

# ROAM

TRAVEL & THE GLOBAL GROOVE

LONDON MARKETS | COLOMBIA | VIETNAM | MALI

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## JAMAICA

An all-inclusive look







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## editor's letter

ROAM went away for a while. Took some time off to plot a new direction. You know how it is—sometimes you start down the wrong path. When this happens there are two choices: either stop, turn around and start again, or continue on, knowing all the while that you might have gone the wrong way. In ROAM's case, the former was the correct choice. It was either that or go the route of the big sellout. The choice wasn't so difficult. So, ROAM is back, truer to its vision and a better publication that will now stay true to its course. That said, it's hard not to fall into the usual trappings of what a travel magazine is. You know, the cute little blurbs about what's cool and trendy, the sexy "model in a bikini" cover, and the voice of Authority on where to go and what to see. Yes, we've been guilty of some of that and can't promise that it won't happen again. But since the last issue there's been a crystallization of ROAM's purpose—to provide provocative, informative and entertaining content on travel and culture. This issue takes us a step closer to that vision. First, the cover concept has been rethought and I am thrilled with the results. Artist Yolanda Gonzalez has created an illustration that captures ROAM's "global groove" vibe. You can expect more innovative covers in the future—no more flesh for fantasy.

Second, our contents are moving into territory that other travel magazines haven't been. Christopher Harrall's "Jamaica, All Inclusive" is a compelling look at Negril today, as seen through its idyllic past. Alex Garland's "The Beach" could be about Negril, where paradise has morphed into a place of contradictions in scenery and behavior.

This issue also features articles on Vietnam and Colombia that read like sketches in a journal, leaving impressions without drawing conclusions. There is no great lesson to be learned in these pieces, nor is there any extraordinary tale to be told. They are impressive in their simplicity. The featured photo essay of Mali, photographed by Jeffery A. Salter is a mesmerizing view of a place that resonates with history and culture. These extraordinary photos touch the imagination and soul. We also take a critical look at "ethnic travel" in Kimberly Duke's well-balanced "Selling Souls." This is an important issue which needs further debate. Keep this article in mind the next time you pay to view a tribal ritual.

There's a lot more to this issue for your perusal and reading pleasure. If you enjoy this issue and find that ROAM is answering an unmet need, do us a small favor and subscribe. We'd like to stay independent and your support helps. It's about the same price as a few coffees and the buzz lasts longer. You can also support ROAM by purchasing your travel guides through our mail-order operation, ROAM Xpress (1-877-280-ROAM). Of course, we could just take a few cigarette ads and our money troubles would be over. But that would be too easy, wouldn't it?

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TRAVEL & THE GLOBAL GROOVE

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## mail room

Dear Editor:

Thank you for ROAM! The summer 1998 issue is a major travel turn-on, and now I want to go on a world tour. I appreciated the magazine's uncluttered, easy-to-follow layout and I enjoyed the honest, well-written articles. The Zimbabwe story was especially attention-grabbing and I especially liked the "Roaminations" section. Kristen Schultz's report on her visit to a Turkish bath was exciting and interesting (an American woman, nude and alone in a foreign land!); and after reading Larissa Phillips' mouthwatering review of her culinary adventures in Italy I became so hungry that I ate myself into a stupor (alas, the victuals were not nearly as exotic as those Larissa enjoyed)! The "Romance" (or should it be "ROAMance") section proved to be a delicious bit of spice added to an already hot issue. Who needs reams of boring pornographic fiction when they can experience the true sexual encounters of real travelers, all wrapped up in neat, hot, one-paragraph summaries? Hey, this romance section alone is enough to tempt anyone to want to go off travelling the horny world.

Once again, thanks for devoting most of the page space to truly interesting and worthwhile stuff and avoiding the usual pretentious jumble of mendacious ad tripe usually found in those shallow, glossy travel "magazines."

Best Regards,  
Patrick Griffiths  
New York, NY

## contributors

**KATIE BRADLEY** is a former Editor at *Art & Auction* and presently resides in New York City. She will be contributing her extensive knowledge of visual arts to ROAM.

**EMMA DOWSON** works for a London publishing house, but spends as much time as possible traveling. She particularly loves Southeast Asia and New York. Her writing appears in *The Guardian*.

**KIMBERLY DUKES** studies the anthropology of visual communication at Temple University. She resents Philadelphia for not being New York.

**CHRISTOPHER HARRALL** would like to be permanently on assignment, but resigns himself to the daily grind. This ex-New Yorker cut his teeth as a copywriter and literary agent and then discovered travel writing.

**CAROL A. SMITH**, is a 31-year-old recent journalism school grad and native Montrealer. Carol fantasizes about visiting the Himalayas but has more modest hopes for Scotland this summer, where she may try to locate a wee branch of her family tree.

**DOREEN SZETO** presently lives in the United States, but travels frequently to London to stock up on eccentric items. She currently works to travel and hopes to continue to travel to work.



## NEW YORK CITY

**Julia Margaret  
Cameron's Women**  
MoMA New York  
Through May 4

Although Julia Margaret Cameron (1815-1879) photographed the most famous intellectuals of her day like Robert Browning, Charles Darwin and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, she also created a wide body of works depicting female models. These models were everyday women—usually her friends and relatives—but were dressed posed as classical, biblical and mythological characters. In these works, Cameron explores love, spirituality and motherhood with



Julia Margaret Cameron's Women at MoMA

create "Happenings." The exhibit continues through 1969, when Dine was a pioneer of performance art. It was during this decade that Dine began experimenting

## artseen

By Katie Bradley

### ROAM'S GUIDE TO CURRENT ART EXHIBITS

a sense of emotion that is rarely seen in works from the Victorian era. Many exhibited works depict Cameron's favorite model, her niece (and future mother of Virginia Woolf), Julia Jackson. These images are among the most beautiful and melancholy of the exhibited works. In one image, "A Beautiful Vision," Jackson, who at the time was recently widowed at the age of 24, is photographed in mourning attire with a white Puritan cap. She exudes sadness as she looks out at the viewer. In another, "She Walks in Beauty," Jackson is seen in fashionable clothing, yet with a face void of all emotion. The exhibited works, when viewed on the whole, are not only a documentation of the styles and sensibilities of their day, but can also be seen as quite modern in their sensuality and composition.

**Jim Dine: Walking Memory,  
1959-1969**  
Guggenheim Museum of Art  
Through May 16

This first major survey of the early work of American artist Jim Dine begins with work from 1959. It was then that the artist began collaborating with fellow Pop artist Claes Oldenburg to

with the imagery—such commonplace objects as bathrobes, hearts, tools, against unpolished, densely colored backgrounds—used in his best-known work, many of which are seen here.

## MINNEAPOLIS

**Robert Gober: Sculpture + Drawing**  
Walker Art Center  
Through May 9

Fresh from a slightly controversial show at L.A.'s Museum of Contemporary Art, the work of American artist Robert Gober is on view at the Walker Art Center. Although the polemic work depicting, put simply, the Virgin Mary pierced with a piece of culvert pipe, will not be on view, you can still expect lots of surprises. Gober usually reproduces everyday items and juxtaposes or melds various items, with common themes being sinks, drains, sewer drains, doors and the human body. Integral to Gober's oeuvre, as well as this exhibition, are his drawings, nearly 100 of which are included. The show will also include new work, an installation created especially for the exhibition and "Slides of a Changing Painting," a projection installation from 1982-83 which is in the Walker's permanent collection.

## LOS ANGELES

**Brassaï: The Eye of Paris**  
J. Paul Getty Museum  
April 13-July 4

On occasion of the 100th anniversary of the birth of the photographer Brassaï (1899-1984), this traveling exhibition is being shown at three venues this year. The four works include images of Parisian life from the beggars and prostitutes to high society, originally printed in his eminent 1932 book *Paris de Nuit* (*Paris by Night*), as well as portraits of Picasso and Salvador Dali and works Brassaï took while a freelance photographer for such publications as *Harper's Bazaar*. The show travels next to the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. (September 4-November 28).

**Van Gogh's Van Goghs:**  
**Masterpieces from the Van Gogh  
Museum, Amsterdam**  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art  
Through April 4

After breaking records and subjecting museum goers to Van Gogh mugs, tote bags and even trading cards in National Gallery in D.C. this fall, "Van Gogh's Van Goghs" is now doing the same on the West coast. Thanks to a renovation, all 70 paintings, including the seminal 1885 paintings "Potato Eaters," "The Bedroom" and "Self Portrait as an Artist," from 1888, and "Wheatfield with Crows," painted the year of his death are among the works on view.

**Edgar Degas Photographs**  
J. Paul Getty  
Museum of Art  
Through March 28

Edgar Degas (1834-1917), Impressionist painter and keen recorder of ballet dancers, Parisian café society and horse races, but photographer? The artist first picked up the camera in his 60s, but soon thereafter began producing photographs both as preparatory studies for his paintings and works conceived as art in their own right, such as his self portraits and portraits of his friends, the painter Pierre-Auguste Renoir and the poet Stéphane Mallarmé among them. Some of the photographs are shown

alongside corresponding paintings and pastels, demonstrating Degas's reliance on photography. For example, "After the Bath," an 1896 painting on loan from the Philadelphia Museum of Art, is shown next to a photograph of a woman in the same pose. Among the most interesting works in the exhibition are three glass negatives, which are art unto themselves. In unique shades of orange and red, with some portions reading as negative and others as positive, their effect is quite startling. The exhibition will travel next to the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (May 31-August 22).

## SAN DIEGO

**Francis Bacon: the Papal  
Portraits of 1953**  
Museum of Contemporary Art  
Through March 28

## NEW HAVEN

**Francis Bacon:**  
**A Retrospective Exhibition**  
Yale Center for British Art  
Through March 21

Francis Bacon is the subject of two exhibitions: a major retrospective at the Yale Center for British Art, and his famous 1953 series copying Velasquez's 1650 portrait of Pope Innocent X is the focus of an exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego. Seven of the nine original paintings from the papal series will be on view, marking the first time a large grouping from the series has been exhibited together. They will be displayed in the museum's Farris Gallery, a nine-sided space, making it easy for the viewer to trace the paintings' developing rawness, terror and anxiety. In conjunction with the exhibition, the museum will be showing John Maybury's film *Love is the Devil*, a biopic of the artist's tumultuous relationship with his lover George Dwyer, that was released last October.



Robert Gober's works at the Walker Art Center



## by the book

READ YOUR WAY THROUGH THE CONTINENT WITH THESE NEW GUIDES

**T**oday's breed of indie-traveler is seeking an off-the-beaten-path experience, and has no desire to hang with the great sea of tourists found in any popular place. That's why it's good to know that a few travel guides, namely *Lonely Planet* and *Rough Guides* (yes, we're playing favorites) are more than happy to oblige this group's specific needs. And just in case you thought there's no place left to hide, be assured that there is. These guides point out the alternative travel options for just about every place on earth.

The flow of guides on European destinations is a case in point. There's probably no other continent with so many guides on it. But there's always something new to cover in this region. New releases from *Rough Guides* will appease the needs of Euro-virgins, who can dive in with *First-Time Europe*, a sort-of Scout's manual to the continent. In its 288 pages, author Louis CasaBianca relates his own adventures in Europe with uncanny wit and wisdom. What better way to know Europe than through someone else's missteps and discoveries? Europe veterans can get an update with *Rough Guide to Europe*, the guide's fifth edition. Get the inside scoop on Europe's best beaches, party spots and, of course, cultural and political life. Sure beats subscribing to *the Economist*.

As very few of us are so privileged that budget is not a factor, *Lonely Planet's Europe on a Shoestring*, is well worth its hefty cover price. This is a definitive guide and will show you how to travel Europe in style without throwing away your hard-earned cash.

If your wanderlust leads east, where the crowds are less and your money goes further, then *Lonely Planet's Eastern Europe* will show you the way. Check out Albania, Hungary, Macedonia, and more in this 864-page bible. Read about each country's history, culture, food, enter-

tainment and places to stay. Learn about staying at village farmhouses, Hungarian pálinka, (brandy), hitchhiking in Romania, and where Marshal Tito spent his summers. Each section, divided by country, is written by an expert. *Lonely Planet's Eastern Europe* even provides a list of places to avoid—topping the list is, what else, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Maybe you don't want to cover such a broad range. Maybe you just want to hit Prague and attend a ball or ogle the architecture. *Time Out Prague* will tell you how to do just that. In its third edition, the photo-packed, clean-looking guide takes you through the city's main places like Staré Město (old town). It also highlights social and cultural activities and contains sixteen pages on dining. If you get bored in the city, the guide will show you some out-of-town trips like Terezín, the former Nazi holding camp, or any number of castles that dot the country.

Okay, so visiting unstable countries isn't your thing. You'll settle for something a little safer, like Berlin, Paris or Florence. Big tourist crowds are guaranteed, but you'll know where to go to avoid these nasty critters by reading up on where to hide with the locals. Across the Adriatic Sea from war-ravaged Croatia it's another world: Florence, Italy. Birthplace of the Renaissance, Florence is what most want out of travel: art, culture, food, shopping, people. *Access Florence & Venice* is a book that numerically lists essential places and activities. It's a pretty handy way to get around, since it's divided up by section of town, with maps for each. Color codes indicate type of activity, making it an easy way to choose your activity. It's also fun to just browse through the short listings.

If Berlin's grit and urban intensity is more your flavor, the new *Rough Guide to Berlin* will put you in touch with the city's pulse. There's no city

that could be more millennial, and this guide revels in all its fabulous offerings. In its fifth edition and at 432 pages, you can know the city intimately just by reading it. Or you can use it to see the vast quantity of culture that Berlin offers.

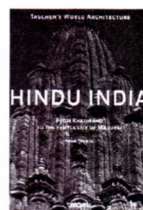
When traveling, the last thing you want is a guide that passes for a tome. On that note, the *Lonely Planet Paris* guide fits nicely in your purse or pocket. It's not obvious, so you won't be when you refer to it. The guide provides walking tours and overviews of the various areas and *arrondissements* found in Paris. There is also a 12-page section on the city's many period buildings and landmarks. The back of the book contains some useful color maps to get around with.

Let's say you want to feel the heat. The heat of summer, the heat of the city, the heat of Madrid. Here's a city that bursts with life: delicious tapas, renowned museums, streets jammed with people. This capital city is laden with sights and sensations—you just have to choose which one. *Time Out Madrid* peeks at this vibrant city, with all its highs and lows. Find out where and when to eat, where to find clubwear for dancing, and what museums exist beyond the big three. The only letdown to the guide is its section pages on bullfighting—last time I knew, this stuff was called torture. I say boycott the bullfighting and act like an animal at one of the city's many wild nightclubs.

Since you're already down in this neck of the woods, you'd be silly not to visit Portugal or even Andalucia. Perhaps not as happening as Madrid, but you won't find the sea in that city. Since its membership in the European Union in 1986, Portugal's capital city, Lisbon, has caught up with the rest of Europe. It is now a thoroughly global city, with all the familiar trappings (i.e. golden arches). *Time Out Lisbon* cheerleads for the city with its usual sassy tone. You'll be getting excited about Lisbon in no time: what other city offers such an array of treats for the mouth (*doces*), eyes (the Tagus River), and ears (*fado* music).

Just south of Portugal lies Andalucia, the passionate heart of Spain. Andalucia's geographic location—at the point where the Mediterranean meets the Atlantic and Europe gives way to Africa—has played a major role in its culture. African Muslims brought their beliefs to the region, as well as flamenco's roots. They also brought architecture, examples of which are some of the greatest Muslim buildings in the world: Alhambra palace, the Mezquita and Palacio don Pedro are a few examples. Many Spaniards are partly descended from Muslims and Andalucia feels more like Africa than Europe in many respects. Of course, this is precisely its allure, and *Lonely Planet Andalucia* offers a telling portrait of the region. There are many "I didn't know that" passages in this book—it's as much a lesson in history as a travel guide. After all, this is where Christopher Columbus set sail.

## Picture Books



**Hindu India:**  
From Khajuraho  
to the Temple  
City of Madurai  
By Henri Stierlin  
(Taschen)

You don't have to be an architect to appreciate this

gorgeous and spiritual volume, the latest addition to Taschen's "World Architecture" series. Author Henri Stierlin leads an extensive tour of the peninsula, and to twenty of the most sacred places of Hindu worship. Find yourself lost in the history of India's Hindu temples as Hindu India journeys to decipher the meanings of the effigies, sculptures, and ornaments that animate their sacred places. Stierlin's analysis covers over a thousand years of Indian history, beginning with wood and cave temples and ending with the sacred cities of the south.



**Dogs in the Sun**  
By Hans Silvester  
(Chronicle)

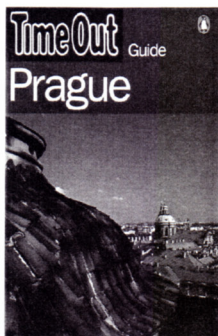
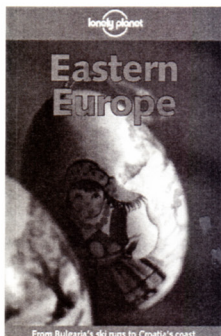
Photographer Hans Silvester likes cats and dogs, especially in the sun. His

series of books on cats and dogs of Greece continues with this sprightly collection of dogs at play and rest in the Greek islands. These dogs have personality, as witnessed by their many expressions and poses. Silvester handles his subject matter with a innocent and magical, touch. If this book is testimony, a dog's life is certainly an enviable one.



**Chasing Rickshaws**  
By Tony Wheeler  
& Richard L'Anson  
(Lonely Planet)

The rickshaw may have never reigned in the West, but even today it is a mass transit choice in certain parts of Asia and Indonesia. This low-tech but highly efficient means of transport rules in places like Bangladesh, where there are over 300,000 of them. Many of India's cities rely on the rickshaw to move its populace. Sadly enough though, the rickshaw is disappearing from many cities. Hong Kong, which had over 5,000 of them at one time has just a few left. The rickshaw symbolizes another, perhaps simpler, time. *Chasing Rickshaws*, a colorful and compelling collection of photos, is a worthy tribute to these wonderful vehicles.

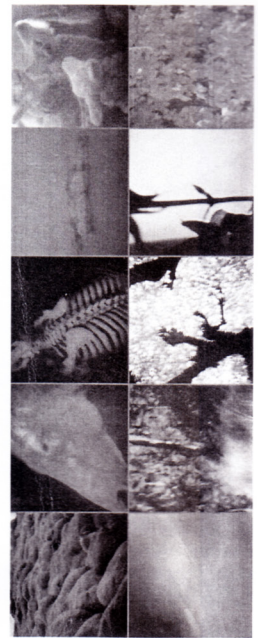






## Atrium Records

Scandinavia. The top of the world, where the aurora borealis rains down from the sky. Where the summer sun stays up all night. Where in winter sunlight barely exists at all. A place on earth of starkness, constraint, where nature still rules. Thinks of the music a place like this evokes: ascetic, ambient, contemplative. It is in this spirit, that Atrium, the new Stockholm-based label, has been formed. Atrium encompasses folk, jazz, contemporary classical, European avant-garde and ancient music. Its goal is to combine the philosophy of Scandinavian art, literature and design, with the frank openness of the flourishing Nordic pop scene. Much of Atrium's music is acoustic and instrumental, however its scope covers electronic music and areas of expression outside the "art music" genre. Artists signed to Atrium are testament of the label's mission: saxophonist Jonas Knutsson, cellist Svante Henryson, "throat joik shaman" Frode Fjellheim, and folk trio Triptyk. Get a taste of Atrium on its evocative sampler, *Other Music From a Northern Place*.



## Making the Scene: an International List

In these times of global economies and *Wallpaper* magazine it seems it's happening everywhere. Not that we can afford to jetset around the world, but so you don't feel left out, ROAM has compiled this list of the trendier spots that you might've missed, or wish you did.

THE PLACE	THE SCENE	HOW IT HAPPENED	CURRENT STATE
Soho, London	An eclectic mix—middle-aged media moguls, the film crowd, beautiful gay boys, indie chicks, Japanese students, wannabe model/actresses, professional hangers-put, high earning twentysomethings. Hare Krishna disciples in saffron robes are often seen dancing in the streets. On Saturday night European weekenders and suburbanites looking for a big night out, make Soho feel like one big bachelor party.	Soho was happening for generations of artists, writers and bohemians, until the '70s when it became a tacky red light district inhabited by dirty old men in raincoats. In the '80s gay cafes, bars and fetish shops opened on Old Compton Street, giving the area a shot of vitality. Then the sex shops closed down and the media and film industry crew moved in.	Soho's too mainstream. Its grimy, slightly edgy atmosphere is threatened by the characterless chains who've moved in. Self-consciously trendy clubs usually have caustic door policies, and over zealous bouncers. But Soho is still a lively and colourful area—you can't beat a beer at 'The Coach and Horses' or a cappuccino at kitschy Bar Italia.
Lan Kwai Fong, Hong Kong	A three block (or so) area set in the middle of one of the densest urban jungles in the world, LKF is where it's at if you're looking for non-nudie bar action in Hong Kong. The tropical weather has everyone from Australian backpackers to high octane Chuppies (read: Chinese yuppies) quenching their alcohol thirst with ice cold drinks from the hottest new bars.	Just another warehouse/residential district about a decade and a half ago, a concerted push by a foreign entrepreneur with a yen for shiny bars and pumping discos put this area on the Asian party map. It arrived just in time for the swelling numbers of ex-patriate and Chinese revelers to take over.	Asian financial meltdown has quelled some of the '80's-like "go-go" spirit and lots of the more colorful ex-pat "characters" have left. But still, if you're in Hong Kong, it's late, and you're not in the mood to check out haggard half-clad chicks dancing on your table (that's Wanchai, another story), you can't beat this feeling anywhere else on the island.
South Beach, Florida	New Yorkers, bridge and causeway Cubanos, transient models and service workers and pumped up queens cohabit this island city off of Miami's mainland. Fueled by white powder, cafe con leche and tropical weather, they chase each other into the night. Ocean Drive and its once-cute-but-now- tacky hotels is pure Euro-trash, leaving Lincoln Road for invading wannabees. But there's always somewhere to hide if you are fab enough.	When Bruce Weber shot some Calvin Klein ads on the roof of a run down Art Deco hotel, the rush was on. Real estate, gays and models were the elixir for South Beach's return to glory. Soon all of the buildings had colorful new paint jobs and shiny floors. Everybody was happy, except for the retirees and crackheads who were transported west or six feet under.	The models aren't quite as plentiful, the kids from the mainland are everywhere (as are drugs) and the cheap little hotels aren't so cheap anymore. South Beach is now a shell of its early days of affordable slumming in the sun. It still holds its own as a party and sex destination though and there's always a party of two going on to make it all seem sooo fabulous. The sun does these things to people.
Istanbul, Turkey	A welcome oasis from seedy bars and <i>gazinors</i> (belly dancing joints), a stretch of nightclubs along the Bosphorus River from Ortaköy to Amavutöy serve up Istanbul's choicest nightlife. Whether it be Cubuklu 29, with its Latin motif, the über-classy Pasa Beach Club (\$40 cover charge), or Memo's mellow but sophisticated scene, these clubs all possess the requisite mix of cash-laden students, foreigners and Turkish beauties. The gorgeous views of Istanbul's twinkling lights across the river don't hurt either.	As Western modernity creeps in, Istanbul's Moslem traditions are slipping. What more can be said: we like to party.	Considering Istanbul's history and its status as an international business center, the money continues to flow. And where there's money, there's bound to be a party or scene of some sort. A continuous flow of cosmopolitan jet-setters keep the vibe alive.





## Prague's Small Secrets

**T**o many travelers, Prague is not so much about museum-going as it is about cathedrals, cobblestones, castles and cafes. Yet there are a handful of museums that are often ignored by tourists, and this gives one a chance to spend some time alone, instead of being shuffled along by the masses. Here are two of the best:

Not even a year old, the **Mucha Museum** (Panská 7, 2628 4162) merits becoming one of Prague's best artistic attractions. Housed in the Kaunick Palace, this small but fascinating museum follows the career of one of the most celebrated Czechoslovakian Alphonse Mucha (1860-1939). He was a proponent of Art Nouveau in all its forms, so much so that the style became known throughout Europe as "le style Mucha."

The museum examines a wide selection of his works: the renowned posters he created for the famous actress Sarah Bernhardt, many of his designs for jewelry, furniture, fabrics and silverware; his paintings and their preparatory drawings; and the national stamps and bank notes the artist designed towards the end of his life. There is even a small recreation of Mucha's studio.

Towards the back of the museum, visitors can view a 25-minute video on Mucha's life and oeuvre, which helps to put the artist into a historical perspective and features the few examples of the artist's best work that are not in the museum, such as the heroic "Slav Epic," a series of 20 enormous paintings that Mucha worked on for some 25 years. The collection in the Mucha Museum is a perfect preview of one of Mucha's grandest creations, found in St. Vitus Cathedral in Prague Castle: the 1931 stained-glass window depicting *The Allegory of the Slavs*.

Usually not included in guidebooks and therefore often ignored by visitors who instead choose to see the Prague Castle and the National Museum, **Prague's Museum of Applied Arts** (ulice 17 listopadu 2, 2481 1241) is one of the city's best-hidden treasures. This museum was constructed in the French Neo-Renaissance style, and was completed in 1901 to house the country's decorative arts collection. Unfortunately, only a portion of this vast collection is on permanent view, but a quick peek at the catalogues of previous exhibitions in the gift shop or the building's public library shows just how vast the collection is.

Always on view is a choice sampling of Bohemian and other European arts and crafts—beautiful examples of 16th-century furniture commissioned by Emperor Rudolph II, excellent Bohemian and Baroque glass, a collection of Meissen porcelain and even a few Gobelin tapestries. Each room of the museum includes accompanying English text cards. The building alone—designed by Czech architect Josef Schulz and intricately decorated with mosaics, stained glass and sculpture—is worth seeing. On the mezzanine are temporary exhibitions, and the museum often organizes shows at other sites, such as the Rudolphium directly across the street. —KATIE BRADLEY

## Beshkempir—The Adopted Son

**IT'S A FILM WITH A DUAL PURPOSE:** to tell a story and to portray a people. *Beshkempir—The Adopted Son*, is a story of identity, place and tradition in a country not yet consumed by modern sensibilities. It's a coming of age story which surpasses cultural boundaries. It's also a telling and intimate portrait of the people of Kyrgyzstan, a central Asian republic which only became independent from Russia in 1991. The Kyrgyz ("forty tribes") belong to one of the most ancient nations in the world and share relations with other people of Central Asia.

Those who seen *Beshkempir—The Adopted Son* have been moved by its sensitive portrayal of a young Kyrgyz boy's quest for identity. This directorial debut by Aktan Abdykalykov was inspired by an ancestral custom still prevalent among the Kyrgyz. The parents of a large family offer a baby to a childless couple after the baby has been weaned. In the ritual which marks the adoption, five old women pass the child over their bent knees and name it *Beshkempir* (translated: five old women).

Beshkempir, the young boy of the title, seems to be a child like any other, living a peaceful life with no real disruptions, caught up in the games and practical jokes common at this age. On the threshold of adolescence, Beshkempir is also feeling the first stirrings of sexuality and his first real feelings of love for the neighbor's daughter.

Then he learns that he isn't his parents biological child, that he'd been adopted. This painful, cataclysmic discovery makes his life unbearable. Beshkempir slowly comes to terms with his newly discovered identity. Shot in gorgeous black and white, *Beshkempir—The Adopted Son* is a rare, poetic treat. Pristine, elegant cinematography and supremely naturalistic acting give the film the feel of an ethnographic documentary infused with art film aesthetics.

—SUSAN WILTON

### Screening Dates

Chicago, April 2  
Ithaca, April 14  
St. Louis, April 23  
Sante Fe, May 21



Prague's best kept secrets are its small museums, including the Mucha Museum, which celebrates the work of Alphonse Mucha (right). Mucha was celebrated for his Art Nouveau work.





## Anoushka's Rising Sitar

It comes as no surprise that the daughter of Ravi Shankar would be a musician. But what is surprising is that it wasn't her father who pushed her to play. Nope, it was mom. "My father wanted to wait until I asked to play, so it was something I really wanted to do. But my mother didn't want to waste time to wait and see. So I started learning around eight. I didn't enjoy it—I had to miss my cartoons, so it would make me kind of mad," she said from her home in California.

At eighteen years Anoushka is about the same age her father was when he began his music studies, and is quickly on her way to establishing herself as an accomplished performer. Her debut recording, Anoushka, interpretations of her father's compositions, was well received by critics and listeners alike. Its soothing, understated tone, with her on sitar, and Bikram Ghosh on tablas, is inviting to seasoned listeners and newcomers of Indian classical music.

Very impressive stuff, but she is the first to point out that she's at the beginning of her career. "I haven't embarked on a solo tour yet. That's going to be the real test, when critics look at me on my own. I won't try to go solo until after I graduate from school."

With a father of international stature as her mentor, one wonders how the two relate. How does she get along with him? "When we go into the music room it really changes," she says with emphasis.

"Because there is that respect of the guru and the disciple, so it really is different. But I am closer to him

than his other students—there is that bond of the father/daughter. But there is a very spiritual feeling and mutual respect."

Indian classical music is known for being deep and introspective. So how does Anoushka pull it out of herself? "It takes experience. A lot of hearing my father and how he does it gives me an understanding of how it sounds. But that more emotional feeling that comes out of the playing—I'm definitely not at the highest level yet. That just comes with experience."

Since Anoushka comes from a strictly classical background what does she think of Indian music fused with electronic music, such as that of Talvin Singh?

"I like it. I don't have anything against taking instruments from different places and putting them together. As long as it sounds good. But nowadays it's more of a gimmick. It's all about 'oh, fusion is the cool thing to do so let's have a formula and put this, this and this together' and it doesn't really blend. When it does I like it but a lot of times it doesn't," she said.

Apart from the music itself, Anoushka loves the opportunity she gets to travel and meet people. Having just wrapped up an American tour, she is looking forward to a visit to India, where her talents will be judged by very discerning ears. "In India the audience is full of musicians and critiques who've been steeped in the music their whole life. That can be very frightening," she said. This young impresario is most definitely up to the challenge.—JC TRIPP

## Chilean Connection

There's a lot to see in Chile: arid desert in the north, the Pacific coast, the fertile agricultural core, meadows and rain forest in the south and a large and wild archipelago. Within the 4,300 km length of the country, one can experience a full range of activities, cultures and lifestyles. So, the question is, where does one begin? Travel books might help, but Chile's Harry and Clara Fuchslocher are a more affective choice. This team have been in Chile for thirty years and take pleasure in assuring their guests a great Chilean experience. View the picturesque volcanic lake regions, travel the Carretera Austral, visit Argentina, drink Chile's delicious wines, hang out in Santiago, or sunbathe at the beach. Not to be confused with an overpriced tour package, this is a couple who love their country, and love to show it off.

Harry and Clara Fuchslocher—Andes Pacific Adventures  
Phone (603) 826-3336 E-mail chchile@fmsi.net



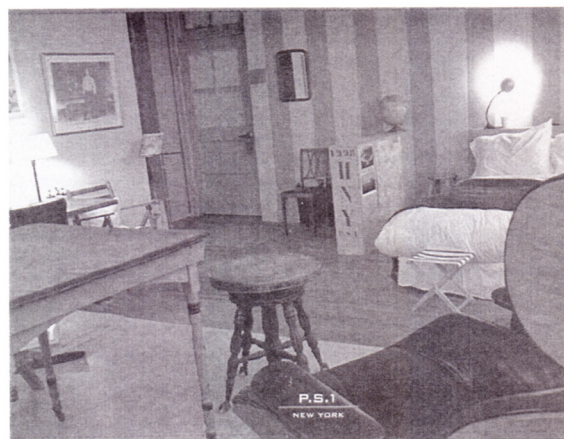
A Chilean panorama

## Hotel New York @ P.S. 1 New York

THE SOUND OF HOUSE MUSIC BOUNCING OFF A STAIRWELL'S WALLS ARE A GIVEAWAY THAT something interesting is transpiring at Long Island City's P.S. 1. What exactly is hard to say: A party? Fashion show? Or performance piece? Only when reaching the top stair and rounding the corner into this mock hotel room does one realize that it's all the above. This is Dutch artist Jeanne van Heeswijk's gathering—a collection of art, fashion and music created by her and visiting artists from her native Rotterdam. Entitled, *Hotel New York*, the ongoing Sunday event is a working and exhibition space with a twist: it is also a hotel room modeled after Rotterdam's Hotel New York. This is van Heeswijk's contribution to P.S. 1's International Studio Program, which provides free studio workspace to promising national and international artists.

The installation is also in memory of the Holland America Line, which for over a century provided transportation between Rotterdam and New York. The shipping company carried nearly 500,000 immigrants to these shores and the Line's former head office in Rotterdam is now Hotel New York. Art, fashion, performance, music—*Hotel New York*'s one room that's got it all.

Hotel New York @ P.S. 1, 22-25 Jackson Avenue, Long Island City (718) 784-2084





# They Don't Stop

Three New York City music promoters that keep the scene moving

BY AIMEE BIANCA

New York—where the pulse never slows. A city alive under the sheath of darkness. On any night, city landscapes merge into sound as sonic scientists converge on underground spaces. Solace is found in the mix. This is the New York of beats and bodies moving. The scene lives and thrives—even in the midst of those that would prefer it disappear. The three promoters featured—Organic Grooves, Giant Step and SoundLab Cultural Alchemy—play a hand in its current state. Here, in their own words, are their origins, philosophies and futures.

## OTHER PARTY PEOPLE

**WHO:** UNITY GAIN

**WHAT:** David Linton "the hausofouch" presents a roving party with live PAs and mix masters, melding sound and art world influences.

**CONTACT:** hausofouch@worldnet.att.net

**WHO:** MUTINY

**WHAT:** DJs Sirai and Rekha bring "musical insurgency across all borders" with the likes of Talvin Singh, Karsh Kale, Asian Dub Foundation and other basement bhangriffs.

**CONTACT:** 212.252.2397—vbald@interport.net

**WHO:** TSUNAMI

**WHAT:** Goa trance-a-thons complete with black neon body paint, Nag Champa and trippy hippie dippies.

**CONTACT:** 212.439.8124

**WHO:** OSSOM

**WHAT:** Soulslinger's new effort to throw regular parties promoting his store and the Liquid Sky label.

**CONTACT:** 212.226.0657—www.liquidsky-music.com

**WHO:** PHYSICS

**WHAT:** Alums of Jungle Nation db and Dara of Breakbeat Science and Mathematics whizzes Roy Dank and BlueLine continue with NYC junglist tradition.

**CONTACT:** 212.946.1998—drumbass.com

**WHO:** DIRECT DRIVE

**WHAT:** DJ Seoul and friends play for the kids in cammo tooting the UK junglist horns to the tunes of Mary and her lamb.

**CONTACT:** 212.613.0900

**WHO:** NYC UNITED

**WHAT:** Presented by the NY Drum & Bass Collective in the wilds of Fulton Street in a banker bar by day club.

**CONTACT:** 212.479.8497

**WHO:** KONKRETE JUNGLE

**WHAT:** Started by prodigal defects from Giant Step, now amongst the older jungle parties in the city.

**CONTACT:** 212.604.4224

— Compiled by Yvonne Liu

(whirl@slack.net)

## ORGANIC GROOVES

**WHAT:** Organic Grooves is a weekly party with cosmic sounds. *Cosmic*, meaning any genre of electronic dance or downtempo music manipulated by the DJ (with the addition of live musicians). The genius of cosmic is that it can be absolutely any type of music, the focus is on the DJ and his/her manipulation of the vinyl. The chaos is heightened with the addition of live musicians who play on top of the DJ. The end result is a heady mix of breaking and repetitive rhythms, evocative of tribal, ethnic and folk as well as contemporary, gritty urban-funk.

**IN THE BEGINNING:** Organic Grooves started on July 28, 1995. **PHILOSOPHY:** To experience an evening with no attitude, with open minds and a whole lot of fun.

**EVOLUTION:** Blossoming from a small growing bud en route to an enormous fragrant flower...

**WHAT MAKES A PARTY:** A tingling sensation of pleasure and happiness.

**NYC NIGHTLIFE:** Even though Giuliani (Mayor of NY) continues to crack down, NYC still offers some of the best in nightlife if you are seeking variety.

**FUTURE:** To begin to publish original music, travel with the whole posse and introduce people to new faces and music.

**CONTACT:** 212.439.1147—www.codek.com/organic.html



ORGANIC GROOVES' DJ SASHA AND ERIKA LIVELY

08735044310

POLAROID 3"

## GIANT STEP

**WHAT:** The Giant Step crew aimed to make New Yorkers dance to jazz and succeeded, thereby revolutionizing NYC nightlife.

**IN THE BEGINNING:** Giant Step started out as concert and event promoters almost ten years ago. As Groove Academy, they brought the best Jazz, Funk, and New-School artists to the NYC stage.

**PHILOSOPHY:** It's always been to support GOOD music. This can mean old school jazz, soul, drum and bass, or house. The category is not important—only the music.

**EVOLUTION:** After Groove Academy came the weekly Giant Step club night, managing bands and releasing records. Now with its Miles A Head series, Giant Step and Levi's bring such luminaries as Massive Attack, Grooverider, Air and Fatboy Slim to NY.

**WHAT MAKES A PARTY:** First and foremost—the music. An amazing party can be held in a barn as long as the music and vibe is rockin'.

**NYC NIGHTLIFE:** It's been a tough time for the last few years, starting with AIDS, which wiped out a lot of its personality in the mid '80s. On the up side there have been some excellent things that have come out of these hardships—Body & Soul, early Giant Step parties, etc.

**FUTURE:** Our upcoming plans are to continue to follow our musical dreams to and beyond the millennium.

**CONTACT:** Grooveline—212.714.8003; web—www.giantstp.com



GIANT STEP'S MAURICE BERNSTEIN AND JONATHAN RUDNICK

08735044310

POLAROID 3"

## SOUNDLAB CULTURAL ALCHEMY

**WHAT:** SoundLab integrates space and visual art with sound—proving that you can be theoretical while moving to the beat.

**IN THE BEGINNING:** SoundLab, as its own entity, has been going on for 4 years now, though it comes from a longer lineage of events from downtown New York and abroad.

**PHILOSOPHY:** To create an open space that has a laboratory aesthetic, revealing the technology and allowing the experiment to fail or succeed. We are not genre specific or bound. We want a variety of beats and people. **CULTURAL ALCHEMY** is a serious goal—to allow people to feel themselves and not be segregated by music type, gender, race, etc.

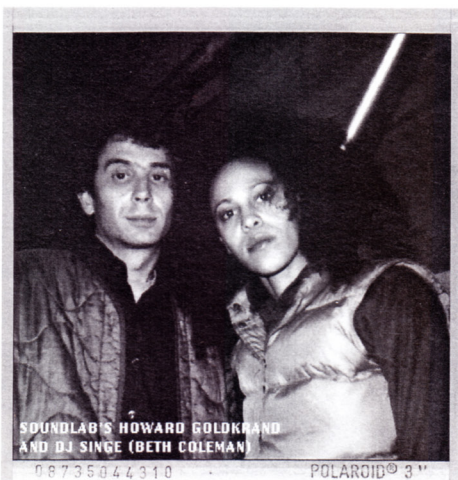
**EVOLUTION:** We started eight flights up over Canal St. in Chinatown. Our numbers and a desire for larger sound systems and spaces has pushed us out of this kind of spot.

**WHAT MAKES A PARTY:** A series of moments of displacement—outside of the daily grind—and an atmosphere that allows mad different folk to assemble with joy and respect.

**NYC NIGHTLIFE:** There are cultural miles in this terrain. This is NYC, the international reflector site of mad flavorz. Nightlife is as righteous as one wants to make it. Quality of life questions, on the other hand, are deeper issues like that of aesthetics. How do you tell someone what is beautiful and what is not?

**FUTURE:** To be increasingly nomadic on the international tip.

**CONTACT:** Soundlab Cultural Alchemy Infomix—212.726.1724.



SOUNDLAB'S HOWARD GOLDKRAND AND DJ SINGS (BETH COLEMAN)

08735044310

POLAROID 3"



# 3AM Eternal



## Reykjavík's Nocturnal Splendor



Aimee Bianca

A three-day stopover in Iceland turns into a marathon session of clubbing, drinking and soaking.

**IDYLIC ICELAND—WHERE THE AIR IS POLLUTION-FREE, WHERE** the people are beautiful and live the longest, where the literacy rate is the highest in the world and, of course, where Björk was born. This faraway place had always fascinated me. Then I heard the rumors—that Icelanders take nightlife seriously. Even though it's dark most of the time, they continue to go out all year round—even when it's snowing. And in the summer, thanks to the constant light of the midnight sun, "on to the break of dawn" takes on new meaning: the party just doesn't stop. When planning a recent trip to London, I discovered Icelandair's stopover perk—three days in Iceland at no extra cost—and as soon as I heard the sweet sound of Icelandair's slogan, "Iceland, it might just melt your heart," I knew I had to go.

Most tourists visit Iceland to see the wonders of nature—either the land of fire and ice's curious mixture of glaciers and volcanoes or, as one local told me, the pretty girls. I couldn't imagine either of these as I took the 50-minute bus ride from the airport over flat, brown, rocky land resembling the surface of the moon. I remembered that astronauts practiced their moon landing in Iceland before they took those monumental first steps and it made so much sense. This was another world. When I arrived in Reykjavík, I was actually surprised to find a small, pretty European city. Home to more than half of Iceland's entire population, Reykjavík is a perfect combination of the provincial and the cosmopolitan. It has the pace of a village yet is inhabited by stylish, savvy, stunningly beautiful city dwellers.

It is Reykjavík's position as a cultured city within an isolated country that makes going out there so interesting. On a Friday night, though there are lines out the door to get into the latest club or bar, once inside it's like being at one big house party. In a city where most people are either related or have dated, it's easy to meet one person and be introduced to everyone in the place. Out in Reykjavík, I was introduced to uncles who were nearly the same age; current kissing partners; and, many times, to one tall, long-haired man.

Some of the best places to go out in Reykjavík are cafes by day and bar/clubs by night. **Kaffi Thomsen** often has local DJ's spinning. At this spacious bar, I was lucky enough to catch one of Reykjavík's best DJ's, Steph from **GusGus** (the music collective). With a London Underground sign marking its entrance, **Kaffibarinn** is the hipster hangout, partly owned by Blur frontman Damon Albarn. This dark and discreet bar allows jetsetters to chill incognito. **KaffiFrank**, with a big picture of Frank Sinatra (hence the name) adorning its wall, is the current favorite hangout.

Drinks are super-expensive and everyone seems to pay for them with their credit cards. A crowd of people having a good time and a waitress constantly taking plastic in exchange for beer—that is the typical scene in a bar in Reykjavík. No matter what the guidebooks tell you, now that beer drinking was legalized in 1989, hardly anyone partakes of the national drink *brennivín* (trans: black death, named to discourage people from

drinking it). Have enough of this strong schnapps and you'll understand why Icelanders have always believed there are "little people" living behind rocks. After the bars close, follow the crowd of revelers as thousands congregate on the streets and in the square, eating tasty Icelandic hot dogs, drinking more and going off to parties that last until late the next day.

You must either start off your night or recover the next day by going to one of the open air swimming pools, open all year round. Utilizing thermal

water from the natural **hot springs**, most are equipped with saunas, whirlpools, and solariums. The most famous of the hot water pools is the **Blue Lagoon**: steaming blue water amidst the backdrop of a power plant. The Blue Lagoon features refuse water from the power station infused with minerals, which is known to have healing properties. Expect to see plenty of old people flocking to this modern-day "fountain of youth," many of them naked in the changing room showers.

If you're up for activity, you can snowboard year-round. In the summer there's snowboarding on the nearby glacier (provided there is enough snow and now too many cracks in the ice). For snowboarding in the winter, it's easy to get to the Blue Mountains, a half-hour trip from the city. **Missing Link Snowboard Shop** can hook you up with rentals and they often organize trips. If snowboarding's not your thing, you can always stay in the city. Chosen

### DINING

Dining in Reykjavík does not just consist of such traditional Icelandic fare as decomposed shark meat and puffin. Ethnic eateries abound.

### AUSTUR Indíafjelagjo

Hverfisgata 56.  
The northernmost Indian restaurant in the world.

### SAMURAI Ingolfstraeti 1.

The first and only Japanese restaurant in Iceland. Expect premium sushi made with fresh Icelandic fish.

### BAMBOO Þönglabakki 4.

Asian eclectic restaurant serving Chinese, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Korean, Malaysian, and Japanese dishes.

### AMIGOS Tryggvagata 8.

Mexican food and bar open late-night.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Scandinavian Tourism Board  
212.949.2333  
Icelandair 1.800.223.5500

as 1999's "European City of Culture," there is bound to be something going on in Reykjavík. Make sure you see whether the **Living Art Museum**, a gallery of contemporary experimental art, is having an opening or party. **Pop Reykjavík**, the biggest music festival, only happens in June, but there are always shows. Check out **Smash**, the local skate/hoodie shop, or listen to **Scratch**, a new hip-hop radio station, to find out about any happenings. Cinema is also huge in Reykjavík, with 6 movie theaters and many film festivals per year.

But whatever you do, do not book a flight out of Iceland for early Saturday morning (I unfortunately did). My new friends tried to convince me to cancel my flight ("Everyone does," they told me). As I broke the shower door in my drunken state (many apologies to the Salvation Army Guesthouse), and as I was passing out on line at the airport, I couldn't fathom anything worse. But I also couldn't imagine having a better time than I had on a Friday night in Reykjavík. —AIMEE BIANCA





Doreen Szeto



# A Shopper's Delight

FORGET ABOUT BUCKINGHAM PALACE, THE ACTION IS AT LONDON'S MANY STREET MARKETS

BY DOREEN SZETO

It's early Sunday morning, the wet street's already brimming with bustling, intent crowds winding their way around each other, straining to get a better view. Elderly grandmothers jostle with Addidas-clad kids whose parents have also come to take part in the circus milling about them. Every now and then the cries of men and women punctuate the drone of the crowd, entreating passersby not to miss a single thing.

No, it's not the scene outside Buckingham Palace. Nor is it the spectacle that takes place most weekends at any other major tourist attraction around England's capital city. All the hubbub's taking place at a street market—one of dozens of them in the various distinct neighborhoods that make London buzz.

Street markets—each with its own character, personality, and specialty—sit nestled within many boroughs throughout London. Many have histories that stretch back for more than a century. Seeing a borough's market will give you more of a feel for the complexity and flavor of modern London than will any other historical site.

Most tourists never make it beyond Harrod's in their shopping spree through the city. Some may reach Portabello or Camden Market, but few experience the true essence of the city by skipping less tourist-friendly markets. Even local residents rarely make it beyond their own neighborhood markets or the famous ones where they take visiting friends.

Neighborhood markets are a great way to start checking out street markets. Some markets are really more like bazaars. In **Ridley Market** in Dalston, you can buy whatever food your heart desires from almost anywhere in the world. The Ridley Market is home to a large Turkish, Indian/Pakistani, and West Indian population. It features fruits and vegetables, housewares, and hardware, and does booming business 5 days a week.

You might also try dropping in on a larger neighborhood market like the one in **Brixton**. Home to mostly African or West Indian immigrants, Brixton is a hodgepodge of different cultural influ-

ences. Come by subway, probably the first thing you'll hear and see as you ascend to ground level are the preachers on their various religious soapboxes. Armed only with their faith and a blowhorn, they spout, scold, and preach to anyone who'll listen. There are probably more religious missionaries per square inch in Brixton than anywhere else in London!

The market is a reflection of this energetic fervor. One of the most famous in London (as seen in Eddie Grant's *Electric Avenue*), Brixton Market has a huge selection of the usual fruits and vegetables, fish and meat, but it also features a variety of clothing, military surplus, hardware, and African textiles.

By far the best place to go for street market action is east London—hands down! **The East End** has not only some of the oldest, most famous, and bountiful markets in London, but many of them are located so close together that the sheer density makes the true market enthusiast's head spin. In these markets you'll be just as likely to find traditional English cockney merchants as you will Pakistani ones, selling their wares to whoever's interested.

One of the most friendly and beautiful is **Columbia Market**. This market specializes in all varieties of urban-friendly flora for the city dweller. Though tucked away in a heavily residential area, it's easy to find if you follow the steady stream of shoppers leaving with a ficus or a pot of wallflowers under their arms. You'll find the market a visual feast for the eyes; cut flowers, palms, and other plant exotica crowd the sidewalks. Behind the stalls are shops that sell arts, crafts, and garden furniture as well as gourmet food and coffee. Where else in London could you buy a garden gnome and a lox-and-cream cheese bagel within a few feet of each other? At the end of the market, there is a charming, winding cobblestone alley packed with local residents and horticultural shoppers relaxing with coffee and pastries.



**Old men with even older-looking blankets and shopping carts display a few things that sometimes look like items pilfered from a pre-war dresser's top drawer. These soon make way for real shops selling used furniture.**

After you've had your fill of the flora and the resident fauna at the Columbia Market, you can head a few blocks down to Shoreditch High Street—London's Wall Street. The stock market is not the only market you'll find here, though. Within the jungle of gleaming glass and steel, you'll find many traditional markets that have been here for more than a century. In the heart of the City is **Leadenhall Market**. Leadenhall sits immediately adjacent to the famously modern Lloyds Building. Made of iron and stone in the late 19th century, Leadenhall retains many of its original storefronts, and contrasts sharply with Lloyds; it was described by Charles Dickens in *Nicholas Nickleby* as a good place to buy fresh-laid eggs. Today you can still buy those at Leadenhall and a whole lot more! To this day, the Market remains famous for the quality and freshness of its meats and produce. Popular with the lunchtime financial crowd, you can have fun mingling with the masses while checking out the topnotch food, or by watching the suits go up and down in the Lloyds Building's famous glass elevators.

A few blocks away is **Spitalfields**. Located under a five-acre Victorian canopy of iron and glass, Spitalfields provides shelter from England's ubiquitous rain. A stone's throw from the center of the City, during the work week it's home to an indoor sporting ground, tasty international food and some upmarket crafts and housewares stores. Once one of the busiest wholesale food markets in London, today Spitalfields is packed on the weekends with stands selling groovy candles, obscure books, funky clothes, stylish mirrors, hard-to-find records and CD's, and freshly cut flowers for those freaky executives and anyone else who's in the area.

A hop and a skip to the east is the famous, although by no means uninteresting, **Petticoat Lane**. Spanning a half a dozen city blocks, Petticoat Lane specializes in inexpensive clothing and household items of every size and description. The Market is very large, so it's easy to get lost amidst the bustling families that make it out here to do their weekly shopping. While you're here you might want to grab a quick bite from the various food stalls that sell piping hot snacks, such as samosas and Jamaican patties. Your best bet, though, (if you're not averse to or afraid of English food) is to try out the stands and cafes that specialize in East London favorites like jellied eels, welshs, pies and mash (that's Anglo-English for meat pies and mashed potatoes), toad-in-the-hole (sausage cooked in a mashed potato casserole), bangers (sausages), and a host of other traditional London fare.

Just north of Petticoat Lane is the equally famous **Brick Lane Market**. Approaching this market, it's hard to figure out where it starts and where it ends. On the sides of the street, old men with even older-looking blankets and shopping carts display a few things that sometimes look like items pilfered from a pre-war dresser's top drawer. These soon make way for real shops selling used furniture. Then comes an assortment of market stalls and trucks. Most of the stalls sell a variety of hardware and underwear for about a pound apiece (1 pound = approx. \$1.50). The trucks feature microphoned hawkers selling electronic equipment and bicycles out of the backs of trucks. I couldn't tell if the goods were hot; I'm not sure I want to know!

Further down the road, about where the street signs begin showing Hindi translations of the street names, the trucks give

way to a labyrinth of arched spaces beneath the train tracks. Here you'll find smaller vendors manning tables piled high with the types of used goods you'd find in a good thrift shop or vintage store. To American eyes, 1930's, 40's, 50's, 60's, and 70's lamps, suitcases, kitchen goods, and clothes piled high in every corner seem like a great find (I've seen vintage 1920's suitcases sold here for about 20 pounds). At the end of Brick Lane Market is a more gentrified area, complete with a few trendy bars, cafes, and the Truman Brewery. This area finally leads to the Bangladeshi restaurant district for which Brick Lane is famous. Conveniently, the Shoreditch tube station is also located here, so you can make a quick escape if you so desire.

If the Victoria and Albert Museum has left you with an urge to splurge in a price range that's way out of your league, **Alfie's**

#### **Antique Market**

might do something to ease your pain. Alfie's is an indoor antique market located in the eastern end of the larger **Church Street Market**.

Alfie's is so good it draws specialist dealers from all around England. In the multi-story complex you'll find Victorian, Art Deco, pre-war and 50's, 60's and 70's antiques for sale in numerous permanent stalls on each floor. From top hats to silver service sets, everyday items of the British past are spread out for every antique enthusiast, and can keep the casual window shopper occupied for hours.

If you're still shopping for antiques after Alfie's, you may want to head out of the urban hustle and bustle to the quieter environs of Hampstead. **The Hampstead Antique and Craft Market** is conveniently located near the center of the village, which is known for its genteel atmosphere. This market offers a low-key environment that's ideal for browsing. Hampstead is one of the oldest antique markets in London, and vendors here specialize in jewelry, furniture, watches, clocks, and a variety of paintings. Around the corner from the Market is the **Hampstead Community Center**, where local craftspeople open a few stalls on weekends to sell homemade crafts like candles, sweaters (that's "jumpers" in England) and art prints. If you need a break, there are plenty of restaurants and cafes that offer outdoor and indoor seating in the area. ☕

Usually located conveniently near tube stations and bus stops, street markets are not only an absorbing way to spend your days in London, but are also convenient stops for when you can spare only a few minutes.

Be aware that opening times may vary according to the season and the time of the week.

#### **How To Get There**

##### **Ridley Market**

Train: Dalston Station  
Open: Tues-Sat, 9-5

##### **Brixton Market**

Tube: Brixton  
Open: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday-Saturday, 9:00-5:30

##### **Columbia Market**

Tube: Bethnal Green, Liverpool Street, Shoreditch  
Open: Sunday, 7:00-2:00

##### **Leadenhall**

Tube: Bank, Monument  
Open: M-F, 9-5

##### **Spitalfields**

Tube: Liverpool Street, Shoreditch  
Open: M-F, 11:00-3:30, Sunday 10-3

##### **Petticoat Lane**

Tube: Liverpool Street, Aldgate East, Aldgate  
Open: Saturday, 10:30-2:30, Sunday, 9-2

##### **Brick Lane**

Tube: Liverpool Street, Aldgate East, Shoreditch  
Open: Sunday 8-1

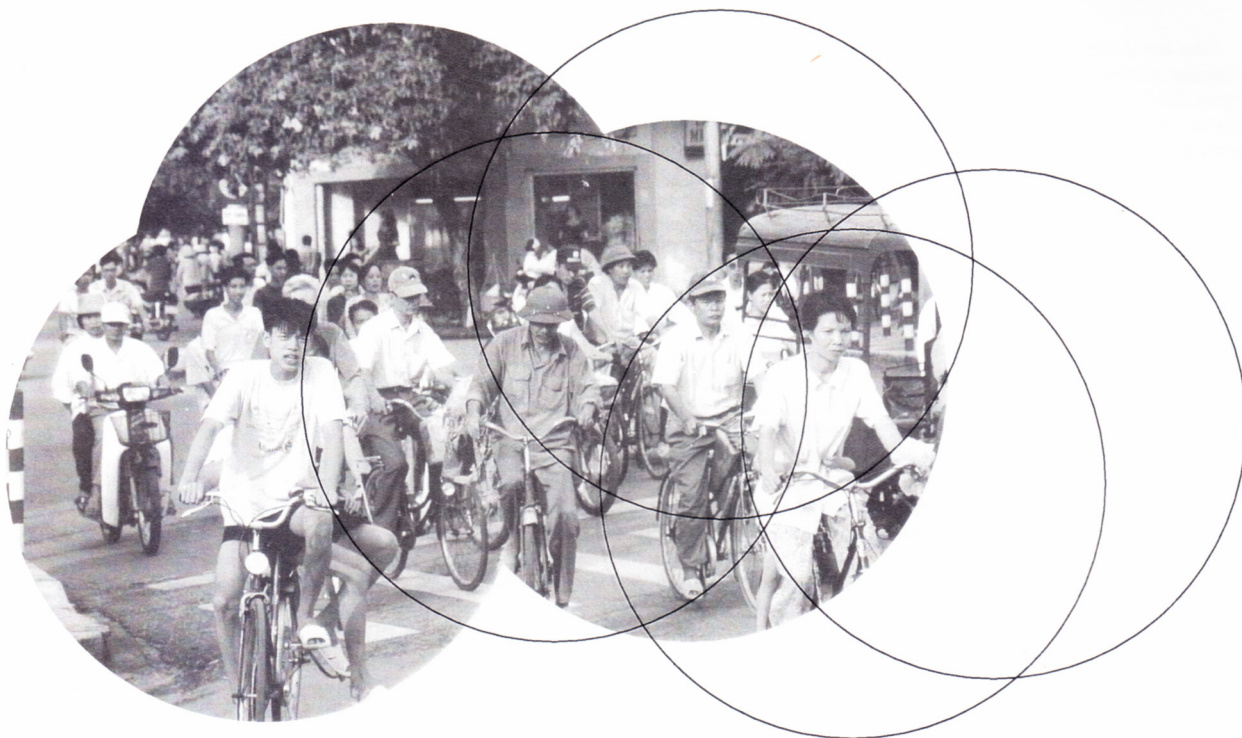
##### **Alfie's Antique Market**

Tube: Edgware Road, Marylebone  
Open: Tues-Sat. 10-6

##### **Hampstead Antique & Craft Market**

Tube: Hampstead  
Open: Tues-Friday, 10:30-5pm, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 11:30-6:30





# Coming Full Circle

AS ITS WAR-TORN PAST FADES, VIETNAM EMERGES ANEW

BY EMMA DOWSON

**T**he old lady at the cycle-hire shop laughs loudly at us and points to the street. It is seven a.m. and Ho Chi Minh City (or Saigon, as the locals still call it) is already awash with kamikaze two-wheelers. Elegant women in spike heels and elbow-length gloves rev their mopeds; school children ride bicycles in pairs, working one pedal each. Cyclos (bicycle taxis) carrying enormous loads whiz past. Everyone is in a hurry to get somewhere. It is not the place for novices like my sister Lucinda and me.

Shambolic, sprawling Saigon teems with life. Crumbling colonial villas and dilapidated Soviet-style blocks shed their skins and spill their contents onto the dusty sidewalks. Meals are prepared, children groomed, and clothes washed here. Every spare inch of cracked concrete is taken up by vibrant street markets, which stock anything from paper-thin silk to brightly-colored spices. Women balancing baskets full of hairy lichees or mangoes on shoulder poles jostle for space with roving hairdressers and manicurists. The bartering is fierce, but punctuated with laughter.

In Cholon, Saigon's Chinatown, colors get brighter and street traders get louder. The air is heavy with the smell of incense and food. Flag down a boy banging a chopstick on a wooden block and he'll bring you a bowl of *pho*—noodle soup. If it's too early to face this traditional breakfast, baguettes and strong dark coffee are always close at hand. We tried magenta-skinned dragon fruit, but not roasted dog, another local specialty.

This is Vietnam ten years after *doi moi*—the Communist government's economic reforms encouraging free enterprise—and com-

mercial instincts that lay dormant for two decades have been rekindled. Modern shops and hotels push skyward, replacing the old haunts of spies, decadent diplomats, and U.S. soldiers. Saigon is busily becoming a modern metropolis, with ambitions to rival those of Singapore or Hong Kong. Billboards advertise political propaganda, as well as soft drinks and a computer dealer named The Peace Corporation.

*Peace* is a word that comes up frequently in conversation with the Vietnamese, particularly when they talk about the Vietnam War. "It's history now; we want to be free of its shadow and enjoy the benefits of peace," a middle-aged restaurateur tells us. But, while Vietnam looks to the future, tourists are inevitably lured here by its past. A morbid curiosity takes us to the former U.S. Embassy, which boasts the most notorious roof in history: the scene of the military airlift that signaled the end of three decades of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. While the rooftop terrace of the Rex Hotel, decorated with fairy-lit topiary and preserved much as it was when U.S. military officers stayed here, has a nostalgic ambiance, the War Crimes Museum is a sobering experience. Although it is full of propaganda, it is interesting to hear the Vietnamese version of events.

However, it's not war relics that leave the biggest impression on visitors, but the hospitable, friendly Vietnamese people. During the harshest years of Communist rule, contact with Westerners was forbidden. Wander down any street today, and you are bound to strike up endless conversations. The local Buddhist-inspired "live-for-today" philosophy is infectious.



"The worst thing about peace is that there's no quiet," complains a weather-beaten man trying to nap in the carriage of his cyclo. Saigon buzzes 24 hours a day. Just as the young are returning home from fashionable bars like Apocalypse Now and Q, their grandparents are starting the day with body-and-mind balancing *tai chi* sessions. Construction clatter, bellowing street traders, honking horns, squealing tires, and squawking chickens eventually drive all but the most committed city aficionados to seek refuge somewhere more tranquil.

We leave Saigon without being brave enough to hire bicycles, and catch a night train to the coast. The Reunification Express runs between Saigon and Hanoi along a line built by the French in the '1930s, sabotaged and bombed scores of times during the war, and reconstructed afterwards by the Communist government to unify the country. The Express travels at 30 m.p.h.—slower than it did over 50 years ago when the track was first finished.

Our "hard berth" compartment was designed for six but holds double that number now. Still, it is luxurious compared to bottom-of-the-range "half seat" carriages, whose narrow wooden benches are crammed with passengers. Those without seats squat in the gaps or stand. The corridor between compartments quickly has become a mobile bazaar, offering anything you could possibly want for a long journey. The family with whom we share a carriage seems exuberant despite the overcrowding. They are northern-born agricultural workers relocated to Saigon by the Communist government after the war, and have saved for years to afford the trip home. They stare with horror at our tickets—as foreigners, we have paid four times as much for the journey as they have.

Soon we are crawling through lush green rice paddies filled with workers, their buffalo harnessed to antiquated wooden ploughs. Clusters of wooden houses on stilts sit at the foot of jungle-clad mountains. Three-quarters of Vietnam's population live in rural areas like these, untouched by the alchemy of change. Saigon seems far away.

The following morning we arrive at the seaside resort of Nha Trang. Six miles of vanilla sand dotted with coconut palms provide a perfect place to relax. Bao Dai's Villas, built as a retreat for

**This is Vietnam ten years after 'doi moi'—the communist government's economic reforms encouraging free enterprise—and commercial instincts that lay dormant for two decades have been re-kindled again. Modern shops and hotels push skywards to replace the old haunts of spies, decadent diplomats and US soldiers.**

Vietnam's last emperor and the place where the ruling elite have rested for decades, is the perfect antidote to the Reunification Express's cramped conditions. Surrounded by bougainvillea and banana trees, our spacious bungalow-style villa costs \$30 a night and is by far the most luxurious place we have stayed in Vietnam, where lodging for budget travelers tends to be basic.

Vietnam has a long, spectacular coastline, across which thousands of boat people fled in search of freedom and fortune and from which millions of fishermen still make a living. Nha Trang's harbor is filled with colorful wooden fishing trawlers and small round basket boats, woven from bamboo strips, which bring the catch ashore. Heaps of gigantic shrimp and cuts of tuna are sold on the beach. We watch as a tiny woman dressed in a jungle-green hat and combat gear haggles ferociously over the seafood. She, we soon discover, is Mama Han, a charismatic, middle-aged woman who had been a soldier and then sold peanuts on the beach before founding the Green Hat enterprise, which runs inexpensive daily boat trips. Vietnamese women dominate the marketplace and are renowned for their business skills, but this particular entrepreneurial woman is something of a local legend.

The Green Hat boat cruises around the bay, mooring close to tiny islands so that we can snorkel around pristine coral reefs inhabited by swarms of electric blue fish. At midday the deck is covered with platters of seafood and exotic fruit. As we feast, Mama Han tells raucous jokes. After a few sips of potent snake



Emma Dowson



wine, the chatter of six different languages fades into the background. I gaze out into an infinity of sparkling turquoise sea, spotting a couple of dolphins. It is one of those perfect moments that only seem to happen when you're far away from home.

Hue, the name of the ancient city we visit a couple of days later, translates as "peace" or "harmony," yet the Vietnam War's bloodiest battle was fought here. Thirty years ago the Viet Cong raised their flag in Hue's citadel and the U.S. Army fought for two weeks to take it down again, destroying the Imperial City in the

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process. Today, there is something horrific about the gutted enclosure, blackened, bullet-ridden and stained with the blood of the 10,000 people, many of them civilians, who died here.

A gang of raggedly-dressed children ambushes us here. One presses a well-worn Zippo lighter, inscribed with the words, "I'm sure to go to heaven because I've spent my time in hell," into my hand. Others grab our fingers and wrists. An imploring chorus starts up: "Madam, give me one dollar." Yet at the same time, the children giggle as if they are playing a game. It is disconcerting.

At the ornately carved gates leading to the Imperial City's inner sanctum, the children are shooed away by an attendant. "Don't forget me," they shout as we move out of reach. But we do, as the magnificent Thai Hoa Palace, alive with dragons and serpents crawling around lacquered columns, comes into view. The Palace, where eighteenth-century emperors consorted with mandarins, miraculously escaped war damage; it looks surreal, standing alone in an overgrown field scattered with fragments of pockmarked walls.


But the children haven't forgotten us and are waiting outside the gates. We hand around coins, but a note of desperation has crept into their voices now. "Remember me when you get back to your country," says one small girl, on the verge of tears. She wears chipped scarlet nail polish and whenever I see that color now, I'm reminded of her.

Midnight. The Reunification Express stops in the middle of nowhere and lurches madly from side to side, buffeted by violent gusts of rain and wind. "We won't move for hours, not until the typhoon blows over," a fellow passenger tells me cheerily. Others lie parceled together on sleeping berths and hammocks slung between luggage racks like spiderwebs. Lucinda sleeps, but I lie awake terrified, watching bolts of lightning fizz across the sky. Later, desperate for company, I wander along the corridor, now ankle-deep in floodwater. In another carriage elderly men in silken pajamas play cards, swig rice wine, and toke on a long bamboo pipe, clearly aiming to drink and gamble their way to oblivion. Next door a woman feeds her baby and a man reads a book by flashlight. Their calm is impressive.

Early next morning, the train jolts into action. We are near the Seventeenth Parallel, where Vietnam was split in two during the war. Outside in the blue-gray gloom, the pragmatic inhabitants of one of Vietnam's poorest provinces are already inspecting their waterlogged crops. Inside, we rescue our sodden suitcases and begin swabbing the floor with T-shirts, sarongs or whatever comes to hand. Someone cracks a joke, and everyone starts laughing hysterically. It is translated for us as, "It would have been lucky for the locals if we'd all died here—they'd have had plenty of fresh, tasty meat for a change." The Vietnamese are always quick to see the lighter side of any situation, although

they do have an incredibly macabre sense of humor!

Having survived the typhoon, we become more courageous, and within hours of arriving in Hanoi we hire bicycles. The roads are less frenetic than those in Saigon, but weaving our way through the ancient quarter, a maze of narrow streets where other cyclists press close and colorful shops tempt our eyes from the road, still feels like something of an achievement.

Pastel-painted pagodas and French colonial relics are as perfectly preserved in Hanoi as is the embalmed body of Ho Chi Minh, which lies in a mausoleum there like a fragile butterfly in a collector's case. Hanoi is an elegant city of lakes, parks, and boulevards shaded by flame trees, less developed than Saigon but gradually gearing up for modernization. We visit a sixteenth-century temple in the middle of an area flattened for development. Inside, light filters through holes in the ceiling, illuminating a cluttered altar festooned with faded banners and a wax-encrusted candelabra. A saffron-clad monk sleeps on a bench, his flip-flops stored neatly beneath him. It is perfectly tranquil until a drill starts up in the distance. The race to start Hanoi's stopped clock has inevitably begun. 

## RESOURCES

### TRANSPORT

#### Train

Regular rail service connects Saigon and Hanoi. The cost of a ticket is between \$50 and \$120. The fastest express train takes 36 hours, the slowest 44 hours. There are six different classes of ticket ranging from uncomfortable "half-seat" to "super-berth," deluxe air-conditioned compartments sleeping two people. In sleeper compartments the top berth is the cheapest, as apparently the Vietnamese don't like to climb up. Reservations should be made a day in advance of travel. We travelled in mid-range "hard-berth" sleepers which cost \$90, were reasonably comfortable, and allowed us to break the journey as many times as we liked.

#### Buses

Buses are cheaper than trains but slow, crowded, and uncomfortable. Some local tour operators run minibuses between major tourist destinations. Sin Cafe Tours, based in Saigon, is popular.

#### Air

Vietnam Airlines serves most important towns and cities. It flies five times daily between Saigon and Hanoi for around \$150.

It's easy to hire mopeds and bicycles for the day. Cyclos are the easiest, cheapest, and most aesthetic way to travel around cities.

### LODGINGS

Most hotels and guest houses are state run, but the new privately-run hotels and guest houses are a better value, cleaner, and more friendly. All rooms should have a fan, but expect to pay more for air-con. The more flights of stairs you're willing to negotiate the cheaper the price.

Most hotels cost around \$20 to \$50 per night. Backpacker guest houses cost around \$10 a night—in Saigon there is a good choice around Pahn Ngu Lao Street and Bui Vien Street. The Prince Hotel, Hotel 211, Vien Dong, and Miss Loi's Guest House all have good reputations. Saigon's classiest hotels are The Continental, setting for Graham Greene's *The Quiet American*

(\$100–\$200) and The Rex Hotel (\$90–\$880).

#### Nha Trang

Bao Dai's villas cost \$20–\$40 per night. Thang Loi Hotel is a U.S.-style motel a few yards from the beach costing \$10–\$40.

#### Hanoi

Hanoi is less well-served than Saigon in terms of lodgings. For a friendly, inexpensive guest house in a good location, try Lotus Guest House (\$10). Many of Hanoi's French-built townhouses have recently been converted to hotels, such as the Dan Chu Hotel (\$70–\$130).

### FOOD

Vietnamese food is excellent—more spicy than Chinese, less hot than Thai. *Pho*—noodle soup with meat, fish or vegetables—is practically the national dish and can be tried at any sidewalk cafe for around fifty cents. Spring rolls are delicious, particularly the steamed variety, and seafood is good, plentiful, and cheap. Because of Buddhist traditions, vegetarian cuisine (*an chay*) is widely available and imaginatively prepared. Fresh exotic fruits—dragon fruit, rambutans, mangoes, and papayas—are inexpensive. The French influence means that baguettes, pastries, and strong coffee are readily available.

### RECOMMENDED RESTAURANTS

#### Saigon

Kim Cafe is a traveler's favorite. The Vietnam House is a beautiful villa where a sumptuous feast costs around \$10. Zen Vegetarian is a friendly place where you can eat well for a few dollars.

Saigon has an excellent nightlife: Apocalypse Now, Q or Saigon Headlines are all popular bars.

#### Hanoi

There is less choice of restaurants here than in Saigon. The Green Bamboo Cafe and Old Darling Cafe are traveler's havens serving good food at low prices. For Parisian atmosphere try Cafe de Paris. The Piano Restaurant specializes in crab and live music.



# JAMAICA,

## All Inclusive

No other place so embodies the idea of an earthly paradise than Jamaica. And no other place in Jamaica so epitomizes the fleetingness of that fantasy than Negril. This picture-perfect beach town has it all, and it's not just sun and surf.

BY CHRISTOPHER HARRALL

I'm standing ankle-deep in a puddle in the middle of a washed-out road. One of the "brief and refreshing rain showers," often praised as a relief from the afternoon heat, arrived early this morning and now refuses to leave. At breakfast, I watched the storm advance, roiling the sea and turning the sky to a dull New England gray. My feet are now lost beneath the muddy water, and tremendous warm raindrops soak me to my spleen. I wear only a pair of red swim trunks, which I haven't taken off for several days. I think, if nothing else, that the rain might freshen them up a bit. In my hand is a soaked wad of Jamaican dollars. Soon joining me in the puddle is an old man wielding a machete. He speaks quickly, alternating between garbled English and Jamaican Patois, and wildly waves his blade in the direction of the wooden huts that line the road. He knows I'm a man in need of something. Why else would I be out here in the rain? "Red Stripe please," I say. He hesitates.

"Red Stripe," I repeat too loudly. "Three," I add, holding up the same number of fingers. I place the money in his outstretched hand. He nods to indicate that we're in business and then walks off down a narrow dirt alley.

"Too much of de white rum for him," says a woman seated in the dim confines of one of the huts. "It make him mad."

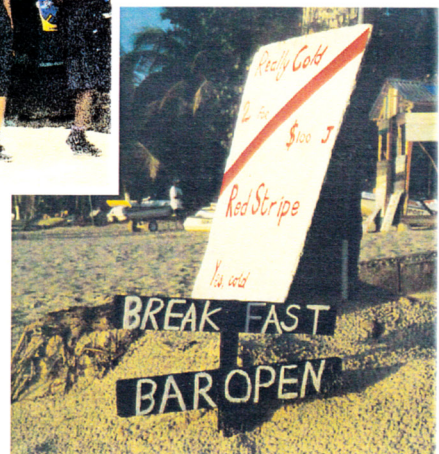
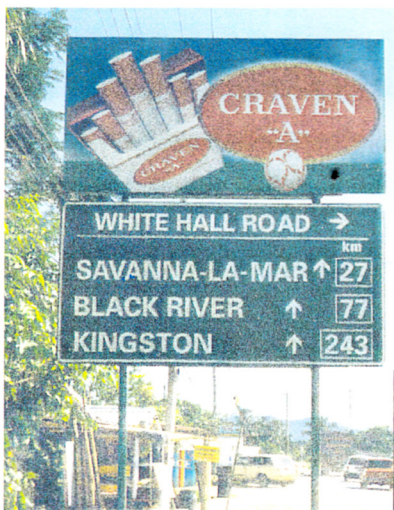
"Mad," I repeat, and then add, "crazy?" The woman smiles a big infectious smile. And as I wait in the puddle, a grin spreading across my face, it occurs to me that my current state might be what people call being 'in the moment.'

"Soon come," says the woman after several minutes pass.

"Soon come," I repeat, perfectly content to wait indefinitely. It's taken several days to attain this carefree state. Several days to lower my urban defense system. Several days to reach a plane of consciousness where I am unalarmed by—and gladly hand money to—a man waving a machete. I am, it seems, happily present, without apprehension, fear, or judging from my appearance, ego. I've stopped wearing a watch. Time is now measured in units of "soon come"; there's no need to worry about that which will certainly arrive. Sure enough my madman returns. I thank him extravagantly and refuse my change, and as the drenched-but-proud owner of three sweating bottles of beer I realize that, rain or no, there is nowhere else I would rather be.

Perhaps visitors to Negril in the sixties and seventies felt the same way after they too had been here for a few days. Perhaps it's why many of them stayed for weeks and months and why others built homes and never left. Located on the western tip of Jamaica, the Negril of today is known for its narrow crescent of gently curving beach, which until fairly recently, and despite its obvious appeal, went mostly untracked. Thirty years ago this international hotspot was just a remote fishing village called Red Ground, built atop a hill overlooking a swamp known as the Great Morass. While places like Montego Bay and Ochos Rios catered to a mounting number of mainstream tourists, Negril existed in a peaceful state of obscurity and the tourist, as we currently know him, rarely ventured there.









Mark Conklin, owner of Banana Shout, a group of villas nestled on the cliffs of Negril's West End, came to Jamaica at a time when the United States was adrift amidst the tension and political unrest of the Vietnam War—a time ripe for escape. Negril proved to be the perfect place to put down new roots. He remembers his first years in Negril and has recorded those memories in a novel, *Why Bananas Shout*. As much about his past as the Island's, the work describes a past with no electricity and no running water; when the "road" was two ruts worn into the hillside by a truck that brought kerosene to light the lighthouse; and only the occasional structure stood where the jungle-like growth was kept at bay by the ceaseless swinging of machetes.

"People came here from all over the world," Mark recalls. "Mostly young backpackers, they'd show up with a sleeping bag and for a couple of bucks a night they'd crash on the floor of a Jamaican's home, eat meals with the family, play with their kids. It was a different life altogether. It was a total escape. Some stayed for a month, some six months. Some like us came and never left."

Word of this hidden paradise spread, and soon people flew in from every continent. Rock stars, celebrities, rich kids, anyone with a little money and free time came to join these pioneering hippies, kick back in paradise, groove with the Jamaicans; smoke, swallow or snort their preference; watch the sun go down and forget about the outside world for a while. On any given day Mick Jagger or Keith Richards might be seen strutting around Rick's Café, a cliffside bar made notorious by its clientele of drug smugglers and celebrities. Mark recalls one instance when he was swinging in the hammock on his porch and he heard "Sunshine Superman" by Donovan drifting through the thick foliage. He wondered how the music could be so clear coming from what he assumed was the faraway stereo of his neighbor. Following the music to its source, he came upon a clearing where, dressed in a purple robe, guitar in hand, sat Donovan himself.

As a result of its increasing popularity, the tourism industry in Negril exploded. Some say the consequences were devastating. Others will argue the opposite, but all agree that the area was forever changed. Conklin, now in his fifties, grayer and heavier than his younger and more handsome self in the Polaroid he's showing me was swept up in the shock wave.

"The tourism thing in Negril happened overnight. Back then we never even thought about making money at this. I had built a small bungalow on the land I owned and one day some young guys



showed up at my door and said, 'Hey, can we rent this place?' So I moved out, back into my lean-to until I could build another place. The next thing I knew I was running a hotel." By comparison, Mark's cliffside resort developed slowly (even today it consists of only a handful of bungalows), whereas down on the beach, property was snapped up at ever-increasing rates and buildings went from foundation to fully operative in a matter of weeks. Haste, lack of planning, the absence of regulation, and a seemingly endless line of tourists resulted in the Negril that exists today. No less than 70 resorts, inns, restaurants, and clubs now line the beach, with another forty or so on or near the cliffs along South Negril Point. Like so many other places before, this paradise was paved overnight, and the transformation of a tiny self-sufficient patch of the tropics into another tourist Mecca was complete.

I've hired a taxi for the day to take me inland away from the crush of tourists. The despair I've begun to feel from the sight of too much sunburned flesh and the chainsaw scream of jetskis is brought to a head by the girlish hooting of a drunk accountant as he parachutes into the ocean for a dunk before the motorboat yanks him skyward again.

My driver, McGee, takes us out of town headed southeast on the narrow and pitted A2. We speed through towns with names that echo Jamaica's history. Sheffield, Little London and Savanna-La-Mar recall a legacy forged when the British took control of the island from the Spanish in 1655. The center of Sav-la-Mar, as McGee says it, teems with children dressed in perfectly pressed school uniforms. Reggae or house music booms from huge amplifiers stacked four high under a corrugated roof, and the road is lined with food stands



offering a variety of fruits, jerk chicken, fried fish, and meat-filled pastries. We dodge oncoming cars and the wayward goat or chicken until the town gives way to Jamaica's lush landscape.

Turning onto a pitted one-lane road, we are hemmed in by eight-foot stalks of sugar cane. Intermittently, small clearings appear where a house has been built and a vegetable garden laid out. The road rises, taking us out of the low-lying fields. Switchbacks zigzag up the steep hills into a landscape dominated by verdant jungle. It is cooler and drier here and the pace more relaxed. This is the Jamaica I came to see, the Jamaica everyone should see. The people along the road wave or call out as we whiz by. "Hey, whitey," some say as a matter of fact. McGee says to me, "Dey say, 'hey, whitey,' you say back, 'hey, blackie.'" "Political correctness" has thankfully not arrived in Jamaica and such an exchange, I sense, is free of malice; we are, after all, referring only to our color.

A variety of trees, their branches laden with fruit, grow on the hillside. Coconuts, mangoes, breadfruit, star apples, bananas, sour-sop and papaya flourish. McGee pulls over and points to a tree bearing a pear-shaped fruit. "Dis is ackee," he says, pointing out a ripe one. It is bright red and the lobes have begun to split at the bottom, spreading like a flower. "Dis is very good, very tasty," he says. "You cook it and it's like scrambled eggs, you have it with salt fish and dumplings for breakfast." All morning McGee stops the car to share his knowledge of the native plants and explain how each can be prepared and eaten. During the eighties he cooked in his own restaurant. A thin, long-limbed man in his fifties with short, graying hair and a deliberate, graceful way of moving, McGee was born just fifteen miles outside "Mo-Bay" as Montego Bay is more commonly called. He attended school and at seventeen took a job with a security company before moving to Negril where he opened his restaurant. "I cooked everything," he says. "All styles, Jamaican dishes, Chinese, some Italian, a little of everything, mon. I did it all." When the building he rented changed hands, he stopped leasing and closed up shop. Now he works for a hotel in the West End and makes extra money showing people around Negril and other parts of western Jamaica.

After stopping at Mayfield Falls, where I am led by guides up a steep mountainside through a series of cool waterfalls and pools, we are back in downtown Negril. McGee points out where buildings long demolished once stood at a time when travelers wandered in on foot or in the back of a farmer's cart. I can see him reconstructing the scene in his mind's eye. "Was it better then?" I ask him, though I know the answer. He hesitates as one who's not given to moments of nostalgia might and then says slowly, "Ya mon, ya." And you know it was. You know it.

Back at the hotel, I'm slaking my thirst, alternating between bottles of Red Stripe and rum-based Dirty Bananas; I assure myself that the blended fruit daiquiris are filled with enough nutrients to serve as dinner. There are some golden-haired kids at the bar, nineties-style hippies. One's had her hair braided, and her boyfriend is so sunburned it's all I can do to keep from slapping him on the back. At a table in the middle of the dining room is a group of Europeans. They've dressed for dinner and make me somewhat ashamed of my reeking swimsuit and salt-caked hair. Adjacent to them is a loud group of tourists from somewhere far below the Mason-Dixon line. I begrudge them their accent and their happy camaraderie even more. I'm beginning to feel like pre-Eve Adam—a bit lonesome in Paradise.

Between stifled fits of giggling, the goldenhairs talk about smoking some more Alaskan bud and going down the road to meet up with the owner of Xtabi, another cliffside resort. I introduce myself, explain that I want to talk to this same fellow about the Negril of old, and, bound together by a common purpose, we're on our way. Lonesome Journalist is happy to have some company and they're

overjoyed, it would seem, to have around someone in charge of at least fifty percent of his faculties. Along the road to Xtabi, we stop at a place named Three Dives and eat jerk chicken with rice and beans smothered in spicy granny sauce. Our food is cooked on a barbecue constructed from a fifty-gallon drum cut in half lengthwise and hinged at the back. Our table is a discarded wooden spool turned on its side just feet from the cliff's edge. We eat to the setting sun and cool our palettes with more Red Stripe. The goldenhairs are peaking on their Alaska and are reluctant to move. I take the opportunity to talk to a woman seated nearby. She is knitting a cotton hat in Jamaica's national colors: black thread for the people, green for the land and gold for the sun. The task is second nature to her and her hands move quickly.

"Where did you learn to do that?" I ask.

"From watching my mother," she answers before agreeing to pose for a picture. Slightly embarrassed, she lowers her face to her work but suddenly looks up wearing a shy smile that is so warm I almost forget to take the photo. Her name is Paula. Her boyfriend's family collectively owns Three Dives. I will eat here four more times before I leave.

The thatch-roofed bar at Xtabi is empty. Darkness has settled

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and an off-season torpor hangs in the air. The bartender seems inconvenienced by our arrival. When I have another Dirty Banana in front of me, the owner emerges from the kitchen. He's of average build, bronzed, with a head of curly, dwindling hair. His greeting is avuncular and reserved solely for the girls. I'm forced to introduce myself and I tell him I'm doing a story on Negril. "I want to know how the area has changed over the last few decades," I say, watching regretfully as that last word hurtles toward the aging expatriate. He shoots me a dirty look as if the goldenhairs he's doing his damndest to impress weren't aware that he is old enough to be their father's older brother. Thoroughly snubbed, I say to myself, "It's obvious, pal," and go back to my drink. He returns to telling the girls about how he slaughtered a pig today at his beautiful farm where he promises to take them. "It took six bullets—six bullets right in the head before it died." The goldenhairs squirm in their seats. Their boyfriends and I are at once embarrassed for him and amused and we turn our grins to the wall.

Two middle-aged men have joined us at the bar. We exchange greetings and the one seated next to me says this is his seventeenth stay in Negril. "I come for the ganj, mon, and the beach. You should see this place in March—22-year-old tits everywhere." His friend has placed a copy of a Jimmy Buffet novel on the bar.

"Had any Jamaican pussy yet?" he asks, leaning well into what I've always considered my personal space.

"Is it on the menu?" I retort. My sarcasm is lost on him. His breath is thick with rum.

"I'll tell you," he continues, "you haven't lived until you've had a Jamaican woman ride your face for an hour."



"Really," slurp the dregs in my glass, and excuse myself. This scene, too, is Negril.

Come nightfall, Negril undergoes a transformation. The West End is primordially quiet. Beyond the reach of streetlights, the jungle looms dark and ominous; insects hum; bats flutter; the ocean gently laps the cliffs and the sky is a glut of stars. But down on the beach the party is just beginning.

I'm crammed into the back of a small Toyota, riding the transmission hump between four other people. Kirk and Craig, two young Jamaicans who hang out by the hotel's front gate, sit on my left. They've adopted me, in a manner of speaking, for the night. Seated on my right is a couple we picked up along the way. The woman has had her hair braided in the traditional Caribbean way and as the car swerves to avoid an infinite number of potholes her beaded tresses swing against my cheek.

We arrive at Alfred's, a restaurant and bar located among the strip of resorts that line the beach. Everyone piles out and I pay the driver. I notice I'm the only one who pays him. He, of course, cannot make change and it seems this is his last stop. As it turns out, he's a friend of Kirk and Craig's, and he's coming in with us. Making our way through the parking lot filled with guys hustling and pushing everything from a cab ride to "the best Alaskan bud" to cocaine, I can hear a woman's voice crooning the refrain to Marley's "Stir It Up." Beyond the bar, the beach is packed with people. Jamaicans and tourists of all ages sway to the easy beat. I order a Red Stripe and work my way through the crowd. Kirk and Craig shadow me. "Mon, you gonna get you friends somting to drink?" "Look," I begin. "I paid for the ride. Times are tight, all around." "C'mon, mon," says Craig. "We're all gonna go to Compulsion later and bust it up. You're with us, mon. You ride back with us, tonight. We naa gonna charge you." Their overtures to me are interjected with brief exchanges in Patois which, unable to understand, I am left to assume I'm not meant to know what they're discussing. Dressed in baggy jeans and Hilfiger tops, these two look like they could be from any city in the States. Their stares radiate a subtle mix of menace and entreaty; a combination that destroys my resolve and has me digging into my pockets for some more Jay. Not exactly sure why I'm doing it, and feeling like the victim of a Jedi mind trick, I buy each of them a beer. We clink a joy-

less toast and turn our attention to the stage where the band slips seamlessly into another cover tune. It's Motown, I think.

I consider wandering down the beach to another venue, maybe Roots Bamboo or Risky Business, but it's the off-season. The only real scene tonight is Alfred's. Tomorrow it will be somewhere else, likewise the following night and the night after that. I'm told that during peak season, Thanksgiving to mid-April, every venue will be packed and Negril's music scene will be pumping out huge helpings of Reggae, Ska, Rock Steady, Motown, House and any and all variations in between. Music here is simply not something you do without.

Around 1:00 a.m. Alfred's is winding down. I'm sitting at a picnic table on the beach nursing a beer. Kirk and Craig are conspicuously absent. Presently, another young Jamaican joins me. He has an innocent look to him and asks where I'm from. We talk for a while. His name is Irving; he's got family in the Bronx, whom he's visited a few times and he thinks New York City is the greatest place on earth. The conversation flows from music to clothes to his job at Hedonism, an all-inclusive resort notorious for offering a Dionysian experience and around which rumors of bacchanalian feasts and orgies circulate. Irving works in the kitchen and to prove it he shows me his check for the week. He's netted a little over one hundred and fifty bucks and is excited to say he has a day pass lined up for tomorrow, when he will hopefully mingle with some of Hedonism's patrons and, as he says, "help some Stella get her groove back."

Done with my beer, I stand up and say goodbye. Immediately, Irving's tone changes. "Where you going, mon? I got a car out front. I'll take you. Where you want to go?" he asks quickly. "No thanks. I'm all set," I say, trying not to feel like our genuinely candid conversation was leading all along to a few bucks for a ride back to the hotel. He pursues me out to the parking lot where at least fifty other guys are hanging out, hustling amidst the tangle of cars, each one a private taxi with fares subject to supply and demand and how well you can bargain. Even with his job, Irving, like so many other young

**He's netted a little over one hundred and fifty bucks and is excited to say he has a day pass lined up for tomorrow, when he will hopefully mingle with some of Hedonism's patrons and, as he says, "help some Stella get her groove back."**



Jamaican hills, smokin' up, the walkway at Rockhouse Hotel.





I face the open ocean and imagine myself lost at sea: no lights, a flat, featureless horizon. This freaks me out sufficiently, and, breathing hard with my limbs growing heavy, I paddle for the lava cliffs that boiled up out of a vent in the ocean floor millions of years ago.

Jamaicans, is working the low-level grift. Whatever I want he'll get for me. If I don't want the cab ride then maybe I'd like to buy us each a Red Stripe, or some ganj? No problem. Cocaine my thing? No problem. Prostitute? No problem. Here, hustling is always direct, yet the offer is often couched in body language that leaves you feeling an unsettling combination of inchoate anger and guilt. Irving is lucky. He is doing better than many citizens of a nation where tourism, the number-one industry, is unable to accommodate a work force that outstrips the supply of jobs. This disparity contributes to a right-and-wrong-side-of-the-tracks atmosphere, the rise of the gated all-inclusive resort that couldn't care less if you and your money never leave the compound and whose profits don't trickle beyond the front gate except for a cheap beer, a carved mask or an ounce of ganj.

When I return to my room, I consider going to sleep, but I feel like a swim. Already dressed for it, I follow a set of stairs down to the water and slip into a sea so warm it's as if I've been turned inside out, bathed in blood, sewn myself into an amniotic sac; this is man's attraction to the sea explained. Fifty yards from shore I think I could keep right on going out beyond the reef over the depths of the Cayman Trench, north toward Cuba or westward to Honduras, maybe Mexico. On my back, stroking hard, I'm soon out beyond the reach of the floodlights that illuminate the cliff face. The shoreline shrinks. In the moonless sky the Leonid meteor shower is in full swing and shooting stars skim toward the horizon. The water is noticeably cooler out here. Darker. Deeper. Vastness below and above. I face the open ocean and imagine myself lost at sea: no lights, a flat, featureless horizon. This freaks me out sufficiently, and, breathing hard with my limbs growing heavy, I paddle for the lava cliffs that boiled up out of a vent in the ocean floor millions of years ago. Halfway there I stop to catch my wind and consider from a distance the island on which I have spent the past eight days. What strikes me most at that moment isn't the sheer cliffs, the warmth of the ocean, or the meteors' fading trails, but the silence, a pervasive stillness that ignores the electric lights, the paved roads, the march of progress: a calm from long ago.

After I returned to the States, a cab driver told me he was going home to Jamaica for the holidays. I said I had recently visited Negril. He was unimpressed. I asked him what town he was from. "Sheffield, in the parish of..."

"Westmoreland," I said, finishing the sentence for him.

"Ya, mon. Ya, mon." He said, smiling and noticeably excited. "I was there," I said. "Oh, mon. You saw Jamaica. You a traveler. You got to explore if you gonna really see a place. You got to see the people, mon, see the land, see the poverty, see everything."

"I didn't see everything," I confessed. "But I left the hotel, I walked all around, I toured the countryside and went into the hills. Too many people go and never set foot outside the resorts except to go to the airport. They may as well go sit on the beach in Florida."

"Ya, mon. You got to see a place, see the good and the bad, all of it with your own eyes to really see it." 📷

## RESOURCES

**Air Jamaica** has direct daily flights to Montego Bay. 1 800 523-5585  
**Jamaica Tourist Board** 212 856-9727

Mark Conklin is currently seeking a publisher for *Why Bananas Shout*. Interested parties can contact Mark at: 876-957-0384



## Rockhouse Hotel

*Yes, Paradise can still be found.*

Perched on the cliffs overlooking the clear blue water of Pristine Cove, and just minutes from the bustling strip of beach that has made Negril a destination for millions, the Rockhouse Hotel is the ideal place to call home during your stay. Once an aging resort, today's Rockhouse was recently transformed from an original 11 villas strewn amidst the volcanic rock and dense jungle into a total of 28 comfortable and attractive living spaces. Whether you check into one of the premium villas with a wrap-around terrace, private outdoor shower open to the sky, and the ocean literally a staircase away, or a new, spacious studio with an elegant fourposter bed and a balcony offering water or garden views, you'll find you've entered a veritable Garden of Eden—a paradise within Paradise, and at a reasonable price.

The vision of a dynamic group of partners, Rockhouse was the result of hard work and perseverance. Fabian Ippoliti, the managing director, has lived on-site at the resort for three years now and has overseen much of the work. He recalls taming the jungle-like growth and blasting the volcanic rock to make a hole large enough to accommodate the cliffside swimming pool, which seems to float serenely above the ocean just beyond.

When you tire of jerk chicken, Rockhouse offers some of the best food in Negril.

Cantilevered over Pristine Cove, the restaurant/bar is a great place to get your fill of drinks made with the native rum spirits while you watch the sun drop into the ocean. Grab a table for dinner and try the broiled snapper stuffed with vegetables or the curried chicken over a bed of roti. For breakfast, order a smoothie or a plate of fresh island fruit followed by the traditional Jamaican dish, ackee and salt fish, and wash it down with several cups of Jamaica's own Blue Mountain Coffee.

In perfect harmony with Negril's lush and rugged cliffside environment, and an ideal distance from the non-stop beach scene, Rockhouse offers the best in location, comfort and price. One of the best base camps you'll find for exploring Jamaica.

## Contact Rockhouse:

Rockhouse  
 PO Box 24 West End Road  
 Negril, Jamaica  
 Telephone/Fax 809-957-4373  
[www.rockhouse.com](http://www.rockhouse.com)

## JAMAICAN CUISINE IN NEGRIL

**Cosmos Restaurant.** Located on the beach. Just ask anyone to point the way and try the fried fish with bammy and Escoveitch.

**Sweet Spice.** Located a half mile out of the town center on the left going toward Savanna-la-Mar. Try the boiled conch.



# MALI, AFRICA

photographed by jeffery a. salter



Women of the Dogon tribe pound millet, a staple of their diet. It is pounded as it has been for centuries, in the shadow of a Babul tree.





Touareg tribesmen lead a camel caravan through the Sahel desert. The caravan will travel "40 days out" under a night sky lit by the Big Dipper and the blessing of Allah's full moon.

Photographer Jeffrey Salter's work as a photojournalist often puts him in the middle of human conflict and suffering. So, when he accompanied a fellow journalist to Mali as a guest of the government, he set out on a different sort of mission. Instead of going there with an agenda, Salter wanted to capture the mood and texture of everyday life in this distant land. "I just wanted to be in an environment without any preconceived ideas of any type of mission," stated Salter. "I wanted people to feel, not just see. Feel the textures, feel the land, the wind against their face." To do that Salter left the tour bus that was transporting him and fellow journalists and rented a motorcycle. "When you're on a bus, you miss so many things. But on a motorcycle you're right there and just stop the bike, talk to people, take a picture and keep going," he said. Using this procedure enabled Salter to achieve an intimacy with the land and the many peoples that inhabit it. Salter visited different parts of Mali and witnessed a wide array of cultures and terrain. "I flew on this old Russian airplane to Mopti, which is where the Dogon people live. They are famous for their artwork and they used to live primarily in cliff settlements. I found Timbuktu to be magical. At night you can lay on your back and just look up at the stars. It's a wonderful place."



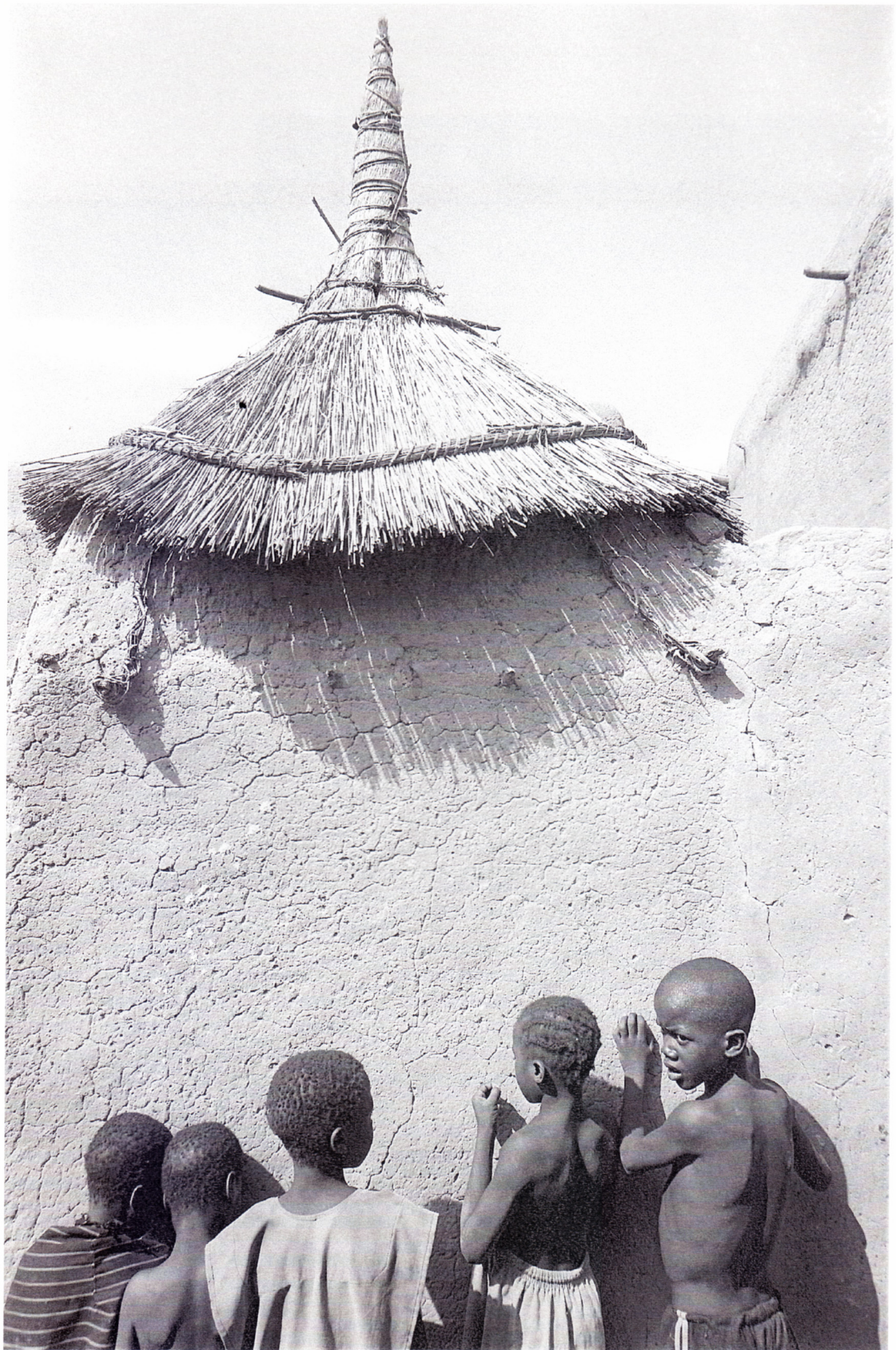


A Dogon priest performs a traditional dance during a rite of passage, held every three years. Their beliefs are based on the Dog Star Sirius.

"In Mali tribes have a ritual in which they drink three glasses of tea. Why three? The first glass is brewed strong, sweet and dark like life. The second is smooth like the love of a woman, and the last glass is light and clear. The Malians say it is light like death."

"My eyes didn't see much of the latter. Just a people who have a love of life and the strength to endure whatever it may bring." **Jeffery A. Salter**





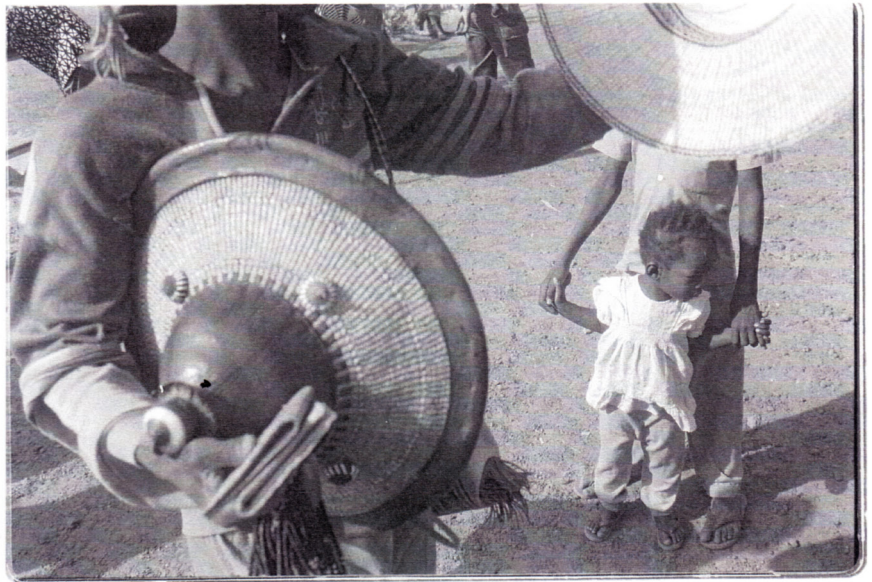
Dogon children play outside of a family hut, which for many of the Dogon has supplanted their traditional cliff dwellings.



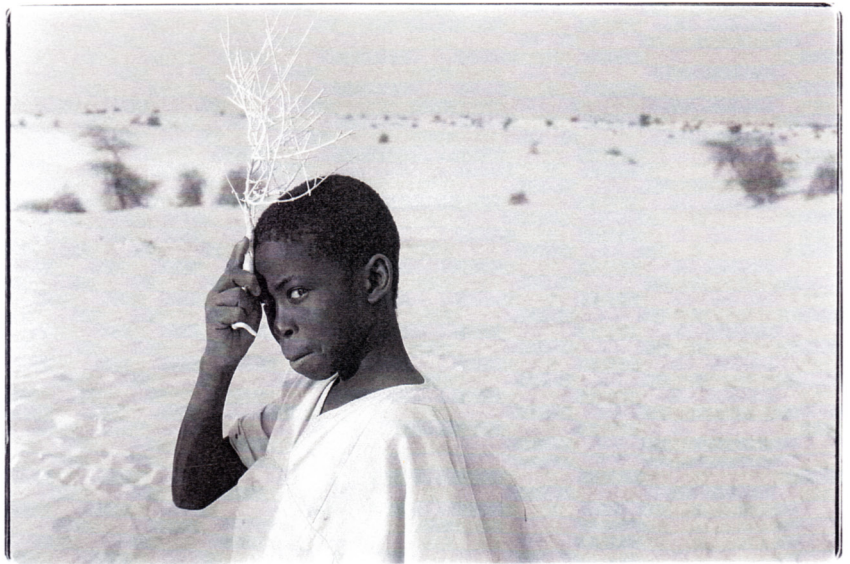


Fula women, with blue tattooed lips, stroll along red earthen roads, wearing their calabash crowns full of market spices and foods.



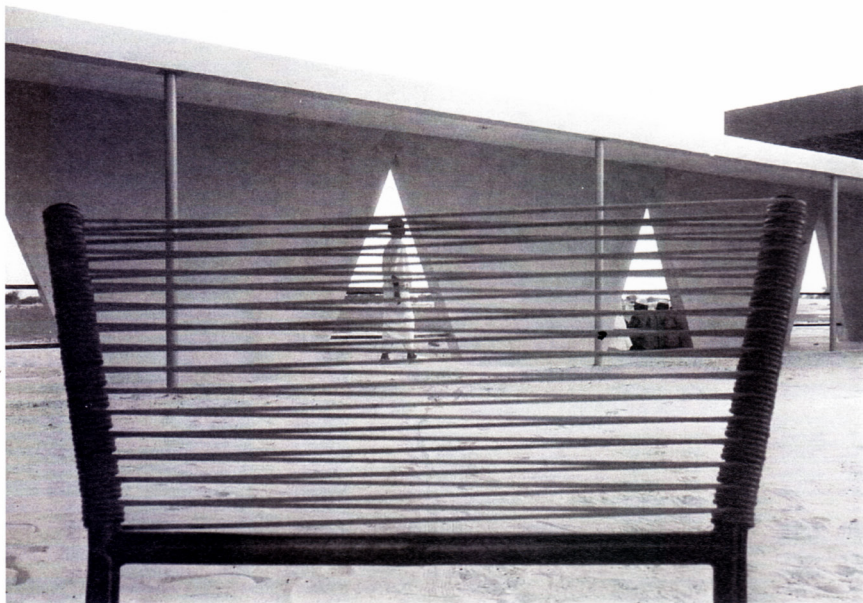


Vendors market pop-up desert hats at the Mopti Airport in the center of Mali, where old Russian planes ferry people from the cities to the desert regions.



A Bambara youth dwells among the nomadic Touareg people who have dominated Timbuktu since the 12th century. He makes a living caring for camels — the ships of the desert.





An elder waits for a plane at the desert airport in Timbuktu.



Women wash mangoes in the Niger River.





The Niger River provides transportation and sustenance to the people of Mali, winding its way through the country's heart. A man wades along its shore while Malians ride a long wooden canoe to villages which line its shores.



# Colombia: The Real Thing



Carol A. Smith

## I M P R E S S I O N S O F A M I S B E G O T T E N L A N D

### INITIALLY, YOU'RE AFRAID.

And it's no wonder, after all the headlines you've read and the raised eyebrows your trip provoked back home. But after a day or two you realize that there's so much more to this stunningly beautiful and complex country than crime and corruption. All you need are street smarts and a sense of adventure.

BY CAROL A. SMITH

### A BOGOTÁ AFTERNOON

The sun is shining in this city of seven million people on the Thursday before New Year's. I'm contemplating the constancy of Bogotá's seasons as Carlos' dad comes out of the bank to ask if I'll join him and Carlos inside. They're worried about my sitting outside on a bench "alone." Alone—despite a lineup of 20 people and the cop with a machine gun keeping a close eye on the scene. I decline, and my father-in-law leaves me to myself to enjoy the crisp Andes air. I do decide to sit on my suede jacket (bought secondhand for \$20) just in case. The paranoia is contagious.

### LA CHAMBA

The cerulean sky favors our outing to La Chamba, a small *pueblo* four hours south of Bogotá, known for its black pottery. As we drive out of my in-laws' Bogotá neighborhood, I become the cliché tourist, camera around my neck, head hanging out the borrowed pickup's window. In the city I gawk at crowded buses careening in and out of traffic and curbside vendors of snacks, cigarettes, and flowers. Once outside the city I gape at alternately lush and rocky mountains, roughly constructed houses, and sun-darkened country people. I can feel my hair begin to curl as we descend and the temperature climbs.

Upon arrival in La Chamba we visit a collective that sells the work of local potters. It's a large, simple warehouse, dimly lit. Once plucked from rough wooden shelves and dusted off, the black pottery is beautiful in its smooth simplicity. Next we enter a small, open-fronted shop, where the owner greets us warmly. We buy a few small items, and the woman, having no change, gives us two small clay animals in lieu of coins. Carlos gets permission to take her daughter's photo. She's a beautiful child of about nine with silky black hair and a gorgeous smile.

Back in the pickup, we bump back along the dirt roads that cut through fields to the highway. It's now rush hour in the *pueblo*.

We pass many people — cycling, walking or herding grey oxen-like cattle — but few cars. Carlos bellows "*¡Buenas!*" out the truck's window, at everyone, and young and old alike respond pleasantly to his greeting.

### EL CAMPO (THE COUNTRYSIDE)

#### NEW YEAR'S EVE IN MELGAR

It's December 31. I spend the afternoon in the shade playing cards with Carlos, his best friend, Luis Fernando, and my teenage brother-in-law, Juan Manuel. We're only three hours south of Bogotá but temperature-wise we're 30 degrees away. At four o'clock, we can leave the roofed patio and enjoy the in-ground pool without risking heatstroke. My parents-in-law have many holiday guests here at their four-bedroom *finca* ("country house") just outside a town called Melgar. We avoid the guests. As evening falls, we grow restless and head into town.

In Melgar, walk-up dwellings and small houses are tucked in among restaurants, shops, and small hotels. Tonight, the main street is packed with people and lined by trailer-like stands that are lit and doing brisk business. Some sell *arepas* (thick, tortilla-like cakes), roasted meat, or juice. Others hawk clothing, sunglasses or inflatable pool toys. We buy fireworks at a grocery store, where the pretty cashier smiles flirtatiously at Luis Fernando, who's shy and responds only by blushing. Next, we stop at a busy ice cream shop near town square, where I sample *avena helada*, a delicious, cold, spiced oatmeal drink. Music blares from beer shops. It's like an oceanside resort town without an ocean.

At 40 minutes before midnight we return to the *finca*. We light fireworks at the edge of the manicured lawn. The air is filled with loud bangs, color, and smoke because many neighbors are also indulging in this popular New Year's tradition. Just before mid



night, Carlos's mom calls us back to the house for the customary eating of 12 grapes each (one for each stroke of the hour). After the toasting and kisses, the music is turned up and my father-in-law leads the dancing. He grabs my hand despite my protests, and soon I'm twirling on the pavement next to the pool, feeling just as Colombian as everyone else.

## SANTA MARTA

Hot air suddenly envelops me as I step off the plane at this small airport on the Caribbean coast. While Carlos goes in search of the uncle who will meet us, I join our travel companions—a couple of friends from back home—in search of our luggage. After introductions, we pile into Uncle Federico's jeep and head toward town, where we'll be staying in a borrowed beachside apartment. The short trip allows us a glimpse of the Sierra Nevada terrain. This coastal mountain range seems very different from Bogotá's lush, cool Andean peaks. Dry scrub and cacti abound.

The next morning, we're crammed into the jeep again, this time headed for Parque Nacional Tayrona. There, we pay the entrance fee and meet our guide, Gonzales who lives in a squatter shack by a gorgeous, pebbly beach, one of many such beaches in this huge park.

Gonzales leads us through the bush, to the remains of a pre-Columbian village that's already been excavated by archaeologists. We walk carefully around shallow circular pits that he explains were once the foundations of pre-Columbian huts. I'm astounded—everywhere I look, the ground is littered with shards of pre-Columbian pottery. My friend and I stoop to examine different fragments. She holds a smooth, black piece that has bat head motifs on the handle. I pick up a sand colored piece with a pattern of small holes poked into its surface.

We walk and look for a couple of hours while Gonzales regales us with tales of his own archaeological finds and of more spectacular ones that are now housed in *El Museo d'Oro* (the Gold Museum) in Bogotá. He tells us that it is illegal to take pre-Columbian artifacts out of the country. We don't mind because though we've learned it's possible to buy authentic artifacts for less than you'd expect, we opted to cram our suitcases with legal low-cost reproductions sold in Bogotá craft shops.

Back at the beach, Gonzales wangles some food from a stall restaurant that's closed for the day. We sit on chunks of driftwood and savor crispy fish and chewy *patacones* (fried flattened disks of unripe plantain) as Gonzales shows off his colorful pet parrot.

I leave the group and moodily toss stones into the water. Now that I've had a taste of the archaeological wonders of the area, I

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long to visit La Ciudad Perdida, a lost city discovered in 1976. But we're going back to Bogotá in two days and have neither the time nor the special government permits required to make the week-long trek.

What we do have time for—a helicopter ride over the ruins—I won't consider. After relishing the sacred hush of the jungle and feeling the jolt of tactile contact with objects dated B.C., there's no way I'd settle for that.

Next time.

## DINNER ON MONSERRATE

Carlos' 71-year-old grandmother (*abuelita*) has taken to holding my hand, perhaps because we can barely communicate. It's the night before Carlos and I fly home and we're going to a family dinner on Monserrate, the mountain peak perched above Bogotá.

Riding the gondola up, I'm awed by the city lights which spread right to the horizon. At the summit, the air is brisk and *Abuelita* wraps her woolen shawl around her head and neck. In pants and a jacket I don't feel cold, and the thought of returning to my homeland's deep winter prompts me to inhale deeply.

The mountaintop French restaurant seems medieval in the candlelight. Wrought iron chandeliers hang from exposed beams and cast shadows on the bare stone walls. As I drink my warm, spiced, *canelazo* punch before dinner, I notice that fog has trapped the moonlight outside the window and blurred the city lights below.

After an exquisite meal, we drink coffee as a trio begins to play traditional Colombian music. We're about to leave when they start one of *Abuelita*'s favorite songs. We pause as she closes her eyes and sings along softly.

Everyone is joking on the gondola ride down. But I turn away and press my face against the glass once again.

Farewell for now Bogotá. 🇨🇴

## RESOURCES

### MUST SEES:

#### Bogotá:

*El Museo d'Oro*—Museum of pre-Columbian gold artifacts that will take your breath away.

La Candelaria—Old Bogotá with cobblestone streets, colorful colonial buildings and tourist shops. Inexpensive lodgings can be found but caution is required in this neighborhood.

La Zona Rosa—Hip area of Bogotá known for great nightlife, restaurants and bars.

Monserrate—Ride the gondola to this peak above the city for stunning views.

#### Outskirts of Bogotá:

Guatavita—Refurbished colonial village with cobblestone streets, fountains, balconied white stucco buildings and clay roofs. Nearby is Guatavita Lagoon, a gorgeous spot steeped in the legends of El Dorado, the pre-Columbian warrior god, and his lost gold.

### Caribbean coast:

Santa Marta—Low key resort town offering good beaches and interesting surrounding spots like Parque Nacional Tayrona, La Ciudad Perdida (Lost City) and the Sierra Nevada mountains.

Cartagena—Colombia's main tourist town. Good beaches and lots of action. A must see is the walled-in Old City.

San Andres—This island off the coast is another popular tourist spot, and Colombians love it too.

### HOTELS

#### Bogotá:

Sofitel Victoria Regia—Luxury hotel in Zona Rosa district. 1-800-221-4542 or 011-571-621-2666.

#### Girardot (near Melgar):

Tocarema—remodeled white stucco "grand dame," perched on a hilltop overlooking the city of Girardot.

### Santa Marta:

Irotama—All-inclusive resort with private beach and beautiful landscaping. 011-571-217-4311.

Ballena Azul—Located in Taganga, a fishing village 10 minutes from Santa Marta. Small and tranquil. 011-575-421-6668 (and 216669)

### MORE INFORMATION

#### On Line:

[www.colombiaemb.org](http://www.colombiaemb.org)

#### Books:

*Lonely Planet Colombia*, by Krzysztof Dydzinski (Lonely Planet)

*Colombia Handbook*, by Peter Pollard (Footprint Handbooks)

*Colombia: The Gateway to South America*, by Lois Markham (Benchmark Books)





Illustration by Michael Miller



# Selling

# Souls

## Consuming the Exotic Other

Our desire to experience “native” cultures stems from a need to return to a primal past. But in purchasing this experience as tourists, do we cheat ourselves and those cultures we subsume?

BY KIMBERLY DUKES

**T**he World Travel and Tourism Council calls tourism the world's largest industry. By 1992, the industry employed one of every nine of all workers—over 212 million people—and accounted for a tenth of global wages. International tourist arrivals neared 592 million in 1996. A subset of the specialty travel market involves what's called ethnic tourism, in which the tourist seeks to encounter people who are geographically or culturally remote.

As the money spent by travelers increases, more and more nations seek a piece of the tourism pie. And if they have the ethnic “other” to draw us in, all the better. In Australia in 1996, around 557,000 international tourists visited aboriginal attractions—an increase of almost fifty percent over the year before. The Bureau of Tourism Research estimates the sales of aboriginal arts and souvenirs to be worth at least \$100 million annually.

In a development plan prepared for the government of Vietnam, the World Tourism Organization cited the country's “ethnic diversity” as one of its potential selling points. The WTO recommended exploiting the number of unassimilated populations who “keep their traditions well and truly alive”—but also cautioned that this ethnic diversity should be protected.

Ethnicity is, after all, big business.



**M**any indigenous groups have begun managing tourism themselves. Controlling the business means reaping more of the profits, and something else: the power to protect their way of life, including limiting the number and behavior of visitors. As the tourist industry in Panama grew in the 1970s and 80s, the Kuna, who live along the Caribbean coast and the San Blas Islands, gradually gained control over tourism to their communities. Despite economic and political struggles, the Kuna are in the vanguard of indigenous people developing tourism resources for their own benefit—to protect their way of life and their rain forest.

What is this yearning we have to go somewhere and see someone who lives differently from the way we live? What does this kind of desire say about us? Tourist brochures and magazines marketing “other” people advertise travel as a way to experience the authentic life—both implying ours is somehow unreal and putting those “others” into a “native” box marked off by presumed ignorance.

The tourist search for the native invokes images of backward people living isolated lives, making authentic crafts, eating strange foods and worshipping stranger gods. “Be primitive! Be exotic!” we urge, dollars in outstretched palms, video cameras clapped to one eye. In general, ethnic tourists seek an ahistorical, apolitical past. We don’t want to see how colonialism wounded other places and peoples. We don’t want to deal explicitly with issues of power, racism, or unequal development—not at home, and certainly not on vacation.

In our craving to visit the “native,” we expose a longing to recover an authentic part of the past, a way of life that probably never existed the way we imagine it to have. Odhiambo Siangla, a Kenyan painter now attending graduate school in the United States, points out that we don’t always see what’s “real.” People being visited will dress up—or rather, down—for tourists. “Say, for example, the Maasai,” he says. “For the tourists, they’ll be wearing a loincloth. When the tourists leave, the Maasai put on the same kind of clothes the tourists wear.” In fact, they might even be the *same* clothes—when tourists go home, they often leave clothing behind as gifts to the people they visit.

T-shirt-wearing natives don’t necessarily make good tourist marketing material, which is one reason Western wear may be hidden when the tour bus shows up. A vacation may be a time of leisure for us, but for the toured it’s both a time of labor and a source of income. The people we visit are working: “playing” native is what brings them the cash to be modern in some of the ways we think we are.

Tourists looking for “unchanged and authentic” people are often surprised to discover that these same people actually participate in global webs of capital and culture. Last fall, for exam-

ple, I was bumped from a flight in Karachi, Pakistan, along with a group of men who worked in the oil fields of Saudi Arabia. They were going home to Nepal, to holiday in their rural villages—villages that are tourist stopovers on and marketed as isolated strongholds of traditional culture.

One of the problems with ethnic travel is the way it stereotypes indigenous peoples as primitive leftovers from a simpler time—human dinosaurs on the road to cultural extinction. In reality, indigenous peoples worldwide are sophisticated users of technology, often hosting websites and international conferences. They’re also politically astute—and effective. The Kayapo of Brazil have transformed video into not just a cultural tool but a

political one, successfully publicizing their opposition to government plans for a dam across the Xingu River. More recently, Chief Pykati-Re of Pukunu village sued The Body Shop for “unauthorized” use of his photograph on posters promoting trade in Brazilian nut oil between the Kayapo and The Body Shop.

That this lawsuit revolves around the use of a photograph illustrates just how valuable a commodity image is to the ethnic tourism trade. Indigenous people who rely on tourism for income need to sell themselves as an “authentic” product—a product and image as carefully crafted as a brochure published by a government tourist authority. According to anthropologist Smadar Lavie, the *Mzeina* Bedouin in the South Sinai not only gave sotto-voce advice on foreplay strategies to necking tourists, but built a fake “traditional” village for tourists who longed for that experience—and to keep tourists out of their own village.

This doesn’t mean that what happens in tourist zones is necessarily not authentic; it can be creative. Cultures change and are always changing, and are internally diverse. What is considered authentic is a matter of complex and continuing negotiation—both within a community and between the community and its visitors. Dances created for tourist shows now are danced at Balinese weddings—they’ve become “traditional.” Carvers in western Africa may copy old and marketable designs and artificially age statues for the tourist trade (by burying them or spitting chewed kola nut to stain them). Still, they also experiment with new materials and create new designs—for both the tourist and the African market.



**One of the problems with ethnic travel is the way it stereotypes indigenous peoples as primitive leftovers from a simpler time—human dinosaurs on the road to cultural extinction.**



**W**e rarely think about someone returning our gaze, or maybe we just don't care. But that doesn't mean people aren't looking back at us, and that they don't have something to say. Tourism researcher G.F. Pfafflin quotes a Hawaiian representative attending the 1986 Third World People and Tourism Conference, who said, "We don't want tourism. We don't want you. We don't want to be degraded as servants and dancers. That is cultural prostitution...there are no innocent tourists."

Dennis O'Rourke's film *Cannibal Tours* in which wealthy tourists sail up the Sepik River of Papua New Guinea in search of former headhunters, also gives the toured a chance to talk back. The plump tourists, sun-hatted, mosquito-netted, and slung with cameras, swarm through village after village, bickering over prices and directing the natives to smile. A German man reels off the immense list of places he's visited, offering his opinion on where to find the most native natives. He asks his latmul guide eagerly, "Where have they killed people?" and insists on their being photographed there together "for the memory. It would be nice."

This jolly German and his companions might be surprised to hear the anger expressed to the filmmaker. A woman selling shell necklaces—what used to count as currency for the latmul—accuses, "Tourists! I'm tired of them! You white people! You have all the money." A grizzled carver echoes her complaint that tourists look and don't buy. When he goes to town, he says, he can't ask for a second price, a third price. More to the point, he also points out the unfairness of being only looked at, and never being able to do the looking. "We don't have money so we stay in the village, we don't go to see other countries." He looks weary. "If they paid me more, I could go on that ship with those tourists."

An Italian tourist talking about what the latmul need tells O'Rourke, "One must attempt to stimulate certain aspirations, certain desires for what they see in us or feel about us...our behavior, our customs, also our clothes—the way we dress as tourists. They need to be helped." His attitude raises the important question: who's cannibalizing whom?

Yet not all tourists feel that way. To some travelers, the ability to make a personal connection with people who live so differently can make a trip an amazing, even a life-changing, experience. Some want to learn from the people they visit—and are willing to expose themselves to curiosity as well.

By the beginning of this decade, over 100,000 people a year visited Thai hill tribes on treks. MaryAnn Petyak was one of them. A book editor who spent a large chunk of her savings on the trip, Petyak dragged her backpack up the mountains to visit some of the hill tribes on foot.

"It was the greatest adventure of my life," she says of her stay with the Karen, one of these tribes. "Not only did it make me appreciate what I have, but it made me realize what kind of person I wanted to be, and how much room there was in my life for things I hadn't always appreciated."

For Petyak, what made the difference was being almost alone. "I had a guide, of course," she says. "But the Karen are used to seeing Westerners in groups, while I was a single white woman. I felt like that made me just as much a curiosity to them as they were to me." Rather than stopping in for a few hours to bargain over handicrafts, she spent several days just talking with


**We rarely think about someone returning our gaze, or maybe we just don't care. But that doesn't mean people aren't looking back at us, and that they don't have something to say.**

people from the village. "They wanted to hear about my life too. They asked me more questions than I could answer. We told each other stories all day." Petyak found something sincere in her experience. Maybe the Karen enjoyed the chance to look back, too.

**T**ourism can create negative social, economic and environmental impacts on populations being visited, which is why anti-tourism backlash sometimes occurs. Such reactions can be provoked by visible inequalities of wealth, or by the behavior of vacationers who don't understand local lifeways—especially behavior consisting of vices which might not be indulged at home: drinking or gambling, exotic drugs, prostitution or reckless sex. Other ways tourism can damage indigenous communities include disrespect of sacred sites and theft of antiquities. Tourism also tends to encourage the use of English, often to the detriment of local languages. And whole areas can be shifted and changed by the tourism-charged rush toward a cash economy.

But there are also benefits. Tourism usually requires the development of some sort of infrastructure to make the toured area accessible and comfortable for visitors. The resultant roads, airstrips, and hotels may provide new access to trade routes and markets for indigenous goods, bringing greater local prosperity. Communities may even find new pride in the process of marketing their ethnicity to tourists.

**O**ur unequal understanding of who is entitled to what tends to leave us on top, well-fed, well-heeled, and with two weeks a year to visit those who aren't. Ethnic tourism isn't all bad. But as tourists, we should acknowledge what our going leaves behind. More than that, we should ask what—and who—we're looking for.

And maybe, too, we should think about what scholar Stephen Greenblatt says in his book *Marvelous Possessions*: "This is the utopian moment of travel: when you realize that what seems most unattainably marvelous, most desirable, is what you almost already have, what you could have—if you could only strip away the banality and corruption of the everyday—at home." 



# Trains and Tribulations

In Russia there is no such thing as a straight path to one's destination.

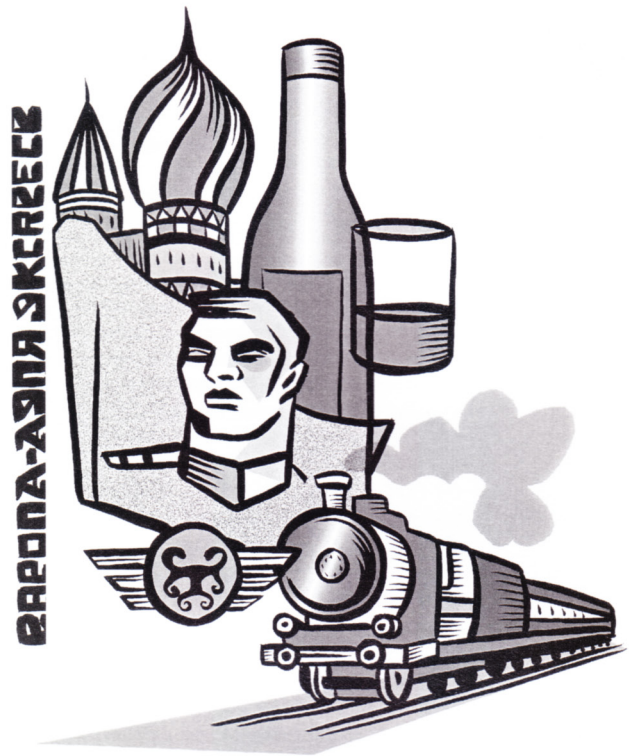
Sometime in the long hot twilight of a Siberian summer the train crossed an invisible line and passed from nowhere to nowhere and into Russia. I was aboard the great railway bazaar, the trans-Siberian railroad, chasing the midnight sun north from Mongolia. I was far drunker than was wise.

A muscled judo student and two attractive women had welcomed my wife and I with an invitation to drink vodka. We consumed it in the traditional Russian manner—often and in large quantities. And it was in this drunken state that I recall looking out the window for one brief, but transcendental moment and thinking, “This is why I travel.”

But moments like these are fleeting, for I soon found myself waking from my stupor in a bad, expensive hotel in Ulan Ude with the mother of all hangovers. I swore to never even look at a bottle of vodka again.

A quiet and sunny Sunday in Ulan Ude is as good a place as any to feel like you've been beaten over the head. At the heart of the city is a grand square, and in the center of the square is a giant stone plinth, atop which rests the head of Lenin. Enormous and black against the blue sky it looms large—it is the biggest bust of Lenin in the world. The hollow, haunting eyes absorb everything, silently passing judgment on all. If you're suitably hung over, it's like looking into the eyes of God.

From Ulan Ude we continued on the railroad to Irkutsk, hoping



Pamela Hobbs

to find some peace on nearby Lake Baikal. Baikal is the world's oldest, deepest, and biggest lake. In its astoundingly clear water live the world's only freshwater seals, and 70 percent of its species are unique. The winter ice is so thick that the Russians once linked the two sides of the incomplete trans-Siberian railroad by laying down track on the frozen lake. To people such as I who are impressed by such superlatives, a visit to Lake Baikal was simply irresistible.

Between the water and the wilderness at the remote northern shore of the lake, in the village of Severobaikalsk, there was rumored to be a local man who would rent us kayaks and a cabin in the woods for a week of idyllic exploration. The only way to get there would be on the *Rocketa*, a powerful Russian hydrofoil which skims across the lake on aquatic wings, six feet of air and a vertical mile of water under its hull, making the entire 636-kilometer trip in only 10 hours.



From the lake's southeast edge, passing through Irkutsk, flows the broad Angara river. Sitting pretty on its banks is the Intourist Hotel. In the hotel's spacious lobby we found, conveniently located, everything we needed to organize our excellent adventure.

The hotel was delighted to have us as their guests and would have been delighted to validate our visas, which would expire in three days. All we needed to do was hand over \$115—ten times what we were used to paying and utterly out of the question. This was blow number one to our plan.

The very nice lady at the information desk gave us the not-very-nice information that this year the *Rocketa* was not running to Severobaikalsk. Like us, it was experiencing a crippling lack of cash. This was blow number two.

Our hopes of tranquility on the lake cruelly dashed, it was time for damage limitation and money was priority number one. Cash was becoming increasingly difficult to locate. The Exchange Bureau was still changing money, but had ceased giving credit card cash advances, upon which we had been relying.

We tried every bank we could find, but those which still operated an exchange service no longer took credit cards. It was the first time we had ever run our money so low. This was the nadir of a spiral downward which had begun months before in Beijing, with a chance encounter with some other travellers.

#### **Visas and Vistas**

**W**e'd been travelling for ten months and had passed through Alaska, Asia and Europe, when we met a Stephan, a Swiss, and Dean and Gilly, two Brits. This group possessed a sense of adventure which I was lacking; that didn't stop us from following their lead into Mongolia.

Without Russian visas, we entered Mongolia planning to arrange them there. It's a fine line between adventurousness and foolhardiness but Stephan, Dean and Gilly appeared supremely confident that all would be fine. They seemed to think that if you put yourself far enough up shit creek, sooner or later someone will give you a paddle.

We boarded the trans-Siberian in Beijing and were swept away from China's crowded streets, past the Great Wall, and into the spreading emptiness of Mongolia. Beneath the open sky the grasslands and hills rolled away to the horizon on all sides—land seemingly without end.

The Mongolians have always been a nomadic people, preferring a wandering lifestyle not conducive to any kind of permanence. Even the fabled Genghis Khan, once the ruler of the largest empire the world had yet known, left few traces.

We arrived at Ulan Bator, both the capital and the nation's only significant city, and set out to secure our Visas. At Gana's Guest house we gave its proprietor our passports and \$50. In return, five days later, Gana handed us our paddles—newly-issued Russian visas. And so, a week after we had arrived in Mongolia, we boarded a train to Russia. The wrong train.

Twenty-four extremely tense hours later we were right back

**We had fallen into the bureaucratic vacuum  
which has overtaken Russia since the demise  
of communism. Freedom without organization  
is dangerously close to chaos.**

where we started, Ulan Bator railway station. This time we got on the right train, and soon things were going very well. It was at this point that vodka binge began.

#### **Fast Forward—Crisis Averted**

**A**cross the street from the last bank we tried was a small window. It was one of the hole-in-the-wall money changers used by Russians to convert their inflation-prone rubles into dollars. We queued up and half an hour later were outside, pockets full of crisp, beautiful \$100 bills.

The following day, time was running out in our search to validate our visas for a reasonable fee. Feeling tired, irritated and deeply disgruntled, we sat down in the concrete marketplace and prepared another cheese and tomato sandwich. We tried to be positive but one can only take so many cheese and tomato sandwiches.

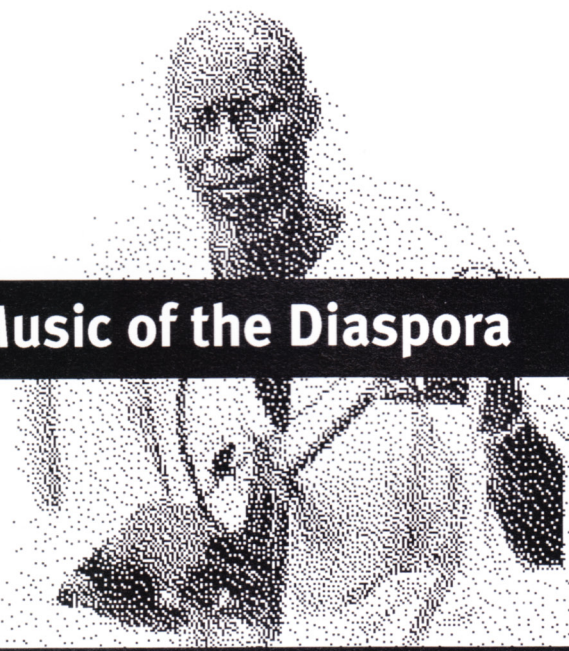
In a faded building on an empty street we finally found the local visa office, where the dragoness in charge exercised her once-considerable power by flatly refusing to help us. We had fallen into the bureaucratic vacuum which has overtaken Russia since the demise of communism. Freedom without organization is dangerously close to chaos.

Our guidebook hinted of a hotel in town which could validate our visas for half the price of the Intourist Hotel, and, left with no alternative, we booked in for the night. For \$50 we got two comfortable single beds in a drab room equipped with a shower that medieval monks would have considered excessively cold.

Nevertheless, the following morning we were in possession of two freshly-stamped visas. The looming crisis had finally been averted, and the urge to simply cut our losses and get the hell out of town grew almost unchecked. Almost. Our fancy plans were gone, but we learned that the *Rocketa* was still running short trips up the lake.

As the *Rocketa* flew across the glassy blue water of Lake Baikal and peace settled in I had another transcendental moment—this time it wasn't fuelled by vodka. In travel, as in life, you learn as much from the rough times as you do from the smooth.—MATTHEW SUTCLIFFE





## Africa to the Americas: Music of the Diaspora

The African roots of Cuban and Latin American music are as strong as ever as this selection of recent CD releases shows

**T**he nineteenth-century slave trade forged close connections between Africa and much of this hemisphere—connections which still exist, reflected in a crop of new Latin releases. The music of Cuba demonstrates the African heritage of the island. Cuba continued to purchase slaves until 1865, stacking a sturdy helping of African culture against that of the Spanish slave owners. Cuba didn't outlaw slavery itself until 1886, long after the trade was banned elsewhere in the Americas. Also, unlike plantation owners elsewhere in the Americas, the Spanish didn't forbid workers to play the drums, still so prominent in much Cuban music.

Since the 1930's, Cuba's rhythms—*habanera*, *mambo*, *cha cha*, *rumba*, and *salsa*—have spread worldwide, even returning to West Africa, the root of many Cuban rhythms. The U.S. embargo has historically prevented us from hearing much of the music played on the island. It has also made it difficult for performers to tour or record in the U.S.

Though the music of exiles like **Celia Cruz** and **Arturo Sandoval** and Cuban-Americans like **Gloria Estefan** has been justly successful in this country, these few performers can't represent the astonishing variety and breadth of Cuban music. Releases by bands like **Los Van Van** and **Irakere** have become more available here, and last year's popular (and Grammy-winning) success of *Buena Vista Social Club* reflects the interest in Cuban music on these shores.

Interest in Cuba is expanding, as are the quantity and quality of releases. The compilation *Rhythm and Smoke*, recorded in Havana, offers a lively introduction to contemporary Cuban music. On this smoothly produced dance album, veteran performers like flutist **Orlando "Maraca" Valle** and Grammy winner **Changuito** join newer talents like **Cubamar** and **CachiBache** in this effort to represent different styles, starting with variations on traditional *son* and *rumba* and dancing all the way through to percussion-heavy *timba*, the offspring of funky new *salsa*. **Catarsis** offers up a charming a capella *cha cha*, while **Arte Mixto** reaffirms the sur-

vival of West African religious beliefs in Cuba with their version of a Yoruba ritual song, "Aguzate."

Roughly translated, the word *cubanismo* means Cuban-ism: something undefinably, definitely of the island. Trumpeter **Jesus Alemañy** (formerly of Sierra Maestra) and his band **iCubanismo!** continue their exploration of the island's unique musical sensibility on their celebratory third album, *Reencarnación* (Rykodisc). The group's acclaimed first two recordings showcase traditional song forms like *son montunos* and *rumba* with modern flair.

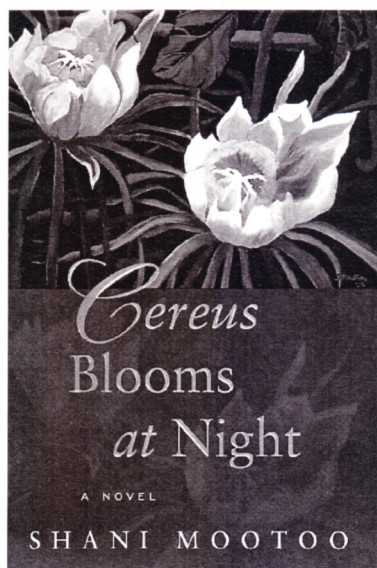
Without abandoning those forms, this time out iCubanismo! extends its interpretations to other older forms like *guaracha*, *descarga*, and *chagüi*. Their music is not just innovative and compelling, it's playful and just plain fun. On songs like the solo-crammed "En Las Delicias," Alemañy's trumpet swaggers and wig-

**Since the 1930's, Cuba's rhythms—habanera, mambo, cha cha, rumba, and salsa—have spread worldwide, even returning to West Africa, the root of many Cuban rhythms.**

gles triumphantly without overshadowing the strong performances of his all-star bandmembers—among them famous *conguero* **Tata Güines** and **Orlando Valle**.

Over the past decade or so, **José Luis Cortés** and **NG La Banda** have released a number of excellent, danceable albums. The musicians—like the members of iCubanismo!, veterans of well-known groups like Irakere and Los Van Van, are some of the best in Cuba. *Veneno*, (Caribe), while not their absolute best (try 1993's *Cabaret Panorámico*), is typically polished. The band's smart Spanish lyrics, many written by Cortés, sometimes dive deep into the well of machismo, so it's refreshing to hear a female singer on three tracks, including the catchy title track and "Estoy Muerto Contigo." Maybe the group is taking their name (NG stands for New Generation) a step further with this new album.





Hamilton Hall has never been a site for "wild student parties"). The guide's even coverage of the attractions of the outer boroughs and New Jersey may even entice visitors into an out-of-the-common way day trip. Also particularly helpful are the 20-page map section and articles on internet sites, diners, and bars.

David Ellis is also a refreshingly opinionated guide. A longtime New York resident, he skewers the city's eating-out customs, badmouths theme restaurants, and emphatically disapproves of Harlem bus tours ("if you're too scared to go on your own, stay in Midtown"). —KIMBERLY DUKES

## Cereus Blooms at Night

by Shani Mootoo

(Grove Press)

*Cereus Blooms at Night* made me uncomfortable at times. Simultaneously, it gave off a warmth and a balmy, exotic appeal. Tyler, a male nurse, begins a job in Paradise, Lantanacamara. Despite small town/small minds matters, he perseveres as he gets closer to the town crazy woman, Miss Ramchandin, who was recently brought into the nursing home where he works. He feels an odd kinship with her, and silently, she understands his "perversions".

Through Tyler's sensitive eyes, the old woman's story begins to unfurl. We go back in time to witness her tragedies, her courage and what led to her current unfair reputation.

This is a mystery story, with villains and

heroes and damsels in distress. But there is nothing glamorous or Agatha Christie about *Cereus Blooms at Night*. It is raw yet intellectual, earthy but refined. Some of the events told of from old woman's past are disturbing, but this book is written with such tenderness, devoted to adjectives that paint powerful pictures, that the reader is compelled to discover the old woman's fate.

Beyond the intrigue, I was stirred by the constant flashbacks to the youth of the old woman. To me, the book was also a commentary on age and the potential beauty of life, of youth, of the elderly. Tyler did not view Miss Ramchandin as merely an old woman; she was girlish, only trapped by time, and unable to undo damage afflicted upon her.

Although the subject matter involving Miss Ramchandin's youth was disturbing, the overall intriguing structure of the story, coupled with the lush prose, made *Cereus Blooms at Night* a worthwhile reading experience. —RANI LONG

## MUSIC

### RAE & CHRISTIAN

*Northern Sulphuric Soul*  
(Smile Communications)

I imagine Rae & Christian's *Northern Sulphuric Soul* as a soundtrack. In my mind, the music would emerge during, say, those meaningful train travel scenes. The intro, "Divine Sounds," will take us through the various landscapes, moving and melting along with the wonderfully textured, multi-layered beats. The lush, tragic-sounding "Swansong" would accompany the lead of the film—leaving a lover for a distant city. Signifying the nighttime arrival in an unfamiliar, slightly sketchy station, "Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep" echoes with the line "protect me from these ill streets."

Mark Rae and Steve Christian, the men behind Manchester, England based Grand Central label, hooked up with such diverse talents as gospel diva Veba, Jeru the Damaja, Texas' Sharleen Spiteri, The Jungle Brothers, and QBall and Curt Cazal to make an album that sets a tone and creates a mood. *Northern Sulphuric Soul* is an unforgettable album; a flawless compilation and one that plays continually in the cinematic recesses of my mind, as well as on my stereo.

—AIMEE BIANCA

### ROBIN ADNAN ANDERS

*Omaiyo*

(Rykodisc)

Robin Adnan Anders, in the liner notes of his album *Omaiyo*, claims to believe that his song-making process yields music that "must be a true representation of the connection between art and life." What the process demonstrates in this instance are the many obstacles that lie between concept and the articulation thereof. Anders seems to anticipate his own failure in the album's introduction, which reads more like apologia than background information, speaking in defense of its own impurity of form. The list of artists and musicians who have successfully melded diverse influences is long and includes such examples as the Byzantine eyes in Modigliani's works to Deep Forest's use of sampling of various African languages and rhythms. The issue, however, is not one of purity, but of clarity, and Anders's album, which combines not only different musical influences, but also genres is muddled: the elements simply do not blend together in a synergistic way. Distracted by these incongruous elements, the listener/reader is caught up in a consideration of the process, but the music itself is not enough to compete with this contemplation. —REBECCA MURPHY

### ALAN STIVELL

1 *DOUAR*

(1 Earth)

Alan Stivell, with the combined musicianship of Youssou N'Dour, Khaled, John Cale, Jim Kerr, and others, boasts no lack of talent on his latest release 1 *Douar*. Known more as a champion of the Breton harp, and dubbed the probable "savior" of Celtic music, Stivell is not an obvious choice to anchor this eclectic production, his roots so steeped in traditionalism. Nonetheless, it is his idea, and that's how these things happen. Each track on 1 *Douar* explores the possibility of Stivell working with different musicians, one at a time, each drawn from the broad gamut of world music. At times, the disparity between traditions means the styles don't mesh, sounding less like collusion and more like collision.

But, oddly enough, it is the disparity that makes this album not just another fifteen-dollar coaster. By gathering so many places, people, things, he seeks out the diversity of sound and hopes to compound it into one which lacks assimilation. Again, the calculated effect can be somewhat overpronounced (if not overbearing), but there are very worthwhile moments here. —TREY SAGER



# Style Merchants

This designer couple gets to travel the world in pursuit of the hottest styles. But as they see it, the fashion life isn't all it's hyped to be. For one, you have to work.

Each spring and fall designers from across the globe make a pilgrimage to the fashion meccas of Europe where they converge on four giant fabric shows. There they work themselves into an exhausting fervor seeking swatches, samples, great deals and, most of all, inspiration.

Two among the many are Suzanne and Michael Anderson, a couple who both work designing menswear in the States. Although a twice yearly trip to Europe on the company may seem too good to be true, Suzanne and Michael are quick to point out that that's precisely because it is. In the fashion business, *business* is often the operative word. The trips are part of the cycle of design which the fashion world moves through each year, spring, summer, fall and winter, and work must come before play. The shows provide an opportunity to match fabrics to existing designs, as well as a storehouse of inspiration and cross-fertilization generated by the chance to see both new fabrics and the fashion of foreign cities.

Different companies set out with varying ideas, goals and, perhaps most importantly, budgets. But everyone is essentially after the same thing—the right fabric at the right price. So there's a very good chance that the fabric the designers see at the shows, or something very much like it, will ultimately be made up into the clothes which a year later are hanging in your closet.

A typical trip might mean a full week of rising at seven to be at the shows by eight. Then working the shows straight through to six, returning to the city by eight to eat with other designers and discuss the day's finds. And finally collapsing back into bed so you can do the whole thing again tomorrow.

Suzanne and Michael admit that there are perks to their work in Europe. Often they are able to share a hotel room, and sometimes there's an opportunity to sneak a half-way romantic dinner. And even if you can't eat with the one you love, you can console yourself with the next mouthful of fine French or Italian cuisine. Adding to the recipe is the chance to visit and revisit some of the world's most renowned cities and watch as they and their fashions change and renew them-

selves. When, as a fashion designer, you're being sent to London solely to shop and soak up its vibe it can seem that the line between work and play has become pleasingly blurred.

For designers like Suzanne and Michael, as for the rest of us, the true value of their bi-annual trips lies not only in the swatches seen, the samples sent home, the work quantifiably completed, but in the chance to renew their acquaintance with foreign people and places, and be stimulated by them.—MATTHEW SUTCLIFFE



Matthew Sutcliffe



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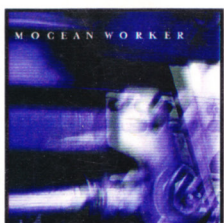
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