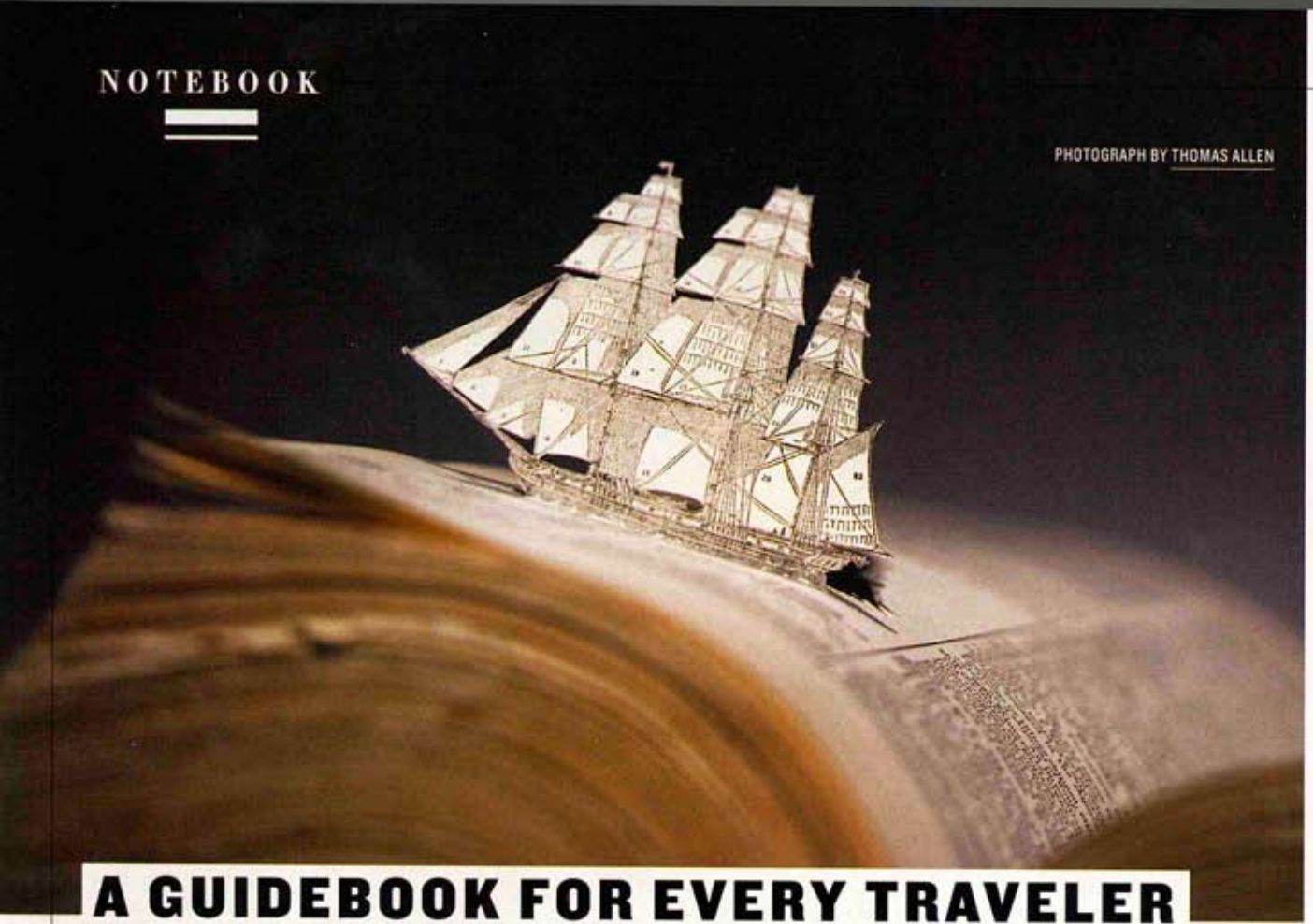


PHOTOGRAPH BY THOMAS ALLEN

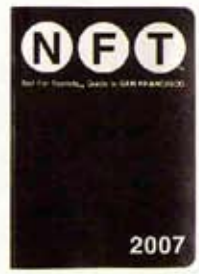
A GUIDEBOOK FOR EVERY TRAVELER

Scores of NICHE TRAVEL GUIDES *target different ways of seeing the world today. Which is right for you?* by JONATHAN YEVIN

PLANNING A TRIP USED TO BE easy. A stop at the bookstore and you were set. Foodies grabbed a trusty Michelin; backpackers, Lonely Planet; and for the family taking in all the sights there was Fodor's. Now the travel sections at Barnes & Noble and Borders are different countries. The difficulty is deciding which of the many series will help you find the tastiest Kathmandu home brew and which you'll need for a perfect three-day weekend with your best girl.

Nota Bene Review

BEST FOR: Top-shelf luxury snobs
STRENGTHS: Impartiality. Nota Bene is so damn rich it can afford to have its reviewers travel anonymously, declining all the complimentary perks frequently thrown at guidebook writers. Founded in 2001 by real estate mogul Anthony Lassman on a challenge from his wife, NB directs its jet-setting readership to the globe's most fashionable hot spots — Rio, Aspen, St. Bart's, Sardinia — and presents the best of each location. (For example, the Miami title recommends room 2202 at the Four Seasons and includes maitre d' recommendations by name.) A staff of experts is on call for last-minute questions. **WEAKNESSES:** Price point: $757 gets you...a one-year subscription, plus access to the regularly updated members' website and unlimited concierge service. Also, you may not have as much in common with a wealthy real estate mogul as this book requires (*nbreview.com*).



NFT (Not For Tourists)

BEST FOR: The newly relocated
STRENGTHS: NFT books keep you from looking like that most loathed of public figures: the guy with the map. The sleek, black, concise guides, available for many American cities, are packed with information about transportation, government services, shops, gas stations, gyms, ATMs, restaurants, WiFi hot spots, 24-hour copy shops, movie theaters, and nightlife. If you have a stack of printer cartridges lying around, all of their guides are browsable online for free.
WEAKNESSES: Maps don't always have scales, which makes it difficult to determine distances. Descriptions are cursory at best. Thumb through NFT and you'll see two- to five-word reviews; some of these quick hits strive for humor — an entry for a Chicago occult bookstore: "I put a spell on you"; NYC's Sweet Life: "Gimme some CAN-DAY!"; Brooklyn Industries: "Represent!" — while others just leave you wanting more — review of Thai restaurant: "Tasty Thai"; Italian: "Romantic Italian"; New York's Urban Angler: "We think it's for fishermen" (*notfortourists.com*).