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A BRIEFING ON GLOBAL AFFAIRS, BUSINESS, CULTURE & DESIGN

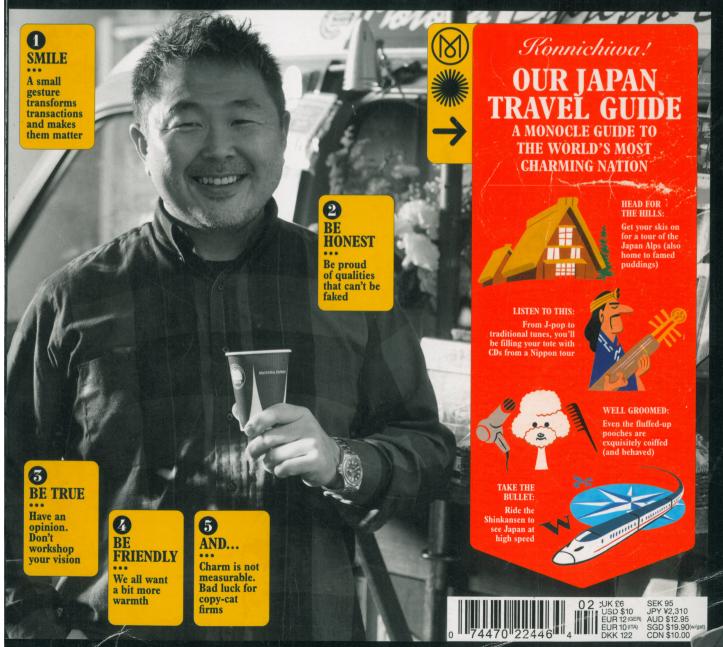
Charm, the next offensive. Is it time to go back to finishing school?

Why businesses, brands and nations need a new buzzword for 2012 and beyond. MONOCLE REPORTS on the top charmers

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03: RESTAURANT **OSTERIA DELLA** VILLETTA

Italy

Eating out is one of life's simpler pleasures but too often cold interiors, indecipherable menus and overzealous chefs get in the way of a good meal. A weekend lunch at Osteria della Villetta, an hour's drive east of Milan, restores faith in a profession that is at its best when it sticks to the basics. Patrons sit on wellworn chairs and rest their elbows on wooden tables free of stiff tablecloths. The Liberty-style décor has remained largely untouched since the restaurant's doors first opened to hungry travelling salesmen in 1900. The day's specials are

read out and there's no need to peruse a bloated wine list - owner Maurizio Rossi, the fourth generation to command the kitchen, has little trouble steering diners towards a bottle of Franciacorta, the local rival to champagne. Regional comfort food (meatballs, sweet stewed peppers and pan-fried perch fished from nearby Lake Iseo) takes the place of fancy-named pastas. The well-measured service, with Rossi and his wife, Grazia, on the front line weaving between guests, leaves you feeling as if you've stumbled into someone's home. — IC osteriadellavilletta.it

Most charming points:

01: The pop of the cork every time owner Maurizio Rossi opens another bottle of well-made Italian bubbly behind the bar.

02: Local dishes made with local ingredients - the coldcuts come from livestock literally around the corner.

03: Service that's familiar and never rushed. Guests linger long after desserts and coffee have been enjoyed.