GARY PLAYER  
Exclusive interview  
GOLD IN THEM HILLS  
The treasures of Britain’s only goldmine  
APPEASEMENT  
Bruce Anderson on Chamberlain and Churchill  
WILLIAM DALRYMPLE  
on the East India Company  

Also inside  
HOW DRONES ARE CHANGING THE WORLD  
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JOY LO DICO  
NICHOLAS COLERIDGE  
WILLIAM SITWELL  
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There are many old and new friends pressed between these pages, who have generously contributed an astounding range of research and opinion for your edification and entertainment.

Poignantly, eighty years after Great Britain declared war on Germany on 1 September 1939, it is timely to reconsider the pivotal role of Neville Chamberlain, who, outside 10 Downing Street on 30 September 1938, declared, “My good friends, for the second time in our history, a British Prime Minister has returned from Germany bringing peace with honour. I believe it is peace for our time. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Go home and get a nice quiet sleep.” He resigned in May 1940 and the rest, as they say, is history.

Was he playing for time or was he foolishly deceived? In this 18th issue of Boisdale Life Bruce Anderson examines Neville Chamberlain’s controversial record and remembers the man.

I have never particularly enjoyed watching other people play games, or sport as it is collectively referred to now, and many things that interest me, like collecting Roman antiquities, mushroom hunting or reading Hebridean history, will I am sure be far less interesting to many people than observing paint dry. However, perhaps like a theologian who does not believe in God, I do have enormous respect for the ideology of sport and appreciate the cultural benefits, the inspiration as well as the pure excitement, ingeniously predicated on never knowing who is actually going to win. But the great sportsman is undoubtedly a true hero, with the level of social veneration and respect that would have been reserved for warriors of old. Beyond being superb athletes they have, to my limited experience, always been people with a very special kind of high intelligence. For none, one could argue, is this more true than of an iconic golfer. The grace, precision and timing; the mental game and the consistency required, are utterly phenomenal. I am thrilled to welcome Gary Player, undoubtedly one of the three greatest golfers of all time, to Boisdale Life in an inciteful interview with Robin Swithinbank.

One also needs a very special set of skills to be the Speaker of the House of Commons, if you are going to control the House and not irritate everyone. Benedict Spence illuminates John Bercow’s peculiar ability to formidably succeed on the former and phenomenally fail on the latter.

The opposite is true of the former titan of magazine publishing, Nick Coleridge, who in his interview with the intrepid Paddy Renouf, displays such charm that, reading between the lines, one can hardly imagine him requiring any management skills at all.

Meanwhile, if the world wasn’t bewildering enough, Pippa Malmgren investigates the astonishing implications of the proliferation of drones in our world.

Enough to turn you to drink? Well, you are in luck, as in this issue you have the opportunity to be truly fascinated by Champagne with Giles MacDonogh – one of my very favourite wine writers; to shake some old fashioned cocktails with the dexterous Alice Lascelles; or visit the best wineries in sunny California with the masterful oenophile, Mike Karam.

Finally, it is with significant pleasure that we welcome two new outstanding writers to Boisdale Life. William Dalrymple, who hopefully requires no introduction, gives us a tantalising taste of his wonderful new book, The Anarchy: The Relentless Rise of the East India Company and, just when you thought you knew what you believed in, Joy Lo Dico compellingly argues that libertarians are quite simply wrong!

RANALD MACDONALD
Editor & Chief and founder of Boisdale Restaurants and Bars
FEATURED CONTRIBUTORS

PIPPA MALMGREN
A former economics advisor to US President George W Bush, Pippa Malmgren is the founder of H Robotics, which produces drones and autonomous vehicles – technologies with profound social implications, which she delves into on page 20.

AVRIL GROOM
Avril is a journalist covering the worlds of fashion, jewellery and fine watches for the likes of FT How To Spend It, the Daily Telegraph and Country & Townhouse. For Boisdale Life, she tells the story of the UK’s only goldmine, recently opened in the Scottish Highlands, and the stunning jewellery to which it’s giving rise.

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Joy is a writer and journalist specialising in politics, the environment and society, and was formerly the executive editor of the Evening Standard. On page 22, she takes issue with libertarians, arguing that their envisaged utopia will always be unachievable.

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Robin is a freelance journalist and editor, writing for publications including the New York Times, the Financial Times and the Daily Telegraph. For Boisdale Life, he sat down with South African golf legend Gary Player. Read his interview, taking in Trump, Zimbabwe, fitness, socialism and high-kicks, on page 38.

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Best Soul Artist: Shaun Escoffery

Best Newcomer: Tallia Storm

Kelsey Grammer and Megan Barton-Hanson

WHAT AUTUMN 2019 LOOKED LIKE AT BOISDALE
Best Instrumentalist: Soweto Kinch (centre) with Jools Holland and Nancy Dell'Olio

Best Band: British Collective (from left, Junior, Don-E, Noel McKoy, and Omar)

Outstanding Contribution to British Music: Rj Gibb (second left) on behalf of Robin Gibb

Best International Band: Sharmoofers

Best Singer-Songwriter: Raye (right, with a friend)

Lifetime Achievement Award: Joe Jackson

Best Latino Band: Ladyva & Silva

Special Award nominee: Richard Hadfield

Best Reggae Artist: Dawn Penn
24 September: London’s finest restaurateurs, chefs, and sommeliers celebrated the start of the game season with a clay pigeon shoot at West London Shooting School before a seasonal game lunch at Boisdale of Belgravia.
OYSTER CHAMPIONSHIPS

6 November: Boisdale teamed up with The Wright Brothers and the City of London Distillery at Boisdale of Bishopsgate to conduct a blind tasting of rock and native oysters from eight different producers in the UK and France. The day saw over 1,000 oysters shucked – much to the delight of the judging panel of London’s leading restaurateurs and food writers. Ultimately the day belonged to France, with Les Huitres Cadoret winning the Best Native Oyster and Maison Gillardeau winning the Best Rock Oyster.
BOISDALE’S 30TH BIRTHDAY PARTY

12 November: The great and the good of the Boisdale community gathered at Boisdale of Belgravia to celebrate 30 glorious years over five courses of incredible British produce, the finest wines and whiskies, and a surprise appearance from Suspiciously Elvis!

Historian and biographer Nikolai Tolstoy, Florence Walker of the Evening Standard and High Commissioner of Jamaica Seth George Ramocan (left) and Elvis songwriter Bill Martin MBE

The Ambassador of the Republic of Cuba to the United Kingdom, Teresita Vicente Sotolongo (standing)

David Burnside of New Century Media

Lawson Muncaster of City AM (left) and Elvis

Glen King (left) and Kevin Moran

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THE EYE IN THE SKY

What do the British Army, Amazon, and Marilyn Monroe have in common? They all were early pioneers of drones – the next frontier of the global economy.

For the cigar smokers out there, imagine a world where a Corona, Robusto, Churchill, or Lusitania was thrown together into one category with snuff, cigarettes, cigarillos, nicotine chewing gum and shisha. While it might be technically correct to call these “nicotine products”, it would not be useful. Yet this is how people talk about “drones”. The child’s toy in the back garden, the Predator drone that “puts warheads on foreheads”, and the cruise missiles that recently took down the world’s most significant oil refinery, Abqaiq in Saudi Arabia, are all drones. For a true understanding of this technology, we need to learn the unique qualities of each “unmanned aerial vehicle” (UAV) that we lump together as drones.

The first thing to understand about UAVs is that, like cigars and some other things in life, size does not guarantee performance. Take the Norwegian Black Hornet Nano drones used by the SAS: They measure 4x1 inches, weigh 16 grams, and have three onboard cameras that offer infrared and night-vision capabilities. The word is, they initially cost $190,000 each. But price is not a useful way to distinguish between drones. The mass-produced toy drones that cost less than £20 can do a lot of damage – witness the £50 million losses caused when toy drones disrupted Gatwick Airport for 33 hours in December 2018. The so-called “military drones” can cost upwards of £250,000 and have far less capability than a commercial drone that sells for £25,000. I say that with some confidence because alongside my work as an economist advising on international markets, policy and geopolitics, I produce an industrial drone called HiSight by the firm I co-founded, H Robotics. We only sell to companies, because we believe that drones are not toys, even if the public thinks of them this way.

This was not always so. Modern drones began as defence equipment. The father of drones was the English actor Reginald Denny, who appeared in many Hollywood films, including Of Human Bondage (1934), Rebecca (1940), Around the World in Eighty Days (1956), and The Third Man (1949).
**Eighty Days** (1956), and **Batman** (1966). He’d been an RAF pilot in the First World War, until he was shot by friendly fire. Fascinated by aircraft, he brought several Sopwiths to Hollywood and sold them to Howard Hughes, who used them to make his epic film, **Hell's Angels** (1930). With the proceeds, Denny indulged his passion for remote-controlled aircraft and ultimately launched the “Dennymite” – the first-ever mass-produced UAV. It had one particularly unexpected result. The production line had lots of “Rosie the Riveters” – women who built defence equipment. Fellow actor Ronald Reagan was then Head of Public Relations for the US Army's First Motion Picture Unit, fondly referred to as “the Celluloid Commandos”. He commissioned a young US Army photographer called David Conover to take some photos of the ladies. One caught his eye as she fixed props onto the drones. He immediately took two weeks leave to teach the young girl how to pose for the camera. That’s where Marilyn Monroe was discovered – on the first drone mass-production line.

UAVs are now at the heart of national security. President Trump and the US national security establishment have accused China’s drone makers of disguising the best reconnaissance system in modern history as a children’s toy. The idea is simple. Many of the toy drones have to be plugged into a computer every few weeks so that the software for the autopilot function, which allows the drone to be flown remotely, can be updated from time to time. But, because the drones typically only have one motherboard for both the camera data and autopilot, the two data streams can co-mingle. In theory it is possible to take a download with each update and thus get all the telemetry and data.

Why would anybody want the camera data? The amazing thing about the aerial view is that it allows you to value assets. You can tell what a business is worth from an aerial image, whether it’s an agribusiness, a mining site, infrastructure, a construction site or even a parking lot. These days hedge funds and asset managers pay firms like Planet Labs, with their thousands of shoebox-sized satellites, for the imagery of parking lots at airports, shopping malls and city centres to tell how many people are passing through before any hard data points are available. Drones capture and deliver this data even faster. The dark allegation that the US has made is that Chinese drone companies are gathering the data and making it available to the Chinese Government. That’s why the US Government has recently prohibited the purchase of Chinese-made drones by any government entity and grounded the existing drone fleets.

The Chinese find all this a bit rich, given that one of Google’s early backers was DARPA (the Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency), which gets to see every single internet search and track every person’s movements. Amazon, which the Chinese view as another surveillance machine, now houses all the data management for each of the 17 US intelligence agencies. Others have also noticed the details in the patent filings for the new drones from Amazon, Google and Walmart. They all seem to contain far more elements for gathering data than for delivery. Is delivering a package an excuse for finding out what car the family drives, how many kids reside at home, and what the dimensions of the house are? The best read on this subject is Shoshanna Zuboff’s **The Age of Surveillance Capitalism** (Profile), which warns of the threats to free will and free markets by such data-collecting technologies.

Little wonder the public, and governments, are uneasy about drones’ surveillance aspects. Yet they come in many forms with capabilities that serve many purposes. Just like a good cigar.
Society

QUITE THE CONTRARY

How might the game of life unfold if it were played with no rules? Libertarians are gasping to find out

JOY LO DICO

Writer and journalist for the Financial Times and Manole

country has adopted full-blown libertarianism as its philosophy. Because they know one thing: When the weather is fair it is easy for man to love his fellow man and agree on a set of principles to live by, without any written contract of duties. But, as poet Charles Bowen said, when it rains, “The rain it raineth on the just/ And also on the unjust fella/ But chiefly on the just, because/ The unjust hath the just’s umbrella.”

“No, no,” cry the libertarians, “you’re confused. The umbrella cannot be stolen as we shall enforce property rights.” Well, we already do – and still the umbrella is not always where you left it.

Raise further objections and a libertarian will find a simple answer to every complex problem, which doesn’t need legislation. “We would be better off if we just…” they say, dismissing several centuries of intellectual energy already expended on finely balanced decisions about the competing rights of a landowner who wants to build a skyscraper with those of his low-rise neighbour who objects. Or, say, the whisky drinker who’d like to know he’s drinking decent liquor, but there’s no label on the bottle.

It is no surprise that libertarians despise government. Government was designed to be despised. Its job is to balance the assertion of liberty to build or distil as one wishes against the rights of those affected. The bureaucrat makes the ruling, steeped in the tedious history of similar bickering, takes the flak and allows us to greet each other civilly if somewhat sulkily. Does the outsourcing of these decisions not in turn give us a different kind of freedom – to do something more enjoyable?

Push any libertarian hard enough and it’s all about taxes: A socialist chastising the rich for greed and demanding it be shared is another form of greed. Though sure that man is by nature good and productive, the libertarian suspects his fellow man wouldn’t agree with his vision of society. It is not just about minding my own business. It is about assuming my business judgement is best.

Poussin's painting of Arcadia is looking rather messy by now. The curve of the hills is ruptured by a tower block. On the right there is a chap in the stocks for stealing an umbrella, to the left someone flattened on cheap hooch. Around the rubble of a civic building, people gather to debate how best to make decisions for the community. “What about a kind of council?” one asks. “Elected,” adds another, “with some officials to enforce the rules.” “And it’s hard work and unpopular,” says one more. “Do you think we should give them some financial compensation for doing it?” Poussin depicts them all with taxed expressions on their faces.
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GANGSTA CHIC

The criminal underworld has always had an exquisite sense of style, and now its dress codes are found in all the best post codes.

As I walked down the elegant, Edwardian, Piccadilly Arcade recently, I saw a set of hats that took my breath away.

They were in the window of Swaine Adeney Brigg, one of the smartest shops in town. Founded in 1750, over the past 270 years the firm has made, among many other things, James Bond’s briefcase (in From Russia with Love) and six postilion whips for Prince William’s marriage to Kate Middleton. And here were the hats worn in Peaky Blinders, the hit TV series about 19th-century Birmingham gangs.

Displayed prominently was the flat cap worn by the show’s star, Cillian Murphy, though his character and his fellow gangsters liked to customise the peaks of their caps with razor blades, to slice them across enemies’ eyes. Thus the name, Peaky Blinders.

You can also buy, for £450, the ‘Peaky Domino’ hat – a black, rabbit-fur bowler, with black and white domino pattern, worn by the character Polly Gray (played by Helen McCrory, queen bee of the Peaky Blinders).

Has it really come to this? The chicest shops in St James’s selling gangster clothes? In fact, it isn’t that odd. For over a century, gangsters have imitated St James’s styles. That gangster clothes now appear in the Piccadilly Arcade just shows how well-dressed the original Peaky Blinders were.

From 1890 to 1910, the Peaky Blinders dominated Birmingham crime, controlling gambling and influencing politics through violence and robbery. They wore waistcoats, tailored jackets, overcoats set off with silk scarves, and those caps. Some say that ‘blinder’ was actually slang for a natty dresser, not a hidden blade, because detachable blades, made by Gillette, only debuted in 1903.

At the same time, a female gang, known as ‘the Forty Elephants’ (from their Elephant and Castle base in South London), dressed beautifully to shoplift from the grandest shops. From 1873 to the 1950s, the Forty Elephants stole from those shops and dressed up as maids to steal from their rich employers.

They wore fashionable coats, skirts, and hats, set off with muff and cummerbunds; their clothes featured extra pockets to hide their swag. One gang member, Lilian Goldstein, was nicknamed ‘the Bobbed-Haired Bandit’, thanks to her hip hairstyle.

Even when gangsters weren’t disguising themselves as rich people to steal from them, they wanted to look like them to show they had made it out of the ghetto and to command respect.

The same happened in America, where Bonnie and Clyde reaped murderous havoc through the South and Midwest from 1931 to 1934, killing nine policemen and four civilians. Much of their misguided glamorisation, revived by the 1967 film, Bonnie and Clyde, starring Faye Dunaway and Warren Beatty, was due to their clothes: in photos found at their hideout, Bonnie Parker smokes a cigar, holds a gun, and wears a long, black flapper’s dress with a black beret set at a rakish angle.

In another photo, Clyde Barrow wears a banded hat, three-piece suit and tie, with a razor-sharp crease to his trousers.

Al Capone also favoured three-piece suits with wide lapels and ritzy ties. His parents were born in Italy. That background lent Italian gangsters in America a European look (so perfectly captured by Robert De Niro and Al Pacino in the Godfather series, and their new film, The Irishman). It also offers another explanation for gangster chic: Goodfellas wanted to show they’d made it in the country where their parents had arrived with nothing.

The Italian-American gangster style caught on among wartime spivs in Britain – note Private Walker in Dad’s Army, who’s keen on wide-collared, double-breasted suits, wide, glitzy ties, and lashings of Brylcreem.

That American-Italian gangster influence can be traced in the Kray Twins. Reggie Kray wore single-breasted dark suits with a white shirt, black tie, and pocket square. The chubbier Ronnie Kray plumped for a double-breasted suit – wise for a larger gentleman.

I once met Frankie Fraser, the violent thug who tore enemies’ teeth out with pliers, who worked for the Richardson Brothers, the Kray’s rivals. He was terrifying (“Don’t write anything rude about my book,” he said, as I bought Mad Frank: Memoirs of a Life of Crime) but wonderfully kitted-out in a black suit, white shirt, floral tie, and razor-sharp parting.

As sartorial standards have declined over the past 50 years, so, too, has the gangster look, but elements survive in Terry Adams, 65, head of the North London Adams Family. Jailed for money-laundering in 2007, Adams is trim and immaculately dressed in tailored suits, velvet-collared overcoats – and a Peaky Blinder.

[Image 185x528 to 252x594]

[Image 185x71 to 404x280]
With any luck, the highlight of Sir Lindsay Hoyle’s time as Speaker of the House of Commons will be the day of his accession; may his fame gain no more gravitas than what little it currently holds.

That is not to be snide, or in any way to check his ambitions or downplay his character or ability. But a great many of us have had enough of the office of Speaker.

His predecessor, John Bercow, has much to answer for. A controversial choice from the outset (backed by Labour MPs for the sole reason that, even then, he was roundly disliked by his fellow Tories), he left with his reputation for rudeness, grandstanding and pomposity much enhanced.

Many may shrug their shoulders and ask, “So what?” British politics has always had that element of the bear pit – more akin to a school debate, with victory measured as much by the volume of guffaws that greet a barb, as by the rectitude of a point. Why should the Speaker not be as vicious as anyone else?

Curiously, the reason why Bercow, as ringmaster of this circus, did the nation a disservice in leading this behaviour starts with his most positive achievement. Under his tenure, backbenchers were encouraged and given more space to let themselves be heard, in a manner not previously seen for quite some time. This was a strangely prescient move – we were, though he would not have known it, rapidly approaching an age of political engagement through social media, where an MP’s voice could not only be heard, but amplified from the Chamber through the internet, and deposited directly into people’s feeds. Bercow gave backbenchers a new kind of power – and my, how they used it.

For quite different reasons, Bercow’s tendency to indulge the lowly MP also proved prophetic as again, unknowingly, it came in the run-up to the UK’s referendum on membership of the EU – a vote, fundamentally, on how, and by who, the public is represented. At the very moment that discontent at a lack of true representation began to really simmer, Bercow gave the world a window into the performance of MPs – how they could (mis)use their voices, what they chose to talk about, and what power, if any, they really had.

It is what has happened since the referendum that will really stick, however.

We all know about Bercow’s questionable positioning on matters of precedent, ripping them up or following them as it suited him. There is little point opining on it here – it was wrong, partisan, and did more damage to his reputation, and to that of Parliament, than perhaps even the expenses scandal a few years ago. Sir Lindsay, Bercow’s deputy throughout this torrid episode, would have seen up-close what that behaviour has done. There is little to suggest that he will venture down the same dark path.

But something that often escapes, amid the outrage at Bercow’s lack of impartiality on Brexit, is how the culture he encouraged in the Commons fuelled the febrile atmosphere the nation has found itself in.

In a realm where insults reign, and where ideologies, increasingly, are diverging from one another at a far greater rate than normal, wit inevitably and quickly gives way to wrath.

That is what we found in the Commons over the chaos of 2019. Gone were the days of droll banter; they were replaced with red-faced bellowing from all sides of the aisle, drowned out by shrill accusations of racism, sexism and other frequently hollow insults, with positions irreconcilable and politicians furious that it should be so. At the centre of it all? The man appointed to keep the peace, preserve civility, and do more than just shout about “Ordaaaaahhh”.

As the Commons behaves, so the nation reflects, and there is little doubt that the rhetoric of our politicians, some of whom really ought to know better, has become emboldened and inflamed by what the outgoing Speaker has allowed.

Sir Lindsay Hoyle has a thankless task ahead, but for the sake of his office and the wider country, he needs to rein in these odious tendencies in Parliamentary discourse.

This will mean leading by example, and not using his platform as a stage to write his own name in the history books. After what came before him, there could be no greater commendation than if history chooses to say very little of Sir Lindsay at all.
Monarchy

COURTING CONTROVERSY

Prince Andrew’s woes continue a long legacy of men’s misdeeds at the Palace

Many who watched the carcrash Newsnight interview with Prince Andrew felt utter disbelief. As the grand old Duke of York made his bizarre and fanciful assertions – being unable to sweat because of an “overdose of adrenaline” from serving in the Falklands; that he could not have slept with Virginia Roberts, then 17, because he was in a Pizza Express in Woking – he did more harm to the monarchy in one hour than anyone since Princess Diana. She, at least, had the excuse of avenging “the Firm” that had wronged her; Andrew failed to realise that his damage-limitation exercise could backfire spectacularly. Tellingly, his initial reaction was that the interview went well. The press thought not.

Prince Andrew has been hugely embarrassing for the Royal Family. But he is only the latest in a long line of royals who have assumed that their status offers them carte blanche to behave as they wish; the feelings and rights of others be damned.

George VI and Elizabeth II were models of decorum, but Edward VIII proved to be a disaster before, during, and after his brief reign (20th January-11 December, 1936) – the shortest in history.

He was well known as a ladies’ man, much to the horror of his private secretary, Alan “Tommy” Lascelles, who said Edward “was never out of the thrall of one female after another… there was always a grande affaire, and, as I know to my cost, an unbroken series of petites affaires”. A typical episode was his seduction of a Mrs Margery Barns, wife of a local commissioner in Dodoma, Tanzania in 1928, while on a royal tour. What led Lascelles to call it “incredibly callous behaviour”, was that he had been informed of his father George V’s grave illness immediately before. Edward dismissed the news as “some election-dodge of [Stanley] Baldwin’s”, and pursued his libertine entertainments.

Yet he met his match in Wallis Simpson, his notorious inamorata, who has been rumoured to be everything from a hermaphrodite to a dominatrix. One disgruntled letter-writer described her as “queen of the golden grummet”, Thirties’ slang for a dominant partner in a gay relationship. Edward was disparaged as the submissive “knight of the golden grummet”. After he abdicated in December 1936, he was reduced to living an uneasy hand-to-mouth existence abroad, all but exiled from Britain and dogged by rumours that he was a Nazi sympathiser. Many argued that the price he paid to marry Wallis was too high for anyone to bear, despite her attractions.

Edward was just as foolish as Andrew in his choice of friends, who included his equerry, “Fruity” Metcalfe. “Metcalfe is not at all a good thing for HRH,” Edward’s assistant-private secretary, Godfrey Thomas, miserably informed the Queen. “He is always cheery and full of fun but far, far too weak and hopelessly irresponsible.”

This has been a pattern over the centuries with royalty, as princes and kings have often preferred the company of the licentious over the dutiful. Charles II was notorious for this, surrounding himself with a “merry gang” of playwrights, poets and wits, including the notorious ne’er-do-well, Lord Rochester. Charles enjoyed cavorting with his familiars, but always stressed that he, as King, held the power, and that they should dance to his tune. This did not always work: In one scandalous incident, Rochester, spying an elaborate sundial in Charles’s garden that reminded him of a phallus, shouted, “What! Dost thou stand here to fuck time?”, drew his sword, and smashed it to pieces. He was banished from court – yet again – but Charles always recalled him from exile. Court was too dull without him, he said.

The tradition of royalty with outré sex lives was perhaps best personified by Queen Victoria’s son, Edward VII, who rejoiced in the nicknames of “Dirty Bertie” and “Edward the Caresser”. He was so committed to his pleasure that in his favourite Paris brothel, Le Chabanais, he kept a bespoke siège d’amour (“love chair”) that allowed him to have sex with two women at once, and at his coronation in 1901, he had his own pew reserved for “the King’s special ladies”, for ease of access.

Andrew can take heart that his actions follow a long, ignoble tradition of royal bad behaviour. He is undeniably an international laughing stock at time of writing, and worse may ensue if he becomes a person of interest to the FBI. He can console himself by knowing that our nation’s history will be all the richer for his conspicuous shortcomings.
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friend recently sat next to Bryan Ferry at a smart dinner party, where the Roxy Music legend was surrounded by aristocrats. “So, who’s your favourite duke?” she asked jokingly. “Buccleuch!” he replied, without hesitation.

Forget being anti-establishment, befriending the best of Burke’s Peerage is in: wellies have been squeezed over leather trousers to headline Knebworth: albums laid down in sound-insulated statelies; and the adrenaline of bloodsports draws a music industry crowd.

“When I go fishing,” says Roger Daltrey of The Who (pictured, right, in the 1980s), “I come away feeling like I’ve smoked half a dozen joints.” In fact, Daltrey, Ferry (who’s son Otis was arrested in 2004 for breaking into the House of Commons to protest a ban on hunting with dogs), Roger Waters (of Pink Floyd), and Eric Clapton were members of the “Countryside Rocks” campaign that supported the Countryside Alliance.

Then there’s Ed Sheeran, who bought a country estate in Framlingham, Suffolk, in 2011. He has just been granted planning permission to build a chapel or ‘prayer retreat’ on the property, after hiring newt specialists to prove that the endangered great-crested variety won’t be disturbed by his worship plans.

When not fronting The Who, the gentrified Daltrey is a distinguished fish farmer who breeds trout so he can “invite all my old workmates from the sheet-metal factory to come fishing”. But operations for his four interconnected lakes are directed from the Jacobean splendour of Holmshurst Manor.

Eric Clapton is a crack shot and adept with a twelve bore. “He came on a very ropey partridge shoot with us,” says a gun from Somerset. “All the beaters were singing Clapton songs to drive the birds. Happily his ear-muffs were so smart, he didn’t hear a note!”

Historically, the aristocracy and rockocracy have rubbed up nicely. Jools Holland found love with Christabel McEwan – the ex-wife of the Earl of Durham – and a bromance with the Prince of Wales. “I have friends who are in the posh category and some who are in the not-at-all-posh category, and some who you would find it very hard to get any sort of handle on,” he says.

Meanwhile, the Big Pink’s Robbie Furze and pop star James Blunt have married landed girls, in the form of Lady Mary Charteris and Lady Sofia Wellesley.

The Rolling Stones – or rather the Rolling Sloanes – epitomise the progression from stage god to country squire. “There was a moment,” says one former aristo groupie, “when Mick was going out with Sabrina Guinness, his PA was Miranda Guinness, and his money was handled by Prince Rupert Lowenstein.” Band-mate Charlie Watts now breeds Arab horses with his wife Shirley on their 600-acre stud farm in Devon. The Stones drummer is said to walk straight off the stage after a gig, toss his drumsticks to a flunky, and clamber into an old Land Rover to be back home before midnight.

Alex James, songwriter and bass player for Blur, has made a second career as a cheesemaker from his Oxfordshire farmhouse. “I sometimes think of myself as a monk. Monks make cheese and music,” he says. “I walk down the street in Chipping Norton and people say, ‘Oi, Cheese Boy!’ It used to be because I was in Blur, but these days it’s all about cheese.”

Similarly, David Gilmour of Pink Floyd lives a bucolic life – his family’s frolics in meadows all documented by photographer Sarah Lee on her Instagram page – and credits his band’s newfound mellow vibe to “an awful lot of downtime, which was home time for all of us – in the country. I don’t think any of us became fully-fledged rock’n’roll people.”

Some were born posh and found rock salvation. “Bunter”, the Duke of Beaufort, head-bangs with his band The Listening Device; while Loyd Grossman and Guinness heir Valentine Guinness have what must be the world’s poshest punk band.

Tax-wise, farming is the way to dispose of your rock pounds. “However stately the home, if you can show that it has a semblance of agriculture, you skip inheritance tax,” my accountant advises. “You also get to use red diesel, which is a boon.” What rockers manage less well are the rural detractors that come with their new estates – village biddies, eco warriors, and county councils fling injunctions rather than knickers. It is not just newt wars; endangered bats have held up Noel Gallagher’s stately-home improvements, and Roger Daltrey is battling to build a new guesthouse on his estate. We fans may have to accept rock gods falling off the wagon and breeding the rare oxen that tow it instead.
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MONEY AND MAHARAJAS

A rollicking read and cautionary tale, William Dalrymple’s new book tells the story of the mighty East India Company, and how it took control of one of the world’s most magnificent empires.

Right: Hawkins Presenting King James’s Letter To The Great Mogul – an illustration from the 1912 book, The Romance of India (artist unknown)
How did the Moghul Empire, a vast expanse of princely states forming what we now know as India, become dominated by “a dangerously unregulated private company, based thousands of miles overseas and answerable only to its shareholders”?

In *The Anarchy: The Relentless Rise of the East India Company* (Bloomsbury), William Dalrymple charts the primacy of this privately-armed trading behemoth, which helped forge Britain’s colonial ambitions. In this edited extract, salty sea dogs try to charm the Moghul Emperor, Jahangir.

It is always a mistake to read history backwards. We know that the East India Company (EIC) eventually grew to control almost half the world’s trade and become the most powerful corporation in history, as Edmund Burke famously put it, “a state in the guise of a merchant”. In retrospect, the rise of the Company seems almost inevitable. But that was not how it looked in 1599, for at its founding few enterprises could have seemed less sure of success.

At that time England was a relatively impoverished, largely agricultural country, which had spent almost a century at war with itself over the most divisive subject of the time: religion. In the course of this, in what seemed to many of its wisest minds an act of wilful self-harm, the English had unilaterally cut themselves off from the most powerful institution in Europe, so turning themselves in the eyes of many Europeans into something of a pariah nation. As a result, isolated from their baffled neighbours, the English were forced to scour the globe for new markets and commercial openings further afield. This they did with a piratical enthusiasm.

On 28 August 1608, Captain William Hawkins, a bluff sea captain with the Third Voyage, anchored his ship, the *Hector*, off Surat, and so became the first commander of an EIC vessel to set foot on Indian soil.

India then had a population of 150 million (about a fifth of the world’s total) and was producing about a quarter of global manufacturing; indeed, in many ways it was the world’s industrial powerhouse and the world’s leader in manufactured textiles. Not for nothing are so many English words connected with weaving – chintz, calico, shawl, pyjamas, khaki, dungees, cummerbund, taffetas – of Indian origin. It was certainly responsible for a much larger share of world trade than any comparable zone and the weight of its economic power even reached Mexico, whose textile manufacture suffered a crisis of ‘deindustrialisation’ due to Indian cloth imports. In comparison, England then had just five per cent of India’s population and was producing just under three per cent of the world’s manufactured goods. A good proportion of the profits on this found its way to the Mughal exchequer in Agra, making the Mughal Emperor, with an income of around £100 million, by far the richest monarch in the world.

The Company realised that if it was to trade successfully with the Mughals, it would need both partners and permissions, which meant establishing a relationship with the Mughal Emperor himself. It took Hawkins a year to reach Agra, which he managed to do dressed as an Afghan nobleman. Here he was briefly entertained by the Emperor Jahangir, with whom he conversed in Turkish, before Jahangir lost interest in the semi-educated sea dog and sent him back home with the gift of an Armenian Christian wife.

A new, more impressive mission was called for, and this time the Company persuaded King James to send a royal envoy. The man chosen was a courtier, MP, diplomat, Amazon explorer, Ambassador to the Sublime Porte and self-described “man of quality”, Sir Thomas Roe.

In 1615 Roe finally arrived in Ajmer, bringing presents of “hunting dogges” – English mastiffs and Irish greyhounds – an English state coach, some Mannerist paintings, an English virginal and many crates of red wine for which he had heard Jahangir had a fondness. Roe nevertheless had a series of difficult interviews with the Emperor. When he was finally granted an audience, and had made his obeisance, Roe wanted immediately to get to the point and raise the subject of trade and preferential customs duties, but the aesthete Emperor could barely conceal his boredom at such conversations.

The *Jahangiri Mahal* inside the Agra Fort, was built in the 16th-century by Akbar, Jahangir’s father.

Above: The *Jahangiri Mahal* inside the Agra Fort, was built in the 16th-century by Akbar, Jahangir’s father.

Right: Engraving of The *First Fleet of the East India Company Leaving Woolwich* (1601)
Jahangir was a proud inheritor of the Indo-Mughal tradition of aesthetics and knowledge. As well as maintaining the Empire and commissioning great works of art, he took an active interest in goat and cheetah breeding, medicine and astronomy, and had an insatiable appetite for animal husbandry, like some Enlightenment landowner of a later generation.

Roe would try to steer the talk towards commerce and diplomacy and the “firmans” (imperial orders) he wanted confirming “his favour for an English factory” at Surat and “to establish a firm and secure Trade and residence for my countrymen” in “constant love and peace”; but Jahangir would assure him such workaday matters could wait, and instead counter with questions about the distant, foggy island Roe came from, the strange things that went on there, and the art which it produced.

“He asked me what Present we would bring him,” Roe noted. “I answered the league [between England and Mughal India] was yet new, and very weak: that many curiosities were to be found in our Country of rare price and estimation, which the king would send, and the merchants seek out in all parts of the world, if they were once made secure of a quiet trade and protection on honourable Conditions. He asked what those curiosities were I mentioned, whether I meant jewels and rich stones. I answered No: that we did not think them fit Presents to send backe, which were first brought from these parts, whereof he was the Chief Lord … but that we sought to find things for his Majestie, as were rare here, and vnseen. He said it was very well: but that he desired an English horse … So with many passages of jests, mirth, and bragges concerning the Arts of his Countrey, he fell to ask me questions, how often I drank a day, and how much, and what? What in England? What beere was? How made? And whether I could make it here. In all which I satisfied his great demands of State.”

Roe could on occasion be dismissively critical of Mughal rule — “religions infinite, laws none” — but he was, despite himself, thoroughly dazzled. In a letter describing the Emperor’s birthday celebrations in 1616, written from the beautiful, hilltop fortress of Mandu in central India to the future King Charles I in Whitehall, Roe reported that he had entered a world of almost unimaginable splendour.

When Roe eventually returned to England, after three weary years at court, he had obtained permission from Jahangir to build a factory (trading station) in Surat, an agreement “for our reception and continuance in his domynyons” and a couple of imperial firmans, limited in scope and content, but useful to flash at obstructive Mughal officials. Jahangir, however, made a deliberate point of not conceding any major trading privileges, possibly regarding it as beneath his dignity to do so.

Yet for all its clumsiness, Roe’s mission was the start of a Mughal–EIC relationship that would develop into something approaching a partnership and see the company gradually drawn into the Mughal nexus.

Over the next 200 years it would learn to operate skilfully within the Mughal system and to do so in the Mughal idiom, with its officials learning good Persian, the correct court etiquette, the art of bribing the right officials and, in time, outmanoeuvring all their rivals – Portuguese, Dutch and French – for imperial favour. Indeed, much of the Company’s success at this period was facilitated by its scrupulous regard for Mughal authority. Before long, indeed, the Company would begin portraying itself to the Mughals, as the historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam has nicely described it, as “not a corporate entity but instead an anthropomorphised one, an Indo-Persian creature called Kampani Bahadur”.}

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Up in the Scottish Highlands, Britain’s only gold mine has sprung quietly into life. 

Avril Groom reports on an unlikely tale of panning and perseverance, whose first fruits are being turned into jewellery of unique provenance.
Blink and you miss it. Cononish, Britain’s only commercial goldmine, is well camouflaged, tucked into a rocky Highland hillside halfway between Loch Lomond and Rannoch Moor, and totally unlike the usual mining image of vast workings and industrial mess. By mining standards this is small scale and, as its location near the village of Tyndrum is in a National Park, environmental unobtrusiveness is top priority.

At present it comprises two large sheds and some earth heaps – the latter will eventually be planted with native vegetation to blend with the hummocks of glacial moraine that dot the natural landscape. The whole project takes some believing, especially if you assume – and why would you not? – that Scottish gold is as mythical as Nessie. But this metal has history, as the mining company’s main jewellery-making partner knows. In the archives of the grand Edinburgh jeweller and silversmith Hamilton & Inches are two Victorian pieces bearing a special mark: it shows that the gold itself, and not just the making of it into jewellery, is of Scottish provenance. It goes back much further, too: gold was known to have been refined for jewellery in the Iron Age and was worn by Scottish monarchs.

In fact, people have panned Highland streams for alluvial gold for centuries, says Chris Sangster, CEO of mining company Scotgold. “Commercial research didn’t begin until the early 1980s, after the British Geological Survey found gold during a study of stream sediment in Northern Ireland, in a similar rock structure which runs right across to Scotland,” he says.

Getting investment wasn’t easy for a painstaking project which entails following the gold upstream until it disappears, and then following the nearest tributaries until you find the right kind of rock and – maybe – some gold. “Any mining project takes large amounts of time and money, and this one is also very small scale for an industry where the minimum investment is usually £100 million,” Sangster explains. “Big companies wouldn’t bother, but we have generous shareholders who are committed to the Scottish gold project.”

Planning permission was another major hurdle in such a sensitive area, especially when scientific tests showed a potentially larger amount of gold than initially envisaged. The mine is now planned to run for between 10 and 17 years, and estimates of the total value of its gold go up to £200 million at current prices, which are gently rising (gold is seen as a safe haven in times of economic uncertainty). The gold is smelted on site and is made to an unusually pure 22 carats, a point of difference from the normal 18 carats used in top-end British jewellery. It has a pleasing, rich yet subtle yellow tone.

The mine will come fully on stream during 2020, but has already been producing gold, and the first precious harvest has been made into fine jewellery by Hamilton & Inches. The evocative and unmistakably Scottish collection of 30 unique jewellery pieces is probably a sound investment on rarity value alone, but their beautiful design adds profound appeal for anyone whose heart – or ancestry – is in the Highlands. It is the first step in what both partners hope will be a fruitful alliance, though it has been a twisting and rocky road requiring, says Hamilton & Inches CEO Victoria Houghton, “commitment and patience on both sides”.

Scotgold’s association with the only Scottish jeweller to bear the Royal warrant goes back to the mid-1990s, when Hamilton & Inches’ then CEO took a farsighted view on the nascent project. Now Houghton has the job of overseeing
its fruition. The collection has been designed and made in the studio and workshop above the brand’s store on Edinburgh’s imposing George Street, and it is hard to imagine a location more conducive to creating Scottish-inspired jewellery. The workshop runs the whole width of the building and looks both south to the rugged Pentland Hills and north to the Firth of Forth, a permanent taster of the landscapes which the collection evokes. Woven round this are tokens of Scottish history, symbols of the nation, sometimes on the back of a piece and therefore very personal to the owner. Everything is hand-made using traditional crafts like engraving and gemsetting, and even the names reflect their inspiration. The collection divides into two: major pieces with gold as a beautiful foil for an array of carefully chosen gems, including sizeable stones, and smaller items where gold craftwork is foremost.

Among the hero pieces are a trio of dramatic rings. One, named after Linlithgow Palace, the birthplace of Mary Queen of Scots, is as grand as its title, with a 4.7-carat, radiant-cut diamond, set high above a frame of smaller diamonds in pear, brilliant and baguette cuts. At £96,500 it is the collection’s most expensive item. The Queen of Scots ring (£29,995) features a rich and clear Sri Lankan sapphire of almost 9 carats plus diamonds and an intricately engraved shank, its back decorated with a gold saltire, Scotland’s ultimate symbol. The third is a bombe ring (£74,500) with a stunning 4 carat, oval yellow diamond.

Other key pieces include cascades of unusual stones in soft shades redolent of Highland landscapes. The most evocative are the Tyndrum Waterfall chandelier earrings (£11,900) named after a fall near the mine, with blue-green tourmalines flexibly set and shimmering, set off by little diamonds, and the Holyrood Palace cuff (£24,250) of hammered gold set with an emerald and tourmalines in autumnal shades, its outline based on the French fleur de lys as a symbol of the Auld Alliance, yet fit for a Celtic warrior princess.

Other chandelier earrings feature Burmese rubies or multi-hued “watercolour” spinels, while the Stirling Castle necklace (£34,500) has a rainbow of pear-shaped tourmalines, recalling both sunlit waterfall rainbows and Victorian acrostic jewellery where stones’ initials spelled out a romantic message. Earrings with detachable drops holding sapphires, tourmalines or garnets are also based on Victorian designs. The smaller items, priced from £1,450 to £9,950, have a different slant, with finely engraved gold designs based around the fleur de lys, trimmed with diamonds and backed with “host rock”, the quartz mineral in which the gold is found. Some reverse to a gold saltire, backed with lapis lazuli or trimmed with sapphire.

The collection was designed, says Houghton, “with both Scots and people from abroad with Scottish ancestry in mind”. So far about a third of the collection has been sold especially, she says, “the fleur de lys and heraldic heritage pieces, the host rock items and multi-coloured pieces, and most of our buyers have been Scottish or Americans with Scottish backgrounds”. Because the stones are unique the main pieces cannot be replicated, and the rarity of the gold means no more can be made at present. However, Houghton says, “we will get new supplies in the spring as production increases and we are already taking commissions. We will make more of the popular pieces and hope to create more limited edition items as interest grows”. Clients are already encouraged to visit the workshops to see their commissions take shape and may eventually be able to visit the mine too.

Scotgold’s long-term hope is that the mine will become an upmarket tourist attraction with considerable benefits for the local community. But this is an unpredictable industry. As Sangster says, “we virtually fell over this very important seam, and we are targeting other sites but we haven’t found anything comparable yet”. You’d better get a piece of this vanishingly rare metal now, just in case it really is a flash in the pan.
‘We virtually fell over this very important seam of gold’
Gary Player is one of golf’s all-time greats. The South African superstar tells Robin Swithinbank why, at 84, he’s still lifting weights, doing high-kicks, sinking putts – and admiring Donald Trump.
Gary Player looks up briefly from the sports section of his newspaper. “I just want to see what they have to say about this Kyrgios fellow,” he says, referring to the mercurial Australian tennis star Nick, who’s upset the tennis establishment again. “Here’s a headline. He says, ‘Tennis needs more bad boys.’” Player shakes his head and tuts disapprovingly. “He shouts, he spits, he swears… It frustrates me. It’s character we need. There’s no question if he had Nadal’s head, or Federer’s, he’d be the best in the world. He’s so talented. But he’s nuts.”

Player, one of the greatest golfers of all time, has never been afraid to speak his mind. Now 84, the fires still burn. The South African was always a fighter, not just on the greens where he took the game to the mid-century poster boys of American golf – including Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer et al – but in life, in politics, in philanthropy, in whatever he was doing. Nothing appears to have changed.

We’re having lunch at Surrey’s leafy Wentworth Golf Club on a steamy summer’s day and the plan is to talk about his first major win, 60 years ago. At just 23, he rocked up at Muirfield and won his first Open, coming from four strokes back to win by two. But it’s going to be a while before that comes up in conversation. Instead, he wants to talk about Donald Trump.

“I’m a big Donald Trump fan,” he says, inspired, I can only assume, by talk of high-profile bad boys. “I’m not going by his character; I’m going by what he did for the country.” He reeks off tax cuts, meeting the Korean dictator Kim Jong-un, and cutting immigration as symbols of Trump’s achievements. “And he’s done more for black people than any president in the history of America,” he adds.

We’ve only been talking for five minutes, and while golf hasn’t come up, we’re already on race and the most controversial American president in living memory. That latter comment won’t sit easily with many. But coming from Player, it warrants hearing.

While he was racking up tournament wins around the world, the diminutive golfer was also an activist – long before the term was claimed by progressives on the Left – routinely speaking out against apartheid in his native South Africa, befriending Nelson Mandela (one of his heroes), sponsoring black athletes, and even wearing black and white trousers at the 1960 Open Championship – using golf for political ends in a way the game would still be very uncomfortable with now.

He says he’s also played golf with every US president since Reagan and that he was never afraid to tee it up with South African prime ministers who advocated apartheid. “I was criticised for playing golf with him,” he says of former South African prime minister Balthazar Vorster. “But if President Xi, a communist, asked me to play, I would play. I’d play with him out of respect for what he is.” He compares Trump to another of his heroes, Winston Churchill. “He was arrogant, he didn’t care what he said, he got the job done.”

He’s played golf with Trump, who he describes as the “best presidential golfer by a mile”, and has no regrets. He’s not worked on one of Trump’s golf courses, but says he’d love to, adding, “He doesn’t know the intricacies of golf design, but because of his ego, he thinks he does. Then, as quickly as we got on to golf we’re off it again.”

Conversation moves to Zimbabwe (“It was the food basket of Africa,” he laments); to the recent spate of murders in the South African farming community.
that last year made him decide to sell the stud farm he’d owned and lived on since 1974 (“A very sad time in my life”); and to socialism. He pulls a Zimbabwean $100 billion note out of his pocket and holds it up. He remembers having to order lunch before a round of golf in Zimbabwe because the inflation rate meant that by the time you’d played 18 holes you’d find the price of your burger and chips had doubled.

“They did a poll of young people recently, and apparently four out of 10 were quite happy with socialism,” he says solemnly, still holding the worthless bill. “So when I meet people and they bring up socialism, it’s interesting to show them something like this. Because they’re oblivious to the facts of what happens around the world. But I’ve got to be very careful what I say…”

In which case, let’s move on and talk about golf, I suggest. And about Gary Player.

He was born in Johannesburg in 1935 to Harry, a gold miner, and Muriel Player, the youngest of their three children. His mother died when he was eight years old, and he was, by his own estimation, poor. Aged 14, he took up golf, and is said to have parred the first three holes he played. He turned pro at 17.

Six years later, he won his first major (for a £1,000 prize), going on to win eight more, the last of them the 1978 Masters, where he shot a final-day 64 to overturn a seven-stroke deficit. His major tally of nine puts him equal fourth on the all-time list, level with Ben Hogan, and behind Walter Hagen, Tiger Woods and Nicklaus, still on top with 18. Palmer, the charismatic American against whom Player had some of his most titanic battles, has seven. He then doubled his own major haul on the Seniors Tour, becoming the only golfer in history to win the career Grand Slam (winning all four of golf’s majors) on both the regular tour and as a senior.

Bar Jersey’s turn-of-the-century star Harry Vardon, Player is the only golfer from outside the USA in the all-time top 10 major-winning golfers. When he won in America, he won in Arnold Palmer’s back yard; in Jack Nicklaus’s back yard. And he won when international air travel was still in its infancy. “I had to fly 40 hours in a plane with no jets and play against these guys in their own country,” he says. “Every time Nicklaus or Palmer came to South Africa, I murdered them!”

Player may have been smaller than Arnie and Jack – he peaked at 5’7” – but what he lacked in stature he made up for in discipline and determination. He became fascinated with sports science early and hit the gym long before being musclebound – like Woods or current world number one Brooks Koepka – was considered good for your game. One of his nicknames was ‘Mr Fitness’.

“In 1965, when I won the US Open to beat Nicklaus to win the Grand Slam, the night before I was squattting 325lbs on my back,” he recalls. “Trent Jones, the [golf course] architect, walked by and said, ‘Gary Player will never win
another tournament. You can’t do weights and play golf.” Apparently, the comment still irks.

He’s famous for having said, “The harder I work, the luckier I get,” but almost blushes when we remember his own sayings, preferring to bring up Churchill. He goes back to his wallet and picks out a piece of paper and quotes: “The heights of great men reached and kept were not attained by sudden flight, but they, while their companions slept, were toiling upwards in the night.”

You get the impression he’d have this for his epitaph. “That’s what I did,” he says, jutting his head forward in that memorable way of his. “I hit balls. When I got back to the hotel at 11 o’clock at night and asked the hotel manager if I could use the gym and he said, ‘No it’s locked,’ I said, ‘Please, give me the key and I promise I’ll lock it and give it back.’ And I did that kind of thing throughout my life.”

He’s been in Greece and hasn’t played golf in two weeks (“That’s like a year for you”) or been to the gym, because there wasn’t one where he was staying. After lunch, he wants to get out on the course and then pump some iron. “Well, I don’t want to go to the gym,” he says, stifling a smile. “It’s tough to go and lift those weights and get on the treadmill. But I’ve kept it going, I’ve put energy in the bank. Look at other guys my age – they can’t walk!”

As if to emphasise the point, he jumps up and kicks his foot to above his head-height. It’s alarming to see an 84-year-old man demonstrating such athleticism. “I’d rather not be the guy that broke Gary Player. “Of course, you’ve got to be blessed,” he goes on, sitting back down. “But I eat properly. I haven’t had bacon or an ice cream in 22 years. I’ve never had a glass of milk to drink. And I’m a fruitaholic.”

And then he’s back on Kyrgios and today’s athletes again. “People say, ‘I’m so unlucky,’” he offers, reflecting on how some handle defeats and setbacks. “But it’s ten per cent what’s happening to you and 90 per cent how you react to it. You’ve got to be grateful for the opportunity and to take advantage of it.”

And with that, he heads off to play golf. There’s just no stopping him.

“It’s ten per cent what’s happening to you, and 90 per cent how you react to it. You’ve just got to be grateful for the opportunity”
THE ROAD TO WAR

In light of a brilliant new book on the subject, Bruce Anderson considers the complexities of the argument around appeasing Hitler 81 years ago.

 Appeasement was the most contentious issue in British political history. It gave rise to quarrels that lasted for decades and had a major impact on election results, especially in 1945. As is often the case when history impinges on current politics, most of the arguments generated far more heat than light. Perhaps only now can dispassion prevail, with the help of an outstanding new book. *Appeasing Hitler: Chamberlain, Churchill and the Road to War* is Tim Bouverie’s debut, and a compelling one.

His opening sentence provides historical context and should embarrass the facile critics of appeasement: “The desire to avoid a second world war was perhaps the most understandable and universal wish in history.”

Over 16 million people died in the First World War. In the UK, the figure was almost 750,000. Casualties on that scale affected virtually every family in the land. The people who had not lost a close relative knew others who had. Think of those pals’ battalions, often recruited from Northern towns, whose young men did not wait to be conscripted but fell in behind the band, marched off cheerfully together, trained together, fought together and often died together. Forget the mythical Angel of Mons. It was as if the Angel of Death had swooped upon those towns, leaving behind a pall of grief and life-long heartbreak.

That was heart-rending. Worse still, it created the conditions for further heartache. After the war to end all wars, peace was supposed to create a land fit for heroes. By the 1930s, those prospects became increasingly distant. There was little heroic on the home front in Britain, and on the Continent, ancestral voices never stopped prophesying war. The term ‘appeasement’ came into the diplomatic vocabulary, but in the early days it was merely a gentle-sounding word, expressive of a desire to make peace. Anthony Eden was happy to use it.

It is easy to understand such longings, as Bouverie makes clear. There was a widespread assumption that any future war would be even more terrible than its predecessor. The miseries of trench warfare would be reinforced by the horrors of war from the air. Stanley Baldwin warned the public that the bomber would always get through. Estimates of likely casualties from bombing turned out, thank God, to be considerably exaggerated. But in the 1930s, it was widely expected that great cities would be pounded into rubble while another generation of young men went to the slaughterhouse.

The case for appeasement had two key reinforcements. The first was the belief that Germany had been treated too harshly in the Treaty of Versailles. As a result, a lot of the British public felt guilty about Germany, just at the wrong moment. Guilt and the resulting desire to make amends might have appeased any other German leader: not Adolf Hitler.

But there appeared to be another reason to make peace with Hitler. Bolshevism was not only turning Russia into a giant Gulag. The Communists had allies in every European country. Hitler dealt with his Communists and in those early days it seemed impossible that he could ever do a deal with Stalin. If he could help to protect Europe from Bolshevism, it was worth forgiving him a certain amount of rough-neckery at Chamberlain had all the skills to be a considerable Prime Minister... in peacetime.
British politics during the 1930s was a classic example of people finding reason to believe what they would like to believe. On the Left, intellectuals insisted that Stalin was trying to create a new civilisation. On the Right, less intellectual characters proclaimed that Hitler was trying to save civilisation from Stalin. Both sides were impervious to any facts that contradicted their theories.

In the middle, meanwhile, millions of decent people simply wanted to avoid another war. In 1933, the Labour leader George Lansbury wanted to disband Britain’s armed forces and dare the world to “do your worst”. In response to that lunacy, the Labour Conference of 1933 voted in favour of total disarmament, and a general strike in the event of war. In the same month, at the Fulham East by-election, a Tory/National Government majority of 15,000 lost to a Labour one of 5,000. The Labour candidate campaigned on pacifism and disarmament.

And in the Peace Ballot of 1935, an opinion poll that canvassed 38 per cent of the adult population, just over 9.6 million voted in favour of an all-round abolition of national military and naval aircraft by international agreement, with only 1.7 million against.

In recent years, there has been a tendency to play down the ‘great man’ theory of history, in favour of social and economic forces. But one cannot consider the history of the 1930s without acknowledging the decisive role of the two great men who ended the decade in a fight to the death: Hitler and Churchill. It is one of the most fascinating episodes
in alternative history. What would the world have been like without them?

Hitler embodied absolute evil, and this explains his successes. He faced men who thought themselves too sophisticated for such a primitive notion; who insisted he was a product of social and economic forces, and therefore manageable.

There were a few exceptions, however. The diplomats, Sir Horace Rumbold and Sir Robert Vansittart, did not buy Hitler’s act, and knew appeasement would not work. But the key figure was Churchill.

It may be that Churchill’s own demonic personality helped him to understand Hitler’s... Only deterrence would work

act, and knew appeasement would not work. But the key figure was Churchill.

I t may be that Churchill’s own demonic personality helped him to understand Hitler’s. If Churchill had been German, he too would have been ready to go to war to expunge the shame of defeat and the humiliations of Versailles. There the comparison ends. Hitler, the hell-hound, revelled in enslavement, the butchery of civilians and the Holocaust. A German Churchill would have been a Prussian militarist, but never a Nazi. The British Churchill, perhaps Britain’s greatest hero, understood that with Hitler, the only deal that would work was deterrence.

But this vital insight ran contrary to the public mood, as did Churchill’s own personality. By 1933, he had been at the forefront of British politics for 25 years. Everyone knew him, although not everyone trusted him. While Home Secretary, he arrived in person to oversee the siege of Sidney Street, when some anarchist gunmen were holed up in an East End house. That is not what Home Secretaries normally do. In the General Strike, he revelled in belligerence.

Then there was Gallipoli, the disastrous 1915 campaign in Turkey, which Churchill, as First Sea Lord at the time, had overseen and for which he’d bought the blame. Was it a strategic master stroke, ruined by incompetent execution, or a wasteful distraction? Interestingly, Labour’s Clem Attlee, who fought at Gallipoli, never criticised him for it. He too thought that it might have worked. But in the 1930s, that was a minority view. Gallipoli was widely cited as further proof of his unreliability. Many of his critics believed that his willingness to threaten Hitler did not arise from a cool-headed geopolitical assessment but from the passions of an inveterate war-monger; a bull who carried a china shop around with him.

There were other problems. Churchill had started his political career as a Tory before joining the Liberals and then, as he himself put it, re-ratting. But he never settled down to the easy loyalties of party tribalism. A lot of traditional Tories distrusted him. Many moderate Tories, who might have been ready to rise above the knee-jerk pieties of the Whips’ Office, were put off by his stance on India. In the 1930s, Churchill denounced any attempts to allow India to move towards self-government. Forty years after he had been a subaltern in India, his views had not advanced towards sophistication.

Then there was the Abdication in 1936, by which time the clouds were darkening over Europe. Previous critics of Churchill were becoming less sure that he was wrong. But he did get the Abdication totally wrong. Edward VIII would have been a wholly unsuitable monarch, so thank goodness for Mrs Simpson. Churchill’s blind loyalty in a worthless cause, plus his drinking – never absent but often exaggerated – helped convince his colleagues that his formidable talents were impaired, because they did not include judgment.
That brings us to a man whose judgment was widely respected for most of his career. Neville Chamberlain was a tragic figure, in the Shakespearian sense: a man with great qualities, brought low by a fatal flaw. Chamberlain had been a good Health Secretary and a sound Chancellor who had helped to steer the British economy away from the rocks of recession. He had all the skills to be a considerable Prime Minister – in peacetime.

He could have said with Hamlet: “The times are out of joint/O cursed spite, that I was ever born to set them right.” But he lacked the self-knowledge to understand his own limitations – the ones that blocked him from understanding Hitler.

At Munich, Chamberlain did a deal, at the expense of the Czechs, and returned home a hero. Tim Bouverie thinks that he should have stood by Czechoslovakia, even if that meant war with Hitler.

The arguments are finely balanced. The Russians, potential allies, had no land frontier with Germany. Other nations would have been reluctant to allow Soviet troops passage. Once they were in, how would you get them to leave? The Czechs themselves had considerable military assets, on paper. But they would have faced sabotage from Sudeten German fifth columnists. Then there were the French, in no mood for war.

Perhaps if Britain had been resolute at this point, the German generals might have overthrown Hitler. One wonders. Some of them were mesmerised; few of them were natural rebels. There is also the argument that Germany gained more from the post-Munich delay than the UK did. We shall never know. On balance, after scrupulously reviewing all the evidence, Bouverie thinks that we should have fought. Chamberlain concluded otherwise, because he had convinced himself that he could do business with Hitler, on the assumption that the Führer was ultimately rational. Post-Munich, as evidence to the contrary mounted up, Chamberlain remained blinkered. He also expressed increasing vindictiveness towards the critics of appeasement – a very unattractive facet of his character.

Wholly committed to public service, a lover of the countryside and of field-sports, there were so many admirable aspects to his personality. But it did end in tragedy. In Auden’s words, “History to the defeated/may say alas but cannot help or pardon.” Even so, those who read this book will see some grounds for leniency. And Bouverie’s balance, judgment and lucid prose make a compelling case.

“Appeasing Hitler: Chamberlain, Churchill and the Road to War” by Tim Bouverie is out now (Bodley Head, £20)
Launching a new champagne marque is an ambitious undertaking, but Giles MacDonogh discovers that the team at Brimoncourt has created a range that is winning the praises of connoisseurs.

It isn’t easy to be new in the world of Champagne. It is the one wine that really is mostly about brands, and Champagne brands aren’t built in a day. The simple, still wines of Champagne are as old as many in France, and planted by the Romans, but they have largely fallen from grace. The bubbly wine that provides joy all over the world is a 350-year old stripling, but it has put down some mighty roots so it’s not exactly novel, either.

Brimoncourt is not completely new. The name refers to a small family firm created in Reims at the end of the 19th century, but which dried up in the Fifties. Alexandre Cornot, a former naval officer from Reims and a notary-turned-art dealer, bought the name from the family in 2008. He worked latterly for Christie’s in New York before returning to Paris in 2006. Soon after his arrival, a family friend with a business on the verge of bankruptcy asked him for help.

It was a 200-year-old label-printing business situated in the Grand Cru village of Aÿ – home to Bollinger, among others – in the Marne Valley, housed in a building designed by Gustave Eiffel of Tower fame. Cornot stepped in and bought it, and though he sold it two years later, he retained...
the premises. The pieces fitted together: now he had a place to make and store it in Aÿ, he was going to make champagne. He went on to acquire grandiose offices in Reims.

Cornot was “to the manner” born. He was well versed in stuffy French receptions where Pinot Noir-based grande marque champagne was inevitable. But he preferred the more down-to-earth way things were done in New York, where his hosts would pour him a glass of wine in the kitchen while cooking: something that might have come from anywhere in the world. In France, wine was forbiddingly French.

Cornot wanted to make champagnes for a modern lifestyle, but he had to secure the grapes first. The purchase of the company had cleaned him out. He had no land and no long-term contracts. (To give you an idea of price, 1 kilo of grand cru grapes cost €7.15 in 2019.) However, he had acquired friends through the printing works, many of whom possessed contacts who were prepared to sell grapes. Very soon he had enough produce from Grand Cru Pinot Noir vineyards on the Montagne to the south of Reims and Grand Cru Chardonnay plots in the Côte des Blans near Epernay. He now needed a first-rate chef de caves, who could create the wine by blending the grapes from different villages. His eyes fell upon François Huré, from the small but respected family firm of Huré et Frères on the Montagne de Reims.

Brimoncourt’s maiden harvest was in 2009, just ten years ago, but no champagne was released until 2013, when the first bottle of Régence appeared. I asked Brimoncourt’s brand manager, Diogo Veiga, about the name. Cornot, he says, is a devotee of the Regency period in French history that followed the death of King Louis XIV in 1715. Louis had spent his last decade old and ill, consoled only by the still wines of Aÿ. When he died, his heir Louis XV was a boy of five and his nephew, the duc d’Orléans, was appointed Regent. His time was marked by sexual license (it was the Regent who coined the phrase “all cats are grey in the dark”) and France’s first enthusiasm for sauté bouchon or sparkling champagne. Fizzy champagne, corked before the fermentation had been fully achieved, had been popular in England at the Restoration, 50 years before, but it had yet to come into fashion in France. The famous painting, Le Déjeuner d’huitres by Jean-François de Troy (1735) depicts the sort of party you might have expected to take place in Paris at the time. Cornot keeps a portrait of the Regent in his tasting room.

I met Diogo at 67 Pall Mall, the wine trade’s posh club. They have already adopted Brimoncourt, pouring the Régence upstairs in the bar and the Extra Brut downstairs in the restaurant. With a membership brimming with Masters of Wine and Master Sommeliers, that can only be a good omen. We tasted three wines: Régence, Extra Brut and Rosé. The only one missing was the Côte de Blans.

Cornot prefers elegance to power, says Diogo, and that means more Chardonnay than Pinot Noir. Régence is 80 per cent Chardonnay, but the grapes come from the southern end of the Côte as well as from the Sézannais, where they get that little bit riper. It spends four years on its lees before
disgorgement and has a relatively low dosage (added sugar) of six grams.

Pure Chardonnay champagnes can be on the sharp side when they are young, but the riper Chardonnay together with 20 per cent Montagne Pinot Noir produces a champagne that may be consumed earlier. I liked the delicate little bubbles and the nose of baked apples and vanilla. The wine is long and elegant. It would make a fine aperitif, but Diogo tells me that it won an impressive Japanese award for pairing with sushi.

Made more in the traditional “English taste”, the Extra Brut reverses the percentages of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. All the grapes come from Grand Cru vineyards – the blacks from the Aÿ, Ambonnay and the deliciously named Bouzy; and the greens from Cramant, Mesnil and Ogier. It spends five years on its lees and with just two grams has hardly any added sweetness at all. It is rather more golden than the Régence but with a similarly fine bead and a proper Pinot red-fruit nose. Its power and length suggests food. Diogo went Japanese again, but I rather imagined it with stewed fowl, something more like a classic poule au pot. Returning to the 18th century, the label reproduces a plan of the gardens at Versailles.

The last of the trio was the Rosé, made from 40 per cent Pinot Noir, of which 18 per cent was red wine. The rest was made up of Chardonnay (35 per cent) and Pinot Meunier (25 per cent). The red was intended to give it some proper Pinot character: Cornot is an admirer of the Burgundy wines of Givry, and likes to smell them in his rosé, which spends four years on its lees and has seven to eight grams dosage – light for a rosé. It has a lovely salmon-pink colour and the tiniest bubbles. Diogo found mangoes and oil of bergamot, while I was in the rather more prosaic territory of raspberries. I detected a smokiness that was not the product of a barrel, as the wines see no oak. What impressed me was a soft, lushness followed by a piercing acidity. Diogo told me he liked to serve it with game – grouse, pheasant or pigeon; foie gras; or even soft local cheese such as Chaource or Brie de Meaux.

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The last man to start a champagne house from scratch (as opposed to bottling the wines from his own vines) was Bruno Paillard, back in 1981. Since then Paillard has built an empire as some venerable houses have come under his sway. Cornot has no such ambitions. At present he makes about 200,000 bottles a year. He could triple or quadruple that in the future, but draws the line at one million.

Deep roots have their advantages: When your house is just a decade old, grapes can be hard to find as many growers are already contracted elsewhere. The best way to ensure supplies is to own land. Brimoncourt has recently bought just under a hectare in Aÿ, which might be used for a luxury cuvée one day. Ideally he would like three or four more hectares.

Champagne producers also need to build stocks of reserve wines to make sure that the wine is consistent from year to year, but Brimoncourt has made a brilliant start and I predict it will only get better and better.
Mt. BRAVE

SETTING THE STANDARD IN MOUNTAIN WINEMAKING
The Glossy Posse and Me

Britain’s magazine publishing supremo, Nicholas Coleridge, talks to Paddy Renouf about his new memoir and life amid the A-list.
We meet in the Ladies’ Bar at the Chelsea Arts Club, a short walk from Nicholas Coleridge’s London townhouse. Sprightly and full of bonhomie, and dressed in a well-cut suit with pocket square and open shirt, he declines a pint with a smile and settles for tea.

Having hobnobbed with the most famous and influential people on the planet, travelled the world, made a fortune and got out at just the right time, some say Coleridge is extremely self-satisfied – in the best sense of the word. He always seems to be content, and might be the only person I know who’s done exactly what he wanted to in life, made money doing it, made it seem effortless, and made it fun.

Shortly to retire from his position as president of Condé Nast International and chairman of the British wing of Condé Nast, the publisher of Vogue, GQ, Vanity Fair and many more, Nicholas Coleridge’s career in the glossies coincided with the glorious zenith of magazine publishing, from the Seventies to the Nineties and into the digital transformations of the 21st century. He cut his teeth as a journalist at the Evening Standard and Tatler, and was editor-in-chief of Harpers & Queen (now Harper’s Bazaar), before moving to Condé Nast and becoming the Mr Big of luxury publishing for three decades. With both hilarity and surprising candour, his new memoir, The Glossy Years, provides perceptive insight into the ever-changing and treacherous waters of journalism, fashion, and a whole sweep of British society figures who populate the pages of upmarket magazines – prime ministers, princesses, and performers; models, moguls, and maharajas.

As we settle down to talk, I suggest that I should have started with Jeffrey Archer’s advice to the young Coleridge, who was sent to interview him: “I’ll send you 12 questions to ask me and you just publish them and my answers.” He reassures me that, unlike Archer, he’s happy to engage.

A legend in the publishing world, Coleridge is equally well known for the ease with which he’s rubbed shoulders with some of the most stylish, powerful and famous people in the world. “They do tend to cluster around magazines,” he says, “and because our magazines are all in slightly different spheres, over time you get to meet a lot of different people.”

Mostly, one imagines, this is a by-product of his personality as well as the impossibly glamorous parties at which he has tended to be a stalwart – but not always. He got to know Princess Diana, for instance, because she’d pop into Vogue House, the London HQ of Condé Nast, to try on clothes.

“She fell into a thing of getting Vogue to call in clothes she was interested in, because she found it embarrassing to go into shops where everyone would get so excited,” he says. “They would go to so much trouble to show her everything they had and then if she didn’t buy anything she would sense their disappointment.”

Nowadays he’s got to know the Duchess of Cambridge, who is the Royal Patron of the V&A, where Coleridge is chairman of the board of trustees. “She is much more grounded than Princess Diana and seems to have a lot of common sense,” he says. “She is incredibly good with donors and philanthropists, but like Diana she is also very, very good with the more junior curators.” And what does he think Diana would make of Meghan Markle? “Oh that’s such a difficult question, isn’t it? Some aspects of Meghan Sussex’s character the Princess of Wales ought to have absolutely admired and would have completely understood – the interest in world issues, for example. I expect the Princess of Wales would herself have become a big climate-change person. As I’ve never met Meghan I can’t really comment. When she appeared on the scene I thought she had an adorable smile and I was rather pro the idea.”

Coleridge, educated at Eton (where his peers included Oliver Letwin and former Telegraph editor Charles Moore) and Cambridge, was just 29 when he became editor of Harpers & Queen, before joining Condé Nast as editorial director and rising up the ranks. Did he always expect to attain such dizzying heights?

“It’s very kind of you to even say that because I think working for a magazine company is not that dizzy a height,” he laughs. “I didn’t know that it would be so interesting, and had no idea that the
“There’s who the editor would like the reader to be, and who they actually are”

Despite the huge problems facing traditional publishing, he remains upbeat. “The middle market has completely gone. In five years’ time there will be nobody young who even remembers some of those magazines existed. But I think the upmarket magazines and specials will continue reasonably strongly for quite a few decades to come.”

Away from the day job, Coleridge has penned a dozen or so books, including The Fashion Conspiracy, in which he caused a stir probing the worlds of designer billionaires such as Ralph Lauren, Yves Saint Laurent and Calvin Klein. “I wrote books because they allowed me to have a parallel existence that was separate from the Condé Nast existence. I wrote them all longhand, in the garden at weekends.”

In fact, he was rendered speechless when, at a reception, David Bowie asked if he was “the writer Nicholas Coleridge”. “That was amazing: My childhood god! I thought I would faint. In the car on the way back, Alexandra Shulman and Dylan Jones [then the editors of Vogue and GQ respectively] kept saying, ‘He did say it, you didn’t invent it,’ because it seemed like the sort of thing I might have hallucinated.”

In his book, a kind of Evelyn Waugh-meets-Dick Francis, Coleridge, a brilliant raconteur, belts out the funny anecdotes: Bob Geldof on William and Fiona Hague’s sex life; a schoolboy George Osborne cadging taxi money; or an editor climbing onto the window ledge of his office, threatening to jump – he had to drag her back in with the help of Human Resources. Mostly though, he’s done well with his editors:

Shulman was at Vogue for 25 years, Sue Crewe at House & Garden for 20, and Jones is still going strong at GQ after 19.

“Choosing them [editors] is one thing I’ve been quite lucky or even good at. They need to be commercial and creative and have a full understanding of who the reader is,” he says. “There are often two different kinds of reader: There’s who the editor would like the reader to be and who they actually are. So an editor of Tatler would like to think that their readers are the three Manners girls plus some fabulous Hollywood actress, plus Nicky Haslam [the socialite interior designer]. And indeed they are, but you’re selling 85,000 copies a month and appealing to a tremendous number of people who will never appear in the magazine and are reading it for all kinds of voyeuristic reasons.”

The Condé Nast empire is overwhelmingly female. “I did like that,” Coleridge admits, “mainly because I’d had very little experience of it. I grew up with two brothers, was educated entirely at all-boys schools, and at university there were far fewer women than there are now. So my career was rather an interesting education.”

It has, he says, been an adventure of his own making: his father was chairman of Lloyd’s, and the last writer in his family was Samuel Taylor Coleridge. “Quite a lot of people who work in journalism have parents who’ve been editors, but I didn’t. So I discovered all of this for myself.”

And what now? For once, he intends to put his feet up. “Well, I’m not going to do anything next, really,” he admits. “I will carry on with the V&A for four more years. It’s exciting that we are opening two new museums in the East End and we opened in Dundee last year.” He’ll also continue to fly the flag in a slightly different capacity, in his ongoing role as chairman of the Campaign for Wool, founded by the Prince of Wales to promote the natural fibre.

With connections like those, and such a diverse and stellar career, I suggest perhaps a peerage is next? “I would feel very uncomfortable answering such a question because it would look very presumptuous!” he protests. And what about politics? He’s emphatic. “No, no, no. There are quite enough Etonians in politics already.”
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TOFFEE & SPICE AROMAS
with a hoppy, bitter finish
When I was the editor of a food magazine, such was the volume of books I received that at the end of every week I had to clear my desk of the latest culinary tomes. I would open a package, put the book down, then pile the next one on top, and within days a fortress would grow around me. No one who is anyone can call themselves a true foodie unless they have published a cook book with their name on the cover.

Not that that diminishes the flourishing genre one bit, for the arrival of a new cookbook always piques my interest. Sometimes I harrumph. There are the celeb chefs whose books appear more regularly than their restaurants close, and who you know have little to do with their book other than approve the ghostwriters. And there are the famous who seem to get book deals without ever having demonstrated any talent for recipe or food writing.

But sometimes there are true gems; the ones I covet and want to grace my shelves. They end up as practical wallpaper, interchangeable interior design. They can decorate and feed. Of course I have food books that I would never cook from, but I like that they’re there. And there’s my own shelf of culinary vanity. Nine translations of a single book of mine. It’s in the downstairs loo, where the shelf can be admired or despised. I don’t care. The key thing is that if a friend of yours publishes a food book, buy it. Long live print! Even if it’s 50 Ways With Sprouts.

Luckily, the books recommended to Emma Hughes on the next page, by five prominent foodies, are much better than that. Meanwhile, Bill Knott warms us with thoughts of proper puddings, and Tom Harrow helps us out with a definitive list of the wines you should avoid at all costs. You’re all set for winter with Boisdale.
The novelist Anthony Powell maintained that books furnish a room; to which I’d add that cookbooks bring it to life. Whether they’re batter-splattered paperbacks or glossy coffee-table tomes, they’re repositories of memories, joy and laughter. And in the digital age, they’re proving resilient. In fact, in the “Cookbook Corner” section of her website, each week the supremely digitally savvy Nigella Lawson recommends an analogue volume. One of her recent picks was *The Quality Chop House* by Will Lander and Shaun Searley, which, she writes, is “a book you want to return to again and again, full of recipes that offer warmth, comfort, reassurance and – so very important, too – delight.” Well, quite.

One reason that bricks-and-mortar recipe collections have an edge over online equivalents is their voice. All recipes speak, but the way a printed one instructs, nudges and gently encourages feels more substantial. They also tell a physical story, falling open at their owner’s favourite recipes like a school library’s heavily pawed copy of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*. And, of course, they’re impervious to food trends. While an algorithm might prioritise the shiny and new, your cookery books will continue to suggest brilliant dishes from decades gone by that might otherwise have got lost in the din.

Practically, they’re a more sensible choice than reading off your iPhone while you whisk and fry – boiling water and hot oil are less catastrophic when mixed with paper than an £800 handset. And it doesn’t matter if they never reach your kitchen. Rather than furiously scrolling through Twitter before putting the light out, a cookbook at bedtime is the purest kind of escapism. (My favourite is Niki Segnit’s *The Flavour Thesaurus*, which helps you matchmake ingredients.) At this time of year, they really come into their own as reading matter: If there’s any nicer postprandial activity than beaching yourself on the sofa with a sherry within arm’s reach and leafing through a new cookbook, I’ve yet to experience it.

But don’t just take it from me – here’s what five top-tier foodies have to say about their collections.

**YOUR WORDS**

Cookbooks can be so much more than lists of recipes. *Emma Hughes* talks to five eminent foodies about the favourites in their collections.

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**RAVINDER BHOGAL**

*Chef-owner, Jikoni*

Growing up, it wasn’t so much mother but Madhur Jaffrey who knew best – her tomes always held the answers. But for me, cookbooks aren’t just for culinary inspiration – they can be a source of cultural insight, too. One favourite is *Food In Vogue*, a selection of recipes that appeared in the magazine from the Forties to Eighties. It was edited by the very flamboyant Maxime de la Falaise, model and muse, and includes a recipe for cake “iced” in gold leaf by Andy Warhol. **The classic:** *Eastern Vegetarian Cooking* by Madhur Jaffrey (1990). The recipes span India, the Orient and the Middle East; it is so rich with wisdom. She was far ahead of her time, praising ingredients that the West has only recently fallen in love with. **The new favourite:** *How to Eat a Peach* by Diana Henry (2018). A master of making you run to the kitchen and having your way with whatever is languishing in your fridge, Henry’s book is stunning and full of atmospheric, transportive menus and writing. It sits on my bedside table. **Jikoni, 19-21 Blandford Street, London W1U 3DG (020 7034 1988; jikonilondon.com)**
ED SMITH
Food writer
My cookbook collection has, in theory, reached its limit, as my wife imposed a one-in-one-out policy some years ago, yet I’m still finding ways to grow it. I don’t know the numbers (hundreds, though), and while she sees the formal shelving in the kitchen and living room, I’ve found space under sofas and beds, too. At its core are two dozen well-thumbed and loved books, reflective of the period when I learnt to cook – mid-Nineties to early Noughties – with some classics to fill the gaps, and then a mass of more recent titles, most of which I’m fortunate to be given. These days they’re for reference and browsing, as I tend to be busy cooking and testing my own recipes.


ROSE PRINCE
Food writer
I have a huge collection of perhaps 200 books, although I did need to cull at least 100 when I left London for Dorset four years ago. Those that I return to all the time have good prose, recipes that work and also a degree of originality. The design is important – not just the cover, but inside, because it’s so much harder to sell a physical book these days. I’ve noticed that books are becoming more and more beautiful as a result. I keep most of mine in the sitting room, where there’s a wall covered in shelves, but there is also a small shelf in the kitchen for the ones I regularly use.

The classic: My Gastronomy by Nico Ladenis (1987). The writing is wonderfully authoritative; full of informed opinion. Every chef should study this book – we use Ladenis’ methods for classic sauces and other techniques daily in our kitchens as they are the very best.


MASHA RENER
Head chef, Lina Stores
A corner of my house is reserved just for my huge cookbook collection, which includes ingredient- and produce-led books. Most of them have now spilled over into my bedroom, which has become a library of sorts. A core collection of 21 cookbooks that each highlight a different region of Italy is a favourite. It always inspires me to learn more about the different gastronomic traditions. I go to antique markets for vintage cookbooks; I’m fascinated by how people used to cook and how these traditions impact us to this day.

The classic: *La Cucina Italiana: The Regional Cooking of Italy* by the Italian Academy of Cuisine (2009) not only has regional recipes but also specific techniques and explains things like the different parts of meat, how to prepare fish, and the different types of pasta.

The new favourite: *Kitchen Confidential* by Anthony Bourdain (2000). I’ve become quite fond of autobiographical cookery books, and this is a fascinating read by an incredibly interesting man.

Lina Stores Kings Cross is now open at 20 Stable Street, London N1C 4DR (linastores.co.uk)

### 2019’s FINEST
The best, hot-off-the-press food books, chosen by William Sitwell

**THE CONSOLATION OF FOOD**
By Valentine Warner (Pavilion Books, £20)
This wonderful book has Valentine Warner’s spirit seared across every page. His love of cooking, of seeking out good ingredients, and of preparing dishes for people is a lesson in how a vital interest in food can make for a fulfilled life. His graceful prose, his musings, and the recipes that emerge make this a book you want to cradle, cuddle, and learn from.

**CALIFORNIA: LIVING AND EATING – RECIPES INSPIRED BY THE GOLDEN STATE**
By Eleanor Maidment (Hardie Grant, £22)
A food stylist and recipe writer, Maidment was so interested in the ideas emerging from the West Coast of the US that she upped sticks and joined a cookery programme to learn at the coalface, albeit a sunny one. This book beams with health and sunshine, is accessible, and the recipes brighten the gloomiest of days.

**YES-VE-GAN! A BLUEPRINT FOR VEGAN LIVING**
By Selene Nelson (Octopus, £10)
This passionate tome from plant-based obsessed writer Nelson will help you get up on one of today’s big farm and food subjects. Whether you’re wondering what your niece is banging on about; want to see what the enemy is planning; or are thinking of cutting down on meat, this is the well-argued book for you.
Evolution. Some may embrace it, some may deny it, but the reality is that on the most immensely macro and intimately micro levels, everything and everyone (with the possible exception of Stonehenge and Nicholas Parsons) is changing.

And when it comes to classic drinks, the British handcrafted gin brand, Whitley Neill, founded by Johnny Neill and distilled in Liverpool, has been at the forefront of developments to complement our changing palates over the last decade.

Experimental botanicals such as blood orange, raspberry, rhubarb and ginger are all part of our gin equation, bringing subtle depth of flavour to the base notes of juniper. As Jamie Rowe, brand ambassador for Whitley Neill, explains: “We were pioneering the use of innovative botanicals 15 years ago by using Cape gooseberry and baobab. The number of botanicals and flavours now available in the food and drink world has meant that people have the opportunity to explore their palate preferences more than ever before.”

An added bonus is the ease of making cocktails at home with Whitley Neill’s range of gins. Having the correct shakers, cobbler's and juicers isn’t necessary, meaning the highball cocktails such as the Tom Collins have gone from being exhausting to effortless to make.

“The beauty of the Whitley Neill Gin range is that it gives you the opportunity to create exciting drinks by simply adding citrus, juice and a mixer,” Jamie says. “Now you can just add apple juice to Whitley Neill Rhubarb & Ginger, top up with ginger ale and a squeeze of lime, and you are good to go. A gin and tonic drinker can enjoy a similar experience with a Tom Collins by adding lemon juice, sugar and soda water.”

So far, so easy. But Whitley Neill doesn’t intend to cause a gin revolution. Rather, it simply wants to broaden the choices out there. It’s all part of its #ginreality campaign, encouraging drinkers who are keen to experiment with flavour profiles to pair gin with ginger ale, lemonade and even prosecco.

“Our campaign, #ginreality, shows people that they can enjoy gin their own way with whatever mixer they choose – and while tonic water may be the nation’s favourite, I’ll have mine with lemonade, thank you!”

Creative and unafraid to seize the moment. Perhaps this is the character of the gin drinker after all. Did we get it all wrong when we defined a G&T (along with roast lamb, Radio 4 and the golf course) as a favourite of the conservative who feared change?

Jamie says Whitley Neill drinkers are not shy to show their imagination when it comes to unique pairings.

“Fans are constantly telling me their favourite pairings. One popular suggestion was for quince with elderflower tonic, which I tried and was delicious! We also find that Whitley Neill drinkers are incredibly keen to experiment with new flavours that we create. Though of course we also have our Whitley Neill Original drinker, who enjoys more of the traditional, London Dry style of gin.”

Inclusive, imaginative and brimful of ideas, Whitley Neill is a gin distiller that knows just how to embrace the past while remembering to raise a glass to the present.
IN PRAISE OF
STODGE, PODEGE AND CUSTARD

Forget the delicate morsel. For Bill Knott, when it comes to dessert, only a proper full-fat, treacly sweet, and winter-warming English pudding can satisfy.
I was in a new Nordic restaurant the other day, sampling the tasting menu. As the earnest sommelier explained why he had chosen a thimbleful of cloudy orange wine to accompany my 17th canapé (sorry, “course”), it arrived. “Spruce shoots, rye crumbs, pickled blueberries, rosemary granita,” read the menu. Since it was the last item on a lengthy list, this, apparently, was pudding.

Well, I’m as big a fan of the Scandinavian kitchen as the next tattooed hipster, but this was not pudding. Treacle sponge, jam roly-poly, spotted dick: Puddings should not be foraged, they should be steamed and served with custard.

The steamed pudding is one of the few exclusively British inventions in our national cuisine, with a long and glorious history. In the Middle Ages, puddings were a mixture of meat, blood, fat, offal, and grain, packed in the intestines or stomach lining of a recently-slaughtered animal, then baked or boiled. Examples that survive today include black pudding, white pudding, hog’s pudding and the mighty haggis.

In the early 17th century, however, cooks began to use pudding cloths. By wrapping a pudding in a square of linen, perhaps from an old bed sheet, and gathering the corners to encase the filling, a pudding could be boiled without the need for intestines. Importantly, since animals were usually slaughtered seasonally, this also meant that puddings could be made throughout the year.

With the steady fall in sugar prices and the widespread availability of dried fruits, puddings became more popular, and sweeter. Cookery in the Middle Ages rarely distinguished between sweet and savoury (many popular dishes were both) but, by the 17th century, clearer distinctions in the structure of a meal had emerged. Take mincemeat, for example. Medieval recipes for mince pies commonly call for minced mutton or beef, to which dried fruits – prunes, dates, raisins – were added, as well as vinegar, beef suet, and spices such as saffron, cloves, nutmeg, mace, and cinnamon. The filling was wrapped in pastry, baked, and served as a main dish.

Gradually, the proportion of meat to fruit changed. By the mid-19th century, recipes for mincemeat favoured fruit, sugar, and alcohol. Eliza Acton’s recipe in *Modern Cookery for Private Families* (1845) contains 1lb of ox tongue, 2lbs of suet, 5lbs of fruit, 2½ lbs of “fine Lisbon sugar”, and – for good measure – a pint each of brandy and madeira.

The Victorian and Edwardian eras saw the “nursery pudding” reach its zenith. Generations were weaned on vast slabs of suet, sugar, dried fruit, and jam, with lashings of custard. By the 20th century, pudding basins became more common than pudding cloths, while Heinz and other big food manufacturers had started putting puddings in tins.

Now, sadly, the classic pudding is in possibly terminal decline. We have suffered all manner of faddish diets over the last 50 years, which haven’t helped; diets that demonise sugar, fat or carbohydrates, which are the ingredients for a steamed pudding. Chefs must bear some blame. In their ceaseless attempts to create beautiful plates of food, egged on by winsome Instagrams of pretty plates and popular cookery shows, the humble suet pudding rarely enters their mind. Admittedly, spotted dick, treacle sponge, and their ilk are not hugely photogenic, but that is not the point: Pudding should be eaten with gusto, not photographed and admired.

At home, meanwhile, enfeebled by central heating, we have slipped into Continental habits, like eating yoghurt for dessert. Proper puddings, we are told, are frivolous and unnecessary, and a sweet tooth is unsophisticated.

But we are in denial. Set a proper pudding before a Brit, and we exhibit Proustian emotion, regressing to the security of the nursery or school dining hall. Scale up Proust’s rather effete little madeleine about 50 times, replace the limeflower tea with a steaming jug of custard, and you will see what I mean.

As we enter the brave new world of Brexit, perhaps it is time to recover some of the happier highlights of our heritage. The Empire wasn’t built on central heating, we have slipped into nostalgia. So, turn off the heating, pull on a sweater, chuck out the diet books, and roll up your sleeves. Spoon some golden syrup into a pudding bowl, whisk together flour, eggs, butter, sugar, and treacle, pile it over the syrup, cover with greaseproof paper and foil, then steam it for two or three hours. Invite a few friends over (best tell them to wrap up warmly) and bung some Elgar on the gramophone. Precede the pudding with a token main course – a roast rib of beef, say, with mounds of Yorkshire pudding – before upending the pudding basin and serving magnificent wedges of treacle sponge. As guests dreamily pour the custard, I guarantee that tears of gratitude will stream down their faces. You don’t get that reaction from rye crumbs and rosemary granita.

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Acton’s recipe for mincemeat has a pint each of brandy and madeira

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Müller Corners. It is time to indulge in nostalgia. So, turn off the heating, pull on a sweater, chuck out the diet books, and roll up your sleeves. Spoon some golden syrup into a pudding bowl, whisk together flour, eggs, butter, sugar, and treacle, pile it over the syrup, cover with greaseproof paper and foil, then steam it for two or three hours. Invite a few friends over (best tell them to wrap up warmly) and bung some Elgar on the gramophone. Precede the pudding with a token main course – a roast rib of beef, say, with mounds of Yorkshire pudding – before upending the pudding basin and serving magnificent wedges of treacle sponge. As guests dreamily pour the custard, I guarantee that tears of gratitude will stream down their faces. You don’t get that reaction from rye crumbs and rosemary granita.
As Boisdale restaurants embrace E&J Gallo wines from the Golden State, Michael Karam explores the winemaking heritage of this great terroir.

Last year, Boisdale Life told the story of the famous ‘Judgment of Paris’, when, in 1976, the Paris-based British wine merchant Steven Spurrier held a blind tasting that would change the wine landscape forever. Spurrier pitted the best Californian Cabernet Sauvignons and Chardonnays against the finest wines from Bordeaux and Burgundy, and the Americans swept the board, in one morning destroying the hitherto unchallenged authority of French wine.

It was, Spurrier says, just a matter of time, though only a few knew the quality the Golden State was producing. Back then, Californian wine had a patchy history and struggled to achieve momentum. It started with Spanish monks in the 18th century, and things picked up following the Gold Rush. The first commercial winery opened in 1857, but California’s trajectory was interrupted by the double whammy of Phylloxera, the vine-destroying parasite, and Prohibition. Phylloxera was eventually overcome, but not before many vineyards were decimated; while the 14 years of Prohibition saw the number of wineries reduced from 800 to just 140. It wasn’t until the 1960s that the region began to recover, as the Judgment of Paris confirmed.

Since then, it hasn’t looked back. Today California is home to some 1,200 wineries, covering nearly 200,000 hectares in 107 American Viticultural Areas (AVAs). It makes 80 per cent of US wine and is the world’s fourth largest wine producer, at roughly the equivalent of 3.6 billion bottles a year.

The wine nerds will tell you that California winemaking is highly affected by the presence of mountains and coastal influences. The state is geologically diverse, possessing both Mediterranean and Continental climates, while the numerous bays and the Pacific Ocean provide cooling winds and fog to temper the heat. Napa and Sonoma are warmer as they are surrounded by mountains, but the morning fog, which dissipates at around 11am, plays a major role in cooling the grapes, ensuring they retain acidity and develop complexity.

One of the biggest names in California wine – indeed in the world of wine – is E&J Gallo Winery. Founded after the end of Prohibition in 1933, E&J Gallo is now California’s largest exporter, with a portfolio of more than 80 wineries that represent a thrilling snapshot of the diverse terroirs. In September, Boisdale, in collaboration with Gallo, launched its California Collection Terrace, listing several wines from a blue-chip quartet of North Coast producers.

Thirty miles long with 17,401 hectares of vineyards, Napa Valley is one of the premium wine growing areas in the world, even if it only represents five per cent of California’s total wine production. Nearly all the wineries are family-owned, and the predominant philosophy is to produce high-quality wines – notably made with Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay, but also Merlot, Pinot Noir and Sauvignon Blanc.
Left: Actor Fred MacMurray founded the winery now run by his daughter

Opposite page: California has both Mediterranean and Continental climates, producing exceptional grape harvests

Wines

Left: Actor Fred MacMurray founded the winery now run by his daughter

Opposite page: California has both Mediterranean and Continental climates, producing exceptional grape harvests

TASTING NOTES

LOUIS M MARTINI NAPA VALLEY CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2016

Bulging with brooding black fruit, spice and bell peppers, with rounded fruit tones, soft tannins and great acidity.

MACMURRAY RANCH PINOT NOIR 2015

Gaminess, dark red fruit and a pleasing hint of garrigue (shrubland), vanilla and sweet spice. It possesses soft tannins and excellent length.

MACMURRAY RANCH PINOT GRIS 2016

Seismic acidity, with notes of citrus, acacia and white pepper. A wine that shows its best in cool climates

J VINEYARDS CUVÉE 20 BRUT NV

Wonderfully balanced with a creamy profile defined by notes of white flowers, citrus, apples, brioche and almonds.

J VINEYARDS ROSÉ NV

Creamy red fruit – primarily fresh strawberries and cherries – and meringue with a savoury nutty twist.

ORIN SWIFT MACHETE 2016

A plush symphony of black and fresh red fruit, ably supported by notes of liquorice and spice, with beautifully integrated tannins.

ORIN SWIFT ABSTRACT 2016

Aromas of cherry and red plum with pork meat and herbs. Balanced and integrated with exceptional acidity.

– from low-yield harvests. Boisdale's Napa duo from the Gallo portfolio represent all that is wonderful and diverse about this region.

Founded in 1933, Louis M Martini Cabernet Sauvignons are given wonderful body by the profound terroir expression in the winery’s vineyards in Cypress Ranch, Sun Lake and Sage Canyon. Boisdale's wine list features older vintage 'Cabs' but the youthful 2016 vintage is bold and powerful. There is a small amount of Cabernet Franc and Merlot in the blend and the wine is aged for 21 months in American and French oak.

Dave Phinney, who created and then sold the cult wine, The Prisoner, now runs the Orin Swift winery, producing an eclectic range of dynamic Bordeaux, Burgundy and Rhone varietals and blends made with grapes sourced in Napa and across the state. The wines are also notable for their edgy labels. Boisdale has chosen the Rhone-inspired Abstract, a blend of Grenache, Syrah and Petit Syrah, aged for eight months in French and American oak, and Machete, made again with Petit Sirah, Syrah and Grenache, aged for 10 months in French oak.

Climate is key in the Russian River Valley AVA, home to just under 100 wineries, where the night temperature can drop by up to 20 degrees Celsius from the daytime high. It is famed for its ability to produce high-quality, cool climate grapes such as Pinot Noir, though Chardonnay is the main grape, prized for its crisper profile, achieved due to the area’s cooler climes and longer growing season.

The MacMurray Ranch, run by Kate MacMurray, the daughter of the actor Fred MacMurray who bought the winery in 1941, is a classic Russian River Valley winery, producing outstanding Pinot Noir, Chardonnays and Pinot Gris. Boisdale has chosen Kate’s Pinot Gris and Pinot Noir, made from grapes grown at the Two Rock Vineyard (named after the two rocks that the Miwuk and Pomo people would pass through for luck on their journeys inland).

Judy Jordan founded J Vineyards & Winery in 1986 and Boisdale has selected two of Judy’s traditional sparkling wines: Brut Rosé made with 100 per cent Pinot Noir, and Cuvée 20 Brut, made with Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier, which scored 96 points at the recent Decanter World Wine Awards. All Judy’s grapes are hand-harvested in low yields to make some of the creamiest, most delicious sparkling wines in the US today.

California wine is all about endurance, dynamism and innovation; a respect for the past with an eye to the future – a philosophy that is captured perfectly in the four Gallo producers currently gracing the Boisdale wine lists. Nothing in California is static, as the French found out to their cost 43 years ago. Vive la différence, dude!

Michael Karam’s “Lebanese Wine: A Complete Guide to its History and Winemakers” is out now
Our resident drinks columnist enjoys the simplicity of the Old Fashioned, elevated and modernised by the new generation of impressive boutique rums.

**RUM OLD FASHIONED**

Rum is ‘having a moment’ these days, and it’s now possible to find small-batch, vintage, cask-strength and single-estate ones with all the complexity and quality of fine Scotch whisky or cognac.

A pioneer in this area has been the Foursquare rum distillery in Barbados. Its Exceptional Cask Selection is a fantastic range of limited-edition vintage and cask-strength rums finished in a variety of different casks. Here I’ve used Foursquare Dominus – 10-year-old rum aged in a mix of ex-bourbon and ex-cognac casks that’s full of dried fruit and gingery spice notes. Another connoisseur’s favourite is the independent bottler Velier. But big names including Diplomatico, Mount Gay, and Appleton have lately made some excellent special-editions too.

It would be a waste to pour rum this good into a punch, although you could add it to a Daiquiri at a push. Far better to savour its qualities in a slow-stirred Old Fashioned.

The first step is to find the right glass – an elegant, heavy rocks glass will encourage you to take your time. Good, fresh ice is essential too. An Old Fashioned looks particularly striking over a single large ice block (you can easily find silicone ice moulds for spheres and cubes online). A long-handled barspoon with a flat end (officially there for muddling fruit) will also make your stirring much more professional. Instead of using the spoon end, flip the spoon over and slip the flat end under the ice. Flick your wrist and the ice will spin around very easily.

I like a dash of orange bitters in there: The Bitter Truth Orange Bitters are more zesty; Angostura Orange Bitters a bit more spicy. But they’re not essential. The orange twist is, however. So be sure to use a fresh ripe orange for maximum fragrance. The sugar syrup is optional, depending on the sweetness of your rum.

Do savour the preparation, as well as the drink itself. That ritual is all part of the fun.

Alice Lascelles is a contributing editor to the Financial Times, and writes ‘The Goblet’ for How to Spend It magazine.

**INGREDIENTS:**
- 60ml Foursquare Dominus Rum
- 5ml sugar syrup (optional)
- 1 dash Angostura Bitters
- 1 dash The Bitter Truth Orange Bitters
- Orange twist to garnish

**METHOD:**
Stir ingredients gently with cubed ice for 25 seconds. Garnish with the twist and serve.

**GLASS:**
Rocks
THE GRAPES OF WRATH

Recommended what to drink is easy enough. Instead, expert Tom Harrow offers a rare and honest guide as to which wines should be avoided at all costs.

Wine writers tend to follow a calendar, from low-alcohol options for a detox January to bolder, spicier wines for September onwards, as leaves and game birds fall. Our challenge nowadays is that there are plenty of drinkable wines all over the place – in wine warehouses, budget supermarkets, and online – not just St James’ merchants. The nuanced differences between bottles that excite sensitive wine writers are less likely to interest the drinking public, whose primary concern is to serve the cheapest wine that guests would rather drink than discreetly pour into the plant pots.

So the most useful wine guide you’ll read this year is below, each entry unaffected by seasonality, vintage, or even Brexit – and best left on the shelf.

Reichensteiner
This insipid Teutonic hybrid is mostly grown and consumed in Germany, and one of the tremendous upsides of global warming is its increasing scarcity in England’s vineyards as viticulturists gleefully rip it up and plant more Chardonnay. As English still white wines are starting to improve, it would be a great shame if your first experiences included this nasty grape. Likewise with Dunkelfelder for even more nascent English red wines. As a rule of thumb, if your choice of bottle contains grapes that sound like the pilot of a Fokker Triplane or one of the last generals out of Hitler’s bunker, put it down and walk away.

Torrontés
Torrontés is Argentina’s signature white grape – a signature scrawled by a toddler with a blunt, bile-coloured crayon. Most examples – young, old, unoaked, barrel aged, whatever – smell like a Glade air-freshener factory, but then, just after you’ve braced yourself for a corresponding mouthful of carbolic soap and tinned apricots, it turns out to be unexpectedly dry – often quite austerely so – leaving you terribly confused. With its dubious initial allure of semi-sweet Muscat and undercarriage of weak vintage Chablis, this ladyboy grape is apparently well matched to seabass ceviche and mango salsa – an equally baffling combination.

Zinfandel (Rosé)
The most interesting thing about California’s Zinfandel is its family tree – proven latterly to be the same variety as Puglia’s Primitivo and Croatia’s Tribidrag. (Who knew?) There are a handful of producers with old vines who can tease out of this alcoholic and overly sweet grape red wines with more complex fruit and spice characters – anise, pepper, sandalwood and so forth – but most taste like liquidised raspberry jam. Rather more offensive are the rosé or blush versions, which run the full range from bland to sickly depending on the production method.

Pinotage
Pinotage was spawned in a laboratory at the University of Stellenbosch in the 1920s, probably for a dare, by crossing Pinot Noir, the noblest of red grapes, with Cinsault (pronounced, fittingly, sans soul) – a southern French blender that props up most overpriced Provençal rosé and only impresses in Lebanon’s Bekaa Valley. Characterised by overripe bananas and Liquorice Allsorts coated in emulsion paint and then set on fire in an old tyre, Pinotage, the Brundlefly of the grape world, is best enjoyed with hyaena biltong. By someone else. Apparently its popularity is on the rise, which is another sure sign the Apocalypse is nigh.

(Pale) Cream Sherry
Every few years, sherry is discovered by someone in their twenties and, like re-animated corpses, bottles lurch across drinks columns and wine-bar lists before sinking back into obscurity for another decade. Cream Sherry is different, however. It has not been on-trend since Doris Day was No. 1 in the charts and is only enjoyed by those who bought her hits on original vinyl. The method of production is to carefully blend numerous subtly nutty, richly complex, and very old Oloroso and Amontillado sherries, and then add enough sickly-sweet rectified grape must to obliterate all flavours except for sultanas mashed in syrup. Imagine if, after three years of painstakingly applying layers of oils onto canvas to create The Night Watch, Rembrandt’s final flourish was to lob a can of Dulux primer over his masterpiece.

Of course there may be exceptions to the rule for all the wines above (except Reichensteiner and cream sherry), but why take the risk, unless you have to buy a bottle for someone you really can’t stand? Like potholes and creditors, these are the most important to remember and avoid.
140 years have passed since Charles Jones and Sir James Crockett joined forces to create what is now regarded as one of the finest shoemakers in the world - Crockett & Jones. The story of a shoemaker (Jones) and a businessman (Crockett) unfolded, resulting in an incredibly successful shoe manufacturing 'firm' that has remained in the careful hands of a Jones ever since.
Colin Cameron gives his old wooden clubs an outing amid splendid surroundings.
THE WRITE STUFF

Based in Birmingham’s jewellery quarter, Yard-O-Led has been hand-making silver-cased writing instruments for generations. Timothy Barber meets its new owner, an entrepreneur bent on bringing back the joy of handwriting.

Next time you find yourself reaching for a propelling pencil, consider this: In your hand is a piece of 200-year-old English technology. In 1816, Sampson Mordan, a London silversmith, filed the first patent for an “Eversharp” metal pencil with an internal mechanism that could propel a thin shaft of lead forwards; and a later expansion of his concept by a Hatton Garden-based German, Ludwig Brenner, introduced a pencil holding multiple shafts of lead at once. Brenner named his company Yard-O-Led, since his pencils’ 12 three-inch leads amounted to a yard in total. What the name didn’t reference was the fact that the business was rooted in exquisite silversmithing. And it still is.

Today, Birmingham’s historic Jewellery Quarter, a buzzing nexus of near-extinct artisanal crafts, is home to Yard-O-Led’s workshops. Here, a little cabal of makers continues crafting exquisite silver writing instruments – pens as well as pencils – that have been treasured as collector’s items for decades. Found in the likes of Harrods and Selfridges, it also exclusively supplies the luxury stationer Smythson.

“We’ve got guys working for us who’ve been with Yard-O-Led 20 or 30 years, and when older pieces come back for servicing, they know instantly from looking at it who created it,” says the company’s boss, Emma Field. “There’s really no manual for this – it’s learned from one silversmith to another, generation to generation.”

In Field’s case that applies to management as well, having taken over running Yard-O-Led from her father, Robin. He oversaw it when he ran the Prices for Yard-O-Led’s sterling silver writing instruments range from £295 to £1,250.

Right, CEO Emma Field
A little cabal of makers continues crafting writing instruments that are collector’s items

firm’s previous owner, Filofax, from whom he eventually bought it in 2014. A few years later his daughter ditched a successful career in the digital luxury sector to take on a fundamentally grittier challenge – raising a heritage craft name in a world that’s almost forgotten the value of the objects such firms make, and of the firms themselves. “A few years ago we were fighting for survival,” admits Field, who turned things around and finally bought out her Pa’s majority shareholding earlier this year. The market for fine writing instruments, Field points out, has yet to see the boom enjoyed by other analogue items of value, like Swiss watches and vinyl records, but she is convinced it’s coming, including among millennials.

“You’re not just owning a Swiss watch to tell the time, it’s to understand and enjoy a piece of craft, and this is the same,” she says, “Pull out a Parker pen and no one will care, but produce a Yard-O-Led in a meeting, or when you’re signing something special, and it’s a thing of real worth. It tells a story.”

That story goes all the way back to Sampson Mordan’s invention, whose patent Yard-O-Led still owns, and takes in decades of making fine silver goods besides pencils, such as some particularly dinky cocktail swizzlers from the pre-War heyday. Now it’s strictly writing instruments, which are all made from fine sterling silver. Either round or hexagonal, these are decorated with engine-turned patterns or, for something truly grand, with elaborate hammered engravings – or “chasing” – in a Victorian floral style. From start to final polishing, it’s a 12-stage process entirely carried out in the Birmingham workshop. The appeal may be bound up in craft and heritage – the pencils still contain exactly a yard of lead refills – but Field says something more fundamental underlies all that.

“There is still a joy to writing, even if you’re just making notes at your desk. We’re all addicted to texts, but if you write someone a love note or a thank-you letter, it’s generous, it shows you’ve put something of yourself into it. It’s personal – and that’s really what we’re trying to sell – that gift of writing.”

Visit yardoled.com

BOISDALE APPROVES

Hackett goes fully bespoke on Savile Row

The shuttering of the Hardy Amies fashion label earlier this year brought with it the closure of 14 Savile Row, home to the Amies business since the couturier bought it in 1946. Happily, another great name in British outfitting, Hackett London, which Jeremy Hackett established from a market stall in 1983, has now moved in, in considerable style.

14 Savile Row, built in the 1730s, will be a flagship for all things bespoke, under the JP Hackett marque. Overseen by a head cutter and a team of specialists, bespoke suits will be created in traditional Savile Row methods, priced from £4,500. Made-to-Measure is also offered in the shop, whose lavish interiors have been created by renowned architect and interior designer Ben Pentreath. Go for the tailoring, stay for the cocktail bar, magnificent period details and Farrow & Ball colours. Visit hackett.com

Visit yardoled.com
On the fairways at Gleneagles in Perthshire, Colin Cameron sets aside modern clubs for his trusty old persimmons.

For all golf's showcase occasions and competitive edge, the game's essence is internal. You versus the course, seeking safe passage for balls, 1.6 ounces or less, into little sunken cups, many yards away. It was ever thus, and in playing a sport so entrenched in ancient tradition, I've decided to use clubs that are similarly archaic. Mine are from the 1970s, and were second-hand then. It's a pure approach, and means I have only myself to beat.

Today, the “woods” used for driving are all made of steel or titanium or other high-tech materials. My own? Classic persimmons celebrating a bygone age. As for irons, my Pings were, in their day, state-of-the-art, but now enjoy heritage status amid today's hybrid gimmicks.

Taking these out on the PGA Centenary course at Gleneagles, the lavish Perthshire estate that hosted the 2014 Ryder Cup and September's epic Solheim Cup showdown, was therefore a mismatch of biblical proportions. Lying amid 850 acres of land, Gleneagles bills itself as “the Glorious Playground”.

My bludgeons and blades predate the creation of this modern monster, designed by Jack Nicklaus to test long-hitting professionals. But golf, as seasoned players will know, really takes place on the fairway between the ears.

“On the tee, Colin Cameron.” As a guest of the watchmaker Audemars Piguet, you get a starter to announce you at the first hole. Already my clubs were turning heads and drawing purrs of appreciation – perhaps it was the encouragement they offered anyone viewing and handling them to revisit past exploits.

Those within earshot were able to notice the difference when my ball left the clubface: the historic, unmistakable thud of a persimmon wood briefly resonated, while I enjoyed the special light, effortless feel of a club that seems rooted in nature. The contrast to the manufactured, industrial, man-made snap of a contemporary metal driver couldn't have been clearer. My subsequent four-iron to the green yielded the kind of divot that greenkeepers haven't seen this millennium.

Earlier, Paul Lawrie, Open Champion of 1999 and someone whose career dates back to when woods were exactly that, declined my offer of a nostalgic swing, amid doubts he'd even get the ball airborne. My playing partner Calum Hill, a young Scottish pro, gamely parked etiquette forbidding club sharing, and leathered a persimmon. He drilled the ball splitting the fairway – only the stiffness of the shaft, far from bespoke for him, prevented a text-book position for his approach to the green. He joined the former cricketer Andrew
STAYING AT GLENEAGLES

Gleneagles is offering an exclusive “Three Day Swing” package from spring to late-autumn 2020, with three nights in a beautiful twin or double room (at 20% off the best available room rate and a discounted round of golf each day) in the glamorously revamped The Strathearn, and three rounds of golf per person on any of the three championship courses. Guests can follow in the footsteps of Ryder Cup legends on The PGA Centenary course or enjoy the Braid-designed masterpieces, The King’s and The Queen’s courses – the perfect golfer’s getaway. Rates for this offer start from £1,755 B&B for three nights, based on two people sharing a Classic Room. (Visit gleneagles.com)

GOLF WATCHES

Chris Hall recommends the timepieces to take on the greens

Waiting at the par three 17th was Tyrrell Hatton, tour professional and Ryder Cup hopeful. Like Calum, he’s much younger than my clubs. We broke protocol again, so that Tyrrell could swing an old iron. His ball came to rest feet from the hole, and the birdie was a given.

By the standards of Gleneagles’ alternative courses, the King’s and Queen’s, the latter dating back to 1917, my clubs are newfangled. Neither is a monster like the Centenary, a course that reflects how today’s equipment adds yards to everyone’s game. The playing field was correspondingly more level, though from the tee I still found myself behind my modern-kitted playing partners.

While I was always an also-ran in the longest drive competition, the courses of yesteryear, from Augusta to St Andrews, are cunning challenges where the best seek to craft a way round. There are undoubtedly easier ways to play the Centenary’s 18 head spinners than to use veritable antiques, but they aren’t as fun. My drive, four-iron, and two putts for a par four were almost as nature intended; and along with a few other triumphs that day, immensely satisfying. Colin Cameron was a guest of Audemars Piguet watches

TAG Heuer is taking a high-tech approach to its ‘golf edition’ timepieces. Its Connected smartwatch (pictured top) comes with a white perforated strap and black ceramic bezel with 18 “hole markings”, but the real appeal comes from its course-tracking software, which uses GPS to plot your position to within a metre on any one of the 39,000-plus courses loaded onto it. It can display 2D course maps, with 3D versions available on your linked phone, through the TAG Heuer Golf app. It also has the capability to record your every shot, sending stats back to the phone for in-depth analysis of your round, and your overall game.

The Big Bang Unico Golf by Hublot (inset above), worn by former world number one Dustin Johnson, includes a counting mechanism integrated into the chronograph movement, capable of recording your score for the full 18 holes, with a running total (up to a maximum of 99) displayed on a window in the dial. Omega has turned to lightweighting processes to create a watch fit for its star golf ambassador, Rory McIlroy. The Seamaster Aqua Terra Ultra Light (left) weighs just 55 grams including its fabric strap, thanks to the use of a new-to-watchmaking aerospace-grade titanium that Omega calls “gamma titanium”. As a final flourish, the crown of the watch retracts, so that it doesn’t dig into the back of your wrist while you play.
Revisiting Berlin as it celebrates 30 years since the collapse of the Wall, Jeffrey Mills finds a vibrant city to fascinate all walks of life

When I first visited Berlin back in the late 1970s, I thought it was one of the most exciting cities I had ever seen. It still is.

At the time, years before its infamous Wall was breached in 1989 and then demolished a year later, the city’s centre was firmly in the west, in the area around the Kurfürstendamm – or “Ku’Dam”, as it’s known. This was where everyone went to shop, eat, drink and enjoy life. The restaurant food may have been underwhelming, but the bars were fun to visit and there were still plenty of cabaret clubs to be found – as well as more exotic entertainments.

Fast-forward to the present, and Berlin was top of the list when two friends – one a journalist and restaurant critic, one a military historian – and I were choosing the location for our annual trip to visit scenes of significant military action. Essentially an excuse for the three of us to spend a few days eating and drinking, with some history and sightseeing thrown in, these have become known as our “Atrocity Tours”. And Berlin has seen plenty of those.

Today Berlin’s hub has moved to the eastern part of the central Mitte district, a zone that once languished behind the Wall. We stayed there, near where the western extremity of Unter den Linden, Berlin’s grandest boulevard, once marked the end of the road for East Berliners, who could do no more than gaze longingly across the border.

This area has not only become the commercial and governmental heart of Berlin, but is now also one of the most vibrant, the Stalinist-era wedding-cake-style blocks having been converted into fashionable apartments. A thriving bar and restaurant scene has inevitably followed, in streets where once the only life was in the queues at the food shops.

Fancying something a bit more distinguished, we enjoyed a particularly extravagant lunch at the Adlon, Berlin’s grandest hotel (now part of the Kempinski group), whose guests, back in the day, included Greta Garbo, TE Lawrence, Charlie Chaplin, and Kaiser Wilhelm II. The food and wine is matched only by the spectacular views of the Brandenburg Gate. It was a suitable setting for us to muse upon Berlin’s dramatic history.

The city has been described as an “accidental capital”. Once a mere blip on the map, it was an obscure and modest settlement until it was turned into the capital of Prussia in 1740 by Frederick the Great. By 1871 it stood as the proud centre of the new German Reich created by Bismarck; but in 1945 it lay in ruins, with 125,000 Berliners killed, after the defeat the Third Reich.

The differences in architecture and atmosphere between the shiny, rebuilt capitalist West Berlin and the then-
The River Spree threads through Berlin’s heart, and the boat takes you past the Reichstag; Schloss Bellevue; Beamtenschlange, home to the civil service; and the Siegessaule Victory Column from the Prussian era. You’ll also pass Nikolaiviertel, the ancient residential area whose seamless refurbishments in the GDR era have made it difficult to make out the total devastation this city once sustained.

History buffs hoping for a tour of Hitler’s Chancellery and Führerbunker will be disappointed: Both sites were demolished by the Soviets in 1947 and the bunker complex is now covered by an anonymous car park. However, you can brave the tourists for a quick look at Checkpoint Charlie, the notorious crossing between East and West Berlin – but don’t linger. Instead, take a walk along what remains of the Berlin Wall, avoiding the temptation to buy a piece of it as a souvenir. Most of the genuine masonry went years ago – together with the Russian binoculars, East German cameras, and other relics of the Nazi era and Cold War, which were once offered at very cheap prices all over the city.

Do visit the Reichstag, close to the Brandenburg Gate, seat of Germany’s parliament since 1999, even though it may mean waiting in a long queue before the trek up to admire the glass-topped dome designed by Sir Norman Foster. Spending time in the spectacular Museum Island complex for some of the best culture in the city – five museums housing breath-taking collections from antiquity to the Biedermeir period – is also essential.

Additional reporting by Damien McCrystal and Tony Torrance

**BERLIN BITES**

**Hofbräu Wirtshaus:** A vast, noisy beer hall on the Alexanderplatz, good for generous portions of hearty Bavarian food and drinkable beer. An inexpensive traditional experience best left to the young. (hofbraeu-wirtshaus.de)

**La Soupe Populaire:** New versions of classic Berlin dishes in the dramatic ‘steampunk’ setting of a historic brewery. We had cabbage salad with lard, black pudding and schnitzel – all excellent and reasonably priced. (lasoupepopulaire.de)

**KaDeWe:** The Kaufhaus des Westens department store has a sensational food market on the 6th floor where you can choose from one of many bars (go for the oysters), and sit all afternoon feasting. Waiters bring dishes – lobster, caviar, ham, veggie options, fish ‘n’ chips, you name it – from the other counters, too. (kadewe.de/en/food-restaurants)

**WHERE TO STAY**

**Ellington Hotel:** This Bauhaus building in Kurfürstendamm, Berlin’s shopping area (home to KaDeWe), was once the city’s most famous jazz hall, where Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald performed. £

**Hotel am Steinplatz:** An Art Nouveau gem in the upmarket Charlottenburg area, where Vladimir Nabokov, Brigitte Bardot and Alain Delon once stayed. ££

**Hotel Adlon:** An opulent five-star Berlin landmark on the Unter den Linden, moments from the Brandenburg Gate. And yes, it has a Michelin-starred restaurant. £££

Left, from top: A fragment of the Berlin Wall; the Nikolai Quarter in Old Berlin; signposting the most renowned boulevard in Berlin, the Unter den Linden; Berlin Cathedral Right: La Soupe Populaire
WELCOME

There is no better time than now and no better place to make it happen.

visitjamaica.com
I must admit, I thought long and hard before booking the trip to São Tomé and Príncipe – a republic of two small, remote islands that lies off the coast of West Africa and was once part of the Portuguese Empire.

The calls from Extinction Rebellion and others to change our lifestyles, and our patterns of production and consumption, have been growing ever more resonant. Increasingly, people like me, who’ve spent our lives jetting off to far-flung corners, are going to have to question the necessities of our journeys. Yes, there are schemes for carbon offsetting and some of them may work. But, realistically, we need to make more of an effort than we usually do to weigh the pros and cons of our next flight to some remote destination.

Something that swung it for me in this instance was the effort being made to create a truly responsible form of tourism on São Tomé and Príncipe. This initiative is led by Mark Shuttleworth, a South African tech entrepreneur (and sometime space tourist), who has ploughed millions into developing a handful of small, sustainable eco-residencies that work with the natural environment, rather than destroying it. His developments include the magnificent Praia Sundy, Roça Sundy and the Bom Bom Island Resort on Príncipe, as well as Omali Lodge in São Tomé.

With Shuttleworth’s help, the future for São Tomé and Príncipe, constituting Africa’s second smallest country, certainly appears brighter than its bleak past. Uninhabited until its discovery by the Portuguese in the 15th century, the islands served as victualling stations supplying slave ships well into the 19th century, while sugar and cocoa plantations sprang up that were themselves reliant on slavery. The current population of just under 200,000 is mainly descended from those enslaved or indentured workers.

There were times, at dawn and dusk, when the birdsong eclipsed the sound of lapping waves

Years of stagnation under a hardline Marxist government followed a peaceful independence in 1975. But today, São Tomé and Príncipe’s relative obscurity is one of its main attractions.

The islands seem to be in a state of almost permanent slumber. Abandoned cocoa plantations; whitewashed Portuguese churches; thick, tropical forest and winding, single-track roads combine to create a sense of peace, if not prosperity, uncommonly seen in modern West Africa.

The whole territory has been designated a World Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO. Príncipe’s forests alone shelter no fewer than eight endemic bird species, and it shares another three endemic species with São Tomé. Staying at the Praia Sundy Lodge on the island, we were, quite literally, situated between the forest and the ocean, and there were times, at dawn and dusk, when the birdsong almost eclipsed the rhythmic sound of lapping waves.
Come sunset on one evening we saw the last amber streaks of sunlight slowly fading from the sable-coloured sands as the palm trees swayed like green metronomes beyond. Our guide broke the quiet with a rapid-fire instruction: “Look there!” he exclaimed. “Can you see there’s one over there?”

A sea turtle, having just laid its eggs, was retreating back into the ocean, using her flippers to make headway on the sand before hurling herself into the blue. Green turtles and leatherback turtles (plus many more of the solitary hawksbill turtle we saw) all call Principe home, with more than 2,000 green turtle nests having been counted by local conservation groups around Praia Grande.

While eggs were being laid on one part of the beach, hatchlings were making tracks elsewhere. I saw hundreds of miniscule babies clumsily claw and hack their way out of their nests, with no small degree of haste and a precision sense of timing and direction. They scuttled towards the cerulean waters, leaving nothing but broken shells and some Lilliputian track marks as a trace that they were ever here at all.

Perhaps their alacrity is because they’re entering a particularly harsh Darwinian lottery. “Only one in a thousand will survive,” Orfeo tells us. “And if they do, they won’t come back to mate or lay eggs for a quarter of a century.”

Leaving Principe for more rambunctious climes back home poses a complex question. Given the relative poverty of the populations on both islands; given the pressure on the native forests and wildlife; is there still a need for the revenue that ‘high-value sustainable tourism’ can bring?

Personally, I think so, though I could be wrong. Others will take a different view. There are no easy answers to these kinds of questions. But if there is one thing that Extinction Rebellion and similar movements have taught us, it is that we have to come up with some answers soon.

Far and Wild offers seven nights at São Tomé and Principe, combining three nights at Omali Lodge with four at Sundy Praia from £2,699 per person, including flights. Visit farandwild.travel for more information.

Above: Driftwood on the beach at Praia Grande on Principe
Right: A beachfront suite at the Praia Sundy hotel with a private pool
Below: Turtle hatchlings on Principe head for the ocean
Crockett & Jones, one of the country’s most lauded shoemakers, is celebrating its 140th with a new collection drawn from its peerless archive of perfectly-made footwear.

It’s 140 years since Charles Jones and Sir James Crockett joined forces to create what is now regarded as one of the finest shoemakers in the world: Crockett & Jones. Jones was the shoemaker and Crockett the businessman, and together they formed a shoe manufacturing ‘firm’ that has remained in the careful hands of the Jones family ever since, and become a benchmark of quality.

At the Northampton factory – the same one the company built in 1890 – you will still find Crockett & Jones working to the hum of skilled craftsmen and women. From clickers and stitchers to leather buyers and the master pattern cutter, Crockett & Jones is a hive of rare traditional skills that imbue every shoe with craft and finesse.

In honour of the firm’s heritage, the 140th Collection breaks away from the norm and takes inspiration from the extensive archives. A specially developed last for the collection, Last 140, features a hollowed out neck, narrow waist, soft outside wall and an elegantly English round toe profile. It took months of model making, sampling and test fitting for a form fit for the collection to be created.

Each style features an elevated Hand Grade specification with British racing green linings, black sole finishing, hand polished uppers, and a gold embossed 140th Collection logo – a nod to the very early days of branded production. The shoes are complemented with a pair of lasted shoe trees that are handmade by the very same last maker of the 140 Last.

There are three styles. The Perry, inspired by a 1920s design, is a pin-punch cap English Oxford with exquisite swan neck facing details. Made from black calf with a notion of black willow grain.

The Magee is a Cambridge Gusset Casual, a design thought to originate on Jermyn Street in London, where Crockett & Jones’ flagship resides. This very ‘London’ style combines antique calf uppers with expertly stitched willow grain gusset sides and quarter inserts.

Finally comes the Turner, the dandy of the three: a demi-boot with a pin-punched short-wing cap, often found on early 19th century spectators. It’s also available as a combination of antique calf and willow grain, with just the strap and ‘fishtail’ back strap both in the grain, giving a slight contrast from the hand polished calf.

Find out more about the skills inherent to Crockett & Jones’ shoemaking at crockettandjones.com/the-article

Clockwise from top:
The six bottles in the Spanish themed in this issue’s Boisdale Life Wine Club offer; Interior of the famous shop on St James; The Berry Bros. & Rudd’s shop on Pall Mall
**DIARY**

**HIGHLIGHTS AT BOISDALE**

FOR TICKETS AND FULL NIGHTLY LISTINGS, VISIT BOISDALE.CO.UK

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**BLUE THE BEAR**
03, 04 JANUARY
Boisdale of Belgravia
A band of under-24s plays rhythm and blues of the 1960s and 70s

**LUCY MERRILYN**
03, 09, 16 JANUARY
Boisdale of Mayfair
The singer's refined mellow sound evokes the great ladies of jazz

**GEORGIA VAN ETTEN**
04, 10, 31 JANUARY
Boisdale of Mayfair
Georgia's refreshing creativity and rich vocal tones have wowed audiences across the globe

**TRIO MANOUCHE**
06, 07, 08 JANUARY
Boisdale of Belgravia
A gypsy swing ensemble playing with infectious energy and joy

**MOONIS MACDONALD**
07, 08, 14, 15, 21, 22, 28, 29 JANUARY
Boisdale of Bishopsgate
The singer-pianist plays jazz’n’blues

**ORIANA CURLS**
08, 15, 22, 29 JANUARY
Boisdale of Mayfair
Timeless American jazz standards

**DUST ME DOWN**
09 JANUARY
Boisdale of Bishopsgate
Genuine Chicago blues, 70s funk, old gospel, and jazz

**BROWN SUGAR BAND**
10, 11 JANUARY
Boisdale of Belgravia
Soul, pop, R’n’B, and Motown

**ERROL LINTON**
10, 17, 24 JANUARY
Boisdale of Bishopsgate
Three-times-winner of the Best Harmonica Player of the Year at the Blues Awards

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**THE BRAND NEW HEAVIES**
06 FEBRUARY 2020
Boisdale of Canary Wharf
Pioneers of London’s acid jazz scene, The Brand New Heavies translated their love of 1970s funk grooves and classic soul into sixteen Top 40 singles and sales of two million albums. Their acclaimed new album, TBNH, was released in September and features guest appearances from Beverley Knight, N’Dea Davenport and Angie Stone, while the lead single is a cover of the Kendrick Lamar song, “These Walls”, lovingly produced by Mark Ronson.
LOUISE MESSENGER
11, 17, 23 JANUARY
Boisdale of Mayfair
The singer performs gems from Tin Pan Alley, the Great American Songbook and rarities from the jazz canon

RICHARD HADFIELD
13, 14, 15, 16 JANUARY
Boisdale of Belgravia
Jazz standards by Ella Fitzgerald and Nat King Cole

ODYSSEY
16, 17 JANUARY
Boisdale of Canary Wharf
Chart-topping disco soul from the trio who brought you the Top Ten hits “Native New Yorker”, “Use It Up & Wear It Out”, “Looking For A Way Out”, and “Don’t Tell Me, Tell Her!” Old school meets new school as the journey continues

CHRISTIAN PRIOR
16, 23, 31 JANUARY
Boisdale of Bishopsgate
A versatile pianist, organist, and vocalist specialising in jazz, blues and early rock’n’roll

KATIE MCHARDY
18 JANUARY
Boisdale of Mayfair
Rich and sultry tones infused with influences of jazz, blues, soul and R’n’B

JO HARROP
20, 21, 22, 23 JANUARY
Boisdale of Belgravia
A night of swinging jazz and classic songs accompanied by the Alex Webb Trio

WAYNE HERNANDEZ
24, 25, 31 JANUARY
Boisdale of Belgravia
A charismatic soul singer who always gets the audience going with his infectious energy and amazingly powerful voice

LIZ FLETCHER
25 JANUARY
Boisdale of Mayfair
“One of the UK’s top jazz singers” says Ronnie Scott’s Magazine, and we agree

THE GIN TRAP HOUSE BAND
27, 28, 29, 30 JANUARY
Boisdale of Belgravia
R’n’B, jump-blues and jazz from the 40s, 50s, and 60s

MICA PARIS
29, 30 JANUARY
Boisdale of Canary Wharf
One of the UK’s most respected female singers, with a career that is full of Top Ten hit singles and best-selling albums

DUNCAN HEMPESTOCK
30 JANUARY
Boisdale of Bishopsgate
Chart-topping disco soul from the trio who brought you the Top Ten hits “Native New Yorker”, “Use It Up & Wear It Out”, “Looking For A Way Out”, and “Don’t Tell Me, Tell Her!” Old school meets new school as the journey continues

GIULIA MARELLI
30 JANUARY
Boisdale of Mayfair
Jazz standards performed by a versatile and powerful vocalist

DEAN’S VEGAS SHOW
THROUGHOUT DECEMBER
Boisdale of Canary Wharf
At this very best Christmas party in London, Boisdale revellers are transported back to the glamorous heyday of Las Vegas through classic songs of the Rat Pack, including “Fly Me To The Moon”, “The Lady Is A Tramp”, “Volare” “That’s Amore” and “New York, New York”.

FRANK & DEAN’S VEGAS SHOW
THROUGHOUT DECEMBER
Boisdale of Canary Wharf
At this very best Christmas party in London, Boisdale revellers are transported back to the glamourous heyday of Las Vegas through classic songs of the Rat Pack, including “Fly Me To The Moon”, “The Lady Is A Tramp”, “Volare” “That’s Amore” and “New York, New York”.

FIRST FLOOR DJ NIGHTS
Boisdale of Canary Wharf
SAXON SOUND SYSTEM DJs: SOUL FUNK & REGGAE
Saturdays 9pm to 2am
MI SOUL RADIO DJs: UK HOME OF SOULFUL MUSIC
Fridays 7pm to 1am
CARWASH: 70s & 80s SOUL & DISCO
Thursdays 7pm to 1am
CARWASH: 70s & 80s SOUL & DISCO
Wednesdays 7pm to 1am
DJ ROZ: FUNKY DISCO
Tuesdays 7pm to 11pm
SANDRA-MAE  
**02, 03, 04, 05 MARCH**  
**Boisdale of Belgravia**  
A talented singer and multi-instrumentalist, playing saxophone, guitar, piano and percussion.

MISSISSIPPI SWAMP DOGS  
**13, 14 MARCH**  
**Boisdale of Belgravia**  
A musical journey that includes hits by artists such as the Neville Brothers and Louis Armstrong.

THE THREE DEGREES  
**17, 18 MARCH**  
**Boisdale of Canary Wharf**  
The super stars perform When Will I See You Again, Dirty Ol’ Man, Take Good Care Of Yourself.

ALEXANDER O’NEAL  
**28, 29, 30 APRIL & 01 MAY**  
**Boisdale of Canary Wharf**  
An R'n'B legend with a sound that has transcended generations, Alexander O’Neal is one of the genre’s most iconic names.

THE REAL THING  
**06, 07, 08 MAY**  
**Boisdale of Canary Wharf**  
One of the UK’s most successful soul acts in concert, original vocalists Chris Amoo and Dave Smith perform a string of hit singles with their five-piece band.

ALBERT LEE  
**03 JUNE**  
**Boisdale of Canary Wharf**  
Grammy Award-winning British guitarist and multiple recipient of Guitar Player magazine's Best Country Guitarist takes to the Boisdale stage for one night only.

THE MANFREDS  
**09 JULY**  
**Boisdale of Canary Wharf Restaurant**  
Paul Jones, with his unique harmonica sound, is joined by Mike Hugg on keyboards, Tom McGuinness on guitar, Rob Townsend on drums, Marcus Cliffe on bass, and Simon Currie on saxophone / flute to perform as The Manfreds.

DINNER WITH SAM WALEY-COHEN  
**25 FEBRUARY**  
**Boisdale of Bishopsgate**  
Sam Waley-Cohen’s win in the 2011 Cheltenham Gold Cup on Long Run was the first success for an amateur rider in 40 years. Now, he is one of only nine jockeys riding to have won jumps racing’s blue riband, as well as three other successes at the winter game’s showcase meeting and three top-five finishes, including second, in the Grand National. On 25 February, just before the 2020 Cheltenham Festival, Sam is our guest of honour for the latest Starter’s Orders supper, in partnership with Fitzdares.

BURNS CELEBRATIONS  
**25 JANUARY**  
**All Boisdale restaurants**  
Annandale Distillery presents the 2020 Burns celebrations at Boisdale – a ritual that has remained unchanged for more than 200 years and is one of the strongest symbols of Scotland’s national identity. Accompanying the traditional feast of the finest Scottish ingredients are Annandale Distillery’s non-chill filtered single cask, single malt Scotch whiskies, which arrive at the table straight from the barrel and bottled at cask strength. Historically, Annandale Distillery has produced smoky-peated whisky and continues this tradition with its highly acclaimed Man O’Sword, as well as its fruity, unpeated, Man O’Words. Needless to say, this is whisky at its absolute purest and most natural.

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ALEXANDER O’NEAL

For more than four decades, Alexander O’Neal has been one of the world’s finest purveyors of R&B and soul music. The singer shot to fame in the 1980s with hits like Criticize, If You Were Here Tonight and Saturday Love, and remains the only performer to have sold out six nights at Wembley Arena. A firm Boisdale favourite, he returns to Boisdale of Canary Wharf from 29 April to 1 May.

What can we expect from an Alexander O’Neal live show right now?
An intimate and energetic performance from an incredibly tight nine piece band that will just light the place up.

What’s your favourite song to perform, and why?
Crying Overtime – one of my own songs that I recorded on the Hearsay album – it’s always been my personal favourite to sing. Also What A Wonderful World by my old friend Louis Armstrong.

What are your plans for 2020?
Touring and working on new material for my new album. People will have to wait to hear the new sound but all I can say it’s not a R&B album like I’m known for!

What would you say has been the high point of your career?
It hasn’t come yet but eight sold out nights at Wembley ain’t bad. It was just incredible. At the time no artist had ever sold out Wembley for that amount of time so it was kind of historic and the crowds were unbelievable.

What’s your earliest musical memory?
Listening to the records my mother would play around the house.

How has the music industry changed while you’ve been a part of it?
Music is constantly changing and technology also plays a good part these days, but it’s still our job to perform music the best way we can – that hasn’t changed, and that’s what people still love.

Which artists would you call your musical heroes and why?
Otis Redding and Sam Cooke amongst many others. Their voices were just incredible – so pure – and with unrivalled delivery. Plus they were the trend setters of their day breaking down racial barriers and all that.

What three records would you pick that inspire you?
What’s Going On by Marvin Gaye
Respect by Aretha Franklin
Amen by The Impressions

Which current musicians do you admire?
H.E.R., Jill Scott and Yolanda Adams

What talent would you love to have?
To be able to fly

What’s the ideal drink to enjoy with an Alexander O’Neal show?
Chivas Regal whisky

What’s your idea of perfect happiness?
Taking it easy with family and friends whilst enjoying some good southern home cooking.

Alexander O’Neal takes to the stage at Boisdale of Canary Wharf on 29, 30 April and 01 May 2020. For more information and tickets, visit Boisdale.co.uk.
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