

GLENN O'BRIEN'S STYLE (A WEB LOG)

No. Not "Yes," No...

A few nights ago Teenage Jesus and the Jerks played New York, at the Knitting Factory. It was kind of like "old home week," especially if your old home was a home for disturbed children or the criminally insane. The place was packed with a multi-generational mob of black-clothed, dyed-black-haired, sunglasses-after-dark-wearing hipsters. They were here to see something you can't see anymore, and hear something live that lives only on record. And Teenage Jesus, headed by Lydia Lunch, this ancient, gnarly band of refusenik revolutionaries, unseen in these precincts for... could it be 27 years?... put on a show the likes of which belong mostly to memory and its dumb nephew, history.

The No Wave was back for a night, and it was a bad mother. There I was, watching a band I watched generations ago, in the company of a bunch of old people who look kind of like my friends of that period—Diego Cortez, Michael Zilkha, Seth Tillet. And there was Marty Rev of Suicide, and James Chance of the Contortions. It was like a reunion of legendary outlaws and their inlaws. And the band, well, this was no nostalgia show. They were really powerful, aged but unchanged, angry as adolescents, and out of step with the pop world as ever. It was a guilty pleasure. Or a guilty pain. Part triumph and part regret for the road not taken far enough. But some background...



Teenage Jesus was the original band of Lydia Lunch, a notorious performer historically linked with what is known as No Wave. And, at her peak, Lydia Lunch was more No than anyone, with the possible exception of James Chance and his girlfriend/manager Anya Phillips. Lydia was to entertainment's star system what black holes are to the astronomical star systems.

The term *No Wave* started as a joke on *New Wave*, a rather wimpy catch-all which I believe was created by a copywriter at Sire Records who perhaps felt he was stretching it to lump the Ramones and Talking Heads under the same category or rubric. Clearly Talking Heads and many of the other bands who played the C.B.G.B./Max's circuit did not wear leather jackets, play fast, or write songs about being sedated. So, New Wave, with its sexy French connotations of Godard, Belmondo, Anna Karina, Gitanes, and existentialism had a certain appeal. But it also seemed a little wimpy. What about the bands who were genuinely avant-garde and who came out of some weird fusion of pop art, abstract expressionism, serialism, film noir, rhythm and blues, free jazz, and juvenile delinquency?

Well, No Wave seemed like a fun thing to call the bands working the frontiers of bohemianism, and it caught on with the public, a rather small but determined public, mainly through Brian Eno's seminal compilation album *No New York*, which came out in 1978 on Antilles Records and introduced the talents of Teenage Jesus and the Jerks, the Contortions, DNA, and Mars. James Chance appeared on the Teenage Jesus tracks on *No New York*, and Lydia would appear on several James Chance tracks on his Ze Records album *Off White*, guest starring as vocalist "Stella Rico." Lydia also worked with Michael Zilkha's groundbreaking Ze Records, making with house producer Bob Blank one spectacular album, the *Queen of Siam* LP. One of Lydia's best quotes is, "I would be humiliated if I found out that anything I did actually became a commercial success." Yet *Queen of Siam* flirted with popularity, playing up her extreme sultriness and ball-busting sexiness.



Where Teenage Jesus had made music with raw power and rough edges, *Queen of Siam* was polished and professional, with amazing horn arrangements by Billy ver Plank, and material like the classic Billie Holiday number "Gloomy Sunday" and the Classics IV's 1968 hit "Spooky." It was a record that said, "I could be a big star if I condescended to that," and proved that if Lydia didn't become a pop star it wasn't because she didn't have the chops.

In fact, although she was known for a very rough, anarchic vocal style, she could sing with edgy pleasantness, and her guitar-playing style was simply riveting. Two of the most interesting instrumentalists on the scene were women playing slide guitar: Lydia and Pat Place of the Contortions.

The original Teenage Jesus had a Japanese guy named Reck on bass (who was also in an early version of the Contortions); when he returned to Japan he was replaced by Gordon Stevenson on bass. Bradley Field was featured on "drum," (yes, not drums but *drum*) an instrument he sometimes played with the Contortions and James White and the Blacks. James Chance, aka White, of course, blew manic sax on the early tracks. Jim Sclavunos joined the band on bass after Gordon, and he stuck with Lydia through her other bands, Beirut Slump and 8-Eyed Spy.



They might not have gotten famous back in the day, but they were plenty infamous. It was the usual too-much-too-soon, ahead of the time, too smart for the room thing, wedded to a healthy dose of refusenikism. Lydia just refused to water herself down for general consumption, an act of integrity that few artists of the last half-century can lay any claim to. And she made spurning look sexy, in a sort of magnificently bitchy and cosmically unreceptive way. The No Wave was a joke, of course, but today it looks better than ever and my main reaction to seeing Lydia front a band in New York again was delighted laughter.

The occasion of Teenage Jesus and the Jerks playing New York was the publication of the book *No Wave* by Byron Coley and Sonic Youth guitarist Thurston Moore, who has also worked with Lydia on a number of projects, including a 1984 EP, *In Limbo*, a 1986 12" called *Death Valley '69*, and another 12" in 1987, *The Crumb*. I haven't picked up a copy of Thurston's book yet, but I read it at James Nares's apartment, and it's really good. I'm going to buy several copies. It is filled with delightful documents and information and is worth the price on the Robert Christgau/James Chance fistfight alone.

So anyway, it was only unnatural that the '08 version of T.J.&T.J. would feature Thurston on bass and Sclavunos on drum. I would have given anything to see the late, lamented Bradley Field, one of the great geni of the period, on drum, but I must say Mr. Sclavunos did a superb, almost flawless job with a drum, a cymbal, and two sticks. He was spare, elegant, and in time. Flawless wouldn't have been appropriate, anyway.

And the band's new bass player, Thurston Moore of Sonic Youth, gave this old-but-more-energetic-than-the-kids band its very powerful sound, modern but perfectly appropriate in power and edge. But there was no doubt who was the star

of the show. Lydia brought a refreshing breeze of bile to a community where lilled livers are endemic.



I'm not going to do a play by play, but I had a grand time. I loved every second. Maybe I shouldn't have, according to some make-believe critics. I was picking up some paper to clean up after my dog on the street when I happened to find this from the *New York Press*, a rag that advertises massage parlors: "Just because Lydia can still kick out the classics, however, doesn't necessarily mean this show should have happened. No Wave, the movement, the people, even the music to some extent, has been retrospectively fetishized to the extent that any resurgence of its key players is bound to get tangled up in the tawdry middle ground between boho nostalgia and historical meretriciousness."

Got that, the show shouldn't have happened according to this theorist. Now let me see, the evils we would avoid thus are boho nostalgia and historical meretriciousness. Hmm. Those abstractoids almost sound yummy to me. Maybe that's why I had such a good time at the show. Boho nostalgia is so powerful at the moment that it would seem to be almost on the verge of giving the culture a boner. And meretriciousness is all about boners too, isn't it? And a historical boner is better than no wood at all, I'd say.

Dopes like this may be the reason Lydia lives in Barcelona, or someplace like that. But it was great, for one evening, to witness a replay of the fantastic promise of negation that Lydia and her erstwhile cohorts offered almost nightly. Those weren't the days. Neither are these. But it was fantastic fun and I must say the nasty old bitch looked gorgeous and sounded absolutely, terrifyingly right on. Twenty minutes. No encore. Perfect.

June 25, 2008

[Music criticism](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

[Email this post](#) | [Reddit It](#) | [Digg This](#) | [Add to del.icio.us](#) | [Share on Facebook](#)

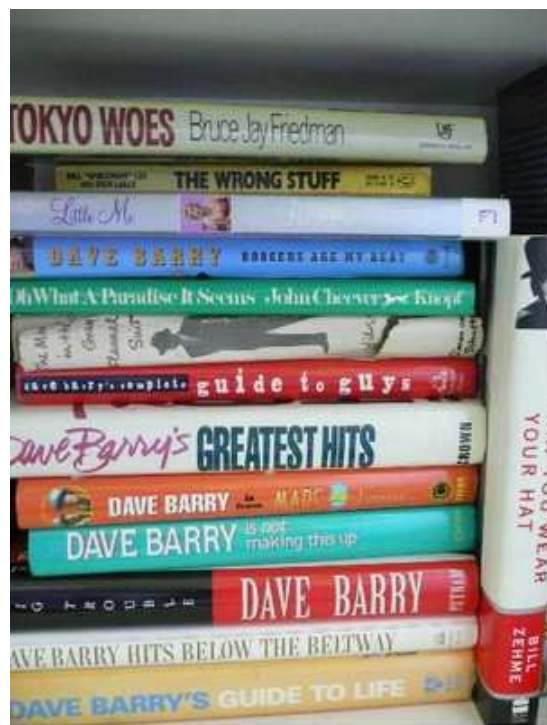
Books Do Furnish a Room (or More)

My wife announced yesterday that some of the books have got to go. It's true, there are piles kind of everywhere. I guess I have a book problem. Sometimes I can't resist them, and I have so many that it's sometimes hard to find the one I want, when I want it.

I guess about half of my books are in my loft in Manhattan, and the other half are in [my country house in Connecticut](#). In neither location does the Dewey Decimal System hold sway, and the filing system is a little dicey. I can't say I have a real system. It's more of an imagined one.

The city/country division is a little bit right brain/left brain. For example, most of the books that would qualify as pure diversion are to be found in the country. Like my almost complete collection of Dave Barry in hardcover. Like my almost complete collection of the novels of Sax Rohmer, including all of the *Fu Manchu* novels. Like my extensive collection of sporty novels by the likes of Dan Jenkins and Peter Gent, and all of George Plimpton (and paperbacks like Ron Luciano's *The Umpire Strikes Back*, Jim Bouton's *Ball Four*, and Bill Lee's *The Wrong Stuff*.) It is also possible that there are no mystery novels in the city, but one can find quite a few Walter Moseley volumes in my Berkshires foothill stronghold, or the collected mysteries of Gore Vidal writing as Edgar Box.

Here's some light reading. You can tell I'm no fanatic, with John Cheever and *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* thrown right in there with the Dave Barry books:



Here are a couple of stacks of *Fu Manchu* and other Sax Rohmer novels:



Guest rooms tend to be stocked with suggested reading:



Some books exist in duplicate or more significant profusion. Anywhere I might potentially hang my hat has an *Oxford English Dictionary*, *Roget's Thesaurus* (the old style), Fowler's *Modern English Usage*, *A Dictionary of Contemporary American Usage*, *The Chicago Manual of Style*, etc. But you'll also find the major classics of Greek, Latin, and English lit, and the more or less complete Robert Benchley, Donald Barthelme, Gore Vidal, Ishmael Reed, Wyndham Lewis, Graham Greene, Kingsley Amis, Richard Brautigan, etc. In fact, when it comes to my favorites there aren't just duplicates, there are piles.

I guess I might have a book problem, because when it comes to certain things I am "powerless" the way some people say they are about drinks, drugs, or doughnuts. Whenever I see a hardcover Donald Barthelme under a certain price, I buy it. I probably have at least a dozen copies each of *Paradise*, *Sadness*, and *City Life*. And I've given at least that many away. I am probably down to three hardcover editions of Gary Indiana's *Resentment*, and a few in paper, because I give those away about as fast as I can accumulate them. I suspect they are a shorthand way of me explaining certain things about my own life. I'm not sure what book I have the most stock of—I'm guessing it's A, a "novel" by Andy Warhol. I think I have fifteen copies, one with a beautiful hand rendering of the "a" logo by Warhol in ballpoint.

It's madness, I know. But real madness was when I was thinking, a year or so ago, of seriously attempting to corner the market on the limited edition of Wyndham Lewis's *Apes of God*. I mean, if the Hunt Brothers could try to corner the world silver market, why not try to corner the market on a book of which there were only 750 printed, and undoubtedly many lost?

I have fantastic bookshelves lining the wall of my library/dining room in New York City. They have been full for years. In fact, the books went vertical rather than horizontal quite some time ago, so as to pack as many volumes in as possible. There is some organization in this area. If you're looking for poetry it's on the upper left, if you're looking for music it's on the upper right. Novels and philosophy are on the right. Biography and art are on the left. Photography is in the middle, right above naval history and fashion.

Near my desk I keep the classics—from Homer, Virgil, Suetonius, Herodotus, Polybius, Tacitus, Livy, Terence, Appian, Sallust, Plautus, Plutarch, Procopius, Petronius, both Plinys, Appolonius of Rhodes, Flavius Josephus, down to Gibbon, down to Keightley's *History of Rome*, down to damn near all of Robert Graves. Within arm's length are a dozen good dictionaries; Mencken's three-volume *The American Language*; Fairchild's *Dictionary of Fashion*; *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*; Kingsley Amis's *The King's English*; *The Use & Abuse of the English Language* by Robert Graves and Alan Hodge; George Polti's *The Thirty Six Dramatic Situations*; and the inimitable *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*.

Also within Eames-chair-swivel range: *The Oxford English Dictionary of Quotations*, Leo Rosten's *Hooray for Yiddish*, *Public Relations* by Bernays; *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*; Amy Vanderbilt's *Complete Book of Etiquette* (1952); *How to Do Almost Everything* by Bert Bacharach (the father of the composer); Emily Post's *Etiquette* (1928); George Washington's *Rules of Civility*; *A Dictionary of Similes*; *Ten Thousand Dreams Interpreted* by Gustavus H. Miller; Milton Berle's *Private Joke File*; Ambrose Bierce's *The Devil's Dictionary*; all of Alan Flusser's books; Farid Chenoune's delightful *A History of Men's Fashion*; and Hardy Amies's *ABC of Men's Fashion*, to name but a few. I have a very large collection of etiquette books. My favorite is *Our Deportment (or The Manners, Conduct and Dress of the Most Refined Society)* (1879), by John H. Young, which never fails to remind me that progress comes at a price.

There's much here on dandies and dandyism, including a very nice copy of Thackeray's *Book of Snobs* with his original illustrations, as well as the Duke of Bedford's *Book of Snobs*; Quentin Bell's *On Human Finery*; Lord Whimsy's *The Affected Provincial's Companion, Vol. 1*; D'Aubreyville's *The Anatomy of Dandyism*; *The Wits and Beaux of Society*; the complete works of John Wilmot, the 2nd Earl of Rochester; and, to get the full picture of "the Libertine," the works

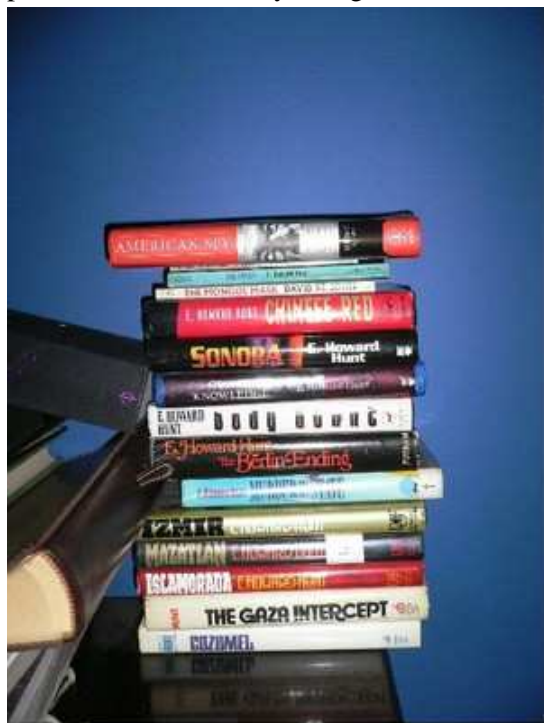
of Sir George Etherege.

I even have a bible, a nice Masonic edition with family associations, as well as *The Oxford Companion to the New Testament*, and, just so I don't get any funny ideas, H.L. Mencken's freethinker's bible, *A Treatise on the Gods*. Right behind me is de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, Art Pepper's cautionary autobiography, and Leroi Jones's *Blues People*.

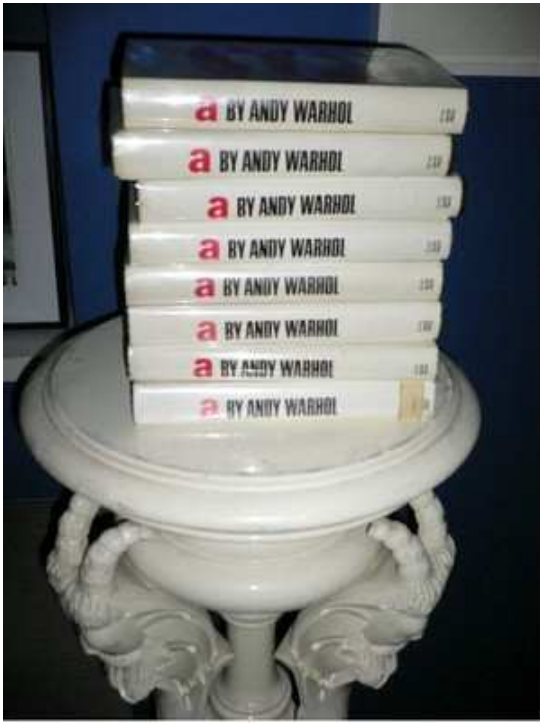
Often someone comes to visit one of my residences (quite often it's a messenger, a delivery man, or someone who's come to fix something) and says, "Wow, have you read all those books?" Usually I laugh and say no, although at least once I know I said yes. I have read a lot of them, and a lot of even more of them, and there are many I plan to read either at my earliest convenience or when I just can't take it any more and refuse to work. I have read just about all of the Gore Vidal books, and I hope he writes some more so I can read some more. They are located right next to just about all of James Purdy's books, not far from most of John O'Hara.

It's funny how enthusiasms happen, and suddenly, way into one's reading career, you suddenly discover somebody you'd passed over in the bookstore many times. For me lately it has been Ludwig Bemelmans, probably best known to most you as the author of the Madeleine children's books, or the artist who decorated that swell eponymous bar in the Carlyle Hotel. For me he is now the delightful author of *The Blue Danube*, *Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep*, *How to Travel Incognito*, and *Hotel Splendide*, among others. His novel *Dirty Eddie* is one of the most amusing tales of Old Hollywood you'll find anywhere.

When you're pretty much maxed out on space for the books, you start doing odd things with them. Like, say, think of them as installations. My friend Richard Prince gets away with that as an artist, stacking various editions of *Lolita* on plinths. I don't think my living room "installation" of E. Howard Hunt books is really pulling it off.



Now, I'm almost pulling it off with the Warhols, thanks to the nice pedestal.



Since my wife declared yesterday that I have too many books, I have some tough choices to make. (No, divorce is not on the table.) Until I do I'm going to have to stay away from the [ABE](#) and [Alibris](#) web sites and book fairs and, sooner or later, I am going to have to de-accession. I could donate some books, but then I might worry about what hands they would fall into. Maybe I have no choice but to become a dealer. I suppose that could make matters worse, but there might be some interesting tax deductions involved.

But the question really is, "Can I change?" I think that any serious collector, or even hoarder, is doing something beyond what meets the eye. For me my books are a sort of security blanket or metaphysical armor or a manifestation of belief in the future. I mean, I wouldn't have all these books if I weren't going to finish reading them, and I wouldn't be able to finish reading them if I weren't going to be around for, say, thirty years. On the other hand, even I have to admit that it's unlikely I'll ever finish Howard Stern's *Private Parts*.

May 28, 2008

[Collecting](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(5\)](#)

[Email this post](#) | [Reddit It](#) | [Digg This](#) | [Add to del.icio.us](#) | [Share on Facebook](#)

Is It Time to Put the Pastors Out to Pasture?

In the magazine world we have a lot of appointments, and it's hard to get around in this town. There's incredible traffic, what with all those sight-seeing buses and rickshaws and billboard trucks. And with our state-of-the-art city planners there are always improvements that haven't quite kicked in—like the redesign of Houston Street and its eternal construction, which has traffic backed up from the West Side to the East River; or the new bus lanes on Broadway downtown, which have yet to show any improvement in traffic (maybe because the police have the right lane of Broadway blocked, while they ticket everyone with the temerity to move out of the left-side gridlock into the totally unoccupied right side of New York's most famous avenue). And so magazine editors take a lot of Town Cars.

These are better than taxis because they pick you up and drop you off where you want, and they wait for you. They rarely curse you or try to overcharge you, and the cars are usually not too smelly and, even if it seems like the driver is suicidal, he will usually slow down if you ask. So we get to know a lot of these drivers.

Today I had an interesting guy. I knew he was different right off because he looked like a college professor. He had the classical music station on, and in the back-seat pocket he had *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and the latest issue of *The New Yorker*. He was quiet and careful (a little too methodical, I'd say, because I had to wait while he wrote out where I was going), not a speed demon like the former Soviet Socialist Republic guys I usually have, who are getaway drivers, geniuses at getting you to your next appointment on time. This guy, I'm sorry, was a bit of a nerd. He was just the wrong guy for the job.

Anyway, I had many stops on this day and so I wound up talking to the guy. Turns out he's a white-collar professional who was a computer programmer until his job was sent to India when he was 55 years old, along with every job in his

department at a Wall Street firm. He studied philosophy and comparative religions and has a degree in biology. He seemed like he should have been teaching rhetoric at Hunter College or molecular biology at City College. But he didn't have any education courses and he's got a teenage son studying music, so he's got to work. There are guys like this driving cabs and flipping burgers and selling underwear.

Things like this make you think there's really something wrong somewhere. It's a waste. I asked him if he was supporting Obama, since McCain is a free-trader and, despite denials, the record shows that Clinton backed free-trade agreements until it became inconvenient for her campaign. This fellow complained that Obama hadn't talked about it much. I suggested that perhaps this was because all the media wants to talk about is the record of Obama's ex-pastor back in Chicago, or else the "bitterness" thing, about lost jobs driving people to the church or their guns and the issues surrounding them. Nobody in the press wants to talk about the real issues—it starts at the top with despicable panderers like George Stephanopoulos and Charlie Gibson and trickles down to the morons who write letters to the tabloids.

The fact is that Barack Obama, like just about every other politician, goes to church. The things that are said in church are often outlandish and over the top. There's nowhere, not even in Congress, where hyperbole works better than in church. Generally speaking, Christian sermons are dramatic and drama relies on overstatement.

Overstatements like: "God damn America..." in a sermon dealing with the drug epidemic in black communities and the mass imprisonment of young black men. Or: "We bombed Hiroshima, we bombed Nagasaki, we nuked far more than the thousands in New York and the Pentagon... and we never batted an eye. We supported state terrorism against Palestinians... and now America's chickens are coming home to roost."

Inflammatory? Sure. But that's what preachers do. They take a grain of truth and blow it up until it inflames.

The reaction to Wright is really about the fact that he talks about things that one is not supposed to mention. But that's what pastors do. I think you'd be hard pressed to find anyone pastoring to a politico who hasn't said or done some stupid shit.

Hillary Clinton's former pastor, William Procanick, is serving a three-year sentence for inappropriately touching a 7-year-old girl. John McCain proudly accepted the endorsement of Pastor John Hagee, who calls the Catholic Church "the Great Whore" and he has blamed Hurricane Katrina on God's wrath over a homosexual parade scheduled for that city.

Our current president was put up to running by his pastor, the Reverend Mark Craig, who hooked him by telling the story of Moses and the burning bush (Exodus 3-4). And I suspect that Bush's extraordinary immunity to criticism might be rooted in a bible verse he often cites, and no doubt picked up from Reverend Craig: "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. I do not even judge myself. I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart..." (I Corinthians 4:1-5)

What Jeremiah Wright talks about seems kind of reasonable compared to God's divine choice of George W. Bush as our infallible President. But speaking of infallibility, how about the biggest pastor of them all? Recently the U.S. Department of Homeland Security admitted to the United States Joseph Ratzinger, a former Hitler Youth who now goes by Pope Benedict XVI, who was once involved in covering up child abuse by Catholic priests in the U.S. and who now preaches that it's okay for Catholic clergy to excommunicate political leaders who support abortion rights and, presumably, birth control. Such as former presidential candidate John Kerry. It's funny how we can allow a foreign head of state who believes in the supremacy of divine law as much as any Shariah-preaching Islamic dictator to visit this country in an election year and mess around with the electorate.

Meanwhile the United States denies entry to artists like Amy Winehouse, author Sebastian Horsley, singer Cat Stevens, rapper MIA, the Israeli singer Rita, the band The Field, five Cuban Grammy award winners, dancehall star Mavado, and Emma Louise Jordan of the Ballett Freiburg. Of course, discriminating against artists is a U.S. tradition and during earlier repressive regimes Graham Greene, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Dario Fo, and Pablo Neruda were turned back at the Statue of Liberty.

It's rotten, what's going on, and it's all in the name of ignorance. How dare Obama say that people without jobs are bitter and turn to religion? How dare the pastor, whom he's been forced to denounce, suggest that the United States ever did anything wrong? The mass media knows a good circus when it sees one, and its Barnum-like tendency is to stir up hysteria rather than appeal to reason.

I grew up in Ohio. I made money for college by working in the blast furnace division of Republic Steel. Steel once

accounted for about a third of the jobs where I grew up. Today those mills are closed. Throughout this country whole industries have been wiped out as America transitions to a "service economy." Whom do we service? That's a good question. Maybe it's debt that we service. But I know that when intellectuals are chauffeuring Town Cars because their jobs were shipped to India to save \$20,000 a year, there's something essentially wrong with the system. I actually think Mr. Obama would like to talk about these issues, but it's tough when the media doesn't care what the candidate thinks, but what his preacher thinks.

I'm hoping that Bill Maher's new film *Religulous*, which comes out this summer, is the *An Inconvenient Truth* of 2008. Maybe he'll get a Nobel Peace Prize for pointing out that religion is the bait and switch that's been for deluding the people for the last few thousand years. Funny, but my driver whose job went to India is very interested in religion even though he himself is not religious. He highly recommended Richard Dawkins' book *The God Delusion*, as well as his book *The Selfish Gene*. The driver prefers Dawkins to Christopher Hitchens's *God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*. From his reading my driver thinks that religion is an innocent error, being a biological system of visualization which developed as a survival mechanism and which has outlived its usefulness. The ability to see demons, he says, might have made a child growing up in a hostile environment more likely to survive. He thinks that these instincts may eventually disappear. Perhaps they will be replaced by instincts that lead to taking teaching courses in case one's industry is moved to the third world.

May 06, 2008

[Criticism](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(10\)](#)

[Email this post](#) | [Reddit It](#) | [Digg This](#) | [Add to del.icio.us](#) | [Share on Facebook](#)

A Reader Request

A regular reader of this "blogue" recently wrote:

I have been curious to know if you have seen films that have depicted Andy Warhol, Jean-Michel Basquiat, the "scenes" that I am unfortunately too young to have enjoyed and possibly any other people you may have known over the years. Have you seen, "I Shot Andy Warhol," "Basquiat", "Factory Girl"...? What is your opinion of the interpretations of the people and the times in these films?

Good question. When I arrived on the scene as a youngster, I had the funny feeling that I was late—I mean, I had missed the *Exploding Plastic Inevitable*, the *Silver Factory*, and *Edie Sedgwick*. Some of the characters I met, such as the legendary *Ondine*, had clearly seen more brilliant days. But later I began to think, "Oh well, maybe it's for the best I came when I did. At least I never injected methamphetamine like Lou."

Here I am interviewing my friend Jean-Michel Basquiat on my cable-access show *TV Party* in 1979:

I remember being contacted in the '90s by the Polish filmmaker Lech Majewski, who wanted to make a film about Jean-Michel. I did everything to discourage him, saying that it would be almost impossible to capture his personality, and reminding him that Jean-Michel hadn't been gone ten years. To drive home my point I brought up the problem of casting.

"I mean, who could you get to play him?" I said, oozing sarcasm. "Terence Trent D'Arby?"

Two days later I read in the *New York Post's* Page Six that filmmaker Lech Majewski was trying to sign Terence Trent D'Arby for his Basquiat film project. Sometimes sarcasm doesn't translate.

This, as well as my feelings about such films as Clint Eastwood's *Bird* (1988), caused me to write an essay called "The Alexander Nevsky Theory," in which I argued that a real person should be dead for approximately 900 years before their life is made into a drama. Alexander Nevsky, of course, being the Russian Prince who defeated of the German Teutonic Knights near Novogriod in 1242, as well as a film of the same name by the great director Sergei Eisenstein. He created a masterpiece at a time when Russia was again threatened by German invasion, and the battle scene on a frozen lake is probably the most spectacular depiction of combat in cinema history:

Of course, my point was that Nevsky was dug up at the right time, for the right reasons, and his family and friends certainly wouldn't mind.

But Basquiat with Basquiat gone only a few years... I could see what was happening. It would be the same old suffering-artist story—a little Van Gogh, a little Jimi Hendrix. The real Jean-Michel was so complicated, how could somebody capture him? Especially someone who didn't know him?

Enter Julian Schnabel, who did know him, but who was hardly his friend. Schnabel took over the project. I was approached by Michael Holman, a bandmate of Basquiat's in Gray, whom Julian had hired to write a screenplay. He wanted to talk to me. I told him I didn't want to participate and I expressed my doubts as to whether anything resembling our mutual friend might come to the screen. He shrugged off my comments and that was that.

I was working as creative director at Island Records at the time Julian Schnabel's *Basquiat* was completed. Island had recently released an album of the artist singing songs he had composed, and was also about to release the soundtrack album. So Julian screened the film for me. Later, on the phone, he asked me what I thought and I remember how it started: "I know you meant well...."

Actually, I was exaggerating. I see that film as Schnabel's pre-emptive strike on art history, an attempt to position himself as the wise mentor to the unstable protégé, when in fact, of course, Jean-Michel is, as T.S. Eliot would put it, "*il miglior fabbro*."

Schnabel does show the well-known incident in which J.M.B. pissed on the floor of his studio, but he depicts it as if he were a stoner, stumbling into the wrong spot, unable to hold his water, when in fact he was the alpha dog marking his territory.

Jeffrey Wright is, of course, a genius, and he does Basquiat as well as he can be done given the script and the intentions of the director. Despite having little resemblance to the artist, Wright delivers an uncanny reading of his mannerism and speech patterns. David Bowie does less well portraying my old boss Andy. In fact I was moved by *Basquiat* and *I Shot Andy Warhol* to write posthumous diary entries depicting Andy's activities as a ghost, haunting Manhattan—"Excerpts from the Andy Warhol Diaries, Summer 1996." Here's a bit:

"July 19, 1996: Keith Haring finally dragged me to see that film where I get shot. (Cab \$10, tickets \$16.) Just seeing the marquee gave me the creeps. I can't believe I let that English girl who directed it hang around the office. She was so polite I couldn't tell she was really mean. And I was so nice to her. The kid who plays me—Richard Harris's kid—is kind of cute but I come off like a big nothing. I guess it could have been worse. She made Fred and Paul into dumb and dumber. And Cand is so butch, she's going to really hate it...I wanted to leave but Keith made me stay. It was so mean I had to go to the bathroom during the scene where Valerie shoots me. It hurt just thinking about it. I can't believe they gave it a good write up in Interview. I don't get what people like about it. I guess it's the first dyke action film."

"August 1, 1996: Went to the opening of Julian Schnabel's film with Jean-Michel. (Cab \$12.) He was so mad. He kept calling Julian a "bad fool." He said the movie was a fake and a distortion. I think he was really mad because he thinks Jeffrey Wright isn't good looking enough to play him. Jeffrey Wright is cute but not as handsome as Jean Michel. He was even madder because Julian cast Gary Oldman to play Julian. I said "Did you really think he'd have somebody fat play him?" Gary Oldman was pretty good but Steven Seagal would have been even better.

"It was really funny seeing David Bowie play me. He was so nelly that it made me feel like a he-man. I can't believe the Foundation loaned Julian my hair...I thought my wig was the worst part of the film, and there were a lot of worst parts..."

Yes, Bowie was dreadful, but we love him so all is forgiven. Such a big sissy as Drella. I remember the day Dave came up to the Factory to sing "Andy Warhol" to Andy, who didn't know if we should let him in. He wasn't famous in America, yet, but I told AW he was famous in England, so he sat there and was nice. At the end he didn't know whether to like it or hate it. (I didn't either, but he meant well.)

Here's some footage of their introduction:

Last night there was nothing on the tube so I checked in on *I Shot Andy Warhol* again. It's still awful. Allow me to quote myself from an old essay entitled, "Shooting Andy Warhol Again":

"Without changing the cast and the set too much, writer/director Mary Harron could have made a pretty good attempt at the Fran Lebowitz Story. Lili Taylor would have had to gain some weight and switch to Lark cigarettes, but the rest she had down pat." I knew Valerie Solanas, and Harron's Valerie is more like Mary Richards from *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* than Valerie Solanas, a truly scary and twisted person who is depicted here as a warm-and-fuzzy though a little misguided feminist hero."

Stephen Dorff tries heroically to be Candy, but he's just not the actor for the part. Maybe Johnny Depp could have pulled it off, but Dorff was out of his depth. Quoting myself again:

"The revisionist Warhol gang is a bunch of decorative losers and stoned-out poseurs. Stephen Dorff gives his all to animate the character of Candy Darling, the most glamorous of Warhol's drag queens. It's not his fault that the complexity, the edge, the twisted wryness and mordacious wit and true glamour of the original Candy is lost. This Candy lacks the femininity, the queenliness, mostly the attitude and dialogue of the original. Mary Harron couldn't turn a phrase with a tugboat."

I find it a contemptible film. Quoting me again:

"In an interview with *New York* magazine, Lou Reed wondered out loud if a film called "I Shot John Lennon" would have been met with such acceptance. Reed's point...is that Andy Warhol still doesn't get the respect he deserves."

As for the other Drella impersonators, I must say that Jared Harris did a creditable job with Andy's intonation, and a pretty good job with his posture and body language, although he never would have offered his hand for a shake. Guy Pearce's turn as the boss in *Factory Girl*, which will go down as one of the worst movies ever made, would have greatly amused Andy. Not only is Pearce a handsome devil, he plays Andy with that I-know-I'm-hot meanness that must come naturally to him.

Andy was, of course, a loser nerd who would have fit in with the trenchcoat mafia in high school, and he had none of that air. He said of the Factory that it wasn't people hanging around him, he was hanging around them.

The most bizarre Andy is, of course, [Crispin Glover](#) in Oliver Stone's *The Doors*. He has nothing to do with the real Andy, but Glover is such a compelling actor that his creepy character, which sees Andy as quite abstract as if on acid, oh so unlike him, is still quite amusing.

I read the script of *Factory Girl* by Captain Mauzner and discovered that the writer thought [Gerard Malanga](#) was "Gerald Malanga." He was also unsure if [Richie Berlin](#), Brigid's sister, was a boy or a girl. In the lot of these movies there are very few interesting performances, the exceptions being [Michael Imperioli](#) (best known as Christopher in *The Sopranos*) as Ondine in *I Shot...* He captures a lot of that manic spirit and brilliant manner. And [Michael Wincott](#) does a fair job as [Rene Ricard](#), given the lines he has to speak.

At least we have Andy's films and quite a bit of him on tape to preserve a sense of the historical record, although I'm constantly amazed by how much credence people give these films. You always have to wonder why a film was made. I happened to wind up in the same restaurant as Schnabel one night around the release of the film, which I had not yet seen. [Diego Cortez](#) was there that night, too, and Julian came and sat with us for a minute. Diego and I had as much to do with Jean-Michel's career as anyone and I knew we weren't in the film, so I asked Julian, who played Diego in the film. He said something like, well, a screenwriter sometimes has to combine certain characters and change things for dramatic reasons. Then I asked who played me. Same answer. Then I asked who played him. "Gary Oldman."

That reminded me of a story about Julian making a phone call to a mutual friend, rather urgently looking for a number for Willem Dafoe. It was reported to me that he said, "Gary Oldman is in rehab and I need someone to play the lead in my film?"

"The lead?"

"Yeah, me."

April 22, 2008

[Criticism](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(3\)](#)

[Email this post](#) | [Reddit It](#) | [Digg This](#) | [Add to del.icio.us](#) | [Share on Facebook](#)

A Fitting (Room) Heir to CBGB



In this space on October 17, 2006, [I discussed my feelings about CBGB](#), the famous birthplace of punk rock on New York's legendary Bowery. Mainly how I found the mass whinging over the demise of this down-at-the heels landmark excessive and hypocritical, even as a longtime patron of the historic nightspot—yes, even as an alumnus of that notorious stage. CBGB changed the world and it changed my life. Among the acts I saw there: Blondie, the Ramones,

Talking Heads, Suicide, the Contortions, Television, DNA, Elda and the Stilettos, the Damned, Robert Gordon, Mink de Ville, Heartbreakers, the Fleshtones, the Patti Smith Group, Jayne County, Tuff Darts, the Dictators, the Marbles, the Dead Boys, the Mumps, the Feelies, the Sic Fucks, the Steel Tips, the Shirts, Pere Ubu, the Kojaks, and even AC/DC. It was a whole new world of music.

My own band, Konelrad, the world's first socialist-realist rock band, performed here. In fact we caused a riot, a sort of low-key Altamont when Hell's Angels, upset by groupies throwing the bikers' drinks at our guitar player, began using the latter as punching bags. That night I got to use Mick Jagger's line from *Gimme Shelter*: "Brothers and sisters, brothers and sisters, why are we fighting?" It was great.

CB's was an interesting club. It was pretty big and had one of the longer bars in New York City. Just inside the door was a coat check which had been converted into a space where the dogs belonging to the owner of the club, Hilly Krystal, could take a dump anytime they wanted. Still, it was cleaner than the patrons' bathrooms downstairs.

Hilly lucked into a gold mine with CBGB (& OMFUG), as the marquee read. That stood for Country, Blue Grass, Blues and Other Music for Uplifting Gourmandizers. I guess that was Hilly's idea. He seemed like the kind of guy who would have rather been listening to Waylon Jennings. But then Television wandered in off the street, saw the stage and PA and asked if they could play there, and the rest is history. Sort of. History is a strange thing. Spike Lee's film *Summer of Sam*, which takes place in about 1977, shows a punk show at CB's, and the audience is a bunch of pogoing, safety-pin-punctured leatherettes with dayglo Mohawks. Not authentic. In fact, nobody called punk rock "punk rock," and everybody then dressed kind of regular, in denim and leather with a little sharkskin and rockabilly thrown in. The full-dress caricature punks did eventually show up, a decade or so later when the place had become institutionalized and a venue for hardcore and other mutant forms of "punk." And CBGB became a sort of caricature of its former self. Sometimes death is better than lingering. What was the old punk expression? Live fast, die young, and leave a good-looking corpse. But CB's was on life support for years.

I lived in the neighborhood but I tended to avoid the place because I usually had no interest in the maybe six bands that would be playing on a given night, and might not have mixed well with the trenchcoat-mafia, fourth-generation rebels that now frequented the place. I'd rather go the Knitting Factory or the Blue Note. But of course I looked kindly on the place until people began protesting the raising of the rent and getting political, or pseudo-political, about it. I'm sure Hilly had the chance to buy the place many times over but didn't bother until those market forces the Republicans are always talking about kicked in and Bowery real estate went through the roof. But there was something hypocritical about the whole thing. Hilly had been raking it in for years. It wasn't a charity. I felt that if Patti Smith was really that upset she should have put up the money for Mr. Krystal to buy the joint. But it's more fun to blame the capitalists who ruined the city by eliminating slums and crime.

Eventually I got so tired of hearing about it I must admit I was totally ready for somebody to take over the lease and turn it into an Italian restaurant. But instead, rather to my surprise, I was on my way to Whole Foods the other day to pick up some unpasteurized cheeses and Balthazar Bakery bread when I noticed that a new marquee was there, where the former club had been boarded up. [John Varvatos](#).

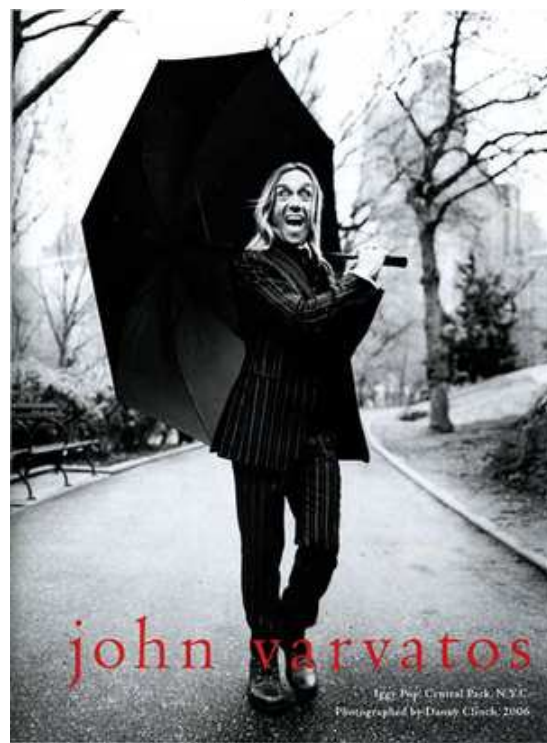


Now I'm sure that lots of people are finding some "sell-out" angle in this, but I don't mind at all. Any clothing designer that uses Iggy Pop and Alice Cooper for models is okay by me. I immediately walked into the store and, what do you know, my close personal friend James Chance was playing there. Well, on the stereo system. James was singing his jazzy version of James Brown's "King Heroin." It was too perfect. James played here live on many occasions, with Teenage Jesus and the Jerks and with his own bands the Contortions and James White and the Blacks. At this point I'm sure he'd rather be playing here on the store stereo than playing live in a CBGB filled with dayglo-haired teen tourists. In the front of the store is a good selection of vinyl for sale. Then there is a bunch of pretty high-end vintage amplifiers

and stereo receivers and other components. There are some Fender telecasters in a glass case, undoubtedly played by someone historic like Tom Verlaine or Richard Lloyd, and then there is the big old famous bar. It was the first time I had seen it without a Budweiser on it, but it looked beautiful and polished. Just behind that are a lot of clothes and a little stage, not where the original was, but fully set up with drums, amps, mics, the whole thing. I guess if the salesmen feel like jamming, there you go. I'm not really sure. I didn't stay long, because I had cheese on my mind, but I figured I'd come back some time and try on some of those dead-man's boots they have for sale. Like Ralph Lauren, Vavartos offers choice vintage stuff alongside the new merch, and some of it looked refreshingly gnarly. At my age you can either buy a Corvette or a pair of studded motorcycle boots.

Anyway, I approve, slightly conditionally, of this neighborhood transition. Jesus, it could have been Starbucks.

And I believe that John Varvatos is genuinely rock and roll. I mean, as genuinely as anything rock and roll can be. Because rock and roll is ultimately a pose. And despite the fact that at some point in the history of what is called punk, "poseur" was about the worst thing anyone could call you, the whole point was posing until the pose took and your dreams became authentic. Today, in the world where the Bowery is where millionaires live, authenticity is what you make of it. I wear it, therefore I am.



April 12, 2008

[Shopping](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(5\)](#)

[Email this post](#) | [Reddit It](#) | [Digg This](#) | [Add to del.icio.us](#) | [Share on Facebook](#)

Better Vacationing



Vacation, of course, means the act of emptying, and boy did I need that last week, after a particularly grueling deadline. I had had it up to *here*. So I did the right thing and booked a villa at [Goldeneye](#), Chris Blackwell's resort in

Oracabessa, Jamaica, W.I.

This was not a shot in the dark. I've been going there for more than twelve years and I knew that it was exactly the place to go to empty the bilges and clear my head. I would do absolutely nothing except eat, sleep, read, and... nothing. And it's easy to do that at Goldeneye because you don't have to do anything else. I didn't even register until I was ready to leave. You can eat in your villa. You don't have to see any of the other guests—it's a private world. And unlike many places in Jamaica, nobody is going to try to sell you anything. You're not in a touristy area, but you're also behind walls and nothing intrudes unless you want it to. Here's my villa:



When I first went to Goldeneye it was still a private home, the residence of Chris Blackwell, the brilliant man behind Island Records. The visionary who brought us Bob Marley and the Wailers, among a host of reggae artists, as well as acts such as Traffic, Marianne Faithfull, Grace Jones, Tom Waits, and U2, to name but a few. Chris, a Jamaican-born Englishman, has homes in New York, Miami, the U.K., and the Bahamas, but Goldeneye seemed to be his heart's principal residence.

Goldeneye was originally the home of Ian Fleming, and he wrote his James Bond novels there. Chris's mother Blanche lived just up the road at Bolt House, and up the hill from Blanche was Firefly, the residence of the great Noel Coward. This little corner of Jamaica was and is a perfect escape. It's out of the way and not easy to get to.

Here's the main house:



In the old days a trip to Goldeneye wasn't exactly easy. The road from the airport in Montego Bay was a mess, and it could take three hours to drive the twenty-six miles. It was so bad that it was better to take a small plane or helicopter

from Montego Bay or Kingston.

I like arriving by copter. I remember the first time I came in at night and we landed on the tennis court. I remember driving in the night from Mo Bay on a moonless election night and almost hitting a black cow in the middle of the road, then driving through a town where the entire population seemed to be standing in the road celebrating the election by firing guns into the air.

But no matter how crazy it was getting there, it was always worth it. The house and grounds were beautiful. The beach was private, the water perfect, the food the height of masterful Jamaican home cooking. Fish fresh from the sea, fat chickens running around the grounds, exotic fruits dropping from the trees. And there are trees and bushes and vines everywhere. The big change I noticed on this trip was how much the place had grown, literally. The property was always lush, but decades of planting have made the place a jungle garden of incredible diversity.



During the years I worked for Island Records it was nothing to hop on Chris's jet and go to Goldeneye for the weekend, so I was there. The first time I took my wife down Chris invited us, as is his custom with favored guests, to plant trees in the garden. I planted a Bombay Mango and Gina planted a grapefruit tree. Gee, that was twelve years ago. That little clump of dirt with a shoot rising from it. It was like waking up one day and suddenly discovering the kids have all grown up. And Gina was happy that her tree is bigger than mine. Well, we'll see about that in the long run. But it's great to wake up in the morning to a glass of fresh orange juice and a plate of incredibly perfect exotic fruits which come from trees planted by the likes of Princess Margaret or Michael Caine or Larry Mullen, Jr. There are papayas, pineapples, mangos, the purple starapple, the brown cinnamony naseberry, the sweetsop.





The Fleming house is sizeable, especially by Jamaican standards, but it has only four bedrooms. So some years ago Chris began building smaller structures around the property—a villa for himself, one for his mother, one for an office. Soon there was a little village, fronting on the sea and on an azure, river-like lagoon, and it was probably the layout of the place, as much as anything, that gave Chris the idea of opening Goldeneye to the public. A factor in the decision, of course, was the fact that he had another house on the island, a very special farm in old plantation country, a magical spot that's a bit like Africa and a bit like Ireland.

Each villa has its own place to swim, and its own garden and verandas, and its own personality. Each has a name taken from a Bond girl. We were staying in Honey Chile, which is actually two little houses connected by a roof. There's a big bathtub in the bedroom and a fantastic outdoor shower with a serious water flow. The other building is basically a living room and a kitchen, and Oscar slept there, loving the idea of a house to himself. Other villas have two or three bedrooms. I remember spending time a few years back at Domino, watching my friend Hooman play backgammon with Dickie Jobson, a legendary local playboy, for thousands of dollars. The secret of their game was that nobody ever paid off, but it sounded good when one of them was up twenty grand.



Every time I turn a corner at Goldeneye there's a funny memory. Rita Marley drinking Goldeneye cocktails after debarking from the giant bus she uses to travel the island in; Naomi Campbell calling Chris "Daddy"; Martha Stewart heading out for a dancehall in Manolo Blahnik high heels with Dickie Jobson in pursuit; Anh Duong going for a nocturnal skinny dip; and walking by the villa of Chris's ninety-year-old mother and discovering a copy of the *Breakfast at Tiffany's* film script, with Audrey Hepburn's signature on the the cover, just sitting on the veranda.



After a few days a Goldeneye I was feeling nice and chill, and it was time to go back to New York and enter the fray once again. The main house, which had been occupied by guests during our stay, was empty, and so I had a chance to show it my son Oscar, who had never been there. He has a vague idea who James Bond is, and no idea who Ian Fleming was. He hasn't even seen the film version of Fleming's *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* yet, but he loved the décor of the house, the crazy giant Asian carvings that Barbara Hulaniki decorated the place with, and he thought the Fleming bedroom's bed was spectacular. It is incredibly massive, made from giant bamboo. It's so massive you have to give it a wide berth, and one night when I was staying in that room I sleepwalked toward the bathroom for a pee and smashed my little toe on the bamboo. I remember at breakfast looking at my swollen, purple little piggy toe and saying to Chris, *I think I broke my toe on that bed.* "Oh," he said, with interest. "Princess Margaret broke her toe on that bed!"



I returned to New York refreshed, with no injuries, but a little sunburn. I knew I was strong again. I survived the return trip on Air Jamaica, on a flight that was three hours late and with flight attendants who seemed to have gone to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Charm School. The last time I wrote a letter to the chairman of Air Jamaica, after they tried to seat my two-year-old by himself, it began, "Once Aeroflot was the worst airline in the world..."

Anyway, my Goldeneye vacation made me ready for anything. And now I'm saving for my own jet.

April 01, 2008

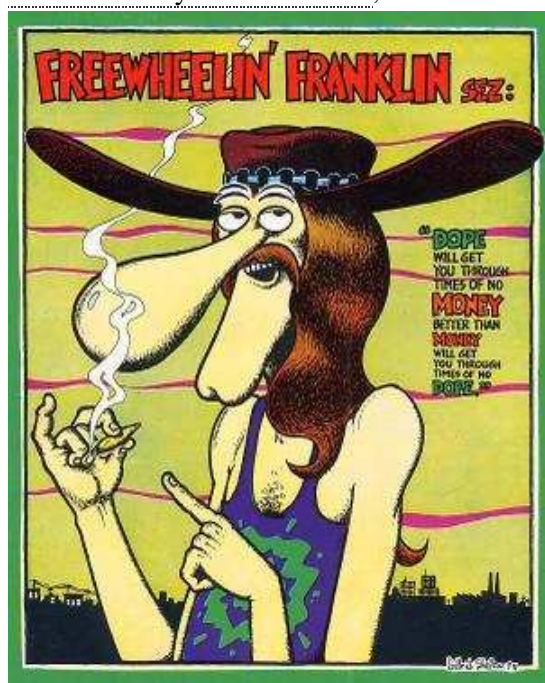
[Care and Travel](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#)

[Email this post](#) | [Reddit It](#) | [Digg This](#) | [Add to del.icio.us](#) | [Share on Facebook](#)

Some Things Just Aren't Done

Sorry I haven't posted lately. I've been up to my jade-green fedora in work. Hopefully I will return to a more genteel existence soon. This overworked condition is making me cranky, and when I'm cranky I start noticing things that bother me. Here are a few of them.

Leather hippie hats: Absolutely no one can get away with wearing a leather-brimmed hat. You know, those leather, cowboy-type hats. I saw a guy walking down Houston Street in one yesterday, and if I had been wearing a sword... Well, this is not the type of headgear that should be worn in an urban area, or even, when you think about it, on a pig farm. I don't care if you are wearing fringed buckskin pants and riding a Harley Davidson or if you are in the the Doobie Brothers, you are not getting away it. I don't care if you have feathers from some rare bird stuck in the hat's band. The only character who ever got away with wearing a leather hippie hat was Freewheelin' Franklin of the Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers, and that's because he was a cartoon. Even Crocodile Dundee wouldn't wear one.



Square-toed shoes: I know this will be controversial, but I've been thinking about it for ten years. Square-toed shoes are jive. I am not talking about Lou "the Toe" Groza's kicking shoe (*left*), which has been obsolete anyway since Garo Yepremian demonstrated once and for all the superiority of soccer-style kicking for distance and accuracy. I am not talking about Frye Boots or any other footwear with an industrial or practical excuse for their existence. I am talking about fashion. Square shoes make you look like a Dutch insurance adjuster. The only character who could get away with square-toed shoes is Donald Duck. Or maybe Howard the Duck.

Sneakers that look influenced by science fiction: I'm not naming any names here because we've got advertisers, but shoes with hydraulics, springs, and various scientific, pseudo-scientific, or architectural influences are simply trying too hard. The same for shoes which are sold in accordance with some sort of philosophy. I don't spend a lot of time listening to the collected works of Sean Combs or Jay-Z, but I do have to admire them for one thing. They made it cool not to wear sneakers. They dress like gentlemen. Wearing sneakers to the job—unless you are an athlete—is a clear sign that you have given up on advancement or on being taken seriously. Or if your name happens to be something like "Turtle." There are, of course, some exceptions. White Keds slip-ons. Anything designed by [Comme des Garçons](#) or [Dries van Noten](#). And, of course, classic Air Jordans, Converse All-Stars, or Jack Purcells can be worn when taking the dog for a walk or polishing the rims. But yesterday I saw a pair

of clear plastic sneakers. Now those might be interesting if worn sockless with earthworms or something added, but basically athletic shoes dependent on the concept of modernism are a dicey proposition. Sure, they are comfortable. But so are any shoes that cost more than five hundred dollars. Save your money. I have noticed lately that I see far fewer men wearing baseball caps on the streets of New York. I take full credit for shaming them out of it. Let's see what we can do here, guys.

Showing chest: There are times when this is okay, like when you're on the back porch having a bloody mary and trying to keep the newspaper from shaking, but there is a guy in my office who wears V-neck sweaters with no shirt underneath. He is so never getting a raise.

Vestigial Pockets: Maybe I'm an old-fashioned form-follows-function guy, but shouldn't pockets be usable? And if they are well below ass level, well, what do you put in them? I feel like I'm seeing less extreme boxer-shorts-display via low-riding jeans (except among white suburban ebonics students), but this has been replaced by designer jeans with pockets on the hamstrings. When I see this that old Clash song keeps popping into my head, "I'm So Bored with the U.S.A."

Tube socks: There is no excuse for wearing tube socks. Ever. Even to the gym. All socks must have heels. I wouldn't even use a tube sock as an emergency head-cover for my 5-wood.

Pants be draggin': If there were a law against your trousers bunching up on your shoes then most of Congress would be in the slammer. Which might be a good thing. Maybe a real "fashion police" could do more for this country than tough law enforcement types like Rudy Giuliani and Eliot Spitzer. I will never wear my pants in the style that my grandmother called "highwater," as some fashion leaders like the radical dandy Thom Browne do, but far better to show some sock or lack thereof than to tromp around with ten-percent of your trousers bagged around the ankles and polishing your shoes. Although the Presidential valet seems to have cleaned up George W.'s act in his second term, he came into office looking like a hick CEO, with pants bunched up and sleeves heading toward knuckles. Who here doesn't understand the difference between "break" and "bunch?"



Brand-new distressed: I've harped on this before, too, but the real meaning of decadence has nothing to do with sex, drugs, or rock and roll. It has to do with stuff like carbon footprints and artificially worn-out clothes. A man should wear out his own jeans, otherwise he is a poseur. The markings on one's jeans should reflect the hours spent kneeling on a roof replacing cedar shingles, or the fall you took off your BSA Lightning where you skidded over fifty yards of asphalt. Not long ago I was walking on the Bowery, where one used to encounter what we blithely called bums and which still has its share of disadvantaged, and I ran into a legendary rock-and-roll manager. His jeans were torn, he was wearing frayed Converse sneakers with no laces, and he was wearing a pea coat that was in shreds. I asked him if everything was all right, and he pointed out that each item he was wearing was new and from a top designer. He even showed me the label in the pea coat, which obviously cost four figures. I advised him to immediately brush his teeth and comb his hair so people might realize that this was a fashion look.

By the way, I just got a fantastic digital Leica and would have loved to document these horrid abuses myself, but I haven't figured out how to use the thing yet.

March 17, 2008

[Style](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(6\)](#)

[Email this post](#) | [Reddit It](#) | [Digg This](#) | [Add to del.icio.us](#) | [Share on Facebook](#)

Going Corporate in Style

The Style Guy has gone to work for a living. If this comes as a shock to you, imagine how I feel. I haven't actually gone to an office daily outside my domicile for...well...generations. But here I am, once again incorporated, and I'm a boss. It is a bit strange, but it's a little like riding a bike. You never forget. And it's also been amusing. I have a staff and I like

working with them very much. They are happy. That makes *me* happy. And like my old boss Mr. Warhol, I do believe that business can be an art.

Going to the office daily has made it far more interesting when it comes to getting dressed in the morning. I visualize my day—the meetings I'm going to have, whatever business lunch or drinks might be on the schedule, and whatever tasks I might have to perform.

Mostly I have worn a suit. I'm figuring Fridays are good for sport jackets. Today I met with writers, so I wore Supreme jeans, an old Issey Miyake striped shirt with a vertical breast pocket, and a stretchy jersey blazer from Freemans with a shawl collar. I looked just the right amount of haute and just the right amount of bohemian.

Tomorrow I have a serious meeting. I plan to wear a dark gray wool suit and a sober tie. When you're going to fire someone, I say wear black shoes and belt. A white shirt is good. If you're going to wear something in your pocket, make it linen in case tears erupt.

When you're going to balance the budget and influence the numbers people, checks are good. Wear black or blue, not red. But here's the perfect tie for impressing a CFO or banker.



It has *balance sheet* written all over it. And how about a Thom Browne Brooks Brothers Black Fleece pinstripe wool three-button suit to top things off? Black Fleece has been a brilliant moment. Radical conservative. I can't believe that Brooks hasn't signed Thom up for life. They'll never find a designer with a deeper connection to the essence of the brand, which is related to modernism.

Part of leadership is projecting an image of realism. When the weather is changeable: Carry a raincoat and umbrella. Practicality begins at the top. Hats are still exotic in the business world. They are so out you don't even see them on *Mad Men*.

It's important to project creativity. At least when you're a boss. I used to freelance as a creative in advertising and I'd get a kick out of showing up for work at a big agency wearing a beautiful suit, shirt, tie, and shoes, because I knew I'd be working with guys in rock-and-roll T-shirts and flip flops. They had such clichéd ideas of creativity. It was like growing a pinky fingernail long to prove you don't work with your hands. Real creatives can dress with zeal and complexity. I feel like I'm setting a tone here.

When you're going to a photo shoot: Denim suit? Sport coat with jeans? Safari-jacket-type unconstructed cotton sport coat? Arty tie? For a heavy art-world day this seems like the perfect kind of tie—figurative but with a subtle chromatic palette. It's by Ralph Lauren.



From Hermès, here's a perfect tie for getting some writing done. For those days when wisdom is required, you can combine it with a tweed jacket with elbow patches.



For lunch with publishers and ad reps, here's a tie with a Bacchic theme that projects a certain savoir faire:



Sometimes stealthy creativity is called for. I like wearing something that seems quite conservative on first impression and then becomes surprising or even mystifying on further examination. Here is a good example of a tie that works two ways. It's a hand-painted number from John Pearse of London. With one's jacket buttoned it looks quite conservative. But after cocktails, open the jacket to reveal the art of living. Suspenders can be employed in the same fashion, or socks.



Here's a vintage Cardin tie that also permits a subtle usage that subverts expectations.



We are at a very interesting point in American cultural history. In many ways the work uniform has never been so rigid and boring—consider the flap Barack Obama has generated simply by not wearing the American flag lapel pin that has apparently become required by the Patriot Actors who dominate the political establishment. Obama is controversial simply by refraining from a rote cliché. I'll bet he has some stars-and-stripes underwear in his drawer. But his cool and composed appearance, like that of JFK, is showing us once again that thoughtful elegance can be a transcendent force in our culture.

As I write this tomorrow is Friday. Spring training is underway. Nature is beginning to assert herself in subtle, seductive ways. I think I'll go with a sport jacket tomorrow. Suede shoes. Blue end-on-end shirt. And maybe this vintage Calvin Curtis tie which has *augury* written all over it. Clothes are a language and we can use that language to lead our crews toward promising lands.



February 29, 2008

[Style](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(4\)](#)

[Email this post](#) | [Reddit It](#) | [Digg This](#) | [Add to del.icio.us](#) | [Share on Facebook](#)

Dressing for Dinner

THEN:



NOW:



When you get your tax rebate check from the Federal Government, I hope you do the right thing and spend it. You're not going to help jump-start a stalled economy if you just *save* that \$600 to \$1200. Besides, that would be so boring. This is free money! Keep it moving! It's not going to get this country moving again if you use it to pay down your credit card debt. No, the patriotic thing is to go out and spend it, and for me the American way requires that it be spent on conspicuous consumption. That's really the engine that drives the economy, let's face it. What killed the middle class was that nobody wanted to be middle class any more. That's the only possible explanation for a majority of Americans going along with policies designed to help the rich. They all plan to be rich.

I haven't gotten my check yet, but I have done my part to help the country out of the blahs by buying something absolutely unnecessary: a pair of evening shoes from [Barker Black](#). I have a theory that if we all dressed for dinner everything would be okay, and these shoes have really perked up my black-tie look. For several years I have considered getting a pair of calf opera pumps and I could have sworn I'd seen them at Brooks Brothers recently, but on my last visit there all the so-called evening shoes looked like something a tap-dancing troupe would wear. I'm not a patent leather type of guy.

Paul Stuart does have a very beautiful, simple black calf pump without a bow, and I would have bought it but they didn't have my size. But recently my walks around the neighborhood have taken me past the Barker Black boutique on Elizabeth Street, and I've found myself wandering in to consider their wares. This old British shoe company has been relaunched in recent years, offering beautifully made shoes that give traditional styles some edge. Sometimes a little more edge than I require, as with their loafers with crossbones. I know that skulls and bones are very popular today, but I can't help but agree with my wife that the skull and bones is the 21st-century equivalent of the happy face.

I did have my eye on a very swell pair of paddock boots, but then something happened. I was on my way to L.A. for the black-tie opening of the Eli Broad Collection at the [Los Angeles County Museum of Art](#). I had my kit already, but one look at my black calf Belgian shoes told me that they needed soles, so I took them to my local on Bleecker Street and said I needed them in a few hours. And then came the call. I was being picked up in an hour. I knew what to do. I ran to Barker Black and picked up their take on the opera pump, probably exceeding my refund considerably. Their version of the classic is slightly racy, with that striped piping and the perforations on the toe. Just the thing for a haute boheme type soiree in LALA land.

I have no doubt that I had the best-dressed feet at this over-the-top opening, and I found that striped piping went perfectly with a pair of black-and-white horizontal-striped Paul Smith socks. I tend to go with the classic black-tie look, foregoing such Oscar-wear as the long tie or the notch lapel, but these slightly fashion-forward shoes were the perfect punctuation for a classic tux.

So I encourage all you fellows to take that Federal check and go out and pick up some new studs or a white dinner jacket or maybe a few bottles of Pol Roger Cuvee Sir Winston Churchill and join me in a celebration of economic recovery. I'm sure Barack Obama would agree that few things give one more hope than freshly pressed evening clothes.

February 20, 2008

[Shoes](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(5\)](#)

[Email this post](#) | [Reddit It](#) | [Digg This](#) | [Add to del.icio.us](#) | [Share on Facebook](#)

Dandies of the Apocalypse

I was walking the dog down my once-bohemian, now-chichi block the other night, and I saw a good-looking young guy and a fine-looking young gal, arm in arm, strolling toward my favorite *ristorante*. He was dressed in black, wearing a bowler hat, a slim black coat, and slim black pants, and was carrying an umbrella. Rain was possible. I thought he looked really smart. Usually you only see a bowler or a derby on TV, on something like *Deadwood* or *McCabe and Mrs. Miller* or *A Clockwork Orange*. I can't think of anyone rocking a bowler significantly since Mr. Steed on *The Avengers*. Somehow it didn't look theatrical, but right. Hmm.

Well then I was looking through the men's runway shows and what do you know? Bowlers! And other Chaplin-like accoutrements, as you'll note if you look at [men.style.com](#)'s top ten looks. Gaultier, Yohji, and Junya Watanabe all featured those crisp, black, short brims. Now, I'm not about to rush out and get myself a bowler. With my big face I'd probably look like Lou Costello. But somehow it *does* seem strangely right now. Dressed-up looks—eccentric, perhaps, but dressed-up—are back big time. I think we're seeing a new kind of dandyism, a dressed-up bohemianism.



The Gaultier show was a knockout. The best dandified looks we've seen in a long time. Not just bowlers with skinny trousers, but really sharp tailoring, taking Savile Row to the races. I think doing Hermès has rubbed off on the maestro, and the looks were urbane and elegant and snazzy.

Jean-Paul Gaultier's fall collection is modern dandyism done to perfection. And that's what dandyism is all about: perfection. This is exuberant, challenging, rakish, and luxurious. It's about impeccable tailoring with attitude. Gaultier flouts the rules of traditional kit while flaunting its workmanship, quality, and attention to detail. The collection is eccentric and cool, but really wearable. I could get away with most of this stuff, and the bold-striped blazer and pants are things I'd give up pasta to get into.



Every season the men's shows have some interesting new directions and some well-calculated outrages, and this one was no different. It's getting so men's runway is as arty and nutty as the women's. I don't know if it's Barack Obama's Kennedy vibe coming on, but I'm feeling all sixties again. And there was a lot of stuff on the runway that would have captured the fancy of Brian Jones and Jimi Hendrix. Alexander McQueen showed a sort of uber-minidress that looked like it was made of burgundy shag carpeting. A kind of a fab, over-the-top solution for freezing days. I remember once reviewing the new designer clothes with Fred Pressman of Barneys. The always elegant Fred was about seventy then. He was dressed in a gray flannel Kiton suit and his trademark black knit tie, and he was eying an almost theatrical Gaultier overcoat. He said, "If I were twenty years younger and three inches taller, I'd wear this." That's how I feel about McQueen.



The brilliant Stefano Pilati has brought an exciting men's style to Yves St. Laurent—cool suits with extraordinary personality. Flaring trousers, shapely jackets, and subtly out-there colors. Why not wear a green suit or a plum suit? I remember when YSL first changed menswear—I had a fantastic blue velvet blazer he made, and it went with all sorts of odd trousers. Pilati's blazers evoke that same verve, and his odd trousers are spectacular. Check out the whole show on men.style.com. Tim Blanks writes that the collection reflects the Warhol Factory. He's right. We dressed like this. Although our pants weren't quite this good, and I think I like these 4-on-6 blazers even more than the old ones. There's nothing freaky about YSL. This is classic cool at its very best—luxurious but a bit louche. Miles Davis and Dexter Gordon would have been all over this stuff.



Ann Demeulemeester showed a rich hippie look. The problem with hippies was that they weren't rich enough. Maybe the new new age will change all that. I think the imagination and variety of style of that time has been forgotten. There is a fantastic passage in Norman Mailer's *Armies of the Night* where he describes the hippie horde that assembled to march on the Pentagon to protest the Vietnam War. Mailer sees Arab sheiks, Park Avenue doorman greatcoats, Daniel Boone in buckskin, wild Indians with feathers, Charlie Chaplin, Foreign Legionnaires, Turkish shepherds and Roman senators, gurus, and samurai in dirty smocks. "They were close to being assembled from all the intersections between history and the comic books, between legend and television, the Biblical archetypes and the movies."

Mailer saw this phenomenon as LSD tearing away the veil between past and present. Today we see the same thing happening around us, as our culture has become an identity grab bag. There is no convention or authenticity, so we choose our images from a vast repertoire of historical roles, sometimes collaging disparate looks to create something new. Demeuelemeester showed a fusion of disparate influences—olive, drab, fringed Victorian shawls, felt hats from the attic, fur and feathers, and flower prints. A little from Grandma and a little from Grandpa are combined to create a slick and perfected version of a venerable rock-and-roll outsider look.



At Alexander McQueen there were tartan poncho-and-kilt suits with rasta-size fedoras and blanket-wrapped heads. It was a sort of Inca/Highlander fusion. Imagine a civilization halfway between *Braveheart* and *Apocalypto*. The new McQueen is right-on, should we go psychedelic and try to restage a...well, not a Summer of Love, I guess a Fall of Love. Would I wear these things? I wish I could. I couldn't handle the schemata. I'd look like a muppet. But I would wear this hat (above). I think it might be thinning.





The always exciting showman John Galiano, whose every collection looks like a movie, from swashbuckling pirate sagas to post-apocalyptic meltdowns, has gone sort of Tudor highwayman on us this time. His troops marched out in big fat Henry VIII berets and leather and fur with touches of brocade, ribbon, and velvet, studs, and chain mail kits, layered the way they did back in the day when one wore a considerable amount of one's wardrobe at all times. The look is gnarly, tough—over-the-top yet roguishly pony. Will we all be wearing executioners masks next fall? Maybe not, but if we do decide to march on the Pentagon once more, I'm wearing Galiano.

February 01, 2008

[Fashion](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(5\)](#)

[Email this post](#) | [Reddit It](#) | [Digg This](#) | [Add to del.icio.us](#) | [Share on Facebook](#)

Global Warming, Local Chilling

Extremes of weather provide interesting people-watching, perhaps especially in cities, and the wild swings of temperature we have been experiencing in recent years make it all the more amusing. There I was, walking to Whole Foods on Houston Street in what is almost a late-afternoon ritual. It was the second week in January, and it had been 60 degrees out. A fellow jogged by in shorts, and then a middle-aged woman emerged from the grocery store in a long overcoat, scarf, and flip-flops. I actually saw quite a few flip-flops that day, and several pairs of shorts. But what I have noticed repeatedly is that a large segment of the population dresses according to the calendar, and not prevailing conditions. On a balmy day you will see down jackets, gloves, scarves, and ski caps aplenty. Such overdressing tends to make the perpetrator look like a schizophrenic. I'm sure you've noticed that street crazies dress like it's winter in the summer. I used to wonder if it was because the homeless tended to wear everything they owned for security reasons, but then I discovered that this compulsive layering among the mentally unsound was noted by Shakespeare.

Here's a tip: Check the temperature and forecast before you go outside. I have the weather set up on the "Dashboard" of my MacBook. As I write it is 47 and sunny. Light overcoat, light scarf, and fedora weather. I think men should wear hats. They keep your brain warm; protect you from small falling objects; give you a regal, crowned feeling; and generally top off your look.

A scarf isn't really necessary today, but it's cool enough to get away with one, and so I'm wearing my Dries van Noten silk-and-wool scarf embroidered with flowers and a snake. When the temperature drops I'll move into a larger, heavier scarf. Here's the Dries van Noten scarf—the brown fedora is from [Worth & Worth](#) and the green pea jacket is vintage, Austrian I think.



When we're below freezing and there's a wind chill, I start thinking about my ears. This may mean the big fake fur hat with ear flaps or the real rabbit-skin trooper cap. Don't start on the rabbits. I eat them, so I might as well wear them. And you know the little critter wasn't trapped.

The other alternative is the stocking or watch cap. I have one in a French sailor-stripe from [Saint James](#) with a matching scarf. And I have a really silly Norway ski cap that I bought in Oslo when it was starting to blizzard. I don't like earmuffs, and I have no problem wearing this hat with an overcoat and dressy kit. The point is to look sensible. Here I am in my Norwegian street vendor pom-pom ski cap, with the Saint James scarf.



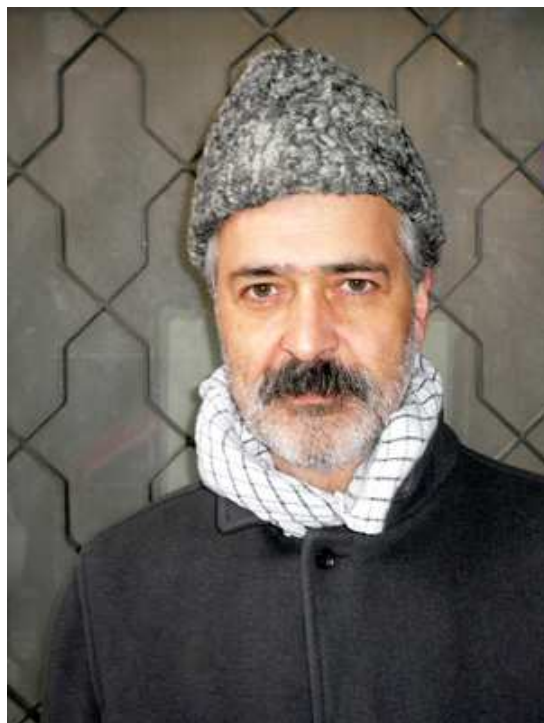
Guys walking around in suits, hatless, on a freezing day may feel macho, but they look stupid. They look as stupid as the guys you see dressed that way trying to run between raindrops, maybe holding the *Financial Times* over their heads. Get with it, chumps! When it rains, you wear a raincoat and carry an umbrella. When it rains heavily, or snows, you wear boots or galoshes. If you don't, you look stupid.

On chilly days in Midtown I often see men in suits, overcoats, and baseball caps. This looks preposterous, and it seems

especially so if it's a Yankees or a Mets cap. If it's Titleist you just feel sad for the guy, and if it's plain and non-adjustable and possibly heavy wool or leather, you think, "Well, he's trying." Trying, but failing.

There are several other natty alternatives—the touring cap, aka coppola; the golfer's or newsboy cap; the deerstalker, aka "the Sherlock Holmes cap", with a double brim and earflaps; the traditional Persian diplomat, which is often made of Persian lamb; and the similar Astrakhan or Politburo hat, the type favored by Brezhnev, Gorbachev, and other cold warriors.

Here's a shot of my friend Hooman Majd in his diplomat. Apt in his case because he's very diplomatic and his father was a career Iranian diplomat (Hooman writes for the Huffington Post and his informative and amusing book *The Ayatollah Begs to Differ* will be published by Doubleday this year.) The scarf was swiped from the Revolutionary Guard.



It's similar to the Arab scarf, the *kaffiyeh* or *shemagh*, which we see in the news on all sorts of Palestinians. It's standard kit anywhere where there's desert because it's cotton and warms you when it's chilly, but also protects you from blowing sand and the like when it's hot. These have become a quite popular fashion item among young folks in Britain. And not-so-young folks like Sting, Colin Farrell... and David Beckham wears one, mate.

I have one given to me by an old Palestinian girlfriend (a Christian, actually, nothing Muslim about it), although I haven't worn it much since an angry older lady punched me in Dean & DeLuca. I guess she thought it meant I support Hamas. I do support the Palestinian people in their struggles, but that doesn't mean I'm anti-Jewish. Incredible how many people take offense. Actually, you often see them on our boys and girls serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Especially the Special Forces cats in beards and shades. Here I am in a *kaffiyeh* with a tweed cap from Bates of Jermyn Street, London. Sunglasses by Fabien Baron, coat by Anderson & Sheppard.



The tam is a nice hat, too. They're big in Jamaica, where they are made to contain dreadlocks. Since I don't have those, I can pull my rasta-made tam down to cover my ears. Here I'm wearing a Jamaican tam with a reversible cashmere-and-paisley silk scarf I bought from Barneys a few years back.



For cold weather it's nice to have a big scarf. This cashmere scarf by [Armand Diradourian](#) for Paul Smith runs a spectrum of greens, from dark to Kelly, and it's 28" x 78." A bit pricey, this was my big Christmas present to myself. The green fedora is from Worth & Worth of West 57th Street, New York.



When it's absolutely freeze-your-ass-off cold there's nothing like serious ear coverage, which is provided by this fake fur hat from Paul Smith from several collections ago. It's acrylic, so only trees died for my ears. I found an even more over-the-top one by Gaultier about a decade ago at Maxfield in L.A., and I hesitated and lost it. Tried to track one down from Gaultier in Paris later, but too late. I learned by lesson. When you see something great, buy it.



Okay, I'm going to be watching. I don't want to see you guys out there shivering in your suits or flitting between raindrops. Real men dress for adversity.

January 22, 2008

[Style](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(8\)](#)

[Email this post](#) | [Reddit It](#) | [Digg This](#) | [Add to del.icio.us](#) | [Share on Facebook](#)

Dandy in the Underworld

John Pearse, a most artistic tailor who enjoys my custom, has his shop on Meard Street, a quaint byway in London's

Soho now restricted to pedestrian traffic. On one of my visits I noticed an interesting sign on the front door of the house across the way: **THIS IS NOT A BROTHEL. THERE ARE NO PROSTITUTES AT THIS ADDRESS.** I asked John about the sign and in his weary and sketchy way he explained that there was an eccentric fellow living there whose rather unconventional “lifestyle” might have led to some misunderstandings.

Here is Pearse by the door.

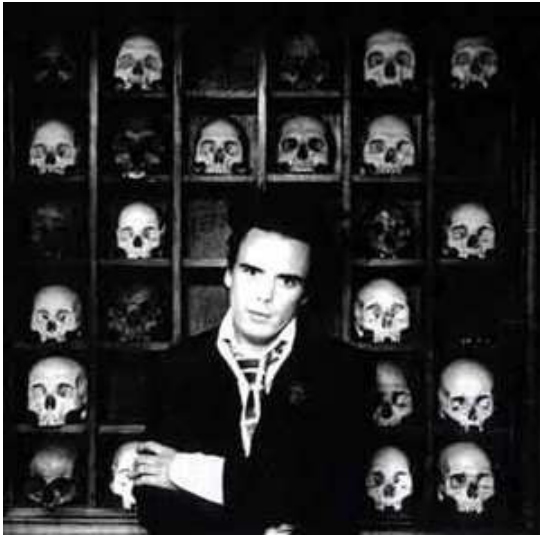


Since Soho is one of those neighborhoods (the sort we don't have anymore in New York) where a harmless skin trade takes place routinely alongside more conventional industries, I didn't think much more of it until I was browsing through “The Affected Provincial's Almanack,” the excellent blog by Lord Whimsy that I dealt with in my last entry here, and I came upon some YouTube film clips of one **Sebastian Horsley** speaking on music, sex, drugs, death, dandyism, and his book, *Dandy in the Underworld*. Yes, that is Horsley's door opposite John's shop. I confirmed it with John, who also confirmed that he had put special hypodermic syringe pockets in Horsely's jackets. Naturally I immediately ordered the book.

Those clips are riveting entertainment. No? There is so little genuine outrageousness (or sense of outrage) these days that Mr. Horsely's casual asides are as warming as a slap in the face followed by a nice cup of PG Tips. I was surprised that I hadn't heard of this fellow before, although I dimly recalled hearing of an Englishman journeying to the Philippines to be crucified on Good Friday, as extremist young male Jesus enthusiasts there are wont to do (too riveting, that video), but I wasn't familiar with this very amusing character. (I began to realize that I have not been spending nearly enough time in England. I have to get rich or the dollar has to perk up.) The occasional club crawl should have crossed his trail long ago.

Anyway, Horsley is the genuine article; he is a real phony, and the story of his life is far better than anything made up. He is the perfect example of someone whose extravagant pose has become an undeniable, organic reality. The harrowingly hilarious *Dandy in the Underworld* is billed as an “unauthorized autobiography.” Clever, but Ray Davies did it first with his fictionalized confessions *X-Ray*. Yet Horsley's book is much more than that; it is a saga among the annals of self-indulgence. *Dandy* stands on its own, even as it stumbles, trips, and freefalls through the wreckage of his precarious life.

Here's Horsley in his book jacket photo.



Mr. Horsley comes from a family of wealthy degenerates and his story, especially his childhood, I suppose, would be painful to follow if his view of it were not so funny. I put a lot of stock in opening sentences. How's this? "When Mother found out she was pregnant with me she took an overdose. Father gave her the pills." Horsley is born, nevertheless, and he concludes: "I was so appalled I couldn't talk for two years." There begins a great love affair with himself that continues today, and an adventure that encompasses careers as vandal, punk rocker, art student, kept catamite of a convicted murderer, parachutist, husband, homosexual, heterosexual, alcoholic, crackhead, junkie, prostitute addict, male prostitute, shark aficionado, sex columnist, lie-about, self-publicist, and painter. Horsley's life has had so many low points that it doesn't surprise that he is a failed suicide, and yet he has this fantastic way of picking himself up out of the gutter (perhaps by the huge points on his Turnbull and Asser "Horsley shirts,") that I came to admire his heroic resilience.

Incidentally, the title of this book is taken from Mr. Horsley's first hero, Marc Bolan, whose final album was entitled *Dandy in the Underworld*. Interestingly (mildly), T.Rex's twelfth album was released on March 11th, 1977, and thirty-one years from that date *Dandy in the Underworld's* American edition will be released. No reason to wait. I recommend the English edition, which can be had speedily from Amazon and the like, and usually British editions have better covers. I recommend hardcover because chances are you will drop it while laughing. Anyway, Bolan was a profound influence on Horsley, who in fact resembles Adam Ant, and *Dandy* was a fitting final testament from Bolan, who died six months later when a Mini he was riding in struck a sycamore tree.



Now his lovers have left him / And his youth's ill spent / He cries in the dungeons and tries to repent / But change is a monster and changing is hard / But he'll freeze away his summers in his / Underground yard

Yes, Horsley is intimately familiar with the monstrous, and he has undergone more changes than most Hindus do in a cycle of lifetimes, but this is precisely the nature of his possible and deeply flawed greatness. I believe there is a considerable romantic heart behind the fabulously baroque bluster and arch wit Horsley seems to generate without

effort. His vision is dark (well, *darkish*) and he may easily be accused of cynicism, but I find his cynicism classical and redeeming, and this is a fellow who has a lot of redeeming to do. He is not cruel; he is kind, and if it is mainly to himself, well, that's a start. Like anyone who steps on a cross voluntarily, he would be a redeemer if he could, and I believe his sentences do the redeeming for him. Rarely one encounters such a treasury of *bon mots*.

"Style is when they're running you out of town and you make it look like you're leading the parade," is actually on the same page as, "If you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there."

Although Horsley seems currently to abstain enough to get things done, he is not a quitter in the fashionable sense. He revels in sex, drugs, and I suppose rock and roll with heroic resolve and fantastical relish despite the disasters that bring him low again and again. And somehow that tarnished enthusiasm seems more sane or at least more glorious than a dozen highly-recommended steps precisely taken. *Seems* is the keyword, I suppose, but I can't help but be taken by sentiments such as "Sex is just a sublimation of drug addiction." And, "I remember the first time I had *real* sex—I still have the receipt."

Lest I spoil the ending, I'll leave the rest to Horsley. He's so good at the last word.

January 08, 2008

[Style](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(3\)](#)

[Email this post](#) | [Reddit It](#) | [Digg This](#) | [Add to del.icio.us](#) | [Share on Facebook](#)

2008, a Year Made for Dandies

Happy New Year? You bet!

I meant to keep in touch more, but I get so wrapped up in the holidays that sometimes I forget my responsibilities. We try to celebrate Christmas around here with all the pagan trimmings, and this year I had to spend hours cleaning up my basement just to locate the ornaments for the crucial Christmas tree... which, of course, has nothing to do with Christ, but lots to do with green—evergreen, in fact. We put a lot of lights and balls and figures on the tree. I like to think of them as minor lares and penates, descendants of the old household gods kept on the hearth in the Roman household.

Here are a few of my favorite ornaments. The cold-blooded creatures:



The gherkin, or dill pickle, and the sock monkey:



Mammy from *Gone With the Wind*:





Not to mention the wise old owl, the Hindu marching band, the [Joseph Kosuth](#) silver balls, the glow-in-the-dark Colonel Sanders, and the Pomeranian dog, to name but a few. What better sort of thing is there to collect? My friend [Robert Hawkins](#), over in London, has a swell tree, too. Here's a look at his.



Well, today the tree is coming down. As much as I hate to see it go, I hate permanent Christmas decorations even more. They're like tape left on windows months after a hurricane has passed. No, we're on to a new year now, and I have a feeling this is going to be a memorable one. There's a sort of 1967 buzz in my ears. Maybe I left the amplifier on. But maybe, just maybe, this year will see a cultural revolution, or at least a *volution*. I've got a feeling 2008 is going to be just dandy.

So in the spirit of catching up, I've been meaning to mention a great man for some time now, and this new year seems like an appropriate occasion.

I wish I could remember who turned me to [Lord Whimsy](#). Please remind me, forgotten sir. Perhaps it was my itinerant snaphooter colleague [the Sartorialist](#). Apologies for my absence of mind. It's the wine, perhaps. At any rate, [Lord Breaulove Swells Whimsy](#), as he calls himself (I doubt that a mother thought all that up), is the author of a very amusing and inspiring volume titled [The Affected Provincial's Companion, Volume One](#) (Bloomsbury, 2006), and the belletrist behind [the blog](#) (god, I hate that term, let's find another one) titled ["The Affected Provincial's Almanack: A Journal of Aesthetic Particulars and Speculative Living."](#) I try to check in there a few times a week, as if it were a sort of ethereal pub.

Here's a photo of Whimsy from his Almanac:





The novelette-sized *Companion* is a delightful collection of essays, homilies, poems, and social studies illustrated by Whimsy's own hand—which generally and genially exhorts the reader toward the veneration of endangered virtues and values. For one thing, the author is a gifted proponent of personality, and a well-armed enemy of the herd instinct so prevalent in our society. He is a self-confessed dandy, a connoisseur of trifles and niceties, and, it goes without saying, a gentleman and a scholar (in fact, a scholar of gentlemanliness). Tucked

within a setting of bibelots and bagatelles here are numerous gems of wit-born wisdom.

Videlicet:

"Once, sissies were mistaken for gentlemen; alas, now gentlemen are mistaken for sissies."

"A man's beard, that marvel of mandibular topiary and primeval source of virile powers, is the equivalent of an elk's antlers or a lion's mane—for it marks its owner as having completed his days a milk-lapping whelp, and heralds his becoming an adult male of the species."

"As opposed to ages past, the bon vivant of today can be known for doing something, but should be much more well known for being someone. The self is the bon vivant's main canvas and medium of choice."

Anyway, this is a must for the library, and a handy companion for the traveler. It will get you coast to coast by air more than once, as anything said well bears repeating. As for the blogue of Lord Whimsy (doesn't that look better?), it is a delightful source of knowledge that one is unlikely to find collected elsewhere. As someone who has spent a small fortune (by today's standards) on gardening, I have been particularly inspired by the horticultural notes he posts regularly. Actually, he's a big fauna fan too, and his postings give us a sort of underground Discovery Channel. Views of his "angel's trumpet" fill me with nostalgia for the *daturas* left behind when I abandoned ship vis-à-vis "the Hamptons." And I have mixed feelings about moving the country house from hardiness zone 7a to 5b. Whimsy got me all excited about a tree, the *Franklinia alatamaha*, which seems unlikely to grow in my new environs, but it seems like a dare. Anyway, Whimsy is an heroic, exemplary gardener, indoors and out. Here's a picture of his bog garden in winter.



One might take Whimsy (who would seem to be named Victor Allen Crawford III, he who holds the Lord's copyrights) for a retro personality, but that would be simplistic. This is a man who is not loathe to praise the works of mid-century modern designers like Tommy Parzinger and Finn Juhl or demonstrate an exquisite eye for mid-century ceramics. He explains his relationship to the past very nicely in a discussion of "trad" on the amusing website Kempt. Is Whimsy a Provincial? Well, he seems to live in New Jersey, near the City of Brotherly Love, which is where he appears to maintain a bastion of civilization against the assaults of vulgarities local, national, and international. I say wherever a fellow like this locates himself, that is a capital.

Another charming aspect of this author is that he belies in spectacular fashion the tired notion that to have style one must be homosexual. Whimsy is more living proof that you don't have to be gay to be a marginalized aesthete.

Anyway, I've just come back from vacation and all this typing has tired me. I have to run over to the private sale at Paul Smith. Why don't you switch over to the Affected Provincial's Almanack now and browse there for a while, while I get up the energy to prepare a new post on another, darker form of Dandyism-on-the-Rise.

January 03, 2008

[Miscellaneous](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(3\)](#)

[Email this post](#) | [Reddit It](#) | [Digg This](#) | [Add to del.icio.us](#) | [Share on Facebook](#)

The Art World Experience

Please bear with me. This is not going to be easy. I just got back from [Art Basel Miami Beach](#), which has become much, much more than a very large art fair. It is now a sort of a mega-convention in the classic, berserk, hog-wild, industry-wide sense. A convention, of course, is a place where people in the same line of work go ostensibly to do business, and then wind up doing everything else. But the art world consists of so many lines of work—imagine a convention that combines the qualities of the Raccoon Lodge, Trekkies, Tailhook, the Democrats, and the Republicans, and then embellish from there.

In old Hollywood movies, conventions were where married businessmen went to go wild with booze and babes. And there is a lot of going wild in Miami. Sometimes you can't tell the art dealers from the hookers without a business card. But A.B.M.B. is even more than a convention because the general public has taken it up like a spectator sport or a festival. It even partakes of pilgrimage in a sort of anti-Burning Man way. The dealers come to enrich themselves and the bourgeois come to improve their status, while yet others come more or less to rub against one another and get sticky in a validated context.

Me? I'm there to combine the opportunity to do a year's worth of gallery hopping in three days with the chance to get over the cough I've had for three weeks. I was also delighted to take Oscar, my seven-year-old son, to look at art and see what struck his fancy. And to do some laps in the pool at [The Raleigh](#).

Here is a seven-year-old looking at art.



Every year that I have attended Art Basel Miami Beach I have come to a new realization. The year before last, it was that the art world is the ultimate consumer of fashion. Last year it was the idea that the art fair had surpassed the biennials, Documenta, and all of the other highbrow institutional conclaves, becoming the organizing model of the art world. Art is no longer run by philosophy but money.

This year I began to see the art world as something much bigger than I'd ever suspected. The art fairs are now various things to various people. They are, yes, the Big Convention. The big culture convention. And this year it seemed that the partying had reached a frenzied, non-stop, almost desperate level. But the art world has clearly moved into a larger place in our society. And it has to do with money. Which everyone was talking about.

I was talking about it officially, having been recruited to moderate a panel discussion on "The Worth of Art," which, coincidentally, is the title of a book by Judith Benhamou-Huet published by [Assouline](#). She possessed the prettiest face and best French accent of the group, which also included David Ross, former director of the Whitney Museum and now curator of the [Artist Pension Trust](#); [Jeffrey Deitch](#), the P.T. Barnum of art dealers; and auctioneer [Simon de Pury](#) of [Phillips de Pury](#).

There has been much talk about price, since Jeff Koons's heart sculpture sold at auction for more than \$24 million, and since a Warhol quadrupled the previous record at \$71 million this year. Here's an art work about big money—a wood burning by Tom Sachs:





Some have greeted the high prices with indignation or consternation. Jerry Saltz, the art critic of *New York* magazine, has argued that high prices become part of art's content, disrupting its meaning. Critic Dave Hickey, often a chiding voice of reason, claims that the market has become a bubble, fed by "greedy artists and stupid collectors." And it is

true that art buying has been so frenzied that people have compared the action to the Tulip Bubble of 1637. But while everyone on our panel agreed that prices are extraordinary, no one predicted that the bubble, if there is one, might burst.

Jeffrey Deitch sees the tremendous growth of the market as a natural byproduct of the transition to an "information culture." Mr. de Pury pointed out that there is unprecedented liquidity in the market and that it may be that things are just getting warmed up, as more and more players enter the market. Mr. Ross and I pointed out that the art market enjoys many advantages over other financial markets in that it is opaque and essentially beyond regulation.

The art market cannot be regulated in the way that the SEC regulates the financial markets, I suggested, because the determinants of prices are inherently ephemeral, even inscrutable. You can't be accused of insider trading in the art market because the market is predicated on insiderism. Everyone feels like an insider, and the struggle is to see who emerges as one in dollars and cents.

Sure, there might be a mortgage crisis, but there now seem to be markets that are relatively immune to the strife besetting the benighted middle classes. The luxury businesses are still hot. And what's more of a luxury business than art? There are almost five hundred billionaires in the U.S. alone, and almost nine million millionaires. That constitutes a pretty healthy collector class. As one waggish auctioneer has put it, after you've got your fourth home, a yacht, and a G5, what are you going to spend your money on? It would seem that as long as there is "hyperliquidity," there will be an art market.

And so it grows. Today Art Basel Miami Beach is not just *one* art fair. There are now twenty different fairs taking place in Miami at the same time, selling art, photography, and design. It is now quite impossible to see everything, so aesthetic triage happens. I intended to do more, but after seeing everything at Art Basel Miami Beach in the main convention center, then visiting NADA (the New Art Dealers Alliance), and then SCOPE, I was exhausted. I guess I had visited about five hundred dealer's booths.

Doing the fairs is interesting in terms of seeing what artists are doing. You really do spot trends. Last year there were many, many artists making very large, hyper-detailed color photographs of what might be considered tedious subject matter, in the manner of Andreas Gursky and Thomas Struth—I think Dave Hickey refers to these as "Large Cibachromes of three Germans standing around a mailbox." (They are still at it, but the subject matter seems more focused on strip mining and other industrial unpleasantness. I doubt those will go in the dining room.) Last year there were many small sculptures on the floors—I noticed because I was looking at the high heels of the female gallery directors and assistants. This year there was a lot of deliberately bad abstract painting in shades of mustard, ketchup, and relish. There was a lot of paint-can trompe l'oeuil where what appears to be liquid is actually solid. (Perhaps symbolic of the "hyperliquid" market.) Oscar was fascinated by these faux liquids, as he was with the profusion of large scary monsters at SCOPE, many made out of old tires, which may or may not have some allusive petrochemical significance.



Absolutely peaking at the moment is Asian cuteness, mostly Japanese otaku, but the Chinese are getting in on the act, too, with Buddha- and Mao-related pop art and post-modern porcelains. What began with Hello Kitty has become a tidal wave of unbearable anime and manga. Eventually the cuteness began to aggravate me, to the point where I began to feel much the way Edmonton Oilers coach Harvey McTavish must have before pulling the tongue out of the mouth

of Calgary Flames mascot Harvey the Hound.

The hardest part of looking at the art at an art fair is the fact that it is surrounded by people who are often more bizarre, startling, intriguing, or complicated. The first day of Art Basel Miami Beach features a preview for the press and VIPs, and so generally you have to be an early bird to catch a glimpse of the high rollers who are making the pot bubble. After that the hordes descend, those who make any market interesting by trying to get in on it. I noticed many graying moneyed couples who strongly resembled Thurston and Eunice Howell of *Gilligan's Island*, closely inspecting the strange products on display at SCOPE and NADA. Perhaps this is the real story: the attempted apprehension of art by a new class of consumers.

I found myself not analyzing the work on display as much as guessing what line of work had enriched the art fair buyers inspecting the merchandise. I was more interested in what they saw in the art than what I saw in it myself. And just as one sometimes perversely imagines what strangers might look like making love or even sitting on the toilet, I found myself trying to picture these artworks installed in the homes of swimming pool contractors, hazardous waste tycoons, swampland developers...

I couldn't help but wonder what revelations Art Basel Miami Beach might bring next year. Too bad I have to wait. But wait...that gave me an idea.

Maybe Art Basel Miami Beach is too good a thing to happen only once a year. Even though it actually happens twice (in the summer in Basel, where it all started). Maybe art deserves its own theme park. Florida has Disneyworld, Epcot, Universal Studios, Marineland, Busch Gardens, Seaworld, the Holyland Experience. Why not The Art World Experience? Once you glimpse the breadth and plumbed the depths of Art Basel Miami Beach you know that there's much more here than can be absorbed in a three hour tour...a three hour tour...

December 19, 2007

[Art](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#)

[Email this post](#) | [Reddit It](#) | [Digg This](#) | [Add to del.icio.us](#) | [Share on Facebook](#)

Bitterness Is Sweet on Occasion

Speaking of obscure drinky-winkies, let us now discuss *bitters*. Bitter, of course, is one of the four basic tastes—sweet, salty, and sour being the others. It comes from old German—it meant *bite*, and the Germans totally understood biting. Bitters, generically speaking, are a group of alcoholic preparations dating back to the early days of distillation, days when drinking was considered medicinal. Which, of course, some of us still practice and preach.

I rarely drink spirits myself, thinking that wine is a comparatively healthy (and more subtle and rewarding) way to imbibe, but I do like a touch of the bitter now and then. This can come in the form of concentrated bitters, the stuff that comes in the little bottles, and bitter cordial digestifs, the stuff you pour a whole gnarly glass of.



Almost anywhere you order a drink with bitters you get a dash of Angostura. This is a fine herbal concoction, created in Venezuela in 1824 by a German M.D. and intended as a digestif. I'm sure you know the bottle, a little steak sauce-sized thing wrapped in white paper.

Anyway, Dr. Johan Siegert was an adventurer, and in 1820 he left Der Fatherland to fight Spanish imperialism in Venuezela with Simón Bolívar. The great Bolívar knew a physician when he saw one, and he appointed Siegert his Surgeon General in the town of Angostura.

Angostura was, of course, a tropical place where the men came down with fevers and parasites and stomach disorders of the most unpleasant variety. A keen student of nature's medicinal herbs, the Doctor spent four years perfecting an herbal tincture he called Amargo Aromatic, or aromatic bitters. Angostura is also a port on the mighty Orinoco, and as such was a port of call for sailors from all over the world—the sea sick, the malarial, the syphilitic, and, of course, the hung over. And so the fame of Dr. Siegert's remedy sailed far and wide. In 1867 Dr. Sieger formed a business with his son Carlos, and soon afterward brought in his brother Alfredo. The dapper and debonaire Don Carlos was justifiably proud of the family tonic and took it to exhibitions around the world. It was exhibited in London in 1862, where it was hailed not only for its restorative properties but also for the way it improved the taste of gin. Cocktails would never be the same.

Cocktails made with Angostura bitters include the Old Fashioned, the Pansy Blossom, the Jockey Club Cocktail, the Vanderbilt Cocktail, the Cabaret Cocktail, the Saratoga Cocktail, the Stone Fence, the Swizzles Cocktail, the Thistle Cocktail, the Smiler Cocktail, the West Indian Cocktail, the Widow's Kiss, the Dandy, the Chicago, the ever-popular Manhattan, and its cousin, the Rob Roy, a favorite of my late stepfather, Don Camptbell, traditionally enjoyed on St. Andrew's Day.

The classic champagne cocktail, which improves dubious vintages, consists of a lump of sugar saturated with Angostura, in a saucer glass which is then filled with bubbly.

The 1930 *Savoy Cocktail Book*, compiled by head bartender of London's Savoy Hotel, recommends the Spencer Cocktail made with Angostura Bitters, orange juice, apricot brandy, and dry gin: "Very mellifluous: has a fine and rapid action: for morning work."

My favorite bible of bibulous behavior, *The Gentleman's Companion*, notes that "Angostura was originated as a tonic, a simple to ward off fevers, miasmas, tropical swamp mists, and the general assortment of mauve willies that beset Nordics under the equator..." The author concludes his praise of the formula thus: "No Amateur worthy of name can have a bar of note without a large bottle of these peerless bitters at elbow. They are absolutely essential to creation of scores of the world's best-mixed drinks: drinks which without such aromatic pointing up would be short-lived, spineless and ineffectual things."

Today Angostura bitters are made in Trinidad and Tobago, and it is not only an essential product for any complete bar, but an important element in Caribbean cuisine. Less famous but no less historic is another small bottle of bitters called Peychaud's which was created, and is still manufactured, in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Peychaud's Bitters is a pink concoction that is much harder to find than Angostura, and it figures in far fewer cocktail recipes, but it can be enjoyed plain with soda or tonic, or in a variety of cocktails suited to that absinthe taste.

Peychaud's was the formula of Antoine Amadee Peychaud, a gentleman apothecary who emigrated from Haiti in 1795, and who apparently brought the recipe with him from that magical and mysterious isle. Monsieur Peychaud began dispensing his bitters for medicinal purposes in glasses of brandy at his shop. It wasn't long before one Sewell Taylor, a friend of Monsieur Peychaud, began dispensing the bitters as well, at his own dubiously dubbed establishment, the Sazerac Coffee House at 13 Exchange Alley, in the French Quarter of New Orleans. Dubiously dubbed because apparently far more spirits than coffees were served there. When that establishment changed hands around 1850, the new owners altered the recipe of what would be regarded as America's first cocktail, by serving the bitters with rye whiskey and absinthe rather than brandy. Thus was born the classic *Sazerac Cocktail*. The Sazerac is properly made by coating the inside of an old-fashioned glass with absinthe, if you can get it, or Pernod, or Pastis, to which is added the long shaken and strained mixture of two ounces of rye whiskey, and 3 or 4 dashes of Peychaud's on a crushed sugar cube. A thin curl of lemon peel should be added as a garnish.

For more serious bitterness, one can drink glasses of the stuff. Bitter is, after all, one of the main flavor groups, and certain philosophical gourmands believe all of these should be contained in each meal. There's a great little Italian soda made by San Pelligrino called Chinotto that comes in small bottles. During periods of abstinence I have quelled my craving for alcohol with this bittersweet beverage. I dump one of the little bottles into a glass and fill it with soda. It's like a virgin Campari.

Campari is probably the most popular brand of bitter beverage. It is, as usual, a secret recipe—this one formulated by Gaspare Campari in the Piedmont of Italy, in 1860. Over sixty ingredients combine to produce that famous taste, including orange peel, rhubarb, ginseng, pomegranate, bergamot oil, and quinine. I have numerous friends who drink the stuff, but for me it was always an ingredient in the *Negroni Cocktail*, a real festival of bitterness I enjoyed frequently during my last divorce. My way, it's a jigger of gin, a jigger of Campari, and a jigger of sweet vermouth, shaken until your arm gets tired, served straight up in a martini glass with a twist. I should add that is often an ingredient in sorbetto and it really works well, even poured on orange or grapefruit ice.

Personally, I'm not a cognac or grappa guy. Life is too short. But sometimes after dinner I will have an amaro, one of those bitter Italian concoctions that have lasted so long they must be good for you. My wife turned me on to Averna, and she swears it has seaweed in it. Whatever is in there discourages you from swilling it. It's a sipping thing, and with that taste it has to be doing some good. There's a rather nice golden-colored bitter called del Capo from Calabria that advertises 29 herbs. Jagermeister is actually one of the world's most successful amari. Its secret formula contains 56 herbs and spices to aid digestion, quell a cough or, if you drink too much, turn you into Kid Rock.

Probably the most intriguing bitter of all is *Fernet-Branca*. It's *really* bitter. Hardcore. Over the years it has been touted as a remedy for stomach upset, menstrual woes, fevers, and hangovers. In the 19th century Fernet-Branca was touted as a remedy for cholera. It is said to cause worms to leave one's digestive tract, and the first taste may give you a hint why. This shit is *bitter*. It contains a potpourri of 27 herbs and spices, including aloe, cardamom, Chamomile, gentian, saffron, cinchona bark, myrrh, and rhubarb, among the less nasty. Supposedly it even has St. John's Wort in it, the hippie Prozac. It certainly tastes like medicine, enough so, apparently, that it was still allowed in the States under Prohibition. But it also has some of the good qualities of medicine. To the extent that in 1978 the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms demanded that its opiate content be reduced to trace levels. Does it work? Well, Dr. Fernet lived into his hundreds. And people don't get cholera much anymore. One thing I'm sure of is that if you stick with this

80-proof digestif, you won't get too drunk. It was a big favorite of my late friend, the great artist [Mati Klarwein](#). I'll bet he had a pre-78 stash. Anyway, I am currently seeing what it can do for laryngitis. I still sound like a butch Harvey Fierstein, but I feel better. It might just be my imagination, but I think the stuff works.

[Got a question for the Style Guy? Click here to ask it.](#)

November 29, 2007

[Permalink](#) | [Comments \(6\)](#)

[Email this post](#) | [Reddit It](#) | [Digg This](#) | [Add to del.icio.us](#) | [Share on Facebook](#)



[Glenn's Bio >](#)

[SUBSCRIBE VIA RSS](#)

**GOT A QUESTION
FOR GLENN?**

[CLICK HERE TO ASK IT >](#)

TOPICS

- [Accessories](#)
- [Art](#)
- [Care and Travel](#)
- [Collecting](#)
- [Criticism](#)
- [Design](#)
- [Fashion](#)
- [Food](#)
- [Glenn's Bio](#)
- [Grooming](#)
- [Miscellaneous](#)
- [Music criticism](#)
- [Shirts](#)
- [Shoes](#)
- [Shopping](#)
- [Style](#)

- [Taste](#)

GLENN'S LINKS

- [Downtown 81](#) >
- [GQ's Style Guy Archive](#) >
- [Human Nature \(dub version\)](#) >
- [Soapbox: Essays, Diatribes, Homilies and Screeds 1980-1997](#) >
- [The Style Guy](#) >
- [TV Party](#) >
- [A Shaded View on Fashion](#) >
- [Ask Andy about Clothes](#) >
- [Christopher Wool](#) >
- [Fashion & Style - New York Times](#) >
- [Kempt](#) >
- [Lord Whimsy](#) >
- [Manolo for the Men](#) >
- [Style Forum](#) >
- [Stylites in Beijing](#) >
- [Supreme](#) >
- [The Sartorialist](#) >
- [Tom Sachs](#) >

ARCHIVES

- [June 2008](#)
- [May 2008](#)
- [April 2008](#)
- [March 2008](#)
- [February 2008](#)
- [January 2008](#)
- [December 2007](#)
- [November 2007](#)
- [October 2007](#)
- [September 2007](#)
- [August 2007](#)
- [July 2007](#)
- [June 2007](#)
- [May 2007](#)
- [April 2007](#)
- [March 2007](#)
- [February 2007](#)
- [January 2007](#)
- [December 2006](#)
- [November 2006](#)
- [October 2006](#)
- [September 2006](#)
- [August 2006](#)
- [July 2006](#)
- [June 2006](#)

JOIN NOW: [POST A COMMENT](#)

[X CLOSE](#)

To post a comment, simply fill in the fields below and click "submit comment." To get full access to

Men.Style.com's special features & community, [join now](#) >

comment

All fields required.

username

password

e-mail address

confirm password

Please send occasional e-mail updates about new features and special offers from **Men.Style.com**

Yes No

I understand and agree that registration on or use of this site constitutes agreement to its [User Agreement](#) and [Privacy Policy](#)

SUBMIT COMMENT >

SIGN IN: POST A COMMENT **X CLOSE**

To post a comment, simply enter your comment with username and password and click "Submit Comment." Not

a member? [join now >](#)
Comment is required.

We're sorry, but we could not accept your request. Please try resubmitting your information.

comment

All fields required.

username

[forgot your username?](#)

password

[forgot your password?](#)

remember me next time

SUBMIT COMMENT >

Use of this site constitutes acceptance of our [User Agreement](http://men.style.com/services/user) (<http://men.style.com/services/user>) and [Privacy Policy](http://men.style.com/services/privacy) (<http://men.style.com/services/privacy>). © 2008 CondéNet, Inc. All rights reserved. The material on this site may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, cached, or otherwise used, except with the prior written permission of CondéNet, Inc. Men.Style.com is a member of the Advance Publications family, which includes CondéNet, Condé Nast, and Fairchild Publications. Men.Style.com is a trademark owned by CondéNet, Inc.