

LUXURY WITHOUT COMPROMISE

# Robb Report

#26

\*An epic Central American  
odyssey (where you'll plant a  
few trees along the way)

## The Giving Issue

The Ultimate Gift Guide: 39 exclusive objects, trips and experiences\*  
Harnessing philanthropy to make a difference in the modern world

# 38

## Rare First Editions of Adam Smith and Charles Darwin

What to buy for the man or woman who has everything—and has even read everything? Might we recommend a rare book. As John Windle, a San Francisco-based antiquarian bookseller and dealer in medieval manuscripts, puts it, part of the magic of a first edition is that “it’s pretty much a certainty that the recipient doesn’t already have one.”

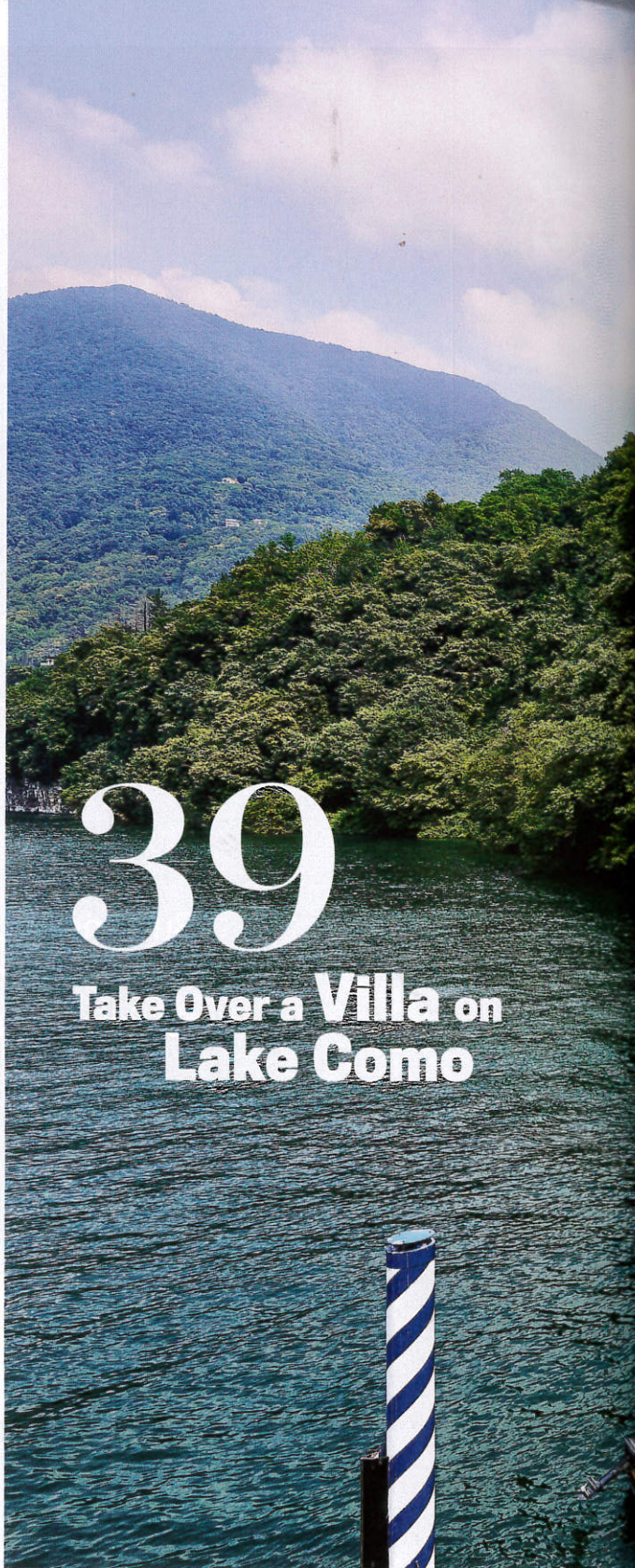
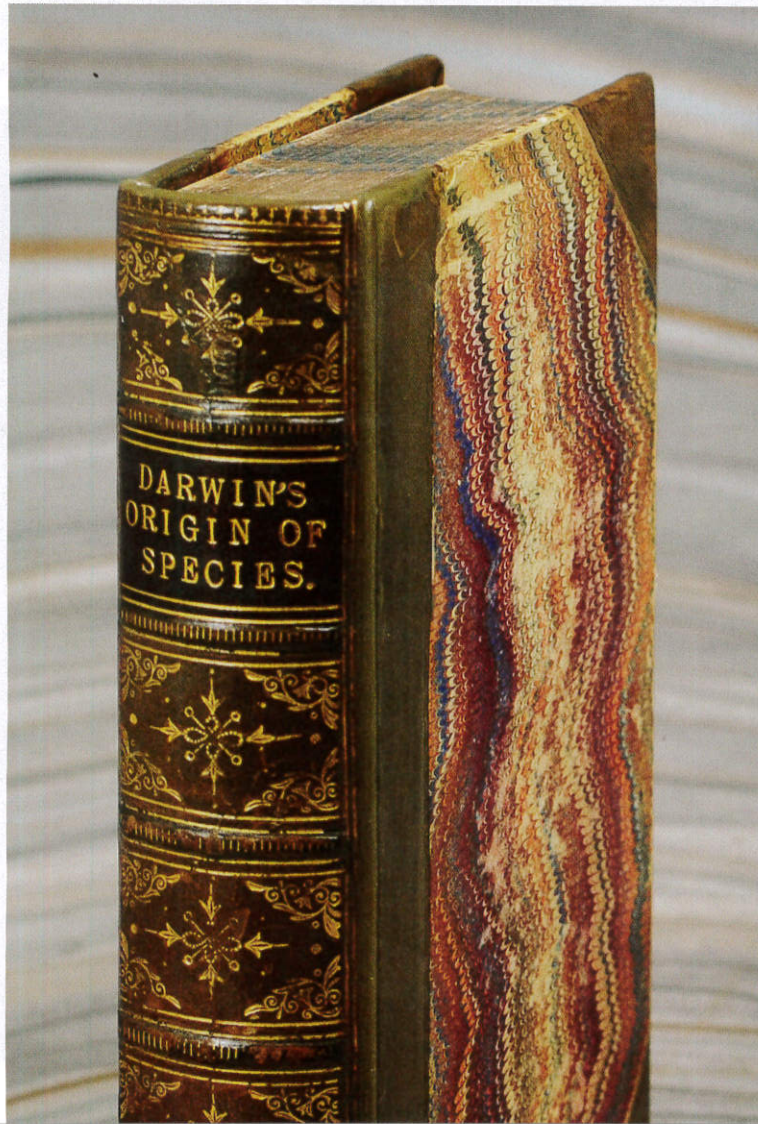
Windle is giving *Robb Report* readers the opportunity to buy rare first editions of two of the most important books ever published: *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, by Adam Smith, and *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, by Charles Darwin.

*The Wealth of Nations*, published in 1776, is the foundation text of modern economics. The treatise by the Scottish Enlightenment philosopher was the first to encapsulate the liberal economic theory that developed into

capitalism; Smith’s description of “the invisible hand” of the free market was profoundly influential to America’s founding fathers. The first edition contains contemporary handwritten annotations. *On the Origin of Species* introduced the theory of evolution when it was published in 1859; it is widely regarded as the most important scientific book ever written.

As well as acquiring the books, which can be done separately, you will have a private consultation with Windle on “the general concept of collecting famous rare books, what is worthy of your attention and money, how to buy privately from dealers or at auction and the care and feeding of your library.” L.A.

Smith: \$187,500, Darwin: \$125,000. Consultation is free at John Windle’s bookshop ([johnwindle.com](http://johnwindle.com)), or \$350 per hour elsewhere, plus expenses. John Windle, 415-986-5826 or [john@johnwindle.com](mailto:john@johnwindle.com)



# 39

## Take Over a Villa on Lake Como

“This lake exceeds any thing I ever beheld in beauty. . . . But the finest scenery is that of the Villa Pliniana,” wrote Percy Bysshe Shelley to his friend and fellow poet Thomas Love Peacock, during a tour of Italy in 1818. The Pliniana remains one of Lake Como’s oldest and most beautiful waterside villas, today run by the nearby Il Sereno luxury hotel,



VILLA PLINIANA: VINCENT DE HOE

which is as contemporary as Villa Pliniana is historic.

Named after Pliny the Younger, the Roman writer and senator of the first century AD, who grew up on the shores of the lake, Villa Pliniana was built in 1573. By the time Shelley tried to rent it nearly 250 years later, it had fallen into disrepair. “The scene from the colonnade is the

most extraordinary, at once, and the most lovely that eye ever beheld,” he wrote, adding that he was “endeavoring to procure” the house, “which was once a magnificent palace and is now half in ruins.”

Today, the villa is fully refurbished as a luxury residence, with 17 bedrooms and interiors by acclaimed designer Patricia

Urquiola. An 18-acre park surrounds the villa, and all guest suites overlook the lake, as do the spa and infinity pool.

Shelley may have failed to “procure” the villa, but *Robb Report* readers can rent out the entire complex for up to 34 guests, arriving via private helipad or boat dock. Il Sereno’s executive chef,

Raffaele Lenzi, will conduct private cooking classes, demonstrating the techniques, presentation and recipes that he has honed working in Michelin-starred kitchens. L.A.

*\$142,200 per week for full buyout, including daily breakfast. Cooking classes from \$700 per person. Marta Camps, Sereno Hotels, sales@serenohotels.com, +39-031-5477-800*