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DRESSED TO KILL
FROM LEFT, DAVE KEUNING, BRANDON FLOWERS, MARK STOERMER, AND RONNIE VANNUCCI.

MUSIC



FAB FOUR

The Las Vegas-based Killers gamble everything on a new album.

Dressed in dark jeans, a white T-shirt, and a dark Alexander McQueen jean jacket, Brandon Flowers, the stylish 27-year-old lead singer of **The Killers**, is on a mission. "We have to prove we're still in the game," he says.

One wouldn't think he'd be worried. His Las Vegas-based band's catchy dance-pop 2004 debut, *Hot Fuss*, went platinum, while its 2006 stadium-rock follow-up, *Sam's Town*, earned it comparisons to U2. Perhaps he's just being cautious. After all, he famously predicted that their sophomore effort would eventually be seen as "one of the best albums of the past 20 years," an assertion that he hasn't exactly retracted but does seem eager, now, to live down. "It was just a comment that I made off the cuff,"

he explains, "and it was taken to the ends of the Earth." This month, the Killers release *Day & Age*, a record that retains all of the anthemic aspirations of their last album but also shows some surprising new influences, including harp, xylophone, and, very prominently, an alto sax. "It's diverse," says bandmate Dave Keuning. "Vacation-like, tropical, and just fun."

As much as you might be caught up by the rollicking charm of a song like "Joyride" ("It's got sax, it's a little bit disco," observes Flowers) or the epic exuberance of the album's single "Human"—don't be fooled. This is a band whose ambitions remain serious. As Flowers says, "There was a time when men made music, and people listened to it, and we're bringing that back." —LAUREN WATERMAN

PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT

TRAVEL

in the heights

Set in a medieval watchtower, an Umbrian hotel offers luxe modernity—at a great price.

Commanding a hilltop between Gubbio and Montone in the storied province of Umbria, a 1,000-year-old watchtower has recently been transformed into one of Italy's most strikingly modern hotels. The creation of architect Christopher Chong and his designer wife, Seonaid Mackenzie, **Torre di Moravola** was a ruin when the couple discovered it some nine years ago. Chong was impressed by its history (it dates back at least to the tenth century) and its "amazing stonework," while Mackenzie was captivated by its location. "The 360-degree panorama of three hidden

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FROM HERE TO ETERNITY
THE SERENE STONE-LINED POOL AT TORRE DI MORAVOLA.

PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT

TRAVEL

valleys—home to red deer, wild boar, and soaring falcons—looked just as I imagine it must have in the Middle Ages," she says.

While restoring the property, Chong was careful to respect its original dimensions, letting the ancient stone walls define the layout. At the same time, there was no attempt to create historically accurate rooms; instead the couple seamlessly incorporated twenty-first-century architectural elements—floating steel staircases, sliding glass screens, sunken tubs. Chong also made extensive use of locally quarried pietra serena stone, which paves the hotel's expansive terraces as well as its 82-foot-long infinity pool. In keeping with its minimalist aesthetic, the seven-room property has no restaurant per se, but a "slow food" chef is on call to prepare guests meals of Umbrian specialties, using local game and Torre's own organically grown produce.

Although the hotel was conceived as an idyllic retreat—one can indulge in on-site yoga and holistic spa treatments—the area offers plenty of high-energy pursuits, including hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, golf, even micro-light flight-seeing. Back on the ground, the medieval villages of Umbria are especially festive this time of year with their holiday markets, church concerts, and seasonal decorations—from "living mangers" to the world's largest Christmas tree in Gobbio, a 2,625-foot-tall extravaganza created with some 7.5 miles of lights strung across a mountainside. The best part? Winter rates at Torre di Moravola are as low as €200 a night; 011-39-07-59-46-0965; moravola.com.

—RICHARD ALLEMAN

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TELEVISION

who, me?

Joan Juliet Buck enjoys Toni Collette's wild transformations.

diable Cody's script for the unrepentant teen-pregnancy movie *Juno* won her an Oscar; at 30, she's made her niche depicting families where anything goes, and she explores the joys of multiple-

personality disorder in **United States of Tara**. It airs next month on Showtime, the channel that likes borderline heroes (*Dexter* is about a serial killer, and *Californication* is about a sex addict). Toni Collette plays Tara, a married suburban muralist with two children and a long-suffering sister named Charmaine

(Rosemarie DeWitt). The husband (John Corbett) is nice, the teenage daughter adorable and annoying, the preteen son overly refined—he has a poster of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* in his room, cooks, listens to Thelonus Monk, and will very quickly be called "faggot" by one of his mother's alternate personalities. Tara is a good mom, but under stress turns into someone else. (This is rare?) The pilot allows the mobile features and body of Toni Collette to morph into T, a rowdy, sex-obsessed teenager, and Buck, a sex-obsessed, Marlboro-smoking guy who punches out the daughter's boyfriend. The kids wonder why she can't "be manic-depressive like the other moms," but the husband takes Tara's incarnations in stride, which allows her to call him and deliver the best line of the first show: "Hey, honey, it's me... Tara." More alternate personalities are promised in the future. I can't wait. □ pata >260



BRIEF PEACE
TONI COLLETTE AS THE GOOD MOM, WITH KEIR GILCHRIST AS HER SON.

DOCUMENTARY

NAZI TREASURE



BACK IN KRAKÓW
LEONARDO'S LADY WITH AN ERMINE.

here is a female figure with an olive branch; what does it symbolize?" asks the teacher showing Warsaw's royal museum to his class. "Peace!" they answer. "And this woman with a sword and fire, what does she symbolize?"

"Justice!" they answer as one. It's as if the blindfolded lady with the scales never existed. **THE RAPE OF EUROPA** on PBS chronicles how Hitler plundered the masterpieces of European art and planned to turn the provincial town of Linz

into an imperial city to house his tomb and a giant museum. The documentary assigns his greed for high art, as well as his anti-Semitism, to his failure to be accepted at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. Art stolen by the Nazis is still being recovered, often at great cost. In New York's Neue Galerie you can see Gustav Klimt's legendary 1907 gold portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer, for which Ronald Lauder paid more than \$100,000,000.—J.J.B.