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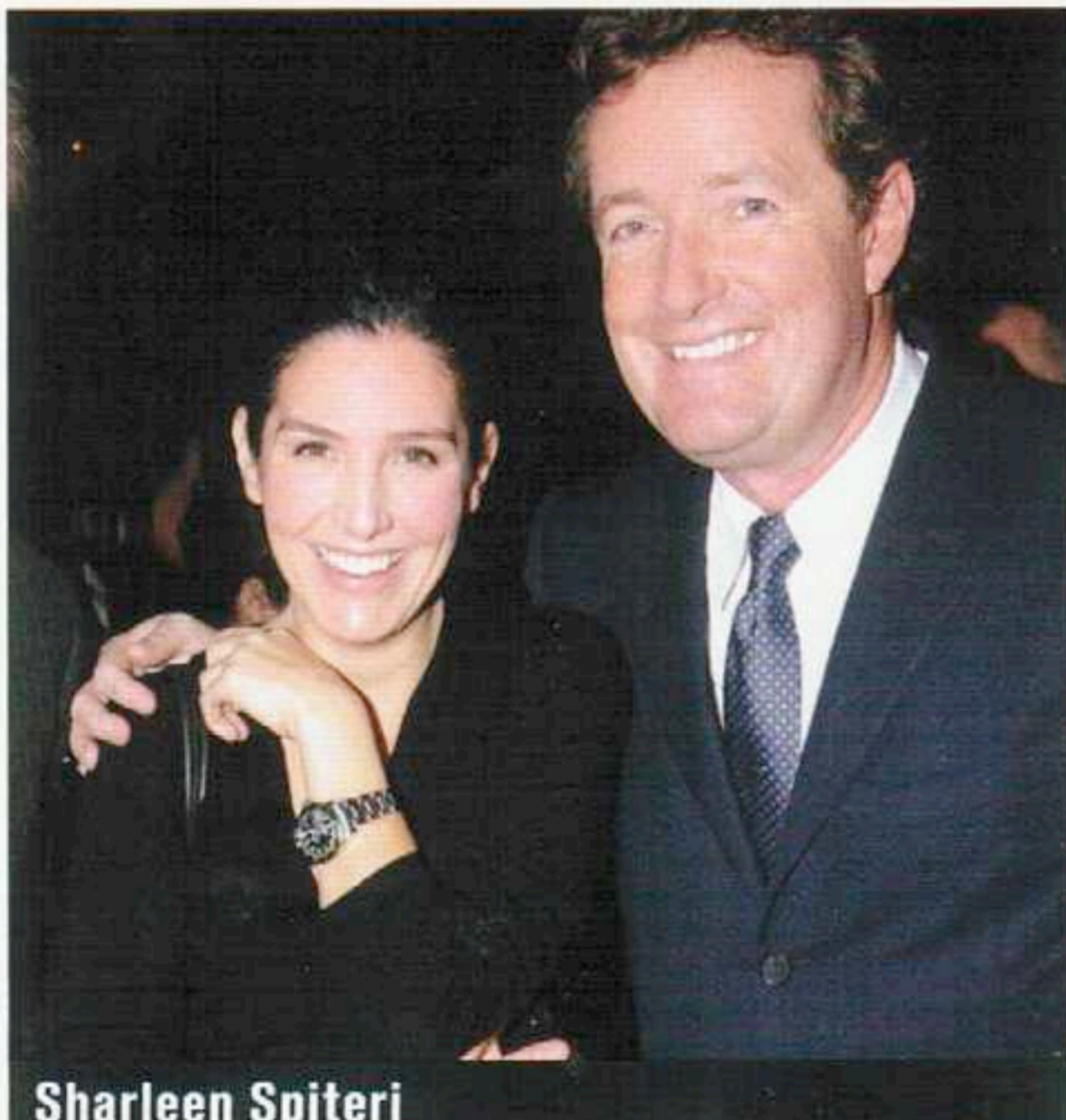
NEW COLUMN! 284
The back page
 Roger Alton, GQ's star signing, celebrates sport on TV.



ON THE COVER
 LEWIS HAMILTON WEARS ZIP-FRONT JACKET BY BOSS BLACK, £229. T-SHIRT BY BOSS ORANGE, £45. 020-7554 5700. GRAND CARRERA CALIBRE 17 WRISTWATCH BY TAG HEUER, £2,995. 0800 037 9658. PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID BAILEY. STYLING BY DAVID LAMB

GQ EXPOSURE

THIS MONTH >>> A STELLAR LINE-UP JOINS GQ FOR MICHELIN-STARRED CUISINE AT UMU, LONDON'S MOST EXCLUSIVE AND AUTHENTIC JAPANESE RESTAURANT



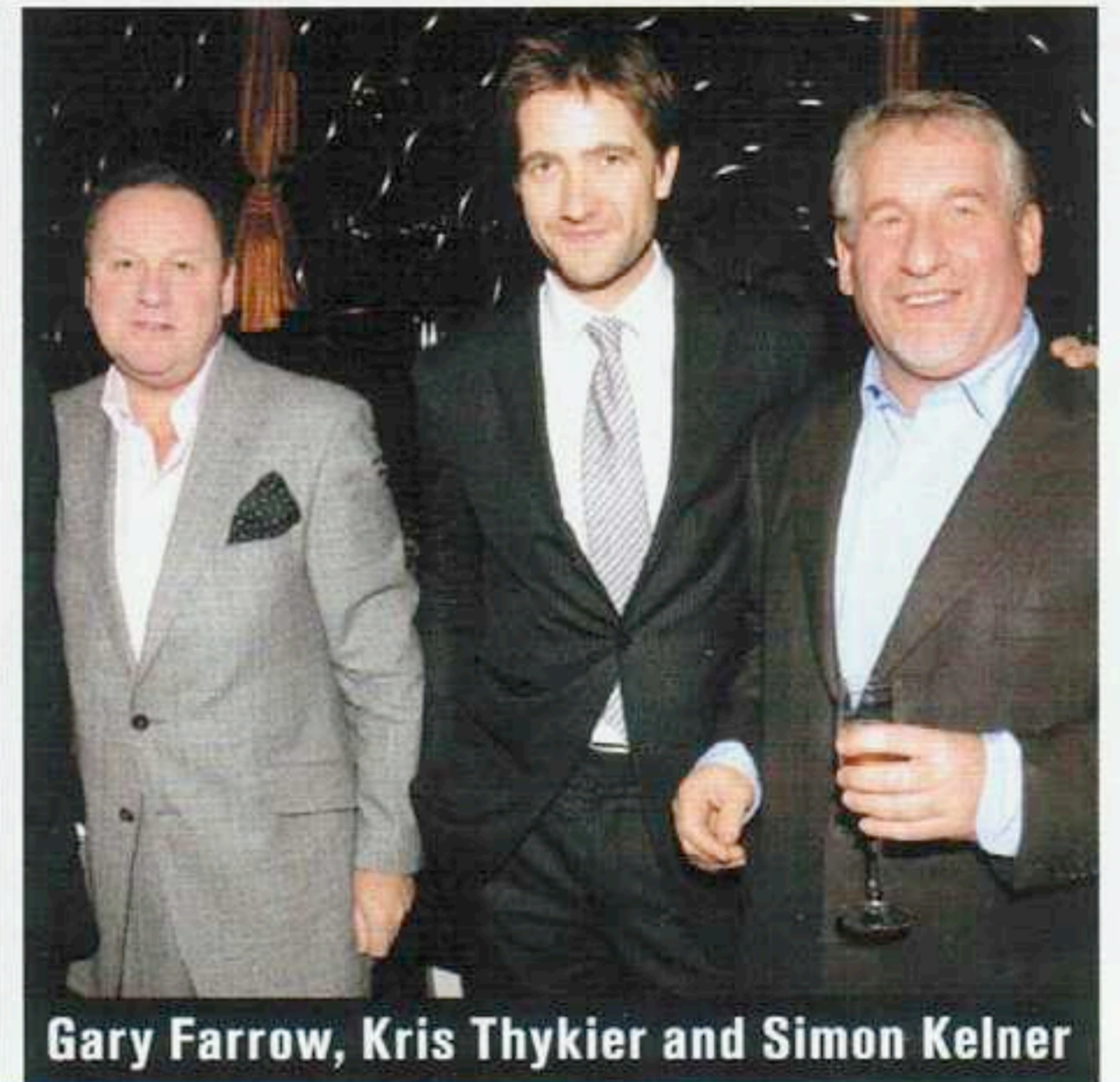
Sharleen Spiteri and Piers Morgan



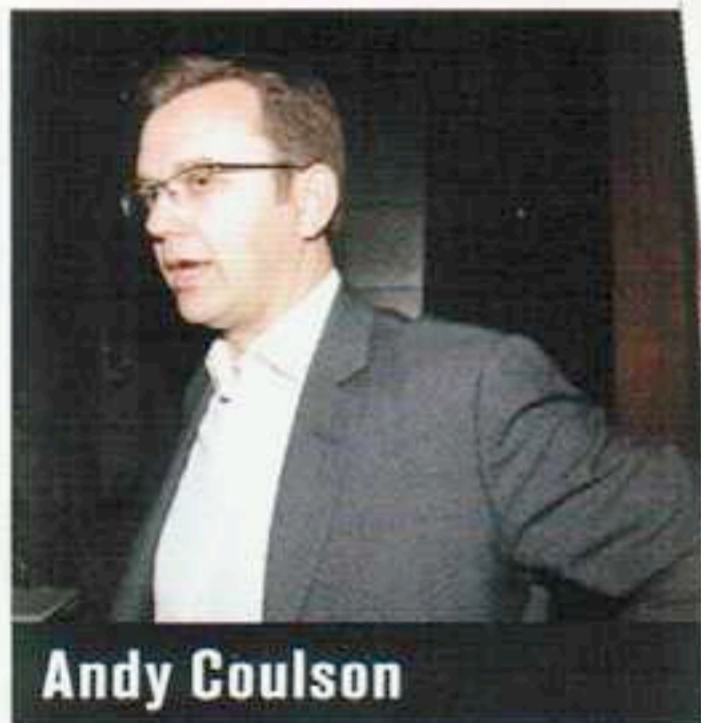
Rebecca Newman and Toby Young



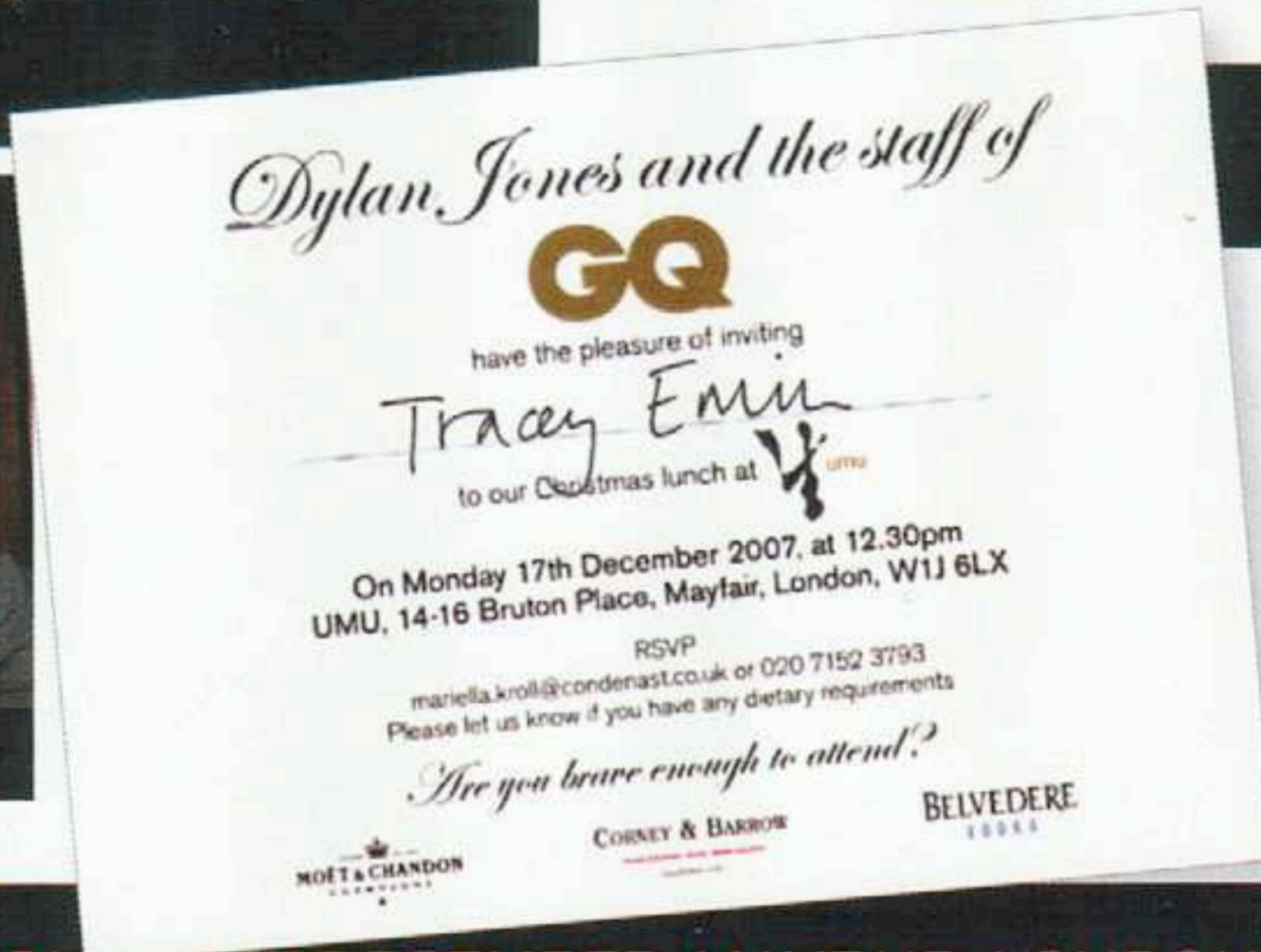
Tracey Emin



Gary Farrow, Kris Thykier and Simon Kelner



Andy Coulson



GQ MAGAZINE ■■■ KODAK

KYOTO TREAT

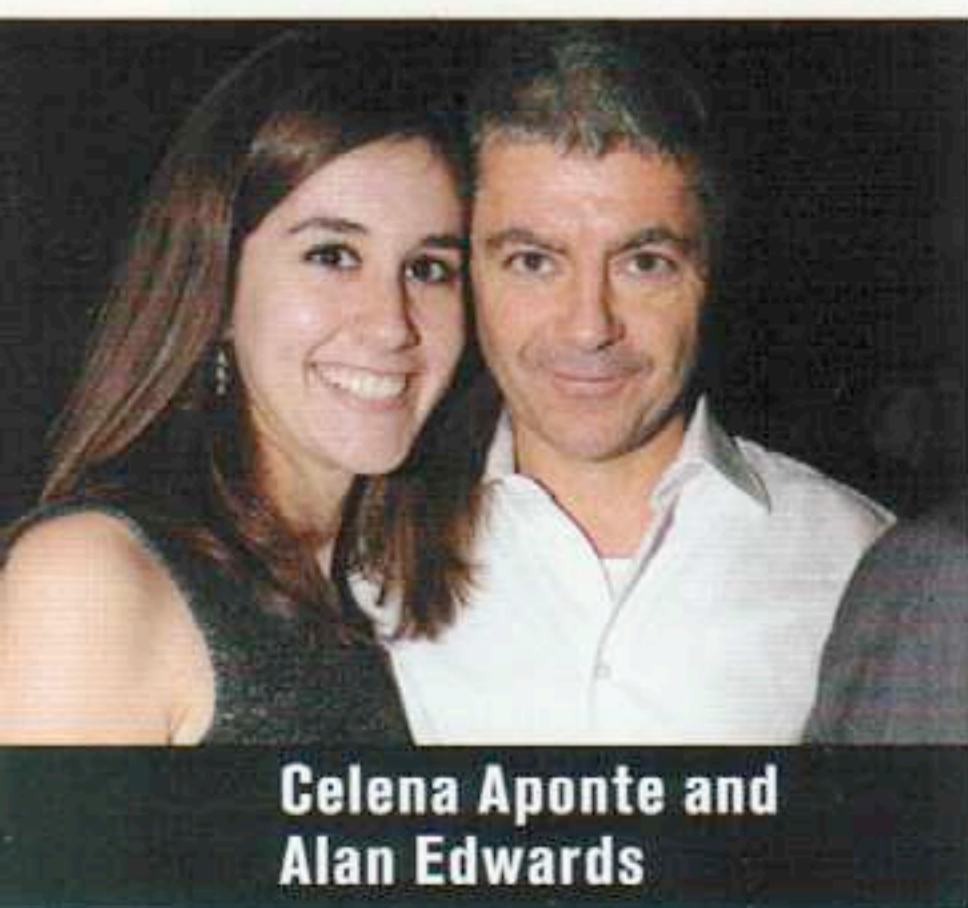
Contributors, columnists, power players and pop stars joined GQ's seasonal celebrations at Michelin-starred Mayfair celebrity haunt Umu. Kyoto cuisine was served, drink flowed... and the scandalous conversation continued into the evening.

THE GQ CHRISTMAS LUNCH

UMU, 14-16 BRUTON PLACE, LONDON W1

MONDAY 17 DECEMBER, MAYFAIR, LONDON

■■■ KODAK



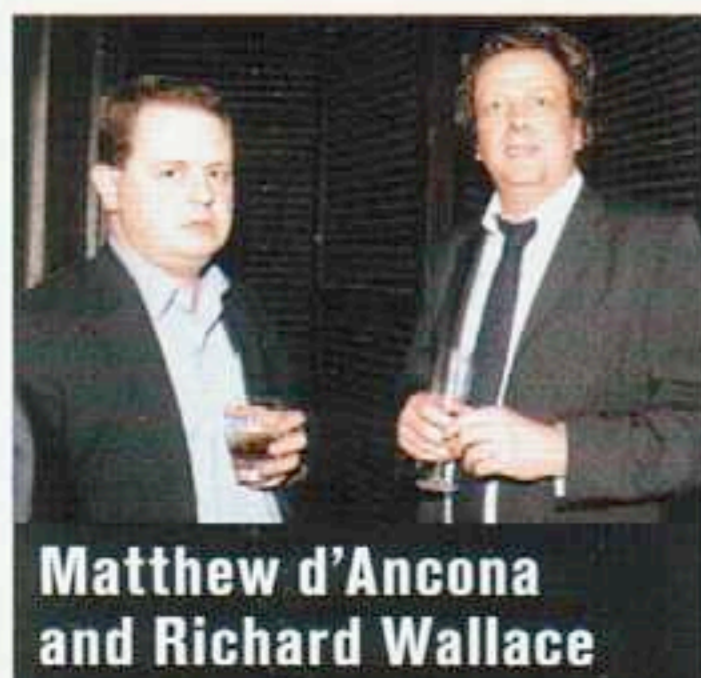
Celena Aponte and Alan Edwards



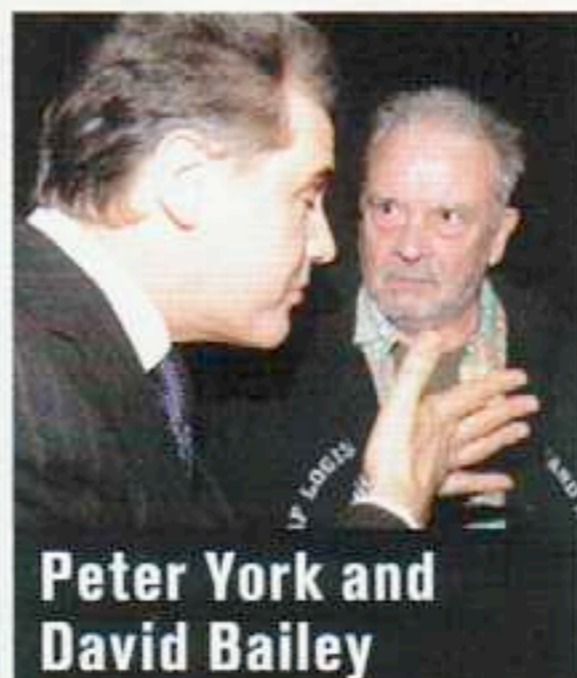
Saffron Aldridge



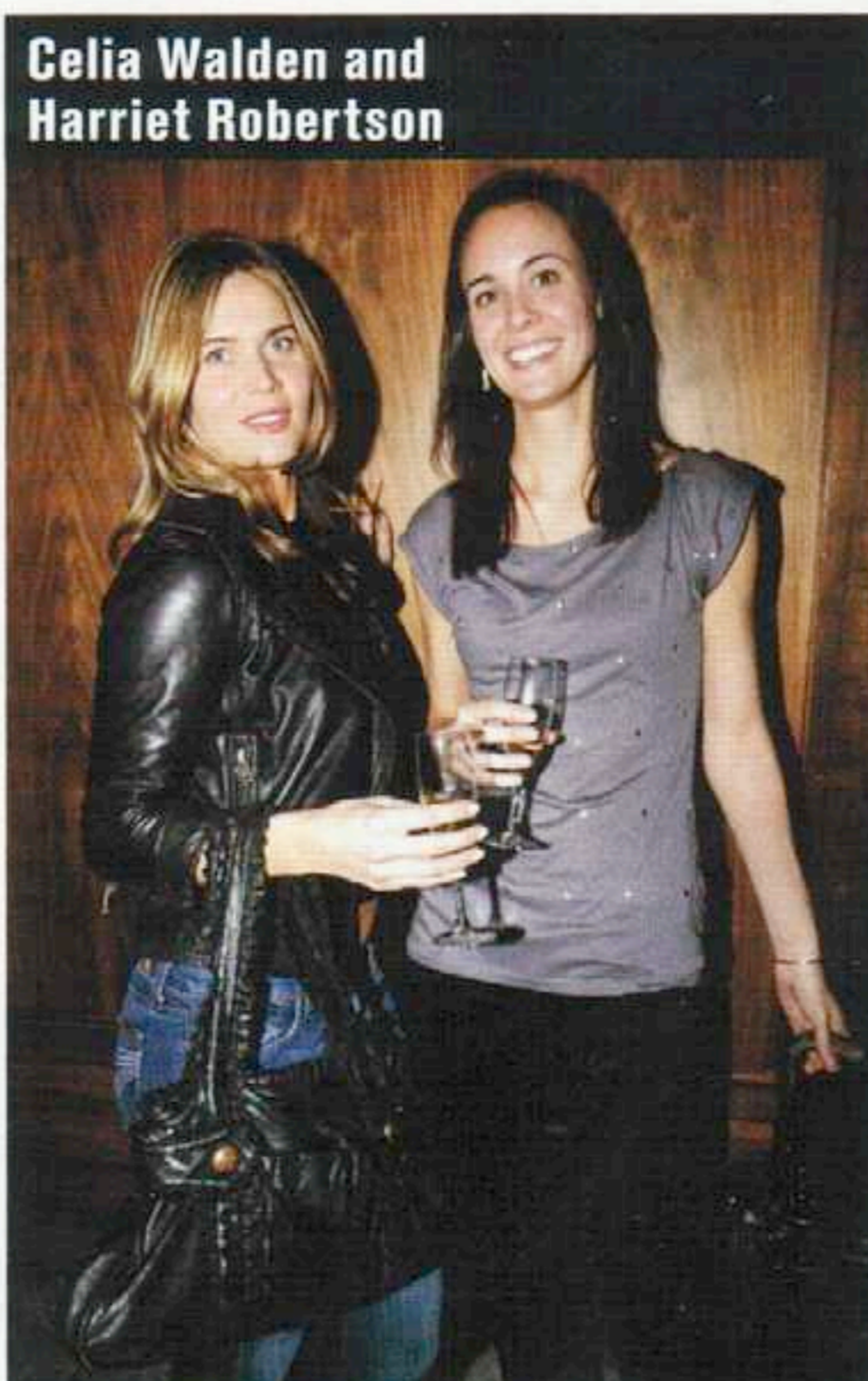
James Nesbitt



Matthew d'Ancona and Richard Wallace



Peter York and David Bailey



Celia Walden and Harriet Robertson



Lily Allen

EDITED BY BILL PRINCE & PAUL HENDERSON

TASTE

THIS MONTH ✦✦ UMU: KYOTO PROTOCOL IN LONDON ✦✦ KAI CATERING ✦✦
HESTON BLUMENTHAL ✦✦ SALVATORE CALABRESE ✦✦ GQ WINE CLUB

RISING STAR

The record-breaking ascent of Michelin-rated Japanese restaurant Umu and its imperious head chef, Ichiro Kubota



Umu may be a stone's throw from Oxford Circus, but its opulent dining room is a little corner of Japan

PHOTOGRAPH PHILIP SINDEN

RESTAURANT JAPANESE



Tucked away amid a flurry of beaverish shoppers and the eager suits of Mayfair is an oasis of luxurious tranquillity that goes by the name of Umu and is hailed – sorry, Nobu – as the best Japanese restaurant in London. Head chef Ichiro Kubota works silently behind a bar, in view of the diners. His dishes are nothing less than culinary masterpieces and watching their creation is like art in motion.

Kubota has been absorbing the Kyoto method of Japanese cuisine since he was a boy, learning from his chef father whom he describes as his “master”. He spent time at the infamous Tsuruya restaurant favoured by the Japanese imperial household, as well as alongside his father at the similarly renowned Hassun before leaving Kyoto to discover techniques abroad at the Michelin-starred Georges Blanc in France and Hotel La Villa in Corsica.

In 2004, Kubota reunited with his passion for the flavours of Kyoto cuisine and moved to London to set up Umu, which took

Raw power: Ichiro Kubota's (inset) multi-knife fish preparation, carried out in Umu's dining room, is performance art in itself

a record-breaking five months to scoop a well-deserved Michelin star. Although only a stone's throw from Oxford Circus, Umu's calm and opulent décor lulls you into a sense of being thousands of miles away. The menu is a combination of traditional and contemporary Japanese food, focusing on balanced ingredients and attention to detail.

Kubota's preparation of the raw fish is paramount, for each process there is a different knife – imported from Japan. The raw fish is sliced immaculately and evenly, often to the width of paper. When *GQ* visited Umu we were treated to *tsukuri moriawase*, which translates as “sashimi of assorted fish”, a typical age-old Japanese way of serving sashimi. Kubota chose the fish based on the best available for the season as well as how good they looked together, in this case it was back and belly of *shimaaji*, sea bass, tuna, squid and a whole langoustine. These were served on an eye-opening decorative still life made up of a filleted fish positioned in mid-leap with edible flowers and not so edible pine twigs – all to create the vision of a Japanese landscape.

In accordance with this style, the landscape has to reflect the season. Not one to leave any stones unturned, Kubota drapes frothed up egg whites over the decoration to represent snow. Lucy Watson

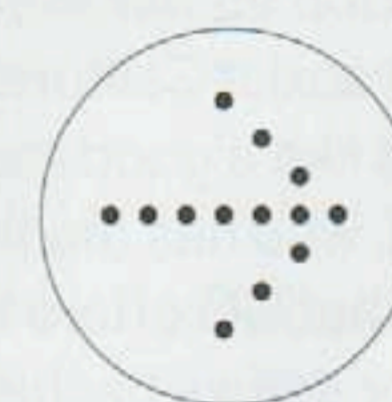
14-16 Bruton Place, London W1.
020-7499 8881, www.umurestaurant.com

HEAVEN'S SAKE
Kumiko Tamba, Umu's sommelier, chooses five of the best Japanese sake to go with sashimi.

- **Kamotsuru Daiginjo** from Hiroshima. “The driest of sakes goes with non-fatty fish.”
- **Chikurin Taoyaka Junmai Daiginjo** from Okayama. “An excellent quality of sake with a high volume of alcohol. Due to its richness and full body it's best drunk with red fish.”
- **Fukuju Daiginjo** from Hyogo. “A complex, rich sake great for fish, ideally red or fatty fish.”

- **Momo no Shizuku Junmai Daiginjo** from Kyoto. “With a fine, fresh quality, it teams up perfectly with white fish.”

- **Hakubotan Yamadanishiki Junmai** from Hiroshima. “This sake is fruity, rich and soft. Like red wine it is ideally served at room temperature, or even warmed. Ideal with red fish.”



LEARN JAPANESE...

...at Umu head chef Ichiro Kubota's kitchen master classes

Just when you thought that things at Umu couldn't possibly get any better, it gives us its own cookery classes conducted by head chef **Ichiro Kubota**. Kubota passes on tips on sushi, sauces and stock-making, while feeding your brain with the history and philosophy behind Japanese cuisine. The class also provides a six-course menu with matching sakes. **LW**
Classes cost £140.

