October
2026

FASHION

When
ATHLETES
BAG UP

BEAUTY'S
TRANSPARENCY
ERA

+

RECOVERY
IS *the* NEW
WORKOUT



LAYSLA
DE OLIVEIRA





LOUIS VUITTON



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HardWear by Tiffany
A symbol of love's strength.



Long Li & Selena Forrest
Left *The Menil Collection*, right *The Rothko Chapel*, May 2026 in Houston, Texas

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Loro Piana

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Alhambra
Long necklace



Dress, Styntsov.
Corset, Voyelle.
Earring,
Marinelli's own.

PERSONAL **BEST**

"GRIT" HAS BECOME AN IMPORTANT WORD IN MY VOCABULARY. Staying focused, strong and passionate about the things I love has always been my MO, but in recent months, with an increased focus on my wellness and self-care, I've come back to the word grit time and again. It's one that balances and centres me.

As someone who has long been invested in personal fitness, I decided to dig deeper in 2026 and challenge myself to switch up my workout intensity. Signing on for such a serious level of training later in life has changed the way I think about strength and what being strong actually means. I once thought it was about how much you could lift or how fast you could run, but I now see it as consistency. It's about showing up, how you approach a challenge and how you push your boundaries—both physical and mental—to achieve your goals.

My training is something I started for the physical benefits, but over time, it has become something so much bigger: an energy source. Pushing beyond my boundaries at the gym has radically altered the way I approach everything else. There is a mental clarity that comes from training—the kind that resets my drive and sharpens my focus. All of this helps me show up as a better version of myself in all my worlds, including the ever-evolving realm of media.

This issue is one I am particularly invested in, as we are celebrating sportiness and all of its stylish, athletic-inspired angles. "The Power of Sport" is our theme, and we are thrilled to have Toronto Tempo centre—and absolute rockstar—Temi Fagbenle as our guest editor, sharing her fashionable faves with us.

In the world of wellness, we talk about post-workout recovery and inclusivity in Pilates. In beauty, Natalie Portman and Leighton Meester front fabulous fragrance campaigns. We also highlight the best watches for active lives and shine the spotlight on Canadian activewear brands. The *FASHION* editors have also curated an expert edit of autumn's coziest knits.

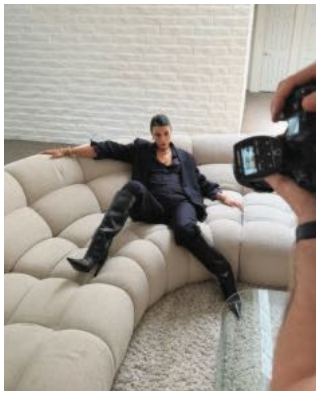
Our October cover star is Canadian actor Laysla De Oliveira. The Torontonian is currently starring in the third season of the Paramount+ spy thriller *Lioness*. (She plays Cruz Manuelos.) What a joy it was to have De Oliveira on-set with us in Los Angeles. She is elegance and kindness personified, and I think you'll agree that these qualities are perfectly captured in her *FASHION* debut.

I hope this issue not only inspires your style choices this season but also has you considering what grit means to you and what keeps you running and fully charged. Happy reading!

With gratitude,

Deidre

Deidre Marinelli, Publisher
@deidremarinelli





A behind-the-scenes look at our October cover shoot

PHOTOGRAPHY, MAIN BY NATASHA GERSCHON. HAIR AND MAKEUP, VERONICA CHU FOR ORIBE AND NAHS. BTS BY GEORGIE ANTONOPOULOS.

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CITIZEN

FASHION

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Top and pants, Aknvas. Earrings, necklace, rings and bracelets, Tiffany & Co.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY NATASHA GERSCHON. CAPE AND SHORTS, LOUIS VUITTON.

TUDOR









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What is it that drives someone to greatness? To take on the unknown, venture into the unseen, and dare all? This is the spirit that gave birth to TUDOR. This is the spirit embodied by every TUDOR watch. Including the TUDOR Royal, a 30mm diameter stainless steel and gold sports watch with an integrated bracelet, a signature notched bezel, and a dial that matches your style. Some are born to follow. You are born to dare.

BORN TO DARE

FASHION AFTER DARK

THE AFTER-HOURS EDIT

Seen. Shot. Remembered.



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The First Dance



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Spotted at Sonny Can't Dance:
The First Dance



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The First Dance



SONIA MANGAT *@soniamangattv*
Spotted at Queens Harbour:
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Deep Sea Series 1



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ASHLEY SUN *@scashleyyoo*
Spotted at Queens Harbour:
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BAG **BOYS**

From A$AP Rocky to the world's best-dressed athletes, men are embracing handbags as the ultimate style flex.

(SEE NEXT PAGE.)

TEXT BY JULIA MCEWEN. PHOTOGRAPHY VIA GETTY.

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Clockwise from top: Erling Haaland, Jannik Sinner, Virgil van Dijk, Kylian Mbappé, Lewis Hamilton

SHOULDER *Season*

As athletes embrace fashion, the luxury handbag has become the latest symbol of modern masculinity.

By **BEN KRIZ**

The World Cup may be over, but its best fashion moments are still lingering. During our collective 5½-week case of football fever, our cups ranneth over: The DR Congo made a statement in crisp tailoring finished with blinged-out brooches and leopard-print harnesses, a surprising number of players opted for bright-pink cleats and Scotland supporters swarmed Boston in a sea of kilts.

But nothing seemed to capture the fashion world's attention quite like the tournament's biggest off-field trend: the players' designer bags. France's squad arrived at training carrying everything from Hermès Haut à Courroies bags to Dior A5 Triangle Pouches. The Netherlands' Virgil van Dijk rolled into training with a Chanel Maxi Shopping Bag. And even Canada's own Alphonso Davies showed up in Toronto with a Louis Vuitton backpack.

However, it was Erling Haaland who took things to the next level. The Norway striker, with flowing flaxen-blond hair and Viking proportions, led his country to the quarter-finals, scored seven goals and gained roughly 22 million Instagram followers along the way. So, when fans discovered that he owns a collection of at least seven rare Hermès bags (including a unicorn Endless Road Birkin that, according to a listing on 1stDibs, is currently going for $83,000), it only added to his growing mythos. (He knows ball!) He emerged on the other end of the World Cup as a genuine cultural crossover.

It might seem strange, but the larger travel bags favoured by many footballers are genuinely useful. Elite athletes spend much of their

PHOTOGRAPHY: COLLAGE BY CINDY KHIN; HAMILTON VIA GETTY; HAALAND VIA @ERLING/INSTAGRAM; SINNER VIA @JANNIKSIN/INSTAGRAM; MBAPPÉ VIA @K.MBAPPE/INSTAGRAM; VAN DIJK VIA @VIRGILVANDIJK/INSTAGRAM.

lives moving between airports, hotels and training grounds, making a capacious leather weekender or tote both practical and stylish. Plus, the larger silhouettes, traditionally seen as more gender-neutral, offer an easier entry point into the category (although some players, like France's Kylian Mbappé, have carried smaller clutches).

For Jack Stanley, a menswear and culture writer based in London, England, the popularity of these bags reflects something more than simply expensive taste. "Players like Haaland are showing that they don't care about all of that; they're comfortable in who they are and how they choose to express themselves," he says. "There's nothing contradictory about being a six-foot-five unit on the pitch and carrying a luxury handbag off it. This is really refreshing—and a different view of masculinity at an important time, when homophobia and misogyny are increasing in football." While few men are likely to spend five figures on an Hermès HAC, Stanley believes that footballers are helping normalize handbags more broadly, even if the trickle-down begins in luxury.

Athletes have been flirting with fashion for decades—from the New York Knicks' Walt Frazier's flamboyant tailoring to tennis icons Arthur Ashe's refined elegance and Andre Agassi's rebellious on-court style—but these moments have been largely individual expressions. Dennis Rodman wasn't afraid to ruffle feathers by wearing dresses and playing with gender norms, but he was an outlier. The modern athlete-fashion ecosystem really took shape in the 2010s as social media transformed players into global brands.

Tunnel walks and airport arrivals are now content opportunities—another way to build a following beyond the game. "Today's athletes are no longer defined solely by what they accomplish on the field; they're building identities that extend far beyond their sport," says Montreal-based stylist and creative director Maude Sen. "Athletes have realized that fashion is another form of storytelling and have become much more involved in the creative process. They're visiting ateliers, collaborating with designers, attending fashion shows and developing genuine relationships with luxury houses."

Formula 1's Lewis Hamilton is perhaps the definitive example. A regular at fashion weeks, he has been co-chair of the Met Gala, collaborated with numerous luxury houses and championed emerging Black designers. In many ways, he's paved the way for modern athletes to be seen as fashion figures. Tennis champ Jannik Sinner has worked closely with Gucci, carrying custom duffles onto Centre Court at Wimbledon, and even the Maple Leafs' William Nylander was regularly photographed carrying Bottega Veneta and Goyard while becoming one of the NHL's most-fashion-forward players.

In working closely with luxury houses, athletes might naturally gravitate toward the most powerful of status symbols: bags. "A bag often says something that clothing alone can't," says Sen. "It communicates taste, an appreciation for craftsmanship and sometimes even a person's philosophy around luxury."

"For a long time, it was cars and watches," Stanley adds. "Now, it extends into other areas. Spending half a million dollars on handbags is a pretty big flex."

The bigger question is whether this influence will extend to the general public. We've watched Timothée Chalamet carry Chanel clutches and Jacob Elordi embrace oversized Bottega Veneta bags. Now, an entire generation of footballers is doing the same. Stanley believes this is already beginning to reshape how men think about accessories and, more broadly, masculinity. "We're seeing some of those gendered divides breaking down in more-subtle ways," he says. "Handbags are a way to bring a bit more softness to how you're dressing."

Whether the average guy will eventually swap his backpack for a large shoulder bag remains to be seen. But then again, a few years ago nobody expected Haaland to make a Birkin look so good. ■

The *Carry* Link

The investment bags changing the conversation around menswear.



The original luxury travel bag. Introduced in the 1930s, the Keepall is essentially a very nice duffle – and one of the easiest entry points into handbags. **Louis Vuitton** Keepall, $3,650



Originally designed to carry riding gear, the Haut à Courroies predates the Birkin and has become one of luxury's ultimate travel bags. **Hermès** Haut à Courroies 40, price upon request



Once associated almost exclusively with womenswear, the Maxi Flap oversized shopping bag has found a surprising audience among famous men. **Chanel** Métiers d'art 2026 Maxi Flap Bag, $11,450



With its signature Intrecciato weave and almost no visible branding, the Andiamo has become the defining bag of the past few years. **Bottega Veneta** Large Andiamo Voyager, $12,280



Compact enough to be carried by hand, the A5 reflects men's growing comfort with silhouettes once considered solely for ladies. **Dior** A5 Triangle Pouch, $1,650

Perfect *Timing*

Liz Guber explores why Rolex—seen from Centre Court at Roland-Garros to the wrists of tennis' biggest champions—remains one of the sport's most enduring partners.



Coco Gauff's 2025 French Open win

I've loved tennis since high school, which means I've watched about 16 Roland-Garros (also known as the French Open) tournaments in my life. My highlight reel includes Italian player Francesca Schiavone collapsing in ecstasy onto the burnt-orange court after winning the final in 2010 and a victorious Rafael Nadal playfully pretending to bite his Roland-Garros trophies. (As the record holder for the most clay-major wins, he's done this a lot.) Of course, I watched all of this on television—until this year, when I finally stepped onto the French Open grounds and took it all in from my perfect vantage point in the Rolex box: The famed Court Philippe-Chatrier, with its suedelike clay, was revealed before me.

Rolex and tennis have a long history: The watchmaker became Wimbledon's official timekeeper in 1978. Today, it's the official timekeeper of all four Grand Slams—including, as of 2019, Roland-Garros—as well as all the other top-tier stops on the ATP and WTA tours. Watch a match sometime and you'll spot the clock in the right-hand corner of the court, with the telltale gold-crown logo beside it.

Unlike other sports, tennis has no set time periods. Games last as long as they need to—with matches between two elite players often stretching past the five-hour mark and the record for the longest match at a major tournament coming in at 11 hours and five minutes. (Yes, I watched it.) Spectators with tickets to an evening match might not get home until after midnight—not that they'd complain.



Beyond keeping time, Rolex also recognizes the best players in the game, anointing them as Rolex Testimonees. Much like a luxury fashion house might tap a starlet with an Oscar nom, Rolex selects both established and up-and-coming players, from all-time great Roger Federer to Canadian phenom Victoria Mboko to two-time French Open champion Carlos Alcaraz. It's all part of the Swiss watchmaker's mission to celebrate human achievement and show up for the milestones.

And although the pros don't tend to wear their watches while playing, a Rolex is embedded in many of the game's core moments, like Coco Gauff's French Open victory in 2025, when she flashed the "Red Grape" dial of her Oyster Perpetual as she held her trophy in front of the roaring crowd, or when 2025 men's singles runner-up Jannik Sinner signed autographs for fans while sporting a Daytona.

While many luxury brands have recently deepened their relationships with professional sports leagues, Rolex has been at it for half a century. In Roland-Garros' Rolex box, an elegant suite draped in forest-green hues, VIP clientele take in matches as they dine on a seasonal menu and sip Champagne. And while the perks might be plush, it's ultimately all about the game—like watching Gaël Monfils, the French player beloved for his cross-court slides and impossible gets, play his final match at Roland-Garros following the announcement of his retirement. A worthy new addition to my highlight reel. ■

PHOTOGRAPHY: GAUFF COURTESY OF ROLEX; STADIUM BY ANTOINE COUVERCELLE COURTESY OF ROLEX.



Lacoste, $165



Champlain, $220



Coach, $120



Loro Piana, $1,470



Marc Cain, $345





Studio Nicholson, $735



New Balance, $180

Ray-Ban, $190





Rolex, $14,750

Court *in* Session

You don't need a killer backhand to get in the game. This fall's mix of performance gear and tennis-coded fashion serves both on and off the court.



Bennett Winch, $2,450



Uniqlo, $80

EDITOR: JULIA MCEWEN. PHOTOGRAPHY: RUNWAY VIA LAUNCHMETRICS.COM/SPOTLIGHT.

Make Your *Move*

Balancing serious performance with serious style, these Canadian sportswear brands have earned a spot in the starting lineup.

By **JILLIAN VIEIRA**



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HOMETOWN: TORONTO

What began as a swimwear start-up founded in 2016 while they were students at Queen's University has become something of a viral hit for 437 co-founders Hyla Nayeri and Adrien Bettio. After going all in on activewear in 2023 – "We let the data and customer demand guide us," says Bettio – the business-minded pair haven't looked back. Bolstered by a bona fide It girl following (Kylie Jenner, Alix Earle and Kehlani are all fans), the Toronto-based brand has mastered the art of creating clothes that resonate online without feeling beholden to the algorithm. Expect Pilates-perfect separates like barely-there bra tops, modal-made ballet wraps and a sculpting halter onesie practically made for post-class matcha. Despite having its finger firmly on the pulse, 437 manages to stay ahead of the dizzying trend cycle. Its surefire strategy? Prioritizing longevity over passing micro-trends. "Before we ask if something is trend-right, we ask if it would make us feel confident wearing it," says Nayeri. "Because we're women designing for women, we're also our own customers." That understanding shows up in every piece: premium fabrications picked for their sweat-wicking functionality, flattering fits that hold up to a full day of plans and thoughtful details like seam-free fronts to make your next sculpt session a little easier.

PHOTOGRAPHY: 437 COURTESY OF 437; CIELE ATHLETICS COURTESY OF CIELE ATHLETICS; REIGNING CHAMP COURTESY OF REIGNING CHAMP.



CIELE ATHLETICS

HOMETOWN: MONTREAL

Running culture – the living, breathing, It crowd-attracting third space that seemingly everyone wants to join – has brands like Ciele Athletics partly to thank for its new-found cool. Since launching in Montreal in 2014, the brand has become synonymous with its colourful short-brimmed running caps – a fixture at start lines and coffee shops alike. Now, the head-to-toe-running-apparel brand is known for its obsessive technical engineering and unstudied street style, counting serious athletes among its devoted fan base. But it all comes back to "Everybody Run," more than just a snappy tag line for the company. "We grew up in a time of cliques: snowboarders versus skiers, skaters versus rollerbladers, punk rock versus prep," says co-founder Jeremy Bresnen. "When we started Ciele, we liked the idea that running was a level playing field that everyone could move to." The brand's collections – of speed-enhancing singlets, muscle-support tights and editorially sound merino balaclavas – let you lace up, go out and get air with every step. "Performance almost always wins out," says Catherine Langelier, Ciele Athletics' senior designer, of the team's unflinching priorities for durability, lightweight construction and protection from the elements. Though "style is only a small piece of it, secondary to the form and function," the brand recently participated in Paris Fashion Week, swapping the traditional trade-show circuit for something that got it closer to the community. "It's a different mood," offers Bresnen. "It seems to have become the place to be part of the conversation."

REIGNING CHAMP

HOMETOWN: VANCOUVER

Across its trove of foundational staples and sleek performancewear, Reigning Champ represents the platonic ideal of modern menswear (read "classic, clean-lined and, honestly, hard to mess up from a getting-dressed perspective"). The Vancouver-based company, launched in 2007, has a winning formula for ready-to-wear: It plucks inspiration from the long-standing culture surrounding sport rather than the physical pursuits themselves. "Everything from a polo shirt to an Oxford button-up to a hoodie has some sort of origin story starting in sport," says Mike Belgue, vice-president of the brand. "We use that as a jumping-off point and lean into the cultural impact that sport has had on men's fashion over the years."

Reimagining these prototypes for today hinges on Reigning Champ's fabric-first perspective. There's Japanese-developed Cordura, a lightweight-meets-durable material found in its non-clingy training tops, alongside the soon-to-be-released silk-cashmere knit polos that surpass the synthetic standard for a day on the fairway. Belgue even wore the brand's cashmere cove crewneck – an everyday wardrobe essential – as a regular mid-layer last ski season. That's the brand's secret sauce: a seamless style experience, from city streets to sweaty courts and even snow-covered slopes. Big-name athletes, including English pro golfer Tommy Fleetwood, have taken notice of Reigning Champ's contemporary style codes and dialed-in technical details, sporting its wares at the highest levels of competition.



The Ones *to* Watch

These emerging homegrown athletic brands are setting the pace for performance and style.



Designed by women for women: That's the boundary-smashing concept behind this Vancouver-based sneaker brand, which commissions biomechanical research to inform its women-specific sneaker designs. **Hettas**, $238



Freedom of movement is the raison d'être for this Montreal-rooted activewear brand, which boasts supportive fits, distraction-free seams and Insta-worthy silhouettes. **Sabē Athletic**, $78



Like the Lemaire of trail running, Montreal's own Norda marries pragmatic utility with cool silhouettes and unparalleled durability to meet its "buy less, buy better" mandate. **Norda**, $295



This Certified B Corp brand based out of Winnipeg pushes you to go places with its approachably priced collection of all-day activewear. **Mondetta**, $89

PLAYING *the* FIELD

Jerseys, rugby shirts and track jackets are this season's MVPs.

By **JULIA MCEWEN**



For years, the soccer jersey occupied a very specific corner of the closet. It was something you "borrowed" from a boyfriend (and never returned), threw on for the pub or dusted off every four years when the World Cup rolled around or when your city's [insert sport] team was in the playoffs. Fashion? Not exactly.

Then something shifted. Between the rise of bloke-core, the vintage-football-shirt boom and celebrities like Dua Lipa, Hailey Bieber, Rosalía and Rihanna making jerseys feel genuinely chic, the humble football shirt pulled off the ultimate glow-up. The momentum was accelerated this year thanks to the Milano Cortina Olympics and the FIFA World Cup, where the arrivals, tunnel walks and off-duty fits became almost as closely watched as the action on the pitch.

The Fall 2026 runways only reinforced the movement. Continuing its love affair with sporty prep, Coach showcased jerseys and varsity-inspired coats, infusing athletic energy into the collection with layers and collegiate motifs, while Dries Van Noten gave athletic dressing a refined edge with technical fabrics and relaxed silhouettes. At Louis Vuitton, Pharrell Williams leaned into performance-inspired outerwear and elevated track separates. Across the collections, rugby shirts, track jackets, varsity layers and performance fabrics confirmed that fashion's relationship with sport has evolved from hopping on the bandwagon to creating a lasting design language.

Maybe that's why the jersey suddenly feels so right. Fashion has always had a thing for borrowing from uniforms—trench coats from the military, loafers from prep schools, bomber jackets from the air force. The football shirt is simply the latest recruit, bringing with it equal parts nostalgia, community and cool.

The only rule? Don't wear it like you're headed to a kickoff. Throw it on under an oversized blazer, tuck it into a silky slip-skirt or pair it with vintage denim and layered gold jewellery. This season, the jersey works well beyond the sidelines.

THE NEW KIT

The football jersey has entered its luxury era, courtesy of Reformation x Umbro. All the sporty nostalgia stays, minus the oversized supporter bulk. This silhouette is slim, polished and dressed for more than match day. Wear it with camo cargos and Sambas, or tuck it into a vintage denim midi-skirt. **Reformation x Umbro** Jersey, $218

THE LAYER PLAYER

Not quite a jersey, not quite a tee, Ganni's double-layered top riffs on the familiar shape of a jersey without going full game day. The elongated sleeves give the silhouette a fashiony twist, while the burgundy colourway keeps things firmly in fall territory. Wear it with baggy jeans or a swishy skirt. Ganni Double Layered Shirt, $420

THE RUGBY REBOOT

Not sold on a football jersey? The rugby shirt has clocked in as fashion's answer. Carhartt doubles down on workwear roots, with sturdy cotton, bold stripes and an oversized fit that splits the difference between vintage campus and cool creative. Pop the collar if you're feeling brave, or don't. Either way, it works. **Carhartt** Devitt Rugby Shirt, $185

PHOTOGRAPHY: RUNWAY VIA LAUNCHMETRICS.COM/SPOTLIGHT



THE RUNWAY REFEREE

Sport didn't shout at Dries Van Noten; it whispered its way through the collection. A rugby-striped scarf knotted over pinstriped tailoring and embroidered cuffs peeking out from beneath a sharp topcoat. Understated and sophisticated—exactly the kind of styling inspiration worth stealing. **Dries Van Noten** Fall 2026

THE EVERYDAY MVP

Not every sporty staple needs a famous crest. This jersey-inspired long-sleeved tee delivers the same collegiate energy without looking like you've just left practice. Its relaxed fit makes it wearable, whether you layer it under a blazer or pair it with Bermuda shorts. **Aritzia TNA** Mighty Cotton Ramos Longsleeve, $58

THE FANCY POLO

Leave it to Miu Miu to make a humble polo shirt feel wildly desirable. Cut from soft cotton jersey with a perfectly shrunken fit, it channels prep-school nostalgia through the brand's unmistakably cool lens. Pair it with nylon trousers, a pleated skirt or even a silk skirt. **Miu Miu** Cotton Jersey Polo Shirt, $1,550

THE LUXURY WARM-UP

You don't need a jersey to channel sport. This ruched track jacket borrowed its ease from warm-up gear but was styled with tailored trousers, a shirt and a tie, transforming a technical staple into something unexpectedly refined. It's the kind of hi-lo mix that defines modern menswear. **Louis Vuitton** Menswear Fall 2026

THE ART-SCHOOL STRIKER

If the traditional football shirt feels a little too expected, Andersson Bell has other plans. The Korean label remixes the classic jersey with an oversized fit, a faded-pink palette and a graphic print that reads more gallery opening than grandstand—sporty without taking itself too seriously. **Andersson Bell** Pink Printed Football Jersey T-Shirt, $230



GUEST EDITOR

Temi Fagbenle

As a centre for the Toronto Tempo, Temi Fagbenle knows that performing at her peak starts long before tipoff. From recovery tools and travel essentials to beauty favourites and confidence-boosting style, these are the products that keep her feeling her best—on and off the court.

EDITOR: JULIA MCEWEN. PHOTOGRAPHY: FAGBENLE COURTESY OF TEMI FAGBENLE.



"This grounding bedsheet has become one of my travel essentials. With all the travel and games, I don't get much time to be out in nature and ground myself on the earth. This sheet lets me enjoy the benefits of earthing from the comfort of my hotel bed." **GroundingWell** Bedsheet, $279



"I love layering Fenty and Mugler Angel perfumes. The combination gives off a 'single, thriving rich auntie' vibe." **Fenty** Eau de Parfum, $130 for 30 ml; **Mugler** Angel Eau de Parfum, $150 for 50 ml

"I take a lot of flights, especially during the season, and the air on planes is incredibly dry. The Kuvola mask acts like a humidifier with every breath I take, helping me stay fresh on flights and reducing my chances of getting sick." **Kuvola** Humidifier Mask, $119





"Fenty Beauty Pro Filt'r Soft Matte Longwear Foundation is one of the few foundations where I've found my exact shade match. I love the smooth finish and buildable coverage. It's perfect for quick touch-ups or a full-glam look." **Fenty Beauty**, $27

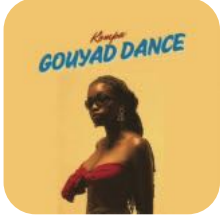


"These are beautifully crafted corsets. You'll definitely be seeing them in a few of my WNBA tunnel fits this season." **Build-a-Bra**, $210





"I love this stuff because it really hydrates my lips and locks in moisture. It's perfect for travelling and road trips during the season." **CNP Laboratory** Propolis Lipcerin Lip Balm, $25



"I'm in love with slow Konpa music and dance. There's something about the steady rhythm, bass guitar and piano riffs that speaks to my soul."



"Modaccio creates well-made clothing for the vertically blessed woman. The pieces are designed to flatter and celebrate our longer proportions." **Modaccio** Blazer, $278



"The Therabody face mask is worth the investment. It helps keep my skin in check, and I've learned that consistency is key." **Therabody** Face Mask, $800



"The *Telepathy Tapes* podcast changed my perspective on life after death and the telepathic abilities that some people believe humans possess. I also learned so much about non-speaking autistic people, their intelligence and the extraordinary experiences discussed in the series." ***The Telepathy Tapes*** podcast



"I use the Hue Supra-Fade Dark Spot Night Serum every single night. It really helps even out my skin tone." **Hue**, $101



ELIZABETH GOMEZ GARCIA, JOURNALIST AND CONTENT CREATOR

SIGNATURE FALL SCENT: "Oud Voyager by Tom Ford. Its rich woody and floral notes make me feel elegant, enigmatic and effortlessly sensual, like I'm wearing a beautifully tailored suit." **Tom Ford** Oud Voyager Eau de Parfum, $390 for 50 ml

MTL HOT SPOT: "Restaurant Île-de-France, also known as Le 9e, located on the ninth floor of the Eaton Centre, is one of my favourite Montreal spots. I always return for its exceptional food, its stunning art deco style and the rich history that lives within its walls."

FALL WARDROBE WORKHORSE: "An oversized tailored blazer is definitely my ultimate fall staple. It's the perfect transition piece, from mild afternoons to cooler evenings, while elevating any look." **Ottolinger**, $1,555

FAVOURITE 'HOOD: "The Plateau, hands down. It hits that sweet spot between trend and individuality, effortless and authentic."



MICHEL-ANGE LIGONDÉ, CONTENT CREATOR AND CREATIVE DIRECTOR

SIGNATURE FALL SCENT: "Dave by Henry Rose has become my go-to. It's warm, woody and subtly spicy with a clean freshness that feels comforting and effortless. It reminds me of coming home to a lit fireplace and a good drink after a long, cold day." **Henry Rose Dave** Eau de Parfum With Vanilla, $165 for 50 ml

MTL HOT SPOT: "I've been spending a lot of time at Lakafe. It's a great place to work, enjoy good food and sip an excellent matcha."

FALL WARDROBE WORKHORSE: "A great pair of jeans. Levi's 517s have the perfect fit and work with just about everything in my wardrobe, whether I'm dressing up or keeping it casual." **Levi's**, $118

FAVOURITE 'HOOD: "Mile End. It has the most authentic mix of vintage, contemporary and independent fashion. People there dress for themselves rather than trends."

FASHION FAM

French Connection

These three stylish Montreal creators share the places, pieces and scents defining the season, from the city's coolest spots to the fall staples they swear by.





ZAC COURCHESNE, FASHION INFLUENCER

SIGNATURE FALL SCENT: "Fou d'Absinthe by L'Artisan Parfumeur. There is something distinctly masculine and mature about this fragrance. I wear it when I want to feel both sexy and elegant." **L'Artisan Parfumeur** Fou d'Absinthe Eau de Parfum, $345 for 100 ml

MTL HOT SPOT: "Cappello, for its carafe of dirty martinis served with chips. A true 'salty girl' dream."

FALL WARDROBE WORKHORSE: "Sleek black boots paired with denim. I love these Tom Ford Chelseas." **Tom Ford**, $2,820

FAVOURITE 'HOOD: "Old Montreal, without hesitation. Where the Plateau leans classic street style, Old Montreal is more assertive, more editorial."

LOCAL-BRAND LOVE: "École de Pensée offers exceptional quality and thoughtfully designed pieces."

PHOTOGRAPHY: GOMEZ GARCIA COURTESY OF ELIZABETH GOMEZ GARCIA; LIGONDÉ BY RANDY SCOTT; COURCHESNE BY CHRIS ROBERGE.

Knit Picks

A great sweater is the cornerstone of every fall wardrobe. Here, *FASHION*'s editors share the knits they'll be living in all season long, from classic cashmere to modern silhouettes.



JULIA MCEWEN
Senior Style & Wellness Editor

I firmly believe that everyone needs a cardigan that feels like a wearable blanket. Bonus points if it's also chic. This one is dangerously soft, makes every outfit look (and feel) expensive and is thin enough to layer under jackets and coats without adding bulk.



Loro Piana,
$2,550



GEORGE ANTONOPOULOS
Senior Creative & Fashion Director, *FASHION* & Events

A grey oversized knit sweater is the ultimate fall essential. Its soft texture, relaxed fit and neutral palette make it a timeless wardrobe staple that pairs perfectly with almost anything.



Ami Paris,
$710



Pinko,
$735



SOUZAN MICHAEL GALWAY
Beauty & Brand Strategy Director

Not to get hyper-specific, but my favourite category of clothing happens to be "a black or cream sweater with a li'l somethin' extra." My current obsession is this slightly oversized wool-and-cashmere blend from Pinko. It features cut-outs and stitching that make it visually interesting but still easy to just throw on.



DEIDRE MARINELLI
Publisher

I love a staple sweater that strikes the perfect balance between luxury and simplicity. Soft, comfortable and cut with a clean silhouette, it's the kind of timeless piece that looks effortlessly chic and works just as well dressed up as it does dressed down.



Celine,
$3,250



STEPHANIE DAVOLI
Editorial Assistant

You can never go wrong with a classic crewneck, and this 100 percent Egyptian-cotton knit is no exception. Accented with timeless ribbed detailing and a relaxed drop shoulder, this sweater is my go-to when I'm looking for an extra layer.



Kotn,
$138



STYLE TIP

Balance is everything. If your shoes are sculptural or boldly embellished, keep the rest of your look streamlined. Think of your clothing as the frame, not the masterpiece.

Fantastical Footwear

Equal parts eccentric and extraordinary, these surreal shoes were among the biggest talking points from the fall runways.



Manolo Blahnik, $2,075



Dr. Martens x Rick Owens, $570



Dries Van Noten, $955



Robert Wun Haute Couture



Eliza Faulkner x Maguire Shoes, $260



Zara, $70



Christian Louboutin, $2,245



Loewe, $1,610



Ashi Studio Haute Couture



Simone Rocha, $1,600

Miu Miu, $3,050





Chanel, $3,100

EDITOR: JULIA MCEWEN. PHOTOGRAPHY: MAIN & RUNWAY VIA LAUNCHMETRICS.COM/SPOTLIGHT.



Slow Build

From locally milled fabrics to handcrafted finishes, Body of Work is bringing Canadian craftsmanship back into focus.

By **DYLAN MUÑOZ**

"We want to play a quiet role in your life," says Brittney MacKinnon, one-half of the Toronto-based artisanal sportswear label Body of Work, which she co-founded with her husband, Dwayne Vatcher, in 2020. The brand, which genuinely lives up to the idea of "elevated basics," was born when Vatcher and MacKinnon both found themselves at a professional crossroads after working at some of Canada's most established retail companies. Vatcher built his career at Wings & Horns, Reigning Champ and OVO; MacKinnon, meanwhile, cut her design teeth at Aritzia and Canada Goose. Both were seeking creative liberation. Enter Body of Work.

"It took many years to develop this level of authentic expression," says Vatcher. "It's a marriage of our personal inspirations and interests—things that are important to us." The name lends itself to creative interpretation, evolution and adaptation. "It's like naming a child—it carries so much weight," says MacKinnon.

Ultimately, that patience and persistence paid off earlier this year, when they opened their first flagship in Toronto's Summerhill neighbourhood. Boxes from upcoming collections are scattered across the hardwood floors as the duo carves out a quiet moment to chat. "Someone once called us a Canadian staple, and

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF BODY OF WORK



it's funny because it's just Brittney and me," says Vatcher. "The entire operation is run by two people. We're even in the shop right now setting up for the launch."

When Body of Work first launched, it was with a T-shirt, sweatpants and a sweatshirt—a modest capsule collection focused on guaranteeing quality over quantity. The line has since evolved to include linen chore jackets, relaxed cardigans and A-line skirts, all designed to look deceptively simple but containing dozens of heavily considered details—such as hand-woven seams and detailed finishes.

Vatcher and MacKinnon knew that with their vast knowledge of the apparel industry, they could prioritize producing locally without compromising on their overall vision. Canadian fabric mills, though pricier, offer a quality that's unmatched by other competing markets—especially for the stretch jerseys that make up many of Body of Work's designs. Many of the local manufacturers work exclusively with natural fibres and operate under a sustainable business model. "It's all a delicate ecosystem," says MacKinnon. "We want to nurture Canadian manufacturers, and we know we're one of many that are doing so." With the unrelenting pace of fast fashion, their goal is to ensure that the next generation of founders has the resources needed to continue protecting this fragile network of businesses.

> "WE WANT TO PLAY A **QUIET ROLE** IN **YOUR LIFE.**"

While producing abroad isn't part of Vatcher and MacKinnon's ethos, their ambitions for Body of Work aren't limited to Canada's borders. The duo share a natural affinity for partnering with like-minded founders. Take their partnership with French footwear brand Mephisto, which allows them to branch out into media that go beyond apparel.

Their hyperfocus on quality in handmade materials effortlessly aligns with Mephisto's capacity to produce top-tier footwear. Each element of the shoe is made with practicality in mind—without losing the earthbound aesthetic that makes Body of Work so recognizable. Premium leather, suede and custom injection mouldings are just a few of the elements that go into the shoe's 160-step production process.

Each decision—from which brands to collaborate with to which retailers to supply to—is completely intentional. The brand can be found at if-you-know-you-know outposts like Gray's and Lost & Found, along with pop-ups in Japan and New York. Just this year, Body of Work was confirmed to have a residency in a private showroom in Paris to showcase its upcoming Spring 2027 collection.

"The positive feedback from customers is very validating—we pour ourselves into the smaller details, and it's not lost on people that we're always going the extra mile," says MacKinnon. Body of Work is a reflection of the duo's shared history and aspirations—something that is often lost on brands missing that "human element." Needless to say, they are excited for the future—letting their shared ambitions shape whatever comes next. ■



VICTORY **LAP**

From the Milano Cortina Winter Olympics to the FIFA World Cup, the world's biggest sporting events are inspiring a new generation of timepieces.

By **RHONDA RICHE**



1. LI'L **YACHTY**

Yachting is about far more than luxury. It demands focus, athleticism and technical precision. Already a legend among regatta enthusiasts, the Rolex Yacht-Master II returns for 2026 with a refined countdown function designed to give racers an even greater advantage the moment the starting signal sounds.

2. **DEEP** DIVE

Panerai is celebrated for making some of the most robust dive watches in the world, and its Submersible line represents the pinnacle of its deep-sea innovation. At 44 millimetres ("QuarantaQuattro" translates to "forty-four"), it's a big boy, but the carbon-fibre Carbotech case keeps it light.

3. APRÈS-SKI

Another legacy timepiece, the Chopard Alpine Eagle, introduced in 2019, owes its elegant design to both the exhilarating ski runs of the Swiss Alps and the super-chic jetset lifestyle of towns like St. Moritz and Gstaad. Seven years later, this angular stainless-steel sports watch, with its integrated bracelet, continues to cut a clean line on the wrist.

4. **TEE** TIME

Few smartwatches blur the line between performance and luxury as seamlessly as this one. Designed with golfers in mind, the Tag Heuer Connected Calibre E5 delivers algorithm-powered insights to help fine-tune every round. The details are just as considered: An engraved 18-hole bezel, fresh white and green accents and a dimpled white rubber strap give the watch an unmistakably golf-inspired finish.

5. **PEDAL** PUSHER

In road races like the Tour de France, teamwork makes the dream work – even if star riders tend to receive most of the glory. The Tudor Pelagos FXD Chrono Cycling Edition, however, was engineered for the entire Tudor Pro Cycling Team. Lightweight and purpose-built, it pairs a 43-millimetre black carbon-composite case with a technical-fabric strap and a cycling-specific tachymeter scale that lets riders calculate average speeds at a glance.

PHOTOGRAPHY: BACKGROUND VIA GETTY



6. GAME-CHANGER

Widely considered the world's first true sports watch, Jaeger-LeCoultre's Reverso was born on the polo field in 1931. Its swivelling case was designed to protect the crystal from flying mallets, creating one of horology's most enduring innovations. While today's Reverso can be adorned with diamonds, enamel and intricate *métiers d'art*, we're partial to the understated Tribute Monoface, which honours the original's equestrian roots.

7. READY PLAYER ONE

Esports now operate much like traditional professional leagues, complete with elite players, coaches, rigorous training regimens and arenas packed with spectators. So it feels entirely fitting that Omega's latest James Bond-inspired Seamaster takes its inspiration not from the big screen but from a video game.

8. WINNER'S CIRCLE

Not every sports watch is designed for the field of play. Inspired by kachi-iro – the deep indigo "victory" blue once worn by samurai – the Citizen AQ4094-58L celebrates precision, perseverance and the relentless pursuit of excellence. Its hand-dyed-washi-paper dial and ultra-accurate Eco-Drive movement make it a tribute to craftsmanship as much as competition.

9. ON BOARD

Few sports have shaped style quite like skateboarding. Designed with Swatch Proteam athlete Andy Anderson, this bright-yellow watch channels that same fearless creativity with a skeletonized dial, bold black graphics and glow-in-the-dark details that feel as at home in the skate park as they do on the street.

10. CLIFF HANGER

Alpina's Alpiner collection draws its identity from the Matterhorn, the iconic Swiss peak that has challenged mountaineers for generations. The brand reaches new heights with this solar-powered timepiece whose translucent dial – finished with its signature Toblerone-inspired triangular pattern – captures light to keep the movement running.



Well *Carried*

Luxury shopping bags are so much more than just vessels for your most coveted purchases—they whisper house codes, spark nostalgia and stand the test of time.

By **SARA BLACK MCCULLOCH**

For as long as I can remember, I've been a shopping-bag stasher. My closet is full of them, including a card-stock structure from MAC with cut-outs for my fingers and a glossy black-and-white design from Browns, which held my Fornarina prom shoes. Tucked away neatly in mint condition, they've outlasted the products they once carried. I don't quite know what I'm saving them for, but discarding them feels wrong.

I've always experienced a distinct delight when strolling through a mall with a stiff paper bag in hand. It feels like a reward for a successful excursion, and the dopamine delivery is no mistake. In the introduction to Judi Radice's *Shopping Bag Design 2*, Italian designer Primo Angeli (an early-days leader in corporate branding) likens this kind of merchandising to a glossy moving billboard that "defines you." The bag doesn't just advertise a store, he explains; it conveys a message about the shopper—even more than its contents can.

Perhaps that's why many of us tend to treat store-provided bags like mini keepsakes, using them as vehicles to loan books or storing them for nebulous special occasions. This instinct was the foundation of a recent retail retrospective held at the Toronto Public Library (TPL). For the limited-time exhibit, a small hall was covered in bright shopping bags from decades-old Canadian retailers, including Hudson's Bay, Eaton's and Honest Ed's.

"We wanted to showcase these bags not just as vessels to carry around purchased goods; they are ways to tell stories," says Joanna Morrison, one of the organizers and a TPL librarian in Special Collections. The project was started by a librarian named Patricia Rogal in 1966. She began carefully tucking bags away at a time when retailers were revamping the brown-paper standard and experimenting with shape and form to entice shoppers. Affixed along the walls, the bags boasted standout colours and distinct typefaces. And with many of them belonging to shuttered department stores (I lingered at the Eaton's archive), a pang of wistfulness was part of the experience.

Throughout the display, no two featured shopping bags were alike and each one served as a stand-alone conversation starter. They were a stark contrast to the UPS parcels that contain today's online orders. E-commerce platforms

PHOTOGRAPHY: MAIN & RUNWAY VIA LAUNCHMETRICS.COM/SPOTLIGHT; SIDEBAR IMAGERY VIA GETTY.

Retail Rewind

A condensed history of iconic, instantly recognizable shopping bags.



HARRODS What started as a green-and-gold grocery bag in 1849 is now an international status symbol synonymous with luxury-department-store splurging.



BLOOMINGDALE'S Created by graphic designer Massimo Vignelli in 1973, the Brown Bag is a fixture on New York City sidewalks and a lesson in lasting brand identity.



HERMÈS Hermès' packaging was first launched in a pale-cream shade, but during the Second World War, a stock shortage forced the brand to opt for bright orange—the only colour the supplier had on hand.



HOLT RENFREW The pink shopping bag—a mainstay in Toronto's Yorkville neighbourhood—has undergone subtle facelifts over the years. The current version has lost the logo, but its signature colour remains.



TIFFANY & CO. The beloved blue hue was selected by founder Charles Lewis Tiffany in 1845 and became an integral part of the brand's image. It was trademarked in 1998 and later standardized by Pantone.

have made shopping frictionless: You can add to the cart, enter your payment and check out from the comfort of your couch. Then, when your purchases arrive days later, they come in bland, brown, often-beaten-up cardboard boxes. It's convenient, yes, but the glamour is gone.

On the contrary, the structured store bag serves as the afterglow of an in-person shopping spree and, at its best, an in-the-know wink at house codes. The fraying handles on Maison Margiela's bag reflect the brand's ethos of deconstruction, Aritzia's It-girl identity translates to its cardboard carriers embossed with art photography and Abercrombie established its frightening reign as the brand for popular teens by plastering headless men with six-packs on its once-coveted bags.

Unlike the delivered-to-your-door packages, the shopping bag carries meaning. Even designers look to it for inspiration. Telfar has a collection that mimics plastic takeout bags, with "Thank You for Shopping" printed in swirly letters. Balenciaga once made calfskin replicas of its paper carriers and sold them for more than $1,000 each. And, most recently, buzzy Parisian boutique Rubirosa introduced a shopping bag that sparked its own wave of fashion-crowd fanfare. Designed by creative director Louis Charles Aka, the takeaway tote features watercolour detailing and is finished with crimson ribbon handles. I yearn for it like some do a Chanel Double Flap.

A few years ago, heritage houses Hermès and Tiffany & Co. started offering customers white paper bags to disguise their high-end purchases. Imagine it: a Kelly or a Bone Cuff hiding in plain sight as it's toted along Fifth Avenue—that signature clementine or robin's-egg blue whited out. This was a security measure intended to protect purchases and customers, but to some degree, it became its own marketing move. "The Hermès bag is beautiful; it's very thick and textured," says Janice Rudkowski, an assistant professor of retail management at Toronto Metropolitan University, "so I wonder if covering it up almost made it more distinctive."

In truth, I don't mind reframing the shopping bag as something worthy of protection. As my closet collection grows, I'm more and more convinced that I'm building a rare exhibit of my own. ■



the drop

THE RELEASES YOU NEED TO KNOW



THE DROP: PANDORA TALISMANS
(FROM $75 TO $398)

THE DETAILS: What's your sign? Pandora is looking to the stars for the second chapter of its Talisman collection, this time putting its signature spin on the zodiac. More than 30 new charms, rings and necklaces mix sterling silver and 14-karat-gold plating with carved cameos and constellation-like stones. All 12 signs are accounted for, alongside earth, air, fire and water motifs for anyone who knows their birth chart by heart. Fronting the campaign is internet-favourite Leo model Alex Consani, whose playful, anything-goes approach to style makes her a natural fit. And, yes, she identifies with her sign. "I mean, I'm a Leo, so I'd be lying if I said I didn't enjoy a little attention!" she says. "But I don't need to be the centre of attention all the time—just every now and then."



THE DROP: OMEGA SPEEDMASTER 38
(38 MILLIMETRES, $16,100)

THE DETAILS: Few watches come with a better backstory. The original Omega Speedmaster famously went to the moon with the Apollo 11 astronauts in 1969, helping turn the Moonwatch into a grail for collectors. Now, Omega is bringing more of that iconic DNA to its smaller Speedmaster 38. Seven new iterations feature rounded subdials, cleaner dials and Moonwatch-style five-link bracelets, but our pick is the ice-blue version, finished with a bezel set with 52 diamonds totalling 1.53 carats. Space-age credentials with some serious sparkle? We're sold.



THE DROP: MIU MIU MIUTINE INTENSE ($215 FOR 100 ML)

THE DETAILS: Miutine Intense opens with a liqueur-like blackberry accord before unfolding into a creamy gardenia heart layered with jasmine and rose. At the base, vanilla bourbon and patchouli create a velvety finish. The result is a balance of decadence and rebellion that resonates with actor Emma Corrin, Miu Miu's beauty global ambassador and the face of the fragrance, which Corrin describes as the original scent's naughty sibling. "It's a warm, enveloping scent; I can imagine it wafting through a hotel"—an apt setting for the quietly luxurious fragrance.



THE DROP: TUDOR ROYAL (40 MILLIMETRES, $4,580)

THE DETAILS: Consider this your sign to go green. The watches in Tudor's newly updated Royal collection come in three sizes (30, 36 and 40 millimetres) and a range of dial colours, including the rich green seen here. The integrated five-link bracelet keeps things sporty, while a newly sharpened notched bezel and Roman numerals bring the polish. The 40 millimetre also has a day-date display and 70 hours of power reserve. It's the kind of watch that plays nicely with everything from a suit to Sunday sweats.



THE DROP: LA BEAUTÉ LOUIS VUITTON LV CRAYON ($72)

THE DETAILS: "Every look I have ever created on the Louis Vuitton runway begins with the lip line," says Pat McGrath, cosmetics creative director for La Beauté Louis Vuitton. "It is where precision becomes art." The legendary makeup artist has created 10 lip liner shades for the brand—ranging from nude to pink to dark burgundy—each in the shape of the iconic Louis Vuitton monogram flower. "They're both seamless to use and beautiful to hold."



THE DROP: GUERLAIN L'HEURE BLEUE ($160 FOR 50 ML)

THE DETAILS: Guerlain's latest scent is inspired by blue hour: the time between day and night when "shapes blur, colours soften—everything turns blue," says Delphine Jelk, the brand's creative director and perfumer. L'Heure Bleue opens with an ozonic accord that evokes "fresh air, breath and blue sky." Heart notes of iris and orange blossom bring tenderness to the formula, while vanilla and ambroxan base notes create the feeling of sun-drenched skin.

TEXT: LA BEAUTÉ LOUIS VUITTON & GUERLAIN BY SOUZAN MICHAEL GALWAY; PANDORA, OMEGA & TUDOR BY JULIA MCEWEN; MIU MIU BY STEPHANIE DAVOLI.


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HEAD *in the* GAME

The pros responsible for the coolest braids in sports—and beyond.

(SEE PAGE 54.)

TEXT BY SOUZAN MICHAEL GALWAY. PHOTOGRAPHY VIA GETTY.



AURA POINTS

Leighton Meester on her beauty rules, her role as the face of Elizabeth Arden's Eternal Aura and being a little bit delusional.

By **SOUZAN MICHAEL GALWAY**

Leighton Meester logs on to our scheduled video call as Adam Brody. Her laptop has stopped working, so she's borrowing her husband's for our interview. "My computer decided that the screen wasn't going to turn on anymore—cool timing!" she laughs. It ends up being an appropriate entrance for the rest of our chat: entirely unfussy and delivered with a sense of humour.

That irreverence comes through when she talks about beauty, an industry she has spent much of her adult life navigating, both as an actor and a musician. "Ninety-nine percent of the time, I've got nothing on," she says, gesturing to her makeup-free face and undone hair. "And then I go into full glam mode. I like the option for [one or the other]; it's almost like playing a character."

It's this sense of ease that makes her newest role, as the face of Elizabeth Arden's Eternal Aura fragrance, feel particularly fitting. (Meester says that she's been a lifelong fan of the brand and describes the scent of the iconic Eight Hour Cream as "the smell of childhood.") Unlike makeup,

PHOTOGRAPHY: MAIN COURTESY OF ELIZABETH ARDEN

> “ I HAVE **FOUND THINGS** THAT ARE VERY **IMPORTANT** IN MY **LIFE** THAT HAVE **NOTHING** TO **DO** WITH **THE WAY I LOOK**. ”



which can transform how you’re seen, scent operates more privately, she says. “If you’re facing the world and you have a pop of [bright] lipstick on, or your hair is freshly done, it’s [on display] for the world, right? But your scent is for you.”

Though her approach to beauty is decidedly laid-back today, Meester explains that when she was younger, it would feel almost like a project—a task that required maintenance. She recalls a period in her early 20s when she wouldn’t be seen without her hair done and a full face of makeup. “I had so many different steps just to get to, like, my base level of normal,” she says. Eventually, she began to question if all that effort was actually worth it. But rather than rejecting beauty altogether, Meester developed a more expansive relationship with it—one in which makeup, hair and fragrance could be tools for expression rather than requirements for feeling worthy. “I [am] really protective of my younger self, who felt like she had to cover her skin and that she wasn’t pretty without makeup,” she says.

So, what changed? “I had to become delusional and be like, ‘Yeah, I look good,’” she laughs. “I have to live like that in order to survive in this world.” Today, she views makeup, hair and (especially) fragrance as vehicles for positive self-discovery rather than obligations.

“Eternal Aura awakens a sense of positivity in me,” she says. “It brings me to the present moment and allows me to feel grounded.” She describes the floral amber scent (with notes of pink pepper, peony, pear, amber and sandalwood) as “whimsical, rhythmic and mood-lifting.” Having long had an appreciation for warm, earthy perfumes, she says her tastes have become more nuanced with time. “I can enjoy floral notes and a more balanced fragrance profile now.”

And Meester has developed her own set of rules for keeping her appearance in perspective, too. “I stay off social media,” she says. “I have found things that are very important in my life that have nothing to do with the way I look.” Those things include reading, learning French, playing guitar, spending time with people she loves and continuing to feel gratitude for her line of work. “In my job, I get to express myself and explore my feelings. I get to play—into adulthood,” she says with a sense of wonder that is undeniably charming after all her years in Hollywood.

Indeed, for Meester, there is still room for glamour, transformation and the pleasure of a beautifully constructed look. There is room for the woman who spent years playing one of television’s most polished characters and for the woman who will apply fragrance before dropping her kids at school while still in her pyjamas (Meester’s words, not mine). Most importantly, there is room for a beauty regimen to be something she does solely for herself. ■

Top Shelf

Leighton Meester’s tried-and-true favourites.



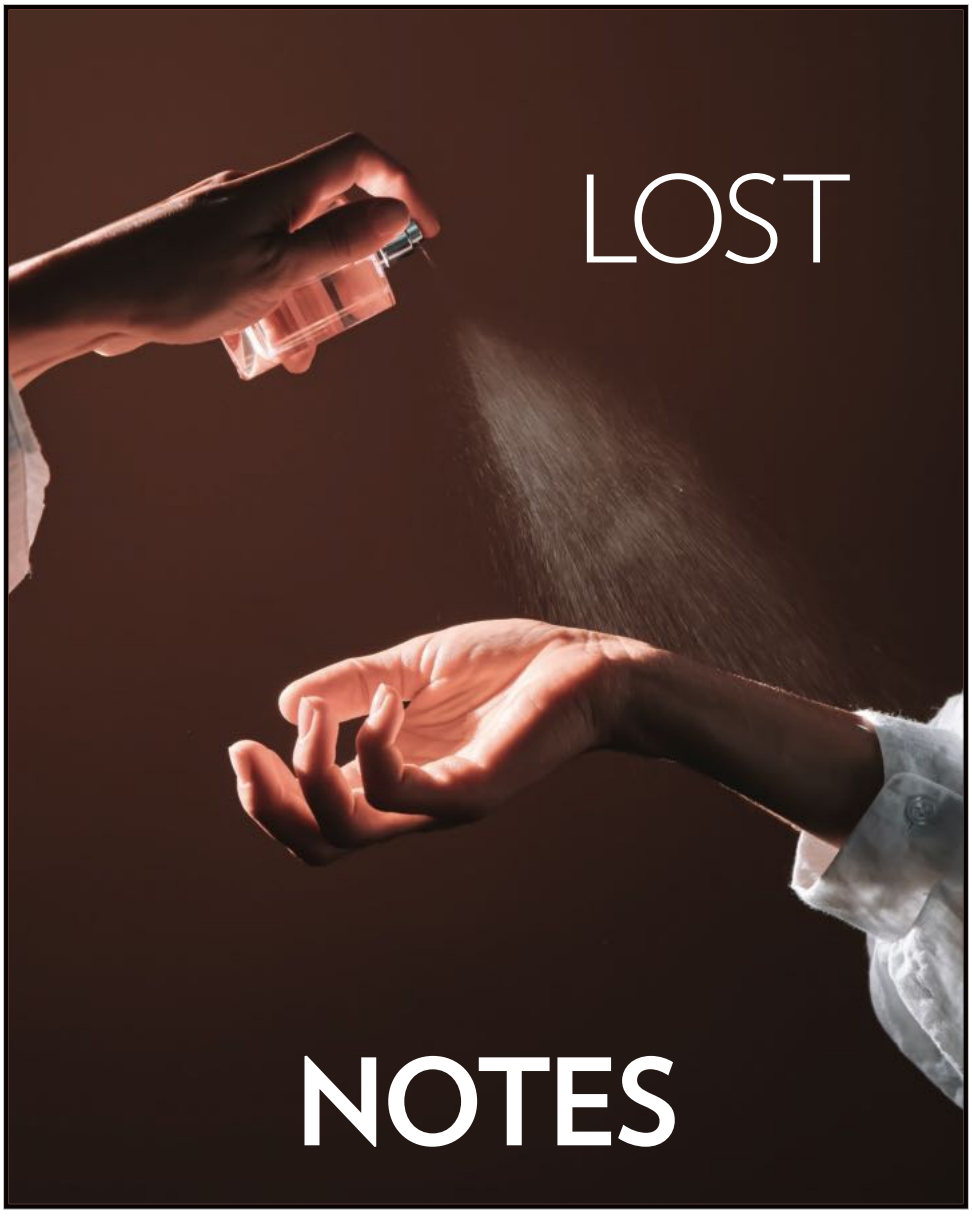
“This is my go-to scent. I love how it’s grounding, uplifting and feminine.” **Elizabeth Arden** Eternal Aura Eau de Parfum, $154 for 100 ml



“I love this multi-use product with foolproof application.” **Charlotte Tilbury** Beautiful Skin Lip and Cheek Glow in “Pinched Cheek Glow,” $54



“I’ve been using this gentle formula for years. I love both of the colour options, depending on the look I’m going for.” **Ilia** Limitless Lash Mascara, $40



LOST NOTES

Fragrancehead **Lauren Knowles** investigates why your most intimate accessory keeps disappearing on you.

I was chatting with a friend at a perfume event when she posed a question I wasn't expecting: "Do you ever have this thing where you can't smell your fragrance on yourself?" To which I responded, with the kind of certainty usually reserved for deeply personal convictions, "Oh my God, absolutely!" Turns out, this nasal phenomenon has a name: fragrance fatigue.

And a scent is a bizarre thing to lose, especially when it's one you proudly declared as your signature. Its smell clings to our bodies like an invisible shield, each note a projection of who we are—or want to be: spice for confidence, vanilla for comfort. For a fragrancehead such as myself, to be without this aromatic aura feels like walking around naked.

Olfactory fatigue, also known as "nose blindness," is an adaptation mechanism that results in the temporary inability to smell a particular scent after prolonged exposure. Basically, your nose ghosts you on your own perfume. "Your nose has millions of receptor cells that detect airborne scent molecules," explains Toronto-based perfumer Brennan Michael. "These cells can get overwhelmed and temporarily 'shut down.' They'll send weaker signals to the brain, and that's desensitization." By tuning out the familiar scents,

PHOTOGRAPHY: MAIN VIA GETTY

> “ THINK OF IT AS YOUR BODY **TURNING DOWN** THE **VOLUME** TO AVOID **OVERLOAD**. ”

the brain's olfactory bulb can better detect new smells and potential dangers, like gas leaks or fires. “Think of it as your body turning down the volume to avoid overload,” he says.

The psychological side effects of nose blindness run deeper than merely missing your scent of the day. “Smells bypass much of the brain's filtering processes, allowing odours to trigger memories and emotions almost instantly,” says Michael. That's the distinctive wiring that makes fading fragrance feel like losing something more than just smell—it's the memory quietly slipping away with it. But there's good news: Unlike anosmia and hyposmia, which are smell-reducing olfactory disorders typically caused by injury or infections like COVID-19, fragrance fatigue is simply a natural form of sensory adaptation. Fortunately, it's temporary and reversible. Depending on the level and duration of exposure, a break of anywhere from 30 minutes to a full 24 hours should do the trick. “Your favourite scents aren't gone; you've just adapted,” Michael insists.

Another factor? The weather. During the sweltering summer months, the heat majorly impacts how a perfume performs. “Heat increases the rate at which fragrance molecules evaporate, leading to stronger initial projection,” explains Michael. But, paradoxically, it also increases the likelihood of faster fatigue. “Humid air carries scent molecules more effectively, and hydrated skin tends to hold fragrance better.” No particular fragrance category (perfumes, colognes or body sprays) is more likely to trigger nose blindness than another, though. It really comes down to formulation. Highly concentrated oils and extraits de parfum can flood the nose faster with their intensity, whereas lighter eaux de toilette can give your receptors more breathing room. “Personal factors such as genetics, age and hormones can also influence sensitivity,” Michael adds.

Let's face it: Social media isn't helping either. On the perfume-obsessed corner of the internet, ever-evolving fragrance fads are no less to blame for olfactory burnout. Emma of @Perfumerism, a fragrance influencer with more than 600,000 TikTok followers, has her finger firmly on the pulse of scent trends. “With so many fragrances releasing all the time, a way to stand out is to target people's pain points—which [are things like] fragrance not lasting,” she says. “Brands have been increasing [their products'] concentration, and bottles are darker to show how powerful and potent it is.” The irony? Constantly dousing ourselves with more-redolent scents for longevity can have the opposite effect.

“We're in a beast-mode era of ultra-projecting scents with synthetics for longevity and huge sillage,” says Michael. “Online trends like layering and ‘smellmaxxing’—maximizing projection through over-spraying or combinations—make [fragrance fatigue] more common, too.” Layering, he explains, can bombard the nose and speed up desensitization. Meanwhile, the over-application of perfumes can overwhelm your receptors faster. “We have high expectations for our fragrances, as we should,” says Emma. “But nothing lasts forever.”

Should you find yourself afflicted with fragrance fatigue, worry not. Here's how to reset.

PUT IT IN NEUTRAL Take a brief break from your signature scent. Michael recommends wiping your nose with a moist towel to remove lingering molecules and smelling neutral aromas like citrus peels or green leaves to help recalibrate. Using fragrance-free soaps and creams can also help streamline the scent you're seeking.

NATURE BOUND “Lots of fresh air works wonders,” says Michael. “Even a quick outdoor walk resets your receptors.” It's a practice that Emma, a perfumery student who's constantly smelling raw materials, also co-signs.

SKIP THE COFFEE BEANS Forget everything you've been told about coffee beans cleansing your palate; you'll want to get your caffeine fix elsewhere. “The scent of coffee is largely based on pyrazines,” Emma explains. These powerful chemical compounds are responsible for that roasted, nutty aroma. “It sticks in your nose, and you can't smell and distinguish [other scents] as well afterwards.”

ALTER YOUR APPLICATION “Where you apply your scent matters just as much as the amount you apply,” says Michael. Instead of the usual neck, chest and wrist pulse points, try spritzing your hair, your clothing or the back of your neck for a more diffused effect. “These areas release scent more gradually, helping reduce fatigue while still allowing the fragrance to be perceived by others.”

EVERYTHING IN MODERATION “When you go back to your favourite scent after giving it a break, it's important to use moderate amounts—maybe not even full sprays,” Michael suggests. “In the summer, less is almost always more.” ■



Dior Miss Dior Eau de Parfum, $234 for 100 ml

PLEASURE PRINCIPLE

Natalie Portman on the evolution of Miss Dior and why sometimes we all just need to look at some trees.

By **SOUZAN MICHAEL GALWAY**



"The journey of becoming a woman, for me, has very much been about going from being someone who was looking to please others to becoming someone who's searching for how to find her own pleasure," says Natalie Portman.

We're chatting at Château de La Colle Noire, Christian Dior's former estate in the south of France, after a viewing of Miss Dior's latest campaign video, starring Portman, who has fronted the fragrance for the past 15 years.

Now, she returns for a playful, upbeat new campaign, set to the soundtrack of Chappell Roan's "Good Luck, Babe!" The video introduces a newly dressed bottle—complete with the iconic Miss Dior dagger bow—now in a slimmer silhouette and rendered in Dior's distinctive houndstooth. "It's a continuation of the woman's journey for beauty, love, passion and freedom," she says. Like the fragrance itself, Portman has evolved without losing her essence. "With fragrance, I used to be like, 'Oh, I wonder what boys like,'" she recalls with a laugh. "Now, at 45, I'm like: 'What do *I* want to smell all day? What do *I* want to have in my environment?'"

The women around Portman have been instrumental in her evolution. "Female friendship is everything to me," she says. "My girlfriends have been my village and my community." She describes decades-long friendships filled with lively group chats, book recommendations, career advice and unwavering support, calling them "the most beautiful relationships of [her] life." And then there's her mother, whom Portman calls her "perennial inspiration," praising her "capacity to find wonder and beauty everywhere all the time." Whether she's sending photos of blossoming plants or reminding her to "look at a tree, look at the sky," Portman says her mother is the angel on her shoulder, encouraging her to slow down and notice the beauty in everyday life.

It's a fitting message for the longtime face of Miss Dior, a scent that has always been rooted in the idea of optimism, youthful spirit and transformation, and its signature balance of luminous florals and deeper, woodsy notes feels particularly resonant through Portman's eyes. At the heart of Miss Dior is the Grasse rose, cultivated in the very region where we're sitting, and it's enveloped in creamy vanilla, almond, tonka and sandalwood. "There's such a beautiful combination of depth and lightness," Portman says. "It's almost like a metaphor for life." ■

PHOTOGRAPHY: PORTMAN BY PIERRE MOUTON FOR CHRISTIAN DIOR PARFUMS



Pure *Joy*

Souzan Michael Galway explores the magic behind Glimmer, Estée Lauder's first major fragrance launch in five years and the brand's debut in the gourmand category.

"Fragrance is emotional," perfumer Jean-Marc Chaillan tells me on a sunny afternoon in New York City. We're chatting about Chaillan's involvement in an exciting new launch for Estée Lauder—Glimmer Eau de Parfum, the brand's first new prestige fragrance franchise since 2021's Beautiful Magnolia. "Finding the right vocabulary to communicate those emotions is one of the hardest parts of the job."

I'm quickly charmed by the onslaught of evocative words I'm met with during my conversation with Chaillan, and it's clear just how important finding exactly the right terminology was in the development of Glimmer. "We wanted to create something joyful, something that represents connection—almost like the feeling of a hug," he explains. "We tried to evoke sophistication, happiness and optimism with a colourful, juicy perfume." Certainly, Chaillan and his co-perfumer collaborators on Glimmer, Dominique Ropion and Anne Flipo, were up to the challenge.



Estée Lauder
Glimmer Eau de Parfum, $145 for 50 ml

"There are three key notes that define the fragrance," says Chaillan. First, there's the rose-macaron accord, which (along with a raspberry-mousse accord) marks Estée Lauder's entry into the gourmand category for the first time in the brand's 73 years of perfume creation. "Creating a gourmand fragrance that isn't overly sweet takes a lot of refinement," he explains. "We knew we wanted to explore the gourmand territory, but we were equally clear about what we didn't want: a fragrance that felt sticky or syrupy." Glimmer's sweetness had to be elegant, which the perfumers achieved by adding dry woods and warm amber to balance the formulation. "Consumers still love that feeling of sensuality and comfort that gourmand notes provide, but now they also want complexity," he adds. "They're no longer looking for the candy-like scents of the past; they want something more nuanced, with contrast and sophistication."

Next is the amber-embrace accord. Rather than featuring a traditional heavy amber, Glimmer has more-luminous amber notes. "We worked with new amber molecules that create a glowing effect instead of one [with a lot of] weight," says Chaillan. Finally, there's the shimmering-patchouli accord, which Chaillan explains plays a very important role in making the fragrance feel elevated. "Traditional patchouli can sometimes smell dusty," he says. "[Glimmer's] patchouli is much cleaner and more radiant. When patchouli is distilled, you can fractionate it and keep only the finest, most beautiful parts of the material, which is what we did here. It gives you the richness of the note without the dusty quality that people sometimes associate with it."

Chaillan says that Glimmer's magic lies in his collaboration with fellow perfumers Ropion and Flipo, each of whom brought their own experience and perspective to the project. "Creatively, everyone explores different territories," he explains. "One perfumer might naturally push the floral aspects further, while another focuses on woody or gourmand notes." The key lies in understanding and trusting one another's creative instincts, he says. "One of perfumery's greatest challenges is communication. Describing a smell isn't easy because everyone experiences fragrance differently. If I describe a scent as 'pink,' someone else might imagine something completely different. But the more you work with [other perfumers], the more you learn their language."

As for the story of Glimmer, whose dazzling campaign is being fronted by Hailee Steinfeld, Chaillan says he has big hopes of the joyful scent becoming an icon in its own right: "I hope it becomes one of those fragrances people wear for years because it makes them feel something. One of the greatest moments as a perfumer is when you're walking through a city—getting on the subway or passing someone in the street—and you recognize a fragrance you created. I never interrupt or tell [the wearer], of course. I'm just happy knowing that my work has become part of someone's life." ■

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF ESTÉE LAUDER



MIXED *Differently*

Inside Canada's indie-beauty scene, founders are rewriting the rules with tighter edits, smarter formulas and clear points of view.

By **JULIA MCEWEN**

PHOTOGRAPHY: MAIN BY CARLYLE ROUTH; LANGMUIR COURTESY OF LIXR BEAUTY; KATONA & SPENCE COURTESY OF 19/99; CASALE COURTESY OF MOB BEAUTY.

SUSANNE LANGMUIR

FOUNDER OF LIXR BEAUTY



Lixr Beauty Lip Lixr Hydrating Tinted Lip Mask, $38; Skin Shake Bi-Phase Serum Skin Tint With Squalane, $68; Lixstick Creamy Lip + Cheek Tint Stick, $48

Susanne Langmuir is a rare breed in the beauty industry: entrepreneur, trained formulator and working farmer growing and harvesting calendula and lavender in her organic gardens in Meaford, Ont., and then incorporating those ingredients directly into her products. Her ingredient-first philosophy has been consistent since 2012, when she founded Bite, a food-grade lipstick brand that launched at Sephora and was later acquired by LVMH-owned incubator Kendo. Now, close to 15 years later, she's back at Sephora with Lixr.

The return wasn't impulsive. Langmuir took roughly four years to develop Lixr's complexion line; the first two were spent in deep R&D chasing a waterless foundation built entirely from skin-nourishing ingredients. "The complexion category is riddled with ingredients that can cause sensitivity," she says. "Anything you apply every single day should nourish, provide skincare benefits and make you feel like you're still in your skin but just a little more polished." She's building it out of her own manufacturing space on Geary Avenue, the same building where she started Bite years before.

The waterless approach sets Lixr apart. A typical foundation can be up to 60 percent water; Lixr's Skin Shake Bi-Phase Serum Skin Tint eliminates it entirely, concentrating squalane and jojoba and avocado oils into a glass rollerball that requires a shake and a 45-degree angle to apply. "It's three times the pigment, so a little goes a long way," says Langmuir. Silicone-free and preservative-free, the line meets Sephora's Clean + Planet Aware standard and is now stocked at roughly 88 locations in Canada and 32 in the U.S.

For a brand that nearly didn't exist, Lixr carries the weight of intention. Langmuir self-funded the $1.6 million venture and kept manufacturing in-house rather than cede control to a contract lab. "I think I care more this time," she says. "I feel I have more to lose by getting this one wrong." That care shows up across the line, in the lip masks that read as a deliberate homage to Bite's cult Agave Lip Mask and in the Lixstick Creamy Lip + Cheek Tint Stick, which extends her skin-first philosophy beyond complexion. Her process is as deliberate as her formulations; the result is a brand built to last.

Kit *Essentials*

A lineup of Canadian beauty finds that makeup artists keep in heavy rotation.



"I love this cobalt eye pencil from Cheekbone. The colour payoff is amazing, and it's so creamy and user-friendly." – Wendy Rorong, makeup artist. **Cheekbone** Fearless Eyeshadow in "Cobalt Blue," $25



"Professional-level craftsmanship that's accessible to all," says makeup artist Jodi Urichuk of Canada's own Rèphr, adding that these brushes, handcrafted in Japan, are workhorse tools that are built to last. **Rèphr** Shodō 05, $61



CAMILLE KATONA AND STEPHANIE SPENCE

CO-FOUNDERS OF 19/99

When Camille Katona and Stephanie Spence launched 19/99 in 2020 (yes, pandemic 2020), they did it with a single red pencil and a high-shine gloss. No splashy debut, no overcrowded shade range – just proof of concept. "We wanted to show how much you can do with so little," says Katona.

The Toronto duo bonded at Bite, spent years launching other people's brands and eventually decided that the industry they'd grown up in needed a serious reality check. 19/99 is the name, and the premise is exactly what it sounds like: Beauty belongs to everyone, from 19 to 99. No asterisks – and no "anti-aging" double-talk. "We don't see ourselves as a pro-age brand," says Spence. "It's more of a judgment-free zone."

The line is deliberately edited: multi-purpose, high-pigment tools designed to invite play. The Precision Colour Pencil (a single product that pulls triple duty as liner, shadow and lip colour) is the brand's calling card, while its Brow Pencil (the graphite shade, inspired by literal HB drawing pencils) has become a cult favourite. Both were developed in close collaboration with makeup artist Simone Otis, whose professional tool kit essentially serves as the brand's R&D lab. "We take what she uses on-set and make it intuitive for everyone else," says Katona. The Lash Tint Mascara (a featherlight formula built for subtlety over volume) became the brand's bestseller before "no-mascara mascara" was even a trend.

This past summer, 19/99 expanded the mascara range with burgundy and blue iterations – shades that took over a year to perfect. "The coloured pigments were drying out the formula, so it was a journey!" says Spence. What do they hope a first-time customer feels when they pick up a product? Both founders answer simultaneously, without hesitation: "Joy!"



19/99 Lash Tint Mascara in "Brown," $22; Precision Colour Pencil in "Bor," $28



"As a makeup artist, I'm always drawn to products that come from real need because they tend to translate beautifully across different faces and skin tones," says makeup artist Veronica Chu of Vasanti, a line created by four South Asian women to cater to the underserved population. "The Plump Up! lipgloss is a staple in my kit, and the liquid correctors are so well considered in both tone and texture," Chu adds. **Vasanti** Colour Correcting Concealer, $32



"I'm really into Fitglow Beauty's Ceramide Hydra-Balm; the night serum balm is permanently on my nightstand, and the coloured versions are my first recommendation for girlies with dry lips who want care and shine," says hair and makeup artist Ashley Readings, adding that Watermelon is her go-to colour. **Fitglow Beauty** Ceramide Hydra-Balm in "Watermelon," $36



MOB Beauty Cream Clay Eyeshadow in "Cyan Blue," $25; Long Wear Liquid Clay Eyeshadow in "Driftwood," $30

VICTOR CASALE

CO-FOUNDER OF MOB BEAUTY

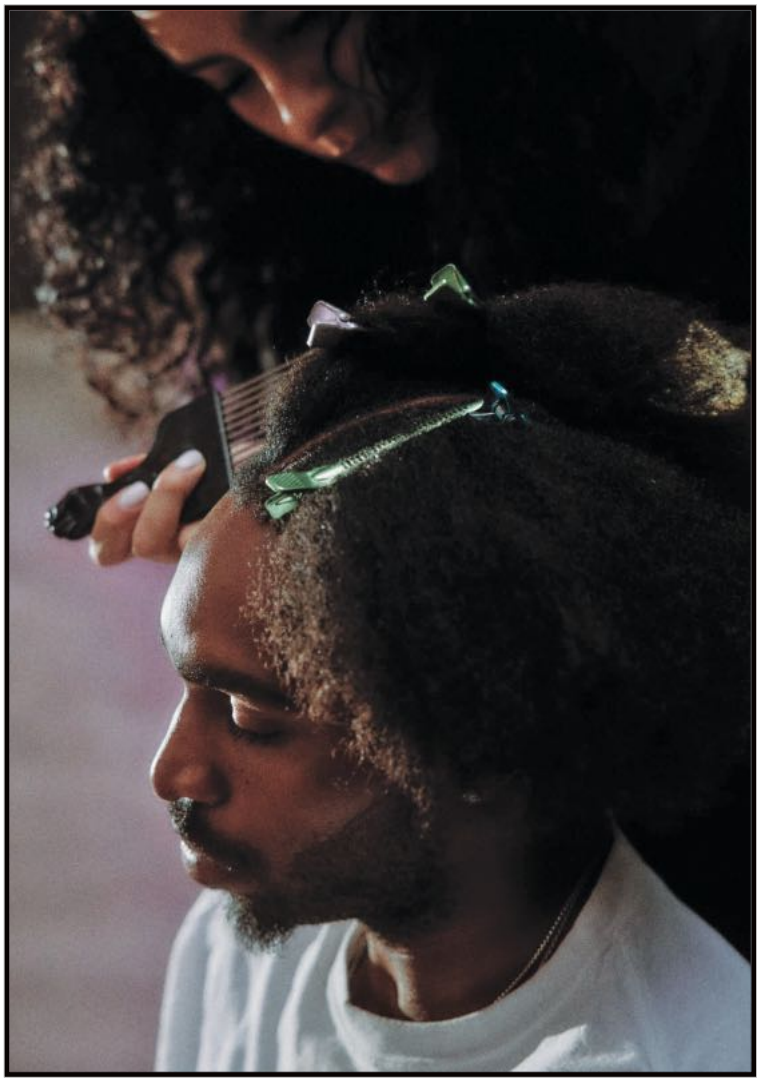
MOB Beauty isn't subtle about what it stands for: an excited crowd. "It's a group of people who want to change the industry," says Victor Casale – from him, it reads less like a tag line and more like a long-held conviction finally put into motion.

Casale's resumé underpins it. He started as a chemist and formulator at MAC Cosmetics, helping build the brand from its earliest days into a global force while developing artist staples still in kits today. He later co-founded Cover FX, a complexion-first brand rooted in skin concerns, scaling it into an international business across multiple markets. While there, he brought on Alisha Gallagher (now co-founder of MOB Beauty) to lead marketing and grow the brand beyond our borders.

Together, Casale and Gallagher set the foundation for something more expansive. Launched in 2021, MOB Beauty operates less like a traditional brand and more like an open-source lab where independent creators, makeup artists and consumers collaborate directly on shades, formulas and launches. These products feel less like drops and more like group projects with viral (and cult) potential.

MOB's refillable, modular packaging (made from a mix of biodegradable and compostable materials) is designed to be taken apart, reused and rethought – part of a broader push to dismantle beauty's default "purchase, consume, discard" cycle. That philosophy extends beyond the brand itself: Casale also co-founded Pact Collective, a cross-industry recycling initiative now partnered with major retailers and responsible for diverting hundreds of thousands of pounds of beauty packaging from landfills.

That ethos translates into product. No pre-built palettes, no excess – just customizable systems that encourage buying with intention and using everything fully. The bigger shift, Casale believes, is still coming – toward a more conscious kind of consumption, where "sustainability is the new luxury." ■



The Big Leagues

Meet the stylists behind some of the best braids in professional sports—and beyond.

By **EBONIE WALKER**





KARINA HIBBITT

BASED IN: SEATTLE, WASH.

At just 22 years old, braider Karina Hibbitt has a long list of famous clients. She's braided for Natisha Hiedeman (a WNBA player for the Seattle Storm), Jon Bell (a professional footballer for Austin FC), Marcus Thuram (a professional footballer for Inter Milan) and most of the Seattle Seahawks players—including Leonard Williams, Zach Charbonnet, Nick Emmanwori and Ernest Jones IV. And it all started during her freshman year of college.

"A University of Washington football player asked me if I knew how to braid hair," she explains. Growing up in a small town, Hibbitt says there weren't a lot of Black people, or even people with different hair textures, around her. "I just had the basic skills that every girl knows from braiding her friends' hair," she says. But she decided to give it a try, and the football player liked the end result. A couple of years later, after much more practice, Hibbitt decided to take a chance on herself and open up her own studio. "I went from 10 clients—on a really good week—to 25 clients my first week in the studio."

It's been a few years since then, and in her first year doing hair full-time, Hibbitt says she's seeing more success than she ever could have imagined. "I ended up at the Super Bowl and the World Cup," she says. "I've been flown out for hair—just insane stuff. I'm really big on faith, and if I was not meant to be in this room, I definitely would not be. If anything, I see it as a networking opportunity. I want to be in those rooms where I can get my name out there. I'm not nervous; I'm ready."



ALYSHA BONA

BASED IN: AJAX, ONT.

"I've always loved doing hair," says braider Alysha Bona. "I just didn't think it would lead me here."

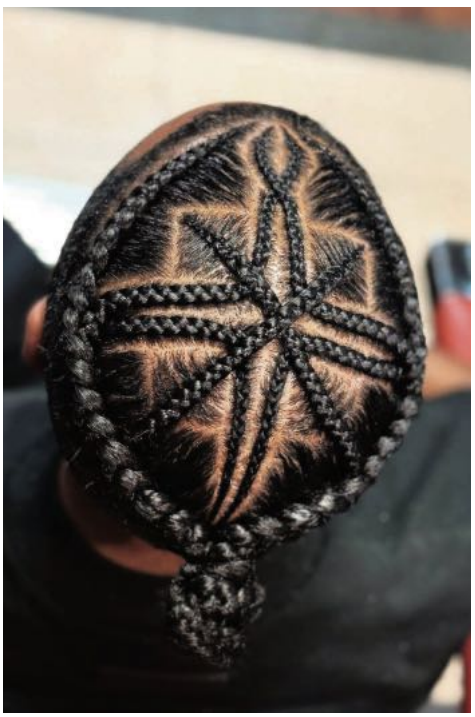
Bona taught herself how to braid by watching YouTube videos, practising on people in her high-school cafeteria and trying different styles on herself. "With practice came perfection, and that's how I gained all my clients," she says. One of those clients is NBA champion and two-time MVP Shai Gilgeous-Alexander (SGA), from Hamilton, Ont.

The braiding community is notoriously tight-knit, and Gilgeous-Alexander found Bona through another one of her famous Canadian clients. "SGA's manager reached out to Drake, whom I also work with, for my contact info," she explains.

The basketball star is very different from other clients because of how much he values his signature look. "If you'll notice, he has the exact same braids every single time: six straight-back braids," says Bona. "That's his thing. He doesn't veer from that at all." Maintaining that style meant that during last year's season, Bona was flying from Toronto to Oklahoma City every two to three weeks to refresh Gilgeous-Alexander's braids.

Travelling so often is a huge commitment, and life on the road can be difficult, but it's also one of Bona's favourite parts of the job. "Being able to travel and experience the world is an amazing perk," she says. "Sometimes it doesn't even feel real. Just saying it out loud is like, 'Wow, I actually do that.'"





PHOTOGRAPHY: (THIS PAGE) BONA VIA @BONABRAIDS/INSTAGRAM; POLES VIA @TYPHSBRAIDS/INSTAGRAM; (OPPOSITE PAGE) HIBBITT VIA @BRAIDS.BY.KARINA/INSTAGRAM.



TIFFANY POLES

BASED IN: CHARLOTTE, N.C.

If you're a basketball fan, you've probably seen the now-iconic picture of Allen Iverson getting his hair braided while taking a breather on the bench in the middle of a game. And perhaps you thought the woman braiding Iverson's hair was his mother, but Tiffany Poles is quick to correct me. "That's actually his aunt, not his mom," she says. She knows because he's her client.

Poles is a veteran in the braiding game. "I've been braiding since I was 12, and I started working in a barbershop at 17," she says. "I got licensed once I moved to North Carolina in 2013." Around that time, a childhood friend of Poles, who played on the Carolina Panthers, reached out and asked her to braid his hair. "Then he told Cam Newton about me," Poles recalls. "And once Cam found out about me, anybody with hair on the Panthers had to come to me. It just blew up from there."

Now her long list of clients includes NFL players Ted Ginn Jr., Antonio Brown and Curtis Samuel and NBA players Caleb Wilson and Miles Bridges, to name a few. "To me, every head is a canvas. So if you ever watch me braid, you'll see that I hold the comb like I'm drawing." It's Poles' creativity—her ability to design something from scratch and make it come to life through a hairstyle—that clients love and respect.

"They trust me—they have seen my work and know what I can do," Poles says. "Some will have inspiration; some will just say 'Do whatever you feel for my head.' They believe in my craft."



THE *Long* GAME

From an apartment lab in Brooklyn to the shelves of Sephora, the founders of Dieux are building a skincare brand that puts education first.

By **EMILY MACCULLOCH**

In an industry built on aspiration, Charlotte Palermino and Joyce de Lemos are betting on something far less glamorous: evidence. It isn't the flashiest message in beauty, nor is it the easiest to communicate in a time where social media rewards misinformed hot takes and the promise of instant transformation. But for the co-founders of Dieux, questioning those conventions is the entire point.

Long before Dieux became a buzzy beauty brand, Palermino and de Lemos were asking a question different from those of many of their peers. Instead of wondering how to sell skincare, they wondered why consumers had to become amateur detectives to understand what they were buying.

For Palermino, whose background spans beauty journalism, social media and brand strategy, the answer wasn't just education; it was building a brand where education was ingrained in the product experience. "When Dieux started, Joyce and I were spending an inordinate amount of time together in her lab," she says. "I heard so many things I'd never heard before, despite being a beauty writer and consumer." This included the myth that Europe bans over 1,400 skincare ingredients while the U.S. bans only a handful and also the practice of "dusting," in which brands include ineffective levels of an active ingredient in their products for marketing purposes.

Eventually, Palermino and de Lemos realized that the best way to shift the skincare conversation was to pair information with curated products. "For us, it's about how we live these values," Palermino says. "We want to make a counter-movement trend rather than just talking about it." Today, that translates to publicly pushing back against misinformation from apps like Yuka, breaking down dupe culture and even lowering prices when costs allow. For Dieux, transparency isn't necessarily about revealing behind-the-scenes secrets; it's about giving consumers what they need to make informed decisions, whether that's posting a breakdown of formulation costs, explaining the benefits of a key ingredient or debunking common myths about retinoids.

For de Lemos, a cosmetic chemist whose career has taken her everywhere from pharmaceuticals to L'Oréal, that begins inside her lab. "To me, transparency looks like education," she says. "When our community understands the thought process behind our formula design, they're able to appreciate and understand the value more."

That shared viewpoint has become Dieux's competitive advantage in a crowded skincare landscape. Rather than chasing viral ingredients or launching products to simply satisfy the never-ending consumer-driven cycle, the brand is built around a smaller selection of staples designed to solve specific concerns, like barrier repair and irritation.

It's a strategy that often runs counter to conventional beauty marketing. When Dieux dropped its first product in 2020, the reusable Forever Eye Mask, Palermino remembers there being plenty of skeptics who questioned whether consumers would embrace a more sustainable alternative. Instead, the launch became early proof that the brand's values resonated with consumers. "It became such a motivating rallying cry for us," she says.

That enthusiasm wasn't limited to the products themselves; it has also carried over


JOYCE DE LEMOS & CHARLOTTE PALERMINO, FOUNDERS

to the brand's fundraising campaigns. Causes Dieux has championed include the Promote Homosexuality Forever Eye Masks—100 percent of the proceeds were donated to G.L.I.T.S, raising more than $83,000 for the Black trans-led organization—as well as fundraising to help those affected by ICE raids across the United States. The response to those initiatives, Palermino says, proved to her that Dieux's community is invested in the larger values behind the brand. "That's when I'm like, 'Wow, we're not only building something that has a lot of momentum but people are showing up and accepting us for what we're trying to do,'" she says.

Brand growth is handled with similar intention. Despite significant growth—including a successful expansion into Sephora Canada and continued success across direct-to-consumer channels—the founders are uninterested in blindly chasing expansion for the sake of it. Their approach is deliberately brick-by-brick, even passing on trend-driven categories like lip balms and fragrance mists to focus on clinical skincare. "There's so much pressure to grow at all costs," Palermino explains. "But for us, it's about being slow and steady."

That patience is most evident in the lab. De Lemos says that after having worked across a range of corporate and start-up environments, she feels that Dieux intentionally sits in a middle ground—one that combines rigorous research with the flexibility to experiment. "We lead with curiosity and openness, and we won't shy away from expensive materials," she says. "If an ingredient is truly incredible, we make the right adjustments to make it work." When developing Deliverance, Dieux's calming antioxidant serum, the team chose to keep active ingredients costing over $5,500 per kilogram and instead found savings elsewhere in the formula to keep the retail price more affordable.

Innovation isn't always about inventing something entirely new, explains de Lemos. Sometimes it's about discovering a new delivery system or approaching an existing ingredient from a different perspective. That's exactly what Dieux did with Firm Revival HydroRetinal Firming Serum. Instead of working with an existing retinaldehyde encapsulate, the Dieux team created a formula that has its own multi-phase delivery system and provides both efficacy and tolerability for sensitive skin. They also deliberately avoid trends that don't have strong evidence. "Over the years, I've avoided 'all-natural' products," says de Lemos. "The science isn't there to support the idea that natural is better than synthetic in terms of efficacy."

That willingness to challenge conventional beauty narratives extends to how the brand communicates with its audience. While social media often rewards sensationalism, Dieux's content focuses on what the industry often *isn't* saying. A scroll through the brand's feed shows posts fighting back against the omnipresent fear of aging and partnering with an existing American tube-wringing company instead of creating their own version. (The Instagram caption reads: "Last year, we explored the idea of creating our own Tube-Wringer. The truth? We couldn't make one that met our standards.")

"Ultimately, are we trying to build legacy or virality?" asks Palermino. It's a question that has become increasingly relevant as Dieux's audience has expanded alongside its retail footprint. Its recent arrival at Sephora Canada marks a milestone but also presents a new challenge: educating customers who are encountering the brand on a store shelf rather than through their social channels. For the founders, that means every touchpoint, from packaging to merchandising to in-store education, must carry the same clarity that their online community has come to expect.

Dieux's evolution has changed Palermino and de Lemos' day-to-day relationship, too. After bringing on CEO Ryan Scott in 2024 to oversee the operational demands of scaling the business, Palermino has returned to focusing on the creative collaboration that defined Dieux's early days.

As transparency becomes an increasingly popular buzzword within the beauty industry, both founders hope Dieux will be remembered not for popularizing a trend but for changing expectations altogether. "I hope people see how we've made transparency a requirement for beauty brands," says de Lemos. "Customers have always deserved to know about the [products] they're buying, how they're made and why they work, and now they're asking for it."

For Palermino, the goal is simple. "I hope that we're teaching people what the problems are but also what the right solutions are and how to actually achieve them." ■



Dieux Firm Revival HydroRetinal Firming Serum, $59

Dieux Forever Eye Mask Reusable 100% Silicone Patches, $35

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF DIEUX



FOR Every Body

How adaptive beauty products are revolutionizing the industry.

By **SARA HAROWITZ**

Makeup artist Trishna Daswaney, who is based in London, England, had always believed that beauty could be used as a tool for empowerment. So in her spare time, she often hosted free makeup workshops for anyone needing a little extra support—cancer patients, those going through gender transition and people with disabilities. Working with those communities opened her eyes to the limitations of the beauty industry. "I was trying to teach the use of tools that some people couldn't even pick up," she recalls. "Here I was trying to do something nice, but I was [actually] making them feel worse."

That realization inspired her to launch Kohl Kreatives, a brand of adaptive makeup accessories designed for those with disabilities that was founded in 2018. Its lineup includes a selection of face stencils called Quickie Stickies, which allow users to effortlessly create designs on their eyelids and cheeks. There's also The Flex Collection: a kit of five makeup brushes with fully bendable heads, making them accessible for people with hand-mobility challenges. All of the brand's brushes also have custom handles that prevent them from rolling away when they're put down plus an audio guide for additional assistance, which is great for those with visual impairments.



When it comes to inclusivity, the beauty industry has made some exciting progress: Makeup shade ranges now cater to a diverse set of skin tones, and more brands are using models of different sizes and backgrounds in their advertising. Those are great places to start, but true accessibility requires so much more. "Adaptive beauty is about far more than making products easier to

PHOTOGRAPHY: MAIN & DASWANEY COURTESY OF TRISHNA DASWANEY

use—it's about autonomy, identity and the ability to define ourselves on our own terms," says Maayan Ziv, a Toronto-based accessibility advocate and the founder of AccessFest. "Beauty has always been a form of self-expression. When accessibility and great design come together, they ensure that disabled people aren't excluded from that experience."

Kohl Kreatives is not the only brand at the forefront of this change. Guide Beauty was created after founder Terri Bryant was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease and wanted to use products that worked with her loss of dexterity. Nimble is an AI-powered smart salon that paints your nails for you. Last year, in honour of World Sight Day, Indigenous-owned Canadian brand Cheekbone Beauty created a first-of-its-kind tactile eyeshadow palette designed specifically for people with visual impairments. And Tilt Beauty creates ergonomic makeup applicators for those who suffer from arthritis.

"I'm really interested in what Tilt Beauty is doing right now," says Ziv. "They're approaching accessibility as a design opportunity rather than an afterthought, and they're proving that adaptive beauty can be functional, beautiful and desirable at the same time."

Big brands are getting involved, too. Estée Lauder has a voice-enabled makeup assistant for the visually impaired, Lancôme developed a computerized makeup applicator and Shiseido has an online beauty-consultation service that uses sign language to support those with hearing loss.

> "ADAPTIVE BEAUTY IS [...] ABOUT AUTONOMY, IDENTITY AND THE ABILITY TO DEFINE OURSELVES ON OUR OWN TERMS."

Adaptive beauty is not just socially progressive—it's also a smart business opportunity. Globally, an estimated 1.3 billion people have a disability, representing 16 percent of the world's population. According to a 2022 study, in Canada alone, approximately 27 percent of people aged 15 and up (that's eight million Canadians) experience a disability that affects their daily lives.

It's also estimated that 1.5 million Canadians have sight loss, which is why Lilia Ivanov, the founder of made-in-Montreal skincare line Lilixir, decided to put Braille on all her product boxes. "When I started to think about the idea of the brand and our values, one of the most important [things] was to be as accessible and inclusive as possible," she says. It took her some time to find a box manufacturer that could do the job—and once she did, her costs went up. "It's worth it, because there are a lot of people with different visual impairments," she says. "And a lot of brands don't think about this category of people."

On that financial piece, Daswaney agrees. "A lot of people say that the way I run my business is stupid, but for me, this is all about having a greater mission," she explains. "It's super expensive, and it takes so much time. I'm not just going to a factory and looking through a catalogue and picking what I want. There's a big cost and a big risk associated with it, but it's something that I'm willing to undertake for the greater good of society." ■

In the *Know*

Five inclusive products leading the way.



All five makeup brushes in this kit are fully bendable both forward and backward, making them ideal for people with motor disabilities. They also stand up on their own and have ergonomic, easy-to-grip handles. **Kohl Kreatives** The Flex Collection, $85



With a round shape for minimal hand strain and a ribbed texture for better grip, the Betty palm applicator is perfect for those with shaky hands or fingers. Plus, its universal star-shaped hole allows it to work with any product, be it lipstick or nail polish. **ByStorm** Betty, $45



Made in Canada from organic, plant-based ingredients, this lightweight serum hydrates, soothes and helps protect against environmental stressors. And like all of Lilixir's products, it comes in packaging embossed with Braille, meaning it's accessible for those with visual impairments. **Lilixir** Ageless Rejuvenating Day Serum, $209



Certified for ease of use by the Arthritis Foundation, this smudge-resistant mascara's patented packaging includes a soft oversized handle and a shortened wand, making it great for anyone who struggles with hand mobility. **Tilt Beauty** Lashscape Volumizing Mascara, $39



This self-priming foundation comes in an impressive 48 shades. Its bottle doesn't have a twist cap; instead, it has a simple slide lock to make it easier for people with dexterity issues to use. **Rare Beauty** True to Myself Natural Matte Longwear Foundation, $58

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WELLNESS

MOVING · NOURISHING · THRIVING



SOLE SEARCHING

What On's next chapter tells us about the future of athletic brands.

(SEE NEXT PAGE.)

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF ON



RUNNING *the* SHOW

Julia McEwen gets a behind-the-scenes look at how On is blending engineering, design and fashion.

By the time I landed in Zurich in late June, the city was in the grip of a record-breaking heat wave. In true European fashion, there wasn't an air conditioner in sight, making a swim in the Limmat River feel less like a touristy diversion and more like a survival tactic. Yet inside On's headquarters, the heat was quickly overshadowed by something else entirely: momentum.

Employees arrived with running packs instead of briefcases, ducking into locker rooms to toss their sweat-soaked gear into office washing machines (a perk reserved for those who run their commute). Moss-covered sofas echoed the rolling Swiss Alps, meeting-room chairs were swapped for oversized boulders and across the street, engineers were building prototypes destined for elite athletes—and eventually the rest of us.

It quickly became apparent that On is about more than making running shoes. It has built an entire culture around movement.

That mindset has helped transform the Swiss brand, founded in 2010, into one of the fastest-growing names in sportswear. Now in its 16th year, On generated roughly $1.4 billion in first-quarter revenue, while its 10-year-old apparel division posted 57.5 percent year-over-year growth—a sign that the company has evolved well beyond footwear.

After touring its Zurich headquarters, I joined the team in Paris for Men's Fashion Week, where On unveiled the LightSpray Cloudboom Strike 2 (its newest super-shoe)—the carbon-plated, foam racing footwear credited with a wave of broken records since it entered the sport. Rather than relying on traditional knitting or stitching, the upper is created by a robotic arm that sprays an ultralight filament directly onto the shoe, reducing weight, eliminating seams and rethinking how performance footwear is made.

Unlike many fast-growing brands where creators gradually retreat into boardrooms, On's three founders—Olivier Bernhard, Caspar Coppetti and David Allemann—remain involved. Over the course of my afternoon at HQ, I met with each of them, and while our conversations naturally touched on quarterly growth and global expansion, they kept circling back to one topic: culture.

"We focus on strategy, product and culture," Coppetti explained, describing where they believe they create the greatest value. Rather than asking why an idea won't work, On encourages its teams to ask what would need to happen to make it possible. Failed ideas aren't viewed as dead ends but necessary steps toward breakthrough innovations. That philosophy runs through Dream On Lab, the company's research facility. Engineers can build new footwear prototypes within days, while robotic machines compress months of wear testing into just three-and-a-half days.

Bernhard, a former professional duathlete, first developed the prototype that would become On's signature CloudTec sole using pieces of a cut-up garden hose. That spirit of experimentation still guides the company today. Even after helping build a global business, he says his favourite part of the day is walking into the lab and watching young engineers chase the next "impossible" idea.

Apparel may only be a decade old at On, but it's quickly becoming a meaningful pillar of the business, supported by collaborations with Loewe and Zendaya that blur the line between performance and luxury. As Allemann told me, the company isn't interested in short-term celebrity endorsements but in long-term partnerships. "We're not thinking in years," he said. "We're thinking in decades."

I left having watched another employee arrive after a run, drop their gear into a washing machine and head upstairs. It struck me as the perfect metaphor: Most brands build products and then try to create a culture around them. On has done the opposite—the products are simply what happen when that culture goes to work. ■

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF ON



Adidas Originals Sport collection, from $65 to $130

RETRO REVIVAL | THE DRIP

Our appetite for vintage athleisure isn't slowing down, and Adidas is leaning all the way in. The brand's new Originals Sport collection takes cues from its iconic Superstar track suit, remixing retro sportswear for today's gym-to-everywhere wardrobe. Fronting the campaign is Calgary-born pop star Tate McRae alongside multi-hyphenate Emilia Mernes. Expect Trefoil-stamped bras, leggings, tanks, onesies and layers that pair throwback Adidas energy with actual performance tech. Your vintage track jacket just found some new competition.

The Pulse

Smart updates for a better, more balanced life.



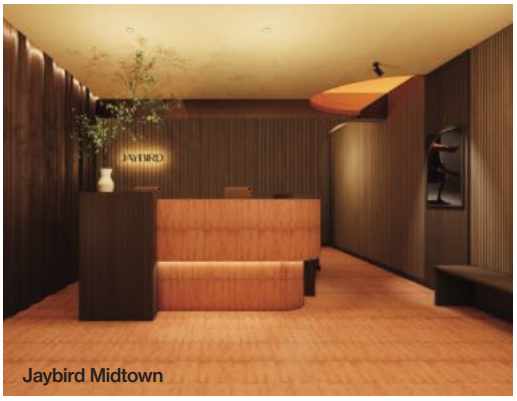
SIP SMARTER | SUPPLEMENTS

Water stacking—the wellness-world habit of adding functional extras to your H_2O—isn't going anywhere. Montreal-founded Good Protein just made it even easier, combining 10 grams of protein and 520 milligrams of electrolytes in one light, clear sip. Available in candy-coded Peach Rings, Pink Lemonade and Watermelon Candy, the single-serve sticks are made for post-workout, mid-afternoon or whenever plain water feels a little boring. Consider your water bottle officially upgraded. **Good Protein** Clear Protein + Electrolytes, $30 for 10 sticks



SMOOTH MOVES | SEXUAL HEALTH

What happens in the bedroom deserves good skincare rules, too. Canadian brand Nixit, best known for its reusable menstrual disc, is bringing its vagina-first philosophy to sexual wellness with Play Safe condoms and a pH-balanced, water-based lubricant. The condoms are body-safe and vegan-friendly, while the lube is designed with intimate health in mind. Even better? The playful, design-forward packaging is decidedly un-clinical—the kind you'd happily leave out on your bedside table rather than hide in a drawer. It's all part of founder Rachael Newton's mission to make vaginal care feel normal, inclusive and a lot more fun. **Nixit** Play Safe Three-Pack and Lubricant, $29



Jaybird Midtown

TAKING FLIGHT | THIRD PLACE

Jaybird is no ordinary Pilates studio. Founded in Vancouver, the Canadian-born concept has built a devoted following with classes that are dimly lit, mirrorless (to allow you to focus inward rather than on the person with perfect form two mats over) and heated by infrared. Movement starts from a place of rest and ends in a sweaty, uninhibited dance party. "Jaybird is not always for everyone, but for those whom it *is* for, it offers personal growth through movement," says co-founder Ariel Swan. The design of each space is as considered as a five-star-hotel lobby: luxuriously fragranced and colour-drenched in dark, comforting hues. This fall, Jaybird will open its third Toronto location, Midtown, in charming Summerhill, as well as its first outpost in New York City. "By bringing you into a dark, warm space with loud, immersive music, it gives you the ability to let go of the outside world and reconnect with yourself," says Swan. "So many people say that it's their therapy."

TEXT BY JULIA MCEWEN. PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF BRANDS.



Piper Gilles

Bounce Back

Turns out, the hardest fitness flex isn't another workout—it's knowing how to recover.

By SARA HAROWITZ

For Olympic medallist Piper Gilles, the hours spent recovering are every bit as important as the hours spent training. Saunas, compression therapy and sleep aren't rewards after a workout—they're an integral part of her fitness regimen. "It becomes a lifestyle," says the Toronto-based professional ice dancer, who won bronze at the 2026 Milano Cortina Olympics with her on-ice partner, Paul Poirier. "It's what we think about constantly: What else can we do to improve our skating? What else can we do off the ice to make sure that what we do on the ice is valuable?"

Restorative treatments are nothing new for elite athletes like Gilles or, perhaps unsurprisingly, for Hollywood A-listers. Many celebrities have helped popularize various wellness modalities, whether it's Jennifer Aniston and Cindy Crawford (they frequent the sauna), Lizzo (a big fan of cupping) or Lady Gaga (she loves a cold plunge). The result is that these recovery treatments are starting to enter the wider conversation, with evidence showing that they benefit everyone—no matter their activity levels. What was once a niche performance tool has evolved into one of the wellness industry's fastest-growing obsessions.

PHOTOGRAPHY: PIPER GILLES COURTESY OF KALA; FAIRMONT PACIFIC RIM COURTESY OF FAIRMONT PACIFIC RIM.



Fairmont Pacific Rim

"Recovery is a huge topic now," says Daniel Salazar, a kinesiologist and personal trainer at Vancouver's Fairmont Pacific Rim hotel. "Your body needs to recover in order to grow more muscle, whether it be to gain more endurance or to get more toned. It's super important in terms of not only performance but also overall health."

In essence, recovery includes anything that helps repair and rejuvenate your muscles and joints between intensive workouts. Everything from hot-cold circuits and IV drips to RMT massages and mobility exercises boasts results that benefit all bodies—and businesses are taking note: The global fitness-recovery-services market was valued at $11.6 billion in 2025, and that number is projected to jump to $37.7 billion by 2035.

"There's this big push for longevity," Salazar explains. "We want to live longer and be healthier. We want to be able to run with our grandkids." Instead of reserving these modalities for those moments when we're already injured, we're collectively starting to understand that they are part of an intentional, holistic approach to staying well.

At the Pacific Rim, a newly renovated fitness centre includes a private contrast-therapy room along with an LED-red-light-therapy panel for targeting sore muscles post-workout. Hot-cold therapy touts benefits including increased joint mobility and reduced muscle tension, while red light stimulates cell energy, which can help boost circulation, lessen joint inflammation, increase collagen production and promote tissue repair.

Both Salazar and Gilles also mention compression wearables as key to their own routines. Gilles never goes on a trip without her Normatec compression pants ("They're kind of heavy to travel with, but that's just part of it," she says), and Salazar has a pair that he uses on his feet. Compression benefits include reduced swelling, increased blood flow and the prevention of fluid retention.

At longevity clinic Supernatural, which has locations in Toronto and Hamilton, customers of all ages and physical abilities love the Oxygen Chamber: a pressurized room with an oxygen mask designed to reduce cellular fatigue and support cardiovascular function. Also available is Full Body Cryotherapy, which involves exposing the body to very cold air for a short period of time (usually three minutes), resulting in cellular rejuvenation, reduced inflammation and boosted endorphins. "It's very invigorating," says Louise Upperton, an integrated-well-being expert at Supernatural. "Most people come out saying they feel super energized and very mentally clear."

Of course, not every regenerative treatment has to be high-tech. Simple stretching and walking can also do wonders for the body, including helping with range of motion, circulation and muscle repair. Plus, they're free. "Mobility is a big part of it," says Salazar, who suggests that a quick morning stretch routine is a great place to start.

After all, recovery isn't a sign that you're slowing down—it's a sign that you know how to keep the pace. ■

Post-*Game* Plan

Products that help sore muscles bounce back faster and make body maintenance a little more enjoyable.



A classic recuperation tool – but much chicer than usual. Crafted from dense, high-quality foam, this hourglass-shaped roller is great for stretching and massaging, helping release tension everywhere from your hips to your hamstrings. **Bala,** $71



For anyone without the space (or funds) for an at-home sauna, this infared hot blanket boasts similar benefits. Settle in while you binge your latest TV fixation and enjoy a sweaty session designed to promote relaxation, burn calories, boost circulation and ease tired muscles. **HighDose,** $1,010



Ease muscle discomfort, improve cellular function and promote healthier-looking skin with this portable, easy-to-use red-light-therapy panel. With four treatment time settings and a convenient handle, it delivers medical-grade red light for targeted relief. **Kala,** $450



This mini electric massager offers powerful percussive therapy to help relieve aches and pains on the go. A companion smartphone app offers guided sessions. **Therabody,** $270



Ideal for runners and hikers, these recovery slides were designed to cushion and support tired feet after all those kilometres. Wear them around the house after workouts – or before your next big adventure. **Hoka,** $65



CORE *Values*

Turns out you don't need a "Pilates body" to do Pilates.

By **INGRIE WILLIAMS**

Pilates is having a moment—one that's projected to be worth $250 billion by 2030. More than a century after German trainer Joseph Pilates developed the low-impact exercise system during the First World War, the workout has been reimagined for a new generation. Today, it's one of the fastest-growing corners of the wellness industry, and the reformer—that spring-loaded, pulley-rigged machine that looks part torture device, part rowing machine—has become the workout's biggest star. According to ClassPass, Pilates was the most-booked workout globally in 2025 for the third consecutive year, with reservations up 66 percent year over year, while the broader Pilates- and yoga-studio market is projected to reach nearly $855 billion by 2036. When I first saw someone gliding across the machine, I wanted to do it, too.

But if I'd let the images of skinny white women that dominate my social feeds influence me further, I may never have tried it. And I would have missed discovering the instantly addictive airborne rush of springing off a rebounder, which I highly recommend. The workout is a go-to for A-listers (Madonna, Jennifer Aniston and Miley Cyrus are fans), and a #pilates search tends to serve up a cookie-cutter visual, reinforcing the message that the Pilates body is thin and white. For the most part, the people doing it online (or receiving the most visibility) don't look like me.

A shift is under way, though. A wave of diversity and inclusivity is helping reshape the industry. This year, Johanna Ricouz has given Pilates a major boost toward greater racial representation. Known as @junglejohanna to her more than 200K Instagram followers, the Miami-based instructor has taken the reach of her wellness-inclusive message for BIPOC communities to new realms by joining forces with Peloton and Lululemon. A shining endorsement on the celeb side, award-winning Black American actor, producer and podcast host Keke Palmer has added "certified Pilates teacher" to her CV. In January, she announced the launch of her wellness platform, Practice by Palmer, to her 14.8 million IG audience. With Palmer's magic touch, the move is sure to inspire the next generation of mat and machine lovers.

My experience is that there's a disconnect between Pilates bodies on social media and what they look like at your local studio. Vina Vo, a Pilates instructor, agrees, and her body-positive mission seeks to overcome this. "Big people can do a lot of things; they're very capable," says Vo, the owner of My Vibrant Body, a studio in Toronto. "They just need proper coaching and a good environment to feel safe to do the fancy moves that they want to do." A former boot-camp-workout devotee, Vo found Pilates after experiencing medical weight gain. "I immediately fell in love with the reformer, and it changed my relationship with exercise," she says. "It helped with my physical and mental transformation."

Today, she helps beginners build confidence through movement. "My following leans toward curvy, corporate professionals," Vo says. When she first trained as an instructor, she found there was no guidance on teaching larger bodies. Instead, she drew on her own lived experience as a mid-sized athletic person to develop an approach that prioritizes accessibility, confidence and progression.

"I'm hoping that in the future, there will be as many diverse teachers as there are participants," Vo says. Her message to newcomers is simple: "Don't wait until you see someone exactly like you. The most powerful thing you can do is take the first step, because you might become the representation that someone else needs to see. My hope is that you realize you've belonged here the whole time." Just like me. ■

PHOTOGRAPHY VIA GETTY

Flex Appeal

Elevated activewear and studio accessories made for every stretch, pulse and plank.

Aritzia, $90



Michi, $190



Knix, $70



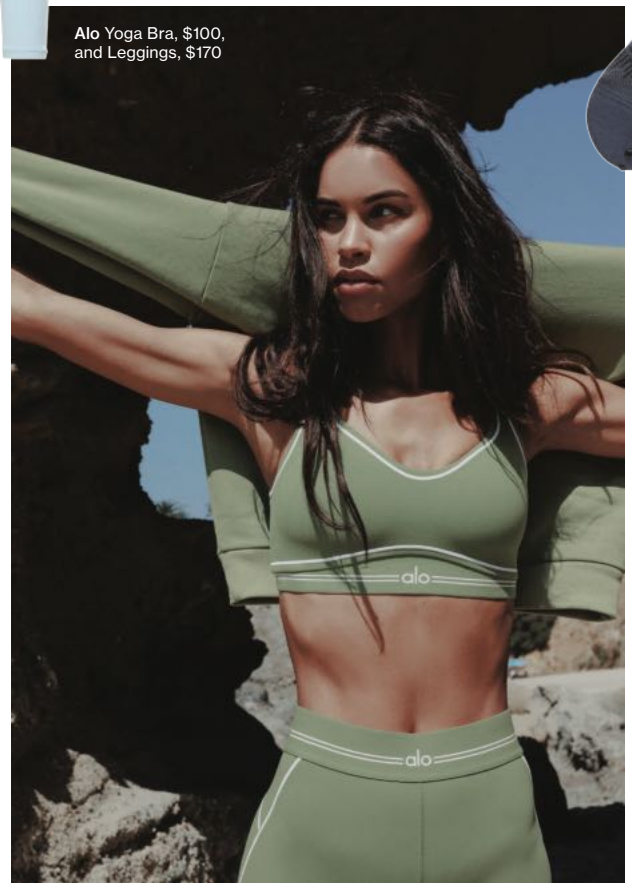
On x Erewhon, $130



Left On Friday, $180



Alo Yoga Bra, $100, and Leggings, $170



Lululemon, $25



NikeSKIMS, $100



Azur, $20



Alpenhaus, $30



Bombas, $30



Left On Friday, $80



EDITOR: JULIA MCEWEN. PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF BRANDS.



William Ukoh. *Untitled from the series Aunties in Suits*, 2025. Archival pigment print. Framed: 71.1 × 55.9 cm. Courtesy of the artist and EMC Contemporary. © William Ukoh

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STATE OF PLAY

Louis Vuitton's Cruise 2027 collection gives uptown polish a downtown edge.

(SEE PAGE 80.)

PHOTOGRAPHY BY NATASHA GERSCHON. TOP, JUMPSUIT AND HAT, LOUIS VUITTON.

BREAKING CHARACTER

She has trained with Navy SEALs and held her own among Hollywood heavyweights. Now, Laysla De Oliveira is hitting her stride.

Words by **CONNOR GAREL** *Photography by* **NICK MERZETTI**

Styling by **ASHLEY GALANG** *Creative direction by* **GEORGE ANTONOPOULOS**



Blazer, shirt, pants
and boots, Gucci.
Earrings, necklaces,
bracelets and ring,
Tiffany & Co.



Top, Salvatore Vignola. Pants, Prabal Gurung. Earrings, necklace and bracelets, Tiffany & Co. Gloves, Charles & Ron.

When Laysla De Oliveira says, from a spacious New York City hotel room in mid-July, that she's made it to her "favourite time of year," she's not referring to the dog days of summer. She's assessing her own internal climate, now cooled in light of certain post-bondage freedoms. "I finally get to climb out of all that military gear and step into my real self, my fashionista self," she tells me, fresh-faced and beaming. The sweat, psychic distress, spent calories and voluntary (or involuntary) tears are all burnt offerings to the play-gods of Hollywood fantasy-making and to everyone who forgets that creating art requires physical labour, too.

De Oliveira, who lives in Los Angeles, is in New York for the season-three premiere of *Special Ops: Lioness*—Taylor Sheridan's high-octane death-trap TV series that casts the Canadian as a battered, wayward woman who finds salvation as an undercover CIA operative—and she's grateful to be trading the heavy drag of American warfare for the glamorous drag of American celebrity. Her fashion choice for the occasion? A suede hooded gown from Gabriela Hearst's Spring 2026 collection. "The hard part now is to talk about [the new season] without spoiling it," she says, and then adds, "I'm really the Tom Holland of the group."

The hard part earlier, during the six months of the year when the crew filmed the show in Fort Worth, Tex., was twofold: First, there was the metric weight of said military drag (the artillery, vests, combat boots and hard helmets are way heavier than one might expect, especially when you're running full tilt under the hot Texas sun) and second, the daily three hours of training required to make the many action sequences feel natural and to imbue her character, Cruz, with the elegant, threatening quality of a crouching tiger. "I wasn't in the gym like that before [this] show," says De Oliveira. "And then, suddenly, I'm being trained by Navy SEALs." (She wouldn't describe them as "tender.")

If *Lioness* made handling weapons second nature, an upcoming role has presented a new challenge for the 34-year-old actor. In a rodeo film called *Cowboy*, musician and music-video director Cameron Duddy's debut, De Oliveira plays Ben Foster's ex-girlfriend and baby mama. "I'm used to handling guns," she says with a laugh. "I was honestly more scared to handle a live baby, [who] might start crying during the energetic, hardcore scenes."

The training and stunt work for *Lioness* were no walk in the park, but neither was inhabiting such a traumatized and discarded woman. "I was exploring that every day, and I pushed my body in ways that it wasn't used to," she says of her first season. "I didn't have any time for self-care, so by the end of filming, it felt like I had just given birth and was experiencing postpartum. Everyone was like, 'How was it?' and I didn't know what to say because I was still processing what had happened."

She was the most depressed she'd ever felt, and she couldn't understand why she wasn't the grateful ingenue she was meant to be, with her childhood dreams having been fulfilled. "I never thought I'd work with one Oscar winner, let alone three at the same time, on a show called *Lioness*, where I play the lioness," she says. How could she have just worked with Zoe Saldaña (whom she says paved the way for her), Nicole Kidman (whom she had to observe from afar as "exposure therapy" before sharing any scenes) and Morgan Freeman ("Like, I can't ask for anything else.") yet still feel, somehow, hollow? "I really had to learn about pacing and self-care and nurturing yourself, because six months is a long time to explore something so emotional—enough time [for it] to get locked into muscle memory."

De Oliveira now monitors these incursions of her characters into her inner life. Her friends, recognizing her tendency to play psychologically disturbed characters, are now begging her to do a romcom.

In some ways, Cruz's evolution on the show, from an uncertain young woman to a self-possessed, un-fuck-with-able dangerous one, mirrors the actor's own professional growth, and after three seasons, De Oliveira can see how Cruz's confidence has begun to influence her own: "It's cool to see the ways Cruz has penetrated the script."

De Oliveira studied dance and drama at Rosedale Heights School of the Arts in Toronto, where she was peers with Canadian photographer Petra Collins, and started modelling when she was just 14—still young enough to be introduced to insecurities she didn't know were possible. But she says it helped her build a thicker skin for auditions, which, "to be frank, [she] cared much more about."

Theatre studies at Toronto Metropolitan University provided diminishing returns. "My style is very small and intimate, and I have terrible stage fright," says De Oliveira. "I'd cry before the performances, and because I'm really not a musical-theatre kid, I would die a thousand deaths whenever we had to sing to each other." She knew that she preferred performing for a camera, but the university, which admitted just 20 students to the program each year, discouraged external auditions because it felt they might interfere with course attendance. This, she says, is where the pessimistic logic of modelling kicked in. She was accustomed to the process of submitting herself to 500 casting calls and booking one job, so she started auditioning on the side. "I knew that if I finished school at 22 or 23 with zero credits, things would be challenging," she says. »



Top and pants, Dior. Sunglasses, earrings, necklace, bracelets and rings, Tiffany & Co.



Top and skirt,
Louis Vuitton.
Earrings, necklace,
bracelets and rings,
Tiffany & Co.

Top, Prabal Gurung.
Rings and bracelets,
Tiffany & Co.



She booked her first TV role in L.A. around age 20 and, buoyed by the feeling of the universe siding with her, decided to drop out of school. It wasn't easy. Such decisions don't bode well for the anxious children of immigrants, who are perennially saddled with the seemingly moral responsibility of converting the sacrifices of their parents into a success they can all be proud of. Her mother had emigrated from Brazil as a cleaning lady, and here was De Oliveira, channelling the high-drama of the telenovelas they had watched together in her youth into a "secret sauce" for these fictional characters. Then the role got cut. "That wasn't cute," she says. It seemed possible, even probable, that she'd abandoned her studies for nothing.

When September rolled around again, though, during the week she would have started her second year, she booked a role that took her to Amsterdam. "Suddenly, I was like, 'OK, maybe this is what I'm meant to be doing,'" she recalls. More guest roles followed, and even through a two-year dry spell, she built enough self-belief to move to L.A. and bet on herself.

Every Canadian artist eventually confronts the backward logic of their home country's creative class: You have to leave to seem attractive to the people who stayed, and then they will want to work with you. When she was 26, having settled into her life in L.A., where she was dating her now husband, actor Jonathan Keltz, she landed a starring role in Vincenzo Natali's *In the Tall Grass*, the 2019 Canadian adaptation of a Stephen King novella. "I was just a newbie until then, doing guest spots and a bunch of pilots that didn't go anywhere," she says. But she felt a big door swing open and saw the light spill in.

When cult filmmaker Atom Egoyan, a darling of the Toronto New Wave, heard that De Oliveira was in town shooting the movie, he reached out. They started meeting every weekend for coffee, and he would bring cut-outs from articles that reminded him of the character he was writing: a young music teacher who willingly goes to jail for a crime she didn't commit to atone for past sins that she can't get over. "It's true that I like to escape into intricate roles that aren't like me at all," De Oliveira admits. "But I'm also a Pisces moon, which means I feel very deeply. Maybe I'm drawn to characters that have complicated feelings. Or maybe *they're* drawn to *me*."

> "I FINALLY GET TO CLIMB OUT OF ALL THAT MILITARY GEAR AND STEP INTO MY REAL SELF, MY FASHIONISTA SELF."

Finally, she read for Egoyan. But when he told her he wanted to give her the main part in *Guest of Honour*, her reaction confused him. "He was like, 'You're the strangest person I've ever given a part to—people were begging for this role, and you're being so casual about it,'" she says. "But I was like, 'Oh, well, I thought you were going to fire me.'" She'd been recast so many times, and watched so many pilots sink, that she couldn't believe she'd landed two starring roles. She compares the feeling to being electrocuted but, like, in a good way.

Now, she's far from those early feelings of uncertainty. It helps, she says, to have an actor for a husband—somebody who can understand the rhythms of her itinerant life and the silence after a bad audition or a hard day on-set. "I don't think I would suggest that two actors date, because actors can be so into themselves," she jokes, "but he's literally been there since my first audition."

After 14 years together, they keep each other grounded. They do audition tapes together and give each other notes on their respective performances. When, recently, De Oliveira was on a flight and couldn't get access to a script that had a part for her, Keltz read it for her and then told her all the reasons she needed to take the part. "Sometimes it kind of feels like we're in a little production company together," she says. (She did take the part, in a hockey thriller called *Good in the Room*, directed by Pat Kiely, where she'll be playing "the Victoria Beckham of Canada, an absolute tornado of a human being.")

It also helps to now have the full support of her family. "My mom sacrificed everything, and I owe it to us [both] to make my dreams come true," she says. "I think it's all about following that inner call and, frankly, not taking no for an answer. People always ask me, 'What's your biggest advice [for young artists]?' I think that when you're starting out, *that's* when you have to believe in yourself the most, because nobody else believes in you at that point. It's only later, when you start to gain some traction, that everybody is complimenting you—and then you have to think about what's real and what's flattery."

But even when she's playing make-believe, De Oliveira knows how to keep in touch with what's real. It's possible, in the end, to keep two feet on the ground and your head in the sky. ■



Jacket, top, tights and shoes, Tom Ford. Earrings, necklaces, bracelets and rings, Tiffany & Co.



Dress, Ceren Ocak. Earrings, bracelets and rings, Tiffany & Co.

Hair, Jerrod Roberts for The Wall Group. Makeup, Leah Darcy for A-Frame Agency. Executive producer, Louie Diaz. Photo assistant, Mickey Hammy. Fashion assistant, Berlin Ventura. Production assistant, Rosario Ochoa. Fashion intern, Jael Valdez.



Jacket, shorts and bag, Louis Vuitton.

CITY SLICKER

French refinement meets New York City attitude in Louis Vuitton's graphic, eclectic Cruise 2027 collection.

Photography by **NATASHA GERSCHON**

Styling by **ASHLEY GALANG**

Creative direction by **GEORGE ANTONOPOULOS**



Jumpsuit,
Louis Vuitton.


Top and skirt,
Louis Vuitton.



Top, jumpsuit, hat and bag, Louis Vuitton.



Blazer, skort and
boots, Louis Vuitton.



Blazer and shorts, Louis Vuitton.

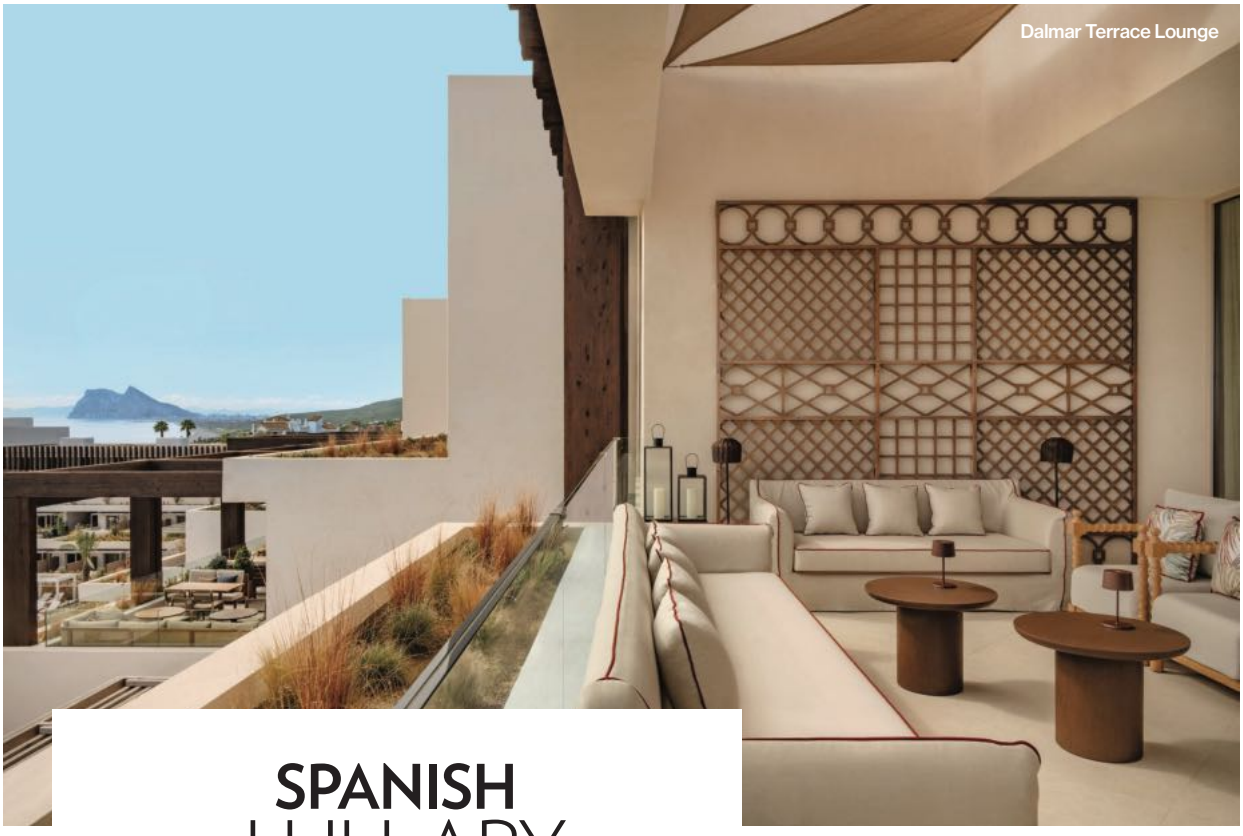


Cape.
Louis Vuitton.



Top and pants, Louis Vuitton.

Hair, Jukka Suutari for Plutino Group. Makeup, Veronica Chu for La Beauté Louis Vuitton. Nails, Naomi Misu for P1M.ca. Model, Dalton for Niwa Models.


Dalmar Terrace Lounge

SPANISH LULLABY

How to spend three perfect days in Spain's Costa del Sol.

By SOUZAN MICHAEL GALWAY

Spain's southern coast, the Costa del Sol region, knows how to win guests over. With its laid-back luxury (think sun-soaked beaches and yachts bobbing on the sea) and impossibly fresh food offerings, it's a no-brainer for those wanting a Spanish stop that's decidedly low-key. If you're looking for a short, relaxing stop in between city-hopping along the Mediterranean (perhaps on your way from Barcelona to Marrakesh), Fairmont La Hacienda Costa del Sol is the ultimate home base to spend a restful few days.

The sprawling seaside retreat is where contemporary design meets the easygoing spirit of the region. Opened in early 2025, the hotel is located on the Mediterranean coast and features stunning views of the sea stretching out toward Gibraltar and Morocco. It's the kind of hotel that makes a compelling argument for doing very little at all. But when you do feel like venturing out, some of the region's most alluring experiences are right on its doorstep. Here's how to spend a few days exploring Spain's southern coast.

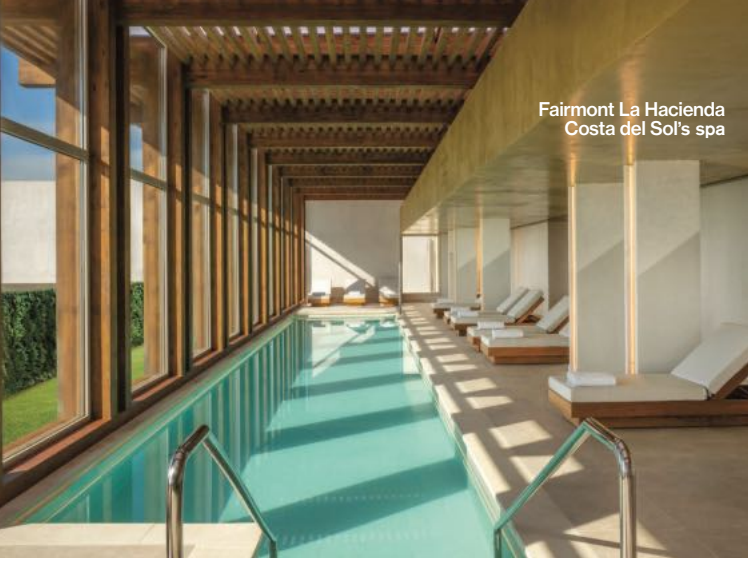

Rosa's Café

THE ITINERARY

DAY ONE The best way to arrive is with a blank to-do list. Fairmont La Hacienda's sleek, modern architecture is softened by the surrounding landscape—with sea views that follow you from the moment you arrive—and the natural hues and organic textiles throughout the hotel.

Ease into your first morning with one of the hotel's wellness offerings. A sunrise yoga or Pilates class overlooking the water is a fitting introduction to the area. Then, find a lounger by the pool, retreat to the private plunge pool outside your villa suite (if you're staying in one) or wander down to the beach for a swim. When hunger calls, settle into the beach restaurant, La Cala de la Hacienda, for lunch. Fresh seafood, colourful salads and unfussy flavours are best enjoyed by the sea, after all.

Spend the afternoon at the spa, where a signature massage followed by the hydrotherapy circuit (steam room, hot tubs, saltwater pool and cold plunge) offers the sort of reset that only a vacation can promise. Or, if a round of golf is what you're after, you've come to the right place. The hotel's property is home to two award-winning courses set between rolling hills and the bright blue sea. Come sunset, make your way to Il Faro for dinner. The restaurant's menu puts the region's exceptional produce front and centre, while the views do their own heavy lifting.


Fairmont La Hacienda Costa del Sol's spa

DAY TWO If Fairmont La Hacienda is an exercise in slowing down, Sotogrande offers a glimpse of the Costa del Sol at its most radiant. Just a short drive from the resort, the exclusive enclave has long attracted an international crowd thanks to its marina, golf courses and famous polo scene. It feels undeniably glamorous without trying too hard.

Start at Sotogrande Marina, where stunning yachts sit alongside boutiques, cafés and waterfront restaurants. Take your time wandering the harbour and popping into its cute seaside shops, like Atipika and Itsomi, to browse irresistible resortwear. Make sure to stop for lunch at Rosa's Café; the pastel-soaked Instagram-ready spot serves wholesome fare with a brunch sensibility (think iced matcha, colourful lunch bowls and fruit-filled pastries), making it an ideal place to settle in for a relaxed midday meal before heading back to the hotel.

In the evening, make sure dinner is at Umbra, the hotel's lively plant-filled patio restaurant, where seasonal ingredients and contemporary takes on Mediterranean classics keep the focus firmly on the region. Make sure to linger over a nightcap with the coastline illuminated below. Don't miss the spicy cocktail offerings, but be warned that the bartenders don't skimp on the heat.


Fairmont La Hacienda Costa del Sol villa

DAY THREE On day three, trade the sea for the mountains. The journey to Castellar de la Frontera takes you inland through a landscape of forests, rolling hills and rugged countryside. Perched within a beautifully preserved medieval fortress, the hilltop village of Castellar de la Frontera feels cinematic, with narrow cobblestoned streets, whitewashed homes and sweeping views. Spend the morning wandering the fortress and exploring the village at your leisure. Pause at the viewpoints, browse the artisan shops and take in the details of a corner of Andalusia that feels worlds away from the resort's contemporary glamour. If you're ready to get your steps in, the surrounding countryside offers scenic hiking routes that you won't regret exploring.

For the final evening, make a reservation at Dalmar, the resort's upscale restaurant led by two-Michelin-starred chef Benito Gómez. Here, a warm and cozy atmosphere goes hand in hand with incredible techniques and ingredients. Ask the staff about the restaurant's amazing signature olive oil, La Oliva Roja. They'll be thrilled to tell you how it's produced exclusively from a Spanish olive grove reserved just for Chef Gómez. The wine pairings are equally thoughtful, with Dalmar's sommelier selecting and presenting herbaceous, surprising wines designed to complement each course—like a sherry that is almost perfume-like in its flavour notes. Each stunning dish is accompanied by a story about its ingredients, its origins or the landscape that produced it.

Before heading to your next Mediterranean destination, use the Costa del Sol as a great reminder that the best vacation highlights are in the quiet times in between buzzing plans. The luxury of the Spanish coast is measured not in how much you can fit into a trip but in how easily you can forget to look at the clock. ■

WHAT TO PACK



This striking cologne features a unique blend of salty, mineral top notes; coconut, lavender and cypress middle notes; and vanilla caviar and cedarwood base notes. It's a must for a beach vacation—with a twist. **Rabanne** Invictus Elixir, $195 for 100 ml



You can't go wrong with this three-in-one fan, mist and personal cooling system (with cryotherapy-inspired cooling plates), available in different colourways. **Shark** ChillPill 3-in-1 Personal Cooling System, $180



A chic vacation calls for statement sunglasses, and these bold frames fit the bill. Pair them with a breezy linen outfit for the ultimate effortlessly cool combo. **Monos**, $185



Fill this gorgeous raffia winged tote bag with all of your vacation essentials. Complete with leather trim and a zipped inside pouch, it's the perfect carryall for the beach—and beyond. **Boss**, $549

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF FAIRMONT



Soft Serve

There's a good reason why words like "buttery," "cloudlike" and "plush" have become part of fashion's vocabulary. In a world of hard edges, softness feels indulgent. Loro Piana commits fully to the bit with the Extra Softy Bag L29, a more compact spin on its signature silhouette. Crafted in sumptuous fine-grain leather, the bag is designed to collapse gracefully against the body rather than sit stiffly beside it. The Italian house's Ghiera charm and sculptural padlock keep things distinctive (no logos required), while a dual-strap system shape-shifts the bag from shoulder to crossbody to hand-held, depending on your mood. Because the most luxurious accessories aren't the ones demanding attention – they're the ones you reach for every day.

TEXT BY JULIA MCEWEN. PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEORGE ANTONOPOULOS USING IPHONE 16 PRO. LORO PIANA EXTRA SOFTY BAG L29, $6,190

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