curçaço, Vermouth, Grenadine and a twist of orange) served *inside* an ice cube. Sip it slowly as it melts









**PAOLO SCAFORA**  
NAPOLI







## Build your own floating paradise

*Private islands make ideal hideaways but are in short supply. Happily you can now commission your own, says Laura Latham*

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE OCEAN and have deep pockets, buying a private island is a no-brainer. As famous island owners Richard Branson and Johnny Depp can testify, they not only offer seclusion but security. The problem is that there are only so many well-placed islands to go around. Many lack facilities, are too isolated or don't have year-round good weather. That's where Amillarah, a new property concept forged by Netherlands-based firm Dutch Docklands, comes in.

The company has been constructing floating buildings in Holland for decades, as a means of tackling the country's flooding problems, and is now exporting the idea of self-sufficient private islands. 'Islands are in demand, particularly

when close to international cities or popular destinations,' says Paul van de Camp, CEO of Dutch Docklands. 'We can create islands with large villas, beaches and pools in almost any location in the world.'

Properties are designed bespoke, either as individual projects or on a resort-style scale, and can be located on a privately owned body of water, such as a lake, or in the ocean. They will be sold through global estate agency Christie's International. 'Dutch Docklands is the only company in the world offering tailor-made private islands,' says Christie's International CEO Dan Conn. 'We are excited to collaborate on the marketing of this landmark undertaking.'

Dutch Docklands recently announced its first project with the Maldivian government, which has commissioned 10 islands to be located 25 minutes from the capital of Male. The properties will be sold to buyers on leases of 99 years. 'The Maldives' natural beauty and lack of construction space make this destination a perfect environment for a luxurious floating development,' says Conn.

They are also in discussion with a developer in Dubai that is commissioning a series of islands as part of its project within The World site, in the Arabian Gulf. A third scheme, to build islands in Miami, Florida, on a lake owned by Dutch Docklands, is in the approval process.

These man-made islands have the seal of





### JUST ADD WATER

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### FLOATING SEAHORSE, DUBAI

This three-storey floating villa has two decks with ample living space above the water and a master bedroom and bathroom that are totally submerged to give astounding underwater views. The villas belong to The Heart of Europe project in Dubai's The World, developed by the Kleindienst Group. [thefloatingseahorse.com](http://thefloatingseahorse.com)



### H2OME

These home pods are fully equipped for underwater use and offer the chance to live completely beneath the surface. There are two bedrooms, along with lounge and leisure areas, accessed by a lift to the surface. If you haven't got your own seabed site, the developer, US Substructures, can provide one. [ussubstructures.com](http://ussubstructures.com)



### DARBY ISLAND, BAHAMAS

This fabulous Caribbean island of 554 acres is part of the beautiful Exuma Cays and is less than 160km from the capital, Nassau. The island has gorgeous white sand beaches, development potential and a castle-style house, built in the 1930s. Price on application through Private Islands Online. [privateislandsonline.com](http://privateislandsonline.com)

approval from one of the world's foremost marine experts, Jean-Michel Cousteau. The underside of the island platforms will provide a habitat for marine life and the properties will be as self-sufficient as possible. They will be anchored to the sea bottom with cables or piles, which will have minimum impact on the seabed. They move up and down with the tides but are engineered in such a way that people will not feel any motion, says van de Camp. Energy will be supplied by wave and solar power, each island will have water desalination technology and there will be storage and collection of all waste, so that nothing goes into the sea. 'The Maldives is one of the most protected marine environments in the world,' he continues. 'Whatever we put there has to be sensitive to that location.'

Prices are expected to start at \$8m, though, of course, it depends on what the client wants.

'We could go up to \$80m if the buyer has specific ideas,' says van de Camp.

The first properties are expected to be available for purchase from this summer. In the meantime, the prototype is being readied for a January launch and interested buyers can reserve their island with Christie's International. 'Since we announced the project the response has been overwhelming,' he says. There have already been enquiries from investors who have a private lake or lagoon on which to put an island.' Van de Camp has also had interest from governments around the world.

'Everyone says land is a valuable resource because it's limited and you can't make any more of it, but that's exactly what we have done,' he says. 'And we've created a property market that hasn't, until now, existed.'

[amillarah.com](http://amillarah.com)





### *Back to Dolce vita*

**T**his extraordinary villa for sale in Castiglioncello is in the most exclusive location: it is set on the hillside overlooking the sandy beach, just a stones throw away from the crystal clear sea of the Quercetano bay and from the pristine pine forest. Castiglioncello is known to be one of the most popular Tuscan maritime destinations and is rightly called the “Pearl of the Tyrrhenian Sea”. It has kept its authenticity and privacy throughout the years guaranteeing tranquility and peace of mind to its guests. The villa was built in the thirties and has a total internal surface area of 450m<sup>2</sup> distributed over 3 storeys. The top floor constitutes a turret with large panoramic windows on all sides from which one can admire the spectacular landscape at 360°.

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# Mighty in the Middle East

*A quintessential British sports car has suddenly become a huge hit in Dubai.  
Jeremy Taylor reports on the rise of the Morgan*



THERE ISN'T MUCH DEMAND FOR tweed caps or leather driving gloves in the Middle East. Temperatures in Dubai regularly reach 45°C in summer – uncomfortably hot conditions to enjoy open-top motoring thrills anywhere without suffering serious sunburn. But that doesn't stop the streets of this super-rich city crawling with automotive exotica, because money here is no object. Sheikhs have been known to buy seven different coloured versions of the same car, one for each day of the week. Even the police force has a fleet of Ferraris and Lamborghinis at its disposal.

Which is why it's rather odd that a hand-built British car, famed for its old-school appeal and retro charm, has proved such a hit with the locals. The styling of a Morgan hasn't changed much since the 1950s and they're also small, cramped and offer few of the luxuries of a modern supercar. So why the surge in popularity in the UAE?

'People here want to show off with a car that stands out from the crowd,' says John Steans, sales and operations manager at Al-Futtaim Automotive. 'It might sound odd but Ferraris and Rolls-Royces are plentiful. Owners compete

for attention. So a Morgan provides a cool alternative that really turns heads.'

Al-Futtaim opened two years ago and is the first Morgan showroom in the Middle East. The eccentricities of the two-seater sports car proved an instant hit, helped by a new breed of Morgan models that manage to strike a balance between innovative technology, history and craftsmanship. Hand-built in a slightly ramshackle factory in Worcestershire, England, many of the techniques used to bolt a Morgan together were first used when the company formed more than a century ago. Henry Frederick Stanley Morgan,



*'It might sound odd, but Ferraris and Rolls-Royces are plentiful. Owners compete for attention, so a Morgan provides a cool alternative that really turns heads'*



or HFS as he was known, built his first three-wheeler – the Runabout – in 1909, opting for a lightweight body that gave the car startling acceleration. The first four-wheel car didn't arrive until 1936 – but when it did, the 4-4 was a huge success and its heirs are still the firm's bestsellers today. Although substantially updated, it's instantly recognisable as a Morgan and provides the DNA for more modern-looking models. The latest of these is the fifth-generation Aero, due for launch in early 2016.

'We're excited about the new Aero in the UAE because it boasts classic Morgan values

but looks very modern,' said Steans. 'The styling is based on the glamorous, open-top sports cars of the 1960s, with a sensational long, low body. There's no other car on the market quite like it.'

A new Morgan is a rare event by any standards. Ever since the two-seater was first revealed at the 2015 Geneva Motor Show, the company has received a string of inquiries from buyers. The new model will cost around £66,000 and is powered by a 4.4-litre BMW engine, producing 367bhp. It should be more than enough to extract electrifying performance from such a lightweight machine.

The Aero is also proof that the family-run business is planning for the future. Board member Craig Hamilton-Smith is the great-grandson of HFS: 'We realise we can't sit still and not offer buyers the choice of more modern models. We're now the only family-owned, British motoring manufacturer left. There have been attempts to buy out the company in the past but we don't want to change the way we work. Morgan is all about history and heritage. It may mean we only operate a small factory and produce a limited number of cars but that's the way we like it.' [morgan-motor.co.uk](http://morgan-motor.co.uk)





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## TALES FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

Some say they're a lost art, but we think postcard writing is a tradition that stands the test of time. Sure, nowadays you can write a quick email and attach a photo, but taking a moment to pause and write down a story from your travels will always be appreciated. Usually postcards aren't cherished for their literary merit, but this issue we have some missives worth keeping: adventurer Geoff Mackley conquers a volcano in Vanuatu; shooting expert Edward Watson goes on a once-in-a-lifetime shoot in Morocco; Hari Ghotra goes back to her cooking roots in northern India; and art appraiser Philip Mould discovers a hidden collection worth £10m.



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## MY RECENT TRIP TO NORTH INDIA LED ME TO A COLLABORATION WITH A MICHELIN-STARRED CHEF



My mum and dad moved to the UK in the '60s, and when my brothers, my sister and I were growing up, food was always a massive part of family life. We would do all those rubbish cooking jobs that no one wanted, like picking mint from the garden, but in the course of that we all learned how to cook and came to appreciate the importance of food and mealtimes in Indian culture. Unsurprisingly, I grew up with a real passion for Indian food.

About four years ago I launched a business where I would go round to people's homes and teach them how to cook Indian food. It was really successful, and to expand it I made the whole thing digital, with online recipes, videos and social media content. Earlier last year I decided to go back to India, just to confirm to myself that I was creating authentic north Indian food.

I'd been before when I was two and then when I was 21, so it had been 18 years since I last went, and I was thrilled that my mother was able to come with me. We stayed with family and friends, and it was an incredible trip, travelling to these amazing food hubs around the

Punjab region, going to open-air spice markets and seeing some really lovely restaurants that were so completely different to what we have in the UK. Most importantly of all, I was able to say to myself, 'Yes, this is the food I love, and this is the way I cook it.' It was a relief!

One of my favourite parts of the trip was staying with my aunt. She has this lovely pink house out in the middle of nowhere, surrounded by lush green fields. I was really drawn to her garden – they have a patch of land where they grow all their vegetables, with aubergines hanging down from the walls, fresh lemons growing and everything they need for the meals they like to cook – they would just go out and pick it and it's all very traditional. They still get their milk delivered in big clay pots, and they make their own yoghurt and butter, but what I found funny was that they have an electronic gadget that they stick on top to do the churning. It was a really strange mix of the old and the new.

While I was there, I had a call from Peter Joseph, the head chef of the Tamarind restaurant in London's Mayfair. I was a bit baffled because I



### HARI GHOTRA

*This British-born, second-generation Indian has a passion for cookery that turned into a business four years ago when she realised there was a market for teaching people how to make great Indian food. But when she went back to India on a culinary voyage of discovery she got a phone call that would change her life*

knew of the restaurant and its Michelin star, but couldn't imagine what he wanted from me. I also had a terrible reception so I explained that we'd have to speak when I got home.

After two amazing weeks and full of new ideas, I got home and called Peter. It turned out that he'd been following my website and my blog and had read about my love of north Indian food, which is exactly what they're known for at Tamarind. We met, we got on well, and a few months ago he took me under his wing as a chef at the restaurant. For me, as a home cook, to get the experience of working in an amazing restaurant has been incredible. It's also been nice to see once again that I really am doing it right!

Things have gone so well that they've asked me to head up a new venture they're working on in 2016, which is really exciting. I can't wait to use my experience in India to add real authenticity to things. I can't say too much about it just yet, but I hope I can squeeze in another trip to India before then because I'm itching to go back.

[harighotra.co.uk](http://harighotra.co.uk)  
[tamarindrestaurant.com](http://tamarindrestaurant.com)



## I WENT TO WORK IN NEW ENGLAND AND WAS PAID WITH A LONG-LOST PAINTING BY CONSTABLE

About 15 years ago, I had a visit from an elderly man called Professor Earle Newton. After pleasantries, he pulled a group of black and white photographs from his top jacket pocket and asked me to look at them. Even though they were slightly blurred, one could see that he had what looked like an interesting collection of English portraits, the exact specialisation of my business.

Newton said, 'If I send you a ticket, would you come out to Vermont, where I live, to catalogue them?' Sure enough a ticket arrived a few weeks later and I found myself on a plane to New England. It was Thanksgiving and freezing cold when I arrived in the dark, and it was snowing, too. Despite the temperatures, there he was at the airport, this old figure in a great rusty Cadillac with a chauffeur, who turned out to be his son.

Off we went into the pitch-black night to Vermont, where Newton lived, driving for three or four hours, down lanes and through winding woods. Finally we arrived at this rather humble, clapboard house. His wife greeted us saying she'd been expecting me and had delayed their Thanksgiving dinner in celebration

of my visit. So, in the middle of the Vermont wilderness, I sat down with this old professor, his wife and their son the chauffeur around the table. The wife broke into prayer, thanking God for sending me to them.

As we said 'amen', I looked around and suddenly realised that there were no portraits in the house whatsoever. After dinner Newton wished me good night and said, 'We'll start at six in the morning.' I started to wonder what on earth I'd let myself in for.

The next morning we crunched across the snowy road to an adjacent, dilapidated church. It transpired that he'd bought this church to house his vast art collection, which at this point I was dubious even existed, as I hadn't yet seen a single picture.

He then opened the doors, and the sight was so extraordinary it hit me like a wave. Where the congregation would have sat on hard, wooden pews were rows and rows of portraits. On the walls all around were other paintings – 17th-, 18th- and 19th-century paintings, paintings of famous people, portraits by familiar artists, and then next to the altar at the back of the church were



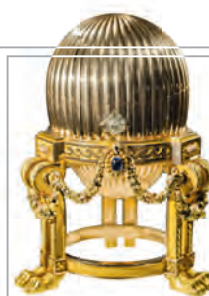
### PHILIP MOULD

*Philip Mould is one of the UK's leading experts in antique portrait paintings. Co-presenter of the prime-time BBC1 TV show Fake Or Fortune?, he also has his own gallery in London which he fills with the magnificent artworks he has found while scouring the world looking for long-lost masterpieces. Here he recalls the day an elderly American gentleman wandered into his gallery with a proposition Philip couldn't refuse*

great, full-length pictures which would once have hung in stately homes. There were about 200 paintings in all.

It transpired that Professor Newton had been to England in the 1960s in that post-war, utilitarian era where people didn't really care for old portraits, so he bought them all for next to nothing. Some he even bought from framers who had bought the paintings just to keep the frames. As I walked around over the next few days, I recognised works by Gainsborough, Rembrandt, Sir Peter Lely, and





## LOST AND FOUND

World-famous artworks can be discovered in the most unusual places

### GOOD EGG

When an American scrap dealer spied a golden egg at a flea market a few years ago, he snapped it up for \$13,000, thinking he could make a quick buck. Little did he know it was the long-lost Fabergé Third Imperial Egg with a hidden Vacheron Constantin watch, made for Empress Maria Feodorovna in 1886. In 2014, it was valued at \$35m.

### MOVIE MAGIC

In 2009 art researcher Gergely Barki was settling down to watch a film with his daughter. Her movie of choice? *Stuart Little*. Not a film famous for keeping an adult's undivided attention, but eagle-eyed Barki spotted *Sleeping Lady with Black Vase* by Róbert Berény – a Hungarian masterpiece that was lost after World War II – used as a prop in the film.

### SOFA SO GOOD

You can often find all kinds of treasures hidden down the back of your sofa. In 2007 a German student struck gold when she found an early 17th-century oil painting called *Preparations for the Flight to Egypt*, believed to be by Italian artist Carlo Saraceni, inside her second-hand sofa bed. The piece was sold for a very respectable €19,200 at auction.

INTERVIEW BY MIKE PEAKE. ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID MAHONEY. PHOTOS © ALAMY, REX

many of the world's greatest portrait painters, all hidden away in deep-freeze conditions in this run-down church for almost 40 years.

At the end of the three days, having looked at the collection, which I later valued at about £10m (he said he had probably paid about £10,000 for them), Newton asked, 'What would you like in return for your hard work?' When I said I wouldn't mind taking a picture, he said he'd prefer me to take one of his non-portraits, as he didn't want to break up the collection. He led me to his garage. There, next to a pool of oil,

was a little canvas, just a scrap of a canvas lying on the ground, and it was a glorious view of Suffolk. He said that he had been told it might be a John Constable, but that he'd never known for sure. So I took that. When I went back to England, still slightly confused by the whole trip, I discovered that the painting I'd taken *was* in fact a rare Constable, worth £100,000.

It was one of those remarkable and completely unpredictable experiences. These days you wouldn't take risks like that – to travel halfway around the world for someone

you'd never heard of. Today you can look everyone up on the internet, but back then wandering into the unknown was sometimes a necessity.

Professor Newton died about five years ago and I went back to New England to help catalogue the collection for probate. It's a beautiful spot – America on one hand but wilderness on the other, an evocative and wonderful place that inspired poets and artists throughout the 20th century. And a fitting spot to find one of the greatest hidden art collections in history.

[philipmould.com](http://philipmould.com)





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## I TOOK AN AMERICAN BILLIONAIRE ON A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME SHOOTING TRIP IN THE ATLAS MOUNTAINS

Within shooting circles there are usually all manner of fascinating characters, and during a recent shoot in Wiltshire I met someone very interesting indeed. I was working with a client on one of the best partridge shoots in England when he asked me to go and help a friend of his, a fellow a short distance away.

I went over and started talking to him. He was American and had some beautiful new Holland & Holland shotguns. We got talking about them and I asked him where he lived. When he said that he had just moved over to England, I said, 'Oh God, you're not one of those Yanks who comes over here and buys a football team and a castle are you?' and he smiled and said, 'I have both.'

Luckily, he was able to have a laugh about it, and we went on to have a great day's shooting. At the end, when I was talking about various places I'd been, he said his 50th birthday was coming up and that he wanted to do something really special to celebrate. One of the things he wanted was to go shooting

somewhere marvellous, and he asked me where I would suggest.

I thought for a moment and then said that to go to the Atlas Mountains in Morocco and shoot partridges would be amazing, but I pointed out that the problem would be getting there – landing in Morocco with eight people and their guns would be an absolute nightmare. He looked at me and said, 'Getting there won't be a problem,' and I said, 'Ah, so you've probably got something decent at your disposal?' and he smiled and said that he had.

It turned out to be a Gulfstream GV, a beautiful transatlantic jet which he, some of his good friends and I all boarded at Farnborough airport in Hampshire. Using a private airport makes such a difference on shooting trips, and getting onto the plane with the guns and up into the air was a breeze.

When we landed at Marrakesh things were a little more complicated, but within no time we were whisked through and on our way to the hotel – all within an hour of landing.

The shooting itself was incredible

– we were up in the Atlas mountains, an hour out of the city and among 4,000ft peaks. I'd been working with a chap I know in Spain for six months to make sure that everything would be perfect. He'd been down there three or four months before putting the birds down on the mountain in a specific area so that they would be living there ready for the shoot. He'd done things in the traditional Spanish way, with beaters, loaders and *secretarios* (the people who count and pick up the birds) and it was all done wonderfully. A really nice touch was that there was a huge Moroccan tent put up for us, which served as a base.

The shooting is right up in the mountains where no one lives and there are no creature comforts, so the tent was a great place to greet the guests as they arrived in the morning and then have lunch later on. It was so strange to do something like that in a country where they don't normally do it, and to be able to pull it off and with all the proper infrastructure was truly remarkable.

As we left after the 48-hour bonanza, the American said it was the most incredible shooting experience he'd had in his life. For me, too, it was one to cross off the bucket list. When it comes to shooting, I've done pretty much everything there is to do in England, Spain and a few other places, but I've never been to Morocco before and I've doubt I'll ever get the chance to do a trip of this calibre ever again.

Next on my list? Canada. It's one of the places that puts on world-class shooting arguably at a standard that's even better than at home, because they put in extra-special efforts to make sure people have an amazing time. I hear great things about two amazing English-style shoots out there with English gamekeepers and I'd love to see how they do it. All I need is another wealthy client in need of my services and we're in business!

[shootingservices.co.uk](http://shootingservices.co.uk)



### EDWARD WATSON

*Edward Watson – also known as columnist Dr Watson in the Shooting Gazette – is a world-renowned shooting instructor, providing expert private tuition at the UK's top shooting schools as well as instruction in the field. He has taught everyone from rock stars to royalty, but it was a chance encounter with a wealthy American that led to what would be his ultimate adventure*



# I STOOD ON THE EDGE OF A LAVA LAKE AND WITNESSED THE HEARTBEAT OF THE PLANET

When I was a boy my father had a great interest in the outdoors and weather, and whenever there was a flood or a storm, Dad would take us out in the car to watch it. Once I was old enough to drive I bought myself a Land Rover and that enabled me to go to a lot further afield, chasing severe weather warnings whenever they were issued in New Zealand. I would be in the thick of it, right there in the flooding and the chaos.

In 1995 a volcano erupted on the North Island here in New Zealand, and I went straight there and climbed up the volcano while it was erupting. I got into a spot of trouble because it had been closed off and I wasn't supposed to be there. But my shots got used all over the world, and at that point I realised that there was a market for volcano footage.

Marum Crater is on the volcanic Ambrym Island in Vanuatu, out in the middle of the South Pacific, and it had been something that had fascinated me since the late 90s. From the rim you can see this incredible lava lake bubbling away inside, about 400m down. There are only four or five volcanoes like this in the world.

I'd been trying for about 15 years to get down into the crater because I wanted to stand on a ledge about 30m above the lava lake, but every trip my team and I had made had been unsuccessful, mainly because of the weather. The storms can be ferocious in Vanuatu, with hurricane-force winds and torrential rain, and that makes the climb down into the

crater even more difficult and dangerous. It's not easy to get to either: you first fly to Port Vila in Vanuatu, then you use a helicopter and a fixed-wing plane to take you 160km to Ambrym. Hardly anyone goes there.

It was 2012 when I finally got down into the crater. We'd already set ropes about halfway down in the build-up to that day during a period of good weather, and then we had to put a whole load of bolts into the rock to enable us to keep going, because you can't just go down on one 400m-long rope. If you did, there'd be too much movement on the rope and you'd be bouncing up and down, dragging rocks down on top of you. Rigging the ropes is very tiring, because you're wearing a gas mask to protect you from the noxious fumes and carrying a lot of heavy gear. It's hot, too – within a few hundred metres of the lava lake you can really feel it.

When I finally got to the bottom I didn't have my heat suit on because I was only intending to rig the ropes and then go down the next day to do some filming. But when you've been trying for so many years and suddenly get that close... I decided to try and get as near as possible without the heat suit. I walked over to the edge of the lava lake and looked in.

There's nothing to describe what I was looking down at – the best I can think of is that it's like looking at the Sun. You can only really stand it for six or seven seconds because it's 1,050°C, so I put my fire brigade



## GEOFF MACKLEY

*For as long as he can remember, New Zealander Geoff Mackley has been risking life and limb in pursuit of jaw-dropping video footage that shows Mother Nature at her most wild and violent. But despite multiple attempts spanning more than 15 years, close-up footage of a bubbling lake of lava in Vanuatu eluded him... until the day Geoff finally achieved his life's ambition in 2012*

heat suit on and my air tanks, and then I could stand there for ages. You can't really feel the heat because the suit reflects it all back away, although you're still kind of aware that you're essentially standing in an oven. What's weird is that you're breathing this cool compressed air from the air cylinder and yet all around you is pure mayhem. You do feel well insulated from it, but you know that if you take the suit off you're pretty much dead.

And so I just stood there, watching this boiling rock. You're watching the heartbeat of the planet – something so powerful it's making rock boil and making it fly through the air like boiling water. There's nothing like it. It was the top moment of my life.

I stayed there on the edge for about 40 minutes, but since then I've been down there several dozen times with film crews and people who want us to lead them down there. I know that, without exception, everyone will say it's the most amazing thing they've ever done, and it's kind of a buzz for me to expose other people to that. I'm now used to it, and I'm comfortable around it to the point where it doesn't even phase me any more – although it probably should.

When I think about standing on the edge of the lava lake for that first time I'm still amazed that I was the first person ever to do it. There aren't many places left on this planet where you can truly say that you're the first ever person to be there.

*geoffmackley.com*





**PLAYING WITH FIRE**

Three magnificent volcanos to get up close and personal with. Heat suit not required

**KILAUEA**

Incredibly, this volcano – one of five hulks on Hawaii's Big Island – has been erupting continuously for 32 years. Currently it's rather aggressive, but in quieter phases Kilauea's roof can be reached by the extraordinary 30km Chain of Craters road. If it's not obstructed by lava, of course.

**PITON DE LA FOURNAISE**

Translated as 'peak of the furnace', this 2,632m volcano on Réunion island in the Indian Ocean is known for its striking shows when cascading lava flows into the sea. Access to the caldera is sporadic, but you can still take a helicopter to within a safe distance of the action.

**MOUNT STROMBOLI**

This island volcano north of Sicily is almost always hard at work – its constant eruptions have earned it the nickname 'the Lighthouse of the Mediterranean'. You can see mild explosions at 400m, but a climb up to the 926m crater (for which a guide is obligatory) is unforgettable.





## FIZZ IN FRANCIACORTA

*This maker of sparkling wine has a rich Italian legacy and is taking it global*

Italians know good wine. And the sparkling wines from the prestigious Ca' d'Or are no exception. Created in Franciacorta, a small wine-making region in Lombardy, in northern Italy, the brand stakes its standing on its top-quality wines, expertise, and the enthusiasm of its founders. Now it's taking its stellar reputation worldwide – across Europe and into China and the US.

Ca' d'Or dates back to 1500 when the Franciacorta region was under Venetian rule, and the brand is overflowing with historic Italian charm, even down to its bottles' ornate Venetian mask motif. Its success is down to the collaboration between Stefano Rangoni, an accountant in Turin with foreign-market experience and a love for Franciacorta; Alessandro Savoldi, a marketing man and sparkling wine aficionado; and Gabriele Lazzari, an engineer in the wine industry.

"Ca' d'Or is a sign of excellence in the wine sector. Its quality can be perceived at first glance, by appreciating the refined bottles curved with precious details, as well as the tasting itself – the bubbles inebriate all the senses," says Rangoni.

The quality standards begin in the vineyards and their refined production process. The territory is spread between Franciacorta and the Lessini Mountains, which sit between Verona and Vicenza, and

face Lake Garda. Production from this area falls under a controlled designation of origin (DOC) and uses the charmat method (also known as the Italian method because of its role in crafting Prosecco). 100% Durella grapes are aged in tanks and bottles for roughly 12 months in total. The ensuing wine is fresh, accentuated with fruity notes and a final taste of cedar wood for complexity.

The Ca' d'Or Grand Vintage Franciacorta DOCG collection contains three varieties, including the Ca' D'Or Franciacorta Brut Noble Cuvée, 90% Chardonnay and 10% Pinot Noir; the Ca' D'Or Franciacorta Rosé, 70% Pinot Noir and 30% Chardonnay; and the Ca' D'Or Franciacorta Pas Dosé vintage 2008, 55% Chardonnay and 45% Pinot Noir.

Rangoni says, "Our philosophy is to offer fresh and elegant wines, which is why for the Rosé and the Noble Cuvée we opted for a low dosage, because we believe in the refinement of the dry product." Ca d'Or wines can be found across Italy's best restaurants, hotels and bars – now for the rest of the world. [cadorfranciacorta.it](http://cadorfranciacorta.it)





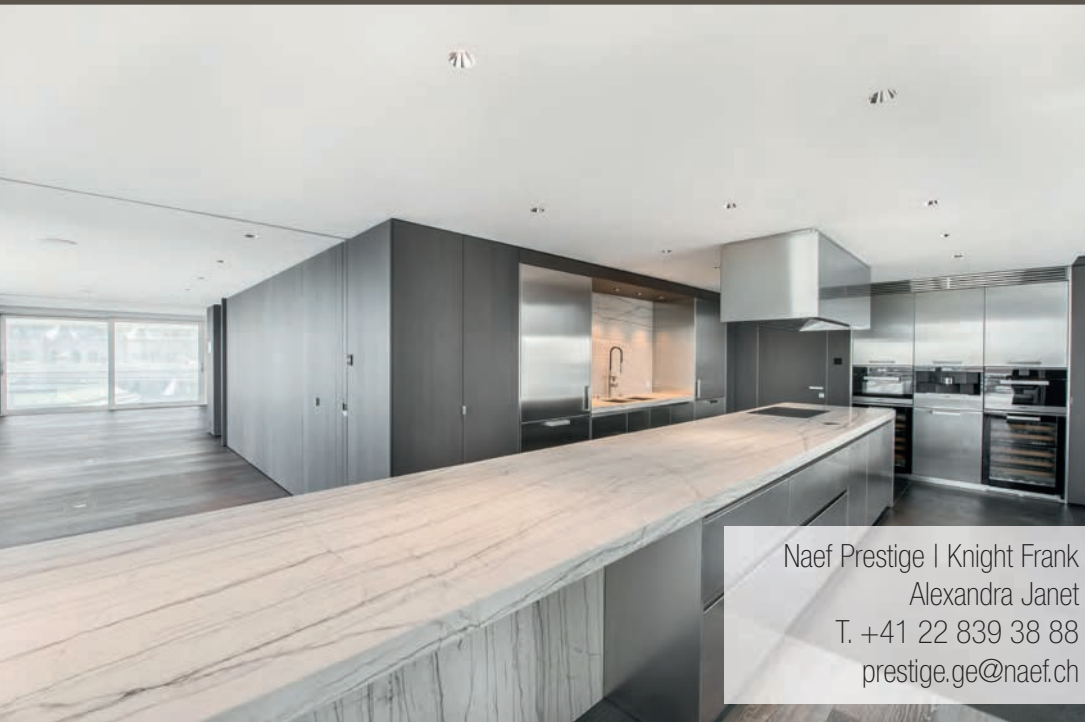
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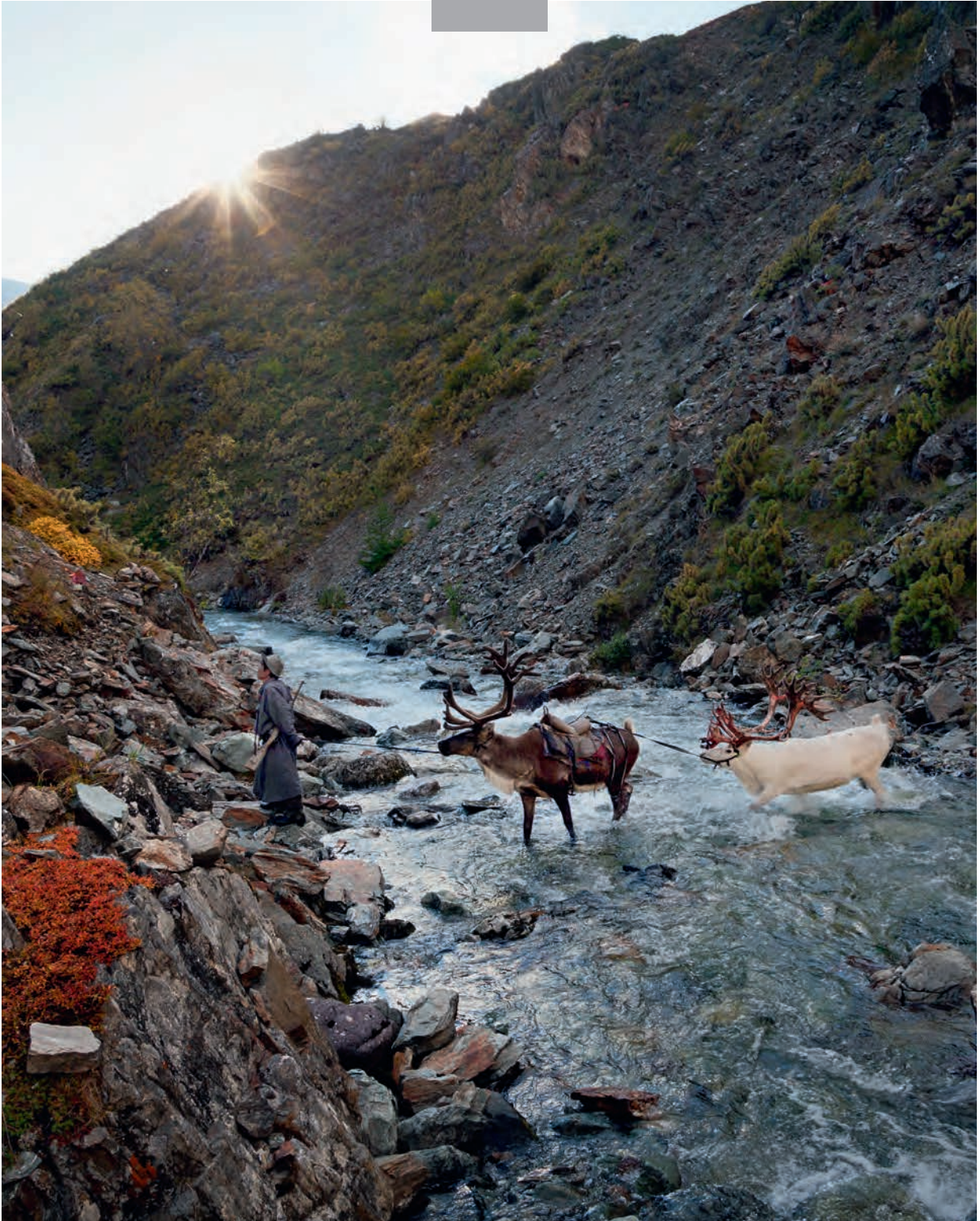


14 years ago, 30° Degrees set out to portray the mountains and nature from an exciting and inspiring angle. To lift the lid on a territory as exhilarating as it is relaxing, where man goes up against the elements to push himself to the limit, no pretence and no excuses. One constant comes to the fore every time: the beauty of nature.



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## NEAREST AND DEEREST

Photographer and film-maker Hamid Sardar-Afkhami has spent the past 10 years travelling through Mongolia, documenting the lives of the Dukha people, a gentle nomadic tribe who live on the fringes of society, tending their reindeer and hunting for game in the forests. In 1977 the Dukha collectively herded more than 2,275 reindeer, but in recent years, that number has dropped to around 600, with only 37 families looking after the deer. Turn the page to find out how the modern world is threatening their traditional way of life, and how they can be helped.









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TRIBES

# Nomad's land

*Photographer Hamid Sardar-Afkhani has spent years living with the Dukha people deep in the Mongolian forest. These nomadic herders are superbly adapted to sub-zero temperatures, but their way of life is under threat from the modern world*





**T**'S A COLD NOVEMBER MORNING. Our reindeer march in single file, clicking their heels and burping softly as they break trail on the snowy slopes of the Sayan Mountains. The temperature dips below  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$ , coating my beard with frost. My companion, Hormush, stops to rub bear fat on my cheeks. 'This will protect your face until we get to camp,' he says pointing ahead to a lone wigwam.

I'm travelling with a band of Dukha reindeer people in the Mongolian 'taiga', the pine forests of the far north, the heart of inner Asia. These nomadic people captured my imagination, and for three years I mapped out their territory and made a film documenting their shamanic rituals. But something worrying is happening. Reindeer numbers are declining, and nobody quite knows why. On this visit I have invited my friend Kirk, a wildlife biologist, to help me investigate.

The Dukha reindeer people live in Khövsgöl (AKA 'the Land of the Blue Lake'), a territory of about 65,000km<sup>2</sup> in a corner of north-western Mongolia bordering the tiny Russian republic of Tuva. They are the guardians of this hidden realm,

patrolling a maze of evergreen forests and snow-capped mountains with their stocky reindeer. They gain a meagre existence by hunting for furs and antlers, which they sell in town. This is their only contact with the outside world.

The origin of these people baffles scholars. The reindeer-riding branch of the Uriankhai – who call themselves 'Dukha' – was virtually unknown until the beginning of the 19th century, when a Russian cartographic expedition stumbled across a group of about 6,000 people riding reindeer, speaking in an ancient Turkic tongue and using squirrel skins as their principal currency. But at the end of World War II, an iron curtain descended. The Soviet Union annexed Tuva and stopped the free flow of the reindeer people back across the Mongol border. It started to persecute the Dukha's shamans and, in 1957, confiscated the reindeer and resettled the Dukha on farms, where they were employed in timber mills and fisheries. The authorities then slaughtered more than half of the reindeer to provide meat for the local schools and herded the rest for skins and antlers.

The Dukha do not generally eat their reindeer, instead they ride them. At least until now. In 1985, the reindeer were

*PREVIOUS PAGE: a Dukha shaman performing a dance ritual to communicate with his shamanic ancestors.*

*ABOVE: the Dukha change camp about 10-15 times a year.*

*RIGHT: these reindeer have been bred to carry people and heavy loads*







*'If we leave,  
part of the forest will die'*







LEFT: *the Dukha's life is closely bound to that of their reindeer.*  
 ABOVE: *the herd are constantly seeking lichen, their favourite food*

assigned to transport hunters into the marshy taiga in search of sable furs for the politburo chiefs in Moscow. To boost the herd's fertility, 50 new reindeer were imported from Tuva. In 1990, on the eve of the democratic revolution, the number of reindeer had increased to more than one thousand. During the subsequent privatisation of state farms, some of the Dukha repossessed their reindeer and moved back into the taiga. This is when things started to go wrong. In less than a decade more than half of the reindeer perished.

Kirk and I are in Borqarluk, a ring of connected valleys below the seven frozen peaks of the Aghii mountains. This enchanted place is where reclusive Ghosta camps with about 70 reindeer, living alone with his adopted daughter, Handa, and her son. 'I don't like towns,' he tells me, 'and my reindeer get sick whenever they go near human settlements.'

Upon inspecting Ghosta's deer, one appears to suffer from pneumonia and two have infected saddle sores. Otherwise, the herd seems healthy. Handa says most of her calves died last spring not from disease but wolf predation. Most families we talked to complained about wolves. In fact, they seem to be the principal cause of fatalities. With the increase in commercial hunting in recent years, wildlife numbers in the taiga have significantly decreased, depriving wolves of their natural prey. With no wild animals left to eat, the wolves now seem to be targeting domestic reindeer calves.

'The wild game which we rely on for food is being wiped out by Mongols who herd sheep and cows in the grassy valleys

below the taiga,' says Ghosta. Many Dukha have now reluctantly started to kill and eat their reindeer. 'Last winter, I had to eat three of my own herd,' he confesses, sheepishly.

Unfortunately, wildlife conservationists don't consider this a serious concern because the taiga is not home to rare species. There are moose, elk and brown bears, of which there are plenty in North America. But the Dukha and their reindeer have a close relationship with these animals and the habitat they share. Conserving nature here would be directly preserving an endangered culture. If only it were so simple. Recently, Lake Khövsgöl and its surrounding wilderness was proposed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, but now the entire taiga has been declared a protected area. This means that the Dukha themselves are no longer allowed to go hunting. For the moment they have been given a small stipend to buy cows and goats instead of hunting game. This can hardly be a sustainable solution, however, as it requires the reindeer nomads to start herding species of livestock unadapted to their environment and lifestyle. Ghosta looks into a bleak future. 'But if we leave,' he says, 'a part of the forest will die.'

I am curious to know what Ghosta thinks of recent talk of inseminating Mongol reindeer with frozen semen from wild caribou in Canada and domestic herds in Scandinavia. For thousands of years, the Dukha have selectively bred a docile deer with stocky bodies and strong backs. Scandinavian reindeer have weak backs and you cannot ride them. The domestic reindeer in Mongolia are only really compatible with reindeer in









LEFT: many of the remaining Dukha families are quasi-sedentary. But herds that move around are much healthier.

ABOVE RIGHT: Dukha children are often sent to boarding school. They used to look after the newborn deer, so now it's easier for wolves to get to the calves



neighbouring Tuva, which have also been bred to carry heavy loads. But Ghosta remains sceptical. 'Between November and March, wild reindeer cross the border from Tuva and breed with ours, but the offspring is too wild and they have to be shot.'

We leave Ghosta and start our journey to Shashpaktuk, where Bayin Dalai lives with about 120 reindeer – the most significant herd in the Khövsgöl taiga. He is probably the last true nomad left in Mongolia, moving camp every two weeks.

Apart from a couple of reindeer suffering from infected saddle sores, Bayin Dalai's reindeer also seem to be healthy. Closer observation, however, shows that the herd structure is not ideal for breeding. Half are castrated males, and the number of fertile females is less than a quarter. Bayin Dalai had 20 new calves born from 20 cows this year. This is a good sign. But without fenced enclosures, they tend to wander off into the woods where they become wolf prey.

'Ten years ago this place was teeming with wildlife,' says Bayin Dalai. 'Today it is hunting anarchy.' At this rate there won't even be a squirrel left in these woods and the Dukha will have no choice but to eat more of their own reindeer.

But are there other reasons the herds are declining? Kirk and I took hair samples and vials of serum from the reindeer to test. The results showed no cause for immediate alarm. The genetic variability among the herd is at the lower end of other known reindeer and caribou populations, but it is not low enough to compromise their immune systems or for fertility problems to be expected.

Clearly other factors are causing their numbers to decline. Among these, poor nutrition, bad herd structure and wolf

predation seem to be the main causes. When Dukha families move closer to town and stop travelling so much, their reindeer cannot take maximum advantage of mountain pastures. This is particularly true of the reindeer herders living in the northern part of the taiga, who have become quasi-sedentary – and it is among their reindeer that we see the most signs of disease. Also, these reindeer frequently come into contact with sheep, goats, horses and yaks. In the past, Mongolia has had several large-scale outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease and brucellosis, a bacterial infection that can damage the joints and produce stillbirths.

The reindeer living further out in the western taiga, which still move camp every two weeks or so, seem to be healthier with higher fertility rates. But even though these reindeer reproduce well, the low number of breeding females relative to the size of the herd means that there are too few calves born every year, half of which are killed by wolves.

The survival of the Dukha and their reindeer will directly depend on efforts to preserve their forests and the wild animals that live here. Resources may be limited, but the point is that conservation organisations whose mandates are limited only to protecting exotic and endangered animals and plants often fail to act in places where the conservation of mundane species is closely related to cultural survival. The Dukha are not primitives stuck in the past, but people whose chosen paths are getting harder to sustain in our ever-developing world. To see how you can help them, visit [culturalsurvival.org](http://culturalsurvival.org). We should do everything we can to help them preserve their way of life.

*hamidsardarphoto.com*



‘Perfection happens  
in nature. There’s talk  
about perfection in  
food, but no chef can  
replicate it to that level’









HERE: *smoked pork espuma with saffron pearls, tomato powder, courgette and fennel.*  
OPPOSITE: *spiced veal with organic quinoa; chef Shaun Hergatt; foraged milkweed and peekytoe crab*





*For Shaun Hergatt, excellent cuisine starts with just a few great ingredients. Jenni Muir meets the New York chef to whom simplicity is key*



HERE'S AN UNUSUAL AIR of Schwarzenegger's Terminator about chef Shaun Hergatt: a relentless, serious-minded focus, offset by gym-honed muscularity that suggests he's even a high achiever in his downtime. So it's a little incongruous that he's getting poetic about jasmine flowers. 'They're fragrant, intense, unique,' he enthuses. 'They encompass mind and palate, open your nostrils, and are true to the flavour of what they represent.'

The question was which local ingredient had excited him the most recently, and it's clear he'd already thought long and hard about jasmine which, like most of the produce at Hergatt's Michelin-starred Midtown restaurant Juni, comes at the peak of perfection from dedicated growers in the regions surrounding New York. His cooking aims to synergise the relationship between farmer, chef and diner, and celebrate the progression from dirt to dinner plate.

'Jasmine is almost freakishly perfect in the way it's made,' he continues. 'Perfection happens in

nature. There's talk about perfection in food, but no chef can replicate it to that level. We can't create that jasmine flower. And you can't say it hasn't got enough acidity or enough salt, because that is what it is.'

The previous evening he'd served jasmine with squab, apple and salsify to a mixed reception – people loved the taste but some were uncomfortable with the on-trend black ash garnish of the bird. 'I don't feel insulted by that,' he says matter-of-factly. 'A certain percentage of people don't get what you do. It's like art. One person appreciates a Picasso, another person walks by and thinks it looks blue. Once you accept that as an artist, you start to live with a little more comfort.'

The comparison with art is appropriate, not just because Hergatt is known for producing exquisitely pretty plates of food, or because he's inspired by great paintings; it's the compulsion to express himself in this way, considering it his destiny, to which many artists would relate. 'I have to make sure I produce this food because that is

who I am and what I do. I'm not doing it for money. My only goal in life is to make lifetime memories for people who come to dine.'

Growing up in rural Queensland with a professional chef for a father, Hergatt experienced a few awe-inspiring special-occasion meals as a youngster. 'That people were very interested in making sure you had the experience of a lifetime was very impactful for me, so I'm loyal to that philosophy,' he says.

At 17 he was an apprentice at a fine-dining restaurant in Cairns, and from there he moved to the dining room of Sydney's Ritz-Carlton Hotel, the company that took him to New York 15 years ago. 'I only knew what I knew,' he says of his decision to leave Australia. 'I wanted to experience other horizons. Travelling is so educational and I still do a lot of it because I come back with more inspiration. But I miss Australia every day.'

Despite the huge number of accolades he's received throughout his career, Hergatt admits that, on a personal level, his path is a struggle.





LEFT: Hergatt at work.  
BELOW: 'Death Star' black truffle; cranberry-apple pebbles; halibut in the spring.  
RIGHT: green asparagus, hyssop and pea blossoms



*'Putting 40 things on a plate muddles the mind and the senses. Masters of the kitchen use just three or four things'*

'Awards and recognition are a high for a day, but they're just a step,' he says. 'At home I sit on the couch with two dogs and two hours of sleep and think about food. But I'm doing what I want to do. When you are born with a talent, your obligation is to utilise it to the fullest. It's not by chance.'

So is he a nightmare to work with? 'I'm very consistent with my team, but in my own head I fight with myself every day. But I cannot give up. I can't waste 24 years of cooking to go back to Australia and say OK, that's that, I'll settle. Not until I feel like there's nothing left.'

Hergatt's food is deceptively simple yet intricate in presentation. He uses modern technology but, unlike the molecular gastronomists, doesn't make a feature of it. Juni's menus tend to list two or three components for each dish, as in 'Nova Scotia halibut, wild carrot blossoms', or 'spruce, strawberry, cucumber', but what arrives at the table is nowhere near as sparse as this implies.

'I don't believe in putting 40 things on a plate,' he says. 'It muddles the mind and the senses. People give credit to highly celebrated chefs because they are doing something the diner can't

do themselves, but I was always taught that masters of the kitchen put three or four things on a plate. Of course, there may be lots of nuances within that...'

When asked about 'truffle cotta, pork, millet' ('Not my favourite dish,' he admits, 'but a lot of people like it'), Hergatt winds up drawing two diagrams to explain its seven layers of flavour – one of which is chicken skin, included for texture and salinity rather than its particular taste. He'll go through six or more generations of a dish in order to perfect it, then move onto the next one.









RIGHT: carrot paper with goat's cheese.

FAR RIGHT: Hergatt makes sure the food – not the decor – does the talking inside Juni.

BELOW: Kumamoto oysters, apple and ginger gelée, yogurt comb



*'I don't have to try and be polished: I have to produce polished food because that's what I am'*

The jasmine finishing the aforementioned squab dish is included for balance. 'Its sweet, rich, warm exotic smell contrasts with the bitter taste of the squab, which is started with a very strong spice mix containing star anise,' Hergatt explains. 'There's charcoal coming from the juniper, and the sauce has liveriness. It's a perfectly synergised flavour profile. It comes down to yin-yang – all things balance.'

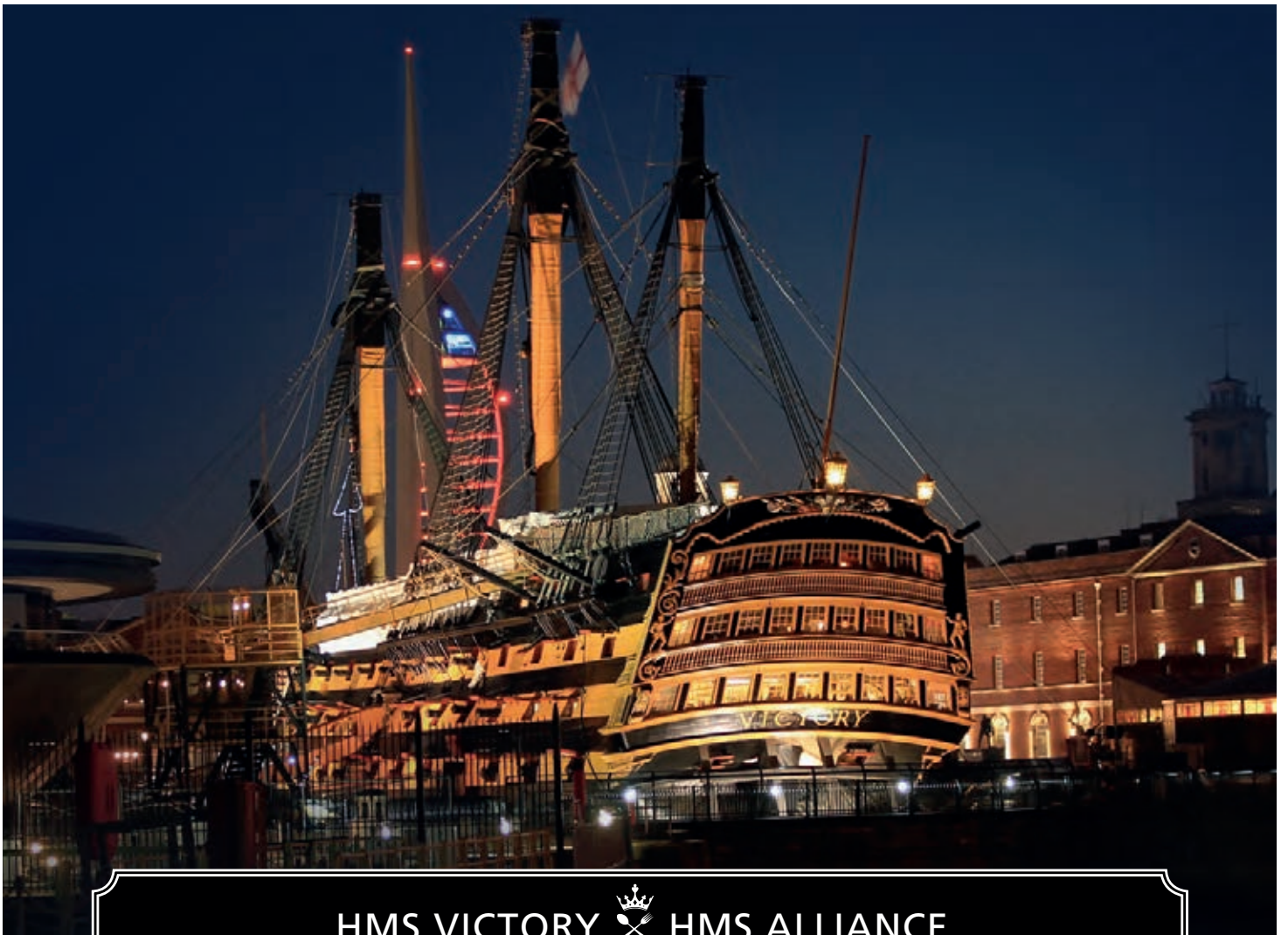
At this level of cookery, perfectionism is part of the job description, but Hergatt seems to have been born with an almost extrasensory fastidiousness. 'Being polished is very important to me: look at my hair, my nails,' he says, smiling. 'You believe it, because it's the truth! And that translates through to my dishes. I don't have to try and be polished, I have to produce this polished food because that's what I am.'

To further refine his art, he actively seeks diners' opinions and has done so ever since he first became a chef de cuisine. 'I've always been very comfortable walking into a room. Back then I knew the food was not great, that it had mistakes, and that the only way to bridge the gap was to get honest feedback from customers.' He wishes the relationship between chef and diner was given more consideration in professional reviews and on sites such as OpenTable – to him it's vital.

'My cooking won't save a life, but 20 years down the track you'll be talking to your grandchildren about it because I gave you the experience of a lifetime,' he says. 'I've had many opportunities to open more restaurants and have more volume, but it's not what's important to me. What's important is to be recommended as someone excellent, which is why I'm very excited about redesigning and perfecting the restaurant this year. I really feel that the seed that I've planted is now growing and blossoming.'

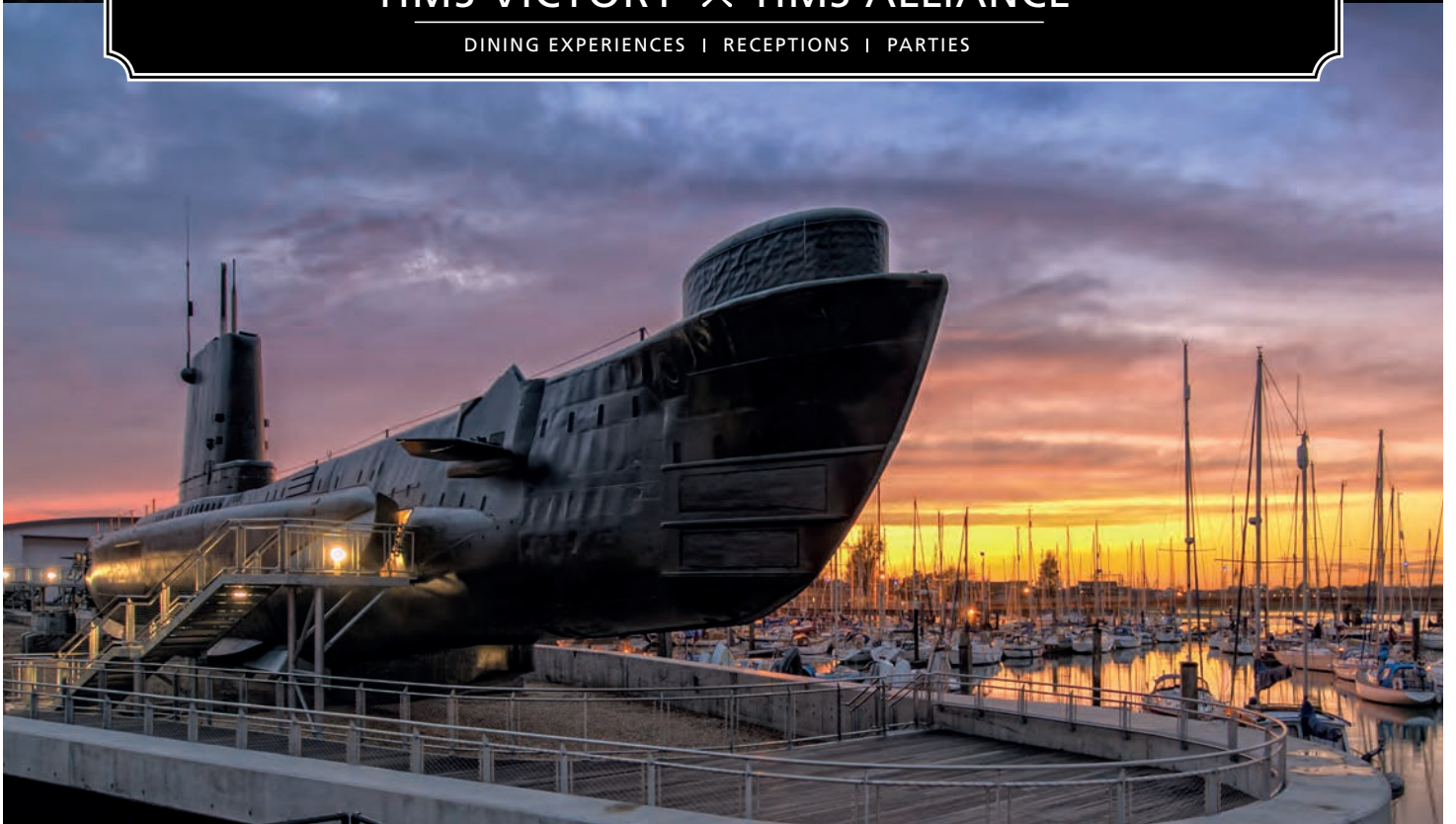
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PRIVAT  
ASTRONOMY

# All the stars in the sky

*The world's first luxury observatory is set to open in the Maldives at the end of 2016. Mike MacEacheran meets up with the country's only astronomer – and friend of Buzz Aldrin – Ali Shameem*

PHOTO © JONATHAN KINGSTON/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CREATIVE







SOMEWHERE ON A WHITE, chalky sandbank in the middle of the Indian Ocean, Ali Shameem squints up at the night sky, one hand resting by his side, the other pointing to the heavens. ‘That’s Vega,’ he says enthusiastically over the sound of the waves rolling in on the tiny atoll’s shore. ‘And that’s the Dog Star. They’re often the brightest.’ He turns to me with a twinkle of excitement in his eyes. ‘We’re lucky – tonight we may see the Pole Star.’

It’s just gone 7pm. The sun set about an hour ago, and a shadowy cloak has already blanketed the Maldives under a great streak of black. Everything is beautifully quiet: other than us and the odd scuttling hermit crab in its ill-fitting shell, there is no sign of life. Across the lagoon, around a kilometre away, a hazy glow settles on the resort island of Soneva Fushi, home to Shameem’s jungle-based observatory hidden

among palms and coconut groves, and our next point of call. If, that is, I can get Shameem back on this planet. Stock-still, he is a thousand million miles away, staring intently up at the stars. ‘I could stay here all night,’ he says. ‘Sometimes, I take dozens of pictures of the same nebula. Even hundreds.’

I quite understood. There are few places as magical for astro-tourists as the Baa Atoll, and as the only astronomer in the Maldives, Shameem has the entire night sky to himself. While most visitors come here for the arcs of coral reef and over-water villas, soft white sands and minty-blue lagoons, there is an even greater luxury most overlook: the rich star atlas of the night sky. The Soneva resort’s observatory now lets guests get closer to the wonder with its striking cherry-red Meade RCX400 telescope.

Maldivian skies are extravagant and humbling: stars, planets and galaxies dot the inky-black sky with thousands of twinkling pin-pricks. The islands lie very close to the Equator, so the Maldives is blessed with views of both hemispheres; it’s one of a handful of spots where you can see both Orion and the Bear, *and* the Magellanic Clouds and Southern Cross. The view is extraordinary: you can observe more than 15,000 stars with the naked eye. To put that into perspective, if you live in a medium-sized town and gaze upwards you’ll be lucky to see 500. But surrounded by hundreds of kilometres of dark water, there’s no light pollution to spoil the view.

Growing up on Maalhos Island in Eydhafushi Atoll, Shameem had even better conditions for his boyhood hobby. In his home village, the houses were only ever lit by oil lamps and hand lanterns; electricity never reached the atoll when he was a child. ‘Even 20 years ago we were kept in the dark,’ he recalls. ‘An island like that is a world away from what most tourists come to the Maldives to experience. That was when I really fell in love with stargazing: I used to map the sky every night for years. Since then, I must have taken more than one million photos of the Moon.’

Without astronomical books, charts or even a rudimentary telescope to guide him as a child,



RIGHT: Maldivian astronomer Ali Shameem.  
 FAR RIGHT: Soneva’s jungle observatory



*'Buzz Aldrin complimented me,  
it was such a remarkable thing.  
He told me to "just keep looking".  
And I still do, every day'*







*'Because the island  
does not have a  
nightclub or karaoke,  
we were inspired by  
the night sky'*







OPPOSITE TOP LEFT:  
*inside Soneva's observatory.*  
OPPOSITE BOTTOM  
LEFT: *the beauty of the  
Maldives' night sky.*  
LEFT: *sunset dining on  
the sandbanks at Soneva.*  
BELOW: *Soneva's open-air  
jungle cinema*



Shameem turned to a Maldivian schoolteacher who knew the basics of astronomy. But it was not enough – Shameem's knowledge had already outstripped that of his tutor. Motivated, he immersed himself in learning to read the ever-changing patterns in the night sky above him.

One summer, his fortunes changed. He landed a job as a waiter at Soneva Fushi, an island in the country's only UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. It is a remarkably beautiful spot, made all the more special by the resort's owners Sonu and Eva Shivdasani's creativity and attention to detail. They were the pioneers of the Maldives' now commonplace 'no news, no shoes' barefoot-luxury ethos. And Soneva also had a number of other firsts: an open-air jungle cinema, chocolate room, treetop restaurant and ice cream parlour, all hidden down looping, sandy lanes. But the Shivdasanis wanted to go one better: to build the first astronomical observatory in the Maldives.

'Sonu always wanted to do something different in the hotel industry and he and Eva are strong believers in astrology,' says Shameem. 'Because the island does not have a nightclub, DJ or karaoke in the evening, we were inspired by looking at the night sky.'

It was the inspiration Shameem needed. He joined the resort's first visiting astronomer, Dr

Parag Mahajani from India, and began studying nightly from 11pm to 4am using the observatory's telescope, cataloguing the constellations. During Dr Mahajani's visit, Shameem was introduced to award-winning expert Professor Massimo Tarengi. A 35-year veteran of the European Southern Observatory in Chile, 'there is little about the night sky he doesn't know, and I'm now his disciple,' says Shameem. More recently he has struck up an unlikely friendship with former astronaut Buzz Aldrin, the second person to walk on the Moon.

'Buzz has been a regular guest at Soneva for the last three years,' says Shameem. 'He first came here when we hosted a special astronomical dinner for him. We got chatting and he complimented me about my knowledge, it was such a remarkable thing for me. During his first trip, the last words he said to me were, "just keep looking". And I still do, every day.'

Shameem and Soneva Fushi's next project is their most ambitious yet. At this stage it's all a little hush-hush, but the team are working closely with some of the world's leading astronomers and are in the midst of installing a powerful Meade LX600 telescope as part of an out-of-this-world luxury observatory on the new resort island of Soneva Jani, in the Noonu

Atoll. Unlike Soneva Fushi's, the new observatory will not have a dome. Instead, it will have a dining platform with a telescope centred in the middle, with each table inlaid with a digital screen where images of the night sky will be displayed via camera.

But that's not all for Shameem. In April 2016, he will head off on a long-planned visit to the Atacama Desert in northern Chile, home to the world's largest dark-sky reserve and the renowned ALMA observatory. It is a chance for him to get closer than ever before to his beloved stars, to experience how the best observatories in the world work, and to learn more about the bigger questions of the universe.

All these new discoveries, fascinating as they are, will simply make Shameem's job harder. He must keep learning, continuing to move obstacles near and far out of the way, doing what he has always done. As we return to the boat that night, making our way back to the resort, Shameem whispers, 'It doesn't get much better than this. Directly on the Equator you can see the North Star hanging low, the entire southern sky, and my favourite cluster, Omega Centauri. It's the most beautiful thing you'll ever see.'

[soneva.com](http://soneva.com)







PRIVAT  
EXPLORER

‘THIS IS AN ELEMENTAL  
STORY OF MEN CHASING  
THEIR AMBITIONS OVER  
THE POLAR HORIZON  
AND TRAVELLING INTO  
THE UNKNOWN’

SIR RANULPH FIENNES ON SIR WALLY HERBERT





**JOURNEYS WALLY HERBERT**

FOR QUEEN AND COUNTRY

Hunt for

FOUR MEN CROSS ARCTIC

Trans-Arctic team  
make landfall

# BRITISH POLAR TREK TRIUMPH

Journey's end after 464 days on the ice

Evening Standard Reporter  
**BRITAIN'S FOUR-MAN TRANS-ARCTIC EXPEDITION REACHED LAND TODAY — TO BECOME THE FIRST MEN TO MAKE A SURFACE CROSSING OF THE**

A British four-man expedition from the Arctic to the Antarctic has today triumphantly reached the continent of Antarctica, completing a 21,000-mile trek across the ice.

The men, who are now in the Antarctic, are Wally Herbert, Frits Koerner, Ken Hodges, and Allan Gill. The expedition was launched from the British Antarctic Survey base at Halley Bay, Antarctica, on August 1, 1956.

The men are now in the Antarctic, and are expected to reach the South Pole in the next few days. They are carrying a large amount of equipment, including a motor sled, a tent, and a radio.

The expedition is the first to cross the Arctic Ocean from the North Pole to the South Pole. It is a feat that has long been considered impossible.

# THE SUNDAY TIMES

22 JUNE 1969

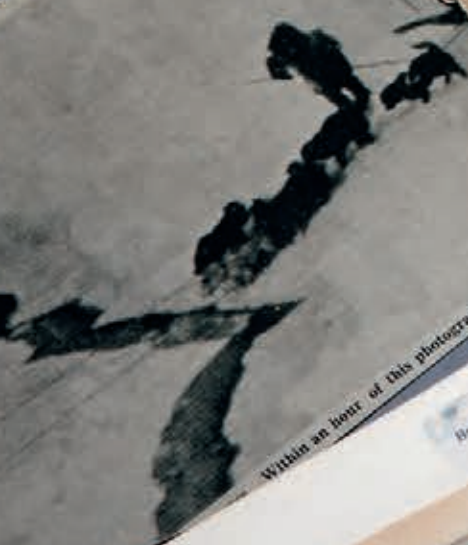


Kept on ice for 476 days

WHAT do men look like at the end of a gruelling, 476-day 21,000-mile trek across the Arctic? Answer: normal. The men, better recognised with ice on their eyebrows, are, from left, Wally Herbert, Ken Hodges, Frits Koerner, and Allan Gill. The picture was taken since the trek began.

**Danger, cold and injury — then dream true**

TIME



Within an hour of this photograph being taken, the lead

ARCTIC

Extract from Bradford Telegraph & Argus, Yorks.





# *The Arctic Ocean is one of the world's last great frontiers. Nearly 50 years ago, four men risked their lives to walk across it, writes Claire Bennie*

IT'S CHRISTMAS EVE 1968. THREE YOUNG Americans – Frank Borman, Jim Lovell and Bill Anders – float some 363,105km (give or take) above Earth in an aluminium capsule. They've just completed nine full orbits of the Moon and taken one of the most influential images of all time: a shot of the Earth rising above the lunar surface like a shiny bright-blue marble. '[It's] a vast, lonely, forbidding expanse of nothing,' offers Borman, looking out past our planet to the cosmos. 'The vast loneliness is awe-inspiring and it makes you realise just what you have back there on Earth,' echoes Lovell.

Of course, it was not these three who took those first momentous steps on the Moon. That honour was reserved for Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin of Apollo 11, who landed there some seven months later. It was, in Armstrong's brilliant, bungled words, one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind. But it was also the achievement that overshadowed one of the greatest terrestrial expeditions of all time on a terrain as unsafe as anywhere on Earth. The British Trans-Arctic Expedition started 10 months before Anders' iconic Earthrise shot was taken and didn't finish until two months before Armstrong made his size-9½ footprint on the Moon.

On 21 February 1968, Wally Herbert (later Sir Wally Herbert), his team of three companions (Ken Hedges, Roy 'Fritz' Koerner and Allan Gill) and their 40 huskies set out from Point Barrow, Alaska. Their challenge? To cross the frozen Arctic Ocean from Alaska to West Spitsbergen in Svalbard, Norway. Many didn't think the expedition was possible, but if anyone could do it, it was Herbert.

Wally Herbert had already followed in the footsteps of Sir Ernest Henry Shackleton in the Antarctic in the years leading up to his Arctic adventure. In 1960, on a trip to the farthest corner of northern Norway, he realised that 'the most challenging journey left to man on the surface of our planet' was to cross the Arctic Ocean. It was not an expedition he would undertake lightly, and it took seven years of planning. Herbert understood that his team would be travelling across – and living on – ice that was in continual motion, cracking and changing beneath their feet. They would also endure extreme cold and months of darkness. But not once did he waver.

'For those of us who have travelled in the polar regions, the desire to keep going back is inescapable,' writes fellow polar explorer Sir Ranulph Fiennes in the introduction to *Across the Arctic Ocean*, a beautiful new book that charts Herbert and co's remarkable journey. 'At times it is bitterly miserable, horrid, relentless, exhausting, dangerous – yes – but the Arctic Ocean also offers a series of experiences that are closer to the finest of all feelings: being truly alive.'

It was 16 months and 6,115km before Herbert and his team set foot once more on solid land in Spitsbergen, having reached the North Pole and successfully crossed the frozen Arctic Ocean. 'They returned to England to a heroes' welcome, but for a generation looking to the heavens in a blaze of rockets and TV screens, the ways of these explorers are old-fashioned, out of step; something, perhaps, of a bygone age. Already their great journey is cast in the shadow of the Moon,' writes Huw Lewis-Jones – historian and, conveniently, the late Sir Wally Herbert's son-in-law – in the book's prologue. But now, as the 50th anniversary of Herbert's expedition approaches, there's more reason than ever to shine a light on this historic voyage.

'What compels a man to risk everything on a dream?' asks Fiennes. 'Why would anyone put themselves through hell and back all for the sake of walking across a frozen ocean?' You'll be left in no doubt as to why Herbert did it by the end of the book. *Across the Arctic Ocean* is illustrated with unpublished photographs and other personal material from the Herbert archive, as well as rare items from public and private collections. These, along with Herbert's eloquent prose – spanning three lengthy chapters – bring the story to life magnificently.

Herbert describes his first experience as an explorer (blagging his way onto a trip to the Antarctic as a surveyor in 1955), the hardships of securing funding and, of course, the journey itself. From keeping the dogs under control to working out where to set up camp (a tricky decision when the summer ice is melting), losing possessions to the inky black waters when the ice cracked beneath them, Gill falling and slipping a disc, and dealing with curious polar bears, it's an incredible first-hand record of an astonishing journey – one that will probably never be repeated.

'The goal of the modern media "explorer" is merely to appear to be doing something new,' writes Lewis-Jones. 'But, of course, so much of this is neither new, nor innovative... Much is mirage. So it's important to distinguish all this activity from those genuine firsts of men like Wally.' This is not the only reason that Herbert's achievement can never be repeated. These days the Arctic Ocean is hitting the headlines because of global warming, the shrinking ice caps, the opening of new northerly trade routes and competition for untapped mineral resources.

So, why did Wally do it? 'My idea of making the first crossing of the Arctic Ocean provoked a range of responses, from incredulity to downright hostility,' he wrote. 'Polar exploration was, surely, an activity from a bygone age? It was in this sceptical environment that I tried to earn my place as a pioneer. My premise was that there is only one ocean left uncrossed – a challenge to which man must respond.'





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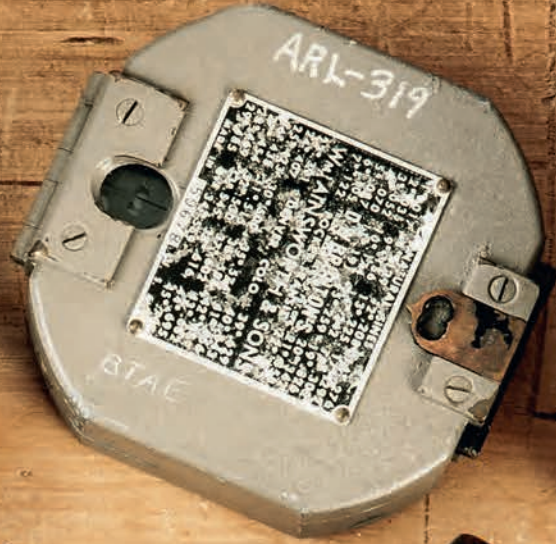
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PAGE 68: Sir Wally Herbert on the night before he, Ken Hedges, Roy 'Fritz' Koerner and Allan Gill left Alaska for the unknown. 'For the entire night before we set out I felt sick,' he wrote. 'There was nothing left in me except fear. It was not so much the personal risks, but the weight of responsibility for the lives of the men who had chosen to share in my dream. So how did I feel as we left? Absolutely brilliant.'

PAGE 69: a photo printed in True magazine, used to illustrate a story about Herbert's journey. Like 'astronauts who tread for the first time on some virgin planet, the British Trans-Arctic Expedition marched across a wasteland never crossed by man,' wrote the magazine. 'Against incredible odds, four brave men walked across the top of this planet.'

*'Why would anyone put themselves through hell and back all for walking across a frozen ocean?'*



PAGE 70: The Sunday Times announced Herbert's plan on 9 July 1967 as 'The Longest, Loneliest Walk in the World'. For the next two years there was an almost constant stream of stories charting his progress. The press weren't the only well-wishers. When Herbert and co finally reached land on 29 May 1969 they received congratulations from around the world. Prime Minister Harold Wilson called the journey 'a feat of endurance and courage which ranks with any in polar history'. Prince Philip called it 'among the greatest triumphs of human skill and endurance'.

PAGE 72-73: some of Herbert's expedition kit from the Arctic crossing, including his Rolleiflex 3.5F and Nikon F2 cameras, two Brunton pocket transits, a Barker M73 prismatic compass, a large Smith & Sons sextant, a Weston light-meter, snow goggles, a Kern DKM1 theodolite, and one of his many pipes.



THIS PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM TOP: Herbert enjoying a fine Midsummer's Day' on the Polar Plateau. Temperatures reached a positively balmy -30° C. MIDDLE: the team in the March sun, early on in the trip. 'With the sun rising higher into the sky, it was a good time to start sledging, but each day we were stopped by ridges in the ice and an insecure pack,' wrote Herbert. BOTTOM: in the summer of 1960, Herbert searched the west coast of Greenland for huskies. Once he found them he had to convince the Inuits to sell them. But the hardest part? Getting them all to McMurdo Sound in Antarctica

PHOTO ON PREVIOUS PAGE © MARTIN HARTLEY



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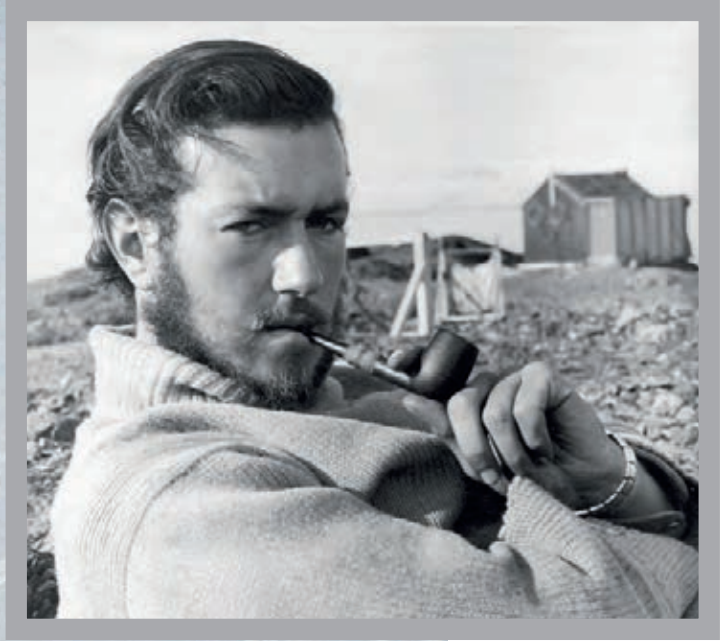
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ABOVE: *Wally Herbert was just 21 when he set sail for Antarctica on his very first polar expedition. His favourite memories were of being one of 12 men around a bunkhouse fire or alone in the solitude of the summer-warmed hills.*

LEFT: *this photo was taken in 1957 on another one of Herbert's trips to the Antarctic. 'This Reclus hut was no more than a box - steeply roofed, with two windows, a door and three primus stoves,' he wrote. 'There were bunks, a table, a bench, two chairs and a gramophone. The Shackleton was due to relieve us but hit an iceberg; she limped back to South Georgia for repairs. We were stranded for a month. To feed the dogs we built a raft and paddled out to sea to catch seals. We fed ourselves on penguin and baked beans in an oven made from an old flour tin. Eventually, on 28 December 1957, the John Biscoe rescued us. The hut is now proudly displayed at the Falkland Islands Museum.'*

THE BOOK: *Across the Arctic Ocean: Original Photographs from the Last Great Polar Journey by Sir Wally Herbert and Huw Lewis-Jones is published by Thames & Hudson, £24.95*



ALL PHOTOS © 2015 THE WALLY HERBERT COLLECTION







# Queen of the skies

*Andrew Humphreys meets pilot Tracey Curtis-Taylor as she takes off on the adventure of a lifetime, recreating Amy Johnson's heroic 1930 flight from the UK to Australia in a vintage biplane*

**W**EATHER, BUREAUCRACY and acts of God permitting, by the time you are reading this, Tracey Curtis-Taylor should be somewhere close to Australia.

She set off on 1 October 2015 from Farnborough airfield in England, waving from an open cockpit to the small crowd gathered to see her off. There was excitement but also some apprehension, because the aeroplane she is flying is a vintage 1942 Boeing Stearman biplane. She is expecting that the 13,000-mile flight will take her three-and-a-half months, hopping between 50 fuelling stops strung out across 23 countries.

Curtis-Taylor's trip is nominally in honour of pioneering pilot Amy Johnson, who made the England-Australia flight in 19 days in 1930, becoming the first woman to do so. But it might be truer to say that Curtis-Taylor is making the flight because she can't help herself.

I first became aware of Curtis-Taylor when by chance I caught a television documentary about a 2013 solo flight she made from Cape Town to Cairo. It was heavy on romantic scenes of a little green aircraft buzzing over the African plains,

and at each dusty stop this tall, striking woman climbed out of the cockpit to variously go off hunting for fuel or patrolling with park rangers, or to ask, 'Where's the loo?' As the journey went on she became increasingly weary and formidably irritable. Towards the end it seemed that her aeroplane was propelled up the coast of West Africa not so much by its engine and wings but by its pilot's sheer bloody-mindedness.

In person, Curtis-Taylor is tall and lean, and when we meet, which is at an airfield canteen, dressed for business in a one-piece olive-green flying suit. She's 53 and has the absolute self-confidence of someone who has been there, done it, flown over it. Born in northern England, she had her first flying lesson aged 16 while on holiday in Canada. Before she was 20, she'd left the UK and was working in South Africa. When it came time to return home, she did it overland in a Bedford truck, which took five months. 'The conditions were so unspeakable. Seas of mud, everybody wracked with dysentery, chiggers in your feet.' A brief spell in London – 'making money' – was followed by a move to New Zealand to join her twin sister, who had just emigrated.





‘That’s the point when I thought, I’m going to learn to fly. New Zealand is a wonderful aviation country. It’s accessible, it’s affordable and there are wonderful aeroplanes everywhere.’ To pay for the lessons, she waitressed, modelled for an underwear maker and stocked supermarket shelves. One day a T6 Harvard, a World War II American training aircraft, flew into the aero club where she was taking lessons: ‘A big brute of a thing. Big radial engine. I was rooted to the spot. I just thought it was fantastic.’ That was the start of her love affair with vintage aircraft. Her desire for adventure started much younger.

‘Probably every major influence in my life comes from literature or film,’ she says. She grew up in England’s rugged and sparsely populated Lake District: ‘I didn’t have proper teenage years, I just read and watched films. I loved *Daktari* and *Born Free*, and became obsessed with Africa. But it was seeing *Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines* and this crazy, mad pioneering, romantic aviation – I wanted my life to be like that.’

She got what she wanted.

In New Zealand she bought a share of a replica SE5, a World War I fighter. ‘It was a single-

seater, so I always had to stay over the field in case the propeller stopped.’ Later she sold that and bought a share of a T6 Harvard, the brutish plane that had turned her head a few years previously. Not content just to fly, she joined a rafting expedition to Papua New Guinea, staying with tribes along the way who had never seen a white woman. She scuba dived World War II shipwrecks in the South West Pacific. She drove in a classic car rally from Peking to Paris lasting six weeks and travelling through northern China, the Gobi Desert, Russia and the Baltics.

Around the time of the rally, Curtis-Taylor came across the story of Lady Mary Heath, who was the first woman to hold a commercial flying licence in Britain, the first woman to parachute from an aeroplane and the first pilot, male or female, to fly a small open-cockpit aircraft from Cape Town to London, in 1928. ‘She was one of the finest aviators of her day and yet she’s disappeared into oblivion,’ says Curtis-Taylor, who had a good idea how to go about changing that.

It took another four years to source a suitable aeroplane, raise serious sponsorship money and find a film company to document the story.



TOP LEFT: pioneer Amy Johnson in 1930 before leaving Croydon to reach Australia aboard her De Havilland Gipsy Moth. HERE: the Spirit of Artemis, Curtis-Taylor’s 1942 Boeing Stearman biplane

PHOTO BY GANIMA-KEYSTONE VIA GETTY IMAGES; IRENE MCULLAGH













LEFT: soaring over the African plains.  
HERE: Curtis-Taylor visiting the burial site of British imperialist Cecil Rhodes in Matobo National Park, Zimbabwe, during her Cape Town to Goodwood flight in 2013

Finally, at the beginning of November 2013 she was taxiing out on a South Africa airstrip ready to reprise Lady Heath's aero-endurance feat. The TV documentary suggests it must have been an extraordinary experience, skimming 50ft above the ground, where the thrill and exhilaration overcomes any prudence: 'The most memorable moments were flying low over the wildlife – whales off the coast of South Africa and elephants, wildebeest, zebras and giraffes on the great plains of the Serengeti and the Masai Mara.' She ignored procedure to fly through the gorge at Victoria Falls in Zambia, a stunt for which she was angrily reprimanded by local air traffic control. In a genuine mistake, she also flew over the Ugandan president's house for which the authorities threatened to impound her plane. On the north coast of Egypt she ran into bad weather, grounding her on the wrong side of the Mediterranean for a week. Foul conditions dogged her from here on, with progress only possible in brief windows between squalls. The flying, she says, was 'stomach-churning, seat-of-your-pants stuff'. She spent Christmas grounded by freezing fog in Rijeka, northern Croatia, with a

*'You have 72 hours to cross a border, so if you're delayed, everything goes down. It was easier in the 1930s than today'*

Toblerone and a book, finally landing back in England on a soggy New Year's Eve.

As I write, it is almost two years later and – a quick check on her Twitter account – Curtis-Taylor is currently in Delhi, staying at the Taj Mahal hotel. She is just seven weeks into a flight that Amy Johnson completed in under three. 'She just took off with her sandwiches and went like the clappers,' says Curtis-Taylor. 'But she was out there trying to break records and going for it. We operate in a very different world now, with borders, bureaucracies, air space, procedures... You have a 72-hour window to cross a border, so if you're stuck in a monsoon and delayed, the whole sequence of permits goes down like dominoes along the route. It

was a lot easier to do this in the 1930s than it is today.'

Johnson just put a ruler on a map to get the quickest route to Australia, which took her over Syria, Iraq and Iran – obviously not an option right now. Instead, Curtis-Taylor has had to take a 2,000-mile detour via Cyprus, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Dubai and Muscat before reconnecting with Johnson's route in Karachi from where she can follow the 1930 flight path across India, down through Myanmar, Malaysia and Indonesia, and finally across the Timor Sea to Australia.

It may be vintage but Curtis-Taylor's 1942 Stearman is an upgrade on Johnson's 1928 Gipsy Moth. 'It's a bit bigger than Amy Johnson's and it's stronger. It's got the big tyres on it and the





LEFT: Curtis-Taylor at the Goodwood Revival with Prince Michael and Prince Pavlos of Greece.

BELOW: the self-proclaimed 'bird in a biplane' takes to the skies



strong undercarriage, so you can put it down on a beach, on a road or out in the bush, and you have a pretty good chance of surviving.' The sea worries her though: the sturdy undercarriage means any attempt to put the plane down on water and it would flip, tail over engine. Her route keeps sea crossings to a minimum.

She bought the aircraft for the Cape to Cairo flight. When she found it, in America, it was a wreck in need of a complete rebuild. 'I just typed "Stearman Europe" into Google and found this operation in Hungary. It's run by a complete Stearman nut, with a fantastic bunch of Hungarian ex-military engineers, and it was half the price you'd pay anywhere else.' To the 1942 airframe she had them add a 1943 engine, 'because I wanted the bigger 300-horsepower version, for taking off and flying in hot, thin air

and carrying heavy kit'. 'Heavy kit' is whatever fits into the storage hold behind the pilot, a space closer in size to a car's glove compartment than a car boot. In here she stashes basic emergency equipment, food, blankets, extra oil, water, an overnight bag and a hairdryer. 'I am a bit superstitious about my hairdryer – although it's not always easy to find somewhere to plug it in.' In the cockpit she has water, maps and muesli bars. She doesn't need anything else as she never flies for more than five hours in one stretch – the plane carries enough fuel in its wing tanks for six hours but she doesn't like to push it too close to empty.

Unlike Johnson, Curtis-Taylor flies with a chase plane. It carries two pilots, two engineers and a cameraman, as well as extra kit, spares and more fuel in case they can't get the right aviation

gas at any landing point. As it's a turbo-prop aircraft, a Pilatus PC6, it flies higher and faster, so it takes off after the Stearman and lands before, so Curtis-Taylor rarely sees it except on the ground.

She is not breaking any records but she does have her own goals. 'The flight is a way to achieve a lot of other things. I have a huge communications and outreach programme behind it. This is about celebrating what Amy achieved in 1930 but also celebrating women's role in aviation.' Extended stops in Istanbul, Dubai and Delhi have been built into the project, during which Curtis-Taylor will take part in events flying the flag for airborne female empowerment.

Of those other two famous aviators in whose flight paths she's following, Amy Johnson had a meteoric career for just 10 years before going down at sea, her body never recovered. Lady Heath crashed badly the year after her historic flight and never truly recovered, dying of alcoholism, alone and penniless 10 years later. 'I think it is hard on my family and my closest friends,' says Curtis-Taylor. 'They wish that I would stop. I sympathise with that. But I feel like I've been steering toward this all my life. I'm absolutely cut out for this.' [birdinabiplane.com](http://birdinabiplane.com)

*'This is about celebrating what Amy achieved in 1930 but also celebrating women's role in aviation'*





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# STORIES FROM THE SILK ROAD

*For an unforgettable world of beauty, culture and mystery, take to  
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*By Charlotte Pénet*







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PREVIOUS PAGE:  
*St Mark's Square, Venice, at sunset.*  
 RIGHT: *Samarkand's Kukeldash Mosque.*  
 BELOW: *the Kalta Minaret in Khiva.*  
 BOTTOM: *Bukhara's Taqi Sarrafon market*



BACK IN 1271, A YOUNG VENETIAN MERCHANT NAMED Marco Polo embarked on an epic journey of discovery that would take him along the Silk Road through Central Asia, all the way to the court of Kublai Khan in China. He ventured on horseback into unknown lands, survived sweltering desert crossings, treacherous mountain passes and terrifying confrontations with both beast and man. His adventure lasted 24 years and he returned to tell the tale, subsequently writing a book that was read by millions and marked by history as the very first travelogue, an eye-opening account of life where no other European had ever set foot before. His tales and adventures seemed so far-fetched to his contemporaries that many didn't believe they could be true.

To this day the stories of the Silk Road continue to fascinate and inspire travellers the world over, and Marco Polo surely played a significant part in creating the myth. Is it the vision of the mysterious landscapes through which horses and camels laden with jewels, spices, nuts, gunpowder and, of course, silk, travelled that captures the imagination? Or maybe it's the idea of the Silk Road as the beginning of a constant mix and flux of populations, of culture and knowledge as well as commodities that piques our curiosity. For some, it could simply be something more fleeting, an exotic dream inspired by *The 1,001 Nights*. All of this and more is waiting to be explored – and it's possible to do even in just one week, courtesy of Hapag-Lloyd and PrivatAir, who have put together an unforgettable air cruise that will enable you to venture into this

other world and bygone era, thanks to the efficiency of travel by private jet.

In the Tracks of the Caravans from Uzbekistan to Venice follows an extraordinary path through the history and heritage of four key cities along the Silk Road. Each stop reveals the city's own specific atmosphere, and as the trip goes on, the experiences and gained knowledge will add to a deeper understanding of the route that brought together different peoples, cultures and religions, through the centuries, from East to West. The trip will be fully conducted in German.

#### **SAMARKAND**

The first stop is Samarkand, in north-eastern Uzbekistan, known as one of the key merchant cities along the Silk Road – where fortunes were made, battles were fought and scientific and religious learning was shared. Destroyed by Genghis Khan and his Mongol armies in 1220, the city was resurrected by Tamerlane, the founder of the Timurid dynasty, in the 14th century. The influence of this era is visible in the grandeur and consistency of the architecture, today restored to its original splendour.

Samarkand has been described as 'the most beautiful face that the Earth has ever turned towards the Sun', and when you see the monumental archways and minarets of the Registan gleaming in brilliant shades of blue and ochre, explore the hidden tiled courtyards of the madrassas, meander through the atmospheric streets of the old town and contemplate the perfect mosaics of

PHOTO © ALAMY





ABOVE: inside a Venetian silk manufacturer's.  
RIGHT: navigate the Grand Canal by gondola



the Gur-e Amir Mausoleum where Iranian, Indian and Mongolian influences all mingle, you'll see why.

Your memories of this city will be closely tied to unexpected encounters and experiences, such as an exclusive fashion show in the grounds of the Registan mosque, where a local designer will show her exquisite pieces, the perfect illustration of the art of silk couture.

#### BUKHARA

After the grandeur of Samarkand, a day in Bukhara affords a glimpse of a merchant city on a different scale, where the past and the present mingle in the bustle of the bazaars, the tranquility of ancient mosques and *madrassas* (schools), and the reviving freshness of the fountains and shady domed passages. This medieval market town was a vital stopping point for merchants, as well as a hub for cultural, intellectual and religious exchange, earning it the reputation of 'Noble Bukhara'. Today it is a protected UNESCO World Heritage Site. The presence of your dedicated guide will bring every site to life, giving meaning through the vivid stories and knowledge of centuries past.

#### KHIVA

On to the jewel of Central Asia's Silk Road where you will feel that just for one day, you truly stepped back in time. As one approaches the entrance gate to the city beneath the ramparts, it is easy to imagine arriving on camel as part of a merchant's caravan and settling in to one of the old brick houses for a well-deserved rest.

This ancient trading town has been remarkably well preserved and

is as close as one can come to an open-air museum. To get lost in Khiva's labyrinth of paved streets, to explore its iridescent mosques and gleaming palaces reminds one of the magic and joy of discovering the rich heritage of our world. However, it is sometimes the simple moments of contemplation that leave the most powerful impression. Gazing out across the rooftops and coloured domes of Khiva at sunset, contemplating the centuries gone by, you may find yourself humbled by the grandeur, beauty, culture and tradition.

#### VENICE

Skipping smoothly to Venice, your journey takes on a new layer of impressions and understanding to this exploration of the Silk Road. In the city known as La Serenissima, where trade in luxury goods from around the world provided economic wealth and fed a thriving silk manufacturing trade, your trip will come full circle. Some may already know Venice, but this journey offers exclusive insights that set everything apart. This trip will give you exclusive opportunities such as the chance to walk the halls of the sumptuous Ducal palace at daybreak before it opens to the crowds; to navigate the Grand Canal with your guide and weave between the palaces, retracing 300 years of history; to visit a famous silk manufacturer; and to escape to the island of Mazzorbo and observe first hand, in an ancient winery, the traditions and *savoir-faire* that surround the Venetian grape. Every day unveils a string of unprecedented experiences that will make this trip unique, and Venice is no exception.

*The Hapag-Lloyd SILK Air Cruise, flight number HKF1606, is scheduled to depart on 25 May 2016 and will return to Hamburg on 31 May*

#### TRIP DETAILS

Wednesday 25 May 2016  
Hamburg / Germany  
Fairmont Hotel  
Four Seasons

Thursday 26 May 2016  
Hamburg  
Samarkand / Uzbekistan  
Registan Plaza

Friday 27 May 2016  
Bukhara / Uzbekistan  
Samarkand

Saturday 28 May 2016  
Samarkand  
Khiva / Uzbekistan  
Samarkand

Sunday 29 May 2016  
Samarkand  
Venice / Italy  
Luna Hotel Baglioni

Monday 30 May 2016  
Venice

Tuesday 31 May 2016  
Venice  
Hamburg

**To reserve a seat or to request the full details of the trip please contact Hapag-Lloyd Cruises GmbH at:**

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