

Masseria Trapania
The Week
22 October 2016



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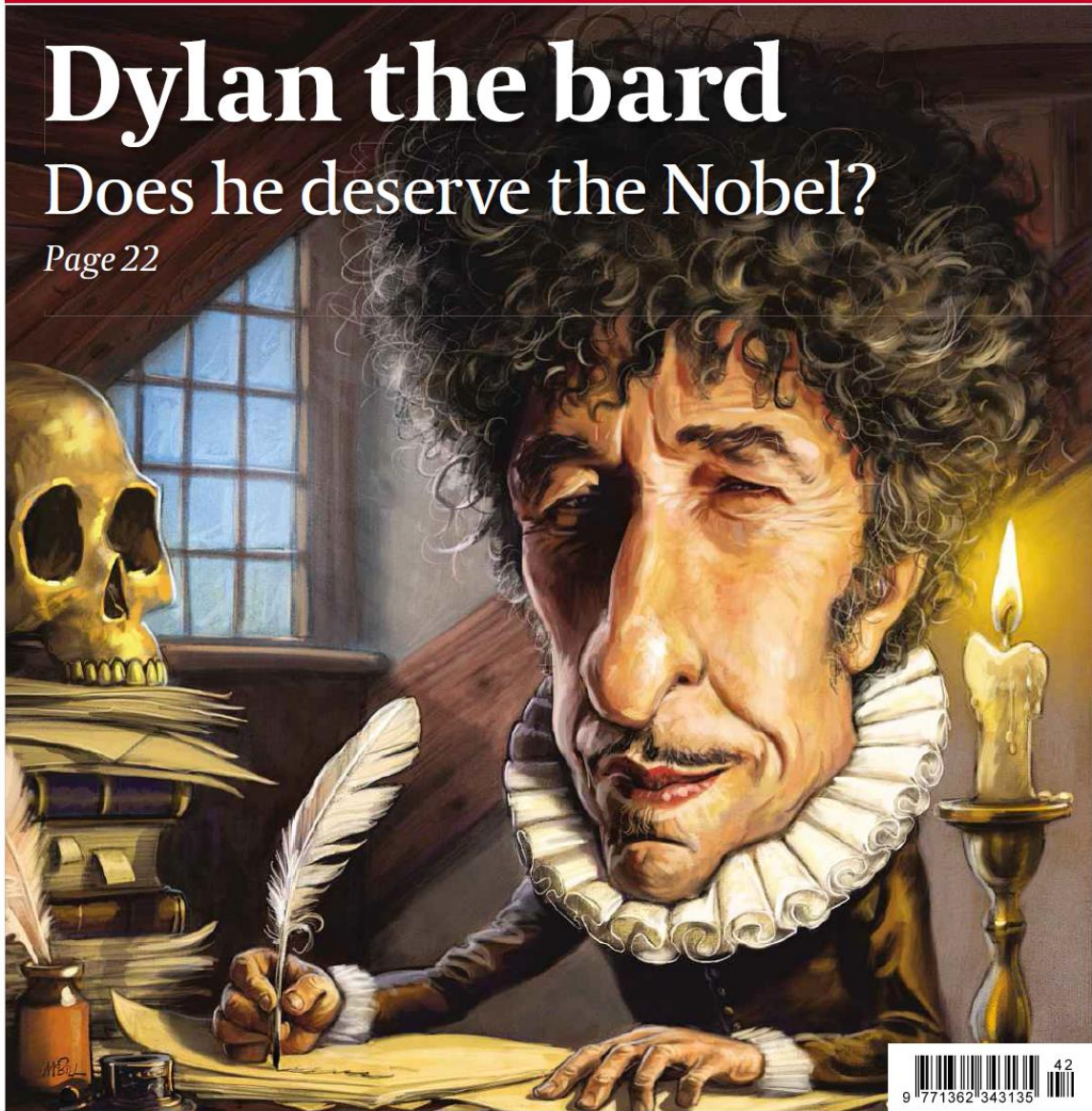
THE WEEK

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THE BEST OF THE BRITISH AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

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This week's dream: the byways of Rajasthan

With their ancient cities and temples, the Indian states of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh attract tourists in droves. But venture off the beaten path and you'll find "an old-time world of colourful villages, fabulous temples, ancient forts and romantic palaces" that still attracts very few foreign visitors. Do so on a group trip with Wild Frontiers and you'll also enjoy excellent guiding, minimum hassle and maximum comfort, says Harriet O'Brien in *The Daily Telegraph*. Their India in Slow Motion tour whisks you for two weeks through "an engaging pageant of classic Indian scenes", with accommodation in old forts and hunting lodges whose owners – rawals and maharajas – are often present to meet their guests.

From Delhi, the night train rattles you down to Chittorgarh, an industrial city with an amazing hilltop fort. Its "brilliantly carved" triumphal tower is resplendent with gods, elephants and horses; and there is a wonderfully decorated temple to Vishnu. Next



Enter India's "old-time world"

comes Castle Bijaipur, a 16th century palace turned guest house in the depths of the countryside. Guests are taken on farm visits; to opium ceremonies (the drug is served at a medicinal strength and, "disappointingly", has no discernible effects); and for picnics by remote lakes, during which staff conjure up mutton curry upon dung fires. And then the group moves on to Bundi, a "gem" of a town, with a winding bazaar and a 14th century fort. In wedding season (November), the streets resound with celebrations, but still more flamboyant is the huge livestock fair held by the Chandrabhaga River during the November full moon. Thousands gather to trade camels,

buffaloes and horses, and pilgrims process down to the water in parades of tuba players, dancers, boy scouts and bejewelled herodes, to light candles and "wash away their sins". *Wild Frontiers* (020-7736 3968, www.wildfrontierstravel.com) has 14 days from £2,225pp, excluding flights.

Hotel of the week



The Mash Inn, Radnage, Buckinghamshire

Stylish revamps of old English inns are two a penny – but few are as "sincere" as this, says Fiona Duncan in *The Sunday Telegraph*. Set deep in the Chilterns (but just 42 miles from London), it was built in 1725 and re-opened by Nick Mash this year. Its "airy" dining room is a convivial space, with a completely open kitchen "groaning with ingredients", where chef Jon Parry produces down-to-earth but "divine" dishes, many for sharing. The five rooms are small, but well-equipped with Roberts radios, Hypnos beds and free-standing baths. There's also a terrace with a fire pit and a "stirringly beautiful" view. Doubles from £100 b&b. 01494-482440, www.themashinn.com.

Getting the flavour of...

Montana's musical dream park

Spread across 10,000 acres of "rock-ridged pastureland" in the shadow of Montana's Beartooth Mountains, Tippet Rise is a sculpture park and music venue with a uniquely "otherworldly" air, says Jay Merrick in *The Independent*. Built by philanthropists Peter and Cathy Halstead and opened this year, it was conceived as a place "where music and land are attuned to the universe", and visitors are limited to 100 a day to preserve the right conditions.

"Renowned" classical musicians perform in the Olivier Barn – a wood-lined auditorium with the same dimensions as Haydn's music room at Esterházy – and beside the park's giant sculptures. These include work by Alexander Calder, Mark di Suvero and Patrick Dougherty, whose *Daydreams* – an old schoolhouse pierced by "huge, coiling willow wreaths" – is well named. Visit www.tippetrise.org.

Victoria Falls, three ways

It is "Global Adrenaline Central", with rafting, bungee jumping, and zip-wiring on offer. But there are more contemplative ways to approach the Victoria Falls, says Sean Thomas in *The Times*. From a helicopter, the meanders, oxbows and eyots upstream are a spectacular sight, and a 15-minute flight over spumes and founts and churning foam passes "like 15 seconds of exhilarated bliss". Or

you can go by boat and sit in a rock pool known as the Angels' Armchair, just two metres from the edge. But more beautiful and less touristy is Cataract Island, a "lush little islet" not far away. Dappled with lilies and orchids and home to kingfishers and golden bee-eaters, it is like a "natural Kew Gardens" just moments from "the endless fury" of the falls. *True Luxury Travel* (020-3137 1247, www.trueluxurytravel.com) has a four-night trip from £2,724pp, incl. flights.

A baroque jewel in Puglia

Perched on the tip of Italy's heel, Lecce is "a bubble of 17th century architectural perfection", showcasing a local strain of the baroque – *barocco leccese* – that's held to be the world's most flamboyant. And the city is now seriously trendy too, says Mia Aimaro Ogden in *The Sunday Times*, thanks to a spate of recent openings. Between visits to its 100-odd limestone churches, check out artisan fashion stores such as IJO', with its "exquisite" hand-loomed frocks; pop into MUST, a contemporary art gallery in a former monastery; and dine at Blu Notte. New hotels include La Fiermontina, a 17th century villa with "astounding" art (Léger, Le Corbusier, Zwobada), and the "immaculate" Masseria Trapanà, an old farmhouse set amid the olive groves. *Bellini Travel* (020-7602 7602, www.bellinitravel.com) has 4 nights from £495pp, excl. flights.

Last-minute offers from top travel companies

Pembrokeshire break

From Fawr, a collection of 6 self-catering cottages near the Clydey Resort, offers a 5-night stay in Ty Hen cottage (sleeps 6) from £1,000 (saving £500). 01239-698619, www.premiercottages.co.uk. Arrive 24 Oct.

Chilled Morocco

A week's stay at the luxurious Rebal Riads – in Sidi Kaouki, 20 minutes south of Essaouira – costs from £450pp b&b incl. Luton flights and transfers. 020-7112 0019, www.fleece.com. Travel Oct-Nov.

Challenging Nepal

The 21-day Gokyo Lakes & Everest Lodge trek (graded demanding) veers off the usual beaten path. From £1,979pp incl. flights. 01962-737565, www.walksworldwide.com. Depart 12 Nov, or 10 Dec.

4-star advent in Austria

Over-50 single travellers can sample glühwein and cookies on a 7-day tour of Austria's markets and lakes. From £1,075pp half-board incl. flights. 01760-722011, www.onetraveller.co.uk. Dep 7 Dec.