



I cooked my way through my divorce

The chef Valentine Warner on the comfort of food

Weekend

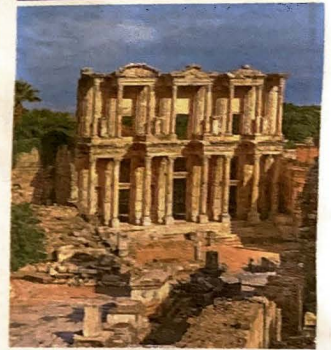
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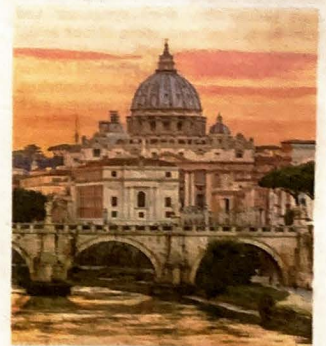
Who is your
child talking
to online?

Digital friendships:
what parents should know

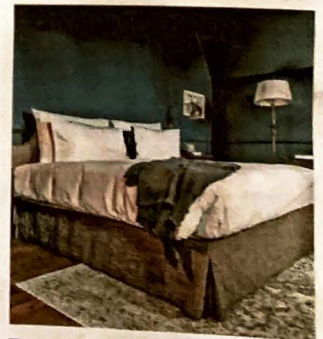
30 cultural breaks
to book now



Sail on a gulet
to Ephesus



See Raphael's
paintings in Rome

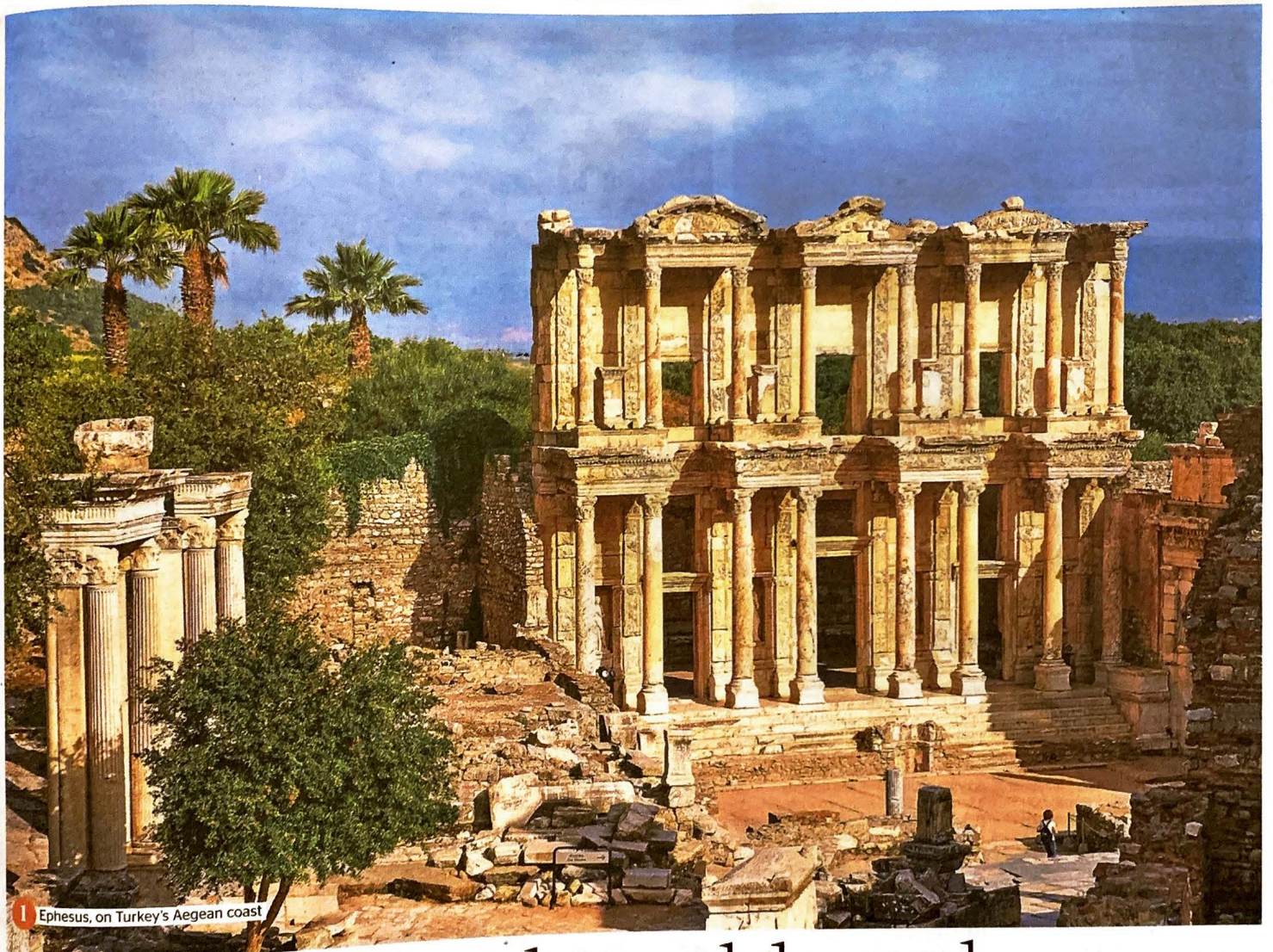


Book a stylish
hideaway in Ghent

Travel

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'Three bears are feasting on barnacles. It's so quiet, you can hear them crunching'
Georgia Stephens takes a small-ship cruise in Canada



1 Ephesus, on Turkey's Aegean coast

30 great cultural breaks

Dance in Cuba, sail to Ephesus or see Raphael's paintings in Rome. **Sean Newsom** picks the best life-enhancing holidays for 2020

1 Cruise back in time along the Aegean coast

How best to understand the Greek and Roman cities that flourished along Turkey's Aegean coast? Simple, just jump on a gulet and go for a cruise. That's the principle underlying this tour visiting the magnificent remains of Ephesus, as well as the sites of Myndos, Iasos and Miletus. You'll see the world as many of the locals once did, with further enlightenment from your guide, the archaeologist Filip Budic. When you've had enough history, just slip into your bathers and go for a swim. **Details** A week's full board on a gulet from £2,465pp, including transfers and excursions, departing

on May 30 (petersommer.com). Fly to Bodrum with Easyjet or Jet2

2 A gala of birthday arias with La Karita

This year Karita Mattila turns 60. The superstar soprano (aka La Karita) has wowed audiences since she won the first BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition in 1983 — and she's still performing at the best opera houses on the planet. On July 25 she celebrates her milestone with a gala night of arias at the Savonlinna Opera Festival in Finland. It's staged in a medieval island fortress, and if you join



3 Villa Medici Giulini near Milan

this tour, you will arrive for La Karita's big night by boat. **Details** Four nights' B&B from £2,555pp, including flights and transfers, as well as several meals, excursions and two operas, departing on July 23 (travelforthearts.com)

3 Private piano party in Milan

The concert pianist Melyvn Tan built his reputation with pioneering performances on the fortepiano, and his work continues to shed light on this influential precursor to the modern instrument. Over three nights ▶

36 Travel Austria

Luxury travel

Ski in supreme style: The mos

A cinema, top chef and even a private spa — this is a truly pampering mountain stay, says **Sean Newsom**

Have you heard? Scott Dunn is closing the door on its luxury ski chalets. Next winter the top-end travel company, which for more than 30 years has helped to define this staple of the British ski scene, is hanging up its chef's apron, filing away its cake recipes and letting someone else do the hard graft in the kitchen. From December 2020 all the catered chalets it will be offering in its winter programme will be staffed by other companies, alongside a glittering array of ski hotels and serviced apartments.

Bad news for chalet lovers? Actually, no: because out of the ashes of the Scott Dunn programme has risen an even more alluring property. And it belongs to the company's founder, Andrew Dunn.

Chalet Artemis is Dunn's personal mountain home: a six-bedroom property built to his blueprint in the Austrian resort of St Anton, and let to Scott Dunn clients for 11 years. Now, as the company's chalet operation starts to wind down, he's flying solo and has relaunched it as a stand-alone property. Last month I was lucky enough to test it. "Lucky" really is the word.

I should say at this point that when I first saw Artemis in 2008, I wrinkled my nose. Sure, there was a swimming pool in the basement and a socking great statue of Artemis — Greek goddess of the mountains — on the terrace, but the interiors seemed rather plain for a luxury chalet. There was too much pale paint and not enough Alpine texture.

So it was a surprise to see how much it had changed when the chalet host Becky Wood welcomed me in. The pale personality has been swept away by a top-to-bottom makeover. Now it's as dark and interesting as one of the wines served in its top-floor dining room.

The key to the new look is the reclaimed wooden panelling. Weathered to a driftwood texture and stained the colour of toast, it's the perfect foil for the chalet's lush colour schemes: burgundy and slate in my bedroom, butterscotch and blue in another. The new emperor-sized beds are spectacular too — made up with the same Herloms sheets favoured by the Queen. They're so smooth and densely woven, there's a silk-like sheen to them. Her Majesty must sleep like a baby every night in their luxurious embrace. I certainly did.

It was the shower that really got my antennae twitching. I had dived in for a quick pre-dinner wash and barely noticed my surroundings, beyond the rainforest shower head. So far, so normal, I thought. But then I stepped out on to the bath mat. Oh my sainted aunt. The cotton was so soft, deep and airy, it all but gave me a foot massage.

Later, Dunn would recount the argument he'd had with his wife about the

mats. "Why on earth do they need to be so thick?" she had asked him. "Because they feel good," was his simple, instinctive reply. He was right to insist. I've never felt so pampered by a piece of woven fabric. "Hang on a minute," I thought as I got down on my hands and knees for a closer look (they're the top-of-the-range lie de Ré mats from the White Company, if you're interested). "If the bath mats are this good, maybe this place is going to be amazing."

It helps, of course, that Dunn has planted his flag in St Anton. Set in the western end of Austria, in the Arlberg region, its ski area clings to the side of one of the most celebrated mountains in the Alps, the 2,811m (9,222ft) Valluga. It's not especially high or broad, but between its tightly clenched knuckles of rock run some of skiing's favourite descents. None is particularly easy. One, an avalanche-prone off-piste route on the north face, is downright dangerous. But together they offer an extraordinarily spirited winter playground. Every time I've asked a former ski racer to name their No 1 resort

— Franz Klammer, Konrad Bartelski, Graham Bell, Chemmy Alcott — they've told me it's this one.

What's more, since 2016, this adrenaline-soaked destination has been linked by the Flexenbahn gondola to its gentler neighbours, Lech, Zürs and Warth. Their combined Ski Arlberg lift pass now offers 190 miles of seamless piste skiing and a more balanced array of slopes.

To get the best from the St Anton side you still need to be at the pluckier, more experienced end of the skiing spectrum. But if you are, you'll ski back into town at the end of the day with a smile as wide as the Alps plastered across your face. I certainly did. The afterglow would have lit up even the dingiest self-catering apartment.

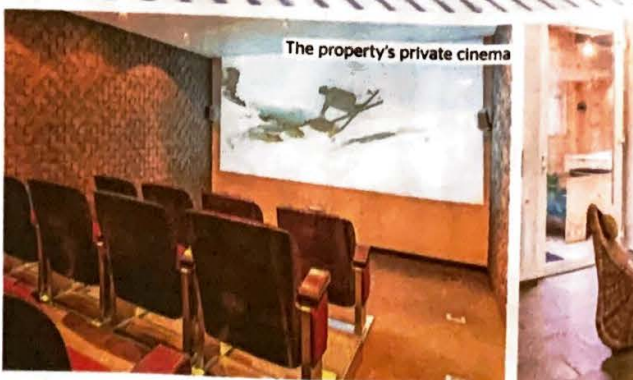
But Chalet Artemis is doing much more than basking in St Anton's reflected glory. To get a proper sense of its quality, I'd already spent a night in the region's most famous five-star hotel, the Arlberg. It's on the other side of the Flexen Pass in Lech, a resort with a more fur-edged flavour than St Anton that has long attracted an A-list but low-key clientele. In part, they come for the town's charming good looks, in part for its mellow, confidence-boosting pistes. But Lech's reputation for charming and discreet hoteliers is an essential element of the appeal: and never more so than at the Arlberg, which played host to Princess Diana five times in the 1990s.

As with many Austrian hotels, the Arlberg's quality rests on several generations of hard work. Benjamin Schneider, grandson of the founder, has recently taken up the reins with his husband, Patrick Krummenacher, with Benjamin's mum and dad in close support. But alongside the continuities of top-notch food and faultless service, the husband-



Need to know

Sean Newsom was a guest of Chalet Artemis and the Hotel Arlberg. One week's rental of Chalet Artemis (for up to 12 guests) starts from £21,500, B&B, including afternoon tea, bar drinks, in-resort driver service and five dinners with wine pairings (chaletartemis.com). Double rooms at the Hotel Arlberg start from £512 a night, half-board (arlberghotel.at). Fly to Innsbruck with Easyjet or British Airways



and-husband partnership are quietly bringing the bedrooms and facilities up to date. The scope of the changes (which include a new spa) and the details (such as the free-standing £4,450 bathtubs in the junior suites) are profoundly pampering. By the time I checked out I was purring like a cat, convinced that such an assured operation would make Artemis look amateur.

I was wrong. It wasn't just the Artemis bath mats or bed linen that won me over — or indeed the bliss of an early-morning swim and sauna in the basement before

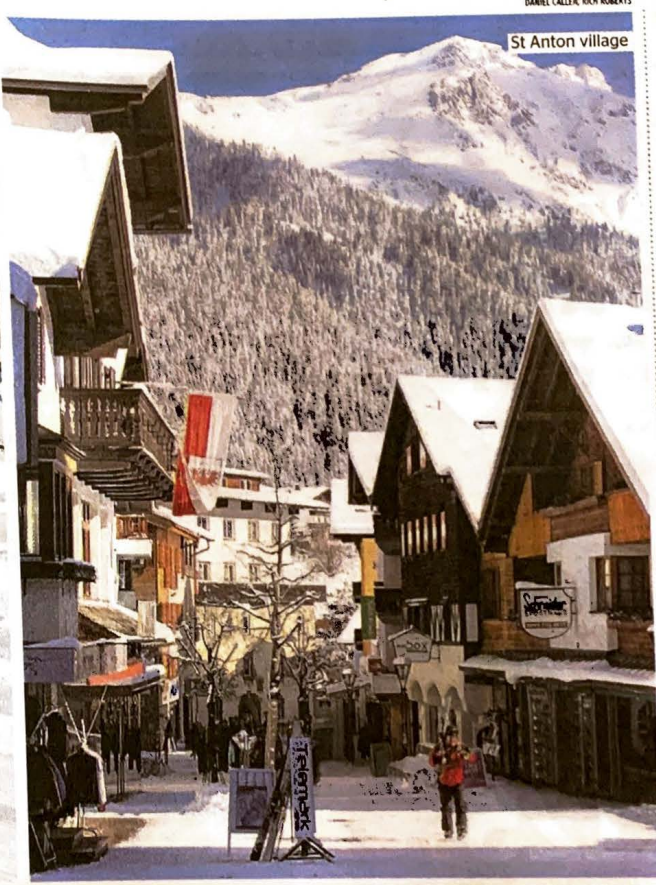
breakfast. It was the staff. Dunn has clearly worked his contacts book hard to assemble his chalet dream team. Rob Daley, who for ten years was Scott Dunn's executive chef, manages the property. His partner, Rosie Flaherty — a veteran of Michelin-starred kitchens, as well as luxury chalets and superyachts — does the cooking. Becky, who welcomed me, used to train Scott Dunn's chalet hosts.

The result is a level of service that at times goes beyond a hotel. At breakfast and dinner, for example, Becky would slip

glamorous chalet in St Anton



The St Anton ski area



St Anton village



The chalet's pool



Chalet Artemis

3 More sumptuous chalets in the Alps

Chalet Shemshak Courchevel

Luxury chalets are not often ski-in, ski-out because many were built long after the top spots in big-name resorts were taken. Chalet Shemshak in the French resort of Courchevel 1850 is an exception. This detached property stands piste-side in one of the world's most fashionable (and intermediate-friendly) resorts, and seems to have an endless supply of space. Usually chalet pools are hidden away in a basement, but Shemshak's stretches across the whole of the lower ground floor, with daylight flooding in through five floor-to-ceiling windows. **Details** From £33,000 a week, B&B, including six dinners and unlimited drinks, but not flights or transfers. Sleeps 13 (consensiochalets.co.uk)

Chalet Elbrus Zermatt

Matterhorn views are instrumental to Chalet Elbrus's allure. So too its quick access to the Sunegga funicular railway, which whisks you up to one of this Swiss resort's best areas of intermediate skiing. Best of all is waking up in skiing's most spectacular town, made even lovelier by car-free streets. Inside the chalet, richly grained wood contrasts with fluffy throws, and the star attraction is the top-floor living and dining area, set beneath exposed beams. **Details** From £31,285 a week, including staff, but not food and drink or flights and transfers. Sleeps 12 (hautemontagne.com)

Haus Hannes Schneider Stuben

Most high-end ski lodges cluster in the best-known resorts, but just occasionally one pops up somewhere unexpected. The Haus Hannes Schneider is an exquisite restoration in tiny Stuben, tucked away at the edge of Austria's Arlberg. No matter that it shares its skiing with St Anton, or that Hannes Schneider, the father of the modern skiing technique, grew up here. This is a village that will never be on the fashion map. Don't come for buzzing nightlife. Do come for delicate artworks, great skiing and more than a touch of boho chic. **Details** From £32,000 a week, B&B, including six dinners and two days' guiding. Sleeps 12 (firefly-collection.com)

away soundlessly from the dining room. "Where's she going?" I'd wonder, before returning to my bedroom to find the bed made, and my clothes neatly folded and ordered — twice a day. My life has never been so tidy. Even more memorable was the team's movie night. It started in the chalet's private cinema with popcorn, miniburgers and the highlights of *Der Weisse Rausche* ("The White Thrill") — a film shot in St Anton in 1931 whose wildly inventive action sequences helped to propel skiing

to the top of Europe's wish list of winter sports. Leni Riefenstahl's starring role — in the days before she became Hitler's favourite film-maker — deepened the sense of fascination. Then we moved upstairs for a gastronomic tour through the best pintxos recipes of the Basque town of San Sebastian, with Rosie on song in the kitchen and Rob explaining the rhythms and recipes of his favourite city. Freewheeling, inventive and full of cultural fizz, it was by far the best evening I've

spent in a chalet, and I've been staying in them, on and off, for 26 years. "At this level, a ski chalet should be like a boutique hotel, run exclusively for a select group of people," Dunn said the next night, when he jetted in for dinner. "So in a way it's superior to a five-star hotel." I wasn't expecting to agree with him. But when the levels of service and comfort are this high, he's right. Perhaps he should open a few more chalets like Artemis. After all, I hear a gap in the market has opened up.