DELENG/2014/59909
AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2026, ₹300

Harper's BAZAAR INDIA

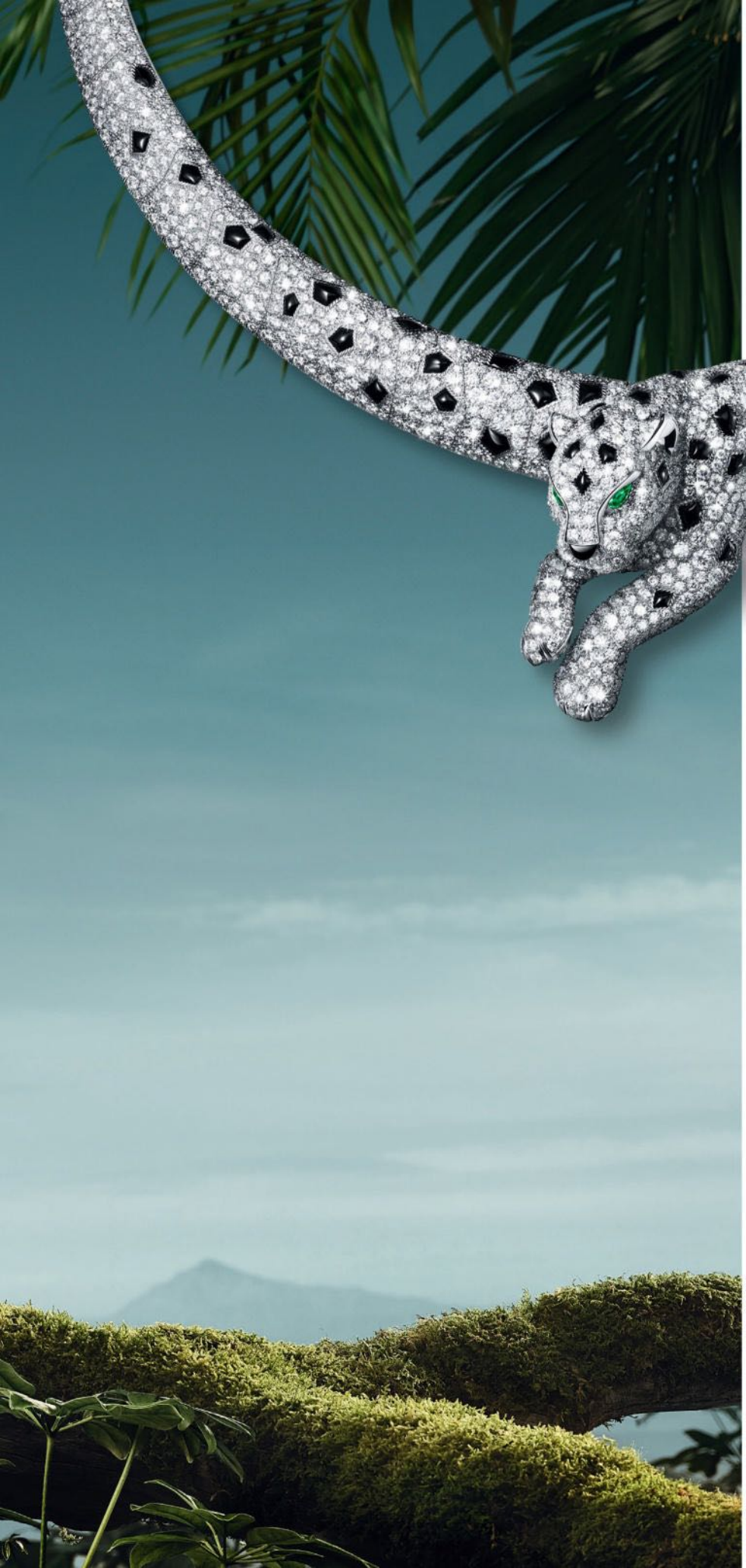
THE RESET ISSUE



Kiara

THE NEXT CHAPTER





Cartier

Crafting emotions

One invention at a time

A.-L. Breguet redefined the art of horology with his inventions. His pursuit of perfection continues to inspire those shaping the future. To celebrate this legacy, Breguet introduces the new Reine de Naples 9935, paying tribute to the first wristwatch.

BREGUET

1775



breguet.com


CHANEL
COCO
MADEMOISELLE
CHANEL
PARIS


COCO MADEMOISELLE
CRUSH ABSOLU
THE NEW FRAGRANCE

CONTENTS

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2026



Model Jasroop Kaur Singh
Photo credit: Vivi Suthathip

FEATURE

120 **A Role of Her Own:** Kiara Advani has always had a plan. It can all seem enviably certain, except that life has a way of rewriting even the best ones. Between the on-screen characters that ask more of her, motherhood, and learning to trust the unexpected, the actor talks about becoming. *By Kriti Shukla*

STYLE

34 **Material Language:** Transforming the precision of craft traditions into contemporary textile designs, Rimzim Dadu establishes the future of surface engineering in fashion. *Words by Shivpriya Bajpai; Photographs by Tongpangnuba Longchari*

40 **Divine Timing:** Alexander Fury enjoys an audience with Valentino's creative director Alessandro Michele, whose bold, disruptive approach—one that blends beauty with chaos, and tradition with innovation—is adding an unexpected chapter to the iconic Roman house's mythology. *Photographs by Agata Pospieszynska*

58 **Couture in the Heat:** Paris's couture season becomes a meditation on fantasy, excess, restraint, and the human hand in the age of AI. *By Anwesh Banerjee*



Tishani Doshi with Frankie at home.
Photo credit: Riccardo Vencato

JEWELS & WATCHES

86 **Lucky Charms:** Four quintessential symbols of Gabrielle Chanel's universe are re-imagined in a high jewellery collection that is steeped in myth and memory. *By Priyanka Khanna*

90 **Collector's Eye:** From Chinese antiquity to Persian tradition and Indian inheritance, Joanna Gong, Leila Kashanipour, and Ramya Giangola approach jewellery through the lens of their own histories. Here, they show us their jewellery boxes, sharing how they collect, what catches their eye, and their advice for building a collection of your own. *By Radhika Somaia*

94 **Summer Strings:** Part friendship bracelet, part holiday memento, beads are having a grown-up moment. *By Radhika Somaia*

CONTENTS

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2026



On the cover: Jacket, embroidered skirt, and J'Adior pumps; all **Dior**; earrings and ring, **Outhouse Jewellery**; and ring, **Ambir Jewels**.

Photographer: Bikramjit Bose; Stylist & Creative Director: Anaita Shroff Adajania; Hair Artist: Daksh Nidhi; Make-up Artist: Sandhya Shekar; Editorial Coordinator: Shalini Kanojia; Line Producer: Salim Memon; Set Designer: Yatin Powle; Assistant Stylist: Neona Bahri.

CONTENTS

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2026



Bespoke celestial opal collar necklace by Anthony Lent from Joanna Gong's Collection



Ballinastack, County Galway, January 1998. Photo Credit: Seamus Murphy

TALKING POINT

96 **Body Politics:** From female warriors to goddesses, artist Bharti Kher uses the body to explore power, belonging, memory, and change. *By Malika Halder*

102 **Objects of Desire:** House of Santal is placing South Asian collectible design at the heart of Manhattan's global luxury conversation. *By Radhika Iyengar*

104 **Poetic Instinct:** Tishani Doshi talks on beauty, birds, memory, and the strange alchemy through which ordinary encounters become poems. *By Akshaya Pillai*

108 **Imagined Lives:** Author Meg Mason on her latest book, the distance between a reader and a writer, and why she is fiercely protective of her new protagonist. *By Rutvik Bhandari*

116 **A Witness to Time:** After four decades behind the lens, Steve McCurry continues to romanticise the realities of the world through documentary photography. *By Jhanvi Duggal*

BEAUTY & WELLNESS

142 **Volume, Please:** 'Ozempic face' has given rise to a new beauty category. But is 'GLP-1 skincare' solving a real concern or simply capitalising on a trend? *Bazaar India* investigates. *By Kriti Shukla*

144 **In Transition:** Since your hormones are rewriting the rules, your skincare should follow suit. *By Jhanvi Duggal*

152 **Flight Mode:** Here's what flying really does to your skin—and how to protect it. *By Bani Sachar*

154 **Skin Secrets:** Secretomes are now emerging as the new frontier in regenerative skincare. *Bazaar India* breaks down the science. *By Tatiana Dias*

ESCAPE

171 **Rock of Ages:** Utah's desert is where ancient formations provide a dramatic backdrop to a secluded honeymoon—and the start of a new life built together. *By Marisa Abela*

176 **The Art of Staying In:** Located in the vibrant district of Aoyama, Soho House Tokyo borrows from Japan without turning it into a pastiche. *By Rasna Bhasin*

IN EVERY ISSUE

14 Editor's Letter

179 How Bazaar

IMAGE: COURTESY JOANNA GONG


MISSION TO EARTHPHASE
OMEGA
x
swatch
Speedmaster
SWISS MADE
Only available at selected Swatch stores

Harper's BAZAAR INDIA

Chairman & Editor-in-Chief
AROON PURIE

Vice Chairperson & Executive Editor-in-Chief
KALLI PURIE

Editor
RASNA BHASIN

Managing Editor
SHIVPRIYA BAJPAI

Assistant Editor
MALIKA HALDER

FASHION & FEATURES
Senior Features Writer JHANVI DUGGAL
Features Writer KRITI SHUKLA
Contributing Fashion Stylist TONGPANGNUBA LONGCHARI

ART
Art Director MANDEEP SINGH
Art Director SATENDER SHARMA
Assistant Art Director VINEET SINGH
Designer CHANDAN ARYA
Video Editor YASH SHAH
Video Editor YASH WARANG

ADMINISTRATION
Senior Editorial Co-ordinator POOJA SINGH
Editorial Co-ordinator SHALINI KANOJIA

DIGITAL
Digital Editor SONAL VED
Digital Managing Editor RUCHA SHARMA
Digital Assistant Editor SHREYA SHAH
Digital Features Editor EDEN NORONHA
Junior Features Editor SCHENELLE DSOUZA
Features Writer (Entertainment) SAGARIKA CHOUDHARY
Junior Writer SANTYA AHUJA
Social Media Manager TANMAY DINESH ASHAR
Social Media Executive EESHA JAIN
Social Media Executive SIDHI GOEL
Executive Assistant (Social Media) MOHIT KUMAR

SALES AND PUBLISHING
Chief Operating Officer (Lifestyle Division) and Publisher SAKSHI KOHLI
Vice President KAMALINEE CHATTERJEE
Deputy General Manager ABHINAV SETH
Senior Manager Sales POOJA ARORA
Senior Manager Sales RAJEEV DUBEY
Senior Manager Sales MEENAKSHI NAG
Manager Sales MOHIT SEHGAL
Executive KANGGANA MALIK

Senior Manager (Operations & Queries) NITIN BHOLA
(nitin.bhola@intoday.com)

SALES AND OPERATIONS
Assistant Vice President (Sales and Distribution) DEEPAK BHATT
General Manager (North) RAJEEV GANDHI
Regional Sales Manager (West) YOGESH GODHANLAL GAUTAM
Regional Sales Manager (East) MANAWER HOSSAIN

CONSUMER MARKETING SERVICES
Deputy General Manager (Operations)
G L RAVIK KUMAR

HEARST MAGAZINES INTERNATIONAL
President of Hearst Magazines International
JONATHAN WRIGHT
SVP/Global Editorial & Brand Director
KIM ST. CLAIR BODDEN
Global Editorial Director & Brand Director
ELÉONORE MARCHAND

INTERNATIONAL EDITIONS
Arabia, Australia, Brazil, China, Czech Republic, Ecuador, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Mexico, Malaysia, Netherlands, Qatar, Saudi, Serbia, Singapore, Spain, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, UK, US, Vietnam



Reine de Naples 8925 watch, Breguet, price on request

VOLUME 18 NUMBER 3
PUBLISHED AND DISTRIBUTED BY LIVING MEDIA INDIA LTD., BY PERMISSION OF HEARST COMMUNICATIONS, NEW YORK, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. **EDITORIAL OFFICE**: LIVING MEDIA INDIA LTD., INDIA TODAY MEDIAPLEX, FC-8, SECTOR-16A, FILM CITY, GAUTAM BUDH NAGAR, NOIDA-201 301, UTTAR PRADESH; PHONES: (120) 4807 100; NEW DELHI • **FOR SUBSCRIPTION ASSISTANCE CONTACT**: CUSTOMER CARE INDIA TODAY GROUP, C-9, SECTOR-10, NOIDA (UP) – 201301. E-MAIL: **wecare@intoday.com**; PHONE / WHATSAPP: +91 8597 778 778 (MONDAY TO FRIDAY, 10 AM – 6PM) • **IMPACT OFFICES**: 1201, 12TH FLOOR, TOWER 2A, INDIABULLS CENTRE (JUPITER MILLS)SB MARG, LOWER PAREL (WEST) MUMBAI-400013. • INDIA TODAY MEDIAPLEX , FC-8, SECTOR- 16A, FILM CITY, NOIDA – 201301 • 98-A, DR RADHAKRISHNAN SALAI, 2ND FLOOR, MYLAPORE, CHENNAI 600 004; PHONES: 28478526-41; TELEX: 041-6177 INTO IN; FAX: 28472178; CABLE: LIVMEDIA, CHENNAI • 201-204, RICHMOND TOWERS, 2ND FLOOR, 12 RICHMOND ROAD, BENGALURU, 560 025; PHONES: 2221 2448; 22213037; TELEX: 0845-2217 INTO IN; FAX: 080-2221 8335; CABLE: LIVING MEDIA BENGALURU. • 52, J.L. NEHRU ROAD, 4TH FLOOR, KOLKATA 700 071; PHONES: 2282 5398, 2282 7726, 2282 1922; FAX: 033-2282 7254, CABLE: LIVING MEDIA. KOLKATA • 6-3-885/7/B, SOMAJIGUDA, HYDERABAD, 500 082; PHONES: 331 1657, 339 0479; TELEX: 0425-2085 THOM IN. FAX: 040-339 0484. • 39/1045, 1ST FLOOR, KARAKKAT ROAD, COCHIN 682 016; PHONE: 0484-2377057, 2377058; FAX: 0484-2377059 • 2C, "SURYA RATH BLDG" 2ND FLOOR, BEHIND WHITE HOUSE, PANCHVATI, OFF. C.G. ROAD, AHMEDABAD-380 006; PHONES: 656 0393, 656 0929; FAX: 656 5293. • COPYRIGHT 1996, LIVING MEDIA INDIA LTD., ALL RIGHTS RESERVED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. REPRODUCTION IN ANY MANNER IS PROHIBITED. • PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY MANOJ SHARMA ON BEHALF OF LIVING MEDIA INDIA LIMITED. PRINTED AT THOMSON PRESS, INDIA LIMITED, 18-35 MILE STONE, DELHI MATHURA ROAD, FARIDABAD-121007, (HARYANA). PUBLISHED AT F-26, IST FLOOR, CONNAUGHT PLACE, NEW DELHI – 110 001. EDITOR: RASNA BHASIN. CORPORATE OFFICE: FC 8, SECTOR 16A, FILM CITY, NOIDA (UP) - 201301. HARPER'S BAZAAR DOES NOT TAKE THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR RETURNING UNSOLICITED PUBLICATION MATERIAL. • ALL DISPUTES ARE SUBJECT TO THE EXCLUSIVE JURISDICTION OF COMPETENT COURTS AND FORUMS IN DELHI/NEW DELHI ONLY. • REGISTERED OFFICE: F-26, IST FLOOR, CONNAUGHT PLACE, NEW DELHI – 110 001.

COPYRIGHT LIVING MEDIA INDIA LTD. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. REPRODUCTION IN ANY MANNER IS PROHIBITED

IMAGE: COURTESY THE BRAND



Mumbai: The Taj Mahal Palace Hotel · Colaba · Phone +91 8655644499 | Jio World Drive · BKC · Phone +91 9930555720 |
Delhi: The Taj Mahal Hotel · Phone + 91 9599511448 | DLF Emporio · Phone +91 9999266586 | The Chanakya · Phone +91 9971172343 |
T-3 Domestic Departure, IGI Airport · Phone +91 11 49631442 | **Hyderabad:** Taj Krishna Hotel · Phone+91 40 66777792 |
Bengaluru: Conrad · Phone +91 9901161354 | T-2 Domestic Departure, BIAL · Phone +91 9663398886 | **Chennai:** Palladium · Phone +91 8828009340 |
Express Avenue · Phone +91 44 48680857 | **Pune:** Phoenix Marketcity · Phone +91 20 66890500

EDITOR'S LETTER



I have often been told I feel too much. Rarely as a compliment. But somewhere between the good, the bad, and the truly unnecessary plot twists, I have realised that feeling too much may not be such a terrible thing after all. Feel the happiness, the sadness, the guilt, the grief, the ridiculous highs, and the spectacular lows. Feel all of it. Isn't that, after all, the whole point of being human?

I've been thinking about that especially this month, as we remember two extraordinary women, Dolly Parton and Gloria Steinem. Both, in very different ways, taught generations of women not to shrink themselves to fit somebody else's idea of who they should be.

Growing up, the September issue was my big present of the year. Friends and relatives travelling abroad were routinely instructed to bring back copies of international publications. I still feel that same excitement, but somewhere along the way I realised there is so much more I want these pages to hold.

Our theme this month is Reset, and it feels particularly apt.

The Gen Z of our part of the world has given me renewed hope. A generation we were perhaps too quick to dismiss as one consumed by screens, reels, and fleeting trends has reminded us that not just our future even our present is in our hands. That we have a responsibility to question, to speak up, and to fight not only for ourselves, but for those who cannot.

The devastating floods in Nepal have been another painful reminder of just how fragile our world is. We may already be late to some conversations around climate and responsibility, but surely late is better than never. A reset begins with accepting where we have gone wrong and choosing to do better.

Our cover star Kiara Advani is experiencing a reset of her own as she steps into motherhood, navigating that beautiful, complicated evolution of becoming something new without losing who you already are. Inside, artist Bharti Kher reminds us through her work that sometimes simply looking at something differently can change everything.

Perhaps that is my September reset too. I still love the clothes, the fantasy, and a fabulous shoe more than is probably reasonable. But increasingly, I care about what lies beyond all of it.

Gloria Steinem once said, "Whatever you want to do, just do it…Making a damn fool of yourself is absolutely essential." And perhaps that is as good a reminder as any that life was never meant to be lived too cautiously.

So feel too much. Care too much. Speak up. Change your mind. Start again. And occasionally, make a damn fool of yourself. There are worse ways to live.

Love and light,
Rasna

RasnaBhasin
EDITOR
HARPER'S BAZAAR INDIA

ON RASNA'S RADAR



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: *Belonging: A Journey of Love* by Sonia Gandhi, Harper Collins, ₹1,095; Liquid Matte Mousse in shade Rosey Nude, Huda Beauty, ₹2,250; iPhone Duo, Apple, ₹2,99,900; Old Soul candle stand XIII, Eina Ahluwalia X The House of Things, ₹23,000; Médaillon pouch, Dior, ₹3,45,000; leather sandals, Dries Van Noten, ₹87,240 approx; and Coco Mademoiselle Crush Absolu Eau de Parfum, Chanel, ₹15,250 for 50ml.

IMAGES: COURTESY THE BRANDS

1926 2026



Maserati Grecale Trofeo.
Engine V6 AWD, Acceleration 0–100 3.8 sec, 530 HP max speed 285 KM/H, Torque 620 NM.

100 YEARS OF THE TRIDENT

MASERATI GRECALE

Maserati

Maserati North India
info@maseratinorthindia.com
+91 97739 95000

VST Maserati (South India)
info@vst-maserati.in
+91 99023 88999

Navnit Maserati (West India)
sales@maserati-navnitgroup.com
+91 82913 02302

india.maserati.com





HAPPY SPORT

Chopard

CONTRIBUTORS



ON HER **FAVOURITE JEWELLERY PIECE**

RADHIKA SOMAIA
WRITER

"My favourite piece is a heart charm necklace by Elie Top, purchased on a whim during a visit to Paris. It was the first piece of jewellery I ever bought for myself, and it resonated far beyond the intrinsic value of fine jewellery."



ON THE **HOUSE OF SANTAL'S CURATORIAL APPROACH**

RADHIKA IYENGAR
WRITER

"One fascinating thing about House of Santal's curatorial approach is how it honours contemporary possibilities of legacy craft. The gallery celebrates South Asian design by showcasing pieces that reflect how traditional techniques can be reinterpreted as modern, collectible design.



ON A **STANDOUT MOMENT FROM PARIS COUTURE WEEK**

ANWESH BANERJEE
WRITER

"Matthieu Blazy's decision to end the Chanel show with a revenge dress instead of the traditional bridal gown was a fabulous reconfiguration and reinvention of House codes and archetypes that struck a chord with me. It felt provocative but not gimmicky, and exactly the kind of newness of creative direction we need today."



ON HER **FAVOURITE BOOK BY TISHANI DOSHI**

AKSHAYA PILLAI
WRITER

"*Small Days and Nights* because the book made me feel seen. It opens out into questions of belonging and what it means to make a home, but I love its complicated idea of empathy; how Grace can be consumed by her love for animals and yet find human intimacy and responsibility so difficult."

IMAGES: COURTESY THE CONTRIBUTORS

BAZAAR
style



Dress, jewellery, and shoes, all Dior

Inside Out

At the atelier with Rimzim Dadu; a deep dive into Alessandro Michele's bold vision for Valentino; a round up of Paris Couture Week; and the trends of the season.

PHOTOGRAPH: DARA DANENBERG-HELM; STYLING: RUTA JANE; MODEL: ARANTZA GOETT; HAIR & MAKE-UP ARTIST: NANETTE SOLIVAN; PHOTO ASSISTANTS: NICOLE MARIN AND MIGUEL BANDEIRA



Dior
Médaillon
belt, Dior

Heavy Medal

The iconic Dior Médaillon, tracing back to the oval-backed chairs that seated guests at Monsieur Christian Dior's first couture presentation on Avenue Montaigne in 1947, now takes centre stage as an oversized brass buckle, cast in an antique gold finish and engraved with the brand's name.

PHOTOGRAPH: HEIKKI KASKI




1


2


3

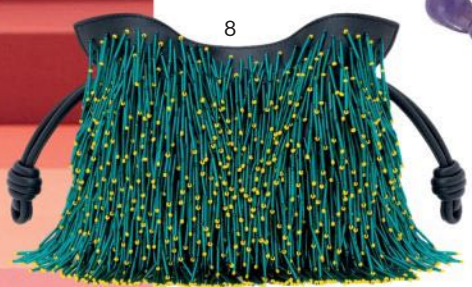

4

5


10


9


6


8


7

Life is a Party

The shades that were never meant to meet, until they did.

1. Spire Cascade midi dress, Christopher Esber, ₹91,160 approx; 2. Hanabi beaded clip-on earrings, Isabel Marant, ₹23,120 approx; 3. VeryDior M1U black mask sunglasses, Dior, ₹60,000; 4. Les Oiseaux Libérés necklace, Cartier, price on request; 5. Cape top, Balenciaga, ₹2,05,625 approx; 6. Asymmetric leaf godet skirt, Alaïa, ₹5,06,200; 7. Valoria sandal, Cult Gaia, ₹57,195 approx; 8. Mini Mimosa Flamenco clutch, Loewe, ₹4,12,000 approx; 9. Parade of Possibilities II necklace, Completedworks, ₹64,200; 10. Triple crown ruby ring, David Webb, price on request.

IMAGES: COURTESY THE BRANDS; CURATED BY TRUSHIETA NARINGREKAR



Madison shoulder bag, Bottega Veneta

Love Letter

Bottega Veneta revisits its long-standing commitment to understated elegance with a tribute to Madison Avenue in New York—where the House opened its first store outside of Italy in 1972. The shoulder bag, Madison, reflects the enduring connection to the city and features the signature Intrecciato leather with malleable memory flap, sculptural knot detail, and chic cross-body chain.

IMAGES: COURTESY THE BRAND AND GETTY IMAGES

RAAYA
BY ATMOSPHERE
MALDIVES





EXPERIENCE
An Adventure to Remember...

Discover the captivating essence of RAAYA by Atmosphere, a private island where sun-drenched days flow into star-kissed nights, surrounded by turquoise waters, powder-soft beaches and enchanting beach and water villas. Embark on a Farm to Table to Soul journey at Seb's Farm, where organic produce and locally sourced seafood are transformed into vibrant, heartfelt cuisine. The exclusive **RAAYA Plan™** curates for you a seamless blend of gourmet dining, wellness, sports, underwater adventures and island experiences. Whether with family, friends or a loved one, RAAYA invites you to slow down, reconnect and embrace island life, with warm hospitality, unforgettable experiences and the freedom to make every moment your own.

KUDAKURATHU ISLAND • RAA ATOLL • THE MALDIVES

@raayamaldives

RAAYA-ATMOSPHERE.COM





1



2



3



4



5

Fresh Pick

Blooming beyond bouquets and into fashion's most beautiful forms.

1. Wild Divine coral necklace, Outhouse Jewellery, ₹23,000; 2. Pink sapphire floral white gold diamond earrings, Amrapali Jewels, ₹4,21,900; 3. Ivora, The YV Brand, ₹17,000; 4. Spiral ring ruby, Mèroh, ₹1,97,000; 5. La Vie En Rose short block heel, Papa Don't Preach, ₹25,500.

IMAGES: COURTESY THE BRANDS; CURATED BY TRUSHIETA NARINGREKAR


All FOR LOVE
PERFECT MOMENTS,
PERFECT MEMORIES
Every celebration deserves
a perfect setting.
CELEBRATE HERE
More than 45 hotel brands.
Find your perfect venue on ALL.com
All
ACCOR
RAFFLES
Fairmont
SOFITEL
pullman
GRAND MERCURE
HOTELS AND RESORTS
NOVOTEL
MERCURE
ibis
ibis STYLES
ENNISMORE
ROSWYN
A MORGANS ORIGINALS HOTEL
the hoxton




1


2


3


4


10


9


7


8


5


6

House Rules

Who said comfort had to stay home?

1. Rhodes top, Khaite, ₹1,94,500; 2. Lattice crochet visor, Magda Butrym, ₹40,800; 3. Monarch round-frame acetate sunglasses, Jacques Marie Mage, ₹83,980 approx; 4. Knotted loose-fit crepe top, Lanvin, ₹2,38,600 approx; 5. Cotton and suede miniskirt, Miu Miu, ₹2,85,625 approx; 6. Bisous wedge 95, Aquazzura, ₹79,400; 7. The small Turismo Crochet bag, Jacquemus, ₹1,66,485 approx; 8. Chain Link ring in metal and pearl, Givenchy, ₹45,000; 9. Chunky cuff bracelet, Victoria Beckham, ₹1,12,600 approx; 10. Mini drop earrings, Bottega Veneta, ₹1,05,000.

IMAGES: COURTESY THE BRANDS; CURATED BY TRUSHIETA NARINGREKAR

Skin by Bio-Oil®





Prints Charming

Every once in a while, dressing up becomes an art form.

1. Reversible silk and wool waistcoat, Etro, ₹1,59,906; 2. Tyra visor, Helen Kaminski, ₹11,425 approx; 3. Drop aviator sunglasses, Bottega Veneta, ₹57,346; 4. Jacket in silk habotai, Saint Laurent, ₹2,97,757 approx; 5. GG Supreme print silk pant, Gucci, ₹1,76,554 approx; 6. Men's close toe slides in emerald, JW Anderson, ₹84,900 approx; 7. Large Romy bag, Celine, ₹4,26,500 approx; 8. Silk ascot with pointy motif, Valentino, ₹49,130 approx; 9. Metal and resin necklace from Coco Beach 2026 collection, Chanel, ₹2,03,200; 10. Braided leather T-bracelet, Tom Ford, ₹49,935 approx; 11. The Solaris ring, Veert, ₹62,500; 12. Saffiano leather bolo tie, Prada, ₹48,518 approx.

IMAGES: COURTESY THE BRANDS; CURATED BY TRUSHIETA NARINGREKAR

Oberoi
HOTELS & RESORTS



Everything beyond belongs to the wild.
Everything here belongs to you.

1800 108 0606 | reservations@oberoigroup.com | oberoihotels.com



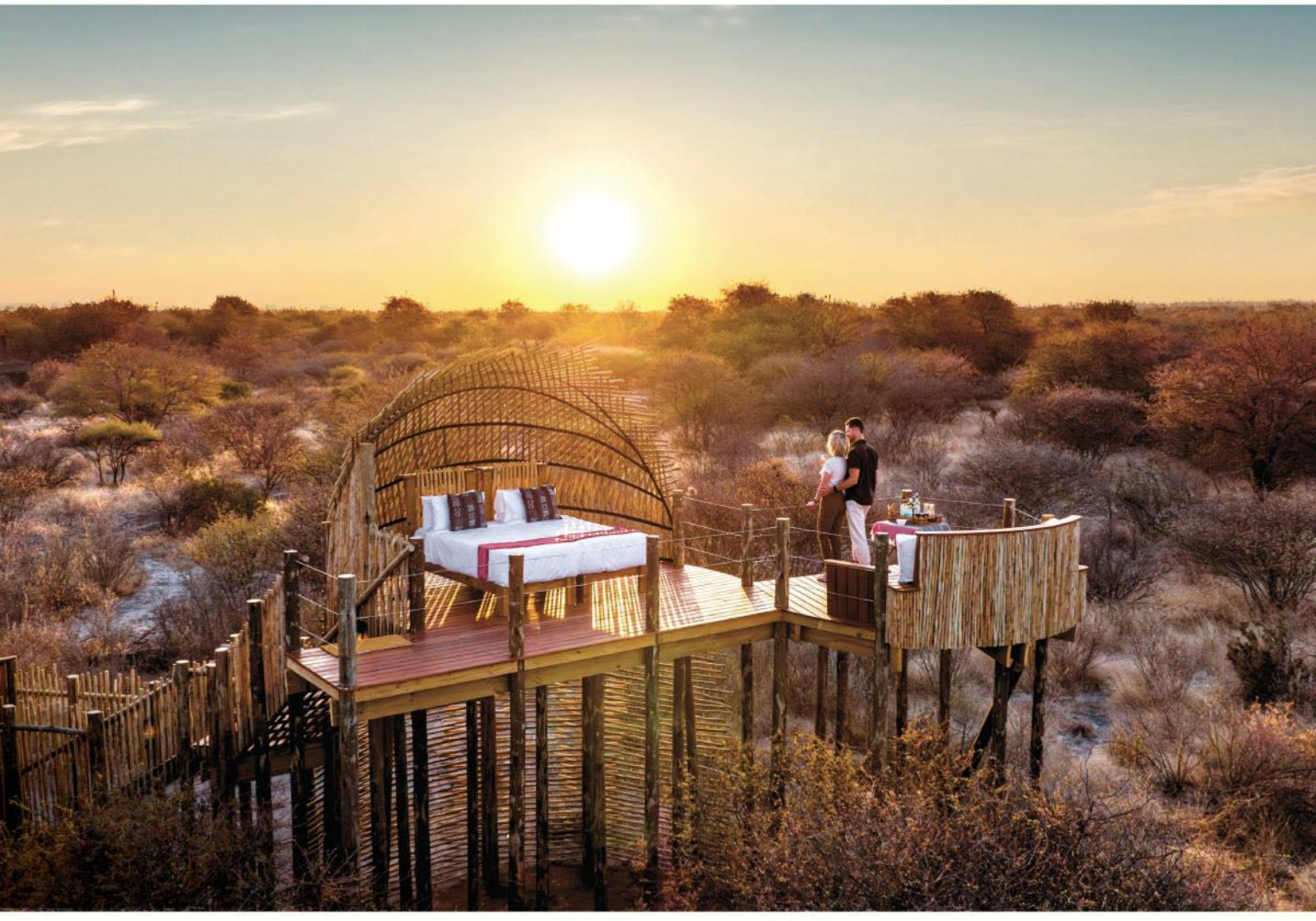
From left: Jelly Drop 50 sandals in light lagoon, silver, and amber, all Jimmy Choo

Jelly Season

Wave-worn curves and a salt-water shimmer have been spotted all along this season's shoreline—every sighting tracing back to the unmistakable sting of a jelly Jimmy Choo.

IMAGE: COURTESY THE BRAND; WORDS: CHARLOTTE MARSH-WILLIAMS

EVOLVE BACK
RESORTS



Spirit of Kalahari

Evolve Back Gham Dhao Lodge, a 30,000-acre private game reserve bordering Botswana's Central Kalahari Game Reserve, offers an immersive Kalahari experience, from its distinctive wildlife and spectacular night skies to the timeless culture of the San people.

info@evolveback.com

COORG ◆ HAMPI ◆ KABINI ◆ BOTSWANA

www.evolveback.com



Artichoke clutch, Loewe

...Go Green?

Loewe's layered leather clutch, in a vibrant green hue and glossy gold hardware, is straight out of a farmers' market shopping list that has got us in an 'artichoke' hold.

By JHANVI DUGGAL

IMAGE: COURTESY THE BRAND

WHY DON'T YOU...

...WATCH

MONSTER: THE LIZZIE BORDEN STORY

Ryan Murphy and Ian Brennan return with the fourth chapter of their biographical crime anthology. Set around the 1892 Fall River killings, this season delves into the life and trial of Lizzie Borden. Premiering September 17 on Netflix, expect a dark, atmospheric take on a case that has fascinated true-crime obsessives.



...ADD

TO CART

The Adidas Originals X Limited Edt Superstar Consortium—Made in India celebrates Indian craftsmanship and design heritage through intricate detailing and symbolic motifs. With only 350 pairs available globally, it is equal parts a collector's piece and a wearable work of art. Each pair comes in a custom box inspired by the humble matchbox. Inside, there is a custom shoe bag, motif-adorned socks, interchangeable red and blue laces alongside the classic black and white sets, and a flame charm.





...TWIST

A CLASSIC ITALIAN DESSERT

Give your afternoon pick-me-up a seasonal upgrade by pouring ceremonial-grade matcha over a scoop of vanilla ice cream. Equal parts dessert and caffeine fix, a matcha affogato is the internet's latest obsession. Take it a notch above and add toppings of your choice—crushed pistachios or a dash of maple syrup.



...PUT ON

YOUR DANCING SHOES

Fred Again is finally bringing his genre-blurring electronic sound to India for the first time. The Grammy-winning producer will make his India debut in December with shows across Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, and Bengaluru, promising an immersive live experience built around his emotive, sample-led sound.



...JOT DOWN

A RAINY DAY READING LIST

Instead of doom-scrolling through another rainy afternoon, curate a stack of books you've been meaning to read. Dive into a fashion biography like *Gods and Kings: The Rise and Fall of Alexander McQueen and John Galliano*, pick up from the Booker Prize 2026 longlist such as, *The Shadow of the Object*, or return to a timeless classic like *To Kill A Mockingbird*. The monsoon afternoons make settling in with a good book feel like the perfect indulgence.

IMAGES: COURTESY THE BRANDS, INSTAGRAM, AND GETTY IMAGES

Material Language

Transforming the precision of craft traditions into contemporary textile designs, Rimzim Dadu establishes the future of surface engineering in fashion.

Words by SHIVPRIYA BAJPAI
Photographs by TONGPANGNUBA LONGCHARI

People think it's an obvious downtime once you are done with fashion week or any show for that matter, but it's the complete opposite," quips designer Rimzim Dadu, as she pulls a chair upholstered in her signature steel wire textile to sit. "You get into the logistics of everything, have to cost it, and make sure it reaches all your stores." And for Dadu, it's a colossal challenge in particular, as her material experimentations don't follow the traditional cut-and-sew mandate. "Additionally, training our retail team adequately is of utmost importance, because we, literally the design team here, just sit and work in a vacuum," she laughs. The collection in question, Inlae, reimagines the traditional Mughal craftsmanship of inlay and stone-setting through mother-of-pearl at the heart of material innovation.

Individually cut and buffed pieces of mother-of-pearl are laid out precisely on a large wooden table, and there's an artisan busy embedding it, almost meditatively, on what appears to be a lehenga made out of a metallic textile, as we arrive at Dadu's atelier in Noida. The designer, caught in the middle of a weekday rush in August, is unhurried when it comes to talking about her design interventions, team, and fashion with intent. It's almost like the white-washed walls, minimalistic interiors, potted plants, and framed swatches—from *The Failed Triumphs* collection acknowledging the experiments that didn't work out in the larger scheme of things (a part of the designer's larger exhibit at KNMA in 2022, titled *Rite of Passage*)—are intentional to balance the inner workings of a thought chamber.

For Dadu, what started in 2007 as a fashion graduate from Pearl Academy in Delhi who had applied to Lakmē Fashion Week's then debut initiative, GenNext, has unfolded in multiple ways—through learnings, unlearnings, and above all, by staying true to the commitment to surface



Rimzim Dadu



Details from the Inlae collection



The designer at work

engineering. "For the longest time, I didn't care how much money I made or didn't. It has been a journey of that little kid out of college who didn't want to put a price tag on her 'art'." Understanding the business and especially the audience was no small feat. Her now-signature cording technique with industrial materials like steel was an alien concept and, more often than not, regarded as too avant-garde for Indian fashion buyers. People had all sorts of questions: This is so structured, who's going to wear it? Who's going to wear metals as clothes? "I remember these multi-designer stores back then would take my short dress and suggest turning it into a CKD (Completely Knocked Down) kit in a churidar, kurta, and dupatta format," she laughs. But the designer was always sure about her vision for surface texture innovation and didn't deter from her path to be perceived as 'palatable'.

It elaborates on the designer's stance on multi-retail stores, an otherwise successful business model for young and established designers alike; having associated only with Pernia's Pop-up Shop, she has shied away from others at large. "Multi-designer boutiques would always pick up the safest things to sell, which would make sense for them. But I've always felt that's not the true representation of my brand." A Rimzim Dadu rack with ten safe pieces won't justify the years invested in design solutions. "I don't think the multi-designer boutiques, at least then, were ready to make the sort of investment in pieces that they felt were a hit or a miss. Or somebody might not even pick it up. It also involves educating the staff—a metal sari has to be draped a certain way."

It's the measured moves to expand the scope of craftsmanship with technology-oriented solutions that have led Dadu to build a widely lauded brand over the years. The metal sari worn by Sonam Kapoor in 2016 at Cannes which involved hammering down stainless steel into fine wires and painstakingly sewing them on textile; the silicone jamdani sari created for Devi Art Foundation that required trial and errors on a makeshift loom; leather corded patola skirt—a permanent display at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London; introduction of zardozi on metal for her couture debut in 2024; a metallic sari installation in collaboration with Cartier for the 100-year celebration of Trinity; and the recent experiments with mother-of-pearl—she has been consistently frontlining material experimentations.







A day's work at the atelier







Glimpses of mother-of-pearls at the studio



Accessories by the designer and a couch upholstered in her signature steel wires on display

A designer thrives on being recognised by their signature. But there's always this constant push-and-pull that Dadu points out. "Let's say developing the steel-wire textiles took years of work to perfect. I can't just throw it away three or four seasons later. And there's always the question of sustainability in design per se. Somebody who bought the metal sari in 2016 should not feel that it's outdated now." Consistency is directly related to sustainability from the design point of view, to give a person who's invested in that piece value for money. Striking 'that' balance is imperative for her.

Dadu has never been a fan of tags; rather, she consciously refrains from them. Case in point: her India Couture Week debut two years back, despite pushing the boundaries of conventional prêt from the very beginning. "I can't make that [prêt or couture] distinction. In fact, the Shape of Becoming collection, ideally a prêt line, involved technicalities and details of couture. And when we sat down to do the costings, my core team was worried and asked for 'prêt-like' options. I genuinely tried, but this is what [couture techniques] comes naturally to us. It's very difficult for us to make traditional ready-to-wear."

> "There's no one aesthetic that defines India. It can be a single sari, a modern Banarasi or patola; it could be metal crafts or bandhanis. It can also be the richest of silks..."

Her design process relies heavily on R&D and involves a fair amount of back-and-forth. It could involve making swatches and sketches, replicating ideas on slightly larger formats or textiles to assess consistency in shape and form, and several attempts to perfect it. "We can never have a collection sketched out and start producing it. It's always done in micro steps. For instance, the silicone jamdani sari took almost two years to make as the initial version contracted as soon as the woven textile came out of the loom, and we had to do it all over again." The key is to adapt faster and constantly solve design challenges. "A lot of times I tell my team that it has become a math problem where, say, a five-inch grid has to be three at the waist. It's essentially a lot of problem-solving skills." But for Indian *karigars*, who are often well-versed with traditional materials, textiles, and craft techniques, how do these extreme experiments land? I ask. "They don't have apprehensions about upskilling. Rather, if I tell them we will keep things simple, they laugh about it. Some of them have been with me for 10, 12, and even 15 years. As I've grown, they've also grown with me," she admits readily. There are times when they come up with technical solutions when the design team struggles to give form to an idea, I am told.

With each passing year and collection, Dadu has carefully widened her artistic horizons—from a prominent accessories line including bags, belts, and shoes to a dedicated menswear category, an e-commerce website, and retail expansions in Delhi and Hyderabad. Retail experience, in her words, "is the first touchpoint for consumers and an opportunity for you to transport them to your world. Spaces should be able to ignite an emotion that always stays with the person." And, as for her plans, "A lot is happening, actually," she pauses and continues, "We're opening a new flagship in Mehrauli in about two months. The metal sari has completed ten years. Next year, the brand will turn 20; we have our hands full." Having sold more than 3,000 saris, Dadu fondly recalls how the first bride came up to her that same year, asking the designer to convince her family about the garment. Created in 2016 as a one-off editorial piece and pushing the brand to a meteoric rise, is 'the' sari emblematic of 'India modern' in fashion, as she has been consistently enduring craft traditions into a contemporary language? I ask. "There's no one aesthetic that defines India. It can be a single sari, a modern Banarasi or patola; it could be metal crafts or bandhanis. It can also be the richest of silks. But yes, I do feel that the world needs to see it, and it's not about seeking external validation. If it can bring better trade opportunities and revenue to India, and its artisans, why not?" Dadu asks rhetorically. ■



Framed swatches on the wall



Alessandro Michele



Divine Timing

ALEXANDER FURY enjoys an audience with Valentino's creative director Alessandro Michele, whose bold, disruptive approach—one that blends beauty with chaos, and tradition with innovation—is adding an unexpected chapter to the iconic Roman house's mythology.

Photographs by AGATA POSPIESZYNSKA

In a grand office, in the grand Palazzo Mignanelli that serves as the imposing headquarters to the grand house of Valentino in Rome, its creative director Alessandro Michele looks oddly at home. It's odd because that grand office, a former ballroom on the palazzo's *piano nobile*, proportioned accordingly and with an intricate vaulted-wood ceiling, looks like nothing less than some Vatican offshoot, a set primed and ready for Conclave to film a few extra scenes. The vast room was specifically chosen for the late, great Valentino Garavani—known universally, respectfully, as Mr Valentino. He wasn't a pope of fashion but, in the words of *Women's Wear Daily*, the 'Sheikh of Chic', and this room was intended as a suitably impressive 'frame', according to his business partner Giancarlo Giammetti. During the palazzo's renovation by Tommaso Ziffer and Massimo Zompa in the 1980s, Giammetti declared: "One has to know one has arrived in Valentino's study." Oh, you still know it today.

You do, however, also know that Michele isn't Valentino. The two don't look—nor indeed design—alike. Actually, they couldn't be more different. With his beard and flowing Twelve Disciples hair, 53-year-old Michele—the former creative director of Gucci, now two years into his new role—more readily resembles the beatific Renaissance saints whose likeness once hung on his studio's soaring walls than the dapper, suited-and-booted Valentino-male archetype. Today, he's seated before an oil painting of an Elysian scene that almost looks like a theatrical backdrop, and is wearing a white T-shirt printed with the slogans APOLLON and DYONISOS in that bright, signature shade of scarlet known throughout the world as Valentino red.

Those two gods—Greek, incidentally, rather than Roman—represent opposite poles: harmony and divine order versus passion, emotion, and instinct. Valentino definitely belongs to the former camp; Michele is more 50/50. He's kind of the fashion god of chaos, honestly—he has sent models trailing pellucid satins in the gutters of Hollywood Boulevard, out onto an operating-theatre catwalk carrying facsimiles of their own heads and, for his debut Valentino haute couture show, wearing ballgowns of breathtaking beauty and Luchino Viscontian proportions juxtaposed with lucha libre-inspired masks. He has already staged a Valentino presentation in a sweaty reproduction of a public bathroom, which raised many eyebrows and some hackles.

The opposing poles at play in his reimagined Valentino were amply demonstrated by a spectacular Autumn/Winter 2026 Ready-To-Wear show. It was held in the rather more refined environs of the Palazzo Barberini in Rome, the first in his own and the brand's hometown. Rome is, for Michele, an essential component that shapes his approach to fashion, and that of Mr Valentino, too. But their perspectives of the city are divergent. "Rome, it's about very different kinds of beauties," he says. "There is one that is solemn; it's incredible; it's big. The beauty of the Greek and Latin language of the goddesses and gods, the majesty of the marble of the fontana." He allies those goddesses with Valentino's idealised women, perfectly draped in stylised plissé silk. "But, on the other side, there is the mess of all these layers, different kinds of messages and emotions." Indeed, traipsing through Rome to the Piazza di Spagna, overlooked by Valentino's palazzo, is to time-travel with mind-boggling speed through architecture that runs the gamut from the ancient world to the Renaissance, the Baroque period to the 1900s bourgeoisie and 1930s rationalism, all at once. "It's like you are in front of the most colossal movie from Hollywood—with the biggest budget for the biggest ceiling, the biggest room, the biggest window, the biggest palace." He's laughing. "And also the biggest mess." You can see that mix in his Valentino clothes—if there's one thing Michele is bringing to Valentino's impeccable Roma, it's a welcome bit of messiness.

That is perhaps why Michele called this collection Interferenze. Indeed, the parade of post-modern beauty, comprising unanticipated combinations of full-length fur coats, leggings and exquisite lace and chiffon gowns worn with globules of gems, felt like just that, as they passed through frescoed salons that, Michele says, seem larger than a football field. They didn't belong. But the title was broader than just these clothes. "The way I work, it's always like an interference," Michele says softly, thoughtfully. "The work of a creative director over the past 20 years, it's being an interferenza or interference in the story of a brand, in the work of someone else. And it's beautiful, the way that two different things, they go together—they come together, to create something new."

His interferenza is especially pointed at Valentino. You wonder at the common ground to be found between a fastidious couturier who, as a child, perhaps apocryphally, cried until he vomited when his mother tried to make him add a 'coarse' bow-tie to an outfit, and the aforementioned madcap creative chaos that had characterised Michele's approach to fashion since he first emerged on the global stage as creative director of Gucci a decade ago. You can imagine the legendarily soignée Swans who comprised Valentino's imperious aristocratic clientele turning up their noses at the grubby, bohemian, rock-and-roll waifs and strays that Michele adores. And, although he fits right in to Valentino's office, Michele himself readily acknowledges those dichotomies, even in terms of the continuum of the house's creative direction. "Pierpaolo and Maria Grazia, they were

"I think that I'm trying to invent and create a movie around a world. I always look at the big picture."



All clothes, from a selection, Valentino Autumn/Winter 2026 collection



like the nephew and niece of Valentino,"says Michele of Piccioli and Chiuri, the designers who led the house's creative direction—first as a duo, then Piccioli solo—between 2008 and 2024. They began work at the label in 1999, just before Michele himself joined Gucci, culminating in a long stint as its creative director. "I'm the really new one," is how Michele describes his place at Valentino, given that many members of staff have served for multiple decades. "I'm looking at the things as a guest or the new inhabitant of the house."

That is how Michele can challenge our preconceptions of Valentino, by mashing together edge with elegance, by twisting those hallmark evening dresses with something as simple as the kind of wrong shoe, glove or skew-whiff hat that Mr Valentino himself would never have dreamt of adding. Yet there are undeniable links forged between the founder and his newest guest. An unexpected one is glamour, something you readily associate with Valentino's sleek evening gowns, for instance. They're almost synonymous. Michele? With collections that have referenced the geek chic of *The Royal Tenenbaums*, not so much. But Michele begs to differ. "I've been very attracted to the glamorous world when I was younger, from Hollywood, from Jean Harlow... I'm discovering that I like glamour also from my point of view.' He smiles. 'I think I've been very rebellious, playing this game."

Hollywood is an interesting take—because cinema is something else that directly connects the two. While an assistant at Jean Dessès in the 1950s, Valentino sketched "dream dresses" for the actresses of his day—one of the first was named Elizabeth, as in Taylor. (Valentino would later dress her, possibly most famously for her final wedding, to Larry Fortensky, in 1991.) Michele, too, has a fascination with film; his mother worked at Cinecittà, the famed Roman studios, assisting a movie executive, exposing her son to the spectacle of Italy's own Hollywood, peopled with Fellini, Rossellini, Bertolucci and the rest—including, actually, Taylor, during her turn in Mankiewicz's 1963 *Cleopatra*. Michele's mother used to tell him stories about rubbing shoulders with her at coffee shops in the city.

Michele, accordingly, compares himself to a film director. "I think that I'm trying to invent and create a movie around a world," he says. "I always look at the big picture." And, like a director, he sees his role as trying to "invent with this script something new".

Unlikely though it seems, it is undeniably true that Michele's Valentino is rooted in the script written by the founder, to a far greater degree than his predecessors. "I don't feel guilty taking different things," he says, and he has, accordingly, plundered the archives, referencing obscure grabs from Valentino's 1980s heyday, which Michele finds perpetually fascinating. In his first collection, there was a jumble of outright referential pieces, from filmy lace dresses to Coromandel-sequined jackets (a note: Valentino's versions predate Karl Lagerfeld's at Chanel by six years). His first haute couture show proposed a jumbotron-scale reissue of a red ruffled tulle dress photographed by Deborah Turbeville in 1977. And some other looks might graft the exquisite draped bodice of a *Bonfire of the Vanities* Valentino evening gown to jeans, say, or transpose a filmy lace lady-who-lunches blouse to top off a pair of grungy Y-front briefs on a guy.

Michele was born in 1972 and grew up in Rome: he remembers his first sighting, aged 13, of Mr Valentino, clutching his pugs and framed through the windows of the new McDonald's in Piazza di Spagna. (How about that for the type of high-low contrast that electrifies Michele's work?) "He was like an epiphany," he says, recalling that unlikely first sighting. "Like a god."

Mr Valentino was—is—thus revered in his adopted hometown. He actually grew up in Voghera in Lombardy, some 300 miles away, but through sheer force of will, became the most Roman of couturiers, indelibly entwined with the Eternal City. When the designer died in January, aged 93, his funeral had the scale and ceremony of that of a state potentate. As a form of homage, Michele opened his following haute couture show with a slender column dress in Valentino red. The Roman ready-to-wear offering closed with a similar number that seemed a throwback to a Valentino original, but wasn't. "That dress, it looked so Valentino," he says. "I was thinking about the era of Elsa Peretti working with Tiffany—the shape must be very organic and chic, but also sexy, because you can really feel the body inside. I was trying to say, this is not just a colour, this is a statement, it's a state of mind, of life, of the way that you want to look and how the women were... There was nothing, just a pair of earrings and the dress. And it's not really me."

Facing off with that legacy must be daunting—to throw out another Roman reference, a designer like Michele has to be Janus, looking back and forwards at the same time. He was also, perhaps, glancing over his shoulder to see the reactions of Valentino and Giammetti, both looming presences. Giammetti attended Michele's shows for the brand, applauding loudly; and although Valentino was too unwell to be there in person, Michele could still sense him. "It's very strange, that he is not any more with us."

Did he ever seek Valentino's approval? Michele takes a moment to pause, to reflect. "It probably was something unconscious," he says, slowly. "I would say yes, because knowing that Mr Valentino was probably watching the show… I feel always very free and very connected with the things that I'm doing, but I think that, in a very unconscious way, something was going on inside me. And, as you know, sometimes that's stronger than the conscious way'"

It's also a natural question to ask what he feels he has inherited from Valentino—aesthetically, and philosophically. "He founded this brand and he really showed the world the power of imagination, the power of creativity, the power of a colour, the power of an attitude. It's like the power of the little detail, on these huge frescoes. I have never been in such a powerful brand in terms of creation.' ■











Dress, Azzopardi Studio; and jewellery, Anabela Chan

Summer Epilogue

The streets of old San Juan become a canvas for sculptural silhouettes and sun-drenched palettes, capturing the last warmth of the season.

Photographs by DARA DANENBERG-HELM

Styling by RUTA JANE



Slip dress, scarf, and shoes, all Erdem



Dress, Taller Marmo; earrings, Anabela Chan; and heeled wedges, Aquazzura



Dress and jewellery, all Dior



Two-piece set, Johannes Warnke; and earrings, Maison Lumière



Cardigan, bralette, faux fur stole, skirt, and shoes, all Simone Rocha



Dress, Dries Van Noten; sunglasses, Kimeze; jewellery, YSSO; and shoes, Manolo Blahnik



Dress, Lurline;
necklace, YSSO

Model: Arantza Goett; Hair &
Make-up Artist: Nanette
Solivan; Photo Assistants:
Nicole Marin and
Miguel Bandeira

Couture in the Heat

Paris's couture season becomes a meditation on fantasy, excess, restraint, and the human hand in the age of AI.

By ANWESH BANERJEE



ARTWORK BY TRUSHIETA NARINGREKAR; IMAGES: COURTESY THE BRANDS AND GETTY IMAGES

Yes, Paris is beautiful in the rain. And in the golden, buttery embrace of a summer sun. Imagine this town in the '20s, through the rain and the sun. The writers, the artists, the designers. Dreamy? Yes. Now imagine the city in a heatwave.

Hundreds of people—city dwellers, office-goers, creatives, tourists, students, lovers—jumping into Canal Saint-Martin to find a moment of respite from the torturous bearings of the sun. Hallowed maisons rescheduling their shows days before their runways, citing the unbearable heat as a reason. Editors queuing outside venues in shorts, tank tops, and fans; their usual stilettos swapped with sliders and ballet flats. Air-conditioned clothing, the kind you only see in Ridley Scott productions or Rick Owens runways, finally becoming a roadside reality. In short, as Paris burned through a historically hot July, the fashion industry got a fall-winter couture season for the books.

First came the larger concerns. Climate change was no longer a headline to scroll past while a faltering global economy raised questions about the relevance of haute couture. And beneath it all lingered the anxiety of artificial intelligence: could four isolated days in Paris, the Mecca of design and creativity, really quiet the insecurities it provoked? As the global fashion community descended upon Paris for sophomore couture outings at Dior and Chanel, and new chapters at Balenciaga and Jean Paul Gaultier, these questions found surprisingly reassuring answers. Sometimes through metallic pleats, often through distortions of material and form, but always saved by finely embroidered sartorial imaginations of seasoned couturiers that seemed far from shy of commenting on the state of affairs that surround us today.



FANTASY AS MACABRE

Very few people in today's world of couture and dressmaking know how to tell a story like Daniel Roseberry. His ability to evoke a sense of awe barely stands second to his ability to fearlessly embrace the macabre, often coming up with shapes and forms that provocatively evoke the darkness of our times. This season at Schiaparelli with The Abyss, Roseberry took us into the depths of the ocean, from where fantastical, Ursula-like tentacled creatures emerged onto the runway. Roseberry began his collection with an attempt at imagining what the deeply human act of making couture would look like in a future that currently appears dotted with the replicative possibilities of AI. His ruminations took him to an atelier outside Paris whose work with silicone and latex led Roseberry to develop swathes of double-sided satin-like fabric that then got translated into distorted jackets and breastplates—sensuous in their construction, yet disturbingly eerie in their sheen.

Yet, hope was to be found in his closing looks, which included a homage to Gaudí's iconic architecture through floral embroideries that included thousands of flowers sewn into the fabric and kept alive for days in the atelier with sugar water. The closing look, which paired a silicone breastplate—complete with muscular curvatures and veiny details—with a feathered skirt resembling the spikes of a sea urchin, was Roseberry's plaintive vision of humanity heading towards uncertain atrophy.

FANTASY AS VENGEANCE

If fantasy became a tool to reflect on the unknown horrors of the future for Roseberry, for Matthieu Blazy at Chanel it was a lens to filter the joys and travails of womanhood. Unbothered by the fussiness of previously established House codes, Blazy's second couture collection, like the ones before, kept probing at something deeper: who truly was Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel as a woman, before anything else? Blazy began his journey with an old book of fairy tales that he found in Mademoiselle's apartment. A laborious mood board of sprouting beanstalks that Blazy himself planted at his atelier became a recurring motif, as the Grand Palais runway stood populated with Jumanji-inspired giant psychedelic flowers and vines luring viewers into their invading snares.

They grew into the opening look, a sheer vest and skirt in rough guipure that brought to mind a magnified tweed weave, paired with Coco's leather-bound volume of fairy tales that inspired the collection itself. Then came vine embroidery crawling with 3D blossoms, setting the stage for a line-up dense with flora and fauna—a cornerstone of Blazy's aesthetic. Spidery flowers climbed up a lilac linen shift dress with a pleated skirt while insect-shaped buttons nestled on a glistening black jacket speckled with poison-ivy green. Minauderies, a treat for a select few devoted collectors, cropped up as magpie nests while heels elsewhere emerged with the figure of Jack clutching onto his heaven-reaching vine.

But Blazy's final masterstroke of whimsical humour came with the decision to end the show not with a traditional Chanel bride, but with a woman in an off-shoulder black dress (which also celebrates its centennial anniversary this year), hemmed with feathers. Chanel, as Blazy rightfully pointed out after the show, never got married, and this final look of liberative autonomy was her revenge on the happily-ever-after we ascribe to our women.







CONSTRUCTION AS RESTRAINT

At Dior, after Magdalene Odundo, Jonathan Anderson turned his attention this season to the works of Lynda Benglis, the American artist whose boundary-pushing work across painting, sculpture, and textiles translated on the leafy Musée Rodin runway as wrapped, tied, and metallic fan pleats by Dior's atelier. One minute, silver pleats were exploding outward from an asymmetric cocktail dress; the next, trouser suits with waisted, frilled black jackets were matched with white bias-cut silk trousers. Among the collection of clutches were purses covered in antique Indian chintz; others, made of porcelain, were decorated with water lilies.

There was some relief in seeing Anderson comfortably settling down within his own vision for the House of Dior, if one remembers the anxiety that marked his first womenswear outing in 2025. It is no mean feat to even attempt to take up stewardship of a Maison as widely scrutinised as Dior. But Anderson's biggest win of all has been his reinterpretation of the Maison's iconic Bar Jacket, which the designer seems to have freed from its structured rigidity. Instead, 80 years later, Anderson has found within its construction a way to melt hardness by embracing a fluidity of form, with sensuously draped trompe l'œil shapes that will definitely go down as a significant contribution to the designer's personal legacy in this hallowed House.

CONSTRUCTION AS EXCESS

But if Anderson's Dior was a study in artistic restraint, Pierpaolo Piccioli's Balenciaga couture debut was a study in calculated excess—and the irreplaceable, tangible engineering of the human hand in an age where the intangible, efficient perfection of AI seems to rule the roost. Since his ready-to-wear womenswear debut in October last year, Piccioli has steadily drawn the Balenciaga audience to the House's primary codes of exceptional tailoring and craftsmanship, seeded in ideas of opulent romance. There is no doubt about Piccioli's talents as a couturier; for years he has steadily wowed clients and editors with his ethereal creations at Valentino. At Balenciaga, he continues his penchant for excess, pairing the romance of Cristóbal Balenciaga with the satirical edge of Demna's erstwhile vision for the House.

The volumes came in sweeping shades of lemon yellow, the brightness of purples, and the most shocking of reds (barely diminished under the searing hot sun on the Cité Universitaire steps). The extremities within the collection were equally striking: an austere, narrow black evening dress with a trailing satin scarf was followed by a voluminous balloon skirt that trailed behind and enveloped the very form of the model walking in it. Elsewhere, the same skirt was reimagined in a feathered pouffe, paired with the sleekest blazer, slashed and fitted with the cold engineering of a sceptic. Finally, there were column dresses with bodices untouched by corsets and held together instead by meticulous micro-stitching that hugged the wearer's waist. With colours, excess, and an imagination of form that never sacrifices the wearer's body at the cost of the fabric, Piccioli's Balenciaga couture was timely, nostalgic and perhaps just the excuse for joy that clients need to justify the hundreds and thousands of dollars they spend on a single couture order every season.

THE SECOND COMING

Taking inspiration from their 1999 "Russian Doll" show, Viktor & Rolf returned to their eccentric runway performances this season, reimagining the present as a second coming of the Gilded Age. In an era where a new vanguard of opulence emerges in the form of AI tech billionaires while rising sea levels, wildfires, and recession continue strapping down working-class spending, the designer duo distilled couture and the Gilded Age 2.0 into two principles: decadence and restraint.

On a rotating stage with mirrored bedrooms, two models—one old and one young—faced the audience as they changed in and out of a series of mirror silhouettes. Those worn by the older model were imagined in humble burlap while the younger model wore gilded embroidery. It was a stark commentary on our times and the almost-interchangeable effects achieved by fabrics rooted in similar intentionality. Ultimately, it made a case for couture itself and its impossibility to exist without the almost Apollonian and Dionysian employment of decadence and restraint.

The romance of the Gilded Age and the '20s also appeared in Elie Saab's Salvador Dalí-inspired couture. Taking a cue from the phantasmagoria of balls from the first decades of the last century, and the anonymity offered by the comfort of surrealist (albeit mandatory) masks, Saab's collection continued building on the House's foundation of red-carpet dressing. In an age where people, like Gilded Age ballgoers, hide comfortably behind the anonymity of social media handles, Saab reimagined evening gowns embroidered with Dalí's "Meditative Rose" as a leitmotif, exploring the sociological frisson of seeing, not seeing, and being seen.





THE HOME BOYS

And finally, there was the Indian contingent. For his 14th couture week outing, Rahul Mishra presented Devi. Inspired by the stone sculptures of the Khajuraho temples and the Ajanta and Ellora caves, Mishra presented a collection in which the tactile intricacy of stone carvings was translated into trompe l'œil embroidery. Elaborate necklaces and carvings appeared on flexible jersey fabrics in the form of beaded and sewn embroidery pieces. The craftsmanship on display—from gota patti to zardozi to chikankari—was exceptional.

Over the past decade-and-a-half, Mishra, despite being a guest member on the official haute couture calendar, has become a regular fixture on the Paris scene. With each season, he continues to push the boundaries of not just Indian craft but its distillation through a refined design lens. Full-body suits imitating the ancient art of carving divinity into stone surfaces gave way to the designer's distinct couture embellishments—a real fashion collector's dream. Despite the dated nature of the core idea itself—one that has repeatedly inspired designers from the subcontinent—Mishra's collection possessed a freshness of spirit, perspective, and wearability that is rarely expected of South Asian designers.

And then, there was Manish Malhotra. If Mishra's outing was a masterclass in the manipulative powers of design, Malhotra's first presentation on the couture week calendar was a tour de force in Indian craftsmanship. Titled Maa and dedicated to his own mother, whom he lost a few months before the show, the collection opened with a cocoon coat sculpted into scenes of mother and child. As the show progressed, the rounded, cocoon-like shapes became embellished with what Malhotra called "the knots of love", including a plunging gold gown adorned with serpentine embroidery. The bangles his mother wore became a bustier gown, rendered in vintage brocade saris and stacked across the bustier.

Throughout, the couturier cast a light on heritage Indian crafts, such as vintage salli embroidery, taban sequins, zardozi, resham, crystal work, and incredibly ornate hand embroidery. With dramatic takes on the classic lehenga silhouette, Malhotra's message about championing Indian craft front and center could not have been clearer. And now that his name has taken root outside the subcontinent, it will be interesting to watch how Malhotra develops his fashion language and makes it resonate globally. ■



INDIAN CRAFT MEETS BYZANTINE ART

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, one of the greatest cultural institutions in the world, has joined hands with Sabyasachi, India's leading luxury house, for a landmark multi-year collaboration. It begins with a Byzantine-inspired High Jewellery collection that will debut at a runway presentation during New York Fashion Week on September 15. Every piece in this collection will be conceived, developed, and handcrafted in India. The pieces will be available at the Sabyasachi flagship located at 160 Christopher Street in New York City's West Village, other global Sabyasachi stores, and select specialty retailers worldwide. The multi-year partnership will see the designer draw from the museum's vast collection of more than 5,000 years of global art and cultural objects, transforming selected historical objects into contemporary luxury through Indian craftsmanship.



FOR THE LOVE OF FASHION

IN HIGH SPIRITS

Nicobar's latest campaign, Off the Turf, celebrates the Indian Women's Hockey Team, bringing together 19 players in a rain-soaked Bengaluru for a portrait of camaraderie. Captured between training sessions, the campaign focuses on the spirit of playing for something bigger than oneself. The celebration comes at a significant moment for the team, following gold at the FIH Nations Cup in New Zealand and silver at the FIH Hockey Women's World Cup Qualifiers in Hyderabad, with the upcoming World Cup in Belgium and the Netherlands, along with the Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya adding to the momentum.

CURATED BY JHANVI DUGGAL; IMAGES: COURTESY THE BRANDS



GLOBAL OUTLOOK

AK|OK, the ready-to-wear label by Anamika Khanna, has launched at an exclusive shop-in-shop at Selfridges London. Called AK|OK Resort, this is the brand's first international collection which embraces versatility, inviting the wearer to style each garment as an expression of their personality. It consists of lightweight cottons, washed linens, fluid silks, and airy knits. The colour palette of the collection is drawn from sun-faded memories: chalk, stone, sand, weathered olive, washed indigo, burnt earth, and quiet black. True to the spirit of AK|OK, the collection remains gender-fluid and seasonless. The launch reinforces the brand's vision of presenting contemporary Indian design to an international audience.



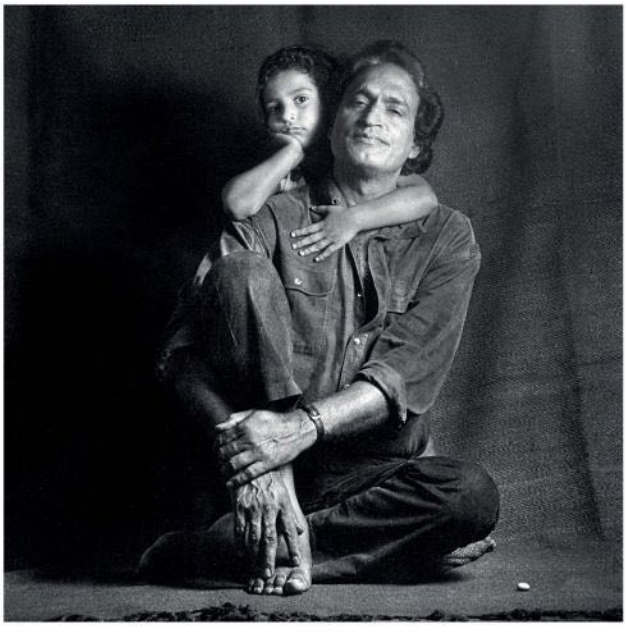
KEEPING UP WITH SKIMS

Global loungewear and shapewear brand SKIMS, co-founded by Kim Kardashian, is set to make its India debut. In collaboration with Reliance Brands Limited, SKIMS will launch stores in Delhi and Mumbai—the brand's first stores in Asia. The label's collections span sculpting bodysuits, bras, underwear, leggings, dresses, sleepwear, and relaxed separates designed for a wide range of body types. "The excitement we've seen from our community in India has been truly incredible, and we can't wait to welcome them in our stores for the very first time," says Kardashian.



HYBRID PAIR

For Louis Vuitton's Cruise 2027 collection, Nicolas Ghesquière gives footwear a futuristic makeover. The hybrid sneaker-boot pairs steal the show in flats, block heels, with ruffles, and Keith Haring-inspired designs. The craftsmanship highlights strips of leather sewn together across these shoes in metallic shades, some solid hues, and others in playful colour-blocked styles.



INDIA TURNS MUSE

For the first time, the Pirelli Calendar turns its lens entirely on India, presenting a portrait of the country that resists a single narrative. The 2027 edition of Cal™, titled 'India, Beyond a Single Gaze', marks another historic first: it brings together two distinct photographic perspectives, those of Norwegian photographer Sølve Sundsbø and Indian master Raghu Rai. Following Rai's death, his daughter and acclaimed photographer Avani Rai stepped in to realise his vision, making the project a deeply personal continuation of his legacy. The calendar features nine prominent Indian women, including Anoushka Shankar, Rupi Kaur, Padma Lakshmi, Freida Pinto, Aditi Rao Hydari, Avantika Vandanapu, Lakshmi Menon, and Bhavitha Mandava, alongside Rai herself, as well as women from everyday life. Together, their stories, landscapes, and identities create an expansive, layered portrait of India—one shaped by contrasting yet complementary gazes.

BAZAAR

accessories



So Kelly leather shoulder bag, Hermès

Soft Sides

Simplicity is elevated with refined craftsmanship and experimental textures to capture the playful spirit quintessential to everyday dressing.

PHOTOGRAPH: WAROON KIEATTISIN; STYLING: PACHARANAN JITWORAJINDA



Boulevard Horsebit high-heeled leather pumps, Gucci

PHOTOGRAPH: PONPISUT PEJAROEN; STYLING: SLALEE SOMBUTMEE



Satin kitten-heel thong sandals, Miu Miu

PHOTOGRAPH: WAROON KIEATTISIN; STYLING: PACHARANAN JITWORAJINDA



PHOTOGRAPH: PONPISUT PEJAROEN; STYLING: SLALEE SOMBUTMEE

Origami Cubic pump, Loewe



Lotus flower basket bag, Loro Piana

PHOTOGRAPHS: PONPISUT PEJAROEN; STYLING: SLALEE SOMBUTMEE



Jackie Slim bag, Gucci

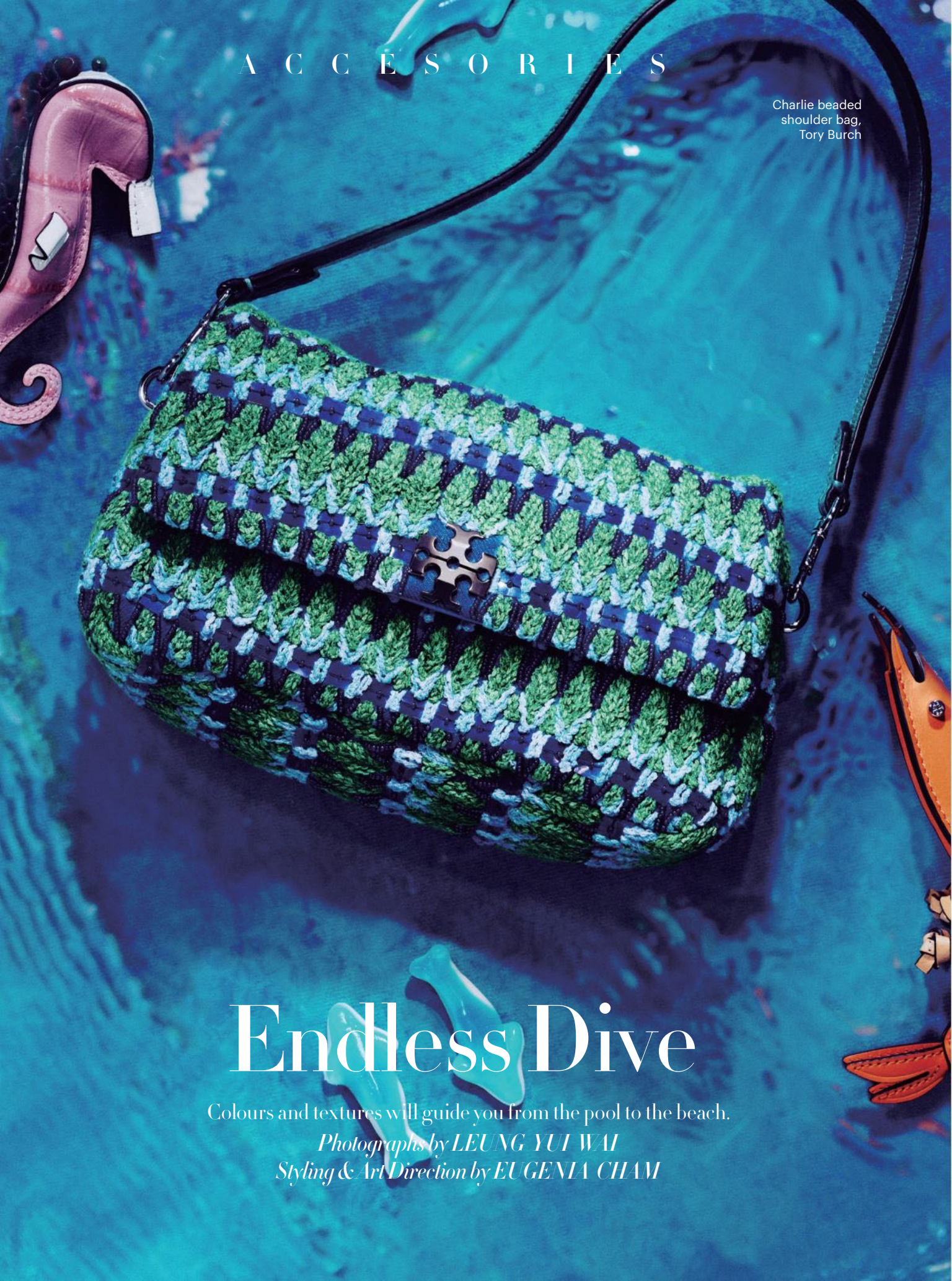


Médaillon mule, Dior

PHOTOGRAPHS: PONPISUT PEJAROEN; STYLING: SLALEE SOMBUTMEE



Barbara tote bag,
Bottega Veneta



Charlie beaded shoulder bag, Tory Burch

Endless Dive

Colours and textures will guide you from the pool to the beach.

Photographs by LEUNG YUI WAI
Styling & Art Direction by EUGENIA CHAM

Sea You There

The ocean has always had a thing for dressing up.



1. Sun 171037 sunglasses from 40 years anniversary capsule collection, Lindberg, ₹57,000; 2. Patch crochet bucket hat in raffia and leather, Loewe, ₹66,000; 3. Beaded starfish bag, Simon Miller, ₹34,900 approx; 4. Starfish charm bracelet multi, Chan Luu, ₹30,035 approx; 5. Pesce beaded clutch, Staud, ₹38,405 approx; 6. Marea sandal 105, Aquazzura, ₹1,25,450; 7. Nautilus earrings, Julietta, ₹28,010 approx; 8. Handmade painted ring, Dries Van Noten, ₹40,800 approx; 9. Shrimp charm, Anya Hindmarch, ₹31,930 approx.

IMAGES: COURTESY THE BRANDS; CURATED BY TRUSHIETA NARINGREKAR



Keira raffia sandals,
Dolce & Gabbana

La Dolce Vita

A little sunshine, a lot of flowers, and nowhere else to be.



1. Double G-detailed cat-eye recycled-acetate sunglass, Gucci, ₹51,960 approx; 2. Sea Nomad floral-appliqué hat, Alanui, ₹49,590 approx; 3. Demetria earrings, Jennifer Behr, ₹35,600; 4. Flower Bee Bouquet of Flowers brooches, Dior, ₹1,75,000; 5. A set of rings, Chanel, ₹1,47,600; 6. Cala mini bag in melange raffia, Loewe, ₹1,88,000; 7. Kiera sandal, Cult Gaia, ₹59,300 approx; 8. Cabine printed duchesse shoulder bag, Versace, ₹2,40,700; 9. Daisy and Zinnia cuff bracelet, Les Néréides, ₹47,550 approx.

IMAGES: COURTESY THE BRANDS; CURATED BY TRUSHIETA NARINGREKAR



Stainless steel and white gold watch (top), Rolex; pink gold watch, Vacheron Constantin

Viscose top, Tove

Power Symbol

Embrace the season with timepieces in a warm palette of browns and golds.

Photographs by PLUSIA ROMPOGIANNAKI
Styling by HOLLY GORST



Stainless steel and
pink gold watch,
Audemars Piguet



Stainless steel and quartz watch (top), Longines; stainless steel watch, Rado



Rose gold and diamond watch (left), Piaget; red and brown gold watch, Blancpain

Silk and cashmere dress, Gabriela Hearst



Gold and steel watch, Omega

Leather dress, Ferragamo



Stainless steel,
diamond and
opaline watch, Bvlgari



Rose gold and diamond watch (left), Chopard; gold watch, Chanel

Wool jacket and matching trousers, both Phoebe Philo

Hair: Chloe Frieda, using Oribe; Make-up: Jinny Kim, using YSL Beauty; Manicure: Ami streets, using Kure Bazaar; Stylist's Assistant: Isabella Magee; Model: Alshwarya Gupta at the Hive Management; Set Design: Clara Metter





NOVA
An Exclusive Collection By

atelier

BY VBJ

612, Anna Salai, 2nd Floor, Thousand Lights, Chennai - 600006

INDIA | USA



Lion Magistral ring

Lucky Charms

Four quintessential symbols of Gabrielle Chanel's universe are re-imagined in a high jewellery collection that is steeped in myth and memory.

By PRIYANKA KHANNA

There's a heatwave in Paris but even scorching temperatures cannot foil Chanel mania. As I walk past the buzzing boutiques on Rue Cambon, the Monday before the Fall/Winter Haute Couture 2026 show, it's clear that the House's new direction is finding deep resonance. My destination, this warm, summer morning, is 18 Place Vendôme, the home of Chanel's fine jewellery and watches, for the unveiling of the 2026 Signes & Symbols High Jewelry Collection.

"My jewellery represents an idea," Gabrielle Chanel was known to say and just as she preferred to cut her dresses directly on the fabric, with her jewellery too, she turned convention on its heads, experimenting with high contrasts, mixing styles, influences, elements, stones, and proportions with a spontaneous ease. For her, jewellery was talismanic, deeply personal, steeped in memory and mythology.

In the century since Chanel was founded, its House codes have remained firmly imprinted in cultural memory. The camellia, monochrome palette, interlocking CC, and tweed are the most recognisable and presented every season in expanded ways, pushing boundaries and resisting stasis. Similarly, this 85-piece new high jewellery collection, conceived as a dialogue between the quintessential symbols of her universe, reinterprets and reinvents iconic motifs in a new direction.

In true Chanel tradition, the collection breaks away from the rules of classical jewellery with an alchemy that simply cannot be replicated. It takes from a lexicon of symbols and motifs that honour Gabrielle's legacy by tapping into her inimitable spirit. 2026 Signes & Symbols has four distinctive lines with the Star, Comet, Camellia, and Chanel's astrological guardian—the Lion—at its core, all rendered with unexpected modernity.

All four motifs have deep meaning—the Comets she spotted over the streaked Aubazine night sky in her formative childhood years have appeared over collections as have Stars like the ones that adorned the abbey's cobblestones; the Camellia is Chanel's signature flower, and the Lion is a fierce symbol of her resilience and acumen, as well as her astrological sign.

The cutting-edge designs and motifs are further highlighted by the 'Precious Four' stones—the octagonal-cut 20.66 carats sapphire (Imprimé Lion necklace), the octagonal-cut 10.44 carats emerald (Imprimé Emeraude ring), the oval-cut 9.41 carats ruby (Lion Millénaire ring) or the oval-cut 10.32 carats

IMAGES: COURTESY THE BRAND

diamond (Symbole Camélia Rose ring)—all exceptional gems hand-picked from across the globe for their clarity, composition, and quality. The collection features over 10,000 stones, assembled over three years and is considered by many to be the most colour-forward collection in the history of the House's high jewellery.

As I walked through the showcase, this single truth stood out—the strongest House codes aren't just created out of repetition but rather those that unveil something surprising and new, on each revisit.

Here are the pieces that will make your jaw drop (as they did mine!):

IMPRIMÉ LION NECKLACE

The first chapter, titled Les Imprimés, sets the tone for the collection's strong graphic elements. In this chapter, recurring patterns, the Camellia, the Star, and the Sun are arranged in lines accented with faceted stones, a treatment that is almost fabric-esque, not dissimilar to bolts of cloth in the atelier. The suppleness allows for design malleability especially in the plastron and bandeau necklaces.

The Imprimé Lion necklace, the centrepiece of the collection, is where the Lion joins the other three symbols—it's the only piece where all four emblems appear together. Brilliant-cut, emerald-cut, and made-to-measure diamonds are set on delicate pink and white gold threads and held by discreet prongs, creating a vertical cascade of sparkle. This waterfall of diamonds is further enhanced by an octagonal-cut, unheated, Sri Lankan sapphire which is a whopping 20.66 carats.



Imprimé Lion necklace

IMPRIMÉ ÉMERAUDE RING

The free-flowing, supple form of the Imprimé Lion necklace is sharply contrasted by the architectural sensibility of the Imprimé Émeraude ring. It makes a strong statement, with an octagonal 10.44 carat emerald as its focus. The Colombian emerald is rare and untreated, classified as 'no oil' meaning it has not undergone the oil treatment that is commonly used to improve the appearance of emeralds.

The beauty of the design is further highlighted in its setting—an oval pedestal with pink gold with the surrounding made-to-measure diamonds creating an almost halo effect. Look closer and you'll see the real technical prowess, two camellia motifs, set with oval and brilliant-cut diamonds are placed on either side; details only a truly discerning eye will appreciate.

THE LION MILLÉNAIRE NECKLACE

The feline motif was unveiled for the first time in 2012 and has since become a prominent symbol in the house language. Chanel, a Leo by birth, was known to be superstitious. Given her fascination with all things celestial (her first and only high jewellery line in 1932, the Bijoux des Diamants was a constellation of diamond-encrusted starbursts and comets) and her belief in talismans, it's no surprise then that she closely followed astrology. The Lion has since appeared in multiple high jewellery and fashion collections, with many believing it is the house's most personal motif.

In true Chanel tradition, the collection breaks away from the rules of classical jewellery with an alchemy that simply cannot be replicated.



Imprimé Émeraude ring



Symbole Saphir necklace

Lion Millénaire necklace

The graphic detailing of this necklace (a part of the Le Lion Emblematique chapter) is striking. In the house's signature black and white palette (with a hint of red), it exemplifies Chanel's idea of mixing influences and details. In this particular piece, the lion is stretched out in profile, as a diamond bas-relief applied to onyx. What struck me was the sculptural nature of this design: the motif appears on both sides of an octagonal-cut 6.12 carats ruby, surrounded by diamonds.

LION MAGISTRAL NECKLACE

The centrepiece of the Le Lion Emblematique chapter continues the lion motif. The feline, like in the Millénaire, is again at repose, highlighting the animal's majestic nature. It's the design and the flexibility of this piece that is as commanding as the central gemstone showcasing both the house's technical prowess as well as being a nod to the Chanel woman, who seeks pieces that adapt to the rhythm of her lives.

Designed in shimmering warm tones of rose gold, platinum, yellow gold with diamonds and emeralds, the beauty of this piece lies in its transformation—worn longer like a scarf or closer to the neck. In the shorter version, the detached elements can be worn as two bracelets. At the heart of the necklace is a single cushion-cut emerald of 6.21 carats, and further expands into a suite with a statement ring featuring a lion at rest.

This 85-piece new high jewellery collection reinterprets and reinvents iconic motifs in a new direction.

SYMBOLE SAPHIR NECKLACE

While, traditionally, Chanel high jewellery has focused on a signature black and white palette, this showcase features a highly varied spectrum of colours and stones, including, rubies, emeralds, sapphires, turquoise, chrysoprase, carnelian, imperial topaz, and yellow beryl explore rich tonality and contrast. The fourth chapter of this collection, Les Symboles, includes Chanel's favourite flower, the Camellia. Though the lore behind her fascination with the camellia varies (it's shrouded in mystery just like the woman herself), many believe it's the geometric perfection, symmetry and purity of its shape that appealed to her.

Like the Lion Magistral, the Symbole Saphir necklace's beauty also lies in its ability to transform. Designed in brilliant white gold, diamonds, sapphires, turquoise, onyx and black lacquer with a single, vivid, cabochon-cut sapphire of 16.42 carats, the necklace can be worn long or short, with or without the flower. The camellia can then be worn separately as a brooch or as a pendant on a chain.

Any fashion insider will tell you that they blindly follow Chanel's most famous axiom when it comes to their sartorial choices. She was famously quoted as saying, "Before you leave the house, look in the mirror and take one thing off."

With this high jewellery collection, she'd be hard pressed to decide which one. ■

Poltrona Frau
1912

Handcrafted with love in Italy since 1912

Poltrona Frau x Shepard Fairey Introduces – Archibald Delicate Balance Limited Edition
Only 200 numbered pieces meticulously crafted Available at
Poltrona Frau Mumbai Flagship Store



Sunday Closed

SOFAS | ARM CHAIRS | BEDS | DINING CHAIRS & TABLES | OFFICE FURNITURE

Poltrona Frau Mumbai

Mumbai - Ground Floor, Wakefield House, Dougall Road Ballard Estate, Mumbai-400 001 - T. +9122 2261 4848
Bangalore - Ground Floor, # 87, Infantry Road, Near Canara Bank, Centrum, Bengaluru, Karnataka - 560001. T: 080 2558 5577 / 87622 12340
Hyderabad - Plot No 839 / A1, Road No 44, Jubilee Hills, Telangana, Hyderabad - 500033 T. +91 90329 89555

www.poltronafrau.com



Bespoke celestial opal collar necklace by Anthony Lent

Collector's Eye

From Chinese antiquity to Persian tradition and Indian inheritance, Joanna Gong, Leila Kashanipour, and Ramya Giangola approach jewellery through the lens of their own histories. Here, they show us their jewellery boxes, sharing how they collect, what catches their eye, and their advice for building a collection of your own.

By RADHIKA SOMAIA

IMAGES: COURTESY JOANNA GONG, LEILA KASHANIPOUR, AND RAMYA GIANGOLA

Some people collect jewellery. Joanna Gong, a cultural strategist and former Sotheby's specialist and director, collects stories.

Ask her about her Anthony Lent ring or a treasured rabbit brooch and the conversation rarely begins with gemstones or goldsmithing. Instead, it wanders towards family, friendship, and the invisible threads that connect people across generations. For Gong, jewellery has never been solely about adornment. It is a way of carrying history.

"Jewellery is one of the few forms of art you can live with," she reflects. "It can be worn, hold value, and eventually become an heirloom." Yet what fascinates her most is not the object itself, but what it represents. That belief is reflected throughout her collection, which feels deeply personal. The daughter of a Chinese antiquities scholar, she grew up surrounded by archaic jades and ancient objects, absorbing their stories long before she began building a collection of her own. Today, many of those pieces have found their way into her hands. One of the first her father passed down was a jade plaque dating to the Warring States period, which she later remounted in gold and diamonds, restoring its original intention as a wearable object with a modern twist.

Antiquity sits comfortably alongside contemporary design in Gong's approach to collecting. When deciding what belongs to her collection, she trusts her instinct above all else. "They need to make my eyes light up," she says. Rarity, provenance, and value may all matter, but for Gong, they come later. That instinct has also led to some unexpected purchases: she once bought a pair of JAR aluminium earrings while waiting for friends in the Parisian heat. "It was an enjoyable pastime!" she laughs.

Growing up, she was captivated by the jewels themselves. Now, she finds herself equally drawn to the people behind them. Relationships with contemporary jewellers have evolved into lasting friendships, and pieces acquired over time have become markers of those connections. "There's something incredibly special about collecting your own generation alongside the generations that came before it," she says.

If there is a recurring theme running through Gong's collection, it is inheritance—not simply of objects, but of values. One of the pieces she treasures most is a Shang dynasty jade rabbit gifted by her father. He spent years collecting rabbit-themed objects for her mother, whose zodiac sign is the rabbit, and the brooch has become a quiet symbol of their family's shared language of collecting.

As a specialist in antique and vintage jewellery, with a particular love for pieces from the late 19th and 20th centuries in England and France, when you look inside her jewellery box, you will not find a catalogue of acquisitions. You will find evidence of a life lived attentively. Every piece is attached to a person, a place, a conversation, or a chapter. "There is always love and community behind my collection," she says.

Perhaps that is also the best advice she can offer to anyone beginning their own collection: train your eye before you train your wallet. See as much as you can. Visit museums, read books, follow auctions, and handle objects whenever you have the opportunity. Love some things, dislike others, and let those reactions teach you what moves you. "Read more and buy less," she advises. For Gong, a meaningful collection is ultimately built through curiosity, instinct, and trust.



Joanna Gong



Bespoke Medusa ruby droplet earrings by Anthony Lent


Leila Kashanipour

Some people save jewellery for special occasions. Leila Kashanipour, a London-based jewellery designer and luxury brand strategist, wears hers everyday.

It is a philosophy that runs through both her collection and her life. Fine jewellery is not reserved for black-tie dinners or family weddings. It is worn with the everyday rhythms of work, travel, and motherhood; layered with beads, mixed with vintage finds and contemporary design. "Jewellery feels most natural to me when it becomes part of daily life," she says.

As a Persian woman, jewellery has always been woven into the fabric of her upbringing. Long before she studied jewellery design at Central Saint Martins, launched her own jewellery brand or trained in diamond grading at GIA, she was peering into her grandmothers' jewellery boxes, fascinated by the stories they contained.

Today, those stories remain at the heart of her collection. Among the pieces she treasures most is a pear-shaped diamond necklace given to her by her mother when she was 14. There is also a channel-set diamond tennis bracelet her father bought for her mother in Italy and later passed down to her. Unlike many collectors, she has no desire to alter either. Their original character is part of what makes them meaningful.

Yet some of the most significant pieces are the ones she bought for herself. A Cartier Santos-Dumont watch, a vintage Cartier Panthère, and a Bulgari Tubogas necklace mark moments of personal achievement. "Purchasing a piece for yourself carries a different meaning," she says. "It represents independence, personal taste, and the decision to celebrate your achievements."

Her collection today is layered, eclectic, and difficult to categorise. Art Deco sits alongside contemporary design. Beads are worn with diamonds. Houses such as Taffin and Hemmerle appeal to her artistic sensibility, while designers like Deszo by Sara Beltrán and CV Stones bring an organic quality she finds equally compelling. What connects the pieces is not a particular period or aesthetic, but individuality.

That instinct has become more refined with time. Where she once responded primarily to visual impact, she now notices proportion, balance, and the intelligence behind a design. "A piece does not need to be loud to be powerful," she says. The first test, however, remains emotional. She needs to feel something. Originality and craftsmanship matter, but so do the people behind them. Some of the pieces she values most come from designers she knows personally, transforming jewellery from an object into a record of a creative relationship. Her advice to other collectors is simple: "Do not feel pressured to define your taste too quickly. The best collections develop gradually and reveal the person who built them."

That philosophy is best captured by the piece she would never part with: her engagement ring. A few years ago, she reset its diamond onto a simple gold band, allowing the stone to almost float. After 15 years of marriage, it has evolved with her. Its value lies not in the diamond itself, but in everything it represents.

Look inside her jewellery box and you will not find a single defining aesthetic. Instead, you will find traces of a life lived between cultures, generations, and chapters.


Bangle and ring by By Pariah

Ramya Giangola, Founder of Gogoluxe and fashion strategist, likes jewellery with a little unpredictability. A Cartier Tank Française gifted by her parents on her 18th birthday sits alongside African trading beads bought on her travels, Victorian diamond-cut rings, vintage finds, and the costume jewellery of Phoebe Philo's Celine. There is no formula to what stays in rotation. If she loves it, she wears it.

Her jewellery habit is less about collecting a particular look than remaining open to discovery. Giangola describes herself as being in a constant state of exploration—through art, literature, music, film, culture, travel and, above all, people. Jewellery happens to be one of the things she finds along the way. A piece from a Marrakech souk can become as meaningful as something far more precious; an encounter with a designer can lead to a friendship, which can lead to another jewel.

That sense of connection is central to the way she buys. She wears Lauren Rubinski almost every day, drawn not only to the jewellery but to the creative mind behind it. She has known Marisa Klass for more than 20 years and treasures her work with crystals and stones. "They all inform the bigger picture of who I am at my core," Giangola says of the many worlds that feed her.

She finds the same pleasure in looking backwards. Vintage discoveries carry evidence of another time, while contemporary jewellery allows designers to reinterpret those references in their own language.


Ramya Giangola


Beaded necklace by Lauren Rubinski

Coming from an Indian family, inherited jewellery is part of Giangola's story, but she doesn't treat these heirlooms as untouchable. Her mother has given her permission to do whatever she likes with the pieces from her wedding, and Giangola has a fantasy of taking them all to Paris to sit with her dearest friend, Rubinski. Her idea is to transform elements into three matching pieces—one for her mother, one for herself, and one for her daughter—so they can all wear them every day, as a constant reminder of their love and bond.

It is this willingness to keep things moving that has changed the way Giangola wears jewellery. She has become bolder with age, reaching for larger pieces and combinations she might once have considered too much. There is no separate category for the everyday and the exceptional. Everything is in play.

That extends to the way she shops. Jaipur's crown jewel Gem Palace is, in her words, "impossible" to walk out of without several impulse purchases. The fact that those pieces have lasted—and continue to be worn—is perhaps the best defence of the impulse buy.

Her advice to anyone beginning a collection is equally instinctive: do not buy something simply because everyone else has it. The value of a jewel lies in the relationship you develop with it, not in the approval attached to owning it. "It's not about what you can afford," she says. "It's about how you choose to wear jewellery that can be a true expression of yourself."

There are still pieces she is looking for: a Picasso-inspired sun-face necklace by Jennifer Alfano, and a rare vintage Piaget on a leather cord like Rubinski's. But Giangola seems happiest leaving the door open to whatever comes next. "We are at a moment where anything goes," she says. "And I love it." ■


1


11


2


10


3


9


4

Summer Strings

Part friendship bracelet, part holiday memento, beads are having a grown-up moment.

Compiled by RADHIKA SOMAIA

The nostalgic strands of summer's past have evolved into something more personal: eclectic necklaces strung with glass, gemstones, pearls and hand-carved beads, often in unexpected combinations. Nothing feels too polished; irregular shapes, vivid colour, and unfamiliar details are precisely the point. Layered with gold chains or worn alongside heirloom jewels, they bring a sense of spontaneity to the jewellery box. The appeal is in their individuality—each strand feels like a souvenir of somewhere, someone or something, only this time, you get to choose the memory.


8


5

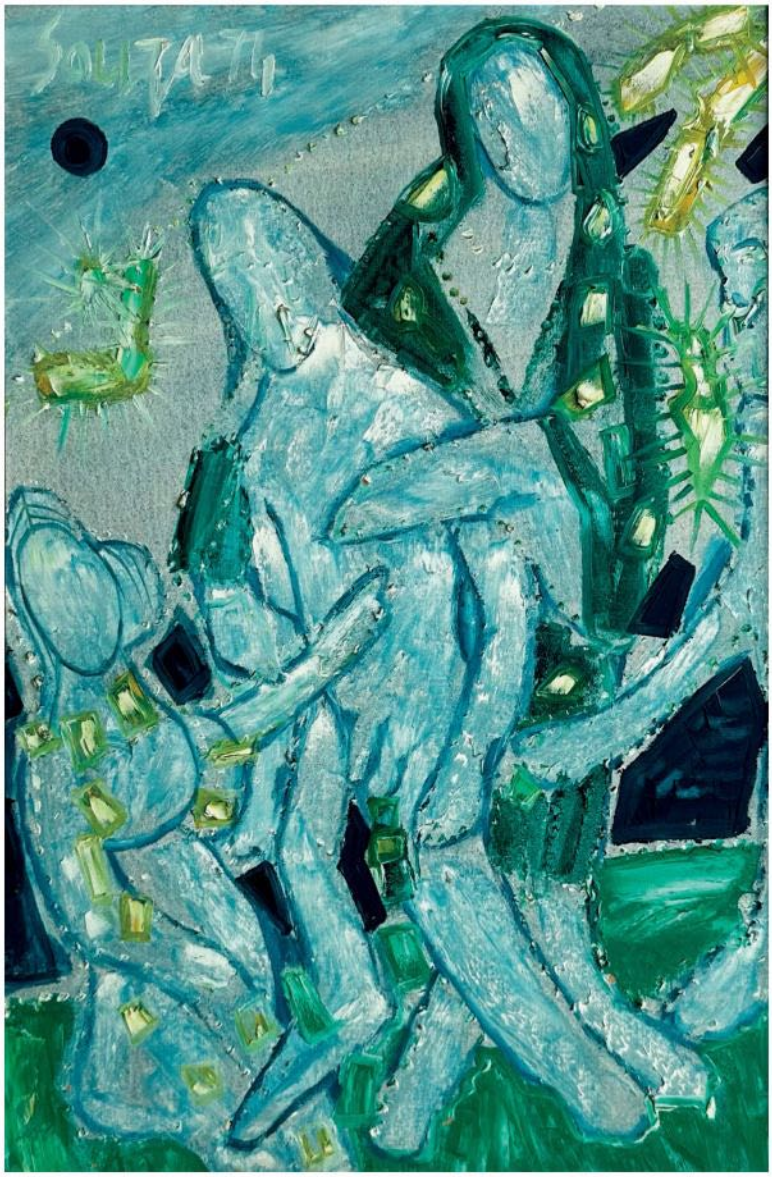

7


6

1. Gold bead tassel necklace, Moi, price on request; 2. Gem quality mixed colour tourmaline bead necklace, Brooke Gregson, ₹16,56,025 approx; 3. Five double sheath tubes on a beaded necklace, Luis Morais, ₹5,35,800 approx; 4. Molly necklace with flat shell beads, gold, and diamonds, Van Den Abeele Paris, ₹4,60,280 approx; 5. 18-carat gold black keshi pearl mauli link necklace, Marie Lichtenberg, ₹5,73,570 approx; 6. Ethiopian opal and pomegranate spinel bead necklace, SYNA, ₹11,96,585 approx; 7. Grape medium medusa necklace, Aglagla, ₹33,08,205 approx; 8. Beaded emerald necklace, Nikos Koulis, price on request; 9. Turquoise and cream heishi beaded necklace, Jenna Blake, ₹4,58,910 approx; 10. Celestial trade beads necklace, Eden Presley, ₹4,36,800 approx; 11. A model in beaded necklaces, Milne Watson, price on request.

IMAGES: COURTESY THE BRANDS

BAZAAR



Pieta (1974)
by FN Souza

IMAGE: COURTESY KALAKAAR ART SALON

Hues of Harmony

Bharti Kher reimagines inherited histories and cultural identities with her latest work at the V&A; exquisite objets d'art from across South Asia find a home at House of Santal in Manhattan; and Tishani Doshi explores the intersection of literature and imagination.



Gaia (2026)

Body Politics

From female warriors to goddesses, artist Bharti Kher uses the body to explore power, belonging, memory, and change.

By MALIKA HALDER

I have more faith in art than I do in human beings," Bharti Kher says this towards the end of our conversation. The statement is bleak and also a striking admission for an artist who has over three decades built a practice that moves across painting, sculpture, and installation without settling comfortably into any one category. Her work examines precisely what it means to be human. Her materials often carry histories of their own. The bindi, which she has used since the 1990s, has become one of the most recognisable elements of her practice while the sari brings with it associations of memory, identity, labour, and the lives of South Asian women. Through all of her work, Kher seems to repeatedly return to the

IMAGES: COURTESY PETER KELLEHER

ideas of transformation and what it means to inhabit a body. Her work often asks us to look again at things we might otherwise believe we already understand.

At London's Victoria and Albert Museum, where four of Kher's works—*Animus Mundi*, *Ghost*, *Warrior with Cloak and Shield*, and *Gaia* are currently in dialogue with objects from its historic South Asian collections, these questions acquire another layer. The museum itself carries complicated histories of collecting, colonialism, and cultural ownership. Kher, however, is less interested in offering definitive answers than in creating the conditions for questions. "I don't answer questions, I just ask them," she tells me. Her works, she suggests, are similarly slippery: they resist fixed identities and easy readings.

During our almost hour-long conversation, the British-Indian artist talks about mythology, womanhood, her enduring love of saris, the freedom she finds in moving between mediums, and why she continues to place her faith in art.

***Harper's Bazaar*: Your sculptures are being placed in dialogue with the works at the V&A. Did the venue change how you thought about these pieces? Did you want them to challenge the authority of the museum itself?**

Bharti Kher: Yes, I think that's why I was selected as an artist to be part of this project. Work in isolation, of course, performs differently. But every time you put your work into a historical space, specifically a Neoclassical colonial structure such as the V&A, it changes the conversation. The V&A was built in the 19th century to house collections that included objects brought from India, many of which had been collected by the East India Company. Over 20,000 objects were moved into what became the V&A, and those objects remain an important part of its South Asian collection.

So, the musuem has a very long history, and it has extraordinary artefacts and objects in its collection. But sometimes those histories raise complex questions. I think projects with contemporary art can open up dialogues. For me, that's a more interesting way of looking at art than thinking of it as a verdict or a clear-cut argument. These are questions that we're opening up, and I think my work is an opportunity to connect with those questions.

HB: Speaking of histories, museums are reassessing whose history they are telling. With your work, what kind of conversations do you hope to open up inside an institution like the V&A?

BK: That's a really big question! What kind of conversations do you wish to see in museums? It's not a question that only the artist is answering or asking. It's also about viewer engagement and how people enter or come to museums and what you, as an audience, are. Are you a participant in the museum and its history, or are you just a consumer of it? It depends on how you want to enter the museum. Do you want to ask questions, or do you just want to be told how to think?

I'd hope that my work would make people stop, wonder and think, and have conversations, certainly in those historic galleries.

There are works that have been there for centuries; some of them are from the 15th and 16th centuries. And there's a specific work of mine that is in conversation with Canova, which is a dream, really.

HB: One of your works also presents a female warrior carrying her house on her head. What was the emotional starting point for this work?

BK: I made the work in 2008, so that piece is almost 20 years old now. A lot of the earlier female sculptures came out of the premise of hybridity, of embodying strength—the strength of a warrior, partly the force of a goddess, and the contradictions inherent within us all as women, that we can be so many things at the same time.

That multiplicity is really not about opposing narratives. You're built up of multiple narratives in your life; you're made up of multiplicities. That's animated through your energy and the tension that comes out when you perceive and look at sculptures, and when you make sculpture, too.


Bharti Kher


Ghost (2024)

"This idea of the boundaries that we create between the body, the home, and the landscape are much more porous than we imagine."

Something like a warrior is about blending the human with the animal and trying to create another. And not in a way that's fearful. I'm not telling you to be afraid of the unknown; I'm asking you to look at the potential of the unknown.

HB: Talking about home, it is something or somewhere we belong. And as someone who has spent decades living between London and Delhi, has your understanding of belonging changed over time?

BK: Yes, I belong where I am at the moment. Mostly, I just belong to my studio. *Gaia* certainly is talking about what home is. What is this place that I know as my centre, as my being? How do you occupy this space called home? And what does that mean? Is it conceptual or physical? At the most perfunctory level, it's about a space or a place—the place that we occupy. That's where you go into the house, the fence around your house, and it expands into the borders around your country. How we move across the world, that's one side. But then there's the metaphysical side of the idea of home, what that means within the self. It's about the spirit, it's about the nature of the spirit. And I think that's where that duality comes into my work.

Although she's carrying a house on her head, it's not her burden. The work is not about female endurance and sacrifice. She's decided that it is an extension of her very being. So she's carrying memory, ancestry, belonging, and shelter, all of it within her.

She's not a supporting architecture; she's generating all these forces within her. So the title was very specific. At first, she could have been many things relating to home or house, but *Gaia* is the ancient idea of the earth as a living organism. I'm not fixing her in the past; I'm creating something that we continue to inhabit. So this idea of home is something that's continuous, consistently changing. And she's not just the earth goddess; she's talking about how we're inseparable from the world that sustains us.

This idea of the boundaries that we create between the body, the home, and the landscape are much more porous than we imagine.

HB: In *Gaia*, you transformed a small clay object into a bronze monument. How does enlarging a very intimate object alter its emotional or even political power?

BK: I don't think anything is about scale. I think a small work has as much political power and monumentality as an outdoor work. Scale is relative to the image that you're being presented. Not every small work has the potential to become a large one, and not every large work needs to be large. And so, it's just that specific piece.

I made many of the intermediaries—hundreds, actually—and only about eight of them deserved that scale, where they would actually work physically with a standing human. These are all things that not every work can transform itself into; it doesn't necessarily have that power. I like the idea that your body somehow has to walk around an object that is bigger than you. You have to engage with it by looking up into it. I wanted you to look up into her, into the house, when you saw the work, so that you actually see her face from underneath. That's how I thought about that piece.



Animus Mundi (2018)

HB: In your other piece, *The Ghost*, the sari has appeared almost like a translucent skin holding memory. Has your relationship with the sari changed as you have grown older?

BK: When I first started using them, honestly, I didn't know that much about the anthropology of different weaves. I knew enough, but not a lot. And now I know much more. I find it fascinating and beautiful and craft-oriented. It's all about hands and families and small weavers.

My mother had a sari shop and a textile shop. My father was in the textile trade. So I've been looking at fabric since I was a kid. And it's quite nice that I can now use it as a material in my work. In *Ghost*, that is a specific silk. It's not tussar silk, and it's not even a fine silk like that. It's very shiny. It's the kind of silk that's treated and has a slight sheen to it. Those saris have a kind of stiffness, and that stiffness was perfect for this work. It created the transparency that I wanted.

HB: Your practice spans painting, sculpture, and installation, yet sculpture seems to have increasingly become the language for you. What can sculpture say that painting cannot, if there is anything like that?

BK: I would say that the reason and the way I make sculpture is that I can stack meaning onto objects. They carry within them an inherent memory of history that I can build on. And then when I stack something else on top of it, it creates another meaning. And then I stack something else on top of it again, and it creates a fourth meaning and a fifth meaning. It's just a different language, that's all.

It's not that it can do anything that painting can't. Physicality, of course—you walk around a sculpture, you stand in front of a painting. I will say the medium is not the message; the message is in the work. And whatever it takes to get there, you use whatever means you can. If there's a thread that runs through everything I make, it's a belief that transformation is our most fundamental condition, and that nothing is fixed.

Bodies, cultures, materials, and even our memories change. So my work isn't trying to preserve a moment against time. I'm just participating in the now.

HB: In one of your interviews, you described art as a language that connects continents and cultures. At a time when the world feels increasingly divided, what responsibility, if any, does art have?

BK: Art is not changing the world. We are not fixing political problems. We're not in those spaces. I think as an artist, you go back to your studio and try your best. We're kind of against nature, against ourselves, against human dignity. We're against almost everything that you grow up to believe—and it's being destroyed at every level around us. So, yes, maybe the answer to your question is that I have more faith in art than I do in human beings. ■



Warrior with Cloak and Shield (2008)

For Stillness

The word Neha Gupta needed, and built into a brand.





There is a particular silence that follows a diagnosis—not the silence of a room, but the one inside a person, where every plan quietly excuses itself and leaves. Neha Gupta knows that silence twice over. She has beaten cancer, and beaten it again.

The second time, she wasn't looking for a comeback story. She was looking for a word—something to hold the peace she needed and didn't have, in her body, in her home, between hospital visits and ordinary days. She found it in *sükoon*: an untranslatable word for a stillness so complete that it settles in the bones.

Most founders point to a gap in the market. Neha's gap was in herself. Chemotherapy leaves a metallic taste that doesn't lift, so she reached for green tea. It leaves skin perpetually dry, so she began mixing her own chemical-free lotions and body butters. And it leaves its smell everywhere—antiseptic, clinging to a home the way illness does—so during lockdown, unable to leave the house anyway, she started making candles on her own stove, until one finally felt like an exhale instead of a hospital.

That's how Sükoon began in 2021: candles, tea, lotions, built by a woman trying to make her own space feel like hers again.

Four-plus years on, that instinct is still the compass—nowhere more visible than in the ceramics, which Neha designs herself and which have quietly become the brand's bestseller. There's a logic to that: a cup or bowl is the thing you hold every single day, so it had to be the thing she got exactly right. Candles have grown into artisanal ceramics, teas, and body care, chosen for what they restore, not what they display. Neha has kept it deliberately independently funded—no rush to scale—growing organically into a brand that ships internationally, to a following that often has no idea of the backstory.

She is, by training, a designer, and it shows most in the gift boxes she designs herself—built for the moments people don't have words for. A friend going through chemo. A mother who needs to be told to rest. Inside one box: a candle, a tin of tea, a jar of body butter, a piece of that same bestselling ceramic—the things she once made for herself, now handed to someone else's hard year. To give Sükoon is to say 'I see what you're carrying'. To receive it is to be allowed, briefly, to put it down. ■

IMAGES: COURTESY THE BRAND





Medha Batra



Spirited Silhouettes

Label Medha Batra bridges international design sensibilities with a deeply rooted Indian soul.

At luxury demi-couture brand, Medha Batra, every creation unfolds a deeply personal narrative guided by memory, culture, global travels, and an uncompromising eye for detail. It is an unapologetic celebration of ultra-feminine charm, expressed through spirited silhouettes, fluid tailored drapes, and exquisite craftsmanship. The MB Muse is bold yet effortless, grounded yet unapologetic—a woman who articulates her individuality through the art of personal style.

Operating from its flagship atelier at The Dhan Mill, Delhi, the label is renowned for its mastery of tactile artistry—fine hand embroidery, signature ombré paani embroidery, and towel-stitch detailing, plays of pearls and sequins, and expressive forms designed to evoke emotions. Anchored by two annual flagship wedding couture launches, the brand's universe is complemented by meticulously curated summer prêt and festive drops.

A Dedication to Conscious Luxury

True luxury in the modern era extends far beyond aesthetics; it demands accountability, intention, and mindfulness. Medha Batra is steadfast in its commitment to conscious luxury, placing sustainability at the very forefront of its creative vision. By prioritising eco-conscious textiles and adopting zero-waste production practices, the label ensures that every ensemble minimises its environmental footprint while uplifting and preserving centuries-old artisanal livelihoods. Each garment is designed not merely as an investment in personal style, but as an enduring tribute to responsible fashion and timeless heritage.

Seasonal Stories: Sakura

Inspired by the delicate allure of Japanese cherry blossoms, Sakura captures the romantic rhythm of the blooming festival across day, dusk, and night. Ethereal, ultra-feminine silhouettes honour this momentary beauty through intricate detailing—blending signature towel-stitch embroidery, traditional paani aari work, and a radiant play of luminous sequins.

An Elysian Summer

A masterclass in modern celebratory attire, An Elysian Summer breathes fresh air into festive wear with a dreamlike, nostalgic energy reminiscent of an idyllic summer wedding. Moving away from traditional heavy tones, the collection embraces a refreshing palette of soothing sorbet hues and airy pastels, punctuated by striking touches of passionate scarlet. Fluid drapes and delicate floral motifs harmoniously merge with the sharp, tailored structure of contemporary blazers, offering a versatile, romantic wardrobe for the modern muse.

Looking Ahead

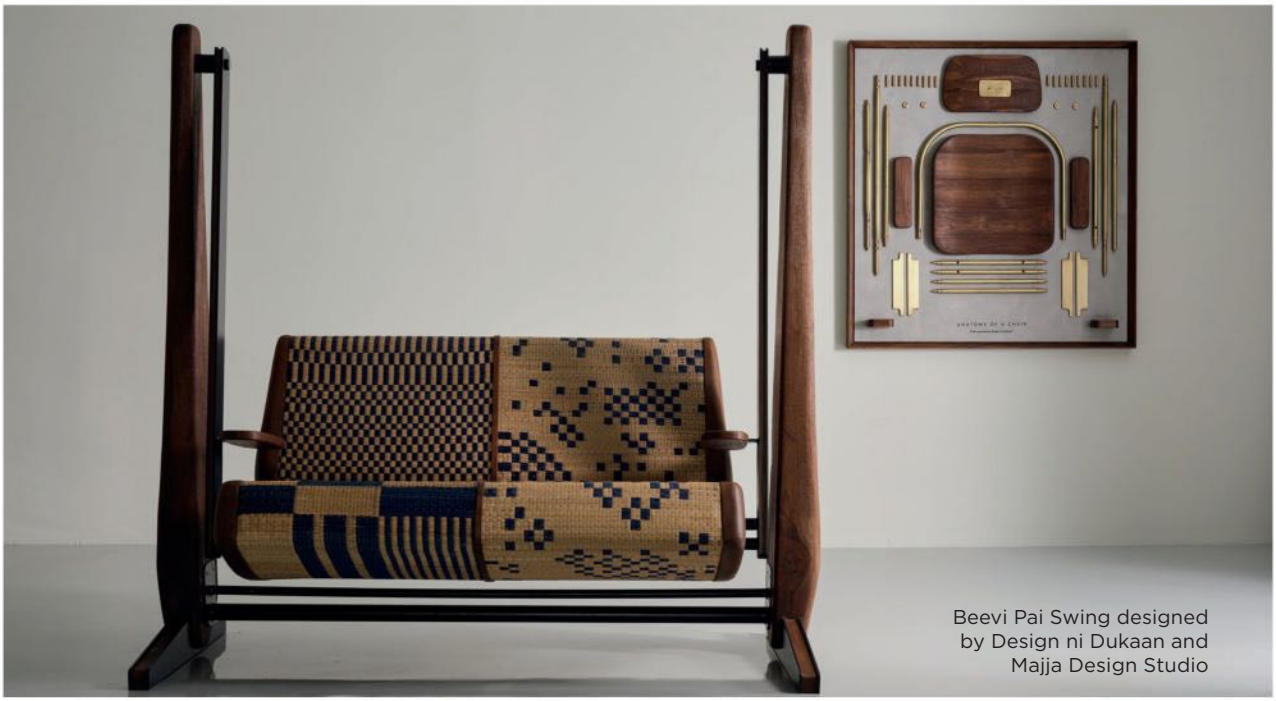
As the seasons shift, the creative expression evolves. Medha Batra is preparing for its highly anticipated festive drop. Meticulously crafted to mirror the splendour, warmth, and emotional grandeur of upcoming celebrations, this capsule blends high glamour with effortless comfort—ensuring the Medha Batra woman commands every room with quiet grace and sophisticated poise.

IMAGES: COURTESY THE BRAND

Objects of Desire

House of Santal is placing South Asian collectible design at the heart of Manhattan's global luxury conversation.

By RADHIKA IYENGAR



Beevi Pai Swing designed by Design ni Dukaan and Majja Design Studio

A console fronted by hand-etched brass doors bears intricate iconography: majestic elephants, turbaned farmers, dancers and flourishing palms. A large ceremonial royal barge cuts through swirling waters. There is movement, drama, and storytelling. Designed by Chacko X Studio Moebius, the Native Console Table's visual language is reminiscent of South Indian temple murals. The console reflects a craft-led convergence of traditional artisanal techniques and contemporary flair. The piece is on view at House of Santal in New York.

Exquisite objets d'art from across South Asia have found a home in this Manhattan gallery overlooking Rockefeller Center. Its appeal lies in foregrounding South Asian design and luxury. While New York is filled with galleries championing American and European limited-edition collectibles, South Asia remains notably underrepresented. Founder, Raksha Sanikam is all set to turn that narrative on its head.

"For a long time, Indian makers and craftspeople have contributed to some of the most important design and luxury industries in the world, often without receiving the visibility they deserve," says Sanikam. "House of Santal is a way to place this work coming out of India and South Asia in direct conversation with the global design world. It's a platform where it can be seen, understood and collected on its own terms."

For House of Santal's first chapter, *At the Threshold of the Courtyard*, statement pieces by 13 designers—each unusual in technique, contour, material, and tactility—offer a snapshot of the distinct visual language emerging from the subcontinent. Each piece is a collectible rooted in honouring artisanal craftsmanship.

The gallery swerves from a traditional white-cube format. One-of-a-kind furnishings are arranged across interconnected mini viewing rooms. "The central space acts as the courtyard. It is designed as a place for gathering, hosting and conversation," says Sanikam. The pieces are placed according to the mood they conjure or the story they narrate. "We wanted the gallery to feel less

IMAGES: COURTESY HOUSE OF SANTAL

like a showroom and more like a journey through rooms," she continues. "Each threshold gives you a glimpse of what comes next, while allowing each piece to hold its own presence. The idea was to let each room feel like its own micro-curation, while still part of a larger spatial narrative."

A coat stand by Rhizome, for instance, has been assembled using a brass *lota* (water vessel) hammered into shape by Punjab's Thathera metalworkers, while its top has been crafted using reclaimed wood from Gujarat's erstwhile Pol houses. In another corner, a bulbous, whimsical planter looks almost totemic. Designed by Karan Desai, the planter's textured, terrazzo-like body is covered in patches of dusty pink, ochre, terracotta, teal and green.

The Ghee Console Table by Rebecca Ruebens draws inspiration from the wooden *havan kund* (sacred fire pit) spoon used during Indian ceremonial rituals. Elsewhere, the Pattamadai mats, which are traditionally hand-woven by women artisans using river grass, are elevated from the floor and wrapped around an old-world Indian swing. Called the Beevi Pai Swing, the piece is a collaboration between Design ni Dukaan and Majja Design Studio who work directly with craft clusters in Tamil Nadu.

"The underlying thread across the exhibition is celebrating legacy craft," explains Sanikam, who spent nine months assembling the exhibition, drawing on years of on-the-ground research undertaken before launching House of Santal. For its inaugural exhibition, Sanikam attended trade shows, visited studios and engaged in conversations with industry experts to finalise the curatorial line-up. "For me, it was less about filling a checklist and more about finding designers with a strong point of view, material intelligence and a clear relationship to craft," she explains.

Sanikam's path has been anything but linear. A former venture capitalist who completed an MFA in



Ghee Console Table by Rebecca Ruebens



Native Console Table by Chacko X Studio Moebius and the Lota Coat Stand designed by Rhizome

The gallery swerves from a traditional format. One-of-a-kind furnishings are arranged across interconnected mini viewing rooms.

Interior Design at the Pratt Institute, she eventually joined the family business as an interior designer. Her own experiences while growing up in India were enriched by "colour, craft, architecture, textiles and rituals", she says, all of which sculpted her astute understanding for design.

House of Santal borrows its name from *Santalum*, the botanical genus of sandalwood. The gallery's colour palette, too, is a nod to the subtle warmth of India, where some of the walls are flushed in deep burgundy, recalling the ruddiness of sandalwood. "Across South Asia, sandalwood has long been associated with ritual, refinement, memory, and sacred offering," Sanikam says. "It felt like a material that carried the spirit of what we wanted to build: something rooted, sensory and quietly powerful."

The gallery carries the mood of a private salon, where visitors can experience bespoke design. Nothing in House of Santal is too ornate or ostentatious. Rather, the furniture, lights, mirrors and objects showcase vernacular craftsmanship through a contemporary lens. They invite visitors to linger along the curves, the textures and grains; and to admire the intricate handiwork and cultural memories embedded within each piece. ■

The exhibition is on view till end of September.

Poetic Instinct

Tishani Doshi talks on beauty, birds, memory, and the strange alchemy through which ordinary encounters become poems.

By AKSHAYA PILLAI

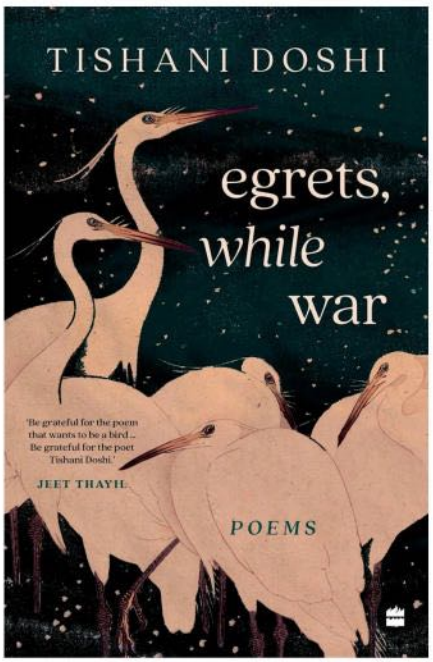


Tishani Doshi with Frankie at home

PHOTO CREDIT: RICCARDO VENCATO

On a morning walk by the sea in Paramankeni, somewhere south of Chennai, Tishani Doshi saw what she thinks might have been the skeleton of a dolphin. Strange and large, with something like a spine running out of it. In all her years of walking the same wet blue edge of the world, she had never before seen anything like it.

Doshi was still thinking about this creature, now reduced to its most elemental lines, when we meet online to discuss her latest poetry collection, *Egrets, While War*. She is speaking to me through a phone held close to her face, her home internet just having thrown a tantrum. "The thing that I love about these walks I've made part of my day is that it's never the same. [The sea] is constantly changing tide and there's always different things. Right now, it's a bit apocalyptic," she says and proceeds to explain how the novelist in her notices the dogs, the strange cast of people, and the poet notices the jellyfish gone clear and limp in the sun, dead fish, goats, turtles, snakes, bottles, toothbrushes, and a lot of what the sea has collected and since lost interest in. "Mostly dead things," she adds.



The conversation keeps returning, naturally, to animals. Dogs, mostly. Dukeekee, my own dog, is asleep in the corner of the screen. Doshi spots her, says hello and though I never quite see Doshi's pet, an occasional distant bark has me imagining Frankie, Zelda, or Buggy nosing around the room, appearing for a second in the small turn of her eyes. There are dogs everywhere, including the book I have placed beside the laptop, knowing I would want to show it to her: *Small Days and Nights*, her 2019 novel about Grace, a house by the sea, and a litter of puppies that keeps multiplying. I hold up the first page, to the little note I had written for my then-boyfriend. He is my husband now, and there is something cloyingly sweet about remembering how I once put her book in his hands, hoping he would understand what it means to build a life with someone who cannot see a stray dog, an abandoned cat, a wounded snail, without wanting to make room for it at home.

That little note feels, in retrospect, like an accidental introduction to her work, where the question of what we allow ourselves to love keeps returning in stranger, more beautiful forms. I joke that I went into the new collection expecting to pet dogs, only to find its pages patrolled by egrets, dodos, orioles, kingfishers, peacocks, and pigeons.

Doshi has your average pair of black binoculars. She usually wears them with a harness, which she says makes her feel very professional. She also uses the Merlin app which identifies birds by their calls. "I have designed a course for my NYU Abu Dhabi students with a very good friend of mine, who is a conservationist and filmmaker, Shekhar Dattatri. The class is called Ecopoetics, and I constructed this course so that I could teach myself as well." Despite all the equipment and the lessons, she remains a novice. She can learn the name of a bird and 10 days later, stand in her garden, or in her study see a bird perched on the top of palmyra, thinking, 'wait, which one was this?' She laughs and there is something in this admission that feels close to the way she describes writing. Doshi is less interested in arriving at an answer than in staying with the thing she does not understand.

"I love the feeling where I know something is going to become a poem. It's not there yet, but I know that in one day or two days or five days, this is going to become a poem." She pauses over the pleasure of that knowledge. "It's the feeling of creation, you know. Maybe some kind of God complex. I made something!" With a novel, that feeling can take years to arrive, buried under all the fumbling and the larger architecture; with a poem, she gets to experience it again and again.

Making something is one kind of astonishment. Seeing something, really seeing it, may be another. Our phones have made strange neighbours of everything: an advertisement for a bubble hem skirt beneath a photograph of a burning building, someone's shakshuka arriving before the next piece of terrible news. I ask her about beauty and how to find it in a burning world. "If anything it's become more important, maybe more necessary," she says. "How we find it, how we recognise it, what we do with it. Especially now that we are moving towards some weird AI generation. This robotic sameness." What she misses is surprise. "It's always the unexpected thing that is most beautiful," she says. Perhaps this is why the natural world keeps finding its way into the poems. A bird has no interest in looking beautiful. "What is it that we deem beautiful? I

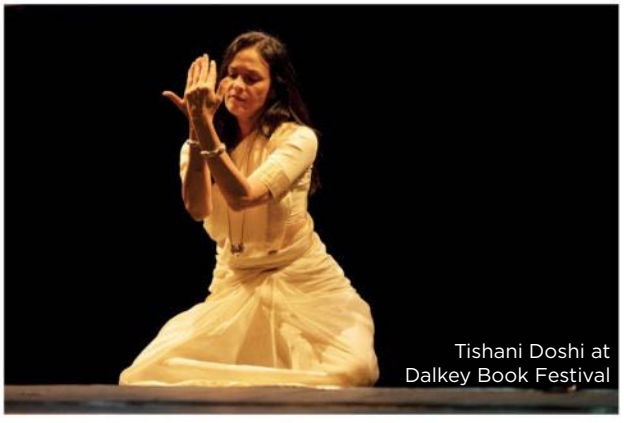
IMAGE: COURTESY AMAZON INDIA

think partly, maybe in the poems, there's this attempt at trying to catch some of that unexpectedness through the strange juxtapositions of other kinds of lives."

A tube of Vicco Vajradanti in a bathroom in Port of Spain, for instance, is where one of the poems begins. Doshi had been talking to a woman whose family had not returned to India for three generations, and yet there it was: this unmistakably Indian object stranded among the objects of another country. From there, the poem travels home: to cousins outside a kitchen, grandparents chewing neem twigs, the ghosts that once moved through bedroom walls. "All this fear is meant to keep us vigilant," she writes. Then the child disappears and the adult returns, still carrying all that fear. "It's amazing to me how much is in the body and in the brain, layered in memory and experience, and how these things find voice," she says, looking past the screen, into the distance. She leans against a white wall in her white shirt, a long, heavy silver necklace falling across her chest. Her hair comes loose around her face.

While she doesn't always have a notebook, she records the occasional voice note but more than often she has what she calls a "strange camera" in her head. "Like I remember this pigeon that I found in my house. A few days later, my father collapsed and I read into that pigeon, certain omens or signs. I think it's really interesting how it's almost as though the poems or the experiences are all held inside the body like in some memory vault. These images connect with others and unlock something. And I think that's where the poem starts." She can write on a bed or at a desk, with Drupad playing or, more often, nothing at all; the only thing she really needs is a door she can close. Understandably so since she also does a lot of reading aloud of things for both fiction and poetry. "So the sonic is very important. I'm like the mad lady who is sort of reciting to herself all the time." Her hands keep moving as she talks, regularly settling behind head and even in stillness, there is something gracefully choreographic about her.

Doshi is currently in the middle of creating two new movement pieces for the 26th Berlin International Literature Festival. She is panicking a little because they are still being made. She is also having fun. Her body is "achy in a good way". After we finish speaking, she plans to make tea, eat some cookies, and go for another walk to see what the tide has left tangled in the sand this time. ■



Tishani Doshi at Dalkey Book Festival



Tishani Doshi and fellow performers walk towards the sea at sunrise

PHOTO CREDIT: RICCARDO VENCATO AND ALLEN KIELY

ZR

Z CINEMA
Nikon | RED

CREATOR'S CUT



6K Highest Resolution **6K/59.94p**

Biggest Monitor 10.16 CM (4") in its class

RAW In-Camera **12-bit R3D NE & N-RAW codec**

World's First **32-bit Float & OZO audio**

Nikon

Corporate/Registered Office & Service Centre: Nikon India Pvt. Ltd., Plot No. 71, Sector 32, Institutional Area, Gurugram 122001, Haryana, (CIN-U74999HR2007FTC036820). Ph: 0124 4688500, Service Ph: 0124 4688514, Service ID: nindsupport@nikon.com, sales and Support ID: nindsales@nikon.com, For more information, please visit our website: www.nikon.co.in

Scan to explore

nikonindia

Imagined Lives

Author Meg Mason on her latest book, the distance between a reader and a writer, and why she is fiercely protective of her new protagonist.

By RUTVIK BHANDARI



Meg Mason

Over the last few years, the internet has flattened a remarkable range of novels into the catch-all label of "sad girl literature". Stories of complex women navigating mental illness, family, relationships, marriage, and parenthood have often been reduced to shorthand for depression and melancholy. Meg Mason, whose critically acclaimed *Sorrow and Bliss* (2020) frequently finds itself at the centre of that conversation, has never resonated with that description. "I saw [Martha] as a complex middle-aged woman with mental health issues," she tells me.

When Mason joins the Zoom call from Sydney, she's framed by wall-to-wall bookshelves. Contemporary fiction sits beside classics—*Hamnet* rests near Hilary Mantel, Stephen Fry's *Mythos* peeks out from another shelf—and the books are packed tightly enough to feel less decorative and more architectural. It's a fitting backdrop for a writer whose own words have become cherished companions for thousands of readers.

The perception of her previous work, however, lingered. When the time came to write another novel, the protagonist that emerged couldn't have been more different. Sophie is instinctively optimistic, warm, and generous—a character Mason says partly arose in response to the way Martha had been received. Yet the novel's deeper concerns—loneliness, imagined intimacy, and the emotional lives readers build around authors—weren't ideas she consciously set out to explore. "My editor said, 'Oh, so you've written about loneliness'," she laughs. "I started thinking and realised, yes—the word lonely appears an awful lot."

The idea for *Sophie, Standing There* arrived in the aftermath of *Sorrow and Bliss*, when Mason suddenly found herself inhabiting a literary world she'd previously only observed from afar. "I'd never really met any of the writers I'd admired before," she admits. Afterwards came literary festivals—green rooms and conversations with authors whose names had once existed only on book covers. In that liminal space, where readers and writers come together, she became fascinated by the people who worked in the wings.

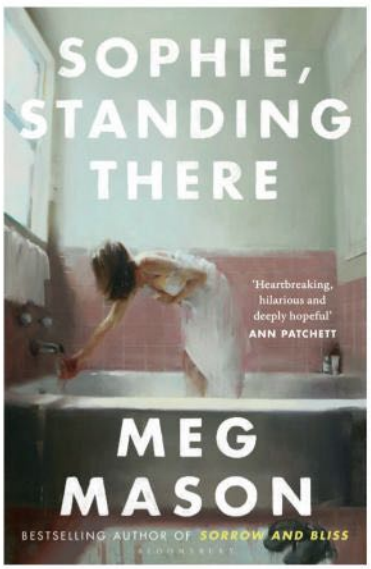
"I came home from Auckland Writers Festival wondering what it would feel like to be on the staff side of a literary festival—to be in such close proximity to

PHOTO CREDIT: ANNE PEETERS

writers and this world, but never quite a part of it," she says. "And what does it feel like to love an author who doesn't know you exist?"

That question sits quietly beneath every page of *Sophie, Standing There*. At its heart, it's a novel about projection—about the stories readers create around the people whose words arrive at exactly the right moment in their lives. Those questions naturally led her to the increasingly familiar phenomenon of parasocial relationships. "We encounter books at exactly the right moment in our lives, and when that happens it's easy for admiration to extend beyond the page," she says. "When what you need aligns with what's on the page, it feels like fireworks."

She laughs softly, aware of how quickly the conversation risks becoming more psychological than literary. That emotional attachment, however, was never something Mason wanted to ridicule. For her, Sophie arrived fully formed in her imagination and quickly became someone she felt protective of. "I don't really care whether readers like me or even the book—I just want them to like Sophie and understand her."



Sophie, reeling from the collapse of her marriage and the loss of several of her closest relationships, finds solace in the work of a celebrated novelist. The more she reads, the more she begins to feel that she knows her. Of course, she doesn't. "Because Sophie doesn't know her, she can imagine her into being," Mason says. "As she consumes more of the author, she begins to feel as though she really knows this person. When they eventually meet, she discovers she's built a different version of the author in her own mind."

It's an experience that, Mason is quick to point out, is anything but new. Readers have always forged deeply personal relationships with books and the people who write them. "Parasocial" may be the modern label, but she resists the idea that it's inherently unhealthy. "Readers are especially good at imagining because books train us to suspend disbelief," she says. "Who hasn't believed that, if they ever met their favourite author or artist, they might form a special connection?"

Other novels might have turned Sophie's attachment into an object of obsession, but Mason never allows that to happen. Instead, she writes her with extraordinary tenderness. The protectiveness she feels towards Sophie, in some ways, is a rebuttal to the reception of Martha.

"An academic, John Mullan, once said that every new novel is a reaction against the one that came before it," she says. "That resonates true for me. The danger after a successful novel is trying to write it again. Martha was so often described as a 'sad girl'— which I never recognised —and there was a part of me that wanted to rebel. I thought, 'Fine. I'm going to write the happiest character you've ever met then'."

As the novel explores what readers imagine about authors, Mason has also had to confront the reverse: what it feels like to become the subject of other people's projections. The success of Sorrow and Bliss transformed her life almost overnight. At 43, with an established career and family already in place, she suddenly found herself flying around the world and meeting readers who treated her as though they already knew her.

"I knew not to believe it," she says. "But at the same time, you do have to inhabit that projection graciously that readers have created. Your only hope is to not start believing it yourself."

As our conversation runs over the scheduled time, Mason slips from talking as a novelist to talking as a "late reader" remembering the book that made her feel less alone. As a teenager who had just moved from New Zealand to Australia, homesick and desperately lonely, she found her sanctuary in the work of Janet Frame. "I opened one of her books and suddenly, there it all was—my childhood, the landscape, the language, the food. It felt as though she'd handed me home in a book."

It's perhaps why Mason resists reducing literature—or life—to a single emotional register. She isn't interested in unrelenting bleakness because that's not how life feels.

"We make jokes in terrible moments, and we can feel an unexpected pang of sadness during perfectly happy times," she says. "I want my books to reflect that."

The quickest answer she gives all afternoon is when asked about the pressure of writing post-*Sorrow and Bliss*. She admits she felt it "only every minute," and the only way she knows how to respond to that expectation is through craft. "I write the book, rewrite it, read it out aloud, and then rewrite it again because I want the reading experience to feel effortless."

As our conversation draws to a close, I tell her that a friend proclaims *Sorrow and Bliss* as one of her favourite novels, and ask if she'd mind recording a short message for her. Mason doesn't hesitate. I also confess that based on my friend's love for the book, I'd made her up to be this mythic figure too. She laughs immediately. "I hope I've quashed that for you." ■

BOOK COVER DESIGN: AMY DAOUD; ILLUSTRATION: KIM COGAN

The Turning Page

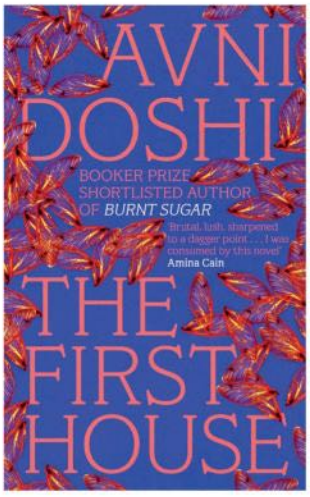
Six compelling new works of fiction explore divorce, identity, war, grief, ambition, and the boundaries of storytelling.

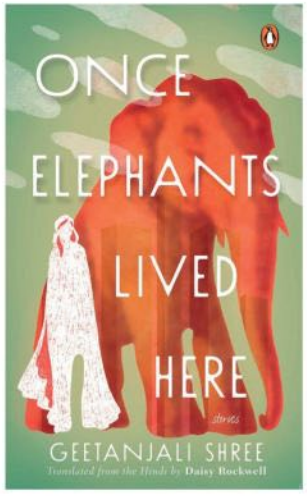
By ANWESH BANERJEE

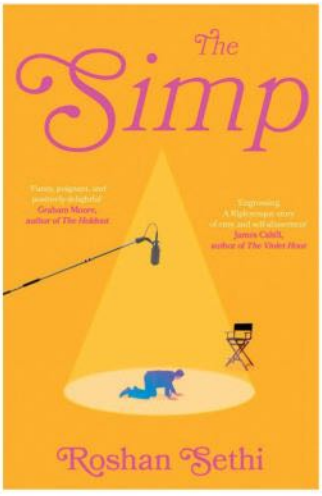
After the Booker-nomination success of her debut novel *Burnt Sugar* (2020), Avni Doshi returns with her sophomore work of fiction. Dubbed by some as a divorce novel and by others as a tale of exorcism, *The First House* follows the story of a married woman—long out of touch with her former creative self—as one fine day she is greeted with the news of her husband divorcing her. In the lineage of novelists before her like Elena Ferrante and Kate Chopin, Doshi uses this as a trigger incident to paint for us the bare bones of a marriage and the portrait of a woman coming undone. No longer moored by the certainty of domesticity, Doshi's narrator begins having visions of mythical comings and the prophecies of ancient goddesses as she struggles to gain a grip on her reality, surrounded by her two daughters in the hostile suburbs. The vision of an Amazon goddess haunts her, and over the course of the summer, as cicadas buried 17 years ago prepare to emerge in a transformational plague, the woman finally gathers her tribe. Rich in its textured understanding of the interiority of women, magical in its exploration of the stars that influence our lives, and clinical in its dissection of the patriarchy that rots marital domesticity, this is an assured work of strong fiction from one of the most important wordsmiths of our times.

Translated by Daisy Rockwell from the 2007 Hindi original (titled *Yahaan Haathi Rehte The*), *Once Elephants Lived Here* is a collection of 11 stories by Booker-winning author Geetanjali Shree and covers a variety of themes, complete with early seeds of Shree's trademark stylistic experimentations. Pushing the boundaries of both linear narratives and genre conventions, each story in this collection, in its own way, attempts to question the existing norms of the short story as a stylistic form. In one story, a woman spends all day compulsively walking in circles around her housing complex, with no introduction, explanation, or denouement. In another, and my personal favourite, a woman goes on a writer's retreat with robots and falls passionately in love with the sky. Plot breaks, broken sentences, grammatical liberties, newly minted words, and new narrative structures are to be found on every page of this collection. A short read that commands your complete attention and submission, this is essential reading for anyone willing to explore the formalistic origins of one of Indian literature's most original contemporary voices.

After the global success of *A Nice Indian Boy* (2024)—a heartwarming, gay romantic comedy of a family drama—director Roshan Sethi now turns his attention to fiction and the written word with his debut novel *The Simp*. It follows the story of Raj Ladlani, a morose and unemployable actor leading an anonymous life in Los Angeles. He works part-time at a frozen yogurt store while obsessively reading *Vanity Fair*, fantasising about stardom and clinging to the encouragement of his ageing coach. One day, his travails miraculously come to an end







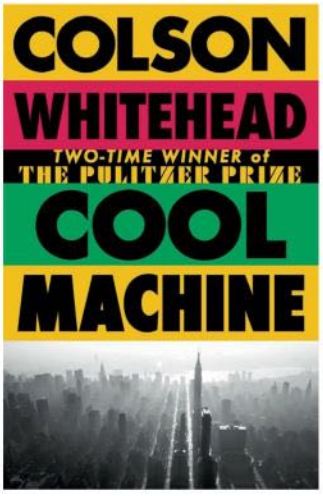
IMAGES: COURTESY AMAZON INDIA

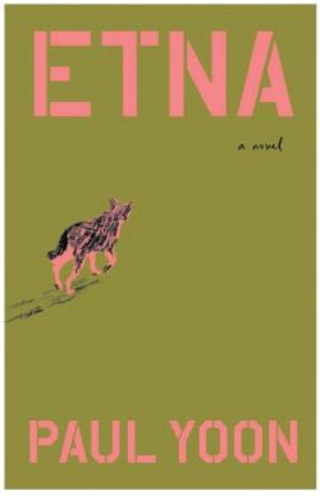
when he answers a job advert detailing a relentless, laughable parade of menial responsibilities for a "Hollywood Family". And thus begins the astonishing bildungsroman-esque chronicle of Ladlani's fall and decline. Working as an executive assistant to Jim H, a massive, macho director, and his young trophy wife with secret writerly ambitions, Ana H, Ladlani discovers a world where histories of race and colonialism collide in frighteningly shocking and comic ways to reveal the true costs of pursuing one's dreams of fame. Written in the lineage of works like Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, the novel, which is inspired by true events, is a brilliantly crafted, acutely observed portrait of the current state of the media industry.

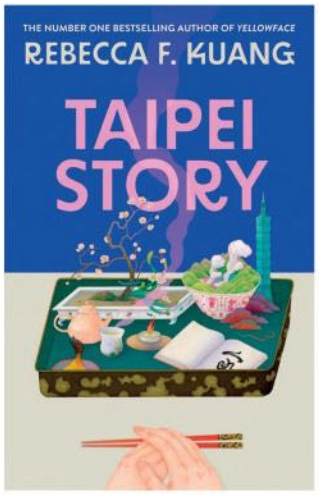
Set in 1981 as the final installment of his Harlem trilogy, Colson Whitehead's *Cool Machine* follows successful business owner Ray Carney, who has just been named Sterling Furniture's Dealer of the Month in early Reagan-era America. But when the banks refuse his wife a loan for her travel agency, Carney gambles on a heist and finds himself entangled with a legendary criminal mastermind. The story jumps to 1983, where Carney's friend and partner-in-crime, Pepper, takes on a bodyguard gig and is plunged into the alien territory of the East Village art and club scene, where everyone speaks a similar language of violence. And as we arrive in the summer of 1986, Carney must make amends for his past mistakes by pairing with a friend from the past and plunging himself headlong into saving a family member from the clutches of city violence that he had left behind long ago. With his usual measured prose, Whitehead paints a picture of a New York in transition, where, gripped by the limits and excesses of Reaganism, shimmering skyscrapers stand next to displaced people huddled in abandoned tunnels. In a dazzling display of protean imagination, Whitehead draws a searing portrait of the New York he saw in his childhood, but one whose darkness he chronicles with the ample patience of a consistent lover.

Be well warned, Paul Yoon's *Etna* is not for the faint-hearted. Set in a fictional country in the present day, this is a story told through the eyes of an—wait for it—ex-military dog, Etna. After surviving years of a devastating war, Etna decides one night to leave the men he has fought alongside for years and return where he was taken from when he was young, in the thin but persistent hope that if a home exists for him, it might be there. Thus begins an exhilarating odyssey told through the eyes of a dog as he traverses across ruined landscapes and fights to survive in a world that, even in peacetime, proves to be just as precarious. Along the way, he encounters other animals and humans who are attempting to figure out how to start again. It is a deeply unconventional narrative choice that takes a minute to get used to. But in a year where we have spent three hours watching the odyssey of a war-battered hero, spare a moment to read this deeply felt novel that urges to cling to hope even in the darkest of times.

After the runaway success of *Yellowface* (2023) and *Katabasis* (2025), Rebecca F Kuang returns with a new, and widely anticipated, work of fiction that follows Yale student Lily who arrives in Taipei for a summer's study at National Taiwan University. It is a summer that Lily hopes to spend working on her Chinese and reconnecting with her cultural roots. This foolproof plan gets completely upended when Lily's grandfather suddenly dies, leaving her to rediscover a past so profoundly touched with grief and heartache that she finds herself at a point of no-return. What emerges is a sensitively written, patiently paced, and insightfully crafted inheritance of grief and the lessons learnt in attempting to reconcile our histories with our present day realities. If her thriller and magical realism outings were any early proof, then *Taipei Story* confirms Kuang's importance as one of the most creatively diverse voices of contemporary young-adult fiction. ■



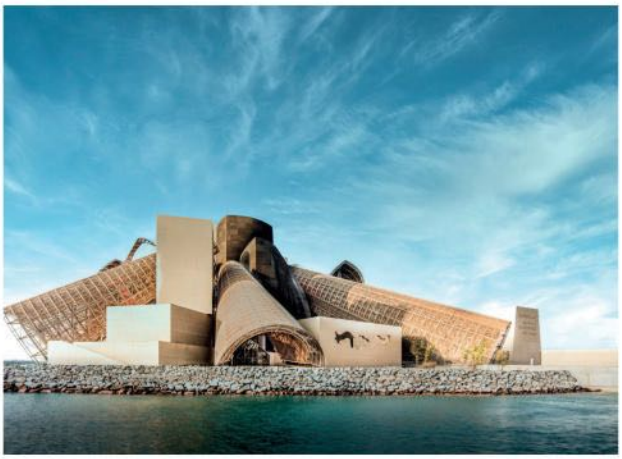






CREATIVE JOURNEY

Trace three decades of painter Asit Kumar Patnaik's artistic practice at *Continuum: A 30-Year Retrospective*. Bringing together around 50 works from 1995 to 2026, including previously unseen paintings and works on paper, the exhibition spans sketches, watercolours, landscapes, abstracts, graphic prints and figurative paintings. Patnaik's evolving fascination with texture, experimentation across materials and semi-realistic figurative style come to the fore, alongside his explorations of human relationships and women's empowerment. The exhibition shows the artist's willingness to experiment while remaining connected to his core ideas. Curated by Shibani Chawla, the show will be on view at LTC Gallery, Bikaner House, Delhi, from October 14 to 18.

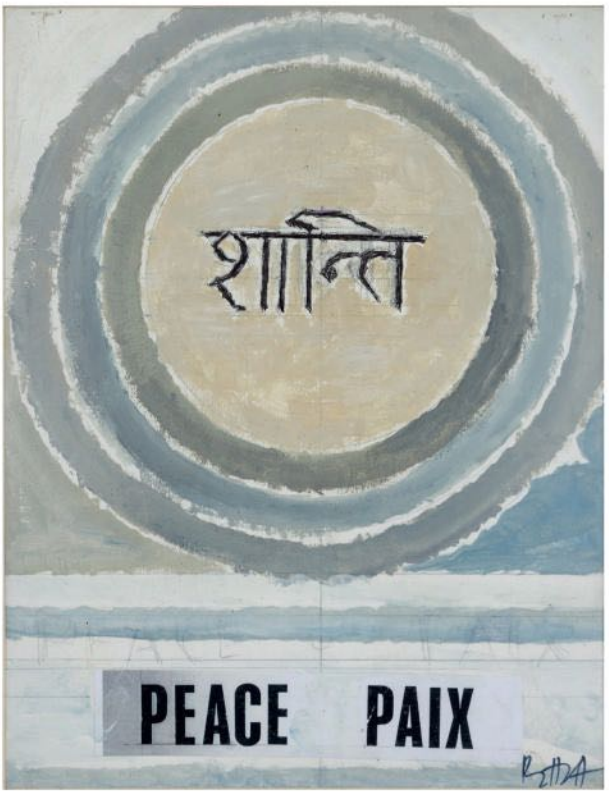


ART DESTINATION

Explore modern and contemporary art at Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, opening on December 11 in the Saadiyat Cultural District. Designed by the late Pritzker Prize-winning architect Frank Gehry, the museum will showcase works from the 1960s to the present, bringing together diverse artistic perspectives and fostering dialogue across cultures.

BAZAAR BUZZ

All that is trending in the art, entertainment, and culinary world.
By MALIKA HALDER



Artwork, titled *Shanti* (2010), by SH Raza

CULTURAL IDENTITY

Ritual, memory, and devotion are in focus at *Performing Belief*, a group exhibition at Kalakaar Art Salon, Delhi. Bringing together works by 22 modern, folk, tribal, and contemporary artists, including SH Raza, FN Souza, MF Husain, Jamini Roy, and Bhuri Bai, the show examines ritual as an evolving cultural language shaped by repetition, labour, identity, and belonging. The exhibition is on view till September 30.

IMAGES: COURTESY THE BRANDS



BACK TO BASICS

Let's Kiss, a new bar in Delhi, brings hospitality back to its simplest, most personal form. With no menu, the bar's team draws from more than 100 drinks, creating cocktails based on your mood, memories, or preferences—or simply improvising. The raw-concrete space, warm hospitality, and dry humour keep things deliberately unshowy, while the food follows suit, with bar grazers, cold bites, tacos, tartines, shareable small plates, and a house pot meal. Founded by Sahil Sambhi, Let's Kiss is less about elaborate cocktail theatre and more about conversation, good drinks, and the feeling of being remembered.



RETAIL EXPANSION

Discover P•TAL's world of handcrafted brass, copper, and kansa at its first experiential flagship store in Hyderabad's Banjara Hills. Spread across 2,000 sqft, the two-level space brings India's metal craft traditions into a contemporary setting, with immersive installations, curated displays, and bespoke gifting. Explore nearly 70 products spanning cookware, serveware, drinkware, dinnerware, wedding, and baby hampers. It also offers personalised products, inviting visitors to discover the stories behind the craft.



Artwork, titled *West Wind* (2026), by Abir Karmakar

BIG MILESTONE

Contemporary gallery Nature Morte is celebrating its 30th anniversary with an exhibition at its new permanent gallery in Gulmohar Park, New Delhi. Titled *The Evolution of the Soothsayer,* the two-part exhibition brings together 35 artists across generations, including Bharti Kher, Dayanita Singh, and Subodh Gupta. Spanning painting, sculpture, photography, experimental materials, and digital practices, the show reflects on the shifting landscape of contemporary art and the individual voices shaping it today. Part One is on view till October 10, followed by Part Two from October 17 to December 12.



CULINARY SPOT

Taste modern Asian cuisine with a Japanese influence at Freddy Who, the new restaurant in Vasant Vihar, New Delhi. The intimate space takes cues from classic Italian social clubs, with oxblood lacquer, burl veneers, bronze detailing, and a sculptural bar. The menu moves from sashimi, carpaccio, and gyoza to robata grills, wok-fired dishes and generous plates. A spirit-first cocktail programme complements the food.





SIGNATURE MENU

Fashion meets mixology at Sidecar, where the cocktail bar has unveiled Sidecar Ke Kalakar, its sixth signature menu of 12 new cocktails, alongside a collaboration with fashion label Huemn. Extending the idea beyond the glass, Huemn has designed a one-off bar apron using its signature 'half & half' deconstruction technique, merging a shirt, dress, and apron into one collectible silhouette. The cocktails are priced between ₹995 and ₹1,595.



CAPTURING EVERYDAY LIFE

Explore three decades of human stories through Seamus Murphy's lens at *Life is in Many Days*, on view at Museo Camera, Gurugram, till October 25. From his lyrical portrait of Ireland and nuanced images of Afghanistan to the vibrant streets of Kolkata and unexpected parallels between Russia and America, the exhibition celebrates resilience, connection, and shared humanity.



Sonet Lumière (detail) by Nilima Sheikh

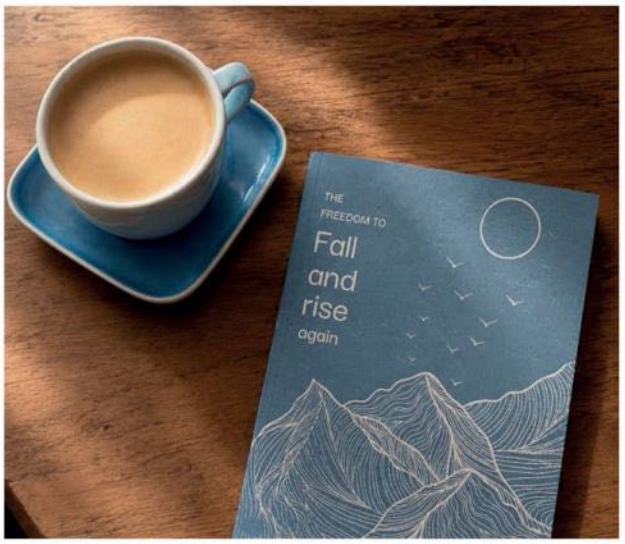
GLOBAL SHOWCASE

Veteran artist Nilima Sheikh explores memory, displacement, and renewal through *Nilima Sheikh: Fractured Skies*, her first solo presentation in New York, at The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) from September 27 to June 13. Co-organised by MoMA and Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA), the exhibition showcases five decades of her artistic journey and brings together works from three significant series—*Each Night Put Kashmir in Your Dreams*, *Home, Land,* and the newly commissioned *Shahid/Witness*. Moving between poetry, folklore, history, and personal memory, Sheikh's layered paintings reflect on the Partition of Punjab, Kashmir, war and displacement, transforming historical trauma into meditations on loss, resilience, and hope.



IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE

Taste Gaggan Anand's return to India at RAGA, his new New Delhi restaurant created with Rydo Anton in partnership with Zorawar Kalra. RAGA is not a recreation of Bangkok or a nostalgic trip down memory lane. Instead, expect a five-hour, two-seating experience that brings together texture, sound, light, rhythm, humour, memory, and surprise. With one menu priced at ₹11,111++ per person, the restaurant invites diners to rethink what a meal can be. RAGA promises an immersive dining experience that plays by its own rules.



COFFEE & CONFIDENCE

Celebrate the freedom to fall, learn, and rise again with In Good Co., a new cafe in Delhi that celebrates experimentation, reinvention, and the courage to try again. It brings this philosophy to life through limited-edition journals created with Paperdom, alongside a menu where Southern Filter Kaapi meets specialty coffee, and Badam Halwa Croissant sits alongside Pindi Chole Hummus. With contemporary spaces, Indian-inspired design, and collaborations with homegrown creatives, In Good Co. captures the evolving spirit of modern India.



Artwork titled *Seeking A Yellow Path-III* (2024)

LAYERED EXPLORATION

Artist Raj Chowdhury is showcasing his debut solo exhibition, *Where Do I Pause?*, at Trace Gallery, Kolkata, a new art and culture space conceptualised by Anissa Sonthalia. Drawing from his time in the ICU, the painter examines contradictory feelings like fear and hope, memory and oblivion, and chaos and clarity. Fragments of personal experiences, current events, philosophy, human behaviour, nature and still life come together in a neo-pop language, creating a shifting landscape where meaning forms, dissolves and lingers in the spaces between. The show will run till September 16.



FOR THE LOVE OF DESIGN

Explore the latest in furniture, lighting, craft and collectible design at Design Democracy at Hyderabad's HITEX Exhibition Centre from September 18 to 20. Bringing together more than 200 brands, 150 speakers and 250 architects and designers, the highlights of the festival include four curated exhibitions, immersive installations, public art interventions, and talks exploring the future of design. ■



Steve McCurry

A Witness to Time

After four decades behind the lens, Steve McCurry continues to romanticise the realities of the world through documentary photography.

By JHANVI DUGGAL

For over four decades, Steve McCurry has been documenting the world with his lens and turning fleeting moments into indelible images. Yet, his most memorable moment isn't the one that he has captured. Asked to name it, he simply says, "Probably the birth of my daughter."

While the world urges you to gaze at it through a rainbow-coloured lens, McCurry finds solace in seeing it as it is—unfiltered and constantly unfolding. Be it the painful reality of the Afghan girl, the joy of colours in Rajasthan, or the expressive face of the elderly of the Rabari tribe, each of McCurry's portraits have spoken to us in more ways than one. From the streets of India to cultures across continents, his photographs have documented a world in constant transition. For McCurry, photography has always been about preserving memories for generations to come. During a session hosted by Leica, McCurry spoke with us about his deep connection with India, the continuing relevance of documentary photography, and the act of telling stories through images.

IMAGES: COURTESY GETTY IMAGES

***Harper's Bazaar*: You've photographed India over so many decades. What is it about the country that still surprises and inspires you?**

Steve McCurry: Well, I think what inspires me is the resilience, the spirit, and the character of the people here, and how they still are. It's still a vibrant, rich country that adheres to its traditions and culture. Despite all the modernity, it still remains true to its Indianness and its unique culture, and the multicultural identity is as strong as it's ever been.

HB: With AI entering every realm of our lives, how do you think documentary photography still has that emotional authority today?

SM: It isn't for everybody; some people appreciate it and some don't. Documentary photography, I think, is important because it documents the world as it is. It almost becomes like a historical document. Family photos of your parents and grandparents—usually, people find that fascinating, to see where we've come from. We all love pictures that show life as it was back then, most people find that really valuable.

HB: After four decades of documenting cultures across continents, what kind of stories do you hope the next generation of photographers choose to tell?

SM: Just continue to tell the story of life as it unfolds. Today we think everything is so modern, but in 50 years, this is all going to seem very quaint and old-fashioned. Each age has a different time and different parts. So, I'd say just continue to document the world as it is.

HB: You have been associated with Leica for over a decade. The brand often speaks about photography as a medium of storytelling rather than simply image-making. How has that philosophy evolved over the years and how does it shape the way you work?

SM: I don't think it has changed. I mean, there's cellphone photography and all of that, but fundamentally, for me, it hasn't really changed. I still walk around, photograph, trying to show people and life. So, in a way, it hasn't really changed for me in 50 years. It's different cameras, but the act of photographing, the act of picture-making, is basically the same. ■

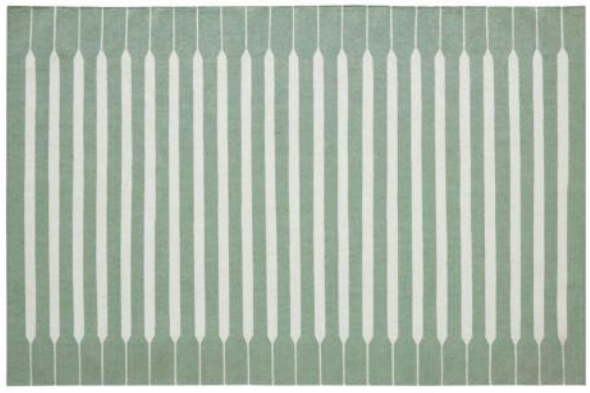




McCurry's works on display at exhibitions in Spain (above) and Italy

Serene Shades

Replace neutrals with rich earthy colours that fill the room with soul and personality.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7

1. Modern geo stripe light green lawan cotton panja dhurrie, Swadesh, ₹20,450; 2. Caramel cream blanket in cashmere blend, Janavi India, ₹25,000; 3. Eloise Chenille chair, Muun Home, ₹38,069; 4. Nordic Breeze dual wick candle, Cotton & Satins, ₹2,450; 5. Yalla embroidered pillow, Pottery Barn, ₹7,000; 6. Harmony of the Heavens table lamp (small), Viya, ₹1,15,000; 7. Gumdrop swivel ottoman pouf, West Elm, ₹32,500.

IMAGES: COURTESY THE BRANDS; COMPILED BY KRITI SHUKLA

HOROSCOPE

Aries
MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Wisdom is found in quiet introspection. Stepping back will reveal hidden truths and restore your power. Strip away unnecessary noise and simplify your routine to create space for what truly matters.
Karmic tip: Surrender the need to control the outcome.

Taurus
APRIL 20-MAY 20

A spark of creative passion is ready to transform into tangible, long-term success. Ground your new ideas into structured plans. Trust in your ability to transmute effort into magic.
Karmic tip: True abundance blossoms when you blend passion with practical effort.

Gemini
MAY 21-JUNE 21

Allow yourself to dream beyond current limits. Open communication and genuine connection in your relationships will guide you toward clarity. Focus your energy on what aligns with your highest purpose.
Karmic tip: Follow the path that expands your heart.

Cancer
JUNE 22-JULY 22

If you feel emotionally uninspired or stuck, shift your perspective. Guard your resources with care, but remain observant of subtle opportunities around you. The universe is offering a fresh path toward lasting peace.
Karmic tip: Awareness unlocks the doors that comfort zones keep closed.

Leo
JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Balance your ambitious fire with intentional rest to maintain your inner harmony. A wave of prosperity is gathering momentum behind the scenes.
Karmic tip: Real power is anchored in equilibrium, not constant force.

Virgo
AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22



Virgo Zodiac tapered templar ring, Elizabeth Gage, ₹9,12,000 approx

Recognition for your hard work is on the horizon. Nurture your goals while allowing yourself to receive grace and support from those around you. You don't have to carry every responsibility by yourself. Karmic tip: Receptive grace is a form of spiritual strength.

Libra
SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Your visionary ideas and sharp intellect are at an all-time peak, empowering you to lead with confidence. However, seeking expert counsel or a fresh external perspective will refine your plans.
Karmic tip: True wisdom knows when to lead and when to listen.

Scorpio
OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

A period of spontaneous joy, celebration, and deep emotional renewal is unfolding. Remember that you are fully worthy of the love, joy, and blessings coming your way.
Karmic tip: Your capacity to receive is equal to your sense of self-worth.

Sagittarius
NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Acknowledge past disappointments without letting them dictate your next horizon. Protect your energy, gather your resilience, and elevate your aspirations higher than before.
Karmic tip: Aim beyond familiar limits.

Capricorn
DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Deep emotional fulfilment and harmonious connections bless your home and personal life this month. Step into your charismatic, passionate energy. Vulnerability will deepen your most cherished bonds.
Karmic tip: Authenticity is your ultimate shield and greatest force.

Aquarius
JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

A major life milestone or shift in perspective opens doors to emotional healing. Balance your responsibilities with light-hearted play. Peace comes when you relax your grip.
Karmic tip: Joy is a vital practice, not a reward for finished work.

Pisces
FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

A major cycle is successfully concluding, ushering in a period of independence and abundance. Ground your creative spirit in practical routines.
Karmic tip: Trust the timing of your journey; the world is ready for your gifts.

PREDICTIONS BY **URVI SHRIMANKER**

IMAGE: COURTESY THE BRAND

A ROLE OF HER OWN

Kiara Advani has always had a plan. It can all seem enviably certain, except that life has a way of rewriting even the best ones. Between the on-screen characters that ask more of her, motherhood, and learning to trust the unexpected, the actor talks about becoming.

Photography by BIKRAMJIT BOSE
Styling & Creative Direction by ANAITA SHROFF ADAJANIA
Words by KRITI SHUKLA



Jacket; embroidered skirt; and J'Adior pumps, all **Dior**; earrings and ring, **Outhouse Jewellery**; and ring, **Ambir Jewels**



Bar jacket; midi skirt; bracelet; J'Adior pumps, all **Dior**; ring, **Outhouse Jewellery**



Shirt; pants; J'Adior pumps; Médaillon necklace; and Dior Médaillon clutch, all **Dior**; bangles and ring, **Outhouse Jewellery**; and ring, **Ambir Jewels**



Shirt; pants; J'Adior pumps; Médaillon necklace; and Dior Médaillon clutch, all **Dior**; bangles and ring, **Outhouse Jewellery**; and ring, **Ambir Jewels**

“Your priorities shift, your time shifts, your body changes, your emotions change. There is no single moment when you suddenly know how to do it all. But it is also incredibly beautiful about discovering this new version of yourself. And I’m still figuring her out.”



This and opposite page: Coat; shirt; straight denim pants; Médaillon belt; earrings; and J'Adior sandals, all **Dior**; rings, **Outhouse Jewellery** and **Ambir Jewels**







This and opposite page: Fitted jacket; skirt; J'Adior sandals; Médaillon earrings and necklace, **all Dior**; and rings, **Ambir Jewels**

Bollywood has always been good at turning actors into memories. A character reminds you of a version of yourself, a song becomes a wedding-season staple, dialogues become inside jokes; and before you know it, the person behind it has become part of the cultural fabric of a particular time. We tend to feel nostalgic about the people we have watched grow up in public, not simply because of the films they made but because of the years those films came to represent. Kiara Advani's journey has followed that familiar arc, from the girl who audiences first noticed in *Fugly* (2014), still finding her footing in the strange business of being watched, to the actor who knows her craft in *Kabir Singh* (2019), *Good Newwz* (2019), *Shershaah* (2021) and *Satyaprem Ki Katha* (2023). There has been no single, defining turn, but a succession of films that have marked different chapters of her career, each one adding to a familiarity that, over time, begins to feel like nostalgia. At 35, Advani has enough distance from the beginning to know what no longer interests her, even if the future remains less certain. "I don't think of it as a reset as much as an evolution," she insists. The distinction is telling. Nothing is being discarded. The actor isn't looking to outrun the person she has been, but to make room for the person she is becoming.

It's raining in Delhi as I sit down to write this, the kind of sudden downpour that makes a long day feel longer. But there is a particular pleasure in ending one by doing what you love—a feeling like the one Advani describes when she talks about acting.

"The only thing that I had absolute clarity in life was wanting to be an actor," says Advani. The instinct appears to predate the career itself. As far back as she can remember, acting was not one possibility among many. It was the only possibility. There is something almost old-fashioned about the certainty of it. No alternate career to fall back on, no carefully hedged bet. Just the kind of blinkered determination that makes hindsight look inevitable. Advani danced around the house, watched films, recited dialogues from her favourites, came home from school, and watched more films. Her parents noticed it early, though they wanted her to graduate first. So Advani did both. College, exams, and evening classes to hone her craft ran alongside each other. "I'm glad that I went to college. I'm glad that I had that experience as well. And I lived my childhood as well," Advani adds. The ambition was there, but so was a life outside it.

Perhaps that is why the lesson being learnt now is almost the opposite of the one that got her here. Advani who once planned her way towards a very specific future is trying to become comfortable with not having every detail mapped out. Preparation comes naturally to her, certainty does not. "You can plan everything and still be surprised," she says. What remains is an attempt to trust the process, be kinder to herself when the answers are not immediate and, as she puts it, "just go with the flow."

There is a similar refusal to over-engineer the person the audience sees. The public Advani, she says, is not some carefully constructed alter ego. "The Kiara people see is very much a part of who I am." In private, the scale simply gets smaller. Family, cousins, her husband's side of the family, holidays, meals, and staying home. "I'm usually quite silly with the people I'm comfortable with," she reveals. "I don't feel the need to be 'on' all the time."

You can tell that the difference becomes clearer once the conversation turns to work. An actor may spend years becoming recognisable, only to discover that such recognition can, in time, prove rather limiting. The business tends to remember what has worked before; audiences hold on to what they once enjoyed. Advani, for her part, appears less concerned with preserving either.



Fitted jacket; skirt; J'Adior sandals; Médaillon earrings and necklace, all **Dior;** and rings, **Ambir Jewels**

Make-up Artist: Sandhya Shekar; Hair Artist: Daksh Nidhi; Editorial Coordinator: Shalini Kanojia; Line Producer: Salim Memon; Set Designer: Yatin Powle; Assistant Stylist: Neona Bahri

"An actor's job for me is to surprise people, and sometimes surprise yourself," she says. "I don't want to build a box around myself." The appeal of a difficult role, then, is not simply the role itself but what it might make possible afterwards. "Every challenging role should expand the possibilities of what I can play next."

Her recent release *Toxic* (2026) offered precisely that opportunity. As Nadia, Advani had to inhabit a character that took her into an unusually dark psychological space. The opening scene, in particular, demanded something she describes as moving through guilt, mania, derangement, and a depth of suffering she had never known personally.

The aftermath is what Advani remembers most clearly. The scene left her physically drained but emotionally lighter. "I had given it my all," she says. "Even though I was drained, I think it had removed everything that I had." There was something else about the day that stayed with her: people from production gathering around the monitor to watch the scene. It is an oddly intimate detail from a film set, where hundreds of people can spend hours working around a single performance without necessarily seeing the moment it produces. For Advani, the response became part of the memory.

Nadia is not the only role that has left such a mark. Be it the final scene of *Shershaah*, where her character confronts the reality of her husband's death, or the moment Monica and Varun Batra, played by Advani and Akshay Kumar, grapple with the mix-up over their babies in *Good Newwz*, even the comic sequences in the latter have stayed with her. "Comedy is such a hard genre to do," she admits. Often, it is a scene rather than an entire film that becomes the thing an actor carries away. The most difficult are usually the ones that require an emotion Advani has never had to live by herself.

That emotional excavation can be exhausting, but experience has also taught her where to draw the line. "When I'm at work, I am fully invested. Home, unless there is preparation to be done, is different. It is where the character stops and I get to recharge. I feel it's also very important to conserve your energy so that you can give your best."

It is a thought that stays with me as we talk about the life Advani has stepped into beyond the characters she plays. There is, after all, a new role waiting for her when she gets home, and one she is still learning as she goes. "Your priorities shift, your time shifts, your body changes, your emotions change. There is no single moment when you suddenly know how to do it all. But it is also incredibly beautiful about discovering this new version of yourself. And I'm still figuring her out," Advani admits.

It has also sharpened Advani's understanding of the peculiar demands placed on women. "Motherhood has made me look at women with an even deeper sense of admiration," she tells me. Nurturing, ambitious, present, successful, graceful, strong: the list can seem endless, and the expectation is often that all of these qualities should coexist without contradiction. "There is no single correct version of motherhood, just as there is no single definition of being a woman. Family and ambition do not have to cancel each other out. Neither does love require the disappearance of identity," she adds.

Advani's insistence that love need not come at the expense of the self recalls a similar reckoning in literature. In Kate Chopin's 1899 novel *The Awakening*, Edna Pontellier draws a distinction between what she is willing to surrender for her

children and what she considers indivisible from her own identity: "I would give up the unessential...but I wouldn't give myself." More than a century later, the sentiment retains its force—the idea that motherhood may demand sacrifice, but need not require a woman to relinquish the self entirely.

For Saraayah, her daughter, the hope is consequently less about following in her mother's footsteps than having the freedom to choose her own. Advani wants her daughter to dream as big as she wants while remaining grounded and compassionate. "I want her to be kind and strong. To know her worth without needing the world to confirm it. Most of all, to understand that she does not have to fit into anyone else's definition of who she should be."

At home, there is the additional complexity of raising a child when both parents can have peculiar work hours. Two actors know what an early call time looks like, what happens when a shoot takes over a day, and why work can suddenly become all-consuming.

"I think it gives us a very unique understanding of each other's worlds," Advani says. There is no claim to having solved the equation. "There's no perfect formula. Instead, there is communication, adjustment, and, occasionally, laughter at the chaos."

The same groundedness appears in Advani's idea of solitude. Me time, for most people, might mean dinner somewhere nice, a spa appointment, a holiday, some deliberate effort to step away from the everyday routine. For the star, it is deliberately unglamorous. Home. A phone switched off. Family or friends dropping by. Something to watch, something to listen to, or nothing at all. "Sometimes it is simply an hour in which nobody needs anything from you. And that feels like a luxury right now," she says.

I underline that sentence in my notes twice. Not because it's a revelation—every working parent alive would nod along—but because it's rare to hear an actor admit that the luxury they crave is just silence.

"When I'm at work, I am fully invested. Home, unless there is preparation to be done, is different. It is where the character stops and I get to recharge. I feel it's also very important to conserve your energy so that you can give your best."

The idea of leaving room for oneself extends, too, to the way Advani dresses. Fashion, for her, is increasingly less about the performance of being fashionable. "My personal style has become much more instinctive with time. I'd rather take a trend and make it my own than wear something just because it's having a moment," she quips.

There is an admission, though, that trends have a way of returning, including the ones you once dismissed entirely. The final test remains simple: if the clothes are wearing you, rather than the other way around, something has gone wrong, she tells me.

It is a useful measure for a career, too. After years of being watched and boxed into familiar categories, evolution isn't about becoming someone new—it's about losing interest in performing a version of yourself that no longer fits. "I would rather try than not try at all," the actor makes a point. ■

BAZAAR
beauty & wellness



Rice 70 Glowy Milk Toner and Rice 70 Intensive Moisturising Milk, both Anua; Concealer in shade 01 Fair Neutral, Haus Labs; AMC Gel Eyeliner 77, Inglot; Star Lit Glitter in shade Holographic Silver, Make Up For Ever; Lipglass Clear, M.A.C Cosmetics

Skin As Identity

Model Jasroop Kaur Singh reclaims space in a world that often asks difference to disappear.

Photographs by VIVI SUTHATHIP

Creative Direction by NUNTAPORN MUNKIT



Concealer in shade 01 Fair Neutral, Haus Labs; AMC Gel Eyeliner 77, Inglot; Star Lit Glitter in shade Holographic Silver, Make Up For Ever; Bio-Lipid Body Lotion, Naturium



Rice 70 Glowy Milk Toner and Rice 70 Intensive Moisturising Milk, both Anua; Concealer in shade 01 Fair Neutral, Haus Labs; and silver leaf



Rice 70 Glowy Milk Toner and Rice 70 Intensive Moisturising Milk, both Anua; Concealer in shade 01 Fair Neutral, Haus Labs; Industrial Colour Pigments 2.0 Eyeshadow Palette, Isamaya; Unlocked Soft Matte Lipstick in shade Peony, Hourglass; Glossybounce Hydrating Lip Oil, Saie; Brow Sculpt, Refy



Rice 70 Glowy Milk Toner and Rice 70 Intensive Moisturising Milk, both Anua; Concealer in shade 01 Fair Neutral, Haus Labs; Industrial Colour Pigments 2.0 Eyeshadow Palette, Isamaya; Unlocked Soft Matte Lipstick in shade Peony, Hourglass; Glossybounce Hydrating Lip Oil, Saie; Brow Sculpt, Refy



Concealer in shade 01 Fair Neutral, Haus Labs; Everlasting Kajal in shade Jet Black, Kiko Milano; Metal Powder in shade Silver, Make Up For Ever; Lipglass Clear, M.A.C Cosmetics



Rice 70 Glowy Milk Toner, and Rice 70 Intensive Moisturising Milk, both Anua; Concealer in shade 01 Fair Neutral, Haus Labs; Garden of Stars Eyeshadow Palette, Ellis Atlantis; Crystals in shades Capri Blue 243 and 001, Swarovski; Colour Excess Gel Pencil in shade Perpetual Shock, M.A.C Cosmetics; Brow Sculpt, Refy



Rice 70 Glowy Milk Toner and Rice 70 Intensive Moisturising Milk, both Anua; Concealer in shade 01 Fair Neutral, Haus Labs; silver leaf; lipstick in shade Penelope Pink, Charlotte Tilbury

Make-up Artist: Zana Moses; Hairstylist: Sheree Jourdan; Hairstylist's assistant: Maria Papadakis-Kotsovolou; Model: Jasroop Kaur Singh at Revolt Model Agency; Post production: Karina Paradi

Volume, Please

'Ozempic face' has given rise to a new beauty category. But is 'GLP-1 skincare' solving a real concern or simply capitalising on a trend? *Bazaar India* investigates.

By KRITI SHUKLA



Few could have anticipated that a class of drugs developed to treat metabolic disease would create an entirely new conversation in beauty. As GLP-1s have transformed weight management, significant weight loss can mean diminished volume on the face and a more hollow appearance. "Ozempic face" may be an inelegant term, but it has given skincare an unexpected new frontier: addressing the aesthetic aftermath of a medical revolution.

THE FACIAL SHIFT

"When someone experiences rapid weight loss on GLP-1 medications, the body sheds fat from the deep, structural fat pads in the face that act as our natural cushion," explains Dr Jamuna Pai, cosmetic physician, author, and Founder of SkinLab. "Simultaneously, because the weight drop happens so quickly, the skin's natural collagen and elastin matrix don't have enough time to contract and adapt. At a tissue level, this leads to structural deflation."

IMAGE: COURTESY GETTY IMAGES

The phenomenon is not exclusive to GLP-1s. Similar changes can follow bariatric surgery or extreme dieting. "GLP-1 skin" is not an official medical condition, says Dr Noopur Jain, Founder and Consultant Dermatologist at Skinzest. "The important distinction is that many of these changes are related to rapid weight loss itself rather than being a direct effect of the GLP-1 medication." How pronounced they are depends on several factors, including age, genetics, facial anatomy, baseline skin quality, nutrition, and the amount and pace of weight loss. Other concerns can accompany the change. "Hair loss is one of the more common concerns I hear," says Dr Geetika Srivastava, dermatologist and Founder of Influennz Clinic. "Patients also frequently report dryness, dullness, and a general loss of skin vitality, particularly as their dietary intake changes during weight loss."

This is where skincare has a role to play, albeit a measured one. "Topical skincare works well on the epidermal-dermal junction," says Pai. "It can significantly improve surface hydration, smooth out a crepey texture." What it cannot do is replace what has been lost beneath the skin. "Products cannot penetrate deep enough into the subcutaneous layers to rebuild lost fat pads or fix severe structural sagging," says Pai.

For the concerns that do sit within its reach, Srivastava points to "peptides, Centella asiatica, copper peptides, and hyaluronic acid," particularly for barrier support and inflammation.

Jain advocates a less trend-driven approach. "I would focus on ingredients and technologies that already have evidence behind them rather than looking for a 'magic' ingredient specifically for GLP-1 skin," she points out. Their efficacy does not fundamentally change simply because GLP-1s enter the equation. "There is currently no accepted medical definition of what makes a product 'GLP-1 skincare'," says Jain. "If a formulation is designed to improve hydration, support the skin barrier, improve texture, or address lines, those concerns can occur in anyone—not only people taking GLP-1 medications."

BEYOND THE LABEL

The category's commercial appeal, meanwhile, is difficult to overlook. As more people undergo significant weight loss, brands have been quick to position products around its visible effects. "Many brands are jumping on a trending keyword to capture a fresh market segment," adds Pai.

Srivastava sees an opportunity for the category to become more considered. "Ideally, I would like to see skincare evolve beyond simply addressing surface-level concerns," she says. The more meaningful shift, then, may be towards formulations designed around the demands of significant weight loss rather than products claiming to treat "GLP-1 skin" as a distinct condition.

The credible response is unlikely to be another miracle cream, but skincare that understands what it can improve, what it cannot, and when the difference requires more than a product.

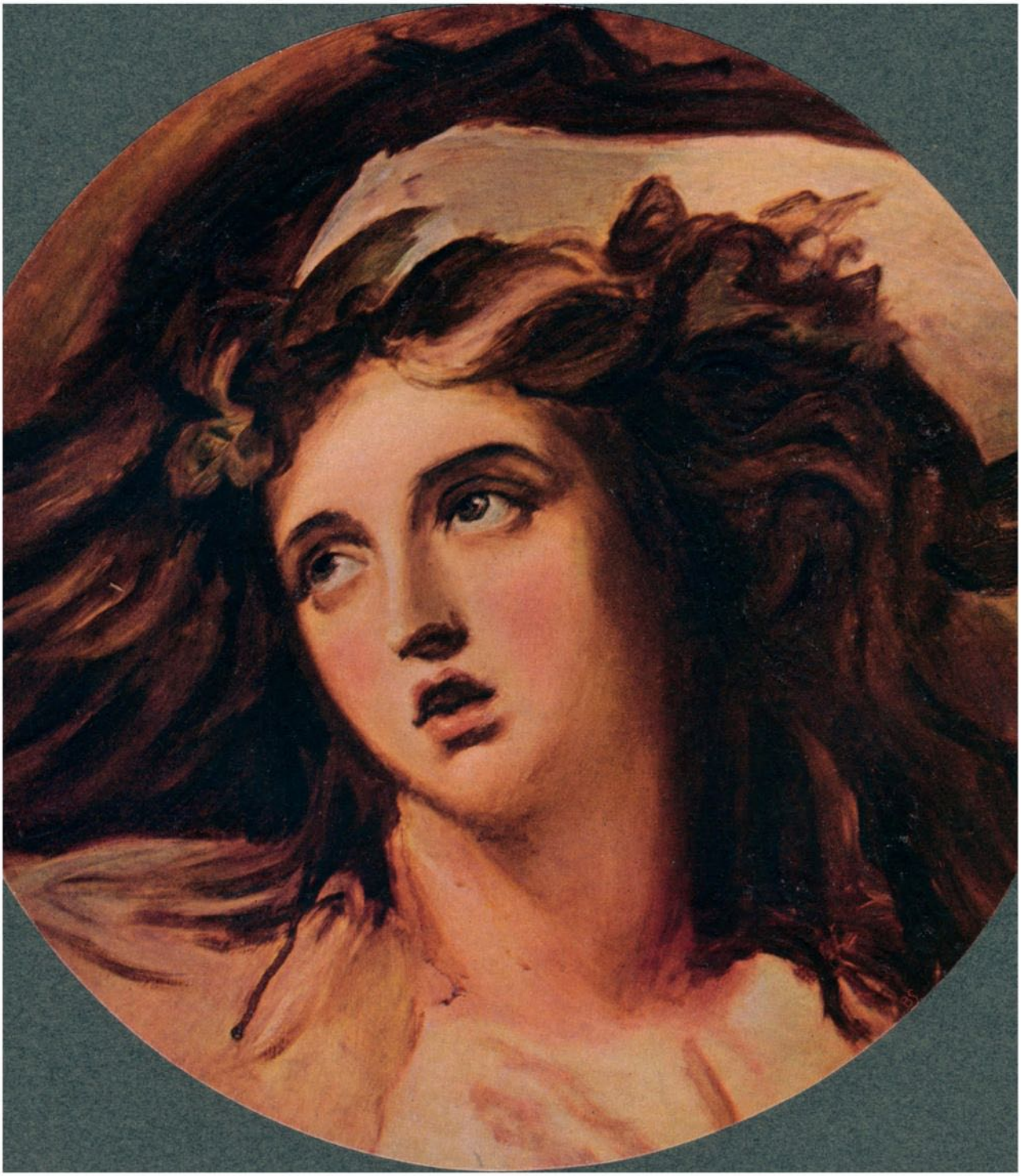
When the concern is structural, however, the beauty shelf has its limits. "Once there is early or established sagging, I generally look at procedures such as HIFU or, in selected cases, thread lifts," says Srivastava. Pai recommends in-clinic options where there is "structural hollowing or visible skin laxity such as drooping jowls, deepening nasolabial folds, or a hollowed under-eye area that topicals simply cannot fix." Neither dermatologist, however, considers GLP-1 use itself an indication for intervention. Jain's philosophy is 'less is more'. "The objective should not be to treat someone simply because they have taken a GLP-1 medication," she says. "We should assess what has actually changed."

THE BIGGER PICTURE

What happens during weight loss matters as much as what is applied afterwards. "Consuming adequate high-quality protein, staying well-hydrated, and taking targeted micronutrients provides the necessary amino acids and building blocks your body needs to maintain collagen synthesis and hair follicle health," says Pai.

Srivastava takes a similarly measured approach, aiming for sustainable weight loss of around 0.5 to 1kg per week in her practice and monitoring body composition to track changes in muscle and fat mass.

The phrase "GLP-1 skincare" may have arrived quickly, but the concerns behind it are not entirely new. What has changed is the scale of attention around them. The credible response is unlikely to be another miracle cream, but skincare that understands what it can improve, what it cannot, and when the difference requires more than a product. ■



In Transition

Since your hormones are rewriting the rules, your skincare should follow suit.

By JHANVI DUGGAL

IMAGE: COURTESY GETTY IMAGES

Perimenopause and menopause bring a host of hormonal changes, from shifting menstrual cycles and hot flashes to disrupted sleep and changes in mood. But the effects don't stop there. The decline in oestrogen can also significantly alter the skin, affecting its hydration, elasticity, sensitivity, pigmentation, and the ability to repair itself. As a result, the skincare routine that once worked may suddenly need a rethink.

This is also a reminder that knowing your skin type isn't a one-time diagnosis. As hormones shift, so can your skin's needs. These changes can begin during perimenopause and become more pronounced after menopause. Understanding these changes can help you adapt your routine to work with your skin rather than against it.

SHIFTING COURSE

The oily skin you've known all your life might suddenly feel tight; products that once worked seamlessly can begin to sting; and dryness, sensitivity, pigmentation or a loss of elasticity can start changing the way your skin needs to be cared for. As Dr Geoffrey Vaz, dermatologist and Founder of Maven Esthetics, puts it, "One of the biggest misconceptions is that menopause only affects your hormones because it has a very visible impact on your skin as well."

According to Dr Vaz, rapid collagen loss can cause thinning skin, reduced elasticity, and sagging, particularly around the jawline, cheeks, and neck. But collagen is only part of the story. Oestrogen is a key regulator, influencing collagen production, hydration, barrier strength, pigmentation and wound healing. As oestrogen levels decline, collagen, elastin, hyaluronic acid, and ceramide levels can also change; the skin barrier weakens, cell turnover slows, and the balance between oestrogen and androgens shifts. "These changes are a natural response to a new hormonal environment, which is why the skincare routine needs to evolve too," adds Dr Vaz.

THE RESET

This change isn't an overnight consequence of your dessert cravings. The key, according to Dr Vaz, is to distinguish a temporary hormonal flare from a sustained change in what your skin needs. A genuine hormonal skin shift tends to be gradual and persistent: over several months, you may notice your skin becoming consistently drier and tighter, more sensitive or easily irritated, while pigmentation, loss of firmness or even adult acne can appear. When these changes persist, your skincare routine may need to evolve with them.

Dr Stuti Khare Shukla, dermatologist and Founder of Elements of Aesthetics, recommends going back to basics. "Protect the skin barrier, use a gentle cleanser which doesn't strip off the moisture, and use gentle products which have ceramides, hyaluronic acid, glycerine, and apply sunscreen every morning," she says.

This is also a time to reconsider how aggressively you exfoliate. Dr Shukla advises avoiding exfoliation altogether if the skin is dry or sensitive, or limiting it to once a week for those who still have oily skin. Strong acids and scrubs should also be avoided. If retinol is already part of your routine, it doesn't necessarily need to be eliminated. Instead, she recommends using "lesser quantity as well as lesser frequency."

The idea isn't to throw away your existing shelf of skincare; it's about adapting it to what your skin is telling you. If a once-loved exfoliating acid now leaves your face feeling tight, or a retinoid that previously passed the test suddenly causes irritation, it may be time to rethink your actives. While barrier support becomes a priority, Dr Vaz believes collagen protection should remain at the heart of the routine.

INSIDE OUT

This evolution doesn't stop at what you're applying to your skin. Nutrition, too, plays a role. As hormonal changes alter the skin's environment, adequate nutrition becomes particularly important. "Menopause doesn't suddenly give you 'bad skin'. It changes the conditions under which your skin has to work," says celebrity dietitian Kavita Devgan.

"Protein is the foundation," she says, pointing out that collagen is a protein and that adequate protein intake is necessary to support collagen production. She recommends including a good protein source at every main meal, from eggs, fish, and chicken to curd, Greek yoghurt, tofu, soy, beans, and chickpeas.

Vitamin C is another important piece of the puzzle. Her simple analogy is: "Protein gives the body the bricks for collagen; vitamin C helps it use those bricks." Omega-3 fats help support the skin barrier and regulate inflammation, while vitamin E and colourful antioxidants help protect skin cells. "Instead of chasing one fashionable antioxidant, I prefer colour on the plate," she says. "Spinach, carrots, pumpkin, tomatoes, beetroot, and others. Different colours bring different plant compounds. Your salad bowl should look less beige!"

Before replacing everything on the skincare shelf, Devgan advises regularising your meals and paying close attention to your sleep. "During perimenopause, hot flushes, anxiety, and night waking can badly affect sleep quality. The face often shows it before the woman fully realises how exhausted she is," she adds.

Most importantly, she discourages crash dieting during this stage. "At this stage of life, the goal should be to lose excess fat if needed while protecting protein intake, muscle, and nutritional adequacy—not simply to make the weighing scale move as quickly as possible." ■

Shelf Appeal

Thoughtful design is redefining luxury beauty and embracing packaging that feels every bit as precious as what's inside.

Photographs by PONPISUT PEJAROEN
Styling by SHIKO SUPITCHAYA



Power of You and Stronger With You eau de parfums, both Emporio Armani



From top: Limited edition Le Baume in Coral; Limited edition Forever Glow Luminizer; and Limited edition Le Baume in Pink, all Dior



Left to right: Crème Pure moisturising body cream; La Panthère Les Gouttes de Parfum Concentré; and Huile Pure moisturising oil, all Cartier



From top: Rose of No Man's Land eau de parfum, Byredo; Valaya eau de parfum, Parfums de Marly; Angels' Share eau de parfum, Kilian Paris



LV Rouge lipsticks;
and LV Ombres
eyeshadow palettes,
all Louis Vuitton



31 Le Rouge lipsticks, Chanel

Photographer's Assistants: Chayanthat Nuchphum and Wararat Jiwpanich; Stylist's Assistants: Rattapong Khamwong, Methawut Wangyo, and Natchaya Klin-obchoei

Flight Mode

Here's what flying really does to your skin—and how to protect it.

By BANI SACHAR



There was a time when in-flight beauty meant a quick spritz of rose water before landing. Today, the modern aircraft cabin is lined with sheet masks, cooling eye patches, and meticulously decanted skincare routines. Fuelled by social media's obsession with looking just as polished at baggage claim as you did at boarding, in-flight skincare has become a familiar ritual.

The aircraft cabin remains one of the harshest environments for the skin. Low humidity, disrupted sleep, and increased UV exposure work together to weaken the skin barrier long before you reach your destination. "Inside an aircraft cabin, the humidity levels drop to somewhere around 10 to 20 per cent. Compare that to the 40 to 70 per cent on the ground and your skin is essentially sitting in a very dry room for long hours," explains Dr Madhuri Agarwal, dermatologist and Director at Yavana Aesthetics Clinic. As water escapes through transepidermal water loss, the skin begins to feel tight, rough, and visibly lacklustre. "And dehydrated skin scatters light poorly that is why you look duller on landing." That dullness, however, is less about exhaustion and more physics. The outermost layer of skin, the stratum corneum, functions like a brick wall, with skin cells acting as bricks and lipids acting as the mortar holding everything together. In an environment where humidity can dip below 10 per cent, that carefully balanced structure begins to lose water far more quickly than it can replace it. According to dermatologist Dr Jaishree Sharad, studies have shown cheek hydration can decrease by as much as 37 per cent within just a few hours of flying. The symptoms arrive quietly: dehydration lines that suddenly seem deeper, skin that feels rougher than it did at take-off, heightened sensitivity, and a complexion that reflects less light than it did eight hours earlier. Thankfully, for most healthy skin, these changes are temporary rather than permanent.

Recycled cabin air has become something of a beauty villain, but both the dermatologists agree it is the low humidity that causes the greatest disruption. It's the combination of exceptionally dry air, prolonged air-

IMAGES: COURTESY SHUTTERSTOCK

TAKE YOUR PICK

(From top) N°1 de Chanel Massage Accessory, Chanel, ₹6400; Jet Lag Mask + Moisturizer, Summer Fridays, ₹4,700; Honey Infused Lip Oil, Gisou, price on request; Advanced Night Repair Serum Synchronized Multi-recovery Complex, Estée Lauder, ₹12,900 approx; SOS Daily Rescue Facial Spray, Tower 28, ₹2,700 approx; and Luminary Under Eye Patches, indē wild, ₹995.

conditioning, sleep disruption, and constant friction against neck pillows, face masks and headrests that gradually leaves the skin depleted. For daytime flights, particularly if you're seated by the window, sunscreen deserves a place in your carry-on just as much as your passport. Aircraft windows block most UVB rays, but a significant amount of UVA still passes through, making pigmentation and photoageing a very real concern. That's why in-flight skincare has become its own beauty genre. Social media would have you believe every long-haul flight demands a 10-step ritual complete with sheet masks, exfoliating pads and multiple serums. Reality, unsurprisingly, is far less glamorous.

"Face mists are similarly overrated as spraying a hydrating mist on the dry skin without sealing it in can actually worsen dryness," says Agarwal. "The one hack that can actually work is layering an occlusive product over a hydrating product." Sharad's advice is similarly restrained. Humectants, emollients, and occlusives remain the gold standard for supporting the skin barrier while repeated face misting, exfoliating acids, retinoids and complicated 10-step routines are more likely to compromise the skin than improve it. As she points out, "A flight is not the ideal setting to test a new active ingredient because reactions are difficult to manage in transit." Ironically, the most effective travel skincare routine asks you to pack less, not more. A barrier-supporting moisturiser rich in ingredients such as glycerin, ceramides or squalane, a broad-spectrum sunscreen for daytime flights, a nourishing lip balm. That's the core routine both dermatologists consistently return to. Everything else is optional.

The most effective in-flight skincare routine begins long before take-off. Dermatologists recommend boarding with an already healthy skin barrier: cleanse gently, apply a richer than usual moisturiser, keep make-up light, and don't skip SPF if you're flying during daylight. During the journey, resist repeatedly washing your face, redirect the overhead air vent away from your skin, drink water consistently, and reapply moisturiser when your skin begins to feel tight. After landing, cleanse away sunscreen and cabin residue before focusing on hydration rather than immediately reaching for exfoliants or resurfacing acids. Give your skin a day to recover before returning to your usual active ingredients.













For model and frequent traveller Avanti Nagrath, years spent flying for work have ultimately reinforced the same lesson dermatologists advocate. "I've learned that keeping it simple is the best approach." Make-up comes off before boarding, hydration takes priority, and moisturiser replaces complicated skincare rituals. She has also stopped chasing viral trends. "One hack that genuinely works is arriving with clean skin and focusing on hydration rather than wearing make-up throughout the flight. My skin always thanks me for it."

Creative entrepreneur and content creator Aishwarya Avlani has reached a similar conclusion. "I've realised my in-flight skincare routine depends entirely on the length of the flight," she says. On shorter journeys she keeps it simple while overnight flights occasionally call for a collagen mask. "I've learnt that giving my skin an hour to reset before jumping straight into my trip makes the biggest difference to how fresh I look and feel." Perhaps that's the biggest in-flight beauty myth of all. Healthy skin doesn't need an elaborate routine to survive eight hours in the sky. It needs a barrier strong enough to withstand them. At 35,000 feet, the smartest thing you can pack isn't another serum, it's the discipline to leave most of them behind. ■

IMAGES: COURTESY THE BRANDS

Skin Secrets

Secretomes are now emerging as the new frontier in regenerative skincare. *Bazaar India* breaks down the science.

By TATIANA DIAS



There was a time when skincare conversations revolved around topical moisturisers, scrubs, and serums. Now? We're casually discussing exosomes over coffee and wondering whether salmon DNA belongs in our routines. Skincare has steadily moved towards an inside-out approach through biotech-powered regenerative treatments that aren't just about aesthetics but also about long-term skin health. And if exosomes introduced us to the idea of cellular communication, secretomes take that a few steps further.

Rather than being a single ingredient, secretomes are a collection of bioactive molecules naturally released by cells. This cocktail includes growth factors, cytokines, peptides, and extracellular vesicles, including exosomes, that work together to regulate cellular communication and tissue regeneration. "I like to think of secretomes as instructions rather than ingredients," explains Dr Simal Soin, Founder and Chief Dermatologist at Aayna Clinics. "They're not replacing skin cells or magically reversing ageing. Instead, they create an environment that allows the skin to function more efficiently."

IMAGE: COURTESY GETTY IMAGES

Simplifying the science, Dr Nishita Ranka, dermatologist and Founder of Dr Nishita's Clinic For Skin, Hair & Aesthetics, describes secretomes as the skin's communication network. "If exosomes are individual messages being delivered between cells, secretome is the entire communication system that helps the skin organise repair and renewal."

This distinction reflects a broader shift happening across skincare. For years, the focus was on correcting visible concerns such as pigmentation, wrinkles, or texture. In contrast, regenerative skincare asks a different question altogether—how do we support skin function to begin with? That's also why secretomes have become the latest talking point in regenerative dermatology, with researchers exploring whether they can enhance the skin's innate ability to recover after damage or aesthetic procedures.

Secretomes and exosomes are often spoken about interchangeably; however, exosomes are only a part of the larger picture. "Secretome is a broader concept," explains Dr Soin. "It includes exosomes, but also a wide range of other bioactive molecules that regulate healing, repair, and regeneration."

Think of exosomes as a single conversation between cells, while secretome is the full language that enables cells to communicate effectively. According to Dr Ranka, this broader view is precisely why secretomes are attracting attention, as they better reflect the complexity of how skin maintains and renews itself.

WHERE THEY SHOW PROMISE

Unlike traditional skincare ingredients that typically target one concern at a time, secretomes are being studied for their ability to influence multiple biological pathways simultaneously. Early laboratory and clinical studies suggest they may stimulate collagen and elastin production, strengthen the skin barrier, reduce inflammation, improve wound healing, and speed recovery after aesthetic procedures.

"The biggest advantage of secretomes is that they work by supporting the skin's own biological processes rather than targeting a single concern," explains Dr Bindu Sthalekar, celebrity dermatologist, cosmetologist, trichologist, and Founder and Medical Director of Skin Smart Solutions. "They may improve firmness by stimulating collagen production, calm inflammation, and potentially shorten recovery time following aesthetic procedures. Improved cellular communication can also contribute to healthier, more resilient skin overall."

According to Dr Ranka, the most promising applications currently include recovery after procedures such as microneedling and fractional lasers, improving early signs of ageing, supporting compromised skin barriers, and enhancing collagen remodelling in acne scars. She stresses, however, that secretomes should be viewed as an addition to established treatments rather than a replacement. "The most effective approach will always combine new technology with strong scientific evidence."

BEYOND THE HYPE

Despite the excitement, secretomes are not suitable for everyone. Experts advise caution in people with active skin infections, uncontrolled inflammatory skin conditions, certain autoimmune disorders, or during pregnancy and breastfeeding, as long-term safety data remains limited. "Anyone with active skin conditions, medical concerns or unrealistic expectations should always seek professional advice before considering regenerative treatments," says Dr Ranka. She also points out that not all secretome products are created equal, making medically validated formulations and experienced practitioners essential.

As with many regenerative procedures, the strongest evidence currently comes from treatments performed in clinics. While secretome-based serums and creams are beginning to enter the skincare market, dermatologists say topical formulations still face scientific hurdles. "These molecules are biologically fragile and require the right storage, formulation, and delivery systems to remain active," explains Dr Soin. "They also tend to perform best when combined with procedures such as microneedling or lasers, which create temporary microchannels that improve delivery into the skin." Dr Sthalekar believes home-care formulations remain an exciting area of research but says maintaining the stability and activity of these biological molecules in a cream or serum is scientifically challenging.

FUTURE OF REGENERATIVE SKINCARE

"If exosomes opened the door to regenerative care, secretomes may represent its next evolution," predicts Dr Soin. "Science is moving quickly, but we still have a great deal to learn."

One of the biggest challenges remains standardisation. Secretome products can vary considerably depending on their cell source, manufacturing process, and purification methods, making it difficult to compare findings across studies or establish universal treatment protocols.

For now, experts agree that regenerative dermatology is moving towards supporting healthier skin function rather than simply correcting visible concerns. "It's not about turning back the clock," says Dr Ranka. "It's about helping the skin communicate better, recover more effectively and maintain its natural strength over time." While the science behind secretomes is promising, dermatologists believe they are best viewed as an emerging adjunct to evidence-based skincare rather than a replacement for proven treatments. ■

Rain Check

From lightweight textures to barrier-boosting treatments, these monsoon must-haves are designed to keep your skin one step ahead of the season.



Ultra-Rich Body Milk Oudh & Green Tea, Forest Essentials, ₹2,295 for 200ml



Clarifying Lotion 2, Clinique, ₹3,150 for 200ml



Active Brightening Complex, Gunam, ₹2,400 for 30ml



Yum Boujee Marshmallow | 81 Cashmere Kiss Lip Balm, KAYALI, ₹2,500 approx



Multi-Benefit Night Cream, Inaara, ₹7,200 for 50gm



Deep Revitalise Balanced Barrier Crème, Luminéve, ₹1,799 for 50gm



Almond, Olive, & Coco Sun-Protect Mousse, Old School, ₹1,760 for 50gm



FortifEYE Patches, Pixi, ₹2,800 for 60pcs



Milky Mineral Sunscreen, Aminu, ₹2,800 for 40ml



Good Grease Cleansing Balm, d'you, ₹2,000 for 50ml

COMPILED BY JHANVI DUGGAL; IMAGES: COURTESY THE BRANDS



1



2



3



4



5



6



7

1. Barrier+ Repair Treatment Leave-on Mask, BYOMA, ₹3,533 approx for 50ml; 2. 360º MD AK Fluid SPF 100 sunscreen, Heliocare, ₹2,000 approx for 50ml; 3. Rice Lipids + Ectoin Microemulsion Serum, The Ordinary, ₹950 for 60ml; 4. Squalane+ Ectoin Overnight Rescue, Biossance, ₹6,700 approx for 50ml; 5. Ceramidin™ Ectoin-infused Cream, Dr. Jart+, ₹6,600 approx for 50ml; 6. Copper Tripeptide & Ectoin Advanced Repair serum, Allies of Skin, ₹18,000 for 30ml; 7. Jet Lag™ Skin Soothing Hydration Mist, Summer Fridays, ₹2,000 approx for 50ml.

Barrier Reset

Shielding skin from environmental stressors, ectoin earns its place in these standout formulas.

COMPILED BY KRITI SHUKLA; IMAGES: COURTESY THE BRANDS

Pill Talk

The latest hair-growth solution comes in a pill. But is convenience worth the caveats?

By KRITI SHUKLA



In the years since the pandemic, hair loss has become a more open conversation among women, with the rise of GLP-1 medications bringing renewed attention to hair shedding. My first introduction to oral minoxidil came from understanding how different it was from the topical treatments I had always associated with the ingredient. Minoxidil was originally developed in the 1970s as a medication for severe hypertension, but doctors soon noticed an unexpected side effect: increased hair growth. "Doctors noticed that many patients taking it began growing more hair, including on areas of the scalp where the hair had started thinning," says Dr Chetna Chhabra, Clinical Lead, Clinikally. This eventually led to topical minoxidil becoming a recognised treatment for male and female pattern hair loss.

The appeal of oral minoxidil lies largely in its effect on the hair-growth cycle. In pattern hair loss, follicles

IMAGE: COURTESY GETTY IMAGES

gradually miniaturise, producing finer and shorter strands. "Low-dose oral minoxidil can encourage follicles to remain in the active growth phase for longer and may help resting follicles transition back into growth, eventually improving density and thickness," adds Chhabra.

The mechanism, however, is more complex than the commonly repeated explanation that minoxidil simply increases blood flow to the scalp. "It appears to influence several signals involved in follicle growth and survival, and the exact mechanism is still being studied," says Chhabra. Some patients may also experience increased shedding during the initial weeks of treatment as older resting hair are replaced by new growing hair. Crucially, minoxidil supports existing follicles; it cannot create new ones or address every cause of hair loss.

The appeal of oral minoxidil lies largely in its effect on the hair-growth cycle...The mechanism, however, is more complex than the commonly repeated explanation that minoxidil simply increases blood flow to the scalp.

MATTER OF CONVENIENCE

The convenience of a tablet can make oral minoxidil sound like an obvious next step, particularly for those who find topical formulations difficult to use consistently. Topical minoxidil remains the more established starting treatment, acting directly on the scalp with less systemic exposure. Oral minoxidil reaches the follicles through the bloodstream and may be useful for patients with more widespread thinning or those unable to maintain a topical haircare routine.

But convenience does not necessarily mean superiority. "Both oral and topical minoxidil can be effective for hair loss, but one is not automatically better than the other for every patient," says Chhabra. She points to a 2024 randomised clinical trial in men, which found that oral minoxidil 5mg daily was not superior overall to topical 5 per cent minoxidil twice daily after 24 weeks.

Dr Nirupama Parwanda, dermatologist and Founder of Zolie Skin Clinic, similarly stresses that adherence to a routine is an important part of any long-term hair-loss treatment, although the convenience of an oral medication has to be weighed against the fact that it acts throughout the body.

That distinction becomes particularly important when considering why the hair is thinning in the first place. "Minoxidil may support hair growth, but it will not correct these underlying problems," says Chhabra. Dr Priyanka Sharma, Co-founder, Director and Chief Dermatologist at V6 Clinics, points out that increased awareness of female hair loss is welcome, but can also lead to oversimplification. "Hair thinning may result from hormonal changes, nutritional deficiencies, thyroid disorders, stress, genetics or scalp conditions, and treatment should address the underlying cause," she says.

When asked whether oral minoxidil is reserved for men, Chhabra is quick to point out that it can also be prescribed for women with female pattern hair loss, where thinning commonly presents as a widening central parting or a gradual reduction in overall density. "The dose is individualised according to the diagnosis, medical history, treatment goals, and tolerability," she adds.

For women, one potential side effect can be particularly unwelcome: hypertrichosis, or unwanted facial and body hair. Chhabra adds that the likelihood generally increases with dose. Light-headedness, headaches, palpitations and swelling around the ankles are other possible side effects, warn experts.

THE SAFETY QUESTION

The appeal of taking a tablet can obscure an important distinction: oral minoxidil is a systemic medication, so its effects extend beyond the scalp. Unlike topical treatments, it requires consideration of dosage, medical history, and individual suitability.

Sharma cautions against viewing low-dose oral minoxidil simply as a harmless "hair-growth pill". While many appropriately selected patients tolerate it well, she notes that it can affect blood pressure and fluid balance. "It is also generally avoided during pregnancy and breastfeeding," says Sharma.

As with most treatments that alter the hair-growth cycle, patience is part of the process. Chhabra says early changes may become apparent around three to four months while a more reliable assessment of density and thickness is usually made at around six months. Results can continue to develop with longer treatment as the benefits generally require ongoing use.

Parwanda is equally clear about managing expectations. "There should be no illusions of it being a 'cure-all' wonder drug. Its use for hair loss remains off-label, and long-term safety and efficacy continue to be studied," she cautions. ■



Scent of Self

The evolution of the signature fragrance in an age of personalisation.

By KRITI SHUKLA

IMAGES: COURTESY GETTY IMAGES AND THE BRANDS

There was a time when fragrance wardrobes felt unnecessary. You found a perfume you loved, wore it often, and allowed it to become part of your identity. Today, that idea of a single signature scent feels increasingly fluid. Enter fragrance layering: the art of combining two or more scents to create a fragrance that is more personal and entirely your own. Fragrance, like fashion, has become another way to tailor your routine to your mood, season, and occasion. "Layering empowers people to participate in the creative process and build a scent that feels uniquely theirs," explains Ankita Thadani, Co-founder of Secret Alchemist. For Manan Gandhi, Founder, Bombay Perfumery and Zero Zero, it also reflects a desire for greater personal expression. "People today are looking for different ways to express themselves," he says. The practice itself is hardly new. Perfumers have long combined aromatic materials to create complexity while fragrance enthusiasts have experimented with combinations for years. What has changed is accessibility, with layering moving from an enthusiast's trick to an increasingly mainstream ritual. "The real alchemy is the creation of a third fragrance," says Thadani. "When layered correctly, you're not smelling perfume A and perfume B separately. You're creating new transitions, new contrasts, and new dimensions that neither fragrance possessed individually."

A bright citrus can sharpen a woody composition; vanilla can soften a floral; rose can gain richness alongside spice. The aim is not simply intensity, but depth and evolution, allowing familiar fragrances to take on a different character. The most successful pairings rely on harmony rather than excess. The biggest mistake, Thadani says, is layering too much. "The most sophisticated combinations are usually built from just two complementary scents." Skin, too, plays a role. Body temperature, hydration, climate, and individual skin chemistry can all affect how a fragrance develops, meaning the same combination can smell different from one person to another. "Skin chemistry is extremely important—it ensures that one has a distinctive blend," agrees Gandhi. The best way to find out whether a pairing works is to wear it for several hours and let it evolve. After all, the appeal of layering lies in its unpredictability—and in creating a scent that feels distinctly your own.

"My forever layering combination has to be Madurai Jasmine and Rare Vanilla," shares Thadani. "I always start with Rare Vanilla as the base. Its warm, woody vanilla creates the perfect foundation. Then I layer Madurai Jasmine on top, and the floral notes become softer, richer, and incredibly elegant. It's one of my all-time favourite combinations because it feels effortless while adding so much depth." Ishita Sawant, Founder, Hira Fragrances, shares a pro tip for beginners. "I recommend pairing fragrances that share at least one common element, whether that's vanilla, woods, musk, citrus or florals," she advices. "That shared note acts as a bridge and helps the fragrances blend naturally. As a general rule, apply the lighter fragrance first and the richer fragrance second. The goal isn't complexity for complexity's sake. The best layering combinations feel seamless, as though they were composed as a single fragrance." ■



Wood Sage & Sea Salt and English Pear & Freesia, Jo Malone: A fresh and effortless blend of mineral woods, crisp pear, and soft florals.



Rose Prick and Vanilla Sex, Tom Ford: A sensual contrast of spicy rose and rich, creamy vanilla.



Madurai Jasmine and Rare Vanilla, Secret Alchemist: A warm floral pairing that gives heady jasmine a smoky, vanilla depth.



Soft Focus

As the overly done look falls out of favour, we explore how and why microdosed neuromodulators fit into the conversation today.

By TATIANA DIAS

Not too long ago, the hallmark of a good cosmetic tweakment was its ability to go unnoticed. Somewhere along the way, however, that gave way to foreheads that didn't move, brows that barely flinched, and beauty ideals built around looking permanently unbothered—giving Botox a bad name globally. Thankfully, frozen faces are slowly retiring, ushering in a new era of subtlety through microdosed neuromodulators: small, strategic doses designed to enhance rather than emphasise. Think of it as Botox, but with intention.

SMALL YET MIGHTY

Neuromodulator treatments like Botox, Dysport, and Xeomin all rely on botulinum toxin to temporarily interrupt the nerve signals that tell muscles to contract. Traditionally, this relaxes the muscle enough to soften dynamic wrinkles.

Microdosed neuromodulators work on the same principle but with a more nuanced approach. "Instead of fully relaxing a muscle, the goal is to soften its activity," explains Dr Zeba Chhapra, Founder and Medical Director of Serenity Med Aesthetics. "Traditional treatments often aim for stronger muscle suppression, whereas microdosing preserves natural expression while subtly reducing lines."

For Dr Madhuri Agarwal, Founder and Medical Director of Yavana Aesthetics, the technique is less about immobilising muscles and more about modulating them. "Small quantities are injected more superficially at carefully chosen points. The muscle still moves, but with less force and fewer visible lines."

In techniques such as mesoBotox or micro-tox, she notes, the injections also target the skin itself, improving texture, pore appearance, and sebum control alongside subtle muscle relaxation.

IMAGE: COURTESY GETTY IMAGES

Unlike conventional Botox, microdosing relies on smaller, more superficial injections delivered across multiple treatment points. "We use lower doses per point, more injection sites for even diffusion and more superficial placement in certain areas, particularly when treating skin quality," says Dr Chhapra.

This superficial approach also allows practitioners to treat delicate areas such as the cheeks and neck, where excessive muscle relaxation can create unwanted complications. "The technique is everything here," warns Dr Agarwal. "Wrong dilution, incorrect depth or poor anatomical understanding can lead to unnecessary complications." For this reason, the procedure should only be performed by a qualified dermatologist.

BEYOND BOTOX

One of the biggest advantages of microdosed neuromodulators is that they preserve natural facial movement while improving fine lines, skin texture, enlarged pores, excess oil production, redness, and lower-face refinement. Because the injections are placed more superficially, they can also be used in delicate areas such as the cheeks and neck with a lower risk of unwanted muscle weakness when performed correctly.

According to Dr Agarwal, patients with enlarged pores or an oily T-zone often notice improvements that conventional deep injections cannot provide. "I have also seen patients with oily foreheads respond well to micro-tox in a way that no topical product could," she explains. "Lower-face work around the lip lines and chin dimpling is another area where microdosing is useful. These are areas where too much product can create functional problems."

She adds that the technique may also reduce the risk of side effects in delicate areas such as the cheeks, neck and lower face, where excessive muscle relaxation can affect swallowing, speech or smile position.

IT'S A MATCH

Microdosing is especially effective for fine surface lines, enlarged pores, excess oil production, the lip area, and even the neck and décolletage—areas where full-dose Botox can sometimes feel too heavy or interfere with natural movement.

The ideal candidate, however, is not someone seeking a dramatic transformation. "Ideal candidates are individuals seeking subtle enhancement," says Dr Chhapra. "This includes first-time patients, those who prefer natural-looking results and patients who may have previously felt overtreated with conventional dosing."

Expectations should also be realistic. Because lower doses are used, maintenance is usually more frequent than with conventional Botox, while deeper static wrinkles or stronger muscle activity may still require traditional dosing.

"Results typically become visible within one to two weeks and generally last three to four months, though longevity can vary depending on the treatment area and individual muscle activity," adds Dr Chhapra.

The growing popularity of microdosing reflects changing beauty ideals and advances in aesthetic medicine.

A CULTURAL SHIFT

The growing popularity of microdosing reflects changing beauty ideals and advances in aesthetic medicine. The conversation has shifted from looking wrinkle-free to looking well-rested—and unmistakably like yourself.

Dr Agarwal believes patients have become more discerning than ever. "People can now see the difference between someone who looks refreshed and someone who looks treated," she says. "I also think the pandemic accelerated this. Zoom calls made people aware of their own faces in a way they had not been before. They noticed lines, but they also noticed what happened to people who overtreated themselves. The conversation has moved toward looking like the best version of yourself."

Social media and high-definition cameras have undoubtedly fuelled this change, but consultant dermatologist Dr Manasi Shirolikar believes the trend reflects something more enduring. "There's a broader cultural conversation around authenticity and natural beauty that has made preserving facial expression not just preferable, but aspirational."

While Gen Z may be leading the demand for preventative treatments, experts stress that microdosed neuromodulators are expanding—not replacing—the role of traditional Botox. "There is a clear shift toward undetectable aesthetics," says Dr Chhapra. "Patients want to look like themselves—just fresher, well-rested and refined. They value movement, individuality and authenticity over perfection."

Microdosing is not a substitute for full-dose Botox, particularly for concerns such as hyperhidrosis, migraines or deep forehead lines, where conventional treatment remains more effective. Instead, as Dr Shirolikar notes, it broadens what neuromodulators can achieve, making the treatment appealing to patients who may never have previously considered it—or those who had stepped away from it. ■

Colour Crush

Water meets oil in Laneige's latest take on lip stains.

By KRITI SHUKLA

As someone who is always hunting for a good lip tint, I was particularly excited for the Laneige JuicePop Box Lip Tint to come to India after its launch in the US. I'd never be without a lip stain; it gives my skin just the right amount of definition without the weight or commitment of a full lipstick. My lips, however, are dry and prone to flaking, which means colour can quickly look uneven or settle into lines. Many tints also leave them feeling tight by midday, so I was curious to see whether this one could offer the ease of a stain without the usual trade-off.



THE FIRST SWIPE

The first thing I noticed was the texture. It goes on as a lightweight, almost watery gel with the doe-foot applicator, gliding easily across the lips before shifting into a softer, oil-like finish. It feels cushiony rather than sticky, leaving behind a juicy sheen and a sheer, buildable veil of colour. The finish is fresh without being overly glossy, and the formula remains light enough that you don't feel as though you're wearing a layer of product. The colour also wears differently from a traditional long-wear stain. Rather than setting down completely and leaving the lips looking flat, it retains some softness as it fades. After eating and drinking, the intensity naturally diminishes, but the colour does not disappear all at once. On my lips, it has also faded more evenly than some tints that can leave a concentrated outline behind. This is where the formulation becomes interesting. Laneige has built the tint around its Water-Oil Remix Technology, which combines the fluidity of a water-based texture with the emollient feel of oils. The formula also contains ceramides and peptides, alongside the brand's Aqua Tune Complex. The idea is to make the product function as more than a conventional colour deposit, with ingredients intended to help maintain lip comfort while the tint wears. In practice, that difference is most noticeable in the way the formula sits on the lips. It doesn't depend on a glossy finish alone to create the impression of moisture; there is a softness to the formula even as the initial sheen settles. My lips have remained comfortable through several hours of wear, and the colour hasn't accentuated the dry patches that usually become more obvious with a tint.

FINAL TAKE

It is worth noting that I've only been using it for a few days, so it is still too early to speak about its long-term performance across different shades and seasons, or make claims about any lasting changes to lip condition. What I can say is that, so far, it has been easy to wear and forgiving on lips that don't always get along with colour products. It gives enough definition to make a difference without requiring the precision or upkeep of a lipstick.

For me, that is ultimately where the JuicePop Box Lip Tint makes its case. It occupies the space between a conventional stain and a lip treatment, with enough colour to be noticeable and enough slip to remain comfortable. If dry lips are usually the reason you avoid tints, this is the one you should be reaching out for. ■

IMAGE: COURTESY THE BRAND



1



2



3

1. Cheirosa 62 Hair & Body Perfume Mist, Sol de Janeiro, ₹4,190 for 240ml; 2. Chandra Hair & Body Perfume Mist, indē wild, ₹1,299 for 60ml; 3. Mineral Sage Hair Perfume, Secret Alchemist, ₹899 for 50ml; 4. Ibiza Hair and Body Fragrance Mist, OUAI, ₹3,375 for 97ml; 5. Find Comfort Body & Hair Fragrance Mist, Rare Beauty, ₹2,100 for 50ml; 6. Hair & Everywhere, Antinorm, ₹1,899 for 30ml; 7. Gloss Absolu Hair Perfume, Kérastase, ₹4,500 for 30ml.



4



5



6



7

Hair Notes

The ultimate finishing touch for scented strands.

COMPILED BY JHANVI DUGGAL; IMAGES: COURTESY THE BRANDS

FOR THE LOVE OF BEAUTY



ROOTED IN WISDOM

Give your skincare and haircare routine an Ayurvedic uplift with Qi Ayurveda's first pro-ageing collection. The brand, which is known to combine traditional Ayurvedic rituals with Swiss botanical science for its haircare items, is now applying the same formula to its skincare products. The range includes a rosewater-based facial tonic, a Kumkumadi-inspired facial elixir, and a daily scalp tonic. All of the products are designed to support hydration, radiance, skin resilience, and healthier-looking hair.

Prices range from ₹1,200 to ₹4,990 across the collection.

NEXT-GEN SPF

Can your daily SPF do more than protect against UV rays? French skincare brand Bioderma believes so with its latest Photoderm XDefense Ultra-Fluid SPF50+. This daily sunscreen is designed to go beyond traditional UV protection. The lightweight formula promises to protect against UVA, UVB, visible light, infrared radiation and pollution, while supporting the skin's natural defences.

Photoderm XDefense Ultra-Fluid SPF50+, Bioderma, ₹2,199 for 40ml





COLOUR THEORY

Consider this your permission to bench the 20-step palette overload. This season, monochrome make-up brings a more considered approach to colour, with a single shade story carried across the face. The trick is to play with subtle variations in tone and texture. Soft rose, warm peach, and muted plum work particularly well while sheer layers keep the finish fresh. Blend a wash of colour across the lids, cheeks, and lips for a polished, tonal effect that feels modern and sophisticated.

COMPILED BY KRITI SHUKLA; IMAGES: COURTESY THE BRANDS AND INSTAGRAM





REPAIR RITUAL

Redken expands its Acidic Bonding Concentrate range with two new treatments for damaged hair. The Hair Bandage Balm is designed to treat dry, fragile ends, helping to smoothen the appearance of split ends. The balm has a targeted approach to restore softness and add polish to compromised ends. The other treatment—the 24/7 Night & Day Serum—offers lightweight, continuous care, combining citric acid, polyglutamic acid, and squalene to strengthen and hydrate.

Acidic Bonding Concentrate Hair Bandage Balm and 24/7 Night & Day Serum, Redken, ₹3,500 and ₹3,200, respectively



BRONZE, BUT BETTER

If a sun-warmed complexion is on your beauty mood board, Dior has a new take on bronzing. Dior Forever Skin Bronze marks the House's first bronzing stick, with a creamy balm texture that melts into skin for buildable, natural-looking colour. Enriched with Dior's Tan Beautifier Complex and vitamins C and E, the formula helps hydrate and smoothen while adding warmth and radiance.

Forever Skin Bronzing Balm Stick, Dior Beauty, ₹6,500



COASTAL ESCAPE

Chloé Atelier des Fleurs introduces Plage du Figuier, a Mediterranean-inspired fragrance. Created by perfumer Ane Ayo, the scent draws on the hidden flower of the fig tree as it transforms into fruit, pairing luminous fig pulp with delicate floral nuances and a soft orange blossom finish. The composition evokes the warmth of the South of France, balancing radiant fruitiness with an understated floral softness.

Plage du Figuier Eau de Parfum, Chloé Atelier des Fleurs, ₹27,600 for 150ml



FRESH DROP

Burberry Beauty has launched its make-up collection in India, bringing together complexion, colour and eye essentials rooted in the House's distinctly British aesthetic. Highlights include a natural-matte foundation, soft powder blushes, glossy balm-like lipsticks, and four-shade eye palettes spanning matte, satin, and shimmer finishes.



Guests at the event

After Hours

PATRÓN brings the art, heritage, and spirit of Mexico to Mumbai.

For this year's World Tequila Day, *Harper's Bazaar India* and PATRÓN brought Hacienda PATRÓN in Jalisco, Mexico, to Mumbai with an immersive estate experience of the brand's home. The celebration brought together creatives from the world of fashion, film, and culture, including Ishaan Khatter, Vedang Raina, Tisca Chopra, Nachiket Barve, Jonita Gandhi, and others, for an evening centred on the heritage and craftsmanship behind the brand. Inspired by the original Hacienda PATRÓN in Mexico, the evening opened in the Picante Courtyard, where signature tequila serves and canapés set the tone. The highlight of the night was a curated four-course Indo-Mexican dinner by chef Prateek Sadhu. Each course was paired with an expression from the PATRÓN portfolio, offering a considered exploration of tequila and cuisine. The evening concluded at the El Alto Listening Room, where cocktails, conversations, and music by DJ Kayan brought the celebrations to a close.



Ishaan Khatter

PHOTOGRAPHS BY VAQAAS MANSURI


Arunoday Singh


Vedang Raina


DJ Kayan


Sasha Grewal, Savleen Manchanda, and Rasna Bhasin


Vedang Raina and Sakshi Kohli


Sanam Ratansi and Aastha Sharma with a guest


Kanika Goyal


Amrita Thakur


Mehreen Pirzada, Sagar Khosla, Sawan Gandhi, and Jonita Gandhi

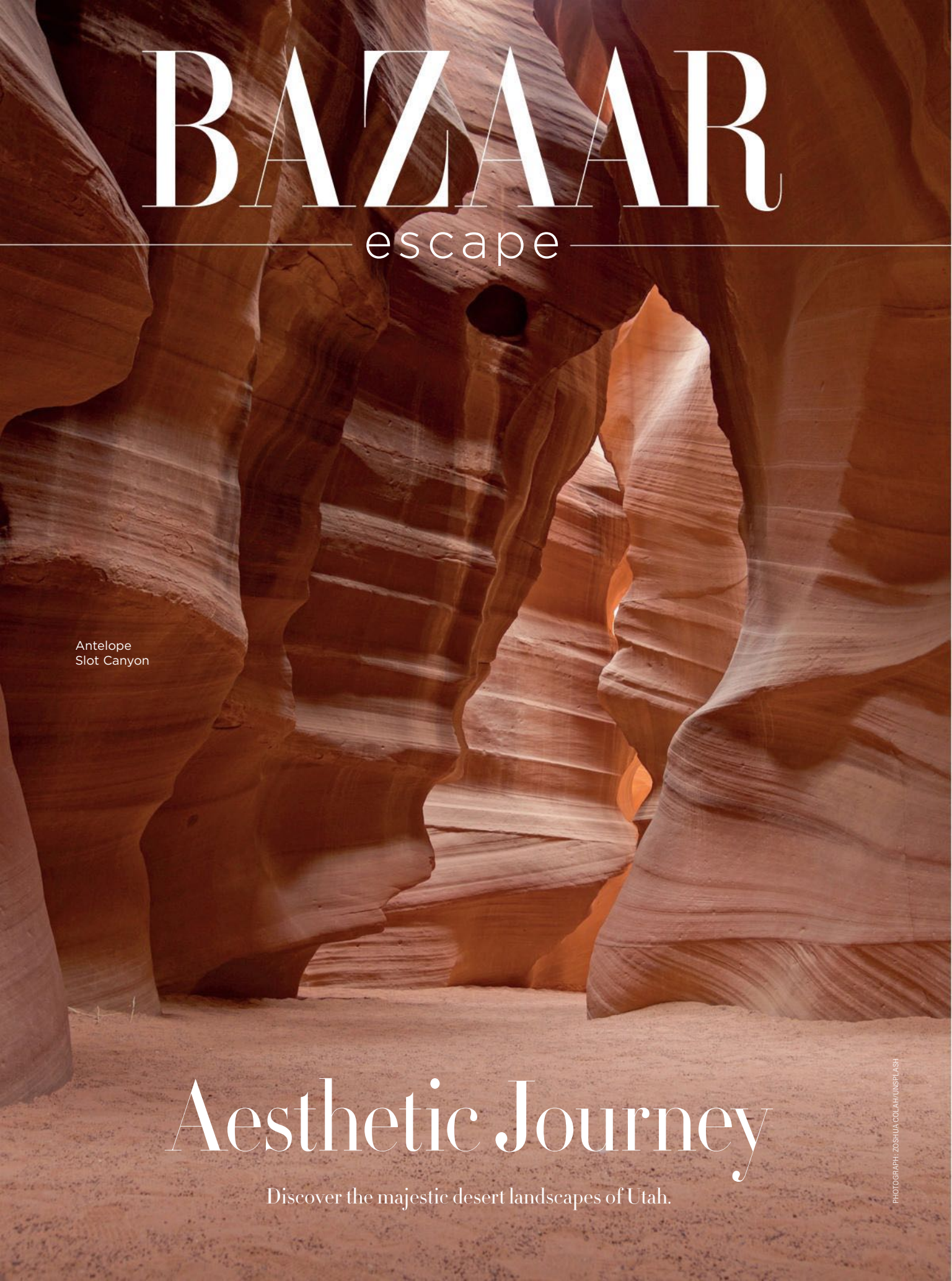

Rasna Bhasin with Sakshi Kohli


Tisca Chopra


Shweta Kapur


Ankit Siwach and Mahima Makwana

BAZAAR
escape

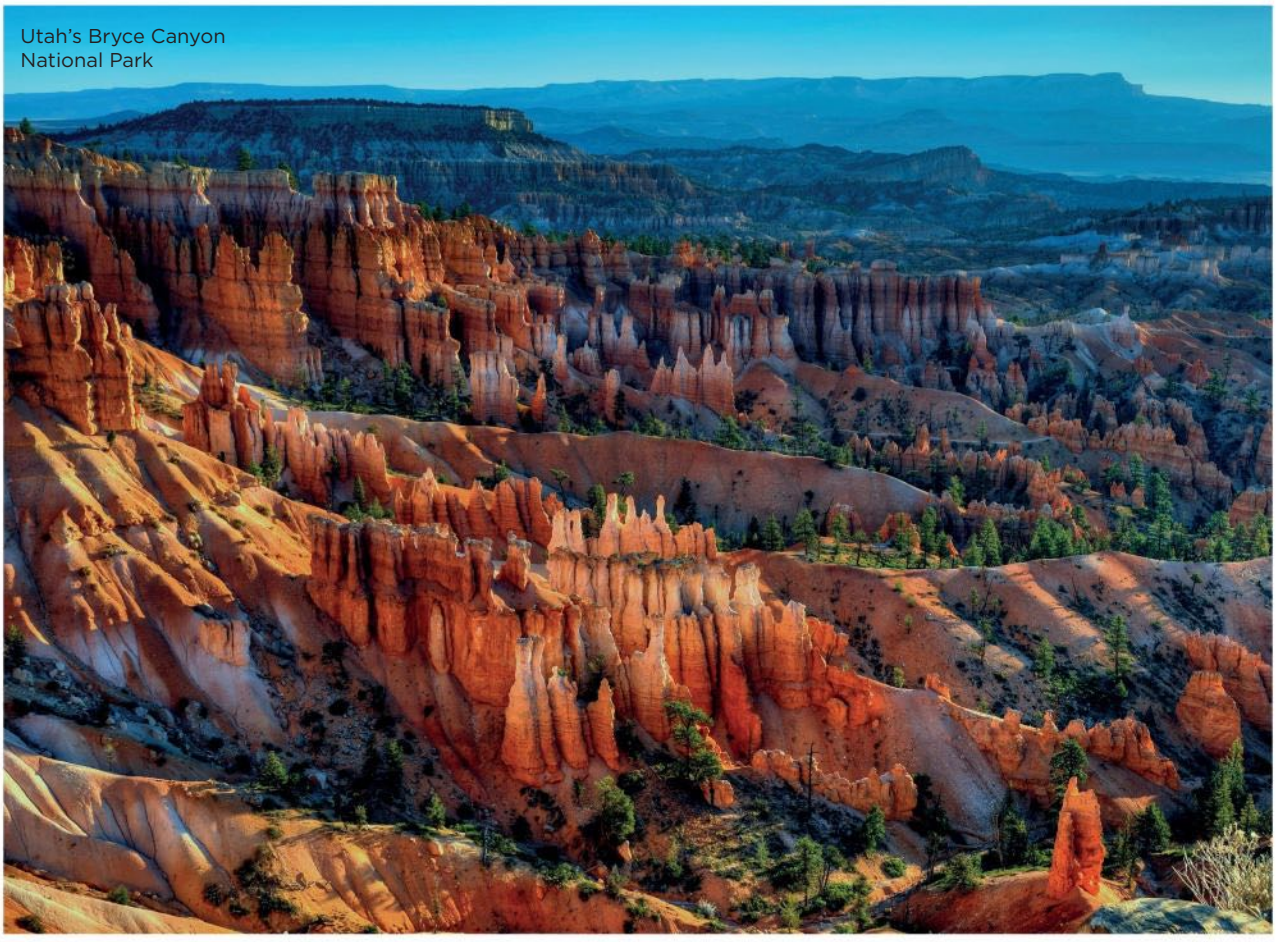


Antelope
Slot Canyon

Aesthetic Journey

Discover the majestic desert landscapes of Utah.

PHOTOGRAPH: JOSHUA COLAH/UNSPLASH



Utah's Bryce Canyon National Park

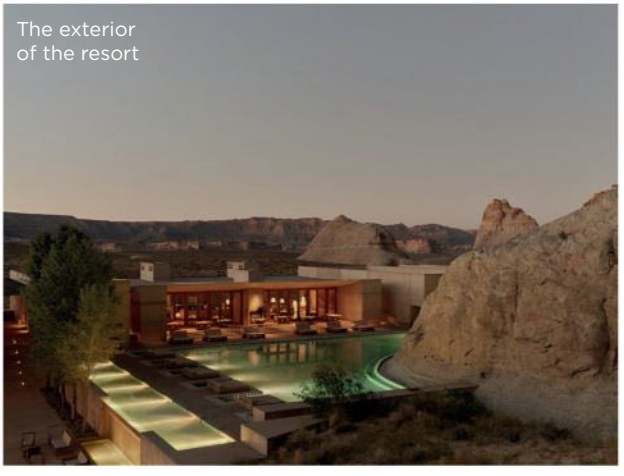
Rock of Ages

Utah's desert is where ancient formations provide a dramatic backdrop to a secluded honeymoon—and the start of a new life built together.

By MARISA ABELA

When my husband Jamie and I tell people that we started our honeymoon in Utah, we can reliably expect one of two responses. The first is a kind but unmistakably pitying smile, a furrowed brow followed by a tight "Oh. Lovely..." The second, however, is a simple question and a look of, dare I say it, lust: "You went to Amangiri, didn't you?"

Indeed, that was where we were. The hotel is a work of art in itself, surrounded by ruby-red, ash-white, and molten-grey Jurassic rocks that stand at about 1,000 feet and stretch into the horizon. The mesas and cliffs cocooning the property are 160 to 180 million years old. When you face north, the entire vista is constantly shifting in colour, depending on the light and the time of day.



The exterior of the resort

PHOTOGRAPHS: ZOSHUA COLAH/UNSPLASH



A private terrace with a pool

Within the walls of this minimalist sanctuary, time ceases to exist—or at least to feel relevant.

At night, with no light pollution, the stars are spectacular. We would lie on the beds on our room's private terrace (I'll come back to this) and watch the night sky reveal itself, one star of Orion's belt at a time creeping over the cliffs. With the help of the on-site astronomer, we peered through telescopes to see Saturn and his rings, the cloudy mass around a dead star and the blue-green hue of Uranus. Just when we thought that we'd come to terms with the reality of the land around us, we were faced with stars that started their journey thousands of light-years ago.

Oh, and it is completely silent. There's no traffic, of course, but there are also no crickets, no birds, no sounds of life. This might seem unsettling, but it is truly grounding, calm within the walls of this minimalist sanctuary. Time ceases to exist—or at least to feel relevant. Stresses, cares, worries and day-to-day concerns simply stop in the stillness of this place.

And then there's the food: whatever you want and the best version of it. Imagine a cornucopia of fruit and vegetables, sashimi, crudités, a prickly pear salad with Lake Powell trout. Maybe you want to be indulgent: brûléed yogurt with a sweet berry compote, unctuous and delicious Navajo tamales and bison tartare. Delivered

The incredibly chic swimming pool, which is open 24 hours a day, yields into a U-shape around a particularly beautiful rock. Swim up to it, touch it, lie on it or climb on it to get to the dreamy spa, another, cooler plunge pool or the jacuzzi, whatever the mood calls for. Inside, the rooms are quietly luxurious—peaceful in their minimalism, yet equipped with everything that you could possibly need. In the lounges, there are low leather sofas on which to rest while listening to live Navajo flutes with cups of desert bush tea and a homemade brown butter cookie. And there is an array of once-in-a-lifetime adventures right on your doorstep. Climb craggy cliff faces on a via ferrata (Italian for 'iron path') route, enjoying views from all-new, astonishing heights, or ride a horse into ancient caves. The property balances its relationship with nature so well that it's as though the hotel is an organic part of the landscape.



The massage room for couples

for personal assembly to your room, s'mores can be roasted on the fire-pit built directly into the lounger on your private terrace. Feeling up for a real culinary experience? The second restaurant is in Camp Sarika, tented pavilions a short buggy ride away in the desert. Here, guests can enjoy a tasting menu from a new country every night. One evening, the menu was French, the next, Indian, then Korean. In short, fussy eaters and gastronomes alike are accounted for here.

Finally (and crucially), the service. At Amangiri, it feels as though you're swept up by an invisible duvet and tucked in for the remainder of your stay. Every time you leave your sumptuous and cosy room, even for five minutes, someone has been in to tidy and placed a little gift on your freshly made bed—a dreamcatcher, an eye mask or maybe some delicious treats. Lounging by the pool one day, I requested a slimline tonic. With a momentarily pained expression, the waiter told me that I had, in fact, asked for the one thing that they didn't have. Of course, I insisted that it was fine, but later at dinner, I was discreetly presented with a small bottle of slimline on a silver tray. "We acquired this for you, Ms Abela, would you like a gin and tonic?" Naturally, I obliged.

So there it is. Our way of celebrating our marriage. It was deeply intimate, it was surreal, it was breathtaking. If anyone tells you that they're honeymooning in Utah, now you know. Smile, nod, and say: "Good for you." ■



A suite pool

Comfort Code

Inside The Blue Kite's playbook for turning holiday homes into a trusted, tech-led hospitality business.

By JHANVI DUGGAL



When every nook and cranny of a property feels close to home, you know it's more than just a project—instead, it's a promise of belonging. That's the idea behind The Blue Kite, the hospitality arm of Goa-based developer Vianaar, which today manages 290 properties across five cities, with 100 more homes on the way by the end of 2026. At the helm is Caroline Mulliez, who brings an unusual mix to the role—a double degree from LSE and NUS, three years at Bain & Company, and six years scaling operations for a sporting goods retailer in India. Under her leadership, that background has translated into a business built on transparency, sustainability, and consistency. The Blue Kite tends to elaborate on the existing understanding of hospitality. Whether it's a milestone, an occasion, a mere holiday, or a home away from home, it's designed to feel unmistakably personal. We spoke to Mulliez about what changes when a side project becomes a 300-home operation, and what she's betting on next.

***Harper's Bazaar*: The Blue Kite started as a side project in 2019 and now manages 300+ homes across five cities. What changed operationally as you scaled?**

Caroline Mulliez: Two things really had to change. The first is the human element. When we were small, our values and culture were shared informally. With 300 employees across multiple cities, we had to formalise our standards, write our processes, and train teammates to embody the brand more consistently. The second is tech. When you manage a few homes, you call the homeowner every now and then. It's an easy relationship, and you manage pricing manually. But pricing 365 days for 300 homes manually is no longer possible. So we lean on tech to ease those

IMAGES: COURTESY THE BRAND

processes. We also wanted homeowners to have transparent access to their financial information—what they've earned, check-ins, number of guests all shared across apps. And we wanted to limit administrative tasks for our teammates, so we built an app for digital check-ins. Tech and human—that's really what you need to look at when scaling a company delivering the kind of service Blue Kite does.

HB: You've called this a new category—somewhere between hospitality and property management. What sets The Blue Kite apart?

CM: We do both the things. We take care of our homeowners' home because we know they've trusted us with their most precious asset. Hospitality is what we do to serve our guests, and they want hotel level standards of cleanliness, operation, comfort, and maintenance. But they also want the privacy and personalisation that you get in a private home.

What we try to do differently is revenue management. Because ultimately, our homeowners care about how well we look after their home, while also wanting their investment to perform well. Our role is to bring both together through thoughtful management. So our job is to optimise pricing and occupancy to ensure that the homeowners are happy—their home is well-maintained, they earn enough, and our guests are satisfied because we give them amazing service. So it's all about combining these elements.

HB: The brand's philosophy leans heavily into slow living, intentional travel, and reconnecting with a sense of place. How does that translate into decisions on the ground—property selection, guest experience design, or service protocols?

CM: We feel luxury travels have really changed over the years. [Today] people look for intimacy, space and reconnecting with their loved ones, which they don't really have time to do in their everyday lives. So we select and design homes around how people will genuinely spend time together. And that can mean having a large dining table where people can have their lazy breakfast, smaller nooks and corners where those long overdue conversations with your loved ones can happen. Then the homes must function as real homes. They must have well-equipped kitchens and reliable internet, and all the practical things that somebody would have in their own home. So we need to make sure that all our properties are either new or feel like new and the experience must be flawless. In Goa, this is an opportunity for people to reconnect with nature. Our properties there have large windows overlooking nature. Whereas in cities like Bangalore and Delhi, we always tell the designer who furnishes the home that it should look a bit special. It should have all the comforts of a home. But it should feel interesting enough.

HB: With over 2 lakh guests served and a growing base of NRIs, international travellers, and long-stay residents, are you seeing shifts in what today's traveller wants from a home versus a hotel?


Caroline Mulliez

CM: People need a home, but they also want the local hint—what's happening in the neighbourhood, where to find the best local food. Travellers coming to Delhi are often here for wedding shopping and similar occasions, so our local team on the ground helps them make the most of their time. In Goa, many of our guests visit to mark meaningful occasions such as a wedding anniversary, a 10-year college reunion, a bachelorette or a 50th birthday. Our team takes the time to understand these occasions and helps guests shape their stay around them.. So we make sure our team is trained to understand those needs and helps guests customise their trip to make the most of it.

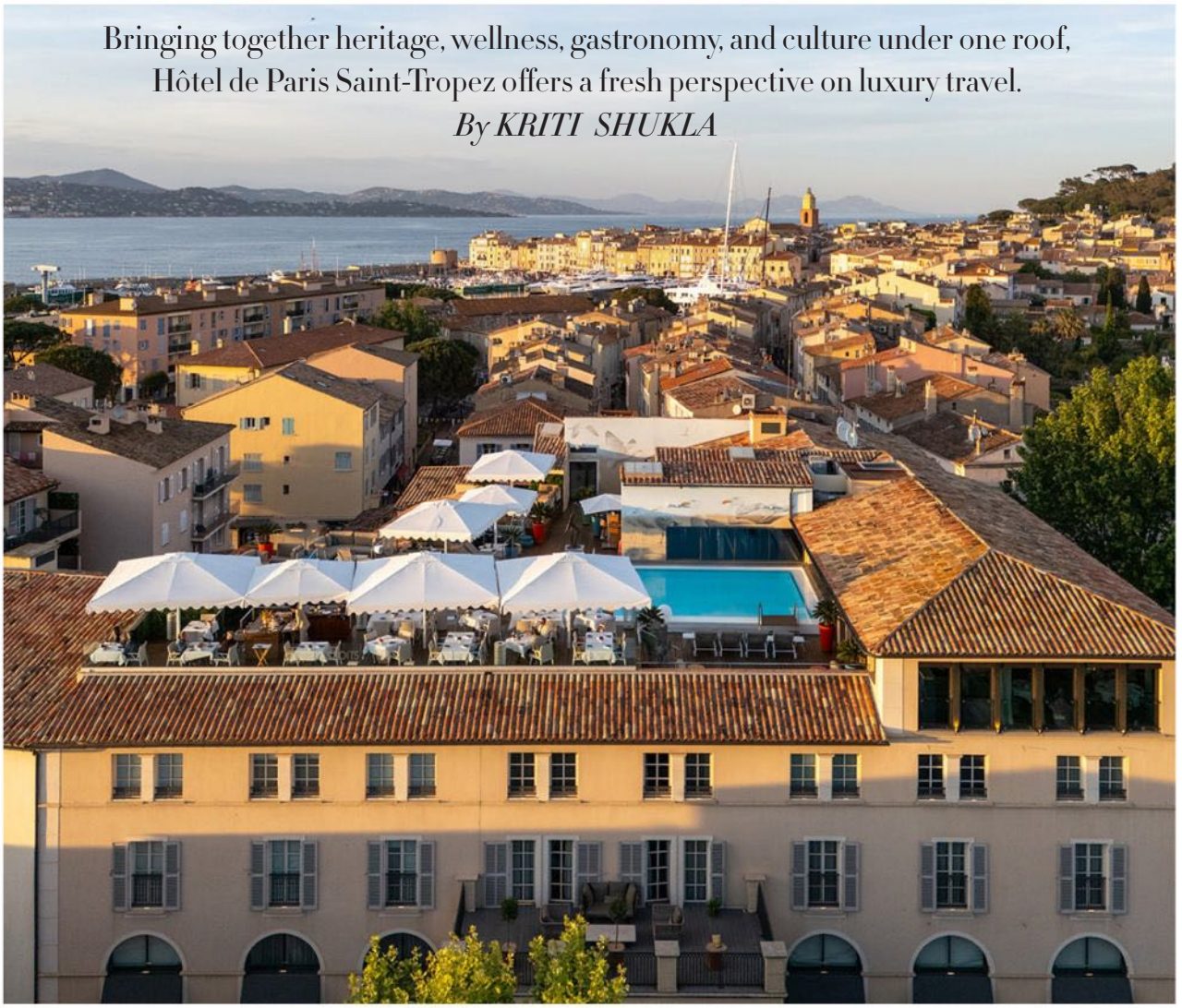
HB: What's next for Blue Kite?

CM: We will continue to make Goa our base. As Vianaar develops more inventory, we'll keep onboarding homeowners who want to generate income. The idea in Goa is to remain the local favourite—we have everything from a one-bedroom studio to a five-bedroom villa with a private pool. So, we need to keep delivering the level of care our guests expect, offering a local experience while ensuring our homes are beautifully maintained. The other side of what we're working on is opening in more cities. Today we're in Delhi and Bangalore, but there's a lot to do in Hyderabad, Pune, Chennai, and Mumbai. If you want an apartment with the comfort and privacy of a home, along with professional cleaning and maintenance, The Blue Kite brings together the best of both a hotel and an Airbnb. We saw an opportunity for this in the cities, and the response has been very encouraging, with strong occupancy. ■

On the Quiet Side

Bringing together heritage, wellness, gastronomy, and culture under one roof, Hôtel de Paris Saint-Tropez offers a fresh perspective on luxury travel.

By KRITI SHUKLA



Saint-Tropez has long been associated with a certain kind of summer fantasy. Picture glamorous beach clubs, designer boutiques, yachts lining the harbour and a social calendar that stretches well past sunset. But beyond the postcard clichés, the French Riviera destination is quietly evolving, with luxury becoming less about exclusivity and more about experiences that feel personal, immersive, and unhurried. Few properties capture that evolution as effortlessly as Hôtel de Paris Saint-Tropez.

Opened in 1931 as the town's first luxury hotel, Hôtel de Paris has witnessed Saint-Tropez's remarkable transformation from a sleepy fishing village and artists' haven into one of Europe's most coveted holiday destinations. Over the decades, it has welcomed cultural



IMAGES: COURTESY ELISE QUINIOU AND CHLOÉ MIGNARD

figures including Coco Chanel, Jean Cocteau, and painter Paul Signac, establishing itself as far more than a place to stay. Nearly a century later, that artistic heritage continues to shape the hotel's identity, balancing its storied past with a contemporary approach to hospitality.

Rather than relying solely on nostalgia, the hotel has adapted alongside changing travel habits. For the 2026 season, it introduces three new family suites that reflect the growing demand for multigenerational holidays. Designed with generous living spaces, they offer the comfort of shared moments while preserving privacy, making longer, more relaxed stays in the heart of Saint-Tropez feel effortless. It is a thoughtful addition that acknowledges how modern luxury increasingly prioritises flexibility, connection, and time together over excess.

That slower philosophy extends throughout the property. Mornings unfold over leisurely breakfasts before guests drift to Les Toits, the hotel's rooftop restaurant and lounge, where sweeping views stretch across the terracotta rooftops towards the Mediterranean. Long lunches naturally give way to sunset aperitifs, turning the rooftop into one of the town's most sought-after vantage points without ever feeling overstated.

Wellness is equally central to the experience. Home to the only Spa by Clarins in Saint-Tropez, the property combines botanical treatments with advanced skincare technologies, offering therapies that feel as restorative as they are results-driven. The emphasis is not simply on indulgence but on creating moments that encourage guests to slow down, disconnect, and recharge.



Dining follows the same relaxed rhythm. While Les Toits offers Mediterranean-inspired cuisine against panoramic views, Le Pationata transforms the hotel's courtyard into a seasonal Italian trattoria, where Sicilian-inspired dishes and generous sharing plates encourage long, convivial evenings. Rather than positioning themselves as destination dining venues, both spaces are





designed to become natural extensions of the guest experience. The experience extends beyond the property to La Serena, Hotel de Paris Saint-Tropez's private beach on Pampelonne Beach, offering guests an exclusive seaside retreat just moments away.

What continues to distinguish Hôtel de Paris, however, is its enduring connection to culture. Contemporary art installations, literary conversations, and the annual Prix du Titre literary prize reinforce the hotel's longstanding relationship with the creative community that first helped shape Saint-Tropez's identity. At a time when luxury hospitality often competes through ever-larger suites or increasingly extravagant amenities, Hôtel de Paris offers something more enduring. It reminds guests that the most memorable stays are not simply defined by where they are, but by the stories they preserve, the experiences they curate and the sense of place they leave behind. ■

IMAGES: COURTESY ELISE QUINIOU



A Parisian Pause

In the heart of the city, Hôtel Balzac offers a sanctuary of considered design, exceptional hospitality, and the quiet pleasures of a slower Paris.

By KIMAYA CHANANA

IMAGES: COURTESY THE BRAND

There was a time when modern luxury used to be defined by extravagance and overindulgence. Today's traveller wants exclusivity, tranquillity, and glamour without ostentation, all while being in a coveted neighbourhood and surrounded by history.

This is precisely everything that Hôtel Balzac, tucked away in one of the most prestigious neighbourhoods in Paris, offers. Located in the Champs-Élysées district, Hôtel Balzac is within walking distance of iconic landmarks such as the Arc de Triomphe and Place de la Concorde. A boutique hotel with 58 rooms and suites, many of which feature open-air terraces and uninterrupted views of the Eiffel Tower, allows guests to experience Paris at their own pace.

For travellers who prefer to stay at a hotel with a rich history, Hôtel Balzac is built on the site of the final residence of Honoré de Balzac, one of France's most celebrated writers, known for his collection of more than 90 works, *La Comédie Humaine*. Designed by Charlotte de Tonnac and Hugo Sauzay, the founders of Paris-based studio Festen, Hôtel Balzac's elevated steps, majestic entrance, lanterns, and intricate architectural details honour the property's rich heritage while giving it a timeless feel. A palette of brown, tawny, cognac, and camel tones, complemented by carefully curated lighting, adds to the warmth of the environment while the soaring ceilings and grand volumes create a sense of openness rarely found in boutique hotels. What makes Hôtel Balzac particularly memorable is its restraint; rather than relying on over-the-top interiors, it lets the meticulously curated design speak for itself. Every space, every piece of furniture, feels intentional, adding to the charm of the hotel.



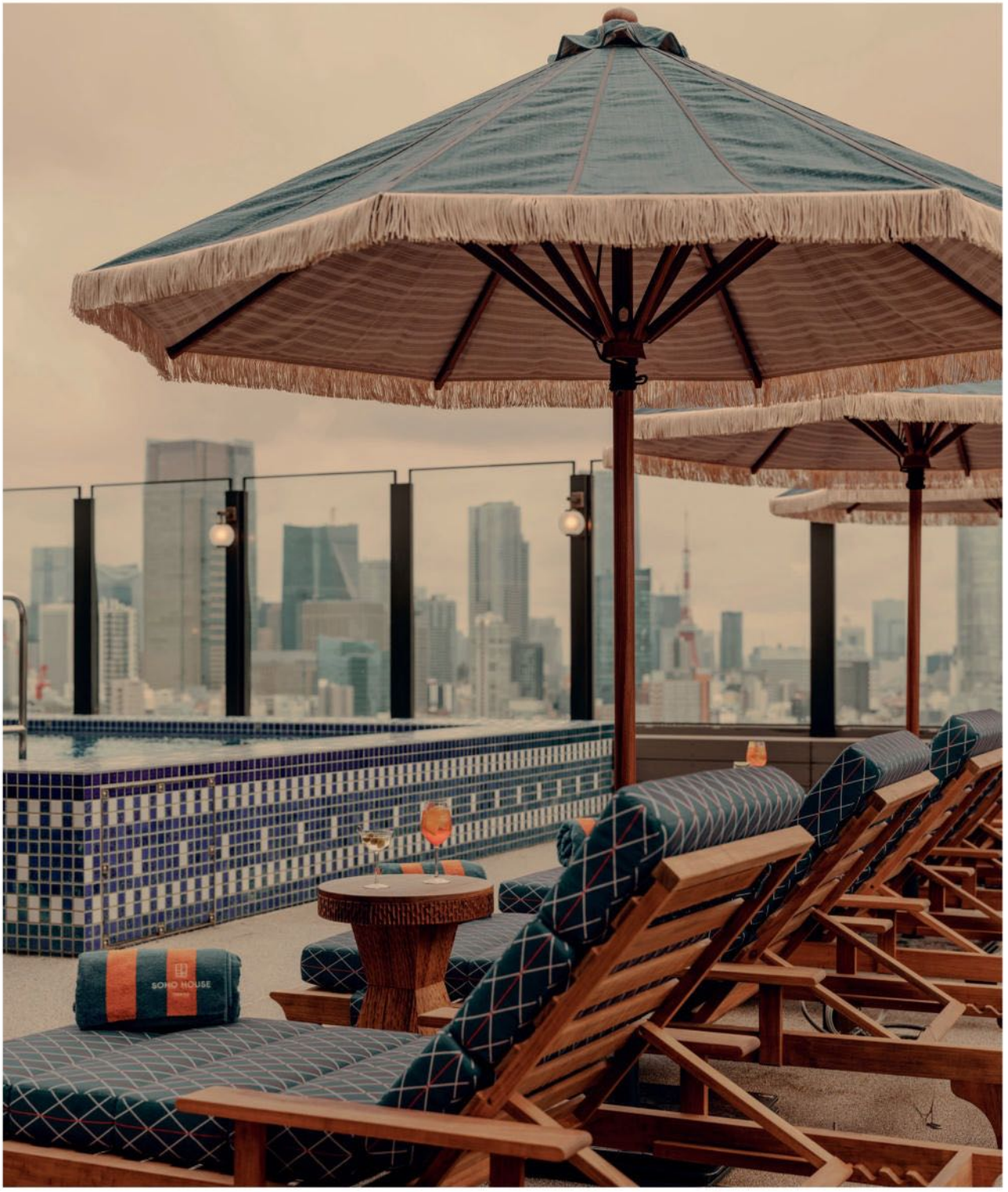


The best way to experience the City of Love is to embrace its slow rhythm, and the glass lounge at the heart of the hotel is the perfect place to do so. Throughout the day, the changing natural light gives the lounge a different feel, making it suited to enjoying the golden hues of the Parisian sunset. The glass lounge is the ideal location for both work and leisure.

At the end of the day, the bar at Hôtel Balzac becomes one of its most compelling spaces. Its dim lighting and mysterious ambience capture the charm of a hidden Parisian speakeasy, making it just as suited to a quiet drink after a day of exploring as it is to a business meeting or a romantic dineout. The same attention to detail is reflected in the culinary experiences the hotel offers. Hidden behind a discreet door from the lobby lies Pierre Gagnaire, one of Paris's most celebrated restaurants. Led by the three-Michelin-star chef of the same name, the restaurant offers a refined interpretation of French cuisine, making it an experience that deserves a place on any Paris itinerary.

After a day of exploring the streets of Paris, one can find the perfect antidote at Ikoï Spa. Meaning "a place where one feels good" in Japanese, it lives up to its name, offering a carefully curated menu of treatments designed to revitalise the face and the body. Guests can further unwind in the sauna, release tension in the plunge pool, or recharge in the fitness studio.

What ultimately sets Hôtel Balzac apart is its hospitality. With staff who anticipate every guest's needs, the impeccable attention to detail can be seen in every interaction. The service reflects the hotel's philosophy of quiet luxury, where comfort and heartfelt hospitality take precedence over extravagance. It is this understated approach that transforms a hotel stay into an experience that feels less like staying in a hotel and more like coming home. ■



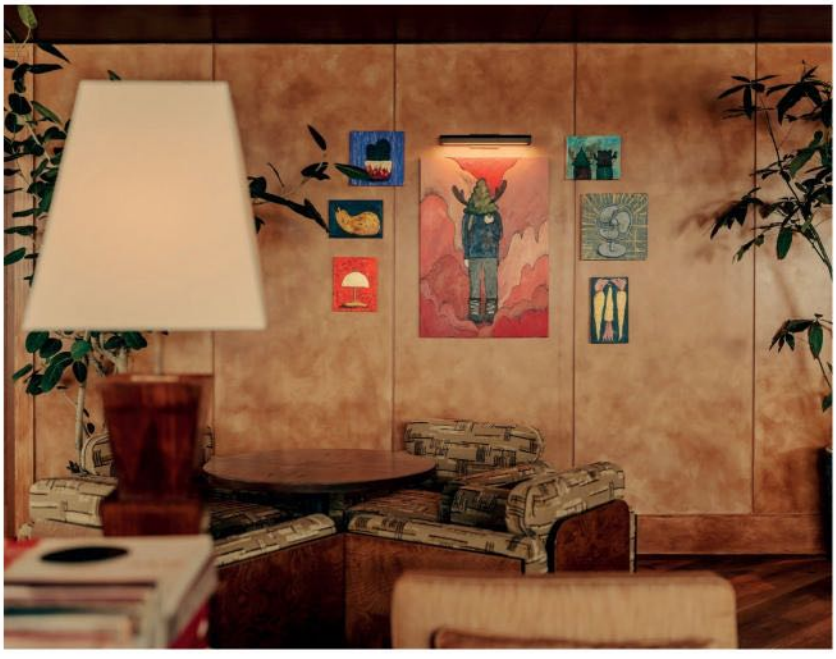
The Art of Staying In

Located in the vibrant district of Aoyama, Soho House Tokyo borrows from Japan without turning it into a pastiche.

By RASNA BHASIN

IMAGES: COURTESY THE BRAND; PHOTO CREDITS: SEAN HAZEN & EDVINAS BRUZAS

If you had ever suggested that I voluntarily attend a morning yoga class while travelling, chances are I would have laughed, politely declined, or found a very convincing reason to disappear. And yet, never say never. On my first morning at Soho House Tokyo, there I was, on a yoga mat, attempting to find some semblance of balance. Much to my own surprise, it wasn't a bad way to begin the day.



Tokyo has always had a way of making me do things differently. I never really need a reason to return; usually, I'm looking for an excuse. I love the contradictions of the city: the energy and the order, the eccentricity and restraint, the obsessive attention to detail, and the fact that no matter how many times you visit, there is always another tiny bar, vintage store or bowl of something life-changing waiting to be discovered.

After several rounds of date changes and diary gymnastics, this trip finally happened, and this time I was discovering the city from Soho House Tokyo, the first House in Japan. I've been lucky enough to visit Houses around the world and, while part of the pleasure is always discovering how each one interprets its city, Tokyo might just have become a firm favourite.

Walking in feels less like arriving at a hotel and more like stumbling into a beautiful, slightly eccentric bookshop you wish you could live in. It's layered and eclectic, warm and fuzzy in that difficult-to-manufacture way. Nothing feels too perfect or precious. There are vintage pieces from Japan, Britain and Europe, Japanese washi paper, lacquer work made in Kyoto, Murano lights and deep burgundies sitting alongside greens and earthy tones. East and West are constantly in conversation, but quietly so.

Then there is the art, which is everywhere without ever making the House feel like a gallery. More than 40 artists born, based or trained in Japan, as well as artists from the Japanese diaspora make up the collection. I loved that the commissions weren't simply things to hang on walls: Toru Otani reimagined the traditional Japanese room divider as a sculptural installation, while works by Yuko Mohri and Ryoji Ikeda bring a distinctly contemporary energy to the space. You find yourself noticing something new each time you walk through.



The bedrooms continue that sense of comfort. Mine felt wonderfully cocooning, with a soft Bancha palette inspired by green tea, parquet referencing tatami, Japanese lacquer and, perhaps my favourite detail, textiles made from upcycled vintage kimono fabrics and sakiori weaving. There is craftsmanship everywhere, but none of it screams for attention. Mostly, the room just makes you want to climb into bed, order something, and temporarily forget that Tokyo exists outside.

Not that there was much danger of going hungry. There were far too many meals at The House Brasserie,



where British comfort food meets Japanese produce, which sounds slightly improbable until you are eating Yamayuri pork sausage rolls with black garlic HP sauce. There was sweet shrimp with cauliflower and corn, pork loin with a mead reduction and soft serve topped with white miso popcorn. I was also introduced to the Highball Fifty, with jasmine, green shiso and cherry, which did little to encourage restraint.

Somewhere between all this eating, I was also put to work. Soho House Tokyo's Head Sushi Chef, Kunihiro Shinohara, gave us a lesson in Edomae-style sushi. Watching someone who has mastered a craft make it look effortless is always dangerous; you briefly become convinced you too possess the skill. My own attempts suggested otherwise.

But perhaps my favourite part of the trip was that the House didn't want us to experience Tokyo only from inside it.

Our itinerary took us out into the city to eat, hunt down tiny speakeasies and trawl vintage stores. What I discovered is that Soho House has something particularly useful for travellers: genuinely good lists. Not the sort that simply round up the places everyone has already seen online, but recommendations that feel considered and curated by people who actually know the city. You can spend the day getting wonderfully lost in Tokyo and then come back to a place that feels reassuringly like home.

That warmth comes largely from the people. The staff is a wonderfully diverse mix, each bringing their own personality, background and relationship with Tokyo to the House. There is no stiffness that can occasionally come with beautiful spaces; instead, conversations happen easily and recommendations are offered enthusiastically. By the end of a few days, you begin to understand why people talk about Soho House less as a collection of properties and more as a community.

One evening, we found ourselves upstairs watching Japan play opposite Brazil. What began as watching a football match quickly became one of those wonderfully unplanned travel memories. There was excitement, of course, but also something incredibly endearing about the humility and grace of the Japanese supporters around us. It felt very Tokyo: passionate without being performative, celebratory without ever losing its sense of consideration.

And that, perhaps, is what stayed with me most about this visit. The best places to stay don't compete with the city outside their doors; they somehow help you understand it better. Soho House Tokyo borrows from Japan without turning it into a pastiche, while still retaining that slightly eccentric, familiar House DNA.

I will always be someone who wants to leave the hotel, walk too far, eat too much, discover a bar I will never find again and return home with a suitcase that mysteriously refuses to close. But I've also realised there is something wonderful about having a place to return to that lets you stop.

Tokyo gave me plenty to discover this time around. Soho House gave me somewhere to exhale between it all. And yes, apparently, somewhere along the way, it also got me to do yoga. ■



On Her Own Terms

Few performers have changed the course of pop culture quite like Dolly Parton. For six decades, she built a body of work that made country music universal while songs like *Jolene* (1973), *I Will Always Love You* (1974), and *9 to 5* (1980) became cultural touchstones in their own right. But Parton's influence was never confined to only music. With her rhinestones, wit, and unmistakable voice, she made unapologetic femininity a force and built a career on the radical idea that you could be both underestimated and entirely in command. She leaves behind a legacy as singular as the woman herself. With this Reset issue, *Bazaar India* bids farewell to a true original, celebrating a career that gave generations of women permission to be louder, bolder, and entirely themselves.

WORDS BY **KRITI SHUKLA**

IMAGE: COURTESY GETTY IMAGES


CKC
GROUP


155
YEARS
Brilliance
As Boundless as the Sky
C. KRISHNIAH CHETTY
GROUP OF JEWELLERS
MAGNIFICENT SHOWROOMS & BOUTIQUES ACROSS BENGALURU
Commercial Street • Main Guard Cross Road (Red Facade) • Jayanagar • Malleswaram | +91 80-4000 1869 / 4100 1869
Dedicated Relationship Manager: +91 95 1313 1869 | www.ckcjewellers.com



LOUIS VUITTON