Beep, beep! Our survey of stealthy new start-ups and family firms

WORLD EXCLUSIVE! We talk the banger business and hedgehog funds with Japan’s miniature success story – and a host of real characterful companies

WHAT’S NEXT?
A SPECIAL REPORT ON TAKING YOUR BUSINESS ON THE ROAD AND ADDING SOME HOT MUSTARD TO OLD CONCEPTS

MR HEDGE
“When I’m looking for fresh talent it’s worth a stop in Savannah.”
See section

MR PIGGY
“I wonder if anyone in Surabaya would be keen on my buns?”
See section

MR SQUIRREL
“I’m also looking to kit out our office. I need a desk with more tail room.”
See section

MR HEDGE (also thinks)
“T’ma loving the grooming guide. I have tricky hairy’
See section

MR PIGGY (also think)
“I’m looking forward to getting on a lounge at the coolest new pool. But if anyone says I look porky…”
See section

“Everyone profits from a hot and spicy sausage.”

HERR OTTER
“T’m already thinking about my retirement to Kyushu.”
See section

WURST WAGES
“After this it’s off to Rio for some Olympic action.”
See section

*PLUS OUR 44-PAGE SINGAPORE GUIDE FROM ART AND DESIGN TO LOGISTICS AND TECH

Sylvanian Families photographed in studio in London
**CULTURE CUTS**

Top picks from the art world

**UNFORGOTTEN NEW YORK**

New York is a land grab in book form to answer back to the real-life and grab that's been taking place in the city for the past 20 years. It's not a nostalgic trip to the good old days so much as a celebration of the city's insistence that New York was home to the legendary spaces of the 20th-century avant-garde. Studio 54, Paradox Garage, the Stonewall Inn, storied legends, myths, a crossroads for nightlife and pop-culture made sense. New York was pioneering territory. — MR

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**BRIEFING**

**Culture**

"Does context aid your understanding and enjoyment of the thing?"

**Magnificent obsession**

A new book purportedly about porcelain is really about its author's own creative process, revealing it pays to pay attention to how things are made.

**ROBERT BOUND**

Do you care how and why something you admire was made? This magazine has asked you to consider provenance before — when choosing your coffee beans or when buying denim — but what of cultural provenance? Does context aid your understanding and enjoyment of the thing?

I've just closed the back cover of *The White Road*, potter and writer Edmund de Waal's wonderful and unusual forthcoming book about the history of porcelain (see review, opposite page). Part history, part memoir, the book is subtitled, "a pilgrimage of sorts". And off he goes. We read of De Waal's trips to Jingdezhen, China's porcelain capital since the discovery of the stuff 1,000 years ago, and of his fears that he might not be on the right road to find what he wants. We encounter our man having a headache the day after he's forced to be a guest of honour at an impromptu booze-fueled dinner; we learn that writing about discovering porcelain can be as trying as actually discovering it. De Waal echoes a thought that many of us have had since school maths classes: "always show your working."

De Waal's book is as much about what drove him to write it as it is about the "white gold" that has excited so much trade, jealousy and mania across a millennium. When De Waal makes it to Dresden, it's plain that our guide does not suffer from precisely the same *Porcelainerkrankheit* as Augustus the Strong, the 18th-century elector of Saxony who ordered the discovery of gold and ended up with something for which he had an ever-greater weakness (and with crossed swords branded it Meissen). But he is far from immune to a sort of mania himself. And happily so, because we get an intriguing, unusual, heartfelt and depthless account of the hidden corners of the history of trade, of industry, of the workings of royal courts, of what became known as geopolitics and of trend and taste.

Another marvel to cross the culture desk this month is the upcoming record from Bergen's HP Gundersen, who trades brilliant blues, psych and country funk under the name The Last Hurrah! The record (see review, opposite page) includes fulsome sleeve notes by Rolling Stone's David Fricke to put the work in context and as mighty fine as the album is, I loved reading Fricke associate it with Little Feat and Stephen Stills. It made me run out and buy records by those artists to further endanger the shelving in my flat. You don't have to make like Hunter Thompson and go full "gonzo" to write a memorable account of how you wrote your memorable account but — and who knew we'd learn so much from our maths masters? — showing your working really works. — (M)