

Sarah Murdoch: A preview of this weekend's Books section (March 7, 2009)

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[This Weekend in Books](#), [Sarah Murdoch](#)

Sarah Murdoch is National Post's Books Editor. Here, she previews the content you'll find in this weekend's paper:

Without doubt, the two hot media tickets in the publishing industry this week were the launch of the new Hamish Hamilton Canada imprint at Nygood, the new restaurant on Toronto's Queen Street West and the reception at Random House's Toronto HQ to mark Zoë Heller's visit to Canada to promote the release of *The Believers*.

First, the Hamish Hamilton event. Mark Medley attended the launch party — along with 200 other industry players — and reports on the new imprint in Weekend Post's Books pages as part of his continuing Ecology of Books series. Amid widespread contractions in all media industries of late, it's a daring, possibly foolhardy, time to be launching what is, in effect, a new publishing house. But at Tuesday's launch, the principals of the venture — Penguin honchos from Toronto, London and New York — expressed nothing but confidence in the head of their new brand, Nicole Winstanley, 35 years of age and a Penguin editor for just three years (during which, it must be added, she earned her spurs as the editor of Joseph Boyden's *Through Black Spruce*, which won the 2008 Giller Prize).

This weekend's Book pages also feature a profile of Zoë Heller (by writer Mike Doherty, who sat down with her during her Toronto stop) and an assessment of her book (by reviewer Cecily Ross, who enjoyed it, with reservations). Doherty found the Brit writer (who now lives in the Bahamas with her husband and two daughters) charming, thoughtful and, like her prickliest characters, entertainingly cutting. A sample observation, about the intrigues of fiction writers: "There's an enormous amount of unpleasantness and spleen and envy, coupled with a surprising amount of comradeship."