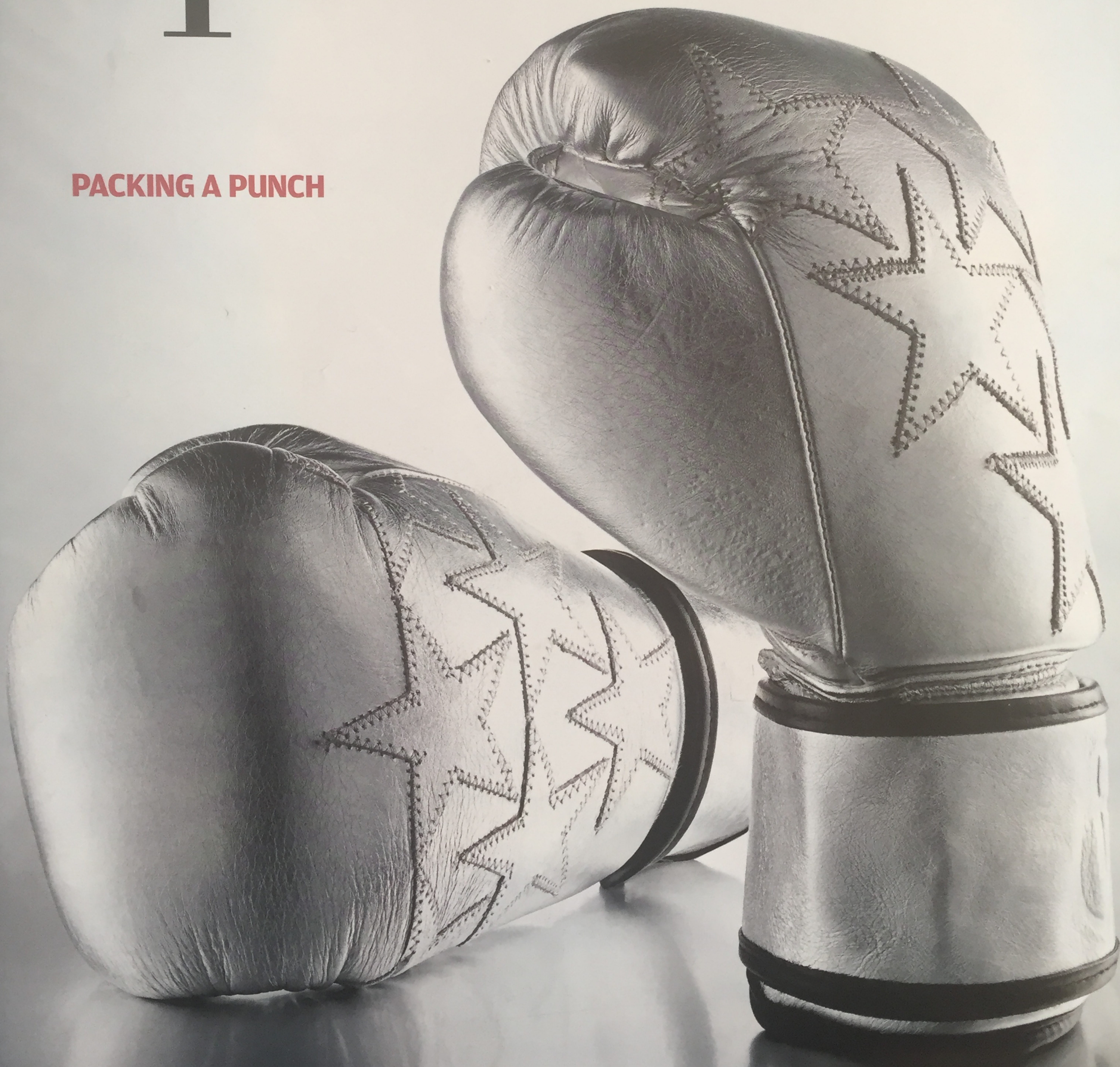


FINANCIAL TIMES

How to spend it

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PACKING A PUNCH



Roger Smith

The independent watchmaker makes his sought-after RW Smith watches entirely by hand at his own workshop on the Isle of Man – at a rate of no more than 10 per year

Watchmaking is intense, so I'm relieved when Saturday comes around. Since our children arrived, lie-ins have become a thing of the past, but I relish the chance to make the most of a work-free day.

The morning begins with breakfast using eggs from A & D Poultry near our home. Our eldest daughter likes pancakes, but for me only poached eggs will do, with sourdough bread from the Noa Bakehouse in Douglas. All the ingredients are local and the entire process is on view, as the bakery forms part of a great restaurant. People think island life means things have to be brought in, but almost everything is made, grown or raised right here.

Next we might head to Ayres Nature Reserve for the shingle beach, dunes and heathland covered in remarkable lichens. It's generally tranquil, though there can be a howling wind. We'll go for lunch at the café at Milntown, a 19th-century mansion bristling with turrets and crenellations. The house and gardens [pictured] are open to the public, having been left to the Milntown Trust by Clive Edwards, who became Britain's youngest baronet when he succeeded as Edwards of Treforis in 1922, aged six. He raced at Brooklands and his cars and motorbikes are displayed in the estate's museum.

Then we'll take in an early show at the Gaiety Theatre in Douglas. Designed by Frank Matcham at the end of the 19th century, it has fabulous gilded ceilings and a Mighty Wurlitzer organ. The theatre often uses producers from off the island, but the actors tend to be talented locals. Afterwards we'll go for an early supper at the Little Fish Café on Douglas quay. Its speciality is Manx Queenies – local queen scallops, just voted the isle's national dish.

Exhausted, we head home, but by Sunday morning I'm revived and will go for a long bike ride. I became a convert when we moved to our current home close to Mount Snaefell. Olympic cyclists Peter Kennaugh and Mark Cavendish both come from the island and the sport is very popular here, so we're well served by bike shops such as Bikestyle and Eurocycles in Douglas. For a challenging ride up the mountain I'll take my Cannondale Six; to explore the island's network of trails, I'll get out my Specialized Camber trail bike.

Afterwards I might persuade everyone to take a trip on the Isle of Man steam



railway that uses trains put on the tracks about 150 years ago. The carriages have wooden compartments with stained-glass windows and moquette seats. We pack a picnic and stay on the train all the way to Port Erin in the south of the island. It has a beautiful bay and on a sunny day we'll go to the beach and enjoy some locally made Davisons ice cream.

After a walk, we might go to The Shore Hotel, which serves the excellent Bushy's beer made at Braddan. The last train returns to Douglas at around 4pm and

when we get home we'll mix up our favourite drink – an Isle of Man gin called Fynoderee, which is superb with Fever-Tree tonic. Then Caroline will cook us a Sunday roast and we'll have some sparkling wine that, believe it or not, is made on the island by the Foraging Vintners craft winery at Port Erin.

As Sunday draws to a close, I'll either head to my garage to get on with restoring my 1967 Mini Cooper, or nip into the workshop to do a bit of drawing to prepare for a new week. **SIMON DE BURTON**

Caroline will cook a Sunday roast and we'll drink wine made on the island by the Foraging Vintners

A & D POULTRY, ST JUDES ROAD, SULBY IM7 2EW. **AYRES VISITOR CENTRE & NATURE TRAIL**, THE AYRES, LHEN ROAD, BRIDE IM7 4BF (01624-844 432; MANXWT.ORG.UK). **BIKESTYLE**, 42 BUCKS ROAD, DOUGLAS IM1 3AD (01624-673 576; BIKESTYLE.IM). **BUSHY'S BREWERY**, MOUNT MURRAY, BRADDAN IM4 2HT (01624-661 244; BUSHYS.COM). **DAVISON'S ICE CREAM**, THE FACTORY, MILL ROAD, PEEL IM5 1TA (01624-844 111; DAVISON5.CO.IM). **EUROCYCLES**, 8 VICTORIA ROAD, DOUGLAS IM2 4EY (01624-624 909; EUROCYCLES.CO.IM). **FORAGING VINTNERS**, FORAGINGVINTNERS.COM. **ISLE OF MAN STEAM RAILWAY**, DOUGLAS STEAM RAILWAY STATION, BANKS CIRCUS, DOUGLAS IM1 5PT (01624-662 525; GOV.IM). **LITTLE FISH CAFE**, 31 NORTH QUAY, DOUGLAS IM1 4LB (01624-622 518; LITTLEFISHCAFE.COM). **MILNTOWN CAFE & RESTAURANT**, MILNTOWN, RAMSEY IM7 2AB (01624-818 091; MILNTOWN.ORG). **NOA BAKEHOUSE**, FORT STREET, DOUGLAS IM1 2LJ (01624-618 063). **THE SHORE HOTEL**, SHORE ROAD, GANSEY IM9 5LZ (01624-832 269; THESHORE.IM). **VILLA GAIIETY**, HARRIS PROMENADE, DOUGLAS IM1 2HP (01624-600 500; VILLAGAIIETY.COM).