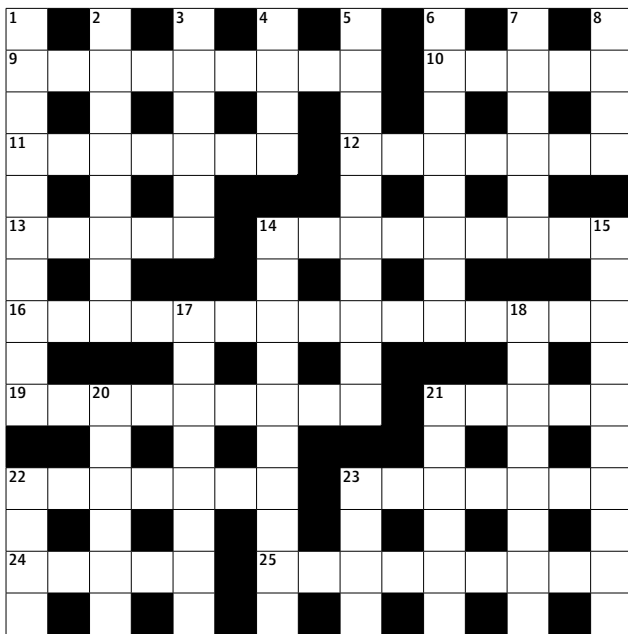


Guardian cryptic crossword



No 26,525 set by Arachne

The first five correct entries drawn each week win Guardian Style and Secrets of the Setters, worth £28.99.

Entries to: The Guardian Crossword No 26,525, P.O. Box 6603, Birmingham, B26 3PR, or Fax to 0121-742 1313 by first post on Friday. Solution and winners in the Guardian on Monday 30 March.

In honour of an 85th birthday

Across

- 9** Refusal to accept our menu turned out for the best (6,3)
10 Edgy psychodrama about free spirit (5)
11,23down Perverse desire harboured by fragrant, funny Fleet Street fiend (7,4)
12 Strong feeling I don't know nothing, stopping at home (7)
13 Extremely habitable address for Maria and Chuck (5)
14 Leaves limits, 1-1-1-leaving husband (4,5)
16 Girl on stage reinterpreting hedonism for musical 9 (7,8)
19 Two idiots stripped Mini's bumpers off (9)
21 Flashback to accident provided that recurrent theme (5)
22 Old female from West Side Story beginning to sing in revue (7)
23 Monkey taunting Martian (7)
24 Side by side in central Ongar (5)
25 Conservative getting on train (3,6)

Down

- 1** 16's response to theatre administration? (10)
2 Current strength of a member, eager to perform (8)

- 3** Record, including A Little Night Music, for clubbers (6)
4 Garland head of Johanna (with Purdey cut, oddly) (4)
5 Success seldom condemned in United States (10)
6 Regularly engages fat ladies, half-cut, for lunch? (3,5)
7 Italian way of acclaiming Pacific Overtures – not entirely quietly! (6)
8 Fourth letter leaving Maidenhead for Jerusalem? (4)
14 Protector of the legend of Venus? (6,4)
15 Round, short granny in tattered flimsies (10)
17 Plan hit snags in town by the sea (8)
18 Superficial and needing no introduction, next queen tours city (8)
20 Now finally bolting down pasty (6)
21 Musical Bohemian knocking stuffing out of colourless imitators (6)
22 Fight ever after for absent love (4)
23 See 11

Solution No. 26,524

