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- TRAVELOG: ACROSS BAGHDAD

times Extra

weekend Guide

Macau Daily Times | Edition 3249 | 15 Mar 2019



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Local newspapers fading away

THE CASE OF WAYNESVILLE

Last September, Waynesville became a statistic. With the shutdown of its newspaper, the Daily Guide, this town of 5,200 people in central Missouri joined more than 1,400 other cities and towns across the U.S. to lose a newspaper over the past 15 years

DRIVE IN

Jake Coyle AP Film Writer

IN 'TRIPLE FRONTIER,' A SPECIAL-OPS HEIST GOES AWRY

Job opportunities seldom diverge as greatly as they do for the former special forces operatives of J.C. Chandor's "Triple Frontier." There is selling condos or taking contract work in an African warzone. There's stocking shelves at Walmart or taking down a South African drug lord. And you thought your LinkedIn profile had inconsistencies.

Yet those are exactly the kinds of choices facing a quartet of ex-military veterans who are rounded up, "Blues Brothers"-style, by Santiago "Pope" Garcia (Oscar Isaac), their former brother in arms who now works for a mysterious company contracted vaguely by "a foreign government."

With the promise of that old temptation — "one last job" — and the potential for a major payday, Garcia gathers each old pal — Tom "Redfly" Davis (Ben Affleck), William "Ironhead" Miller (Charlie Hunnam), Ben Miller (Garrett Hedlund) and Francisco "Catfish" Morales (Pedro Pascal) — with little trouble. Once at the pinnacle of their profession, they're all struggling to adapt to civilian life.

Davis is a divorced, heavy-drinking real estate broker with little talent for it. Miller is getting his face kicked in as a cage fighter.

"I say we deserve better," Garcia tells Davis. "You've been shot five times for your country and you can't pay off your truck."

"Triple Frontier," a Netflix release playing in theaters for a week before streaming, was first scripted by Mark Boal with plans for Kathryn Bigelow to direct. Both remain executive producers and Boal is a co-writer alongside Chandor.

That "Triple Frontier" originated from the team behind "The Hurt Locker" and "Zero Dark Thirty" isn't surprising. It's similarly attuned to the under-rewarded sacrifice of elite American soldiers. But it's also a larger leap into genre. Bountiful in dudes, guns and action scenes, "Triple Frontier" is the kind of proudly macho movie that's perhaps too familiar to moviegoers — though such a starry, big-budget thriller is more novel for Netflix.

"Triple Frontier" is both more and less than what it seems. The crew heads south to an unspecified country



Oscar Isaac (left) and Ben Affleck in a scene from the film

in South America (the title refers to the junction of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay) where they plot, with the help of an insider (Adria Arjona), to take down a long-elusive drug lord named Lorea at his jungle hideaway and make off with millions.

But "Triple Frontier" is only part heist movie. Its second half, a militaristic riff on "The Treasure of Sierra Madre," tailspins into a existential, survivalist thriller about greed and combat addiction. For many of the guys, especially Affleck's Redfly, being drawn back into the field is like relapsing. Trigger fingers again get itchy, to tragic ends.

Almost as soon as the mission — more ragtag than what they signed up for — gets started, regret begins to creep in. Launched with a mix of altruistic and capitalistic intentions, the expedition begins to mirror other American international overreaches, and, not unlike in Afghanistan or Iraq, the former soldiers find themselves leaving stacks of cash to compensate for the deaths of villagers. Things turn dark and in a frantic escape over the Andes, the value of money plummets.

Allegories of capitalism have proven a passion for

Chandor, who has made money an ever-present subtext in crime dramas ("A Most Violent Year," with Isaac as an ambitious heating-oil businessman) and survival tales ("All Is Lost"). His debut, "Margin Call," was about a Wall Street investment bank in the tumult of a financial crisis.

"Triple Frontier," a Netflix release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America for "violence and language throughout." Running time: 125 minutes. ★★☆☆☆

Premiered yesterday on Netflix Macau

BOOK IT

'DAISY JONES AND THE SIX' WILL DRAW YOU IN

Like a poignant song with lyrics that speak to your soul, "Daisy Jones & The Six" by Taylor Jenkins Reid will transport you to another place and time.

Set in the drugs and rock 'n' roll culture of 1970s, the story begins with an LA "it girl" named Daisy Jones whose big blue eyes and copper hair get her into all the hot spots. She falls into music but with a gritty voice like Janis Joplin and a gift for songwriting, she actually belongs there.

Then there's a band called The Six whose lead singer Billy Dunne is the definition of a rock star: he's moody, arrogant and handsome.

Through a series of events, the two acts come together and form Daisy Jones & The Six. The group skyrockets with critical and popular acclaim, hit songs and a sold-out tour, until they suddenly, inexplicably break up.

Now, all those involved, from the band members to their friends and loved ones, look back and share their version of events in the first-person. It reads like you're watching a documentary where no one holds back.

Each character is compelling but Daisy Jones is the star. She's a blazing talent who is unapologetic in her sexuality and lives life on her own terms (which is fitting in this #MeToo era.)

Actress Reese Witherspoon has secured the rights to "Daisy Jones" and will develop the story into a limited series for Amazon Prime.

Alicia Rancilio, AP



"Daisy Jones & The Six" (Ballantine Books) by Taylor Jenkins Reid

tTUNES

JOHNNY CASH'S CABIN IS SETTING FOR FINE TODD SNIDER ALBUM

The microphone pops when Todd Snider delivers an especially emphatic lyric, and his chair creaks under the weight of his performance. The rustic charm of the setting — Johnny Cash's recording studio in Hendersonville, Tennessee — is audible throughout an album that ranks with Snider's best work.

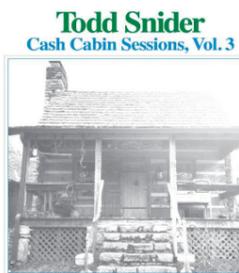
On "Cash Cabin Sessions, Vol. 3," Snider is clearly inspired by his historic surroundings, and he came armed with marvelous material to enhance the intimate front-porch feel. (The album title is a bit confusing, because there was no Vol. 1 or 2, and the CD jacket sports a photo of Snider holding a single finger aloft.)

The 34-minute set features mostly a one-man band, with occasional backing vocals from Jason Isbell and Amanda Shires. Snider accompanies himself with Cash's Martin guitar, a 12-string guitar, mandolin, harmonica and a four-string banjo that's perfect on "The Blues on Banjo" even though he can barely play it.

As usual, Snider's best instrument is his sharp wit. He sings a song about a song, fondly remembers an Elvis roadie, reflects on the history of TV and addresses our current follies, most pointedly on the closing "A Timeless Response to Current Events."

Snider makes it all as engaging as a visit from a funny friend, a vibe not easily created. According to the excellent liner notes, Snider's breathtaking screed on "The Blues on Banjo" was captured on the first take, but other songs involved up to 40 takes. Polish is sometimes needed to achieve raw beauty, as Johnny Cash well knew.

Steven Wine, AP



Todd Snider, "Cash Cabin Sessions, Vol. 3" (Aimless/Thirty Tigers)

NEWS OF THE WORLD

Five minutes late, Darrell Todd Maurina sweeps into a meeting room and plugs in his laptop computer. He places a Wi-Fi hotspot on the table and turns on a digital recorder. The earplug in his left ear is attached to a police scanner in his pants pocket.

He wears a tie; Maurina insists upon professionalism.

He is the press — in its entirety.

Maurina, who posts his work to Facebook, is the only person who has come to the Pulaski County courthouse to tell residents what their commissioners are up to, the only one who will report on their deliberations — specifically, their discussions about how to satisfy the Federal Emergency Management Agency so it will pay to repair a road inundated during a 2013 flood.

Last September, Waynesville became a statistic. With the shutdown of its newspaper, the Daily Guide, this town of 5,200 people in central Missouri's Ozark hills joined more than 1,400 other cities and towns across the U.S. to lose a newspaper over the past 15 years, according to an Associated Press analysis of data compiled by the University of North Carolina.

Blame revenue siphoned by online competition, cost-cutting ownership, a death spiral in quality, sheer disinterest among readers or reasons peculiar to given locales for that development. While national outlets worry about a president who calls the press an enemy of the people, many Americans no longer have someone watching the city council for them, chronicling the soccer exploits of their children or reporting on the kindly neighbor who died of cancer. Local journalism is dying in plain sight.

A rock outcropping painted by a local tattoo artist to resemble a frog greets visitors who follow the old Route 66 into Waynesville. Along with its sister city St. Robert, the military towns are dominated by the nearby Fort Leonard Wood, which has kept the county's population steadily around 50,000 for the past decade.

Five of Waynesville's eight city council members are former military, and Mayor Luge Hardman says the meetings run efficiently as a result.

"This is a small town where you can be from somewhere else and not feel like an outsider," said Kevin Hillman, Pulaski County prosecuting attorney.

The Daily Guide, which traces to 1962, was a family owned paper into the 1980s before it was sold to a series of corporate owners that culminated with GateHouse Media Inc., the nation's largest newspaper company. Five of the 10 largest newspaper companies are owned by hedge funds or other investors with several unrelated holdings, and GateHouse is among them, said Penelope Muse Abernathy, a University of North Carolina professor who studies news industry trends.

Critics have said GateHouse and some other newspaper companies follow a strategy of aggressive cost-cutting without making significant

David Bauder & David A. Lieb, AP

Decline in readers, ads leads hundreds of newspapers to fold



investments in newsrooms. GateHouse rejects the notion that their motivations are strictly financial, pointing to measures taken in Waynesville and elsewhere to keep news flowing, said Bernie Szachara, the company's president of U.S. newspaper operations.

All newspaper owners face a brutal reality that calls into question whether it's an economically sustainable model anymore unless, like the Jeff Bezos-owned Washington Post, the boss is the world's richest man. That's especially true in smaller communities.

"They're getting eaten away at every level," said Ken Doctor, a news industry analyst at Harvard's Nieman Lab.

Newspaper circulation in the U.S. has declined every year for three decades, while advertising revenue has nosedived since 2006, according to the Pew Research Center. Staffing at newspapers large and small has followed that grim trendline: Pew says the number of reporters, editors, photographers and other newsroom employees in the industry fell by 45 percent nationwide between 2004 and 2017.

In the mid-1990s, when former Daily Guide publisher Tim Berrier was replaced, the newspaper had a news editor, sports editor, photographer and two reporters on staff. Along with traditional community news, the Daily Guide covered the Army's decision to move its chemical warfare training facility to Fort Leonard Wood in the 1990s, and a flood that swept a mother and son to their deaths in 2013.

As recently as 2010, the Daily Guide had four full-time news people, along with a page designer and three ad salespeople.

But people left and weren't replaced. Last spring, the Daily Guide was cut from five to three days a week. In June, the last newsroom staffer, editor Natalie Sanders, quit — she was burned out, she said. She made a bet with the only other full-time employee, ad sales person Tiffany Baker, over when the newspaper would close. Sanders said three years; Baker said one.

The last edition was published three months later, on Sept. 7.

"It felt like an old friend died," Sanders said. "I sat and I cried, I really did. Because being the editor of the Daily Guide was all I wanted for a really long time."

The death of the Daily Guide raises questions not easily answered, the same ones asked at newspapers big and small across the country.

Did GateHouse stop investing because people were less interested in reading the paper? Berrier said about 3,600 copies of the Daily Guide were printed in the mid-1990s. At the end, GateHouse was printing 675 copies a day.

Or did people lose interest because the lack of investment made it a less satisfying read?

"As the paper declined and got smaller and smaller, I felt that there wasn't as much information that really made it worthwhile, so I did eventually stop" subscribing, said Keith Carnahan, senior pastor at Maranatha Baptist Church in St. Robert.

Berrier blames GateHouse, who he said "set the Daily Guide up to fail." Others are less sure. Sanders, the former editor, and Joel Goodridge, another former publisher, blame both GateHouse and the community for not supporting the paper. Goodridge said some businesses found

and they could advertise much more cheaply in free circulars dumped at local stores. He now works at a college in the nearby town of Rolla. His job at the Daily Guide was eliminated during the relentless downturn.

"When I first got into the newspaper business, it was intriguing, rewarding and I felt like I was doing something more than generating profits," Goodridge said. "I felt like I was doing something for the community. As the years went by, it changed."

GateHouse said the Daily Guide, like many smaller newspapers across the country, was hurt by a dwindling advertising market among national retailers. The paper supplemented its income through outside printing jobs, but those dried up, too, said Szachara, the GateHouse newspaper operations president.

Given an unforgiving marketplace, there's no guarantee additional investment in the paper would have paid off, he said. Szachara said the decision was made to include some news about Waynesville in a weekly advertising circular distributed around Pulaski County.

"We were trying not to create a ghost town," he said.

Residents of Waynesville are coming to grips with what is missing in their lives.

"Losing a newspaper," said Keith Pritchard, 63, chairman of the board at the Security Bank of Pulaski County and a lifelong resident, "is like losing the heartbeat of a town."

Pritchard has scrapbooks of news clippings about his three daughters; Katie was a basketball player of some renown at Drury University. He wonders: How will young families collect such memories?

The local state representative, Steve Lynch, would routinely cut out a story about people recognized in the paper, add a personal note, laminate it and send it to them — a savvy goodwill exercise.

Historians worry about what is lost to future generations. Many of the displays in a small museum of local history in St. Robert are stories retrieved from newspapers.

Residents talk with dismay about church picnics or school plays they might have attended but only learn of through Facebook postings after the fact.

"I miss the newspaper, the chance to sit down over a cup of coffee and a bagel or a doughnut [...] and find out what's going on in the community," said Bill Slabaugh, a retiree. Now he talks to friends and "candidly, for the most part, I'm ignorant."

Slabaugh acknowledges some complicity in the Daily Guide's demise. He said he angrily stopped buying the paper when it wrote about a drag show at a local community center.

Beyond the emotions are practical concerns about the loss of an information source. The bank routinely checked the Daily Guide's obituaries to protect against fraud; Pritchard said you'd be surprised by family members who try to clean out the accounts of a recently-deceased relative.

At a time when journalists and police are often at odds, it's somewhat startling to hear local law enforcement unanimously express dismay at the loss of a newspaper.

Like many communities, Waynesville is struggling with a drug problem. The nearby interstate is an easy supply line for opioids and meth, police say. The four murders in Waynesville last year were the most in

memory, and all were drug-related. For painful, personal reasons, Pulaski County Sheriff Jimmy Bench wishes the Daily Guide was there to report on the December death of his 31-year-old son, Ryan, due to a heroin overdose. It would have been better than dealing with whispers and Twitter.

"Social media is so cruel sometimes," Bench said.

Without a newspaper's reporting, Police Chief Dan Cordova said many in the community are unaware of the extent of the problem. Useful information, like a spate of robberies in one section of town, goes unreported. Social media is a resource, but Cordova is concerned about not reaching everyone.

Local authorities still write news releases and, in the final days of the Daily Guide, the overworked staff often printed them verbatim — even giving front-page bylines to the marketing director for the Waynesville School District.

"I thought it was great," said Waynesville School Superintendent Brian Henry, later adding: "Nobody's really stepped in and filled exactly what we had with our newspaper."

Posting press releases to official Facebook pages isn't quite the same. County coroner Nick Pappas said readers are more suspicious of news releases than they would be of a fully reported news story.

"I'm not going to put out anything critical of myself out there," said Hillman, the prosecuting attorney who just started his third term in the elective office. "I mean, that's the truth. What politician is?"

This isn't a hopeless story. Dotted across the country are exceptions to the brutal new rule, newspapers that are surviving with creative business plans. In North Carolina's Moore County, owners support the 100-year-old Pilot with revenue raised by side businesses — lifestyle magazines, electronic newsletters, telephone directories, a video production company and a bookstore.

Philanthropy is supporting other efforts to fill gaps created by journalism's business struggles. Report for America, which sees itself as a Peace Corps for journalists, has sent young reporters into communities in Mississippi, Texas and elsewhere. It has relationships with newsrooms across the country, including The Associated Press. The American Journalism Project is raising money to fund local news, and recently announced USD42 million in pledges. What this effort means for Waynesville, and many small towns like it, remains to be seen.

It briefly had an alternative after the Daily Guide folded. A local businessman, Louie Keen, bankrolled a newspaper, the Uranus Examiner, that was delivered for free. The paper had some journalistic spunk, revealing that the Waynesville mayor had blocked some residents from seeing her postings on the city's Facebook site. Mayor Hardman said it was inadvertent and quickly corrected.

The paper lasted five issues.



Maurina



Nick Pappas



Natalie Sanders



Jimmy Bench

WORLD OF BACCHUS

Jacky I.F. Cheong, MDT

The Land of the Eagles II



**KANTINA ARBËRI
KALLMET 2016**

A single-varietal Kallmet from northern Albania, sourced from vineyards at up to 550m a.s.l., matured in stainless steel tanks and bottles for up to 12 and 8 months respectively. Bright garnet with crimson-ruby rim, the discreet nose reveals blueberry, black cherry, nutmeg, tobacco and forest floor. Anchored by vivacious acidity and silky tannins, the nuanced palate unveils mulberry, cassis, black pepper, rooibos tea and sous bois. Medium-bodied at 13%, the dainty entry evolves into a saline mid-palate, leading to a focused finish. Delightful when slightly chilled, reminiscent of a petite Chiroubles or Régnié.



**KANTINA ARBËRI
KALLMET REZERVË 2015**

A single-varietal Kallmet from the same location, matured in barrels and bottles for up to 18 and 12 months respectively. The ancient variety is vigorous, early-ripening and high-yielding, but above all consistent. Rich garnet with cardinal-carmine rim, the aromatic nose effuses mulberry, prune, clove, coffea arabica and cedar. Braced by abundant acidity and tasty tannins, the spicy palate emanates cassis, dried fig, allspice, red tea and leather. Medium-full bodied at 13%, the succulent entry continues through a fleshy mid-palate, leading to a high-spirited finish. May come across as stylistically similar to a Morgon or Moulin-à-Vent, but the Albanian character is evident.



**KOKOMANI
VINEYARD SHESH I
ZI 2013**

A single-varietal Shesh i Zi from central Albania, matured in French oak barrels for up to 12 months. Dark garnet with carmelian-claret rim, the brooding nose offers prune, black olive, clove and incense. Supported by generous acidity, ripe tannins, the backward palate delivers dried cherry, wild mushroom, caffè espresso and fresh earth. Full-bodied at 14.5%, the dense entry persists through an impenetrable mid-palate, leading to a savoury finish. If tasted blind, it could well be mistaken for a southern Rhône.

(Continued from "Land of the Eagles" on 12 February 2019)

To this day, the flag and coat-of-arms of Albania still prominently feature those of Gjergj Kastriot Skanderbeg's. Indeed, the national hero's saga – initial service under and subsequent revolt against the burgeoning Ottoman Empire – uncannily mirrors the complicated Albanian-Ottoman relations. The production and consumption of wine were decimated under Muslim Ottoman rule, but not eradicated. Upon achieving independence from the same empire which had then become the sick man of Europe, Albania embarked on an arduous mission to revive its time-honoured traditions of viticulture and winemaking.

As green shoots were beginning to appear, the reborn Albanian wine industry was hit by the 1933 edition of phylloxera plague, followed by Fascist Italian and Nazi German occupation during WWII. Behind the Iron Curtain, Albania might a short-lived member of the Warsaw Pact, but it did adopt collectivisation and state-run economy. In vinous terms, that means quantity above quality, and Albania's viticultural hectareage peaked in the early 1970s, with some 20,000ha of vineyards.

Mikhail Gorbachev's "War on Alcohol" during the 1980s resulted in massive vine pull and winery shutdowns across the Eastern Bloc. Only marginally aligned with the Soviet Union, Albania was comparatively less affected than Bulgaria and Moldova when it comes to the

Communist style boom-and-bust of viticulture and winemaking. Following the end of the Cold War, a new dawn has broken, with capital, expertise and investment gradually flowing in. Albania as a modern wine-producing country possesses some 30 wineries and 10,000ha of vineyards; while the figures are not impressive per se, three other facts are. First, Albania's four wine regions – Coastal Plains, Central Hills, Eastern Sub-Mountains and Southeastern Mountains – encompass a hugely diverse range of terroirs and climatic conditions. Second, much of the said regions are either elevated at up to 1,300m a.s.l. or moderated by the Adriatic and Ionian Seas.

Third, and perhaps most important of all, the Land of the Eagles is endowed with a myriad of indigenous varieties. The likes of Babasan, Cërujë, Debin, Kallmet, Kotekë, Kryqës, Manakuq, Mereshnik, Mjaltëz, Pulës, Serinë, Shesh, Stambolleshë, Tajgë, Vlosh and Vranac etc. might be a mouthful, but each one of them tells a story unlike any of the ubiquitous international varieties. With hindsight in an age where authenticity and terroir reign supreme, Albania's isolation during the Cold War might yet be a blessing in disguise.

To be continued one day...

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Jacky I.F. Cheong is a legal professional by day and columnist by night. Having spent his formative years in Britain, France, and Germany, he regularly writes about wine, fine arts, classical music, and politics in several languages

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Sunday: 18:00 - 24:00

TRAVELOG

Qassim Abdul-Zahra, AP



ACROSS BAGHDAD, A MOMENT OF RESPITE AND GUARDED HOPE

Baghdad's main commercial district has seen more bombings than its residents can count. Death visited almost daily during times of war — most horrifically, a 2015 suicide bombing that ripped through two shopping malls, killing over 300 people.

But over the past year or so, the residents of Karrada have felt more normal than they have in decades. Streets lined with food stalls are crowded with shoppers, coffee shops and restaurants are packed until late, and the grey cement blast walls that protected against bombings are being removed.

"I used to go to school and come back home, nothing more," said Rusul Mohsen, a 33-year-old middle school teacher, seated recently at a store front sipping coffee. "If I went to a restaurant, I would ask to sit in a corner the farthest away from any windows, fearing a car bomb explosion might shatter the glass."

For the first time in 15 years there is no major war or insurgency in Iraq, and the defeat of the Islamic State group in late 2017 after a ruinous four-year war has given the population a moment of respite. Despite the enormous challenges ahead, there is a guarded sense of hope across the capital. Car bomb explosions that became the norm after the U.S.-led invasion in 2003,

making the Iraqi capital's name synonymous with war, have ceased — at least for now. Thousands of concrete barriers that snaked through the city as protection from suicide car bombers have been towed away in trucks, easing traffic.

Army spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Rasool said thousands of barriers have been towed away to a plot of land on the outskirts of the city, saying they may be used in the future around Baghdad to protect against infiltration. Parts of the heavily fortified Green Zone on the west bank of the Tigris River have reopened to the public, including public access to the landmark "Victory Arch" — a 40-meter tall arch of two swords held by bronze casts of former dictator Saddam Hussein's hands to commemorate the Iran-Iraq war. On Monday, Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi eased restrictions on the Green Zone further, announcing the highly secure area would stay open to the public for an hour and a half longer in the day.

The U.S. established the Green Zone in 2003 to secure its embassy and Iraqi government institutions. But the zone became a symbol of the country's inequality, fueling the perception among Iraqis that their government is out of touch.

On the other side of the river, Baghdad's famous Rasheed

Street, the capital's oldest street and cultural center known for its crumbling, old Iraqi houses, has also reopened for cars and pedestrians after a 15-year closure due to security risks.

A new Central Bank headquarters, a towering waterfront building on the banks of the Tigris designed by the late Iraq-born architect Zaha Hadid, is currently under construction, expected to be completed next year.

"Baghdad feels better than it has since 2003," remarked a veteran Western diplomat in Baghdad.

Even so, the country faces massive challenges. The Islamic State group, which is about to lose its last shred of territory in neighboring Syria, is creeping back in Iraq, stepping up insurgent-style attacks in areas outside Baghdad and the country's north. Tens of thousands of people remain displaced and much of the country is in ruins. The country is plagued by corruption, and in the oil-rich but parched south, violent riots have repeatedly broken out against living conditions.

Baghdad, an ancient metropolis of 8 million people that was once the Arab world's cultural center, is barely functional, its infrastructure crumbling. Armed militias who fought IS alongside the Iraqi armed forces roam the streets in what many see as the country's latest menace,

amid reports of kidnappings for ransom and general lawlessness. Unemployment, poverty and disenfranchised youth are widespread.

"There is a big gap between people's aspirations and the government ability to deliver," the Western diplomat said, speaking on condition of anonymity so he could speak freely.

Still, many hope that after years of bloodshed, Iraq is starting to turn a corner. In Karrada, the Hadi Center where a 2015 suicide bombing trapped people in a burning inferno for hours, killing around 300 people, is full of shoppers and youngsters fill the food court. The adjacent Laith Center had to be razed and rebuilt from scratch. It's now almost completed. Assem Gharib, owner of a pastries and ice cream shop, said for years he used to pay someone to supervise the street outside his shop and keep cars from parking in front.

"I used to be frightened whenever a car approached, imagining it to be a suicide bomber or a car bomb. Now it's the opposite, we are happy when a car parks in front of the shop," he said.

That kind of confidence eluded most Iraqis for the past 15 years. The country has been at war, one way or another, for more than a generation, starting with the eight-year Iraq-Iran war that ended in 1988, followed by

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and the subsequent military intervention by the United States.

The worst bloodletting came with the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, which triggered an al-Qaida driven insurgency and sectarian violence that washed over the country, killing tens of thousands of Iraqis. Bombings reached up to 10 a day.

The violence culminated with the Islamic State group, an al-Qaida offshoot, seizing Iraqi cities and declaring a self-styled Islamic caliphate over large parts of Iraq and Syria. That triggered a displacement crisis unprecedented in Iraq's history. Millions fled their homes in the face of the militants' rapid advance. Others fled as Iraqi forces, backed by the U.S. and Iran, battled back, ultimately reclaiming the last town in late 2017.

Few dare to hope the current lull in fighting will last and many worry fear the growing power of the Shiite militias, known collectively as the Popular Mobilization Forces.

Bashar Ali, a 33-year-old shop owner on Karrada street, said he fears the return of IS fighters from Syria and the lawlessness outside the city, including kidnappings and killings. "Baghdad is like my home, I feel safe in my own home, but when I go outside I don't feel this way," he said.

WHAT'S ON



TODAY (MAR 15)
AZZOLINI AND LU JIA

Italian bassoonist Sergio Azzolini is known for his ability and accomplishment in classical instrument performance, especially of music from the baroque period. He has won numerous international awards for his interpretations of work by Antonio Vivaldi. This month he is collaborating with conductor Lu Jia and the Macau Orchestra for a concert with a Southern European theme. The programme features Carl Philipp Stamitz's bassoon concerto, as well as work by Vivaldi and Felix Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 4 "Italian". The performance lasts for approximately one hour, with no interval.

TIME: 8pm
VENUE: St. Dominic's Church
ADMISSION: Free admission; tickets are being distributed one hour before the performance at the concert venue; maximum of 2 tickets per person
ORGANIZER: Macau Orchestra
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2853 0782
www.om-macau.org



TOMORROW (MAR 16)
THE TOPS MACAU ABRSM HIGH SCORERS' CONCERT

This Macau Youth Symphony Orchestra Association celebration, the latest edition of an annual event, showcases this year the successful candidates from the 2018 local round of the prestigious ABRSM practical examinations, tests administered by the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, a body based in the United Kingdom. The concert brings together more than 30 of Macau's most talented musicians and the various instruments they play. It lasts for two and a half hours, with an intermission of 15 minutes.

TIME: 7:30pm
VENUE: Small Auditorium, Macau Cultural Centre
ADMISSION: MOP120
ORGANIZER: Macau Youth Symphony Orchestra Association
ENQUIRIES: (853) 6828 1963
www.abrsm.org/mo
TICKETING SERVICE: (853) 2855 5555
www.macauticket.com



STROLLING IN THE GARDEN, LISTENING TO MUSIC

The "Strolling in the Garden, Listening to Music" series, held on weekends, takes the Macau Chinese Orchestra to several of the city's most culturally-apposite sites, from the Macau Tea Culture House, located beside the Lou Lim Ioc Garden, and the nearby Chun Chao Tong Pavilion to the Jao Tsung-I Academy. This month's edition of the event series visits the Mandarin's House.

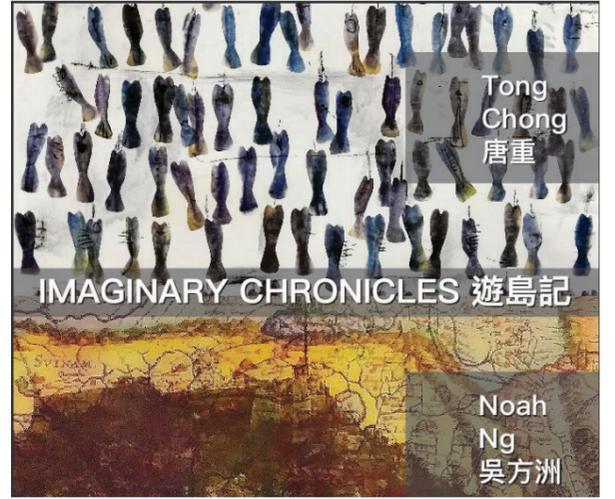
TIME: 3pm and 4:30pm
VENUE: Mandarin's House
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8399 6699
ORGANIZER: Macau Chinese Orchestra
www.icm.gov.mo/ochm



SUNDAY (MAR 17)
MEMBER JOINT EXHIBITION OF 33RD ANNIVERSARY OF CAC – CÍRCULO DOS AMIGOS DA CULTURA DE MACAU

To celebrate the 33rd Anniversary of CAC – Círculo dos Amigos da Cultura de Macau, Albergue SCM is holding an exhibition with that very title. Founding members of the association, including Carlos Marreiros, Mio Pang Fei, Un Chi lam, Victor Marreiros, Guilherme Ung Vai Meng are taking part. The event exhibits the works of other members including James Chu, Konstantin Bessmertny, Lam Kin Ian, Joey Ho Chong I, Noah Ng Fong Chao, and Tong Chong.

TIME: 3pm-8pm (Mondays)
12pm-8pm (Tuesdays to Sundays)
UNTIL: April 14, 2019
VENUE: Albergue SCM
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRY: (853) 2852 2550
ORGANIZER: Albergue SCM
Email: creativealbergue@gmail.com



MONDAY (MAR 18)
EXHIBITION "IMAGINARY CHRONICLES" ARTWORKS BY TONG CHONG AND NOAH NG FONG CHAO

Tong Chong – Blossom Series
New works of the Blossom Series explore the definition of beauty in people's lives through daily nuances of life. The rapid spread of information nowadays bring constant impact on people, from daily living habits to folk traditions, people have a new understanding of beauty.

Noah Ng Fong Chao – The Pleasure
The artist created the artworks based on Ye Quan's "Pilgrimage to Lingnan" – according to the artist, if what is written by Ye Quan described the superficial cognition of the Chinese to the Western customs, then he would like to use this misunderstanding of the West to create his artworks.

TIME: 2pm-7pm (closed on Sundays)
UNTIL: April 18, 2019
VENUE: Creative Macau - Center for Creative Industries
ADMISSION: Free
ORGANIZER: Creative Macau - Center for Creative Industries
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2875 3282
www.creativemacau.org.mo



TUESDAY (MAR 19)
EXHIBITION OF NEW WORKS IN MAM COLLECTION – CHE HO

This exhibition features five pieces of calligraphy and four paintings donated in 2017 by local artist Che Ho. It includes "Spring in the Misty Rain", a painting displayed at the Art Exhibition of the 2010 Shanghai World Expo. Che Ho is known for using Western techniques in Chinese painting and for applying ancient skills to today's art practices, in order to create his own style.

TIME: 10am-7pm (no admittance after 6:30pm; closed on Mondays)
UNTIL: April 14, 2019
VENUE: Macau Museum of Art
ORGANIZER: Macau Museum of Art
ADMISSION: FREE
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8791 9814
www.mam.gov.mo



WEDNESDAY (MAR 20)
3RD MACAU PRINTMAKING TRIENNIAL

The 3rd Macau Printmaking Triennial has set a new record after receiving 1,097 entries by 720 participants from 39 countries and regions. A panel composed of internationally renowned printmakers, specialists and academics from all over the world selected just the best, 175 winning and finalist works. These works - including "Habitable structure" by Polish artist Łukasz Koniuszy, awarded the Gold Prize - are scattered in four different venues across town. The Silver and Bronze Prizes went to Thai artists Warranutchai Kajaree and Rattana Sudjarit for the works "The remains of the painful thing 6" and "The way of harvester No. 2".

TIME: 10am-7pm (no admittance after 6:30pm, closed on Mondays)

Macau Contemporary Art Center - Navy Yard No.1;

Exhibitions Gallery and Nostalgic House of the Taipa Houses

10am to 9pm (Tap Seac Gallery)

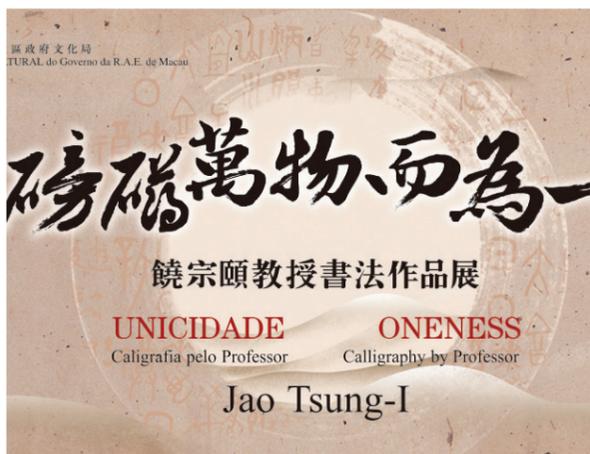
9am to 9pm (Temporary Exhibition Gallery of the Municipal Affairs Bureau)

ADMISSION: Free

ORGANIZER: Cultural Affairs Bureau

ENQUIRIES: (853) 8988 4000

www.icm.gov.mo/printmaking



THURSDAY (MAR 21)

ONENESS: CALLIGRAPHY BY PROFESSOR JAO TSUNG-I

To commemorate the first anniversary of the death of renowned sinologist Jao Tsung-I, the Cultural Affairs Bureau is hosting "Oneness: Calligraphy by Professor Jao Tsung-I". The exhibition showcases 15 sets of calligraphy work by Jao Tsung-I, and enables visitors to glimpse the complexity, beauty and spiritual quality of Chinese calligraphy.

TIME: 10am-6pm (No admission after 5:30pm, closed on Mondays)

UNTIL: September 30, 2019

VENUE: Jao Tsung-I Academy

ADMISSION: Free

ENQUIRY: (853) 8598 6718

ORGANIZER: Cultural Affairs Bureau

Sands WEEKEND



THE BLACK PEARL MENU AT LA CHINE

Until 31 December 2019

Level 6, Eiffel Tower, The Parisian Macao

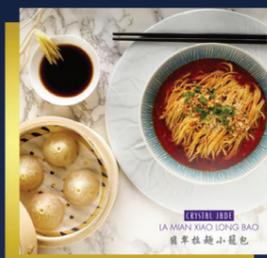
Indulge your palate with La Chine's Black Pearl Degustation Menu, featuring signature assorted appetisers, soup, main courses and dessert. Premium ingredients include dungeness crab, Gillardeau oysters, suckling pig, Kagoshima wagyu sirloin, blue lobster, South African abalone cooked with passion and flair by our award winning chefs.

Time: 11am-3pm; 6pm-11pm

Price: MOP1,288*

Reservations: +853 8111 9210 or lachine.reservation@sands.com.mo

*Subject to 10% service charge.



CRYSTAL JADE LA MIAN XIAO LONG BAO OPENS AT SANDS COTAI CENTRAL

Shop 1026, Level 1, Sands Cotai Central

Crystal Jade La Mian Xiao Long Bao has opened at Sands Cotai Central bringing a contemporary twist to classic Beijing, Szechuan and Shanghai cuisine, showcasing La Mian noodle dishes and Xiao Long Bao dumplings.

Time: 11am - 11pm

Reservations: +853 8113 8998 or crystaljade.reservation@sands.com.mo



BRUNCH EXTRAVAGANZA

Every Saturday

Shop 1039, Level 1, The Venetian Macao

It's your weekend and you deserve to treat yourself and the whole family to a fun-filled SATURDAY. Join us at Portofino for an unforgettable BRUNCH extravaganza and indulge in amazing Italian and Mediterranean dishes with the best selection of fresh seafood, live cooking stations, and the famous Venetian entertainment.

Time: 11:30am - 3:30pm

Price: Adult from MOP488* | Child from MOP245*

Reservations: +853 8118 9950 or portofino.reservation@sands.com.mo

*Subject to 10% service charge.



COTAI WATER JET 2019 BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION PROMOTION

Until 31 December 2019

Passengers whose birthdays are during the month of the purchase date and who are 12 years or above can show their valid Macao or Hong Kong ID, or international passport to enjoy a Cotai Class round trip ticket for HKD/MOP 259 or a Cotai First round trip ticket for HKD/MOP 469. This promotion only applies to Cotai Water Jet City Route.

Black-out Periods: 5-7 April, 19-22 April, 11-13 May, 7-9 June, 29 June to 1 July, 14-15 September, 5-7 October and 21-26 December of 2019.

Further details: www.cotaiwaterjet.com



澳門金沙度假區

Sands
RESORTS MACAO

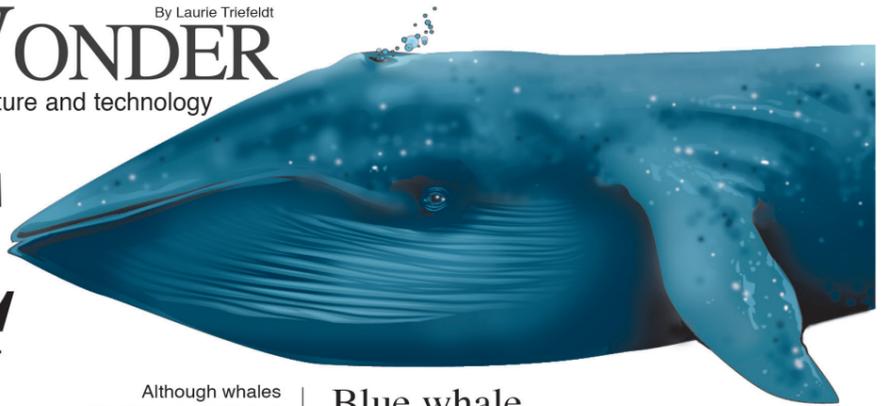


WORLD OF WONDER

By Laurie Triefeldt

Exploring the realms of history, science, nature and technology

BALEEN WHALE MIGRATION



Although whales breathe less often than other mammals, they still need air to live. They breathe through a blowhole (or nostril) on the top of their head.

Many whales travel long distances from deep, colder feeding areas to warmer, shallower waters for mating and giving birth.

Migration basics

Many animals **migrate**, following a natural instinct to move over great distances while following food, looking for a better climate, or seeking a place to breed and give birth (called **calving**).

Whales are nearly always on the move, and some travel great distances. Whale migrations can be related to climate changes; water temperature, depth and salinity; topography of the sea floor and how much food is available.

Impressive travelers

Gray whales have the longest known migration of any mammal. They travel a 10,000- to 12,000-mile (16,000-19,000 km) round trip every year between their winter calving spots in the warm waters of Mexico and their summer feeding grounds in the cold Arctic seas.

Migratory patterns

Whale migratory patterns vary from species to species and also within and among populations. For example, in **right whale** populations, migrations are undertaken almost exclusively by pregnant females heading to warm waters to give birth, while both male and female **humpback** and **gray whales** undertake seasonal migrations.

Whale basics

Whales, dolphins and porpoises are not fish. They are warm-blooded mammals that live in salt water all around the world. The blue whale is the largest known animal and can reach 98 feet in length. All whales, dolphins and porpoises belong to the group of animals scientists call **cetaceans**. They come in a wide variety of shapes, sizes and colors, but they share the same traits as other mammals — they are warm blooded, give birth to live young and breathe air. Unlike other mammals, whales do not have hair. They have a thick layer of blubber under their skin to keep them warm. For whales living in very cold waters, the blubber can be 20 inches thick.

Whales cannot breathe underwater. They come to the surface at specific intervals to blow out the used air and take in fresh air for their next dive.

Types of whales

Scientists divide whales into two groups: **toothed whales** and **baleen whales**. The toothed whales have teeth, much like ours, and feed on squid, seals, sea lions and fish. The baleen whales have a special feeding plate called **baleen** that grows from their top jaw. Baleen is a horny, hairlike substance that grows in a dense mass to filter small plants and animals out of the seawater. This food, called **plankton** or **krill**, is taken in large gulps by the whale, often many tons at a time. The water is swept through the whale's mouth, trapping the krill against the baleen plate, where the whale wipes it off with its tongue and swallows it.

SOURCES: World Book Encyclopedia, World Book Inc.; <http://www.whaleroute.com/migrate>; <https://www.wildaboutwhales.com.au>; Smithsonian Institution; NOAA

Gray whale

In the past, **gray whale** populations existed in both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. In the 17th century, the Atlantic population was wiped out by whalers. Today, they are found only in the eastern Pacific, although they once wintered along the Korean and Chinese coasts. They are also known as California gray whales.



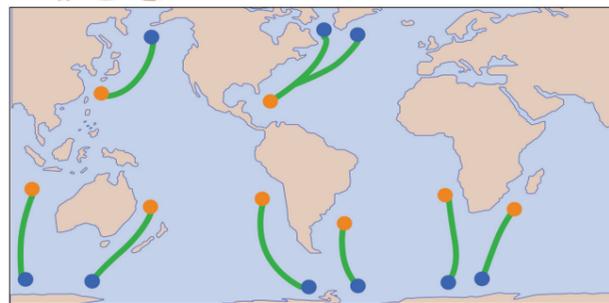
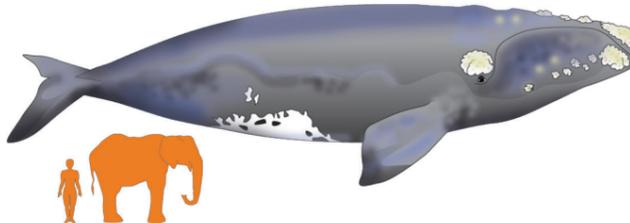
Full-grown whales are covered with a blotchy covering of barnacles and whale lice and have a mottled appearance. Adults grow to about 49 feet (15 m) and weight up to 44 tons (40 metric tons). They live between 55 and 70 years.



Right whale

Right whales, or black whales, are three species of large baleen whales of the genus *Eubalaena*: the North Atlantic right whale, the North Pacific right whale and the Southern right whale. The right whale got its name because it was the "right" whale to hunt — it was slow-moving and floated after being killed.

They grow up to 59 feet (18 m) long and weigh up to 77 tons (70 metric tons).



Blue whale

The **blue whale** is the largest animal to have ever lived and is found in oceans around the world. It feeds for months in polar waters before migrating to the equator to breed and give birth.

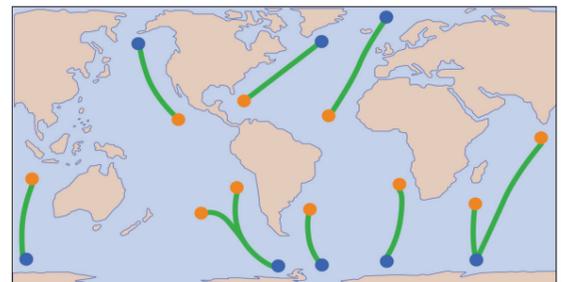
Blues usually travel in small groups, in pairs, or alone. The oldest and largest blue whales travel the farthest each year.

During migration, the whales eat little or nothing, surviving on body reserves for 4 months or more.

During the feeding season, a blue whale eats more than 4 tons (3.6 metric tons) of krill daily. Sometimes, two whales will work together to catch the krill. One whale will use its body to block the prey, forcing the school of krill into an easy-to-eat group.



Blue whales are born weighing about 3.5 tons (3 metric tons). The calf nurses on its mother's milk for several months and gains about 200 pounds (91 kg) every day. A full-grown blue whale weighs in at about 150 tons (136 metric tons).



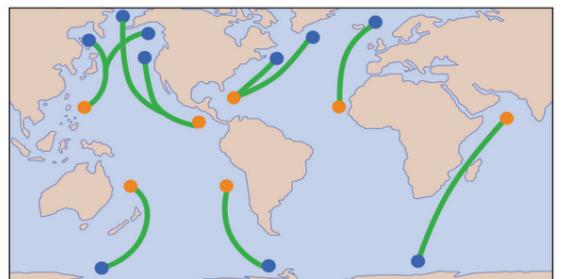
Humpback whale migration

Humpback whales are found in all the world's oceans. During summer months, populations in the Southern Hemisphere spend their time in Antarctica feeding. In late autumn, they begin an annual migratory route to their winter breeding and calving grounds in the warmer tropical waters of the Pacific. They return south in spring.

Humpback whales migrate an average of about 5,000 miles (8,000 km) each year.



Adults range in length from 39 to 52 feet (12-16 m) and weigh around 33 tons (30 metric tons).



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