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Editor's Letter

Edwin Smith



At this time of year many readers and friends of *Spear's* would usually be preparing for a trip to Davos. Not in 2021, however. The World Economic Forum's annual marquee event is being relocated from the bijou Swiss ski town to Singapore, and will take place in May. As John Arlidge explains on page 54, senior politicians in the ambitious city-state worked long and hard to bring the WEF to Asia. They hope the event will help the Lion City establish itself as the leading international hub for businesspeople to meet 'irl' in the Covid purgatory of 2021. John's report describes what's in store for those who decide to make the journey. (Clue: be prepared for rather a lot of nasal swabs.)

In the luggage of many a 'Davos Man' travelling to Singapore, you can bet that there will be ties made by Hermès. On page 58 we chart the rise of the neckwear *ne plus ultra* – from its early days in Cannes to its Nineties peak in the world's financial capitals – and ask whether our age of informality might pose an existential threat.

Existential threats – to the planet, the financial system and the role of America – were on the mind of hedge fund billionaire Tom Steyer when he campaigned to become the Democrats' nominee for president last year. He speaks to Tom Teodorczuk (page 50) about what he learned in defeat, how Wall Street needs to change, and his relationship with Joe

Biden. (Don't be surprised if Steyer helps to shape the new president's economic policies in the years to come.)

Elsewhere, the former editor of the *Financial Times*, Lionel Barber, discusses his 15-year tenure and the process of writing his diaries. What he learned from close-quarters encounters with powerful

people – from Lloyd Blankfein to Vladimir Putin – is worth sharing.

That piece (page 14) comes from a conversation with *Spear's* staff writer Arun Kakar. His interview with a second big beast of the media, Andy Coulson, appears on page 44.

Coulson, as has been well documented, rose

to become director of

communications at Number 10 but came crashing down to earth when he was convicted of phone hacking and sentenced to 18 months in prison. Now he's using his experience to protect and burnish the reputations of his own clients. Arun's exclusive interview features in our new briefing section (page 31), which is divided into two parts: property and reputation management.

There is – somehow – also space for replica Ferraris (page 82), the scion of a Parisian baking dynasty (yes – that's baking, not banking), a trip to the Serengeti (page 90), an examination of the watch industry's changing attitudes to customisation (page 96) and our Midas interview with actor Anna Friel.

I hope you enjoy the issue.



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