

TRAVEL

# Guidebooks come back from the brink

By Tom Robbins

After a decade of decline, new figures show a surprise upturn in sales of printed guidebooks.

Six years ago, the Financial Times ran a prominent story on the “death of the guidebook”. New apps and ebooks were, we reported, threatening the future of printed guidebooks, whose sales were falling off a cliff. “If the rate of decline continues,” we predicted, the final guidebook in the U.K. “will be sold in less than seven years’ time.”

Sales did indeed continue to plummet but figures published last week show an abrupt change in fortunes. According to the Nielsen Book-Scan Travel Publishing Year Book, which contains data from online and high-street book retailers, sales of travel books in both the U.K. and U.S. rose last year for the first time in a decade.

U.K. sales of guidebooks to foreign destinations were up 4.45 percent compared to the previous year. Sales across the whole travel category - which also includes travel literature, maps, phrase books and so on - were up further, at 6.04 percent, though 4.65 percent of that rise was down to a single book: Bill Bryson’s *The Road to Little Dribbling*. In the U.S., guidebook sales had fallen almost 7 percent in 2014, but in 2015 recovered to grow 1 percent.

The modest revival has been helped by the simple fact that more people are travelling - the number of outbound tourists was up about 8 percent for both the U.S. and U.K. in 2015, compared with the previous year. Travel publishers had suffered as tourism numbers fell after the financial crisis, but the decline only accounted for a small proportion of their woes. In



A pedestrian passes displays of postcards and tourist guide books outside a souvenir store in Lisbon, Portugal

2014 about 9 percent fewer travellers left the U.K. than in 2005, but guidebook sales fell 45 percent over the same period.

“In 2005, travel information online was in its infancy - travel guidebooks were the main source,” says Stephen Mesquita, author of the Nielsen Book-Scan report. “That landscape has changed completely but some of the publishers who have stuck at it are now seeing quite reasonable growth in sales.”

Launched with heavy discounts and substantial promotion, ebooks sales grew rapidly after 2007 but then plateaued in 2014. They now represent about 7 percent of the travel market in the U.K. - far less than the 25 percent or more for fiction. “All the noise about ebooks has died down, and the consumer now sees they are

just one of the options,” says Mesquita. “People don’t necessarily rely on one medium now - they might use a print guide for historical background, but check hotel and restaurant listings online.”

“If you want to search, then digital products are

**“The modest revival has been helped by the simple fact that more people are travelling**

really good,” says Piers Pickard, managing director of publishing at Lonely Planet. “But people don’t tend to search guidebooks - they flick and browse.”

The anticipated threat from “augmented reality” apps never materialized because of consumers’

continued fear of roaming charges. Even apps which can be fully downloaded before leaving home have not proved as much of an alternative (and alternative income source) as publishers expected.

“What’s happened is that data speeds have got

better, so people don’t need apps, they just get on the web on their mobile devices,” says Jonathan Knight, founder of Punk Publishing and the Cool Camping and Cool Places websites. “Plus, people want to search freely across the web, they don’t necessarily want to be

tied in to one app.”

Meanwhile improved technology and cheaper photography have prompted an evolution of print publishing. Lonely Planet, the company driving the sector, with 9 percent annual growth in guidebook sales in the U.K. (to £10.2m) and 6 percent in the U.S. (to USD21.9m), has abandoned its “book first” model in favor of creating content which is then used across both digital and paper platforms. Even within print, the company has expanded its range, producing multiple guides to the same destination that vary in size and style. The four Lonely Planet guidebooks to New York, for example, now range from the traditional 450-page guide to a 40-page, photo-led “Make my Day” book, designed to work as an impulse purchase in gift

shops. “The publishing industry as a whole has responded to ebooks by making books much more beautiful, tactile objects,” says Pickard.

Whether the new figures represent a resurgence or a reprieve remains to be seen, but there are other encouraging signs. Cereal magazine recently expanded its series of print guidebooks, and Stanfords, the 163-year old travel bookshop in London’s Covent Garden, returned to profit last year for the first time since 2002. “An app is always going to be more up-to-date but there’s something about planning your holiday with a book,” says Tony Maher, Stanfords’ managing director. “It’s part of the excitement of the holiday.”

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## FASHION – NEW YORK FASHION WEEK

## Is the fashion show dead?

By Jo Ellison

Is the fashion show dead? It's the question that the industry has been wriggling with all week as brands have scrambled over each other to deliver their goods to market straight off the catwalk. "See now buy now", "runway to retail" and "ready to go" are just some of the slogans that have been coined to conjure the new fashion order. They come in the wake of announcements this month, from Burberry and Tom Ford, that from September the brands will sell their collections straight after their shows. It's had a domino effect in New York, where Michael Kors, Tommy Hilfiger, Coach and DVF offered a select few items for sale straight after their AW16 shows in New York this week.

But what do these seasonal tags even mean any more? And what will the model mean for manufacturers. More pertinent for me, what role does the fashion critic have to play in all this?

The effort has been inspired, largely, by a "consumer lead" desire to abbreviate the time between which things are seen on the runway and when they arrive in store. There has been much talk of how the impact of social media has played havoc with the consumers' understanding of the fashion calendar. The move has also issued a broadside to those high street retailers who have capitalized on the delay in delivery by replicating the looks (for a fraction of the price) in the interim. "It will cut down on the number of copies we see each season," explained Coach chief executive Victor Luis. "And put the power back in the hands of the brands."

It will also disrupt the decades-old system of show week, where editors, buyers and brands congregate to discern the rhythms of the fashion year. The fashion week format has long seemed an unwieldy anachronism, but, as Yoox NAP chief executive Federico Marchetti said last year, it's the most efficient one we have. With this new system, brands will drip feed their product offerings in stages, with buyers and those magazines with a long lead time likely taking precedence.

"So many things are wrong. The seasons. The shows. The way we present things..." said Diane von Furstenberg from her headquarters in Manhattan. As the president of the Council for the Fashion Designers of America, she was speaking for both her brand and the US industry. "I think the presentations will become more intimate. We'll end up doing big production shows that are more relevant to the consum-



Models walk in the finale of the Ralph Lauren Fall 2016 collection during Fashion Week in New York on Feb. 18

er." Luis also spoke of brands introducing a schedule of smaller presentations, for buyers and stylists that will build up to the bigger spectacle of a show. Rather than kill it off, we might be entering an era of the never-ending show.

And what about inventory? Don't the brands place themselves at greater risk if they are ordering product in advance. "The truth is, a brand like Coach isn't waiting for the wholesale buyers and department stores to make their orders during fashion week any more," Luis explained. "To be able to deliver in August, which is when the stores now want their product, we have had to make major manufacturing decisions well before the show. We've ordered the materials and product that we expect will perform well; and spoken to our factories. If a store wants to make a specific order, and they're prepared to wait a bit longer, then of course we will deliver so long as the numbers are significant enough," he continued. "But it's a fallacy to think of show week as the focus of the buying calendar. We're way past that."

It's no surprise that New York, where many of the brands

are in easy distance of their factories and orders can be completed within a relatively uncomplicated infrastructure, has been an early adopter of the model. The city's mayor Bill de Blasio has spoken about the boon for the "Made in NY" initiative that has been building

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momentum in recent years, and there are clear benefits to see.

"The new system should make the whole process far more scientific," said Marigay McKee, the luxury consultant and former president of Saks department store. "If it means smaller, more frequent orders, the system could become more precise and less wasteful, and more dynamic and responsive."

"An average US department store carries up to 2,000 brands,

of which around 30 are American with manufacturing nearby," she continues. "This retail model could see a real regeneration of manufacturing and artisanal production in New York and New Jersey, which would be a great thing."

Where the system will be-

come unstuck will be for those more international brands that are manufacturing product from multiple global sources, a particular issue in mainland Europe where brands routinely co-ordinate their deliveries from scores of different manufacturers and specialists.

Neither is it particularly cheering news for fashion critics who are looking increasingly redundant in this bigger brand-driven picture. If the buy-



The Ralph Lauren Fall 2016 collection is modeled during Fashion Week in New York on Feb. 18

is done, and the product ordered, what influence will the critic have except to help shape a narrative that has been cast by the brand. "We'll always need journalists to help explain and interpret the collections," offered Luis by way of consolation. In an editorial landscape already driven by favoritism and early access, it seems the critic could become even more compromised.

That brands have become a uniquely powerful force in the industry is nothing new. These moves will make them even stronger. More worrying will be the impact on those smaller, independent brands that are even now struggling to deliver to deadline. There's a danger true creativity will get crushed in the race to embrace the consumer.

But we're not there yet. And there were some lovely shows this week. Peter Copping's third collection for Oscar de la Renta was sublime, a blend of artisanal skill and artistic integrity that could never be rushed. Proenza Schouler and Boss also stand out, showcasing chic lines and sinuous proportions. Victoria Beckham had another cracking

season with a collection that revisited and reconstructed her early line of corset dresses. And Ralph Lauren delivered herringbone tweeds and taupes that were a comforting take on classic American elegance. Away from the show "tents" there were some terrific presentations, such as The Row and Gabriela Hearst, labels that are growing outside the show format to offer a trans-seasonal wardrobe, with an emphasis on US craftsmanship and manufacture.

The prize for fashion ludicrousness must go to Moncler, which staged its skiwear spectacle outside at the Lincoln Plaza last Saturday on the coldest night recorded in the city for 100 years. That we nearly perished, on a night when the thermometer dropped to minus 22 degrees, watching models prance around in quilted down jackets and furry snow boots was an irony so profound I couldn't even laugh about it. But if they're short of plot lines for next "Zoolander", there continues to be no shortage of silly in fashion.

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By Frank Bajak, Libardo Cardona

**T**HE doctor taps Zulay Balza's knees with a hammer and she doesn't feel a thing. She can't squeeze his outstretched fingers or shut her eyelids. Her face is partially paralyzed.

"The weakness started in my legs and climbed upward. The face was last. After three days, I couldn't walk," said Balza, 49. "My legs felt like rags."

Balza is a patient at the public University Hospital in Cucuta, at the epicenter of the Colombian outbreak of the mosquito-borne Zika virus. Only Brazil has more cases.

Two weeks ago, she came under assault by Guillain-Barre (gee-YOHN-bah-RAY), a rare and sometimes fatal affliction that is the Western world's most common cause of general paralysis.

Alarm over the Zika epidemic spreading across the Americas has been chiefly over birth defects, but frontline physicians believe a surge in Guillain-Barre cases may also be related.

The World Health Organization says Guillain-Barre cases are on the rise in Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Suriname and Venezuela, all hit hard by Zika, though a link remains unproven.

The auto-immune disorder historically strikes only one or two people in 100,000. About one in 20 of those cases ends in death, and it is frightful.

"I thought my body was going to explode," said Balza, sitting on her hospital bed and apparently over the worst.

Guillain-Barre attacks skeletal muscular nerves as if they were a foreign enemy. Fine motor skills rapidly erode, arms and legs tingle and weaken to numbness. Patients lose their balance, their speech. In rare cases, they require ventilators to stay alive.

The syndrome typically strikes after a bacterial or viral infection, such as influenza, HIV or dengue, though its cause can't always be determined.

Dr. Jairo Lizarazo, the neurologist treating Balza, has seen cases increase more than tenfold since December — 30 cases in all — in this muggy city bordering Venezuela. Like Balza, many patients never showed the characteristic symptoms of Zika — fever, rashes, joint pain and conjunctivitis. Four in five don't.

He's convinced the virus boosts susceptibility to Guillain-Barre.

"It's an epidemiological association," said Lizarazo. "We don't know exactly how it works. But it's there, for sure."

Associated cases confirmed or suspected based on clinical evidence number in the hundreds. Guillain-Barre cases believed to be linked to the virus have killed three people in recent weeks

AP PHOTO



Zuleidy Balza (left), sits with her mother Zulay Balza who's recovering from Guillain-Barre syndrome at the Erasmo Meoz Hospital in Cucuta, Norte de Santander state, Colombia, on February 11. Balza was diagnosed with Guillain-Barre Syndrome, a disorder in which the immune system attacks the nervous system, causing muscle weakness and sometimes paralysis

## Doctors: Upsurge in paralysis condition accompanies Zika

**Alarm over the Zika epidemic has been chiefly over birth defects, but physicians believe a surge in Guillain-Barre cases is also related**

in Colombia and health officials have attributed another three Guillain-Barre deaths in Venezuela to suspected Zika infections.

WHO said Zika has been confirmed present in apparently just one Guillain-Barre death, in the northwestern Venezuela state of Zulia in January.

Dr. Maria Lucia Brito Ferreira, chief neurologist at Hospital da Restauracao in Recife, Brazil, said she hopes to get laboratory confirmation this month that nine Guillain-Barre deaths recorded there in the past year were Zika-related.

Cases of Guillain-Barre in Colombia — about 450 annually before Zika struck — were up nearly threefold in the past month and a half.

El Salvador has reported 118

cases since November, nearly as many as previously seen in a year. "The only explanation is the Zika virus," said Deputy Health Minister Eduardo Espinoza.

Dr. Osvaldo Nascimento, a leading Rio neurologist, estimates Brazilian cases of Guillain-Barre are up fivefold. Reporting is not compulsory, so the government's partial figure of 1,868 cases requiring hospitalization last year is a sketchy parameter.

An upsurge in Guillain-Barre was documented in 2013 during a major Zika outbreak in French Polynesia, with a study finding cases up twentyfold. WHO said all 42 cases recorded in the Pacific archipelago tested positive for Zika as well as dengue fever, which is also currently present in Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil and other Zika-affected countries.

Antibodies for the dengue and chikungunya viruses, which are far more debilitating than Zika, are often being found in infected patients. That is making establishing a direct Zika-Guillain-Barre link more complicated.

Like Zika, both viruses are transmitted by the Aedes aegypti mosquito and could also trigger Guillain-Barre, experts say.

Under normal circumstances, eight in 10 patients nearly fully recover from Guillain-Barre, though it sometimes takes

months.

Data on Guillain-Barre is scant in most of the developing world. Of 18 countries participating in a clinical study launched by Dutch physicians in 2012, only two are in Latin America: Mexico and Argentina. Brazil just joined.

Across the region, investigators were simply unable to get government funding to participate, said Dr. Ken Gorson, a Tufts University neurologist and president-elect of an international foundation that combats Guillain-Barre.

Poorer countries were ill-prepared to manage the crisis.

Colombia's National Health Institute is overwhelmed with a weeks-long backlog in completing tests for Zika.

The three Guillain-Barre deaths that the country's Health Ministry attributed to Zika on Feb. 5 have not yet been confirmed by laboratory tests, said spokesman Ricardo Amortegui. Nor have the three deaths in the Venezuelan state of Lara announced last week.

One Guillain-Barre fatality in Colombia suspected of being linked to Zika was a 51-year-old man from the Caribbean island of San Andres who died in November, said Rita Almanza, epidemiology chief in Medellin. The others were a 45-year-old man and a 41-year-old woman flown from Turbo on the Caribbean coast who died in Me-

dellin in February.

Guillain-Barre grabbed hold of Nancy Pino in neighboring Venezuela with devastating effect.

The 68-year retired school administrator developed fever, rashes and muscle pain while celebrating Christmas with her family in the hot lowland state of Anzoategui.

She recovered quickly. Days later, her hands and feet started to go numb. Her tongue felt like it was asleep. She stopped eating.

The family rushed her to a Caracas hospital. She could barely walk.

Bed-ridden, she lost the ability to talk and soon, to breathe. Doctors attached her to a respirator.

"It was so quick," daughter Nihara Ramos said between sobs. "It was like a flame consuming her from the bottom up."

Doctors diagnosed Guillain-Barre with a spinal tap — they assumed she had Zika earlier — and suggested that the relatives obtain immunoglobulin, an expensive treatment that pools healthy antibodies from hundreds of donors. Gorson said it costs USD15,000-45,000 in the United States.

The family, straightjacketed by Venezuela's economic crisis, couldn't find or afford enough.

In less than three weeks, a woman who once bounded up seven flights of stairs to her apartment was dead. **AP**



This undated photo provided by biologist Brent Hendrixson shows a new species of tarantula named after the late singer Johnny Cash because adult males "dress" in black, and the spiders can be found near the site of Cash's famous song, "Folsom Prison Blues"

By Janet McConnaughey

A tarantula named after singer Johnny Cash is among 14 new species identified by scientists who spent a decade collecting the hairy spiders and studying nearly 3,000 of them.

The spider doesn't sing, but it's black and can be found near the California prison that was the setting of Cash's "Folsom Prison Blues."

The researchers also collapsed the number of U.S. species from 55 to 29, including *Aphonopelma*

*johnnycashi* and *Aphonopelma atomicum* — named, with a wink to "Tarantula" and other sci-fi B movies, because it was collected near the atom bomb test site in Nevada.

"This is unequivocally the most important work on tarantulas ever done. It sets an incredibly high standard for taxonomy which few will be able to attain," Robert Raven of Australia's Queensland Museum wrote in an email after reading the paper.

The 340-page study by biologists Chris Hamilton and Jason

## NATURE

# New tarantula species named after singer Johnny Cash

Bond of Auburn University and Brent Hendrixson of Millsaps College "will be referenced for many many years," Raven said.

A National Science Foundation grant let the three collect nearly 1,500 spiders from the 12 states where tarantulas live — the public sent another 300 or so — and analyze DNA from more than 1,000. They also studied 1,200 specimens lent by the American Museum of Natural History and The Natural History Museum of London.

"Prior to our research, those two places had the largest collections of North American tarantulas in the world," Hamilton said.

While he was doing the tarantula work for his doctoral dissertation, Auburn built a museum that now houses the new specimens, he said.

The group used more DNA spe-

cimens and a much broader range of DNA than any past studies, as well as analyzing anatomy, behavior and ecology, said Ingi Agnarsson, who lined up peer reviewers and evaluated the study as an editor for the journal *ZooKeys*, which recently published it.

"It's an awesome paper," said Agnarsson, an associate biology professor at the University of Vermont.

The group checked DNA for 54 of the 55 supposed species. The exception was *Aphonopelma phasmus*, which was found in a remote part of the Grand Canyon that researchers couldn't get to.

*Atomicum's* name refers to the Nevada National Security Site. Hamilton wrote the name also is "in homage to the famous sci-fi B movies of the 1950's, of which *Tarantula* [1955] was the most entertaining."

Since *atomicum* is one of the smallest U.S. tarantulas, the name is "slightly ironic," he wrote.

It's not quite the smallest — that's *Aphonopelma paloma*, which can sit comfortably atop a quarter, Hamilton said.

Hamilton, who is such a fan of Cash that he has a tattoo of the late singer on his right arm, said the name "johnnycashi" — pronounced "Johnny CASH-eye" — came to him almost as soon as he was sure that it was indeed a new species.

"We're describing diversity on the planet, but it should still be fun," he said.

Would johnnycashi's venom burn, burn, burn, "A Ring of Fire"?

Nope, said Hamilton, who says most tarantulas are not aggressive. The fangs would hurt more than the venom, he said. **AP**

## ASK THE VET

by Dr Ruan Du Toit Bester



### COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT SPAYING YOUR DOG

**SPAYING** a Dog is the surgical procedure that involves the removal of the uterus as well as the ovaries. The medical term used for spaying is Ovariohysterectomy or OVH. Spaying refers only to the procedure of sterilization of a female dog. Castration refers to neutering of a male dog.

In Macau I have had to re-spay more than 200 animals that have been spayed incorrectly. Please make sure your vet does OVH's and don't just tie of the uterus or remove the ovaries. I have had case were the dog was said to have been spayed and just opened and closed, so check your vet!!

A female dog has her first heat cycle when she is six to nine months old. The heat cycle occurs twice per year, and this is when the dog can get pregnant. Spaying can prevent pregnancies.

#### WHAT'S THE BEST TIME FOR SPAYING?

Spaying is recommended at any age of your dog. However, the best time for the procedure is before your dog has her first heat cycle. This will make the procedure less complicated.

It's not recommended to spay the dog while she is in heat or pregnant. The procedure may lead to complications.

#### HOW LONG DOES SURGERY TAKE?

This surgery is an uncomplicated procedure if you know what you doing. The vet will make an incision and remove the ute-

rus and the ovaries. In the least complicated case, prior to the dogs first heat cycle, the procedure takes up to 10-15 minutes.

#### ARE THERE STERILIZATION SURGERY COMPLICATIONS?

Sterilization may have complications including infections or hemorrhage. The anesthesia may create complications, especially if the dog is older or has a medical condition.

The dog may experience recurrent heat cycles if the ovaries are not properly removed as I commonly see in Macau.

#### HOW DO I CARE FOR THE DOG POST-SURGERY?

The dog will be released from the vet hospital on the day of the surgery. She will feel no discomfort and can put up with the pain. However, she should be less active for the following two weeks. Make sure she doesn't lick the wound and check the wound to make sure it's not red or swollen.

#### WHAT BEHAVIORAL CHANGES CAN I EXPECT?

Spaying will change your dog's behavior. She will be friendlier and less active. You will no longer have to put up with the behavior changes related to the heat cycles. Dogs with aggressive and dominant behavior may also become more quiet and obedient.

#### WHAT ARE THE SPAYING HEALTH BENEFITS?

After the removal of the ovaries and the uterus, your dog will not be able to have



any more litters and she will not have heat cycles. She won't be at high risk for reproductive system or mammary cancers and uterine infections.

#### WHAT ARE THE DRAWBACKS OF STERILIZATION?

Spayed dogs are prone to joint problems, cancers and thyroid disease. A sterilized dog is more likely to suffer from bladder incontinence.

#### WHAT IS SPAYING THROUGH LASER SURGERY?

Spaying may be performed with a laser beam as well. The surgery is faster, less painful and the bleeding is minimal. However, the surgery wounds will take longer to heal.

#### WHAT IS THE SPAYED DOG'S DIET?

There is a special diet from Royal Canin recommended for spayed dogs. Your pet is susceptible to weight gain after the procedure, so you will have to take care of her diet to prevent other health com-

plications related to heart conditions or joint problems. Remember that spaying alone doesn't make your dog fat.

#### WHAT ARE THE DOG STERILIZATION SURGERY COSTS?

A dog sterilization procedure should cost between USD1000 - 3500 depending on the size. Laser surgery spaying procedures may cost more, because the equipment is pricier.

Hope this helps and congratulations to the all the animals that got spayed this month at our hospital

Till next week

Dr Ruan

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