

ELLE

SEPTEMBER 2026 £4.99

'THERE'S A
FIRE IN ME'
ANYA TAYLOR-JOY
ON LIVING FEARLESSLY

+

**NEW-SEASON
DRESS CODES**
FIERCE FRILLS
ARTFUL MESSSES
LUXE LEATHER

**MADE
WITH
LOVE**

FASHION'S CRAFT REVOLUTION

A still life composition for a Dior advertisement. A light blue quilted handbag with a silver-tone metal clasp is placed on a dark wooden pedestal. Behind it is a large, rustic copper pot filled with a lush green plant that has many small, delicate purple flowers. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The word "Dior" is written in a large, black, serif font across the middle of the image.

Dior



Dior









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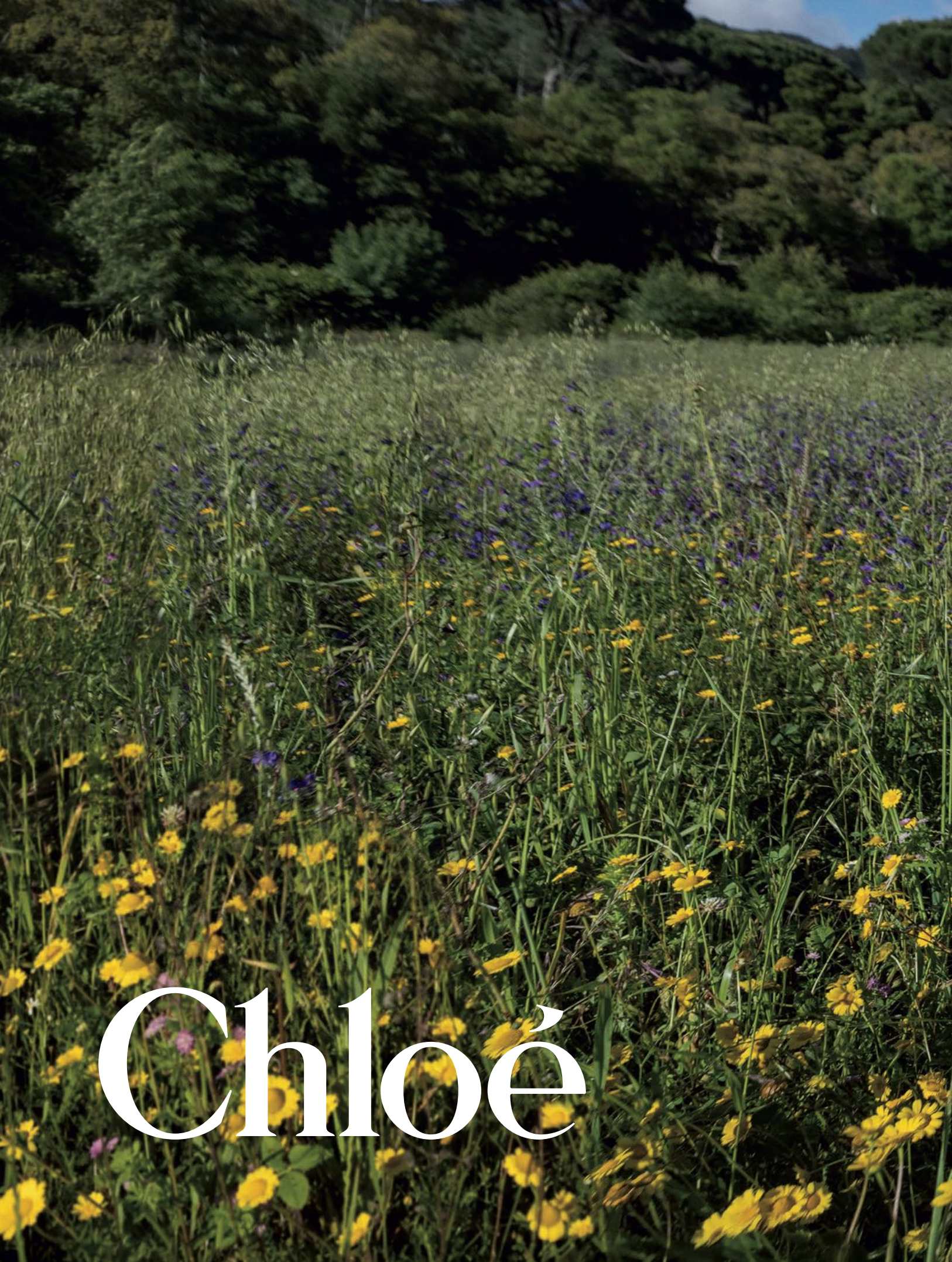


miu miu





Cartier



Chloé







Constellation

FOREVER TIMELESS

Ω
OMEGA



GIVENCHY

Liu Wen

PARIS

Juergen Teller

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SEPTEMBER 2026



ON THE COVER

ANYA TAYLOR-JOY WEARS DRESS, PRICE ON REQUEST, DIOR. PLATINUM AND DIAMOND NECKLACE AND PLATINUM, GOLD AND DIAMOND RINGS, ALL PRICE ON REQUEST, TIFFANY & CO. PHOTOGRAPH: YULIA GORBACHENKO. STYLING: JAIME KAY WARREN. HAIR: GREGORY RUSSELL AT THE WALL GROUP. MAKE-UP: GEORGIE EISELL AT THE WALL GROUP, USING DIOR. NAILS: KIM TRUONG AT A-FRAME. SET DESIGN: ROMAIN GOUDINOUX AT BRYANT ARTISTS. LOCATION: GALLERY 6 @GALLERY6SPACE. PRODUCTION: VIEWFINDERS. STYLIST'S ASSISTANTS: PATRICK RAMMELKAMP AND HADYA TUOFIQ

PHOTOGRAPH: YULIA GORBACHENKO

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IN THE HOT SEAT
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With Love, Since 1837 **TIFFANY & CO.**



HardWear by Tiffany
A symbol of love's strength.

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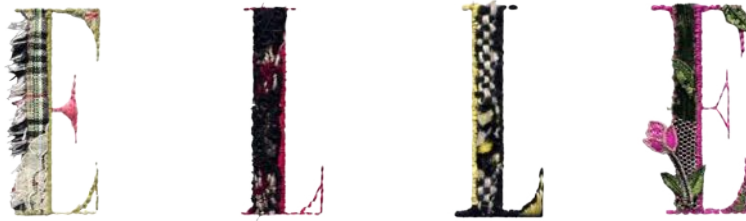
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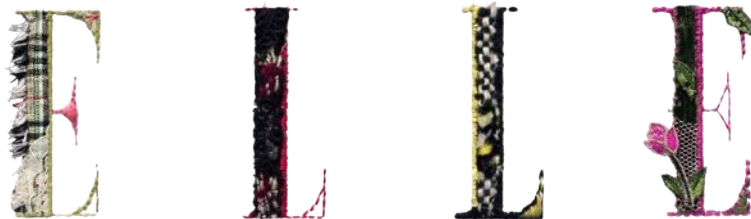


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FENDI







ETRO

PALAZZO MONTI
Artist Residency

editor's letter



**FORTUNE FAVOURS
THE BOLD**
ANYA TAYLOR-JOY,
OUR COVER STAR THIS
MONTH, WEARS DIOR
AND TIFFANY & CO



CALL IT FORESHADOWING OR DESTINY, BUT SOME OF MY earliest school memories are of my teachers commenting on my clothes. My wardrobe was a cheerful mix of the Oshkosh denim overalls my mom would purchase and sweet pint-sized dresses in manifold colours and prints, handmade by my grandmother just for me. The approving nods I'd get from the faculty each morning taught me formative lessons about the ways clothes can tell a story about who we are.

Grandma Bessie spent her younger years working as a seamstress, but by the time I came along, she would only turn on her Singer machine for close family and friends. My experiences flipping through the pattern books and mounds of fabric and trimmings she kept in her little sewing room instilled in me quite early on a deep appreciation for the unique skill and creativity that goes into making beautiful clothes.

She would, I think, have adored the theme of this September issue, *Made with Love*, celebrating fashion's resounding return to craft. Not that handwork ever went away. But in a world of artificial intelligence, algorithmic sameness and Big Tech trillionaires, the greatest luxury now feels like the endless magic of the human hand.

The autumn runways were an explosion of it: Jonathan Anderson's artfully reimagined Bar jackets and embroidered crinoline miniskirts for Dior, worn by our cover star Anya Taylor-Joy, who talks to ELLE's Chiara Wilkinson about her peripatetic life and explosive new show *Lucky* on page 124. Then there were Matthieu Blazy's otherworldly tweed jackets, made of technicolour chainmail, at Chanel and Louise Trotter's delightfully out-there coats for Bottega Veneta, all shaggy, swingy, draped drama. A joyful glamour and artisanal spirit runs through the new season, which made the clothes especially exciting to shoot for this special issue.

There's always a buzz in the office when the best of the autumn collections begins to arrive in the fashion cupboard, before our stylists whisk them off to locations and studios and turn them into the visual storytelling you see here. Echoing the creativity that goes into the making of the clothes, our fashion team spends months dreaming up imaginative ways to bring them to life on the pages of ELLE with the hope of inspiring you to think through your own wardrobe, and personal style, in a new way. Grandma would approve.

Kenya

KENYA HUNT Editor-in-Chief

Top of the class



*Wearing
Nour Hammour
leather jacket*

A CULT LABEL AMONG EDITORS, ITS CHIC OUTERWEAR WILL BE MY GO-TO THROUGH THE CHANGING SEASONS



*Reading
Claudia Rankine's
'Triage'*

THIS GENRE-BLENDING EXPLORATION OF A FRAUGHT FRIENDSHIP IS A MUST-READ FROM ONE OF OUR LITERARY TITANS



*Wearing
Wales
Bonner skirt*

IT'S GIVING BIG BACK-TO-SCHOOL ENERGY – AND HIGH FASHION



TUDOR



BLACK BAY 54

What is it that drives someone to greatness? To take on the unknown, venture into the unseen, and dare all? This is the spirit that gave birth to TUDOR. This is the spirit embodied by every TUDOR Watch. Including the TUDOR Black Bay 54, a 37mm diameter, stainless steel diving watch, with high performance Manufacture caliber, taking inspiration from TUDOR's past and blending it boldly with contemporary appeal. Some are born to follow. You are born to dare.

**BORN TO
DARE**



ART DIR: PAUL MARCIANO PH: JOSH RYAN © GUESS®, LLC 2026



GUESS

contributors



The profiler

CHIARA WILKINSON

Wilkinson fell into journalism for the promise of free gig tickets as a student, but it was an 'insatiable curiosity' about the world that turned it into her career. She started on the news desk of her local paper in Edinburgh before joining *Time Out* and, later, *ArtReview*. Career highlights include glamping beside wild horses in Mongolia after the Naadam Festival and interviewing childhood hero Jacqueline Wilson. Her best writing advice? If you're stuck, write it as you'd tell your friends at the pub. This issue, she meets cover star Anya Taylor-Joy.



The stylist

RUDY SIMBA BETTY

Few stylists have a client list quite as starry as Rudy Simba Betty, ELLE's new contributing fashion editor. The Congo-born, London-based creative has worked with everyone from Naomi Campbell to Burna Boy. A highlight was being nominated as part of the BFC New Wave Creatives, 'which happened later in my career, but felt like a timely warm hug'. This autumn/winter season, he predicts that 'jazz shoes, Derbys, the Zizi styles from Repetto' will be everywhere, and recommends wearing them 'with or without socks'. See his work in 'The Bold Type' (page 140).



The writer

MADELINE CASH

The author of one of this year's most talked-about books, *Lost Lambs*, Cash decided she wanted to be a writer when she was a wee kindergartener. This early sense of direction clearly paid off. Her debut about a dysfunctional family became a runaway literary hit (she was a guest at ELLE Collective Book Club last month). Her most surprising writing habit is holding a rubber snake, and the book she always recommends is *The Nix* by Nathan Hill. In this month's issue, she writes about the sartorial differences between London and New York (page 44).

The model

AMARA KWAY

Born and raised in Gambela, Akway spent her teenage years training to be a runner for the national Ethiopian team. Now, she's switched lanes, and is a model on the international stage. Having debuted with Lanvin for SS20, she's gone on to walk for Givenchy, Valentino, Dries Van Noten and Schiaparelli. The biggest misconception people have of her? 'They often assume that I'm quiet,' she says. 'But I love chatting and getting to know people!'





**ISABEL
MARANT**

LONDON CODES
A LOOK FROM
THE ERDEM
AW26 SHOW

An American in London

*Madeline Cash, an author from
LA who recently moved to London
from New York, explores how she's
stuck with a style that works for
her, regardless of where she lives*

the moment

EARLY INTO MY AMEXIT, A VERY CHIC PUBLICIST TOLD ME IT IS A faux pas to wear 'wellies' in London, despite them being the most suitable footwear for the climate. I had just purchased a pair of JW Anderson galoshes, inordinately expensive for a garment shaped like a frog. But rainboots in the rain would, apparently, point to my emigrant ignorance and reveal me to be the stupid American that I am with my hideous accent, weather-appropriate shoes and inability to properly hail a bus. Raincoats and umbrellas, the publicist told me, are a non-starter as well. Waterproofs are for tourists and businessmen. British natives bear the full brunt of the storm, soak their trainers and ruin their blow-outs to preserve their sense of nationalism. When thinking about delineating my style between New York and London, this anecdote was the first that came to mind.

I have dressed the same since I shed my school uniform for my adult one: long skirts, long sleeves, dark colours. As my budget increased, so did the clothing's quality but, between the ages of 19 and 29, between brunches and nightclubs, New York and London, I more or less dress the same, which is to say, like a vaguely religious teenager. I dress like the secretary you hire after your spouse has discovered your affair with my predecessor. Trends oscillate at such volatile frequency (see the wonders our friend Jonathan Anderson has done with Dior), I thought it best to set an innocuous baseline for myself that can be expanded upon and accessorised depending on the occasion.

I travel a lot – this year alone to Morocco, Romania, Poland, Italy and a large swath of the American South. So how do I sustain the uniform across climates and cultures? Before any trip, I always look to Joan Didion's packing list – two skirts, two jerseys or leotards, one pullover sweater, two pairs of shoes, stockings, bra, nightgown, robe, slippers, cigarettes, bourbon – with a few modern updates, such as swapping the bourbon for a Coke Zero. Instead of trying to adhere to the times, I attempt to foster a sense of timelessness.

I am also attempting to cultivate a sense of placelessness. I do not dress with notable differences between cities, but it's not lost on me that people do. Zadie Smith, for instance, has pointed out

that 'nobody in London is impressed by the branded bags, shoes and watches that New York women always look so proud to own'. She attributes this to the Londoner's inherent 'coolness' versus Americans' status obsession, but I'd argue against this generalisation. London is too old, too big, too expensive and too diverse to contain a singular aesthetic. Though New York is only a modern microcosm of the vast London ecosystem, socioeconomic factors render some neighbourhoods comparable, so, if you're a New Yorker hoping to code-switch seamlessly between London diasporas, you can usually apply fashion to cardinal direction: the Upper East Side and west London share a certain poshness commensurate with the areas' priciness, while east London and the Lower East Side share younger, more contemporary sensibilities. Brooklyn may be a closer sartorial relative to south London, though I haven't spent enough time in Brooklyn nor south London to pinpoint what exactly they're doing down there. I believe one can dress with respect to the heritage of each neighborhood by sticking to the Didion-prescribed garb, avoiding obvious signifiers such as ostentatious labels and notable patterns (say, a Burberry plaid). While the length of hemlines rise and plummet like the American dollar versus the British pound, one can never go wrong with a smart pair of trousers. Paired with a cashmere cardigan, suddenly a British aristocrat is indistinguishable from an American transplant.

That's what I think anyway, but I can't really speak for London. Furthermore, I am not the arbiter of New York fashion either, because I'm ultimately from Los Angeles, which is a completely different stylistic beast. It's a living miracle I don't have a face lift and a small dog. Admittedly, I did once go blonde. Sometimes, even in America, one cannot escape one's birthright.

The best fashion advice is dress for the three Bs, a system I made up just now: body, budget, burial. Wear something flattering, don't go into debt to buy it and always dress like it might be for your open coffin. Before leaving the house, any house anywhere in the world, think: 'If I were to be struck dead in the street, hit by a yellow cab or red double-decker bus, would I be content in this outfit forever?' □



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agenda

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JAZZ SHOES

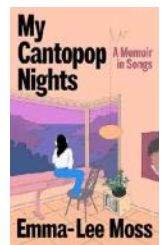
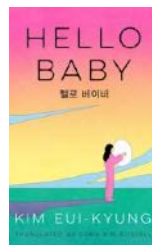
Jazz slippers are the new ballet flats. Thank Michael Rider, who has made the shoe a new house signature at Celine and created the year's breakout footwear trend in the process. We're currently wearing them with slouchy denim, micro-shorts and breezy skirts — clothes that make you want to move, just like the shoes.

GOTTA DANCE BELOW, FROM LEFT:
£45, MARKS & SPENCER.
£2,250, CELINE. £109, COS



read: CULT ESEA BOOKS

A heart-warming coming-of-age novel set in the Philippines; a thriller that plunges readers deep into Osaka's nightlife; a feminist Korean novel about six women who meet in a Seoul fertility clinic; and a memoir by singer-songwriter Emmy the Great (aka Emma-Lee Moss): a roster of East and Southeast Asian stories doesn't come much stronger than this. These new releases coincide with the ESEA literary festival, which returns to the Foyles flagship store, 107 Charing Cross Road, London, on 19 September. Fill your shelves.





see: THE STORY

Letitia Wright is making her National Theatre debut in 'The Story', a newsroom thriller about the death of a white teacher in a Black neighbourhood and the pursuit of truth, from 27 August to 24 October.

ELLE COLLECTIVE

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LOG ON FOR
YOUR CHANCE
TO SEE *THE STORY*
AND EAT DINNER AT
FORZA WINE WITH
ELLE COLLECTIVE



see: GEESE ON TOUR

Rock has been top of our summer soundtrack. To round off silly season with a bang, NYC's cult rock band Geese are arriving in the UK on 25 August to play Glasgow, Reading and Leeds and London's Troxy on 1 September. Spend one last moment in the moshpit.

wear: PENCIL PUSHER

Last season's 'great big skirt' has been replaced by something altogether neater. A straight-up, knee-length version prevails for autumn/winter 2026. But its simplicity ends at the silhouette. Shop and style options in brilliant textures, complex patterns and shades that challenge standard colour pairings. This isn't the time to skirt around the fun of fashion.



PHOTOGRAPHS: IMAXTREE, LEWIS EVANS, CHRISTINA EBENEZER

A/W 26 Collection
A reflection of modern essentials



VAGABOND
SHOEMAKERS



LA BOMBA

BE LOUD BE FREE

NEW

THE ORIGINAL EAU DE PARFUM & INTENSA
THE NEW FLORAL AMBERY FRAGRANCE

CAROLINA HERRERA

ELLE

FIRST LOOK

EDITED BY NAOMI PIKE

FIRST LOOK

We contain MULTITUDES

Put it all on, then strip it all off, says Prada this season. The brand proposed a real-life approach to getting dressed, removing layers for each catwalk turn. 'As a woman, each day demands not only a shifting of clothes, but a richness of identities within yourself,' said Miuccia Prada. If anyone knows how women strive to dress, it is the designer, who retains practicality in her designs. 'Expressions of living,' she calls them. Expressions of thriving, we say. Pile. It. On.





Hadya Tuofiq **SENIOR FASHION ASSISTANT**

'During shows, comfort is key. Kitten-heeled boots look great paired with baggy trousers, and there is nothing quite like a pointed toe to elevate an outfit. Lastly, Vivienne Westwood has some fabulous new blazers this season; this pink-and-white checked version will be my staple wardrobe piece to throw over simple outfits.'



1 Boots, £220, ALOHAS
2 Blazer, £990, VIVIENNE WESTWOOD **3** Sunglasses, £350, BOTTEGA VENETA at NET-A-PORTER **4** Mirror, £280, DIOR **5** Glaze Craze Tinted Lip Serum, £19, LANEIGE



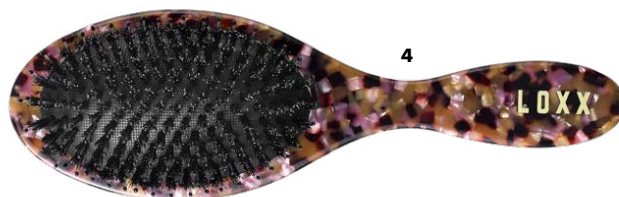
DRESS CODE

Fashion MONTH

Summer is drawing to a close, which can only mean one thing: fashion month is here. As we all prepare to board flights to New York, London, Milan and Paris, the ELLE team reveal the new-season buys we're coveting this month



1 Jacket, £4,400, MARNI **2** Skirt, around £1,259, TORY BURCH **3** Heels, £910, VALENTINO **4** Hero Hairbrush, £25, LOXX HAIR INC **5** UltraCharge Pro Power Bank, £69.95, BELKIN **6** Tidal Deep Hydration and Plumping Serum, £70, SUNDAY RILEY



Naomi Pike

COMMISSIONING EDITOR

'Going to the shows is always about a balance of looking good and feeling good. For me, that's a great skirt, statement jacket, hydrated skin, polished appearance and, ultimately, a phone that's fully charged.'



ELLE COLLECTIVE

WIN A CURATED SELECTION OF THE EDITORS' PICKS

SIGN UP ON PAGE 86 OR AT ELLECOLLECTIVE.CO.UK



Avril Mair **FASHION AND JEWELLERY DIRECTOR**

'Having once survived Milan Fashion Week without luggage, I refuse to check bags, so my Rimowa carry-on is full of statement pieces. This season, it's Jonathan Anderson's take on the Dior Bar jacket, plus a Chanel leopard bag that was lust at first sight. Tiffany's HardWear bracelet is a tough finishing touch.'

1



2



3



1 Bag, £7,260,
CHANEL 2 Jacket,
£4,200, **DIOR**
3 Suitcase, £1,090,
RIMOWA
4 Bracelet, price on
request, **TIFFANY**
& CO 5 Jeans,
£85, **COS**

4



5



Julia Storm **MULTIPLATFORM FASHION EDITOR**

'A big bag that fits my laptop is at the top of the list when it comes to my fashion-week survival kit, making it easy to work from anywhere. For a time-saving beauty hack, I use this Victoria Beckham lip liner as an all-in-one lip colour, blush and eyeshadow for quick touch-ups.'

1



2



1 Bag, £2,150,
PRADA
2 Flats, £395,
DEAR
FRANCES
3 Shirt, £320,
AGOLDE
4 Lip Definer,
£31, **VICTORIA**
BECKHAM
BEAUTY
5 Earrings,
around £160,
MEJURI

3



4



5



2



1



Holly Gorst **FASHION EDITOR**
'I'm gravitating towards timeless pieces that have effortless versatility. Loewe's Amazona bag remains a constant, styled with relaxed Celine boyfriend jeans and a simple tank. As we transition into winter, the same ease extends to beauty. Merit's Great Skin Serum is my go-to for a healthy glow.'

1 Sunglasses,
£315, **TOM FORD**
2 Jeans, £790,
CELINE 3 Bag,
£3,550, **LOEWE**
4 Jacket, £620,
TOTEME
5 Great Skin Instant
Glow Serum,
£35, **MERIT**

3



4



5





STREET STYLE

Get a GRIP

The top-handle bag is having a revival, worn in myriad ways by fashion's well-heeled crowd. Wear the classic silhouette with a utility shirt or a much-loved leather jacket for a look where laid-back ease meets polish. Whether you swing it by the handle or carry it in the crook of your elbow, stride forward with the knowledge you've got a grasp on what's in now.



MARCCAIN

Marc Cain Sports

THE MEMO

Between the COVERS

Fashion and literature have been bedfellows for years, but the relationship is becoming more prolific than ever

WORDS BY HANNAH NATHANSON

FOR ONCE, YOU DON'T NEED TO READ BETWEEN THE LINES. THIS summer, it's not the classic Nineties sandal or the corset dress that will afford you the most swagger. It's your holiday reading selection. 'Does a novel deserve more respect than a handbag?' asked *The New York Times* in a 2022 piece that considered whether the fashion set posing with hardbacks or starting Instagram book clubs was pure performance. There was Kendall Jenner on a yacht reading Chelsea Hodson's essay collection *Tonight I'm Someone Else*; and, more recently, the bookshelf backdrop at Dua Lipa and Callum Turner's wedding (the singer even opened The Manifesto Library in Porto). As books took on a status symbol of their own, signifying taste and intelligence, many assumed the trend would fade. Except it hasn't. The relationship between fashion and literature is ever evolving and has now taken on new meaning.

At a time when our attention is being compromised more than ever and algorithms are dictating our style and taste, books represent craft, skill and sophistication – all eternally fashionable. Earlier this year, Miu Miu hosted the fourth edition of its Literary Club in Milan, where guests included Alexa Chung and Emma Corrin. Themed around 'Politics of Desire', with a panel discussing Annie Ernaux's *A Girl's Story*, the event had an academic feel akin to the brand's heritage: Mrs Prada famously has a PhD in political science. For spring 2026, Coach launched its Explore Your Story campaign with Penguin Random House. The collection featured book charms of

titles such as Celeste Ng's *Little Fires Everywhere* and Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*.

Elsewhere, fashion's engagement in the literary world continues apace with Chanel's six-year sponsorship of Clivedon Literary Festival; Saint Laurent opening a bookstore in Paris; and Sézane's Literary Salon hosted by author Liv Little. For a more constant display of bookishness there's Jonathan Anderson's literary spin on the Dior book tote, loved by Rihanna, and the ever popular Daunt Books bag that nods to bohemian refinement. And the fashion crowd are flocking to Climax Books, founded by former *Dazed* editor Isabella Burley.



PAGE TURNERS
CLOCKWISE FROM
BOTTOM LEFT: A PINK
PHONE BOX IN SOHO
SQUARE TO CELEBRATE
30 YEARS OF ACNE PAPER.
A DIOR BOOK BAG.
RIHANNA WITH THE
DRACULA VERSION.
SHELVES AT CLIMAX BOOKS

'Brands like Miu Miu are getting involved in the literary space because it's one of the last ways you can signal taste in a world where every trend is available on demand 24/7,' says author and journalist Zing Tsjeng, who moderated a headline event at a Miu Miu Literary Club. 'There's something about reading that points to an intellectual sophistication that appeals because you can't easily buy it on the internet – it's something you have to cultivate over time.'

The writers brands are choosing to work with carry significance, too. Madeline Cash, author of one of this year's most-hyped reads, *Lost Lambs* (and a guest at ELLE's own Book Club), starred in a recent Gap campaign. According to the brand's chief marketing officer Fabiola Torres, Cash was chosen for her originality: 'We're drawn to people with a strong point of view and an authentic voice. Authors bring that in a meaningful way – they shape conversations, inspire individuality and connect communities through storytelling.'

What makes the relationship stronger than ever is its reciprocity; writers love to be swept up in the narrative of fashion. Next year, the Barbican exhibition 'Characters of Fashion' will explore how writers such as Toni Morrison and Joan Didion used clothing as a creative tool, alongside designs by Dior and Erdem and bespoke commissions from Simone Rocha. The author of *My Year of Rest and Relaxation*, Ottessa Moshfegh, who has collaborated with Proenza Schouler, Maryam Nassir Zadeh and Prada, says: 'I'm fascinated to hear my favourite designers talk about their process because it feels so similar to writing to me. In both, the work is a kind of magic act, transmitting something new and otherwise ineffable into a personal experience of art.'

As the actor BJ Novak declared in his opening speech at the 2026 Pen America Literary Gala: 'Writing is glamorous. Reading is glamorous. Freedom of speech is glamorous.' That glamour isn't going anywhere. □

1

- 1 T-shirt, £850, DIOR
 2 Notebook, £375, CELINE
 3 Heels, £870, KHAITE
 4 Bag, £2,200, BALENCIAGA
 5 Skirt, £375, GUCCI at MYTHERESA



- 1 Top, £165, POLO RALPH LAUREN
 2 Glasses, £310, CHLOE 3 Flats, £1,020, THE ROW at NET-A-PORTER
 4 Bag, £1,259, OLYMPIA LE-TAN
 5 Skirt, £240, GANNI

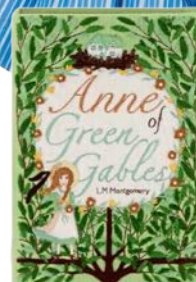


Join the LIT CROWD

The AW26 catwalks leant into literary styling. From Gucci to Versace, designers presented an intellectual take on everyday dressing with sharp tailoring, polished separates and an attitude in line with the book-chic mood



- 1 Cap, £65, SOEUR 2 Jumper, £1,110, VERSACE 3 Trousers, £475, VICTORIA BECKHAM 4 Mules, £540, LE MONDE BÉRYL 5 Glasses, £425, BOTTEGA VENETA



ELLE COLLECTIVE

JOIN ELLE'S MONTHLY BOOK CLUB TO HEAR FROM LEADING GLOBAL AUTHORS BY JOINING ELLE COLLECTIVE ALL ACCESS
 SIGN UP ON PAGE 86 OR AT ELLECOLLECTIVE.CO.UK

YOUR DANCING QUEEN SUMMER IS HERE

A large, bright, circular light source, resembling a sun or moon, dominates the background of the stage. Four performers are visible on stage: a guitarist on the left, two vocalists in the center, and a pianist on the right. The foreground is filled with the silhouettes of a large crowd, with many hands raised in the air, suggesting a high-energy concert atmosphere.

ABBA[®] Voyage

JESMYN WARD HAS SPENT MONTHS conversing with her younger selves. The bestselling author of the novels *Salvage the Bones* and *Sing, Unburied, Sing* (both of which won the US National Book Award for Fiction), as well as the memoir *Men We Reaped*, and more, is a MacArthur 'Genius' Fellow and the youngest person to have received the Library of Congress Prize for American Fiction. And yet, when confronted with the words she crafted in her earlier years, Ward's initial reaction was much like any other writer's: she cringed.

'The 1990s teen is still very much alive in me, that looks at the self and judges,' Ward says. 'Sometimes, when I think about my earlier work, on the surface, I'm like, "Oh, God, I was terrible. Everything was terrible."' But that perspective shifted when she began to compile her new nonfiction collection *On Witness and Respair*. 'To actually go back and sit with [the earlier work] enabled me to see beyond that 1990s, self-conscious, self-judging teen; to sit with another version of myself and see that version tenderly, almost.'

On Witness and Respair – so titled after an essay she published in the wake of her husband's death in 2020 – collects more than a decade of Ward's nonfiction works and previously unpublished speeches. Her essay about Hurricane Katrina precedes her study of William Faulkner, which itself precedes pieces on figures from Prince to author and activist Ta-Nehisi Coates. Ward writes of the legacy of *Gone with the Wind*; of her family and her home in Mississippi; and of hope and 'respair', defined as 'fresh hope after despair'. In narrowing down the collection, she gravitated to work that most seemed to be 'wrestling with the material in a more frank, open way'.

Ward imbues the word 'witness' with great meaning; to her, 'witnessing' is not an act of casual observation. No true witness is a bystander. To witness is to commit to absorbing an experience – a moment, a memory, a story – and carrying it forward.

After her husband's death, Ward sank into 'hot, wordless grief', but she did not stop writing. Some days, she wrote a single sentence. Others, she drafted thousands of words. (Those words would eventually form the bestselling novel *Let Us Descend*, a book that prompted *The New York Times* to compare Ward to Faulkner himself.) And she continued to witness: the pandemic making its sweep across the globe, the protests outside her doors. She paid

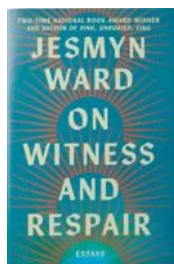


IN CONVERSATION WITH

Jesmyn WARD

In a world built on distraction, the acclaimed author of *Sing, Unburied, Sing* discusses the power of being present in moments of both grief and joy

WORDS BY LAUREN PUCKETT-POPE



CLEAR VIEW
JESMYN WARD
WANTS US TO
PAY ATTENTION

attention, not because it was easy, but because she believes doing so is a necessary precursor to any real and lasting solace.

Ward expands on this idea. 'If you are present for grief and loss and trauma, perhaps that leads you towards being present for expressions of joy.' Doing this work of witnessing in an era that incentivises distraction is as difficult for Ward as it is for any of us. She struggled to silence her criticisms when she reread her old work, and struggles daily to 'stand underneath a waterfall' of social media – 'this deluge of perspectives and information and "witness"'. There are times when standing under that waterfall causes despair. But her new book, she hopes, makes it clear that paying attention can also bring connection, resilience and conviction. It can bring us relief. 'Part of the work that, maybe, these essays will do in the world is to push back against the idea that you can't do anything,' she says. 'There is worth in witnessing.'

'*On Witness and Respair*' (£20, Bloomsbury) is out now



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INTRODUCING

Macy GRIMSHAW

Newly graduated, the designer is the London fashion scene's fastest-rising star, says Naomi Pike

MACY GRIMSHAW IS MAKING A NAME FOR HERSELF. TOUTED BY fashion editors as one to watch, the 25-year-old designer has created pieces worn by Lola Young, Simone Ashley and Emma Corrin, with bespoke commissions in high demand – and yet, for now, her workshop is also her Hackney living room. She shares the space with a flatmate whom she has known since growing up in Hong Kong. 'I can't wait to have a studio and a team,' she tells ELLE. 'Being a designer in the early stages can be solitary.'

A London resident since she moved to the city for university, Grimshaw turned the industry on to her designs at her Central Saint Martins' MA graduate show earlier this year. Her collection, styled by Harry Styles' collaborator Harry Lambert, was praised by fashion insiders for its creative reach, art-like sensibility and craftsmanship. Lambert first came to know of Macy's work through her BA graduate collection, quickly started requesting it for his shoots and later offered his help. 'I loved the first collection I made. I went into

the MA with the intention that I needed more time to work on my craft and create some crazy couture pieces,' she says. 'I managed to have that experience.'

Grimshaw is inspired by her own photography. 'I try to put everyday objects into a different context, to make these small, underappreciated details of life become beautiful,' she says. She points to one example: a jacket covered in what look like pencil shavings, but made from leather. It's a feat of creativity and a testament to her skill as a maker, too. 'For a lot of my pieces, there is not a second chance,' she adds. 'The sample is the first try on a full scale, and I genuinely don't know if it's going to work. It's my favourite part of the process.'

She has been busy developing ideas that have continued to garner buzz: a top embellished with cigarette stubs; a 'poem' dress designed for Paloma Elsesser, moulded from paper and scrawled with a verse written by the model; a life-size paper-doll-inspired look for Harry Styles, which he wore as a part of the artwork for his latest album *Kiss All The Time. Disco, Occasionally*.

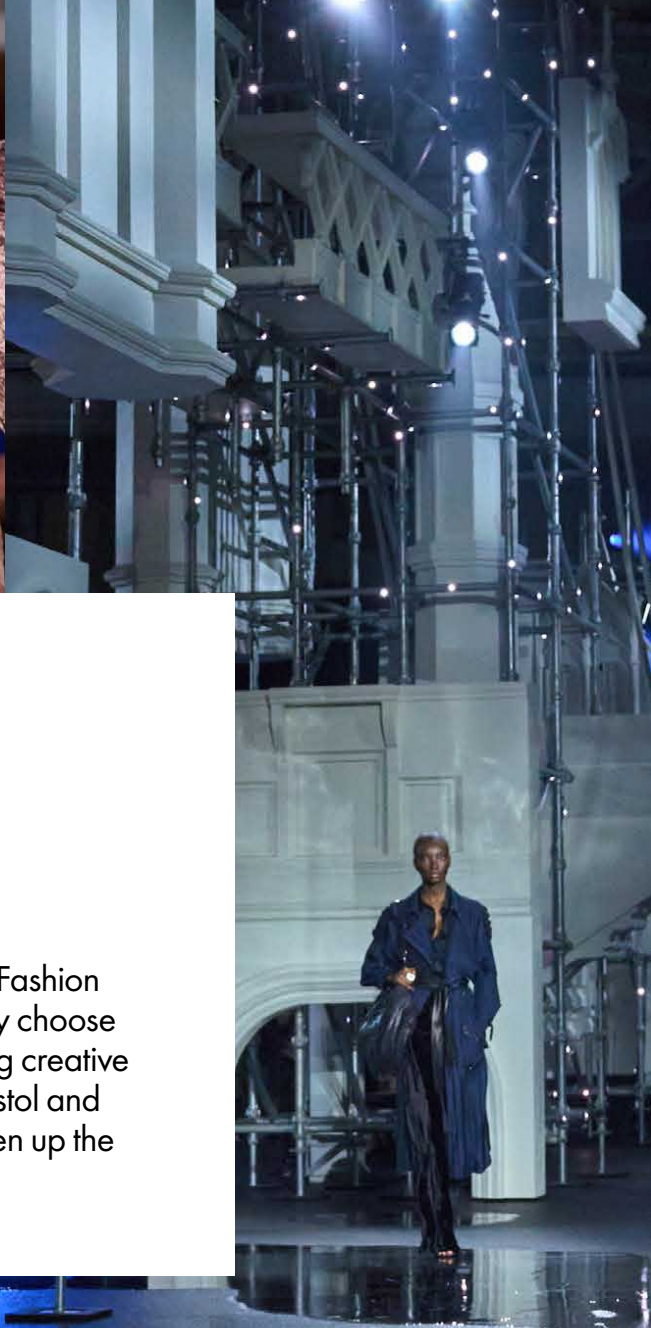
'Creating bespoke pieces is so much fun, as you can put such effort and detail into them, but I do know I would like to make my brand accessible,' she says. 'My instinct is to craft and create quickly as I don't have much patience, but I know that [for the brand to grow] I need to take my time. There are always deadlines, but there's no rush.' For her, that may be the case, but the industry is eagerly awaiting this brilliant new designer's next move. □



THE MEMO

Made in THE UK

A new programme from the British Fashion Council will allow designers to finally choose Manchester over Mayfair. Supporting creative communities from Newcastle to Bristol and beyond, Fashion Britain plans to open up the map beyond the capital



HOMETOWN HEROES
FROM TOP: DESIGNS
BY PAOLO CARZANA,
PATRICK McDOWELL
AND CHARLES JEFFREY
LOVERBOY. RIGHT:
BURBERRY AW26





CULTURE CLUB
CLOCKWISE FROM
LEFT: LOOKS BY
ASKER, PAOLO
CARZANA AND
PHOEBE ENGLISH



LONDON MIGHT WIDELY BE CONSIDERED THE HOME OF BRITISH fashion, but many of the UK's most iconic designers hail from far beyond the M25. Vivienne Westwood (Tintwistle), Daniel Lee (Bradford), Paul Smith (Nottinghamshire), Zandra Rhodes (Chatham), Christopher Kane (North Lanarkshire), Jonathan Anderson (Magherafelt): the list goes on. Likewise, roughly 85% of Britain's textile manufacturing takes place outside London. And yet, the city remains a make-or-break place for the industry's designers. That's great for Londoners; less so for the scores of creatives who live in other regions and struggle to gain access.

'Too often, fashion has been a London-centric story,' the British Fashion Council's CEO Laura Weir said in a speech last autumn. Now, she's working to change the narrative with the launch of Fashion Britain. 'A key ambition of mine since I started as CEO of the BFC last year has been to decentralise fashion,' she says.

The nationwide series of events – in Edinburgh, Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle and Bristol – is set to create opportunities for creatives to gain access to the world of fashion. 'Fashion Britain will build a unified moment for participation. We want the public to see themselves in fashion, and to connect the nation to this potent, powerful and economically crucial industry,' Weir says.

The programme launches as an increasing number of independent brands move operations outside the capital due to rising costs (84% of the nation's fashion companies are currently based in the city) and local coalitions such as Fashion Alliance North, established last year at The Leeds School of Art, work to support rising designers and creatives.

Those leading the groundswell of support to shift focus beyond London point to increased access to education, healthier local economies, more sustainable supply chains, and meaningful diversity and inclusion. 'It's about creating an even playing field and recognising that there are fabulous designers and an industry outside London,' says knitwear designer and Central Saint Martins lecturer Berni Yates.

Fashion Britain will give the public a preview of what a decentralised industry could look like through a series of talks with designers who are local success stories, including Liverpool's own Patrick McDowell and Leicester-born Nicholas Daley. It will also highlight the parts of British fashion's story that rarely get told: that there's a whole world of talent and creativity across the nation – a new generation of future Vivienne Westwoods and Paul Smiths waiting to be seen. □

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BRITAIN EVENTS
THROUGHOUT
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IF YOU TRY ONE THING

Come **UNDONE**

The place to be this season? The haberdashers. A length of ribbon, trailing from a crop top worn with jeans (as seen at Erdem) or falling from the neck in lieu of a scarf (to follow Ferragamo's example), is the ultimate finishing touch for autumn/winter 2026. Whether you choose grosgrain or silk satin, be sure to keep those lengths longer than might feel natural. Or, go all out and find pieces composed entirely of ribbons, as seen at Dior and Simone Rocha. You'll have the season all tied up in an instant.

vivienne westwood AW2627 photo by juergen teller



Vivienne
Westwood

ELLE

STYLE + SHOP



BACK *in* BUSINESS

THIS SEPTEMBER BRINGS A NEW WAVE OF CULT
MUST-HAVES TO SERVE YOU ALL SEASON, DELIVERING A TWISTED
GLAMOUR TO YOUR BACK-TO-SCHOOL LOOKS

Coat, price on request, ERDEM. Earrings, £69, PANDORA. Heels, £795, MANOLO BLAHNIK

STYLE + SHOP

Dress, £460, MICHAEL
MICHAEL KORS. Heels,
£625, MALONE SOULIERS



FRILLS *and* SPILLS

If the dress code calls for it, why not flirt with fringing? As seen on the AW26 runways, tassel trims are free-spirited and, most importantly, fun



THE EDIT

TO *the* NINES

FALL BACK IN LOVE WITH DRESSING UP THIS SEASON, FROM SOPHISTICATED COATS TO PARTY-READY LBDs – THERE'S NO NEED TO PANIC AT THE DISCO WHEN YOUR OUTFITS LOOK THIS GOOD

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MELANIE RODRIGUEZ STYLED BY HOLLY GORST SHOPPING BY GRACE CLARKE

Faux-fur coat, £2,190,
TOTEME. Jumper, £330,
DHOEMI. Capri pants, £140,
SAMSØE SAMSØE.
Earrings, £69, PANDORA.
Bag, £425, STRATHBERRY



Top, trousers and bandana
(worn around waist), all price
on request, 16ARLINGTON.
Earrings, £69, PANDORA

Styling tip
Pair metallics with
everyday pieces
such as tailored
trousers for an
elevated approach

- 1 Top, £20, TU 2 Belt, £295,
DENHANCHE at SELFRIDGES
3 Earrings, £280, SWAROVSKI
4 Bag, £2,800, BALENCIAGA
5 Top, price on request,
AHLUWALIA 6 Trousers, £259,
HERNO 7 Bag, £300,
MICHAEL MICHAEL KORS
8 Earrings, £410, CHLOÉ
9 T-shirt, £2,920, MICHAEL KORS
COLLECTION 10 Sunglasses,
£425, BOTTEGA VENETA
11 Clogs, £665, BURBERRY
12 Coat, £2,610, ETRO 13 Earrings,
£89, PANDORA 14 Boots, £1,700,
BRUNELLO CUCINELLI

Coat, £1,510,
MARINA RINALDI.
Earrings, £69, **PANDORA.**
Bag, £135, **GUESS**

CLEAN *slate*

Less is, indeed, more. Neutral tones
and minimalist silhouettes will always
make for a chic 'fit





Top, £239, and skirt, £239, both
KARL LAGERFELD. Earrings,
£89, **PANDORA**. Heels, £625,
MALONE SOULIERS

RUFFLE *feathers*

Make a statement in textured pieces
that demand to be seen



Coat, £915, MARC CAIN.
Earrings, £69, PANDORA

Styling tip
Keeping it simple
in the accessories
department allows
patterns and textures
to take centre-stage

1 Skirt, £875, SIMONE ROCHA
2 Top, £14.99, H&M **3** Sunglasses,
£150, MICHAEL KORS at
SELFRIDGES **4** Kitten heels, £455,
LE MONDE BÉRYL **5** Jumper,
£675, CANADA GOOSE
6 Earrings, £87, AGLAGLA **7** Dress,
price on request, ISABEL MARANT
8 Jacket, £259, MARINA RINALDI
9 Kitten heels, £310, LILI CURIA
10 Belt, £250, LEMAIRE at
MYTHERESA **11** Trousers, £22.50,
TU **12** Boots, £475, MONCLER
13 Earrings, £25, COS **14** Bag,
£3,100, FENDI



1



2



3



4

5



14



13

12



Coat, £1,145, HERNO

Styling tip
Burgundy is the new black – treat it like a neutral and watch your outfits reach new heights



6



7



8



11



10



9

1 Dress, £59.99, MANGO
2 Bag, £2,865, TOD'S 3 Jacket, £4,900, PRADA 4 Kitten heels, £620, TOTEME 5 Necklace, price on request, GIOVANNI RASPINI 6 Trousers, £650, EMPORIO ARMANI 7 Earrings, £495, LOEWE 8 Sunglasses, £385, KHAITE X OLIVER PEOPLES 9 Top, £3,150, LOUIS VUITTON 10 Flats, £18, TU 11 Earrings, £510, RABANNE at NET-A-PORTER 12 Skirt, £349, ARKET 13 Boots, £425, MARC CAIN 14 Jacket, £120, GUESS

A full-page photograph of a woman with long brown hair and blue eyes, wearing a black, feathered, halter-neck dress and black high-heeled sandals. She is crouching and looking directly at the camera. The background is a plain, light color.

Dress, £310, **MANGO**.
Earrings, £129, **PANDORA**.
Heels, £565, **MALONE**
SOULIERS. **HAIR**: Chris
Sweeney at One Represents,
using Amika. **MAKE-UP**: Faye
Bluff at Agency of Substance,
using Elemis. **STYLIST'S**
ASSISTANT: Gloria Madenge.
MODEL: Stella Jones at
Kate Moss Agency

BACK *to black*

The new way to wear an LBD
this autumn? In tactile textures and
shapes that scream glamour



Jumper, £1,600, jeans
£850, bag, £2,550,
and belt, £690, all **CELINE**



Paint the TOWN

Keep it in the family and match your accessories
to your outfit for a look that packs a crimson punch

Bag and cardigan, both
price on request, PRADA

NEW IN

Pick me UP

BRIGHT BAGS, BOLD BELTS AND LARGER-THAN-LIFE EARRINGS ARE THE
JOY-GIVING WARDROBE UPDATES TO INVEST IN THIS AUTUMN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JONATHAN ARUNDEL STYLING BY GRACE CLARKE WORDS BY JULIA STORM



The woman is sitting on a green background, wearing a bright yellow sweater with a dark blue patch on the sleeve, a black skirt with a ruffled hem, and black high-heeled shoes with orange accents. She is looking towards the camera with a slight smile.

The BUZZ

Sleek and sophisticated with plenty of personality, Loewe's bag is best paired with punchy colours and cosy textures

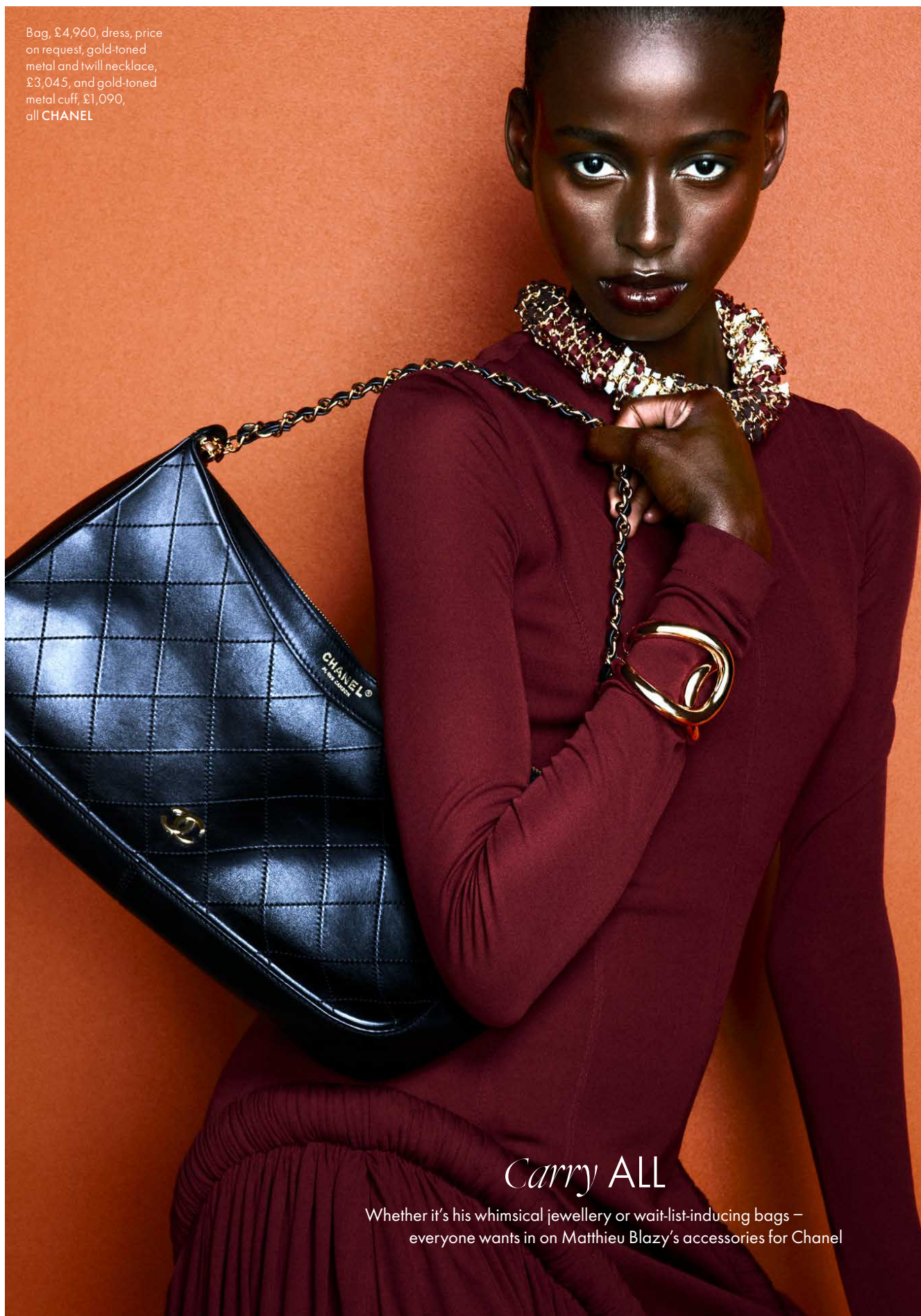


A close-up shot of a black leather Loewe bag with the brand name 'LOEWE' embossed on it. The bag is resting on a yellow knitted sweater. The background is a solid green color.

LOEWE

Bag, £2,700, jumper, around £1,280, top (just seen), around £835, skirt, around £4,180, and slingbacks, around £940, all **LOEWE**

Bag, £4,960, dress, price on request, gold-toned metal and twill necklace, £3,045, and gold-toned metal cuff, £1,090, all CHANEL



Carry ALL

Whether it's his whimsical jewellery or wait-list-inducing bags – everyone wants in on Matthieu Blazy's accessories for Chanel

Quilt to LAST

The most luxurious way to offset your tan as you ease into autumn? Dior's citrus-coloured cult bag and sandals

Bag, £2,700, top, £4,500,
skirt, £6,100, metal bracelet,
price on request, and
sandals, £1,300, all DIOR



Off the CUFF

Worn on their own or stacked
with other precious pieces, Hermès'
statement bracelets have a lot to say

Metal and leather bracelet,
£800, and jumper, price on
request, both HERMÈS

Out of THE BLUE

A bright bag sits best with neutral colours.
Take inspiration from the Louis Vuitton
woman and mix beige with cerulean blue

Bag, £1,810, jacket,
£3,050, skirt, £1,940,
and trainers, £785, all
LOUIS VUITTON

Done DEAL

The micro bag is on pause. This season's defining statement? Go big or go home



Bag and leather earrings, both price on request, and mesh jumper, £765, all **SPORTMAX**. **HAIR:** Ami Fujita. **MAKE-UP:** Martha Inoue, using Merit. **NAILS:** Sasha Goddard at Caren, using Chanel Le Vernis in Rouge Noir and Chanel La Crème Main. **MODEL:** Blessing Ifeoluwa at PRM Agency





THE PIECE

BREAD *ahead*

Fendi's iconic Baguette is a sartorial secret weapon, fitting in effortlessly with everyday joys and rituals. A sparkly version is the perfect way to elevate your go-to jeans and favourite T-shirt, serving a touch of glamour wherever you go. Bon appétit!

PHOTOGRAPH BY JONATHAN ARUNDEL STYLING BY GRACE CLARKE

Bag, £4,900, FENDI



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We believe style is about individuality, confidence and connection. That's why we created ELLE COLLECTIVE, our membership that brings you closer to the world of ELLE through exclusive rewards and competitions, curated offers and unforgettable member experiences.

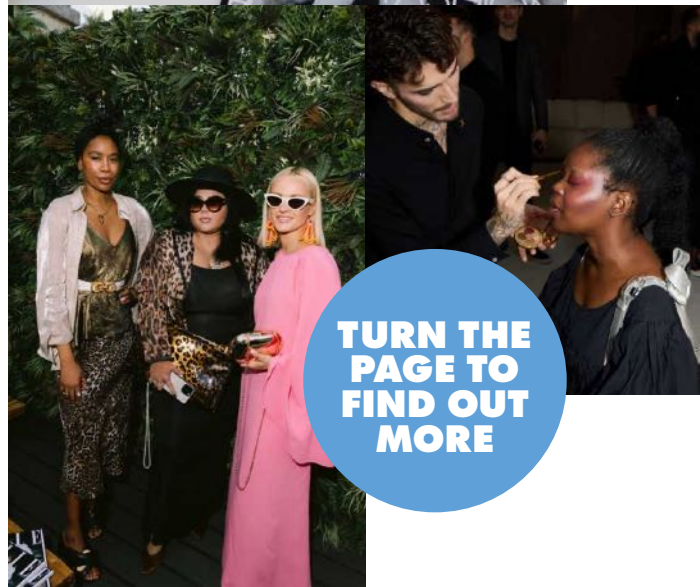
Each month, you'll discover new ways to connect with the fashion, beauty and culture you love, from editor-approved recommendations and insider content to backstage access and invite-only events created exclusively for our community.

Turn the page to discover more and to take your place in the fashion inner circle.



Warmly,

Kenya
KENYA HUNT Editor-in-Chief



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MORE**

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UPCOMING *events*



9 SEPTEMBER

ALL ACCESS

ELLE STYLE AWARDS

A chance to experience one of the most exciting nights in the ELLE calendar, celebrating standout names across fashion, film, music and culture.



21 SEPTEMBER

THE BOOK CLUB – EMMA CLINE

Attend an intimate evening of conversation at Soho House with author Emma Cline for September's ELLE x Soho House: The Book Club



EARLY SEPTEMBER

BEAUTY: HAIR TREND TALK

Join our Autumn Trend Talk session exploring the biggest hair trends shaping the season, with insights from industry experts and the ELLE editorial team.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: OFFER VALID FOR NEW SUBSCRIPTIONS ONLY. TO UK DELIVERY ADDRESSES. SUBSCRIPTION OFFER CLOSING 2 SEPTEMBER 2026. LINES OPEN WEEKDAYS 9AM-6PM, SATURDAYS 8AM-4PM. CALLS ARE CHARGED AT YOUR STANDARD NETWORK RATE. FOR OUR DATA POLICY, VISIT WWW.HEARST.CO.UK/PRIVACYNOTICE. OFFER ENDS 2 SEPTEMBER 2026. PHOTOGRAPHS: OLIVIA MALONE, LOUIE BANKS, NORMAN JEAN ROY, PIXELATE IMAGING, IMAXTREE

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FASHION BRITAIN

A month-long celebration of fashion
across the UK curated by
the British Fashion Council



Find the events that inspire you. Scan to explore.

JEWELLERY

To the POINT

As we move into autumn, shift the focus of your jewellery assortment to clean lines with sharp finishes. Anchor your new-season wardrobe with spiralling bangles, teardrop earrings and rings with pointed angles. Hard by nature but soft in sentiment, these architectural designs elevate the simplest of ensembles.

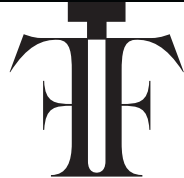
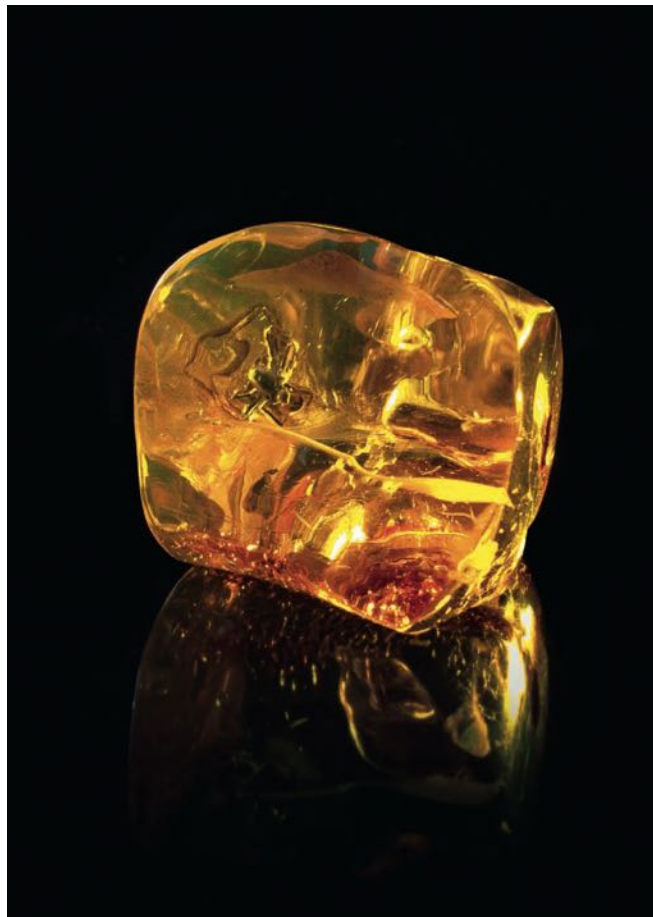
EDIT BY GRACE CLARKE



- 1 White gold and diamond ring, £3,380, **CHAUMET** 2 White gold and diamond ring, price on request, **CHANEL FINE JEWELLERY** 3 Yellow gold ring, £3,300, **CARTIER**
 4 Rose gold and diamond stud earrings, £3,225, **DE BEERS** 5 Rose gold and diamond ring, £8,060, **REPOSSI** 6 Steel necklace with yellow gold studs, £5,700, **BULGARI**
 7 Yellow gold ring, £5,325, **TIFFANY & CO** 8 Yellow gold earrings with diamonds, £4,815, **SHAY JEWELLERY** at **MYTHERESA** 9 Yellow gold and diamond necklace, price on request, **VAN CLEEF & ARPELS** 10 Pink gold and diamond necklace, £2,250, **DIOR** 11 Rose gold bracelet, £1,780, **CHOPARD** 12 White gold and diamond ring, £3,300, **GRAFF**
 13 Yellow gold and diamond earrings, price on request, **BUCHERER FINE JEWELLERY** at **MYTHERESA** 14 White gold and diamond earrings, price on request, **LOUIS VUITTON**

The
A M B R É E
Fragrance Family

Night-time closes in. Heady scents fill the air. Warm spices and woody frankincense, softened with sweet vanilla. Ambrée fragrances revel in luxury and inspire indulgence. A silk wrap around cool shoulders, that soon slips to reveal yet more layers.



ELLE

TREND REPORT

WORDS BY LAURA ANTONIA JORDAN

THE NEW SEASON

Walk this WAY

So, what is the mood of AW26? A slick, masculine-feminine mix or artsy, handworked crafts? Pared-back minimalism or heightened romance? Neo-heritage or future-facing? All this – and more – is up for grabs in a season that celebrates instinct over rules. ▷

TREND REPORT



DIOR

CHANEL

LOEWE

ERDEM

LOUIS VUITTON

VICTORIA BECKHAM



THE TREND

Home SPUN

Collaging and crocheting, whip-stitching and embellishing – you can see the human hand (and heart) in an array of art-inflected looks. But make no mistake: while they might have a craft-table patina, each and every piece is masterfully, impeccably executed. ▸



THE DETAIL

FUNNEL *vision*

Whether grazing the chin or almost covering the mouth, the funnel-neck jacket is taking the fashion world by storm. (Psst: since launching her brand, Phoebe Philo has been making some of the best in the biz.)



THE MOOD

More is MORE

Mix to the max: an anorak over a spangly dress (Marni), lumberjack checks with dance-floor fringing (Rabanne) or a glitzy top with slouchy pyjama pants (Vuitton).



ACCESSORIES ALERT

MASK *up*

Can't decide between wanting to be seen and going incognito? Shield sunglasses, somehow, do both.





THE MOOD

Comfort SEEKING

Oof, doesn't the world feel particularly harsh right now? Soften the edges where you can via swaddling silhouettes, generous proportions and super-snuggly knits. The perfect excuse, should you wish, to stay in.

THE TREND
SWISH
swish

A neat little trim won't cut it — unapologetically long and lavish tassels are in. ▸





THE TREND

Red ALERT

Blending in? Forget about it. From cola-can brights to rich merlots, luminous satins to slick leathers, there's a scarlet shade and style for everyone. Wear with own-the-room confidence. >





THE TREND

BELOW *the belt*

Spearheaded by Chanel's Matthieu Blazy, the low-slung, 1920s-inspired dropped waist rules for the 2020s.



THE DETAIL

Buttoned UP

Big, bold buttons in a contrasting colour are the go-to embellishment for the woman who doesn't do embellishments.



THE TREND

New ROMANTICS

Slick and body-skimming (as seen at Saint Laurent and Gucci) or poufy and pretty (look to Givenchy and Chloé), let lace be as suggestive or brazen as you desire. ►



EMPORIO ARMANI



MUGLER

THE PIECE
GO
faux
Fantasy 'furs' (fake it!)
run the gamut
from sleek siren to
outré glamazon. >



GUCCI



CHANEL



THE MOOD

FULL *bloom*

Gilding the lily in the best possible way: floral prints get a joyous upgrade into explosive, tactile forms.



BOTTEGA VENETA



VALENTINO



DIESEL



BALENCIAGA



BOTTEGA VENETA



THE TREND

INTO *the deep*

From inky navy to zingy cerulean, Yves Klein ultramarine to electric shades, the collections are awash with blues. A hope for (metaphorical) bluer skies? Maybe. Or maybe they just look great.



THE PIECE

SQUARE *dance*

Big for SS26, even bigger for AW26: lightning strikes twice for the square-toe shoe. As seen on geeky loafers, dance shoes, snazzy sandals and grown-up slingbacks, right-angled footwear has hit hot-property status. Get in line!



THE MOOD

When night FALLS

Demna's highly charged Gucci debut closed with Kate Moss practically prowling down the catwalk in a backless dress (with a G-string provocatively peeping out), verifying the LBD's power to thrill. Go as demure or daring as desired but, whatever you do, RSVP 'yes' to the black dress. □



ELLE COLLECTIVE

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NEW-SEASON TREND TALK
FROM THE ELLE EDITORS

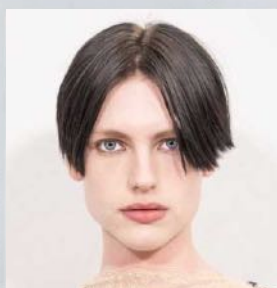
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E L L E

BEAUTY + WELLNESS



Dior



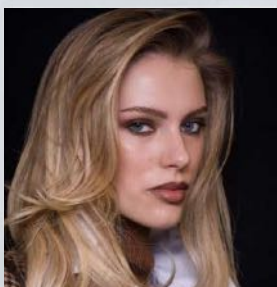
Chloé



Ferragamo



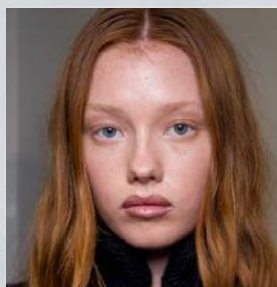
Boss



Luisa Spagnoli



Dries van Noten



Ottolinger



Dolce & Gabbana



Erden



Dolce & Gabbana



Julien Macdonald



Tolu Coker

Hair AND now

BOBS! PIXIES! XXL LENGTHS! YOUR NEW-SEASON HAIR INSPIRATION STARTS HERE, WITH OUR EDIT OF THE CHICEST TRENDS TO TRY. PLUS, WHY RESETTING YOUR VAGUS NERVE IS THE KEY TO WELLBEING, AND HOW HAND TWEAKMENTS ARE THE NEXT ANTI-AGEING FRONTIER



FROM BIXIE BOBS TO THE RISE OF TALISMANIC ACCESSORIES, HERE'S ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE CUTS, COLOURS AND STYLES TAKING OVER THIS SEASON AND BEYOND...

COMPILED BY MEDINA AZALDIN, KATIE WITHINGTON, URMI PANDIT AND JENNA WAGGITT

FULL *shade*

The coveted high-shine hair colours set to dominate this autumn

Bourbon GLOW

THE LOW-DOWN: As seen at Chanel, this rich, glamorous brunette is a classic burnt espresso shade with the subtlest hint of auburn. It's a fresh twist on deep brown, with a mirror-like shine that shifts beautifully in the sun.

ASK FOR... a midnight hue with a gentle hint of warm umber that glows when it hits the light. A bespoke consultation is always key, no matter which colour you choose. 'This allows us to explore which red undertones best complement your skin to create a customised shade with depth and dimension,' says Marlon Hawkins, artistic director for Brooks & Brooks salon. He's also a fan of temporary glossing treatments to achieve the effect.

MAINTAIN WITH... hydrating, colour-protecting products that prevent the hair from becoming porous, and space out your washes to extend the longevity. 'Keep your tone looking fresh between appointments with regular glossing treatments to elevate colour, boost shine and maintain vibrancy,' says Hawkins. 'Limiting excessive heat styling and always using a heat protectant will also help minimise premature fading.'

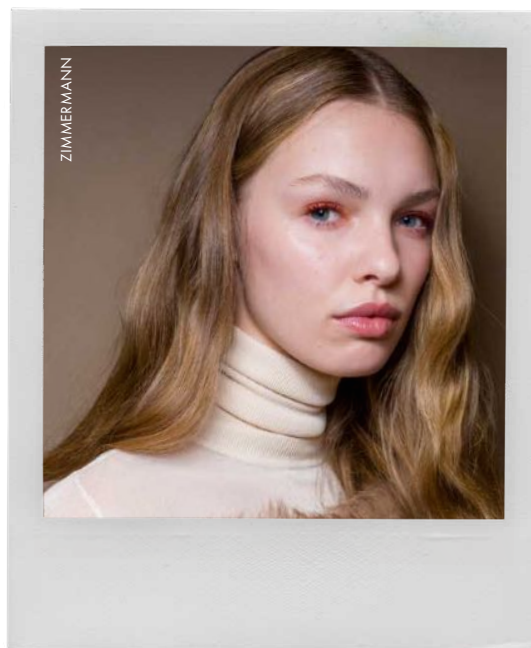


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1 Colour Depositing Mask in Bordeaux, £28, **MOROCCANOIL**
2 Professionnel Vitamino Color Spectrum Shampoo, £27, **L'ORÉAL PROFESSIONNEL**



Cowboy BEIGE

THE LOW-DOWN: A blend of sand and earthy hues, this dusty blonde, spotted at Zimmerman and Celine, feels both natural and elevated.

ASK FOR... a hazy dark blonde that strikes the balance between warm and cool tones, staying clear of buttery golden hues and ultra-bright blonde finishes. Whether you have Afro hair, curls or straight lengths, the tint should feel soft and pulled directly from nature. 'Request a combination of thicker highlights and then introduce lowlights,' says blonde expert Harriet Muldoon at Larry King's Kensington salon. 'Adding a touch of warmth to the lowlights means that when they're placed next to the highlights, the two tones complement each other rather than competing.'

MAINTAIN WITH... a sulphate-free shampoo. Avoid all-over tints, which can diminish the shade's natural nuances. ▷



1 Ultimate Color Miracle Leave-in Mask, £23, **WELLA PROFESSIONALS**
2 Lamellar Gloss Hair Oil, £12.50, **TRESEMME**
3 Blond Absolu Shampoo, £37, **KÉRASTASE**

UP AND *away*

Fresh ways to elevate your tresses



- 1** Headrush Shine Spray, £13, **BED HEAD BY TIGI**
- 2** Supershine Smoothing Wax Stick, £45, **ORIBE**
- 3** Love Curl Enhancing Milk, £29, **DAVINES**

LUCKY *charms*

THE LOW-DOWN: Small yet mighty, tiny talismans, beads, pearls and precious stones adorn intricate braids and updos.

TRY IT BECAUSE... 'These can be playful and full of energy during festival season or refined, precise and quietly luxurious, which is what we encounter most in the salon,' says legendary hairstylist Charlotte Mensah. 'Charms in the hair can be the finest complement to an avant-garde dress. They draw out the hair's beauty and elevate the whole look.'

HOW TO NAIL IT: 'Less is more,' advises the hairstylist Tim Scott Wright. 'A charm can be added into a braid for a more bohemian look, or into your band in a ponytail, or indeed as an addition into your hair that hangs from the ponytail.' To keep it elegant and not twee, keep the placement lower down on the hair rather than by the parting.



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Power BRAIDS

THE LOW-DOWN: The timeless staple gets a sophisticated and commanding update through strong, architectural silhouettes.

TRY IT BECAUSE... the elegance lies in its versatility. Revered hairstylist Charlotte Mensah is known for her intricate and sculptural braids, including chunky plaits and canerows. 'Whatever your texture, always start with clean, healthy hair that's been cleansed and nourished,' she says. Sinead Gorey showcased extra-long plaits while Missoni and Tory Burch opted for stiff, sculpted plaits with a sleek, minimalist effect that lets the face take centre-stage.

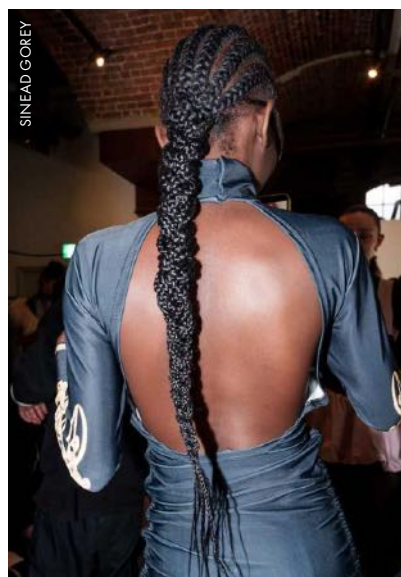
HOW TO NAIL IT: Swap romantic, bohemian plaits for a lacquered, intentional effect. A generous spritz of hairspray and glossing mist will ensure a modern edge.



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- 1** Style + Treat Yuzu + Plum Oil Sleek Stick, £20, **BRIOGEO**
- 2** The Cream 230, £88, **SISLEY**
- 3** Manketti Oil Salt Scrub, £60, **CHARLOTTE MENSAH**

PHOTOGRAPHS: AHMET KURT/UNSPLASH, IMAXTREE, GETTY IMAGES

CHIC *chignons*

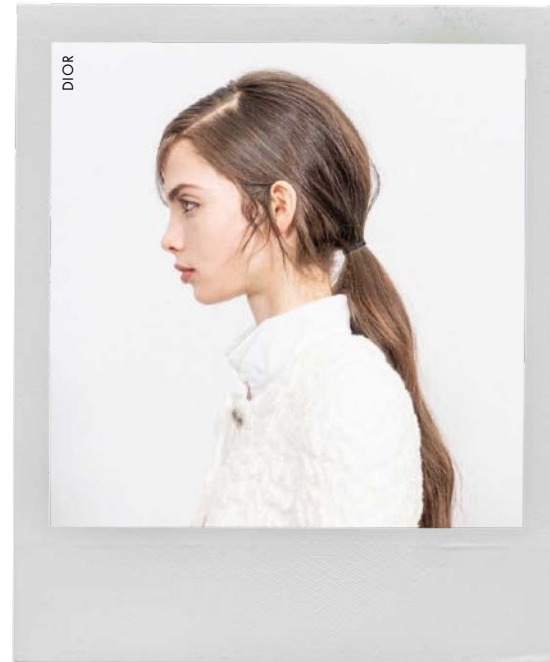
THE LOW-DOWN: The most elegant way to wear a bun this season.

TRY IT BECAUSE... this classic updo is back in full force. 'Just like the red lipstick, chignons will instantly make you look pulled-together and ready to take on whatever comes your way,' says hairstylist Sam McKnight, who created the regal bun at Richard Quinn. 'Whether you go sleek and perfected or for a wet-look finish, it's a strong and powerful move.' Twisted chignons à la Chanel AW26 are having a revival (try yours with a French pin), or opt for a tight, ballet-inspired bun.

HOW TO NAIL IT: 'I love the mid-height chignon, slicked back with hairspray for control and shine. The chignon itself is a simple twist with a pin or two,' says McKnight. 'It's not overly complicated and feels fresh.' Before twisting up the hair, apply a styling balm to keep frizz at bay and add shine, then finish with a strong-hold hairspray.



1 Full Dry Volume & Texture Spray, £31, **LIVING PROOF** **2** Detangling Hair Mist, £54, **CAIR** **3** N 02 The Small Care & Detangling Hair Brush, £98, **LA BONNE BROUSSE**



SOFT *pony*

THE LOW-DOWN: This timeless, practical style takes on a breezy, romantic mood.

TRY IT BECAUSE... it's fresh, easy and cool, as spotted at Dior's AW26 show, created by hairstylist Guido Palau. 'The ponytails had an undone balance between masculine and feminine, with softness through the tendrils and a deep, boyish side part,' says London-based hairstylist Hollie Rose Clarke. If higher ponies feel sportier and youthful, those placed low on the nape of the neck have an elegant effect.

HOW TO NAIL IT: One insider trick is the 'double ponytail method', which creates a more secure updo. Tie a half-up pony where you want it to sit, then gather all your hair up into a whole ponytail. Keep the hair loose, rather than slicked back and tight. 'Experiment with the texture if you're leaning into a soft, undone wave. Grab your pintail comb and pull out some strands so it looks effortless,' says Clarke, who recommends swapping an elastic band for a hair bungee to achieve a professional finish. ▷



1 Happy Endings Nourishing Balm, £36, **HAIR BY SAM MCKNIGHT** **2** Session Spray Flex, £30, **KEVIN MURPHY** **3** Diamond Sleek Smoothing Spray, £10, **GARNIER**

GREAT *lengths*

Refresh your mane with an impactful new cut

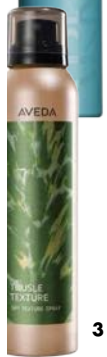


THE 'Boyfriend' PIXIE

THE LOW-DOWN: This hybrid style combines the confidence of a pixie and the softness of a bob. 'It's built through layered, feathered lengths that create movement rather than bulk,' explains Jake Unger, hairstylist at Larry King Marylebone. 'This gives the hair an effortless, borrowed-from-the-boys attitude without sacrificing femininity.'

ASK FOR... a textured bixie with softness around the ears, movement through the crown and enough length at the fringe to sweep, separate or tuck. Keep the back gently layered with just enough length to feel contemporary and slightly grown-out. 'A cool bixie shouldn't look as though it has been meticulously crafted, even though it absolutely has,' says Unger. It's grungy yet relaxed.

STYLE IT WITH... a mousse to prep the hair and create grit and hold, and use a styling clay for a lived-in feel.



- 1** Velvet Texture Clay, £29, LARRY KING
- 2** The Body Hybrid Mousse, £14, ARKIVE
- 3** Touse Texture Dry Texture Spray, £29, AVEDA

WHIMSY *curls*

THE LOW-DOWN: Go big with a playful yet eye-catching style that highlights your individual curl patterns.

ASK FOR... texture and volume. 'Work with the hair rather than forcing it to do something it's not. Healthy curls are always going to give you the best volume, so hydration is paramount,' says texture expert Rianna Henry. 'You can also create volume by brushing out the natural curl pattern,' adds hairstylist Subrina Kidd. 'The curls are separated, so it expands and fluffs out like a beautiful cloud. You may not get definition, but you get expansion.' A layered cut can help, but 'it has to be done proportionately if you want to keep the length and maximise the volume', advises Kidd.

Extensions can cheat extra volume, too. 'For curly hair, texture matching is everything. The curl pattern, density and movement all need to work with your natural hair to create a seamless finish,' says extension specialist Sarah Ethel.

STYLE IT WITH... lightweight formulas for soft curls with movement. 'Diffuse the hair until it's around half dry,' says Henry. 'For extra volume, lift the roots using a hairdryer with a pick attachment.' For hold, Kidd recommends tilting the head and spritzing a gentle hairspray.



- 1** Refreshing Curl Mist, £31.50, REDKEN
- 2** Moisture Sealing Lotion, £36, CÉCÉD

Halo LAYERS

THE LOW-DOWN: This understated cut creates volume, softness and movement without compromising length.

ASK FOR... strategically placed layers around the crown, creating a light, airy silhouette that frames the face while preserving fullness through the ends. For those with thicker hair, halo layers help remove excess weight, preventing the hair from feeling bulky while creating a softer, more effortless shape. The style is equally flattering on finer hair, adding texture and dimension for a fuller-looking finish. Naturally curly locks also benefit from the cut, as the layers enhance shape, definition and overall movement. Celebrity stylist Naomi Brooks explains that this style is ideal for those with 'long hair who want to retain length but desire movement and lots of volume, particularly anyone with thick hair looking to remove heaviness'.

STYLE IT WITH... a root-lifting blow-dry spray for a voluminous effect. □



1 Silkipro Hair Straightener, £249.99, **SHARK**

2 Volumizing Blow Dry Mist, £30, **OLAPLEX**

3 Honey Gloss Collagen Drops Hair Oil, £22, **GISOU**



The OFF-DUTY bob

THE LOW-DOWN: 'This is a bob that has relaxed its schedule,' says Unger. Typically sitting at a jaw- or collarbone-skimming length, the shape is clean and intentional, but not rigid, he says. Soft texture is essential for making the style appear carelessly undone, rather than freshly salon-styled.

ASK FOR... a soft, low-maintenance bob with movement and minimal layering. 'The finish should feel effortless, not overly sculpted, so avoid sharp, severe lines unless you're after a more polished look,' adds Unger. This cut has an understated confidence that makes everything look elevated yet insouciant.

STYLE IT WITH... a gentle wave. 'Apply a little volumising mist before rough-drying or air-drying, then let the hair fall naturally. A slight bend, an imperfect parting or a tucked ear is often all it needs. The goal is polished ease, not perfection,' recommends Unger.



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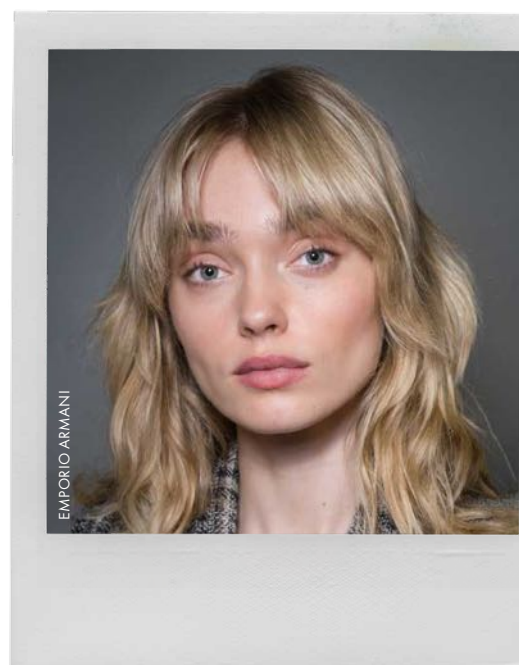


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1 Chitosan Multi-Use Styling Spray, £27, **DYSON** **2** The Great Iron, £120, **HERSHESONS** **3** Complete Air Dry Volumizing Wave Spray, £26, **JVN**



FIELD-TESTED BEAUTY

A successful festival weekend starts with a visit to Boots

DUST OFF YOUR DRY SHAMPOO: THE summer of music has arrived. But before you shake out the tent, don't forget to re-stock your beauty bag at Boots, where you can pick up everything you need for a successful alfresco weekend, come rain or shine. Not sure which products deserve a place in your festival kit? Boots' Beauty Crew is on hand to help. With more than 1,400 Beauty Crew members across 180 of Boots' biggest stores, you can be sure they'll help you find the right products for your style, budget and beauty goals.

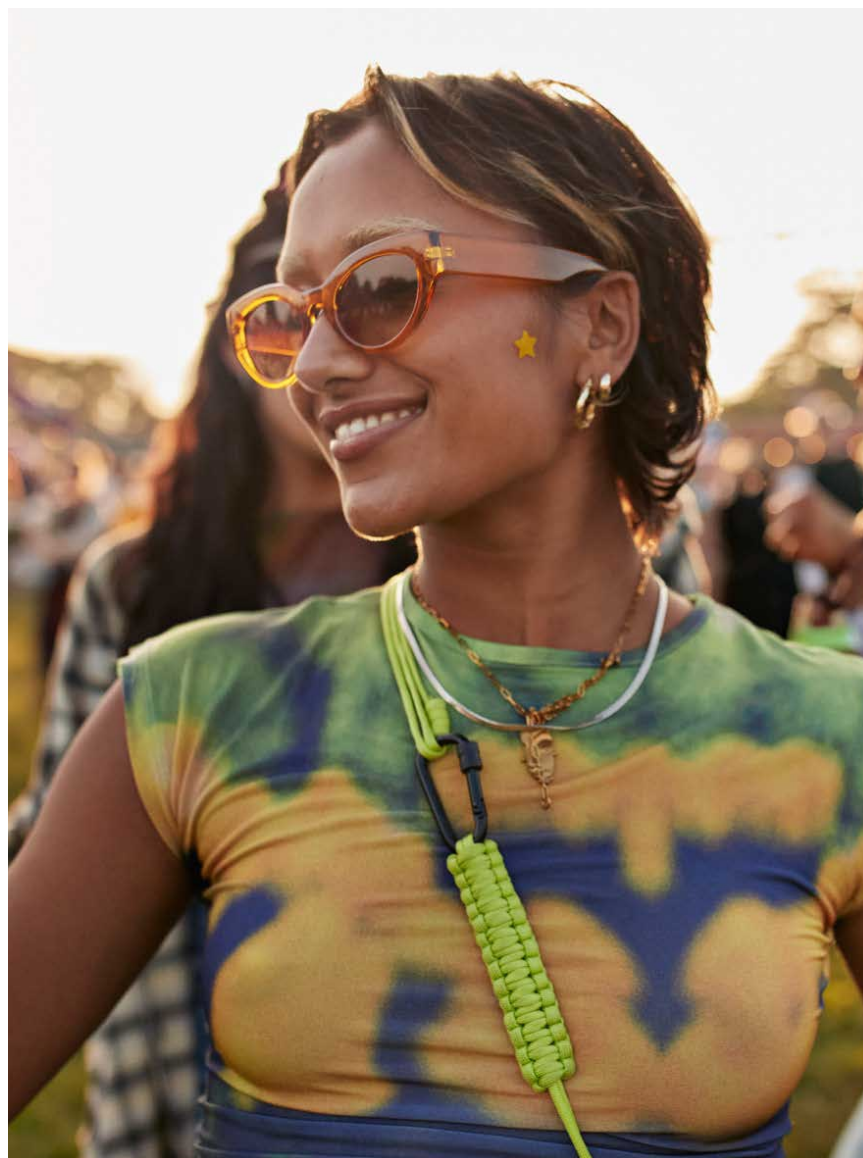
Whatever the weather forecast, a good SPF should be a priority, and it's worth placing your trust in the new wave of K-beauty formulas. Anua Zero-Cast is TikTok-famous for good reason: it's designed to be invisible on all skin tones, melting into the complexion and leaving a natural, dewy finish. Those with sensitive skin might try Beauty of Joseon Relief Sun, a lightweight, organic formula with broad-spectrum protection. If you need advice on which sunscreen is best suited to your skin type, Boots' Beauty Crew can help point you in the right direction.

At a festival, it's easier to go for a healthy natural glow instead of heavy make-up. Rocco's antioxidant-infused Sunshine Dew Glow Essence leaves skin radiant, with a gentle shimmer and a fruity scent. For a pop of colour, Huda Beauty Blush Filter Blurring Blushlighter Palette is buildable and easy to blend with just your fingers.

And, of course, you should always remove make-up before hitting the sleeping bag. Use Garnier Micellar Cleansing Water All-in-1 for easy, no-rinsing cleansing that suits all skin types. Follow with a rich moisturiser to prep the skin for the next day.

So, with your must-buy list sorted, all that's left to do is finalise those all-important outfits and start mapping out set times. After all, festival season is all about preparation – and with Boots, you're already ahead of the game.

Shop now in stores nationwide and at [boots.com](https://www.boots.com)



1 Huile Prodigieuse Shimmering Dry Oil, £33*, **NUXE** **2** Sunshine Dew Glow Essence, £18**, **ROCCO** **3** Zero-Cast, £18***, **ANUA** **4** Vitamin Sun Stick, £19†, **LA ROCHE-POSAY** **5** Micellar Cleansing Water All-in-1, £3.49††, **GARNIER** **6** Relief Sun: Rice + Probiotics, £15.50†††, **BEAUTY OF JOSEON**

ELLE
BEST OF
BEAUTY
2026

BEST BLURRING



BEST SHEER



BEST SOFT
GLOW



BEST
TRAVEL-FRIENDLY



BEST POWDER



5

BEST SHADE RANGE



BEST HYDRATING



9

BEST
INTENSE
SHINE



1 Reflect Highlighter Stick, £45, **VICTORIA BECKHAM BEAUTY** **2** Skinfinish Lightstruck Liquid Highlighter, £32, **MAC** **3** Soleil Glow Highlighter, £49, **TOM FORD** **4** Soft Strobe Creamy Highlight Powder, £25, **SIMHAZE BEAUTY** **5** Backstage Glassy Glow Stick, £37, **DIOR** **6** Light Reflecting Luminizing Powder, £35, **NARS** **7** Unreal Liquid Highlighter, £38, **HOURLASS** **8** Silky Touch Highlighter, £26, **RARE BEAUTY** **9** Baume Essentiel, £40, **CHANEL** **10** Beauty Light Wand, £31, **CHARLOTTE TILBURY**

BEST LONG-LASTING



10

BEST LIQUID



10 OF THE BEST *highlighters*

DEWY FORMULAS FOR FLATTERING LUMINOSITY AND LASTING SUMMER RADIANCE

EDIT BY KATIE WITHINGTON

Road

WORDS BY KATIE WITHINGTON



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The MOMENT

A fresh smoke is sweeping through the beauty world this season, as Hermès introduces a new take on modern grunge. Eyes are framed with diffused, lived-in gunmetal tones, while lips and cheeks are softly flushed with a watercolour effect. The look is having a moment off the runway too, with Charli xcx embracing her Noughties-rock era – and Teyana Taylor, Zendaya and Jenna Ortega all wearing kohl-lined eyes and umber shadows on the red carpet. Rich noir eyeliners add a sultry feel, while smooth creams and buildable powders create dimensional smoulder on the lids.

1 Smokey Eye Mascara in Black, £31, **BOBBI BROWN** **2** Drawn This Way Eyeliner in No Shade, £22, **MARC JACOBS BEAUTY** **3** Not So Basic Eyeshadow Palette in On The Rocks, £22, **JORDANA TICIA**

Nailed IT

Skip baby pinks and milky tones; this season's palette is all cosy teddy-bear browns and dusty lilacs. 'We'll start to see a softer transition into autumn with sheer, earthier neutrals: think taupes, mauves and warm beige tones, worn with a translucent or ultra-glossy finish so they still feel beautifully polished,' says celebrity nail artist Georgia Rae.

Le Vernis Longwear Nail Colour in Garçonne, £30, **CHANEL**

The TIP book

IN A FLASH

Streamline your hair routine with this one-minute treatment that contains strengthening ingredients for rapid results. Dualsenses Rich Repair 60Sec Treatment, £19, Goldwell.



SLEEPING BEAUTY

Trade homemade sleepy-girl mocktails for a supplement that blends magnesium, chamomile and lemon balm to support sound sleep. Try Bedtime Blend, £14.25, Wellthy by Boots.



PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES



1

TAKE note

Enigmatic, style-forward evening scents are in abundance this season, drawing inspiration from starry nights, smoky beverages and glittering party gowns. To evoke a glass of bay rum on ice, consider DS & Durga's spicy blend of sandalwood, lime and linden. A shimmering chainmail gown is transformed into fragrance in BDK Parfums' sparkling citrus, ginger and peppercorn scent, while Serge Lutens' La Nuit Tombée blends smooth incense with earthy patchouli and dry cedarwood, making it the perfect choice for beachside evenings beneath the stars.

1 La Nuit Tombée Eau de Parfum, £213, SERGE LUTENS **2** Silver Ceremony Absolu de Parfum, £230, BDK PARFUMS **3** Rum Bay Rum Eau de Parfum, £155, DS & DURGA



ONE to WATCH

Oil-skin saviour salicylic acid is making waves in scalp care. 'We've become much more focused on treating the scalp with the same level of care as facial skin, and salicylic acid is great because it gently exfoliates away dead skin cells, excess oil and product buildup, helping to reduce irritation and flaking while supporting a healthier scalp environment,' explains cosmetic doctor Sonia Khorana.

1 The Clear Thinker Clarifying Shampoo, £29, FENTY HAIR **2** Fresh Start Anti-Dandruff Scalp Serum, £30, HELLO KLEAN



ASK the PRO

CHARLOTTE MENSAH

As joyous as summer sunshine is, its effects on your hair are something to be mindful of, according to British hairstylist Charlotte Mensah. 'Heat and humidity strip the scalp of its natural oils, so hair needs extra nourishment. Apply a lightweight oil to the mid-lengths and ends to lock in moisture, smooth frizz, and bring out natural shine,' she says.

1 Glued Blasting Freeze Hairspray, £5.65, GOT2B **2** Colorance Hair Colour, professional only, GOLDWELL **3** Manketti Oil Hair Pomade, £55, CHARLOTTE MENSAH



LITTLE MISS DIOR

With its velvety rose petals, peonies and powdery iris, this classic is having a resurgence on TikTok – a must for your perfume wardrobe. Miss Dior Eau de Parfum, £78, Dior.



SO FRESH, SO CLEAN

Consider adding a scented dry shampoo to your haircare routine to diminish oils and refresh roots, while creating a fresh aroma that lingers. Super Dry Shampoo Melrose Place, £26, Ouai.



THE DRAWING BOARD

Victoria Beckham's new scribble-and-blend blush pencil offers precision application for an understated and lasting flush of colour. Blush Stylus, £38, Victoria Beckham Beauty. □





Show of HANDS

As Daniella Parete Clarke
discovers, the anti-ageing industry's
next big thing is at your fingertips



'THE HANDS NEVER LIE' IS AN OLD ADAGE, BUT IT'S MORE relevant than ever in the beauty world. Last year, celebrities stepped onto red carpets with radically de-aged appearances, prompting speculation about a wave of deep-plane procedures revolutionising the cosmetic-surgery world. In short, the 'Forever-35 Face' was born. But if 2025 was the year of the facelift, then 2026 is the year that hands are going under the needle.

Where a hand-cream habit once sufficed, the expectation is that hands should now be treated with the same products and interventions making faces appear eternally youthful. Online, Google searches for 'hand rejuvenation' are at an all-time high, as are those for wrinkle-reducing LED gloves. Meanwhile, users on Reddit's r/PlasticSurgery forum have started discussing hand procedures in between posts about nose jobs.

Beyond the beauty sector, hands have taken hold of the Zeitgeist: they were the motif du jour at the Met Gala and starred in this year's most talked-about sex scenes. Megan Wallace, the sex writer behind the newsletter *Pulp*, points to culture's 'pro-finger agenda', from the finger-sucking moments in *Wuthering Heights* to *The Creation of Adam*-style title card for Ryan Murphy's *Love Story*. While it's tempting to think the trend signals an erotic renaissance, sex, in this case, becomes shorthand for beauty and youth. Wallace attributes the fetishisation of hands to the rise of evermore extreme beauty standards: 'It makes sense that hands are the big thing right now.'

'Patients are recognising that while the face may appear refreshed, hands reveal your age,' says Dr Paris Acharya, an aesthetics specialist in London. The fixation can also be linked to diet culture's comeback. As GLP-1 drugs become increasingly popular, users are reporting complications including decreased libido, muscle-mass loss and accelerated ageing in their hands. 'We're seeing prominent veins and tendons due to rapid weight loss associated with these medications,' adds Dr Acharya. This side effect even has a name: 'Ozempic hands', and some clinics are already offering treatments for it.

Most patients, however, are unsure what to ask for. 'It tends to be someone who has already had a treatment on her face,' says Dr Dara Suite, an aesthetic doctor at London's The Well Clinic. 'They don't know what can be done, unless a friend has had discussions with them about it.' Hand rejuvenation can take several forms, which she breaks into layers: hyperpigmentation, targeted with lasers and IPL (intense pulsed light); texture, meaning wrinkles, on which she uses skin-booster injections or chemical peels; and volume loss, restored with filler and fat-grafting. She, along with several other doctors, told ELLE she has seen an increase in women seeking hand treatments in the past year.

Dr Sherrif Ibrahim is a leading New York dermatologist and an expert in laser treatments that have changed the hand-rejuvenation game. 'People are looking at their hands all the time; it's not like looking at your face, where you need a mirror,' he says. Tapping away on our phones and laptops all day have made us conscious of how our hands look while completing daily tasks. This was the case for Nam Vo, a 46-year-old make-up artist with half a million Instagram followers. 'My hands are often in my

content,' she says. 'They're starting to raisin. They look 10 years older than my face.' Two years ago, Vo started going to Korea for platelet-rich plasma and stem-cell injections. 'I get sedated because it's painful,' she says. 'I don't want to go down the filler route – it's too much drama. But I might change my mind down the road.'

Daphne Sawyer*, a patient at The Well Clinic who lives in Notting Hill and works in tech and finance, says her hands weren't something she had given much thought to. That changed when, aged 51, she saw a photo of herself that bothered her, sparking her anxiety. Since then, she has had filler, skin boosters and IPL treatment. 'The changes weren't dramatic, but my hands look healthier and less tired,' she says.

New York resident Lisa Ingle, a longtime client of Dr Ibrahim, had similar concerns: 'My hands had these brown spots. It doesn't matter how well you take care of your face – if your hands are showing, people can tell what your age is.' When Dr Ibrahim suggested treating her hands with the Sciton Halo Tribrid, a powerful laser that targets multiple layers of skin at once, Ingle, 60, was all for it. Before the treatment, she was rarely outside in short sleeves. Now, she is happy for her hands and arms to be on show.

Although Sciton is popular Stateside, hand rejuvenation is still an IYKYK phenomenon closer to home. Those already dabbling with injectables might consider it a natural next step, part of what Dr Acharya calls a 'holistic aesthetic approach'. Dr Ibrahim agrees: 'Most people don't realise that what I'm doing for their faces, I can do for their hands. I often just add it on for them.'

While the words 'rejuvenation' and 'wellness' cloak cosmetic treatments in the language of self-care, the fear of ageing is the impossible-to-ignore motivator. One surgeon shares that patients often describe their hands as 'claw-like' – a dehumanising term loaded with internalised misogyny – while Daphne refers to her 'granny hands'.

Dr Hansel Misquitta, a London-based aesthetic doctor, is aware of how trivial insecurities can reveal something deeper. 'With some demographics, including South Asian, it can be colour-driven – there's an obsession with lighter-looking skin,' she says. 'One woman said, "I have Priyanka Chopra's hands, but my knuckles are darker. Can you make them look exactly like hers?"' At The Well Clinic, patients tend to be white, affluent women, aged 55 and up. But a younger cohort, aged 27 to 40, are starting to request sun-damage-reversing treatments, too.

Still interested? It'll cost you – not just in the figurative sense. Chemical peels and dermal filler can be hundreds of pounds, while the Sciton Halo Tribrid will set you back thousands. That's without counting follow-up appointments for maintenance. When asked if she will continue treatment, Ingle doesn't hesitate. 'I'll do it for the rest of my life. Or, as much as my wallet allows.'

As the conversation around anti-ageing continues to dominate, hands are just the latest manifestation of women's insecurities. The advancement in age-reversing technology is becoming more sophisticated, so it's evident this is just the beginning. Thanks to our voracious trend cycle and a host of talented surgeons, the hands are far more capable of lying than anyone ever imagined. □

*Weight-loss
drugs are
accelerating
ageing in
the hands**



THE *missing* LINK

AS CHRONIC STRESS BECOMES MORE WIDESPREAD, A ONCE-OVERLOOKED NERVE HAS EMERGED AS A POTENTIAL WELLNESS SAVIOUR. AMELIA BELL INVESTIGATES THE RISE OF VAGUS NERVE STIMULATION – AND EXACTLY HOW TO DO IT

A LOT HAPPENS IN THE HOUR BEFORE I GO TO BED. FIRST, I USE a red-light LED face mask to stimulate collagen and induce a sense of calm. Next, as I read, I lie on a crystal-embedded pulsed electromagnetic field mat, a device that emits low-frequency waves to shift my nervous system into a state of zen. More recently, I've added a new ritual to my wellness routine: vagus-nerve stimulation. After applying my skincare, I stand in front of the mirror and stick my tongue out for 40 seconds (harder than you think) as part of my quest to activate the longest cranial nerve in the body and, in turn, reduce stress.

It's not just me. The vagus nerve has become the wellness industry's hero. It's at the centre of TikTok's 'low cortisol' humming (stimulating the nerve through physical vibrations), while 'vagus-nerve icing' (applying cold pressure) is being touted as a way to reset the nervous system, and a new generation of vague-nerve stimulators (devices that deliver electrical impulses to activate the area has turned hard-hitting neurology into a nightly bedside ritual.

The vagus nerve has been central to Traditional Chinese Medicine modalities for millennia – a communication pathway

between the brain and body that governs heart rate, digestion, immune responses and how your body responds to stress. The latter explains the sudden fascination. According to the Office of National Statistics, one in three British people are experiencing anxiety in 2026 – and among younger adults, 43% report feeling acute stress daily.

'Scientific research has finally caught up with old-world wisdom in realising that we need to build resilience to stress, and that the signals to lower the effects of it are passed through a well-functioning vagus nerve,' explains Dr Navaz Habib, author of *Activate Your Vagus Nerve*. 'The conversation is now shifting from "how to calm down" to "how to help the nervous system recover",' adds Jane Ollis, medical biochemist and founder of neurotech company Sona. The vagus nerve, it seems, is the missing link.

'Think of the vagus nerve as the communication highway delivering sensory intel from your gut, heart and lungs back to the brain, then sending calming commands to the immune cells in each organ to prevent chronic stress overload,' explains Dr Habib.



‘When people talk about listening to your body, the vagus nerve is the channel doing the talking,’ adds Ollis, who describes it as the body’s ‘sixth sense’. For me, the signs of how stressed I am are always physical: tight shoulders and a clenched jaw signal I’m in fight-or-flight mode. ‘When the vagus nerve is active, it helps calm the body’s immune system by releasing a chemical called acetylcholine; this tells the body to turn down the inflammation signals that can cause low mood, anxiety, brain fog and fatigue. A well-tuned vagus nerve does not eliminate stress, but it stops stress from becoming background static,’ she explains. Indeed, a healthy nervous system is not calm all the time. ‘It’s responsive. It knows when to mobilise and when to release,’ she adds.

Vagal tone (the activity of the vagus nerve) is mostly measured through heart-rate variability (HRV), which is the variation in time between heartbeats. I track this on my Oura ring, which collates a score based on stress and recovery. Higher vagal tone is often a sign of a more responsive nervous system, greater resilience to stress and healthier cardiovascular function (an ability to regulate after

stressful periods); lower vagal tone, meanwhile, points to a nervous system stuck in a stress loop (feeling wired but tired). The differences are plain. ‘If you feel wired but tired, emotionally reactive, foggy, bloated, inflamed or permanently on edge, that is often a nervous system that has forgotten how to stand down,’ says Ada Ooi, a facialist and Traditional Chinese Medicine expert.

With cortisol levels collectively at an all-time high, stimulating the vagus nerve has become a popular antidote. ‘Focus less on “stimulation” and more on supporting the body through rhythm and steadiness,’ suggests Nahid de Belgeonne, author, somatic educator and nervous-system strategist. ‘Small repeated signals of safety are more effective than occasional extreme interventions.’ It’s true. Social media portrays the vagus nerve as yet another performance metric. See the ‘cortisol-girl aesthetic’ and ‘low-cortisol mornings’, which ultimately add excessive steps to hack your way into a calmer state – yet real results come from consistency and simple daily practices.

When it comes to signalling safety, breathwork is, for me, the direct line to calm. ‘Breathing changes signals sent to the brainstem through vagal pathways, which creates the natural rise and fall of the heart rate with each breath,’ explains Rob Rea, breathwork practitioner and human-potential coach. It’s the exhalation, he says, that increases vagal activity; try the four-six breathing technique (breathe in for four seconds, then out for six seconds), he suggests.

The influx of vagus-nerve stimulators has also doubled this year. ‘These devices help shift your body from sympathetic survival to parasympathetic repair, enhancing digestion, immunity, sleep and emotional regulation,’ says Dr Habib. Paired with breathing and sound, Ollis says you aren’t just relaxing the vagus nerve, you’re strengthening neural pathways in the long run. When I clipped the Sona device (which uses AI to deliver personalised vagus-nerve stimulation) into my ear for the first time, I felt instantly at ease and slept noticeably better. But vagus-nerve stimulators aren’t a quick fix – you’ll need consistent daily use for real results.

There are also techniques that require zero tech. I’ve tried humming on my commute to work and languorous sound baths at the weekend. The nerve runs through the throat and ear canal, so both vibrations activate the parasympathetic pathways and the vagus nerve. ‘Vibration provides direct stimulation, as your nervous system responds to resonance,’ agrees Ollis. Cold exposure, such as splashing cold water on your face, is another tried-and-tested method. ‘This triggers the mammalian dive reflex, rapidly increasing vagal activity and slowing the heart. Think of it as pulling the handbrake,’ explains Ollis.

Meanwhile, some viral trends, such as the 40-second tongue-stretch hack, need further investigation. ‘Sticking your tongue out doesn’t “activate” the vagus nerve in the way social media often suggests. However, the tongue, jaw, throat and neck are connected to cranial nerves that contribute to how we perceive internal bodily states. Gentle tongue movements, yawning and jaw-release exercises influence muscle tension, breathing patterns and sensory awareness, which may make you feel more relaxed,’ explains de Belgeonne.

The irony isn’t lost on me. I’ve been guilty of doing, tracking, and optimising more in the quest to lower my cortisol levels. But if the sudden buzz around the vagus nerve has taught me anything, it’s that resilience is not built through self-optimisation, but smaller moments of calm – which is what my evening routine will look like from now on. □

The editors on...
MANICURES

Nail art is here to stay. Whether you're keeping it low-key and understated or embracing bright colours, let the ELLE editors inspire your next set...



Katie Withington UKRAINIAN MANICURES

I've long struggled to find a manicure that lasts. That is, until I discovered the lengthy but thorough Ukrainian manicure – a game-changer for my chip-prone tips. Paying close attention to the cuticles and nail-plate preparation, this dry technique avoids soaking the nails to prevent polish from lifting over time. A So.Shell Ukrainian manicure with hard gel takes an hour and a quarter, but results in a pristine, long-lasting look.

For colour, I love an understated sheer pink with minimalist white polka dots or a high-shine chrome effect. Apply hand balm before bed to prolong the overall appearance for up to three weeks and keep skin smooth.



- 1** Rockhard Cuticle Nipper, £30, **TWEEZERMAN**
- 2** Shea (Karité) Hand Balm, £29, **L'OCCITANE**
- 3** Hand & Cuticle Serum Pen, £12.95, **NAVY**
- 4** Miss Dior Melt-In Hand Cream, £54, **DIOR**

- 1** Hand Cream Zephirine, £29, **LBTY**
- 2** Nail Lacquer in New Day New Me, £10.99, **ESSIE**
- 3** Nourishing Oil, £53, **HERMÈS**
- 4** Gemini Nail Polish in Pink Marshmallow, £15.50, **BIO SCULPTURE**



Medina Azaldin BIO SCULPTURE

I fell out of love with traditional gels as they never seem to last on my incredibly dry nails, but Bio Sculpture changed my mind. This professional nail system takes a 'skincare' approach to nails by offering bases that are bespoke to your needs, be it strengthening, conditioning or extra longevity. If glossy, jelly-like hues and pristine cuticles are in your Instagram 'saved' folder, Bio Sculpture is the answer. My latest set lasted for almost six weeks thanks to a combination of the Grip adhesion enhancer and Conditioning base gel. After a summer of blush tones, I'm heading into autumn embracing micro French tips with unexpected colour combinations, such as candyfloss pink and navy blue or butter yellow with maroon, for an artistic twist.



Urmi Pandit LONGER LENGTHS

Extensions have been my signature for so long that I feel incomplete without my 'talons'. Whether it's micro polka dots, floral gems or tortoiseshell, this month, I'm channelling something playful but chic, as per the AW26 shows: earthy browns, terracottas and neutral hues (see Akris and Zimmermann) topped with pearlescent cat-eye finishes (inspired by Di Petsa). Teamed with a rounded, almond shape, out-there designs feel more wearable. Between manicures, I let my natural nails breathe and use strengthening polishes to protect them.



- 1** Active Smooth, £16, **MANUCURIST**
- 2** L'Huile Camélia, £30, **CHANEL**
- 3** Little Treasure Nourishing Cuticle Oil, £19, **NAILBERRY**
- 4** Nail Hardener, £22, **KURE BAZAAR**



- 1** Peacci Nail Polish in Bonfire, £7.20, **2** Cuticle Essence, £12, and **3** Gel Colour in Cherry Glass, available in salons, all **THE GELBOTTLE INC**



Candice Brathwaite BIAB

Having worn acrylic nails since I was 15, I recently transitioned to BIAB (Builder in a Bottle) and have found it a brilliant replacement – to have my own nails feel this strong has been a revelation. I get them done once a month, instead of my non-negotiable two weeks with acrylics, and getting that time back is fantastic. When younger, I tried every nail colour of the rainbow until I realised I kept coming back to red. Now I always have mine in crimson and, of late, I've tried patterns in ruby shades, too. We no longer have to rely on just acrylic or nail extensions to get a manicure that starts a conversation. The louder the better – for the chat and for the nails. □

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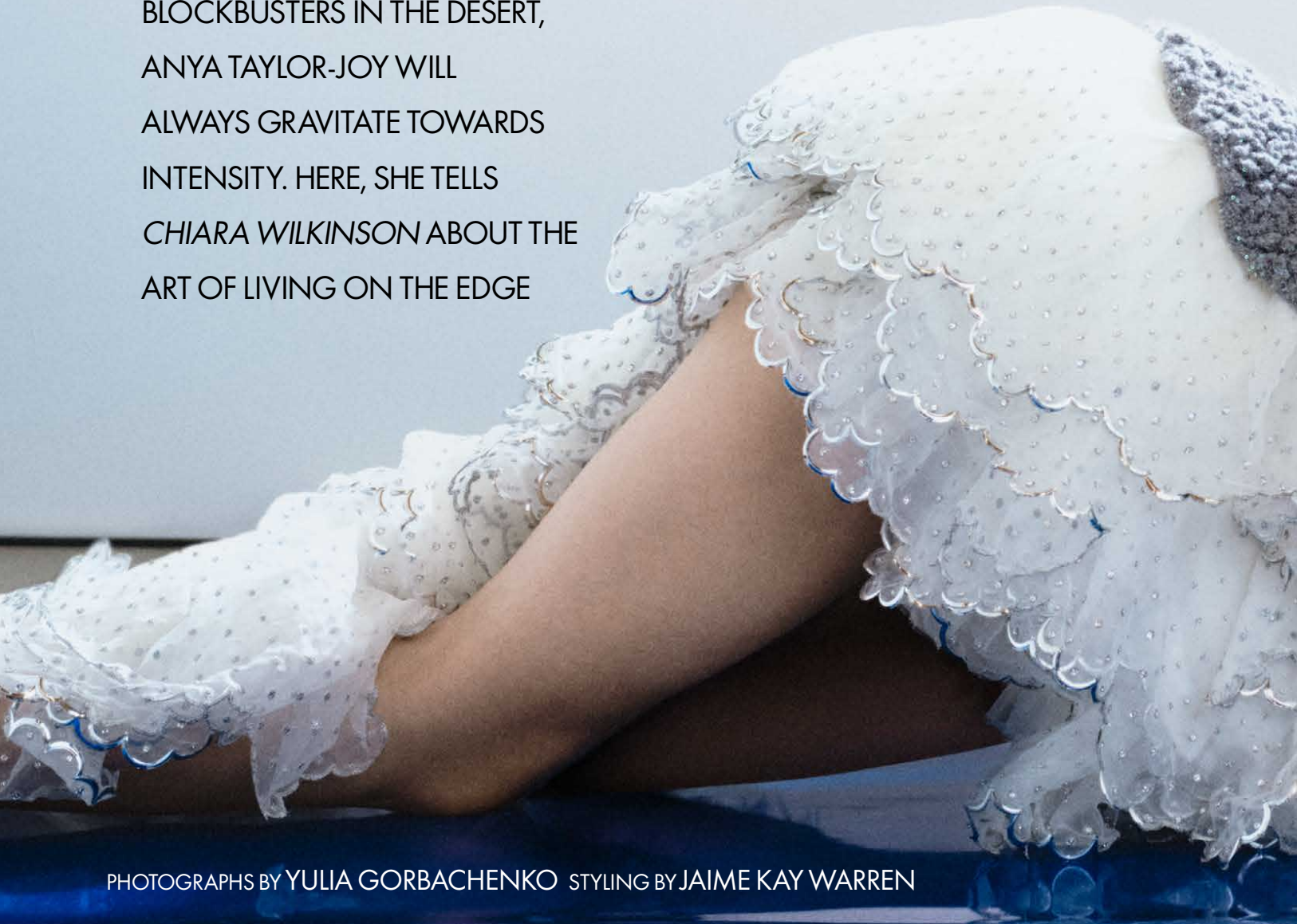
WHEN SOMETHING IS MADE WITH LOVE, IT SHOWS. OUR COVER STAR ANYA TAYLOR-JOY'S LATEST SERIES, THE HEART-RACING HEIST DRAMA *LUCKY*, HAS BEEN A PASSION PROJECT THAT SIGNALS A NEW ERA FOR THE GOLDEN GLOBE WINNER. MEANWHILE IN FASHION, THE GREATEST HALLMARK OF LUXURY TODAY IS EVIDENCE OF THE HUMAN HAND, AS THE INDUSTRY MAKES A RETURN TO CRAFT. IT'S TIME TO SLOW DOWN AND SAVOUR THE MAGIC OF CREATIVITY – OUR NEW-SEASON COLLECTIONS SHOOT INVITES YOU TO DO EXACTLY THAT

PHOTOGRAPH: YULIA GOBBACHENKO. STYLING: JAIME KAY WARREN

Gold and diamond necklace and platinum and diamond necklace, both price on request, **TIFFANY & CO.** Bra, £1,200, **DIOR**

LUCK BE A LADY

WHETHER SHE'S RAVING TILL
DAWN OR SHOOTING EPIC
BLOCKBUSTERS IN THE DESERT,
ANYA TAYLOR-JOY WILL
ALWAYS GRAVITATE TOWARDS
INTENSITY. HERE, SHE TELLS
CHIARA WILKINSON ABOUT THE
ART OF LIVING ON THE EDGE



PHOTOGRAPHS BY YULIA GORBACHENKO STYLING BY JAIME KAY WARREN



Anya Taylor-Joy
wears cardigan
and skirt, both price
on request, **DIOR**.

Platinum, gold
and diamond ring,
price on request,
TIFFANY & CO



Jacket and skirt,
both price on request,
DIOR. Platinum,
yellow gold,
diamond and
aquamarine brooch,
price on request,
TIFFANY & CO





ANMA

Taylor-Joy is a woman who lives in extremes. ‘I pulled together my 30th birthday party in two days,’ she says. ‘Two hundred of my favourite people in one place, on a Wednesday, in LA. My friends DJed some pretty intense techno, which I realised is not everyone’s cup of tea, but they got into it.’ She partied until 1.30am the next day, then slept for two hours and went to Coachella – before coming back, packing a bag and driving across America.

She rides through every situation like this, with the same hardcore intensity she brings to the screen, squeezing the utmost out of every frame. In person, however, she is anything but frantic. It’s a sweltering 35°C and London has that specific unhinged energy only a heatwave can bring. At midday, people with pints are already noisily congregating on the pavements. But three floors above, in an air-conditioned Soho House, it’s a different picture: Taylor-Joy enters, a portrait of serenity in an ivory midi-dress from Fforme, its pleated satin illuminating her pale skin. There’s a meticulousness to the way she sits, speaks and moves that makes even the smallest gesture feel intentional. She picks up my recording device and examines it in her palm, as though trying to calculate its weight. She orders a drink – ‘a Diet Coke would be amazing’ – pondering at length whether it’s actually any different to Coke Zero.

Caffeine calls: in London for 48 hours to promote her new TV series *Lucky*, she’s come directly from the set of *This Morning*. Last

weekend, she was in New York to attend Taylor Swift’s wedding at Madison Square Garden. ‘It was wonderful,’ she says, consciously adding nothing more. The last time she spent a significant period in the English capital was over Christmas, when she was based at her house in east – an area she chose because of its ‘village feel’, almost cut off from the rest of the city. ‘You feel a little like Jane Austen [when you go into the centre of London]. Like, “I’m going to town”’, she says, mimicking a posh English accent not dissimilar to the one she used to play the protagonist in the 2020 film *Emma*.

Regency-era ladies are just one of the many guises Taylor-Joy has taken on during her acting career. She made her debut in Robert Eggers’s 2015 indie horror *The Witch*, before landing a breakout role as the red-haired chess prodigy in Netflix’s lockdown hit series *The Queen’s Gambit*, which won her a Golden Globe. From there, things accelerated at vertiginous speed. In 2022, she played a Slavic sorceress in *The Northman* and a sex worker under threat in *The Menu*. In 2024, she was the post-apocalyptic warrior Furiosa in the *Mad Max Saga* of the same name – and made a surprise cameo in *Dune: Part Two*. At the end of the year, she’ll return as Alia Atreides in the third iteration of *Dune*, alongside Zendaya and Timothée Chalamet. ‘Denis [Villeneuve] is one of my favourite film-makers of all time,’ she says. This summer, she officially joined the cast of *The Lord of The Rings: The Hunt for Gollum* (‘I feel like I’ve been >



Dress, price on request, **DIOR**.
Platinum, gold and diamond rings, both price on request, **TIFFANY & CO**



‘BALLET CLASS AND DEEP, DARK TECHNO: THAT’S A PRETTY GOOD SPLIT OF MY PERSONALITY, TO BE HONEST’

an elf mywhole life, so it feels very validating,’ she told Rotten Tomatoes); she’s also rumoured to be playing a young Joni Mitchell in an upcoming biopic, alongside Meryl Streep (about which her lips remain sealed).

But first, she’s starring as the eponymous lead of the pulse-racing new Apple TV+ series *Lucky*. A big-budget, seven-episode thriller, it follows Taylor-Joy as she runs, quite literally, from the time-capsule playground of Las Vegas’ Caesars Palace to the calming waters of Big Sur, California, after a 10-million-dollar heist goes wrong. The project came about when, two years ago, Reese Witherspoon sent her a copy of Marissa Stephey’s book of the same name and asked if she’d like to be involved. Taylor-Joy said she would love to co-produce. ‘I’ve always been interested in not just why something works, but how it works,’ she says of her own production company Lady Killer, which she set up in 2024. ‘I felt like I’d been doing it for a while. It just hadn’t been part of my job title.’

If *Lucky*’s chase scenes played to Taylor-Joy’s natural speed, her foray into producing allowed her to flex ‘the spreadsheet side’ of her personality. ‘I learnt that being a leader is about being unflappable,’ she says. ‘It’s not your job to freak out, it’s your job to find solutions and soothe everybody else.’ She cast her good friend and stunt double from *Furiosa*, Hayley Wright, and Annette Bening as the scheming mob leader. She also brought in Timothy Olyphant to play Lucky’s charming yet manipulative father, and Aunjanue Ellis-Taylor as the series’ ruthless, worn-out FBI agent.

It was while watching Luca Guadagnino’s 2024 romantic drama *Queer* that she knew blue-eyed Drew Starkey was the only man to play Lucky’s love interest: ‘I was like, “That guy, we need him!”’ she says. ‘We got along so well.’ Starkey learned a great deal from his co-star. ‘As an actor, Anya is unbelievably giving,’ he says. ‘She has a great capacity to share herself in a way that’s vulnerable and compelling. As a producer, she’s the ultimate collaborator. She was open to the creative team and crew in ways that gave a voice to every member working on the story, while still having the strength to stand firm in her own ideas. You simply trust her.’

Lucky herself is scheming and manipulative, but she’s not a traditional con-artist. Her motivations are deeply psychological and calculated. ‘Anya is a wonderful actor, but beyond that she’s incredibly smart – she radiates this effortless intelligence that is vital to the character,’ says Jonathan Tropper, creator and co-showrunner. ‘Lucky is complicated. Fearless and frightened, broken but hopeful, and it’s all wrapped up in this innate intelligence. When you watch Anya in the role, whether she’s on her front or back foot, you never doubt that Lucky is the smartest person in the room.’

That intelligence may be what makes Taylor-Joy a natural fit for the role, alongside her deep understanding of family ties. But while Taylor-Joy’s character operates under the looming influence of her father, in real life, her parents’ impact is more gentle. She credits her father, a former banker of Argentine-Scottish descent, and mother, a psychologist, with helping her get to where she is while keeping her grounded. ‘My dad’s motto from when I was very little was: the harder I work, the luckier I’ll get,’ she says. ‘My mum always told me to be myself. That’s taken a long time to learn, and I think it’s something you just have to keep reminding yourself of.’ When I ask how she checks herself, she says: ‘I try to focus more on the things that I love rather than trying to self-analyse all the time.’

Those passions include dance. She trained in ballet, but gave up pointe for raving at 15; she needed something less controlled. ‘That’s a pretty good split of my personality, to be honest,’ she says. ‘Ballet class and deep, dark techno.’ Spirituality is another outlet – she meditates, gifts her friends decks of tarot cards and called her 30th birthday party ‘Spectral Spring’ (‘I wanted it to look a bit culty. Everyone was in long white dresses or suits and flower crowns’).

She’s an incessant reader, and travels with around 20 physical books at any given time. ‘I’ve just finished Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando*, and I’m about to start reading Deborah Levy’s *The Cost of Living*,’ she says. ‘Deborah and Olivia Laing are up there’ with her favourite writers, and she’s developing Bella Mackie’s book *How to Kill Your Family* into a Netflix series, with filming starting ‘soon’.

Throughout it all, she retains a childlike obsession with >

Jacket (worn as
a dress), price on
request, **DIOR**.
Platinum, gold
and diamond ring,
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Top and skirt, both
price on request,
DIOR. White gold
and diamond ring,
£2,725, matching
ring (both on right
hand), £4,550,
matching ring (on left
hand, just seen),
£7,375, and platinum
and diamond
bracelet, £7,825, all
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Dress, price on request, **DIOR**.
Platinum, gold and diamond rings and platinum and diamond necklace, all price on request, **TIFFANY & CO**

‘I FEEL EMBOLDENED TO TAKE MORE RISKS BECAUSE I HAVE A RELATIONSHIP THAT IS HEALTHY AND SO FUN. I LAUGH 90% OF THE TIME’

animals and the natural world, whether it's doting on her 'massive, fluffy' cat Emperor Kitsune, or falling asleep to David Attenborough's *Asia* documentary. She engages in what she describes as 'an active slowing down' by visiting national parks.

Taylor-Joy's innate curiosity appears to stem from her cross-cultural upbringing. Born in Miami, she grew up as the youngest of six siblings – four of whom are from her father's previous marriage – in Buenos Aires, Argentina. 'When I think about myself as a child, I just imagine being in the woods and looking up at the sky,' she says. 'I'd play by myself there for hours. I was very concerned with the patterns of migratory birds, so I'd get all the kids at school to build nests. I thought that was our responsibility.'

No birds came, and when her family moved to London when she was six, things – beyond the sky – were greyer. At first, she refused to learn English, preferring to speak with her native Spanish, and was severely bullied in school. By the time she was a teenager, she had developed a love of acting, and she convinced her parents to let her travel to New York alone to take part in a directing programme at 14. Things turned a corner two years later when she was scouted by Sarah Doukas, who famously discovered Kate Moss, while Taylor-Joy was walking her dog outside Harrods in Knightsbridge. Fashion itself held little appeal: she only accepted because she believed modelling might open the door to acting. And sure enough, a conversation on a fashion shoot with actor Allen Leech, who played Brandon in *Downton Abbey*, led to her signing with his agent.

'It wasn't that I didn't like clothes,' she says, of those early modelling days. 'But I used to have a friend who would try to get me to watch fashion shows, and I was like, "What are we doing? We could be outside."' Things are different now. 'The transformational power of fashion really got me hooked,' she says. 'The more I learnt about craftsmanship, the more fun I found it.' She describes her personal style as slinky and comfortable: 'If I could live in Galliano silk for the entirety of my life, I'd be very happy!' In 2021, she was announced as a global brand ambassador for Dior. Earlier

this year, she attended the house's 2027 cruise show with her musician husband Malcolm McRae, from the band More*.

Taylor-Joy becomes visibly giddy when she mentions McRae. She is, naturally, a romantic. When the couple first met at a music studio, they discovered they shared the same birthday, April 16, and after they made their first public appearance – photographed kissing on the streets of New York in May 2021 – they eloped to New Orleans in April of the following year. 'I don't want to sound smug, but I love him so much,' she says. 'To have a best friend who goes through life with you – it has given me a sense of security that I didn't really ever dream about. It wasn't something that was on my list. Now that I have it, I just feel emboldened to take more risks because I know I've got something really nutritive and solid and healthy and so f*cking fun. I laugh, like, 90% of the time.'

When they're not together, which is a lot, they check in to catch up on their 'adventures' at the beginning and end of every day. 'Malc's got a dumb phone. And I've kind of been offline for a while,' she says. In an early interview, she said she stopped looking in mirrors for a long time after seeing cruel comments about her looks on social media. Being offline has 'done wonders' for her mental health: 'I do sometimes feel like I don't really know what's going on [online], but I think it's so nice to be fully present.'

She's looking ahead to the next decade: if her twenties were about adventure at full tilt, her thirties promise much of the same. 'There's a fire that starts up in me when I realise something is going to be tough,' she says. 'I love to be in situations where others would be miserable and make them places full of joy. Like *Dune*, shooting in the desert. Yes, it's hot. Who cares? This is wild!' Taylor-Joy will always favour the margins over the middle ground: hot or cold, hard or soft, techno or ballet. 'When I was a kid, I told my mum, "the middle is death",' she says now, laughing. 'I think she was trying to talk to me about balance.' Growing up hasn't softened her appetite for life in the fast lane. 'Having been in some really dark places, I now have such an appreciation for it all. What a privilege it is to be exhausted by the thing that you love!' □





Jacket and skirt, both price on request, and heels, £1,300, all **DIOR**. Yellow gold bracelet, £7,000, and platinum, gold and diamond rings, both price on request, all **TIFFANY & CO.** Tights, stylist's own. **HAIR:** Gregory Russell at The Wall Group. **MAKE-UP:** Georgie Eisdell at The Wall Group using Dior. **NAILS:** Kim Truong at A-Frame. **SET DESIGN:** Romain Goudinoux at Bryant Artists. **LOCATION:** Gallery 6 @ gallery6space. **PRODUCTION:** Viewfinders. **STYLIST'S ASSISTANTS:** Patrick Rammelkamp, Hadya Tuofiq

The Ball Type

IN OTHER WORDS: SATIN! GLAMOUR! SEQUINS!
METALLIC SURFACES (OR EYES)! SKY-HIGH SHOES!
SLITS! GLOSS! LOTS OF IT. LIFE IS SHORT! THE AW26
COLLECTIONS BECKON YOU TO HAVE FUN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARC DE GROOT STYLING BY RUDY SIMBA BETTY



Valentino

Top, skirt and heels, all price on request. Crystal earrings, price on request, VALENTINO GARAVANI. Scarf, stylist's own



Max Mara

Dress, price on request, and boots, £1,200



Hermès

Top, jumper, skirt, tie, and boots, all price on request

Louis Vuitton

Blazer, £4,150, trousers, £1,670, hat, £435, brass earrings, £3,500, and bag, £2,370





Celine

Coat, £4,950, jumper, £1,100, hat, price on request, and boots, £1,050. Socks, stylist's own

Givenchy by Sarah Burton

Hat, £4,267, and brass earrings, price on request







Sabel Mart

Blazer, around £810, top, around £250, trousers, around £470, necklace, around £215, and heels, around £675



Chanel

Dress, price on request, metal and mother-of-pearl earrings (one shown), £865, and heels (in hand), £5,220



Ferragamo

Coat, £8,925, top, £5,270, and skirt, £3,200



Balenciaga

Top, trousers and gloves, all price on request. Boots, stylist's own





McQueen

Coat, £2,300, jumper and shorts (worn underneath), both price on request, skirt, £790, and boots, £1,250



Polo Ralph Lauren

Jacket, £645, shirt, £215, trousers, £375, and belt, £285. Boots, stylist's own

Prada

Jacket, £7,700, coat, £3,600, jumper, £1,550, earrings, £3,150, bag, £2,350, socks, £640, and heels, £1,130





*Givenchy by
Sarah Burton*

Coat, £4,704, top, £2,138, and brass earrings, price on request



Chloé

Jacket, £2,469, shirt, £2,127, trousers, £2,726, brass necklace, £1,324, and boots, £2,127



Gucci

Top, £1,150, leggings, £975, bag, £3,360, and heels, £840



Giorgio Armani

Jacket, £1,300, trousers, £880, and bag, £490



Dior

Dress, price on request, and heels, £900



miu miu

Dress, £1,820, bag, £3,050, and clogs, £360. Glasses, stylist's own





Burberry

Shirt, £1,190, trousers, £1,490, and belt, price on request

Michael Kors Collection

Coat, £2,760, trousers, £965, gloves, £640, bag, £1,350, and Oxfords, £710. Scarf, stylist's own





Fendi

Dress, £4,700. Shoes, stylist's own

HAIR AND MAKE-UP:

Irena Ruben. **NAILS:**

Delphine Atssi. **STYLIST'S**

ASSISTANT: Olivia

Sandford-Wilson. **MODEL:**

Amar Akway at Premier
Model Management



CRAFT *work*

IN A WORLD INCREASINGLY DRIVEN BY ALGORITHMS AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, LUXURY FASHION'S GREATEST FLEX IS THE MAGIC OF THE HUMAN HAND, WITH A SLEW OF DESIGNERS INCLUDING JONATHAN ANDERSON, MATTHIEU BLAZY, LOUISE TROTTER AND DANIEL ROSEBERRY TAKING THE POWER OF CRAFT TO NEW HEIGHTS. LAURA ANTONIA JORDAN LOOKS AT WHAT IT MEANS FOR OUR WARDROBES

PHOTOGRAPH BY JONATHAN ARUNDEL STYLING BY GRACE CLARKE



SHIRT, £280, AND TROUSERS, £300, BOTH CITIZENS OF HUMANITY

OVER THE YEARS, PAULINE DUJANCOURT'S catwalk collections have drawn on Chekhov's *The Seagull*, her mother's wedding dress, Shinto shrines and the Salem witch trials – but there is one inspiration the Paris-born, London-based designer will always return to: watching her late grandmother knitting and sewing.

Rummaging through one of the many overflowing boxes of swatches, technique developments and experiments (the little relics of a creative mind in action) in her beautifully chaotic east-London studio, Dujancourt explains that 'these handmade, hybrid crochet pieces will always remain the starting point' of her airy, romantically gothic collections. Of course, there are far more efficient ways of doing things than Dujancourt's preferred method, ones that are easier, more streamlined and much less time-consuming. But for Dujancourt, an Andam Prize-winning designer known for her knitted, crocheted and macramé work, that isn't an option.

'That was my biggest worry when I started: "How am I going to scale the brand if it works? And also, are people actually into handwork?"' she says. The answer was an affirmative yes. 'What was really beautiful is that everyone who discovered the clothes in person told me about a woman in their family who used to knit and how that brought back memories of them.' Her solution to scaling in a meaningful, intimate way was to work with a collective of women in Peru. 'They've been growing with the brand. [They're like] my other hands across the world.'

Dujancourt is one of the heroines of the contemporary handicraft movement, which cherishes time and expertise over mass-produced instant gratification. While *les petites mains* (as couture atelier artisans are sometimes known) have always been indispensable, industriously ticking away behind the scenes, the autumn/winter 2026 collections are an explicit, visible celebration of their work. 'The collections this season reflect a broader desire for authenticity, longevity and pieces with a story behind them,' says Bosse Myhr,



IN THE DETAILS
EMBELLISHMENTS
AND EMBROIDERY
AT (FROM TOP)
CHANEL, PAULINE
DUJANCOURT,
DIOR AND ERDEM



the director of womenswear, menswear and childrenswear buying at Selfridges.

It's there in the tender tactility of Matthieu Blazy's Chanel. His AW26 show spoke to Coco Chanel's assertion of the need for 'dresses that crawl and dresses that fly'; it included glittering tinsel, organza feathers and pearl paillettes, every look honouring the expertise of the maison's ateliers and inviting closer examination. At Dior, each intricately embroidered pair of jeans and explosive corsage gestured to the hands that had made them (creative director Jonathan Anderson also integrated Irish and Scottish knitwear, natural dye-work by Gloucestershire-based Polly Lyster – who appeared in the AW26 lookbook – and oak objects by the Mouseman Craftsmen, famous for their handmade furniture, into his JW Anderson collection).

You can also see it in Stella McCartney's colourful tea-cosy crochets, the deliberately undone threads of the floral motifs on Erdem's coral-lace panier gown and the buttery intrecciato leathers of Bottega Veneta. At Loewe, the trompe l'oeil latex, looped and lacquered leather and pastel shearling 'cords' speak to the joy Jack McCollough and Lazaro Hernandez have found in their toybox of crafts. In Phoebe Philo's Collection E, meticulously worked, dense embroidery resembling crushed carnations and sharp-pressed fluid silks with intentional creases and folds masterfully exhibit what it's all about: not just hand, but heart. Without being too lofty about it, you can see the humanity in these pieces.

But why now? While it's overly simplistic to argue that AI = bad (consider what it can do for healthcare, for instance), this season's prevalence of visible crafting is undoubtedly a beautiful yet firm kickback against the more negative impacts of rampant tech, holding off the stampede with bobbins and knitting needles. The robots can't crochet – yet. This is the sartorial equivalent of 'touching grass'.

'As technology accelerates, there is a growing appreciation and renewed appetite for the imperfect, the tactile and the

handmade,' says Myhr. 'We're seeing women seek out pieces that feel distinctively human and bring a sense of individuality and emotional resonance. Techniques such as crochet, embroidery and embellishment speak to time, skill and creativity – qualities that feel increasingly luxurious today and add value.'

Lydia King, the managing director of department store Liberty, sees a similar trend happening. 'Customers are gravitating towards clothes that feel considered and tactile,' she says. 'True luxury isn't just about the finished piece, but the artistry, time and craftsmanship behind it.' Belma Gaudio, the founder of London boutique Koibird, agrees: 'Craft and storytelling bring back a sense of magic that makes fashion feel emotional.'

Craft is also a tacit invitation to slow down, to savour. In the overwhelm of modern life, there is something deeply luxurious about taking one's time. When being always on is not just encouraged but expected, it is soothing. Indeed, wasn't our drive to make things with our hands during the pandemic less about having too little to do and more about having too much on our minds? There is an honesty to using one's hands and an alchemy to creating something from nothing.

'When the world is so chaotic, you search for substance,' says Tory Burch. This season, she 'wanted to honour heritage crafts while twisting and pushing them in a different direction: cardigans with Zardozi embroidery in badla metal threads, belts handwoven from multi-coloured leather, wool and silk, then brushed and washed by hand, and our Bunny Knot bag, detailed with hand-done knots'.

There is a palpable sense of both personal history and cultural heritage in crafts that also serve to magnify their importance. Burch was thinking about her father Buddy while designing her collection: 'He often said, "Classics become interesting with your personal take."'

To champion craft is to preserve stories and traditions, personal as well as cultural. By not just celebrating, but collaborating



SOFT POWER
TACTILE LOOKS
BY (FROM TOP)
PAULINE
DUJANCOURT,
LOEWE, BOTTEGA
VENETA AND
STELLA McCARTNEY



with (and investing in) artisans, designers can help keep the art alive.

'Craft reveals the presence of the maker and the intelligence of the hand. It reminds us that knowledge is built over time, through observation and material understanding,' says Karishma Swali, the co-founder and creative director of Chorus, a Mumbai-based multi-disciplinary atelier dedicated to contemporary expression of couture-grade craft. 'We are committed to exploring the textile architectures of the Indian subcontinent and the knowledge systems they contain. Working with the hand creates a direct dialogue with the material, allowing intuition and skill to shape the outcome. These human gestures give objects their character and presence. For us, technique carries the stories, communities and histories embedded within the act of making.'

The signs of a maker invite us both to tell and listen to stories; it's back to that humanity aspect. Dujancourt's clothes have invited people who discover them to open up. 'They started telling me about how they used to do crochet when they were kids,' she says of people who encountered her clothes at showrooms and pop-ups. 'It became a way to connect with people and for them to confide in me, sometimes about quite emotional stories. That all happened thanks to a hand-knitted jumper – that's quite beautiful.'

And, of course, part of what makes any story compelling are the twists, quirks and disruptions. The imperfections, too, are why handmade crafts feel so electrifying right now. It's the radical antithesis to all that maxxing and optimising, swiping and scrolling.

'I think what I love most about experimenting a lot by hand are the happy accidents,' says Dujancourt, citing an instance of inadvertently weaving two colours together late in the studio one night, but being unexpectedly thrilled with the moiré effect – a detail that made it to the catwalk. 'It's usually how the best stuff is born.' That, in other words, is how the magic happens. □



*'I'm proud
London is an
international
fashion
powerhouse'*

AS SADIQ KHAN CELEBRATES 10 YEARS IN OFFICE, THE LONDON MAYOR REFLECTS ON THE ENDURING POWER OF ENGLAND'S CAPITAL CITY, THE CHANGING LOOK OF BRITISH FASHION AND WHY HE STANDS BY HIS VOW TO BE THE 'FIRST FEMINIST IN CITY HALL'

WORDS BY OLIVE POMETSEY ILLUSTRATION BY LILY PICHON FLANNERY

SADIQ KHAN WILL BE THE FIRST TO ADMIT that, for a long time, he lived in a man's world. He went to an all-boys school in Tooting, London, and was one of seven brothers who grew up in a three-bedroom council flat in Wandsworth. All of his friends were the same gender. His mother and sister were there, of course, but his life experiences were largely shaped by the men around him. The lens through which he saw society only accounted for one half of the population.

Then he became a father to two daughters. 'When I had my girls, my perspective changed,' he says. 'Their life experience changed the way I thought about things.' His eyes were opened to the reality women face. He realised how banter among lads on a bus may intimidate a girl on her own, and became aware of the hyper-vigilance required for women to move through the city safely. 'I've never experienced anyone touching me up on the Tube, right? But that's not the experience of girls and women in London.'

That's why, 10 years ago, when Khan first ran for Mayor of London, he vowed to be 'the first feminist in City Hall'. Now, after making history in 2024 by becoming the first mayor to win three successive terms, he says his time in office has only strengthened his determination to make the city a safer and fairer place for women.

Although quick to list what he's learnt from the past decade, Khan admits there's still much more work to be done. But first, he takes a moment to list out his successes: 'A Londoner born and raised in our city today is breathing cleaner air, going to primary school, having a free, nutritious meal, and going to after-school clubs and holiday schemes,' he says as we sit in a sprawling conference room in a central-London government building. He's wearing his signature look: a navy suit, no tie, with the top button of his shirt undone. Blank whiteboards hang on every wall; a table big enough to seat a growing start-up stretches out in front of him. He's warm and cracks jokes with his team ('We couldn't find a more glamorous room? It's ELLE!') before swiftly switching back to politician mode.

He points out that young Londoners can now whizz across the city on the Elizabeth Line or via new cycle lanes, as they make their way to one of the 300,000 jobs that City Hall has helped to create. 'I'm proud of the difference we've made. But what's really important, particularly in the current climate, is standing up for our values.'

Amid the ever-growing threat of the far right and the increasing grip of big tech, bridging the gap between divided communities is at the forefront of Khan's mind. That often makes him a focal point in politics. In 2019, Trump called him a 'stone cold loser' while Steve Bannon, his alt-right former chief strategist, went so far as to refer to Khan as a 'radical' cautionary tale that New Yorkers should avoid.

Last year, the city elected Zohran Mamdani, a result that Khan said gave him hope. Since then, the comparisons – two starry, energetic mayors, both the first Muslims to take on the roles, governing two of the world's biggest financial capitals – have drawn inevitable comparisons.

But today, Khan is more interested in drawing comparisons between the experiences of women and men in the city. When Khan goes to a nightclub, he explains, he only worries about his bad dancing, and not whether his drink will get spiked. In 2017, he had a great time watching The Killers at the British Summer Time festival, while activist Gina Martin was upskirted at the same gig.

'I'm cognisant of this,' he says, furrowing his brow in frustration. 'On the other hand, a number of things have happened that should be a wake-up call for everyone.' Khan lists the names of women who've paid the ultimate price of misogyny: Sarah Everard, Zara Aleena, Bibaa Henry and Nicole Smallman, to name only a handful – 'Londoners whose lives were cut short because of the actions of men.' Then, he reminds us of MP Jess Phillips' annual speech in Parliament, when she reads out the names of every femicide victim from the preceding year. 'Every three days, a woman in this country is killed by a man. I find it shocking,' says Khan. 'You can't escape the conclusion that we've got an epidemic



FROM LEFT: SADIQ KHAN WITH JUSTINE SIMONS, DEPUTY MAYOR FOR CULTURE AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES; AT LONDON FASHION WEEK IN 2018; WITH NAOMI CAMPBELL AT PRIDE IN LONDON IN 2025

of violence against women and girls.'

Over the past few years, City Hall has invested £277m to help tackle the issue, alongside producing campaigns such as 'Have A Word' and 'Say Maaate to a Mate', which put the onus on men to provide meaningful allyship. 'These videos have been viewed more than 50 million times and 86% of men who saw them changed their behaviour in terms of challenging friends who have been misogynistic or acted inappropriately,' says Khan.

At a time when the manosphere seems to grow ever faster, its power fuelled by certain members of powerful governments, big tech and the political establishment, Khan's work stands as a rebuke. 'If the first thing you see online as a nine-year-old boy is an Andrew Tate video, because of algorithms, you'll keep seeing the same misogynistic messaging,' he says. 'You're not seeing the counter: how it feels to be a girl or a woman, or what a healthy relationship looks like.'

Khan, one of the more social-media savvy members of the Labour party, has been thinking a lot about algorithms lately. In April, he railed against the 'outrage economy', calling out disinformation and platforms that incentivise division and 'make profit from poison'. For Khan, it's personal. Over the past two years, content that paints the capital as unsafe has risen by 200%, alongside a 350% increase in anti-migrant rhetoric, often posted by accounts associated with the US, Russia, China and Vietnam. Many of those attacks piggyback a narrative perpetuated by Donald Trump: that London is a dangerous, lawless city. Khan points out that, in

● *We've got an* **EPIDEMIC** *of violence*
against **WOMEN and GIRLS** ●



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: WITH ROKSANDA ILINCIC, SAADIYA KHAN AND SIMONS AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM BALL; CELEBRATING RE-ELECTION WITH HIS DAUGHTER; WITH ANGELA RAYNER; ON A WOMEN'S MARCH

reality, homicide rates have dropped to the lowest since records began – meaning that, per capita, the city is technically safer than Paris, Madrid, Berlin, Barcelona, Toronto and ‘any state in the USA’.

Why, then, has London become the far right’s punchbag? ‘Let’s be frank. If you’re someone who believes in nativism and mono-ethnicism, and that there’s a clash of civilisations between Islam and the West, you hate London because we are diverse, progressive, liberal, multicultural and incredibly successful. We are the cultural capital of the world. The music capital of the world. The tourist capital of the world. The student capital of the world. The AI and the life sciences capitals of Europe. They’re thinking, “Oh my God, these guys are the antithesis of what we’re saying.”’

Essentially, he says, London is evidence that progressive values and multicultural communities benefit everyone, directly opposing the fearmongering narrative of far-right leaders. A similar story is currently playing out in New York under Mamdani, who has been in office since January. ‘There’s a reason why New York, in my opinion, is the second-greatest city in the world,’ says Khan. ‘New Yorkers chose the positivity of Zohran over the negativity of his main opponents – hope over fear, unity over division, love over hate – which is the London story as well.’

Khan believes that the greatest city in the world is, obviously, London. This summer, the capital is experiencing a cultural renaissance, with landmark art exhibitions, the opening of new nightclubs and shows from the world’s biggest artists. The city has already played host to music

superstars Bad Bunny, Rosalía and Harry Styles. Khan goes on to note other major cultural events, such as the opening of V&A East in April, Tracey Emin’s retrospective at Tate Modern (‘just amazing’) and an exhibition of the late David Hockney’s work at the Serpentine. ‘Good culture reflects society; great culture shapes it,’ says Khan. ‘The food, the arts, the galleries – London’s just a really exciting place to be.’

Throughout his 10 years, Khan says culture has been his top priority. ‘Four out of five people say culture is what they love about our city, it’s what drives tourism and jobs, generating £64bn a year for us. He acknowledges that creatives are driving this success story, but that actually *being* a creative today isn’t easy. ‘One thing that all creatives need is affordable space and, through my creative-enterprise zones, we’ve seen a major increase in studios. Our first Creative Land Trust is providing long-term, affordable studios. We’ve also been working with Sir Paul Smith to unlock free studio space at Studio Smithfield, in the heart of the City of London.’

The power of the British fashion industry and its importance for London remains especially key. ‘I’m proud that London is an international fashion powerhouse, with our designers leading the way in creativity and innovation. We have incredible heritage brands alongside exciting new talent. The fashion industry is also a huge economic driver, attracting businesses and visitors and contributing £62bn to the UK economy.’ He adds: ‘London has always been a city that thrives on innovation and experimentation. Whenever I attend shows during London

Fashion Week, I’m struck by the extraordinary creativity and diversity on display. From rising stars such as Tolu Coker and Harris Reed, to iconic British brands like Burberry, London continues to set the standard for fashion on the global stage.’

Khan also sees the seismic changes AI is bringing across the economy, especially for creatives. ‘For every business to benefit from the opportunities AI can unlock, there needs to be support. At London Tech Week, I announced a £12m investment to help small and medium-sized businesses to harness the power of artificial intelligence and boost economic growth across the capital. This reflects our ambitious but balanced approach to AI – embracing its enormous potential while recognising the challenges and concerns it presents.’

Ten years into the job and the capital hasn’t lost its shine. If anything, Khan’s love for his hometown has grown, enriched by the stories of Londoners he meets on a daily basis. That said, a decade is a long time to stay in any job, let alone one of the most important political positions in the country. Back in 2023, Khan said he was aiming for six terms as Mayor of London. Halfway through, is that still the case? ‘At least!’ Khan says with a grin. ‘I’ve got the best job in the world – definitely the best job in politics.’ Besides, there’s still plenty more work to be done. ‘As long as I’m Mayor, we’re going to carry on being a beacon for equality, for progressive values, for liberalism. We should be proud of that.’ And with that, he says goodbye and practically runs out the door to his next appointment. Busy day? Try decade. Khan is always moving forward. □

All TOGETHER now

MEET THE
TRAILBLAZERS
ENSURING BRITISH
FASHION REMAINS
ONE OF THE
WORLD'S MOST
CREATIVE, AND
FEARLESS,
COMMUNITIES

WORDS BY TAMISON O'CONNOR

FOR A FASHION EDITOR, NOTHING QUITE beats the thrill of sitting front row at a show and seeing pure, unfettered creativity come down the catwalk. It's a giddy, exciting feeling; a welcome reminder of exactly why you love your job. In today's climate, when commercial demands, shareholder expectations and rapid-growth ambitions are increasingly influencing collections, unabashed experimentation and fearless design are luxuries not all designers can afford. In the UK, however, there's an abundance: creativity truly is at the beating heart of the industry. It always has been, and it always will be. That's the magic of British fashion.

Lately, however, it has been difficult. With a sluggish economy, the rising cost of living, geopolitical uncertainty, post-Brexit challenges and a luxury-market downturn that has dampened sales across the industry, there has never been a tougher time to make your way as a fashion creative, particularly for those running an independent brand. And yet, despite what seems like a mountain of hurdles, it feels like there's a renewed sense of energy and optimism driving the UK fashion industry forward right now.

Take London Fashion Week: this September is shaping up to be one of the most exciting line-ups we've seen for a while, with beloved British brands making a return to the schedule. Among them are Alexander McQueen and Mulberry, which is now under the creative direction of Christopher Kane, one of the UK's most critically adored designers. Meanwhile, M&S is set

to make a big debut on the calendar, celebrating the centenary of its fashion business.

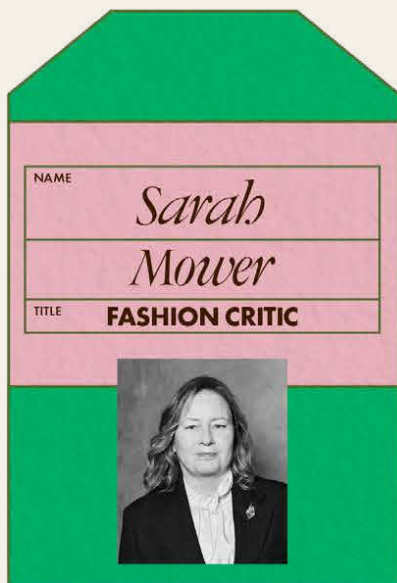
So many of the designers who grew their careers out of the UK are also making waves on the global stage. Just look at Jonathan Anderson, who is setting the luxury agenda at Dior and was handpicked by American pop royalty Taylor Swift to design her wedding dress. Or Simone Rocha, who debuted menswear at Pitti Umo in Florence this summer. Or Pauline Dujancourt, who won the Special Prize at the prestigious Andam Fashion Awards in Paris this year. The list goes on.

Ultimately, the fashion industry plays a key role in shaping culture, contributing about £67.5 billion in gross value added annually to the country's economy, according to the British Fashion Council. It's also a cornerstone of British soft power, bolstering the nation's cultural and economic influence abroad. In fashion circles, the UK is renowned for producing world-class talent – and is often the place that mega-brands turn to when scouting for the next big thing.

But none of this success happens by accident. Behind the scenes, a passionate community of executives, creatives, entrepreneurs and mentors have been working tirelessly to provide opportunities for creativity, experimentation and fearlessness to thrive. Here, ELLE celebrates the movers and shakers within British fashion, people who have dedicated themselves to keeping joy, craftsmanship and innovation at the core of our industry.

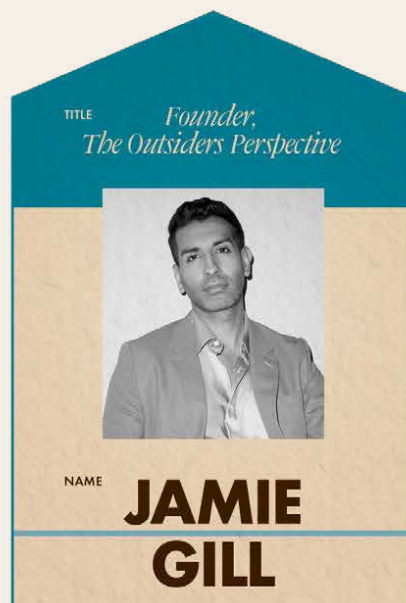


For more than 25 years, Lulu Kennedy has been fashion's fairy godmother, finding and nurturing the next generation of talent through her non-profit incubator Fashion East. Most of British fashion's biggest names – Jonathan Anderson, Martine Rose and Grace Wales Bonner among them – came up through her programme, which more recently has supported buzzy emerging designers such as Karoline Vitto and Standing Ground's Michael Stewart.



British fashion's most notable and longstanding champion of new talent, Sarah Mower spreads her influence far and wide. Jonathan Anderson, Simone Rocha and Grace Wales Bonner are just a few of the names she has helped along the way as chair of BFC Newgen, which supports designers at the start of their careers. This year, she's launched Fashion Assembly, encouraging designers to return to their old schools and inspire students.

As CEO of the British Fashion Council, Laura Weir is spearheading a new era, with a strategy to revitalise the industry and amplify the UK's place on the global stage. Since taking over the body last year, she has already begun rolling out initiatives to bolster funding, revamp ways to support talent and help foster thriving fashion hubs beyond the capital.



The former chief executive of Roksanda is helping to transform the make-up of fashion through The Outsiders Perspective, his talent accelerator for people of colour hoping to break into the business side of the industry. For Jamie Gill, inclusivity is what makes the British fashion industry so great. 'We're a melting pot of incredible cultures, which results in precision tailoring, street style and modern British heritage all out of London,' he says. 'British fashion feels less rule-bound than other places; that's what gives it such a unique point of view.'

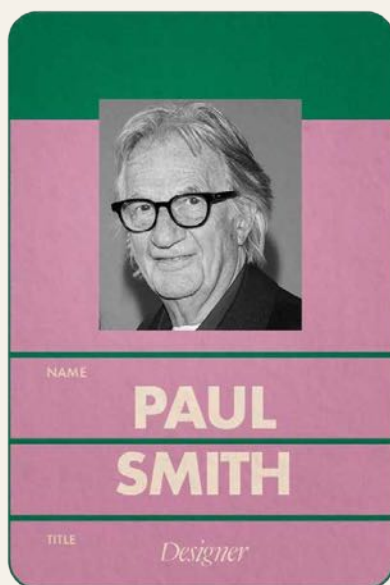
The founder and editor-in-chief of '10 Magazine' is one of the industry's most influential creative forces and biggest cheerleaders. 'What makes (our fashion community) inspiring is that everyone, in what is a financially challenging environment, is fearless and brave, and the creativity never suffers,' Sophia Neophitou-Apostolou says. 'It just doesn't. We are a nation of people who are fearlessly following our passions.'



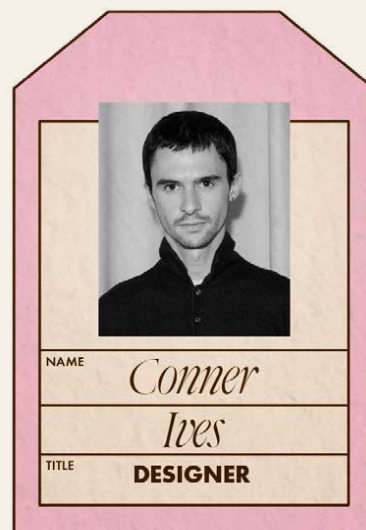


The entrepreneur and philanthropist has dedicated her career to empowering new designers, co-founding the Fashion Trust, a non-profit platform that scouts, funds and mentors young talent. 'What inspires me most is the incredible mix of people who make up the British fashion community,' she says. 'Of course, the designers, but also the editors, buyers, stylists, mentors and retailers who all play such an important role. Everyone brings something different, and it's that sense of collaboration and support that makes the industry so special.'

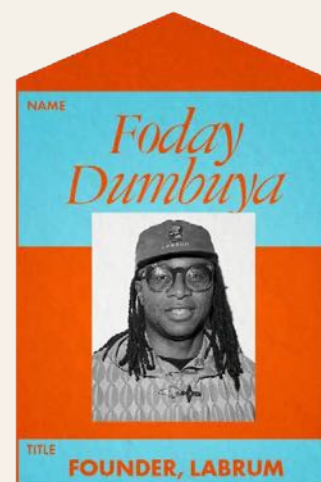
The renowned British designer started his charitable foundation in 2020 to offer advice, access, opportunities and funding to the next generation of creatives. In 2024, together with the Mayor of London and real-estate company Projekt, the foundation launched The Fashion Residency at Studio Smithfield, offering early-career designers free studio space in central London alongside mentoring from industry experts, supporting exciting names including Pauline Dujancourt, Paolina Russo and Paolo Carzana.



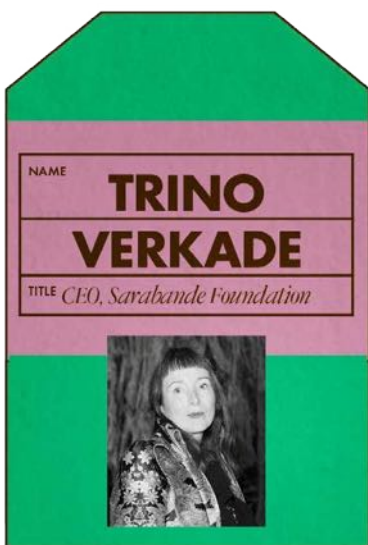
The British-Yemeni fashion designer, who was the first to present a Hijabi collection at Central Saint Martins' MA graduate showcase, has built a brand rooted in community and social activism, using fashion as a platform to raise awareness and give back. Her recent London Fashion Week souk pop-up, hosted in collaboration with Tank Magazine, partnered with local businesses and community collectives in her network to raise thousands for humanitarian charities across Palestine and Yemen.



The US-born, London-based designer made a name for himself with his Americana-inflected, environmentally responsible designs, made from deadstock and upcycled vintage. Last year, amid attacks on trans rights in the US and the UK, the designer took a stand by debuting his viral 'Protect the Dolls' slogan tee, which went on to raise about £500,000 for Trans Lifeline.



Through his label Labrum, Sierra Leone-born Foday Dumbuya is reframing the conversation around immigrants, uniting West African and Western culture and paying homage to the rich, untold stories of his heritage. His star power has grown even larger in the wake of Arsenal's historic Premier League win – Dumbuya designed the team's wildly popular away kit.

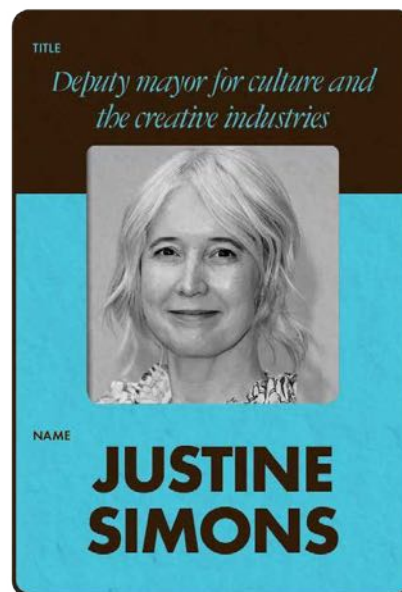


The fashion executive runs the Sarabande Foundation, the charitable platform founded by the late Lee Alexander McQueen. Under the leadership of Trino Verkade, who was McQueen's first employee, the organisation gives early-career artists and creatives scholarships, mentorship and studio space. Some of the most exciting British design talents have benefited from its support, including Craig Green, Molly Goddard and Bianca Saunders.



The designer and Central Saint Martins lecturer has an outsized energy that is as bold as her trademark pink hair. She has spearheaded a range of projects, including Wool Exchange and the Makers Camp initiative, which explore sustainable practices in design. For Berni Yates, the spirit of British fashion lies in its 'creativity, sense of humour and care', and in the 'diaspora of cultural "mash-ups"', which is 'like nowhere else'.

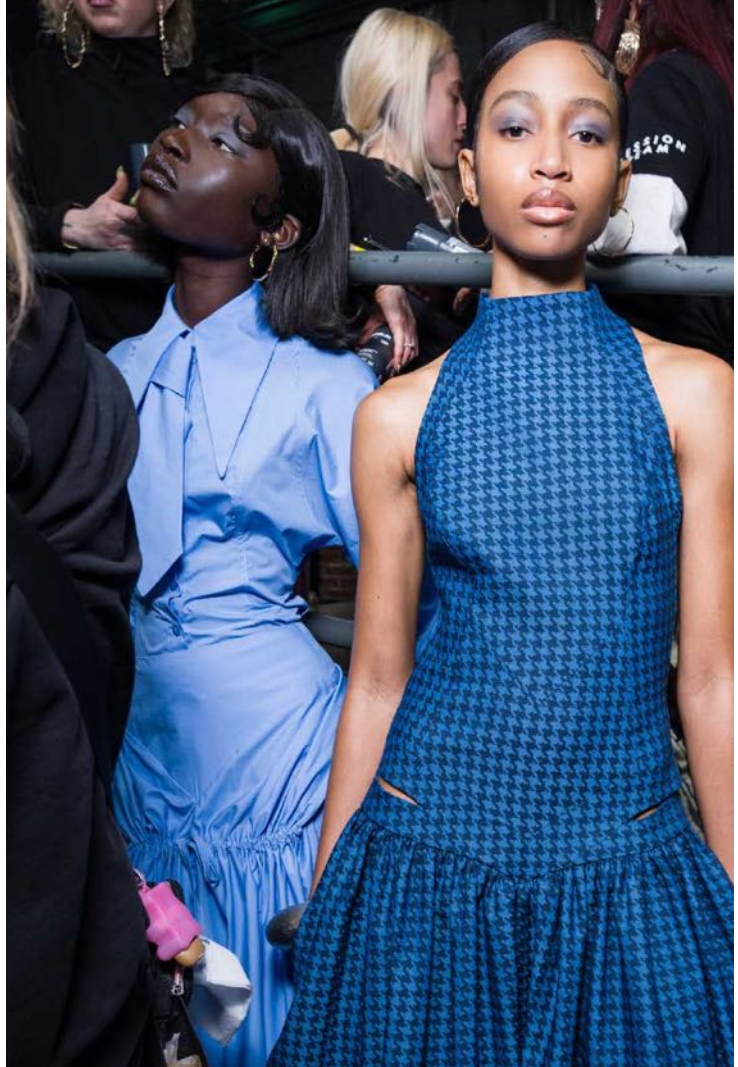
The deputy mayor for culture and the creative industries has played a key role in London's creative scene over the past 20 years. 'There are other fashion capitals around the world, where you can see great couture or big global brands – but if you want to know what's coming next, you have to be here,' she says. 'The diversity of backgrounds and ideas creates a dynamism that feeds our creative story.'



Through her platform, Brand63Africa, Eva Omaghom is connecting African designers with international fashion markets, amplifying their work on a global stage. Earlier this year, the inaugural cohort of designers presented their work at London Fashion Week as part of an exhibition – hosted by creative committee member Vanessa Kingori and attended by King Charles – while their collections will be on sale this autumn at Harrods. 'We're building a community rather than driving competition. We want designers to support one another, share opportunities and collectively strengthen the ecosystem for future generations,' says Omaghom.

The founder and editor-in-chief of '1 Granary' has grown her platform into an invaluable resource for established and aspiring talent alike. What started as a magazine designed to challenge hierarchies within an opaque fashion system has evolved into a media brand that also acts as a talent incubator, education platform and brand-builder. Kuryschuk's impressive roster of mentees includes Chopova Lowena, Knwls and Paolina Russo. □







A DIFFERENT VIEW

LONDON DESIGNER TOLU COKER'S
INCLUSIVE VISION IS A
REFLECTION OF THE CITY SHE
CALLS HOME. KACION MAYERS
CHARTS HER JOURNEY

AT A TOLU COKER SHOW, THE FRONT ROW'S PARTICIPATION HAS been known to far exceed the standard terms of attendance. Take last season, when Little Simz didn't wait for the finale, but instead, jumped up and out of her front row seat to open the show herself, performing for the other unsuspecting attendees. In any other circumstances, this might have been the story of the morning, but another guest, seated two seats down from her, had already claimed those column inches – His Majesty King Charles III.

'As designers who make luxury clothing, we deal in the currency of value, desire and power,' Coker tells me, sitting on the edge of her studio sofa, a wall of her signature hats climbing up behind her. 'I'm a Black woman, British-Nigerian, from a working-class background, designing luxury womenswear. In a lot of people's minds, that in itself is a contradiction. But that's the reality for so many of us who are, in real time, trying to move through certain worlds without coming from those backgrounds.'

The collection, titled Survivor's Remorse, was an ode to the immigrant experience and its multiplicity, social mobility and the question of who belongs. It also marked her last collection as a part of the British Fashion Council's Newgen talent incubator. Puffball sleeves, exaggerated collars and corseted waists strutted down a catwalk reimagined as the Mozart Estate in west London, where she grew up. 'I don't think there was a better guest to represent those themes than King Charles, sitting inside the central playground cage where we used to hang out as kids on our estate,' she tells me. 'There's an idea of the "proper" environment someone of his position should be in, and I think it made complete sense with the story I was trying to tell.'

Her clothes feel like a collision: rich West African colours, British tailoring, heritage tartans and Windrush-era silhouettes, undoubtedly shaped by her years roaming the historically Caribbean neighbourhoods of Latimer Road, Harrow Road and Ladbroke Grove. The North Kensington she knew and grew up in still carried the memory of signs reading 'No Blacks, no dogs, no Irish', and the community that formed in defiance of them left its fingerprints all over Coker's work: the jockeys and stables through Gary, an Irish family friend, the local African community and the Caribbean mechanics doing up old cars under the bridge on Latimer Road. 'The question of who has access, and redefining what we assume "belongs" together, runs through everything I make,' she says.

It's why she politely resists any compartmentalisation. 'I wouldn't describe my work as West African, or British, or any single thing. It's a culmination of life experience and different vantage points,' she says. There's the culture she picked up on the block, her education at Christ's Hospital boarding school in Horsham, her time spent designing for a large fashion retailer in Spain. And, running throughout all those references, the influences absorbed from her mother, a homemaker, and father, an avid photographer who arrived from Nigeria in the 1960s with his camera, determined to document his experiences.

'My mum was everything,' Coker says. 'Homemaker, dress-maker, community chef, community host.' Her mother would take the coach to Paris for the weekend, fill her bags, and sell it all back home, like the local Avon lady. Women would arrive as she'd cook jollof, turning the living room into a boutique with dresses over doorframes. 'Maximum style, minimum budget,' as Coker puts it.

Her dad photographed everything: his own life; the lives of near-strangers who let him in; and the conditions on working-class estates at the time. 'It's intimate,' she tells me. When he died suddenly in 2008, her brother Ade inherited his cameras and lenses, and the siblings began piecing the archive back together. Coker and Ade have shown up on doorsteps with photographs of history people didn't know had been recorded. 'We've found gaps in their family archives that my dad's photographs fill,' she says. 'If we

‘AS DESIGNERS OF
LUXURY, WE DEAL IN
THE CURRENCY OF
VALUE, DESIRE AND POWER’



PHOTOGRAPH: ADAMA JALLOH

hold so much history in albums, does that memory die with the people who carry it?' she asks. The answer might lie within her own work.

While studying at Central Saint Martins, she amassed an enviable line-up of internships. At JW Anderson, she found herself in the fabric-development team in an open-plan Dalston studio where nothing was siloed. She'd overhear Anderson talking bestsellers and margins, watching a brand run on resourcefulness as much as vision. At Celine, her shortest stint, she sat in the archive next to the product team, catching Phoebe Philo during her London visits. But it was Maison Margiela that changed everything. Coker arrived with her sketchbooks as a stand-in for the portfolio she always struggled to muster up. In John Galiano's atelier, she watched fittings unfold in real time: pieces she had painted would end up on the catwalk. 'That internship changed the entire trajectory of my life,' she says. 'Seeing my own work on the runway and reviewed positively gave me the confidence that maybe it wasn't my work that wasn't acceptable in that space; maybe it was assumptions about the person it came from. That idea became the foundation of my final collection,

and part of my brand ever since.'

Coker says she's proud of her brand's multi-generational appeal and has seen the same piece bought by a wealthy 50-year-old and a twenty-something who saved for months to afford it. These are clothes to be worn one way by a mother, differently by her daughter. Coker's customer might be a gallery curator, a singer going on tour – Ariana Grande, Tyla and DoeChii are all fans – or someone buying their first investment piece off the back of a new job. 'She comes from every kind of background,' says Coker, adding that the thrill of dressing some of the most famous women in the world still hasn't worn off.

'I care about construction, fit and reparability,' she says. 'The labour that people don't see.' She

believes a garment built to be mended is a garment built to outlive the person who bought it, and that's the exact point. 'You get what you invest in,' Coker says.

A more mindful approach is already taking shape. September's show, she hints, will mark a deliberate change of pace that is less about producing into the void, and more about having a dialogue with her community and customers. She's creating a wardrobe built on fewer, more considered pieces.

And while she's proudly independent, she hasn't ruled a creative directorship at a bigger house out of her future. She's intrigued by the idea for 'the psychology of it' and the strangeness of watching worlds collide through her at the top of a storied maison. For now, she's focused on bolstering her manufacturing in the UK, building a supply chain with real economic weight behind it and resisting the version of 'ethical' that's really just a nice press story about an artisan the brand isn't truly invested in. As for AI posing a threat to a practice built on craft, story, history and the very human hands that make it all, she's not too concerned. 'AI is only as good as its prompt,' she says. 'It has speed – I've got the direction.' □

ARE *you* being SERVED?

THE WAY WE SHOP IS EVOLVING, BUT ONE THING NEVER CHANGES: OUR LOVE OF BRICKS-AND-MORTAR STORES AND THE SALES STAFF WHO POWER THEM. ELLE'S FORMER SHOP ASSISTANT NAOMI PIKE GOES BEHIND THE COUNTER TO MEET FASHION'S FRONT LINE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAUREN MACCABEE

EVERY SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, FOR WHAT FELT LIKE FOREVER but was really just over three years, I would head to a retail job on Bond Street that supported my studies in fashion journalism and the work experience I packed into the rest of the week.

So much can happen in a six-hour shift on a shop floor. I sold Marni sandals to megastars; explained, apologetically, to a minor royal that her Amex had been declined; asked a household name to please refrain from coming behind the till point; and – a sign of the times – sold more tax-free Valentino Rockstuds to international customers than you can imagine. Often all before a lunchbreak.

But there was also a whole host of unrecognisable faces that have stuck in my head ever since. Advising and styling these strangers I'd either never meet again or develop a relationship with (clienteling, don't you know?) shaped my love of fashion and how I shop forever.

Today, with the shoe on the other foot, I crave these moments of joy and advice shared between strangers. Shopping online is convenient, but it'll never beat the human touch and connection that breathes life into bricks-and-mortar stores. After all, it's the shop girls – or rather, women – who harbour the intel, the best styling tips and, hopefully, exactly what you're looking for.

In 2026, these stores and the staff who oversee them matter more than ever. While pop-up AI chat boxes ask us 'How can we help?' with every refresh, the role of the IRL attendant carries even more significance. They are not only there to process a transaction in a conveyor belt of commerce (stores that employed this strategy have changed to self-service anyway), but to offer expertise and insight as much as enthusiasm and conversation. Today, they must be shrewd, engaged, enthusiastic and all-knowing – a vital part of the 'experience economy' (retail's latest buzzwords).

While empty units on Britain's high streets are more commonplace than ever before, it's not all doom and gloom. The Office for National Statistics found that while 83% of UK customers enjoy a hybrid approach, online shopping still only holds 28.8% of the

share. That means in-store shopping retains the number-one position among British shoppers. Plus, *The Independent* reports that in the year up to May 2026, across England and Wales, 13 new retail stores opened each week. Brands such as Erdem and Roksanda contribute to that, while Hermès' queue-inducing new flagship is a best-in-class example of experience-led retail.

And, just like me, for many in the industry it all started on the shop floor. While at Central Saint Martins, Mithridate creative director Daniel Fletcher spent his Saturdays working at Victoria Beckham's Dover Street store. 'I loved it and one of the key things it taught me (as well as helping to fund my graduate collection) was understanding your customer and how to engage with them,' he says. 'The range of visitors to VB Dover Street was vast, but Victoria was clear: everyone was welcome. Retail experience is now one of the first things I look for on a CV – it gives a different kind of perspective and attention to detail, and they are always much harder workers.'

Today, you will see designers with names above the door putting in shifts to get real insight from real customers. Paul Smith rarely misses a Saturday at his Albermarle Street store. It's proof that the shop floor may be the most important place in fashion.

Here, *ELLE* gets to know the women behind the counter...



REJINA *Pyo*

‘This job made me realise how emotional fashion can be for people,’ says Harriet Batstone, 26, a sales assistant at Rejina Pyo’s Golborne Road store. She is also a textile artist in her own right. ‘What’s most rewarding is when you see someone’s mood change. They might be a bit nervous and not sure what their style is. Then you help them choose something and they find a new confidence,’ she adds, having recently helped a bride buy her Rejina Pyo wedding dress. ‘It’s a beautiful store to work in, but it’s meeting the people who come in that I love the most. There’s such a wide variety of clientele and every day is different. It’s hard to make yourself feel good all the time with the pressures of today, but being able to give that to someone else feels really nice.’ >



Found AND VISION

As a sales assistant at west London's premiere vintage store Found And Vision, Christiana Alaoye has a part-time job any fashion enthusiast would envy. 'I get to see amazing clothes every day. Things that I saw from afar growing up are now in front of me at work,' she says with wonder, dressed in archive Prada. 'I got into fashion through subcultures and music, but working here has taught me so much about the industry.' Alaoye, 22, is the face that greets Found And Vision's loyal customer base, who drop in from all over the world to explore its dressing-up box. One memorable name? Hailey Bieber, who left with Tom Ford for Gucci flares, a 1990s Gianni Versace leather men's jacket and a vintage Vivienne Westwood velvet skirt suit. 'Those moments [when a celebrity comes in] can be high stress, but she was lovely,' says Alaoye. 'It was nice to pull out special pieces for her. Every day I sell things I love, and I'm always so glad someone is getting to buy them.'



PEACHY *Den*

With no till point for its sales assistants to congregate around, it's the Peachy Den mirror that becomes the Soho shop's centrepiece. 'When the store's not busy, we'll do a little photoshoot, which is fun for us girls,' says Tiana Hsu, 24, an aspiring documentary film-maker.

The flexibility and stability that working there part-time offers Tsu means she can pursue creative outputs alongside being a shop assistant. The same applies to her colleagues – among the Peachy Den set, there's a musician, a model and someone about to launch her own fashion brand. 'I love everyone who works here because they're all a bit freaky,' Tsu says. 'It's a completely different vibe from other retail jobs I've had, because the girls who work here are just like me – and the girls who come into the shop are, too.' Alongside her new-found friendships, what are Tsu's favourite parts of the job? 'I love getting my uniform allowance and I love my employee discount!' >



GANNI

'How many people can say they meet 200 new people a day?' asks Bonnie Goudie, a 24-year-old sales assistant for Ganni. 'I'm incredibly lucky to meet all the people I do; I chat to lots of different individuals from all walks of life. You might think working in retail is transactional and shallow but, for me, it's incredibly human.' The Danish brand has five stores across London, creating its own network of hands-on experts who know the product and look the part while selling it. 'I've got five ports of call if I ever need anything, or to celebrate the big wins, the small wins – it's wonderful,' she adds. But the community doesn't just include the workforce. On a Friday night, they invite customers in to have a drink with them, knowing many by their first names and, crucially, by taste. 'It's all about establishing trust,' says Goudie. 'You want the customer to feel seen.'



Straw LONDON

Emily Attrill (above left), 37, opened Straw London on Columbia Road six years ago but, even as the brand, which creates its own dreamy dresses and interior pieces, expands, Attrill still spends as much time on the shop floor as possible. 'It's important to see what customers like in real life, but there's also the whole fun of having a shop of your own, and sharing that through storytelling and merchandising,' she says. 'People get one glimpse of your shop, and you have to make an impression!' Attrill's approach has attracted customers including Nancy Meyers, who ordered a giant gingham bow, as well as everyone from '20-year-old fashion-influencer boys buying our slip-on shoes' to '80-year-old granny gardeners'. Attrill's colleague, Mary Close (above right), 23, is a customer-turned-employee whose shopping sprees in Straw turned into a job. 'I'm a chatterer so, paired with loving the product, it's the perfect place for me, because my job is to talk all day!' says Close. □

A VERY FINE MESS

STAINS? WHO CARES. TOO MANY LAYERS? WHY NOT. A SELF-CONFESSED 'STYLE SLOB', SUSIE LAU HAS ALWAYS ENJOYED A DISHEVELLED LOOK, EXCEPT NOW SHE'S SEEING IT EMBRACED AS PART OF A WIDER REACTION AGAINST PERFECTION AND SELF-OPTIMISATION





ON MY WIKIPEDIA PAGE, WHICH I HAVE no idea who compiled, there's a photo of me taken from Facebook where I'm at a Trailer Trash party wearing an American Apparel pink hairband, a black bin-liner Ann Demeulemeester dress (that cost £2 on early eBay) and an expression that can only be explained by one too many snakebite drinks. It's not an image that communicates 'respected fashion journalist' and yet I have never tried to rectify it. In truth, I sort of love that it's so resolutely messy.

The photo doesn't even show the butterfly belt, sheer purple tights and yellow vintage heels I was also wearing – I've always been a bit much. But through different life stages, I've defaulted to messiness because however much grooming or chic styling is foisted on me, there's no escaping my instinct to want to have choppy hair covering my face, smudged lipstick and one too many layers of an outfit – and *always* forgetting to iron out my creases.

Now messiness in all its aesthetic glory is being celebrated in a meaningful way. Its rise is a saviour, and antithetical in a world ruled by AI. And those of us style slobs who never really succumbed to slicked-back hair and Carolyn Bessette-dupe 'fits, well, we are rejoicing.

In the past few seasons, high fashion has laughed in the face of quiet luxury (remember her?), whether it's through expressive maximalism, distressed textures and deliberate bad taste done good. In fact, the 'messy girl' is a more general umbrella movement that houses its related offspring, including the 'frazzled English woman' with her skinny scarves and ditzy florals, and the mushroom-toned, mud-sploshed

'goblincore'. Or the nostalgic renaissance of indie sleaze that's bringing back not just Hedi Slimane skinny jeans but also the messy nights of yore.

At Diesel's autumn/winter 2026 show, creative director Glenn Martens arranged 50,000 objects from the brand's history of parties and events to put together a monumental homage to the 'walk of shame'. All the better to showcase extreme-treated denim. At Prada, where Miuccia has long championed imperfection, shirt-sleeve cuffs came tinged with dirt. They were buried under layers of utilitarian coats, wrinkled and faded silks and dresses with fraying embroidery. When I heard Miuccia say backstage, 'As a woman, your life is layered,' I almost cried. At its core, the rise of disarray is really about embracing life's imperfections.

Rebecca Osei-Baidoo, womenswear buying manager at Selfridges, sees fashion's shift to messiness as one connected to real life. 'In a world ruled by clean-girl energy, life optimisation and all of the 'maxxing', there's a growing appetite for fashion that feels human, individual and slightly messy,' she says. 'We're seeing strong resonance with brands such as Rick Owens, Acne Studios, Sacai and Gimagwas, whose relaxed silhouettes, unexpected layering and intentionally undone styling champion this mood. It's less about looking polished and more about expressing personality through pieces that feel authentic, lived-in and uniquely your own.' For Tiffany Hsu, chief buying and group fashion ventures officer at MyTheresa, 'the "worn" aesthetic has emerged as a recurring micro-trend over recent seasons. We have seen it translated most prominently through leather goods, leather apparel and denim. It's an easy trend for consumers to incorporate into their wardrobes as it feels familiar and accessible.'

Indeed, the most coveted bags are not necessarily pristine new ones but beaten-up second-hand Chloé Paddingtons or Balenciaga Le City bags circa 2006. Invariably they're worn with wired headphones dangling out haphazardly. Even at the most haute of houses, Matthieu Blazy put battered 2.55 Chanel on the runway.

Messy-girl energy puts up its biggest fight against the mainstream beauty ideals that have emerged from the deluge of clean-girl aesthetic posts on social media, dictated by 12-step skincare routines. It's a means of saying no to the unrealistically pristine onus put mostly on matcha-swilling, Pilates-honed women to live their lives exclusively in uncomplicated shades of taupe and green. At Gucci,

the men and women walking the runway for Demna's debut show were made up to look like they were coming home from the club at 4am with Kate Moss, who has long championed the smudged black eyes of late-night blurry pap shots.

Make-up artist Joey Choy, who has worked with influencer Gabbriette (who also walked for Gucci and is a poster girl for her 'stayed up all night' eyes), connects the trend with the tactile humanity that we're all craving right now. 'There's a comeback of the messy-girl aesthetic, because clean-girl make-up has started to feel corporate. What's taking

● I WANT TO HAVE SLEPT-IN
MAKE-UP AFTER GOING
OUT IN A DRESS WITH A
TOMATO STAIN ON IT FROM
DINNER WITH FRIENDS ●

over is something more lo-fi. Think finger-painted, blurred, slept-in, morning-after residue. The overnight mascara, the undone liner, that slightly oily skin – these activate the imagination in a way that perfection simply can't. It's this unapologetic, don't-care attitude that is the sexiest mood to put on the face right now.'

On social media, mess has become a stylistic choice as you routinely see people's real-life background clutter – cornflakes on the kitchen island, laundry hanging on radiators and piles of papers on desks. Alexa Chung has recently pioneered the at-the-door 'Ring camera' selfie, with its CCTV grain and offbeat wide angle.

In interiors, it has never been more popular to have rooms that look properly lived-in, whether it's through kitchens with mismatched fittings, surfaces that have a patina and colour palettes and textures that feel characterful. The biggest critique you could levy on a room is: 'It looks a bit show home.' At one end of the scale, you have intentional cluttered aesthetics championed by interior designers such as Jermaine Gallacher, who eschews sleek fixtures in favour of an old 1850s hob piled with pots and pans.

On the messier sliding scale, you have TikTok hashtags 'cluttercore' and 'messyroom' inundated with user-generated content in a rebuff of unrealistically neat homes. For Ben Spriggs, editor of ELLE Decoration UK, mess is central to the work of one of his favourite creatives, Charlotte Taylor: 'She's known for her exhibitions that embrace the chaos of the everyday, from unmade beds to breakfast leftovers. Think of her as the Tracey Emin of interiors! Forget mass-produced flawlessness – it's in clutter that you find real character.'

As a parent, mess becomes even more of a stark reality. You simply can't avoid it and you either accept that tomato and Nutella stains will feature prominently in your life or you are scarily disciplined and have on-hand help to wipe everything out of sight. My messy inner core means I'm always suspicious of kids in well co-ordinated outfits, or #sadbeige, all the time. Meanwhile, my three-year-old toddler is off to nursery in odd socks, perma-stained tops (they're gonna get wrecked anyway) and trousers that are comically short because I'm eking the last bit of wear out of them.

This rise of messiness in all its manifestations is an obvious reaction to the infiltration of AI aesthetics seen on social media and our constant questioning of what's real or fake – whether it's people's filter-covered faces, improbable travel destinations or slop content geared purely towards virality. It's also an affront to the culture of life optimisation that, alongside the rise of wellness, has seeped into our everyday lives through a deluge of data from sleep apps and Oura rings. *The Diary of a CEO* podcast host Steven Bartlett's claim that three glasses of wine had a domino effect on his productivity was in turn met with a messy backlash.

Messiness is also potentially a reaction towards 'tasteslop', as coined by the writer Emily Segal: signifiers of good taste, which have been combed by AI and recontextualised away from their initial meaningful beginnings. Think using Margiela Tabi shoes or Rimowa luggage to communicate instant good taste. 'The personal and idiosyncratic connection makes things less obvious and prevents them from being meaningfully cloned by absolutely everyone



(ie, becoming tasteslop) even if the actual taste markers are not totally different in content,' writes Segal on her Substack.

Of course, as AI becomes more sophisticated, it will come for messiness that is not organically nurtured, but rather artificially engendered. Hence why I'm not necessarily a fan of curated messiness. The ruched tablecloths at dinner parties that purport to be 'casually' draped. The rails of pre-weathered clothing all looking exactly the same in a high-street store.

The messiness I live by comes naturally because life is well and truly messed up and embracing the ups and downs has become much more than just performative aesthetics. I want to have mornings with slept-in make-up that is a result of going out and experiencing full-bellied laughs in a dress with a tomato stain on it from that great dinner with friends (where, yes, maybe I drank more than two glasses of wine). I want food that spills over generously – over-sauced pasta, juicy soup dumplings and gravy in a jug for a Sunday roast. I see a stack of well-thumbed books piled on a watermarked coffee table and immediately want to reach over to have a nose-through (as opposed to colour-co-ordinated bookcases that I'm too scared to touch). I want to walk out of the door with creases at the corners of my eyes as well as my shirts.

Coco Chanel famously advised looking in the mirror and taking off one thing from your outfit when you leave the house. I'll add five, thanks. It's a resolute and resigned self-acceptance that I will somehow always carry the fluffy-haired, awkward energy of that Wikipedia pic. □


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Destination STYLE

THE CRUISE SEASON WAS A TALE OF TWO CITIES: NICOLAS GHESQUIÈRE STAGED LOUIS VUITTON IN NEW YORK, WHILE MATTHIEU BLAZY TOOK THE CHANEL FRONT ROW TO BIARRITZ. HERE ARE THE FASHION SET'S ITINERARIES. PLUS, THE BIG INTERIORS TREND REPORT AND HOW THE RUNWAYS HAVE INFLUENCED THE DOMESTIC SPHERE

EMPIRE *state* *of* MIND

Between a popular new mayor and a string of starry, splashy runway shows, the Big Apple has never looked so good

NOTHING CAPTURES THE MOOD OF New York City quite like the sea of blue and orange that flooded the streets this summer: euphoric Knicks fans celebrating a basketball victory more than half a century in the making. The city is having something of a renaissance, with optimism surrounding Zohran Mamdani's first year as mayor; the pop-and-sport wedding that turned Madison Square Garden into the world's most glamorous chapel; and Louis Vuitton's three-year partnership with the newly restored Frick Collection, where it recently staged its Cruise 2027 show. The dining scene has never felt more vibrant, either – from the arrival of Mûje to the hotly anticipated opening of Straker's, where reservations are set to be among the hardest to secure. Elsewhere, Ferrari's first lifestyle flagship in SoHo is giving shoppers fresh reasons to linger, while Issey Miyake is expanding its New York footprint with the opening of a new flagship at 45 Madison Avenue. And next month, the film world is set to descend on the Lincoln Center for the New York Film Festival, while in October, Broadway welcomes Tom Hiddleston in *Much Ado About Nothing* and MoMA unveils *Brancusi: The Artist and His Studio*. In short: New York is the city break to take this year. Here, its most stylish insiders tell us where they'll be eating, drinking and shopping this season...



PHOTOGRAPHS: SJOBLÖ/UNSPLASH, LIZ CLAYMAN, ERIN NEARY, GETTY IMAGES

'Straker's is one of my must-visits when I'm in London, and I've been waiting for its NYC outpost on Grand Street a long time. It's the sort of delicious but un-fancy fare I really love. I've been furiously checking Instagram, and it seems like its launch has been pushed back, but as soon as it's open, I'll be first in line.'

LYNETTE NYLANDER, EDITOR

**NELL DIAMOND, FOUNDER
OF HILL HOUSE HOME**

'The streets of New York are calling, and my three picks are in my favourite neighbourhood, the West Village – all with outdoor tables where you can sit and watch the city go by. In the morning, head to Café Panino Mucho Giusto on Hudson Street. I've been getting coffee here since before my children were born, and now I tote them along for freshly squeezed orange juice at the weekend. The staff are lovely and the paninis are objectively perfect.

Walking the West Village on any given afternoon is to wonder, "Does anyone here have a job?" – and then, "Should I order an Aperol spritz?" May I suggest pausing at the brand-new Le Dive, where it is impossible not to feel lucky: to snag a perfectly positioned bistro table; to people-watch down 7th Avenue; to simply exist in the greatest city

on earth. And by evening, move over to Tartine; it's a West Village classic that still feels like a secret. Try the spicy chicken and fries before enjoying a stroll down the prettiest street in the West Village – West 11th, which the city temporarily renamed "Jalen Brunson Boulevard" in honour of our Knicks captain.'



TALK OF THE TOWN
CLOCKWISE FROM
TOP LEFT: THE EMPIRE
STATE BUILDING; WEST
BROADWAY STREET; LE
DIVE; BOOK CLUB BAR



'Book Club Bar in the East Village is exactly what it says on the tin – a bookstore/café/bar with a well-thought-out selection of titles and a peaceful back garden. It's the perfect place to while away an afternoon.'

VÉRONIQUE HYLAND, WRITER AND EDITOR


MAGNUM[®]
true to pleasure

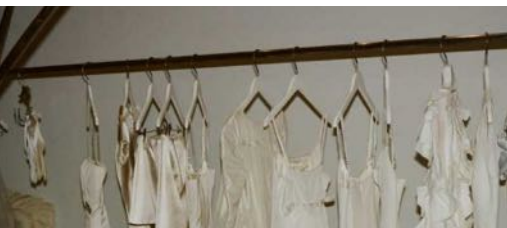


mini
MOMENTS OF PLEASURE 



**RAJNI JACQUES,
FASHION DIRECTOR**

'I love the Afro-Caribbean cuisine at Tatiana by Kwame Onwuachi and how exciting and intriguing each plate is. The ambience always feels right, too. Dimes Square can be a bit much, but it boasts some great food. Or head to Nine Orchard – Corner Bar (above) has a wonderful neighbourhood feel, and the cocktails always provide a conversation starter. For an upper-echelon feel with the same high quality, you can go right next door to Swan Bar. And for the best atmosphere, go to Bar Oliver. This San Sebastián-inspired spot is a fantastic place to hang out and chill with friends. They have a great wine selection and even better snacks.'



'I'm a bit biased, but I always recommend a stop at my facial studio, Sofie Pavitt Skincare Studio. After treating yourself, wander over to Orchard Street, where some of my favourite shops are. I stop at Sandy Liang (above) – it always has the coolest selection. Then, visit Regina's Grocery across the street for a sandwich before heading to Eel Bar for a martini.'

SOFIE PAVITT, FACIALIST



'I love Jacqueline Sullivan Gallery (above). It has a beautiful assortment of furniture and objects on display. I have yet to see a show there that I didn't like. Cafe Kestrel is the cutest restaurant in Red Hook, Brooklyn, with delicious food, good design and the best service. It also has its back patio open in warmer months, which is really lovely.'

**MOLLY BLUTSTEIN,
FASHION INFLUENCER**



SOPHIA ROE, CHEF

'The coolest listening bar in Tribeca is All Blues. It has got an amazing but very simple bar menu, the most unbelievable sound system and such good vibes. I love this place. And the Django (above) is underneath the Roxy Hotel and has a jazz-cellar-type vibe. The acoustics are next level, and the vibes are so freaking sexy. It's a tone-setter for a night out and the perfect place to get dressed up with all your friends without feeling like you need to go to the club all night.'



**MARJON CARLOS, PODCAST
HOST AND JOURNALIST**

'I live in Ridgewood and local restaurant Rolo's brings the girls out, far and wide. The food is excellent and never disappoints, and its famous burgers sell out quickly. It's perfect for date nights with your friends or your boo.'

I love Climax Books by Isabella

Burley, too – the curation is excellent and so pointed. It's always a treat to find a good bookstore that serves as a cultural nerve centre. And while I know New York is full of members' clubs right now, I have really been loving Moss in Midtown. Its subterranean hammam is such an oasis.' □


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LA PÊCHE

EVERYONE'S GOING... *to the Basque Country*

Chic surf spots, superior anchovies and excellent vintage denim – *Lena de Casparis* explores France's southwestern coast and discovers why it's quickly becoming the fashion set's new favourite holiday destination





CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:
LA GRANDE PLAGE IN
BIARRITZ; LES HALLES;
VILLA MAGNAN; A\$AP
ROCKY AND MICHAELA
COEL AT THE CHANEL
CRUISE SHOW; VILLA
MAGNAN'S POOL



EXACTLY ONE HUNDRED AND ELEVEN years after Coco Chanel chose Biarritz as the setting for her first couture house, the stylish vanguard – including Michaela Coel and A\$AP Rocky – again flocked to the French Basque Country for Matthieu Blazy's debut cruise collection this spring. Now, the rest of us are heading there for its laid-back charm. More polished and peaceful than Marseille and without the posturing of the Riviera, Biarritz offers Belle Epoque mansions, gourmet cuisine and a sun-drenched horizon that could rival the Caribbean.

Begin your trip at Villa Magnan, a boutique hotel where Hector, their free-roaming donkey, sets a delightfully slow pace. Breakfast here feels lifted straight from a Sofia Coppola classic: wild floral installations sit alongside curated bowls of granola and home-baked French patisserie treats, all set to the soundtrack of vintage vinyl records.

It would be dangerously easy to spend an entire holiday within this hotel's walls. The five bedrooms are a masterclass in vintage interior design, with floor-to-ceiling bookshelves, mosaic-tiled bathrooms and antique fixtures you'll immediately want to slip into your suitcase. Spend your hours reading in the orangerie or lounging by a sunny pool hidden deep within the gardens. Don't miss the hotel's curated shop, stocked with custom collaborations from heritage French houses including Repetto and Castex. And be sure to have dinner in the old greenhouse restaurant, situated in the fairytale garden, where,

each season, a different chef is invited to cook over the wood-burning fire. Then drink until late at Chez Babette, the hotel bar tucked under the large wisteria, where a vermouth cocktail chased up by a gilda, the famous Basque *pintxo* of anchovies, olives and spicy pickled pepper, is a must.

But the surf is up, and the beach only a 10-minute taxi ride away. Head for the Côte des Basques, where you can find cheap board hire along with regular surf lessons for beginners. Do wear a wetsuit if you are travelling here outside

of the high summer months; the Atlantic can be very cold.

When you've exhausted the surf, head to Paddo, where the eggs and green goddess salads will nurture you back to strength. Catch Les Halles food market before it >

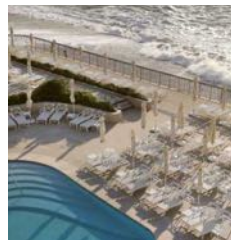
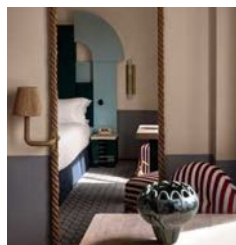
*Spend the
afternoon
searching for
vintage
fashion finds*

BIARRITZ *breaks*

The best boutique and luxury hotels in the seaside city

REGINA EXPERIMENTAL BIARRITZ

A NEW RENOVATION BLENDS
OLD COASTAL GRANDEUR
WITH ART DECO STYLE
(REGINAEXPERIMENTAL.COM).



HÔTEL DU PALAIS
BUILT IN 1854 BY EMPEROR
NAPOLEON III, THIS
LEGENDARY FIVE-STAR HOTEL
WILL MAKE YOU FEEL LIKE
FRENCH ROYALTY (HYATT.COM).

HÔTEL DE SILHOUETTE
YOU'LL FIND SLEEK AND
STYLISH ROOMS AT THIS
17TH-CENTURY BOLTHOLE
NEAR LES HALLES (HOTEL-
SILHOUETTE-BIARRITZ.COM).





shuts at 2pm and don't miss the artisan coffee at Lobita, the truffle omelette at Balme or the €1.50 oysters at L'Ecaille.

Next, spend the afternoon wandering in search of vintage fashion finds in town. There's Fadead, where the art and fashion pack go to buy vintage Levi's, while Harold & Maude has French vintage classics from YSL to Chanel. Go to Encore for designer labels and bygone French high-street brands. And don't miss the vintage clothes from Martine.

For visual stimulation of a different

kind, visit London gallerist Lucy Chadwick's Champ Lacombe, Biarritz's first contemporary-art gallery; and pop into the charming Bookstore Biarritz for a range of artful coffee-table books and beach reads.

If you're in town on the fourth Saturday of the month, head to the Basque coast's biggest flea market Les Pucés de Quintau, where stalls of linen, ceramics and antiques unfurl under the pine trees in the nearby town Anglet.

For the ultimate sun-downer, head to Etxola Bibi cabane, Biarritz's original beach bar, which has a cult following. Then stroll inland to Cheri Bibi, for seasonal food, natural wines and

exceptional people watching.

As evening falls, head back to the coast to Le Basta for a vermouth and soda with a jamón plate and the best gildas in the city to keep you going until dinner. End your night with a wander down to the fishing port (Le Port des Pêcheurs), and the former sardine-salting sheds for dinner at the iconic seafood restaurant Chez Albert.

Biarritz proves that true coastal luxury isn't about glitz and big yachts, but a perfect blend of fashion and surf – oh, and the gildas are to die for. □

WHAT TO *pack*

Embrace laidback luxury with these easy pieces



1 Dress, £520, **SIR** **2** Sunglasses, £55, **LE SPECS** **3** Shirt, £120, **SKALL** **4** Swimsuit, £69.95, **MASSIMO DUTTI** **5** Sandals, £210, **ALOHAS** **6** Cuff, £535, **DÉHANCHE**

BASQUE *tripping*

On the 90-mile stretch from Biarritz to Bilbao, stop off at...



GUÉTHARY

AT THIS PICTURESQUE SURFING VILLAGE, HEAD TO BOHO BEACH BAR HÉTÉROCLITO OR CAFE DU FRONTON ON THE TOWN'S SQUARE. DON'T MISS CHEZ NADYNE FOR OCEAN VIEWS AND THE BEST SEAFOOD TAPAS ON THE COAST.



SAN SEBASTIÁN

AVOID THE TOURISTS AND HEAD TO THE LAIDBACK NEIGHBOURHOOD OF GROS FOR LUNCH AT THE COSY BISTRO GERALDS BAR WITH A MENU OF STEAK TARTARE AND FRESH ANCHOVIES. END YOUR MEAL AT LA VIÑA IN THE OLD TOWN FOR THE WORLD'S BEST BASQUE CHEESECAKE.



GETARIA

THIS SMALL HILLSIDE TOWN IS WHERE CRISTÓBAL BALenciAGA WAS BORN. HEAD TO THE EPONYMOUS MUSEUM FOR AN UNPARALLELED LOOK INTO 20TH-CENTURY HIGH FASHION.



BILBAO

END THE TOUR AT THE GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, THE FRANK GEHRY-DESIGNED SPECTACLE THAT SINGLE-HANDEDLY REVITALISED THE CITY.


VITABIOTICS

**BEAUTY.
NOT JUST SKIN DEEP***



From Boots,
Holland & Barrett,
Superdrug, supermarkets,
pharmacies, health stores
and **perfectil.com**

*Contains zinc which contributes
to the maintenance of normal
skin, hair and nails.

INTERIOR *life*

Is your living room wearing AW26? Grace Clarke charts the trends to welcome into your home this season



ROARING *return*

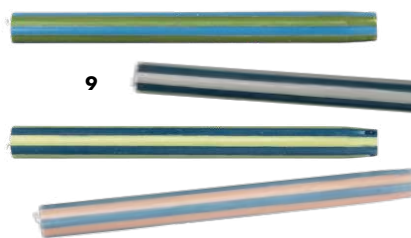
Fashion takes a walk on the wild side as animal print sheds its kitsch connotations to become the ultimate home neutral. Take inspiration from the Prada woman and try subtle cheetah-print trims or introduce texture with low-slung tiger-print sofas, muted leopard-print wall coverings and silk-velvet zebra lampshades.

- 1** Plates, £100 for two, HENRY HOLLAND
- 2** Sofa, £6,500, HOUSE OF HACKNEY
- 3** Lampshade, £34.99, H&M **4** Cushion cover, £35, ARKET **5** Chair, £540, ABIGAIL AHERN
- 6** Bowl, £65, HENRY HOLLAND **7** Pouffe, £695, SIX THE RESIDENCE **8** Cushion, £20, NEXT **9** Mug, £23, ANNA + NINA **10** Rug, £109, LIVABLISS **11** Table, price on request, DOLCE & GABBANA CASA **12** Diffuser, £130, BAOBAB COLLECTION at SELFRIDGES



PARALLEL *universe*

Conventional stripes have bucked tradition this season, re-emerging in exaggerated, graphic scales. Take your cue from Dries Van Noten, who masterfully layered vertical stripes on the runway. Introduce geometry with floor-to-ceiling drapery or a statement sofa in wide stripes. Elevate it all with clashing palettes: rich burgundy against sky blue, or vibrant Indian yellow with ink-dark navy.



1 Sofa, £829, **MADE** **2** Cushion cover, £25, **VOI COLLECTIVE** **3** Salt/pepper mill, £60, **ADDISON ROSS** **4** Blanket, £145, **COLOURS OF ARLEY** **5** Cups, £35 for four, **THE CONRAN SHOP** at **GLASSETTE** **6** Lamp, £65, **ROCKETT ST GEORGE** **7** Bag, £2,750, **DIOR** **8** Sofa, £8,495, **BUCHANAN STUDIO** **9** Candles, £20 for four, **YOD & CO** **10** Cushion cover, £14.99, **H&M** **11** Robe, £200, **TEKLA** at **SELFRIDGES** **12** Napkins, £25 for two, **DUSEN DUSEN** **13** Mug, £5, **JOHN LEWIS**

CODE *red*

Scarlet is back with supercharged energy this season. Follow Bottega Veneta, where Louise Trotter infused her collection with blood red. Deploy it at home with curated precision: an upholstered chair here, a lacquer-trimmed window there. Alternatively, for maximum theatricality, indulge in colour-drenching and coat a room head-to-toe in glossy crimson.



- 1** Mirror, £675, DINDSLEY **2** Cutlery, £29 for a knife-and-fork set, LATE AFTERNOON
3 Chair, £589, HAY **4** Butter dish, £40, DENISE
5 Mirror, £336, GUSTAV WESTMAN at SELFRIDGES **6** Candle holder, £60, &TRADITION at SELFRIDGES **7** Lamp, £1,400, LOUIS POULSEN at MYTHERESA **8** Sofa, price on request, LOUIS VUITTON **9** Vase, £2,140, ALEXA LIXFELD **10** Stool, £125, FERM LIVING **11** Glasses, £58 each, NASON MORETTI



ESSENTIALS EDIT

THE BEAUTY OF SIMPLICITY

When I founded PURE. COSMETICS, it wasn't because the world needed another beauty brand. It was because I believed beauty could be simpler, kinder, and more transparent.

Shopping for cosmetics had become overwhelming. Ingredient lists were confusing, products overpromised, and finding options that aligned with my values wasn't always easy. I wanted products made with carefully selected ingredients people could recognise and trust, products that felt luxurious, delivered real results, and reflected a more thoughtful approach to beauty.

That belief became PURE. COSMETICS.



As a female-owned independent British brand, we create plant-powered products designed to nourish, enhance and preserve natural beauty. By focusing on what truly matters and removing the unnecessary, we celebrate the beauty of simplicity.

Our journey begins with hair and scalp care, but this is just the beginning. As our community grows, so will our collection, expanding beyond hair and scalp care into skincare and body care. With the same uncompromising philosophy.

Inspired by Nature. Powered by Plants.

Discover the brand redefining beauty through simplicity - and follow the journey of PURE. COSMETICS. - Rhian Miller, Founder of PURE. COSMETICS



MAGICAL NATURAL: CATCH BEAUTY & HEALTH ON TIME

Founder Connie Tse is a qualified professional aromatherapist (UK IFA, TQUK & US NAHA Level 3). Products are formulated and produced on a lab-grade clean bench, and undergo 1+ year of real-user testing before launch – never on animals.



Brand mission: protect your skin and health while respecting nature. Effective, sustainable, genuinely natural. No gimmicks, no waste, no compromise—just magic, proven by science.

Real nature. Real science.
Real results.

Find more:
www.magical-natural.com
IG: [life.botanicals](https://www.instagram.com/life.botanicals)



CRAFTING YOUR FOREVER PROMISE

An engagement ring is the ultimate expression of your story. In the heart of the Birmingham Jewellery Quarter, our master goldsmiths combine traditional skills with



exceptional diamonds to create timeless bridal jewellery. From classic solitaires to perfectly matched wedding bands, every piece is made to last a lifetime. Whether you choose a signature design or create something entirely bespoke, our expert team is here to guide you through every step. Discover beautifully crafted jewellery made for generations to come.

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or visit 112 Vyse Street, Birmingham, B18 6LP.

ESSENTIALS EDIT

BEAUTIFULLY REFINED: THE RISE OF NATURAL AESTHETICS

In an industry where subtle, refined results are increasingly sought after, Lumineux Aesthetics has become one of the South Coast's most respected destinations for advanced aesthetic treatments. The multi award-winning clinic has built a reputation for delivering subtle, elegant enhancements that help clients feel the absolute best version of themselves – never overdone, always beautifully refined.

Founded by Jacqui Thomasson, a Registered Nurse Practitioner in both General Nursing and Mental Health Nursing, the clinic combines advanced medical expertise with a warm, personal approach. After over 30 years working within the NHS, including a role as Lead Nurse in Undergraduate Medical Teaching, Jacqui chose to follow her passion for facial aesthetics & regenerative treatments.

Her dedication to excellence led Jacqui to complete extensive advanced training: achieving a prestigious Postgraduate Level 7 qualification in Clinical Injectable Therapies in Harley Street, alongside a Level 7 qualification in Independent and Supplementary Prescribing.



Today, Lumineux Aesthetics is recognised as an accredited Save Face clinic and has received national recognition, including Aesthetics Clinic of the Year – Hampshire 2026 and Best Skin Rejuvenation & Regenerative Aesthetics Clinic UK 2026. Jacqui is celebrated for her unwavering commitment to safety, innovation, professionalism, and exceptional patient care.

www.lumineuxaesthetics.co.uk | www.instagram.com/lumineux.aesthetics



QUIET AESTHETICS: WHY SUBTLE IS THE NEW LUXURY

Something is shifting in the way women think about their appearance. Not a trend, exactly. More of a recalibration.

The era of visible intervention, the overfilled lip, the frozen brow, is quietly giving way to something more considered. Patients are arriving at clinics not asking to be transformed, but to be maintained. To look healthy. Rested. Entirely themselves.

Trey Bryant has been watching this shift for over two decades. As founder of Gower Skin Aesthetics, an HIV-regulated clinic operating across Swansea and London's Harley Street. She calls it quiet aesthetics.

"The most effective treatments are the ones nobody can quite identify," Bryant says. "Patients want to look like the best version of themselves. Not a different version."



At GSA, that means evidence-led treatments designed to support the skin's own regenerative processes. Preserving movement, improving quality, and working with each patient's individual structure rather than against it. This is where aesthetic medicine is heading and is the standard at GSA.

"The women coming to us aren't chasing youth. They're protecting it."

Gower Skin Aesthetics Swansea | Harley Street, London
www.gowerskinaesthetics.com | 01792 983033



Revealed: The 2026 UK's Best Workplaces for Women™



Great Place To Work® is on a mission to make every company a great workplace for all – because when people trust their leaders, feel valued, and experience fairness at work, businesses outperform the market. We call this the **Great Place To Work Effect**: great leaders build trust, which shapes the culture that drives performance.

Every year, we gather direct, honest feedback from over 10 million employees worldwide. Our survey is completely confidential, so people can feel comfortable to be honest about their workplace, and companies can gain detailed insights into how they can better serve their people.

Only employers with the highest levels of trust,

job satisfaction, and empowerment earn Best Workplaces™ recognition.

The 2026 UK's Best Workplaces for Women List ranks 350 organisations creating inclusive, equitable workplaces. By fostering environments where all employees, regardless of gender, can flourish, they're not just doing the right thing – they're strengthening business performance.

Keep reading to discover who made the 2026 UK's Best Workplaces for Women List, or scan the QR code to discover more about the Great Place To Work Effect.



2026 UK's Best Workplaces for Women™



Small Companies (10-50 employees)

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Thomas and Co International | 26. Laerdal Medical Ltd | 51. Eulogy | 74. Vizst Technology |
| 2. Good Humans | 27. Vetro Recruitment | 52. GIG Retail, a Smollan company | 75. Wirquin |
| 3. Bridging Finance Solutions Group Ltd | 28. Principal. Global Events | 53. Aura Infection Control | 76. StoryStream |
| 4. Brand Genetics | 29. jLiving – Jewish Community Housing Association | 54. Enovation Controls Ltd | 77. Helapet |
| 5. Healthier Business Group | 30. If U Care Share | 55. Retail Active, a Smollan company | 78. The July |
| 6. Linden House Epsom – Nirvana Care Group | 31. Something Big | 56. RAINBOW FOSTERING | 79. EVOLVE Advice Ltd |
| 7. Founders Law | 32. Beanstalk | 57. Insight Global | 80. Micom |
| 8. Candour Agency Ltd | 33. Zoocha | 58. Richard Nelson LLP | 81. Blackwell Adventure |
| 9. Happy | 34. Aldwych Consulting | 59. Interlink | 82. Spur Therapeutics |
| 10. Entec Si | 35. BFY Group | 60. MAM Baby UK | 83. Ansarada Group Ltd |
| 11. Learning Resources Ltd | 36. Resonant Group | 61. All The Best | 84. scarlettabbott |
| 12. Bind Media | 37. Molecule to Medicine | 62. Tribal Impact | 85. BBJ&K Ltd |
| 13. Ecology by Design Ltd | 38. north9 | 63. Hope Capital Property Finance | 86. Evolve Commercial |
| 14. Flourish Education | 39. Nolan Business Solutions | 64. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) | 87. Potentia Insight |
| 15. Embark Learning Care Academy / Fairway | 40. TePe Oral Hygiene Products Ltd | 65. Genie Ventures | 88. John Mason International |
| 16. Inardua | 41. St Wulfstan Surgery | 66. Wellington IT | 89. Achievers |
| 17. iCan wellbeing Group CIO | 42. International Chamber of Shipping | 67. Timac Argo | 90. Perkins Coie |
| 18. BOOM! Healthcare Communications Ltd | 43. HSPG | 68. Divine HomeCare Solutions | 91. Goodwill Ltd |
| 19. Vantage UK Group | 44. Consultant Connect | 69. Fuel Bank Foundation | 92. ICL: Independent Container Line |
| 20. AgileCadence | 45. Reinvigoration Group | 70. RCP Parking Ltd | 93. Prezsee UK Limited |
| 21. Day One Strategy | 46. Firstlight Group | 71. Webflow | 94. Core Prescribing Solutions |
| 22. Genie Goals | 47. Refugee and Migrant Justice | 72. Leman International Transport Limited | 95. CEN Group Holdings |
| 23. Wildfire | 48. Storck UK | 73. Clone | 96. Preventicum |
| 24. Incentivesmart | 49. Two Degrees Below Ltd | | 97. Vending Sense |
| 25. Planisware | 50. Careforsons LTD | | 98. Attic Self Storage |
| | | | 99. Sikla |
| | | | 100. Lupa Foods |

Medium Companies (51-200 employees)

- | | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. ILS Case Management | 28. Touch Medical Media | 52. IMP Software | 79. WisdomTree |
| 2. BFP Group | 29. Tangle Teezer | 53. Warranty Solutions Group | 80. Creditspring |
| 3. Outrank Ltd | 30. Whitmore High School | 54. IASME Consortium | 81. justteachers Ltd |
| 4. Signable | 31. Puma Capital Group | 55. CPS | 82. Leumi UK |
| 5. Citipost Mail | 32. AccessPay | 56. Technology Management Ltd | 83. Crescent Purchasing Consortium |
| 6. Aspire Scientific | 33. S2 Partnership Ltd | 57. Lavazza UK&I | 84. Route 101 Ltd |
| 7. Leighton | 34. Char.gy | 58. Vesta Software Group Ltd | 85. Nteractive Consulting & Events |
| 8. G Touring | 35. Hyundai Capital UK Ltd | 59. Nous Group | 86. TrueLayer |
| 9. Highgate IT Solutions | 36. SquaredUp | 60. Glassmoon Services | 87. Bionical Emas |
| 10. Dukes Bailiffs Limited | 37. Vetoquinol | 61. Fleet Alliance Ltd | 88. Service Innovation Group UK |
| 11. The DPO Centre | 38. The Marketing Lounge Partnership Ltd | 62. Windward Energy | 89. Tanium |
| 12. Teladoc Health UK | 39. Homeprotect | 63. MCL Medics | 90. Kia UK Ltd |
| 13. Impression | 40. Tedaisy Insurance Group Ltd | 64. Moose Toys | 91. PureMalt Products |
| 14. Squaretrade | 41. N-Compass | 65. Invisors | 92. 2i Ltd |
| 15. EXUS | 42. Clive Owen LLP | 66. LPPI | 93. Veran Performance |
| 16. PREM Group | 43. e.l.f. Beauty | 67. Simpson Associates | 94. LIMA |
| 17. LACE Partners | 44. AlumierMD | 68. Abbey Group | 95. Clays |
| 18. Shared Access | 45. Gorilla Glue Europe Ltd | 69. Xledger | 96. Nuby |
| 19. Tomorrow | 46. Lansons | 70. The Berkeley Partnership | 97. HURST |
| 20. Lioncourt Homes | 47. National Day Nurseries Association | 71. Alternative Airlines | 98. Lubbock Fine LLP |
| 21. Mercator Digital | 48. Agria Pet Insurance | 72. Coface UK & Ireland | 99. PubMatic |
| 22. STM AGENCY | 49. Wales Council for Voluntary Action | 73. Leeds Mind | 100. Workplace Interiors Company Cheltenham |
| 23. Dezrez | 50. Bolton Lads and Girls Club | 74. Watkins & Gunn Solicitors | |
| 24. Consilient Health | 51. Scientific Group | 75. IP Integration | |
| 25. Box.Com (UK) Ltd | | 76. BTTC Infrastructure Ltd | |
| 26. Beckett Investment Management Group Ltd | | 77. UP3 Services Ltd | |
| 27. Streathers North London | | 78. Premier Education Group | |

Two Leaders. One Message: Culture Drives Performance



What does it take to build a workplace where women – and all employees – can thrive?

For leaders like Sally Pritchett and Sarah Goodall, the answer is clear: culture isn't a 'nice to have'. It's the foundation of performance, trust and long-term growth.

Two leaders at organisations recognised on the 2026 UK's Best Workplaces for Women™ List, Sally and Sarah are bringing their perspectives to the For All Summit™ in London this November – sharing what it really takes to create high-trust, high-performing cultures.

"I've tried to create a culture where people can feel part of something, where they can be themselves."

Sally Pritchett has spent over two decades shaping workplace cultures rooted in trust, inclusion and clarity. Her leadership at Something Big reflects a belief that culture is not defined by leadership statements, but by everyday behaviours and experiences.



Sally Pritchett,
CEO and Co-Founder,
Something Big

Hear more from Sally and Sarah at For All Summit™ London



For Sarah Goodall, CEO at Tribal Impact, culture is not separate from brand or performance – it is what brings them together.

Her work focuses on a critical shift from brand-led communication to people-led influence. Her perspective is grounded in the belief that culture is what enables employees to become credible advocates – strengthening both engagement and commercial outcomes.

"Internal engagement is the foundation that makes genuine, sustained employee advocacy possible – driving stronger engagement, more meaningful interactions and higher conversion rates."

Sarah Goodall, CEO,
Tribal Impact



2025 UK's Best Workplaces for Women™



Large Companies (201-1000 employees)

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Powerforce Field Marketing | 27. NEBOSH | 50. Atom Bank | 75. Corona Energy |
| 2. Active Prospects | 28. Newmedica | 51. Pegasus Group | 76. CliniMed and SecuriCare (Medical) Ltd |
| 3. Lindt & Sprüngli UK Ltd | 29. Kyowa Kirin | 52. Tropic Skincare | 77. Ryan |
| 4. Development Bank of Wales | 30. Albert Goodman | 53. YMCA St Paul's Group | 78. Xero |
| 5. Coloplast | 31. BOXT | 54. AKG UK | 79. Exclusive Networks |
| 6. Phoenix Software | 32. Mercer & Hole | 55. Borders College | 80. Slalom |
| 7. Citizens Advice Gateshead | 33. Vertex Pharmaceuticals Inc | 56. General Mills UK | 81. WCF Ltd |
| 8. PKF Francis Clark | 34. Insulet | 57. The Doyle Collection | 82. Fittleworth Medical Ltd |
| 9. National Fostering Group | 35. Liberty IT | 58. Family Adventures Group | 83. Leigh Day |
| 10. World Wide Technology | 36. Johnston Carmichael | 59. Bioscript Group | 84. IMA, the Smollan agency |
| 11. MetLife | Chartered Accountants and Business Advisers | 60. Exclaimer | 85. Suntory Global Spirits UK |
| 12. Takeda Pharmaceutical | 37. TTEC (UK) SOLUTIONS Ltd | 61. Shake Shack | 86. Pharmacy2U |
| 13. BHP Professional Services Limited | 38. Alliance Homes | 62. De Lage Landen Leasing Ltd | 87. Leek Building Society |
| 14. Goodlord | 39. Vegner Group | 63. Carl Zeiss Vision | 88. Everyturn Mental Health |
| 15. Aventus Group Ltd | 40. PayStream Accounting Services Ltd | 64. AsendiaUK | 89. Canaccord Wealth |
| 16. Braze | 41. Havebury Homes | 65. Acorn Early Years Foundation | 90. Liquidline |
| 17. Reward | 42. Milford Haven Port Authority | 66. bpha | 91. Havas Lynx |
| 18. Biogen | 43. The Farnborough Airport Company | 67. Samsara | 92. HGF |
| 19. Genesys | 44. Smollan | 68. Imperial London Family of Hotels | 93. Roper Rhodes |
| 20. Blackstone | 45. Assurant | 69. Zen Internet | 94. Brightwell |
| 21. Stryker UK | 46. MSC Industrial Supply Company | 70. RiverStone International | 95. International Beverage |
| 22. Ellisons | 47. Premium Credit | 71. Robert Half | 96. Tapestry |
| 23. Huntswood - A ResultsCX Company | 48. Talon | 72. Manutan UK | 97. Bayley & Sage |
| 24. Fraikin | 49. Borough Care Ltd | 73. Chiesi Ltd | 98. Charlie Bigham's |
| 25. ProCook | | 74. Tandem Bank | 99. Bents Garden & Home |
| 26. Natilik | | | 100. Bloomsbury Publishing Plc |

Super Large Companies (1001+ employees)

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| 1. Kids Planet Day Nurseries | 14. Northumbrian Water Group | 28. Capital One | 41. Allianz UK |
| 2. Aviva | 15. AJ Bell | 29. Nottingham Community Housing Association | 42. Volkswagen Financial Services (UK) Ltd |
| 3. Hilton | 16. Clermont Hotel Group | 30. Siemens Healthineers AG | 43. Blackpool and the Fylde College |
| 4. Savers Health and Beauty | 17. Dimensions | 31. McCarthy & Stone | 44. Salesforce |
| 5. Colosseum Dental UK Ltd | 18. Acorn Group | 32. Hilti | 45. RSM UK |
| 6. AbbVie | 19. Tahir Group | 33. Bupa Dental Care | 46. Womble Bond Dickinson LLP |
| 7. Baringa | 20. N Family Club | 34. TP | 47. Capgemini UK |
| 8. Home Group Limited | 21. HomeServe Membership Ltd | 35. SpaMedica | 48. ServiceNow |
| 9. Admiral | 22. Coventry Building Society | 36. Places for People | 49. Brown & Brown |
| 10. Softcat plc | 23. Centrica PLC | 37. Experian Ltd | 50. Encore Capital Group |
| 11. TD SYNnex UK | 24. Specsavers | 38. Vanquis Bank | |
| 12. Domestic & General | 25. Adobe | 39. Outcomes First Group | |
| 13. Consensus Support Services Ltd | 26. Markel | 40. Cisco | |
| | 27. Marriott International | | |

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Why Regenerative Aesthetics Is The Future of Skin Health

Inside Georgie's Aesthetics, the clinic redefining modern beauty through science, artistry and regenerative medicine.

BY LAURA HILL



Exosomes, Sculptra, Radiesse and hyaluronic acid are some of the most talked-about regenerative treatments in aesthetics right now, and Georgie's Aesthetics is firmly at the forefront of this evolving movement.

More than just a beauty business, Georgie's Aesthetics is a luxury, medic-led clinic delivering clinically proven results with an experience to match. Think softly sculpted features, calming neutral-toned interiors, and the confidence that comes from being treated by someone who truly understands both the science and artistry behind aesthetic medicine.

“
It's not just about treatments. It's about helping women become the most empowered version of themselves while improving skin health through a multi-layered regenerative approach.
”

GEORGINA SEXTON
FOUNDER & NURSE PRACTITIONER

Founded in Milton Keynes, the clinic has quickly become one of the UK's most sought-after destinations for natural, full-face rejuvenation. Founder and Nurse Practitioner Georgina Sexton has spent more than eight years training alongside some of the industry's leading global injectors and surgeons, building a reputation for delivering elegant, natural-looking results.

Patients travel nationally and internationally for the clinic's signature approach, combining advanced clinical expertise, patient safety and a deep understanding of facial anatomy. While many clinics focus on trends, Georgie's Aesthetics is known for creating results that age beautifully over time, restoring confidence without compromising individuality.

01 THE PHILOSOPHY

Her treatment philosophy incorporates the latest advancements in regenerative aesthetics, including precise micro-dosing techniques and advanced biostimulators that work in harmony with the body to encourage natural collagen production and long-term skin health.

02 THE 360 APPROACH

The recent launch of the clinic's 360 multi-layer skincare range further supports this regenerative philosophy. By targeting the underlying causes of skin ageing and supporting healthy cellular function, the range helps restore healthier, stronger and more radiant skin.

03 THE DIFFERENCE

What truly sets the clinic apart is the trust it has built with its clients. Georgina is consistently praised for her meticulous approach, extensive knowledge and ability to create bespoke treatment plans tailored to every individual.

04 THE EXPERIENCE

Combined with five-star client reviews, a calming environment and comprehensive aftercare support, the clinic continues to stand out for all the right reasons.

05 THE FUTURE

In a world where beauty is moving away from extremes and towards natural, healthy-looking results, Georgie's Aesthetics is helping redefine what modern aesthetic medicine looks like.



DISCOVER MORE AT

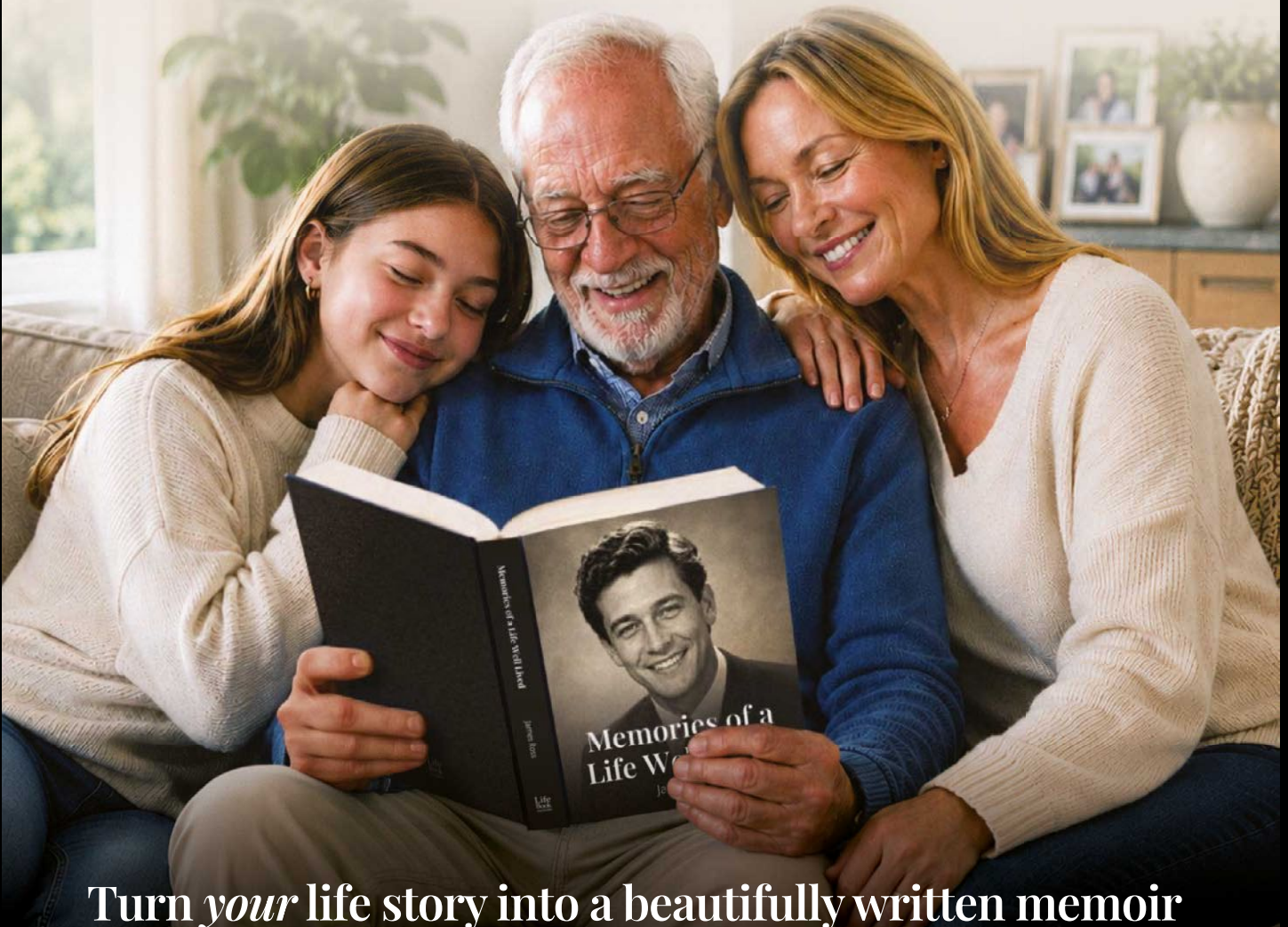
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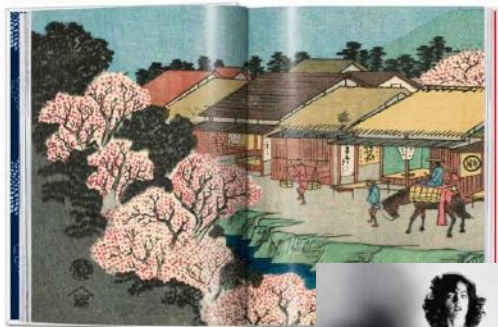
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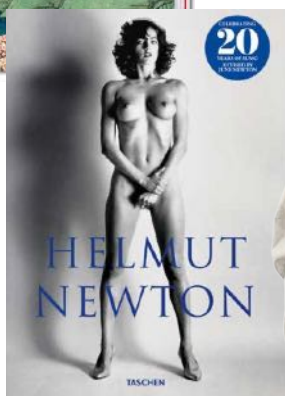
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final word



I'LL NEVER TIRE OF VISITING JAPAN. I'D LIKE TO GO THERE ONCE A YEAR TO CHECK IN WITH ALL THAT'S GOING ON, AND PAY A VISIT TO TOKYO HANDS.

I LOOK AT HELMUT NEWTON BOOKS FOR INSPIRATION. THE WAY HE SHOT IN BLACK AND WHITE WAS, AND IS, GORGEOUS – ALWAYS FIERCE AND POWERFUL, WITH SO MUCH STORYTELLING.



I LOVE A MARTINI WITH MY BEST FRIEND LISA. SHE'S BASED IN SCOTLAND AND I'M IN LONDON BUT, WHEN SHE VISITS ME, WE LOVE GOING TO THE DOVER, OR THE CONNAUGHT HOTEL, BECAUSE THEY DO THE BEST CRISPS, TOO.



I LOVE A MARKET PLACE: BOROUGH MARKET, BRICK LANE VINTAGE SHOPPING WITH MY CHILDREN AND RIDLEY ROAD IN DALSTON. BEING AMONG PEOPLE GIVES ME SUCH SATISFACTION. THERE'S SO MUCH INSPIRATION ON THE STREET.



Tastemaker: SANDRA CHOI

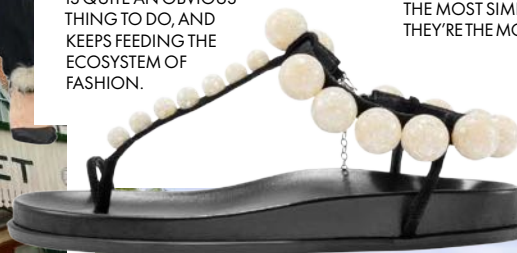
The Jimmy Choo creative director loves to shop at markets, wears the same sandals on every holiday and sips martinis at The Connaught



I'VE JUST DONE MY PERSONAL ORDER FOR CONNER IVES' LATEST COLLECTION. TO BE ABLE TO NURTURE A YOUNG DESIGNER THAT YOU BELIEVE IN IS QUITE AN OBVIOUS THING TO DO, AND KEEPS FEEDING THE ECOSYSTEM OF FASHION.

THERE'S ONE PAIR OF JIMMY CHOO SANDALS THAT I ALWAYS TAKE ON HOLIDAY WITH ME. THEY'RE PROBABLY THE MOST SIMPLE SHOES BUT, TO ME, THEY'RE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL.

Sandals, £1,350,
JIMMY CHOO



THE SERPENTINE GALLERY IN HYDE PARK IS ONE OF MY FAVOURITE PLACES. IT FEATURES SUCH AMAZING ARTISTS THAT ARE A CONSTANT SURPRISE, AND THE BOOKSHOP IS GREAT!



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AS TOLD TO NAOMI PIKE: SERPENTINE SCULPTURE BY JESUS RAFAEL SOTO; PHOTOGRAPHS: GEORGE DARRELL (COURTESY OF SERPENTINE), CODY WAKIN/UNSPASH; GETTY IMAGES; SEIRIDGES; HELMUT NEWTON/TASCHEN; UAGAWAHIROSHIMA/TASCHEN; IMAXTREE

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