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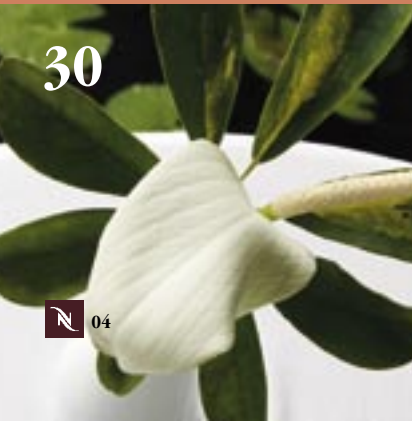
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Neo

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**Anna Netrebko**, opera-singer, was born in Krasnodar and received her vocal training at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. The now 34 year-old young soprano became an overnight sensation in the music world with her triumphant debut at the San Francisco Opera in 1995. Anna Netrebko has since starred with opera companies and symphony orchestras around the world such as the Metropolitan Opera (War and Peace), Salzburg Festival (Don Giovanni), Royal Opera, Covent Garden (La clemenza di Tito), Washington Opera (Rigoletto, Le nozze di Figaro, Idomeneo), and Bayerische Staatsoper (La traviata). She recently became an exclusive recording artist with Deutsche Grammophon and has garnered two of Germany's prestigious 'Echo Awards' for her newest release, 'Sempre Libera'. In June 2005, Anna Netrebko was awarded the State Prize of the Russian Federation in the field of Arts and Literature. Despite **Michel Comte's** undeniably busy schedule, the celebrity photographer simply couldn't turn down the opportunity of capturing her unique style on film. For you to discover on pages 20–25.

**Jill James** has been a Financial Times journalist for 25 years. She worked on the paper's Weekend FT section for 12 years and was travel and food editor for five years and built a team of outstanding award-winning travel and food writers. She is now planning editor of the paper's special reports section specialising in business travel. Food is still her passion in life and she continues to cook and write. She uncovers some of the secrets of Mother Earth's precious gems, the truffle on pages 26–29.

**Christina Schott** was born in 1971 and completed her German university studies before graduating from the Henri-Nannen School of Journalism in Hamburg. After that she went on to work for one of Germany's most influential weekly news magazines Stern, for which she continues to write to this day. The renowned newspapers Die Zeit and Financial Times Deutschland often publish her work, which, since 2002, she has been sending in from her new home in Indonesia. She visited Java with the photographer Daniele Mattioli and has painted her impressions in writing on pages 30–35.

**Heston Blumenthal** went from being an office equipment salesman and debt-collector to finally realising his dream of being a chef when he opened his restaurant The Fat Duck in Berkshire, England ten years ago and has since gone on to wow its guests with truly eclectic cuisine. Blumenthal is part of a growing group of chefs, scientists and psychologists that are looking at food and the way we eat from a different angle – the approach being more holistic and, with new con-trolled experimentation, one that does not automatically take historic kitchen lore and tradition for granted. The 41-year old chef has "started to look at the ritualistic aspect of our mealtimes and the way that the brain can almost pre-determine the taste of something." For a taste of the unexpected turn to page 46.



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