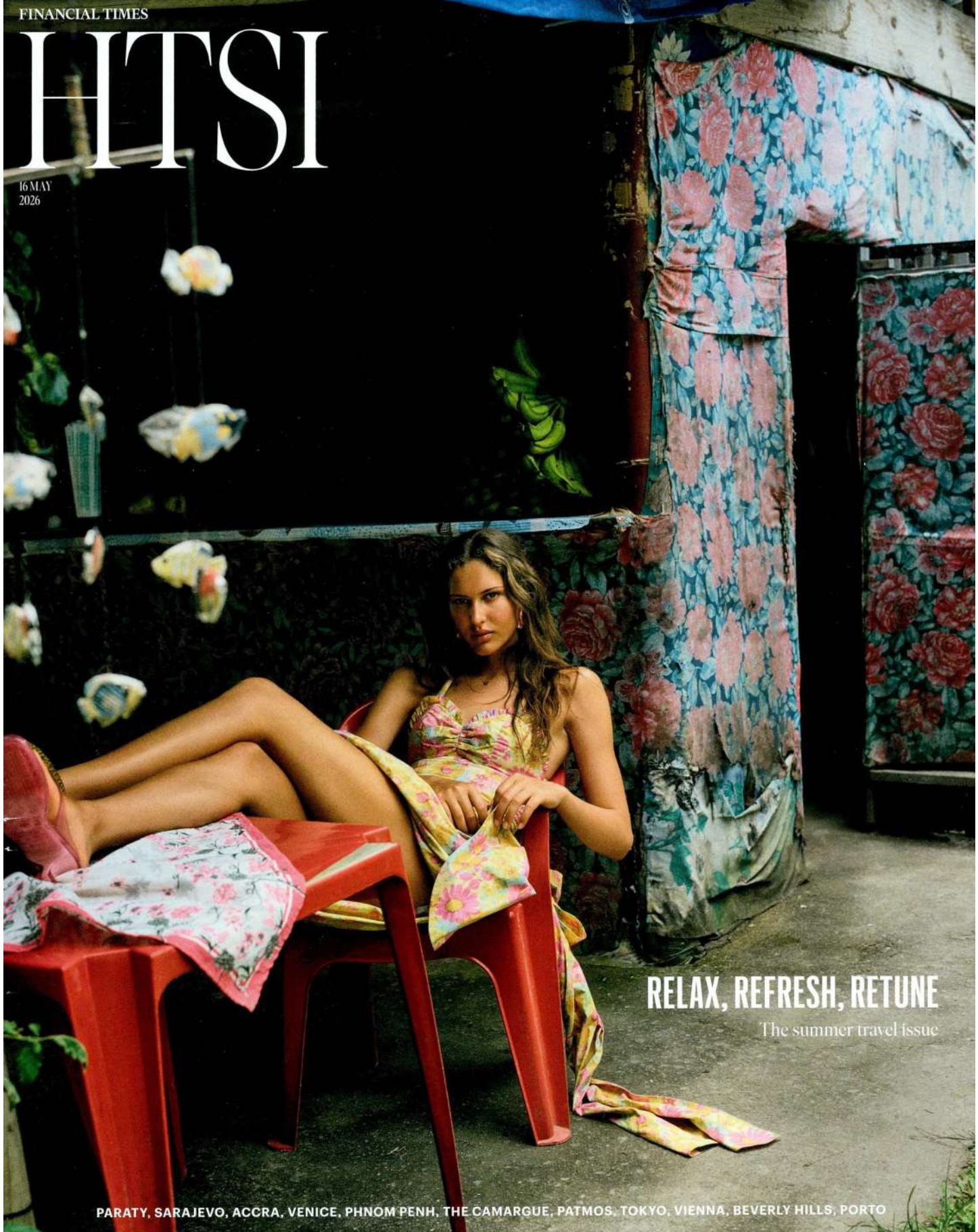


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HITS

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RELAX, REFRESH, RETUNE

The summer travel issue

PARATY, SARAJEVO, ACCRA, VENICE, PHNOM PENH, THE CAMARGUE, PATMOS, TOKYO, VIENNA, BEVERLY HILLS, PORTO



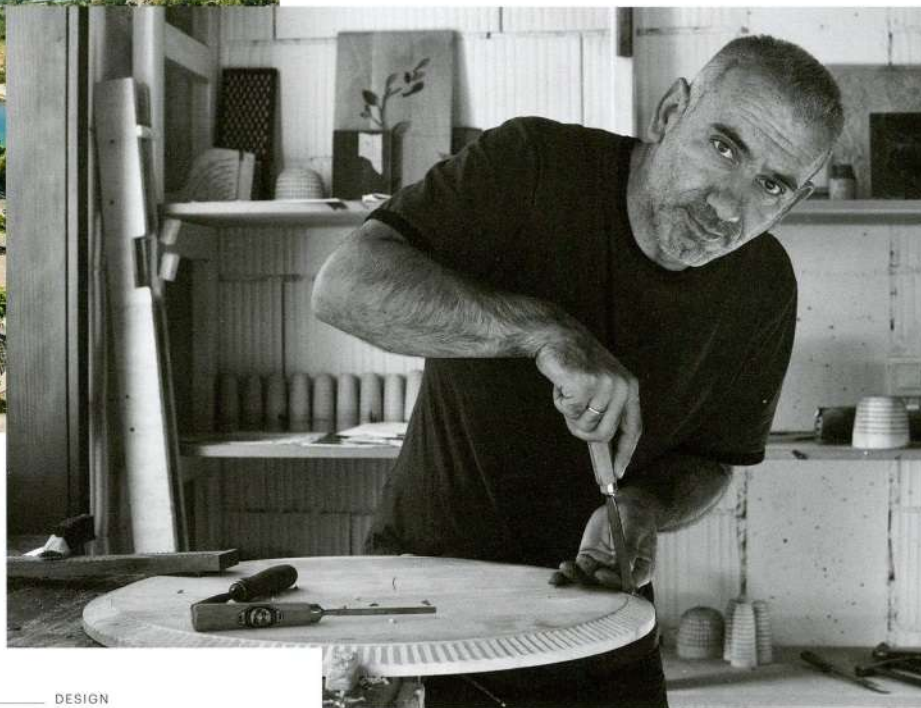
Bosnia is a hidden little gem," says Orhan Nikšić. The former senior economist at the World Bank is giving a potted tour of his home country, shuttling between the city of Mostar, with its famous, destroyed and then reconstructed Ottoman-era bridge, and the capital of Sarajevo. There's a stop-off in the medieval hillside village of Počitelj, where a 14th-century fortress towers over the Neretva river and cobbled alleyways are strewn with fresh mint and fallen pomegranates. Another stop takes in Konjic, encircled by the Prenj and Visočica mountain ranges, where Nikšić grew up.

His entourage includes a line-up of internationally renowned designers – among them former Memphis Milano member Michele de Lucchi, Yves Behar, founder of San Francisco studio Fuseproject, and Muji collaborator Naoto Fukasawa. All have designed products for Zanat, the brand that Nikšić and his brother, Adem, developed from the woodcarving workshop their great-grandfather started more than a century ago. The gathering is a celebration of the 10-year anniversary of its relaunch and the journey from "primitive village craft" to global design brand.

Heritage craftsmanship isn't generally top of mind at the mention of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Nor, for that matter, is tourism. Direct flights from London to Sarajevo aren't exactly plentiful (save for the odd Ryanair hop). But visitor numbers are up: by almost 32 per cent from 2023 to 2024.

"The war that we had in the '90s has left really deep marks," says Nikšić.

Top left: the Bosnian village of Počitelj by the Neretva river. Top right: Zanat craftsman at work on a Piano table designed by Milanese studio Palomba Serafini Associati. Below: the workshop of Mostar coppersmiths Edo Kurt & Saša Miličević



DESIGN

MADE IN BOSNIA

The country's craft was virtually extinguished. These makers are saving its skills. By Victoria Woodcock

"But the spirit of Bosnia is still alive. The idea [with Zanat, the Bosnian word for "craft"] was to somehow reveal this. We wanted to impart a deeper understanding of Bosnia's traditional culture."

In Sarajevo, the country's rich artisanal heritage is embedded in the very structure of the city, with the hillside *mahalas* (rambling residential districts) centred around the bazaar of Baščaršija. It was developed in the 15th century, when the city was newly part of the Ottoman Empire. Buildings such as Gazi Husrev-Bey Mosque were encircled in a warren of wooden-fronted artisan workshops – from makers of knives, jewellery and textiles to masters of calligraphy. Sarači Street gets its name from the leatherworkers that set up shop there; Kazandžilik from its cacophony of coppersmiths, hand-hammering traditional Bosnian coffee sets with intricate embossed patterns.

Sulejman Hrgić is one of the area's remaining coppersmiths – and, aged 40, also one of its youngest. At his shop-studio on Kovači Street, he creates souvenirs for passers-by and also works to commission, in aluminium, silver, copper and more. Past requests include a heraldic plaque for the US Embassy and a pickguard for a Fender Stratocaster.



From top: ZANAT maple Grad bookend by Jasna Mujkić, E165, and maple Grana salt and pepper set by Naoto Fukasawa, E176. TAKO STUDIO KERAMIKE ceramic Zen Kyusu tea set, BAM140 (about £62). SULEJMAN HRGIĆ copper tray, POA

"I live a legit Sarajevo life – old Baščaršija-style. Here, we still drink coffee together," says Hrgić of his artisan neighbours. "And I love it. But there is no point making stuff that can be made by machine; you need to invent stuff."

The Homo Faber Guide (an online platform dedicated to artisans) proposes a Sarajevo craft tour titled "The Guardians of Ancient Crafts". It spans the studios of Hrgić, where he also offers hands-on workshops; Hazim Numanagić, one of Bosnia's most celebrated calligraphers; and the city's sole milliner, Janko Hlпка, whose cigarette-smoke-filled workshop seems frozen in time.

"It's on its last breath," says Sarajevo-based Tatjana Kovačević-Vidović of her chosen craft: ceramics. With only four traditional pottery workshops remaining – down from 100 in 1900, according to a 2022 study conducted by Newcastle

ARTISANAL HERITAGE IS EMBEDDED IN THE VERY STRUCTURE OF SARAJEVO

University alongside the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina – "I want to try to make ceramics alive again," says the founder of TAKO Studio Keramike. "I have a modern approach – somewhat minimalist and also fun."

Such start-ups are bubbling up despite a lack of government assistance. "Many things in Bosnia happen thanks to the enthusiasm and persistence of individuals," says Nikšić, who returned more than a decade ago after living in Washington, DC and Jerusalem. "We don't have the greatest system to support us but we try to do our best."

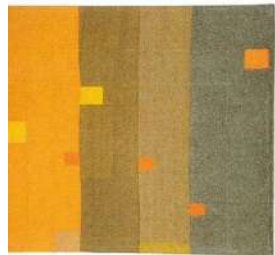
He describes Konjic, a 35-mile drive south-west of Sarajevo, as "a small town where generations of craftsmen have carved wood with skill and poetry". Here, Zanat continues to create traditional pieces,

THE FIX



Left: a Bosnian woman working on a piece for Bosna Quilts at a refugee centre in Austria, 1993. Below left: a 2020 piece by Bosna Quilts

A 1993 QUILT BY BOSNA QUILTS



gouged with geometric yet floral motifs – examples made by Nikšić's grandfather are held in the collection of the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Its USP, however, is contemporary interpretations such as the gently undulating Touch dining table designed by Studioilse and the shapely Meduza table lamp by Sebastian Herkner. The new anniversary collection of objects includes a jewellery tray by Monica Förster, a bowl by Swedish architecture firm Wingårdhs and a pair of minimal salt and pepper shakers by Fukasawa.

All of Zanat's wares are made with local Bosnian wood – from oak and ash to walnut and cherry – which is dried and milled on site. While the factory floor buzzes with the sound of electrical saws and CNC machines, the carving studio upstairs still thrums with the analogue audio of hammer on chisel, and master craftsman Ibro Bubalo passes on his skills to the next generation, including his daughter Jasmina.



Third from top: a plate by artisans Edo Kurt & Saša Miličević, POA. Above: ZANAT Nakti jewellery tray by Monica Förster, £400. Below: the Zanat factory in Konjic

"BEAUTY AND KNOWLEDGE are fragile things that must be continually cared for and reimagined," says Nikšić, who has turned the family's workshop into a museum to the craft that is now enshrined on Unesco's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Zmijanje embroidery, a specific type of blue-on-white cross-stitch used to decorate women's clothing and household linens, is also on the list. But while



"BEAUTY MUST BE CARED FOR AND REIMAGINED"

Aleksandra Ivanković has spearheaded a project to "collect, digitalise and safeguard the patterns and motifs", finding, say, a set of embroidered-in-Bosnia napkins isn't easy. Few craft initiatives have an international presence. Zanat and a clutch of other furniture brands – including Artisan, born of traditional woodshop Čostović in Tešanj – are highlighting "what is possible", adds Nikšić.

One success story was started not in Bosnia, but in Austria, where in 1993 artist Lucia Lienhard-Giesinger and a group of Bosnian women started the Bosna Quilt Workshop as a temporary employment project in a refugee shelter in Vorarlberg. Today they collaborate on their "textile art across borders" and have created more than 3,000 quilts. Each is designed by Lienhard-Giesinger on the shores of Lake Constance and stitched by the Drina river, in Gorazde.

"The war really affected the confidence of Bosnians," says Nikšić. "But now when people in the factory see the pieces they've worked on being valued and appreciated [at events such as Milan Design Week], it really does have a positive impact. Quite often young designers ask me for advice on starting their own brand – and that really makes me happy." ■HTSI

Victoria Woodcock travelled to Bosnia as a guest of Zanat, zanat.org



AUTHENTICITY BED BY OSWALD BOATENG & SAVOIR

INTERIORS

BEDTIME, TAILORED

Oswald Boateng brings his Savile Row know-how to Savoir. *By Inès Cross*

Oswald Boateng barely sleeps – he says he gets a maximum of five hours a night. Yet when the opportunity to create his dream bed arose, he didn't hesitate. "I am drawn to craftsmanship – and Savoir excels at it," says the fashion designer of the British bedmaker.

Boateng first set up shop in the shadow of Savile Row in 1995, at the age of 28, and has attracted a client list that includes Sir Mick Jagger, Sir Daniel Day-Lewis and Spike Lee. He likens the process of creating a Savile Row suit to the production of his new bed – a made-to-order piece that involves more than 200 hours of handwork at Savoir Beds' London factory and costs upwards of £76,000.

At its core is the signature No 2 mattress stuffed with a blend of wool, cotton and horse tail. The surrounding design draws heavily on Boateng's love of textiles: A custom headboard, set atop a curved oak frame, is upholstered in woven leather and embellished with a design that reinterprets Ghanaian Kente cloth. The base is wrapped in an embossed leather from specialist Whistler Leather, while the back is draped in a deep green satin from Milanese fabric house Dedar.

"Every time Oswald comes to the factory he brings this massive energy," says Savoir's CEO Alistair Hughes. The brand, which first created beds for The Savoy hotel in 1905, makes fewer than 1,000 beds a year. Each mattress is individually signed by its maker; all use South American horse hair that is twisted into ropes for three months to achieve a permanent curl before being separated out to form natural springs, which offers, says Hughes, "unparalleled bounce and longevity". Previous bespoke commissions have included round beds, revolving beds and beds with integrated speaker systems.

"They were telling me everything's possible," recalls Boateng of his design. But for Hughes, Boateng's manufacturing know-how was key: "Anyone can put a pen to paper, but when someone really understands the process of how things are made, you know it's going to work." Could it encourage Boateng to spend more than five hours asleep? With two young kids ruling his roost these days, he's more inclined to enjoy the odd lie-in. ■HTSI

The Oswald Boateng Bed will be showcased at Savoir's Mayfair showroom from 16 May and has a lead time of 16-18 weeks; savoirbeds.com

PHOTOGRAPH: BOSNA QUILT WORKSHOP; EDO KURT; MICHAEL SINGLARE; MATTHIAS WEISSENGRUBER; NICOLAUS WALTERS; ZANAT ARCHIVE