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Tatler contents

Wedding Guide 2024

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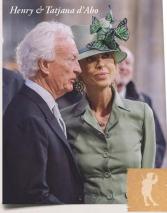
The Tatler's 1960 Brides issue was drop deb gorgeous

HOTOGRAPH: ALEX BRAMALL DRESS, POA, JENNY PACKHAM.
HOESE, SB80, MALONE COULIERS. HEADPIECE, £795, RACHEL
REVOR-MORGAN. BAG. 5555, MAE CASIDY. GLOVES, 555, DENTS.
RRENDS AND BRACELET, POA, CHAJUMET.



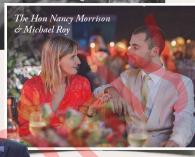
triple threat of outfits for her wedding to New Yorker Jake Giordano at the d'Abo family house, West Wratting Park in Cambridgeshire.

BYSTANDER WEDDINGS OF THE YEAR









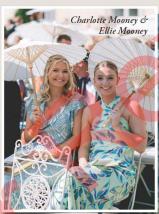


TRULY, MADLY, ELY Photographs by LARA & BIZZY ARNOTT

After accepting his proposal in Cornwall, Isobel Stanley married sparkling-wine scion Tristram Coates in July at the majestic Ely Cathedral, where it took her three minutes to walk the full length of the aisle - one of the longest in Britain. The bride wore the spectacular Derby Tiara with a gown designed by Tomasz Starzewski, adorned with her great-grandmother's family lace.









Hacking & Marina Hacking

DREAM COMO TRUE

Photographs by GREG FINCK

Max Robinson and Annabelle 'Belle' Porter adopted an amusing slogan for their Italian nuptials: 'Bellissimo to the Max' - and their wedding certainly lived up to that billing. Held on Lake Como's shimmering shores, it might rank as the most extravagant wedding of the summer, with the modelesque bride wearing an exquisite lace Zuhair Murad gown for the ceremony at the 16th-century Villa Balbiano.





BYSTANDER WEDDINGS OF THE YEAR





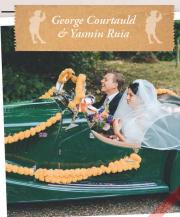
LONDON CALLING

Photographs by TOM DURN

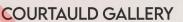
A top society turn-out gathered at the Brompton Oratory in Knightsbridge for the wedding of Talitha Fosh and Nathan Cohen. Bridesmaids Clementine Nicholson, Aphra Mactaggart and Amy Gatehouse escorted Tally – resplendent in an Eponine gown and tiara by Kiki McDonough – from the pink London taxi in which she made her arrival. Afterwards, guests moved to Boodle's (transformed into a woodland by florist Lucy Vail) for dinner and dancing, with the bride's brother Max Fosh showing his signature moves.



Ella Ma







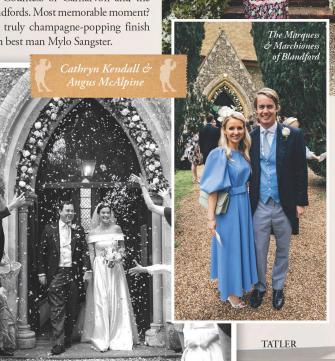
Photographs by MICHAEL MAURER

The wedding of George Courtauld and Yasmin Ruia in Woodbridge, Suffolk, late last summer blended the cultures of bride and groom with grace and sophistication. (Her Indian heritage inspired his arrival on horseback before the church service, which was followed by the traditional Vidaai ceremony.) A buyer for Rixo, Yasmin looked beyond gorgeous in an elegant gown she had designed herself.

ENGLISH ROSE

Photographs by MATT PORTEOUS

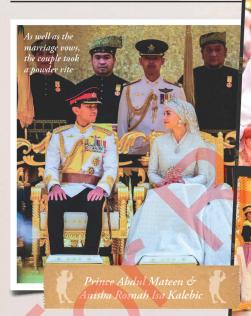
The rose garden at the Kendall family seat of Kidmore House in Oxfordshire was a romantic setting for the speeches celebrating the marriage of Cathryn Kendall and Angus McAlpine. Dressed by Emma Victoria Payne, Cathryn herself curated the pastel-perfect occasion, attended by such guests as the Earl and Countess of Carnarvon and the Blandfords. Most memorable moment? The truly champagne-popping finish from best man Mylo Sangster.





When Prince Ludwig of Bavaria married Sophie Evekink in Munich last May, Nymphenburg Palace was the grandiose backdrop for their reception. The bride wore a Reem Acra gown with a full skirt and lace bodice, a veil designed by the Ukrainian label WONÁ Concept and the Bavarian Sapphire Floral Tiara.

A society wedding for the ages: in a flower-adorned Kirche St Michael in Altshausen, Germany, the young aristocrats were observed taking their marriage vows by the likes of Queen Mathilde of Belgium. The ceremony was imbued with history, with the bride wearing an elegant high-neck gown that previously belonged to her mother and a family heirloom tiara.



BRUNEI ON PERFECT

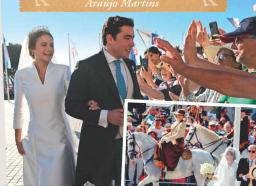
This glamorous, young Bruneian royal couple celebrated their nuptials with 5,000 guests in a 10-day extravaganza in the capital, Bandar Seri Begawan. The highlights included a ceremony to bless the newlyweds with fertility and wealth (in which their families applied a paste made from rice flour and scented oils to the couple's hands), a parade in a Rolls-Royce and a reception at which the bride dazzled in an embellished Zuhair Murad gown.

CHIC AND 'CHICA'

The glittering union between Duarte and Maria Francisca, Duchess of Coimbra – or Chica, as her lawyer husband calls her – saw 1,200 guests attend a lavish ceremony at the baroque basilica within Portugal's royal palace at Mafra. The duchess paired her Luzia do Nascimento dress with an elegant diamond diadem once worn by the late Queen Amélia.



Infanta Maria Francisca of Braganza & Duarte de Sousa Araújo Martins



The bride was walked down the aisle by her father, the Duke of Braganza, who claims the Portuguese throne



Pas de deux

Love is in the air at the Royal Ballet: meet the jeté set as they prepare to waltz down the aisle this summer





SOPHIE ALLNATT
First artist Sophie has set her wedding
date for July in Cheltenham

Tm calling my
wedding day a
performance,' says
Royal Ballet
soloist Hannah
Grennell



MEAGHAN GRACE HINKIS Wimbledon is Meaghan's location of choice, with a reception at Frensham Hall in Surrey



MICA BRADBURY

This Royal Ballet soloist will marry





THERE IS SOMETHING IN the water at the Royal Ballet, Four

the water at the Royal Ballet. Four ballerinas are engaged, including first soloist Meaghan Grace Hinkis, all due to be wed this summer. The excitement is palpable. 'I'm calling my wedding day a performance,' says Hannah Grennell, who has a Royal Opera House coordinator planning the occasion. Being the centre of attention might be de rigueur, but what of their bridal

style in a world filled with tutus, hair and make-up? Like a performance, there will be outfit changes. Sophie Allnatt is going for something 'as tight as possible', while Hinkis says her dress 'isn't subtle'. And naturally, the one thing they all look forward to is the dancing. As Grennell put it, 'I'm expecting a lot from my fellow ballerina guests.' □ Swan Lake is at the Royal Opera House until 28 June (roh.org.uk).

WEDDING EDITION

The names to know and the places to go: from florists and stationers to venues and couturiers, rely on these specialists to ensure a wedding day without a hitch

TATLER

HONEYMOONS! SEE PAGE 129

Whether you're seeking the most romantic hotels on earth or a more muted 'mini moon', *Tatler* knows the hotspots for a honeymoon you'll never forget

Blooming marvellous!

ARCADE FLOWERS

Opt for an array of big, blousey peonies and showy rose blooms – no minimal nonsense or tight-budded bouquets. Society florist Emma Newton-Smith of Arcade Flowers provides pastoral extravagance for wedding decoration. A Midsummer Night's Dream is the order of the day, with an abundance of pillar candles and candelabras, branches of foliage and whimsical hanging installations of flowers, such as rambling cream roses

that exude a dreamy English glamour, scented with glorious sprays of jasmine. arcadeflowers.co.uk

NEILL STRAIN

When only the best will do, this Mayfair and Belgravia florist takes a couture approach, fashioning flowers into living works of art. Using only what's in season, he specialises in bold styling. *neillstrain.com*



GLISTEN UP

Ring in your inner glam with Adler's Classic with a Twist collection. Take your pick from contemporary designs that feature timeless sapphires, emeralds, rubies and pearls, partnered with diamonds. These are pieces to enjoy on your wedding day and beyond. adler.ch

Dress drama

Suzanne Neville is the bridal couturier that style-savvy media stars flock to for red-carpet drama and weddings. Expect a whirlwind of breathtaking floral tulle and lace designs in the British designer's 2024 Symphony collection, in which the corset takes centre stage, revealing Neville's clever cuts and flawless fits. suzanneneville.com



Stars flock to Suzanne Neville for red-carpet drama



MUM'S THE WORD

The chicest mothers of the bride in town turn to Lalage Beaumont's Knightsbridge boutique. Offering made-to-measure and bespoke services of the highest quality, they tailor for the most discerning of grandes dames. Ialagebeaumont.com

Let the good times roll GSP EVENTS

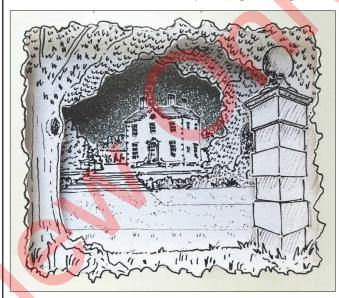
With two decades of experience, Emma Gold's talent is exemplary. Whether in the Cotswolds, Cannes or the Caribbean, she plans the party of a lifetime. gsp-uk.com

PARTY PLANNERS

The mastermind behind King Charles's 50th, Party Planners, founded by Lady Elizabeth Anson, is now run by Harriet Webber-Jamieson. partyplanners.ltd

PUT PEN TO PAPER

Allow Hugo Francis to bring life to your wedding venue via his bespoke 3D works of art. Handmade in postcard to A5 size, they're a unique and luxurious way to invite guests to your celebrations, not to mention the most beautiful keepsake. @hugofrancisdesigns



Say yes to the address

One of the great power houses of Norfolk, Wolterton Park was built by Horatio Walpole (the brother of prime minister Sir Robert), inspired by the Italian architect Palladio. The PM, alongside other leading politicians,

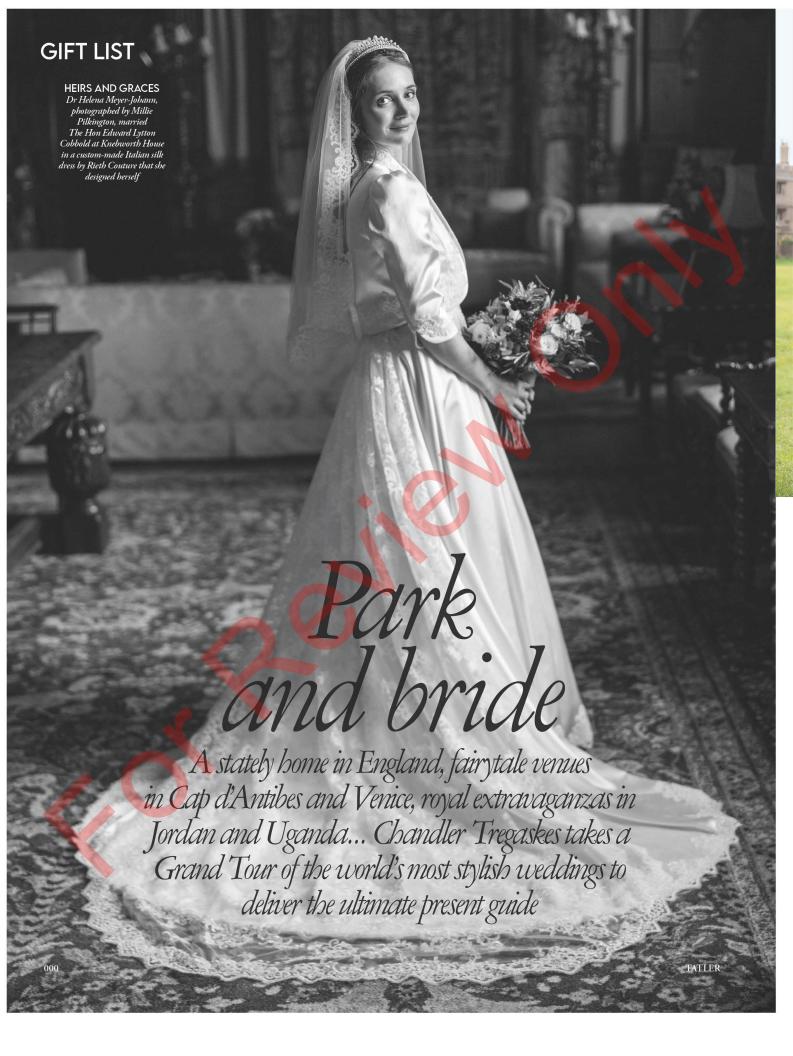
was a regular guest – so it's little wonder that the State Bedroom with bathroom is a haven of great beauty and now one of the most luxurious honeymoon suites in the country. woltertonpark.co.uk



THE FOOD OF LOVE

Jimmy Garcia doesn't offer a menu per se, but a promise: anything is possible. For the chicest seafood shack at your party, try a scallop bar. Savour them Sicilian-style crudo or perfectly grilled with rich seaweed butter and a sprinkle of bottarga. For a bucolic fantasy, his imaginative edible vegetable

gardens are delectable for a high-society walled-garden wedding. 'Gardeners' will carry wheelbarrows filled with chocolate soil and such delicious horticultural wonders as edible moss, meringue toadstools and salted caramel served in watering cans. *jimmygarciacatering.com*







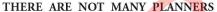












that can count multiple royal weddings among their portfolio of past celebrations, but Party Planners, which has masterminded spectacular events ever since it launched in 1961, certainly can. Its experienced team organised Her Royal Highness Princess Eugenie's 2018 wedding and the wedding eve party for Their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales.

Royal connections are in this company's blood. It was founded by Lady Elizabeth Anson, who was cousin to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and is known as the doyenne of party planning. Now Party Planners is in the hands of her exceptionally capable protégé Harriet Webber-Jamieson, who remains committed to the timeless glamour and pioneering spirit that have made it a global success.

Harriet and her trusted, talented team pride themselves on being 24-hour party people at







Harriet and her trusted, talented team pride themselves on being 24-hour party people

the very forefront of the industry. The services they provide cover every element of an event, including access to a unique network of trusted specialist suppliers, as well as a world-class, inhouse concierge service and design consultancy. Alongside royalty, Party Planners has crafted events for celebrities and international brands, and its existing loyal client base has been built over many decades.

Whether it's an intimate affair at home, blockbuster movie-set design, or a lavish weekend of celebrations among the rolling hills of Tuscany, the team can bring dream weddings to life – however imaginative the vision or grand the scale. Party Planners has created weddings of every size across the UK and around the globe, and is known for making wedding planning stress-free and fun. In fact, with these experts on board, the entire process feels like part of the celebration itself.





CAPITAL WHIRL

From New Covent Garden flower market to a suite in Claridge's – via an exuberant Cuban-themed club night and three stunning outfit changes – Emma King and Alexander Taylor's wedding was a chic odyssey around the hotspots of London



IT ALL BEGAN WITH A

picture of the Jagger/Pérez-Mora Macías wedding in St Tropez in 1971. (Who could forget the bride's low-cut white suit?) Fast-forward to a sunny London morning in September 2023, when hedgefunder Emma King arrived at the registry office to marry advertising techhead Alexander Taylor in her own elegant but edgy three-piece. The newlyweds cut quite a dash as they skipped down the steps of Old Marylebone Town Hall and were greeted by 20 friends and family in a deluge of rose petals. 'Bianca's 1970s style and mood were exactly what I wanted for leaving the ceremony,' says Emma.

But that white suit and broadbrimmed hat was just the first of three outfits in which Emma would be appearing, the groom accompanying her in a trio of his own. 'We were both really thoughtful about what we wanted to wear,' she adds.

Meanwhile, the day was planned to within an inch of its perfect life by Philip Pleydell-Pearce, who had done the same for Emma's parents. It had as its theme a celebration of the capital, where the couple have built their lives. And Emma, intent on it being London-centric from start to finish, was heavily involved in every aspect: from early-morning New Covent Garden visits with her florist - Christopher Hammond-Davis of Woodbrown - to Savile Row for her suit fittings. 'Being the only female tailor in the street, The Deck was particularly important to me,' she says. 'I especially loved the ace of spades embroidered inside the sleeve,' she adds with a glint of feminine wile. 'Because you always need a card up your sleeve...'

Her own was a double-decker bus that whisked the congregation (via stops at Westminster Cathedral, Piccadilly Circus and the Houses of Parliament) to the Kings' Berkeley Square home for an intimate roof-top lunch. And that was followed by a be-ribboned black cab, which transported them to join 200-plus guests for further festive fun at Battersea Arts Centre. Or, for that one night only, the Cuban-themed

STYLE EYES 1 Kaftan, £815, TALLER MARMO at net-a-porter.com. 2 Earrings, £280, ALIGHIERI. 3 Top, £1,464, AGUA BENDITA at net-a-porter.com. 4 Jacket, £445, OLIVER BROWN. 5 Shoes, £3,700, JIMMY CHOO. 6 Bridal perfume, £49, ELIE SAAB. 7 Necklace, POA, CHANEL 8 Lipgloss, £34, CHANEL. 9 Loafers, £240, DUKE + DEXTER. 10 Trainers, £340, ALAIA at net-a-porter.com. 11 Watch, £2,195, FRÉDÉRIQUE CONSTANT



Club Correntoso (the latter being Emma's middle name).

Here, Cuban band The Legends played while guests aged 12 to 91 hit the dancefloor. A cigar-roller was on hand and guests grazed at leisure on Cuban-inspired food stalls by Mark Jankel. 'The energy was electric,' says Emma. 'Philip

had totally nailed the vibe and we couldn't stop smiling.' Arriving in a flowing champagne silk dress by Spanish designer Cortana and a striking Jess Collett-designed headpiece (inspired by the one created by the British milliner for the Princess of Wales at the Coronation), with Alexander in a crisp

cream double-breasted suit, they oozed Tropicana-esque glamour.

But they didn't stop there. At 10.30pm, the couple made a quick dash to change into their third 'clubbing' outfits (Emma still in her headpiece). Then, grabbing their families under the guise of needing a backstage team meeting, they all went to welcome Mark Ronson, who would be DJing for the grand finale. 'We agreed our siblings had to have a moment with him, or they'd never let us live it down!'

Unsurprisingly, nobody wanted to leave. But at 2am, the couple made their exit in a pastel-coloured Cadillac that deposited them at the front of Claridge's for their first night. (Emma's parents had done the same on their big day.) 'I'll never forget the look on the night doorman's face as we rocked up,' she says. 'It was pure magic.'









ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE



Wolterton Park is just as well suited to glamorous indoor affairs as sprawling al fresco celebrations

guests. The highlight here is the opulent State Bedroom, which is used as a Bridal Suite.

This is a proudly versatile venue, which impresses in any season, and Wolterton Park is just as well suited to glamorous indoor affairs as sprawling al fresco celebrations in the spring and summer, with space for up to 200 in a marquee in the grounds of the estate. Perhaps the best aspect is the uninterrupted privacy offered by it being exclusively yours, with the option to extend across two or three days. Why limit the best time of your life to just one day?



Grand design

For a country house wedding venue with majestic interiors and bespoke planning look no further than Wolterton Park

IMAGINE HOSTING YOUR WEDDING

in an 18th-century stately home set in more than 500 acres of parkland and woodland. Envisage its grand, Palladio-inspired style, enchanting walled gardens, luxurious lodgings and illustrious former guests. And, best of all, imagine that your dream wedding will be taking place as one of only six hosted at this venue all year, each crafted to the bespoke wishes of the bride and groom.

It may sound like the stuff of fantasy, but this is the exact scenario for those lucky few who hold their weddings at Wolterton Park, a private country estate in north Norfolk available for exclusive-use weddings. This is a place of vast arched windows, corniced ceilings, pedimented door cases, magnificent fireplaces, large sash windows and sparkling chandeliers. The house is not open to the public, which is perhaps why this stylish venue has remained completely under the radar.

Wolterton Park is an ideal setting for those looking to escape to the bucolic bliss of the countryside for their nuptials, but without straying somewhere too difficult for guests to reach. Within the hall itself, there are 11 sumptuous bedrooms, which can be combined with six holiday cottages to sleep up to 64

EMMA KING & ALEXANDER TAYLOR

The chic newlyweds skied down to their reception in Mont d'Arbois, Megève, in the second chapter of their wedding — undoubtedly the greatest show on earth





The Coreths and the Grangers made an eye-catching balloonscape using Chinese lanterns, paper cups and streamers



Following a season of back-to-back invitations, culminating in six weddings in as many weeks – from Mallorca and Madrid via the slopes of Megève – bride-to-be Annabel Sampson finds inspiration aplenty



THE HON LARA BAMPFYLDE Friends desperately tried to reunite Lara, the daughter of Lord and Lady Poltimore, with her family's namesake tiara, famously worn by Princess Margaret in the bathtub

ISTANBUL, JANUARY 2023. Picture the scene: James, my floppy-haired Hugh Grant-esque boyfriend of six years, gets down on one knee on a tiled rooftop, with the Blue Mosque for a backdrop. The call to prayer is a well-timed soundtrack to proceedings. Pure bliss! I accept.

And immediately, my hitherto-dormant bridal brain whirrs into action. Richard Curtis supposedly began writing *Four Weddings* after attending 65 in an 11-year period; and while I haven't clocked up quite so many, I may not be far off. I can even count my box-fresh fiancé as a wedding victory: the 'brother of the bride' who I first registered when he gave a reading from a lectern, his round spectacles propped at the end of his nose.

I peaked last year with a run of six weddings in six weeks. My screenplay would be called 'Six Weddings and a Coronation' – of which I caught only a tantalising glimmer because I was hotfooting it to Bolton Abbey to watch the Prince and Princess of Wales's portrait painter Jamie Coreth marry my oldest childhood friend, Issy Granger, the home-decor goddess and daughter of the esteemed High Sheriff of Yorkshire, Clare Granger.

So now I'm the eager bride, what will I be gleaning from the greatest weddings I've ever attended? From a five-day bash on the slopes of chi-chi Megève to a minimalist matrimonial knees-up at Mallorca's Neuendorf House, friends' weddings are certainly fertile ground for personal #wedspo – and in the hope that it may be of some use to others, here's what I've learnt.

First off, wear the tiara. For my auspicious day, a great friend has proffered a diadem from their

family vault: the daintiest, prettiest, diamond-encrusted headpiece. So how could I refuse? And as the Hon Lara Bampfylde, daughter of Lord and Lady Poltimore, said to me: 'If you can't wear a tiara at your own wedding, when can you?'

It's a good point. For Lara's own nuptials, despite concerted efforts, we were unable to reunite her with her family's namesake tiara – the glittering piece famously worn by Princess Margaret in a bathtub in 1962 – since it is now in the hands of an international tycoon. Fortunately, the Comyns, her new in-laws, had their own less-famous parure to give her for the great day.

Second, leave demure at the door. I'm looking to such fashion-forward friends as Beth Johnson, the starchitect-on-the-rise who commissioned a 'structural', sundrenched cream silk creation by

SOCIAL EYES

Spanish designer Cortana for her Mallorcan wedding at Neuendorf House, the captivatingly stark John Pawson and Claudio Silvestrindesigned building. I'm taking notes from fantasy snow-bride Emma King, who was St Moritz-chic in sparkling Elie Saab, with an icewhite botanical headpiece by the Princess of Wales-approved milliner Jess Collett. And I'm thrilled by how Issy Granger designed her own dress with the loveliest, Guinevere-esque sleeves inspired by 'Mr Darcy on some subconscious level'.

The aforementioned Lara started the day in a virginal, high-necked Alice Temperley dress before morphing into a character from Daisy Jones and the Six in a fluffy 16 Arlington top and Galvan trousers (when she appeared on the drums). I'm going for glass-half-full glamour in Halfpenny, inspired by school friend Flora Blackett-Ord who brought backless drama to Northumberland's Whitfield Hall. I'll be wearing intricately embroidered gloves, a delicate antique lace veil and... a dress with a voluminous mermaid silhouette. But will I be able to dance?

Hopefully enough to take on the tango – in the manner of highflying barristers Edward Granger and Samantha Daley who performed a smouldering take on the notoriously hard-to-master routine in the Palace of Westminster (where the bride is Counsel to the Joint Committee on Human Rights).

A grand entrance is of paramount importance. I will be channelling Emma King and Alexander Taylor, who descended Mont d'Arbois in perfect parallel turns, with a posse of groomsmen brandishing flames against the backdrop of snowy mountains - to the reception where guests were experiencing Taylor Swift-fan levels of euphoria. Meanwhile, Charlie Girardot and Lucy Pedder, at wedding dos in Madrid, exuded main character energy, entering a monastery to Beyoncé's Crazy in Love, and sashaying past elegant swathes of Delevingnes (Charlie's family) while guests rattled their tambourines. And James and I will both be on galloping horses, soaring over cavalletti on our way into the reception like glamorous newlyweds, the Hon George Greenall and Toby Corbin. Just kidding.

But we will be having a ringbearing owl – a decision rooted in pure eccentricity. (My brother's best friend Holly Ziff planted the seed a decade ago at her own Jewish wedding, and I've been hooked on the idea ever since.) Other brides prefer dogs: Mimi Westropp, the daughter of the Hon Victoria and Harry Westropp, held up her shihtzu Bilbo to the high heavens for handmade details. Issy and Jamie Coreth fashioned more than 200 miniature paper chairs in a literal riff on 'take your seat' for the placements at their wedding breakfast. (And with their artistic families, the creative couple also constructed a raft of 300 hot-air balloons using Chinese lanterns, paper cups and streamers to form a balloonscape across the marquee.) Alice Elphick and Ollie Frewin decorated the trees along their driveway in thousands of multicoloured silk ribbons for a British Indian-inspired wedding. As for me? My mother, an actor-turned-ceramicist, is making

And me? I've always been hooked on the idea of having a ring-bearing owl — a decision rooted in pure eccentricity

the group wedding photograph in front of the Westropp family home, Goadby Marwood Hall. And Sarah Procter dressed up her beloved labrador Tarka in a brideworthy white ribbon, in which she was photographed staring adoringly at the Pol Roger champagne.

Now we come to the important subject of music. Whether it's a brass trio honking out The Pink Panther Theme, a string quartet inside the Palace of Westminster or Mark Ronson dropping Missy Elliott's Get Ur Freak On at Emma and Alexander's Club Correntoso night (wedding, chapter one) music is undeniably crucial. It could even be worth optimising the sound system in the loos: one freshly married young MP was foxed - at his own wedding by the brother of the bride. His maiden speech in the House of Commons was played on repeat in the Portaloo powder room for the duration of the reception.

I am personally obsessed with

legions of pottery vessels in shades of green and gold which will brim with sweet peas, jasmine and delphiniums for table decorations.

Of course, we've latched onto an integral theme to distinguish our British garden extravaganza from the many others and dispel the possible onset of any wedding ennui. If Beth and John Machin were all about pure, unadulterated minimalism at Neuendorf House and Dominic Ramsden and Scarlett Long embodied the quintessential dolce vita at a castello in Tuscany, we'll be channelling the Ancient World via Yorkshire, owing to James's infatuation with all things classical (and his degree in archaeology). If Issy and Jamie named the tables after shades of paint, from cobalt blue to cerulean, we're going for a rollcall of Roman Emperors. We've sourced classical busts and wrought iron columns, you name it.

But what about the date? Given the garden's leading role in our upcoming wedding, a weekend has

unquestionably been chosen when - as my mum says - it will be at its most 'floriferous'. Sweet peas, cornflowers and ammi (or 'Queen Anne's Lace') have been planted down; and there will even be a pearly bush of Exochorda 'The Bride'. Otherwise, I'm taking horticultural hints from Charlie Roper and Flora Blackett-Ord, whose Northumberland garden abounded with huge white peonies and foxgloves. Meanwhile, Stockeld Park was verdant-in-excelsis for the wedding of Phoebe Grant and Charlie Newman, flush with botanicals and even a fully-formed tree in the middle of the central bar.

Maryanne Haggas, granddaughter of Lester Piggott, transformed her marquee into a spring cherry blossom installation with the help of the florist du jour, Lucy Vail. Ollie Ridley and Emily Shalash's garden-based ceremony, set against the Cotswolds hills in Moreton-in-Marsh, was the utopian rural idyll. And the ethereal arrangements around the old ruined church – a kind of topiary folly – at Birdsall House in Yorkshire for the wedding of Molly Anderson and Andy Bulman were enchanting.

Of course, I'll be keeping the father of the bride in check (he has at times teetered into 'father of the bride-zilla' territory). No doubt he'll be looking to fellow Yorkshire 'FOB' Philip Procter who, when hosting his new Berkshire and Newmarket-based in-laws (Lord and Lady Benyon and Lord and Lady Grimthorpe), addressed the marquee: 'To the gentleman who entangled his Ferrari's snow chains in the cattle grid, please don't worry. The local blacksmith is on the job and it should be free by tomorrow for the journey home!'

Anything else? It remains to be seen whether I'll be struck by more inspiration prior to my walk up the aisle. At the time of writing, we're just an Antigua-based wedding and a bumper May of back-to-back nuptials away from our own on 8 June − and that's a day after the Duke and future Duchess of Westminster. Yorkshire best be ready. □





SOCIAL EYES

MARYANNE HAGGAS & ADAM PEACOCK

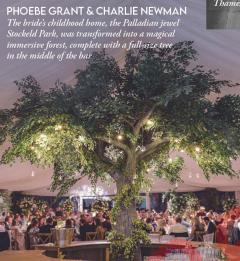
Lester Piggott's granddaughter commissioned Lucy Vail to create a cherry blossom takeover of the marquee – which was met with the whole-hearted approval of her father, William Haggas, one of the King's racehorse trainers



EMILY SHALASH & OLLIE RIDLEY

The bride's subtly printed floral dress, with tiny buttons down the back, was

perfect for an al fresco Gloucestershire wedding at a 16th-century manor house with a 300-year-old Mulberry tree





Even my box-fresh fiancé was a wedding victory – a brother of the bride'





Big names, BIGNUMBERS

What does it take to break the scales for society's most lavish nuptials? From mega veils to cakes galore, Dora Davies-Evitt is keeping count



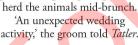
£926,400

was the price bid for Princess Margaret's wedding tiara when it was sold at Christie's in 2006. Called the Poltimore, it was made by Garrard for the wife of the second Baron Poltimore (who was treasurer to Queen Victoria's household). The princess paid £5,500 for it at auction in 1959, a few months before Antony Armstrong-Jones



of veil were sported by Priyanka Chopra when she married Nick Jonas in 2018. (That was for their 'Western' ceremony, though they were also wed in a Hindu rite.) And over the course of their five-day festivities, she wore at least an equal number of outfits. These included a gold and silver sequin sari by Abu Jani-Sandeep Khosla; a Ralph Lauren gown, teamed with that long veil; and a red Sabyasachi lehenga with Chopard jewellery. Low-key





500 years old

is the age of the Knebworth

estate where the Hon Edward

Lytton Cobbold married

German heiress Dr Helena

Meyer-Johann in 2023. The

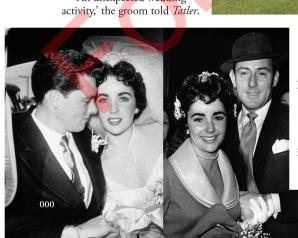
next day brought drama: a fallen

tree set 40 red deer loose in the

grounds, requiring the guests to

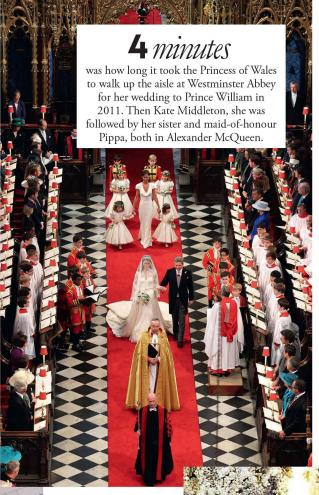


were uttered by Hollywood star Elizabeth Taylor, who tied the knot with seven different men. Her husbands ranged from hotel tycoon Conrad Hilton Jr (in 1950) to construction worker Larry Fortensky (in 1991); and in between, she married Richard Burton - twice, Michael Wilding, Michael Todd, Eddie Fisher and John Warner.





SOCIAL EYES





6 months

in the workshop and Lady Kitty Spencer's Dolce & Gabbana gown was finally ready for her headline-grabbing wedding to Michael Lewis in 2021. Among the guests were close friends Sabrina Elba, Pixie Lott and Jade Holland Cooper, as well as such family members as the bride's sisters Lady Eliza and Lady Amelia Spencer. The ceremony took place at the Villa Aldobrandini near Rome.

2 countries

(France and Italy) hosted Kim Kardashian and Kanye West's nuptials in 2014. They kicked off with a pre-wedding party at the Palace of Versailles and, a day later, tied the knot at the Forte di Belvedere in Florence. Fast-forward to 2022 and Kourtney K wed Travis Barker in Portofino, sparking accusations of 'copying' from her little sister. Ah, these reality royals...



is the number of people who tuned in to watch the Duke and Duchess of Sussex wed at St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle, with 100,000 well-wishers lining the streets. ▷







36 royal households

and heads of state attended the Madrid wedding of Letizia Ortiz Rocasolano and Prince Felipe of Spain in 2004, including Prince Albert of Monaco, the then Prince of Wales and Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden. The occasion was the first royal wedding Spain had hosted in almost a century.



were used to adorn Victoria Swarovski's 2017 custom-made white dress for her wedding to Munich-based entrepreneur Werner Mürz, held at the Cathedral of San Giusto in Trieste. Made by Dubai-based designer Michael Cinco, it featured a wide skirt and a sheer bodice, and she matched the gown with a pair of white Jimmy Choo heels.

27 cakes

is how many the then Prince and Princess of Wales had to contend with in 1981. But first the ceremony: en route to St Paul's, Diana sailed past the crowds in the Glass Coach with her father John, the 8th Earl Spencer – the carriage was said to be a squeeze for them thanks to her meringue dress.



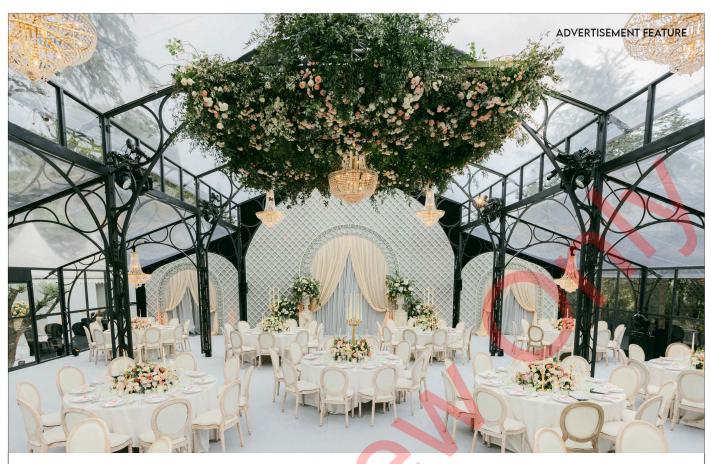
70,000 *orchids*

were flown from Thailand to fill Jay-Z's 13,500 sqft Manhattan penthouse when he celebrated his marriage to Beyoncé in 2008. Only 40 guests were invited to witness the event, held inside a large tent in his drawing room. Goodbye, single lady! □

3 stone

was the weight of the wedding dress worn by Soraya Esfandiary-Bakhtiary when she married Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi of Iran in 1951. The bride wore a Dior gown comprising 37 yards of silver lamé, plus pearls, 6,000 diamond pieces and 20,000 marabou feathers. So heavy was the creation that moments before the ceremony the Shah took scissors to the train in an attempt to lighten her load.





The master plan

As it approaches its third decade of wedding expertise, GSP Events reflects on its now legendary status

EVEN A CURSORY scroll through the dreamy, floral-adorned Instagram account of GSP Events is enough to make you swoon. From the Cotswolds to the Caribbean, via the sands of St Tropez and the rolling hills of Tuscany, every GSP-produced wedding is picture-perfect. They resemble the wildest Pinterest-board fantasies incarnate and demonstrate the utmost professionalism. This creative flair has been honed over almost 30 years by organising extraordinary, award-winning events around the world.

You might find your interest piqued by a gathering on the landscaped lawns of Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild in the south of France, or by a hidden feast in the magical woods of Wilderness Reserve, the off-grid country estate in Suffolk. You might prefer the timeless grandeur of dinner and dancing in the ballroom at Claridge's, or the sleek glamour of a takeover at The Maybourne Riviera, overlooking Monaco on the cliffs of the Côte d'Azur. All this and much more can be crafted to perfection by GSP Events, which counts celebrities, royalty and luxury brands as clients.

Founded by Emma Gold in 1997, GSP

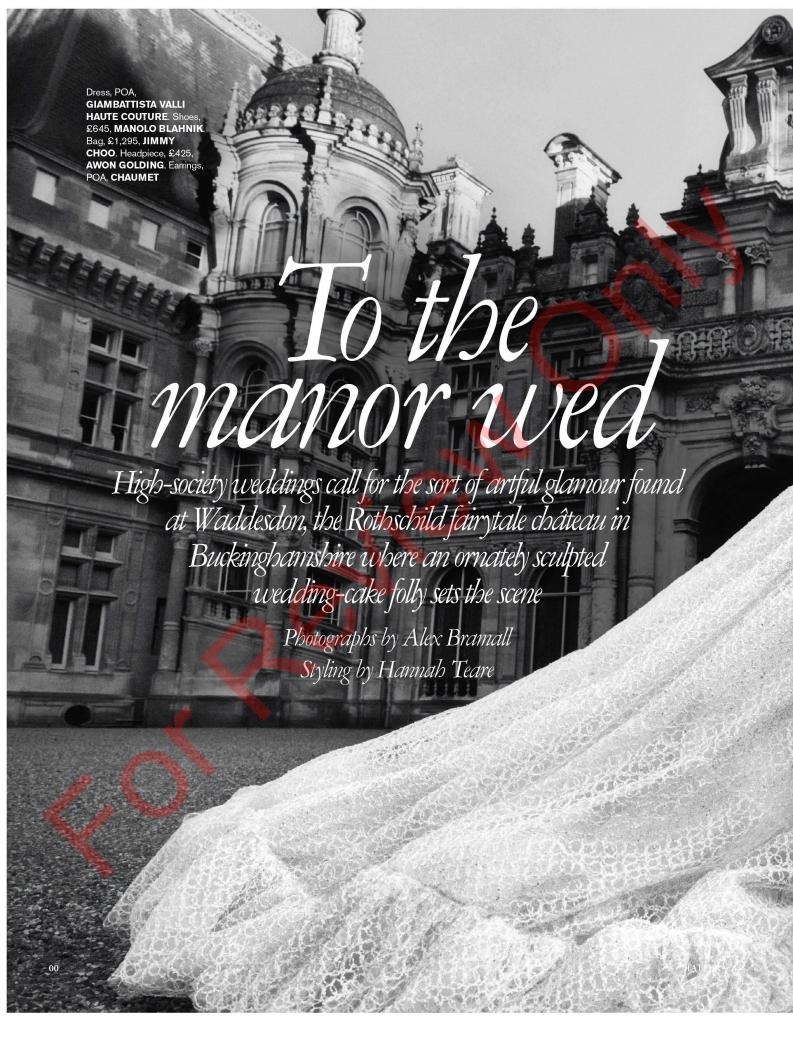
From the Cotswolds
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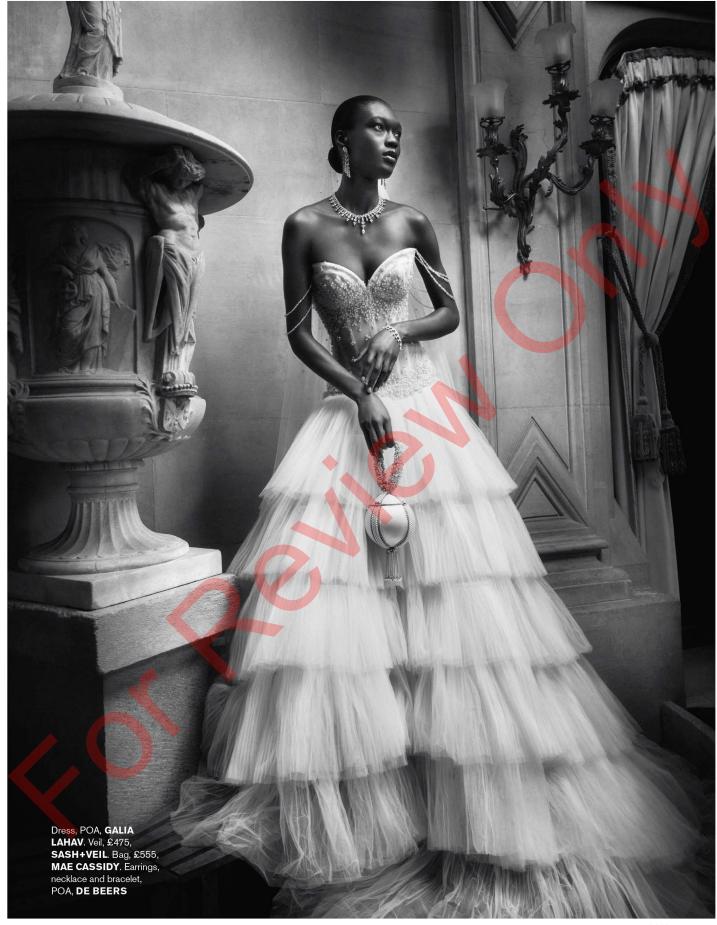
Events is a boutique agency now celebrating 27 years of industry-leading work. With an enviable network of contacts, GSP has won official-supplier status at some of the world's finest venues. But it's not only weddings on which Emma and her competent team can work their event magic; GSP has also crafted engagement parties, pre- and post-wedding celebrations, and milestone birthdays, not to mention exclusive red-carpet events and sophisticated charity galas for some very high-profile names.

A central part of GSP's ability to deliver successful events is its commitment across the event-planning spectrum. Whether you're organising a large wedding abroad, or an intimate gathering at home, you will always receive the same level of bespoke, dedicated care and service.

GSP's outstanding portfolio of events has only been made possible by sustaining loyal and honest relationships with both its clients and longstanding suppliers. These industry links have been nurtured by a long-serving, dedicated core team, which has a real passion for creating the exceptional, high-quality weddings. GSP Events has truly earned its reputation for discreet, skilful execution, proving a godsend for anyone planning a glamorous celebration.

























By ASTRID JOSS

beauty





BRIDE'S HAIR

The countdown is on. From high-society hair stylists to miracle make-up artists – and the tools to track down – Astrid Joss shares the final flourishes you need for wedding-day radiance

TREATMENTS

For a healthy-looking head, 'Botox' your locks at Marylebone's glamorous Gielly Green. The non-invasive treatment consists of a formaldehyde- and keratin-free smoothing process that calms and relaxes hair, banishing frizz and leaving you with a silky-smooth shine. There's no downtime, and it lasts three to six months. *giellygreen.co.uk*

GLOSS

For an unapologetically rich sheen, there's only Neville's. Kash Bishop administers a series of new K18 restructuring rituals that impart all the gloss and bounce of a 1990s supermodel (four in a row, for the full effect). And then there's the holy grail, the signature liquid-gold blow-dry — it's basically a Brazilian straightening without chemicals — which ensures only the most precise results; and it'll dazzle for at least a month. *nevillehairandbeauty.net*

GROWTH

Philip Kingsley is the expert who the rich and famous consult when things get a little thin on top. Book in with Mayfair's premier trichologist for any tress-related issues and you'll emerge brand-new. Whether it's dandruff, hair loss or anything in-between, this expert team will succinctly diagnose and effectively treat any problem. And, should you be out of the vicinity, this salon also offers a brilliant online service. philipkingsley.co.uk

EXTENSIONS

The reigning queen of this scene, Louise Bailey will create volume, length and most importantly high

TRESSED TO IMPRESS

Get a-head of the game with the best preparation products



1 Damage Reverse Serum, £59, **VIRTUE** at cultbeauty.co.uk. 2 Silk turban, £75, **SLIP**. 3 Sculpt **Gua** Sha, £42, **ACT+ACRE** at cultbeauty.co.uk. 4 Scalp Exfoliating Shampoo, £38, **RAHUA**. 5 Alchemy Resilience Shampoo, £47, **ORIBE**. 6 Hairology hair supplements, £45, **VIDA GLOW**

drama. This is seriously haute hair. With 22 years of experience and a celebrity client list to match (Ellie Goulding and Yasmin Le Bon), she knows her tails from her lengths. Her signature style? Your hair looks completely natural even under the forensic glare of those in the know. beautyclublondon.co.uk

COLOUR

Look to Oxford Circus-based Moe and Shady Harb, Lebanese brothers who are transforming the colour of London's most high-maintenance women one head at a time. This pair can magic any hue from dark noir to icy blonde without breaking into a sweat. @moe_harb_London @shady_hairstylist

George Northwood, the man who was behind the Duchess of Sussex's

glossy hairdo's on her former royal tours, also has an eye for flawless colour. Both his Fitzrovia and East London salons offer to-dye-for services and cutting-edge techniques. georgenorthwood.com

STYLISTS

For a touch of stardom, consult the king! From tending to Hollywood legends to masterminding couture shows: it's all in a day's work for this oh-so down-to-earth yet largerthan-life character. Drama? Larry King has seen it all. Now, bring on the bride! larrykinghair.com

A celebrity in his own right (and by appointment to the Afro-Caribbean A-list), Errol Douglas is most at home tending to the Belgravia set by day; and by night, attending award ceremonies (where he or his

clients are often winners). If you can't pin him down, his senior style director James Brunt is also a whizz at anything from a chic chignon to the most glam, blown-out 'down-do'. erroldouglas.com

When nerves are running higher than your piled-up coif, you need Jordan Garrett by your side. The former assistant of Luke Hersheson has picked up every trick of the trade from 'the boss' — including how to manage the ultimate bridal demands. hershesons.com

HAIR WE GO For the day of, go full pelt





1 Wave maker, £149.50, HERSHESONS. 2 Portrait of a Lady Hair Mist, £150, FRÉDÉRIC MALLE. 3 Dream Coat Supernatural Spray, £27, COLOUR WOW. 4 The Invisible Hold hairspray, £82, SISLEY PARIS. 5 Gold brush, £95, AERIN at net-a-porter.com



REVISITED

ABOUT FACE

In the weeks before the wedding, it's all about skinnovation





FACIAL

JOANNE EVANS

Surgery not your thing? For a more natural approach, Evans specialises in medically-enhanced treatments such as lasers, peels and dermabrasion. For a glowing and healthy complexion, she's the lady of the facial manor. *skin-matters.co.uk*

LASHES

EDY LONDON

For brighter eyes, lash-lengthening is key. Edy specialises in individual extensions for a defined but natural look, expertly applying each little lash to complement your unique features. salon.edy.london

BROWS

NAILS & BROWS

This Berkeley Street hotspot was founded by Sherrille Riley to offer the most discerning of clients — including Mayfair locals and royals — essential grooming services at a superlative level. While her extensive brow menu includes a variety of techniques to tidy and re-shape, it's the micro-blading and microfeathering treatments that remain stars of the show — perfect for those who've little or none of their own. nailsandbrows.me

TUTORIALS

CHANEL

Practice makes perfect – and who better to employ than Chanel for the ultimate lesson? Visit its School of Makeup and choose from four masterclasses. For example, Glow On The Go will show you how to stay radiant in a stressed-out world. And The Essentials teaches you

how to create a complete wedding look, with a Chanel artist offering make-up tips and tricks, as well as advice on how to enhance your best features. *chanel.com*

GUERLAIN

For those who feel time-poor but are in need of a glow-up, Guerlain's Covent Garden boutique is an ideal pit stop. The make-up is quick – 45 minutes – but still ultra-luxurious. guerlain.com

AT HOME

INPARLOUR

The beauty concierge that Nicky Hilton Rothschild called in for her bridal hair and make-up offers a vast menu of treatments in your own home – or space of choice – and you can invite the rest of your entourage, too. *inparlour.co.uk*

RUUBY APP

In Manchester, Surrey, London and the Cotswolds, industry experts from Ruuby's designated bridal section will come straight to your door. Services include trials, and make-up on the day, for bride-to-be and her wedding party. *ruuby.com*

MAKE-UP ARTISTS

EMMA O'BYRNE

Egypt and Sicily, via Venice: just a few of the locations that feature on O'Byrne's wedding hit list this year. Little wonder, when her jet-set clientele includes brands (Chloé and Chanel), A-listers (Claudia Schiffer, Sienna Miller) and royals (Princess Beatrice). More importantly, bridal make-up is what she loves to do most. @emmaobyrne

HANNAH MARTIN

The wildly talented, down-to-earth Hannah has been the lead make-up artist at a host of royal weddings. *@hannahmartinmakeup*

SARAH JANE WAI

For a clean, exact and elevated look, put your face in the hands of ex-Charlotte Tilbury MUA Sarah Jane. Known for defining cheekbones and widening eyes, she's the person Kylie, Amal, Salma and Demi all call. @sarahjanewai

READY FOR YOUR CLOSE-UP

Face the future as you walk down the aisle



1 Indulge for Women scent, £2,400, **AMAFFI.** 2 Orange Blossom CBD Oil, £18, **TRIP.** 3 Illuminating Powder, £68, **CHANEL.** 4 Addict Lip Maximiser in Pink, £32, **DIOR.** 5 The Favourite Scent, £175, **PENHALIGON'S.** 6 Silky Bronze Cooling Protective Suncare Spray SPF50+, £90, **SENSAI.** 7 24H Intense Volume Curl Mascara, £34, **GUERLAIN**



Lip service

Having witnessed decades of dubious lip augmentation, Dr Prager has honed the ultimate, medically led antidote: The London Lip

'I FIRST WITNESSED LIP augmentation in 2000,' says Dr Michael Prager, who has been practising medicine in London for 23 years – garnering international acclaim and a flercely loyal fanbase in the process. 'The work was done by a French plastic surgeon using a semi-permanent filler. It took him two seconds – half a syringe left, half a syringe right – and there was no regard to any sort of anatomy. The filler went in, the lip was big and that was that.'

Mercifully, in the 24 intervening years, vast improvements have been made, both in terms of the skillsets of those who are administering the treatment and the products used in the procedure itself. Yet, as Dr Prager notes, one

of the biggest challenges for practitioners in the field is fads, which can mean that lip augmentation is dictated by fashion rather than solid medical knowledge. That's where Dr Prager's new treatment, The London Lip, comes in. It offers discerning clients a high-quality option that has been honed over 20 years of experience. The knowledge gained during this period means this internationally regarded doctor has an intimate understanding of the procedure and its history.

Speaking from the stylish comfort of his exclusive London clinic, located amid the timeless glamour of Knightsbridge, Dr Prager recounts a few more tales from this turbulent history. It began with the so-called 'Paris Lip',

which was en vogue when he first arrived in London from his native Germany. 'This was apparently the best way to enhance lips – by injecting the top lip only,' he says, with a bemused smile. 'Nobody even thought about injecting the bottom lip. I was working with a lot of models at the time and not one of these naturally beautiful people had a disproportionately larger top lip, so it made no sense to me whatsoever.'

After the Paris Lip faded from fashion, another disastrous trend emerged: something Dr Prager refers to as the 'bee-sting procedure', which saw lips being pumped to ever greater (and less natural-looking) proportions. 'People were injected anywhere

Top three treatments

THE LONDON LIP

Developed over 20 years,
The London Lip combines a superlative
understanding of procedure and
product, which is delivered with
Dr Prager's signature light touch and
meticulous artistry.

THE ILLUMINATOR FACIAL

A therapist-based skin resurfacing treatment that can compete with any machine, this facial offers outstanding results with minimal downtime. Truly a luxury experience.

PRP LIPS AND BODY RESURFACING

As an alternative to injectables, Dr Tuckey uses pioneering natural methods, such as platelet-rich plasma, to regenerate lip tissue and stimulate growth factors.

in the lip, without any nod to anatomy, aesthetics or even science,' he explains. 'The aim was merely to pump the stuff in. This went on for a couple of years until around 2008, but the look was turned on its head with the ascendency of Angelina Jolie; suddenly, everyone was creating huge bottom lips, which may have worked for Jolie herself, but not so much for other people.' Fast forward to today, and the reign of supersized, extravagantly misshapen lips seems to be

ongoing. Dr Prager continues: 'These fads don't last forever, unlike the potential damage caused by them — damage, incidentally, that we spend a lot of time undoing at The Prager Clinic in order to restore and maintain the health of the lips.'

Dr Prager's newly announced procedure, The London Lip, is the antidote to this history full of disappointment. It epitomises this doctor's meticulous artistry, refined skill, resistance to fads and hard-earned knowledge gleaned over decades of work. Central to the success of The London Lip are two simple factors: the product and the delivery. 'One reason I can do lips a lot better today than I could, say, 10 years ago is that I use soft and trusted products,' he says. 'I no longer need to trial something that's new on the market, a product that promises to be the next best thing. The other difference is that I am able to inject lips with a cannula, which allows me to surpass anything that has been done previously.' This means he can inject trusted products into the actual lip body, rather than just the outline, and also correct fine lines above the lip.

To further achieve effective anti-ageing effects, Dr Prager advocates balancing lip enhancement by restoring youthful vitality to other areas of the face too – not simply plumping the lips and hoping for the best. 'The lips, along with the surrounding area of the mouth and face, all lose collagen, yet I end up correcting the damage caused by other practitioners largely because they appear to have no understanding of that,' he says. 'One of the issues with lip procedures is that they are commonly performed by cosmetic experts

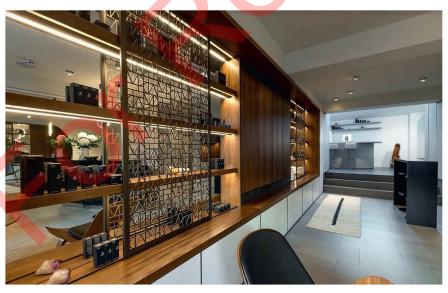
'With The London Lip,
I'm restoring the whole area,
not just the lip, which is
why the results look
proportionate and make
total medical sense'

rather than medical doctors, like myself, and it eventually shows. When I treat the perioral area that includes lips, skin and chin, I'm restoring the whole area, not just the lip, which is why the results look proportionate and make total medical sense.'

The result of the treatment is naturally beautiful, balanced lips restored to their former glory, which look youthful and utterly believable. The London Lip is available only at The Prager Clinic, where the superlative skill of a medical doctor ensures patient satisfaction, without a fad in sight.

Dr Michael Prager

Considered among Europe's most experienced practitioners of cosmetic medicine, Dr Prager is internationally acclaimed for his skill. Fashions come and go, but Dr Prager has remained true to his belief that less is more – he was among the first to champion the natural look. He continues to favour restoration over alteration, with his clinic's subtle yet rejuvenated results reflecting this beautifully.







RAPT WITH A BEAU

Calling all grooms! It's time to sharpen up appearances. From a trim physique to glowing skin and healthy hair, here are the no-fuss treatments and cosmetics to covet

By ASTRID JOSS

EYE SEE

Iron out tired skin around the eyes with the SmartXide Punto CO2 laser. This provokes the skin into stimulating collagen and elastin to tauten the epidermis and smooth out creases. Start six months before the big day with three sessions, eight weeks apart. Downtime depends on the intensity; as Taktouk Clinic's Dr Hall says, the higher the setting, 'the better the results; but with a longer recovery'. From £995 (drwassimtaktouk.com)

NO SWEAT

If you want to avoid wet patches on your big day – who wouldn't? – there's a highly effective solution in toxin. It works by blocking the signals from the nerves that stimulate sweat glands. Dr Mullan will give 10 to 15 skin-deep jabs on the affected areas, and the pin-pricks cause almost no pain. From £400 (medicetics.com)

HAIR RAISING

Yearning for a youthful-looking hairline? A surgical hair transplant may be the answer. During a sixhour procedure, Dr Somji extracts healthy follicles from donor sites to be embedded into sparse areas. (The addition of stem cells supercharges the results.) But do plan ahead — consultations should be booked 12 months before the big day. From £7,000 (drmedispa.com)

SVELTE AND FELT

Check into Dr Prager's clinic for a Venus Legacy treatment to shift a few pounds. This non-surgical lipolysis heats fat cells until they melt away. It's comfortable (with no downtime); have no fewer than six sessions. Face from £120, body from £250 (drmichaelprager.com)

MALE ORDER: LOOK SHARP!

CUT TO THE CHASE

For an up-to-the-minute look – be it a reshaped beard or a dapper version of the 'skin fade' style – the expertly trained barbers at Adam Grooming Atelier use traditional Turkish methods to achieve razorsharp results. *harrods.com*

ABOUT FACE

Lift, sculpt, tighten and brighten: take a facial workout at Claridge's sumptuous spa with the FaceGym team. Combining muscle manipulation with EMS technology, the Signature Sculpt will deliver new vigour to your visage in the space of a lunch break. *claridges.com*

NAIL IT

For the most pristine male manipedi in town, there has only ever been Geo F Trumper. It's modern grooming with old-school style, all performed to a tee. *trumpers.com*

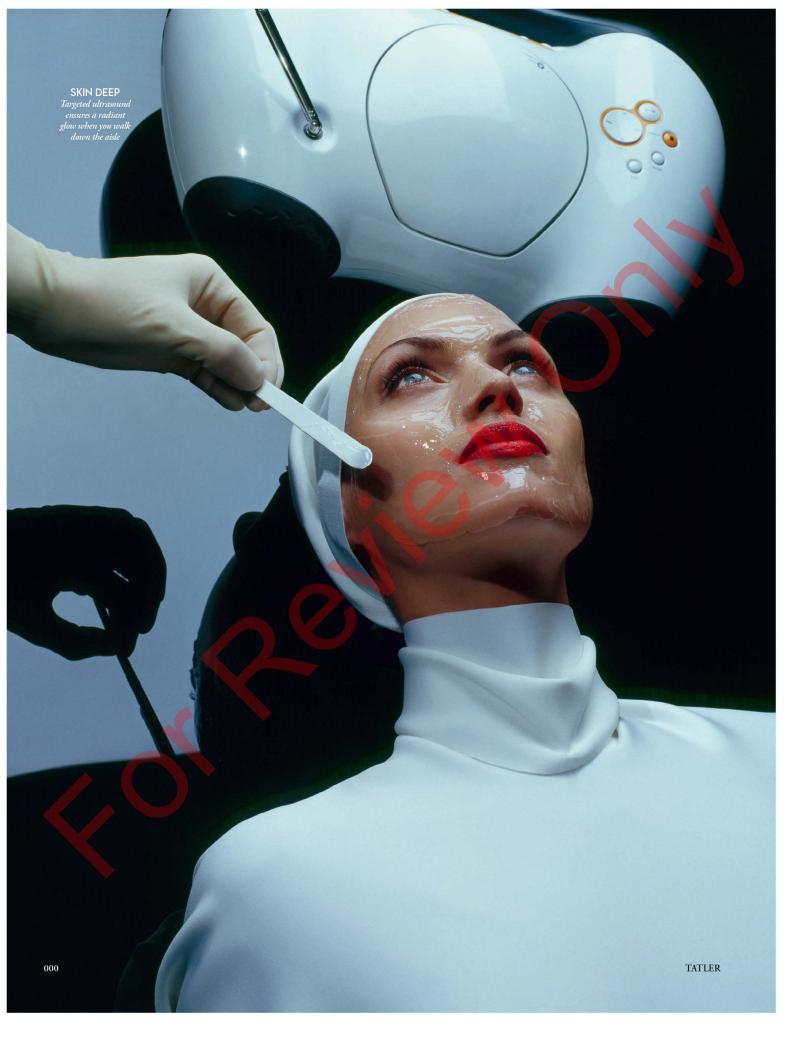
FINISHING TOUCH

It's all in the detail. From perfecting your lashes and building the dream brow to going hairless – wherever you like – The Refinery will help you cultivate your overall look. *the-refinery.com*

WORK IT OUT

Whether you're after a toned body or full-on weight loss, the ineffably hip gym ID Fitness takes a three-pronged approach of calisthenics, strength training and Pilates. With personal training focused on both enjoyment and results, members can be found sweating it out at the Harrods location – though ID Fitness has now upped its game by opening an even slicker branch in Mayfair. *trainwithid.co.uk*







TREAT YOURSELF

From last-minute tweaks to months of scheduling, here's how clinicians can create ultra-luxe looks for when you plan to tie the knot

By FRANCESCA OGIERMANN-WHITE

THE CHURCH IS BOOKED,

the invitations calligraphed and in the post, the groom is almost on the wagon and now the bride's final dress-fitting is looming. But what about the all-important aesthetic preparations? Whether it's all happening in a whirl or the big day has been planned for years, there are stealthy ways to refine, restore and rejuvenate every possible body part in time for that walk up the aisle...

FOR GLEAMING SKIN

Three months to go: BTL Exion Face with Dr Galyna Selezneva at Dr Rita Rakus Clinic

The lowdown All eyes have been on BTL Aesthetics, awaiting the launch of its Exion platform; certainly, in the hands of Selezneva, this device does not disappoint. There are four applicators but it's the Exion Face that is set to have happy couples lining up fast. This uses a patented technology called monopolar radiofrequency, plus targeted ultrasound, to initiate the body's natural production of hyaluronic acid. That in turn boosts hydration, plumping the skin and upping the glow. Book in for offthe-charts luminosity. And best of all, there's not a needle in sight.

Pain factor Nothing to speak of; in fact, some people find the treatment deeply relaxing.

Social downtime Minimal, bar the tiniest pink flush which soon fades. **Results** A complete game-changer for a dry complexion. One month later, the skin is firmer and Englishrose dewy. drritarakusclinic.co.uk

Two weeks to go: Aquagold Plus facial with Dr Surbhi Virmani at Cosderm UK

The lowdown Need to perk up tired-looking skin? Cue Virmani's Aquagold Plus facial, which brightens and tightens skin in record time. First, she preps you with a gentle fruit-acid peel, to deep-clean pores and do away with roughness. Next comes the Aquagold: a little vial of bespoke serums, its lid is studded with some tiny 24-carat-gold needles which inject the solution deep in the dermis. In no time you'll be ensconced beneath the Dermalux's LED lamp, which will swiftly calm inflammation, accelerate collagen production and induce deep relaxation. Exactly what's required, with only a fortnight until the big day.

Pain factor The peel tingles, but is quickly neutralised; the Aquagold induces a feeling of pressure but isn't uncomfortable per se.

Social downtime Expect a little warmth and redness, which soon subsides and can easily be covered with post-procedure make-up (or man-tan). Not that you'll want to... **Results** A few hours later, the skin is bright and gleaming, while fine lines and pigmentation will appear softer. Happy days! *cosderm.co.uk*

FOR A HEAD-TURNING NECK

Six months to go: 3D Thread Lift with Dr Jean-Louis Sebagh

The lowdown So you want a profile that's more refined, or indeed chiselled? Go straight to Sebagh's spectacular Grade I-listed clinic, full of peerless art and antiquities,

where the former surgeon is kept busy by sculpting the necks of the capital's elite. And that's because his 3D Thread Lift can't be bettered. Sebagh laces polydioxanone threads through two planes: in the superficial musculo-aponeurotic system, to lift the muscle; the other superficially, to address the skin. (And when jowls start to give way, the doctor might also pass threads beneath the chin in a hammock formation.) In a final flourish, he injects collagen stimulators diluted with platelet-rich fibrin, a concentration of growth factors collected from the patient's blood - to banish any lingering crêpiness.

Pain factor It's not for the faint-hearted – but the procedure takes a little less than an hour, and you're ready to go home a few hours later. Painkillers will take the edge off.

Social downtime Bruising and swelling could both occur, so clear your diary for the next week to 10 days and prepare to lay low.

Results Rather sensational, it has to be said. Any jowls are as good as gone, the silhouette is far sleeker – and it should stay that way for up to two years. *drsebagh.com*

Three months to go: Neck Perfect with Dr Wassim Taktouk

The lowdown Whether weight loss has taken its toll or a neglected neck has always been your nemesis, Taktouk can fix it with his hi-tech Neck Perfect treatment. It enlists help from several sources: bio-stimulators such as Sculptra; a Cool Peel laser to gently resurface crêpey skin; plus some Ameela Rejuvenation

polynucleotides. For those worried about so-called necklace lines, he'll boost hyaluronic acid with BTL Exion; if the neck appears stringy, Taktouk will inject micro-droplets of toxin to soften overactive muscles. Brilliantly bespoke – and not just for brides...

Pain factor Thanks to an application of numbing cream, the laser is fairly unnoticeable; however, the injectables can sting a tad. The radiofrequency, meanwhile, feels like a hot-stone massage.

Social downtime On the day of treatment, an oversized polo-neck will be your best friend, concealing possible redness without chafing or rubbing. Taktouk will also give a wealth of advice on post-procedure care, as well as mandating SPF.

Results Within a month, the skin will look rejuvenated. But three months later is when the neck feels tauter and the skin is noticeably thicker. *drwassimtaktouk.com*

FOR A SLEEK SILHOUETTE

Six months to go: InfraBaldan with Professor Bob Khanna

The lowdown The InfraBaldan is the newest way to sculpt a leaner-looking physique: it's safe, natural and gradual. The sci-fi contraption combines infrared light therapy with exercise – think an easy-going spin class – to target fat cells and to stimulate cellular regeneration, while firing up the metabolism and ensuring effective weight loss for longer. Ideal for that walk from the altar to the door...

Pain factor The best thing about ▷

beauty

 the InfraBaldan is that, in order
 to achieve results, you just need to
 lay back, relax... and pedal.

Social downtime None – though you might look hot and flushed straight afterwards, so schedule your diary accordingly.

Results Expect to commit: you're looking at two or three 40-minute sessions a week, until your desired weight loss is achieved. (As always, good nutrition will fast-track the outcome.) *drbk.co.uk*

Three months to go: Erchonia Emerald Laser with Dr Nima at Remedi

The lowdown Both a Reiki practitioner and the co-founder of clinic Remedi, Dr Nima is far from your average aesthetic doctor; and the Emerald Laser is not your average body-contouring device. Instead of killing unwanted fat cells to achieve the desired silhouette, its beams perforate them, so that they actually release their fatty-acid content into the lymphatic system, whence the body can dispose of them naturally. A session takes less than an hour, and one to two are recommended weekly for a few months. Follow that regime and 'slimmeddown wedding' will take on a whole new meaning.

Pain factor Zero. Some people even fall asleep on the treatment table thanks to the laser's hypnotic, green, swirling light...

Social downtime Again, zero. No redness, no soreness, no nothing. Results Impressive, with patients seeing an average loss of six inches from the waist after just 10 sessions. Up the ante at the gym to seal the deal. remedilondon.com

FOR THICKER HAIR

One year to go: Nanoprocedure with Amy Meshkati at Meshkati Hair Centre

The lowdown This non-surgical treatment promises personalised upgrades to thinning or sparse hair. First, Meshkati conducts a thorough investigation, collecting samples to find a precise match in her 'bank'. Then, the procedure itself: 20 in-clinic hours spread over two or three consecutive days,

during which she fixes multiple new strands to the scalp's stronger anchor hairs. (The follicles are held in place by flat, microscopic discs, which Meshkati calls 'nanopoints'.) One by one, your locks build in density until the desired effect and fullness is achieved.

Pain factor Relief is administered, which thankfully renders the procedure rather breezy.

Social downtime None at all. If anything, hair only looks better as the sessions continue.

Results A dramatic improvement in hair health and thickness – and utterly undetectable. Trialling different styles can now commence... *meshkati.co.uk*

Six months to go: HydraFacial Keravive at Elenique Skin Clinic

The lowdown Young lovers who want to stay looking that way are hotfooting it to Fulham for the Keravive. Simply put, it's a facial for your scalp: designed to deepclean and soothe, remove product build-up and even stimulate hair growth. But there's no kneading involved. Instead, various nozzles (attached to a quietly humming device) are methodically run across the scalp, which dispense a mixture of supercharged serums, growth factors and proteins that cleanse, exfoliate and hydrate. You'll be dispatched with an at-home spritz to be used daily for 30 days.

Pain factor The sensation of the nozzles being traced across your head is rather relaxing.

Social downtime None. Still, your hair can appear slightly damp on completion, so hop into a cab to go home (or better yet, book a blowdry afterwards).

Results Immediately, the scalp feels so fresh, clean and revitalised; and three months later, even the hair starts to feel more lustrous. *eleniqueaesthetics.co.uk*

FOR A CAMERA-READY SMILE

18 months to go: Invisalign at Zental Knightsbridge

The lowdown The capital's most dentally discerning wanna-weds are found at Zental on Walton

Street, where some serious smilestraightening takes place. Sleek and serene, the clinic is renowned for its Invisalign procedure, which can transform crooked teeth with clear, near-invisible retainers. The treatment plans are mapped out meticulously; check-ups are conscientiously done; and in what feels like no time at all, the teeth start to shift. Thrilling!

Pain factor Invisalign isn't sore, more like occasionally uncomfortable. But grin and bear it for the final wow factor.

Social downtime None. Feel free to carry on with your usual day-to-day activities.

Results Every treatment is totally bespoke, but within a year – if not less – teeth tend to look straighter. Now, why not add in some whitening for a smile that'll dazzle all the way up the aisle? zental.uk

Three months to go: Composite Micro Layering with Dr Brandon Nejati at Nejati Clinic

The lowdown The dental surgeon Nejati has finessed a flawless way of restoring worn-down gnashers to pearly glory. Wildly in demand – and rightfully so – his Composite Micro Layering works by building up the exterior of the teeth, layer by layer, with Nejati 'painting on' a porcelain-infused nano-composite that he colour-matches expertly for an undetectable finish. Light years away from veneering, it's an elegant way to refine one's smile ahead of those all-important wedding photographs...

Pain factor Not so uncomfortable that you'll need anaesthetic. Just escape into the calming aesthetic of Nejati's serene clinic.

Social downtime Similar to that following any normal trip to the dentist.

Results Straight away, the teeth look brighter, healthier and shapelier. Dental affairs in order, don't leave without stopping in to see acupuncturist Sarah Bradden, also in residence, who is renowned for her mind- and body-calming therapies. Her technique will leave even the most jittery of lovebirds feeling zen. nejaticlinic.com □

GUARANTEE A WEDDING-DAY GLOW



ALASTIN

Designed for pre- and post-procedure care, Alastin is the hottest range to land from the US – and derms are going wild over it. The clever TriHex technology (a blend of active peptides and rejuvenating ingredients) promotes fresh collagen and elastin, effectively enhancing the results of your laser, microneedling or injectable treatment. alastin.com



DR PRAGER

Beauchamp Place's most in-demand doctor has an equally covetable skincare line, and nothing brightens a bride's complexion quite like it. The Urban Protect Day Oil contains vitamin C and gold flakes to make skin gleam – but for a megawatt glow, the Acid Peel Mask with AHAs can't be bettered. skincare.drmichaelprager.com



SARAH CHAPMAN CLINICAL

Sarah Chapman's new range has been worth the wait (four years!). The cult facialist (Victoria Beckham's go-to) has created three supercharged formulas, powered by an intelligent delivery system which gets active ingredients (like vitamin A, vitamin C and EGFs) exactly where they're needed – for maximum results minus the surface irritation. sarahchapman.com

trove

remote, coral-ringed Tetiaroa Atoll in French Polynesia was once a sacred place for Tahitian royalty Heart's desire

Looking for The One? That otherworldly honeymoon of dreams? Embark by sea plane, cruise liner or private jet and revel in a romantic arrival, says Delilah Khomo





Here comes the pride

From tracking cinematic lions to sleeping under a dazzling sky in a treehouse lodge, newlyweds Davina Chelsea and husband George venture off on the safari of dreams

EVER SINCE MY CHILDHOOD, I HAD

dreamed about heading off on a bumpy Land Cruiser adventure to relish the deafening silence of the bush, the sundowners and star-gazing and – not least – the close-up encounters with prowling predators and herds of elephants. It was the trip I always came back to in my imagination. It was 'The One'.

If I'm honest, *The Lion King* was responsible for planting this seed many years ago. (I mean, who doesn't want to see Simba and Nala at play in real life?) But I'd put off going to Africa until the right time presented itself. I wanted to save it for something special, and I had the perfect moment in mind. Cue, my honeymoon...

Even the preparation for this trip was exhilarating: working out when to go and, indeed, which safari camp to stay at. And oh, the glamour: the Penelope Chilvers safari boots and my mother's vintage khakis, not to mention the Leica camera I'd bought in anticipation. So, off my husband, George, and I went, in the middle of the dry season – the best time to see South

Africa's wildlife, when the lack of rainfall forces the animals to tolerate human observation in their search for water.

From Johannesburg, it was only a propellerplane hop to Lebombo Lodge at Singita Kruger National Park, where we were welcomed by Bernard, our charming and expert guide. And after drinking fresh coconut water with him on the airstrip, we took a short drive to what has rightly been billed as the world's most romantic safari escape, courtesy of what must be its most luxurious safari company.

Singita was founded in 1993 by the visionary hotelier-conservationist Luke Bailes, who had a plan to reinvent the safari experience by complementing it with wonderful food, wine and design. It certainly worked: the group has since hosted a selection of royals and celebrities. But equally important, Bailes transformed the former hunting-ground of his grandfather into a glossy game reserve – now widely known as Sabi Sand – and declared a 100-year mission to protect the landscape for generations to come.

this led to Singita being granted its concession at Kruger, where you can now go on game drives with expert trackers or venture out on foot on a guided walking safari and quietly explore the natural habitats of fauna roaming free.

It's a place of magic; and arriving at Lebombo's sleek glass and wooden pavilion, you can see and feel it. There's nothing dated or retro here. Inside, creating tranquillity through the use of exquisite raw materials, designer Boyd Ferguson has seamlessly incorporated a chic blend of grey tones, ecru linens and carved wooden accents into far-stretching views from the property. Outside, an ice-blue infinity pool sits in front of the restaurant, where guests enjoy freshly made juices while sparrow-like 'nedickies' sip from the calm ripples of cool water that spill over its edge.

Luke's son Jo has been making his mark as Singita's new CEO, so you can now celebrate South Africa's thriving arts scene in the group's dedicated gallery spaces. But most significantly, at Kruger he is creating a spa experience – part of a new, truly holistic, group-wide wellness philosophy called Wholeness, which will no doubt amplify the energy of this incredibly spiritual place. I can testify that the Ndzi Lorhe







Africa body ritual, a truly lavish affair of exfoliation followed by a soothing herbal wrap and full-body massage, is a genuinely out-of-body experience. The real showstopper, however, was yet to be revealed.

Nothing prepared us for the 13 breathtaking cabins dotted along the hillside, each with expansive glass doors and a terrace boasting incredible prospects of the Limpopo River. Ours, which we nicknamed 'the treehouse', was furthest along the hill, and in it the elegant themes of the lodge had been carried through.

Facing those panoramic views were canopied beds made with crisp linen sheets. There were sumptuous sofas draped with cashmere blankets, and coffee tables stacked with beautiful African art books. And the bathroom was just as amazing, with a freestanding bath, ceramic pots containing natural bath syrup and salts, and an indoor-outdoor shower (that was particularly popular with baboons if you forgot to lock the door). At night, the lodge staff filled the cabins with a sea of tealights and set up outdoor beds, so you could lie back and admire the dazzling starscape to the rhythm of the river rushing in the background, and prepare for the dawn.

Waking up at 5am has never been easier: the excitement of going on a drive is unlike any other. After walking down to the main lodge, we met our guide Bernard and tracker Howard, who offered us herbal tea, juices, hot croissants and sandwiches filled with smoked cheese and chutney. Then we climbed into our safari truck, supplied with heated seats and hooded fleece robes to combat the chill before the sun rose, and began what would become our daily routine. An almighty chorus of birdsong filled the sky, accompanied by the crunching sound

of the elephants stripping bark from trees to feed to their young. And as the light began to manifest, so did sightings of the Big Five: lion, leopard, elephant, buffalo and rhino. I'll never forget standing above the Limpopo, with crocodiles and hippos meandering through its waters, while a large herd of elephants roamed the rust-coloured Lebombo Mountains in the distance. It really was like a scene from *The Lion King*.

Yes, I'm well aware that Disney's masterpiece was based on Kenya. But gazing at the volcanic terrain of the Kruger National Park, I felt I was in that film, watching lions of all ages slink through red kopjes exactly like Pride Rock. For me, the highlight was to track the prides as they explored the riverine forests, sometimes brushing our vehicle, or darting through cacti in pursuit of their kills. The languid grace of the lionesses as they flopped across the luscious grasslands with their cubs was cinematic gold.

Dinner on our last night was sensational - I never imagined ostrich would taste so good but then, all the senses are heightened here. Something seems to happen to your perspective on safari: not just an adjustment to your vision caused by the epic landscapes, but a gift of profound wonder at the natural world. As we returned to the airstrip, set for the bright lights of Cape Town, George and I felt so sad. Leaving the cocooning Lebombo Lodge made for a painful goodbye; but the life-enhancing drives and the sense of peace were what we missed most. It's a comfort to know that - thanks to Singita's meticulous and unparalleled conservation efforts - whenever we return, we should find this patch of paradise just as we left it. \square Elegant Resorts (elegantresorts.co.uk) offers seven nights from £14,369, full board, including park fees, conservation levies, flights and transfers.



Follow ancient thermae traditions in the marble tepidarium at Six Senses Rome

The Royal Crescent Hotel & Spa, Bath, UK

This is Regency grandeur at its finest, on the most perfect honeystone-hued crescent in Bath. Nowhere else in the world evokes such Austen-style romance – the authoress herself lived for a time at No 1 Royal Crescent – and the master suites are havens of Georgian elegance. Today, while the decor is a contemporary take on 18th-century splendour, it still incorporates some original artworks and features. (The hallway stone is worn from years of traffic of fashionable society, from Regency silk dance shoes to Manolo mules.) Outside, there's a quintessentially romantic English garden, filled with rambling roses and honeysuckle; beyond it sits a spa whose glistening blue-mosaic-tiled pool comes into its own when the doors are flung open in the summer. royalcrescent.co.uk ▷



HIGH ON A PINE-COVERED HILLSIDE

on Turkey's Datça Peninsula, above a scenic cove where the Aegean meets the Mediterranean at the end of a three-mile lane dotted with almond trees, D Maris Bay awaits. Its striking views are truly a trump card, looking out across the wide swathes of five perfect powder-white beaches and the exceptionally photogenic archipelago of the Dodecanese islands.

All this raw beauty creates a sense of serene, restorative calm within this modernist retreat, a place of granite and marble interiors, airy spaces and floor-to-ceiling windows to make the most of those surroundings. Nearly 200 stylish rooms provide memorable lodgings across the hotel, while one private villa offers the ultimate seclusion with its own lush garden, private pool, on-site hammam and expertly equipped kitchen for moments of culinary inspiration.

As well as the natural splendour and sleek design of the hotel, what really sets D Maris Bay apart are its exclusive partnerships, with plenty of exciting ventures on the horizon for this year's season. Gourmands, already taken with the hotel's five upscale dining options, will delight in a collaboration with a two Michelinstarred chef. Showcasing an Aegean-inspired menu, you can expect the most memorable

What really sets
D Maris Bay
apart are its exclusive
partnerships, with
plenty of exciting
ventures for this
year's season



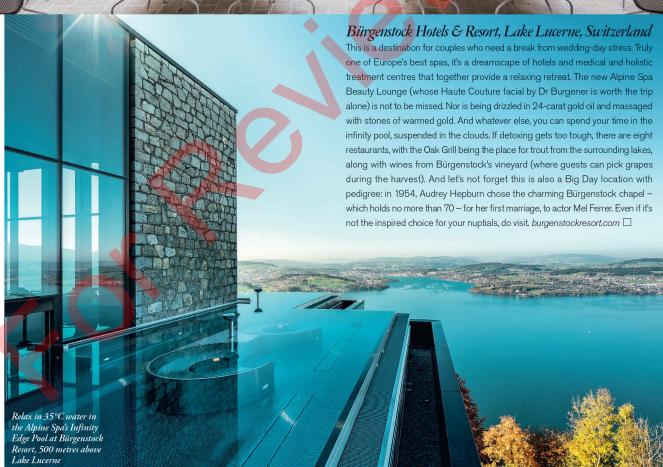
dinners at D Maris Kitchen. Meanwhile, a partnership with LUX Tennis will mean private, personalised tennis lessons are available to guests, and elevated offerings tailored for yacht fans will see plenty of opportunity to take to the waters surrounding the hotel.

All this will be carried off with the hotel's defining characteristic: warm, generous and welcoming Mediterranean hospitality. This allows experiences to be matched to each guest's unique rhythm, whether they're trying water sports, hiking around the spectacular local scenery, revelling in the relaxation afforded by the kids' club, being pampered into a blissful state in the spa, checking out the hotel's latest partnership – or some heavenly combination of all of the above.



Extravagant romantics, look no further. This Parisian institution is Marie Antoinette in hotel form. A suite is named in her honour because, as the young Dauphine, she had music lessons here. And you'll know why it has long been the benchmark of the city's five-star-palace scene as soon as you see the chandeliers, the glittering ballroom and the silken elegance of the suites; not to mention in the gilded environs of the pool, lined with 17,600 gold scales. The Crillon is also an ideal base for expeditions to peruse the French fashion houses, should you be looking for a couture fitting. And dinner at the Michelin-starred L'Écrin is a must. But while you'll be amazed by the exquisite perfection, what will really make you cry 'Mon Dieu!' in delight is eating the signature millefeuille from the Butterfly Pâtisserie in a bed that owes its sumptuousness to a Simmons mattress sheathed in cool Rivolta Carmignani linen. rosewoodhotels.com







WHEN ON A HONEYMOON - OR ANY

holiday for that matter — only the very best destinations allow you to disconnect from everyday life and focus on two things: your loved ones and restorative, uninterrupted relaxation. One place that's been thoughtfully designed for just such an escape is Sani Resort, an eco-conscious enclave of five hotels amid a beautiful nature reserve on the Kassandra Peninsula in northern Greece.

Views of the glistening Aegean Sea from the 7km of blue-flagged beaches and the majestic Mount Olympus make Sani Resort a soulstirring setting. Its five-star accommodation ensures world-class comfort, as do the five Anne Semonin spas, where the treatments guarantee relaxation and relief. Equally calming is a stroll in the Sani Marina, where traditional Greek and Michelin-starred dining awaits. Active types can head to the Rafa Nadal Tennis Centre and Bear Grylls Survival Academy, or do some mindful flow yoga on the beach.

However you spend your days, returning to a luxurious room will be a treat, especially if you checked into one of the Beachfront Residential Suites at Sani Asterias – the most exclusive in the accommodation collection. Each feels like a microcosm of contemporary Mediterranean luxury, with direct beach access, private infinity pools and sleek, airy

With beach access and private pools, each of the new Beachfront Residential Suites at Sani Asterias feels like a microcosm of Mediterranean luxury





spaces that meld indoor and outdoor elements seamlessly. Meanwhile, Sani Resort is a great choice if you have children in tow, with excellent facilities to keep them entertained while you relax, perhaps booking a private yacht cruise or a romantic dinner on the beach.

The beach is always a good choice if you have children as it's located in the buzzy centre of the resort. There you will find many activities and amenities to keep the little ones occupied, leaving you more time to relax.

Another draw is Sani Resort's thriving cultural scene, and this year will see the return of Sani Gourmet, a food festival showcasing the work of Michelin star-level chefs alongside rising culinary stars. A highlight of the year is the Sani Festival, which fills the resort with the sights and sounds of jazz, dance and musical theatre, to be enjoyed with a freshly made cocktail in hand.

For more information, please visit sani-resort.com

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Tatler throwback



17 FEBRUARY 1960

Ringing the changes

Debutantes were no longer presented at Court but, launched in The Tatler, they still 'came out' to society

In February 1960, few people could have realised the sweeping social changes the next 10 years would bring; nor what the 1960s would come to signify. But *The Tatler* had an inkling. After all, to the horror of ambitious mothers throughout the land, the presentation of debs at Court had been abolished two years earlier. Regardless, the magazine still saw 'coming out' as a natural rite of female passage between finishing-school and the altar. Hence this cover, announcing its Debutantes & Brides issue with a shot of a rather knowing deb having a ring put on it by her giant-headed delight.

So how did yesteryear's themed special compare to today's guide? Inside, the main article was dedicated to the 'season that launches a decade', starred 'a

tensome of girls coming up for a launching of their own' and previewed the private bashes they would be throwing later that year — including Sarah Rashleigh-Belcher's dance at London Zoo. Elsewhere, society hostesses gave 'their own priorities for a party that never drags'; there was a fashion shoot spoofing a comedy of manners; and a spread on the upcoming marriages of Elizabeth Jane Tilney and Aphra Farquhar-Fetherstonhaugh (pronounced, as everyone then knew, 'Farker-Fanshaw'). But it wasn't all fun, games and ancient names. The issue closed with an address to debutantes by the famously trenchant journalist Pamela Joan Vandyke-Price. 'Life,' she opined, 'is no tea party.' **IVY KELLY**



WILLIAM: ABREATH OFFRESH HEIR?

FROM WADING INTO POLITICS TO
FLYING SOLO ON THE RED CARPET, THE
PRINCE OF WALES WASTED NO TIME MAKING
HIS MARK WHEN HE STEPPED UP FOR HIS
FATHER AND WIFE THIS YEAR. BUT THIS IS
JUST THE BEGINNING FOR A FUTURE KING
DETERMINED TO DO IT HIS WAY,
EXPLAINS WESLEY KERR

hen I first met Prince William in 2009, he asked me if I could tell him how he could win the National Lottery. It was a jokey quip from someone who has since become the Prince of Wales, the holder of three dukedoms, three earldoms, two baronies and two knighthoods, and heir to the most

prestigious throne on earth. He was, of course, being relatable; I was representing the organisation that had allocated Lottery funding towards the Whitechapel Gallery and he wanted to put me at ease.

William is grand but different, royal but real. At 6ft 3in, he has the bearing and looks great in uniform after a distinguished, gallant

military career. He will be one of the tallest of Britain's kings since Edward Longshanks in the 14th century and should one day be crowned sitting above the Stone of Scone that Edward 'borrowed'. William, by contrast, has a deep affinity with Scotland and Wales, having lived in both nations and gained solace from the Scottish landscape after his mother died. He's popular in America and understands that the Crown's relationship to the Commonwealth must evolve.

The Prince of Wales has long believed that 'the Royal Family has to modernise and

develop as it goes along, and it has to stay relevant', as he once said in an interview. He seeks his own way of being relatable, of benefitting everybody, in the context of an ancient institution undergoing significant challenge and upheaval, as the head of a nation divided by hard times, conflicts abroad and social and political uncertainty.

We might recognise Shakespeare's powerful line spoken by Claudius in *Hamlet*: 'When sorrows come, they come not single spies, but in battalions.' With the triple announcement in January and February of the Princess of Wales's abdominal surgery and long convalescence, of King Charles's prostate procedure and then of his cancer diagnosis, the burden of leadership has fallen on 76-year-old Queen Camilla and, crucially, on William.

The Prince of Wales's time has come to step up; and so he has deftly done. In recent months, we have seen a fully-fledged deputy head of state putting into practice his long-held ideas, speaking out on the most contentious issue of the day and taking direct action on homelessness. Last June, he unveiled the multi-agency Homewards initiative with the huge aspiration of ending homelessness, backed with £3 million from his Foundation to spearhead action across the UK. He is consolidating Heads Together, the long-standing campaign on mental health, and fundraises for charities like London's Air Ambulance Charity. He was, of course, once a pilot for the East Anglian Air Ambulance services — a profession that had its downside: seeing people in extremis or at death's door, he found himself 'taking home people's trauma, people's sadness'. Tom Cruise was a guest at the recent London's Air Ambulance Charity fundraiser, William's first gala event after Kate's operation.

And more stardust followed when William showed that, even without his wife by his side, he could outclass any movie star at the Baftas. There's also his immense aim of helping to 'repair the planet' itself with his Earthshot Prize: five annual awards of £1 million for transformative environmental projects with worldwide application. This project has a laser focus on biodiversity, better air quality, cleaner seas, reducing waste and combating climate change. Similar aims to his father; different means to achieve the goal.

On the issue which has caused huge convulsions – the Middle East conflict – William's 20 February statement from Kensington Palace grabbed attention. He said he was 'deeply concerned about

the terrible human cost of the conflict since the Hamas terrorist attack on 7 October. Too many have been killed.' There were criticisms - along the lines of the late Queen would have never spoken out like this' or 'what right does he have to meddle in politics?' – but it was hard to disagree with his carefully calibrated words. His call for peace, the 'desperate need' for humanitarian aid, the return of the hostages. The statement was approved by His Majesty's Government, likely cleared with the King himself at Sandringham the previous weekend and also backed by

the chief rabbi of Great Britain, Sir Ephraim Mirvis. Indeed, William and Kate had immediately spoken out on the horrors of 7 October. William followed up the week after his Kensington Palace statement by visiting a synagogue and sending a 'powerful message', according to the chief rabbi, by meeting a Holocaust survivor and condemning anti-Semitism.

This is rooted in deep personal conviction following William's 2018 visit to Israel and the West Bank, says Valentine Low, the distinguished author of *Courtiers* and *The Times*'s royal correspondent of 15 years, who was on that 2018 trip. 'William was so moved by his visit to Israel and the West Bank, he found it very affecting, and he was not going to drop this issue – he was going to pay attention to it for the rest of his life,' says Low. 'He must feel that... not to say something on the most important issue in the world [at that moment] would be a bit odd if you feel so strongly about it.'

There was concern from some commentators about politicising the monarchy, but this rose above the particulars of party politics. As Prince of Wales, like his father before him, there is perhaps space to speak out sparingly on carefully chosen issues. On this occasion his views were in line with majority public opinion.

On homelessness, news came that same week that William was planning to build 24 homes for the homeless on his Duchy of Cornwall estate. 'William's impact is very personal,' says Mick Clarke, chief executive of The Passage, a charity providing emergency accommodation for London's homeless. 'Two weeks before Christmas, the prince came to our Resource Centre in Victoria for a Christmas lunch for 150 people. He was scheduled to stay for \triangleright

The Prince of Wales's time has come to step up; and so he has deftly done. In recent months, we have seen a fully-fledged deputy head of state speaking out on the most contentious issue of the day



NOBLE CAUSES

FROM ENDING HOMELESSNESS TO SAVING THE PLANET, WILLIAM IS A FUTURE KING ON A MISSION TO CHANGE THE WORLD FOR THE BETTER



□ an hour, to help serve, wash up and talk to people. He ended up staying for two and a quarter hours, during which time he went from table to table and spoke to every single person.' Clarke continues: 'William has an ability to listen, talk and to put people at ease. During the November 2020 lockdown, he came on three separate occasions to help. It gave the team a boost that he took the time; it was his way of saying: "I support you; you're doing a great job."' Seyi Obakin, chief executive of Centrepoint, one of the prince's best-known causes, adds: 'People associate his patronage with the big moments like the time he and I slept under Blackfriars Bridge. The things that stick with me are smaller in scale and the more profound for it — in quieter moments, away from the cameras, where he has volunteered his time.'

It is a different approach from the King's. As Prince of Wales, he was involved in the minutiae of dozens of issues at any one time, working into the night to follow up on emails, crafting his speeches, writing or dictating notes. Add to that much nationwide touring over 40 years (after he left active military service in 1976), fitting in multiple engagements, often being greeted formally by lord lieutenants.

This is not William's style. He has commended his

father's model, but he does things his own way. Although patronages are under review, William has up till now far fewer than either his father or his grandparents.

Charles is sympathetic to William's approach and his desire to make time with his young family sacrosanct. They are confidantes, attested by the night of Queen Elizabeth's death; they were both at Birkhall with Camilla, reviewing funeral arrangements while the rest of the grieving family were nearby at Balmoral, hosted by the Princess Royal. Charles has had almost six decades in public life and is the senior statesman of our time, with even longer in the spotlight than Joe Biden.

fter Eton and St Andrew's University, where he met Kate, William served in three branches of the military between 2006 and 2013, finishing as a seasoned and skilled helicopter rescue pilot. His later employment as an air ambulance pilot stopped in 2017, when he became a full-time working royal. At that time, not so long ago — with Harry unmarried, Andrew undisgraced, and Philip and Elizabeth still active — William shared the spotlight. Now, after the King, he's the key man.

He can look back on the success of his first big campaign initially launched with his wife and brother in 2016: Heads Together. 'We are delighted that Prince William should have become such a positive and sympathetic advocate for mental health through his Heads Together initiative and now well-established text service, Shout, among other projects,' says the longtime CEO and founder of Sane, the remarkable Marjorie Wallace CBE. 'It is not always known that

he follows in the footsteps of his father, the King, whose inspiration and vision were vital in the creation of our mental health charity Sane. As founding patron, he was instrumental in establishing our 365-days-a-year helpline and was a remarkable and selfless support to me in setting up the Prince of Wales International Centre for Sane Research.'

Indeed, says Wallace, this is where Prince William echoes the work of his father, showing the same 'understanding and compassion for people struggling through dark and difficult times of their lives and has done much to raise awareness and encourage those affected to speak out and seek help. We owe a huge debt to His Majesty and the Prince of Wales for their involvement in this

still-neglected area.'

Just as I saw all those years ago at that early solo engagement in Whitechapel, William still approaches his public duties with humour and fun. 'He defuses the formality with jocularity,' says Valentine Low, citing two public events in 2023 that he witnessed. In April last year, while on a visit to Birmingham, William randomly answered the phone in an Indian restaurant he was being shown around and took a table booking from a customer — an endearing act of

tomer – an endearing act of spontaneity. On his arrival later that day, the unsuspecting diner was surprised to be told exactly whom he had been talking to.

In October, Low reported, William 'unleashed his inner flirt as he hugged his way through a visit with Caribbean elders [in Cardiff] to mark Black History Month. As he gave one woman a hug – for longer than she expected – he joked: "I draw the line at kissing." And while posing for a group photograph, he prompted gales of laughter when he quipped: "Who is pinching my bottom?"

Low believes that when William eventually becomes king, he will be more 'radical' than his father but wonders if people will respond to 'call me William' when 'the whole point of the Royal Family is mystique and being different'. However, William has thought deeply about his current role and is prepared for whatever his future holds.

For now, there is a decision to be made on Prince George's secondary schooling. It's said that five public schools are being considered, all fee-paying. Eton is single-sex and boarding but close to home. Marlborough (Kate's alma mater) is co-ed and full boarding. And Oundle, St Edward's Oxford and Bradfield College (close to Kate's parents) are co-ed with a mix of boarding and day.

As parents, William and Kate aspire to raise their children 'as good people with the idea of service and duty to others as very important', William said in an interview with the BBC in 2016. 'Within our family unit, we are a normal family.' Which may be one reason why he is so resistant to their privacy being compromised either by the media or close family members.

The 19th-century author Walter Bagehot wrote: 'A family on the throne is an interesting idea also. It brings down the pride of sovereignty to the level of petty life... a princely marriage is the brilliant edition of a universal fact, and, as such, it rivets mankind.'

TATLER 00

William saw close up his

mother's ability to bring public focus and her own personal magnetism to any subject

or cause she focused on





SI If hereditary monarchy is to survive it must beguile us but also demonstrate its utility, that it is a force for good. William said in that 2016 interview, 'I'm going to get plenty of criticism over my lifetime,' echoing Queen Elizabeth II's famous Guildhall speech in 1992 'that criticism is good for people and institutions that are part of public life. No institution − city, monarchy, whatever − should expect to be free from the scrutiny of those who give it their loyalty and support, not to mention those who don't.'

William saw close up his mother's ability to bring public focus and her own personal magnetism to any subject or cause she focused on. He admires his father's work ethic, the way he 'really digs down', sometimes literally (I understand that gardening is giving the King solace during his cancer treatment).

But the biggest influence for William was Her late Majesty, as he said on her 90th birthday. As an Eton schoolboy, William made weekend visits to the big house on the hill, being mentored by Granny rather as she had been tutored in the Second World War by the then vice-provost of Eton, Sir Henry Marten. William said in 2016: 'In the Queen I have an extraordinary example of somebody who's done an enormous amount of good and she's probably the best role model I could have.' That said, his aim was 'finding your own path but with very good examples and guidance around you to support you'.

Queen Elizabeth II had a brilliant way of rising above the fray and usually being either a step ahead of public opinion or in tune with it. If you are at the helm of affairs in a privileged hereditary position, your duty is to serve and use your pulpit for the benefit of others. In a democracy, monarchy is accountable. The scrutiny is intense, with

an army of commentators paid for wisdom and hot air about each no-show, parsing each announcement, interpreting each image.

William takes the long view. He has 'wide horizons', says Mick Clarke. 'There are so many causes that are more palatable and easier to achieve than ending homelessness, but his commitment and drive are 100 per cent.'

The prince seeks a different way of being royal in an ancient institution that must move with the times. His task? To develop something modern in an ever-changing world. He faces all sorts of new issues — or old issues in new guises. Noises off from within the family don't help — Andrew's difficulties, or the suggestions of prejudice from Montecito a couple of years ago (now seemingly withdrawn), which prompted William's most vehement soundbite: 'We're very much not a racist family.'

William is maybe a new kind of leader who can keep the monarchy relevant and resonant in the coming decades. Queen Elizabeth II is a powerful exemplar and memory, but she was of her time. William is his own man. He must overcome and think beyond 'the unforgiving minute.' Indeed, he could seek inspiration in Rudyard Kipling's poem, *If.*

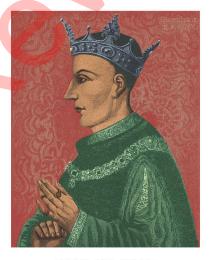
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'
If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch[...]
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

WELSH ASSEMBLY: PRINCES OF WALES PAST



THE BLACK PRINCE

Edward of Woodstock, known as the Black Prince, was Edward III's eldest son. He was also made Earl of Chester and Duke of Cornwall, making him the first English duke. In 1346, he became the hero of the Battle of Crécy, defeating King John of Bohemia during the Hundred Years' War.



KING HENRY V

During his teens, the future King Henry V first proved his mettle when fighting alongside his father at the Battle of Shrewsbury in 1403. After succeeding to the throne in 1413, he famously stepped up to defeat the French at the Battle of Agincourt in 1415, becoming a national hero.



KING HENRY VIII

Henry Tudor, Henry VII's second son, became heir apparent after his elder brother, Arthur (also a former Prince of Wales), died of the era's mysterious 'sweating sickness' at just 15. Henry would go on to marry Arthur's widow, Catherine of Aragon, in 1509. The rest is history...

THE SOLDIER PRINCE

FOLLOWING ROYAL TRADITION, WILLIAM HAS SERVED IN THE ARMY, NAVY AND AIR FORCE, LATER WORKING AS AN AIR AMBULANCE PILOT BEFORE TAKING UP FULL-TIME ROYAL DUTIES



WHETHER ON THE BATTLEFIELD OR IN A CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS, WILLIAM'S PRINCE OF WALES PREDECESSORS WERE NO STRANGERS TO STEPPING UP WHEN CALLED BY THE CROWN



KING CHARLES I

Charles was born into the House of Stuart as the second son of King James VI of Scotland. After his elder brother, Prince Henry, died of typhoid fever at 18, he became heir apparent. His time as king resulted in a bitter end: the English Civil War and his execution in 1649.



KING GEORGE IV

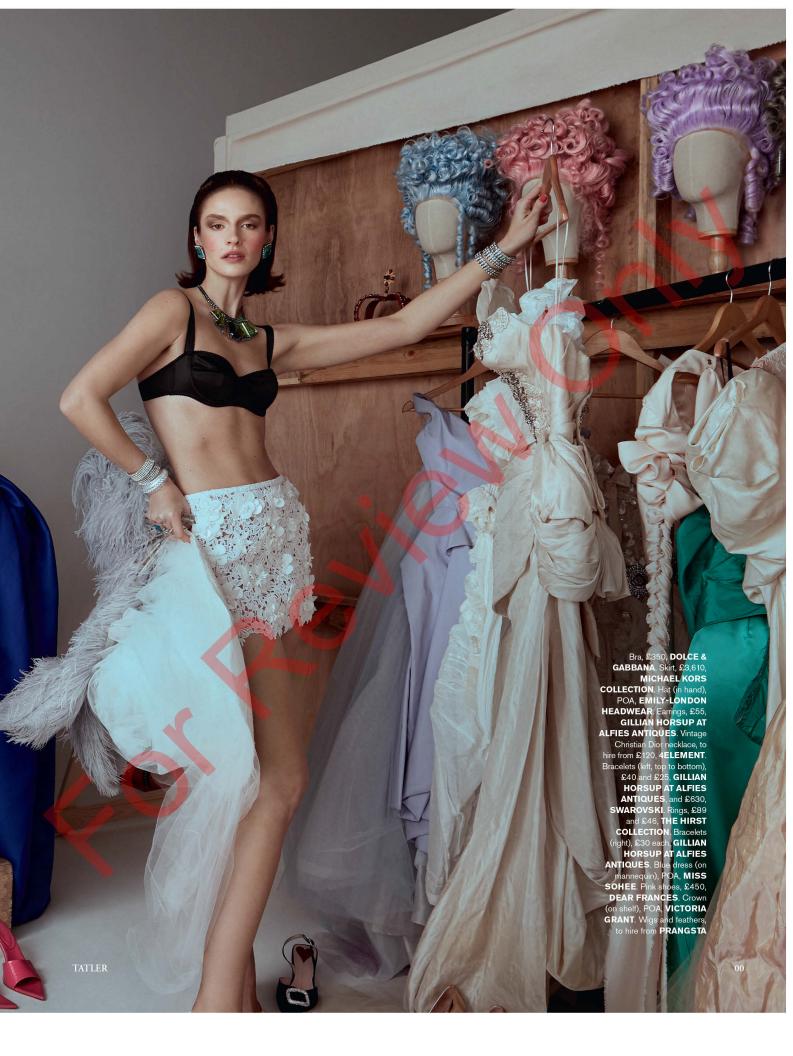
During his time as Prince of Wales, George acted as regent for his mentally ill father, King George III. He was ridiculed for his spending, but his contributions to the country included remodelling Buckingham Palace and rebuilding Windsor Castle.



KING CHARLES III

Under the 70-year-reign of Queen Elizabeth II, Charles became the longest-serving Prince of Wales – 64 years and 44 days – and the oldest person to hold the position. In 1976, he stepped up to become a memorably philanthropic prince, setting up The Prince's Trust charity.





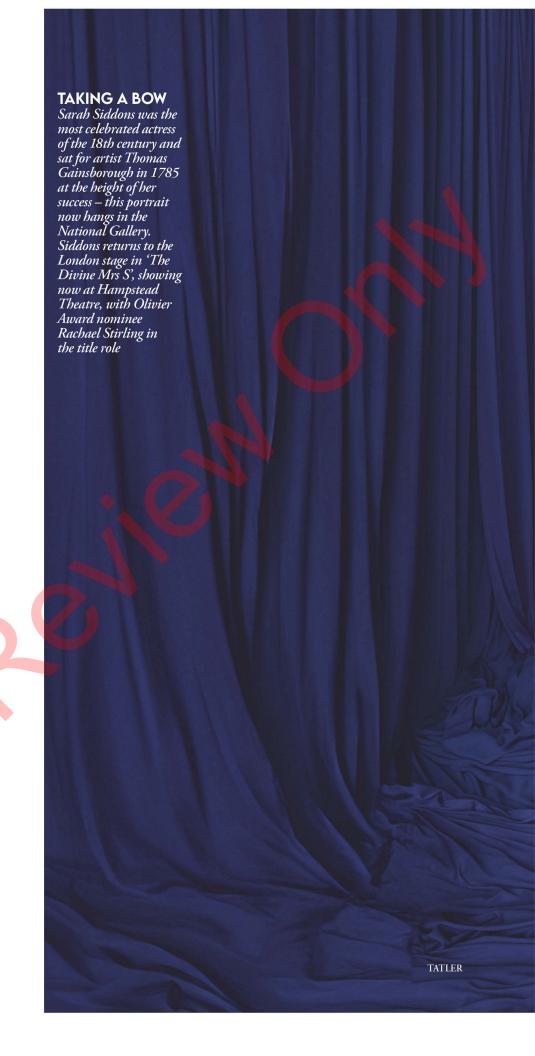






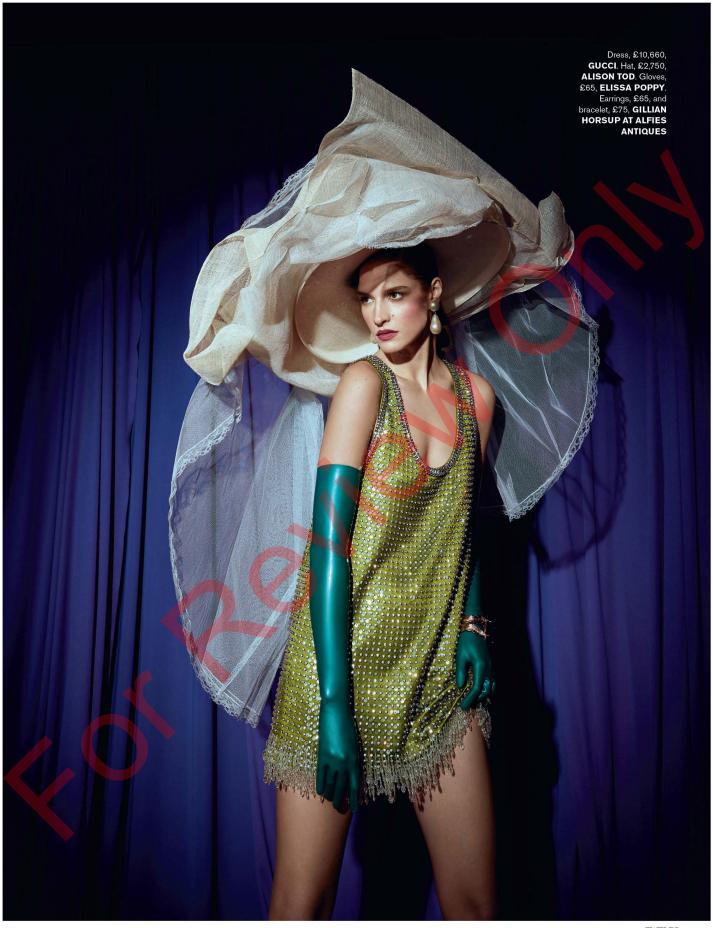


Coat, POA, RICHARD QUINN. Top, £2,100, and skirt, £4,000, DIOR. Shoes, £595, JIMMY CHOO. Earrings, POA, CHANEL HIGH JEWELLERY. Tights, stylist's own



Dress, POA, and shoes, £2,900, BALENCIAGA.
Hat, £1,025, EDWINA
IBBOTSON. Earrings, £55, GILLIAN HORSUP
AT ALFIES ANTIQUES.
Rings, from £46, THE
HIRST COLLECTION





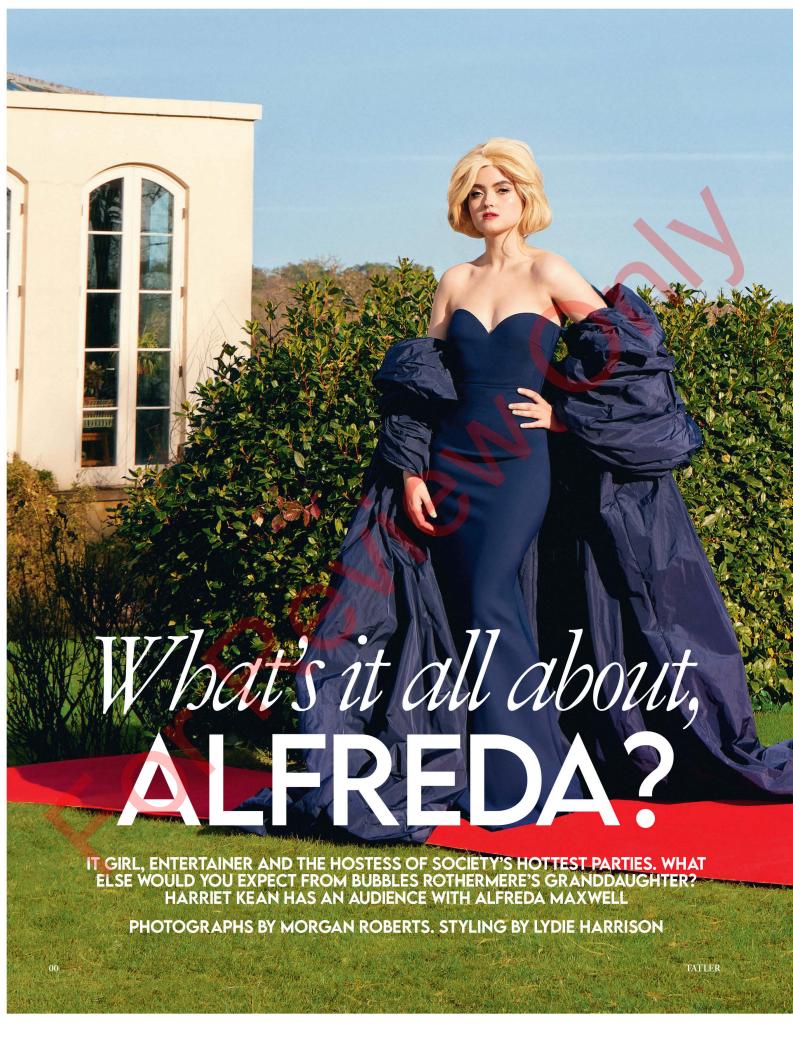




Shirt, £2,850, and blazer, £1,800, DOLCE & GABBANA. Dress, POA, NINA RICCI. Earrings, £110, THE HIRST COLLECTION. Rings, (middle finger) £59, THE HIRST COLLECTION, and £230, SWAROVSKI

For stockists, see Address
Book. Hair: Jason Goh using
Hair by Sam McKnight.
Make-up: India Rawlings.
Nails: Ami Rai at Snow
Creatives using Chanel Le
Vernis in Été Indien and La
Crème Main. Photographer's
assistants: Tristan Fennell
and Daniel Walker. Styling
assistants: Sophie Callaghan
and Hyunsoo Lee. Model:
Asia Piwka at Titanium.
Production and casting:
Nicholas Forbes Watson.
Production assistant: James
Lamb. Set design: Aaron
Vernon. Wigs: Artisan
Wigs London







n May 1986, Patricia 'Bubbles' Rothermere was profiled by *Tatler*. Bubbles – a sobriquet supposedly coined by Nigel Dempster for her love of champagne – was the estranged wife of Vere Harmsworth, 3rd Viscount Rothermere, the proprietor of the *Daily Mail*. But she was far more than that: dressed like an 18th-century *madame* in gigantic gowns with lashings of bows and taffeta, Viscountess Rothermere brought a certain quirk to English high society. Especially when cruising around Eaton Square in the back of her Bentley, champagne flute perennially in hand.

Now, 38 years later, it's her granddaughter's turn in the spotlight. Bursting onto the scene with her blonde bombshell wigs, fake nails and neon yellow gloves, Alfreda Maxwell *is* the moment. Just like Bubbles before her, she is the centre of the social world, a fabulous hostess, a beacon of old-school glamour – and a high-society showgirl. This witty, Liza Minnelli-inspired singer-songwriter performs a wild cabaret show to a bewitched audience at The House of KOKO. And the crowd? Well, even Lord Porchester has witnessed Alfreda's bejewelled lingerie.

Yet, for all the exhibitionism and flamboyance, Alfie – as she is known to friends – is a classic introverted extrovert, more comfortable behind her on-stage persona. Which is why she turns up to lunch on Portobello Road with long black mesh gloves (only removing them to eat an olive). 'I behave very differently when I'm wearing the wig,' she says, adjusting her blonde beehive. 'It's like a mask, a character. I find it difficult to do any of those things without that.'

'Flamboyant', 'absurd' and 'outrageous' is how she describes her alter ego – could she also be describing Bubbles? She ponders. 'I can see the similarities,' she says, in her low, old-cinematic, slightly droll voice. 'I love champagne. I love to party. I love performing. I want to be a star.'

And Bubbles was a star: considered a beauty in her twenties, she became an actress under the name Beverley Brooks, appearing in several films including *Find the Lady* and *Tears for Simon* (both in 1956). When Bubbles wed Vere Harmsworth in 1957 (after her divorce from a Coldstream Guard, Captain Christopher Brooks), she famously said that she didn't just marry a man, she 'married \rightarrow



an empire'. And yet she was still very much a part of the social scene, flouncing about in ruffles, rich fur coats and gargantuan diamonds. Bubbles was 'loved by society', says Alfreda. And especially by 'the gays'.

'So many old gays come up to me and say, "Your grandmother BUBBLES!" Alfreda exclaims, gesticulating theatrically. 'They have so many great stories.' Most, Alfreda believes, are gossip, like the tale that Bubbles headhunted a chauffeur by standing on the corner of Eaton Square and judging all the drivers who passed by. But one story she knows is true: 'She had a butler with her at every party, serving her her own champagne,' Alfreda says. 'Everywhere she went. Hence the name Bubbles, which she didn't like at all.'

er grandmother's lavish parties, wild behaviour and attention-seeking dresses were all part of what Alfreda describes as her 'Bubbles era', which began after Patricia's estrangement from Lord Rothermere - who was, Alfreda explains, contrastingly a 'very sweet, cosy man'. While the viscount lived mainly in Paris, Bubbles flitted between her penthouse in New York and houses in Beverly Hills (Alfreda's dream: 'I want to be a Beverly Hills housewife,' she says), Jamaica, Mustique (where her friend Princess Margaret was a neighbour), the South of France and Eaton Square. She also had a manor house in East Sussex: Stroods, where her daughter Geraldine -Alfreda's mother - now lives.

Always the hostess, Bubbles threw 'big, fat parties. Those walls have seen many things,' Alfreda says of Stroods's library, a sumptuous room lined with old leather-bound Harmsworth Encyclopedias. A box of Bella Freud 'Ginsberg is God' matches sits by the fireplace, and on a shelf is that May 1986 issue of Tatler starring Bubbles. But the

walls keep other secrets too: Stroods has become the epicentre of Alfreda's social set, where she and her clique escape London for Whispering Angel-drenched weekends with fabulous dinners, long walks, karaoke, and glamorous murder-mystery parties. Such as at Halloween last year, when Alfreda hosted a Romanov-themed murder mystery. Allegra Handelsman wore a white lace dress and a white Blair Waldorf-esque headband, Stanley Dunmore a sailor's outfit, and man-about-town Edoardo Nappi a fur ushanka. But Alfreda stole the show in a vintage Christian Dior fur shawl – 'one

of the most valuable things I own. Everyone kept saying I was a Russian Marilyn Monroe.' Written onto a piece of cardboard, the programme for the evening was laid out: to solve the murder of Alfreda Maxwell, 'mother and socialite', with arrows leading to the 'suspects', who included her cousin India Harmsworth Yeates and Viviane Lian, the Burlington Arcade-dwelling artist.

With the help of ChatGPT, Alfreda wrote the plot, which culminated in her 'live' murder - typically theatrical, typically Alfie. 'I did a whole thing,' she laughs, explaining how everyone gathered in the pitch-black dining room to witness a spectacle: when the lights were flicked on, Alfreda was lying 'dead' on the floor. A hapless victim, 'covered in [fake] blood' and clutching a piece of paper inscribed with the letter E. Who was the murderer?

There haven't been any real murders at Stroods, but the house has not been without drama. In the 1970s, it burnt down entirely.

> 'My grandmother left her hair curlers on,' explains Alfreda. 'A curtain caught fire.' Stroods was rebuilt in the exact same style, and Bubbles lived there until her death in 1992 at the age of 63. (She accidentally overdosed on sleeping pills while at her house in Nice.)

> The fact that Alfreda never met Bubbles perhaps adds to her mystique. 'I wonder if I would have seen her very much. She was definitely publicly epic, but privately...' Here she hesitates, choosing her words carefully. 'I think having a mother like that would be quite tricky. You know, someone who's always out, living very outwardly.

> 'My mother said to me the other day, "I know you heroworship my mother." And I said, "Where do you get that from?" And she said, "The wigs... You know, you do seem to be like her."

> Alfreda pauses, her amber eyes glancing downwards. 'You know,' she adds, 'my mother is just as if not more fabulous than Bubbles. It's sad that [my grandmother] was never

around to see it... or appreciate it. My mother grew up in a very strange world,' she continues. 'She wasn't a boy, [so] she was

Indeed, she must have been: it's widely reported that Bubbles was so hell-bent on delivering a male Rothermere heir - to take over the running of the Daily Mail - that she researched the methods of Dr August von Borosini to influence the gender of her unborn child. They clearly worked, because after three baby girls, Jonathan, the current Viscount Rothermere, was born.



CHAMPAGNE SOCIALITE Alfreda's grandmother Viscountess Rothermere, universally known as Bubbles, photographed for The New York Times in the library of her Fifth Avenue apartment in Manhattan, 1978

treated... differently.'

☐ It's a tale as old as time, but would her mother have wanted
to have run the Daily Mail? 'Well,' says Alfreda, 'if gender
wasn't an issue, she would have had to. That would be f******
hilarious.' She pauses for a moment, imagining. 'It would be a
very different paper.'

How so? 'She'd just be having a bit of a laugh, I think,' Alfreda says. 'She's very, very smart.' But she thinks that Jonathan has 'done an incredible job. It must be strange for him, having grown up with that.' Then, swiftly changing the subject: 'They forgot my lemonade.'

By contrast, Alfreda's childhood was far removed from the world of newspapers and high society. She grew up in America,

first in Massachusetts, as her father – Glyn Maxwell, a celebrated playwright and poet – was teaching at Amherst. Then the family moved to the Upper West Side in New York, while he taught at Columbia. 'I'm so sad that we ever left,' Alfreda sighs theatrically. 'I'd love to marry a Yank.'

Alfreda went to school at Columbia Grammar – but academia wasn't her bag. 'I was always so spaced out,' she says, referencing her ADHD. 'Most of the time I was dreaming of the stage.' She recalls how she was once caught 'practising her autograph' in a lesson. 'So ridiculous.'

'I really wanted to go to performing arts school,' she says. Like a charm school? 'Yes — a chaaarm school,' she says, feigning an American accent. Like grandmother, like granddaughter: Bubbles attended the Rank Charm School. 'I wish I had a stage mum,' says Alfreda. 'I would have really loved a momager.' But that didn't stop her from directing her own

plays at home and on holidays. 'We would go on holiday with the Fiennes, and I would make them all be in my films... That was a massive name-drop,' she laughs. 'That's hilarious.'

When she was nine, her family moved back to Stroods. Returning to England was 'a culture shock', says Alfreda, who at the time had an American accent. 'I had no idea about the Royal Family; I didn't care about the newspapers. Everything English slightly irritated me: like tea and the BBC.' She was enrolled at Cumnor House, where she felt 'ignored – it wasn't until I sang at a leavers' concert that people noticed me and I had an identity'.

Post-Cumnor, she had a spell at Worth, then for sixth form moved to Fine Arts College: a college for 'classic north London, Hampstead types' like Rocco Ritchie and Brooklyn Beckham. Alfreda describes her time there as 'a dream. It's the St Trinian's of now,' she says. 'None of us really did much work. We were on the loose, having a complete laugh with the teachers on school trips.' And her weekends were equally wild: underage drinking and 'legendary' out-of-control parties, all hosted by Alfreda. 'My house was the party house,' she says. There would be shisha pipes, neon lights and smoke machines. 'I hadn't been the popular kid [at school], so suddenly having all these friends was very exciting.'

But behind closed doors, Alfreda was busy writing songs - 'shit

demos whining about some guy I was with at boarding school', she calls them. After graduating, she did an Iggy Pop and started recording in Berlin. She then had material — an oeuvre of songs, 'pop and electronic-inspired' — which she performed back in London, namely at 'the late but great Laylow', the now-closed celeb-magnet Notting Hill members' club.

So far, so social. But this socialite's life took a rather different turn when Alfreda fell pregnant at 22. The father was a friend from Fine Arts whom she'd been dating for a year. 'It was a lovely surprise,' she says. 'But I look at 22-year-olds now and think, "[You're a] baby." They broke up just six months after Dorothea was born. 'We couldn't do the whole parenting thing together,' she says. 'But we made it work apart, with a lot of support from my mum and his family. She has a whole village.'

He has since moved on - 'he has a girlfriend, it's very serious' - but Alfreda

is single. I'd like a boyfriend,' she says. 'But there's a lot going on. What man wants to hitch up with some mad wannabe cabaret superstar, cat-owning, mother of a three-year-old?' That sounds rather fabulous, I say. 'For a gay man,' she quips.

Nevertheless, Alfreda attracts eccentric, thespian types wherever she goes. She's even earned the nickname 'The Patron of the Arts' because she is always hosting 'out-of-work actors' and former Broadway stars (such as *The Rocky Horror Show*'s Nell Campbell) in her shed in Ladbroke Grove. The rest of her house is equally theatrical: her bedroom, which she calls 'The Theatre', features



three bright-purple auditorium seats and is lined with pictures of Marilyn Monroe and Andy Warhol ('My mum used to work at The Factory,' says Alfreda, casually). She also has a walk-in wardrobe packed full of fancy dress, latex and velvet. Her favourite piece? Possibly her Tom Ford shoes that spell out 'Pussy Power' in pink sequins.

While she admits that Bubbles perhaps inspires the wigs and the flamboyance, she cites the late Isabella Blow – her godmother – as a style icon. 'I remember her standing over me with a massive hat,' she says. 'Perhaps I get my style from her, then Marilyn Monroe, Liza Minnelli... Old Hollywood – I just love that world.'

t's that world that she has introduced to modern society with her witty, self-written cabaret shows at The House of KOKO. 'I'm very inspired by Tin Pan Alley, the old American songwriters and publishers,' she says. Every other month, in KOKO's jazz bar, Ellen's, she and Claudia Rosier (who plays a nanny-cum-burlesque dancer) curate a range of racy acts. But the highlight is when Alfreda performs 'Guest Room', a catchy, Kate Nash-y tune she penned with her co-writer, George Petrie. The witty lyrics recount a time she had to stay in the 'shitty little guest room' at the house of her then-boyfriend's parents.

'Guest Room' has not only been heard in The House of KOKO, but also in the mustard velvet booths of Chiltern Firehouse. Her clique were singing the lyrics loudly one evening and Alfreda's 'teenage dream' overheard: it was Katy Perry. 'She was *loving* it,' Alfreda says. 'She was like, "What is this? Like, a hit in the UK that I don't know about?" I performed "Guest Room" to her, then we were all singing it. Then we all started singing show tunes.'

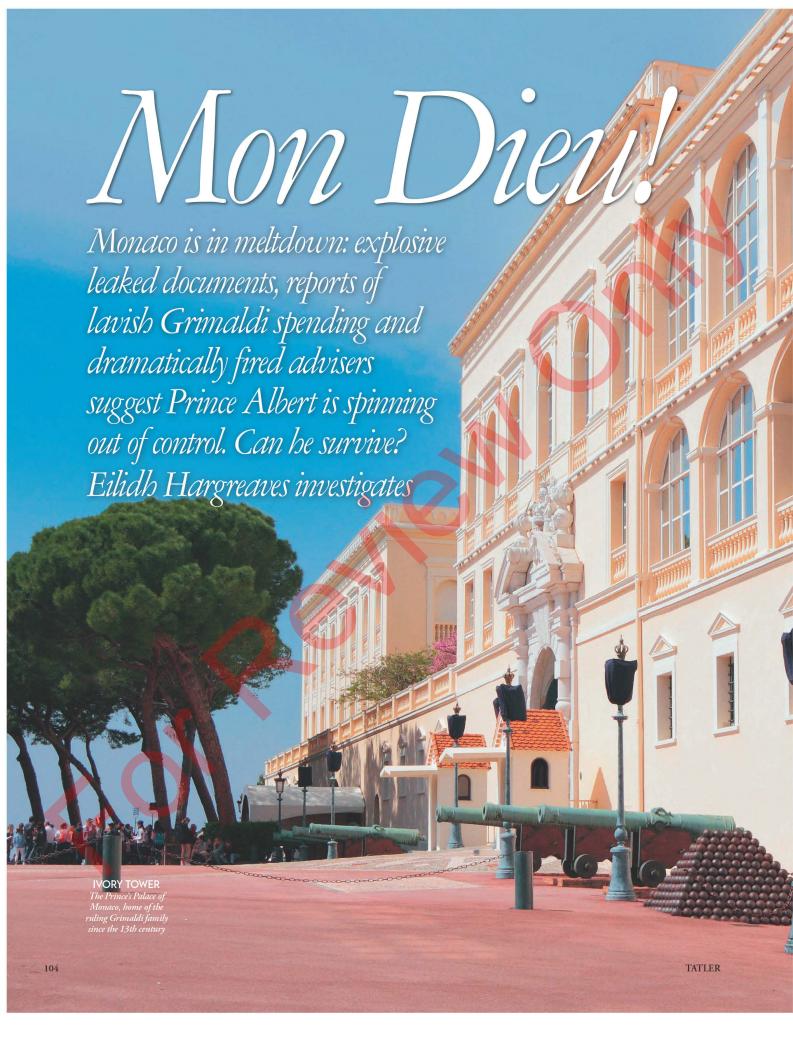
Soon 'Guest Room' will come to the masses: it's being released as a single in May ahead of Alfreda's debut EP, due out in July, entitled *Mother's Makeup* and inspired by 'expectations of women as lovers' and the fear of 'becoming one's own mother'. It's not, however, about her own experience of motherhood, which changed Alfreda profoundly. 'I wasn't really a person before Dorothea,' she says, suddenly moved. 'I was a bit of a shell. I was running around, chasing a dream. I was taking for granted the things that I had and I was unhappy. But after having her, I just came to life. My whole life slotted in. I wouldn't change a thing.'

Although Alfreda concedes that she is like Bubbles 'aesthetically and personality-wise' – the champagne, the parties, the performing – she's also resolute that she is different in many ways. 'Often I don't drink at all. A lot of it is like a performance sometimes,' she says. 'And I wouldn't ever put that above my responsibility to Dorothea. And my love for family. I'm sure she did love her family. But Dorothea always comes first.'

T've finally figured out who Alfreda is,' she adds, levelling a look with her big, almond-shaped eyes. 'It's something else, taking from all of these people that I grew up in awe of: like Issie [Blow] – and slightly like Bubbles – and people I worshipped on screen. Hopefully, I've mastered the balance between taking myself seriously and also not taking myself seriously at all,' she muses, adjusting a glove, one of her false nails poking through like a cat's claw. 'Not enough people have a sense of humour about themselves.'

Well, this cabaret-singing, wig-wearing and Katy Perrytwinning blonde bombshell certainly does. An It girl is born. □







v t

nce upon a time, courtiers were desperately seeking Prince Albert II of Monaco. There was an important meeting, but where was the sovereign? Nowhere to be found in the Prince's Palace – not in his office, which he took over from Princess Grace and turned into an unnavigable mess of paper stacks,

photographs and dirty cups. Not in such Monégasque hotspots as Place du Casino, where Ferraris and Porsches growl past, where

billionaires fill the golden salons of the 150-year-old Casino de Monte-Carlo, and where the doors of Pierre and Andrea Casiraghi's building La Petite Afrique spew out super-rich tenants and Dolce & Gabbana customers. Not even at Hôtel de Paris, where Safras and Ofers and Reubens splurge. Nowhere. As it turned out, he had escaped on his private jet to Strasbourg and was eating frogs' legs with some friends. His staff found out only when one courtier was sent a WhatsApp picture of Albert dangling a grenouille from between his fingers.

Apparently, the prince makes a habit of disappearing. He is more interested in sports and saving the oceans than in affairs of state. 'If he ever has an opportunity to escape, he does,' says a former palace insider, a sigh in his voice and sorrow in his heart. No wonder Albert's father, Prince Rainier III, seriously con-

sidered ejecting him from the line of succession in favour of his elder sister, Princess Caroline – a tale recently recounted in French newspaper *Le Monde* but denied as 'a fable' by the prince.

This Houdini habit is perhaps regrettable: with the prince said to be in a permanent state of 'avoidance', Monaco is in meltdown. Leaked documents paint a shambolic picture: Albert has been accused of losing control over Princess Charlene's spending, he has had to explain that he bankrolls any overspend from family money, and he is at the centre of a row with his former advisers, which many feel only serves to increase the power of the property monarch of Monaco, Patrice Pastor. A salient scandal: can Albert survive it?

This chapter of chaos began in 2021, when Les Dossiers du Rocher (The Rock Files, referring to the Rock of Monaco) were

published, whistleblowing alleged corruption at the heart of the palace on an anonymous website that leaked both real and fake emails between Albert's four closest advisers, nicknamed the 'G4'.

The website suggested the advisers had personally profited from business conducted on behalf of the palace. This group includes: Claude Palmero, the Grimaldi family's asset manager of 22 years, a loyal and clinical chartered accountant whose father, André, had been Prince Rainier's finance man; Thierry Lacoste, Albert's childhood friend and lawyer, whose mother, Nadia, had been the palace's

communications gatekeeper and a friend of Princess Grace; Didier Linotte, the president of the Monégasque Supreme Court; and Laurent Anselmi, Albert's chief of staff. They all strongly deny the accusations. In fact, the term 'G4' was invented by the website. The four were never one unit that acted and thought together. The idea stemmed from what a former palace adviser describes as the previously existing G6 - a group which met quarterly between 2010 and 2015 and included the four aforementioned advisers, as well as former prime minister Michel Roger and lawyer Jean-François Renucci, who died in a car crash soon after the Dossiers were released.

Initially, it seemed the group had nothing to worry about. That first drop was a bit of a dud. Albert stuck by his guys, condemned the Dossiers, and the anonymous publisher eventually stopped

in spring 2022. Then, in June last year, Albert made a sudden U-turn, clearing out the 'G4', citing a 'cleaning of his hands'. Lacoste and Palmero were out; Linotte pushed into retirement; and Anselmi given the duff position of Président de l'Académie de la Mer de Monaco – he has a wonderful office view, no staff and no budget, I am told. No one knows what changed Albert's mind, but *Le Monde* revealed in its investigation that Albert had attended secret meetings with the billionaire property developer Pastor (known in Monaco as 'the king') one month earlier – meetings that they claim may be central to this tale. Was this, they asked, what had sealed the disgraced advisers' fates? (Intriguingly, however, a new *Bloomberg* investigation adds that Emmanuel Macron apparently pressed Albert to sort things out around the



MONACO ON THE ROCKS?

Prince Albert came to the throne in 2005, promising to revamp Monaco's reputation as a sunny place for shady people. But the drama hasn't stopped...



Albert weds Charlene Wittstock - rumours of an unhappy marriage begin instantly



same time. So perhaps that was what galvanised Albert – though when approached for comment, Albert declined to respond.)

The whole affair made one person in particular look very, very bad: Palmero. Over two decades, he had become one of Albert's closest advisers; but now he was being forcibly ejected from his second-floor office (a spartanly serious room with a huge desk, pencils, three armchairs, and a two-metre-high safe that courtiers joked was as big as a wardrobe), led to his Renault Clio by one Colonel Luc Fringant, and handed a sterile letter of severance from the prince. His daily routine - two thirds of his time spent working for the Grimaldis and the rest overseeing his role as partner at a PWC - was shattered. At 66, the keeper of the secrets was out, humiliated and further enraged when, in July, Albert gave an interview to Le Figaro accusing him of corruption, and the royal family filed a criminal complaint accusing him of mishandling their accounts. It was a dagger to the heart of his most loyal subject. Palmero later filed multiple lawsuits against the prince, including for false allegations, defamation and unfair dismissal.

The thing is, says a local journalist, 'Albert is a weak person. I'm not saying he's a bad person; I think his heart is in the right place, but he avoids confrontation. He had a lot of that when his father was alive; so when he does [engage in] confrontation, it's like a bloodbath. There were other, more diplomatic ways of handling the ousting of Palmero – without all the drama.'

The gossip mill was in full flow. Still, the accountant vehemently denies all accusations of corruption, maintains everything can be explained, and says he was always acting under the prince's instructions. His unfair dismissal claim against the prince continues to work its way through the courts.

Meanwhile, Gérard Davet and Fabrice Lhomme, two investigative reporters from *Le Monde*, managed to obtain copies of five of Palmero's account books: two decades' worth of Grimaldi financial records. Their four-part report, published in January, was explosive. The employment of illegal immigrants? Palmero unable to curb Charlene's spending? Albert instructing Palmero to secrete money offshore and buy assets under his (Palmero's) name? Secret payments to Albert's ex-girlfriends? Imagine the fury in the palace.

Albert's lawyer Jean-Michel Darrois responded: 'At the palace, Mr Palmero was solely responsible for human resources and recruitment. The prince does not intervene in such matters. An audit has been launched and, obviously, if it turns out that there have been any irregularities, they will be put to an end immediately.' Regarding any overspend, he added: 'For all members of the princely family, from the moment Claude Palmero informed [the prince] of such

THE FAMOUS FOUR

These powerful senior figures in Prince Albert's court were abruptly ousted last year. Meet the mysterious G4...



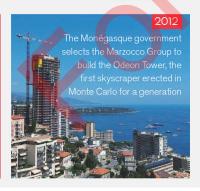
DIDIER LINOTTE
The former president of Monaco's
Supreme Court was pushed into
retirement last summer

CLAUDE PALMERO
The Monégasque royal family's
principal accountant and asset
manager was sacked after 22 years



LAURENT ANSELMI Anselmi had been chief of staff to the prince for just a year and half when he was dismissed last summer

THIERRY LACOSTE Lacoste had long been Prince Albert's personal lawyer, and his late mother was a confidante of Princess Grace



2014

The Caroli Group is awarded the contract to build a new waterside development, the Esplanade des Pêcheurs. But it faces so many roadblocks that the group's head, Antonio Caroli, says he was forced to give up before a single brick had been laid

2017

Alleged defects in the Marzocco Group's
Jardins d'Apolline
project spark
contested claims of
a 'health emergency',
and the contract for its rebuilding is

and the contract for its rebuilding is awarded to billionaire Patrice Pastor. In 2018, the Marzocco Group's lawyer Dupond Moretti complains that the state acted before any expert investigation was complete

MAY 2021

Princess Charlene comes down with a throat infection while in South Africa. After multiple surgeries and several stays in hospital, she finally returns to Monaco and her family in November







Les Dossiers du Rocher, an anonymous site featuring real and fake leaked emails between the 'G4', goes live, and is emailed to journalists and power players. Albert supports his four advisers

MAY 2023

Albert allegedly has a secret meeting with Patrice Pastor (below). Some have asked if this swayed his next move...





Albert's business manager of 22 years, Claude Palmero (*above*), is sacked and ejected from the palace. He later lifted the lid on the royals' lavish spending

JULY 2023

In an interview with Le Figaro, Albert completely dismisses Palmero. It infuriates his former adviser, who later files lawsuits against the prince claiming false allegations and defamation. Palmero also files a claim against Albert for unfair dismissal, which he has taken to the European Court of Human Rights

Interestingly, the Monégasque mood was little changed. Of the illegal workers? 'Everybody employs illegal labour,' says the local journalist. 'Beausoleil is a suburb of poor people, many of whom work just for cash in Monaco. So it didn't surprise anyone that Charlene might have done the same.' As for the obscene spending? 'So what? They have the money. There's no scandal about that.'

M

eanwhile, I shot off a request to an email address I found for Palmero. He came back to me: 'Unfortunately I am not giving interviews.' Perseverance. Eventually, he agreed to answer a limited number of questions. 'We had a relationship of trust,' he says of Albert. 'My role revolved around three

main activities: I managed the assets of the prince and his family, those of the Crown, and I was responsible for instigating, launching and sometimes supervising strategic projects of general interest for Monaco. My exchanges and conversations in person with the prince were simple and direct. We often took stock of ongoing projects, and efficiency as well as confidentiality were important to both of us.' So what went wrong? 'I can't explain his strange U-turn last year. In the prince's interview with *Le Figaro*, the comments made about me were offensive and defamatory. Positioning my departure in the context of a "hand-washing" operation is intellectual and moral fraud.'

Clearly, at the heart of Monaco's consequential power struggle, there is a standoff between Albert and his former advisers. And there is one person in particular who many people believe benefits from this. Someone who has long been at loggerheads with Palmero: Patrice Pastor, the 51-year-old Monégasque property magnate, who for years has been called 'the king' by his entourage and, more recently, 'the octopus' by the press. He's a workaholic with a bullish, Trumpian confidence, who employs a nighttime secretary and blasts off emails to his associates late at night. Pastor gets around Monaco on his scooter and drinks beer in nondescript cafés, despite his extreme wealth, and he has sued the state multiple times in relation to building contracts awarded to his competitors.

For many years, the Pastor family had a near-monopoly on the property development market. After Albert became Prince of Monaco (in 2005), the palace and its advisers began to try to broaden the market to include other players, including the Caroli and the Marzocco groups. Through extensive legal and PR campaigns, he has diminished both of these competitors. After lengthy

disputes over the Odeon Tower and the Jardins d'Apolline projects, Claudio Marzocco is no longer involved in public building contracts in Monaco. And Antonio Caroli has experienced so many roadblocks in his Esplanade des Pêcheurs project, he says he's been forced to give up: for this, he has publicly blamed Pastor.

It is easy to see why it is he who Claude Palmero and other former advisers believe to be behind Les Dossiers du Rocher. The former palace insider suggests that Palmero especially was leading the fight against Pastor's dominance in the market – that Palmero was therefore Pastor's arch-enemy.

Tatler has not seen any evidence to link Pastor to the Dossiers and he himself has fiercely denied being behind the leaks. He told *Le Monde*: 'I'm not a nice guy. I'm free, independent and I have money, so... Everything in the Dossiers du Rocher is true, and everyone knows it! The truth is that I irritate them.' In the middle of these grinding axes, there is a fudging Prince Albert.

On a grossly wet February day, I arrive in Paris to meet Davet and Lhomme at Le Zimmer, the Châtelet café and former hangout of Zola and Proust — their choice. It is fitting. The Woodward and Bernstein of France take their seats in front of me, dimly illuminated by the glow from the red lampshades. They are conversational, amiable, clear; possessing a low-key freneticism that indicates a life on the hunt. This investigative duo is the real deal: the shiver in Sarkozy's spine, possibly even the reason Hollande didn't get a second term. A patron squirrels over to say 'bonjour' — she recognises them from the television.

The partners have been investigating Monaco for more than 20 years, exposing scandals about the ultra-wealthy. They were even summoned to Monégasque court in December 2003. 'We were convicted of public defamation against Alexey Fedorychev and his company, the sponsor of AS Monaco]; and it strengthened our desire to investigate Monaco,' says Davet. 'It didn't intimidate us,' adds Lhomme. 'It had the opposite effect. Since then, we've been fully on Monaco.' For them, the Grimaldis are the ultimate subjects. Monaco, which the family has ruled for more than seven centuries, remains one of the last European monarchies where the monarch – an unelected hereditary – has executive power over the government. 'There is a lot of money, which equals a lot of temptation,' says Davet. 'There are people who abuse their function. There are people who abuse the prince, who benefit from his weakness. He can't do it himself; he depends on people.'

Having investigated Les Dossiers du Rocher in 2021, they say one of the things that became clear to them is that there was a war bubbling in Monaco's property development market, and ▷



DECEMBER 2023

Tatler's features director flies to New York to meet Alexandre Grimaldi, Prince Albert's eldest son with former air hostess Nicole Coste, for his first solo interview – a world exclusive





 <i trying to hold the ring was Albert − a seemingly nervous, floundering prince with too many personal problems, including two love children and a complicated marriage.
 </p>

'He was surrounded by four people who were his loyal right-hand men and advised him to make sure that the real-estate market was more evenly distributed in Monaco. There were billions at stake,' says Lhomme. But Patrice Pastor — the great-grandson of stone-mason Jean-Baptiste Pastor, who built Monaco's towers with Prince Rainier after the Second World War — was the main player and was naturally in no mood to lose business, say allies of Palmero. Rows broke out over a few huge building contracts awarded to his rivals, the Caroli Group and the Marzocco Group. He began to use litigation to challenge his rivals and even the state.

'A year later [from their original investigation] we learn that Prince Albert had changed his mind: he no longer supports the 'G4' [those denying the Dossiers' accusations of corruption], and he got rid of them in a very violent manner. A month before, he met Pastor in secret,' claims Davet. So, he surmises: 'Prince Albert has changed his mind on probably very strong advice from Pastor.'

Davet and Lhomme soon learnt that copies had been made of Palmero's five accounting books by Monégasque authorities, before

they were – incredibly – handed back. 'Palmero said, "I don't want them published, because there are very secret, very intimate things inside," says Lhomme.

Obviously that made them hellbent on accessing the photocopies. 'It was very complicated: Monaco is very small, when you're a jour-

nalist you're spotted right away, there are surveillance cameras everywhere, everyone is paranoid. We felt like we weren't in a democratic country.' Eventually, they won out: a source ('who works in... let's say, "justice") met them at a secret location and they left Monaco with the scoop of the year.

It took them three full days to comb through, entry by entry. First, they couldn't believe there were so many annotations from Palmero. 'We can see over 20 years the evolution of the relationship between Palmero and Albert. At the beginning, Palmero was an adviser. As the years pass, Palmero becomes more and more important. We almost get the impression that he is the principality's boss. It's a very interesting, very human relationship, and it seems it happened because Albert isn't really interested in finance, administration, business management.' As time went on, Palmero's notes showed more influence, more alarm at what he was being asked to do, and more resistance to it.

Especially, as *Le Monde* revealed, to Charlene's 'dangerous' spending: around €1 million for her office renovation; €900,000 for her brother Sean Wittstock's house; more than €600,000 on the twins' births and baptisms; €15 million expenditure in total since she married the prince (as allegedly recorded in 2019). 'It's crazy! I have no control over the princess's spending,' Palmero is said to have written, noting also that she employed eight staff members – some of whom had expired passports – and paid a private chef €300 a day, cash-in-hand. Again, Albert's lawyer felt compelled to respond and insisted that any overspend was covered by the family's private assets, not state funds – and that Albert did not get involved in HR matters, but they would regularise any issues they found.

almero's annotations allowed an intimate glimpse into the family dynamic. 'We could see that Princess Caroline is not friends with Charlene,' says Davet. 'Charlene has a crazy desire to spend money and Prince Albert says yes to everything. Charlene is very lonely in the palace; so her best friend is possibly the prince's money.' The only person who dares say no is... Palmero. As Davet and Lhomme reported: 'She wanted a new catamaran and he said no. Albert uses his money to buy a kind of family peace around him.'

It became clear that Palmero was not just an accountant: according to *Le Monde*, he was also in charge of hidden budgets, sensitive dossiers and special 'missions', and lent his name to several properties, assets, businesses and funds bought or opened on the prince's behalf – and at, says Palmero, his request. Notably, this time, according to *Libération*, there was an account named AG at BNP, which oversaw bank transfers to his love children, Alexandre and Jazmin Grace Grimaldi. *Le Monde* also revealed that Palmero 'bought' a lavish Parisian apartment intended to house the prince's bodyguards, and an apartment occupied by Charlotte Casiraghi, Albert's niece. Albert claimed that, at the time, he had no idea these purchases were

being made in Palmero's name. He told *Le Monde* that, upon a recently commissioned audit, he discovered 'Mr Palmero had put all the assets of the princely family in his name. The princely family no longer owned its assets!'

Palmero later tells me that his work was carried out with the

prince's permission: 'I sometimes had to lend my name to be of service to the prince and his family, who were worried about discretion, confidentiality and security on certain matters. This was done on several occasions at their request and with their agreement beforehand. To claim otherwise would be misleading. As I was performing my service to the prince, I had no problem doing it. I obviously did not gain any personal enrichment from it.'

Everyone I speak to says Prince Albert is too nice, too flimsy, to be powerful. Why? 'His father was very authoritative; his mother [Grace Kelly] was a star,' says Lhomme. 'He found himself having neither of these qualities but with huge media power, and it completely inhibited him. He has a stutter in French. Face to face, when we interviewed him, he's not comfortable, he's not sure of himself. It is moving in a way. He is suffering.'

They celebrated their scoop by getting stuck straight into another investigation – international this time. Top secret. They have to go – and so do I, because I have a meeting with the former palace insider, who has invited me to a secret location to brief me. 'It's a very serious situation,' they say. 'People don't have to like Claude Palmero. But he is someone deeply honest and he really loves his country. He is proud of Monaco, but he believes that Monaco should shine for good reasons. And if Monaco wants to be as attractive as it claims to be, it has to be as perfect as possible, fighting against money laundering, fighting against corruption. Promoting financial transparency. Fighting against big monopolies. And this is what he has been doing. This vision was the prince's vision at the beginning.'

This is plainly true. In his early years as prince, Albert admitted that Monaco was in need of cleaning up; that under his father, the

'Charlene has a crazy desire to spend money and Albert says yes to everything'

saying that Monaco is a 'sunny place for shady people' rang true. In his accession speech – written with his former chief of staff Jean-Luc Allavena and Thierry Lacoste – he cried, '*Pas plus!* I will fight with all my strength for Monaco to be beyond reproach', and pledged to guide the principality with 'morality, honesty, and ethics'.

With the help of Palmero, they successfully managed to get Monaco off the OECD's 'Grey List' of non-cooperative tax authorities in 2009 – a huge coup that demonstrated Albert's clean-up efforts in real terms. A former ambassador who used to visit the principality regularly in this era confirms: 'Back in my day, they were doing their best to get their act sorted. And certainly the occasional policeman that I talked to was impressed by how they were cooperating.' Albert was a natural at deftly handling international relations. The ambassador goes on: 'He invited all the ambassadors who were accredited to Monaco to the great wedding, where they built a multistorey pavilion and Bernard Arnault provided Château d'Yquem for the dessert wine. It was pretty extraordinary.'

That accession speech is now a source of pain for some Monégasques as they reflect on the damage the Dossiers with their allegations of corruption have done to their reputation and to the progress Monaco has made. 'These things are very different today and this is a major problem for Monaco,' says Palmero. (Indeed, separate from this story of the Dossiers, the Monégasque government is awaiting the verdict from two reports from watchdogs on its financial transparency and regulation.)

I am told some members of the G4 believe they can prove Pastor was behind Les Dossiers du Rocher; that it was created to push Palmero, Lacoste, Anselmi and Linotte out. But that proof isn't public. There is nothing known which suggests Pastor is behind the Dossiers. And he strongly denies he had anything to do with them. He told *Le Monde* in May 2022: 'Everyone is aware of the crux of the matter: the methods of a small group [the G4] that sets up business by taking advantage of the prince. And because I am the best in Monaco, I'm in the way. But it makes no sense that I be the one behind Les Dossiers du Rocher – I don't care about these people.'

On one hand, the wave is crashing at the palace doors. But most Monégasques are still doe-eyed for Albert: I hear that Baroness Marianne Brandstetter, the *grande dame* widow of billionaire casino magnate James Crosby, lives in a suite at the Fairmont Hotel and can say 'Prince Albert is the most wonderful man in the world' in three languages. Hannah Heerema (wife of Eric, the Dutch oil infrastructure heir) once boasted to me that her friend Albert had proclaimed aboard their yacht *Herculina* that their English sparkling wine, Nyetimber, was better than champagne. Of course he did. In Britain, we might recognise his 'yes' complex as being just 'too honourable'. But with the palace in turmoil, it's time for Albert to say 'pas plus!'

Perhaps he will, though he has some big decisions to make. 'He told me that he is feeling very badly,' says a friend who believes Albert still can get a grip on the situation — and is steeling himself to do so. 'I think it's going to take some time, but I'm confident.' We'll see.

But perhaps most unexpected of all is the emergence of Claude Palmero as a real-life Count of Monte Cristo. The low-key, unglamorous background figure who never eats out, holidays in Albania and drives an old Clio despite his multi-millionaire status is being tipped by French celebrity magazine *VSD*'s 'Top or Flop' column as the new man of the moment; he's the fresh protagonist of *Bloomberg*, *Le Monde* and now *Tatler*. All illustrated by his headshot: a stiff smile, grey suit and round glasses. Only in Monaco. \square





Royal painter, PRISONER – SPY?

DID A TRAITOR REALLY PAINT THE QUEEN MOTHER?
PHILIP DE LÁSZLÓ WAS THE ARTIST WHO CAME OUT OF
NOWHERE TO PROVIDE THE ANSWER TO ETERNAL BEAUTY.
WHAT WAS HIS SECRET, ASKS LUCI GOSLING

No. 828, May 9, 1917] THE TATLER

IN AID OF THE SICK AND WOUNDED HORSES

A Beautiful Portrait of a Ducal Worker in the Cause of Our
Dumb Heroes.



THE DUCHESS OF PORTLAND

The Duckess of Portland is lending her house, 3, Grosvenor Square, to-day (May 9) as a badge depth for the R.S.P.C.A day for the henefit of horses sick and wounded in the same. Her Orace will personally sail R.S.P.C.A days in front of the house, and will be aided by some other ladies. Before her marriage, which took place in 1889, the Duckess of Portland was Miss Yorke Dullas York, and is the only daughter of Mr. Thomas Yorke Dullas Yorke of Wampargat, Louth

De László's portrait of the Duchess of Portland in The Tatler, 9 May 1917

n June 1923, *The Tatler* paid a visit to The French Gallery on Pall Mall to view an exhibition of portraits by the painter Philip de László. For a publication whose main currency was pictures of famous people, portrait shows were all part of the social round, but de László's line-up of gold-standard sitters was enough to impress even a world-weary *Tatler* journalist.

It was, they gasped breathlessly, 'a pictorial Debrett or Almanach de Gotha, for you will find none here but the most illustrious. I counted one king, two princesses, a couple of dukes, three duchesses, two marquesses, four marchionesses (one Italian), three earls, two countesses, one viscount, three barons, four baronesses and various daughters and sons (and their wives), besides great statesmen and ambassadors, and Mussolini.'

It is less a question of who de László painted, and more who he didn't – he produced a staggering volume of portraits. The de László Archive Trust, which has curated the exhibition Philip de László (1869-1937): Master of Elegance, showing this spring at Gainsborough's House in Suffolk, has catalogued almost 5,000 works, with more drawings still to add. Presidents and prime ministers, dukes and duchesses, popes and politicians, actresses, writers, intellectuals and countless members of the royal houses

THATLER

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PRINCESS ALICE, COUNTESS OF ATHLONE

One of the many outstanding portraits by the renowned artist, whose exhibition at Knoedler's Gallery in Band Street comes to an ed all too soon on July 22. Phillip Laszlo de Lombos, who was emobled in 1912 by the last Emperor Frant Jusef of Austria. needs no advertisement as one of the greatest portrait painters of the day. His fame is world wide and his works is known in every imprortant capital in the evilized allole. He was elected Persident of the Royal Society of British Artists in 1939

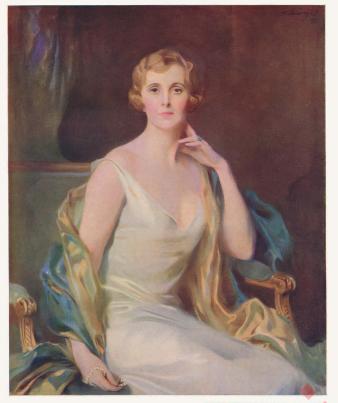
Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, painted in 1932

of Europe all sat for him, some of them several times over. It was quite an achievement for a seamstress's son from Hungary.

Born Fülöp Laub in Pest on 30 April 1869, he left school aged nine and in 1884 took up an apprenticeship at the studio of a prominent society photographer, not only earning him enough to support his mother and siblings (his father, a tailor, had absconded) but also impressing upon him at a formative age the correct way to behave around important clients. He squeezed in art classes at weekends and evenings, and in 1886 won a state scholarship to attend the Hungarian Royal Drawing School. From there, aged only 16, he entered the National Academy of Arts, and in the early 1890s studied at both the Royal Bavarian Academy of Arts in Munich and the prestigious Académie Julian in Paris.

By the mid-1890s, de László (who Hungarianised his surname in 1891) began to receive commissions for portraits, most significantly a request to paint the Bulgarian royal family. In 1899, he painted Emperor Franz Josef of Austria and the following year General Sir George White, at the request of Queen Victoria, although the queen herself was one notable royal subject who eluded de László's brush (the other being the Russian tsar and his family). He did, however, travel to Potsdam in 1900 to paint Victoria's grandson, the German emperor, and his family. His

June 28, 1933 "Thetch



THE PERFECT ENGLISH BLONDE.

Countess Howe (née Mary Curzon) painted in 1931 COUNTES HOWE'S Monde beauty is always regarded as the perfect English type of loveliness. She is the will of Ear Howe, and was Miss Mary Curson. She is one of the ber known figures in Londen society and its specially interested in music and the chama. This picture is by Philip A, de Lassió M.Y.C., whose loan exhibition of pertratta at Knoedler's (Sallaries) in aid of the Artisti's General Benevolent Institution, operación in aid of the Artisti's General Benevolent Institution, operación

ROM THE PORTRAIT BY PHILIP A. DE LÁSZLÓ, M.V.O.

portrait of Pope Leo XIII won him a Grand Gold Medal at the Paris International Exhibition. In the same year, he married Lucy Guinness and became a bona-fide member of the European aristocracy; but it was no easy ride.

De László and Lucy first met at a ball Munich in 1892. At the time, he spoke no English and Guinness no Hungarian, so the pair at first conducted their courtship in a patchwork of German and French. Lucy's parents, who belonged to the banking branch of the wealthy Guinness brewing dynasty, were suspicious of this strange Hungarian artist, who was, according to her mother, 'a most fascinating, but dangerous man'. It would be eight long years before they were finally permitted to marry; by which time de László had more than proved his suitability, having become successful enough to build a fine studio villa near City Park in Budapest. Theirs was a happy union, and fruitful, too, with five sons born between 1901 and 1912: Henry, Stephen, Patrick, Paul and John. Charming portraits of the boys, all with the pale Guinness eyes and red hair of their mother, form part of the exhibition at Gainsborough's House.

He and Lucy had moved to Vienna in 1903, but after the enthusiastic reception of his first London exhibition in 1907, they relocated to England, where clients were of the highest rank. The King and Queen had visited the show and commissioned



THE COMTESSE DE CASTELLANE
From the portrait by P. A. DE LASZLO.

The Comtesse de Castellane, the Argentinian-born wife of French aristocrat Georges de Castellane, painted in 1931

portraits, first of their second daughter, Princess Victoria, and then of themselves. It was the supreme calling card and rubber stamped de László's already formidable reputation. High-ranking patrons, notably Sir Ernest Cassel, Lord Selborne and the Duke of Portland, were also instrumental in brokering introductions. In 1912, *The Tatler* reported that de László was among a 'most judiciously "mixed" shooting party at Welbeck Abbey, the Nottinghamshire seat of the Duke and Duchess of Portland. Fellow guests included the Duchess of Teck, Miss Ivy Gordon-Lennox and Count Mensdorff – there are de László portraits of all three.

The press took to describing him as the 'Hungarian Sargent', a label that might have weighed heavily on a lesser man, but de László accepted the sobriquet with ease. An unapologetic traditionalist, his admiration of British or British-based painters such as Thomas Gainsborough, Thomas Lawrence, John Singer Sargent and even Anthony van Dyck had been part of the reason he had moved to London. Inspired to paint his own homage to the Grand Manner portraits of previous centuries, he presented his subjects with an otherworldly dignity and grace, in a style perfectly suited to hanging alongside ancestral portraits in stately homes.

One of his most celebrated works in this genre is a 1913 painting of Viscountess Castlereagh, later Marchioness of Londonderry, \triangleright

THE TATLER

A BEAUTIFUL STUDY

From a Painting by P. A. de Laszlo, M.V.O.



THE MARCHIONESS OF TITCHFIELD

A 1915 portrait of the Marchioness of Titchfield (née Ivy Gordon-Lennox), later Duchess of Portland





A 1907 portrait of Princess Louise of Battenberg in The Tatler, 20 July 1910

A Princess Among Fair Women



H.S.H. PRINCESS LOUIS OF BATTENBERG; BY LASZLO

A beautiful portrait of one of the King's first consins. The eldest daughter of the late Princess Alice, Grand
Duchess of Hesse, she married Vice-Admiral H.S.H. Prince Louis Alexander of Battenberg in 1889. This
portrait is soon on view at the Etabhilou of Fair Women as the Grafton Galletin

Importantly, he made everyone look sensational. 'Americans love his style because — well, he never paints you on your plain days, does he?' remarked *The Tatler*'s columnist, 'Eve', in 1917. Everyone in a de László portrait looks like themselves, only better. Necks are subtly elongated, gowns ripple around creamy shoulders, liquid eyes sparkle, diamonds scintillate and ropes of pearls glow, such as in the 1925 portrait of the Duchess of York, later the Queen Mother. There are the unmistakable violet-blue eyes set in a face of winsome prettiness, but de László performs magic to elevate the little duckling of a duchess into an elegant swan. Even without silk gowns and gemstones, he could conjure glamour out of his sitters. Sir Philip Sassoon, painted during the Great War in his uniform, looks like a brooding matinée idol — compelling *The*

Tatler's Eve to admit he was 'so darkly handsome, I don't wonder he's always getting his portrait painted'. When de László's painting of the novelist Elinor Glyn and her vivid red hair was exhibited in 1915, it caused a sensation. Everyone wanted to be de Lászlóed. And when, in the same year, Christie's hosted a fundraising auction for the Red Cross, with one lot offering the chance to sit for a portrait by some of the finest painters including Sargent and Augustus John, the highest bid - £1,000 (£129,000 today) was for de László.

Gregarious yet discreet, a fluent conversationalist and comfortable anywhere from royal courts to riviera villas, de László formed firm and lasting friendships with many of his clients – and it is notable that sitters often returned to repeat the experience. For the Londonderrys, he painted 16 portraits in total; the Portlands, for whom he painted 20, created a de László Room at Welbeck Abbey specifically to showcase his work. De László's pleasure in

painting was very much rooted in his fascination with people. He approached portraiture as a psychological challenge, aiming to reveal the sitter's personality in tandem with showing them at their best. 'László paints his women as a lover,' *The Tatler* declared rather brazenly after enjoying another exhibition at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1917.

is success and social standing suffered a cruel blow in the autumn of 1917, when he was interned as a 'hostile and potentially dangerous citizen'. He had lived in England for a decade, been granted British subject status three weeks after the declaration of war and had contributed conspicuously to the war effort. But in an atmosphere of feverish, xenophobic paranoia, his 'crime' of sending five letters to his family in Hungary - then enemy territory - was suspicious enough to seal his fate. Despite the interventions of several prominent friends, he was arrested on 21 September and later sent to the Camp for Interned Enemy Aliens in Islington. 'Eve' delivered the news in her usual jaunty manner, but clearly sympathised with de László's plight: 'Talk of the town, of course, was the way those crool (sic) authorities had gone and thrust into a dungeon deep, or interned, or something, that most fearfully fashionable of portrait painters, the much befriended László. Before the war, Lord knows which of us he HADN'T painted.'

Vilified by the press, including *The Times* and *Daily Mail*, both papers under the control of Lord Northcliffe (whom he had

painted), de László suffered a mental and physical breakdown and was transferred to a nursing home in Notting Hill. His case was heard by a Naturalisation Revocation hearing in June 1919, when he was exonerated.

His innate work ethic superseded his wounded pride - he quickly returned to painting and his clients returned as swiftly. By the 1920s, he was as busy as ever and mingling with the wealthy and well-connected. In 1925, his invitation to the Royal garden party confirmed his acceptance back into society; Lucy was presented at court the following year. He worked as assiduously as always until, following a heart attack, he died on 22 November 1937. For a man whose depictions of faces remain as fresh and vivid as the day they were painted, it seems entirely appropriate that his headstone bears the epitaph 'Life is so glorious'. \square Philip de László (1869-1937): Master of Elegance runs at Gainsborough's House until

23 June, gainsborough.org



The First "Date" of Royal Wedding Week



PRE-WEDDING SITTERS

The Bystander's report of Princess Marina of Greece attending a de László exhibition at the M Knoedler gallery on Bond Street on Monday, 26 November 1934. Three days later, she married Prince George, Duke of Kent