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**EATING
OUT**

The Howard is heavenly

Lisa Hilton finds pub perfection in the Cotswolds

“YOU MIGHT SAY THAT ENTRY into Brewer’s Dictionary is the reference equivalent of making it to the Order of the Garter.” Thus says etymologist Susie Dent on the 2012 edition, which included “Chipping Norton set” amongst its annual gems.

In still more thrilling news for Oxfordshire, that very same year saw the publication of quondam popstar Alex James’s autobiography *All Cheeses Great and Small*, in which England’s most exclusive rural idyll figured as an “Hieronymus Bosch twatscape”, a phrase I long to have come up with but which must be credited to the great Marina Hyde.

Yet, in a breathtaking twist of fortune, scarcely had Chipping Norton founder member David Cameron stormed to victory in the 2015 election on the promise of a referendum on Europe than the clique was officially declared socially dead. It was always nonsense, of course.

No-one except journalists ever cared who was invited to kitchen sups with Elisabeth Murdoch and by then people had more than a crack in their Daylesford Organic pheasant’s egg to worry about.

The mayor of Chipping Norton spoke presciently for the nation when he commented that “We would prefer to be put on the map for something more positive.”

THE HOWARD ARMS IN ILMINGTON IS as positive a reason one could imagine to give the Cotswolds a chance. The quintessence of gorgeous pubness, the sixteenth century building on the village green was revamped in 2017, retaining all



the features a purist could demand: log fires, gleaming flagstone floors, a serious range of beers, along with a perfectly pitched menu and eight extremely pretty bedrooms.

Masses of glorious flowers, gently chalk-hued walls and eclectic textiles lend an easy elegance, but nothing is too too — the garden gives on to a playing field saved from development by the owners, the bar area is spacious enough for conviviality rather than grudgingly carved out of the dining rooms.

Food walks the same thoughtful line between classics and Mediterranean inspiration. The Howard’s menu encapsulates everything that’s positive about the way food has evolved in the UK, in that it’s no longer surprising to find ham, egg and chips with piccalilli alongside burrata with roasted peach and pinenuts.

THAT THE KITCHEN REALLY CARES about what it sends out was evident from a dish of sugar snaps with gremolata and sea salt to crunch while we ordered. A perky local take on edamame, they could have been supper alone alongside fat cushions

TABLE TALK LOGO BY JONNY HANNAH; CONTRIBUTOR PORTRAITS BY VANESSA DELL

of fresh bread and butter from Holmleigh Farm eleven miles away.

Lamb belly croquettes with anchovies, parsley mayo and parmesan (*right*) were another clever adaptation, unctuous without being fatty, dense meatiness with a jagged jolt of sea.

White crab muffin with poached egg and hollandaise was so good we had to order a second for quality control purposes, but the Howard's triumph is the fish and chips. There's an axiom that one can tell a good chef by their omelettes; fish and chips might be a good substitute for showcasing essential skills.

Fluffy, friable beer batter, springy haddock, chips the right side of chunky and genteelly crushed peas which actually tasted of pea — impeccable.

Onwards to the puddings, where I could have fancied the chocolate crème brûlée with shortbread but swerved to the sticky toffee pudding with treacle sauce and honeycomb when the waitress offered to bring clotted cream *and* ice cream. Again, pretty much peerless.

A GASTROPUB THAT FEELS LIKE A proper pub is a tricky combination, but the Howard manages welcoming and unfussy. The menu and interiors are chic enough for a smart lunch or a date, whilst the bar feels like a fine place for a quick one.

Beyond a Bollinger-shaped nod to Chipping Norton, wines are priced for real people, divided between “Easy Drinking”, “Full” and “Classics”, and the staff know the list — a suggested Portuguese Prunus Dão Tinto was gutsy without being overwhelming.

The Howard opens early for coffee, there are Sunday roasts and (I imagine), spectacular breakfasts and a cheerful pizza van, open afternoon through evening on weekends, when it's not trundling off to local festivals.

Which leads us to the big reveal. Not only is the Chipping Norton set not dead, it seems we have misjudged it. JD Vance may have repositioned the Cotswolds on the political map when he chose the hapless hamlet of Dean for his summer holiday, rousing locals to slogans such as “JD Vance's Netflix password is “pass-



Caption

word” or “JD Vance claps when the plane lands”, but the real revolution was kicking off in Ingham.

AT AUGUST'S “FEASTIVAL”, HELD ON the farm of Britain's premier cheese bore, Mr James, the audience was treated to a finale of Britpop Classical, ninety minutes of symphonic Cool Britannia tunes including not one but two Oasis hits. “Full credit to Alex that he has put past disagreements behind him,” gushed one review.

Look, if Alex has the diplomatic skills to overlook the fact that Noel Gallagher once wished Aids upon him and set “Wonderwall” for strings, what might he not achieve on an international stage? The Garter isn't good enough. Maybe the key to world peace was lurking behind Sam Cam's Aga all along. ♦

For further information go to howardarms.com



EATING IN

My beef with burgers

Felipe Fernández-Armesto dislikes typical stadium food

BACK, AS THE SONG SAYS, IN Indiana, I await, with detachment unique in my university, the new college football season. To understand Notre Dame's commitment to faith and football you need to know that we have about 300 masses every week — and more

when we play at home (*below*). By beating the Protestants at their own game, we became American Catholics' honorary, collective alma mater.

On game days, over 70,000 fans make pilgrimages from every state of the union. Celebrities, high-rollers and top-line

performers for the half-time show scream in on private jets. The campus becomes half-fair-ground, half-fairyland, noisy with revellers, bagpipes, popping corks and clattering beer-caps, and bright with bandsmen in comic-opera uniforms.

A lot of seriously silly flummery precedes the game: the Stars and Stripes are raised; the Constitution is read; an Air



Table Talk

Force squadron flies past in salute. Our team marches amid adoring throngs from the basilica to the stadium.

The university band — nearly 400 strong, out of about 8,000 undergraduates — leads the players onto the field, with cheerleaders stepping daintily. Ours are demurely dressed in unglamorous green: their moral superiority over the typical visitors' swimsuit-style scanties and provocatively jaunty bolero-jackets will, we hope, presage victory.

"Cheer, cheer for old Notre Dame," sings the crowd. "Shake down the thunder from the skies!" Win or lose, when the game is over, the bells ring out for yet another mass, with their unchanging, unworldly, unaffected rhythm.

NONE OF IT WORRIES ME. I'm used to it. What I can't get used to are the burgers: dozens of student-run kiosks serve them, along with bratwurst and hot dogs. The charities they support differ — from abandoned dogs to unmarried mothers — but the burgers are all the same.

The Knights of Columbus offer penitentially chewy steak sandwiches, but everywhere else the menu is unvarying and the products as uniform as the bands' attire — only less colourful and more anodyne, until smothered in mustard or ketchup.

Fans' indifference to flavour and texture is a clue, I suspect, to understanding the appeal of a new and disturbing trend: "cultivated" meat — a form of processed mush, lab-generated from animal stem cells and mixed with soy and who-knows-what-else.

Adulterators exploited it first to replace traditional dog-food, and now, increasingly, to resemble steaks and chops for human consumption. It threatens to take over the biggest market for meat by imitating burgers.

I am grateful for one change that has made the monster welcome in Frankenstein's kitchen: unashamedly carnivore consumers seem increasingly to echo this column's revulsion from the folly and fakery of vegan meat-substitutes.

But lab-grown, flesh-based cultivars are even more mad: a vegan-free alternative to meatless meat. From *ersatz* meat we are turning to *ersatz ersatz* meat.



As with the veggie-meat lobby the justifications for the new trend are unconscionably artificial: artificially moral and artificially ecological. Traditionally raised meat is only minimally unhelpful to the environment and utterly unprejudicial to the soul.

HAMBURGERS, LIKE THE SOULS OF meat-eaters, are redeemable. Cheap versions, like those the charity-minded students inflict on their game-day customers, have given them a bad name. If you come to Notre Dame to watch American football, do what the cognoscenti do: reward the students and renounce their burgers.

Bring your own, with a portable, hickory-wood and charcoal barbecue to

grill them on.

Typically, English eaters think that ground beef needs egg and bread to bind it, but if the meat is of good quality — grass-fed, decorously marbled, unpolluted by hormones or glutamates — and lovingly, carefully pressed into shape, it will stay that way without additives.

The best cooking methods are heretical: I film the raw burgers with olive oil for perfect caramelisation over intense but almost smokeless heat. Seasoning — in my case, with garlic salt — must be postponed until after cooking.

I see the appeal of coatings of grilled onions and peppers or such American exotica as peanut butter or ketchup. But a well-cooked burger is sufficiently unctuous on its own. My late mentor in burgers, Bernie Bachrach — an eccentric historian of medieval warfare, who derided chivalry and played with toy soldiers but ate wisely — insisted that only a raw ring each of onion and tomato, with a leaf of hearty lettuce are fit to share a burger's bun.

What should that bun be? Conventional soft baps are uninteresting unless there's plenty of egg in the mixture, but a salt-crusted roll, made by rolling butter inside the dough and sprinkling the outside with coarsely ground salt, provides just the right amount of complementary crunch. •

DRINK

Normal for Normandy

Henry Jeffreys enjoys the bounty of a French supermarket



I HOPE ALL CRITIC READERS ARE feeling suitably refreshed after a summer at their villas in Umbria or cottages in Southwold. We had a week in Normandy, as we've done for the past couple of years. Where we live in Kent, it's quicker to get to France than visit my parents around the M25.

There are many things I love about Northern France: the empty, well-maintained roads, the way the architecture feels at once familiar and strange, the omnipresence of the Second World War.

But perhaps the thing I look forward to most is going to the supermarket.

I know I should be haggling over moules just landed by Gauloises-smoking fishermen like Rick Stein or Keith Floyd would do, but my French isn't up to it. So instead we go to the biggest Intermarché we can find. Avoid the small Carrefour Contact stores in touristy towns, the prices are outrageous.

Visiting a good French supermarket is a treat for the senses. Those ridged red tomatoes that actually smell of something,



Part of the wine selection at the Intermarché Hypermarket at Conches-en-Ouche, Northern France

the mist that sprays sporadically on the lettuces, the seafood bounty, the freshly baked bread, and the wine! *Mon dieu*, the wine! I still can't quite get over seeing classed growth claret sitting on the shelves next to the rosé.

I was seriously tempted by some Château Langoa-Barton for €50, alongside cheaper options like Château Poujeaux and some Côte-du-Rhône from top Cornas producer Franck Balthazar. It really is a wonderland.

But then I thought of my burgeoning credit card bill and moved over to the more affordable aisles. There are ludicrously cheap wines, litre bottles for one euro, though these are often Spanish or non-specific Euro wines, and are best avoided.

Spend a bit more and you can find some things worth drinking. We had a very tasty Muscadet Sur Lie for under five euros and a Saumur red for six. One of the best things about visiting a non-wine producing region such as Normandy is that you get wines from all over France, whereas a supermarket in the Languedoc, for example, largely stocks local wines.

I WASN'T ALWAYS SO unadventurous. When we only had one child, I often used to combine work — meaning vineyard visits — with holidays, but with two it's harder. One bored child in the vines is manageable; two is asking for trouble.

Though on this last trip to keep my accountant happy we did manage to visit one cider maker, so part of the holiday is

at least tax deductible. Norman cider is excellent and you can buy bottle-fermented farmhouse examples for five euros. One for another column, I think.

As someone whose job it is to search out the finest wines available to humanity, it's quite nice to have a break where I can shop like a normal human being rather than a wine bore.

Holiday wines are not for scoring or pontificating about but are simply good to drink cold out of a Duralex tumbler while sitting on the terrace with a book, like that Muscadet. I recall a holiday to Marbella a few years ago, finding a €4 Godello at Lidl that served a similar purpose.

Such wines are not exactly bland but they're not overtly fruity or full of character. They're simple, unpretentious bottles of the sort that are increasingly hard to get hold of in England.

WINES THAT FIT INTO THIS category include Muscadet, Picpoul de Pinet, Beaujolais, Portuguese Vinho Verde, or Italian whites such as Gavi or Soave. Probably the ultimate understated wine is rosé but only if you're not paying too much for it.

Andrew Jefford, the greatest of all wine writers, wrote: "A blockbuster red can be great; a blockbuster rosé would be a comprehensive failure. The reason being that sippability, drinkability, is even more important for rosé than for most wines."

These are largely Old World wines because I suspect that New World producers, with their emphasis on big,

crowd-pleasing flavours, find them hard to make.

The Californian Zinfandel brand Ravenswood had the slogan "no wimpy wines"; holiday wines aren't exactly wimpy, they're more affable, like a good travelling company. New Zealand Sauvignon or Australian Shiraz just have too much going on though South African whites sometimes hit the spot.

YOU CAN FIND GOOD ORDINARY wines in some unlikely places. Stephen Harris runs The Sportsman at Seasalter, about five miles down the road from us. Despite having a Michelin star, he offers the standard Shepherd Neame wine list (the brewery that owns the pub).

With your £85 tasting menu, you can have Picpoul at £7.95 a glass or a Provence pink for £8.50. Most wine trade people bring their own, but I find that with exquisite food (and the food at The Sportsman is certainly that), simple wine is best.

The problem in Britain is that decent, cheap wines are increasingly hard to find. On top of your 13 per cent alcohol Beaujolais, you will have to pay £2.88 in duty plus 20 per cent VAT. Then, if you're eating out, the extra National Insurance and higher minimum wage will bump it up further.

But you can still find them in France, and with Normandy only a half-hour train ride away, next year I'm going to stock up. I might even hire a van. Vive le booze cruise! ●

Mixed messages

Rufus Bird intro here



THE ART MARKET ENJOYED decades of growth, seemingly outpacing other sectors, especially in sales of contemporary art. Specific areas turned down, but one of the aspects of the current “correction” is the growth in value at the lower, sub-£20,000 objects market. There has also been something of a revival in Old Master paintings. So, given these mixed outcomes, has the market really dropped?

Well, in overall value terms, yes, but that headline figure is skewed by the large prices achieved for modern and contemporary art in 2020-2022.

And that part of the market (which gets the headlines) has dropped for two reasons. First: widespread speculation has been skewered by rising interest rates. Investors have at last realised that the financialisation of art is a risky, short-term bet, not a realistic long-term game. The sums no longer add up for an investor who borrows money to buy art. Second: there are fewer masterpieces being offered.

IT’S BEEN SAID (FOR ABOUT THE PAST two decades) that, outside of modern and contemporary art, we are in a “masterpiece market” — that the big guns only come out to buy great works of art, leading to a polarisation of prices (low prices for “sub-prime” work, then stratospheric prices for the few masterpieces that do emerge).

That occurred in July at Christie’s when the painting, *Venice on Ascension Day* by Canaletto, sold for £31.9m — an auction record for the artist. There were three bidders, quite good by today’s standards.

Elsewhere, some art fairs like Art Basel are now too big and too expensive.

Commercial rents for bricks-and-mortar gallery spaces have increased, and the overheads for starting and maintaining small, up-and-coming galleries that promote interesting art leave many unable to sustain their business model.

The latest attempt to seduce clients sees Sotheby’s leasing the famous Breuer building on Madison Avenue, *left*: a brutalist construction designed by Marcel Breuer, which will be their new chi-chi HQ. However, they are also retaining most floors of their old York Avenue premises and it’s hard to see where this gamble will pay off.

Christie’s are sticking to the tried and trusted art sales methods. Orlando Rock, Chairman of Christie’s UK, believes the

market is increasingly focused on narratives and storytelling, as it has been in the museum sector for years.

“We’ve seen an increase in Millennial and Gen Z clients who now comprise 31 per cent of our clients,” he notes, and “while the new generation may have different tastes from their parents, they remain motivated by the thrill of discovering something which speaks to them, which is the same motivation for collectors it has always been.”

THE MARKET FOR GREAT ART WILL revive, as it always does, but what should be done? First: remember why people want to buy art. Buying art is not necessary. It is not exactly like buying a luxury good: a Kelly bag or a Patek Philippe is a status symbol, inasmuch as a painting by a “brand” like Basquiat or Bellotto or Picasso or Rubens can also be. Yet art seems to represent something broader: perhaps suggestive of a

GRANGER/ALAMY



CHRISTOPHER PINCHER | DELUXE

Winter warmers

The shadows of summer grow longer, heralding autumn, and a chill leavens the air. To borrow from Tennyson, “in the fall an old man’s fancy lightly turns to thoughts of warmth”. And not the old, only. For, in truth, none of us really wants to shiver as we thread

our way through the City’s thoroughfares, evading Khan’s muggers and Philp’s vigilantes, en route to some safe haven. Whilst we may not avoid shivering in fear, we can take precautions against the cold.

Some years ago, I had a new *covert* coat made up by the House of Commons tailor, Alexandre. In charcoal grey with a velvet collar, it is both sleek and snug. Its design is particularly popular amongst those of a shorter stature as the flat front with buttons hidden leaves the wearer the illusion of length not supported by their actual leg measurement. Always single breasted and cut above the knee, the Covert coat has long been my favourite insulator.

But there are plenty of other topcoat designs with which to fight the battle for comfort. The *Chesterfield* is a heavier and more formal derivation of the covert and was a staple of the smart wardrobe until the 1960s. Often double breasted and a little longer than a covert, the Chesterfield is ideally suited to a gentleman of the fuller figure: think Adam Boulton rather than Robert Peston.

The *Raglan* overcoat, on the other hand, is a design to fit all morphologies.

The sleeve is cut from neck to armpit affording the wearer much more breadth of movement, and thus helpful to anyone going about London armed with a swordstick (for the purposes of self-defence, naturally). There is no shoulder in a Raglan but there are plenty of pockets for your loose change, bags of boiled sweets and your



particular worldview, a statement on some aspect of humanity, a distinct style, or even an intellectual basis for understanding the world, while also signalling to others, "this is my world".

Marina Phelan, of Charles Beddington Ltd, says "education is key and newer collectors need to be careful who they listen to — it is our job to work out how to

reach them and educate them in our fields".

SECOND, BUYING ART should be enjoyable and convenient. Online bidding is certainly convenient — at Christie's, 80 per cent of bids in the first half of 2025 were placed online; and buying at an art fair can also be enjoyable and convenient.

Third, most auctions have lost the element of theatre. The whole point of an auction is to bring bidders together. The major auction houses have made it as easy as it can be not to attend auctions in person.

A rare disruptor in the art market, Loïc Gouzer's "Fair Warning" auctions take the opposite approach, offering a single work at 5pm local time on Sundays. Only vetted bidders are allowed to join the auction, and as there is only one work to consider each week, there is plenty of time to view it — if you can get to Montauk.

Finally, buying art has almost always involved a personal connection. People buy art for all sorts of reasons, for decoration; to be a part of a wider conversation and community; to build a legacy, perhaps as a serious collector of great art or to give to a museum, or to throw light on a particular form of creativity. The structures that facilitate these impulses need developing. And



sonic screwdriver (for those who fear to face not only Mayfair muggers but marauding Daleks).

If the Raglan was designed for the dashing, the **Ulster** was conceived for the daring, particularly those pursuing the Conan Doyle look. With its elbow-length cape and hard-wearing materials like herringbone tweed, the wearer can go safely sleuthing along The Strand, imaging himself pictured in its eponymous magazine. And whilst it may be rather dated now, derivations of the Ulster, including the Hubertus coat, are not entirely obsolete and were favoured until recently by, amongst others, Lord Hurd of Westwell and the late Prince Philip.

It would be impertinent to discuss overcoats without mentioning the ultimate antidote to winter — the British Warm. Invented, the **Crombie** historians remind us, by Crombie as a greatcoat for officers on the eve of the First German War, the British Warm remains a cold weather classic.

Made from tough Melton or Mackinaw cloth, the coat is peak lapelled, double breasted, leather buttoned and sometimes belted for maximum protection. In that famous photograph of the Big Three at Yalta, Roosevelt's Astrakhan collared cape invested him with the insouciance of a dying dandy, but both he and Uncle Joe were eclipsed by Churchill, swathed in taupe, the epauleted epitome of bulldog pugnacity. George Orwell may have coined the "Cold War," but Churchill determinedly remained both British and Warm on the sunny side of the Iron Curtain.

Looking the part without feeling the cold is to reach the unreachable star. Beneath the stars on that cold spring night, as the Titanic slowly sank, a middle-aged man's thoughts likely turned to legend. Realising his situation was perilous, Benjamin Guggenheim famously elected to dress for death. Returning to his stateroom, he removed the sweater and lifebelt the steward had given him and changed back into evening clothes. Whilst the ship's band played "Songe d'Automne", Guggenheim emerged on deck, resplendent in white tie, telling his hearers "We've dressed up in our best and are prepared to go down like gentlemen." His valet, Victor Giglio, stood next his master, carrying his overcoat. ●

The art of nature

Marian Boswall finds a major design exhibition provocative and compelling



made visible". His JFK Memorial at Runnymede, or the layered symbolism of Shute House, treated land as cultural text.



Since then, only a handful of mavericks — Charles Jencks's Garden of Cosmic Speculation, Ian Hamilton-Finlay's Little Sparta, Kim Wilkie's Orpheus (*left*) — have continued that tradition. The rest of us rarely aim higher than ornamental beauty, climate resilience and biodiversity gain. Indispensable objectives, but hardly the stuff of myth.

The biosphere may be healthier, but our relationship is not reimagined. In short, we risk constraining the most comprehensive of arts to a junior branch of land management. The natural capital accountants have arrived; the poets have fled.

But nature's own voice may yet return as guide.

The Design Museum's *More Than Human* explicitly overturns Jellicoe's belief that "man's place is to be above nature". The exhibition's premise is that

IN 1975, GEOFFREY JELlicoe — surely the most influential British landscape architect of the twentieth century — made an audacious claim: "The world is moving into a phase when landscape design may well be recognised as the most comprehensive of the arts."

His pioneering *Landscape of Man*, published 50 years ago, was a manifesto masquerading as a historical tour d'horizon.



Landscape design, Jellicoe insisted, was no mere ornamental diversion, but the one art form capable of mediating between humanity and nature,

reason and intuition, science and myth. It was, he said, society's only true necessity.

Half a century later, where does his vision stand?

Walking through the opening night of the Design Museum's *More Than Human* exhibition this summer, I wondered what Jellicoe would think now. On one level, he would feel vindicated. Public bodies in Britain are beginning to accept, if not embrace, nature recovery networks.

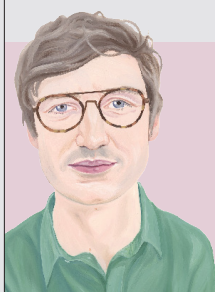
Large-scale projects — the Somerset Wetlands, Weald to Waves, Chalk to Coast, the Cambridge Nature Network, and new townscapes such as South East Faversham and Chapelton (*detail, below*) — are

finally convening landscape architects, farmers, architects and conservationists as co-designers of a future healthy landscape. The creed that landscape is



social necessity has, at least, filtered into policy papers.

But here's the rub: the visionary imagination has slipped from view. For Jellicoe, landscape was never just ecological. It was also symbolic, allegorical, even metaphysical — "the invisible



PATRICK GALBRAITH | COUNTRY NOTES

The lost world

In the arena of storytelling, there's power in chronicling change. H.E. Bates, best known for writing *The Darling Buds of May*, does it brilliantly in *The Poacher*. The relatively compact novel, which Bates's brother called "almost a family history", tells

the story of a village shoemaker-cum-poacher in a world that is fast fading.

A *New York Times* review from 1935 reads: "Beautifully and without affectation Mr. Bates has expressed through the story of Luke Bishop's life his deep feeling for the life of the English countryside, for the changes which have come over it in the last half century and his own nostalgic regret for the order which has passed."

Laurie Lee's *Cider with Rosie*, has something of a similar spirit, beginning with Lee, as a toddler being set down from an old wagon and ending with a motorcar roaring into his remote Cotswolds village.

About four years ago I was hunkered down in the mud, five miles east of Hull, with an old wildfowler called Dave Upton. People in Britain seem to talk a lot about the Fens — for those who like psychogeography, Fenland Lincolnshire looms large. But the flatlands that run alongside the Humber, north of the Wash, are every bit as captivatingly bleak. Welwick and Patrington Haven are well worth a visit if you feel like going in search of a lost England.

Dave and I shared a flask of tea as he told me bits and pieces about his life. When he was a young man, he wanted to join the cod fleet but his mother wouldn't let him, on account of all the young men from Hull who have died down in the Barents Sea,





we must design with nature —or even as nature. Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg's AI-generated *Pollinator Tapestry* makes the human designer redundant by using an algorithm to specify insect-attracting planting palettes. The MOTH Collective's mural advocates legal rights for rivers. The whole exhibition is a pageant of species-level humility: Homo sapiens put back in his box.

Would Jellicoe have been horrified or delighted? Both perhaps. He might have resisted the dethroning of the designer, the suggestion that landscape can compose itself. And yet he also divided art into Fancy and Design: the imaginative and the rational.

He urged landscape architects to borrow vision from artists, who glimpse truths beyond time and space. In that sense, *More Than Human* radicalises rather than rejects his legacy.

From the *Rumiti ritual*, where men dressed as trees process through Basilicata hills, to Isabella Rosellini's *Seduce Me* films, where she playfully enacts the mating rituals of bed bugs and sea horses, the exhibits explore the world through Fancy — reimagining futures beyond human design norms; embracing the “invisible made visible”.

And for those who find this all too esoteric, Marcus Coates's *Nature*

Calendar — a patient daily record through the year of wrens shifting seasonal song and eels slipping downstream — echoes Jellicoe's conviction, and that of every good gardener, that close observation is the bedrock of understanding nature. And a successful crop.

ALL OF THIS IS AS RESONANT NOW AS 50 years ago. Our food system, biodiversity, the politics of land are not just ecological issues. They are cultural issues, which demand cultural solutions. Habitat corridors and healthy soils will keep us alive, but man does not thrive on bread alone. We need landscapes that articulate meaning, that confront mortality, power, belonging, transcendence. That is the scale Jellicoe imagined.

Like Jellicoe, the exhibition is provocative and compelling. Its challenge is clear: landscape design must move beyond stewardship to embrace co-creation — capable of shaping both land and meaning, of recovering the numinous, and of re-enchanting a culture that has forgotten how to see. ●

so instead he'd spent his life in the shipyards.

And when Autumn rolled round, whenever time allowed, he'd be out on the marsh trying to get underneath the pink footed geese. He had, it was clear, a sort of spiritual connection with the pinks – the

rhythm of his year seemed to be dictated by the geese going away in early spring and returning again with the cold.

It was late in the season when we were out and Dave only fired a couple of halfhearted shots. I got the sense he felt he'd killed enough wildfowl that year – his freezer was full and as much as anything it was just about being out there, where his father shot geese before him and where his son shoots geese now too.

When the light had fully come up and the birds stopped flying across the marsh, we wound our way back across the fields then we drove to a local bakery for breakfast. We ate our pies sitting at a bus stop outside a Methodist chapel. It became clear, as we chatted, that Dave and his brother Paul, who had joined us, have a tremendous appetite for heading all over

England in search of shooting and fishing – they are Hull men through and through, but they think nothing of driving four hours in search of a couple of ducks. When I asked them about their tireless travels they shrugged and said, “We got to do it while we can.”

At the time, I assumed they meant they were getting on a bit and they wanted to make the most of life while they could. But when I look back on it now and I think about the many battles they were fighting with various authorities over their favourite bit of marsh, which is set to be sacrificed to the sea in the hope of mitigating the risk of flooding in Hull itself, I'm not so sure.

I suppose it's entirely possible that within their lifetime, through losing ground and through the regulation of wildfowling as they've always known it, their world will change. Like Luke at the end of Bates's *The Poacher*, a place they loved will be truly gone.

In my relatively short lifetime, all sorts of things have gone. For me, as a writer, the material is rich: hunting with hounds is out, what was left of England's grey partridge shoots have mostly disappeared, hare coursing has gone, salmon numbers are dire, and an array of birds are heading for extinction. That's all fairly cut and dried, but I suppose that ultimately only time will reveal the impact of such changes. You can't really see it in the moment, it's only years later on looking back that what's truly been lost becomes clear. ●

Do let's be beastly

Hannah Betts channels her inner wild animal



OCTOBER, AND THE BREAKING guise is dead Victorian child. This isn't even a Hallowe'en thing, it's a real-life phenomenon that's been simmering away since summer when the vibe was to waft about in one's nightdress looking a tad wan. "Haunted couture," entails bloomers, flouncy white cotton, tattered lace and spectral tulle.

In a *Guardian* article by Lucianne Tonti, the University of Lancaster professor Catherine Spooner cited the French Revolution, Miss Havisham, and the eerie 1975 film *Picnic at Hanging Rock* as influences, deeming the look to represent "a party at the end of the world".

I'm not knocking the aesthetic, obv. Dead Victorian child/apocalyptic nihilism is very much my wheelhouse. I passed my adolescence in a haunted Victorian villa whose womenfolk floated about in snowy nightdresses *Virgin Suicides*-style.

I was bright white, with Sharpie-hued hair, and rarely slept; never not undead adjacent. Before I discovered blusher, my Victorian Literature tutor was convinced I had galloping consumption.

However, shroud chic will not exactly be what one wants in, say, a job interview, or meeting with one's investors. Moreover, you may wish to hold off as so often the vibe predicted to dominate at the beginning of a season is relegated to a no-show a month or so in.

HOLD FIRE. BIDE YOUR TIME. EASY tiger; or, in my case, zebra. For animal print is the obvious transitional solution, the full Noah's Ark of zoological markings feeling newly fresh. For those seeking to inhabit the land of the living, it's all about animal camo.

Back when I was a nipper, leopard print was perceived as red-in-tooth-and-claw racy: Bet Lynch in *Coronation Street* mode. By the Nineties, it had become a grunge trope to be rocked with silk slips and tiaras. In the Noughties, it became voguish to declare that leopard was a "classic," swiftly segueing into "neutral,"

after which it became banal. Everybloody-body wore it — it was all over pre-cool M&S, British Home Stores, Next — to the extent that it felt sad sack, de-fanged, all vim vanished.



If you continue to be sold on the pattern, you could do a lot worse than *All Saints muddy brown leopard trench* (£329, allsaints.com, left). However, I

still feel leopard holds insufficient fascination. Besides, its pays to consider the undertone of one's beast. Even at its



H&M's "Co-ord" skirt and jumper. Inset, above, Mytheresa's faux fur coat

least orange, leopard — like tiger and cheetah — will still read pretty warm.

Even grey leopard doesn't work on cool-toned moi, despite having once boasted a *Times* reader convinced that Julie Christie, Babs Streisand and I were goddesses who ran his life, and could take the form of snow leopards. (This is true, obv. Their pelt just doesn't do anything for me.)

This makes zebra or dalmation — if going full Cruella — the only shows in town. And the style set would appear to set agree, preferring feral fashion in monochrome. Forget apex predators. These days, pack animals look less follow-the-herd.

NATURALLY, I ANTICIPATED THIS earlier in the year with a few canny Vinted purchases: a Nineties DKNY purse; a pair of long, pointy Zara flats; a pleasing belt — all considerably better quality than much of the current high-street tat.

For if all animals are equal, some animals are more equal than others. One needs to be extremely choosy about mate-



rials, meaning it's worth splashing out on the more elegantly cut *Rotate mighty-shouldered faux fur coat* (now £472, mytheresa.com) rather than the dodgy *French Connection* take

that appears over-sized without intending to be (£145.50, asos.com).

I'm not saying that spenny is always the route. I'm giving the *H&M Premium Collection "Co-ord"* (yes, people actually say this) a punt, with its *Jacquard-knit mohair-blend skirt* (£54.99, H&M.com) and matching *Mohair-blend turtleneck jumper* (£64.00).

True, I'm concerned that the model's having to wave her arms about in the air to make it work, but let's see. And I may or may not team this ensemble with *& Other Stories Hairy real leather slingback kitten heels in white dalmatian print* (now £74.75, asos.com).

For style gurus are forever shaking a choppy finger admonishing that "a little goes a long way" when it comes to animal



patterns: a scarf here (*Marc Jacobs'* is sumptuously soft, now £115, flannels.com, *left*); a belt there (check out *Jaded London's* unfussy take, £50, selfridges.com); or token sunglasses (*Celine's Mono-chroms* are cool as, now £170, sunglaseshut.com). Up to a point, Lord Copper. Some of us maintain that too much is never enough. Team zebra with polka dots, stripes and / or checks for full mono mania. •

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Essentiel Antwerp's zebra-print pouch



planning "a surprise", which Hector had now rumbled. Cue me having to book a £1,000 dawn hot air balloon ride I didn't even want, because Will couldn't do so himself.

None of it fooled anybody. In fact, the girls convinced themselves that Daddy must be having an affair, because why would he have needed to vanish for a day to book a balloon ride? They then staged a kind of intervention 6,000 feet above sea level, in the sodding balloon, so that he "would have nowhere to hide".

I let him dig himself out of that one. And he STILL didn't mention the Mounjaro! Which it turned out the first hotel had not kept refrigerated, and so was not even viable (Jesus wept).

By the time we landed I was considering an affair/divorce. Think about it — is there anything less sexy than a middle-aged man panicking about his weight loss jabs in a former famine region? You see? Full existential crisis territory.

And when I sent an SOS voice note to my most woke friend Saskia, expecting full support, she said I should check my skinny privilege and that I clearly have a huge "thin bias". She's probably on the jabs herself.

THE REMAINDER OF THE EIGHT-WEEK "holiday" was spent at Cowes week (shoot me now, I hate sailing so much) and ferrying the children to their various camps, since we'd bankrupted ourselves on the safari.

Which still allowed time for Hector to break his hand catching a cricket ball, Minnie to contract glandular fever from some revolting teenager she's been snogging at her intense French camp and me to nearly murder Will's father for implying Hector's dyscalculia was due to my failure to drill him in times tables.

Meanwhile Lyra is still in sleuth mode hunting for evidence of Will's affair, a notion of which — frankly — I'm in no hurry to disavow her. Roll on autumn. •

HOT HOUSE

Safari, so bad

Claudia Savage-Gore on her sub-Saharan homesick blues

AH, AUTUMN! HOW I TREASURE this time of year. Don't worry. I'm not about to go off on a paean to freshly sharpened pencils, and the scent of Starbuck's latest bonfire spiced oat milk monstrosity. No, my joy is entirely familial — i.e. the novelty of silence and solitude after a VERY long hot summer. Boy did I need it.

How was your summer? Listen to mine, and weep.

Our safari holiday was massively derailed by Will leaving his supply of Mounjaro in the minibar in our first hotel, and only realising after the six-hour drive to the second hotel. Not surprisingly his preferred meds-courier service Pharmaciege doesn't operate in remote sub-Saharan Africa, so there was no chance of getting a new supply.

My comment that the food wasn't up to much anyway, and he could surely manage without his wretched jabs for a while went down badly (unsympathetic). As did my suggestion that he could always try the old-fashioned holiday weight loss method of traveller's diarrhoea.

And since the whole enterprise is still

being kept secret from the children (to protect Will's ego, though he claims it's to avoid inflicting "body image issues") we had to pretend he had left his passport in the hotel, while he spent 24 hours and hundreds of pounds in chauffeur fees going back to the first hotel to retrieve his drugs.

Only for Hector to find Daddy's passport very clearly visible on top of his suitcase ...

BEFORE I COULD NOTIFY WILL OF this development he returned performing "massive relief" at having found his passport. Only for Hector to produce the real document. Cue a very weird improvisation by Will, where he "confessed" that he had actually been out

Caption