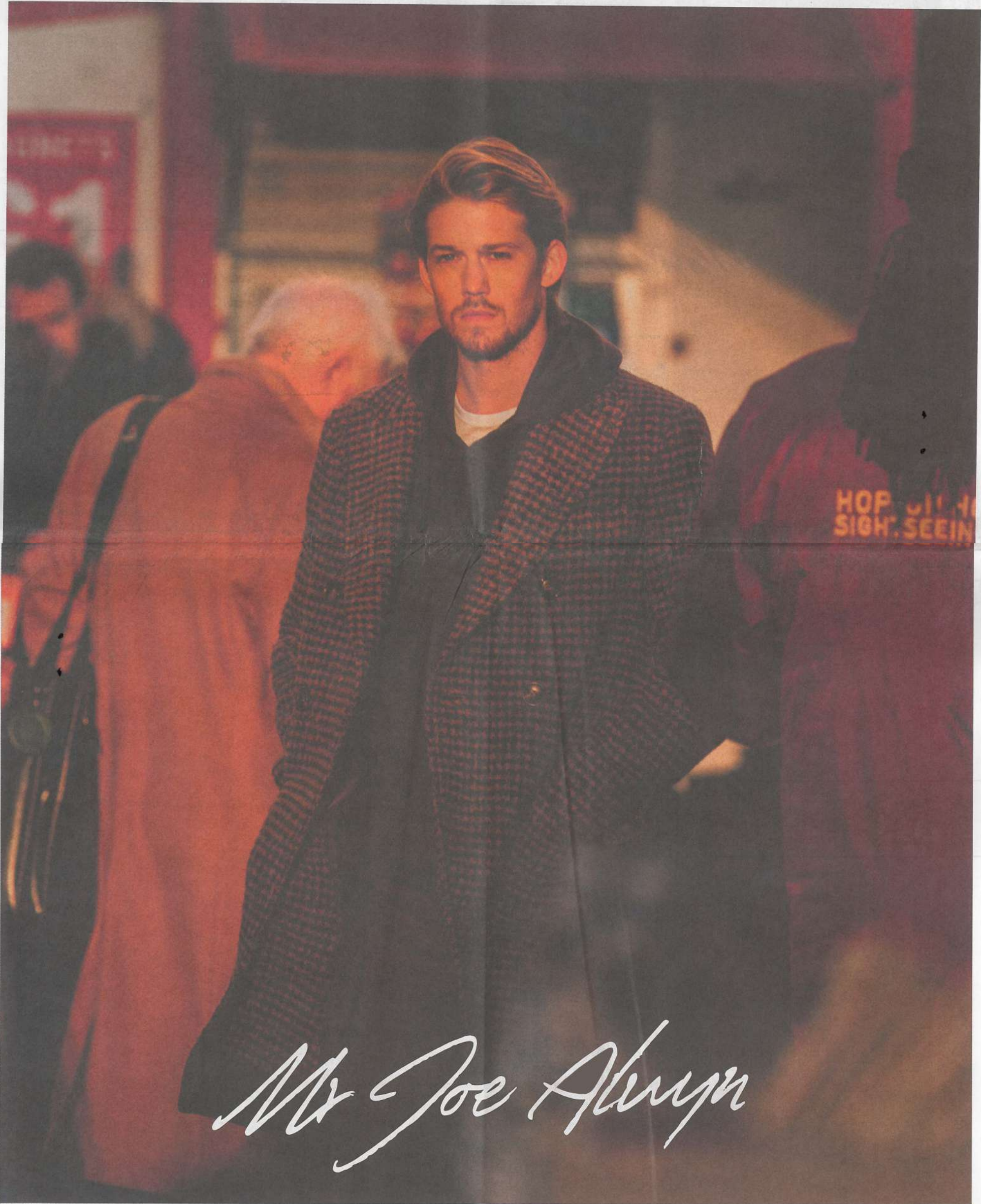


— THE — MR PORTER POST

THE MEN'S STYLE DESTINATION: MR PORTER.COM



Mr Joe Alwyn

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THE MOGULS' HIDEAWAYS

Words by Mr Will Dean

Preparing for the end of the world is no longer the niche pursuit of cult leaders in Guyana and paranoid Cold War suburban fathers. It's now a favoured pursuit of the Silicon Valley ultra-rich, including PayPal co-founder Mr Peter Thiel who, when doomsday comes, plans to fly with fellow entrepreneur Mr Sam Altman to his property on New Zealand's South Island. Here's where we'll be heading when everything goes to pot.



Where: Torres del Paine National Park, Chilean Patagonia.

Why it's so safe: A climate of almost unending rain guarantees a decent supply of fresh water. The local guanaco population offers meat and fur if things get particularly fraught.

Where to buy: Houses in the national park are rare. You could take refuge in a hikers' shelter, but if you're in for the long haul, head north. A lodge in the Pata Rio Futaleufú community features land for organic farming, plentiful fruit and room to graze sheep. The view isn't bad, either.

Where to stay: The Singular Patagonia in Puerto Bories, close to the Argentine border and gateway to the Rennell Islands, offers five-star luxury with the bonus of a quick escape route to Antarctica if things get really bad.



Where: Ilulissat, Greenland.

Why it's so safe: Located pleasingly far from moving tectonic plates and major cities, Ilulissat has it all, especially icebergs, which is what its name means in Greenlandic. Explorer Mr Knud Rasmussen's birthplace is about as remote a town as one might find – or at least the most remote with a football team. And as the planet gets warmer, the temperature, which hovers around -14°C in March, can only get more hospitable.

Where to buy: A small Arctic villa within walking distance of the Rasmussen museum can be yours for £105,000.

Where to book a room: The Hotel Arctic is a stunning place to watch the Northern Lights while chowing down on dried musk ox in a luxury igloo at a Unesco World Heritage site. And the Wi-Fi is all right.



Where: Northern Iceland.

Why it's so safe: Iceland has an unending geothermal energy supply, plentiful supplies of fish and a surplus of all-weather football pitches that will see you through any impending climate catastrophe.

Where to buy: Gone through the minor bureaucratic formality of gaining the Icelandic Minister of Justice's approval to buy real estate? Get a run-down five-bed in the village of Patreksfjörður for just £145,000.

Where to book a room: Deplar Farm, a grass-roofed hotel in Sveitarfélagið Skagafjörður, is very much in the centre of the Venn diagram in which the middle of nowhere meets bespoke luxury. It offers lots, but most importantly has an outside pool that is warm enough for a spot of Northern Lights gazing.

THE CEO MAKING TECH MORE LOVABLE

Mr Suyong Joh, the man in charge of South Korea's biggest messaging app, welcomes MR PORTER into his office

Words by Mr Adam Welch | Photography by Ms Koomi Kim | Styling by Ms Eilidh Greig

On the day MR PORTER meets Mr Suyong Joh, the traffic is terrible. It takes more than an hour to drive from Dongdaemun Plaza, where hordes of pink-haired teenagers are gathering for Seoul Fashion Week, to the comparatively calm and utopian environs of Seongnam, a satellite city south of Seoul and home to the offices of Kakao, one of South Korea's most successful tech companies.

The reason it all takes so long is that there's a taxi strike, which is sort of Kakao's fault. The company, which started its inexorable rise to ubiquity with messaging app KakaoTalk – think a souped-up, much cuter version of WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger – has started recruiting for a new carpooling app, which, according to the drivers, will threaten their livelihoods.

But such an occurrence is nothing new. Kakao is in a period of rather aggressive expansion, with products now incorporating everything from banking (via subsidiary KakaoPay) to music (Melon, South Korea's biggest streaming platform, which Kakao purchased in 2016) to KakaoGames (which took close to \$100m last year and grew 42 per cent year on year).

"Everything this company has done has always shaken up the order of that particular field," says Mr Joh, who has served as co-CEO since March 2018. "When KakaoTalk was launched, the telecoms companies all went, 'What? People aren't using text messages any more?' And when KakaoBank was launched, the banks were upset. Kakao is used to it. Despite that, Kakao still intends to go on with what it's doing: making things easy and being loved by people."

Mr Joh is a rather unusual tech CEO. His background is not in algorithms and data, but in design, branding and publishing. Before he joined Kakao, he ran his own agency, JOH & Company, which provided 360-degree creative direction services to a range of hotel and lifestyle brands. He is also the publisher of *Magazine B*, a monthly, ad-free journal. Of course, he also has some formidable experience in branding digital technologies. From 2003 to 2010, he worked at South Korean search giant Naver and is credited with the design of that company's wonderfully simple green search window. But his first obsession was with the idea of branding in itself.

"I've been interested in this since I was very young," he says. "It wasn't so much the concept of design I was into, but the consistency of images. I noticed certain brands had a consistency



Everything this company has done has shaken up that particular field. It intends to go on with what it's doing: making things easy and being loved by people

in what they present to people. So I thought, 'That's cool. I want to do that.' It was only later I realised that this was what people call 'design'."

At Kakao, he's got a mammoth task in front of him. How do you remain on-message at a brand that is so multifaceted? What unites venture capital, music streaming and on-demand taxis?

"For a long time, when you talked about a brand, you would think about a single function," says Mr Joh. "But times have changed. Take Google. It started off with one function, but now has various products and you know by

the Google brand that you can trust them. So it is with Kakao. You might think of it as just a communication tool, but it's grown to represent something that is innovative in our daily lives."

The same month Mr Joh was announced as Kakao's new co-CEO, the company unveiled a vision, titled Kakao 3.0, in which it outlined its plans for expansion across Asia, alongside its intention to dive into both artificial intelligence and blockchain technology. But Mr Joh also has some goals closer to home. At Kakao headquarters, he has just finished a refurb – heavy on the natural textures, with plenty of

plants, a library and cosy breakout spaces – which represents his vision of the modern workplace. Ultimately, he doesn't want Kakao to be a "dinosaur-like" corporation. Instead, it should be "loved by everyone".

One way it is most definitely loved is via its cast of colourful mascots. Collectively known (and sold) as Kakao Friends, they're an ebullient collection of anthropomorphic characters that first appeared in KakaoTalk as emojis, but are now a national phenomenon, almost impossible to avoid in Seoul. In the Kakao office, these characters dance across revolving doors and peek out from behind partition screens. They are very, very sweet. But, says Mr Joh, they're about more than that.

"It's a very important part of the business," he says. "They started life as a communication tool. Instead of writing something in a text, you would send a character that would represent your feelings. So people identify themselves with these characters. And your friends might be using the same characters. It helps to create an emotional bond, both with the characters, but also with each other."

Since Mr Joh's appointment at Kakao, one of its subsidiaries, formerly Kakao Friends, merged with JOH & Company to create another subdivision, Kakao IX, which deals with the franchising and merchandising of Kakao's intellectual property, including Ryan ("the lovable lion"), Muzi ("a radish in disguise") and Apeach ("a mischievous, silly fruit"). An odd conjunction, it would seem, but Mr Joh maintains that here, still, it's all about consistency. "Kakao Friends has these strong, valuable assets that you can do so many things with," he says. "JOH & Company was really about systematically managing the image of certain brands. That's still continuing."

One part of Mr Joh's former business that has remained unchanged is *Magazine B*, which he is still very much involved in. It provides him with a means of communicating in-depth, he says, with an audience in a way that is not possible via other media. "A book can be too heavy," he says. "And we're used to looking at our mobile phones. But that can make the content too light, to try and get it all into one post or page."

All this – the focus on consistency, the idea of measured growth, the interest in print media – might seem at odds with our ever-churning, always-on stance of digital culture. But then again, you get the feeling that perhaps Mr Joh is the kind of man to change all that.

Sweater by Berluti 1051302, trousers by Acne Studios 1066777, shoes by Mr P. 1076222, watch by Piaget 985852

Let them eat cake

The world's best pastry chef on the joys of dessert

Words by Mr Samuel Muston



The experts
MR ALBERT ADRIÀ

Mr Albert Adrià is one of the world's finest chefs. As well as being named the world's best pastry chef by the World's 50 Best Restaurant Awards and having built a mini restaurant empire in his native Spain – which includes *Tickets*, his impossible-to-get-a-reservation outpost in Barcelona – he now has designs on London. He recently opened *Cakes & Bubbles* at the Café Royal Hotel, where his hazelnut and white chocolate cheesecake is presented in the manner of a wheel of cheese.

Why did you choose to make this a dessert restaurant? One day I woke up and felt it was something that I owed myself. It was something that I wanted to do. London and the Hotel Café Royal are simply the best places I could think to do it.

You have said you want *Cakes & Bubbles* to be an "experience". How would a full meal pan out? I want it to be like sweet tapas. Small bites like in a tasting menu so people can eat up to seven or eight different things. For me, only in this way can you call it a proper experience.

Some of your creations are quite off the wall. What inspires you? My inspiration comes from the clients, and only them, their sensibility. They are the thing that turns the food into art. I am simply a cook.

What's the best dessert you've ever eaten? It is very hard to decide, since I have eaten at so many places and so very well. But I remember a pain perdu with roasted apples and black truffles by Jacques Chibois. I had it at the end

of the 1980s and I can still remember it now. Up until that moment, I did not know you could use black truffle for a dessert.

What are your three favourite restaurants? I could name 3,000 restaurants. To name only a few would be unfair on the rest.

Who would be your ideal guests for a dinner at the Café Royal? Anybody who likes to honour themselves with a nice glass of champagne and a dessert.

What makes you the best pastry chef in the world? I don't work to be the best pastry chef in the world. I just do my work as a chef and let people make their own judgement.

EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY



APRON (PART OF SET) BY SOHO HOME 1118172



CHAMPAGNE FLUTES BY TOM DIXON 1122760



CHAMPAGNE COOLER BY ASPREY 1065828



CORKSCREW AND BOTTLE OPENER BY LINLEY 1122699