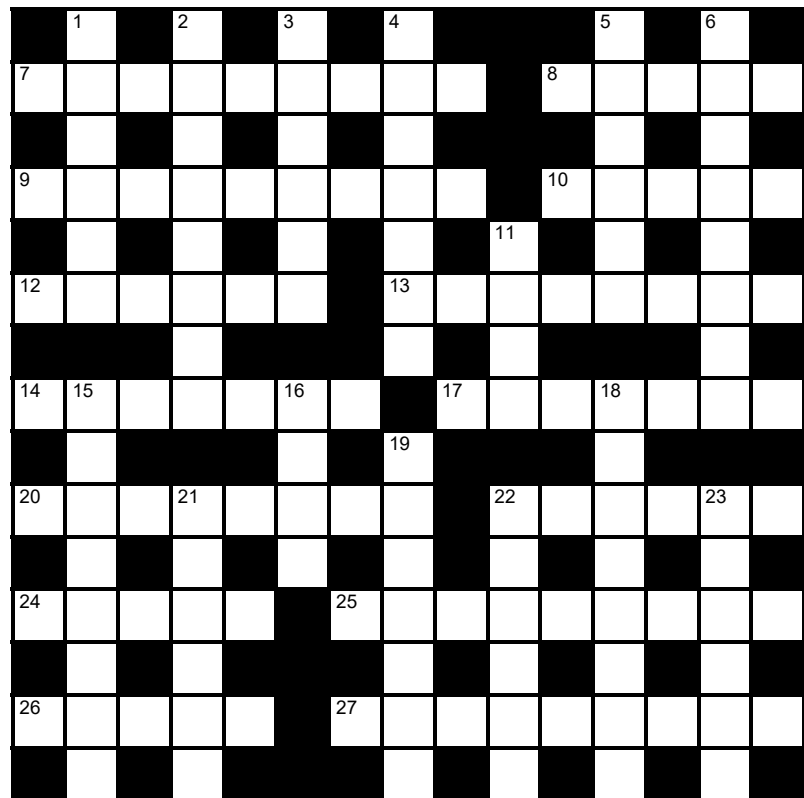


Across

- 7 Best is stopping to talk, for crying out loud (9)
- 8 Occasionally pray during party, then go quiet (3,2)
- 9 Hit men next in line (9)
- 10 Soldier reversing in vehicle in Big Smoke (5)
- 12 Port entertainers stripped near point (6)
- 13 Police deployed to intercept group of drivers with problem maintaining locks (8)
- 14 In typical fashion, left after USA screwed up twice (2,5)
- 17 Excavates more to go back through hideouts (7)
- 20 In Scotland old, witchlike woman unendingly smuggles pot (8)
- 22 Fellow working oddly doused in cheesy dip (6)
- 24 Restrict quantity of damask imported (5)
- 25 Professional to use keyboard model (9)
- 26 Tolerate British man attempting to mate (5)
- 27 Quietly track spy within catching adult display that is splendid (9)

Down

- 1 Searches through Access courses (6)
- 2 Guides serve the Charente brought up at regular intervals (8)



- 3 Entertained by commercial featuring flightless birds cycling (6)
- 4 African goat skinned and skewered by a bit of wood on the counter (7)
- 5 Boatmen talked about holiday at sea (6)
- 6 Extent of the French allotment (8)
- 11 Electronic issue lying about very narrow margin of victory (4)
- 15 Pounds boat with debris every now and then (8)
- 16 Fresh Sprite with a drop of Fanta poured away (4)
- 18 Regretful writer not finishing article on conservationists (8)
- 19 Undergoing test (oral) nit messed up (2,5)
- 21 Evacuated large mission overseas in Greek island (6)
- 22 Swimmer replacing a little boy with female parent (6)
- 23 It's official: mother not starting parking rental, according to East Ender (6)