

GQ

MARCH 2021

The Biden supremacy

Inside the mission to rebuild America

Story by **Michael Wolff**

Joe Biden photographed by **Alex Majoli**

Having a mayor?

The unfulfilled promise of Sadiq Khan

Story by **Martha Gill**

El Bulli's last supper

The disappearance of the world's greatest chef

Story by **Kieran Morris**

The secret life of Sean Connery

(It's even more need-to-know than you think...)

Story by **Sean Macaulay**

The 2021 GQ Car Awards

Great Scott! We gave one to a DeLorean!

Lots of fashion stuff you can't get anywhere else

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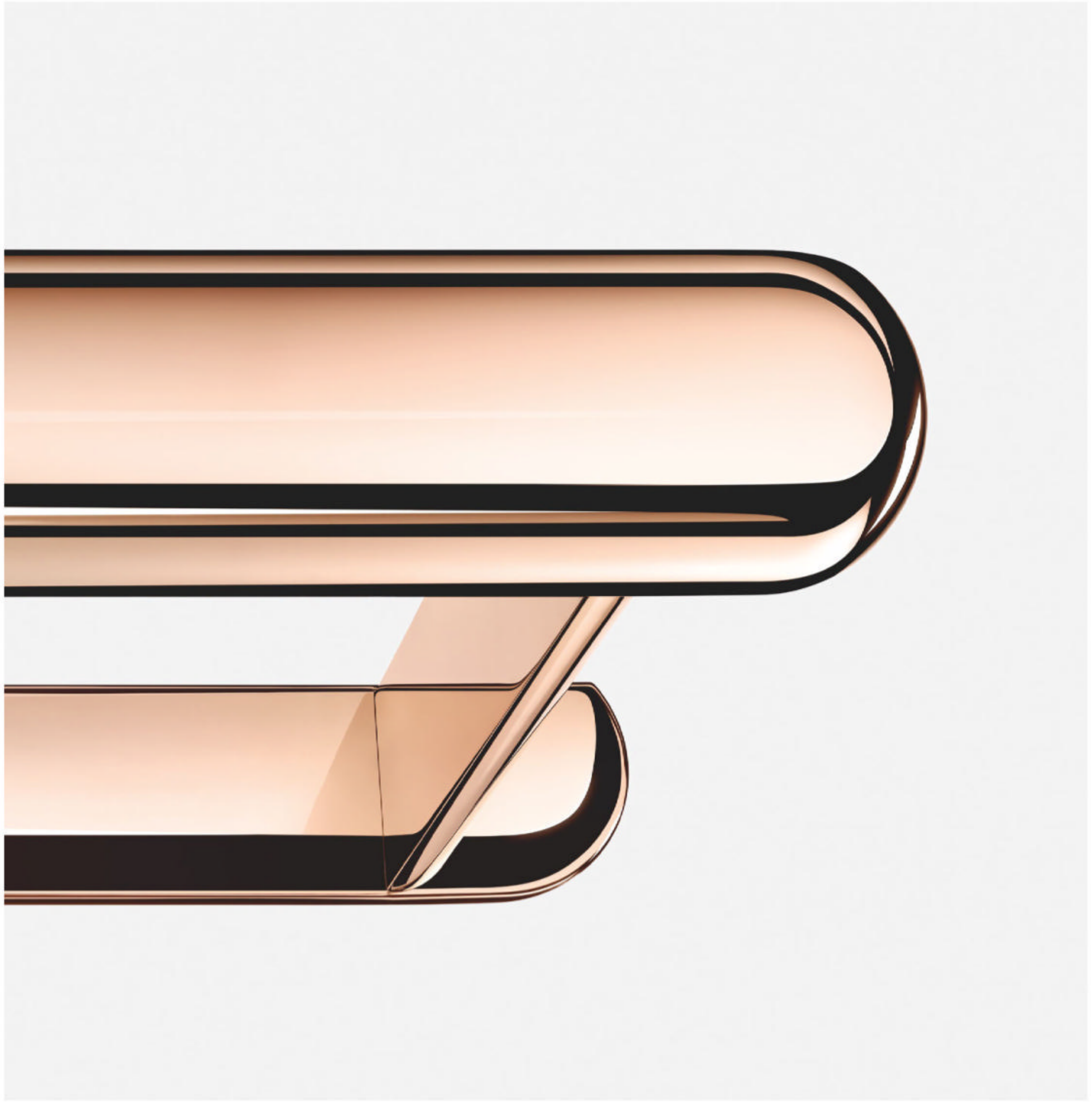
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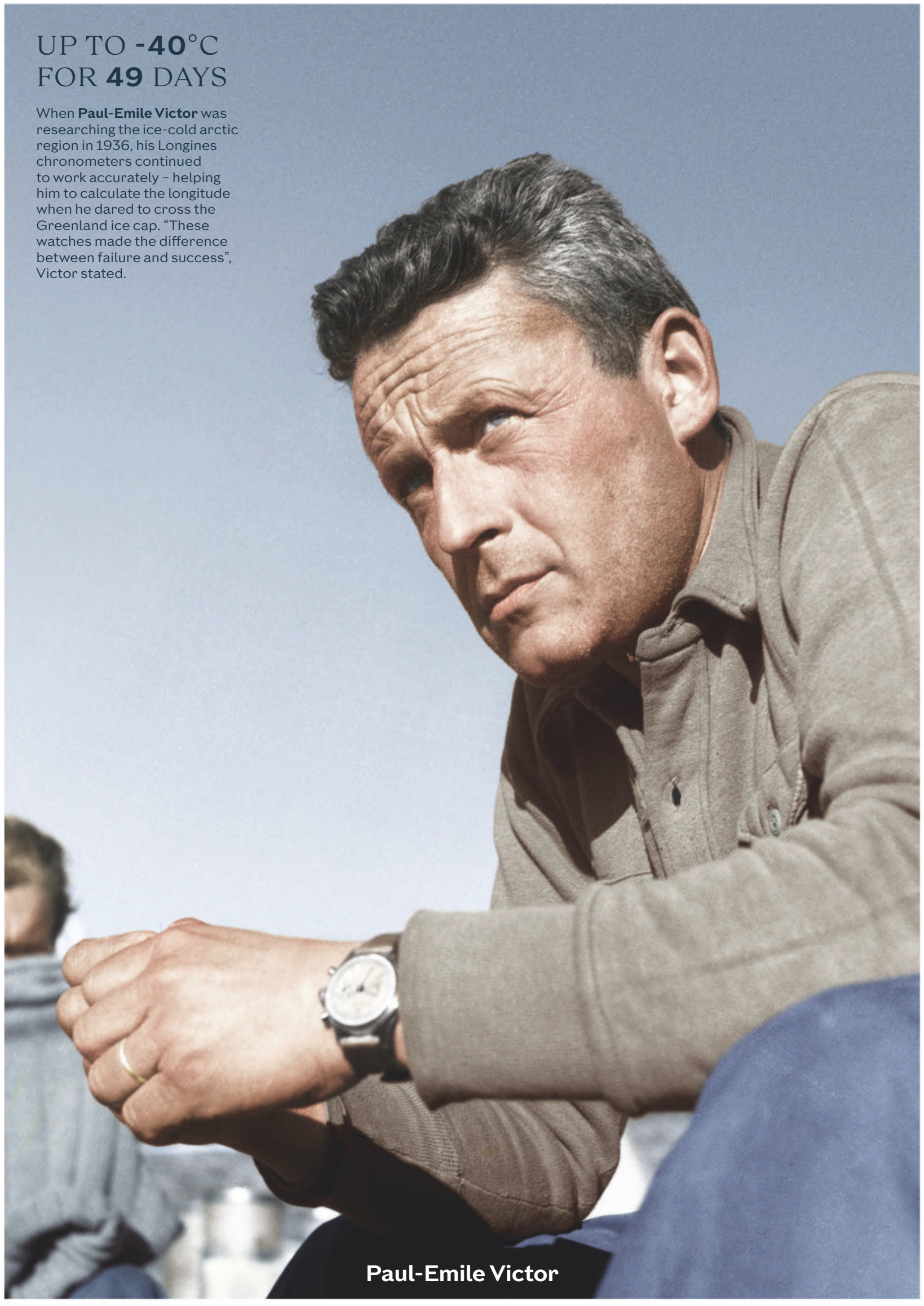
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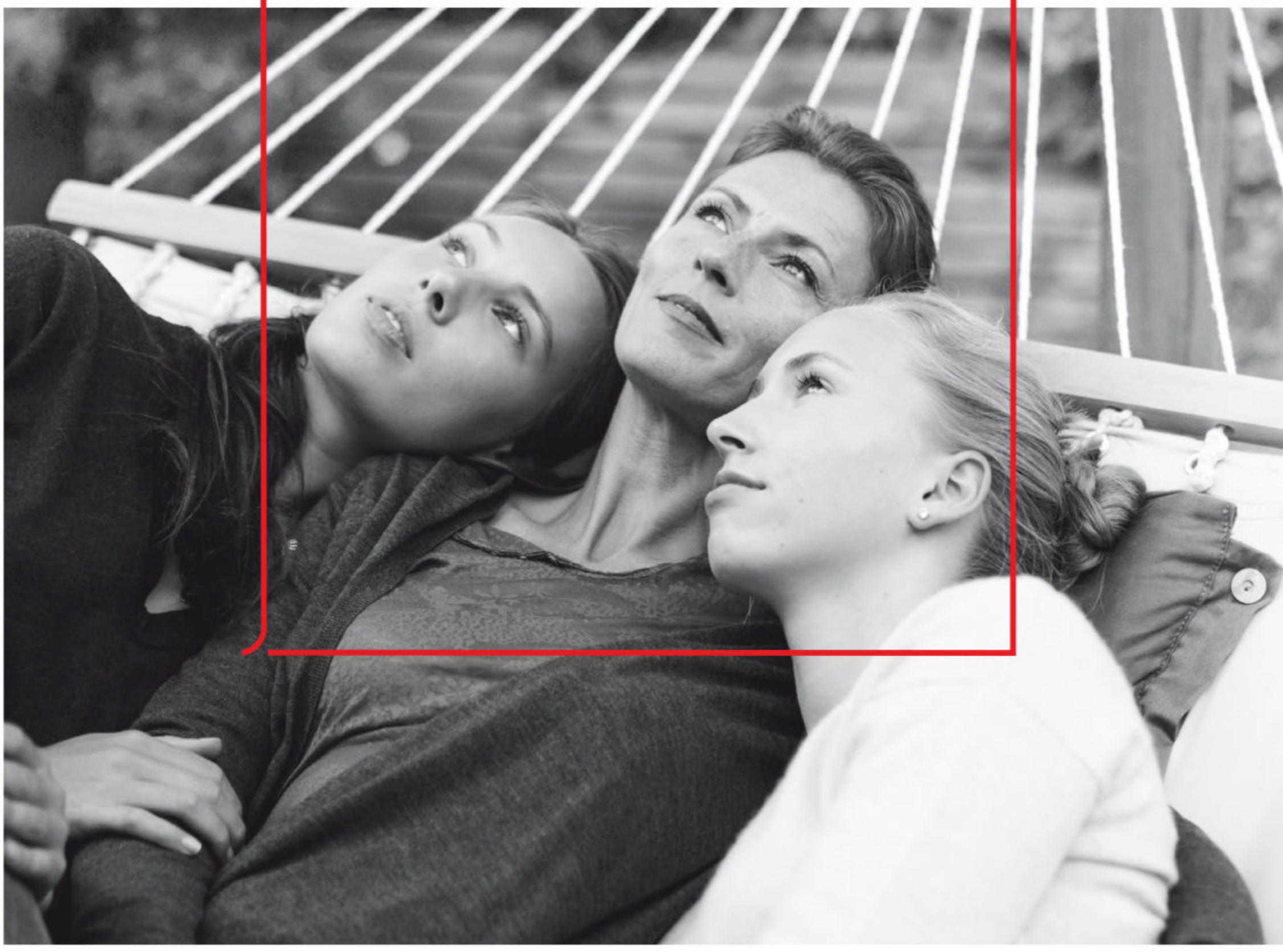


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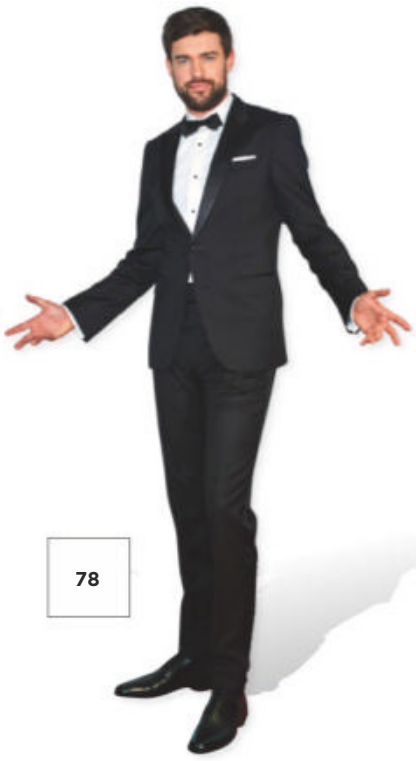
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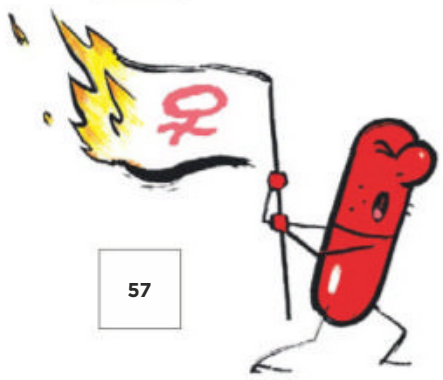
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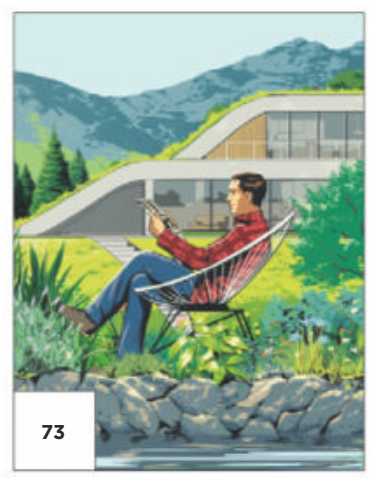
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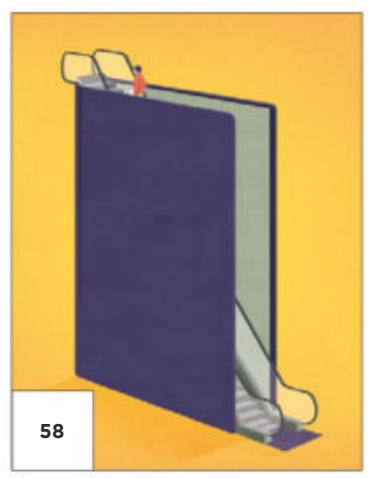


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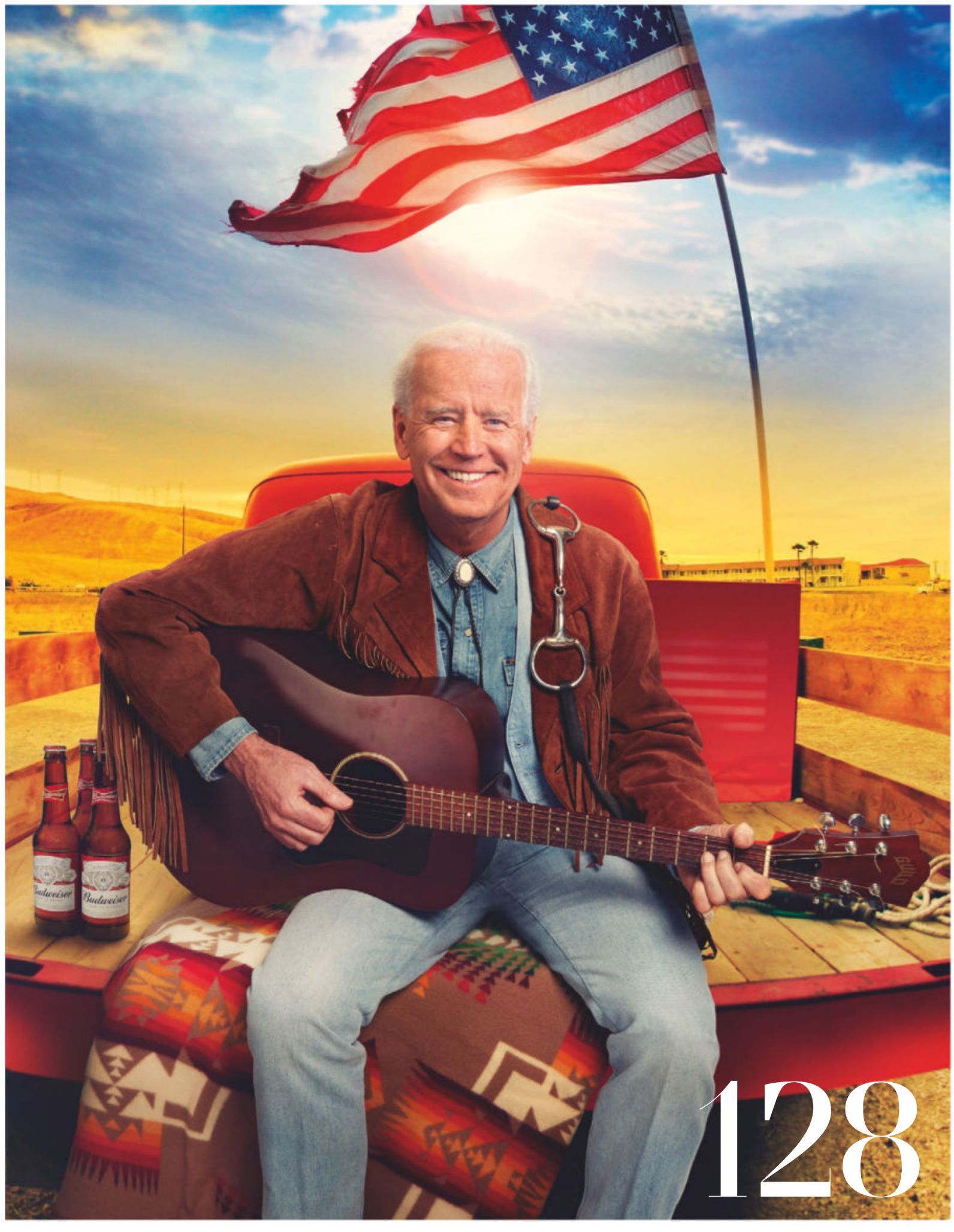
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Michael Wolff on how Joe Biden heals America. Plus, a deep dive into the president's political (and sartorial) history.

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A TERM OF TWO TALES

It began in 2016 as an ambitious bid to sustain London's place as an international keystone, while battling serious challenges faced by many of its citizens. But when they finally return to the polls, it will be under a shadow of debilitating political impasse. Before voters have their say in the postponed mayoral election, we investigate what part circumstance played in the paralysis of City Hall or whether deeper personal failings let down a capital in crisis.

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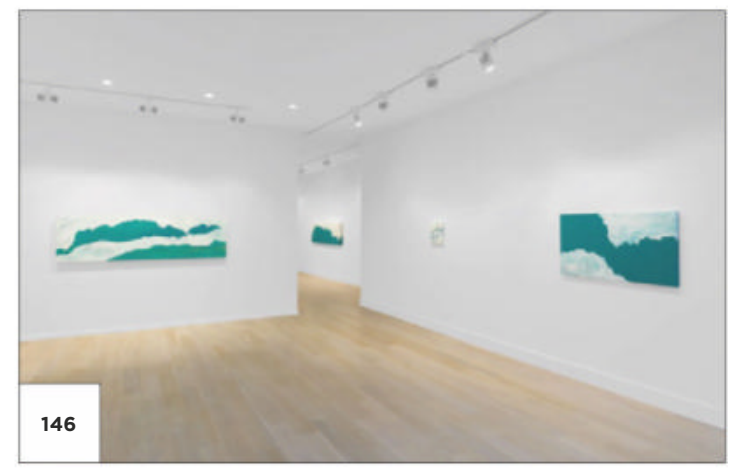
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Editor's Letter



Supporters of Donald Trump invade the US Capitol, Washington, DC, 6 January

One nation, under Joe

Joe Biden certainly understands the nature of the hurdles in front of him. Since his election victory in November, which was officially confirmed the following month, Biden has struck the right note every time his country has needed him to. Not by calling for the defenestration of Trump and not by waving pieces of paper, threatening force or through political rhetoric. No, the 46th president of the United States has worked his way into the news feeds largely by being calm and collected. He, at least, knows the way forward right now involves the most fragile volte-face in US political history.

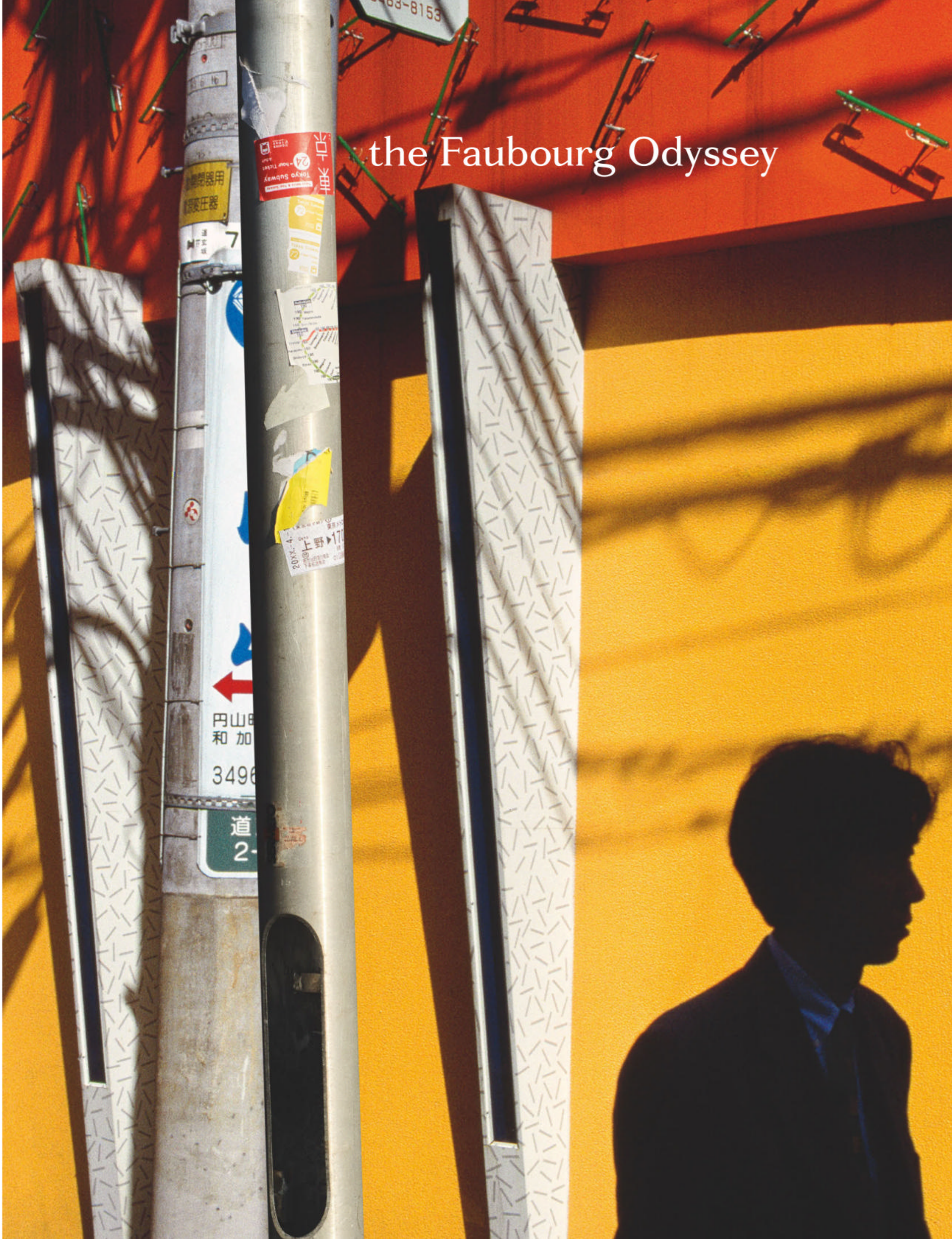
Of course, it wasn't meant to be this way, but then liberal America has been saying this for more than four years now. Belonging to a country that was having its own existential crisis – Brexit, remember that? – looking across the Atlantic actually became something of a respite, light relief from our government's own inability to reach agreement both at home and abroad. We looked at the Trump administration with the widest of eyes, aghast that such a freak show had been allowed to happen. And that was the thing my US friends appeared to say every time I saw them, every time I spoke to them. "How could we have allowed this to happen?" they said, as though saying it out loud made it somehow better.

This self-retribution lasted a good while, until my friends started drawing up lists of the young and the mighty who were going to take Trump on at the next election and wipe the floor with him, who were going to present such powerful agendas that there would be no way anyone from a red state (which Democrats >>

Biden knows the way forward involves the most fragile volte-face in US political history

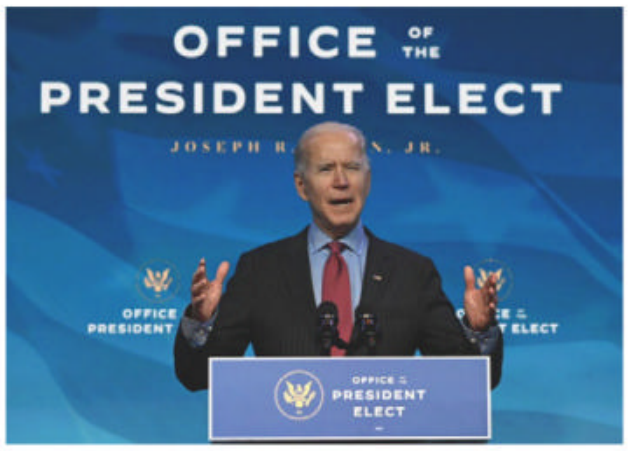
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Joe Biden speaks after the US Capitol riot, 8 January

>> persist in calling flyover states) would be able to resist. The future was coming, I kept being told, and that future was to come in the shape of (deep breath) Pete Buttigieg, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Kamala Harris, Michael Bloomberg, etc... Every week it seemed there was another left-field, rich, "previously unheralded" potential candidate, one who was apparently gifted with such surface smarts and gravitas that the American public couldn't fail to elect them.

Didn't happen.

Of course, Biden wasn't the sexy candidate, but he was experienced

What we ended up with was the old, moderate guy and while many US Democrats I know are embarrassed about having such an unremarkable politician as their president, the relief that they are no longer steered by an irrational narcissist kind of puts their disappointment into sharp contrast. "It's OK. We'll take the old guy over the nutjob."

From the very start of the primaries, many Democrats started prioritising electability over personality and while there was a massive surge from voters on the left, advocating the most unlikely party candidates, there was always a quiet, almost hushed understanding that Sleepy Joe might win out. Of course, he wasn't the sexy candidate, but he was well-known and generally perceived as a moderate, not to mention experienced. Initially it was difficult to evaluate the extent of his popularity and then, of course, there was the distinct possibility that the Democrats were simply scaring themselves into voting for the "known", by getting behind a white, moderate male in response to Hillary Clinton's embarrassing loss back in 2016.

Of course, although more moderate presidential candidates generally tend to do better in US elections, the ascendency of Trump made forecasters think those days were perhaps behind us, but the support of Biden has perhaps shown everyone there were enough voters frightened by Trump's puerile belligerence to embrace a quiet American.

What Biden semaphored was not just his electability, but also his deep understanding of the rules and a belief in the Constitution. The new president has a real reverence for US democratic institutions, not treating them as playthings in the seemingly arbitrary way Trump did.

So far, there hasn't been a big Biden moment. Trump denied him his moment when he won the election – primarily due to his refusal to admit defeat – but perhaps the one great thing we can say about Biden is that he doesn't live for big moments. He's had enough of those in his life, both good and bad, and his ambition now is to simply sit down and steer his country back to the place it was when his predecessor got his sweaty, greedy little hands on it.

What he does next is of colossal importance but, as Michael Wolff explores in his piece on Biden in this issue, his decisions will not be based on playing to the gallery. "Among the many perplexing things about the new political world for some former Trump White House staffers is that Joe Biden has largely picked noncontroversial people to fill the places in his administration," writes Wolff. "It is not only that this gives the Trumpers few issues to get their teeth into – that is, in right-wing parlance, to weaponise the Biden team – but it seems mystifying to them that there might be a political strategy and world view that does not court and thrive on conflict. What, after all, is the point of politics?"

Over the next few months, we shall all find out. GQ





Covers photographed by **Alex Majoli and Christopher Anderson**



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Dylan Jones, Editor

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Find a new selection of clothes to fall in love with this year from the best menswear items of the week.

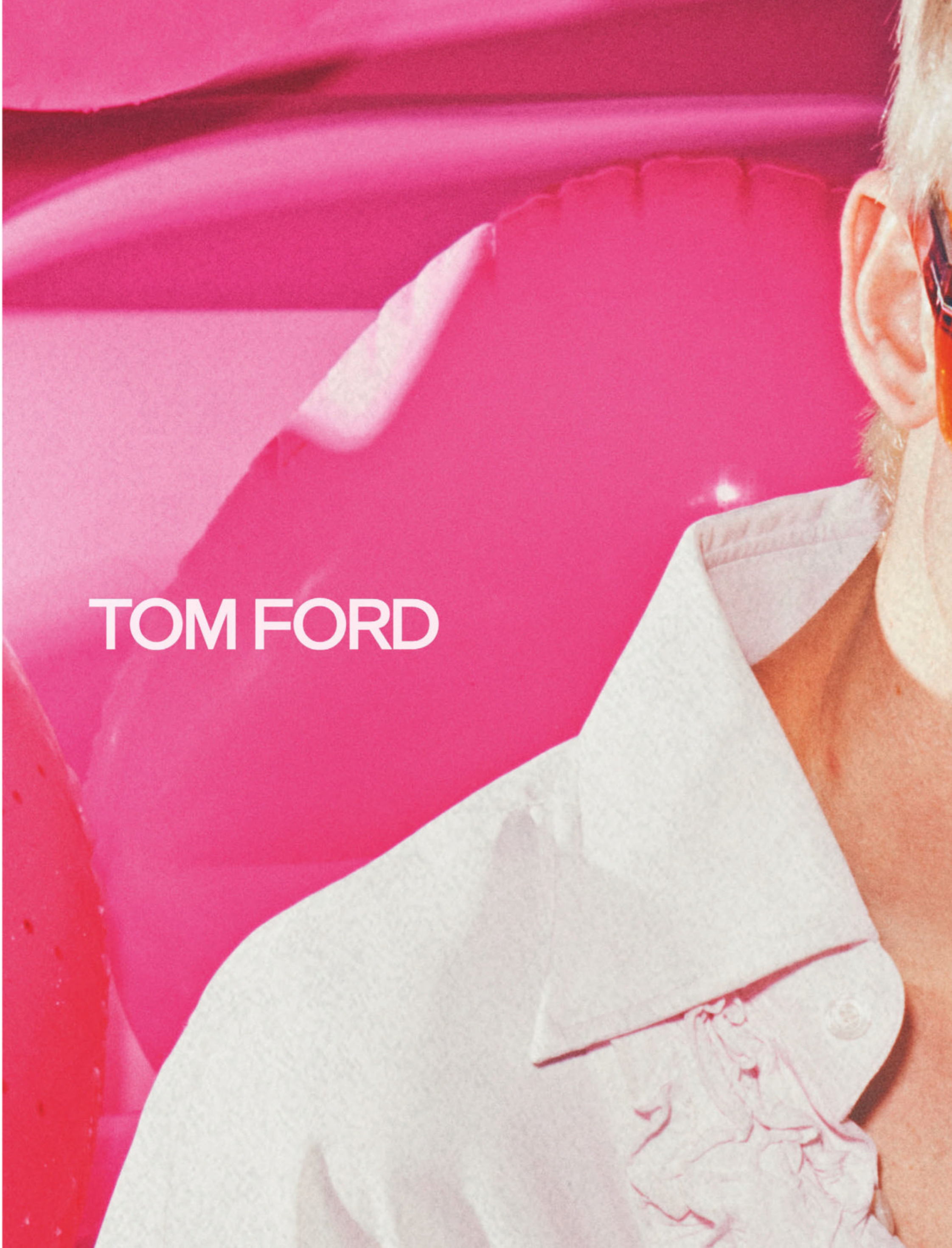
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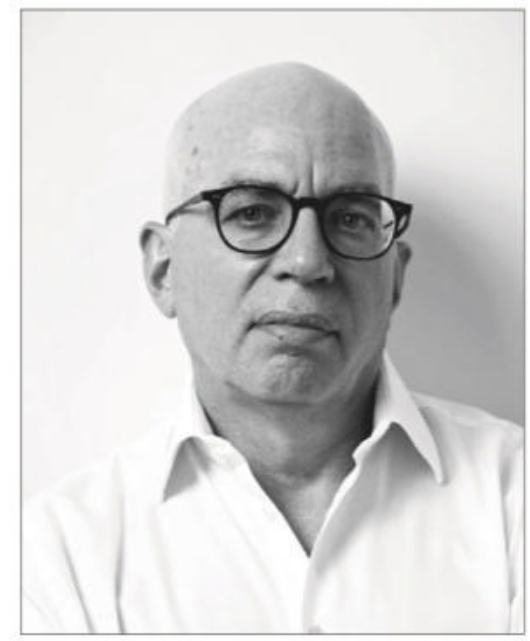
Martha Gill

As City Hall "downsizes", *GQ* contributor and former lobby journalist Martha Gill reported on the sense of decline and atrophy that has blighted the last two years of Sadiq Khan's first term as London mayor. "While researching this piece, two things struck me," says Gill. "As mayor, Khan has been uniquely unlucky. And he has never failed to make his bad luck worse."



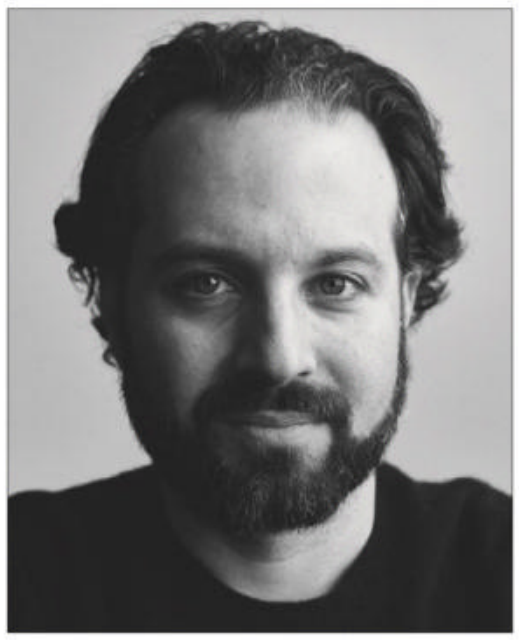
Simon Webb

Photographer Simon Webb shot and created composites of this month's cover star, imagining the 46th US president, Joe Biden, in various guises as an American icon. "I love all things Americana, so it was an absolute joy to bring these ideas to life," says Webb. "I hope they provoke a little laughter and happiness at a time when it's very much needed."



Michael Wolff

Veteran political commentator, *GQ* contributor and sometime Donald Trump nemesis Michael Wolff turned his attention to cover star and president Joe Biden for this issue. Life in the US should be at least slightly calmer now Trump and his disruptive circus have quit Washington, predicts Wolff: "I am looking forward, in the Biden era, to a little sleep."



Howie Kahn

As the world locked down last year, US art galleries had to find a new way to reach their clientele as the rich fled New York City. The answer, as Howie Kahn writes, was to open branches in the Hamptons. "Every business has done what it must to endure during Covid-19," says Kahn. "I only wish the public could take home what these galleries sell: art that calms an anxious, fearful mind."



Josephine Judd

Junior Digital Picture Editor Josephine Judd joined the *GQ* team just in time for one of the biggest events of the year: the Men Of The Year Awards. "The event premiered in my second week working from home," says Judd. "Watching the awards, I had an overwhelming sense of pride to be part of a team championing diversity and honouring true heroes such as Marcus Rashford and Captain Tom."



Kieran Morris

After closing El Bulli in 2011, pioneering Spanish chef Ferran Adrià announced a new project: writing an encyclopaedic compilation and search engine for all food, ever. Writer Kieran Morris met Adrià to chart this Sisyphean task. "Ferran sent me homework to do before I met him," says Morris, "but by the end of the day I could see why he thought I needed a head start on all the details." GQ

Photograph **Dan Martensen**

Are you ready for the new Roaring Twenties?

After close encounters with devastation, society does not just recover – it thrives. And today, once lockdowns are finally behind us, we can look ahead to technological advances, spontaneous travel, innovative hospitality and re-energised retail on a planet ready, ripe and raring for prosperity

Story by **Teo van den Broeke**

Periods of strife invariably spawn moments of prosperity. In response to the horrors of the Great War, for instance, the bright young things of the Western hemisphere partied relentlessly, listening to jazz, dressing as flappers, drinking Gin Rickeys, all the while investing in status automobiles and electric Tiffany lamps. The period became known, of course, as the Roaring Twenties. The US became the planet's greatest economic power and its allies, we Britons included, benefited wildly from its success.

A similar story unfolded after the Second World War. The 1950s was a decade so prosperous that the world and his wife started procreating on a scale never before seen in modern times: an over-sexed two-fingers-up to the miseries precipitated by the biggest and deadliest conflict in recorded human history.

Here's a bullish prediction: this year – when the current restrictions are out of the way – we will see the same pattern play out again. With the rollout of the Covid-19 vaccine this spring, the world is about to change. We're going to party like it's 1999 (or should that by 1929?). It's going to be a Gatsby-esque lockdown bounce-back, with hedonism on an unprecedented level. Because, while we are not coming to the end of a conflict in the traditional sense, the global pandemic has created the biggest disruption of everyday life since wartime. What we have all experienced in the past year will be remembered as one of the bleakest periods in multiple generations.

Indeed, at the end of 2020, the UK was experiencing the most severe recession since the economic downturn of 1709. According to market research firm GFK, consumer confidence dipped to minus 33 in November (the lowest reading since May), while the Office For National Statistics (ONS) reported that unemployment rose to 4.8 per cent between July and September and household spending fell by a record-breaking 23.6 per cent in Q2. The increasing number of experts suggesting that we might never get a vaccine ("We might just have to live with the virus") sent our collective psyche into a downward spiral.

It's easy to forget how fast that changed. In November, we had our first glimmers of hope with the announcement that Pfizer and BioNTech's vaccine had achieved 90 percent efficacy. Further vaccine success stories followed, the UK secured 357 million doses and the stock market took notice. Now, despite the unexpected third lockdown, the prospect of a new Roaring Twenties seems less like a pipe dream and more like a pipe bomb: fuse lit, explosion imminent.

That rapid shift in the national mood is crucial to understanding why we are going to bounce back so hard. There aren't deep-rooted problems in the economy that have to be slowly and carefully fixed – the downturn was entirely driven by the virus, a problem that an effective vaccine directly and quickly solves. Of course, it will take time for those who have unfortunately lost work to find new jobs. Yet this recession has been highly atypical in that, despite the economy shrinking, average household savings have been increasing: from April to June 2020 the rate saw the biggest spike since records began, according to the ONS. A portion of those lucky enough to have continued working were able to put money away during all three lockdowns (a Bank Of England survey revealed 28 per cent of British households had accumulated savings as a result of the pandemic, while the Office For Budget Responsibility published a forecast of a second peak in the household saving ratio in late 2020 and early 2021) and are now sitting on cash.

The reality, however, is that boom times don't just happen because economists and statisticians say they're going to. The flappers and the rockers and the baby boomers didn't start flapping and swivelling and bonking just because the Bank Of England and the ONS gave them the thumbs-up to do so. These things happen because people, fundamentally, want to have a good time when they can. We have all spent the past year



itching to go out and have fun and, boy, are we going to make up for it.

One industry that looks set to benefit from our collective craving for post-pandemic freedom is the automotive industry. Car sales took a significant knock during the pandemic, with management consulting company McKinsey suggesting that the top 20 OEMs in the global auto sector saw profits decline by as much as $100 billion in 2020. But just as the boom of the 1920s saw an uptick in sales of Ford Model Ts, some of the industry's leading figures are predicting a similarly prosperous second half of 2021. What's more, the pandemic may have precipitated some positive change, with the ever-expanding electric and hybrid arenas set to experience the most significant levels of growth.

"We have a strong order bank going into [this] year," Kristian Elvefors, managing director of Volvo Cars UK, explains. "In particular, we're seeing a marked increase in orders for our electrified cars." Jonathan Goodman, the COO of electric car manufacturer Polestar, agrees: "With electric vehicle adoption accelerating, the government investing in infrastructure and digital commerce coming to the fore, Polestar is confident about good levels of growth in the UK in 2021. For the industry as a whole, this year will see a return to growth following the huge impact of Covid-19 on the 2020 market."

And then, of course, there's the travel sector. According to figures released by the ONS towards the end of last year, the global travel industry was harder hit by the pandemic than any other, with agents and operators reporting a 90 per cent decrease in profitability since February 2020. But with international travel corridors reopening and consumer confidence increasing, a rapid resurgence in long-haul holidaying is looking likely, says Geoffrey Kent, founder of luxury travel company Abercrombie & Kent. "This past year has left our guests with a deep longing to explore – whether that be a completely new culture or marvelling at exotic wildlife – as well as a desire to connect with like-minded people," explains Kent. "With the availability of a vaccine, we're hearing from travel advisors that their clients are ready to return to travel and they want to book now to ensure availability, as well as have something to look forward to."

It's a sentiment mirrored by Roland Fasel, COO of the luxury hotel group Aman Resorts, which has properties on five of the seven continents, from the mountains of Bhutan to the deserts of Utah. "We are currently seeing an upturn in bookings from our hotel's local markets, with domestic travel resuming first in many of our destinations as international restrictions remain in place," Fasel tells me. "We currently have seven properties under construction and our strategy with all will remain a continued focus on offering access to earth's most remote and beautiful destinations in unparalleled and undisturbed luxury. Aman New York's highly anticipated opening is just months away."

Aman New York is set to open its doors this spring; (opposite) Roaring Twenties opulence and hedonism, as captured in the 1924 film Three Weeks



Photograph Getty Images

We have all spent the past year itching to go out and, boy, are we going to make up for it

And though a resumption of international travel will form a significant step in our global economic recovery, a more localised return to the nightclubs, restaurants, bars and pubs which punctuate our towns and cities is equally vital. Since the first lockdown, 660,000 jobs have been lost in the hospitality sector. Indeed, at the time of writing, a poll has revealed that 72 per cent of Britain's restaurants and pubs fear they will become financially unviable and will be forced to closed permanently. It is an obligation, therefore – quite seriously, it is a civic duty – for anyone with money to get out and start spending like there's no tomorrow on all those platters of pici cacio e pepe and long, tall glasses of barolo that we all took for granted so readily pre-Covid. To let the very coat hooks that hold up the fabric of our society – the dive bars and olde worlde taverns, the hipster cafés and vegan eateries that have hosted so many birthdays, engagements, weddings and wakes – fall off the wall would be nothing short of a national travesty.

'Last year was difficult, but it gave us the opportunity to focus on making things better'

No one appreciates the urgency better than Nick Jones, founder and CEO of Soho House, who was forced to close parts of every one of his 27 international properties throughout 2020. "I'm feeling positive," Jones tells me. "I think people will go out again to eat, drink and see each other like they were before. Perhaps we will see a return to the Roaring Twenties. Twenty twenty was difficult, but it gave us the opportunity to really focus on making things better for members – improving their time in the Houses and on the Soho House app – so we're ready for a busy year ahead." So busy, in fact, that the company is forging on with no fewer than five House openings in 2021: one in Tel Aviv, one in Rome, one in Paris, one in Austin, Texas, and one on the Caribbean island of Canouan.

Of course, it's not just the travel and hospitality industries that are in desperate need of the forthcoming economic boost. The dual lockdowns sliced through the jugular of the previously booming fashion sector and all at once paralysed big businesses (Burberry reported a pre-tax profits fall of 62 per cent in the first half of 2020) and placed the futures of many young creatives – brilliant, bright designers such as Holly Fulton, Bethany Williams and Phoebe English, who put all their energies into providing PPE to frontline workers at the start of the first lockdown – on a knife's edge.

But that was then: a time when none of us needed to wear anything but sweatpants, dressing gowns and furry slippers. This is (almost) now: a moment in history when it's absolutely vital to get dressed up, to hit the town and to start showing off with all the vanity and vigour we excelled at pre-pandemic. It's a point on which Damien Paul, the head of menswear at luxury retailer Matches Fashion, agrees. "I expect we will see our customer looking to find joy in fashion with an explosion of colour in his wardrobe [this year]," Paul says. "Focusing on more tactile fabrications feeds into this. This is clothing to make you smile and to make you enjoy the craftsmanship that goes into creating it."

So once the current lockdown is through, get that haircut, buy those stupidly expensive shoes and prepare yourself for a year of going hard and rarely going home. We'll see you out there. GQ



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+
When Paul Newman marched on DC in 1963 he made tinted shades his big style flex (with neither a red hat nor buffalo horn in sight). Be more Paul in 2021 – p.59

This month: Hyperpop is the vital young music scene Soundcloud was built for p.65
Netflix's half-billion-dollar bad joke p.66 Why a **Trumpist party** would shatter Republicanism p.68

GQ GENTLEMEN'S QUARTERLY

Attack the week Hype

Featuring cover stars from Michaela Coel to Robbie Williams, GQ Hype is your weekly digital fix of fashion, politics, sport, entertainment, health and travel





























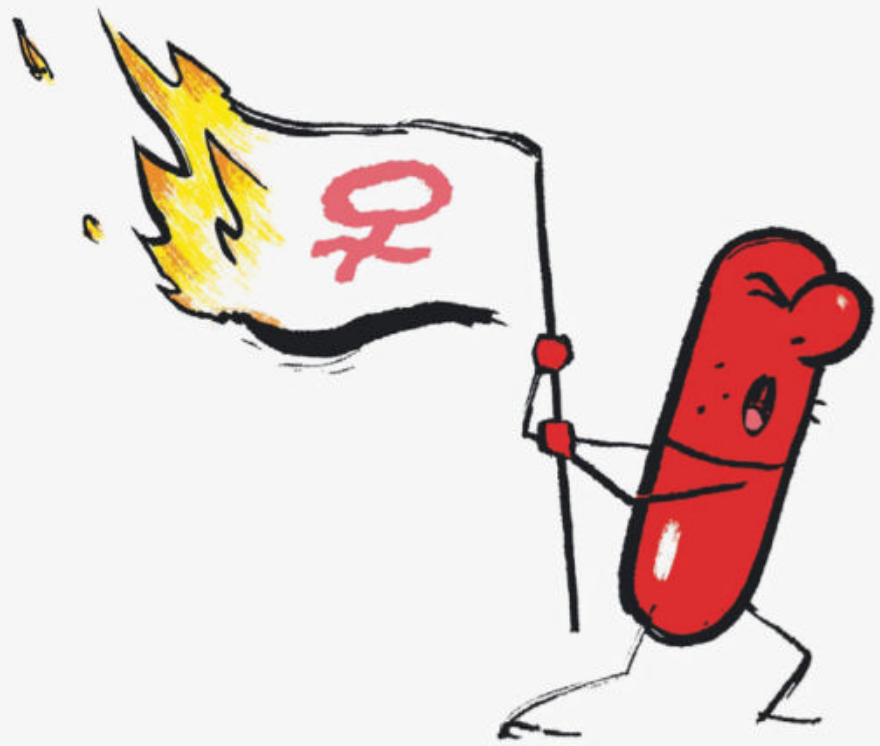


Cover drops at 7am every Monday at GQ.co.uk and @BritishGQ

The male separatists of the ‘Men Going Their Own Way’ movement are the Taliban of the manosphere

Story by **Tony Parsons**

But don’t be complacent: their virulent misogyny is going mainstream



Out on the wilder shores of the manosphere, they talk constantly about the red pill and the blue pill.

Derived from a scene in *The Matrix*, taking the blue pill lets you live your life in blissful ignorance of the monstrous reality of the wicked world, while necking the red pill opens your eyes to reveal the awful truth. Dream world or real world: it’s your choice. As rebel leader Morpheus (Laurence Fishburne) explained it to Neo (Keanu Reeves) in 1999, “You take the blue pill, the story ends, you wake up in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe. You take the red pill, you stay in Wonderland and I show you how deep the rabbit hole goes.”

But out in the manosphere – far too often a digital sewer for 50,000 shades of misogyny – “taking the red pill” means that a guy has opened his eyes to the “bitter truth” about women. Namely: women are not simply pieces of meat; women are pieces of poisoned meat and they will lie about you, end your career, suck your bank account dry, wreck your life and send you to a cell with some other blameless soul that got on the wrong side of the sisters, like that nice Harvey Weinstein. “The red pill represents a new phase in online misogyny,” wrote Donna Zuckerberg, author of *Not All Dead White Men*. Red-pill believers, says Zuckerberg, “not only mock and belittle women; they also believe that in our society men are oppressed by women”.

From the incels (involuntary celibates) to the PUAs (pick-up artists), nobody on the manosphere is quite as obsessed with the red-pill concept as the boys in MGTOW (Men Going Their Own Way), who aspire to live their lives without contact with women. The MGTOW (pronounced “mig-tau”) who achieve total enlightenment are said to be “going monk”, which does what it says on the tin. Going monk is the black belt in giving up women.

Some MGTOW have platonic relationships with women, while others keep transactions strictly commercial, with sex workers. But what you notice about all of them is that they never stop talking about women. Men sharing their lives with girlfriends, wives and daughters never devote this much time to thinking, talking and obsessing about women. At first glance, the official Men Going Their Own Way website (*mgtow.com*) looks like a cross between a trailer for an action movie and a cry for help. “Ejecting silly preconceptions and cultural definitions of what a man is,” promises the MGTOW mission statement, “refusing to bow, serve and kneel for the opportunity to be treated like a disposable utility.” Fair enough. And for a moment you can imagine a digital universe where men are uplifted by sharing the secrets of their soul. But it took, oh, about 90 seconds for MGTOW to turn this brother’s stomach. “Put a bitch in her place?” asks one forum. “Unleash the beef.”

In this culture of dread between the sexes, we all lose



A few sad, embittered losers in a dusty nook of the internet? If only! One MGTOW vlogger has had more than 90 million views for his YouTube videos – including “Criticise Her & She Will Destroy Your Career” – while that glossy MGTOW website has knocking on for 800,000 replies to more than 50,000 anti-women topics. That’s a lot of misogynistic madcaps. “MGTOW resemble men’s rights activists (MRAs) more than incels and PUAs,” wrote Laura Bates, author of *Men Who Hate Women*. “Both groups believe that women pose an immediate threat to all men. MRAs believe that women are so unfaithful and untruthful that they often force men to raise other men’s children, thus financially ‘cuckolding’ them. MGTOW believe that women are extremely likely to make false accusations of sexual and domestic violence, in order to damage men socially, steal their money or even have them jailed.” But the MGTOW – and the men who lap up their vicious woman-hating crap – are more than another catchy manosphere acronym. They tap into a genuine terror of men who have spent their formative years watching women through the distorting mirror of pornography, who have consumed far too much music where women are routinely referred to as “bitches” and who, crucially, see in Me Too not a brave new world where sexual bullies finally get the punishment they deserve, but a world where the woman is always believed.

Porn on tap, bitch-slapping beats and a virulent Me Too backlash: did we really imagine men would be improved by all that?

The sad sacks of MGTOW, presenting their fear and loathing of women as a political manifesto, are only the tip of a toxic iceberg. Men – millions of men – now have a general anxiety about women that simply did not exist as recently as the end of the last century. That anxiety is widespread, mainstream and real.

Former US vice president Mike Pence proclaimed that he never dines alone with a woman who is not his wife, while an orthopaedic surgeon in Chicago told the *New York Times* that he was never alone with a female colleague. “My livelihood is on the line,” he said. “If someone in your hospital says you had inappropriate contact with this woman, you get suspended for an investigation and your life is over.”

Men who have never heard of MGTOW know the feeling. In a post-Me Too survey in the US, 27 per cent of men polled said that they now avoided one-to-one meetings with women. And in this culture of dread between the genders, we all lose. Rachel Sturm, a professor at Wright State university who worked on the research, said, “When men say, ‘I’m not going to hire you. I’m not going to send you travelling. I’m going to exclude you from outings,’ those are steps back.”

The MGTOW are sorry excuses for men, but what they represent is a profound shift in the way men and women relate. We are increasingly afraid to work with each other, to flirt with each other, to love each other. We are becoming terrified of what, not so very long ago, was the most natural thing in the world.

Illustrations **Nishant Choksi**

Why 'smart thinking' books create idiots

Want a short-cut to intellectual clout in 150 pages? Spoiler alert: there isn't one Story by **Sam Leith**

One of the most bankable genres in publishing these days is what's called "smart thinking". In a dumbed-down world, what could be more attractive? Yet, whenever I hear someone pitching a "smart thinking" book I'm reminded of that pert saying of Mrs Thatcher: "If you have to tell someone you're a lady, you're not."

The original "smart thinking" books started as an amalgam of business-motivational stuff, self-help and pop sociology. Their basic gimmick was, in the manner of Malcolm Gladwell, to take one big idea and arrange the world around it. They sold like hot cakes. We're now, as a result, witnessing the "smart-thinkification" of almost everything.

Have you ever wished you could get a handle on the profoundest insights into the laws of the universe – how black holes die; why civilisations founder or flourish; the workings of quantum gravity; the application of the offside rule – in less time than it takes you to unlock Rainbow Road on *Mario Kart Wii*? Boy, does the modern publishing industry have you covered. The schedules groan with books called things such as *Fundamentals: Ten Keys To Reality* or *Simply Quantum Physics*. There's even *Math Without Numbers*.

These books are the publishing world's Facebook ads

Of course, the world has always had, and needed, books that explain complex ideas for the general reader. The problem is that this publishing vogue is starting to present a worldview in which oversimplification is not only possible but a necessary virtue. The big selling point has become the gap between the simplicity of the answer and the complexity of the question.

It's perhaps not a coincidence that the form to which they often revert is the listicle. They are the publishing world's equivalent of those Facebook ads promising "Seven tricks to a flat belly". Want to know the history of Japan? Why, here it is – courtesy of Christopher Harding's latest – "in 20 lives". I've lost count of the number of books, following in the illustrious footsteps of Carlo Rovelli, that come across my desk promising to explain particle physics in a numbered series of lessons.

I don't doubt that many of these books are entertaining, their authors learned and their insights insightful. But the trend tells a story and it isn't an encouraging one. Does the Nobel laureate Frank Wilczek, author of the aforementioned *Fundamentals*, not feel a twinge compressing his life's work to a listicle? Does the famously dour John Gray wince as he includes a list of life lessons from the behaviour of cats ("Ten Feline Hints On How To Live Well") in his latest book?

They no doubt reassure themselves: well, Stephen Hawking started it with *A Brief History Of Time*. But it was to the credit of Prof Hawking that, though everyone bought that book, almost nobody understood it. In 2004 another now Nobel laureate, Roger Penrose, really did set out to explain the whole shebang in *The Road To Reality: A Complete Guide To The Laws Of The Universe*. But that was 1,136 pages long and he made no bones about it: you needed at least degree-level mathematics to have a hope of digesting what it said.

Popular publishing, now, is ever more resistant to the idea that readers should be presented with difficulty and complexity rather than fed pellets of pre-digested knowledge. It's slavishly chasing the burgeoning idea in our culture that knowing stuff (and having opinions about it) is easy and requires no real intellectual labour or investment of time. But what that produces are really the high-toned outriders of a cultural environment in which every idiot on social media is an instant and stridently opinionated expert of constitutional law, trade relations, identity theory and epidemiology. Too seldom do we hear from such books what one geneticist, Adam Rutherford, says explicitly in his *How To Argue With A Racist*: this stuff is "wickedly complicated".



In dumbing down grand complexities, the genre makes halfwits feel clever

Illustration **Ana Yael**

The business case against WFH (that's 'work from hotel')

It's hospitality's latest pivot, but who needs an excuse to take time out?



Time was, hotels that offered "day use" were pitching themselves at a certain, ahem, profession. Now, even the smartest stays seem to want the world to know their bedrooms are available at unusual hours. Not to facilitate *that*, of course. No, in these pandemic-ravaged times, hotels are reinventing their rooms as temporary, rentable workspaces. It's happening the world over from Los Angeles to Tokyo to London, where the likes of the Ham Yard Hotel in Soho, the Bulgari in Knightsbridge and the Rosewood in Holborn (*left*) are all in on the act. But let's be candid. No matter how you've sold the idea to yourself, motoring through work is not the sole reason you're booking in. The hotel knows it (why else would the Rosewood's "Workcation" package include spa access and discounted cocktails?), you know it (hence the amount of cash you're parting with for the privilege) and, if you're planning to expense it, prepare to find out quite emphatically that your boss also knows it. Truth is, you just want some downtime from reality. Nothing wrong with that, but rather than dress it up as "business" here's what you should do: man up and own it. Take the day off, check into somewhere cool, rack up a horrifying room service bill, enjoy the in-shower hammam – whatever. But forget about your email and that slide deck until the next morning. Then go home and go very hard. **CB**

Everything looks better through tinted shades (including you)

It's been a long, lonely winter, which is why you need some properly mood-enhancing sunglasses

Story by **Teo van den Broeke**

Coat, £6,400. Rollneck, £645. Sunglasses, £182. Bag, £900. Gloves, £300. All by **Dolce & Gabbana**. dolcegabbana.com

Now that the days are getting longer, the sun's a little stronger and the Covid vaccine is finally on the way, it's time to invest in a pair of life-enhancing sunglasses that will vastly improve your world view just in time for the spring. Inspired by classic aviator styles from the 1970s, the new breed of oversized, soft-lensed shades doing the rounds right now are designed to make everything look that little bit better. What's more, the sepia-toned lenses of those at Dolce & Gabbana, Tom Ford, Gucci and Ray-Ban will work excellently with the two biggest trends of the season, namely utility (oversized taupe safari jackets, roomy trench coats and multi-pocketed cargo pants) and *ton-sur-ton* (camel suits teamed with stone rollnecks and buff overcoats), meaning you'll look every bit the low-key disco sex bomb you were destined to be before the damned pandemic got in the way.

+ Reframe your outlook

Throw shade and elevate your eyewear game with a trio of high-flying aviators...



The classic ones

By Ray-Ban, £140. ray-ban.com

The originals and arguably the best, Ray-Ban's aviators first saw light in 1937 and have kept maverick peepers safe from the sun ever since.



The pimped ones

By Tom Ford, £285. tomford.co.uk

Trust Tom Ford to create a pair of sunglasses that look like they were begat (out of wedlock) by Hunter S Thompson and the actual sun.



The genderless ones

By Gucci, £345. gucci.com

Designed to be worn by both men and women, these specs from Florentine brand Gucci will give everything that rose-tinted edge come spring.

To hell with the rule book. Labour needs policies NOW

Yes, the party must wait to take the fight to the ballot box, but the battle for voters' confidence won't be won from the sidelines

Story by **George Chesterton**

If you type the words "Labour" and "policy" into Google, it takes you to link after link for the 2019 manifesto. There's nothing that puts off new customers like old stock. Labour are currently in a triple bind: the vampiric legacy of Jeremy Corbyn, the constraints of opposition during a pandemic and the Brexit negotiations, plus a down-in-the-dumps disposition after a fourth election defeat.

The future of Labour depends on how quickly they grasp that escaping the orbits of Corbyn and Brexit will provide a gravitational slingshot. Labour needs ideas. Policies, policies and policies. Contrary to orthodox thought that policy announcements should not be made until just before a general election, 2021 is the ideal moment in the cycle for Labour to take the initiative against a Conservative government that, however incompetent, is so skilled at portraying its own dominance as the natural order of things.



Sir Keir Starmer, Edinburgh, 17 September

Corbyn's abilities were "dramatically overstated for political reasons", but the same can't be said of the damage he did to Labour's reputation. "Starmer's big test is to define his leadership against the far left, who have chosen to have a battle on the one thing Starmer can't compromise on, which is anti-Semitism," says former Labour home secretary Alan Johnson.

The new Labour leadership spent the year of Covid providing carefully selected scrutiny while backing the government's managerial decisions. It was a wise, if not particularly energising, strategy for 2020. Similarly, Starmer treated the Brexit negotiations in much the same way he would a coughing mask-free teenager on a train: he kept well away. The paradox is that Labour are bystanders as these two historic moments pass, yet they must exploit them. In 2021 the pandemic and Brexit are exposing aspects of Britain many voters were content to sweep under the carpet. The most glaring of these is inequality: child poverty and malnutrition; a housing crisis that hurts the young disproportionately; how healthcare and individual health depends so much on social class; the transformation of the job market as retail and service roles become increasingly vulnerable; the need for a green economy; the social care crisis.

One of the absurdities of Labour in opposition over the past ten years (it's a crowded field) has been the misplaced sense of shame over the Blair-Brown years. Remember that terribly embarrassing government who reduced child poverty, invested in schools and hospitals, reduced crime and homelessness and brought peace to Northern Ireland? Iraq may have been a horrendous error, but it does not mean those other things didn't happen. The great lesson Labour should take from Tony Blair today is his ambition and confidence.

Labour cannot continue taking a knife to a gunfight

In 1995 and 1996 New Labour created a sense that they were waiting to save the country from an atrophied, squalid Conservative Party, setting the agenda with one idea after another that undermined their opponents and gave the public the chance to get to know the men and women who wanted to govern.

"You want to give the electorate a sense of your priorities," says Alastair Campbell, Blair's former director of communications. "Everything politicians say and do ought to be related to policy." The policy process from 1995 to 1997 ended with the pledge card, a deceptively brilliant bit of messaging, which made five distinct policy promises on crime, education, health, jobs and tax. "I don't think it is too early for Labour to bring out some policies," says Campbell. "Labour could begin policy commissions into youth unemployment, post-Covid recovery, social care. There has to be a tie-up between what you are saying during the long, hard years in opposition and what you say before the election. It's never too early to point out where you differ from the Tories on policy."

Labour's "other" problem is the anonymity of the shadow cabinet. "Gavin Williamson is so bad, but do the public know what Labour's shadow education secretary is saying or would do?" says Campbell. Sending out the same faces over and over again is overtly defensive. When Richard Burgon volunteered to be Corbyn's human shield in 2019 he ended up dragging Labour's credibility down even further with each foolhardy televised appearance. Starmer must identify the best communicators he has and send them out like apostles. Tawdry as it is to some, voters value competence – or at least the appearance of it. They value trust. If Labour can't score on these now they really should just give up.

To convince people to vote for you, you need to make them feel they have been listened to. The Corbyn years were tinged with ideological snobbery and Corbyn's Labour often dismissed the nonmetropolitan world as parochial. Now is the time to embrace the parochial by having policies that put money and control of neighbourhoods into the hands of those who inhabit them. Promises to devolve big decisions to local communities would be tough for Tories to argue against.

The Conservative Party is a machine for keeping power and Boris Johnson is preprogrammed to adapt and survive. Labour cannot continue taking a knife to a gunfight. Pointing out how badly the government has managed the Covid crisis is the easy part, but that will not earn an election victory. Johnson's strength is a sense of movement – even if it's zigzagging all over the place – and Labour need to match him. They need momentum (not that one). "Keir is proving himself to be competent against Johnson, but that's never going to be enough," says Campbell. "It has to be about the big arguments about what they want for the country. You need a bold vision that is credible."

Giving the public something to judge the Tories against this early in an electoral cycle may run counter to prevailing wisdom, but prevailing wisdom is a luxury after ten years in the wilderness. Starmer needs to roll the dice in 2021. And Labour needs something to put on its website.

Photograph **Getty Images**

The winner of 78 major awards

GQ is the only magazine in Britain dedicated to bringing you the very best in style, investigative journalism, comment, men's fashion, lifestyle and entertainment.

GQ is the brand to beat

2020 PPA **30 Under 30**
2020 BSME **Writer Of The Year**
2019 PPA **Writer Of The Year**
2019 PPA New Talent Award **Editor, GQ.co.uk**
2019 PPA New Talent Award **Engagement Manager, GQ.co.uk**
2018 Comment Awards **Popular Columnist Of The Year**
2017 BSME **Editor Of The Year**
2017 Lovie **Best Website For Lifestyle**
2017 Digiday Publishing Awards Europe **Best Use Of Facebook Live**
2017 Digiday Publishing Awards Europe **Best Branded Content Program**
2017 PPA **Writer Of The Year**
2017 AOP **Audience Development Team Of The Year**
2017 CNI **Best Brand Financial Performance In Native Advertising**
2017 CNI **Best Native Campaign Of The Year**
2016 BSME **Editor Of The Year**
2016 Digiday Awards Europe **Video Team Of The Year**
2016 Shots Awards **Brand Entertainment Of The Year - Series**
2016 Ciclope Festival **Finalist, Best Direction**
2016 Lovie **Long Form Or Series Video First Place**
2016 Lovie **Long Form Or Series Video People's Choice**
2015 DMA **Men's Lifestyle Magazine Of The Year**
2015 FMJA **Stylist Of The Year (GQ Style)**
2014 BSME **Digital Art Director Of The Year**
2014 DMA **Designer Of The Year**
2014 TCADP **Media Award**
2014 FPA **Feature Of The Year**
2014 FPA **Journalist Of The Year**
2014 Amnesty International Media Award
2014 PPA **Editor Of The Year**
2014 FMJA **Online Fashion Journalist Of The Year**
2013 EICA **Media Commentator Of The Year**
2013 DMA **Men's Lifestyle Magazine Of The Year**
2013 BSME **Editor Of The Year**
2013 FMJA **Outstanding Contribution To London Collections Men**
2013 PPA **Magazine Writer Of The Year**
2012 Mark Boxer Award
2012 BSME **Editor Of The Year**
2012 DMA **Lifestyle Magazine Of The Year**
2012 Help For Heroes **Outstanding Contribution**
2012 Px3 Prix De La Photographie Paris **Gold Medal**
2011 Foreign Press Association Media Awards, Sports
2011 Amnesty International Media Award
2010 Amnesty International Media Award
2010 One World Media Press Award
2010 The Maggies **Magazine Cover Of The Year**
2010 P&G Awards **Best Styling (GQ Style)**
2009 PPA **Writer Of The Year**
2008 BSME **Editor Of The Year**
2007 BSME **Magazine Of The Year**
2007 BSME **Brand Building Initiative Of The Year**
2007 MDA/MJA Press Gazette Awards **Best Cover**
2007 P&G Awards **Best Styling (GQ Style)**
2006 P&G Awards **Best Grooming Editor (GQ Style)**
2006 P&G Awards **Best Styling (GQ Style)**
2006 MDA/MJA Press Gazette Awards **Interviewer Of The Year**
2006 MDA/MJA Press Gazette Awards **Best Designed Consumer Magazine**
2006 MDA/MJA Press Gazette Awards **Subbing Team Of The Year**
2006 PPA **Writer Of The Year**
2005 PPA **Writer Of The Year**
2005 Magazine Design Awards **Best Cover**
2004 Association Of Online Publishers Awards **Best Website**
2004 BSME **Magazine Of The Year**
2003 PPA **Writer Of The Year**
2002 BSME **Magazine Of The Year**
2002 PPA **Writer Of The Year**
2001 BSME **Magazine Of The Year**
2001 PPA **Designer Of The Year**
2001 Printing World Award
2000 Total Design Award
2000 Jasmine Award Winner
1999 Printing World Award
1999 Jasmine Award Winner
1999 PPA **Designer Of The Year**
1995 Ace Press Award **Circulation**
1995 Ace Press Award **Promotion**
1995 PPA **Columnist Of The Year**
1994 PPA **Publisher Of The Year**
1991 British Press Circulation Award **Best Promotion Of A Consumer Magazine**

MEN, LISTEN UP!

Simone Rocha is your new female role model

Next month, the celebrated womenswear designer launches her first male line in a hook-up with H&M... and the results are sublime

Story by **Teo van den Broeke**
Photographs by **Rosaline Shahnavaz**
Styling by **Angelo Mitakos**

Coat, £140.
Cardigan, £70.
Trousers, £50.
Shoes, £200. All by **Simone Rocha x H&M**. hm.com

Simone Rocha has been showing her ethereal women's collections as part of London Fashion Week since 2010 and in that time she's honed a craft-focused creative mode that's instantly recognisable. It's fortunate for us, then, that as part of the Irish-born designer's new collaboration with H&M, Rocha is to release her first ever menswear line, which is as wistful and desirable as it is excellently affordable.

Following in the footsteps of the likes of Margiela and Versace, Rocha is the latest designer to be tapped by the Swedish high street giant and the resultant collection, out next month, is a small yet perfectly formed capsule of intricately crafted menswear staples. There's an Aran knit encrusted with pearls (a key Rocha touchstone, so to speak), an excellently slouchy suit crafted from tartan seersucker and an oversized trench that, the removal of Rocha's preferred puffy Elizabethan sleeves notwithstanding, could have been taken straight from the designer's LFW runway. "I went back and looked at how masculinity had influenced my work," Rocha tells me over Zoom. "I looked back at my archive of men's pieces and that became a starting point for the idea of the silhouette, but I also looked at things that came to Simone Rocha womenswear from menswear, such as the trench coat, the brogues, the Aran knit – all the original men's pieces I translated into women's."

Rocha's womenswear shows are famously narrative-driven, emotional affairs, while also built around a surgical exploration of the female condition. Did she apply the same approach to her menswear? "With womenswear, every collection feels like a play, with a beginning, middle and end. It usually [focuses on] an independent, strong, feminine woman who can be any age. So for the menswear I was thinking, 'Who's that woman's friend? Who's her boyfriend? Who's her brother? Who's her dad?'" She pauses. "I didn't want the menswear to feel fussy. I wanted it to feel natural and easy."

Full to bursting with affordable forever pieces that feel more painstakingly produced and lovingly designed than their high street origins might suggest, the clothes feel both naturally Rocha and innately wearable all at once. It's a good starting point, one imagines, for a stand-alone menswear line that could work in tandem with her eponymous womenswear offering. "You might have to wait for my own menswear collection," Rocha demurs, smiling. "I work with stylist Robbie Spencer on all my shows and he does a lot of menswear," she continues. "We could see where this starting point could lead, which was really good, so, potentially, potentially."





Above: Shirts, £70 each. Trousers, £50. Shoes, £200. Socks, £10. Left: T-shirt, £35. Trousers, £70. All by **Simone Rocha x H&M**. hm.com

+ The best bits

Simone Rocha selects the standout pieces from her collaboration with H&M

The cardigan

£70. hm.com

"An amazing boiled wool cardigan: we styled it under and over suits, so it's really a layering piece."



The sweater

£70. hm.com

"I love the Aran knit, where we brought the pearls into it. Pearls are a Simone Rocha signature."



The trench coat

£150. hm.com

"The other piece I really love is the trench coat. We do one in womenswear that has lots of volume and historical influence and it was really nice to strip it away to bring it back to a classic menswear shape."



Model **Hidetatsu at Supa** Grooming **Alexis Day using Givenchy and Kérastase** Retouching **Love Retouch**

Is this the first and last word in sports luxe?

The Zenith Chronomaster Sport launches a new era for the iconic El Primero chronograph

Story by **Charlie Burton** Photograph by **Mitch Payne**



When Julien Tornare took the helm at Zenith in 2017, he confronted a tough question. Given the brand's intense focus on its innovative Defy line, should they keep the more traditional Chronomaster?

This classical-looking model had been created in 1995 as a top-of-the-range home for Zenith's El Primero – an automatic chronograph that was the first such movement to be announced to the world, in 1969. Tornare couldn't kill this celebration of the brand's past, but he did insist on a rethink. "With Chronomaster, there had been so many versions – it was a bit of a mess," he says. "I needed time to come up with a very clear road map."

He determined the Chronomaster should have two distinct sub-lines: one that looks "super close" to the 1969 original; another that is modern and sporty. The latter debuts this month with the new Chronomaster Sport – and it's seriously lovely.

The watch clearly has Zenith DNA – nodding to models such as the De Luca, Rainbow and A277 – but reads in no way as a throwback. It's also elegantly restrained, making the 41mm piece decidedly versatile. "I wanted it to be, as we say in France, 'sport chic', meaning a casual watch you can wear with a suit." It's a confident broadside against the watchmakers that dominate this area of the market.

So with Zenith's new "road map" established, where might the Chronomaster go from here? "We'll play with colours, bring in new materials, especially in the straps," says Tornare, "and, of course, continue to do all our watches with Zenith movements. When you buy a Zenith, you're buying something super authentic."

£8,300. *ZENITH-WATCHES.COM*



The secrets of my success

Jack Conte, CEO of Patreon

The platform that lets content creators turn their fans into paying subscribers has disbursed £1.5 billion and is valued at £900 million. Here's what the 36-year-old has learned

Story by **Thomas Barrie**

Form habits consciously

Building habits is important. One of mine is a weird, small thing, but it's very helpful: I stop eating just before I'm full. I feel so much better throughout the course of the day if I don't pack myself. It's a good way to get more energy.

Purge your calendar weekly

My executive assistant and I look at my calendar for the week ahead and we cancel things. If you don't trim meetings constantly, your time will fill up.

Cultivate 'core behaviours'

The exec team and I do stand-ups twice a week, where we get together for half an hour and talk about big updates and anything anyone needs to settle with the team. One of the questions is: "Did you see any teammates exemplify our core behaviours [showing curiosity, being candid yet kind or displaying bias towards taking action] this week?"

Forget work-life balance

I don't get a work-life balance. The buck stops with me. That's the role I'm in. If the company needs something to happen and it's 11pm and it's date night, tough luck. Devices are on and I'm on.

Read books, not Medium posts

Medium is like the Instagram of the corporate world. It's the layer that we want everybody to see, but not actually how it is. It feels like content marketing. There's a bunch of books that I've just loved: *Getting Things Done* by David Allen, *Winning* by Jack Welch, *The Advantage* by Patrick Lencioni, *Topgrading* by Bradford D Smart and *Who: The A Method For Hiring* by Geoff Smart and Randy Street.

Use your inbox like a feed, not a to-do list

I've started thinking of all my inbox trays almost like a social media feed. I'm not going to get to everything, but if it's really important, I will. I literally could spend all day every day responding to requests and still not get to all of them and then not push forward the goals of the company. So I'm relentless about prioritisation.



Hyperpop scenesters Laura Les and Dylan Brady of 100 Gecs

Hyperpop is pure, ridiculous, UNADULTERATED FUN

So can everyone stop taking it so damn seriously? Story by **David Levesley**

To devotees, "hyperpop" is a sound so addictive it's worth streaming millions of times every month. When one of the genre's biggest acts, US-based duo 100 Gecs, featured a pine tree on their debut album cover, their legions of fans tracked down the *specific tree* and made it a bona fide pilgrimage site. To detractors, however, hyperpop's lethargic vocals, high-speed backing tracks and glitchy, blown-out, bedroom-style production make it completely unlistenable.

But for all the debate, one thing is certain: newspaper music critics have (years late to the party) discovered it. In recent months, they have all published their obligatory hyperpop pieces, typically with a tone reminiscent of how the sexually uptight write about polyamory. To these writers, hyperpop is bewilderingly, but quite possibly "the future of music". But there's one thing the commentators seem to ignore: maybe nobody, least of all those who listen to it and make it, wants hyperpop to be the future of anything. Hell, most of them don't even recognise the label in the first place.

Maybe nobody wants hyperpop to be the future, least of all its listeners

In 1999, the British Museum's Simon James released a book arguing that the Celts, rather than being a singular ancient society, are a construct invented in the 18th century to lump together linguistic similarities in the Scottish, Welsh, Irish, Cornish and Manx communities. This is, effectively, what has happened with hyperpop. A brief recap: the term is said to have begun as a tag on music streaming services and was often used to describe music in the vein of producers Sophie and AG Cook. Cook is the founder of the PC Music movement, a sort of ironic-but-good twist on the plinky-plonky Eurohouse of the 1990s. Sophie, meanwhile, made industrial techno into dance floor bangers and vice versa. Both of them have had a huge influence on Charli XCX, who is probably the most mainstream artist associated with hyperpop, even if she herself does not associate with it ("What is hyperpop?" she tweeted last year).

From its spiritual home on Soundcloud, this wave of new music has since been channelled onto Spotify, courtesy of its "Hyperpop" playlist, which has edged it further towards the mainstream. But listen through it and you have to admit Charli XCX has a point. The genre includes PC Music stalwarts such as Hannah Diamond alongside names from the Y2K movement such as Slayyyter, who offer a revisionist history of Paris Hilton's solo efforts (yup, get your head around that). If the term generally refers to queer-centric dance-pop, then Dorian Electra (whose 2020 sophomore album was a nightcore and incel irony-fest featuring Pussy Riot and Village People) is paradigmatic. But then there's also the thumping sugar-and-sex-club pop of acts such as That Kid or 100 Gecs, plus all the newer, deliberately more diverse talent emerging from Soundcloud.

The one thing it all has in common is that it's fun, queer, sexy music being made because there's nothing else like it and kids want to hear their sexuality and anxieties represented in music that speaks to their experience. That's why I have long loved these artists myself, as a queer man raised in the internet age. I'm not into it because I think it's of universal import, but because it sounds like a three-minute poppers rush. When the *New York Times* asks these musicians about record deals, that's not really the point: these are people making art for art's sake.

I urge you, if you haven't, to dive into some of the artists that get clubbed together, reluctantly, under the "hyperpop" label; let's celebrate its insular, queer tribalism. Long may it continue. And long may we not care a jot if it doesn't.



Steve Carell's Space Force failed to land

Is Netflix KILLING comedy?

Story by **Stuart McGurk**

The Space Force flop wasn't an aberration – streaming services are actually sabotaging the sitcom

Earlier last year, a couple of months after we collectively gawp-binged *Tiger King* and to all the fanfare one might expect given the cast involved, a sitcom called *Space Force* launched on Netflix and promptly came crashing right back down to earth.

It starred Steve Carell as Mark Naird, the four-star general in charge, and was based on Trump's real-world initiative. *Friends*' Lisa Kudrow played Carell's wife. John Malkovich played a scientist. Greg Daniels, showrunner of the US *Office*, was the writer.

And yet for all that talent, the only thing we discovered was this: we all know in space no one can hear you scream, but it turns out no one can hear you laugh either.

It would be easy to mock *Space Force* by mentioning, for instance, the plot of episode two, which sees the team attempt to fix a sabotaged satellite by getting the chimp on board, Marcus, to suit up. ("Why can't you appeal to his sense of duty?") You would be incorrect: as Marcus spins off towards the sun, having forgotten to hang on while using a drill, it will be the only moment you belly laugh in the whole show.

This isn't to say it's quite as terrible as pretty much every review suggested ("One could almost write the jokes in one's sleep" – the *Washington Post*), but you realise it's almost not a sitcom at all. It's high-concept, plot-driven. The series is dominated by a soapy storyline regarding Naird's daughter. His wife is in jail. Episodes start exactly where the last ended, as if they're barely episodes at all.

Turns out, in space no one can hear you laugh

Put another way: it's the format itself, more a drama than a comedy and designed exclusively for Netflix's "next-episode" countdown, that's making it unfunny. And, worse, it's not alone: the inept space travellers trope was repeated last year by the TV networks, those bastions of more traditional (ie, funny) sitcoms, with Armando Iannucci's *Avenue 5*, starring Hugh Laurie, and, in December, *Moonbase 8*, starring John C Reilly. The space boredom was going viral. Think of the classic sitcoms created by TV networks: the format is almost never new, but then the format is almost never the point. From *The Office* to *Frasier* to *Friends* to *Modern Family* and *Schitt's Creek* (which is on Netflix, but bought in from CBC), it's about a tightknit group (family, friends, a workplace) and the situations revel in the absurdity of the everyday. Plots don't flow from one episode to the next and deliberately so: Chandler being stuck in an ATM booth with a supermodel did not warrant a series-long arc.

Case in point: the finale of the first series of *Frasier* saw the Crane brothers have a coffee and "discuss life and happiness". The series finale of *Space Force*, meanwhile, saw a militarised US-China moon war taking place at the same time Carell's daughter was in the desert being chased by crazed rapists on motorbikes and climaxed with her father rescuing her in a helicopter while his wife broke out from prison. *Frasier* was funnier.

I know what you're going to say: that kind of sitcom is old-fashioned, in the past, yesterday's news. Get with the (space) programme.

Well, actually, the pandemic only proved something we'd all felt: we binged dramas on streaming services, but we barely bothered with their sitcoms. And it wasn't that we didn't want comedy. *Friends* found a new gen Z audience on Netflix, all shouting, "We were on a break!" at each other, to the extent that Netflix paid a frankly insane $100 million just to stream it in 2019. Stateside it was revealed that the series Netflix subscribers clocked up more time watching than *any other show* was the US *Office*, which isn't great news for Netflix, as it's an NBC show it lost the rights to in January.

As the *Chicago Tribune* put it in a headline: "*The Office* is Netflix's most popular show, even though it was made for and originally aired on an old-school broadcast network. Oh, the irony".

Panicked that it no longer had anything to make its viewers actually laugh, Netflix bought the rights to *Seinfeld* for an even-more-insane $500m; it's expected to arrive this summer. Take that in. Half a billion for *Seinfeld*: a sitcom that ended in 1998, when Bill Clinton was president.

What this tells us, quite simply, is that streaming services don't know their algorithms from their elbows. In their hands, sitcoms have become half-hour dramas with the occasional titter: *Love*, *Transparent*, *Master Of None*, *Sex Education*, *Glow*, all perfectly fine, but there remain more jokes in one episode of *Parks And Recreation*, a show about the workings of local government.

The divide was made no more plain than with the news that came as the 2020 omnitastrophe drew to a close: *Mrs Brown's Boys*, a ratings-smash sitcom that could barely be more elemental but which is to *Frasier* as a PG Tips chimp is to an actual human, had been renewed until 2026.

To paraphrase Charlton Heston at the end of *Planet Of The Apes*: "You maniacs, Netflix. You blew it up! God damn you all to hell!"

+ This is the year you should get a house robot

Once lockdowns are a thing of the past, you owe it to yourself not to waste any more time indoors again. Ever, frankly. So, may we suggest outsourcing one of life's most tedious chores to technology. The Dyson 360 Heurist is the company's next iteration of its lauded 360 Eye robot vacuum. Like the original, it trundles around your house on tank tracks using a camera and sensors to navigate obstacles. But it comes with a multitude of upgrades. It has 20 times more memory, for instance, allowing it to take readings from its sensors every 20 milliseconds – thus making it even less likely to run over the dog. This new model also really sucks (in a good way): the V2 motor spins at 78,000rpm to vacuum 20 per cent harder. The key thing you need to know, however, is all in that new suffix: Heurist. It's a reference to the robot's ability to learn. With a quad-core processor and 10GB of memory, it's able to become an ever-more conscientious house slave. It remembers previous maps that it has created of your property and uses these to build a fuller and fuller picture of what it needs to clean – this also allows you to set it to work on specific rooms or zones. And if it becomes sentient and takes over the world? Well, it can't do a worse job that the current lot, can it? **CB**

£799.99. *DYSON.CO.UK*



Story by **Teo van den Broeke**
Photograph by **Rosaline Shahnavaz**
Styling by **Angelo Mitakos**

Twenty twenty, in addition to being easily the most unpleasant year in recent memory, will also go down in history as a time fashion realised the old adage about two heads being better than one is true. From the sports-infused tailoring of Zegna x Fear Of God to the sellout brilliance of Converse x A-Cold-Wall*, the collaborations were varied and the results eminently sellable. However, the one we've been waiting for is between Gucci and lo-fi climbing brand The North Face.

Teased last year during the first peak (no pun intended), the collaboration, which consists of apparel and accessories, hits selected retailers this month (a small amount will be made available online) and it's everything you'd expect of this ultimate marriage of function, form and fashion. From the branded cable-knit socks, beanie hats and primary-hued puffer jackets that fit neatly with The North Face's utilitarian aesthetic to the jazzed-up floral gilets and camping backpacks that scream Gucci-laced overstatement, there's something for everyone. But you'll have to be quick to get your hands on a piece – collaborations such as this have a habit of not hanging around long.

GUCCI.COM

Leave your drab hiking gear at home.

The new Gucci x The North Face collaboration is high fashion... only higher

Model **Hidetatsu at Supa** Retouching **Love Retouch**



Shirt, £700. Jeans, £450. Both by **Gucci**. Backpack by **The North Face x Gucci**, £2,380. gucci.com

+ The best of the rest *Up hill and down Dalston: go wild in the country with the collab collection where hipster meets hiker*

The hat
£350.
gucci.com

Chunky, woolly, branded to the hilt: just the thing to keep your ears warm on a socially distanced walk.



The socks
£140.
gucci.com

Now all you need is a pair of Gucci hiking boots. Oh, and a willingness to handwash your socks.



The jacket
£1,300.
gucci.com

Primary coloured and oversized: your new best friend for Covid-secure outdoor activities.



If Trump fans launch a 'Patriot Party', it could change Washington forever...

While it wouldn't be a party in a normal sense, it may eviscerate the Republicans

Story by **Freddy Gray**



Trump supporters attack the US Capitol, Washington, DC, 6 January

"There is nothing which I dread so much," said America's second president, John Adams, "as a division of the republic into two great parties."

Adams' worst fear came true, of course, and Americans have duly spent much of their history fretting about the political stranglehold of the two-party system. From time to time, third parties have threatened to challenge the dominance of the Republicans or the Democrats – the Populist Party in the 19th century, say, or the Reform Party in the 1990s – but the structure of American democracy has always meant that new movements, whether they be on the left or right, end up absorbed into the coalition bellies of the two big beasts.

Trumpism, however, is something completely different. It is an increasingly radical and, yes, popular phenomenon that wants to destroy the existing political order. Trump's "America First" movement believed that the American people had spoken in 2016 when Trump came to power. Now, they believe that the people have been robbed. The 2020 election, they feel, was the greatest fraud in democratic history and anyone who disagrees with them is a traitor. But their anger is directed not towards the Democrats and their new president, Joe Biden. It is aimed at Fox News, since they feel America's biggest right-wing news network has sold them out, and also at the Republican Party, which they feel has betrayed them. Many of them will now stop at nothing to destroy it.

There are growing calls for a new Patriot Party to "take our country back". At the "Million Maga March" in December, Nicholas J Fuentes, a radical, nationalist podcaster who has been banned from YouTube, shouted into his megaphone, "We're done making promises. It has to happen now. We're going to destroy the GOP!" The crowd cheered and chanted back, "Destroy the GOP! Destroy the GOP!" – the new mantra of the emergent American right.

'It has to happen now. We're going to destroy the GOP!'

Even seemingly normal Trump voters have become ever more militant and radicalised by the culture wars. Social media makes them so. It's not just that "deep state" conspiracy theorists drive them crazy in online echo chambers, it's that big tech companies' attempts to control the content on their platforms makes conservatives feel ever more angry. More than 74 million people voted for Trump in 2020 and surveys suggest half of them think the election was "rigged", while 74 per cent don't think the result was "legitimate or accurate". You don't placate these people by censoring their social media ramblings.

A Patriot Party won't be a "third-party" party in any normal sense, since many of its followers will now never accept elections they don't win. They distrust institutions so much that they think democracy itself is a fix. So it could go two ways. The Patriot Party may end up in the political wilderness as a quasi-revolutionary movement, with Trump as their mad king in Mar-a-Lago, Florida, texting out commandments to his ever crazier followers on the diminishing number of internet platforms that will let him speak. After the storming of the Capitol by Maga-heads in January, Democratic talking heads have been quick to label Trumpism as a "domestic terrorist" force. That's not fair. But as Trump fans feel more and more marginalised and subjugated, they will become more seditious. America Firsters could end up morphing into the fascistic thugs that the media has always made them out to be. The mask becomes the men.

Alternatively, the Patriot Party might actually end up disrupting the two-party system. The Patriots probably could not win any substantial elections by themselves, at least not any time soon, but they could end up eviscerating the hitherto durable Republican coalition. This would give their Democratic opponents the opportunity to win every major election for a generation.

The relationship between Republicanism and Trumpism has always been strained. In 2016, Trump won by orchestrating a working-class revolt against his party. He opposed globalisation, foreign wars, immigration – all of which the free-trade-obsessed Republicans had spent the previous decades supporting. From 2017 to 2019, Trump and the Grand Old Party had full control of the executive and legislative branches. Yet the only significant reform they achieved together was a tax cut.

For all his flaws as a man and a politician in office, Trump was a brilliant campaigner. In 2020, he showed how the American right can win in the future by appealing not just to the white working-class, but also to socially conservative, or anti-woke, Hispanics and African-Americans. But the old Republican Party was never able to channel his madly effective populist juju. Today, any "Trump Republican" candidate who isn't despised by his party's establishment will be loathed by Trump's voters.

A more skilled politician than Trump might have taken over the GOP more thoroughly and remade it in his own image, kicking out the old guard at every level and installing his own people and institutions. But Trump was far too interested in himself for that kind of revolution, so he settled on a deeply flawed union with the existing party instead. Like most marriages involving Trump, it was always going to end badly. The divorce could be the most painful part of all.

Photograph **Getty Images**

LOMOND
russellandbromley.co.uk





Go, go, Gadget Gucci!

Style Shrink

By **Teo van den Broeke**

Dear Style Shrink,

Following the style write-off that was 2020, I really want to make more of an effort with my outfits this year. I was wondering, therefore, what you think are the most important trends to invest in right now. I work in sales and live in the suburbs, so I don't want to know about anything too crazy, but I feel like having some fun with my wardrobe for once. If the lockdowns proved anything to me it's that life's too short to spend it in sweatpants.
Michael C, Oxshott

We're moving into the first throes of a new year and it won't be long now (I pray) before we can wear all the clothes we weren't able to last year. Suits! Smart shoes! Socks that don't have little plastic pebbles on the bottom of them! The opportunities, Michael, are endless and I, like you, can't wait to take full advantage of them. Spring/Summer 2021, however, is a strange season, particularly given that so few brands were able to show their wares due to the international lockdowns. But, based on the core collections I did manage to see (digitally, naturally), here are the top three trends I think you should be investing in.

The first, Michael, is "new utility". We are, of course, still living through uncertain times and, as such, it pays to be prepared. This nascent interpretation of the trend for functionalism that has been around for a while focuses primarily on field and safari jackets finished with multiple oversized bellows pockets. Good examples can be found at Dior in sumptuous crocodile, at Gucci in moss canvas and at Tod's in ribbed leather. The great thing about this new breed of outer layer is that it's easy to dress up and dress down. Team Gucci's field jacket, say, with a pair of chino Bermuda shorts and one of the season's floral bowling shirts and you've got yourself a perfect working-from-home-while-doing-a-spot-of-gardening outfit. On the other hand, wear the same jacket with a pair of slim-cut suit trousers in navy and a white shirt and you've got a look that any Milanese financier would drool over.



Coat by **Wooyoungmi**, £1,149. At farfetch.com

The next big trend for you to pay attention to is oversized trench coats. Shown in extra-roomy gabardine and cotton at Loewe, Ermenegildo Zegna and Wooyoungmi (where the vibe was "Inspector Gadget on speed"), the key is to opt for a muted shade of stone or quartz and embrace your inner DI with full gusto.

The final trend to get in on – providing I haven't lost you already, Michael – is pastels. Perhaps it's a response to the technicolour abrasiveness that was 2020, but pretty much every designer worth his or her fabric swatches went all in on softly, softly hues for SS21. At Prada, Mrs P sent models onto her virtual runway wearing close-cut long johns and cable-knit V-necks in shades of frosted sage and gooseberry, while at Gucci, Zegna and Etro, single-breasted suits in peony and cherry blossom were the order of the season.

So there you have it, your zingy new post-pandemic wardrobe mapped out for you – and not a sweatpant in sight.

Dear Style Shrink,

I've just started my second term at university – the first one was awful – and I need some advice about suits. I want to invest in something quite simple and cool, but not too businessy, that I can wear to the end-of-year ball but also with a T-shirt on a Monday night (students don't really go out at the weekend). My budget is absolutely tiny, a few hundred pounds at the most. Could you help me with some interesting ideas?
Lewis, Oxford



Suit by **Bonne Suits**, £200. bonnelife.com

Hi, Lewis. If you had a bit of budget to spare I would usually send you in the direction of Savile Row, but in this case I'm going to recommend the Dutch worker suit manufacturer Bonne Suits. Super cool and inspired by the kind of functional two-pieces Jackson Pollock might have worn – rather than anything stuffy – the brand's cotton, canvas and velvet suits come in a wide array of colours and are a snip at around £200. They look as brilliant dressed up with shirts and shoes as they do dressed down with sneakers and tees.

SEND YOUR MENSWEAR-RELATED STYLE QUESTIONS TO STYLESHRINK@CONDENAST.CO.UK

Illustration **Joe McKendry**

Movin' and groovin'

Whether you're a sneakerhead or a creature of comfort, Hermès will get you off the sofa and laced into a pair of retro trainers this Spring

Story by **Sophie Clark** Photograph by **Colin Ross**

It's happened: we've booted 2020 out of the way for good and now we're fully embracing 2021. And, boy, are we ready. Aren't we? OK, if you need some encouragement (you're only human after all) look to these Hermès trainers to get you going. Crafted from Epsom leather and suede goatskin, cut in graphic panels in a pleasing palette of mustard, blue and (of course) orange, they're a new-vintage take on a classic running style. Sure, they might not technically be footwear to work out in, but getting yourself back into a pair of trainers is the first step, right? Back away from the slippers and try these on for size. They are guaranteed to put a spring in your step. GQ





Trainers by **Hermès**, £720. hermes.com

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Annals of The One Per Center **#7**

Call it ‘eco-capitalism’

Sure, their hedge funds have performed well, but the superrich are going back to the land

Story by **Rachel Johnson** Illustration by **Guy Shield**



At one with nature, the One Per Center’s way

Mr One Per Cent’s country estate had everything he could want. Media and party barns. Indoor pool with infrared sauna. John Deere gator. He could go on. But apparently this is not good enough for Miranda, who has now gone full Greta, a pivot that has been even less popular with him than Boris’n’Carrie telling Northern voters in the red wall seats to get rid of their cars.

Miranda’s new line was this: no way was the house or grounds going to be carbon neutral any time soon, therefore they had to do better.

“May I remind you that not only do I pay for everything, but I actually installed that hangar for the chopper. And I commissioned the wild meadow ‘living roof’,” he told her icily as they headed out in wellies towards the bottom of the valley. In fact, he was rather pleased with the way the structure was cut into the hillside and blended into the Hertfordshire landscape.

Miranda had said she wanted to “show him something”, which sounded sinister. They crossed the ha-ha and the meadow to reach the river, which was bisected by a brook that tumbled down the hill. She had already insisted that anything beyond the ha-ha should be left to nature. She had read *Wilding* by Isabella Tree for her book group and, frankly, life had not been worth living since.

“Here,” she said. He looked at a fallen tree next to a pool that had formed by the bank.

“They’re coming down from Scotland next month,” she continued.

“Who are?” he asked.

“The *beavers*,” she snapped, as if he were being dim. He swallowed. He had read a book on D-Day by Antony Beevor, but he did not dare hope she was talking about him and his wife, Artemis.

“A breeding pair,” she said, eyes shining under her untamed brows. “They’re a keystone species.”

Miranda had also started rinsing her hair with vinegar and had stopped shaving, but he was far too frightened to mention such an intimate aspect of her back-to-nature drive.

“We might have kits here soon! And then we will be doing our bit, won’t we, to make the valley bottoms wet again and help with flood management, you know?”

Mr One Per Cent had long been of the view that happy wife meant happy life.

“Whatever you say, M,” he said, adding, even though his superb bon mot would go over her head, “Let’s not split over beaver, eh, darling?”

The new lexicon: words and phrases heard in the wild this month...

Guydle

AKA shapewear for men. Our view? You do you. But bring someone home while wearing a pair and, for the love of God, undress yourself in the privacy of your own bathroom.

E-charisma

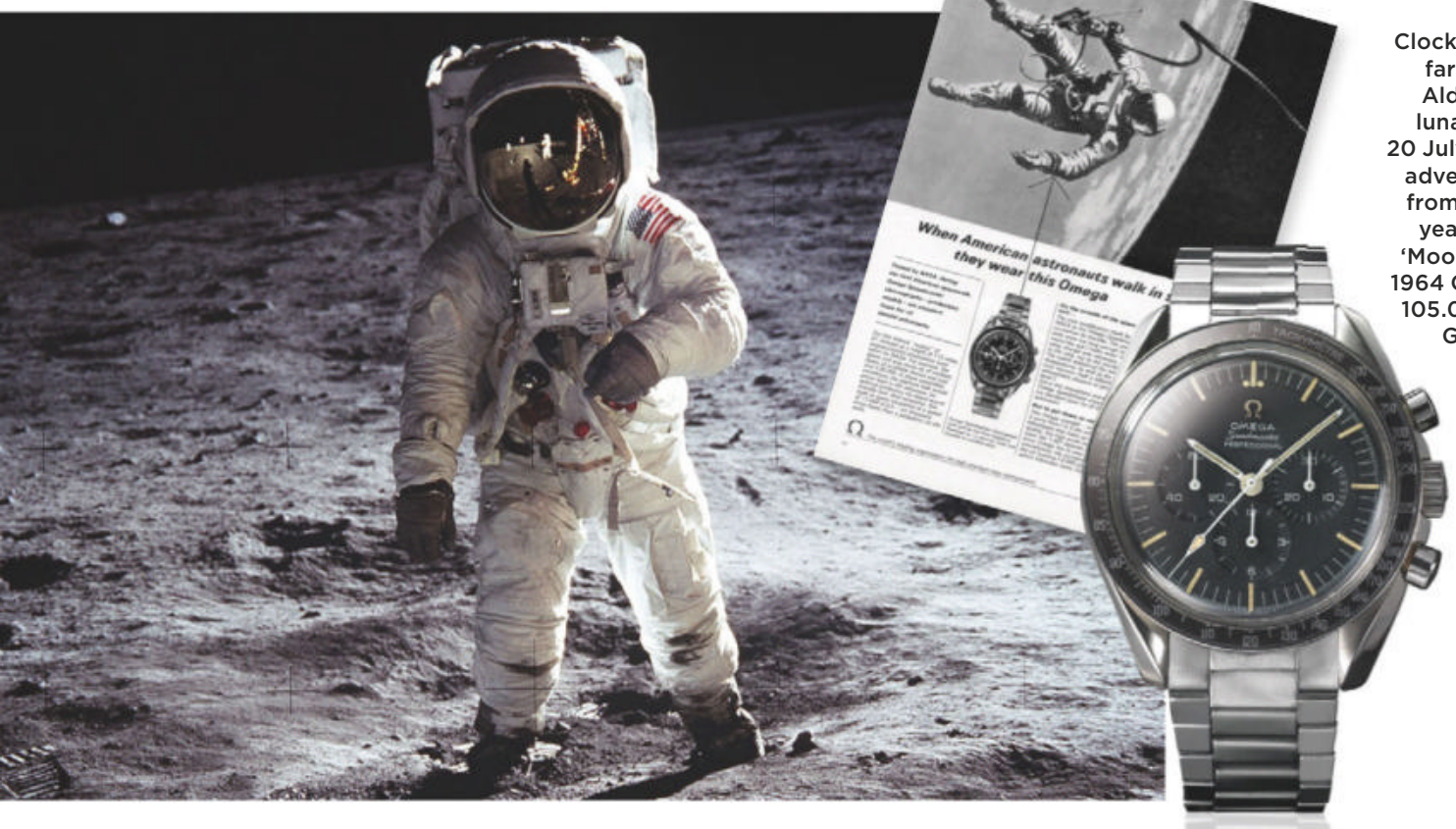
The ability to charm others on Zoom. Apparently this involves looking directly at the camera and nodding a lot. Plus, presumably, masking the fact you are sick to the back teeth of video calls.

Zuppies

The greed-is-good, want-it-all, high-finance power brokers of generation Z. Although you possibly have another word for them...

Situationship

A noncommittal relationship that zeitgeisty think pieces are keen to present as an intriguing new quirk of the sex-positive millennial lifestyle. Or, as it has been known for literally decades, “friends with benefits”.



Clockwise from far left: Buzz Aldrin on the lunar surface, 20 July 1969; an advertisement from the same year; the first 'Moonwatch', a 1964 Omega ST 105.012 Fourth Generation

How the Omega Speedmaster became a manssential

Story by **Teo van den Broeke**

In 1970, 'moonshot' was a word a nation could believe in, even in crisis. Now, a new edition of the watch that averted catastrophe on Apollo 13 enters our orbit

There are some items – garments, watches, flacons of fragrance, even – that transcend trends. They are less objects, more heirlooms of our shared history and, as such, exist in a permanent state of desirability. These are the items most of us will itch to own at some point in our lives – the kind of thing that, in turn, every brand worth its cloth or carbon fibre is desperate to wield in its arsenal.

Burberry's classic Kensington trench coat is one such piece. Worn by officers during the First World War, it's a gabardine relic of a time when life was tough and our outer layers needed to be equally so. Belstaff's leather flight jacket is another. Show me a man who doesn't hanker for one of the UK label's heavy-duty cowhide bombers and I'll show you a low-flying liar.

Omega's "Moonwatch" is arguably one of the most desirable timepieces among these essential luxuries. Worn by astronauts on six lunar missions – including Apollo 11 in 1969, during which Buzz Aldrin and Neil Armstrong became the first men to walk on the moon – the Swiss marque's Speedmaster Professional Chronograph (to give it its technical name) has become one of the brightest stars in the watch firmament.

Personally, I didn't fully understand the fuss that surrounded the Moonwatch until I became the owner of one a few years ago. Sure, the 42mm case is the perfect size, its pared-back profile is satisfying in its simplicity and the monochromatic symmetry of the dial is *chef's kiss*, but what I was most surprised by was how important the illustrious history of the watch became once I felt the heft of the thing on my wrist.

The watch was worn on six lunar missions, including Apollo 11

The Speedmaster Chronograph was, after all, the wristwatch deemed most suitable to accompany men into space in an age before digital models existed. Indeed, it was the only watch to pass the rigorous thermal, shock, vibration and vacuum tests Nasa put it through, making it the first to be declared "flight qualified for all manned space missions" in 1965. "The watch was a backup. If the astronauts lost the capability of talking to the ground or the use of their digital timers on the lunar surface, the only thing they had to rely on was the Omega watch on their wrist," said James Ragan, the Nasa engineer who tested and approved it.

Wally Schirra famously orbited the earth six times on the 1962 Mercury-Atlas 8 mission wearing a second-edition CK2998 Speedmaster, while Apollo 13's Jack Swigert used his Speedy to time the burn of his ill-fated craft's engines and consequently help guide it back to safety in 1970.

Today, the Speedmaster's enduring popularity means that if you have any pretence of being interested in watches, you need to own one. Indeed, the market for vintage Moonwatches is so buoyant that some models, including hard-to-come-by CK2998s such as Schirra's, sell for tens of thousands of pounds. What's more, most preowned Moonwatches are remarkably difficult to tell apart, due to the unchanging nature of the design (save for microscopic details such as the fact that some bezels made before the 1970s feature a dot above the "90" on the tachymeter, for instance), making pretty much any model from any decade an entirely worthy addition to a collection.

That said, a run of landmark new editions have made quite a splash. Last year, the watchmaker unveiled a stainless-steel Moonwatch powered by a revived Calibre 321, the movement that, though discontinued in 1968, later went to the moon. Then it released the "Silver Snoopy Award" 50th Anniversary watch, in honour of the award presented by Nasa to Omega marking the Speedmaster's contribution to space exploration and its role in saving Apollo 13. (Snoopy had been adopted as Nasa's mascot because, in the words of Omega, he had the ability to "keep things light in serious situations".) Flip the cartoon dog-adorned timepiece over and you'll see a scene play out on the case back: Snoopy flying around the moon in a module while the earth slowly rotates. It can't fail to make you smile. Finally, this year, Omega changed the movement inside the standard Moonwatch for the first time in five decades. The replacement of the 1861 movement with the new 3861 renders it a Master Chronometer and reintroduces classic design features such as a dot-over-90 bezel and stepped dial.



For me, however, it's the simple fact that my own Moonwatch – the take on the model that was released in 2017 – is manual (meaning the mainspring needs to be wound by hand to keep it going) that clinches it as a thing of true horological beauty. There's something particularly special about having a physical connection to such a feat of engineering – a feeling of being grounded by the dependable, intricate harmony of human-made cogs and pinions and springs. It's the same feeling those astronauts must have also felt all those years ago, hundreds of thousands of miles away from home, looking back at the earth they had left behind.



OMEGA SPEEDMASTER SILVER SNOOPY AWARD 50TH ANNIVERSARY, £8,250 (*ABOVE*). OMEGA SPEEDMASTER MOONWATCH MASTER CHRONOMETER (*LEFT*), FROM £5,100. *OMEGAWATCHES.COM*

Photograph **Nasa**

Clockwise from left: Barber Club Defining Fiber Cream, £5.99. Barber Club Long Beard & Skin Oil, £10.99. Hydra Energetic Anti-Fatigue Daily Moisturiser, £9.99. Hydra Energetic Healthy Look Express Care, £10.99. Barber Club Matte Molding Clay, £5.99. Barber Club Slick Fixing Pomade, £5.99. All by **L'Oréal Men Expert**. loreal-paris.co.uk

Spring forward your grooming routine

Make the dull complexions and unkempt hair of winter a thing of the past with L'Oréal Men Expert's new routine game-chargers

Story by **Sophie Clark** Photograph by **Mitch Payne**

Spring is finally on the horizon and there's nothing like a new season for stepping back and reassessing your grooming regime. Just as you update your wardrobe, the same prep should go into your skin- and haircare. And with the specially formulated L'Oréal Men Expert range that's never been easier.

First, it's time to dial up the hydration. A great moisturiser absorbs fast and has non-greasy texture and warrior-like, multitasking potential. L'Oréal Men Expert's Hydra Energetic Anti-Fatigue Moisturiser ticks all those boxes with bells on. Made with vitamin C and guarana (a good, natural source of caffeine), it's enriched with fatigue-fighting ingredients to help reinforce your skin's natural resistance, making it stronger and healthier for the months ahead.

Next, look to the Hydra Energetic Healthy Look Express Care gel to enhance your skin with a subtle glow, which will have everyone fooled that you're ready for spring. Apply a thin layer of the tinted formula to your face and neck for a boost that will bring any dull complexion back to life. It's also a replenishing gel that nourishes your skin with a burst of moisture while veiling your face with an understated wash of bright, healthy-looking colour. With genius, undetectable coverage, it lasts all day while seamlessly hiding the rigours of the night before.

Wanting to sharpen up on top this year? Lock in a new style with the help of the Barber Club Slick Fixing Pomade, Matte Molding Clay or Defining Fiber Cream and refresh your facial hair with the Long Beard & Skin Oil.

By switching out your usual grooming products for these spring-friendly counterparts – focusing on hydration and going the extra mile – your grooming routine will be ready for the new season in no time. Consider these simple steps and you'll be guaranteed to banish the winter blues and re-emerge with healthy, glowing skin.


Blazer
119.99



Simone Rocha

X

H&M

Launches 11 March
Explore the collection now at hm.com



At the start of last year, the *GQ* editorial and commercial teams sat down to figure out how the Men Of The Year Awards 2020, in association with Hugo Boss, now in its 23rd blistering year, could pivot out of the chaos and confusion created by the global Covid pandemic and transform it from a spectacular live event into... well, what exactly? Slowly but surely an idea began to take shape: an exceptional series of bespoke films, each made in close collaboration with a very worthy award winner. And so it was we spent a year filming acting icons oversharing in East London, sporting heroes being triumphant in Italy, rock legends reminiscing about their excesses in Los Angeles. These premiered on the *British GQ* Youtube channel as a special awards film presented by Jack Whitehall at the London Coliseum. The event was also a global first for our publisher, Condé Nast, transforming the Men Of The Year show from a invitation-only ceremony for the cultural elite into something much more accessible and celebratory. It was the year when everyone was invited: well, we all needed a reason to celebrate, not only those who invested shrewdly in vaccine development companies. Here are the men and women we honoured on the night.

With thanks

GQ would like to extend special gratitude to our event partner, Hugo Boss

Jack Whitehall hosts the virtual GQ Men Of The Year ceremony, filmed at the London Coliseum and streamed on the British GQ Youtube channel on 26 November

Photograph **Gavin Bond**



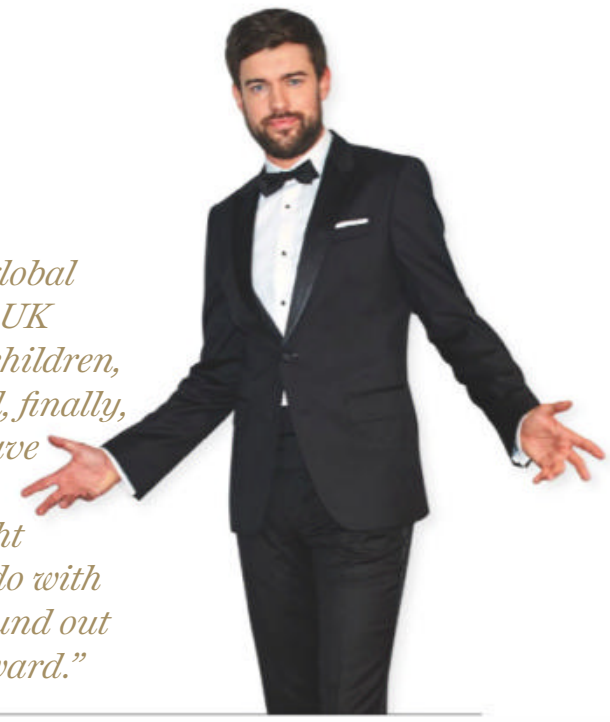
The COVERS

Nine special collectors' covers

Captain Sir Tom Moore; John Boyega; Paul Mescal, wearing Boss and Boss Bottled; Ozzy Osbourne; Marcus Rashford; Shawn Mendes; Lewis Hamilton; Piers Morgan; and Lashana Lynch, wearing Boss and Boss The Scent Pure Accord For Her

Host

Jack Whitehall



"Twenty twenty has been a year like no other: a global pandemic, the Black Lives Matter movement, the UK government deciding it was time to stop feeding children, not to mention a squatter in the White House and, finally, hope of a long-awaited vaccine. Now, you may have noticed that while the GQ Awards usually take place at the Tate Modern with an audience, tonight there's no one here. That actually has nothing to do with social distancing or lockdowns: the guests just found out Piers Morgan was winning the TV Personality award."



Inspiration

Captain Sir Tom Moore

Jack Whitehall: "For me, Inspiration Of The Year is a straight shootout: Joe Wicks and Captain Sir Tom Moore were really the two great heroes of the pandemic. One reached the milestone of 100 years old by raising more than £30 million for the NHS, having already risked his life for this country while winning an actual war. The other spent lockdown doing lunges dressed as Harry Potter and then, to be fair, did raise quite a lot of money for Children In Need. Only one can be named *GQ*'s [winner]."

Our film with Captain Tom reveals the centenarian's 'true' sporting potential: "The laps around the house, that's how it all started. At first it felt quite hard, but then when those endorphins kick in, it's hard to stop. I suppose I got quite good at it. I didn't want to draw any more attention to myself. I suppose it's just when you put your mind to it, the body follows. I wouldn't call myself a professional – just pretty good at the whole sports thing. Running. Jumps. Yoga and Pilates, of course. Just trying to stay fit. Oh, yes, and the half-marathon win. No big deal. I need to work on my backflip, take up skateboarding… But let's not get carried away. Baby steps first. Thank you, *GQ*."

#GQAwards

How social media chronicled the night

2.01pm
26 November

@HUGOBOSS Tonight, the @BritishGQ Men Of The Year Awards return… The Hugo Boss Breakthrough Actor award goes to @mescal_paul! #BOSSxGQAwards

4.03pm
26 November

@LewisHamilton So honoured to be called @BritishGQ Game Changer Of The Year. Thank you, *GQ*.

Solo Artist

Shawn Mendes

Whitehall: "Our next award is heading in the direction of an international heartthrob who has been topping the charts around the globe. It's like they made a composite of all of One Direction: Zayn's voice, Harry's good looks, Niall's... guitar. Ladies and gentlemen, Mr Shawn Mendes!"

Shawn Mendes: "This means so much to me. Thank you so much for the Solo Artist award. I just want to say that this is wonderful and I hope that everybody is staying happy and taking care of themselves. I love you all. Thank you again and take care."



TV Personality

Piers Morgan

Piers Morgan (interviewing himself): "He's somebody who divides opinion like few others. But tonight he's getting an award for something different. It's his skewering of British government ministers during this global pandemic, holding them to account on behalf of the British people, trying to get answers when they really don't want to give them. He is Piers Morgan."

Morgan: "Well, thank you very much, but I sort of feel we should be sharing this, shouldn't we?"



Photographs **Gavin Bond; Richard Dowker**













Peroni Breakthrough Designer

Daniel W Fletcher

Teo van den Broeke: "I'm here in East London to present our Peroni Breakthrough Designer Of The Year award to Daniel W Fletcher. Fletcher has, in the past half-decade or so, made a name for himself as one of the most exciting talents on London's menswear scene, with his unique aesthetic and host of famous devotees, including Harry Styles, Sam Smith and Troye Sivan, to name a few. Fletcher, who is also the artistic director of menswear at Fiorucci, is a more than worthy winner of this year's award."

Daniel W Fletcher: "Thank you so much. This is a huge honour. I can't believe it. This is really a huge moment for me. I remember being an intern at [Louis] Vuitton and seeing Kim [Jones] come back with his [award] for Designer Of The Year. To be sitting here with one in front of me now is a huge, huge honour."

From top: Captain Sir Tom Moore; John Boyega; Michaela Coel; Marcus Rashford; Patrick Hutchinson

7.09pm 26 November

@captaintommoore
Congratulations, @LewisHamilton. What an incredible year you have had. Perhaps one day we'll get to do a lap together? #WalkWithTom

7.32pm 26 November

@captaintommoore
I enjoyed watching all the people whose job it was to get me just right, doing a little bit here and there... Ready and waiting, @BritishGQ. #GQAwards

7.36pm 26 November

@MarcusRashford
GQ Men Of The Year Awards 2020. Wearing @Burberry, of course. Head over to @BritishGQ Youtube at 8pm for the show. #GQAwards



Visit the British GQ Youtube channel to view all our Men Of The Year content



Campaigner

Marcus Rashford

Whitehall: "Aged 23, he has single-handedly taken on a government and helped fight to feed some of the most vulnerable children in society. And if you thought that was impressive, he's also able to bag 20 goals a season playing in front of a midfield pivot of McTominay and Fred. Is there anything this man can't do? *GQ*'s Campaigner Of The Year is Marcus Rashford."

Marcus Rashford: "I've helped a lot of people, but I know that there are still loads more who need the help. My biggest aim is to try to just give kids the best chance from the day they're born. I want to say a big thank you to *GQ* for the Campaigner award. I really appreciate it."





Lifetime Achievement

Ozzy Osbourne

Whitehall: "Over a 50-year career that began with Black Sabbath and transformed him into a pop culture icon in his own right, Ozzy Osbourne has become something of a heavy-metal national treasure. He released his 12th solo album, *Ordinary Man*, to critical acclaim earlier this year in spite of a Parkinson's diagnosis, which he revealed in January. He truly is an indomitable spirit."

Ozzy Osbourne: "Thank you for this award. I'm blessed. Thank you."

Maddox Gallery Artist

Charlie Mackesy



Mackesy's bestseller and Comic Relief T-shirt print

Whitehall: "Despite it being another big year for Banksy, with his politically charged murals capturing the public mood – God, he's come a long way since hosting *Art Attack* – the winner is actually Charlie Mackesy, whose book, *The Boy, The Mole, The Fox And The Horse*, with its message about communication and good mental health, has spent more than a year in the *Sunday Times* Bestsellers Top Ten."

Charlie Mackesy: "I started drawing, really, because my best friend was killed. Drawing was a way of making sense of existence when I was 19.

"The book came about two years ago. I discovered the NHS were using it right through Britain and then I would see images of the drawings stuck on lampposts in LA, in Sydney, Melbourne, places where things were really tough. I guess, for me, it just happened by surprise and the more I saw it, the more I drew."



#GQAwards

How social media chronicled the night

8.15pm 26 November
@BootstrapCook
Marcus is an absolutely tireless, peerless, egoless campaigner for true change. Down-to-earth, funny, driven, and absolutely brilliant company...

9.04pm 26 November
@formulaAMELIA
There are two black athletes of the cover of *GQ*, both of whom have contributed to the country in 2020 more than the government could even dream of.

9.06pm 26 November
@MaddoxGallery
Congratulations to the incredibly talented @charliemackesy, who we are honoured to present as the Maddox Gallery Artist Of The Year.

9.08pm 26 November
@jamiemacphotos
Happy to confirm Shawn Mendes was a big fan of @SportsTeam_ at the @BritishGQ awards tonight...

Game Changer

Lewis Hamilton

Whitehall: "He is the GOAT: he's just equalled Michael Schumacher's long-standing record for the most F1 World Championship titles. Not only that, but he is an outspoken voice for change in his sport."

Lewis Hamilton: "Every single one of us bleeds the same colour of blood. It started when I was five, my first experience of racism. Even once I turned professional, I received racial abuse and no one said anything. We came up with the idea to put together a commission to create opportunities for young black men and women to get into our sport. Just the smallest of changes can make a huge thing."



Hugo Boss Breakthrough Actor

Paul Mescal

Whitehall: "Our next award is for the Hugo Boss Breakthrough Actor Of The Year. The winner is Paul Mescal. Emmy-nominated and now a *GQ* award – what a year he's had. Very much the Captain Tom of the millennial generation. Let's see your Hugo Boss Breakthrough Actor Of The Year..."

Paul Mescal: "Hi, I'm Paul Mescal and I play Connell in *Normal People*. I'm incredibly honoured to accept the Hugo Boss Breakthrough Actor Award."













Hugo Boss Breakthrough Actress

Lashana Lynch



Whitehall: "Lashana has already found success in the Marvel Cinematic Universe after she appeared as fighter pilot Maria Rambeau in *Captain Marvel*, but her role alongside James Bond will surely propel her to even more dizzying heights."

The GQ lie detector: "Did you like Bond films before you acted in one?"

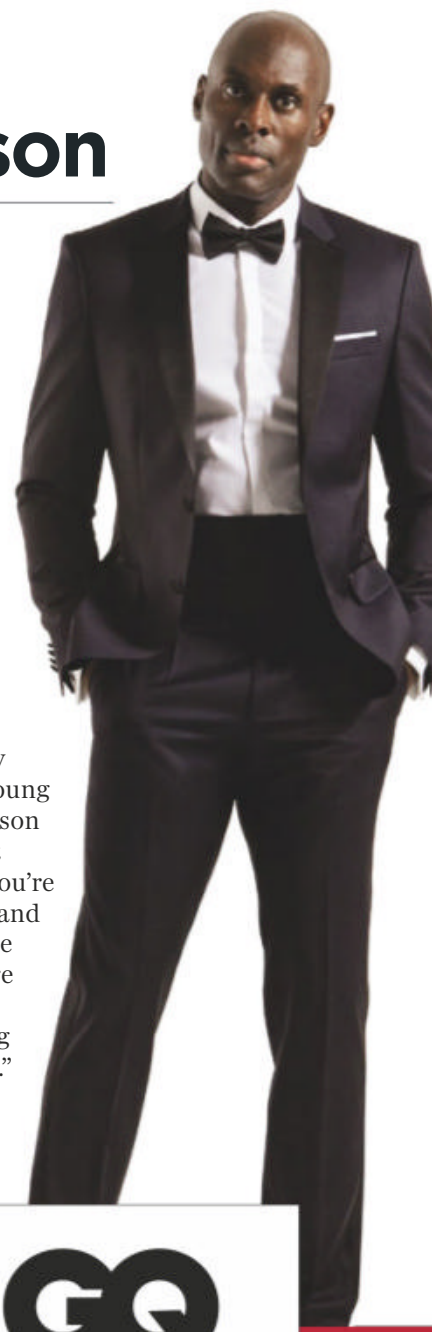
Lashana Lynch: "Yeah. Yes. [*Lie detector triggers.*] Yes! Is it showing a lie already?"

Lie detector: "Who is the *GQ* Hugo Boss Breakthrough Actress Of The Year?"

Lynch: "I am."

Humanitarian

Patrick Hutchinson



Whitehall: "Patrick Hutchinson attended the Black Lives Matter protests on London's South Bank in the summer with the intention of keeping the peace. He became a symbol of tolerance and empathy when he was photographed carrying a white counter-protester to safety amid a heated confrontation in the crowd, an image that was seen around the world."

Patrick Hutchinson: "It's easy to sit by and say to any individual, but especially young people, to be the bigger person and to not react and not let things escalate. But when you're on the other end of racism and oppression, it's difficult. One of the reasons we were there was to protect, oversee and stop the young people doing things that they may regret."

From top:
Charlie Mackesy;
Lashana Lynch;
Daniel W Fletcher;
Paul Mescal;
Piers Morgan

9.25pm
26 November

@Sarah_EmilyP
Oh, my God. How incredible does Captain Sir Tom Moore look on the red carpet for the virtual *GQ* Men Of The Year Awards? What a man!

9.27pm
26 November

@piersmorgan
Genuinely chuffed. Thank you, @BritishGQ.

10.17pm
26 November

@poeticzustice
John Boyega is *GQ*'s Icon Of The Year. Yup, yup, yup!

10.31pm
26 November

@BrookburnP
Our children were thrilled to show their support and thanks for @MarcusRashford as part of the *GQ* Awards! It was a pleasure to be involved.

GQ
MEN
OF THE YEAR
2020
BOSS

Photographs **Hamish Brown; Alexis Chabala; Danny Kasirye; Pamela Littky; David Vintiner**



Icon

John Boyega

Whitehall: "John became an icon the moment that mic was thrust into his hand in Hyde Park in June and he delivered a moving and powerful speech that resonated with people across the globe."

John Boyega: "Thank you for this phenomenal award, for the opportunity to receive something like this. Thank you for noticing me doing that, because, now, in many senses, I feel fully motivated to continue fulfilling this title and I will."



Creative Icon

Michaela Coel

Whitehall: "*I May Destroy You*, which Michaela Coel wrote and starred in, I can tell you as a fellow comedian, is the type of show that is so good it makes me want to quit my job and retrain as a Deliveroo driver."

Michaela Coel: "Thank you so much, *GQ*. It's been an incredible time, because my first shoot with *GQ* was the first one out of lockdown and I felt very comfortable here and very safe. The show was a lot – it was a lot of pain, it was a lot of joy – and I feel very, very, very, very honoured to receive this award. Thank you."



Design Legend

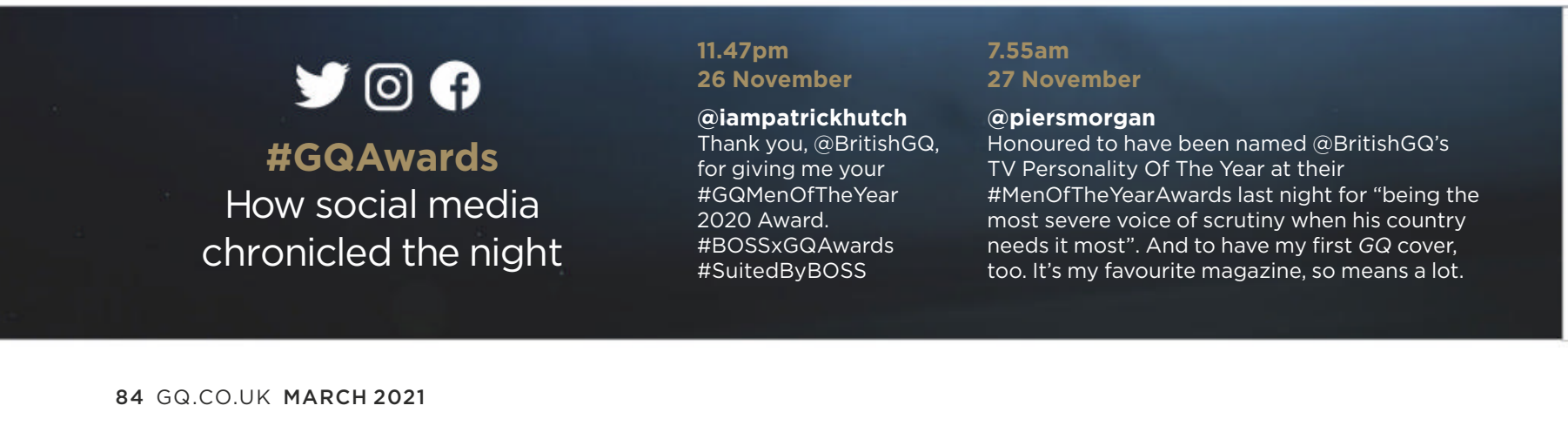
Tommy Hilfiger

Whitehall: "Tommy Hilfiger, AKA Mr America, celebrates three-and-a-half decades in the business this year – an extraordinary achievement in an age that has seen the fashion landscape change irrevocably."

Tommy Hilfiger: "My greatest dream is to embody our Americana heritage by creating fashion for all. I've always thought that American styles should embody the country's spirit by being inclusive and democratic. It's a true honour to be recognised by the authority on men's fashion. Since day one, I wanted to make my mark on the industry and leave behind a meaningful legacy. It's been a whirlwind that still excites, challenges and inspires me every day. I'm completely honoured to receive this award. It is sacred and I will cherish it forever. Thank you very much, *GQ*."

With special thanks

GQ would like to say a special thank you to our event partner, Hugo Boss, category sponsors Maddox Gallery and Peroni, as well as the London Coliseum, Black Dog Films and our 2020 host, Jack Whitehall.



#GQAwards
How social media chronicled the night

11.47pm
26 November

@iampatrickhutch
Thank you, @BritishGQ, for giving me your #GQMenOfTheYear 2020 Award. #BOSSxGQAwards #SuitedByBOSS

7.55am
27 November

@piersmorgan
Honoured to have been named @BritishGQ's TV Personality Of The Year at their #MenOfTheYearAwards last night for "being the most severe voice of scrutiny when his country needs it most". And to have my first *GQ* cover, too. It's my favourite magazine, so means a lot.

Inside the GQ Men Of The Year winners' £10,100 gift bags

From a Hugo Boss dinner suit to a Nobu overnighter, our awardees earned...



111Cryo/Heat contrast therapy voucher 111Spa/Clinic treatment voucher **111skin The Intensive Kit and The Regenerative Kit** Anker Nano charger and Soundcore Flare 2 **Augustinus Bader The Body Lotion and The Cream** Bamford Grooming Department Sport All-Over Body Wash **Beyl Clima-Adaptive Anti-Pollution Moisturiser** Boss Alive and Boss Bottled eau de parfums, Boss Ladies Signature Watch and Peak Men's Watch **Byredo candle** Champagne Laurent-Perrier La Cuvée Brut NV **Chaos personalised phone case** Dermologica Biolumin-C Eye Serum **Doisy & Dam Dark Chocolate Drops** Dr Barbara Strum Hyaluronic Ampoules and Lifting Serum **Dr Dennis Gross Alpha Beta Universal Daily Peel** Drowsy Sleep SOS pillow spray and sleep mask **Dyson 360 Heurist robot vacuum and Supersonic Hair Dryer** Grind House Blend Coffee Pods **Harry's Deluxe Christmas Winston Gift Set** Honest Burger At-Home Kit voucher **Homewood, Bath, luxury overnight stay in a bespoke suite** Hugo Boss leather washbag and dinner suit **Jukes non-alcoholic drink cordials** Kiehl's Facial Fuel and Midnight Recovery Concentrate **Kloris CBD Oil Drops, Superboost Face Oil, No-Rinse Hand Sanitiser and Recharge Bath Block & Melt** Lockdown Liquor & Co Picante and Pepino **Lumity Morning & Night Male Food Supplements** L'Objet Mamounia No28 candle **ManTidy Carabiner Pouch** Marks & Spencer Balance Body Wash, Calm Scented Candle, Harvard travel minis, Nod Ready Set Go travel kit, Tranquil Scented Candle **Mz Skin Hydra-Bright Golden Eye Treatment Mask** New York Dermatology Group at the Harrods Wellness Clinic consultation and treatment by Dr Costas Papageorgiou **Noble Isle Whisky & Water Bath & Shower Gel** Nobu Hotel, London, overnight stay and dinner **NuFace Trinity Advanced Facial Toning Device** Nurse Jamie Uplift Massaging Beauty Roller **Olaplex Hair Perfector No3 and No7 Bonding Oil** Paula's Choice 2% BHA Liquid Exfoliant **Penfolds BIN 389 Cabernet Shiraz** Philips Sonicare 9000 DiamondClean toothbrush and Vacuum Beard Trimmer 7000 **Pickett London dice case** Pietro Simone Skincare Discovery Kit and bespoke facial **Pureis Ultra Pure CBD Advance Absorption Capsules and Ultra Pure CBD Fast Absorbing Oil Drops** Slip Silk Sleep Mask **Smythsons Make It Happen Panama Notebook** Soho Home Bassett Diffuser and Discovery candles **Sunday Riley UFO Ultra-Clarifying Face Oil** Tata Harper Hyaluronic Gel Moisturizer **The Light Salon Boost Antimicrobial Mask & Skin Repair Set and Boost LED Face Mask** The Stratford, London, overnight stay in a Manhattan Studio and dinner in Allegra Restaurant **Therabody Theragun Mini and Theragun SuperSoft Attachment** Victorinox Lexicon Framed Series Global Hardside Carry On **Waterford Gin Journeys highball glasses GQ**

GQ MEN OF THE YEAR 2020

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
BOSS
HUGO BOSS



Photographs **Pixeleyes; Shutterstock; Ben Weller**

Glow with the flow

From zesty, lime-coloured outerwear to a retro teal polo shirt, turn up the volume on your wardrobe with a considered pop of colour

Edited by **Sophie Clark**

1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



1. Watch by **Avi-8**, £265. avi-8.co.uk **2.** Jacket by **Mackage**, £790. mackage.com **3.** Scarf by **Gucci**, £335. gucci.com
4. Saffron Lazuli eau de parfum by **Carolina Herrera**, £235. At Harrods. harrods.com **5.** Jeans by **H&M x Lee**, £34.99. hm.com
6. iPhone 12 Mini by **Apple**, from £699. apple.com **7.** Socks by **Stance**, £12.99. stance.eu.com **8.** Polo shirt by **Canali**, £290. canali.com
9. Towel by **Pendleton**, from £115. pendletonwoolenmills.eu

Bag by **Louis Vuitton,** £3,850.
louisvuitton.com

Hold up!

Louis Vuitton's new holdall is a twist on a classic – ideal for indecisive and style-conscious packers alike

Story by **Sophie Clark**
Photograph by **Colin Ross**

In theory, a great holdall only needs to promise one thing: to hold all your essentials. But in runway realms, the making of a "can't live without it" carrier goes far beyond functionality. The Keepall Bandoulière 50 by Louis Vuitton does exactly that. Crafted from raffia and showcasing an oversized, electric orange checkerboard motif, this luxury accessory is a head-turning conversation starter if we ever saw one. It just so happens to also get the job done when it comes to packing for an overnight stay or weekend getaway. Perfect for "just in case" packing, this space-efficient holdall will comfortably carry a weekend's worth of wardrobe while also allowing room for whatever you don't end up wearing. You'll never have to leave anything at home again. With orange chain detailing and the option of a crossbody strap for a nonchalant "What, this old thing?" vibe, this bag will transform panic packing into a ritualistic art form.

THE CONTROL YOU NEED, THE THRILL YOU WANT



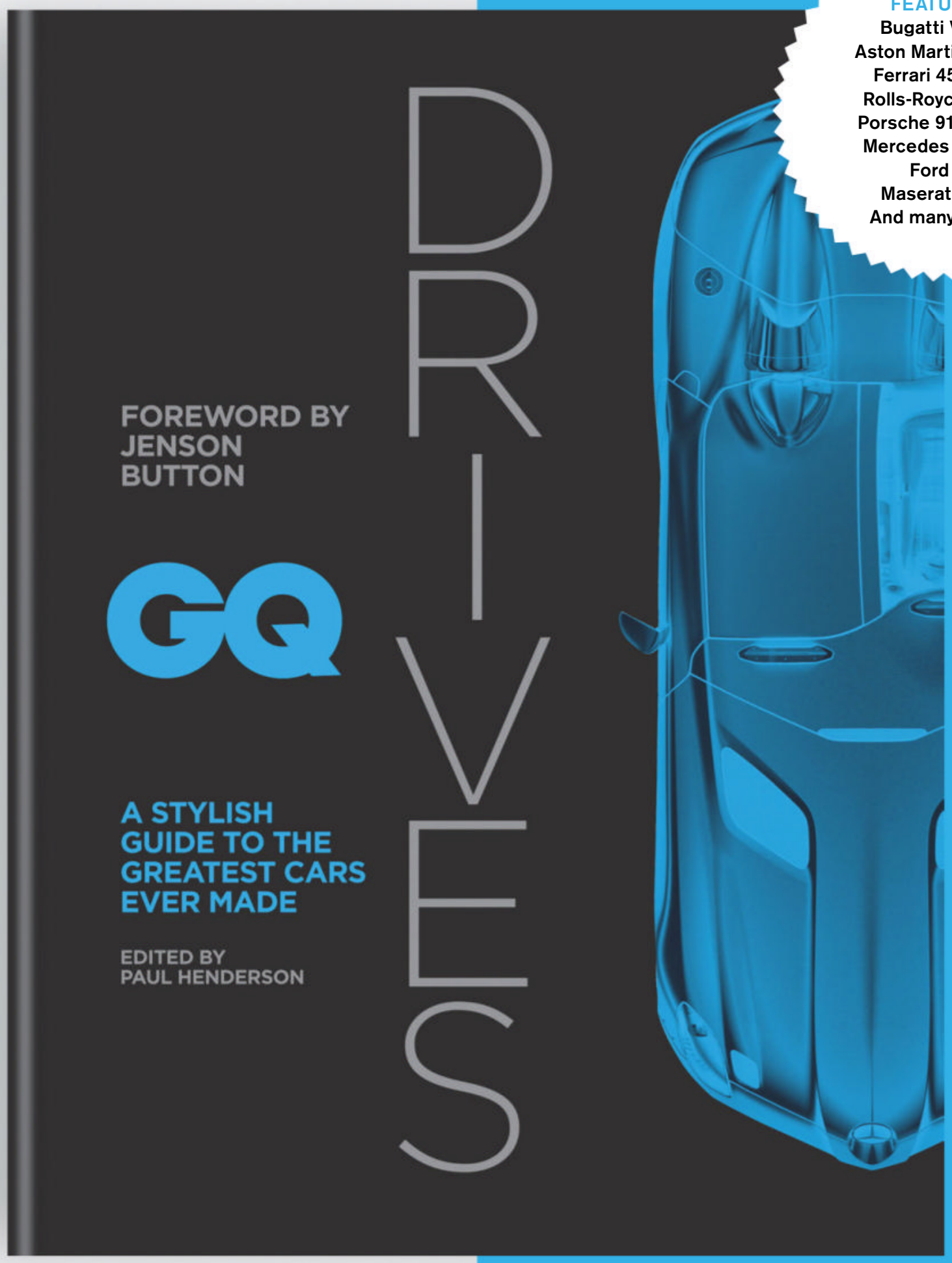


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By Paul Henderson, with foreword by Jenson Button.
ISBN 9781784725990 RRP £25

Seat belts on, keys in, hands at ten and two.
GQ's annual auto extravaganza returns, celebrating the very best vintage icons, modern marvels and truly revolutionary concept creations...

The 2021 CarGQ Awards

IN ASSOCIATION WITH MICHELIN

Compiled by Paul Henderson and Jason Barlow Photographs by Wilson Hennessy

NEW F-PACE
HARD TO FORGET.

New Jaguar F-PACE. A performance SUV unlike any other, now restyled to be even more assertive, even more distinctive. The all-new premium interior features the best in contemporary British design, and next-generation infotainment features the latest connected technologies. The extensive new engine range now includes Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle and Mild Hybrid Electric Vehicle technology. Every journey can feel extraordinary. New Jaguar F-PACE. Easy to love, hard to forget.



MK
marc kinchen
DJ/PRODUCER

Official WLTP Fuel Consumption for the F-PACE 21MY range in mpg (l/100km): 23.1 - 130.2 (12.2 - 2.2). WLTP CO_2 Emissions 275 - 49 g/km. PHEV in mpg (l/100km): a fully charged battery. For comparison purposes only. Real world figures may differ. CO_2, fuel economy, energy consumption and range figures may vary according production vehicle over a standardised route.



Combined 112.5-130.2 (2.5 - 2.2). CO_2 Emissions 57-49/km. The figures provided are as a result of official manufacturer's tests in accordance with EU legislation with to factors such as driving styles, environmental conditions, load, wheel fitment, accessories fitted, actual route and battery condition. Range figures are based upon

The GQ Car Awards are back for another year. Back where they belong. Back to their best. Back like Burt Bacharach's backing band. Produced in partnership with Michelin, it's a celebration of classic cars from the past, on-point models of the present and concept cars still to come. From 1960s restomods, cult convertibles and hydrogen-powered crossovers to luxury limos, extreme e-machines and iconic hypercars, this might be the most exciting automotive line-up we have ever assembled. We also tracked down Formula One legend Bernie Ecclestone to his secret lair in Switzerland to present him with a Lifetime Achievement award, and asked our Designer Of The Year to create a bespoke car just for GQ. On top of all that, we even found ourselves a time-travelling DeLorean. Like we said, the GQ Car Awards are back… to the future.



Luxury Car Of The Year

Rolls-Royce Ghost

For a car that is 5,546mm long, 2,148mm wide and weighs just shy of two-and-a-half tonnes, you would have thought that, as far as visual statements go, the Rolls-Royce Ghost could have been a *GQ* award winner on looks and presence alone. And yet there is so much more to this automotive apparition than meets the eye. Not only is it the most technologically advanced Rolls-Royce ever made, but the new Ghost also manages to be elegantly understated, dynamically assertive, more comfortable and less intimidating. As for the interior, it redefines the parameters of where "perfection" starts and "paradise" ends. *£233,235. rolls-roycemotorcars.com*



From West Sussex to Solihull, a holy trinity of British automotive engineering

SUV Of The Year... Then

Range Rover Classic

"The idea was to combine the comfort and on-road ability of a Rover saloon with the off-road ability of a Land Rover. Nobody was doing it." So said Charles Spencer King, chief engineer and the man largely credited with developing the original Range Rover Mk1. Designed for the landowner who wanted a little more sophistication, it was billed as the car that could take you from "farmhouse to townhouse". Beautifully simple, boldly utilitarian and utterly revolutionary, it was considered such an "exemplary work of industrial design" that it became the first vehicle to be displayed in the Louvre. It is the alpha to the 50th anniversary's omega and a work of design genius. *landrover.co.uk*

SUV Of The Year... Now

Range Rover Fifty

Officially, the Range Rover celebrated its 50th birthday in the summer, taking the opportunity to create 1,970 anniversary editions of the sector-defining SUV that has made luxury off-roading on-trend for half a century, but we make no apology for being slightly late to the party. Pretenders to the throne have come and gone, but no other 4x4 has had the goods to take the crown. During that time Range Rover has added to the family with Evoques, Sports and Velars, but it is the Autobiography that gets the special treatment here, with its unique exterior Auric Atlas detailing, plus a set of monumental 22-inch wheels. Fifty really is the new fabulous... even approaching 51. *£108,965. landrover.co.uk*

Convertible Of The Year

Porsche 911 Turbo Cabriolet

Ah, yes, the annual Porsche 911 award. We're unrepentant. All 911s are turbocharged now, but the new 572bhp 911 Turbo is many orders of magnitude more powerful than its siblings and the only one with that famous badge on its rump. It's also more involving to drive than recent Turbo iterations, which, for all their outrageous performance, tended to be a little... cold. This one delivers the most incredible bandwidth of any car currently on sale, especially in convertible form. One moment you're mooching along in surprising comfort, the next the horizon is being reeled in with a rapidity that is genuinely eye-popping. And, as ever, nothing accelerates out of a corner like a 911. Ballistic, breathtaking, brilliant.
£143,560. porsche.co.uk

Hard top, soft top, tops off... three performance cars that don't put a lid on pace



Track Car Of The Year

BAC Mono R

When the Briggs brothers – one a gifted engineer, the other a brilliant designer – alighted on the idea of re-creating the single-seater racing experience in a road-legal car, it could have been a fast but fragile one-trick pony. A decade and 100-plus cars later, the Mono R lands, sporting 44 new, bespoke carbon-fibre parts, each one enhanced with graphene for extra strength and even less weight. The car's ingeniously skeletal form was unimproveable, but it really is all new. The most visible addition is the ram intake, which delivers more high-pressure cold air to the Mountune-supplied 2.5-litre four-cylinder engine and ups the power output to 340bhp. Given that it weighs a scant 555kg, we're talking a power-to-weight ratio of 612bhp per tonne. And that is the stat to end all stats. *£190,950. bac-mono.com*

Super Sports Car Of The Year

Maserati MC20

Maserati has an allure that refuses to be extinguished. Less charitable souls might argue that this most esteemed of Italian luxury carmakers might now be past its sell-by date and, if the MC20 heralds yet another comeback bid, well, this time the company that brought us the A6 GCS, 250F and Ghibli really has come out fighting. Electrification is imminent, but for now let's enjoy a technically fascinating 622bhp twin-turbo V6, mid-mounted in a body that cleaves to fashionably reductionist design principles. The chassis is made of a light and strong carbon composite and has been codeveloped with racing expert Dallara, the gearbox an eight-speed dual-clutch set-up that's both ultrafast and smooth. The MC20 is classy, charismatic and alternative. *£187,000. maserati.com*



Bernie Ecclestone photographed in 1992

Lifetime Achievement Award

Bernie Ecclestone

Clever, colourful, controversial, enigmatic and ruthless, Bernie Ecclestone is the billionaire businessman who ran Formula One for 40 years and single-handedly transformed the sport into the hugely successful global franchise it is today. The former 'F1 supremo' currently lives in Switzerland with his wife, Fabiana, and last year the 90-year-old became a father once again. We asked writer and director Manish Pandey, who wrote the Bafta-winning documentary Senna, to pass on our congratulations – virtually, of course – and ask the motorsport magnate to reflect on his lifetime achievement. Bernie may have refused a knighthood in the 1990s, but he couldn't turn down a GQ Car Award...

Everyone knows I love Ayrton Senna, but my love for him was predated, by five years, by my love for Formula One and that love has endured for the quarter of a century since Senna's death. At the heart of that love is the man who created it all, Bernie Ecclestone. So much has been said and written about him that it is impossible to reconcile it all. But, last autumn, I had the joy of spending a month with him, listening to the story of it all. He is a very strong man who fears nothing. He balances intellect and emotion, his left and right brain working in total harmony, unlike many other "high-functioning" executives. He is incredibly sensitive and very emotional. He has the memory of an elephant. And he is very, very funny.

How does it feel to receive *GQ*'s Lifetime Achievement Award?
I'm hoping it isn't the end of my life!

Have you finally reached a point when you're comfortable looking back?
Obviously, my life has changed a lot in the last four years. It's much easier now. It's a different way of acting. When I was running Formula One, I was constantly growing the business and endlessly firefighting. But I'm in Switzerland now. Because of the pandemic, I've had a lot of time with my family. Both my girls were out here, as well as Fabiana, and [my son] Ace was born here. I've never been uncomfortable looking back, I've just been a bit busy.

It seems extraordinary, but you were at the first Grand Prix at Silverstone in May 1950. What do you remember about it?
I remember it very well. In fact, I was racing that weekend in a Cooper 500. There were no hotels. Some people were lucky enough to have a camper or something to stay in, but I slept in my car. I can remember it: it was an American Ford Custom. Alfa Romeo won the race. In fact, they were first, second and third, with no Ferraris entered.

You started as a car salesman, then a driver, a driver-manager, a team owner and then you ran Formula One. Was there always a grand plan?
No. Never. I used to deal pens in Petticoat Lane on Sundays, then motorcycles when I worked at the gas board, then used cars. I'm a dealer. Every situation I've faced, I've faced as a dealer. You have to know the price of what you're selling and you've got to work out the price someone is willing to pay for it. You're selling to people who are very smart. They're wide awake. So you have to be wide awake too – look for an opportunity and take it. But I'm also a handshake guy. Around the world people knew that, dealing with me, a handshake was enough. If you look at contracts, as soon as the ink is dry you've got a lawyer trying to find a way out of it.

Do you have a management style? You're one of the most successful businessmen and dealmakers in history, but I bet you've never read a single book on management or economics. What is your secret?
My secret is my handshake. People know they can trust me to do the best for everyone involved. People like to talk a lot. It's always better to do something than talk about it. If you're going to say you're going to do something, do it. I hate it when people say they're going to do something, then don't. I don't bother [with them] again.

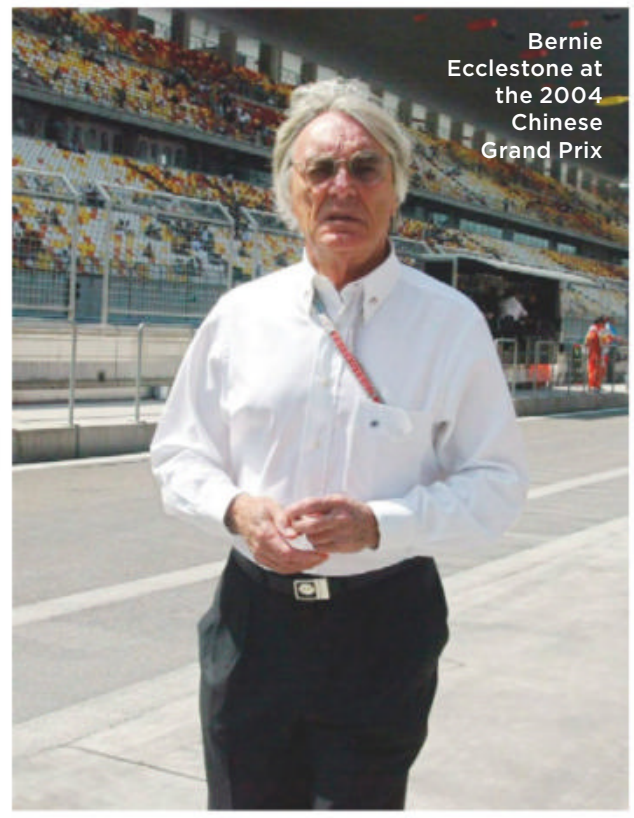
Who did you most admire? Was there anyone in your Formula One dealings who felt like a true match?
Mr [Enzo] Ferrari. He was very special and he helped me a lot. He taught me that the sport is on the table and the business is under it. Formula One is Ferrari and Ferrari is Formula One. It's that simple. Colin [Chapman] was another. He was a genius. A very quick driver too.

Has anyone ever outwitted you in a deal?
Probably. But I'd rather not remember.

Do you think you're misunderstood?
Sometimes I word things in such a way that they aren't taken how I meant them to be. I've got myself into a bit of trouble, but I can honestly say that a person is a person to me. I take people as I see them. It doesn't matter what colour they are or whether they're a man or a woman, their religion or nationality, whether they're rich or poor, their politics... Look at me: I'm below average height, but I don't feel bad about it. I'm exactly the same as someone who's taller. In fact, in an aircraft seat I'm more comfortable than someone who's taller. There are positives to everything. Nothing's all bad.

'I used to deal pens and used cars. Every situation, I've faced as a dealer'

You have a bit of a history of winding people up...
Poor Jean-Marie [Balestre, the ex-head of Fisa, Formula One's governing body]. Max [Mosley, Balestre's successor] and I used to have a bit of fun with him. I remember once we told one of the marshals in South Africa that he'd try to get up on the podium after the race but he wasn't authorised. He said, "Leave it to me." Then Jean-Marie went up and the marshal just grabbed him and sort of threw him off. He was very upset about that. Or when we used to do the block bookings for the hotels and got him a room overlooking a stairwell with a shared toilet. He didn't seem to like that at all. It was good fun in those days.


Bernie Ecclestone at the 2004 Chinese Grand Prix

You saw Romain Grosjean's accident in Bahrain, after which he just walked away. Others haven't been so lucky and many were close friends. How do you cope with loss?
I don't go to funerals. If you were close to someone, they knew you were close to them. What's the point of going to the funeral? They're dead. They don't know. When [François] Cevert was killed at Watkins Glen, it was horrible. He was basically cut in half. Carlos [Reutemann] came in and he was shaken up. They were mates. He told me what he'd seen, but then, when it was time to practise, he went back to the car. It sounds callous, but that's how it was in those days. You just carried on. It's much safer now, thanks to Sid [Watkins] and Max. But it will never be completely safe. You have to accept that.

What do you think of Formula One now? Do you miss being involved? Do you think it's being well run?
I miss some of the deals, especially with the promoters at some of the circuits – a few might have gone under if we hadn't been involved and helped a little – and the deals with some of the big sponsors, who've renewed for decades. I watch the races. And I still get the odd call for advice.

Would you have permitted the "End Racism" message at the beginning of the races?
A few years ago, there was an American football player [Colin Kaepernick] who used to kneel before matches. Well, there was a lot of anger from the authorities about that. One or two of the drivers in Formula One spoke out about it but, in the end, they didn't do it. They didn't kneel. They said they were asked not to. They didn't say who asked them not to – it wasn't me. I was out of Formula One. I can't see what's different about this year. Those awful things that have been happening in America have been happening for many decades. I suppose it's a good thing that people have been made aware of what's happening. I hope it makes a difference.

What will your legacy be?
If people want to remember me, they will, for whatever reasons.

Who is the real Bernie Ecclestone?
I don't know whether he exists. He's a bit flexible!

What is the best thing about your life?
Being a dad again, being around Ace. He's changing every day. I'm a bit upset with myself that I didn't spend enough time with the girls when they were babies. I was too busy building my business.

Photographs **Getty Images; Shutterstock**

Mercedes has incredible form when it comes to creating concept vehicles. The Vision AVTR goes further than usual by uniting the fine minds at the company's Advanced Design Studio with the creative freethinkers at Lightstorm Entertainment, the production company behind James Cameron's monster hit *Avatar* and its long-awaited sequels. Hence AVTR – although it also stands for "Advanced Vehicle Transformation".

Naturally, it's fully electric, with a motor on each wheel producing the overall equivalent of 479bhp. Actually, those are spheres rather than wheels and they can rotate through 30 degrees, enabling the AVTR to "crab" sideways. As for motive power, well, the EV world's dirty little secret is that batteries use rare-earth metals such as lithium and cobalt, which are difficult to mine and finite in supply. The AVTR uses graphene-based organic cell chemistry to get round this and it's also 100 per cent recyclable. Mercedes is addressing the need for a circular economy in the raw materials sector, so this is a potential game changer, as is conductive charging, which will replenish the batteries in 15 minutes, while the range is projected to be a seriously useful 450 miles. This particular aspect of the future can't arrive soon enough.

The AVTR's emphasis on efficiency applies equally to energy consumption per computing operation, another hot-button topic and one that'll be addressed by the arrival of AI in cars. It's also an exercise in biometrics and the AVTR plays with the idea of "neuromorphic hardware", tagging the car to the nervous system of the operator. The car's energy supply is also boosted by the 33 multidirectional "bionic flaps" on the rear, which act like supercharged solar panels.
mercedes-benz.co.uk

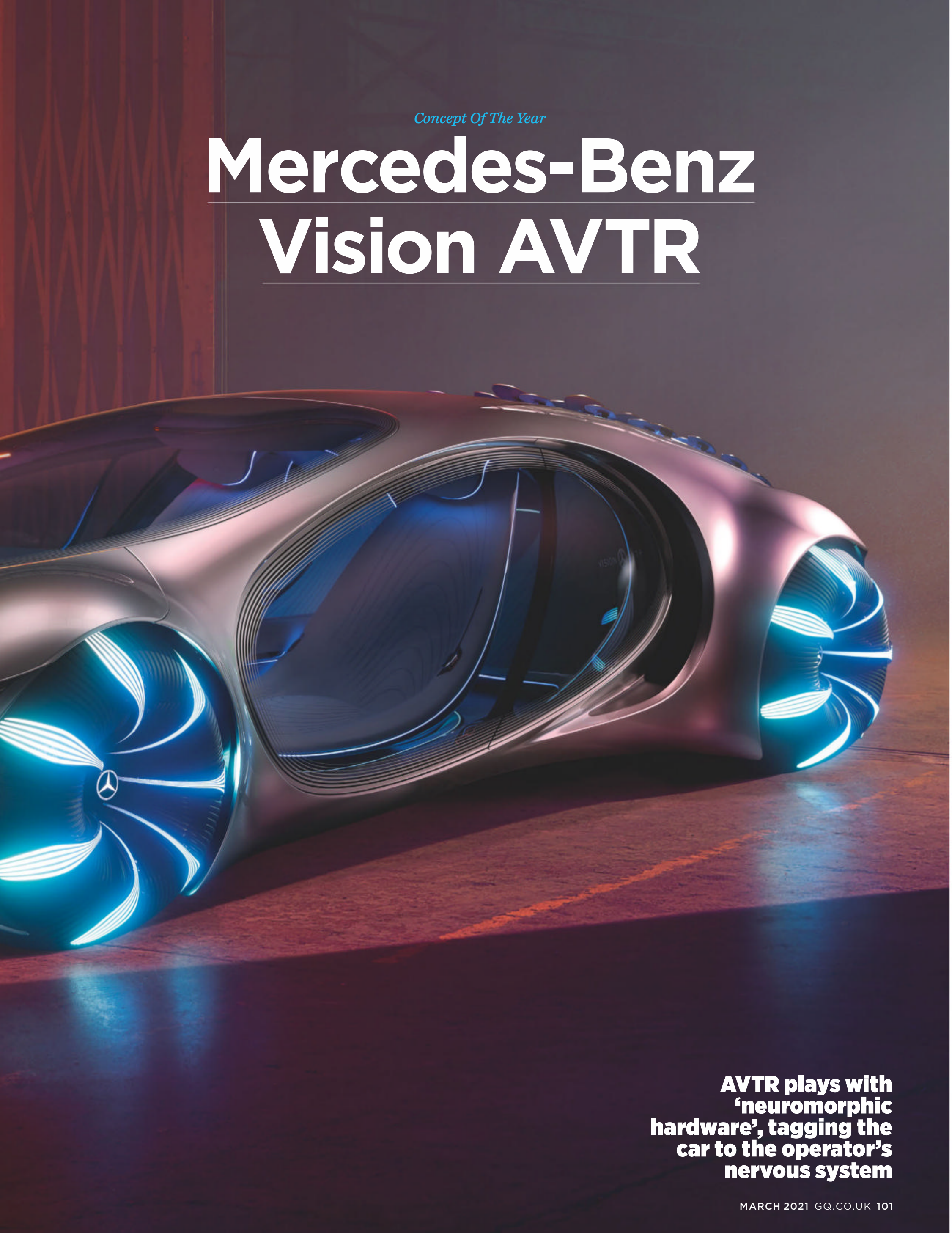


Spherical wheels allow the AVTR to 'crab-walk' sideways

Photograph **Philipp Rupprecht**

Concept Of The Year

Mercedes-Benz Vision AVTR



AVTR plays with 'neuromorphic hardware', tagging the car to the operator's nervous system

My name... is Michael Caines

From humble beginnings and having overcome a life-changing accident, Michael Caines is now one of the best and most well-respected chef patrons in the UK. He also has great taste in cars. Not a lot of people know that...

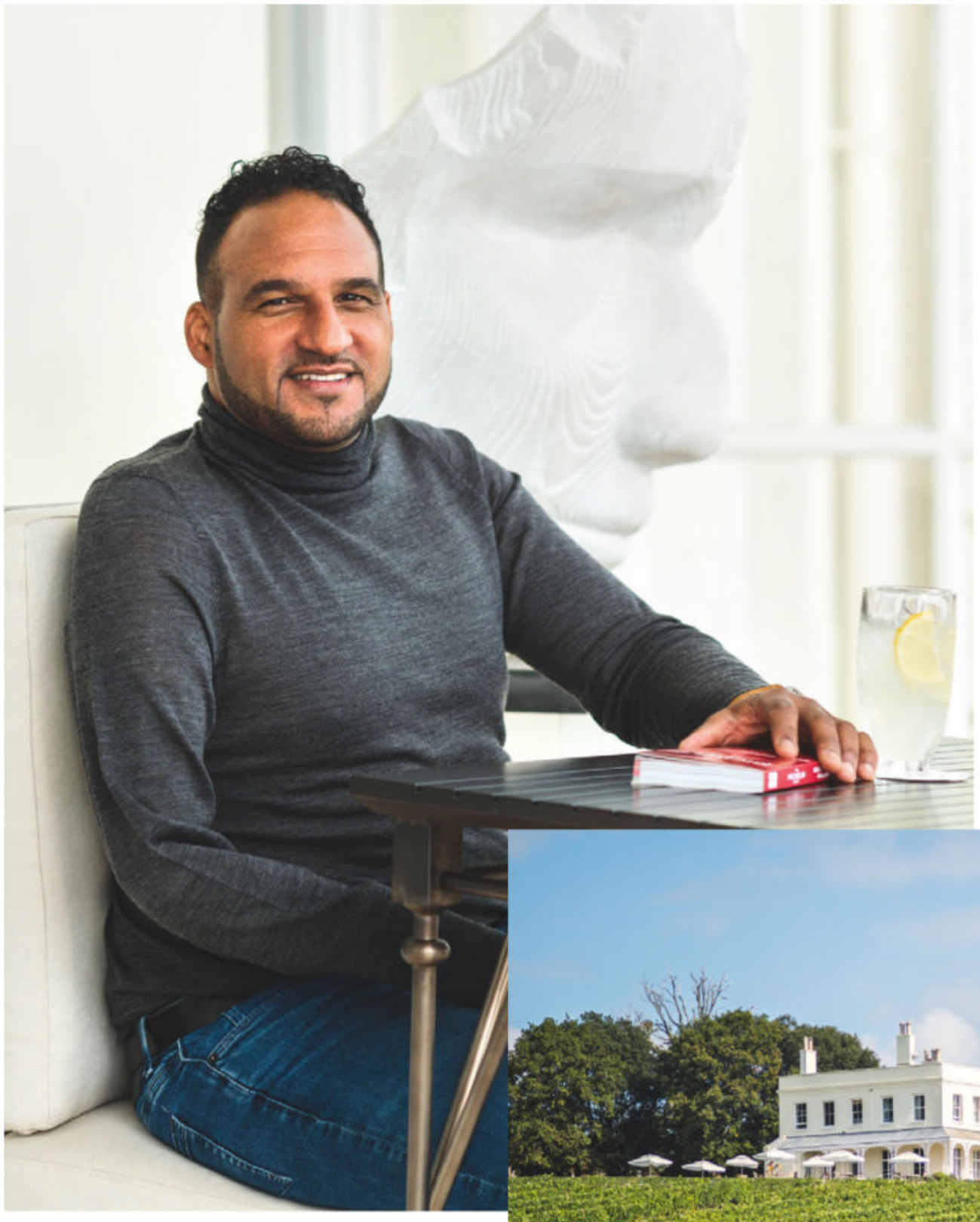
Story by **Paul Henderson** Photograph by **Andrew Shaylor**

Michael Caines, the chef patron of Lympstone Manor, started his career with leading Gallic gastronome Raymond Blanc at Le Manoir Aux Quat' Saisons in Oxfordshire. Inspired by "RB", Caines first moved to Burgundy, where his mentor arranged for him to work at the then three-Michelin star restaurant Côte d'Or, before travelling on to Paris, where he finished his culinary apprenticeship with the legendary Joël Robuchon, perfecting the kitchen skills he has used to such acclaim throughout his life.

And yet years later, despite his heavyweight haute cuisine connections and his devotion to the art of French cooking, the chef found himself being chased out of the country by the gendarmerie. Caines, laughing, takes up the story...

"I was driving a Porsche 911 Turbo at the time and a group of us decided to drive to France to watch the rugby," the 51-year-old explains. "We were all in decent cars on a run to Paris, but we got caught on the way down there. The police pulled us over, told us they were watching us – and they weren't joking. They followed us for the whole day, met us at every *péage* [toll] and eventually escorted us straight onto the ferry. We weren't racing, but they weren't taking any chances."

The lesson here is that if you don't want to attract unwanted attention on the autoroutes of France, don't travel as part of a supercar fleet on the weekend of Le Crunch. The other thing you shouldn't do if you don't want to be noticed is drive a lime green McLaren 600LT Spider. Caines agrees with the first point, but remains less convinced by the second. "Yes, it does look a bit lairy," he says, "but it's a car that just



looks right in that colour. It is the complete opposite of a boring car, so why would you get it in a boring colour?"

He makes a good point. Caines also surprised himself by choosing it. For most of his life, he has been a committed Porsche man. It's a love affair that started as an adopted child growing up in Exeter. He remembers having a poster of an air-cooled 911 Turbo on his bedroom wall and although his first car was a VW Polo, when he finally started making decent money as a chef he bought a Boxster, then a Boxster S, followed by a couple of 911s and finally a GT3. Not even the horrific car crash that cost Caines his right arm in August 1994 could put him off. "I just fell asleep at the wheel," he remembers, almost matter-of-factly. "I had been working long hours at Gidleigh Park and I was tired after being at a family christening in South Wales. It was my fault, not the car's."

Within two weeks of his accident, Caines was back in the kitchen of the Devon hotel and despite his disability he devoted himself to cooking. He spent more than 20 years at Gidleigh, winning the restaurant two-Michelin stars and earning himself a reputation as one of the country's best chefs. Then in 2015 he discovered what he describes as an "extraordinary and immense" listed property on the Exe estuary and decided to make it his own, following in the footsteps of Raymond Blanc by creating a magical country house hotel. Lympstone Manor opened for business in November 2016 and within six months had been awarded a Michelin star. To celebrate his success, last year Caines decided to buy himself another Porsche, this time a GT3 RS. At least, he tried to...

"I just couldn't find one," he says. "I even asked my friend Mark Webber [the ex-Formula One driver, now a Porsche ambassador] if he could help and the best he could do was find me a second-hand one. It was really disappointing, but then I saw the McLaren 600LT. I registered my interest, McLaren invited me to have a look and that was it. As soon as I saw it, my heart ruled my head and I had to get it. Yes, it was too expensive, but I could just about afford it and it makes me proud to have it. But I do feel I have earned it and what it does is keep me motivated, keep me focused and keep me pushing to make Lympstone better and hopefully land that second Michelin star and perhaps, one day, a third."

For Caines, that Michelin recognition is a major factor in driving him and his team to keep pushing their food forward and take Lympstone Manor to the next level. By being successful as a business, he knows he can dedicate more time and resources to perfecting his menu and delivering the standard of presentation and service that the *Michelin Guide* expects. "We want to offer our guests an unforgettable experience, just like Raymond always has at Le Manoir," says Caines. "And the restaurant offering is just one part of that. But I know that Lympstone can offer me the platform to get two stars, then hopefully a third."

And if he does win three stars, Caines knows exactly what he'd buy to celebrate that career-defining achievement. "It would have to be my absolute dream car," he says, almost too quickly (like any car nut, he has clearly thought about it), "the Porsche 918 Spyder. Three stars and that car... that would do nicely."

If he does win three Michelin stars, Caines knows exactly what he'd buy to celebrate: 'A Porsche 918 Spyder'



Chef patron Michael Caines pulls up at country house hotel Lympstone Manor in his McLaren 600LT Spider

Saturday chef, Sunday driver

James Martin has an incredible automotive collection, but the TV chef would swap them all for a Michelin star and a reasonably priced car (well, probably...)

Story by **Paul Henderson** Photograph by **Andrew Shaylor**

'I didn't have enough to do up the house and was living in a motorhome, but I had a Ferrari in a shed down the road'





James Martin with two of his 42-strong car collection, a 1965 Ferrari 275 GTB/C (also left) and a 1966 Ford GT40; (below) the chef also collects Michelin memorabilia, including this sign, mounted on the gates to his house

Last year, 15 of the most successful chefs in the country – the likes of Sat Bains, Tom Kerridge and Paul Ainsworth – met up for dinner at Daniel Clifford's two-Michelin star Midsummer House in Cambridge to chew the fat (metaphorically speaking), catch up and put the culinary world to rights. Over some good food and a few glasses, the conversation turned to their careers: failures, successes, the highs and lows of a hard-knock life in the boom and bust hospitality industry. Like Frank Sinatra, they all had a few regrets, but then again not too few that they couldn't mention them within their trusted circle.

James Martin, the undisputed king of Saturday morning cooking, listened to his friends before finally admitting his own disappointment. "I know it's been tough for you guys," he said in his familiar Yorkshire accent, "but don't forget I'm the only one here without a Michelin star." There was a stony silence… Then the whole table burst out laughing and launched a tirade of insults and derision in his direction. "I suppose I asked for it, really," Martin admits with a self-deprecating laugh.

And yet Martin hadn't said it to be funny or even to earn some sympathy. He really meant it. For all his "celebrity chef" status, the car collection (which we will get to) and the financial benefits of a career cooking on screen (from *Ready Steady Cook* and *The Big Breakfast* to *Saturday Kitchen* and the equally imaginatively titled *Saturday Morning With James Martin*), his biggest professional disappointment remains missing out on Michelin's seal of approval.

"It sounds weird for a chef who is nearly 50 to say, but after the first lockdown ended in the summer I fell back in love with food, more than ever," Martin tells *GQ*. "I wanted to be a chef from a very young age because I had a passion for it. But over the years you get distracted and dragged in different directions. Now I am back cooking at Chewton Glen Hotel, where I started my career as a pastry chef many years ago, and I couldn't be happier. I appreciate that the successes I have had from television gave me the opportunities I have now, but there is a part of me that does wonder what would have happened to me as a chef if I had turned left rather than right."

Regardless of what might have been, one thing is certain: if Martin had forsaken a career in front of a TV camera for one behind a stove, he wouldn't have amassed the car collection he has today. Fifteen years ago *GQ* visited him at his Hampshire home, when his 1955 Gullwing Mercedes-Benz 300 SL was his pride and joy. Since then, it would probably be safe to say his obsession has got a little out of hand. The list stands at 42 and pride of place now belongs to a stunning 1965 competition-spec Ferrari 275.

"I had money set aside to rebuild my house and I sold the Gullwing, but I ended up spending all the money on the 275. It's ridiculous because for five years I didn't have enough to do up the house and was living outside in a motorhome, but I had a Ferrari in a shed down the road."

The rest of his collection is a mishmash of classics (such as the 1966 Ford GT40, 1972 Ferrari Daytona and 1967 350GT Shelby Mustang), old school rally cars (Colin McRae's Ford Focus, Petter Solberg's Subaru and Paddy Hopkirk's Mini Cooper S from 1964) and sentimental keepsakes, including a version of his first car, a Vauxhall Nova, a load of Fiat 500s and a Citroën 2CV that once belonged to the late, great TV gastronaut Keith Floyd. "It still smells like Oddbins and is covered in dents from when he crashed it on the way back from the pub, but I absolutely love it."

So far, however, his dream car has eluded him. "The Ferrari 250 Short Wheelbase," he says wistfully. "I had a chance years ago, but I just couldn't afford it and it broke my heart. Now they are just silly money. My mate Ross Brawn [ex-Ferrari F1 team principal] has two of them and I keep asking if he wants to sell me one. He just laughs."

It's a shame that so many people seem to think he is joking, because when it comes to cooking and cars James Martin is deadly serious. Then again, as his chef friends remind him when they see his garage, he shouldn't expect much sympathy. GQ



Designer Of The Year

Ian Callum

This year, the visionary behind the astonishing Aston Martin Vanquish went back to the drawing board and somehow, impossibly, made it even better – in no fewer than 350 different ways. Here, he pulls back the curtain on a design methodology, honed across half a century, from which today's young car designers have so much to learn

Story by **Jason Barlow** Portrait by **Greg Funnell**



Elon Musk offered me a job many years ago, but I was too in love with the brand I was working for," Ian Callum admits. After 50-plus years in the business, 20 of them spent as design director for Jaguar, the garrulous and occasionally mischievous Scot is now stretching out in ways that the machinations of the car industry rarely allow – and letting off some creative steam.

"I don't want to get into corporate train interiors or kettles. I want to get into things that are born of artistry rather than pure practicality," he says. "This might be contentious, but I also believe that once you've designed a car, plus all the components and navigated the legislation, you can probably design most things. People talk about 'penning' a design and it's a word I loathe. The real strength in car design is in understanding how to get that notion into reality. It's a very, very complicated process."

Like all the greatest car designers, Callum is as much a problem solver as he is an artist. He's also a CBE, a rare accolade in the car design community.

'The learning never stops. You can't wait around for the muse to descend'

GQ has just specced a version of Callum's Aston Martin Vanquish 25 (official title: The *GQ* Specification Aston Martin Callum Vanquish 25 by R-Reforged), the first of many projects on his company's slate. "It's rare that a designer has a chance to retell the story of one of their own cars," he says. "I've wanted to do that for some time. Materials and technologies have advanced, allowing us to introduce these along with new ideas that weren't feasible when the car was launched 20 years ago."

We choose a potentially risky but elegant shade of brown for the exterior. Thankfully, Callum approves...



Congratulations on winning *GQ* Car Awards' Designer Of The Year. You are officially an automotive national treasure.

Thank you. I like to think that my own sense of discipline has rubbed off on other people. I read nice things on social media and it's heartening to know I've affected someone in a positive way. One of the greatest joys about designing is the joy you give to others. There's always a frustration too, because I always think there's a better answer to the work I'm doing. I look back and allow myself to think, "Yeah, you did good. Well done." But it's not really enough. It never is. >>



The GQ Specification Aston Martin Callum Vanquish 25 by R-Reforged might sit in the slipstream of reimagined cars such as Singer's masterful take on the Porsche 911, but there is one vital difference: it's been done by the man who designed the original. Ian Callum and his team claim they've made 350 alterations to the flawed but magnificent Vanquish, transforming the car's handling and ride, boosting the power output from that charismatic 5.9-litre V12 to 580bhp and sharpening the exterior design. Buyers can spec any colour they like, though Callum keeps a gentle hand on the tiller. This left-field British hero is enjoying a second moment in the sun... *£540,000. r-reforged.com*



Isn't that the lot of the creative person?
Probably. It could have been better, because you know more now and could have dealt with situations more effectively. If I'd dealt better with some situations that arose at Jaguar in the early days, it would have been an easier journey for me. But that's a different challenge. That's about politics. I just never feel comfortable that enough has been done. You always want to do a better job.

What's your greatest skill?
I need to be among other people to stimulate ideas and thoughts. The one thing I'm really good at is making judgement on other people's work, figuring out ways that ideas can then be improved. I'm a good editor, I guess. Sometimes I turn things on their head, but try to do so without any confusion. The creative side is so important to me. Creativity is the stimulus of life.

Do you create every day?
I try to draw or sketch every day, although it's not always possible. It's about getting what's in your head down on paper and really working things out. Have you read the book *How To Fly A Horse* [subtitled *The Secret History of Creation, Invention And Discovery* by Kevin Ashton]? It challenges the illusion that creative people have this moment of inspiration. Most creativity isn't like that. It's hard work. Often you realise that the idea you're working on is actually rubbish and you have to really work through it. I'm not happy unless I'm doing that. But it could be a Scottish, beating-up thing.

You're doing your own thing now. What have you learned?
I once had a hunger for materialistic things and, honestly, I've got everything I could ever have wanted. What's left is a pure creative urge. You're always looking for permission, for acceptance, especially in a corporate environment. I realise now I shouldn't have been looking for that so readily, so from now on I'm going to do what I feel is right, for nobody's else's sake. Now, when I walk away from something, I can say it was absolutely right, with no ambiguity. Corporate debate can be exhausting, but you learn to play the game. Some people I worked with were much more persistent and better at it than I was. I realised recently that the only thing I need to pursue now is a life of creativity. The learning never stops and you can't wait around for the muse to descend.

'The people at Glasgow School Of Art were fighting to get out of this greyness'

What were you hungry to do when you were young?
Prove to the world I was a good designer, to prove to myself I was, too. When I was studying industrial design at the Glasgow School Of Art, I was determined to be the best in class. I loved that place. The atmosphere was so conducive to creativity. I used to sit in the library and read all the Italian design magazines, despite not understanding a word of Italian at the time. Those three years in Glasgow were like being caught in a big, shining light. The people there were fighting something, pushing to get out of this greyness that had enveloped the UK at the time.







All Callum Vanquish 25 clients are invited to personalise their cars and can do so to an extraordinary degree. The man himself favours red, but GQ elected to take the Vanquish into territory we're pretty sure no one else has ventured: a brown exterior – which Callum calls 'Brown Sugar' – over a cognac interior

Do the basic principles of design always hold true?
Your eye changes. But what's fundamentally right will always be right and what's fundamentally wrong will always be wrong. Designers now are under such pressure. Either they don't know any better or they have no choice, but the result is something that screams at you. I'm not sure how many people really recognise true beauty now. I have conversations with people about a car I have reservations with and they say, "Isn't it great?" Because it's shouting at them. It's like Frankie Boyle. He's very funny and very clever, but he's vulgar. People seem to love vulgarity.

Isn't there room for "punk" in car design?
Of course. But you can do it with more elegance. The best punk songs had an underlying melody.

Now you've stepped out of it, to an extent, what's your opinion on contemporary car design?
A bit of a mess, really. I'd be hard pushed to name a new car I really want. I'd put the Range Rover in there, because it's got such a strong sense of discipline. I like the Jaguar F-Type, because I understand it. [*Laughs.*] Or a Porsche: what they do is exactly what I love. Again, it's about discipline and the current 911 is a beautiful car. I feel privileged to have been part of a golden era. I fear for those cars that we love. For most people at the top end of the business, they're just a money machine, a commodity.

Is car design properly respected? They are amazing devices, aren't they?
Ask Google. Ask Apple. Ask Dyson. They all had a look and thought, "This is hard work." That's why it hasn't happened for any of them. A car is the most complicated product in the world. It's more complicated than an aeroplane. Planes have to rely on very clever tolerances and the jet engine itself is a hugely complex piece of machinery. But as an entity a car has much more difficult dynamics to deal with. The current Ford Fiesta is the most incredible piece of automotive technology. What you're buying there is beyond belief. People have no idea. You've got about $200 to do the interior and if you can't then you won't survive. This is where the Chinese market is really going to hurt, because pretty soon they'll be doing an entire car for a few hundred dollars.

GQ MEN OF THE YEAR 2020

IN ASSOCIATION WITH BOSS HUGO BOSS

For this year's unique virtual presentation of the 23rd annual Men Of The Year Awards, GQ compiled a very special selection of winners' films – all available to watch at GQ.co.uk



Captain SIR TOM MOORE *Directed by* **Marie Schuller**

Captain Tom made headlines around the world walking in his garden, but, as *GQ* finds, that was just the start of his exercise routine...



Lashana LYNCH

Directed by **Greg Barnes**

We gave new 007 Lashana Lynch a polygraph test to extract all she knows about *No Time To Die*.



Ozzy OSBOURNE

Directed by **Jordan Vogt-Roberts**

The heavy-metal legend on dark magic and the true story of Black Sabbath's origins.



Michaela COEL

Directed by **Jade Ang Jackman**

Everyone wants to know what's on her mind – and famous friends have emailed to ask.



Lewis HAMILTON

Directed by **Tom Hingston**

The record-breaking racer on the politics, impact and importance of taking a knee in Formula One.



Marcus RASHFORD *Directed by* **Toby Dye**

With the help of fellow campaigner Jack Monroe, the footballer revisits his school and learns what it takes to cook a meal on a budget.

With special thanks to

BLACK dog

The P1800 Cyan is a refuge for anyone who thinks modern high-performance cars are a bit joyless

A past master remastered and a blast from the cinematic past

Restomod Of The Year

Volvo P1800 Cyan

Pretty, isn't it? Re-engineering/reimagining an old car with new parts and technology provides a refuge for anyone who thinks modern high-performance cars are a bit joyless. California-based Singer started something magical with its reworking of the Porsche 911 a decade ago, but top Swedish squad Cyan Racing has gone even further with its take on Volvo's elfin P1800 coupé. Only the roof pillars, handbrake and wipers survive from the donor car, whose new chassis is enveloped in carbon-fibre body panels. It feels spectacularly well made and engineered. It also weighs just 990kg, so the 414bhp produced by Volvo's 2.0-litre turbo is more than enough to provide truly vivid performance. That lack of mass is detectable in every aspect; less is most definitely more, even at six figures. *£380,000. cyanracing.com*

Icon Award

DeLorean DMC-12

It's 40 years since the DeLorean – the gull-winged dream car that turned nightmarish yet finds itself at such a curious nexus of popular culture that it's hymned by the disparate likes of Steven Spielberg and pop savant Gruff Rhys – entered production. John DeLorean was a visionary automotive engineer whose reputation remains permanently besmirched, prey to a series of plot twists that Hollywood has tried to nail but never quite managed. A charming maverick, he somehow persuaded the British government to fund his car and a factory in Belfast during the height of the Troubles, then ended up ensnared in an FBI cocaine sting as he tried to keep the accursed venture afloat. The DMC-12 itself risks becoming a footnote, but we guarantee you nothing turns heads like one of these. Ask Marty. *delorean.com*

As a statement, this is ringing the changes through the world's biggest megaphone

EV Of The Year

BMW iX

Crystal buttons and a wood centre console contribute to an EV that's much more than an eco drive

Photograph **Philipp Rupprecht**

Some observers – by which we mean 90 per cent of the internet – think BMW has lost its collective mind lately. What's with the gigantic twin kidney grille, the odd proportions and crazy surfacing? Car design in the 2020s, it seems, isn't about beauty, it's about making noise. The iX is BMW's new pure-electric SUV, so it's silent on the move. But as a statement, this is ringing the changes through the world's biggest megaphone. Powered by a dual-motor drivetrain, the iX has a power output of close to 500bhp, so it's fast. BMW promises a maximum range of 375 miles and if you can find a fast charger it'll replenish to 80 per cent in 45 minutes. But the main action is inside. The centre console's wood surface minimises the switchgear, while the iDrive controller and gear selector are rendered in crystal, as are the buttons to move the seats. The main touchscreen is a slender piece of high-technology sculpture. And the iX is supremely clever underneath, part aluminium, part carbon fibre. *£85,000. bmw.co.uk*



Gordon Murray's latest and greatest and the car with which he set the standard

Hypercar Of The Year

Gordon Murray Automotive T50

Can you name a sequel better than the original? *The Godfather Part II*, perhaps? The GMA T50 sits in the shadow of the car many cite as the greatest ever, the McLaren F1. Its creator is now revisiting that same far-out hypercar territory, refining the singularity of his vision yet further, but this time armed with the techno arsenal to *really* get the job done. "The new car will deliver what the F1 delivered, but it's better in every area," Murray tells *GQ*. "The fun thing is no one is doing what we're doing, a complete, driver-focused, analogue motor car." The T50, of which all 100 are sold, weighs just 980kg and its carbon-fibre chassis cradles a new 3.9-litre V12 that makes 650bhp and will rev to 12,100rpm. It has a six-speed manual gearbox and the fan at the back imports an aerodynamic device Murray devised in F1 40-plus years ago. *£2.3 million. gordonmurrayautomotive.com*

That $1 million car is now a $22 million machine and the F1's status as an all-time great is secure

Legend Award

McLaren F1

When Elon Musk sold his first company for more than £200m in 1999 he treated himself to a McLaren F1. He paid a million bucks for his, stuck 11,000 miles on it and eventually totalled it. The F1 is not for the faint-hearted and many experienced drivers have suddenly found themselves with their hands very full indeed. That's part of the attraction: its creator, Gordon Murray, wanted to deliver the most uncompromised driving experience imaginable. Despite being incredibly compact there's room inside for three occupants, the driver famously seated in the middle. BMW supplied a 6.1-litre 620bhp V12, one of the best-sounding engines ever made, and a unit that pulses with motor racing know-how. Musk recognised it as one of the car world's Holy Grails. Twenty years on, that $1m car is now a $22m machine and the F1's status as an all-time great is secure. Pretty soon it'll be the answer to the $64m question...

With thanks to James Cottingham at DK Engineering

From the hydrogen Hyundai to a bike that's a car and one beast of a bike...

Motorbike Of The Year

Aston Martin and Brough Superior AMB 001

We'll be honest: they had us at "Aston Martin's first motorbike", but that was just the start. The AMB 001 has been created in partnership with the recently revived Brough Superior, the legendary motorcycle maker that famously built "two-wheeled Rolls-Royces" between 1919 and 1940 (Lawrence Of Arabia owned eight) and only 100 units are being built. Beautifully sculpted, it features a titanium backbone frame and an aluminium fin that runs the length of the bike (taking design inspiration from Aston's Valkyrie) and is powered by a turbo-charged 997cc 8-valve V-twin that produces 180hp. Just don't try to ride it on the road: this is a track-only machine and you won't get much change from £100,000. Then again, can you really put a price on art? *£98,000. astonmartin.com*

Alternative Energy Car Of The Year

Hyundai Nexo

The great, the good, the government and Greta have all pretty much decided that cars of the future will be powered by electricity. By turning on, plugging in and kicking fossil fuels out, we will save both the planet and Jeremy Clarkson's petrol-powered soul. Hallelujah! But there is another horse in the race to reach an environmental Elysium that might be a better solution for our personal mobility needs: hydrogen, potentially a more efficient and practical alternative power source. And that's why we are giving Hyundai some much-deserved credit: at present the Nexo is one of only two hydrogen fuel-cell cars available in the UK, with the carmaker boldly going where only a few others have gone before. We intend to support it all the way. *£68,856. hyundai.co.uk*

Microcar Of The Year

Citroën Ami

Microcars aren't new, especially in France, and eco-conscious Parisians have long dealt with punitive tax and the impossible scarcity of parking spaces by driving what's technically known as a quadricycle. But Citroën's Ami is more than just a gussied-up four-wheel scooter. The world's most genuinely avant-garde carmaker is enjoying a range-wide creative renaissance and this little device – just 2.41 metres long and powered by a 5.5kWh lithium-ion battery – reconnects the brand with cheap but hugely charismatic forebears such as the 2CV (check out the hinged windows). Partly designed to entice car-averse generation-Yers behind the wheel, the Ami tops out at a heady 26mph, but it's an amusing and efficient way to shuttle between arrondissements. *£5,000. citroen.co.uk*

The dirtiest discipline in motorsport is cleaning up its act



New-School Rally Car Of The Year

Veloce Racing Extreme E

No more hand-wringing: Extreme E actively wants to repair and reverse environmental damage... by racing. Huh? The cars are fully electric, 536bhp rally-raid-style beasts and they'll compete in X Prix events consisting of qualifying, a semifinal and a final, contesting two laps across a five-mile off-road track. Each team has a male and female driver and the push to sustainability will be presided over by a panel of scientific experts. Ocean, desert, glacier, arctic and Amazon locations will host each of the five rounds, the whole circus moving between locations aboard the RMS St Helena, a converted Royal Mail cargo ship that also acts as a floating lab. Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg are among the team owners, while rising British star and W Series champion Jamie Chadwick will be competing for the Veloce Racing team, whose cofounders include F1 design genius Adrian Newey. *veloce-racing.com*

Old-School Rally Car Of The Year

Audi Sport Quattro S1 E2

When the original Quattro was unleashed on the world back in 1980, it not only revolutionised motor sport but had an era-defining impact on production car technology. By introducing an effective and reliable all-wheel drive system, Audi established itself as an automotive engineering pioneer, but what sold it to the car-buying public was what it could do in the hands of rally drivers such as Walter Röhrl, Hannu Mikkola and Michèle Mouton. However, if the first version was good, it was the final evolution of the Quattro – the S1 E2, designed for Group B competition, with a short wheelbase and more than 500bhp of unbridled power – that lives longest in the memory amid the filth and the fury of rallying's golden era. Iconic, terrifying, dangerous and breathtakingly fast, it was a beast in the body of a bulldozer and utterly unforgettable. *audi.co.uk* GQ

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Paul Henderson



+
Nobu and De Niro have done it again with their proud new hotel on London's Portland Square – p.120

Photograph **Clerkenwell Boy**

This month: Michelin-star food **delivered to your door** p.121 **Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall** fixes your diet for good p.122 **Tayer + Elementary** makes world-class cocktails look easy p.122

The Hotel

Would you open a new hotel now? No, because you're not Nobu and De Niro

Story by **Paul Henderson**



It takes a lot of confidence to open a multimillion-pound flagship hotel in the midst of a global pandemic, but the owners of Nobu Portman Square believe success always starts with sushi...

It took Robert De Niro four years to convince Nobu Matsuhisa to open a restaurant with him in New York. The actor was patient, the chef reluctant, but after a protracted courtship eventually De Niro picked up the phone and popped the question: "So, Nobu, how about it?" The rest, as they say, is *omakase* (and that legendary black cod).

Over a partnership that has lasted for 26 years, they opened 48 restaurants and 13 hotels together, but the happy couple aren't done yet. Despite both being in their seventies and navigating their way through the coronavirus pandemic, this past December they went ahead and opened what might be their most ambitious and impressive (and possibly expensive) venue to date: a 14th hotel, Nobu Portman Square. The top-line details are as you might expect: it's a 249-room hotel in London's Marylebone, featuring a ballroom (with room for 600 guests), a state-of-the-art gymnasium, a wellness centre and, of course, a 192-seat signature restaurant and bar (with an outside terrace). But it is the modernity of the light-filled architecture, coupled with jaw-dropping artistic flourishes – Jeremy Maxwell Wintrebert's glass-blown lighting sculptures and Ivan Black's dazzling kinetic installation in the lobby will be dominating your Instagram feed for months – that really makes a statement, introducing guests to Nobu Portman Square's understated elegance from the moment they arrive.

Above, right: Nobu Matsuhisa and Robert De Niro; (below) Matsuhisa Benedict with king crab

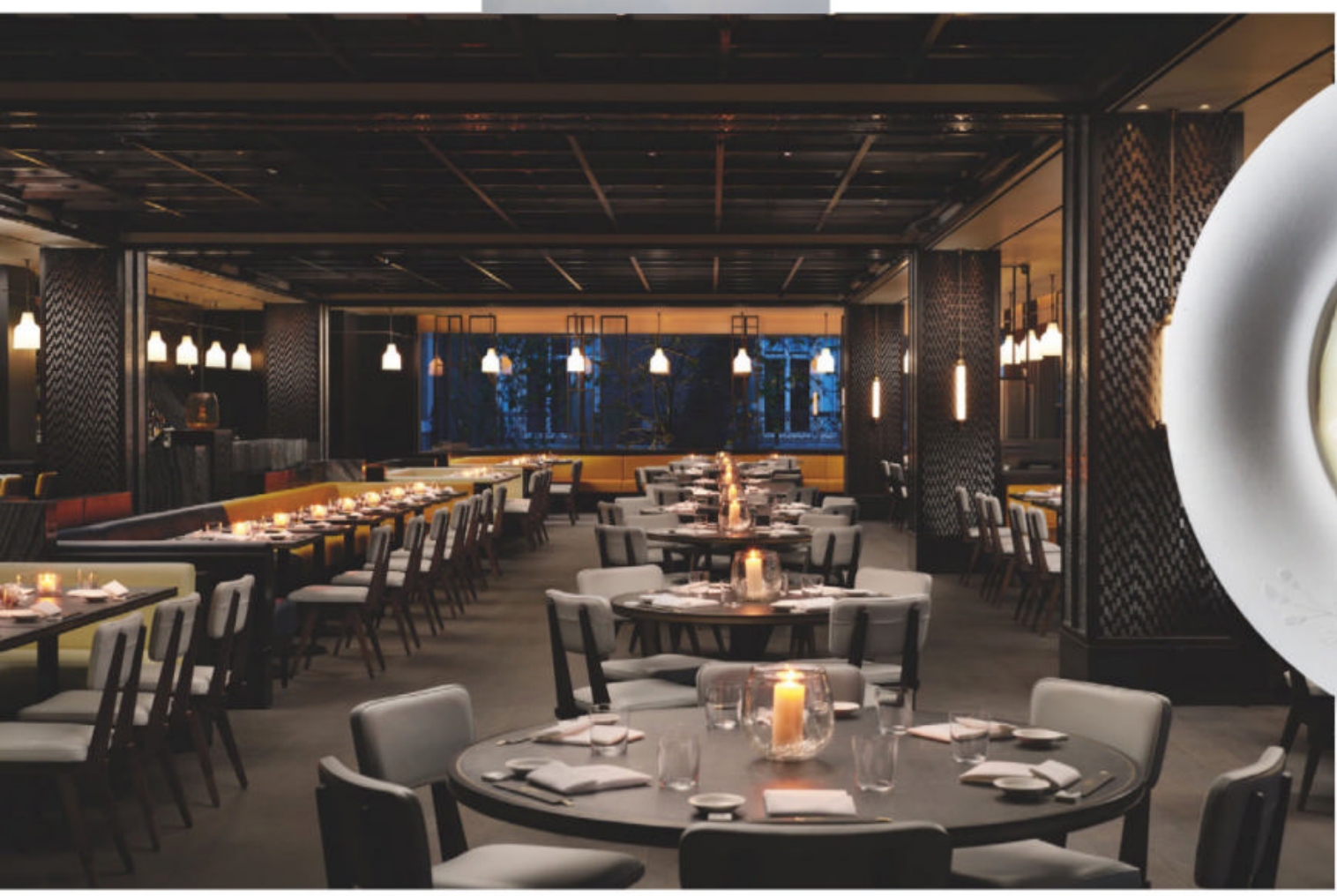


'It's all about the great food. That's what it comes down to'

The rooms themselves are simple but impeccably finished, with natural materials, neutral colours and minimal clutter. There are also subtle hints of Japanese arts and crafts throughout. By cleverly and successfully blending traditional minimalism with the conceptualised creative flair of David Collins Studio throughout, the result is a sophisticated and contemporary space that sets a new flagship standard for the Nobu brand.

However, according to the owners, what will guarantee the hotel's success is the same thing that has driven the business from the outset. It's what brought Nobu and De Niro together in the first place and still attracts guests from Milan to Manila, Dallas to Doha. "It's all about the great food. That's what it comes down to," De Niro tells *GQ*. "What I really love is that, wherever you are in the world, if someone says, 'Let's go to Nobu,' you know you are going to eat well, in a beautiful restaurant and have outstanding service. That makes me feel proud... especially when it's our own hotel."

FROM £354 PER NIGHT. 22 PORTMAN SQUARE, LONDON W1. 020 7208 6000. *LONDON-PORTMAN.NOBUHOTELS.COM*





From left: The 192-cover restaurant at Nobu Portman Square; Yellowtail Jalapeño

Photograph **Steve Neaves**

The Pub

Aim for The Star Inn, Harome

The Yorkshire bolthole continuing to redefine the 'gastro pub'

Although chef patron Andrew Pern has since added shinier stars to his stratosphere, it was this 14th-century thatched pub on the outskirts of the North York Moors that first shot the Yorkshire-born bon vivant into orbit, in 1996, and it has enjoyed celestial success ever since.

While The Star's signature dish – grilled black pudding and pan-fried foie gras with Pickering watercress – will appeal to the more carnivorously inclined, its vegetarian offering is equally inspired. It is rare for a pub of this calibre to appease both locals and touring gastronomes, but The Star is a place where you can just as easily mark a milestone with its ten-course tasting menu as enjoy the laid-back table d'hôte-style "locals" over a pint of Pillar T'Post.

Find yourself enthralled by the Yorkshire Wolds and wilds? Luckily for you there's room at the inn, which not only gives you the all-clear to indulge in the wine pairing, but also means you'll be rewarded with a stonkingly good full Yorkshire the following morning. **Millicia West**

MAIN STREET, HAROME, YORKSHIRE YO62 5JE. 01439 770397. *THESTARATHAROME.CO.UK*



The Roundup

+ Fine dining at home: three Michelin-star chefs who deliver



Northcote At Home
by Lisa Goodwin-Allen

northcote.com/at-home

The setup: Lisa Goodwin-Allen has been cooking at a Michelin-star standard for nigh on 20 years and, judging by the produce-focused seasonal dishes on her fine-dining at-home range, it's safe to say she's got the hang of it now.

Eat this: Select from the Northcote menu or pick one of Lisa's "Gourmet Boxes" (*£90 for two people*).

Drink that: If you are ordering a box, you can choose a wine pairing per course, chosen by Goodwin-Allen and Northcote's sommelier via The Wright Wine Company in nearby Skipton (*from £67*).



Simon Rogan
At Home

simonroganathome.co.uk

The setup: Initially, Simon Rogan's boxes were limited to the Lake District, close to his Cartmel restaurant L'Enclume, but the food was so good and the demand so great that he has ended up offering his service nationwide.

Eat this: His three-course seasonal menu (*£45 per person*) changes each week and includes dishes such as ham hock terrine, guinea fowl with artichokes and a lemon verbena posset.

Drink that: Valentin, L'Enclume's charming head sommelier, can choose a wine flight to accompany your menu (*from £40*).



Hame
by Adam Handling

adamhandling.co.uk/hame

The setup: *GQ*'s 2020 Best Restaurateur started offering at-hame (Scottish for home) meals during the first pandemic lockdown and perfected the art in the second. So fans of Handling's flagship Frog restaurant can now order his signature dishes as well as some great set menus.

Eat this: Choose from Sunday Lunch (*£130 for two people*) or the Who Are You Trying To Impress? date-night special (*£305 for two people*).

Drink that: With Handling-esque attention to detail, he also offers pre-bottled cocktails from his Eve Bar. Try the Pandan Old Fashioned or the Eve Grounded Negroni (*£24 each*). **PH**

The Bottle

Régnié, Domaine Julien Sunier Beaujolais, France (2018)

Bright, vivid and bursting with character, this organic red proves as expressive as its star vintner

In case you hadn't noticed, Beaujolais is having something of a resurgence. Once the punchline to every wine snob's favourite nouveau joke, this little area north of Lyon (don't call it Burgundy) might not take itself too seriously, but that doesn't mean it isn't producing some premium and deliciously drinkable bottles. Take talented winemaker Julien Sunier, for instance. Something of a rock star in the region, Sunier is committed to organic farming on his relatively small (just over five hectares) *domaine* and has become adept at creating fresh, floral and elegant wines such as this medium-bodied 2018 Régnié. Energetic, expressive and versatile, it delivers a hit of raspberries and cherries alongside an earthy spice that pairs perfectly with grilled meats. Order yourself a few bottles and you are guaranteed to have the last laugh. **PH**

£21.50. AT BERRY BROS & RUDD. *BBR.COM*

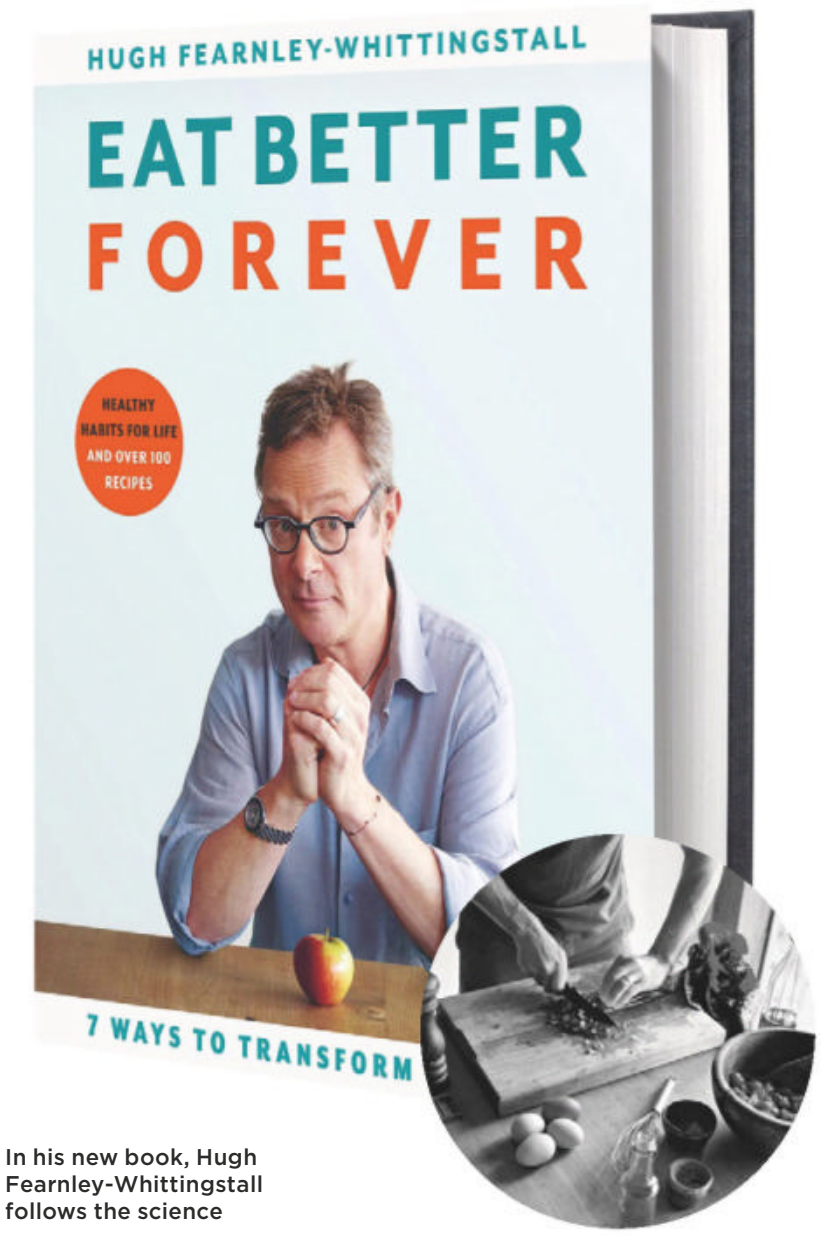


The Book

A good diet is for life... literally.

Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall on making change that runs the course

I am lighter, healthier, fitter and less anxious than I have been in years." So says Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall in the opening of his latest book, *Eat Better Forever*. And it's clear he's telling the truth. The market for healthy eating, diet and wellness books might seem saturated, but this latest offering from the River Cottage creator is loaded with useful, scientifically backed advice on how to improve your diet with seven long-term changes. From eating more whole foods and reducing refined carbohydrates to varying our diet as much as possible and eating more mindfully, the science is all there, but so are the fantastic recipes, such as spicy cabbage and carrot kraut, homemade Asian hotpots, Moroccan spiced lamb steaks and a mushroom and black rice "chachouka". Of course, Fearnley-Whittingstall's politics are ever present. "We have been thrown out of kilter by the industrial food industry," he tells *GQ*. "But I hope this book helps people find ways to look after themselves with food, while acknowledging a few modern hazards. Before you even start worrying about calories and carbs, ask yourself what should be the fundamental building blocks of your diet. Think hard about what food you eat; not just when you eat and why, but be conscious of how and what you eat and make sure that the mast you tie yourself to is not for the benefit of a short-term diet, but for the long haul." **Cass Farrar**



In his new book, Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall follows the science

EAT BETTER FOREVER: 7 SIMPLE WAYS TO TRANSFORM YOUR DIET BY HUGH FEARNLEY-WHITTINGSTALL (*BLOOMSBURY, £26*) IS OUT NOW.

The recipe: Roots, bangers and beans from Eat Better Forever

A well-seasoned sausage can go a long way. In this hearty winter stew, they partner with thick-cut vegetables and creamy white beans in a one-pot dinner that needs no accompaniment

Ingredients

(serves four)

2tbsp olive or vegetable oil

6 pork sausages, cut into 4 pieces

Splash of dry cider or white wine (optional)

2 onions, chopped

2 medium carrots, thickly sliced

2 celery stems, chopped

½ head of celeriac or **2** medium parsnips, peeled and cubed

2 medium potatoes, scrubbed or peeled and cubed

400g tin of beans, such as cannellini or kidney

500ml hot vegetable or chicken stock (or hot water)

Sea salt and black pepper

Chopped parsley (optional)

Method

Heat 1tbsp of oil in a large saucepan. Add the sausage and cook over a medium heat, turning often, until well browned.

Add cider or wine (or a splash of hot water from the kettle) and cook for a minute or two, stirring and scraping up any nice bits of browned sausage meat from the base of the pan. Transfer the sausages and pan juices to a dish.

Heat another tbsp of oil in the pan. Add the onions, carrots and celery and cook for 10 minutes or so, until softened.

Return the sausages to the pan with their juices and add the celeriac or parsnips, potatoes and beans.

Add a pinch of salt and a grinding of black pepper and pour in stock or water to almost cover everything. Bring to a very gentle simmer.

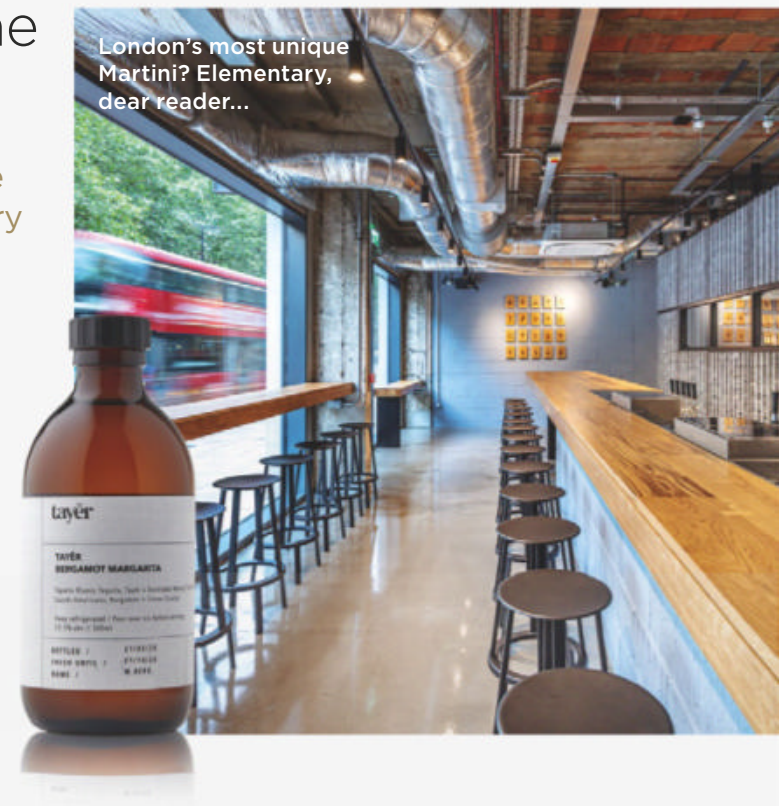
Cook uncovered very gently for about 40 minutes, until everything is tender. (Or cook with lid on in the oven at 140C.)

The potato should have broken down a little and thickened the sauce. If not, mash some of the vegetables and beans against the side of the pan with a fork and stir in. Scatter over some chopped parsley and serve.

The Bar

Tayer + Elementary: two world-beating bars in one

When Tayer + Elementary opened on London's Old Street in 2019 it became the capital's buzziest spot. Almost two years on it's been crowned the fifth best bar in the (entire!) world for 2020 and has two equally beloved concepts under one roof. Where Tayer is the backroom destination, promising elaborate tasting menus and drinks pairings, Elementary is the all-day affair upfront, where the execution and accessibility is so impeccable you ought to consider this review a public service announcement. Elementary is, genuinely, an everyman's bar, despite what the concrete-chic decor, foreign rap soundtrack and East London location might suggest. Deliciousness is at the heart of proceedings, with a rotating menu of classic cocktails, served from taps. From a G&T to an Old Fashioned via a Negroni, all are complex in flavour but simple in presentation. But before you even look at the science lab-style whiteboard menu behind the bar, you must order the legendary One Sip Martini, complete with blue cheese-stuffed olive as a tiny aperitif. And don't forget the small plates. Golden fried chicken, made with vodka-spiked batter, comes absurdly crisp and dusted in an addictive spice mix, while the lobster tostada delivers wizard-like levels of balanced complexity in a mere mouthful. **Kathleen Johnston**



London's most unique Martini? Elementary, dear reader...

152 OLD STREET, LONDON EC1. *TAYER-ELEMENTARY.COM*

Small Bites

Three post-lockdown recommendations...

And what to order when you (finally) get to go



Gordon Ramsay Burger at Harrods

The king returns to the capital with his world-famous Las Vegas concept. Hellfire wings, badass burgers, loaded dawgs and cement-thick shakes are the stars of the show.
Standout dish: You've heard about the £80 burger, right?
87-135 Brompton Road, London SW1. 020 7225 6800. harrods.com



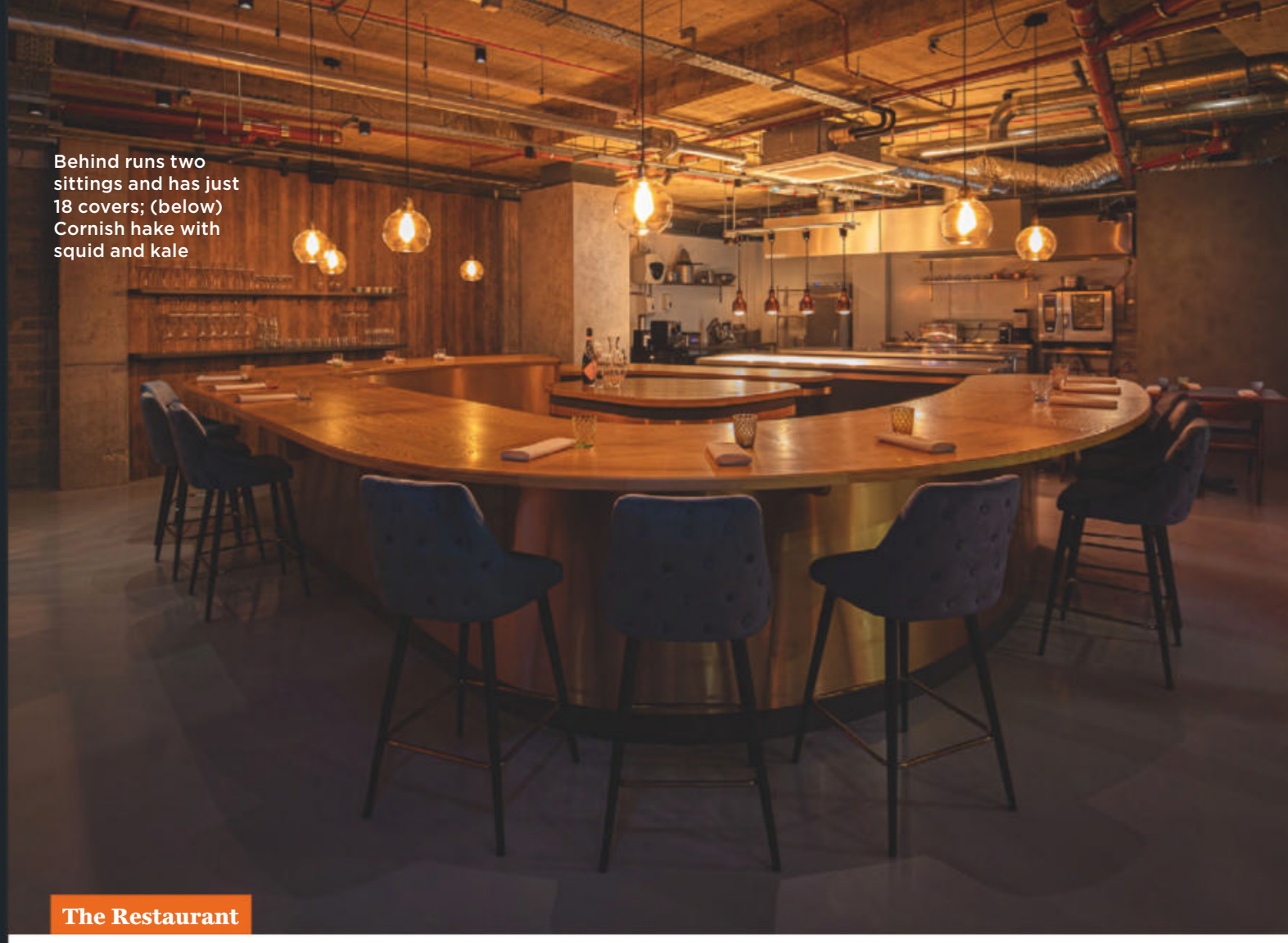
Kol

Ex-Noma Mexico chef Santiago Lastra's long-awaited and eagerly anticipated Kol (which takes its name from the Spanish word for cabbage) features modern Mexican fine dining at its ambitious best.
Standout dish: Langoustines, smoked chilli and sea buckthorn tacos.
9 Seymour Street, London W1. 020 3829 6888. kolrestaurant.com



Cafe Bao

Not even a pandemic halted the demand for Bao buns. Its new all-day branch brings Yoshoku cuisine to London's King's Cross and doesn't disappoint.
Standout dish: The fried chicken XO butter Kiev and the Baofiteroles.
Unit 2, 4 Pancras Square, London N1. baolondon.com



Behind runs two sittings and has just 18 covers; (below) Cornish hake with squid and kale

The Restaurant

No chef left Behind! Andy Beynon shoots for the stars in 2021

Ambition prevails as Michelin comes knocking

Story by **Ailis Brennan**

I want to get two Michelin stars here," says chef-owner Andy Beynon. It's a bold statement, particularly in these times, but not entirely unexpected. Everything about Behind, Beynon's new restaurant in London's Hackney, goes against the particularly rough grain of the past 12 months and does so with palpitation-inducing audacity. A "chef's table" concept with just 18 covers (one sitting at lunch, one at dinner), it serves eight-course tasting menus in by no means the most glamorous part of London. It's a daring business model, but one that Beynon chose to persevere with at the pandemic's height, while most fine-dining folk were furiously "pivoting" from truffled terrines to takeaway burgers. Beynon knows his stars – his CV touts stints alongside Jason Atherton, Claude Bosi and Michael Wignall – and Behind's seafood-focused menu shows it. Towered on a shellfish-buttered English muffin, an exhilaratingly fresh bite of mussel tartare rushes with the fragrant salinity of Cornish seawater. Silky brown crab is covered with a spiced plum jelly veneer, a pairing that plays out with even more zing between the white meat and fresh fruit counterparts on top. Earthy delights come courtesy of "mushrooms on toast": hen-of-the-woods smothered in full-bodied cep custard, with a sourdough cracker and seductively brothy mushroom tea.

Behind isn't really a chef's table, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. The room is large and certainly able to accommodate more than a dozen or so diners sitting intermittently around an expansive counter located quite some distance from the kitchen (there is a real chef's table, but it seats six at a push). But what should feel austere is instead warm: music hums above the low chatter and succeeds in dispelling awkwardness, while Beynon and his brigade swap over-the-counter theatrics for intimate chats with diners as they hand-deliver food. GQ

20 SIDWORTH STREET, LONDON E8. *BEHINDRESTAURANT.CO.UK*







Maxx Royal Kemer on Turkey's Turquoise Coast features three private beaches and a spectacular bar built over the bay on an outcrop of rock





ROYAL FLUSH

Maxx Royal Kemer on the Turkish Riviera has been dealt a winning hand: beautiful beaches, seven incredible restaurants, four fantastic pools, a world class children's club and its pocket ace: year-round great weather just four hours from London

Without really making much of a fuss about it, the people behind Maxx Royal Resorts have, over the last few years, been quietly reinventing the Mediterranean holiday. At its two sites – 55 miles apart, either side of Antalya on Turkey's sunny south coast – it's taken the concept of the all-inclusive and elevated it to something sleek and modern, all contemporary rectilinear design and upscale luxury.

Maxx Royal Kemer, just south of a pretty little marina town of the same name, is a case in point. Set over 28 sprawling acres, it's an immersive destination for the whole family and it really does contain multitudes: including three beaches, four pools, seven incredible restaurants and eleven striking bars.

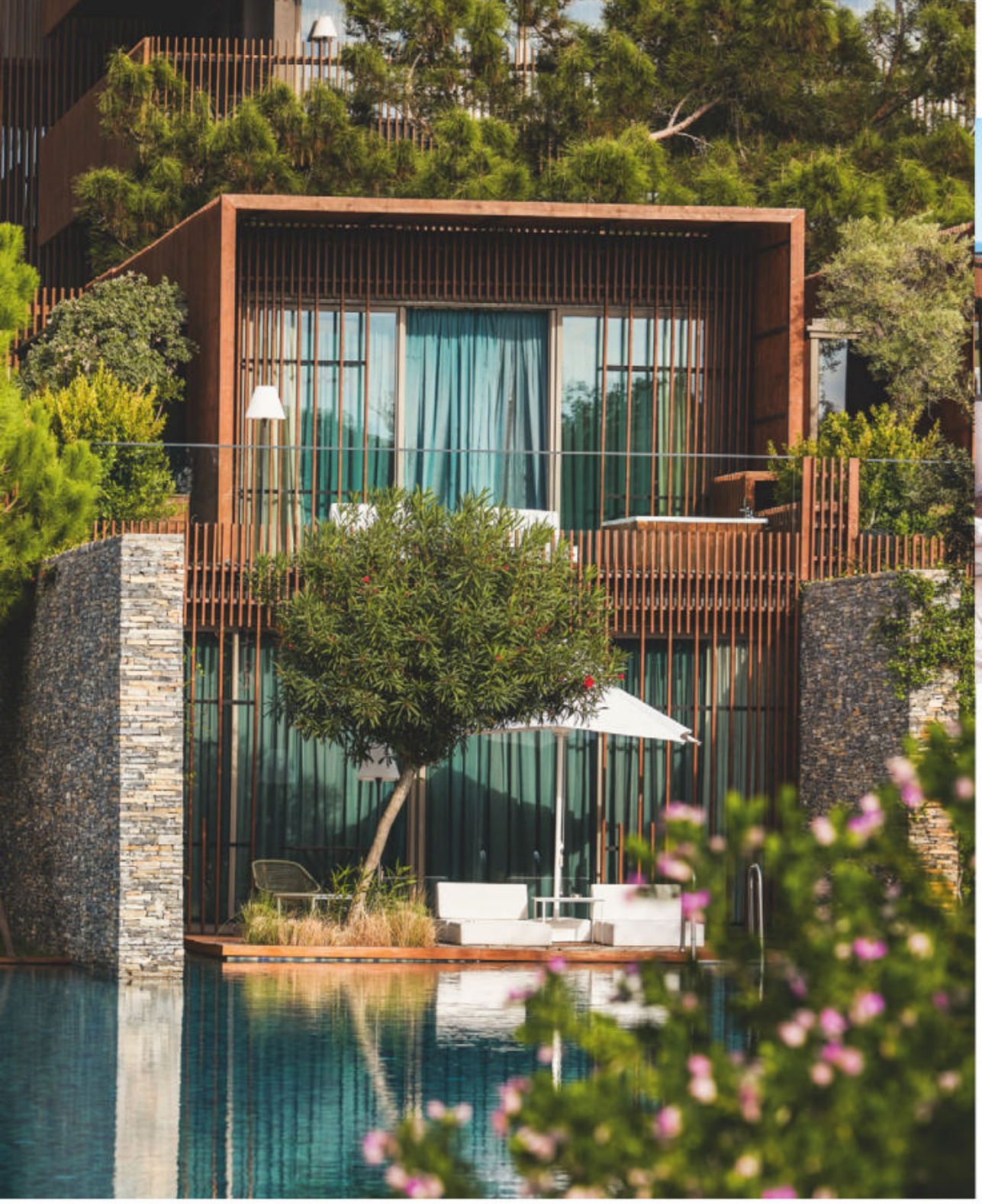
Throughout, the design is slick, understated and elegant. Straight-lined Scandi-influenced wooden detailing meets modernist drystone walls to give an international feel. To experience the resort at its best, book one of the beachside villas, each of which opens on to a pool and provides access to a secluded private beach and one of its ultra-cool cuboid cabanas – the grandest beach huts you'll ever see.

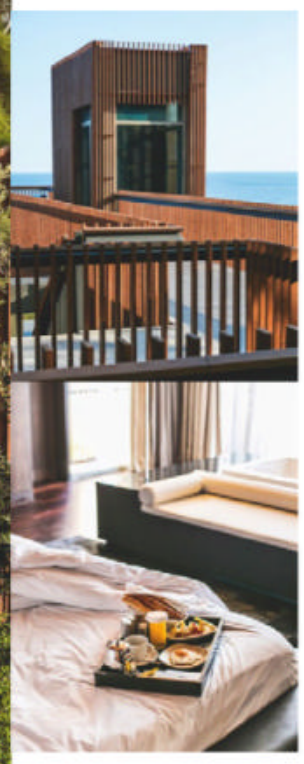
Run by a team that understands a whole-family holiday depends upon a brilliant children's club, Maxx Royal Kemer doesn't attempt to cater for all the young ones with a one-size-fits all approach. Instead, the astonishing fun palace, Maxxiland, is divided into sections for toddlers, older children and teenagers. It has its own cinema, a massive playground and the list of activities is almost endless: pirate days, ghost hunting, mini discos and cooking courses, not to mention an exhilarating aqua park with its aptly named slides, Turbulence, Space Hole and Kamikaze. What's more, the teenagers' space will have even the surliest adolescent smiling, thanks to laser tag, darts, Playstations and table football.

Of course this kind of well-thought provision for children liberates their parents, guaranteeing time do what they want. And this is where Maxx Royal Kemer really comes into its own.

First and foremost, obviously, is the beach. They call this stretch of shoreline the Turquoise Coast for a reason; the water sparkles with the colour of exquisite jade and there's barely a ripple on the surface of the bay. Lush forest and hard, handsome rocks frame the beach beautifully and there would be no shame in spending your whole trip lazing on one of its loungers.

To do so, though, would be to miss out on the resort's many diversions. Whether it's off-road cycling tours of the local countryside, yoga, Crossfit or kick boxing





Inside and out, Maxx Royal Kemer takes its cues from modernist and Scandinavian design

classes or a round of tennis on its superb hard courts, this is a fantastic destination for sports enthusiasts. Throw in sailing and surfing lessons and there's enough to have you working up a sweat throughout the whole trip.

Mercifully, there's also a world-class spa in which to unwind afterwards. The Aven Royal is a high-tech pleasure palace and it's got the lot: saunas, Turkish baths and massage rooms, which allow you to choose from an extensive menu of treatments, including luxurious Rhassoul mud therapies.

And then, of course, there is the food, which is worth the trip itself. Maxx Royal Kemer is the kind of resort that has a standalone patisserie, an in-house chocolatier and a little joint that turns out homemade ice cream. And the savoury food is even more exciting. As well as a huge dining court, where expert chefs put together seafood specialities, classic Italian dishes and delicious Anatolian cuisine, there are three separate fine dining restaurants for big nights out. Azure Japon turns out pretty plates of super-fresh sushi, while Bronze Steak House on the sea-front terrace serves a long menu of different cuts. Most exciting of the lot, though, is the haute cuisine of Michelin-starred chef Alfredo Russo. Totally modern and considered down to the last detail, Russo's eponymous restaurant perfectly captures the spirit of the whole place. **GQ**

They call this stretch of shore the Turquoise Coast for a reason

+90 242 444 6299. *MAXXROYAL.COM*



GQ Partnership

\+

Full house

Maxx Royal Kemer has stacked the deck when it comes to resort amenities



Dining

Whether it's a trattoria serving classic Italian cuisine or the brilliant Bronze Steak House, an al fresco Japanese sushi joint on the beach or a fine dining restaurant from Michelin-starred chef Alfredo Russo, the resort's seven must-try restaurants have something for everyone.



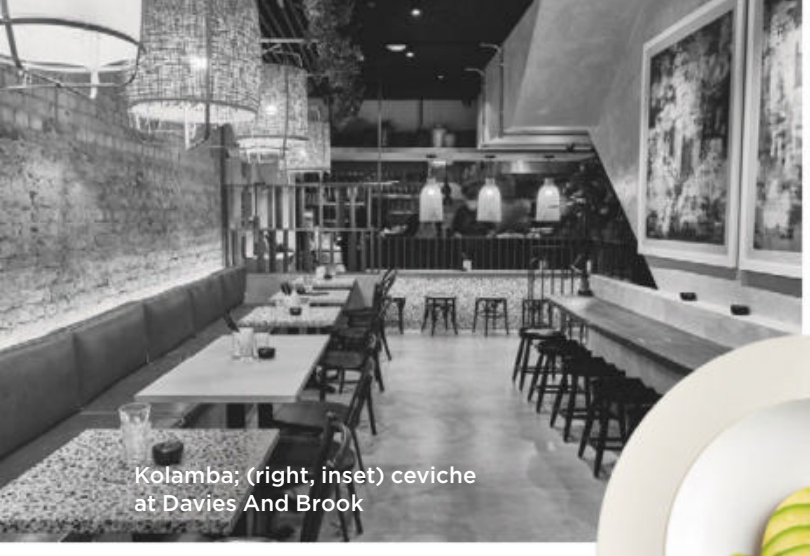
Aven Royal Spa

The facilities at this sumptuous retreat include Turkish baths, massage rooms and a high-tech cosmetology centre. Those in search of renewal should try the special detox programme or if it's pampering you're after go for one of the luxurious Rhassoul mud therapies.



Black Diamond

An ultra-hip open-air bar that's been built spectacularly on a rocky outcrop at the end of one of the resort's beaches, Black Diamond is the place to go for sundowners and late-night revelry. The cocktails here are first class.



Kolamba; (right, inset) ceviche at Davies And Brook





Boli and epa at Akoko



Amazónico

While many sectors of the economy have been hit hard by the global pandemic, hospitality has perhaps suffered more than most. And yet despite all the challenges our nation's bars, restaurants, hotels and pubs have faced, many have persevered, adapted their businesses, donated their services, supported their employees and demonstrated a resilience that can only be admired... and celebrated. So here, presented in association with the support of our partner Veuve Clicquot, is the shortlist for the 2021 *GQ* Food & Drink Awards.



Veuve Clicquot

PRESENTS

GQ

FOOD & DRINK

AWARDS

2021



Carmen at Swift Shoreditch

Best *RESTAURANT*

- **Casamia, Bristol** casamiarestaurant.co.uk
- **Davies And Brook, London** daviesandbrook.co.uk
- **Lake Road Kitchen, Cumbria** lakeroadkitchen.co.uk
- **Trinity, London** trinityrestaurant.co.uk
- **The Wilderness, Birmingham** wearethewilderness.co.uk

Belvedere *BEST BAR*

- **Dukes Bar, London** dukeshotel.com
- **The Gate, Glasgow** thegateglasgow.com
- **Kwant, London** kwantlondon.com
- **Swift Shoreditch, London** barswift.com
- **Under The Stairs, Edinburgh** underthestairs.org

Best *FRONT OF HOUSE*

- **Richie Corrigan at Daffodil Mulligan, London** daffodilmulligan.com
- **Kevin Dow at The Gannet, Glasgow** thegannetgla.com
- **Tom Eulenberg at Cirque Le Soir and Ours, London** cirquelesoir.com; restaurant-ours.com
- **Tom Fogg at Cora Pearl, London** corapearl.co.uk
- **Seng Khou at Meraki, London** meraki-restaurant.com

Best *INTERIOR*

- **Folie, London** folie.london
- **Hélène Darroze At The Connaught, London** the-connaught.co.uk
- **Kolamba, London** kolamba.co.uk
- **Spiritland Royal Festival Hall, London** spiritland.com
- **Wilder, London** wilderlondon.co.uk

Veuve Clicquot *INNOVATOR*

- **Hospo Live** hospolive.com
- **Tom Kerridge for Meals From Marlow** tomkerridge.com
- **Asma Khan for Darjeeling Express** darjeeling-express.com
- **Brodie Meah and Max Venning for Shop Cuvée** shopcuvee.com
- **Charlie Mellor for Big Night** bignight.app

Best *RESTAURATEUR*

- **Philip Howard and Rebecca Mascarenhas for Elystan Street and Kitchen W8, London** elystanstreet.com; kitchenw8.com
- **Nisha Katona for Mowgli Street Food** mowglistreetfood.com
- **Paul Milsom for Milsom Hotels** milsomhotels.com
- **Stevie Parle for Pastaio, Craft London, Palatino and Joy, London** stevieparle.co.uk
- **Nico Simeone for Six By Nico** sixbynico.co.uk

Best *SOMMELIER*

- **Frederic Brugues at Sketch, London** sketch.london
- **Lukas Hyner at Belmond Le Manoir Aux Quat'Saisons, Oxfordshire** belmond.com
- **Georgios Iordanidis at Zuma, London** zumarestaurant.com
- **Sabrina Manolio at Margot, London** margotrestaurant.com
- **Ryosuke Mashio at Umu, London** umurestaurant.com

Best *OVERALL EXPERIENCE*

- **Amazónico, London** amazonicorestaurant.com
- **The Idle Rocks, Cornwall** idlerocks.com
- **Pollen Street Social, London** pollenstreetsocial.com
- **Scott's, London** scotts-restaurant.com
- **Thyme, Gloucestershire** thyme.co.uk

Best *CHEF*

- **Sally Abé at Harwood Arms, London** harwoodarms.com
- **Mark Birchall at Moor Hall, Lancashire** moorhall.com
- **Claude Bosi at Bibendum, London** claudebosi.com
- **Santiago Lastra at Kol, London** kolrestaurant.com
- **Lorna McNee at Cail Bruich, Glasgow** cailbruich.co.uk

Best *HOTEL*

- **Belmond Cadogan, London** belmond.com
- **Birch, Hertfordshire** birchcommunity.com
- **Chewton Glen, Hampshire** chewtonglen.com
- **The Pig At Harlyn Bay, Cornwall** thepighotel.com
- **Stock Exchange, Manchester** stockexchangehotel.co.uk

Best *BREAKTHROUGH*

- **Akoko, London** akoko.co.uk
- **Ravneet Gill** ravneetgill.com
- **Kol, London** kolrestaurant.com
- **Mei Mei, London** meimei.uk
- **Seabird at The Hoxton, Southwark, London** thehoxton.com

Best *PUB*

- **The Black Bull, Cumbria** theblackbullsedbergh.co.uk
- **Freemasons At Wiswell, Lancashire** freemasonsatwiswell.com
- **The Olive Branch, Rutland** theolivebranchpub.com
- **The Pony & Trap, Bristol** theponyandtrap.co.uk
- **The Royal Oak, Wiltshire** royaloakswallowcliffe.com

Sustainability *AWARD*

- **Karma** karma.life
- **Natoora** natoora.co.uk
- **Neat Burger, London** neat-burger.com
- **Publik, London** publik.london
- **Watergate Bay, Cornwall** watergatebay.co.uk





Lobster (below) and Humm Dog with fried chicken (below left) at Davies And Brook

The judges

Introducing our panel of industry experts, the leaders in the world of hospitality, interiors and food and drink, tasked with choosing the very best of this year's impressive shortlist



Alexei Rosin

After more than two decades at Moët Hennessy, Alexei Rosin is now the managing director for UK and Ireland, where he oversees Moët & Chandon, Dom Pérignon, Veuve Clicquot and Hennessy Cognac.



Dylan Jones

Now in his 22nd year as Editor-In-Chief of *British GQ*, Dylan Jones is also chair of London Fashion Week Men's and the Hay Festival Foundation and a board member of the British Fashion Council.



Oliver Peyton

Oliver Peyton has been a fixture on the food scene since his first restaurant, Atlantic Bar & Grill, in the 1990s. A judge on *Great British Menu* since 2006, he is cofounder of hospitality group Peyton And Byrne.



Skye Gyngell

Australian-born Skye Gyngell first made her name at Petersham Nurseries, helping it gain its first Michelin star in 2011. Since then, she has opened her own restaurant, Spring, at London's Somerset House.



Ravinder Bhogal

Ravinder Bhogal is an award-winning writer, chef and restaurateur. Her first restaurant, Jikoni, opened in London in 2016 and currently operates as an at-home dining concept, Comfort & Joy.



Agostino Perrone

Agostino Perrone has held the position of master mixologist at London's multi-award-winning Connaught Bar (which won another *GQ* Food & Drink award just last year) since it first opened in 2008.



James Cochran

Previously of James Cochran EC3, The Ledbury and The Harwood Arms, James Cochran is inarguably one of the most exciting chefs on the circuit. His London restaurant 12:51 opened in August 2018.



Honey Spencer

Sommelier Honey Spencer is founder of Bastarda – a concept pop-up seeking to unite creative talents in the worlds of food, wine and art – and wine director for The Palomar, The Barbary and Evelyn's Table.



Rose Murray

Rose Murray is founder of These White Walls, the luxury interior design studio behind Hide restaurant. Upcoming projects include a hotel in Italy and a selection of private dining rooms in Hong Kong. GQ



Joe Biden beside Marine One as vice president, Washington, DC, 2014

American carnage: can Biden mend these disunited states?

How do you follow that? After four years of political vandalism, the 46th president has a plan: an administration of competent, faceless operators, a government whose first and only job is to pick up the pieces and the refound faith that voters of all persuasions will reward prosperity

Story by **Michael Wolff**
Photograph by **Alex Majoli**

Photograph **Magnum**

Biden argues the deeply contrarian thesis that the federal government is effective

Among the many perplexing things about the new political world for some former Trump White House staffers is that Joe Biden has largely picked noncontroversial people to fill the places in his administration. It is not only that this gives the Trumpers few issues to get their teeth into – that is, in right-wing parlance, to weaponise the Biden team – but it seems mystifying to them that there might be a political strategy and world view that does not court and thrive on conflict. What, after all, is the point of politics?

Biden's generally unobjectionable, if not bland, choices have been confusing to many liberals too. Given the opportunity, why wouldn't you confront the defeated leviathan with social justice fire and fury and a landing force set to undo, as fast as possible, whatever can be undone?

But Biden seems to be having none of this. Unlike everyone else to the left of far right, Trump might truly not occupy most of the space in Biden's head. Or, in some extraordinary act of political will and discipline, he is simply determined to just ignore him, pay no attention to the last nutso four years.

The Biden administration is, so far, largely made up of second- or third-string players from the Bill Clinton and Barack Obama administrations (which is what Biden himself was). Yes, a retread. But where Clinton and Obama were both making statements about independence from the Establishment and about up-to-the-minute voices and about being the new guy in town, Biden is saying quite the opposite: it's back to business as usual here inside the Beltway.

Which is pretty astonishing. I can hardly think of another political moment in modern presidential history when you could proudly turn to the insiders, pros and bureaucratic apparatchiks to front your administration.

As with Trump, pundits missed the attraction to Biden's dinosaur attributes

In that sense, the contrast with the Trump administration could not be more profound. That was an administration based – if it was based on anything besides Trump's immediate hankerings – on an utter absence of experience, expertise and know-how. Here were outsiders and amateurs not remotely interested in being professionals. Their credibility came from neither being knowledgeable enough, nor attentive enough, nor judicious enough to be serious government operators (certainly that was how one achieved credibility with the know-nothing, attention-deficit, unreasonable president). Now, overnight, they are replaced with earnest and largely faceless career government employees, all practised and proficient in their specialties.

In this – in the pure relief and the stunned silence that has greeted the survival of liberal democracy – Biden has somehow managed to avoid the change-now, change-at-any-cost, we're-the-fuckers-in-charge-now wrath of all the many divas of his own party, who have been, so far, little more than perfunctory in their objections to his embrace of a deep-down pre-Trump status quo. Is this strategy on Biden's part or default?

It's not hard to envision that if there were no Trump and there were no left-wing pressure and if the last generation of anti-DC politics had never occurred, this is the kind of administration Biden would have naturally assembled. That's just the fact: he's a 78-year-old man who has worked on Capitol Hill or, a mile and a half away, in the White House since he was first elected to the United States Senate at the age of 29. After nearly 50 years you might reasonably be forgiven for not being much aware that there could be another way of life. Biden is a man, one of the last, who openly believes what no one is uncritically allowed to believe any more: that the federal government is an effective and largely well-intentioned operation. That's the deeply contrarian thesis he is arguing – tragically out of touch or audaciously cunning.

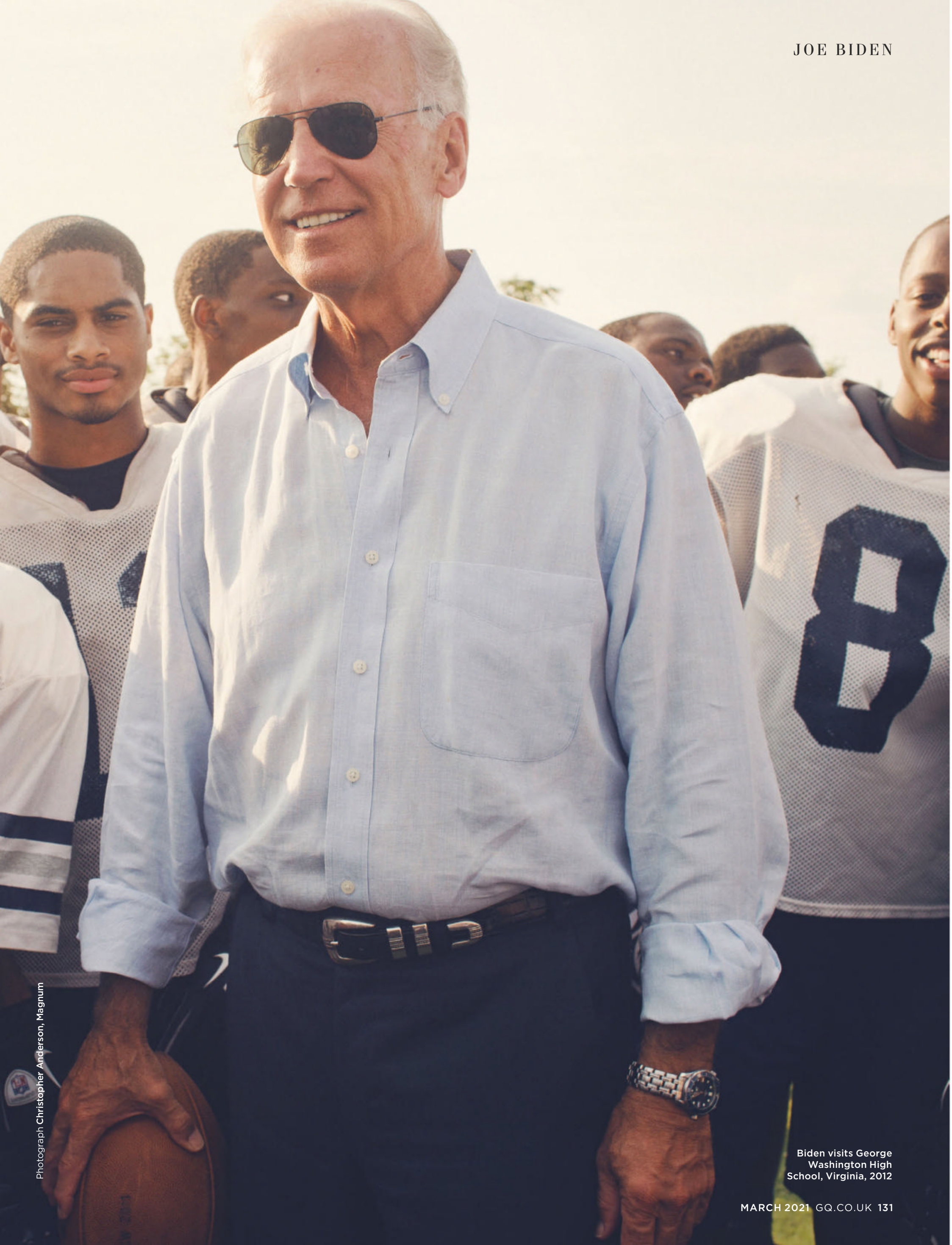
Trump leaves the White House in high and bilious dudgeon, with apparently no intention of retreat, no less retire. He is sure to seize great new media opportunities and to barnstorm every high-capacity red-state stadium. His method will be to bait and goad and provoke the new government – to draw out his opponents and turn them into his enemies. But that is a lot harder to do if the other side is faceless. Here, in Biden's design, is the everyday, going-to-work, steadily humming, substantially boring, win-some, lose-some, back-to-normal-business bureaucracy against the one-man disrupter to whom, ever so unruffled and boring, it does not pay much attention.

Biden simply does not rise to the Trump bait. The former president's tricks and powers are hardly to be discounted in this next, umpteenth fight of his public life – who can possibly predict what Trump-style train wreck and novel outrage will weirdly delight a weird public? But the Biden thesis is an eminently arguable one. Emerging from death, turmoil, lockdown and the fear of Covid, the greatest sustained upheaval of quotidian life since the Second World War, the most basic desire will be for stability and escape. In this, Biden, otherwise too old, too vague, too disengaged, is Eisenhower: trustworthy, calm, feet on the ground and with a twinkle in his eye, a man you can count on for not too much disruption.

This strategy – or is it just basic temperament? – serves in Biden's fight against his other primed and ready opponent, the Democratic Party's left wing, likely as determined as Trump to challenge the Biden plan for a good and earnest federal government. The Democratic left wing emerges from the 2020 election with both a now-or-never need to assert itself and with the whittled-down House majority – the Republicans have clawed back swing districts – exposing its vulnerabilities. In two years' time, the mid-term election will be a three-way battle, pitting the Biden thesis both against the left wing and against >>

Biden is determined to ignore the last nutso four years



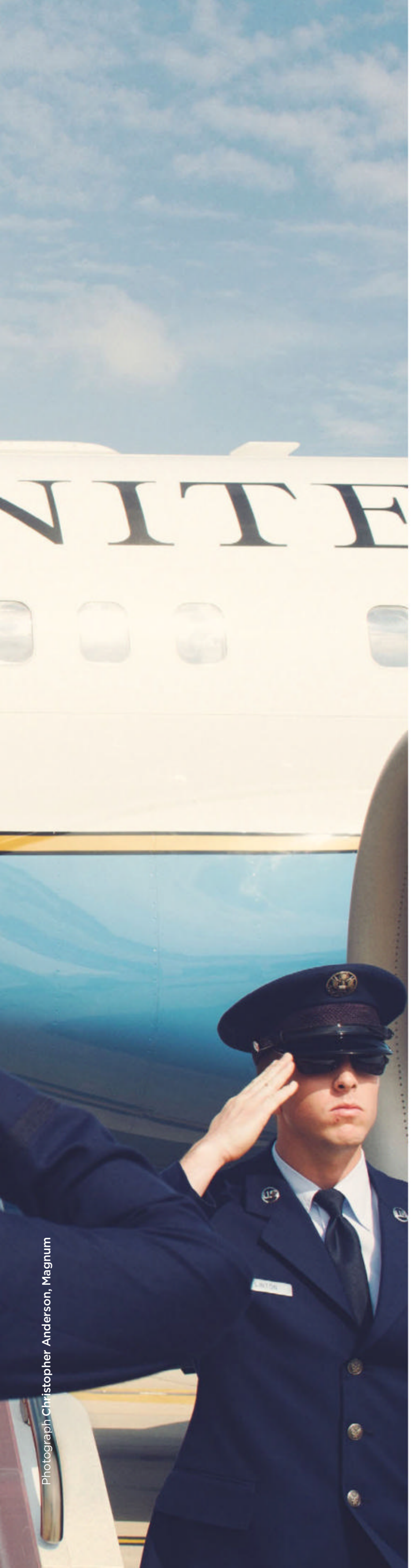


Photograph **Christopher Anderson, Magnum**

Biden visits George Washington High School, Virginia, 2012

The Democratic Party's left wing is likely as determined as Trump to challenge the Biden plan

Biden disembarks from Air Force Two, Maryland, 2012



Photograph Christopher Anderson, Magnum

>> Trump. Hereto it is the counter-zeitgeist that Biden will rely on, that the left and its identity-this-and-that agenda will lose its primary races to a new, Biden-style let's-just-get-along equanimity. Biden is playing the exhaustion card.

In some sense, this goes to what are undoubtedly his strongest political beliefs, a kind of bedrock liberalism for which, again, he may be among the last proponents. When all is said and done, it is the job, the noble job, of government to pick up the pieces. Good times can take care of themselves, but in bad times the only thing that stands between hope and faith and accelerated breakdown is a government that recognises its existential responsibilities. It is not just that there are few people who believe this any more – except a 78-year-old who can remember when almost every liberal believed this – but that the nature of those responsibilities and the mechanics of them have become so much more complicated. It is not clear that anyone knows how to deliver existential services nor that the electorate would recognise them if they received them. But maybe comes the moment comes the man.

It is worth again noting the unlikely rise of Joe Biden. Few candidates, other than Trump, have so defied the expectations of experts, pundits and media. Biden brought nothing to the 2020 race that would have been considered a forward selling point. If there is someone more out of it in modern political terms – its style, language, aspirations, technology – I can't think who. Indeed, as far back as 1988, when he first ran for president, he seemed even then too uncool and hokey. In some sense, Biden's entire career, a dedicated get-along-to-go-along climber up the greasy Washington pole, has been at odds with the define-yourself-against-something politics that has been the foundation of every notable political career of the last several generations. Biden was, at best, humoured in his dreams for the presidency by the cognoscenti, but never taken seriously. But it's also worth noting that while everybody who knew anything during the 2019 primary season was waiting for him to die a natural political death, he remained, through pooh-poohing and primary defeats, the steady leader in national polls. Again – as with Trump – the pundit class missed, or dismissed, the public's clear and steady attraction to Biden's dinosaur attributes. And it is pretty safe to say that he was not offering anything other than dinosaur attributes: he knew Washington, he knew government, he could make it work and, as a corollary to that, he was hopelessly sentimental about it.

Biden genuinely believes the Trump voters are not lost to the republic

He was also at extreme odds with every obvious interpretation of the present state of American political life. There was Biden, at one furthest pole, with faith in liberal democracy; there were, at the other side, two inimical sides of American culture about to commence a civil war.

Biden does genuinely and, again, almost uniquely seem to believe that the 74 million Trump voters are not lost to the republic – even that his job is to win them back. For every liberal, the Trump base, the Trump deplorables, indeed virtually every Trump voter of every stripe, represent a black hole of sympathy and comprehension. On what logic, on what basis of human connection and concern, could they have voted for someone so obviously crazy and malevolent? Biden, out of generosity or political tradecraft, sees a portion of the 74 million as perfectly redeemable. They can be counted on to vote with their pocketbooks in the best liberal trade-off between ideological purity and self-interested consensus. Quite a few white working-class voters, racist or otherwise, will return to the Democratic Party for a tangible paycheque and benefits bump. A forcefully advancing economy – one that, ideally, advances more evenly across the demographic divides – wins you lots of friends.

The secret of successful government is about what your country can do for you. Of course, that sense of broad government value is exactly what the past generation of politicians has failed to deliver on – hence the current mess. Is Biden any different, any less hamstrung by his own demanding base and a recalcitrant opposition, any more able to see the forest for the trees than other politicians?

It's a further cockeyed bit that Biden seems to yet retain genuine affection, no matter how much they have tried to wound him, for his former Republican colleagues in the Senate. In the modern liberal world, Republicans in Congress are even more hated than the 74 million. But Biden may remain the last loyal member of the Senate club – that is, when being a member of it was a more important attribute than the politics that got you into it, when Washington was a shared business and backscratching paid dividends for everybody.

The essence of the Trump message and its powerful attraction was the promise that you could return to something that had been lost. (For Trump, it was a kind of Rat Pack sensibility.) Liberals, of course, were contemptuous of this: nostalgia for the past versus their determination to race on to some ever-altered place. But, in this, Biden's message and promise isn't that different from Trump's. He too is a man from another age – a Capitol Hill of cordial colleagues – a better one, in his eyes, and he is going to see if he can marshal its virtues once again.

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- THE CRACKS INSIDE TRUMP'S WHITE HOUSE **(Michael Wolff, November 2020)**
- JOE BIDEN WILL WIN BECAUSE HE BELONGS TO A WORLD BEFORE TRUMP **(Michael Wolff, August 2020)**

Joe Biden's VP represents many milestones for the office, but look past gender and race and what appears is an astutely balanced politician, auditioning for president

'Kamala Harris wants the top job. She knows it. Biden knows it'

Story by **Marie Le Conte**

It may be easy to forget now, but Joe Biden having Kamala Harris as his vice president wasn't always a done deal. Although the pair had known each other for a long time, through Harris' friendship with Biden's son Beau, neither considered the other to be the obvious choice. On the one hand, she took a long time to nominate him as the Democratic candidate; despite multiple calls from Team Biden ahead of Super Tuesday last March, Harris only threw her weight behind him when it had become clear he would win. On the other, his aides and family hadn't appreciated the blistering attack she'd launched on him during the first primary debate and thoroughly studied every potential candidate before eventually picking her.

Still, they are now in it together, two halves of the ticket that saved America. How will their partnership work? At their first joint event, Biden said, "I asked Kamala to be the last voice in the room, to always tell me the truth – which she will – challenge my assumptions if she disagrees, ask the hard questions, because that's the way we make the best decisions for the American people." Warm words as they were, they did not tell us much about the role she would play in his administration. Instead, a better pointer would be his relationship with Barack Obama and how close the pair grew to be. As one of his advisors told *Politico* last year, "He had a very idealised view of what this relationship is and could be. The intimacy he had with Obama is so important to him and was guiding him since the beginning."

This is partly why he picked Harris to begin with. Although Californian Representative Karen Bass was starting to emerge as a favourite, Biden ruled her out as he did not know her well enough and wanted someone he was "simpatico" with. This is good news for Harris: she presumably does not want to spend four years on the sidelines and having a president set on a solid working relationship is encouraging. Still, the question is: what will she do with that power? Even now, it is not clear what she stands for, despite having had a long career in the public eye. Accused of flip-flopping during her own run for the presidency, she originally sponsored Bernie Sanders' Medicare For All bill and vowed to abolish private healthcare insurance, before releasing plans that saw private insurers retain an important role in the system.

In her previous life as attorney general of California, she frequently avoided taking a stand on the big issues, from refusing to back the legalisation of cannabis and reforms on the state's controversial three-strikes law to declining to support ballot measures seeking to end the death penalty. That being said, she did help introduce a bill to make lynching a hate crime while in the Senate. Perhaps more interestingly, she worked with Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez to push for an independent Office Of Climate And Environmental Justice Accountability.

This offers a clue about the way forward; following bruising primaries, left-wing Democrats have already vowed to be a thorn in the administration's side. If Harris can do more with "The Squad" and their fellow travellers – especially on an issue as prominent as the climate emergency – a fragile peace can perhaps be secured between the different wings of the party. We do also know that Harris cares tremendously about vulnerable women and children, having cofounded the Coalition To End The Exploitation Of Kids and headed a task force fighting against the human trafficking of girls.

Then there is, of course, the small matter of her identity. Kamala Harris is the first ever female VP, the first ever black VP and the first Asian-American VP. Before that, she was California's first female, black and Asian-American attorney general. Oh, and before that, San Francisco's first female, black and Asian-American district attorney. Her very election was an earthquake and it seems as certain as anything that her role will involve being a passionate spokesperson for women and people of colour. But do not expect her to become a radical either. In fact, don't expect her to make waves unless she really feels she must. As early profiles of her pointed out, a lot of her stances and career choices can and should be seen through the lens of her ambitions. Kamala Harris wants to be president: she knows it, you know it, Joe Biden knows it. Her job over the next four years will not simply be vice president; instead it is likely she will see it as a drawn-out job interview, in which she will show the American people she is best placed to get the top job next.

Then again, Biden had tried to run for president multiple times before Obama and it did not dampen their working relationship. The difference now, to put it politely, is that it is unlikely Biden will be fighting another election in 2024. It is also possible that, for whatever reason, Harris will have to assume presidential responsibilities before then.

Team Biden will have taken this into account when making their choice. It is also telling, in this context, that he was keen to go for someone he felt personally close to. The president is not a young man and will need someone to be the active, energetic face of the administration in a way he cannot. Still, he can trust her to be present without overstepping the mark.

As a result, both sides may well enjoy a strong but well-delimited working relationship: the president because he knows he might not have long in the spotlight after all and the VP because she doesn't want to burn herself too much before it is her time to shine. It is a marriage of convenience, but then most political alliances are. The only question is can this fine balance of needs and aspirations survive a whole term?

Kamala Harris is the first female, black, Asian-American US vice president

Harris does not want to spend four years on the sidelines



Photograph **Getty Images; New York Times/Redux/Eyevine**



All the president's faults

Aggressive, ambitious career politicians, perfidious legislation, a lobby that serves the deepest pockets: the last president promised to sweep all that away. Fat chance. But the new guy operates deep inside the Beltway, and with an electorate still utterly divided, Joe Biden's 'healing hands' may be covered in too much mud

Story by **Freddy Gray** Illustration by **Eleanor Shakespeare**

In February 2019, I made the mistake of telling Joe Manchin, the US senator for West Virginia, that I couldn't understand why people thought Joe Biden was so great. Manchin looked at me sternly and told me that his friend Joe was the most decent man in politics. Manchin's wife, Gayle, delicately explained that she and her husband were close to Joe Biden and his wife, Jill. Clearly, I'd committed a faux pas.

Lots of powerful people adore the new president of the United States. Joe Biden's just a great guy, says almost everyone in Washington, DC, a city full of not-such-great guys. Even Republican opponents like him. He's warm and affectionate, they say. He has a unique talent for empathy and "the connect" – meeting, greeting and bonding with the public. His faults – his tendency to talk too much and be far too tactile with women, his occasional temper – are just products of his exuberant, passionate nature. He loves too much, you see.

Not everybody loves Joe Biden, however. A number of women have found his apparent handsiness, and his tendency to sniff their hair, discomfiting. Tara Reade, a former staffer in his Senate office, says he went much further and sexually assaulted her in a hallway in 1993. "Today I hear over and over about Joe Biden's compassion and how great he is," she tells me in the days leading up to his inauguration. "But I remember his anger, his smile, his eyes cold and furious and the roughness of him."

Biden's avuncular persona has been stage-managed, claim some former colleagues

For all Biden's talk of a Green New Deal, Big Oil surged following his election

Biden denies Reade's allegation. "It never, never happened," he says, and most people believe him. Plenty of journalists have uncovered inconsistencies in her story and made her out to be a crazy person. Reade says this is all the work >>

>> of the Biden "machine", headed by his PR guru Anita Dunn, who also just so happened to advise Harvey Weinstein. "I was smeared and gaslighted and my life was torn to pieces," says Reade. "Yesterday I was in a queue with my daughter at a grocery store and saw Joe Biden's face on the cover of some magazine proclaiming him to be the saviour of our country. I stood there with that cognitive-dissonance feeling, knowing that the truth about him was never really told. The truth has been professionally whitewashed."

Reade's allegations about Biden may be highly contentious, but her assessment of the spin operation around America's 46th commander-in-chief rings true. There are far too many spoon-fed long-reads in American magazines about Biden's heroic struggles against adversity, his folksy humanity, his willingness to listen and, as the profiles always put it, "to heal the wounds" of 21st-century America.

You don't read much about his bristling pride, his anger and his arrogance, even though those qualities are perfectly evident to anyone willing to look. Nice guys don't spend four decades obsessively trying to become the leader of the free world. In the 1980s, some people claimed Biden would sell his own grandmother to be president. In 1987, Jeff Connaughton decided to quit his high-earning job in finance to work on Biden's first presidential campaign. Almost ten years earlier, as a student, he had seen Biden give a speech and the young senator's energy and passion inspired him. But his experience in politics left him disillusioned. In a memoir published in 2012, Connaughton described Biden as an "egomaniacal autocrat" who was "determined to manage his staff through fear". Apparently, Biden liked to call staffers "Dumb Fuck" when he couldn't remember their names. "His ambitions," wrote Connaughton in his bridge-burning book, *The Payoff: Why Wall Street Always Wins*, "were mainly about himself." Biden's office declined to comment on the charges, but said, "The vice president has not read Mr Connaughton's book but values his relationships with all members of his staff and appreciates their hard work and dedication."

In response to Connaughton's criticisms, Annie Tomasini said that Biden was "a mentor" to her and "incredibly kind". Such loyalty is seemingly rewarded: Tomasini is now director of Oval Office operations in his White House. Biden's friends and the Democratic court chroniclers will tell you that he has been mollified through suffering. He has been through a lot of pain: in 1972, his first wife and daughter died in a car crash just before he became the senator from Delaware. He suffered two cranial aneurysms in 1998 and his son Beau died of brain cancer in 2015. Such tragedy deserves sympathy and Biden's ability to overcome his grief is profoundly admirable.

But Connaughton and others paint a picture of Biden as someone who can be vile to those around him. One young staffer once allegedly got into Biden's car holding a list of names and phone numbers and said, "OK, Senator, time to do some fundraising calls." "Get the fuck out of the car," Biden is claimed to have replied, the old charmer.

People like to say that Trump is a liar, and he is, but Biden has honesty issues too. His presidential campaign in 1988 famously imploded after he was accused of plagiarising a Neil Kinnock speech. Earlier, he had been forced to redo a course while at the Syracuse University College Of Law in the 1960s because he had lifted five pages from an academic paper without attribution.

Biden's problem is that he's become so swept up in his own mythology that he's lost touch with his reality. That's why, for instance, he said he marched with the civil rights movement in the 1960s, a claim he later rolled back on. It's why he said he was "shot at" in Iraq. Only when challenged did he downgrade the claim: "I was near where a shot landed." Biden also likes to tell people that in a meeting with Vladimir Putin he squared up to the Russian leader and said, "Mr Prime Minister, I'm looking into your eyes and I don't think you have a soul." Does anybody seriously believe that happened?

Connaughton described Biden as an 'egomaniacal autocrat... determined to manage his staff through fear'



Biden began his presidential campaign in Philadelphia, 8 May 2019

"I exaggerate when I'm angry," says Biden. But his tendency to say too much is weirder than that. For all his supposed empathy, he struggles to notice when he is boring his audience rigid. According to writer Benjamin Wallace-Wells, in 2005, when a young Barack Obama, just arrived in the Senate, sat through a speech by Biden to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he allegedly passed an aide a three-word note. "Shoot. Me. Now," it read. Obama never confirmed or denied it.

The Official Obama-Biden bromance narrative of President Obama is that the two men started out as an odd pair but ended up being one of the great Washington partnerships. But the truth may be that Obama wasn't ever quite as comfortable with Biden as he made out and vice versa. Before Biden's nomination became inevitable in 2020, Obama never seemed all that convinced about him as a presidential candidate. Obama annoyed Biden by seeming – at least in one media appearance alongside his then veep in 2014 – to anoint Hillary Clinton as his preferred successor. Biden did serve Obama loyally, but he could be neurotic about how outsiders perceived his role in the administration. "My manhood is not negotiable," he reportedly once said when discussing how much power he ought to have as vice president.

Bullied as a child because of his speech impediment, Biden can be intensely sensitive to slights. But the worst part isn't his personality. It's his politics. Biden talks about "transforming the soul of America". For decades, however, he has been accused by opponents of being behind some of the most toxic decision-making in Washington, for dressing up great government horrors in the name of overcoming partisanship or healing (that word again) divides. That may be why, for all his talk of making American healthcare more fair, Big Pharma stocks rose in the wake of Biden becoming the Democratic nominee. It might also be why, for all his talk of a Green New Deal to save the planet, Big Oil surged in the weeks following his election victory.

In 1994, Biden was the driving force behind the Violent Crime Control And Law Enforcement Act – AKA the Biden Crime Law – which is often blamed for contributing to mass incarceration of African-Americans and led to longer jail terms for nonviolent offences, all under the implacable banner of being "tough on crime". It is strange to think that, in the year of George Floyd's killing, when America seemed to cry out for more racial justice, the country ended up electing Biden. Given also his role in sponsoring anti-crime bills in the 1980s, which disproportionately affected African-Americans, it could be argued he supported policies that locked up more black men and women than any other figure in recent US history.

In the 1990s, in the same supposedly centrist vein, Biden supported various welfare and banking reforms that made it much it harder for the poor to pay off their debts. It's no coincidence, surely, that Biden's largest donor was the credit giant MBNA.

Taken together, that might help explain why today the most powerful forces in America seem so sanguine about having Good Ol' Joe as the president: he won't rock the privilege boat.

He never has.

Who runs the world? Meet the new inner circle appointees

Some call it 'Obama's third term' (or Hillary Clinton's first), but there's no question Biden's cabinet is loading up for a bruising four years

Story by **Garrett M Graff**

After four years of tweeting, controversy and a rotating cast of colourful, outspoken and ill-equipped staff at the dark and stormy Trump White House, Joe Biden's initial appointments to fill the top roles of his administration clearly set a different tone: they're boring. Facing a trio of immediate crises – a pandemic killing tens of thousands of Americans a week, a stalling and faltering economy and widespread unemployment and ever more urgent questions about the resilience of American democracy – Biden's emphasised building a team that's "ready on day one". Most of his picks are longtime aides or colleagues from the Obama administration, experienced in Washington and deeply versed in policy minutiae – and, for the most part, all but silent on social media.

While his heavy reliance on former Obama aides has led some to label Biden's approach to governing "Obama's third term", there are some important and subtle differences. The world has changed a great deal since Obama took office in 2008 and many of Biden's top picks were in line four years ago for Hillary Clinton's administration. It might be more fair to call Biden's team "Hillary's first term". What that means practically is that while Biden has built a historically diverse team and tried to balance the increasingly vocal and powerful left wing of his party and make a nod to generational change by nominating new leaders such as Pete Buttigieg to be transportation secretary, his inner circle is like him – old-school, centrist moderates, believers in American exceptionalism – ten of which include...

Photographs Getty Images; New York Times/Eyevine



Ron Klain, chief of staff Obama's one-time Ebola tsar is beloved in Washington and is one of the best prepared chiefs of staff in decades.



Steve Ricchetti, counselor to the president Ricchetti has been at Biden's side for nearly a decade and will be the West Wing's designated wise man, utility player and president whisperer. As a former lobbyist, he's connected on Capitol Hill, which will be critical to ushering in Biden's ambitious agenda amid narrow and fractious House and Senate Democratic majorities.



Mike Donilon, senior advisor to the president The third member of Biden's White House inner triumvirate, Donilon – an experienced Democratic strategist and brother of Obama's former national security advisor – is best known for his messaging savvy. He's lived and breathed Biden's message of cooperation, conciliation and character.



Jake Sullivan, national security advisor The longtime Hillary Clinton advisor has made a point of connecting economic and national security issues, emphasising that a top concern of the National Security Council should be US workers and the middle class back home.



Susan Rice, director of the Domestic Policy Council Best known as Obama's national security advisor and as a possible veep pick by Biden, Rice is now pivoting to domestic issues, where she has little experience and her policy preferences are all but unknown.



Antony Blinken, secretary of state The internationalist will be tasked with rebuilding the country's diplomatic ranks and global respect after years of neglect and insults from his departing predecessor, Mike Pompeo. The top three issues on his plate? China, China and China.



Merrick Garland, attorney general The Supreme Court justice-who-never-was, after his nom was blocked by the Republican Senate in Obama's final year, will be in charge of rebuilding the Justice Department's reputation for integrity after Trump's term of damage.



Janet Yellen, treasury secretary The respected economist and former head of the Federal Reserve, ousted by President Trump, will be the first woman to head the US economy, a daunting task given the impact of the pandemic. A pragmatic consensus-builder, she'll be a key voice for the administration on trade and she's respected enough by the party's progressive wing that she can likely get away with more moderation than they'd want.



John Kerry, special presidential envoy for climate The former Massachusetts senator who lost the 2004 presidential race has come out of retirement for his second "second act", after serving as the secretary of state under Obama. In a first-ever role as a globe-trotting, cabinet-level climate envoy, Kerry's mission is to get the United States back in the international arena on combatting the ever more pressing problem of climate change.



Avril Haines, director of national intelligence The first woman to head America's $60 billion-a-year constellation of 17 intel agencies, Haines will deliver the Oval Office's daily intel briefing, a key role that will help shape what Biden prioritises as president.

NOT JUST A REGULAR JOE

The 46th potus is more than the saviour of the Union... He's a true-blue style icon too

Story by **Teo van den Broeke** Photographs by **Simon Webb** Styling by **Angelo Mitakos**

The wolf of the White House

A big job (the biggest, really) calls for a big suit. Think Jordan Belfort meets Gordon Gekko in the mind of Tom Ford and you'll be somewhere on the right balance sheet. When it comes to pattern, Biden knows it's all about pin or chalk stripes, but it's really in the accessories that a commander-in-chief's mettle is measured, so make like the man himself and ensure your briefcase is croc, your shoes handmade and your specs? Fully sexed.

The brands From the king of American power tailoring, Mr Ford, through to the body-con domi-suits peddled by Donatella Versace, any brand that cuts a strong shoulder and a nipped waist is worthy of the dead presidents in your pocket.

Most likely to wear when... Re-signing the Paris Agreement on climate change (like a boss).



JOE BIDEN

Jacket, £1,850. Trousers, £680. Both by **Versace**. versace.com. Shirt, £50. Tie, £40. Pocket square, £25. All by **TM Lewin**. tmlewin.co.uk. Shoes by **Russell & Bromley**, £275. russellandbromley.co.uk. Suitcase by **Aspinal Of London**, £650. aspinaloflondon.com

Photograph **Shutterstock**



Rodeo Joe

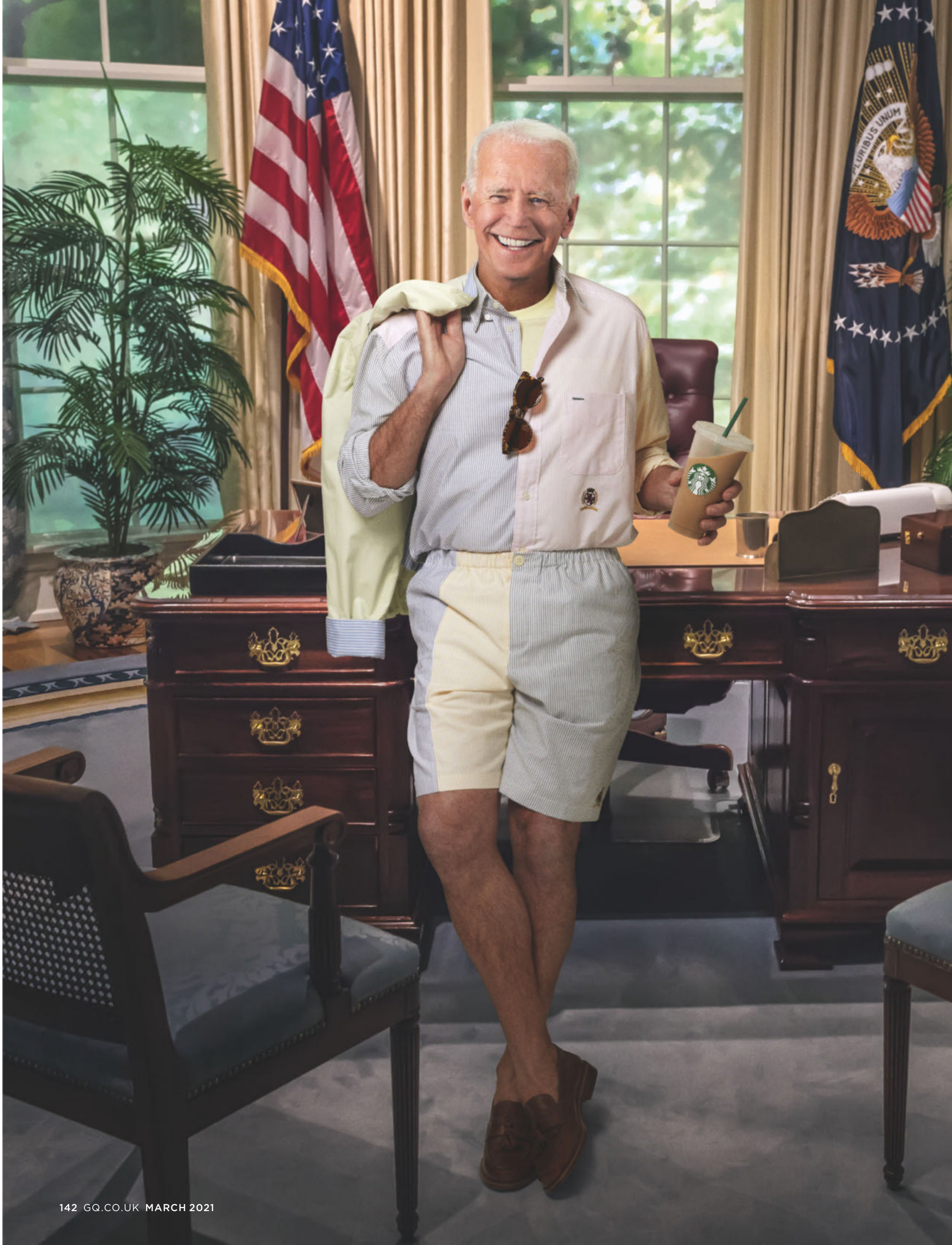
Like some bronco-riding, lasso-swinging love child of Ennis Del Mar and Billy The Kid, Biden knows his way around a tasselled suede jacket and ten-gallon hat better than most of his presidential predecessors, Dubya notwithstanding. Oh, and he's not one to be thrown off by an overinflated orange rodeo clown, either.

The brands For the full American pastoral effect Biden knows to look no further than his democratic brother in spurs, one Mr Ralph Lauren.

Most likely to wear when...
Chasing the aforementioned clown out of the White House.

Jacket, £75. At Waiste Vintage. waiste.co.uk. Waistcoat, £630. Shirt, £155. Jeans, £610. Belt, £549. All by **Ralph Lauren**. ralphlauren.com. Bolo tie by **Nudie Jeans**, £48. nudiejeans.com. Boots by **Tiger Of Sweden**, £389. tigerofsweden.com. Hat, £30. At Rokit. rokit.co.uk

Photograph **Shutterstock**



The prep elect

Joe Biden has been serving up those sweet Ivy League goods ever since his days playing freshman football at the University Of Delaware. From classic Weejuns pennies worn with white socks to this season's panelled pastel Oxfords teamed with jazzy Madras shorts, you'd better believe Biden's got you prepped.

The brands Of the fabled four great American designers, Ralph Lauren, Perry Ellis, Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfiger, it's the latter who has the edge on low-key collegiate classics worthy of a president.

Most likely to wear when... On a yacht off the coast of Martha's Vineyard, emulating a young JFK.

Jacket, £330. Shirt, £190. T-shirt, £60. Shorts, £160. All by **Tommy Hilfiger**. tommy.com. Shoes by **Russell & Bromley**, £195. russellandbromley.com. Sunglasses by **Oliver Peoples**, £257. oliverpeoples.com

Photograph **Shutterstock**


USA
B1DEN46

True-blue Biden

Anyone who's seen a photo of the improbably handsome cad that is a young Joe Biden will know he'd not only have given Jimmy Dean a run for the money in the looks department, but in the style stakes too. The fundamental basics of Biden's all-American get-up? A cherry-red Harrington jacket, classic blue jeans and a T-shirt as white as the stars on the spangled banner.

The brands There's nowhere better for Americana-infused basics than Calvin Klein. Just ask Joe.

Most likely to wear when... Thanking the good folks of Georgia for his surprise win. GQ

Jacket by **Baracuta**, £305. baracuta.com. T-shirt, £28. Jeans, £85. Both by **Calvin Klein**. calvinklein.co.uk. Shoes by **Converse**, £57. At Schuh. schuh.co.uk. Socks by **Falke**, £12. falke.com. Sunglasses by **Ray-Ban**, £176. ray-ban.com. Comb by **Kent Brushes**, £4. kentbrushes.com

Photograph **Shutterstock** Model **Ian S at Base Models**

The ART



of SURVIVAL

Here's a curious thought. The Hamptons has long been a hideaway for the super rich, but the NYC art dealers who count its billionaires as customers never had a presence there. Then, last year, as their clientele fled Covid-19 for the safety of second homes, gallerists were forced to follow the money – or die trying. In a matter of weeks, an entire blue-chip district emerged among these tony villages, just one symptom of a business forced to pivot at lightning pace. But can a small town scene sustain the invasion, as the pandemic threatens dire consequences for creators, curators and collectors alike?

Story by **Howie Kahn**

Photographs **Alamy; Genevieve Hansen**

Opposite: A former Main Street clothes shop in Southampton, New York, now Hauser & Wirth's new 450 square metre galley in the Hamptons

During the crisis, only New York's essential workers could do their jobs in person. Art dealers did not make the cut...

On a wind-whipped afternoon in late November, Main Street in Southampton, New York looked like a ghostly still life of a slumbering summer town. No cars, no people, a shuttered fudge shop – an off-season amplified by a resurgent pandemic. Inside the state's newest branch of Hauser & Wirth, however, artists and gallerists mounted an alternative mood through a show of paintings. With social distancing mandates in place and buzzy openings relegated to memory, the work itself – albeit viewed silently and alone – offered a much-needed shot of life.

With more than a dozen outposts across Europe, Asia and the United States – and annual sales in the hundreds of millions of dollars – Hauser & Wirth had signed the lease last June, taking over a two-storey, 450 square metre former clothing boutique. But it had never previously planned to open here. It was a move born of emergency.

At the start of 2020, the New York art scene had anticipated a very different kind of year. Hauser & Wirth was readying for the May opening of its five-storey Selldorf Architects-designed flagship in Chelsea, Manhattan – a 3,300 square metre structure symbolising, in natty glass and steel, a bullish global art market embracing a period of erecting commercial-cultural monuments to itself. Pace, another of the mega-dealers, had just opened its own 7,000 square metre Chelsea flagship in September 2019. Nearby, David Zwirner was working towards cutting the ribbon on its upcoming five-storey, Renzo Piano-designed mecca.

But in March 2020, as the virus devastated New York City, galleries of all sizes found themselves cut off from doing business as usual. Doors locked. The crowded exhibition openings that gathered buyers, artists and writers – a major driver of hype and sales – stopped cold. Construction slowed. Unfinished flagships froze with their metal bones exposed, while smaller galleries scrambled to pay the rent. Selling art suddenly meant rethinking the established wisdom that proximity to a piece heightens the desire to own it. Only the city's essential workers could do their jobs in person. Art dealers did not make the cut, instead Zooming relentlessly to plot ways to avoid insurmountable loss.

"We had to reinvent ourselves," says Marc Payot, the 54-year-old co-president of Hauser & Wirth. Payot speaks with the kind, stable certitude of his native Switzerland, an attribute that doubtless factors into his ability to sell museum-grade artwork to repeat customers. Nearly as soon as the pandemic struck, Payot left New York City for his house in Water Mill, a hamlet within Southampton. "A lot of our clients moved out here," he says.

From early March, the Hamptons absorbed the city's moneyed elite like a beachside doomsday bunker soon to fill up with Pelotons and Picassos. Payot realised the exodus created opportunity. Dealers such as Pace, Lisson, Michael Werner, Sélavy By Di Donna and more also set up shop in the Hamptons during the pandemic, signing new leases in time for its summer season. New York had sprung an entire blue-chip gallery district in just a few weeks.



'Untitled' by Philip Guston (1973), part of Hauser & Wirth's multimillion-dollar exodus to the Hamptons

'Our business is not designed to absorb a massive drop in sales. I told my staff in New York this is an existential threat'

This luxury migration model has since caught on more widely. A few months after launching its Hamptons location, Pace opened in Palm Beach, Florida, following its wealthy collectors south for the winter. Mexico City's prominent Galería Mascota, targeting another seasonal destination for the rich, took up residence in Aspen, Colorado.

It's a strategy rooted in privilege and shows that, right now, survival at the top of the art world pyramid comes at a premium. While these businesses' monthly Manhattan rents hover throughout the six figures, the Hamptons doesn't exactly offer a bargain. Spaces can still cost tens of thousands of dollars per month.

That's without the renovations. Once Payot had the keys for his Southampton Hauser & Wirth site, he ordered a series of customised improvements to remove the air of retail from a space that sits between a cheese shop and a home décor boutique. Over a two-week period last summer, Payot oversaw construction of walls and bookshelves on the ground floor. New racks for storing paintings went up in a back room. Several alley-facing windows on the first floor were replaced with drywall in order to create additional space for hanging art. Electricians installed a new lighting scheme. The rent and setup costs are easily recovered with a fraction of a single sale (galleries typically take around 50 per cent; works command millions), but nevertheless it amounted to an added expense during an economic downturn. Payot's art handlers duly transported millions' worth of work from the city, including a multimillion-dollar Philip Guston. "We worked day and night," Payot recalls. "It's not just a tiny shoebox situation. I wanted to be able to present the range of what we value."

Months later, in October, 14 works by the 81-year-old painter Mary Heilmann, priced from $25,000 (£19,000) to $325,000 (£245,000) each, occupied the gallery's ground floor. Heilmann lives in nearby Bridgehampton. She spent much of the pandemic making abstract acrylic paintings on canvas and paper that captured a sensation usurped the world over by the virus' spread: personal freedom. The work summoned the lost feeling of bounding eagerly into sunlit waters with an unmasked face. Heilmann named the show, with its counter-pandemic mood, *Highway, Oceans, Daydreams*.

A gallery possessing the sudden ability to follow the money, almost to its doorstep, amid the most dire of circumstances, signals a sharp divide in the art world. While some dealers have the means to pop up anywhere, anytime, others go on life support. Satellite galleries in the Hamptons can feel planets away from, say, those on Manhattan's Lower East Side. There, dealers risk it all on emerging talent with no track record of sales and business plans that have every bit as much to do with brazen idealism as they do with converting creative output into actual capital.

New York Magazine's art critic Jerry Saltz views this outcropping of Manhattan dealers in the Hamptons as an exercise of commerce above all else – simply a way for the rich to get richer. "It was horrifying for me to watch as this Potemkin art scene was happening in the Hamptons," he says. "I was disheartened to see the coverage they were getting while New York galleries were starting to wither on the vine."

Tripoli Patterson, the 36-year-old owner of Hamptons mainstay Tripoli Gallery, has watched his neighbourhood change from the inside. He isn't a nimby (he showed an Alex Katz last summer and one of Heilmann's new works in the Hauser show appeared on his walls first), but notes that his new mega-dealer neighbours ought to attempt to improve the community and not just by funnelling art into beachside estates. "It's very important when you go into places to be courteous and thoughtful about the environment," says Patterson. "Make sure local schools have access to seeing the galleries. Make sure the local community feels invited."

Still, Patterson accepts that the presence of galleries such as Pace and Hauser & Wirth will underscore the seriousness of the local commercial scene. "Not that we need help with that," he says, "because the art scene is what put the Hamptons on the map in the first place." >>

Photographs **Courtesy of Ellen Gallagher, the Philip Guston estate, Mary Heilmann and Hauser & Wirth/Thomas Barratt/Genevieve Hansen**

Mary Heilmann's exhibition, Highway, Oceans, Daydreams, opened on the ground floor of Hauser & Wirth's Southampton gallery in October 2020; (below) co-president Marc Payot on the first floor with 'Aquajujidsu' by Ellen Gallagher (2017)

Survival atop the art world pyramid comes at a premium, and with spaces costing tens of thousands a month the Hamptons aren't exactly a bargain

Art history in the Hamptons runs deep. Since the 19th century, artists have established a significant presence throughout Long Island's eastern tip. Impressionist William Merritt Chase arrived to paint the Shinnecock Hills in 1891; by the mid-1900s, a full-on scene had emerged, with artists retreating from the constraints of the city to enjoy more freedom, more natural light. From the mid-1940s through to the mid-1950s, Jackson Pollock lived and died in the Hamptons, painting a number of peak ab-ex works in his barn. Willem de Kooning moved there in 1963. He said that life in Springs, the area where he had settled, felt "kind of biblical, the clearing out to make a space".

It would have been sensible, then, for these name-brand galleries to make space and open in the Hamptons any number of years ago. As the area trended richer and richer, their clientele became inextricable from the community fabric. But top Manhattan gallerists chose to keep the area as a retreat for themselves, leaving its art scene to gather chiefly around local, noncommercial institutions such as Parrish Art Museum, Guild Hall and Pollock-Krasner House And Study Center.

"I've been [vacationing] out here for years," says Gordon VeneKlasen, a 58-year-old partner at Manhattan's Michael Werner Gallery who has been instrumental in its new East Hampton operation. "It's been an escape. By the time summer rolls around, we're broken as art dealers." VeneKlasen never expected to do business near his holiday home. But after recovering from Covid-19, he considered that opening a gallery here could be a significant source of income during a year that saw his sales drop by more than 30 per cent. He debuted to the East Hampton set last summer, selling works by modern masters Sigmar Polke and Francis Picabia inside a 150 square metre refurbished retail premises. "I put a few pieces of Brazilian furniture in the window to see if it would bring more people in," VeneKlasen says. "It's the idea of a shop."

There's more hustle to running a gallery than meets the eye, VeneKlassen explains. "This is a very high-overhead game," he says. Annual gallery rent can enter the millions. A budget of hundreds of thousands of dollars pours into travel and setting up booths at the must-attend fairs in Switzerland, Miami, London and Hong Kong. Salaries, utilities, multiple strains of carried insurance, art-handling fees and printing costs for exhibition catalogues all add up, multiplied across a year's slate of exhibitions and across however many locations a gallery runs around the world.

Following the money is nothing new. Look at Pace, a gallery matched by few for its overheads and territorial ambition. It operates nine spaces

'The world is rigged for money, rigged for wealthy people. I find that all sad, but that's my business in the end'





Top: Per Kirkeby paintings and bronzes at East Hampton's Michael Werner Gallery; (above and below) Yoshitomo Nara's After All I'm Cosmic Dust in July 2020 at Pace Gallery, East Hampton



on three continents with reported gross annual sales of more than $1 billion (£750 million). In 2014, it launched an outpost in Silicon Valley, giving the tech industry's high-net-worth founders and coders their own local fine arts showroom.

What's different about the Hamptons cluster is the sheer speed with which it sprung up – and therefore the inherent risk of the enterprise. The pandemic didn't allow for the usual period of careful ideation, planning and execution galleries usually put into new premises. "It was definitely about keeping the business alive," says Marc Glimcher, the 57-year-old second-generation president and CEO of Pace, who set about planting a flag in East Hampton as soon as he recovered from his own bout of Covid. "Our business is not designed to absorb a massive drop in sales. I told my staff, 150 employees in New York, this is an existential threat." Last summer, Glimcher opened a 160 square metre site a stone's throw from Werner, kitty-corner to a Starbucks. He immediately put on three sold out shows: Yoshitomo Nara's *After All I'm Cosmic Dust*, comprising new drawings, Torkwase Dyson's *Studies For Bird And Lava*, her debut show with the gallery, and Arlene Shechet's tenderly titled *Together*.

Payot, VeneKlasen and Glimcher all suggest they'll extend their Hamptons leases beyond 2021. "The world is quite sadly rigged for money," says VeneKlasen, "rigged for wealthy people – and those are the people who buy expensive art. They're not running out of money for the most part. I find that all sad, but that's my business in the end. It's a complicated moment. It's excruciating, really."









The pandemic forced innumerable businesses to pivot and shift, sometimes on a daily basis; the art world has proved no different. The Hamptons moment reflects the acceleration of a number of emerging trends that may shape the future relationship between art and commerce. Look closer at these galleries and you'll spy a cunning sales mandate: one that combines a strategically reactive real estate play with a new embracing of e-commerce. Like many luxury marketplaces, fine art seemed to lag well behind the rest of the world in selling online – some major players had never even tried it before. Now, suddenly, online viewing rooms – known simply and clinically as OVRs – have grown into increasingly sophisticated sales tools. They offer elaborate multimedia content packages about works and their artists – sometimes using virtual reality – and allow buyers to acquire seven-figure art with just a couple of clicks. This technology and the opportunity to use it has existed for years, but it took the standstill of a pandemic to dedicate time to coding it properly. As Saltz puts it, "Galleries were too busy shelling out hundreds of thousands of dollars every goddamned month to go to some other art fair."

With in-person viewing cut off, then restricted to small groups or appointment only, online sales grew significantly during 2020. In 2019, they represented ten per cent of total sales; in the first half of 2020, that grew to 37 per cent, according to a survey of 795 international galleries assembled by arts economist Dr Clare McAndrew with support from Art Basel and the Swiss investment bank UBS. According to the same study, 26 per cent of online buyers were new to the galleries, having had no previous purchasing relationship. Significantly for the galleries who set up in the Hamptons, McAndrew found a super-rich clientele who just kept on spending: 92 per cent of those surveyed bought art in the first half of the year; 56 per cent spent more than $100,000 (£75,000); 16 per cent spent more than $1m (£750,000).

Among those evolving their "bricks and clicks" strategies in the Hamptons, 49-year-old Emmanuel Di Donna has brought together the digital and physical in a newly created brand he calls Sélavy By Di Donna. "I didn't want to create another Di Donna here," he says of his 600 square metre namesake gallery in Manhattan. "I don't think the austerity of it, of the brand, would work."

Di Donna Galleries specialises in museum-calibre exhibitions of surrealist works made between 1900 and 1970. Sélavy, on the other hand, named for Rrose Sélavy, the female alter ego of conceptualist Marcel Duchamp, looks more like James Bond's living room, combining timeless pieces across a variety of genres with no expense or verve spared. A sleek, limited-edition Man Ray chess set sits near the entrance, a $5m (£3.7m) Warhol silkscreen hangs on one wall, a gouache and India ink Picasso self-portrait, painted a few months before the artist's death in 1973, hangs adjacent. "Let me show you how it looks online," says Di Donna, tapping the screen of his iPad. Everything for sale in the room can be bought digitally, from an ancient Greek marble torso for $85,000 (£65,000) to a $1.2m (£900,000) Dubuffet acrylic of human-like figures seemingly looking to escape a hellish maze. Di Donna has signed a three-year lease in Southampton and has started to think of Sélavy as a modular showroom. "You can't stay still in the art world. The models are changing. You have to roll with the punches," says Di Donna. "We could take this to Palm Beach," he continues. "We can go anywhere."

'It was horrifying to watch this Potemkin art scene happening in the Hamptons... while New York galleries were starting to wither on the vine'



From top: Gordon VeneKlasen of Michael Werner and (right) Pace's Marc Glimcher; 'Untitled' by Francis Picabia (1933) at Michael Werner; sculpture from Torkwase Dyson's August 2020 Studies For Bird And Lava exhibition at Pace; 'Monstre (Vénus Et Adonis)' by Picabia (c1924-1927) at Michael Werner

In pairing their Hamptons storefronts with a newly robust digital strategy, the major players have increased their reach fast. Their immediate success, set against the backdrop of an American economy struggling to stay afloat, has turbo-charged them into the kind of business they have long proclaimed themselves to be: no longer mere galleries, neatly confined to the world's arts districts, but, rather, global cultural brands capable of flourishing both within a starchitect-designed stronghold and 15 steps away from a resort-town Frappuccino. But let's be clear, web domains will not eclipse actual real estate. Glimcher, of Pace, maintains the internet is important, but not the endgame. "On a scale of one to ten, >>

Photographs ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London; Axel Dupeux; Michael Werner Gallery; Jonathan Nesteruk; Pace; Alessandro Simonetti

>> it's maybe a two or a three," he says. "It's good for storytelling and worthy of investment, but the work is valuable because you experience it."

Hence the ways in which the Hamptons scene is also experimenting with spatial and perceptual ideas of what constitutes a fine-art gallery in the first place. Lisson Gallery, which has locations in London, New York and Shanghai, opened its Hamptons outpost last summer in a 100 square metre viewing space with the intention of exhibiting not entire shows, but one work at a time. "I wanted to do something simple," says 35-year-old executive director Alex Logsdail. "Everybody has one thing in their studio they're really happy with. Asking for ten things during a pandemic is more challenging." The space's size brings the viewer almost into the painting and forges a more intimate connection than possible in a much larger gallery setting, such as the 800 square metre one that Lisson runs in Manhattan. Closeness works. Lisson opened in East Hampton last year on 30 July with a single Stanley Whitney painting and sold it for $850,000 (£635,000). A duo of acrylic on paper works by Carmen Herrera went up on 6 August, fetching $120,000 (£90,000) and $850,000 (£635,000).

This appetite for ripping up industry norms is now rippling throughout the art scene. Like all fields predicated upon shopping, the post-pandemic art market will offer more varied ways to shop than the market that preceded it. Gallerists will hedge against going under during the next global emergency – this in a new, whiplashed era when survival will long remain top of the mind. For dealers, that means combining traditional gallery operations with boundary-pushing ideas, brand extensions and an increased focus on high-touch immersion. Last August, Pace announced an offshoot company called Superblue, dedicated to producing ticketed, large-scale experiential art by the likes of Teamlab, Nick Cave and others. In the wake of a season of Black Lives Matter protests, David Zwirner revealed in September plans for a new Manhattan commercial gallery and exhibition programme to open this year with an all-black staff led by gallery director Ebony L Haynes.

How these various forces play out could reshape the art world dramatically. "The next 12 months will really determine what happens," says Saltz. But, he cautions, "It's going to be hard."

Just as the Hamptons gallery migration got underway, Becky Elmquist, 33, busied herself closing her four-year-old gallery, Larrie, on the Lower East Side. There, she prided herself on giving early-career artists their first Manhattan shows, using income from her PR and consulting business to help them pay for materials. "I felt a need to help artists who didn't have enough money to make work," she says. But she knew her platform wouldn't survive an indeterminate number of months without the ability to draw a crowd and that $4,000 (£3,000) a month in rent multiplied over the same unknown period would break her. "It was sad to give that all up."

The types of artist Elmquist represented faced a breaking point too. In December, Americans For The Arts published "Covid-19's Impact On The Arts Research Update", reporting that 63 per cent of artists and creatives have become fully unemployed. Soberingly, 67 per cent can't "access the supplies, resources, spaces or people necessary for creative work" and 78 per cent "have no post-pandemic financial recovery plan".

Yet, Saltz cautiously says, the emerging sector of the market will rebound, despite not having had the leverage to dedicate the pandemic to growth. Rent reductions will ultimately pair empty storefronts with young, mission-driven gallerists finding shrewd new ways to make their business work.

Elmquist, for instance, spent July through December doggedly negotiating with her old landlord, who eventually agreed to rent the space back to her at a reduced rate on a month-to-month basis. A new incarnation of Larrie will open soon and Elmquist plans to put on four to six exhibitions a year – serving the same sorts of early-career artist as before – all while supplementing her income by using the space for brand activations and sample sales. "I've had six months to sort out a new model," she says, full of hope.





Significantly for the galleries who set up in the Hamptons, a super-rich clientele just kept spending in 2020



From top: Lisson Gallery on Main Street, East Hampton, showing work by Channa Horwitz; 'Untitled' by Stanley Whitney (1996) at Lisson; gallerists Emmanuel and Christina Di Donna at Sélavy By Di Donna in Southampton

All the pandemic months at home brought with them an urge to punch through the walls. Or, at least, in the Hamptons, to redecorate them lavishly. "Artists who were successful commercially before this crisis have been equally or even more successful during this year," says Hauser & Wirth's Marc Payot. "There's a tendency to want something that's difficult to get. That's even more true now during this crisis."

Inside the East Hampton Pace Gallery, in its rear salon, a metre-and-a-half tall recessed ellipse emits a tender glow. Its edges brighten and colour spreads through the form, blushing and saturating in sequence until all new colours appear in a spectrum of tones: blues and greens; reds, purples, pinks. James Turrell, the 77-year-old master of light and space, conceived the ellipse as part of his *Constellation* series. Each piece in the group features an etched glass or scrim panel housing thousands of tiny LED lights programmed by a computer to absorb a viewer's attention until Turrell's expression of luminous colour appears to replace all matter. The longer you watch it, the more narcotic it gets, carrying you away with the softest and deepest of hues. The price of transcendence: $750,000 (£560,000) each.

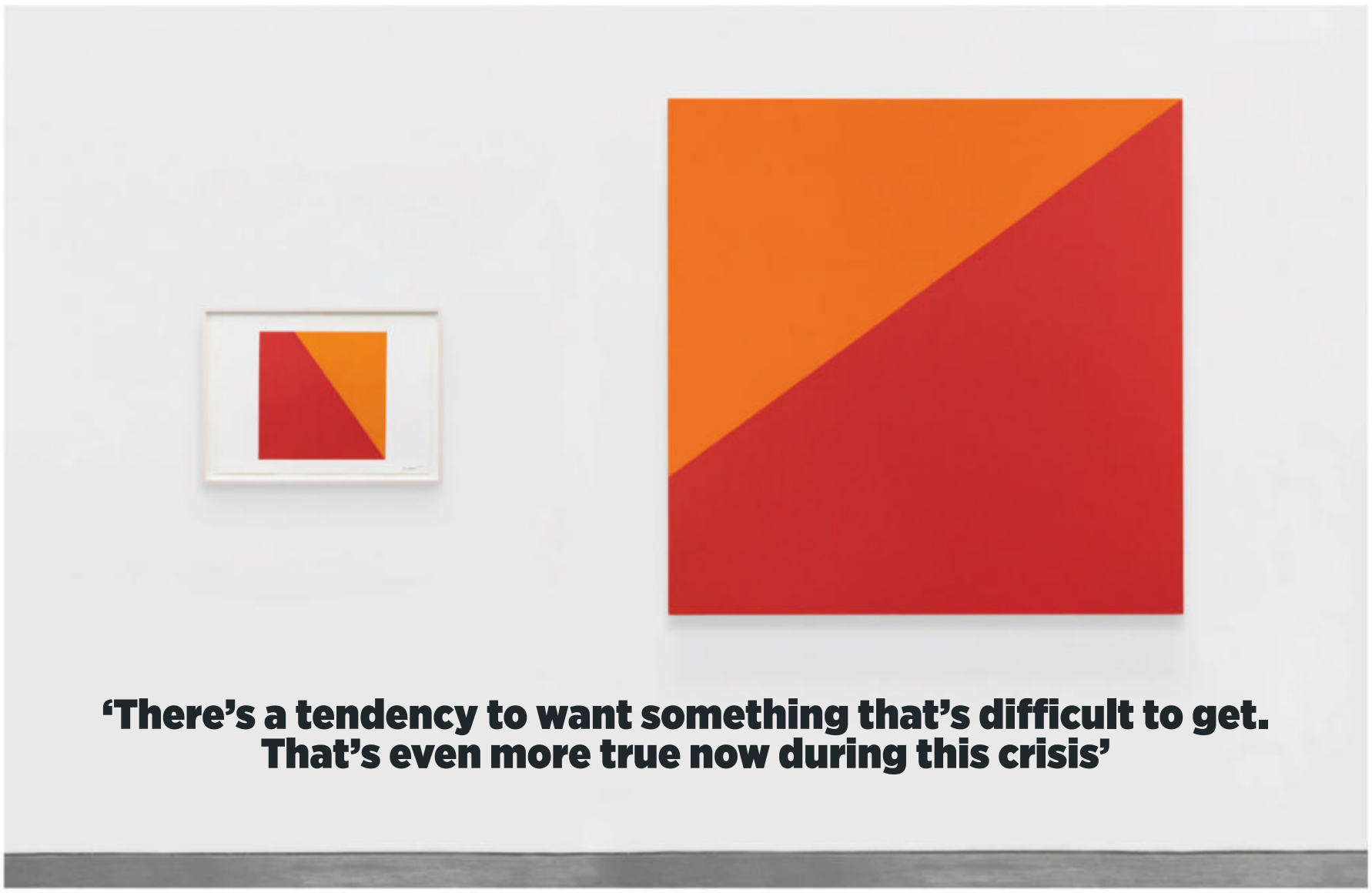
"We sold all of them," says Glimcher. "There were ten in the series and we sold all ten during the pandemic. People want to transform their spaces to include more art that creates a phenomenological experience.

"People are tearing apart their homes to put in these Turrells." **GQ**

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New concept gallery Sélavy By Di Donna was created as a ‘modular showroom’ that enjoins physical and digital display; (below, from left) ‘Untitled’ and ‘Desierto Rojo’ by Carmen Herrera (both 2017) at Lisson



‘There’s a tendency to want something that’s difficult to get. That’s even more true now during this crisis’

Photographs **Lisson Gallery; Jacob Snavely**

El Bulli's last supper

Ferran Adrià shocked the world in 2011 when he closed his iconoclastic triple Michelin-starred restaurant. Since then, he has set himself a new Sisyphean task: a multivolume encyclopaedia and search engine that will not just be a 'Google' for the culinary arts, but for creativity at large. It will take decades – a second life's work – so GQ met him to ask how he plans to change the world again

Story by **Kieran Morris** Photograph by **João Canziani**

‘I see chefs still doing things we did 20 years ago. After El Bulli, everybody started questioning everything’

Ferran Adrià photographed in February 2011, the year he closed El Bulli; (opposite) ‘Pea Spheres’, one of the famous restaurant’s 1,846 dishes

Photograph **August Images**

Anyone who's been at a table with ***Ferran Adrià*** will tell you he eats like no other man on the planet. Take, as we did, a fried sardine. Adrià will pick it up, noting its texture, tactile strength, crispness, colour, temperature, all within the timeframe of a squint and a wrinkle of the nose. There's a pause as he tees himself up, before the sardine vanishes between his teeth, leaving only an immaculately clean skeleton behind (or sometimes nothing, if he deigns to eat the bones too). He processes the flavour and moves on, inscrutable, to the next one and the next and the next.

Grant Achatz, the man behind the three Michelin-starred Alinea in Chicago, describes him as a vacuum: ***"He computes it, then inhales it – I've never seen anything like it."***

As I sat across from Adrià – a stout, tousled hurricane of a man, all in black as if to reject the concept of chef whites – he explained his eating approach. "I'm always analysing, but I try to differentiate between 'good food' and 'gastronomy'," he said. "When I'm having a gastronomic experience, I'm looking to pick up something more, something new or emotive. When I'm just looking for good food and a good time, I come somewhere like here." He had taken me to Miguelitos in Eixample: a restaurant that was, to him, a marker of Barcelona's exceptional gastronomic credentials. "You won't find it mentioned in any guidebooks or restaurant lists – there's a hundred other restaurants like this in the city. I mean that as a compliment. This is the base standard."

He seemed to know the waiters already; he brought his wife, Isabel, who immediately picked up on whatever's left of Liverpool in my accent. "Do you like champagne?" he asked before I could even sling my jacket over my chair. By the time I sat down, before even the table water had been poured, I had a glass of Krug placed at my right-hand side. A menu arrived and before I had a chance to try to translate it, it was taken away: Adrià had already waved his pointing finger over the lot. The table began teeming with plates of classical Spanish tapas, dollops of Russian salad and fish fried every which way.

Conversation meandered through every topic under the sun: the US election, the state of scientific advancement in the world, the cost of season tickets at the Nou Camp and Anfield. At one point, we talked about stews. He was in the process of thinking up a book about them and so I told him about the origins of Scouse – something I'm claiming as a first. Adrià and his wife then taught me how to eat a sea snail: he insisted I had to keep its cartilage on; she insisted it was far nicer without. I tested both and told Adrià his wife had the better of him on this one.

Adrià has an opinion on everything, from the United States' place on the world stage ("declining, even with Biden") and the best restaurant in London ("A Wong. There's nothing like it in Europe") to his perfect meal ("eaten in a monastery, in silence, cooked by Andoni Luis Aduriz"). He revels in debate, with a verve you would usually call a "know-it-all" tendency, if it wasn't possible that he actually does know it all. He talked me through one of his favourite verbal jousts, with a guest at one of his book tours for Phaidon a decade previously, who had made the mistake of asking him about using chemicals in his cooking instead of natural products. "I said, 'Look, I'm sorry, but this has come down to you. I promise you that after I've answered your question you'll never ask it again,'" before reeling off a ten-minute dialogue about the definition of science itself.

It is this manner of speaking, whizzing in and out of points at such speed and ferocity, which makes his friend Nicholas Lander, the *Financial Times*' restaurant critic, describe him as "impossible to understand in any language".

He talked me through his daily schedule and given how sprightly and lively he was at dinnertime I couldn't believe it. "The whole world should work like me! If they did, the human race would get a lot more done." He wakes up at 4.30am every day, has an espresso (a Lavazza, always; he's a brand ambassador), skips lunch and works straight through to 8pm. "From the second I start the day, I'm working, going through these questions and tasks in my head – so, so many of them. That's how I've been able to get this far. That's how I keep going." When you're trying to build something that will outlive you, time is precious.

Ferran Adrià is the most important, idolised, controversial and written-about chef of the last century – and he knows it. For years, he was the byword for the mad scientist in the kitchen, known worldwide for the "techno-emotional cuisine" of his legendary restaurant, El Bulli, on the craggy shores of the Costa Brava. Alongside Heston Blumenthal, he came to embody what was known, often contemptuously, as "molecular gastronomy" – a phrase he and others can't stand, but one that took hold in the public imagination and made him a bona fide culinary superstar.

His food – eaten, in his estimation, by only 700 new people a year – sent shock waves through the restaurant industry, inventing not just new dishes or combinations, but also new cooking techniques, textures and experiences at the table. He stripped away your choice about what you ate, and your knowledge of what was coming next, and over 50 courses would try to get responses from you that you never thought food could produce: fascination, shock, rapturous laughter. Every dinner at El Bulli was the result of Adrià and his team asking and answering

questions about food. What is a ravioli? Why do we eat bread before a meal? Does a cocktail need to be a drink? Questions that are, on the face of it, absurd, but answers that yielded 1,846 dishes across 24 years.

Adrià's sweep of achievements is mind-boggling. Despite never going to university, he has taught at Harvard and counts the ex-vice president of MIT as a close personal friend. Despite never studying art, contemporary art's most important exhibition, *Documenta*, invited Adrià to "exhibit" El Bulli in 2007 and he still boasts about being the event's chief provocateur.

Massimo Bottura, the legendary Modenese chef who trained under Adrià 20 years ago, still beams like an intern over his former master: "He was revolutionary – he taught me how to use the power of emotion and express myself in a million different ways."

He never got to be a footballer, as he first wanted, but he did get to dine many, many times with Johan Cruyff, his childhood idol, whose goals for his beloved FC Barcelona he gushes over, if you care to ask him. "He's the only person I've ever asked for an autograph," said Adrià. "One time, when we ate together in my friend's restaurant, we moved the tables apart and kicked a ball about. Now that was living the dream."

Nowadays, he counts Manchester City's manager, and Cruyff's disciple on earth, Pep Guardiola, as a dear friend. "I spoke to him last a few months back, when his mother passed. Would you believe, he was cooking one of my recipes for dinner!"

And yet, after decades at the very pinnacle of fine dining, Adrià ran out of questions to ask and dishes to create, so to reignite his curiosity he stopped cooking. El Bulli served its last customer in 2011 and transformed itself into the El Bulli Foundation, dedicated to "feeding creativity". By stopping his culinary career at a fixed point, Adrià preserved his life's achievements before decline could set in, while leaving his mind free to answer bigger and bigger questions.

His focus moved from just food towards what it means to have an idea, turn it into reality and refine it into something interesting – what he calls a "general theory of creativity". When I met him earlier that day, he invited me to his attic space, the El Bulli Lab, around the corner from Plaça d'Espanya in the south of Barcelona. For the past ten years he has been working, writing and studying with a fraction of the public attention he has dealt with for the majority of his career. You'd be forgiven for thinking he'd vanished. From this space, Adrià has been leading a 20-year plan, expected to be completed by 2030, which aims not just to transform the world of food knowledge but also revolutionise the way we, as human beings,

'I could have just retired after El Bulli, opened a workshop, but there were so many questions we left unanswered'



El Bulli staff at work and (below) attending a meeting in the restaurant's kitchen

create new things. There is a lot to this plan. Firstly, there are his two hubs: La Bulli Grafía, a permanent exhibition that celebrate's his restaurant's past, and El Bulli 1846, a research centre for building the future. If you want to encounter him in the future, it is probably best to check these two places before you look anywhere else.

Then there's the Bullipedia. Never a shrinking violet, Adrià has gone beyond the ten-a-penny tomes that are typically favoured by ageing food figures (*Gordon Ramsay: Quick And Delicious*, anyone?). Instead, he is putting together a 35-volume encyclopaedia detailing the history, science, uses and purposes of practically any culinary topic on God's green earth. Where the pages of Julia Child taught us the proper way to cook and MFK Fisher's the way to consider what we eat, Adrià is offering something yet more profound: the ability not just to recall or experience, but to understand the entire world of food on a level we are yet to realise.

Accompanying that, there's Seaurching ("sea-urching", as in "sea urchin"), which is kind of like a foodie Ask Jeeves, where you can pose any question about food and have your answer pulled from the ocean of Bullipedia information.

Say, for example, you want to use Google to search for "sweetcorn". Right now, that would yield you 32 million results – a galaxy of clippings, most of them useless, arbitrary, governed by such things as SEO, which have no relevance to someone wanting to understand sweetcorn. "Seaurching" for sweetcorn, however, will cut through the noise and only give the verified, organised information that cooks need, sanctioned by Adrià and his team of researchers.

"People ask me if you'll need the Bullipedia to know how to fry an egg," he scoffed. "Of course not. But if you want to really understand why we eat eggs, or eat at restaurants, or eat at all, then you can get the answer in the Bullipedia."

Underpinning all of this is what Adrià calls his grand project, "Sapiens": a research methodology that he developed while creating dishes with his team, which he believes can be used by artists and craftspeople of all disciplines to invent things more effectively. This "tool" is what he wants to pass on as his creative legacy and its impact could be new food or new ways to cook, but it could just as easily be new buildings or paintings.

Building the El Bulli Foundation has been, to put it gently, arduous. "If I knew it was going to take this long," said Adrià, "I wouldn't have done it." Although established in 2013, it is only now starting to take shape. Adrià could just as easily have kept the lights on at El Bulli, serving the hits from his repertoire of dishes. "I have achieved everything I could have wanted for my life. I really could have just retired to Cala Montjoi and opened up a little workshop where people could come in and have something to eat. But there were so many questions we left unanswered."

Most chefs of his generation are left to sit and watch the sun go down on their reputations, as younger upstarts – sometimes their own >>



Photographs **Maribel Ruiz de Erenchun**

>> trainees – leave them looking old and stale. Like a champion boxer who can't find it within himself to hang up his gloves for good, Adrià is trying to best his own legacy. This next decade, in some senses, will be the hardest of his career, especially since this is his second go around. He knows he won't be around in 50 years' time, but ideally he'd like to be around for the next ten. He wants El Bulli to have its correct place in history, but with the mountain left to climb, how much work can one man fit into a lifetime?

Ferran Adrià is at his happiest in a lab. Of all the preconceptions I had before meeting him, it was this one I saw confirmed almost instantly, in the ease with which he moved from desk to desk in his giant loft, glancing over his staff's research and dispensing direction on what to do next.

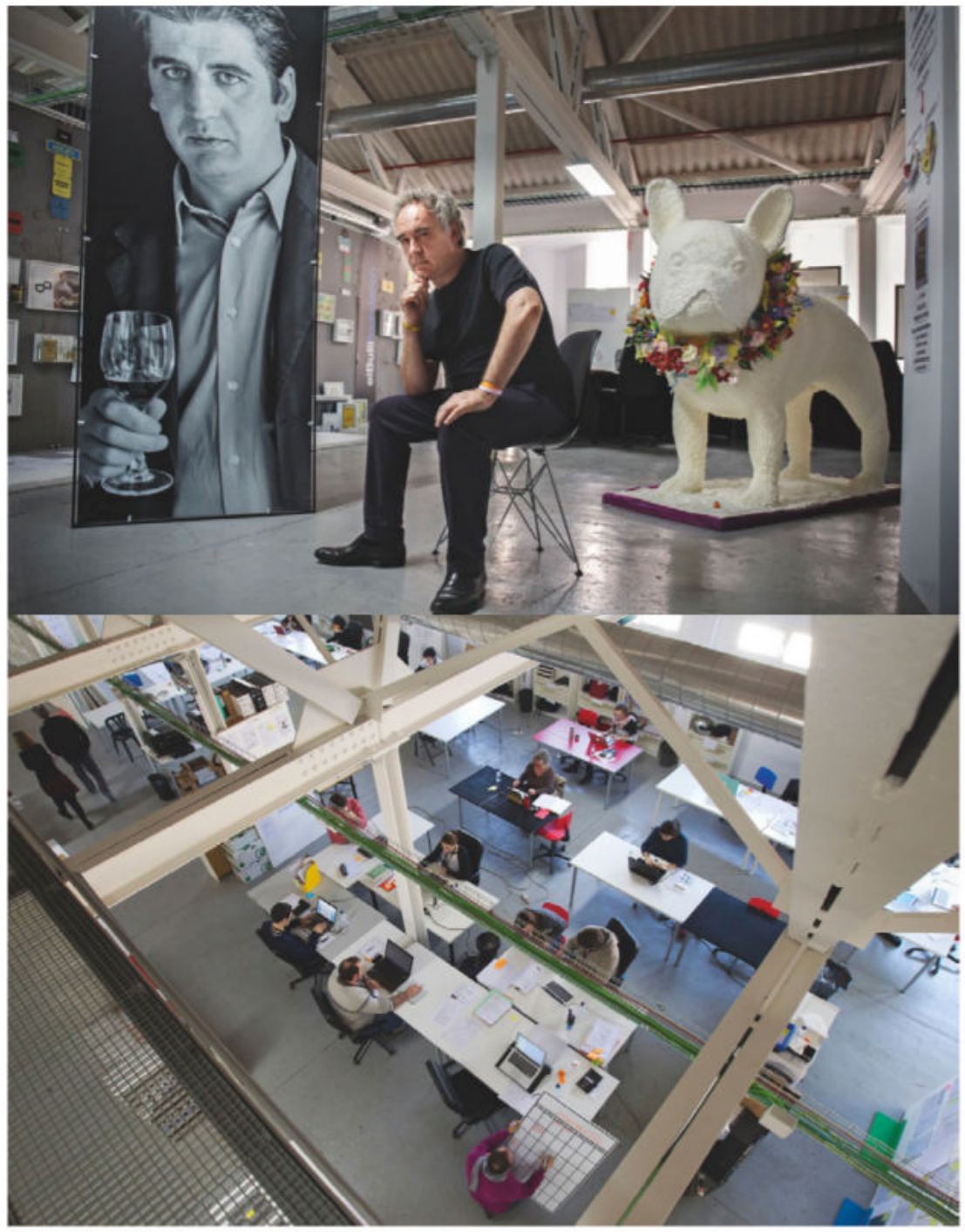
From 1995 onwards, El Bulli pioneered the concept of "kitchen R&D" and is still the restaurant most people associate with using science and experimentation to create its menu. Nowadays, from The Fat Duck to Noma, research chefs are almost a necessity at the highest level of restaurant. Vaughn Tan, an assistant professor of strategy and entrepreneurship at University College London, just last year published *The Uncertainty Mindset*, a ten-year study of how R&D has become integral to the success of modern, forward-thinking cooking. "Places with that intensity, to keep their standards, can't just test as they go," said Tan. "They need people dedicated to coming in, trying things, failing, studying, reworking and innovating."

What Adrià liked about having a separate space and team to create new dishes was the freedom it brought him; he became so enamoured with the process that he would shut the restaurant down for half a year just so he and his team could spend the other half playing around with every idea that came into their heads. "When we started experimenting, we were like naughty schoolchildren," said Adrià. "Even though the restaurant was nearly bankrupt, we couldn't help it. We wanted to explore the limits of existence."

Adrià and his team would invent dishes that were designed to provoke – if not insult – customers. One particular dish, "Two Ways Of Presenting Chicken Curry" (dish number 298, from 1995), would see the waiter ask if a diner wanted thigh or breast meat, before bringing them a plate of curry ice cream dressed with chicken jus. Their focus was on being avant-garde, producing things that had never even been conceived of before, never mind made by others.

Aside from being provocative, Adrià's research team was also obsessively meticulous. It wasn't enough for them to have an idea and turn it into a dish for the El Bulli menu. They brought seriousness and rigour to their creativity and, as a result, pushed their standards higher, setting the bar for all other restaurants to follow.

Every single completed dish would later be analysed and interrogated until they could pinpoint what was genuinely ground-breaking about it. From this, they sketched out a "motorway of creativity" map, in which the "motorways" were world-firsts (the first foams, the first warm jellies) that they could "drive down" when trying to think of a new idea. That way, they would never be stuck trying to recollect what they had invented the year before and could spin off into an endless well of new concepts: gelled spaghetti made from Parmesan stock or cocktail meringues frozen with liquid nitrogen, to name but two.



From top: Ferran Adrià at El Bulli Lab, Barcelona, 2016; the workspace in 2015

Bit by bit, all of this research created ever-increasing amounts of data, which Adrià and his team brought together into an online "General Catalogue" of El Bulli dishes, where all 1,846 plates could be traced, explored and categorised. It's not hard to see how Bullipedia swelled from this – in fact, the feverish nature of this research laid the foundation of everything Adrià does today, up to and including the Bullipedia. "We questioned everything," said Adrià. "That was our philosophy, in two words: question everything."

Sticking closely to this philosophy brought Adrià and El Bulli their success. It was the mindset that kept them at the top for so long, the mindset that earned Adrià his mercurial reputation as the man who made caviar out of mango juice and olives that exploded the second they went in your mouth.

"I look at Instagram now, maybe two or three times a day," said a smirking Adrià, "and I see chefs – chefs on the [World's] 50 Best list – still doing things we did 20 years ago. That was the power of El Bulli. After us, everybody started questioning everything."

Grant Achatz makes no secret of El Bulli's impact on him: "I fell in love with his thought processes and his risk-taking, how he would openly admit to creating a dish that did not taste good, on purpose. To me, that was so courageous."

Questioning everything costs money – lots of it – as does six months of menu research and serving only once a day to an audience of 50. To facilitate his creativity, Adrià depended on Juli Soler – his best friend and business partner; the yin to his yang; the Laurel to his Hardy – to handle the numbers.

El Bulli as a restaurant barely ever broke even and so the rest of its money came from a world of side projects pushed by Soler. They put Adrià's name on olive oil, beer, chocolate, soups, crisps, they opened a publishing house for their cookbooks and offered a catering service that fed guests at the wedding of the current king of

Photograph **Francesc Guillamet**

Spain, Felipe VI. "If they didn't happen to be the two best men in the world at their professions," said Nicholas Lander, "they would've made marvellous salesmen."

With Soler's support, Adrià had total licence to create and provoke and innovate and with that came the cavalcade of acclaim. He all but headlined the world's most important contemporary art fair, popped up in *Ratatouille* (2007) and graced the covers of magazines the world over, with that trademark piercing glare of his. One such profile, written by Arthur Lubow for the *New York Times Magazine*, was so heretical to French food critics that some argued it was cultural retaliation for their country refusing to invade Iraq.

When you've developed nearly 2,000 plates of food, however, and seen them imitated all over the world to varying levels of success, it's easy to see how you could feel creatively spent. "By 2008, I became dispassionate, you could say. Why? Because I'd reached the limit – my limit."

The decision to close El Bulli in 2011 – or, rather, to stop serving food at El Bulli – stunned the restaurant world into silence. Rumours spread of imminent financial collapse or some kind of rift with his brother, Albert. Nobody could figure out why – it made no sense. "I always believed that it was the weight of the waiting list," said Lander. "Everyone in the world would call for a seat at their table and Juli told me that they were just tired of saying no to people."

But more than this, serving customers was one task Adrià was genuinely bound to; if he was going to be the head chef of a restaurant, all the creativity in the world couldn't separate him from this basic obligation. This unscratchable itch is ultimately what distinguishes him from the pack: the substance beneath his ethereal food. Nothing at El Bulli was more important than the pursuit of the new, not even cooking. If he wanted to question everything, something had to go. And with that, the world's best chef left the kitchen for good.

Did you ever go to El Bulli?" was the first question Adrià asked me when I met him at the El Bulli Lab. When I said no, too bashful to say I was 14 years old when they closed for good, he led me over to a sturdy sandalwood table covered in plastic wrap. "Well, now we can sit at the El Bulli table!" All around me were notes upon notes, files and folders, boxes piled up to the ceiling. He gestured over to a glass case displaying the first syphon his kitchen ever used, with the kind of reverence people usually reserve for chunks of moon rock. His boyish enthusiasm to show me every corner of the archives bordered, at times, on giddiness.

Adrià has held on to practically everything that made El Bulli what it was, with a fervour some might call hoarding. It took two hours of moving from spot to spot, with effusive explanations, to complete the tour. I saw every book he ever worked on, every article he was ever featured in and the trophy shelf – my God: not just awards for being the world's best restaurant, but prestigious design awards, letters of praise from the Japanese government, professorships and honorary diplomas from universities around the world.

From the accolades corner, we went through to his Alexandrian library, which held every book he deems historically important to the food-writing canon, from the very first printed cookbooks onwards. He knew I liked Auguste Escoffier and Elizabeth David, so he hurried me over to a locked wooden cabinet full of their first editions, which he'd tracked down. These were his foundational texts, stacked alongside unbelievably rare copies by Marie-Antoine Carême and Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin. I didn't get to hold them, but he was especially eager to dust them off and leaf through them for me, in case I didn't believe what I was seeing.

You would not sense, from the glee he can barely conceal, that it took so long – and so much



'Thaw', a green pinecone-infused sorbet

'Even though El Bulli was nearly bankrupt, we wanted to experiment, to explore the limits of existence'

effort – to get to this blissful state. "I've been lucky enough to find something that motivates me as much as what I used to do," he said. "It's strange, I know, but I like it. I understand why I'm doing this, even if nobody else does."

Over the past decade, Adrià has started projects, ended projects, reworked and redesigned projects; battled with architects, politicians, activists; lost his best friend; and now launched in the middle of a global pandemic that has thrown out all the old certainties about the future of gastronomy.

Transitioning from kitchen life was his first big challenge. Pere Obrador, an associate professor at the University Of Barcelona, noted how much of a novice Adrià was at the beginning. "He was an analogue chef trying to break into the digital world," said Obrador. "He knew Google and how to email and that was pretty much it."

Obrador joined up with the El Bulli Foundation after Adrià signed a deal to be a global ambassador for Telefónica in 2010; part of the deal was that Telefónica's Open Innovation team, for which Obrador was programme manager, would collaborate with the fledgling foundation to help it take shape. Over four years, they staged hackathons, hosted conferences and developed a big part of what is now the digital side of Bullipedia.

Conversing in the same language, so to speak, was difficult: Telefónica's team were all data miners, technologists, analysts; Adrià's team were, for the most part at first, restaurant alumni, invested in sticking around for this next new phase. There were clashes.

"Ferran was used to seeing results at the end of the day," said Obrador, "And in what we do, sometimes there's nothing to show by the end of the day. A week can go by with no progress; being creative in this world takes time."

Not too far into this adjusting process, Adrià discovered that, for the first time in his professional life, he would have to go it alone, as the illness and passing of Juli Soler took the wind from his sails. "We were like a married couple," he told me. "We put up with each other for 25 years. I was the serious one and he was just an unrepeatable individual – a cross between Groucho Marx and The Wolf [Harvey Keitel's character in *Pulp Fiction*]."

For years, Adrià had acted with the confidence that he would have Soler by his side, able to configure the business in such a way that things would always turn out OK, no matter how expensive or taxing a project may be. Every decision – right up to closing the restaurant – was made together and their dream was a shared one. Before Soler passed, in 2015, Adrià ensured he was appointed as honorary president of the El Bulli Foundation, but processing the fact that he would have to direct this 20-year plan on his own was particularly hard. "Now both of his children work in the foundation," he said, "and I'm so happy about that. But losing Juli was a very, very difficult moment."

Compounding the loss of Soler was the unrelenting squabble over the old El Bulli restaurant space. Originally, the plan was to expand it out into a theme park for culinary innovation, with art installations that told the story of the surrounding area: magma, olives, birds' nests, algae. El Bulli had always been in close proximity to Cap De Creus Natural Park and is so synonymous with the region that a new species of native scorpion was named after the restaurant (*Roncus elbulli*). With the fame and tourism they have brought to the town of Roses, and to Catalonia more broadly, they assumed their project would be welcomed with open arms.

Unfortunately, they could not have been more incorrect.

Given that the plans for El Bulli 1846 would have tripled their footprint – an increase in size that is illegal by Catalan law – and encroached on protected shoreline, Adrià drew the ire of environmental campaigners. For two years, between 2014 and 2016, the battle raged. Around 71,000 people signed petitions against the new space, insisting that the damage it would bring was >>

>> not worth the boost in tourist trade. "We even offered the ownership of it all to Catalonia!" said Adrià. "And still we couldn't convince them." Eventually, he conceded defeat and split his plans in two – he had to, because the opposition wasn't going away.

But those defeats and difficulties did little to dampen his spirits. With every passing year, he kept his head down and persevered and now he speaks with the Zen of someone who knows that things will eventually work out for him. "They were very difficult times, but we got through them. And right now I'm having a blast. All we're focused on is enjoying ourselves."

The Adrià project that is hardest to grasp, by far, is Sapiens. In spite of this, or because of this, it's the one he enjoys most. From what I can ascertain (and believe me, I have tried very hard to ascertain) it can be explained like this: If "question everything" is the philosophy, then Sapiens is the action: establishing the "what", "how", "why", "who", "when", "where" and "for whom", almost like a high-school history essay.

Testing the Sapiens methodology has become Adrià's main aim with the foundation, as well as a not-insubstantial revenue stream for partnering with brands and companies. He has done collaborative Sapiens events with Dom Pérignon to "decode" the world's most famous champagne, he's given talks about Sapiens at Google HQ, overseen creative audits for companies such as Hewlett-Packard, Caixabank and Roca and signed a partnership with Disney to produce an illustrated children's cookbook that demonstrates Sapiens to parents and children alike through superhero-themed recipes. According to Adrià, Diego Martínez, of Granada CF in La Liga, even uses Sapiens to inform his coaching decisions.

What does it entail, then? Much as Adrià and his chefs mapped out their "motorways of creativity" for new dishes, Sapiens means systematically interrogating your creations and spotting the novelty in your previous work so you can then spin off from those novelties to think of new ideas. For Dom Pérignon, it might be looking at the first year it deviated from mixing chardonnay and pinot noir grapes at a 50/50 blend; for Martínez, it might entail looking at why dropping to three at the back when you're off the ball results in a successful chance. So the theory goes, if you know why the "dish" worked, you can learn from its successes, evaluate its drawbacks and carry those insights forward with you to the next "dish" you create.

It is easiest to see Sapiens as the end point of El Bulli's method of studying and restudying itself. As a concept, it began to coalesce while Adrià was organising an exhibition of El Bulli's history for the Palau Robert in the centre of Barcelona in 2012. By examining not just the restaurant's dishes but its business, history, geography, layout and cultural impact, he discovered things that passed him by over the preceding quarter of a century. "Did you know we were the first restaurant to have an entirely electrical kitchen? I didn't, until we started studying ourselves again."

Even people who have known Adrià for years, such as Noma's René Redzepi (a former trainee from the same class as Massimo Bottura), can't quite place what Sapiens means. "Ferran talks about his projects a lot," said Redzepi, "but sometimes when you speak to him it's beyond you. At some point, it's all going to click into place and make sense, I'm sure. But I'm not going to grasp it until I see the whole thing come together."

It's all very complicated, as Adrià freely admits, but he is certain that Sapiens has the potential to reconfigure all we know about knowledge. "There's a world of information out there and no general system that can link it together," he said. "Sapiens is that system. Use it correctly and you'll be able to understand anything."

To prove this, he led me to the giant screen at the back of the lab and pulled up a map of the universe. Set against a backdrop of constellations, Adrià's map organised the great unknown in a strikingly simple way. There were planets, of course, and stars, moons, galaxies, asteroids, black holes, satellites. Each category is broken down further and further as you follow the map downwards: the types of planet and moon and star, what links them together or separates them from one another. This was Sapiens in action, he said: questions about the universe answered, linked and made effortlessly understandable. It was more than a bit confusing, but for a second I could have sworn it made sense.

'La Bulligrafía isn't about vanity, it's about legacy. Without all of this, we would be dead'



'Mango And Black Olive Discs'

I met Adrià again a few months after our meeting and found him thriving in his new lab in Cala Montjoi, absolutely wrapped up in Sapiens work after so long spent waiting. "It's incredible, such an incredible environment," he said. "I can't think of a better place on earth to be." For this first phase, Adrià picked ten researchers after extensive interviews and tests to work out whether they could handle the pressure of this pilot project. Among this core squad was a philosopher, a psychologist, a geopolitical intelligence expert and an architect, all corralled into the task of testing, refining and simplifying the Sapiens methodology.

Their workday ran from 11am to 8pm, having the run of the renovated restaurant to themselves. Leisure time was unrestricted, meals were cooked in the old El Bulli kitchens and walks on the beach were encouraged. But the work was rigorous and Adrià, as in his cheffing days, was unflinching in his perfectionism. "It's like being a football team," he said. "I'm the coach, they're the players, but we're all one. We're not FC Barcelona – not yet anyway. Right now we want to be Atlético Madrid – small, but hard-working, always fighting."

Everything is clicking into place. Last July, Adrià secured a building befitting his museum – a museum he had spent four years trying to find the right destination for. La Bulligrafía will open this year in an old factory space just outside Barcelona, in the bordering city of L'Hospitalet De Llobregat where Adrià and his brother were born. The visitor experience will be unique.

Adrià suggests ticket holders watch a 50-minute documentary or read a sheet of thought-provoking questions ahead of their visit so that they approach the building and the exhibition in the right frame of mind. (I was asked to do the same before our interview.) Inside, is 550 square metres of El Bulli materials – an entire life's work. Should visitors feel snackish, there will be refreshments, but they will be El Bulli refreshments. After they leave, the ticket grants 12 months' access to the full El Bulli archive, so they can revisit any aspect of the tour they enjoyed or try their hand at one of the 1,846 dishes, should they be so inclined.

"It's not about vanity," he assured me. "It would just be a shame if all of our work was lost. We already have our place in history, sure, but this isn't about history; it's about legacy. Without all of this, we would be dead."

From the experience of eating in Barcelona right now – or any major city, if you look hard

Photograph **Phaidon**

enough – you wouldn't say the El Bulli legacy is at risk of dying out. If you walk along Avinguda Del Paral·lel alone you'll encounter five of Albert Adrià's restaurants, including the tapas bar where I nabbed a hurried, nervous lunch before meeting with Ferran.

Head into the city centre and you'll find scores of restaurants owned by El Bulli alumni, including one that ranks as the ninth best restaurant in the world right now. Disfrutar, headed by Eduard Xatruch, Oriol Castro and Mateu Casañas (the trio who ran the kitchen for El Bulli's final decade), is in many senses the spiritual successor to the restaurant in Cala Montjoi and the bond between them and Adrià persists today. "There are no words to describe how close we are," Xatruch told me. "Ferran is like a father to us."

From Achatz in Chicago to Bottura in Modena, Redzepi in Copenhagen to Gaggan Anand in Bangkok, El Bulli alumni continue to dominate fine dining. The El Bulli Foundation has even drawn up an alumni page – dubbing its former staff "Bullinianos" – organised by years like a university honour roll.

Slowly, steadily, Bullipedia is now starting to make waves in the English-speaking world, with Phaidon, Adrià's publishing partner, launching *What Is Cooking* last year, the latest addition to his series of volumes. "This book was six years of my life," said Adrià. "I thought I could answer that question in a few months. I'm Ferran Adrià, after all. How could I not? But writing it showed me that I knew nothing. I went to bed every night realising how stupid I was."

Bullipedia is a product of the madness of his philosophy. Questions begat questions begat questions. "What if there was a Wikipedia for all of food? OK, let's do it, but what is food? What makes an item 'food'? Is an apple 'food' when it still hangs from a tree? If not, what is it about taking it from the tree that makes it 'food'?" The possibilities, as Adrià discovered, are endless.

Over 464 pages, Adrià and his team answer the titular question in staggering detail, covering everything from the thought processes involved in getting up and cooking something to the variety of settings where cooking happens to the evolution across history of grinding tools for making flour. Their next volume, *The Origins Of Cooking*, has just been released, which charts how mankind and our ancestors learned to cook between the Palaeolithic and Neolithic eras, a time span of more than three million years.

There's a full Sapiens book on the way, standing at about 600 pages, featuring Adrià's map of the universe alongside dozens of other diagrams and case studies. Beyond that there's one book on the history of the tomato, one on chocolate, four on cocktails and six on wine. And that's just the start of it. "In four or five years, Bullipedia will be complete. In general, that is – the foundational books. But we now know how to write a book about anything."

Once that's all digitised, in English and Spanish at least, Seaurching, El Bulli's very own food Google, will follow suit. The challenge there, however, is that they won't be relying on an algorithm to work out people's queries; instead, the hope is that they have already answered any question you could ask in the process of building Bullipedia. And from looking through the detail of the first few editions, I'd say it's entirely possible they may have.

The first half of the 20-year plan is all but complete. Over the past decade, Adrià has made a clear and permanent separation from cooking (although, due to the pandemic, he is cooking now more than ever, but only for his wife). Dr Jekyll, as he describes his old self, is a long time gone from the stage and it's Mr Hyde, free of the constraints of his kitchen and able to explore creativity more broadly, that the world will be getting used to from now on.

The most difficult thing now will be making the work of the last ten years count. All of it will have to be paid for, somehow, and the race is



on to find out how to get buy-in from interested guests. There is a lot left to do. Every solution – from more brand collaborations to annual donations to building a Netflix-style service for Bullipedia – will take more time and energy to develop, alongside everything else.

What El Bulli used to offer was quite straightforward: the best meal on the planet, the best meal of your life and very often one of the best experiences a human being could have. Now, Adrià and co can offer you all of the backstage – the sketches, the plates, the pots and pans and chairs – but not the thrill of the meals that made them so famous. The end result needs to be more than those 1,846 dishes for any of this work to be a success.

Adrià is, typically, intensely relaxed about the future. "It's not about popularity. It never was," he said. "As I said earlier, only 700 more people a year tried our food, but who were they? Media people, business people, the provost of Harvard... They started a domino effect. And they'll do so again." The focus is on becoming a foundation that stands for creative excellence, with a centre at the heart of it – El Bulli 1846 – where the world's greatest minds can come in for residencies and brainstorm alongside one another to shake up the landscape of humanity.

Pere Obrador notes how this has been the objective from the very beginning. "He wanted to invite his good friend Norman Foster," he said, "and then a great painter, a great sculptor and a great chef. Unbelievable things would happen, he'd say. They'd use Sapiens and Seaurching and all of these tools and [El Bulli 1846] would become this magical place that phenomenal things emerged from."

More importantly, Adrià wants his work to be a reference point, not just in how to cook brilliantly but how to transform the field you work in, just as he did with food. "I see chefs in my kitchen right now," said Grant Achatz, "and they're 22, 23. They have no clue yet, but they have the power to do whatever they want to do because of Ferran and El Bulli."

Whether his life's work will have the impact he desires, however, is a question that will only be answered by the passing of decades, not years. His aims seem nigh on impossible to complete, but those who know him understand that he will finish the job or die trying. "He's a bulldozer," said Obrador. "When he has a vision, he drives it forward no matter what's in his way."

He won't stop, because this is the only way he believes El Bulli can be truly understood going forward, in the absence of actually bringing people to eat there and experience it for themselves. "People forget everything," said Adrià. "Even Michael Jordan had to make *The Last Dance*." And much like the insatiable champion at the heart of that Netflix series, Adrià is hellbent on this one final victory. It took just under 20 years for Adrià to go from the back of the El Bulli kitchen to the front of the *New York Times Magazine*. Those 20 years were immensely hard work, full of peril and stress and danger, but they laid the foundation for Adrià's legend. The next ten are about sealing it.

Our meeting had gone on for around six hours and the intensity of our conversations had left me sapped, exhausted by the whirlwind of concepts and theories and challenges. Adrià's day had started almost ten hours previously, which went some way to explaining his choice of nightcap, a Marlboro Red, which I had not had him down for. And the next day, he would be doing it all again: up at 4.30am, espresso, no lunch, work until 8pm.

"We couldn't have spoken like this ten years ago," he told me. "I look back at the best interviews I ever gave and I'm almost ashamed. When I read them, I think to myself, 'Did I really say that? This guy knows nothing!'" Should all go to plan, El Bulli will get its rightful place in history, but Ferran Adrià will remain a constant work in progress. **GQ**

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The SECRET LIFE *of* Sean Connery

Story by **Sean Macaulay**

With an irresistible, raw-edged charm borrowed by Bond but inalienably his own, Edinburgh's 'Big Tam' strode the silver screen for half a century, before his death last year at 90. But by every account – some salacious, others ferocious, all reverent – the character he played best was himself. And nobody did it better

Photograph **Allstar**

Connery had a 'chemical effect' on women. The romping anecdotes stack higher than the gold bars at Fort Knox

Shirley Eaton as Jill Masterson and Sean Connery as James Bond in Goldfinger (1964)

When it comes to the galaxy of Hollywood and the supernova that is Sean Connery, one can pinpoint the moment of cosmic birth right down to the second. The year is 1962. The setting is Le Cercle casino, Mayfair, London. The game is chemin de fer. A woman in a red dress asks a man in black tie for his name. The reply is three words, punctuated with the snap of a cigarette lighter. Three syllables in fact. Two of them the same. *Bum. Bum-bum.* I don't even have to write them out. It is the most impersonated phrase in cinematic history.

Cary Grant was the most exquisite film star Britain ever produced, a fine-cut gem of self-mocking champagne charm, but Connery, the rough-diamond Edinburgh navvy with feral eyebrows and forearm tattoos, was the biggest, the most successful, the most iconic, the most idolised and the most controversial. He was the epitome of on-screen cool and the patron saint of taking no shit. (When asked the best way to deal with Hollywood, he said, "Get yourself the best lawyer in the world and stick it to them.") And it all started in a makeshift crib in the bottom drawer of his parents' wardrobe in a cold-water tenement flat in Fountainbridge, Edinburgh.

So many British theatrical greats with singular personas are self-inventions – Noël Coward, Cary Grant, Rex Harrison. All from humble provincial origins. All remade with poshified accents. All, crucially, refashioned from within. Connery was no less a self-willed marvel, but he remained elemental, essentially undiluted. Unlike Grant, Connery didn't leave behind his working-class upbringing, but brought it with him. For James Bond, he was polished up by director Terence Young, who took Connery to his tailors and taught him high-life connoisseurship. The eyebrows were trimmed, the nails manicured, the back hair plucked, but his essential self remained intact.

In some of his pre-Bond appearances, he's so rough-edged at times – the eyebrows are positively werewolfian – that his rawboned gusto feels too big for the screen. Even as he says some of the least likely Connery dialogue of all time: "Please don't go. I'm frightened. My life is in your hands. You don't know the power you have, Anna Karenina. Send me away. I can't bring you happiness."

At 6ft 2in and 15 stone, with a buffed-up physique from weightlifting, "Big Tam", as he was known in his youth, was naturally built for the grand battles – exploding volcanoes, mountaintop sword fights, great leaps off the parapet, teeth-gritted hand-to-hand combat, especially if the hands were fake. ("Tell me, [Dr No,] does the toppling of American missiles really compensate for having no hands?")

With Bond, Connery came of age as part of the 1960s social revolution that overthrew half a century of epicene British leading men such as Leslie Howard and Michael Wilding. "It's such a misconception of an actor," said Connery at the time, "when you see some of the old films, that he should have a grand piano and candelabra and Renoirs and dress for dinner."

He was such a hairy-chested life force that there was no way to accommodate him in romantic comedies or living-room dramas. He made his share of stinkers, for sure, but there are no scenes of squirming social embarrassment or milquetoast timidity anywhere on Connery's résumé. No real smallness. The only time he put on a pipsqueak voice was when he appeared on *What's My Line?*, during which blindfolded guests had to guess his real identity.

Alec Baldwin, who worked with Connery on *The Hunt For Red October*, still vividly remembers their first day together. "He came on set with the uniform, the steel-grey hairpiece, the make-up and I just stood there going, 'Look at this guy. He's the king. This guy is the king.' And he was the king. Handsome as the day is long and an amazing actor."

Baldwin paid homage by mimicking Connery in a scene crawling through a submarine duct, but this was back in 1990, when doing the "s with an h" accent was still fresh. On later movies, Connery's assistant would routinely give younger male costars the two fundamental rules of working with Sir Sean: "The first rule is you must never do the voice. The second rule is you must never do the voice." Inevitably, some brash hopeful would try out their Connery impression at the table read, prompting a swift reply: [*insert the voice here*] "Ah, shut the fuck up!"

One could do a whole essay on the joys of the Connery voice: the masculine authority, the musicality, the sardonic top spin, the purring sensuality ("You're a woman of many parts, Poosy."), the ferocious barking of orders even when only for an Istanbul hotel "break-fast" (never "breck"), and, of course, the divinely dead-flat string of 007 quips that accompanied every henchman or assassinatrix termination.

'He was a gentleman of great passion. But he was not going to drag things out needlessly'

"I think he got the point." (Harpoon gun.)

"She's had her kicks." (Poisoned shoe spike.)

"Shocking. Positively shocking." (Electrocution in a bathtub.)

The one-liners got rote and camp along with the general mid-period sag of the Bond films. But the best ones retain their sardonic zing.

Saturday Night Live comedian Darrell Hammond, whose raucous impersonation of Connery as a vehement idiot took on a life of its own, said his test for a great celebrity impression was how many words were needed before people could guess who it was. With Bill Clinton, he got it down to one word – "lingerie" – thanks to a sleazily extended last vowel. With Connery, it was down to one syllable. Yes. As in, "Yesh. It's Sean Connery here..."

I quote directly because, amazingly, the great man called me at home once. It was one of those classic dream-come-true moments (for me anyway) – a relaxed, rambling 20-minute conversation with your childhood idol ostensibly treating you as an equal. I nearly missed the call, too, because it was first thing in the morning local time and he initially sounded like an old man pretending to be Sean Connery. (He was 76 and explained he'd picked up a scratchy throat from all the air conditioning while travelling in Europe.) But then he got warmed up and there was no mistake after that. When he described a political event as pathetic – "Oh, it's pa-the-tic..." – the surge in conviction and volume made me feel like Indiana Jones getting scolded by his dad. "You call *this* archaeology?"

Here's how the call came about. My sister is married to Gordon Brown, the former prime minister, who got to know Connery when campaigning for the establishment of a Scottish parliament in 1997. Later, when Connery was pondering a move back to Scotland, Gordon took him out to see some properties in Fife. One unsuspecting home owner got the shock of her life when she opened her door to find James Bond and the then chancellor of the exchequer on her front step asking to look around – the house wasn't even listed.

Connery didn't end up buying a house, as he was never able to resolve his love of Scotland with his abhorrence of UK tax rates: "They're impossible." As Billy Connolly joked when presenting him the Bafta Fellowship award in 1998, "[Sean] hovers over Scotland like a great colossus... from the Bahamas." But he donated heavily to Scottish causes over the years and supported the arts there often.

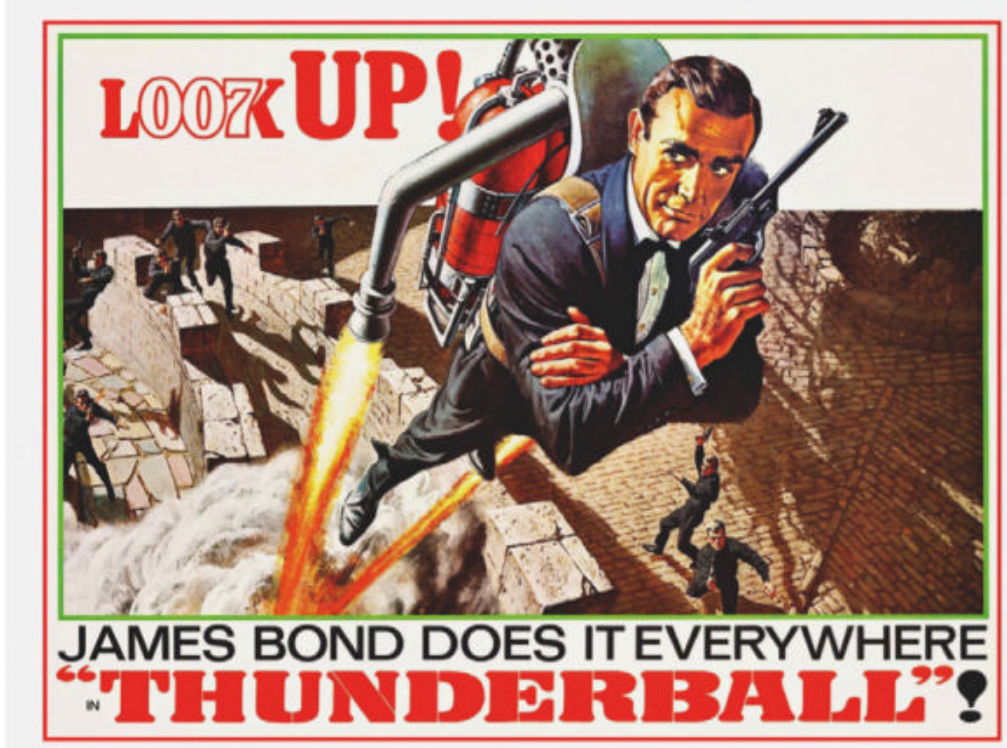
So, in 2006, when Connery attended the Edinburgh International Film Festival, Gordon invited him for dinner up at the house. My sister's account is that Connery was urbane, charming, drank Scotch and laughed it up, swapping stories late into the night with Gordon and his dear pal Sir David Murray. He and his wife, Micheline Roquebrune, brought gifts for their two boys (rugged little puffer jackets "perfect for a Scottish summer at the beach"). Best of all, when he sat next to my sister at dinner, his opening line was, "Now, tell me, are you related to the Sean Macaulay who writes above movies for the *Times*?"

Turns out, he liked reading my stuff. "Wherever I am in the world, I log on and read his stuff." Of course, he could just have had a very smart assistant briefing him, but my sister got me his address in the Bahamas and I duly sent off a letter of thanks and assumed that was the end of it. Soon after, the 2006 California state elections were underway, unleashing a blizzard of robocalls from Hollywood celebrities along the lines of: "Hi, this is Warren Beatty and I'm urging you to vote Democrat this week..."





‘I’m at an age where it’s easier to get out of things than get in them. And I don’t just mean my trousers’



From top: Connery with Alec Baldwin in The Hunt For Red October (1990); with Tippi Hedren on the set of Marnie (1964); Frank McCarthy’s movie poster for Thunderball (1965), Connery’s fourth film as Bond

Photographs Alamy; Getty Images

“Hi, dis is Arnold Schwarzenegger telling you to vote Republican...”

When the Connery call came through from his house in the Bahamas, it was preceded by a bunch of international dialling clicks just like a robocall, so my first thought was, “What the feck are the Scottish National Party doing campaigning in California?”

“Yesh, your letter’s been around the horn, as indeed have I, but I’m back at my desk now...” As the penny dropped, I went into a sort of delayed shock. My mouth kept working, but my knees gave way, literally buckling beneath my framed set of original Bond posters: “Everything he touches turns to excitement!” (The *Thunderball* poster is the rarer version, naturally, with the protruding jetpack.)

My infatuation with Sean Connery had a Freudian dimension and not just because I was named after him. Like many children in the 1960s and 1970s, I saw my first Bond film with my father. He was also from Edinburgh and had brown suede shoes like 007’s in *Goldfinger* and even wore a similar Rolex, so when my parents divorced, Connery was the automatic choice to be my fantasy father figure. He was indestructible and witty and would teach me golf and baccarat and how to taste the jagged edge and attract women who carry their own hunting knives.

Unfortunately, he was no help when it came to passing A levels. Connery dropped out of school at 13 to begin his fabled litany of odd-jobs and pay his “share of the rent”. The list is now the stuff of national myth: milkman, coffin polisher, ditch digger, lifeguard, butcher’s shop assistant, truck driver (like his father), catalogue sweater model, even a babysitter at one point, plus a three-year spell in the Royal Navy, where he acquired his tattoos and a lifelong distaste for stifling bureaucracy. “My idea of the Navy was more of a fantasy than a reality,” he admitted.

When I mentioned how many people in Edinburgh still claimed to have had him deliver them milk, he said, “There must have been eleven horses pulling that fucking float.”

He was unabashed about his childhood deprivations, despite colleagues saying he had more than a few chips on his shoulder when he moved to London in his twenties. He could still point out the brass bank plaques he’d polished when he returned with his family in the 1970s for a tour of his old neighbourhood. (They were horrified by the grimness.) And yet he was increasingly reluctant to revisit the rest of his life in more searching detail. He’d wriggled out of an attempt at an autobiography with writer Meg Henderson before he abruptly cancelled the memoir he’d finally completed with Hunter Davies, The Beatles’ first biographer. At the eleventh hour, a warehouse of printed copies literally had to be pulped. Davies had spent many weeks at the Connery house working on the book and he remains diplomatically mystified by the decision. (Davies enjoyed the experience and the man immensely, but even after Connery’s death, he is still legally bound not to discuss it.)

Tellingly, when the subject of the abandoned >>

>> autobiography came up, it was the one moment in our call when Connery squirmed a little. “That decision cost me a packet,” he said. “I’ve reached an age where it’s a lot easier to get out of things than get in them. And I don’t just mean my trousers.”

I did push him about telling his story fully, making the case that it would be a perfect bookend to *Marnie*, the Alfred Hitchcock movie he made in 1964. Like *Spellbound* and *Citizen Kane*, *Marnie* is a classic “hunt the wound” psychiatric detective story. In this case, a publishing playboy (Connery) tries to unknot the mental mystery of his frigid kleptomaniac wife (Tippi Hedren). It’s also a lurid fever dream of Hitchcockian fetishism – Connery is attracted to her because she is a thief – but it has a denouement of repressed traumatic memory coming to the surface.

In Marnie’s case, it’s the killing of a sailor client by her prostitute mother. Connery lost his virginity in an air raid shelter aged 14 and never looked back on that front. The only hint of a Rosebud explanation is when he reflected on the sternness of his mother: “The simple fact that my mother never kissed me or held me in her arms when I was a child has had lots of repercussions on my life.”

Connery biographer Michael Feeney Callan said Connery’s desire to impress his mother was the big driving force. “When I interviewed his younger brother, Neil, Effie, the mother, came up all the time. The dad was more of a Saturday-night toper. The mum was an improver and a reader. And Connery had this divine curiosity, this relentless need to improve. Much as he loved Scotland, he couldn’t wait to get out of Edinburgh. Neil, by contrast, appeared in a spy spinoff film called *Operation Kid Brother* and two years later he was back working as a plasterer.”

Connery always claimed he didn’t know he had a deprived childhood until it was pointed out to him by a social worker. But the memories of poverty haunted him and money remained a preoccupation his whole life. “I’ve been screwed more times than a hooker!” He switched off lights in unused rooms. He preferred to drive himself to the set, even on big Hollywood productions. When he voiced the title character for the low-budget Scottish animation movie *Sir Billi* he met the producers at the airport himself. “We heard ‘*Beep! Beep!*’ and there was Sean Connery driving an old Toyota,” recalled Glasgow writer and producer Tessa Hartmann. “He jumped out of this old car and shouted, ‘Right, come on, kids, get in the back.’ We were due to start recording the next day and he said, ‘I’ll pick you up at half past eight. That’s not five minutes before and not five minutes after.’ He was a proud man and incredibly successful but humble and very down to earth.”

Needless to say, he was unswayed by my pitch for the full, soul-baring confessional and his eventual memoir, *Being A Scot*, was more a mix of national history and softball anecdotes. “I know that people are waiting for me to reveal of all my passionate, torrid affairs and name all of the women who have crossed my



‘If I started to behave to any woman the way Bond does, she’d run like a jack rabbit or call the police’



Clockwise from top: Connery with ex-wife Diane Cilento on their honeymoon in Spain, 1962; as Bond alongside Lana Wood in Diamonds Are Forever (1971) and Shirley Eaton in Goldfinger (1964); with Charlotte Rampling in cult sci-fi epic Zardoz (1974)

Photographs **Alpha Press; Getty Images**

path, but I won't. I will take these secrets to my grave."

Unlike the women, who merrily sang like birds when the tabloids tracked them down or it was time to write their memoirs. There's no way round the subject of sex and Connery. His coauthor, Murray Grigor, said Connery had a "chemical effect" on women and the romping anecdotes stack higher than the gold bars at Fort Knox. I knew one writer who interviewed Connery for a big cover story and then, before publication, he seigneurially borrowed her flat for an assignation (with the writer's late father's ex-girlfriend, no less). The back bedroom was overlooked by an art school, so I still can't help picture a couple of art students squinting out the window, saying, "It can't be him, can it?"

Big Tam was a ladies' man from his early days as a lifeguard and, later, at the local Palais De Dance in his tight trousers and pointed shoes. "It's a wonder there wasn't a plaque behind the old sweetie factory," joked his old bodybuilding friend Jimmy Laurie. Connery really made an impression one night when he showed up at the West End Cafe with a stunning singer on his arm called Maxine Daniels. "You could say there were conventions about the kind of people one socialised with, but Tommy didn't worry about them. Glamorous women especially were drawn to him, theatrical women."

Once he himself entered the world of theatre, he developed a method of requisitioning the dressing room for half-hour spells. A self-confessed "cut-to-the-chase" man, he was also an ardent romantic who could get very emotional and tongue-tied when smitten. He had a handful of marriage proposals knocked back in his twenties before he married Diane Cilento. "You can't be married to a serious actress like Diana and have an eye for other women," he insisted at the time. And indeed their early days were happy, but Bondmania and his roving eye soon swamped any chance of domestic bliss. "Sean, like so many men, puts women into two categories: those who do and those who don't," said one actress friend who was in the "don't" category. "He wasn't the least bit put out by it. He simply shrugged his shoulders, cooked a perfect meal for us both and we spent a great evening talking and listening to music."

Actor Sue Lloyd, who later starred in TV soap *Crossroads*, had a similar experience on their first date, but not the second. "We got very merry and he came back to my place and stayed the night. All I can say is that he was warm, sweet, lovable. A big cuddly teddy bear of a man."

Carly Simon, before she gained fame as a solo singer, memorably crossed paths with Connery in 1965 while travelling on a cruise ship from London to New York with her sister. She cheekily sent him a note suggesting a preprandial drink and within 15 minutes he called their room, while still in the middle of a massage, no less. At the first meeting, she caught him gazing at their long legs and thought he was "a jungle animal foraging to see if he could drag any remarkable grub back to his magnificent cave". Said cave was the presidential suite, where he served them cocktails, champagne and shrimp with "What's New Pussycat?" playing on the speakers. "He was extremely polite and not remotely aggressive," Simon recalled in her memoir *Boys In The Trees*. "Ah, girls, you're so beautiful," Connery said. "You're so funny. Come here, you adorable college girls…" When he suggested they all dance together, she did wonder if he "had simply assumed that anyone who used the word preprandial in a note would be equally well acquainted with ménage à trois and want one too". Simon declined the offer only to find herself outflanked by her sister, who hooked up with Connery on the last night of their trip, when Carly was washing her hair, and didn't return to their cabin until 5.15am, just as the ship was greeting the Statue Of Liberty. Simon broke up their singing partnership over it. "It was the dirtiest possible sisterly trick," she fumed. Twelve years later, she recorded one of the best Bond theme songs, "Nobody Does It Better", for Roger Moore in *The Spy Who Loved Me*; she admitted that she always thought of Connery when singing it.

Margaret Nolan, who played the masseuse, Dink, in *Goldfinger*, recalled Connery used to give her a lift home in his Rolls-Royce. "But he was actually more interested in my non-identical twin sister, who's very much his type. She's quite petite with red hair and she looks a bit like Diane Cilento, so he obviously likes these quite petite, high-cheekboned women. I remember he was very keen to dance with her!"

"If I actually started to behave to any woman the way Bond does," Connery told *Playboy* in 1965, "she'd run like a jack rabbit or send for the police." But he was a ghoster. Once the bloom was on the rose, the communication dried up fast, as Lynsey de Paul found out. She said Connery wooed her by quoting poetry. He also called her from the set of *The Russia House*, saying he was only thinking of her while filming his kissing scenes with Michelle Pfeiffer.

Lana Wood, who played casino hustler Plenty O'Toole ("Named after your father, perhaps?") in *Diamonds Are Forever*, gave a detailed account of her Connery "interlude" in *Natalie: A Memoir By Her Sister*, starting with their first meeting when she stumbled in on him in his hotel suite and he boomed,"Well, hello there!" "He was stark naked and sitting on the toilet," she writes. "It was just a matter of time… He was an assured lover given to bouts of spontaneity. Once, returning from a hard day on the set, he came rushing at me as soon as we got to his hotel room. He had his clothes off and was helping me out of mine when I hugged him and got a whiff of Sean after a day of physical exertion. He smelled like the bottom of a lion's cage and did not appreciate my insistence he take a shower first."

On his last film, Connery butted heads with the director so badly he insulted him on the red carpet

More than one biographer of Connery said one of the perils of writing his life story was being inundated by women from around the globe eager to share their tales of flings and one-night stands – Oslo, Paris, New York, Morocco, Los Angeles… The make-up artist, the reiki instructor, the socialite, the chanteuse, the Polish starlet, the Oscar-winning actress, the Danish designer, the ex-mistress of Norman Mailer, the zaftig BBC receptionists (yes, plural), the costars, more than a few extras on *Zardoz*… Charlotte Rampling, his costar, told me that when it came to pretty women, "Sean was a hunter".

Shelley Winters had an interesting test to see if someone had the makings of a leading man: could you safely leave them alone with your girlfriend? She was able to answer that question herself quite a few times, thanks to romps with Burt Lancaster, Clark Gable, Errol Flynn and William Holden. And in the 1950s, she enjoyed a bouncy train ride with Connery from Liverpool to London with the blinds drawn.

"Only Bill Wyman had a busier 1960s," reckoned one talent agent, "and only Warren Beatty a busier 1970s!" Connery's 1980s and 1990s weren't exactly dull either. Some thought him the "most divine creature imaginable"; others quite the reverse. "He was a gentleman of great passion," recalled one former lover, "but he was not going to drag things out needlessly."

Supermodel-turned-novelist Carole Mallory gave her Connery fling a big thumbs-down. "We saw each other a few times, but he was married and I hated having to sneak around… Let's just say he didn't leave a very big impression [in bed]. At least I got a meal out of him."

Florida TV reporter Glenna Milberg was eight months pregnant while reporting a story near the set of *Just Cause* and had her bottom pinched by Connery as he was slowly driving by. "You've got some nerve," she said, thrusting her pregnant belly into his car window. They laughed and she still treasures the autograph he gave her.

These were his "Lion Of Marbella" years, tanned and newly lean again from all the golf, with lots of photoshoots lounging around in towelling robes and hammocks. But despite his stealth approach, the stories kept appearing.

A Danish-born designer called Helle Byrn came forward to tell her side of their alleged eleven-month affair. "He's a vampire for women," she said. "He just takes them and sucks them dry." Connery, she revealed, dropped by after rounds of golf and before going home to tea and took the same approach to contraception as Austin Powers: "Only sailors use condoms, baby." (It's a wonder he never had a paternity suit.) For some reason, Connery did not avail himself of a "Jissbon" sheath, a Chinese condom brand named after its translation of James Bond. (Mr Kiss Kiss, Open, Pinch Tip, Unroll, Bang Bang?)

But even before the wattage of superstardom, he had what his fellow struggling actor Michael Caine called "animalistic sexual power". Many of his early breaks in television, such as playing a boxer in *Requiem For A Heavyweight*, were >>

>> due to the producers' wives casting the deciding vote. "You can hear his balls clanging from here," was the verdict after one audition.

Still, all that raw masculinity and working-class primitivism needed a lot of shaping before it would succeed on the big screen. His years of weightlifting had given him the door-filling physique, but he refined his movement by studying with the Swedish body technique guru Yat Malmgren, who advised him, "Think about cat animals – lions, tigers, panthers – they are very loose."

Connery's languid big-cat sensuality and cut-to-the-chase seductions as James Bond coincided perfectly with the arrival of the pill and the explosion of free love. Shirley Eaton, immortalised with gold paint after her character slept with 007 in *Goldfinger*, said the Bond sex scenes were a world away from the British diet of nudge-nudge *Carry On* comedies. "It was grown-up sexuality. Sean and I just fell into our natural sensuality without any rumpy-pumpy and I think that's what made it so exciting."

Connery still needed to find his performer's confidence to play Bond. He started acting at 23, touring in the chorus of *South Pacific*, and within five years he was starring alongside Lana Turner in *Another Time, Another Place*. But the prospect of Bond tested his nerves and his first wife was the unsung influence in helping him play it with total conviction.

Despite the contentious divorce, Cilento remained proud of her contribution to his career. Feeney Callan met her when working on a project with her third husband, playwright Anthony Shaffer. "She was wary at first," he told me, "but we did have a conversation about Sean, how she had coached him for the role of Bond. He had a Shakespearean mindset, she said. He was reading Marlowe. He had played Hotspur and Macbeth. He was studying these texts very seriously and he brought the same seriousness to Bond. She still respected how he had redefined the suspense thriller. I don't think she had ever really fallen out of love with him."

Still, their marriage ended badly and indeed her account of the night Connery hit her in a jealous rage is an inexcusable low point. He denied it, but he idiotically double-downed on his views about slapping women in the infamous Barbara Walters interview in 1987. It's a classic gotcha ambush by Walters, abruptly bringing up a quote he made 20 years earlier, and he walked right into it.

He attempted to give it more context when talking with *Vanity Fair* in 1993 and then made a belated amends in 2006 with a definitive statement against any kind of abusive treatment towards women, but it remains the grim blot on his résumé. And indeed, it's sobering to see just how many times he hit women on screen – and not just as Bond: Gina Lollobrigida in *Woman Of Straw*, Candice Bergen in *The Wind And The Lion*, even poor Audrey Hepburn gets walloped in *Robin And Marian* so he can carry her to safety. (One should note the Bond villainesses also get to spit in his face, slash him with broken glass, crush his head between their thighs and trap him in a nosediving light aircraft.) It wasn't just him; violence against women was unexaminedly routine stuff in movies for years. And the flipside to his artistry is that he explored male violence in some of his other roles.

It's there most searingly in a film such as *The Offence* from 1973, in which he interrogates a suspected child molester (played by Ian Bannen) so aggressively that he kills him. It's a sick game of cat and mouse and the sadism is queasily intimate. I think it's far and away Connery's bravest performance.

Colleagues often referred to Connery's lack of vanity. He rarely worried about keeping up appearances. He would often throw his Bond wig like a frisbee at the end of a day's filming. "You really have to free yourself a bit to be an actor. You have to be willing to make an arse of yourself." He even wore a dress in *Zardoz*. But in *The Offence*, he went further, playing a hulking detective of limited grasp, unravelling under the torment of his own terrible thoughts of molestation. Yet at no point does he dilute the performance to keep his character "likeable". He was a straight-arrow actor, like James Cagney: either full on or not at all. Boredom or disdain crept in on some projects, but he rarely sank to kowtowing to the audience.

He was at heart an artist and he took his craft profoundly seriously. His tearful humility when he, alongside Audrey Hepburn in 1987, received France's prestigious Commandeur De L'Ordre Des Arts Et Des Lettres honour for his contribution to the arts is really something to behold.

In his later years his acting settled into the victory-lap roles of know-all taskmaster to blander, younger stars – what was described by critic David Thomson as his "mercenary mentor mode". He was always shaking his head pityingly, showing these young pups how it's done, when what he really needed was equal sparring partners.

'It was grown-up sexuality. Sean and I just fell into our natural sensuality... It was exciting'

Off-screen, he met his match in Micheline Roquebrune, his wife of 45 years. She was half his size, but held her own as a partner, armed with a thick French accent and the regal serenity of a Kennedy wife. "Micheline is a European," explained one friend. "And a bohemian painter." In other words, no tabloid distractions entered her vision. Still, she had her own big-cat protective streak and would go to the set when Connery was filming love scenes. "When his wife came in the afternoon to watch, he could not get out of bed quick enough!" said Valerie Leon, who had a 007 bed scene in *Never Say Never Again*.

Barbara Carrera, who played villainess Fatima Blush in the same film, remembers looking up mid-kissing scene to find Roquebrune staring right at her. "It took us right out of the scene. So Sean had her taken off the set. We laughed about that a lot after filming was long over. Micheline had a great sense of humour about the whole thing."

Connery loved that Roquebrune was a better golfer than him (he felt golf was "the ultimate revealer of character") and that her work won awards. "She's the star these days, not me." Not to be completely outdone, he kept his Oscar and other awards in the bathroom so any guests would still see them. "That's just me showing off a little."

The pair famously met playing golf during a tournament in Morocco while he was still married. They fell into bed for five days and Roquebrune wrote about their first romantic tryst for France's *Gala* magazine as if auditioning for Mills & Boon: "He grabs hold of me and kisses me passionately. Almost brutally. Animalistically. His skin releases a scent, not of hot sand, but more like silex, a warm and intoxicating smell like stones rubbing against each other. I'm transported."

Connery found his best on-screen sparring partner in Michael Caine. Their 1975 high-adventure yarn, *The Man Who Would Be King*, directed by John Huston is a buddy-movie classic. It also has two nice examples of Connery's craft as an actor. One is the tweak he gives to his character's line "My da's name was Herbert Dravot, Esquire and he kept a pub in Pimlico." Connery changed it to the more specific and funny "My dad's name was Herbert Dravot, Esquire... and he was bar steward in a knocking shop in Durham." (Durham also fits his character's Scottish accent better.)

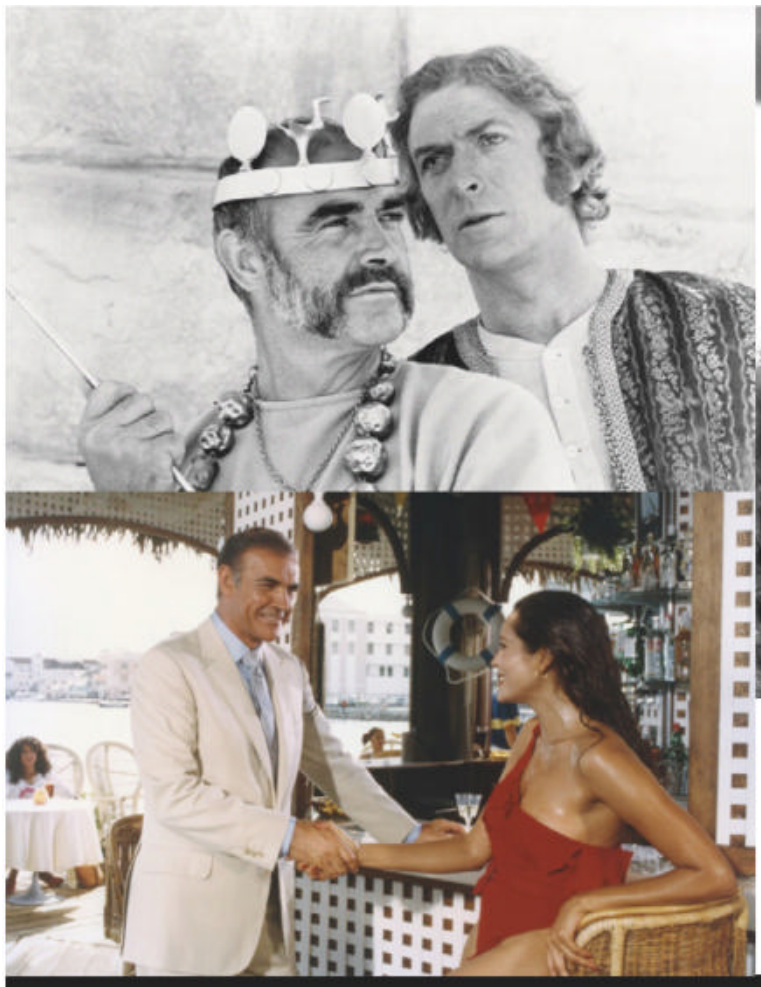
The other example of Connery acting skill is at the finale, when the two rogues, Daniel Dravot and Peachey Carnehan (Michael Caine), are forced to the rope bridge over the ravine by angry natives. In the script, Dravot's falsely earned crown is hurled into the air before he is sent plummeting to his doom. In the film, Connery makes the stronger choice and defiantly pauses to put the crown on his head before walking out onto the bridge as they cut the ropes.

Connery thought Huston was a "real bandit" but loved working with him. "He said the two characters, Danny and Peachey, were really one man. As long as they were together, they could do anything. The moment they started to drift apart, they became like you and me."

I love that "like you and me". Connery's image became so fixed as the invulnerable macho sage that it's refreshing to return to his other roles and see quite how much vulnerability is there. Vulnerability, not weakness. He could play strong, beaten down – excelled at it, in fact. The vodka-shaken smoothness of Bond is the dominant cliché, but the Connery films are full of sweat-drenched beatings, where he's the one on the receiving end.

Some of his most powerful moments are when he finally cracks under intolerable pressure. As in *The Hill*, one of his favourite movies, when he struggles to stand on a wounded leg while railing against his tyrannical commanding officer.

It's still electrifying, not least because he unleashes his Edinburgh accent at its most





Clockwise from top left: With Michael Caine in The Man Who Would Be King (1975); starring opposite Audrey Hepburn in Robin And Marian (1976); with second wife Micheline Roquebrune at Cannes Film Festival, 1981; with Barbara Carrera in Never Say Never Again (1983), his final turn as James Bond

'The fact my mother never kissed me or held me in her arms when I was a child had lots of repercussions'



Photographs **Getty Images**

ungentrified. Like all genuine movie royalty, he could keep his accent even when playing Russians or Arabs and it still made complete sense. Of course, Hollywood logic meant he won his Oscar doing a pretty hokey Irish accent in *The Untouchables* in 1987. This career high point, however, was not matched by a fitting swan song. In fact, his last film, *The League Of Extraordinary Gentleman*, was a rancorous calamity where he butted heads with the director so badly he insulted him at the film's own red-carpet premiere. "I've never been noted for my patience," he admitted. No kidding. His last words to me were, "All right. Get to work!"

Amid his later years, Connery struggled increasingly with dementia and needed a helper to steer him around in public when in New York. He could be crotchety to the point of caricature, as in his legal feud with the family's downstairs neighbour over renovations and clogged plumbing. But, conversely, he showed up to support worthy causes, screenings, arts shows, community centres and reached out to people in times of need, such as one local photographer who had lost a son to suicide.

He was a proud father and a doting grandfather, who loved reading bedtime stories. (His bedtime recitals of *Nessie's Messy Loch* and as Sir Billi the vet must have been the equivalent of Michelangelo building a snowman.) And he was always up for a cèilidh. Glasgow Rangers star Ally McCoist still remembers the party held the night before a Scotland-Brazil World Cup game. "It was an official 'who's who' of Scottish people. Sean Connery was there, Sir Alex Ferguson was there, Jackie Stewart, Kenny Dalglish, you name it, and it was just magical, absolutely magical. Everybody was going crazy the whole night." McCoist was onstage with the band belting out Bruce Springsteen and at one point turned round to see Connery "with his top off, bare-chested, giving it plenty! I mean, what a man. He was just an absolutely fantastic man."

It is always painful to watch a legend grow frail, especially one who was such a life force. But he passed away peacefully in his sleep at his home in the Bahamas and as an artist he had prepared me with his role in *Robin And Marian*. It is my favourite Connery performance, as the ageing Robin Hood returned from the Crusades to fight the sheriff for one last hurrah: wistful, defiant, eternally boyish. "I'd never have a day like this again, would I?" he says to his true love, Marian, as he lies dying from her beneficent poison. She nods and his journey into immortality is complete. **GQ**

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- SIR ROGER MOORE: 'I'M A LOVER, SEAN CONNERY'S A KILLER' **(David Walliams, November 2012)**
- SEAN CONNERY: 'SCOTLAND IS MY HOME AND EMOTIONALLY I'VE NEVER LEFT' **(Andy Morris, 2008)**

‘THE SUIT IS NOT DEAD. IT’S JUST EVOLVING’

What shape will formalwear take, once it emerges, blinking, from the year of ‘working-from-homewear’? Stefano Canali, CEO and scion of the Italian menswear dynasty, has seen the future... and it’s looking sharp

Story by **Teo van den Broeke** Photograph by **James Anastasi** Styling by **Luke Day**

From left: Blazer, £1,820. Jacket, £770. Trousers, £480. Coat, £1,440. T-shirt, £240. Trousers, £480. All by **Canali**. canali.com

Models **Jefferson and Nic W at PRM**
Grooming **Josh Knight at Caren**
Style assistant **Angelo Mitakos**
Grooming assistants **Olivia Cochrane; Anni Rademacher**
Fashion intern **Ellie Hammond**

Exactly 43 days before the UK went into its first nationwide lockdown, a handful of the world's most famous actors were walking the red carpet at the 92nd Academy Awards, blithely unaware of the real drama that was yet to unfurl across the globe.

Brad Pitt strolled solo, wearing an immaculately cut velvet dinner suit with shawl lapels from Brioni, Leonardo DiCaprio looked resplendent in his go-to black barathea wool dinner jacket from Giorgio Armani and even "kid among kings" (or should that be "king of the kids"?) Timothée Chalamet opted for a suit, of sorts, in the shape of a recycled nylon two-piece from Prada, which made headlines for a good week after the event.

Fast forward a year and looking back at that spiffy sartorial hit parade feels a little bit like observing the evolution of man, only in reverse. Over the long socially distanced days and weeks that followed the Oscars, the world's men collectively reverted from smartly tailored reveller to comfort-seeking pyjama wearers (who put on a shirt for Zoom meetings, if you're lucky) and suits, as a consequence, have never looked or felt more arcane.

It's a change in consumer mindset that the head honchos of tailoring companies, such as Canali – which, incidentally, dressed Paul Rudd in an elegant navy dinner suit for the aforementioned ceremony in 2019 – have been forced to grapple with since the pandemic began.

"The past months have been very challenging," Stefano Canali, the company's CEO of just a year-and-a-half, tells me over a meeting on Microsoft Teams (he prefers it to Zoom), from his office in Sovico, Italy. He's wearing an open-neck shirt, his dark, slightly coarse hair is loosely pulled away from his face and, at 49, he looks every bit the modern young chief exec. "We had to face a quite unfamiliar situation. When we first stayed at home during lockdown we had to leverage these wonderful technical solutions and had to get accustomed to a new lifestyle and to deal with our colleagues around the world," he continues. "But when people are under pressure they do their best. We managed to come out with the best collection we have ever made: SS21."

The collection Canali is talking about – a three-part celebration of tailoring that, well, isn't tailoring, which will be available in the coming weeks from the brand's recently opened flagship on London's New Bond Street – is an embodiment of the speedy recalibration many of Italy's most storied suit makers have been forced to partake in since March. It's an ultra-elegant and easy-wearing nylon- and jersey-clad response that Canali hopes will keep increasingly comfort-focused customers both engaged and – most importantly – spending, whatever the coming months may bring. With more than 1,500 employees and an annual turnover of around £180 million to maintain, the stakes are high.

"On the one hand we have the Exclusive Collection, which represents the most demanding, most stylish guy out there, with the most precious materials and the softest construction," Canali tells me of his 31-look silver bullet. "Then we have Canali 1934, which keeps on evolving around the icons of the menswear wardrobe. It has a modern twist towards something softer and lighter – basically the soft-tailoring concept," he continues. "And last but not least we have the Black Edition concept, which represents the most urban and technical execution of Canali's DNA, designed for a younger customer or a customer who wants to dress up at the weekend and in a more casual situation."

'Last year was a challenge, but we made our best ever collection in lockdown'

A smart-meets-casual mix of "Impeccabile" leather biker jackets and gabardine military field jackets cut in soft, spring-like shades of periwinkle and terracotta, tobacco sports jackets finished with understated patch pockets and perfectly cut trousers in picnic-friendly hues (and that's before you get to the track pants, high-function cagoules and trainers – trainers! – of the "Black Edition"), these are clothes that embody the understated style favoured by the tasteful and moneyed Canali man, certainly, but suits, or suits as we traditionally know them, are few and far between.

Impressive though Canali's lightning-bolt pivot to working-from-homewear has undoubtedly been – look back at one of the brand's collections from just two or three years ago and you'll be hard pushed to find a get-up that doesn't involve some kind of trussed-up tailored item – it's a shift that, in truth, has been a long time coming. The pandemic might have acted as a catalyst, but since the fintech boom of the early 2000s, and with it the rise of the underdressed billionaire, lo-fi luxury brands that specialise in cashmere track pants and barely there sports jackets – Brunello Cucinelli and Loro Piana – have been guzzling up the market share once dominated by Canali and its tailoring-focused contemporaries.

It's not the first time the Canali family – Stefano belongs to the third generation, alongside a handful of siblings who work with him at the company – has been forced to change tack in a moment of crisis. Founded in 1934 by fabric magnate Giovanni Canali and his tailor brother, Giacomo, the brand's success over its 86-year history has been as much the product of the beautiful garments it produces as its ability to overcome adversity.

"The fabric company my grandfather worked for went bankrupt in 1934. As a consequence, he and his brother set up a workshop making men's suits and garments. That was until the Second World War struck and they faced the first major turning point," Canali tells me, matter-of-factly. "They realised they needed to do something different in a state of uncertainty, so they joined forces with the second generation – my father, Eugenio, and my uncles, Giuseppe and Genesio – and realised that raincoats were potentially very promising, as they were becoming very sought-after all over the world.

"By the end of the 1960s, however, coats went out of fashion, so my father and his uncles reinvested all the money they had saved, in order to make sure the company they had built could fulfil the needs of the customer, so they moved



Third-generation CEO Stefano Canali

back to suits." He pauses. "Now we're facing a similar turning point."

But it's not just the shift in consumer desire and a general relaxing of dress codes brought about by Covid-19 that Stefano Canali – who started his career in New York as a trader at an Italian commercial bank before joining his family's company in 1998, being made general manager in 2008 and promoted to CEO in 2018 – is being forced to tackle now. The climate crisis is placing increasing pressure on big fashion businesses to become both accountable and transparent about their sustainability track records. However, where many major fashion houses have produced limited collections of "recycled" clothes and accessories, in a bid to create a readily marketable illusion of sustainability, Canali is determined to do things properly.

"Honestly, we had a sustainability-related project scheduled at the end of last year, but we were forced to postpone it," he tells me seriously. "But, to explain, I would like to state some principles about sustainability. First of all, if you want to come up with a sustainable project, you must measure what your sustainability is at the very beginning. But measuring sustainability means you have to consider many factors: the sourcing of your materials, the way you treat workers who manufacture your product offering, the way you consume the earth's resources... You must concentrate on many aspects. You must then set specific and measurable goals," he continues, "otherwise you run the risk of pursuing a greenwashing strategy, which is useful to nobody.

"We might propose a product made out of a recycled fabric. As a single thing you can appreciate its value, but it doesn't tell the whole story. If you, for instance, source this product from a country where there's no health insurance for workers and the wages are low, are you doing the right thing? I'd say no. You're just considering one piece of the whole story. If you want to be 100 per cent responsible you must measure all the details to come up with a genuine, verifiable analysis of the situation. You must define the areas you want to measure and you have to measure in accordance with the setup you've defined."

So is Canali currently a sustainable company? "I will never say Canali is a sustainable company until I define the areas I want to measure and until I measure our impact in all the areas I want to put under analysis."

It strikes me at this point that Canali has become the leader of his family's company at an acutely challenging time. When I ask him about it he seems to recoil, laughing (or, perhaps, whimpering) as he goes. "I was appointed general manager in September 2008, the same month the Lehman Brothers financial disaster occurred." He smiles. "I was appointed CEO one-and-a-half years ago and the situation wasn't great out there... But I don't want to joke. I believe that I had and I still have opportunities to do great and important things for the company and the family.

"As a person I never want to justify the fact that we cannot reach goals because of external issues. If we cannot perform as well as we would because of the pandemic we know the reason why, but the current situation is no excuse for anybody – neither myself nor the people working in our manufacturing facilities – for not doing the right thing, consistent with the strategy we're pursuing."

What would Canali be doing if he wasn't pushing his family's company into the future? "If I wasn't CEO of Canali I would be a rugby player. I'm one of a few Italians who doesn't care about football," he says, laughing. "I've always been in love with rugby. My 'no excuses' motto is also the motto the All Blacks have printed in their gym. My daughter also has it printed in her bedroom: 'My dear daughter, whatever happens, no excuses.' You have to come through these issues. You're not meant to be distracted. You need to focus."

'I believe the suit must further evolve towards softness. It's going to be lighter, less uniform'



Left: Suit, £2,100. Shirt, £470. Shoes, £425. Below: Suit, £2,100. Shirt, £330. Shoes, £470. Pocket square, £50. All by **Canali**. canali.com

Above: Jacket, £650. Top, £230. Trousers, £480. Shoes, £425. Right: Jacket, £1,440. Shirt, £450. Trousers, £420. Shoes, £575. All by **Canali**. canali.com

Which brings us neatly back to the pertinent point: the state of the suit in 2021. Menswear commentators, such as myself, have written ad nauseam on the subject in recent years, with the vast majority coming to the somewhat wishy-washy conclusion that two-pieces, three-pieces and dinner suits still have their place, but the future ultimately lies in easy-wearing separates – the kind of low-key gear Canali is stocking the rails of its stores with right now. I'm interested to hear it from the tailor's mouth, so to speak: if anyone knows whether the suit's days are truly numbered, it's a man who has spent his entire career thus far peddling them.

"If you consider the suit as a shape, the composition of a jacket and a trouser, we've seen it evolving in the past years – we've evolved shapes, constructions, weights, suits in different fits and styles," Canali tells me with a certain strained patience. "I believe that on the one hand, suits must further evolve towards softness, towards an unconstructed style. It must evolve in terms of fabrics and materials. It's going to be something lighter, something less uniform, something that is easily matchable to pieces in the more casual portion of the collection.

"The boundaries between casual and formalwear are very blurred these days and will continue to be blurred," he continues. "We have developed an offering that is very consistent and a continuous mix of the formal and casual. Materials and construction techniques are being exchanged, they are complementing each other. It's not a sign of confusion, it's a consequence of the time we're living in. The suit is not dead, it's just evolving." GQ

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‘Ken treated his opposition with a witty disdain, Boris with charming disdain. Khan’s is brutal...’

Mayor of London
Sadiq Khan

Sadiq Khan

A TERM OF TWO TALES

It began in 2016 as an ambitious bid to sustain London's place as an international keystone, while battling serious challenges faced by many of its citizens. But when they finally return to the polls, it will be under a shadow of debilitating political impasse. Before voters have their say in the postponed mayoral election, we investigate what part circumstance played in the paralysis of City Hall or whether deeper personal failings let down a capital in crisis

Story by **Martha Gill** Photograph by **Nadav Kander**

In April 2016 Zac Goldsmith and Sadiq Khan sat beside each other in a debate at the Union Chapel in Islington. They were both on stools – Khan's feet swung several inches above the ground – and the difference between them was striking. Khan was scrappy and cocksure.

Goldsmith answered questions with all the pugnacious dynamism of an aristocrat showing tourists around his estate. "I was very taken by a relaxed, laid-back public schoolboy and a much smaller, energised Sadiq," said an audience member, who at the time was working in City Hall alongside Boris Johnson. "Zac lounged like a head of house at Eton. Sadiq was a coiled spring of energy, of pent-up, furious desire."

A businesswoman in the audience told the mayoral candidates she was worried about the size of the congestion charge, a fee that aimed to deter drivers from London's busiest streets. It also deterred customers. As other candidates prevaricated, Khan was straight to the point. "What I won't do is increase the amount you pay for the congestion charge, nor will I widen the area. It's really important," he said.

In October 2020 a rather different Khan appeared before the London Assembly at its monthly Mayor's Question Time. He hunched in his blue gilet, looking defeated and resentful. In June, as London businesses teetered on the edge of bankruptcy, the congestion charge had been hiked by 30 per cent. Now the area in which it applied was to widen.

A Tory Assembly member, Tony Devenish, asked the mayor if he would consider a "special Christmas present for the West End": suspending the congestion charge, just for the four Saturdays leading up to Christmas.

Khan looked deflated, but his voice was level. The charge "was something the government imposed on TFL", he said, as a condition for bailing it out. He was as angry about it as anyone.

Devenish tried again. "You have the power, do you not, to suspend the congestion charge for those four Saturdays, if you wish to?"

"No," Khan said firmly. If he breached the government's conditions, "they could quite easily not give us any further sums of money".

"To put on the record," Devenish said, "you're saying you do not have the power, as the mayor of London, to suspend the congestion zone for a Saturday?"



Sadiq Khan and Zac Goldsmith debate ahead of London's most recent mayoral election, April 2016

Khan wasn't expected to win the race to be London mayor. He wasn't even expected to win the race to be Labour's candidate. The front-runner had been Tessa Jowell, a veteran London MP of more than two decades who had been Olympics minister under Tony Blair and Gordon Brown.

Yet Khan had "preternatural" skill on the stump. He won support from all corners of Labour's church: among them heavyweight leftist and former mayor Ken Livingstone and Oona King, whom Livingstone had described with distaste as an "uber Blairite". He successfully courted the hard-left members who would soon make Jeremy Corbyn leader (Khan was one of the MPs to "lend" Corbyn his nomination to get him in the race), only to distance himself from them at lightning speed once he no longer needed their support.

'Zac Goldsmith lounged like a head of house at Eton. Khan was a coiled spring of furious desire'

A mere week after the new Labour leader was anointed, Khan was publicly rebuking him in the *Mail On Sunday* for failing to sing the national anthem.

Khan's victory over Goldsmith – initially the 2/1 favourite to win – is often told as the story of Goldsmith's failure and his fatal tactical mistake. Amid rising concerns about Islamist terrorism, Goldsmith's campaign had decided, through hints and nudges, to cast doubt on Khan's loyalty to Britain. London, a diverse and open city, would not have it. By the time votes were counted, recalls journalist Dave Hill, a quip was doing the rounds: "It's no good dog-whistling in a city with no dogs."

But that story underplays Khan's canniness as a campaigner. He cleverly turned attacks to his advantage ("I will be the British Muslim who takes the fight to the extremists") and he told a compelling story: that of the state school-educated son of a bus driver, brought up on a council estate, wanting to lead the city that had given him so much. He had the right pro-business, pro-infrastructure pitch for his electorate. His victory was a landslide and he entered City Hall in triumph, employees lining up four-deep around the ramp that winds up through the building. "I'm living the dream," he told reporters, as he walked through the corridors.

Almost five years later, the mayor and his team are preparing to move out of the iconic glass "helter-skelter" on the riverside to a cheaper site towards the city's periphery – a "glazed shed" in the Royal Docks. The symbolism is a little too raw. During his term in office Khan's power has dwindled and in the months since the start of the pandemic he has been effectively sidelined from decision-making in his own city. Bad luck is certainly part

Photographs **Charlie Gray; PA Images**

of it: Khan is serving alongside a belligerent government run by his predecessor, concerned with "levelling up" power away from London and hostile to him personally. Covid-19 has meant a vast expansion of government control and savage cuts to Khan's budget. Yet for all his political skill, and all the goodwill that greeted him as he came to power, the mayor has never failed to make his bad luck worse.

The change of regime at City Hall was greeted with optimism by the staff. Most felt more politically aligned with the new mayor, a Remainer and a left-wing centrist, than they had with his predecessor. They also tended to like him – Khan remembered junior staffers' names and was scrupulously polite. But while as mayor Johnson had roamed the corridors, Khan, according to staffers, "hides away on the eighth floor. Lots of us still don't know him."



Sadiq Khan photographed for British GQ, as 2017 Politician Of The Year

As time wore on it became apparent to those working at City Hall that he was absent in a larger sense too. Ideas and proposals would be left at his door, never to be seen again. Feedback was ignored or greeted with irritation. A coterie of loyal and long-serving advisors "ran the show entirely", something that rankled with the rest of the staff, who felt "shut out and didn't know where they stood". Deputy mayors had been appointed with a liberal hand, often supposedly in charge of areas City Hall had little to do with, such as education, then left to their own devices. "They've got no power and he doesn't speak to them," says one insider. "All the important stuff he keeps in his top team of five," another local government worker says, sighing. "The rest of us get meaningless flimflam." A spokesman from Khan's office calls these claims false and says that City Hall is a very collegiate workplace.

The top team is tight. "Other groups around politicians have briefed against each other and that doesn't happen with us," says Paddy Hennessy, who, as director of communications, is one of their number. "When we came to City Hall there hadn't been much central control. Some talented people were very frustrated: they were doing good work but nobody cared." Hennessy had first been a journalist and then Labour's deputy director of communications, before working on Khan's mayoral campaign. That last gig is a theme in the inner circle. Khan's chief of staff, David Bellamy, Jack Stenner, his director for political and public affairs, and Leah Kreitzman, the mayoral director for external and international affairs, all helped run Khan's mayoral bid. The group's fifth member, Nick Bowes, director of policy, had been Khan's special advisor when he was shadow secretary for justice.

Descriptions of Khan's leadership style have more than an echo of those of Theresa May's during her time in the Home Office and Number Ten: an all-powerful inner circle and complaints of "micromanaging" and "control freakery" on the outer edges. May was frightened of the media; Khan is known for personally signing off press releases. "Sadiq is a nervous wreck about saying anything in print. He is shit-scared and his staff have to rehearse answers over and over before he can face a journalist. When a quote is going out he nit-picks and goes round in circles," says a former City Hall staffer from a previous administration. A spokesman for Khan says he makes no apologies for being fully briefed at all times to ensure he is able to communicate with Londoners and the government. Under Khan the City Hall communications department greatly expanded: figures released in January 2020 showed spending on press officers increased by a quarter since Khan was elected.

'He doesn't have the ability to connect or negotiate. It's Sadiq's way or no way'

Khan, like May, can find small talk a challenge. "His communication style can appear distant and impersonal," says Tony Travers, director of regional research group LSE London. "He has found it hard to build a rapport with London." Perhaps more damningly, some claim that Khan's rather clenched attitude can spill over into anger and petulance when members of his side refuse to "get on board with the cult of Sadiq". Nickie Aiken, the Conservative MP for the Cities Of London And Westminster, recalls him shouting at Labour council leaders during a meeting, then purposefully ignoring them when it ended, instead saying exaggeratedly warm goodbyes to those on the Tory side. "They fought back and he wasn't having it. He got up and ignored them, no chit-chat, then came over to the Tory leaders, wishing me luck in the election: 'Any help you need from me...'" Aiken says. Khan's office says it is untrue that he shouted or lost his temper.

The afterglow of Sadiq's 2016 victory lasted roughly two years. It had been powerfully symbolic: the first Muslim mayor not only of London but of any major Western city. He stood for London's progressiveness and he also represented something cool. Young Londoners stopped to take selfies with him on public transport. He led London's annual Pride march. In 2016 he was both the *Evening Standard*'s Londoner Of The Year and *GQ*'s Politician Of The Year – an accolade he won again in 2017. He ticked off policy pledges: the Night Tube, the one-hour "hopper" bus ticket. A number of tragic events hit London in quick succession – the 2016 Croydon tram crash, the Grenfell fire in 2017, several terrorist attacks – and Khan handled them with dignity and tact.

Then there were his spats with Donald Trump, which rebounded in his favour. It was laudable that Khan should stand up to Trump: the then presidential contender had just called for a "total and complete shutdown" of America's borders to Muslims. Yet Trump was also the ideal political target: the mayor had nothing to lose by attacking him and the reward would be a global stage and valiant casting – a tiny David shaking his fist at a Goliath. It is perhaps unsurprising that Khan struck first. Within a week of Khan's victory, amid mutterings from Trump that the new mayor would be a "good thing" for London, Khan tweeted that "Trump's ignorant view of Islam could make both our countries less safe". The same day, Khan appeared in the *New York Times* comparing his success to that of pop star Zayn Malik and Olympic champion Mo Farah: each had showed young people, Khan said, that "you can be British, Muslim and successful".

Political enemies accuse Khan of vanity. "Sadiq criticised Boris as a red-carpet mayor, but Sadiq's that on stilts," says Gareth Bacon, the Tory MP for Orpington. "He's always taking selfies outside City Hall and trying to associate himself with famous people. He has favourite photographers." In 2017 Khan was in a box for the finals of the World Athletics Championships, watching the women's 100-metre relay, which the UK won. As people clapped, his companion turned around for "one second" and Sadiq was gone, rushing down to be photographed with the runners.

"He likes being photographed with young, dynamic people – and specifically not older white men digging holes for houses, even if those houses happen to be affordable," a former City Hall staffer says. But whether vanity, sensible PR or both, it worked – at least for a while. In summer 2016, as Owen Smith prepared to challenge a flailing Jeremy Corbyn, Khan was being talked about as a future party leader: a bright star in a dull galaxy, an "untainted" contender who could lead Labour into Downing Street.

Then, in 2018, a turning point. In the first 100 days of the year, 52 people were killed in the capital, most of them young. That tragic statistic produced a new type of question for the popular new mayor: why hadn't he done anything about it? Sadiq protested, accurately, but in vain, that there had been sharp cuts to police spending. There had, moreover, been an even steeper rise in knife crime outside the capital. That merely drew political fire: he was blame-shifting. Action was needed, not excuses. >>

>> Khan called a knife crime summit, inviting MPs and community leaders to City Hall. "But rather than be held to account, he chaired it, which meant he could avoid any tricky questions by passing them along to someone else," says Aiken. "[Home secretary] Amber Rudd and [Metropolitan Police commissioner] Cressida Dick ended up getting the stick and Sadiq sat there saying, 'What are you doing about it?' That's typical of Sadiq; he's always avoiding responsibility."

That line of criticism did not let up but merely found new avenues. Soon the state-educated bus driver's son and first Muslim mayor of London started to represent something else: a politician who got little done and was forever passing the buck. There was Crossrail, a London railway line originally meant to open in 2018 but delayed until 2022, a projected £4 billion over budget. In April 2019, a major commuter route, Hammersmith Bridge, was shut to motorists and then later to pedestrians, causing deep unhappiness among those who had used it. It is still closed. Sadiq had come to power promising to solve London's housing crisis, yet had presided over the slowest rate of house building in the UK.

What proportion of the blame for these failures should lie with Khan? His office says he campaigned "relentlessly" for funds to tackle knife violence and points out he has invested several million in schemes to help young people out of a life of crime. TFL owns Crossrail, but the mayor says he inherited a mess – it began in 2009 – and that the project's leaders had been slow to tell him of its problems (it has been alleged that Khan knew earlier than he'd admitted). Khan argues he can't afford to fix Hammersmith Bridge – only the government can. And while he received more than £4.8bn from the government to tackle the housing crisis, he said he actually needed several times more. ("Sadiq has broken records every year for the number of social and affordable homes that have been started," his office says.) At every turn, he says, Downing Street has blocked him by refusing him the funds he needs.

There is some weight to Khan's claims that his authority is limited and that central government has been less than helpful. London mayors have few formal powers, but their informal power is great: they have high profiles and large platforms to do with as they wish. "It doesn't matter if you don't control all of the budget yourself. You have to use the bully pulpit of mayor to be an advocate and chivvy people along," says Andrew Boff, a Conservative member of the London Assembly. "What is the point of having a mayor of London if they can't fix a bridge?"

Rory Stewart, who ended his mayoral bid in May after the race was postponed last March, argues that Khan could gain the power he needs if he were really interested in asserting it. "As mayor your power is very ambiguous. It's about what the person who is mayor makes of the role. Politics is often about magic: taking responsibility for things you are not responsible for and making things happen. When I was prisons minister you could argue I was not ultimately in charge of prisons, but when I said I was in charge of prisons the system adjusted itself so that I was."

Why hasn't Khan managed it then? "It suits Sadiq to pretend the position has less power than it has. His skill is acting as lord mayor of London. But he's not interested in the Piccadilly Line." Travers agrees. "As mayor Sadiq is very good at conveying messages, notably in relation to the coexistence of the city's many communities and that 'London is open'. But, like Boris before him, he is probably less interested in policy than Ken Livingstone was."

Yet Khan has had success in at least one policy area: cleaning London's filthy air. He put low-emission buses on the dirtiest routes, ended the licensing of new diesel taxis and introduced charges to deter vehicles from entering the city centre. A recent report, which does not include falls in pollution after the first Covid-19 lockdown, found there has been a 94 per cent reduction in the number of people living in areas with illegal levels of nitrogen dioxide since Khan became mayor. Why haven't we seen this kind of achievement elsewhere?

At least part of Khan's problem with "getting things done" is that he inherited so little from his predecessor. Johnson, on the other hand, benefited from a rich legacy. It was Livingstone who laid the all-important groundwork for hosting the Olympics, locking the Treasury into regenerating the East End, and Livingstone who introduced plans for the "Boris" bikes. Thameslink, the refurbishment of the Tube, Docklands Light Railway, these projects matured under Johnson's tenure, allowing him to take much of the credit. Johnson's own ideas – the Garden Bridge, "Boris Island" – often never manifested. Khan was handed the Night Tube, the doomed Crossrail and little else.

Did Khan see the mayoralty as merely a stepping stone to the Labour leadership?

Yet it is clear Khan himself is responsible for a fairly large part of the difficulty he now faces. He made the foolish choice to freeze transport fares, one of the only two funding levers directly available to him – the other is to raise council taxes, which is capped by government. (The fare freeze, a spokesperson from Khan's office says, was necessary and the loss in revenue "entirely covered by efficiency savings driven by the mayor".) It was an appealing campaign promise, but with that decision he severely limited his own power and cut off his independence: for every project he must go cap in hand to Downing Street to ask for money. His success as mayor would largely depend on his relationship with the government. And that was to be a problem.

In 2013 then justice secretary Chris Grayling wrote to Johnson to turn down a request that the mayor take control of more rail services. "Not because I have any fears over the immediate future," Grayling wrote, "but because I would like to keep suburban rail services out of the clutches of any future Labour mayor".

And that Labour mayor finds himself in a uniquely tricky position. Unlike his predecessors, Khan's entire term has been served under a politically opposed government – which in 2019 also became a hyper-powerful one, bent on centralising that power to Downing Street. Not only that, it is a government led by Khan's predecessor, a politician whose instincts are to burnish his own legacy at his successor's expense. Many of those who worked with Johnson in City Hall followed him to Downing Street – among them Kit Malthouse, Eddie Lister, James Cleverly, Munira Mirza and Andrew Gilligan, who spent an intervening period as a journalist, writing articles about Sadiq "no-Khan-do".



Then, too, there is the "levelling-up" agenda, which is to balance the economy away from London and towards the North. And there is the fact that, despite their national success, since 1997 the Conservatives have done worse and worse in the capital city. (Until then the political make-up of the capital had, for many years, broadly reflected that of the country as a whole.) London is not only a problem for the Tories, it is an existential threat.

But if Khan was dealt a poor hand, he also played it particularly badly. Government officials who have had dealings with him paint a picture of a politician more interested in scoring points than finding common ground and cutting deals. Khan was adversarial from the off, "Blairite" in his tactics to never give a point away to the opposition, "barraging" Number Ten with criticism, writing scathing letters to Downing Street "almost daily" and then leaking them to the press.

"He's nice as pie in private and then the opposite in public. It's baffling that he doesn't think one undermines the other. He accepts compromises, is conspicuously grateful for support,

Photographs **Getty Images**

then goes out and claims it's damagingly insufficient," says one Tory minister.

"I worked with him when he was mayor – it was difficult because he wanted to make everything political," says Stewart. "I was trying to do a joint programme on electronic tagging. When I engaged with his deputy mayor, all she wanted to do was shout at me about austerity. I got very fed up... I was a junior minister trying to do a practical project."

Why didn't Khan try to forge better relations with the government? Did he see the mayoralty as merely a stepping stone to the Labour leadership and a platform from which he could rehearse attack lines? If so, that option has now faded. Another line of thought is that Khan is deeply tribal – far more so than Johnson or Livingstone – and cannot help but express his scorn for Tory politicians, even when it harms him.

"Ken would treat opposition politicians with a witty disdain, Boris with a charming disdain. Sadiq's is a brutal disdain. It's very deeply ingrained," says a former City Hall staffer. "You can see it in his body language when he is being questioned by Assembly members. Andrew Boff has occasionally got him going; you suddenly see a really snarling side to him."

"Even to get him to accept a fact is impossible," says Boff. "In March he said you can't get Covid from the Underground and I asked him what advice he was getting to come to this conclusion. He couldn't admit to having said it."

"Khan doesn't have the ability to make connections or negotiate. If he has power over you he knows what to do. If he doesn't he gets stroppy," says a Tory MP. "He acts like a petulant child; it's Sadiq's way or no way."

Whatever the reason, the relationship between the mayor and the government has only worsened. "Ministers," Khan's office says, "have increasingly treated London as the enemy rather than a key delivery partner." By the time the coronavirus arrived, a City Hall staffer says, it was "utterly poisonous".



From left: With Boris Johnson and Jeremy Corbyn following the London Bridge terror attack, December 2019; Khan attends London's #March4Women, March 2017; at the anniversary vigil of the Grenfell Tower fire, June 2019

In early November Khan confirmed the news: the financial damage wrought by the coronavirus meant the mayoralty could no longer afford to stay in their prestigious home. City Hall would be moving out of Central London to a cheaper site in the east of the city.

Khan has not had a good pandemic. Some business leaders and CEOs speak of him with scorn: he hasn't communicated with them; he hasn't met them; he has been absent. His repeated calls for restrictions further alienated London's struggling companies. There were demands for him to visit the West End and "look us in the face".

"There have been no ideas, no transport help," says a West End councillor. "He did nothing to help open theatres except say, 'Theatres should reopen.' If he'd put forward a plan people would have said yes."

"He's a nice enough guy but he just doesn't seem to get business at all," says one City chairman. "He doesn't seem interested and often appears disengaged or unable to follow the discussions. He's been a great disappointment, I'm afraid." Khan's office calls this claim "patently ridiculous".

In the autumn Khan spoke out against a 10pm curfew that had been imposed on bars and restaurants and his demands that government support businesses got louder. "He has stepped up his engagement with businesses as the pandemic has gone on," says Eddie Curzon, director for London & South at the Confederation Of British Industry. "It feels like the channels are open when it matters and it's more possible to explore problems." But Jackson Boxer, the chef who runs Brunswick House, told the *Evening Standard* that by then it was too late and the mayor was "vainly attempting to posture his way back into the industry's good graces".

'He doesn't seem to get business. We keep having to go over things again for him'

What could he have done instead? Some argue that had he come up with a coherent plan for London businesses in February 2020 and presented it to Number Ten, they may have cooperated. "He just didn't want to be held responsible for anything that went wrong," says one business owner. "He could have made a far stronger case on our behalf."

But the pandemic coincided with a strengthening of government power. Covid-19 has, in some ways, been an argument for devolution: countries with strong public health systems have managed it better. Yet in Britain, the reverse happened. "In Germany, local leaders were able to lead the public response to Covid, whereas in the UK pretty much everything is dictated by government," says Andrew Carter, chief executive of Centre For Cities. "The relationship between the mayor and central government is more important than it should be."

No UK Mayor has fared well. Steve Rotheram, metro mayor, of Liverpool has said he only found out his city was moving into the highest level of restrictions when he read about it in a newspaper. When Manchester mayor Andy Burnham demanded a more generous settlement for locking down, the government refused his demands and imposed the lockdown anyway. For his part, Khan was excluded from Cobra meetings ("He found it odd and insulting," says Hennessy), then when a lack of commuters left TFL with a giant hole in its finances, the government attached conditions designed to enrage Londoners: an extension to the congestion zone, council tax hikes and higher-than-inflation fare rises. At Prime Minister's Questions Johnson heaped on further indignity by falsely accusing Khan of "bankrupting TFL". A spokesperson from Khan's office says that the sole cause of TFL's financial problem is the Covid-19 crisis.

Yet in their responses, Khan and Burnham have cut rather different figures. The Manchester mayor used his bully pulpit to force the government into public negotiations, successfully painting himself as a Northern champion. Khan, conspicuously exhausted by the endless haggling over TFL subsidies, vacillating between amplifying the government's message and objecting to it, has revealed himself for what he is: a mayor whose political capital has run out. Whether the fault lies with him or Downing Street, the effect is the same. While the current government remains in power, this London mayor will not be an effective one. **GQ**

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TONY KING

‘Lennon and Jagger and Elton and me...’



Meet the *King* behind the thrones

For seven decades, British A&R don Tony King has played fixer, muse, close friend and confidante to a Mount Olympus of rock, pop and disco gods. From the Beatles’ first acid trip to the comfort he – and a Christie’s catalogue – gave during Freddie Mercury’s last days, his recollections are the fabric from which legends are cut and here he shares his greatest hits, in all their starry, stoned, stentorian glory...

Story by **Dylan Jones**



Tony King and John Lennon filming a television spot for the former Beatle's album Mind Games in 1973

'My ambition was to have a good time, hang out with famous pop stars and get paid for it'

Photographs **Greg Gorman; May Pang**

Tony King's

mansion flat in London's Primrose Hill contains the spoils of a career spent at the very top of the music industry, the detritus of a life lived – to the full, to the very brim – with the likes of John Lennon, Sir Elton John, Freddie Mercury and Sir Mick Jagger. King is a man who partied with The Beatles, who heard "Satisfaction" before anyone who wasn't a Rolling Stone and who once thought nothing of interrupting a stupefied David Bowie while he was taking cocaine in a Beverly Hills bathroom.

Tony King has, clearly, lived. At the age of 78 he is still extraordinarily well connected, still planning the next part of his journey and still receiving his daily phone call from Elton (who actually called halfway through our interview a few months ago). On his walls are gifts from Elton, Jagger, Lennon, Yoko Ono and Charlie Watts, photographs of him with Mercury and The Beatles in their pomp and dozens of other mementos from a life spent in the shadows of the high life.

As he says himself, "The cast of my life are all represented here in lots of different ways and I love them all dearly."

King's extraordinary life has been a litany of happy accidents, while his career has been a series of one-door-opening-as-another-one-closes types of affair. He has been a gofer, a super-tooled promotion man, a publicist, an A&R man, a manager, a label boss and an inspired creative director. And he's lived to tell the tale.

King was born in Middlesex in 1942, but was soon handed over to his grandparents by his mother when his father left her. So, for the first eleven years of his life, the woman he thought was his mother was actually his grandmother. One day he overheard his sister talking to his grandmother. "When are you going to tell Tony about his mother?" she said. When he found out, he says, his "world completely turned around".

Having already moved to Eastbourne ("They used to call it the 'Suntrap Of The South'," says King, his tongue very much in his cheek), because of the tuberculosis spreading through his family, his sense of geographical alienation was compounded not just by this shocking news, but also by the realisation that he was gay.

"I think the trauma of discovering who my real mother was became more evident as I grew older, but I still felt like I'd been cheated. I was of a nervous disposition anyway. I used to fool around with boys at school and realised I really liked it, but I didn't know what it was. I mean, I heard the word homosexual. So I went to the library and looked it up: men who are attracted to people of their own sex. And I thought, 'Well, I guess that's me.' I started reading Tennessee Williams, but I didn't know there was such a thing as a gay world. All I knew was, in Eastbourne, the only way to meet men, to put it bluntly, was to go cottaging."



King, aged 15 in 1957, at home in Eastbourne. A year later he would join Decca Records as an office boy

Like many isolated youths, King immersed himself in music, particularly early rock'n'roll. He started pestering local record shops for jobs until he got an interview at Decca Records in London.

At Decca he started as an office boy, aged 16, but was soon approached by various heads of department to change jobs. "I was very pretty at the time," says King, with a wink. After a few years he was approached by the promotor Tony Hall and went to work for him. He was 19, living in London and soon a stalwart of the gay scene. "I was very different. I was very young. Promotion men at that time were not 19."

'The Beatles went for dinner with a dentist who spiked their drinks with acid – their first trip'

King would be sent to the airport to pick up Hall's celebrity clients and had to look after them while they were in London, taking them to their press appointments, to lunch, to dinner, "everything". He would chaperone The Ronettes, The Crystals, Della Reese, Chris Montez and Little Eva, taking it all in his stride, pinching himself every now and then to make sure he wasn't back in Eastbourne, simply dreaming.

But this was the early 1960s and the world was starting to change. He would take Brenda Lee to the cinema, take Roy Orbison out to dinner. Phil Spector liked hanging out with King so much he used to buy him sweaters.

"Brenda was the first person to turn me on to the idea of professionalism, the importance of rehearsing, of making sure everything about a performance was as perfect as it could be," says King. "From that moment on, I became enamoured with people who knew what they were doing. Roy Orbison knew what he was doing, as did The Ronettes. Later on, Mick Jagger certainly knew what he was doing."

It was during this time that King realised people would employ him because he had taste.

"I wasn't ambitious. I just flew by the seat of my pants. My ambition was to have a good time, hang out with famous pop stars and get paid for it. I wasn't thinking, 'Oh, I could become this or that.' No, I was just looking after pop stars and I was really good at it."

King was chaperoning Chris "Let's Dance" Montez at the BBC Studios in Lower Regent Street one afternoon when through the door came four young men from Liverpool, The Beatles. "Wow, the energy of them. They had just arrived from Liverpool and they were plugging 'Love Me Do', so they weren't famous at all, they were new kids on the block, at the BBC to plug their record. But they had something. When they came in the room, the energy went up, especially from John Lennon, who seemed a really whip-smart kind of guy. As a result of meeting them, I started seeing them a lot. We liked the same music and I used to get them early Motown records. Tony Hall used to have these parties at his flat in Mayfair and The Beatles would always come. I saw them there the night before they went to America for their Ed Sullivan appearance and they were all excited. They were like kids in a candy store. When they came back, they were completely different people. They got turned on to dope by Bob Dylan and when they came back we all started. We'd all go to the Ad Lib Club, toking on hash and grass.

"The Ad Lib was a very cool hangout place. The Beatles went for dinner with a dentist and he had spiked their drinks with acid and when they got in the lift going up to the club they thought it was on fire because they were so out of it. That was their first acid trip. The Ad Lib >>

Photograph Rick Diamond/Getty

With Mick Jagger at a reception for the Stones singer's second solo album, Primitive Cool, 1987



'I became enamoured with people who knew what they were doing. Jagger certainly knew what he was doing'

>> was chic but then everyone moved on to The Scotch in Mason's Yard."

King worked for Hall for three years before being poached by Andrew Loog Oldham, who at the time was managing The Rolling Stones and was even younger than King. This was when Swinging London started to move through the gears and when suddenly teenagers were in positions of genuine power.

"Andrew was 18, smart, sharp, a cool dresser, liked me a lot and wanted me to leave my promotion job and come and work for him," says King. "At first, I couldn't, as it didn't seem right that an 18-year-old was going to be my boss. But as the Stones got more famous, he approached me again and I jumped ship. At my interview he played me an acetate of 'Satisfaction' and said, 'Oh, we've just finished this.' Keith Richards didn't want it to be a single, as he didn't think it was a hit. But Andrew knew. Andrew always knew."

Then came the real work and the real madness.

"Tony [Hall] joined me at Ivor Court to launch Immediate Records and promote the Stones," says King. "He speaks well of and to, dresses well, shops well, keeps well and laughs well. Tony would only put up with the very best of you and had the ability to help you find it."

Loog Oldham was also into drugs and King became the official joint roller in the office. "Whenever anyone asked for a smoke, Andrew would say, 'You better talk to the promotion department about that,'" says King. "I used to keep it in a drawer. I saw the Stones all the time, saw Mick and Keith, and we hung out. We were stoned all the time. I went to a premiere with Andrew once and we were smoking in the car. We drew up outside the Leicester Square Odeon and a policeman came to open the car door. As he did, a big cloud of marijuana smoke flew out. But in those days the police didn't know what it was."

King had already earned accolades for being the life and soul of the party, any party.

"London's after-hours scene in the mid-1960s was strictly a private affair," says Loog Oldham. "Those of us still going after last call at The Ad Lib, The Cromwellian or The Scotch Of St James would pile into an odd caravan of motors and make our way to whoever was inclined to open their homes to dolly birds and drunks. On one such night, Mick and Keith, along with Paul McCartney, found themselves with nowhere to run but the lounge of my own humble domicile, along with our mutual friend Tony King. Rather omnisexual himself, Tony had studied The Supremes' deliciously lip-synced performances on TV's *Ready Steady Go!* and his impersonation of Diana Ross was convincing to say the least. A not-to-be-denied Ms King pulled Mick, Keith and me to our feet to play our parts as Flo and Mary to his Diana, or Duke, Obie and Lawrence to his Levi Stubbs if the next 45 to drop was by The Four Tops. McCartney, who would not be moved from his front-row seat in one of our art deco peacock chairs, was left to gape in total disbelief."

After a few years, King was headhunted again, this time by The Beatles' producer, George Martin. There was no room for him in the office and so they put him in with The Beatles' publisher, Dick James.

"I used to see this young guy hanging out in the lobby," says King, "and we just started talking to each other. We talked music all the time. His name was Reg and that's how I came to meet Elton. I used to get him session work. He played on 'He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother' by The Hollies, played on records by The Moody Blues, Cat Stevens, Status Quo, The Bee Gees, played on dozens of things. I'd call up his mum in Pinner and say, 'Hello, Sheila. Can Reg do a session? It's three quid an hour for three hours.' She'd say, 'He's cleaning the car. I'll go and ask him.' Then he'd come up to Abbey Road and do his session for £9."

"I thought he was the most stylish person I had ever seen," says Elton John. "He had elegance from the word go."



With Beatles Ringo Starr (left), who made him chief A&R man at Apple Corps, and John Lennon, for whom he promoted the album Mind Games

Then, after a couple of years of this, in 1970, King was off again, this time to Apple, The Beatles' company, having been offered a job as their chief A&R man by Ringo Starr. He started travelling to the US and while in New York happened upon the Continental Baths, "which was an eye-opener". The following year he was flown to the US to launch the *Ringo* album, swanning around New York in his Tommy Nutter suits, causing havoc at every turn, cruising around in a rented Thunderbird. After three weeks he was just about to fly home when he got a call from John Lennon's girlfriend, May Pang, asking him if he'd stay to help promote his new album, *Mind Games*.

"Initially I was nervous, because John could be cruel," says King. "John had an edge to him and you didn't want to get on the wrong side of him, because he could cut you down. When we met, I was actually so nervous that I couldn't drive properly. I'd picked them up at a house in Beverly Hills and was driving them to a restaurant. But when we got there, I was so nervous about having John Lennon in my car that I lost the ability to park. And it was an automatic! So, I had to ask him to get out and go inside while I parked. He found this hilarious and after that we got on famously. We got on so well that I even did a TV ad for him for *Mind Games*, dressed up as the Queen. Obviously. He'd seen me do an impression of her at dinner one night and never forgot it."

'Lennon had an edge to him. You didn't want to get on his wrong side, because he could cut you down'

King told Elton he was doing the commercial and invited him down to the set. This was the first time that Lennon had met the piano player and they immediately forged a firm friendship, one that resulted in him asking Elton to sing on his *Walls And Bridges* single "Whatever Gets You Thru The Night".

King was also responsible for Lennon appearing on stage with Elton at Madison Square Garden a few months later. "Elton asked me to ask him, so I called him," says King. "I said, 'Will you go on stage with Elton at the Garden?' And John said, 'I'll tell you what, if my record goes to No1, I'll do it.' So I went to Capital Records and said, 'If you can jam this record up to No1, we've got an Elton John and John Lennon appearance at Madison Square Garden.' And they jammed it up to No1 for one week only. So John agreed to perform and I think of that as the highlight of my career. I think it's the highlight of Elton's career too. I think it was the highlight of everybody who was there. It will never be forgotten, that night. It was so special. I go goose bumpy even now."

By the mid-1970s, King was living the high life, spending inordinate amounts of time in nightclubs, drinking to excess, sleeping with naughty boys and taking more cocaine than even most rock stars. He was, in a sense, out of control, although at this stage in the narrative arc of post-War pop, he was only behaving like most other people at the sharp end of the entertainment business. "In 1973 I was on holiday with Elton in LA and I discovered this club called After Dark on Melrose," says King. "I told Elton I was going one night and he said he wasn't sure about coming because he wasn't really out. Then, after dinner, we'd all had a few drinks and Elton said he'd come. He was only going to stay for two minutes, but ended up staying three hours."

King thought he was grounded, but in reality he was anything but. "I would get on the Concorde and come to London and go down to see my mum and she would say, 'What do you pay for butter in America?' I said, 'I don't know, Mum,' but I made sure to learn before I came home again."

Spending so much time in the US meant that King started becoming a disco aficionado and became more knowledgeable about the genre than most people in the industry. >>

Photographs **Sam Emerson; May Pang**

TONY KING

‘I always remember Elton’s grandmother asking for her cigarettes as he was drowning in the pool’

With longtime friend and collaborator Elton John in the 1970s

‘When The Beatles came in the room, the energy went up, especially from John Lennon’







From top: On a promotional tour with Cliff Richard for Devil Woman, which was released on Rocket in the US in 1976 and gave Richard his first US hit; Elton John, King and John Lennon en route to Boston for Elton's show, November 1974. Later that month, Elton would join Lennon on stage at New York's Madison Square Garden, a collaboration orchestrated by King; as RCA's head of disco marketing with Evelyn 'Champagne' King and Cher at Billboard Magazine's 1979 Disco Convention

>> Lennon loved disco and would ask him to get him all the latest releases. One of his favourites was "Shame, Shame, Shame" by Shirley & Company. "When I was in LA, I used to come to New York a lot to see John, which is when I fell in love with disco," King says.

King would spend inordinate amounts of time with Lennon and for a while became his regular drinking buddy.

"At the 1975 Grammys afterparty, John was in the bathroom doing coke with David Bowie," says King. "Yoko was running around, asking where he was, and starting to get irritated. So I went into the bathroom, where John and David were still doing the coke, and he saw me and I said, 'Red alert.' 'What? Mother?' asked John. I said, 'Yes,' and he literally ran back to his table. Shortly afterwards he told me that Yoko was pregnant and that he was going to stop working. At the time, we were planning to do an album, using a lot of the black musicians who had played on *Young Americans*. It was going to be called 'Between The Lines' and I had already started sounding out musicians."

As Lennon was going into semi-retirement, and as Apple was winding down, King started looking around for his next perch.

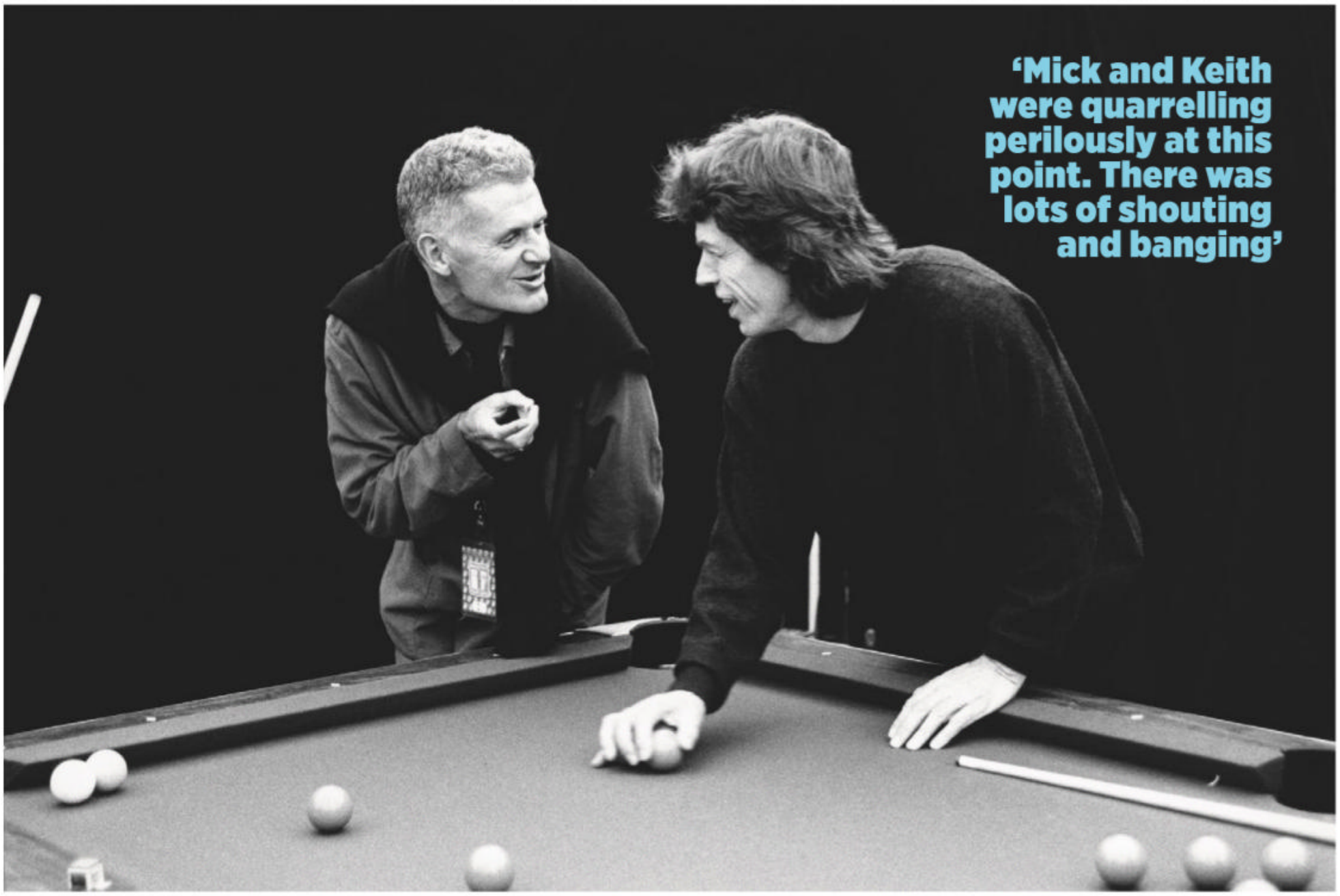
"Before I left New York, John said Yoko wanted to get a Madonna to put at the end of her bed to bring good fortune for the baby. So John and I went out looking for one. He was always very good with people on the street. He'd always say hello, but said that the trick was to keep walking. He said the secret is to say hi and don't stop."

King certainly wasn't stopping. Having left Lennon to bring up his son Sean, he promptly accepted a job at Rocket Records and moved back to LA, to Beverly Hills, to his Mercedes, his expense account and his gilded life of excess. His first job was to mastermind the launch of Elton John's 1976 album, *Blue Moves*, at a time when Elton was the biggest star in the world.

"Elton by this time was up and down like a barmaid's drawers, because of the powder," says King, with affection. "He was quarrelling with [his manager] John Reid and the whole thing was a nightmare, as there was so much coke around. This was the time of the Dodger Stadium concert, when Elton tried to commit suicide three days beforehand when he threw himself in the pool. He got weighed down by the dressing gown and he had to get rid of it as it was pulling him to the bottom. His mother and his nan were sitting out by the pool when all this was happening. His nan said, 'You going back in the house, Sheila? Can you bring me my No6?' I always remember that, his grandmother asking for her cigarettes as Elton is drowning."

Finding the pressure of working for Rocket too much, King then upped and left and started running the disco department at RCA, when every record company in North America was getting a "disco" person. "Our department was completely gay and so we used to call it Homo Promo. I was running around, going to discos, getting stoned, working every hour of every day, when work and play all fell together. I used to have a lot of fun. Oh, my God it was >>

King with Lennon and the star's then girlfriend May Pang in New York, 1974; (below) playing snooker on tour with Jagger in the mid-1980s



Photographs **Bruce Cole; Sam Emerson; Claude Gassian**

Tony King with Jo Wood, at London's Foundling Museum, 12 February 2010

'I'd lie on the bed with [Freddie Mercury] and hold his stone-cold hand while he bid for things from Christie's'

>> fun. There was a bar called The Cock Ring just down the road from my apartment and we all used to go to Fire Island in the summer."

When the disco boom started to fade, King became RCA's creative director, but by this time he was so burned out that on Good Friday in 1981 he joined AA. "I got sober and I've been sober ever since, but it wasn't easy," says King. "Six weeks into my sobriety Elton came to town doing copious amounts of coke. And then a few weeks later, bloody Freddie Mercury arrives. 'Darling, I'm here.'

"Freddie had a young crowd of gay guys who he loved hanging out with in New York and he was much more on the gay circuit than Elton was. When I told him I wasn't doing anything he said, 'Oh, don't worry, darling. You just do what you have to do!' I remember standing in [legendary New York gay club] The Anvil at six o'clock in the morning with him, with my Perrier, and Freddie saying to me, 'Oh, it's like Berlin.' And all I'm thinking is, 'I want to go to bed.'"

King had met Mercury while working at Rocket and, unsurprisingly, they had become fast friends – so fast that King says he was the one who encouraged Mercury to tell long-term girlfriend Mary Austin he was gay.

"I asked Freddie outright if he was gay and he said, 'Well, yeah.' So I said, 'Does Mary know? And he said, 'Well, I haven't said anything.' So I told him he had to live an honest life and if you don't live an honest life then you're not going to be very happy. Within 24 hours he called me up and he goes, 'Well, darling, I've done it.' I said, 'What do you mean 'done it'?' He said, 'I told Mary and she was OK.'

"But Freddie loved to go out. He loved The Anvil. All kinds of stuff went on at The Anvil."

King and Mercury would stay friends for the rest of the star's life. He was even there at the end.

"One day towards the end of the 1980s I noticed he had discolouration on his face and I asked him what it was. He said the marks were liver spots, but I knew they weren't. And then all of a sudden he stopped seeing people. I'd come to London and he wouldn't see me, wouldn't see anyone. I kept asking to see him and then, unbelievably, one day he said yes. When I saw him I was shocked by what I saw and I realised he was not going to make it, as he was very ill. He wanted me to stay with him and so I stayed with him two or three times. I'd just lie on the bed with him and hold his stone-cold hand while he used to bid on things from Christie's. He used to flick through the catalogues and I'd say, 'I can't believe you're doing that,' and he'd say, 'What else am I going to do? I may as well spend my money and enjoy spending it.'"

After RCA, it was time for King to move on and he did so by going to work for Mick Jagger, who was releasing his first solo album, *She's The Boss*.

"Mick and Keith were quarrelling perilously at this point. Keith was doing too much white powder and Charlie was on smack. They managed to put an album together called *Dirty Work* and I tried to get them to promote it. I got me, Mick and Keith to meet and talk about the possibility of a tour and there was lots of shouting from the office, things being banged against the wall. And then Mick came out. He said to me, 'Don't ask me to do that again,' and then the tour got cancelled."

As the pendulum swings, so it beguiles. King became a Catholic in 1982, not long after he stopped drinking and just before he joined The Stones. He says he had been fascinated by the Catholic Church since he was young and had actually wanted to convert since he was a teenager. The obstacle he always faced was being unable to reconcile his faith with his sexuality. But then he walked passed a phone booth.

"I'm on my way back from The Cock Ring one night when the phone rings in the booth outside my building. I picked it up and someone said, 'Hello, Tony. Is that you? How are you?' And I said, 'I'm fine, but I don't think I'm the Tony you want.' He said, 'No, I don't think you are, but you sound very nice nonetheless.' Anyway, we ended up having a long conversation. I was a bit drunk, so I said to him, 'Do you believe in God? Are you religious?' He told me that he had faith and so we eventually agreed to meet. I had no idea who he was, but when I met him he was very nice and we had a nice conversation. Then I met him again and this time he told me he was a priest. I told him I wanted to become a Catholic and said, 'How do you equate homosexuality with being Catholic?' He said, 'You dignify your sexuality with your faith.' He said God made us all and forgives us all and made us all in his likeness and that includes gay people. So, after I got sober, I started to go to St Joseph's Church in Greenwich Village and eventually became a Catholic."

King worked on the Stones' *Steel Wheels* tour and eventually did five tours with the band. In 2011, Elton called him from a Rocket board meeting in New York to ask him to work on his Las Vegas show. Six years on, in 2017, over a lunch with Elton and David Furnish in France, King was asked to work on the 2018 tour, which he took on the road. He was still working with Elton when Covid-19 came along. As soon as Captain Fantastic starts touring again, King hopes to be back on the road, back where he belongs, standing in and out of the shadows.





Instagram photos with friends Sir Elton John and the artist and filmmaker Sam Taylor-Johnson

"He's brilliant to work with on any creative level and has never lost his eye," says Elton. "Even now, he's light years ahead of anyone. Plus, he has an historic knowledge and love of popular music, gleaned from an early career at Decca and having to deal with big stars from America, Britain and Europe. With Tony it's all about instinct – choosing the right interview, the album cover, etc. Nobody has that more than him. He also has unwavering loyalty and I can't recall him ever bad-mouthing any of his clients."

King is certainly a product of his times, a man who grew to prominence during a period when getting by on your wits and your good looks were completely natural and when jobs and careers could be conjured seemingly out of thin air. If there hadn't have been a career for King, then one would have been invented for him, although, in a sense, it was. Confidante, consultant, A&R man, fixer, uber-publicist, advisor, right-hand man and creative muse. In reality Tony King has made a career out of being Tony King.

"Tony has the most impeccable eye," says David Furnish. "It takes years of experience to develop and train your eye to recognise and champion aesthetic brilliance. Throughout his career, Tony has worked with the biggest and best artists in the business. That level of taste and sophistication he's developed makes him second to none. He's our tastemaker extraordinaire. That's why his business card title says 'Éminence Grise'.

"I was creative director of Elton's *Farewell Yellow Brick Road* tour," Furnish continues, "and I knew we could always rely on Tony to ensure that everything we wanted to create was executed beautifully and in the best possible taste. He's a true collaborator, who takes his ego out of the equation and works as part of a team."

"I've had a pretty wonderful time," says King, without a hint of bluster. "It's been pretty wonderful. Extraordinary. Unique. No one's had a career like mine. No one's worked for Lennon, Jagger and Elton, and that's a pretty good trio. I've been blessed to work with wonderful people who, apart from John and Fred, have remained my friends. You know, I had this lovely working, friendly relationship with people and I met extraordinary people and did extraordinary things. And in the process personal things happened. Not bad for a boy from Eastbourne, eh?" **GQ**

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Photographs **Richard Young/Shutterstock; Instagram.com/aak70**



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Jacket, £1,150. Vest, £135.
Jeans, £527. Belt, from £80.
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Coat, £8,350. Trousers, £1,150. Shoes, £840. All by **Giorgio Armani**. armani.com

The GQ Spring/ Summer 2021 collections

Yes, it's time to retire the sweats, as we present the freshest outerwear stars and stripes your personal runway has been pining for

Photographs by **James Anastasi**
Styling by **Luke Day**



Dior

Coat, from £8,000.
Tank top, £1,759.
Trousers, £857. Sandals,
£740. Socks, £220.
All by **Dior**. dior.com

From left:

Coach

Coat, £ 1,700. Jumper, from £373. Both by **Coach**. uk.coach.com

Celine

Jacket, £890. Hoodie, £590. Trousers, £690. All by **Celine**. celine.com



From left:

Brunello Cucinelli

Jacket, £4,400. Shirt, £490. Tie, £190. Jeans, £690. All by **Brunello Cucinelli**. brunellocucinelli.com

Canali

Suit, £2,100. Shirt, £330. Both by **Canali**. canali.com. Tie by **Brunello Cucinelli**, £190. brunellocucinelli.com



Hermès

Jacket, £2,290. Shirt,
£920. Trousers, £690.
All by **Hermès**. hermes.com

From left:

Paul Smith

Jacket, £760. Sweater, £215. Trousers, £285. All by **Paul Smith**. paulsmith.com

Salvatore Ferragamo

Coat, £2,500. Top, £385. Trousers, £2,770. All by **Salvatore Ferragamo**. ferragamo.com



Gucci

Coat, £1,600. T-shirt, £400. Socks, £135. Hat, £300. All by **The North Face x Gucci**. Shirt, £700. Shorts, £600. Shoes, from £650. Both by **Gucci**. gucci.com



Prada

Jumper, £1,250. Trousers, £1,440. Shoes, £705. Socks, £65. All by **Prada**. prada.com. Watch by **Omega**, £12,190. omegawatches.com

From left:

Bottega Veneta

Coat, £2,180. Jacket, £1,805. Top, £940. All by **Bottega Veneta**. bottegaveneta.com

Etro

Jacket, £975. Shirt, £250. Tie, £120. Trousers, £395. All by **Etro**. etro.com



Burberry

Coat, £2,490. T-shirt, £400. Jeans, £1,090. All by **Burberry**. uk.burberry.com



Boss

Coat, £595. Boiler suit, £525. Both by **Boss**. boss.com



Dolce & Gabbana

Gown, £2,800. Trousers, £845. Both by **Dolce & Gabbana**. dolcegabbana.com



Louis Vuitton

Coat, £1,500. Shirt, £710. Both by **Louis Vuitton**. uk.louisvuitton.com

Models **Max K at Chapter; Reece at IMG; Samer at KMA; Tyler at Milk; Oliver D at Next; Jefferson and Nic W and Yiorgos at PRM; Jordan C at Select; Stan at Supa**
Grooming **Josh Knight at Caren**
Styling assistant **Angelo Mitakos**
Grooming assistants **Olivia Cochrane; Anni Rademacher**
Fashion intern **Ellie Hammond GQ**

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GQ's Lookbook

TRVTH



This brands ethos centres on hope, fear and aspiration, they thrive on authenticity. In these uncertain times they welcome security whilst aligning with comfort and functionality, 'nobody said it would be easy, but with emboldened honesty, we will all live to create the future we always imagined'. Specialising in sport and loungewear, curated in London, made for those who want to make a silent statement, TRVTH is a lifestyle brand with ethics and philosophy at the helm of their activities.

trvth.co.uk / IG: @trvth_online

CHANCE PARIS



CHANCE PARIS is not just a clothing brand but a lifestyle. Established in 2017 in Paris, their mission is to create a movement where everybody has a chance to succeed in life. You just need to take it! Every piece is in high quality, simple and embroidered with the logo that you can wear on any occasion. Visit chanceparis.com and follow @chanceparisofficial on IG.

CONSCIOUS



London based luxury clothing brand Conscious strives to break down social labels and cultural segregation through their premium apparel made to celebrate and explore individualism. With seasonal collections to look out for, the unique personality of the brand ensures a sustained popularity and is certainly a brand not to be missed. Visit conscious-lltw.com for more and follow @conscious_lltw on IG.

GARNET LDN



Garnet LDN was founded within the urban city of London. It focuses on the properties of the garnet gem stone being that it radiates love, health and loyalty aligning with the brand's three main ethics. The designs are uniquely created to display these ethics whilst also entwining street culture. To see the latest trends visit garnet-ldn.com and follow @garnetldn on IG.

GEECHI VIGILANTES



Geechi Vigilantes is a rooted luxury brand illustrating bold fashion for the true individual. The eccentric aesthetic of their custom threads advocate for all to nurture their individual styles. Visit geechivigilantes.com and follow @geechi_vigilantes on IG.

GYB.LDN



GYB comes from the phrase 'get your bread'. The brand believes whatever your situation is, wherever you are from, young or old, you need to 'get your bread'. Exceptional quality is the foundation of GYB. LDN, and is the driving force behind all decisions, as-well as introducing a variety of designs and logos that signifies financial motivation. Visit gybldn.com and follow @gyb.ldn on IG.

OSMARI



Osmari is a luxe men's activewear and swimwear brand inspired by the elegant-athletic male silhouette. Data science and computational mathematics meet to produce fashionable activewear that's vibrant and expressive and accentuates shape and support. Visit osmari.com and follow on IG: @osmari_wear

ABSURD CLOTHING



Wear Absurd to create a statement and stand out from the crowd! Join a family based community which promotes equality and sustainability with "YOU" in the centre of everything that the brand creates. Support a better world you live in with 5% of all profits donated to WWF, the world leading conservation charity. Visit absurdclothing2017.co.uk or follow on IG @absurdclothing2017

AINSLEY & TROUPE



Ainsley & Troupe is purposeful, minimal, timeless, luxury with a nature-driven twist. The brand believes that there aren't many things in life (aside from a strong spiritual foundation) that give a man confidence and a sense of purpose quite like being well-dressed does. Ainsley & Troupe's latest SS21 Marine Collection pays homage to nature with a line of suits that represent the beach and marine habitats through the fit, fabric, function, and colour palette of each piece. Visit ainsleyandtroupe.com and follow @ainsleyandtroupe on IG for more.

AZZURRA THE LABEL



Azzurra is an Australian-based clothing label made by hand in Melbourne but designed to capture the evanescence of a European summer. With custom developed prints and Italian heritage, Azzurra is a young brand with a wise vision. Combining bold colours and delicate tailoring (for men and women), stepping into one of their designs feels like all clothing should: easy. Chase the European sun at azzurrathelabel.com.au and follow them on IG: @azzurrathelabel

SILENT AURA



Silent Aura, based in Sydney Australia is a premium streetwear brand that embraces unique energy and creativity, allowing one's light to shine whether accepted by others or not. Silent Aura prides itself in combining exceptional quality and comfort throughout each mindful creation. Visit silentauraapparel.com and follow on IG: @silentauraapparel

STUDIO ESSENTIEL



Studio Essentiel is an Amsterdam based fashion label that offers menswear essentials with an edge. The brand aesthetics draws inspiration from sportswear, tailoring and avant garde. Their garments are made for men that want to stand out in a subtle way through enhancing their looks with an edgy, masculine and modern DNA. Shop with them on studio-essentiel.com or follow them on IG: @studioessentiel

BANNI PERU



Banni Peru is the Number 1 destination for all your high end fashion needs. Their premium pieces are perfect for all occasions and all seasons. With Limited Edition products and collections, the brand's unique flair is exclusive, stylish and luxury. Show the world your place in fashion by wearing Banni Peru.

Visit banniperu.store to shop their collections.
Follow @banniperu on IG.

SELF.OMMES



The German Street wear brand SELF.OMMES is reflecting the current political situation around the world, world peace and the on going Corona Crisis for the final collection in 2020. Pictured is the Oversized heavy cotton blue washed World Saver sweatshirt available at selfommes.com or IG: @self.ommes

TRIBAL ËYËS



Tribal ëyës displays a unique style that infuses ethnic designs into neutral eyewear. Eyewear or outfit, the tribe is audacious, with Spring 21 collection that will showcase block patterns and more colours. Founded in Sept 2020 by Physician/Entrepreneur, Ona Utuama, the brand donates eye goggles as PPE to health workers in Africa. Shop at tribaleyesshop.com and follow on IG: @tribal.eyes Photographer/model: Ade Adewunmi



TERFORD



Terford is a modernised streetwear brand that focuses on high-end accessories. Specialising in the headwear department, Terford will give you quality over everything, whilst always giving you the royalty you deserve on the streets. To find out more, visit terford.com or IG: @terfordclothing

THE WOLFE LONDON



The growth of The Wolfe London has enabled the brand to expand and become a platform that can support other businesses and individuals who want to collaborate, be inspired, mentored and motivated in pursuing their dreams. Learning from their own errors and mistakes has made The Wolfe London become a reputable brand that provides advice and initiatives to prevent others experiencing the same hardships. They share the belief that you create your own fate – what you put in is what you get out; collaboration is the key to success. Visit thewolfelondon.co.uk or IG: @thewolfelondon

VÉTRA



Vétra was founded in 1927 in Paris by a young entrepreneur, making quality French workwear. The family-business still manufactures 100% in France in its own factory, iconic chore coats. Vétra epitomises the genuine Bleu de travail, featured in countless rugged and authentic fabrics and styles.

Visit on IG: @vetra_france or vetra.fr

WORSHIP95



Worship is a premium clothing brand based in Chicago IL that offers a variety of designs inspired by their pillars of worship. From religion, to their culture. Follow on IG: @worship95 or worship95.com

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VOTWEAR



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SEASON INTERNATIONAL



Season International explores themes based on emotion, place and community. Every piece is a poem. Their latest capsule collection, International Acres, was inspired by the emotions evoked through isolation, nature, and the idea of creating your own world. Follow on IG: @seasoninternational or visit seasoninternational.co

SUAVITY



Suavity aims on being one of South Africa's leading Ladies and Men's Tailors providing long lasting, well fitted clothing, personalised tailoring, exclusive fabrics and timeless styles. From inception to completion Suavity offers the most personal experience. A wide variety of traditional or contemporary styles to suit your physique, an exquisite range of fabrics to suit your needs, well-constructed garments specially made for you. Visit suavity.co.za or IG: @suavity_sa

RISKY UNIVERSE



RISKY UNIVERSE is a luxury/streetwear brand founded in 2020 that stands for high quality and outstanding designs. It's about a way of living, you gotta stay RISKY. Don't forget to check them out on IG: @riskyuniverse or riskyuniverse.com

SANTA ANA



Urban as the Music Awards. Athletic by default. SANTA ANA creates iconic basics by citing selected streetwear elements on highly functional sportswear fabrics. Take your athletic metropolitan look to the next level. Shop their unique signature. Visit santa-ana.co.uk IG: @santaanaathleticapparel

URBAN KANGSTER



The "Pocket Hoodie" by Urban Kangster (UK) does not represent just comfort or style. It was created to enlighten your lifestyle and depict the core values you believe in. Be a Kangster. Love it, live it, and believe in it. They are a brand that looks beyond the brand. Visit urbankangster.com or follow IG: @urbankangster

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The R. J. Mitchell comes with two dial options: Western Europe, and North Africa. The watch has a titanium case, brass bezel, hand made camouflage strap, sapphire crystal, a stunning custom rotor wheel, and is powered by the legendary ETA 7750 Swiss made, automatic movement. £795.

Visit the220watchcompany.com for more.



PRYZM EYEWEAR



Blending distinctly Italian handcrafting techniques with a modern philosophy of experimentation, PRYZM is the new luxury eyewear brand, poised to set new levels when it comes to exclusive personalised experiences. While encoring their patrons to "be who you're meant to be", founders Bhavi & Mishaal have created a bespoke service that provides an extensive choice of frame styles, frame colours, and selection of special tints. Each finished creation is an art object unto itself.

Visit pryzmeyewear.com
or IG: @pryzmeyewear



The Fashion Collection

1



SUBSOLAR £100
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2



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3



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IG: @THESLMPDCO

4



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IG: @BUCQLE

5



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IG: @BIGBELLYLIFESTYLE

6



TANGERINE CREAM HOODIE $50
CHOSENOFFICIAL.COM
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7



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YASHA.LONDON
IG: @YASHA.LONDON

1. East London footwear brand **notwoways** sold out their first two drops in a matter of seconds. The industry is taking notice and demand is making them hot property on resale markets. Their new 'subsolar' colourway is due to drop by the end of February. Visit notwoways.com or @notwoways on IG to find out more! **2. Bullion Eyewear** is a London based eyewear brand delivering luxury quality and classic frames without the high price tag. The Milan is made from premium acetate and finished with polarised lenses. To view the full collection visit bullioneyewear.com **3.** Launched in 2014, **SLMPD CO®** Is a motivational lifestyle brand influenced by the streetwear and urban culture today in the UK. The diversity and juxtaposition behind the name of the brand is one of the unique reasons SLMPD CO® stand out today; as well as the limited capsule drops and exclusive high-quality apparel. **4.** Bye bye belt. Hello **Bucqle**! Meet Bucqle, the modern replacement for the belt. Bucqle is a unisex premium accessory to tighten the waistband of your pants and skirts by the millimetre to the perfect fit per person. It is basically the belt without the strap, but simplified and easier to use. Visit: bucqle.com **5. Big Belly Lifestyle** are an exclusive premium street wear brand, born in Birmingham early 2016, that treats their products and designs like an art. They want people to wear their garments to feel really important, to feel very positive in themselves and stay motivated to reach greater heights within their journey. **6.** Many are called. Few are chosen. Motivational clothing company **CHOSEN** are making big moves with their high fashion apparel and premium streetwear that not only looks good but helps you to feel good too. With worldwide shipping and unique designs, join the CHOSEN journey today. **7.** A class of its own, the men's light grey **CARTÉ Luxury** classic sweatsuit, made with a unique bold simplistic style. Assisted Direction Papi Ezekiel Gaucheislife. Designer and owner Cuthbert Assan. Available exclusively at carteluxurystore.com and on IG: @carteluxe **8. C.era Apparel**: A Los Angeles based lifestyle brand. C.ERA represents the spirit of pushing oneself to achieve your goals and dreams with hard work and determination. "All We Have Is Now" and "Get Lost in the Music" are just a couple mantras that represent C.ERA Apparel and C.ERA lifestyle. **9. Louvensteyn** embodies the traditional, French savoir-faire process. Each piece is made entirely by hand by the craftspeople in the atelier which use only natural exotic and calf leathers. Enjoy complimentary customisation of your name or initials on your luxury leather goods and free worldwide shipping. **10.** This upcoming Welsh brand pushes the boundaries of the fashion world beyond the ordinary. **Visioneyez** deliver latest innovative designs. Incorporating a trendy twist to give you that 'outside the box' style. Guaranteed – you don't already have it in your wardrobe. **11.** Take a chance to stand out from the crowd. **FortunaBeads** provides you with a distinctive way to express your personality through unique handcrafted wrist-wear. That's why every bracelet needs to meet three absolute requirements: Style, Comfort, and Affordability. Based in the Netherlands. Worldwide shipping available. **12.** The Stealth jacket from emerging brand **YASHA**, was devised to assist in life-threatening situations without compromising on style, comfort and everyday wearability. It comes with a choice of 4 different liners which are NIJ and Home Office certified. (£708).

TO ADVERTISE CALL 020 7499 9080 X3705

TO ADVERTISE CALL 020 7499 9080 X3705

The Fashion Collection Continued

13



THE MIDNIGHT COLLECTION £25 PER PAIR
BOCKABOCKA.COM
IG: @BOCKABOCKAUNDERWEAR

14



CHARLES LEBRUN PAINTER HOODIE – BROWN/RED £102
CHARLES-LEBRUN.COM
IG: @CHARLES__LEBRUN

15



ROMANTIC FLOW DESIGNER BOXER SHORTS
TINGSLABEL.COM.AU
IG: @TINGSLABEL

16



HOODIE
HOSEACLOTHING.COM
IG: @HOSEA.CLOTHING

17



TIME & SPACE METEORITE ULA DIVE WATCH 41MM £645
ZENEAWATCHES.COM
IG: @ZENEAWATCHES

20



NEVADA TURQUOISE RING £175
IZZYMCD.CO.UK
IG: @IZZYMCDJEWELLERY

18



RED UNISEX SWEATSHIRT PRINT ALL OVER
SILVA-OFFICIAL.COM
IG: @SILVA_OFFICIAL20

19



AUREUS LUXURY WOODEN WATCH
RBURNETTBRAND.COM
IG: @R.BURNETTBRAND

21



4PCE CROWN ROYAL SET
XQUISITJEWELLERY.COM
IG: @XQUISITJEWELLERY

22



SIGNATURE CAP £65
BRANDEDLONDON.COM
IG: @BRANDED.LDN

26



"LIFE'S TOO SHORT" £65
BROKENPLANETMARKET.COM
IG: @BROKENPLANETMARKET

23



FPWL – H2 – BLACK £85
FERINO.CO.UK
IG: @FERINOWORLDWIDE

24



BACKPACK SELECTION
OSITABRAND.COM
IG: @OSITABRAND

25



BROWN/YELLOW BOXERS €25
MAHONEBROTHERS.COM
IG: @MAHONEBROTHERS

27



STARVINGBRAND.COM
IG: @STARVINGBRAND

13. Bocka Bocka was founded by two brothers with a single goal: to make colourful, original underwear for men with personality. The Midnight Collection combines stunning printed waistbands with luxurious cotton/modal fabric. The result? Underwear that will make you look and feel great! Use code GQ21 for 15% off (expires 01/02/21). **14. Charles LeBrun** is an Australian label and brainchild of designer and photographer, Georgia Haynes. Charles LeBrun blurs the line between sportswear and fashion; inspired by Georgia's love for basketball, with the freedom of trans-seasonal and genderless clothing that is authentic with comfort at the centre of all designs. Visit charles-lebrun.com and follow @charles__lebrun on IG. **15. Ting's Label** is specialises in unique limited edition designer wear. All designs have a story inspired by real people. **16. Hosea** is a Christian Clothing Brand creating premium products with a minimalistic aesthetic. Their goal is to empower Christians in their faith whilst helping to spread the Good News of Christ through their eye-catching designs. Hosea has printed seven adjectives on the back of this hoodie to fill in the blank left at the front. **17.** Based in Canada, **ZENEA Watches** designs Swiss Made timepieces that seamlessly pair contemporary styling with classic design elements. The Time and Space Meteorite Ula Dive watch is constructed of 316L marine grade stainless steel; a Swiss ETA automatic 2824-2 movement, sapphire crystal, ceramic bezel, screw down crown and has an impressive water resistance rating of 300 metres. The dial is constructed from an actual slice of the 4.5 Billion year old Muonionalusta meteorite which fell in the Northern Sweden area, making this watch unique in its presentation and beauty. **18. SILVA OFFICIAL** is a clothing brand known for its innovation design and street-style and craftsmanship based in Dublin Ireland is the perfect blend of high fashion and street wear with creativity, quality and attention to detail the collection is unique from others street-wear brands. Featuring in this magazine is the SILVA sweatshirt printed all over from the launch collection (available also in White, Black, Green). **19. R. Burnett** Brand is luxury watch company which focuses heavily on detail and displaying distinguishing quality throughout every aspect. R. Burnett isn't only a well-crafted watch, but also a lifestyle brand built on the principle of succeeding beyond measure and breaking through limitations, in style. **20.** Specialising in bespoke pieces of silver jewellery, **Izzy McD Jewellery** carries a vintage yet refined rock n roll, biker vibe. With heavy statement cuffs and signet rings to sleek pendants and necklaces, Izzy McD Jewellery puts a modern twist on classic American south-western style. **21.** Since 2018 **Xquisitjewellery** has been one of the fastest growing accessory brands creating refreshing minimalist, premium unisex jewellery, without the expensive markups. Xquisitjewellery eliminates typical industry shortcuts with its focus on quality craftsmanship and fair pricing. They are more than just quality accessories. **22. Branded London** offers effortlessly stylish and premium street wear to the modern man. This brand's high quality products will guarantee you are always looking the best and stand out from the crowd. **23. Ferino** is the brand for the people. Cut from a different cloth, for extraordinary individuals. Born from a pandemic, Ferino catapults it's quality-lead garments through a boundless route of creativity. Born in the UK, produced in Portugal. **24. OSITA** is led by two brothers who bridge beauty and function into fashionable leather products. Named after their late uncle, Osita translates to "from today, all is well." With this, they fuse their Nigerian roots into their vision of fashion. Visit their website to see this unique selection of backpacks. **25. MÄHÖNE** is a Finnish underwear enterprise founded by three childhood friends from Helsinki, Finland. Their philosophy in making underwear is first and foremost about quality. Their goal is to make the best underwear in the world and they have been striving to reach this goal since 2010. **26. Broken Planet Market** is a sustainable streetwear brand based in London. All of the products are made ethically, using a blend of organic and recycled materials. Their online store opens once a month and regularly offers new designs that usually sell out within minutes. The best way to keep up with the brand is through their IG account @brokenplanetmarket **27. Starving Brand** is a unique streetwear brand centred on connecting people through the basis of everyone's need for something. These beautifully textured woven tapestry crewnecks are comfortable and extremely detailed. They are made of 100% cotton woven threads and are hand sewn.

28



APPLE WATCH PENDANTS
VOBARASHOP.COM
IG: @VOBARAGOLD
@VOBARAOFFICIAL

29



TELEPHONE SWEATSHIRT
HUSTLERSPROSPER.COM
IG: @HUSTLERSPROSPER

30



PERSONALISED SHACKLE & GREY ROPE BRACELET £28
PARKERCOLEATHER.COM
IG: @PARKERANDCOUK

31



THE NAVIGATOR £36
DEENGARMENTS.COM
IG: @DEENGARMENTSLDN

32



BFE CROSS BODY BAG £15.99
BRIGHTFUTUREEMPIRE.COM
IG: @BRIGHTFUTUREEMPIRE

33



SAPPHIRE AUTOMATIC 40MM $169
BODERRY.COM
IG: @BODERRYWATCH

34



ARIZONA BLUE LION MEDALLION CAP £35
SUAVEEAPPAREL.COM
IG: @SUAVEEAPPAREL

35



VERTIGE ZIP CARDHOLDER €95
MYVERTIGE.COM
IG: @MYVERTIGE

36



HAWK EM HOODIE
SQUILLR.COM
IG: @SQUILLR

37



BWG BAVARIA 2018 £255-£315
BAVARIAN-WATCH.COM
IG: @BAVARIANWATCH

38



FADED CREWNECK TEE €99.95
CHICCHERIABRAND.COM
IG: @CHICCHERIABRAND

39



MELANIN ROOTS UNISEX TEE
MELANINCLOTHINGUK.COM
IG: @_MELANIN.CLOTHING_

40



MALACCA PRINCE OF WALES
SWAINEADENEYBRIGG.COM
IG: @BRIGGLONDON

41



BRACELET BOSTON £55.99
REYNBORG.UK
IG: @REYNBORG_

42



BENNY SODA LACE-UP ANKLE BOOTS £72
SODABCN.COM
IG: @SODABCN

28. Vobara Apple Watch Pendants are designed to house the Apple Watch Into a fashionable pendant! Worn by many celebrities such as Quavo, Future, Lil Yachty and many more! **29. Hustlers Prosper.** The home of mesmeric fashion pieces and nostalgic artwork. They strive off the sole purpose of bringing back the old-world vibes of feel good fashion. HP invites it's viewers to submerge themselves in the animated minds of their artists, as well as feel second to none in their distinctive pieces. **30. PARKER&CO** is a men's accessory company based in Hertfordshire, specialising in personalised small leather goods and bracelets that embodies classic and unique style. Use code GQ15 for 15% off your first purchase (expires 01/04/21) – Free UK delivery and ships worldwide. **31.** Inspired by their North African heritage as well as experiences in navigating their way through the City of London, **Deen Garments** have developed unique designs to bring an alternative brand representing the Capital that we all know and love. Focused on attaining the best quality fabrics and mesh, the team have produced caps that hold their shape wear after wear. **32. Bright Future Empire** is a British clothing brand that celebrates every success along the road to greatness. With high quality pieces at affordable prices, Bright Future Empire embodies the drive and determination of dream seekers and entrepreneurs – making it truly the chosen streetwear for the ambitious. **33. Boderry** creates classically beautiful and elegant watches with a luxurious feel and undeniable quality for their affordable prices. Their innovative approach, from design to sale, saves you money whilst providing you with premium materials and exceptional customer service. Express your personality through the different styles Boderry have to offer, from formal to casual and all the while stylish. **34. Suavee Apparel** is more than just a brand but a statement of excellence, inspired by the military medals of honour and acts of achievement. Exquisite packaging, quality fabrics and garments engrossed with their beautiful, unique collection of logos for trendy fashionable designs. **35. Vertige.** Check out this luxury leather goods brand from Monaco, turning heads all the way from the French Riviera. From cardholders to clutches, each piece makes sophistication effortless. Plus, because Vertige products are made from 100% genuine leather, they'll only enhance with age. Get 20% off cardholders with VERTIGE20 (expires 04/03/21). **36.** Founded in 2018 by Andrew Fatoberu, the brand **Squillr** roots itself in modern culture, while creating refreshing pieces for comfort. Their gender fluid collections are inspired by financial elevation which is displayed via their simple and effective designs. **37. BWG Bavarian Watch** is your new premium watch brand without the excessive price tag. A sustainable, durable, high quality watch that fits the wrist perfectly whilst looking incredibly stylish and dapper. Inspired by the culture of Munich, founder and designer Frank has produced a real luxury German watch where tradition meets high tech and every material has been carefully chosen for the best quality, durability and appearance. Unique to you, choose your dial design and colour and switch up your strap for whatever the occasion or activity. Wear perfection on your wrist with BWG. **38. Chiccheria Brand** stands for luxurious and limited streetwear fashion and high-end accessories. The collection is inspired by the surfer lifestyle of southern California and the glam look of West Coast Metropolis Los Angeles, combined with the elegance and quality of Italian tailoring. **39.** British brand **Melanin Clothing**, created by Gloria Mba, believes that all different shades of black should get equal recognition within our modern society. They accomplished this goal by creating a logo which includes all different shades of black. They hope that their clothing line allows people to feel more confident in their skin. **40. Brigg** has always been synonymous with the quintessential British gentleman, and their umbrellas can be found throughout history to present day. From Royal Households, to the hands of world leaders, stars of the silver screen and leading film productions worldwide. Holding a Brigg in hand, is to gain a handcrafted ally for life. **41. Reynborg** from Berlin specialises in handmade premium gems. Their model Boston consists of 316L stainless steel and functional fabric. Use code GQ15 for 15% off your order (expires 28/05/21). **42. Soda BCN** is a brand with a retro-futuristic inspiration. Find their clothing, accessories and deco with vibrant prints and styles ranging from tie dye to camouflage or retro prints like pictured Benny Soda Lace-up ankle boots (£ 72). Worldwide shipping.

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TO ADVERTISE CALL 020 7499 9080 X3705

The Fashion Collection Continued

43



DENIM HAT WITH LEOPARD APPLIQUÉ LOGO
VRVEOFFICIAL.COM
IG: @VRVEOFFICIAL

44



HOODIE
JUGGIN.CO.UK
IG: @JUGGCLOTHIN

45



BLACK 'FL' CARGOS
FATTYLOU.CO.UK
IG: @THEFATTYLOU

46



ALEXIS JODHPUR TAN SUEDE BOOTS
VIVVANT.CO.UK
IG: @VIVVANT

47



INFINITE SKULL RING £380
SBROCCHI.COM
IG: @SBROCCHI_OFFICIAL

48



AQUARIUS LEATHER BELT £215/£175
ZODYAK.CO.UK
IG: @ZODYAKOFFICIAL

49



ORIGINAL LOGO TEE
BLACK/WHITE
RANGERCLOTHING.CO.UK
IG: @RANGERCLOTHING

50



LIFE AND DEATH BEANIE
MIDNIGHTSPECIAL.SHOP
IG: MIDNIGHTSPECIAL

51



HOODIE
LIMETLESS.COM
IG: @LIMETLISS

52



G10 NATO BLUE $85
FOURTHANDAVERY.COM
IG: @4THANDAVERY

53



MASTERPIECES PACK €45
CURATORSOCKS.COM
IG: @CURATORSOCKS

54



JUAN ANKLE BOOT £460
ALESSANDROVASINI.COM
IG: @ALESSANDROVASINIOFFICIAL

55



SHAMBALA STAR TIGERS EYE BRACELET
SANGSTERJEWELS.COM
IG: @SANGSTER_JEWELS

56



WHITE LOGO HOODIE
PLUGCALLING.COM
IG: @PLUGCALLINGLDN

57



CLASSIC SCRIPT LOGO HOODIE $37.99
ABSOLUTEVICTORYEVERYDAY.COM
IG: @ABSOLUTEVICTORYEVERYDAY

43. VRVE is a streetwear brand with designer aesthetics. Live Very Rich according to your standards; expect to be treated Very Expensive. The light washed Denim Hat with bold Leopard Appliqué logo is the perfect piece to elevate a monochromatic look. **44. Jugg** is a lifestyle fashion brand offering key pieces for your wardrobe. From tracksuits and hoodies, to jackets and headwear, there is something for everyone. **45. FattyLou**, created by artists and musicians from the front lines of fashion. Bringing you a new streetwear brand, birthed in the U.K's centre of urban art and Hip Hop culture, Bristol. Items coming directly from the source, with a wide range of premium quality clothing, accessories, art and vinyl at affordable prices. FattyLou's mainly limited runs are not to miss. **46. Vivvant London.** Designed in London, handcrafted in Florence. This is a sophisticated suede Jodhpur boot in tan. The robust rubber sole with hard finish provides a masculine character to the shoe, with an overall fine shape. A stud faster holds the foot comfortably. The triple V leather stitch on the back represents their brand name signature. **47. Sbrocchi** is a gentlemen's lifestyle brand. Bringing handcrafted, exclusive collections and limited pieces back to men's wardrobes. This piece pictured here is the 'Infinite Skull'. A 13 gram 925 sterling silver ring. All jewellery is made to order. **48. ZODYAK**. A British brand that offers luxurious high-end accessories to cater to the taste of cognoscente for both men and women. Inspired by the horoscope, each piece is designed with the user in mind through exceptional quality and craftsmanship certified to deliver substance. **49. Ranger** is an up and coming streetwear brand which guarantees to combine sophisticated style with classic comfort. It's memorable name and design has seen the brand become a quick hit amongst customers and social influencers, boasting nothing but positive feedback. **50. Midnight Special** is a new fashion label out of Los Angeles focusing on up-cycling vintage garments. The inspiration behind it is hard to define, with subtle nods to racing culture and portraiture – the hand painted designs could just as easily hang in a gallery. Drops are limited. **51. Limetliss** is a top luxury streetwear brand based out of Philadelphia. Featuring handmade denim jeans and an iconic collection of jackets. Our goal is to bring unique high-quality streetwear from Philadelphia to the world of fashion. **52. 4th&Avery** was created to become the accessory that expresses a specific taste and desire for distinctive lifestyle products. Each design represents a global influence but with a minimalist's approach. From the custom designed bands to the rose gold accents, 4th&Avery is committed to delivering quality of craft and customer service. **53.** An exclusive Pack of **Curator Socks**' most popular Masterpieces: Great Wave, Starry Night, The Kiss, and Composition II wrapped in a beautiful gift box. You no longer need to visit the museum to see these iconic artworks. Perfect gift for a discerning collector. Discover it via curatorsocks.com **54. Alessandro Vasini** is an emerging Italian luxury shoe designer acclaimed by artists and celebrities worldwide for his Chic, Rock'n'Roll inspired boots and shoes. Known particularly for the sexy yet sophisticated silhouettes is by many considered the ultimate in men's boots. All products are handmade in Italy with impeccable craftsmanship and attention to the details, using some of the best leathers around. **55. Sangster Jewels** offers stylish handcrafted pieces of jewellery for the modern man. Each jewellery piece is a symbol of power and purpose, inspiring you through life's journey. **56. Plug Calling Attire** is a luxurious clothing series consisting of Streetwear and Sportswear collections. Their premium branded garments are perfect for any occasion. The premium brand connect to each wearers identity, their culture and their social norms. **57. AVE** (Absolute Victory Everyday) is a premium streetwear brand dedicated to the mantra 'For The Win'. The brand uses innovative designs to celebrate individuality whilst maintaining high quality and style in all their pieces. Shop their iconic hoodies, available in different colour-ways, to express your personality and motivate yourself to strive for victory everyday.

58



OVERSIZED SWEATSHIRT
GOOD AND EVIL SPIRITS
(HEATHER BLUE)
PASUNEMARQUEPARIS.COM
IG: @PASUNEMARQUE

59



DUSKY PINK HOODIE £130
USHIWEAR.CO.UK
IG: @USHIWEARCLOTHING

60



"BRUCE" LONGWING DERBY £650
PASSUS SHOES
SARTORIALE.COM
IG: @PASSUSSHOES

61



MINNEAPOLIS £65
AUSTEREWEAR.COM
IG: @AUSTEREWEAR

62



DISTRESSED PAINT SPLASH JEANS
TRIBALSOCIETY.CO.UK
IG: @TRIBAL.SOCIETY

63



DAD CAP
TANTILONDON.CO.UK
IG: @TANTILONDON

64



CACTI LUXURY MICROFIBRE
CLOTH £24.99
BARROCCUANDCO.COM
IG: @BARROCCUANDCO

65



CAMO LEATHER STRAP
MONSTRAPS.COM
IG: @MONSTRAPS

66



HOKAGE CAPSULE X TEE £35
CAPSULECOLLEXION.COM
IG: @CAPSULECOLLEXION

67



BLACK GUNN BRIEF €65
KVRTSTVFF.COM
IG: @KVRTSTVFF

72



BLACK SILVER WATCH £109.99
STELLAMWATCHES.COM
IG: @STELLAMWATCHES

68



SKI RESORT T-SHIRTS £22
GOODTRIPCLOTHING.COM
IG: @GOOD.TRIP.CLOTHING

69



BRIEFCASE NO 1-1 (M) €169
HOLZRICHTER.BERLIN
IG: @HOLZRICHTERBERLIN

70



JODHPUR ANOOP £391
CROWNSTREETCOLLECTIVE.COM
IG: @CROWNSTREETCOLLECTIVE

71



I.N.T.A.B GALACTIC HOODIE
MELOVECLOTHING.CO.UK
IG: @MELOVECLO

58. Pas Une Marque is a Parisian streetwear label that aims to create a movement of like-minded individuals that strive for self-expression and have a unique thirst for knowledge. We believe in creating timeless pieces made through specialised washing, dyeing and sewing techniques. **59.** This Dusky Pink Hoodie is designed and handmade from premium heavyweight cotton in their **Ushiwear** Studio, right here in the UK. **60.** From the heart of Europe comes this small emerging shoemaker: **PASSUS**, tradition and luxury united to serve the needs of the 21st-century gentleman. Completely Handmade footwear, available exclusively at sartoriale.com purveyor of the finest menswear since 2000. **61.** At **Austere Wear** their glasses are handcrafted from wood, giving every pair a polished, minimalistic look. They proudly offer prescriptions, readers, transition lenses, and blue light and UV-blocking lenses... all in rugged, distinctively-stylish frames. In October, they released their Minneapolis frame, which features engravings of the raised fist symbol. It quickly became their top seller. **62. Tribal Society** – Denim Made for You. Each jean is hand finished, making every pair unique. **63. TANTI** – an independent London-based brand, leading in hand-crafted men and women's headwear. With a diverse range of designs, TANTI produces only the best quality pieces for your crown. Email luke@tantilondon.co.uk for further info. **64. Barroccu & Co.** specialise in premium quality microfibre cloths for a clientele with discerning tastes. The unique formulation of their cloths effectively cleans sensitive applications such as glasses, camera lenses, smart devices and watches. Their limited edition collections embrace a unique palette of the finest materials, rich colours, and striking original artwork and designs. Reusable and washable, their durable pieces are both a statement accessory and a practical tool for everyday use. More than a cloth! **65.** Whether if it's a handmade example of artisan perfection or a precision injection moulded rubber strap, **Monstraps** are on a relentless pursuit of quality. They provide comfort as a number one priority. Visit their website to find out more. **66. Capsule Collexion.** Set up in Summer 2020 by a collective of designers and entrepreneurs, Capsule is rooted in the street culture of Ladbroke Grove, West London. Already regularly spotted on the backs of some serious A-listers, Capsule's designs for t-s and casualwear merge multiple genres in playful homage. They hit the market once a fortnight, exclusively online on a timed Limited Edition basis. **67. KVRT STVFF** has been ready to sweat since 2018. This Barcelona based brand designs high-end sportswear, swimwear and underwear for anyone who feels confident in their own skin. **68. Good Trip Clothing** is on a mission to change the souvenir clothing market, for good. Only using premium organic and recycled materials, this sustainable brand prides itself on quality and eco-friendly processes with 20% of their profits donated to charities around the world. The designs in their Ski Resort Range are created by taking the outline of the mountains on the piste map! This is then expertly embroidered onto organic cotton t-shirts and sweatshirts made from a blend of organic cotton and high quality polyester recycled from plastic bottles. Save 20% with the exclusive discount code GQFEBRUARY (expires 28/02/21). Follow them on IG @good.trip.clothing **69. HOLZRICHTER Berlin** is a Berlin based Start-up that manufactures modern bags and accessories only using finest vegetable tanned premium-leather. Always with the aspiration of creating unique timeless products, that are made to sustain life's voyage. Eco-friendly, handmade and exclusively online. **70. Crown Street Collective**: Their shoes, boots and accessories are bespoke, handcrafted affordable luxury. Custom-made in Spain with the finest Italian leathers and sartorial materials, they provide fashion freedom for those with a creative flair. All of their products are made-to-order, therefore minimising fashion wastage. They contribute to a greener environment by only producing what their customers need. #crownstreetcollective **71. Melové.** "Intermission, Never take a break". This collection has been inspired by the ethic of hard work and dedication. Implementing the necessary steps through self reflection to achieving your goals but never taking a break too long to lose sight of them. The vivid imagery has been constructed with strong bold colours, creating an energetic atmosphere throughout the design, bringing it to life. **72. Stellam Watches.** When you combine unique, minimalistic and luxurious you get a watch unlike any other. Guaranteed to be your favourite watch in your collection at a fraction of the price. Use code "GQ" and get 30% off your entire order (expires 05/03/21).

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TO ADVERTISE CALL 020 7499 9080 X3705

The Fashion Collection Continued



73

RIDER RIPPED GRAY JEANS £49
SHOPBROTIQUE.COM
IG: @SHOPBROTIQUE



74

GREY ALL-IN-ONE TRACKSUIT
POSTERBOYSBYCDN.SHOP
IG: @POSTERBOYSBYCDN



75

L'ORIGINAL €147
HOMMEHOMMEPARIS.COM
IG: @HOMMEHOMMEPARIS



76

BLACK FIELD JACKET
MSSRS.CO
IG: @MSSRS.CO

TO NEW BEGINNINGS WORKERS
JACKET £58.97
TNNCLOTHING.COM
IG: @THENEWNORMAPPAREL



77



78

DUAL XL BRACELET WITH TIGER'S EYE
AND 18K GOLD VERMEIL £150
HETARIKI.COM
IG: @HETARIKIJEWELLERY



79

ESK EXECUTIVE KIT BAG £54
MONTROSEBAG.COM
IG: @MONTROSEBAGCOMPANY

73. Brotique is an American streetwear brand inspired by street styles from around the world. Shop 100s of styles of jeans designed for the modern man, along with express international shipping at shopbrotique.com Use promo code "GQ10" for 10% off of your order (expires 01/04/21). **74. PosterBoys** is a brand that aims to help showcase ones true colours by expressing who they truly are. Their products are innovative with a contemporary edge that are sure to maximise on comfort without compromising on style. **75. Homme Homme Paris** is a European fashion brand, creating classic timeless pieces combined with contemporary international designs. You can see an architectural and structural approach to his designs to create a long lasting life. **76. The New Norm Clothing** was developed during unforeseen times. It was ignited by the global change we all faced which kept us inside our homes hence the logo formation of a house. It represents those who embraced the change, evolved and prepared themselves with the mindset that our normal way of life will be much different than before once we step back out into the world. They decided to create and give a fresh new experience to walk out into your New Norm. **77. MSSRS** is founded by Anthony Newman, redesigning fashion through functionality. The British designer fuses tailoring and tech whilst elevating streetwear for todays ever changing world. **78. Hetariki.** Stylish designs with a luxury twist using semi-precious stones that imbue a sense of calm, balance and mental positivity. 'We want our jewellery to help provide a positive and optimistic mindset in dealing with the everyday challenges of modern living'. A percentage of each sale is donated to mental health charities. **79. Montrose Bag Company** hand manufacture all weather bags engineered to perform outdoors. First established in 1789, their kit bags have a long standing reputable heritage in the North Sea Oil and Gas industry. They design, develop and hand manufacture all their products at their workshop in Montrose, Scotland. Quality craftsmanship, that's guaranteed to last. Visit montrosebag.com and follow on IG: @montrosebagcompany for more information.

About Time



GOLD COAST €180
LESSWATCHES.COM
IG: @LESS_WATCHES

3



6

SNOW STAR ICE BLUE
€1565
MILUS.COM
IG: @MILUSWATCHES



1

HYPERION £ 315
STEFANO BRAGA WATCHES
STEFANOBRAGAWATCHES.COM
IG: @STEFANOBRAGAWATCHES

ZEITWINKEL
WWW.ZEITWINKEL.CH
IG: @ZEITWINKEL.CH



2

BESPOKE LEATHER WATCH STRAP
VELLE ALEXANDER
VELLEALEXANDER.COM
IG: @VELLEALEXANDER



4



5

GREEN DIAL (GREEN CERAMIC
BEZEL) SW200 $599
AQUATICOWATCH.COM
IG: @AQUATICO_WATCHES



7

KINGSTON NAVY
JAGGERWATCHES.COM
IG: @JAGGER__WATCHES

1. Stefano Braga Watches. Hyperion represents the origin of the world, in the delicate and complex balance between day and night, sun and moon. The dial draws a ying-yang to represent the complex balance that puts this project on stage. Available in various colours. **2.** Bespoke leather watch straps expertly handmade by a sole craftsman using only the finest materials. Combining exquisite detail with an unpretentious, consultative approach, **Velle Alexander** crafts custom watch straps worthy of the watches on which they're worn. Perfection is worth pursuing. **3. LESS Watches** are for those who want more style with less environmental impact. They are the only watch with straps made from upcycled surf wetsuits. Inspired by the stark Atlantic coast of the west of Ireland the watch features a minimalist case with 5ATM water resistance coupled with an innovative adjustable cinch buckle and eco-friendly strap. Giving you subtle style with a bold statement. **4. Zeitwinkel** is a Swiss watch manufacture based in the Jura, valued by enthusiasts for their hand-made watches and their in-house manufacture movements. Models such as the sapphire dial 273° are available directly from the atelier. **5. AQUATICO** is a young and vibrant watch brand created by mechanical engineer, designer and watch collector Calvin. The brand strives to produce premium timepieces using Swiss automatic movements and high quality materials for long-lasting durability and luxury style. With unique and varied designs perfect for all occasions, visit aquaticowatch.com to browse to collection. **6. Milus International.** The new Snow Star Ice Blue is a modern iteration of the brand's original timepiece. The colour blue symbolizes the path of light travelling through ice – the longer the path, the more blue it appears. The new Snow Star features everything you'd expect from a modern Swiss timepiece, such as 100m water resistance, a reliable ETA 2892-A2 (top grade) movement, 42 hours of power reserve and a fully polished 904L stainless-steel case. **7. Jagger.** Kingston is the perfect everyday watch. Its stylish look featuring navy dial, rose gold case and black strap continues to turn heads. Visit their website and IG to see more.

Man Of The House

1. Rebecca Ainscough's work evokes the sensuality of classical nudes. Ideally sized, for a bedside table or sideboard, these contemporary Bronze sculptures invite you to explore the beautiful symbiosis between the psyche and physical form. Tactile and kinetic Still Dancing II (pictured) spins gracefully in its hand forged frame. Visit **rasculpture.com** or IG: **@rasculpture**

2.Racquel Miller is an intuitive abstract self-taught artist that resides in Connecticut, USA. An expression of her soul, Racquel's art is inspired by the beautiful colours and forms found in nature; reefs and tropical oceans, springtime flowers, or the sweet smelling lush green forest. She creates beautiful abstract art that transports you to a place of joy, calm, and peace. To feel refreshed, renewed, and rested...a space for reflection. We are surrounded by beauty that is an invitation to embrace with colour and nature. Her nature inspired art welcomes you to a place to feel connected to the beauty of life and what lies beyond our sight. Her work is currently feature at The Spectrum Art Gallery and The Connecticut Art Gallery. Pictured is 'Secret Garden', 24"x30", $750. Visit **dbrdesignsbyracquel.com** or IG: **@dbr_designsbyracquel**

3. Inspired by an ambition to reinvent orthodox objects, **Lunar Artefacts** of London continually complements the world of technology with its emblematic endeavours. Developed and designed in-house, the brand captures attention with state-of-the-art ideas and ever-lasting quality of the Pointer Instruments. Devotion to details is turning ordinary gadgets into hi-tech chefs-d'oeuvre. Produced from finest materials and topped with full-grain leather, it is designed to age with style. Follow on IG **@lunar.artefacts** and visit their website **lunarartefacts.com**

4. Marcela Solana 'MARCH', is a Mexican artist known for her playful use of acrylics. When she discovered her artistic abilities, she made it her mission to inspire, spread love, and colour life through her art. Visit **marcelasolana.com** to view her available work. IG: **@marcelasolana.art**

5. RCKZ is a Germany based design brand offering an exciting way to display the sneakers you love. The edgy and diamond-like design is stackable at the top, sides, and bottom, creating an eye-catching interior accessory. Follow on IG: **@rckz_** or **rckz.de**

6. Mona Gabor is the creatrix of "The Game of Colours" that she plays with ease and passion. Her abstract acrylic colourful compositions have a vibrant and fresh feel with a metallic and sheen effect. Mona enjoys dancing between the extremes: from straight geometrical patterns to seamlessly converging colour compositions. While she is in submission to the powerful moments of creation she feels absolutely limitless – an artist of inner paradoxes. Her artworks can be viewed at **monagabor.com** or **@mona.gabor.art** on IG.

7. Stefania Pinsone was born in Rome, lives and works in Switzerland. The distinctive painting style of the award-winning artist combines figurative imagery with a new contemporary impressionism of the digital age, exploring new materials in a complex system of symbols and signs. Picture featured: Neon scorpion. Acrylic painting on black Plexiglas, 40 cm x 65 cm, 2017 (covered by fluorescent blue Plexiglas). Visit **stefaniapinsone.pictures** or follow her on IG: **@stefaniapinsone_art**

8. Pullman Editions designs striking original limited-edition posters that capture the enduring appeal of Art Deco. Their posters feature winter sports, glamorous resorts around the world, and historic automobiles. Over 100 designs available at £420 each. Call **020 7730 0547** or view and buy online at **pullmaneditions.com**

9.Slippery When Wet 4D, Photography on Acrylic, 64 x 48 in, 2019 – by British born New York Artist **Carol Brown.** For sales contact – **carolbrownstudios.com** and follow **@carol_brown_studios** on IG.

10. Juniper is a design company of premium home essentials inspired by the unparalleled experience at a secluded luxury boutique hotel. Sustainability is at the heart of everything they do, they push the boundary for value chain transparency and are climate neutral certified. Visit **jun-per.com** or follow IG **@juniperofsweden**

11. Tim Cunliffe's stained glass brings striking designs and coloured light to any interior. With over 30 years' experience, his work combines the ancient tradition of medieval stained glass with a fresh contemporary approach often focusing on animal imagery. Visit **timcunliffe.com** and follow on IG: **@tim_cunliffe**

12. Talented Russian born British artist, **Kat Herrgott-Penter** crafts beautiful and meaningful pieces that present a moment of luxury to the viewer. Her work is inspired by a vast variety of experiences and moments in life and she finds crafting her pieces similar to music in that she seeks out a rhythm. Explore more online at **kathergott-penter.co.uk**

13. LAUREN FORCELLA's paintings captivate the beauty and magic found in nature. Whether you seek a breathtaking original with signature rich colours and textured brushwork, or a bold giclee print on canvas, browse her artwork at **laurenforcella.com** and IG **@laurenforcellaartist**

14. Drawing inspiration from the vastness of the Australian landscape, **Lümo Designs** create striking organic contemporary pieces evoking a sense of balance and calm. The skilful use of texture and natural material conveys a timeless elegance and meditative flow. Visit **lumodesigns.com** and follow **@marcilutkenart** on IG.

15. Rold Design, based in Chicago IL, is a luxury experience design firm that creates experiences. Residential and commercial spaces yes, but they far exceed that by creating and delivering every single detail involved in an experience including digital and event experiences as well. Their tailored touch helps to create spaces entirely suited to your practical needs and personal tastes. As seen here, the custom created library collates the individual style and work space of the client. Design bold and bespoke spaces for a home that reflects you and reach out at **rolddesign.com** and IG **@rolddesign**

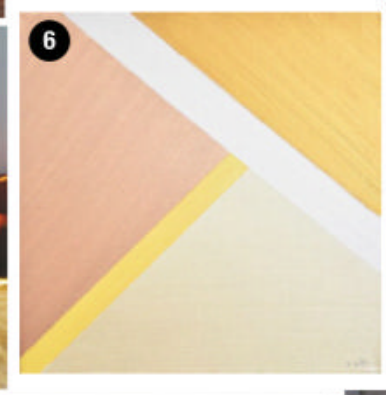




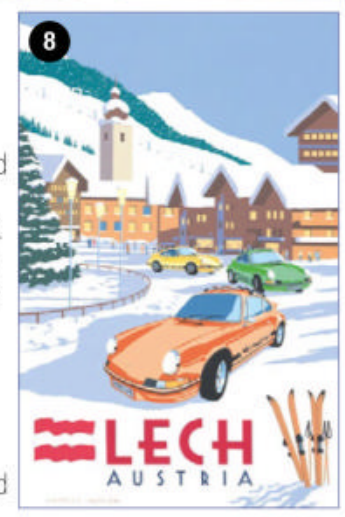


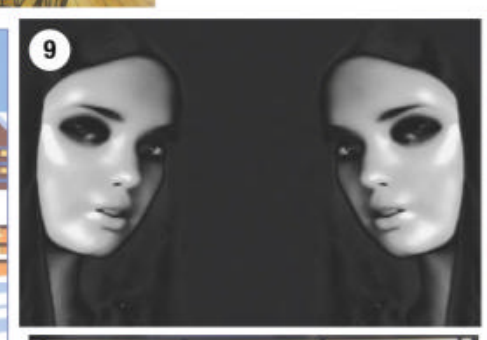








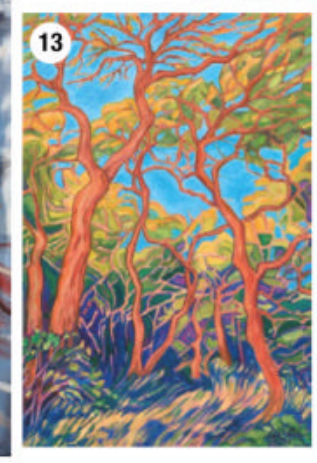
















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Be Mine







1. Inspired by the love between Mother and child, **Merci Maman** creates beautiful hand-engraved jewellery starting from £39.Choose special names, dates, or messages to create a keepsake that will last a lifetime. Available in 18k Gold plating and 925 Sterling Silver, use code GQ15 for 15% off your first order (expires 04/03/21). **mercimamanboutique.com**

2. Introducing the new 'Sleep-and-Slay' Collection by founder Carla Sigua for **Carlitas**. Made to enhance and empower you and your true beauty. The silk sleep mask collection is here to bring that luxurious touch to your beauty sleep and bedtime routine. Soon to release their 'Lounge-and-Slay' silk loungewear collection, you can relax and indulge in elegant comfort for all those important dates with your sofa and a box set. Visit **carlitas.co** for more and follow **@carlitas.co** on IG.

3. The **Pixie Cup** is a reusable, silicone cup that collects menstrual flow. Lasting up to 10 years, it'll basically be your gal's new BFF. (sorry!) She can say goodbye to tampons and scrambling for products that time of the month. Visit **pixiecup.com** or IG: **@mypixiecup**







4. Sustainable towel by **The Summer Chaser** is an ultimate companion during yoga sessions, ocean dips and highly anticipated adventures. Light and compact fabric make these towels easy to pack and bring anywhere. Each towel comes in a beautiful matching drawstring bag and makes a perfect gift for a conscious traveller. Purchase online at **thesummerchaser.com** and follow **@thesummerchaser** on IG.

5. ATHAENA BRIDE is a London based luxury bridal, evening wear and accessories brand for the elegant and discerning woman. Their silk and cashmere scarves will add style and panache to any wardrobe. Their embroidery is all hand made. They run small production quantities to ensure their quality is always of the highest standard. For more information visit: **athaenabride.com** **@athaenabride** on IG.

6. Taylor & Hart is an award-winning jeweller specialising in exceptionally crafted custom, ethical engagement and wedding rings. If love has no limits, neither does Taylor & Hart. They're redefining the rules of engagement by embracing what makes jewellery magical – creating heartfelt custom pieces that capture your story. Inspired by you, crafted by Taylor & Hart. Visit **taylorandhart.com** call **020 3126 4915** and follow **@taylorandhart** on IG.







7. Sudden Beauty was created with the idea of giving beauty seekers from all ages, all sexes, and all walks of the life to experience a world of beauty tools. Pictured is the micro needle derma roller that works with a mission to rejuvenate and regenerate the appearance of the skin. For more information visit **suddenbeautycare.com**

8. Tiny Alpaca is an eco-friendly, family run brand that focuses on luxury muslin squares, blankets and accessories for your little people. A portion of their sales go towards charity. Use code "HEYGQ21" for 10% off (expires 17/12/21) on **tinyalpaca.co.uk** and follow **@tinyalpaca** on IG to discover more.

9. Jane Dottie Vintage is a sustainable, small batch, slow fashion brand for the modern-day renaissance woman. Founded by Tatyana ZW Alanis, the brand is dedicated to bringing quality and sustainable styles to the community. Jane Dottie Vintage is a platform that not only places prominent emphasis on eco-friendly practices, but all things women empowerment too. Visit **janedottie.com** and IG **@janedottievintage**









10. Fervenzi is a luxurious leather fashion brand that encourages individualism and inspires authentic, stylish living in everyday life. With extreme focus on the quality of workmanship and the use of premium raw and sustainable materials, each leather jacket is designed in the USA and thoughtfully hand-crafted in India. Visit **fervenzi.com** and follow them on IG **@fervenziwear**

11. Inspired by the brand's founders, a husband and wife duo, **Gaâla** is a slow fashion brand uniting classic French aesthetic with the finest Belarusian artisanship. Gaâla creates uniquely limited apparel using high quality deadstock fabrics leftover from fashion houses. Gaâla seeks to create timeless clothing that transcends trends; including classic professional wear designs, elegant day-to-evening dresses, and chic, functional jumpsuits – all with a nod to vintage. Visit **gaala.com** and follow **@gaalaparis** on IG.



12. Gifting done gorgeously! **Raph&Remy** is a premium baby gifting brand that designs stylish, sustainable and personalised bamboo baby essentials. For the chic and modern mama who won't compromise on quality for their precious babies comfort, is thoughtful about environmental impact and enjoys a beautiful unboxing experience. Visit **raphandremy.com** or IG: **@raphandremy**



13. Flamingo Jewellery's unique pieces are the perfect one-of-a-kind gift for the loved ones in your life. Their individually sourced gemstones are carefully and expertly hand-crafted in England, perfect for exuding elegance day-to-day or adding a luxurious touch for special occasions. Discover their beautiful collection at **flamingojewellery.co.uk** and follow **@flamingo_jewellery** on IG.

14. Inspired by all things magical, **BISOULOVELY** carefully crafts the jewellery of your fairytale dreams. Each piece is whimsical and ethereal, with celestial motifs that are sure to be a stunning addition to your collection. With new pieces added to the collection every month, BISOULOVELY will surely be a shop you visit more than once for pieces that will speak to your inner starchild. Shop online at **bisoulovely.com**



15. Looking for a better way to walk your dog? The **BullyBillows** Premium Harness has got you covered. Its padded front and back panels offer ultimate comfort, preventing rubbing and chafing during those spring strolls. Secured with two quick-release clips, you can slip the harness straight over your dog's head and you're ready to go. Visit **bullybillows.com** and follow on IG: **@bullybillows**

16. Shimmer and Wax Candle Co. based in Lanarkshire, Scotland, offer a range of sustainable luxury home fragrance options. Visit **shimmerandwaxcandleco.co.uk** or IG **@shimmerandwax**

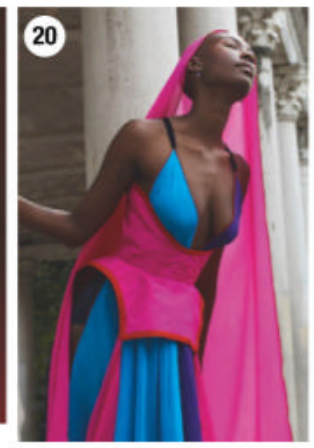
17. Makiko Wakita Los Angeles. Featured Eternity Thread 'Day Light & Night Sky' ring is made with half 18KYG/18KWG – Sapphires/Diamonds. Thin as a thread, you can enjoy this delicate band as the ring naturally turns to show two tones throughout day and night. Check out **makikowakita.com** IG: **makikowakitala**

18. Estrid is a razor without all of the bad stuff, at a fair price. The razor is solid steel with five blades for a close and smooth experience. Available via a subscription service, delivered straight to your door. The starter kit is £7.95 with free shipping always. Vegan and cruelty-free. Visit **estrid.com** and on IG: **@heyestrid**



19. GrayxWild is a British reversible-tailoring brand. Their core piece – the blazer – is a wardrobe essential. GrayxWild is reversible, sustainable and spreading the slow-fashion message. They are reviving the modern wardrobe, encouraging women to buy forever in-season pieces that become staples. Visit **grayxwild.com** and follow **@grayxwild** on IG.





20. House of Jewell is an African-American luxury brand founded by three generations of artists. Daring colours and inspiring silhouettes embody the distinct aesthetic and voice of Paula Jewell. Marrying fashion and art, this delicate execution is what makes House of Jewell a staple wardrobe addition. Visit **@houseofjewellcouture** and **houseofjewell.com**



21. The **Di Giovanna** organic vineyards and winery are nestled inside the beautiful nature reserve of Monte Genuardo, near the small village of Sambuca di Sicilia (Agrigento). Private guided tours and tastings are offered seasonally, by appointment. Visit **di-giovanna.com** to book a winery tasting or shop on their online store for exclusive Sicilian wines and olive oil. Follow **@DiGiovannaWine** on IG.



22. Sanctifino, a unisex oil-based fragrance by **Incensum Fragrances**, captures the sacred infusion of spirit into matter. A metallic scent with a rich regal center that unveils a brightness like that of reflective light. Sanctifino reflects the axiom of "as above, so below". Available at **incensumfragrances.com**. Follow **@incensum_fragrances_official** on IG.





23. High-end womenswear label **Philo** has been on the watch for the most striking fashion trends and a perfect combo of luxury streetwear. Brand was founded by a Polish born stunner Anna Kociuga New York's F.I.T. graduate. Her business mindset and entrepreneurship skills driven her to create PHILO that perfectly balances today's comfort fashion vs. timeless elegance. Visit **philonewyork.com** or IG **@philonewyork**

24. For those that want make-up to look and feel good, but want products that are sustainable, vegan-friendly, and cruelty-free, **ST Essentials** offers Loose Pigments and Body Shimmers that cater to all skin tones and embrace every body. Unlike other make-up brands, ST Essentials is committed to providing sustainable products that allow you to feel good both inside and out, while doing your bit for the planet. Discover More at **stessentials.com** and follow on IG: **@stessentials**







25. The perfect eco-friendly gift. **TERRA ACTIVE**, a sustainable, female-founded active brand from The Netherlands provides you with high quality eco-friendly yoga mats and sustainable clothing. Taking care of your health and the health of our planet. Use code GQ15 for 15% off (expires 04/03/21). Visit **terra-active.com** or follow on IG: **@terra.active**

26. Enhance the magic of the festive season with **Sand & Stone Jewelry**'s designer jewellery and apparel. The perfect gift for loved ones this Christmas, their statement leather cuffs are designed with motivational quotes and remind the wearer to live their best life. Inspired by life, worn with love. Visit **sandandstonejewelry.com** and follow IG: **@sandandstonejewelry**

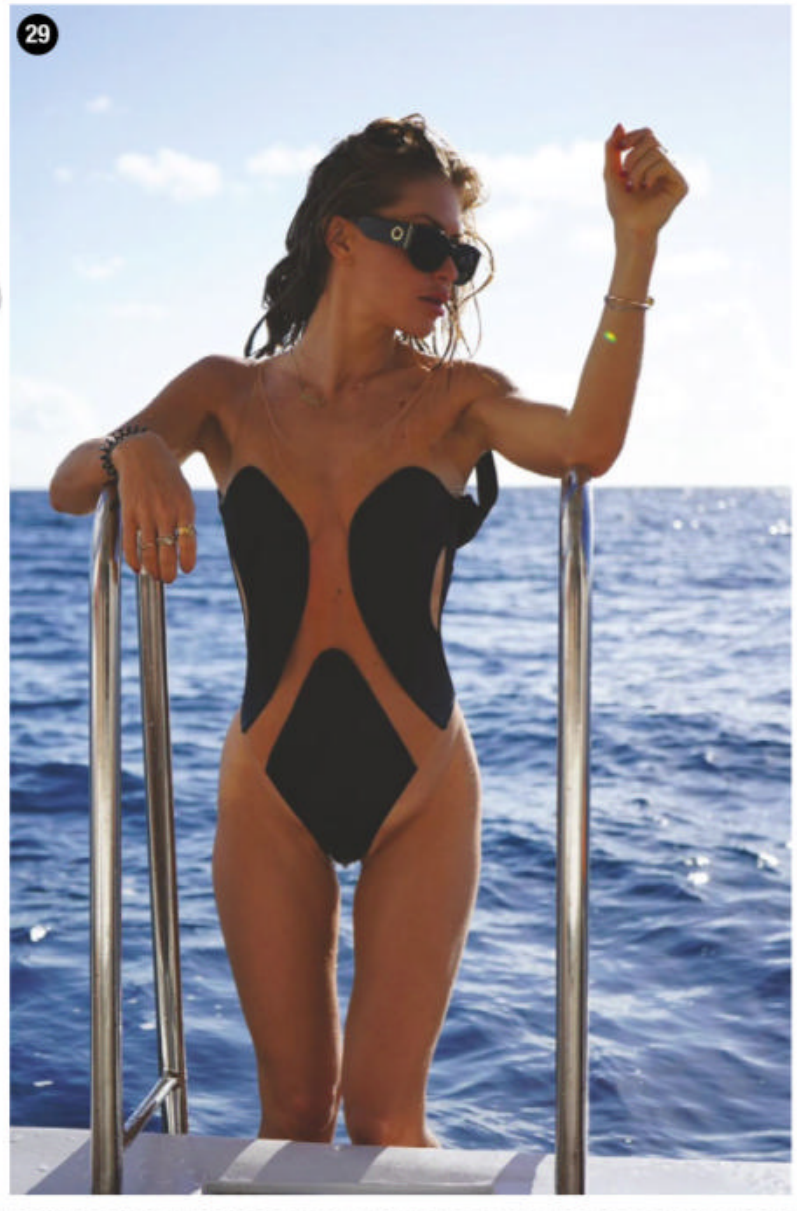


27. Yonder's mantra is simple. Like having a dog, your dog gear should make you feel something. You use it every day, it lives in your house and, most importantly, it plays a part in bonding you to your dog – Yonder brings you Feel Good Dog Gear™. Get your feels at **yonder.dog** and **@yonder.dog**

28. Magari Empire is more than jewelry. It's a mindset of self- motivation and awareness of self-worth. They believe success lies within all of us. MAGARI EMPIRE is a luxury lifestyle made accessible for all. Every release is designed with one focus in mind: Reclaim Luxury, Redefine Quality! Visit **magariempire.com** and follow on IG: **@magariempire**



29. Go behind the scenes of **Botanical Beach Babes** Billionaire Swimwear collection shot on location in Saint Barthélemy featuring award-winning lifestyle and fashion blogger superstar Maja Malnar. The Slovenian stunner is seen wearing their best selling Sqorpios Elements One Piece made from ECONYL® regenerated nylon. Visit **botanicalbeachbabes.com** and follow **@botanicalbeachbabes** on IG.



30. Julio Cuellar Jewelry offer beautiful one of a kind pieces, using exquisite stones to catch the eye. With each piece being totally unique, they offer custom jewellery including wedding bands, engagement rings and gold chains. Visit **juliocuellarjewelry.com** and follow on IG: **@juliocuellarjewelry** to find out more.

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Be Mine Continued





















31. Bèl Flame Candles offers beautiful collection of candles that unravel the complexity of natural scents, adding a touch of zen to our every day lives. Inspired by the Haitian Revolution, the 1804 candle will help make you feel calm, relaxed and set the mood for an evening of pure bliss. Candles are a vibe enhancer so treat yourself. Visit **belflame.com** or **@belflame_** on IG.

32. Setery's laid-back luxury pieces are the perfect choice for cozy times. Crafted from vegan and natural materials, responsibly manufactured towards people, animals & nature. The slow fashion label from Munich offers an effortless yet chic wardrobe. Discover their sophisticated designs and find your perfect conscious luxury gift. Visit **setery.com** or IG: **@seteryclothing**

33. L'MOMO is a luxury fashion brand that exemplifies bold, modern ideals. They pride themselves on attention to shape and form to dress you in clothes that offer enduring style and wearability. Each piece is made with visionary taste in mind, thrilling the senses and inviting you to explore. Visit **lmomo.ca** and follow on IG: **@lmomofficial**

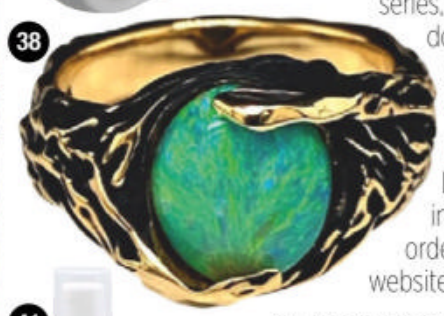


34. Quantum, the hand-crafted Made in Italy brand: The Infinitive Bridge collection is inspired by the Sicilian Andromeda Theatre, which emphasises two different but near realities. Visit the shop here: **quantumbrand.it** and follow them on IG: **@quantum_dress**

35. Simon Wright offers a complete bespoke service, making your jewellery in platinum and gold using the finest diamonds and gemstones. An appointment involves viewing stones, a short tour of the workshop, and a sit down design session all in his Clerkenwell studio workshop. By appointment only. Visit **sw-jewellery.com** or follow on IG **@sw_jewellery**

36. Give the gift of youth and radiance with **ESPÉRER SKIN CARE** s Anti-aging night repair serum. A blend of Rose and Argan, full of vitamins and antioxidants that delay the appearance of ageing and wrinkles for smoother feeling, younger looking skin. Cruelty free and ethical beauty starts with ESPÉRER. Visit **espererskincare.com** and IG **@espererskincare**

37. Inspired by the beauty of colour, Jamaican-born designer **JAG**, debuts her handbag collection series, DAK|TARI. Swahili for "doctor", DAK|TARI embodies the spirit of the classic doctor bag reimagined with fresh, new vibrant hues and textures. Each bag is unique, hand-finished and made to order. Visit **bananalily.com** and follow **@shopbananalily** on IG.



38. EARTHFIRE is owned and operated by jewellery designer and opal cutter Luke Eliasz in picturesque Hobart, Tasmania. He specialises in organic nature inspired-designs, all of which are bespoke one-off pieces. Welcoming custom orders, you can contact Luke through his IG **@earthfire_australia** or his website **earthfire.com.au**



39. KyRe Laine Collection is a luxury brand founded by Jennifer McNeil in 2014. Specialising in bridal, prom and special occasion gowns. Featured model Nia Dorsey is wearing the "Ivy" gown from her collection. Photographer: Austin Ivy; Makeup Artist: Resethia McMahon; Wardrobe Stylist: Michelle Toney. Visit **kyrelainecollection.com** and follow on IG **@kyrelainecollection**

40. Introducing the new sophisticated evening bags from **ELK Design Studios.** Born in California, The Clutch bag comes in a range of finishes that is guaranteed to turn heads from Mayfair to Malibu. Crafted from the finest sustainable hardwoods and trimmed in rich top grain leather, The Clutch brings an alluring glamour to her style – The perfect gift for Valentines! Use code 'GQUK2021' for an exclusive 15% off (expires 01/04/21) at **elkdesigntudios.co.uk** Follow **@elkdesignstudios** on IG.



41. BODIED Skincare Club is dedicated to providing a luxury plant-based skin care option tough enough to keep up with active lifestyles and athletes. Their products aim to purify, soothe, hydrate, and brighten skin naturally. To shop BODIED Skincare Club's luxury products visit **bodiedskincare.club**



42. Give her the best sleep of her life in luxuriously soft organic cotton bedding from **HauteCoton.** Wake up together feeling well rested with the world's best sleep products. Special offer for GQ readers only! Receive 15% off with complimentary custom holiday packaging. Visit **hautecoton.com** with code GQ15 at checkout (expires 04/02/21).

43. Terra Tonics Elemental Cleanser is a lightweight, undiluted powder to foam cleanser. Delivering only potent active ingredients. This unique blend of organic adaptogens, botanicals and minerals nourishes the skin with moisture whilst helping to maintain your PH balance. Leaving skin looking and feeling fresh and smooth. Visit **terratonics.com.au** or IG: **@terratonics**





44. RaluFineArt offers a collection of unique luxury scarves' designs, all limited editions. The founder and designer Malina Catoiu replicates designs from her original photos by translating the essence of nature and urban impressions into these delightful, bright and memorable fashion accessories. She believes in the timeless beauty of nature that puts her own designs in a different perspective, making them the ideal gift. Discover her collection at **ralufineart.com** follow on IG: **@ralufineart** on IG. Model: @valentinaoprea94

45. Pupnaps are designers and creators of a best-selling calming pet bed. Comfort and providing a sense of security are the main features of their beds. The ultra-comfortable faux fur provides the foundations of what is an incredible bed that helps to reset your pets nervous systems, allowing them to relax faster and for longer. Visit **pupnaps.co.uk** and follow on IG **@pupnapsofficial** to find out more.

46. HOUSE OF WASEE, was founded under the creative direction of Pakistani fine artist, Farah Wasi Ghatala. The L.A. brand creates wearable pieces of art inspired by different cultures and the history of the world. Each piece intends to tell a story about humanity. Visit **waseejewels.com** and follow **@houseofwasee** on IG.



47. LaMarriia's St. Almond Lait Bar is formulated with authentic strawberry-almond milk and vitamin A. Almond Lait Bar packs handmade coconut-almond milk and vitamin E. Along with their natural ingredients, Lait Bars contain beneficial and moisturising properties, leaving skin feeling hydrated for 12+ hours. Shop fragrance-free and scented collection at **lamarriia.com**

48. Lebarde7 Face Cream by **Lebarde.** This Unique Face Cream contains nectar of 3 gold medal winning bees and endemic plants from the Alp mountains of ancient Colchis, Georgia. It contains 7 unique products produced by Gold Bees. The cream is 100% natural, containing unique ingredients, Free from artificial chemicals and preservatives. Rich in vitamins, amino acids, minerals, and antioxidants. Suitable for all skin types and can be used as a day and night cream. Helps to reduce the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles. Visit **lebarde.co.uk** for more.





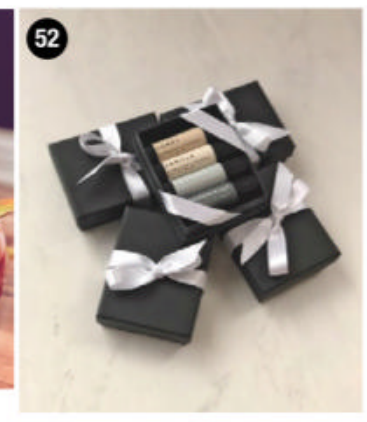
49. Latham & Neve – known for their stunning contemporary hand-made British jewellery since 1997. Featured is the unique Ripple Bangle in beaten silver and 18ct gold. Ballroom bangles, everyday earrings, ravishing rings and much much more... Buy online/stockists/brochure, visit **lathamandneve.co.uk** or call **01580 753399**.



50. Silverlesque is the home of stunning sterling silver jewellery. Their collection encapsulates both elegance and style. If you are looking for beautiful sterling silver jewellery gifts, then be sure to check this brand out. Showcased here are the Silverlesque Fougère Earrings. Discover more at **silverlesque.com** or follow on IG: **@silverlesque.com**



51. One Eleven Candles is a hand-poured soy crystal candle company. All candles are made with crystals, oils and positive intentions. Soul Enchanted features rose quartz crystals, which promotes unconditional love. Use this crystal to attract love and heal the heart chakra. Visit **oneelevencandles.com** for more.



52. Buttery, smooth and indulgent. London based **Jacqueline Organic** is on a mission to provide clean lip care without compromising on luxury. Formulated with fair trade cocoa butter and heavy-duty moisturisers, these lip balms will leave your lips feeling hydrated and protected all year round. A staple item in everyone's beauty regime. Visit **jacquelineorganic.com** and follow on IG: **@jacqueline.organic**

What's Your Tipple



1. Rockstar Spirits super premium spiced rums made with single distillery spirit. The Grenade series is three super smooth 65% abv rums with a blast of fruit flavours. Two Swallows is three rums created in honour of Captain Webb – a true Victorian hero and proudly part of their family history. Their latest release is the 57% Banana Bomb. All the Rockstar Spirits are incredibly versatile and great with coke, lemonade and ginger. Visit **rockstarspirits.co.uk** for more. All available on Amazon Prime.



2. Lowick Vineyard offer a beautiful selection of award-winning English wines, all harvested, pressed and bottled in the UK. From crisp, refreshing whites, smooth and warming reds to bright, fruity rosés and delicious fizz, each bottle promises to bring Lowick's signature sensory richness to any lifestyle. **lowickvineyard.com**



3. UNLTD. is an award winning alcohol free craft beer with all the flavour of full strength beer. Drinking clean shouldn't be boring. That's why UNLTD. have created a delicious alcohol free, low calorie and vegan friendly beer. Empowering beer lovers to make a positive change and enjoy a healthier lifestyle without the limitations of a hangover. Use 'GQ10' for 10% off at **UNLTD.beer** (expires 01/04/21).

4. Thameside Rum Company launched late in 2019 and are aiming to bring authentic Navy style rum back to the UK. They produce small batch rums inspired by the English style Caribbean rums that were imported, blended and stored in the dockyards along the Thames dating back to the 18th Century. Use code GQ15 at **thamesiderum.com** for 15% off (expires 01/04/21).



5. Love craft beer? **People's Captain** brings you a selection of fresh, delicious beers to your door to help you through another lockdown. To get you started, they have an exclusive GQ reader 10% off your first order 'GQXPC10' (expires 01/04/21). Better still, join their subscription club from £31.50/month for 12 beers and other goodies! Visit **peoplescaptain.co.uk**



6. Isle of Arran. If you are looking for the perfect versatile Single Malt to enjoy at home, we recommend that you try the Arran Sherry Cask Single Malt. This is a rich, fruity cask strength Single Malt with luxurious sweet spicy notes, complimented by a touch of cherry and hazelnut. It is absolutely delicious on its own or with a little splash of water to open up the aromas. The beautiful Isle of Arran is your next whisky destination with two stunning distilleries to visit – Lochranza in the north and Lagg in the south. Visit **arranwhisky.com** to read all about this forward thinking distiller and make a plan to visit them. In the meantime, the full range of Arran Single Malts are available from specialist whisky shops and from **arranwhisky.com** Search Arran Single Malt online for your nearest retailer or delivery service.



7. Mainbrace is a craft premium golden rum. It is a unique blend of unaged agricole from La Favourite Distillerie and 2-5 year old rums from 3 different stills in Guyana. As a smooth drink with no additional sweeteners or colourings added to the blend, Mainbrace has received rave reviews and multiple global awards. Available from **mainbracerum.com** and **thewhiskeyexchange.com** for £33.95.



8. Emerald Gin is an exceptionally smooth tasting gin, boasting strong citrus flavours, soft floral notes and fierce spice. The result is a perfectly balanced and fantastically dry tasting gin. Created by brothers-in-law Gareth and Scott, each bottle is carefully crafted in their hand-built garden shed distillery. Launched in December 2020, an exciting and refreshing new gin. Follow their journey on IG **@emerald_gin_ltd** and visit **emeraldgin.com**



9. The latest creation from the masters of cocktails at **Tom Savano** is a luxuriant blend of authentic New York rye whiskey from the early 1900s, blended with a Kentucky bourbon and a hint of Islay peat. Tasting notes of dark cherry, smoke, golden maple and sumptuous Italian herbs. Visit **tomsavano.com**



10. The Baijiu Society has brought a modern range of Baijiu, the world's oldest spirit and China's national drink to a new audience. Against an ever more crowded gin market, Baijiu Society sets a taste challenge to any gin drinker to experience its greater complexity, aroma and delicious floral, fruity flavour to make their signature pour... the B&T. With a range of natural infusions they have created an unrivalled range for cocktail enthusiasts and mixologists which sit alongside their infused beers. The perfect place to develop a taste for the remarkable spirit. Visit **baijiusociety.com**



11. Nusa Cana Spiced Rum. Bringing back the forgotten story of Indonesian rum. With its rugged Indonesian heart and straight up attitude Nusa Cana Spiced Rum is rich in pineapple, ginger, cacao, coffee and the warmth of tropical island spices. Made to share with friends: mix with ginger ale or cola over ice, add a spiced twist to your daiquiri or mojito, or serve in a tropical spiced rum punch. Visit **nusacana.com** IG **@nusacana**



12. Yorkshire Explorer. Distilled in Yorkshire, Explorers Rum is made with Sugar Kelp grown on the Yorkshire coast. Sugar Kelp is combined with the sweetness of vanilla, locally foraged heather and honey, and the rich warmth of clove and ginger to create the Explorer's unique salted caramel flavour profile. Visit **theyorkshireexplorer.co.uk**

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The Next Big Thing











1. Löv Air Purifier. As we are staying indoor more nowadays, fresh air might be the most wanted present this year. This Scandinavian-inspired air purifier is slim enough (8cm) to be easily attached to a wall or propped up wherever convenient. Löv ("leaf" in Swedish) can be the perfect small-space solution. Visit **komma.kr** or follow **@komma.official** on IG to find out more.

2. The Chicago-born brothers who founded **Tensho** have leveraged a lifetime of combat sports experience into crafting the only boxing gloves worth wearing. Tensho's obsession with both a modern aesthetic and the perfect fit has elevated the standard of what a fighter should wear in the ring. The Origin Series gloves are an essential for both casual and hardcore boxers. Visit **tenshogear.com** or follow on IG: **@tenshogear**

3. Ram Canyon. Designed and tested in the demanding climate of the Canadian rocky mountains, this sleek and innovative roll-top pouch is perfect for carrying your everyday items. Follow them on IG: **@ramcanyon** or purchase at **ramcanyon.com**

4. Hajk is a Swedish contemporary outdoor brand for men rooted in the idea that the outdoors is about enjoying the now. They design clothing to perfectly complement an outdoor lifestyle; carefully balancing fashion, performance and sustainability. Hajk create aesthetic and functional pieces to accompany a day-to-day wardrobe, designed with care for the planet and a better tomorrow. Visit **hajkclothing.com** and follow on IG: **@hajkclothing**







5. Ice, Ice, baby! Have your surroundings smelling cool, crisp and fresh for hours with the latest product release from **Car Cologne**. A few small bursts of Dry Mist will not only help eliminate the smell of odours, but sanitise your environment providing long-lasting fragrance whilst leaving you feeling protected. Suitable for cars, home, office, clothing, footwear and more! Available in a variety of scents with free U.K. delivery on all orders. Shop the collection at **CarCologne.com**

6. Take your workouts to the next level with the Chopper by **ChopFit**. Available in both Standard and Pro versions, the Chopper is an incredibly versatile fitness tool that comes with a suite of unique workouts. Reap the benefits of full-body strength and conditioning circuits at home or on-the-go, all available on the ChopFit app. Visit **chopfit.com** and follow **@chopfit** on IG.







7. For the coolest foldable electric bikes on the planet, look no further than **MATE.BIKE**. Founded in Denmark, on the principle of revolutionising urban mobility without compromising style, these bikes will let you cycle for longer with ease. Join MATE.BIKE's increasing number of celeb fans from as little as £1499. Visit **matebike.uk** and follow **@matebike.uk**

8. FIKA, CBD designed for the everyday. A premium brand based in the UK with the sole focus of bringing the best possible products to market whilst pioneering the destigmatisation of the plant itself. With Swedish origin and ideology for success and mental health, FIKA believe it is vital to take time to appreciate the important things in life, everyday! They desire to create high quality, trustworthy CBD for their customers with unrivalled attention to detail throughout the process, from seed to shelf within the UK. Visit **fikacbd.co.uk** and follow **@fika_cbd** on IG.

9. Brutal Buddha is a men's premium activewear company co-founded by two guys on a mission to help active men seeking balance live longer, healthier lives. This mission is the brand's North Star and guides every decision they make. Brutal Buddha has built the world's most comfortable 3-in-1 activewear shorts with support in all the right places for the male parts. Your practice will never be the same. Join the Brutal Buddha Community at **brutalbuddhagear.com** and follow along on IG **@brutal_buddha #NamasteBrutal**

10. Sapphire glass and a machine-ground bezel are the first clues that the ZERO is no ordinary pen. Handmade by **Montegrappa**, heavy bronze hardware offers responsive handle and horological swagger. Combine hard-wearing PVD finishes with a wide range of colours using the Italian maker's custom design tool. Configure your own at **montegrappa.com**





11. Introducing the revolutionary Erae Touch by **Embodme.** With a colourful and powerful LED panel, the Polyphonic MIDI controller brings an immersive audiovisual experience to even the most demanding producers and musicians. Experiment, compose and perform with the ultimate instrument tool that bridges the gap between electronic music and human expression. Discover a whole new way of creating at **embodme.com** and pre-order the Erae Touch now.



12. The MuscleGun Carbon is a revolutionary handheld deep tissue massage device that targets areas of the body with strong pulses of pressure to quickly alleviate muscle tension, tightness and pain. As part of their January Sale offering, they are offering £30 off and are also including their Organic Recovery Massage Oil (worth £30) Free of charge with every order. Visit **muscleguns.co.uk** and follow on IG: **@musclegunuk**



13. NOVUS is the world's first luxury, lightweight electric motorcycle. The handmade bike with its revolutionary, super lightweight, full carbon fiber monocoque frame is designed in Germany. Weight: 75kg, power: 24hp, speed 120km/h. The production is limited to 1500 pieces and reservations can be done under **novusbike.com**



14. Dirty kit. The foldable antibacterial inner bag to separate dirty from clean. The everyday essential for anyone active and on the move: perfect for sweaty kit, dirty laundry, and muddy footwear. A large portion of gym bags contain E. Coli and other harmful bacteria. Utilising silver ion technology, dirty kit prevents bacteria from spreading and the secure zip closure locks in odour. They also help the environment too; the reusable bags are made from recycled fibers and designed to replace plastic bags. Check out their pocket-sized antibacterial pouches too. Visit **dirtykit.com** and follow **@dirtykit** on IG.



15. Beyond Blend's sleek and stylish portable blender makes blending your favourite smoothie on the go super simple and easy. Whizz up a protein shake on the way to the gym, iced coffee at your work desk, or maybe a quick juice in the car. Available in minimal black or naked beige. Explore at **beyondblend.com** and IG **@beyondblend** Use the code "beyondGQ" to get 15% off your first buy (expires 01/04/21).

16. Good Organics Premium Toothpaste Tablets are the future. An innovative new way of brushing your teeth. Each ingredient is 100% naturally derived and hand-picked for its unique and effective qualities in complete oral care. Eliminate harsh toxins and chemicals from your daily routine today! Visit **goodorganicscompany.com** to purchase for more information **hello@goodorganicscompany.com**

The Grooming Edit

1. NO GUNK makes award winning all-natural grooming products for Funky Fellas! Their NEW Deodorant Balm in Citrus and Musk is 100% natural and leaves no residue on your hands after application. It's enriched with natural Shea Butter, Coconut Oil and Liquorice Extract. It will leave your underarms feeling hydrated and fresh all-day long. If you are yet to take the natural deodorant plunge, this is the one to try. Shop online at **nogunk.com** and get 10% off with the code GQFEB21 (expires 04/03/21).



2. Skin Beautiful Organics is a new modern brand of efficacious, luxury plant-based skincare made in the USA. The Gold Standard Serum is an elegant suspension of retinol combined with a synergistic blend of premium botanical extracts. This serum is high in Vitamin A, C, and E, sea minerals, amino acids, peptides, pigments and polyphenols. Visit **skinbeautifulorganics.com** and IG **@skinbeautifulorganics**



3. The men's skincare launch of the year! These new natural sheet masks for men from **Wolf Project** aim to help with the appearance of dark-circles, surface wrinkles and dry feeling skin. Apply, relax and repeat – your skin will thank you! Visit **wolfproject.co** or IG **@wolfproject.co**





4. British brand **Morgan's Pomade** was established in London in 1873 and produces high quality men's hair, beard and spa products. The extensive product range includes pomade, hair styling, shaving, beard, cologne, spa products and gift sets. Only the finest ingredients are sourced to produce luxury professional grooming products. See **morganspomade.co.uk** for the full range.



5. Stylish handmade HERRINGBONE GROOMING ROLL with a manicure set by **MANTIDY.** Includes six essential manicure tools contained in their signature-designed elasticated band. The roll is made of quality, vegetable-tanned cowhide leather. Use 17% discount code "GQP12" at **mantidy.co.uk** (valid until 04/02/21). Visit their shop to get free personalisation and gift wrapping at 11 Princes Arcade, Piccadilly, London SW1Y 6DS. Follow on IG **@themantidy**



6. The ultimate set for your beard care and travel needs. **BeardGang Members** is a leading UK brand specialising in Hemp based beard care for the facially blessed. The BGM Deluxe Set includes your choice of Hemp oil plus Mango Magic Hemp balm, Hemp Beard Wash, The Beard Comb XL and the BGM Wash Bag made from Vegan leather. Visit **beardgangmembers.com** and follow **@beardgangmembers** on IG.



7. Uppercut Deluxe Clay is a strong hold product with a natural finish that is easily reworked throughout the day and just as importantly, washed out at the end. Clay will tame hair short or long, adding texture and control to a diverse range of styles. Visit **uk.uppercutdeluxe.com** or IG **@uppercutdeluxe**



8. "On a mission to help 1 million men Face The Day." **Ra. Men's Care** is a breath of fresh air in the men's skincare market. Cutting through the gimmicks that have recently taken over men's skincare, Ra. rises above, offering men premium quality, vegan products that deliver a luxury experience at an affordable price. An essential part of any man's self-care regime. Learn more at **ra-skincare.com** or IG **@ra.menscare**



9. shi/dto men's skincare combines the latest in science and innovation. Their exclusive formulations are concentrated on cutting-edge active ingredients. Vegan and Cruelty-Free, Dermatest "Excellent." Use exclusive code GQUK21 for 10% off on any item (expires 21/03/21) at **shidto.com** and follow **@shidto_official** on IG.

10. Vitabiotics. Wellman Gummies provide comprehensive nutritional support for the man who wants it all. Each delicious, vegan, natural orange flavour gummy contains 22 nutrients to help maintain overall health and vitality, including Vitamins B6, B12 and copper which support normal energy release, as well as pantothenic acid, Siberian Ginseng and Co-enzyme Q10. Wellman Gummies are ideal for those who don't like swallowing tablets. Visit **vitabiotics.com**



11. Balance Male Grooming's RX1 Razor. The classic cut throat. Made with quality stainless steel, the positioning of the ridges inside has made the single edged razor fit seamlessly to enable a closer shave. The 2 way latch locks in the razor aiding the blade to glide on the skin effortlessly. Each stroke leaves the skin feeling smooth and hair-free. Complimentary 5 double-edged blades. Follow **@balance_mg** on IG and use code "GQ" at checkout (10%) expires 01/04/21. Visit **balanceproducts.co.uk**



12. Since 1854, **Taylor of Old Bond Street** have produced and sold the finest in Luxury Men's Grooming Products and accessories, creating a brand which is synonymous with British style and quality. Visit their store at 74 Jermyn Street, St James's, London, SW1Y 6NP, call **020 7930 5544** or visit them at **tayloroldbondst.co.uk**



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TRULY CONVERTED

Thinking of moving to the countryside? Some of the best homes are those that started out as something else completely, from schools to stately piles



HOPE HOUSE, WILTSHIRE
Set within six acres of parkland, this Georgian villa and former school has been transformed into a mixture of apartments and townhouses. Residents have access to landscaped communal gardens, complete with tennis courts, secure parking and a concierge service. From £795,000.
Acorn Property Group: 020 3858 0518

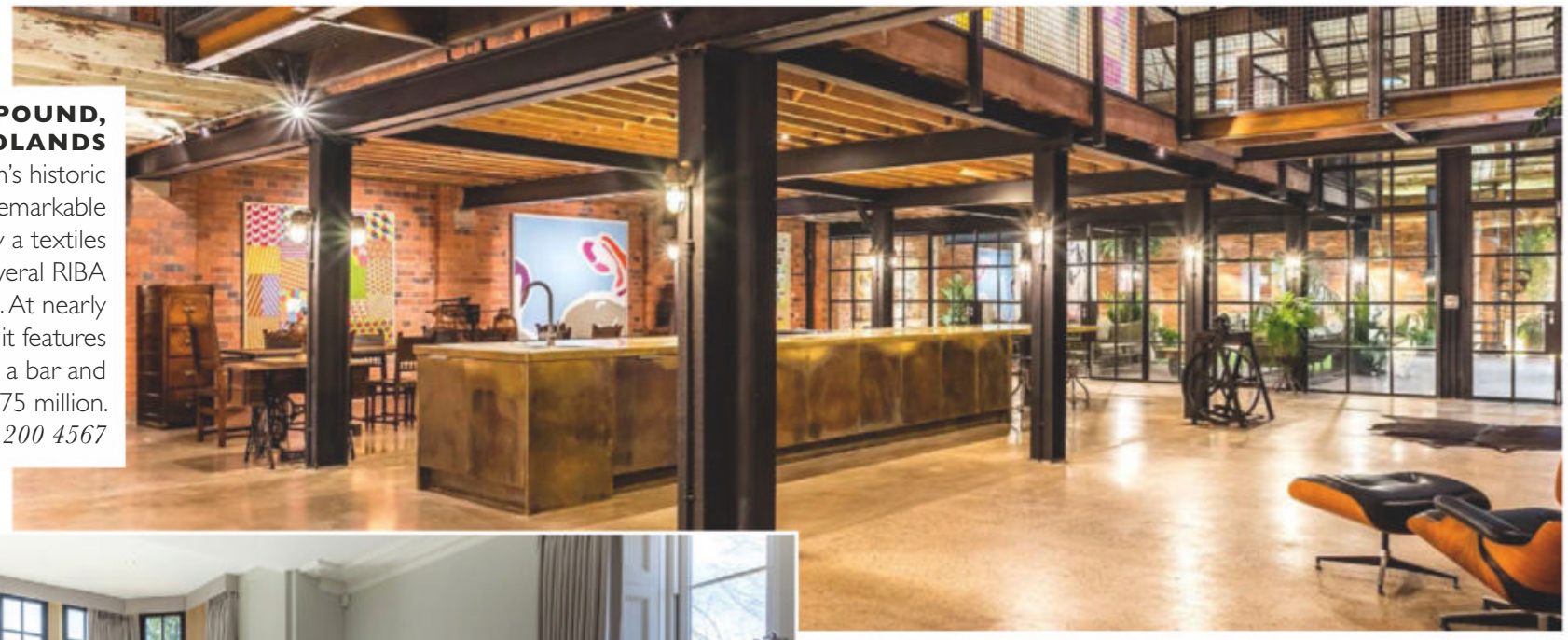
You can trace England's past through the many historic buildings that form part of its landscape, with former barns, outbuildings, churches and schools given a new lease of life as residential properties. If you're contemplating a move to a more rural way of life, then consider one of these characterful homes that come with their own unique story, such as Hope House, by Galliard and Acorn, in Bath.

This Georgian villa was originally built for Charles Hamilton, who made his fortune as the first man in Britain to successfully produce home-grown 'champagne' from his vineyards in Surrey. More recently, it was home to Bath High School, whose many former pupils include the cook and television presenter Mary Berry. The Grade II-listed property has now been converted and further developed into a collection of apartments and townhouses that make the most of the elevated site, with far-reaching views across the city of Bath and the Avon Valley.

'The rush to buy in the country doesn't seem to be on the wane,' says Jonathan Bramwell of The Buying Solution. 'Buyers want buckets of character and a story to tell – our international clients in particular love to feel like they're buying a slice of British history, perhaps a wing of a stately home or an apartment within one.'

With that in mind, you could consider Parklands Manor in Oxfordshire, a Victorian manor house surrounded by 23 acres of private parkland. Recently converted into a series of apartments, it brims with period charm and gives buyers the opportunity to live in a stately home without the hefty maintenance bills.

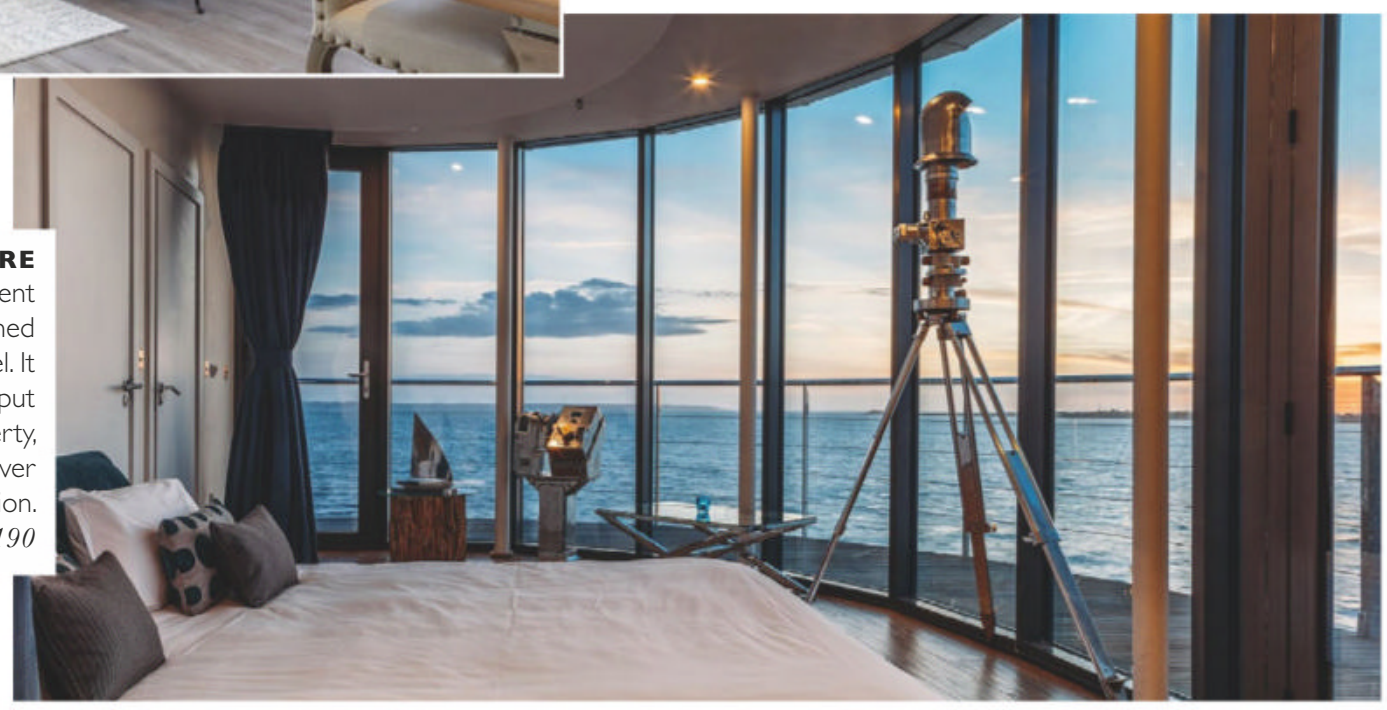
However, for those intrepid buyers looking for something truly unusual, how about a Napoleonic fort in the middle of the Solent? Whoever falls in love with this remarkable site will be monarch of their own little island.



THE COMPOUND, WEST MIDLANDS
In the heart of Birmingham's historic Jewellery Quarter, this remarkable property was formerly a textiles factory and has won several RIBA awards for its conversion. At nearly 9,000 square feet, it features expansive living spaces, a bar and a 25-seat cinema. £2.75 million.
Savills: 0121 200 4567



PARKLANDS MANOR, OXFORDSHIRE
Built as a private residence, this Victorian property was used as a school before being converted into apartments, with additional new buildings providing a range of traditionally inspired homes. It occupies a prime rural spot just 10 minutes from the centre of Oxford and an hour from London. Apartments from £300,000.
Savills: 01865 704044



SPITBANK FORT, HAMPSHIRE
This historic fort in the middle of the Solent near Portsmouth was extensively refurbished in 2012 and used as a boutique hotel. It now offers an opportunity for a buyer to put their own stamp on this unusual property, which spans 33,000 square feet over three floors. £4 million.
Strutt & Parker: 020 7318 5190



THE OLD CHAPEL, NORTH YORKSHIRE
Formerly a Methodist chapel, this property is situated in the small village of Westow. The space has been cleverly reconfigured into a four-bedroom home, with an open-plan, split-level living space and a garden room, as well as a separate studio flat. £700,000.
Carter Jonas: 01904 275096

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A PLACE IN THE SUN

Many of Europe's finest resorts offer the option to purchase private properties – here's why they're the perfect retreats for families of all ages



SOTOGRANDE, SPAIN
Situated in a gated residential community in the upmarket Sotogrande resort, Villa Dorado is a spacious property with eight bedrooms, indoor and outdoor pools, a gym and a spa. It occupies a private setting, with views across both the sea and golf course. POA.
La Reserva Club: 00 34 856 560 922

For those searching for a European bolt-hole post-Brexit, investing in a property that's part of a luxury resort might be the perfect solution. Not only can you make the most of shared amenities such as swimming pools, golf courses and private beach access, but there's none of the hassle and maintenance that comes with owning a second home – you can simply show up and relax, which will certainly appeal to busy families.

'There are a number of European resorts and developments that have been designed with families in mind,' says Rod Taylor of Savills. 'The established resorts, such as Quinta do Lago and Sotogrande, are permanently on buyers' wish lists as they offer such a wide range of amenities with something for everyone, whether it's kids' clubs, golf, polo or family-friendly dining.'

One of the top resorts in the Algarve, Quinta do Lago is known for its world-class golf course, and residents also have access to a wealth of facilities, including no fewer than 12 restaurants offering a wide range of dining options. It's particularly suited to families who enjoy an active lifestyle – aside from golf, it offers everything from water-sports to a state-of-the-art sports hub used by elite athletes. The villas themselves are substantially proportioned – currently for sale is a five-bedroom property with a heated swimming pool and a putting green.

Meanwhile, Sotogrande in Spain's Andalusia region has been attracting the smart set ever since it was first established in the 1960s. It has its own residential haven, La Reserva, which is home to some of the finest residences in Europe, with owners having access to a private beach, golf and restaurants. For families seeking to settle down on a more permanent basis, there's the attraction of having one of Spain's best international schools close by. With many activities on offer, a great sense of community and access to so much open space, any children who live in the grounds of Sotogrande can count themselves very lucky indeed.



QUINTA DO LAGO, PORTUGAL

Occupying an elevated yet private position within the resort, this spacious villa has been recently refurbished, with five bedrooms including a spectacular master bedroom suite that has views to the sea. There's also plenty of outside space, with multiple terraces and well-maintained gardens. €5.5 million.

Quinta do Lago Real Estate: 00 351 289 392 754



KILADA COUNTRY CLUB, GREECE

Named after the local fishing village of Kilada, this extensive development will include a championship golf course, a beach club and private residences in the Peloponnese region of Greece. At the heart of the development will be a country club where residents can make use of a gym, spa, bars and restaurants. POA.

Kilada: 00 30 21 0361 4255

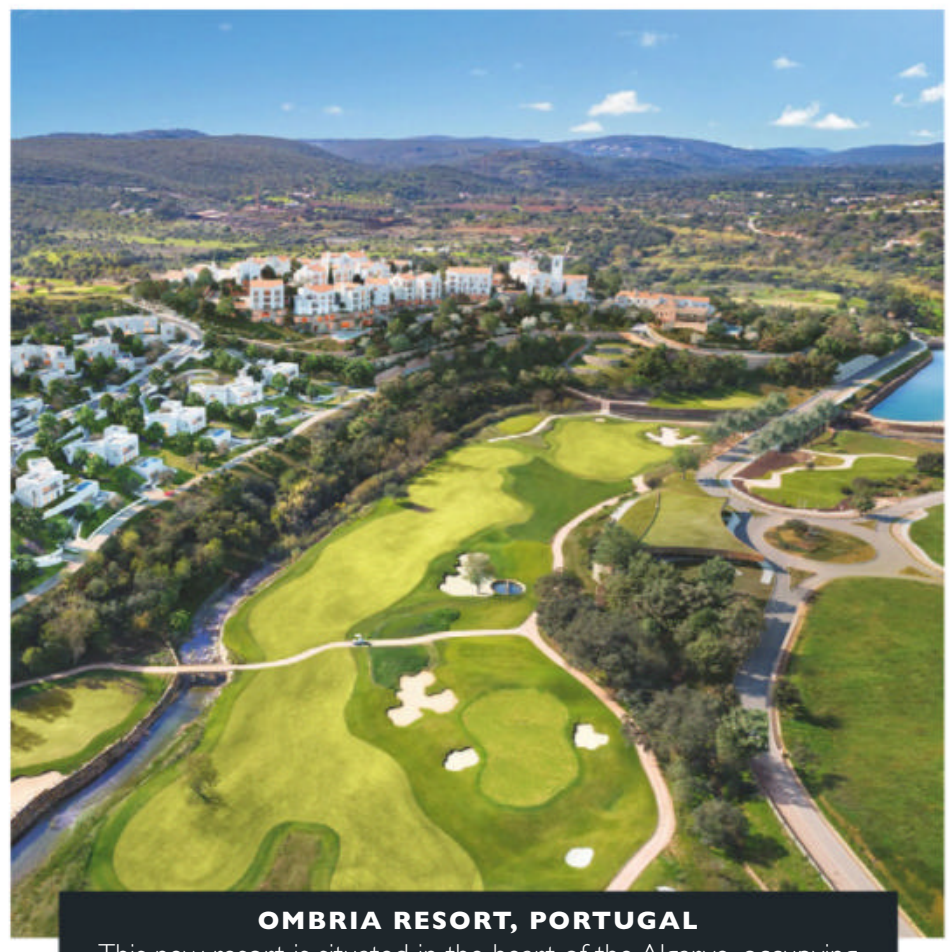


TERRE BLANCHE, FRANCE

This substantial eight-bedroom villa on the French Riviera has separate guest accommodation and is surrounded by beautiful countryside. Within the resort are two world-class golf courses as well as a Michelin-starred restaurant. €10.95 million.

Savills: 00 33 493 874 115





OMBRIA RESORT, PORTUGAL

This new resort is situated in the heart of the Algarve, occupying 150 acres of rolling countryside. As well as a golf course, spa, restaurants and bars, there will be an organic farm and an observatory for star-gazing. The properties will be a mix of apartments and villas. From €368,050.

Sphere Estates: 020 3617 1360

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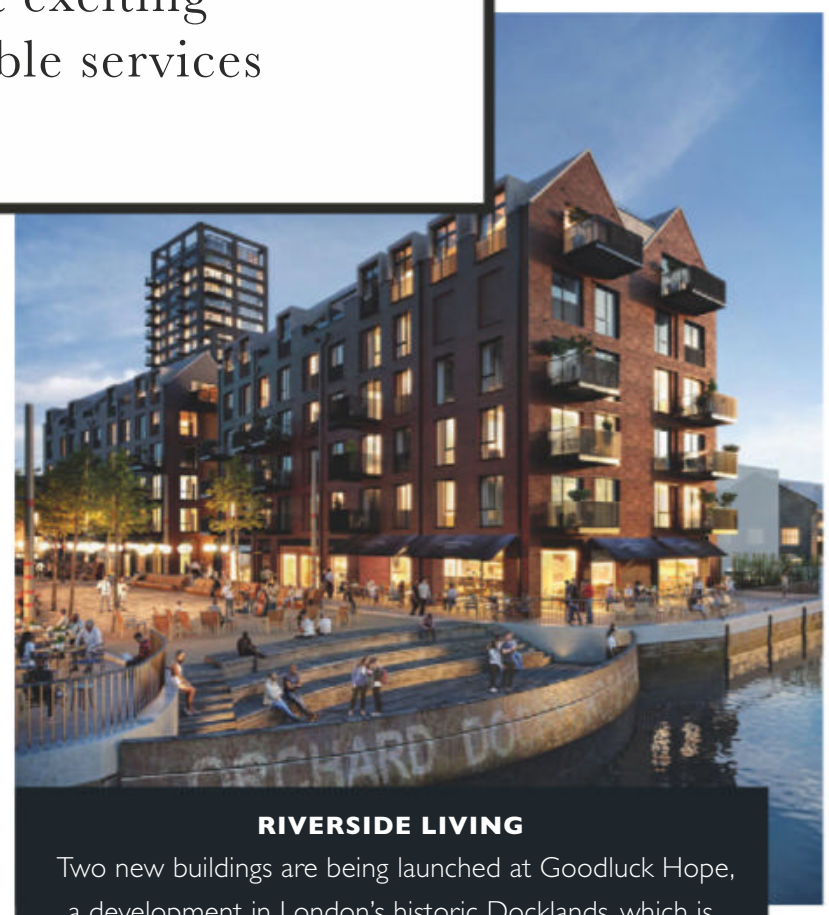
A round-up of the latest exciting developments and invaluable services



GOOD NEIGHBOURS

Few addresses have as much of a royal connection as No. 1 Palace Street – a former hotel which once hosted Buckingham Palace visitors, and has now been transformed into a collection of apartments by the developers Northacre. Set opposite the monarch's London residence, it's perfectly positioned in the heart of the city, and blends heritage elements with contemporary design to create luxurious and spacious homes. The show apartments are now open for viewings through JLL.

For more information, visit www.jll.co.uk/no1palacestreet



RIVERSIDE LIVING

Two new buildings are being launched at Goodluck Hope, a development in London's historic Docklands, which is being transformed into a vibrant residential, commercial and cultural community, with institutions such as the English National Ballet moving to the area. The new buildings – named Castalia and Estrella – provide 61 apartments with views across the water and a design inspired by the area's industrial past. Both are scheduled for completion in 2022. Apartments from £430,000.

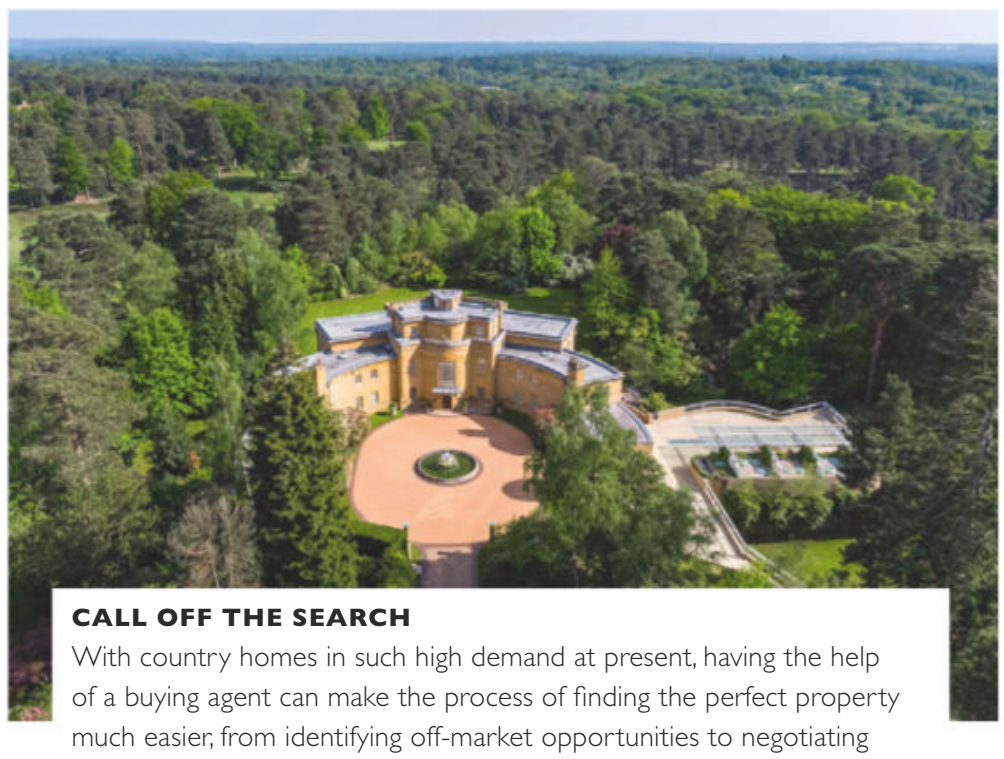
For more information, visit www.goodluckhope.com

GREATNESS OUTDOORS

With people spending more time in their gardens than ever before, there's never been so much emphasis on outdoor space. Whether you're selling your property or planning to stay put, a refresh of your garden will be a worthwhile investment. For 16 years, Outer Space Garden Design has transformed plots across London and the South East, from small urban courtyards and roof terraces to full-scale rural landscaping. From the initial consultation through to completion, the company can oversee all aspects of the process, making it as easy and enjoyable as possible.

For more information, visit www.outerspace-gardendesign.co.uk





CALL OFF THE SEARCH

With country homes in such high demand at present, having the help of a buying agent can make the process of finding the perfect property much easier, from identifying off-market opportunities to negotiating the best possible price. Having spent 30 years buying and selling across Surrey, Richard Winter has left Savills to set up his own property acquisition firm. With his network of contacts spanning Surrey and West Sussex, he's well placed to help those trying to find their ideal country house within striking distance of London.

For more information, visit www.richard-winter.com

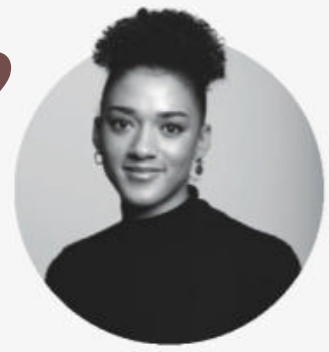
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The highs, the lows and the hustle with... **The UK's 'prince of garage', Conducta**

December 7 2019 was not supposed to be a good night. I'll hold my hands up and admit I was in a bad mood. An argument with my boyfriend had soured the tone as we made our way to Mick's Garage in London's Hackney Wick for the final date of Kiwi Klub, DJ and producer Conducta's tour of his rapidly growing UK garage label, Kiwi Rekords. The weather was cold, the queues were long and, worst of all, I had nothing to wear. My sulk cemented itself when a group of boys tried to deflect from the fact they were jumping the line for the toilets by complimenting my entirely unremarkable outfit. "Let's just go home," I said to my boyfriend as I emerged from the bathroom an hour later. But then a DJ saved my life. Yes, life. I was clearly being a drama queen that night.

Conducta doubles over laughing in the cosy booth we've snagged in Uli, in London's Notting Hill, as I relay this story to him. I'd like to say this is because of my expert comedic delivery, but he laughs a lot throughout the duration of our conversation, no matter what the topic is or how he feels about it. His instantly recognisable smile disappears so infrequently that I begin to wonder if that's simply how his face is built, like a reverse resting bitch face. In reality, it seems that the UK's reigning "prince of garage" is generally an extremely cheerful person. "I'm so glad you enjoyed it, because I had such a stressful night," he says of the Mick's Garage gig, tucking into a plate of pork dumplings. While I was practising my purposeful bitch face in the toilets, Conducta was worrying about the kind of things you'd only notice if you were in charge of an audience's Saturday night, such as the venue's layout and lack of intimacy. (Oh, if only we'd known how lucky we were...)

'I wanted to give garage a new context. That allows listeners to discover more of the genre'

Still, there were reasons to celebrate. Over the course of the tour, Kiwi Klub had been selling out venues across the country with a label that, at the time, was less than a year old. It was also Conducta's penultimate gig of a monumental year. His mission to create a fresh, buzzing UK garage scene, which he felt was lacking when he was rising through the ranks, was beginning to work through Kiwi Rekords, so too were his efforts to disassociate the genre with nostalgia through a groovier, more accessible sound. "What I've wanted to do is give garage a new context," he explains, talking through how he purposefully chooses artists people might not expect to hear on a garage track when remixing. "Then that allows new listeners who enjoy digging into music to get in their bag and discover and enjoy more of the genre."



Producer and Kiwi Rekords founder Conducta

Conducta's sound had also begun to go global, so much so that he'd been able to tour Asia and Australia. "The reaction to UK garage in Tokyo was crazy. I haven't seen anything like that, even here," he says in disbelief. "When I get sent demos from upcoming producers, I have people send me stuff from as far as Argentina and Colombia."

But, most importantly, 2019 will go down in the history books as the year Conducta scored his first top-three record as a producer, AJ Tracy's "Ladbroke Grove". Having claimed double-platinum status last year, it's now the bestselling UK garage track ever. Sorry, Daniel Bedingfield. We've still "gotta get thru this", but Conducta's soundtracking the struggle now.

Before "Ladbroke Grove" dropped, the weight of being an upcoming producer at the helm of an upcoming record label were becoming too much. Then also signed to a major label, pressure to produce more mainstream music – paired with a party lifestyle and a strained relationship with parents who disapproved of his career choices – took Conducta to a rooftop three hours before his first Klub Kiwi show to contemplate suicide. His father called just in time. "It was like telepathy, the way he knew," he says. From that point on, he started taking his health more seriously, getting fit, cutting back on DJing's hedonistic trimmings, going to therapy and focusing on his plans for Kiwi Rekords.

"It took a lot to mentally drag myself out of that place," he admits. The major label didn't help: "They actually said to me, 'Oh, everyone goes through it, but do you want to be happy and have a swimming pool, a big car and all of that?' The situation was taking a massive toll on my mental health and that was the response." Although now shrunk in size, Conducta's smile is still constant. "I feel like it would have been irresponsible for me to do any interview and not reference what happened, because mental health should be talked about."

How is Conducta feeling now that he's working from home, with club venues currently closed indefinitely, in turn postponing his planned tours? "I'm in a privileged position in that I've already been able to establish myself. If this had happened two or three years ago, I'd be screwed," he says. "Now it's about giving back." Over lockdown, he launched a competition for budding garage artists to get their foot in the door, the prize being a remix released on Kiwi Rekords and inclusion in the next Kiwi Klub line-up. That's nice and all, but from a selfish, personal perspective, I need to know when he thinks the next Kiwi Klub night will take place. He sighs. "When I've been googling previous plagues, [I've read that] they usually last about two or three years." Damn. What about a socially distanced, sit-down show or a sneaky, underground rave? Surely he must be tempted? "Until it's safe, I wouldn't feel right doing that." Double damn. I guess I'll see him in 2023. **GQ**

Illustration **Derren Toussaint**

+ The rise of Conducta *From bedroom DJ to double platinum-selling producer*

2006
Discovers garage music through mixtapes passed down from his godbrother.

2010
His first attempt at producing finds its way onto MistaJam's BBC Radio 1Xtra show.

2012
Moves to London and starts booking shows alongside UKG legends.

2019
Launches Kiwi Rekords and embarks on the first Klub Kiwi tour.

2020
"Ladbroke Grove" turns double platinum. His mum and dad are finally convinced.

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