



Reading 21

You are going to read an article containing reviews of guidebooks. For questions 1–14, choose from the list A–E. Some of the choices may be used more than once.

Which section mentions a book or books?

1. concentrating on some unusual aspects of life in one country?
2. which will cover a particular aspect that has often been neglected?
3. being worthy of their reputation?
4. which would benefit from more detail in some parts and less detail in others?
5. giving equal importance to both culture and places in a particular city?
6. by writers who are showing less and less variety in their style?
7. whose writer encourages the reader to read more widely in a particular field?
8. combining an academic approach with an attractive design?
9. containing factual details which may be unreliable?
10. proudly acknowledging its biased approach?
11. which will depart from the publisher's normal theme?
12. whose writers offer impressions which they have not considered carefully?
13. containing information about places suggested by a variety of contributors?
14. backing up the narration with pictures?

A

Today's proliferating travel journalists and guidebook writers seem to be portraying the world in an increasingly uniform manner. Superficial responses and preconceived images alternate with easily digestible bites of cultural and historical information and with ever-larger doses of ephemeral and often misleading practical information. It is thus with enormous relief that one comes across guidebooks written not only with passion and profound knowledge, but also from an unusual and at times commercially foolhardy perspective.

B

The crisply designed City Secrets, Rome is one guidebook with a difference. Unashamedly proclaiming itself to be a 'highly subjective' work, it brings together the personal choices of what to see and experience in Rome of numerous artists who are regular associates of the city's American Academy.

Under its influence, you might well be encouraged, say, to undertake such an unusual activity as a 'Tosca stroll'. The main problems are that the entries are often too short to be enlightening, and are sometimes backed up, unnecessarily, by lists of largely unfamiliar names endorsing the recommendations.

C

With glorious disregard for current fashions in guidebook production, the recently founded Signal Books has begun bringing out a series of discursive, virtually unillustrated, and highly literate city guides. This extremely promising series, entitled Cities of the Imagination, concentrates as much on the image of a city as formed by artists and writers as it does on surviving monuments. The series was launched by Jay Wilson's masterly Buenos Aires, which, with its exceptional wealth of literary references, does full justice to a city whose fictional identity is far more potent than the stereotypical tourist vision. Wilson's book inspires the reader to escape into the little-explored world of Argentinean literature. Later volumes in the series will be equally rich in their treatment of a place's artistic associations, which, in guidebooks in general, have tended to fare far less well than literary ones.

D

Among the very few existing guides devoted solely to retracing an artist's footsteps is Ellen Williams' slight but very readable Picasso's Paris. She outlines here four walks which have been intelligently devised so as to give the reader a sense of the artist's personal and artistic development, beginning with his impoverished days in Montmartre and ending with his later years in the area of St-Germain-des-Pres. Another good publisher offering titles with an artistic slant is Ellipsis, which has deservedly gained respect for its architectural guides. These guides, almost small enough to be hidden in the palm of one's hand, and yet filled with stunning photographs, have dealt until now mainly with recent architecture. However, they are rapidly branching out into other areas, and are soon to include a guide to Italian gardens, and an 'opinionated' survey of New York's museums and galleries.

E

At a time when publishers are looking more favourably on quirky books, three guides have recently appeared celebrating British quirkiness. One of them is the enjoyable Eccentric Britain, which directs travellers to follies, strange customs, places associated with famous eccentrics, and obscure museums. The monumental work Follies, Grottoes and Garden Buildings by Headley and Meulenkaamp is a model to which all guidebooks should aspire. Scholarly yet consistently entertaining, it is also clearly laid out and abundantly illustrated, making it the ideal companion for any cultural tour of Britain. But for sheer eccentricity, there is nothing to beat the Dutch author Pieter Boogaart's A272: An Ode to a Road. Bizarrely designed by the author himself, with annotations and deviations running in smaller print around each page, this follows the whole length of the

very ordinary A272 road, which epitomises the essence of Britain, and is transformed by pen into a route as exotic as the Golden Road to Samarkand. It is a book replete with witticisms, personal asides, and cultural and historical gems.

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11 класс, вариант 2*

Reading 21 — Keys

1. E
2. C
3. D
4. B
5. C
6. A
7. C
8. E
9. A
10. B
11. D
12. A
13. B
14. E

EXPLANATION

A

Today's proliferating travel journalists and guidebook writers seem to be portraying the world in an increasingly uniform manner. Superficial responses and preconceived images alternate with easily digestible bites of cultural and historical information and with ever-larger doses of ephemeral and often misleading practical information. It is thus with enormous relief that one comes across guidebooks written not only with passion and profound knowledge, but also from an unusual and at times commercially foolhardy perspective.

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