

VOL 47 · NO 3 · 2017

TRAVELLER



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BELMOND IN PERU

A land of ancient civilisations and mist-shrouded Andean peaks, Peru is truly spectacular. And, what better way to explore its rich variety of landscapes and cultures than with Belmond, whose luxury travel collection ranges from country-spanning rail journeys to sophisticated lodges far off the beaten track.



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From Here to Eternity

I'm looking forward to seeing Bruce Parry's first film, *Tawai*. Parry became famous for his BBC documentaries, which saw him living with remote indigenous tribes and immersing himself in their rituals and ways of being with great gusto and guts too, enduring various painful rites.

He's our guest traveller in this issue, and it was a pleasure to interview him for a second time. We met the day after they'd finished editing this documentary film. I think he said it had taken them two years to edit it. Right now, I have much empathy for that, which suits, because empathy – between people, and people and the planet – is a big theme in *Tawai*.

The making of the film saw Bruce once again visiting remote communities, but this time the scope is bigger, and not just because this is big and not small screen stuff. Actually the scope – the destruction of the planet – couldn't be bigger, or more on the mind, with a hurricane still whipping away across the Atlantic right now.

Hurricanes are no respecters of borders. Birds don't know about them either, as mentioned in Justine Hardy's hard-hitting column for us, which looks at the people forced to flee over borders, or trapped within them, and what happens to their beliefs along the way.

Jonathan Lorie crosses a different sort of boundary altogether in Denmark, driving right into the past and back again, while Selina Siak Chin Yoke, whose story of recovery from both cancer and depression resulted in her book *When the Future Comes Too Soon*, blurs past and present beautifully as she travels in Malaysia.

Sunny Singh also goes back in time, to Patna, India, in sentences as tasty as the smoky street food she remembers. Her Patna, with its charcoal fires and bright colours, is a world away from the soft misty tones of Scotland's Patna, as different from each other as the Ganges from the River Doon – but with a shared history, transcending the notion of borders altogether in slightly surreal fashion. But it's not quite as surreal as the modernist art that Simon Urwin finds on the islands dotting the eastern



Amy Sohanpaul wonders, where are we now?



coast of Japan. In another unexpected blend, there's excellent olive oil produced here, rivalling Italy's finest.

Stromboli is also one of Italy's finest, with beaches of black sand, a volcano as smouldering as Sophia Loren and, despite being small, still style-setting and glamorous in that very Italian way. Francesco Lastrucci's fabulous photography makes it seem even more so.

Our other picture story couldn't be more of a contrast. All is neon and modern, simultaneously super-saturated bright and deeply dark in Neo Alonzo's photos of Seoul. Simon Langley finds the spaces in between, with words that take in the history, the hip and the happening beside and behind and above that city's straight streets.

The roads that take us through New Zealand and South Africa are more expansive and certainly more winding. In New Zealand, Clyde Macfarlane finds them almost empty, and the glorious bays that line the route almost deserted. In South Africa, Mark Eveleigh takes a dustier and a most delicious route from Durban to Cape Town, sampling local specialities and stories along the way.

Road trips like these feel so liberating, so heady, because they create a sense of being able to drive into the horizon forever. The whale seen by Freddie Reynolds off the coast of Oregon need never stop, looping between Mexico and Alaska each year. The heron on our cover that stars in Jonathan and Angie Scott's fable of the Maldives, has no boundaries either. At any time, it can simply take to the air and look down from the sky 'which is all men's together', as Euripides once said.

And from up there – well higher up really – the earth appears to be all men's together too. That's a view literally and mentally shared by almost all astronauts. It's something called the Overview Effect, described by the author and philosopher Frank White. For those who look down from space, he says, it seems obvious that 'the Earth is a whole system, everything on it is connected, and we're a part of it'.

The tribes that Bruce Parry met have always known this. Futuristic men have looked down from the moon and seen it. We are all in the middle of it.

TRAVELLER

Traveller is Britain's original magazine for intelligent travel. Since 1970 it has reported on the real experience of travelling the world, and many of today's leading explorers and adventurers are on the Editorial Board.

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Sir Hereward Wake BT MC DL is a baronet and retired major who has been involved in youth expeditions worldwide.

Every issue we seek out today's most distinguished and interesting travellers to contribute to the magazine

THE PEOPLE BEHIND OUR STORIES



BRUCE PARRY

makes environmental and tribal documentaries. His next film is *Tawai, A Voice from the Forest*, shot in Borneo and the Amazon.

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KATIE HICKMAN

is a bestselling novelist and travel writer, noted for her adventures with a Mexican circus. Her latest romance is *The House at Bishopsgate*.

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VALERIA NECCHIO

is an Italian photographer, author and blogger based in London and Venice. Her debut cookbook last summer was *Veneto*.

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NOE ALONZO

is a Texan photographer now based in South Korea. He says, 'My shooting is most active during the crepuscular hours.'

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JONATHAN LORIE

is a travel journalist and director of the Travellers' Tales training agency. Previously he was Editor of *Traveller* magazine.

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FRANCESCO LASTRUCCI

is a freelance Italian photographer, born in Florence and working worldwide for major magazines.

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CLYDE MACFARLANE

is a travel writer and music critic. His book of haiku poems on a travel theme, *Across New Zealand in 140 Hitches*, comes out in October.

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SELINA SIAK CHIN YOKE

is a Singaporean writer whose new novel, *When the Future Comes Too Soon*, is based on her grandmother's experiences in Malaya.

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JONATHAN SCOTT

is a wildlife photographer based in Kenya. His latest book, *Sacred Nature*, won the Independent Publishers Book Award for photography.

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SIMON URWIN

is a TV executive turned travel and portrait photographer. He has shot in over 75 countries, from Antarctica to Afghanistan.

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SUNNYSINGH

is a novelist, academic and founder of the Jhalak Prize. Her latest book is on Bollywood superstar Amitabh Bachchan.

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FRED CROWE

is our youngest contributor, aged 18 and studying Aeronautics and Astronautics at the University of Southampton.

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Heron in the Maldives (Jonathan and Angie Scott).

On these pages (clockwise from top left):
'Baikoko at the mouth of the Mwachema River' (Michael Armitage/White Cube), giraffes in Selous game park, Maldives lodge (Jonathan and Angie Scott), Maori ceremonial paddle, Stromboli island (Francesco Lastrucci).

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Walk in the wild

Far out among the *miombo* trees the big game

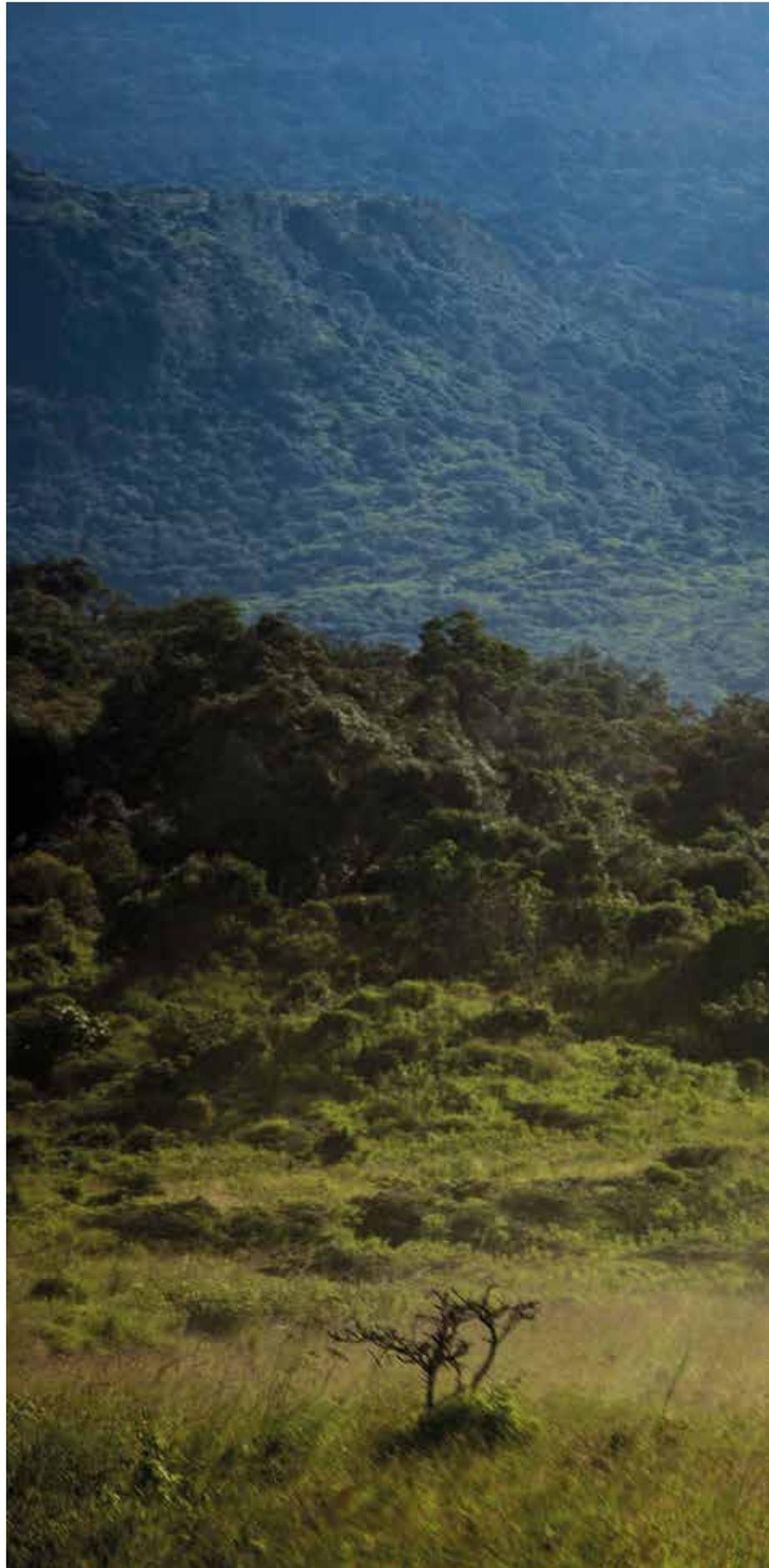
waits. Lions prowl the night, giraffes graze the bush, hippos splash in the river. Deep in the shadows, rarer creatures lurk: wild dogs skittering between kills, black rhinos lumbering through wild grass. Welcome to Selous, the second biggest game park in Africa – and one of the remotest.

For 19,000 square miles this wilderness stretches across southern Tanzania, ending only at the Indian Ocean. No humans live here, no real roads run through it, and only the northern section is open for regular tourism. Here tented camps and boutique lodges spread along the winding Rufiji River, offering a luxurious and largely private version of the classic African safari.

The park was named after legendary Victorian explorer Sir Frederick Selous, whose life reads like a Boy's Own adventure. He set out for darkest Africa while Livingstone was still alive, opened up huge tracts of what became Zimbabwe, Zambia and southern Congo, and led Cecil Rhodes' colonial column into Matabeleland.

He also shot vast numbers of wild animals on his journeys, sending over 500 specimens to the Natural History Museum in London. In 1909 he co-founded the Shikar Club for big-game hunters, whose meetings still take place at the Savoy Hotel. In 1917, aged 66, he was killed while fighting German forces along the Rufiji River – and he lies buried there. It is said that even while at war he carried a butterfly net in his baggage.

Today's park is still an adventure, usually reached by small plane or river boat: a true wilderness.





EVENTS

Travel shows 2018

VARIOUS VENUES

This spring's crop of travel industry exhibitions present the unusual and inspiring for your travel plans and dreams. Granddaddy of them all is Destinations in Manchester (19–22 January) and London (2–5 Feb), offering the biggest and broadest range of travel companies. More niche are the Luxury Travel Fair in Birmingham (2–5 November) and the Adventure Travel Show in London (20–21 January), ranging from total pamper to total adventure.

Tickets from these sites:www.destinationsshow.com,www.luxurytravelfair.com,www.adventureshow.com.**Scythians: Warriors of Ancient Siberia**

14 SEPTEMBER TO 14 JANUARY

BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON

Major exhibition revealing the untold story of the terror of the steppes – the Scythians, nomadic tribesmen and masters of mounted warfare in the Dark Ages. Their encounters with the Greeks, Assyrians and Persians were written into history but for centuries all trace of their culture was lost. Now discoveries of their ancient tombs have unearthed a wealth of treasures (pictured). Amazingly preserved in the permafrost, clothes and fabrics, food and weapons, spectacular gold jewellery – even mummified warriors and horses – are revealing the truth about these people's lives and their rich civilisation, which eventually stretched from the Black Sea to the edge of China.

£16.50, www.britishmuseum.org.

Above: Horse and rider from the British Museum's Scythians show.

**Illuminating India**

4 OCTOBER TO 31 MARCH

SCIENCE MUSEUM, LONDON

A celebration of India's contribution to science, technology and mathematics, staged to coincide with 70 years of Indian independence. At its centre are two major exhibitions: '5000 Years of Science and Innovation' and 'Photography 1857–2017'. They present a kaleidoscopic history of scientific breakthroughs in India, and a unique photographic survey of the country's cultural history pivoting on two key dates: 1857 (the Indian Mutiny) and 1947 (Independence).

Free, www.sciencemuseum.org.uk.**One of Two Stories**

7 JULY TO 29 OCTOBER

CENTRE FOR CHINESE CONTEMPORARY ART, MANCHESTER

A newly commissioned radio series and gallery installation inspired by tales of Chinese migrants, presented as part of Manchester International Festival. Fresh from representing Hong Kong at the Venice Biennale, sound artist and composer

Samson Young will take visitors and listeners on a journey inspired by the myths and legendary tales of seventeenth-century Chinese travellers making their way to Europe on foot. Presented to a live studio audience over five evenings in the Old Granada Studios, this tapestry of sound, oral histories, songs and poetry will also be broadcast in Manchester on FM and for the rest of us online. Meanwhile the gallery hosts a related audio-visual installation.

See www.cfcca.org.uk.**Purple**

6 OCTOBER TO 7 JANUARY

CURVE GALLERY, BARBICAN, LONDON

British artist and film-maker, winner of the 2017 Artes Mundi prize, John Akomfrah has been commissioned to create an immersive video installation addressing climate change and its effects on human communities, biodiversity and the wilderness. For this he combines archival footage with newly shot film and a hypnotic sound score.

Free, www.barbican.org.uk.



Left: Wall panel from the first class salon of the *Normandie*, 1934. (© Miottel Museum, courtesy of Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts.)

Below: Poster of the *Empress of Britain* for Canadian Pacific Railways, by JR Tooby, 1920. (© Victoria and Albert Museum, London.)



Ocean Liners: Speed & Style

3 FEBRUARY TO 10 JUNE

V&A, LONDON

A giddy glimpse into the glittering world of the ships that brought style and speed to the world of travel in the days before flying was common. Some 250 exhibits range from glamorous flapper dresses – and bikinis – to Art Deco posters and cabin furniture. There's even the Duke of Windsor's monogrammed luggage, a diamond tiara saved from the *Lusitania* and a piece of sunken treasure: a fragment of carved panelling from the first-class lounge of the *Titanic*. The exhibition launches with a Brunel steamship of 1859, drifts past the floating palaces of the 1930s, and ends at the *QEII*. En route it visits the fashions, interiors and images that made the ocean liners into icons of modernity.

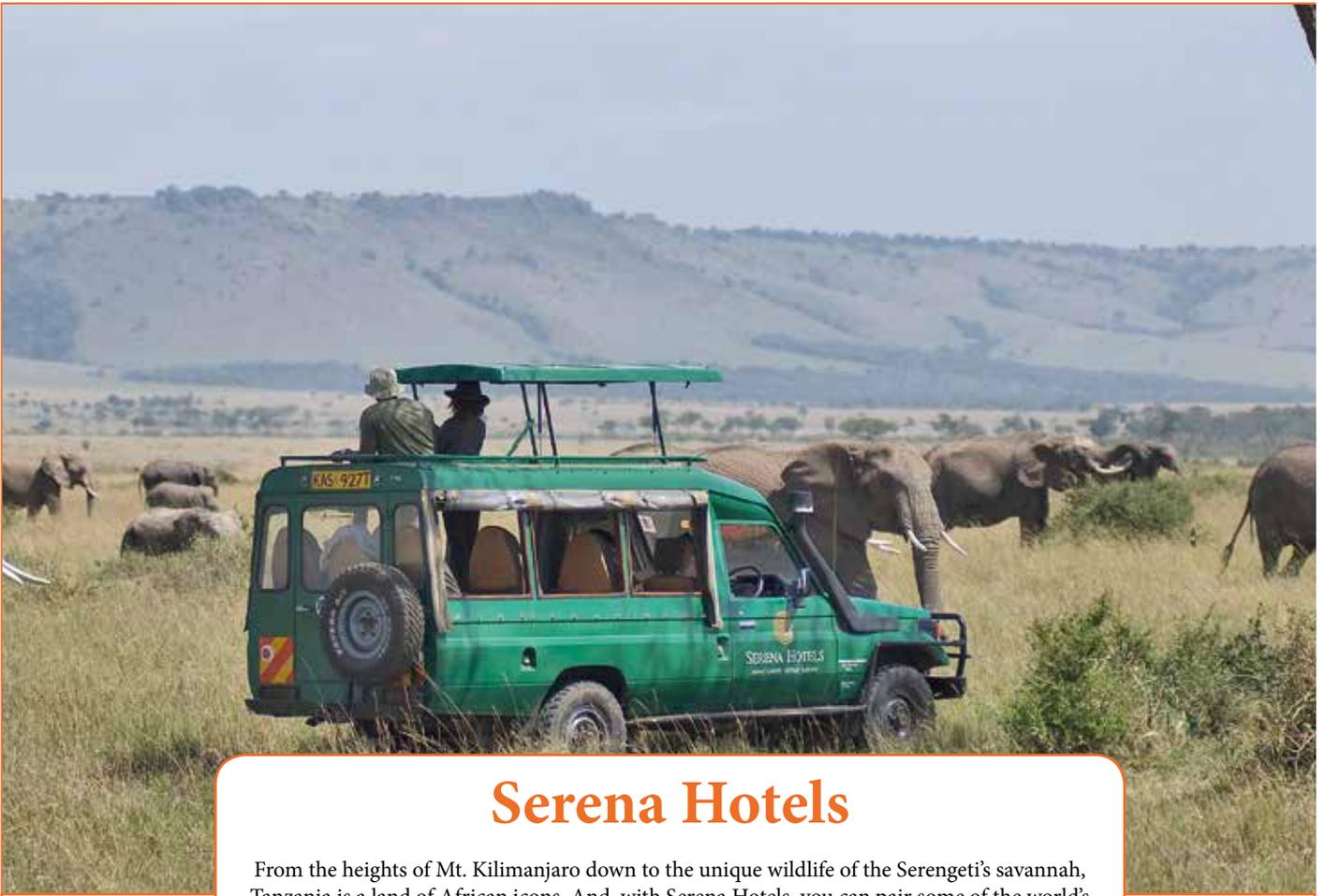
£18, www.vam.ac.uk.

CURATOR'S COMMENT

“The great age of ocean liners has long passed but no form of transport has been so romantic or so remarkable. Three years in the making, this exhibition shows how liners have shaped the modern world in many ways.

GHISLAINE WOOD, EXHIBITION CURATOR

”



Serena Hotels

From the heights of Mt. Kilimanjaro down to the unique wildlife of the Serengeti's savannah, Tanzania is a land of African icons. And, with Serena Hotels, you can pair some of the world's finest safari experiences with a getaway to a paradise island, all the while staying in some of the region's leading accommodation.

SERENA MIVUMO RIVER LODGE

Standing high on the banks of the Rufiji River, this luxury safari lodge features just twelve thatched chalets, each with a plunge pool and private-deck views out over the Selous Game Reserve. The biggest in Africa, it's home to the world's largest concentration of elephants, along with everything from lions and leopards to giraffe and zebra. Then, when you've finished your safari, you'll return to the likes of sundowner drinks, gourmet cuisine and spectacular panoramas from the infinity pool. The rooms themselves are just as impressive, lit by Edwardian crystal chandeliers and resplendent in marble basins, classic safari antiques and evocative rattan furniture. There's also an aromatherapy spa that offers a full range of treatments.



ZANZIBAR SERENA HOTEL

Idyllically poised right on the seafront of historic Stone Town, Zanzibar Serena Hotel is an oasis of tranquillity among the bustle of one of Africa's oldest towns. And, just like Stone Town's diverse heritage, it combines Swahili style with Arabic opulence, evident across high ceilings, shuttered windows and traditional carved furniture. Particular highlights include the inviting swimming pool and the Baharia Restaurant, where fragrantly spiced delicacies are served up to spectacular views of the *dhow*-dotted bay. Then, when you've explored the bright bazaars, sultans' palaces and winding narrow streets of Stone Town, the white sands of the exclusiv Mangapwani Serena Beach Club are just a short distance away.



To book your Serena getaway, visit wexas.com or call **020 7838 5958** for more information.

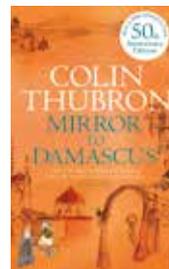
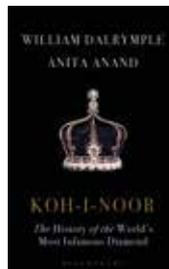
LATEST NEWS FROM OUR HONORARY PRESIDENTS

An evening with Ranulph Fiennes and friends

Indomitable explorer Sir Ranulph Fiennes will host *From Ice To Spice*, an evening of adventure stories with four top travellers, at London's Royal Geographical Society on 16 November. He will be joined on stage by celebrated actress and TV traveller Joanna Lumley, expedition leader and presenter Monty Halls, endurance doctor Mike Stroud and freediving champion and camerawoman Sacha Dent. All will be sharing their travel experiences in aid of Transglobe Expedition Trust, the charity founded by Sir Ranulph to support humanitarian, scientific and educational projects. It promises to be an evening of thrills, spills and heart-stopping tales from the frontiers of global adventure. Tickets are £10-30 from www.transglobe-trust.org.

New books from our presidents

Three of our Presidents have books out this season. Most topical, though not newest, is a reissue of Colin Thubron's classic travelogue, *Mirror To Damascus*, with a new introduction written this year when he revisited the city now torn by civil war (Vintage, £9.99). Less contemporary, but equally political, is *Koh-i-Noor*, a history of the famous diamond by William Dalrymple and Anita Anand. The gem that started in Mughal India and ended in the Tower of London as, literally, the jewel in the crown of empire, is now demanded back by many Indians (Bloomsbury, £16.99). More personal is Fergal Keane's *Wounds: A Memoir of War and Love*, which traces a family history in which his relatives fought on both sides of the Irish civil war (William Collins, £18.99).



Cousteau on film



The life story of the legendary marine explorer Jacques Cousteau (father of our president Jean-Michel) is retold in a new movie released this autumn. *The Odyssey* features Lambert Wilson as the man who invented the aqualung, used it to pioneer scuba-diving – and then used that to create the underwater film techniques that have opened up the oceans for a worldwide TV audience ever since. Audrey Tatou plays his long-suffering wife, Simone, as the great man sails the seas in a restless search for footage and fame. Critics have rated the underwater scenes more highly than the narrative: but if you weren't brought up on his TV films, it's a fair introduction to a great ecologist whose life's work has raised awareness worldwide for the beauty and fragility of the seas.

The heart of the hunter

AMY SOHANPAUL MEETS THE TRIBAL TRAVELLER
TURNED FILM-MAKER BRUCE PARRY

“To hell with what classical physics says, I totally believe now that there genuinely is a connection between everything. We are all really, literally divine, and we are running a very dire risk of upsetting the balance of our relationship with each other and with nature, in a very real way.” Those were Bruce Parry’s concluding words in my last interview with him, six or so years ago, in some sort of hotel boardroom, a formal setting slightly at odds with this most relaxed and unpretentious personality.

Six years on, in the lively café of the Picturehouse cinema in Piccadilly, we pick up exactly where we left off. This time the setting is more apt, as the presenter of BBC TV’s hugely popular *Tribe* has just co-directed his first big-screen film, *Tawai*, a documentary featuring Borneo and the Amazon.

“The film tries to explore that idea of connection,” Parry tells me now. “What is it to be connected, what is it to be separated, how do we perceive ourselves in relation to what is around us? What is our relationship with the natural world, and how has this changed over time?”

‘Tawai’ is a word used by nomadic hunter-gatherers in Borneo to describe their feeling of connection to nature.

It’s hard to translate. But some interviews in the film capture a little of this profound sentiment: “Trees are like humans,” says one tribesman. “If the really big trees die, so do all humans. If the forest dies, humanity dies. The forest may die. The forest says, ‘We are part of the same family.’”

For the Penan, forever nomadic, forever foragers, forever hunters, today’s uncertainty over the fate of the forest threatens their way of life. Logging is the major threat. Indeed, for the first time in their existence, they are faced with the prospect of settling. Parry visits them in the film – or rather, revisits them, having previously stayed with them for *Tribe*. He worries about them now, wondering how they will adapt as they are forced into agriculture and settlements.

“The Penan felt completely different from any other group,” he muses.

“They were nomadic and still hunter-gatherers, but that wasn’t the thing. There was something very much deeper. It’s not immediately discernable, but very real when you’re with them. It’s the fact that they were very egalitarian. I look at all the other tribes I’ve been with and they are all hierarchical, they all have chiefs, shamans, leaders, but not the Penan.”

Parry has long been an advocate for learning wisdom from traditional

peoples and sources. There is, he says, “much to be gained from those living lives very different from our own.” The Penan – and the Piraha from the Amazon, the other tribe shown in *Tawai* – have traditionally been at one with nature, and their hunter-gatherer way of living incorporates a mindfulness that Parry says we can access, leading to a greater sense of our connection with the wider environment.

“Hunting is a meditation. Every day when you hunt, you’re meditating. You have to be in your senses, you have to be alert, you can’t be drifting off in your mind to the future and the past. If you step on a twig, you’ll never feed your family. When you’re hunting, you’ll be there, in the moment. If you’re chanting, you’ll be exercising the parts of your mind and body and senses that keep you in the present.

“I’m not saying we should all become Buddhists,” he adds, “but the tools of meditation, song, poetry, dance, allow us to reconnect to something that is greater than ourselves. You’re able to feel more intensely the empathic sense of connection. That’s just what meditation has been shown to do. You have a much stronger feeling of being, of an expansion, if you will, of a conscious awareness of being part of something.”



Belonging – to nature or to the community – is another tribal lesson that Parry feels we could learn from, especially in our treatment of the natural world. “If you’re feeling an empathy with your neighbours, and an empathy with nature, you treat things in a different way. If I feel your pain and your joy, it’s in my interest to make you happy. But if I’m feeling separate from you, I can behave how I want, to you or to nature. So their sense of empathy is how they are able to maintain this balance with their surroundings and with each other.”

But Parry is keen to stress that he’s not advocating a return to another

era. He’s an idealist, for sure, and he’d like to change the world. But he’s a pragmatist, especially about how to do so. “This film is about understanding where we are now. For 95 per cent of our time on the planet, we were relatively harmonious with the environment. Now we’re not. But we’ve also created this amazing world. So it’s not about turning back the clock – but it is time to wake up to who we really are and where we really are. It’s about how we’re going to use all this wisdom.

“Are we going to see ourselves once again as part of nature? Or do we really think we’re above it, and then we can travel to Mars?”

He smiles. “The people I met knew that they weren’t above nature, so what you do to nature you do to yourselves. If we can get rid of this sense that we are bigger, that we are special and bigger, if we can put ourselves back in line with everything else around us on the planet – which is the other part of wisdom – then we have a potentially amazing, beautiful future ahead of us.” He pauses. “You know, it’s not too late.”

***TAWAI: a Voice from the Forest* is released on 29 September in selected cinemas across the UK.**

Patna

INDIA

words
Sunny Singh

Opposite (from top):
Handicrafts for sale in a market in Bihar. A 1967 Indian stamp showing Patna's Martyrs' Memorial. Prayer flowers in a Buddhist temple, Bihar.

Patna tastes of rum and coke, smoky seekh kebabs and freedom. It smells of crisp winter nights, charcoal fires and motorcycle exhaust. It is the sound of heated political debates as dawn's delicate pink lights the sky over an opalescent river.

Patna – the capital of Bihar – is where I sought comfort when I felt lost, mid-way through my university studies in the USA. I would stay up reading till my uncle and aunt put the daily newspaper to bed in the early hours of the morning. Then we would find the hole-in-the-wall for *parathas* and chicken *do-pyaaza*, knock back Old Monk, watch the sun come up, and crawl to bed just as the city awakened.

But my earliest memories of the city are of peering out of the train window looking for my great-uncle who would without fail greet us, with a packet full of hot *jalebis* if we were merely passing through, or with his monster Jeep if we were visiting. Even amongst innumerable similarly clad men, he would stand out with his silver hair and immaculate white *dhoti-kurta*, the usual tall rifle on his shoulder and a single bandolier slung across his chest. For years, I thought his name was Babu Saheb, because that's what everyone called him. I realised years later that men of my family had long been called that in a city that has held, protected, rejected and murdered us for many centuries.

Located at the site of an ancient capital, Pataliputra, the city has long been intertwined with the region's history, legend and mythology. Given its age, it is perhaps appropriate that Patna's denizens cannot agree on the origins of its name or indeed its foundational myth. Founded as the capital of Magadha on the banks of the river

Ganges, the city dates back to the early days of Buddhism and is named either for the local goddess, Patan Devi, or from the Sanskrit term *pattanam*, meaning 'a town on dry land'. Others believe that the city is named for a mythical queen, Patali, whose name is often translated as 'trumpet flower'. My great-uncle never failed to mischievously remind us that 'trumpet flower' also refers to *datura* – an aphrodisiac and a deadly poison, much like the city itself.

For my family, Patna has often been closer to the poison. The city was a key trading-post for the East India Company, second only to Calcutta, with the river serving as the main artery to the seas. Although the ancient glories had faded, its inhabitants muddled along as they had under the Mughals and Nawabs in the centuries before. However, under Company Raj, the city also steadily lost its urban core, with many of its old guard retreating with their families to their rural strongholds as a measure of protection against rapacious Company rule.

Then in 1857, an irascible ancestor, Kunwar Singh, joined the uprising against the Company's depredations. Despite his status as a nationalist hero, Singh's motivation is unlikely to have been patriotic. "If you ask nicely, you can have my life," my great-uncle used to tell me, "but we do not take orders."

Eighty years old and, according to family accounts, with a hot temper that we have all inherited, Singh and his guerrillas harried the company forces for months. "And when his arm was shot by the Angrez, he chopped it off and gave it as an offering to the river," my great-uncle's voice would drop to a whisper, his palm slamming down on his wrist like knife. Even

now, standing at Ranighat, I can see that offering in mind, that severed limb, larger, more muscular, but so like my own hand.

Despite losses and injuries, Singh managed to return home to die, albeit before the uprising was thoroughly crushed. His route from Patna to Jagdishpur and then to the village is one that I have repeated in my great-uncle's Jeep and – when weather and roads went bad – by elephant. And every step of the way, Kunwar Singh's shade has kept me company.

It is a measure of Patna's character that the city – and the region of Bihar – did not sink to its knees after the comprehensive defeat of the uprising in 1858. Few, if any, noticed that Company Raj had been replaced by the British Crown, and small rebellions continued through the decades, even in face of the crushing, impoverishing policies of the empire. Revolutions simmered in the city before independence, including Champaran and Quit India movements. After 1947, small mutinies have continued. In a crumbling house in Gaihat, a tiny old lady with hair like spun cotton laughs as she recounts hiding *inquilaabis* (freedom fighters) from colonial police in a hidden section of her box room. A whisper tells me that the box room has seen more recent use during the Emergency, this time hiding student union leaders sought by independent India's police. Even later I learn about a young man with Naxal affiliations who found safety in that old cubby hole. There are many such hiding places even today, ready and waiting to be used as necessary. A city that has lived millennia of history is not easily lulled by promises of peace.

Much has changed in Patna since those heady days of late-night motorcycle rides, the chill air clearing my rum-filled mind. Many of the stalwarts whom I automatically seek in the city have departed, including my great-uncle. Yet when I arrive at Patna Junction – one of the oldest major train stations in India – I can hear his voice in my head: "We Biharis don't follow orders. Requests, always. Orders, never."

As I walk to a cousin's shiny 4x4 – the old Jeep too is gone – I feel Patna bring down all the weight of history on me. She squares my shoulders, seeps into my gait and lifts my chin.



Unlike my ancestors, I don't need a bandolier, a sword or a rifle. Because as the locals say, you can take a Bihari out of the state, but you can't take Bihar out of her.



Patna

SCOTLAND

words

Jonathan Lorie

It's not every sleepy village in Scotland that's named after a city in India, but in a neat reversal of British imperial history, it's not every member of the Raj who was born in India and remembered this in his estate back home. But that's what happened to William Fullarton, Scottish mining magnate and son of empire, who named a pit village in Ayr after his birthplace on the Ganges.

Scotland's Patna is a handsome straggle of old stone houses along the river Doon, 45 miles southwest of Glasgow. It's surrounded by lush green fields and forests, while to the west is the Firth of Clyde and its ripple of islands through the Hebrides. The climate is far from Asian: daytime temperatures peak below 60 degrees in summer, 40 in winter, and it rains most days of the year. It is wet enough, perhaps, for growing Patna rice.

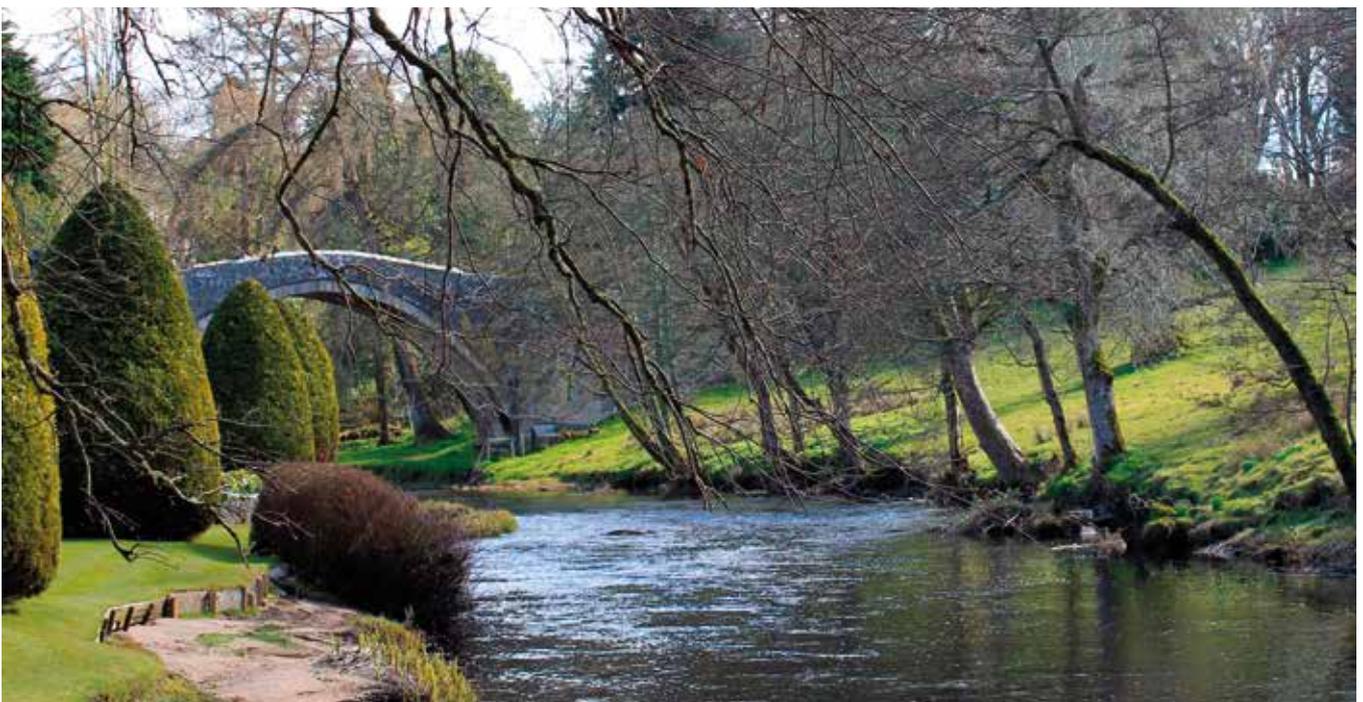
Visitors love the pools and rapids of the River Doon, which picks up speed from here to the sea, and anglers come to fish salmon in its rushing waters.

There's golfing too, on the nine-hole course just outside the town. But amateur historians spend their visit wandering among the old landmarks: the site of Patna Station, which hauled coal from Fullarton's mines but closed in 1964, the arched granite Patna Auld Bridge that he built, and Patna Primary School, which carries a plaque in his honour: 'Erected by the inhabitants of this neighbourhood in testimony of their gratitude to William Fullarton.'

Fullarton founded the town in 1802 to house the workers from his mines. Coal was the oil of its day, and this was the height of the industrial revolution that powered Britain's rise to empire. The imperial roots went deep: his father had worked for the East India Company, and his uncle had been a surgeon at Fort William, now Calcutta. William was born out there, in the original city of Patna. And the village he created on his return to 'home' is a reminder of the international links and status that once made Britain great.

Opposite: The lush rice fields of Patna, India.

Below: The gentle banks of the River Doon at Patna, Scotland.



Memories in the mist

Words by Fergal Keane

The rain is in since late last night.

It woke me around two, hammering on the roof of this tin cottage. It drips and spills down the windows and bends the branches of the hydrangea. The bay is shrouded. You will do well to see beyond a few feet at Ardmore Head. Puddles are swelling in the holy well of Saint Declan. The pilgrims are marooned in their bed-and-breakfasts. My sounds are the rat-tat-tat on the roof, the swish of car wheels moving along Coffee Lane, the wood pigeons calling from Virginia Keane's wood. If it stops, I will hear doors opening and the voices of tentative walkers heading towards the cliff path.

But for now we are enveloped by coastal fog. There is no going anywhere in this weather. Surely it cannot last all day? But it can. It can sit for days. So I wait by myself, trying to focus on the here and now – what I should do today, how I can

distract myself – and failing badly. It is the hour of self-laceration. All my failings come to visit. With no company but my own accusing voice, this holiday morning spills into recriminations. By this age, a man should feel sure of himself and be approaching the point of contentment. But I have never had the gift of peaceful self-reflection. From early on, from the beginning, my head has welcomed too easily the siren voices of reproach. What have I not done, who have I failed?

Shiva Naipaul once wrote that 'every journey is a form of self-extinction,' and I can see how my travels have enabled me to escape the negative, if only temporarily, by obliterating them with movement, experience, drama and, ultimately, exhaustion.

And then I come here, to this village in the south-east of Ireland where I have

been coming each August since I was a baby, and where my family has roots that date to the late nineteenth century and my great-grandfather patrolled the district as a sergeant in the Royal Irish Constabulary. In Ardmore – in Irish it means 'the great height' – I stop moving, except for the family picnics, the fishing, the 'ghost' walks with children, the camping trip to Curragh beach. None of this was the movement of escape, but of return to a world of familiar intimacies and relationships.

In Ardmore there was always comfort. It was the place where, once a year, I was granted respite from the terrors of growing up in a chaotic, frequently violent, alcoholic home. Here I learned how to swim, taught by my grandmother, and how to fish – a gift given by a gentle Dublin man, John Ryan, who in his fairness and solidity showed me



everything a father should be. His sons were my close friends and August visitors to Ardmore like myself. On rainy days like this, he would pack us all into his big black car and head for the byways of the Blackwater Valley, turning left at Youghal Bridge and vanishing into a world of woods and Anglo-Irish mansions. When a spring tide whipped up the surf on Ardmore Bay, we fished for bass, each longing to hear the shout of 'Fish!' when a rod arched and the fight was on.

But it is a mistake to believe that only the good emotions engendered by a place live with us. If Ardmore was my escape, it was also the place from which I had to return to the madness and sorrow. A memory: a summer's end in the late 1960s when my father was due to visit but failed to appear, and we made the long journey back to Dublin anxious for what might lie ahead.

I recall vividly leaning my head back and gazing up at the twilight sky as the car came alongside the Liffey into Dublin and wishing I could fly out of there into eternity, wishing I could vanish forever.

And so it is, without fail, year upon year, that the middle of August sees the descent of melancholy. This year it has triggered other more recent griefs, so that marooned on this rainy peninsula I feel I am slipping from sadness into the deadening embrace of depression. I will not let this happen. I cannot. I am no use to myself or anybody else when the Black Dog gets a grip.

I know many travellers who, once they have come to a stop, find themselves felled by depression, or at least a sense of emptiness. In travel I have explored many cultures and seen sights that delighted and horrified. I have made friends and

escaped the clutches of dangerous men. The decades on the road have enriched my mind and soul. But the price of the road is high. I am not talking only about the pain felt by loved ones at my absence, but at the absence from myself in all these years of wandering.

Enough with the sad refrains. There is nothing to do with this day but face it. Get out into the rain and be soaked. Walk the beach and keep my face into the wind. That way the future lies. Whatever is waiting in the mist, I will meet and go on.

The writer is a Special Correspondent with BBC News.

Illustration by Luke Walwyn.

Lighthouse of the Med

pictures
Francesco Lastrucci





Three hours north of Sicily, as the boat sails, an island rears out of the sea to form a picture-perfect volcano. It has been smouldering and erupting for the past two thousand years.

Known to the Romans as the Lighthouse of the Mediterranean, the fiery peak of Stromboli can be watched from offshore, in a boat after dark when the sparks fly skywards. Or from a mountain path during the day, when ash and stones can be seen soaring hundreds of feet in the air.

One of only three active volcanoes in Italy, this jagged rock has attracted artists and style-setters for decades. Jules Verne set the climax of his novel *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* here, and JRR Tolkien used it as the model for

Mount Doom in *The Lord of the Rings*. Fabled film-makers Roberto Rossellini and Ingrid Bergman began their scandalous affair here while making *Stromboli, Land of God* in 1949. Their little red house can still be found in the island's tiny capital, Stromboli.

Today the beautiful people still visit, including recent president Giorgio Napolitano and fashion designers Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana, who own a villa here.

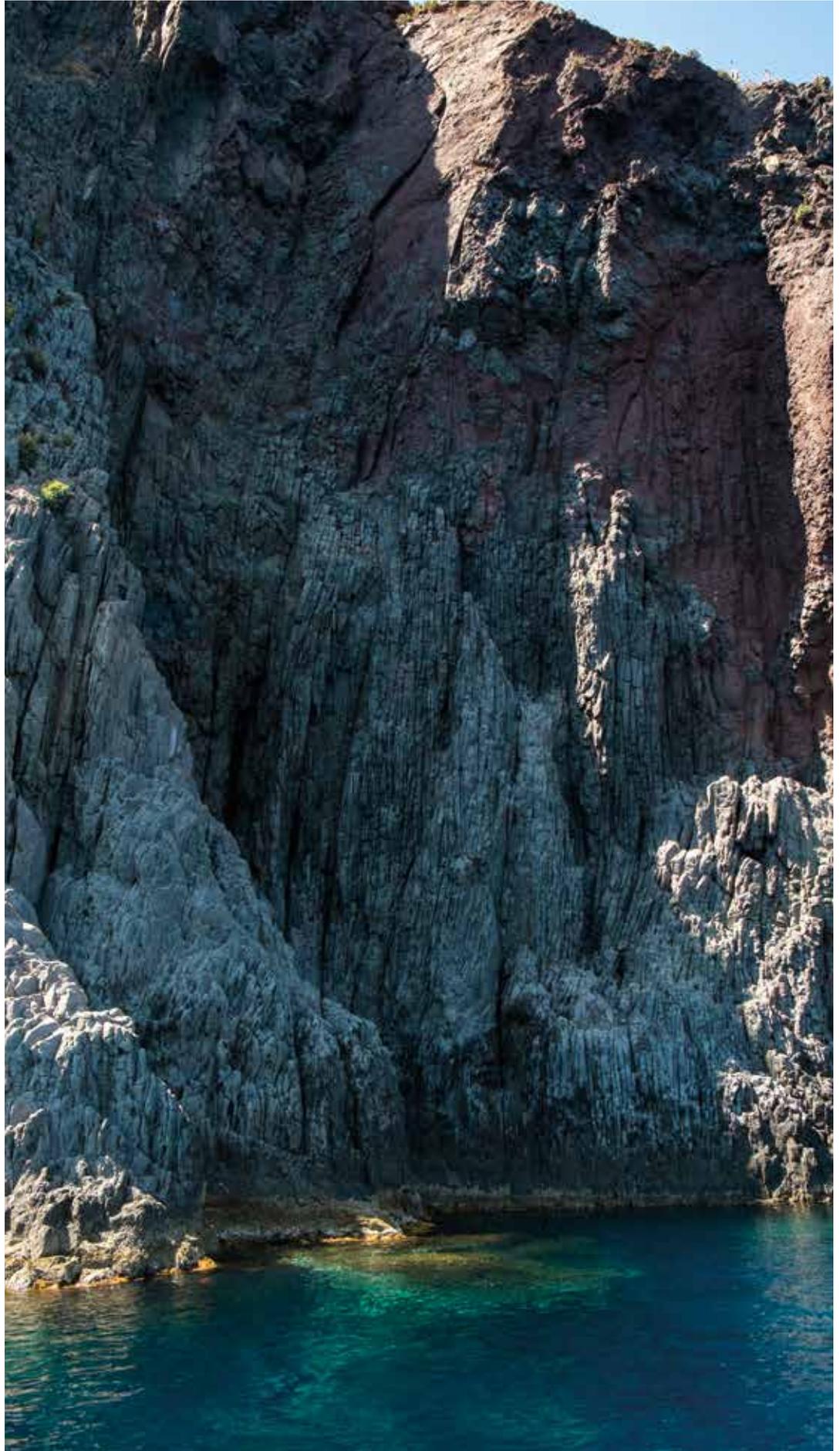
But most people come on a day trip by boat, to sample the black-sand beaches and seafood cafes, where fish fresh from the nets is served beneath the 3,000-metre cone of one of Italy's most spectacular islands.



Above: Island life can be pretty relaxed in the little village of Stromboli, where a visit to the baker and the beach easily combine.

Right: The offshore islet of Strombolicchio is the remaining plug of an old volcanic peak that has now collapsed. Today it is a prime spot for diving and snorkelling.

Previous page: Sunset on the mountain path that leads to the Sciara del Fuoco – the Landslide of Fire – a high viewpoint on the volcano's active flank.





Opposite page: The volcanic black sands of beaches at Ficogrande (top) and Piscità (below) attract tourists as much as the volcano itself.

Above and right: Only 500 people live on the island, earning their living from tourism or the ancient harvest of the sea, catching fish and eels for the restaurants that cater for tourists.





Next page: Visitors must have a guide to trek to the summit of the volcano, where three live craters burn and flame.

My earliest memories are of the stars over Ipoh.

There was no light pollution in those days, and the darkness that enveloped me was velvety black. I would look up at the tiny pinpricks of light high above and wonder – how far away are they, could I ever visit a star?

I remember too, as a child there, being fed exciting stories. I heard about my great-grandmother, who had been a Nyonya, a woman of mixed Malay-Chinese heritage. She was reputed to be fierce: people who had met her still trembled at the memory, 70 years later. She was formidable in other ways too, starting a business when women did not run businesses, and raising a troop of children with her earnings.

At school I heard other stories, like the tale of Hang Li Po, a Ming princess given in marriage to the Sultan of Malacca many centuries ago. The Sultan hoped his town would be spared invasion if it came under Chinese protection through her. She did not arrive alone. The princess was accompanied by 500 courtiers in flowing silk robes studded with jade, rubies and other precious stones, glinting in the sun. The Sultan was so impressed that he gave the courtiers an entire hill on which to live – Bukit Cina or Chinese Hill, which still exists today.

But ties with China did not save Malacca from European conquest. The Portuguese arrived, then the Dutch and finally the British. They left behind a Portuguese fort and Dutch buildings in terracotta red, contrasting strangely with the Chinese cemetery and the now reconstructed Sultan's palace. Being a port, Malacca was also one of the first places where Chinese traders settled and intermarried with local women. This created the mixed-race Baba-Nyonya

community, which became known for its unique language, attire, cuisine and porcelain, preserved today at the Baba And Nyonya Heritage Museum in Malacca.

I visited this museum, located inside a delightful old family house, as part of the research for my debut novel, *The Woman Who Breathed Two Worlds*. At the time I was recovering from breast cancer, or rather, from post-chemotherapy depression. I felt as if the ground had been swept from under my feet, and had no choice but to change my life. After I wrote my first short piece, it became clear that I had a lifetime of stories stored inside, which would not be suppressed. I recalled what I had heard about my great-grandmother and a nebulous dream of writing a novel based on her life.

Returning to Malaysia for more information, I interviewed anyone who would talk to me about the old days. Everything I experienced – the heat and tropical thunderstorms, even the mosquitoes – helped me bring colonial Malaya



Memories of Malaysia

words
Selina Siak Chin Yoke

to life. In the process I began to see Ipoh, my old hometown, in a new light.

My heart leapt as I drove towards Ipoh. The undulating hills surrounding the town looked familiar, yet they seemed somehow more atmospheric than I had ever known them, the trees clinging to their sides coming alive. As I imagined my protagonist walking along Ipoh's streets, I knew she would have seen these hills from almost anywhere. The town and its hills – blue on clear days, dreamy on grey days, dark during thunderstorms – would have kept my protagonist company. I knew then that Ipoh would have to become a character, its mood gauged by the way the surrounding hills looked.

I was not the first to be captivated by Ipoh's hills. An early Taoist-Buddhist temple was built inside one of the caves beneath the limestone hills in the late 1800s. Soon after, the Sam Poh Temple, described in my novels, rose into the rock alongside dramatic needles sculpted by years

of trickling water. My great-grandmother was cremated in this temple, and her remains lie in an urn somewhere inside this vast cave complex.

When I wanted to dedicate my book to her, I realised that we didn't know her name. In the old days, people addressed older folk by their family rank, not their names. No one really knew Great-Grandma's name, only that she passed away on the eve of the Japanese invasion in 1941.

My uncle and I were shown into dark chambers of the temple, filled with urns from floor to ceiling, many without records of their contents. We never found her urn. But it was a pleasure to once again breathe the air from Ipoh's hills, a breath of the gods.

***When the Future Comes Too Soon* by Selina Siak Chin Yoke is published by Amazon Crossing, £8.99.**

Image: Modern mural on a ruined wall in Ipoh, by Ernest Zacharevic, depicting a hummingbird in flight.

Archipelago of art

words & pictures
Simon Urwin

Opposite: Pumpkin
by Yayoi Kusama,
Naoshima island.

On the pale sands of Naoshima island, a group of young boys stop their football game to throw pebbles at a *torii* gate, an ancient Japanese custom said to bring riches to anyone who lands a stone upon the sacred perch.

Along the beach, a plump, polka-dotted pumpkin stands resplendent in the darkening skies, drawing a crowd of camera-clickers, symbolising prosperity of a different kind.

The small, rocky Naoshima is one of just 700 isles that dot the vast expanses of the Seto Inland Sea on the eastern coast of Japan. For centuries, this remote region was known as a sparsely habited marine byway, a place for cargo ships to navigate through on their way to the Pacific, not a destination for visitors to linger.

In recent years the tide has turned, though, and the fortunes of the islands and their once-dwindling populations have been dramatically revitalised. Naoshima and her neighbours now boast a reputation as one of the most surprising and rewarding destinations in Japan for cultural travellers. The force behind the change is a simple and beautiful one: modern art.

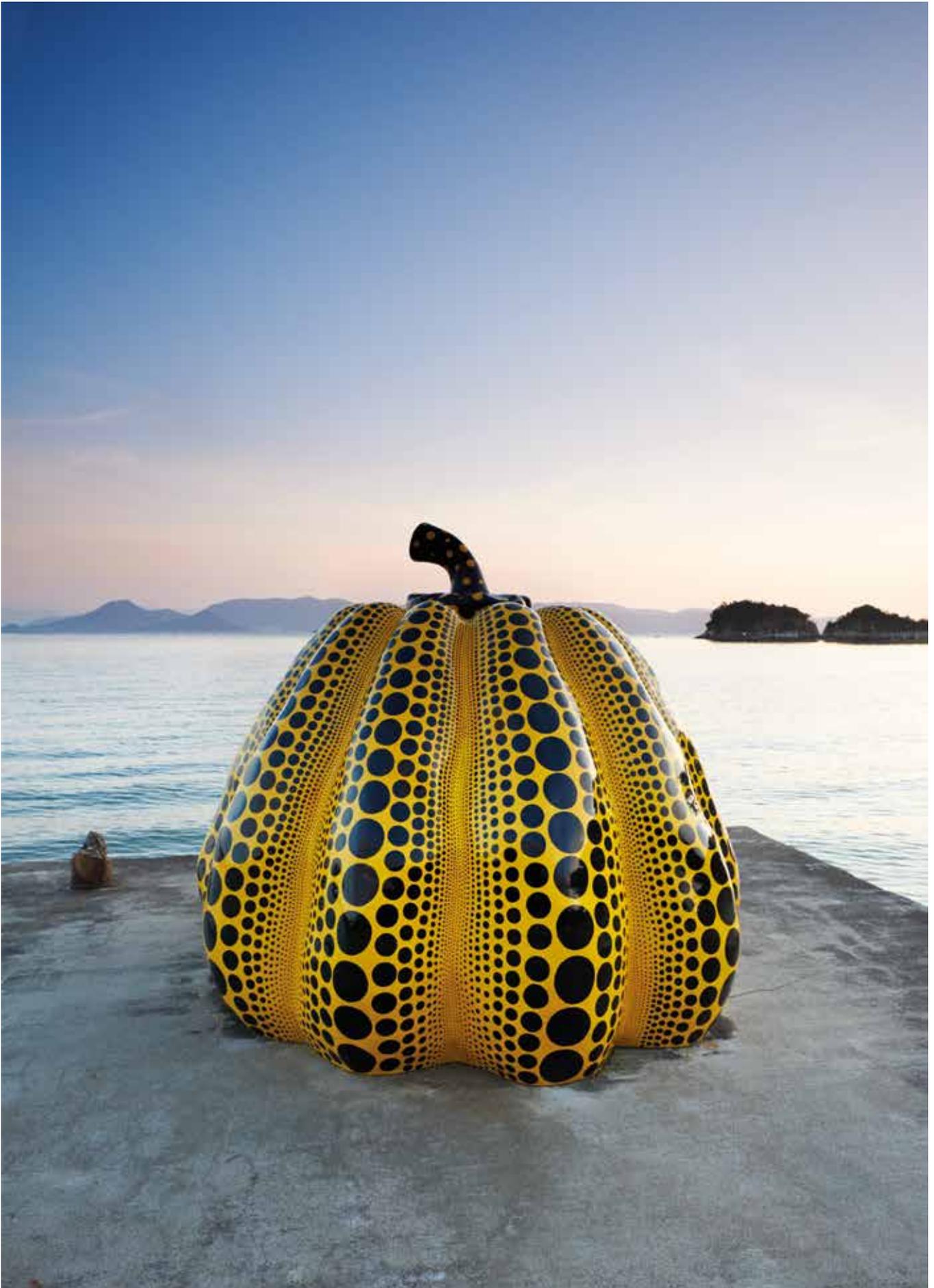
To come here takes time and patience. I first catch

the bullet train from Tokyo to Kyoto, then jump between three local trains before boarding a ferry that carries me to Naoshima's shores. It takes the best part of a day, but it's a journey richly rewarded.

Exploring the island's hilly roads by bike, I find striking contemporary artworks in the unlikeliest of rural settings, a backdrop of bamboo forest or blue sea adding to their allure. At a museum showcasing Monet, I meet an artist from a neighbouring island. "Naoshima is like the queen of the archipelago," she tells me. "The charitable initiative to regenerate the area with art, rather than industry, started here. It then spread to other islands, now the Seto region has its own art triennial. The transformation is incredible."

Inujima is one of the islands affected by this cultural renaissance. It might be a tiny, sleepy community of just 47 souls, but its artistic attractions belie its diminutive size. Here an immense copper refinery has been converted into a gallery resembling Tate Modern in scale, while visually arresting modern art befitting New York's MoMA sits amongst the vegetable gardens.

I meet one elderly man tending to his flower-beds in front of a giant acrylic circle filled with brilliantly coloured artificial petals. "I like how



Below Left: *Contact Lens* by Haruka Kojin, Inujima. Numerous round lenses of varying size and focus show the village landscape of trees, houses and passing locals, changing the shape and size as you look through each lens.

Below Right: Midori Kuyama at the Inoue Olive Farm.

Opposite: During the ebb tide, three of the Seto Inland Sea's islets are connected to Shodoshima island by a sandbar known as Angel Road.

they've blended art with nature," he says, pausing to move a wheelbarrow. "It has also encouraged young people to come back from the mainland, which is great for the future of all the islands. Now more people are interested in the area, not just in the art but the food of Seto. The food here is especially delicious."

A large golden sculpture glints in the distance as the ferry lands me on Shodoshima, a two-hour journey from Naoshima. On closer inspection, it turns out to be an outsized olive wreath, the leaves engraved with the future dreams of the island's children, the artwork itself hinting at Shodoshima's renown.

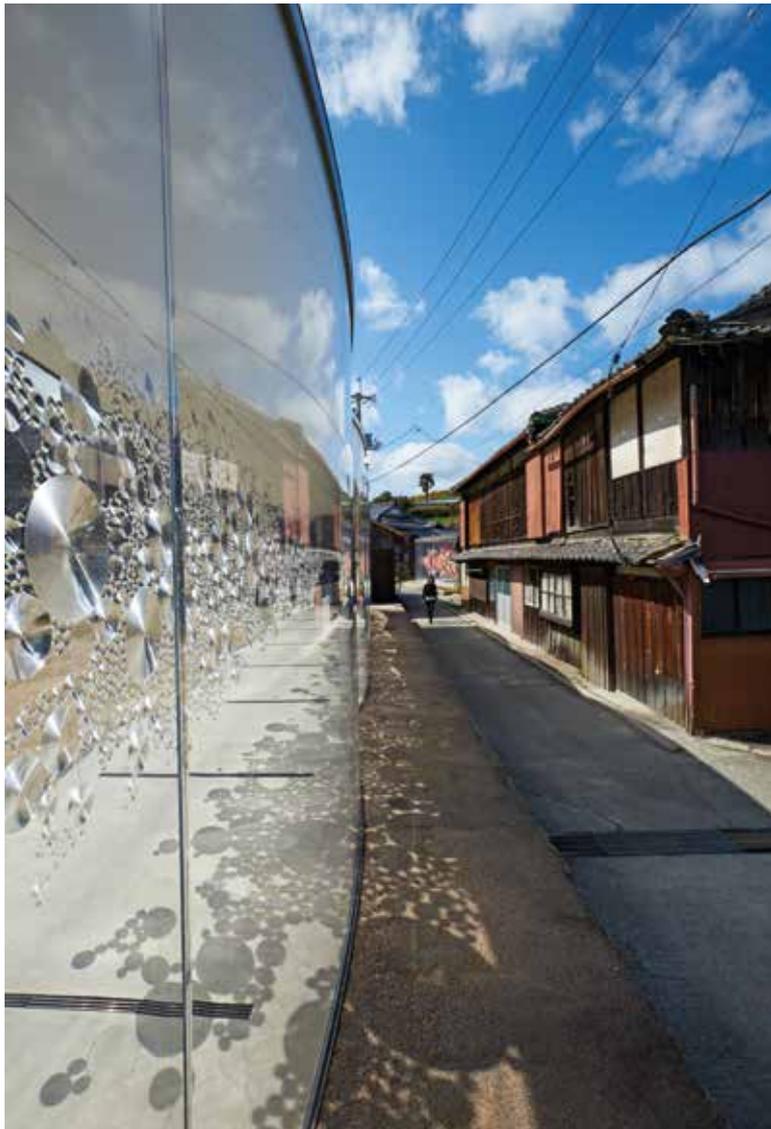
Walking from the port of Tonosho, a vermilion pagoda is the only landmark to help steer me through Meiro No Machi (Maze Town), its labyrinthine alleyways built to confuse

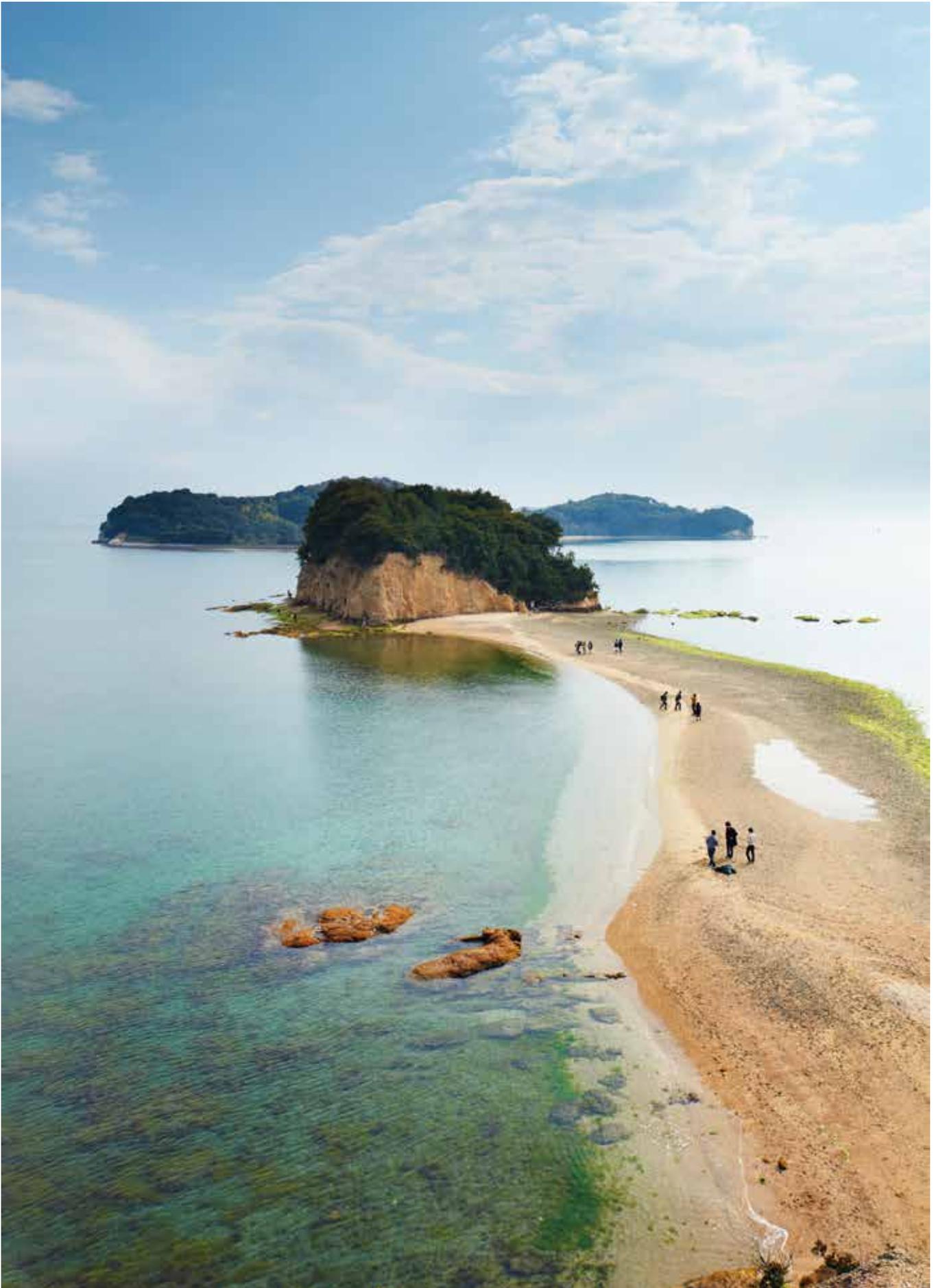
marauding pirates and protect the buildings from typhoon winds. I walk in search of a taxi and see no one for 30 minutes, save an elderly woman crouching to pour milk into her kitten's china bowl, then hurrying inside at the sight of a sudden stranger.

Driving along the coast road, I spot curtains of *somen* noodles drying on breezy terraces close to the water's edge. "You can taste the flavours of the sea air in the noodles," my taxi driver tells me. I'm dropped off high above the town, in a place where olive trees have flourished in abundance since the first saplings were planted in the early 1900s. A benign climate of warm, sunny days and low rainfall here creates olives rich in oil – peppery, delicious and capable of beating their Mediterranean counterparts in international tasting awards.

Midori Kuyama has been tending the trees at the Inoue Olive Farm for a decade. "Taking great care of each tree allows it to focus its energy on growing the most flavourful olives. It is a personal process for me, a bit like mothering," she says proudly. "It's why the end product is so good."

In a nation where emotions are often hidden beneath layers of etiquette, it's extraordinary to see how the islanders' connection with food allows them to be so uncharacteristically







Above: Yasuo Yamomoto, master soy-sauce maker.

Right: Bottles of Yamomoto soy sauce.

Opposite: A street in Maze Town, Shodoshima.

expressive. Nowhere is this more evident than at the Yamamoto soy brewery, one of 100 small-scale artisanal producers concentrated in the historic area of Shou No Gou (Country of Soy Sauce). Plump wooden barrels over 150 years old rise high into the air, releasing a pungent perfume of *moromi*, the mash of soybeans, wheat, salt and water that makes the salty concoction. Mr Yamamoto, the current owner shows me around. “Naoshima has its art, but here on Shodoshima food is an art form in itself,” he proclaims proudly.

A fifth generation soy-sauce master, he is happy to reveal the secret for creating such exquisite liquor. “It’s not really me who makes it. It’s partly our beautiful climate, which is ideal for fermentation, but mostly it’s the fermentation moulds that do all the work.” Unlike factory-made sauce, which is rush-produced in three months and uses only a few types of fermentation germs, Mr Yamamoto uses hundreds of moulds in a slow and laborious process that takes up to two years. “Here it is quite a sensual method. I believe that, just like children, the moulds are living, so I love them and look after them and talk with them.”

The result of such tender loving care is a sauce considered one of the finest in Japan, popular



with exacting housewives and Michelin-starred chefs alike. “It has a very complex *umami* (savoury taste), so only a few drops are needed on a very simple dish – delicate *sashimi* perhaps, or a *hinomaru bento*.” He hands me a bottle as a gift and, with a wry smile, offers some advice: “You certainly wouldn’t use it on your fish and chips!”





Between land and sea

words
Freddie Reynolds

With a gentle push of the accelerator you can be out of downtown Portland and into the countryside in 20 minutes. Like all cities, or like all American cities at least, Portland is a place keenly focused on itself – ‘The *best* in Portland!’, the streetside references to TV shows about it, the grumble about bin men. And after three days it’s easy to get lost in it, which is the reason for visiting anyway. The point is to get lost in it. And so by the time we’re a few miles out of the city – and we were heading west – you remember again that this is the States, and there’s city-States and country-States and everything else in between, every new slice seemingly cut to the extreme of another.

With just ten miles of tarmac gone, we were now far past the hipster ‘burbs and somewhere else entirely different. That summer the landscape around us was burnt and harsh and dusty and our journey was measured out in Trump/Pence banners. (By contrast, riding the bus in Portland we could see how close we were to our stop by counting the vegan cafes.) The banners were a curiosity, if an uneasy one. We joked a bit, bit our lips a bit.

So it was with some relief when we finally hit the Oregon coast and fresh and salty air, turned left,

and headed south along the 101 to California. Small towns, some full of tourist tat, some conspicuously not, lay at either side of the highway as we drove south along the coast. Living rooms on the right-hand side had envious views of the Pacific, while those on the left stayed out of the fog that sits eerily still at the threshold between land and sea, sometimes for an hour in the morning, sometimes for a whole day or longer. The Trump banners had gone, and the cafes here sold fresh fish and clam chowder and hand-collected sea shells, which even the hardest Portland vegan might find hard to resist.

As the road continued, seagulls tracked overhead and we joined a weird and curious convoy of bikers, long-distance cyclists, retirees in Winnebagos and pony-tailed men in pick-up trucks towing small fishing boats.

We all appeared to be driving with crooked necks, one eye on the road, the other on an invisible point, half a mile offshore, hoping to catch a glimpse. Every so often you’d pass a group of cars and bikes parked up. Drivers and passengers would be standing outside, the doors to their vehicles still open, and someone would be pointing.

Opposite: Battle Rock at Port Orford on the Oregon coast.

Opposite: Up close with a grey whale. Commercial fishing boats on the dock at Port Orford.

And there you'd see it. A cloud of spray. A deep grey shadow. White water. Maybe a hint of a fluke. Gone again.

Twice every year, grey whales pass along the entire coast of Oregon. In winter they're heading south, from feeding grounds in chilly Alaska to the warm waters off Baja California, that loose-limbed peninsula and westernmost state of Mexico. There they breed and then, in spring, they turn around and head north again. A few thousand grey whales make the trip. And, as the long journey back to Alaska is often slower and more leisurely and includes mothers and young calves, in summer the coast becomes a favourite destination for people hoping to spot them.

After a few days travelling in the opposite direction to the northbound whales, and catching the odd glimpse, we found a small campsite and pitched our tent just south of the town of Port Orford. Located on the north side of a gorge that runs its river out to sea, the campsite was a short drive from the sandy beach just south of the town.

Port Orford itself is not much to shout about. There's a small supermarket and an overpriced café, where we drank cappuccinos and counted our money.

We drank every dreg and then walked south along the beach, climbed a sea stack, and threw long strands of washed-up kelp at each other. Light fading, we turned back on ourselves and trudged down towards the natural harbour that sits at the edge of the town.

It was a tiny harbour, home to a short concrete jetty and maybe half-a-dozen rusted fishing boats tied alongside. A man in paint-splattered overalls was power-sanding the hull of a wooden fishing boat, and at the centre of the quay there was a fishmonger, which doubled as a restaurant and a museum dedicated to great white sharks.

We nosed around for a while, spoke to the staff about the sharks, bought scallops to cook over the fire pit back at the campsite and then wandered out of the shop and sat on the sea wall overlooking the still, dark waters of the harbour.

Suddenly there was a whoosh, something similar to the sound of someone filling a balloon with compressed air. The surface of the harbour

appeared to expand. And there in front of us, maybe ten feet from our dangling legs, grew the arching back of a grey whale, curling at once above and then back below the surface.

The water pitched and lifted, disturbed by the weight below.

We watched.

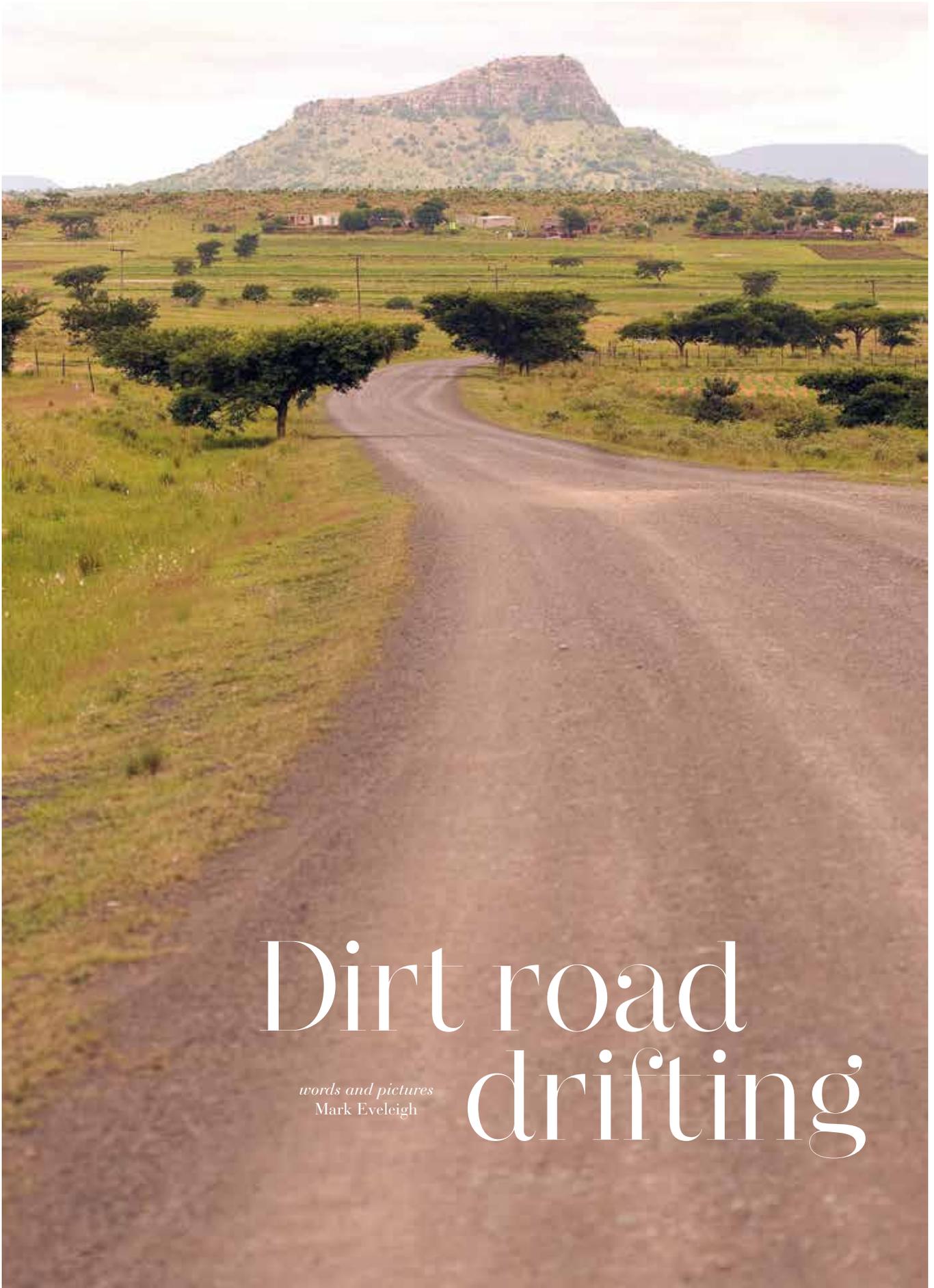
And then it was there again. The whoosh. The elephant-grey back. The small bump where, on other whales, you'd see a dorsal fin. Then the base and, following it all, the length of an enormous tail, tantalisingly close to the fluke. But then gone again, back beneath the surface.

We sat there for an hour, maybe more. The whale stuck around too, oblivious or not caring for us. It was feeding on the kelp at the bottom of the harbour and was obviously unhurried, perhaps not yet ready for Alaska and the cold.

The man put down his sander to join us and then a small crowd gathered, waiting for the whale to rise, growing like a freak wave forced by an earthquake, and then disappear once more into the water below.

We never got a fluke. But that was better, in a way. This wasn't a show, but feeding, living life. No postcard shot. Just a single whale, getting on with its business, a few feet from the shore, in a small harbour in another absurd and remarkable part of America.





Dirt road drifting

words and pictures
Mark Eveleigh

The African sun shimmered on the swaying grasslands of Zululand. A craggy mountain, shaped like a clenched fist, rose higher above the horizon with each mile I drove.

I had left Durban, on the coast, earlier this morning and hoped to be under the shadow of the fist before the midday heat kicked in. That fist is highly appropriate. It was here that the mighty Zulu nation crushed the British invaders on 22 January 1879. Armed only with *assegai* spears and a few captured guns, they inflicted the greatest defeat in history by a tribal nation on a modern European army. The nearby mission station at Rorke's Drift, where British survivors defended a dwindling bulwark that shrank to the size of a tennis court, retains a powerful poignancy even today. I spent the night at the Rorke's Drift Hotel, where owner Charles Aikenhead, a retired Irish Guards colonel, regaled me over dinner with stories of heroism and bloodshed that could have been part of a Boy's Own adventure book.

Next morning I left behind the pastel-painted *rondavel* huts and lyre-horned Nguni cattle of Zululand and descended to the gentle grasslands and Friesian-speckled meadows of the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands. A whole chain of quaint craft shops, cafés and *padstalle* (roadside farmstalls) has become a favourite fixture of day-trips known as the Midlands Meander. At Karkloof Farmers Market, I stocked up on home-made nougat, soft cheese and Nguni biltong. An extra-shot cappuccino was still steaming in a mug in my car when I rolled off the slip road at Pietermaritzberg and steered towards Ixopo.

'There is a lovely road that runs from Ixopo into the hills,' wrote Alan Paton in his celebrated novel *Cry, the Beloved Country*. 'These hills are grass-covered and rolling and they are lovely beyond any singing of it.' Written in 1948, it's about as beautiful a first line as you'll find in any novel. It struck me as even more powerful, just after dawn in Ixopo, when I heard first-hand how hauntingly beautiful African singing can be. I had been woken from my cosy bed at King's Grant Country Retreat by the sound of local farm workers singing their traditional greeting to the day. Then as I drove the car off, down a dirt track, a pair of crowned cranes seemed to honk in farewell from the rising mist beside the dam.



I kept the car pointed southwards between the mountains of Lesotho and the Wild Coast as the road whipped out ahead like a flicked rope, luring me hypnotically onwards. When I reached Addo Elephant National Park, South Africa's third largest park, I slipped into low gear and eased along the dirt tracks, keeping an eye out for lion, buffalo, rhino, leopard and even wild dog. As the name suggests, Addo Elephant Park is the best place in the entire country to see herds of pachyderms, with a total population around 600. That afternoon I sat in the car by Hapoor Dam, munching kudu biltong, and counted up to 300 elephants congregating by the water, in family groups with young calves.

My friend Peter Frost, a South African editor and journalist, had advised me not to miss

In pictures: The dramatic mountainscape around Isandlwana, where the Zulu nation defeated the British army in 1879, is now home to scattered farms, wild kudu and endless empty roads.



In pictures: Signs along the dirt roads capture the humour and danger of this remote region.

Nieu-Bethesda under any circumstances. “The town defies easy definition,” he said, “it’s balm for the soul. It’s about no streetlights – meaning a killer light-show on a clear night – and the sheer remoteness of it all.” Peter had fallen so deeply in love with the town that he wrote *Nieu-Bethesda: A Short Guide to a Little Great Karoo Town*. “The famous Owl House, artist Helen Martins’ tiny home and yard, is an ode to creativity,” he said. “The Karoo Lamb restaurant serves an excellent *potjie* stew and

there’s artisan beer at the Two Goats Brewery.” But the reason I’d come to Nieu-Bethesda was to meet the owner of Auntie Evelyne’s Eating Place, a humble eatery in a private house, located about a mile from the town centre.

“I was born here but moved away to work as a kitchen help on a farm when I was young,” Auntie Evelyn told me that evening, as I tucked into succulent Karoo lamb, sweet potatoes, shredded carrot and maize mash. “I still mostly cook *boerekos* – farm food.” Tourists and travellers eat in the restaurant, but in her yard this hard-working woman puts her profits to good use – by feeding up to a hundred hungry people each day at a soup kitchen. Before I left, she gave me her recipe for home-made ginger beer, so spicy it made my nose tingle.

By sunrise next morning, I was hauling a cloud of golden dust down the dirt-track backroads out of town. The Karoo is still a tough area to survive in, and as I drove along the N9 highway it was only the windmills mounted above boreholes that alerted me to the location of scattered homesteads and sheep farms. By midday I was winding cautiously into Prince Alfred’s





In pictures: The coastal strip with its beach huts and marine sports offers a refreshing contrast to the dusty interior.

Pass. A mournful sign read 'Convict Graves', commemorating some of the labourers who carved this road in 1866, and another was so intriguing that I screeched the car to a halt: 'Hot Beer, Lousy Food, Bad Service – Welcome to Angie's G Spot'.

At this idyllic spot on the banks of a tumbling river, Angie Beaumont and her husband Harold had built a little homestead – complete with accommodation, bar and restaurant – that was nothing short of a little patch of South African

paradise. Their living quarters were partly made from a 1952 bus built into a wall. The property was fully self-sufficient. Harold shot his own venison with a crossbow, and Angie baked bread on an old wood-fired Aga cooker. Skins and horns decorated The Pit Stop Bar and whisky was served from the rear end of a stuffed reedbuck. The sparkling riverbed made the best possible jacuzzi during the heat of the day and, in the evening, you could just lie back on the banks and watch an unparalleled lightshow of southern hemisphere stars.

Soon I had to leave behind the dry hills and plateaus of the Karoo. I drove towards the coast again, to the so-called Mother City, Cape Town. I was looking forward to my first sight of Table Mountain: but given the chance, I would happily have extended my road trip right to the opposite coast of this wonderful country.







Heron island

words & pictures
Jonathan & Angela Scott

In pictures: The Maldives are a paradise for marine wildlife enthusiasts, their lagoons teeming with seabirds and swirling shoals of tropical fish.

The grey herons of Velassaru were impossible to miss, with their flashy head plumes and strangely dinosaur looks. Standing nearly a metre tall but weighing in at a wispy two kilos, they were as eye-catching as a serpent: half bird, half God, denizens of the watery places so loved by humans. Here in the Maldives, a tropical paradise of 1,200 islands in the warm waters of the Indian Ocean, they were a perfect symbol of peace and tranquility.

This is the story of one of those herons. His name, of course, was Heron.

Heron enjoyed a simple life. The deep blue of the sky and startling whiteness of the sand in the Maldives were the backcloth to his existence. The bare essentials were all he needed: no possessions to tie him down, just a roost in the treetops. His castle was the island surrounding the luxury resort of Velassaru.

But he was a resident, never a tourist. No need to make choices between bungalows or villas, whether to reside by the beach or tucked among the luxuriant gardens – though he did occasionally dip his aquiline bill into one of the pools, mesmerised by his own reflection.

Heron had the freedom of the manor and an unerring routine. By the time Velassaru's guests had ventured onto the beach for some morning yoga or a gentle paddle, Heron had long since saluted the dawn with a long cry of "Fraaank" as he glided over the water, ready for another day of patrolling the shallows for fish.

Also unlike the guests, who morphed from colourful beachwear to casual slacks and shirts at the end of each day, Heron wore the same elegant outfit day in and day out: a dashing combination of white chest feathers, grey morning suit and natty black head plumes.

And while human visitors donned goggles and flippers to splash into the watery world of the ocean and admire coral and fishes, Heron would dive straight into the depths, his harpoon-like bill lancing forward at almost 100 mph to skewer one of the tiny fish that clustered in dark clouds near the shoreline. He monitored the ebb and flow of these swarms as black-tipped reef sharks

patrolled the shoals, occasionally lunging with electrifying speed, mouth wide open, sending a cloud of sparkling silvery bodies into the air and straight into his open bill.

Though Heron preferred his own company, there was no denying his celebrity status at Velassaru. He was very much a public figure, his image enshrined on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, attracting thousands of followers each year. Everyone who visited Velassaru wanted their picture taken with him. He was the perfect model, polite but never deferential, betraying no hint of embarrassment or irritation as couples posed in front of him, prostrating themselves at his feet for a low angle shot or climbing up on the boardwalk for an aerial view. His patience was inexhaustible.

At dusk as the sun dropped soft and golden down the silky sky, Heron paced the water's edge, his long shadow mirroring his silent footfall, leaving three-pronged imprints in the glittering sand. He would stop occasionally to slide his rapier bill through his breast feathers, teasing out a rumple here and a tangle there, until everything was just so. Sometimes he perched atop the thatched roof of the spa, watching as evening revellers ambled back along the boardwalk to the neat row of waterside villas. He passed no judgement, inscrutable as an ancient weathervane. Then his imperious yellow eyes drooped shut.

During the daytime, Heron's insatiable passion was for fish. Had he not been such a master fisherman, he might have been jealous of the Sushi Bar at Velassaru, with its smooth slices of salmon and tuna. Presiding over the culinary feast, chef Carlos Exprua from Costa Rica knew all about how Heron had nurtured a baby heron that had taken a tumble from its nest near the staff quarters.

The baby heron was fortunate, picked up by its human friends and dusted down before a hawk or crow could snatch it away. Known as Makana to its Maldivian carers, it wandered wherever it pleased, becoming even more of a celebrity than its older relative, pacing the beaches and boardwalks around the island. It knew exactly where to find the next meal, tapping its bill impatiently on the door of the



kitchen, demanding fresh scraps from the catch of the day long before the first guest sat down to dine. Eventually Makana was taken to another island to begin a new life. For a while, nothing was seen or heard of Makana. But one day it took to the air and, with an elegant swish of its six-foot wingspan, lofted into the blue. After circling for a final look at its adopted home, it flew straight as an arrow back to the island of its birth.

That was a while ago now, but with herons' capacity to live 10 or 15 years, it's pleasing to think that Makana and Heron might still be giving visitors to this wonderful place not only a sense of their grace, but also a particular piece of island wisdom: keep it simple.



Miracle on the Han River

pictures
Noe Alonzo

words
Simon Langley





South Korea is a nation that had to grow

up quickly. Just a half century ago it was the industrial North's vestigial poor cousin, reliant on subsistence farming. It had a smaller GDP than Ghana. The Korean War once pushed its defensive forces to just a tiny foothold in the south-eastern corner of the peninsula.

Since then, UN intervention followed by decades of prudent fiscal government have transformed the country. Today South Korea is the world's eleventh largest economy. It's home to tech giants such as Samsung and LG, to the world's fastest internet service and its four largest shipyards.

But it's not all heady superlatives. This rapid growth – known as 'the miracle on the Han River' – has come at a price.

When I first arrived, my boss was keen to explain his country's work ethic. "Korea doesn't have ore," he said, "we have people." So Koreans work the second-longest hours in the OECD and holidays are a rarity. Every night, employees won't leave their offices until their managers do.

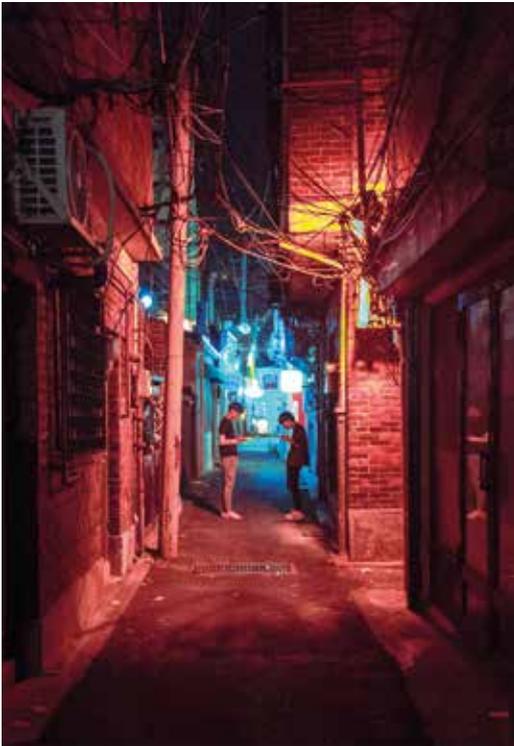
That's why, between the glass and steel of Seoul's skyscraping thrust, there's a rabbit warren of laneways alive with neon. Street vendors hawk steaming dumplings, karaoke bars blare out bouncing beats, and tangled power lines make for easy metaphors of a country not fully past its growing pains. This is where the city comes to breathe.

And Korea has the highest alcohol consumption per capita in the world. *Soju* – its national drink – is the globe's best-selling booze.

The result? A soundtrack of bubblegum k-pop and chattering optimism that isn't interrupted by what's happening a few dozen miles north. While miracles take work, they do come with their upsides.









Driving the Viking trail

words
Jonathan Lorie

Opposite:
A reconstructed Viking church door at the Moesgaard Museum in Aarhus.

I'm driving through central Denmark in search of dead bodies. Not the kind you find in Scandi Noir movies or washed up in Copenhagen in scary news reports, but an older kind from long ago that can tell us about our past and maybe who we are.

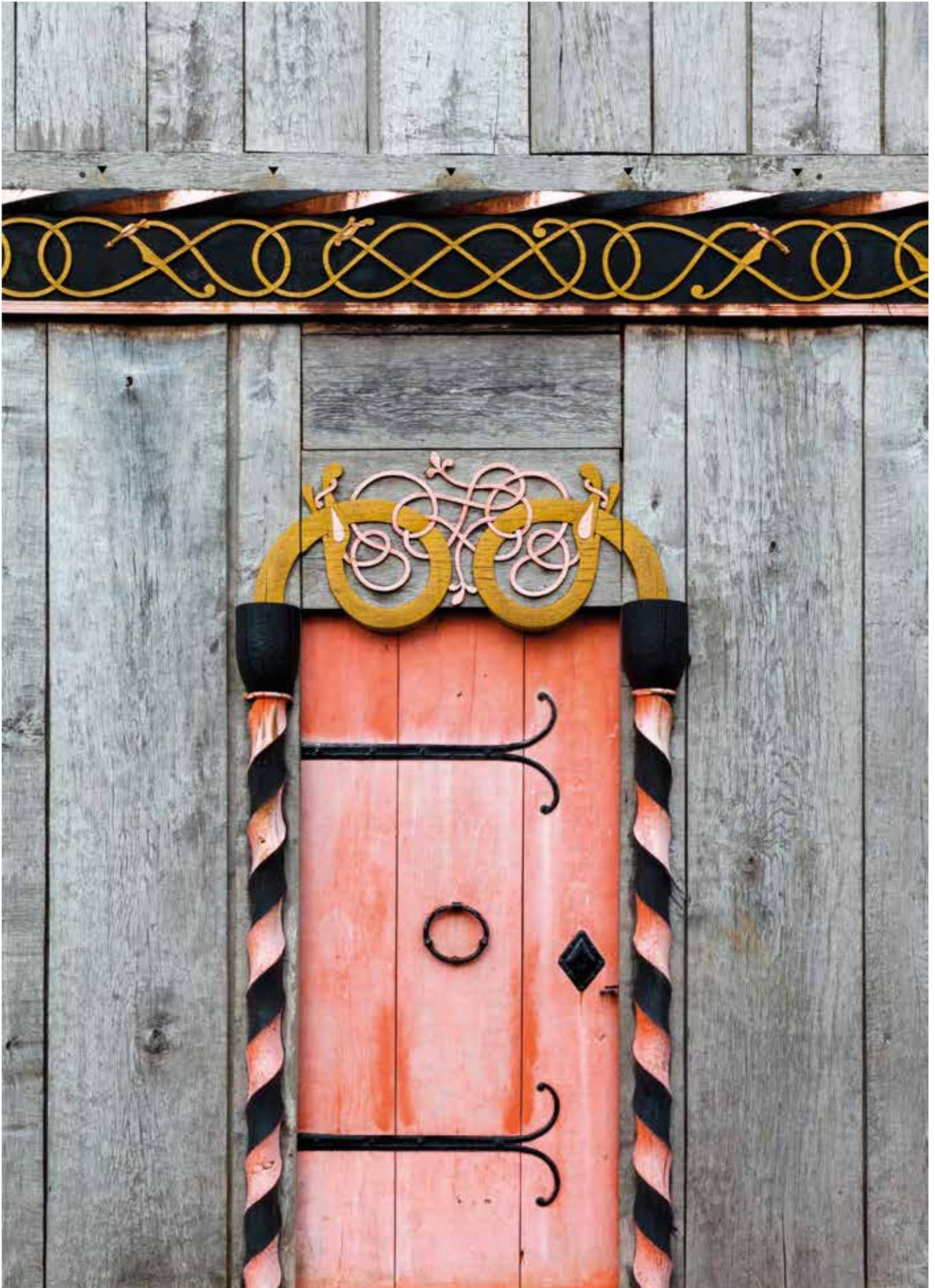
"They were buried with everyday objects and even dogs," says Jasper Lynge, steward at Lindholm Hoje, the largest Viking burial ground in Europe, where I begin. "They had things you would recognise – knives, jewellery, dishes for food. But this was done a thousand years ago." We gaze across a windswept hill in northern Jutland where hundreds of stone circles still mark the graves of Dark Age people. Many are shaped like ovals – like boats – 20 feet long and marked at prow and stern with taller stones jutting from the grass like ancient timbers. Beyond them shimmers a jagged fjord where longships once launched for the North Sea and the lands of plunder – including, of course, the British Isles.

"And now, a Viking breakfast," grins Jasper, leading me into a visitor centre with fine displays on Viking history. We sit at a table spread with Dark Age

delicacies – slices of sweet spelt bread, a rough bowl of pickled gooseberries, rosemary jam "and a horn of mead wine," he chortles. "These salted almonds came from Spain, where the Vikings traded. They sailed everywhere. In the graves we found a brooch with African ivory inlaid, a knife of Damascus steel and coins from Arab lands."

These early freebooters, part merchants part pirates, spun a web of trading and raiding that spanned Europe and the north Atlantic. They reached Constantinople and Newfoundland, built Dublin, York and Novgorod, ruled Normandy, Sicily and Scotland. They left behind their genes and their place-names, the British royal family, and a particular form of corpse that would not look out of place in *The Bridge*. I say goodbye to Jasper and drive off to see one.

Aarhus, 70 miles south through waving cornfields and pretty wooden villages, is Denmark's Oxford – a handsome university town by the sea, noted for its nightlife and its New Nordic restaurants. This year it is Europe's Capital of Culture and its





Above: Europe's largest Viking graveyard, at Lindholm Høje in northern Jutland.

ambitious programme, directed by an expat Brit, asks what it means to be European – an interesting question in the era of Brexit. There have been avant-garde operas, community arts, Viking sagas and a Creativity World Forum. But the town is much more famous for a 1,900-year-old murder victim on show in its archaeology museum, who offers a different answer to that question.

Moesgaard Museum is a spectacular modern building by the shore. You can walk up its slanting roof for superb views of the silver waters that link the Baltic to the North Sea. Inside is a hall displaying the evolution of mankind, from apes to now,

shown in sculptured faces of all the variant species: Sapiens comes in late. Beyond that is the resting place of a 30-year-old man who was killed near here in 200 AD by having his throat slit from ear to ear from behind.

Grauballe Man was discovered in 1952 by peat-cutters digging for fuel. He was so well preserved in the acid waters of the bog that they thought he was a recent death and called in the police. The authorities could still take his fingerprints.

I gaze into his face. His hair is red. His skin is soft and shiny. His head is twisted behind his back.



Bodies like this have been found all across northern Europe, from the marshes of Poland and Germany to the lowlands of Belgium and the bogs of England and Eire. They go back a long way, as far as 8000 BC, and their spread suggests a single culture across ancient, tribal Europe, long before the Vikings.

They are thought to be sacrifices, slipped into the waterworld between earth and underground where gods might be approached, perhaps in times of trouble. Beside Grauballe Man are displayed other offerings dropped into the holy waters – warriors' swords, ritual cauldrons, plaits of women's hair.



I wander through the dim-lit chambers, as though underground myself. The maze of the museum is a twilight zone of a distant past that is also mine, like a place from a dream whose symbols stay in your mind. My ancestors came from Scandinavia. My grandfather was a knight at the Swedish court. These people are my own. The borders between them and me are thin.

Forty years ago, in the last era when Ireland had a hard border and Europeans were being killed for religious reasons, a young Irish poet called Seamus Heaney wrote a suite of poems about this bog man and his compatriots. One begins: 'Some day I will go to Aarhus/To see his peat brown head,/The mild pods of his eye-lids,/His pointed skin cap....'

The suite became famous as the core of a book called *North*, which identified the old cultures of the North Sea as a single zone, whose buried meanings affect us still. For Heaney was writing in the time

Above: Viking-style plaits on a modern-day villager at Lindholm Hoje.



Opposite and above: The Viking stone at Jelling marks the birth of the Danish nation.

of the Troubles in Ireland, when historic identities bred violence on a scale way beyond Scandi thrillers. His poem ends: ‘Out there in Jutland/ In the old man-killing parishes/ I will feel lost,/ Unhappy and at home.’

But in a classic case of mistaken identity, Heaney got the wrong corpse. I drive on to the town of Silkeborg to see the truth. It’s a handsome place on a lake where boats splash and the police are polite at my driving errors. In the hall of its local museum I meet curator Karen Boe.

“Oh yes,” she smiles, “I met Heaney. I even got drunk with him. He helped us a lot, because he wanted to make up for this.” Heaney’s bog body, she explains, was not the one at Aarhus but the one on show here in Silkeborg: Tollund Man. “But he said that Aarhus fitted better in the poem, so he owed us a syllable.”

She shows me the body on a slab. It is scary. The dead man is naked but for a leather cap and belt, curled as though asleep or afraid. And round his neck is a noose.

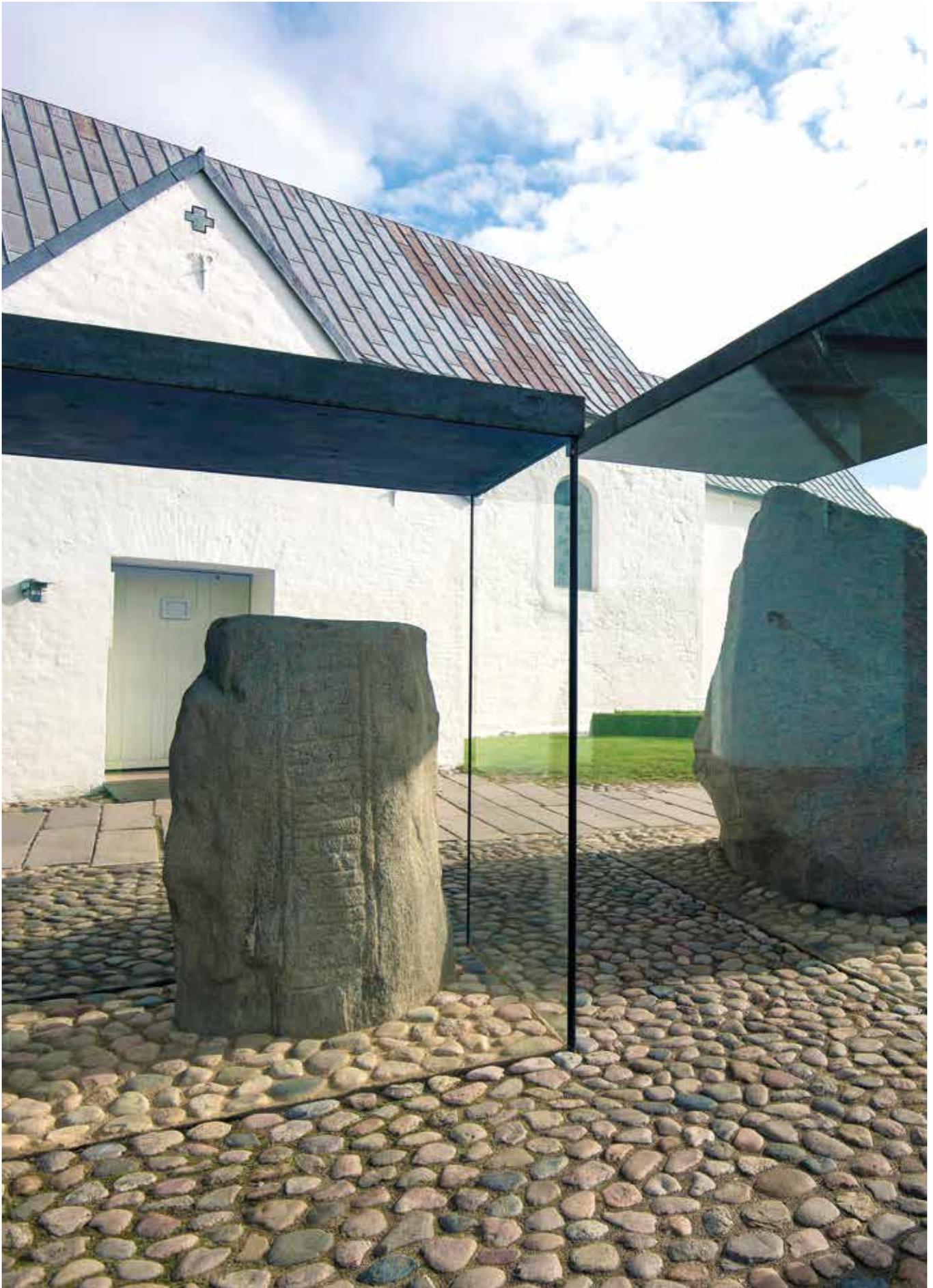
“Hanging was a sacred death,” says Karen. “In Norse

mythology, Odin was the head god and he sacrificed himself by hanging on a sacred tree. Perhaps this man was a messenger to the gods.”

I end my journey at a final resting place, where Dark Age beliefs merged with Christianity. Forty miles south, in the heart of the country, is a village called Jelling. I park and walk to its whitewashed medieval church. Beside it rise two burial mounds, the tombs of the first king and queen of Denmark. In front is the Jelling Stone, a 10-ton slice of granite erected by their son, Harald Bluetooth. It’s popularly known as ‘Denmark’s birth certificate’.

I peer at its carved sides. One is chiselled with Viking runes boasting of Bluetooth’s conquests and how he converted ‘Danmark’ to Christianity. The other has a carving of a crucified god, tangled among branches. But it is not Odin: it is Jesus, the earliest image of Christ in all of Scandinavia.

A similar carving of Christ among branches has been found on a grave in St Paul’s Cathedral in London. It dates from the eleventh century, the period when Vikings occupied England under William the Conqueror – and never left again.







The key to the Marae

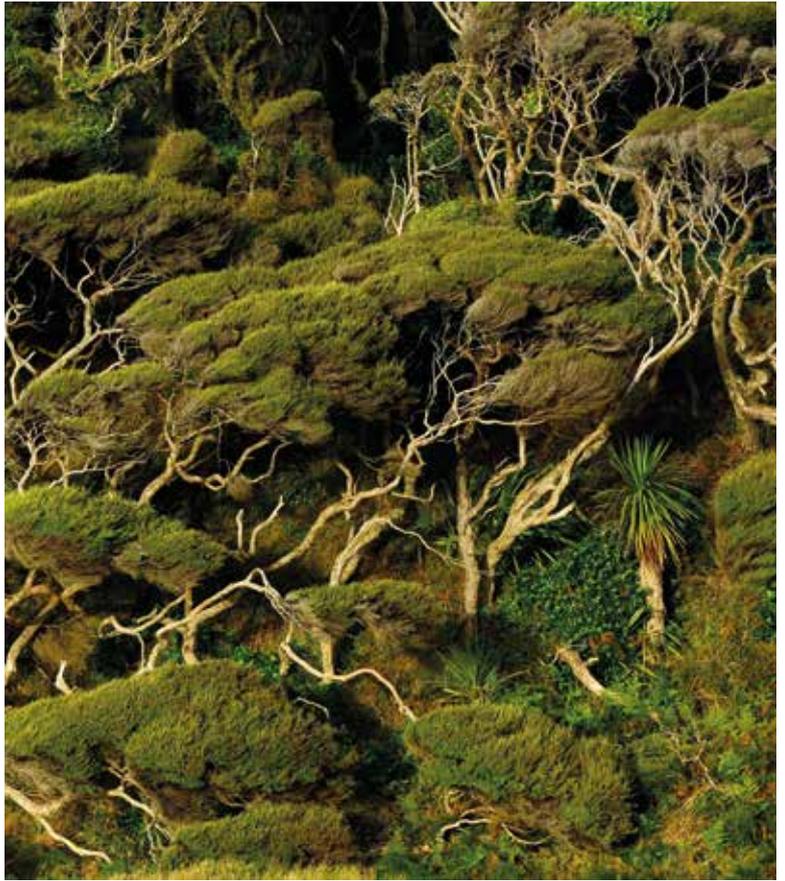
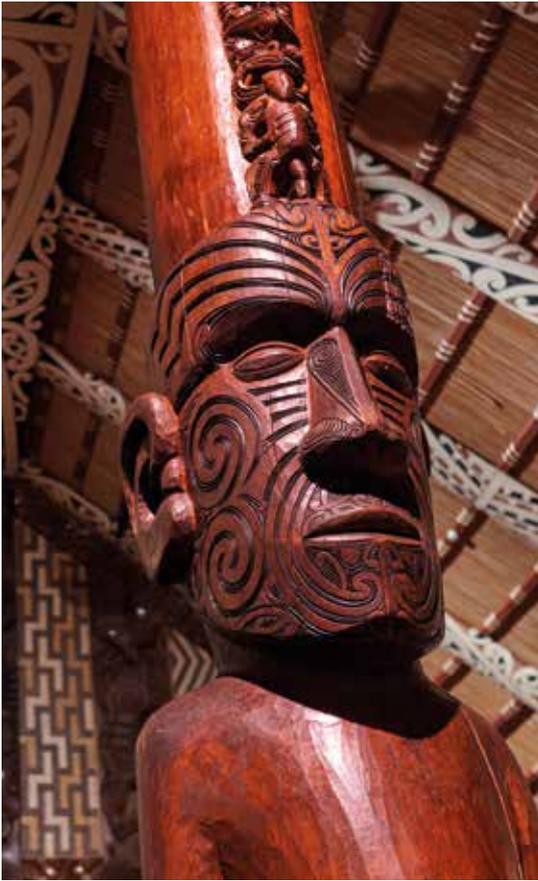
words
Clyde Macfarlane

Harry looks into his coffee and listens to the house-owner speak. Another man who rose to shake my hand observes with a lazy silence. A scruffy mullet falls over his big shoulders. It's as if he walked out of a barbershop mid-way through a haircut. The house-owner talks in a soft voice: he, like everyone else I meet, is concerned about how wet the summer has been. The plants grow out of control in this constant tropical mist. This morning was bright, but the puddles on the road reflected the sun like a hangover.

The East Cape peninsula of New Zealand's North Island is an intricate network of ocean bays and empty roads. Nowhere in the country is Polynesian culture more apparent. It's not uncommon to hear Maori spoken, and the long-trusted dietary staples of *kumara* and pig are ever present in the honesty boxes and chicken-wired yards of the houses, trailers and tin shacks that dot these hills.

At the coast, the flowers of pohutukawa trees are a brilliant red against a seemingly permanent bank of white cloud. The clouds and the Pacific Ocean are frozen like a landscape painting. The waves are short in height but long and noisy; a constant roar makes the crash and sigh of their shallow breaks indistinguishable.

Public transport out here is awful, so New Zealand's laidback lifestyle makes hitchhiking an ideal way to travel and meet people. Not knowing exactly where you'll end up is something to be embraced, thanks to an excellent Freedom Camping scheme,



which keeps a network of free campsites clean and equipped with hot showers. A highway cuts from Wairoa to Opotiki, but the best sites follow the smaller roads around the coast. Surfers meet on good-weather evenings, their black shapes rising and falling with the sunset-orange waves. As a lone traveller, you'd be hard pushed to walk past a roadside barbeque group – beers in hand, wetsuits unzipped at the hips – without being asked to join.

I tell the boys about Wharariki beach, a sand spit at the far north of the South Island. You can camp at the back of caves that half-fill with water as the tide comes in. All day tiny birds dart a few feet from your head. At dusk they go nuts, screeching and dive-bombing out of the cave in the minutes after the sun has set over the sea but before its light has faded. At night bats appear, beating wind across your face as they change course around your echo-located outline. In the morning, you realise your tent is covered in dung.

The house-owner asks if there is any good fishing at Wharariki, nodding to his rods propped up behind the fridge. On cue the boys get out their phones, both a few swipes away from their favourite fishing-trophy snaps.

Harry talks in a clipped Kiwi bounce, more clipped and bouncing when I am out of the conversation: the schooling of his son, the good health of the house owner, the weight of a cousin's newborn baby. "Ten stone!" the cousin chips in from the living room to raucous laughter. When she enters the kitchen, I cannot believe she's old enough to be a mother. Her baby looks down on us with dark, serious eyes. "Pounds I could believe," says the house-owner with a wise grin.

Wise is an attribute I gave him before I entered the house, for he is the man who holds the key to the Marae. He is a traceable relative to Harry, but they seem to bond more through friendship than family.

We finish our coffee and drive to the Marae. There are two houses. The first is a meeting house, with

a triangular roof that drops almost to the ground. The air inside is heavy with the smell of cooked meat. There is no floor, only a carpet of straw-like grass that becomes the outdoors where it meets the dropped roof. An ashy hole in the centre holds the memory of a recent cook-up. Carved wooden figures sit on each other's shoulders up the walls. The house-owner strokes the rich wood of the figures, the curls of the necks, the cheekbones and the angry eyebrows. Harry does the same, as does Scruffy Mullet – not through ritual, just a common curiosity.

We remove our shoes before entering the second building. Damp mattresses are propped up to air. I notice the red hooped rugby socks of the house-owner. In his youth, perhaps. Now he is too old and peaceful to play rugby. Instead, the bunched woolly socks make him look like a big toddler. Harry, rugby socks and rugby shorts, has the solid neck of a prop. His shark-like features are surprisingly intact. Harry and Scruffy Mullet study a series of portrait photos with a concentration that could lead one to assume that they, like me, are first-time visitors to the Marae.

"Have you seen Joseph's girl lately?" Harry asks, rubbing his jaw with the V of his hand. "Looks the same."

There is a picture of a frizzy-haired woman who looks like she knew how to have fun. A gold necklace weighs heavy on her chest. Her ears have matching teardrop jewellery, connected to her ears, it seems, by ribbons. The house-owner nods in agreement. Even in the presence of such a crowd, there is no hiding a distant family connection. No one is alone. I imagine the mattresses covering the floor, a full house at the Marae halfway between Tokomaru Bay and Rangitukia.

Preceding page: Beach at Waitangi, North Island, where a historic peace treaty was signed in 1840 defining the rights of the Maori peoples.

Opposite page (clockwise from top left): Traditional statue inside the national Marae at the Waitangi Treaty Grounds. Manuka trees on the way to Wharariki beach. Carved head in a Marae at Rotorua. Blossoms of the pohutukawa tree.

The ice cream is free

FREDERICK CROWE DISCOVERS THE DELIGHTS OF A DAY IN CUSCO

I came to Cusco as a volunteer in local schools, but a national strike prevented that. While waiting to build badminton nets and plant apple trees, I set out with my fellow students to explore the city.

Our mornings started at the Mirador Hostel with a breakfast of sweet bread (because all bread in Peru tastes sweet) and jam, while Julio the giggly waiter served coca tea. Or we'd go around the corner to get doughnuts at a bakery, indulging ourselves for 20p. Then we'd wander the streets of Cusco, filled with a din of beeps and whistles from the rush-hour traffic.

Walking up to the main plaza one day, we spotted something through an old door that appeared to be a basketball match. Surprised and intrigued, we ventured through and discovered a huge basketball arena with seating all around. A women's match was in full swing, which we watched while finishing our warm caramel pastries.

After the match, we walked to one of the most important Spanish Catholic churches in Cusco. Qorikancha was built directly on top of the Inca Temple of the Sun, whose remains are still incorporated into today's church. We stayed here for hours, marvelling at the incredible Inca stonework which fits together like a jigsaw puzzle without cement or mortar, and at the exquisite Spanish architecture and artwork inside, with gold leaf almost everywhere you look.

One of the finest pieces of work inside was a large painting of the Milky Way, or 'celestial river' as it is known, which identifies the silhouettes of animals important in Incan culture. The gardens were as breathtaking as the church itself, with honeysuckle everywhere drawing an abundance of hummingbirds.

Leaving the gardens, we walked to the main plaza and ordered a bite to eat at Bambos, the Peruvian version of McDonalds. Still with room and a sweet tooth, we popped into an ice cream shop nearby and put Bob Marley on the jukebox. Within minutes, the ice cream bar felt like the hub of Cusco and we could hardly move for the crowd. Unbeknown to us, that day at four o'clock all the ice cream was free, attracting a surge of people.

One of our guides in Peru, Andy Dare, had recommended a visit to the chocolate museum in a square just above the plaza. On the way, we caught a wedding in another of the huge Spanish churches, entering just as the bride was being walked down the aisle by her father to the sound of Mendelssohn's *Wedding March*. One of the greatest aspects of Cusco, we were finding, is its air of discovery and spontaneity.

At the chocolate museum we were guided by a local boy called Gabriel, who talked us through the processing of cacao from bean to bar, telling many *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* jokes along the way. Then he took us to sample

their produce, a variety of chocolate-based teas, jams and liqueurs. Of course we tried all 12 of the latter.

That day was a friend's eighteenth birthday, so we let her choose the restaurant that night, while we explored different streets off the main plaza, directing some American tourists from Iowa in the process. Settling on an Italian restaurant, we entered and were greeted with free Pisco Sours. This classic local cocktail is normally made from Peruvian white brandy (Pisco), lime juice and egg whites. But on telling the waiter that our friend was turning 18, we were given free shots of Pisco mized with coca leaf.

Feeling merrier than when we entered, we decided it would be a good idea as a birthday treat to find a karaoke bar. There we sang for nearly two hours, joined by the staff behind the counter. Favourite songs were Earth Wind and Fire's *September* and ELO's *Mr Blue Sky*.

It was a long evening and we wandered back to the Mirador Hostel to get some sleep. But as I walked to my room, I heard our permanent guide, the aptly named Tom Jolly, bursting through the hostel's front door followed by a mariachi band in full swing. We joined them in the courtyard, along with Senor Lucas the Mirador owner and Julio his newest employee.

The dancing and singing lasted all night, ending a day that could not have gone better. Cusco turned out to be the trip of a lifetime.



Laws of the Jungle

Words by Justine Hardy

*'We borrow the hearts
Of nomadic birds
Who don't recognise borders.'*

These words were written on the side
of a shelter in the camp in Calais that
became known as 'the Jungle'.

The camp was a symbol of the refugee
crisis in Europe, an emblematic clutch of
blue, green and white plastic and canvas,
an unsettled settlement, shifting around
the edges of Calais for 25 years.

When the refugee crisis peaked in
2015, the UN's refugee agency UNHCR
reported that 65.3 million people had
been displaced by war or persecution
during that year. In relation to the
world's population of 7.4 billion, this
implies that one in every 113 people on
earth was either internally displaced,
a refugee or an asylum seeker.

By then Iraqi Kurds, the earliest
majority in the camp, had become a
minority in the face of a Syrian influx.
But the Jungle was a different kind
of refugee camp to those sheltering
millions of displaced Syrians elsewhere,
camps such as Za'atari in Jordan, which
had become that country's fourth most
populated city, though it was a slum city.
By comparison, the Jungle was less than
a tenth of its size.

Za'atari is entirely peopled by Syrians
fleeing the civil war. For many living
there, it is only a few miles and one
border from their homes – a border that

was sealed in 2013 due to the strain on
Jordanian resources, particularly water.

Those who lived in the Jungle repre-
sented a different refugee cataclysm.
In that crisis year of 2015, one million
refugees entered Europe. In total they
had travelled over two billion miles to
get there, and the camp was made up
of more than 20 nationalities.

It was not recorded who wrote those
introductory words. The shelter had
been abandoned when the words were
photographed. Amongst all the records
of who passed through the camp, there
is no mention of where the writer came
from or where they hoped to go. But it is
unlikely to have been a woman, because
97% of the Jungle's population was male.

Here is one of the hard facts of refugee
camps. The further they are from the
refugees' home country, the higher the
male population. In contrast to the male
domination of the Jungle, the population
of Za'atari Camp, so close to the Syrian
border, is almost exactly 50:50 male and
female across all age groups.

"Of course we send our sons. They are
strong and have more education than we
women. They can find work. Then they
will send for us," said an Afghan woman
at a displaced persons camp in Pakistan
in 2015. She was answering a question as
to why her three sons had set out on the
harsh journey to Europe, leaving herself
and her daughters in the camp.

'We borrow the hearts of nomadic

birds...' – that first line from the tent in
the Jungle, perhaps written by someone
forced to close down their own heart,
locking it away as part of a life that no
longer existed, in a country that might
never be the same again.

The loneliness of the long-distance
refugees, young men tramping thou-
sands of miles, needs to be re-examined
through the prism of anger that their
isolation creates. They are not travellers
by choice, and the evidence is that they
are not navigating their new worlds well,
separated from the familiarity and com-
munity of their families and homes.

The countries being asked to find
solutions for these travellers, providing
them with jobs and homes, and then
the same again for the families that may
follow them, have also to confront the
stark actualities that ride alongside
the economic challenges of taking in
these refugees.

So many nations of the world are the
result of humanity on the move, escap-
ing disaster, famine, war, oppression and
disease. In contrast to the vast historical
movements of tribes and peoples, this
current wave of the displaced is spear-
headed by young men, many travelling
in desperation, fuelled by rage about
the devastation that they have come
from – a form of anger exacerbated by
separation from all that they know. It is a
fury that can become violently redirected
at the comforts and freedoms they find

in the countries they have risked everything to reach.

Recently, in a stark and controversial article in *National Interest* magazine, an experienced refugee programme director quoted a friend, an Afghan, who had long been settled in Austria. In his work as a court translator, this friend had listened to the evidence of hundreds of recent Afghan refugees arrested for various crimes, but for one in particular. This man was discussing the escalating number of rapes being perpetrated by young Afghan men in Austria.

His belief was that these crimes are motivated by a deep and abiding contempt, which these young men seem to have for Western civilisation. To them, Europe represents an escape from violence, but it is also the enemy. He felt that they see women as their legitimate spoils, along with housing, money and passports.

And then there is the raw state of these hearts, borrowed from nomadic birds.

This is not a mawkish and patronising appeal to 'feel their pain'. It is asking for more clear-sighted understanding of how these young men are behaving, so far from the stability and controlling structures of their families and communities. As the Afghan court translator pointed out, until they began these unwanted journeys they had only ever seen women covered and chaperoned. Now they find themselves

in places where women move around freely, apparently without needing the protection of men. The translator believes that this disgusts them.

There is an ignominy to many of the scenarios playing out around these vast movements of humanity. Misplaced political correctness masquerades as 'cultural sensitivity', flailing and failing in almost every way. Perhaps worse than this is a particular kind of privileged naivety that assumes that all refugees must surely aspire to 'our' way of life.

In the planning and thinking around these heart-battered travellers, there is a very human truth that seems to be ignored. Anyone, when faced with death, will do almost anything to survive, abandoning aspects of their humanity as they do so. After this brutality of survival, it is an act of great human courage to bring a heart home, and to enter a new community, amongst people who have not had to live through the same violence.



JUSTINE HARDY is a writer, trauma psychotherapist and the founder of Healing Kashmir.

Illustration by LUKE WALWYN.



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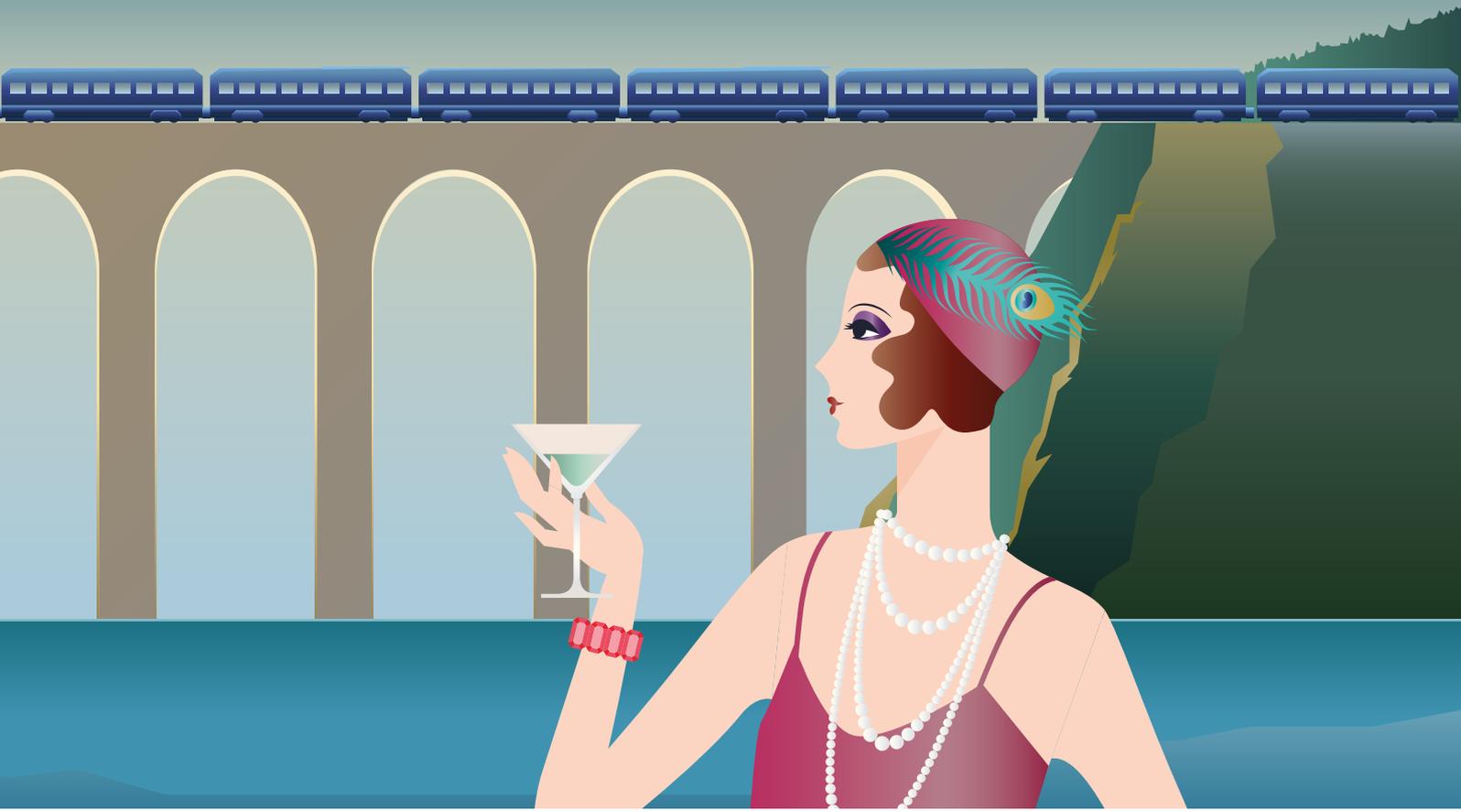
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When in Venice...

Italian cook **Valeria Necchio** shares recipes from her home town

INTERVIEW BY MARK REYNOLDS

What are the main distinctions between dishes from Venice and those from the surrounding region, and what do they have in common?

Venice's cuisine is influenced by the sea that envelops it, as much as by its heritage of trading in spices and dried fruits and its history as a melting pot of cultures. Its repertoire is defined by seafood, game and vegetables, often scented with warm spices or sweet-and-sour notes. Part of this food heritage spread inland, but they remain very distinctive worlds. Away from the sea, poultry and livestock take the place of seafood; food is generally heartier and heavier in sauces and condiments. What they do have in common is rice and cornmeal as staples and starches of choice. Pasta is a fairly recent and still marginal part of Venetian cuisine.

What was your motivation for collecting these recipes and publishing them in your new cookbook *Veneto*?

A combination of factors came into play. The main one was that I wanted to tell the story of my home region through its food, in a way no one had done before. And I wanted to do so through anecdotes about me and my family and snippets of daily life, to put the food into a context that feels interesting, informative and enjoyable. In this sense, the narrative in *Veneto* is as crucial as the recipes. I knew from the start that the book was going to have a strong memoir-like component,

so I wanted its structure to reflect this. By grouping the recipes into classic ('Then') and modern ('Now'), I had the chance firstly to tell the story of my family by means of the traditional recipes I have been exposed to growing up; and secondly to move on from the strictly traditional repertoire to share my personal journey, as someone living away from home and cooking Venetian-inspired dishes that are both modern and rooted in the region's array of flavours and ingredients.

What age were you when you cooked your first Venetian meal, and what did you make?

We cooked a lot of traditional recipes in my family, but never consciously so. For us, it was just everyday food. I began to see it with different eyes only as I started to travel, learn about regional Italian food and become interested in it. The first time I purposefully and knowingly cooked a fully Venetian meal must have been in my early twenties. I don't remember exactly what I cooked, but I'm fairly confident that there were crostini, risotto and baked fish thrown in there. And of course biscuits with sweet wine.

Who are your main culinary influences, both within your family and beyond?

Grandma and Mum are both home cooks, though very different ones. I was influenced by both – by Grandma's very hearty, small repertoire of classics, and by

Mum's slightly lighter and straightforward cooking. They both embraced seasonality (we had a prolific vegetable garden) and that has had a huge impact on the way I cook and think about food today. Family aside, I've been definitely influenced by the *locavore* (local food) movement, and by the idea of conscious consumption and community support; by chefs whose culinary approach I felt immediately close to mine, and who champion an ingredient-driven sort of cooking that is both uncomplicated and utterly refined; and finally, by a handful of strong, inspiring food-writing voices of the likes of Elizabeth David, Jane Grigson and Anna del Conte.

What are some of the more unusual or far-flung ingredients in Venetian cooking?

White polenta, definitely. Certain types of fish and shellfish such as *moeche* (soft-shell crab) and mantis prawn. And stockfish, which often hails from Norway but is quite hard to find outside of Veneto. *Castrature*, the first, most tender shoot of the artichoke plant: particularly prized are those coming from the island of Sant'Erasmus, in the Venetian lagoon. And *bruscandoli*, or wild hop shoots – quintessential part of our springtime culinary repertoire.

Which of these dishes do you find yourself preparing most weeks?

I love seafood and I cook it regularly when I'm in Veneto. I also have a soft spot for *baccalà mantecato*, which I make with stockfish, as tradition demands, but that I cheatingly whip up with a mixer.

What are your key courses for a blow-out dinner party?

I love a good *antipasti* spread to start the meal: *sarde in saor* (sweet-and-sour marinated sardines), some crostini and a tray of piping-hot cod rissoles. For *primo*, a bowl of risotto with squid ink is hard to beat. Sea bream baked on a bed of thinly sliced potatoes is a good way to carry on the meal while keeping things on the light side, so as to ensure plenty of room for a couple of *zaeti* (polenta biscuits) at the end.

How much of your diet is generally made up of seasonal food versus year-round staples?

It depends on the seasons. In the summer, I only eat what's in season or growing in the garden, as everything is so abundant and gloriously flavoursome. In winter, I rely on what I've preserved (tomato sauce, frozen green beans, peas and borlotti beans) for a change from root vegetables and chicory. In early spring, when there's not much fruit around, I just carry on buying apples and pears until the first strawberries and *nespole* (loquats) make an appearance at the market. Generally speaking, I try to stick to what's around at any given time of the year in the place that I'm living in.

Which not-quite-Venetian recipes have crept into the book by virtue of being family favourites?

Sbrisolona is one, a crumbly polenta and almond shortbread originally from Mantova. I included it because I absolutely adore it and because it feels very familiar to me (Mantova has a very similar culinary repertoire to the Venetian hinterland). Another is *gnocchetti al pesto*. Basil pesto comes from Liguria, but we've always made it at home, as a way to use up the giant amount of basil growing in our garden. So in a way, it has always been a familiar flavour for me.



PHOTO: ?????

Which are among the most unswervingly Venetian dishes?

There are a few, but I'd say *bigoli in salsa* (fresh thick spaghetti in an anchovy and onion sauce) and *sùgòi* (must grape pudding).

Do you strictly serve Venetian wines with this food, or are there allowable exceptions?

I like exploring different regions, so no, I serve a bit of everything depending on what's cooking and what I have on hand. That said, I'm partial to good, local bubbles. There's never a shortage of prosecco in my fridge.

Veneto: Recipes from an Italian Country Kitchen, by Valeria Necchio, is published by Faber & Faber, £20.

Ulagalla

Anuradhapura



Step into the past at this 150-year-old traditional mansion surrounded by 58 acres of gardens where monkeys scuttle and peacocks strut. Scattered among the lush grounds are 20 eco-villas for guests, elegant hideaways of dark wood and thatched roofs, edged with private decks and plunge pools. Seclusion and serenity are the watchwords here. From your balcony you can gaze across rice paddies, lakes and forests, where elephants are still seen. And to really get away from it all, you can borrow bikes to explore the whole estate.

Social life revolves around the Olympic-sized outdoor pool, the library and the open-sided bar with its timber beams and cooling breezes. If you're seriously in need of a pamper, there's an open-air spa beside a pond, offering traditional Sri Lankan massages and treatments. Dining options are pretty spectacular. There's the top-floor restaurant with its lovely views and menu of local curries and international cuisine. Or the observation platform, where you can eat under the stars. Or you might choose something more private – a meal served in your villa, out among the rice fields or even on the helipad.

Nearby are some of Sri Lanka's greatest sites. Half an hour away is the magnificent ruined city of Anuradhapura,



a UNESCO World Heritage Site filled with ancient temples and statues that are still revered and worshipped to this day.

An hour away is Sigiriya, a dramatic fortress on a vast rock with sweeping views across the central highlands: the climb is an adventure in itself. Equidistant is Dambulla, famous for its rock-cave temple filled with Buddha statues and ancient paintings, a twilight sanctuary filled with chanting and incense.

Chena Huts Yala National Park

Enjoy the best of wildlife on land and water at this boutique hotel set between Sri Lanka's best game park and a fabulous beach. The beach is home to nesting turtles, while Yala hosts herds of wild elephants that often play in the surf there. Storks and ibis wade through a lagoon beside the hotel, where crocodiles and buffalo lurk. Guests stay in safari-style thatched huts sprinkled among jungle trees, each with its own plunge pool and sun deck and designed with contemporary luxury in mind: think white domes arching over crisp white beds and freestanding bath-tubs, with vast windows looking onto the untamed bush. Dinner is in a hut by the sea, or lamplit on the beach itself, while a cocktail bar is sunk into the sand beyond.



Ceylon Tea Trails Hatton



Sri Lanka's only Relais & Châteaux hotel is a luxurious base for exploring the central highlands, where rolling green hills are home to tea plantations, waterfalls and spectacular walking routes. Once this was the heart of the British Raj on the island, and Ceylon Tea Trails elegantly evokes that vanished era with four planters' bungalows from the 1880s and 1920s. Splendidly restored, they now offer timbered ceilings, panelled libraries and claw-foot baths, and each has its own butler, chef and pool. They're built around the stunning Castlereagh Lake, and of course the grounds include croquet lawns and a clay tennis court. Meanwhile a resident tea planter will guide you through the tea-making process from hillside to factory, ending with a tasting.

Residence Colombo

Escape the heat and dust of Sri Lanka's capital city at this historic townhouse with its grand Victorian halls and luxury suites. Claiming to be Colombo's finest boutique hotel, it once welcomed British governors and Indian maharajas to its tranquil gardens. Today it also boasts a gourmet restaurant overlooking the outdoor swimming pool, serving an imaginative modern menu. But a favourite with the locals is old-fashioned afternoon tea. The suites are decorated in a blend of modern and Victorian style, and all feature private courtyards and spacious bathrooms with rain showers. Grandest of all is the Residence Suite which has a garden – quite a luxury in the centre of town. The location is also convenient, a short drive from the central area of Fort.





EXPLORE OREGON



Oregon is a state of natural wonders, of rich history and of surprising diversity. Windswept beaches front verdant forests while snow-capped peaks give way to sweeping rangelands and towering rock formations are born out of dramatic river valleys. One moment you could be tasting your way through one of the state's 750 vineyards and the next taking a board down one of its fabled slopes. Oregon is, after all, host to North America's only year-round ski season. What's more, with Delta Air Lines' new non-stop flights between London Heathrow and Portland, it's never been closer.



It's got the superlatives to back it up, too. Oregon features the continent's deepest river gorge, the world's second-most-climbed mountain and the country's deepest lake. Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuge even features the largest concentration of wintering bald eagles – a true American icon. It's all predicated on millennia of geological activity, marked by explosive volcanicity and best showcased with Oregon's 230-strong collection of state parks. Indeed, the John Day Fossil Beds is one of the richest fossil sites in the world. Here, world-class museums and mountains stratified into painted bands of colours remember some 45 million years of natural history.

But, it's not just for looking at and measuring. Much of Oregon's charm lies in getting out there and exploring; those wild rivers make for some of the finest white-water rafting and lush, waterfall-troubled woodland make for ideal hikes. After all, nearly half of the state is forested. And, the spirit of the Old

West is very much alive here, with the high desert of Eastern Oregon a postcard of dusty plains, jagged red rocks and snow-capped peaks that roll down into golden wheat fields and hills of sage. You can even live out your cowboy fantasy with a stay on a historic ranch, complete with horse rides, cookouts and, yes, lasso lessons. Don't also miss out on Bend's High Desert Museum where the region's pioneer heritage comes to life in live demonstrations. The other side of the coin can be found with the state's ten Native American tribes, their story told in reservations and fascinating heritage centres.

How best to take it all in, then? There's only one answer – indulge with that great American tradition, the road trip. Many of the best routes map its spectacular coast, stopping off at remote coves, historic lighthouses and quaint seaside towns. You'll also be rewarded if you turn inland, with everything from high mountain passes to open roads that lead through horizonless plains. It'll come as no surprise that Oregon features more scenic highways than any other state. But, if two wheels is more your thing, then look no further than the state's Scenic Bikeway programme, the only one of its kind in America. Comprising over 300 miles of prime trail, it's a collection of routes first suggested by locals. You'll just have to choose between desert-canyon challenges and gentle sweeps through fertile farmland.

Then, at the end of it all, you've earned some quiet respite. Get away to a quiet mountain cabin, tee off on an award-winning golf course and luxuriate with one of Oregon's world-class spas. And, with 363 miles of coastline to choose from, it's not difficult to find a pristine slice of beach to call your own. There are even 16 hot springs to choose from, and that's just the ones they know about.

However, hidden away among the great outdoors, there's a slice of considered urbanity – Portland. Once overshadowed by its bigger, West-Coast cousins, Oregon's largest city is truly coming into its own. There's a microbrewery and artisan coffee house on every corner, galleries exhibit the latest in local work, and cinemas screen indie releases, washed down with a craft beer, of course. Then, if shopping is more your bag, you'll be happy to hear that Oregon has no sales tax and Portland a myriad ways to take advantage, from big-brand arcades to whimsical boutiques housed in old Victorian residences. That's not to say, however, that the city has lost touch with its roots. The state's natural beauty is invited in with verdant parks, flowering shrubs and tall trees while the Willamette River winds through its centre and giant Mt. Hood provides the backdrop, keeping Portland honest.



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Trouble in paradise

words

Jonathan Lorie

Painting

Michael Armitage

'Painting is a way of thinking through something,' says Michael Armitage, 'trying to understand an experience or an event a little better and trying to communicate something of the problem to others.'

Problems are what this Kenyan-born artist's work is all about. The pictures may look gorgeous, their paint dripping with rich tones and swirling into dream-like images of the exotic and erotic, but look hard and you will see constant hints of trouble in paradise: the octopus lurking in the shallows, the crowd gathered by a reclining female nude, the feet hanging in the canopy of a tropical tree. Rich with the promise and menace of his East African homeland, these paintings dig deep into the meanings of life out there.

They're painted on a local material, the beaten bark of a fig tree from Uganda that was once used as clothing, in the days before European colonists brought in cotton. This *lubugo* cloth looks soft and uneven, lush and distressed all at once. And it's slashed with gaps and seams where different sheets are held together. The artist admires this cloth's history and inconsistency: 'I liked the way that the surface would interrupt the paintings,' he explains. 'It began to be a sort of metaphor of subversion.'

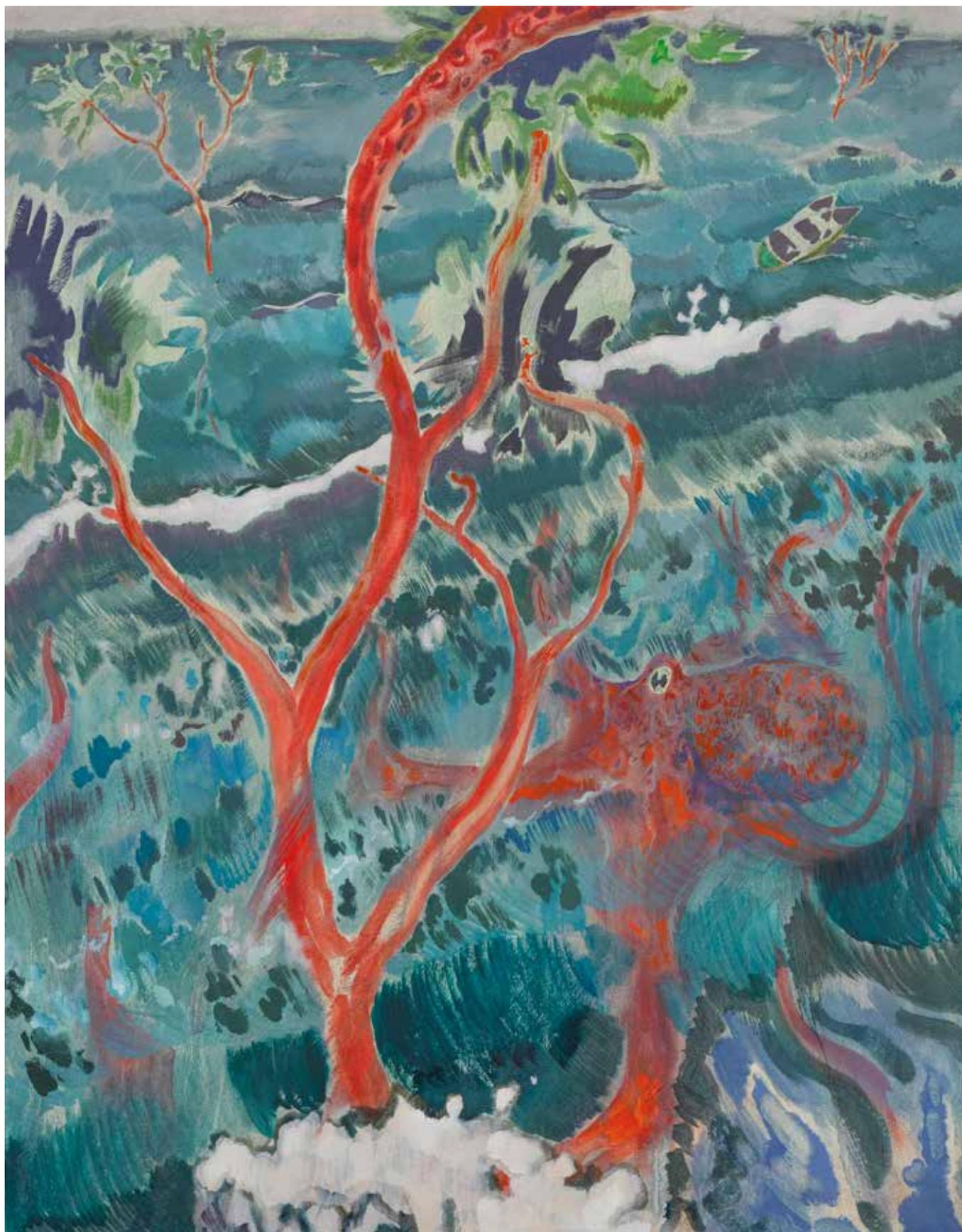
Critics have noted resemblances to Gauguin in these works: the hallucinogenic colours and haunted

motifs of figures both sinister and voluptuous, set in ambiguous but exotic landscapes. If there is a link, then Armitage is updating it: his imagery includes billboards and rallies, *tuk-tuks* and shanties, terrorists and shopping malls. There are echoes here too of Edvard Munch, whose fluid lines and expressionist moods allowed that artist to look beneath the surface of everyday situations.

Living between Nairobi and London, Armitage is increasingly recognised as part of a new wave of African contemporary art that is exciting collectors worldwide. His latest show was at Turner Contemporary, the influential public gallery in Margate, and he is represented in the UK by White Cube, champion of hipster art.

That new wave has found a home this autumn in the newly opened Zeitz MoCAA museum in Cape Town, which houses over 100 rooms of 'twenty-first century art from Africa and its diaspora'. When it opens at the end of September, we will know whether Armitage has a place in there. He certainly deserves one.

Opposite: The Octopus's Veil, Michael Armitage, 2016, oil on *lubugo* bark cloth, 220 x 170 cm (photo © White Cube/George Darrell).



Goodbye to all that

'The beauty of a landscape resides in its melancholy,' runs the epigraph to Nobel Prize-winning author Orhan Pamuk's portrait of his native city, Istanbul. It's a mood he makes his own in this lavishly illustrated reissue of the book that made his name here in the UK over a decade ago. Part memoir of his childhood, part homage to a great and changing city, *Istanbul Illustrated* is entirely captivating, and its plangent, nostalgic prose is only enhanced by the wealth of old photos that now grace its pages.

Here are black-and-whites of the Bosphorus filled with steamships, the bazaars with hawkers, the streets with horses. Men in straw boaters crowd a quayside, donkeys carry crates down cobbled alleys, tramcars plough through snow between Art Deco tenements. Behind them all loom the mosques, their slender minarets tribute to a vanished era of imperial greatness, from which the society into which he was born had not yet recovered.

It was a secular Turkey back then, with hardly a veiled woman showing in these photos. Middle-class families like Pamuk's aspired to be as Western as possible. He writes, 'Our greatest shortcoming, we felt, was never being as modern as we wanted to be.' Hard to believe that now, but the impact of Ataturk, modernising founder of the nation in the 1920s, was still profoundly felt and welcomed.

Pamuk started taking photos aged ten in 1962 (pictured right) and some images



from his family album are included here. Many others come from period sources and, for this edition of the book, he has added an extra 233 pictures. As he explains in a new introduction, 'In my view, the ideal photography book is one that enables its readers to discover their past anew through images of ordinary streets, objects, and moments in time.'

Curiously, he has decided not to explain the pictures themselves. He says, 'I set myself a rule: "There will be no words or descriptions beneath the photographs!" The significance and the context of an image should be revealed by the written text proper, not by a caption. Even though these photographs and images portrayed specific objects, streets, and people, their real purpose was to evoke a particular feeling and atmosphere.' And the atmosphere he seeks is the sadness of a city and a society lost to its own past yet unable to achieve its future.

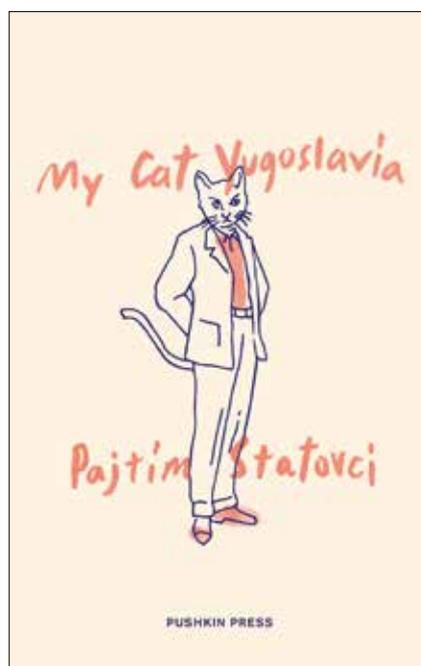
Yet the accompanying text is filled with life as well, following his own progress through childhood to adolescence. It ends with a final flourish as he embarks on a passionate yet secret affair with a fellow student. To this day he protects her identity, saying only – and wonderfully – that 'her name meant Black Rose in Persian'. She visits him in the studio where he paints, becomes his model, then his lover. But her parents send her away to a school in Switzerland.

The affair marks Pamuk's entry into adulthood and a future very different from the past to which this entrancing book bids a fond but firm farewell.

Reviewed by Jonathan Lorie

Istanbul: The Illustrated Edition by Orhan Pamuk, Faber, Hbk, 624pp, £25. His latest novel is *The Red-Haired Woman*, Faber, Hbk, 272pp, £16.99.

Home and away



International author Pajtim Statovci's debut novel *My Cat Yugoslavia* is a dazzling portrait of displacement and desire, featuring lost souls in search of identity, order and companionship – and a vituperative talking feline. He was born in Kosovo in 1990 but raised in Finland from the age of two. We asked him about the meaning of home in a world of shifting national identities.

What is Kosovo to you?

A beautiful, mountainous country in south-east Europe, a place where I was born, where I regularly visit, where they make the best *flija* pastry ever.

And Finland?

A beautiful country with lots and lots of lakes and rivers in northern Europe, a place where I live and work at the moment, where most of my family and friends are.

And Albania?

A beautiful country in south-east Europe,

home of my first language. In many ways Albania is similar to Kosovo, but in other ways it's so different. In Kosovo we use more words and figures of speech that stem from Serbo-Croatian, because Kosovo was a part of Yugoslavia and Albania wasn't.

And Yugoslavia?

It was a socialist country in south-east Europe that began disintegrating in the early 1990s due to numerous unresolved issues. I don't have any personal memories of life in Yugoslavia, but it has had a great impact on me and my writing, and I'm very drawn to the history of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – presumably because I was born there.

Where is home?

Everywhere I feel safety, comfort and love. Everywhere I can write, dream and get phone calls from friends and family.

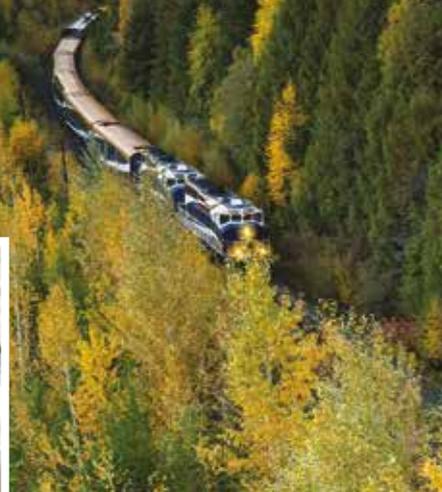
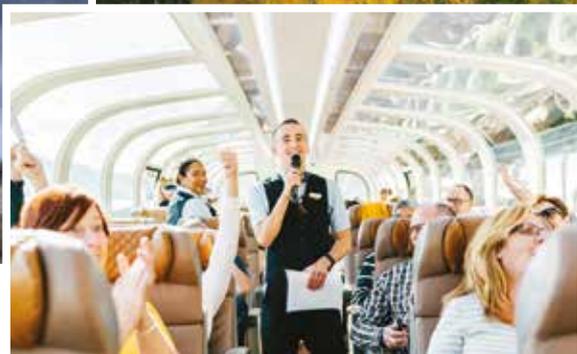
***My Cat Yugoslavia* by Pajtim Statovci (below), Pushkin Press Hbk, 272pp, £14.99.**





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ALL ABOARD AMAZING



Love in Lahore

by Isambard Wilkinson

My travels in Pakistan began before

I stepped onto its soil, in my childhood, in my grandmother's camphor-perfumed, cramped old tower in Ireland, where every summer her Pakistani friend the Begum Sajida Ali Khan visited with her family. They didn't adapt themselves to the house, it succumbed to them. Servants slept on floors outside bedroom doors, fridges overflowed with sticky sweets and pungent dishes. Gifts of embroidered cloth soon covered sofas, walls and even my grandmother. In the evenings, coiled in shawls to ward off the bone-devilling damp, they told stories about their travels together in Pakistan, conjuring a hot and turbaned land where carpet-flight and slipped sprites did not seem improbable to my young imagination.

But I'd no idea what a large role Pakistan would play in my life until I was 18 years old and my grandmother suggested that I go with her for the

marriage of the Begum's youngest son.

Pakistan in 1990 lived up to my imaginings. On landing at Lahore airport, my grandmother covered her hair with a scarf, and with our luggage bobbing on the heads of khaki-overalled porters we disappeared into a crowd of beards, turbans, frying *samosas* and inquisitive eyes. On the road to the Begum's mansion, my grandmother pointed out *fakirs*, a small nomad encampment and the house of a friend, a tribal chief who on her last visit had been in a foul mood because his enemies had ambushed some of his men.

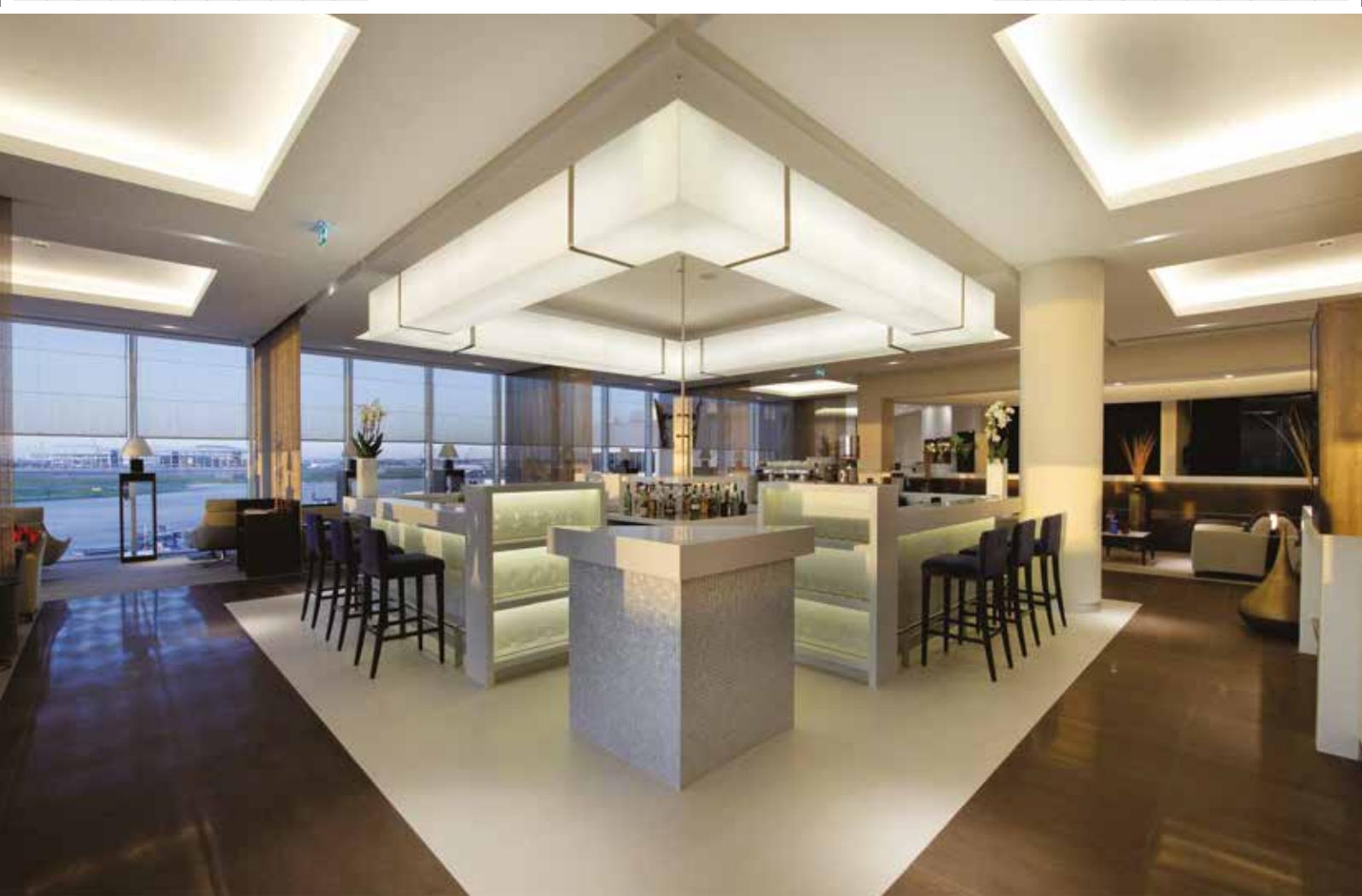
The Begum put me up in a room on the roof of her house. From there, surrounded by a constellation of minarets and domes and listening to the cries of street hawkers, I saw young boys tugging the strings of kites battling above television antennae, rickshaws

puttering along tiny alleys and first heard the call to prayer. We had entered a place of enchantment.

The week of the wedding neared and I was entranced by its preparations. A new well had been dug in the garden for the occasion, huge brass pots of food cooked over fires and suits of clothes and jewels exchanged. Then came the surging momentum of the ceremonies that joined the two parties. The bride and her entourage of maidens, thickly tressed, bodies caparisoned in gem-encrusted robes and noses studded with gold, danced off against stamping and twirling men.

How long will you remain in Pakistan, they asked. As long as my money lasts, I replied. Then you will never leave Pakistan, they said.

**From *Travels in a Dervish Cloak*,
by Isambard Wilkinson, Eland, £19.95.**



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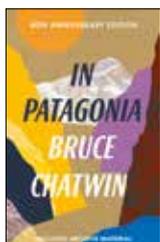
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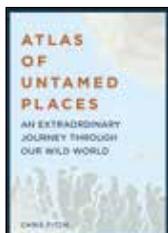
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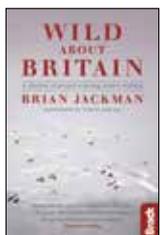
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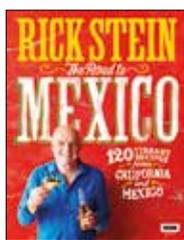
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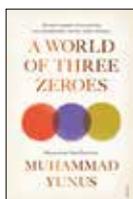
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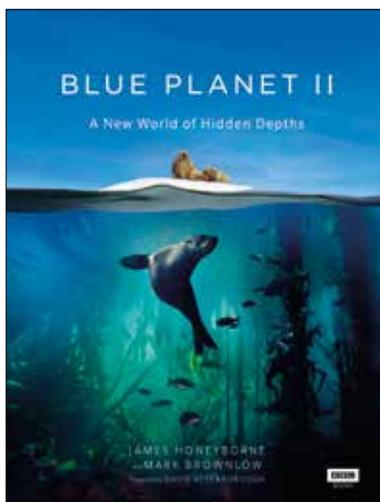
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A witty coast-to-coast romp from Alaska to New York, in which a personable British lawyer on a career break meets the locals and undercuts the hysteria of Trump's campaign trail.



A life on the ocean wave
This October the BBC is reprising its landmark series *Blue Planet* with a second look at life in the oceans, and the book of the TV series promises to be remarkable. With over 200 breath-taking photographs and stills from the BBC Natural History Unit's spectacular footage, each chapter of *Blue Planet II* brings to life a different habitat of the oceanic world. Voyages of migration show how each of the oceans on our planet are connected; coral reefs and arctic ice communities are revealed as thriving underwater cities; while shorelines throw up continual challenges to those living there or passing through. The science and technology behind the making of the programme is explained throughout the book: how the team captured these amazing stories – many of them filmed for the first time – and what the future holds for marine life. Presenter Sir David Attenborough says: "I am truly thrilled to be joining this new exploration of the underwater worlds which cover most of our planet, yet are still its least known."
***Blue Planet II*, by James Honeyborne and Mark Brownlow, BBC Books, HBK, 304pp, £25.**

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GLOBAL HOTSPOTS

1 IRAN

Last summer saw two terrorist attacks in the capital, Tehran, one on the parliament building and another on an important shrine near the international airport. Further attacks are judged highly likely. In addition, the British Foreign Office warns that eastern border areas are susceptible to kidnapping of foreigners. It advises against travel within 100km of the Afghan border, within 10km of the Iraqi border, in the province of Sistan-Baluchistan, and anywhere east of a line running from Bam to Jask.

2 PHILIPPINES

Terrorist groups continue to plan attacks at any time and place, including in the capital Manila. There has been an increase in kidnapping of foreign nationals. This threat extends throughout the Philippines, both on land and at sea, but is acute in the south (Mindanao, Palawan and central Visayas). The Foreign Office advises against all travel to western

and central Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago, because of terrorist activity and clashes between the military and insurgent groups. It also advises against all but essential travel to the remainder of Mindanao (excluding Camiguin, Dinagat and Siargao Islands) and to the south of Cebu province, due to terrorism.

3 TURKEY

The situation has calmed following an attempted coup in July 2016, but the security environment remains volatile and a state of emergency is in place. In some busy areas, especially Istanbul, the authorities are stopping people to conduct ID checks, and there are extra police checkpoints on main roads. Travellers should keep their passport and a printed copy of their e-visa or residence permit with them. Meanwhile, terrorist groups, including ISIS, continue to carry out attacks, mostly in Ankara, Istanbul, the south and east. To date these have mainly targeted the Turkish state, civilians and demonstrations.

4 VENEZUELA

Frequent protests have taken place over the past year in Caracas and other

towns across the country. Some have been in response to economic issues like electricity, water and food shortages, others have been political protests. Some have resulted in injuries or deaths. There have also been cases of looting and of crowds lynching suspected criminals. The police and national guard are heavily armed and protests can take place or turn violent with little warning. The authorities often use tear gas, buckshot and plastic pellets to disperse protests, and sometimes arrest large numbers of people. Travellers should avoid large public gatherings and should not cross police lines or civilian-run barricades. Demonstrations often cause travel disruption as a result of road closures.

5 YEMEN

The world's worst humanitarian crisis is unfolding in Yemen after years of civil war and under pressure from a Saudi-backed blockade. Two million people have been displaced. In addition to ongoing fighting, travellers risk terrorist attacks, kidnap and detention by terrorist groups, local militia, armed tribesmen and criminal gangs. The British embassy in the capital, Sana'a, has been suspended since 2015.



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From idyllic beach resorts and rustic-chic safari lodges to authentic Rajput palaces and world-renowned landmarks, Taj offers a truly unique collection of experiential hotels. However, while each is deeply rooted in its local heritage, they all share the same passion for world-class service, whether that's enjoying some of India's finest food, taking afternoon tea in a grand ballroom, or simply browsing the complimentary newspaper delivered to your door. And, while there are over 100 Taj properties to choose from, we've picked out three of our favourites to show to you today.

TAJ EXOTICA RESORT & SPA, GOA

White sand, infectious spirituality and a mesmerising blend of Indic sensibilities and Portuguese heritage – there's nowhere else quite like Goa. And, there's nowhere else quite like the Taj Exotica Resort. Tucked away among 56 acres of lush greenery on the state's pristine southwest coast, it enjoys a sense of quiet seclusion, wrapped up in old-world architecture, flower-lined patios and pillarless banquet halls. But, the relaxation isn't just limited to the resort's golden slice of beach, with everything from yoga and meditation classes to a full suite of spa therapies available. For something more active, the resort offers badminton, tennis, watersports, a golf course and, this being India, a cricket ground. At the end of it all, you'll retire to the quiet sanctuary of your luxury accommodation, with the choice of sea-view rooms or garden villas. Whichever you decide upon, you'll be treated to soaking tubs, pillow menus and a flawlessly contemporary style, characterised by crisp linens and soothing colours. And, your private verandah – or the beach itself – is the perfect spot to enjoy an intimate dinner of just-caught seafood.



THE TAJ MAHAL PALACE, MUMBAI

Since its turn-of-the-century opening, the Taj Mahal Palace has been a Mumbai landmark, its iconic spires, graceful domes and arching colonnades a jewel amongst the city's colonial architecture. And, it's entertained a guest list of past presidents and captains of industry, each undoubtedly impressed by the truly opulent rooms. Expect pillow menus, rich fabrics and bathrooms of Italian marble paired with spectacular views of the city, harbour or the next-door India Gate – the colossal arch built for the 1911 landing of King George V. But, the indulgences don't end with the room, with everything from harbourside cocktail bars and a superb spa to a state-of-the-art gym, morning yoga held by the pool and afternoon tea taken overlooking the Arabian Sea. It's all paired with some of the city's – if not India's – finest restaurants, from contemporary Indian innovations to light bites served poolside to guests lounging on rattan furnishings. Further highlights include live-kitchen Chinese delicacies and the rooftop Souk restaurant where Mediterranean classics are served up to views of Mumbai's twinkling lights.

THE TAJ MAHAL HOTEL, NEW DELHI

Set among tropical gardens and fronted by a truly impressive pool, the Taj Mahal New Delhi is an oasis of calm amid the chaos of India's vibrant capital. Indeed, it's perfectly positioned among the leafy boulevards, with India Gate, the Presidential Palace and the National Museum all within easy reach. Delhi's grandeur is also invited in; the hotel's dramatic façade of pink Dolphur sandstone sets the tone for rich interiors dressed in antiques, priceless art and traditional accents. It's a sense of style that continues to the rooms, each of which feature stunning aerial views of Delhi's skyline. In turn, upgrades mix in butler service and club access, which confers a full spread of complimentary extras, from afternoon tea and welcome drinks to evening cocktails and hors d'oeuvres. In fact, it's perhaps the dining where the Taj New Delhi really shines, with highlights including gourmet Indian delicacies, award-winning Japanese cuisine and the spectacular rooftop views of the Grill. Then, after all this indulgence, relax in the spa's sauna and Jacuzzis, or burn off the calories with the state-of-the-art fitness centre.



To book your Taj getaway, visit wexas.com or call **020 7838 5958** for more information.



CALIFORNIA DREAMING

While the likes of Hollywood's glitz, Yosemite's natural wonders and San Francisco's Golden-Gate icons rightly grab the headlines, there's plenty more to the Golden State. Spread some 800 miles along the Pacific Coast, California's charms are wonderfully diverse. One moment you could be sampling world-class wines among lush vineyards and the next hiking through wild deserts and grand redwood forests home to the tallest trees in the world. In fact, no other state has more national parks or has hosted both the summer and winter Olympics. Here are just a few of regional California's highlights.

Greater Palm Springs

While you'll know Palm Springs as the year-round, fifties and sixties getaway of Hollywood's fashionable set, the likes of Dean Martin and Frank Sinatra would be right at home among the town's retro-chic to this day. A veritable oasis in the desert, Palm Springs welcomes with crystal-clear pools, evocative modernist architecture and, yes, roads lined with hundreds of towering palm trees. It's all mixed with an unabashed taste for luxury, showcased in everything from its glittering nightlife and culinary scene to its indulgent spa retreats and championship-standard golf courses.

Then, after taking in the region's eponymous downtown, there's no fewer than nine other cities to explore, with highlights including the glam of Palm Desert, Indian Wells' tennis pedigree and the thermal soaks of Desert Hot Springs. However, it's perhaps Palm Springs' wilderness areas that impress the most. Cycle through the

San Bernardino National Forest before hiking through Big Morongo Canyon and taking the world's largest rotating tram car over the dramatic cliffs of Mt. San Jacinto State Park. Lastly, there are the glittering night skies and otherworldly desert landscapes of the region's national-park jewel – Joshua Tree. And, just as it was for Elvis Presley, Greater Palm Springs is only two hours from Los Angeles' famous beaches and skyscraping grandeur, while laidback San Diego is just half an hour further.

Napa Valley

Simply put, Napa Valley is one of the world's leading wine regions. Here, old-growth forests fringe backcountry roads, pretty chateaux gaze out from hilltop bumps and gentle green contours are terraced into a near-endless spread of vineyards. And, this wealth of topological diversity – along with the idyllic Californian climate – informs a collection of over 400 wineries. Expect everything from fruity merlot and buttery chardonnay to the region's



prized keynote – its full-bodied cabernets. You'll soon find your favourite between the sharper purity of the mountain vineyards and the ripe, powerful flavours of the fertile valley floor.

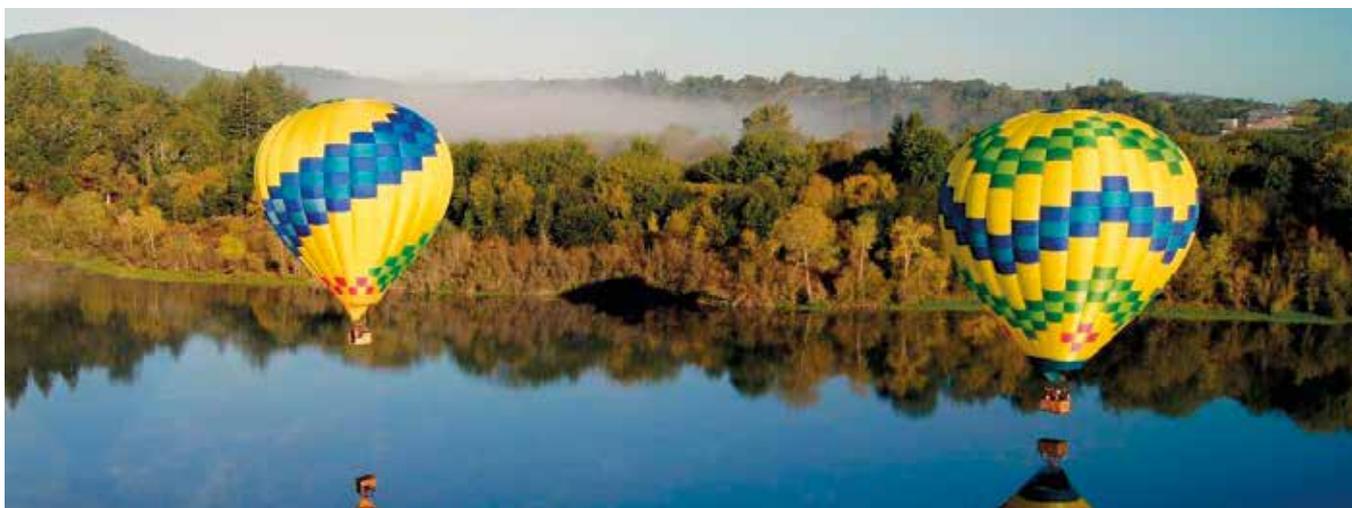
But, it's not all about wine. Cycle quiet laneways, hike among verdant hills and pause for thought at artisanal boutiques or local art galleries. You can even paddle the Napa River – a perfectly scenic way to spend an afternoon. Then, finish at one of the valley's superb restaurants; the cabernet is particularly well paired with such rich meats as rib roasts and slow-roasted beef. What's more, it's all just a short hop from the San Francisco Bay Area. Lastly, although that West-Coast sun makes the region a true year-round destination, visit at 'Crush Season' to watch as the valley comes alive with a harvest buzz.

Sonoma

Often unfairly overshadowed by the big-name acts of its next-door neighbour, bucolic Sonoma is an enticing, some say quieter, alternative to Napa Valley. Just like its sibling, Sonoma Valley features over 400 wineries, ranging from

family-run boutiques to internationally regarded labels. Historically, the region has perhaps best been known for its diverse chardonnays, tannic cabernet sauvignons and pinot noirs that span from the heartily aromatic to the bright and precise. Yet, wine doesn't have a monopoly on Sonoma's soils, with the county home to dozens of artisanal breweries, distilleries and cider houses. Don't forget to end the day with some of the region's farm-to-table delicacies, found across local markets and award-winning restaurants alike.

Once you've tasted your way through the cellar doors and barrel rooms, there's also a great outdoors to discover. Moving out of the 19th-century charm of Sonoma, you can kayak along the scenic Russian River, wonder at the tallest living things at the Armstrong Redwoods and discover a wildly rugged coastline. Here, dramatic cliffs are contrasted with pristine Californian beaches on truly spectacular roadtrips along Highway 1. And, although it's just 45 minutes' drive from the Golden Gate Bridge, Sonoma is a destination that demands at least a couple of nights' attention.



For more information, call a Wexas USA specialist on 020 7838 5958 or visit wexas.com



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On the ground, there are brand new lounges at New York JFK and Boston, as well as upgrades to those at London Gatwick. Think tranquil spaces provided by contemporary interiors and spectacular panoramic views complemented by internet access, an at-seat power supply and a wide choice of refreshments. Then, at London Heathrow Terminal 5, we welcome our First customers to The First Wing – an exclusive check-in environment with direct access to the lounges, including our flagship Concorde Room. This unique space is the epitome of elegance, featuring chandeliers, curated artwork and waiter-served dining

Lastly, new routes include a London to Nashville service, due to launch in May 2018, making British Airways the first European airline to fly non-stop to the Tennessee capital.

British Airways looks forward to welcoming you onboard.



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DISCOVER *The Palm Beaches*

Since the elite travellers arrived here in the early 1900s, The Palm Beaches have earned the title of *America's First Resort Destination*®. Home to renowned golf courses, world-class shopping and dining, a host of cultural attractions and 47 miles of golden sands, this iconic destination on Florida's sun-drenched Atlantic coast has evolved into the ultimate tropical paradise.



Long stretches of uncrowded coastline, crystal-clear aquamarine waters, the aroma of salt on the ocean breeze. While The Palm Beaches may evoke images of immaculate sands and swaying palm trees, once you tear yourself away from the shore, you'll find an irresistible destination full of everything from a rich history and thriving arts and entertainment scene and a stunning natural world, all complemented by the very best in Floridian hospitality. From Jupiter in the north, to Delray Beach and Boca Raton in the south, luxurious resorts, gourmet culinary experiences and a host of wildlife adventures will inspire and excite in equal measure.

The Palm Beaches offers something for everyone, whether you're seeking a luxury beach, golf or spa break, a charming bed and breakfast, or a chic, urban hotel with nightlife close at hand. There's also a thriving culinary scene, tempting taste buds with a delicious array of local produce showcased in everything from food festivals and farmers' markets to established restaurants headed up by award-winning chefs. And, with over a dozen breweries and even an organic

winery, there's always something special to complement a delicious dinner of seafood or steak.

As *Florida's Golf Capital*®, the region is tailor-made for sports lovers, offering championship courses that have hosted the world's greatest players. But it's not just golfers that can take in a game. Sports fans can cheer on their favourite teams during spring training baseball games while, during

the winter months, visitors can enjoy international polo tournaments and equestrian festivals. Scuba divers and snorkellers, too, will be treated to something truly special, with colourful reefs to explore and playful pods of dolphins, endangered sea turtles and gentle manatees often seen swimming just off the coast.

The Palm Beaches has also made a name for itself as *Florida's Cultural Capital*®, with more than 200 attractions ranging from world-leading art museums and music festivals to botanic gardens photography exhibitions and even beachside theatre performances.

And, with an ideal location just an hour north of Miami and two hours south of Orlando, The Palm Beaches is easily accessible from three international airports. Yet, it still retains an air of utmost exclusivity, ensuring you'll want to return again and again.

Visit wexas.com/palm-beach or call **020 7838 5958** for more information.




 DISCOVER
THE PALM BEACHES
 FLORIDA

The long road home

Travel writer and novelist **Katie Hickman** recalls five landmarks from her travelling life

HACIENDA ZULETA, ANGOCHAGUA, ECUADOR

When I was a teenager my family lived in Ecuador for three years. I fell in love there for the first time. My *novio's* family owned an ancient *hacienda* called Zuleta, in a remote valley high up in the Andes. Zuleta was – and remains – the most romantic place for me. It was not just its history (the house, with its huge cobbled courtyard, was founded by *conquistadores* in 1691), but the incredible freedom of life that went with it. We rode horses into the mountains, went for lakeside picnics and explored the nearby villages, all in wildly beautiful countryside surrounded by the snow-capped peaks of the Andes. I have no doubt at all that those experiences are what inspired me to become a writer and traveller. Many years later I used my memories of Zuleta to create the fictional Hacienda Santa Luz in my first novel, *The Quetzal Summer*.

BHUTAN

In 1984 I made a journey from Thimphu, the capital in the west, to the Indian border on the east, recounted in my first travel book, *Dreams of the Peaceful Dragon*. With my partner, the photographer Tom Owen Edmunds, I trekked through the Himalayas on horseback for two months in the monsoon rains. It was a wet, uncomfortable and leech-infested journey, but an extraordinary one. In those days there was no real tourist trade. Thimphu was a one-horse town with one hotel. There was almost no infrastructure in the rest of the country, and only one road – the ‘lateral road’ – which was regularly washed away by the rains. We stayed in local houses and monasteries. Some of the areas we travelled through were so remote they had never seen foreigners before. With our pale skin and hair, they thought we were fairies.

MEXICO CITY

In 1990 I spent a year travelling through Mexico. I went there to write a second travel book (*Travels with a Mexican Circus*) and joined Circo Bell's, a family-run circus troupe that is thriving still. As travellers, we are usually just passing through places and it is hard to get to know anyone well. My thinking was that as a circus is a travelling village, I could roam the country with them, while at the same time becoming part of their community. Of course, as with all the best-laid plans, it didn't work out quite like that! Mexico



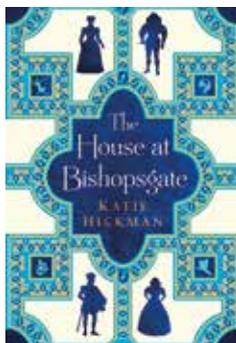
City is so vast that, even after two months on the road, we had only just reached the suburbs. But I did become intimately acquainted with parts of that vast, sprawling metropolis which I would never normally have thought – or dared – to venture into... and I learnt a few circus skills along the way. Circo Bell's became like a second family to me – two of them are now my godchildren and their parents my *compadres* – and nearly 30 years on I am still in touch with them.

THE OUTER HEBRIDES

I first went to the Outer Hebrides when my son was three. A friend of a friend had been left an island, Ensay, by an eccentric godfather: a tiny speck of rock, about a mile long and half a mile wide, between South Harris and North Uist. Together with all our supplies, we were deposited on the beach by a fishing boat, requesting its owner to come back in a week to collect us – weather permitting. The only habitation was a half-derelict house in which we made a camp. There was no running water, no heating apart from an ancient and grumpy Aga, and no electricity (we used oil lamps). But the island remains one of the most beautiful places I have ever been. When the sun came out (which it did occasionally), the little beaches were as white as the Caribbean, the waters aquamarine blue. We swam in the chilly sea, built bonfires on the beach, foraged for mussels and shrimps in the coves and rock-pools – a true *Swallows and Amazons* holiday that none of my family will ever forget.

THE OLD KENT ROAD, LONDON

When people ask me where I live, I say the Old Kent Road: you know, the brown one on the Monopoly board. I have been a Londoner all my adult life, but the Old Kent Road, where I have lived for 20 years, still inspires me more than anywhere else in my city. What it lacks in beauty, it makes up for in sheer diversity, and is surely one of the most international places on earth. So many communities have found a way to live together here. My car mechanic is from Bulgaria, the ladies in the nail bar from Vietnam, the café owners from Morocco. The deli-shops are run by Iranians, Algerians and Kurds, the convenience store by Sri Lankans, the chemist by a Chinese family. All of them call this home. Even after a lifetime of travelling, I know there is nowhere else quite like it.



Katie Hickman's most recent novel, *The House at Bishopsgate*, is published by Bloomsbury.



ADVENTURES IN MICHIGAN

Carved out by glaciers some 12,000 years ago, Michigan is home to a truly spectacular natural world. Over half the state is given over to forests, its winter wonderland makes for ideal skiing and gentle green contours are sculpted into championship-standard golf courses and Traverse City's award-winning vineyards. It's got the numbers to back it up as well, with its landscapes protected by no fewer than seven national parks and 103 state parks, ideal for days spent on hikes and bike rides and nights spent camping under the stars.

However, it's the Great Lakes that demand the most attention. Unfurling as great horizonless seas, they offer everything from surf beaches and giant sand dunes to historic military fortifications and 129 lighthouses, resplendent in that iconic white and red. Be sure to also hit the waters themselves, with canoe paddles, fishing excursions and sailing trips bringing you

to shipwreck dives and car-free islands. Prime among them is Mackinac Island, where the only form of transportation is by horse or bicycle and colourful clapboard houses remember all the charm of yesteryear. Just don't forget to sample the local fudge.

Then there's Detroit. One of America's greatest cities, its newfound optimism is best exemplified by its colourful murals, inventive microbreweries and cycle greenways – the Riverwalk is a particular highlight for its skyline views. That's not to say, however, that Detroit has forgotten its vibrant roots. The likes of Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye and Diana Ross all got their starts in the city, with its rich musical heritage showcased in detail at the superb Motown Museum. However, you can step back even further in time with the Henry Ford Museum, its 12 acres of automobiles, pop culture and machinery mapping a century of American innovation.

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