

PROPERTY SUPPLEMENT OF THE YEAR

# H O M E

## WEST COAST MODERN

The award-winning holiday home that's brought the Isle of Skye bang up to date *p10*

### GETTING A GOOD SIGNAL

Mobile-phone tycoon John Caudwell's plans for his country pile *p12*

### SUNNY DELIGHTS

Why 2015 could be the year everyone wants a piece of the Maldives *p40*  
PLUS Stamp duty: who will really benefit?

### MASTERING MONOCHROME

How to work black and white *p52*  
PLUS Spring colour in your garden

# TIME AND PLACE

## DBC Pierre

**B**y the time I moved to Mexico, when I was about seven, I had already lived in several places all over the world: Australia, New York, England. My father was a geologist for the United Nations Development Programme, working in South America and other regions, and was in search of solutions to famine in Africa and Asia. Mexico City had the perfect environment and climate for his job there.

It took for a while to start enjoying myself. I spent most of my first year there in bed, with a nasty bout of hepatitis. I got picked up at school in Durham. I was very much into my own devices, drawing and painting, and by the time I returned, we had made a radical move to a house in the south of the city, an apartment over a development, the Instituto del Pedregal, built on a lava flow caused by the eruption of the Xico volcano in about 1910.

Designed by the Mexican modernist architect Luis Barragan, it had a curved facade, the entrance was lined with red brick. The house was enormous, a long, low, white and stainless steel structure, like a chain-link, with waterfall and indoor plants, surrounded by a jungle landscape. There were many trees and butterflies in fact. The place was so big, we found out after many years that there had been a ghost living there, being looked after by the staff quarters, who we had never known about. But it was perfect for the likes of me, a combination of empty rooms in which I could set up my various projects.

In one, I used my father's old trunk to create a room, some with bags of tea and flour. When I came back to it many weeks later, it was a real home, completely inhabited with mice. I attended the international school, but I was a poor student. I never really caught up about my time out there.

well with, so there were various gaps in my schooling, and I was disruptive. I have never found time to hold a pen correctly.

Luckily, the teachers encouraged me to get involved in sports, and graphics for the school festival. And my parents were always taking me out of school to go abroad. My father died young – when I was 17 – but I think he had a sense that I would find my true home if I saw the real world.

My mother had her own radio show in Mexico, and she was really good fun, organising parties at the house for visiting visiting dignitaries, which got me into the scene of Mexico City with my best friend, Anthony, whose family were from Iowa.

We would explore the local culture, the landscape of the city, the pyramids and beautiful European architecture – in the fields where my father worked, into an ancient Mexican marketplace and temple. There is an awful lot of talk of murals in Mexico, but most of the things I see, however, are really good people, and they love children.

We stayed on for a while after my father died – my mother had become part of the local community – then she came back to Mexico and I stayed on. I lived on an apartment for a while, and worked as a photographer, starting rock bands.

I came back to Mexico, however. Back then, Mexico was part of the North American Free Trade Agreement, but I had it on good authority that if I brought a car over the border from Texas in the middle of the night, it would be fine. Let's just say that I had taken it with a bad view. The quality of this was that I got my permanent residence – via consular – so I couldn't work there any more. I left for Australia.

The best thing is that I found, and my life has been a series of missed opportunities. In school times, they had the concept of honor – the right, or signature, moment in which everything happens, and witnesses of fortune upon and down. I don't plan on missing many more opportunities.

Interview by Emma Wells

Breakfast with the Beatles by DBC Pierre is our new Christmas CD, £7.99. In box it's £12.99. See page 108 or visit [www.dbcpierre.com](http://www.dbcpierre.com), or call 0204 777 25 51 or visit [www.dbcpierre.com](http://www.dbcpierre.com).



£3.95m

### A TUOOR ROSE

There's no need to search Wall Hall when you find your own grade I listed home. Dating from the 1470s and added to over the next 500 years, the former factory in Gosworth (off the A101) has a fine Elizabethan timber-framed hall and 17th-century painted woodwork, two stone parlours, a pine-clad dining room, a great hall and a two-bedroom African-inspired wing with a wicker riding, set in 30 acres in Gosworth, Cambridgeshire, with only 100m to the local station. It's a great package. And bring your own four-poster. 01223 417450, [savills.co.uk](http://savills.co.uk)

The New Yorker, writing under DBC Pierre, is really growing up in Mexico

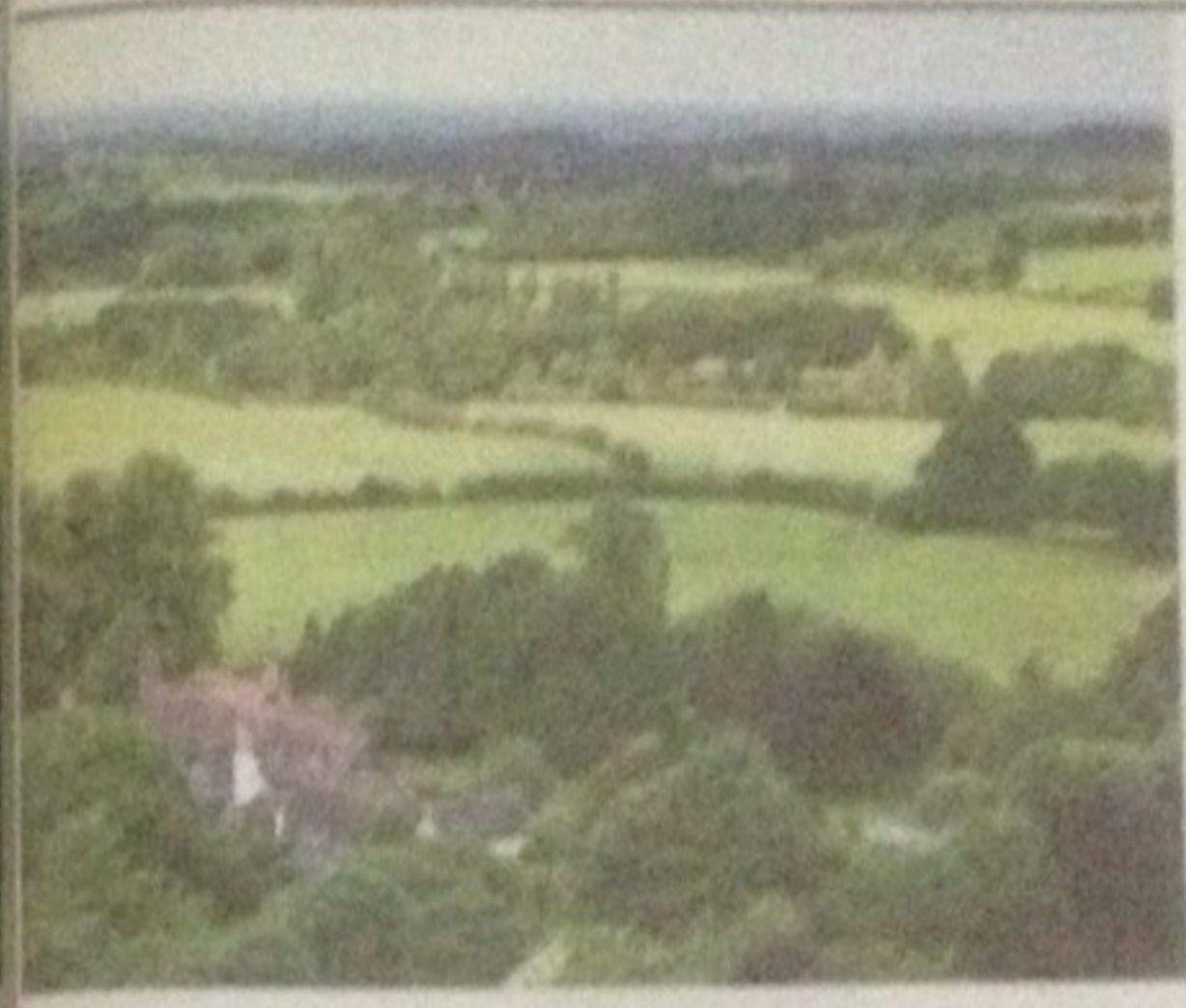
# HOUSES OF THE WEEK



£850,000

### SHOUT IT FROM THE ROOFTOPS

You couldn't fail to be excited about living in the capital after taking in the views from this Battersea Park roof garden – you can see the power station, the Shard and the London Eye. The owners aren't too staid either: the split-level penthouse is a Victorian era of design, has a 10ft living area and two double bedrooms. It's a short walk from the station and backdrops of "happy valley", and the price has been cut from £999,950. 020 7228 2066, [kfh.co.uk](http://kfh.co.uk)



# HOUSES OF THE WEEK



£475,000

### COTSWOLD CLASSIC

Bevriale Cottage is a 17th-century home with restored casement windows, a door canopy and an orchard fringed by ivy-clad walls. In Great Berkhampstead, Gloucestershire – a village in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, known for its pub and brewing heritage – it has two bedrooms and a studio. An Age completes the Cotswold look. The average selling price here last year was about £100,000 more than in nearby Bourton-on-the-Water. 01863 822661, [jackson-stops.co.uk](http://jackson-stops.co.uk)

**MOVING ON** 22.02.2015 / 3

ALEXANDRA COSS

How Low Price? Best of English village 2015



### All shook up in Sussex

Englishman who's been wondering why *Love Hurts* is selling like country pie near Buxton, East Sussex – but perhaps that's the daughter simply wants a change of scenery. Property 41, and her former husband, the music producer Michael Levenson, bought a house in 1991 – for £5.5m in 2010, according to the Land Registry. The sprawling six-bedroom property offers a characterful mix of detached and the double buildings, some of which are grade II listed, with a stone house. It has a good location with a gym and tennis, a couple of two-bedroom flats, an orangery and a carriage. Even if Levenson, who has been married to Michael Jackson and Nicolas Cage, says the £5.5m asking price, she will raise a lot. But she is the King's wife, with an estimated fortune of \$300m (£194m). It probably won't always be on her mind. 020 7861 1114, [knightsfrank.co.uk](http://knightsfrank.co.uk)

Daniel Hirst's job involves buying houses, but it's not perfect: it has setbacks



### Novel destination

Montreal was the setting for part of Victor Hugo's epic novel *Les Misérables* – Jean Valjean is, for a few years, mayor of the town – and this 17th-century coaching inn, known as the Hotel de France, is where the great writer stayed on one of his many holidays in the area. And that's not it for the roll call of famous visitors: Laurence Sterne and Napoleon were guests, as were, more recently, the actor David Tennant and the late comedian Mel Smith – the latter described the hotel as "a place of sleep and dreams". The 18-bedroom property, which sleeps 40, is now for sale at £3.5m (£1.3m). 020 3151 7278, [hempsons-international.com](http://hempsons-international.com)

### Spot the problem



Daniel Hirst may be the wealthiest man in the world, with a net worth of £235m, according to The Sunday Times Rich List, but he still has to deal with mundane property problems like the rest of us. The entrepreneur, 49, has submitted a planning application to Westminster council to open up the floorboards and ceilings of his grade I listed John Nash pile, which overlooks Regent's Park, so asbestos can be removed. Hirst bought the 16-bedroom Palladian house for £3.5m last autumn, and must "documentate the property" before he can apply to refurbish the asbestos-lined mansion and build an extension below the garden to accommodate his hoard of artworks. The artist, who owns several homes in Britain and overseas, has a 2,000-strong collection, including pieces by Francis Bacon and Banksy.



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