

April 2006



Word of mouth



Do the time warp

Pink Martini's fans range from the '60s (which wanted the band for a party) to André Delays (who hired them for the Kellogg launch). The 12-piece group provides "exquisite musical wallpaper", and despite being based in Portland, Oregon, is equally at home in 1930s Havana, 1940s Paris or 1950s Tokyo. Any nation that does not sing or dance is in huge trouble," says bandleader Thomas M.

Lauderdale. Here are five songs he can't travel without:

- **Harry Nilsson** 'Everybody's Talkin'' "The perfect song for driving a convertible on a beautiful, hot summer's day"
- **Chopin** 'Nocturne in D flat, opus 27, no.2' "Endlessly exquisite - a reversal on 'Theme from when day falls into night'"
- **Serge Gainsbourg with Jane Birkin** 'Jane B' "Hard to imagine improving on Chopin, but Gainsbourg managed it - a super sexy

groover version of Prokofiev in F minor, opus 28, no.4"

- **Jimmy Scott** 'Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child' "Transcendental: the most unjustly ignored singer of the 20th century"
 - **George Gershwin** 'Rhapsody in Blue' "My favourite piece to play in the entire world; symphonic classical music meets jazz"
- Pink Martini plays London's Barbican (www.barbican.org.uk) on 25-26 March. #1

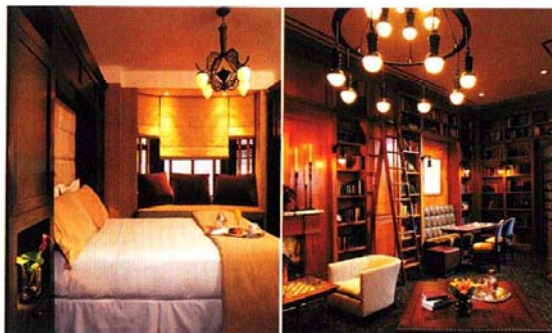
Transcendental

A guide book with no words? That's the concept behind a new series created by Swiss graphic designer Claude Barchhied. The first book of uncaptioned photographs and maps covers Afghanistan, arranged under themes such as 'Mountain' and 'Customised AK' (the gun), and depicts green starbursts of marijuana, red valleys of poppies, murals, generals and broken things!

Barchhied's Best Afghanistan, 2005 (plus £3.09 p.p.), from Grantham Book Services (01476 941080; orders@gsb.the-uk.co.uk)



"Any nation that does not sing or dance is in huge trouble"



Alpha male

Urban retreat New York's newest revamped hotel, The Mansfield, dates from the early 20th century when it catered for wealthy young bachelors about town. Its masculine ambience has been preserved by designers Andi Pepper and Stephen Jacobs, and is enhanced by a wood fire, private cell-phone booth and club room with mahogany games tables. Girls should head straight for the M Bar, with its fabulous glass-and-wrought-iron dome, to plan an attack on the shops on nearby Fifth Avenue. 12 West 44th Street, New York (00 1 212 277 8700; www.mansfieldhotel.com). Doubles from \$282

PHOTOGRAPH: ADAM LEVY

BORDER PATROL The Bhutan-Assam border has just re-opened: go in spring or autumn with Steppes Travel (www.steppestravel.co.uk). Tours from £3,160 per person