

FINANCIAL TIMES

HITS

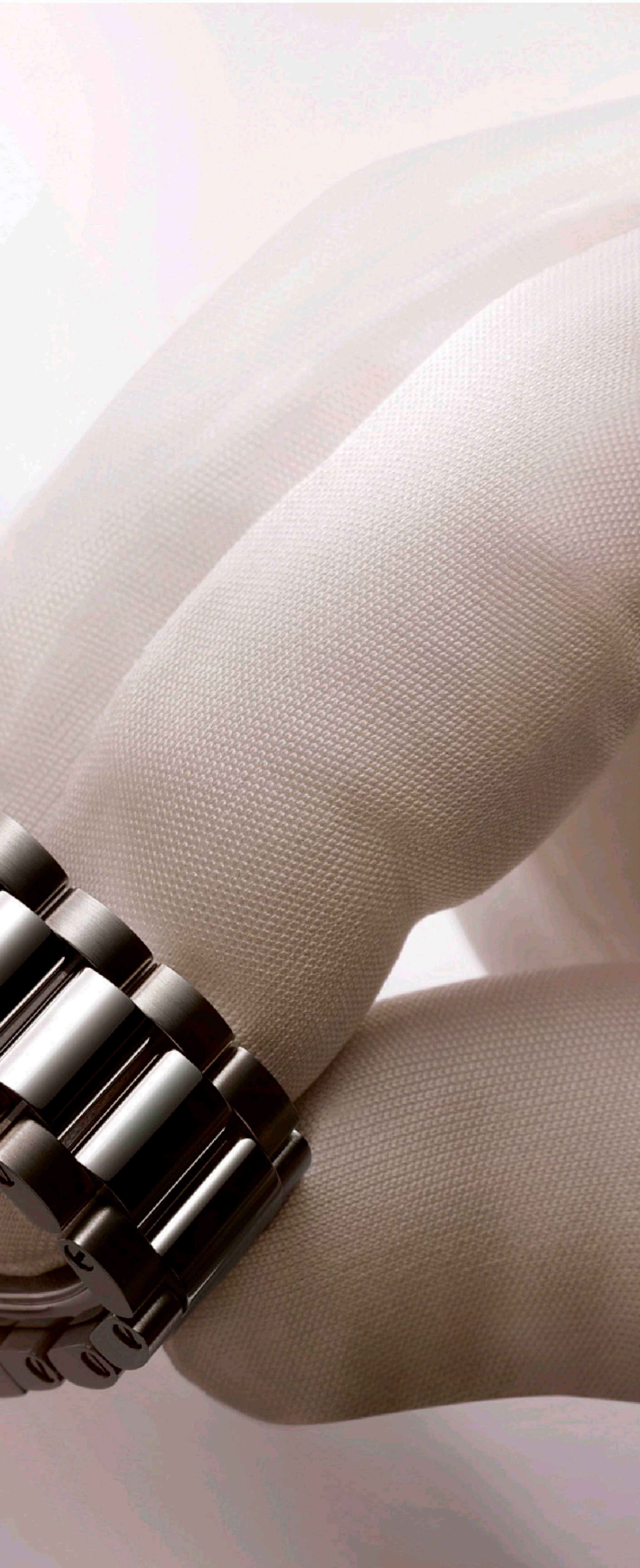
6 APRIL
2024

CILLIAN MURPHY

is enjoying the moment

PLUS SLOW CYCLING THROUGH SOUTH AFRICA, ST VINCENT TALKS TASTE, A GOURMET GUIDE TO JAKARTA, THE CULT OF COGNATO





SEAMASTER AQUA TERRA SHADES
Co-Axial Master Chronometer

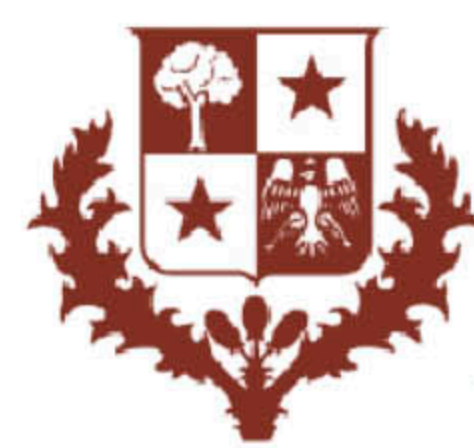
PRECISION

Our attention to detail is evident in everything we make. Consider the bracelet of our 34 mm Seamaster Aqua Terra Shades. Polished and brushed with beautifully rounded links, it is the perfect blend of form and function. Even the clasp is a work of art. We achieve this level of excellence by investing time and obsessing over the details. That's our uncompromising approach. That's OMEGA precision.



#Precision

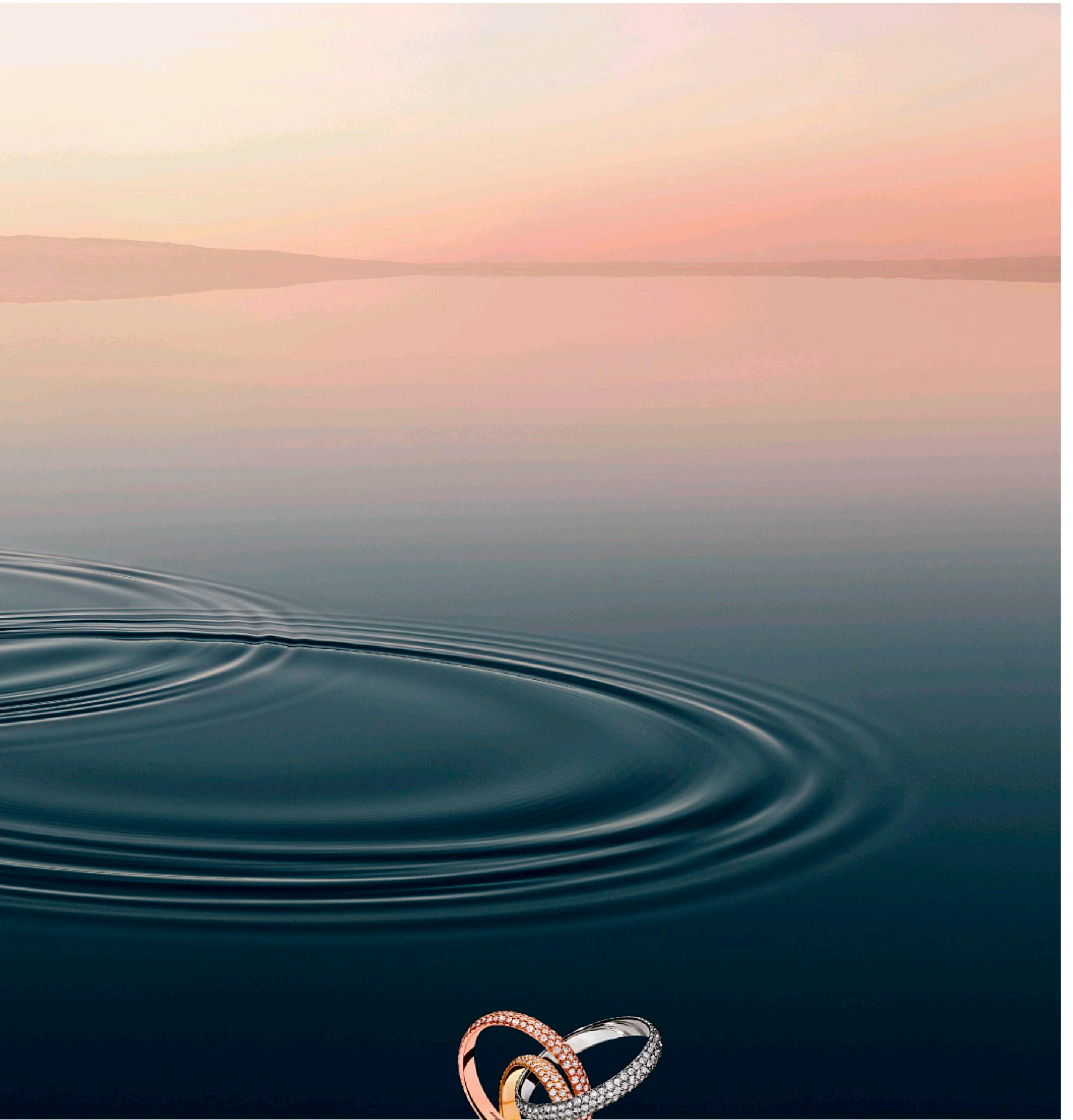




Loro Piana



TRINITY
Cartier



Van Cleef & Arpels

Haute Joaillerie, place Vendôme since 1906





Frivole collection
Between the Finger Ring,
rose gold and diamonds.





Hermès Frères
de Paris


HERMÈS
PARIS

Faubourg calling

HTSI

6 APRIL
2024

REGULARS

13 OPENING SHOT
Jason Rhoades' riotous exploration of LA's car culture

17 EDITOR'S LETTER
Jo Ellison introduces Cillian Murphy, cool suits and cult jewels

19 THE AESTHETE
Musician St Vincent talks taste

34 THE FIND
A crystal ball that's the future for houseplants

37 THE CAUSE
Artist Mark Bradford on his work with the inmates of Venice's prisons.
By Claire Wrathall

38 DOUBLE ACT
Can John and Jack Whitaker make showjumping history?
By Sharon Smith

57 TRAVELISTA
Three blissful Mediterranean stays.
By Maria Shollenbarger

59 TECHNOPSIS
How to create the ultimate home ambience.
By Rhodri Marsden

60 HOW TO HOST IT
Laila Gohar celebrates spring vegetables

61 DRINK
The rebirth of Port Ellen.
By Alice Lascelles

62 HOW TO SPEND IT IN... JAKARTA
Rahel Stephanie's culinary guide to the Indonesian capital



ON THE COVER:
Photography by INDIGO LEWIN
Styling by ROSE FORDE

CILLIAN MURPHY wears VERSACE wool tailored coat, £2,310. Hoodie, Murphy's own

THE FIX

23 TAILOR'S VERSION
Setchu, Savile Row and the origami suit.
By Kin Woo

25 MUSK TILL DAWN
Six men's fragrances with heady appeal.
By Inès Cross

28 TOTAL BABE
Capote's favourite, Babe Paley, is this week's style muse.
By Aylin Bayhan

30 FRESH HEIR
Francesca Amfitheatrof joins the dynasty at Codognato.
By Maria Shollenbarger

35 IT'S IN THE PAPER
Clara Baldock shines a light on the best new lanterns

28



40

FEATURES

40 THE MESMERISING NORMALITY OF CILLIAN MURPHY
The actor talks Oscars, Versace – and his enduring awkwardness.
By Jo Ellison

46 BRAKE THE CYCLE
Charlotte Sinclair heads out on a "slow cycling" adventure through South Africa's Western Cape

50 "I END WITH THE SHADOWS"
The fairytale visions of painter Guglielmo Castelli.
By Gisela Williams

25



19

PHOTOGRAPHS: MOLLY MATAJON, INDIGO LEWIN, CILLIAN MURPHY WEARS VERSACE WOOL TAILORED COAT, £2,310, WOOL JACQUARD VEST (JUST SEEN), £690, WOOL TROUSERS, £810, AND BRAIDED LEATHER MEDUSA BIGGIE BRACELET, £260. JOHN LOBB LEATHER FREDDO! BOOTS, £1,940. RING, CILLIAN'S OWN



miujiu miujiu

OPENING SHOT

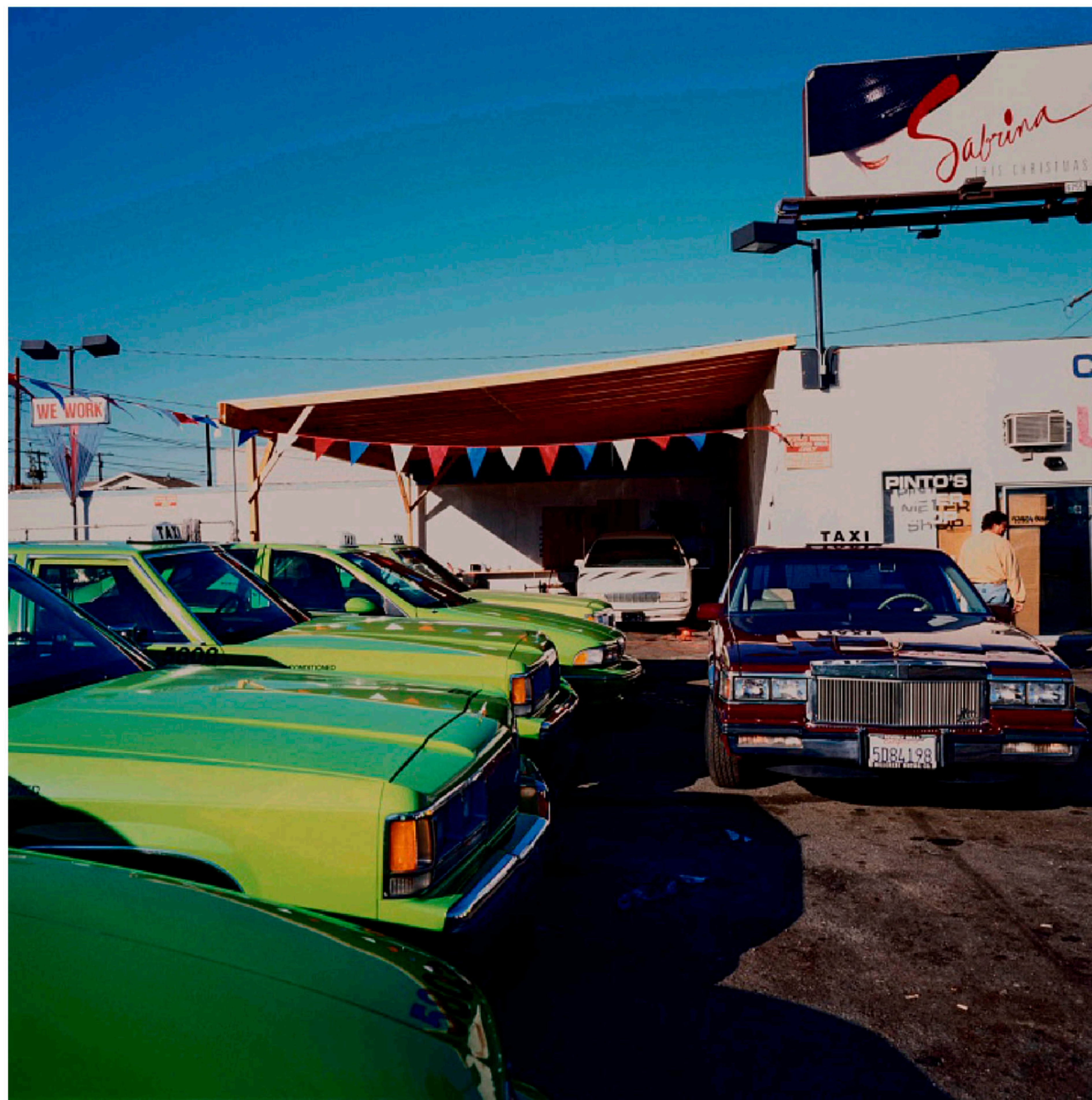
RHOADES TRIP

A new exhibition of the late artist's work explores the motor culture of Los Angeles

The car was a constant theme for the late Californian artist Jason Rhoades, known for his boundary-pushing, sex-obsessed and often recklessly provocative installations. This year, Hauser & Wirth has given over a gallery in its downtown Los Angeles space to *Drive*, an ever-changing exhibition of Rhoades' riotous, sprawling sculptures, drawings, videos and archival material. In the first iteration of the show, a Chevrolet Caprice, a Ferrari 328 GTS and a Ligier microcar are parked in the gallery, alongside a video projection, filmed in the '90s, in which Rhoades drives around in the Caprice, talking fervidly about his "car projects". As he navigates his way around Los Angeles, Rhoades muses on how he relates to cars: to him they are a vehicle for dreams, desires and beliefs, ready-made sculptures, objects of meditation, class signifiers, American idols as well as his means of reaching his art studio each day. They are also an expression of place, "integrally important to the process that takes place in LA", he says. **ALEXANDER JAMES**

Jason Rhoades' Drive is at Hauser & Wirth Downtown Los Angeles North A Gallery until 14 January 2025

Right: a photograph from Jason Rhoades' *Caprice Auto Project*, 1996



CONTRIBUTORS



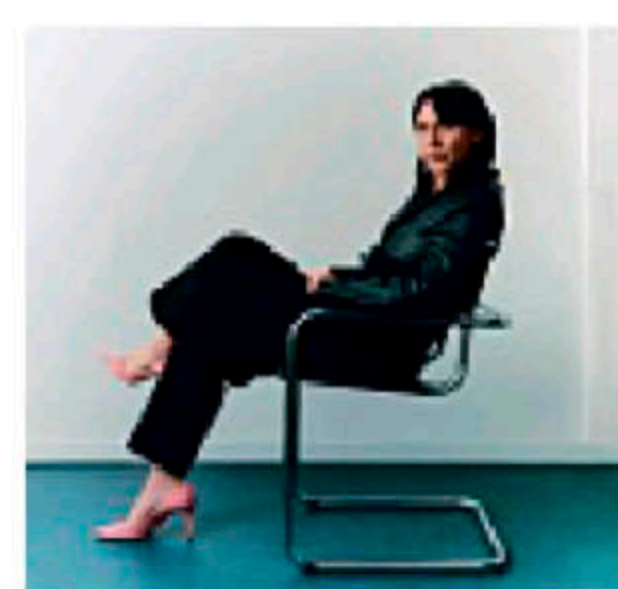
MOLLY MATALON

Matalon's work deals with "desire, idealisation and power dynamics, providing a rarely seen female photographic viewpoint": in her 2020 photobook *When a Man Loves a Woman*, she subverted her title by taking "erotic but sensitive" portraits of men. Her subject this week is our Aesthete, the musician St Vincent – aka Annie Clark. "I loved finding out that Annie's mom is a photographer and so she grew up constantly having her picture taken."



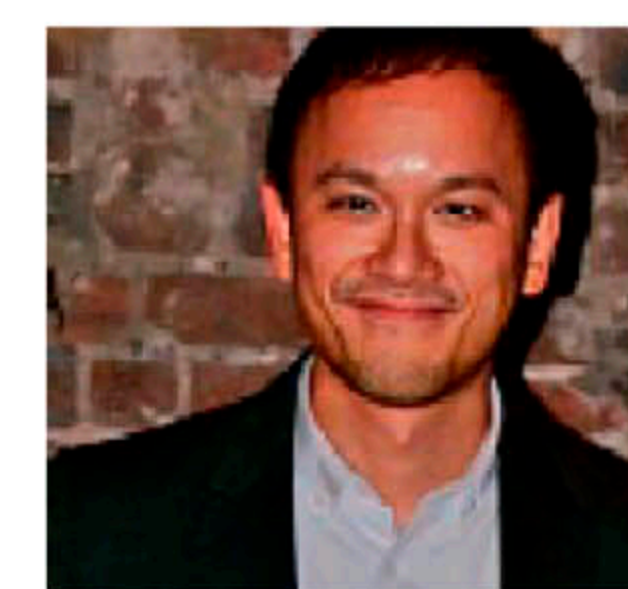
MUHAMMAD FADLI

The photographer began his career taking pictures for the local paper in west Sumatra where he grew up, and has since moved on to personal projects exploring colonisation in Indonesia and "extreme scooter" communities. Fadli is now based in Jakarta, where he shot this week's *How To Spend It*... column with Rahel Stephanie, the founder of supper club Spoons. The biggest challenge? "The awful Jakarta light; that's why we use a bright flash."



ROSE FORDE

"I am often considered part of the 'new vanguard' of red-carpet stylists, and am happy to play a part in making it more experimental and interesting," says Forde, who has spent the past decade styling actors including Cillian Murphy, whom she dressed for this week's cover story. "This shoot reflects the conclusion of a journey Cillian and I have been on through his well-deserved awards run," she says. "He is a true collaborator."



KIN WOO

The former doctor made the jump to journalism after interning at *Dazed* magazine while on sabbatical in 2006. For this issue he spoke to Satoshi Kuwata, the designer of menswear label Setchu, who has created a collection in collaboration with the Savile Row tailor Davies & Son. "It was refreshing to see Setchu win the 2023 LVMH Prize," he says. "The designs are a mix of sartorial formality, practicality and playful inventiveness."

Chopard

THE ARTISAN OF EMOTIONS – SINCE 1860



ALPINE EAGLE FLYING TOURBILLON

Epitomising the pure and sophisticated aesthetics of the Alpine Eagle collection, this 41 mm-diameter model is crafted from Chopard's exclusive, high-quality Lucent Steel™. Equipped with the L.U.C 96.24-L movement, it is one of the rare flying tourbillon watches to bear both chronometer certification and the *Poinçon de Genève* quality hallmark. Proudly developed and handcrafted by our Artisans, this exceptional timepiece showcases the finest expertise and innovation cultivated within our Manufacture.



GS
Grand Seiko



ALIVE
IN
TIME

Not just telling time, living in it.
Grand Seiko. Alive in Time.



grand-seiko.com

Evolution 9 Collection Mechanical Hi-Beat 36000 72 Hours Chronograph

#SLGC001

HTSI

EDITOR
Jo Ellison (jo.ellison@ft.com)

DEPUTY EDITOR
Beatrice Hodgkin (beatrice.hodgkin@ft.com)

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Rasha Kahil (rasha.kahil@ft.com)

STYLE DIRECTOR
Isabelle Kountoure (isabelle.kountoure@ft.com)

FEATURES

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Tim Auld (tim.auld@ft.com)

ASSISTANT EDITORS
Jackie Daly (jackie.daly@ft.com)
Louis Wise (louis.wise@ft.com)

COMMISSIONING EDITORS
Rosanna Dodds (rosanna.dodds@ft.com)
Baya Simons (baya.simons@ft.com)

EDITORIAL COORDINATOR
Clara Baldock (clara.baldock@ft.com)

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Inès Cross (ines.cross@ft.com)

JUNIOR EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Marion Willingham (marion.willingham@ft.com)

FASHION

FASHION EDITOR

Benjamin Canares (benjamin.canares@ft.com)

JUNIOR FASHION EDITOR

Aylin Bayhan (aylin.bayhan@ft.com)

JUNIOR FASHION FEATURES EDITOR

Sara Semic (sara.semic@ft.com)

ART

ART DIRECTOR

Carlo Apostoli (carlo.apostoli@ft.com)

DEPUTY ART DIRECTOR

Morwenna Parry (morwenna.parry@ft.com)

JUNIOR DESIGNER

Sofea Aznidi (sofea.aznidi@ft.com)

PICTURES

PICTURE DIRECTOR

Katie Webb (katie.webb@ft.com)

DEPUTY PICTURE EDITOR

Amara Eno (amara.eno@ft.com)

JUNIOR PICTURE EDITOR

Paula Baker (paula.baker@ft.com)

SUBEDITORS

CHIEF SUBEDITOR

Kate Chapple (kate.chapple@ft.com)

DEPUTY CHIEF SUBEDITOR

Alexander Tyndall (alexander.tyndall@ft.com)

SUBEDITOR

Helen Bain (helen.bain@ft.com)

JUNIOR SUBEDITOR

Chris Allnutt (chris.allnutt@ft.com)

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Vivienne Becker, Jessica Beresford, Julian Broad, Simon de Burton, David Coggins, Adeela Crown, Aleks Cvetkovic, Delphine Danhier, Wilow Diallo, Aimee Farrell, Kate Finnigan, Maria Fitzpatrick, Nick Foulkes, Alexander Fury, Julian Ganio, Laila Gohar, Fiona Gofar, Ben Grimes, James Harvey-Kelly, Jasmine Hassett, Andreas Peter Krings, Alice Lascelles, Rhodri Marsden, Jay Massacret, Evens Mornay, Nicola Moulton, Rebecca Newman, Michelle Ogundehin, Ajesh Patalay, Charlene Premph, Harriet Quick, Tamara Rothstein, Fergus Scholes, Victoria Woodcock

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Lucia van der Post (lucia.vanderpost@ft.com)

TRAVEL EDITOR

Maria Shollenbarger (maria.shollenbarger@ft.com)

US CORRESPONDENT

Christina Ohly Evans (christina.ohlyevans@ft.com)

PUBLISHING

GLOBAL DIRECTOR, LUXURY & WEEKEND ADVERTISING

Dorota Gwilliam (dorota.gwilliam@ft.com)

COMMERCIAL SALES & PRODUCT MANAGER

Isaac Peltz (isaac.peltz@ft.com)

PRODUCTION

Denise Macklin

ADVERTISING PRODUCTION

John Lee

WWW.FT.COM/HTSI

X.COM/HTSI

INSTAGRAM.COM/FTHTSI

FT.COM/NEWSLETTERS

EDITORIAL ENQUIRIES 020-7873 3203

ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES 020-7873 4208

HTSI magazine is printed by Walsstead Group for, and published by, The Financial Times Ltd, Bracken House, 1 Friday Street, London EC4M 9BT. ORIGINATION BY Dexter Premedia

PHOTOGRAPHS: MARILU ANDRE, PAOLO PRENDIN



Guglielmo Castelli at his studio in Turin (page 50). Above left: CODOGNATO gold, diamond, emerald, pink-sapphire and pink-tourmaline cross, POA (page 30)

It's impossible to meet Satoshi Kuwata, the man behind Setchu and the winner of last year's LVMH Prize, and not be captivated by his story. Arriving in London from Japan aged 21, with scarcely any English and an obsession with British fashion, Kuwata spent his first weeks trying to find an apprenticeship on Savile Row by walking into tailors' shops and presenting them with a handwritten sign. Later, while working with clients at H Huntsman and Sons, and simultaneously studying fashion at Central Saint Martins, he realised he wanted to bridge the gap between the codes of suiting and modern fashion's more relaxed approach. He worked for nearly two decades at different fashion houses before launching Setchu in 2020, a hybrid expression of his experiences in both worlds.

This month, Kuwata debuts a collaboration with Davies & Son, the oldest and one of the most venerable institutions on Savile Row, with a collection that draws on all sorts of artisanal details, including origami: its real eureka distinction is that you can fold up the jackets to fit inside a case. As someone who always travels with hand luggage, and who always needs a blazer, this innovation resonates deeply with me – as it will to anyone who has to pack a suit for work. Kin Woo meets Kuwata and Johnny Allen, the head of bespoke at Davies & Son, to discover that even the quaintest environments can sometimes be the fulcrum for radical ideas (page 23).

Do you own a paper lantern? One of the most practical, cost-effective and beloved interiors features, the lampshade remains near-ubiquitous in sitting rooms and bedrooms throughout the world. Its relative cheapness has contributed to its popularity, but the real secret to its lasting endurance is that it casts such a beautifully diffused light. I had never thought to change the £2 Ikea orbs that have been hanging in my living room for at least a decade until I read Clara Baldock's piece about the upgraded versions now available to buy (page 35). I'm especially taken by David Horan's "deckled" contributions to the genre – a vegan recipe – and the eco-resin made by Australian lighting designer Lana Launay; both have a gloriously vellum-like effect.



I PARTLY OWE MY HUSBAND TO CILLIAN MURPHY

The Venice Biennale begins next week and so this issue brings together three figures who have a deep association with the city: artist Mark Bradford is working with the Rio Terà dei Pensieri retail project to help rehabilitate prisoners by teaching them skills to help them gain employment (page 37); Guglielmo Castelli, the Turin-based painter, is bringing his first major institutional exhibition *Improving Songs for Anxious Children* to the city's Palazzetto Tito (page 50); and Francesca Amfitheatrof, artistic director of watches and jewellery at Louis Vuitton, has joined the legendary Casa Codognato as its new head of creative. The house of Codognato is as cult-like as it is ancient, a fabulous confluence of gothic, baroque and religious inspirations that has been operating under the same family since 1866. Maria Shollenbarger went to its new store, just off St Mark's Square, as it prepares for a new chapter. Don't worry, it's one in which snakes, skulls and massive crucifixes still abound (page 30).

Lastly, I was beyond thrilled to interview Cillian Murphy as he capped off an epic awards season: our last conversation for this week's cover story took place two days after he picked up an Academy Award (page 40). I've known Cillian for nearly 30 years now – I partly owe my husband to him – and I'm inordinately proud of him. He's one of the most talented and least affected actors in the world. ■ HTSI
 @jellison22
 For the best of HTSI straight into your inbox every week, sign up to our newsletter at ft.com/newsletters

TF
TOM FAULKNER



Capricorn

LONDON | NEW YORK

28 Pimlico Road, London, SW1W 8LJ
tomfaulkner.co.uk



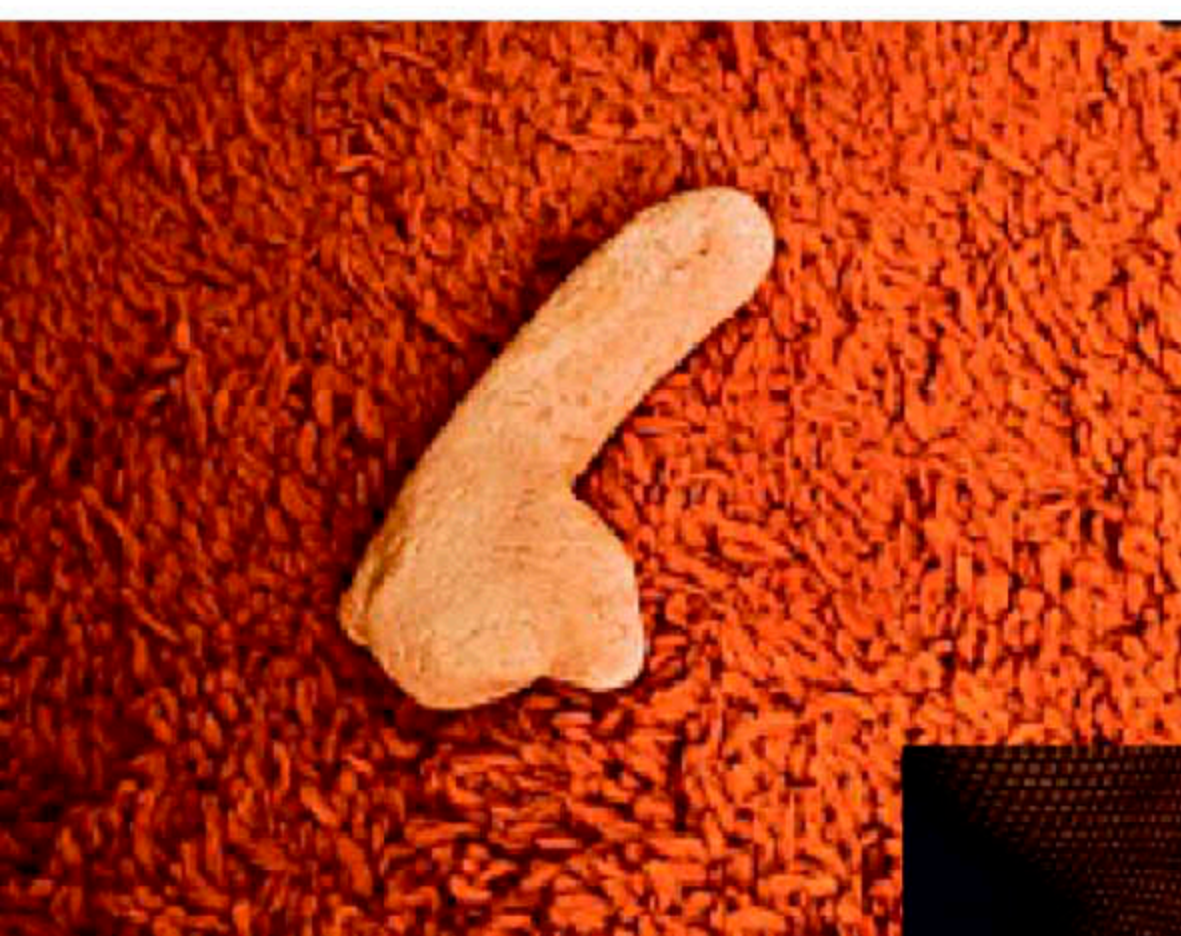


I went home and was so obsessed that I made guitars out of cardboard and rubber bands. She saw I meant it, so she went back and got it. The seed was sown.

St Vincent

The musician – aka Annie Clark – loves flasher coats, food candles and old-fashioned phone calls

INTERVIEW BY LAUREN HADDEN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MOLLY MATALON



HER FAVOURITE RECENT LISTEN: POMPEII BY CATE LE BON



MY PERSONAL STYLE SIGNIFIER is a trench coat. It's incredibly low-maintenance and can be dressed up or down. It can say a few things: English gentleman, busy stylist or playground flasher. My favourite is probably a Celine trench I got in 2017, at the end of the Phoebe Philo era. I'll wear it till I'm 85, God willing. I'll be buried in that thing.

THE BEST SOUVENIR I'VE BROUGHT HOME is from the first time I went surfing, in Barbados. I wiped out and got swept away from the rest of the group. But as I was fumbling back, I found a giant piece of coral in the shape of a beautiful turgid cock. There's a reason for every wipeout; in this case, so I could bring back this beautiful cock.

THE THING I COULDN'T DO WITHOUT is music. At the age of five, I saw the Ritchie Valens movie *La Bamba* where he plays that red Stratocaster. It seemed a magical object and I wanted to get near it. My mom took me to Target in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and there was a social worker; there wasn't much money; and it was expensive. I grew up thinking \$20 was a massive amount of money. But

MY STYLE ICON is Erykah Badu. Style is interesting because there's what someone wears and how someone wears it. The same thing can look completely different depending on the person. Erykah has a wild and exciting style. Put it on anyone else and you'd be calling the authorities.

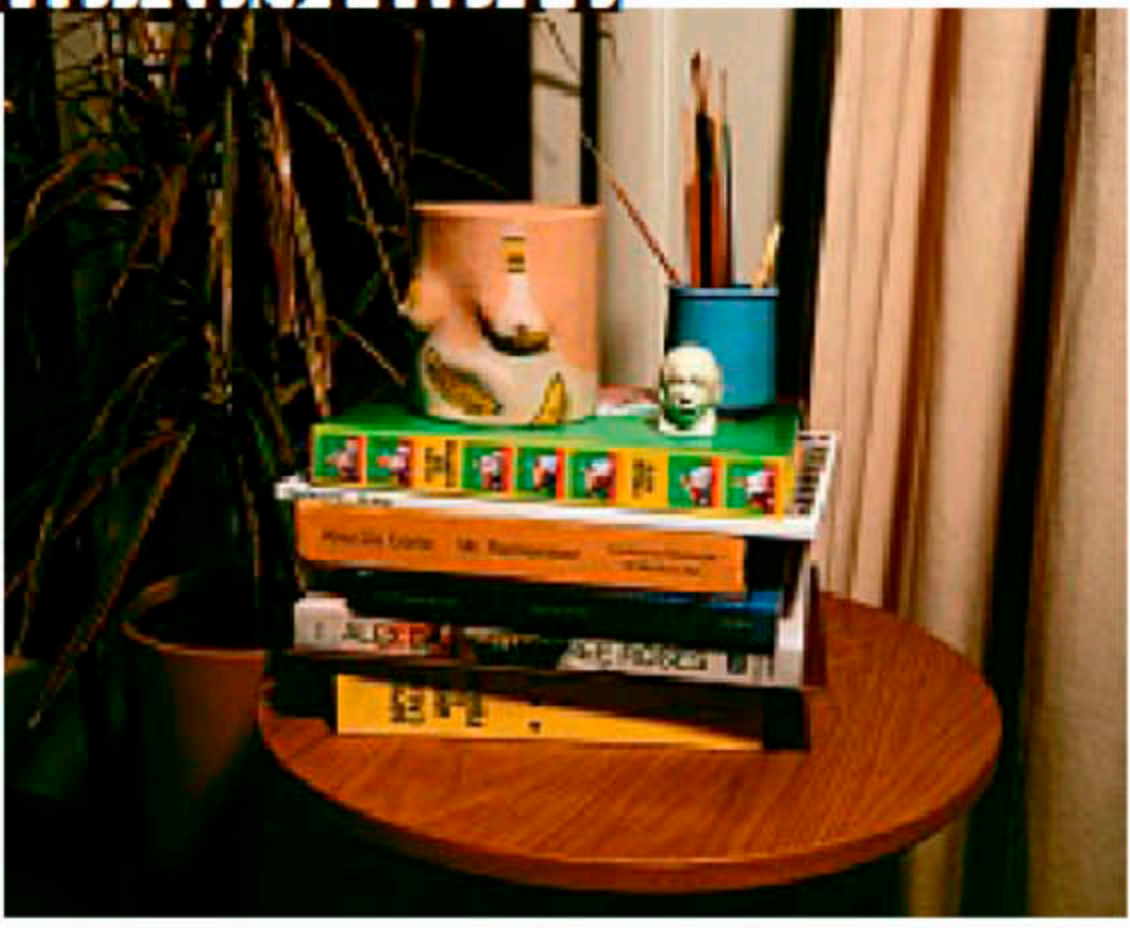
THE BEST BOOK I'VE READ IN THE PAST YEAR is *Faith, Hope and Carnage*, the series of interviews Seán O'Hagan did with Nick Cave. I found it incredibly wise and inspiring, especially the way he talks about grief.

THE LAST ITEM OF CLOTHING I ADDED TO MY WARDROBE was a pair of Prada ankle boots. I grind shoes down to the nub. If I have a favourite thing, I wear it every day. They were sold out in my size all over the States, but I found them in duty-free at Heathrow. I happened to be in London the following week to play the Royal Albert Hall. So I'm stumbling to my gate, tired and hungover, and I almost miss my flight stopping to buy these boots. They are Prada's answer to Dr Martens, except chic and lightweight.

THE LAST MUSIC I BOUGHT was Cate Le Bon's most recent record, *Pompeii*. Cate is one of my best friends in the whole world and also one of my favourite artists in the whole world.

Top: St Vincent at home in Los Angeles, wearing her old Celine trench coat. Above: the coral she found in Barbados. Right: with her copy of Nick Cave and Seán O'Hagan's *Faith, Hope and Carnage*

THE AESTHETE



THE BEST GIFT I'VE GIVEN was fixing a gas leak at my mother's house. I gave her the gift of life, because she didn't explode, and so I've given myself the gift of life, because I adore my mother.

AND THE BEST GIFT I'VE RECEIVED is a Lomo 19A19 microphone, which my family got me for my last big birthday. It was built in the 1960s, an excellent Soviet version of a German-engineered Neumann U47 or an AKG C12 VR. [Musician/producer] Steve Albini was the first guy to get hip to the Lomo. They were cheap 20 years ago because people hadn't caught on to their quality, but they're tricky to get now. I've used it so much on my recordings since I got it.

I HAVE A COLLECTION of candles in the shape of food. It's a pretty extensive collection that includes a beautiful fruit tart, a very convincing brie and a hot dog. Japan is a good source but I've picked them up all over. It's a specific kind of person who feels delight at that kind of oddity.

I'VE RECENTLY REDISCOVERED my old '90s Madonna records. I took my sister to see her opening night at the O2. I wept at that show. I was genuinely, deeply moved. I became a fan again, with a capital F. Instead of watching the show and thinking, say, about the production, I was completely immersed in it.

THE LAST THING I BOUGHT AND LOVED was a Vermona DRM1 MKIII drum machine. I make beats [with a MIDI keyboard] and send it to this, which allows me to manipulate the sounds in real time. Then I balance the sounds within the Vermona and make a stereo, or sometimes mono, bounce of the beat. It's a more circuitous route, but it's worth it for the sonic and tactile satisfaction.

IN MY FRIDGE YOU'LL ALWAYS FIND waffles that you can make in the toaster, because I can't cook. And champagne. One is AM and one is PM.

AN INDULGENCE I WOULD NEVER FORGO is a real counterpoint to my sob story about growing up lower middle class... listen, if there's champagne to be had, I'm having it. My favourite thing to do at a fancy party is point at the food or drink and ask people, "Is this free?!" I was taken out for dinner in Vegas around the time of the Grammys, and we went to Carbone, which has an extensive champagne list. I tried something from a small vineyard and it was the best thing I've ever had: it was magic in the mouth. My family took me to Carbone the next night and I was going to order it for the table before I saw the price and decided that the tap water was nice too.

AN OBJECT I WOULD NEVER PART WITH is a white Supro Dual Tone guitar, signed by David Bowie, which I treasure. I would never get rid of that. I don't play it live. It's like fancy candles: not for burning.

THE ONE ARTIST WHOSE WORK I WOULD COLLECT IF I COULD is Goya. I went to the Prado last time I was in Madrid with my artist friend Alex Da Corte. We saw

Goya's Black paintings – *Saturn Devouring his Son* and *Witches' Sabbath* – which sent a lightning bolt down my spine. Goya painted them on the walls of his house: he lived with those. They feel like end-of-life paintings. I don't think you're able to paint those kinds of things when you're young. They're by someone reckoning with mortality. I'm thinking they'd go nicely in the bedroom.

THE BEAUTY STAPLE I'M NEVER WITHOUT is a hot shower. No matter how late the party is, I never go to bed without washing my face, brushing my teeth and showering. Especially on tour, because I genuinely get disgusting. I'm covered in sweat, I've often made my knees bleed, I've gone into the crowd, I've had people's hands on me, I've spat – it's a feral existence.

MY FAMILY OWNS a taqueria in Dallas, Resident Taqueria, which does incredible food, very reasonably priced. They've won awards – my brother-in-law is an amazing chef and studied with Jean-Georges Vongerichten and Thomas Keller. It's a great hang, and when I'm in Dallas I eat at least one meal a day there.

MY FAVOURITE APP is Chordbot. I write so much music on there. It's a way to put together all those expensive chords. I'm talking about chords with flat nines and 13s; I'm talkin' half-diminished with dominant sevens. I'm talking chords.

SOME OF MY BEST IDEAS have come from conversations, from calling up a friend and just riffing. There's something crystallising about conversations with friends who are also artists – like calling up Carrie Brownstein [of Sleater-Kinney] and going off on a tangent. Conversations with

strangers are fascinating, too. I'm at a level of success where if you know me, you know me, but I'm not so mainstream that I can't walk down the street. I like what that affords me, that I can have a conversation with a stranger at a bar and they don't know what I do. I like when no one is self-conscious or has anything to gain except a human interaction.

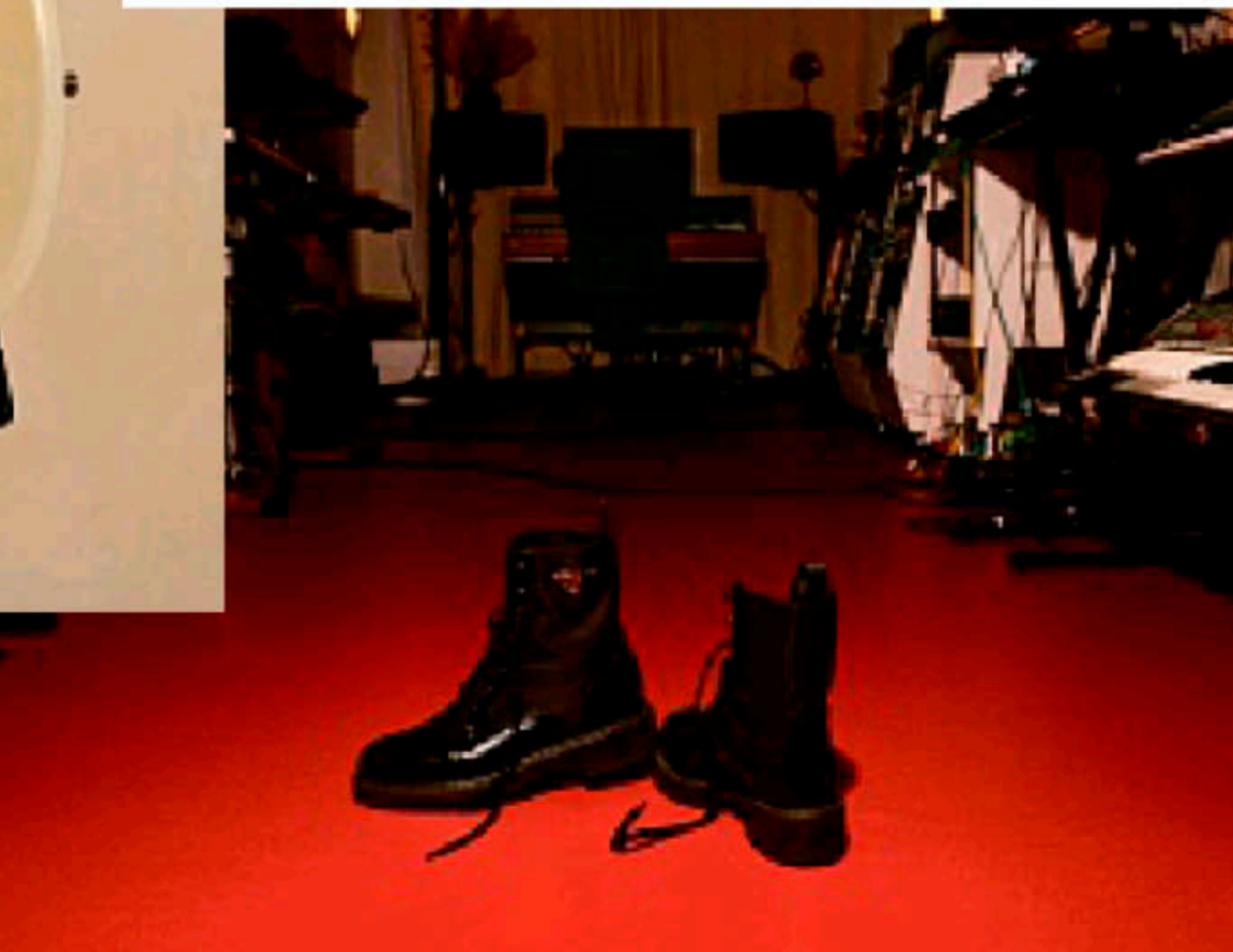
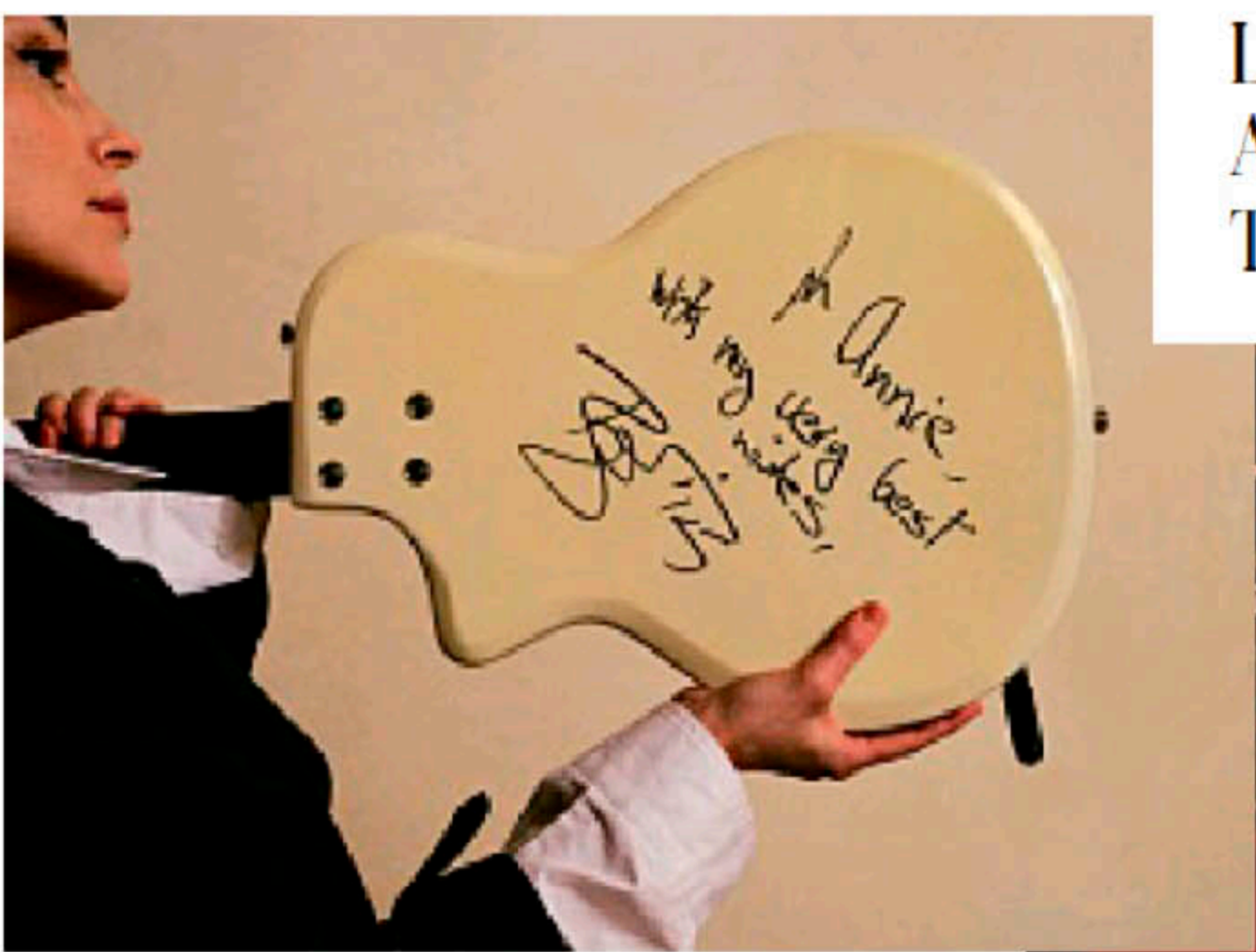
THE WORK OF ART THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING FOR ME was John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme*, which I first heard when I was 15. I was hearing someone clawing their way up to ecstasy through immense suffering. I didn't grow up like Coltrane or have the same life experiences, but there was something in there that spoke to my own suffering. You listen and it's like a portal to the sky opens up.

MY FAVOURITE BUILDING is Electric Lady Studios in NYC. I made parts of my last three records there. The place has a soul. I take a song I'm stuck with and somehow always find it in those studios.

THE BEST BIT OF ADVICE I EVER RECEIVED was that most people are just thinking about themselves. When we're young we're so self-conscious, but it really doesn't matter. ■HTSI
All Born Screaming is released on 26 April on Fiction/Universal



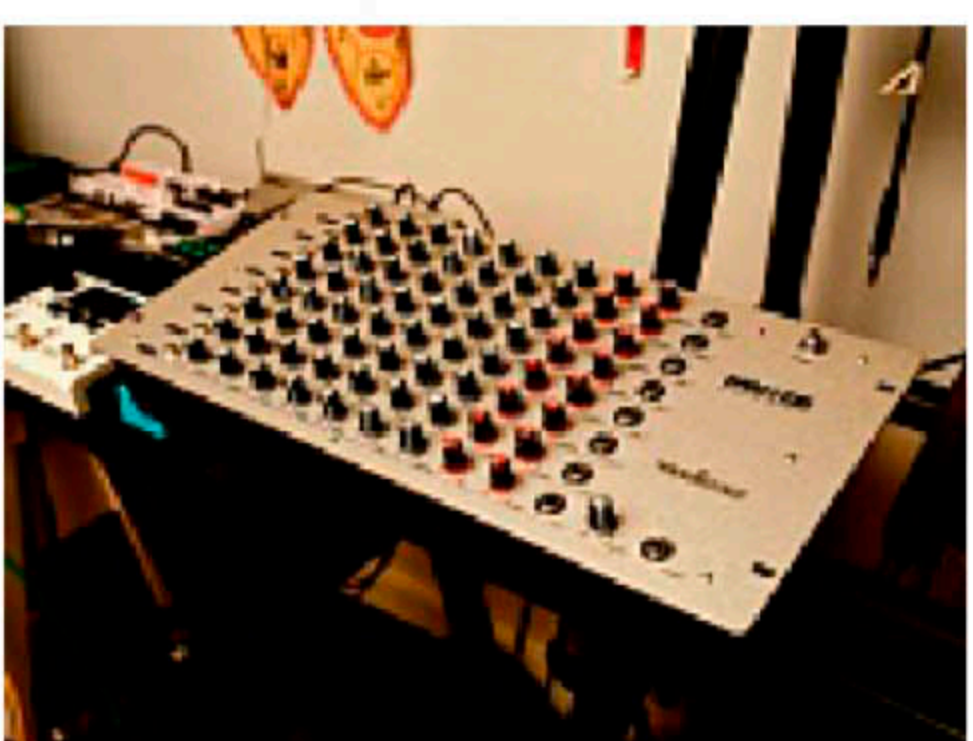
LISTEN TO JOHN COLTRANE, AND IT'S LIKE A PORTAL TO THE SKY OPENS UP



Top left: a pile of art books, many by her friend Alex Da Corte. Top right: champagne – an indulgence she would never forgo. Above, second from top: her sitting room. Above left: her guitar signed by David Bowie. Above: her Prada ankle boots



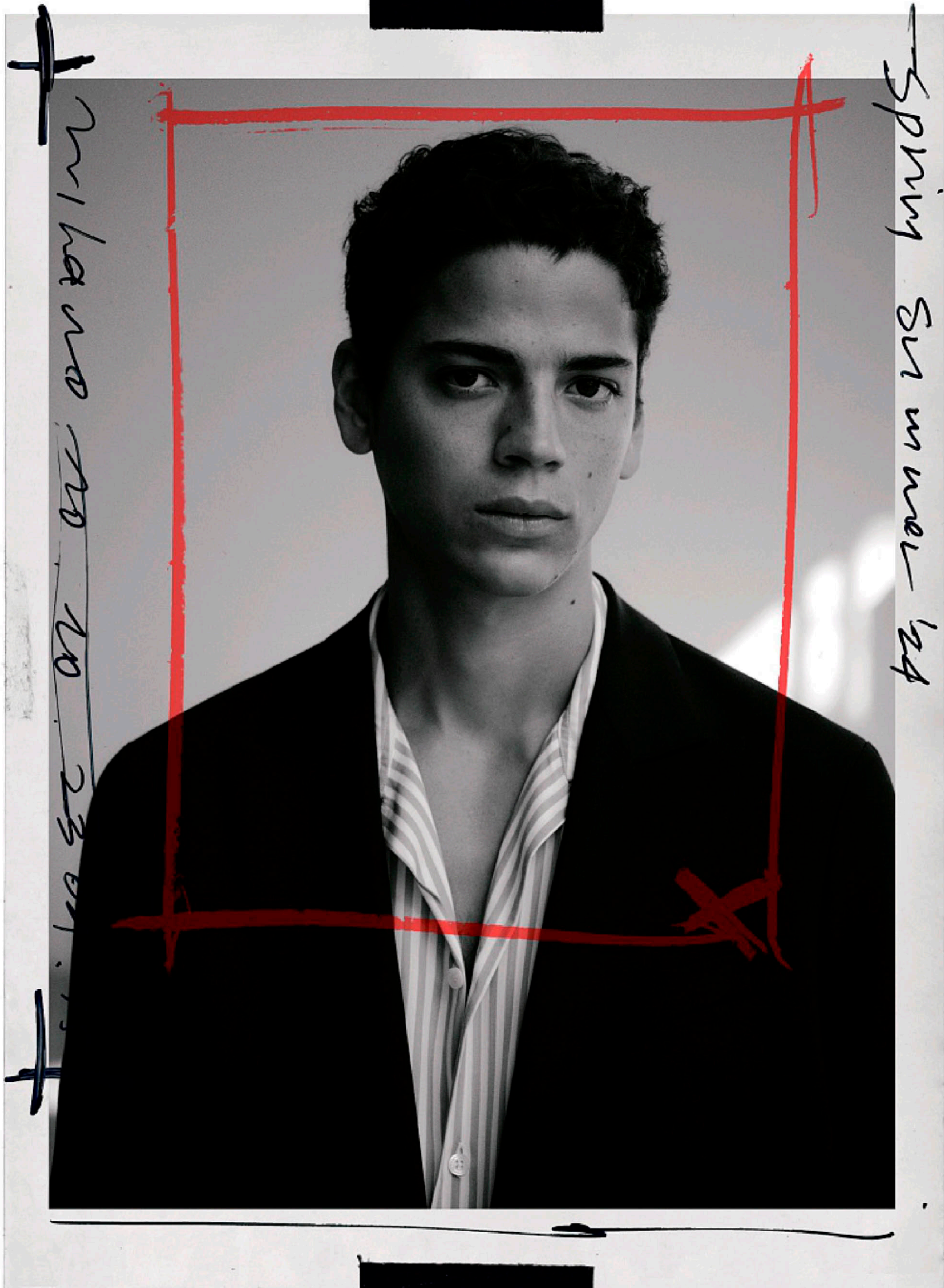
Above: waffles – a fridge staple. Right: at home in LA. Below: her Vermona DRM1 MKIII drum machine



A woman with short dark hair, wearing a tan trench coat with a white shirt underneath, is walking. She is carrying a bottle of Veuve Clicquot champagne in her left hand. The bottle is dark green with a gold label and a gold foil top. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

STELLAMcCARTNEY
Veuve Clicquot

Veuve Clicquot's harvest by-product becomes a grape-based alternative to leather.



Milano no no 23 on

Spring Summer '24

altea
MILANO

www.altea.com @alteamilano

THE FIX



MENSWEAR

TAILOR'S VERSION

LVMH Prize-winner Satoshi Kuwata is bringing an origami twist to Savile Row. By *Kin Woo*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOSHUA TARN

Satoshi Kuwata explains the inspiration behind his brand, Setchu, by crumpling a corner of a piece of paper. "There is this plain area that represents simplicity, whereas the crushed part is about texture," says the 40-year-old Japanese designer. "By mixing these unexpected elements together, you can find the truth of who you are."

On a sunny spring afternoon, Kuwata – winner of last year's LVMH Prize – is sitting on a leather armchair in Davies & Son on Savile Row in Mayfair, mixing more unexpected elements. A slim, calm figure

dressed in black, with hair tied back and a tidy moustache and goatee, he cuts a modern presence in one of London's oldest bespoke tailoring houses, in neat contrast with Johnny Allen, the head of bespoke who is regaling visitors with tales from his decades in the business, or co-owner Patrick Murphy who presides over proceedings. They have gathered to mark a new collaboration, a "mini-capsule" of two coats and a jacket that blends Kuwata's vision with Davies & Son's savoir-faire. It also marks a full-circle moment for the designer, nearly 20 years since, aged 21 and speaking barely any English, he came to London in 2005 hoping to work on Savile Row. "I've been in love with British fashion for half of my life," he says. "The beautiful thing about this project is that now I get to make it."

Kuwata grew up in Yawata, near Kyoto. His mother, hoping to spark his imagination, gave him pen and paper instead of toys to play with: "It made me realise that material limitation can help make you

super-creative, because you have to create everything for yourself." An aunt used to work for Pierre Cardin's licensing business in Japan, and would bring over Cardin's creations for him to examine. "It was like a toy that I would break open to see the construction. It was fascinating to see the

clothes from the inside." Aged 19, he started working in the men's suit department of the Beams store in Osaka. "That's where I fell in love with classical tailoring, and that's when I decided to go to Savile Row."

The culture shock on his arrival in London was intense. "I'd never been out of Japan before, and suddenly there was this priest with tattoos talking to me in the airport." He first looked for work on Savile Row holding a handwritten sign. Eventually he ended up employed by H Huntsman and Sons, combining this with studying womenswear at Central Saint Martins. "He was so dedicated and always

**"I'VE LOVED
BRITISH
FASHION
HALF OF
MY LIFE"**

Above, from left: Patrick Murphy, co-owner of Davies & Son, Johnny Allen, its senior client manager, and designer Satoshi Kuwata at Davies & Son on Savile Row



working, never taking his eye off the ball," recalls his tutor, Howard Tangye, former head of womenswear there. "His clothes always looked best when on the body and in movement."

After working for Gareth Pugh, Givenchy and Golden Goose, Kuwata launched Setchu in 2020 in Milan. The brand's name comes from the Japanese phrase "wayo setchu", with "wayo" denoting Japan and the west and "setchu" meaning a compromise or fusion of different cultures; it refers to Kuwata's British training contrasted with his penchant for Japanese minimalism. He sums up the codes of the brand – now stocked by Bergdorf Goodman, Machine-A and, from next season, Dover Street Market in London and Paris – as "functionality, timelessness and this artisanal, handmade quality".

THIS IS EXEMPLIFIED BY the brand's bestselling item, the origami jacket (€1,310) – slightly oversized and double-breasted, it is made from a lightweight pre-creased wool and folds up like origami in a suitcase. It can be tied at the waist and, like most of Setchu's clothes, worn by both men and women. All of Kuwata's garments mutate via clever draping, folding and fastening: a cashmere jumper turns into a gilet and then into a cardigan, while a greatcoat morphs into a boxy jacket and then, in a twist on a kimono, a wrap skirt. "It's like going to Tesco and buying three-for-one!", he laughs.

When, last June, Setchu was awarded the LVMH Prize, Kuwata's mobile phone

was full of congratulations. But one message in particular caught his eye: it was from Allen, an old mentor, who had helped Kuwata land that first job at Huntsman. "Even [when he was] a fashion student, I could see that he had an eye for detail and a strong respect for the craft," says Allen. "I told him we needed to collaborate."

Though Davies & Son has dressed the likes of Clark Gable, Bryan Ferry and generations of the royal family, this represents the first time in its 221-year history that it has worked with a fashion designer. "We don't normally do this but we really respect and trust Satoshi," says Allen. In the door of a changing room, a model wears a long black double-breasted coat, still unfinished with dressing pins in place. While the coat is cut to Davies & Son's exacting standards, the oversized fit, the unusual choice of fabric (black herringbone, a material typically reserved

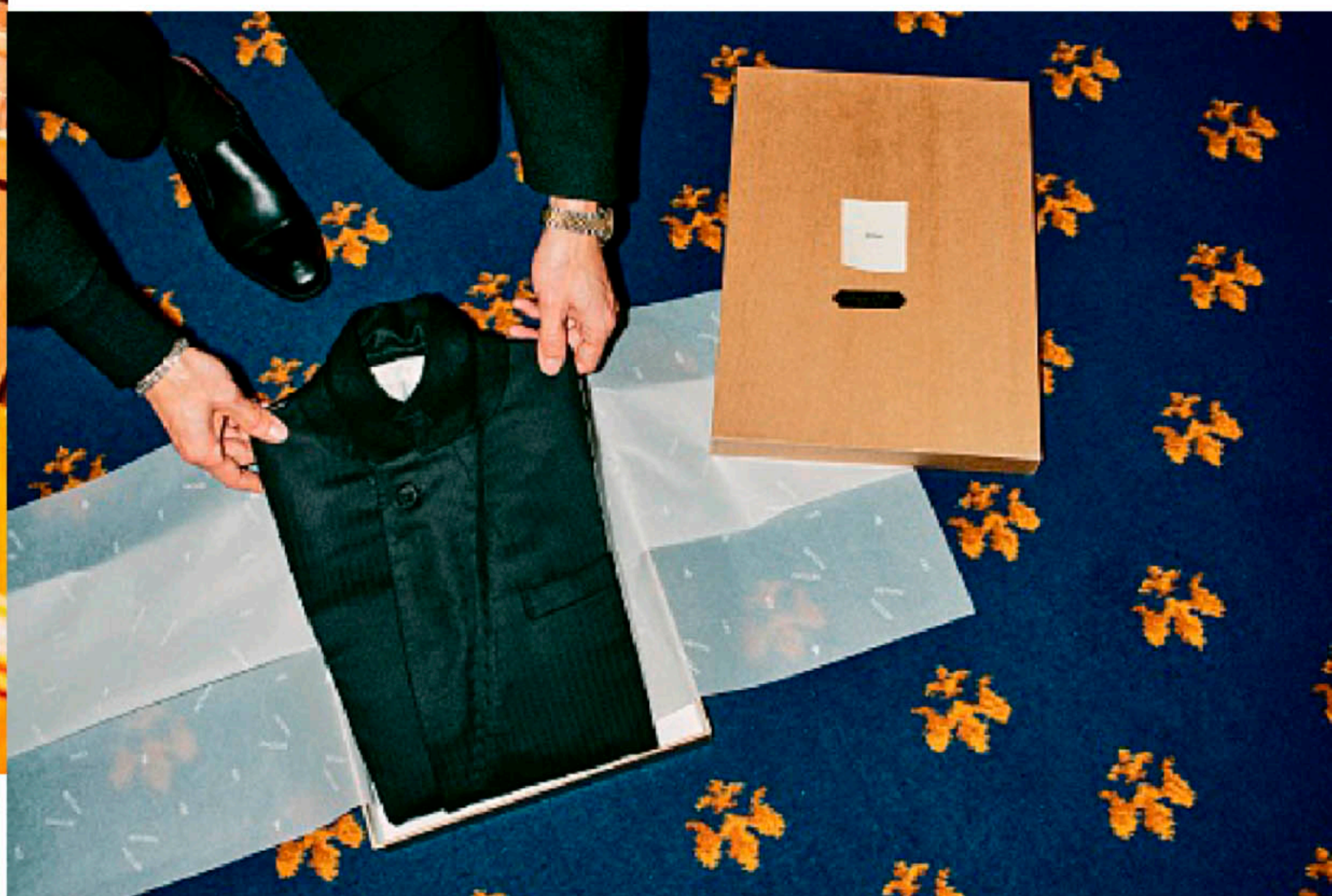
"IT'S LIKE GOING TO TESCO AND BUYING THREE-FOR-ONE!"

for morning coats) and the way the coat can be folded and packed away showcase Kuwata's skills. "He was able to bring new techniques and push the boundaries

and challenge us," says Allen.

This month sees the debut, at the Venice Biennale, of the three bespoke looks: the double-breasted coat, a short jacket in black herringbone and a long cashmere coat in white. The bespoke process will take around eight weeks and cost about £9,000 (Kuwata is also looking into a limited run of ready-to-wear). The designer has also called in a favour from bespoke shoemaker George Cleverley, which has produced a black calf-leather version of its classic Chelsea shoe (£1,700). For Kuwata, it represents not only a homecoming of sorts, but a confirmation that he's on the right path with Setchu. Much of his approach to the brand is informed by his love of fishing: a keen angler since childhood, he travels everywhere with a fishing reel and tackle in his suitcase, and he wanted to create clothes that "pack nicely", but also "look chic for any occasion".

"When I'm working I can't stop, so the only time I can take a break is when I go fishing," he says. "But when you catch a fish, you have the same excitement as when you design something good." ■HTSI



Left: a black Savile Row jacket by Kuwata. Right: model Bibi tries on the jacket

Top: Kuwata with George Glasgow Sr, owner of George Cleverley. Above: Kuwata is measured by Murphy and Davies & Son cutter Joe Matthews

FRAGRANCES

Musk till dawn

Six men's fragrances with a heady appeal



BULY 1803 Eau Triple Sumi Hinoki

Favoured by chef Francis Mallmann, this perfume is inspired by the smell of Kyoto's charred wood houses. A mix of sweet and smoky, infused with warm aromatic herbs. €150 for 75ml



CDG Blackpepper

Described by its creators as "electric", this eau de parfum blends fiery cedarwood with patchouli and tonka bean for a muscular winter musk. One to reach for on a night out. £90 for 100ml EDP, doverstreetmarket.com



BELLA FREUD Ginsberg is God

Inspired by Beat poet Allen Ginsberg, leafy green notes fuse with frankincense, wormwood and leather for a spring scent. £85 for 50ml EDP



MALIN+GOETZ Dark Rum

A nod to the rum originally drunk by sailors passing through the Caribbean, this is a warm, tropical concoction sweetened with plum and bergamot. £86 for 50ml EDP



ARGENTUM Fire Amber Oudh

Formulated in Grasse, this oud-based fragrance is blended with leather, papyrus and smoke. It uses a patented technique combining water with oils for a "beast scent" that lasts – but is kind to the skin. £148 for 70ml EDP



GABAR No II Ground

Saffron, sandalwood and fig come together with deep notes of wood bark in an homage to Myanmar's ancient capital of Bagan. £120 for 50ml EDP



NASOMATTO Blamage

Italian perfumer Alessandro Gualtieri is famed for his provocative scents. Blamage boasts a strong woody character that mixes musk, leather and birch in a highly concentrated formula. £130 for 30ml extrait de parfum **INÈS CROSS**





ART DIR: PAUL MARCIANO PH: VICCOLIYA & SAIDA © GUESS?, INC. 2024



GUESS

GUESS.EU

BALLY leather Ollam bag, £1,650

SAINT LAURENT EYEWEAR acetate sunglasses, £325, net-a-porter.com

MONIES freshwater-pearl necklace, £2,610, doverstreetmarket.com

ELIZABETH GAGE gold Moon and Sun earrings, £4,320

PRADA wool feather-trimmed jacket, £4,550

WEEKEND MAX MARA crepe jersey skirt, £210

DIOR silk-mix Montaigne bar jacket, £3,400

The inspiration: socialite Babe Paley in *Vogue*, March 1946

CARTIER gold and leather Baignoire watch, £6,600, harrods.com

JOSEPH shearling coat, £2,495

SHOPPING

TOTAL BABE

Let Truman Capote's favourite Swan be your muse this season, says *Aylin Bayhan*

LANVIN leather Medley loafers, £890

TOVE silk dress, £1,295

TOM FORD leather belt, £540, net-a-porter.com

POLTRONA FRAU monolite lary table, £7,272, frankbros.com

HIGH SPORT cotton stretch trousers, £685, net-a-porter.com

1950s CHATY VALLAURIS wood Sunburst mirror, £1,600, vinterior.com

STAUD viscose-mix top, £235, mytheresa.com

GUCCI Rouge à Lèvres lipstick, £37

THE ROW Sofia mini leather shoulder bag, £2,680, lyst.co.uk

FERNANDO JORGE gold and jade ring, £6,950

MAISON ROYÈRE velvet and wood sofa, POA

TOTEME leather shoes, £450

CHRIS BASIAS STUDIO marble and bronze Olei floor lamp, \$2,170, frankbros.com

GIGI BURRIS MILLINERY felt and ostrich-feather Jeanne hat, £475, collagerie.com

PHOTOGRAPH: HORST P. HORST/CONDE NAST/SHUTTERSTOCK



ACQUA DI PARMA



VIBRANT SOPHISTICATION

Colonia since 1916.

Discreet. Radiant. Refined.

A celebration of subtleness.

A nod to the vibrance of Italian arte di vivere.



INTERVIEW

FRESH HEIR

Jeweller Francesca Amfitheatrof is joining another dynasty at Codognato.
By Maria Shollenbarger

Attilio Codognato, who died last November at the age of 86, was a man who existed at the centre of things: the centre of the art world, the jewellery world and the world-unto-itself that is Venice. Presiding for decades over a family business founded in 1866, he was a fourth-generation artisan who crafted some of his industry's most sought-after jewels; a renowned collector, friend of Castelli and Sonnabend, Rauschenberg and Warhol; and a sort of aesthetic vector, converging people, ideas and influences by the sheer force of his charisma.

These are some of the vaunted terms in which Francesca Amfitheatrof – artistic director of watches and jewellery at Louis Vuitton – is speaking of Casa Codognato's late scion, whom she first met when she was a twentysomething jeweller. She is sitting in a velvet-lined antechamber in the new shop, which recently relocated to the Calle Vallaresso, just off St Mark's Square. In the showroom, Attilio's son Mario, a curator and the director of Berggruen Arts & Culture, is



Top left: all the fittings in the shop, including the 19th-century safe and art deco sign (seen bottom far right), were carefully moved last year to the new address at Calle Vallaresso. Above right: CODOGNATO gold, diamond, emerald, pink-sapphire and pink-tourmaline cross. Jewellery throughout: all prices POA

conferring with a handful of artisans – metalsmiths, enamellers and gem carvers whose own history with Codognato in some cases extends back several generations, as they have produced the house's unmistakable designs. Attilio favoured old-cut and cabochon gems, delicate enamels, super-worked 18th-century gold and pure silver, memento mori and Catholic iconography.

"He was a jewellers' jeweller," says Mario of his father. "He was enormously respected by colleagues who operated on a whole different scale."

"Any time I was in Venice I'd stop by the shop to see Attilio," adds Amfitheatrof. "We always talked about the most

interesting things – he had this wild, surreal mind; he'd lived in New York and been at The Factory, he knew all the artists. He wasn't just Italian." She herself is the daughter of an Italian mother and a Russian-American father and had a peripatetic childhood across several continents. "So we shared a mix of cultures."

Amfitheatrof and Mario also share a history of their own. "We were students in London together," she says of their long friendship. "Then I started doing my design thing, and he was working at [Anthony] d'Offay, alongside Sadie Coles – with Damien Hirst in the storeroom; can you imagine?" Amfitheatrof went on to study at





the Royal College of Art with the Italian goldsmith Giovanni Corvaja and designed for Alessi after graduation, then worked for fashion and product-design houses ranging from Balenciaga and Chanel to Wedgwood and Garrard. She joined Tiffany & Co as its first female design director in 2014, staying for four years before moving to Louis Vuitton. All the while, she kept a foot in the art world: she was arts curator of the Gucci Museum from 2010 to 2013.

Amfitheatrof's involvement with Codognato has been a long time in the making. Over the past few years, as Attilio was producing less new work, she and Mario started talking about the future. Initially the discussion involved her "in a supportive role". More recently that role became, at Mario's request, more active. "In the year before Attilio died, we [all] spent a lot of time together," she says. "We saw him often at his palazzo, we met with some of the long-time makers. I think observing me with them, he realised, 'She can do this; she knows what she's talking about.'"

AMFITHEATROF IS NOW HEAD of creative at Codognato, a maison that couldn't be further removed from the sprawling enterprise that is LVMH, where she retains her role at Louis Vuitton. Its tightly knit "board of five", as they call themselves, includes Mario and his sister Cristina (a psychotherapist based in London), Mario's girlfriend Henrietta Labouhere (who collaborated on the new shop's interiors with Eric Allart) and Natalie Lewis, Amfitheatrof's long-time strategic consulting partner in all her non-Vuitton endeavours. Mario stays on at Berggruen Arts & Culture; Cristina continues her work in London. But all confer and collaborate on the brand's identity.

Mario's own CV includes roles as founding director and chief curator of Madre, the museum of contemporary art in Naples, directorships at Blain Southern in London and the Venice-based Anish Kapoor Foundation, and chief curator of Vienna's 21er Haus. "I never thought I'd be involved, but I'm very happy to be part of Codognato's continuation, and of keeping it in my family. Francesca and I share tastes, so professionally we understand each other immediately. But she's also someone I actually enjoy spending time with."

"I have a very good, I suppose *character* is the word, for adapting to a house's deeper meaning," says Amfitheatrof of her role here. At Codognato, five artisan workshops, none with more than two specialists, work to realise each piece. "It's a phenomenal opportunity to have all the resources I have at Vuitton, and I have the same relationships with artisans, because the high jewellery is all handmade. But here I get a different thrill."

She has always been intrigued by the baroque semaphores that define the Codognato style – alchemy and mysticism, cameos, snakes and skulls. In Attilio's designs, a hinged snake cuff has scales incised into gold or made of minuscule emeralds. A huge crucifix is embellished with a pendant inlaid with two skull faces, the cross dripping with blue sapphires; hidden at its base is a tiny screw that opens it to reveal a removable rock-quartz cross.

Amfitheatrof, at least for now, intends only to subtly evolve these themes. "I started



to be very inspired by Old Masters hands – painting, sculpture, Caravaggio's Bacchus holding his glass of wine, or the long, long fingers of Canova." Her first collection, called *Ultima Mano*, will debut during the Biennale. Among the designs is a pair of earrings (*Vino Veritas*), fashioned from hands holding wine glasses – one full, one empty – carved from rock crystal and bunches of gem-cluster grapes. She shows me drawings of a pendant for a large necklace, featuring a hand holding a large black pearl. "That's the sun, the

alchemic symbol for Man. That section is attached to an old-mine cabochon ruby; on the back of it is a moon engraved in silver, for Woman." The pendant will hang from a thick double chain on

"I HAVE A GOOD CHARACTER FOR ADAPTING TO A HOUSE'S DEEPER MEANING"

which another pair of hands, gold and silver, are clasped – the silver textured and then oxidised, its grey gleam echoing the pearl. They wear tiny ruby and champagne-diamond rings and bracelets; gold vines wind around and over them.

The whole is unmistakably Codognato, but ever so slightly dialled back, somehow a bit smoother, somehow feminine. Its name: *Psyche & Cupid*. "This is the one," she says. "This one's the masterpiece." If the speed with which it sold is any indication, yes, it is: at the tail end of February, after weeks of close collaboration between Amfitheatrof and a third-generation Codognato artisan, the final product arrived in the store. By mid-afternoon, it had been acquired – by A\$AP Rocky, passing through town, making a serendipitous stop-in. Worlds converging: Attilio would have approved. ■HTSI



Top: a selection of CODOGNATO *Samorodok* pieces, including a gold, silver, diamond, sapphire, ruby and emerald bracelet. Above: CODOGNATO gold, silver, champagne-diamond, old-mine-ruby and grey-Tahitian-pearl *Psyche & Cupid* pendant necklace, from Amfitheatrof's first collection for Codognato, entitled *Ultima Mano*

AMFITHEATROF OUTSIDE THE NEW SHOP AT CALLE VALLARESSO



PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF CODOGNATO (4), SOPHIA SPRING (3)

Above, from left: Francesca Amfitheatrof, Mario Codognato and Cristina Codognato. Left: CODOGNATO diamond, emerald and pink-enamel skull and amphorae earrings

CODOGNATO GOLD, SILVER, DIAMOND AND RUBY SERPENT RING





THE TAG HEUER CARRERA

RYAN GOSLING.
CHIEF QUALITY OFFICER.





**FALL
GUY**
ONLY IN CINEMAS

THE FIND

DAB'O crystal water-diffusing Grand Globe, available in a selection of colours, £66, abask.com

SMART INVESTMENT

A crystal ball that'll see your plants into their future

EDITED BY **CLARA BALDOCK**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **KRISTY NOBLE**
STYLING BY **KATIE PHILLIPS**



Left: CARAVANE recycled paper, bamboo and rattan Bell lamps, from €225 each. Far right: DAVID HORAN vellum floor light, from £3,600, betonbrut.co.uk

ISAMU NOGUCHI BY VITRA AKARI 9AD, £660



INTERIORS

IT'S IN THE PAPER

The classic lantern never looked so contemporary, says *Clara Baldock*

Regolit, a simple globe pendant that became ubiquitous among nesters when introduced in 2006 and which is currently making a comeback in households around the world.

Handmade examples can also be affordable. British homeware brand Sansho works with a family-run business in Nagoya, Japan, which produces elegant *chōchin* from resilient mulberry or hemp fibres to create an almost lace-like quality to the lamps, priced from £64.

In Kyoto, Japanese lantern makers Kojima Shōten, a firm established c1789 (during the Edo era), created a large, washi-paper light with Norm Architects for a private residence on the Swedish coast. The N-PL01 pendant is now produced by Japanese lifestyle brand Karimoku (from €2,300) with a construction that is similar to the bellows of an accordion and a triangular silhouette that mimics the pitched roof of the building it was originally created for.

Other twists on form range from Caravane's luminous bell pendants (from €225) in recycled abaca paper, to Nicola Harding's half-hexagonal, art deco-inspired Stitch In Time wall lights (£500), which are composed of coloured parchment paper with a contrasting stitch and trim. Spanish artist and designer Jaime Hayon, meanwhile, has lent his flamboyant signature style to the bulbous forms of his Formakami family of lights (from £180) for Danish brand &Tradition. The pieces represent the duality of Japandi style, highlighted by the use of ivory-coloured rice paper contrasted with contemporary, black-stained oak detailing.

Boxier styles include the minimalist Preziosi table lamp (£1,600) by artist Nick Metzler and the Vessels for Light series (€1,641) by design studio Christian + Jade, which consist of two stacked columns that are subtly stitched and waxed to create a brushstroke effect. The Copenhagen-based couple are interested in changing the perception of everyday materials. "Paper and candle wax were some of the materials around us that we wanted to explore, elevate and give new value to," says Christian Hammer Juhl.

Multidisciplinary designer David Horan applies drops of water to the deckled shade



INGO MAURER PAPER LAMPAMPE, €885

of his lamp. When illuminated, it has the appearance of a sunlit window pane sprinkled with rain. Available exclusively through London gallery Béton Brut, Horan's floor and table lamp are part of his inaugural furniture and lighting collection entitled Paper, which draws inspiration from découpage and the Japanese Mingei folk-art movement.

Horan's shades have a quality that recalls vellum: in fact, he layers sheets sourced from a Unesco heritage paper mill to create a vegan take on the material. "I love the quality of the material used by Aldo Tura," he says, referencing the Italian furniture designer who was known for his

"THE WAY LIGHT IS DIFFUSED THROUGH PAPER IS SO COMFORTING"

use of exotic finishes such as lacquered goatskin. "I had a hunch that a similar effect could be achieved without animal skin, using Japanese paper instead."

Australian lighting designer Lana Launay, meanwhile, uses "an eco-resin or pure beeswax to seal and strengthen the paper" and give it a vellum-like effect. This helps her to create the totem-esque Modular Launay floor lamp (\$5,500), a stack of four shades that can be configured in more than 20 ways. Her playful pieces are sculptural – some even spiral – but always soft and subdued thanks to the washi and shoji papers she uses. She remains entranced. "The way light is diffused through fibrous paper is so comforting," she concludes. "It's sheer magic..." ■HTSI

Above centre: SANSHO washi paper Enban shade, £245. Above: CHRISTIAN + JADE Vessels for Light 01, £1,380, olivergustav.com. Below: Lana Launay with her Modular Launay floor lamp, \$5,500



&TRADITION FORMAKAMI JH18 LAMP BY JAIME HAYON, £205



Above: NICOLA HARDING paper Stitch In Time wall light, £500. Below: NICK METZLER paper and steel Preziosi table lamp, £1,600, atelier-ik.com



PHOTOGRAPHS: CHRISTIAN AND JADE, GENEVIEVE LUTKIN, NIC GOSSAGE

When the late artist Isamu Noguchi visited the Japanese prefecture Gifu in 1951, he was entranced by the paper lanterns – *chōchin* – used by fishermen to illuminate their boats. A meeting with the mayor led to his help in revitalising the craft the town was once known for, creating the Akari light sculpture – a collapsible, split-bamboo frame wrapped in washi paper whose traditional candle was replaced by an electric bulb.

Over the years Noguchi developed more than 100 versions of his lamp, and inspired other designers to create similarly iconic lights. German designer Ingo Maurer, nicknamed "the poet of light", crinkled Japanese paper to conjure texture for his oversized Lampampe (€885) – a piece conceived in 1980 and still made in Munich today.

The weightless versatility and affordability of the paper lamp – in addition to its gentle diffused light – is key to its enduring popularity. Its utilitarian beauty is perhaps best exemplified via Ikea's iteration, the

SAFARIS • FLIGHT-FREE TRAVEL • SABBATICALS • ROAD TRIPS • FAMILY HOLIDAYS



ORIGINAL TRAVEL



A DIFFERENT TAKE ON
TAILOR-MADE TRAVEL

© Lucy Laucht



+44 (0) 20 7591 4433 • WWW.ORIGINALTRAVEL.CO.UK



ABTA
ABTA No.Y5632

Below: the garden at the women's prison in Venice. Right: Mark Bradford with members of the Rio Terà dei Pensieri non-profit cooperative in the garden



Prisons are not the first thing most people think of when they think of Venice," says the artist Mark Bradford, who represented the US at the 57th Biennale in 2017. "But they do represent part of the community." There are two here: one for women on the Giudecca and another for men in Santa Croce.

A 15-minute walk east of the latter, on the Fondamenta Frari, under an acid-green awning, stands Process Collettivo, a shop selling handmade accessories in aid of the non-profit Rio Terà dei Pensieri, which provides education, training and work for those incarcerated across Italy. That the store exists is thanks in no small part to Bradford, arguably the pre-eminent abstract artist of his generation, winner of a MacArthur Fellowship (or \$800,000 "genius grant") in 2009 as well as this year's Getty Prize, worth \$500,000 for the honoree to donate to the non-profit of their choice. In addition to creating an exhibition for the US pavilion, Bradford determined to do something for the city. "So I started researching organisations that I felt had a real social impact," he says. "It was a broad net. Then someone recommended Rio Terà. And I was so struck by its work."

Established in 1994, Rio Terà had already set up workshops in which inmates can learn skills to help them gain qualifications and employment on release. They are also able to work; in the men's prison, there's a silkscreen printing studio that takes on commercial contracts for museums, bookshops and universities. The garden in the women's jail produces soaps and toiletries. "It's all in such a contrast to the United States where the prison [system] has very little humanity," writes Bradford in the new book that details this collaboration. He hopes "this way of working could be a template the United States could adopt".

Bradford, who has described his work as art "with a social or political context clinging to the edges", is no slouch when it comes to good causes. The Sotheby's auction of his painting *Speak, Birdman* raised \$6.8m for the Studio Museum in Harlem, while Art + Practice, the non-profit he co-founded, helps children experiencing displacement worldwide and young people leaving foster care, among other things.

BORSA FOR
PROCESS
COLLETTIVO
BY MARK
BRADFORD,
\$35,000



Bags of potential

A prison project supported by the artist Mark Bradford shows Venice at its best, says *Claire Wrathall*

"I come out of a long merchant culture," Bradford says, of the appeal of the Rio Terà retail project. "My mother had a small beauty shop," he explains, referring to the salon he was working at when, at the age of 30, he enrolled at CalArts. "I wasn't unfamiliar with the idea of a small shop servicing a local community." Together with the project's former director Liri Longo, they "walked all over Venice" until they found the right site. "And we built the store from there."

More than just an outlet for products, the shop has become somewhere people can find out what Rio Terà does, and a place that helps maintain a bond between prisoners and their families. "Many of them visit the store and take pride in the fact that they can buy products that are made by family members, so there's this emotional connection too."

Although it's seven years since Bradford's first collaboration with Rio Terà, the shop endures and he will continue to support it – not least with the proceeds of a new editioned sculpture based on the form of a tote bag (\$35,000), which Hauser & Wirth will launch this month. Named *Borsa* and blown from glass at the Berengo Studio on Murano – "so each one is a little bit different" – it is a departure from his usual style and medium. Its colour alludes to the rubino pink favoured by the Venetian aristocracy in the Renaissance. And its form echoes both the bags made in the prison workshops and "the kind of bags everybody carries at the Biennale". The hash marks reference the way people count down the days

to their release – an expression of what he calls "ideas of temporality, of counting, of incarceration". Bradford has inscribed each tiny line himself.

Bradford cares "deeply about the project and what happens to it". But a far deeper impression has been left by "the people I've come to know". As Bradford was installing his show at the Biennale, one young man was due for parole. "I asked if he could come and work with me in the Pavilion. It was great! I would watch him interacting with all the university interns. I would tell him: 'Don't

you hide your story. You've done your time. You make sure you hold your head up like everybody else.'"

As Bradford says: "In my practice, light and shadow exist in the same space. I'm not saying you cannot enjoy the beauty of Venice, but incarcerated people exist here alongside everyone else." ■ HTSI

Mark Bradford: *Process Collettivo*, edited by Nicole R Fleetwood, is published by

Hauser & Wirth at £38. A fundraising edition will be available at the gallery's pop-up bookstore in Venice's Campo San Maurizio from 15 April to 3 May, with proceeds going to Rio Terà. hauserwirth.com, malefattevenezia.it, rioteradeipensieri.org

Far left: members of the cooperative sell produce from the prison in front of the building. Above: working in the bag manufacturing laboratory at the men's prison – all the products are sold at the shop, Process Collettivo

PHOTOGRAPHS: CARLOS AVENDANO, AGATA GRAVANTE AND DAMIAN TURNER (4). © MARK BRADFORD, COURTESY THE ARTIST AND HAUSER & WIRTH/KEITH LUBOW



A stable FAMILY

Showjumping legend John Whitaker has a new rival, his nephew Jack. *Sharon Smith* meets them as they prepare for Windsor – and the Olympics

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TOM JAMIESON

Showjumper John Whitaker is contemplating how many competitions he has won during his near-50-year career. “I’ve no idea!” he answers honestly, which is perhaps understandable. At 68, he is one of the world’s most successful showjumpers – and has no plans to retire any time soon.

Jack Whitaker, John’s 22-year-old nephew (and son of showjumper Michael Whitaker), has joined us on the farm, having followed in the family’s sporting tradition. How many events has he won? He grins towards his uncle. “Not as many as him.”

John suddenly recalls the tally: “I’ve got about 24 or 25 international championship medals,” he says. His hoard includes an Olympic team silver from 1984, and multiple trophies, many of which are displayed inside a dresser in John and wife Clare’s farmhouse, a 120-acre haven overlooking the Yorkshire Pennines.

The 60 horses at their yard are missing three of their number on the day I arrive. Sharid, whose recent wins include two firsts at the London International Horse Show (LIHS) is en route to John’s next event in Spain, while his potential hope for the 2024 Olympics, Arqana

Right: John Whitaker (left) on Pretzel and Jack Whitaker on Ava at John’s farm in Yorkshire. Below: the trophy cabinet in John’s living room



de Riverland (a horse owned by the French rider Juliette Faligot who has handed over the reins to Whitaker to give it the best chance of winning) and Equine America Unick du Francport are still in transit from a competition in Doha, Qatar.

Jack is as ambitious as his uncle. Noted as one of Britain's most exciting up-and-coming jumpers, he is building his own collection of international trophies eventing at equestrian's five-star competitions. As a junior, he won a team silver at the 2018 Summer Youth Olympics in Buenos Aires. Last year, he and fellow equestrian Joe Stockdale became official ambassadors for the Royal Windsor Horse Show, one of the world's most prestigious equestrian events.

Jack is not the Whitaker family's only protégé. The showjumping dynasty, which began with farmer's son John, and two of his brothers Michael and Steven, now includes 15 Whitakers who compete internationally – and often bump into each other at shows. Jack never felt forced to compete. "There was no pressure on me," he says. "I went to all the big shows with my dad when I was young and I enjoyed it, so I wanted to do it, too. My mum was quite tough though. Before I could ride, I had to do all the groundwork first, like mucking out and cleaning tack."

His father Michael passes the best horses on to his son. Which means competing against John. Is that something Jack finds difficult? "No," he answers without pause. "You've got to be ruthless. When you get in the ring, it's that hunger to win."

John nods in agreement: "It's in the Whitaker genes. Jack has inherited the determination to win," he says. "Everyone wants to succeed, but in the end it comes down to pressing the right buttons for that 60 seconds when you're in the ring. It's one thing to be keen and interested, but it's another being good enough. You've got to have that little bit extra: the will to win, horsemanship and the right character."

The same famous sibling rivalry occurred between John and his brother Michael, who competed for more than 40 years, winning 15 championship medals (he still competes, although not at the highest level; he now focuses on producing the horses for Jack to ride). "I've done it all my life with Michael – if he's in the lead, I try to beat him. If I'm in the lead he tries to beat me," says John. "Even when we were kids, if I did well in a class, Michael would think to himself, 'If he can do it, I can do it.' And I'd think: 'I can beat him.'"

Although fiercely competitive, the Whitaker clan are equally loyal and provide support when one of its members has had a bad round.

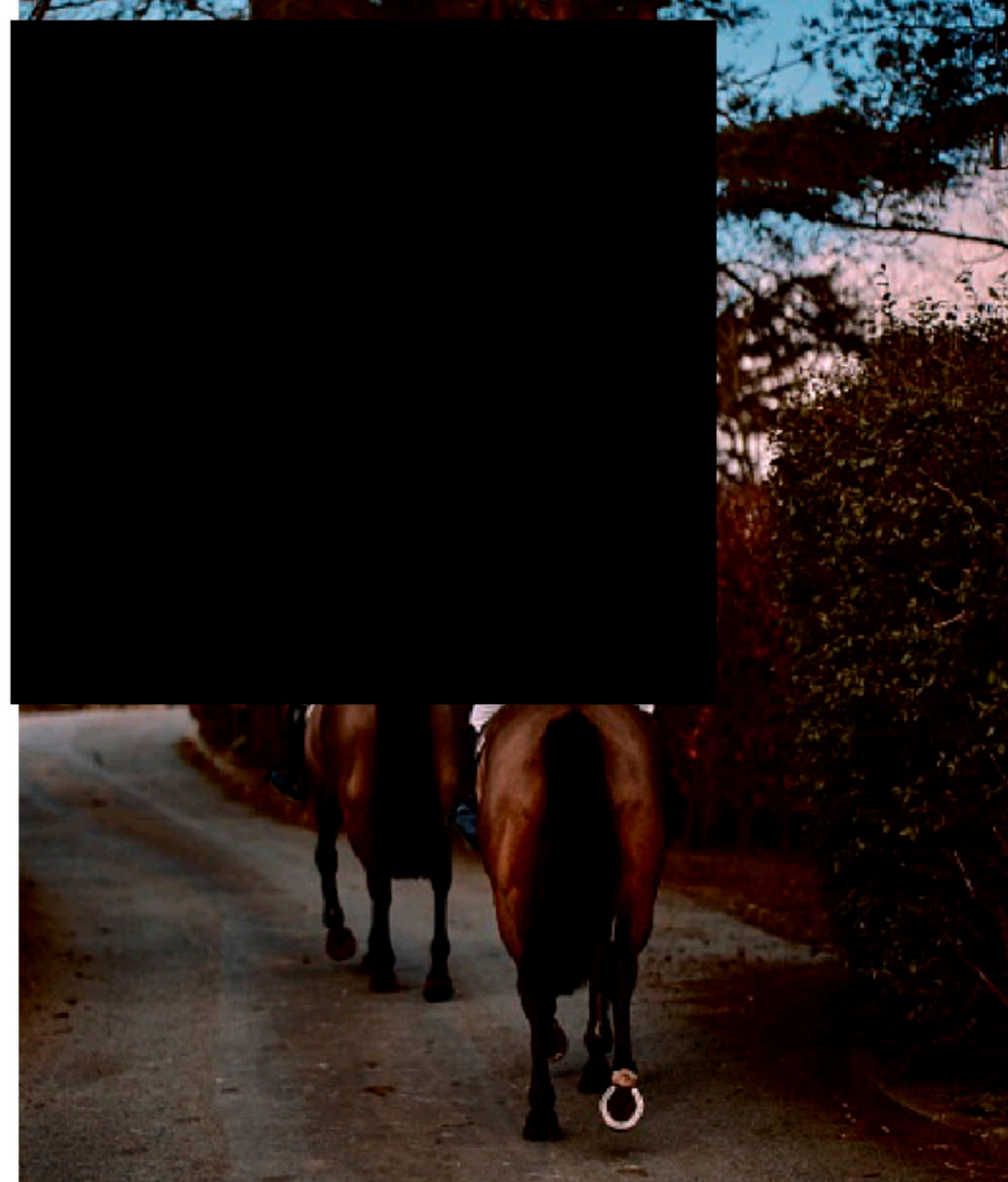
I ask Jack what he most admires about John. "He's very good under pressure. I admire how cool he is – his ability to just get it done," he says.

John smiles at the compliment. "It's about being able to handle a situation where you're expected to win the competition. When you're in a big championship you get nervous. If you don't you're not trying hard enough – you're not passionate enough," he says. "You have to control your nerves because the horse feels it, and then he can go wrong."

He looks to his nephew who, he says, has inherited this same trait: "He's very good under pressure and rises to the occasion," John continues, before adding: "Unfortunately, he hasn't inherited my looks – or my hairstyle, or his father's. He's disappointed about that." "I took all his hair, is that what inherited means?" Jack shoots back.

While the Whitaker name is lauded whenever one of its members enters a ring, John has a special place in the hearts of showjumping fans. A fence knocked down is often met with a collective gasp of disappointment, followed by a rousing cheer as he and his horse continue on. "They feel sorry for me," he jokes. "Cheering definitely motivates you though, it's a good feeling. It brings the best out in all of us."

Likewise, the horses have to have a certain temperament to succeed. Ryan's Son, the 16-hand bay gelding who kicked off John's career in the 1970s, and with whom he won many top prizes, would buck violently after the last fence to the thrill of the arena.



"YOU'VE GOT TO BE RUTHLESS. WHEN YOU GET IN THE RING, IT'S THAT HUNGER TO WIN"

Left: Jack riding Ava (in front) and John on Pretzel, and (below) with Wishes



Milton, another big winner, was also a crowd-pleaser: "He would grow in stature, he loved it. It definitely made him better," John recalls.

Now approaching 69, John is close to rivalling the world's oldest five-star winner, Austrian Hugo Simon, who came second at the Wiener Neustadt Grand Prix in 2016 at the age of 74. It's all the more remarkable given that in December 2000, John almost died from a brain haemorrhage. He returned to competing within a year, defying all expectations – except his own. "When I woke up in hospital I said, 'Where's my jeans, I'd better get going, it's Olympia [now LIHS] next week.' I had drains in my head [for the fluid on the brain] and the doctor said, 'You're going nowhere', but I had no doubt that I'd ride again."

John remains a key player in showjumping where combining a quality rider and horse is highly lucrative. A top horse can cost millions, and the value is elevated by the prize money on offer. At the Royal Windsor Horse Show, where both John and Jack will compete this May, the Rolex Grand Prix's prize fund is €500,000. Here, as has become customary, Jack will ask John for advice as they walk a course before competing.

"He'll tell me, then beat me anyway," says Jack. "I'll tell him wrong," John retorts.

Both uncle and nephew are also in the running for selection for the Paris Olympics. For Jack, it would be his first Games, for John, his seventh. He thinks he has "an outside chance" with Arqana de Riverland.

Let the competition start. ■HTSI

Royal Windsor Horse Show 2024, 1-5 May, rwhs.co.uk

Below: rosettes on display in John's house



The mesmerising normality of Cillian Murphy

The Oscar-winning actor on life after *Oppenheimer*, becoming a Versace Icon and being the most “awkward person on the internet”

Interview by *Jo Ellison*

Photography by *Indigo Lewin*

Styling by *Rose Forde*

The first time I met Cillian Murphy was at the Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh, in 1997. The actor, then 21, was making his stage debut in *Disco Pigs*, a two-hander about teenagers from Cork, Ireland, a frenetic story about friendship and first love.

Even then, in tight-fitting silver trousers that looked like tin foil, fearless, feral, Murphy had a magnetism that ricocheted around the room. That ethereal face, that deep, laconic Irish accent, those ice-blue eyes held everybody in his thrall. He would wind down after each performance with several pints (and an odd obsession with Chumbawamba) with the company, a wild gang who were all great friends. Had you asked me then if he might one day win an Oscar, I would have nodded: absolutely, yes.

Last month Murphy picked up his first Academy Award for best actor for *Oppenheimer*, crowning a 28-year

career. Thanks to Danny Boyle's *28 Days Later*, six films, including *Batman*, with the filmmaker Christopher Nolan, and *Peaky Blinders*, Murphy is established as one of the best-known actors of the modern age. He has also continued to pursue new roles in theatre, working regularly with the same creative team. Enda Walsh, who wrote *Disco Pigs*, is now my husband, and he and Murphy still collaborate every few years. As such, I've long had a ringside seat to his successes and know his wife Yvonne McGuinness, an artist, and their children Malachy (18) and Aran (16), who now live in Dublin. A testament to his universally attractive features: as a toddler, my daughter would call him “Kiki” and try to stroke his face.

Our first meeting for this profile took place on the HTSI shoot at Wapping Power Station, Shadwell, a relic of Victorian engineering that is as far removed from glamorous as it is possible to be. Murphy was holed up in a “luxury” trailer, with the heating set to furnace, drinking mugs of herbal tea. The shoot had gone well and he was in a bonny mood: “I actually like taking pictures. I love trying to find the mood with the photographer and the stylist. When it's a collaborative thing.” Murphy is now 47, with greying hair and a

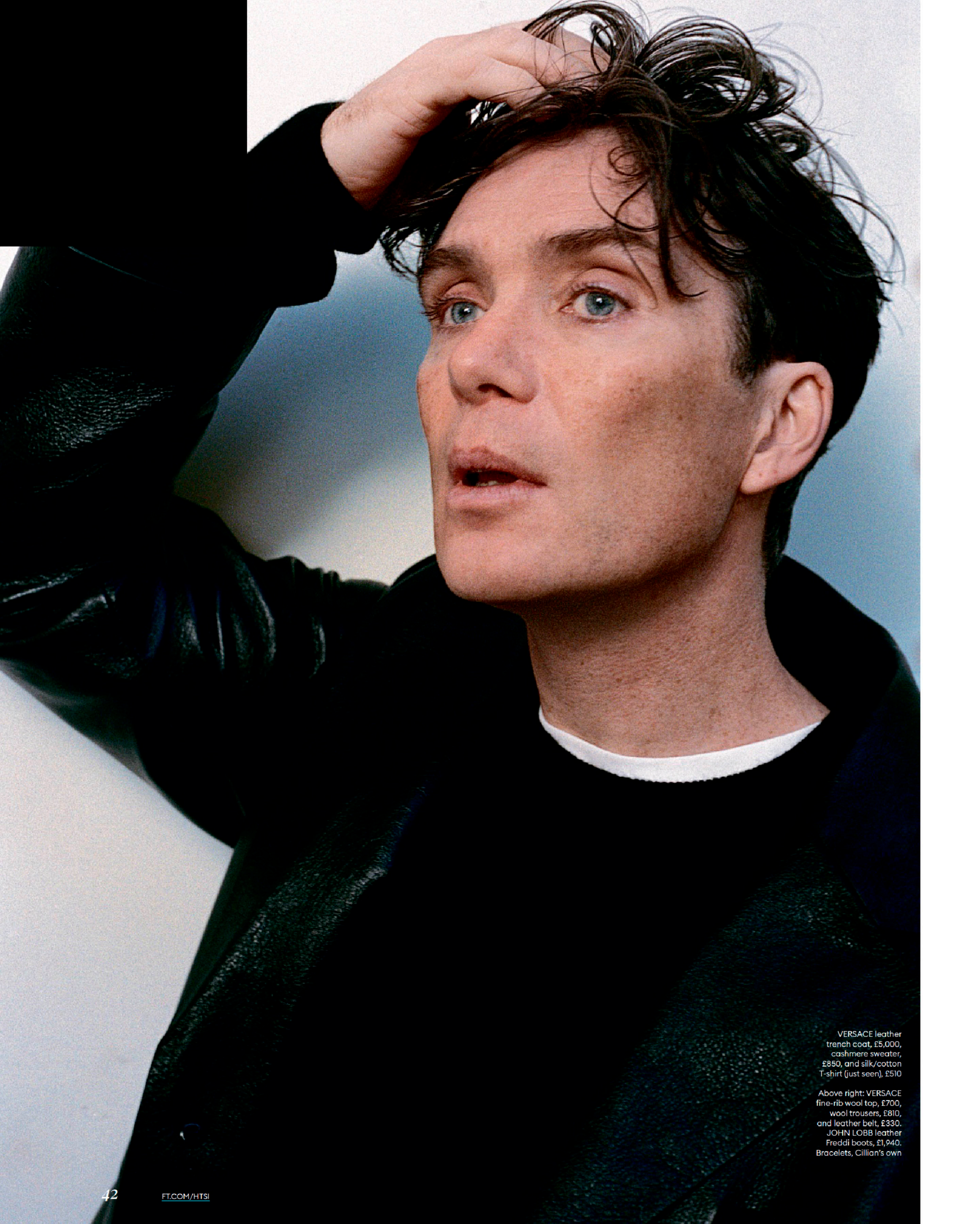
slight ruggedness about the eyes. He's still absurdly handsome, especially when dressed in his off-duty sweater, jeans and workman boots.

In early February, Murphy was at the midpoint of the awards campaign. He was jetting back and forth from Hollywood for countless dinners and meet-and-greets, and dozens of ceremonies that would make the presidential trail seem tame. His odds for winning had become a near done deal, his fame had reached another tier. In Ireland, he had reached the zenith of recognition: his former primary school had swagged the school gates in a banner wishing him good luck at the Academy Awards.

For a man who has always steadfastly avoided press attention, the new scrutiny found him somewhat overwhelmed. “He is the world's best actor and the world's worst celebrity,” said his co-star Emily Blunt recently when asked about his attitude to fame. Murphy acts like a spooked cat around most journalists; he has no social media platform. He specialises in an expression poised between disappointed and bemused. “Everyone knows that I'm the most fucking memed awkward person on the internet,” he cringes when I mention a TikTok that sees him ambling into the Golden Globes alongside the



Right: Cillian Murphy wears VERSACE wool tailored coat, £2,310, and wool trousers, £810. JOHN LOBB leather Freddi boots, £1,940



VERSACE leather trench coat, £5,000, cashmere sweater, £850, and silk/cotton T-shirt (just seen), £510

Above right: VERSACE fine-rib wool top, £700, wool trousers, £810, and leather belt, £330. JOHN LOBB leather Freddi boots, £1,940. Bracelets, Cillian's own



“EVERYONE KNOWS THAT I’M THE MOST FUCKING MEMED AWKWARD PERSON ON THE INTERNET”

caption: “When you made plans while you were feeling extroverted and now you have to attend.” “Can’t I just be normal?” he says. “It is nuts, you know?”

In spite of appearances, however, Murphy has been having fun: he’s even allowed himself to have been photographed in public with Yvonne, a very rare occurrence in their 20-year marriage. “I am enjoying it, because I’m choosing to enjoy it, and I think there’s a distinction,” he says. “And this is celebrating the work that we did, and you have to go into it with an open heart.”

He reminds me of another Cork-born legend, the Irish midfielder-turned-football pundit Roy Keane. Both share the same congenital disposition to seem utterly nonplussed. “[Roy Keane] is actually one of my favourite people,” says Murphy. “I met him once in an airport, and we had a very intense chat for about an hour and a half.” Did he see a kindred spirit? “I did,” says Murphy. “He’s got that thing, that Cork sense... straight to the heart of the issue. He’s a legend. Everything he stands for, I love.”

Murphy’s route to acting was one part accident, three parts drive: the eldest of four children to teacher parents, Brendan and Mary, he grew up in Cork city, in the south of Ireland. His first creative outlet was playing in a band. “Music for me is a pleasure,” he says (he still presents a show on BBC Radio 6 when time allows). “I’ll do anything that involves music... even just making mix tapes or making radio shows or being in music videos. Really, it’s a primal

thing.” It is, he says ruefully, the career that got away. “It’s funny, recently my dad found a load of VHS tapes of the band’s earliest days. We were 15 or 17. It’s all I wanted to do. I was completely eaten up by this need to make music and be a musician. To just be up there and play the songs.”

When the band (including his 16-year-old brother) were offered a record deal, his parents “scuppered” the plan. He then started a short-lived law degree before his natural curiosity led him towards the stage. He badgered a local director to give him an audition, and got a part. Not long after he was touring *Disco Pigs* across the world.

Murphy has always been single-minded about what he wants to do. He has boundless energy and focus. When he’s trying to get his head into a project, he’s been known to go for multiple runs (he used to run 10km distances competitively), although today he’ll more likely walk his dog, a black Lab called Scout. “I don’t think it’s ambition,” he says when asked if he is goal-oriented. “But I love challenging myself. And if you get to a level at something, you go, ‘Oh, what if we push this further and go to the next level and see what happens there?’”

It’s one of the reasons he admires Christopher Nolan: he shares the filmmaker’s unsparing efficiency and desire to get things done. “I’ve never seen a more effective use of time on a film set, ever, in my whole career,” he says. “Film sets are so wasteful normally, it’s like a picnic, everyone just sitting around eating snacks. It drives me mad.” By contrast Nolan has established an accepted culture in which everyone is there to work. “No phones, real locations if possible, so you don’t have guys standing around with lights and scrolling phones. He keeps the catering miles away from the set. It focuses everybody. Everyone expects excellence, because he delivers excellence all of the time.”

Seen in retrospect, Murphy’s career has seemed very fluid. He endured a couple of years of unemployment in

his 20s, but in 2002 Danny Boyle cast him in *28 Days Later*, an apocalyptic thriller that became a cult classic, and he’s been pretty busy ever since. In 2006 he was nominated for a Golden Globe for *Breakfast on Pluto*, and starred in Ken Loach’s *The Wind That Shakes the Barley*, which won the Palme d’Or at Cannes. *Peaky Blinders* brought him to a whole new audience, as have the Nolan films, but his career has been a slow maturation to greatness rather than an overnight success. “I am really glad that it [the awards campaign] happened to me now, and not when I was 20,” he says. “I’ve been acting for a long time. I don’t think you’re wiser, but I have perspective. If it had all happened in my 20s, I wouldn’t have been able to handle it very well.”

His latest role is much more fun. He is currently the face of a new Versace Icons collection, picked by Donatella Versace and shot for the campaign by Mert & Marcus. Murphy enjoys clothes and fashion. He spent six months working with archive Versace looks: he’s especially attached to high-waisted trousers (see his many red-carpet appearances), and the tailoring that marked the early ’90s at the house.

Versace first became aware of Murphy as Scarecrow in the *Batman* movies: she’s also a big *Peaky Blinders* fan. “I wanted to collaborate with someone unexpected,” she says. “It was so interesting to work with him. Cillian loves clothes, and understands and appreciates the subtle details – he has an instinctive taste and natural eye for style.” As for what makes his screen presence so magnetic, she refers, as everybody does, to those steely blues. “There is something magical about Cillian that I instinctively connect with, and his mesmerising eyes of course.”

Murphy’s own personal style has been honed via costume, nowhere more than in his *Peaky Blinders* guise; there have been few other wardrobes as influential



Left: LEMAIRE wool shirt, £415, and lyocell T-shirt (just seen), £100

Right: VERSACE wool tailored coat, £2,310. BURBERRY silk/wool waistcoat, £690, and matching trousers (just seen), £1,090

Grooming, Gareth Bromell at WSM using Sisley Paris. Photographer's assistants, Pedro Faria, Seb McCluskey and Georgia Williams. Tailor, Allison Ozeray. Stylist's assistants, Amy Jolly and Lacie Gittins. Production, Rachael Evans at RE.Pro

experience or any of that, but just a life lived. I remember there was a weird transition when it was like, 'I'm the dad guy now?' But, as the dad of teenage children, I'm very comfortable playing a parent now."

As for technique, he still draws on the same gut reflex. "Instinct is the thing I rely on most," he says. "Everyone is obsessed with process. But I'm much more interested in outcome – that's all that matters. What I do in the rehearsal room... just happens. It's all about energy and being in the right frame of mind."

The last time I spoke to Murphy was two days after the Oscars ceremony. He had arrived in New Zealand with Yvonne and Aran, currently acting in the new Taika Waititi film. Murphy had "catastrophic" jetlag, and was still feeling "pretty dazed". Following one of the "longest awards seasons in history", thanks to the actors' strike, he was still getting used to having the statuette in his life. "It's bizarre. I see it and think, 'What the fuck', and get a shock."

On the Academy stage he thanked the room in Gaelic, and spoke of being a "proud Irish man". What was the significance of being the first Irish-born actor to be awarded for a leading role? "The Oscars looms very large in our cultural landscape," he says. "I remember as a kid when Daniel Day-Lewis and Brenda Fricker and Neil Jordan [other Irish creatives] won. They're massive. And I felt very strongly about my Irish identity: it was very prominent in my thoughts, because it's an American awards ceremony, and you do feel as though you are representing. And because you're aware of how much people at home are invested in it. You want to be the best you can."

Murphy never set out to win an Oscar: "You'd have to be a bit strange if that's how you felt." Neither does this mean he'll move to Hollywood and join the LA scene. He doesn't really differentiate between different acting cultures in the course of what he does. "I'm just part of a big ecosystem. Sometimes you work in a studio in Los Angeles, and sometimes you're on a tiny indie set. Sometimes you're in a theatre. And sometimes you overlap. But really, you work how you work," he says. "You have your value system. 'Hollywood' is something you only read about."

Normal life now beckons. He can retreat into his introverted self. He can grow a beard, and eat and sleep again, and go for long solo walks in Kerry where he and Yvonne have a second home. He was hugely boosted by Yvonne throughout the season; the role of supporting spouse should also get an award. He was also delighted to have his whole family on the red carpet for the big night – his best mate and his younger brother flew out to surprise him, too.

"Emily [Blunt] is a best friend – and [Robert] Downey [Jr]," he says of the "surrogate family" who have been with him throughout. "I couldn't have got through it without them. They're such good people, I'm really lucky. Also, we had a laugh."

After so much campaigning and producing and planning, does acting still give him the thrill? I think back to that feral actor at the Traverse and whether he can still tap into the brilliant raw emotion he had then. "I still get chills," he says of live performance. "The magic still exists. Even when you know how the cake is baked, you still enjoy eating it. Do you know what I mean?" ■HTSI

"THERE WAS A WEIRD TRANSITION WHEN IT WAS LIKE: 'I'M THE DAD GUY NOW?'"

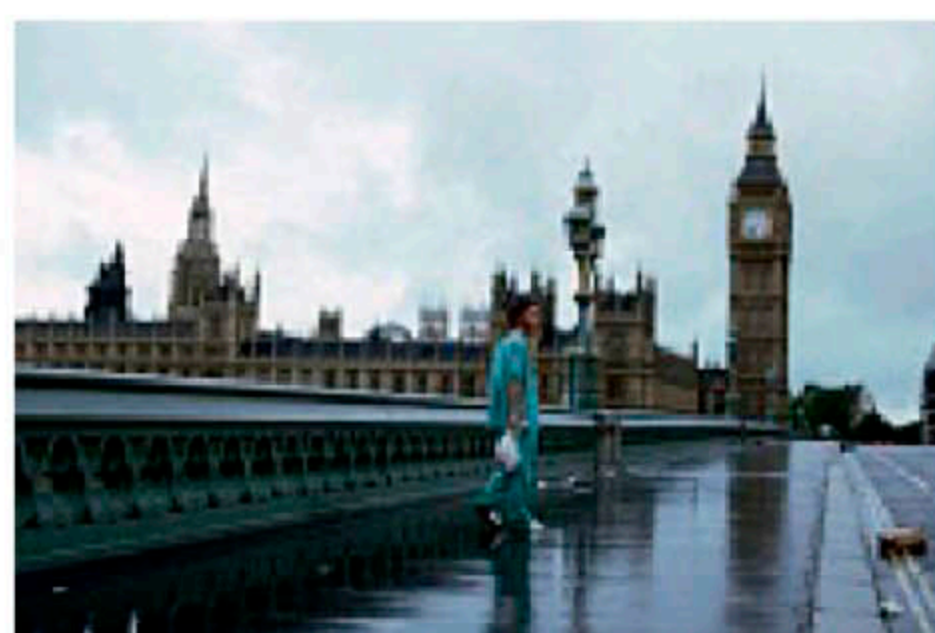
as Thomas Shelby's, with his great coat, mad undercut and swaggy totems of old-timey gangster style. Murphy first donned the cap in 2013 and will likely wear it again when the long-promised *Peaky* film transpires. "There's a lot of momentum," says Murphy of the feature that will start filming in September. He says he'll do it if "there's a great script" and "more story". But when pressed for confirmation of his reappearance he insists there's "nothing official yet".

Oppenheimer has brought other opportunities. Weeks after our first meeting, I saw Murphy at the Berlin Film Festival, where he was opening the Berlinale with the film *Small Things Like These*, an adaptation – by Walsh – of the Claire Keegan novel. Murphy was there as that film's lead actor and its co-producer, a debut project under the banner of his new film company Big Things Films. *Small Things* was produced with Matt Damon and Ben Affleck (he pitched it to Damon while they were on a night shoot on *Oppenheimer*), for a modest budget of less

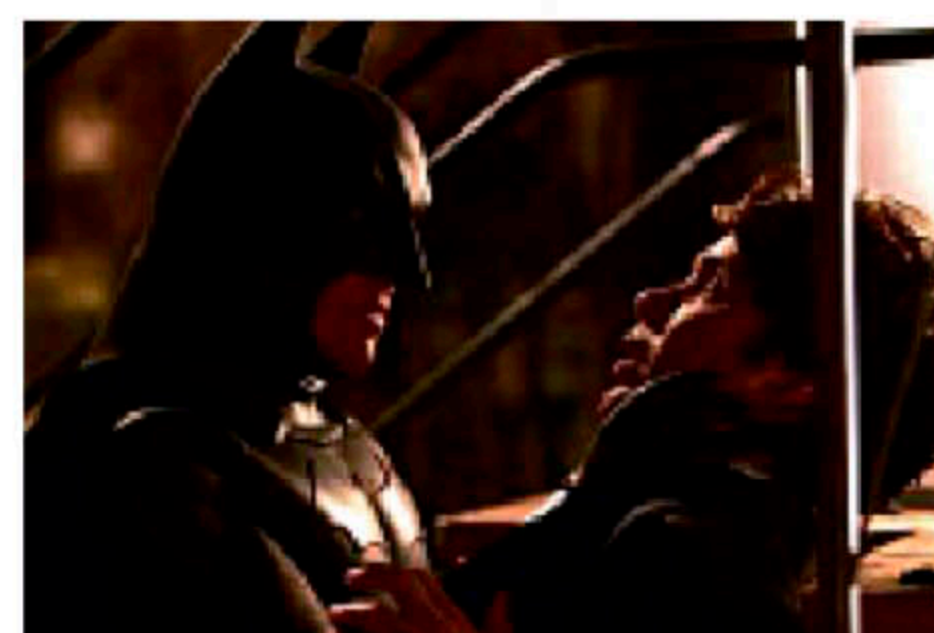
than \$10mn, and focuses on a community being witness to decades of institutional abuse. A counter to the bombast of *Oppenheimer*, it is tiny, quiet and cerebral. But Murphy's performance, as a family man wrestling with his conscience, is one of the best of his I've seen.

Then comes Netflix's *Steve* (another adaptation, this time of Max Porter's *Shy*), which he will also star in and produce. He's collaborating with the director Tim Mielants, with whom he worked on *Peaky Blinders*, and it's another role based on a man poised on the edge. Murphy is drawn to anguish, and roles that tickle the darkest recess of the human soul. This, combined with his professional intensity, means it's easy to forget that in private he's a total goof. He's an incredible mimic, and loves dad jokes, wordplay and godawful puns; I've often said that if the work dries up in acting, he'd be a great headline writer at *The Sun*.

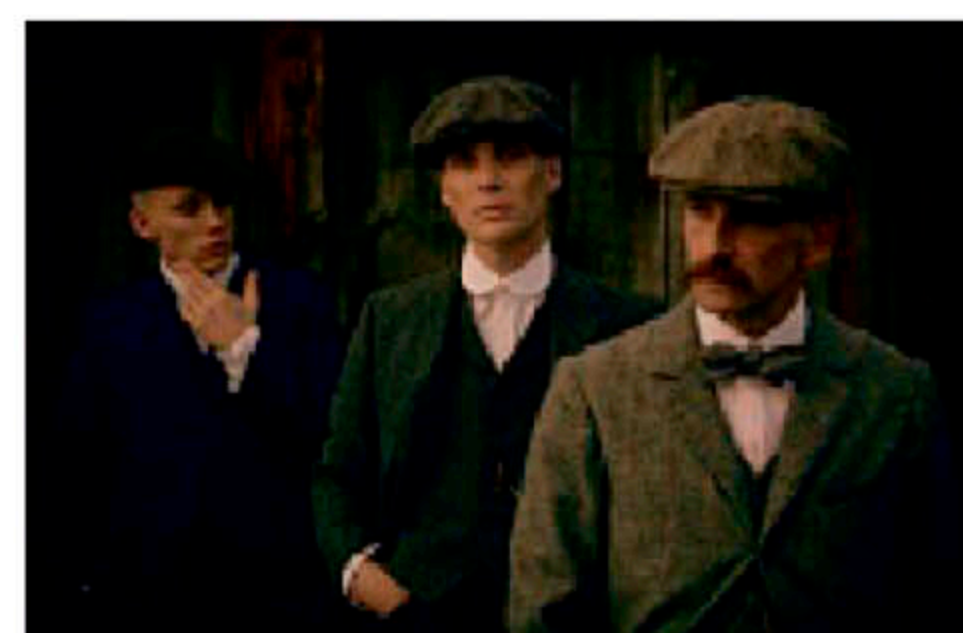
"I don't know where I read the quote: it takes 30 years to make an actor, but I believe that," says Murphy of the roles that he now seeks. "It's not just technique or



28 Days Later, 2002



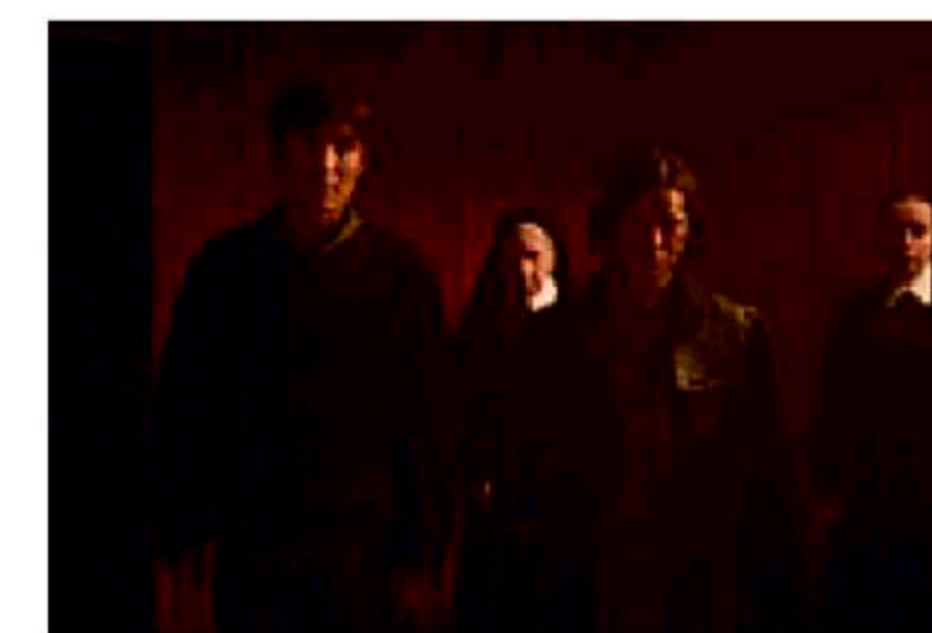
Batman Begins, 2005



Peaky Blinders, 2013



Oppenheimer, 2023



Small Things Like These, 2024





BRAKE THE CYCLE

Adventure outfit The Slow Cyclist has taken its easy-riding ethos to South Africa's Western Cape. *Charlotte Sinclair* joins the first trip

Photography by *Kent Andreassen*

Above left: the author and The Slow Cyclist guide Hannah passing farm vehicles in the Karoo. Above right: the Swartberg mountain range



land of South Africa's famed coastal Garden Route, away from the cars and whale-watching tours, there is a sense of time winding down. It pours over the Outeniqua mountains into the spreading valleys of the Klein Karoo, a palimpsest of crumpled hills and Afrikaans farmlands. History is emergent in every layer, from the San cave paintings decorating hidden outcrops to the Victorian engineering that conjured the Swartberg Mountain Pass, and the small towns founded by European settlers, whose ghosts are said to stalk the Boer graveyards.

It's an area uniquely suited for discovery by bicycle, which is why The Slow Cyclist – a boutique tour operator created by Oli Broom in 2014 for which considered, conscious travel is a founding principle – is now operating here. Its ethos was inspired by Broom's own trip from London to Brisbane to watch the 2010 Ashes; a slow cycle indeed, lasting 412 days, traversing 23 countries and coming in at 28,000km. Offering trips in Rwanda and Transylvania, Turkey and the Peloponnese, the company provides e-bike, slack-pack adventures high on charm and off-map experiences, and low on effort and injury.

Broom describes The Slow Cyclist as “a means to travel responsibly, with a light footprint, while creating real connections to people and places. I always say our clients are curious travellers with a bit of juice in their legs; they're not cyclists, but they like cycling. To see the world from the saddle of a bike is to break down a barrier – the car windscreen, in this case – between you and the people and places you pass.”

There's no doubt that pedal power provides opportunities for deeper interactions. The feeling under the wheels as the uneven shale of a track smooths into red clay, or the hair-dryer-to-the-face experience of zooming through shimmering pockets of hot air that rise from the road like will-o'-the-wisps. By car, it would be easy to miss the cawing of a hadada ibis as it detonates into flight from the top of a eucalyptus tree, or the swish of an ostrich *corps de ballet* racing on tiptoe down the curve of a field.

The Slow Cyclist's debut trip to South Africa's Western Cape encompasses three distinct biomes: the sprawling desert of the Great Karoo, the semi-desert of the Klein Karoo and the temperate rainforests of Tsitsikamma National Park, the miles and route spiralling down to the Indian Ocean. It's a journey of approximately 330km and a 4,500m climb – a startling ascent that is, in fact, barely noticeable (the bike's internal motor makes short work of even the steepest incline).

The route has been rigorously planned to avoid all crowds and cars, and to incorporate plenty of surprises: a deliberate lack of information on the itinerary allows for the rare treat of not knowing everything in advance. Each stop is intentionally designed to foster further insight into the landscape – whether pizza at a biker pub whose ceiling is decorated in racing-car flags, tea at a sculptor's studio or a stop in the Klein Karoo's patchwork fields, where a lunch of chicken and mango salad and cold white wine has been set up on a veranda.

Accommodation is, similarly, equal parts charming and illuminating, ranging from a boutique vineyard where

the noise of a whip crack shoos starlings from the Chardonnay grapes, to an off-grid cabin stay where horses wander the glades, drinking from the rainwater swimming pool and nosing around our breakfast table.

We are a group of nine, plus our indefatigable South African hosts, Jaco van der Westhuizen and Katja Ratcliffe, and guide, Hannah Basson (responsible, after a long day's ride at the back of the peloton, for cleaning and charging the bikes). It's a very jolly crew – almost all British and averaging late 50s to early 60s. There is a Fulham couple in their early 70s on their third Slow Cyclist jaunt; a pair of Yorkshire farmers; a racecourse chairman; and a Swiss financier couple outposted in Singapore. The group's age range is a reflection of the democratic nature of ebiking, which creates a low barrier to entry; a basic level of fitness is useful but not, perhaps, essential (bags travel separately, further minimising effort).

Frankly, it's a relief not to hear a single mention of Strava. Slow Cyclists are as much defined by a love of exploration and down-to-earth attitude as by age; there are comparisons over lunch of trips made to Patagonia and the Antarctic. Says Sara Foyle, a sprightly 72-year-old: “This is for people who don't want to take a cruise to Antigua or lie on a beach all day. We want adventure.” Later, she snatches the title of speed queen, hitting a fearless 54kmph while whizzing downhill one afternoon.

Our first day is spent climbing from Prince Albert – a colonial Karoo outpost with a handsome Cape Dutch church and a yearly jazz festival – up through the pleated hills of the Swartberg Pass. The road, which passes through



a Unesco World Heritage Site, is the work of engineer Thomas Bain, who in 1888 created a route through an area of mountains previously deemed impassable.

The vistas are monumental: a cardiogram line of hills foregrounds the desert plateau stretching to the horizon. It makes for a punchy initiation: a steep 1,000m climb that I stupidly decide (or, to be clear, my ego decides) to do on the lowest “Eco” setting. The bike weighs nearly 30kg; as I slow to a crawl, my legs circling crazily in the lowest gear, one of our peloton sails past me, trilling “Turbo!” – the name of the bike’s highest setting.

We ride out into gin-clear mornings, spinning down green valleys, past explosions of bougainvillea from cottage gardens, stands of willows marking the seam of a river. We dawdle to watch a water mongoose swimming across a dam. Children yell encouragement as we pedal past: “Hold, legs, hold!” From fields where blue cranes stalk the turned earth there rises the distant thunder of a tractor. When asked what’s farmed in the famously impenetrable Karoo soil, our guide, Katja, deadpans: “Rocks.”

“We’ve had drought here for seven years. Half the farms went bankrupt,” says Laura Schoeman, the owner of Berluda ostrich farm. The trade in ostrich feathers predates

FRANKLY, IT’S A RELIEF NOT TO HEAR A SINGLE MENTION OF STRAVA

the arrival, in the late 1800s, of enterprising Lithuanians to Oudtshoorn – the so-called “feather barons” who made their wealth selling plumes to European hatmakers. By the turn of the 20th century, 1kg of white wingtip feathers fetched more than 1kg of gold. Now Berluda’s main customers are in Brazil, where the plumes are used for carnival costumes. Ostrich leather has become another source of profit: “The processing is very specialised,” says Schoeman. “Hermès, Louis Vuitton, they only want flawless skins with no marks. We do it all here.” The birds blink in curious disapproval as we cycle away.

We follow corrugated tracks upwards, through green hills felted in fynbos. The sun begins to sink, leaving shining streamers suspended over the Langkloof valley. We drop down to Louvain, a 50,000-hectare farm first settled in 1780 by colonists who followed the San people over the mountains. Owner Morne Jonker, charming in board shorts, grills ostrich steaks on the braai for supper. (Louvain’s ostrich leather, he tells me, goes to Prada.) “South Africans don’t mind hard work,” he says, understating the agricultural challenges of an environment beset by drought and wildfire. The next morning, Morne’s equally charming son, Douglas, leads

us through the heat to a cave beside a spring where he swam as a boy. “But I never knew these were here,” he says, pointing to the cave’s wall, decorated with illustrations of giraffes and eland, painted by San people hundreds of years ago. In one bewitching image, a group of mermaids appear to stir the depths of the nearby spring.

As the miles accumulate, so do the stories: of who lives here, and how, and where. We move out of the farmlands and down into temperate rainforest; dinner discussions turn to politics – to the long shadow cast by apartheid and colonial rule, to farm ownership and the complex question of expropriation. The conversations speak to the unique perspective that comes from a slow-speed, eyeball-level observation of a place.

We pedal through a fine net of rain to reach the Knysna forests, where, at a tin-roofed tea house, an extravagantly bearded guide named Hardy Loubser recounts stories of yet more hard lives grafted into this wilderness, including 19th-century woodcutters who were born and died without ever leaving their arboreal residence. Today a solitary elephant still hides in this vast national park, the last living remnant of the herds that used to wander the Klein Karoo freely before it was carved into settlements. “All she knows is being alone,” says Hardy. “She’s lonely but doesn’t know she’s lonely.”

At the coast at Sedgefield, where the flat silk of the Indian Ocean spreads out beyond the dunes, we say goodbye to the bicycles. It is strange and bittersweet; the notion of getting into a car seems vaguely alien. “Travelling this way does something to the body and mind,” says Broom; it’s a



thinking experience as much as a physical activity – “an antidote to mindlessness”. Importantly, it’s also great fun, an adventure as much about group dynamics as anything else – the jokes, the team spirit, the meeting as strangers and leaving as friends, the many glasses of delicious South African wines. A trip that proves the theory: the most memorable journeys are those shared. ■HTSI

Charlotte Sinclair travelled as a guest of The Slow Cyclist, which offers a seven-night journey through the Western Cape from £3,945 per person, including support vehicle and luggage transfers, host and English-speaking guides, accommodation, meals, snacks and drinks, all activities, e-bike and helmet hire; theslowcyclist.com

Above left: riding along the Kammanassie road. Above: ostriches in Louvain in the Langkloof valley. Right: the author in Rolbaken nature reserve. Below: San rock art near Louvain Guest Farm in the Langkloof valley



Right: Guglielmo Castelli in his studio in Turin. Behind him are (left) *Sempre aperto teatro*, 2023, and (right) *Shadow landscapes*, 2024



Growing up in 1990s Turin, Guglielmo Castelli was often left alone with books and drawing materials while his parents were at work. Sometimes he would draw images that were sparked by the story he was reading; other times he drew directly onto the pages of the book, often disrupting or changing the narrative. “My mother always told me that to be free you have to read other people’s stories; that you need to understand the garden outside your own walls,” he says.

But he was warned of the dangers of escape. “This was in my bedroom as a child,” he says, pointing to a series of scenes painted on glass, meant for a stereoscope, that illustrate a young boy trying to get an apple from a neighbour’s garden. He sticks his hand through a hole in the wall to grab one and is attacked by a dog. The final images show the boy crying, his arm bandaged. Castelli’s paintings are heavy with nostalgia; yet shadows swirl.

“I end with the shadows”

Guglielmo Castelli is telling dark fairytales in Venice this spring. *Gisela Williams* visits his studio

Photography by *Paolo Prendin*





CASTELLI'S PAINTINGS ARE HEAVY WITH NOSTALGIA

Above: Castelli in front of *Sempre aperto teatro*, 2023. Top right: *Settle the bill with the rest of the world*, 2021. Right: *Louise was right!*, 2023

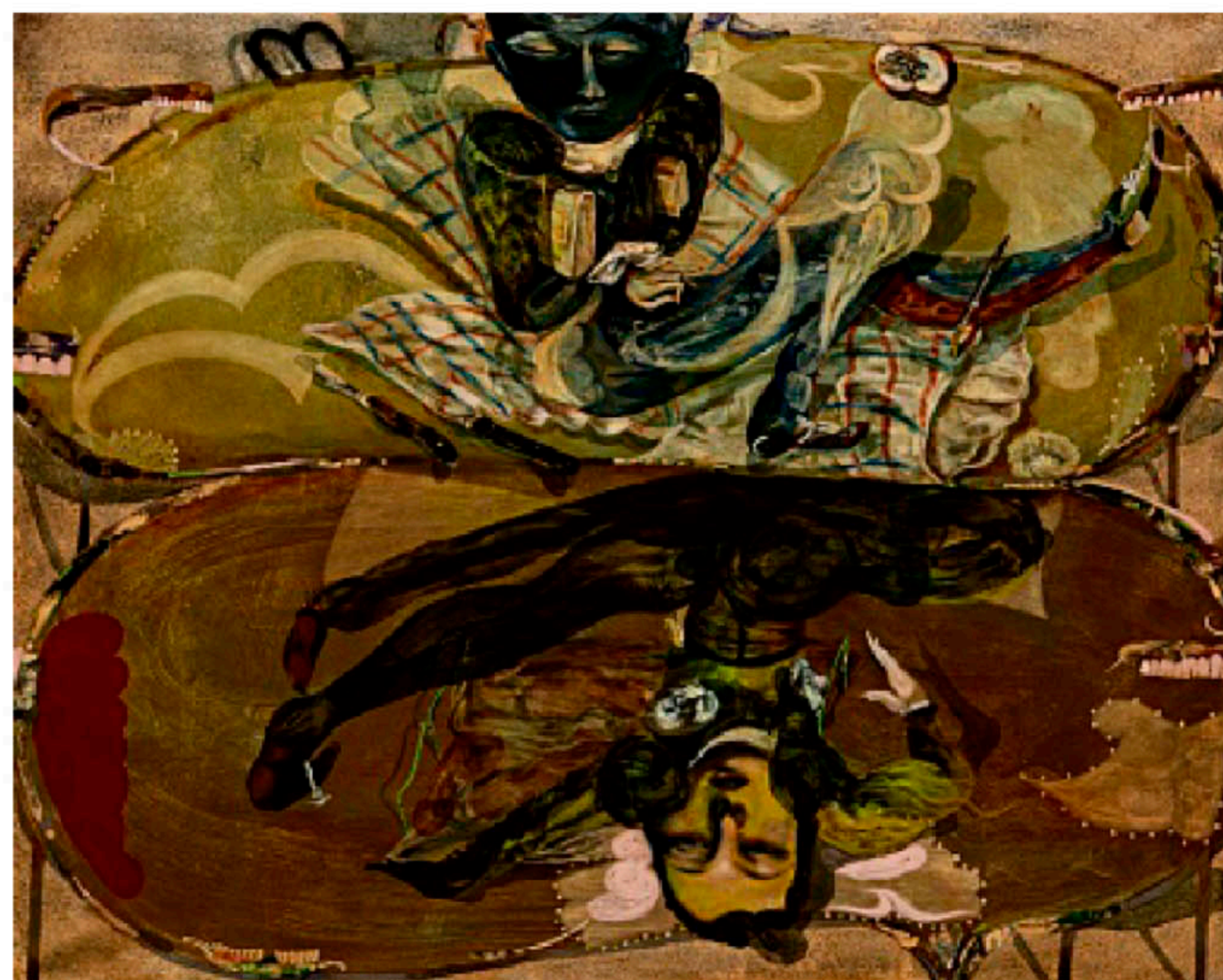


The past few years have seen Castelli's work shown as part of buzzy group exhibitions and in solo shows from Berlin to Manhattan – he is now represented by the gallery Rodeo as well as Mendes Wood DM (São Paulo, New York, Brussels, Paris). “There aren't many painters working today that compel me,” says Rodeo's founder, Sylvia Kouvali, “but when I saw his work for the first time I thought this could not be made by a living artist, and someone that young. His paintings, the technique and the layers and time he takes invoked for me the Old Masters.”

Museum and institutional group exhibitions include those at the Fondation Louis Vuitton, Castello di Rivoli and Aspen Art Museum. Last summer, a Christie's sale saw prices hammer down at around four times their estimates. This spring, the 36-year-old's first major institutional show, *Improving Songs for Anxious Children*, opens at the Palazzetto Tito, dovetailing with the start of the 60th Venice Biennale. A dozen paintings, three sculptures and a large textile maquette are some of the pieces currently planned for the space, home to the Bevilacqua La Masa Foundation, founded in 1898 as a launch pad for young artists – which have included impressionist Gino Rossi and futurist Umberto Boccioni.

The show's curator Milovan Farronato met Castelli through Kouvali. “I thought his work would be perfect in the Palazzetto,” says Farronato. “The building is a charismatic one, facing the canal near the Accademia. The reflections of water and light moving on the walls resemble the movement in Gugilelmo's paintings – where all the shadows seem to be running away.” Farronato and Castelli also collaborated on a small booklet that focuses both on work shown in the exhibition and on the artist's studio in Turin.

Castelli still lives in Turin's elegant, historic centre, with its grand avenues and squares lined with towering stone arcades. But his studio workshop is hidden at the back of a small courtyard in a gritty industrial suburb; the façade is marked by a tiny bronze plaque that reads “Sweet Baby Motel”. Stepping inside feels surreal, like walking onto a theatre set. It is split into two rooms: one is lined



with paintings and holds a big table covered in tubes and jars of oil and acrylics; the other is like a living room, arranged with treasured objects, images and books.

On a wet, chilly day in February, Castelli is working on one of the last pieces for the upcoming show: a series of textile panels, painted and embroidered with images inspired by the boy and the apple story, which he is exploring hanging on a device that resembles a laundry drying rack. Having studied theatre and set design before he turned to painting, Castelli is now experimenting with work that crosses both disciplines. A mix of Baroque music and Bellini is playing in the background as he makes an espresso in the small kitchen. He could inhabit another era dressed in tailored trousers, a Japanese collared wool sweater and black Gucci dress boots.

Each canvas feels as if it contains a dark spirit; upon close examination, the thick layers of paint often reveal disturbing symbols. There is something both dreamy, reminiscent of Marc Chagall, and menacing, more like Francis Bacon. For Castelli, inspiration often starts not with art, but with a book. Last year's show at New York's Mendes Wood DM was titled *Demonios Familiars*, named for the Spanish writer Ana María Matute, whose work explores the liminal space bridging childhood and adulthood. While in New York Castelli paid a visit to the New York Public Library and came upon the book *Improving Songs for Anxious Children* – which cautions against immoral behaviour. “As soon as I picked it up, I felt my body going very hot,” he says.

Although Castelli painstakingly plots out each work with sketches and moodboards, he begins with a sort of chaos, by covering a canvas with what he calls “mud”: an unpredictable foundation of acrylic, turpentine, oil paint and water that creates a swirl of abstractions. When he starts painting his swirling figures and landscapes, those underlying shapes can dictate or distort the figure. At the end, he might, with a flourish, add a few details, like a cherry or a small flame. Such “little fires force me to change direction”, he says.

“There is something undeniably sharp about Guglielmo’s ability to paint often indescribable feelings such as fear, danger or chaos, but also beauty and passion, with so much poetry,” says Taciana Birman, a director of Mendes Wood DM’s Brussels gallery. “I see it as an element of his own worldmaking, and of creating perspectives that refute any singular definition.”

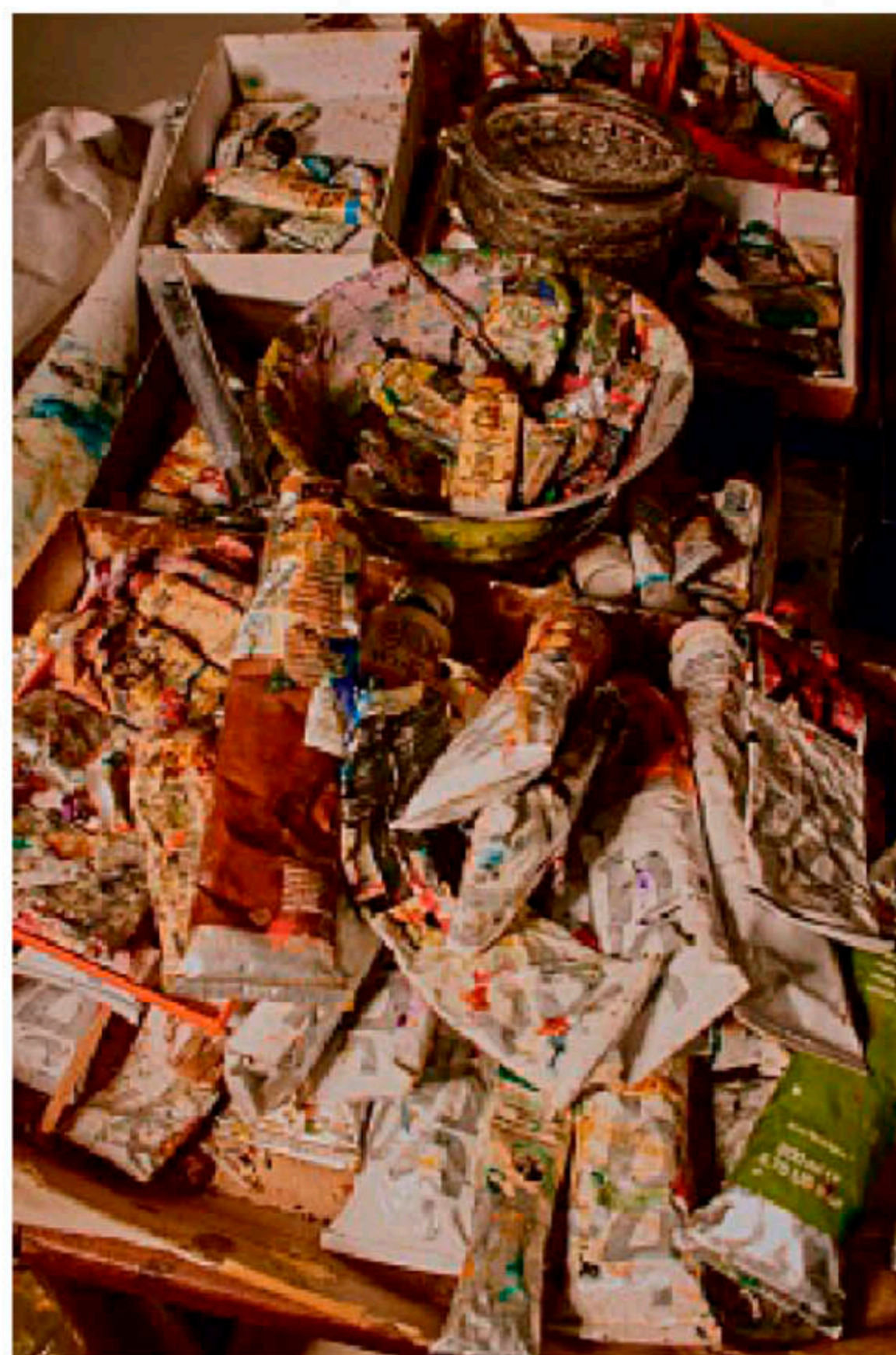
Castelli leads me to the large table covered with pastels, candles, a vase filled with a bouquet of winter berries and dying flowers, and dozens and dozens of small sketchbooks, each labelled with the year it was used. “I make my drawings in here,” he says. Behind the table is a chair piled with books, from one on Balthus and another on the Belgian symbolist painter Léon Spilliaert to a large tome on Persian paintings. A vintage glass pharmacy vitrine holds a mix of dolls, puppets, masks, white coral mounted on Lucite, and small wooden figures of nuns and priests, which feed into his works. He points at a rabbit with a child’s face. “That was my mother’s.” He then pulls out what looks like a strange sinister-looking toy made of short rubber hoses, shakes it, and it makes the sound of ducks. “It’s a tool that hunters use to scare the ducks so that they are easier to shoot.”

For Castelli, beauty alone is banal – it’s only interesting when there is a threat that it might be overwhelmed by darkness, fire or violence. He recalls reading *Little Red Riding Hood* as a child and finding the end, when the grandmother is saved and the wolf killed, boring. “I changed it and made Little Red Riding Hood fall in love with the wolf and then travel the world together,” he laughs. Then adds: “It’s through facing and embracing fear that you can manage. I don’t believe in Once Upon a Time.” ■HTSI

Guglielmo Castelli: Improving Songs for Anxious Children runs from 15 April to 17 July at Istituzione Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, Venice



“LITTLE FIRES FORCE ME TO CHANGE DIRECTION”



Top: *Sempre aperto teatro*, 2023. Above: oil paints in Castelli’s studio. Right: the artist with a work in progress





H O R I Z O N

AN EXTRAORDINARY JOURNEY
TO THE FUTURE



THE
MACALLAN
200
ANNIVERSARY

×



PLEASE ENJOY RESPONSIBLY. DO NOT DRINK AND DRIVE. [be**drinkaware**.co.uk](http://bedrinkaware.co.uk)



BENNETT WINCH

HANDMADE IN ENGLAND



*Military grade
cotton parachute webbing*

*Waterproof
bonded canvas outer*

Solid brass hardware

Magnetic connectors

Detachable garment bag

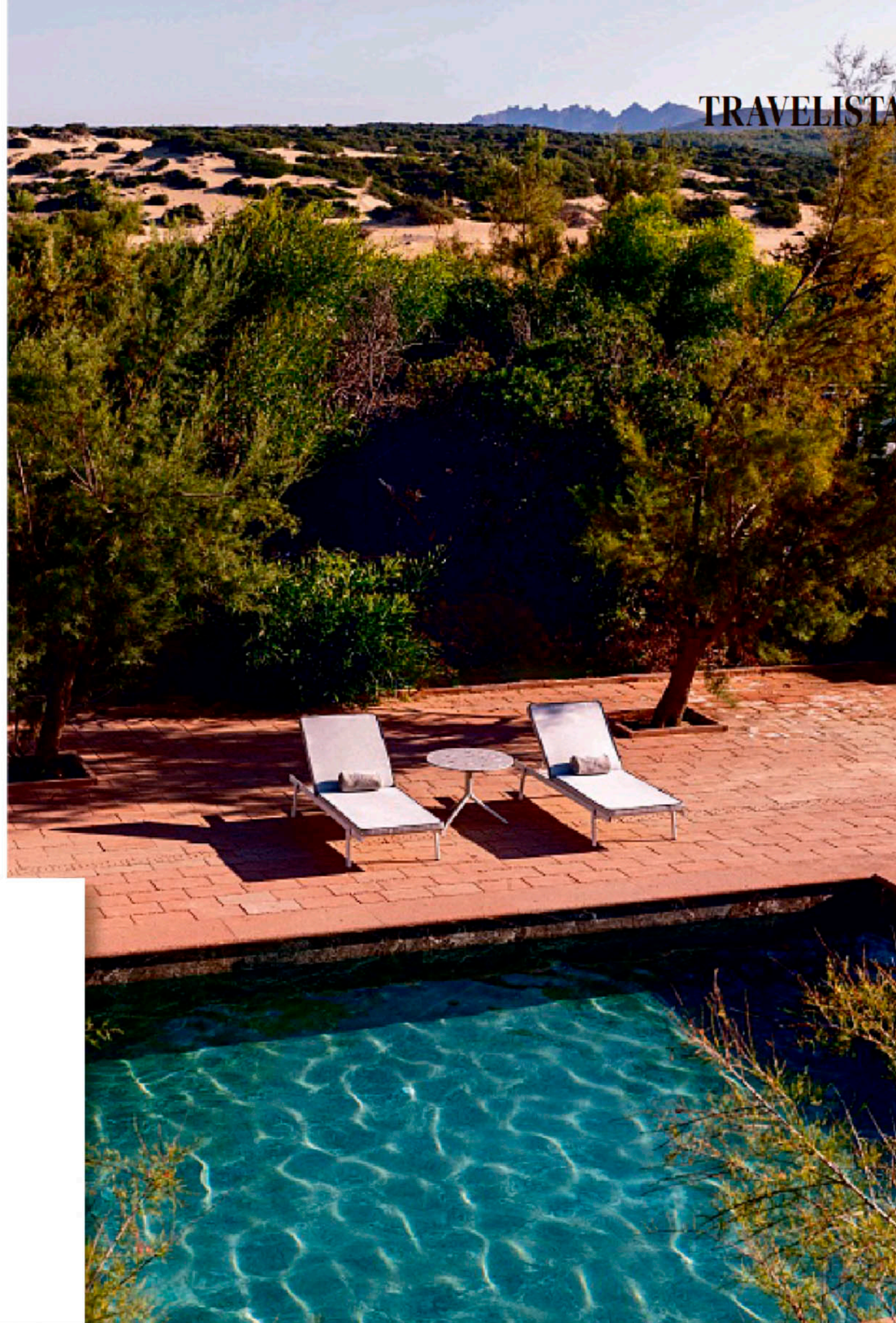
Tuscan leather trim



The Suit Carrier Holdall

One man stumbles down Savile Row taming a suit bag in one hand and a duffel bag in the other. A second man walks towards him carrying a Bennett Winch Suit Carrier Holdall. The first man nods, the second man waves.

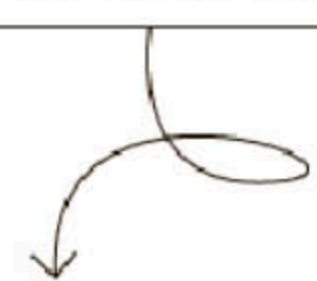
Below: the American Bar at Le Dune Piscinas in Sardinia. Right: Le Dune's swimming pool



Piscinas, in south-western Sardinia, is almost as far as you can get geographically from the Costa Smeralda without actually leaving the island. Not surprisingly, it bears little resemblance to that lifestyle destination, physically or culturally: down here you're closer to Africa than you are to Rome, and there's nary a giga-yacht to be spotted on the horizon (nor anchored in any fancy marina; none of those around, either).

I fell hard for this wild coast, home to some of Europe's tallest sand dunes, when I first explored it almost 15 years ago. Le Dune was the whispered-about Shangri-La I never quite made it to: a cult hotel far down a gravel road, with simple sun-filled accommodations, fresh food and gem-hued seas; the windsurfer's and solitude-seeker's dream. In a few weeks, it will reopen after a three-year renovation that looks to have introduced considerable polish without denuding it of its essential appeal. The 28 rooms and suites still have their sandstone floors and whitewashed rafters, but the design is upgraded. Some suites have little plunge pools set into sand gardens, others have private terraces; the warm-toned plaster walls are incised with decorative motifs. The bar has retained its low-slung, vaguely '70s appeal, huge stone fireplace and all, but it's updated with sleek sofas

DUNES DE FORMENTERA



TRAVEL NEWS

Change your dune

Find Mediterranean bliss on Sardinia, Formentera or Tinos

WORDS BY MARIA SHOLLENBARGER

and a worldly cocktail list. The food is now overseen by a chef who helped earn La Terrazza at Rome's Hotel Eden its Michelin star. But the overall promise is of continued simplicity, in spirit and service: the owners know nature is the star of the Le Dune show. ledunepiscinas.com, from €265

FORMENTERA'S FINE NEW RETREAT

More dunes, in this case Balearic ones: Dunas de Formentera will open on the island of the same name at the end of next month. The 45-room hotel, overlooking the southern end of Migjorn Beach, is the latest in a series of collaborations between Marugal – the Spanish hotel micro-brand that manages, among others, Cap Rocat on Mallorca and Christian Louboutin's Vermelho in Melides, Portugal – and the Mallorcan interior designer Antonio Obrador. Set back from the beach, semi-hidden in the umbrella pines and dunes, it's a quieter alternative to its sister property, Gecko Beach Club, Marugal's beacon of feet-in-the-sand revelry a few hundred yards up the shore. Obrador's style is pared-back, his palette white, sand and terracotta: floors are continuous polished concrete, and there's lots of smooth touchable teak. The rooms are spread across a series of one- and two-storey houses; some have terraces and separate sitting areas. The restaurant covers the Mediterranean gamut, from wood-fired pizzas to the catch of the day *a la plancha*. A saltwater infinity pool rounds out the picture. dunasdeformentera.com, from €450

MINIMALIST CYCLADIC STYLE ON TINOS

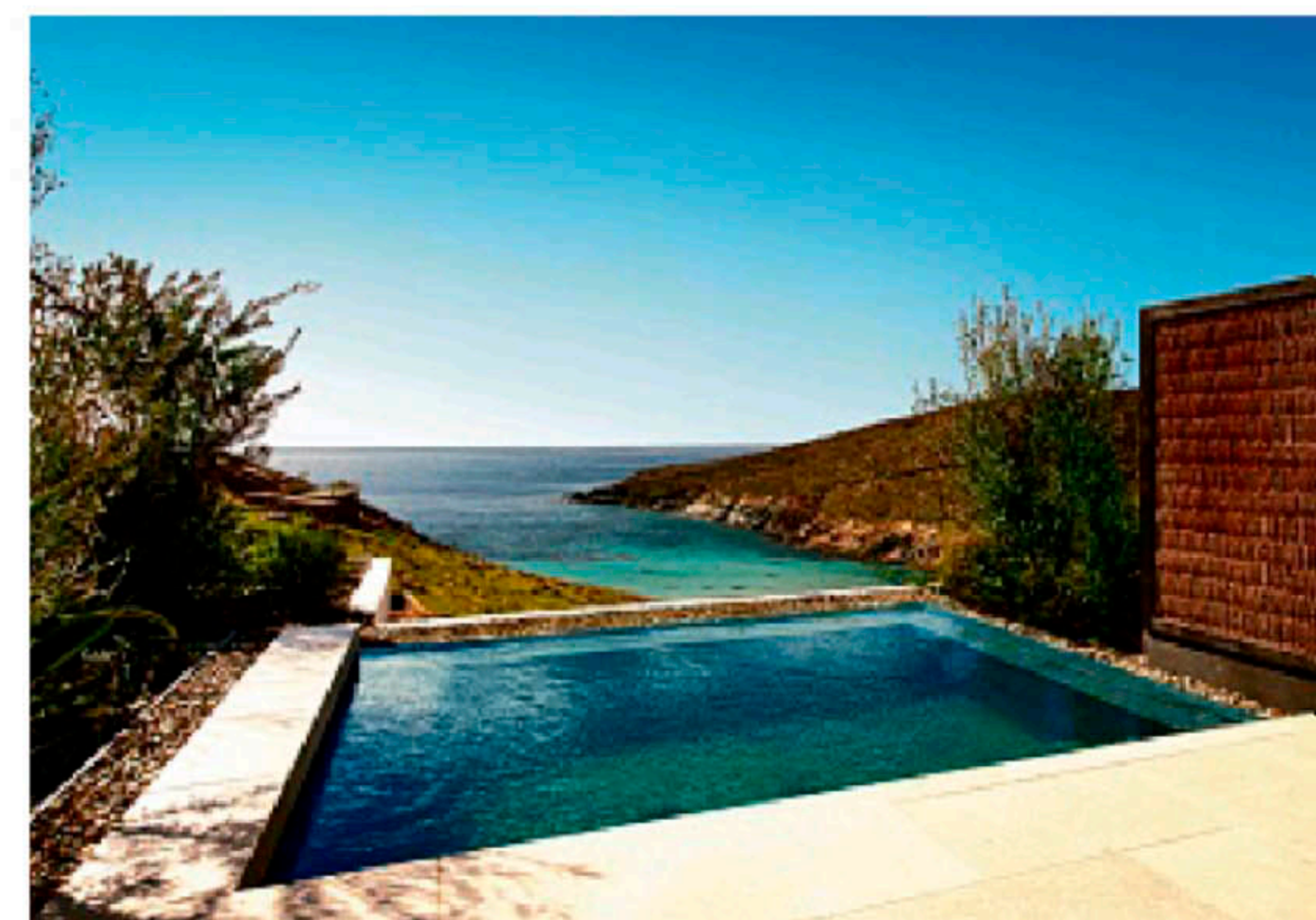
Despite being less than half an hour by boat from Mykonos, Tinos has retained, particularly outside the highest-season months, both character and calm. Its steep slopes attract walkers; its hinterland is full of windmills, some dating back centuries to the era of Venetian dominion, and foursquare brick-and-whitewash dovescotes dot the slopes everywhere. Odera, when it opens next month on the island's south coast, will be one of Tino's only full-scale resort propositions. Its 77 rooms and suites, housed in low cubic bungalows along a bluff's edge, filter Cycladic design elements

IT IS THE WHISPERED-ABOUT SHANGRI-LA I NEVER QUITE MADE IT TO

through a monochrome, minimalist lens: stone floors, washed concrete walls, the only hints of colour a sea-blue or indigo stripe here or a terracotta lounge chair there, next to the plunge pool. A winding path leads down to a private beach with its own bar-restaurant; there is also a full gym and a small spa, with its own hammam and hydrotherapy circuit. For a more essential workout, there is always Tinos's 400-plus kilometres of footpaths – and the Aegean for your cool-down. oderatinos.com, from €300 ■HTSI
@mariashollenbarger

LE DUNE'S LIBRARY

Below: a private "chill-out pool" with a sea view at Odera Tinos



idealista

The leading property app in Spain, Italy and Portugal



Stunning contemporary villa in Sicily

€ 5,300,000 www.idealista.it/luxury/stunningvillainsicily

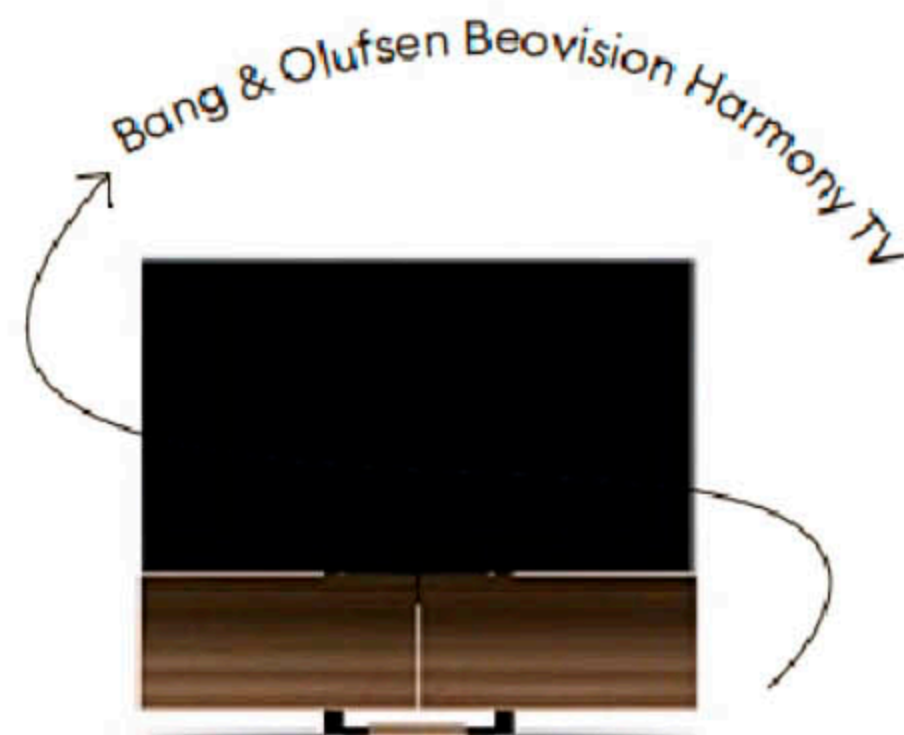




Occhio Luna lights

THE LIGHTS FANTASTIC

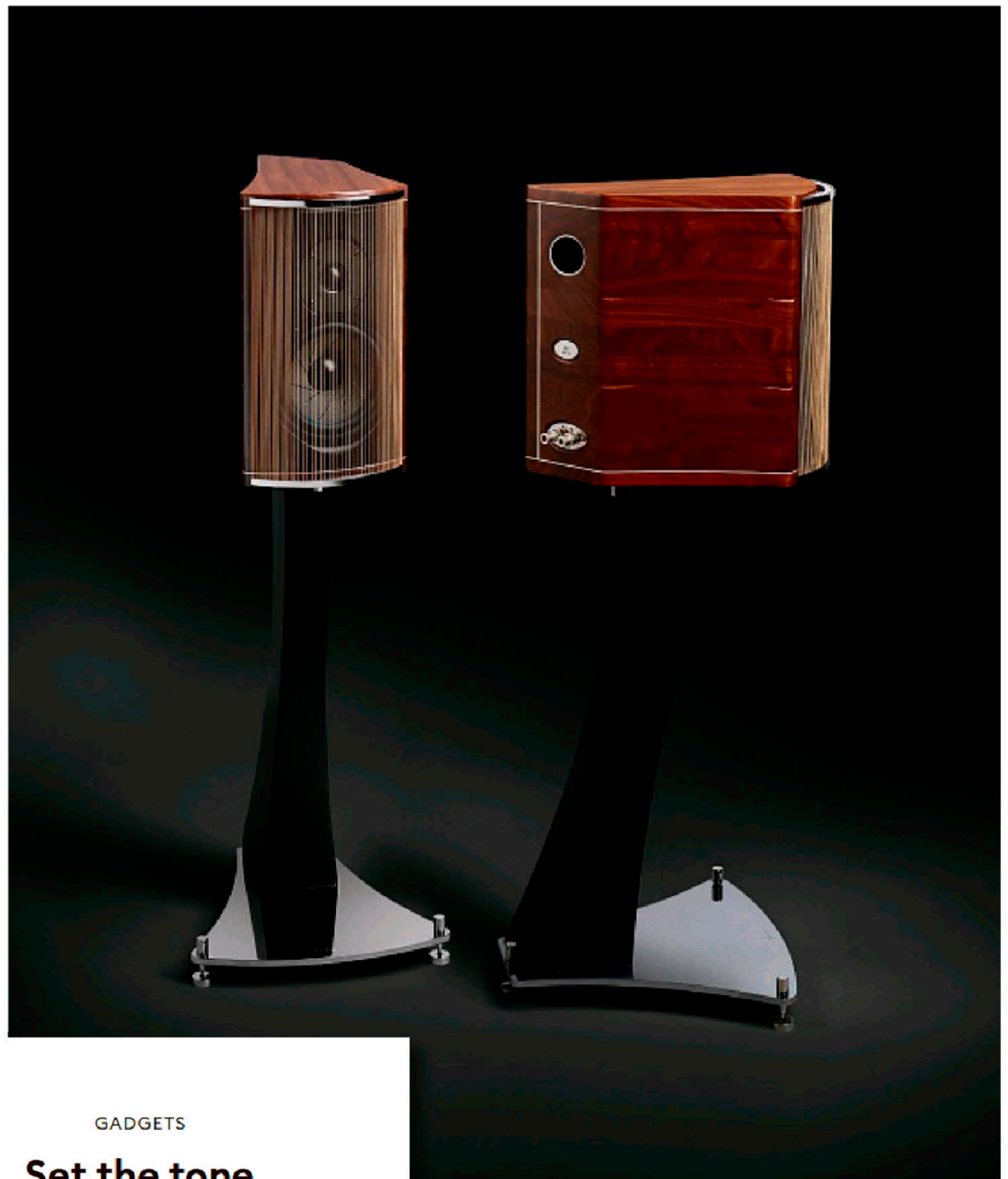
We call them light fittings, but German design firm Occhio calls theirs “luminaires”: sleek, modular objects, many with interchangeable filters and lenses, all connected via a Bluetooth mesh to give consistent, considered lighting throughout the home. Its new Luna collection may look at first glance like a series of lightbulbs housed within spheres, but the reality is more complex and beautiful: LEDs within the casing project light into a solid glass “fireball”, which appears to float and glow when switched on but vanishes when switched off. That switching and dimming can be done with simple hand gestures, while an app gives more granular control and lets you link groups of lights. A little piece of celestial magic. *Occhio Luna*, from £778



Bang & Olufsen Beovision Harmony TV

OLEDs YOU WIN

It's the newest and largest of B&O's Harmony TVs, made in partnership with LG – in fact, it's the largest LG OLED screen currently available at some 2.15m wide. But while the screen is big, bright and beautiful (and with the blackest of blacks), it's the kinetic speakers that really impress. They sit horizontally below the screen when in TV mode, but smoothly and silently fold up to the vertical when the Harmony is serving as a media centre. For years, TV manufacturers have quietly wrestled with the problem of what to display when just playing audio; B&O has provided a rather elegant answer, which is to mostly cover it up with oak or walnut, leaving a neat information bar at the top of the screen. *Bang & Olufsen Beovision Harmony 97in*, £50,450

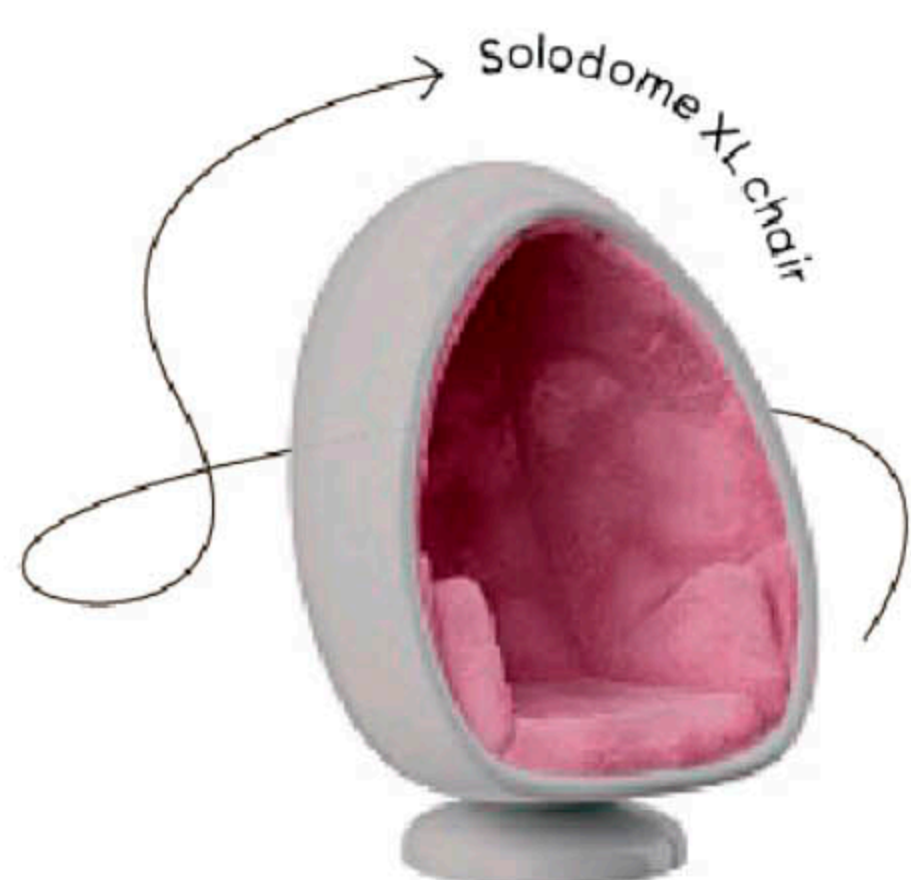


GADGETS

Set the tone

Five ways to create the best home ambience

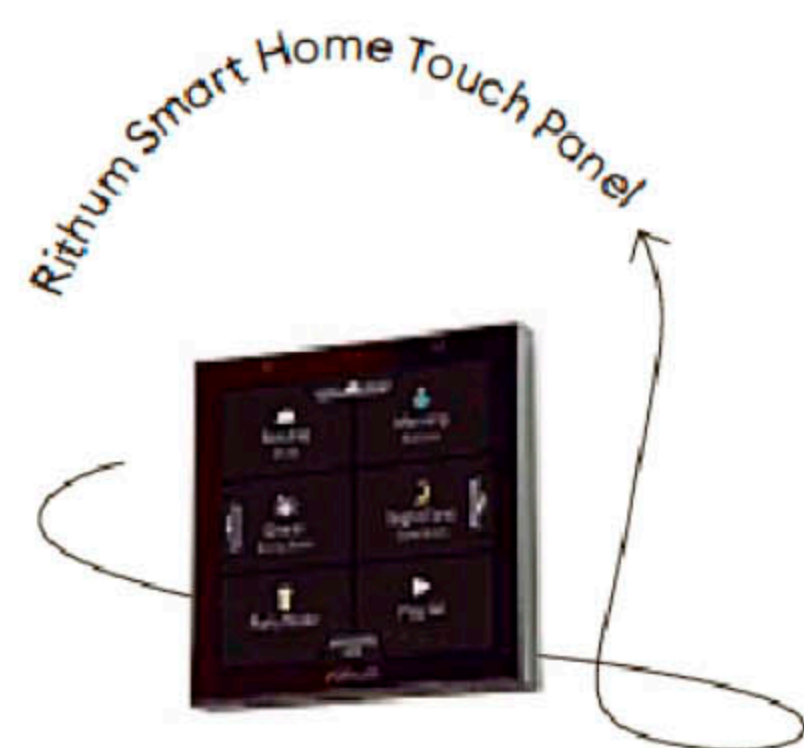
WORDS BY RHODRI MARSDEN



Solodome XL chair

LOST IN MUSIC

Purely for his own delight, Californian audio engineer Kris Cadle installed a speaker system into a classic egg chair. On finding out about this and experiencing it first hand, fellow engineer Josh Chaney was “blown away”. The two have now swung into full production, but the wholly customisable Solodome isn't just a cute retro object: fiendishly clever virtualisation creates stunning spatial audio from stereo source material (either via Bluetooth or a 3.5mm jack) and delivers it through two speakers at ear height and subwoofers in the seat. That sense of immersion is enhanced with noise cancellation (you can barely hear anything going on outside the chair) to give the ultimate space for rediscovering the art of listening. *Solodome XL*, £5,604



Rithum Smart Home Touch Panel

MAKE THE SWITCH

Smart home devices that control light, sound and heat inevitably revolve around an app, or, more commonly, multiple apps on smartphones or virtual assistants. Some may consider this a triumph of technology, but for others it's an impractical chore. This award-winning panel uses the light-switch locations that are already embedded in our domestic lives, and with a range of software plug-ins lets you control a whole range of these devices and systems, including Sonos and Philips Hue out of the box. Suddenly, a visitor to your home can turn up the heating a notch without any password shenanigans. “Prosumers” should be able to install them, otherwise it's a pretty straightforward job for an electrician. *Rithum Smart Home Touch Panel*, £249.99

Ask someone to do a quick pencil sketch of a loudspeaker and they'll invariably draw a rectangular box with a couple of circles on the front. Italian designer Franco Serblin saw things differently. In 1983, he established the audio firm Sonus Faber, driven by the philosophy that speakers should be beautiful to look at and that musical fidelity could naturally flow from that beauty. “He had a great belief that attention should be paid to the way violins and cellos are made,” says Ricardo Franassovici, MD of British distributor Absolute Sounds and one of Serblin's champions. “He went to Cremona to talk to the old luthiers before they disappeared and took their secrets with them.”

That devotion to the work of Italian violin- and lute-makers can be seen in classic Sonus Faber products such as 1993's Guarneri Homage. Serblin sold his company in 2006, continued to design under his own name and died

in 2013. “But rather like Michelangelo, he left a lot of drawings,” says Franassovici. Serblin's son-in-law now runs the Italian workshop that bears his name, developing new products inspired by ideas contained within those sketches.

The latest of those is named after the Goldberg Variations, a suite of pieces for keyboard by JS Bach published in 1741. Its appearance is extraordinary; a uniquely asymmetric cabinet, handmade from solid walnut, with thin cords replacing the speaker grille to evoke Italian stringed instruments of the 17th and 18th centuries.

THEY DEAL HANDSOMELY WITH ANY MUSIC THAT IS THROWN AT THEM

The Vivaldi and Corelli pieces that Franassovici chooses to play by way of a demo feel historically and musically appropriate, but as you'd hope for a product of such pedigree, it deals handsomely with whatever he throws at it – Muddy Waters, obscure 1970s prog-rock outfit Sweet Smoke, “The Look of Love” by Dusty Springfield. “I'm a music person, not a hi-fi person,” he says with a smile.

The Goldberg doesn't boast subwoofers and extended bass; for living-room listening that would be overkill, according to Franassovici. “We want the sound to breathe in the room,” he says. And it does. Deeply and easily. ■HTSI

@rhodri

DETAILS

Franco Serblin *Accordo Goldberg* £8,888 a pair, absolutesounds.com



Left: the two “Phoenix” copper pot stills at Port Ellen.

DRINKING

The ghost with the most

Alice Lascelles gets a first taste of the resurrected Port Ellen whisky distillery

There are few bigger highs for a whisky lover than flying into Islay on a clear day and looking down at the rugged coastline, studded with whitewashed distilleries marked with their names in huge black letters: Ardbeg, Lagavulin, Laphroaig, Port Ellen. It’s a view that can’t

have changed much in nearly 100 years, but from this month it will look a little different – because Port Ellen, which has lain silent since 1983, has now been resurrected.

Port Ellen is perhaps the most fêted of all the “ghost distilleries”, a term used to describe the cohort of producers who closed in the 1980s and 1990s owing to a slump in the

market. Its superannuated (and fast-dwindling) stocks are now much sought after by whisky collectors. The cheapest bottle of Port Ellen today goes for around £850, rising to 10 or even 100 times that for its rarest editions.

Founded on the shores of Islay in 1825, Port Ellen is notable for several industry “firsts”, including being the first Scotch whisky distillery to export to North America. Its peaty profile has fluctuated over the years (a quirk that makes it catnip for collectors), but the signature notes are an ashy smoke and a robust fruitiness that get more complex and interesting as it matures.

Resurrecting the distillery has been a big undertaking. Its owner, Diageo, has invested more than six years and many millions into the rebuild (the only figure Diageo will share is the £35mn combined cost of resurrecting Port Ellen and Brora it announced back in 2017). Its new waterfront home is an ambitious fusion of tradition and innovation: part cutting-edge distillery, part whisky destination that’s open to visitors.

Those paying top-whack for the by-appointment Atlas of Smoke Experience (POA) enter through a hallway lit by the glow of a vast amber Perspex sphere. A sculptural spiral staircase leads up to a lounge with exhilarating views across the Sound of Islay – on a good day you can see all the way to Ireland. (The lounge also overlooks the small coastal road that runs into the town of Port Ellen – the occasional passing lorry serving as a pertinent reminder that this is a working distillery and not just a museum.) In place of the usual copper and tartan knick-knacks are contemporary artworks inspired by the island.

The real focal point, though, is the gleaming still room visible across the courtyard – a cathedral of glass housing four towering copper pot stills. The larger pair – called Phoenix – are exact replicas of the original stills and make Port Ellen in the traditional style; the smaller pair are for making more experimental whisky. Master distiller Alexander McDonald

can tinker with variables including the amount of copper contact, the grain size and type and levels of peat – and tease out the resulting new-make (unaged spirit) in ever-finer increments. “We have put a lot of work into recreating that classic Port Ellen spirit,” says McDonald, “but we also want to do things people haven’t done before. Port Ellen distillers were so innovative in the past – we too want to be trailblazers.”

Scotch whisky must legally be aged for at least three years – so it will be a while before any new Port Ellen is released. To mark the relaunch, though, they’ve delved into remaining old stocks to create Port Ellen Gemini, a limited-edition duo of 44-year-old curiosities which have the distinction of being the oldest whiskies ever released directly from the distillery. Some 274 of these sets have been created and they retail for £45,000 apiece – a tasting of both is also included in the Atlas of Smoke experience.

Very little of the original Port Ellen stock remains on Islay – most of it was sent (like the majority of Islay malt) to age on the Scottish mainland. On the morning I arrive, McDonald has just been reunited with a cask that’s been over the water since 1979. “It’s a lump-in-the-throat moment,” says McDonald. “It’s like the whisky is coming home.”

He hands me a long copper valinch and invites me to draw the very first dram. We taste in silence, our whisky-strong breath making clouds in the chilly warehouse air. As the robust smokiness softens I start to notice notes of pineapple (tropical notes are a hallmark of old Port Ellen), blackcurrant jelly and cloves. The finish has a savoury tang – oyster shell and salty sea air. VIP visitors

“IT WAS SO INNOVATIVE – WE TOO WANT TO BE TRAILBLAZERS”

will also get to sample this “dramming” cask.

The unapologetically luxe nature of the Port Ellen experience has led to accusations of pricing out the grassroots fans. The distillery has pledged to host events for everyone, including the local community, and a free “open house” at least once a month – tickets for this can be booked in advance. The cheapest tour, aside from that, is £200 per person.

It’s a busy time for the town of Port Ellen. Just up the road the vast Portinruan distillery is slowly taking shape. The landmark Islay Hotel is being revamped by its new owner LVMH – it will relaunch in early 2025. The town also has a burgeoning rum scene, spearheaded by the Islay Rum Distillery, which makes excellent white rum, using imported molasses, in the shadow of Port Ellen. Portinruan, too, will be making rum as well as whisky; there are also plans for a rum distillery in Laggan Bay, opposite Islay airport. Things are changing fast – high time you booked that flight.

■ [HTSI portellen.com](https://portellen.com)
 @alicelascelles

FIVE MORE GHOST DISTILLERIES TO KNOW

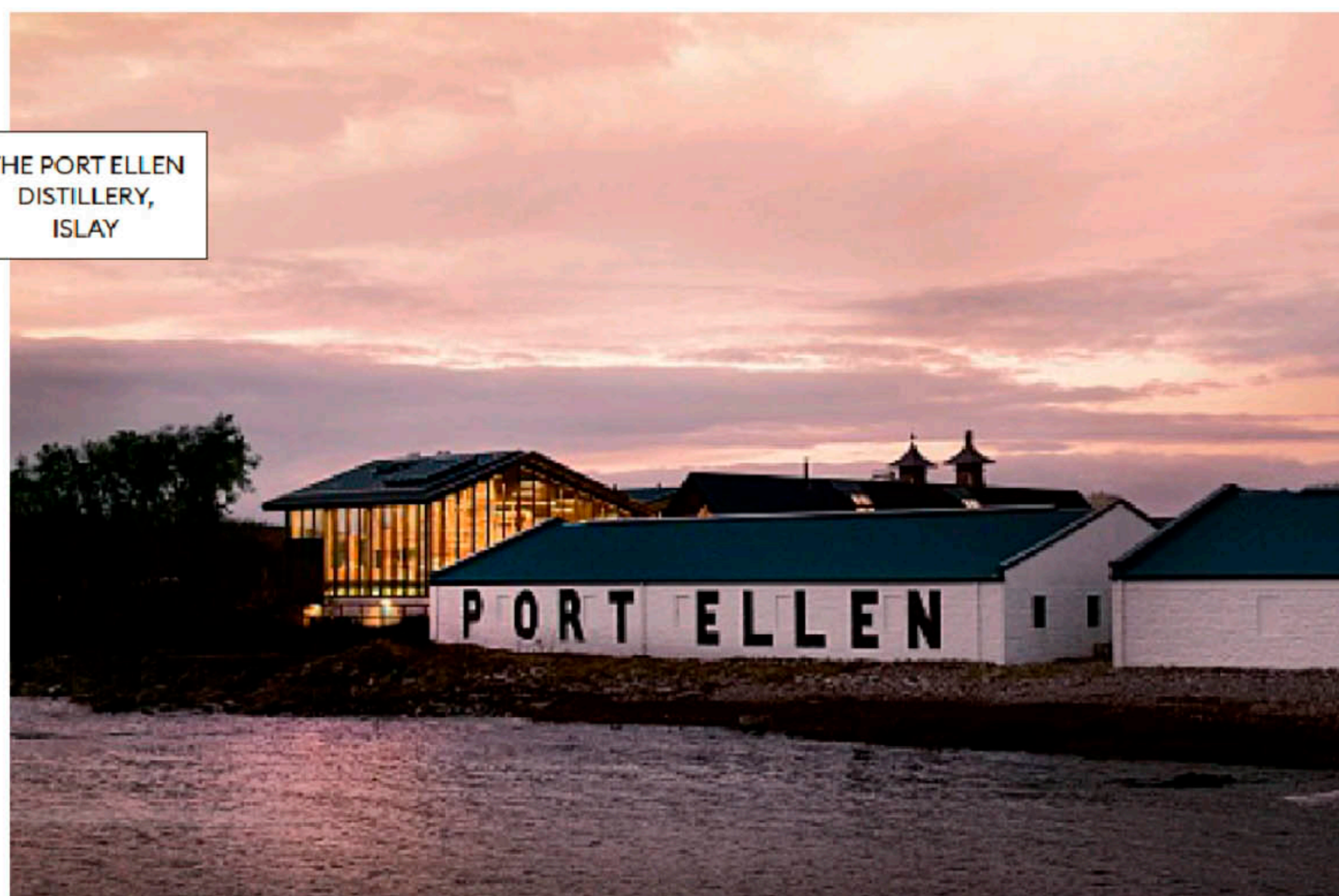
Brora, Scotland
 This storied Highland distillery was revived in 2021 after a silence of 38 years – it’s adored by whisky lovers for its mercurial smoke and fragrant, fruity waxiness. malts.com

Rosebank, Scotland
 The much sought-after malts from this Lowland distillery combine elegance and power. Having been silent since 1993, it restarted production in July last year. rosebank.com

Karuizawa, Japan
 This Japanese distillery’s heavily sherried, broad-shouldered malts are some of the most valuable in the world – it closed in 2001 and has never been revived.

Hanyu, Japan
 This defunct distillery found new fame in the guise of the Ichiro’s Malt Card series – a range of eye-catching malts that never fails to create a frenzy at auction. whiskyauctioneer.com

Littlemill, Scotland
 Dating from 1772, this Lowland distillery was one of the oldest in Scotland – it had highs and lows but was shuttered for good in 1994. littlemilldistillery.com



THE PORT ELLEN DISTILLERY, ISLAY

GOHAR'S
SUITCASE OF
SPRING
VEGETABLES



HOW TO HOST IT

Spring fever

Celebrate the end of winter with a suitcase full of veg, says *Laila Gohar*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ADRIANNA GLAVIANO

Fifteen years ago I walked into an enchanting Brooklyn home that felt more like a beautifully chaotic souk than somebody's house. It was bursting with art, people, colours, food, flowers, children, life... Ramdane Touhami, the proprietor, was sitting around a large, 20-person dining table, yelling a mile a minute over a giant bowl of steaming couscous. Every time he opened his mouth there would be an explosion of ideas and of dreams. He spoke of politics, music, fashion, architecture, anarchy, religion and skiing, sometimes in the same sentence. His wife, Victoire de Taillac, welcomed me with open arms as she chased the youngest of their three children from underneath the dining table. I had never met these people, yet it felt so familiar.

Ramdane, who is Moroccan, and Victoire, who is French, had spent time living in Paris, Tangiers and Tokyo, and had just arrived in New York. I was immediately drawn to their spirit. It was the start of an epic friendship.

No matter how busy Ramdane has been over the past decade, he somehow always has time for me. He'll be closing deals worth millions, buying factories, opening hotels or starting new businesses, but he's also somehow available for a lunch on Tuesday, or he'll call me up to say, "Let's go to Venice tomorrow for a day. I have found this incredible lace you'd love." This generosity of time is exactly what makes him a great host.

I was recently in Paris working for Fashion Week, staying at the couple's home, and thought to break up work a little by throwing a nice Saturday lunch. My way of relaxing from my job of cooking and hosting is to cook and host some more. And who better to do it with than the two best hosts I know?

It's taken me some time and a lot of thought to be able to put my finger on what I think makes someone a good host. It has everything to do with generosity. True generosity is generosity of the spirit. Sharing yourself with others. And a "self" is not something that money can buy. There tends to be a misconception that generosity has to



do with means. This is far from the truth. I've seen people who have nothing but give everything. Hosting is not about how rich you are, or how big your house is, or how accomplished a cook you are. It is about how generous you are able to be with your time.

As it is spring, we decided to host a spring feast featuring spring vegetables: white asparagus, cardoons, beans and green garlic, steamed artichoke with aioli, grated carrots and a big leafy salad. The preparation was simple – the platters were overflowing with vegetables and the glasses with wine. I went straight to the market with my big Rimowa case and packed it with vegetables. It took about two hours for the three of us to get everything in order as Tonton, the family's giant Old English Sheepdog, was dashing in and out of the terracotta-tiled kitchen and around our feet. Then our friends began to pour into the kitchen one by one.

Max Farago, a photographer living in Los Angeles was the first to arrive with the director Arnaud Uyttenhove. Then came the Lebanese restaurateur Kamal Mouzawak with his elegant Afghan Hound (appropriately) named Souk. Then there was a Korean friend I had recently met in Seoul, Mijae Kim, as well as the Mexican creative director Rafael Prieto, and finally another colourful character, Michael Klawans.

Every single person came from a different country. It was a busy week for all, but it felt especially important to set some time aside for each other. There was an air of abundance in the room – yes the food, but more importantly the conversation and attention we were giving one another. One of my earliest memories of Victoire back in Brooklyn was sitting around the table at their home and discussing how fruit in Japan tends to be meticulously and individually packaged and each one needs to be perfect. Victoire said, "I do appreciate the perfection of each strawberry, but my aesthetic is a big bowl of strawberries, not a single strawberry. Some are perfect, some are not, and that's OK." This conversation stuck with me all these years, and I think often about this aesthetic of generosity. ■HTSI

@lailacooks



THE PLATTERS WERE
OVERFLOWING WITH VEGETABLES,
AND THE GLASSES WITH WINE

Above right:
Gohar prepares
the spring feast
with Ramdane
Touhami and
Victoire de
Taillac at their
Paris home.
Below: their
guests sit
down to eat



Above: cooking the
cardoons with the beans



TEA AND
PEAR TART AT
THE END OF
THE MEAL

HOW TO SPEND IT IN...



Left: Rahel Stephanie beside Bubur Ayam H Jewo and (above right) on Pancoran Street. Top: chicken noodles at (above) Kopi Es Tak Kie

cuisine from West Sumatra where lots of dishes – fragrant curries, sweet sauces and fried fish doused in spicy sambal – are served like a mini buffet. People from Padang are known as some of the most entrepreneurial Indonesians, so their eateries are widespread. The restaurant most favoured by Jakartans is probably Pagi Sore, but my friend Sabrina, who is of Padang descent, prefers Nasi Kapau Sutan Mangkuto – it's incredible.

I'm ethnically Batak, which is from North Sumatra. We have lots of native spices – Andaliman has been compared to Sichuan peppercorn because of its numbing effect – and one of my favourite dishes is turmeric-spiced buffalo cheese... kind of like an Indonesian burrata. Toba Tabo Lapo Batak in Setiabudi serves traditional Batak fare in a colourful environment with music, an important element of my ethnicity's culture. A lot of people in Indonesia are like, "Oh yeah, Batak people are the most 'lit' ethnicity." We love a party.

Jakarta can be quite polluted. Pedesaan Farm, an accommodation a couple of hours' drive away, is set in a *desa* (village) and is run by two friends. You can really experience slow village life there, and you're so close to nature; it's attached to an organic farm. There's not much opportunity for relaxation in the city itself, but Kota Tua, meaning "old town", is based on Dutch urban planning and has several blocks separated by canals. There's a lovely square to walk around, and Kopi Es Tak Kie, a favourite spot for coffee, is nearby. My preferred mode of transport is the gojek, a motorbike taxi.

You'll see a lot of loud luxury and exuberant displays of

wealth in Jakarta. I don't subscribe to that. Pasar Santa is an alternative market for thrifting clothes and records. There's a bookstore called Post, which is set up like a living room and has the most beautiful books and zines. Lokaholik, which serves gorgeous cocktails, and Coffeebeerian (coffee and beer) are also close by. I love having a sour beer made from local fruits.

Outside of cooking, I DJ. My sets are often inspired by Indonesia's cuisine and culture – and how both go hand in hand. In a city like Jakarta, there's a fine line between authentic subculture and duplicating subcultures for commercial success: you can tell a lot of places are just trying to be a club in London. Two of my favourite rave collectives are Club Vixxen and Swanky Express. They change venues, but the ones

I've been to have been amazing.

Being a majority Muslim country, Indonesia's drinking culture isn't rife, but people don't need alcohol to have fun; they're still out. As soon as the party stops, the first question will always be: so where are we going for food? ■HTSI

JAKARTA

Rahel Stephanie, founder of supper club Spoons, snacks her way through a "chaotic" city

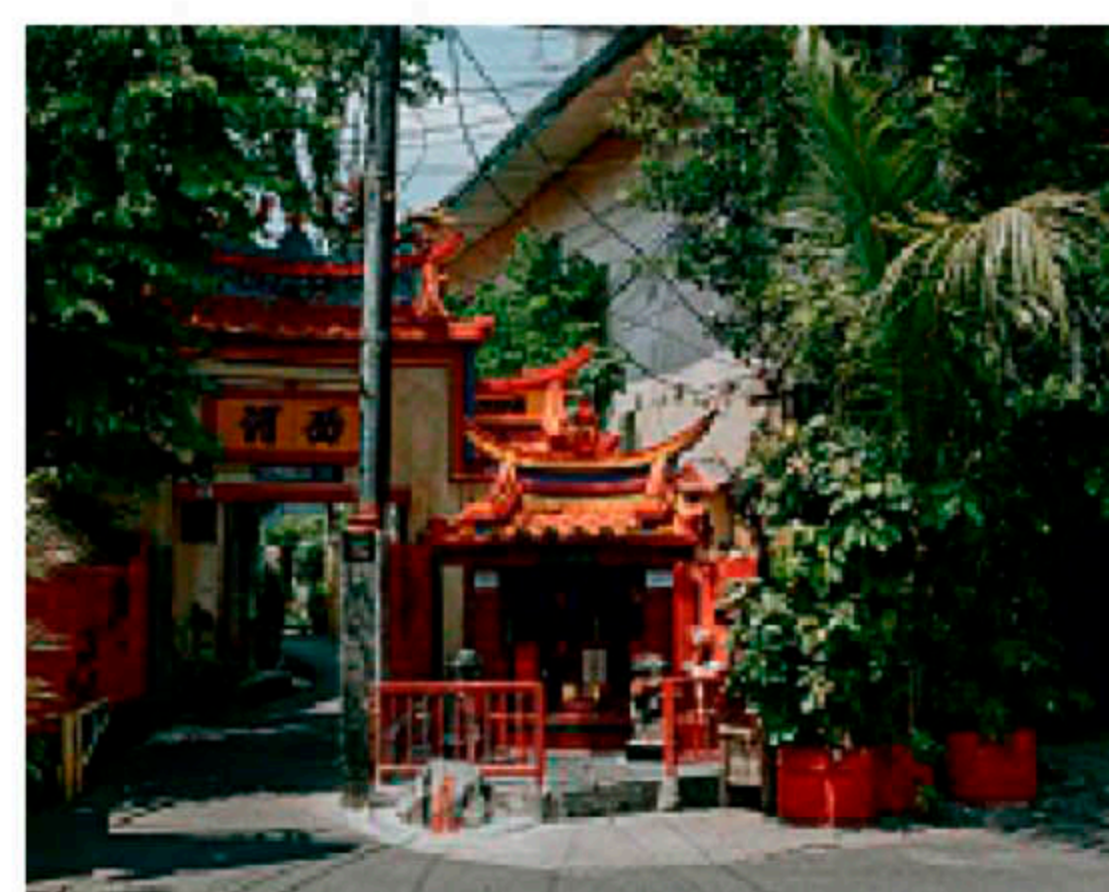
INTERVIEW BY ROSANNA DODDS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MUHAMMAD FADLI

I was born in Jakarta, and by growing up here I say I was raised in chaos: Jakarta is the very definition of chaos as a city. When I moved to London 11 years ago I was completely unfazed by the noise and the hecticness. Friends would ask, "How are you so conditioned to this?" I'd say, "I'm a Jakarta girl."

My mom, sister and I left Jakarta for Singapore when I was nine, but we'd go back every few months. It's a bittersweet relationship: I love Jakarta; I'm proud to come from here; however, when I visit I'm confronted with cultural differences and, as a city, it can feel quite transactional – though I guess that's normal for a capital city. But there are so many other things I love: the food, the art, the music... the food. Everything we do here, all our activities – almost all of it goes hand in hand with a meal or a snack.

In central Jakarta, where my family lives, there's a cart called Bubur Ayam H Jewo that I've been going to for rice porridge since I was a kid. It's an amazing place because it's right outside Cut Meutia Mosque, named after a national heroine who took part in the struggle against the Dutch colony. Every time I return, this is the place I head the morning after my arrival.

It's almost cheating to say that Indonesian food is your favourite cuisine: Indonesia is an expansive country made up of more than 17,000 islands and hundreds of ethnicities. That diversity is naturally reflected in our food. A must-do dining experience is Padang, a regional



Far left: dendeng balado at Pagi Sore. Left: a shrine in Petak Sembilan. Below: Stephanie on a motorbike taxi



EVERYTHING WE DO GOES HAND IN HAND WITH A MEAL OR A SNACK





Sticks 2-seater sofa | Sticks lounge chair
Glaze coffee table, rectangular



STICKS

Design by Cane-line Design

FLAGSHIP PARTNERS

Cobham: Cedar Nursery, KT11 3JX - www.landscaping.co.uk | **Hatch End, Middlesex:** Chaplins Furniture Ltd, HA5 4JS - www.chaplins.co.uk | **Leicestershire:** Birstall Garden & Leisure, LE4 4DX - www.birstall.co.uk
St. Helier, Jersey: Bauformat, JE2 4WS - www.bauformat.co.je

PARTNERS

Amersham: Space Modern, HP6 6JQ - www.spacemodern.co.uk | **Birmingham:** Glassdomain, B18 4HE - www.glassdomain.co.uk | **Bournemouth:** So Furniture, BH4 9AR - www.sofurniture.co.uk | **Cheshire:** Ferrius, SK10 4QF - www.ferrius.co.uk
Chester: Chattels, CH1 3AE - www.chattels-designerfurniture.co.uk | **London:** Garden and Terrace, N1 3JF - www.gardenandterrace.co.uk | **Newcastle upon Tyne:** Barker and Stonehouse, NE1 4PQ - www.barkerandstonehouse.co.uk
Nottingham: The Worm that Turned, NG1 5FD - www.worm.co.uk | **Preston:** Scossa, PR1 4HH - www.scossa.co.uk | **Rowland's Castle:** Encompass, PO9 6DX - www.encompassco.com | **Sheffield:** Ponsford, S2 4HS - www.ponsford.co.uk

United Arab Emirates Flagship Partner

Dubai & Abu Dhabi: SANIPEX GALLERY - www.sanipexgroup.com

Hong Kong Flagship Partner

Hong Kong: Everything Under The Sun - www.everythingunderthesun.com.hk

cane-line.co.uk

Cane-line[®]

LIFE MADE COMFORTABLE

@caneline



louisvuitton.com

LOUIS VUITTON