

THE FIELD



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DRIVEN SNIPE ON THE ISLE

Over the sea to Tiree, where
birds spring at every step and
grey geese cloud the horizons

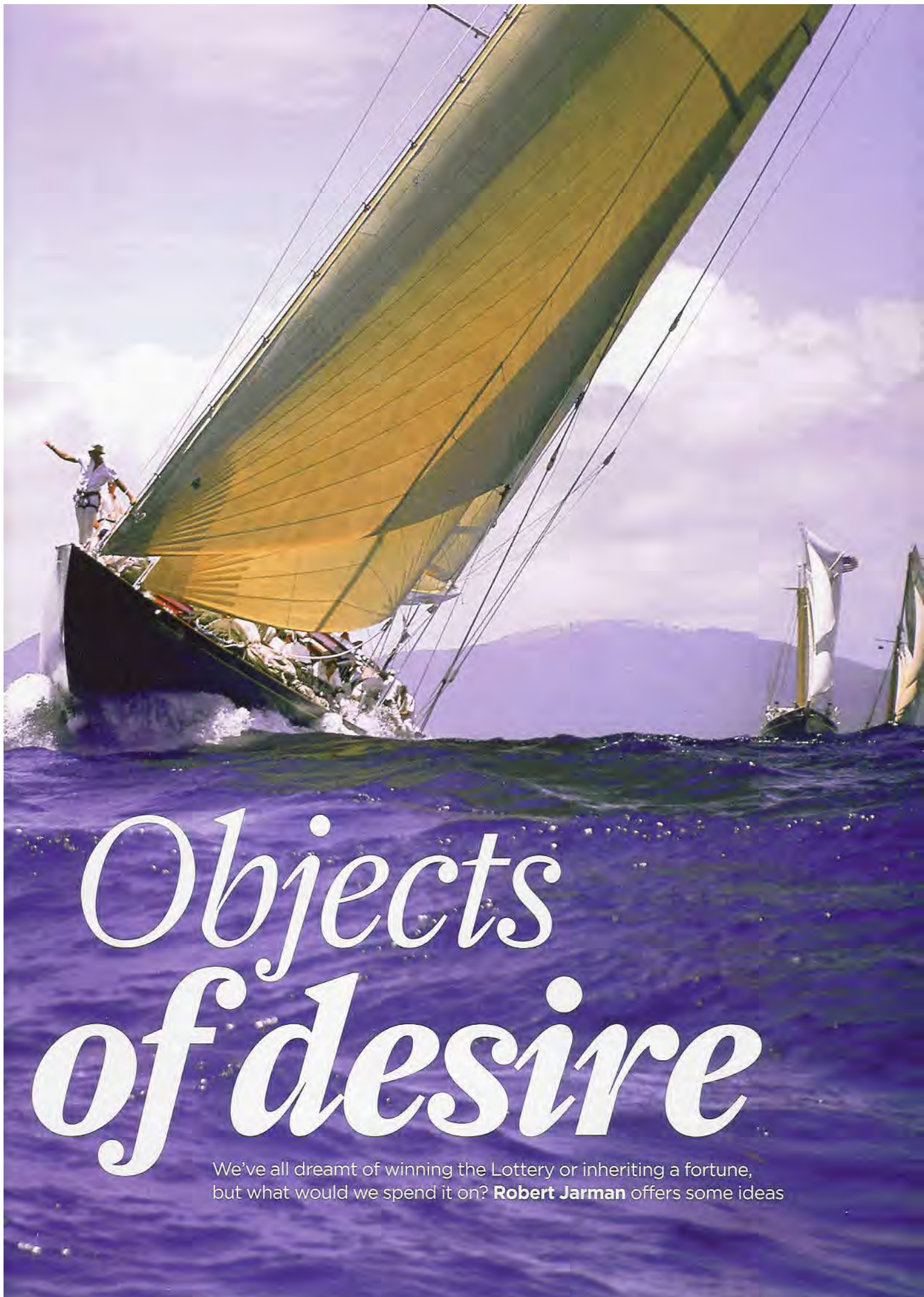
THE PERFECT POCKET SHOOT

How a dream, four friends and 142
acres won the Purdey Game Award

A DOG'S DINNER

Expert veterinary advice on the right
food for pets and working gundogs





Objects of desire

We've all dreamt of winning the Lottery or inheriting a fortune, but what would we spend it on? **Robert Jarman** offers some ideas

THIS is the dream: one day you're pottering around the garden when there's a rap on the front door. The postman is holding a registered letter ominously bearing the mark of a London solicitor. But instead of some legal tedium it announces that a neglectful godfather (vaguely something in oil, definitely not the marrying type) has left you the lot. Suddenly the problem is not humouring the bank manager but replacing him with an investment broker.

In this happy idyll of unlimited cash, what would you buy? After much pondering and malt, these are my choices.

Yacht

J class yachts remain the epitome of elegance afloat. The folklore surrounding them is legendary, although only 10 true J class yachts were ever built.

Only three are still sailing - *Shamrock V*, *Velsheda* and *Endeavour*, and all have undergone extensive restoration and rebuilding, overseen by naval architects Dykstra & Partners in Amsterdam. The company is also the design consultant for new replicas of *Endeavour II* and the famous American yacht *Rainbow*. All have costs estimated at between £15 million and £25 million per boat, depending on specification.

The adjective most frequently used to describe these yachts is "awesome". They were known as the greyhounds of the seas and I have seen, at close quarters, the three remaining J class yachts race against each other in the Solent, which *was* truly awesome.

Contact David Pitman, Chairman of the J Class Association, email info@jclassyachts.com, www.jclassyachts.com.



"Awesome" J class yachts, which include *Velsheda* (left), are regarded as the epitome of elegance afloat

Private plane

I have chosen a Boeing 737/700 business jet, with an interior by Andrew Winch Designs. This conversion can accommodate 19 passengers and comfortably sleep 13 in a configuration of four double beds and five fully reclining seats.

A private jet is possibly the greatest luxury money can buy, and it isolates the owner, his family and friends from the vicissitudes of commercial air travel.

Of course, this is an extreme extravagance, and you can rent private jets and helicopters, as required, from Andrew Davis, who owns the von Essen Group, which includes the London Heliport and PremiAir.

Contact Andrew Winch Designs, tel 020 8392 8400; PremiAir, tel 01895 830900.



A Boeing 737/700 business jet (inset) with an Andrew Winch Designs interior (above) is the greatest luxury money can buy

Car

I wanted to select a classic British car and considered the famous 4.5-litre Bentleys, the early Jaguars including the fabulous XK series (culminating in the classic E-type of the early Sixties) and the Aston Martin DB series immortalised by 007 in the Bond films.

I finally settled on a Bentley S2 Continental convertible, which looks sensational and was a Grand Tourer for the connoisseur who liked to drive fast in extreme comfort.

However, I also yearn for an Aston Martin DB9 with its state-of-the-art technology and handling. This is a thoroughbred sports car which combines power, beauty and soul, the last quality being a rare commodity in modern cars. What's more, it sounds great, too - there's certainly no Italian whining under this bonnet.

Contact Kim Palmer at Aston Martin Cars, tel 01926 644644, www.astonmartin.com.

A Bentley may be the writer's first choice, but he also feels a Bond with the Aston Martin DB9 (below)





Riva boats (above) have seduced the glitterati for years with their luxury, performance and style

Speedboat

Every great yacht deserves a suitably elegant tender, and mine is a classic vintage Riva Super Aquarama, the Ferrari of speedboats. Gleaming varnished woodwork and glistening chrome fittings combined with elegant Italian styling, luxurious interiors and fabulous performance, have elevated the classic Riva to iconic status.

These boats have seduced the *cognoscenti* and glitterati for years. Limited production means that vintage Rivas are in constant demand, and a restored Super Aquarama in mint condition would cost between £250,000 and £420,000. **Contact** Nick Thompson at Riva Revival UK, tel 01550 777537, www.rivarevival.com.

Cigars

A friend once gave me a T-shirt bearing the legend: "Life is too short to smoke cheap cigars," a sentiment with which I concur entirely.

The best cigars still come from Cuba, and the most famous is the ubiquitous Cohiba, much loved by Fidel Castro. Cohiba is the Taino Indian word for tobacco, and has established itself as the premier brand of Havana cigar. This is reflected in the prices, which range from £10 to £27 a cigar.

I favour its Siglo range, which offers a slightly lighter flavour than the original Linea Classica.

I am told that, like fine wines, fine cigars are best aged for as long as possible to allow the blend and complexity of the tobacco to develop to maturity, but this works only if you have a really good humidor.

However, in my opinion, there is nothing quite like a freshly rolled cigar for sheer flavour and exuberance, so I recommend a trip to Havana to collect them in person.

Contact Cigars Unlimited, tel 020 386 9000, visit www.cigarsunlimited.co.uk.

Cohiba is the premier brand of Havana cigar and was a favourite of Fidel Castro. The Siglo (below) has a light flavour



Silver

Georg Jensen was one of the greatest designers and silversmiths of the 20th century, and attracted some of the most talented designers of the period to work with him. His iconic designs were so far ahead of their time that they still look contemporary today, and grace the homes of an international, cosmopolitan, design-conscious elite.

One of my favourite pieces is a covered fish dish with twin fish finials on the lid and a lobster pattern mazarine designed by Johan Rohde. It combines sculpture with beauty, form and function and costs around £160,000.

Contact Michael James at The Silver Fund, tel 07710 032453, www.thesilverfund.com.



Dish up fish with silverware (above) that combines beauty, form and function - as it should for the price

Fishing beat (trout)

My favourite fishing beat is the confluence of the rivers Test and Bourne that was made famous by Plunket Greene in his Victorian fly-fishing idyll *Where the bright waters meet*. Plunket Greene was the Pavarotti of his day, but became so obsessed with fly-fishing that he chose to be buried in a churchyard a short cast from the river.

This piece of river is everything that a chalkstream should be – full of clean gravel, gin-clear water, waving beds of ranunculus and a thriving population of wild trout. Add the beautiful valley in which it sits, and you are as close to angling perfection as I know.

The estate was sold in 2001 for around £8 million. Fishing heaven, it seems, does not come cheap, although you can still rent some of the best beats

Contact Simon Cooper, Fishing Breaks, tel 01264 781988.



The confluence of the rivers Test and Bourne (above) is as close to angling perfection as it gets



PHOTO: BARRY.COM

Chalet Montana (below) in Val d'Isère (above) makes renting look an attractive option for skiing



Ski chalet

I can see all the attractions of owning a ski chalet, although the cost – from £1 million to £4 million for a decent chalet in a top resort – makes renting look an attractive alternative. A company called Descent has taken standards of service to a new level. It has some of the best fully catered chalets in the best resorts, with a fleet of four-wheel drive vehicles to ferry guests in comfort.

Two weeks at Chalet Montana (which sleeps 12 plus three children) at Val d'Isère in high season would cost £105,200 (£7,000 per person) although in the low season chalets are priced at as little as £10,000 per week for eight people.

Contact Descent, tel 020 7384 3854, www.descent.co.uk.

If a celebrity chef hasn't snapped it up first, how about a Georgian manor house (below) with plenty of space in Hampshire?

Principal residence

I once owned the perfect Georgian house on top of a hill, facing due west, with endless views. But a rather serious reversal of fortune put paid to all that, and I have been seeking a replacement ever since. How about this:

"A fine early Georgian manor house in a beautiful rural setting overlooking its own parkland", with five reception rooms, 10 bedrooms, seven bathrooms, domestic offices,

pool house, tennis court, attractive partially walled gardens, three cottages, a stableyard, a four-car garage, manège and paddocks, in all about 17.72 acres. It is in Hampshire, my home county, which is a bonus.

The last I heard, a local celebrity chef was rather keen on it, so watch this space. And finally, the asking price? Offers in the region of £9 million.

Contact David Pardoe at Savills, tel 01962 841842. ➤



A Patek Philippe Calatrava (right) ticks all the right boxes for the writer's choice of wristwatch

Wristwatch

I have to yield to a Swiss maker for what I consider to be the finest and most elegant wristwatch in the world, a Patek Philippe. I have chosen a Fifties Calatrava, with an 18-carat gold case with snap-on back.



The price is a mere £12,500, which is not much compared to the "blingier" models that can fetch more than £600,000, but I prefer the simplicity of this classic model.

Contact Gerald Marsh at GE Marsh & Co (Antique Clocks), tel 01962 844443.

Hardy Angel rods and reels are heavenly to use



Fishing rod and reel

I canvassed opinion on this, and combined wisdom seemed to favour Sage or T&T rods, while the most popular reels were Abel and Tibor Riptide, because they are the essence of style and function (although there was a soft spot for the Hardy Perfect).

However, the man who is such a good fisherman that he can cast with a broken stick tells me that he favours Hardy's new Angel series because aesthetically it is the most beautiful range of rods and reels ever made. Angel rods range from £599 to £729 and reels from £79 to £129.

Contact Hardy & Greys, tel 01655 602771.



A best pair of Holland & Holland Royals (above). Own a horological masterpiece in a long-case clock (below)

Guns

There is an age-old debate over who makes the finest guns, and I visited the two most obvious choices. The chairman of Purdeys, Nigel Beaumont, has a "hands-on" approach and works in the Hammersmith factory when not promoting the guns worldwide, while Daryl Greatrex presides over a very efficient team at Holland & Holland. Both are impressive businesses, upholding the best traditions of English gun-making while embracing modern technology to improve the quality wherever possible.

However, any choice of gun depends on personal experience, and the closest I ever got to shooting heaven was a matched pair of vintage Woodwards (which fitted me beautifully) on a partridge day at Belvoir Castle, so I would love to own a pair.

Jason Abbot has a pair of vintage Woodwards, circa 1895, in good condition, for sale at £22,000. A best pair of Purdeys or Holland & Holland Royals would cost more than £100,000 (though they should last for another 100 years).

Contact James Purdey & Sons, tel 020 7499 1801; Holland & Holland, tel 020 7499 4411; and Jason Abbot (Gunmakers), tel 01844 281765.



Long-case clock

I have chosen a unique musical long-case clock by Daniel Quare, one of England's greatest clockmakers, which has all the hallmarks of a horological masterpiece.

Because of the extravagance lavished on this tall and impressive clock, one may assume that it was made for a Royal palace, standing as it does at 10ft 5in. However, it would grace the entrance hall of any large house, with its elegant proportions, complex movement and exquisite walnut veneers. This is the zenith of the clockmakers' art, on a grand scale. Its price tag is £400,000.

Contact GE Marsh (Antique Clocks), tel 01962 844443.

Bespoke tailoring

Ozward Boateng is widely credited with bringing Savile Row tailoring to a new generation, and his clients include David Bowie, Daniel Day-Lewis, Russell Crowe, Samuel L. Jackson, Mick Jagger and Keanu Reeves, not to mention my friend and colleague, the Russian art dealer, James Butterwick, whose Boateng suits I have often admired.

Boateng has opened shops in major cities worldwide. Because he sees himself as more than a tailor and designer, he has coined the phrase “bespoke couturier” and has revolutionised the art of bespoke tailoring.

If I had the opportunity, I would like to have an entire wardrobe made by Boateng.

Contact Ozward Boateng, tel 020 7437 0620.



Ozward Boateng (above) has revolutionised the art of bespoke tailoring



Not a bad alternative: a villa in Valbonne (above)

Holiday home

A friend has a beautiful villa perched on a mountain above Vence, with panoramic views of the Côte d'Azur, which I have long coveted. My alternative is nearer the coast:

“A stunning property at Valbonne, on the Côte d'Azur, set in parkland and olive groves with views to the sea, three reception rooms, six bedrooms, five bathrooms, a three-bedroom guardian's house, a two-bedroom guest-house, gym, cinema, two-hole golf course, swimming pool with pool house, stables and tractor shed. In all about 12 acres.” A snip at around £7 million.

As somebody once said, “Money is not important, but it sure helps the kids to keep in touch,” and I think owning this place might have the same effect.

Contact Paul Humphreys at Knight Frank International, tel 020 7629 8171, www.knightfrank.co.uk/international.



MARTIN PRAJLX

Pheasant- and partridge-shoot

Set in the deep chalk valleys of Dorset, the Wrackelford estate has been a destination shoot for those seeking the thrill of high partridges and pheasants for decades. The shoot has developed hand in hand with conservation over the past hundred years. It is now in the capable hands of Oliver Pope, who is ably assisted by his head-keeper, Mark Valder, and a small army of enthusiastic and friendly loaders, pickers-up and beaters, resulting in a very happy, relaxed and welcoming shoot

Wrackelford has a waiting-list as long as your arm for driven days that command “premier cru” prices. For a taste at a more modest price, try the simulated driven days that take in some of the best drives, but start at a rather more affordable £290+VAT per head.

Grouse moor

Two of the best grouse moors to be sold in recent years were Gunnerside in Yorkshire and Wemmergill in Co Durham. Good grouse moors rarely come on to the market, but they are usually valued according to the average bag shot over the previous five- or 10-year period with £4,500 per brace (or more) then ascribed to it.

Contact The Cooper & Pope Shooting Company, tel 01264 781855; Jonathan Kennedy at CKD Kennedy Macpherson, tel 020 7499 1944; and William Duckworth-Chad at Savills, tel 020 7409 8885. ➤



Champagne and wines

It is too difficult choosing just one great wine, so I have cheated by dividing this section up as follows:

Champagne Either 1996 Krug at £2,846 per case – a stunner if a little young – or 1981 Krug at £5,525 for a case of magnums, one of the best champagnes ever made.

Red wine Either 1990 Château Pétrus at £40,200 per case or 2005 Château Margaux at £12,500.

White wine The 2001 Le Montrachet, Domaine de la Romanée-Conti, at £2,600 per bottle.

Sweet wine Château d'Yquem sauternes, £5,400 per case. The above are available from Berry Bros & Rudd.

Rhône wines If you want better value for money try some of the seriously underrated Rhône wines such as 2001 Hermitage Rouge from Gérard and Jean-Louis Chave (£120 per bottle), or 2005 Vin Blanc de Château Grillet from Isabelle Baratin-Canet (£52 per bottle) from Yapp.

Contact Joss Fowler, Berry Bros & Rudd, tel 01256 340123; Jason Yapp, tel 01747 860423.



Salmon fishing

In 2000, I was lucky enough to be taken on a fishing trip to Russia as a guest of an old friend. The whole thing was extremely well organised by Roxtons sporting agency, a company founded by Christopher Orssich and the first to offer trips to the Varzuga river.

This was fishing for pure fun, with rods ferried to their beats on jet boats, and the "experts" landing as many as 20 salmon in a day. The fishing here is so highly prized that the river is looked after by an armed military patrol to stop professional poachers.

A seven-day fishing expedition to the Kola Peninsula costs from £5,000 per person excluding flights.

Contact Charlie White at Roxtons, tel 01488 689788.

Fishing on the Varzuga river (above) is highly prized



Whatever your tittle, there's lots of fine wine to be had (above)

Cuff-links

I have always longed for a pair of gold and lapis lazuli cuff-links and recently found a lovely Art Deco lapis lazuli and diamond dress set comprising four studs, four buttons and a pair of double cuff-links, circa 1920, priced at £14,000. This is a real indulgence since I do not really



"do" male jewellery. However, I think that a formal dress set is allowed.

Nevertheless, I am still searching for the perfect pair of lapis cuff-links. Rumour has it that Carl Fabergé made some, but I have yet to find them.

Contact Francis Norton at SJ Phillips, tel 020 7629 6261, www.sjphillips.com.



Dress to kill with lapis lazuli cuff-links (above) and Lobb footwear (left and right)

Bespoke footwear

"The most beautiful shop in the world" was how *Esquire* magazine described the wood-panelled splendour of the London premises of John Lobb, one of the few remaining hand-made boot- and shoemakers.

Lobb shoes are a work of art, unique to their owner, created by the close teamwork of specialist craftsmen, all of whom have served long apprenticeships to acquire their particular skills.

I have yearned to own a pair of Lobbs, or, better still, have a pair for every occasion. Prices range from £655 for a pair of slippers to £6,271 for a pair of crocodile shoes, with a standard pair of leather shoes costing £2,290 (with all prices excluding VAT). **Contact**

John Lobb, tel 020 7930 3664. ■

