25 YEARS
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CANADA
TM
MAY/JUNE 2026
THE POWER ISSUE
MEET THE WOMEN SHAKING THINGS UP
+
WHY IS EVERYONE SMOKING AGAIN?
TEYANA TAYLOR
CAN DO IT ALL
THE HOTTEST NEW WEDDING TRENDS

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MERYL STREEP
ANNE HATHAWAY
20TH CENTURY STUDIOS PRESENTS A WENDY FINERMAN PRODUCTION A DAVID FRANKEL FILM "THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA 2" MERYL STREEP ANNE HATHAWAY EMILY BLUNT
PRODUCTION DESIGNER JESS GONCHOR DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY FLORIAN BALLHAUS, ASC EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS MICHAEL BEDERMAN ALINE BROSH McKENNA EXECUTIVE PRODUCER KAREN ROSENFELT PRODUCED BY WENDY FINERMAN, p.g.a. BASED UPON CHARACTERS CREATED BY LAUREN WEISBERGER

EMILY BLUNT
STANLEY TUCCI
THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA 2
JUSTIN THEROUX WITH KENNETH BRANAGH AND STANLEY TUCCI
CASTING BY ELLEN LEWIS SHAYNA MARKOWITZ
COSTUME DESIGNER MOLLY ROGERS
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MUSIC BY THEODORE SHAPIRO
EDITED BY ANDREW MARCUS
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PRESS TO EXPLORE

DUA LIPA FOR NESPRESSO

NESPRESSO

WHAT ELSE?

NEW VERTUO UP

ICED & HOT COFFEE

NESPRESSO

WHAT ELSE?

VÉNUS
DE
NINA RICCI
the new fragrance

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Teyana Taylor is wearing a bra and underwear by Kiki de Montparnasse, a coat by Gucci and her own earrings.

Photographer Carin Backoff **Stylist** Alex White **Hairstylist** Lateafa Alvaranga **Makeup artist** Yeika Glow **Manicurist** Sarah Chue (Star Touch Agency) **Set designer** Lauren Machen (Lalaland Artists) **Editorial producer** Crawford & Co Productions

PHOTOGRAPHY, PETER GEHRKE; DRESS, BAG AND EARRINGS (GUCCI) AND BRACELETS (ISABEL MARANT)

ELLE CANADA

25 YEARS

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DESCRIPTION Clinically proven scar and stretch mark oil. INDICATIONS Scars: Helps improve the appearance of new and old scars. Stretch marks: Helps improve the appearance of stretch marks. Also helps improve skin elasticity, thereby reducing the possibility of stretch marks forming. Uneven skin tone: Helps improve the appearance of uneven skin tone. Aging skin: Helps improve the appearance of aging skin on the face and body. Dehydrated skin: Helps reduce moisture loss and improve the appearance of dehydrated skin. PRESENTATION Orange / pink oil. FORMULATION Specialist oil mixture with vitamins and plant extracts. INGREDIENTS Paraffinum Liquidum, Triisononanoin, Cetearyl Ethylhexanoate, Isopropyl Myristate, Helianthus Annuus (Sunflower) Seed Oil, Bisabolol, Tocopheryl Acetate, Anthemis Nobilis Flower Oil, Lavandula Angustifolia (Lavender) Oil, Rosmarinus Officinalis (Rosemary) Leaf Oil, Calendula Officinalis Extract, Glycine Soja (Soybean) Oil, Retinyl Palmitate, Tocopherol, Parfum, Alpha-Isomethyl Ionone, Amyl Cinnamal, Amyl Salicylate, Benzyl Salicylate, Beta-Caryophyllene, Camphor, Citronellol, Citrus Aurantium Peel Oil, Coumarin, Eugenol, Farnesol, Geraniol, Geranyl Acetate, Hexamethylindanopyran, Hydroxycitronellal, Isoeugenyl Acetate, Lavandula Oil/Extract, Limonene, Linalool, Linalyl Acetate, Pinene, Terpineol, Terpinolene, CI 26100. SCAR CLINICAL TRIAL Trial center: proDERM Institute for Applied Dermatological Research, Hamburg, Germany. Objective: To assess the efficacy of Bio-Oil® Skincare Oil in improving the appearance of scars. Sample: Subjects: 36 female participants of various Fitzpatrick skin types. Scar ages: newly formed to 3 years old. Scar locations: abdomen, leg, arm, neck, knee, trunk, upper body. Age of participants: 18–65. Methodology: Double-blind, randomized and placebo [illegible] matching scars or a scar large enough to allow a half-half scar application and intra-subject compar[illegible] additional massaging performed on the target area. Application performed under super[illegible] and 8 weeks. Different scar parameters as defined in the Patient and Obse[illegible]io-Oil® Skincare Oil is efficacious in improving the appearance of scars[illegible]5), evident in 66% of the subjects. After 8 weeks (day 57) 92% of [illegible] almost triple that at 2 weeks. A continuous improvement of POS[illegible]f Dermatology, Peking University First Hospital, Beijing, China. Ob[illegible]il in improving the appearance of facial acne scars on Chinese su[illegible] scars on the face (<1 year old). Bio-Oil® Skincare Oil treatment c[illegible]articipants: 14–30. Methodology: Randomized, controlled, efficacy[illegible]n followed by a 1-week washout period. Product applied twice da[illegible]vals. Assessments conducted at 0, 4, 8 and 10 weeks included th[illegible]easurement of acne scar color / redness using a chromameter, m[illegible] of comedones and inflammatory lesions by a dermatologist. Sub[illegible]t: The best result of the clinical grading was in Bio-Oil® Skincar[illegible]acular (flat) acne scars, with the overall skin becoming brighter.[illegible]1% of subjects experienced an improvement in the overall con[illegible]t in scar color. Acne count and sebum measurement results sh[illegible]e or increase sebum secretion. STRETCH MARK CLINICAL TR[illegible]mburg, Germany. Objective: To assess the efficacy of Bio-Oil®[illegible]jects: 38 female participants of various Fitzpatrick skin types. St[illegible]h spurt). Stretch mark locations: abdomen, thighs and hips. Age[illegible]-controlled study. Subjects had matching stretch marks or stre[illegible]a-subject comparison. Product was applied twice daily for 8 w[illegible]erformed under supervision at regular intervals. Assessments[illegible] the Patient and Observer Scar Assessment Scale (POSAS) we[illegible]ppearance of stretch marks. A statistically significant result wa[illegible]fter 8 weeks (day 57), 100% of subjects showed an improvem[illegible]. A continuous improvement of POSAS over the duration of the[illegible]hens & Associates, Inc., Texas, United States of America. Obje[illegible]arance of uneven skin tone and mottled pigmentation when use[illegible]nd neck. Sample: Subjects: 67 female participants of various F[illegible]e on the face and neck. Bio-Oil® Skincare Oil treatment cell incl[illegible]icipants: 30–70. Methodology: Randomized, controlled, efficac[illegible]n followed by a 1-week washout period. Product applied to the [illegible]vision at baseline visit. Clinical evaluations conducted at 0, 2, [illegible] neck for uneven skin tone and mottled pigmentation. Result: B[illegible] tone and mottled pigmentation in photodamaged (aging) skin.[illegible]ers on the face and neck. After 12 weeks, 86% of subjects in t[illegible]vement in uneven skin tone on the face, 71% of subjects in m[illegible]0% in mottled pigmentation on the neck. AGING SKIN CLINICA[illegible]tates of America. Study 1: Face and neck. Objective: To evalua[illegible]oderate photodamaged (aging) skin on the face and neck. Sa[illegible]h clinically determined mild to moderate photodamage on the[illegible] the untreated cell included 32 subjects. Age of participants: 3[illegible]ubjects participated in an initial screening evaluation followed[illegible]daily for 12 weeks. Application performed under supervision a[illegible]weeks. Subjects were clinically graded separately on the face[illegible]ines, coarse wrinkles, mottled pigmentation, uneven skin ton[illegible]earance, and clarity (dullness). Result: Bio-Oil® Skincare Oil is[illegible]n on the face and neck. After 8 weeks a statistically significant[illegible]94% of subjects in the Bio-Oil® Skincare Oil treatment cell sho[illegible]nd 80% of subjects showed a statistically significant improver[illegible]he efficacy of Bio-Oil® Skincare Oil when used on the décolleta[illegible](aging) skin. Sample: Subjects: 67 female participants of varic[illegible]damage on the face and neck. Bio-Oil® Skincare Oil treatment[illegible]ticipants: 30–70. Methodology: Randomized, controlled, efficac[illegible] followed by a 1-week washout period. Product applied to the c[illegible]ormed under supervision at the baseline visit. Clinical evaluatio[illegible] separately on the décolletage, lower legs and arms for the f[illegible]/ scaling, visual roughness ...

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ELLE CANADA'S POWER ISSUE

Inspiring, game-changing women don't become that way overnight. Multi-dimensional leaders learn that authenticity is their superpower, embrace challenges with grit and maintain an unwavering belief in themselves, no matter what. At ELLE Canada, that spirit of ambition and self-expression is always worth celebrating. As a purveyor of professional-grade, science-backed hair care, Kérastase lifts up women through rituals of resilience, letting their hair be a reflection of their inner strength. That is why Kérastase partnered with ELLE Canada for this issue, honoring resilience, confidence, and the women who embody both.

To learn more about Kérastase, its inclusive hair-care collections and its continuous mission to empower all women, visit **kerastase.ca**.

PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF KÉRASTASE

Taking Up Space

THESE DAYS, the word "power" has become somewhat loaded. We hear it and can't help but think of what's happening in the world: unchecked authority, demonstrations of force and decisions that hit squarely but rarely fairly. We think of the type of power that consumes, crushes and frightens.

And yet, when I look at the cover of this issue, that's the word that comes to mind. Because in my life and in the lives of the women I admire, power doesn't look like that at all. It tends to be a lot more benevolent and nuanced.

Around me, I see women who embody strength in a thousand different ways. There are those who take a stand without trembling and those who inspire change without ever raising their voice. Those who lead, those who create and those whose tired arms still manage to hold everything together. Those who are unsure but keep going anyway.

For a long time, we tried to define what a strong woman is—as if there were a blueprint to follow and a perfect balance to strike: assertive but not "bossy," ambitious but not threatening, confident but not defiant.

We were subtly taught to exist within the strict boundaries laid out for us—to adjust our tone and smooth our edges. Because strength in a woman must always remain palatable.

A woman who speaks passionately is characterized as "intense." A woman who knows what she wants is "difficult." When men display firmness, they're perceived as possessing great leadership skills. When we do it, we're called "cold."

It's not surprising, then, that many women have learned to make themselves smaller, couching their words and calibrating their every move to avoid being labelled. But over time, this constant restraint only ends up distancing us from our true selves.

To me, the turning point happens when we accept who we are—contradictions, grey zones and all. Being assertive isn't about being harder or louder; it's about being more aligned with ourselves. It's about saying no to the things that don't feel right and yes to the ones that speak to our core. Because, ultimately, power isn't about taking up more space. It's about fully occupying our own—and not the one assigned to us.

A woman who lives her truth changes a room, a team, a family. That's not because she's actively trying to influence the world around her—she just does it naturally. And in doing so, she gives others permission to do the same. She carves out her place without seeking to check any boxes. She's not playing a role. She's just unapologetically herself. And *that* is powerful. ■

Sophie Banford, *publisher*
@sophiebanford

PHOTOGRAPHY, ANDRÉANNE GAUTHIER; STYLIST, VANESSA GIROUX; MAKEUP ARTIST, SOPHIE PARROT. S. BANFORD IS WEARING A SWEATER VEST (EMILIO PUCCI AT HOLT RENFREW), JEANS (CITIZENS OF HUMANITY AT SSENSE) AND JEWELLERY (DRAE COLLECTION AT SIMONS)

CLIP, **VAN CLEEF & ARPELS** ($12,800, VANCLEEFARPELS.COM)

BLOUSE, **SILK LAUNDRY** ($225, SILKLAUNDRY.CA)

SCARF, **LORO PIANA** ($370, CA.LOROPIANA.COM)

SUNGLASSES, **JACQUEMUS** ($453, SHOPBOP.COM)

DRESS, **ARITZIA** ($168, ARITZIA.COM)

BELT, **SIMONS** ($39, SIMONS.CA)

SPRING *Is Here*

With longer days, the return of greenery and warmer weather, springtime has finally arrived, and editor-in-chief Joanna Fox is fully embracing it. Here are some of her ideas on how to brighten up the season.

SKIRT, **ZARA** ($100, ZARA.COM)

BAG, **BOTTEGA VENETA** ($7,390, BOTTEGAVENETA.COM)

POLO TOP, **J.CREW** ($174, JCREW.COM)

SHOES, **SÉZANE** ($330, SEZANE.COM)

HERMÈS UN JARDIN SOUS LA MER EAU DE TOILETTE SPRAY ($148 FOR 50 ML, HERMES.COM)

NECKLACE, **MADEMOISELLE JULES** ($245, MADEMOISELLEJULES.COM)

PHOTOGRAPHY, ANDRÉANNE GAUTHIER (J. FOX); MAKEUP ARTIST, SOPHIE PARROT. J. FOX IS WEARING A BLOUSE BY SILK LAUNDRY. EARRINGS BY MEJURI AND NECKLACES BY DEUX LIONS

first look

FROM THE RUNWAY

Lavender HAZE

Pop open the Parma Violets—their sweet pastel hue is an exact match for one of spring/summer 2026's favourite shades. Lilac was a fixture throughout the new collections, with designers bringing the shade to life through texture. See Burberry for crochet, Stella McCartney for faux feathers and Valentino for velvet. Purple never looked so good.

TEXT: JOANNA FOX; PHOTOGRAPHY: LAUNCHMETRICS SPOTLIGHT

ON THE STREET

True BLUE

Denim is shedding its casual weekday vibe and treading into polished, runway-ready territory with rich-indigo and deep-rinse washes that elevate any look. At Khaite and Victoria Beckham, slim stovepipe silhouettes and roomy wide-legged styles were rendered in dark washes, adding a sense of *gravitas* to everyday dressing, while at COS, the hue went ultra-stiff with structured matching top-and-bottoms sets—always a yes. From head to toe, dark denim is crisp, clean and ultra-chic.

TEXT: JOANNA FOX; PHOTOGRAPHY: LAUNCHMETRICS SPOTLIGHT

STYLE *the* TREND

This season, inky indigo makes for a chic style starting point.

DAY

Take the Canadian tuxedo to the office with complementary dark washes. Fun extras, like a striped top and platform mules, keep the two blues from dipping into down-home territory.

1. NECKLACE, **MELANIE AULD** ($325, MELANIEAULD.COM). 2. SHIRT, **T. LINE** ($295, SHOPTLINE.COM). 3. TOP, **TNA** ($58, ARITZIA.COM). 4. JEANS, **LISA SAYS GAH** ($305, LISASAYSGAH.COM). 5. BAG, **H&M** ($35, HM.COM). 6. SHOES, **RAYE** ($273, REVOLVE.COM).

NIGHT

A pair of slouchy denim boots sets the stage for a playful going-out look. Slip into some slinky, vintage-feeling separates and elevated earrings for an of-the-moment medley.

1. TOP, **LAAGAM** ($98, LAAGAM.COM). 2. BAG, **A BRONZE AGE** ($175, ABRONZEAGE.COM). 3. SKIRT, **MASSIMO DUTTI** ($329, MASSIMODUTTI.COM). 4. EARRINGS, **BIKO** ($265, ILOVEBIKO.COM). 5. BOOTS, **DIESEL** ($1,095, DIESEL.COM).

WEEKEND

An on-the-go weekend calls for an outfit that can keep up. Lean on a dark-wash dress, and pair it with a suede jacket and statement-making accessories like retro sunnies and a silk bandana.

1. SUNGLASSES, **CANADA GOOSE** ($435, CANADAGOOSE.COM). 2. DRESS, **BANANA REPUBLIC** ($210, BANANAREPUBLIC.CA). 3. SCARF, **MADEWELL** ($100, MADEWELL.COM). 4. JACKET, **SMYTHE** ($1,195, SHOPSMYTHE.COM). 5. SHOES, **SÉZANE** ($320, SEZANE.COM).

TEXT AND STYLING, JILLIAN VIEIRA

5 Av/59 St
Grand Central-42 St
5 Av/86 St
Do not lean on door

TEXT, CYNTHIA QUELLET; PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF CHANEL

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

SUBWAY CHIC

ON A RAINY DECEMBER AFTERNOON in an abandoned subway station on New York City's Lower East Side, creative director Matthieu Blazy presented his highly anticipated first Chanel Métiers d'Art show. As the well-heeled crowd carefully made their way down the stairs, the bustle suddenly stilled as rapper A$AP Rocky and actor Margaret Qualley—both brand ambassadors—made their striking entrance. Wearing looks that had been revealed a few days earlier in a Michel Gondry-directed short film made for the French house, the pair immediately established a cinematic tone as reality and fiction collided.

A piercing whistle preceded the arrival of a subway train from which models of all ages emerged, playing the roles of everyone from students to executives to eccentrics. Embodying that raw yet elegant New York energy as they stepped onto the platform, they represented the infinite cast of characters who come through here every day, playing "the heroes of their own stories," explained Blazy in the show notes.

The pieces created a dialogue between eras, pop culture and the exceptional artistry within le19M, the emblematic Parisian building that unites Chanel's 11 *maisons d'art*, each specializing in exquisite techniques such as embroidery, featherwork and pleating. Between art deco nods and contemporary references, the world of superheroes subtly entered the scene, playfully interpreting the house's codes with wit and imagination. Nods such as bouclé tweed, a flannel shirt weighted with a chain, a Superman crest and boots inspired by Wonder Woman coexisted alongside animal prints and bags shaped like New York talismans—an apple, a squirrel, a takeaway coffee cup. It was Blazy's urban jungle.

After the show and back to the reality of the city, guests seemed lighthearted, their moods lifted by this joyful ballet. Chanel's version of the iconic *I ❤ New York* T-shirt (handmade and covered in sequins, of course) perfectly captured the spirit of the show. This collection was a declaration of love—to New York, its inspiring chaos and its many women; to both the Manhattan of the 1930s that so deeply influenced Gabrielle Chanel and the one of today; and, above all, to the artisans whose craftsmanship transforms the ordinary into the extraordinary. ■

WHY NOT TRY

Get in LINE

Stripes never go out of style, but on this season's runways, they had a fresh, modern energy. While Jacquemus championed bold, unapologetic lines with wide horizontal bands in vibrant or muted tones, Issey Miyake and Lacoste reworked the motif with classic Breton-inspired polos and tops cut in more voluminous silhouettes. Rather than just serving as a background pattern, stripes are being used strategically—verticals to elongate, diagonals to inject motion, mixed widths to add visual drama—making them a key print to shake up the season.

TEXT: JOANNA FOX; PHOTOGRAPHY: LAUNCHMETRICS SPOTLIGHT

COS ($183, COS.COM)

MANGO ($110, MANGO.COM)

MIISTA ($557, MIISTA.COM)

COACH ($200, COACH.COM)

WALES BONNER ($1,014, WALESBONNER.COM)

ALDO ($98, ALDOSHOES.COM)

Make a Move

Slim-silhouetted, retro-feel sneakers gain traction this spring.

MAGUIRE ($250, MAGUIRESHOES.COM)

PUMA ($130, PUMA.COM)

VAGABOND ($190, VAGABOND.COM)

ZARA ($60, ZARA.COM)

ALOHAS ($270, ALOHAS.COM)

ADIDAS ($390, ADIDAS.CA)

STYLING, JILLIAN VIEIRA

The endless appeal of the button-down shirt.

By RENÉE REARDIN

BACK *to* BASICS

CHANEL

WHEN WORN BY THE CORPORATE SET, the classic button-down shirt is serious and stuffy. When worn by fine-dining wait staff, it's proper and punctilious. But when worn by stylish women—like Lauren Hutton and Carolyn Bessette in decades past and, more recently, Sarah Pidgeon (who plays Bessette in *Love Story*) and the models on the spring/summer 2026 runways—it's cool and completely captivating. No other garment can give its wearer such presence. And that's particularly true for the current season, for which designers found fresh ways to make it look alluring, effortless and quietly sexy.

At Chanel's spring/summer 2026 presentation, button-downs had a relaxed fit juxtaposed with tuxedo collars. Sleeves were pushed up and shirttails left untucked over elegant skirts, giving eveningwear a nonchalant air. Dior showed button-down shirts of the fitted variety—each with its own special detail, like a pussy-bow collar, asymmetrical pleats or rows of ruffles—in plaid, olive and sky blue. Celine's were cut from a knit material with a touch of elastane for a body-hugging fit, accented with flashy silver buttons and paired with ruched miniskirts—perfect for a club night in the 2000s with the Hilton sisters. Givenchy's versions were voluminous, had their cuffs casually flicked back and were paired with draped skirts in an Old Hollywood-glamour sort of way. Similarly, at Saint Laurent, exaggerated '80s-style shirts were teamed with leather pencil skirts. Prada went in the opposite direction, featuring a lineup of button-downs in all their utilitarian glory, in hues like medical-scrubs blue and camp-ranger sand and with short sleeves, a crisp, boxy fit and buttons done all the way up to the neck. The designers' message was clear: No matter your style or what you do from nine to five, there's a trendy shirt for you.

"Part of the reason the shirt survives every era is its versatility," says Britt Barkwell, founder of Canadian shirting brand T.Line. "It's a piece that constantly reinvents itself—it can feel tailored or relaxed, polished or undone." That's the thing: In womenswear, the button-down shirt can be anything its wearer wants it to be. Its cut signifies its trend. How it's worn gives it attitude.

The first button-down shirt for women emerged in the 1860s. With a loose fit and pleats that gathered at the waist, it was a trendy piece for the younger set that highlighted their hourglass shape. By the 20th century, the button-down had become so popular in the U.S. that it was part of the unofficial everyday uniform of American women and came to symbolize their new-found independence and professional titles. ➤

PHOTOGRAPHY, LAUNCHMETRICS SPOTLIGHT

Since then, it's been a mainstay in women's wardrobes, largely taking on a traditional men's style—losing the pleats and frills—while allowing for individual styling. Thanks to a select group of mid- to late-century film and fashion stars styling button-down shirts to casual perfection, we've learned that its unrivalled allure lives in its details—the cut of the shoulder, the placement of the buttons, the drape of the fabric, the way it complements its wearers' everyday gestures—all of which today's best shirt designers are meticulous about.

"There is something very alluring about a garment that moves a little around the body," says Marie Marot, founder of her namesake French shirting label. "As a woman walks or shifts her posture, the fabric opens slightly, catches the air and reveals small details, like a shoulder or a collarbone. That balance between structure and freedom is what gives the shirt its quiet sex appeal." When designing her pieces, she considers how the garment will sit when a wearer pushes up her sleeves and slips her hands into her pockets, how it will rest on her décolletage when she leaves buttons undone and how it will sit when tucked into jeans. "The right cut is when the shirt feels natural on the body," says Marot. "It should give space and comfort while still maintaining a clear line and a sense of elegance."

Carolyn Bessette

Lauren Hutton

Although the garment certainly has a borrowed-from-the-boys sensibility, the best shirts for women aren't taken from a man's closet but are designed specifically for the female body. "The proportions, the shoulders, the button line and the length need to follow the way a woman moves and lives in the garment," explains Marot. "The inspiration may come from men's wardrobes, but the final piece must fully belong to women."

This season, one of the biggest street-style shirt trends is colour. No longer are white, blue and chambray shirts the most valuable wardrobe staples; now, bright-hued and striped ones are. T.Line is introducing saturated colours like burgundy and pink to its shirting collection as well as colour-blocked versions with contrasting collars and cuffs—styles that are also Marie Marot's bestsellers in France. Perhaps the chicest styles are the ones you'll continue to reach for. "I tend to wear the same shirts year after year and let them evolve with time," says Marot. "Rather than replacing them, I like living with my shirts, wearing them often and letting them age."

That's another reason to love the button-down shirt: How you wear it is an expression of your style and personality. It's a timeless piece you can make entirely your own. ■

PHOTOGRAPHY, GETTY IMAGES (C. BESSETTE & L. HUTTON) & LAUNCHMETRICS SPOTLIGHT (MODELS)

HAUTE LAP

The most fashionable runway in sports? The Formula 1 paddock.

By D'LORAINE MIRANDA

FERRARI STYLE

PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF FERRARI

HEAD-TO-TOE BOTTEGA VENETA. J.W.Anderson pigeon purses. Archival Cavalli. Is this what the street-style set looks like while vying for the attention of a photographer during fashion week? Or is it just another day in the Formula 1 paddock?

Over the past few years, the worlds of sport and fashion have been converging at breakneck speeds, whether it be via LVMH's sponsorship of the Paris 2024 Olympics, the WNBA's multi-year partnership with Coach or Canadian basketball superstar Shai Gilgeous-Alexander serving fit after fit in the NBA tunnel (and, let's not forget, co-designing his own Canada Goose collection).

F1 is just one of many sartorial playgrounds of late, and it's now considered the pinnacle of not only motorsport but also style. Last year marked the start of a 10-year partnership between F1 and LVMH. Now, brands under the luxury conglomerate's umbrella—like Tag Heuer (F1's new official timekeeper) and Louis Vuitton (which crafts bespoke trunks for race trophies and is set to be the title sponsor of the 2026 Monaco Grand Prix)—have become more prominent on the track.

Even before the official start of this year's racing season, F1 fashion news flooded timelines. Luxury watchmaker IWC, a long-time sponsor of the Mercedes-AMG Petronas F1 team, tapped British driver George Russell to create two timepieces. At the Adidas Y-3 fall/winter 2026/2027 menswear show in Paris, models walked down the runway in elevated Mercedes F1-branded bombers, varsity jackets and jerseys, with billowy trousers, fur accents and asymmetrical miniskirts completing the looks. And Canadian actor Hudson Williams stepped out in a red leather trench by Ferrari Style—the automaker's ready-to-wear fashion line—while on his viral *Heated Rivalry* press tour.

However, this synergy between the two worlds is far from new, says Carlotta Constant, a London-based celebrity stylist and creative consultant who works with Ferrari racer Charles Leclerc. "Fashion has always existed around Formula 1, but for a long time, it sat very much on the periphery, being fairly conservative, functional and sponsor-led."

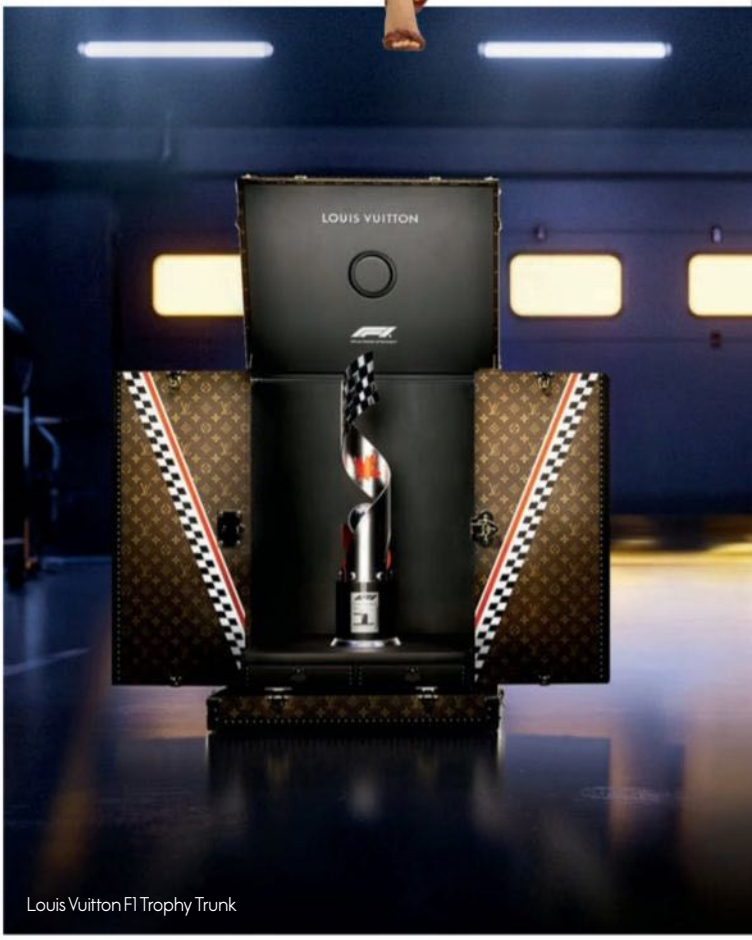
Hugo Boss and Tommy Hilfiger sponsored teams in the '80s and '90s, respectively. Off the track, the ▸

late Brazilian champion Ayrton Senna's laid-back style rivalled Princess Diana's off-duty looks—penny loafers, polos, dad jeans and all. But it wasn't until the late 2010s that F1 fashion really started to shine, with British racer Lewis Hamilton using the paddock as a ground for self-expression, whether by amping up his outfits with jewellery or ditching his standard team kit altogether in favour of more fashion-forward pieces. The overarching message? That fashion could sit authentically alongside elite performance. "He was the first to truly push boundaries and redefine what fashion in F1 could mean," says Constant. "His paddock walks became moments in their own right—not just outfits but statements."

Since then, the seven-time world champion has cemented himself as a fashionable force in the sport and beyond, famously co-chairing the 2025 Met Gala, becoming an ambassador for Lululemon, co-designing capsule collections with Dior—the list goes on. However, fashion brands have only really accelerated into F1 over the past two or three years, says Constant. The turning points? The popularity of Netflix's *Formula 1: Drive to Survive* series, the *F1* movie and buzzy new locales on the race calendar, like Miami, drawing in internet boyfriends (Timothée Chalamet) and It girls (Hailey Bieber) alike. "[All of this] injected a new sense of spectacle, celebrity and cultural crossover," she adds.

This shift is what Rocco Iannone, creative director of Ferrari Style, dubs a new cultural phase for the sport and is the reason the sport is seeing a fashion boom. "It's no longer only about speed and competition; it's about storytelling, identity and emotion," he says. "Fashion fits naturally into this moment because both worlds are driven by performance and desire." There's also the sport's proximity to all things luxury and our fascination with how the 1 percent live. Imagine the romance of the Monaco Grand Prix, where cars take to the picturesque streets of Monte Carlo and onlookers bask on yachts moored in the glistening port. "That crossover naturally lends itself to fashion in a way few other sports do," says Constant.

And, of course, there's the pursuit of personal style. Since Hamilton started leading the fashion charge, the F1 grid has begun to open up stylistically, says Constant. "There are now genuinely strong personalities and wardrobes emerging, and drivers are becoming more confident in expressing themselves." Take Leclerc, who has been working with Constant for over a year now. Rather than creating an alter ego for the Monegasque driver, she's there to support him, just as a personal trainer or nutritionist would. "As a stylist, we create a trusted, collaborative space where you have to truly understand who they are, what they want and how they choose to present themselves to the world."



Louis Vuitton F1 Trophy Trunk

Her expertise has also extended to Leclerc's wife, influencer Alexandra Saint Mleux. Some of her standout fits include a 2003 Roberto Cavalli cheongsam-inspired dress for the Singapore Grand Prix and a rotation of quintessentially Italian ensembles by Dolce & Gabbana for the Italian Grand Prix in Monza. (And, yes, the couple's mini long-haired dachshund, Leo, was also styled in matching designer harnesses.) "It's been really exciting to watch both F1 drivers and their partners begin to truly own their space within the sport," says Constant.

Another name cementing itself? Ferrari Style, which launched during the spring/summer 2021 season and is led by Iannone. The inaugural collection weaved in the Italian carmaker's iconic logos and colours, laying the groundwork for the line. "Since then, Ferrari Style has evolved with more confidence and precision," says Iannone. "What has grown is the freedom to push proportions, materials and attitudes further. Today, the collections are more expressive, more sensual and more radical at times but always disciplined."

PHOTOGRAPHY, GETTY IMAGES (L. HAMILTON, A. SAINT MLEUX, T. TAYLOR & C. ERIVO), COURTESY OF FERRARI, Y-3, LOUIS VUITTON & IWC

From left: Beyoncé, Teyana Taylor and Cynthia Erivo in Ferrari Style

And the pieces have caught the attention of those beyond the track too. In the past year alone, Beyoncé, Teyana Taylor, Raye and, of course, Williams have been spotted in Ferrari Style. "Moments like [Williams in Ferrari Style] reinforce how fashion can act as a cultural bridge, drawing fashion lovers toward the world of Formula 1 while inviting motorsport audiences to engage with style as a form of expression," says Iannone. "Ferrari has always existed beyond categories, and that's what allows these worlds to meet so naturally."

So what's next for fashion in F1? With Apple TV now broadcasting races in the U.S. (Canadians can continue to catch them on TSN) and an all-new American team on the grid (Cadillac F1), an uptick in North American viewership is inevitable. As for brands, expect many more to latch on to the sport's relevance. "I do believe this momentum will continue but only for brands that approach it with authenticity," says Iannone. "With Ferrari Style, we don't respond by chasing visibility; we focus on depth. Our role is to offer a refined, long-term vision of style that reflects Ferrari's heritage and future, not a seasonal reaction to hype." The brand is also set to expand its fashion presence in North America, opening a flagship location in New York later this year.

And when it comes to paddock fits, Constant anticipates more drivers tapping the expertise of stylists and leaning on them for support and optimization rather than replacement of their individuality. In the world of racing, anything can happen. But if there's one thing that's certain, it's that the fashion in seasons to come will be kicking into high gear. ■

Clockwise from left: Lewis Hamilton at the Dior fall/winter 2026/2027 menswear show; IWC Pilot's Watch Chronograph 41 George Russell; Alexandra Saint Mleux in Roberto Cavalli

DRESS *to Impress*

Arti Gogna (left) with model

Montreal-based designer Arti Gogna on creating formalwear that will stand the test of time.

By ERICA NGAO

ARTI GOGNA IS ON A MISSION to create a dress you'll want to wear again and again. In 2008, as a design student at Lasalle College in Montreal, Gogna launched her label after her debut collection captivated audiences at a showcase. She started approaching local shops to see if they would be interested in carrying her pieces and eventually landed her first retail customer: Boutique 1861. To this day, the store still carries Gogna's line—a testament to her ability to create enduringly chic dresses that outlast trend cycles.

"There are some designs that we've been selling for over 10 years," says Gogna, whose offerings range from cocktail dresses to bridalwear to custom pieces. "In the new collection that's coming out, there are items that you could have in your closet for another 10 years because they won't go out of style." This season, she pairs the brand's take on sleek, sophisticated silhouettes with bolder colours and new prints. For Gogna, the art lies in balancing the freshness of new ideas with the permanence of classic elements. "The client is really someone who's building their wardrobe, not shopping for fast fashion."

Gogna's pieces are made to stand the test of time when it comes to not only style but also quality. The dresses are designed with bridesmaid duties and sweaty dance floors in mind and have enough stretch and structure to keep everything feeling comfortable and supported. The label has celebrated a few milestones this year, including launching at Simons and a rebrand that invites customers to become studio insiders. In this next chapter, Gogna is putting the spotlight on the women who inspire her designs—and on the transformative experience of dressing for the occasion. "I feel like when I wear a dress, I become a different person," she says. "It's like I take on a version of myself that is more exciting, feminine and playful."

BEYOND THE SEASON "It's important to buy something that you're going to rewear. Usually, dresses kind of get destroyed by the end of the night because [they're not made to withstand that kind of] wear and tear. When you're shopping for wedding or bridesmaids' dresses, keep in mind that you're buying something that builds on your wardrobe and is true to your identity; [don't choose] based on what the trends are. Now more than ever, I feel like we need to be very mindful of where we spend our money. If you're buying a dress, it should be something that lasts."

FIT FOR ALL "You often see the price change as the size gets bigger, but we don't do that. Obviously, there's more fabric involved in making bigger sizes, but what we want is for everyone to feel like their size is standard to our brand. Whether you're an extra small or a 4XL and you're shopping with us, you can feel like you're not getting a special size—you're just purchasing a dress. I want everyone to feel equal."

INSIDE THE STUDIO "When people come in for a private experience, they're very curious about the brand. Even on social media, people always prefer when we post anything with me or the team in it or behind-the-scenes [content]. We want to show the journey behind the collections and [what it's like] working with models and designing. [People are interested in] the process of what goes on behind these dresses. It's not just the product—it's so much more." ■

PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF ARTI GOGNA

SPACE ODYSSEY

Fashion is shooting for the stars this season. Susie Lau explores how celestial exploration is capturing the hearts of us all, including the industry's key players.

BACK IN OCTOBER, on the penultimate day of Fashion Month, I was physically shaking as I walked into the Grand Palais in Paris. Matthieu Blazy was about to debut his first collection for Chanel as creative director—only the third person to hold the position after Coco Chanel herself. For a fashion nerd like me, an event like this would be monumental no matter what. But stepping inside the grand venue and being confronted by a glowing solar system—with giant orbs suspended above and an iridescent onyx-like floor below—made the historic moment even more awe-inspiring.

Looking at the open-mouthed "wow" expressions around me, I could see I wasn't the only one transported back to being five years old. Blazy had tapped into something universal for us to connect with. "We all observe the same sky," he said. "And I think it provokes the same emotions in all of us." Cannily, the set also linked back to Coco Chanel's own fascination with the stars. "I love everything that is above: the sky, the moon, I believe in the stars," she once said.

At a time when we're not sure what to believe (thanks to fake news, a mistrust of mainstream politics, social-media stunts—the list goes on), it's no wonder we're all projecting hope into outer space—the final unknown for most of us. Given that our planet is plagued by conflict, climate change and uncertainty, this fascination with space is timely.

The most obvious entry point is astrology: We've made the act of consulting the stars part of our day-to-day routine, with apps like Co-Star garnering 30 million registered users and the global astrology market estimated to reach over $31 billion by 2031. In literature and film, ▸

PHOTOGRAPHY, GETTY IMAGES

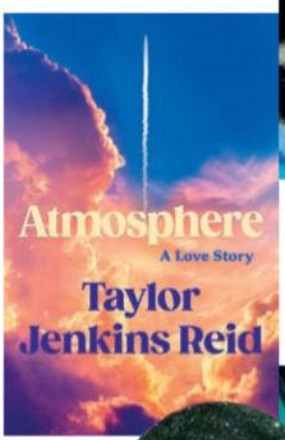
CHANEL

the narratives around space are also changing alongside strides in aeronautics research, space technology and a wider awareness of what exists beyond our planet. We've moved on from the far-fetched disaster tales and alien takeovers of '90s films *Armageddon* and *Independence Day*. Now, we have the fantastical imagining of faraway planets, like in *Dune*, or more realistic takes on space-shuttle missions gone wrong, including the recent film adaptation of sci-fi writer Andy Weir's *Project Hail Mary*. In *Orbital*, Samantha Harvey's Booker Prize-winning novel, a space pastoral plays out with six astronauts considering existential questions as they orbit the earth. "Because who can look at man's neurotic assault on the planet and find it beautiful?" writes Harvey. "And now maybe humankind is in the late smash-it-all-up teenage stage of self-harm and nihilism." Reading *Orbital* is like momentarily floating in zero gravity above ourselves and seeing—with the self-aware distance we need right now—human nature at its best and worst.

In fashion, which is experiencing its own uncertainty and flux with new creative directors at all the big houses, turning to space feels like an act of rebellious whimsy. Trust Thom Browne to send out models with alien heads on the spring/summer 2026 runway as he sought to "explore the edges between the ordinary and the outer limits." Space—and the infinite possibilities of what is out there—is also, essentially, fun. As shown in the joyful energy of that planet-filled Chanel set, tapping into our inner child is fashion's antidote to the feeling of malaise in the industry.

On a more pragmatic level, space provides an opportunity for fashion to explore something genuinely new. Prada partnered with Axiom Space in 2023 to design the spacesuits for NASA's Artemis III mission. The historic undertaking, scheduled for 2027, will be the first crewed lunar landing since Apollo 17 touched down in 1972. But bringing space closer to us has its ups and downs. When a celeb-heavy Blue Origin suborbital flight took place last year, it was criticized, not least because the all-female crew assembled by Lauren Sánchez came off looking vacuous. "Space is going to finally be glam," said passenger Katy Perry. Should space ever be described so glibly? Furthermore, amid a cost-of-living crisis, Sánchez and her friends flaunting a space jaunt funded by her then fiancé Jeff Bezos, one of the world's richest people, was only ever going to come off looking out of touch.

Commodifying the low-earth-orbit zone is fast becoming a tangible reality as two projects, Voyager Station and Pioneer Station, aim to become the first luxury accommodations above our planet. This is wanderlust gone extreme. While some are hailing it as the democratization of space, it feels as though the final frontier is already heading the same way as desirable Instagram-friendly holiday destinations on earth: commercialized and colonized. The sheer mystery of what space is actually like is the most tantalizing thing about it. Blazy said it best: "What makes space so universal and enduring in our collective consciousness is that everyone can humbly look up into the night sky and feel something far bigger than all of us." ■



From top: Zendaya in *Dune*; *Orbital* by Samantha Harvey; *Atmosphere*, a love story set in space, by Taylor Jenkins Reid; Ryan Gosling in *Project Hail Mary*

PHOTOGRAPHY. LAUNCHMETRICS SPOTLIGHT (RUNWAY) & MOVIESTILLSDB (*DUNE*)

10 QUESTIONS WITH *Bridget Brown*

Meet @briidgetbrown, a content creator, business owner and lover of all things vintage who's based in Hamilton, Ont.

By JOANNA FOX

1 GO-TO CLOTHING BRAND FOR EVERYDAY WEAR?
"I love a fun twist on wardrobe staples, and one of my favourite brands right now that does this so well is Tibi. The way they mix sporty and chic is truly unmatched."

2 WHAT DO YOU NEVER LEAVE THE HOUSE WITHOUT?
"My lipliner! Oh, and my EpiPen."

3 WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS YEAR?
"Probably gardening, which I never thought I would say. We bought a house last summer, so I am excited to finally start planting and growing my garden."

4 WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR STYLE INSPO FROM?
"Although there are many public figures I look up to for their taste, most of my style inspiration comes from film and art as well as strangers I see out in public."

5 IF YOU COULD STEAL SOMEONE'S WARDROBE, WHOSE WOULD IT BE?
"Currently, it would have to be [fashion influencer and stylist] Courtney Grow's. Her style is so playful and fun yet also timeless. I love how she mixes vintage pieces with modern trends; it feels very intentional and cohesive."

6 FAVOURITE SPRING/SUMMER 2026 TRENDS?
"Scarves and brooches, but I like to wear them in a functional way to rework and reshape clothing instead of just throwing them on. Also, anything purple or turquoise has been completely consuming my brain."

7 WHAT'S ONE STYLE HACK EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW?
"Popping the collar on a blazer—and either securing it with a brooch or just leaving it as is—is my favourite little style hack."

8 WHAT CAN YOU NOT LIVE WITHOUT?
"The thrift store! It's where I feel most at peace and most inspired."

9 DESIGNER PIECE YOU'VE BEEN DREAMING ABOUT LATELY?
"I'm always dreaming of a sequined or beaded Fendi Baguette."

10 FAVOURITE SKINCARE PRODUCT RIGHT NOW?
"It's more of a skincare tool, but my CurrentBody red-light mask has become a ritual in my skincare routine."

PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF BRIDGET BROWN (MAIN IMAGE), ADOBE STOCK (PLANT), LAUNCHMETRICS SPOTLIGHT (RUNWAY) & @COURTNEYGROW/INSTAGRAM (C. GROW)

DOUBLE TAKE

Veronica Swanson Beard and Veronica Miele Beard, the co-founders of Veronica Beard, share how they grew their brand, what challenges they faced and what success means to them.

By JOANNA FOX

Veronica Swanson Beard and Veronica Miele Beard

IN THE LATE AUGHTS, stylish New York-based sisters-in-law Veronica Swanson Beard and Veronica Miele Beard recognized that there was something missing from women's fashion. "Veronica and I were constantly talking about what we loved, what felt overdone and what we couldn't seem to find for ourselves," says Swanson Beard. "We realized that there was a gap between what women were being offered and what we actually wanted to wear: pieces that felt chic and effortless but still made sense for real life. Once we saw that clearly, the idea for the brand came into focus."

Miele Beard, who was working on a trading desk at the time, used to think about how men had a built-in uniform—a suit and tie—that instantly made them look polished and powerful. Women didn't have that solution. "There were great jackets and layering pieces for men but nothing for women that offered the same versatility and structure without bulk," says Miele Beard. "We wanted to create a modern uniform—something effortless but transformative."

That's how Veronica Beard was born in 2010 and has since grown into a company with 48 stores worldwide—two in Canada (at Royalmount mall in Montreal and Yorkdale in Toronto) with a third slated to open later this year in Vancouver's Oakridge Park—and an annual revenue of over $400 million, according to Forbes. It was around that time that "the Veronicas," as they are now known, also created the Dickey Jacket, the brand's hero piece, which is still a bestseller. They call it a "Wonder Woman cape"—an item that instills confidence and instantly makes any outfit just that little bit more chic. From there, the brand evolved across categories, but the philosophy remained the same: versatile, easy pieces that elevate a woman's everyday wardrobe.

We recently spoke with these inspiring women about their respective roles, growing their brand, the changing fashion landscape and what's in store for spring/summer 2026.

What do you each bring to the company?

VERONICA SWANSON BEARD "I come from a fashion background and bring a strong point of view around design and aesthetics. I'm constantly inspired by art, interiors and vintage—how things are collected, layered and lived in over time. That perspective helps shape the look and feel of the brand and how we translate classic ideas into pieces that feel modern and relevant."

PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF VERONICA BEARD

VERONICA MIELE BEARD "The success of our business boils down to the product, and I've always been a product junkie. I'm constantly thinking about women's lifestyles—how they travel and work and move through their day. I look at everything [in terms of] both creativity and supply and demand: What does she need? Where is she wearing it? How can we make it easier for her? To me, luxury is about saving her time and elevating her everyday."

You've been in business for 16 years. What are some of the challenges you've faced along the way?
V. M. B. "One of the biggest challenges has been scaling the business while staying true to who we are. As you grow, there's constant pressure to move faster or expand more broadly, but maintaining quality and brand integrity has always been essential for us. As we've entered new categories and expanded internationally, we've approached each move with discipline. Every space and market has its own nuances, and we've been intentional about understanding them before stepping in. Growth across categories and geographies is exciting, but it requires focus and rigour. You have to evolve without losing your core."

And what are some of the successes?
V. S. B. "Seeing how the brand has grown over the past 16 years has been incredibly rewarding. What started with the Dickey Jacket has expanded into a full lifestyle brand—from denim to shoes to handbags to jewellery—and we've built a truly global customer base along the way. Opening our first store in Paris later this spring will feel like a meaningful milestone in that journey."

How have you seen the fashion industry change?
V. M. B. "When we launched, social media as we know it today was only just beginning to take shape. Storytelling was still mainly driven by traditional media. Today, connecting with your audience happens in real time across so many channels, which has changed not only how fashion is discovered but also how it's experienced."

Can you tell us about the inspiration for your spring/summer 2026 collection?
V. S. B. "The spring/summer 2026 collection channels the carefree energy and optimism of the season. It's about having fun getting dressed and leaning into pieces that feel expressive, playful and true to who you are. We were inspired by the wit and charm of Parisian artist Thomas Lélu, whose point of view felt like a natural fit and led to a special collaboration."

What is the #VBGIVESBACK initiative?
V. M. B. "VB Gives Back is a core part of who we are as a brand and reflects our commitment to paying it forward and amplifying important causes. We donate a portion of every online purchase and host shop-for-a-cause events in our stores throughout the year, working with both quarterly partners and many additional organizations [whose causes] span women's health, children's initiatives, disaster relief, the fashion industry and more."

What do you wish someone had told you when you were starting out?
V. S. B. "That you don't need all the answers at the beginning and that growth comes from learning as you go. Asking questions, staying open and building a team around you that complements your strengths make all the difference."

What advice do you have for women who are trying to start their own business today?
V. M. B. "Truly understanding your customer is essential, and growth should happen intentionally. Never build the stadium before you have the fans! Focus on earning loyalty one step at a time, and let the business grow from there."

The key to success is...
V. S. B. "Trusting the process. Building something meaningful takes time, and believing in the long game makes it easier to navigate the inevitable ups and downs." ■

Veronica Beard spring/summer 2026 campaign

Dearly Beloved

Bridal fashion is in its authenticity era. The experts explain how it's getting real this year.

By SUMIKO WILSON

WE'VE HIT PEAK WEDDING. Bridal content is everywhere—and it's by design.

First, the wedding day quietly morphed into a wedding weekend. Obviously, for many cultures, this has long been a traditional practice, but it's a relatively recent change in the West. To get more quality time with guests, couples are now stretching the event into a three-part affair: a welcome dinner the night before the ceremony, the wedding itself and then a farewell brunch on the third day.

Then came the rise of the wedding-content creator, a separate photographer who captures candid moments strictly for social media. The appeal is obvious: off-the-cuff footage and images with an instant turnaround and a more feed-friendly feel than the official wedding photos.

Naturally, this means more content all around. And for the past decade, this surplus has resulted in a flattening of bridal fashion. Looks are entirely inspired by the feed and then posted right back onto it. So what's a stylish bride to do? As social media steps into a less curated era, bridal fashion is recalibrating itself. This means that for 2026 wedding looks, authenticity is key.

"More and more couples want their wedding to be a reflection of themselves and their story as a couple," says New York City bridal stylist Gabrielle Hurwitz. "That's translating into their fashion, their guest experience [and] their design elements. They want their wedding to be beautiful, sure, but they want it to be beautiful in a way that feels [like] *them*—not stuffy or contrived. I think that's true of their looks too."

Ahead, experts break down this year's bridal-style trends.

RARE FINDS

Vintage bridal has always existed on the fringes, but this year, it's stepping into the spotlight. "It's a continuation of what [we've been] seeing on the red carpet," says Hurwitz, pointing to the fever-pitch popularity of ultra-rare archival looks among celebs. (See Ariana Grande hosting *SNL* last year in 2005 Vivienne Westwood bridal couture and Margot Robbie breaking out her Galliano-era Dior to promote *Wuthering Heights*.) "Vintage really appeals to people because it offers a one-of-a-kind [look] that you're not gonna see a million other girls wearing. And it inherently has history built into it because it's been around for a while. It's like a treasure in itself." Hurwitz emphasizes that vintage shopping requires an open mind. "You never know what you're gonna find," she says. "Vintage is [about] the luck of the draw. You could have your heart set on a vintage Valentino piece, but even with the best sourcers out there, who knows if that's available?"

OLD LACE, NEW TRICKS

This year, staples are being reworked rather than replaced. "I'm seeing more and more lace," says Gaby Bayona, founder of Vancouver-based bridal labels Truvelle, Aesling and Laudae. "We're talking laces that are more modern and less traditional." Brides, she notes, are gravitating toward soft, romantic and corded lace styles most often. And Hurwitz expects lace to appear in deliberate doses rather than full-coverage looks. "Danielle Frankel, who is kind of the darling of bridal right now, is doing really interesting things with lace," she adds. "She's playing with it as a texture versus an all-over textile. It's a great way to incorporate it as a motif rather than a head-to-toe look."

NOT QUITE WHITE

As vintage gowns gain traction, warmer shades of white are following suit. Courtney Kaufman, a manager at New York- and L.A.-based vintage bridal salon Happy Isles, attributes the shift to the growing awareness of colour theory. "[Last year] brought a big surge of that," she says, explaining that brides often lean into a vintage-feeling look because of the shade of white they're choosing. "There are these pearly tones that only raw silks, charmeuses and chiffons age into." Kaufman refers to these hues—shaped by time and material rather than dye—as "candlelit whites." ▸

PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF LAUDAE AND REFORMATION & TIANA DUARTE-KARGBO (CINQ)

SOMETHING BOLD

When it comes to engagement rings, understated is out. Last year, Dua Lipa debuted a diamond set on a chunky gold band, and the ripple effect was immediate. "So many people come in with that reference," says Edilou Cañedo, founder of Toronto-based jewellery brand Cuchara. "It's simple, but it's statement—that's the new timeless. That aesthetic can last longer than the five-to-10-year cycle of engagement-ring trends. That's what's going to be looked at as a 'cool-girl ring.'"

It's not purely a celebrity-fuelled spike. As thin bands give way to thicker silhouettes, Cañedo points to shifting economics and materials. "With the increase in the cost of gold and how much it jumped in 2025, having a statement chunky gold ring says a lot about your style and how much money you put into the design," she says. "In the past, lab diamonds weren't as popular. Now that they're a thing, the value [of a ring] really speaks in the gold material, not necessarily the size of the stone."

Blair Nadeau

Cuchara

Ouma

A.B. Ellie

CARRIED AWAY

Bridal purses may not be standard, but that's changing. In 2026, they're emerging as a practical and chic finishing touch. Bayona's Lovenote boutiques (located in Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg and Ottawa) offer custom designs made from the same fabric as a bride's gown. "It really is an extension of your look and feels very custom and true to your vision," she says. "It feels less mass market and more bespoke." For more daring brides, a bag in a different colour can introduce contrast to an otherwise-all-white look. "Unique handbags could be a thing in the next year," says Hurwitz. Though luxury bags can inflate a budget, they're one of the few wedding buys that can be endlessly repurposed after the big day. "It's easier to justify that kind of purchase if you can wear it beyond the wedding, whether it's a vintage Chanel clutch or a personalized Olympia Le-Tan bag."

RUN IT BACK

No, your eyes don't deceive you. Chokers are back—yet again. After resurfacing in the mid-2010s, the early-aughts accessory is making its way back onto the bridal scene. "We're gonna see a lot of choker elements where the neck scarf once was," says Kaufman. "[That's] not to say that [scarves] will go away—they never will. But [we'll see] other neck elements and really thick, chunky collar necklaces."

AND TO TOP IT OFF...

As brides move away from cathedral silhouettes, Juliet cap veils are popping up more and more. "Mantilla veils were kind of [a thing], but I think Juliet veils are having a moment right now," says Hurwitz. ■

PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF OUMA, A.B. ELLIE, CUCHARA & BLAIR NADEAU

GET A GOOD LOOK

Specsavers' newest designer collab is crafted to let you be your most authentic self.

THE POWER of a fabulous pair of glasses is undeniable. Yes, it can be the anchor of a really great outfit; but, more than that, it can also be an integral token of self-expression.

That's been the guiding philosophy for Specsavers, which has just partnered with Canadian designer Hilary MacMillan on an all-new exclusive eyewear collection.

Featuring 13 optical frames and four sunglasses, the heritage-meets-modern collection is rooted in a sense of liberation. As MacMillan puts it, think of these pieces as tools for self-expression, helping us show up as our full selves.

"When your frames feel right, you move through the world with more clarity and more confidence," explains MacMillan. "There's something incredibly empowering about putting on a pair of glasses that feels like an extension of your personality—something that supports your voice, your identity and your presence in any room."

"This collaboration is built on a shared belief that eyewear should be expressive, accessible and well designed," says Juan Carlos Camargo, product director at Specsavers Canada. "Hilary's approach to fashion mirrors our mission to make high-quality eyewear easily accessible to Canadians. Together, we focused on creating frames that are versatile—the kind of pieces that stand out for their design and everyday wearability."

The Specsavers x Hilary MacMillan collection blends the aesthetic language of MacMillan's brand (think pops of colour, subtle details and vintage nods) with Specsavers' unwavering commitment to quality.

Hilary MacMillan 04 and Sun RX 01 glasses

Hilary MacMillan wearing Hilary MacMillan 12 glasses

"My namesake label has always leaned into retro influences, especially the '70s," she says. "I love the shapes, the gradients and the sense of freedom of that era, and you'll see that echo throughout the collection." As such, expect the range to play with soft colour transitions, sculptural silhouettes and subtle tartan accents that hint at MacMillan's Scottish heritage.

Ultimately, the timeless collaboration between Specsavers and MacMillan makes eyewear deeply personal. The frames give you permission to express your mood each day. Are you feeling bold or looking for something simple and understated? "The collection lets you show your personality in a way that feels natural," MacMillan offers. "When someone puts on a pair and sees themselves reflected a little brighter, a little bolder, that's the magic to me."

Find your next favourite pair of frames in this collection, starting at $199 for two pairs* and available at over 270 Specsavers locations across Canada. ■

*Hilary MacMillan eyewear at Specsavers starts at $199 for two pairs of frames with standard single-vision lenses to the same person's prescription. Visit **specsavers.ca** for full terms and conditions.

PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF SPECSAVERS

radar

WHAT'S ON THE ELLE EDITORS' FASHION AND BEAUTY LISTS RIGHT NOW.

FEELING CHEEKY

Prada has unveiled its first-ever blush. The pocket-size compact, rendered in kitten-paw pink and shaped in the brand's signature triangle, is a thing of beauty—but its contents are somehow even more arresting. The innovative formula starts out as a creamy balm, melting seamlessly into skin, and then sets to a powder finish that softly blurs imperfections. With its highly tactile texture, the product can be swiftly swiped on with a finger or brush and layered to create a custom flush, be it subtle or sculpted. The pigments stay put for up to 12 hours, while a raspberry extract nourishes skin and enhances its radiance over time.

PRADA TOUCH CREAM-TO-POWDER BLUSH ($59, SEPHORA.CA)

LONDON CALLING

Toronto-based fashion and home-goods brand Kotn recently opened a London outpost of sorts. Instead of an overseas boutique, Beit Kotn in Shoreditch is a private hotel for creatives and friends of the brand and a venue for cultural events and community gatherings. Would-be guests are asked to submit a request online for the chance to stay in the colourful, homey two-bedroom unit, which comes with a dedicated concierge service.

kotn.com

Flight of Fancy

A new butterfly emerges this spring. Meet La Bomba, a sparkling fruity-floral housed in a spectacular winged bottle. With its opening notes of ripe pitaya, the scent serves up an instant jolt of energy. "We wanted something juicy, almost gourmand, that gives colour to the fragrance," explains master perfumer Christophe Raynaud. At its heart, an exuberant bouquet of frangipani brings warmth and sensuality. "The idea was to capture the essence of a luminous woman who laughs, dances and overflows with joy," he says. The perfume's name is actually the nickname legendary fashion editor Diana Vreeland gave Carolina Herrera as a nod to the designer's boisterous spirit and bold style. It's a scent that promises to leave an explosive trail.

CAROLINA HERRERA LA BOMBA EAU DE PARFUM SPRAY ($172 FOR 50 ML, SEPHORA.CA) ▶

TEXT, MELISSA FEJTEK. JOANNA FOX, KATHERINE LALANCETTE. TRUC NGUYEN & CYNTHIA QUELLET; PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF PRADA, KOTN & CAROLINA HERRERA

Less Is More

Young people's skincare routines are becoming more and more elaborate—cue multi-step regimens inspired by TikTok and the layering of potent actives on dermises that have yet to develop their first wrinkle. Montreal brand Alldayer is taking the opposite approach. Targeting the 14-to-24 age range, the newly launched company is all about pared-down products that seek to support the skin rather than overstimulate it. It's as simple as can be: There's a gentle yet effective cleansing gel, a toner-serum hybrid that refreshes and balances, a light moisturizer and an acne treatment. The goal? To help young people build a healthy and lasting relationship with their skin. **alldayer.com**

STAR TREATMENT

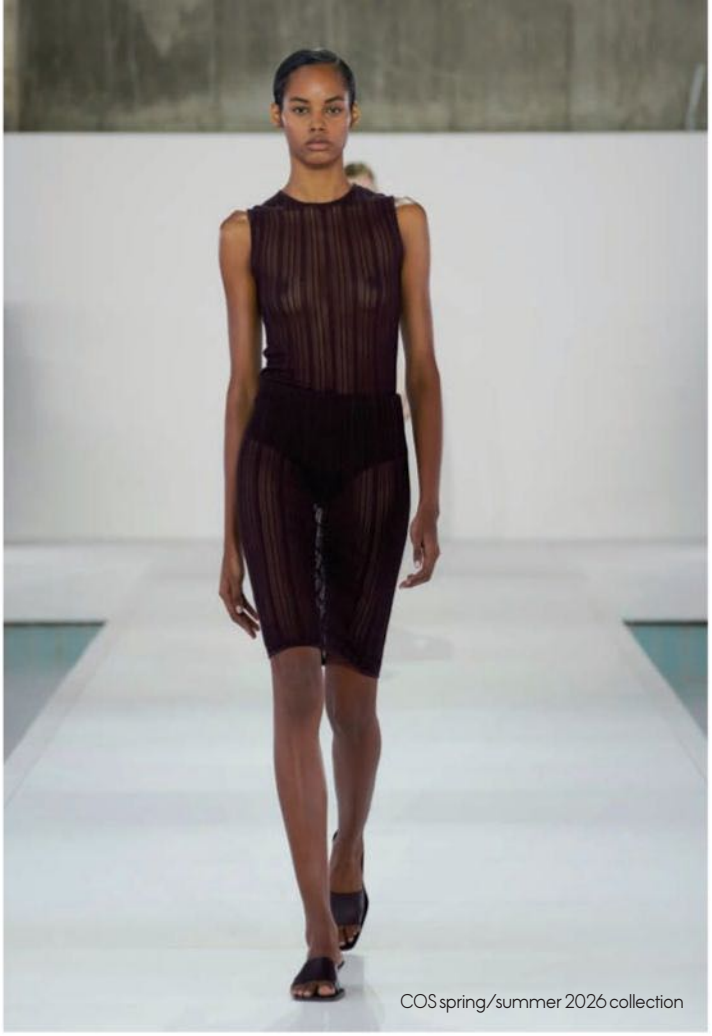
After wooing consumers south of the border, TRESemmé's A-List Collection has at long last landed on Canadian shelves. Inspired by prestige products that often cost over five times more, this lineup of styling aids aims to make red-carpet-worthy hair accessible to all. There's the Dry Texturizing Spray, which yields sexy volume along with that coveted lived-in feel; the Instant Fix Styling Stick, which offers lasting sleekness; the Bonding Oil, which boosts strength and shine; the Workable Hairspray for flexible hold; the Lacquer Shine Spray, which leaves locks frizz-free and glossy; and the Signature Fragrance, which was crafted by master perfumers and scents strands with a sensual swirl of vanilla and sandalwood while also upping radiance. The best part? Prices start at just $13. **tresemme.com**

PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF ALLDAYER, TRESEMMÉ & GOLSHAAH

Golshaah spring/summer 2025 collection

Eyes on the Prize

When the 2026 LVMH Prize cohort was announced earlier this year, there was just one Canadian fashion brand on the short list: Golshaah by Golnar Ahmadian. Founded four years ago by the Toronto-based Iranian designer, who has a background in architecture, the emerging label has received plenty of accolades and gained fans who were drawn to the tension between its sculptural and tailored yet somewhat undone designs. The winner of this year's prize, to be named in September, will receive a €400,000 endowment as well as mentoring from teams at the French luxury-goods conglomerate. But no matter how things land, the experience has been profound for Ahmadian. "I'm incredibly grateful and humbled to be recognized by LVMH and to stand alongside such talented designers from around the world," she told us from Paris in late February. "It still feels a bit surreal, and I'm just trying to take in every moment." **lvmhprize.com, golshaah.com** ➤



COS spring/summer 2026 collection

URBAN HAZE

This past March, COS returned to the runway to present its spring/summer 2026 collection, staging a show in Seoul for the first time. Set in a brutalist-style former bathhouse on the city's outskirts, the striking show featured models walking around pools filled with a cloudlike haze to a soundtrack captured on the Seoul subway—a tribute to the capital's urban soundscape. Across 40 looks, a sea of slate greys, creams and warm browns was punctuated by flashes of blue and oxblood. Sculptural tailoring, fluid silhouettes and plays on materials (*trompe l'œil* silks that looked like denim, crinkled leather, sheer ribbed knits) reflected a cross between '80s power dressing and '90s minimalism. Womenswear leaned into softened structure and ethereal transparency, while menswear reworked everyday tailoring with relaxed precision and understated utility. The result is a study in modern elegance, with craftsmanship and simplicity converging in COS' quietly confident vision of contemporary dressing. **cos.com**

Blue Crush

One of the most iconic eaux de toilette of the early aughts is *finally* getting the eau de parfum treatment. Thanks to the magic of master perfumer Olivier Cresp, the new Dolce & Gabbana Light Blue Eau de Parfum is more concentrated and longer-lasting. The fragrance takes us straight to the breezy Mediterranean seaside with a sun-drenched blend of Sicilian lemon, Calabrian bergamot and pink pepper softened by creamy frangipani, cinnamon bark, marigold and amber. The Pour Homme edition, created by Alberto Morillas, takes the OG scent's signature notes of juicy mandarin, grapefruit and juniper and introduces salty sea-water-soaked cypress for a fresh take on the cult classic.

DOLCE & GABBANA LIGHT BLUE EAU DE PARFUM SPRAY ($169 FOR 50 ML, DOLCEANDGABBANA.COM) ■

PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF COS & DOLCE & GABBANA

RISK TAKER

Canadian actor Meaghan Rath steps into a new role in Silicon Valley drama *The Audacity*.

By JOANNA FOX

PHOTOGRAPHY: JUSTIN WILCZYNSKI (SEVEN ARTIST MANAGEMENT)

THE LAST TIME Canadians saw Meaghan Rath on TV, she was playing an affable, relatable mom trying to do it all in the CTV comedy *Children Ruin Everything*. But when she returns to our screens this spring in *The Audacity*—a hotly anticipated AMC series created by Jonathan Glatzer (*Better Call Saul*, *Succession*) about the big egos and questionable ethics of the Silicon Valley set—she'll be doing something very different. In fact, if you're familiar with the Canadian actor's work, you'll see that it's a big departure from anything she's done in the past.

"[I thought], 'I'm just kind of gonna make a fool out of myself in the audition,' because I'd never done this kind of role before," says Rath of her character, Anushka Bhattachera-Phister. When she first got the script for the show early last year, she almost passed on it because she didn't think she had a shot. "Anushka is a very put-together British-Indian woman who works in the tech world, and Jonathan Glatzer writes in such a beautiful but dense and challenging way. I've never really done that kind of project before."

PHOTOGRAPHY: JUSTIN WILCZYNSKI (SEVEN ARTIST MANAGEMENT)

"Jonathan [Glatzer] has this amazing ability to humanize these monstrous people. It's just the most fun to play because it's not straightforward. You're not really sure if you're supposed to like them or hate them. And that's sort of like the sweet spot."

The dark comedy, which was shot in Vancouver and has already been renewed for a second season, is set against a backdrop of billionaires, psychiatrists, tech obsessives, AI labs and privileged teens and features a brazenly egotistical data-mining CEO (played by Billy Magnussen) who blackmails his psychiatrist (Sarah Goldberg) into sharing private information about his competitors. And at the centre of all of this is Rath's Anushka, who is both having an affair with Magnussen's character and working for a competing company. "She's a chief ethicist, but she's having an affair," says Rath. "She wants to make the world a better place [and] use tech to [do that], but she's always on the side of money. She's complicated and full of nuance, and these contradictions that I find so interesting to play all sort of seep through slowly. You get to see her in a lot of different situations with a lot of different characters, and she's different with everybody."

Born and raised in Montreal, Rath has been acting since she was a teenager, but her career really started to take off in 2011, when she landed a main role in the cult Syfy show *Being Human*, about a ghost, a vampire and a werewolf living together. She then made the jump to prime time with a recurring role in Fox's *New Girl* and later snagged a main role in *Cooper Barrett's Guide to Surviving Life*, a comedy about a college-age guy trying to figure out how to grow up. Although that show only lasted one season, it's how she met her now husband (and the father of her two children), actor Jack Cutmore-Scott (who also starred in the *Frasier* reboot). From there, she joined the cast of CBS's *Hawaii Five-0* for three seasons before landing back home with the award-winning CTV comedy *Children Ruin Everything*. More recently, she also starred in the Jason Biggs-directed thriller, *Untitled Home Invasion Romance*.

Prior to *The Audacity*, Rath didn't know anything about the tech world, data collection or privacy within that context, but she explains that the series is more about seeing all of these things through the characters' lenses. "Jonathan [Glatzer] has this amazing ability to humanize these monstrous people," she says. "It's just the most fun to play because it's not straightforward. You're not really sure if you're supposed to like them or hate them. And that's sort of like the sweet spot."

The rest of the show's ensemble, which includes Zach Galifianakis, Simon Helberg (*The Big Bang Theory*) and Rob Corddry (*Hot Tub Time Machine*), are clearly relishing the project too. "The beautiful thing about working on the show is that the cast is so insanely good," says Rath. "Everyone is genuinely happy to be there and to be working on something like this with this team. To be able to act these scripts is an incredible once-in-a-lifetime kind of thing."

Now, Rath is just really excited—and terrified—to share her work with the world and see how it's received. "I've never been more scared of something coming out because it's so different [for me]," she says. "I was very nervous [playing this character] at first. But then I realized it's actually so helpful to [inhabit] a person who feels so different from yourself. It weirdly allows you more freedom in some way." ■

Power Players

25 YEARS

Meet five women who are carving their own paths and leading the way for Canadians everywhere.

By JOANNA FOX & PATRICIA KAROUNOS

WHEN CANADIAN WOMEN put their mind to something, they get it done. Across the country and around the world, they are making career moves that are shaping lives, subverting conventional thinking and changing things for the better. For the next instalment in our series celebrating 25 women in honour of 25 years of ELLE Canada, we're highlighting power players who are undeniable leaders in their industries. Whether they're transforming the way we approach style and beauty, spearheading a women's professional sports league or advocating for their community, these women are moving forward with heart, intention and vision in ways that are uniquely theirs.

Diana Matheson

In 2023, for the first time, a total of 32 teams—a jump from the previous event's 24—competed at the FIFA Women's World Cup. From that pool, only two nations did not have a professional women's soccer league back at home: Haiti and Canada. Regardless of the results (it was a disappointing tournament for Team Canada, which was eliminated at the group stage), it was obvious that there was a gap here that needed to be addressed.

Luckily, Diana Matheson—a two-time Olympic bronze medallist who played in 206 games for the Canadian national team over her career—was already on it. After retiring from soccer in 2021, the athlete, who's from Oakville, Ont., got her M.B.A. and worked with the Union of European Football Associations. She'd seen the growth of women's sports and wanted to be prepared for whatever might take shape in Canada. But she quickly realized that no one else had effectively jumped on the opportunity, and at the rate the market was growing, she knew that it could soon be too expensive to get something off the ground. In 2022, months before the 2023 World Cup kicked off, Matheson and her business partner, Thomas Gilbert, co-founded Project 8, a start-up designed to launch a domestic professional women's soccer league.

"Five years ago, women's sport wasn't treated like a business," says Matheson. "We have all the building blocks here in Canada, from the players to the fan base, and we're really good at the business of sport. We just had to get started. And, honestly, a big driver of this was the fear of regret if I didn't try to do it—the fear that we would miss this window to build just because someone didn't believe it was a business or didn't believe that we could do it."

Project 8 soon turned into the Northern Super League (NSL), which is heading into its second season of competition this spring after officially debuting last year. Right now, there are six clubs in the league representing cities across the country: Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver. The NSL can already be considered a success. The minimum salary for players is $50,000 (second only to the U.S.-based NWSL, or National Women's Soccer League, per Sportsnet). And, according to Matheson, there was an average of 4,000 fans at every game (putting the NSL in the top five in attendance among women's pro-soccer leagues); the first season also brought in around $30 million in revenue (placing it eighth among women's professional sports leagues). "We have a harder road because we have to build from scratch," she says. "But we also get to control our own destiny, which is a gift." The ultimate goal, Matheson adds, is to make the NSL one of the top five women's professional soccer leagues in the world.

That's where the former pro, who also played in the NWSL, channels most of her energy. Matheson is the NSL's chief growth officer, which means she's focused on "anything that's going to help build this league, grow it bigger and meet our goals." That includes continuing to look for investors, convincing people to say yes to her vision, working with the government to accelerate the women's sport industry in Canada, getting NSL teams into global competitions, advocating for infrastructure, expanding to more cities and, of course, attracting more fans.

Matheson thinks that part of making the NSL a reality is the timing. "I've made a career of trying to work hard and do the right things but [also, when I've been] at the right place at the right time, [going after] an opportunity if I see it," she says. But consider her long, respected track record, her genuine love for the game and the years she's spent building relationships and credibility and you'll begin to wonder *who else* but Matheson could have established a homegrown league. She has the motivation and the vision, and she leads with consistency. "I want to continue to be authentic, drive things that matter, admit when I get something wrong and then get up and go again," she says. "I want [people to be able to say] 'She did what she said she was going to do.'" ➤

PHOTOGRAPHY, AARON COBB

Susanne Langmuir

Farm to face: That was the starting point for Susanne Langmuir's latest brand, Lixr. The prolific Canadian beauty entrepreneur has a 21-hectare organic farm in Meaford, Ont., and has been growing plants and botanicals (think lavender, sage and calendula) for over 10 years. She was originally inspired by her time living in the South of France, where she sourced ingredients for fragrances, and wanted to learn how to grow and formulate with such ingredients herself. Enter Lixr, which she describes as "botanically based skincare elixirs made with really incredible ingredients [and] advanced green chemistry."

Langmuir, who's also the founder of an eponymous fragrance line and the beloved natural-lipstick brand Bite Beauty (which was sold to LVMH's Kendo in 2014 and has since shuttered), has built a career on pushing industry boundaries and continues to do so with Lixr. Each of the range's five products—including a tinted serum, a cream-to-powder complexion stick and a cushiony lip mask—combines makeup and skincare. The serum, for example, provides sheer, luminous coverage while also hydrating and nourishing the skin. Even more intriguing? The formulas are entirely waterless. Because both she and her son have faced skin struggles, Langmuir wanted to avoid using potentially sensitizing preservatives in the products. Through research, she discovered that the only way to do that was to skip water altogether. Instead, the formulas are concentrated with efficacious skin-boosting ingredients.

Lixr officially launched a few years ago but is now levelling up big time: Earlier this year, it underwent a brand refresh and entered Sephora, through which it's available online and in select stores. "[Sephora] wasn't the original goal—[although] they're incredible partners—but I took a couple of years to travel, source, grow and formulate, so it was an organic path," says Langmuir. "It's a faster lane and a different pace; I made this decision knowing that it would be more challenging than [sticking with] smaller retailers. But I would have regretted not doing it, and this [means that Lixr] has the opportunity to have more reach and exposure."

When it comes to her work, Langmuir still approaches every aspect of what she does with an "insatiable curiosity"—formulating, mixing colours and melting and transforming ingredients all make her feel like "a kid at Christmas." She's never thinking about novelty or buzzy trends, preferring to innovate with tried-and-true ingredients that already have decades of research behind them proving they work. And she's obsessed with the entire user experience. She wants the way the product's packaging feels in your hands, the aromatics that envelop you when you use it and the way it feels on your skin to be luxurious and sensorial—in a mindful, sustainable, less wasteful way.

For Langmuir, it's about "quality over quantity," she says. "Making fewer products, not focusing on newness or faster-paced launches and being very mindful about ingredients, where they come from, how they're made and what their impact is. Packaging is one of the biggest shifts [over my career]. Previously, we didn't [stop to think about] making, for example, a lipstick component with a magnetic container, weights and all of these fancy coverings to house a very small amount of product to make it feel special. I have evolved to be mindful of being small but mighty while still having that luxury experience."

Success, for the multi-hyphenate, means not only making excellent products but having people love them too. "Success is being relevant, creating things that matter to people and creating a place of work that people want to be at because we're pushing to achieve something worthwhile," she says. "My goal is that the products become a core part of [people's] routines either because they make them happy to apply them or because they make their skin better. I'm driven more by that than other things."

Vanessa Craft

Former ELLE Canada editor-in-chief Vanessa Craft is literally a globetrotter. With her finger firmly on the cultural pulse, the Toronto-born media executive left the magazine industry behind in 2020 and made the (very insightful and timely) leap to social media with a role at TikTok. She eventually became its global head of content partnerships and business development and moved to New York City.

"In five and a half years at TikTok, I built and led three organizations—two of them global," says Craft in an email. "A significant portion of that work happened on a plane or in the back of a taxi somewhere between London, Seoul and São Paulo, which tells you something about the scale but also about what the job actually required—[insight] on global trends and cultures. This platform completely changed how culture and communities form, and I was responsible for setting content strategy and building first-to-market partnerships with many of the world's largest media companies across fashion, entertainment, sports and lifestyle."

Craft worked on TikTok initiatives like Canada's Indigenous Accelerator Program and #BookTok's book-to-screen collaborations as well as global moments like TIFF, the Met Gala and the FIFA World Cup.

PHOTOGRAPHY, CHARLOTTE VANDERVEEN (S. LANGMUIR) & COURTESY OF VANESSA CRAFT

More recently, though, she left the behemoth social-media platform to launch a strategic-advisory practice built on everything she developed across media, culture and tech over the past two decades. Craft still values her time at TikTok. "[It gave me] a profound understanding of the way audiences grow," she says. "The way fandom can become a movement overnight. Operating across that many markets and cultural contexts also teaches you how creativity moves differently around the world—and how important it is to respect those nuances while still building strategies that resonate globally. [This next chapter] allows me to lean into that more intentionally, exploring projects and collaborations at the intersection of culture, storytelling and technology."

With a career path that has never been linear, Craft has always said yes to things that spark her curiosity. Reading and writing were her first forms of escape but also how she discovered the joy of building worlds and imagining characters, places and possibilities beyond what was in front of her. In her late teens, she moved to London, England, and won a writing contest for *The Sunday Times*, which led to an internship and eventually a path into journalism. She made her way back to Toronto, where she later joined ELLE Canada in 2011. "Leading ELLE was a master class in expanding a cultural institution's audience," she says. "Moving to TikTok was almost the opposite challenge. Instead of interpreting culture, we were helping it unfold in real time—working with creators, communities and companies like Disney, the NFL and Netflix to amplify moments as they happened."

For Craft, leadership is fundamentally about service. "It's about clearing the path, elevating the work and setting a vision that others will strive to follow without you needing to be in every room," she explains. "It also means being comfortable delivering difficult truths with clarity and empathy. People can handle hearing what stands in their way if it's delivered with respect." If there's a through line in her career, Craft hopes it's that she helped create space for people and ideas that might not have been heard otherwise. "If people walk away from something I've helped build feeling more connected, more inspired or more confident in their own voice, then I think that's work worth doing."

And how does such a talented force define success? "I recently heard Viola Davis say 'The definition of hell is: On your last day on earth, the person you became meets the person you could have become,'" she says. "I used to view success as being led by ambition and a one-way climb upward; now I see it as turning toward everything I ever wanted for myself." ▸

Noura Sakkijha

Noura Sakkijha

Jocelyn Formsma

It's likely that you or, at the very least, someone you know owns a piece of Mejuri jewellery. And co-founder and CEO Noura Sakkijha wouldn't have it any other way—although even she might not have been able to predict how the Canadian brand would evolve after its 2015 launch. "Mejuri today is more confident and more mature," she says. "We know what our values are, and they feel a lot stronger, more fortified and more sophisticated. The core didn't change, but there's a lot more 'I know who I am and therefore command more confidence in how I show up in the world.'"

Sakkijha is a third-generation jeweller—she grew up in Jordan, where she learned about the craft by observing family members work. Because of that, she always knew that she would change the fine-jewellery industry. "I loved the meaning of fine jewellery—how things are made, how you can pass them on—but when I looked around, it felt very traditional," she says, explaining that pieces tended to be marketed as lavish gifts for men to offer to women. As an adult, she moved to Canada to do an M.B.A., but when she started to earn her own disposable income, she realized that there still wasn't a jewellery brand that spoke to her—or to any woman who wanted to buy jewellery for herself. Seeing this gap in the market, Sakkijha co-founded Mejuri with her husband. "It's [based on] a very simple and intuitive premise that didn't exist in a modern way."

In the 11 years since Mejuri debuted, the Toronto-based brand has become wildly popular for its high-quality eco-conscious direct-to-consumer pieces designed with women in mind. Sleek and elegant yet unfussy, they're meant to be worn every day without looking try-hard. And they're everywhere and in every context—see cool-girl Instagram feeds, collabs with Ganni, Reneé Rapp and Jenna Lyons and even a recent campaign featuring rising Canadian tennis star Victoria Mboko. Mejuri has helped transform jewellery into something that is intrinsic to daily personal style, not saved for special occasions.

While the brand's success is the product of both hard work and history, Sakkijha is surprised by how much passion she still has for the business. "It's been years, and I wake up every day [with a] love [for it that] is just so deep," she says. "The past few years have been challenging for everybody, so to still feel like I see the future and have a massive vision—I'm so grateful for that."

Core to that vision are the things that drive her: her family legacy, sustainability, the strong belief that everyone deserves to be able to access amazing designs, the team that has built the brand with her and the customers who come up to her and share the stories behind their own Mejuri pieces. Sakkijha also says she has "loved the idea of achieving since [she] was little and the idea of making something big" and that there's still so much room to grow the brand. What she's most excited about currently is global expansion—there are now 59 Mejuri stores around the world, with four more to come this year.

But even as Mejuri continues to grow, it will always be distinctly Canadian, says Sakkijha. "We have a very specific POV on who we are as a brand, and key to that is diversity—something I associate very much with Canada," she says. "Canada is in the DNA of the business, and we're very proud of that."

Jocelyn Formsma

At one of her first jobs, Jocelyn Formsma placed a sticker on her wall that read "All I want to do is stand up and make a difference." The president and CEO of Indspire, the largest Indigenous-led charity in Canada, admits that "it sounds kind of cheesy." But if you were to speak with her for even just five minutes, you'd be able to tell that it's an earnest, deeply felt sentiment that she has embodied throughout her career.

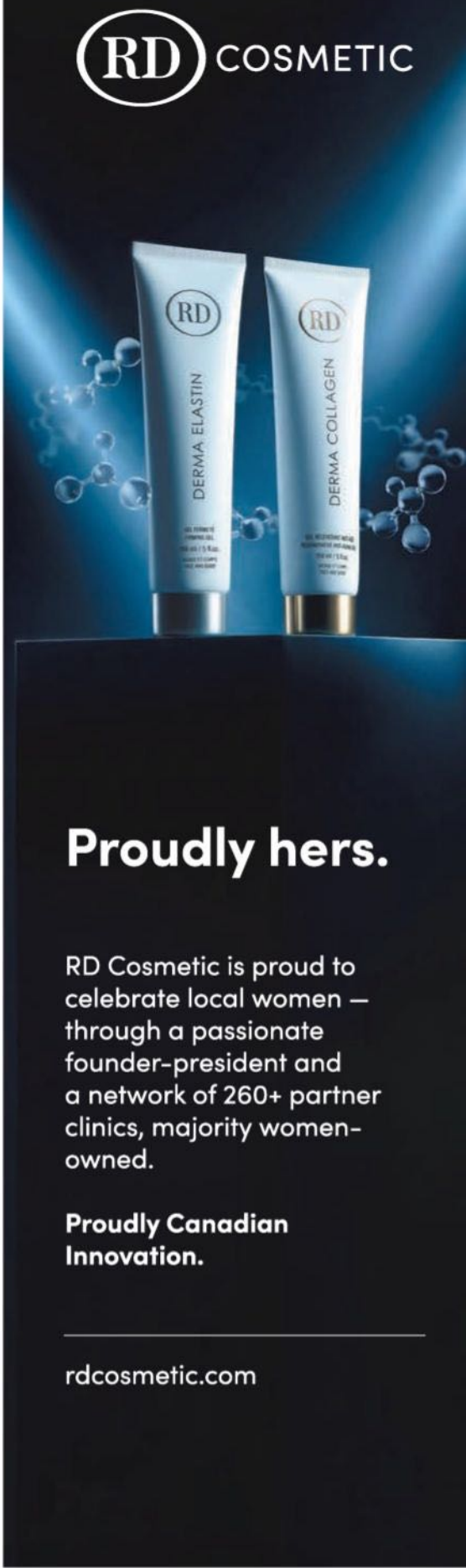
Formsma is a member of Moose Cree First Nation and grew up on Treaty 9 territory in Northern Ontario. Her late mother, who was a residential-school survivor, made sure that Formsma and her sisters always saw the best parts of their community. That laid the foundation for culturally grounded community work and a leadership style she's employed ever since. "When you grow up in a small, isolated rural community, your options for what's possible can be quite limited—not because of people telling you that you can't do [something] but because you don't have the imagination outside of it," says Formsma. "The way I grew up, nothing was off limits. Everything seemed like it was available to me—I just had to work really hard."

She became involved in friendship centres (community hubs providing culturally specific resources and services for Indigenous youth) during high school, pursued post-secondary studies as a mature student, attended law school and then practised as a lawyer for three years before being appointed CEO of the National Association of Friendship Centres. She has served as a board member for the National Indian Child Welfare Association and the Indigenous Bar Association and was the youngest-ever chairperson of the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN). Last year, she was appointed Indspire's president and CEO, which is a natural fit for her. "There's so much work that needs to be done, and this piece of work really focuses on hope, inspiration and possibility, and that's just such a beautiful mission," she says.

With 25 years of community and volunteer work on her resumé, Formsma is tasked with developing a strategic plan for the organization, which invests in education for Indigenous people. Since 2019, Indspire has provided over $150 million in scholarships and bursaries, supporting more than 40,000 students. Moving forward, she hopes to expand the program so that it's even more accessible. She also wants to shine a brighter light on the Indspire Awards, an annual ceremony recognizing Indigenous excellence in different areas. (Formsma herself won an Indspire Award in 2024 for her service work.)

While Indspire is registered as a non-profit, Formsma makes it clear that she doesn't view this work as charity. Instead, it is upholding rights, ensuring that people stay connected to their language and culture and equipping future leaders with the tools they need to succeed. When it comes down to it, Formsma just wants to make a difference, like that sticker reminded her all those years ago. "I strongly believe in capacity building—in making sure that if you're doing something somewhere, you're leaving something behind [that makes] the community better off," she says. "I lead with my principles, and I lead with my values. There's always going to be the risk that I'll make a mistake, but I push forward knowing that because sometimes the risk of not doing something is greater than actually doing something." ■

PHOTOGRAPHY, ERIN LEYDON (N. SAKKIJHA) AND TIFFANY THOMAS (J. FORMSMA)



In the Moment

Meet Canadian up-and-comer Birva Pandya.

By PATRICIA KAROUNOS

CANADIAN ACTOR Birva Pandya was in a car with her friends on the way to a boat party to celebrate someone's birthday. Laughter echoed, the music was loud, the Wi-Fi was spotty and her phone kept ringing. Finally, her agent managed to get through with the good news: Pandya had booked a role in *The Testament*s, the sequel series to *The Handmaid's Tale*, adapted from Margaret Atwood's 2019 novel of the same name. She was filled with excitement, of course, but her first thought was "What am I going to do about school?" She was in the middle of a semester at film school in California and had already taken a leave for another project. "Everyone was like, 'Just take a moment and be happy about this,' which I really needed to hear. I'm such a control freak—I always need to know what is happening in my life, but in this industry, you can't have that. I've had to learn to let things go and let things happen."

It all ended up working out for the Torontonian, who has also had roles in Netflix superhero dramedy *The Umbrella Academy* and Stephen King adaptation *The Institute*. *The Testaments* (which stars *One Battle After Another* breakout Chase Infiniti and is streaming now on Disney+) is set in dystopian Gilead about 15 years after the Elisabeth Moss-led *Handmaid's Tale* took place and follows a new generation who have only ever known a world in which women are married off into servitude. Pandya plays Miriam, a "wife in training" who is struggling with the pressures of marriage season. "This [can be] a show for people who are not familiar with Gilead—it's a whole new perspective, and we all really tried to make it its own thing," she says. "Tonally, it's really funny, which is something you wouldn't expect. When I read the scripts, I was giggling with these girls on the page because I saw my friends, my sister and myself in them."

A+ STUDENT "I'm a big reader, and *The Handmaid's Tale* is such a big part of Canadian [literary] history. I studied it in high school, and we watched the show too. English class was one of my favourites because I'm such an analytical person, so being in a classroom full of people taking on this one book with so many different perspectives was something I really loved. Once I got the role, I emailed my English teacher and was like: 'Guess what? You're never going to believe this.' He was so excited and proud; it felt like a full-circle moment."

CHARACTER STUDY "Miriam is someone who desperately wants to fit in. She is really guileless and believes in the system—until she finds that it doesn't [work]. When I was a teenager, all I wanted was to be heard and be the loudest in the room; Miriam is so quiet, it's almost like she doesn't want to be seen or heard because she thinks that's what will guarantee her safety. Throughout the season, you see her kind of fighting to be heard and then battling between who she wants to be—what she thinks her life could look like—and the belief that the only path is to follow the rules."

HAND IN HAND "With *The Testaments*, we're dealing with women who are in a transitional phase, and the way they navigate that is through each other—by having this aspect of community even when they are in competition. The concept of sisterhood and girlhood is very important to me. When things get really dark and I don't know what to do, the one thing I know is that I have my mom, my sister and my girlfriends. And that's a message that everyone on this show wanted to make clear—that at the end of the day, even if these girls don't have anything going for them, they have each other." ■

PHOTOGRAPHY: TIZIANO LUGLI; STYLING: ADENA ROHATINER & RIKKI MENLO; MAKEUP ARTIST: CARISSA FERRERI; HAIR STYLIST: BRADLEY LEAKE; ALL CLOTHING (MADALINA CAMINSCHI)

Welcome To The Most Magical Place On Earth

There is one place on Earth where the power of magic ignites the wonder that lets everyone be a kid—no matter who they are. It welcomes everyone, transporting us into stunning worlds, favourite stories and far-off galaxies. And conjures memories to last a lifetime. Here, magic finds its way into every moment, every encounter and every heart.

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agenda

YOUR CULTURE HITS THIS MAY/JUNE.

VISUAL ARTS

Art Party

Contemporary-art devotees from around the globe will descend on Venice, Italy, this spring for the 61st Venice Biennale, which opens on May 9. Often described as the Olympics of the art world, the festival unfolds across national pavilions, each spotlighting one or more selected artists. This year, Canada presents Montreal- and Berlin-based conceptual artist Abbas Akhavan, whose poetic, site-specific sculptural installations are poised to transform the Canadian pavilion's distinctive architecture. The Biennale's curated central exhibition, *In Minor Keys*, staged across the Giardini (gardens originally commissioned by Napoleon Bonaparte), the Arsenale and venues throughout the city, was organized by the late Cameroonian-Swiss curator Koyo Kouoh, who passed away suddenly last May. The show highlights artists whose practices actively engage with society and who focus on themes of humanity, resistance to spectacle and collective healing. Fuelled by a daily espresso and a sustaining mortadella panino, visitors can immerse themselves in the evolving conversations shaping today's truly global contemporary-art world. **labiennale.org**

TEXT, ROBB JAMIESON & PATRICIA KAROUNOS; PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF THE VENICE BIENNALE, 20TH CENTURY STUDIOS (*THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA 2*), APPLE TV (*MAXIMUM PLEASURE GUARANTEED*), BROKEN SOCIAL SCENE & MACMILLAN PUBLISHERS

FILM

FATE OF FASHION

A lot has happened in the fashion landscape (smartphones! Instagram! digital media!) since the 2006 release of the instant classic *The Devil Wears Prada*. Well, 20 years later (OMG), we're back in the sleek anxiety-inducing New York City offices of *Runway Magazine* in *The Devil Wears Prada 2*, hitting theatres on May 1. The all-star cast—including Meryl Streep, Anne Hathaway, Emily Blunt and Stanley Tucci—may all be back, but this time around, the power dynamics have shifted. As Miranda (Streep) tries to keep the magazine thriving in uncertain times, her former assistant Emily (Blunt) returns as the head of a luxury brand whose advertising dollars could make or break *Runway*. Will print media survive? We sure hope so. **20thcenturystudios.com**

TELEVISION

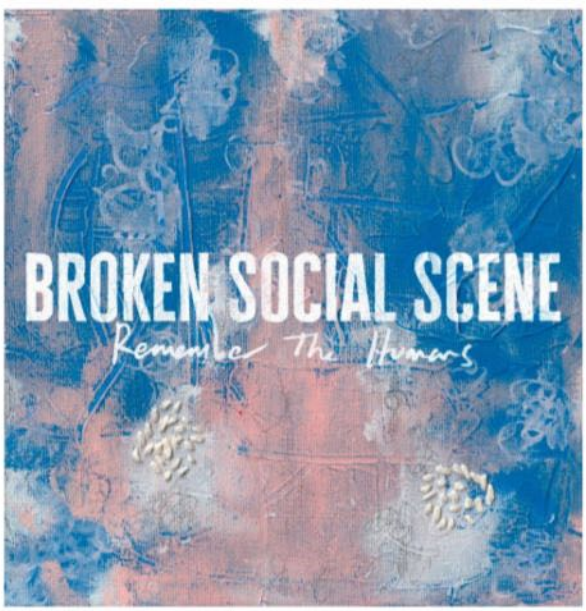
Soccer Mom

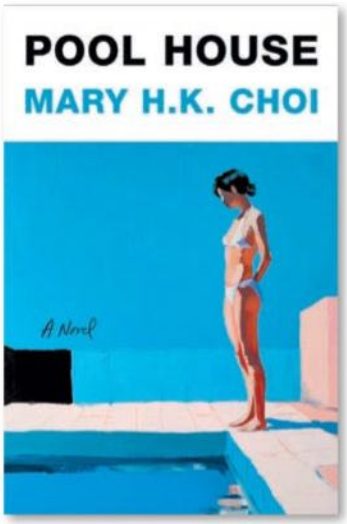
Youth soccer. Blackmail. Murder. Tatiana Maslany. You might be thinking of a certain clone character from the award-winning Canadian actor's hit series, *Orphan Black*, when you see those words combined (hi, Alison Hendrix), but Maslany is actually entering brand-new—but equally thrilling—territory. Her latest series, *Maximum Pleasure Guaranteed* (streaming on Apple TV as of May 20), follows recently divorced mom Paula, who is convinced that she has witnessed a crime. She embarks on her own dangerous investigation, getting swept up in a grand conspiracy at the same time as she's trying to rebuild her life. **tv.apple.com**

MUSIC

FRIENDS FIRST

Canadian indie rock band Broken Social Scene drops its sixth studio album—its first in nine years—*Remember the Humans*, on May 8. The highly influential Toronto collective is marching through its third decade with hard-earned maturity and a distilled message of what matters in life: friends and family. This all-star crew of musicians, including Kevin Drew, Leslie Feist, Brendan Canning (who's also part of the band By Divine Right), Amy Millan (Stars) and Emily Haines (Metric), have picked up where they left off with another life-affirming record that sounds both complex and loose at the same time. Famously a shambolic, fun live act, these lifelong friends are getting together this summer for the All the Feelings Tour along with co-headliners Metric and Stars. **brokensocialscene.ca**





LITERATURE

Swim Upstream

Bestselling young-adult author Mary H. K. Choi has made a name for herself with her sharply observed YA fiction (like 2018's *Emergency Contact*). Now, just over five years since she published her last book, Choi is back on the shelves with her debut adult novel, *Pool House* (out on June 9). Set in Hollywood, it chronicles the relationship between mother-daughter duo Moon and Stevie. Moon is a recovering addict and out-of-work actor who is grieving the death of her lover/former co-star and desperately wants to cling on to her daughter. Stevie, on the other hand, wants nothing more than to leave everything behind. When Moon's TV son—and Stevie's long-time crush—comes back into their lives, the trio adopt the image of a picture-perfect family even as years of tension and things left unsaid start to pull them apart. **us.macmillan.com** ■

Musician, director and *One Battle After Another* standout Teyana Taylor has proven that she can do it all. And she's doing it her own way.

By NERISHA PENROSE
Photographer CARIN BACKOFF
Stylist ALEX WHITE

The Revelation

Top, jeans, belt and shoes (Versace) and ring and bracelet (Bulgari)

Bra, trousers and suspenders (Vaquera) and bracelet and rings (Bulgari)

THE SCREEN OF MY IPHONE is the smallest one Teyana Taylor has been on this year. Not even five minutes into our FaceTime call, she's on the move. She's agile yet composed, her bare face set off by spiky lashes and a bandana over her pixie cut. In a flash, she's in a car headed to her next appointment: a read-through for *Get Lite*, her directorial debut, starring Storm Reid. Our conversation weaves in and out of interruptions—hotel elevators, spotty Wi-Fi, muffled car horns—but each time the screen freezes, she quickly reappears. It's a whirlwind pace that's fitting for an artist who told us back in 2008, on her debut single, "Google Me," exactly how big she planned to be.

Seventeen years later, there's no need to Google. You can see her in Paul Thomas Anderson's *One Battle After Another* (for which she won a Golden Globe and was nominated for an Academy Award, both for Best Supporting Actress; the movie took home six Oscars in total, including Best Picture and Best Director) alongside Leonardo DiCaprio, Sean Penn and Regina Hall; in Hulu legal drama *All's Fair* with Sarah Paulson, Kim Kardashian and Niecy Nash; and returning to music with her 22-track comeback album, *Escape Room*, after a five-year hiatus.

Taylor was poised for the spotlight early, introducing herself to the world in a voluminous tulle dress in MTV's *My Super Sweet 16* with a skateboard-meets-dollhouse party. She was already signed to Pharrell Williams' Star Trak Entertainment, and when Beyoncé wanted to learn the quintessential Harlem "Chicken Noodle Soup" dance, she called upon a then 15-year-old Taylor, who would go on to help choreograph the singer's 2006 "Ring the Alarm" music video. "To see her even want to work with this 15-year-old girl from Harlem and be so invested in learning something specific, I came through," says Taylor. Instead of inflating the young artist's ego, the moment instilled humility. "To see her respect what I was there to do [taught] me very early on to never feel like I'm above learning. Never get in the space where you feel like you've done it all."

Two anchors keep her grounded: motherhood (she has two daughters: 10-year-old Junie and five-year-old Rue Rose) and Harlem. She returned to the neighbourhood for 2023's *A Thousand and One* as Inez, a single mother and convicted felon who kidnaps her son from foster care. The layered portrayal won her a Critics Choice Award. Her character in *One Battle After Another*, Perfidia Beverly Hills, is a resistance activist whose choices invite both critique and compassion.

"I think what directors see is that I can handle every single layer of motherhood," says Taylor. "I'm taking myself out of my comfort zone [to play] more complex characters. Perfidia is so human, so raw and so flawed." The hardest scene was the one most crucial to Perfidia's arc: leaving her daughter, Willa (Chase Infiniti). Abandoning a child was difficult for her to contemplate. "It took a lot of takes [for me] to do it with a straight face and no tears." Perfidia, she adds, "showed [her] what it feels like to not feel heard and seen and how to stand up for yourself no matter who's in the way. She has been put in positions where she has been forced to show up for herself and only herself."

It was a timely lesson that fuelled Taylor's musical resurrection. *Escape Room*, released last August, opens with "Fire Girl," in which she spits "Thinking I'm playing, I'm not / Think that I'm dangerous, I am"—a fitting anthem for both Perfidia and herself. The album was a spiritual release, but it was also a declaration of independence. In 2020, frustrated by her label's lack of support for her third effort, *The Album*, she took to Instagram Live to announce she'd be retiring from music to pursue other creative avenues. By the time she returned with *Escape Room*, she says, "[she] had already proven that [she does] everything." In the accompanying visuals, Taylor waltzes down the street in a red bikini, coat and hat, embodying the rose that's long symbolized her art. It makes sense that the flower is her emblem—she embodies all its contradictions: beauty and resilience, unpredictability and edge. "Yes, that rose that has been trampled but also picked up and properly watered and, in so many ways, found her light again," says Taylor. "I'm in a space where there are no thorns, just the rose." ▸

Bra (Kiki de Montparnasse), jeans (Silver Jeans), bracelet (Bulgari) and mules (Christian Louboutin)

"Perfidia showed me what it feels like to not feel heard and seen and how to stand up for yourself no matter who's in the way. She has been put in positions where she has been forced to show up for herself and only herself."

ON ENTERING A NEW ERA "I have a lot of gratitude for how I am seeing all of my prayers be answered, all of the tears wiped. It was tough because I said I retired and I didn't know what was next. I was afraid, but I wasn't afraid to take the leap. I've always had a strong relationship with God and felt him saying 'Do you trust me? You ready to let me take that teddy bear from you so I can give you something bigger and better?'"

ON WHAT PERFIDIA TAUGHT HER "She's unapologetically herself, and that's the part of her that inspires me, because I feel as a Black woman, when we are at that level of confidence, we're told that we're too loud. When we say nothing at all, we're told that we need to stand up. We stay, we're weak. We go, we're the problem. I can appreciate Perfidia standing on what she believes in."

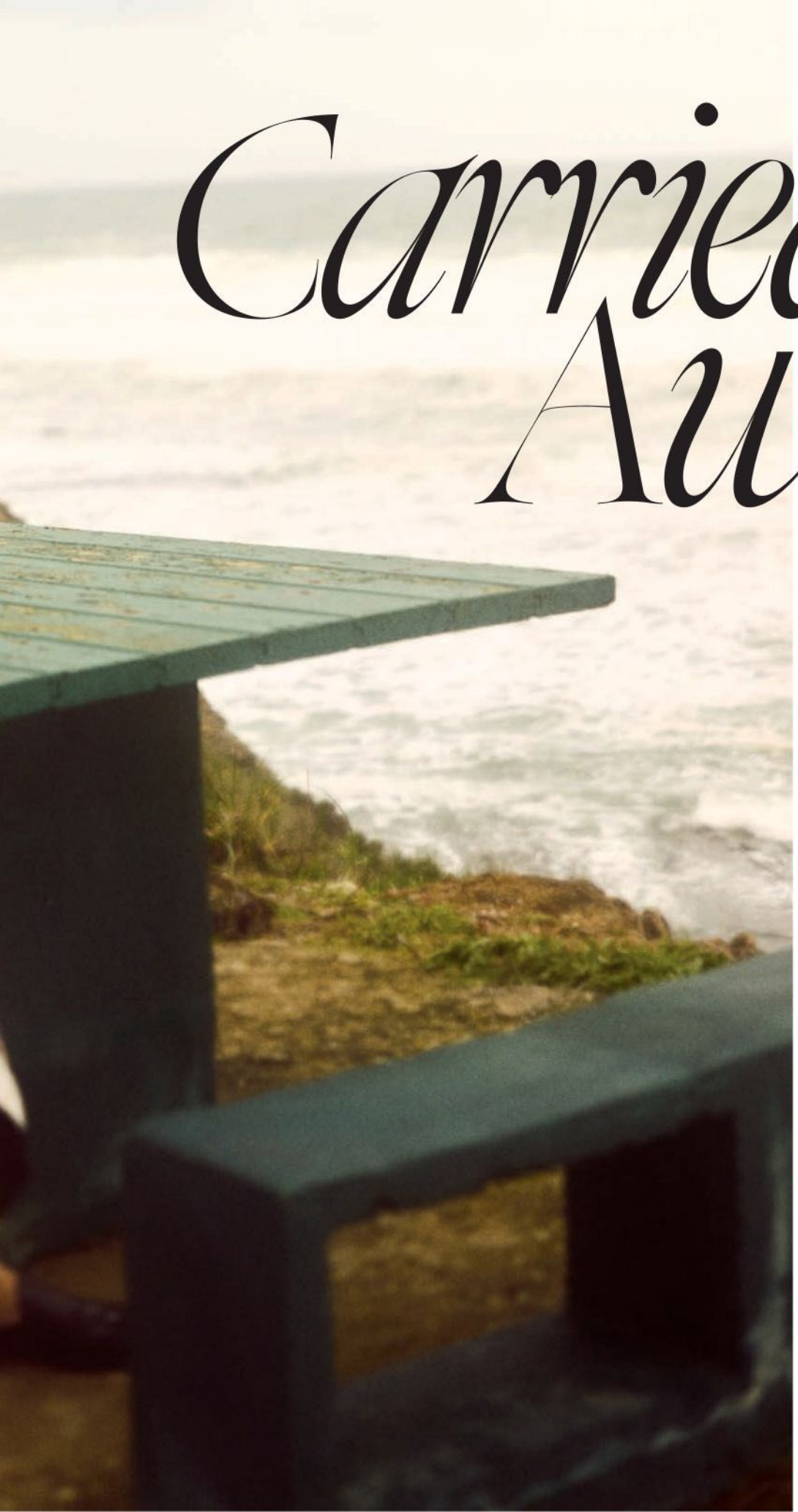
ON BEING A WOMAN IN HOLLYWOOD "I do see change happening. I do see more light being shed on women, and I think it's because we're busting through the doors, unapologetically us. We're not giving anybody a choice: You will see us, and you will hear us. And if you don't, we're going to make you. Seeing women step into our glory and standing 10 toes down in some red bottoms [Louboutins] has been amazing. We're really stomping through, and that's what I love about being a woman in Hollywood. We're going to make you hear us."

ON THE POWER OF SISTERHOOD IN THE INDUSTRY "To be able to call on my village and [have them] all show up in a heartbeat feels good. Taraji P. Henson, Sarah Paulson, Niecy Nash, Issa Rae, Kerry Washington, Regina Hall—they showed up for me at a time when I needed them. Their support felt like a comforting hug that whispered: 'Mm-hmm, it's okay. We got you.' Seeing such beautiful women who have overcome so much and kept their crowns lifted through it all show up for me? It really, really meant a lot." ■

Shirt and skirt (Willy Chavarria), sunglasses (Saint Laurent), bracelet (Bulgari) and mules (Christian Louboutin)

Hairstylist, Lateafa Alvaranga; makeup artist, Yeika Glow; manicurist, Sarah Chue (Star Touch Agency); set designer, Lauren Machen (Lalaland Artists); producer, Crawford & Co Productions

Dress (Loewe) and
shoes (Pierre Hardy)



Carried Away

SLIDE INTO VACATION MODE WITH SLOUCHY SEPARATES, FLUID FABRICS AND MANY A JAUNTY ACCESSORY.

PHOTOGRAPHER
PETER GEHRKE

STYLIST & FASHION DIRECTOR
ALEXANDRA BERNARD

Bodysuit, bikini top, bracelets and boots (Isabel Marant) and headband and belt (Sirivannavari)

Jacket (Calvin Klein), bra and panties (Fendi), bracelet and necklace (Samuel François) and sunglasses (Valentino)

Shirt and shorts (Dolce & Gabbana), bra (Sirivannavari) and headband (Souleiado)

Dress and sandals (Balenciaga)

Sweater and skirt (Chloé), glasses (Valentino), ring (Ginette NY) and watch (Dior Horlogerie)

Hat (Maison Michel), suit and shoes (Chanel), bodysuit (Eres) and rings (Ginette NY and Pascale Monvoisin)

Top, skirt and visor (Hermès), sunglasses (ELLE), shoes (Pierre Hardy), bracelet (Dinh Van), watch (Dior Horlogerie) and ring (Ginette NY)

Dress (Valentino), rings (Monsieur and Pascale Monvoisin) and mules (Repetto)

Hat (Sirivannavari), glasses (Valentino), necklace (Samuel François), bracelet (Isabel Marant), swimsuit (Eres), trench coat (Michael Kors), sandals (Balenciaga) and bag (Longchamp)

Jacket, shirt and shorts (Prada)

Model, Esin Bicak (Oui Management); hairstylist and makeup artist, Julia Kraemer; photographer's assistant, Jacopo Peloso; stylist's assistant, Mathilde Lamère; producer, Yannick Selva

*Instrumental test after application of Serum on dryness, dullness, lack of volume, thickness & frizz.

The MOMMY GLOW-UP

Can a few units of Botox or a blowout make you a better mother? Or at least a happier, more confident one? "Absolutely!" swear many. Because while you might expect motherhood to take your sleep and your free time, you may not expect it to take the part of you that once felt sexy and beautiful. Tired of looking tired, many moms are on a mission to get their mojo back.

By KATHERINE LALANCETTE

PHOTOGRAPHY, LISE-ANNE MARSAL/TRUNK ARCHIVE

"Nobody talks about how you don't feel pretty anymore after becoming a mom. Not even when you try. Not even when you do your hair and makeup." These words appeared over a video that content creator Anh Ho posted to Instagram last fall. In it, she is attempting to curl her hair as her two kids cling to her legs. Soft music plays over the clip, while her youngest can be heard crying in the background.

The Reel clearly resonated, racking up over two million views and more than 34K shares, presumably landing in many mommy group chats. "Haven't taken a selfie since my son was born (he's 2)...because why would I when I look like a wreck 110% of the time?" commented one follower. "I relate to this so much," wrote another.

Annabelle, 36, can also relate. In the months following the birth of her first baby five years ago, the Montreal HR specialist barely recognized herself. "It was as though a truck had run over my face," she says, recalling how she was taken aback by the sight of her own reflection. "I could accept that my body had changed, because, obviously, it had grown a human. But I never thought my face would change so much. I felt like I had aged really fast."

Perhaps it wasn't just a feeling. Several studies have in fact shown that having children can speed up the clock. For instance, researchers at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va., found that motherhood may accelerate cellular aging even more than smoking. Data collected by a Columbia University team suggested that moms' biological age increases by 3 percent more every year compared to women who've never given birth. (Interestingly, the dads in the sample didn't appear to have been affected.)

Why this happens isn't exactly clear. Is the aging caused by the physiological demands of pregnancy (according to a Duke University study, carrying a baby is one of the most extreme endurance feats on earth, equivalent to running a marathon every day for nine months) or perhaps the hormonal roller coaster that accompanies it? Or, rather, are lifestyle changes like sleep deprivation and heightened stress to blame?

"It's a perfect storm," says Dr. Beatrice Copps, a dermatologist with a focus on aesthetic medicine. "There are just so many factors all at once."

In her sleek all-white office at Dermapure's Westmount location in Montreal, Copps often meets mothers in

"I made an agreement with my husband: If I schedule an appointment, whether it's for physio or cosmetic things, I've paid the price with my body and now you're going to watch the kids while I do these things. And I'm not going to feel an ounce of guilt."

search of a pick-me-up. "They want a glow. They can't quite put their finger on it, but they just feel like they're more tired-looking." A JetPeel, which exfoliates skin and boosts radiance with no downtime, is one of her top picks for some immediate gratification. For more targeted concerns like melasma (also charmingly known as "the mask of pregnancy"), wrinkles or sagging, she'll usually recommend solutions like lasers (Clear + Brilliant Perméa is a go-to for melasma) or injectables (like neuromodulators, fillers or biostimulators). "Sometimes it's like we're treating the skin but we're also kind of treating the soul."

Her colleague, clinic director Jessica Bouchard, concurs, adding that consultations with moms of young children often extend beyond simply explaining the treatments on offer. "I'll have a woman in front of me saying 'Do something for me, tell me, guide me,'" she says. "Even yesterday, [a patient] came in, and she had a two-month-old. It was her first time out of the house since having the baby, and she was bawling, like 'Who am I? Just give me something.'"

After three months of sleepless nights and breastfeeding struggles (latching issues, blisters, recurrent mastitis), Annabelle decided to switch to formula. One of the first things she did after stowing away her pump was book an appointment at a medi-spa. "I wanted to feel a bit more like who I was before I had a baby," she says. "I didn't want to look like a tired mom anymore; [I wanted to look] like the me who was multi-faceted."

She went with her mother and sister and brought along her baby. It was her first time having any sort of aesthetic procedure. After chatting with the doctor, she settled on some Botox to iron out the lines between her brows and some filler to soften the shadowing beneath her eyes.

"It made me feel really good," she says. She revelled in her refreshed appearance, but it was more than that. In a way, she felt like she'd taken back ownership of her body. "I really loved being pregnant and sharing my body with my baby and feeling her move inside me. I understood the constant need to be poked and prodded during checkups. But after the delivery, I was so over it. I didn't want to be touched anymore, I didn't enjoy breastfeeding or pumping. I just felt like my body wasn't mine."

Pregnancy and breastfeeding, as anyone who has gone through them can attest, involve a lot of sacrifice. Your body is essentially at the service of your baby, and that comes with long lists of things you can't eat or drink or do (including many cosmetic treatments). It might sound silly, says Annabelle, but those jabs from her injector made her feel like she had agency again.

After Copps delivered her second baby, she was eager to get back to her regular skin routine. She even packed her prescription retinoid in her hospital bag. "I couldn't wait to restart it," she says with a laugh. (The use of topical vitamin A derivatives like retinoids and retinol isn't recommended during pregnancy due to potential developmental harm.) The derm was also excited to get procedures again. "I made an agreement with my husband: If I schedule an appointment, whether it's for physio or cosmetic things, I've paid the price with my body and now you're going to watch the kids while I do these things. And I'm not going to feel an ounce of guilt."

Ah, yes, the proverbial mom guilt. That pesky voice inside your head that takes pleasure in pointing out the myriad ways you are perpetually falling short. Either it's telling you your boss and colleagues are mad at you for leaving early for pickup, or it's chastising you for not being there enough for your children. And God forbid you actually take time away from your kids and job and partner to go do something as selfish as getting a haircut or facial.

"I get a visceral reaction when I hear [mothers] label themselves as 'selfish,' because you're still a human—you still have value separate from this baby," says Samantha Waxman, a registered clinical and health psychologist. Waxman is the co-founder of The Well Parents Centre in Toronto, a clinic dedicated to supporting individuals and families through the challenges of pregnancy, postpartum and parenting. Its name nods to the well-baby visits that infants get and that parents could often desperately use as well.

"Taking time to exercise, get your nails done, get your hair done—that's not selfish," she insists. "You're entitled to take time to do things for yourself, regardless of the baby. But in addition, it helps you be a more sustained, mentally healthy, physically healthy version of yourself for that baby."

In a Substack newsletter titled "Let's Get HOT," stylist Allison Bornstein (who coined the viral "wrong shoe theory") echoed this sentiment, sharing her quest to feel good about herself again after giving birth to her son, Jack. "I know that Jack doesn't need a hot mom, he needs a present and happy mom," she wrote. "But I am happiest when I feel pretty, and why can't Jack have a mom who is secure, loving and also super hot?"

If highlights or skin lasers help you feel more content and self-assured, Waxman is all for it. "But it can't be the only strategy," she cautions. "We also want to look for [solutions] that are within ourselves—diversify the tool kit, you know?" ▸

"Taking time to exercise, get your nails done, get your hair done—that's not selfish. You're entitled to take time to do things for yourself, regardless of the baby. But in addition, it helps you be a more sustained, mentally healthy, physically healthy version of yourself for that baby."

Her biggest piece of advice? "Ask yourself who is the woman you want to be right now, not who you were before your kids, because that person doesn't exist anymore." There can be power in acknowledging the sadness that might arise from that. "But we can grieve the loss of who we used to be while also having real joy and excitement about discovering this new version of ourselves."

The new version of Annabelle, for one, makes it a point to look after herself inside and out. As she's now a mom of two girls, it's something she's keen to model. Her daughters know she likes to go for runs and read books and fuel her body with nourishing foods. They see how she cares about her work and makes time for her friends while still being present at home. (She recalls how when she was growing up, her own mother, an entrepreneur and mom of three, would soak in the tub every night, slathering on a mud mask and smoking her single daily cigarette—it was the '90s.) "I want to show my girls that it's important to feel good in your body, your heart and your mind," she says.

But what about things like injectables? Do those still count as self-care? It's a question she grappled with recently when her five-year-old came down with a cold and had to stay home from school. Annabelle happened to have a lunchtime Botox appointment that day, so rather than cancelling, she opted to take her daughter with her. "I wouldn't want her to internalize that mommy doesn't want to get older. I also would never do anything that would drastically change my face because I want to look like my girls. I want them to see themselves in me." So she explained to the kindergartner that this is simply something mommy does to pamper herself and feel good. "If I'm being honest, when I was younger, I wanted to be perceived as beautiful—not only by men but socially too. It made me feel valuable. But now I really don't care. This is for me and only me."

As Copps likes to say, "it's important to do things that pour into your cup. You don't get a medal for how much you sacrifice." She would also like to dispel the popular notion that moms can have it all at once or achieve that elusive "work-life balance."

"Let's be honest—there's no such thing, right?" What it comes down to, in her opinion, is choosing which ball to drop at a given moment. Often, it can feel like the easiest one to drop is you. You figure you won't disappoint anyone if you skip your workout or hair-colour touch-up or whatever else it might be. "But it's not true," she says. "When you disappoint yourself, it reflects on everything else." ■

PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRIS CRAYMER/TRUNK ARCHIVE

Smoke Signals

Trays of Belmonts at weddings. TikToks about smokes that "don't count." Doubled-up cigs dangling off Addison Rae's lips in one of her music videos. It's official: Pop culture is smoking again.

By JENNIFER BERRY

THERE'S A SCENE in the 2025 movie *Materialists* in which Manhattan matchmaker Lucy (Dakota Johnson), sheathed in a cerulean-blue Proenza Schouler column gown, plucks a cigarette from a slim silver case and lights up outside a swanky wedding. The cigarette acts only as an accessory, never mentioned throughout the scene, and despite knowing the nasty habit would undoubtedly leave Johnson with bad breath, foul-smelling hair and a host of potential health problems, I can't help but think "She looks hella chic."

Jared Oviatt, the Calgary-based creator of the Instagram account @cigfluencers, which documents famous people smoking, agrees. "My first reaction watching *Materialists* was 'I don't think anyone has ever looked as good as Dakota Johnson looks in this movie,'" the 26-year-old social-media manager tells me. Oviatt started the account in 2021, not long after Dua Lipa included a pic of herself smoking in one of her many photo dumps, and he first went viral with an Instagram story of *I Love LA*'s Rachel Sennott taking a drag.

While it could be argued that Johnson looks sexy smoking in the Celine Song film for reasons other than the cig itself (movie-star genes, French-girl bangs), there's no denying that she's on-trend. Of late, cigarettes have been all over pop culture and fashion, from TV shows like *And Just Like That...* and *The Bear* to the lyrics of Addison Rae and Lorde. Beyoncé lit up onstage during her Cowboy Carter tour. *Heated Rivalry* heartthrob Hudson Williams did it outside the Armani men's show in Milan (defying the city's public-smoking ban in a dapper double-breasted suit). Gracie Abrams and Paul Mescal were snapped looking loved up while smoking together (it was all very Brad and Gwyneth or Johnny and Kate in the '90s), and buzzy label Khaite doled out branded packs of smokes and lighters at a fashion-week party last fall. And who could forget Charli XCX's birthday bouquet of lilies and Parliaments from singer Rosalía in 2024? (Even Diet Coke is now referred to as a "fridge cig," according to TikTok.)

It wasn't long ago that cigarettes were a dirty little secret in most circles, hidden behind mouthwash, mints and clandestine runs to the corner store. So why are they suddenly being reframed as a fashionable accoutrement or a so-trashy-it's-cool prop?

Many attribute the phenomenon to a pushback against modern self-improvement imperatives. (Cue the colossal wellness industry, with its myriad supplements and health-tracking devices, valued at US$6.8 trillion last year.) It's a bit like how digital fatigue has led many young people to embrace throwback devices like corded headphones, flip phones and digital cameras as a symbol of their opting out of the tech rat race. Perhaps we've reached a point of wellness fatigue and everyone's a bit tired of having to be good all the time.

After falling out of favour during the green-juicing, detox-obsessed 2010s, smoking is once again being regarded as rebellious, with cigarettes serving as something of a branding tool. One area where this couldn't be more evident is weddings. Take the aforementioned Charli XCX, who went viral (once more) over the summer when photos of her—dressed in a veil and a white Vivienne Westwood mini—smoking alongside her newly minted husband hit the internet. It was Oviatt's top-performing post ever. "That seemed like a moment when everyone was like, 'Holy shit!'"

Where there might once have been his and hers signature cocktails and midnight Big Macs there are bowls of Belmonts and personalized matchbooks. "We started noticing the trend in the past two to three years, but it really picked up momentum more recently," says Alexa Tepperman, co-founder of luxury-event planning and design firm Duet Events, of cigarettes at weddings. When putting together mood boards, "clients often reference old Slim Aarons-style photographs, vintage European dinner parties or fashion campaigns where cigarettes are used almost as a styling prop," she says. ▸

PHOTOGRAPHY. LAUNCHMETRICS SPOTLIGHT (MAIN IMAGE), GETTY IMAGES (CELEBRITIES) & MOVIESTILLSDB (*MATERIALISTS*)

It was that kind of old-school glamour that inspired Cassy Airapetian, 31, to stock her summer 2025 Toronto wedding with cigarettes. "I wanted it to be like we'd time-travelled to Vegas in the '70s," says the newlywed. "I wanted to pay homage to a time when martini trays and people smoking in sequins went hand in hand." OG It girl Chloë Sevigny's 2022 nuptials (where an assortment of Marlboro Lights and American Spirits filled elegant silver cups) were a big inspiration. "She's so cool," says Airapetian.

"Cool" is a word that came up again and again in my reporting—not in the sense that smoking itself is inherently cool but, rather, that not caring about an occasional smoke *is*. "I think it signals 'We're a cool couple. We can have cigs at our wedding. We don't care,'" says Oviatt. "One of the first people to do it was one of the Olsen twins, after all." (It's true: Mary-Kate's 2015 wedding decor was infamously said to consist mostly of cigarettes. Who needs flowers, right?)

Naomi Campbell, 1996

Mary-Kate Olsen, 2007

Dua Lipa, 2026

Brad Pitt and Gwyneth Paltrow, 1996

Addison Rae, 2026

Charli XCX and husband George Daniel, 2025

Airapetian used to be a heavy smoker but now puffs more casually, like many of her friends who consider themselves social smokers. "I think it's the rejection of modern society and bringing back what people used to do, like a shot and a cig," she says of the habit. "Things continuously recycle, and with the rise of analog culture, it only makes sense that people are like: 'I'm sick of the vape. Let's bring back cigarettes.'"

Which leads us to the vaping of it all. Could the rise of the cheeky cig be a response to the now known dangers of vaping? "To me, vaping and Zyns [nicotine pouches] are a means to an end—a way to get as much nicotine into your body as possible as efficiently as possible that you can do anywhere, anytime," says Oviatt. Smoking, on the other hand, he sees as an intentional act "instead of a delivery device."

Duet co-founder Aja Zylberberg says couples view cigarettes at weddings as a way to set a fun party tone rather than as a means to outrightly promote addiction. "It is rarely about encouraging smoking and more about creating a mood or moment."

But not everyone is down for cigarettes' 2026 laissez-faire rebrand. "It's alarming," says Carolyn Baglole, an associate professor in the department of medicine at McGill University who researches respiratory illnesses. Whether you're addicted to nicotine or not, the best thing to do, in her opinion, is abstain completely from smoking and vaping. "There's no safe level of smoking. You're inhaling thousands of chemicals into your lungs. Every puff you take is chemical after chemical after chemical. And many of them are known carcinogens."

Baglole notes that while smoking is at an all-time low in Canada, tobacco is still the leading cause of preventable death worldwide. "Eight million deaths per year," she emphasizes. "Seeing this as a trend, people are playing with fire. Tobacco contains nicotine, and nicotine is an addictive substance. So what may start out as casual today could lead to addiction and higher usage later on."

It might be tougher to convince folks to consider long-term effects when so many feel disillusioned about the future. Recent data shows a global decline in hope and an increase in apathy, particularly among younger generations. According to the Ipsos 2025 Populism Report, 56 percent of people surveyed across 31 countries believe that their society is "broken."

"Maybe people are like, 'The economy's in shambles, [so] I might as well have a cigarette about it,'" says Airapetian. Or as Rae sings: "Guess I gotta accept the pain. Need a cigarette to make me feel better." But Baglole's advice is firm: Find another way to unwind or dull that existential angst. "Not every smoker will develop lung cancer—we know that. But why take the risk now when you're young? Keep your lungs healthy. You're no cooler for doing it." Might be time to consider cracking a fridge cig instead... ■

PHOTOGRAPHY, GETTY IMAGES (M.-K. OLSEN, N. CAMPBELL & B. PITT AND G. PALTROW) & INSTAGRAM (D. LIPA, A. RAE & CHARLI XCX AND G. DANIEL)

PHOTOGRAPHY: LAUNCHMETRICS SPOTLIGHT

CURVES AHEAD

They're often described as "unruly," "temperamental" or "unpredictable." But the truth is curls follow a logic all their own. From understanding their unique attributes to learning how to style them like a pro, here is everything you need to know to master your texture without taming it.

By JOANIE PIETRACUPA

IT IS ESTIMATED that a third of the world's population has curly hair. And according to a forecast published by Scientific American Custom Media in collaboration with the L'Oréal Group, that number will reach 40 percent by 2030 due to a rise in multiracial ethnicities and demographic growth in regions where curls are common. At the same time, the international market for products dedicated to textured hair is expected to register an average annual increase of around 5.4 percent over the next few years, according to MetaStat Insight. It's official: Curls are no longer a niche segment; they are now redefining research, formulations and hair education.

TEXTURE 101

You may be familiar with the classic hair-type chart, which was popularized in the 1990s and depicts strands of hair identified by numbers from 1 to 4 and letters from A to C. "The number indicates the family—[straight is 1,] wavy is 2, curly is 3 and coily is 4—and the letter specifies the tightness," explains Suzette Boozer, celebrity hairstylist and curly-hair expert for Dippity-Do. For example, 2A corresponds to a loose wave, while 4C applies to a very tight texture with a high shrinkage rate (more on what that means later).

The chart provides a useful visual reference, not a scientific diagnosis. "Curl shape is only one part of the equation," notes Rashad Anthony, curl expert and Redken ambassador. Porosity, density, hair diameter and scalp health all matter just as much. Vernon François, global ambassador for Olaplex, prefers to talk about a "hair pattern" instead of a "type" to remind us that texture exists on a wide spectrum.

Another common misconception is that you belong to a single category. "It's very common to have multiple curl patterns on the same head," says Denise Hosni, a DevaCurl stylist and educator specializing in textured hair. ▸

For instance, you might have tighter curls at the nape of your neck and looser ones at the crown. As François says, "the goal shouldn't be uniformity but harmony."

A DISTINCTIVE ARCHITECTURE

Why are curly locks often drier and more fragile than their straighter counterparts? It all starts at the root. "Curly hair grows from an asymmetrical follicle," explains Cassie Siskovic, academy director for Moroccanoil in New York City. Contrary to smooth strands, which are born from a round follicle, curly hair originates from an oval or inclined follicle, yielding a rippling or spiralling hair fibre. Clavia Moore, a stylist and curl expert for L'Oréal Professionnel, points out that this asymmetry also influences the internal distribution of proteins within the fibre. "The shape of the follicle determines not only the shape of the curl but also how the hair behaves," she says.

Firstly, it can impact the distribution of sebum because "natural oils have a harder time travelling down a spiralled hair shaft," explains Anthony. As a result, lengths and ends tend to be more prone to dryness. Secondly, each curve creates an area of structural tension—François calls this a "stress point"—meaning that wherever the hair bends, it's weaker.

William Gauthier, training expert for Laboratoires Pierre Fabre, adds that cuticles also tend to be more open in these spots, making the hair more porous. Porosity refers to hair's ability to absorb and retain water; water penetrates more porous hair easily, but it evaporates from it just as quickly. "Very porous hair benefits from richer creams and products that seal in moisture, especially nourishing oils," says Nikita Mehta, co-founder of Fable & Mane.

UNDERSTANDING SHRINKAGE

"Shrinkage" in this context refers to curls' ability to contract as they dry. For instance, type 4 spirals can shrink by up to 70 percent, meaning that if a strand is 10 centimetres when it's stretched out, it can measure only three centimetres once it returns to its natural form. This feature of curly hair actually plays a protective role: The hair fibre twists onto itself, thus leaving ends less exposed and less vulnerable to breakage. As Anthony reminds us, "healthy curls shrink. It's a sign of vitality, not a flaw."

THE IDEAL REGIMEN

When it comes to washing curly hair, you want a product that's gentle yet effective. "A healthy scalp is the foundation of a healthy hair fibre," says Leigh Casbourne, trainer and product specialist at Lush Cosmetics North America. Think of a vegetable garden, she says: If the soil's not rich in nutrients, you're less likely to get a great harvest.

If you've spent some time on TikTok, you might have come across the viral Curly Girl Method, which recommends steering clear of heavy-duty shampoos and prioritizing hydration and natural drying. While this approach has allowed many to rediscover their natural texture, some tweaks may be needed to adapt it to your particular mane. "It's not a universal formula," cautions Siskovic. Furthermore, many pros do advise deep-cleaning hair with a clarifying shampoo from time to time to remove buildup from styling products, mineral residue from hard water and natural sebum.

PHOTOGRAPHY, LAUNCHMETRICS SPOTLIGHT

After washing comes conditioning and then detangling. Always handle your strands with care, especially when they're wet and therefore more fragile, because being too rough can cause damage as well as lift the cuticle and induce frizz. Also keep in mind that water is curly hair's best friend and the key to scoring beautiful definition. "Think of it as your first styling aid," says Anthony. You want to make sure your strands are not just damp but completely saturated before applying anything to them. This will encourage the natural formation of your curls.

The next step involves a strategic layering of products. Many experts, including Oribe ambassador Stacey Ciceron, swear by a "leave-in, oil, gel" or "leave-in, oil, cream" routine (known by the acronyms LOG and LOC), which works to hydrate the hair and then keep that moisture in.

Lastly? To air-dry or to diffuse: That is the question. "If you are prone to frizz, reach for a diffuser; it helps set the shape and limit the impact of ambient humidity on definition," advises Ciceron.

THE FRIZZ FACTOR

Contrary to popular belief, frizz isn't always a sign of damage. François distinguishes between structural frizz, which is caused by a lack of hydration, and expressive frizz, which is that natural fuzzy quality that gives curls character. The idea isn't to eradicate frizz entirely but, rather, to refine it.

Between washes, a simple misting of water mixed with a leave-in conditioner can work wonders for limp curls, bringing back their definition. This trick can come in handy considering that "65 percent of Black people avoid physical activity, including water sports, in order to maintain their hairstyle," reveals Kimberlee Blakley, director of product development at MAV Beauty Brands and a certified trichologist.

A CUT ABOVE

Cutting curly hair requires careful consideration of shrinkage levels and the distribution of textures throughout the hair. Some stylists favour dry cutting to get a better feel for how the hair behaves, while others prefer to work on wet strands, adjusting their technique according to a person's curl pattern. All agree, though, that it's essential to find a pro who is well versed in working on textured hair and to schedule an in-depth consultation about your texture, styling preferences and lifestyle habits before making any snips. In other words, turn to someone you can trust to help you rock your texture in its full fabulous glory. ■

ADD TO CART

WASH
ALCŌVE CURL SHAMPOO
($18, ALCOVEHAIR.COM)

HYDRATE
L'ORÉAL PROFESSIONNEL CURL EXPRESSION PROFESSIONAL CREAM
($45, MATANDMAX.COM)

DEFINE
KĒRASTASE CURL MANIFESTO GELÉE CURL CONTOUR
($67, KERASTASE.CA)

SEAL
ORIBE ETERNAL CURLS POLISH & PROTECT OIL
($70, ORIBE.COM)

Skin WHISPERER

Sarah Akram is one of Hollywood's best-kept secrets. Here, the master aesthetician (and recently appointed Dior skincare expert and ambassador) reveals her tricks for a glow that just won't quit.

By JOANNA FOX

"LET ME START by saying I didn't find skincare—skincare found me," says Sarah Akram. If her name doesn't ring a bell, it's because Akram belongs firmly to the "if you know, you know" category of beauty professionals. The type of high-profile clients she tends to probably prefer it that way, appreciating a certain degree of privacy. (Akram is not one to drop names, but, trust us, she has beautified *everyone*.)

Even the location of her office reflects her proclivity for discretion. Instead of setting up shop in a big city like Paris or L.A., the Washington, D.C., native chose a charming 250-year-old building in the historic district of Old Town Alexandria, Va. Recently, however, a new gig with Dior (temporarily) brought her to New York City. The French label tapped Akram to become its new skincare expert and ambassador. Part of her role involved designing treatments for the brand's first permanent spa in the U.S., which is nestled on the top floor of its House of Dior flagship. You may have caught wind of its Haute Couture Facial, which Dior developed with Akram over the span of two years. The 90-minute treatment combines state-of-the-art technology with Dior's most exclusive skincare lines. It's priced at a cool $1,800 and is, as you can imagine, all sorts of fabulous.

That said, though, Akram's approach to skin is surprisingly low-key. Her go-to tool of choice, for instance? Her bare hands. "For budding aestheticians, washing people's hair is an incredible way to develop great hands," she says, referencing her very first job: a stint as a shampoo girl at 14. It was actually a facialist renting a space in the salon she worked at who first piqued her interest in skincare. Akram eventually gathered the courage to ask her what a facial was exactly. A few days later, she was on the table getting her first one and was immediately hooked.

"That moment was over 20 years ago, and since that experience, I've been very lucky to have been educated by incredible experts in both medical- and non-medical-grade

DROP THE ROUTINE
A peek inside Sarah Akram's skincare drawers.

"I'm obsessed with toners. This one helps prep my skin for all the good stuff to come in my serums and moisturizers."

BIOLOGIQUE RECHERCHE LOTION P50T ($103, LIVING-BEAUTY.COM)

"I keep these in the freezer and use them daily to improve blood flow and circulation and to de-puff my face."

SARAH AKRAM SKINCARE CRYO STICKS ($137 FOR A SET OF TWO, SARAHAKRAM.COM)

"This serum has visibly lifted and redefined the contours of my face, and I really love it." Akram recommends pressing (rather than rubbing) serums into the skin.

DIOR PRESTIGE LE NECTAR INTÉGRAL ($975, DIOR.COM)

"Never skip your SPF! I love this tinted lightweight formula. It feels gentle on my sensitive skin and provides a gorgeous glow."

ELTAMD UV PHYSICAL TINTED FACE SUNSCREEN SPF 41 ($68, AMAZON.CA)

PHOTOGRAPHY: PAT MARTIN FOR DIOR (S. AKRAM)

skincare technologies and methods," she says. "I soaked up every minute like a sponge. The more I learned, the more I knew this wasn't a phase—it was my calling."

Over the years, she's used that knowledge to craft her signature philosophy—one that has gone on to seduce many an A-lister while remaining markedly simple. "I take a conservative, slow and steady, non-invasive and consistent approach to building healthy skin from within, prioritizing long-term skin integrity over quick, aggressive fixes," she explains. She achieves this through a combination of bespoke treatments, the use of innovative technology, expert manual techniques and, most importantly, a strict at-home product regimen she instructs clients to follow religiously.

Part of Akram's work involves staying ahead of the curve when it comes to new ingredients and tools, constantly testing and researching the latest launches. "Skincare technology is evolving faster than ever, and, honestly, it's thrilling," she says. "We're entering an era where treatments are hyper-personalized, results are measurable and devices are becoming just as essential as products. From LED and radio frequency to AI-driven skin analysis and advanced regenerative therapies, the future is all about precision, prevention and deeply targeted results."

But that doesn't mean she'll integrate a buzzy new gadget just for the sake of hopping on a trend. "At my boutique, everything we bring in must deliver real, transformative change. Whether it's customized advanced lifting devices, cryotherapies, sculpting massage techniques or next-generation formulations, I'm always blending cutting-edge science with the intentional hands-on artistry that defines my work."

Which is why, according to the expert, the future of beauty lies not just in tech but in balance too. "It's knowing when to use high-tech tools and when the human touch is irreplaceable. My goal is to create a hybrid approach where personalized technology enhances what I already do best: treating the skin holistically and creating results that look natural, lifted and alive." ■

"This game-changing eye cream is infused with Rosapeptide to correct signs of aging and yeast extract to reduce signs of fatigue."

DIOR PRESTIGE LE CONCENTRÉ YEUX ($365, HOLTRENFREW.COM)

"I pull this out when I want a deeper cleanse." Akram likes to keep her skin damp afterwards to enhance the absorption of products to come.

AUTEUR DEFINITIVE ENZYME CLEANSER ($240, AUTEUR.COM)

"I use this mask daily to help stimulate collagen and minimize the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles. It has truly improved my skin texture."

OMNILUX CONTOUR FACE ($535, OMNILUXLED.COM)

"This leaves my skin nourished, soft and supple." Pro tip: Let serums fully soak in before proceeding to your next step.

DIOR PRESTIGE LA MICRO-HUILE DE ROSE ACTIVATED SERUM ($440, DIOR.COM)

"This tinted serum is enriched with skin-brightening actives that leave me with a glowy complexion."

SELF GLOW BY JAMES READ FIRST LIGHT TINTED TAN SERUM ($55, WELL.CA)

STEADY GAINS

Collagen banking is beauty's latest buzz phrase. Rather than delivering instant results, the strategy requires a good deal of patience and planning. The reward for those who stick with it? Better skin for the future.

By EMILY MACCULLOCH

IF YOU THINK OF your skin as an investment—a "skinvestment," if you will—collagen, then, is your capital. It's the thing you want to grow over time in order to have a cushion (quite literally, in this case) that'll help you better face (again, quite literally) whatever lies ahead.

It's called "collagen banking," and it seems to be everywhere in skincare lately, from treatments promising to rev up your own production of the protein to salves vowing to help build reserves of it. The idea? Turn to them now and cash in on a plumper, more cushiony visage down the road.

"Think of it as front-loading your skin so that you age less drastically later," explains Annie Lorefice, senior aesthetic nurse at Clinique Le 1620's downtown Montreal and Royalmount locations. She notes that these days, many patients inquire about collagen banking, but even for those who don't, she and her team make it their goal to educate them on the importance of investing in their collagen stocks.

A little refresher on collagen: "Collagen is a protein that forms the skin's natural scaffolding," explains Dr. Nazli Ghiasi, a board-certified dermatologist and the owner of MapleDerm in Toronto. "It's the structural framework that gives skin its strength, firmness and elasticity." In other words, it's what keeps everything lifted and smooth—until it starts to disappear.

"After the age of 25, collagen starts to deplete in our bodies at a rate of approximately 1 percent every year," says Lorefice. "While this decline happens naturally as we age, it's accelerated by UV rays, cigarette smoke and poor nutrition, and it even has a genetic component." The amino-acid-rich protein comes in many forms (28, to be exact), but the two most closely tied to skin aging are types I and III. "Type I collagen is like a pillar that gives skin its strength and firmness, while type III collagen is responsible for skin's flexibility and acts like springs to keep the skin bouncy," notes Ghiasi.

For years, it was the norm to wait until telltale signs of aging—forehead lines, crow's feet, a slackening of the skin along the jawline—appeared before booking in for a cosmetic treatment, but that has changed. "Patients often ask me how to be more proactive and prevent aging rather than reverse it," says Ghiasi. "Attitudes have shifted drastically toward prevention, and that's precisely referring to collagen banking."

That shift resonated with Romy, a 37-year-old from Montreal who decided to get some Sculptra, a.k.a. biostimulator injections, ahead of her last birthday. (The treatment can cost between $800 and $1,400 per vial. She got two.) "As I was approaching my 40s, I wanted to do something to sort of preserve my skin's youthfulness—something that would yield long-term results," she explains. "I did some research and found out about how Sculptra can boost your own collagen. That really spoke to me. It's kind of like how I've moved away from fast fashion in recent years and am being more mindful about investing in things that will last longer."

Most patients used to seek out cosmetic tweaks to modify their appearance or enhance specific features. Who could forget the lip-filler boom brought on by Kylie Jenner's confession to plumping her pout in 2015? But as "filler face" has increasingly gotten a bad rap and ▸

PHOTOGRAPHY: LAUNCHMETRICS SPOTLIGHT

"Think of [collagen banking] as front-loading your skin so that you age less drastically later."

many celebrities have spoken publicly about dissolving their fillers, a more global, undetectable approach has been gaining traction. "I tried a little filler here and there in my mid-20s, and I felt like it really changed my appearance—like, not in a good way," says Romy. "Even though I only did it a few times, when I look at photos, I find it just looks weird. Like the places that were augmented stick out too much. Now I'm much more focused on my skin's overall health and quality."

Biostimulators, like Sculptra, are but one of the ways you can safeguard your collagen and build on it too. As with any smart investment plan, the best approach is a diversified one. "There's never an age that's too young to preserve your collagen," says Ghiasi. "The first and most important step is practising good sun protection." Wearing a broad-spectrum SPF 30-plus daily, 365 days a year, is the least expensive and least invasive way to go about it. She also points to lifestyle factors, such as a diet rich in antioxidants, regular exercise, good sleep habits, minimal alcohol consumption and abstinence from smoking. (As for oral collagen supplements, the jury is still out on whether they are truly helpful in increasing the body's deposits of the protein in the skin.)

When it comes to your skincare regimen, Ghiasi recommends crafting a lineup that will increase collagen production and protect against oxidative stress, which is one of the main culprits behind degradation. A vitamin C serum in the morning and a good retinol at night are the basics to start with, while actives like peptides and niacinamide can be folded in for further benefits.

For those wanting to take things up another notch, Lorefice suggests non-invasive treatments that trigger controlled regeneration. A good start includes "IPL [intense pulsed light], a gentle light-based treatment, and advanced facials combining microneedling, platelet-rich plasma or fibrin [PRP/PRF], exosomes and LED therapy, depending on [a person's] skin type and goals," she says.

Once you hit your 30s and your natural collagen levels further dwindle, energy-based devices can make a big impact. "Radio-frequency microneedling treatments, ideally paired with PRP for an extra regenerative boost, will kick collagen production into high gear," she adds. Hybrid fractional and CO_2 lasers are other powerhouse options that target hyperpigmentation and skin texture while also performing deep dermal remodelling.

And then there are injectables—a trend that's currently skyrocketing. Over the past year, Ghiasi has seen a notable shift toward biostimulatory fillers (like Sculptra and Radiesse), which stimulate the body's collagen production over the course of a few months rather than instantly replacing lost volume. "Patients are increasingly interested in treatments that work with their own biology," she says. The appeal? Biostimulators can offer more inconspicuous, gradual results compared to traditional hyaluronic-acid fillers, and they often align closely with longevity-driven skin goals. She adds that the demand for this type of treatment has grown significantly in her clinic. "Upwards of 70 percent of our monthly filler injections in 2025 were biostimulatory."

Within three months of getting Sculptra, Romy noticed her face looking bouncier and smoother. "If I was stippling on foundation with a brush, for example, I could see my skin sort of springing back, the way a bouncy castle would if you were jumping on it. It was super subtle, but it just gave me a more youthful appearance without changing what I look like." She's considering making the injections her yearly birthday gift to herself, much the same way she puts money into an RRSP every February.

Because, ultimately, the earlier you start caring for your collagen, the more youthful dividends you'll collect later. While your savings grow in the bank, your skin's youth capital is compounding in another, and that's one investment your future face will surely thank you for. ■

INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO

Blue-chip beauty buys guaranteed to give you big returns.

1. **TATCHA** THE MILKY SUNSCREEN BROAD SPECTRUM SPF 50+ ($70, SEPHORA.CA). 2. **DERMALOGICA** PRO-COLLAGEN BANKING WATER CREAM ($111, DERMALOGICA.CA). 3. **NEUTROGENA** COLLAGEN BANK 15% VITAMIN C SERUM ($30, SHOPPERSDRUGMART.CA). 4. **FUNCTIONALAB** RETINOL 1% SERUM ($135, FUNCTIONALAB.COM).

PREP SQUAD

As we shed our layers (oh, the joy of leaving home without a jacket or slipping a sockless foot into a flat), our winter-weary skin might need help getting ready for its big reveal. Beauty director Katherine Lalancette rounds up her go-tos for a head-to-toe glow.

You've heard that retinol can work wonders on the face, but did you know it can also be a game-changer for the skin below the neck? This lotion, enriched with pink-algae-derived pro-retinol as well as argan oil, makes the body velvety smooth all over.

JOSIE MARAN PINK ALGAE PRO-RETINOL BODY BUTTER ($98, SEPHORA.CA)

Winter can really do a number on our lips, which is where this buttery mask comes in. It's chock full of honey, collagen and hyaluronic acid to intensely hydrate and repair.

GISOU HONEY GLAZE COLLAGEN THERAPY LIP MASK ($36, SEPHORA.CA)

Don't neglect your hands! They go through a lot and deserve some TLC. This salve from Canadian brand Omy sinks in quickly (read "no greasy film") and gets paws silky in no time.

OMY LABORATOIRES REPAIR HAND CREAM IN FROSTED VETIVER ($16, OMYCOSMETICS.COM)

If you find that the cold, dim months have dulled your complexion, warm things up with these self-tanner drops. Simply add a few to your cream or serum to enjoy a subtle boost.

CAUDALIE SELF-TAN SUN DROPS ($39, CA-EN.CAUDALIE.COM)

Those little bumps we sometimes see on our upper arms are called keratosis pilaris. If they tend to bug you, try this body scrub, which combines physical and chemical exfoliation, to help nix them fast.

FIRST AID BEAUTY KP BUMP ERASER BODY SCRUB IN TOASTED COCONUT ($46, SEPHORA.CA)

These pads were designed to deliver a Korean facial in just five minutes. Steeped in powerful actives like vitamin C and niacinamide, they dial up radiance in a flash and can even diminish the look of dark circles.

GLOW RECIPE VITAMIN C BRIGHTENING TONER PADS ($42, SEPHORA.CA)

Pedi time is upon us: A coral-red polish will look ravishing peeking out of your favourite peep-toes.

GELCARE NAIL POLISH IN REEF ($22, GELCARE.COM)

Roll on this lightweight serum anywhere you please (your face, your armpits, your bikini area) to soothe irritation and prevent the formation of bumps caused by ingrown hairs.

TOPICALS HIGH ROLLER INGROWN TONIC ($35, SEPHORA.CA)

This luscious oil turns your morning shower into a veritable self-care ritual. Containing 50 percent glycerine serum, it produces a pampering lather that leaves skin supple and luminous.

DOVE SERUM+ RADIANCE OIL BODY WASH ($20, SHOPPERSDRUGMART.CA)

Sandal season will be here before we know it. Score baby-soft feet with the help of this award-winning peel-mask, powered by glycolic acid (to banish calluses) and aloe vera (to moisturize).

GRACE & STELLA EXFOLIATING FOOT PEEL MASK IN LAVENDER ($14 FOR TWO PAIRS, AMAZON.CA)

Nothing perks up the face like a swipe of blush. This gel-cream formula yields a fresh, juicy flush that stands up to water, sweat and humidity.

BENEFIT COSMETICS JUICE STICK HYDRATING DEWY GEL BLUSH STICK ($46, SHOPPERSDRUGMART.CA)

Power Era

Busy, breezy and unbothered, Kendall Jenner is in a new season of life. The 30-year-old gets candid about acne, anxiety and the importance of safeguarding your energy.

By KATHERINE LALANCETTE

NAVIGATING THE TRIALS of tweenhood and adolescence with a full-blown camera crew in your face and having your appearance, personal life and familial drama steadily dissected by tabloids and TikTok could do a number on anyone's psyche. But Kendall Jenner appears remarkably unscathed.

Though the model and reality-TV star has been open about dealing with anxiety in the past, she seems to be more at ease than ever these days. Whether she's fronting a high-profile fashion campaign, promoting her tequila brand, 818, or giving *Architectural Digest* a tour of her exquisitely appointed mountain retreat, there's a relaxed self-assuredness that comes through in everything she does. "Peaceful, intentional, empowered" is how she describes this chapter of her life, having recently entered her 30s. "Confidence is something you build as you grow and get to know yourself," she says, calling it "an ongoing process."

Her latest gig thus couldn't be more fitting. Jenner has been selected to embody Emporio Armani's new scent, Power of You, a gourmand medley of passion fruit, frangipani and vanilla meant to encourage wearers to stand taller and own their power. Here, Jenner talks about overcoming her insecurities, protecting her peace and finding boldness in fragrance form.

What does the word "power" mean to you at this point in your life? "Power at this stage isn't about being the loudest in the room; it's about [having] a quiet confidence that comes from being fully present and trusting your own energy."

What was your first impression of Power of You? "The first thing I noticed was the juicy, vibrant burst of passion fruit. It felt energizing, uplifting and bold."

When you choose a fragrance, what story do you want it to tell about you without saying a word? "I'm drawn to scents that are unique—something that feels like a natural extension of who I am and leaves a lasting impression."

Power of You is all about empowerment. When you're having a day when you're maybe not feeling as confident, what are some things that help you feel empowered? "I focus on self-kindness and finding things that genuinely make me happy. I love journalling and being in nature."

EMPORIO ARMANI
POWER OF YOU EAU DE PARFUM SPRAY ($136 FOR 50 ML, ARMANI-BEAUTY.CA)

You've been transparent about experiencing anxiety. What have you found to be helpful in managing those feelings and what would be your advice to anyone struggling with that right now? "For me, managing anxiety is all about my environment and my routine. I've learned that I need to be very intentional about the energy I surround myself with. My advice for anyone struggling is to start small: Find one ritual that makes you feel calm, like a walk or a specific playlist, and make that your non-negotiable."

You've also shared your struggles with acne. What has made the biggest difference in your skin and what's your relationship with your skin like now? "The biggest shift happened when I started looking at my lifestyle as a whole. I've found that prioritizing sleep, staying hydrated and really managing my stress levels have made the most impact. My relationship with my skin is much more intuitive now; I try to listen to what my body is telling me."

With such a busy travel schedule, how do you stay grounded mentally and physically? "I try to bring 'home' with me wherever I go. That means sticking to my wellness routines, even in a hotel room."

What did it mean to you to become an Emporio Armani ambassador? "[It] felt like a natural fit because the brand has always stood for empowering people to express their most genuine selves. What stands out most about Mr. Armani's incredible legacy is [the] effortless, timeless elegance he mastered. His vision inspires me by proving that you can stay classic while still keeping things young, fun and vibrant."

How has your relationship with fashion evolved since the beginning of your career? "I feel like I'm much more curated now when it comes to fashion. I value longevity and quality over trends; I want pieces that I can see myself wearing 10 years from now."

You once revealed that you keep a picture of yourself as a child on your mirror. What does having that photo there mean to you? "It's a reminder to be kind to myself. When I look at it while I'm getting ready, I remember that I'm still the same girl, and I want to make choices that would make her proud."

Is there a place in the world where you feel most like yourself? "Home or anytime I'm horseback riding." ■

PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF EMPORIO ARMANI

THREADS of GREEN

From Dublin to Killarney—a heritage trip to Ireland reveals the Emerald Isle's blend of tradition and style.

By JULIA ESKINS

A bird's-eye view of Adare Manor

John Kavanagh
The Gravediggers pub

IT'S A RARE SUNNY AFTERNOON in Dublin, and the pint in front of me gleams like something sacred. I'm at John Kavanagh The Gravediggers pub, known for having the best pours of Guinness in Ireland's capital. Anthony Bourdain once signed the guest book, "Heaven looks just like this." Even Bono abided by the 1833 pub's old-school rules: no singing, no music, no dancing—just good conversation. "The best pubs in Ireland are family run," says Keith McGovern, co-founder of the celebrity-favourite Perfect Pint Tour. As we sit in a Victorian-era snug, once reserved for women drinking discreetly, the worn wooden floors and cheers of "*slainte*" ("to your health") feel instantly familiar.

A familial connection is what drew me to Ireland in the first place. I recently received my Irish passport through my grandmother, who immigrated to Canada decades ago. Under Irish law, anyone with a parent or grandparent born on the island can apply—a right many are now claiming. A record one-million-plus Irish passports were issued in 2024, driven by increased U.S. and U.K. demand following Brexit and the presidential election.

Irish culture is also having a moment. Cable-knit Aran sweaters are trending again, as is the viral "split the G" challenge (when drinkers try to swallow enough Guinness on their first gulp to dissect the G on a branded glass). According to McGovern, the classic way to drink the stout is in seven or fewer equal "sups," leaving behind "seven rings of heaven" rendered in white foamy lace.

That same spirit of tradition runs through Ireland's most storied hotels. Many belong to the Leading Hotels of the World, a collection of independent properties spanning more than 80 countries. In Ireland, most of these retreats are family owned, intertwining heritage and polished hospitality. My first stop in Dublin, the Merrion, captures that dichotomy perfectly. The 142-room hotel is housed in four restored Georgian townhouses built by Lord Monck in the 1760s, whose grandson became Canada's first Governor General. Local interior designer Alice Roden selected soft green-and-gold Irish fabrics that complement the rococo plasterwork. Works by Jack B. Yeats and William Scott line the walls, forming one of the country's largest private art collections. I spend my first two days eating my way around the property: ▸

PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF ADARE MANOR & JULIA ESKINS (PUB AND SHOP)

Adare Manor

an art-themed tea, lunch at the Michelin-starred Patrick Guilbaud and breakfast in the sunlit Garden Room, where even the staff uniforms, by Oscar-nominated Irish costume designer Consolata Boyle, celebrate homegrown creativity. Between meals, I wander Drury Street, a former rag-trade hub that's now home to boutiques including the Irish Design Shop. Inside, a collection of ceramics, prints and textiles ranges from Jennifer Slattery's Irish-linen napkins to Ellie Dunne's blankets, which are made from the fleece of Galway's protected sheep.

Nearly everyone I meet here tells me that to truly experience Ireland, you need to head to the countryside, which is exactly what I do. After a two-and-a-half-hour drive past rolling green farmland, I arrive at Adare Manor, the former 19th-century home of the Earl of Dunraven. Today, the Leading Hotels of the World property, in County Limerick, is one of Ireland's top resorts—complete with a Tom Fazio-designed championship golf course set to host the 2027 Ryder Cup. Even without teeing off, there's plenty to enjoy: falconry demonstrations, horseback riding, tastings at the on-site chocolatier and Michelin-star dining. Admiring the building's neo-Gothic architecture on a self-guided audio tour is an activity in itself. The manor is a rare example of a calendar house, with its 365 windows, 52 ornate chimneys, seven stone pillars and four towers. Beyond the gates of the 340-hectare estate, you'll find the village of Adare's colourful thatched cottages, antique shops and cozy pubs.

I spend most mornings at the sleek wellness complex, a new addition featuring padel courts, an indoor pool and a glass-wall-enclosed hot tub overlooking the woods. At the spa, which uses products from London-based skincare brand 111SKIN, treatments draw inspiration from Celtic lore and the ancient ogham alphabet, in which each letter is tied to a tree or plant. In the surrounding forest, art installations honour their symbolism—willow for harmony, oak for balance, birch for renewal and ash for rebirth. The property is also home to five rare ogham stones, memorials dating from the fifth to the seventh centuries etched with family names.

With heritage travel continuing to boom, it's no surprise that Adare Manor is also a gateway for ancestry trips. Set along the 2,500-kilometre Wild Atlantic Way, the property is an ideal base for coastal road trips to Galway, Mayo and Kerry—counties that saw significant emigration during and after the Great Famine in the 1800s. My own ancestral journey takes me southwest to Killarney, where my family on my mother's side traces their roots.

At the Killarney Park Hotel, a member of the Leading Hotels of the World for more than two decades, I'm immediately struck by its warmth. Family run and freshly renovated, the hotel features 69 rooms, many designed for multi-generational groups. Inside, local textiles and thoughtful touches—Dyson hair tools, yoga mats from Irish wellness brand Inish Living and amenities by natural-skincare range Wildsmith—invite a slower, more intentional pace. "Giving guests a sense of place was the most important thing to us," says Ciara Treacy, a third-generation hotelier. Just beyond the property lies the 10,236-hectare Killarney

PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF ADARE MANOR

National Park. From certain rooms, you can see the MacGillycuddy's Reeks mountain range, home to Ireland's tallest peak. Treacy swears by wild swimming in the lake after a hike. "When the water's like glass, there's nothing better." After a climb up Torc Mountain, I'm rewarded with sweeping views of the lakes, but September's chill makes me skip the cold plunge. On another afternoon, a horse-drawn jaunting car and small boat bring me to Innisfallen Island, where the ruins of a seventh-century monastery sit under whispering trees said to carry ancient wisdom.

Trees, fairies and folklore are integral to Ireland. "A lone hawthorn bush was something revered and never interfered with," storyteller Killian Burns tells me one afternoon over Irish coffees in J.M. Reidy's pub. "People said prayers around it. It was seen as a portal to the underworld." Burns is one of many keeping Ireland's oral traditions alive. There's also a renewed interest in the Irish language, reflected in the wares of brands like Mara Duit and De Búrca, which regularly incorporate *Gaeilge* text into clothing and accessories.

Back in the capital, I check into the Westbury, which in 1985 became the first hotel in Ireland to join the Leading Hotels of the World. With its location just off the popular pedestrianized Grafton Street, sleek rooms featuring art deco accents and lively fine-dining restaurant named after Oscar Wilde, it captures the pulse of modern Dublin. The concierge will happily coordinate special experiences, from private city tours to tickets to EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum, where interactive exhibits tell the global Irish story, including famine ships, migration to North America and the cultural exports that followed. I spend an afternoon there, marvelling at the resilience and passion that continue to define what it means to be Irish.

Kindred of Ireland

Arriving at Innisfallen Island

Before flying home, I detour to Belfast, where my grandmother was born. She always identified as Irish, although people in Northern Ireland can choose either a British or Irish passport. Once defined by strife, the city is now in the midst of a revival. Tours explore sites linked to the Troubles, the three-decade conflict that shaped Northern Ireland, while the Titanic Quarter and its award-winning museum stand where the famed ship was built. In the Cathedral Quarter, cafés like Trait pair sycamore-wood interiors with Donegal textiles, while clothing brand Kindred of Ireland revives the city's linen heritage. Beyond the city, designer Hope Macaulay has helped put Northern Ireland on the fashion map with her chunky, colourful cardigans, which are handmade by local knitters.

On the train back to Dublin, I watch the sun set over green fields and feel the weight of my connection to Ireland. Until now, it existed only on paper and in family stories, but meeting the people who shape the country today makes it feel real. For a small island, Ireland is vast, but its heart is far bigger than its borders. I may never master a Guinness sup, but I'll always carry my Irish badge with pride. ■

PHOTOGRAPHY, JULIA ESKINS (BOAT) & COURTESY OF KINDRED OF IRELAND

48 Hours in WEST HOLLYWOOD

Consider this vibrant, walkable area your stylish jumping-off point for exploring Los Angeles.

By ROBB JAMIESON

IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY, West Hollywood emerged as a nightlife haven, fuelled by looser gambling laws and an unmistakably rebellious spirit. That independence carried into the 1960s and '70s, when rock 'n' roll and hippie culture electrified the neighbourhood, giving rise to legendary venues that still define it today, including the Troubadour, Whisky a Go Go and the Roxy. Echoes of Old Hollywood remain in enduring icons like the chic Chateau Marmont and the Sunset Tower Hotel as well as classic culinary institutions such as Dan Tana's and Canter's Deli. Yet West Hollywood's true allure lies in its vibrant present: a dynamic food scene shaped by global influences, effortlessly cool shopping rooted in California design culture and hospitality that feels equal parts stylish and welcoming. Centrally located with easy access to Los Angeles' top attractions and sports venues, West Hollywood is the perfect starting point for your next exhilarating urban escape.

STAY

1 HOTEL WEST HOLLYWOOD (1)

Perfectly positioned at the base of the Hollywood Hills with sweeping views stretching from downtown Los Angeles to Santa Monica, this two-tower retreat places nature at the forefront. Living gardens, organic textures and abundant natural light define the design, reflecting 1 Hotel's commitment to sustainability without compromising the elevated hospitality it's known for. Reclaimed wood features prominently throughout, spacious rooms are dressed in locally sourced linens and signature nature-inspired bath products from the Bamford Collection complete the experience. That thoughtful approach extends to the Bamford Wellness Spa, where personalized treatments incorporate exclusive organic products. Guests can also reset with the Alo Runners Club's five-kilometre route through West Hollywood; it's an energizing way to beat jet lag while discovering the neighbourhood. Dining centres around 1 Kitchen (open daily from morning through mid-afternoon), where chef Ginger Pierce highlights farm-to-table ingredients sourced from the hotel's own organic garden to create fresh, distinctly Southern Californian cuisine. As afternoon turns to evening, Juniper Lounge & Garden transitions the space into a relaxed indoor-outdoor setting beneath leafy canopies and open skies. For sunset cocktails, Harriet's Rooftop delivers panoramic city views and an effortlessly cool atmosphere. **1hotels.com**

1

KIMPTON LA PEER HOTEL

Set at the intersection of Melrose Avenue and Santa Monica Boulevard, Kimpton La Peer Hotel places guests steps from West Hollywood's best restaurants, galleries and coveted retail. Centrally located yet discreetly tucked away, the property delivers a luxury boutique experience and a real sense of privacy. Its 105 stylish guest rooms and suites balance contemporary design with relaxed California sophistication. At the heart of the hotel is Ladyhawk, the vibrant Eastern Mediterranean restaurant led by *Top Chef Middle East* winner Charbel Hayek. Showcasing California's seasonal produce, the menu highlights wood-fired specialties and bold, spice-driven flavours alongside inventive cocktails. A meal here isn't complete without a selection of dips—from a silky house hummus to a richly textured muhammara. Coffee enthusiasts can linger over Ladyhawk's Turkish coffee service, prepared with finely ground Najjar coffee in an Arzum kettle and traditionally brewed over hot sand. Upstairs, a rooftop pickleball court and outdoor event space offer sweeping views of the Hollywood Hills, adding a playful, distinctly Los Angeles touch to the stay. **lapeerhotel.com** ▸

PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF VISIT WEST HOLLYWOOD

EAT

NIGHT + MARKET

Chef Kris Yenbamroong's Night + Market WeHo is his restaurant chain's original outpost, and it's been serving bold, flavourful Thai cuisine since 2010. (It later expanded to Silver Lake and Venice.) It may not be the city's newest hot spot, but the spice still delivers and the wine list feels as playful and unfussy as the restaurant's kaleidoscopic decor. Not a Thai-level-heat devotee? No problem—chefs will happily tailor the spice to your comfort level. **nightmarketsong.com**

BADMAASH (2)

Brothers Nakul and Arjun Mahendro, originally from Markham, Ont., bring a distinctly personal touch to this contemporary Indian restaurant (which has a second location in downtown L.A.). The family connection runs deep—their father, chef Pawan Mahendro, leads the kitchen, drawing on recipes from his home state of Punjab. Expect bold flavours and unapologetic spice, particularly in standouts like the Ghost Chili Lamb Vindaloo. A playful Canadian nod comes in the form of Chicken Tikka Poutine: masala fries layered with cheese curds, generous pieces of chicken tikka and fresh cilantro for comfort food with a vibrant twist. **badmaashla.com**

CASA MADERA

Inspired by the coastal flavours of the Mayan Riviera, Casa Madera brings some Mexican energy to West Hollywood dining. Its signature open-air dining room—complete with a retractable roof and sweeping arches—frames distant views of downtown Los Angeles while embracing California's year-round sunshine. It's a natural choice for celebratory brunches with a balance of sweet and savoury favourites, from Cinnamon Crunch French Toast to the indulgent Madera Burger, a wagyu-beef double smash burger served with Parmesan-truffle fries and an optional egg add-on for a decadent morning upgrade. **thecasamadera.com**

DRINK

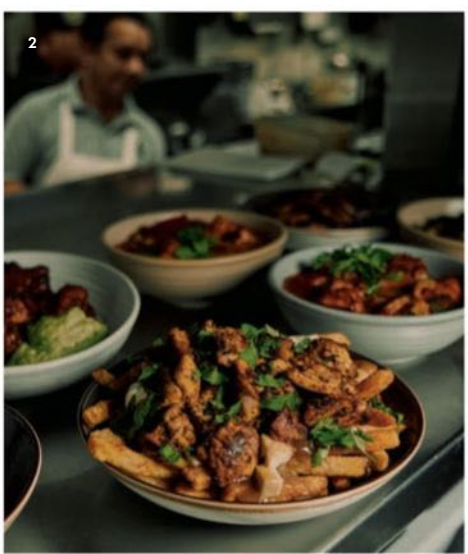
THE TOWER BAR AND RESTAURANT (3)

Housed in famed mobster Bugsy Siegel's former apartment in the perfect art deco Sunset Tower Hotel, the Tower Bar exudes Old Hollywood glamour with a side of discretion. Dark-wood panelling, intimate nooks and a glowing wood-burning fireplace set the stage for classy cocktails. A perfectly crafted martini is the ideal companion for slipping seamlessly into the rhythm of this classic Hollywood haunt. **sunsettowerhotel.com**

THE COMEDY STORE

Sip a drink while trying not to get caught in the crossfire of some of the world's best stand-up talent at the Comedy Store. Founded in 1972, this iconic venue launched legends like Richard Pryor, David Letterman and Sandra Bernhard. The chaos of the '70s and '80s may be gone, but the laughs are as sharp as ever. A well-run bar and performer-first ethos ensure top-notch shows, and it's not uncommon to catch current stars like Marc Maron, Ali Wong or Nikki Glaser lighting up the stage on any given night. **thecomedystore.com**

3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PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF BADMAASH; SUNSET TOWER HOTEL & GANNI AND KEITH LUBOW/COURTESY OF CHARLES GAINES AND HAUSER & WIRTH (INSTALLATION VIEW OF *NUMBERS AND TREES* AND *THE TANZANIA BAOBABS*, 2024, BY CHARLES GAINES)

DO

SOFI STADIUM AND INTUIT DOME

West Hollywood is the perfect jumping-off point for experiencing some of the world's most prestigious sports teams and cutting-edge venues. Located in Inglewood, SoFi Stadium, where NFL teams the Rams and the Chargers play, seats over 70,000 yet feels surprisingly accessible, with open sides, a striking roof that projects images for passing planes and a double-sided 4K HDR Infinity Screen by Samsung. It hosted the Super Bowl in 2022 and will host it again in 2027 as well as several FIFA World Cup matches and the 2028 Olympic ceremonies. **sofistadium.com**

Just south of the SoFi, the new Intuit Dome—owned by former Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer—redefines the NBA experience for Clippers fans while also serving as a concert venue. Facial recognition speeds up food and merch purchases, triple the usual number of washrooms eliminates wait times and interactive armrest buttons link to a massive 4K two-sided screen with live player stats (and even stadium-wide games of Candy Crush). **intuitdome.com**

ACADEMY MUSEUM OF MOTION PICTURES, HAUSER & WIRTH WEST HOLLYWOOD (4) AND UNIVERSAL STUDIOS HOLLYWOOD

For more than a century, Hollywood has been a cultural powerhouse across film, music, visual arts and literature. Begin your culture tour at the architectural marvel that is the newly renovated Academy Museum of Motion Pictures, designed by Pritzker Architecture Prize winner Renzo Piano. The museum fuses the beautifully restored 1939 Wilshire May Company building with a striking glass-and-concrete sphere housing the state-of-the-art David Geffen Theater. Inside, explore movie memorabilia from some of the 20th century's most iconic films. **academymuseum.org**

For contemporary art, head to Hauser & Wirth West Hollywood, a 560-square-metre gallery in a converted vintage-auto showroom. Open to the public and free to enter, it showcases the very best modern and contemporary artists, including the late Louise Bourgeois and Alexander Calder, alongside emerging talents like Canada's Allison Katz. **hauserwirth.com**

For a lighter dose of fantasy, Universal Studios Hollywood—just a 20-minute drive from West Hollywood—immerses visitors in movie magic. Step into Super Nintendo World for a vibrant digital playground that features the Mario Kart: Bowser's Challenge VR ride, or wander through The Simpsons' Springfield, complete with Moe's Tavern and Duff Brewery. Other standout attractions bring the Fast & Furious, Jurassic Park and Harry Potter worlds to life, blending thrills and nostalgia for a quintessentially L.A. experience. **universalstudioshollywood.com**

SHOP

THE GREAT, co-founded by designers Emily Current and Meritt Elliott, champions vintage-inspired ready-to-wear with a focus on impeccable denim—the foundation of any contemporary wardrobe. Effortlessly relaxed yet feminine, it's the quintessential L.A. shop without a hint of pretension. **thisisthegreat.com**

H. LORENZO, celebrating 40 years, is a family-run haven for designer treasures. Founder Lorenzo Hadar and his son Mac curate pieces from brands like Kapital, Jacquemus and Comme des Garçons. Once browsed by the likes of James Brown and Tupac, the store still attracts celebrity stylists; everything here is a guaranteed standout limited-edition find. **hlorenzo.com**

Danish label **GANNI** (5) brings a futuristic punk edge to West Hollywood, pairing bold prints and chunky accessories with a distinctly Scandi aesthetic. It's daring, playful and perfectly at home in L.A.'s dynamic fashion scene. **ganni.com** ■

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Carrying *the* Torch

WE TALK A LOT about women's entrepreneurship, but we don't talk enough about business succession (that is, the process by which a person takes over an existing company in order to continue growing and advancing it). And yet the coming years will be decisive for the Canadian economy: Thousands of strong, profitable businesses that are deeply rooted in their communities will be looking for successors. These small and medium-sized enterprises are not simply asking to continue; they are waiting to be transformed, propelled forward and reinvented—by women.

Too often, even when faced with golden opportunities, we hesitate. We doubt our legitimacy, our experience, our financial capacity. We wait for the perfect moment or until we feel "ready." But taking over a business isn't about knowing everything. It's about being willing to learn, surrounding yourself with the right people, making courageous decisions and trusting your instincts. It's about daring to enter the room and take your seat at the table, even with fear in the pit of your stomach.

Studies show that when women take over a business, they don't just grow it; they transform organizational culture, reinvent governance and integrate more human and sustainable practices without sacrificing performance. In an economy in transition, these nuances change everything. They make the difference between simple continuity and real transformation. Women-led business succession is an opportunity to reshape the Canadian economy in our own way. We need more women who buy, negotiate and sign—not later or "when the time comes." Now.

Because business succession isn't just about taking over a company. It's about choosing ourselves. It's about choosing to believe in our abilities, our vision and the impact we can have. It's about claiming our place in the economy while transforming the way the market operates. Every woman who dares to take this step becomes both an entrepreneur and an agent of change. ■

Sophie Banford, *publisher*
@sophiebanford

PHOTOGRAPHY, ANDRÉANNE GAUTHIER; STYLIST, VANESSA GIROUX; HAIRSTYLIST AND MAKEUP ARTIST, SOPHIE PARROT. S. BANFORD IS WEARING A SHIRT (LOEWE AT HOLT RENFREW), JEANS (ZIMMERMANN AT HOLT RENFREW) AND JEWELLERY (DRAE COLLECTION AT SIMONS)

Jenn Harper

Laura Thompson

Elise Tastet

BUSINESS MODELS

Three Canadian founders on how leading with empathy has helped their businesses thrive.

By TRUC NGUYEN

THERE'S STILL A GENDER IMBALANCE when it comes to positions of business leadership. Only 4 percent of Canada's largest publicly traded companies had a female CEO in 2022, and that same year, fewer than one in four board seats were held by women.

At the same time, studies have consistently shown that there are clear benefits to having empathetic leaders at the helm of organizations of all sizes. A survey by Catalyst, a global non-profit focused on advancing women in the workplace, found that companies that centred empathy had more productive and engaged workforces and lower levels of employee burnout and turnover.

Compared to men, women in leadership roles "demonstrate stronger empathy, particularly in emotional sensitivity and communication skills," notes a 2024 paper in *Journal of Human Resource Development*. These leaders are the ones "driving a shift toward more people-centred, collaborative and inclusive" workplaces and building "companies with greater adaptability and long-term competitiveness."

PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF CHEEKBONE BEAUTY (J. HARPER), COURTESY OF THREE SHIPS (L. THOMPSON) & ALISON SLATTERY (E. TASTET)

At a time when burnout and disengagement as well as a lack of trust in institutions are major social issues, female leaders across various industries are challenging traditional hierarchical models and contributing to more humane, collaborative and sustainable ways of working. Here's how three Canadian founders are redefining leadership—and proving that it is possible to lead with heart while creating success and value.

BUILDING NEW MODELS OF WORK

Jenn Harper, the founder and CEO of Cheekbone Beauty, was working in sales in the food and hospitality space when a dream about three Indigenous little girls in lipgloss changed the trajectory of her career. "I wanted to figure out how to make a lipgloss, and I wanted to use a portion of the profits to do something to support my Indigenous community," she says.

From the beginning, Harper knew she wanted to build a business that makes an impact—the Certified B Corporation donates funds and products to organizations like Navajo Water Project and One Tree Planted and funds scholarships for Indigenous students—and operates with intention. "When you get to feel good about the work you do, I think that matters in 2026," says Harper.

The Ontario-based cosmetics brand's core values are inspired by a set of guiding principles from Harper's Anishinabe culture called the Seven Grandfather Teachings. Values like honesty, love and humility are integrated into the philosophy and operations of the business; there's an emphasis on communicating with tact, caring for co-workers and eschewing traditional workplace hierarchies in favour of a culture of collaboration.

"I've always loved the idea of building a company with a really good culture," says Harper. "I really wanted this to be a place where people felt like they could be themselves."

Three Ships co-founder Laura Thompson also drew from her experiences working in corporate sales and finance to build her natural-skincare company, now an eight-figure business. For example, poorly run one-on-ones with a former manager inspired Thompson to introduce a more formal framework outlining how they would be conducted at Three Ships. "It's a big opportunity if you run good meetings as a business," says Thompson. "That's a huge leg up over some of your competitors, and it's an area I think a lot of companies get wrong."

Having had a fraught early-career experience at a start-up where she "felt like decisions were being made behind closed doors," Thompson also tries to be as transparent as possible with her team about the health of the business. "When we were running into cash-flow issues several years ago, we were transparent with them about the amount of money we had in the bank and how many months of runway we had left, and it turned into a really positive experience," she says.

PRIORITIZING FLEXIBILITY AND ENGAGEMENT

At Three Ships, the quarterly pulse surveys have been showing that employee engagement is "consistently above industry averages," says Thompson. To drive engagement and retention, the Toronto-based company offers benefits including a hybrid work model, Friday afternoons off in the summer and a paid sabbatical month when employees reach their five-year service milestone.

"It's not just one program; it's doing the right thing consistently and showing that you recognize that people have lives outside of work and that you support those lives outside of work," says Thompson.

The employees at Tastet, a food-guide and tech platform headquartered in Montreal, also enjoy a flexible work culture and a number of unique perks. "People do their best work when they feel respected, autonomous and proud of what they're building," says founder and CEO Elise Tastet. There are two in-office anchor days, but the hours are flexible, and employees can work remotely the rest of the week. Plus, there are team trips, and restaurant visits are paid for by the company. "There are a lot of fun parts," says Tastet. "We're very lucky."

CELEBRATING WINS TOGETHER

Beyond workplace perks, employees at Tastet and Three Ships also have a direct stake in their company's success: Tastet offers workers stock options, and every employee at Three Ships has shares in the business.

"I think that's huge because when they hear us talk about growth and the long-term potential of the company, they can actually understand 'Okay, I'm going to benefit from this—not just in terms of career prospects but in terms of actual money that I could make from this down the road if the company were ever to sell,'" says Thompson.

Ultimately, in building inclusive, collaborative organizations for which core values come first and employee engagement is a priority, these Canadian entrepreneurs are demonstrating how empathy-driven leadership can be good business too.

"Women who build companies are building a more empathetic workforce, and I think that's important," says Tastet. ■

IT TAKES TWO

Maguire's co-founders on taking risks, building a fashion business and their entrepreneurial journey.

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE that Montreal-based footwear brand Maguire was founded in 2017 with only $15,000, a bonus that co-founder Myriam Belzile-Maguire had received at work. "I'd never had this amount of money before in my life, and I used it all to buy our first production," she says. It was just enough to produce one shoe style in two colours—the starting point for what has now become one of Canada's buzziest accessories brands, known for its stylish, accessibly priced leather shoes and boots.

Almost a decade on, Maguire boasts four stand-alone boutiques in North America, a collaboration with Quebec retailer Simons and multiple CAFA awards, including the coveted Accessory Designer of the Year honour in 2024.

Here, we talk to Belzile-Maguire and her sister, Romy Belzile-Maguire (the other co-founder of the brand), about the risks they took to launch their business, the challenges they overcame along the way and the highlights of their entrepreneurial journey.

Romy and Myriam Belzile-Maguire

What were you doing before founding Maguire?

MYRIAM BELZILE-MAGUIRE: "I was a footwear designer prior to starting the company, and I was working for the Aldo Group. I learned a lot about shoes and production and producing in all kinds of different countries. My job was to travel around the world and look at everything on the market, and I noticed that there were a lot of shoes under $150 and a lot of shoes over $500. My budget was more around $200 to $300 for a good pair of leather shoes, and I couldn't find many options. So that's why I decided to quit my corporate job and start the project. My family was not surprised. But my dad was also like, 'Why are you leaving a good job?' Because no one in our family was a business owner, and this was a risk."

ROMY BELZILE-MAGUIRE: "My background is in communication and marketing for non-profits. I spent my whole career doing marketing with no budget. When I joined Myriam, it was natural for me to work in start-up mode. I am used to doing the most with the dollars I get to promote my projects [with], and I think it's also part of how we grew Maguire: organically and with patience and one customer after another."

How did you get started?

M. B.-M.: "I quit my job in 2016, and we did a test before officially launching the business the following year. At first, we only had money to pay me a salary, and Romy was helping out at night and on the weekend. She quit her job once we opened the Montreal flagship and had enough money and regular sales for a second person."

PHOTOGRAPHY, SAMUEL FOURNIER (SHOES) & COURTESY OF MAGUIRE (BELZILE-MAGUIRE SISTERS)

R. B.-M.: "At the beginning, what really helped us was the support of our customers. We were so small that we couldn't buy inventory, so we would run pre-sales and people would pay for their shoes in advance. At the end of the day, when you build a brand, you need a community."

What was the most challenging part of launching the company?

M. B.-M.: "What comes to mind is an issue that remains complex even today: finances, particularly the company's financing methods and the management of cash flow. I learned that when it comes to financing, the key element is being able to rely on an account manager who truly believes in the project and is fully committed to it. We were very fortunate in that respect. At National Bank, our account manager acted as a genuine partner and an ambassador for the brand. She even helped us discover creative solutions that we would not have thought of otherwise."

R. B.-M.: "When we started, Myriam was able to make great products and I was able to go to market and sell the products. So the beginning was easy for us because we were in control of the products and the branding. But then when you start selling, everything else appears and you have to handle things like finances, HR, logistics and operations."

Have you ever had to pivot the business?

M. B.-M.: "The current socio-economic and political climate is pushing us to stay agile and rethink our expansion strategies in order to support sustainable growth. We had to rethink all our prices and shipping strategies. Instead of opening more stores in the U.S., we're now looking at opportunities in the Canadian market and Europe."

Nearly 10 years on, you've accomplished a lot with Maguire. Was there a moment that made you feel like it has all been worth the risk?

M. B.-M.: "Now that I'm older, I realize that there's almost as much risk in not doing an idea as there is in doing it. In 2016, I had a job. It was well paid, and everything was great, but then COVID-19 happened, and I may have lost that job [if I hadn't quit]. Of course entrepreneurship is risky, but I feel like there's risk in any path at some point. So you may as well do it and see what happens."

Looking back at their entrepreneurial journey, the sisters are proud of what they have accomplished and excited for the next decade. This year, they are looking at a U.S. warehouse and new retail spaces in Canada and—for the first time—exploring wholesale opportunities in Europe. "I think you always have to be willing to change," says Myriam. ■

ENTREPRENEURSHIP 101

TIPS FOR LAUNCHING A BUSINESS

If you've been thinking about taking the leap into entrepreneurship, you're in good company. Two in five Canadians are looking to start a new business, according to a recent survey by the Diversity Institute at Toronto Metropolitan University. For those aged 18 to 20, that number jumps to 56.5 percent. Today, only about 20 percent of small and medium-sized enterprises in Canada are majority-owned by women.

Get started by identifying a business idea that you feel very strongly about. "You have to be passionate about the business you want to launch because you're not going to work 40 hours a week," says Mélissa Du Sault, account manager for Commercial Banking at National Bank. "It's really almost a 24-7 job." Your business should also meet a market need or offer an improvement on what's currently available. "It's all about disrupting the market when you launch a business," she adds. "You have to know your competition."

Do your background and customer research, think about what your competitive edge will be and, if possible, build up a financial cushion before leaving your day job. "[For] the [first] three to five years of a business, it's a start-up," says Du Sault. "And during that time, you might not have a salary, insurance or a pension."

You'll also need to put together a short business plan outlining your vision and including elements like competitor research and financial projections. "It has to be precise, concise and straight to the point," says Du Sault. A compelling, well-written plan will also be necessary if you need a line of credit or financing to launch or grow your business.

As your business matures and evolves, you can adjust the plan, and your bank could even help connect you to relevant local and government supports and resources to support growth. "Your banker should be able to provide you with all that knowledge or at least put you in contact with people with that knowledge," says Du Sault.

For more tips on starting your own business, visit **nbc.ca/business**.

Linking UP

It's tempting to believe that we live in a professional world where the glass ceiling has long been shattered, but the truth is women (and LGBTQIA2S+ folks, of course) in business still face far more barriers than men. Inequalities mean that we lag behind in these spheres, which is why female-only networking organizations have popped up across the country. Here are five groups looking to bridge the gap through connection.

By CAITLIN STALL-PAQUET

WOMEN'S NETWORK

Started as a response to a need rather than as a business idea, this network held its first summit amid International Women's Day event cancellations during the COVID-19 pandemic to help women find connection in a time of isolation. Six years on, it still supports working professionals and entrepreneurs alike by driving leadership advancement.

Every season, this Ontario-based organization welcomes hundreds of attendees in person and reaches thousands more through media, social platforms and a subscriber base. However, its real impact happens at events, where it prioritizes research-based workshops and panels over entertainment so women can walk away with usable tools and pathways for next steps. Director and founder Kristine Leadbetter-Gold sees how women are still navigating the triple shift (having a job and doing domestic labour and child care alongside emotional work), the motherhood penalty, the menopause penalty, the pink tax and the glass ceiling—which she says is increasingly turning into "the glass cliff," referring to women being placed in risky leadership positions during a crisis.

"The reality is we still have not solved the challenges facing professional women," she says. "Every year, I ask myself if we still need gender-specific networks, and every year, the answer is yes. The demand is there because the challenges persist." Leadbetter-Gold does see light on the horizon, though, with younger generations being more outspoken, bolder and less willing to tolerate inequity. **womensnetwork.ca**

WBE CANADA

Think of the Women Business Enterprises Canada Council (WBE Canada) as a one-stop shop of sorts in the female-centric entrepreneurial world. It acts as a nexus, offering a wide array of services to businesses that are at least 51 percent owned and run by Canadian women. First up, its certification helps members get direct access to corporate and government opportunities. WBE Canada is essentially a stamp of approval for local, national and global supplier diversity programs, which are implemented by 95 percent of Fortune 500 companies. The latter are always looking to work with women-owned companies, and this organization is the connective tissue that can get entrepreneurs-in-the-making in front of them.

To give participants a boost and get them ready for those big meetings, WBE Canada hosts a bunch of monthly online events on subjects like managing cash flow, reviewing resources and meeting buyers. Plus, its annual national conference in Toronto is a networking extravaganza that creates opportunities for 400-plus certified women to connect. **wbecanada.ca**

PHOTOGRAPHY: ADOBE STOCK

MONDAY GIRL

Aiming to help level a very uneven playing field, Monday Girl creates spaces where women can build real relationships with mentors from companies like Google, Deloitte, Nike and Sephora. The organization knows that women enter the workforce with less access to the informal networks, sponsor relationships and insider knowledge that propel careers forward. Its North America-wide and online events—there were over 300 in 2025—are designed to turn connections into real opportunities, like job offers, promotions, mentorship and strategic clarity.

Rather than providing a jolt of motivational high, this team is looking to build momentum, forge real relationships and accelerate professions. "When women receive consistent strategic support early in their careers, the ripple effects extend far beyond individual advancement; they reshape entire industries," says co-founder Rachel Wong.

Monday Girl's data shows that women remain significantly under-represented in C-suites, boardrooms and founder circles. But the problem isn't a lack of talent or ambition; it's a lack of access. The organization's 2025 Canadian Women's Mentorship & Networking Report found that 85 percent of working Canadian professional women stated that having a mentor was vital to advancing their careers, but only 15 percent had one. These gatherings aren't meant to be about collecting business cards and moving on—organizers care more about what happens after participants leave. **joinmondaygirl.com**

WOMEN OF INFLUENCE

For the past 30 years, this Toronto organization has been focusing on celebrating women who are building companies, leading organizations and creating impact. It draws attention to its participants' successes through national awards, live events and editorial storytelling. "When women see other women being recognized at scale, it magnifies what feels possible," says president Linda Kuga-Pikulin.

Kuga-Pikulin has always striven to create a community in which women support women through real connections, shared experiences and public celebrations of accomplishments. That spotlight is important when it comes to normalizing and celebrating female success at scale. She also thinks it's important for women in business to surround themselves with people who understand what they're building and want to see them succeed.

The expert businesswoman points out that entrepreneurship can be isolating, so community matters. Women come to the network she built for connection, recognition and opportunity. Since many of its programs are nomination-based or application-led, those who end up in them are accomplished and serious about what they're building.

Its flagship events, including the RBC Canadian Women Entrepreneur Awards and the Top 25 Women of Influence Awards, bring together leaders from across industries to celebrate high achievers. However, the network's reach is even broader offstage thanks to digital platforms and social media reaching more than one million people. With year-round operations through awards, content and community programming, the organization continually has something about women in business on the go. **womenofinfluence.ca**

STARTUP CANADA

This national organization serves up resources for women-identifying business people who are in the early stages of their careers and looking to learn as well as scale up their endeavours. It posts all sorts of webinars on its website, available for free to anyone looking to brush up on topics like financial literacy, women entrepreneurs' well-being and business communication in times of crisis.

You can also sign up for in-person networking events or tune in to Startup's eponymous podcast, hosted by CEO Kayla Isabelle. On it, she explores a different key area of business each month, from funding to scaling and marketing to HR. These conversations feature innovative women across various fields, like biomedical engineer turned entrepreneur Rashmi Prakash and women's-health specialist Rachel Bartholomew. **startupcan.ca** ■

BE MINE

Looking for an exciting new project? What if you could... buy a business? According to Global Affairs Canada, women remain under-represented in business acquisitions, accounting for just 31.4 percent in 2022. We spoke with Alexandre Ollive, CEO of Repreneuriat Québec, for advice on getting started in business acquisition.

By ELISABETH MASSICOLLI

How do you go about buying a business?

"Start by defining and planning your acquisition. This will help you assess your strengths, identify promising sectors, analyze your financial capacity and explore financing options. Talk to your family and network to [help you] consider personal factors and gain support.

"If you're looking to take over a family business or your current workplace, have a conversation with the owner. For external acquisitions, the market can be opaque, as many sellers prefer discretion to avoid alarming clients, employees or suppliers. Confidential matchmaking platforms, such as the Repreneuriat Québec Index, can be useful for finding businesses for sale."

What resources are available to help?

"Several organizations support women in business. Repreneuriat Québec, along with partners like BCF Business Lawyers, Fonds de solidarité FTQ and PwC, co-founded the Women in Business Acquisition movement. They offer guidance, webinars, networking opportunities and training sessions.

"Since 2022, new initiatives have emerged, including the Excelles Repreneuriat fund, launched by the Business Development Bank of Canada. This $50-million investment-and-accelerator fund supports women in identifying, acquiring and managing businesses successfully."

repreneuriat.quebec ■

To learn more about best practices related to business transfers and acquisitions, visit nbc.ca.

PHOTOGRAPHY, GETTY IMAGES

SPENDING AND FINANCES

10 Questions With MISS DARCEI

Beauty creator Miss Darcei built her platform on bold experimentation and sharp commentary. Behind the viral moments is a disciplined approach to money. She shares the risks, habits and systems—from leaving her steady job to budgeting around her average month—that helped her turn creative ambition into sustainable success.

By ELISABETH MASSICOLLI

1 **If your wallet could talk, what would it say about you?** "It would say I'm dramatic but disciplined. I'll spend big if it builds something long term, but I don't impulse-buy the way I used to. I've learned the difference between exciting and strategic."

2 **What's the best financial advice you've ever received?** "'Don't build your life around your best month. Build it around your average one.' In a creative career, income fluctuates. Stability comes from planning for the middle, not the peak."

3 **What's the biggest financial risk you've ever taken?** "Leaving a 'normal' job to do content full-time. It felt scary at the time, but betting on myself was the only way to build something real."

4 **You get to test and review many products regularly, but how do you manage your own beauty budget?** "PR [packages] satisfy my curiosity. My own money goes toward staples I'll actually finish. I repurchase instead of buying what's trending. My latest purchase was Huda Beauty's pressed powder. My advice is: Don't let trends bully your budget. Invest in products you'll use daily. Experiment occasionally; save consistently."

5 **What's a small habit that has helped you spend more intentionally?** "I wait 48 hours before buying anything non-essential. If I still want it after the dopamine fades, then maybe the desire is real."

6 **How do you balance creative authenticity with the commercial realities of monetizing content?** "If I wouldn't use it off-camera, I won't promote it on-camera. Longevity matters more than quick checks. I also separate 'Darcei the person' from 'Darcei the brand.' This system protects my energy, so my creativity doesn't burn out."

7 **What's one financial habit that makes you feel grounded?** "Monthly money check-ins. Numbers calm me down more than ignoring them ever could."

8 **What was the biggest mistake you made early on as a content creator that shaped how you run your business today?** "Saying yes to everything. I thought volume meant growth. It doesn't. Alignment is more important. If it builds trust, authority or future leverage, I'm interested. If it's just money without momentum, I'll pass."

9 **What's the most meaningful purchase you've made lately, and why did it feel right?** "Investing in my health. I went to a doctor and got every test imaginable done. I want to make sure that I'm staying healthy so I can keep doing what I love."

10 **What would you tell your younger self—before the brand deals and visibility—about building a sustainable creative career?** "Build structure before you chase scale. Visibility without systems creates chaos. Sustainability is the real flex." ■

PHOTOGRAPHY: SSAM KIM

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*Clinical study conducted on 30 subjects. **Clinical study of 248 subjects, 56 days.

MIRROR, **ZARA HOME** ($549, ZARAHOME.COM)

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♣ SUR DIFFUSER OIL, **LOHN** ($30, SHOPLOHN.COM)

STYLING, MACA ATENCIO

perspectives

THE LATEST IN TRAVEL, DESIGN AND CULINARY NEWS.

ICONIC DESIGN

The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation just made its most unexpected—and, honestly, brilliant—move yet with a rug collection in collaboration with Rugs Direct, and we're completely obsessed. Inspired by Wright's most iconic architectural motifs—the geometric precision, the organic warmth, the patterns that made his interiors as legendary as his buildings—each rug is essentially a piece of design history for your home. The collection includes area rugs and runners in palettes ranging from earthy neutrals to bolder, jewel-tone hues. And at Rugs Direct prices, Wright's genius has never been this accessible. **rugsdirect.com**

Perfectly Undone

Etsy just made it official: Washed linen is the texture of 2026, and your home (and wardrobe) is about to feel it everywhere. Softly rumpled duvet covers, breezy curtains that move with the lightest wind and oversized blazers with that effortless, lived-in finish that somehow always looks intentional are coming your way. What makes washed linen so right for this moment? It's the anti-trend trend: natural, biodegradable and aging beautifully with every single wash. Independent Etsy makers are already running with it in the most beautiful ways, with earthy table runners, hand-dyed dresses and linen sheets in muted palettes that are quietly luxurious. Consider this your permission to embrace the wrinkles. **etsy.com**

Zero-Proof Props

Beyond Noa, the country's first national non-alcoholic cocktail competition, has officially arrived. Held by Quebec-based zero-proof spirit company Noa, it's a massive deal for the sober-curious movement that's been growing over the past few years. Forget sad sparkling water dressed up with a lime wedge; Beyond Noa is all about complex botanical spirits, fermented teas, craft non-alcoholic beers and non-alcoholic wines that genuinely hold their own at the dinner table. This landmark competition brings together local producers and judges on a national stage to recognize the real craft behind alcohol-free drinks. Whether you are fully sober, are dry-ish or simply love a beautiful guilt-free drink on a Tuesday, Canada's non-alcoholic scene is officially worth toasting. **@drink-noa.com**

TEXT, MAGA ATENCIO & TRUC NGUYEN; PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF RUGS DIRECT, ETSY, NOA, SUPERNATURAL, IKEA & TERRA KAFFE

LIFE TECH

Saunas, ice baths and red-light therapy are ubiquitous these days in many cities, found at dedicated spaces and inside high-end gyms and spas. Now, new longevity-focused centres are combining these popular offerings with therapies and technologies designed to optimize performance, health and well-being.

At Toronto's Supernatural, which opened last year in the Yorkville neighbourhood, guests can book in for one of the longevity-focused spa recommended "protocols" to address issues ranging from aging to recovery. There are countless technologies to choose from: cryotherapy and oxygen chambers, a light pod, customized IV drips and vitamin shots, performance assessments, biomarker testing and more. The centre even offers services that address surface-level concerns with more standard tools like lasers, peels and biostimulators. Similarly, Vancouver's Regen Recovery offers DEXA body scans (dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry non-invasive imaging tests, which use low-dose X-ray to accurately measure body composition, including body-fat percentage, lean muscle mass and bone density) and time in a hyperbaric oxygen chamber alongside more traditional treatments like massage and acupuncture. Upgrade Labs, in Oakville, Ont., and Calgary, is focused on performance and recovery technologies so guests and members can incorporate things like cryotherapy and full-body compression sessions into their wellness routine. **hellosupernatural.com**, **regen-recovery.ca**, **upgradelabs.com**

Supernatural in Toronto

Make It Pop

After years of playing it safe with a sea of whites and blond wood, IKEA is finally breaking free with collections that are bursting with bold graphic prints and saturated hues that remind us exactly why we fell in love with the Swedish brand in the first place. But the real standouts here? A lineup of Bluetooth speakers that actually look like they belong in a well-designed space. Whether you're doing a full refresh or just need one statement piece to shake things up, IKEA is offering every reason to browse again. Budget-friendly maximalism? Yes, please. **ikea.com** ■

RISE AND SHINE

Coffee lovers, clear some counter space. The Terra Kaffe Demi is here, and it's every bit as gorgeous as it is functional. The colours alone are enough to make you want to rearrange your entire kitchen. ("Chef's kiss" doesn't quite cover it.) Picture rich, thoughtful hues designed for people who believe their morning ritual deserves to look as good as it feels. Demi is built for the coffee enthusiast who wants barista-level results without the barista-level learning curve—or price tag. **terrakaffe.com**

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SPRING STYLE, THE MELANIE LYNE WAY

Step into the new season with Melanie Lyne's SS26 collection—a refined edit of contemporary silhouettes, elevated fabrics and polished details designed for every occasion. From tailored separates and lightweight layers to statement dresses, the collection offers versatile pieces that move effortlessly from day to evening. Crafted for those who dress with intention, each look reflects Melanie Lyne's signature balance of elegance and modernity. **melanielyne.com**

WAKE UP TO YOUNGER-LOOKING HAIR

Hair renews itself overnight, and this serum works in sync with that natural rhythm. Kérastase's Overnight Youth Serum, powered by Pro-Xylane™ and Ochrophyta Algae, targets visible signs of hair aging, including dryness, dullness, frizz and loss of volume and thickness. Its lightweight texture melts instantly into lengths, leaving hair silky, revitalized and delicately scented by morning.

($98, kerastase.ca)

astrology

TAURUS
APRIL 20 – MAY 20

After a hectic end to March, you move into a calmer phase that gives you time to look at the bigger picture and work out what's really going on. The choices you make now will be important, so don't let yourself be distracted by the reappearance of an ex who's eager to rekindle your affair. It could be fun for a short while, but it will pull you back into the past, when you should be reaching for the future.

GEMINI
MAY 21 – JUNE 20

Are you still trying to turn around a situation that's not going your way? Taking risks in the hope of getting a brilliant last-minute result? Ask yourself why you're doing this. If you win, then fine; but if you lose, you could lose big. It might be better to simply let it all go. Uranus' entry into your sign this month will bring new opportunities and much brighter prospects.

CANCER
JUNE 21 – JULY 22

You're nervous about meeting up with someone special from your past, but you needn't worry. Enough time has gone by since the end of the affair for you both to have moved on, and neither of you feels the need to reopen old wounds. When you talk about old times, the feeling is warm and nostalgic and there's no bitterness; you may have lost a lover, but you've gained a friend, so be happy with that.

LEO
JULY 23 – AUGUST 22

The first disagreement in a new relationship is always difficult because you haven't learned each other's style of arguing. You may not have met anyone quite like this before—someone who can push back just as hard as you—and in these early days, you may be tempted to think that any sort of agreement between you is impossible. That's not true. Give yourselves time, don't take things too seriously and all will be well.

VIRGO
AUGUST 23 – SEPTEMBER 22

An unexpected career opportunity may seem a long way out of your comfort zone, but is that a reason to say no? If you think you don't know enough about what the job involves, then ask for more information, talk to people who have done it before or research it online. In fact, your talents are exactly right for it. You don't know it yet, but this is the chance you've been waiting for.

LIBRA
SEPTEMBER 23 – OCTOBER 22

If you've made a few wrong moves recently, now is a good time to put things right. If you made a hasty decision, you can go back and say that after giving it some thought, you've decided not to proceed. If you argued with someone, you can say you're sorry and all will be well. And if you said no to a new love affair because you thought it could never work, you can change that too.

SCORPIO
OCTOBER 23 – NOVEMBER 21

An explosive argument flaring up without warning must surely signal the end of a romance, but, in fact, the opposite is true. Somehow, this fierce exchange about what you like and don't like about each other allows the relationship to breathe, with the result being that the affair becomes closer and sexier than ever. You might even find yourselves planning your long-term future; are you sure you're ready for that?

SAGITTARIUS
NOVEMBER 22 – DECEMBER 21

Although it's wise that you're making plans for the long term and doing all you can to reach your goals, there are good times to be had in the short term too. The present moment must always be taken as it is—you can't save it for some future date. So if there's something you want to do or a trip you want to go on, take advantage of the playful mood of the planets over the next few weeks and go for it.

CAPRICORN
DECEMBER 22 – JANUARY 19

For a relationship to grow, you have to say the right thing at the right time to let the other person know how you feel about them. Maybe you couldn't judge the right moment or you were shy or you didn't want to spoil what you already had, but for some reason, you've left it very late. You can rescue it, but you'll have to be quick. Don't overthink it—just go from here.

AQUARIUS
JANUARY 20 – FEBRUARY 18

A new chapter of your life starts now, as your ruler Uranus changes signs. If you feel that you've been held back for any reason recently, unable to use your talents or follow your interests, all that is set to change. Over the coming months, you will recover that sense of freedom you lost. Set your own agenda. If you want to do something, do it—nobody will stop you.

PISCES
FEBRUARY 19 – MARCH 20

You are wonderfully flexible and adaptable, but even you can't live in the past and the present at the same time. To stay rooted in the past with the people and places you know so well while also reaching for the future is too much of a stretch. This month will show you that your present situation can't continue. To be where you want to be, you need to move on—and if that means leaving the past behind, so be it.

ARIES
MARCH 21 – APRIL 19

Your family and closest friends are disapproving of your latest project. You could ignore them and carry on alone, of course, but they are just trying to stop you from going too far too fast. When the wave of planetary energy that has carried you forward starts to subside after the 6th, you have the perfect excuse to slow things down a little. There's no need to abandon your plans; just revise the timetable.■

TEXT: BERNARD FITZWALTER; COLLAGE: GUILLAUME BRIÈRE

final word

ELLE CAPTURE PRESENTED BY Black's

The finalist in the **CULTURE CATEGORY** of our ELLE Capture contest is Izabel Kazenbroot-Guppy. A film and digital fashion photographer from Vancouver Island, Kazenbroot-Guppy is inspired by nostalgia, love and heartbreak and the moments in between. She aspires to take photos that feel like memories. "This image was taken behind the scenes of [Canadian indie musician] Art d'Ecco's music video for his single 'I Feel Alive,'" she says. "I was shooting photos [of him] between 'action' and 'cut' in the hope of capturing a relaxed expression—a moment of drifting off into thought. The scene was set for a Fosse-style choreographed number on the bar top." ■

PHOTOGRAPHY, IZABEL KAZENBROOT-GUPPY

EVERYTHING YOU NEED FOR A DREAMY OUTDOOR SPACE

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SPRING/SUMMER
2026

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