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JUNE 2026
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HEARST

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JUNE 2026 £6.99

JODIE COMER
On healing, herbalism and Robin Hood

COMIC TIMING
Why funny women are having a moment

'IT HAS TO BE A DREAM'
Chanel according to Matthieu Blazy

NATIONAL TREASURES
The people, places and parties bringing joy to Britain

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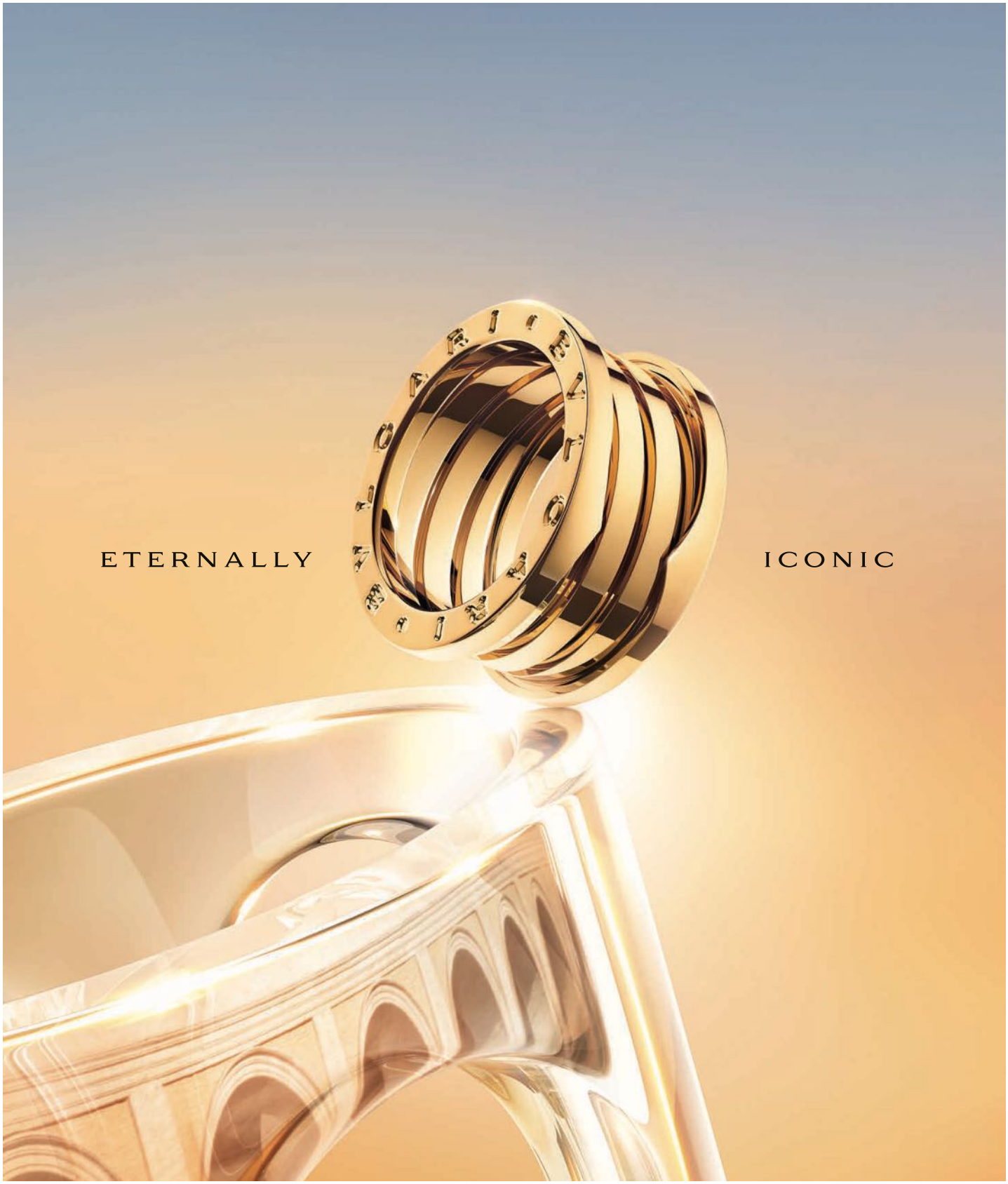
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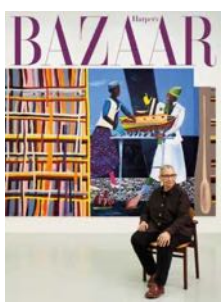
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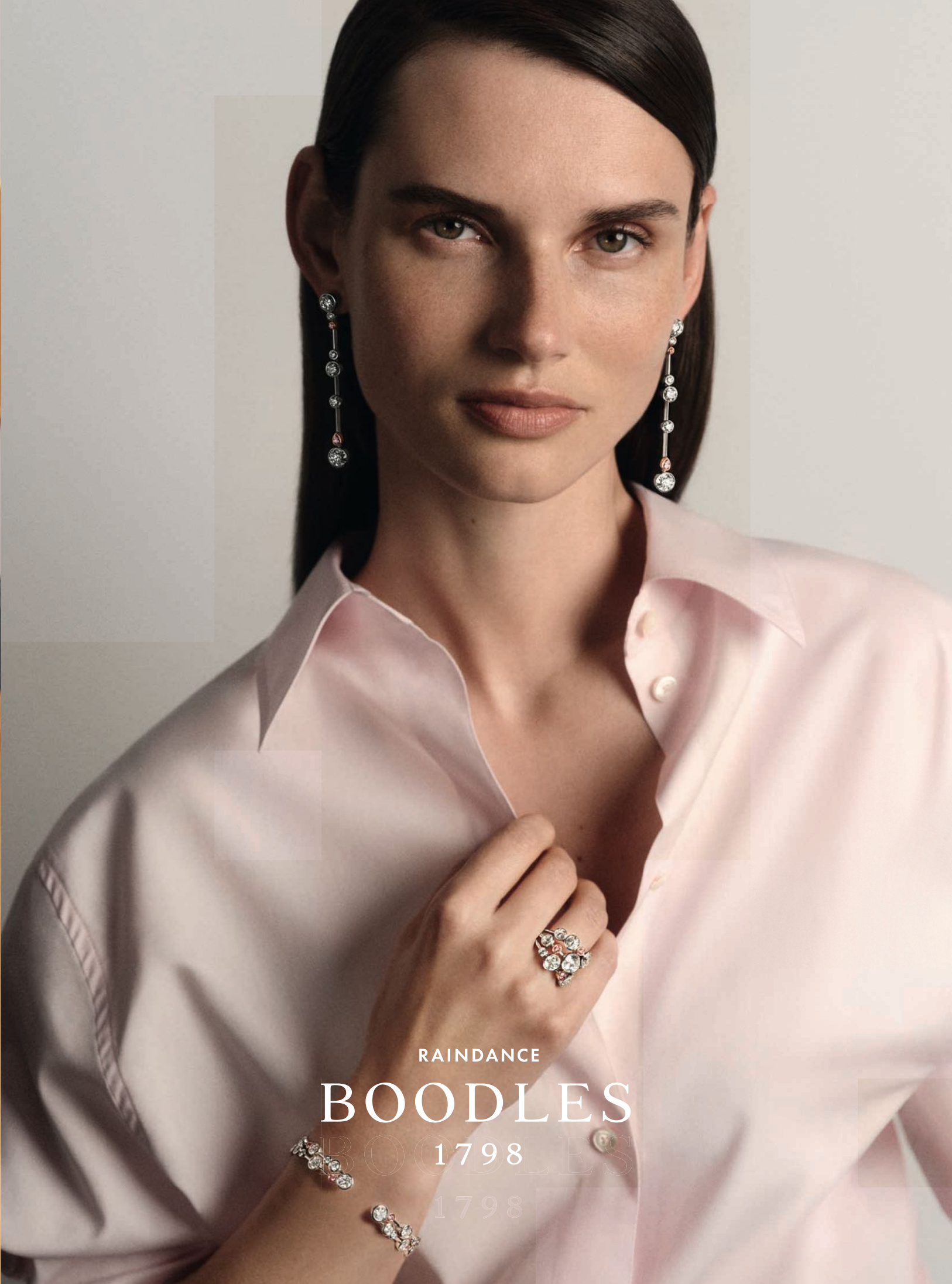
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COVER LOOKS Above left: Jodie Comer wears embroidered silk cardigan, from selection; silk T-shirt, £2,170; jeans, £2,000, all Chanel. Boots, stylist's own. Platinum, rose gold and diamond earrings; platinum and diamond bracelet, both from a selection; platinum and diamond ring, £14,500, all Boodles. Styled by Charlie Harrington. Hair by Sam McKnight at Premier, assisted by Ryan Steedman, using Hair by Sam McKnight. Make-up by Wendy Rowe at Artlist. Manicure by Michelle Humphrey at LMC Worldwide, using Essie. Photograph by Marcus Ohlsson. Above centre (limited-edition cover available exclusively at the Venice Biennale): Lubaina Himid, with her *Boatbuilders* (2025); artwork courtesy of the artist. Photograph by Philip Sinden. Above right (*The Ultimate Travel Guide 2026* cover): swimsuit, £570, Eres. Styled by Grace Clarke. Hair by Konstantinos Sakkas. Make-up by Ninni Nummela, using Chanel Hydra Beauty Micro Crème and Les Beiges Serum Concealer Natural Healthy Glow. Model: Mila Bergsma at the Hive. Photograph by Jesse Laitinen

PHOTOGRAPH: MARCUS OHLSSON




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BOODLES
1798



Talita Von Furstenberg — Portofino, 2024

BUCCELLATI

MILANO DAL 1919

35 Albemarle Street - Mayfair - London

Hawaii Collection

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Nora Svenson wears Gucci in 'Woman about town'

PHOTOGRAPH: ANYA HOLDSTOCK

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Contributors


PAGE 130

RUTH ROGERS

One of the nation's best-loved chefs and restaurateurs, Rogers has run the Michelin-starred River Cafe in Hammersmith since founding it with the late Rose Gray in 1987. During that time, she has released numerous cookbooks and launched a successful podcast, *Ruthie's Table 4*, which has inspired her latest volume, *Table 4 at the River Cafe*.

British summer has arrived when... 'the River Cafe terrace is full, and there's nobody sitting inside.'

The hotel you'd like to live in 'I love the Cipriani in Venice, the Annapurna in Courchevel and the Mercer or the Carlyle in New York. But I couldn't live anywhere but my own home.'

Your room-service order 'A grilled cheese sandwich and tomato soup.'

An unmissable event of the Season 'The Serpentine Summer Party.'

Who is your national treasure? 'My family.'

OLLY ALEXANDER

Since first topping the UK singles chart in 2015 with the synth-pop ballad 'King' with his band Years & Years, Alexander has also gained acclaim for his acting – notably for his role in the TV series *It's a Sin*. Ahead of his appearance at Charleston Festival, he shares the books that have shaped his life.

British summer has arrived when... 'the wisteria in my garden blooms and I can wear shorts in the evening.'

The hotel you'd like to live in 'After doing *The Importance of Being Earnest*, I feel it's only right to say the Savoy. It's what Oscar would want.'

Your room-service order 'I judge a restaurant by how good the chips are, so chips and a glass of champagne.'

An unmissable event of the Season 'As a keen gardener, I love seeing the creativity at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show.'

Who is your national treasure? 'It has to be George Michael.'


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PAGE 165

VICK HOPE

In this issue, the Radio 1 host and *Countryfile* presenter shows us another side to Ibiza, where she lives part-time with her husband – the DJ Calvin Harris – and their son.

British summer has arrived when... 'my go-to pub order switches from red to white wine.'

The hotel you'd like to live in 'Jakes on Jamaica's Treasure Beach is the level of vibey yet laid-back I aspire to.'

Your room-service order 'Curry goat and fresh soursop juice. Salivating already.'

An unmissable event of the Season 'The Women's Prize for Fiction – the finalists offer an excellent annual reading list.'

Who is your national treasure? 'Andi Oliver. She is the best person on TV.'


PAGE 90

JODIE COMER

'You have to stay curious,' says our cover star, who has played a psychopathic assassin in *Killing Eve*, a devoted mother in *Star Wars* and a criminal-defence barrister in the one-woman play *Prima Facie*. As she takes on her next challenge, portraying the healer Bridget in *The Death of Robin Hood*, she talks about controlling emotions, collecting crystals and coming home to perform in Liverpool.

British summer has arrived when... 'you're in the back of a black cab with all the windows down, sunglasses on and wind in your hair.'

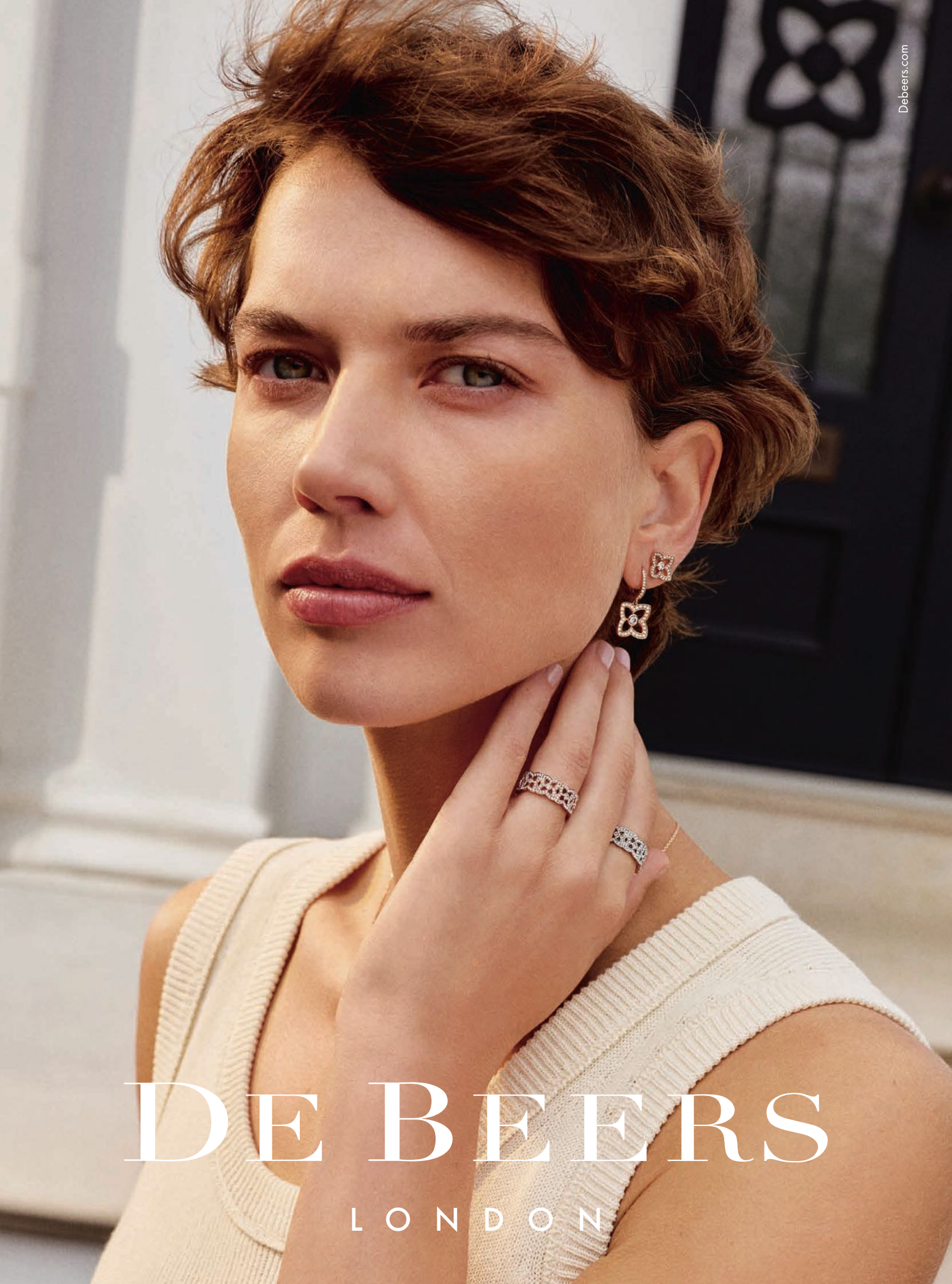
The hotel you'd like to live in 'Soneva Fushi in the Maldives.'

Your room-service order 'Coffee, fruit plate, chips... Always chips.'

An unmissable event of the Season 'Any evening spent in a park with a 9pm sunset, drunk and tired from pollen.'

Who is your national treasure? 'Bob Mortimer.'

WORDS BY BROOKE THEIS. PHOTOGRAPHS: PHILIP SINDEN, MARCUS OHLSSON


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Editor's letter



Jodie Comer wears Celine and David Morris (page 90)

What does the arrival of June mean to you? Perhaps it's the promise of warm days and scented nights; a calendar bursting with social and sporting events; the opportunity to dress up in vibrant colours and a dramatic hat; or the gastronomic pleasures of Jersey Royals with peppery olive oil, or ripe strawberries and cream…

You'll find all these summer joys and a lot more in this latest issue of *Harper's Bazaar*. Alongside our indispensable guide to the British Season (and what to wear to its key events), which starts on page 57, we have a cornucopia of treats in store, from the cultural moments that mark the month (page 71) to our accompanying *Ultimate Travel Guide*, a collection of the loveliest hotels and holidays near and far.

Our cover star Jodie Comer, fresh from triumphing on the London stage, discusses taking time to find happiness through herbalism on page 90, while on page 122, the fashion designer Matthieu Blazy opens up in a rare interview about the feminist philosophy behind his much-lauded reinvention at Chanel.

Meanwhile, as the Venice Biennale gets under way, Helena Lee follows the artist Lubaina Himid across a pivotal year as she prepares to represent the nation at the British Pavilion. I meet one of my own heroines – Ruth Rogers, co-founder of the iconic River Cafe, who has now established herself as an admired podcaster (page 130). And on page 134, we talk to the women redefining British comedy – which is, as the comedian Sally Phillips tells us, our national language. 'The French have philosophy, the Italians have beauty and we have laughing at things.' I think we chose well.





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EDITOR'S CHOICES

A pale-blue skirt-suit worn with co-ordinating heels is a chic alternative to a day dress for seasonal engagements. Just add sparkle…



Blazer, £2,595, Erdem



Skirt, £1,695, Erdem



Ring, from a selection, De Beers

THIS MONTH, I ENJOYED…

'The Music is Black' at the new V&A East museum *(vam.ac.uk/east)*
Exomind neurostimulation at Dr Preema London Clinic *(drpreema.com)*
Carriage driving on an Irish estate *(ballyfin.com)*

LYDIA SLATER
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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Veuve Clicquot



'La Grande Dame 2018 vintage expresses a new facet of l'Art du Pinot Noir'

Didier Mariotti, Cellar Master

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BAZAAR
style

EDITED BY
AVRIL MAIR



1

THE OVERSIZE EARRINGS

These blowsy Dior blooms are the best in show.

Gold-plated palladium earrings, £3,050, Dior

2

THE SEQUINED JACKET

For relaxed daytime glamour, elevate a sports jacket with a sprinkling of sparkle.

Silk jacket, £6,500; denim trousers, £1,050, both Brunello Cucinelli

10 things we love

Embrace the great outdoors in natural tones, soft textures and a glimmer of sunshine

PHOTOGRAPHS BY THERESA MARX STYLED BY HOLLY GORST



3

THE TACTILE DUO

Drape yourself in co-ords that are as soft on the skin as a summer breeze.

Suede shirt, £3,270; matching skirt, £4,330, both Gucci

THE STATEMENT BAG

Gucci's squashy Paparazzo tote is a shortcut to sartorial style.

Canvas and leather bag, £2,300, Gucci. Gold and diamond ring (worn throughout), £6,975, Tiffany & Co

THERESA MARX



THE RECONFIGURED TRENCH

Burberry's sky-blue tasselled mackintosh ensures your outlook stays bright even when the sky turns grey.

Leather trench-coat, £9,900, Burberry



THE UNDERSTATED TAILORING

Stay grounded in a luxurious palette of soft olive shades by Loro Piana.

Wool and cashmere jacket, £4,750; matching waistcoat, £1,975; matching shirt, £1,345; silk trousers, £1,525; leather bag, £5,290; satin mules, £1,345, all Loro Piana. Gold and diamond earrings, £7,375, Tiffany & Co



THE HAUTE HARDWARE

For a look guaranteed to dazzle all beholders, pair this sunny dress with Tiffany's glinting Bone cuff.

Viscose and wool dress, from a selection, Celine. Gold cuff, from a selection, Tiffany & Co



9

THE SUEDE COAT

…but keep Ralph Lauren's classic duster handy to throw on for instant adult sophistication.

Suede coat, £2,395, Polo Ralph Lauren. Leather bag, £5,400, Fendi

THE KNITTED SET

Revisit the joy of childhood summers in Moncler's carefree striped knickers and top…

Cotton T-shirt, £525; matching knickers, £480, both Moncler



THE FORMAL TWO-PIECE

Ermanno Scervino's textured corset and skirt are all you need for garden-party chic.

Lace and shearling corset, £2,620; matching skirt, £3,330, both Ermanno Scervino. Wool-mix bag, £630, Toteme. Gold ring, £4,975, Tiffany & Co

WORDS BY LYDIA SLATER. HAIR BY CHRIS SWEENEY AT ONE REPRESENTS. MAKE-UP BY FAYE BLUFF AT AGENCY OF SUBSTANCE, USING BOB BEAUTÉ. STYLIST'S ASSISTANT: NINA GAHREN WILLIAMSON. MODEL: ANJALI TORVI AT VIVA MODEL MANAGEMENT

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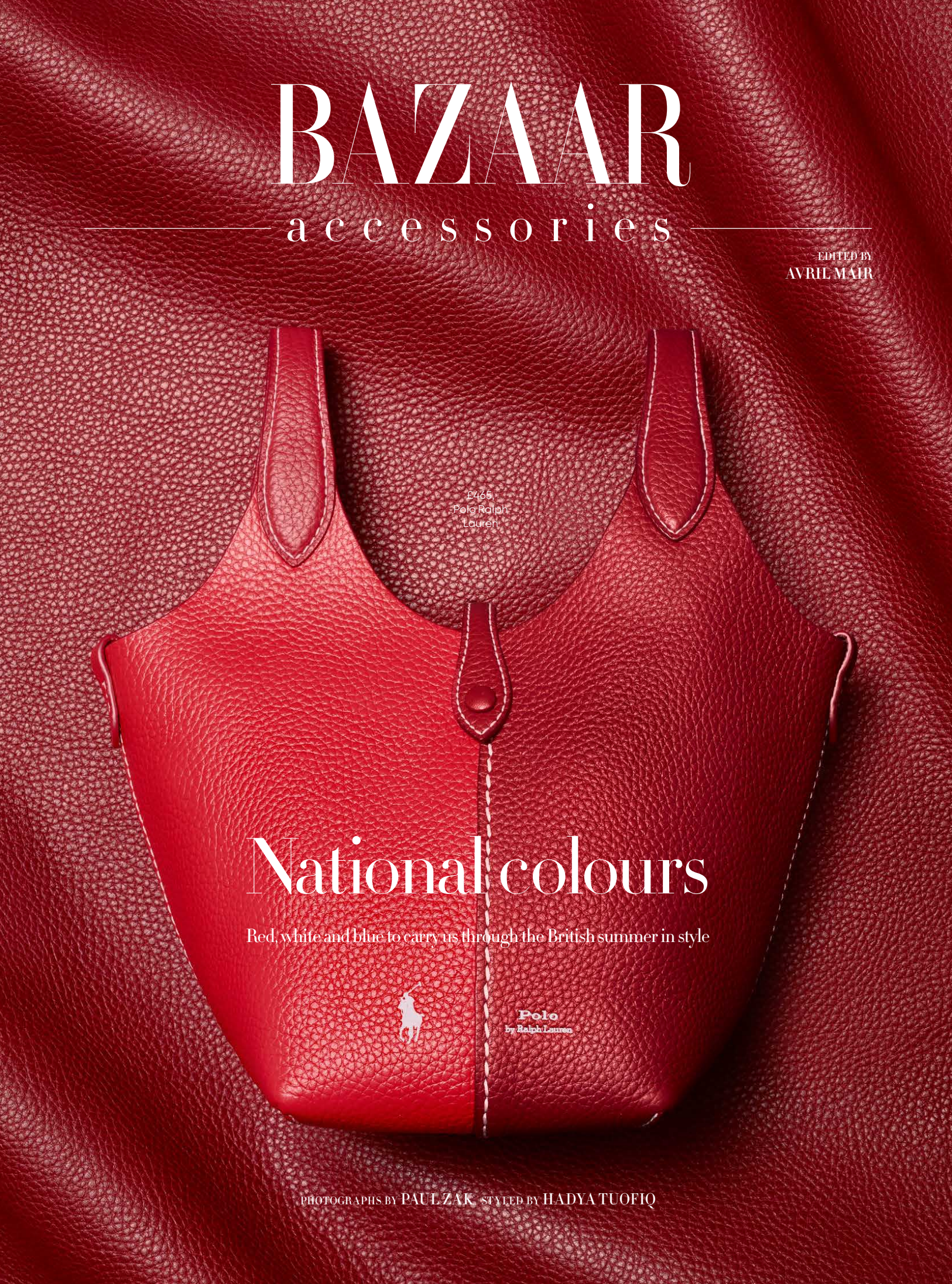
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BAZAAR

accessories

EDITED BY
AVRIL MAIR



£465
Polo Ralph
Lauren

National colours

Red, white and blue to carry us through the British summer in style

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL ZAK STYLED BY HADYA TUOFIQ


£2,050, Chloé
From a selection, Valentino Garavani
£500, Toteme
Belt, £295, Déhanche
£660, Dries Van Noten
Hair clip, £350, Prada
Bracelet, £152, Tory Burch
Brooch, £80, Weekend Max Mara
£2,020, Khaite
£4,900, Schiaparelli
£1,050, Celine
£870, Ferragamo
£2,310, Bottega Veneta
£430, Jude
Charm, £135, Polo Ralph Lauren
£750, Jil Sander
£995, Hermès
Bag, from a selection, Chanel
£4,200, Dior
£670, Givenchy by Sarah Burton


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Hair clip, £144, Simone Rocha
£1,720, Gucci
£830, Valentino Garavani
£890, Alaïa
Hair comb, £415, Completedworks
£400, Celine
£675, Manolo Blahnik



Singin' the blues

Denim, cyan or aquamarine:
all shades are welcome this season

PAUL ZAK



Scarf, £315, Brunello Cucinelli



£440, Miu Miu



£2,200, Loewe



Earrings, £235, Completedworks



£800, Etro



£490, Chloé

£3,050, Fendi

Belt, £230, Max Mara





Bag, £1,050, McQueen



£680, Giorgio Armani



£230, Jennifer Behr



£855, Louis Vuitton



£415, Gucci



£1,610, Alaïa

Belt, £620, Gabriela Hearst



£1,590, Valentino Garavani



Scarf, £405, Ferragamo



£460, Oscar de la Renta



£2,650, Dior

£785, Manolo Blahnik



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thewalpole.co.uk

Kathryn Sargent, bespoke tailoring, London. Shot by Sam Walton

All pieces, from a selection, Tiffany & Co HardWear collection

Tough love

Strength and beauty unite to dazzling effect in Tiffany's HardWare line

Inspired by a unisex bracelet from 1962 found in the house's archives, Tiffany HardWear is an iconic collection that transforms the industrial into modern luxury. Now, almost a decade after its launch, new limited-edition designs are bolder than ever. Combining two signature Tiffany & Co metals, the pieces feature links crafted from lightweight, high-strength black titanium with a platinum clasp that also comes set with diamonds. AVRIL MAIR

PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF TIFFANY & CO

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Your chance to become part of *Harper's Bazaar* Privé, our growing community of visionary women













It has been a busy year for *Harper's Bazaar*'s membership club Privé. From partying with the stars during awards season to toasting the centenary of Queen Elizabeth II in the London townhouse-turned-restaurant where she was born, we have enjoyed a host of exclusive experiences in the company of women we admire, including the iconic British artist Tracey Emin. Join now to gain access to all our upcoming events, including a summer soirée at Rosewood London and a night at the opera.

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PHOTOGRAPHS: OLIVER HOLMS, HEATHER CHUTER, IONA WOLFF

BAZAAR

at work

EDITED BY
BROOKE THEIS



Deliver results

Why harnessing fear is key to success, according to the Olympian Victoria Pendleton.

Plus: Cynthia Erivo's secrets for staying motivated; and how AI could improve your job prospects

Silk blazer, £2,432; matching trousers, £1,118; leather belt, £446; matching bag, £2,606, all Michael Kors Collection

PHOTOGRAPH: SILVIA DRAZ. STYLED BY: GRACE CLARKE. HAIR BY LEWIS STANFORD AT EIGHTEEN MANAGEMENT, USING L'ORÉAL PROFESSIONNEL TECNI.ART. MAKE-UP BY: EOIN WHELAN, USING BY TERRY. MANICURE BY: HAYLEY EVANS-SMITH, USING ESSIE. STYLIST'S ASSISTANT: OLIVIA SANDFORD-WILSON. MODEL: SASHA DOM AT LINDEN STAUB TALENT AGENCY



AHEAD OF THE GAME

The champion track cyclist turned jockey *Victoria Pendleton* on how to use fear to your advantage

OUR RESPONSE TO FEAR IS NATURAL AND INSTINCTIVE. IT'S THERE for a reason and we should acknowledge it. But, if we have enough perspective on a situation to know that we are not in danger, we should walk straight into that uncomfortable feeling.

I am an introvert who ended up performing at the Olympic Games – and winning three medals. I used to find every competition nerve-racking, but worked out a way to get through it. The truth is, I got there through failure; I've lost a lot more races than I've ever won but, from those experiences, I've learnt to harness my emotions. Adrenalin is essential for high performance, so I welcome it. You need it to be your best physical self: to be sharp in your decision-making and have clarity in your thinking at any given moment. You will have a racing heart and sweaty palms, but those physiological sensations show that your body is getting ready for action.

Never let other people put limits on your capabilities. At 16 years old (the same age I was first talent-spotted by a national cycling coach), I was told by several adults in positions of authority that I didn't have the mindset to be a champion, and that I was too weak to be an athlete. Had I listened to those voices, I might not have gone anywhere.

We're conditioned to seek security and comfort; particularly as women, we don't like to do things we're not good at in front of people, because we are afraid of being judged or others passing comment on how we perform. In my career, that has been the

greatest source of fear, and it's a shame. I flunked out in the first round of my first Olympics in 2004, track cycling in Athens. I was overwhelmed by the whole thing and I was so fearful of disappointing people that I was holding myself back. To have the default confidence of a mediocre white man would be lovely, wouldn't it?

Aged 34, I was offered an opportunity to train as a jockey in the space of just over 12 months, having never ridden a horse before. People told me it was impossible. Despite that, I did it, to see how far I could get. My first riding lesson was terrifying and brilliant in equal quantities. I rode 92 different horses in that first year, and I ended up completing the 2016 Cheltenham Festival in front of 70,000 people, finishing in fifth place. It was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life, and I was able to prove all the naysayers very, very wrong.

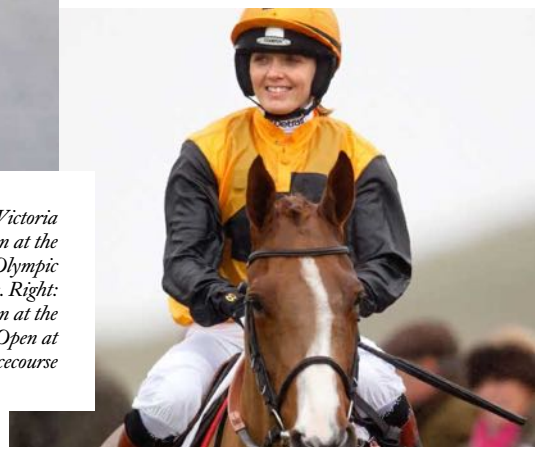
When you try something new – whether it's a sport or an art class – you're going to feel a bit nervous going into it. That's normal, but the opportunity for growth is far greater than that momentary feeling of discomfort. Usually, it's all in anticipation, and as soon as you get over that threshold – that doorway, or that opening sentence – the fear will dissipate, and you'll find that you're capable of much more than you thought you were.

Ultimately, it's important to make decisions for yourself. I only came into my own when I stopped simply responding to everybody else's tactics. It wasn't until I said, 'No, this is how I'm going to approach this race – and I'm going to make the moves before you do, with confidence and conviction' that the real turning point came for me. I would repeat the word 'commitment' in my head when I was racing. I would think: 'Just commit to this. Don't doubt yourself. Don't hold back.' I was no longer waiting for things to happen to me.

Fear shouldn't interfere with life when it doesn't need to be there. Be brave and have the confidence to do what scares you – it could be speaking to your superior at work, or asking for feedback or a pay rise. Seek out things that are going to benefit you. What is the worst that can happen?

'The Fear Opportunity' by Victoria Pendleton (£16.99, Pan Macmillan) is out on 21 May. □





Above: Victoria Pendleton at the London 2012 Olympic Games. Right: the Olympian at the Ladies Open at Barbury Racecourse

GOING FOR GOLD

British sports stars share the secrets to their successes



ZOE ATKIN

The Olympic skier on maintaining motivation

'Your mindset around something really affects the way you perform. To succeed, you have to be tethered to your purpose and also have a passion for the sport. Reconnecting to that allowed me to become a lot more process-oriented, instead of focusing so much on the results. At the end of the day, I can ski at my best but maybe someone else has the best ski of their life. I can only focus on what is within my control.'

EMMA RADUCANU

The tennis star on playing the long game

'I don't necessarily have it all figured out at this point in my career. I don't win every match, and other people can see that and the realness behind it… I'm pretty much on display. I hope I can handle those situations with enough grace and dignity that I set a good example for other people who might be facing adversity.'





ALEX GREENWOOD

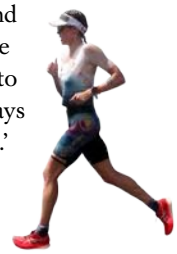
The Lioness and Manchester City captain on winning

'The way I approach pressure is to prepare for it. If I've done everything I know I need to, in terms of how I sleep, how I eat, how I train, then when it comes to game day, I am relaxed. I love the feeling of winning; I'm willing to do anything I can to keep that feeling alive. But success is also about growing the game; thinking about what opportunities I can give to younger women to succeed in football.'

LUCY CHARLES-BARCLAY

The Ironman World Champion on second chances

'When I had to pull out of the Ironman World Championship in Hawaii last year, I was devastated. I had worked to be in the best shape for that race – but I realised I could use it for something else, as there was another World Championship that was happening in Marbella four weeks later. I turned my focus to that one and managed to get the win. It's important to remember you always have another shot.'



AS TOLD TO BROOKE THEIS. PHOTOGRAPHS: LORNA ROACH, GETTY IMAGES



REPORT

A HELPING HAND?

Frances Hedges trials the latest CV-enhancing tech to find out whether AI can really make a difference

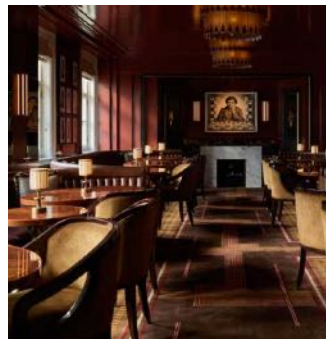
'FACT: RECRUITERS SPEND LESS THAN SEVEN seconds scanning your resumé.' This message pops up when I log on to resume.io, one of the AI-based tools that claim to improve your CV at the touch of a button. In a world where job applications are reviewed at best by an overworked HR team and at worst by a machine, they're an enticing way of setting yourself apart.

Assuming you're not starting from a blank page, most CV-building sites will format your document in line with your chosen template and bolster the language. Their relevance can vary according to sector (cake.me is ideal for creatives building a portfolio, while rezi.ai is better for corporate roles), and some, such as tealhq.com, are particularly good at tracking job opportunities. One platform, enhancv.com, offers the option to have my CV tailored to 'impress recruiters' or 'pass ATS' – the latter a reference to the applicant-tracking systems that are now widely used to screen candidates. This trend is only likely to continue: LinkedIn, which has just released a tool enabling AI-based interviews as part of its HiringPro function, reports that 89 per cent of UK recruiters intend to use more AI to fill job openings this year.

Being at a relatively senior level, I'm less concerned with facing a machine than with catching the eye of the hiring manager during that crucial seven-second window, so I select 'Impress recruiter' and let AI rewrite my CV. The results are a mixed bag: while there are indications that the text has not been written by a human (the presence of em dashes is generally deemed a giveaway, as is the overuse of business jargon), the system makes some notable improvements: changing passives to actives and generally pushing me to be less apologetic about my achievements.

'As women, we tend only to apply for jobs when we're 100 per cent qualified, whereas men do so when they're 60 per cent there – so a good starting point is to ask AI what makes you stand out,' says Zehra Chatoo, a former Meta senior executive who left the company to found Code For Good Now, which aims to close the gender AI gap. 'We often take some of our most important strengths for granted – AI can show you patterns you may have missed.'

This doesn't mean you can completely hand over responsibility to a machine. As AI uptake increases, recruitment experts including Amanda Whicher, the director of technology for Hays in the UK, are seeing CVs becoming homogenous – as well as unrealistic. 'It's unlikely that you're going to fulfil every single one of the criteria on a job description,' advises Whicher. 'A bullet-by-bullet match is usually a warning sign that you've used AI.' But while a CV that is 'devoid of personality' will never interest her, she believes none of us should be too proud to use the resources at our disposal. 'Whether you're 15 or 65, chances are, AI can support your application.' □



POWER LUNCH

SIMPSON'S IN THE STRAND

At 198 years old, the London institution was in need of a refresh; who better to do so than the Wolseley co-founder Jeremy King? And what a rebirth: from the moment my guest and I entered the Grand Divan dining-room – an Edwardian salon with claret-red banquettes – I knew this was just the place to make a good impression. The menu is a glorious romp through classic British cooking: a pie of the day, Scottish langoustines, Brixham dayboat fish. A roast has traditionally been the thing to have here, served by a master carver from a silver trolley. My Devonshire beef rib was beautifully tender, and came with a comically big Yorkshire, crisp potatoes and tenderstem broccoli. Puddings are equally nostalgic, with spotted dick and treacle tart on offer. But the show-stopper is the croquembouche for two: a pile of choux buns decorated with an exquisite tangle of spun sugar – a flourish to sweeten any business deal. HELENA LEE

simpsonsinthestrand.co.uk



PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES, ALEXI LUBOMIRSKI, HELEN CATHCART

MY WORKING LIFE

CYNTHIA ERIVO

The actress on how she balances a West End run with marathon training



I'm an early riser. I wake up at around 6.30, I walk my dogs and then I get right on the treadmill. Having a routine helps me fill my life with variation; it gives me touchpoints in a day when everything can be completely different.

Right now, I'm training for a marathon. I'm also performing a one-woman show, *Dracula*, in the West End, so I've been using morning workouts as a way to energise the day. They give me stamina to do what is a very physical show at night.

To get in the zone, I'll plug in. I sometimes listen to an audio-book, a podcast, a playlist I've made (I'm obsessed with Prince) or an entire album. I love *Jean* by Yebba; it's like a combination of R&B and country music.

Inside my handbag, I always have a notebook and a pen. I also carry a protein bar and three different kinds of teabag: I mix together an orange, ginger and mint with a ginger ginseng and a green tea. It's my little elixir for the day.

It's important for me to set boundaries when I'm working. I ask to be left alone for half an hour before I have to go on stage, and I limit the amount of people I see after the show, so I can get home to rest.

My style at work is tough with an edge of softness. I like volume and texture, so I always have a good oversize coat on, and I'm really into chunky stomper boots – Balenciaga and R13 have great options. But, on a two-show day, there has to be an element of cosiness. Between performances, I'll wear a tracksuit and Brooks trainers because I want to feel comfortable.

I prefer to communicate over the phone. If I have to send an email, it's straight to the point: direct and brief. When I'm trying to get something done, I want to make sure the recipient can understand what it is – and if I don't understand something, I will say so.

When I have a very busy week, I try to adjust my schedule. I ask the question: how important is this today? Is this necessary, or can it wait? I have to be clear about what does and doesn't need to happen because, if I don't, I run myself into the ground.

I mark the end of each big job with a pit-stop. After this *Dracula* run, I'm going to need a break, so I've already prepared for that. I'm taking two weeks off. For the first couple of days, I'm going to stay at home and do nothing, and then for the rest of the time, I'm going away – maybe to Italy.

Every job I've had has taught me something. I find out where I want to go from there, what I want to do next, or if I want to do something similar again. I pick roles I know I'm going to learn from. □

ALL BUTTONED UP

Three fresh, office-friendly takes on the classic white shirt



From a selection, Dolce & Gabbana

£1,295, Joseph

£150, Me + Em

LONDON'S FINEST ADDRESS

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BAZAAR

the season

EDITED BY
FRANCES HEDGES



PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM CARLOW

Out and about

Glyndebourne or Goodwood; Wimbledon or Wilderness: this fair isle is home to a host of brilliant summertime events to keep you entertained and enlightened

Glyndebourne Festival

WHAT TO WEAR

The Braemar Gathering

Try a refined twist on smart countryside style

Put your own haute spin on Highlands garb in classic pieces with a chic flourish. Prada's glorious checked dress will pair perfectly with masculine monk brogues from Church's and a decorative brocade Valentino bag. Match Phoebe Philo's kick-tailored blazer with a printed silk-organza skirt from Max Mara, or choose JW Anderson's cropped take on the traditional wax jacket. Finish with elevated accessories: Harry Winston's diamond earrings will add extra elegance. Let the games begin. HANNAH BANKS-WALKER

Necklace, £1,980, Hermès

£2,420 Chloé

£1,050, Brunello Cucinelli

From a selection, Harry Winston

£4,300, Fendi

£550, Loewe at Net-a-Porter

£1,120, Church's

Scarf, £200, Loro Piana

£770, Max Mara at Mytheresa

Scarf, £135, Johnstons of Elgin

£4,500, Prada

£425, Gucci

£470, Celine

£7,650, Rolex

£2,400, Phoebe Philo

£1,435, JW Anderson

£695, Tod's

£1,690, Valentino Garavani

COMPILED BY GRACE CLARKE



£7,780, Chaumet



£1,495, Erdem



£3,800, Dior



£1,035, Etro



Bracelet, £11,600, Boodles



£850, Victoria Beckham



£865, Aquazzura





£5,050, Longines



Scarf, £110, Weekend Max Mara

£5,250, De Beers

WHAT TO WEAR

Henley Royal Regatta

Embrace a cool colour palette to achieve riverside polish

Replace more obvious nautical references with lightweight summer tailoring as you enjoy the rowing action on the Thames. Brunello Cucinelli's cable-knit blazer is an excellent place to start – layer it over Victoria Beckham's icy-blue midi-dress and complete your look with raffia accessories. Ralph Lauren's floor-sweeping skirt earns its stripes; wear it with a crisp white shirt and choose between Louis Vuitton's pretty ballet pumps and Aquazzura's block-heeled sandals. Just don't forget your sunglasses. HBW



£2,120, Ralph Lauren Collection



£4,650, Brunello Cucinelli



£1,015, Cartier



£79, Holland Cooper

£1,980, Prada



£380, Loewe



£770, Louis Vuitton



WHAT TO WEAR

The Cartier Queen's Cup Final

Achieve understated elegance at a canter with clean lines and gold accents

Few things are more appropriate for polo than Erdem's blooming shirt dress – except, of course, Simone Rocha's charming cardigan. For the print-averse, the Row's wide-leg trousers will, when paired with Cartier's gold necklace, add a touch of quiet luxury, helped along by a timepiece from Van Cleef & Arpels. Channel Jackie O in a sharp skirt suit by Max Mara with Loewe shades and Gucci's tidy tote, or pick pastels: Gabriela Hearst's powder-blue dress is a dreamy partner for Givenchy's square-toe satin ballet flats. HBW

COMPILED BY GRACE CLARKE



Necklace, from a selection, Graff





£2,260, Khaite at Net-a-Porter











WHAT TO WEAR

The Royal Academy Summer Exhibition

Display your artistic flair in a selection of sartorial masterpieces

The Summer Exhibition calls for vivid brights and punchy, sculptural accessories. Gianvito Rossi's fiery mules and Tiffany's captivating Elsa Peretti Split ring are all Roksanda's feather-trimmed dress needs, while Jil Sander's two-tone layered knit is the ideal accompaniment for Chloé's high-rise denim. Alaïa's architectural shoes come in the shade of the season, chartreuse, or you could take things back to basics with purses in primary shades from Celine and Bottega Veneta. Picture perfect. HBW



Scrunchie,
£300,
Celine



From a selection, Omega



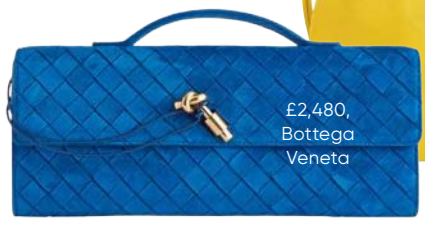


£396, Prada









HORTICULTURE

Realms of possibility

Three imaginative plots to discover at this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show

LAND ART

The Tate Britain Garden

'I've always felt that gardens are a fantastic bastion of liberty,' says Tom Stuart-Smith, the creative force behind the Tate Britain Garden at this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show. For the gallery's debut entry, the landscape architect wanted to make a space that encouraged exploration and discovery alongside contemplation. 'It's inspired by the perception of what a garden can do to bring the gallery onto the street,' he says. 'In a way, it's an antidote to the traditional museum experience – it's non-didactic and non-linear.'

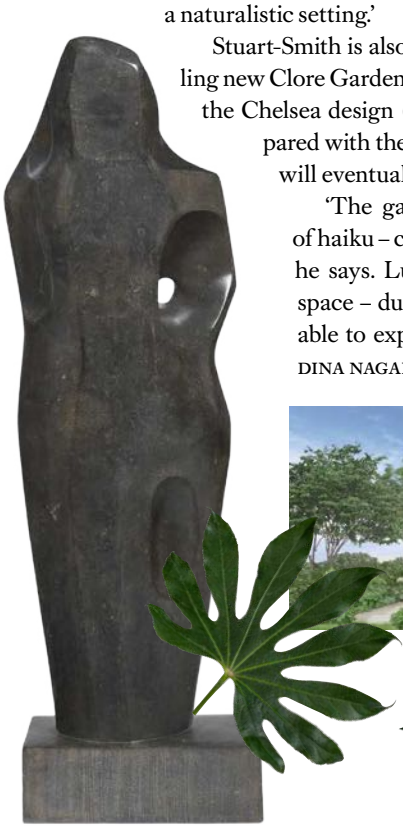
Visitors will wander down a gently curving path fitted with a flowing golden water channel, before encountering Barbara Hepworth's *Bicentric Form*. The piece's organic shape is a harmonious counterpart to the trees and colourful flowering shrubbery of Stuart-Smith's biodiverse planting.

'Hepworth's work encourages proximity to nature and she liked seeing it in gardens, so I think it's a very happy choice that we've got it here,' he says. 'It's how I think sculpture should be viewed: not in a formalised context, but in a naturalistic setting.'

Stuart-Smith is also responsible for the sprawling new Clore Garden at Tate Britain, into which the Chelsea design (a demure 22 x 12m, compared with the new plot's acre and a half) will eventually be incorporated.

'The garden at Chelsea is a sort of haiku – compacted and condensed,' he says. Luckily, visitors to the new space – due to open in 2027 – will be able to experience the poetry in full.

DINA NAGAPETYANTS





Left: 'Bicentric Form' (1949) by Barbara Hepworth. Above: the vision for the planned Tate Modern Garden



A miniature garden by Common Farm Flowers

NATURAL BEAUTY

Flowers from the Farm

In a mark of our increasing awareness of the importance of locally grown and cultivated blooms – as opposed to those traditionally flown in from the Netherlands, Kenya or South America – a miniature flower farm will go on display in the main pavilion for the first time at RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

The exhibit is courtesy of the trade association Flowers from the Farm, whose co-chair Georgie Newbery is the founder of Common Farm Flowers in Somerset. Newbery started out working in fashion and living in Paris, with stints at American *Vogue* and with John Galliano. 'I learnt that it doesn't matter if others think that what one does for a living is frivolous – whatever the work, do it as though your life depends upon it,' she says. This attitude stood her in good stead when she decided to pivot to horticulture. 'Growing flowers for sale allows me to indulge my creativity, run a specialist business and keep my hands covered in soil.'

Newbery is among a chic cohort of British flower farmers that also includes the former model Alfie Nickerson, who grows about 20,000 perennials and 25,000 annuals a year at Burnt Fen Flowers in Norfolk. 'Peonies, sweet peas and roses are always popular, but we're seeing an increased interest in single-variety bunches, such as Icelandic poppies,' he says. Elsewhere, Milli Proust, who co-runs the West Sussex farm and floral-design studio Alma Proust, is 'noticing a continued move towards seasonality and honesty – flowers that look like they've grown somewhere real, with bendy stems, seed heads and evidence of weather. There's less appetite for perfection and more for feeling'.

That will be in evidence at their RHS Chelsea installation, featuring British ranunculuses, peonies and digitales, with foliage such as copper beeches and limes. 'And, of course, nettles,' adds Newbery, 'because all farms need them to make fertiliser.' Form and function indeed. CATRIONA GRAY

PHOTOGRAPHS: TATE BRITAIN/COURTESY TOM STUART-SMITH STUDIO; TATE PHOTOGRAPHY (SONAL BAKRANIA AND MATT GREENWOOD); CATHERINE MACDONALD, © HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES; RICHARD LEA-HAIR



LIVING HISTORY

The Boodles Garden

For the landscape designer Catherine MacDonald, the chance to create a garden at RHS Chelsea Flower Show inspired by four landmark Historic Royal Palaces meant taking the time to rediscover some of our finest architectural achievements and heritage landmarks.

'I'd been to these places before, of course, but I found myself seeing them through different eyes,' she says of her research trips to Hampton Court Palace, Kensington Palace, Kew Palace and the Tower of London. 'Seeing the craftsmanship that must have gone into every detail of their construction reminded me of our rich cultural heritage.'

MacDonald's garden, which marks her third collaboration with the jewellery house Boodles, is based on an early plan she found of the Tower of London site, whose concentric structure has influenced the circular layout of her design. The rill at the centre echoes the Tower's famous moat, and she is using limestone from Cumbria for the paving, as seen in the White Tower's stonework.

Perhaps the most splendid feature will come in the form of a decorative ceiling that will be hand-painted on site by the artist Tess Newall, who is taking her cues from the one found inside Queen Charlotte's Cottage at Kew.

As for the planting, says MacDonald, 'I want it to feel bold and colourful, with luxurious hues that create a sense of joy.' Alongside some striking topiary specimens, purple irises and salvias will be reminiscent of the grapevines at Hampton Court, with red peonies making a nod to the damask wallpaper and bed canopies found in Kensington Palace. The result will be a jewel-like garden fit for royalty. FRANCES HEDGES

The RHS Chelsea Flower Show runs from 19 to 23 May (rhs.org.uk).

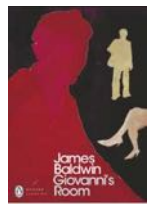




Queen Charlotte's Cottage. Left: a detail of its painted ceiling

GIOVANNI'S ROOM
BY JAMES BALDWIN

I read this as a closeted teenager and it lit me on fire. It was the first time I saw my desires reflected in writing. The pain and passion in the central relationship felt so visceral.





AT YOUR OWN RISK
BY DEREK JARMAN

I picked this up when I was preparing for *It's A Sin* and fell in love with Jarman's writing. I went on to read many of his diaries – they're all excellent, and I was overjoyed to discover we share a love of gardening. I've found a lot of courage and clarity in his words.

LITERATURE

Words of wisdom

Ahead of appearing at this year's Charleston Festival, the actor and activist *Olly Alexander* reveals four books that have shaped his life

GOODBYE TO BERLIN
BY CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD

This reminds me of another brilliant novel I read recently: Olivia Laing's *The Silver Book*. They both chart the rise of fascism – sadly, an issue that's pertinent to our current time, which is why I'm really looking forward to bringing some attention to Isherwood's incredible work at this year's Charleston Festival.





PLAY IT AS IT LAYS
BY JOAN DIDION

I read this in my early twenties, as a jobbing actor. It captures the existential nightmare of fame, although that didn't put me off trying to make it. Didion's sparse prose is masterful.

Olly Alexander will speak at Charleston Festival on 25 May (charleston.org.uk).



FESTIVALS

Play on

A woman with many strings to her bow, Nicola Benedetti shares her vision for this year's Edinburgh International Festival

'I'M NOT INTERESTED IN SEPARATING THE ARTS FROM POLITICS,' SAYS Nicola Benedetti, the director of the Edinburgh International Festival. 'The minute you start being driven by fear of criticism, that's the end to all creativity.'

Since taking the lead at the annual celebration of music, opera, theatre and dance in 2022, the Grammy Award-winning violinist has championed the power of the performing arts to bring about social change. This year's edition of the festival is no exception, marking the 250th anniversary of American independence and featuring the largest-ever cohort of US artists in an event series interrogating national identity at a fraught political moment. 'A lot of people have asked me, "Wasn't this too big a risk to take?"' she says. 'But I think this is precisely the time for us to bring together artistic visionaries who offer a nuanced, colourful, creative alternative to the dominant narrative about America.'

Opening with an ensemble performance titled 'All Rise', which will bring more than 200 performers – jazz musicians, orchestra members and choristers – onto the stage together, the programme will address themes including resilience, belonging and the rise of AI. This engagement with the issues of the day is important to Benedetti, who points to the festival's origins in a post-World War II effort to unite people, saying: 'Its mantra was explicitly to present a counterpoint to the horrors the nation had just experienced.'

In an era when arts organisations have to work harder than ever to defend their role – Timothée Chalamet recently made headlines for saying 'no one cares' about opera and ballet any more – Benedetti is passionate about making their case as essential to individual and civic health. 'As with anything that's longer-form or has a layer of complexity, you'll always have to invest heavily in time, money and care; in narrating and contextualising; in inclusivity and accessibility,' she says. 'I see that not as a battle, but as a responsibility.' FH

The Edinburgh International Festival (eif.co.uk) runs from 7 to 30 August.





Below: Nicola Benedetti. Top: performing at the opening night of the Edinburgh International Festival in 2023

FOOD & DRINK

Dine out

Culinary festivals to suit every appetite



BEST FOR: SEAFOOD
ROCK OYSTER, CORNWALL
Nathan Outlaw and Matt Tebbutt are among the chefs cooking with freshly caught produce at this coastal celebration. *23 to 26 July (rockoysterfestival.co.uk).*



BEST FOR: CHEESE
BIG FEASTIVAL, OXFORDSHIRE
Co-founder Alex James – the Blur bassist turned artisan cheesemaker – can be relied upon to serve up plenty of fromage, both on plates and on the decks. *28 to 30 August (bigfeastival.com).*



BEST FOR: PIE
PUB IN THE PARK, MARLOW
The chef Tommy Banks will launch his pop-up 'Tommy's Pie Shop' for the ultimate in comfort eating. *14 to 17 May (pubintheparkuk.com).*

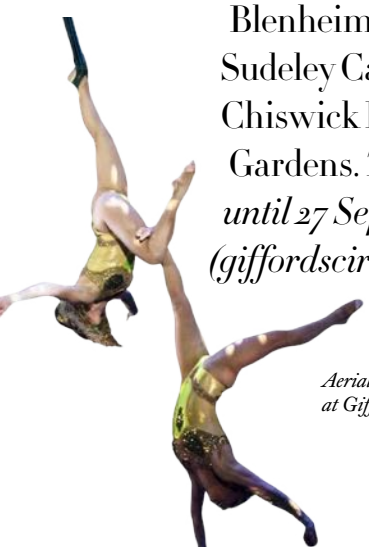
PHOTOGRAPHS: STILL MOVING MEDIA LLP, ALAMY, EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL, ANDREW PERRY, GETTY IMAGES, FRANZ GALO, CAITLIN MOGRIDGE, AMY IVORY, BENEDICT CAMPBELL



EVENTS

This is England

Roll up, roll up, for the return of Giffords Circus, this year performing its new production *Waterfield*. Inspired by the beauty and magic of the English countryside, it features the troupe's signature blend of high-wire acrobatics, comedic charm and antics from Tweedy the clown. See it at venues including Blenheim Palace, Sudeley Castle and Chiswick House & Gardens. *Touring until 27 September (giffordscircus.com).*



Aerial acrobatics at Giffords Circus

SPORT

Holding court



Annabel Croft during her junior playing career in 1984

Daniella Parete Clarke meets Annabel Croft, the tennis champion turned courtside interviewer

'I WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO PLAY tennis and win Wimbledon,' wrote an 11-year-old Annabel Croft in a school essay. By 21, she was well on her way to achieving her dream, as a precocious young player who had climbed to number 24 in the world rankings, emerging triumphant from Junior Wimbledon in 1984. Not long after, however, she retired from competitive sport, finding the touring too lonely.

'I decided I was on the wrong path,' she says. 'I'm a big believer in taking responsibility for your own actions. If you choose to be a tennis player, it involves living out of a suitcase three quarters of the year. That's the nature of the sport, and if that's not for you, don't choose to do that.'

Croft's change of course prepared her for a second act as a presenter, a role that has included returning to the courts to interview players at Wimbledon. 'It is,' she says, 'the greatest tournament in the world.' Her athletic career has informed her interview style: 'My golden rule is that it's never about me – I take the ball and I pass it on.'

To watch Croft courtside is to witness a pro at work. Even during a 'nightmare' moment at the 2024 Wimbledon finals, when she memorably called Carlos Alcaraz 'hot' – quickly correcting herself to say his playing was 'on fire' – Croft kept her cool, laughing along with the crowd (and with Alcaraz's opponent, Novak Djokovic). Her empathy for the players is clear, such as when she admonished spectators for booing Alexander Zverev after he beat Roger Federer at the O2. 'I was looking at Zverev's face and thinking he was about to cry,' she recalls. 'I thought, "Right, I'm taking control of this situation."' Djokovic later commended her bravery.

Being at Wimbledon brings back bittersweet memories of Croft's own tennis career. 'It's a gladiatorial sport,' she says. 'It's character-building and soul-destroying.' With hindsight, she's proud of her achievements, not least her Junior Wimbledon win. Back then, she was too busy preparing for her next tournament to celebrate. 'It's funny how, when you're less uptight, things flow. I'll always be in that trophy cabinet.' This year's challengers are in good hands.



Presenting for the BBC at Wimbledon

Pro tips

Annabel Croft's women to watch



MAYA JOINT

I like this 20-year-old Australian player's game. She beat Emma Raducanu last year at the 2025 Eastbourne International.



IVA JOVIC

Last year, I watched Iva play in the qualifying event for Wimbledon, which I host. She's 16th in the world at the age of just 18.



HANNAH KLUGMAN

This British teenager has a great all-court game, with lots of variety and a good backhand slice.

FESTIVALS

Free spirits

Acts joining this year's Wilderness line-up reveal how they embrace the event's carnivalesque mood







A Woodfired Canteen feast at Wilderness

FEASTING WITH… CHLOE KNIGHT

OWNER AND EVENTS DIRECTOR, WOODFIRED CANTEEN

I'm looking forward to serving up an open-fire feast to remember at Wilderness. The menu changes annually, but some of my favourite dishes to cook on the coals are smoked chicken with new potatoes, whole aubergines with tahini and a herb gremolata, and Middle Eastern-inspired flatbreads. For pudding, I might put some peaches on the grill and drizzle honey over them; they're delicious with clotted cream, broken ginger-nut biscuits and oregano. The key to cooking over the flames is patience – good things take time!

ROCKING OUT WITH… JAKE SHEARS

LEAD SINGER, SCISSOR SISTERS

UK festivals are a blast. I've played a lot of them over the years, and they're where I learnt how to perform. You're there for a crowd of people who aren't necessarily all there to see you, so you've got to connect with an audience and pull them in. You only have a few songs to do it, and if you're not there by song four, you're screwed. But I have such a good time on stage; I don't get nervous at all any more.

I was an attention-seeking kid – loud, with a bizarre sense of humour – and I've been able to channel that into my career. I've mellowed out over the years, but getting on stage for me is like being let out of the bag for an hour and a half. Playing rock 'n' roll is fun and silly – I love just jumping out there and letting the crowd have it.

SWINGING WITH… LOU PALEY

CO-FOUNDER, WOMEN IN JAZZ

This is our third year bringing Women in Jazz to Wilderness, and my aim is always to show people that jazz isn't about one single sound: it can be personal or collective, and it's constantly evolving. This time around, we'll have the singer Bel Cobain performing an intimate, introspective set, and then the New Regency Orchestra will bring a sense of scale and community to the festival – as well as big-party energy! Jazz is all about letting go – you don't have to understand it, but you can feel it. Be open, present and let the music take you anywhere.

PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES, TOM SHAXSON, RICHARD IVEY COURTESY OF SARA BERMAN © GLYNDEBOURNE PRODUCTIONS LTD, STEVEN STRINGER, SARA LINCOLN, ALAMY



MEANINGFUL MUSIC WITH… ANDY CATO
MUSICIAN, GROOVE ARMADA; CO-FOUNDER, WILDFARMED

My life is one of extreme contrasts: I might be DJing in Ibiza at 5am and talking about regenerative farming at the Labour Party conference in Liverpool come 5pm. Yet there are similarities between music and food production, too. As a musician, you make things happen and persuade people to come with you – just like my path from experimenting with growing vegetables in France to running Wildfarmed, a food supplier that works with farmers to make flour and bread that's better for the planet.

We're nearing the 30th year of Groove Armada and it's such a privilege still to be playing to huge, young crowds like the one at Wilderness. Leading a double life can be tiring, but music is a release from the hard yards of trying to build a sustainable food system. From the Wildfarmed signs held up at our gigs, it's clear that opportunities for hope and agency matter to people.

MINDFUL MOMENTS WITH… RACHEL CORBY
REWILDING COACH

When I take people forest-bathing at Wilderness, we'll sit under a beautiful old tree and focus on our senses until the outside noise starts to drop away. I'll ask participants to look closely and observe patterns, such as how the light falls onto a leaf; roll up their sleeves and rub their arm on the treetop to engage their sense of touch; listen to the sounds of the forest; and crush a handful of leaves to breathe in their scent. It's a moment of respite from all the stimulation around.

CULTURE

Sailor's delight

Nautical art comes to Glyndebourne



Sara Berman had never been to the opera when she was invited to create and exhibit art inspired by this year's Glyndebourne Festival, so seeing her first production was eye-opening. 'I was quite overwhelmed by the music,' she admits. 'And as a former fashion designer, I was fascinated by the costumes.' Perusing the programme, she found herself drawn to Benjamin Britten's *Billy Budd* – the tale of an innocent sailor who becomes the subject of a false accusation – not least because she was recovering from major back surgery. 'Being stuck at home felt a bit like being on a boat, where I had to use any physical and emotional resources available to me,' she says.

Berman started with drawings and paintings featuring ropes – a motif associated with both safety and restriction – before regaining enough strength to resume her usual practice, which involves using costume to step into character. 'There's a strong performative element to my work,' says the artist, whose self-portraits in the title role will go on display as part of her show 'Entanglements' at Glyndebourne. 'I don't think I've ever had so much fun as I did with this – I've fallen in love with opera.' FH

'Billy Budd' is at the Glyndebourne Festival from 28 June to 30 July (glyndebourne.com).

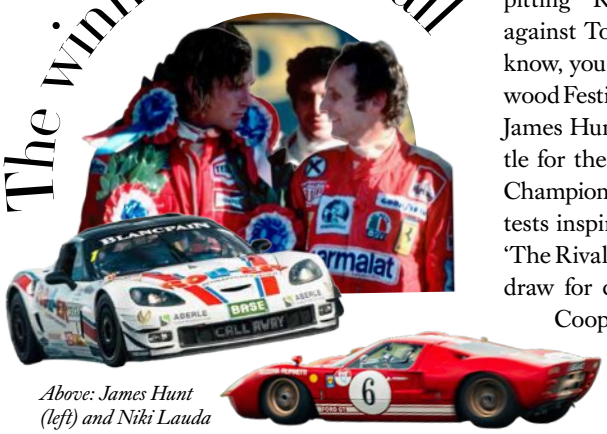


Above: 'Billy Budd 4' (2026) by Sara Berman. Top: her 'Entangled' (2026)

LEISURE

The winner takes it all





Above: James Hunt (left) and Niki Lauda

In the motorsport equivalent of pitting Rupert Campbell-Black against Tony Baddingham (if you know, you know), the 2026 Goodwood Festival of Speed is recreating James Hunt and Niki Lauda's battle for the 1976 Formula 1 World Championship. It's one of the contests inspired by this year's theme 'The Rivals: Epic Racing Duels' – a draw for car enthusiasts and Jilly Cooper fans alike. FH

The Goodwood Festival of Speed runs from 9 to 12 July (goodwood.com). □

DIRECTORY

The best is yet to come...

All the events you can look forward to this great British summer

13 – 25 May
CHARLESTON FESTIVAL
charleston.org.uk

19 – 23 May
RHS CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW
rhs.org.uk

21 May – 31 May
HAY FESTIVAL
The *Wuthering Heights* director Emerald Fennell, the World Wide Web founder Tim Berners-Lee and the writer Bernardine Evaristo are highlights of this year's line-up.
hayfestival.com



21 May – 30 August
GLYNDEBOURNE FESTIVAL
glyndebourne.com

27 May – 25 July
GARSINGTON OPERA
garsingtonopera.org

5 – 7 June
CHESTERTONS POLO IN THE PARK
polointheparklondon.com

5 – 7 June
LONDON GALLERY WEEKEND
londongalleryweekend.art

13 June
TROOPING THE COLOUR – THE KING'S BIRTHDAY PARADE
kbp.army.mod.uk

14 June
CARTIER QUEEN'S CUP FINAL
guardspoloclub.com

16 – 20 June
ROYAL ASCOT
ascot.com

16 June – 23 August
ROYAL ACADEMY SUMMER EXHIBITION
royalacademy.org.uk

23 – 27 June
THE BOODLES TENNIS
theboodles.com

29 June – 12 July
WIMBLEDON TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS
wimbledon.com

30 June – 5 July
HENLEY ROYAL REGATTA
hrr.co.uk

2 – 5 July
FORMULA 1 PIRELLI BRITISH GRAND PRIX
Catch music acts including Richard Ashcroft and David Guetta alongside thrilling racing action at Silverstone.
silverstone.co.uk



8 – 12 July
HENLEY FESTIVAL
henley-festival.co.uk

9 – 11 July
THE DEBENHAMS JULY FESTIVAL AT NEWMARKET
thejockeyclub.co.uk

9 – 12 July
GOODWOOD FESTIVAL OF SPEED
goodwood.com

17 July – 12 September
BBC PROMS
Dating back to 1895, the Proms are still the world's greatest classical-music festival, whether you're in the top seats or the arena.
bbc.co.uk/proms



19 July
COWDRAY GOLD CUP FINAL
cowdraypolo.co.uk

28 July – 1 August
QATAR GOODWOOD FESTIVAL
goodwood.com

30 July – 2 August
WILDERNESS FESTIVAL
wildernessfestival.com

1 – 7 August
COWES WEEK
cowesweek.co.uk

7 – 30 August
EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL
eif.co.uk

7 – 31 August
EDINBURGH FESTIVAL FRINGE
edfringe.com

5 September
BRAEMAR GATHERING
braemargathering.org

PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES, BILLIE CHARITY, ANNABEL MOELLER


HOLLAND COOPER

RADO
SWITZERLAND

MASTER OF MATERIALS





RADO INTEGRAL

YEARS
HIGH-TECH CERAMIC

ETERNAL BEAUTY

In 1986, Rado introduced high-tech ceramic to the world of watch-making – a bold move that would redefine the industry. This pioneering material, known for its exceptional durability and smooth, tactile finish, quickly became a signature of the brand. The Rado Integral is a witness to time – a reminder that some beauty is natural and eternal.

BAZAAR

talking points

EDITED BY
CHARLOTTE BROOK



PHOTOGRAPH: © ESTATE OF PATRICK HERON, COURTESY THE ESTATE OF PATRICK HERON

In the abstract

Patrick Heron's reality-bending paintings beguile in a new exhibition. Plus: immerse yourself in the history of Hampstead Heath Ladies' Pond; the BBC shoots and scores a gripping stage-to-screen adaptation; and English estates open their gates to unmissable modern art

'Christmas Eve' (detail; 1951) by Patrick Heron



Left: 'The Pewter Cannister St Ives' (1951) by Patrick Heron. Bottom left: 'Figure in Harbour Room (Orange and Grey)' (1952–1954) by the artist

ART

TAKING SHAPE

Striking forms abound in Patrick Heron's early work

BY CHARLOTTE BROOK



'My main interest, in my painting, has always been in colour, space and light,' Patrick Heron wrote in 1958. The pivotal years leading up to this statement by the Cornwall-based artist are the subject of a new exhibition at Hazlitt Holland-Hibbert, a gallery specialising in British modern art, whose museum-quality solo shows have previously focused on Bridget Riley, Frank Auerbach and Barbara Hepworth. Now, the spotlight is on Heron's evolving practice in the early Fifties, when, emboldened by those across the English Channel, including Georges Braque and Pierre Bonnard, he navigated his own route from figurative to abstract art. Some works have never been displayed publicly; others are familiar. A highlight has to be 1951's monumentally sized – if unseasonal – *Christmas Eve*, which depicts festive scenes through a warped perspective, stitched together with free-form squares, stripes and circles in unexpectedly summery hues. *'Patrick Heron: Early Works' is at Hazlitt Holland-Hibbert (hh-h.com) until 10 July.* □



BOOKS

GRAND REVEAL

As the latest season of *Bridgerton* demonstrated, there is nothing as alluring as a masked ball. In her splendidly illustrated new history, Meghan Kobza chronicles the flirtations, frivolity and fantastical costumes that made such exclusive gatherings Georgian London's hottest ticket. Featuring characters such as Teresa Cornelys – christened the 'Empress of Pleasure' for her lavish and libertine soirées – and her coterie of outrageous guests, it's a compelling glimpse into a colourful period of history.

'The Masquerade' by Meghan Kobza (£25, Yale University Press) is out now.



'GRAND REVEAL' BY DINA NAGAPETYANTS. PHOTOGRAPHS: © ESTATE OF PATRICK HERON. COURTESY OF THE ESTATE OF PATRICK HERON, HAZLITT HOLLAND-HIBBERT, COURTESY OF YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS, ROB YOUNGSON/NETFLIX © 2026



FICTION

BATTLE CRY

Women shunned by society are given a voice in this story

BY ERICA WAGNER

***UPRISING*, TAHMIMA ANAM'S FIFTH NOVEL**, is extraordinary. At around 200 pages, it has the stripped-down power of a folk tale while remaining rooted in the real world. It tells a devastating story – of women trapped in a life of sexual servitude – that is also about independence and empowerment.

'This is a book I was afraid to write,' Anam says. 'At first, I thought the subject was too dark to go beyond a short story you'd read in 20 minutes.' Her work is always challenging and ambitious: her first novel, *A Golden Age*, which was shortlisted for a Costa Prize, is set in the early 1970s during the Bangladesh War of Independence; its sequel *The Good Muslim* (2011) carries the narrative forward and continues to blend a family's lives with the complex politics of their time. *The Startup Wife* (2021) displayed her range, as a witty satire on the absurdity of the Californian tech scene.

Now, the setting is an island, never named, where women who have been discarded by society earn their living with their bodies. There is perhaps an echo of *The Handmaid's Tale*; their lives are controlled by Amma, the madam, a kind of Aunt Lydia. Women oppress women – but the brutal forces of the world shaped by men act upon them all and limit their choices. You understand why Anam was concerned about what it would mean – for her, for her readers – to spend an extended period here. 'But I had the idea of making the novel about an uprising, and not the situation that the women were in: I realised I could talk about how they were going to get out of it. And then I thought, "Wow, this is the book that I have to write."'

A sense of urgent pressure is palpable on its pages. Every character in the book is a heroine, as we learn what misfortunes brought them to this place and what they must overcome every day of their lives, but Kusum, who leads the insurgence among the women, is a brilliant centrepiece. 'She is one person from the outside world who is there to remind everyone that there is an existence beyond this island, and that although these women have accepted their situation, change is possible.'

It wouldn't do to give too much away, because this is a page-turner as well as a perfectly crafted work of art. It is told in a chorus, the collective voice of the children of the island, who see that liberation comes from human action: 'We learned… that our salvation had come in an entirely earthly form, one of flesh, bone and song.'

Uprising has its roots in a real place. Banishanta is an island in southwestern Bangladesh, where prostitution is legalised. Anam is careful to say that, although she has visited the island, she only went after she completed her book. 'I wanted it to be fiction. I wanted to be able to say, honestly, "This is a story that I made up,"' she explains. On her visit, she befriended some of the women there, but what she has written is in no way reportage. 'For the purposes of the novel, having a place that you cannot leave is very powerful as an idea. On the real island, the entrapment is more societal than physical,' she says.

The tale is a hymn to collective action that also acknowledges despair. Anam wanted to show, she says, 'the possibilities of women's solidarity, while also acknowledging the overarching power of the system that we all live under and are oppressed by'. What would you do to be free, the novel asks – and the question lingers long after the final page is turned.

'Uprising' by Tahmima Anam (£16.99, Canongate) is published on 21 May. □

FILM

RUN THE WORLD (GIRLS)

Witness an idiotic, innuendo-loving advertising exec portrayed by Sacha Baron Cohen receive a rude awakening as he finds himself in a parallel universe governed by women, where Rosamund Pike and her fellow female comrades operate with all the traits traditionally ascribed to the alpha male. With a sparkling supporting cast including Richard E Grant, Fiona Shaw, Emily Mortimer and Charles Dance, Netflix's *Ladies First* (out on 22 May) makes for a pacy, political and provocative rom-com. CB



Right: Sacha Baron Cohen and Rosamund Pike in 'Ladies First'

BOOKS

DEEP DIVE

Nell Frizzell reflects on 100 years of the Hampstead Heath Ladies' Pond



IN A QUIET CORNER OF HAMPSTEAD HEATH, below the slopes of horse-chestnut-trees and ivy-covered logs, lies a world-famous secret swimming lake. The Kenwood Ladies' Pond has been open to female swimmers since 1926 and, in the past 100 years, has played host to thousands of remarkable women, naked ping-pong matches, flittering kingfishers, literary idols, film stars, picnics and ducks. As a writer, a former Ladies' Pond lifeguard and year-round swimmer for more than two decades, it has been my great fortune to chart the life of this idyll in a new book. Beginning with the ice-breaking antics of the 1920s, we traverse wartime drama, the 1960s sexual revolution and the arrival of bikinis, followed by second-wave feminism and celebrity sightings, continuing up to today's record-breaking numbers and courtroom battles.

The land on which the Ladies' Pond sits was given to the public by the Guinness family under the Iveagh Bequest in 1925, to be enjoyed in perpetuity. In the shadow of World War I and the tumult of the General Strike, this silty, spring-fed scene soon became a regular swimming spot for a group of hardy women, immortalised with their bobs and stout shoes, gaily taking to the water in all seasons, in a 1931 documentary called *Winter Nymphs*. A few decades on, refugees from Hitler's Germany gathered on the Upper Meadow to share cake and gossip, while actresses including Katherine Hepburn stood shoulder to shoulder with young girls in the queue for the now-dismantled diving boards. The past few decades have seen the Turner Prize-winning artist Cornelia Parker come to the pond, heavily pregnant, to cool off in the water, and contemporary writers such as Deborah Levy and Amy Liptrot seek respite from the sweat of London life. I even had the strange luck of trying to cajole Emma Thompson into a swimming costume (she had wanted to swim topless) surrounded by moorhens.

The Ladies' Pond has always been more than just a liminal space of lily pads and leisurely backstroke; it is a community and a refuge for women of all ages, shapes and inclinations. What its future holds is hard to say but, for now, we celebrate this first century of sisterhood, sanctuary and swimming.

'Brave and Bold: 100 years of the Ladies' Pond on Hampstead Heath (in all weathers)' by Nell Frizzell with the Kenwood Ladies' Pond Association (£16.99, Mudlark) is out now. □



An early-20th-century postcard of the Hampstead bathing ponds. Above: a bather at the ponds in 1930

PHOTOGRAPHS: © LOOK AND LEARN/BRIDGEMAN IMAGES, GETTY IMAGES, BRINKHOFF MOEGENBURG



STRIKE A POSE

Ralph Lauren claimed that he designed dreams rather than clothes, and so he sent all looks – whether the 1996 classic 'Rodeo Drive' collection or his many variations on denim – down the runway with whimsy and outdoorsy verve. Suede, Claudia Schiffer and nearly 60 years' worth of his all-American outfits are celebrated in a fabulous new book, *Ralph Lauren: Catwalk* by Bridget Foley (£65, Thames & Hudson), out now.





'War Horse' on stage

THEATRE

FREE REIN

The author Michael Morpurgo discusses the return of his novel *War Horse* to the stage

BY CHARLOTTE BROOK

'I FIND IT QUITE ANNOYING THAT THE PLAY wasn't done before the book,' says Michael Morpurgo about the National Theatre's greatest success, the stage adaptation of his novel *War Horse*. The production, which has been seen by more than eight million people, returns to its home this month. 'Had I seen the play first, the book would have been better.'

The author's wry description of his 1982 hardback's arrival as 'a publishing non-event' is fairly correct – it had a lukewarm reception and sub-mediocre sales. I ask how he felt when that year's Whitbread Award chair, Roald Dahl, told him that while *War Horse* was a good story, children 'just aren't interested in history'. 'What's printable? Miffed,' he says. 'And of course, it's nonsense – it just depends on how you tell the story.'

It turned out that it needed to be told on stage. In 2007, the book was adapted by Nick Stafford and originally directed by Marianne Elliot with Tom Morris, who pitched the production, championing it from the off, and has overseen its evolution over the past two decades. On debuting at the NT, the way the Handspring Puppet Company's horses' ears flicked, hocks jolted and necks twisted in response to pain, joy and hard work astonished audiences.

'What I rather like about going to the show is that it continues to affect seven-year-olds and 97-year-olds equally,' Morpurgo says. 'When I wrote the book, there was still a lot of nostalgia around World War I. I grew up when it was "the war to end all wars". It wasn't. The nostalgia has gone. On the news, on our screens – finally, we do know war is about suffering.'

This production's endurance reminds us of war's futility and its cost, as well as – its makers hope – the perennial possibilities of peace, too.

'War Horse' is at the National Theatre (nationaltheatre.org.uk) from 16 May until 30 July.



Joseph Fiennes in the BBC's 'Dear England'

TELEVISION

COMING HOME

As his award-winning play *Dear England* kicks off on the BBC, James Graham talks to *Helena Lee* about how he turns real-life stories into thrilling stage and screen action

JAMES GRAHAM DOES A GOOD line in self-deprecation, as I discover when I speak to him the morning after he receives a gong for 'Services to UK Theatre'. 'It's one of those awards you get at the end of your career,' he says. 'So I don't know if people are trying to tell me something…'

It's unlikely. The playwright, screenwriter and, dare we say it, national treasure has a knack for pinpointing the mood of the realm through events that have shaped it. Tackling controversial real-life subjects that capture both the public's consciousness and what lies beneath, Graham has turned his pen to figures as contentious as Rupert Murdoch and Edward Snowden. Most recently, his subject was Jacob Dunne, who killed James Hodgkinson on a night out with a single punch and went on to form a bond with his victim's parents after serving time in jail. His oeuvre reaches far beyond theatre too: the television drama *Brexit: The Uncivil War* was released soon after the referendum, with Benedict Cumberbatch as Dominic Cummings, while the series *Sherwood* investigates the effect of a double murder on a Nottinghamshire mining community – similar to the one Graham grew up in – that is still smarting from the split loyalties caused by the miners' strikes. All these projects have something in common: by using moments in history and imagining the texture behind them, the scripts hold a mirror up to our behaviour and ask penetrating questions about why we are where we are. 'I'm trying to make sense of our political and cultural institutions, and what they say about us,' says Graham.

This summer, his 2023 smash-hit National Theatre play *Dear England* arrives on television; Graham has adapted his script into the screenplay for a four-part series. Still starring Joseph Fiennes and bringing in Rupert Goold, the original director, it follows Gareth Southgate's journey from interim England men's football manager to a hero of modern masculinity. Over the course of the drama, the character questions what it is to be English with his young team, and reckons with his demons as the player whose missed penalty in the semi-final against Germany knocked the team out of Euro 1996 and (unreasonably) incited the nation's ire.

'The world of football was not normally attuned to or welcoming of that kind of emotional and psychological stuff,' says Graham. 'Gareth identified that England needed a new story, and wanted his team to write one. One of the problems these young men faced was that they were in a story they didn't understand. No one had ever asked them, "What did they think of England? What was their England?" That was what Gareth tried to solve: to not be imprisoned, but be liberated by it.'

The title of the play comes from an open letter that Southgate wrote during the pandemic, addressing England football fans in the wake of racist abuse towards members of his team. It's still particularly resonant today. 'His message to young men is that you can grow and be better by being vulnerable,' explains Graham. 'Strength doesn't mean fighting. It can mean introspection, being part of a team, interrogating and giving expression to your feelings. And this is how he managed to resurrect the England men's squad, going from some of the worst results they had ever had to the biggest continual success they'd enjoyed since 1966. It's extraordinary.'

For Graham, evoking empathy is key. 'It's about finding the universal in this story,' he says. 'Our challenge was, how do you get proper footy fans to trust you and walk into a theatre? How do you get theatre-goers [who don't follow football] to trust this story is still going to resonate and appeal to them? You're always looking for those crossovers.'

As part of his writing process, Graham conducts extensive research and interviews to capture details that might seem superfluous. Very often, what characters say comes verbatim from these transcripts. With *Dear England*, however, the journey was slightly different. 'It was a difficult one – a bit of a dance – although a joyful one,' he says. He managed to spend the day at St George's Park, the home of the England football teams, met an attention-shy Southgate there, and subsequently stayed in touch with him. 'He wanted to help because I think he understood that a cultural response to the same issues he was dealing with in his team was going to have value.' Graham admits that Southgate's story was a gift for a playwright. 'It's Shakespearean. You couldn't get a more perfect redemption arc!'

True to form, Graham's script is very funny. When I ask why comedy is fundamental to his work, he says: 'The tarty answer is because I'm absolutely committed to a good night out. Theatre in particular should not be a chore, or something you feel you should go to because it's good for you, but because it's unapologetically entertaining. There's also something about the absurdity of English life. We're a very old country, we have some strange rituals and I think leaning into that is a way of affectionately going, "Isn't it all a bit ridiculous? Let's have a laugh at it."'

'Dear England' is coming soon to BBC iPlayer and BBC One. □

'MOVING PARTS' BY DANIELLA PARETE CLARKE. PHOTOGRAPHS: DAN FEARNAN, © LEFTBANK PICTURES/BBC; GETTY IMAGES, REBECCA WARD, COURTESY THE ARTIST AND RONCHIN



'Winter'; 'Far Wind' (left), both created by Rebecca Ward in 2025

ART

MOVING PARTS

Immerse yourself in an exhibition of large-scale new works by the Brooklyn-based artist Rebecca Ward, who deconstructs her canvases before hand-sewing them back into geometric designs, painted and dyed in deep blues, greens and purples to create what she calls 'architectural garments'. *From 11 June to 30 September (ronchinigallery.com).*





From top: George Michael on stage in 1988. In 1987. Touring with Wham! in 1985

BOOKS

I'M YOUR MAN

Sathnam Sanghera brings the legendary George Michael to literary life

BY CHARLOTTE BROOK

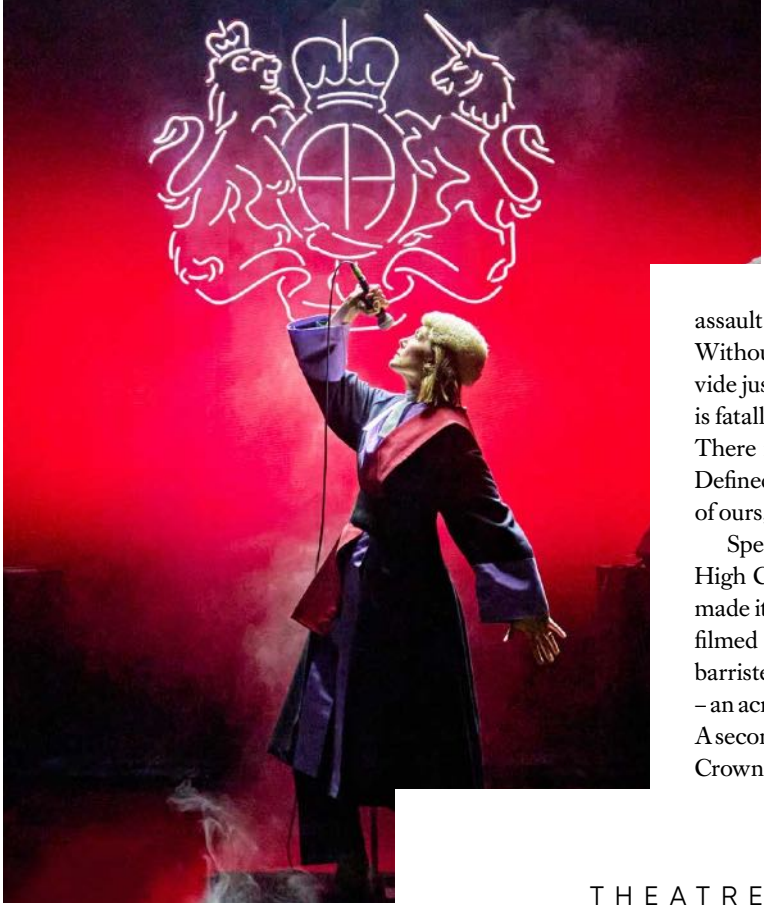
A writer renowned for his ability to set personal experience in its political context, Sathnam Sanghera has turned his talents to a different, unexpected topic: Eighties and Nineties pop. In a new book, he pays a fascinating, fun and poignant tribute to his musical hero George Michael, tracking the star's life in parallel with a changing Britain, covering subjects from immigration to gay rights.

'George led a life that tells us a lot about the turbulent times the country has lived through,' says Sanghera. 'If British imperialists hadn't got involved in India, Suez and Cyprus, neither Andrew Ridgeley's father, who came by boat from Egypt during the Suez crisis, nor George's, a Greek Cypriot immigrant, would have arrived in England. Neither member of Wham! would have been born in Britain, if at all.'

Throughout the book, social history is woven with autobiographical commentary. Though initially reluctant to compare himself to his idol ('George was one of the most famous and desired men in the world!'), the author does acknowledge some parallels. 'I guess we were both teenagers who considered ourselves physically unattractive; we were both introverts; we both fought our families hard to become who we wanted to be – then managed to keep them close; and we also both had an idiosyncratic approach to creativity.'

The greatest lesson Sanghera thinks we can learn from his subject? 'In the end, the coolest people often turn out to have been condemned for being uncool in their time.'

'Tonight the Music Seems So Loud: The Meaning of George Michael' by Sathnam Sanghera (£22, Pan Macmillan) is published on 4 June.



THEATRE

STAGE PRESENCE

The dramatist and former lawyer *Suzie Miller* on what a difference a play makes

THEATRE ISN'T JUST ENTERTAINMENT – it holds an extraordinary power to change people's perspectives. I've been surprised and delighted by the impact my own work *Inter Alia*, which is currently playing in London's West End before heading to Broadway later in the year, has had in this regard.

In the play, Rosamund Pike gives a magnificent portrayal of a top London Crown Court judge whose son may have committed sexual assault. Meeting our audience, my director Justin Martin and I have found ourselves deeply involved in discussions about young men and women, the manosphere and how we might open up communication to effect change. The play traces how modern women are juggling so many elements that remain invisible to others. The joy of talking to women as they leave this play declaring, 'This is my life!' is seeing a portal opening towards visibility, ultimately challenging the structures that do not fit women. Men take me aside, having recognised themselves in the silence from the father on stage. The words I heard so often – 'I am going home to take a walk with my son and talk' – could just indicate the beginning of proper engagement. It's true that the theatre can make a difference to how we receive information.

I say this with optimism because, without any expectation, my previous play – 2022's *Prima Facie* starring Jodie Comer (who incidentally graces the cover of this issue) – was an example of how we can facilitate change through art. The show won both Jodie and me Oliviers and transferred to Broadway, where Jodie was awarded a Tony, despite it being her first full-length play. This was all thrilling for a story about a rape, but what really gave us pause was what it achieved in the real world. *Prima Facie* was a one-person monodrama that followed a young barrister, Tessa, at the top of her game, often representing men accused of sexual assault in court and maintaining a deep belief in the legal system. Without offering too many spoilers, she then needs the law to provide justice for herself in such a situation, yet discovers the system is fatally gendered and not fit for purpose when dealing with rape. There is a line where Tessa says: 'The law is an organic thing./ Defined by us./ Constructed by us,/ in light of our experiences./ All of ours,/ and so,/ there are no excuses any more./ It must change.'

Spectacular things happened after the play opened. A female High Court judge who sits at the Old Bailey saw *Prima Facie* and made it mandatory for the judges of Northern Ireland to watch the filmed production before adjudicating rape cases. Young women barristers who saw the play formed an advocacy group called Tessa – an acronym for 'The Examination of Serious Sexual Assault' laws. A second female judge who drafts directions for juries at the London Crown Courts called me after seeing it, to say she had rewritten the directions for deliberating a sexual-assault or rape case. She used some of the words from the play in her redraft. It has also been used in judicial and police education on how to take a rape or sexual-assault statement in Britain, as well as in Australia, America, Europe and other countries.

In the UK and US, our producer James Bierman at Empire Street Productions partnered with the Schools Consent Project charity, which has now educated tens of thousands of teenagers around consent. *Prima Facie* has been translated into more than 30 languages and is in more than 50 countries. A film adaptation starring Cynthia Erivo as Tessa opens the conversation up to the experience of women of colour and will be released later this year.

Women's stories matter; they have reach. Take Ava Pickett's *1536*, another Olivier nominee for Best New Play, which harks back to generations of women attempting to challenge a patriarchal system. Today, women in positions of power (all bringing with them the experience of being female; of being mothers, daughters, friends) are not only able to see where change can be implemented, but also have the power to broker it themselves.

Is this a cry to work together? Yes, a cry to recognise that our theatre is not falling on deaf ears and to form part of the change we all want to see.

'Inter Alia' is at Wyndham's Theatre until 20 June (nationaltheatre.org.uk). □



Left: Jodie Comer in 'Prima Facie'. Above: Rosamund Pike in 'Inter Alia'

PHOTOGRAPHS: ALAMY; TOBY ADAMSON. COURTESY GOODWOOD ART FOUNDATION, MATTIA AQUILA, HELEN MURRAY, MANUEL HARLAN. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST'S ESTATE/PANGOLIN LONDON. PHOTO: STEVE RUSSELL STUDIOS





EXHIBITIONS

ESTATE OF THE ARTS

A quintet of country manors showcase four creatively daring displays



Clockwise from above left: Waddesdon Manor. 'Back to Venice (Male)' (1988) by Lynn Chadwick. The ancient woodland at Goodwood Art Foundation. 'Beast VII' (1956) by Lynn Chadwick. The Temple of the Four Winds at Castle Howard



From North Yorkshire to the South Downs, the length of England this summer is studded with historic homes hosting contrastingly modern exhibitions. Amid the Baroque splendour of Castle Howard, Es Devlin is staging an installation in dialogue with John Vanbrugh's Temple of the Four Winds (from June; castlehoward.co.uk), while the genteel surrounds of Norfolk's Palladian Houghton Hall welcome Lynn Chadwick's arresting semi-abstract bronzes and previously unseen works spanning 40 years of the sculptor's prolific career (from 2 May; houghtonhall.com). Further south, the otherworldly lightscapes of Bruce Munro – created with his daughter Tink and including a dynamic display set to Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* – cast a magical glow over the grounds of Waddesdon Manor (until 29 November; waddesdon.org.uk). Completing the alfresco showcase is Goodwood's exhibition of the American land artist Nancy Holt (until 1 November; goodwoodartfoundation.org), whose vast concrete structures will take up residence among the estate's 70 acres of ancient woodland. DINA NAGAPETYANTS



The Hemingford Arms in Islington

BOOKS

SIPPING PRETTY

The pub, that inimitable staple of British culture, is in peril, with one closing every day across England and Wales. The artist Lydia Wood has decided to champion these institutions by committing every single public house in London (yes, all 3,500 of them) to paper. In *Locals*, Wood takes us on a tour of 60 boozers, escorting us to riverside inns, historic hostelries and tiny taverns offering karaoke. Along the way, she orders endless half-pints and packets of crisps, and introduces us to Beyoncé, a Mile End joint's resident cat. Consider the book an epic bar crawl – just without the hangover. *'Locals' by Lydia Wood (£20, Hodder & Stoughton) is published on 21 May.* DPC


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BAZAAR
living

EDITED BY
FRANCES HEDGES

Display of affection

How two creative women turned a London house into a stylish testament to their friendship. Plus: perfect parasols; barbecue essentials; and inspiration for elegant summer entertaining

Details in the guest bedroom in Daniela Colaiacovo's London home

PHOTOGRAPH: OSKAR PROCTOR



The study in Daniela Colaiacovo's London home. Opposite, clockwise from top left: the hallway. Christine Van Der Hurd (left) and Calaiacovo. Details in the downstairs bathroom

Double the design

When Daniela Colaiacovo turned to Christine Van Der Hurd for decor advice, an enduring and very stylish friendship bloomed

BY CHARLOTTE BROOK







'IT WAS LOVE – OR FRIENDSHIP, AT ANY RATE – at first sight.' Over espressos sipped on frighteningly white linen sofas, the textile designer (and creator of the sumptuous striped rug underfoot) Christine Van Der Hurd is explaining how she first met Daniela Colaiacovo, in whose West Kensington living-room we are sitting.

The pair crossed paths in the early Nineties when Colaiacovo, the founder of an ethical jewellery brand and an educational mentor at the King's Trust, was looking for a rug for her home in Rome. 'The apartment was quite baroque, so I was after something fresh,' she says. She went to the Vanderhurd boutique in Chelsea (the brand name is a contraction of her surname) and met its owner, who was over from New York visiting her London flagship store. 'There was Daniela, this Italian in a beret and leather jacket,' recalls Van Der Hurd. 'We got talking and the rest is history.'

What started as the relationship between a designer and her client evolved into a bond that has endured more than three decades, forged because of the two women's similar tastes: they share, among other things, an enthusiasm for collecting glassware and contemporary photography. Both wonder if the traditional aesthetic environments in which they grew up prompted a rebellious requirement for colour and modernity. Colaiacovo's Italian family surrounded themselves with 16th-, 17th- and 18th-century art, while Van Der Hurd's parents were antique dealers on Portobello Road, down which she would wander in the Seventies searching for bright, bold jewellery, Fifties print dresses and experimental photographic art: in her words, 'light things'.

Van Der Hurd's elegant imprint is in evidence throughout Colaiacovo's four-floor, four-bedroom Victorian terrace house. At every turn is a rug, bed throw, cushion or headboard whose design the duo conceived together – whether recently, for a specific slot here, or repurposed from one of Colaiacovo's past residences, such as the mauve tufted runner carpet with a multicoloured wavy motif, brought from a former, open-plan flat. Here, it squiggles welcomingly down the long entrance hall; the remaining 'leftover' strip has rendered the little cloakroom fun as well as functional.

Van Der Hurd became godmother to Colaiacavo's daughter, in whose bedroom is a jazzy chest upholstered in patchwork offcuts from the designer's archives. Elsewhere in the house, new additions nod to the changing dynamics in Colaiacovo's life, such as the soft-grey canvas that covers the walls and cupboards of her shared study. 'Don't forget, I live with my partner, so I had to balance,' she says, with a smile. 'If I were alone, I'd have gone crazy with colour.'

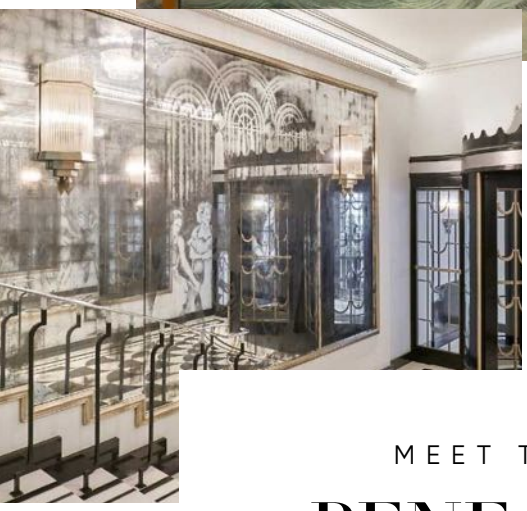
That said, while pale, neutral walls make the most of the natural light and allow the textiles and artworks to sing, the design-minded friends went full-throttle with colour in pockets of the property. They created an aquatic optical illusion in an awkward understair shower room using blue geometric 'Les Croquis' wallpaper, and transformed the downstairs washroom into an enveloping coral-hued sanctuary with the 'Flower Cut Out' pattern.

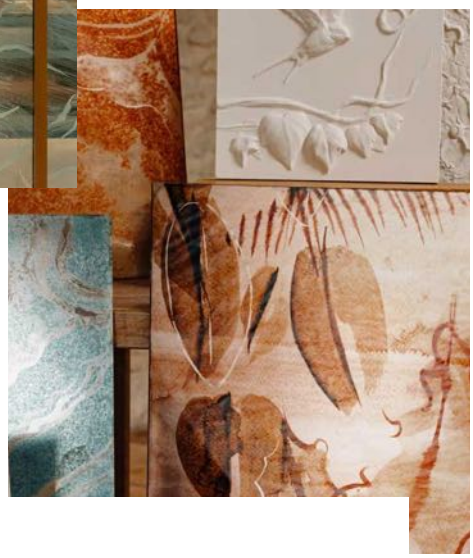
Those powdering their nose there may be distracted by the playful photographic collages of classical female nude sculptures by the artist Alexandra Lethbridge. They are monochromatic, like much of Colaiacovo's collection, which also includes the work of William Klein and Isaac Julien. The master bedroom is home to a diabolo-shaped stool made in collaboration with the curator Jermaine Gallacher, along with a Gio Ponti sideboard, framed Erté illustrations and a buttercup-yellow quilted counterpane and headboard made using Van Der Hurd's own fabrics.

As we leave, the two women cross-examine colourways, debate emerging photographers and pick up cushions, musing on whether one might work better on a different armchair. 'Bits and pieces are always coming and going here,' Colaiacovo says, assessing a gallery-wall layout. 'And when I want to make a change, Christine is always the first person I call to discuss it.' □

PHOTOGRAPHS: OSKAR PROCTOR







MEET THE MAKERS

BENEATH THE SURFACE

The duo behind Peascod create intricate art pieces from their West Country studio

BY FRANCES HEDGES

INSIDE A CONVERTED VICTORIAN BREWERY in Somerset's Shepton Mallet, Emma and Tobias Peascod are quietly working away on a series of masterpieces.

The creative pair, who met as art-school students in London and married in 2012, pursued their crafts individually for years. Tobias, a sculptor, specialises in bas-relief and gained renown after a 2012 commission to create the panels for Alexander McQueen stores worldwide. Emma is a glass artist with expertise in verre églomisé – applying gold or silver to the reverse of a mirrored surface and etching or painting it to create a luminous effect. They formed a shared studio, Peascod, after finding their complementary skills were in demand on the same projects. 'We both have a delicate approach,' says Tobias, 'and we love experimenting with processes and materials.'

After a stint in Stoke Newington, they moved to an area of the West Country that is a hub for artists. 'It's impossible not to be inspired by our surroundings,' Tobias says. 'We can see the Somerset Levels and Glastonbury Tor from the window. We often go out and take photographs or notes – something as simple as a colour or texture will make it into our designs.'



The couple's unique imprint can be found in private homes, superyachts and venues ranging from Claridge's Ballroom, for which they created huge glass panels inspired by Cecil Beaton's society photos, to Raffles London at the OWO, whose Guerlain spa is home to their bespoke glazing. They recently unveiled an abstract composition in the Royal Suite at the new Mandarin Oriental hotel in Vienna, which Emma says is 'art deco in style – classical and restrained, despite the gilding'.

Both are constantly imagining new possibilities: Tobias nurtures ambitions to make 'a mediaeval-style vaulted ceiling', while Emma, who is half-Japanese, wants to explore using washi paper in installations. Although her travels to Japan are inspiring, the pair remain in Somerset for now because, as she puts it, 'it's literally the best place in the world'.

peascod.studio □



FLOWERS ADD FLOURISH

A joyful new volume from the garden designer Sean A Pritchard, *Atmosfloric* (£30, Mitchell Beazley) celebrates the art of bringing colour into the home and garden with flowers. It draws on examples from inspirational destinations such as Charleston Farmhouse and Kettle's Yard.



PHOTOGRAPHS: MARTIN SLIVKA, SEAN PRITCHARD, GETTY IMAGES, MILO BROWN





DECORATING

UNDERCOVER OPERATION

Give your garden a boutique-festival makeover – or prepare to take chic shelter from the rain

This summer, Glastonbury devotees will be mourning the absence of the festival, which is in its 'fallow year' to allow the pastures of Worthy Farm to recover. For those keen to host merrymakers in their own gardens instead – preferably without the equivalent lawn damage – there are several good sources of festive paraphernalia.

Raj Tent Club is the premier rental service for elegant canopied structures – its co-founder Nicky Marks recommends the 2.8m pergola for a modest garden party, or suggests sizing up and hiring daybeds for the full glamping experience. 'Throw in floor cushions, fairy lights and jam-jar votives for atmosphere,' she adds.

If you'd rather invest in something you can keep beyond the occasion, Parasol-UK offers a lovely selection of rain-proof pop-up gazebos that are easily put up and dismantled. Consider the Jaipur-inspired Punya print, named after a Sanskrit term for the manifestation of good karma. Look out for the brand's collaboration with Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler at this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

The beauty of a tent is that you don't have to invest in specialised outdoor furniture: bring rugs, throws and pouffes from your living-room to create a cosy ambience. Scent also plays a part in conjuring the festival experience. Candles are a good start, but for that evocative campfire smell, Nkuku's Indian kadai bowls double as a warming firepit and working grill. Who needs Glasto anyway? FH

rajtentclub.com. parasol-uk.com. nkuku.com □





Clockwise from top left: the Etage sunshade by Raj Tent Club. The Astell tent by Parasol-UK. A kadai bowl and surround by Nkuku. Parasol-UK's Horkesley parasol

FOOD & DRINK

FIRE IT UP!

Raise your grill game with these barbecue buys



THE CONDIMENT

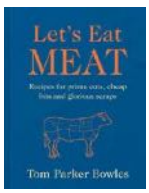
Sweet Hickory Smoke Rub

This blend of smoked paprika, chilli and sugar is just the right mix of sweet and smoky. *£5.95 (fortnumandmason.com).*

THE COOKBOOK

'Let's Eat Meat' by Tom Parker Bowles

Elevate your BBQ with grilled spiced quail and Thai chicken satay. *Out 21 May (£26, Pavilion).*





THE EQUIPMENT

Lorenzi Milano barbecue utensils

This set of six stainless-steel tools in a calf-leather case is the ultimate gift for culinary masters. *£5,710 (abask.com).*

Side plate, £96, Astier de Villatte

Glasses, £260 for two, La DoubleJ

Cutlery, £375 for a 24-piece set, Bitossi

Jug, £125, Klimchi

Place mat, £58, Coro Cora at Liberty

Table, from a selection, Louis Vuitton

Glasses, £160 for two, Cabana

Napkins, £80 for four, Once Milano at Mytheresa

INTERIORS

FEAST DAYS

Tasteful homeware for stylish summer hosting

COMPILED BY GRACE CLARKE

Bowl, £225, Dolce & Gabbana

Blanket, £1,975, Loro Piana

Cushion cover, £129, Yves Delorme

Candles, £9.99 for six, H&M

Side table, £302, Serax

Armchair, from a selection, Fendi Casa

Sunflower Jug print, £60, Katie Roberts



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Harper's BAZAAR

JUNE 2026

This month, our cover star Jodie Comer reflects on her meteoric career, the chef Ruth Rogers unveils a compendium of culinary stories, and the artist Lubaina Himid prepares to represent Britain at the Venice Biennale. Elsewhere, we examine why the nation's female comedians are stealing the scene, and the designer Matthieu Blazy reveals what Chanel means to him. Plus, in fashion, there's sophisticated urban chic by the Thames

Photograph by *MARCUS OHLSSON*





Jodie Comer wears embellished jumper, £295; sequined top, £395; vinyl skirt, from a selection, all SIMONE ROCHA. Rose gold and diamond earrings, from a selection, BOODLES

Golden hour

Whether she's turning heads in Hollywood blockbusters or captivating audiences on stage, Jodie Comer has the Midas touch, portraying complex characters with uncommon emotional depth. Coming off a succession of acclaimed projects – including her *tour de force* performance in the legal drama *Prima Facie* – she tells *Gavanndra Hodge* why she's ready for a reset

Photographs by *MARCUS OHLSSON*
Styled by *CHARLIE HARRINGTON*

There is no great fanfare when Jodie Comer enters the unfussy local pub that she has chosen for our meeting. I don't even notice her arriving, ordering a herbal tea, finding a seat in the corner of the bar. And yet less than two weeks ago she was on stage for her triumphant final performance as Tessa Ensler in the one-woman phenomenon *Prima Facie*, a role for which she has won pretty much all the theatre awards going. She is also the actress who erupted onto our screens as the assassin Villanelle in *Killing Eve* (getting all the awards for that too), and who always seems to steal the show, even when she is not meant to. She was hard to miss in films including *The Last Duel* alongside Matt Damon and Adam Driver, *Free Guy* with Ryan Reynolds, big franchises such as *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker* and Danny Boyle's *28 Years Later* with Aaron Taylor-Johnson.

The dynamism of her presence in action demands attention, but in real life she is more low-key. 'I like this place because it's not too busy, and look: we can sit by the window, in the sunshine,' she says when I do finally find her. The actress, casual in jeans, a baggy white jumper and delicate gold jewellery, is an attentive conversationalist. We are in Hampstead, near where she lives with her dog, and Comer is happy to be home after the nine-week regional tour of *Prima Facie*. Written by Suzie Miller, a former lawyer, the play is about a defence barrister who finds herself on the other side of the legal system when she experiences sexual assault. It was initially staged in Miller's native Australia, but its impact and success in Britain can in large part be put down to Comer's coruscating performances. She debuted in London in 2022, before taking the play to Broadway in 2023, then around the UK, finishing in March this year in her home city of Liverpool. 'There was something really cathartic and serendipitous about me coming home – about Tess coming home.'

When she first starred in the play, Comer was 29 and had never done theatre before: 'I was very anxious, very aware that people were thinking, "Is she going to be able to do this?"' Four years later, there is no question of her ability to master the material, but she has changed in other ways too. 'I have more confidence, I know myself more,' she says. 'I feel that when you're playing a character with certain attributes, you are forced to touch upon, discover and illuminate those parts of yourself. They might be parts you've neglected, or that don't feel very present in your day-to-day. That assuredness and confidence that Tess has – I found it easier to connect with those attributes.'

The role also requires Comer to connect with confusion, despair, violation and disbelief, but this time she had a drama-therapist, Wabriya King, who was on hand to support her to manage any overwhelming emotions with psychotherapy and movement. After a show, Comer would meditate, use breathwork and stretch. 'You hold a lot of tension playing that kind of material, so it's about letting it out of your body and bringing back a sense of safety,' she says. 'Riya was amazing at reminding me to dedicate time to myself.'

It seems inevitable, considering the intensity with which Comer engages with her parts, that it would have some impact on her real life. Her next role will be in *The Death of Robin Hood* opposite Hugh Jackman. Written and directed by Michael Sarnoski, the mind behind *Pig* and *A Quiet Place: Day One*, the film reimagines our merry green-clad hero as a merciless brigand whose years of violence have exacted their own heavy toll. Close to death, he finds himself at a holy island, under the care of Bridget, who is played by Comer with a stillness and grace that is a counterbalance to Jackman's grisly and ageing outlaw. They are killer and healer, darkness and light. 'I love the character, I love what she stands for,' she says. 'I related to her. Holistic medicine, nature: those are things that I've become interested in. For my preparation, I read books about women and healthcare in that historical period. But I also read *Why Women Grow* [by Alice Vincent], which inspired me. Like Bridget, I felt as if I was naturally moving into a place of looking after myself from within, and it's about how nature provides so much of that for us. How disconnected we've become from that, in the West.'

Comer was so inspired that she signed up for a six-month herbalism course. 'As much as I do research for a character, I don't think I've really studied anything since I left school. That was quite surprising to me. I was like, "Gosh, Jodie, you have to stay curious."' She laughs when I ask if she is intending to become a part-time dispensing herbalist. 'It's more for myself, in my own house. I really enjoy things like making my own teas.'

She is, she says, 'a homebody. I love cooking. I'd much rather cook a meal than go out'. When she has to travel for work, like the two months she spent in Belfast filming *Robin Hood*, she always has a rental with a kitchen. 'It's a big thing for me. I'll be travelling up in my car with all these jars of ingredients rattling around, my yoga mat, my blankets.' She likes crystals, and other little keepsakes that she picks up. 'I am a bit of a magpie,' she says. But, more than anything, she yearns for a garden. 'My dream, and I'm manifesting this, is to have a space where I can just be in my underwear, gardening.'

It is possible that the healing gene – if not the acting one – was passed down from her parents. Comer's father Jimmy is a physio and massage therapist who works for Everton Football Club. 'I don't know whether my dad would think of himself like



Silk top, from a selection, CELINE. White gold and diamond earrings, from a selection, DAVID MORRIS

MARCUS OHLSSON





Embroidered silk cardigan, from selection; silk T-shirt, £2,170; jeans, £2,000, all CHANEL. Platinum and diamond ring, £14,500; matching bracelet; platinum, rose gold and diamond earrings, both from a selection, all BOODLES

MARCUS OHLSSON





MARCUS OHLSSON





Wool jacket, £1,990; silk and lace top, £1,590; jeans, £1,660, all CHLOÉ



Silk top; cotton trousers, both from a selection, CELINE. White gold and diamond earrings, from a selection, DAVID MORRIS

MARCUS OHLSSON

'MY EMOTIONS WERE VERY ACCESSIBLE TO ME AT SUCH A YOUNG AGE. ALL THIS STUFF WAS INSIDE ME AND I DIDN'T QUITE KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH IT'

that, but he is a healer in many ways,' she says. Meanwhile, her mother Donna works for Merseyrail. Comer was raised in a suburb of Liverpool; as a child, she was always doing impressions, being the entertainer. 'My mum and dad didn't come from this world but saw how much I loved it and so invested in it, driving me to auditions, chaperoning me.' She started going to a local drama school at the age of 11, and was soon getting small roles in shows such as *Holby City* and *Waterloo Road*. 'I wasn't very studious, but when I was out on a job, that was when I came alive.' She decided to bypass drama school and started working after her A-levels, getting her first major role aged 18 in Channel 4's *My Mad Fat Diary*. 'Part of me has always felt like a bit of a fraud for that. I had an insecurity about not being classically trained,' she says. 'When people make me speak about [the canonical] works, I think I'm not familiar with that, or I don't enjoy that, and it feels taboo to say so.' I ask if she's read any Shakespeare: 'I am trying!'

What she did always have, though, was an ability to bring deep emotional texture to the roles she played, combined with a desire to be part of projects that have wider social impact. When she was 12, participating in a local talent show, she performed a monologue from the point of view of a girl whose father had died in the Hillsborough disaster – although she was so overwhelmed by the material that she started to cry when introducing it. 'My emotions were very accessible to me at such a young age. I remember my drama teacher saying, "What you have is amazing, but you can't be crying before you've even started." All this stuff was inside me and I didn't quite know what to do with it.'

Comer might be better able to control her emotions these days, but she still seeks out stirring parts that affect her. 'That type of material invigorates me,' she says. 'The work in which I am having to explore an emotion very deeply, or inhabit an experience so far from my own, or leave an experience feeling spent, like I've explored something I couldn't really explain, is what propels me.'

One of her early champions was Stephen Graham, the actor and co-creator of the series *Adolescence*. Comer and Graham worked together on the drama *Help*, written by Jack Thorne, in which Comer's powerful portrayal of a nursing-home care assistant during the Covid pandemic broke the fourth wall and won her a Bafta. Likewise, *Prima Facie* dealt with live issues, but of systemic misogyny in the legal system, engaging with the fact that one woman in three will be a victim of sexual assault. The play precipitated tangible social change, resulting in the delivery of school workshops on consent and the creation of forums where survivors can share their stories. 'I've seen the healing, the opportunity it has provided people to face themselves and their experiences, to communicate with the ones they love,' says Comer. 'It has inspired people to pursue law, or have a conversation with a relative about something they'd never spoken about before. People are less alone than they thought they were. That provides a huge amount of hope for me, and affirms that doing work like this is powerful and important.'

That does not mean that everything Comer does has to be intensely serious. *Killing Eve* was fun, in a psychotic vaudeville way. Plus, she says: 'Villanelle blessed me. Because she was so multi-faceted, people couldn't put me in a box. That offered me a lot of freedom.' Comer has just finished filming *Stuffed*, a musical in which she plays a taxidermist who wants to stuff a human being. It's one of the wackiest concepts for a film I have ever heard. She laughs. 'I know. I got the script just after *Robin*. I'd said no to a couple of things that didn't feel right, and it was just a breath of fresh air – original material, completely new score.' She has long wanted to do a musical, though her singing talent, which you can hear when she covers Mariah Carey's 'Fantasy' in *Free Guy*, is little known thus far. As a child she loved *Cats*, *Blood Brothers* and *Guys and Dolls*, and in her teens thought she might make a career in musical theatre. But *Stuffed* is no *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. 'She finds a man on the dark web who volunteers. And it's about what transpires when they meet each other and this relationship forms. It's just so unbelievably surprising, so full of tenderness.'

Comer will be spending the summer continuing her herbalism course, taking a break. 'It's become more important to me when I'm not working to get back into my own routines, to see friends and family. Experiencing the world in a way that probably sounds very mundane. To be at home, read a book, go to the gym, walk the dog, maybe go to see some music. Re-grounding, committing to those things that fall by the wayside when I am in the depths of something.'

She has recently loved seeing Rebecca Lucy Taylor in *Teeth 'n' Smiles*, and the Tracey Emin exhibition at Tate Modern. 'I'm drawn to art that is exposing, personal and courageous.' She was an executive producer on *Help*, participating in the creating of the script, but has not done any other writing, although it is something that she is interested in pursuing. 'I'm a big fan of the essayist Melissa Febos. I've just devoured her books *Girlhood* and *The Dry Season* because there is so much she speaks about that I feel like I connect to. I like that kind of introspection.'

Comer is 33, and believes she is entering a new phase. 'I've never really had milestones like, "I want to be here by this time; this is where I see my life." Maybe that's detrimental sometimes, because I can be a bit loosey-goosey,' she says. But after the frenetic pace of the past decade, during which she has done so much work, investing herself so intensely in each part, her focus is shifting from the professional to the personal. 'Everything now is about being on a quest to know who I am, to be able to take care of myself and listen to myself and honour myself. I think we are always seeking exterior opinion, validation and advice, but a lot of the time, we know innately what we need, what we desire, so it is a case of just reconnecting with that. I love my job and I'm very grateful for it, but it's important to give just as much energy to myself.'

'The Death of Robin Hood' is out on 4 September. □





Shearling coat, £7,850; jersey bodysuit (just seen), £785; leather heels, £840, all GUCCI. White gold and diamond earrings, from a selection, DE BEERS. Tights, £23, FALKE

MARCUS OHLSSON





Knit dress; matching polo tops (around shoulders and waist); tweed slingbacks, all from a selection, ERDEM. Platinum and diamond earrings, from a selection, BOODLES. Hair by Sam McKnight at Premier, assisted by Ryan Steedman, using Hair by Sam McKnight. Make-up by Wendy Rowe at Artlist. Manicure by Michelle Humphrey at LMC Worldwide, using Essie. Stylist's assistants: Hadya Tuofiq and Nina Gahrén Williamson. Shot at Hall Barn Estate (hallbarnestate.co.uk)

MARCUS OHLSSON



Trench-coat; wool jumper with scarf attached, £1,500, both GIORGIO ARMANI. Gold earrings, from a selection, GEORG JENSEN. Sunglasses, £300, STELLA McCARTNEY. Faux-fur bag, £270, EUDON CHOI

Photographs by
ANYA HOLDSTOCK
Styled by
SOPHIE VAN DER WELLE



WOMAN ABOUT TOWN

This spring's landmark looks are made for floating through city streets and standing out from the crowd. Become a sight to behold in timeless trench-coats, delicate lace, sculptural silhouettes and feather-light silk

Lamb-skin dress; calf-skin boots, both from a selection; silk twill bandana, £250, all HERMÈS



Lamb-skin trench-coat, from a selection, RALPH LAUREN COLLECTION. Silver-plated mother-of-pearl earrings, £195, REJINA PYO



Silk twill dress, from a selection, DIOR



Belted trousers, from a selection, SPORTMAX. Leather bag, £735, NEOUS. Velvet flats, £465, LE MONDE BÉRYL



Silk faille blazer,
£2,560; matching leggings,
£1,330; leather bag,
£2,430, all GUCCI



Poplin dress; matching shirt (worn underneath); piquet jumper; silk socks; leather trainers, all from a selection, MIU MIU



Patent leather jacket, £3,300, LOUIS VUITTON. Earrings, stylist's own





Sequin top; cotton skirt, both from a selection, VALENTINO. Gold earrings, from a selection, GEORG JENSEN. Glass necklace; leather and suede bag, both from a selection; Lycra tights, £460; leather heels, £910, all VALENTINO GARAVANI



Leather jacket, £2,990; taffeta top, £2,590; matching skirt, £2,490; gold and silver necklace, £590; suede calf-skin bag, £2,120, all CHLOÉ



Silk and viscose dress, £4,665; lamb-skin heels, £1,165, both CHANEL. Sunglasses, stylist's own



Poplin dress, from
a selection, CELINE.
Gold earrings, from a
selection, GEORG JENSEN



Shearling coat; leather boots, both from a selection. BOTTEGA VENETA. Earrings, stylist's own



Leather top, about £2,175; matching skirt, about £4,780; matching belt, about £565, all GIVENCHY



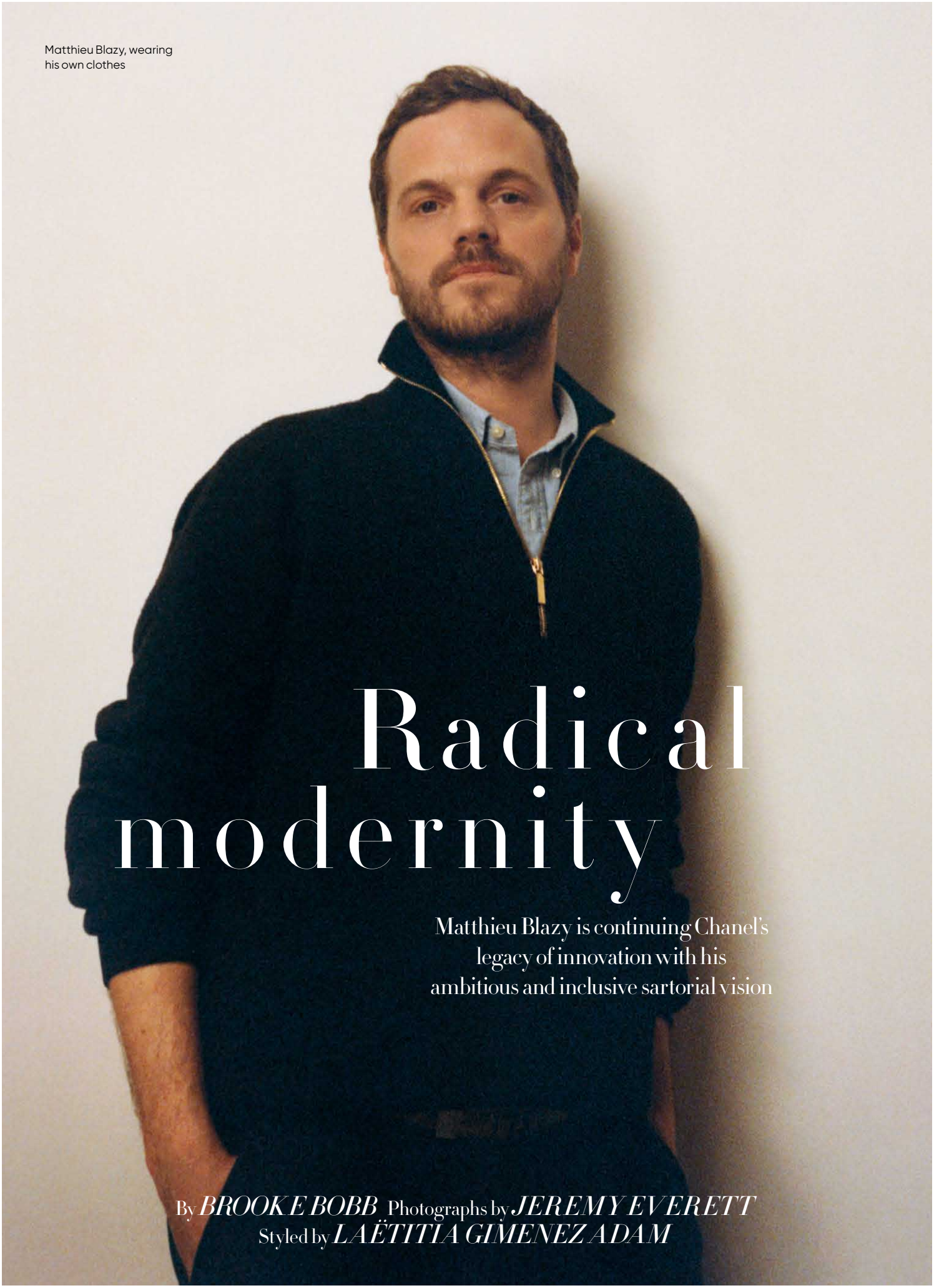
Lace dress, £770, BLUMARINE. Cotton tights, £30, SWEDISH STOCKINGS. Leather sandals, £585, NEOUS



Cashmere top, £1,610;
fringe skirt, £8,700; leather
bag, £2,900, all PRADA



Crystal-embellished dress, £4,200, STELLA McCARTNEY. Tights, stylist's own. Hair by Maki Tanaka. Make-up by Athena Paginton. Manicure by Emma Welsh at SB Collective. Stylist's assistant: Olivia Sandford-Wilson. Model: Nora Svenson at Premier Model Management



Matthieu Blazy, wearing his own clothes

Radical modernity

Matthieu Blazy is continuing Chanel's legacy of innovation with his ambitious and inclusive sartorial vision

By *BROOKE BOBB* Photographs by *JEREMY EVERETT*
Styled by *LAËTITIA GIMENEZ ADAM*

Who is Chanel for?

The lady who lunches in a tweed jacket? The K-pop idol who loves a double-C logo? The yummy mummy with her quilted flap bag? Certainly, it's for the few who can afford it and for those who want to telegraph an association with the brand that epitomises the highest echelon of chic. But Matthieu Blazy, Chanel's artistic director, sees things more expansively. 'I thought that the Chanel aesthetic was somehow overshadowing the idea of women,' Blazy says. 'It was one woman, but I see many, many women.'

He is telling me this from a corner of Chanel's couture salon at 31 Rue Cambon, the one with the famous mirrored staircase where Gabrielle 'Coco' Chanel used to stage her fashion shows and watch them, secretly, from the top steps. It's an unseasonably warm but typically grey February day in Paris, a few weeks before the autumn/winter 2026 Chanel show. In anticipation of Blazy's arrival, a reverential silence blankets the room. 'He will be down in five-and-a-half minutes,' a publicist says. On the wall behind me hangs a large black and white portrait of Chanel herself, her face turned to the side. She gazes down at me discerningly, even a little intimidatingly. I feel acutely aware that I am in the spiritual presence of one of fashion's most important legacies, waiting for the person now tasked with carrying it forward.

When Blazy bounds down the stairs, the austere hush dissipates. He's dressed casually, in a quarter-zip junper and navy trousers. 'It's almost like a uniform,' he says. We're seated across from each other in cushy ivory armchairs, cordoned off by pastel-coloured screens. 'The atelier has the white coats. I wear this one.'

Despite his rarefied surroundings, the 41-year-old designer, now four collections into his tenure at Chanel, is disarmingly lacking in pretension. I ask Blazy if he ever feels Gabrielle Chanel's presence when he's in this room. 'I have to say that, the first time I stepped in here, I had that feeling.' He lowers his voice. 'I was a bit like, "Fuuuck."'

After Chanel revolutionised fashion in the 1920s with her long, loose silhouettes, drop-waist dresses and boxy suits that freed women from the corset, Karl Lagerfeld came in 1983 and turned Chanel into a pop-culture juggernaut. He created an unabashedly glamorous, double-C-bedecked, tweed-miniskirted world for Chanel. The catwalk shows at the Grand Palais were spectacles, the front rows lined with celebrities, the sets out of this world: a giant globe one season, a towering iceberg another, or a rocket ship that actually lifted off. While it's true that Blazy's catwalk debut last October included a set studded with giant planets, Chanel has come back down to Earth under his watch. Or, in the case of his December Métiers d'art show, gone subterranean, as Blazy set the show in an abandoned New York City subway station and cast models as New York archetypes, with all of them hustling to catch a train. The glamour is still there, but the wattage is dialled down – and everyone is invited in.

The Métiers d'art collection, inaugurated by Lagerfeld in 2002, showcases the work of Chanel's artisan maisons, which specialise in heritage crafts such as embroidery and embellishment. Lagerfeld would show these collections in far-flung and exotic locales including Salzburg, Monte Carlo and Shanghai. That Blazy chose the New York City subway, a place where people of all backgrounds, styles, ideas and ambitions collide, as the setting to showcase Chanel's métiers was the clearest articulation of his vision to date. Take, for instance, the opening look: a quarter-zip knit (the same one he's currently wearing) and jeans, modelled by the NYU engineering student turned model Bhavitha Mandava. Or the double-wool crepe skirt suit embroidered with tiny twisted bits of raffia and handblown-glass beads designed to look like popcorn stuck to the fabric, as if you were just at the cinema and forgot to dust yourself off. Or another pair of jeans, this time made with silk charmeuse. The magic was about the dissonance: people in clothes that took hundreds of hours to create hoofing it down a New York City subway platform, just like any other New Yorker trying to make it to the next thing on time.

These are clothes that ignite desire because they feel accessible, even if they are made with the finest techniques and fabrications. There's the blazer bluntly cut at the waist and an embroidered jacket hanging over a suede flap bag, looking like it has gone through the wringer of life. A flannel shirt is actually made of bouclé. In an era where attention is king, Blazy is capturing it with clothes – and a feeling – that we can recognise ourselves in.

'There is something very alive in his clothes,' says Jessie Buckley, who accepted her Best Actress Oscar in a red-and-pink Chanel gown. At the Métiers show in New York, Buckley says she 'felt emboldened and tall and alert and in love with all of the characters of women. There was a pulse to it'. Her fellow Oscar-nominee Teyana Taylor echoes the sentiment: 'Matt understands that the clothes need to complement the person wearing them, and you see that in the way people wear his collections.'

Blazy was inspired by the extraordinary clash of people you see on the subway. (He lived in New York a decade ago, while working for Raf Simons at Calvin Klein.) He had also unearthed a story about Chanel's first visit to the city in 1931, when she had walked around downtown and noticed how many women were dressed in knock-off Chanel. They weren't mimicking a logo, but a style. That invigorated her, pushing her to return to Paris and keep evolving her designs.

By then, Chanel 'was a celebrity herself', Blazy points out. 'I'm fascinated that instead of being upset about [seeing people copying her designs], she actually embraced it. She was always looking at women in Paris who were wearing Chanel to go for dinner or go dancing, but it was never really taken into the street.' He adds: 'When she came back to Paris, she reinvented herself completely



‘I thought that the Chanel aesthetic was somehow overshadowing the idea of women. It was one woman, but I see many, many women’

and shortened her skirts. I think that’s where she became modern – like, radically modern.’

Blazy doesn’t always sketch. More often, he drapes directly on the body, letting instincts guide him, along with a blend of pop-culture, literary and historical references that he culls from his past and present in collaboration with his head of research, Marie-Valentine Girbal. He tells me he’s reading a lot about Marie Antoinette and listening to Rosalía in the studio. His show soundtracks have included nostalgic songs such as Snap!’s ‘Rhythm Is a Dancer’ and Lady Gaga’s ‘Just Dance’. At the Métiers d’art show, he used voiceovers from the film *The Hours* and ‘Bam Bam’ by Sister Nancy. ‘I think there is something honest in using references that I understand, that speak to me or my generation, or maybe we’ll talk to a younger generation,’ Blazy says. He pauses again and looks off toward a vase of flowers that match the colour scheme of the lighter-than-air couture collection hanging on racks and mannequins near us. ‘I don’t know, I try to be quite honest.’

Blazy casts his catwalk presentations with women of all ages and backgrounds, including the 49-year-old model and vintage-store owner Stephanie Cavalli, who has walked in three of his shows thus far and opened two, becoming one of his new muses. (He calls her a modern-day Coco Chanel.) Cavalli describes Blazy’s Chanel as ‘opening up these possibilities for different people, different ages, different races – it’s like a flower unfurling and blossoming.’ That includes men. A$AP Rocky, Jacob Elordi, Pedro Pascal and Kendrick Lamar have all worn Blazy’s Chanel. But the designer is quick to point out that gender isn’t a factor in his process. ‘We will never communicate about the fact that we do menswear,’ Blazy tells me. ‘There are just pieces that fit everyone.’

Part of Blazy’s plan is to rethink the way the Chanel boutiques operate, doing away with targeting specific customers or clientele and opening up the merchandising to blend categories and sizing. ‘For some categories of product, we changed the sizing,’ Blazy explains. ‘So instead of having 36, 38, 44, 48, we put S, M, L. We took the gender out of the sizing.

‘I propose stories and designs in which I believe, things that make my heart beat,’ Blazy tells me. ‘No one needs a new bag or a new jacket. Chanel has to be a dream.’

Bhavitha Mandava has walked in all of Blazy’s Chanel shows, but she says that the quarter-zip-knit-and-jeans look was her favourite. ‘It felt the most like me,’ she says. ‘I also loved seeing how many people recreated the look afterwards, which speaks to its impact and how fashion can inspire and connect people across different spaces and communities.’

‘I’m very happy if someone embraces the fashion and not just the product,’ Blazy says. ‘Because the clients who want Chanel, they will come anyway and get it. But if a student starts to wear their old quarter-zip and jeans, or if a young woman chops her blazer, I think it’s good. And it’s fun.’

The day after I meet with Blazy, I tour Le 19M, the complex that houses 11 of the artisan maisons owned by Chanel. Among them are Lesage and Atelier Montex, which specialise in embroidery; Lemarié, focusing on flowers and feathers; Massaro, a shoemaker; Paloma, a flou atelier that works with delicate fabrics; and Maison Michel, which is a millinery house. Typically, the savoir-faire of most of these institutions is reserved for couture or Métiers d’art, but Blazy is bringing them deeper into the fold of the house and creating more collaborative workstreams between the maisons, involving them in the ready-to-wear collections too.

I start at Montex. There is a hush in the workrooms that is similar to what I felt back in the couture salon, save for the clicking sounds of the manual machines being delicately manipulated by young artisans (most appear to be between 25 and 40). Their phones are put away, and there isn’t a laptop or a pair of noise-cancelling headphones in sight – just silk, raffia, beads, muslin and hand-drawn maps of embroidery to be placed on various garments. The workmanship is exquisite, as it is at Lesage, where Chanel’s famous tweeds are developed on antique looms. When I walk through Maison Michel, I pick up a felt fascinator in the shape of a leopard’s head, but then a tiny veil catches my eye. According to the house’s creative director Priscilla Royer, it was designed



This page and opposite: Bhavitha wears jumper; jacket (on handbag); skirt; earrings, gloves; handbag; slingbacks, all CHANEL Métiers d'art 2026 Collection. Trinidad wears jacket; skirt; bag, all CHANEL Métiers d'art 2026 Collection



Jacket; skirt; earrings; bag; Mary Janes, all from a selection, CHANEL Métiers d'art 2026 Collection



Jacket; skirt; fascinator; slingbacks, all from a selection, CHANEL Métiers d'art 2026 Collection

Hair by Yuji Okuda, using Less Is More Organic Haircare. Make-up by Thierry Do Nascimento. Manicure by Chloé Nguyên. Casting: Anita Bitton at the Establishment. Production: Day Int. Models: Trinidad Castaño and Bhavitha Mandava

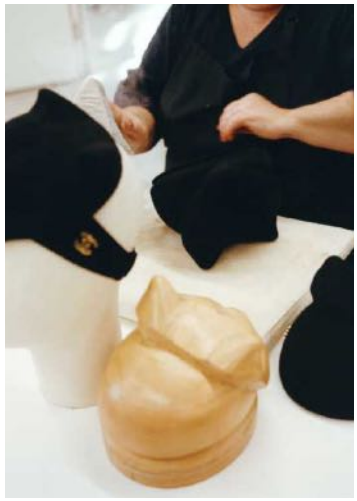
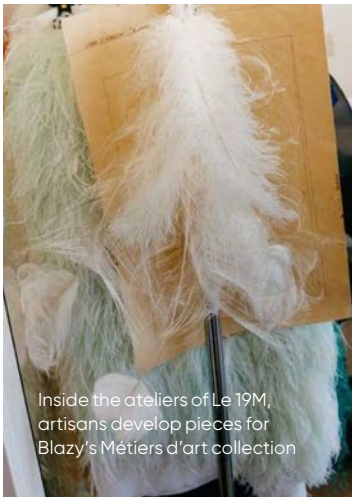













Inside the ateliers of Le 19M, artisans develop pieces for Blazy's Métiers d'art collection






Dress; skirt; bag; slingbacks, all CHANEL Métiers d'art 2026 Collection

'No one needs a new bag or a new jacket. Chanel has to be a dream'

collaboratively by several of the maisons: the cap from Maison Michel, the silk cage over the face from Paloma, the flower on top from Lemarié and smaller floral embroideries from Montex. It was a huge but exciting challenge, Royer says, to get the fascinator to Blazy's exact specifications: how it needed to look from afar, sit on the head, cover the face. Holding this wisp of a thing in my own hands, I think about something Blazy told me the day before: 'You don't just do a little embroidery because it's pretty. It needs to explain something, bring an idea.'

Blazy has honed his ability to translate products into Zeitgeist-shifting ideas throughout his career. He trained early with Raf Simons, who hired him straight out of school after seeing his graduation collection at La Cambre in Brussels, which was inspired by the astronaut Claudie Haigneré, the first French woman in space. (She sat in the front row at Chanel's A/W26 show in March.) His former professor Tony Delcampe remembers being struck by 'his knowledge and interest in the arts, which was quite unusual for a young boy at 17'. Blazy was an immediate fit for the school, which, Delcampe explains, trains students 'to be curious about our contemporary world, to build your culture more and more and to be able to translate it in your clothing language'.

After his work with Simons in menswear, Blazy joined Maison Margiela in 2011 as part of the anonymous design team for the house's Artisanal line. He remained behind the scenes there until the fashion journalist Suzy Menkes famously blew his cover by revealing his name in a review of the Artisanal collection in 2014. 'I still remember the thrill when I saw the mix of detail and delicacy that he is now bringing to Chanel,' she says of her discovery.

Simons later hired Blazy to work with him at Calvin Klein, alongside the former Alaïa designer Pieter Mulier. Blazy remained relatively unknown in the industry until 2021, when he was named the creative director at Bottega Veneta; there, his alchemical use of unexpected materials, such as raffia and textured leather made to look like banana leaf, turned everything he touched into gold. His famous white tank top and trompe l'oeil leather jeans, inspired by Natalie Portman's character in the 2004 film *Closer*, would become his signature: a perfect fantasy of the everyday meeting the extraordinary.

When Blazy started at Chanel, he decided to begin not with the signature cap-toe shoes or the iconic 2.55 bag but with Chanel herself, delving into her personal history. He wanted to 'understand the psychology behind it and what she saw in things and how that resulted', he explains. With each collection, he has referenced anecdotes from her life: her love affair with Boy Capel and his shirts; a quote she gave to Le Figaro about women needing clothes to turn them from caterpillars to butterflies; the first New York visit; a flapper dress she loved to wear. 'The reason it's still relevant today is that the early approach was so humanist and so liberating. She was her own test – she designed what she wanted to wear. The birth of modern fashion came from an act of liberation, which is amazing.'

'What Matthieu is bringing is this evolution of the silhouette,' notes Chanel's longtime president of fashion Bruno Pavlovsky. 'Something perhaps cooler than it was before.' When I ask him about the Métiers d'art show specifically, Pavlovsky smiles and says: 'There is a mix of everything, which gives you a show that is authentic, which is impactful. You almost forget the decor or set. At the end of the day, you look at the silhouette and the models and you say, "Why not for me?"'

Blazy isn't just crafting a world around Chanel – he's making clothes for living in that world. 'I never start a show or collection with the idea of the wardrobe,' he says. 'But I always lean to make sure that it becomes one.'

When it's time for Blazy to go back to work, presumably on the autumn/winter 2026 collection, which will include chain-mail skirt suits and exaggerated, belted drop waists, he thanks me warmly, then goes back up the mirrored staircase in his jumper and slacks.

A few weeks later, Blazy's spring/summer 2026 collection arrives in stores in Europe. The response is immediate and, well, rabid. Fashion editors plot their purchases strategically in furious group chats. Lines form at the boutique on Rue Cambon. Influencers broadcast their shopping hauls to their hundreds of thousands of followers. I'm not immune to the frenzy. I'm not in Paris when the collection hits stores, but a friend (the truest kind) FaceTimes me at 7am New York time so that I can shop for a pair of shoes virtually. The call wakes up my husband and my three-and-a-half-year-old, but my turquoise-and-black square-toe slingbacks are worth it. I'll wear them with my favourite jeans. □



Ruth Rogers photographed in her kitchen at home

Photographs by
PHILIP SINDEN

Kitchen confidential

Ruth Rogers – cook, co-founder of the River Cafe and podcast interviewer extraordinaire – sits down with *Lydia Slater* to share the story of her life in food

There are many things that can bring up a memory – like the music you listened to as a teenager, the clothes your mother wore, the cities you travelled to. I think it's interesting to explore memories through the lens of food. So many of the people I interview on the River Cafe *Table 4* podcast didn't grow up with a sense of entitlement, so they see food as a measure of their success. For Paul McCartney, it was the day he could order a great bottle of wine; for Tracey Emin, it was opening a restaurant in Margate and hiring refugees to cook there, because she grew up with so little and was given Christmas dinner by the Salvation Army.

We started the podcast in the pandemic as a way of reaching out to our friends. I remembered how Ian McKellen had read out our recipe for ribollita at a charity event we had and brought the house down, and I thought we could have people reading recipes every week. But my friend Graydon Carter told me we had to do something more, so it segued into a deeper proposition: why did you choose this dish? Did your mother ever cook Italian food? That sort of thing. My stepson Zad has a production company, Atomized, and he and I started together; my first three interviewees were Michael Caine, Jake Gyllenhaal and Wes Anderson, who are all close friends of mine and River Cafe regulars.

Five years later, we're now on YouTube. We've had a range of guests, from Gwyneth Paltrow and David Beckham to Nancy Pelosi, but my favourite conversation ever was with my son Roo – I learnt from him what it was like growing up. People ask who I would most like to talk to, and it would be my late husband Richard [Rogers], because he loved Italian food so much, and it was through him that I became a cook.

I grew up in a small town in the Catskills, about a hundred miles north of New York. My father's parents came from Hungary and my mother's family from Russia. On the podcast, I find people often talk more about their grandmother's cooking than their mother's, because, as a grandmother, you take that time to think about your grandchildren and what you want them to identify with. My Hungarian grandmother used to bring her own rolling pin to make strudel when she came to visit.

In the 1960s, my mother discovered cookbooks by Julia Child, but she really preferred reading to cooking – she was a librarian. It was a small town, so there was just a pizzeria and a Chinese restaurant. My father, a radiologist, used to drive us to New York about once a month, and we would have lunch at a special restaurant, the Russian Tea Room, after going to the theatre. When I was about 12, we moved to Woodstock. It was much more sophisticated; full of artists and musicians. My parents had a lovely house right on the stream. I remember the noisy dinners, the cocktail parties, people sitting on our lawn and having a good time.

If you want to eat well, you learn to cook. My mother gave me some cookbooks and let me use the kitchen, and I just followed a recipe. Julia Child's were brilliant because they're like a scientific manual – add a quarter of a teaspoon of this, and the soufflé dish

'If you want to eat well, you learn to cook. My mother gave me some cookbooks and I just followed a recipe'

must be six inches deep: so specific. One summer, when I must have been about 15, I decided I was going to earn money catering. My sister suggested I make a card saying: 'Why ruin your own dinner party when Ruthie can do it for you?' So that was my summer job in my teens.

I went to Bennington College in Vermont, which seemed to suit a lot of my political and social ideals. But I was unhappy there. It was isolated. My parents agreed to let me take a term off and go to London. I stayed with some friends of theirs in Muswell Hill. I was lonely – I remember writing to my parents and saying: 'I'll get used to the food, I'll get used to the city, I'll get used to being away, but I don't think I'll ever make any friends here.' I read that out recently at a Thanksgiving dinner that I gave for 50 friends.

Howard Koch, the screenwriter who wrote *Casablanca* and came to England after he was blacklisted, gave me a list of people to call. I didn't call anyone, but one of them invited me to dinner, and I met their daughter-in-law Georgie Wolton, who introduced me to a whole group of friends. For Free Mags Check sastatus. com I moved to Regent's Park, where I shared a basement flat in a house with a group of Americans who were protesting against the Vietnam War. I had a few different jobs, in a little restaurant in Primrose Hill – I was fired after two days – and then a kitchen shop, to help pay the rent.

I was supposed to go home at Christmas, but by October, it became really clear to me that I wanted to stay. I applied to do graphic design at the London College of Printing. It was a heady time. Don McCullin was a visiting lecturer, and I met a whole new group of friends, photographers, artists and designers.

When I met Richard, the world opened up.

Richard's mother Dada was a brilliant home cook. She was brought up in Trieste and had been taught English by James Joyce. I think he was a better writer than teacher, because her English was only OK. Every Sunday lunch was at her house. We'd get there early, and I'd watch her make a risotto, a pasta sauce or ice-cream. Having come through the war, she was very frugal. It was simple cooking, not fancy at all. I learnt so much from her.

In May 1971, Richard won the competition, with Renzo Piano, to design the Pompidou Centre. It was like winning the lottery. We moved to Paris about six months later. Our flat was in the Marais, on the Rue de Sévigné. Underneath us was a boulangerie and around the corner was a butcher. I worked in the office, doing graphic design, but at lunchtime I would leave an hour early and go to the market, and then go home to make lunch for Renzo and Richard. That taught me so much about shopping and cooking and eating seasonally. One day you had asparagus, and the next day it was gone, but there were melons instead. I also took lessons from Simone Beck, who had written *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* with Julia Child.

Roo was born in 1975, and we left Paris a year later. I was having a blissful time, but for Richard, although he loved it, it was also an intense experience.

After coming back to London, in 1981, we created our house in Chelsea. Richard was always a rebel, but he also became part of the establishment and was chairman of the Tate. I worked in his office and edited, but I was always home when I wanted to be, and I really found great pleasure in cooking and creating.

Richard and his partners bought a group of warehouses on the Thames, because he didn't want to move his office into a building in the City – he wanted to create a community. It took two or three years, and during that time we talked a lot about the things we wanted to do, one of which was to open a restaurant. Eventually I said: 'Why don't I do it?' Richard loved that idea. At the same time, Rose [Gray] had decided she wanted to cook – she'd gone to New York and worked with Nell Campbell in Nell's restaurant, but she had to come back because she had four children in London. So I called her up and said: 'Should we go look at this space?' And we did.

It was good that we started small, because our knowledge wasn't great, and we didn't have much money. We went to the Reject Shop for the lights and Rose travelled to the north of England to buy second-hand ovens. It was a staff canteen to begin with, and Rose and I made sandwiches and pasta. Eventually the council allowed us to open to the public.

At the time, if you wanted to go to a restaurant and have fun, you probably went to a simple Greek or Italian restaurant, but perhaps you didn't eat so well; if you wanted to have better food, you'd have to dress up and you might be intimidated by the atmosphere. We thought, why can't you do both: have good food but no dress code, where you can sit and see the kitchen?

Both Rose and I had lived and cooked in Italy, and we wanted to make that sort of simple, seasonal food: bruschetta with peppery new-season olive oil, grilled fish with salsa verde, wine that wasn't Chianti in a straw-covered bottle. For this kind of cooking, the ingredients do have to stand on their own. *The River Cafe Cookbook*, which was published in 1994, was our way of explaining the kind of food we wanted to cook and how we wanted to run a restaurant. That was when it really took off.

We have had some wonderful chefs working with us over the years. Jamie Oliver; I'm very, very close to him. Sam Clark, who went on to start Moro; April Bloomfield, Theo Randall and Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall; and Emily Mortimer was a waitress for a bit. I always hope that the people who work here take away not just the food but our ethos. Rose passed away in 2010, and I think of her every day. The best tribute to her is to make the River Cafe better and better.

Today there's *Ruthie's Table 4*, and a new book *Table 4 at the River Cafe*, the River Cafe Cafe, Shop the River Cafe, offsite events, and we're making plans to celebrate the River Cafe's 40th anniversary. Wolfgang Puck came in once and I said: 'You know, Wolfgang, I want to be like you and have 45 restaurants.' And he said, 'Ruthie, I want to be like you and have one.' I try to be in the River Cafe every day. It's where I feel inspired by all the people working there, full of memories of Rose and Richard. I'm so lucky.

'Table 4 At the River Cafe: Conversations about Food and Life' by Ruthie Rogers (£25, Ebury) is published on 14 May. □

HAIR AND MAKE-UP BY TERRI CAPON



Funny





girls

For too long, women have been sidelined in comedy – but the tables are finally turning. *Marie-Claire Chappet* meets the trailblazing talent having the last laugh

'Comedy is Britain's national language,' says the actress and queen of sketch Sally Phillips. 'The French have philosophy, the Italians have beauty and we have laughing at things.' Indeed, if the Brits have a dominating characteristic, it is our sense of humour. From self-effacing football chants to the dry irreverence of the stiff upper lip, there is nothing we like more than seeing the funny side. We are, after all, the nation of *Monty Python* and *Morecambe and Wise*; of *The Good Life*, *Fawlty Towers* and *Blackadder*.

So far, so blokey. Yet our most fascinating, pioneering comedic figures are our funny women. Hylda Baker, born in Lancashire in 1905, was writing her own stage shows by the age of 14 and ended up a beloved sitcom star; Gladys Morgan, dubbed the Queen of Comedy, was a fixture of Forties and Fifties radio. By the Seventies, the experimental scene had birthed the doyennes of humour Tracey Ullman, Victoria Wood, Dawn French and Jennifer Saunders. *French and Saunders*, which ran on the BBC from 1987 to 2005, changed the game. Both comics independently went on to create female-led sitcoms – *The Vicar of Dibley* and *Absolutely Fabulous* – but it was their original pairing that paved the way for women to make their mark in television comedy, with a clear evolution of the sketch format that lurched towards the absurd and the surreal.

Their work had a profound impact on Phillips, who became a part of Britain's first all-female sketch show in the late Nineties and early Noughties, *Smack the Pony*. 'When we started, a consensus existed that men were funnier than women,' she recalls. 'I think there was also a lot of anxiety from male comedy writers about writing women as idiots. It seemed misogynistic, so they didn't do it. Consequently, we ended up with all the feed lines and the exposition. It was hard to be funny without anything funny to do. *Smack the Pony* was us owning our idiocy.'

Miranda Hart's eponymous BBC sitcom *Miranda* (2009 to 2015) was also predominantly built around giving women the space to be ridiculous. 'My desire to get into comedy came from watching *Morecambe and Wise* and being so happy to see adults being silly,' she says. 'If I have contributed anything, I hope it's for performers and non-performers alike to have the permission to be playful, to be big, to be vulnerable.'

Now, a new generation of Millennial female comedians have taken the format to new heights. Phoebe Waller-Bridge and Michaela Coel perform deft high-wire acts of comedy and tragedy, expertly blending laughter with danger, disaster and darkness. Their remarkable creations – *Chewing Gum*, *I May Destroy You*, *Fleabag* and *Killing Eve* – have become international sensations. They are now Hollywood's hot properties, starring in and writing the biggest blockbusters around, from James Bond films to those in the Marvel Cinematic Universe. What stood out about their comedy-dramas was the way they turned a sharp, dry, British lens on the darkly funny reality of being a woman. Waller-Bridge captured the hidden anguish behind our national bent for self-deprecation – breaking the fourth wall with humour, while revealing the reality of her character's suffering. Coel tackled sexual assault head-on, making audiences laugh and cry in equal measure. They pushed the limits of what comedy can do and, in the process, formed a new genre.

Conversely, two of the most successful shows of recent years have taken an established format – the family sitcom – and flipped the script. While their antecedents often made frazzled mothers the stooges for jokes about feckless fathers, *Motherland* and its hugely popular spin-off *Amandaland* present a note-perfect skewering of parenting from a distinctly female perspective, complete with sniping mums at the school gates and the annual nightmare of World Book Day. No wonder they have boosted the careers of several great comic actresses, including Diane Morgan and Lucy Punch.

'We were trying to make a horror film, and I think we successfully achieved that,' deadpans Holly Walsh, one of its creators and writers. 'With *Amandaland*, we're always punching up at our lead character. There's something very British about enjoying seeing incredibly successful, pretty people have moments of doubt and make bad choices. We're also trying to laugh at stressful situations, which I think is another British trait – a kind of Blitz spirit.'

Walsh emerged from the notoriously male-dominated stand-up circuit, as did her fellow comedienne Lucy Beaumont (a former

'There's something very British about enjoying seeing successful, pretty people make bad choices'

winner of the BBC Radio New Comedy Awards), who is candid about the challenges she encountered during her early days in the industry. 'It was hard to get booked, because they would say, "Oh, we've already had a woman on this month." When you did get a gig, they would treat you differently. Sometimes the compere would say, "I'm sorry, we've got a woman on next, but can we try to be nice to her?"' It was even harder for performers of colour in the sector. 'At first, people didn't know what to do with me, where to put me,' says the comedian and writer Ava Vidal, who began her career on the BBC's *28 Acts in 28 Minutes* back in 2005. 'I was quite softly spoken – and there weren't many Black ex-public-school girls doing comedy. I'd like to think I opened doors. I think younger Black comics now have more range than they were allowed before.'

The comedian Sindhu Vee originally moved to the UK from India in the early Nineties to become an investment banker ('You will die single, but not poor,' her mother told her), but caught the comedy bug by accident after doing a stand-up set on a whim. She tells me her sense of humour was honed as 'distinctly British' – dry, acerbic. 'When I first moved here, I remember thinking, "What's wrong with them? They don't like a lot of feelings",' she says. 'But I quickly learnt that Brits do not have big reactions, they have sarcastic responses.'

Always ready with a witty, effortlessly deployed comeback, Vee is very much the type to get invited onto another British comedy staple: the panel show. Yet this format has long had a woman problem, with rarely any female talent showcased, and, only recently, a tokenistic quota enforced. This has reinforced the perception of comedy as a male forum that women occasionally stumble into. (The BBC's 'home of witty banter' channel, launched in 2007, is still called Dave.) 'Those shows are just set up for the male ego,' Beaumont says. 'They're all male writers coming up with the material, and then you go on and think you're rubbish because you feel you can't hold your own in those sorts of environments. But it's not set up for you.'

A game-changer in this regard is the arrival of *Saturday Night Live UK* – the long-awaited British edition of the popular US show that has demonstrated its commitment to gender equality from the outset, featuring five leading ladies from its cast of 10: the stand-ups Ayoade Bamgboye, Ania Magliano, Annabel Marlow and Emma Sidi, and the comedy writer and actress Celeste Dring.

Sidi tells me the equal-gender split feels natural and that going on set feels like coming together with 'other people who were also weird at school'. 'I think we've produced something distinctly British – edgier, sillier,' she says. 'We have figures like Keir Starmer and the Royal Family to play with, who are funnier to me than people like Trump. There's more nuance, a sort of cloudiness to them.'

> The *SNL UK* set feels like coming together with 'other people who were also weird at school'

Weekly, the cast embark on that great British tradition of mocking authority. The comedian Rosie Holt, who embodies a red-suit-clad Labour MP persona on stage, believes humour is our national means of protest. 'I think it's important to poke fun at those in power,' she tells me. 'By doing that, you can expose their weaknesses, but you can also get through to people. Anger can just turn people off.' Vidal, too, views comedy as a vital tool for making positive change. 'I've led diversity training and talks in the City, and I always do it with humour,' she tells me. 'People would say to me afterwards, "I didn't want to come here. HR made me, but it turned out to be really good fun."' When I ask Walsh about the role of comedians in driving social progress, she has the best answer: 'Well, mate, however you write this up, make me sound good. I'd love to win a Nobel Peace Prize.'

And don't we need jokes now more than ever? 'I believe the power of comedy is greater than any of us probably realise,' says Hart. 'It doesn't ignore challenges or suffering, but it has the ability to say, "I am going to laugh despite everything that's going on." It brings light in the darkness. Even if for just a moment.' □

PHOTOGRAPHS (PREVIOUS PAGES): ALAMY, GETTY IMAGES, BBC/MOVIESTILLSDB, CHANEL 4/MOVIESTILLSDB, MATT CROCKETT, DISNEY/MOVIESTILLSDB, DEBBIE ELLIS, BY PIP, ITV/MOVIESTILLSDB, KARLA GOWLETT



Lubaina Himid invites *Helena Lee* to join her over the course of a year as she embarks on the biggest creative journey of her career: representing Great Britain at the Venice Biennale

Photographs by
PHILIP SINDEN
Sittings editor
HADYA TUOFIQ

THE ARTIST'S

Lubaina Himid and 'Boatbuilders' (2025), photographed at her studio in Preston



WAY





Clockwise from above: research for 'Gardeners'. Himid and 'Is Water Always Useful' (2025), on left, and 'Man in a Rope Drawer' (2025), right. Himid's former studio in her Preston home. Sketches for 'Gardeners'





17 JANUARY 2025, BEIJING

Lubaina Himid is keeping a secret.

We are in China for the opening of her first ever solo exhibition in the country – a survey at the Ucca Center for Contemporary Art that features some of her greatest hits. Among them is *Naming the Money* (2004), which brings the invisible to the fore through 100 life-size cut-out Black characters – ceramicists, viola de gamba players, shoemakers – who were conventionally peripheral, but are now all named and given complex interior lives.

The figures are quintessential Lubaina Himid: theatrical, compelling, asking questions of the viewer; impressive in their individuality but also in their collective number. The show is a huge moment for the artist, and for British creativity in Asia.

But unbeknown to all there, just before Christmas the 70-year-old received a significant telephone call: an invitation to represent Great Britain at the world's most prestigious artistic stage, the Venice Biennale, and take over the British Pavilion. Of course, she accepted.

At the celebratory dinner that evening at a fantastic restaurant in the hotel, Himid and I are having a chat about Zanzibar, the place of her birth. After her father died (he was from the Comoro Islands off the coast of East Africa), her mother took her back to London when she was four months old. 'We left under traumatic circumstances,' she tells me. 'My mother didn't really talk about it.' Zanzibar has loomed large in her life as a place that has been difficult to return to. 'I became frightened of going back for childish but real reasons, of belonging to the wrong set of people. In preparation, I tried to experience it through other means: Zanzibar through Venice. I used the city as a way to practise being out of my comfort zone; to learn the behaviours of not getting upset or feeling lost, a bit like using a supermarket car park to learn how to drive. Venice is nice, easier to digest.'

Perhaps the Venice Biennale is a homecoming, of sorts.

15 AUGUST 2025, PRESTON

It's a beautifully sunny day, and Himid is worried that Preston, her home city now for more than 30 years, is giving me the wrong impression. I'd just walked past the neoclassical Harris museum and art gallery, closed for refurbishment at the time, but looking majestic, bathed in a warm white light. 'It's not usually like this,' she assures me over a cup of tea in one of her studio spaces, a former escape-room complex now fitted with museum-quality lights.

Himid – a key figure of British art and a cultural activist who has dedicated herself to uplifting marginalised narratives – has been ready for the Biennale for a good while. Sonia Boyce and John Akomfrah, who represented Great Britain at Venice in 2022 and 2024 respectively, are artists she has known well for more than 40 years. However, she hasn't exhibited there in any capacity, even outside a national pavilion. Although she won the Turner Prize in 2017, at 63, the oldest person to do so, there are gaps in her career where she feels she has missed out on incremental steps. 'Before showing at Tate Modern, theoretically and logically, you should have solo shows at galleries such as Serpentine, Whitechapel, Hayward and Tate Britain,' she says. 'I went extremely slowly, then fast-track. So with Venice, there have been British and Black British artists in the main exhibition over the past 20 years, and that participation eluded me. Then suddenly I'm representing Britain in the same way that Jeremy Deller, Cathy Wilkes and Chris Ofili did. I needed to figure out how best to do that, and still make work that I really wanted, because you have to sustain the belief in it for a long time. You have to inhabit it.'

Last summer, before Himid got the call, she and her long-term partner in work and life Magda Stawarska were on holiday driving across Germany, the Czech Republic and Poland, imagining 'the most ridiculous and wild things' they might create if ever she were to present at Venice. One possibility had been a performance, to dress up as two cleaning ladies, one from Africa, one from Eastern Europe, spending the whole time cleaning the Pavilion, incognito. But when the possibility turned into reality, they passed on the concept, even if it did poke marvellous fun at the establishment. 'We'd have to have been Fatima and Lodzia for seven months, and we're quite easily bored.' She laughs at the thought.

When I look at the three large-scale paintings surrounding us now, though they are half finished, the idea behind them is clearly fully formed, and thematically in keeping with Himid's whole oeuvre. Each has two people in the act of creation, whether growing a cactus in *Gardeners*, discussing migration in *Boatbuilders* or in a state of anxiety in *Architects*, debating whether to construct a monumental house or a tin caravan. 'They're all about what home is. How you make one in a new place when you have perhaps tenuous, not even tangible connections to another.' They will eventually be a set of five paintings that explore what it is to move from one place to another, how to make a life in a new place, how to navigate this transition while keeping the emotional and physical traces from the place you have left. 'You have to hold on to something because you have to get up in the morning and make it work for the people around you. I think people do live their whole lives in a new place that doesn't work for them. It's about how you survive through making, whether it's making food or clothes or something that grows. Making dreams.'

Venice is the perfect forum to express that idea. Historically an island of trade and merchants, the city has an ostentatious beauty

'I think people do live their whole lives in a new place that doesn't work for them. It's about how you survive through making, whether it's food or clothes or making dreams'

ARTWORKS COURTESY OF LUBAINA HIMID



Himid in front of 'Tailors' (2025)



ARTWORKS COURTESY OF LUBAINA HIMID

and intricate topography that reflects its varied inhabitants and visitors over time. Himid has been making reference to the city in her work ever since the early Eighties. Of her 1997 series *Venetian Maps*, she observed that 'Venice is a symbol for me, of how people of the Black diaspora have for centuries been the backbone of the cultural development of many European cities, but that this presence is invisible.'

In the pavilion, they will be ever-visible in the resulting paintings. These figures are motifs that appear in her work often – people creating, yet battling in a societal frame and context that is not of their making, each with their own extraordinary narrative.

I'm particularly taken with *Gardeners*, in which one of the individuals pictured has a hoe, and the other holds a watering can over a rotund and flowering cactus. 'Both are doing the wrong thing to it,' Himid tells me. 'I wondered: why would they be confused and anxious enough to water a cactus? It's prospering, but something is amiss.' She communicates the dissonance at the heart of these experiences so simply.

It's impossible to talk about Himid's work without acknowledging her ever-evolving collaborative process with Stawarska, a multidisciplinary and sound artist, who, in this case, supports the sonic element. In another part of the Pavilion, the traditional folk tune 'An English Country Garden' will fill the room, recorded by the Greek singer Nana Mouskouri in the 1970s. 'When I was a child, she was the nation's favourite,' says Himid. 'It was about the time of black-and-white-minstrel shows, so I'd have been about 10. She sings not in a sweet English, but the clearest, richest English. It has an air of longing and leaving, regret and hope that I'm trying to get these paintings to have.' Himid plays the song on her iPhone, and we listen to it together, thinking of the way it will be layered with what the audience will see. In another room, we'll hear crashing waves – ones that Stawarska recorded in St Ives, a reminder that 'in Britain, we are not more than 70 miles from the coast'. It's a move that questions our expectation of Britishness, wrapped up in the delightful.

'I'm all those people, in all those paintings. I'm building. I've spent a lot of my life thinking about how to escape, which I don't need to,' she says. The characters seem to encapsulate a sequence of migration that is rarely talked about: the unseen struggle, the pride in growing and building a life, the inevitability of getting it wrong. And it makes me wonder: who defines what is right?

15 DECEMBER 2025, PRESTON

'Do you like our Christmas tree?' Himid asks of the light-draped conifer standing sentinel in her bay window as I step into her Victorian terrace. It's unexpectedly jolly and kitsch. The sky is grey, the pavements slick with rain, and it's almost exactly a year since she found out about Venice. I'm here to see the completed work; she's almost ready to put down her paintbrushes before

'I'm all those people, in all those paintings. I'm building. I've spent a lot of my life thinking about how to escape, which I don't need to'

‘I invite visitors into a space of performance where they’re the performers, and the people in the paintings are the performers, and they do this conversation together’

Stawarska hosts Polish Christmas on the 24th and every piece is shipped to Italy. We speak for a couple of hours before breaking for a pleasant meal that Stawarska has prepared: tomatoes, smoked salmon, beetroot salad and delicious bread. ‘We’re both into sitting down and eating lunch,’ says Himid. ‘I get a bit Joan Collins about it otherwise.’ We eat Baci, the chocolate pralines that have a message hidden in the wrapper, with coffee. Stawarska reads hers out: ‘Being loved by someone gives you strength while loving someone gives you courage.’ It’s ridiculously appropriate. ‘I don’t love the chocolates, but I absolutely love the messages,’ Himid says with a laugh.

She shows me around her new studio: a dream come true for any creative. They have bought the property behind the one they live in, so they are back-to-back – mirror-image footprints, linked by their gardens. The structure has been gutted and rebuilt: Stawarska has her soundproofed studio on the top floor, and Himid is almost ready to move into the ground floor where she will be painting from now on. While the house and the home have always been important to her practice (her current abode in Preston was the site where the 100 *Naming the Money* figures were created), this feels like a new chapter.

Himid thinks deeply about space – perhaps inevitably, given her training in theatrical design as an undergraduate at Wimbledon College of Arts. From the beginning, she knew exactly how the paintings would be laid out in the pavilion, and the way she’d like the public to interact with them. ‘The temptation was to up the ante, ramp everything up. I suppose I’ve tried to pare everything down, while creating a sense of unease.’ She wants to give visitors space to develop a relationship with the work. ‘I really believe people come to galleries with their whole lives with them. You don’t realise it, but you do. All the people you know, the food you’ve eaten, the things you’ve seen. I still find myself inviting visitors into a space of performance where they’re the performers, and the people in the paintings are the performers, and they do this conversation, perambulation, together.’

We drive in the punishing rain to see the final paintings. In addition to the completed *Architects*, *Gardeners* and *Boatbuilders*, I’m also shown two more. In *Tailors*, the characters are having a disagreement: should they wear the clothes of the location they are in, or hang on to their sense of self by wearing garments from the home they’ve left? They are problem-solving, remembering that they are in a place where clothes were made for the men who led the enslavement of Africans. Reflected are the patterns from kangas – fabric worn by East African women – and also those of the ruling classes of Britain. The final large-scale painting *Chefs* recalls her series ‘Pastry Chefs’ made in 2019, in which men make delicious concoctions while engaging in everyday decisions. Here they are still involved in the magic of cooking, but in competition with each other.

Himid revisits her kanga flags. There are three, each of which has questions on it, and they will sit alongside the appropriate painting, asking: ‘Is water always useful?’, ‘Can poison taste delicious?’ ‘Can flies settle here?’ ‘They are not complicated questions, but the answers might be, depending on who you are,’ she says.

Also hung in ceremonial fashion will be a collection of oars, symbols of the possibility of going back, and of leaving and arriving at a place surrounded by water, recalling the oceans enslaved people had to cross. None of them match. They have images painted upon them. There’s the lemon, always present in her paintings – sweet, but also sour and bitter (‘I love the shape and colour, the sexiness of them, the ambiguity they have, the double life’), oak leaves and wagtails.

Now, all Himid has to do is decide what to paint on the remaining oars – something she will do on the day. I ask whether she got emotional through the whole process. ‘Yes, that’s why I listen to football matches and golf tournaments over four days while I paint,’ she says. ‘All those paintings are about the hidden histories of the slave trade and how to deal with the personal of being me, in the political of being in the world.

‘The time given is so short that I think there’s a real danger of just working. It can become a bit of a task. I had to understand at the front of my brain rather than somewhere deep in my heart. It was necessary to keep physically connecting with these paintings. I’m feeling the place. With the gardeners, I knew how wet it was, the temperature, what kind of day, what sounds there were. I had to keep trying to find ways not to panic, not to see the end result before I got to the end result.’

And yet, here she is, a year later, surrounded by a body of work that is about to meet the world, and live and breathe.

25 FEBRUARY 2026, LONDON

I meet Himid and Stawarska, champagne in hand, at a private view at Tate Modern. They are happy – the works have been shipped to Venice. In a few months, Lisson Gallery is presenting *Zanzibar*, collaborative work that draws on Himid’s original series of paintings made in the Nineties, and they have a Paris show in October. But before the Biennale opens in May, they have one more significant event. ‘We’re getting married!’ Himid says with a grin. ‘We thought, “Why not?”’

It’s certainly time to celebrate.

Lubaina Himid’s British Council commission ‘Predicting History: Testing Translation’ for the British Pavilion at the 61st Biennale Arte runs from 9 May to 22 November 2026. □

HAIR AND MAKE-UP BY TERRI CAPON, USING FENTY BEAUTY, GATINEAU PARIS AND ORIBE



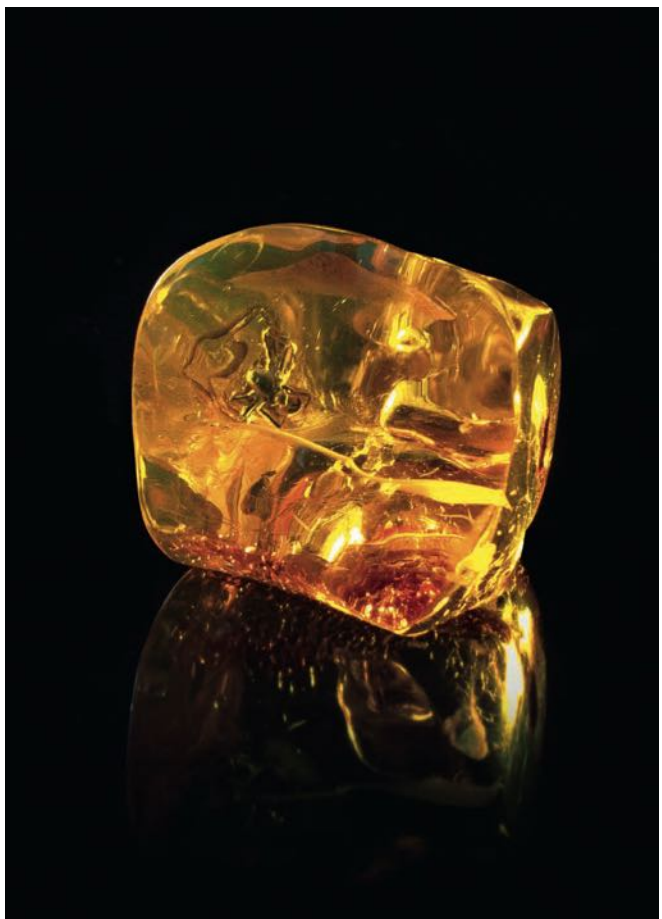
Magda Stawarska wears silk top, £185, ME+EM. *Wool trousers, £450,* STUDIO NICHOLSON. *Leather kitten heels, £465,* LE MONDE BÉRYL. *Gold vermeil ear cuff, £160,* OTIUMBERG. *Bracelet, her own. Lubaina Himid wears her own clothes throughout. Photographed in Magda Stawarska's new studio*

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BAZAAR beauty

EDITED BY
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Sheer joy

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ANU KHAPUNG
at the Dorchester
Working with your bone structure, Khapung meticulously adapts her threading, tinting, lamination and lifting treatments, for the ultimate brow and lash architecture. From £35.

HYPER-REALISTIC BROWS
by Rachel Pitman
Using lightweight rotary pens and pharmaceutical-grade pigment, Pitman, originally an artist, creates beautifully natural-looking brows. From £1,300.

Best for BODY

Revitalise yourself from top to toe

The state of your skin is an indicator of overall health, and addressing one can improve the other – hence the benefits of treatments such as lymphatic drainage. 'When the lymphatic flow is slowed – which often happens due to stress, a sedentary lifestyle or hormonal changes – it can lead to water retention, heaviness and inflammation,' says Rebecca Trévalinet, a wellness expert based at the French Pharmacy in London. 'By restoring movement, treatments can help bring the body back into balance.' At Harrods, Kama Ayurveda's Lymphatic Ayurvedic Drainage Body Treatment (£160 for 60 minutes) will leave you feeling fresher.

Elsewhere, collagen-boosting injectables such as Plinest polynucleotides promise to improve long-term skin quality. The Nécolleté Collagen Wash used in treatments at Clinic Dr Paris in Marylebone (£850 for 30 minutes) is designed to restore density and luminosity to the neck, décolletage and hands. If fine lines and slack skin are a concern, Sculptra, a collagen-stimulating injectable predominantly used on the face to smooth, plump and tighten, is available for the chest, gluteal area, arms and back of the thighs, too, offering results that last for more than two years. At home, show your limbs extra care by incorporating firming peptides, brightening vitamin C and sun protection.



WORDS BY KATIE WITHINGTON, MEDINA AZALDIN AND KATY YOUNG. PHOTOGRAPH: MATEUSZ SITEK



Best for HAIR

A trio of treatments to add volume, movement and hydration

FOR FINE HAIR

Hair Filler by Hadley Yates

Small, custom-bonded hair extensions are used to create fullness in thinner areas of the head, fill in sparse hairlines and add thickness to a fine fringe. From £450.

hadleyyatessalon.com

FOR CURLS

Aevum Texture Enhancement Session

A proprietary peptide complex re-bonds curls, regulating and polishing textured patterns to offer a healthy lustre that lasts for up to 15 washes. From £150.

aevumsalon.com

FOR SHINE

Hairtoxx at Haug London Haus

Cryogenic technology enhances the absorption and retention of hydrating and bond-repairing ingredients, such as antioxidant-rich açaí, glacial water and hyaluronic acid, by smoothing and tightening the cuticle using a freezing tool at sub-zero temperatures. From £140.

hauglondon.com

Best for FEET

Luxury pedicures that focus on condition over colour

BASTIEN GONZALEZ
at the Mandarin Oriental
Our beauty director's favourite podiatrist for a complete skin and nail overhaul, Gonzalez can undo damage caused by years of acrylics. From £190.

MARGARET DABBS
The inventor of the medi-pedi, Dabbs offers podiatry that is transformative for high-heel devotees and serious runners alike – as well as for anyone wanting to embrace sandal-wearing season. The Medical Pedicure, from £85.

ELIM MEDIHEEL
at Selfridges
Restore baby-soft skin with this blade-free treatment underpinned by pH-balancing skincare, which you can enjoy in your private cushioned cubicle. From £45.

Bare Feet the Electronic Callus Remover, £35







Westmoreland Cosmetics Glass Gel, £25

The Gel Bottle Better Balm, £35.40

Bio Sculpture Ethos Seaweed Calcium Base, £15.50



Sisleÿa L'Intégral Anti-Âge Hand Care, £133



La Prairie Cellular Hand Cream, £120



FAQ 221 LED Red Light Therapy Hand Mask, £289



L'Occitane Shea Nail & Cuticle Oil, £16



Manucurist Active Plump Nail Care, £16





Best for HANDS

Top tips for soft skin and impeccable nails

'The discrepancy between what individuals use on their face compared with their body has led to visible differences in skin ageing,' says the plastic and reconstructive surgeon Dr Ashwin Soni. Fortunately, as preventative treatments extend beyond the face and décolletage, a new wave of skin technologies brings the power to rejuvenate and transform our hands – one of the body parts most susceptible to signs of sun damage. Restylane, an injectable skin booster that stimulates collagen and elastin to encourage hydration, has become a front-runner in the category, lasting between six and 18 months. Other good options include micro-needling and LED-light therapy.

As for the nails, the Ukrainian manicure – a technique involving careful cuticle removal – offers a tidy finish that makes gel polish look as natural as possible. Alternatively, opt for a Japanese manicure for a chemical-free approach that sees nail plates buffed with beeswax and keratin, promising repair and restoration.

'Bare manicures are all about refinement rather than making a statement,' says the manicurist Georgia Rae. 'That is where detailed cuticle work becomes essential. When everything is clean, precise and well-maintained, it creates a look that feels elevated but understated.'

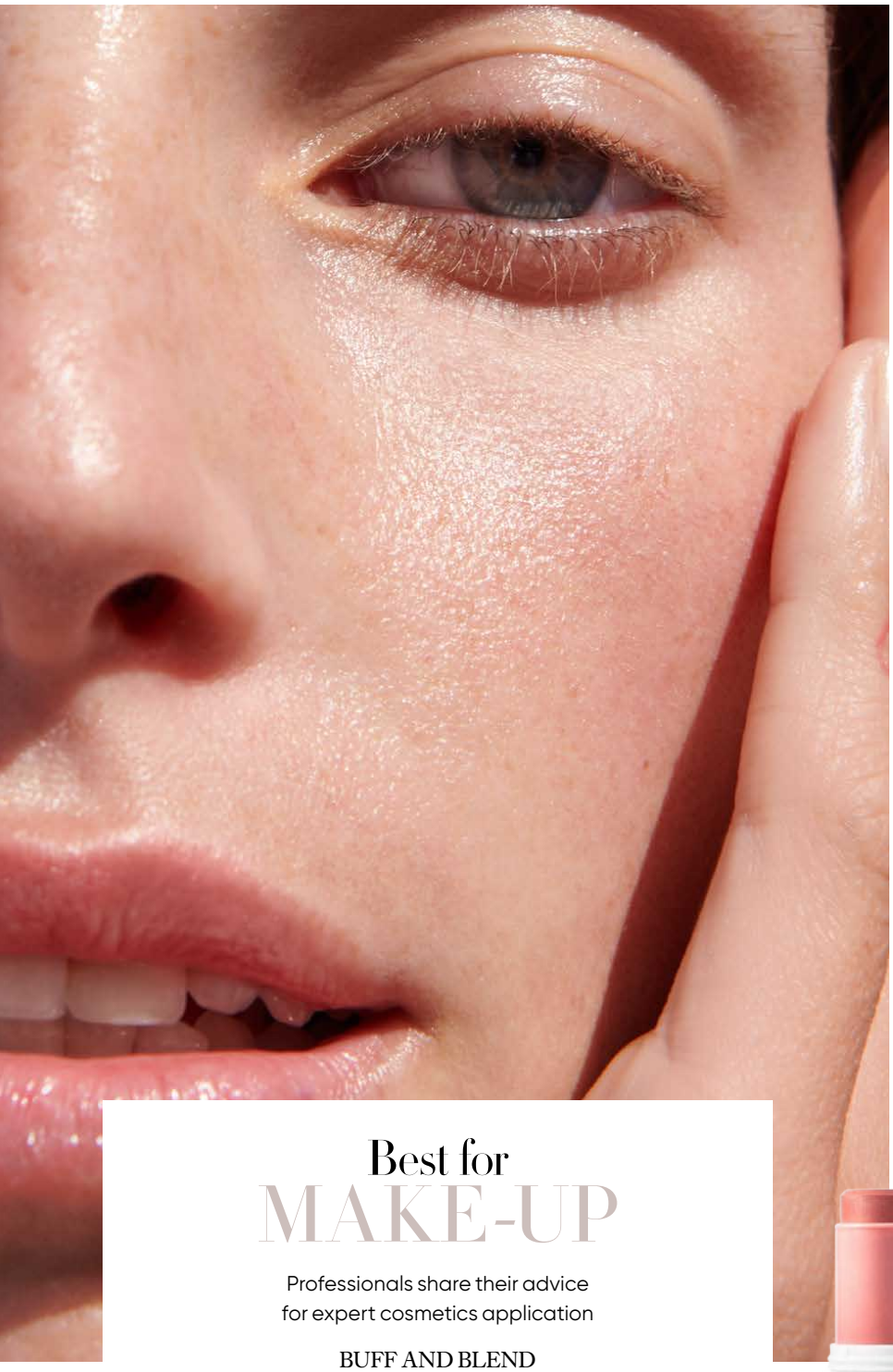
Best for TEETH

Subtle dentistry tweaks are replacing drastic whitening regimes

FEATHER VENEERS
by Dr Sam Jethwa
Ultra-thin porcelain shells are bonded to the surface of the enamel, enhancing shape, size and length with minimal to no preparation of the tooth. *bespokesmile.co.uk*

COMPOSITE CONTOURING
by Dr Edward Li
Opt for a natural finish over artificial symmetry with this tooth-building composite, which rebuilds worn edges, restores chips, improves colour and controls translucency. *abc.dental*

GUM FRAMING
by Dr Rhona Eskander
Even very small adjustments to gum tissue can transform the appearance of your smile. Dr Eskander uses a laser or scalpel to contour the patient's gum line for a bespoke experience. *drrhonaeskander.com*



PHOTOGRAPH: MATEUSZ SITEK

Best for MAKE-UP

Professionals share their advice for expert cosmetics application

BUFF AND BLEND

'My advice for getting a professional, "real skin" finish is to take a clean, dry, fluffy brush and lightly blend make-up into your complexion,' says Lisa Eldridge. This simple trick removes excess product and blurs edges for a smooth and seamless look.

SOFT FLUTTER

'Cleanly separated lashes create definition without heaviness,' says the Chanel make-up artist Anna Payne. Use a mascara with a small plastic-bristle brush to comb on precise colour.

LOOK TWICE

'Step back from the mirror and observe the skin in natural light to ensure everything looks cohesive and soft,' advises Chantecaille's Melissa Claassen. This will ensure your complexion looks its best in all settings.

Best for SKIN

How to achieve a bright, glowing complexion in time for summer

FOR PLUMPING

Newest by Mastelli

This advanced injectable gel combining polynucleotides with hyaluronic acid brings regenerative benefits and improves luminosity for up to seven months. *thesoniclinic.com*

FOR SCARRING

PDRN microneedling

This non-invasive cosmetic procedure reduces pigmentation and smooths an uneven texture resulting from blemishes and age. We recommend Dr David Jack's Harley Street clinic. *drdavidjack.com*

FOR SCULPTING

Face Gym

The Three-Month Method – a training programme for the face that includes a monthly sculpting treatment, a targeted add-on and at-home exercises – will help you unveil lost cheekbones and improve definition. *facegym.com*

FOR MAINTENANCE

Libi Roos

An aesthetic practitioner who tailors each facial to her client, Roos incorporates hands-on massage and clever tools such as dermaplaning, radiofrequency, LED light and IPL devices for clarity, hydration and glow. *libirooskincare.com* □



BEAUTY MOODBOARD

Comforting tea rituals meet sunny Italian savoir-faire in Bulgari's Thé Impérial







Jacques Cavallier

Jacques Cavallier manifested Bulgari's Thé Impérial fragrance into being. He first created the scent in 2017 for Bulgari hotels, originally for use in bathroom amenities such as shower gels and body creams, but it was always his 'secret wish' to bottle it as a perfume. Nine years later, he has realised that ambition, as Thé Impérial joins Bulgari's Eau Parfumée collection of refreshing compositions inspired by tea. Cavallier looked eastwards when creating Thé Impérial. 'I'm passionate about Asia,' he says. 'I love mornings in China, Japan and Vietnam – there is a special light before the sounds of the city come on. I respect how the urban environment mixes with the natural world.' He explores this idea of contrasts through the combination of warm, ginger-infused black tea and vibrant Italian fruits such as lemons, bergamots and mandarins: a homage to Bulgari's Roman heritage. Tea makes a compelling fragrance note for its versatility. 'It is fresh, dry and can be blended with most ingredients in a perfumer's palette. It is as important for me as rose or jasmine,' Cavallier says. Ultimately, he adds, tea 'makes you feel better' – and the zesty, lively scent of Thé Impérial is a sensorial tonic for the soul that is now available beyond Bulgari's hotel doors.

MEDINA AZALDIN

Bulgari Thé Impérial Eau Parfumée, £115 for 75ml.



Da Lat, Vietnam



PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF BULGARI, GETTY IMAGES

THE BEAUTY EDIT

BRONZERS

BAZAAR EDITOR'S CHOICE 2026

Try these luminous formulas for the ultimate sun-kissed look



BEST SHADE RANGE

Nars Laguna Bronzing Powder, £40

An edit that complements all complexions, from subtle hues for pale cheeks to flattering neutrals for darker skin.



BEST BUILDABLE

Chanel Les Beiges Healthy Glow Bronzing Cream, £50

From a light tint to a dramatic effect, this jasmine-infused gel can be dialled up as desired.



BEST FOR GLOW

Hourglass Ambient Lighting Bronzer, £56

Marbled with delicate pearl elements for a sheer veil of radiance and warmth.



BEST FOR DRY SKIN

Refy Cream Bronzer, £20

Add definition and a sunlit golden tone with this smooth, vitamin-E-enriched blend, available in six glossy shades.



BEST SHEER

Rare Beauty Warm Wishes Soft Matte Powder Bronzer, £27

Translucent pigments melt into the high points of the face for a natural-looking, post-holiday flush.



BEST STICK

Dior Forever Skin Bronze, £50

For precise application, draw this creamy balm along the cheeks, forehead and chin, then blend for long-lasting lustre.



BEST FOR CUSTOM COLOUR

Westman Atelier Sun Tone Bronzing Drops, £53

This effortless fluid can be dotted across the complexion for an all-over tint, or added to foundation to create a believable tan.



BEST WITH SKINCARE

Yves Saint Laurent All Hours Hyper Bronze Powder, £48

A little goes a long way with this clever compact, formulated with niacinamide, hyaluronic acid and limetta fruit to refine and hydrate.



BEST FOR SMOOTHING

Makeup By Mario SoftSculpt Transforming Skin Enhancer, £35

Designed for textured skin, this multi-tasking blurring balm gives an understated bronze effect and a diffused, dewy finish.



BEST FOR OILY SKIN

Victoria Beckham Beauty Matte Bronzing Brick, £69

Dust a generous wash of the lighter shade over the face, then sweep the deeper colour through the hollows of the cheeks for added dimension.

WORDS BY KATIE WITHINGTON

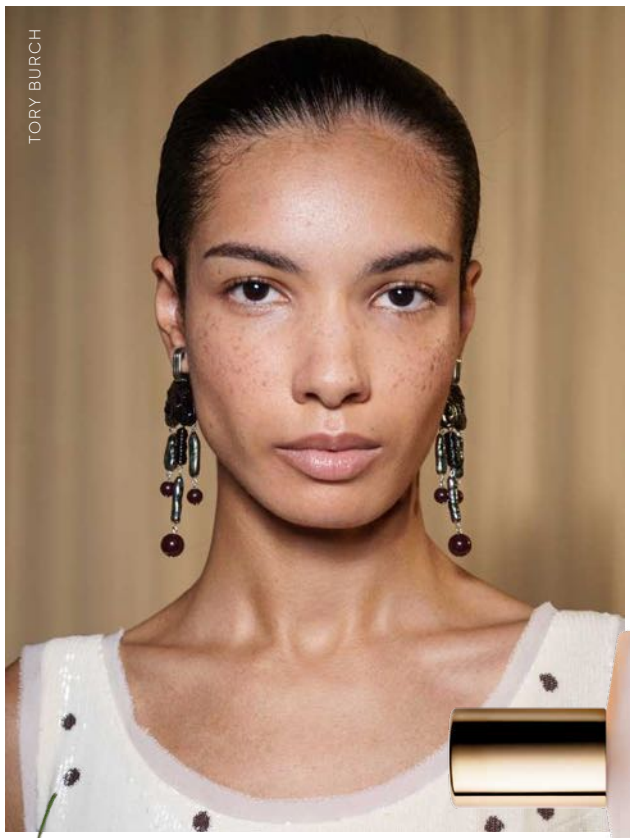
WHAT KATY DOES

Our beauty director Katy Young reveals the secrets of her routine

Perfect formula

A Nobel Prize-winning chemist has discovered a way to reduce the stress hormone cortisol in skin cells. Reap the benefits of his research with Noble Panacea Exceptional Repair Reset Cream, which, used over 30 days, offers your complexion the next best thing to a holiday.

Noble Panacea Exceptional Repair Reset Cream, £325





Loewe Aire Sutileza Elixir, £145 for 50ml



Memo Cap Camarat, £120 for 30ml

Matiere Premiere Metal Lavender, £170 for 50ml



Diptyque Fleur de Cerisier candle, £58; lid, £61



Wildsmith Parterre, £75



Mella 1809 Hemming Street, £65

Green house

A new crop of candles inspired by fragrant leaves, vegetable patches and geranium pots proves that scenting your home isn't just a winter pursuit; create a lush, sunlit sanctuary filled with fresh, floral notes.

BON VOYAGE

I've been transporting myself to Provence every morning with perfumes that evoke the warm citrus air and uplifting lavender breezes of a French summer. Wear with a crisp white shirt and a silk headscarf.

New wave

This summer, join *Bazaar*'s Wellness at Sea voyage aboard Cunard's *Queen Anne*, headlined by the Olympic heptathlete Katarina Johnson-Thompson. Departing from Southampton, you'll enjoy a curated programme complete with treatments, classes and expert talks.

5–12 July; from £2,499 a person, based on two sharing a Princess Grill suite (cunard.com).





Dior Solar the Self-Tanning Drops, £56

Vita Liberata the Glaze Peptide Tanning Serum, £34

Faux glow

For those wary of self-tanning, I have found two solutions: Vita Liberata's Glaze, a peptide serum with DHA that builds the finest layer of colour over eight hours; and Dior's new Solar the Self-Tanning Drops, which blend with skincare for a lightly sun-kissed effect.

PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES, IMAXTREE

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ZELENS
Z-22 Ultimate Face Oil
WORTH £80

VOTARY
Nutrient Cream Light
WORTH £75

AMOUAGE
Guidance eau de parfum
WORTH £45.50

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IN RARE CIRCUMSTANCES, BOX CONTENTS MAY VARY. FOR FULL TERMS AND CONDITIONS, SEE HEARSTMAGAZINES.CO.UK/TERMS-AND-CONDITIONS. PHOTOGRAPH: BELL STUDIO



DRIVING CHANGE

Fredrika Klarén, head of sustainability at Polestar, on her push for progress in the car industry

HOW DO YOU MAKE AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE MORE ECO-CONSCIOUS? It's something that Fredrika Klarén spends a lot of time thinking about. She joined Polestar, the Swedish luxury-car maker, in 2020, after spending a decade working in sustainability for companies including Ikea and the Scandinavian fashion conglomerate Kappahl. 'I've always been driven by societal progress,' she says. 'I come from a small, close-knit community – I grew up on a tiny island outside Gothenburg. Looking back, I understand that's where I got my set of values from – that you need to be progressing as a society, otherwise no one has a good life.'

Sustainability is more important now than ever, particularly in our current economic and political climate. Electric vehicles are often touted as the lower-emission alternative, but they still have a broader environmental impact. Reducing this is Klarén's focus. Polestar publishes entire life-cycle assessments for all its cars, illustrating carbon footprint, so consumers can make informed choices. 'If you go to a restaurant, you want to know where your food comes from – so why not for a car?' she says. 'We're also very progressive on climate, [lowering] emissions from the production of materials used.'



Fredrika Klarén. Above: the Polestar 3

Take the Polestar 3, for example – a stylish premium SUV that wears its credentials as a badge of honour. 'Each piece of upholstery has a sustainability label showing its CO_2 impact and origin, so customers can compare materials,' explains Klarén. 'We also include traceability for mica and lithium, in addition to nickel and cobalt – materials that are high-risk in terms of supply chains. And the Polestar 3's carbon footprint is lower than our first car from 2020*, despite being bigger and heavier. That's due to more renewable energy being used in battery production, and sourcing low-carbon aluminium.'

As for the myth that the car industry is male-dominated? Polestar debunks that too, employing more women than men in its UK office. 'What enthuses me is that our success comes from being a diverse group of people,' says Klarén. 'We could not have achieved what we have with a traditional set-up. I feel excited because I see the value it creates, and I hope that becomes the reality for my daughters. Things improve when more women are involved in decision-making, design and innovation.'

Discover more and find the electric car for you at polestar.com/uk.

PHOTOGRAPHS: NATALIE MARTINEZ. *THE POLESTAR 3'S CRADLE-TO-GATE LIFE CYCLE HAS A TOTAL CLIMATE IMPACT OF 24.7 TONNES CO2-EQ PER VEHICLE. THE EQUIVALENT FIGURE FOR THE POLESTAR 2 IS 26.1 TONNES CO2-EQ PER VEHICLE

CALM IN THE CHAOS

At our 'Art of Wellness' reader event, in association with Polestar, leading figures revealed how they cut the noise of modern life in favour of finding moments of joy



Bazaar's deputy editor Frances Hedges, Ada Ooi, Maria Uggla and Jasmine Hemsley

'WE LIVE IN AN OVERSTIMULATED WORLD where everything is designed to distract us. We constantly implement new wellness protocols because we feel disconnected, but really, we're just adding even more things to our to-do list.' So said the author and ayurvedic advocate Jasmine Hemsley to an exclusive audience of 50 *Harper's Bazaar* readers at the 'Art of Wellness' event, held at the Park Hyatt London River Thames in association with Polestar.

Hemsley – who hosted a sound bath for the group – was part of a panel that also included wellness practitioner and skin-care entrepreneur Ada Ooi, and Polestar's own head of colour and material, Maria Uggla. The theme of overstimulation ran throughout the conversation, as they sought to reposition wellness as a source of respite rather than a chore. Hemsley explained that 'creating space in the day for breathing or meditation' had improved her quality of sleep, as had eating seasonally and developing habits in line with her body's circadian rhythm. Uggla, who lives on a Swedish island, said that being close to nature helped her to feel grounded, highlighting the Scandinavian concept of *friluftsliv*, or open-air living. Ooi, whose holistic practice combines elements of Chinese and western medicine, revealed the one piece of advice she gives her patients is that 'being still is not a crime', warning that excessive multi-tasking can overload our brains, which can affect other areas of the body, including our digestive systems.



Hemsley with Paola Di Lanzo, who led a guided movement session

Finding moments of joy emerged as a priority, with Ooi pointing out the benefits of pleasure: 'It suppresses inflammation by taking your body from "fight and flight" to "rest and digest" mode, it produces neuro-chemicals that modulate your emotions and it's been said to help prevent memory loss.'

Hemsley encouraged listeners not to rush quotidian tasks, because by slowing down, 'you are training your mind to see happiness in the everyday – it might make you marginally less efficient, but you will be buying yourself health'.

Uggla, meanwhile, reflected on the satisfaction of bringing a sustainable mindset to her working life. She revealed: 'I was a climate activist long before I became an automotive designer. Now, I enjoy the opportunity to change the industry from the inside, through a more conscious use of materials. Ultimately, pleasure relies on doing something you're passionate about.'



CATHAY PACIFIC

MOVE BEYOND

BAZAAR
escape

EDITED BY
HELENA LEE



Greener pastures

An adventure through Scotland by way of the most luxurious lodgings, from remote treehouse retreats to a cosy Edinburgh hideaway. Plus: enchanting London hotels for city slickers; and Vick Hope's ultimate Ibiza itinerary

Loch Tummel in Perthshire

PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES





PINE TREES HOTEL

The Perthshire town of Pitlochry has been attracting visitors ever since Queen Victoria and Prince Albert first came here in the 1840s, and is now a cultural hotspot, thanks to Alan Cumming's role as the Festival Theatre's artistic director. By far the best place to stay is the Pine Trees Hotel, an Edwardian property surrounded by terraced gardens and woodland, with its freshly renovated bedrooms, roaring log fires and contemporary paintings by Scottish artists. The restaurant and bar are excellent, and guests who want to explore the Highlands can borrow boots and raincoats, before returning to tea and homemade shortbread. JP

Pine Trees Hotel (pinetreeshotel.co.uk), from £358 a room a night.

LOCH AND KEY

Through town, country, highlands and an island, *Justine Picardie* and *Charlotte Brook* sample Scotland's most inspiring stays



100 PRINCES STREET

The jewel in the crown of Edinburgh hotels, this has the most enchanting of views, overlooking Princes Street Gardens and the famous castle. Originally the headquarters of the Royal Overseas League, where Scottish explorers gathered to discuss their adventures, the boutique lodging (which opened in 2024) still has the atmosphere of a private members' club. Each of the 29 rooms is individually decorated with bespoke tartans, opulent velvets, original artworks and thoughtfully chosen books, while the linen-clad beds are supremely comfortable and the marble bathrooms luxurious. Equally alluring is the bar, which offers expertly prepared cocktails, a superb whisky collection and a panoramic vista of the city skyline. JP

100 Princes Street (100princes-street.com), from £415 a room a night B&B.



PHOTOGRAPHS: DAVID F COOKE, ITAGO MEDIA, ALEXANDER BAXTER, BEN SHAKESPEARE



THE TREEHOUSES AT LECKIE AND LANRICK

It wasn't just the under-10s who were beguiled by Enid Blyton's *The Magic Faraway Tree*, whether in its original book form or this year's film adaptation. Those of us adults who also like the idea of scaling an oak-tree to live in an arboreal lodge – especially when it comes with the option of a Swedish massage and a piping-hot bath on your own terrace – should check in to one of these two Stirling establishments. A Nordic design sensibility pervades all the huts, where essentials such as breakfast hampers can be delivered – or it's a few fields away to the Gargunnock Inn for a delightful dinner. Lovely any time, although it's worth bearing in mind that it's steak night on a Thursday. CB

The Treehouses at Leckie and Lanrick (leckietreehouses.co.uk, lanricktreehouses.co.uk), from £265 a night, for a minimum two-night stay.





PENICUIK ESTATE

From the top of the Pentland Hills, 20 miles from Edinburgh, you have a pair of strikingly different views. Look northeast, and there's the Scottish capital sprawling out to sea; do a 180 and behold Penicuik Estate's bucolic, gently landscaped arcadia replete with planted woods, skylarks and sheep. There is also a scattering of exceptionally handsome buildings, almost all of which have been given careful, chic makeovers. The 16-bedroom former stable block is surrounded by cottages (all with their own hot tub), but for a romantic residence, choose the tiny two-person Palladian villa in the walled garden. Around most corners are Highland cows, ponds to swim in and fields to ride through – because guests are welcome to bring their horse along for the weekend. CB

Penicuik (penicuikestate.com), from £9,750 a night B&B for the main house (minimum two-night stay).

ARDBEG HOUSE

Bouncing across the North Atlantic aboard a fishing boat while eating a halved sea urchin (recently caught, cracked open and garnished with Glenmorangie whisky by the vessel's proprietor Angus) isn't the wildest part of staying at Ardbeg House on the Isle of Islay. The interior designer and Fife Arms mastermind Russell Sage has given the Victorian inn a maximalist update: seaweed-inspired carpets swirl on thestairs as you head up to a bed ensnared by wrought-iron serpents. Sip a whisky sour before dining on venison pie after the sun sets. CB

Ardbeg House (ardbeghouse.com) from £225 a room a night B&B. □



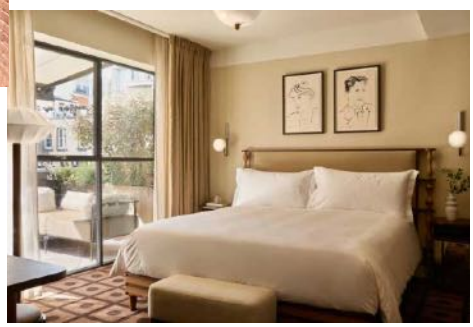


Breathing space

Seeking calm and respite, *Mary Lussiana* discovers a tranquil oasis in the beating heart of London







From top: the Gambit Bar at the Newman. A studio room with a terrace. A Terrace Suite room

IF I HAD TO CHOOSE ONE ADJECTIVE TO DESCRIBE THE Newman, the debut hotel from the company Kinsfolk & Co, it would be 'soothing'.

I arrived in Fitzrovia, nerves jangling, after some terrible family news, and here was a place where, to my relief, all was right with the world. Check-in was seamless and friendly, with capable, confident staff who exuded a genuine enthusiasm as they worked (two weeks in, admittedly, but I think it will last). The suite had an air of calm to it, with its enveloping, curved lines, soft lamps and sitting-room floor of rich oak-brown parquet in mesmerising patterns of circles within squares. My bedroom had an armchair and footrest placed by the window, from where I could have whiled away hours watching London life beneath me. The bathroom, with glossy, custom-made tiles in cream and burnt gold, had a huge tub to soak in and an unusually generous walk-in double shower. Further aids to soothe guests, if the empathetic attitude of the staff failed, could be found in the Kloris CBD Gummies, available to order to your room, or the Rainbow Dust Coffee Superblend in the mini bar, made with natural adaptogens such as lion's mane, maca and ashwagandha.

These supports for wellbeing feel appropriate given that one of the key local figures to whom the Newman pays homage is Florence Nightingale, who volunteered in the former Middlesex Hospital, just round the corner, during the cholera outbreak of 1854; the penthouse suite of the hotel is named in her honour.

Another character central to Fitzrovia whose style inspired the Newman's designers, the London-based studio Lind + Almond, was Nancy Cunard. The shipping heiress and muse to Ezra Pound, Aldous Huxley and others rented a secret studio around the corner, working on her poetry by day and partying wildly by night. Her large signature bangles, which she wore on both arms from elbow to wrist, are the departure point for the column of spindle shapes on each side of the wooden bedheads.

Meanwhile, the photographer Rory Langdon-Down was commissioned to capture the area's present-day denizens in a series of eye-catching black and white portraits that line the corridors. Into this artistic mix come visible elements of Fitzrovia's architectural style, which include art deco and Victoriana, and a nod to the mid-century-modern furniture designer Gerald Summers, whose nearby workshop and commitment to craftsmanship shaped the neighbourhood's design legacy.

In turn, the Newman has been embraced by its local community. Already fantastically busy, Brasserie Angelica, with its street entrance, accessible, informal atmosphere, wood-fired dishes and innovative lunchtime quirks, including a sandwich trolley, is evidence of this. The menu is comforting and the food excellent: try the satisfyingly sharp steak tartare with gaufrette potatoes, the warming beetroot and horseradish soup with smoked cheese dumplings, or the ultimate roast chicken and mushroom and tarragon pie accompanied by a cep sauce.

Downstairs, the Gambit Bar is a hidden den under a coffered ceiling, calling to mind artistic intrigues and heady nights; it serves carefully crafted cocktails to suit your mood. And the hotel's urban sanctuary, Wellness at the Newman, has clean-lined Nordic interiors and uses enticing under-the-radar brands such as Moss of the Isles, created using marigold and myrtle. Florence Nightingale would surely have approved.

The Newman (thenewman.com), from £695 a room a night. □

PHOTOGRAPHS: HELEN CATHCART





THE CADOGAN, A BELMOND HOTEL

The many charms of the Cadogan – a notable art collection, private tennis courts and a perfect location on Pont Street – have been enhanced by its new bistro Willett's. Headed up by Michael Turner, formerly of the Savoy Grill, it serves British specialities with a witty twist. After an amuse-bouche of mushroom consommé, designed to look like a cup of tea and a biscuit, we gorged on sourdough crumpets topped with Dorset crab, followed by Sutton Hoo chicken and morel pie. As well as an extensive pudding menu, there's a trolley groaning with sweet treats. Meanwhile, our dog was equally well-catered for with a canine menu including beef tartare. LYDIA SLATER

The Cadogan, a Belmond Hotel (belmond.com), from £760 a room a night.

CAPITAL IDEAS

Biohacking lounges, canine menus and Michelin-starred Jammie Dodgers: discover the London hotels offering a new take on luxury



MANDARIN ORIENTAL HYDE PARK

With Heston Blumenthal's Dinner parting ways with Mandarin Oriental next January, epicures should visit soon. Famed for its 'meat fruit', liver parfait masquerading as a mandarin, the two-Michelin-starred location is presenting its swan song 'A Journey Through History' – an eight-course tasting menu exploring five centuries of British gastronomy through Blumenthal's greatest hits. It begins with a crisp tart with horseradish and a spritz of grass dressing, followed by vibrant nettle porridge with a garlicky frog's leg, perfectly cooked duck inspired by the 17th-century food writer Hannah Woolley, tipsy cake with spit-roasted pineapple and the chef's take on Jammie Dodgers. Course after course to surprise and delight, served with a big dollop of whimsy. HL

Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park (mandarinoriental.com), from £800 a room a night. 'A Journey Through History', £195.



SIX SENSES AT THE WHITELEY

The first Six Senses hotel on these shores has certainly made an impression. Occupying the Whiteley, a former shopping centre on Queensway, it features an extraordinary interior by Foster + Partners, with a dramatic staircase restored beneath the famous glass dome. The cutting-edge wellness offering is a core part of the property's unique appeal: there's the 2,300-square-metre spa, incorporating a biohacking lounge, a magnesium pool to encourage muscle recovery and nervous-system regulation and the private-members' club Six Senses Place. HELENA LEE

Six Senses at the Whiteley (sixsenses.com), from £825 a room a night.



PHOTOGRAPHS: JASPER FRY, LOLA LAURENT, MARTIN MORRELL

Harper's BAZAAR

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LYDIA SLATER EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



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INSIDER'S GUIDE

VICK HOPE ON IBIZA

The presenter divulges her favourite spots away from the island's party scene



£745, Cult Gaia





Alumier Bright & Clear Solution, £50.50





Ibiza. Left: the Juntos farm. Right: Cala Gracioneta



£105, Birkenstock at Net-a-Porter





£420, Alémais

Ibiza used to be about hardcore raving. It has evolved into somewhere really special – from where I went to my first yoga retreat to where I've given birth and started a family.

It has been a half-home for about four years. My husband Adam [the DJ Calvin Harris] does his residency at Ushaïa for the whole summer. Ibiza has this magnetism. When I step out, I feel my worries dissipate. There are areas where you can be the only person looking at a vast expanse of ocean.

My favourite area is the north coast, between Benirrás and Cala d'en Serra. In summer, Ibiza really does fill up, but in the north, you can't tell that it's high season.

Groove Armada's 'Superstylin" is the first song I put on as I land. I love listening to music when I'm driving, too. Ibiza has some great radio stations, Orgánica and Radio Ibiza, that provide the perfect soundtrack with minimalist Balearic beats.

I feel healthier here because the food is so fresh. There are organic farms, such as Juntos and Terra Masia, which Adam co-owned. I love popping to the eco-shop Polen in the village of Santa Gertrudis.

The beach at Benirràs is busy but a lot of fun, with the drumming sessions at sunset. Another of my favourites is Cala Xuclar because of how peaceful it is. If I really want to feel like I'm on holiday, I'll bring a big pack of paprika-flavoured crisps and a Fanta Limón.

Great restaurants further to the south include Jondal and Cala Gracioneta. I order meat or perhaps turbot. One of the best meals I've had was in the Atzaró Agroturismo Hotel in the north, hosted by Yotam Ottolenghi. If my friends visit, I'll take them to Atzaró for lunch – kids can run around and people bring their dogs. The spa is also good. Even if you're not getting a treatment, the pool is lovely to lounge by.

Flip-flops don't cut it. For trekking on a brilliant beach such as Es Portitxol or Cala d'en Serra, I'll be in in Birkenstocks or plimsolls. During the day, it's about swimwear and cover-ups, which you can get at the hippie market at Benirrás or in Santa Catarina.

I'm into rentals. I'll wear dresses from Farm Rio, Alémais and Cult Gaia. For the evening, I'll rent from Hurr – the Annie's Ibiza x Clio Peppiatt collection is fun, and Rat & Boa's pieces are floaty and airy.

I use AlumierMD beauty products. My routine includes its cleanser, exfoliating toner and vitamin-C and peptide serum, followed by its moisturiser. For the evening, I'll add concealer, mascara and highlighter.

We still go to a couple of clubs. I like to join when Adam's playing, which I was doing until I was 36 weeks pregnant – not in heels. But I'm up for heels again! Ibiza is a place where you can dress up or down. □

AS TOLD TO HELENA LEE. PHOTOGRAPHS: JENNIFER/UNSPLASH, LUANA FAILLA, COURTESY OF VICK HOPE

LEADING THE CHARGE

A parliament of wise women convened at Corinthia London for *Bazaar*'s annual gala

BY CHARLOTTE BROOK PHOTOGRAPHS BY OLIVER HOLMS


Deborah Frances-White


Sonia Lynch


Lashana Lynch and Lydia Slater



Helena Lee, Melissa Hamilton and Katie Carr


Charlotte Proudman


Charlotte Colbert and Deborah Frances-White


Katie Carr


Frances Hedges and Suzie Miller


Melissa Hamilton

'Oh yes. There she goes,' said Lashana Lynch's mother Sonia with quiet pride as the actress took to the stage to exuberant applause at *Bazaar*'s annual International Women's Day gala dinner. The first female 007 and new mother, who spoke about strength in vulnerability, gave one of three talks held during an elegant evening at Corinthia London, hosted in partnership with Irwin Mitchell alongside support from Marylebone Village and Range Rover. Over plates of tuna tataki and za'atar roasted aubergine, the assembled sisterhood were galvanised by tales of endurance from the author Katie Carr and the Royal Ballet principal dancer Melissa Hamilton, and uplifted by messages of a brighter future from all the speakers. As the comedian Deborah Frances-White observed, discussing the current face of feminism and how we can broker change with the *Prima Facie* playwright Suzie Miller and the barrister Charlotte Proudman: 'It sounds like an odd time to say this, but I've never been more hopeful than I am now.' CB

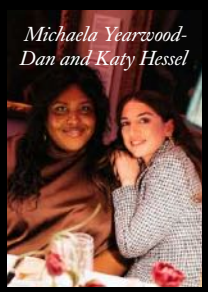
ART MOVEMENT

Aesthetes and icons danced and mingled at the National Portrait Gallery's soirée

PHOTOGRAPHS BY IONA WOLFF


Bella Freud


Gillian Wearing


Michaela Yearwood-Dan and Katy Hessel

On a mild spring evening, the National Portrait Gallery rolled out a spectacular red carpet for its glittering annual gala. As champagne corks popped, the co-chairs Zadie Smith and Bella Freud emerged from Bentleys, while Jarvis Cocker sauntered into the 'Lucian Freud: Drawing into Painting' exhibition, where David Dawson was sharing stories of his 20 years by the artist's side.

The event's committee members, including Rashida Jones and *Bazaar*'s Helena Lee, led the charge upstairs for a decadent dinner. There, the silent auction saw guests jostle for lots including a *Slow Horses* set visit hosted by Kristin Scott Thomas and a styling session with our fashion director Avril Mair.

A dessert station opened along with the dancefloor to an effervescent set by Sophie Ellis-Bextor. Michaela Yearwood-Dan was saying her farewells when a Noughties classic from the DJs Hale Zero stopped her in her tracks. 'We made a million!' confided the gallery's director Victoria Siddall, filled with excitement at setting a record, and delighting in the knowledge that she has started as she means to go on. CB


Sophie Ellis-Bextor


Rashida Jones and Zadie Smith


Rosie Huntington-Whiteley and Helena Lee


Kristin Scott Thomas


David Dawson


Eva Langret and Thomas J Price


Victoria Siddall


Matthew Slotover and Jarvis Cocker

HIGHLIGHT REEL

Stars of the film industry spent their post-Baftas evening celebrating Donna Langley

PHOTOGRAPHS BY NATALIE MARTINEZ


Donna Langley


Hannah Waddingham


Amalie Gassmann and Jessica Henwick


Jesse Plemons and Kirsten Dunst


Karen Elson and Isla Fisher


Charlie Quirke and Jack O'Connell




Jessie Buckley and Renate Reinsve


Emma Stone


Kate Hudson and Danny Fujikawa


Ozwald Boateng and Emilia Boateng


Regé-Jean Page and Nathalie Emmanuel

Following the Bafta awards at the Royal Festival Hall, the A list headed to a Mayfair private members' club to pay homage to the British chairman of NBC Universal Donna Langley, who had just been presented with the 2026 Fellowship by the Prince of Wales. 'It's great to be back,' said the London-born, LA-based executive, responsible for films such as *Oppenheimer* and the *Bourne* franchise, as she received congratulations from stars including Emma Stone, Jack O'Connell and Mark Strong. Kirsten Dunst eschewed the margaritas in favour of an espresso with her husband Jesse Plemons, while Hannah Waddingham posed for the cameras and Kate Hudson laughed on the smoking terrace with Isla Fisher. The Best Actress winner Jessie Buckley kicked off her heels and hugged her fellow nominee Renate Reinsve, before taking selfies with her team and that gleaming Bafta statuette. MARIE-CLAIRE CHAPPET □

LIFE AND SOUL

Bazaar Privé members gained intimate insights into Tracey Emin's revelatory exhibition

PHOTOGRAPHS BY OLIVER HOLMS



Jodie Comer



Lydia Slater, Tracey Emin and Maria Balshaw

Bazaar Privé and Gucci co-hosted an evening of conversation in honour of Tracey Emin's landmark exhibition 'A Second Life' at Tate Modern. After a cocktail reception, during which Jodie Comer reunited with her *Prima Facie* crew, including the playwright Suzie Miller, our editor-in-chief Lydia Slater spoke with the artist and Tate's outgoing director Maria Balshaw. 'When you're faced with knowing you've got six months to live, you look back at your life and go, "What was that about? If I got another chance, I'd do it differently,"' said Emin, who underwent major surgery in 2020 to treat her cancer. 'And then here it was, my second life, my other chance.' It was also a poignant evening for Balshaw, who had been the lead curator on the show and was in her last week at Tate. She showed Emin the effusive messages left in the gallery's visitor's book, while the artist and Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe expressed their admiration for each other. Guests had the chance to visit the exhibition, and Emin herself tried on caps emblazoned with her artwork in the gift shop – an endorsement, if ever there was one. HELENA LEE □



Katy Hessel and Robert Diament



Maria Balshaw and Harry Weller



Magda Stawarska and Lubaina Himid



Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe

Scan the QR code to find out more and register your interest in Bazaar Privé

Harper's BAZAAR PRIVÉ

BAZAAR FASHION

FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS TO SACRED GOLD: AZADI ADORNMENTS NOOR COLLECTION ILLUMINATES HERITAGE



What began as a single creative act in a small festival marketplace has now evolved into a globally recognized jewellery brand. **Nahal, founder of Azadi Adornments, has built a multi million dollar business and a community of hundreds of thousands**, all united by a shared vision: freedom, self-expression, and the preservation of heritage.

Now Azadi has **unveiled its first solid gold collection**: Noor / روشن, meaning "light" in Persian. Through Noor, Nahal pays homage to matriarchs, like her great grandmother Atikeh, and the stories they hold within.



Noor is also a reflection of Azadi itself. A word meaning "freedom," seen threaded through the collection through lines of sculpted gold, wearable talismans, and the message of self-determination that defines the brand. **In a world where Iran's fight for basic freedoms continues to dominate headlines, the collection is both a personal and collective declaration: heritage, identity, and liberty are worth honoring and preserving with pride**.

Each piece invites wearers into an intimate, sacred experience: stacking and styling as a story. It is **jewellery made to move with your life while marking your milestones, eventually passing into the hands of the next generation**.

Scan the QR code to head to: **www.azadiadornments.com** and use our Harpers Bazaar exclusive code for $75 off: **AZADIBAZAAR**

LUXURY LATEX, LAVISH YOU.



Fornikationuk is a small, UK-based latex clothing brand redefining how latex is worn. Founded in 2021, the brand grew far beyond expectations, driven by a belief that latex belongs in everyday wardrobes—not just special occasions. Designed and handmade to order by a professionally trained latex maker, each piece blends craftsmanship with wearability. From refined underwear to statement dresses, long skirts, and effortless daywear, Fornikationuk creates elegant latex designed to be lived in. Made by a small, passionate team, our mission is simple: to bring beautifully made latex into the mainstream—one timeless piece at a time.

Find us at fornikationuk.com

BONE BLACK





Lena Dechamps has been making art under the moniker boneBLACK for over a decade. She works across media, but it's her hand-painted clothing that established her reputation as a skilled artist and thoughtful collaborator. boneBLACK's work begs the question, what if this chore coat were a little more fun? Dechamps has a playful yet sincere touch with the details she paints, working closely with clients to develop a unique iconography for each apparel piece. The result is a wearable archive of personal symbols, from beloved places, mementos, and inside jokes, to flora, fauna, and the fantastic. She translates these meaningful elements into a bespoke visual language, hand-painted on each garment—whether new, vintage, or a cherished piece from the client's own closet—imbuing functional apparel with sentiment, humor, and individual narratives that will have everyone asking, "Hey…where did you get that?"

Lena's clever, intricately rendered designs transform durable, workaday clothing into expressive, well-loved material testaments of a life well lived that—like their wearers—only get better with age. Whatever the event, the perfect personalized gift awaits at **boneblackstore.com.**

Jacket: Stan Ray Shop Jacket, Natural Drill | Bag: Puebco, College Tote

Use code "**HARPERS**" for free shipping.



LUCENT LOS ANGELES

From the beginning, LUCENT has been grounded in a clear vision: elevated design, clean silhouettes, and a distinct point of view. Although the brand was initially launched with a focus on menswear, expanding into the women's luxury market was always part of the plan. Drawing inspiration from the legacy of boundary-pushing designers and the evolution of modern luxury, the brand was built on the belief that exceptional design should never be limited by category, but shared more broadly.

As LUCENT has evolved, so has its audience. It became increasingly clear that women were deeply connecting with the brand's aesthetic: minimal, structured, and expressive. Over the past year, that connection has translated into meaningful growth, with women now representing more than 30 percent of our customer base, a figure that continues to rise.



At its core, LUCENT is about creating pieces that feel intentional, refined, and timeless, while still allowing individuality to come through. Expanding into women's luxury is not a departure, but a natural progression. LUCENT is available on all major platforms and at **lucentlosangeles.com**, where the full collection can be experienced.

BAZAAR BEAUTY

SEISO: A MODERN RITUAL LOVED ACROSS LONDON



Loved by a growing community across London, **seiso** is a contemporary body care brand and beauty salon rooted in mindful self-care and minimalist formula. Located in the heart of Central London, it has become a go-to destination for elevated treatments and refined daily rituals.

At the core of **seiso** are its holistic formulations - intentionally crafted using carefully chosen botanicals to support the skin in its most natural state. Each product is designed to cleanse, hydrate, and restore balance, turning everyday rituals into moments of calm.



Seiso is equally known for its detail-driven salon services, where nails, lashes, and skin treatments are designed to enhance and preserve natural beauty. Each appointment is elevated through considered rituals using **seiso's** own formulations, supporting long-term nail, lash and skin health.

@SEISO.SALON

More than a salon, **seiso** is a modern sanctuary - where beauty meets stillness, simplicity, and quiet luxury.

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Instagram: **@seisouk @seiso.salon**

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With over three decades of clinical expertise, Dr Bhavjit Kaur takes a refined, ethical approach to aesthetic medicine, one that prioritises harmony, precision, and long-term results over trends. Recognised as Aesthetic Doctor of the Year UK 2025, she is known for her thoughtful care and commitment to her patients. As the founder of Tuhi Clinic and co-founder of Health & Aesthetic Clinic, and SkinSutra Clinic, she offers personalised, non-surgical treatments grounded in a holistic understanding of skin and hair health. Her SkinSutra skincare range extends this philosophy beyond the clinic, supporting results with scientifically backed formulations. She believes in supporting patients to look like themselves — only more confident.

To enquire or book: **contact@drbhavjitkaur.co.uk**
Scan QR code to visit her website

THE FACIAL IMPACT OF GLP-1 RAPID WEIGHT LOSS



"While weight loss can be incredibly positive for health, the face often loses structural support as facial fat pads reduce." — **Shahina Juma**, Clinical Pharmacist & Independent Prescriber

The growing popularity of GLP-1 medications has transformed weight management, but rapid weight loss frequently leads to facial volume loss, hollowing and reduced skin elasticity — changes often seen after rapid weight loss. Through careful facial assessment and a holistic treatment approach, Shahina focuses on restoring structural support, enhancing skin quality and achieving refined, natural-looking rejuvenation through advanced aesthetic and regenerative treatments at her **pharmacist-led aesthetic practice, Absolute Skin Aesthetics**, in Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire.

BESQUE – HONORING SKIN THAT HAS LIVED





DISCOVER YOUR BESQUE LIFE TODAY

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Besque is an all-natural skincare brand built by women, for women. Our formulations are grounded in natural oils, simplicity, and intention: no synthetic fillers, no artificial fragrance, no unnecessary additives. Just thoughtfully selected, cold-pressed botanical oils that work in harmony with your skin.
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HESPERIDES

Hesperides is a modern fragrance house inspired by the art of everyday ritual. Each scent is crafted in small batches using carefully balanced blends designed to transform spaces and moments alike. From atmospheric home fragrances to bespoke scents created for weddings and special occasions, Hesperides invites you to experience fragrance as something deeply personal, a way to pause, reflect and reconnect. Rooted in the quiet magic of dusk and storytelling through scent, Hesperides creates fragrances that linger long after the moment has passed. Discover a new kind of luxury, where scent becomes memory at **hesperides.uk**.

BAZAAR ESSENTIALS

DIAMONDS FACTORY ARE CHANGING THE WAY CUSTOMERS BUY JEWELLERY WITH THE ART OF CUSTOMISATION





Designed with you in mind, Diamonds Factory are a luxury jeweller known best for their incredible selection of engagement and wedding rings that can be completely personalised to you with their unique made-to-order concept. From metal to shape, stone type, carat, colour and so much more - the possibilities really are endless when it comes to creating the dream jewellery piece.

With over 18 years of industry expertise and their own in-house designers and manufacturers too, quality and craftsmanship is at the heart of everything Diamonds Factory does, with official certification and a lifetime manufacturing guarantee on every piece to back it up. From durable, everyday pieces to more glam, statement items of jewellery designed for those exciting special occasions, there really is something for everyone.

Featuring an extensive selection of other incredible jewellery pieces both online and in their stunning showrooms too, customers can shop diamond earrings, pendant necklaces, bracelets and gorgeous gift sets too. Diamonds Factory offers the full package for any sparkle lover who's looking to expand on their jewellery collection with affordable, high-quality pieces custom designed by you.

Discover More at Diamonds Factory - www.diamondsfactory.co.uk | service@diamondsfactory.co.uk | 020 7138 3672

ASIAN GIRL POWER



Asian Girl Power is fashion with a backbone. Designed by Dokb Studio, this Korean American woman-owned brand transforms pride, protest, and cultural memory into statement pieces meant to be seen. Rooted in community and resistance, the collection challenges silence and celebrates survival—past, present, and future. This is clothing for those who carry history forward and wear their truth without apology. Asian Girl Power isn't about trends. It's about taking up space.

Explore the collection at **asiangirlpower.com**

Use code BAZAAR20 for 20% off

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MÄN ZAZA&LILI



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BAZAAR ESSENTIALS

VIBRA HOTELS

The rules are different here at Vibra Yamm a laid-back-lux hotel freshly opened in Ibiza, the island that never stops reinventing itself, where wellbeing, adventure and nightlife come together effortlessly.

Feel the sun on your skin at the fabulous rooftop pool, complete with breathtaking sea views over San Antonio Bay. Indulge in a delicious breakfast at Aura Terrace as the sea breeze drifts by. Perhaps you'll spend the day uncovering hidden coves and golden beaches nearby… or perhaps not. Just follow your instinct and let Ibiza guide you.

As dusk settles, sip champagne and cocktails while the sky glows gold and crimson and the music begins to take centre stage. The best moments are shared around the table at **Dietro al Sole**, Vibra Yamm's very own trattoria, where authentic Italian recipes meet the flavours of Ibiza in a fun yet intimate setting.

When it's time to slow down, we elevate indulgence to its finest form with a detoxifying massage, a soothing sauna session, or simply a quiet moment to just be.

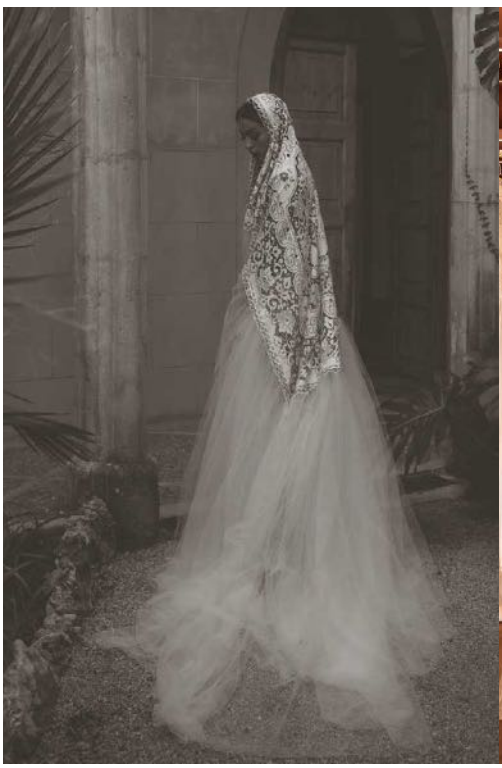
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Bazaar Fashion

Enchanté Communication - Global Fashion Brand Feature of the Year
Exclusive Interview with Eden Keshia







Eden Keshia
Founder of Eden Keshia
Enchanté Communication - United Kingdom

"Eden Keshia: Heirlooms in the making, stories in every stitch"

In a landscape where bridalwear so often drifts toward the expected, Eden approaches things differently. Her process begins not with a silhouette, but with a person, her story, her references, the things she carries with her. The work itself grew from something deeply personal: a friend searching for a dress that felt entirely her own. What emerged was not just a garment, but a way of working that felt instinctive and collaborative, rooted in trust rather than prescription.

That beginning still shapes Eden's work today. Each piece is considered beyond how it looks. These are garments formed through memory, emotion, and a respect for the hands that bring them to life. With a background across editorial fashion, theatre, and dance, Eden has an innate sensitivity to movement and presence, thinking about how a piece exists in motion, how it is worn, how it is lived in. Hand-painted embroideries are translated into thread, carrying gesture into form. Antique and heritage textiles are treated with care, not simply reused, but given space to evolve while holding onto their original character. There is a quiet conversation between past and present in everything she creates.

She moves instinctively, choosing what resonates. For many, that means reconnecting with techniques, materials, and cultural references that hold weight, not as trends, but as something meaningful. There is a growing desire to wear something that acknowledges where it comes from, something that respects craft and lineage while still feeling entirely personal.

There is a sense of nostalgia in Eden's work, but it is never about looking back without intention. It exists more as a feeling, something subtle that allows each piece to hold history without being defined by it. As Eden reflects, these are pieces made for celebrating, garments that carry memory while leaving space for new ones to unfold. That balance gives the work its sense of timelessness, not as a fixed aesthetic, but as something shaped by emotion and meaning.

With the opening of Eden's atelier in Hebden Bridge, this way of working takes on a physical form. Set within a town with its own textile history, the space feels naturally aligned with her approach. Everything is created in-house by a small team of artisans and seamstresses, where the process remains visible and connected. There is a sense of closeness in how things are made, an understanding that each piece is the result of time, care, and many hands.

The space itself moves away from the conventions of retail. It feels lived-in, layered with objects, references, and fragments collected over time. Visitors are invited not just to view the work, but to engage with it, to touch, to try, to imagine what it could become. Conversations unfold easily, and garments begin to take shape through that exchange. It becomes less about selecting something finished, and more about discovering something personal.

In a time where so much feels fast and intangible, Eden's commitment to tactility stands apart. Fabric is meant to be felt. Craft is meant to be seen up close. The atelier becomes a place of connection, where ideas are explored in real time and where the relationship between maker and wearer feels present and immediate.

Even as her work reaches a wider audience, Eden remains closely involved in the process. She is present in the atelier, grounded in the act of making, ensuring that each piece retains its integrity. Growth, for her, is not about scale alone, but about continuing to create with honesty and intention.

Looking ahead, what comes next feels like a natural deepening rather than a shift. There is room to expand beyond bridal, to explore new forms while holding onto the same emotional core. At its centre, the intention remains unchanged, to create pieces that are not only worn, but truly lived in.

In the end, it is not about what a bride is expected to wear. It is about what she chooses to carry with her, and how she chooses to be seen.

Enchanté Communication
PR & Advertisement Director: Xavier Tan Jiang Hoe
Founder of Eden Keshia: Eden Keshia

For more information, please visit:
Eden Keshia Instagram: @edenkeshia_
Eden Keshia Website: www.edenkeshia.com
Instagram: @houseofenchante
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Pearl bag, £895, Simone Rocha

DISH, £210, GEORG JENSEN

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J12