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WHAT (AND HOW) TO SHOP NOW

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CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN
ON SOLE POWER

THE ELLE STYLE AWARDS ISSUE

STARRING
TYLA
SARAH PIDGEON
SIMONE ASHLEY
AND MORE...

'ANOTHER WORLD IS NOT ONLY POSSIBLE, SHE IS ON HER WAY' – ARUNDHATI ROY

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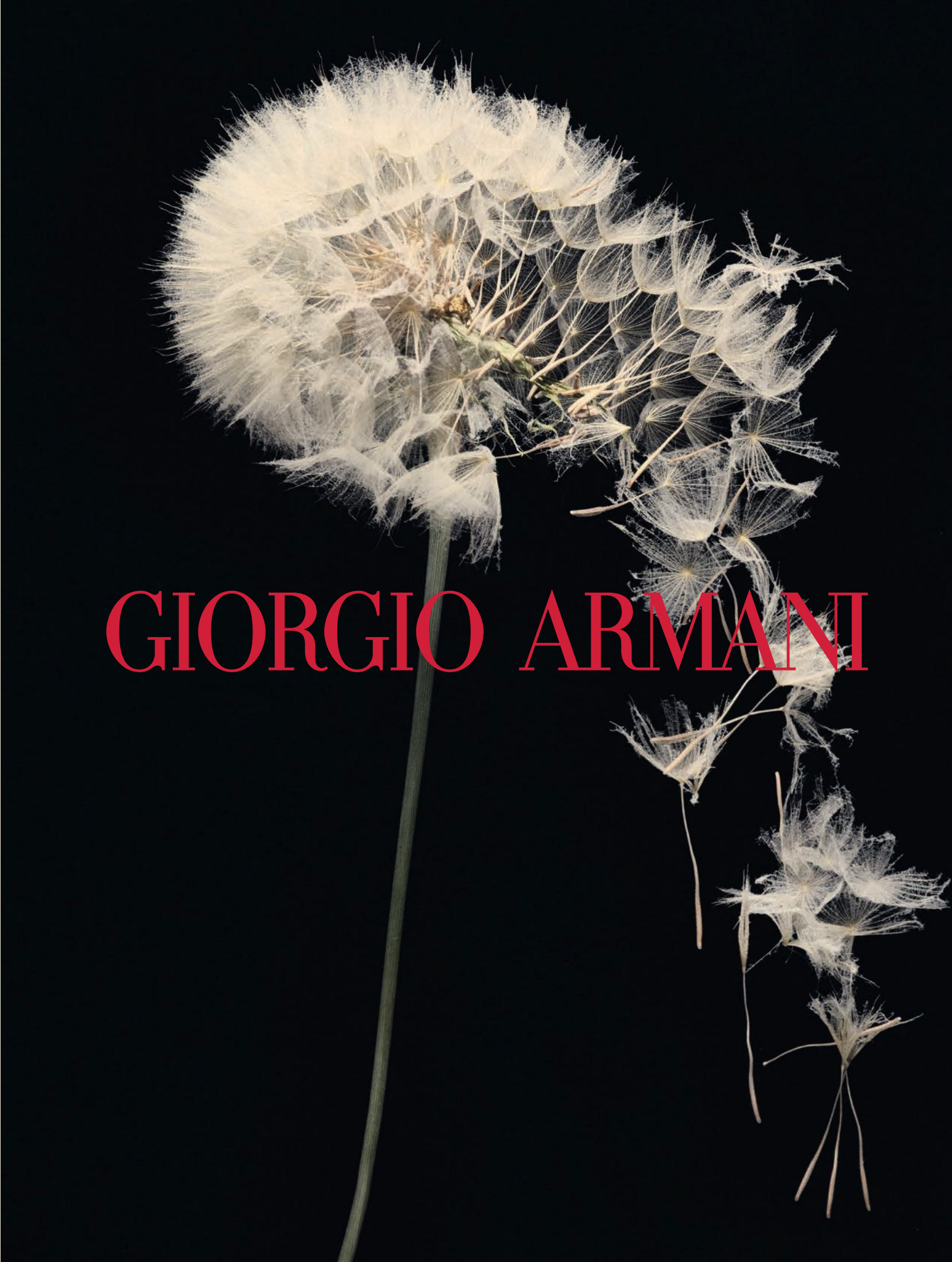






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IT'S A LOVE STORY
HAVING SKYROCKETED TO STARDOM THIS YEAR, SARAH PIDGEON SITS DOWN WITH ELLE TO DISCUSS HER NEXT MOVE







ON THE COVERS

SARAH PIDGEON WEARS DRESS, PRICE ON REQUEST, CHANEL. BEIGE GOLD AND DIAMOND EAR CUFF, MATCHING BRACELET (TOP) AND GOLD AND DIAMOND BRACELET, ALL PRICE ON REQUEST, COCO CRUSH BY CHANEL FINE JEWELLERY. PHOTOGRAPH: TOM SCHIRMACHER. STYLING: ANNE-MARIE CURTIS. HAIR: CHRISTIAN WOOD AT THE VISIONARIES. MAKE-UP: FLORRIE WHITE AT THE WALL GROUP. NAILS: IRAM SHELTON AT A-FRAME. STYLIST'S ASSISTANT: LAURYN DOHERTY. SET DESIGN: LEE FLUDE AT AGENCY 41. **TYLA** WEARS SHIRT, £1,180, MIU MIU. TIGHTS, STYLIST'S OWN. PHOTOGRAPH: JESSICA MADAVO. STYLING: FERANMI ESO. HAIR: VIRGINIE MOREIRA AT MA+ GROUP. MAKE-UP: JOSH BART. NAILS: NIKKI PANIC AT ONE REPRESENTS. SET DESIGN: ANNA GRABOWSKA. STYLIST'S ASSISTANTS: NINA GAHRÉN WILLIAMSON AND THULILE MAZOSIWE. **SIMONE ASHLEY** WEARS DRESS, PRICE ON REQUEST, ERDEM. BOOTS, £460, LILI CURIA. PHOTOGRAPH: EKUA KING. STYLING: JENNY KENNEDY. HAIR: PETER LUX AT THE WALL GROUP. MAKE-UP: ALEX BABSKY AT THE VISIONARIES. NAILS: MICHELLE HUMPHREY AT LMC. SET DESIGN: LEE FLUDE AT AGENCY 41. STYLIST'S ASSISTANT: NINA GAHRÉN WILLIAMSON

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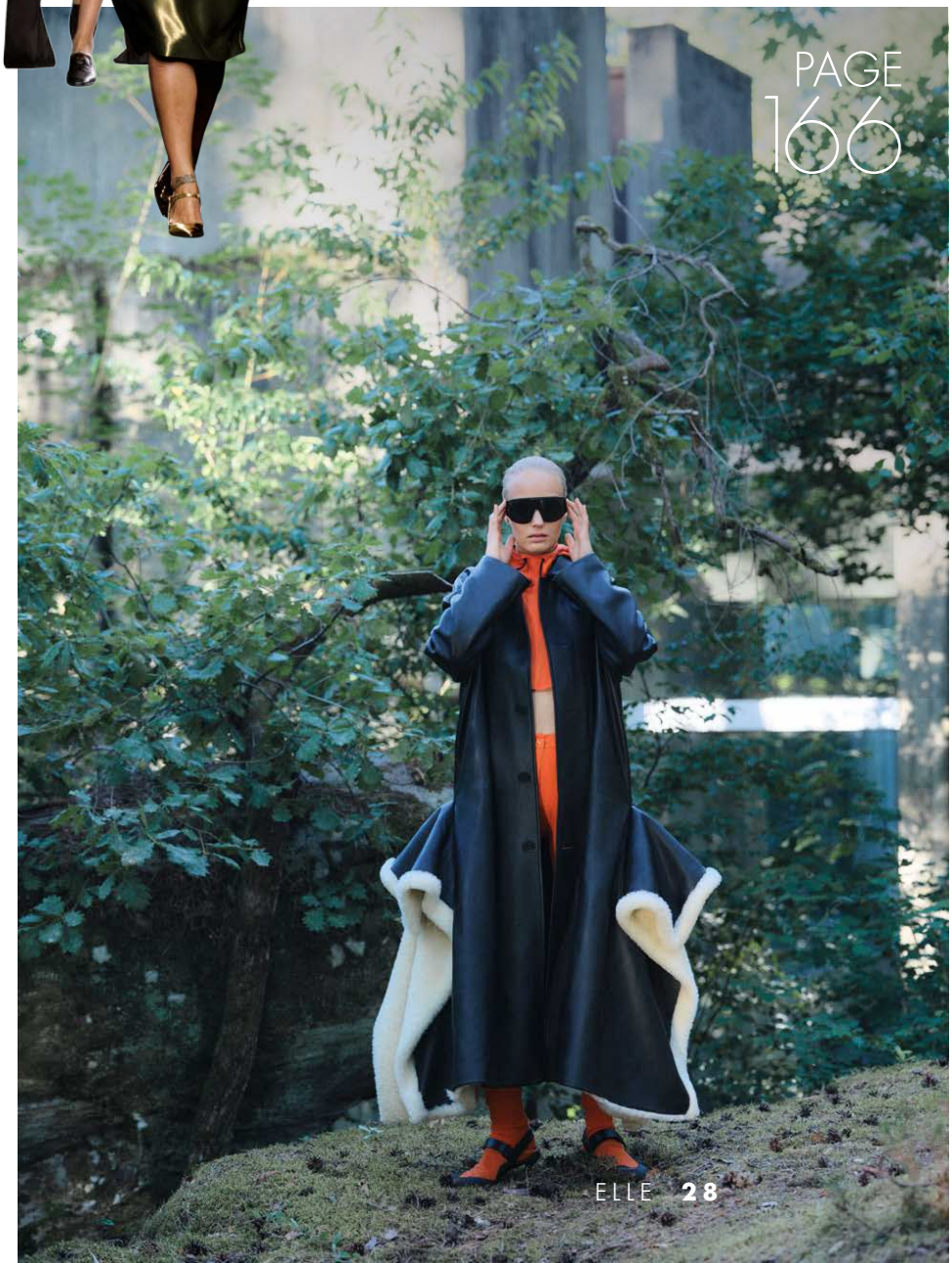
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La vie est belle

L'ORIGINAL
& THE NEW VERY CHERRY





DOLCE & GABBANA

PHOTOGRAPHED BY STEVEN MEISEL

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editor's letter





THIS ISSUE HITS NEWS STANDS THE WEEK THAT MOST KIDS HEAD back to school after the summer holidays – a time when most grown-ups return to work as well. But here in the ELLE office, this time of year is also known for the ELLE Style Awards, our annual celebration of the best of creativity in fashion and culture, which kicks off the month of runway shows. In this age of constant optimisation and engineered perfection, when people are generally partying, drinking and eating less, it feels right to head into autumn, a season inherently known for work and productivity, with a big, glamorous, raucous party – filled with free-flowing champagne (thanks to our generous partner Moët & Chandon), fashion and ridiculously talented people.

Mind you, at ELLE, we work hard – very hard. But the Style Awards reminds us of the importance of pausing to appreciate the fruits of our creative labour, and to consider its wider purpose. We spend the better part of 12 months deliberating over who to recognise, because our previous winners have all been so illustrious: Vivienne Westwood (2004), Naomi Campbell (2010), Alber Elbaz (2016), Sarah Burton (2023), Kim Jones (2023), the Lionesses (2025), Sienna Miller (2009), Pharrell Williams (2014), Malala (2025) and Zadie Smith (2025), to name a few.

This year, our cover stars Tyla, Sarah Pidgeon and Simone Ashley join the impressive list, alongside a host of people whose work captured our imagination this year, from Louise Trotter's artful, craft-centric ready-to-wear collections at Bottega Veneta to Emily Maitlis' appointment-listening podcast *The News Agents*. Each winner's creative output is wildly different from the other's, but what unites them is a distinct ability to speak to the moment. There's Tyla's inescapable and deliciously pop hit 'Chanel', which paved the way for her latest album *A*Pop*; Sarah's Emmy-nominated performance as Carolyn Bessette-Kennedy in the critically acclaimed television drama *Love Story*; and Simone's viral turn as Miranda Priestley's new first assistant in *The Devil Wears Prada 2*. Discover their stories inside the issue, and then follow @elleuk on 9 September to see the full list of winners and ceremony highlights in real time. It promises to be a night worth raising a glass, or two, to.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT SIMONE ASHLEY, ONE OF OUR THREE COVER STARS AND A WINNER AT THIS YEAR'S ELLE STYLE AWARDS, COMMANDS ATTENTION IN McQUEEN



KENYA HUNT Editor-in-Chief

COAT, £1,990, SKIRT, £890, AND DRESS (WORN UNDERNEATH), £7,600, ALL McQUEEN. PHOTOGRAPHS: EKUA KING; FABIEN MONTIQUE

Autumn treats



Carrying... a Smythson journal

I ALWAYS START SEPTEMBER WITH A NEW LEATHER-BOUND NOTEBOOK. THIS TIME, I'M GOING FOR THE CLASSIC PANAMA IN RED, THE ACCENT COLOUR OF THE SEASON. JOURNAL, £175, SMYTHSON



Wearing... a Loewe ribbed turtleneck

THE CRAYOLA-BRIGHT STRIPES SCREAM BACK-TO-SCHOOL JOY. HAPPINESS IN KNITWEAR FORM. JUMPER, £1,300, LOEWE



Trying... Augustinus Bader lip balm

I'M EMBRACING A NUDE LIP IN THE TRUEST SENSE WITH THIS HYDRATING FORMULA. LIP BALM, £38, AUGUSTINUS BADER

contributors



The photographer
JESSICA MADAVO

Born in Johannesburg and now living nomadically, photographer and film-maker Jessica Madavo first picked up a camera to document her friends, with the simple aim of saving the memories they were making together. By the age of 16, she had already published her first zine. Her spontaneous, film-led style captures intimate, unguarded moments; in this issue, she photographs cover star Tyla. 'It was organised chaos in the best sense,' she says. Her career highlight? 'Travelling the world,' she says, before adding that meeting new people on set excites her each day.





The stylist
FERANMI ESO

While his editorial shoots are bold, Eso keeps his own wardrobe deliberately pared-back, favouring a personal uniform of basics while he works so he can focus entirely on the creative process. Music is equally essential, with artists such as John Glacier and Klein soundtracking many of his shoots. Having styled talents including Kelela and LSDXOXO, Eso says his biggest challenge when styling a cover shoot is 'creating something that people can connect with'.

The writer
EMILY CRONIN



At a recent tech-free yoga retreat, Cronin found herself reflecting on the restorative power of nature, a theme that runs through her feature in this issue (page 46). Her career began after winning a talent contest for young writers, and she's since interviewed everyone from Mick Jagger – who she says is 'very sexy, even on the phone' – to Donatella Versace, approaching each conversation with what she describes as 'non-judgemental curiosity; you never know what someone has been through or what might arise in the course of conversation'.



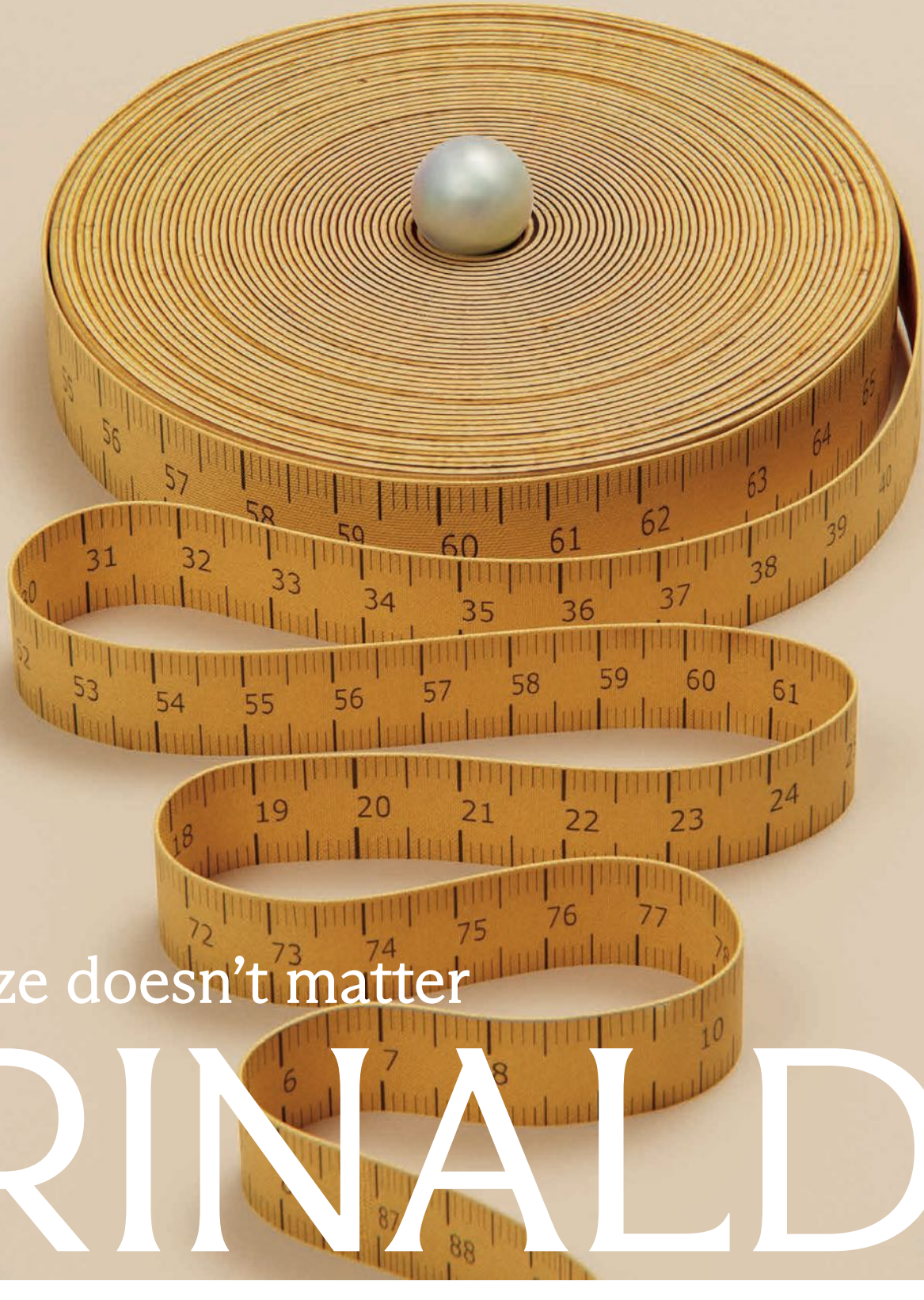


The profiler
TAMISON O'CONNOR

For ELLE's fashion features director Tamison O'Connor, the best profiles go beyond the headlines. 'I'm always trying to understand what drives someone, what makes them tick,' she says of her approach to interviewing. This month, she traces the remarkable career of Christian Louboutin. Away from her writing desk, O'Connor swears by her Alaïa ballet flats – 'they're the most comfortable shoes I own' – and unwinds by catching up with friends, 'ideally over an ice-cold glass of wine'.

PHOTOGRAPHS: JESSICA MADAVO, LILY CRAIGEN, OTTO MASTERS

MARINA



Size doesn't matter

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Touch grass

As designers embrace forests, wildflowers and the romance of the outdoors, Emily Cronin explores what fashion's return to nature says about where we are now

the moment

I WENT TO THE WOODS BECAUSE A PERSON CAN REMAIN IN THE city only so long before embrittling. I went to the woods craving the spring of moss underfoot, unfamiliar birdsong, the scent of the forest after sudden rain. I went to these specific woods – the Berkshires in Western Massachusetts – for a solo yoga retreat from my day-to-day life in London. The kind with silent breakfasts, barefoot forest bathing and an invitation to lock your phone in a safe for the duration of your stay.

It was the sort of place where the closest I came to street-style watching was noting subtle distinctions between my fellow practitioners' preferred leggings. And yet, even in the woods, I remained inescapably myself. On the final morning of my retreat, lying on a paddleboard as rain ruffled the surface of a mirror-like lake, I couldn't meditate away one persistent and unenlightened thought: that our SUP guide's footwear of choice looked not unlike Phoebe Philo's Pace Runner sandals.

Nature is healing, so they say. It's also front of mind for fashion designers this season. In Paris, Louis Vuitton transformed the Louvre's Cour Carrée into an alpine hiking trail via the installation of blocky green knolls. Calling the collection Super Nature, artistic director Nicolas Ghesquière proposed clothes as a response to the environment, complete with bags bandana-tied around walking sticks. At Miu Miu, Miuccia Prada dressed her woman in trapper hats and shearling-lined windbreakers before sending her trooping across the forest floor (staffers covered the catwalk in grass and twigs pre-show). Hermès's Nadège Vanhee created a moss-filled woodland setting for her show, offering us Sixties-tinged jumpers and coats in black cherry and loden green, explorer jackets, salopettes and thigh-high boots. She said she wanted to dress clients who 'take control, walk in the night and chart new territory'. No wonder the clothes had all the makings of a wardrobe for the luxest Dolomites walking holiday imaginable (hold the Salomon X Ultras).

The great-outdoors-spo carried on into the couture season. At Dior, tree ferns dominated the runway as models in monstera-green Bar jackets, fern-lace-appliqué dresses and suits that frothed with tiny wildflower appliqués passed beneath the fronds. Meanwhile, anemone-like blossoms and flowered vines twined through Chanel couture. Backstage, Bruno Pavlovsky, president of fashion at the label and head of the French Fashion Federation, called nature 'the ultimate luxury'. What, not handbags? Not trophy blazers?

'I have to say, it's not what I was expecting right now,' says Arizona Muse, model, entrepreneur and founder of Dirt charity, a nonprofit working at the intersection of fashion and soil regeneration. 'Because, actually, what's happening is that sustainability is falling out of trend, and funding for sustainability is reducing within the private sector. But in a way, it's not such a surprise. People have always loved the Earth, just secretly. I completely concur that access to nature – wild, deep nature – is the biggest luxury we have.'

That this celebration of nature should take hold now, against a backdrop of AI anxieties, protracted war and climate catastrophe (those heatwaves!), may seem counterintuitive. Then again, it makes sense that designers have decided now could be a good moment to touch grass. It's a fitting response to our fractured and frantic times.

As Chloé's creative director Chemena Kamali said when unveiling the house's AW26 campaign (think chiffon maxi-dresses atwirl in a wildflower meadow): 'Nature brings us back to instinct, freedom and connection.' It's a 2026 reboot of an idea American naturalist John Burroughs expressed in a 1912 essay: 'I go to nature to be soothed and healed, and to have my senses put in order.'

But fashion's relationship with nature has a darker side, too; the industry has a well-documented deleterious impact on the natural world. Each year, 92 million tonnes of textile waste are produced globally. We're buying more and wearing it for less time, discarding it more freely. In 2023, the most recent year for which we have data, only 8% of textiles incorporated fibres made from recycled sources, according to the United Nations Environment Programme.

'For me, nature in fashion isn't actually about the visuals; it's about what the impact is on nature, by fashion,' Muse says. At Dirt, she's working with The Demeter Standard, the strict certification body for biodynamic agriculture worldwide, to create new standards for textiles and encourage the use of regenerative dyes ('natural colours: they're not all brown!'). 'We need to recalibrate and look at who we are as an industry and how we're using our strength wisely,' she says.

It's a conversation that is long overdue. Right now, the hills are calling. You know what would help on my next hike-to-SUP? A Louis Vuitton walking stick, that's what. □



PHOTOGRAPHS: GOUTIER/GC IMAGES, EDITORIAL/GORSKI/MAXTREE ON, GETTY IMAGES, IMAXTREE

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agenda



shop: BEANIE BABY

We're planning our winter wardrobes from the top down by investing in a woollen beanie. As seen in several inky-black and grey shades at Bottega Veneta, the classic warmer returns in a new proposition. Creative director Louise Trotter took the look in a new direction, pairing the hats with shoulder-grazing chandelier earrings and bold necklaces. The clash we never knew we needed.

eat: AT KID

Soho's latest opening comes from a partnership made in heaven: Sertaç Dirik, of Mangal II fame, and David Carter, the restaurateur behind Oma and Smokestak. Kid's menu will be based on flavours of Central Anatolia. Expect huge scallops with roasted horoz beans, and içli köfte, traditionally served at family gatherings, made with braised beef, roasted onions and grape molasses wrapped in a bulgur wheat shell. Chef's kiss.



watch: SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

A new version of the classic stars Daisy Edgar-Jones as Elinor Dashwood (below), the embodiment of good sense, opposite the wild, romantic sensibility of Marianne (Esmé Creed-Miles). The sisters navigate heartbreak, meddling interlopers and mysterious strangers, but it's Jane Austen, so we're expecting love to win in the end. Out on 25 September.



WORDS: NAOMI PIKE, HANNAH NATHANSON AND DANIELLA PARETE CLARKE. PHOTOGRAPHS: DOMI RAD, © 2026 FOCUS FEATURES, IMAXTREE



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: PAUL O'GRADY (CENTRE) AND JULIAN CLARY (CENTRE RIGHT) WITH THE GLITTER BOYS; KAE TEMPEST; CHAPPELL ROAN





visit: TIM WALKER'S 'FAIRYLAND'

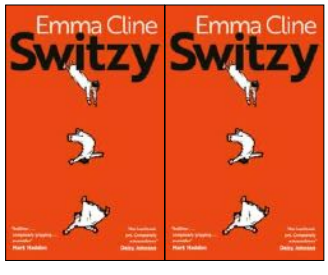
Opening at the National Portrait Gallery, 'Fairyland: Love and Legends' explores themes of community and identity. The British photographer's career-long fascination with queerness and fairy tales is in focus, so expect fantastical landscapes, surreal fashion shoots and familiar faces, from Chappell Roan to Kae Tempest. It's certain to be a showstopper – welcome to Tim Walker's whimsical inner world. From 8 October.

wear: SIMONE ROCHA

The collaboration every fashion editor is waiting for lands this month. Simone Rocha x Adidas reworks recognisable classics through the designer's romantic lens of lace, pearls and unapologetic femininity. The collection spans puff-sleeved track jackets, ruffled zip-up tops and pearl-tipped hardware, alongside Mary-Janes and ballet flats with the three stripes and ribbon lacing. Style with an oversized leather biker jacket and razor-sharp masculine tailoring for a modern finish.



ELLE COLLECTIVE
SIGN UP ON PAGE 88 OR AT ELLECOLLECTIVE.CO.UK
EMMA CLINE IS OUR GUEST AT THE ELLE COLLECTIVE BOOK CLUB AT SOHO HOUSE ON 21 SEPTEMBER



read: SWITZY

Emma Cline's hit debut *The Girls* was impossible to put down. The American author's latest, *Switzy*, tells the story of a retired executive suffering with dementia. As he takes one final journey to a clinic in Switzerland, via past haunts in London and France, flashbacks from his 70 years come to him, and we're left considering what makes a life. Out on 9 October.

PHOTOGRAPHS: TIM WALKER, IMAXTREE


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FIRST LOOK



FIRST LOOK

Best DRESSED

This season, designers returned to the simplicity of a dress – not as a one-and-done solution, but for the instant wardrobe upgrade a dramatic gown can offer. We're looking to Dior's ra-ra frills, Alaïa's metallic minidresses, Chanel's feather epaulettes and the king of offbeat opulence Alessandro Michele, who decorated the Valentino show in decadent details destined for the dancefloor.

EDITED BY NAOMI PIKE

PHOTOGRAPHS: IMAXTREE











THE NEW NOSTALGIA
RIGHT: SANDY LIANG. LEFT, FROM TOP: A LOOK FROM HER SS24 COLLECTION. BACKSTAGE AT AW23. HER AW25 CAMPAIGN

LIFE IN BOOKS

Take a BOW

With her debut book, New York designer Sandy Liang is looking back on her fashion journey

WORDS BY ERICA GONZALES

SANDY LIANG LOVES TO SCRAPBOOK. She started as a kid, and now she's a mother, she's making little scrapbooks for her two-year-old son Rainier, to commemorate moments of his life.

That's what Liang does best: preserve memories, especially of childhood, and bring them back to life in charming ways. Her eponymous line is known for its signature bows and ballet flats, and that nostalgic ethos is at the heart of her first book *Dressing Up: Sandy Liang*. Published this month by Rizzoli, it traces the evolution of her brand, and her life, since she founded the company in 2014. Photos are arranged like, you guessed it, a scrapbook – runway shots appear next to images of Liang cooking with her grandmother ('Paw Paw' in Cantonese). 'I wanted it to feel very personal, and not just like a fashion archive,' Liang says.

Her memories of fashion weren't always pleasant, though. 'Growing up, if I cared about make-up or clothes, it was a sin. It was like, "Oh, you want to have no morals and be a bad person,"' she jokes. Her mother was frugal, supplying her with hand-me-downs and clothes from clearance racks that she was embarrassed to wear. 'I remember going to Old Navy like it was Disney World,' she says. 'It made me feel like clothes had this magical power.'

Liang put photos of street-style stars such as Olivia Kim and Jen Brill in her school binder, and added some dazzle to her calculator with the Chanel logo. Still, it took young Liang time to be comfortable with fashion. 'I've always loved princesses and that fantasy – the ruffles and the frills and the satin,' she says. 'But I never saw myself able to wear that stuff. It wasn't until my later twenties that I felt like I could just wear whatever I want. Who cares?'

It just so happens that our interview takes place days after the discourse about Olivia Rodrigo's babydoll dresses has begun to spread online. 'I think it's so silly. People just need stuff to talk about and get angry about – and that's why I hate social media,' Liang says with a laugh. The designer has faced similar backlash about her work. Recalling criticism over a mini-skort she designed, she says: 'This is not made for a little girl. This is made for a woman, and I'm a woman designing clothes for myself.'

Her devout customer base gets the distinction. When there's a sample sale, shoppers line up for hours outside her New York shopfront, and her collaborations are quick to sell out. Liang still pinches herself seeing the response. 'I just feel so thankful that people care enough to show up. I'm happy they get what they want.' □

PHOTOGRAPHS: SANDY LIANG, PHOENIX JOHNSON, LUNA CONTE


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THE MEMO

A denim DISCOVERY

With jeans all over the autumn/winter catwalks, there has never been a better time to find the perfect blues...

WORDS BY NAOMI PIKE

AS A STAUNCH DENIM SCEPTIC, THE EFFORTLESS, EVERYDAY appeal of perfect blue jeans has long passed me by. When everyone else got barrel-leg fever, I remained immune. I had no desire to try a 'stovepipe' cut, nor return to the skinny jeans that populated the wardrobe of my teenage years. My issue with denim was not about how it looked, but how it felt. I simply never found a pair of jeans that made my mid-size, thick-thighed frame feel good. But then the autumn/winter 2026 collections came along and made me want to try again.

The shows swelled with great denim. At Dior, a fashion house best known for its full-skirted silhouette, Jonathan Anderson placed jeans front and centre, with stonewashed styles worn under his version of the classic Bar jacket. At Givenchy, Sarah Burton showed indigo denim, dramatic and pooling in proportion. Alessandro Michele signalled the return of the drainpipe at Valentino. At Stella McCartney, jeans were paired with rugby shirts; at Balenciaga, with cropped parkas. Matthieu Blazy, too, made a convincing case for denim as the ultimate luxury-wardrobe staple: the Chanel Métiers d'Art show in New York opened with jeans and a quarter-zip jumper.

The omnipresence of jeans on the catwalk speaks to where the fashion industry finds itself now, says Grace Neal, denim buying manager at Selfridges. 'Customers are investing more thoughtfully and looking for pieces they'll wear season after season, rather than simply buying into trends. Denim sits perfectly within that shift, because it combines everyday practicality with elevated design,' she says. 'We're seeing designers reimagine jeans through impeccable cuts, premium fabrications and directional styling, proving that something inherently functional can still feel incredibly luxurious.' Neal name-checks Saint Laurent's viral 1970s high-rise jeans as 'capturing the mood' of now. 'They're investment purchases that transcend seasons and become wardrobe signatures, rather than trend pieces.'

But finding the right fit can be a challenge. A 1970s-style Saint Laurent silhouette may not work for everyone, especially if you're not sample-size. Not every brand's offering is inclusive in its sizing – and even when it is, the cut often doesn't live up to expectations. So, what's the secret to finding that holy-grail pair? Shrirekha Patel, a master tailor for Levi's at its Lot1 Soho studio who makes custom pairs for clients, suggests choosing comfortable fits that give you confidence, rather than going for whichever shape is fashionable at any given time. 'The beauty of jeans is their flexibility,' she says. 'It's about what makes you feel good – you don't have to be limited by trends. Find the fit that works for you, and it will be timeless.'

Brands such as Levi's, Good American and ELV Denim offer styles that cater to a range of different body types. Experiment by trying out a range of cuts (you never know what might suprise you), or try working with a local seamstress to tailor a vintage pair of jeans to seamlessly fit your shape. The trick is also in the styling – after all, a fabulous head-to-toe look is the ultimate confidence-booster. It's this attitude that I'm embodying as I take on the season's most wearable trend. ▷



JEAN GENIES
FROM TOP: VALENTINO AW26; STELLA McCARTNEY AW26; DIOR AW26; RIHANNA; GIVENCHY AW26; PALOMA ELSESSER; MYHA'LA

PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES, IMAXTREE

1 Coat, £2,850, **PRADA** **2** Jeans, £119, **ALIGNE** **3** Cardigan, £250, **MITHRIDATE** **4** Necklace, £3,655, **CHANEL** **5** Heels, £2,050, **PRADA**






ART HOUSE
Turn-up jeans bring an edge to AW26's take on twee.




PREP SCHOOL
A sharp blazer worn with relaxed jeans is the silhouette of the season.



1 Loafers, £640, **TOD'S** **2** Blazer, £1,990, **McQUEEN** **3** Bag, £3,600, **DIOR** **4** Shirt, £95, **WITH NOTHING UNDERNEATH** **5** Jeans, £890, **GIVENCHY**

THE MEMO

Blue JEANS, *baby!*

Make denim the foundation of this season's best outfits

1 Jeans, £40, **MARKS & SPENCER** **2** Trainers, £79.99, **NIKE** **3** Jacket, £1,555, **DRIES VAN NOTEN** **4** Top, £160, **CHOPOVA LOWENA** **5** Bag, £2,170, **GUCCI**







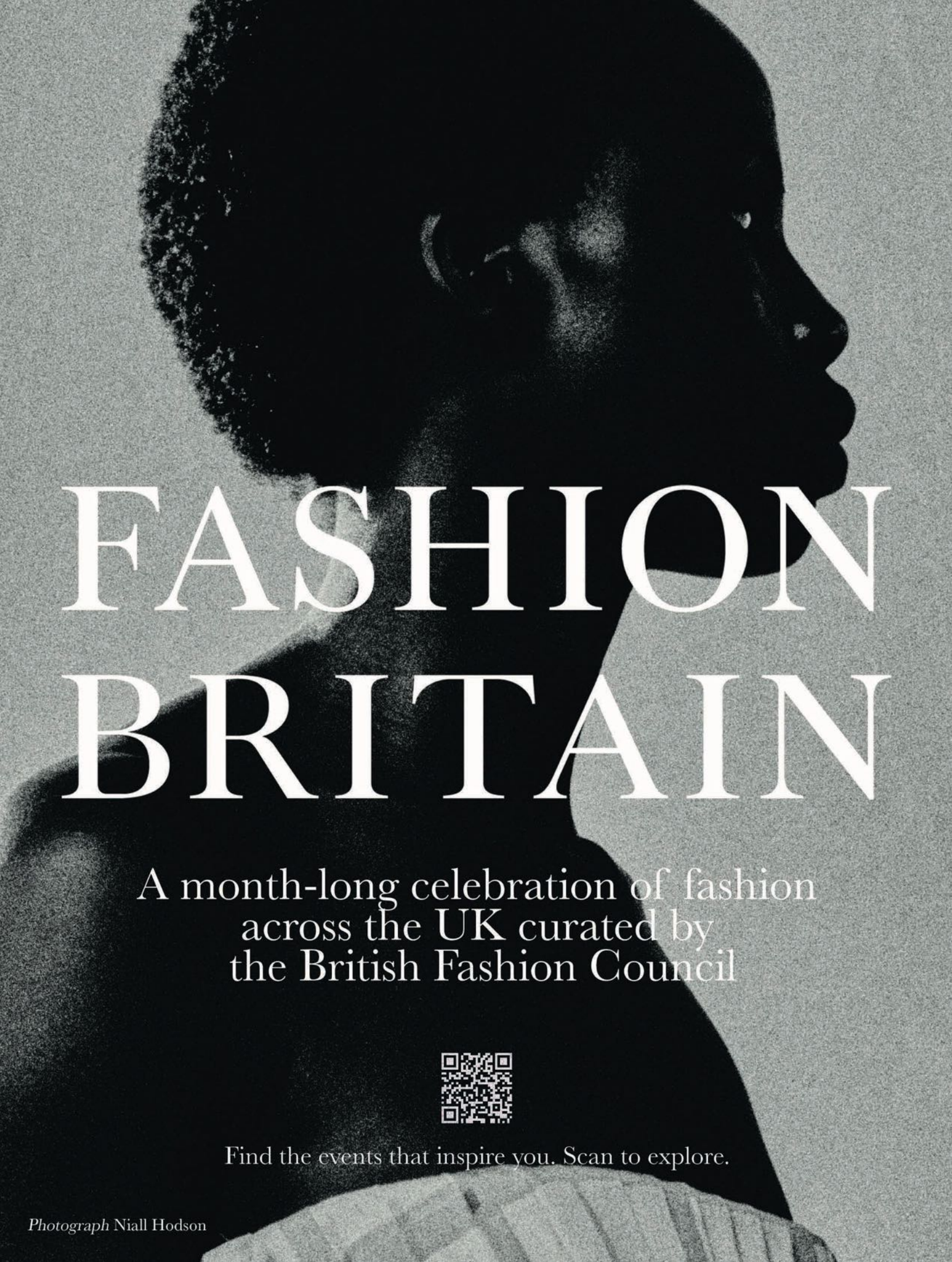
COLOUR POP
Winter brights find new favour when set against deep-indigo denim.

1 Bag, £2,305, **LOEWE** **2** Jeans, £95, **LEE** **3** Blazer, £345, **THE FRANKIE SHOP** **4** Heels, £1,020, **SAINT LAURENT BY ANTHONY VACCARELLO** **5** Shirt, price on request, **VALENTINO**




POWER PLAY
Skinny jeans are back, best worn with broad shoulders and fierce heels.




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MINIMALIST MASTER
RIGHT: VERONICA LEONI. BELOW: DENIM JEANS AND JACKET FOR CALVIN KLEIN COLLECTION AW26, BASED ON A 1976 DESIGN

IN CONVERSATION

Her CALVINS

Veronica Leoni is cannily mining the archive as she reinvents the American sportswear stalwart

WORDS BY VĒRONIQUE HYLAND

ON SEVENTH AVENUE, THE MAIN DRAG OF MANHATTAN'S garment district, appearances are everything, even when it comes to minute details. A block away from the Calvin Klein headquarters, I witness a window-washer's boss pointing out a spot he missed. It brings to mind the famously exacting house founder, whose work helped vault American style to the top of the fashion food chain.

Veronica Leoni, creative director of Calvin Klein Collection, shows up fresh from a fitting, a pincushion (does it get more old-school?) encircling her wrist. She's wearing a black suit and Adidas trainers, though her multiple piercings and asymmetric pixie cut give the look an injection of punk. 'I'm OK to be a minimalist,' she says, 'but I like the idea that minimalists can be loud.'

When Leoni was growing up in Rome, her first exposure to the world of Calvin Klein came via the deliciously androgynous CK One ads. After studying literature and philosophy at Sapienza Università di Roma, she swerved into fashion, working for Jil Sander, The Row and Phoebe Philo-era Céline, and creating her own acclaimed brand, Quira, which was an LVMH Prize finalist in 2023.

Having worked under so many noted female designers, Leoni is now one of the still-rare women leading a major fashion brand – something she wishes was not the case. She recently met Fendi chief creative officer Maria Grazia Chiuri, and shares an observation Chiuri made: 'When a man cooks very well, he's [called] a chef. When it's a woman, she's a cook.'

The auteurism so often accorded to male designers is something Leoni wants to reclaim. For Calvin Klein Collection autumn/winter 2026, she looked to what she called 'the cult of the body' circa the late 1970s and early 1980s, when gym culture was surging. That translated into muscle-baring sleeveless looks and ab-flaunting side cutouts, as well as suggestive sheer moments. It fits interestingly into our current analogous era, when Ozempic and peptides reign supreme among many of the fashionably shredded, although the hedonism of that time feels more like a distant memory.



Klein was an early denim pioneer, helping to reinvent the American staple as a luxury item worthy of a runway pedestal. Leoni has included denim in her last three catwalk shows for Collection, and this season she replicated a pair of Calvin Klein jeans from 1976.

She believes that denim is a way of 'embracing the heritage and honesty of the American wardrobe, and trying to inject that into the luxury feeling that the runway had at the time'.

It's not Leoni's first nod to the house founder: she has also blown up the CK One perfume bottle into a bag and woven underwear waistbands into a gown. But she remains a minimalist to the core: 'There's always a point when we start to go backward and peel off everything that looks unnecessary.' Mr Klein himself would be proud. □

PHOTOGRAPHS: ZOË GHERTNER, CALVIN KLEIN COLLECTION



Lena De Casparis **DEPUTY EDITOR**

Frieze is filled with fashion peacocks, so I'll join the party by making a statement in this scarlet Celine shirt. I'll pair it with some utility trousers, plus a good belt, boot and a bag like the new Gucci Paparazzo: squishy and impactful. It has plenty of room, especially for this slick digital camera that's perfect for capturing my favourite works at the show.











1 Boots, £530, **DEAR FRANCES**
2 Shirt, £620, **CELINE** **3** Belt, £445, **DEHANCHE** **4** Camera, £70, **MANUAL PHOTO** **5** Bag, £2,560, **GUCCI**

DRESS CODE

Art SEASON

This month, a stacked diary sees the ELLE team dressing the part to take in the capital's cultural highlights. Prada dresses, Gucci bags and Hermès lipsticks top our wish lists as we head to Frieze, The London Film Festival and new openings across the city









1 Shirt, £510, **TOTEME**
2 Flats, £340, **STAUD**
3 Bag, £635, **MARNI**
4 Jeans, £525, **B SIDES**
5 Nail polish, £30, **CHANEL**
6 Bracelet, £850, **BOTTEGA VENETA**



Kenya Hunt **EDITOR IN CHIEF**

After three months of intense, hot, hot, summer heat, I'll be living in denim, styled in myriad ways this autumn as the weather cools down. I love the joy of these paint-splattered Jackson Pollock-inspired jeans by B Sides. Bottega Veneta's artful leather cuff and Marni's crafty beaded bag will make beautiful companions.

ELLE COLLECTIVE

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PHOTOGRAPHS: LEILA FREDRICHSEN, USING POLAROID GO INSTANT CAMERA GENERATION 3, £79.99



Gloria Madengé **FASHION INTERN**

I gravitate towards pieces with a sense of individuality. This season, I'm wearing a Dries Van Noten ribbon-adorned blazer and carrying a DeMellier bag, with Mugler kitten heels for an impactful look. Add in a vintage Cartier Crash watch, and this outfit will see me through a day of exhibitions.



1 Watch, price on request, **CARTIER** **2** Replica By The Fireplace eau de toilette, £127, **MAISON MARGIELA** **3** Bag, £395, **DEMELLIER** **4** and **5** Skirt, £595, and jacket, £1,890, both **DRIES VAN NOTEN** **6** Mules, £890, **MUGLER**

Tamison O'Connor **FASHION FEATURES DIRECTOR**

When I have cocktail parties in the diary, I turn to low-maintenance outfits that deliver on maximum impact. Top of the list is this Prada dress, which I'll wear with a Herbert Levine statement shoe and jewellery from Copenhagen-based brand Ragbag. A spritz of Bibbi fragrance and swipe of Hermès lipsick will be the perfect finishing touches.





1 Lipstick, £71, **HERMÈS** **2** Dress, £3,800, **PRADA** **3** Slingbacks, £880, **HERBERT LEVINE** **4** The Other Room eau de parfum, £225, **BIBBI** **5** Bracelet, £341, **RAGBAG**

Grace Clarke **SHOPPING EDITOR**

There's no reason for autumnal dressing to feel dull, so I'm brightening my wardrobe with pops of colour and patterns: the bolder the better. I'll be picking up Loewe's striped Flamenco bag to add a touch of whimsy to my day-to-day look.





1 Bag, £2,200, **LOEWE** **2** Jeans, £700, **JW ANDERSON** **3** Mules, £620, **LE MONDE BERYL** **4** Jacket, £660, **AMI** **5** Earrings, £465, **COMPLETEDWORKS**



















STREET STYLE

Well RED

Let a scarlet jumper be the red thread running through your outfit rotations this autumn; the pop of colour promises to spark joy on even the dreariest of days. Wear yours slipped over a crisp white shirt, draped across your shoulders or tied nonchalantly around your waist. Seeing red never looked so good.

WORDS BY OLIVIA SANDFORD-WILSON

PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES, IMAXTREE


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LIFT *off*

USHER IN THE NEW FASHION SEASON WITH DAZZLING JEWELS, HERO PIECES AND COVETABLE ACCESSORIES

Symbole ombré white gold, diamond, garnet and turquoise earrings, **CHANEL HIGH JEWELLERY SIGNES & SYMBOLES COLLECTION**

PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY OF CHANEL



CHASING *rainbows*

Kaleidoscopic colour in retina-searing shades is a high-jewellery theme, with juicy gemstones at Dior, bright lacquer at Chanel and bold jewels at Chaumet. Sometimes too much isn't enough.

1 Symbole emblématique white and rose gold, diamond, sapphire, turquoise and carnelian brooch, **CHANEL HIGH JEWELLERY SIGNES & SYMBOLES COLLECTION** **2** Talisman Gabrielle white gold, diamond and carnelian ring, **CHANEL, AS BEFORE** **3** Verbena Bouquet gold, sapphire and diamond earrings, **CHAUMET A JOURNEY THROUGH NATURE HIGH JEWELLERY COLLECTION** **4** Cinnamon Bark rose gold, rubellite and diamond earrings, **CHAUMET, AS BEFORE** **5** Symbole étoile white gold, diamond, tanzanite, garnet and carnelian ring, **CHANEL, AS BEFORE** **6** Lucky Clovers gold, diamond, emerald, garnet, chrysoprase, cacholong and opal earrings, **DIOR JOAILLERIE DIORISSIMA HIGH JEWELLERY COLLECTION**



JEWELLERY

SHINING *examples*

EXQUISITELY CRAFTED FROM PRECIOUS MATERIALS AND RICHLY HUED GEMS, THE NEW FINE-JEWELLERY COLLECTIONS SPOTLIGHT TIMELESS DESIGN AND THE BEAUTY OF THE NATURAL WORLD

EDITED BY AVRIL MAIR

LA VIE *en* ROSE

Van Cleef & Arpels' signature lucky charm gets a new-season update: the four-leaf Alhambra, first launched by the maison back in 1968, is now reimagined in pretty pink enamel.

Gold and enamel bracelet, **VAN CLEEF & ARPELS ALHAMBRA COLLECTION**



TOUGH *stuff*

Transforming the industrial into modern luxury, Tiffany & Co's HardWear collection takes its inspiration from a 1960s bracelet found in the brand archives. These earrings perfectly blend strength and beauty.

Gold and diamond earrings, **TIFFANY & CO HARDWEAR COLLECTION**



GRAPHIC *design*

Strong, sculptural shapes and playful details: the less serious side of jewellery is epitomised by Jessica McCormack's blackened diamond bow and Chopard's Happy Diamonds pendant. Boucheron, Louis Vuitton, Repossi and Tasaki are also in on the game.

1 White gold, diamond and pearl necklace, **TASAKI DANGER COLLECTION 2** White gold and diamond necklace, **CHOPARD HAPPY DIAMONDS COLLECTION 3** Serti sur Vide white gold and diamond ring, **REPOSSI 4** Ball n Chain yellow and blackened white gold and diamond pendant, **JESSICA McCORMACK 5** White gold and diamond ring, **LOUIS VUITTON IDYLLE BLOSSOM COLLECTION 6** Gold and onyx ring, **BOUCHERON SERPENT BOHÈME COLLECTION**



RETURN *of* SILVER

No more mixed messages: silver tones are trending. Put the pedal to this metal with striking pieces from Hermès, Pandora, Roberto Coin, Fope and Giovanni Raspini.

1 White gold and diamond necklace, **PANDORA INFINITE COLLECTION** **2** White gold and diamond ring, **HERMÈS CLOU D'H COLLECTION** **3** White gold and diamond ring, **ROBERTO COIN LOVE IN VERONA COLLECTION** **4** Eka white gold and diamond earrings, **FOPE** **5** Daphne sterling silver earrings, **GIOVANNI RASPINI** **6** Eka Flex'it white gold and diamond necklace, **FOPE**

THIS PAGE: SHOPPING: HADYA TUOFIQ



Wild THING

A spectacular exercise in savoir-faire, this tiger ring gives new form to Cartier's big-cat obsession, bringing it to life with onyx, sapphires, aquamarines, quartz and diamonds. The new king of the jungle.

Faune & Flore de Cartier white gold, diamond, sapphire, aquamarine, onyx and quartz ring, **CARTIER HIGH JEWELLERY INTO THE WILD COLLECTION**



GARDEN *of* EDEN

Worn by everyone from Elizabeth Taylor to Zendaya, Serpenti – a symbol of Bulgari since 1948 – makes its sinuous, seductive return in yellow gold and pavé diamonds, using the maison's historic tubogas craftsmanship.

Gold and diamond bracelet,
BULGARI SERPENTI TUBOGAS COLLECTION



IN *full* BLOOM

The natural world at its most magical is captured in the latest high-jewellery collections – a bumper crop of floral designs blossoms across vibrant pieces from Dior, Chaumet and De Beers.

1 White gold and diamond earrings, **DE BEERS LOTUS COLLECTION 2** Fleur Aquatique white gold, diamond, tourmaline and lacquer ring, **DIOR JOAILLERIE DIORISSIMA HIGH JEWELLERY COLLECTION 3** Star Anise white gold, sapphire and diamond earrings, **CHAUMET A JOURNEY THROUGH NATURE HIGH JEWELLERY COLLECTION 4** Saffron Flower white and yellow gold, diamond and enamel ring, **CHAUMET, AS BEFORE 5** Sunset white and yellow gold, diamond, turquoise, pearl and lacquer earrings, **DIOR, AS BEFORE 6** Vanilla Flower white and yellow gold and diamond earrings, **CHAUMET, AS BEFORE**

PHOTOGRAPHY: GUTTER CREDIT GOES HERE



FLIGHTS *of* FANCY

Tiffany's Legendary Bird features hummingbirds hovering over orchids – and a 35-carat Madagascan sapphire. Graff's butterfly pins are crafted in diamonds and pearls, while Chaumet turns its signature bee into bejewelled brooches.

1 Legendary Bird: The Sapphire Edition platinum, gold, sapphire, opal, diamond and mother-of-pearl brooch, **TIFFANY & CO HIDDEN GARDEN COLLECTION 2, 3 & 4** Daphne white gold and diamond brooch, Sylvie white gold, diamond and pearl brooch, and Tamara white gold, diamond and emerald brooch, all **GRAFF HIGH JEWELLERY 5** Saffron Flower white gold, spinel, diamond and enamel ring, **CHAUMET A JOURNEY THROUGH NATURE HIGH JEWELLERY COLLECTION**



Gilding THE LILY

Minimalist and timeless, and sculpted from recycled sterling silver, Swarovski's new Classica collection takes inspiration from the calla lily. Who knew you could improve on nature?

Sterling silver bangle, **SWAROVSKI CLASSICA COLLECTION**

IN *with* THE *new*

A CHANGE OF SEASON IS THE PERFECT EXCUSE TO INDULGE IN A LITTLE SHOPPING. INTRODUCING THE HERO BUYS THAT YOU'LL REACH FOR AGAIN AND AGAIN – AND AGAIN

EDITED BY GRACE CLARKE



POP *art*

Neutrals? Never heard of them. This season's leading colour combinations are all about styling bold with bolder – especially when it comes to accessories

1 Sandals, £370, **JUDE** at **SELFRIDGES** **2** Dress, £1,200, **DIOTIMA** **3** Sunglasses, £340, **CELINE** **4** Bag, £1,695, **MARNI**
5 Earrings, £225, **COMPLETEDWORKS** **6** Skirt, £59, **JOHN LEWIS & PARTNERS** **7** Earrings, £255, **ISABEL MARANT** at **MYTHERESA**
8 Loafers, £249, **MARC CAIN** **9** Bag, £2,300, **LOUIS VUITTON** **10** Sunglasses, £330, **LOEWE**
11 Shirt, £1,350, **JIL SANDER** at **MYTHERESA**

WORDS: JULIA STORM. PHOTOGRAPHS: IMAXTREE



TRACK *star*

There's an art to elevating your activewear. A good starting point? Mixed-metal jewellery, textured trainers and oversized visor sunglasses. Fashion goals

1 Trainers, £485, **DOLCE & GABBANA** at **MYTHERESA** **2** Necklace, £198, **MISSOMA** at **JOHN LEWIS & PARTNERS** **3** Ring, price on request, **PANDORA** **4** Hoodie, £74.99, **NIKE** **5** Sunglasses, £495, **BALENCIAGA** at **SELFRIDGES** **6** Shirt, £185, **POLO RALPH LAUREN** at **SELFRIDGES** **7** Trainers, £85, **ADIDAS** **8** Jacket, £40, **TU** **9** Sunglasses, £460, **LOEWE** at **MYTHERESA** **10** Top, £1,470, **PRADA** at **MYTHERESA** **11** Bag, £2,600, **MIU MIU** at **MYTHERESA** **12** Socks, around £80, **ISABEL MARANT**

PHOTOGRAPHY: GUTTER CREDIT GOES HERE



FREE *spirit*

We can thank Chloé creative director Chemena Kamali for the triumphant return of boho. Take on the trend with earthy hues and maximalist textures, then seal the deal with beaded accessories from labels like Rabanne, Toteme and Julietta

1 Top, £45.99, **MANGO** **2** Flats, price on request, **DOLCE & GABBANA** **3** Jeans, £170, **GUESS** **4** Bag, £2,510, **LORO PIANA** at **MYTHERESA** **5** Jacket, £460, **MMK** **6** Sunglasses, £12, **NEXT** **7** Top, £38, **MARKS & SPENCER** **8** Belt, £115, **MARC CAIN** **9** Boots, £50, **TU** **10** Dress, £1,575, **ETRO** at **MYTHERESA** **11** Jacket, £120, **LEVI'S** **12** Sunglasses, £760, **JACQUES MARIE MAGE** **13** Mules, price on request, **CHLOÉ** **14** Trousers, £2,110, **LOUIS VUITTON**



SUITS *you*

The sleekest tailored ensembles pay close attention to the fine details. Make the look feel modern with a Western-inspired belt, pleated trousers and loafers with contrast stitching

1 Blazer, £1,860, **MICHAEL KORS COLLECTION** **2** Belt, £220, **MAX MARA** at **MYTHERESA** **3** Top, £45, **GUESS** **4** Jacket, £399, **MARC CAIN** **5** Trousers, £265, **MARINA RINALDI** **6** Heels, £675, **MALONE SOULIERS** **7** Jacket, £785, **HERNO** **8** Bag, £1,810, **JW ANDERSON** **9** Belt, price on request, **MANGO** **10** Trousers, £22.50, **TU** **11** Bag, £2,450, **FENDI** **12** Loafers, £790, **TOD'S**

PHOTOGRAPHS: IMAXTREE



BECAUSE *the night*

After dark is when the sartorial magic happens. Make an entrance in a silky dress and keep warm in a cosy, cocooning coat. Party-ready pieces are firmly at the forefront this season

1 Bag, £2,800, **DIOR** **2** Sunglasses, £540, **PHOEBE PHILO** at **MYTHERESA** **3** Skirt, £1,860, **CHLOÉ** **4** Hair clip, £340, **PRADA** at **SELFRIDGES** **5** Earrings, £750, **SWAROVSKI** **6** Top, around £270, **MAX MARA** at **MYTHERESA** **7** Necklace, £1,980, **HERMÈS** **8** Jacket, £12,400, **BRUNELLO CUCINELLI** **9** Belt, £285, **POLO RALPH LAUREN** **10** Bag, £4,240, **GUCCI** **11** Jacket, £2,240, **MICHAEL KORS COLLECTION** **12** Sunglasses, £410, **CELINE** **13** Bag, price on request, **CHANEL** **14** Earrings, £720, **GIVENCHY** at **MYTHERESA** **15** Dress, £880, **MARINA RINALDI**



ROMANTIC *heroine*

Boudoir-inspired lace and sensuous silhouettes were big on the AW26 catwalks. From slinky, body-skimming styles to grand statement moments, we're lusting after pieces with a passionate point of view

1 Bag, £2,700, **DOLCE & GABBANA** at **MYTHERESA** **2** Dress, around £850, **ISABEL MARANT** **3** Flats, £125, **MMK**
4 Skirt, £59, **OMNES** at **SELFRIDGES** **5** Earrings, £575, **ERDEM** **6** Top, £770, **VIVIENNE WESTWOOD** **7** Skirt, £1,560, **CHLOÉ** **8** Sunglasses, £490, **DIOR**
9 Jacket, £119.99, **MANGO** **10** Earrings, £425, **DRIES VAN NOTEN** at **MYTHERESA** **11** Bag, £2,820, **GUCCI** **12** Top, £22.99, **H&M**
13 Bracelet, £145, **GIOVANNI RASPINI** **14** Cardigan, £895, **MONCLER**

PHOTOGRAPHS: IMAXTREE



Blazer, around £385, trousers, around £215, and blazer (tied around waist), around £340. **OPPOSITE** Blazer, around £340, trousers, around £215, and shoes, around £170, all **BOSS**



NO *limits*

Boss's new office-ready collection offers clean silhouettes that look tailor-made and more modern than ever

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALEX WALTL
STYLED BY PIA LÉONIE KNOLL

For AW26, business is booming; the collections are filled with sultry tuxedos and tailored two-pieces that would look right at home on the streets of Canary Wharf. Boss's take offers a confident, contemporary spin on heritage tailoring, as classic silhouettes are given a modern finish and elevated with the softest cashmere and merino wool. Corporate just got a seriously cool upgrade.

MODEL: SERENA MARQUES (WILHELMINA)



Bag, £2,550, turtle-neck, £590, white shirt, £990, cream shirt, £1,700, and trousers, £1,100, all **CELINE**

THE PIECE

CHERRY *pick*

Celine's Michael Rider has made it official: red is fashion's accent colour of choice and the easiest gateway into the AW26 season. Whether it's a sock, trouser, blazer or, in this case, sleek handbag, you can't go wrong with a pop of crimson to energise and add a modern edge to a classic palette of black, white or animal print. Our top styling tip? Limit the scarlet tones to a single item for maximum cool.

PHOTOGRAPH BY GLADYS TAN STYLING BY HOLLY GORST



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Warmly,

KENYA HUNT Editor-in-Chief







KEEP READING TO LEARN MORE

PHOTOGRAPHS: SARAH ELLEN TRACHER. FABIEN MONTIQUE. WILL ALDERSLEY. RUTA ZEMAITYTE

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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



SEPTEMBER
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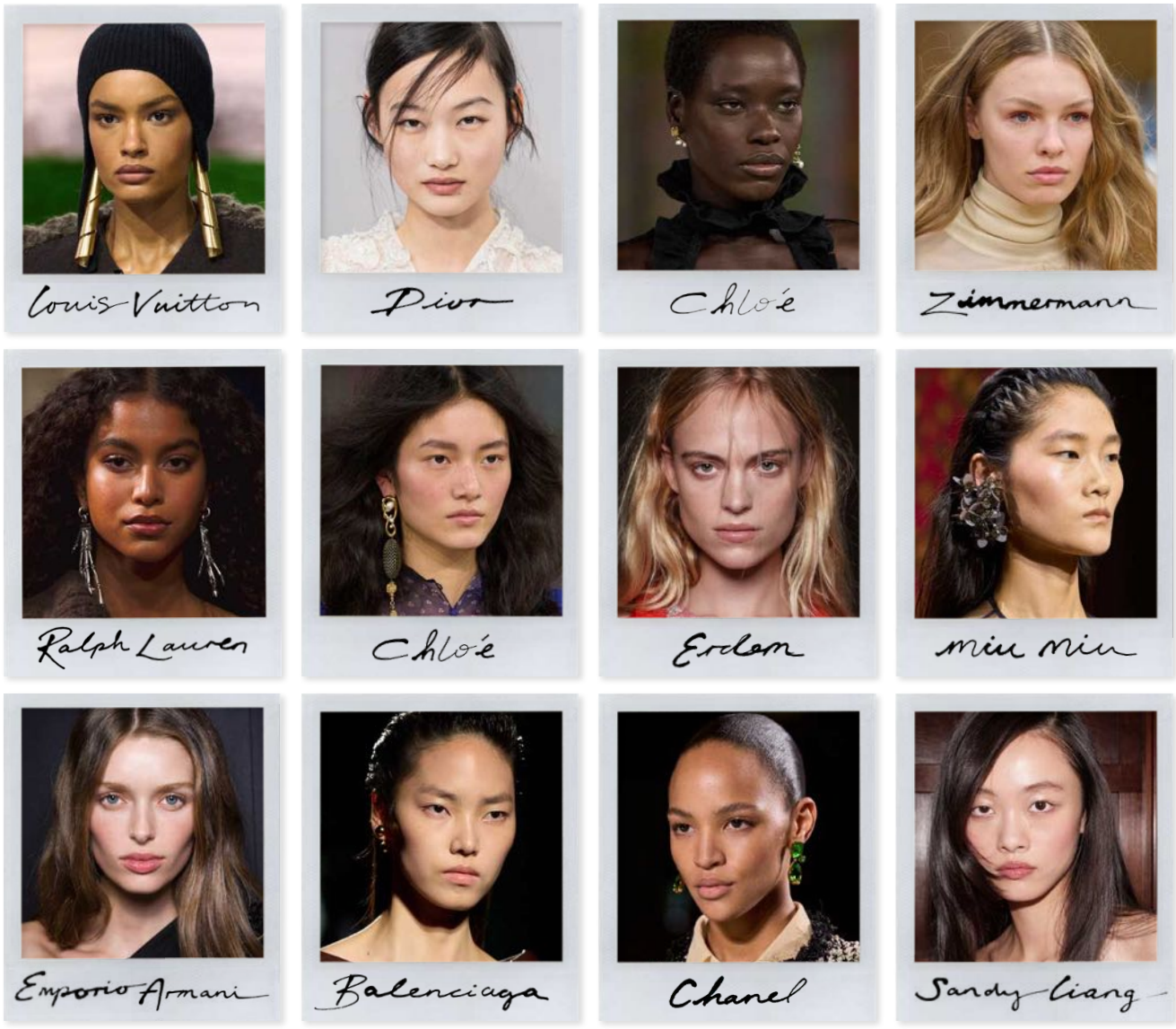
ROMA 1884



THE NEW BACIAMI ANCORA

ELLE

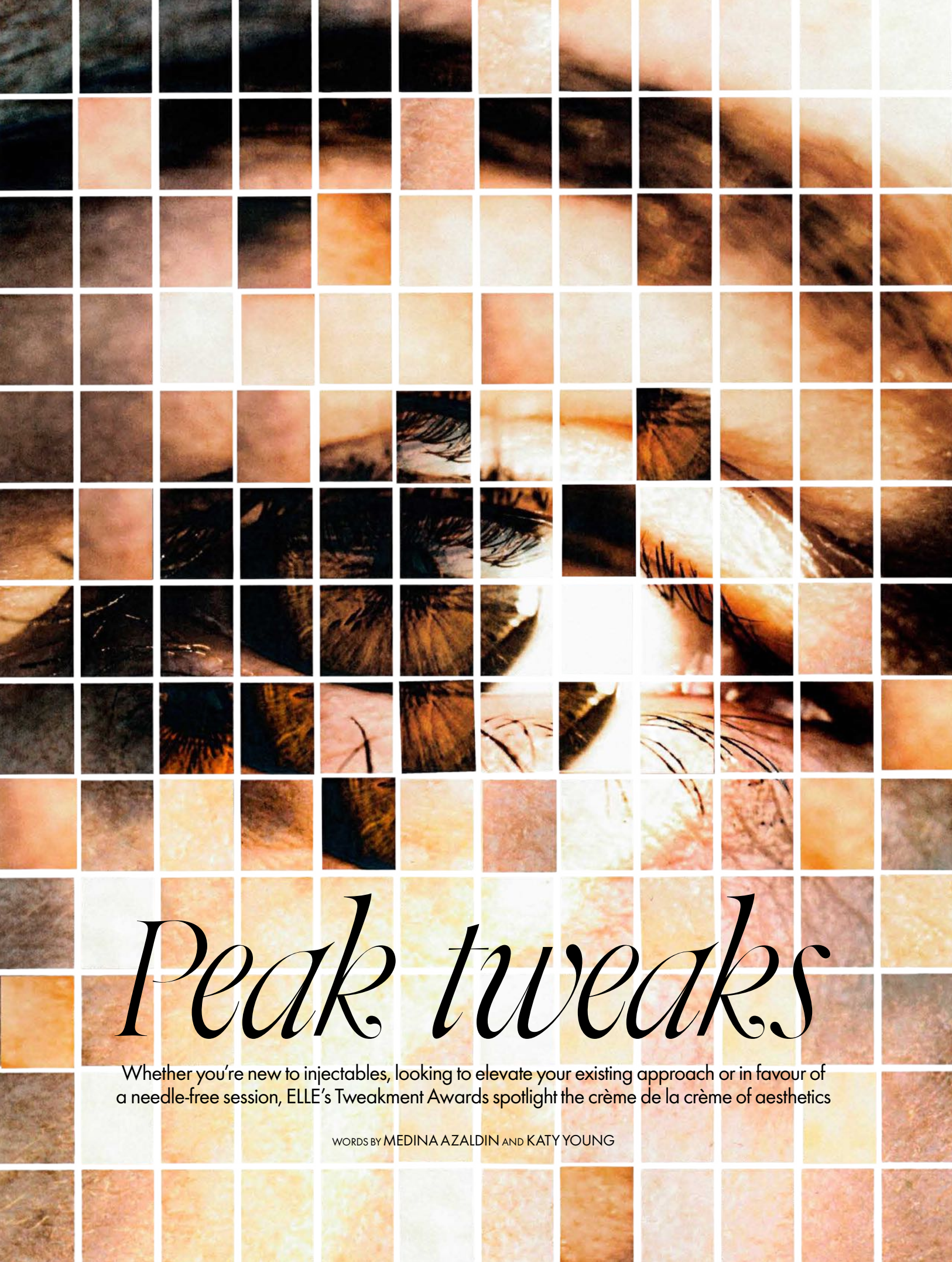
BEAUTY + WELLNESS



Skin DEEP

ACHIEVE A HEALTHY, GLOWING COMPLEXION WITH ELLE'S GUIDE TO THE BEST EXPERTS AND TREATMENTS. PLUS, THE MOST EFFECTIVE SERUMS FOR EVERY SKIN CONCERN

PHOTOGRAPHS: IMAXTREE



Peak tweaks

Whether you're new to injectables, looking to elevate your existing approach or in favour of a needle-free session, ELLE's Tweakment Awards spotlight the crème de la crème of aesthetics

WORDS BY MEDINA AZALDIN AND KATY YOUNG

AESTHETIC TREATMENTS HAVE NEVER been more mainstream. About 7.7 million Brits – that's 11% of the population – had a procedure in 2023, and in 2026, there's more choice than ever. From regenerative injectables and collagen stimulators to new energy-based devices and AI-powered skin analyses, there is truly something for anyone who wants it. But the big change afoot isn't about technology or formulas; it's about mindset.

The conversation has moved beyond correction to optimisation – a cultural change embraced by the industry. Conversations about plumping and tightening have given way to a desire for healthier, stronger, glowing skin. 'The flex used to be volume. Now it's radiance,' says Dr Jennifer Owens of Reborne Longevity. 'Patients aren't asking how to change their face; they're asking how to improve the quality of their skin at a cellular level. Polynucleotides, biostimulators, anything that works with the skin rather than just filling space – that's where the real interest is,' she adds. In 2024, there was a 25% rise in the demand for regenerative 'natural response' treatments, and a 27% rise in laser and light rejuvenation over the year, says Dr Liesel Holler, an aesthetic doctor.

The era of filled faces may be ending, too, as wrinkle-relaxing treatments such as botox fell by 17% and fillers declined 26%, according to a statement from the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons.

Now, with skin quality the benchmark of aesthetic success, many have wised up to supposed miracle marketing claims, TikTok trends and fleeting fads, and are asking more of the right questions. There is an increased demand for clear results and safety standards, and even clearer outcomes. 'Patients are becoming more informed, actively seeking practitioners who demonstrate the ethical practice, transparency and membership of recognised professional bodies such as the British College of Aesthetic Medicine [BCAM],' explains Sadie Van Sanden-Cooke, the organisation's COO.

Thankfully, regulation is no longer optional. Greater oversight has become essential – not only to protect patients, but also to raise standards. 'The industry is moving rapidly towards a healthcare-led model,' says Van Sanden-Cooke, 'with greater emphasis on licensing, governance, competency and accountability. Patient safety will define the future of aesthetics.'

So, if you are considering a treatment this year, let ELLE be your guide. Our edit of the best tweakments to try in 2026 is built on trust not trends, championing transparency, clinical expertise and meaningful innovation above all else.

ELLE TWEAKMENT AWARDS 2026

Brightening

THE INJECTABLE

RESTYLANE VITAL LIGHT

Kind on delicate complexions, this skin booster contains hyaluronic acid, and works to improve hydration and elasticity to deliver a fresh, well-rested look without changing your features.

TRY... Dr Ashwin Soni at The Soni Clinic (thesoniclinic.com)

THE LASER

LASEMD ULTRA

Using advanced fractional-laser technology, this treatment encourages collagen production, minimises pigmentation and early signs of fine lines and boosts luminosity.

TRY... Debbie Thomas at D Thomas Clinic (dthomas.com)

THE BEGINNER'S OPTION

BABYGLOW BY TEOXANE

Designed to deliver an instant hit of radiance, this injectable protocol uses Teosyal Redensity 1: a blend of hyaluronic acid, amino acids, antioxidants, minerals and vitamin B6. The precise eight-point expert injection technique targets key areas of the face to maximise light reflection and improve smoothness. The result? Glowing, fresh skin with minimal discomfort.

TRY... Dr Raul Cetto at Le Petit Saint (lepetitsaint.com)

THE NEEDLE-FREE

REXONAGE 3

This energy-based device uses Quantum Molecular Resonance technology to take care of inflamed skin and support cell regeneration for a calmer, brighter and plumper complexion.

TRY... Dr Karen Doherty at Dr KD (drkarendoherty.com)

THE FACIAL

BIOLOGIQUE RECHERCHE TREATMENT

This 90-minute bespoke session combines Biologique Recherche's hard-hitting formulas with star facialist Melanie Grant's hands-on work and the Remodelling Face Machine, which uses a combination of specialised electric currents to maximise your desired results.

TRY... Melanie Grant at Melanie Grant London Studio (melaniegrant.com) ▷

Skin texture

THE INJECTABLE

JULAINE

While botulinum toxins are known for their ability to quickly soften fine lines, the biostimulator Julaine takes a slower approach, designed to encourage collagen production for plumper, smoother skin.
TRY... Dr Brendan Khong at Dr Brendan Khong (drbrendankhong.com)

THE LASER

FOTONA SP DYNAMIS

This over-achieving, versatile device works on several concerns, from deep wrinkles to scarring, through two laser wavelengths.
TRY... Debbie Thomas at D Thomas Clinic (dthomasclinic.com)

THE EYE SOLUTION

EYE-RECONDITIONING PROTOCOL

Dr Anjali Mahto's multi-pronged approach, using regenerative polynucleotide injectables and energy-based devices such as UltraClear, promises to refine crow's feet and fine lines while firming up delicate under-eyes.
TRY... Dr Anjali Mahto at Self London (selflondon.com)

THE BEGINNER'S OPTION

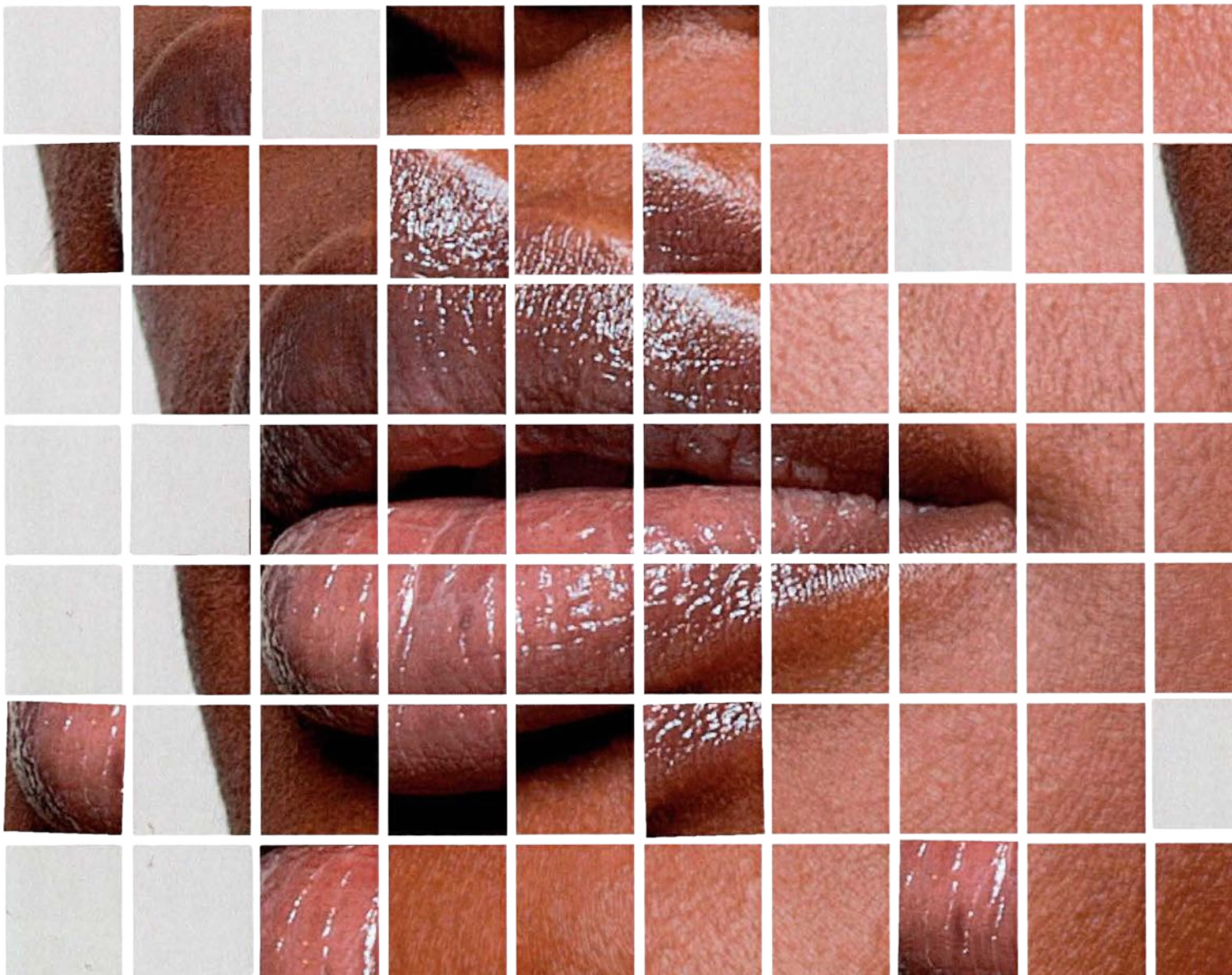
MICROTOX

Inspired by the Korean 'glass skin' trend, this treatment uses a more diluted form of the wrinkle-relaxer botulinum toxin. It's injected under the skin's top layer to gently smooth fine lines and refine the appearance of pores.
TRY... Dr Christine Hall at Taktouk Clinic (drchristinehall.com)

THE FACIAL

PDRN SALMON SPERM RESET FACIAL

For skin that looks brighter and feels more robust, this microneedling treatment combines collagen-boosting polydeoxyribonucleotide – yes, the DNA-based ingredient derived from salmon sperm – with a peptide peel to help improve cell turnover.
TRY... Bozena Czyz at Dr David Jack At Liberty (drdavidjack.com)



'Patients are asking how to improve the quality of their skin at a cellular level'

ELLE COLLECTIVE
SIGN UP ON PAGE 88 OR AT ELLECOLLECTIVE.CO.UK
SCAN HERE FOR A CHANCE TO EXPERIENCE FACIALS BY SARAH CHAPMAN AND SU-MAN



THE INSIDER AWARDS

The experts that Team ELLE have on speed dial for radiant skin

DR COSTAS PAPAGEORGIOU
I won't let a fashion month go by without seeing Dr Papageorgiou for light therapy and hydrofacial treatments that help me look more well-rested than I actually am.
Kenya Hunt, editor-in-chief

DR ASHWIN SONI
Want to appear fresh-faced and well-rested? Dr Soni's ultra-subtle approach is unmatched.
Katy Young, beauty director

MINA LEE
Intuitive with a holistic approach, Lee offers facials that leave you feeling better inside and out.
Medina Azaldin, beauty editor

DR CHRISTINE HALL
An expert in Korean innovations, Dr Hall is beloved by injectable newbies and experienced clients.
Amelia Bell, multiplatform beauty director

SARAH CHAPMAN
The one to call for a facial that gives instant glow and clarity.
Urmi Pandit, beauty assistant

DR KAREN DOHERTY
She always delivers – expect a luminous effect every time.
Roberta Schroeder, e-commerce senior editor

DEBBIE THOMAS
Thomas' light touch with lasers makes her the best in the biz.
Avril Mair, fashion, jewellery and watches director

DR ALEXIS GRANITE
This consultant dermatologist is well-versed in every skincare concern under the sun.
Katie Withington, senior beauty writer

Blemishes

THE INJECTABLE

PLINEST POLYNUCLEOTIDE
By helping to rebuild lost collagen, injectable biostimulators can gradually smooth uneven texture and improve skin quality – useful when it comes to treating pitted, post-acne scarring.
TRY... Dr Priya Verma at Art Clinic (art-clinic.co.uk)

THE LASER

AEROLASE NEO ELITE
Whether you're dealing with active spots, post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation or persistent redness, this device delivers ultra-short pulses of high-density energy into the skin's dermal layer. The pay-off? A more comfortable session that's suitable for all skin tones.
TRY... Dr Brendan Khong at Dr Brendan Khong (drbrendankhong.com)

THE BEGINNER'S OPTION

LDM TRIPLE ULTRASOUND
This Korean staple is a non-invasive, needle-free device that uses alternating ultrasound frequencies to minimise redness and rosacea, strengthen the skin barrier, boost collagen production and enhance your overall luminosity.
TRY... Dr Marwa Ali at Harrods Wellness Clinic (harrods.com)

THE NEEDLE-FREE

ADVATX AND LUMENIS STELLAR M22
A multi-device approach delivers comprehensive results: AdvaTx eases redness and post-blemish scarring, while the Lumenis Stellar M22 tackles pigmentation and active breakouts.
TRY... Debbie Thomas at D Thomas Clinic (dthomas.com)

THE FACIAL

KMP SIGNATURE FACIAL
Katharine Mackenzie Paterson has refined her technique over decades, resulting in extractions that don't scar and treatments that give skin a calm, lifted look. You'll leave armed with with practical, long-term care tips, too.
TRY... Katharine Mackenzie Paterson at KMP Skin London (kmpskin.com) ▷

Sculpting

THE INJECTABLE

SCULPTRA

This biostimulator works to encourage the production of type-1 collagen, which is responsible for the structural integrity of the skin, thus restoring bounce and elasticity while providing a naturally lifted effect to the face.

TRY... Dr Ashwin Soni at The Soni Clinic (thesoniclinic.com)

THE DEVICE

THERMAGE FLX

Meet the non-invasive, needle-free option that tightens slack skin on the face, neck and body. Radiofrequency technology acts deep beneath the surface to boost collagen production and redefine natural contours.

TRY... Dr Ophelia Veraitch at Dr Ophelia Clinic (drophelia.com)

THE BEGINNER'S OPTION

HARMONYCA

This fast-acting injectable combines hyaluronic acid with calcium hydroxyapatite to deliver immediate volume while supporting collagen production over time.

TRY... Dr Apul Parikh at Dr Apul Parikh Clinic (apulparikh.co.uk)

THE FILLER

ESTYME

This incredibly refined gel by Evolus belongs to a whole new generation of hyaluronic-acid filler. It creates a more natural effect, especially on the cheeks, lips and chin, while causing less post-injection inflammation. It requires less product, too. Best for those seeking to restore structure and shape to the face.

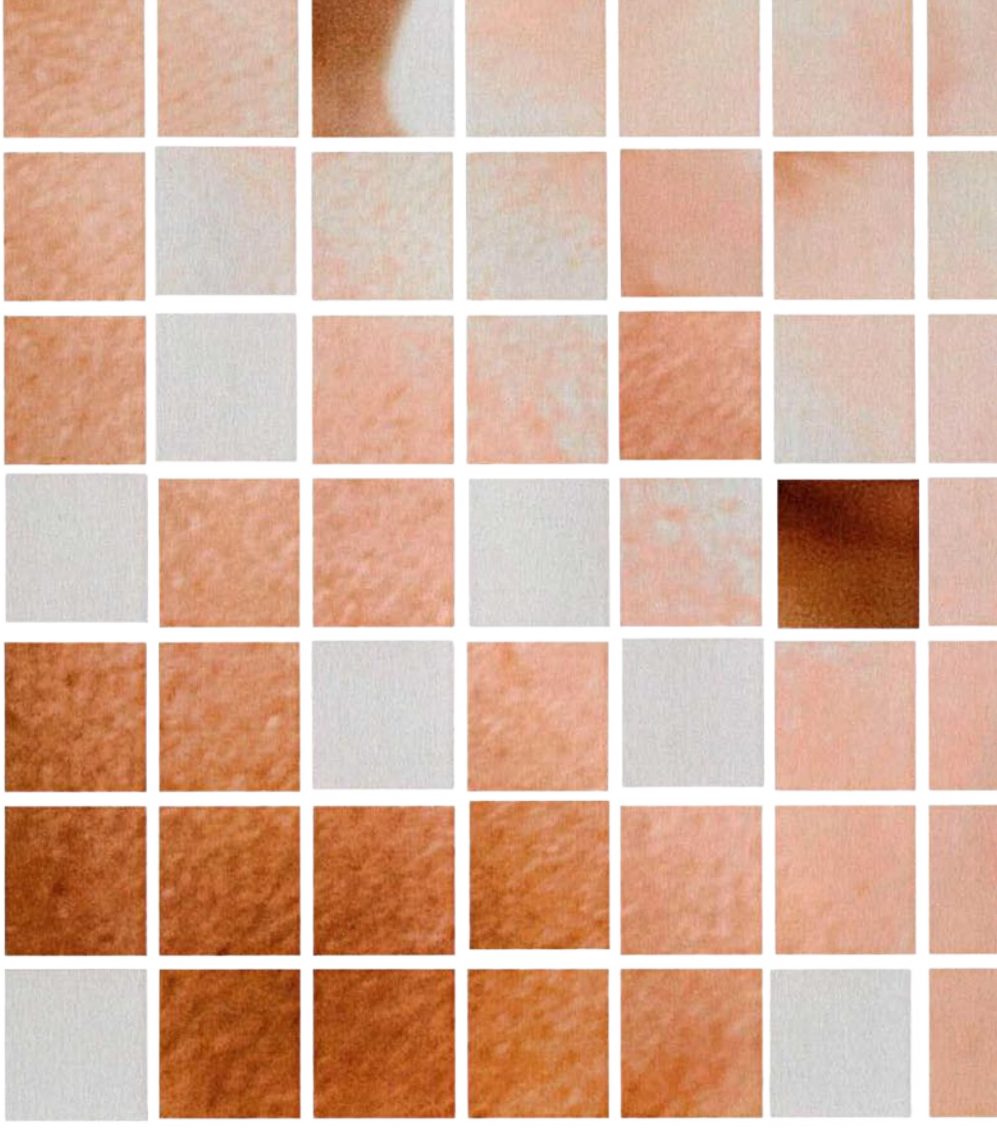
TRY... Dr Jennifer Owens at the Glow Clinic (theglowclinic.ie) and Reborne Longevity (rebornelongevity.com)

THE FACIAL

SKIN REBORN SCULPTING FACIAL

A hands-on massage protocol that works deep into your muscles to sculpt your cheekbones and create a contouring lift. You'll leave with a noticeable glow, too.

TRY... Su-Man at Sofitel Spa, Sofitel London St James (su-man.com)



'Anything that works with the skin rather than just filling space is where the real interest is'

IN THE KNOW

Three useful resources to have at your fingertips

THE APP: TWEAK

Expect unbiased information and transparency for safer aesthetic treatments.

tweak-app.com

THE CAMPAIGN: VET IT BEFORE YOU GET IT

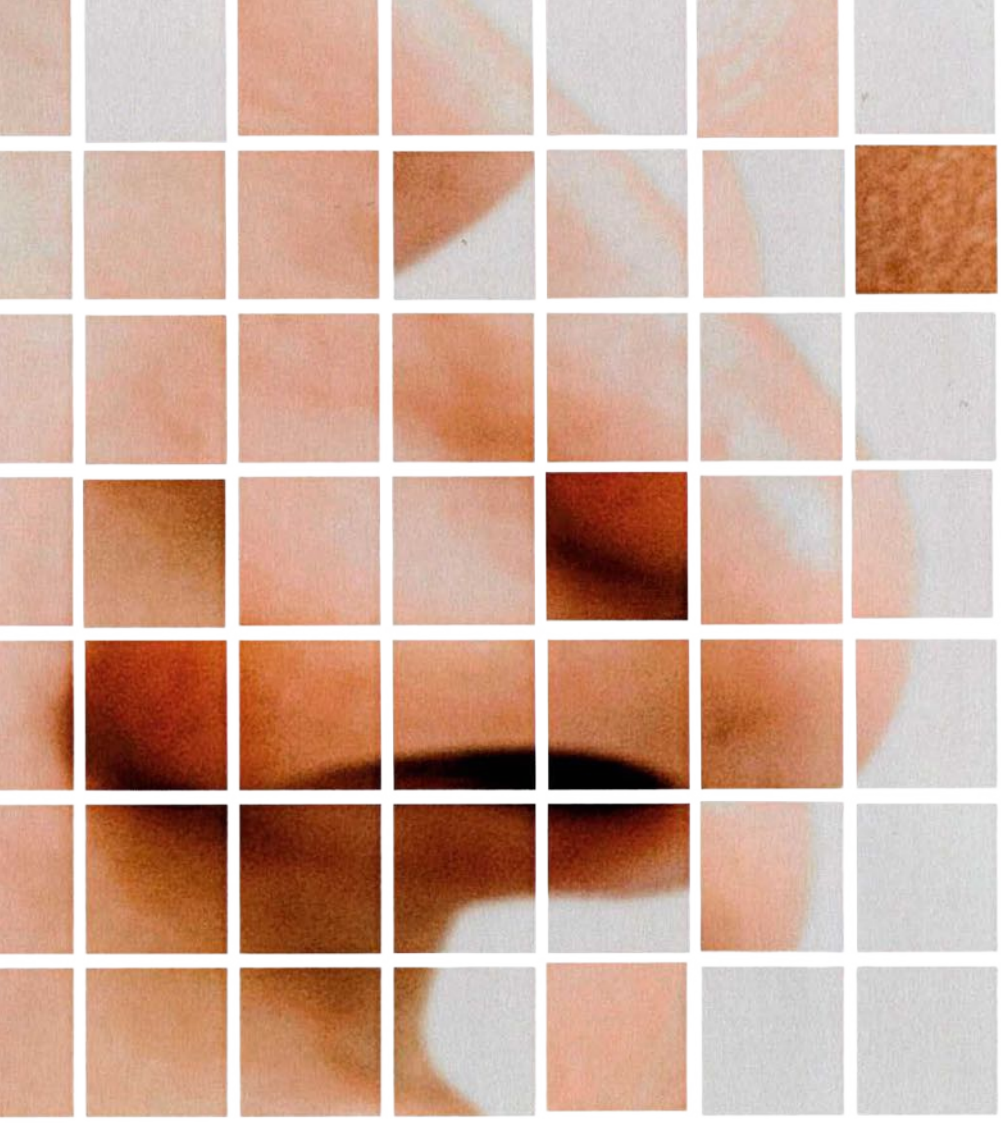
BCAM's questionnaire ensures you make informed decisions before you book an appointment.

bcam.ac.uk/patients/vet_it_before_you_get_it.aspx

THE SITE: NOLI

Features an AI-powered tool that delivers product suggestions tailored to your needs.

noli.com



BEYOND THE SKIN

A healthy scalp is the foundation of fuller, healthier hair. Here are three ways to encourage optimal growth

CALECIM ADVANCED HAIR SYSTEM
Using microneedling to deliver a powerful complex of more than 3,000 proteins, growth factors and exosomes, this six-week plan kick-starts follicles to tackle shedding.
TRY... Aevum Salon (aevumsalon.com) and Hannah Gaboardi Clinic (hannahgaboardi.com)

HYDRASCALP WITH KERAVIVE
This non-invasive treatment clarifies and infuses the scalp with a blend of peptides and nourishing vitamins for shinier, thicker hair over time. Available nationwide (hydrafacial.co.uk)

FOTONA HAIRESTART
Gentle thermal pulses from Fotona Smooth technology stimulate the scalp to support thicker, denser-looking hair.
TRY... Dr Tanja Phillips (tanjaphillips.com)

Into the future

What's next for tweakments? We gave the experts a crystal ball – and here are their predictions

PREVENTION, NOT CORRECTION

According to facialist Sarah Chapman, the demand for regenerative treatments that support natural repair processes and improve skin quality will continue to grow and extend to the rest of the body for a more holistic approach.

HOLISTIC AND TAILORED

Forget one-size-fits-all. When it comes to treatments, we'll be seeing an even more bespoke approach, says Dr Priya Verma. 'Plans will become increasingly personalised, combining advanced imaging, skin analysis and preventative strategies to support healthy ageing,' she says, noting a shift away from volume-focused aesthetics towards regenerative medicine, with a greater emphasis on collagen production and overall skin health and quality.

INSIDE OUT

Expect to see more spaces combining aesthetic work with longevity medicine. 'The most forward-thinking clinics will treat the whole person,' says Dr Jennifer Owens. 'Looking well and feeling well are finally being understood as two expressions of the same thing.'

PEPTIDE POWER

It's only a matter of time until the UK embraces the US phenomenon, says Dr Ashwin Soni. 'We'll see innovation in peptide injections for the face, which will boost collagen [production] and elastin stimulation,' he says. 'Currently, peptides are legal to possess and buy. However, in the UK, they are mostly only regulated for research purposes.'

MIND OVER MATTER

'As interest in cognitive performance, stress resilience and emotional wellbeing continues to grow, we will see more brain-focused services entering wellness and longevity spaces,' says Dan Honeywell, co-founder of Naya Health. 'However, appropriate clinical oversight and measurable outcomes will be essential to ensure this remains evidence-led.' □

PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES



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THING OF BEAUTY

THE NOSE *has to travel*

Forget postcards – Louis Vuitton wants you to experience the world through perfume. For its latest collection, we're heading east with a trio of fragrances inspired by Chinese culture. Created by Jacques Cavallier Belletrud, Vuitton's Master Perfumer, and his daughter Camille, Ink Mark blends earthy sandalwood with smoked incense and amber. To honour the tea ceremony, Tea Storm is a refreshing blend of magnolia, moving into a comforting honeyed tea. And Moon Tale plays tribute to Chinese opera, with soft peony and magnolia. No passport required.
Louis Vuitton, Les Parfums du Monde, £265 each for 100ml. KATY YOUNG


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Radar

WORDS BY KATIE WITHINGTON



1



2



3

The MOMENT

After seasons of 1990s minimalism, fashion's pendulum is swinging back to expressive maximalism. And who better to capture the zeitgeist than Dame Pat McGrath? Graphic, clashing tones at Balenciaga's AW26 show were proof that 1980s colour is back. Reminiscent of McGrath's iconic era as John Galliano's key make-up artist, with striking similarities to the Dior spring 2004 couture beauty moment, there were evocative sculptural looks that David Bowie and Grace Jones would have been proud of. Expect to see more jewel tones, foiled blushes and intense colour-blocking across the lids, cheeks and lips this winter.

1 LV Crayon Lip Pencil in Monogram Rouge, £43, **LOUIS VUITTON** **2** Lip Sculpt + Shade Contour Duo In Elson Extreme, £32, **PAT McGRATH LABS** **3** Eye Dare You! Beyond Multi-Finish Eyeshadow & Highlighter Palette, £90, **DOLCE & GABBANA**



1

2

ONE *to* WATCH

Our matcha obsession shows no signs of ending, and now skincare brands are bottling the trend, too. Fortunately, this one has substance. Packed with potent antioxidants, matcha helps defend skin against environmental aggressors while soothing inflammation for a calmer, more even tone. Consider it your skincare secret weapon as the weather shifts.

1 The Matcha Foam Cleanse, £42, **TATCHA** **2** Matcha Mist Elixir, £59, **BY TERRY**

PHOTOGRAPHS: ALAMY, DAN JACKSON, GETTY IMAGES, IMAXTREE

The TIP *book*

FULL FLUTTER

Embrace a dramatic effect this season – choose an inky formula and fluffy brush for maximum impact. Backstage tip: use tweezers to pinch lashes into clusters for a spiky effect. Notorious Mascara, £31, Nars.



BLINK AND YOU'LL MIST IT

A new era of luxury fragrance mists is here: lightweight, effortless and designed to see you through the new season without the extra bulk. Hair & Body Perfume Mist in Satin Cream, £20, Calvin Klein.





TAKE *note*

Think of these 'quiet luxury' scents as the versatile wardrobe staples of your fragrance collection, whether you're drawn to warm second-skin musks, the cool freshness of evening air or softly powdered florals. Guerlain's 2026 interpretation of its iconic L'Heure Bleue features a combination of long-lasting, fresh iris tincture and rich iris butter to capture the promising mood of a cloudless evening sky. For a comforting blanket of scent, opt for Max Mara's plush blend of woody florals and creamy vanilla. Seeking a statement? Destin de Balmain Parfum leaves the ultimate impression, combining creamy Australian sandalwood roots with rich cocoa butter.

1 Le Parfum, £144 for 100ml, **MAX MARA**
2 Destin de Balmain Parfum, £145 for 100ml, **BALMAIN BEAUTY** **3** L'Heure Bleue, £145 for 100ml, **GUERLAIN**



Nailed IT

Nostalgia is reaching its zenith this AW26 season, as demonstrated by Sinead Gorey's crackled, high-shine tips. For a chic nod to Y2K beauty, swap cat-eye flicks and sheer nude manicures for foiled silver nails and chrome-effect top coats. Equal parts playful and polished, the look brings a dose of early-2000s glamour to the here and now.



THE *pro* SPOTLIGHT

VICTORIA BECKHAM

There's no A-lister we'd sooner take beauty cues from than Victoria Beckham, and you'll struggle to find a chicer winter ritual than wearing your signature scent to sleep. As she releases her new fragrance Hotel Portofino, she tells us: 'I love that Marilyn Monroe quote when she's asked what she wears to bed, and replies, "Chanel No 5." I'm the same. Once I've had a bath, finished my skincare routine and applied my body lotion, the final step is a spritz of perfume. It's such a lovely finishing touch.'

Hotel Portofino extrait parfum, £303 for 50ml, **VICTORIA BECKHAM BEAUTY**



PHOTOGRAPHY: GUTTER CREDIT GOES HERE

SHEER PERFECTION

Gucci Westman continues to take us to new heights in make-up: a skincare-infused serum with the coverage and finish of a foundation. Suprême Bio-Complex Liquid Foundation, £65, Westman Atelier.



CLEAR AS DAY

Living Proof has done the impossible by making dry shampoo feel fresh and cool. It absorbs oil and scents lengths to revitalise and refresh hair. Perfect Hair Day Sheer Clean Dry Shampoo Mist, £27, Living Proof.



PUFF, PUFF, PASS

Ditch the make-up brush for a velvet puff and setting powder. It might sound Victorian, but it will leave you looking like you've had eight hours of sleep. Airbrush Flawless Blur Loose Powder, £40, Charlotte Tilbury.





ANALYSE THIS

BODY SCANS HAVE TAKEN OVER THE WELLNESS SCENE, WITH WAITING-LISTS REACHING HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS. *KATIE BEROHN* TAKES A CLOSER LOOK AT THE LATEST HEALTHCARE PHENOMENON

ONE DAY IN LONDON THIS SUMMER, I UNDRESSED AND CHANGED into a yellow robe. It was almost the same shade of lemon as everything else in the room: the walls, the curtains, the counters, the doors, the floor, the examination table, the body-scanning technology. I matched the environment that I would spend the next 20 minutes in while various machines collected data about me. High-resolution cameras captured 453 spots (including moles and freckles) on my body, an ECG recorded 10 seconds of my heart rate to analyse its rhythm, and a blood test measured 49 different biomarkers.

It sounds like an episode of *Black Mirror*, but this was my experience getting a Neko Health Scan. Neko is one of many body-scanning companies proliferating the wellness space. When it first opened a facility in London, it had a 300,000-person waiting-list. The company is expanding to the United States this September and received a barrage of interest. Prenuvo, Function Health (previously Ezra) and Reborne Longevity offer scans too, and they have become a new token of luxury wellness optimisation, like infrared saunas. Kim Kardashian called Prenuvo 'life-saving'. Yasmin Sewell, founder of perfume brand Vyrao, posted about Neko on Instagram, likening it to 'stepping into the future', saying the impeccable design 'felt like a Prada store mixed with some *Gattaca* vibes'.

If you listen to the hype, these tests seem to have nothing but upsides. Tools such as Neko and Prenuvo can give you a glimpse into what's happening inside your body, which may help you fine-tune your health decisions. And unlike CT scans (which Oprah Winfrey popularised after getting a full-body one done for her show in 2000), the new tools are radiation-free and often based on MRI technology. While Prenuvo and many others offer MRI services, Neko offers a scan with a different suite of tests that aim for a snapshot of your overall health. Its scan looks at your heart and circulatory system, does full-body skin mapping, identifies blood biomarkers, and assesses microcirculation and vascular health via a laser vibrometer device. Other tools are more commonplace, including a blood-pressure cuff. Because of its comprehensive analysis, Neko costs £299 in the UK, while a more detailed internal scan, like an MRI of the head and torso, can cost thousands. 'Usually, most people in their twenties and thirties don't have chronic diseases, but sometimes we can see the very early stages of something that, maybe, years later could cause a lot of pain, a high medical cost or a shortened lifespan,' says Andrew Lacy, founder and CEO of Prenuvo, which has a clinic on Great Portland Street in London.

'Seeing all my data presented like character attributes felt satisfying'

Proponents of these scans view them as an enhanced annual check-up where you see many specialists at once, allowing you to find out what needs work and how to keep track of any progress. 'When you come back the next year, we can see what's improving,' says Dr Mert Aral, the head of medical innovation at Neko. But while these scans could catch something life-threatening, the potential of additional investigations is one thing that makes doctors hesitant to broadly recommend scans, especially if there are no symptoms. 'These scans can pick up incidental findings – abnormalities that would never have caused any health problems, but once they're identified, they often lead to further scans, tests or even invasive procedures,' says Dr Sonia Khorana, a general practitioner. 'That can create unnecessary anxiety and, in some cases, expose people to risks from investigations they may never have needed.' She says the challenge is that, for the general healthy population, 'we don't yet have strong evidence that the benefits consistently outweigh the downsides. That's why, in the UK, screening programmes are only introduced when there is good evidence that they improve outcomes overall.' But it's not all negative. 'There are occasions when these scans detect significant conditions, such as certain cancers or aneurysms, at an earlier stage, when treatment may be more effective,' says Dr Khorana.

There's also the worry of the potential financial burden and anxiety that could come with a health scare. According to a study in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, South Korea, where scans are common, saw a 15-fold increase in thyroid-cancer diagnoses over the course of two decades, but virtually no impact on mortality. The cancers that were found are called papillary-thyroid tumours, which are common but almost never become evident or lead to any clinical danger. But if you know about an abnormality, you may still feel compelled to act on it.

This is particularly relevant in the case of false positives, which can be common (the rate varies based on the type of scan and the radiologist reading it). 'It's really important to weigh the potential benefits of early detection against the possibility of unnecessary testing and anxiety,' says Dr Khorana. When it comes to additional testing, Prenuvo's Lacy argues that it's a fair trade-off for the number of cancers found. 'For one in every two people who get a biopsy [after a Prenuvo scan], it ends up coming back positive for cancer, according to the clinical studies we've done,' he says. 'Biopsies after traditional breast-cancer screening for women [including mammograms] have a much lower positive rate – one in every five biopsies actually ends up as cancer. These tests are more accurate than people think.' MRIs may also be able to find some small breast lesions sometimes missed by mammograms. However, patients should still attend the NHS recommended screenings, such as mammograms and colonoscopies.

Like it or not, scan culture has pervaded the zeitgeist, especially among a certain set of celebrities, who serve as the face of wellness culture and likely can afford to pay for them (or may get them for free). Health influencers on TikTok have also started to go abroad for body scans, which can be a fraction of the price of those offered in the UK. People often share their experiences in countries including South Korea and Turkey. My Neko scan gave me insights into my heart health and mapped out every mark on my body to watch for skin cancer. Seeing all my data presented to me like character attributes felt oddly satisfying, like I could gamify my health. I'm scheduled to get a Prenuvo scan soon, which makes me anxious, since a part of me would rather not know if I have any aneurysms or lesions lurking under my skin. But, in the era of scan culture, I can't say no – another part of me finds it too enticing. □

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The editors on...

GETTING THE GLOW

Peels! Oils! Retinol! Everything we rely on for luminous skin straight from our beauty cupboard



Nellie Eden PREGNANCY SAFE

In pregnancy, I've simplified my skincare, but I've also become more intentional about the rituals that make me feel good. With many ingredients now off the table, I've been loving Medik8's PDRN serum. It's safe during pregnancy and helps support the skin's natural repair process, so my sensitive complexion stays hydrated, bouncy and calm without relying on stronger actives. On my body, Dreem Distillery's butter has been a saviour for my sciatica and I use an oil to keep the skin on my bump nourished. I also use my Mauli Rituals Kansa tool to de-puff and boost circulation on my face, neck, chest and calves. It's all about taking a few moments to care for myself.



1 Exo-PDRN Prismatic+ Serum, £79, **MEDIK8** **2** Dreem Melt Magnesium Butter, £36, **DREEM DISTILLERY** **3** Kansa Face Massage Dome, £64, **MAULI RITUALS** **4** Tonic Body Treatment Oil, £45, **CLARINS**





1 Super Retinol, £40, **BEAUTY PIE** **2** Redermic Anti-Ageing Concentrate Retinol Moisturiser, £38.50, **LA ROCHE-POSAY** **3** Retinoid 1, £70, **SKIN ROCKS** **4** Rénergie CRX Triple Serum Retinol, £120, **LANCÔME**



Katy Young RETINOL

If you want to build glow, rather than borrow it, you should probably start with retinol. While PDRN, peptides and exosomes are having a moment, retinol is still the gold standard in creating radiance. The skin-conditioning vitamin-A derivative boosts collagen and encourages cell turnover, speeding up the process of shedding dead skin cells so that shiny new ones can reveal themselves and come into the light – literally. Retinol has a bad rep for creating skin sensitivity, but modern encapsulated versions mean that redness is completely avoidable now. Start slowly at a low percentage or opt for a moisturiser format, and remember: consistency is key to building up your skin wattage.



Medina Azaldin MODERN SCRUBS

Those old enough to remember the gritty St Ives scrub of the 2000s may shy away from physical exfoliators for fear of further damaging their complexion, but I've got great news: new-gen formulas are gentle, effective and leave your skin feeling satisfyingly clean but not stripped. As someone who wears make-up, SPF50 and is prone to excess oil, a bi-weekly scrub is the only thing that makes my face feel fresh and radiant. Look for ultra-fine natural particles or enzymes in a creamy base instead of large granules that risk micro-tears in the skin. Dermalogica's Milkfoliant is designed for sensitive faces, while Dr Levy's resurfacing cleanser uses rice powder and nourishing fatty acids.



1 3Deep Cell Renewal Micro-Resurfacing Cleanser, £39, **DR LEVY** **2** Daily Milkfoliant, £65, **DERMALOGICA** **3** Gentle Buffing Gelee, £62, **OMOROVICZA** **4** The Renewal Oil Exfoliator, £115, **LA MER**



1 Water Sun Cream SPF50+, £18, **THANK YOU FARMER** **2** Milky Jelly Gentle Gel Face Cleanser, £24, **GLOSSIER** **3** Zero Pore Pad 2.0, £24, **MEDICUBE** **4** Green Plum Refreshing Toner, £16, **BEAUTY OF JOSEON**





Katie Withington EXFOLIATING ACIDS

As a make-up lover, I look for smoothing results that deliver a lasting glow without compromising my skin barrier. Enter the ultimate clarifying trio: lactic acid for brightening the skin's surface; glycolic acid for targeting fine lines and texture; and salicylic acid that aids the breakdown of sebum and blemishes. Beauty of Joseon's refreshing toner has become a daily favourite, offering a gentle solution to dead-skin build-up and congestion. On the oilier days (due to fluctuating hormones) or when stubborn texture sets in, I reach for Medicube's salicylic-acid pads to target enlarged pores and keep shine at bay. The rest of my routine is simple, soothing and sun-safe: think creamy cleansers, gel moisturisers and high-factor SPF. □

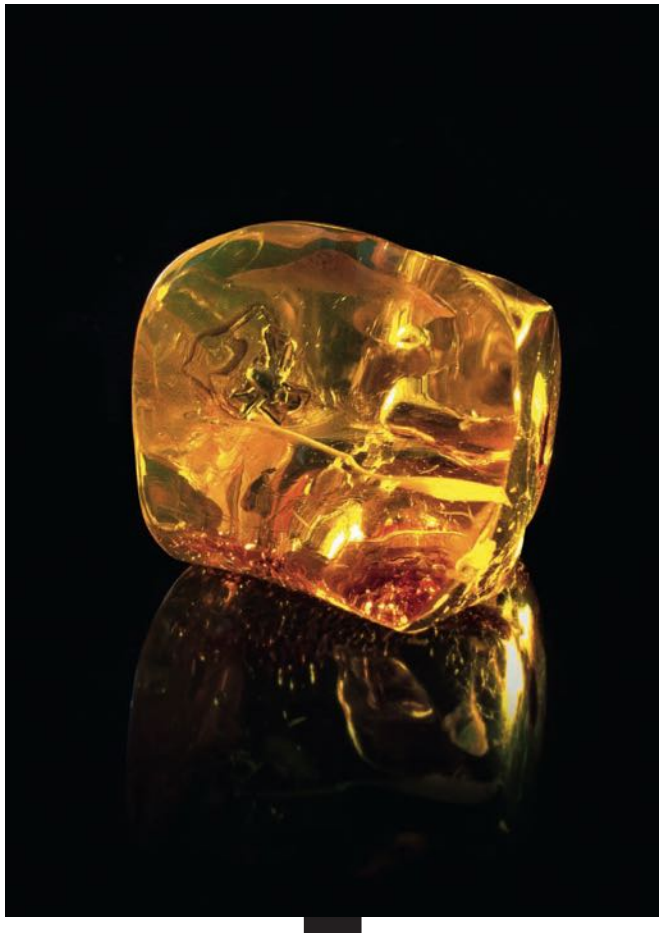
PHOTOGRAPH: JACK GRANGE

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1 BEST FOR EYES





2 BEST FOR REDNESS

3 BEST FOR REPAIR



4 BEST FOR ELASTICITY



5 BEST FOR FIRMING



6 BEST FOR FINE LINES



7 BEST FOR GLOW



8 BEST FOR SMOOTHING



9 BEST FOR SENSITIVE SKIN



1 Lissant Line-Smoothing Eye Serum, £260, **RĒVIVE 2** Repair & Renew Serum, £26.50, **CETAPHIL 3** Exo-PDRN Prismatic+, £79, **MEDIK8 4** Absolue Longevity MD Intercept The Serum, £160, **LANCÔME 5** Futurecode Booster, £89, **DERMALOGICA 6** AGE Interrupter Ultra Serum, £140, **SKINCEUTICALS 7** C-Radical Defense Antioxidant Serum, £165, **ALASTIN 8** The Genaissance de la Mer Serum Essence, £690, **LA MER 9** Centella Red Serum, £30, **ERBORIAN 10** Supernatural Blemish Face Serum, £68, **EMMA LEWISHAM**



10 BEST FOR BLEMISHES

10 OF THE BEST *serums*

THESE FORMULAS HARNESS INNOVATIVE INGREDIENTS FOR HYDRATION, CLARITY AND RADIANCE

EDIT BY KATIE WITHINGTON


BALEN


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IT'S ELLE STYLE AWARDS TIME, OUR FAVOURITE POINT IN THE YEAR, WHEN WE CELEBRATE DEFINING DESIGNERS, MUSICIANS, ACTORS AND MORE. OUR 2026 WINNERS HAVE GIVEN STANDOUT PERFORMANCES THAT HAVE SET THE WORLD ALIGHT, FROM SINGER TYLA AND HER METEORIC RISE IN MUSIC TO SIMONE ASHLEY FOR HER TURN IN *THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA 2* AND SARAH PIDGEON'S EMMY-WORTHY PORTRAYAL OF CAROLYN BESSETTE KENNEDY IN *LOVE STORY*. TODAY'S MUSES ARE DRIVING CULTURE FORWARD ON THEIR OWN TERMS – AND IN THE NEW-SEASON LOOKS WE LOVE



PHOTOGRAPH: JESSICA MADAVO. STYLING: FERANMI ESO



Shirt, £1,180, and heels, £1,010, both, **MIU MIU**. Tights, stylist's own

WRITTEN IN THE STARS

WITH A SECOND ALBUM OUT AND A GLOBAL TOUR ON THE HORIZON, TYLA IS ON COURSE FOR WORLD DOMINATION. SHE TELLS *TAMISON O'CONNOR* HOW SHE MANIFESTED HER OWN DESTINY

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JESSICA MADAVO STYLING BY FERANMI ESO





OPPOSITE Dress, £3,300, and heels, £925, both **MIU MIU**. Nose stud and anklet (worn throughout), Tyla's own. Socks, stylist's own



Sheer dress, £2,650, red dress, £2,750, and pink dress (worn underneath), £1,560, all **MIU MIU**

CONSIDERING

she has just lost her passport, Tyla is sanguinity personified. Never mind that the international pop star is embarking on the promotional tour for her new album *A*Pop,* taking flights around the world on a near-daily basis. The singer says she has a miraculous ability to manifest her own good fortune. 'You know, my mother always used to tell me, "Tyla, why do you always get what you want?"' she says, laughing. 'I'm telling you, once you move through life as if things are gonna go your way, they do. Honestly.'

She has a particularly hectic travel schedule at the moment, from India to Japan to Mexico and then on to California. Yesterday, it was Berlin to London, via a connection somewhere in Europe – at this point, who can keep up?. But when Tyla landed in the UK, her visa-laden passport – the one thing she really can't afford to lose – was nowhere to be found.

'I'm not stressing, but my team? They're going crazy,' she tells me animatedly as she sips from a can of Sprite. We're sitting in her dressing room after her ELLE cover shoot: her tiny 5'3" frame is swathed in an oversized fluffy white robe, a glittery sheen on her décolletage just visible above the lapels, and she has beige flurry slippers on her feet. She tells me how she charmed her way through border control (yes, I know that never happens); and that she had just received a phone call from the airport with good news: they located her passport and it was headed her way (I know, that never happens either).

Tyla, whose full name is Tyla Laura Seethal, smiles. 'I'm like, "You see? Magic!"'

As we're talking, I'm struck by her self-assured confidence. There's no ego involved; not a hint of narcissism. It's more of a 'you get back what you give' kind of drive. 'I just feel like you can choose whether to think negatively or positively,' she says. 'So why not just think positively?'

It's this outlook that helped catapult her to global stardom, the segue from rising star in her native Johannesburg to international chart-topper unfolding almost overnight. At 24, she already has two Grammys, along with a Victoria's Secret Fashion Show, three Met Galas and a Fifa World Cup performance under her belt. She even has her own Bratz doll. She's also credited as being South Africa's first major pop export, single-handedly bringing her country's signature rhythmic amapiano sound into the mainstream.

'Every single song she drops is a banger… Some people just have it. She's effortless and real in her coolness, because it feels like she's not trying – she's just being herself,' says Zara Larsson, who teamed up with Tyla on the hit single 'She Did It Again'. 'I believe an artist is someone who creates a vibe, a sound or a world. Why not all three? She does that for me. She's making a lane in pop that no one's in at the moment, and that's exciting.'

Those addictive songs have spawned countless lip-sync and dance challenges on TikTok, and amped up anticipation for Tyla's sophomore project. 'The direction of the album was really just to make whatever I wanted to make, and to be so limitless in my idea of what pop sounds like,' she explains. 'My dream of being a pop star was a very big dream. So now that my whole life has changed, I really wanted to take this opportunity to be the pop star that little Tyla wanted to be. And do it exactly how she wants to.' For Tyla, South African pop music is, simply, pop music.

Growing up in Johannesburg, Tyla's house was always filled with music, her father's records playing on repeat. His playlists, which ranged from African musicians to American R&B, hip-hop and house, offered Tyla a comprehensive music education. It meant her listening taste was equally diverse: 'Voices' by Disclosure, 'The Worst' by Jhené Aiko, Aaliyah's 'At Your Best (You Are Love)' and Stevie Wonder's 'Golden Lady' are just a few of the songs she reels off. 'I wasn't the type to obsess over one artist,' she says. 'But songs! I would obsess over specific tracks. And I'd be like, "I wish I made that."'

She was also hypnotised by the glamour of the entertainment world. Her grandmother was a singer, and regaled a young Tyla with stories of her early days performing, when she'd enter competitions to win cigarettes. 'I found it such an exciting, movie-type life. It was not realistic. And that's also what made me fall in love with it, because I just love the idea of having a life and doing whatever you want in it, and making it your own fairy tale.'

And so young Tyla made it her mission to become a pop star, uploading covers of her favourite hits to social media. 'That was what I wanted to do. As I got older, my parents probably thought I was going to grow out of it. But I think my love for it and my intuition that this path is for me became stronger.' A DM from her first manager Garth von Glehn was soon followed by a music video and record deal, which got her the attention of the South African music industry. 'We were just hustlers – we would make things happen,' she says.

Then, a couple of years later in 2023, she released 'Water', the song that changed everything. With its infectious, smooth-rolling beat, catchy lyrics and music video filled with Noughties nostalgia and sensual choreography, it had the perfect ingredients for a summer anthem. The song became a viral sensation and a hit TikTok dance challenge; everyone from Jennifer Hudson to Teyana Taylor to Radio 1's Remi Burgz was doing the routine.

British record producer and songwriter Sammy SoSo worked with Tyla on both her albums. 'There was a star quality about her. I knew one day [she] would be massive – that drew me in,' he says. ▷

Jacket, £4,050, and
trousers, £3,950,
both **MIU MIU**





Jacket, £4,500,
and heels, £925,
both **MIU MIU**

‘ONCE YOU MOVE THROUGH LIFE AS IF THINGS ARE GONNA GO YOUR WAY, THEY DO’

‘She’s an incredibly hard worker and she’s exceptionally talented. She is also genuinely lovely to be around and approaches everything with a positive attitude. That combination really helped her stand out.’

You might say Tyla’s coming of age in the era of TikTok couldn’t have been better timed. The social-media app that has rewired the way teens and young adults engage with music and pop culture is surely the perfect platform for an aspiring musician and talented dancer with catchy beats and quotable song lyrics to find a following. While many of her famous peers have expressed reservations about social media, Tyla feels at home on the platforms; it was her prolific TikToks that made her famous, after all.

She describes methodically creating her videos with the discipline of an athlete in training: ‘Eeeeeveryday,’ she drawls. ‘I didn’t have a phone at the time, so I would borrow my father’s, and me and my sister would have to take shifts.’ Even now, her TikTok page remains delightfully unpolished. Slick behind-the-scenes clips sit alongside rough-and-ready videos of Tyla and her friends doing dance routines in her bedroom. A recent fan comment on a video reads: ‘I love how Tyla posts like she’s not famous.’ ‘I honestly do it for myself,’ Tyla explains. ‘A lot of people try to be cool about it, but it’s fun, you know? Why not have a little fun!’

Nevertheless, she’s also having to navigate growing up in the public eye, and weathering the many waves of backlash that can come with that. She has become her generation’s global ambassador for South African music and culture and one of the most prominent pop stars to emerge from the entire content. ‘It is weird. I’m like, aaaawk-waaard,’ she drawls, laughing again. ‘It’s an awkward phase going from teenager to young adult. As a woman you go through so many changes – mentally, physically,’ she says. ‘A lot of women get to do that in their own space, in their own comfort zone. So the fact that I’m doing that in front of the world… At first, I felt like I couldn’t make a mistake.’

That can be confronting, particularly when a misstep or misunderstanding can take on a life of its own. Tyla experienced this a few years ago, as controversy swirled after the star proudly described herself in a TikTok video as ‘Coloured’ – a term commonly used by mixed-race South African people to identify themselves, but one that can be seen as highly offensive elsewhere in the world, particularly in Britain and the US, where it’s closely associated with a deeply racist history. ‘I don’t expect to be identified as Coloured outside of Southa by anyone not comfortable doing so, because I understand the weight of that word outside of SA,’ she clarified on social media at the time. ‘But to close this conversation, I’m both Coloured in South Africa and a Black woman.’

On a broader scale, the fall-out highlighted the challenges of navigating local nuances around race, racism and identity in a globalised world. On a personal level, it was a painful moment for Tyla. ‘At first, it was very confusing for me, just as a human. I felt like, “Wow, I never thought who I was, was wrong”,’ she says. ‘I knew that I was just telling my truth. I wasn’t trying to do anything crazy.’ Now, living in the US, she understands why the video caused such an outrage and has come to terms with what happened. ‘After I spent a lot of time thinking about it and looking back at it, I was like, “There is no right answer for that question”,’ she says. ‘It just is bigger than me, you know?’

The incident hasn’t dampened her national pride, though. If anything, it has only intensified it. Home, for her, is a sacred place. In fact, her most memorable pinch-me concert moment wasn’t Coachella, or the Fifa World Cup opening ceremony. It’s always when she’s on stage in South Africa. ‘I perform in Cape Town and Joburg in an arena and I’m like, “Woah! I’m a South African pop star – wow!”’ she says in a sing-song manner. ‘People come out and support me, and support from home always feels different.’

Tyla’s inner circle is made up of the best friends she grew up with, along with her four siblings. One of her sisters, Sydney, lives with her in New York, and her brother Tyrese travels with her whenever he can. She also has a ‘close friend’ whom she refers to with a coy smile, refusing to elaborate beyond admitting that she’s known them ‘for a while’ and that they’ve watched life change together.

For a pop star who’s constantly going viral on social media, Tyla is a pretty guarded person: ‘I’ve always been the type to keep things private, because I think it’s cute to have this relationship with yourself,’ she says. She also values her independence. ‘I think you take for granted the importance of doing things for yourself,’ she says. ‘And how good it feels to do things for yourself. There have been so many times that I’ve run away from [security guards]. I’m like, “Leave me alone!”’ Often, she tells me, she puts on a disguise and goes out and about in New York incognito, walking for hours, travelling on the subway, taking a trip on the ferry. (I’m unsurprised when she declines to provide any more details of what this disguise involves. ‘Then you’re gonna tell,’ she teases. ‘Right now, I could be anyone.’)

‘When you’re a celebrity, you sometimes get lost in it. You think that that’s the real world, but it’s not,’ she says. ‘Because I was able to watch the industry from afar – very far, from the bottom of Africa – I saw it as this untouchable realm. Now that I’m in it, I know the difference. I know what’s real and I know what’s not. And I think that’s why I’m able to be more playful about it now and not take it as seriously. Because it isn’t that serious. There are way more serious things happening in the world, you know.’

Her debut world tour will kick off in October, but before she gets on the road, she plans to visit Hawaii for a brief summer getaway. ‘It’s been my dream place to go to ever since I was young, and the *A*Pop* era is me satisfying my inner child. I’m doing everything Little Tyla wanted to do.’ □



Coat, £1,560,
MIU MIU



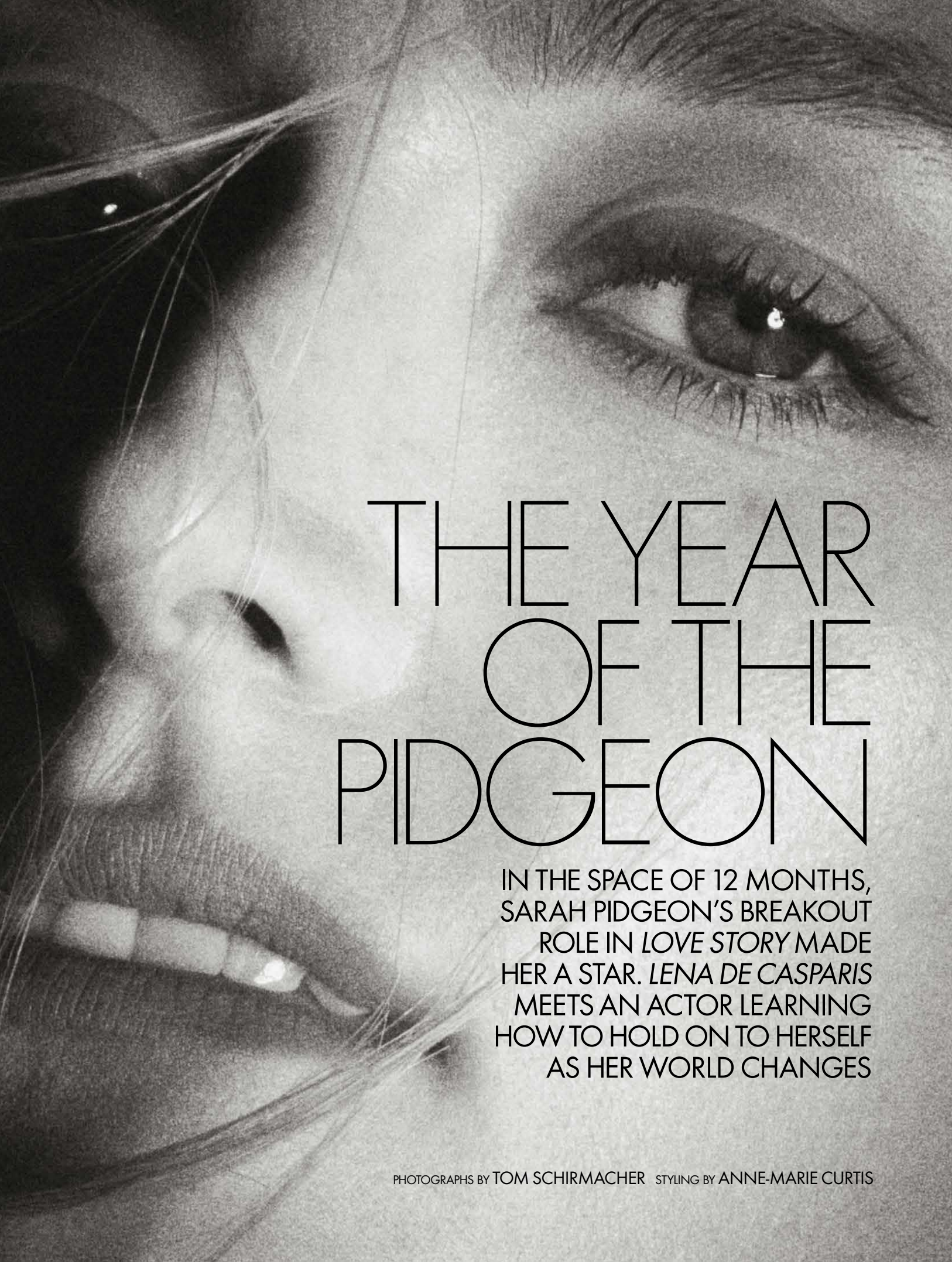
Jacket, £4,500,
MIU MIU

Skirt (worn as dress), £1,180, and heels, £925, both **MIU MIU**. **HAIR:** Virginie Moreira at MA+ Group. **MAKE-UP:** Josh Bart. **NAILS:** Nikki Panic at One Represents. **SET DESIGN:** Anna Grabowska. **STYLIST'S ASSISTANTS:** Nina Gahrén Williamson and Thulile Mazosiwe





Dress and top (worn underneath), both price on request, **CHANEL**. White gold earrings, £3,780, matching bracelet and white gold and diamond necklace, both price on request, all **COCO CRUSH BY CHANEL FINE JEWELLERY**



THE YEAR OF THE PIDGEON

IN THE SPACE OF 12 MONTHS, SARAH PIDGEON'S BREAKOUT ROLE IN *LOVE STORY* MADE HER A STAR. *LENA DE CASPARIS* MEETS AN ACTOR LEARNING HOW TO HOLD ON TO HERSELF AS HER WORLD CHANGES

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TOM SCHIRMACHER STYLING BY ANNE-MARIE CURTIS



Dress, price on request, **CHANEL.** Beige gold and diamond ear cuff, price on request, **COCO CRUSH BY CHANEL FINE JEWELLERY**

SARAH

Pidgeon is having the sort of week that would make a lesser person unbearable. It begins in Copenhagen, on a mini-break with the sister she adores. By Tuesday, she is in Paris, celebrating her 30th birthday from the front row of Chanel's couture show at the Grand Palais. On Thursday, she learns she has received an Emmy nomination for playing Carolyn Bessette-Kennedy in *Love Story*. At the weekend, she is in London shooting her first ELLE cover. Wimbledon final tickets are involved. There are macarons and champagne at every turn, and even some memorable whipped butter.

Yet each time the conversation threatens to drift into Hollywood hyperbole, Pidgeon pulls it firmly back towards the ordinary. Friends who are tired of seeing her face online. Her devotion to her family. The tyranny of endless hair appointments. 'My life, compared with all previous years, has been very abnormal this year,' she says, laughing at the absurdity of it. 'I've been travelling to different places. I've been working a lot. I'm attending couture shows, doing photoshoots and going on late-night television. It's so different from anything I've experienced. It's been a big change.'

In the six months since *Love Story* aired, Pidgeon's life has turned on its axis. Then, she was an actor with a respected body of work, steadily building a career. Today, she is Emmy-nominated, an It girl sought after by fashion brands and recognised by strangers while cycling through Copenhagen. 'I was trying to make sure I didn't crash as I said hi,' she says. The first indication that things were changing was when her friends' algorithms became saturated with her face. 'They were like, "Jesus, I'm just seeing the same picture of you over and over again." I told them, "I'm sorry, I'm bored of it too."'

It is shortly after 8am when we meet on Parliament Hill. London is already wide awake. Dogs pull their owners along dusty paths; swimmers emerge from the lido, towels thrown around their shoulders; everyone appears to have an iced coffee and an opinion about the heatwave. Pidgeon likes the strange solidarity the heat creates. This spirit of camaraderie reminds her of home, New York City, where, this summer, the Knicks' long-awaited championship win has made the metropolis feel as though it belonged to everyone.

Dressed in a lace Doên blouse, Phoebe Philo silk trousers, Margiela Tabi shoes and large black sunglasses, Pidgeon looks as if she could have wandered out of an expensive Pilates class in Hampstead. The comparison with Bessette-Kennedy, however lazy, is difficult to avoid.

When the audition for *Love Story* first arrived, Pidgeon knew little more than the basics about Bessette-Kennedy. That she'd worked at Calvin Klein. That she'd married John F Kennedy Jr. And, of course, the looks: slip dresses, perfectly fitting Levi's, tortoiseshell headband, capacious LL Bean totes.

What interested her in Ryan Murphy's series was its desire to look beyond the familiar construction of Bessette-Kennedy as a difficult woman. 'There was this idea that she wasn't the ice queen the tabloids had made her out to be,' she says. 'She was ambitious. I don't know how someone rises through Calvin Klein that quickly without ambition. But she also had a generosity of spirit. She made people feel like they were the only person in the room.'

Playing Bessette-Kennedy arrived at an unusually resonant moment. Pidgeon was 29 during filming: almost exactly the age at which Carolyn was establishing herself in New York. 'I was playing her at the same time in my life,' she says. 'Being a twentysomething in NYC, a young professional, a young woman falling in love, finding her footing in a city and entering the next strata of her life.'

What stayed with her was Bessette-Kennedy's self-possession. 'Carolyn really knew who she was. She backed herself. Being able to embody those qualities was a real gift, because they're qualities I want to have more of. In advocating for her, I think I became at ease with the discomfort of advocating for myself.'

The show became a phenomenon, amassing more than 40 million viewing hours to become FX's most watched limited series on Hulu/Disney+ to date. It earnt six Emmy nominations and catapulted Pidgeon into the mainstream. 'Had I understood what the show would become while we were filming it, I would have been crippled with anxiety,' she admits. 'When I heard that the first cuts were coming together, I broke out in hives. It suddenly became a reality that people were going to see it'.

Pidgeon quickly learnt to stop Googling herself. 'Curiosity has killed this cat before,' she says, smiling. 'If you believe the good things people say online, you have to believe the bad things too. There's probably a conversation happening about me somewhere that I don't need to listen to.'

As we sit on a bench, two red Labradors begin to stalk a plump grey pigeon. 'They're so big here,' she says, impressed by her namesake. Stealthily, the hounds hide in the long grass. We both remain gripped as they skulk forward. Eventually, the pair pounce: the bird squawks and feathers fly, but it escapes to safety. The conversation moves to the paparazzi, and a recent incident where photos were taken without her knowledge. 'No one wants a private moment captured,' she says, declining to discuss any presumed relationships.

Her own visibility is, as she points out, on a different scale to Bessette-Kennedy's. Still, the past year has required some changes. She has long appreciated the anonymity of New York, the freedom to walk through the city crying or to conduct an unguarded conversation on the phone. Now, she is more aware.

'I don't want to change how I'm living,' she says. 'I like my life. But I'm making small adjustments. I want to protect the things that feel like they're just for me, or the people in my life.'

Contemplating a life lived through camera phones and on social media, she pauses. 'I think our brains were never designed to be this aware of ourselves. I don't think we were supposed to see our reflection in more than a babbling brook', she says.

This, Pigeon believes, is one of the reasons *Love Story* resonated with audiences so much. 'There was this "you had to be there" energy in the 1990s. If you missed something, you only heard the stories.' A time before smartphones, Instagram, maxxing and aura-farming. 'I think people are craving lives that feel less scheduled,' she says.

She recently had a spontaneous dinner in Paris with her *Love Story* co-stars Grace Gummer (who played Caroline Kennedy) ▷



Top, £650, and bandana (around waist), £550, both **16ARLINGTON.** Trousers, £795, **ROKSANDA**. Slingbacks, £1,175, **CHANEL**. White gold and diamond earrings, price on request, **COCO CRUSH BY CHANEL FINE JEWELLERY**



Jacket, £8,615, and dress (just seen), £8,095, both **CHANEL.** White gold and diamond earrings, price on request, **COCO CRUSH BY CHANEL FINE JEWELLERY**



Dress, £1,200, **TOVE.**
White gold earrings,
£3,780, **COCO**
CRUSH BY CHANEL
FINE JEWELLERY





Dress, price on request, **ERDEM.** White gold earrings, £3,780, gold and diamond bracelet, price on request, beige gold ring, £3,250, and gold and diamond ring, £3,150, all **COCO CRUSH BY CHANEL FINE JEWELLERY**

‘BEING ABLE TO EMBODY CAROLYN WAS A REAL GIFT’

and Dree Hemmingway (Daryl Hannah). But her closest relationship from the series remains with Paul Anthony Kelly (JFK Jr). ‘In the wake of the show, we got to be there for each other and check in. He’s such a stand-up guy and a talented actor. There is no one else I would rather have made this with.’

Fashion has provided another unexpected education. Murphy hired a 10-person style-advisory board for *Love Story* led by Rudy Mance, who scoured eBay and borrowed from collectors to dress Pidgeon in the sharpest Calvin Klein tailoring, that legendary Prada camel coat and original Yohji Yamamoto pieces, as well as an Hermès Birkin that they beat up to resemble the one Bessette carried.

It has altered the way Pidgeon dresses away from work, too. ‘I’m a tall person, and it took me a while to stop apologising for the amount of space my body takes up.’ Now, she gravitates towards clothes that emphasise rather than diminish her stature. She’s also the new face of Balenciaga bags and Chanel’s Coco Crush collection: ‘I wear the jewellery every day; I sleep in it, I bathe in it. It has sort of become a part of me and how I express myself.’ Her own wardrobe, however, remains repetitive, comfortable, slightly tomboyish and mostly black and white. She is, like everyone else, still searching for the perfect denim. ‘If a pair of jeans fits perfectly, they can do everything,’ she says. ‘Cocktails, groceries, day, night.’

Then there’s perhaps her biggest change: her hair. ‘I’ve *never* thought this much about hair,’ Pidgeon says, groaning. A lifelong brunette, she has spent the past year blonde. Not just any shade, but Carolyn blonde: the expensive, carefully calibrated hue that demands experts, strategy and a lot of time. She has spent more hours in a salon chair in the past 12 months than at any previous point in her life. She speaks about root shadow, extensions and hydration with a seriousness usually reserved for politics. The maintenance requires time that could be spent with friends, reading books or doing almost anything else. But, when the blonde is fresh and the shade right, she admits ‘it really does transform you’. What about lopping it all off and trying a brunette bob? She’s tempted. ‘But I’ve made it this far. I’ve spent this much time. To go dark now would feel like I hadn’t got the full return on my investment.’

Pidgeon’s own roots are more sensible. The daughter of two lawyers, unlike many peers, she was not raised by anyone in the business or at stage schools. Her and her sister Annie’s childhoods in Michigan were filled with cultural extracurriculars: piano lessons, museums, theatre trips, dance classes. ‘My parents encouraged my sister and me into all of the arts,’ she says. ‘If an orchestra was playing in town, we’d go. If there was an exhibition, we’d go.’

After discovering she loved acting, Pidgeon attended an arts-focused high school before studying at Carnegie Mellon School of Drama. ‘I was always going to go to university,’ she says. ‘It was really useful to have those four years to try out different versions of myself. You cosplay adulthood in college.’ After graduation came a move to New York and roles in *One Dollar*, *The Wilds* and *Tiny Beautiful Things*. In 2024, she made her Broadway debut in the play *Stereophonic*, which earnt her a Tony nomination.

Her sister remains her best friend. Having Annie beside her for much of this week has made otherwise surreal moments feel familiar. ‘She has consistently cheered me on and been one of my biggest supporters. Being able to share it with her felt really special.’

At 30, Pidgeon feels closer to the woman she would like to become, although she is reluctant to suggest that the process will ever be complete. ‘A lot happened in my twenties. Thankfully, most of it was good. But I learnt a lot, and I’m getting closer to becoming the person I want to be.’

Pidgeon describes herself as an all-or-nothing thinker who loves a clean break. Birthdays make more sense to her than New Year’s resolutions – winter in New York is too cold and too dark to offer a convincing fresh start; a summer birthday feels more hopeful. ‘It’s a time to reflect a little, but also to give myself another chance and let go of the things I might be holding on to,’ she says.

Her definition of success remains practical. ‘I want to be able to support myself, and maybe a family one day, through acting,’ she says. Beyond that, she wants to earn the trust of other artists. ‘When people I admire are working on a project, I want to be someone they think to ask for an opinion. I want them to respect my approach and my taste as an artist. I want to be in these artistic salons of peers, collaborators and people I look up to.’

She briefly felt pressure to capitalise on the momentum of *Love Story*, but is trying to resist it. ‘There is a beauty in having patience.’ Not that she’ll need it: her next film role, in Amazon’s dramedy *Honeymoon with Harry* alongside Jake Gyllenhaal and Kevin Costner, is already in the works.

Before we part, and Pidgeon returns to the best week of her life, I ask her what her hopes are for the next decade. As work pulls her away more, she has become preoccupied with more rituals: recurring walks, annual trips with Annie, familiar dinner tables, a regular poker night she intends to establish despite not knowing how to play – days that retain value long after the cameras stop rolling. ‘I have to figure out how to find that same sense of fulfilment when I’m not on a set or in a rehearsal room,’ she says.

Despite becoming famous for playing one of the most aloof women of the 20th century, Pidgeon appears to be having a very good time: she orders extra chocolate on her cappuccino, speaks about her first Phoebe Philo purchase with a pride usually reserved for a newborn and, at the end of a 10-hour photoshoot, asks the photographer whether they can do it all again.

A year ago, Pidgeon was hoping she might one day lead a series like *Love Story*. Today, she is one of Hollywood’s most exciting new faces. Almost everything around her has changed. Yet throughout our morning, she returns to the quieter things: her sister, the friends who tease her, books waiting to be read and routines that exist beyond public view. As we wander down the hill, past the runners, dogs and swimmers, ordinary lives unfold, gloriously undocumented. It seems while Sarah Pidgeon is turning into someone the world is watching, the unexpected gift Carolyn Bessette-Kennedy gave her was how to protect the woman she is in private. □



Dress, price on request, and slingbacks, £1,090, both **CHANEL.** Gold necklace, £4,030, beige gold ring, £3,250, and gold and diamond ring, £3,150, all **COCO CRUSH BY CHANEL FINE JEWELLERY**



Jacket, £8,615, dress, £8,095, and mules, £1,135, all **CHANEL**. White gold and diamond earrings, price on request, **COCO CRUSH BY CHANEL FINE JEWELLERY**. **HAIR:** Christian Wood at The Visionaries. **MAKE-UP:** Florrie White at The Wall Group. **NAILS:** Iram Shelton at A-Frame. **STYLIST'S ASSISTANT:** Lauryn Doherty. **SET DESIGN:** Lee Flude at Agency 41

SIMONE'S SECOND ACT

BRIDGERTON MADE HER A GLOBAL STAR. NOW, *THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA 2*, A DEBUT EP AND A MOVE TO NEW YORK ARE REVEALING THE FULL SCALE OF SIMONE ASHLEY'S AMBITION. ELLE'S PERFORMER OF THE YEAR STYLE AWARD WINNER TELLS *NICOLA FAHEY* WHAT COMES NEXT

PHOTOGRAPHS BY EKUA KING STYLING BY JENNY KENNEDY





Dress, £2,900, **McQUEEN.** Heels, £650, **STELLA McCARTNEY**



Coat, £6,832, top, £2,135, skirt, £1,110, gloves, price on request, and sandals, £1,281, all **GIVENCHY BY SARAH BURTON**

STARRING

opposite Meryl Streep is enough to send even the most seasoned actor into a confidence spiral. Simone Ashley? Not so much. Last July, she was in London waiting to hear whether she had landed the role of Miranda Priestly's newest assistant in *The Devil Wears Prada 2*. The audition had taken place over Zoom while she was recovering from sinusitis and she 'pulled any energy' she could find to put on some make-up and log on. There was no time for any niggling imposter syndrome that might creep in at the prospect of joining one of cinema's most formidable casts. 'I was like, "This is a slam-dunk. I feel really right for this."' Four weeks later, while Ashley was out drinking negronis with a friend in Notting Hill, the call came. Just as she had predicted, the part was hers. Within days, she had packed up her life and moved to New York.

She tells me this with a deadpan delivery – no softening self-deprecation, jokes or an apology. Unlike most actors I've interviewed, Ashley is unconcerned about winning me over. She is kind, warm and funny, but there is no people-pleasing, no performance of false modesty, no nervous laughter or rush to fill the silence. She only turned 31 in March, yet her self-assuredness doesn't feel like fake-it-till-you-make-it confidence. It feels deep-rooted and instinctive.

This is immediately clear when we meet at The Ivy Chelsea Garden on a warm July morning. Ashley, coming straight from the gym, is dressed in a pink Minnie Mouse jumper, capri trousers and trainers. Her hair is loose, her face make-up-free. As the brunch crowd clatters around us, she steers me decisively towards a red velvet sofa in a quieter corner by the window. She has the unmistakable energy of someone having the year of her life. Call it her power era; her hot-girl summer; whatever it is, she is in her element. 'It feels like I'm driving a fast car and it's just not slowing down,' she says, now grinning. 'It's really exciting – it takes my breath away.'

She rattles through the opening months of 2026: eight cities in four weeks, recording sessions for her debut EP squeezed between international press commitments and a permanent move to New York. She expected to spend a fleeting summer filming in Manhattan, but the city became 'a catalyst of confidence' and she soon found herself apartment-hunting. 'New York is amazing – it's changed my life,' she says. 'I've been in London for half my life – nearly 15 years now – and I think naturally, maybe you just tend to get lazy with pushing yourself.' She has also spent three months sober, in order to sustain her new 'athletic lifestyle' alongside a disciplined routine of reformer Pilates, strength training, saunas and ice baths. 'I was like, "I'm just going to be sober and live like a monk!"'

A year on from that Zoom audition when Ashley knew she would get the part, *The Devil Wears Prada 2* has grossed more than half a billion dollars worldwide and sent her rocketing up every casting director's wish list. Amari Mari may not have been the lead, but Ashley made Miranda Priestly's assistant entirely her own, delivering her barbed one-liners about political correctness with enough precision to make them some of the film's sharpest and funniest moments. She describes working on set alongside Meryl Streep, Anne Hathaway and Stanley Tucci as an exercise in osmosis. 'I was really just reacting to Meryl. It's her movie, her set, and I learnt so much from watching her work,' Ashley explains. 'Observing how they embodied their characters gave me so much to draw from. I felt very empowered as a young woman.'

That feeling of admiration was mutual. Speaking to ELLE, Streep describes Ashley as a force to reckoned with. 'With her luminous elegance, her sparkling laugh and sly asides, Simone is great fun on set,' Streep says, 'but her discipline and stamina and ability to sharpen each take with precision demonstrates more than just a natural gift – it signals serious commitment. She's quite special.'

Off set, her New York nights belonged to a new circle of friends and, increasingly, to music. A classically trained singer who grew up playing piano, Ashley began writing almost compulsively with Fraser T Smith, the Grammy-winning producer behind Adele, Stormzy and Dave, whom she had met on a previous film project. A few songs in, Smith told her she should make an album, and his wife Sarah introduced her over Zoom to songwriting legend Diane Warren. During a whirlwind January, Ashley flew from Sydney to LA to record Warren's 'Tragic Romantic', now one of six tracks on her soul-pop debut EP, the aptly titled *Songs I Wrote in New York*.

'What I love about making music is that it's my story, my life, my creative control,' she explains on the sudden pivot. 'With movies, it's more about being the director, producer, writer and star. It is hard to have control and shape the future of a project and how it's going to look. I actually prefer making music when I'm busy, because I'm more out of my head and creatively inspired. When there's a lot of adrenalin, that's when I tend to do better work.'

A record deal with Abbey Road Recordings, an imprint of Universal Music Group, followed. A week before we meet, Ashley made her live-music debut – not in some sweaty basement or at an industry showcase, but at Windsor Castle, performing for 150 guests at Prince William's Earthshot Prize, which celebrates environmental game-changers. Wearing a sculptural Gaurav Gupta gown, she used the occasion to champion Indian design, which she plans to build on when she heads to Mumbai with Earthshot in November for more performances.

'It was an honour to meet Prince William,' she says. 'I wasn't nervous, which was a good sign. Although, the art of performing live is definitely a muscle I need to exercise, and my confidence will develop. He enjoyed it. He's very excited for Mumbai, as am I. I'm looking forward to a whole tour of Indian designers. I'm still finding my feet with my wardrobe, but it's a journey I'm really excited for.'

Her fashion life has been just as busy as her music calendar. In the past few months, Ashley has fronted Burberry's High Summer campaign alongside Tom Blyth, worn lime-green Prada at the New York premiere of *The Devil Wears Prada 2*, vintage McQueen at Cannes and Ralph Lauren at Wimbledon. From *The Devil Wears Prada 2*, she says her favourite look was the black Dolce & Gabbana bralette, cropped bolero and skirt from the Madonna 'Vogue' montage. ▷



Dress, £1,525, **KNWLS.** Gold and diamond earrings, £6,900, **BULGARI**



Dress, £1,390, belt, £350, and heels, £650, all **STELLA McCARTNEY.** Gold and steel rings, from £1,580, both **BULGARI**



Coat, £1,990, skirt, £890, dress (worn underneath), £7,600, and boots, £1,590, all **McQUEEN**













‘STAYING ON MY OWN PATH IS SO FREEING’

For all the big names, the label she talks about with most affection is 16Arlington, crediting designer and close friend Marco Capaldo with ‘setting the benchmark for British designers’ and capturing ‘what it really means to be a London girl’. Right now, though, she is buying vintage; partly, she argues, because Instagram has managed to make fashion boring. ‘Everyone is dressing exactly the same – you can see there’s an algorithm,’ she says. ‘I’m getting a bit sick of seeing everyone wearing the same thing. I like buying vintage because it feels original and there’s a story behind it.’

Ashley has just wrapped on Molly Gordon’s hotly anticipated comedy *Peaked*, which follows two former high-school ‘It girls’ who have hit rock bottom in their late twenties and scheme to crash their 10-year reunion after realising they weren’t invited. She appears alongside her *Sex Education* co-star Emma Mackey, *Heated Rivalry* breakout Connor Storrie and global superstar Dua Lipa – a roll call so zeitgeisty it reads like the internet’s dream casting. ‘That was one of the best experiences ever – like *Sex Education*, but on another level,’ she says. ‘Dua’s such a pro – she worked so hard, and just took it in and had so much fun with us all. We were all so excited to have her there. Connor’s an amazing person, very kind and professional.’

Storrie describes Ashley as ‘this beautiful cocktail of playfulness and reverence’, recalling how she could switch in and out of character in a second, suddenly ‘full of power and conviction’. ‘There was this one group scene where Simone had a line at the very end of the monologue that was so silly, and she never said it as a joke,’ he tells me. ‘Anyone else would have tried to play up the joke, but she said it so earnestly and differently every time, that it made it a thousand times funnier.’ Director Gordon confirms that we’ll see ‘a different side of her’ in the film: ‘I’m excited for everyone to see how hilarious she is… She’s also a ridiculously hard worker. We had some really long nights, and we were shooting outside in New Jersey during a very cold March. And she was just so game the whole time, so positive, and brought it take after take.’

This winter, Ashley joins the star-studded ensemble of *Only Murders in the Building*, following recent credits in *The Little Mermaid* and rom-com *Picture This*, which she executive-produced. But whatever comes next, Ashley has no intention of outgrowing the Netflix juggernaut *Bridgerton*. It was Jonathan Bailey, her on-screen love interest, who taught her the value of staying loyal to their fans, and she confirms today that both will return for the fifth season. ‘It changed my life and, without it, I wouldn’t be where I am. That show reached near and far. Even in the places you don’t think you’ll get recognised, you do. Whenever it finishes, it’s going to be the end of an era. I think they have about four or five more siblings to get through. I’m in it till the end!’

She is grateful that Shonda Rhimes’ *Bridgerton* helped reshape the conversation around representation in period drama. Ashley’s Tamil heritage is central to her identity – not the sum of it – and she is drawn to culturally specific work, but says there is ‘still a lot of progress to be made’. Her desire to shape stories rather than simply appear in them is what led her to establish her own production company in 2021, Good Catch Entertainment. ‘I haven’t made anything yet, but I was inspired by Margot Robbie [who is behind LuckyChap Entertainment]. I definitely want to make and star in something in the vein of the Dev Patel *Lion* or *Slumdog Millionaire*. Something really cinematic and feel-good set in India. Manifesting that one for sure!’

As Amazon MGM plots James Bond’s future, Ashley’s name keeps surfacing. She grew up watching the films and has said she’d love to see an Indian Bond girl. Would she take the call? ‘I would, yeah,’ she says. That, however, is as far as she’ll be drawn. ‘If it happens, it happens! I’m not going to talk about it. I definitely want to do more movies and find a really delicious TV show to get into. I’d love to do an action movie. Something fantasy, maybe.’

Born in Surrey – her mother was an accountant, her father a pharmacist – Ashley grew up obsessing over Quentin Tarantino films, and Uma Thurman in particular, while dreaming of a life beyond the home counties. Her training included Redroofs School for the Performing Arts in Maidenhead and musical theatre at ArtsEd in west London.

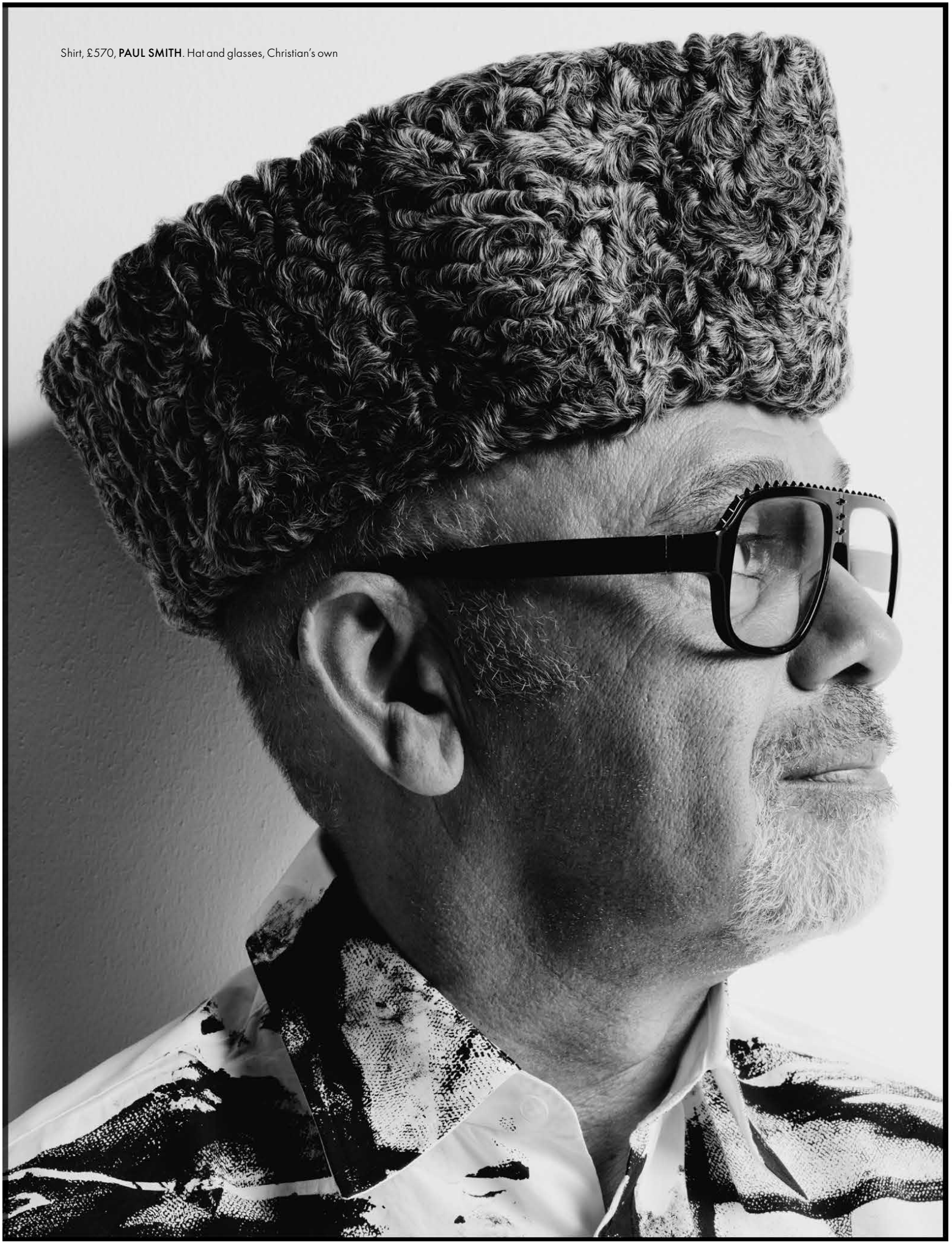
By 18, she was modelling and auditioning for roles, with no guarantee that either would lead anywhere, only the conviction that she would make it. Her quiet confidence, which she says comes from her mum, paid off with a 2016 debut in CBBC drama *Wolfblood*, followed by roles in BBC thriller *Guilt* and ITV’s *Broadchurch* and, then, in 2019, as Olivia Hanan in *Sex Education*. ‘As I began to believe in myself more, the people I wanted to work with could see it and believe in me, too. I’m not perfect, and I’m sure there’s negativity out there, but I try not to look. It only clouds your judgement. Staying on my own path, without comparing myself to others, is so freeing.’

That same unhurried energy shapes her love life. Just as she trusts her career trajectory, she has an old-fashioned faith that the right person will appear in time. ‘I definitely want to have my own family and I’d love to find my person,’ she says, with unexpected openness. ‘I have all my dreams and ambitions for my career and that will live on, and I trust that when the time is right the other parts of my personal life will find their way, too. I don’t put pressure on anything. I believe in the right person at the right time – someone who’s kind and has similar ambitions and dreams. That doesn’t have to be career-wise – I think you can have very different ambitions and dreams, but just an understanding and support between them.’

These days, almost every time Ashley steps out with a male colleague or friend, the internet decides she’s debuted a new boyfriend. Last summer, a walk through New York with actor Joshua Jackson sent social media into overdrive. Is that level of scrutiny exhausting? ‘Honestly, nothing in my career is a nightmare,’ she says, though she draws a firm line. ‘My job is to be an actress and an artist; anything else simply isn’t my job.’ Perhaps it’s no surprise that, after a career built on self-belief, Ashley is locked in on doing things her way. □

Coat, price on request, **ANDREAS KRONTHALER FOR VIVIENNE WESTWOOD.** Stockings, £15.99, **CALZEDONIA**. Suspenders, £250, **AGENT PROVOCATEUR.** Heels, £650, **STELLA McCARTNEY.** **HAIR:** Peter Lux at The Wall Group. **MAKE-UP:** Alex Babsky at The Visionaries. **NAILS:** Michelle Humphrey at LMC. **SET DESIGN:** Lee Flude at Agency 41. **STYLIST'S ASSISTANT:** Nina Gahrén Williamson





Shirt, £570, **PAUL SMITH**. Hat and glasses, Christian's own

Heart and Sole

FROM DUA LIPA'S WEDDING TO ZENDAYA'S ENDLESS SO KATES, CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN'S RED SOLES ARE BACK IN THE SPOTLIGHT. BUT THE DESIGNER BEHIND FASHION'S MOST FAMOUS HEELS HAS NEVER CHASED CELEBRITY. AS HE RELAUNCHES HIS BELOVED PIGALLE, HE TALKS POP CULTURE, TRAVEL AND WHY INSTINCT ALWAYS TRUMPS AMBITION

WORDS BY TAMISON O'CONNOR PHOTOGRAPHS BY OTTO MASTERS STYLING BY NINA GAHRĒN WILLIAMSON

PHOTOGRAPHY: GUTTER CREDIT GOES HERE

‘I’M NOT A PERFECTIONIST. I WANT TO DO THINGS WELL, BUT I DON’T WANT TO HAVE TO LEAD MY LIFE WITH SUCH PRESSURE’

WHEN I MEET CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN, he’s wearing a traditional short-skinned papakha hat, purchased on a recent trip to Georgia. He was there a couple of weeks ago, he tells me, for a birthday party. ‘It’s beautiful. The food is delicious. The churches are beautiful. Beautiful museums. The city of Tbilisi is incredible,’ he explains to me animatedly. In all other respects, Louboutin comes across as pretty low-key. He’s not particularly tall, his manner is unassuming. And yet, as we go on to shoot his portrait for this story, I remain utterly mesmerised. Between the hat and the flowing Georgian coat he’s wearing (another acquisition from his trip), he cuts a uniquely striking figure; almost regal. Although, perhaps that is to be expected. He is the king of the killer stiletto, after all.

During the 2000s and early 2010s, Louboutin’s high heels became the ultimate footwear status symbol, instantly recognisable by their trademarked (yes, it’s legally protected) bright-crimson sole. The heels became shorthand for top-tier luxury and cultural capital. But then trends shifted: sneaker culture took hold, streetwear invaded the high-fashion runways and women shunned heels in favour of more comfortable flats. The pandemic seemed to be the final death knell for the stiletto, as global stay-at-home mandates left no occasion to break out the sky-high heels.

Now, though, the Louboutin heel is enjoying a buoyant resurgence, with Gen Z catapulting the red-bottomed shoes back into the spotlight. Zendaya is rarely seen on the red carpet without a pair of Louboutin So Kate stilettos on her feet. Addison Rae, meanwhile, almost never takes hers off, even rehearsing for performances in them. Dua Lipa just got married in a pair (Miss Z pumps were her style of choice), while Ariana Grande is performing in hers during her world tour, as I write this very article. Tyla, too, more often than not turns to her trusty red-soled heels.

It’s the kind of marketing success story that luxury brands pay big bucks to achieve. Not Louboutin. ‘I didn’t try to be part of pop culture,’ he says. But when major rap stars like Cardi B sing about their expensive red-bottom shoes, it can’t help but give the brand cultural cachet. The designer sees the crossover happening within a bigger ecosystem, ‘which has to do with design, with desire, with sexuality somehow, femininity… but also freedom’. He pauses. ‘It’s very much attached to freedom,’ he says. ‘That makes me very happy.’

Louboutin has always let passion guide his internal compass. Many stalwart fashion figures start out with dreams of running a global empire, driven by laser-focused ambition and long-term business plans. But Louboutin’s path was more tangential. After his first gig in fashion, he left to become a landscape gardener. ‘I always thought, *go where life is taking you*. I’m not a perfectionist. I want to do things well, but I don’t want to have to lead my life with such pressure,’ he tells me after the shoot, over a cup of tea. It was a lesson he learnt from his father, a carpenter, who taught him that when working with wood, you have to follow the direction of the grain; try to work against it, and you’ll end up with splinters. Louboutin took it as a philosophical lesson: go with the flow of life and respect where it’s going to lead you. ‘I realised after a while that the sky is the limit if you [set] no limit. Things may be way more interesting if you’re not driving them.’ Luckily, he found his way back to designing shoes and a childhood passion for sketching high heels turned into a global footwear empire, which in 2021 was valued at €2.25 billion.

Even though Louboutin didn’t aspire to work in fashion when he was younger, one of his favourite pastimes was sketching heels. He had a very happy, if atypical, childhood, growing up in a working-class family in the 12th arrondissement in the eastern outskirts of Paris with his father Roger, stay-at-home mother Irene and three older sisters. Bored with school (‘By 13, I had no enthusiasm for it anymore,’ he says), he instead spent his time going to clubs, watching 1970s Bollywood and Egyptian films at the local cinema and exploring the Museum of African and Oceanic Art close to his home, passions that ignited his love of travel and different cultures. ‘I discovered the world was bigger than my neighbourhood,’ he explains.

He would often sneak into Folies Bergère, the famous cabaret music hall in Faubourg-Montmartre, too. ‘I was obsessed with showgirls,’ he says. ‘I would go to the music hall often with my best friend of the time, and we would sneak in. My favourite thing was the musicals, so I thought I should draw shoes for these girls.’



La Pigalle

Heels, £870, **CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN**. Skirt (just seen), price on request, **McQUEEN**. Tights, £6.99, **CALZEDONIA**

La Pigalle heels, £870, **CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN.** Christian wears: shirt, £570, **PAUL SMITH**. Trousers, £1,300, **GIORGIO ARMANI**. Shoes, price on request**, CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN.** Coat and hat, his own. Effy wears: jacket, £3,600, and skirt, £1,650, both **DOLCE & GABBANA**. Top, price on request, **JOSEPH**

















Christian Louboutin

‘MY FAVOURITE THING WAS MUSICALS. I WAS OBSESSED WITH SHOWGIRLS, SO I THOUGHT I SHOULD DRAW SHOES FOR THESE GIRLS’

A sense of wanderlust fuelled his early twenties, which he spent travelling the world from Egypt to India. He funded his travels by working – internships at Charles Jourdan in Paris and freelance work selling shoe sketches to houses including Chanel and Saint Laurent. ‘My thing was, I make some money, I travel for two months, I come back, I draw, I make some money, back to travelling,’ he says. Then he landed a job as an assistant to Roger Vivier, supporting him with a few projects, including a retrospective of his work in Paris. ‘After that, I thought, *I’m not going to work with anybody else.* No one was going to give me any enthusiasm versus what I had with Roger, whom I adored.’ That was when he decided to take up gardening.

Restlessness brought him back to shoe design. ‘I realised you need a lot of patience to do a garden; in 10 years it’s going to start looking good. When you’re 26, you’re like, “But I will be dead in 10 years!” So I ended up thinking, it’s too long.’ Believing he would never work for someone as inspiring as Vivier again, he decided to work for himself. And with that, he opened his own shop in Galerie Vérot-Dodat in 1991.

His iconic red sole was born a couple of years later, when the designer saw a model he was working with painting her nails red. ‘It came from the fact I wanted to stay really close to my drawings. I was sketching things with bright colours, thinking of 1960s serigraphy and pop art,’ he says. In contrast, his shoes had big black soles, visible from behind. ‘I realised that there is no black in my drawings, I have to erase the black. So I ended up grabbing the nail polish and actually painting it red.’

This joyful spontaneity sits at the heart of Louboutin’s brand. One of his favourite films when he was a kid was a 1960s musical called *Les Demoiselles de Rochefort*, about two twin sisters who ‘just don’t care. They’re very feminine, very playful’, he says. ‘You can be serious and frivolous, and to me that’s a very important mix.’

It’s a formula that ensures his shoes remain bestsellers, even after all these years. ‘Louboutin has never compromised its creative vision in pursuit of trends. From the iconic red sole to the unmistakably feminine silhouettes, every design reflects a singular point of view that is instantly recognisable around the world,’ explains Tiffany Hsu, chief buying and group fashion ventures officer at Mytheresa, who notes that the brand is an ‘exceptional performer’ for the retailer. ‘At the heart of the brand: Louboutin himself, a visionary creative whose imagination, charisma and unwavering passion continue to infuse the house with relevance and vitality.’

‘What continues to set Louboutin apart is its unmatched creativity and willingness to push boundaries,’ agrees Josie Gardner, head of accessories and shoes at Harrods. She points to the spectacular theatrical experiences Louboutin hosts during Paris Fashion Week as an example, recalling a particularly memorable contemporary take on a 1950s-style Hollywood water ballet, performed by the French Olympic artistic swimming team while wearing Miss Z heels. ‘The brand consistently delivers a sense of excitement and fantasy that captivates its audience while reinforcing its unique position within the luxury market.’

Louboutin’s heeled shoes are notorious for prioritising style over comfort (see the viral video of Zendaya’s stylist Law Roach explaining how she trained herself to withstand the pain of her go-to red carpet So Kates). Louboutin himself has spoken publicly about how, as a designer, comfort is not his priority – the look of the shoe is. It comes as a surprise, then, to learn that the designer has spent the past four years working to ‘perfect’ his La Pigalle shoe, which is relaunching after it first debuted more than two decades ago, re-engineering the style to make it easier to wear. ‘It’s the same silhouette, but when you wear it, it’s a totally different shoe,’ he explains. ‘Comfort has become a reality, and also a way that people want to feel. It’s not necessarily just about walking in your shoes, but also having a comfort zone when everything has become so aggressive.’ Although, he then adds: ‘How can you do a high heel if you’re thinking comfort? That’s not going to happen.’ □

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SCAN TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR UPCOMING EVENT WITH CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN

GROOMING: SVEN BAYERBACH AT CAROL HAYES MANAGEMENT. HAIR AND MAKE-UP: TERRI CAPON. MODEL: EFFY GE AT MILK MODEL MANAGEMENT



Coat, price on request, and heels, £840, both **GUCCI.** White gold and diamond earrings and matching rings, all price on request, **VAN CLEEF & ARPELS.** Tights, £9.99, **CALZEDONIA**





AN INTERIOR LIFE

LET THE PLUSH TEXTURES AND COCOONING SHAPES OF THE AUTUMN/WINTER SEASON INVITE A SENSE OF EASE INTO YOUR WARDROBE. THERE'S NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME THAN NOW TO DRESS FOR YOURSELF



PHOTOGRAPHS BY EKUA KING STYLING BY RUDY SIMBA BETTY

Dress, £3,950, **CELINE.** White gold and diamond earrings, price on request, **VAN CLEEF & ARPELS**



Coat and bra, both price on request, **ERDEM.** Skirt, £3,320, **LORO PIANA**





Dress, price on request, **MAISON MARGIELA**.
Gold bangle, £7,900, **TIFFANY & CO**



Top and skirt, both price on request, and heels, £900, all **DIOR**. Pink gold, diamond and quartz ring (top), £11,400, white and yellow gold, diamond and emerald bracelet and matching ring, both price on request, all **DIOR JOAILLERIE**. Tights, £9.99, **CALZEDONIA**



Jumper, £1,180, top, £820, skirt, £3,300, trousers (worn underneath), £1,000, socks, £860, and lace-ups, £1,170, all **PRADA**



Jacket and shirt, £7,660 each, gilet, £5,745, skirt, £4,440, belt, £1,655, bag, price on request, and slingbacks, £1,090, all **CHANEL.** Tights, £9.99, **CALZEDONIA**



Dress, £75, **INTIMISSIMI**. Pearl and crystal earrings, price on request, **VALENTINO GARAVANI**



Dress, around £2,475, **ALAÏA.** Gold ring, £4,170, **BULGARI**



Coat, £8,000, dress (just seen), £1,560, and bag, £3,050, all **MIU MIU**. Shorts, £47, **INTIMISSIMI**. White gold and diamond earrings, price on request, **BULGARI**. Socks, £27, **FALKE**. Heels, price on request, **WALES BONNER**. **HAIR:** Jaz Lanyero at Agency 41. **MAKE-UP:** Martina Lattanzi. **NAILS:** Abena Robinson at Agency 41. **STYLIST'S ASSISTANT:** Nina Gahrén Williamson. **MODEL:** Malaika Holmen at Next Management. Rugs by Zara Home



Dress, £1,880, skirt, £2,479, brass earrings, £675, belt, £812, gloves, £1,282, and boots, £2,479, all **GIVENCHY BY SARAH BURTON**



Jacket, £5,950, top, £2,470, and brass earrings, £3,100, all **LOUIS VUITTON**

POWER UP

LET THE AUTUMN COLLECTIONS' RICH TEXTURES AND SCULPTURAL SILHOUETTES EXUDE A STRONG CONFIDENCE FOR THE SEASON AHEAD, WITH SOFT WOOL RUFFLES, TOUGH LEATHER AND LAYERS OF FLUID SILK

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CĒDRIC BIHR STYLING BY ELISSA CASTELBOU



Top, £975, leggings, £1,500, and sunglasses, £405, all **GUCCI**



Dress, price on request, **CHANEL**. Sunglasses, £350, **ALAÏA**. Earrings, around £75, **FLORENCE TOUSSAINT SCHMIDT**. Necklace, around £105, and bracelets, around £75 each, both **ATELIER ROZIER**. Heels, £740, **ROGER VIVIER**



Jacket, turtleneck, trousers, scarf and gloves; all price on request, **HERMÈS**



Top, £1,700, trousers, £1,350, sunglasses, £350, and boots, £1,250, all **CELINE**



Dress, £1,770,
MAX MARA.
Earrings, around £160,
JUSTINE MĒNARD.
Gloves, price on
request, **LARUICCI**



Jumper, £1,910, shirt, £1,460, skirt and shorts (worn underneath), £1,010 each, and socks, £860, all **PRADA**



Jacket, £4,100, and dress, price on request, both **DIOR**



PHOTOGRAPHER'S ASSISTANTS: JEAN GARCIN AND ALEXANDRA BEYERR. DIGITAL TECHNICIAN: PABLO AZEVEDO AT PURPLE GRAIN

Top, £1,900, **GIORGIO ARMANI**. Trousers, price on request, **LARUICCI**. Sunglasses, £350, **ANDY WOLF**. Earrings, price on request, **WOUTERS & HENDRIX**. Gloves, around £190, **SQUILLACE 1923**. **HAIR:** Liv Holst at WSM. **MAKE-UP:** Céline Exbrayat at Call My Agent. **STYLIST'S ASSISTANT:** Alexandra Lefèvre. **MODEL:** Leni Voster at Premium Models. **FASHION DIRECTOR:** Alexandra Bernard at ELLE International. **PRODUCER:** Yannick Selva at ELLE International. With special thanks to Musée de Préhistoire d'Île-de-France, Nemours


HOW
we
SHOP
now



IN THE WORLD OF LUXURY, 'BACK TO SCHOOL' SHOPPING LOOKS DIFFERENT THIS AUTUMN, AS A WAVE OF NEW MARKETPLACES, PLATFORMS AND BRICKS-AND-MORTAR EXPERIENCES IS RESHAPING HOW WE DISCOVER AND BUY FASHION

WORDS BY NAOMI PIKE PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDY PARSONS

ONCE UPON A TIME, THE LOCAL HIGH STREET was a Saturday afternoon shopping ritual. It was retail therapy and pleasure that doubled as a social outing – a thing to do with friends. But when was the last time you indulged in it? Not an errand to find a dress for that wedding or job-interview suit, but rather the joy of wandering from store to store and discovering the hero piece you didn't know you needed. And if you went home empty-handed? No bother. You'd try again next weekend.

Packed schedules, social media and smartphones have transformed the way we buy clothes. Forget waiting in line all night for the shop doors to open – more often than not, it's fastest fingers that get the good stuff.

For many people, scrolling has become the standard way of sourcing; a new wave of tech-powered platforms is rewiring how we shop, and apps such as Vinted and ShopMy are now the first port of call. Meanwhile, consumers are embracing resale, tuning into livestreams and joining members-only communities like Mile to access exclusive discounts.

That's not to say that in-person shopping is over. On the contrary, brands and retailers are focusing on turning their shops into destinations that offer both social and cultural moments, while celebrities and tastemakers are hosting car-boot-sale-style events, so fans, followers and friends can shop directly from their wardrobes.

The goalposts are moving, with experience, curation and community becoming more important than ever. So where are we turning to? These are the platforms shaping the future of shopping.

VINTED

A Prada skirt. A Burberry trench. Comme des Garçons trousers. These are just a few pieces offered up by Team ELLE when asked about their best Vinted buy. The wildly popular second-hand marketplace, long known as the place to go to offload old children's clothes and high-street finds, has become a cult destination for fashion insiders hunting down the luxury pieces that got away.

The Lithuanian company launched in the UK in 2014 but hit its stride during lockdown, as wardrobe clear-outs replaced, well, any other sort of activity. Since then, Vinted has evolved into a key port of call for a certain kind of discerning luxury shopper who is at once savvy with spending, niche in their procurement and conscious of their environmental impact. In fact, the platform is now the third largest fashion retailer in the UK with an estimated 17.4 million customers, according to trade publication *Retail Week*.

'AFFORDABILITY *is part of the* STORY, *but* PEOPLE *are also shopping more* INTENTIONALLY'

What also makes Vinted notable is how most of its sellers are also its buyers. 'That creates a circular marketplace where people sell the items they no longer need and use that money to fund their next purchase,' says Jessie de la Merced, Vinted's vice president of corporate affairs.

In 2025, Vinted shoppers saved about £18.6 billion by buying items second hand, spending 72% less than the original retail price on average, according to research by the platform. In addition, 88% said that they check the app before buying something new. 'Affordability is certainly part of the story, but what we're seeing is that people are shopping more intentionally. Vinted has become as much about self-expression as it is about value,' de la Merced adds. 'Those figures show just how mainstream second hand has become – not just as a way to save money, but as an everyday way to discover and enjoy fashion.'

PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES

LOOK *what she* MADE *us do*

They've got it, we want it. Thanks to their track shorts, trophy bags and styling tricks, these are the influential women making us want to add to basket



MILE

Quickly becoming known as the Raya of retail, Mile is the shopping app that allows its community to nab designer pieces for a great price, with luxury brands such as Jacquemus and Burberry included in invitation-only sales where discounts can extend to as much as 90% off retail price.

'It's the complete opposite of the traditional off-price world,' explains brand director and co-founder Jordan Grant. 'You need to be referred by an existing member; there's a waitlist; you can't screenshot inside the app; and if you leave, you can't rejoin. That level of discretion is really intentional. It protects the brands, but it also makes shopping feel exciting again. You're part of something, rather than just endlessly scrolling.'

The Mile model works so well because the experience still feels elevated. It's the antithesis of getting sweaty while trawling through endless overstocked racks in a fluorescent-lit bargain basement. 'Our members still love luxury, but they want to feel like they're spending well,' Grant continues. 'At the same time, brands want a more discreet way to move inventory without compromising how they're perceived. That's exactly where Mile sits.'

CLOSET *sales*

Borrowing from your best friend's wardrobe has levelled up in recent years as closet sales have become de rigueur. Chloë Sevigny's at it, famously. So are Jemima Kirke and Paloma Elsesser. But there's also a burgeoning community of key fashion-industry insiders selling their unwanted wares directly out of their wardrobes.

'[The rise of closet sales] has stemmed from there being so many microtrends and everyone on social media looking the same,' says Tora Northman, a creative consultant who has hosted one of her own, parting ways with pieces from Acne Studios, Balenciaga and Comme des Garçons. 'Shopping from someone else's closet feels more interesting than purchasing from an ad you've been served.'

For Northman, buying pre-loved is about taking a conscious approach, too. 'There's a wider range of pieces to choose from, often at reasonable price points. Buying things new these days is becoming so expensive, and if you're someone like me who doesn't shop fast fashion, I end up browsing Vestiaire and Vinted for pieces,' she explains. 'A closet sale is basically that but IRL and curated – you know exactly what type of pieces might be available because you know the person or have seen their aesthetic.'

Her advice for hosting your own? 'You need a lot of pieces, and not everything is going to sell unless you're willing to drop the price. For me, a big learning was also letting go of pieces that had a lot of sentimental value, knowing that they'd live on happily ever after with someone else.'

SHOP*My*

An antidote to the algorithm, ShopMy delivers tastemaker-led recommendations for discerning shoppers keen to follow an aesthetic lead. More than 300,000 carefully selected influencers share personally curated edits via their own storefronts on the platform – Adwoa Aboah, Bobbi Brown, Conner Ives, Romilly Dauphin Newman and Nara Smith among them. 'It's anyone with a distinct point of view – that could be a stylist, dermatologist, interior designer, brand founder, editor or simply someone whose taste and expertise others rely on,' explains founder Tiffany Lopinsky. 'We believe that a trusted human recommendation is the most powerful force in commerce.'

The affiliate-marketing platform has become a huge hit, driving about $80 million in sales each month. Part of its success lies in its integrated ecosystem, bringing brands, creators and shoppers together in one place. Having built a following on Instagram, Lopinsky saw the potential in connecting everyone: 'Brands struggled to identify creators who genuinely loved their products and could drive sales, while creators lacked the tools and infrastructure to build businesses around their authentic recommendations.'

But it's also a place where shoppers can get a direct window into what their favourite celebrities are shopping themselves. Lopinsky advises curators, as they're called on ShopMy, to link to everything their audiences are enquiring about in their content. 'Whether it's a round-up of their favourite white T-shirts, the plates from a dinner party they hosted or the lipstick they're wearing in a video – if your audience is asking, it belongs in your storefront.'

YOU'VE *got mail*

Substack is fast becoming the scroll of choice for women looking for seriously stylish shopping edits. Here are our favourites

THE CEREAL AISLE
If you loved *Man Repeller*, you'll love Leandra Medine Cohen's newsletter, centred on her distinctive personal style.

5 THINGS YOU SHOULD BUY
Stylist Becky Malinsky scrolls 'so you don't have to'. Her concise edits are shrewd, informed and exceptionally compiled.

GOOD FANTASY
This is a must-subscribe – Michelle Li has an exceptional eye for a brilliant second-hand buy.

REMOTELY
Spanning Lucy Williams' favourite finds in fashion, interiors and beyond, this is an exercise in good taste.

ADD TO WISHLIST
Otegha Uwagba's digest is for 'intelligent people who like nice things'. Stay for the witty commentary.

MAGASIN
Its bio reads: 'It's a store. It's a magazine. It's a shopping newsletter.' To Laura Reilly's triptych, we'll add 'must-read'.

TIME LESS
Joyce Lee curates timeless pieces designed to last, saving her readers precious time in the process.

WITH CARE
Reese Blutstein's 'Four Looks Friday' will inspire you to reimagine the clothes you already own.

VIP *experiences*

While many beloved shops have disappeared from our high streets, IRL stores are far from dead. On the contrary, retailers are finding success by curating energetic spaces tailored to their most loyal customers, where you can do so much more than just shop.

This year, Selfridges debuted 40 Duke, a fully immersive space for its top clients, complete with several private-shopping suites, a rooftop restaurant and a lounge bar that you'd more likely find in a Scandi hotel. 'This is an extremely intimate and social space to build relationships and to make somebody feel incredibly comfortable. It's not a hard sell. It should be a pleasure to come here,' says the department store's creative director Will Wyness. 'We like to give our customers a reason to visit. Selfridges is essentially a programmed line-up of things to do, see, buy and experience.'

Selfridges is far from being alone in ensuring that its VIP customers are well and truly catered for. Louis Vuitton has a luxury apartment discreetly located above its London flagship store where select customers are invited to retreat and shop in private amid original works by Jeff Koons and Jean-Michel Basquiat. This year, Hermès debuted its new maison at 166 Bond Street, where, behind a hidden door, invited guests can discover private lounges curated with pieces from the historic Emile Hermès collection and a secret rooftop garden. At Harrods, meanwhile, an invitation-only penthouse suite can expand to include after-hours browsing, bespoke dining and a personal stylist. As Selfridges' Wyness puts it: 'The experience is often the reason that people get out of bed.'

TIKTOK *Shop*

Social media has fundamentally changed the way we browse, discover and click to buy. At the forefront of this shift is TikTok, with the social-media app's commerce arm (relaunched in the UK in 2023) offering speedy checkout for viral products.

For brands and retailers selling through TikTok Shop, the platform really comes into its own with Live Shopping, where a presenter will talk through each product, often modelling it themselves. Think QVC for Gen Z. In the UK, more than 6,000 sessions are performed a day, according to Bianca Sing, the platform's global head of strategic partnerships.

'It's interactive and expert-led: people can see products demonstrated, ask questions in the moment and shop with more context than a static product page can offer,' she says. 'It's shopping that feels human again, with someone who looks like you or shares your taste, guiding the decision. That's something I'm genuinely proud of: TikTok Shop has put people back into online shopping.'

Thus far, the format has lent itself especially well to beauty buys, but clothing is its next frontier. 'For fashion, it opens up style discovery beyond the usual gatekeepers – giving independent or emerging brands and established high-street names the same opportunity,' Sing says. 'What wins is what resonates with the community, not how big your business is.' □

> ‘SHOPPING *from someone else's closet feels more* INTERESTING *than* PURCHASING *from an ad*’



Money TALKS

THE ECONOMY IS COMING FOR OUR LIBIDOS. *HANNAH NATHANSON* EXPLORES HOW FINANCIAL INTIMACY BECAME THE YEAR'S DEFINING RELATIONSHIP TREND, AND IS REWRITING THE RULES OF MARRIAGE AND DATING

ILLUSTRATION BY JANICE WU

I'VE NEVER SEEN THE SEX APPEAL IN A SPREADSHEET. I'VE TRIED to get excited about cells and attempted flirting with formulas, all in a bid to keep on top of my finances. But the spark has never lasted. My husband, on the other hand, loves Excel, truly loves it. On occasion, it has been the cause of our arguments, although what we're really clashing over is our different approach to how we manage money (I'm a spender, he's a saver) and, in turn, how this affects our life together. But while money is, according to research, the primary reason for relationship conflict (not just us then), being open about differences is a crucial part of financial intimacy: the way in which people discuss and approach money within a relationship.

When the *Financial Times* columnist and author of *What They Don't Teach You About Money* Claer Barrett posts about how couples deal with finances, her engagement surges. 'It's a real talking point,' she says. 'I think people are so fascinated because they secretly would love to find out what other couples do, but are too afraid to ask. People want to know "is this normal?" That's the big question.' This thirst to understand how other couples manage their money is everywhere. One of the year's biggest books has been *Strangers: A Memoir of Marriage* by Belle Burden, which tells the story of Burden's husband of 20 years suddenly walking out on the family and her subsequent financial turmoil. Despite being the subject of a *New Yorker* exposé into how much she actually lost (Burden is an American heiress with considerable assets), it was hailed as a 'cautionary tale of financial naiveté', with Burden telling the media: 'If anything comes out of my book, I hope that younger women or contemporaries really take a look at their financial life and think about what would happen to them if the marriage ended.'

Burden might belong to a rarefied world, but the notion of financial intimacy is becoming increasingly relevant as the economic landscape shifts and the nature of partnerships changes. Women are more financially independent than ever before: in heterosexual marriages, the percentage of wives earning more than their husbands has risen from 20% to 25% over the past decade; in the US it's closer to 30%. Studies show that same-sex couples value more co-independence when it comes to finances. And while we may be living and working for longer, with a higher proportion of dual-income households, we're also in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis. According to a study by Monzo, 65% of Brits in relationships said that the current state of the economy had caused more money arguments between couples, putting the average number of disagreements at five every month. So how can couples navigate this new territory while building financial intimacy? And are couples who spreadsheet together really more likely to stay together?

Earlier this year, former First Minister of Scotland Nicola Sturgeon told journalist Laura Kuenssberg that she had no idea that her ex-husband – and former chief executive of the SNP – Peter Murrell was guilty of embezzling more than £400,000 from the party that she had led for nearly 20 years. Some of the 'household' items that Murrell bought included £19,000 worth of fountain pens, more than £2,000 on Lalique salt and pepper grinders and a now-infamous motorhome worth £125,000.

In her defence, Sturgeon told Kuenssberg: 'Just to explain how our finances worked, we had separate bank accounts, I never had any access to his bank account, he didn't have any [access] to mine. Every month I would pass him a sum of money to cover my share of the household expenses and leave him to it.' It was an intimate snapshot into how this prominent couple ran their finances: largely transactional, with minimal communication.

Unlike Sturgeon and her ex-husband, couples in the UK are far more likely to share some part of their finances. According to Lloyd's, roughly half of UK couples have a joint account which equates to approximately 8 million partners. Among Lloyds customers, this accelerates in early adulthood (aged 25–34), with almost one in five young adults having a joint account. Over 55s are also twice as likely to deposit their salary payments into a joint account, compared with those aged 18–34. According to Monzo, customers are most likely to use joint accounts for practical reasons: 36.4% of spend is on bills compared with 4.7% on holidays.

What resonated with both Sturgeon and Burden's stories was the recognition of a broader dynamic where one person takes the lead on finances in a relationship. 'There is nothing unusual about that, and in many relationships it works perfectly well,' says Donde Thiam, a senior solicitor at Blackadders LLP who specialises in family law and pre- and post-nuptial agreements. 'The difficulty arises where the other spouse has little or no understanding of the overall financial position. If the relationship breaks down, that lack of knowledge can make an already stressful situation significantly more difficult.'

Health editor Eve Simmons, 35, experienced this first-hand when one evening, six months after their £50,000 wedding, her husband told her out of the blue that he no longer wanted to be married to her. 'We had bought the house in the suburbs. We had the dog. We were trying to conceive pretty much straight after the wedding,' says Simmons, who had been with her husband for nine years before they got married and who, following their divorce, wrote *What She Did Next*, a book about her experience. 'It meant my entire world fell apart overnight.' She ended up moving out of the dream house they'd bought together with the help of a £25,000 gift from her mother.

'Then we got into the conversation about our shared finances, and I was very surprised at his cold and unempathetic attitude,' says Simmons, who had predominantly been both the higher earner and the saver in the relationship. Complications arose when she asked for the £25,000 her mother had gifted towards the deposit to be returned to her as part of the house sale. Her ex-husband, however, claimed that it had been spent. 'It was my mistake, and this is what I want women to be aware of: I had no claims otherwise, because it

'FOR ANYONE WHO'S USED TO EARNING THEIR OWN SALARY, ASKING THEIR PARTNER FOR MONEY FEELS ABHORRENT'

‘THERE’S A FEAR THAT TALKING TOO OPENLY ABOUT MONEY MAKES YOU LESS DESIRABLE’

had gone into his account. He had done all of the spending. He kept tabs on everything in a spreadsheet, and I had nothing to do with it. I didn’t even know there was a spreadsheet. I had no oversight.’

Simmons vowed never to be blindsided again. She is now in a new relationship and has a young son with her partner. ‘We’ve been really conscious that it’s important to keep tabs on what’s coming in and what’s going out, and to be really transparent.’ There’s a spreadsheet where they both enter spendings from individual accounts, and also a legally binding contract that states that she has 100% ownership of the flat they share; they plan to update the contract as they both contribute to mortgage repayments.

Planning for the future is, according to Barrett, the linchpin of financial intimacy. Talking about who contributes what or setting up a joint account is only half of the story: ‘It’s not gone into the territory of financial planning, having joint saving goals, looking ahead to what’s coming up.’ For her, becoming more financially intimate with your partner is ‘not really about the money, but about the plans – and not being afraid to ask for what you want’.

After artist Aadya Summer*, 37, proposed to her girlfriend last year, they began to plan their wedding: ‘I wanted to copy all the weddings I’ve been to, so we were looking at a minimum of £10,000.’ All of Summer’s savings had recently gone into a creative project, so there was a pressure on her partner to pay for the wedding from their savings. ‘Then we thought about it and were like, “This is crazy, we don’t need to have a wedding like other people; we just need to get married.”’ Together, they decided to keep the savings for a house and marry in a register office with family and two guests each, followed by a big party one summer evening with takeaway pizzas and friends DJing. Being open and trusting about money has had a positive effect on their relationship: ‘She made me open an ISA, and when I earnt more money they helped me set more aside,’ says Summer, whose income is more irregular. ‘But I also think I’ve shown her you don’t need to panic so much – money comes and goes.’

Financial planning, and an opportunity to be more intimate about money, becomes particularly important for women during major life events such as maternity leave, job changes or having to take time out of work to care for ageing parents. When I had my children, I knew I didn’t want to ask my husband for money. In Barrett’s experience: ‘For anyone who’s used to earning their own salary, to have dependency thrust upon them… having to ask their partner for money just feels abhorrent.’ I felt similarly, and made sure I was able to save enough for the time I took off from work. My husband covered more of the household finances during that time but, despite me still not getting on board with a spreadsheet, we worked as a team with our money. He also saved for a period of unpaid shared parental leave.

This is not how my parents navigated their family life when I was born in the 1980s. ‘Most of us have grown up with a very different blueprint of how our relationships work financially,’ says Vicky Reynal, financial psychotherapist and author of *Money on Your Mind: The Psychology Behind Your Financial Habits*. Half of her clients are in heteronormative partnerships where the woman is the main breadwinner; she attributes this ‘unchartered territory’ to a new insecurity around financial intimacy. ‘The dynamics of two working partners raises many questions about power and freedom,’ she writes in the chapter in her book about money and couples. Reynal also points out that when couples argue about money, ‘we’re arguing about our different views on equality versus fairness, secrecy versus privacy. We’re arguing about a power dynamic that we’re unhappy with. And sometimes all these important values and themes get played out in the relationship with money.’ The key for Reynal is changing our perception of conflict: ‘It doesn’t have to be a bad thing if you speak to each other calmly and respectfully and are curious about each other’s differences – you’ll be stronger as a result.’

Aiming for financially intimacy can, however, cause tensions with maintaining independence. Financial advisor, author of *Your Money Life* and host of the *Asset Avenue* podcast Bola Sol says she sees a lot of women who have bought houses and have multiple assets who are struggling to date. ‘There’s a fear that talking too openly about money makes you less desirable or that being the higher earner makes you “too much”,’ she says. She wants women to know that financial independence and financial intimacy aren’t opposed. ‘You can be fully in control of your own money and still build genuine transparency with a partner.’

For Sol, the most important thing is trust. She runs ‘Finance Friday’ on her Instagram for people to anonymously share their money dilemmas. ‘I’ve heard stories of women going on holiday with the kids and coming back to a brand-new car that the husband decided to purchase with their joint savings. I’ve seen relationships survive infidelity and not survive a financial secret, because financial secrecy hits something deeper.’ As Reynal says: ‘Transparency doesn’t mean there’s no privacy; it means there are no secrets.’

In answer to the ‘is this normal?’ question Barrett gets asked most frequently, there’s no one way to be financially intimate; what works for some couples is different for others. What’s clear is that it doesn’t have to run counter to financial independence. With more communication and a foundation of trust, couples can navigate a new blueprint for money within relationships that looks different from previous generations. What’s more, just as conversations about money, fraught or otherwise, are often about something else, being financially intimate can improve other aspects of a relationship. ‘Couples who are financially intimate are less likely to argue about money in the long term,’ explains Sol. ‘Once you’ve had the honest conversation, you stop having the same fight on repeat. There are other benefits, too: genuinely knowing and being known financially by your partner builds a kind of trust that shows up in every other part of the relationship.’ Now, where did I save that spreadsheet? □

*NAME HAS BEEN CHANGED





'WE HAVE TO SHOW UP FOR EACH OTHER'

AFTER YEARS OF DRESSING IN BLACK, THE POET CLAUDIA RANKINE IS GRADUALLY EMBRACING COLOUR. AS SHE PUBLISHES HER MOST PERSONAL BOOK YET, SHE TALKS TO *KENYA HUNT* ABOUT GRIEF, CREATIVITY AND FINDING JOY IN UNEXPECTED PLACES

CLAUDIA RANKINE IS ONE OF OUR MOST REVERED MODERN thinkers, one of our living titans. There are her books – *Don't Let Me Be Lonely*, *Citizen* and *Just Us*, among others – which are pioneering, prescient, fiercely intelligent reflections on race, identity and power: genre-blurring works that dance between poetry, essays, photography and visual art with a stunning clarity.

She has also become one of our most stylish women of letters. Her uniform of colourful scarves and black head-to-toe dressing has inspired comparisons to the personal codes of Joan Didion, who habitually wore rollnecks, and Zadie Smith, with her signature red lip.

But the world has changed radically since *Just Us* was published in 2020, which was itself a year defined by the global pandemic and a reckoning on racial justice. And so, her devotion to the colour black takes on a different meaning. 'All my clothes are black because I expect the world to soil me,' she writes in her long-awaited new collection *Triage*, a devastating meditation on the politics of now, told through the reunion of two old university classmates after decades apart: a narrator (who is Rankine) and a character known simply as the theorist.

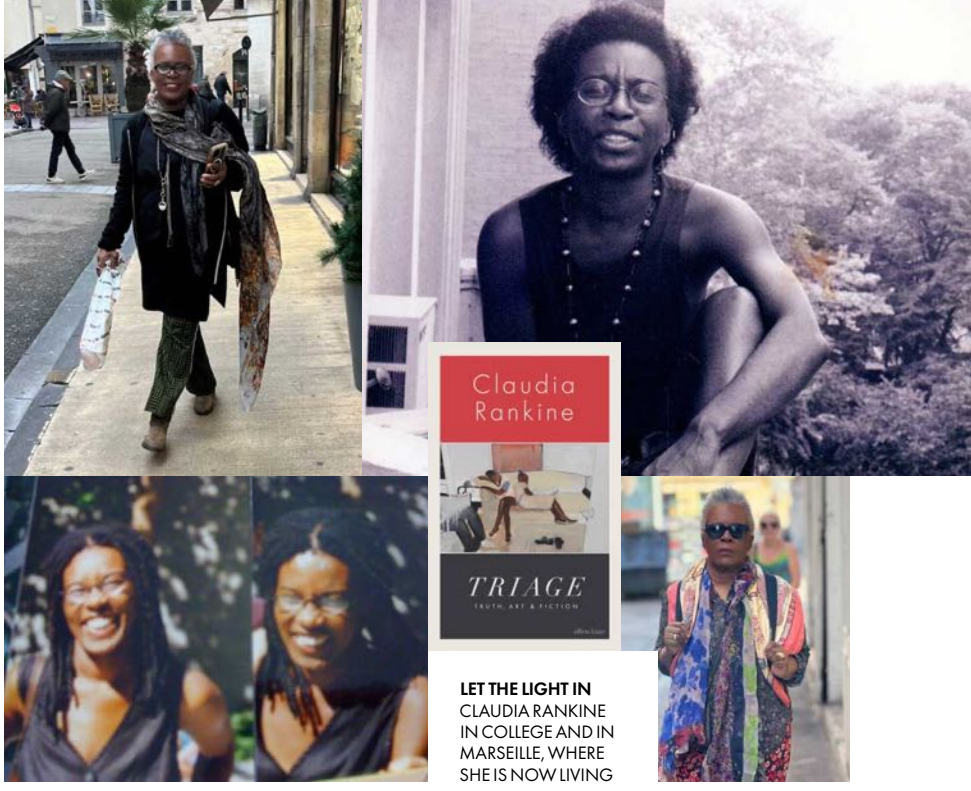
When we sit down to discuss the book and the porous boundaries between the personal and the political, she puts it simply: 'The use of black has to do with mourning, because the book is essentially a book about grieving.' ▷

As a new government settles into power in the UK, and the United States heads towards its consequential midterm elections, we spend an hour together: Jamaican-born, American-raised Rankine in her light and airy home in Marseille, where she has been since January, and me in an air-con-chilled office in London. Via Zoom, we talked through how she makes sense of the moment.

As someone who moved to the UK from New York in 2008 to advance my career as a journalist, I'm always curious to hear why authors and writers move to the places they do. What inspired you to move to Marseille?
For the first time in my life, I've been holding a kind of precarity around simple things, like going through immigration or border patrol at the airport – you just don't know. Maybe it's inflated from where I'm standing as an American citizen, but I worry about things I've never worried about before. And so, we thought maybe it was time to have an alternative plan in case, just in case… I still have my job, I still pay my taxes, I still do what I do. But it seemed like good sense, actually, to have another home. It's nice to be here in Marseille. I'm not saying the French don't have their issues. But it feels lighter – there are no guns here. You don't feel like you're in a fight for your life. You live with a communal identity.

That sense of needing an exit plan brings to mind emergencies, which leads me to the title of your book. Why *Triage*?
Well, most of us think of triage in a medical sense and this idea that you attend to the person or persons who are in the direst position. I think we as humans, are going to have to start thinking in that way. Refugees, immigrants, the undocumented, trans people, women, African-Americans – you can just keep going. Climate change means that people are going to need to move. We really need to start thinking about how we can position ourselves relative to our neighbours. And I mean neighbours in all the ways that you can think about it.

I was struck by the cover artwork. There was a retrospective of Noah Davis's work at the Barbican last year, and I remember seeing that painting of women on a sofa at a time that felt particularly heavy in the world.



LET THE LIGHT IN
CLAUDIA RANKINE IN COLLEGE AND IN MARSEILLE, WHERE SHE IS NOW LIVING

I attended that show at the Barbican, which was incredible. And I was asked to write a piece for the exhibition's catalogue. When my editor at Penguin suggested that we use this painting for the cover, it seemed full circle because I had spent so much time thinking about it when I wrote for the catalogue. And it was right as I was working on the book. It was a meditation on collapse and needing to take a moment out, just for self-care.

And you ended the book with a painting by Kerry James Marshall ,who also had a wonderful exhibition here, at the Royal Academy.
I really think that Kerry James Marshall is the painter of our time. There's something about Marshall's ability to sit in every emotional and effective possibility for Black people, whether it is cynicism, joy, questioning: it's all there in those works. And when I first saw this particular piece [titled *Everything Will Be Alright, I Just Know It*], I couldn't stop laughing. Because so many people say to me: 'Oh, come on, Claudia, there must be a good side. Things are going to get better. You must be hopeful about something.' It just seemed to step right into that moment.

You write devastatingly about this idea of collapse. But people want to hold on to hope.
I feel that we have to do as we've always done, which is keep going. There's no other choice. Of course you're going to keep going. But keep going with a clear-eyed sense of what the obstacles are. I think that often people want to believe that in order to be optimistic, they have to close their eyes. And I think, no, we should be aware of the limits and the struggles and the violent intentions that surround us. And then we have to turn to the things that we have always turned to, which are community, each other.

We have to know that we have to show up for each other. Even with climate change. I know people who have suddenly woken up and found their car is floating in the middle of the street. This is going to call for different actions from us, human to human. Like

THIS PAGE: PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF CLAUDIA RANKINE.
PREVIOUS PAGES: PHOTOGRAPH: IKE EDEANI/*THE NEW YORK TIMES*/REDUX/EYEVINE

in Minnesota, where people have shown up for their neighbours to the point where some people have given their lives for their neighbours. So it's within us. It is possible. We can do it.

Your last book was published in 2020 during a period of upheaval. When did you start writing this new book?
Gosh, it was years ago. It was 2022, the year that Mahsa Amini was killed. That, in a very strange sort of way, connected to the struggles in the US around abortion and Jeffrey Epstein – everything became a soup in my head. It was almost like it took my face and turned it in a direction it hadn't been in.

And I felt deeply saddened, but also this rage against patriarchy kind of welled up. We were having the MeToo movement and we were in the midst of the rise of white supremacy, with these men who were saying things like: 'I could kill somebody and nobody would care' [in 2016, Donald Trump said: 'I could stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody, and I wouldn't lose any voters']. And that was the beginning [of the book]. It started out as a poem that evolved into four years of writing.

So much has happened in the world in those four years, from changing governments to wars and even more digital disruption. Were you writing to make sense of the moment?
In some sense, I think so. In a way, you write into the moment, to parse it. But I think, even more so, I was insistent on not being a part of the silence and the erasure. I needed to give the theorist and the narrator an origin story. And I decided to use myself in terms of the narrator, which I'd never really done before, then I thought: 'I'm going to use a friend who's Palestinian for the theorist'.

It was probably the most freedom I've had as a writer working on *Triage*. Because, for the first time, I just thought: 'Well, I'm in my sixties. Is this my last book?' Who knows? And so I thought, I'm going to give it everything I got and I'm going to use all the skills from playwriting, from essay writing, poetry, my conversations at a dinner. I don't care. Here it is. If I dreamt it, here it is.

There's a strong element of memoir. How did you decide what parts to reveal and which to keep for yourself?
While I was working on the book, my mother died. So, it was not something I intended to put in the book, but it happened. You know, as complicated and complex as our relationship was, it was also very close. Because you only have one mother. I didn't expect that to be in the book because I didn't expect to be in that place. But once her death happened, it was yet another way of thinking about grief. It was almost as if all the intellectualising around grief became tangible, became real to me. I just shut out the world for six months and wrote the book.

Were there any surprises that came up in the writing?
I had a different ending in which the theorist died. And then I thought: 'No, no, no.' I always wanted the sense that maybe you could come back and try again. You know, maybe you fail once, but you can give it another shot.

In the book, you wrote about black clothing as a signifier of grief. But today, you're wearing this lovely lilac scarf.
As I was working on that piece [in the book] I was also living in Berlin and all my clothes were black. A friend of mine came over to visit and said: 'You look so Berlin.' I think I had on black-leather pants and a black jacket and black boots.

That sounds quite fabulous.
But it's funny – since I've been in Marseille, I thought, 'Oh my goodness, I need some colour.' I looked at my wardrobe and said, 'I need some clothes that are not black.'

What do you look to for lightness and joy?
I love tennis, so I watch that. I love Carlos Alcaraz and it's been great watching Serena Williams come back. And since this is a fashion magazine, I can admit that I love watching videos of runway shows on my phone. I loved watching the Balenciaga show and Dries Van Noten. If I need colour, that's where I go.

What do you hope will stay with your readers?
Well, I wanted the book to be a performance of what it means to be in dialogue with someone else at a time when so many people are letting people go. And that you can sort of stay with your principles. And also, you can be changed. You can be affected by what others say and do. So, it's less that there is a right answer or a wrong answer.

I don't feel like the narrator is right all the time, and I don't feel like the theorist is right all the time. I feel like there are two people in a struggle to show up the best they can.

'Triage' by Claudia Rankine is published by Allen Lane □

'I THOUGHT, I'M GOING TO GIVE IT EVERYTHING I GOT: PLAYWRITING, POETRY, CONVERSATIONS. IF I DREAMT IT, HERE IT IS'

FRANCES HAUGEN *took on* FACEBOOK. NOW *her story* IS COMING TO *Hollywood*

WORDS BY JESSICA BENNETT



FRANCES HAUGEN

IN THE TRAILER FOR *THE SOCIAL Reckoning*, Aaron Sorkin's follow-up to his hit 2010 film *The Social Network*, Frances Haugen arrives on the scene just as whistleblowers often do: lit like a witness, seated across from an investigative journalist on a secluded park bench, carrying secrets that might change the world. The implication is immediate, and also familiar. She is a lone woman taking on one of the most powerful companies on Earth; a disruptor, as the fictional journalist will call her before the scene fades to black, whose decision in 2021 to leak thousands of internal Facebook documents, many of them focused on the platform's harmful effects on children and teenagers, helped trigger a global reckoning over the harms of social media.

Directed and written by Sorkin, the film, which is out on 9 October and has been kept under tight wraps – even Haugen herself hasn't seen it – stars Mikey Madison as Haugen; Jeremy Allen White as the *Wall Street Journal* reporter Jeff Horwitz; and Jeremy Strong as Mark Zuckerberg. In an interview, Sorkin calls it 'a great David and Goliath story – if Goliath invited everyone to a party and spiked the punch, and David was a nerd'.

And yet when I meet the real Haugen, 41, what strikes me is how little she resembles the Hollywood archetype. It is easy, sitting across from her in a café on the Upper West Side, to forget that she helped uncover one of the most consequential corporate scandals of the digital age.

It is May, and Haugen, in a chequered wrap dress and no make-up, her thick blonde hair in a messy bun, is in New York on her way home from a speaking gig in Barcelona, her first in about 18 months. She and her husband Alex Newman, an entrepreneur and engineer (he co-founded HCaptcha, the security software we use to prove we're not robots), are travelling with their nanny and 16-month-old daughter.

Haugen is a consultant on the Sorkin project, but she has not read the script. Which was honestly just as well, she tells me, sipping a cup of tea. In the five years since she first came forward in a series of *Wall Street Journal* articles called *The Facebook Files* that would transform her from a little-known data scientist and engineer into one of the world's most famous whistleblowers, she has become used to the idea that there are two versions of herself. 'There's the myth of Frances,' she says – strong, polished, unbreakable – 'and then there's who I am.'

The real Haugen is no less determined than her public doppelgänger, but considerably less mythic. She left Silicon Valley five years ago for a holiday in Puerto Rico and never went back, opting for a slower (and warmer) way of life. Being a whistleblower, she says, is not the hardest thing she's had to endure; that belongs to the debilitating autoimmune condition she still lives with and the years she spent regaining her strength after a period when she was paralysed from the knees down. Haugen isn't too worried about the juxtaposition between Hollywood's version of her and the real her: 'You can believe whatever you want about me – I have a very happy life, I have a very cute baby and I get to live by the ocean.'

Haugen never set out to be a corporate dissident. The child of academics – a doctor and a biochemistry professor turned Episcopal priest – in Iowa, she grew up listening to NPR and classical music (which didn't make her particularly popular in school) and always thought of herself as a rule follower. In high school, she found her voice in the debating team, learning that she had a skill for taking complicated information and organising it into coherent arguments.

She got into MIT, but instead chose to be part of the first graduating class at Olin College of Engineering in Massachusetts, then a start-up. She arrived in Silicon Valley in 2006 for a job at Google, back when women made up less than 13% of technical staff. ('Blonde women were on the sales team or were marketers,' she writes in her 2023 memoir *The Power of One*. 'They did not code – but I did.') Initially, she worked on Google Books – 'not a choice assignment' then, but one she loved: 'I used to tell people, "I am literally the greatest librarian; I have more books than even the Russians."'

Looking back on it now, she might have spent the rest of her career at Google, were it not for two things: a mysterious pain and weakness in her legs, combined with extreme fatigue, that became so severe she needed a wheelchair, forcing her to take a month of medical leave. When she returned, a performance-improvement plan led to her taking severance and leaving the company. Within two months, a blood clot in her leg landed her in intensive care. 'I was so weak at one point that I fell and hit my head in my bathroom, sustaining short-term brain damage that meant I couldn't even talk for a while,' she writes in her book. She would be out of work for 15 months.

She went on to work at Yelp, then Pinterest and, ultimately, Facebook, where she was hired in 2019 to join the company's

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JEREMY ALLEN WHITE AND MIKEY MADISON IN *THE SOCIAL RECKONING*

Civic Integrity team, created to combat misinformation around elections. By then, she says, most people in Silicon Valley were sceptical of Facebook – it was a stain on any engineer's résumé – but she genuinely believed she might be able to help. Part of her reasoning was personal, involving something that happened with a friend. Back when she was working at Pinterest, in the lead-up to the 2016 election, Haugen had hired a young developer named Jonah as her assistant, in exchange for office space. The two became close, spending hours talking on long walks after work. She knew him as an enthusiastic Bernie Sanders supporter, but after Sanders lost to Hillary Clinton in the primary, Jonah began spending more and more time in chatrooms online, drifting into conspiracy land. She watched, she writes in her memoir, as 'he began going deeper and darker, as algorithms pushed and pulled on his anger'. She tried to pull him back, but eventually they stopped speaking. He moved away to live with people he'd met online.

Years later, at Facebook, Haugen would encounter many of the same dynamics on a vast scale: algorithms that rewarded outrage; recommendations that pushed users toward extreme content; and feedback loops that couldn't distinguish between positive and negative reactions. The problem, she came to believe, was not simply that there were bad actors; it was that Facebook's systems amplified them. When Facebook dissolved the Civic Integrity team in December 2020, just after the presidential election, Haugen became increasingly disillusioned, convinced that the company was unwilling to confront the consequences of its own products. She thought again about Jonah. 'I wanted to be able to sleep at night,' she later wrote, 'free of the burden of carrying secrets I earnestly thought endangered the lives of tens of millions of people.'

Horwitz, the *Wall Street Journal* reporter, had reached out to Haugen on LinkedIn the day after the election. But it wasn't until a month later, during a staff meeting in which Haugen's team was informed they would be reorganised, that Haugen replied to him. Over the following months, she and Horwitz would work together to expose what would become known as *The Facebook Files*, a series that revealed the company understood far more about the harm it was causing than it had publicly admitted, including how drug cartels and human traffickers used its services openly, and that Facebook-owned Instagram had knowingly contributed to eating disorders, anxiety and depression among teenage girls. The articles relied on a massive trove of internal documents that Haugen would collect in secret – 22,000 pages in total, which she methodically copied one by one, using a burner phone to take a photo of each document on her computer screen (the only way to avoid potential spyware), then downloading those photos onto another computer (one that she'd never connected to the internet) and then filing them into folders labelled with a precise numerical system. After about 15,000 or so images, she developed a hunch in her back and had to wear a posture-correcting brace.

When *The Facebook Files* landed, in September 2021, it sent shock waves through Washington and Silicon Valley, prompting a Senate subcommittee hearing – in which lawmakers described the disclosures as a 'bombshell' – and transforming the public's understanding of Facebook's power overnight. Within a month, Facebook announced it would rebrand as Meta. Within six months, its valuation fell by almost 50%. But Haugen never intended to become the face of that story. 'Part of why the documents are so voluminous is because they were supposed to stand on their own,' she says. But anonymity came with its own burden: always looking over her shoulder, wondering if she'd been discovered.

As she picks at a slice of gluten-free toast, she tells me a story about one of the first days she spent with her now husband. She was living in Puerto Rico by then, dating a mutual friend of theirs, and he was hosting a barbecue on his roof. A drone appeared overhead and stayed there, hovering for what felt like forever. 'So I'm getting tense, my boyfriend is getting tense, everyone is getting tense,' she recalls. 'And rationally, I know this is not Facebook coming for me, but emotionally I'm like, "Oh my God, they've found me."' Minutes passed. The drone remained. Finally, she says, Newman's dad, a boisterous man who had a joint hanging from his mouth, marched toward the drone and began stripping and dancing for it until it flew away. Working with a non-profit legal representation group and a team of advisers, Haugen ultimately decided to reveal her identity for the first time on *60 Minutes*, three weeks after the story hit.

The years that followed were consumed by the consequences of that decision. Haugen spent three years travelling: testifying before Congress and the European Parliament; speaking at conferences; and meeting with regulators, lawmakers, academics and activists. But even as her public profile grew, her health continued to deteriorate. She was diagnosed with a rare condition that left her in constant pain when temperatures dropped below roughly 30 degrees, which explained why she felt much better in Puerto Rico than San Francisco. 'The entire time I was on the road, I wore battery-powered warming socks,' she says. 'And it's a nightmare having to manage your batteries on the road because each one lasts, like, four hours, but without them, it's just excruciating.' By 2024, she was exhausted: 'I was like, "I can't keep doing this."'

By then, she and Newman were married; they had eloped in August 2022 after

nearly a year of dating, exchanging vows on the beach next to a turtle sanctuary where they had gone snorkelling on their first date. In hindsight, it was strange they hadn't met sooner. They were both engineers, both Burning Man 'rangers', the volunteers who de-escalate conflicts, who had spent years orbiting the same Silicon Valley circles. After a break-up with her boyfriend, she rented a room in Newman's house in Puerto Rico. 'I rearranged the furniture in the living room so he'd have to sit next to me,' Haugen says of her attempts at courtship. They made their relationship official just days ahead of Haugen's testimony before Congress, which coincided with the *60 Minutes* episode. 'I think part of why he finally got brave and asked me out was that I was going to become a public face,' she says. 'He had one last chance to start dating me before I became the myth.'

The life Haugen has built in Puerto Rico looks very little like the one that she left behind. Her pace has slowed considerably. She still advises policymakers and speaks publicly on occasion, but much of her energy has shifted toward recovery and family life – which, in Haugen's case, means applying a technologist's thinking to domestic problems. She is writing a script for an AI house manager named Petra – 'because she's the rock we all stand on,' she says – who can select groceries on Amazon and locate parking spaces. When their daughter outgrew her climbing gym and Haugen couldn't find better options, she designed one herself from PVC joints and 3D-printed parts. 'We're still engineers,' she notes.

For the first time in years, she feels as though her body is catching up with her ambitions. Desensitisation therapy and other treatments have allowed her to travel again. After her time in Barcelona, she and her husband took a Mediterranean cruise, where she went hiking for the first time in about two years. 'This was a really big deal for us because I literally have not been strong enough to travel.'

Becoming a parent has sharpened some of her convictions. One thing that frustrates her, she says, is how insulated she feels executives such as Zuckerberg remain from the consequences of what they build. When she worked at Facebook, she says, almost no body had kids. 'Adam Mosseri was asked for years, "Does your kid use Instagram?" And he'd be like, "Oh, my kid's not old enough."' (Mosseri, the head of Instagram, has three children under 13 – the minimum age to join the platform in the US. In the UK, new government legislation will raise that age to 16 from spring 2027). But Haugen points out, 'As of 2022, a third of seven- to nine-year-olds are on social media [in the US].'

After *The Facebook Files* came out, Meta implemented a variety of new safety measures: shelving a plan for 'Instagram Kids', which was aimed at children under 13; making accounts private by default for teenagers under 16; and expanding parental controls and other safety measures. In the UK, the social-media ban for under 16s was hailed as positive by most parties, including parent groups that pushed for the ban, and showed the way in which governments can enforce stricter regulations. But Haugen says the problem runs deeper: it's common in Silicon Valley for the very people creating the products to forbid their own children from having the devices they run on. 'I can tell you that no self-respecting Silicon Valley executive would let their kid use a tablet,' Newman says. I start to ask what devices they might let their own daughter have. 'Oh, no, no, no,' Haugen says immediately. 'She lives in Puerto Rico,' Newman adds. 'There's too much fun stuff to do.'

Of course, worrying about the future is one thing. Building it is another. In Barcelona, Haugen gave a presentation called 'The Truth Behind the Algorithm', outlining what she hopes will be her next endeavour: a plan for measuring the real-world impact of social platforms on kids. The way she sees it, companies would opt into the programme, tasked first with surveying their underage users on five things: unwanted sexual messages within the past seven days; whether the platform interferes with their schoolwork, job or health; if it impacts their ability to go to bed at night; if it helps them connect with people in real life; and if they feel they can stop using the platform whenever they want. Then they'd be urged to publish those results publicly, in turn letting schools, parents and advertisers decide where they want to spend their attention and money. 'We're not powerless, right?' she says.

She asks if I've been following 'the lawsuits'. For all the attention paid to congressional hearings and whistleblower testimony, she believes that one of the most consequential outcomes of *The Facebook Files* may be happening more quietly in the courts. In the years since the disclosures, thousands of lawsuits alleging social-media addiction have been moving through the judicial system, including a recent jury verdict in California and sweeping cases brought by a group of 42 state attorneys general, accusing Meta of designing addictive products for children. In March, a New Mexico jury ordered Meta to pay £279 million for misleading users about the safety of its platforms; a day later, a Los Angeles jury awarded £4.5 million to a now 20-year-old woman who argued that Meta and Google's YouTube had intentionally designed features that hooked her as a child, contributing to her anxiety and depression.

Haugen lights up when she talks about these cases. 'Six million [dollars] for one woman,' she says. You can almost see the wheels turning in her head. 'If you scale that up, right, you'd need just a fraction of 1% of the teenagers in the United States [to file lawsuits] and that's a trillion dollars.' To her, the significance isn't any single verdict, but the possibility that a legal playbook is beginning to emerge. 'It's like asbestos, or opioids,' she explains. 'As they win, lawyers can run the same playbook over and over again.' What excites her is not the prospect of punishment but accumulation: evidence building on evidence, case after case, until accountability becomes harder to avoid.

There's a concept in economics, she tells me, called Stein's Law: the idea that if something cannot go on forever, it will stop. Haugen often thinks about the concept in relation to tech. 'You can't keep having kids get more and more damaged. You can't have the academic gaps get bigger and bigger. You can't have more and more kids kill themselves. You can't have these things just keeping getting worse,' she says. 'Eventually, there will be a point where people will say "enough".'

Can a movie help with that? I ask her. She thinks for a moment. 'There's this saying about people who write novels, which is that you write your novel, and you have all this intentionality, and then people read your novel and get different meanings from it. And some writers are like, "Oh, no. That is not what that means; I never intended that." But the reality is, when you interact with the public, you invite them in, right? You invite them into your story,' Haugen says. In other words, the myth no longer belongs entirely to her. 'People have to believe that change is possible.' □

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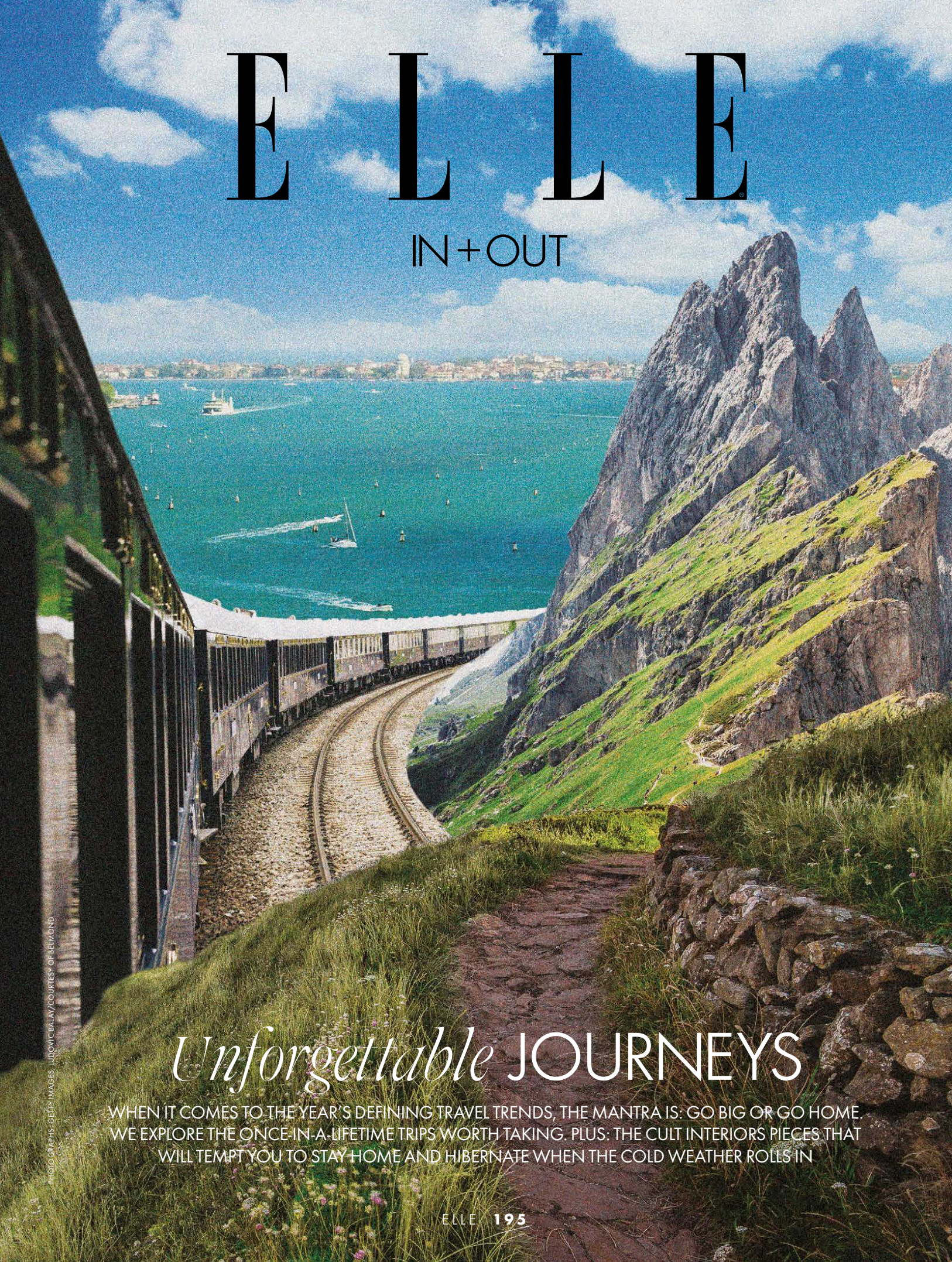


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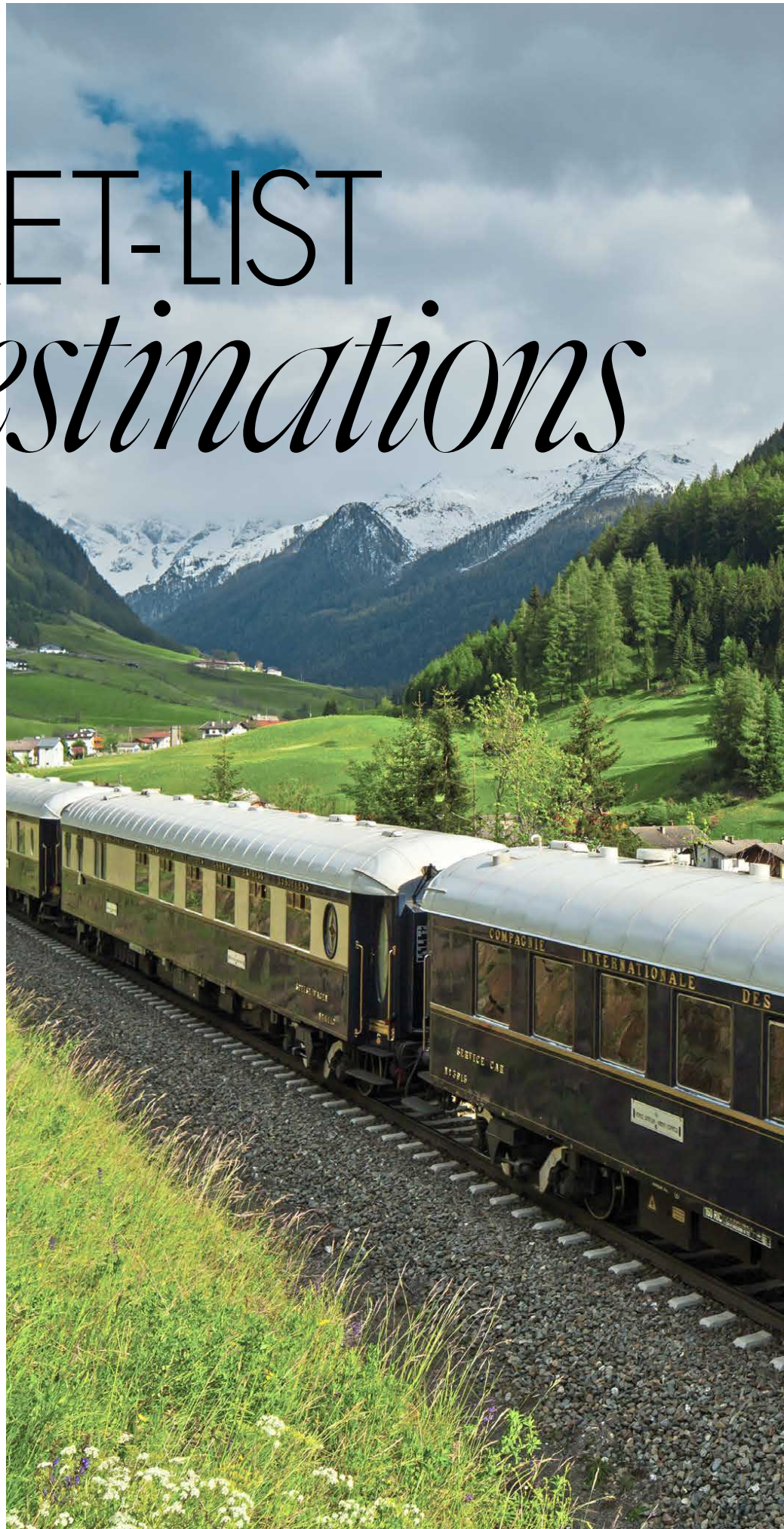
WHEN IT COMES TO THE YEAR'S DEFINING TRAVEL TRENDS, THE MANTRA IS: GO BIG OR GO HOME. WE EXPLORE THE ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME TRIPS WORTH TAKING. PLUS: THE CULT INTERIORS PIECES THAT WILL TEMPT YOU TO STAY HOME AND HIBERNATE WHEN THE COLD WEATHER ROLLS IN

PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES, LUDOVIC BALAY/COURTESY OF BELMOND

BUCKET-LIST *destinations*

Forget last-minute mini-breaks and staycations – there's a growing trend for booking once-in-a-lifetime trips that will remain with you for years to come

WORDS BY HANNAH NATHANSON



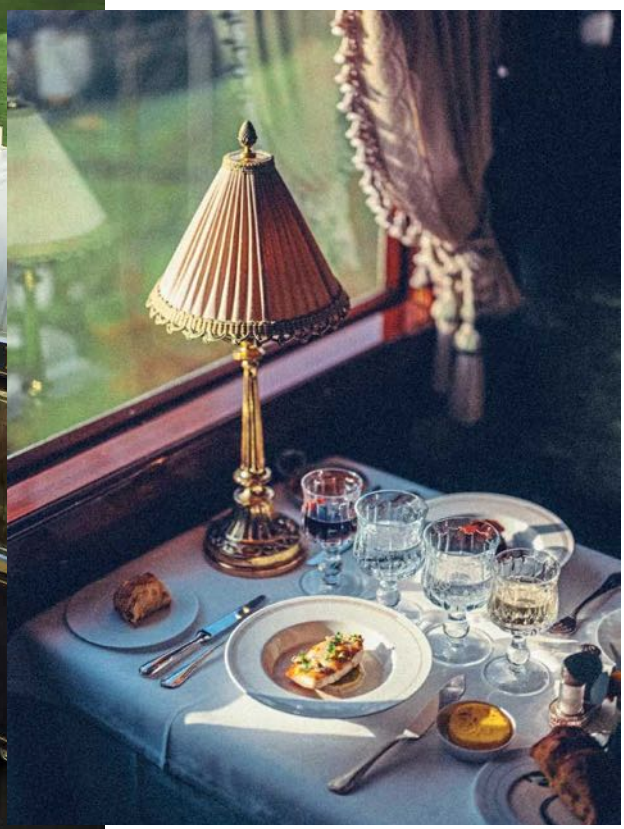
WHAT WOULD YOU DO FOR LOVE? I WAS thinking about this while listening to a smartly dressed Swede talk about the concoction of sleeping pills he'd taken the previous night as we shot through the Gotthard Tunnel on board the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, A Belmond Train. We'd left Paris' Gare de l'Est the morning before and would arrive in Venice, skimming across the Lagoon, later that day. The Swede, a self-confessed claustrophobe with a strong aversion to long tunnels, explained how he'd really only agreed to take the trip in order to accompany his girlfriend. Because for her, a journey on one of the world's most beautiful and historic trains was, quite simply, the holiday of a lifetime.

With a travel market that's flooded with options – when you can book a last-minute short-haul flight seamlessly and turn up at a supposedly secluded beach cove, only to find out the Instagrammers got there first – there's a growing demand for something a little more rarefied. After the pandemic, the number of people booking once-in-a-lifetime holidays shot up, with 2022 being the year of the Goat – 'Greatest of All Trips' – according to Expedia's travel-trend report,













PHOTOGRAPHS: DAVID NOTON, CHRISTOPHE COENAN, BOBY/COURTESY OF BELMOND, HANNAH NATHANSON

TRAIN DREAMS CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: A BED ON THE VENICE SIMPLON-ORIENT-EXPRESS; HANNAH NATHANSON IN HER CABIN; THE DINING CARRIAGE. OPPOSITE: THE VENICE SIMPLON-ORIENT-EXPRESS

which found that 65% of travellers planned to 'go big' on their next adventure. This trajectory hasn't slowed down. In fact, it's become even more competitive, with people saving for bucket-list adventures that prioritise anti-itinerary spontaneity, seeing natural phenomena and the slowest of slow travel. According to the latest research from Expedia, bookings for Beijing to walk the Great Wall of China and explore the Forbidden City were up 185% this year compared to 2025. Meanwhile, Opodo saw bookings for long-haul destinations this year up 96% for Brisbane and 81% for Quito in Ecuador.

The Swede's glamorous girlfriend was not the only one on a trip of a lifetime on board the Belmond train, which turns slow, luxurious travel into a kind of religion. There were honeymooners (it was rumoured that newlyweds Jack Whitehall and Roxy Horner were nuzzling in a nearby carriage); Boomers who had been saving for years to make the journey; and me, months into a new decade and keen to mark the occasion with a trip that would stand out for being utterly unique and unrepeatable. What's more, I was travelling with a friend I'd known since my first day at primary school, who had also just turned 40. It felt fitting to take a once-in-a-lifetime trip with a once-in-a-lifetime companion.

It turns out that Belmond does 'bucket list' incredibly well, especially with its latest Villeggiatura by Train series, which celebrates the idea of taking your time when travelling. It was immediately clear that this was no ordinary *vacanza*; moments before boarding the gleaming midnight-blue train, accompanied by a jazz band playing on the platform (who also jumped aboard as that night's entertainment), the cabin stewards were already talking about flowing champagne, afternoon tea in our art deco cabin, pre-dinner cocktails in the bar and gourmet three-course meals in the elegant restaurant carriages.

'You'll be dancing and swinging your hips before long,' said Cosmin, one of our stewards, as he did a little jig in time with the train's gentle swaying. We took it as our cue to abandon any sense of time and succumb to the rhythm of train life, much like our predecessors would have done before us. The Venice Simplon-Orient-Express has seen it all, from spies and authors to royalty. Sleeping Car 3309 was marooned in a snowdrift for 10 days in 1929 (something Agatha Christie knew all about); Car number 3425 was refuge to King Carol II ▷

of Romania, who escaped with his mistress in 1940; and Car 3544 went from ferrying the rich and famous to being used as a wartime brothel.

Today, the individually designed suites have had a more salubrious makeover. Ours was called Le Campagne, and was decorated with intricate marquetry inlaid with patterns including feathery grasses and mountain flowers. Two pea-green armchairs turned into luxurious twin beds and there was an en-suite with a shower and a beautiful, hand-blown Italian-glass basin. We could have quite happily stayed there for the whole journey, talking without any interruptions – other than a knock for a champagne refill – and watching the world flash pass, catching both the fleeting moments (a group of French teenagers plunging into sapphire-blue water) and the sweeping landscapes of the Swiss lakes and towering Dolomites, which made me think I never wanted to fly anywhere again.

But there was an entire train to explore, including three hand-restored dining cars – all differently themed, from Côte d'Azur-blue to plush scarlet – and Bar 3674, where a pre-dinner cocktail could easily segue into a post-dinner party lasting into the early hours. If you stay long enough, you'll be served a midnight brunch of lobster rolls and, yes, more champagne. We retreated to our cabin, but heard the next morning that the party had carried on until dawn.

The magic of an overnight train is the mystery of where you'll be when you wake up. As the train travelled through northern Italy, we stopped at a few stations briefly, oblivious as to why anyone might be staring at us through the window, as we tucked into breakfast wrapped in dressing gowns specially made for passengers, which were gifted to us at the end of the journey.

There was a giddy feeling as we arrived into Santa Lucia station, cutting across the Venetian Lagoon. As part of the Villeggiatura package, the journey continued from rail to water taxi at another pace altogether as we disembarked at the world-famous Cipriani, a Belmond Hotel. In the quiet of the lush, shaded gardens, with a Bellini in hand, we could reflect on what had been an unforgettable and unrepeatable adventure. It really was a trip of a lifetime – even, I think, for the well-dressed Swede. □

For more information about the Belmond Villeggiatura experience, go to belmond.com/trains/europe/venice-simplon-orient-express







FLOAT ON FROM TOP: THE CIPRIANI'S PRIVATE WATER TAXI; ST MARK'S BASILICA IN VENICE; A SUITE AT THE HOTEL



Book these UNFORGETTABLE *trips*

Six exhilarating experiences to make your next holiday one to remember



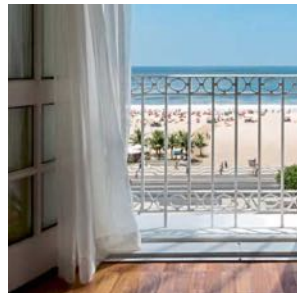
SAFARI IN SOUTH AFRICA

Following a thoughtful refurbishment, Phinda Vlei Lodge in South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal province reopened this summer. With just six suites overlooking a rare sand-forest habitat, it offers one of Africa's most intimate safari experiences. The reserve is renowned for close-up sightings of elusive cheetahs and endangered black rhinos. Back at the lodge, expect sprawling suites, outdoor showers, a serene new library and the sort of relaxed luxury that makes it truly unique.
andbeyond.com/lodge-editorial/phinda-vlei



SAIL THE NILE

Drift from Luxor to Aswan on one of Nour El Nil's handcrafted *dahabiyas* (traditional wooden sailing boats) and discover Egypt at the river's leisurely pace. Days are spent exploring ancient temples and palm-fringed islands, while life on board unfolds more slowly: enjoy breakfast as fishermen cast their nets, eat long lunches beneath billowing sails and savour candlelit dinners served on secluded riverbanks beneath the stars. This is a return to the romantic age of travel, when time was no object.
nourelnil.com



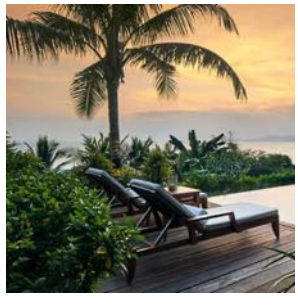
EMBRACE A SUMMER OF SPORT

Head to Rio de Janeiro next summer for the Women's World Cup final at the Maracanã, one of football's most iconic stadiums. Between matches, spend your time lounging on golden beaches, sipping caipirinhas and soaking up the city's incredible energy. Check into the legendary Copacabana Palace, Rio's grande dame hotel, which enters a new chapter this December with a reinvention of an all-suite pool wing, pool area and five new wellness floors.
belmond.com/en/hotels/south-america/brazil/copacabana-palace-rio-de-janeiro



JOURNEY THROUGH JAPAN

Skip Tokyo and travel from Kyoto to Kyushu aboard Seven Stars in Kyushu, Japan's most exclusive sleeper train. With just 10 cabins and a maximum of 20 guests, the train elevates the art of *omotenashi* (Japanese hospitality) to dizzying heights. Expect handcrafted wooden interiors, a piano lounge for evening performances, tea ceremonies and multi-course Japanese menus served as mountain landscapes and coastal views drift past the window.
cruisetrain-sevenstars.jp



ESCAPE TO THE BEACH

Few beaches feel truly movie-like, but Nihi Sumba, on the remote Indonesian island of Sumba, combines the wildest beauty with complete seclusion. Wake to horses galloping along the shoreline, spend afternoons surfing one of the world's most coveted breaks and then retreat to visually striking villas scattered across the hillside. With a reputation as one of the world's most exclusive resorts, it maintains a laid-back spirit that makes luxury feel easy.
nihi.com



SAVOUR A MEAL TO REMEMBER

For a dining experience that lingers long after pudding, book a table at the three-Michelin-starred Maaemo in Oslo. Over the course of four hours, you will be taken on an incredible journey through Norway's forests, fjords and Arctic coastline, with ingredients sourced from the country's most remote regions. Expect langoustine, king crab, wild herbs and even reindeer transformed into extraordinary dishes. Less dinner than a masterclass in storytelling for your senses.
maaemo.no □

WORDS: LENA DE CASPARIS. PHOTOGRAPHS: TYSON SADLO, ANNA JAY, MATTIA AQUILA / COURTESY OF BELMOND, MATTHIAS MULLIE/UNSPLASH, JORDAN HARVICH, READ MCKENDREE

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HEART AND SOUL CLOCKWISE FROM BELOW: ESMÉ CREED-MILES IN *SENSE AND SENSIBILITY*; FOWLESCOMBE FARM; BURGH ISLAND

EVERYONE'S GOING TO *Devon*

Romantic lore, magical views and irresistible food – England's southwest has become an unexpected hotspot. Thank Jane Austen

WORDS BY LENA DE CASPARIS

SOUTH DEVON IS HAVING ITS MAIN-character moment. Quite literally. This month, its rugged coasts and windswept moors provide the backdrop to the new adaptation of Jane Austen's classic *Sense and Sensibility*, starring Daisy Edgar-Jones and Esmé Creed-Miles. The Devonian village of Lustleigh will star in the new *Harry Potter* series, as HBO transforms the quaint spot into Godric's Hollow. Add to that Dartmoor National Park's 75th anniversary and a new exhibition at the British Library opening in October connecting Agatha Christie's lifelong love affair with Devon and suddenly England's south-west corner feels very much the place to be.

At the centre of Devon's renewed cultural cachet is Fowlescombe Farm, the latest weekend break of choice for creatives (Lucy Williams launched her With Nothing Underneath collection there this summer). Set across a farmhouse and a cluster of barns, the mood at Fowlescombe is all about feeding the soul (and the belly). Rooms are drenched in natural light with oat-washed walls, mid-century furniture, sheepskin rugs, log burners and deep baths. The minibar is stocked with English sparkling wine, smoked almonds and home-made clotted-cream fudge.

The food at Fowlescombe is a big draw. In a kitchen under the direction of *MasterChef* finalist chef Elly Wentworth, the motto is simple: celebrate Devon's extraordinary produce. Hands-on workshops, from bread kneading to sausage making, run throughout the day. Dinners of cucumber gazpacho and pork belly followed by lime tart are often served communally, with meals stretching late into the night. Nearby, Fowlescombe's sister pub, The Millbrook Inn, serves one of the best Sunday roasts in the country.

Afterwards, pull on a pair of wellies and explore the working farm. Wander Fowlescombe's 450 acres of orchards ▷



THE COAST WITH *the most*

Enjoy south Devon's beach life

HOPE COVE
YOU'LL FIND THIS PICTURE-PERFECT SANDY BEACH (ABOVE) AND SEASIDE VILLAGE NESTLED BETWEEN SALCOMBE AND THURLESTONE.

BURGH ISLAND
A TIDAL ISLAND AT BIGBURY-ON-SEA THAT INSPIRED THE SETTINGS OF AGATHA CHRISTIE'S *AND THEN THERE WERE NONE* AND *EVIL UNDER THE SUN*.

DAWLISH WARREN
THIS SANDY BEACH STRETCHES OVER A MILE AT THE MOUTH OF THE EXE ESTUARY. EXPECT GENTLE WATERS BACKED BY SAND DUNES AND AN INTERNATIONALLY PROTECTED NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE.

ELBERRY COVE
A SECLUDED, SHINGLE BEACH IN SOUTH DEVON, NESTLED BETWEEN PAIGNTON AND BRIXHAM.

PHOTOGRAPHS: FISHO UNDERWOOD, COURTESY OF FOCUS FEATURES, GETTY IMAGES





LAID-BACK LUXE
RIGHT: A GARDEN STUDIO AT FOWLESCOMBE FARM. BELOW: THE GREENHOUSE, SET OUT FOR DINNER

and meadows, admiring the chickens, cows, pigs, beehives and the odd bleating goat. Beyond the farm, just a short drive away, are some of Devon's most-loved beaches: try South Milton Sands or Bantham for cinematic coastal walks that explain exactly why it's the backdrop for so many film and television moments.

For a restorative warm-up, head to The Somewhere Sauna at Mothecombe for a traditional wood-fired sauna with panoramic views across a pine-tree-lined valley that leads down to the sea, then brave one of the two outdoor cold-plunge baths.

If you're feeling adventurous, trek across the moors to Wistman's Wood in the West Dart Valley of Dartmoor National Park, where a magical nine-acre site is famed for its pygmy oak trees and granite boulders blanketed in dense mosses, ferns and rare lichens that could be lifted straight from Taylor Swift's *Folklore* album cover.

When it's time to refuel (again), head for an iconic Devonshire cream tea at Otterton Mill, a working watermill that serves scones made from flour milled on site (just remember: in Devon it's cream first, then jam). Or make the trip to Pilchard Inn, a 14th-century pub located on Burgh Island famed for its fish and chips.

The mood in Devon this autumn is simple: slow down, embrace wild nature and eat everything. It's no surprise everyone is heading west.

WHAT TO *pack*

Be prepared, whatever the weather



1 G-pants, £95, **GRAMICCI 2** Clearwater CNX sandal, £100, **CLEARWATER 3** Explorer bottle, £34.95, **BLACK + BLUM 4** Re-Nylon jacket, £1,410, **PRADA 5** Hard shell trolley, £278, **EASTPAK**

A MATTER OF TASTE

Four must-stay retreats where dining takes centre-stage



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THE RED LION, CLOVELLY
A CHARMING 18TH-CENTURY INN NESTLED ON THE ANCIENT HARBOUR QUAY. NAUTICAL-THEMED ROOMS COME WITH SPECTACULAR SEA VIEWS, AND THE MENU FEATURES LOCALLY CAUGHT SEAFOOD.



LYMPSTONE MANOR, EXE ESTUARY
WITH VINEYARD VIEWS, THIS TWO-MICHELIN-KEY HOTEL, OWNED BY CHEF MICHAEL CAINES, IS SET WITHIN 28 ACRES OF WOODLAND. ENJOY LONG LUNCHES, SWIMMING IN THE OUTDOOR POOL AND, OF COURSE, WINE-TASTING.



BORINGDON HALL HOTEL, PLYMOUTH
A GRAND ELIZABETHAN MANOR HOUSE IS NOW HOME TO MICHELIN-STARRED RESTAURANT ACLĒAF, MAKING IT ONE OF THE SOUTHWEST'S MOST DISTINCTIVE FINE-DINING DESTINATIONS.

PHOTOGRAPHS: JON TONKS/COURTESY OF FOWLESCOMBE FARM, WISH WISH WISH, MATTHEW HAWKEY

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FURNITURE *is the new* FASHION



With chairs popping up on runways and skirts that double as carpets, the line between the two worlds is blurring

WORDS BY ADRIENNE GAFFNEY

IF THERE WAS ONE TAKEAWAY FROM THIS YEAR'S MILAN DESIGN Week, it was that fashion and furniture are no longer fully distinct categories. Brands including Prada, Hermès, Fendi and Giorgio Armani presented installations featuring furniture pieces or home objects. And in recent seasons, Bottega Veneta, Ralph Lauren and Alaïa have all created custom seating for their fashion shows. The movement goes both ways, with brands such as Institution and Hodakova creating clothing that could *almost* double as home decor.

Georgian-Azerbaijani designer Galib Gassanoff, whose label Institution showed models wrapped in patterned carpets for autumn/winter 2026, says his goal is 'to tell a story where objects, interior design and contemporary art can dialogue with fashion and clothing'. He loves the notion that a garment could one day find a new use in the home, aiming 'to give this idea of a collectable – clothing that is not staying in a wardrobe after you wear it once or twice. It can live forever on a wall'. Growing up in the Caucasus region,





CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT
HODAKOVA AW26; CUSTOM SEATING FOR ALAÏA'S COUTURE SHOW; RALPH LAUREN'S AUTUMN 2026 SHOW SEATING; INSTITUTION BY GALIB GASSANOFF AW26; BOTTEGA VENETA'S RUNWAY, WITH CHAIRS BY 6:AM



PHOTOGRAPHS: IMAXTREE, GETTY IMAGES, COURTESY OF THE DESIGNERS

which has a long history of artisanal tapestries and carpets, Gassanoff learnt how to make pieces on a loom, following ancestral traditions, and he still works with local craftspeople to create exclusive pieces.

Designer Ellen Hodakova Larsson is known for her boundary-pushing pieces. For her AW26 Hodakova collection, shown at Le Carrousel du Louvre, chairs became dresses, the fabric wrapping the body and the chair legs sitting alongside the model's thighs. Another look paired a rug worn over the shoulders and torso with a top and shorts.

Fashionable furniture made its way off the runway, too – though not far from it. For Ralph Lauren's autumn/winter 2026 show, which was held at New York's Jack Shainman Gallery, a mix of vintage chairs and furniture from the brand's home line stood alongside antique carpets. Invitations to Alaïa's spring 2024 couture show in Paris came in a brown-leather box. Inside each was a wood-and-leather folding chair. These served as seating for the show, held on a footbridge, and guests were expected to arrive with their chairs in tow.

Over the years, Bottega Veneta has worked with furniture and design brands to create runway seating, which, in some cases, then shows up at design shows and becomes available for purchase. For the brand's AW26 show held in Milan back in March, British furniture designer Max Lamb created 421 chairs made from expanded polystyrene, which were hand-cut and assembled for the event. Meanwhile, Bottega Veneta guests sat on special editions of architect Le Corbusier's famous crate-inspired LC14 Cabanon Stool, created with Cassina in collaboration with the Fondation Le Corbusier. The trio later made versions of the stools for a Milan Design Week installation called On the Rocks.

The Italian glass brand 6:AM created blown-glass stools for Bottega Veneta's spring/summer 2026 runway show. 'The cube [stool] already existed as an idea before the collaboration,' says Edoardo Pandolfo, co-founder of the brand. 'What changed through the dialogue with Bottega Veneta was its scale and ambition. The fashion show provided an opportunity to realise the project in a way that would not have been possible otherwise, transforming a single object into a collective architectural gesture.'

The furniture designers learnt that one of the biggest distinctions between fashion and interiors is the timeline. While most fashion designers adhere to a strict schedule, releasing collections at specific points during the year, furniture and design brands operate more independently. 'Fashion operates at a completely different pace. Collections are developed and presented at extraordinary speed, and everything revolves around a fixed date,' Pandolfo says. 'Between the compressed timeline, the technical challenges and the absence of a plan B, this became one of the most demanding projects we have ever worked on.'

Despite the differences, Gassanoff believes all designers share a similar goal: creating beautiful pieces that shape the way we live and feel. He wants to play with the notion that fashion pieces are often seen as disposable – worn for a season or two and then cast off – while furniture can be used for generations. He believes clothing can last, too. 'Usually, people think of furniture as an investment,' he says. 'I'm trying to make customers think that clothing, if it's made in a certain way by certain craftsmen, has a kind of value. It's an investment, as well.'



COLOUR PAIRINGS

YELLOW *& orange*

A clever hit of bright mustard can elevate even the darkest corner, adding a dash of sun all year round. Or for something bolder, try a warm and graphic orange – think the *Marty Supreme* campaign – that works like a charm with natural woods and tactile textures

1 Chair, £159.99, **DAALS** **2** Cushion, £15, **JOHN LEWIS & PARTNERS** **3** Candle, £115, **LOEWE** at **MYTHERESA** **4** Lamp, £145, **ADDISON ROSS** at **LIBERTY** **5** Candle, £95, **CABANA** **6** Mugs, £40 for two, **THE CONRAN SHOP** **7** Jug, £290, **AKUA OBJECTS** **8** Sofa, £1,169, **JOHN LEWIS AND PARTNERS** **9** Tumblers, £235 for two, **NASON MORETTI** **10** Butter dish, £55, **&K AMSTERDAM** **11** Stool, £365, **POLSPOTTEN** **12** Lamp, £560, **PALEFIRE STUDIO** **13** Jug, £100, **JOHN LEWIS & PARTNERS**

PHOTOGRAPHS: IMAXTREE



GREEN *& blue*

Crisp and modern, the freshness of green works best as a point of contrast, lifting darker tones and bringing a clean, contemporary edge. Use on walls and upholstery alongside calm and grounding blues for effortless refinement

1 Cutlery set, £40, **SABRE** at **SELFRIDGES**
2 Lamp, £155, **&TRADITION** **3** Mirror, £115, **JOHN LEWIS & PARTNERS** **4** Glass, £68, **GUSTAV WESTMAN** **5** Table, price on request, **LOUIS VUITTON** **6** Bowl, £39, **SERAX** **7** Vase, £14.99, **H&M** **8** Lamp, £778, **FLOS** **9** Bench, £1,395, **SOHO HOME** **10** Jug, £90, **HOME STUDYO** **11** Glasses, price on request, **ARMANI CASA** **12** Chair, £891, **NOO.MA** **13** Jug, £55, **HAY** **14** Vase, £2,430, **ALEXA LIXFELD** at **MYTHERESA** **15** Side table, £195, **THE CONRAN SHOP**

PHOTOGRAPHY: GUTTER CREDIT GOES HERE

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Circular Groove is a London-based circular fashion studio founded in 2023 by Ksenia Kazbekova. Built on the belief that exceptional wardrobes are collected over time, not consumed in seasons, CG offers a carefully curated selection of vintage and second-hand fashion chosen for its character, craftsmanship and longevity. After a series of successful pop-ups across London and New York, Circular Groove now welcomes clients to its Notting Hill studio by private appointment, continuing to champion a more thoughtful approach to fashion.

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MADE, NOT MINED



There is a quiet audacity to Apartment6's premise: that rarity need not be found, but made – grown, colour by colour, stone by stone, for the wearer alone. Pink, white, or a hue no mine could ever guarantee, each diamond is chemically and visually indistinguishable from its earth-bound counterpart, and ethically its superior. The house's in-house designs are built for transformation – day into evening, one stone into two – jewellery that adapts as fluidly as the women who wear it. This is modern luxury with a conscience, and unmistakably, a point of view.

Rarity, reinvented.

apartment6.co.uk – @_apartment6

FASHION EDIT

SEASON 11 OF TIFFANY'S RED CARPET FASHION SHOW IN MONACO SHOWCASING INTERNATIONAL DESIGNERS DURING THE 79TH CANNES FILM FESTIVAL



From the Dance Floor to the Red Carpet Collection by LR Fashion of Slovakia
https://www.lrdancefashion.com



Hollywoodienne Glamour Collection by Lucilia Couture of the UK at Tiffany's Red Carpet Fashion Show Monte Carlo
https://luciliacouture.co.uk



Heavenly Glow Collection Marquisa by Brigitte of Romania at Tiffany's Red Carpet Fashion Show in Monte Carlo
https://www.marquisa.eu



3AM Luxury Handbag & Accessoires Brand Presents The Joséphine Collection In Monte Carlo
https://3amluxury.com



Savage Beauty Collection
Tailored Made DK By Dorota Kuznicka Couture of Poland at Tiffany's Red Carpet Fashion Show in Monaco
https://sklep.dkuznicka.pl



Fashion Designer & Fashion Show Producer Tiffany McCall at the 79th Cannes Film Festival in LR Fashion and Jewels by Boutique Eco Diamant Monaco
https://eco-diamant.com



International Fashion Influencer & Businesswoman of Dubai Shiva Helali at the 79th Cannes Film Festival, Styled by Tiffany McCall
https://tiffanysfashionweeks.com



International Model Anupama Kunjur of the UK at the 79th Cannes Film Festival, Styled by Tiffany McCall
https://tiffanysfashionweeks.com

Hair & Makeup Maap Paris By Janine Zenk | Dario Ciccarelli Of Glam Cannes & Rooby Ahuja | Jewellery Partner Boutique Eco Diamant Monaco | Photo Credit: Koperski, Sebastien Arsi & Marcelo Nlele of Presscrea

FASHION EDIT





HSW: THE ARCHITECTURE OF HER

Where sculptural tailoring meets modern femininity. Each piece answering a feeling...

Founded by Dr. Maram Alibrahim, HSW was created for women who have outgrown compromise. The house explores architectural silhouettes, refined craftsmanship, and enduring design, creating garments that balance structure with softness and confidence with ease.

Produced in limited quantities using exceptional natural materials- including cashmere, bouclé, fine leather, and premium wool-each piece is designed to become part of a lasting wardrobe rather than a passing season.

The debut AW26/27 collection, The Architecture of Her, reflects a vision of quiet luxury where thoughtful construction, timeless elegance, and contemporary femininity exist in perfect balance.

DESIGNED BY Dr. Maram Alibrahim
WWW.THEHSW.CO
@THEHSW.CO

SOME STORIES ARE WRITTEN. OURS ARE WOVEN.





Every Elsie Tweed scarf is inspired by moments from founder Leona's family life and the ever-changing colours of the Donegal landscape. A contemporary Irish brand, woven in Donegal from the finest 100% merino lambswool and lovingly hand-finished.

Elsie Tweed is a celebration of colour, craftsmanship and effortless style, created to evoke memories, inspire new adventures and become part of your own story.

Discover **elsietweed.com**.
Use code **ELLE10** for 10% off online.
Follow **@elsietweed**.

BEA



Bea is redefining everyday essentials with a collection of premium underwear and casual wardrobe staples. More than a basics brand, Bea is dedicated to perfecting the pieces women reach for most, solving everyday wardrobe frustrations with practical, flattering designs that work as hard as they do. At the heart of every design is a flattering fit, helping women feel comfortable and confident. Following a sell-out launch, Bea's signature Relaxed Fit T-Shirt is back in stock. Crafted from premium combed cotton for a soft, breathable feel and effortless comfort that keeps pace with everyday life. Bea confident. Bea comfortable. Bea you.

FASHION EDIT

THE ART OF MODERN FEMININITY

I have always believed that fashion is about far more than clothing. The right dress can change the way a woman walks into a room, the way she carries herself and, most importantly, the way she feels.

That belief inspired me to found Miss Candy in 2012. From the very beginning, my vision has been to create timeless pieces that celebrate femininity, confidence and individuality rather than passing trends.

Every Miss Candy design begins with my own sketch. I personally select premium fabrics from Europe's finest textile mills and shape each silhouette with meticulous attention to proportion, craftsmanship and detail. Every collection is created to become part of life's most meaningful moments.









Today, as Miss Candy enters a new chapter in London, my ambition is to share this vision with women around the world. I believe true luxury is not about excess. It is about exceptional quality, thoughtful design and creating something a woman will treasure for years.

For me, success has never been about following fashion. It has always been about creating beauty that lasts.

Dasha Shaporenko

Founder, Creative Director & Designer of Miss Candy

www.misscandy.ua | @misscandy

ESSENTIALS EDIT

TRANSFORM ELITE

Beauty. Skin. Longevity

The ritual your skin - and your future self - deserves.

Some skincare routines feel like effort. This one feels like a choice you make for yourself.

Transform Elite is a curated collection of performance-led skincare for people who want visible radiance, lasting hydration and the quiet confidence that comes from caring for themselves well.

Founded by Hang Hough, each formula is created to feel as elegant as it performs - from cleansing and hydration to renewal, tone correction and targeted care. No overcomplicated steps. No compromise on quality. Just beautiful, high-quality skincare designed for real life and consistent daily use.

To complement your skincare ritual, meet **ELITE WITHIN** - our premium daily drink designed to support beauty and longevity from within. Because the most transformative rituals begin beneath the skin.



Live Younger. Live Elite.

New to Transform Elite? Use code **ELLEELITE** for complimentary UK delivery and a luxury discovery gift with your first order. Terms apply.

Discover the collection at TheTransformElite.com/elle

LEAN LATTES PROTEIN COFFEE



Breakfast is often the meal where protein is overlooked, with many mornings centred around cereal, toast or coffee alone. Lean Lattes Protein Coffee makes it easy to add more protein to the start of the day, combining premium Arabica coffee with 8g of whey protein in every serving.

With just 33 calories before milk is added, it can be enjoyed hot or over ice and is designed to taste like a smooth, barista-style latte rather than a traditional protein shake. Simple to prepare and easy to fit into a busy routine, Lean Lattes offers a delicious way to enjoy coffee while increasing protein intake at breakfast.

Discover more at: www.leanlattes.com

Offer: Readers can save an extra 20% off sale prices until 31 October 2026 by scanning the QR code and using the discount code MORNING20

DEERIEO NATURAL SKINCARE



Where expert formulation meets the power of nature. Handcrafted in Scotland, our award-winning, dermatologist-approved skincare combines carefully selected botanicals with proven cosmetic actives to restore healthy skin, smooth texture, even skin tone and support a firm, radiant complexion.

Discover Daily Glow, our best-selling moisturiser for sensitive and menopausal skin. Formulated with niacinamide and vitamin C-rich sea buckthorn to brighten, soothe, deeply hydrate and strengthen your skin. It's luxuriously rich yet elegantly lightweight, delivering the indulgence of a spa treatment with visible results and an exceptional 4.98 customer rating.

Scan to enjoy an exclusive 20% ELLE reader offer across the full Deerieo collection, or use code ELLE20 at checkout. deerieo.com

ESSENTIALS EDIT

ALL-NATURAL BODY CARE FOR SKIN THAT HAS LIVED

Skincare does not mean facecare, it's bodycare! Till our late 30s, we believe skincare is something that begins with the face & neck and ends at the back of our hands. But then you're 40 one day and suddenly you hate your arms and legs. But this is not simply a "normal 40s" thing. The skin on your arms, legs, thighs, tummy, bums, and décolletage has lived through hormone shifts, motherhood, weight changes, sun exposure, and time. It deserves the same, if not more, care and intention. Besque was created by women, for women, with one belief at its heart: body care should feel less like correction and more like respect. Created by women, for women, Besque makes clean, natural body care for skin that has lived. No synthetic fillers. No artificial fragrance. Simply cold-pressed botanical oils, thoughtfully blended into one nourishing, non-greasy, and calming ritual. Besque's Magic Body Oil is designed to deeply nourish dry, thin, crepey, or loose skin while supporting softness, skin elasticity, and a healthy glow from within. This all-natural body oil sinks instantly into damp skin, helping it feel smoother, firmer, and deeply hydrated. A few minutes after the shower is all it takes: slow hands, massage in the body oil, and care for the places we too often overlook. Not anti-aging. Not harsh fixing. Just clean, intentional body care for women over 40.





Scan here to read ingredients

Discover Besque Today hello@besque.co | www.besque.co

A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON SKINCARE

Designed for women who are already becoming the strongest version of themselves, AYLIMA combines Korean skincare philosophy with a more grounded, modern approach to beauty.



The Stockholm-based brand creates high-functioning formulas centered around skin resilience, recovery and long-term skin health using advanced actives like peptides, fermented extracts and Centella Asiatica. The result is skincare shaped by discipline, momentum and modern life.

www.aylima.com

WEIGHT LOSS SHOULDN'T MAKE YOUR LIFE SMALLER

For so many women, wanting to feel better in their body comes with a fear of losing the parts of life they love: dinners out, chocolate, a Friday evening glass of wine, holidays, and joy.



I'm Alice, founder of ALY Online Coaching. I help women lose weight without falling back into restriction, guilt or the endless Monday restart cycle.

You don't need to be the person who says no to everything.

The goal is to build confidence, self-trust and healthy habits that fit into real life.

Scan the QR code to learn more.

ESSENTIALS EDIT

THE NEW ERA OF INTIMATE WELLNESS

Intimate wellness is becoming an increasingly important part of women's health conversations. In Surrey, Nurse Prescriber Elle Jenner offers a discreet, expert-led approach to supporting pelvic floor health using advanced electromagnetic technology.



What sets Elle apart is her personalised approach. Each treatment is tailored to the individual, with intensity and progression carefully adjusted throughout the course of treatment. The non-invasive technology is designed to support pelvic floor muscle strengthening in a comfortable clinical setting.

Working closely with every client, Elle focuses on helping women feel more confident and supported in their everyday lives through personalised care and professional expertise.



Book a confidential consultation with Nurse Prescriber Elle Jenner today.

07703 658070 | info@medicsaestheticsclinic.co.uk
www.medicsaesthetics.org

HAIR THAT MAKES YOU FEEL LIKE THE BEST VERSION OF YOURSELF

Based in the far north of Scotland near John O'Groats, Helaina Rosie Hair has been helping women feel confident, beautiful and completely themselves since 2011. Specialising in bridal hair, Helaina combines creativity with a warm, personal approach that keeps clients returning time and time again. Inspired by industry icons including Sam McKnight and following training through the prestigious Mastered programme, Helaina is now looking to expand further into editorial styling whilst continuing to create beautiful, confidence-boosting hair for every client who sits in her chair.





Follow the journey and discover more at **@helainarosie**

ACROSS GENERATIONS



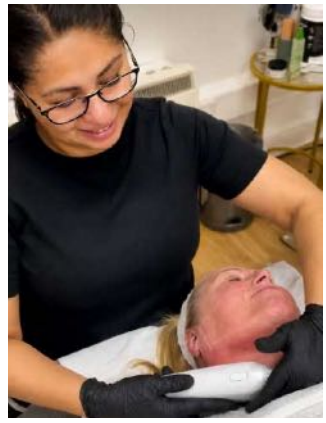
Founded by New Mexico artist, writer, and metalsmith Leah Prada, Yoté explores the relationship between identity, inheritance, and belonging. Rooted in Prada's Genízara heritage and the philosophy of Tangible Folklore, the work examines how culture is carried, transformed, and expressed across generations. Through jewelry, writing, and visual storytelling, Yoté challenges stereotypes and invites reflection on the complexities of ancestry, mixed identity, and the stories we choose to preserve. Each piece acts as both adornment and artifact, reminding us that who we are is shaped not only by what we inherit, but by what we choose to steward forward.

Explore the world of Yoté: **www.yotejewelry.com.**

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

ESSENTIALS EDIT

THE SUBTLE LIFT: WHY HIFU IS REDEFINING NON-SURGICAL REJUVENATION



For years, aesthetic treatments have been associated with reversing visible signs of ageing, but the conversation is changing. At Sculpt by Sumera, founder Sumera Hussein believes the future of skin rejuvenation lies in prevention rather than correction.

"More of my younger clients are choosing HIFU not because they look older, but because modern lifestyles are accelerating skin concerns," she explains. Hours spent looking down at phones, laptops and screens can contribute to poor posture, tension and early loss of definition around the jawline and neck. HIFU (High-Intensity Focused Ultrasound) works by stimulating collagen production deep within the skin, helping to strengthen and support facial structure naturally.

Rather than immediately turning to fillers or Botox, Sumera advocates rebuilding the foundation first. "It's like building a house. You strengthen the structure before focusing on the finishing details."



Clients consistently praise her personalised approach. One reviewer described the results as "unbelievable," while another noted that Sumera "really knows her stuff" and tailors treatments to individual needs.

Her advice when choosing a practitioner? Look beyond price. Experience, consultation quality and a thorough understanding of facial anatomy should always come first, ensuring treatments enhance rather than alter your natural features.

www.sculptbysumera.com | 07951 278565 | @sculpt.edinburgh | @sculpt.glasgow

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THE ART OF MODERN LUXURY





Today, luxury accessories have become the foundation of a well-curated wardrobe. More than finishing touches, they are expressions of personal style, chosen for their craftsmanship, enduring appeal and ability to elevate any look with effortless sophistication.

As consumers become increasingly selective about what they buy, the focus has shifted towards quality over quantity. The most sought-after luxury pieces are those that can be worn season after season, effortlessly elevating both everyday looks and special occasions.

At AMPM Luxury Goods, we specialise in sourcing some of the world's most desirable luxury accessories, including watches from Rolex, Patek Philippe and Audemars Piguet, alongside designer handbags from brands such as Hermès, Chanel, Louis Vuitton, Gucci, Prada and Dior. We are also proud to be an official stockist of Tiffany & Co. sunglasses, bringing one of the world's most iconic luxury brands to our Belfast showroom and online store.



Whether you're searching for your next luxury purchase, investing in a timeless piece, or looking to sell a luxury item you no longer wear, our team is here to help. Scan the QR code to browse our latest collection, request a valuation, or speak with a member of our team.

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final word



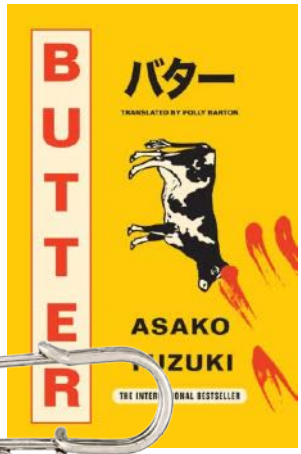
WHETHER IT'S JACKSON BOXER'S NEW RESTAURANT VESPER, LUCA, ST JOHN OR THE PARK BY JEREMY KING, THERE'S SO MUCH GREAT FOOD TO ENJOY IN LONDON.





THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY IS ONE OF MY FAVOURITE PLACES – I LOVE WHAT DIRECTOR VICTORIA SIDDALL IS DOING THERE. I'M VERY EXCITED ABOUT A PARTNERSHIP THAT WE'RE WORKING ON FOR THIS MONTH WITH THE BRITISH FASHION COUNCIL.

I WAS RECOMMENDED ASAKO YUZUKI'S NOVEL *BUTTER*, WHICH I LOVED. I HAVEN'T STOPPED EATING WHITE RICE WITH SOY SAUCE AND BUTTER SINCE FINISHING IT! PATRICK RADDEN KEEFE'S *LONDON FALLING* IS AN INCREDIBLE ROMP THROUGH THE WEALTHY LONDON UNDERWORLD AND HOW IT DIRECTS THE CITY, WITH SOME INTERESTING SOCIAL COMMENTARY AROUND KEEPING UP APPEARANCES AND THE PITFALLS OF THAT AS A PURSUIT.





THIS SEASON, I FANCY TOYING WITH A BROOCH. CHRISTOPHER KANE WEARS THEM BEAUTIFULLY, SO I'M TAKING INSPIRATION FROM HIM.

I FIND IT HARD TO PICK ONE BEAUTY PRODUCT BUT THE HELIOCARE 360° MINERAL TOLERANCE FLUID SPF50+ GIVES ME A NICE GLOW WHILE PROTECTING ME FROM UV RAYS.





MY DRINK OF CHOICE DEPENDS ON WHO I'M WITH. WITH MY CLOSE FRIEND, THE HAIRDRESSER JOSH WOOD, IT'S ALWAYS AN OLD FASHIONED AT THE FUMOIR BAR AT CLARIDGE'S. IF IT'S WITH MY DAUGHTER, IT'S A BUBBLE TEA AT SELFRIDGES.

I NEVER TIRE OF LONDON. EVERY TIME I TAKE THE TRAIN INTO THE CITY AND GO OVER ONE OF THE BRIDGES, BE IT BLACKFRIARS OR LONDON BRIDGE, I GET INSPIRED BY THE RIVER, THE BUILDINGS AND THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF PEOPLE YOU SEE AND MEET.



The Tastemaker: LAURA WEIR

As London Fashion Week returns, the British Fashion Council CEO shares the books, bars and galleries shaping her season

ELLE COLLECTIVE

ELLE COLLECTIVE HAS EXCLUSIVE ACCESS TO FASHION BRITAIN EVENTS THROUGHOUT SEPTEMBER

SIGN UP ON PAGE 88 OR AT ELLECOLLECTIVE.CO.UK

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