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THE MOVIE!

STORY BEHIND
HER NEW FILM

MARRIED
TO THE JOB
IS WORK RUINING
YOUR RELATIONSHIP?

25 MAY 2026
ISSUE 934



SPRING FASHION ISSUE

STARRING ACTOR GUGU MBATHA-RAW



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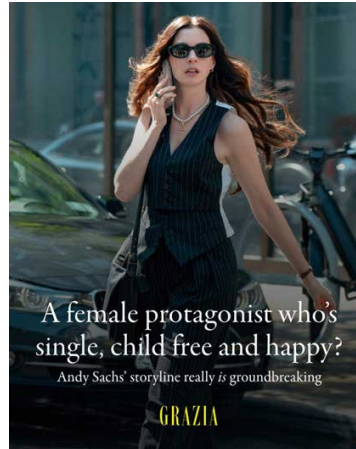
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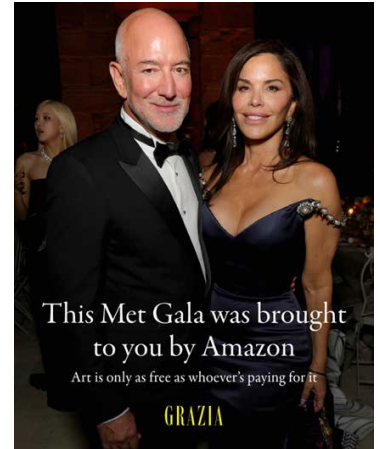
▶ MEANWHILE, ONLINE...

YOU'VE BEEN READING...



Our take on the refreshingly groundbreaking Andy Sachs in *The Devil Wears Prada 2*.

COMMENTING ON...



Our coverage of how 'fashion's biggest night out' was funded by Bezos's billions.

WATCHING...



Visionary costume designer Molly Rogers revealing which designers said no to the first *Devil Wears Prada*.

BUYING...



Anything and everything bright red – possibly the most accessible styling hack you'll enjoy all year.

HAVE YOUR SAY...

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I'VE JUST READ Polly Vernon's column (*My brush with the pink-pill-popping femosphere*, 11 May) and am staggered. As a woman in my fifties, I think it's really important to listen to women who are a bit older than you. You only learn about life through living it and women have a great track record of having each others' backs, be it between mothers and daughters, sisters or best friends. Think of it as the female equivalent of the old boys' club! My tuppence worth is that being financially independent gives you a lot more power and agency in your relationship to decide where you live, how to spend your joint income and crucially what you want to do and when, on your own terms rather than feeling indebted to somebody else. Do yourself a favour and give yourself this gift!

Caroline



HERMÈS
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corde et soie
Hermès, traversant horizons

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WELCOME TO THE ISSUE

One of the things I love about *Grazia* is the breadth of content we cover. This issue is a case in point. With spring in full swing, there are dreamy fashion shoots to transport you into holiday mode and shopping specials where the team have scoured the shops for the key items that'll bring your wardrobe bang up to date. Jazz slippers for the win. Meanwhile, I've been in Ibiza talking to M&S's director of womenswear, Maddy Evans, about why the time felt right for the brand's first catwalk show – and her mission to help every woman nail their style. But we've also interviewed journalist Emma Barnett, who has produced the first ever feature-length film about endometriosis for the BBC. As she says, one in six women leave the workplace because of endometriosis and it costs the economy £8bn per year – yet it's dramatically underfunded and remains a taboo. Barnett hopes to change that by opening up about the emotional and physical toll it takes on her. It's a powerful reminder of why women's health must be on the agenda.



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TUDOR



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**BORN TO
DARE**



OUR MENTAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM NEEDS MORE SUPPORT

Mental health patients are routinely coming to harm because of high case loads and **understaffing**, a poll by the Royal College of Nurses (RCN) found last month. Nurses are caught in a ‘perfect storm’, said Prof Nicola Ranger, the general secretary of the RCN. ‘It means that despite working exceptionally hard, they just cannot meet **rising demand**.’ As a result, vulnerable people are going without care and mental health staff feel distress watching patients deteriorate. The Government has just announced that 8,500 new mental health workers have been hired since 2024. It’s a welcome step in the right direction, but this **Mental Health Awareness Week** we need to keep supporting those who support us, and push for the crucial help they need.

POLLY VERNON

‘Alignment’: a new concept that makes everything better! Kinda...



REJOICE! A NEW Hollywood euphemism is born! The first of its magnitude since Gwyneth and Chris’s ‘conscious uncoupling’ – although, I’d argue, this one has more potential for day-to-day application.

It was forged in – oh, mild-to-moderate panic, I assume, in the comms department of a TV production studio, then thrown to the wider world. Its purpose? To explain Helena Bonham Carter’s hasty departure from the set of the next season of *The White Lotus*. Bonham Carter seemed, on paper, like the perfect addition to the show’s cast, concept and vibe. Her exquisite oddness and her residual hint of poshness made her a natural inheritor of the X-factor hit-maker function originally delivered by Jennifer Coolidge. Although HBC, an actor of proven and undisputed ability, would, of course, have done it all her own way, made it her Own Thing... Except that she didn’t complete a full week of filming.

The statement addressing her leaving of the show reads: ‘It had become apparent that the character which [producer and writer] Mike White created for Helena Bonham Carter did not align once on set.’

Align? ALIGN? Ah – what glorious semantic jiggery pokery is this? How many sins does it cover? What manner and quantity of explosive rows? What clash of

equally formidable egos? I mean, I don’t know for sure, of course, but I do know whatever happened to cause a massive star to walk away from a massive show was breezily glossed over, explained away, dismissed, by one calm, moderate, rational-seeming – though actually really quite slippery – concept: alignment.

God, I love it! It’s so vague, yet sort of, unarguable. Secretly high-handed, though it acts like it’s totally reasonable. To date, I’ve used it to explain: a morning-after headache, grumpiness and fatigue (‘Hangover? *No!* I didn’t align with all that wine I drank last night on an empty stomach!’); being late for an appointment (‘Sorry. My outfit was not aligning, had to pop home and change’); and getting out of things other people have asked me to do, to which I’d initially agreed, then: thought better of (‘Yeah. I know I said I would *but*, turns out, I don’t align with your original request’). I’ve used it to express enthusiasm (‘I am so aligned with *The Pitt*’), approval (‘I really align with Meryl Streep’s *DWP* promo wardrobe, don’t you?’) and, also? A total lack thereof (‘I don’t “hate” her, no – we just... don’t align’). It is multipurpose, versatile and I love how it acts like a grown-up, when it’s actually a spoilt child’s get-out-of-jail-free card. Try it! Thank me later.

CURRENTLY OBSESSED WITH...



1
L’Atelier 73’s enamel cactus necklace
Perfect beach jewellery.



2
Whistles’ lime heeled flip-flops
So easy. So friggin’ cool.



3
Wonderskin eyeliner
I was wary cos viral on TikTok... But it’s brilliant.



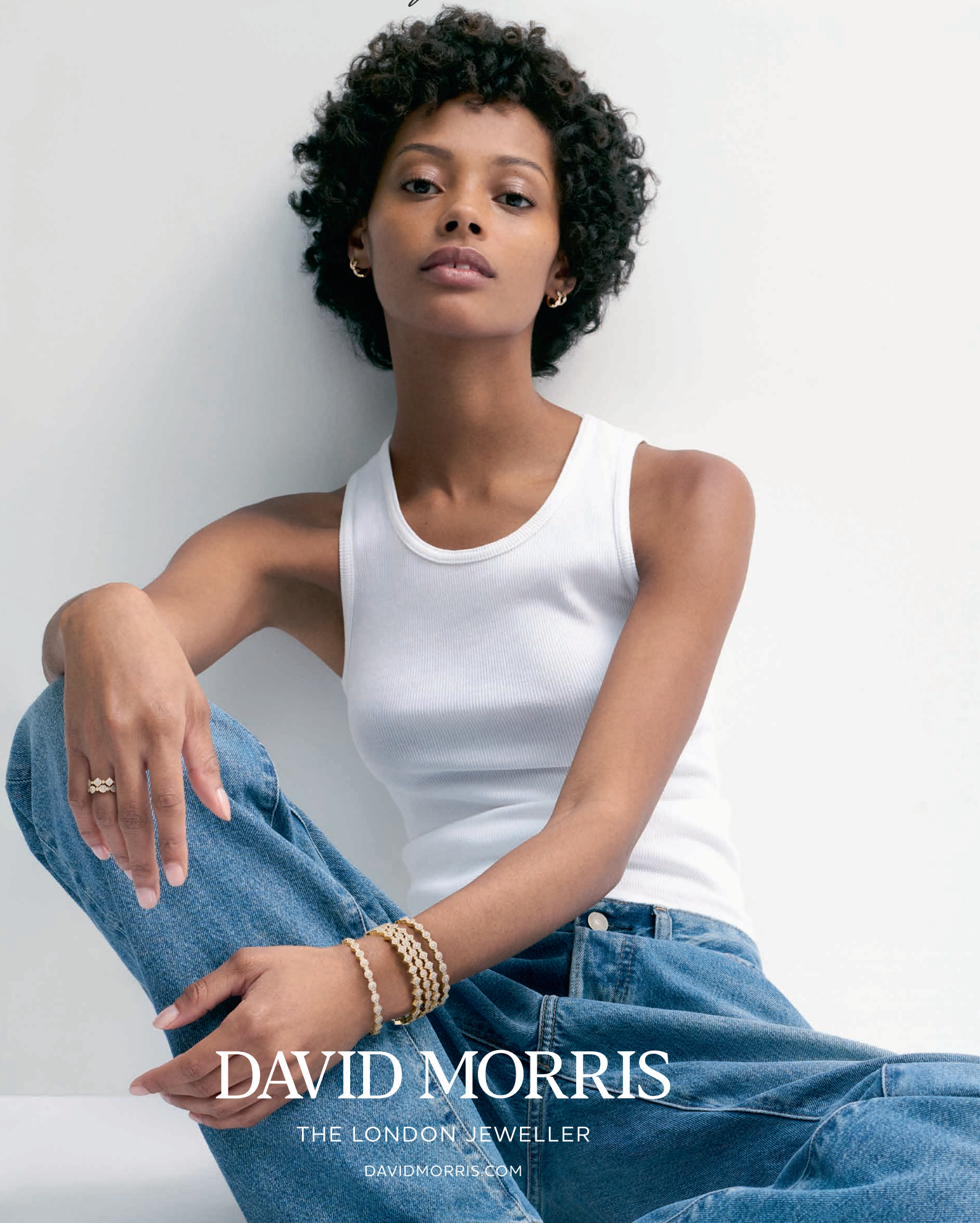
4
Uniqlo’s grey unisex jorts
I have them. They’re sort of... perfect.



5
Damson Madder’s sundresses
Really cute, slightly unusual.

TRIOLETTE

by *Cecily Morris*



DAVID MORRIS

THE LONDON JEWELLER

DAVIDMORRIS.COM

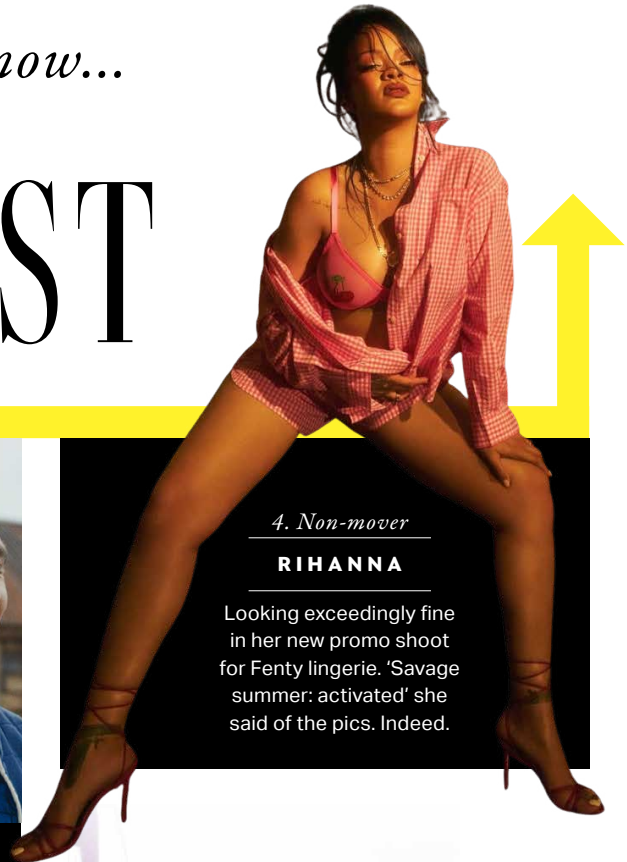
Introducing The Holiday Edit



THE WHITE COMPANY
LONDON

Who we're loving and living for right now...

CHART OF LUST



1. Up

SIMONE ASHLEY

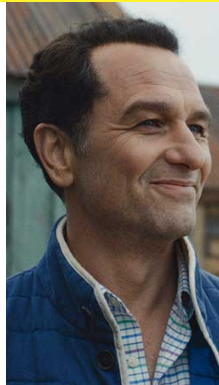
Inspired addition to *The Devil Wears Prada* cast on the occasion of its reboot. Did sterling work with her promo wardrobe, too.



2. Non-mover

LISA VANDERPUMP

A new season of *Vanderpump Villa* occurs; we are, yet again, struck by her signature mix of regal, naughty HOG* ('heart of gold).



3. Up

MATTHEW RHYS

Five minutes ago, he was terrifying in *The Beast In Me*. Now? He's hilarious in *Widow's Bay*. We do love range on a man.



4. Non-mover

RIHANNA

Looking exceedingly fine in her new promo shoot for Fenty lingerie. 'Savage summer: activated' she said of the pics. Indeed.



5. Non-mover

GRAYSON PERRY

Grayson Perry Has Seen The Future is a brilliant and thorough interrogation of AI. We learned loads. (We do like to learn, yes; how rude!)

6. Non-mover

JILLY COOPER, RIP

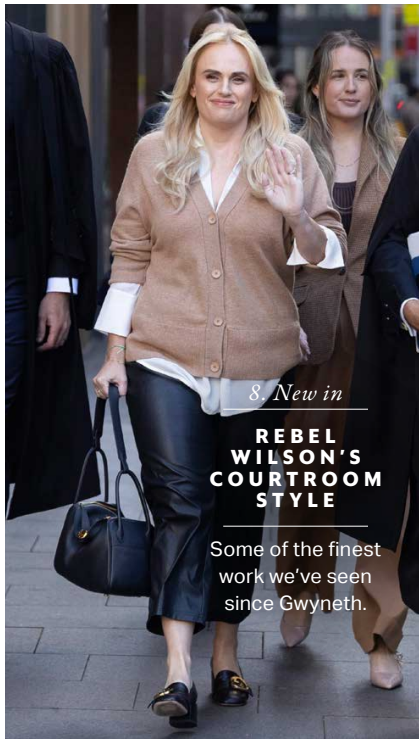
Rivals returns, huzzah! And it transpires that, on one of her earliest meetings with star Aidan Turner, the great Jilly C asked him, of the show's cast, 'But who's bonking who?'



7. Up

THE YACHT-WRECKING ORCAS OF GIBRALTAR

They're back! Sinking luxe yachts, like they do every spring. Latest research into their motives suggests they might just be bored teenagers.



8. New in

REBEL WILSON'S COURTROOM STYLE

Some of the finest work we've seen since Gwyneth.

9. New in

BANKSY'S RESIN MAN

A 25-foot monument erected in the dead of night, undetected, on a Pall Mall traffic island because, said Banksy, 'There was a bit of a gap.'



10. Non-mover

JAMIE BARTLETT

In other AI-related news, Jamie Bartlett's podcast *Everything Is Fake (And Nobody Cares)* is vvg indeed; and co-presented by an AI assistant, Jimmy Botlet.

WORDS: POLLY VERNON. PHOTOS: GETTY, DISNEY, INSTAGRAM/RIHANNA

WHAT'S NEW NOW!

Our latest and greatest of what to add to your shopping list

Try knotting a silk scarf loosely around your hips for an added pop of primary colour, the quickest way to add interest to simple spring outfits. **£45, cos.com**



Two of the biggest trends of the season? Asymmetric hemlines and grey jersey. Peachy Den's marl midi nails the two in one fell swoop. **£109, peachyden.co.uk**

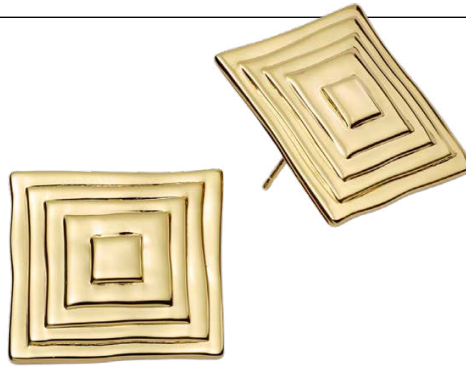
Flip-flop weather hasn't quite landed, so opt for MaxMara's ballet-flat-espadrille hybrid for the perfect transitional shoe. **£545, maxmara.com**



A new Loewe Paula's Ibiza campaign means summer is nearly here. **loewe.com**



Jewellery house Daisy teams up with swimwear label Away That Day for a summer-ready collaboration. Expect statement studs, trimmed swimwear and perfect pendants. **Earrings, £85, daisyjewellery.com**



The latest addition to the Givenchy by Sarah Burton family arrives! The slouchy Voyou, available in four chic shades, is our new arm candy crush. **£1,523, [Givenchy by Sarah Burton](http://Givenchy.com)**



Holiday on the horizon? Smarten up your journey with Aspinal of London's tan leather passport cover – putting the glamour back in travel. **£95, aspinaloflondon.com,**



Queen of minimal dressing Rosie Huntington-Whiteley goes maximalist for a new collection with VIX. Our favourite? A tiger-print halterneck. Quiet luxury be gone! **£307, vixpaulahermann.com**



Statement necklaces signal the start of spring/summer. Bookmark Le Sundial's collection of OTT pendants as your warm weather wardrobe hero. **£402, lesundial.com**

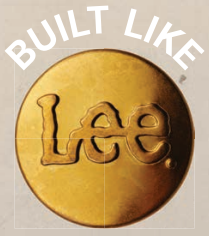


When it comes to sunglasses, 'bigger is better' is the correct approach. Marina Rinaldi's D-frame shades are your blueprint. **£305, marinarinaldi.com**



Take a sculptural approach to sandals. Case in point: Marks & Spencer's graphic wedges, our new favourite footwear. **£46, marksandspencer.com**

EDITED BY JULIA HARVEY





10 HOT STORIES

1. Blake's bombshell moment

What's behind her shock lawsuit settlement? *Georgia Aspinall* investigates...





Blake at the Met Gala in archival Versace

PHOTOS: GETTY; SHUTTERSTOCK

SHE WAS ONCE dubbed the queen of the Met Gala and was a mainstay on best-dressed lists for more than 10 years. Designers, from Chanel to Gucci, clamoured to dress her. But this year, no one expected Blake Lively to turn up at the Met Gala at all.

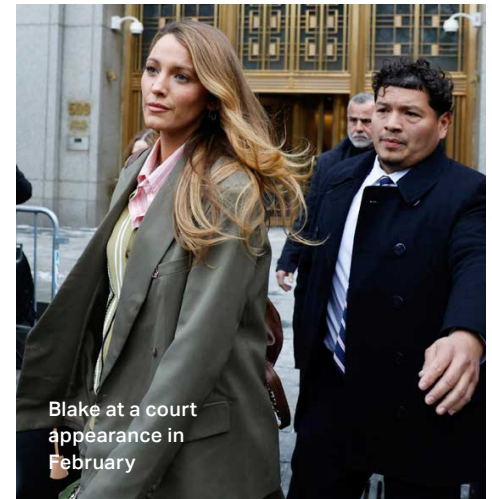
Amid the fallout from her 18-month-long lawsuit against Justin Baldoni, photographers were expecting to capture Lively heading up the steps of the US District Court in Manhattan, rather than the Met Museum. Lively had accused her former director and co-star of sexual harassment on the set of *It Ends With Us*, and of orchestrating a smear campaign against her for complaining (claims he denies). Scheduled to begin this month, the \$161m trial would have seen a judge deliberate over three of Lively's initial 13 claims (10 were dropped over technical issues) relating to retaliation, aiding and abetting retaliation, and breach of contract.

Imagine the gasps, then, on the Met's Italian-garden-inspired steps when Lively emerged in archival Atelier Versace, all smiles and waves, just hours after news broke that she and Baldoni had settled. 'We acknowledge the process [of making *It Ends With Us*] presented challenges and recognise concerns raised by Ms Lively deserved to be heard,' a joint statement read. 'We remain firmly committed to workplaces free of improprieties and unproductive environments. It is our sincere hope that this brings closure and allows all involved to move forward constructively and in peace, including a respectful environment online.'

Lively seemed joyous as she made her way into the event, and the biggest night in fashion is certainly one way to celebrate the end of what has been the darkest chapter of her career so far. Subject to intense trolling – about everything from her perceived personality to her acting ability – her reputation has taken a battering in the past two years. Stepping out at the Met was perhaps Lively's best opportunity to regain the affections of the internet.

The big question is, why settle now? Two weeks prior to trial and after three failed attempts by presiding Judge Lewis J Liman to have the pair mediate a settlement, it seemed both parties were determined to have their day in court.

'The brutal bottom line for Blake is that she was backed into a corner,' a source close to the situation claims. 'After the majority of her claims were thrown out a few weeks



Blake at a court appearance in February

ago, it became increasingly apparent that she was beating a dead horse and going to trial would have left her many more millions out of pocket. Given the colossal amount she's already ploughed into this case it was a practical decision to draw a line under it all and walk away. Suffice to say, she's enormously disappointed; it's the last outcome she wanted or envisaged going into this case.'

Baldoni's team are reportedly celebrating. 'Justin is thrilled and privately telling people he feels hugely relieved,' the source explains. 'Ultimately, nobody can declare themselves a winner here, it cost way too much and took a serious toll on both sides emotionally.'

For Lively, attention now turns to resetting her public image. 'Blake is trying to cling to the positives and hopes she's served as an example of someone who wouldn't sit back and accept what happened to her in the workspace. Her priority right now is to salvage her career,' says the source. 'Ryan [Reynolds, her husband] is right behind her, they still have a lot of very influential friends in the industry and there's a definite confidence that Blake can move forward from this and still land good jobs.'

Rumours of a move to the UK, where Reynolds co-owns Wrexham FC, have been widely reported. That's unlikely, the source says. In fact, her Met Gala appearance proves she's taking the opposite approach: she's holding her head high on the world stage. And the industry she grew up in is keen to support her, with stories quickly emerging that Anna Wintour had personally invited Lively – and placed the actor at her table. A compelling start to her new chapter.



2.

Charlize shows the power of a capsule wardrobe

Charlize Theron's press tour wardrobe is a masterclass in style with substance

THE MODERN FILM press tour has become fashion's most reliable sugar rush: a procession of looks to hype a film, calibrated for maximum impact, engineered for social media. Lately, however, the sheer volume of pre-release outfits makes your head spin. So much so, it produces the visual equivalent of white noise.

Here, thankfully, the exception to this rule. Charlize Theron's latest outings – to promote her new Netflix movie, *Apex* – are offering the ultimate red carpet



panacea, reminding us that fashion does not need to shout 'method dressing' or 'promo tour' to be heard. What it needs is pristine clarity and a point of view.

OK, it helps that Theron possesses the sort of physical presence that designers (and the rest of us) can only dream of: model height, sample-sized proportions, a face that can hold its own against the most sculptural of garments. But, seriously, that's not the whole story.

In collaboration with her stylist Leslie Fremar, Theron brings an haute level of catwalk awareness – the monochrome palette, the most flattering silhouettes and huge discipline to stick to a theme. But the best bit? *It's a look we can all do!* And how often can we truly, say that?

Let's analyse. First, by barely straying from black and white, all distraction is removed, pulling focus on the distinctive shapes and the woman wearing them. A stark, oversized white shirt is clean, cool and doesn't scream try-hard.

Take her Givenchy by Sarah Burton outfit – that white shirt (in leather) is practically a sculpture – plain at the front and rising in the back. The 'pinched' pants gently balloon over the leg and draw in at the ankle, forcing attention on the pom-pom sandals, also in black (because why throw it all off with a colour?).

Another look that takes us beyond the red carpet? That men's Dior suit – again black – worn with nothing underneath bar a frilled collar, like a modern version of an Elizabethan ruff. The black trouser suit is huge for next season, worth the investment. Turn to Ralph Lauren or to Róhe for a deliciously cut double-breasted blazer. Sculptural shirts are aplenty, and With Nothing Underneath stocks one of our favourites. As for balloon trousers, until you're 100% sure you want to commit to a designer pair by Chloé, dip your toe by way of H&M. The only colour addition? Scarlet lipstick. Think of this look as reachable fantasy.

Can we also talk about the Balmain

L-R: Charlize in a Dior suit, Balmain leather trousers and Givenchy by Sarah Burton leather shirt



Blazer, £439, Lauren Ralph Lauren

Shirt, £150, With Nothing Underneath

Bra, £58, Skims

STYLE FILE
Chic separates

Shorts, £360, Toteme

Balloon trousers, £32.99, H&M

Leather trousers, £349, Massimo Dutti

black leather biker trousers worn with a crisp black shirt and sharp pointy heels? Easy. Or the black Alexander McQueen skirt suit – a flatteringly longline blazer worn with silk skirt? Chic. How about the Bottega Veneta white textured top with a fringed miniskirt – sounds *awful*, looks *gorgeous* – with supremely doable ballet lace-ups. Even her most directional pieces – those balloon trousers or grown-up Bermuda shorts – feel grounded.

What we're saying is this: to look edgy/sexy/cool/confident is to recognise that a wardrobe gains power through consistency. Theron doesn't appear to be trying on different identities from one appearance to the next. She is refining herself with each look – and, if you can stick to these rules, so can you, too.

Invest in pieces that veer a bit more sculptural because they will hold their shape over time. Pay greater attention to proportions that ultimately suit you; be extra-disciplined with black and white. And resist the urge to overcomplicate anything. Remember, style is the art of refusal.



3.

'I tell my son I can keep him safe, but I don't know if that's true'

Jewish school children talk to a policeman in Golders Green

Anti-semitic attacks are causing heartbreak for Jewish parents, writes *Siam Goorwich*

SHORTLY AFTER 11AM on 29 April, news broke of the stabbings of two men, aged 76 and 34, in Golders Green – the epicentre of Jewish life in London. The police are treating it as a terrorist incident.

Even as a standalone event, this would have been frightening – but it was the latest in a string of attacks against the UK's Jewish community, who account for just 0.5% of the population. There's an atmosphere of fear among all British Jews, but parents are finding themselves at the sharp end, dogged by questions of how to keep their children safe.

Just two weeks earlier, on 15 April, Cara Lever woke to news of an attempted arson attack on the synagogue that houses her son's nursery. 'I found myself grappling with impossible questions: how do I begin to explain this to my three-year-old? How can I possibly send him back to nursery?' In the weeks since, she and her husband have been 'constantly' weighing up their options: 'Jewish school or multi-faith school? Would our children be safer

if we moved away from London, or even left the UK altogether?'


These questions are increasingly commonplace. Leah* has two daughters in state schools in east London. In the weeks after Hamas attacked Israel in October 2023, her youngest – eight at the time – says she heard children in the playground saying, 'Jews are evil.' Later, her best friend told her, 'My mum said that we can't be friends because you're Jewish.' After a lesson on the Holocaust in her eldest daughter's secondary school, she says some students were heard saying, 'It didn't happen, they're exaggerating. And even if it did, they deserve it and they should have all died.'

Abigail Radnor, who co-hosts *Nisht For Me*, a podcast about Jewish life in Britain, says she has to do 'deep breathing' to stem her anxiety as she drops her children at their heavily guarded Jewish primary school in Manchester. 'My kids have taken

part in multiple "invacuation" drills, practising keeping really still and completely silent, hiding under the desks,' she explains. 'Every night I promise my four-year-old, who is scared of the dark, that there is nothing to be afraid of and that Mummy and Daddy will always keep him safe. My heart breaks slightly as I soothe him with these words, as I just don't know if it's a promise I can keep.'

Some parents have decided that the UK is no longer the best place to raise Jewish children. 'Leaving the UK is a choice that was made for us in many ways,' Rachel* told *Grazia*. 'I can't see a future for my daughters here, it looks increasingly bleak, increasingly heavy. I want to give them the opportunity to live a different kind of Jewish life, where they don't need to be scared or embarrassed or ashamed.'

For parents staying in the UK, the question of how to raise their children to be proud of their heritage, without putting them in danger, is a constant anxiety. 'I recently had to have a difficult conversation with my three-year-old,' says mum-of-two Amy*. 'He proudly tells everyone his Hebrew name, and I had to explain that he has to be careful who he tells he is Jewish, because someone might want to hurt him. Two Jewish mum friends are debating whether to even tell their children that they have Jewish ancestry. It breaks my heart that once again we are essentially being forced into hiding who we are in order to survive.'



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FEATURING HAILEY BIEBER



MANGO



The Met Gala: brought to you by... Amazon

The event has always relied on patronage, but a tech bro takeover is ruffling feathers, says *Rebecca Lowthorpe*

4.

LAUREN SÁNCHEZ BEZOS arrived at the Met Gala on the first Monday in May looking notably solo and, for her, low-key, in navy Schiaparelli couture said to be inspired by John Singer Sargent. Her husband was MIA, having slipped in the back door to avoid the protesters and paparazzi. When spotted later, in a regular tuxedo, it was clear he had ignored the 'Fashion Is Art' theme entirely. But then, the uber-billionaire gets to dress like a James Bond villain if he wants to, given he paid for the event – to the tune of \$10m, the largest individual financial commitment in Met Gala history.

The event has always run on patronage.



dare they! But are fashion people just full of pure snobbery – hypocrisy even? Or are they being sensibly suspicious?

The reality is that the Costume Institute is the only curatorial department in the Met that has to fund itself. The other galleries are supported by the museum's endowment. Which is why the gala exists and why tickets now cost \$100,000, while tables start at \$350,000. Last year's event raised a record \$31m. In other words, the costume department has always been dependent on the goodwill of money. The Bezoses didn't create that vulnerability. Indeed, they were invited in, by the queen, Wintour, who chooses everyone in attendance – the 400 guests, the stars and which fashion houses are allowed to collaborate with them, plus the glamorous co-chairs – Beyoncé, Nicole Kidman and Venus Williams.

For Wintour, who at 76 is seeking to further cement her legacy, the stakes this year were higher than ever. Although the wing of the Met that houses the Costume Institute is already named the Anna Wintour Costume Center, last night's gala saw the inauguration of the Costume Institute's new permanent home: the Condé M Nast Galleries, a nearly 12,000 square-foot space that used to be the museum's gift shop, now transformed into one of the grandest fashion spaces in the world. So, once tucked away in the basement, now fashion will be the first thing visitors see when they walk into the Met's Great Hall, having claimed the most important real estate in one of the world's greatest art institutions.

It's a genuinely thrilling moment, which makes the Bezos association feel all the

Anna Wintour has spent three decades keeping the Costume Institute alive via a careful ecosystem of corporate sponsors and wealthy donors. Big money has always been in the room. The difference now is who the money belongs to – and what it wants in return.

The Bezoses, and their \$250bn net worth, are the main source of funding for both the gala's party and the exhibition, Costume Art. Many see this as strategy over philanthropy (although you could argue all philanthropy is strategy of some kind) and marks the end of the Met Gala as we knew it. The horror of the Bezoses buying their way into high society – how

more loaded – and even put some invitees off. Note Meryl Streep's absence, thought to be Bezos-related; her publicist said, 'It's never really been her scene.' Meanwhile, Livia Firth posted a video claiming the Met Gala had turned into *The Hunger Games* and being disappointed to see which side of history Wintour had chosen to stand on.

New York City mayor Zohran Mamdani – the Democratic socialist elected on a platform of housing affordability – and his wife, Rama Duwaji, sent their regrets and instead celebrated Met Gala Monday with a portrait series of garment workers. 'We're proud to feature the stories of these hard-working New Yorkers who make our city's fashion industry second to none.' As illustrations of the yawning chasm between socialist values and capitalist spectacle go, it was pointed. Particularly given that the Bezos fortune now underwriting the Met Gala was built, in part, on labour practices that have been extensively documented and widely condemned. An activist group, under the name Everyone Hates Elon, even hacked into subway display cases to post anti-billionaire posters near the museum in the days before the event calling it The Bezos Met Gala and claiming it was brought to you by worker exploitation.

But the Bezoses aren't the only billionaires looking for social cachet. Fashion weeks have also been hijacked by the monstrously wealthy. In fact, the last fashion season was defined, to an uncomfortable degree, by billionaires inserting themselves into front rows. Mark Zuckerberg and his wife Priscilla Chan appeared at Prada in Milan in March – dressed head to toe in the label. Why? Because Meta is reportedly developing Prada-branded AI smart glasses. A week later, in Paris, Bryan Johnson – the 48-year-old tech billionaire intent on bio-hacking his way to immortality – appeared as a model at the Matières Fécales show subversively titled The One Percent. And months before, at the January couture shows, it was the Bezoses who took their seats at the Schiaparelli show sandwiched between Anna Wintour and Andrew Bolton, the Costume Institute's head curator, and later that day at Dior, alongside France's first lady, Brigitte Macron.

Then came the Met Gala announcement and the \$6.25m partnership with the

L-R: Chloe Malle, Lauren Sánchez Bezos, Bee Carrozini and Anna Wintour at the Met Gala

THE STARS WHO NAILED THE 'FASHION IS ART' BRIEF



AYO EDEBIRI
CHANEL

Ayo Edebiri's floating Chanel gown landed somewhere between the draping of ancient marble sculptures and pure etherealism.



JULIANNE MOORE
BOTTEGA VENETA

Julianne Moore's sculptural LBD (long black dress) proves once more that the actor needs no fanfare to conquer the red carpet.



ALEXA CHUNG
DIOR

A chartreuse lily-petal-embellished Dior gown? No one will ever do it quite like Alexa Chung.



KIM KARDASHIAN
ALLEN JONES +
WHITAKER MALEM

Love it or hate it, Kim K owned the theme with a dress by artist Allen Jones and the duo Whitaker Malem.



DREE HEMINGWAY
MAISON VALENTINO

Brilliantly bonkers, Dree Hemingway in Valentino couture was one of the most ostentatious looks of the night.



CLAIRE FOY
ERDEM

Erdem Moralioglu and Claire Foy turned one of the night's most-referenced influences, Madame X, into a dramatic, sweeping look.



BEYONCÉ
OLIVIER ROUSTEING

After a 10-year hiatus, Queen B returned to the steps of the Met, in a sparkling skeleton design by Olivier Rousteing.



HUNTER SCHAFER
PRADA

Inspired by Klimt's *Mäda Primavesi*, Hunter Schafer's torn-up Prada dress nailed the theme, turning a work of art into, well, art to live in.

Council of Fashion Designers of America. The Anna Wintour X Bezos arrangement is transactional in both directions: the Bezos get cultural legitimacy and the Met Gala gets a whopping cheque. Add to that the exquisite timing of *The Devil Wears Prada 2*. Its central plot – in which a tech billionaire attempts to buy a failing fashion magazine to please the woman in his life – was presumably intended as satire, given the rumours, before Condé Nast went another way, that Bezos was considering buying the publishing group as a gift for

Lauren Sánchez. Life didn't quite imitate art but it got uncomfortably close.

Some will say this is simply fashion's new reality. That these men are everywhere – on our phones, in our feeds. You can't opt out of Zuckerberg's internet; it's hard to entirely refuse Bezos's world of instant delivery. Fashion, like every other cultural institution, must operate within the infrastructures these men built and own. So while the snobbery is real, underneath it is a genuine anxiety about that happens when the most powerful night in fashion is answerable to

a man whose primary business is logistics.

Others say the Met Gala is not a front row seat. It is fashion's most public declaration of what it values, who it celebrates and what it believes itself to be. This year, that declaration was made possible by the man who, actually, did exactly the same thing in 2012, when Amazon sponsored the gala and he held the same honorary chair. Nobody really noticed then. But we're all glaring now – why? The theme was Fashion Is Art. The irony being, of course, that art is only as free as whoever's paying for it.

WORDS (FASHION SIDEBAR): HENRIK LISCHKE. PHOTOS: GETTY



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*Model shown Abarth 600e Competizione 207kW (280PS) with optional Bi-Colour Shock-Orange paint. Personal Contract Hire. Offer subject to availability, on selected models at participating retailers only. Initial rental £2,999 plus 47 months at £329. 6,000 miles per year. Finance subject to status. T&Cs and exclusions apply. Applicants must be 18+. Guarantee may be required. Price shown includes vehicle excise duty throughout the duration of the agreement plus 3 year's roadside assistance, beginning on the date of registration. Excess mileage and vehicle condition charges may apply. **You will not own the vehicle.** Finance by Stellantis Financial Services, RH1 1QA. Offer applies to Retail customers. Cannot be used in conjunction with other offers. Available on orders from 1st April to 30th June 2026. **Stellantis UK Limited trading as Fiat UK is a credit broker, not a lender. The only lender we will introduce you to is Stellantis Financial Services, RH1 1QA. No commission received.** Stellantis UK Limited reserves the right to change, amend or withdraw this offer at any point in time. Correct at time of print. Fuel economy and CO₂ results for the Abarth 600e Competizione 207kW (280PS). Mpg (l/100km): N/A. CO₂ emissions: 0g/km. Electric range up to 207 miles (WLTP). For comparison purposes only. Range achieved in real world may differ according to factors such as accessories fitted, battery condition, weather, driving style and vehicle load.

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Delivery charges may apply.

5.

Inside the Kate Moss biopic

A new film charts her friendship with artist Lucian Freud, writes *Rebecca Cope*

IN AN INTERVIEW at the turn of the millennium, Kate Moss revealed that one of her few unrealised ambitions was to be painted by artist Lucian Freud. The late artist, one of the 20th century's foremost portraitists, was known for his unflattering naked realism, which he saw as at odds with the 'sheen of glamour' of celebrities. Despite making a point of refusing to paint famous people (reportedly turning down an invitation from Diana, Princess of Wales) he made an exception for the then 28-year-old supermodel.

The unlikely relationship that blossomed during the making of the resulting artwork, *Naked Portrait, 2002*, is the inspiration for upcoming film *Moss & Freud*. Starring Ellie Bamber as Moss and Derek Jacobi as the artist, the film has been executive produced by Moss herself, offering a rare insight into the life of a woman famous for adhering to the mantra 'never complain, never explain.'

'Sitting for Lucian was an honour and incredible experience,' Moss said when the film was announced. 'I knew that [director] James [Lucas] would convey the emotion in the storytelling in a fitting way, one this memoir deserves, having been involved in the project and script development from the beginning.' Moss was also instrumental in casting Bamber, who nails the model's mannerisms, including that charming cackle.

Set in 2002, the film is an early-noughties nostalgia-fest, from the fashion (denim cut-offs, waistcoats, Vivienne Westwood pirate boots) to the soundtrack (it opens with Royksopp's *Flashlights And Explosions*). Moss devotees will recognise her most iconic shoots – including the Union Jack dress she first wore in John Galliano's 1993 catwalk show – with her friend, hair stylist turned fashion editor James Brown, overseeing the costumes, many of which are Moss's. It even recreates her 30th birthday party, with its *The Beautiful And Damned* theme, at which Freud was in attendance.

As the film depicts, Freud's portrait-painting process was arduous, with the model – who was pregnant at the time with daughter Lila Grace – expected to sit for him from 7pm to 2am, seven nights a week at his Notting Hill home.

According to Freud's daughter, designer Bella Freud, Moss asked her, after the first sitting, how long it would take, as the canvas was 'quite big.' It took nine months, with Moss's due date something of a hard deadline.

Through flashbacks, there are parallels made between Moss and Freud's first wife, Lady Caroline Blackwood, who shared a similar rebellious spirit. As Geordie Greig wrote in his 2013 biography of the artist, *Breakfast With Freud*, this was part of Freud's attraction to Moss. 'It went against all his instincts to use a professional model, but with her he was intrigued. She was wild and unpredictable. He liked rebels.'

Despite this love of rebelliousness, Freud was known for his insistence on promptness. Moss told *The Times* in 2023, 'He taught me discipline, which I hadn't been taught properly before. If I was, like, two seconds late, he would kick off. Once I was three minutes late and he went absolutely berserk. I was crying and I was pregnant and I went, "I'm pregnant!" and he went, "Oh, I'm so sorry," and I was forgiven. He was so strict. But he made a massive impression on me.'

There were rumours that there was something romantic to the relationship, with Freud being a lothario (he reportedly had more than 500 lovers and at least 14 recognised children). A photo of Moss cuddling him in bed added fuel to the fire. Yet Moss denied anything ever happened.

The portrait showed a new, vulnerable side to Moss. But neither artist nor muse had much fondness for it. 'The picture didn't really work,' Freud told Greig, while Moss said, 'He didn't really like the picture, and I didn't, really. I had a great time but it's not, like, my favourite Lucian painting.' Despite their misgivings, it sold for £3.9m in 2005, a record at the time.

Moss did get an original Freud, though, in the form of a tattoo. 'He gave me a bottle of really good Rothschild wine and he got out his etching needle and scraped into my thigh a flock of birds, which now look like varicose veins,' she said in an episode of *Desert Island Discs* in 2022. 'But I'm still probably the only living person with a Lucian Freud on my thigh.'

'Moss & Freud' is in cinemas 29 May



Unlikely friends Lucian and Kate. Top: Ellie Bamber as Kate in the new film

6.



Summer dressing woes – sorted

M&S's first catwalk show delivered trends and staples with aplomb, says *Hattie Brett*



YOU COULDN'T MAKE it up. Marks & Spencer had spent months planning the pinnacle of its five-year mission to get British women to reappraise their clothing – a catwalk show in Ibiza more befitting a luxury brand than a high street giant. A hundred guests flown to Ibiza, including Dannii Minogue and AJ Odudu. A fashion show timed to coincide with the sunset – all lace trimmed boho dresses, crisp white linen and crochet. A live shopping stream from the so-called Casa del Compliments, so customers at

Models walk the M&S catwalk in Ibiza



home could snap up a feelgood buy from their sofa. The plan was to launch a summer collection that had guests whispering ‘Love that’ – a slogan M&S has now trademarked – as top model Jill Kortleve and co strode across the catwalk bisecting the pool. And then the weather forecast shifted: rain ahead. Lucky, then, that M&S is a thoroughly British institution used to navigating stormy waters. They made shifting the entire production 24 hours earlier than anticipated look as easy as turning around a business that everyone in the UK has an opinion on – achieving the highest profit in 15 years in the 2025 financial results.

‘Value, versatility and quality remain key to our audience, but we’ve also been on a huge journey to improve our style perception and broaden our appeal. Our customer was saying, “Give us something a bit more relevant. That feels modern,”



MADDY'S
TOP PICKS



‘Our customers love co-ords for their versatility. You can wear the top with jeans, the bottoms with a T-shirt – or both together.’

**Scarf-print shirt, £26,
and shorts, £28**



‘I love this super-soft and buttery chocolate leather-look gilet. Useful for throwing on at the weekend or at a festival.’

Gilet, £48



‘This offers flattering coverage but the leopard print makes it feel elevated and sophisticated.’

Swimsuit, £36



‘We’ve worked really hard at footwear recently and we’re seeing that pay off in great sales. I predict these will sell out.’

Woven sandals, £40

Maddy Evans, M&S director of womenswear, tells *Grazia* of the journey that began when she joined the brand seven years ago. She cites the recent viral hits – the squashy suede loafer, a satin pink bomber and a red funnel-neck jacket – as evidence she’s managed to keep the heartland M&S older audience loyal but also attract a younger demographic. ‘All of those items could be worn by someone 65 or 35. And those viral hits help people reappraise the business.’

But while Evans is confident the 12 million women who shop at M&S are now clear they can find quality cashmere, coats and denim in store, she’s now keen to make sure the retailer is front of mind for summer, too. Plus help the customer navigate what can be a tricky season for us Brits, more used to drizzly barbecues than Ibiza sunsets. ‘Our customer has a “summer me” in mind. “I’m on holiday, I’ve got a tan, I’m starting to relax and I want to express myself in a different way than I would at home,” she says of research that shows 84% of M&S customers buy new clothes ahead of their summer break. ‘She needs some help in terms of what to wear.’

For Evans, that means doubling down on what she knows works – crochet, linen, co-ords and chocolate brown, which she says remains a key colour. Some 50% of the range will be £30 and under. ‘But we’ve not skimmed,’ she reassures. ‘We’ve spent a lot of time on the collar details, the width of the trim, the buttons, the fit, how it flatters.’

Alongside the affordable staples, though, Evans knows they also need to hit trends – but interpret them in the M&S way. She cites the balloon pants in chocolate brown (what else?) and olive green that were cut on multiple body shapes until they found a version that would appeal. ‘Other retailers do it in a more extreme way, but our customer is looking for that flattering hit.’

The revamp of M&S stores and campaign imagery also helps the customer navigate how to style the trends. ‘There’s this little strappy embroidered dress, but you don’t have to wear it as a dress. You can wear it over a trouser,’ she says. ‘It’s about giving her confidence.’

And compliments. ‘I have had a couple of comments recently from people asking, “Is that from M&S? And you go, “Yes it is,” Evans says of when she feels her best, popping the collar of her cream linen suit. Love that!

A photograph of a man and a woman in a romantic embrace outdoors. The man is on the left, seen from the back, wearing a dark blue blazer. The woman is on the right, seen in profile, wearing a white floral blouse and dark overalls. Her hand is resting on the man's shoulder. They are standing in front of a blurred background of green trees and a bright sky, suggesting a park or garden setting. The overall mood is intimate and peaceful.

7.

Rivals returns as the perfect low-cortisol TV

Jilly Cooper's bonk-filled universe is back, the ideal antidote to stress of *The Pitt* and *The Bear*, says Hattie Crisell

PICTURE THIS: YOU arrive home from a long day of putting out fires at work – with only brief breaks to read crisis messages from your childminder/partner/mother. You've been in adrenaline mode since 7am and now you desperately need to unwind. You put on your slippers, whip off your bra and collapse on to the sofa, where you select a nice relaxing episode of *The Pitt*. But uh-oh! Someone's foot has



Join the
Rutshire set
for a life
less anxious

been 'degloved'. There are lingering close-ups of sinew, blood and bone, against a soundtrack of frenzied screaming.

No. This is not the weeknight comfort viewing a working woman needs. I'd go so far as to say my 42-year-old nervous system has rejected it. Of course I thought the first episode of *The Pitt* was brilliant – but I saw it weeks ago and still haven't steeled myself to watch episode two. Can



my relentless anxiety be blamed on perimenopause or is this simply what it's like to be alive in 2026? Both, but so much of TV now seems to be jaw-clenchingly intense.

The Pitt is not the only culprit. Season one of *The Bear* was all shouting and stress. *24 Hours In Police Custody*: one hour of real-life despair and violence. A friend recently told me his mental health is no longer robust enough to watch *Married At First Sight Australia* (those aggressive dinner parties are hard to stomach).

The most damaging to my own inner peace was the crime series *Happy Valley*, which I came to years after everyone else. It's incredible television and I was instantly addicted. Unfortunately, I also found it so frightening that I couldn't sleep at night. I had to watch it earlier and earlier in the day in order to recover before bedtime. Eventually – having viewed the first episode of season two at 10am and mainly on mute, in order to reduce the tension – I realised it was time to go cold turkey.

What I really need at this point, and what I suspect the nation needs, is low-cortisol entertainment that will unwind me as effectively as a candlelit bath. Enter *Rivals*, adapted from Jilly Cooper's *Rutshire Chronicles*, which returns on 15 May with a second delicious season.

Rutshire in the 1980s is a wonderful place where people wink liberally at each other and TV presenters warm up their voices by trilling 'Chaka Khan, Chaka Khan!' Nobody in Rutshire has anxiety;

instead they have tons of sex and love every minute of it. Sit back and enjoy as *Rivals'* poshest characters introduce themselves as 'Muffy – short for Caroline!' and say things like, 'You should be heading up the wooden hill to Bedfordshire.' You never hear that on *MAFS Australia*.

Within the first 10 minutes of the first new episode, you'll see a *lot* of high jinks – and two penises. Shortly afterwards, there's someone doing something in the shower that has rarely been shown on TV, followed by fantastic cameos from Pam St Clement and a box of Crunchy Nut Cornflakes.

Yes, there are grim plot lines on *Rivals* too – you'll remember a certain baddie lying in a pool of his own blood at the end of season one, having been smacked in the head with a television award. Yet even that is delivered more like camp pantomime than harrowing drama. In the first scene of season two, he's already opening his eyes and preparing to wreak a villainous revenge. And everybody is just so gorgeous, from the incorrigible shagger Rupert Campbell-Black (Alex Hassell) to the endearing Freddie Jones (Danny Dyer).

Happy Valley left me with midnight heart palpitations, feverishly paranoid that James Norton might run me over in his van. In contrast, I finish every episode of *Rivals* feeling delighted, satisfied and as though all is right in the world. I yawn, I switch off the TV and I head up the wooden hill to Bedfordshire.



Love that.

A woman with short brown hair stands on a rock by the sea, wearing a light-colored, sleeveless mini dress with a black floral pattern and a black belt. She is also wearing black strappy high-heeled sandals. The background is a clear blue sky and a calm blue sea.

M&S

Embellished mini dress £48

8.

'Like the Obamas, work impacts my marriage'

As Barack Obama admits work pressures cause tension with Michelle, one writer can relate...

Barack and Michelle Obama at a Democratic National Convention

AT LAST! MICHELLE Obama and I have something in common. Alas, not a best-selling memoir or impressively sculpted upper arms, but an over-crowded marriage in which husband and wife jostle for space with the all-consuming weight of work.

In an interview with *The New Yorker* on 4 May, Barack Obama admitted that the continuing demands of being a figurehead for the Democratic Party weigh heavily on his marriage. 'It does create a genuine tension in our household and it frustrates her,' said the former President, who left the White House 10 years ago. 'She wants to see her husband easing up and spending more time with her, enjoying what remains of our lives.'

Oh, Michelle, how I feel you. But how I also emitted a hollow laugh at the words 'easing up'. We wish.

My husband is not a former world leader, but he is a lawyer whose work is not confined to a neat 9-5 but ranges freely across evenings (sometimes all-nighters), weekends, birthdays and holidays.

I joke with a friend who is also married

to a lawyer that we could publish a coffee-table book of photographs entitled 'Places My Husband Has Worked'. For me these include – but are not limited to – the vaporetto over the lagoon between Marco Polo airport and Venice; a makeshift poolside office in 40 degree heat in Greece; our honeymoon; a really charming Provençal kitchen; the library at Cliveden House mere moments before a wedding (not our wedding); on a picnic bench in a playground adjacent to our son's weekly football training.

He is, I should add, a loving, active, involved parent and an excellent husband. I'm proud of his career-related achievements and supportive of the work required. I'd just like rather more of him. Perhaps a little more time for – what's that word again? Leisure. Relaxation.

But you can make room for a demanding job in a marriage. My husband and I met at university and have been together more than 20 years, so we have had many years to adjust. How I chuckle at my optimistic younger self, who booked theatre tickets

on a weeknight. My husband is not my go-to plus one for any weekday events. We both work full-time, so we tag-team the children's events when necessary. My mild petulance when he works on weekends and on holiday has long since ceased. Perhaps we are accustomed to it, but we've also got better at handling it. We ringfence the time required for work and plan around it – he works on Saturday, so I spend time with the children or friends, then we do something together on Sunday.

It's also paying unexpected dividends. Now that the children are secondary-school-age, my work calendar is gratifyingly busy and I, too, find myself working evenings and weekends. My husband has quietly stepped in without rolling an eye. This might not be quite what Michelle Obama has in mind when she talks about 'easing up' but, if anyone understands what it's like to be one-half of a power couple, it is she. 'It is important to marry someone who is your equal,' she once said, 'and to be with somebody who wants you to win as much as you want them to win.'

Fashion week guests sealed the deal on jazz flats



9. Put on your dancing shoes!



£145, Arket



£690, Celine



£650, Bally



£79.99, Mango



£280, Soeur

cream man, but in 2026 reads as pure Parisian fantasy. Yes, they will scuff almost immediately, but that is rather the point. A bit of wear lends them that studied casualness, especially when paired with faded jeans and a cashmere knit.

If white feels like a step too far, black is a gentler entry point. There's a pair from Bally that make feet appear improbably dainty and feel like a breath of fresh air after seasons of elongating, pointy shoes. Elsewhere, COS (£109) and Arket (£145) have good options that will not require a financial reckoning. For the brave, a red pair has a certain schoolgirl charm that translates as chic. There is, however, a caveat. These are not shoes for stomping. They demand a certain lightness of step, a glide. But that aside, they're an easy proposition when worn with jeans and T-shirt and, once paired with a lace-trim silk slip in the heat, they become just about the coolest thing since sliced bread. In short, the jazz slipper is a small, elegant rebellion against chunky soles and sensible choices. Just mind how you walk.

EVERY SO OFTEN, a shoe sidles into view and, before you know it, it's everywhere. On pavements, in cafés, lined up at the bar as though it has always belonged there. This season belongs to the jazz slipper, a whisper-thin, lace-up number that, according to Lyst's just released index of the most in-demand products, is not merely having a moment, it is *the* moment. The jazz shoe lands at number four, with searches up more than 300% in the last three months.

Celine led the charge, with Michael Rider sending ballet lace-up slippers down the

runway with the sort of insouciance that makes you question your entire shoe rack. Since then, they've ascended the ranks with the determination of a social climber at a country house weekend. It's time to declare it dancing-shoe season.

The appeal is disarmingly simple. An almond toe, laces and a sole so slight you will reacquaint yourself with every pebble on your route home. White leather is the headline act (Celine's come in white but so does a pair from Proenza Schouler, £515, Soeur, £280, and Mango, £80), which might conjure images of Elvis or a retro ice

A fresh set of celebs enters The Traitors castle

With the cast for *The Celebrity Traitors* season two revealed, *Joe Stone* predicts the drama...

10.

MIRANDA HART TAKES A TUMBLE

Everyone knows that the challenges are the least entertaining part of *The Traitors*. Enter: queen of slapstick Miranda Hart. What the 6ft 1in bag of nerves lacks in athleticism, she is sure to make up for in comic value. Whether prat-falling on a hill climb or capsizing during a rowing race, she'll invigorate the mid-episode lull with some much-needed energy.



KING KENNY AND ROSS KEMP FORM AN ALLIANCE

Some things are scarier in pairs (see: the Krays, the Cheeky Girls). Ross Kemp cultivated his hard man image playing one half of *EastEnders'* Mitchell brothers, before embarking on another formidable twosome when he married Rebekah Brooks. Solo? He's a less intimidating prospect. On *The Celebrity Traitors*, he'll once again augment his tough guy credentials by forming an alliance with YouTuber and boxer King Kenny. Their plan will work until B-roll footage of them tucked in bed reveals that they're both terrified of the dark.



MYHA'LA CONFUSES EVERYONE WITH JARGON

As an actor on *Industry*, Myha'la is a double threat. First, because she is a professional liar, and second, because having played a trader across four seasons of the show she is accustomed to using the kind of indecipherable language guaranteed to make your head swim. (Sample line of dialogue: 'Ask Rishi for the level of one-year, one-year Euro swap in 500K DVO1.'). If she's as smart as her character, she'll use this to her advantage by bamboozling her fellow players. Much like when I'm watching *Industry*, everyone will be too embarrassed to admit that they have zero idea what she's on about.

JAMES BLUNT TAKES AN EROTIC SHOWER

It's traditional for *Traitors'* turret meets to be interspersed with mad cutaways of *Faithfuls'* nightly routines – including gratuitous shots of the most hunky male lathering up in the shower. While Tom Daley played this vital role in season one of *The Celebrity Traitors*, the new cast lacks an obvious successor to his mantle as king of thirst. Thankfully, the always game James Blunt will be happy to give it a good shot.

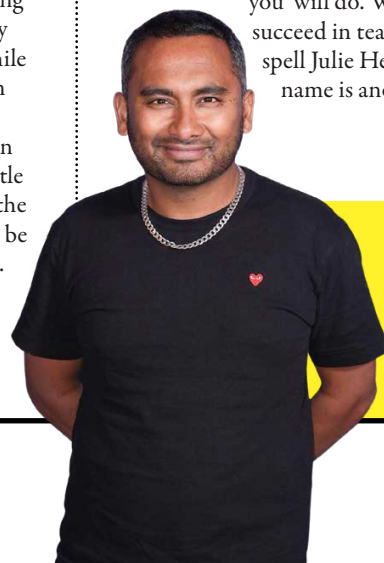
JERRY HALL AND JOE LYCETT START AN UNLIKELY ROMANCE

She's a 69-year-old Texan supermodel, he's a Brummie panssexual who likes to refer to himself as 'Mummy'. On paper, it's not a match, but stranger things have happened in the upside down world of showbiz. Specifically: Jerry's five-year marriage to Rupert Murdoch.



AMOL RAJAN BECOMES THE GRAMMAR POLICE

Arguably the most frustrating part of *The Traitors* isn't watching *Faithfuls* succumb to groupthink or continually misspelling each other's names. It's the incessant ungrammatical use of 'yourself' when nominating each other (how long before one of them says, 'Myself is nominating yourself'?). As a Cambridge graduate and former *Today* and *University Challenge* presenter, Amol Rajan is our best hope of persuading his fellow contestants that 'you' will do. Whether he'll succeed in teaching them to spell Julie Hesmondhalgh's name is another matter.



A woman with long dark hair, wearing a white dress with blue floral and polka dot patterns, stands on a sandy beach. The background shows a calm sea and a cloudy sky. The dress has a V-neckline and a gathered waist.

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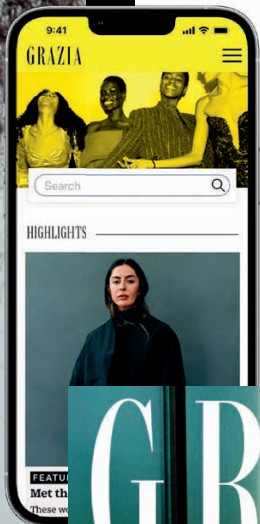
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PHOTOGRAPHS SOPHIA SPRING
STYLING JULIA HARVEY

'PEOPLE DON'T REALISE I'M IN PAIN MOST OF THE TIME'

Behind the scenes of her BBC career, Emma Barnett lives with endometriosis. Her new film urges the Government to end this 'silent emergency' for women

WORDS MARIA LALLY

IT'S NERVE-RACKING interviewing an interviewer – and Emma Barnett, the 41-year-old host of BBC Radio Four's flagship *Today* programme and former lead presenter of *Woman's Hour*, is one of the best in the business. Her CV includes stints at *Newsnight*, LBC and BBC Radio 5 Live. She has discussed violence against women with Queen Camilla (then Duchess of Cornwall), secured the first interview with the newly freed Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe in 2022 and has grilled several Prime Ministers.

'It's a funny thing when your job gets done on you,' she smiles. 'My friend is an

obstetrician and when she had her children, she said [giving birth] made her a better doctor. I think engaging with your line of work is probably a very healthy thing.'

As it happens, the Manchester-born broadcaster and journalist is a great interviewee: friendly, open and very keen to discuss the matter at hand: a documentary she has made for the BBC about endometriosis. We're talking over Zoom – Barnett from her London home during her three-year-old daughter's nap. She also has an eight-year-old son with her husband Jeremy Weil, whom she met in 2004 at university.

'I was surprised that the BBC hadn't done a film on endometriosis,' she says. 'I've made lots of telly and radio, but I haven't done anything quite like this before. I tried to really focus on making a film that shares women's stories and I went into this with the ambition of helping women with this awful condition survive the best they can.'

Barnett is among the one in 10 women in the UK who battle this painful and debilitating disease. In endometriosis, the endometrium (uterus lining) grows outside the uterus, often spreading to the



THIS PAGE
Shirt, £150, With
Nothing Underneath

PREVIOUS PAGE
Trench, £590, Norma
Kamali; T-shirt, £55,
With Nothing
Underneath

ovaries, fallopian tubes and (as in Barnett's case) the bowel. She also suffers from adenomyosis, which frequently exists alongside endometriosis, where the lining grows inside the wall of the uterus, causing swelling and inflammation. Both can result in heavy and painful periods and infertility, along with pain in the pelvis, back and legs.

In the documentary, Barnett interviews doctors, researchers and other sufferers and shares far more of her own story than she thought she would. 'It's the most candid and personal I've been,' she says.

She has described her pain as 'bone grinding'. 'I've had to develop quite a harsh relationship with my body to still have the life I want,' she says. 'I've learned to suc-

'I'VE LEARNED TO SUCCUMB TO IT. SOME DAYS I CAN'T THINK STRAIGHT'

cumb to it. Some days, I can't think straight and I get intense pain down my legs, which feels like I'm being pulled down. But my mind is a great escape. I read, I watch something lovely or have a movie day with my children and batten down the hatches. At times I've had to lie on the floor next

to them until it's over.'

She tells me about a time pre-kids when she was running around her local park with a friend and collapsed, 'in huge amounts of pain. I didn't know what was happening and my friend was really scared. Not long after that I was diagnosed with endometriosis at the age of 31. Since then, I've changed how I exercise and now do a lot of strength training and swimming rather than intensive cardio.'

Fasting has also helped with the inflammation, which she discovered after reading *Fast Like A Girl* by Mindy Pelz. But she is still often in pain. 'But people wouldn't know it because of the way I am, the way I present, and the sort of spirit I have. Even when my insides are like a meat grinder, I can't let myself get sad about it. When I have to get upstairs for work, I think, "I'm fucking getting up those stairs." It's the same when I'm on air, standing at sports day or doing the school run.'

She sounds incredibly resilient, I say. 'I think I've had to be,' she replies. 'I think endometriosis forces that upon you. But God forbid my daughter has this.'

Barnett rarely speaks about her children (she won't name them) but tells me that when her son was born, she felt 'pretty much set as a boy mum. My husband comes from a family of boys. So, it was quite a pressure finding out I was having a daughter while presenting the longest running women's programme in the world [*Woman's Hour*, which she left in 2024 for the *Today* job]. I thought, OK, she's got to be a fantastic feminist.'

She and Jeremy also worried their daughter might one day have endometriosis. 'But it did make me think if she ever experienced this pain, I would be so kind to her,' she says. 'I would get her a drink, sit with her, put a nice film on. So, at the grand age of 41, I've learned to look after myself the same way.'

Barnett says that Jeremy, who we meet in the documentary, hates seeing her in pain. 'You can see it on his face. But he's learned some good strategies and he'll go and get my heat bag, he taps me out of parenting [duties] and there's an unspoken shorthand between us. We've been together for 21 years and we know each other very well, as friends as well as romantic partners.'

Her friends are also very important to her. Despite getting up at 3.20am in the week (she has Fridays off), 'I still go out because people are my medicine. I don't

break arrangements with friends easily, only once or twice a year. Especially because when you have young kids it's even more important to still see your friends and still be you. But recently I did cancel because I was in pain and my friend replied, "Friendship is not about performance and I don't want you to have to perform this evening." That was lovely.'

In March, a Women and Equalities Committee (WEC) report found that systemic change is needed in women's health-care. The committee chair, Sarah Owen MP, said, 'It is a national scandal that nearly half a million women are on hospital gynaecology waiting lists when there are effective treatments that could be administered in primary and community care, if only they could access them.'

Last month, Health Secretary Wes Streeting responded to this by unveiling a £5m Women's Health Strategy to end 'medical misogyny' and the 'gaslighting' of women's pain. Yet an analysis by *The Times* found that the Government's plans to tackle men's health are still receiving 60% more funding than those for women.

'There's a squeamishness around women's health,' says Barnett. Despite endometriosis being as common as diabetes, it receives a fraction of the funding and, on average, takes a decade to be diagnosed. 'Even the recent health strategy was all about speeding up diagnosis, but the other issue is when you get diagnosed, what then?' It's true: I was diagnosed with adenomyosis in 2021 and offered no advice or treatment.

'It's a disgrace,' she agrees. 'Endometriosis is a silent emergency and I include adenomyosis in that. One in six women leave the workplace because of it and it costs the economy £8bn per year. In France and Australia, they have dedicated funds for endometriosis research, yet in the UK, the country that created IVF, it seems we only make advances when it comes to fertility.'

'Now, I'm a huge beneficiary of IVF and had seven rounds to have my gorgeous children. But I feel the only breakthroughs we make about women-specific health are gynaecological. That pisses me off. Endometriosis is a system-wide disease that can affect your brain, lungs and bowel, but people think it's just painful periods.'

She has spoken about her struggles to conceive due to endometriosis and the miscarriage and six rounds of IVF she had while trying for her daughter, who was born in 2023 (it took one round to have her son in

HOW TO GET HELP WITH ENDOMETRIOSIS

Symptoms vary and include pelvic pain, painful and heavy periods, pain during or after sex, pain during bowel movements or urination, fatigue, bloating during your period and difficulty conceiving.

According to the charity Endometriosis UK, the definitive way to get a diagnosis is by a laparoscopy (where a camera is inserted into the pelvis via a small cut in the navel).

The charity advises speaking to your GP about your symptoms. They should refer you to a specialist. There's a questionnaire on the Endometriosis UK website to help you with relevant information for this appointment.

Currently there is no cure, however treatments, such as surgery (to remove it), hormonal (to reduce levels of oestrogen), and pain relief can help ease symptoms.

Visit [endometriosis-uk.org/living-endometriosis](https://www.endometriosis-uk.org/living-endometriosis) for more help and advice

2018). She says that when she left *Woman's Hour* she deliberately included an item in the last episode for women who wanted to be mothers but never were. 'I'll never forget being a woman who wasn't going to be a mother, and there will always be a piece of my heart still with those women. I'm fiercely loyal to them. Equally, I don't like to forget women who don't want children.'

She hopes the film will lead to more funding, greater awareness and more NHS pathways, and says she's pleased to be able to use her skillset as a journalist to keep the issue 'front and centre'. 'I want to amplify how hard this is for women who are not looking for sympathy but just trying to survive. I want it to be treated with the same gravity as the other stories I report on, and for this film to be a rallying cry.'

Emma Barnett's film will be shown on BBC Two and iPlayer next month



Sweater, £210, Land's End; trousers, £250, Me+Em

HAIR: DAVID WADLOW; MAKE-UP: ADAM DE CRUZ AT PREMIER HAIR AND MAKEUP; NAILS: EMMA WELSH AT SB COLLECTIVE; SHOOT: PRODUCER: ANNA DEWHURST; PHOTOGRAPHER'S ASSISTANT: RITIKA SHAHA; MAKE-UP ASSISTANT: ROCIO CUENCA; FASHION ASSISTANT: AMBER BACKHOUSE



WHAT I'VE LEARNED ABOUT FEMALE RAGE



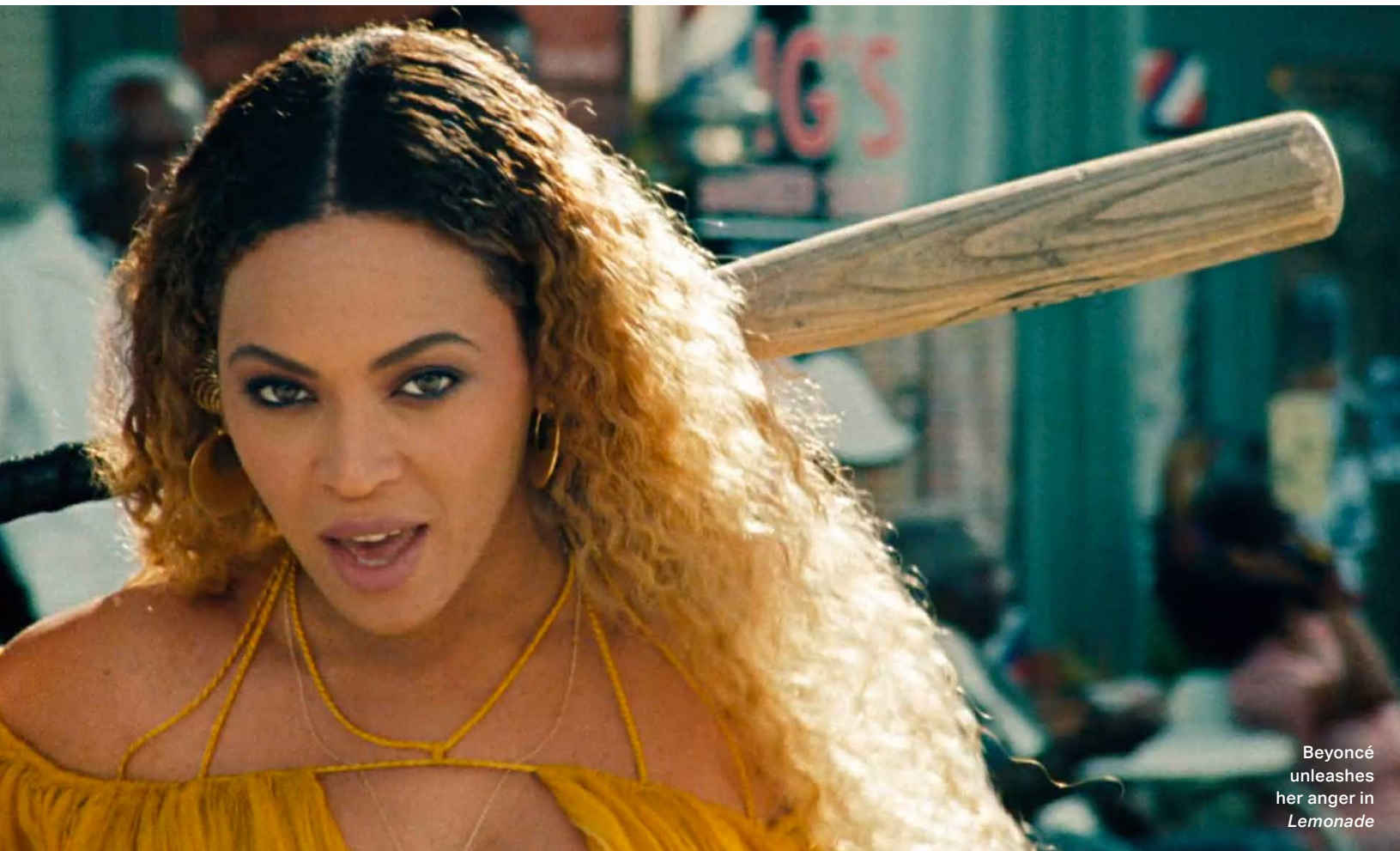
Imani Thompson's hotly anticipated novel, *Honey*, unpicks the insidious trope of the 'angry Black woman'

WRITING STORIES IS a strange business. Often, when I start writing something new, I think that I know what it's about. The trouble with stories, however, is that they have a mind of their own.

My debut novel, *Honey*, started with me sitting in a café four years ago with a slice of cake. My idea was clear: a woman starts murdering bad men. It would be like *Dexter* but my protagonist, Yrsa, is Black, a PhD student, a feminist. This, I thought, will be a satirical take on the tiresome trope of the 'aggressive Black woman'. It will be a novel about someone who, driven by their blossoming female rage, decides to take justice into their own hands.

And so I started my research. I thought about growing up and watching the stereotype being levied against women of colour: Serena Williams is 'too fierce'; Naomi Campbell is a 'diva'; Meghan Markle (who I watched marrying Prince Harry with delight) is 'demanding, a bully'.

I thought too about my own experiences of tone policing, where how you're perceived to be speaking is used to shut down what you actually have to say. 'OK, I won't touch your hair, but next time can you be nicer about how you ask me?' There was no



Beyoncé
unleashes
her anger in
Lemonade

way my protagonist was going to avoid the stereotype, so I wanted to address it.

In one scene, students discuss the music video for *Lemonade*, in which Beyoncé smashes cars with a baseball bat. Why, the students are asked, is Beyoncé playing up to notions of being ‘angry’? Because, come their replies, this trope has worked to delegitimise the emotions of women of colour as a means to oppress and control.

Rage is not a quiet emotion and, as Audre Lorde writes in *The Uses Of Anger*, ‘[a]nger expressed and translated into action... is a liberating and strengthening act of clarification’. If you don’t want women to be free, weaponise their rage against them. There she goes, just another angry woman.

But Lorde’s essay is not about the misuse of anger – it’s about how anger, when tapped into, is ‘loaded with information and energy’. So yes, I thought, writing those early chapters, I’m being clever here. I’m allowing a woman to lean into all her rages – be that against men, racism, history, scholarship or the cost of a Diptyque candle – while keeping an eye on, and remaining critical of, the stereotypes. The name Yrsa, after all, derives from the Old Norse word for wild, mad, furious. Yrsa pushes

boys off rooftops because she’s vengeful, but she’s liberated. Pitch perfect.

That is until my story said: no, actually, you’ve got it all wrong. This isn’t about rage at all.

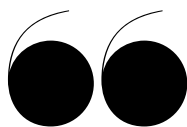
Suddenly, I realised that the key to understanding my novel was not ultimately in Yrsa’s anger, but in her desire – in what truly drives her to destroy. She’s a somewhat vengeful academic vaguely interested in feminist justice – but, more than anything, she’s an addict. Sex, sugar, power. She binges, eats entire cakes, poisons multiple men because she is driven by lust, the thrill of playing God, the getting away with it. Moreover, she comes from a maternal line

sticky with violence, desire and sin. Killing is in her bones.

‘Call it rage. Call it sport’, as I write in the novel. Because whoever the player, whoever the target, is killing not ultimately the sport of our own destruction? It’s never long before any academic, political or moral reasons unravel and we are faced with violence for the thrill of it, for the enjoyment of the game.

So my novel stopped being a romp of female rage and moved to a space beyond rage. And this I found to be far more interesting. Yrsa becomes everything she accuses her oppressors of being. In a strange way, through her refusal to care about race, morality or retribution, she liberates herself from each and every stereotype. She embodies something universal about human nature and our propensity to violence.

My novel does not end on a happy note, but neither does it end where it began – or, rather, where I thought it began. But that’s the thing with stories, you can’t direct them too much. While we may want to reduce Yrsa, or the book, to conversations about anger, doing so would overlook something far darker in her and, at times, in us. *Honey* is out now (Borough Press)



THE ‘ANGRY’
TROPE IS A
MEANS TO
OPPRESS AND
CONTROL



MATALAN

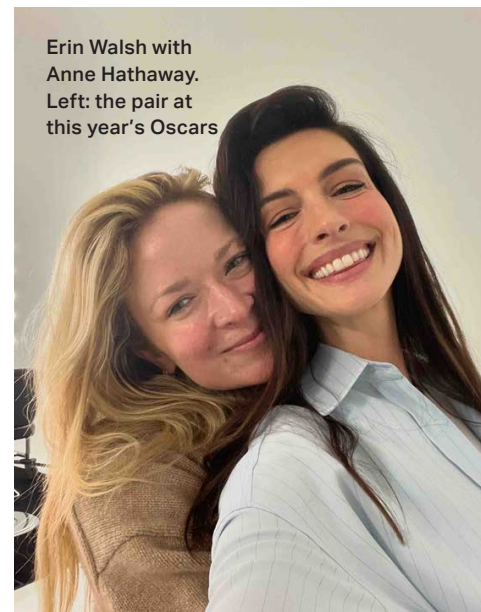
STYLE FOR EVERY MOMENT



A woman with blonde hair, wearing a white, short-sleeved, form-fitting dress, is walking on a red carpet. She is smiling and looking down. She has gold jewelry on her wrists and is carrying a black clutch bag. The background shows a busy red carpet event with many people, cameras, and bright lights. There are signs that say "OSCARS" along the side of the carpet.

MEET THE A-LIST'S 'FASHION THERAPIST'

Celebrity stylist Erin Walsh teaches *Victoria Moss* the art of intentional dressing



Erin Walsh with Anne Hathaway. Left: the pair at this year's Oscars

WHEN I CALL Erin Walsh, she is in a car in New York on her way to the office. Midway through she arrives, lugging garment bags out of the boot as we speak. Her schedule is utterly nuts.

The day before she'd been in LA dressing Anne Hathaway (in Valentino couture) at the Oscars. 'I go to Milan tomorrow for a Bulgari campaign and event, then we go to Japan, Seoul and Korea right after that, but Mexico in between, for *The Devil Wears Prada 2*,' she reels off.

In the midst of dressing Hathaway for the film's promo tour, Walsh is launching her first book, *The Art Of Intentional Dressing*, which is as much a guide to life as it is to getting dressed. Walsh's theory is that you can't dress well until you have clarity over what it is you want to feel inside. It's perhaps no surprise that she also dresses the viral life coach Mel Robbins (author of the best-selling *The Let Them Theory*); Walsh's advice is practical, holistic and as focused on the internal as external.

Walsh has pulled in some helpful voices for her book – Spanx founder Sara Blakely, Diane von Furstenberg, powerhouse Emma Grede (behind Skims and Good American), Rachel Zoe, as well as her long-term clients, actors Kerry Washington ▶

and Mariska Hargitay, while Hathaway has written the foreword. She describes Walsh as ‘my slightly psychic bestie, soul sister’ and elucidates the book’s central premise. ‘The question tugging at the thread of “What am I going to wear?” is usually “Why do I care?”’ writes Hathaway. ‘And the big question at the heart of it all is “Who am I?”’

‘It’s never just about the fashion,’ says Walsh. ‘People’s issue is they think it’s about the clothes. But until you make it about something bigger it won’t make sense.’ Her process has been honed over decades in the industry, although acting rather than fashion was her first calling.

She moved to New York at 17 to attend the prestigious Stella Adler Studio of Acting at NYU. ‘I thought I was going to be a movie star,’ she says. However, upon graduating, the precarious reality of trying to make it dawned on her. ‘I had this epiphany: “I have no clear path to success.” That seemed terrifying to me. It’s funny, because the industry I ended up moving into had exactly the same problem.’

What she didn’t know, however, is that her training would eventually give her a shorthand to working with the actors she would later be dressing. After a stint in retail, she was temping at the publishing house Condé Nast when a job came up at *Vogue* as an assistant to Phyllis Posnick, a legendary, exacting editor whose shoots bordered on the surreal.

‘She was a tough cookie and had no patience for anything less than perfection,’ recalls Walsh, who also learned that at *Vogue* the word no ‘doesn’t exist’. While she didn’t last long under Posnick (‘I did work very hard, but I wasn’t the right fit for her’) she took with her the lessons of working with that level of scrutiny.

Neatly, she was at *Vogue* when the first *Devil Wears Prada* film came out. The irony that she’s now dressing Anne Hathaway for the sequel tour isn’t lost on her. ‘It’s very meta,’ she laughs. After *Vogue* she carved out work as a freelance assistant, hustling and learning, and hit her big break working with Kerry Washington in 2013. From there her career as a red-carpet stylist kicked into gear. Washington is still a client, as are Selena Gomez, Mindy Kaling and Ariana DeBose.

Walsh has a good grip on high-stakes dressing. ‘If you listen to all the noise, you’ll never get anything done. The internet has opinions, and you can consider it, but you can’t let it be the reason for your modus operandi.’ It’s a pressure that, she says, ‘has gotten easier over the years. I used to work with Sarah Jessica Parker and she said that preparation is the antidote to regret.’

Walsh describes herself as the ‘fashion therapist. I want [clients] to feel their best. I’ve always had that relationship with clothes where they transformed how I felt. But I kept seeing clients, and my aunts in the Midwest or the south, with this underlying sentiment of “getting dressed makes me feel bad about myself”. It was so frustrating to me.’ That was the seed that ignited her idea for the book. ‘I have to fix this, because I know it to be the opposite,’ she says.

The book isn’t merely a list of what goes with what. It’s more of a holistic directive to establish a wardrobe that works for your personality and lifestyle. There’s a scent guide based on feelings and emotions; for travelling, a packing list she calls ‘a peace kit’ and she also taps into wardrobe feng shui. Her intention is to interrogate and help us to override the ‘neuroses and insecurities’ that we all have, movie star or not.

Her CREATE method (clarity, ritual, edit, alignment, truth, expansion) starts with a very simple question: how do you want to feel today? It’s something she lives and breathes. ‘When I was writing the book, I wore almost only white because I was living in LA at the time and I needed clarity and calm. Then I moved back to New York and wore only black for about

HOW TO DRESS INTENTIONALLY

Create a morning ritual. It could be a mantra, meditation, scent, movement... What can you do for yourself to get you back into your body?

Transform your closet into a library of feelings. Look at every piece in your closet and pinpoint how each makes you feel, coming up with three words for it. It makes you develop a shorthand, so when you walk in there, you’re not discombobulated.

Be honest. A lot of people hold on to clothes because of guilt over how expensive something was. Ask yourself, ‘Does this serve how I want to feel and who I want to be?’ If it doesn’t, it has to go. You have to be ruthless.

Be clear on how you are feeling, who you are, what your body looks like, what makes you insecure and what scares you. Without that clarity – which is scary – you won’t be able to embrace the joy.

Always ask, ‘How does this make me feel?’ before considering trends.

Dress as if you’re already living your desired reality.



Selena Gomez and (left) Kerry Washington

five months because I needed some protection while I was transforming.

‘Most people’s closets are this archive of all these people they used to be, not who they are any more, whether that’s from a perspective of size or even joy.’ Her point with the book is to accept that ‘even the most famous people in the world don’t know how they’re going to wake up feeling. There are days when I wake up feeling uninspired, tired, bloated. We’re women, our bodies change all the time. We can’t control that, but we can set up systems. When you get intentional about your wardrobe, you’re saying to yourself that you matter, you’re worthy.’

‘The Art of Intentional Dressing’ by Erin Walsh is out 21 May

CULTURE DEBRIEF

WITH OTEGHA UWAGBA



Michael Jackson's legacy seems uncancellable

IN THE MIDST of all the recent *Devil Wears Prada 2* hullabaloo, it's been easy to overlook the cinematic box office hit that was the Michael Jackson biopic *Michael*. At \$217m it had the highest opening weekend ever for a biopic – proving that, despite the allegations of child sexual abuse that dogged the artist's latter career (allegations that he always denied) music's King of Pop still occupies hallowed ground within our culture. Michael Jackson is, even posthumously, demonstrably uncancellable.

No doubt it helps that the film – as uncritical as one might expect given it was co-produced by the late singer's estate – concludes its narrative in 1988, before the first abuse allegations had begun to emerge (it remains to be seen if or how a rumoured sequel will address them).

Despite Jackson having been accused of the worst thing a person can do, accusations that would ordinarily ensure pariah status for even the biggest stars, being a Michael Jackson fan is not regarded as in any way problematic in the way that being, say, a Diddy supporter or working with Woody Allen now is.

One simple explanation is that many Jackson fans simply do not believe the allegations against him, regarding him as an eccentric but ultimately harmless Peter Pan figure. And yet Jackson's legacy still endures even among those who – like myself – find the allegations credible, citing the sheer number of them and the settlements both Jackson and his estate have made over the years; the fact Jackson himself acknowledged sharing his bed with young boys (though he characterised said behaviour as entirely innocent); and the specificity of the accounts in the truly haunting 2019 *Leaving Neverland* documentary (accounts that Jackson's estate deny).

Even as new allegations emerged as recently as last month, 17 years after his death Jackson remains one of the most streamed artists on Spotify – a fact I offer without judgement because I am among



Jaafar Jackson as Michael Jackson in *Michael*

those who still (occasionally) stream his music, merrily singing along when it comes on the radio. Truthfully, any resistance I have to watching the Jackson biopic stems from the simple fact that it looks quite bad, as opposed to any moral stance.

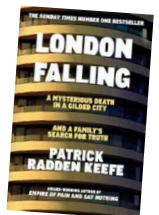
The reality is Jackson's music (and that of The Jackson 5) is too embedded in our lives, his sound and iconography too influential to attempt to dismantle his legacy now. He is the soundtrack to wedding receptions and family barbecues, the rare musician whose catalogue might have soundtracked childhoods across multiple generations of the same family. It is not an exaggeration to say that at this point Jackson's music is virtually inextricable from public life – and, as a result, we are somewhat selfishly willing to overlook his alleged sins, because it is too inconvenient to do otherwise, too insurmountable a task.

And so his legacy remains intact, not because of a widespread belief in his innocence but because, despite his alleged crimes, Michael Jackson is simply too big to fail, and certainly too big to cancel.

ON MY RADAR

READING

Patrick Radden Keefe's **London Falling**, an impeccably reported true crime story with broader social themes.



VISITING

The newly opened V&A East's **The Music Is Black** exhibition.



LISTENING

To **ICYMI**, an excellent pop culture analysis podcast hosted by Kate Lindsay, covering everything from niche influencer drama to 'finger princesses' (worth a google).



A GROWN-UP SUMMER

No fuss no frills – welcome your warm weather wardrobe reset from Primark, where getting dressed for summer feels easy and pulled together





LEFT: jersey bandeau top, £6, and satin kimono skirt, £18.
ABOVE: tailored waistcoat, £20, and Bermuda shorts, £14.
RIGHT: cotton shirt, £14, and linen-blend skirt, £16



SOFT FOCUS, SHARPER LINES

Have you ever wanted to dabble in boho but knew deep down somewhere that, well, the textures, the frills, the colour aren't exactly for you? A piece of good news, the latest Primark collection proposes a slightly more minimalist take on free-spirited dressing, reinterpreting boho codes in ways that feel infinitely more mature, and, crucially, surprisingly considered, all at the Primark prices people know and love. That's one surefire way to lift your hot weather wardrobe out of its seasonal rut in one fell swoop.



PROMOTION GRAZIA



ABOVE: poplin shirt, £14, jersey bandeau top, £6, and Bermuda shorts, £14.

ABOVE RIGHT: boxy shirt, £14, lace cami, £12, and trousers, £16.

RIGHT: linen-blend lace tank, £16, and culottes, £16.

FAR RIGHT: poplin shirt, £14, and poplin shorts, £14



THE ART OF LAYERING

There's a way to approach layering in summer that has very little to do with practicality and everything to do with how a look comes together. Primark makes it easy to get the layered look in one go, with pieces designed to slot seamlessly into each other. Think lace layered under do-it-all co-ords, or a scarf tied around the waist, offering styling twists that feel current, without trying too hard. It is all there in one place, fashion-forward and coordinated, and ready to shop via Click & Collect for an even simpler finish.

*See and shop the collection in-store or via
Click & Collect online at [primark.com](https://www.primark.com)*

PRIMARK



pooky 



Beautifully made.
Endlessly loved.



www.pooky.com

GRAZIA FASHION



PHOTOGRAPH CAMERON BENSLEY
STYLED BY JULIA HARVEY
EDITED BY MOLLY HAYLOR

VAN CLEEF & ARPELS has long mined ancient Egypt for inspiration. The new collection, Fascinating Egypt, nods to that lineage, marrying art history, goldsmithing finesse and the maison's virtuosity with gemstones for pieces with instant heirloom appeal.

Gold Paysage Secret Bracelet with emeralds, sapphires, spessartite garnets and diamonds, price on request, **Van Cleef & Arpels**





'I NEVER DESIRED FAME'

Actor Gugu Mbatha-Raw has quietly built a career where she's in control both on and off-camera

PHOTOGRAPHS
EKUA KING

STYLING
GEORGIA MEDLEY

WORDS

LAURA ANTONIA JORDAN

One of the best things about being an actor, Gugu Mbatha-Raw says, is that you can be 'a bit greedy. You get to live many, many different lives in a year.'

It's one of the first proper spring days, the type in which it's impossible not to feel cheerful, and Mbatha-Raw is looking the part in a zingy pink top, fresh and make-up-free bar the remnants of some khaki nail polish. The latest life she has got to test drive, courtesy of new film *Fuze*, is that of a Met Police chief superintendent tasked with coordinating an evacuation of central London following the discovery of an unexploded WWII bomb. 'She's the main decision maker, responsible for calling the shots of how London is going to respond to a crisis like this.'

So, an 'edge of your seat... mash-up of a heist movie and bomb explosion thriller'. To prep for the role, Mbatha-Raw spent time with the police and in the Met's Special Operations Room. 'It was really very interesting to get your head around the stakes of a situation like that, what drives somebody to do that, that sense of integrity and leadership.' *Fuze* is a wild ride of a movie, a proper all-action film, but it showcases Mbatha-Raw's ability to coax out the very human heart in each of the roles she takes on, however real or outlandish the circumstances around them might be.

She first made her name in a 2009 theatre production of *Hamlet*, opposite Jude Law. But 2013's *Belle*, an 18th-century period drama about mixed-race aristocrat Dido Elizabeth Belle, was her big breakthrough

(Oprah, whom Mbatha-Raw would later act with in Ava DuVernay's *A Wrinkle In Time*, was a fan). One of the most versatile talents of her generation, her work has spanned TV (*Black Mirror*, her heartbreaking turn in the first season of *The Morning Show*) and film (*The Woman In Cabin 10*, *Motherless Brooklyn*), fantasy (*Loki*, *The War Between The Land And The Sea*) and biopic (for instance, her turn as the first Black woman to be crowned Miss World in *Misbehaviour*). She approaches each role with tenderness and thoughtfulness.



Gugu in her latest role in *Fuze* (top) and in *Belle*, her 2013 breakthrough role

Of late, thrillers have been something of a through-line for Mbatha-Raw. There's the forthcoming *Possession*, scheduled for later this year, which explores colonialism, as well as Jed Mercurio's highly anticipated *Trinity*, co-starring Richard Madden. Set on a nuclear submarine, you better believe she spent time with people who actually do that work. 'It's such a privilege to dive into a completely different world,' she says.

Why are thrillers having a moment? 'I think we're very distracted right now!' she laughs. 'And there's something about a thriller that grabs your attention. [You have to] stop scrolling your phone for a minute and actually watch.' That escapism serves a vital purpose, she says. 'I was thinking the other day about films and TV kind of being like the grown-up bedtime story. They give us a place to kind of have a break from our lives.'

Born in Oxfordshire, Mbatha-Raw is the only child of a white nurse mother and Black South African doctor father. 'You're very aware that things are unfair, you're brought into the world with an awareness of injustice. And as simple as that sounds, it definitely imbues you with an awareness of the world,' she says. 'Certainly for me, growing up hearing his stories and his perspective definitely gave me a global perspective of the world and an awareness of my privilege. And I think that has really helped me feel grounded in the industry.' They separated when she was young, but she remains close to them both. Having lived in Los Angeles for years, Mbatha-Raw got a home in Oxfordshire post-pandemic. The thing she misses most about LA, she says, are the hummingbirds, but

Continued on page 79



THIS PAGE
Shirt, £1,290, and skirt,
£1,550, both Fendi

PREVIOUS PAGE
Shirt, £1,550, and
trousers, £1,550,
both Fendi





THIS PAGE
Dress, £3,700, shoes,
£950, and bracelet,
£530, all Fendi

OPPOSITE
Bag, £3,300, Fendi



Continued from page 74

she maintains a sunny enthusiasm that is very Californian.

Talking a couple of weeks before she turned 43, how has Mbatha-Raw found her forties so far? 'Really, really good!' she says. 'I'm kind of loving it. I'm getting to do what I want to do. I feel like I'm able to kind of appreciate and have meaning in life.' She agrees it's a decade that looks different – younger! – to when we were growing up. 'It reminds me of the *Black Mirror* episode [fan favourite *San Junipero*, an outlying feelgood chapter in the dystopian franchise] that I did. How old is your soul? That really resonates with me. It's about your energy, it's about your spirit.'

Besides, acting helps maintain a youthfulness. 'I feel like I do a job that is literally "let's pretend". I feel like I have the privilege that me hanging on to my childlike imaginative sensitivities is actually so important. There is a bit of an arrested development being an actor,' she says, laughing. 'But in a good way! Because you have to be able to access play. Obviously, you still have to operate in the world and do worldly things. But ultimately the thing that you have to preserve is your sense of play and mischief.'

Lately, Mbatha-Raw has taken on the very grown-up responsibility of being an executive producer on *Possession*, a title she also held on Apple TV's *Surface*, which was produced by her *The Morning Show* co-star Reese Witherspoon's company, Hello Sunshine ('she's an incredible pioneer and businesswoman in the industry').

'Obviously, as an actor, you are just focused on your character and your journey and to have the perspective of a whole production has been really interesting. It's more responsibility in a way, more information. You know, you can't necessarily just escape into your imaginary world,' she says of her experience producing. 'I find it fascinating. I think the whole process of a project from beginning to end, even how it's marketed, is so important.'

There's no doubt the *Fuze* marketing department have been working hard; it's been difficult to get on the tube in London without seeing adverts for it. 'People have been texting me pictures of my face on buses!' she laughs. Nevertheless, Mbatha-Raw maintains she can operate with rela-

tive anonymity. 'I get noticed occasionally, but I think you can sort of turn that on and off a little bit with your energy and with how you move around the world.'

She is fastidiously private in some ways (she has never publicly discussed her relationship status). Fame – an 'occupational hazard' of some facets of her work – is not something she ever pursued. 'I definitely got into this art form because I love acting. I never [had a] desire to be famous.'

Maintaining her privacy is a matter of 'self-protection' she says, as much for the longevity of her career as for herself. 'I always like believing in an actor's character. I want to go on a journey with them, not be distracted by too much information about them as a person.' A degree of anonymity affords an actor crucial freedom. 'If you're the one always being observed, you're never going to be able to observe humanity,' she says. 'You miss a lot if you're like, "Oh, everyone's looking at me."'

Still, Mbatha-Raw has learned to wrangle her profile for good, like highlighting her work as a global goodwill ambassador

for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Recently that role took her to Chad, where she met with refugees of the Sudan war. 'We're certainly in danger of being in an era of compassion fatigue, where there's just so much to be worried about that you can become paralysed with not knowing what to do about any of it,' she says. 'But the UNHCR does incredible work. Seeing it firsthand really makes you understand and you want to share it. It feels like a responsibility.'

It's a truly 'soul nourishing' experience, affirming and humbling. Mbatha-Raw keeps a daily gratitude journal. What is she grateful for? 'I'm grateful that I am more established in my career, that I have meaning in my life and confidence to have boundaries. I feel incredibly grateful that I'm doing what I wanted to do when I was 11. You know? I made my hobby my job. I feel constantly filled with gratitude that I naively just stuck to that. It's very easy to get worn down by life and I feel grateful that I still feel really optimistic.'

'Fuze' comes to Sky Cinema on 29 May



THIS PAGE

Scarf (worn as top), £380, jeans, price on request, bag, £9,100, and scarf (in pocket), £380, all Fendi

OPPOSITE

Pocho, £3,200, and shorts, £1,450, both Fendi

All clothes Fendi Pre-Collection Fall/Winter 2026

PHOTOGRAPHS KAJ JEFFERIES
FASHION MOLLY HAYLOR

FREE SPIRIT

Embrace adventure –
in fashion and in life







THIS PAGE

Top, £140, Emporio Armani; jeans, £310, Max Mara; bangles, £85 each, Dinosaur Designs; sunglasses, £375, Gucci; earrings, vintage

PREVIOUS PAGE

Dress, £3,400, and helmet, price on request, both Celine; shoes, £635, Aquazzura; bangles, price on request, Dinosaur Designs

Top, £1,050, Emilia Wickstead; trousers, £450, Emporio Armani; shoes, £635, Aquazzura; bag, £735, Dries Van Noten; sunglasses, £197, Black Eyewear; bangles, Dinosaur Designs, as before; earrings, vintage



Bodysuit, £680, and skirt, £600, both Chloé; shoes, £790, Stella McCartney; bangle (on model's right wrist), £13,400, Pomellato; bangle (left wrist), £24,800, Tiffany & Co; rings, £240 each, Dinosaur Designs





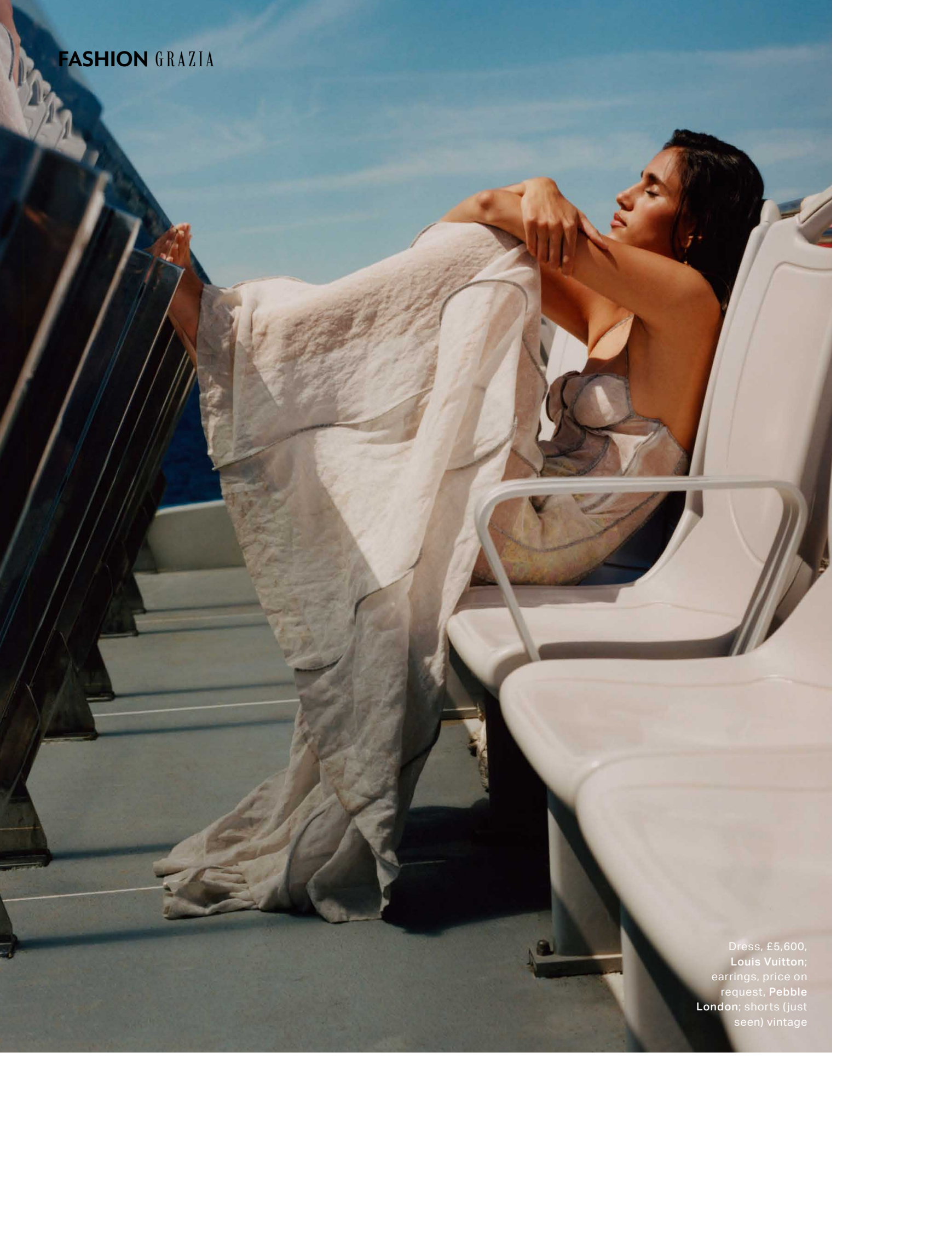
Dress, price on request, Miu Miu;
earrings, £225,
Completedworks




THIS PAGE Jacket, price on request, skirt, £4,440, and earrings, £1,125, all Chanel; sunglasses, £375, Gucci

OPPOSITE Top, £2,950, skirt, £2,250, and shoes, £850, all Fendi; bikini top, £35, Calzedonia; sunglasses, price on request, Miu Miu; bangle, Tiffany & Co, as before; earrings, price on request, Valentino Garavani





Dress, £5,600,
Louis Vuitton;
earrings, price on
request, Pebble
London; shorts (just
seen) vintage



Jacket, price on request, **Valentino Garavani**; trousers, £675, bag, £3,600, and earrings, price on request, all **Dior**

Model Aya Fellaini at Blow Models
Hair and make-up Carla Abrams using Charlotte Tilbury
Casting Christie Phedon
Shoot producer Gabriela Velasco
Photographer's assistant Freddie Hare
Fashion assistant Amber Backhouse

TAKE A TRIP



CHIC CITY BREAKER

It's all in the trimmings. Ensure Celine silk scarves and OTT belt buckles are first on your packing list. Jeans, £790, scarf, £440, and belt, price on request, all Celine

Your suitcase
has never
looked more
stylish...

PHOTOGRAPHS TOBIAS DELCROIX
FASHION JULIA HARVEY



LADIES' DAY TRIPPER

Plans finally making it out of the group chat calls for Dior. Shoes, £960, tie, price on request, and bag, £3,950, all Dior

QUEEN OF THE MANOR

Countryside manor trips call for heritage Gucci monogrammed everything. *Shirt, £1,240, bag, £2,300, both Gucci; watch, £2,850, Tudor*





**THE BIG APPLE
WEEKENDER**

Heading stateside? Ensure your arm candy is up to scratch.

Go on, take a bite.

Shoulder bag, £7,260, scarf, £300, and apple bag, price on request, all Chanel

SUNSHINE SEEKER
Keeping the UV rays at bay
never looked so good.
*Dress, price on request, hat,
£550, shoes, £1,200, and
sunglasses, £450, all Loewe*





BEACH BABE

Bookmark Miu Miu's summer dress as the ultimate beach-to-bar 'fit.

Dress, £3,650, bikini top, £850, and bag, £2,300, all Miu Miu; sunglasses, £55, Le Specs



HOLIDAY MARKET HOPPER

Mix and match prints and textures for an artisanal-inspired holiday haul.

Dress, price on request, scarf, £2,950, and shoes, £1,120, all Louis Vuitton

POOLSIDE POSER

Bikini? Sunscreen? Jimmy Choo jelly shoes? Well, duh! Shoes, £425, and sunglasses, £292, both Jimmy Choo; bikini top, £55, Guess; Laneige Water Bank UV Barrier sunscreen, £26

Shoot producer Gabriela Velasco
Fashion assistant Frankie Martin



YOUR NEW STYLE STARTER PACK



BOSS

LII STUDIO

ISABEL MARANT

ALBERTA FERRETTI

FERRAGAMO

Your high-street heroes, plus the extras to complete the look

EDITED BY JULIA HARVEY



Skirt, £29.99, Reserved



Skirt, £95, COS



Heels, £1,260, Chanel



Bracelet, £98, Missoma



Skirt, £145, Jigsaw



ALBERTA FERRETTI

THE SMART SKIRT

Falling just below the knee, the neat new season skirt silhouette will be your most useful wardrobe item yet. Take note from the runways and wear with simple pumps, V-neck cardigans and basic tees for a 2026 upgrade to trousers.



FENDI

Jacket, £99, Hobbs



Cardigan, £450, &Daughter



Skirt, £85, & Other Stories



Bag, £2,600, Prada



Hair pin, £70, Lié Studio



Sunglasses, £330, Loewe



Skirt, £169, Massimo Dutti

Flip-flops, £36,
Havaianas



Necklace, £210,
Hunting Season at
net-a-porter.com



Bag, £340,
Gimaguas



Skirt, £290,
Ganni

THE POP OF RED



Inject style into your existing wardrobe with a healthy dose of tomato red. Layer basics under techy anoraks, try pillar-box maxis worn with unexpected athletic zip-ups and, if all else fails, red flip-flops are your secret sartorial weapon.



LOEWE



Sunglasses, £260,
JW Anderson



Top, £24.99,
Weekday

T-shirt, £60,
American
Vintage



SIMONE ROCHA

Jacket, £38,
Next



Track top,
£22.50, F+F



Shoes, £230,
Samsøe Samsøe



CONNOR IVES



Jacket, £299, Massimo Dutti

Blouse, £99, Mint Velvet



Scarf, £48, Bimba y Lola



Jeans, £280, Haikure



Bag, £226, Guess



Sunglasses, £430, Chloé



Jacket, £379, Whistles



Jacket, £36, Matalan



STELLA MCCARTNEY

THE SUEDE SHELL JACKET



With the forecast more reliable, now is the time to bring out the suede. Update oversized bombers by opting for tonal suede shades paired with light-wash denim, broderie anglaise blouses and crafty accessories.



Jacket, £479, AllSaints



Belt, £28, Fat Face

Top, £55, and skirt, £70, both Damson Madder



Shoes, £215, Ancient Greek Sandals



Top, £79, and trousers, £135, both Jaeger

PIERRE-LOUIS MASCIA



Belt, £250, Isabel Marant



Sunglasses, £375, Celine



Necklace, £158, Reformation



Dress, £64.99, H&M



ETRO



Top, £16, Tu Clothing

THE SILK SCARF EFFECT

Polka dots may be *the* print of S/S '26, but scarf prints are the on-trend bohemian alternative. Handkerchief hemlines, textured accessories and oversized shades complete the vision.



Bag, £355, Weekend Max Mara



Necklace, £165, Rixo



Blazer, £439, Sandro



Sunglasses, £255, Victoria Beckham Eyewear



Bag, £119, Dune London

Trousers, £95, Arket

THE TAILORING TWEAK

Take a relaxed approach to suiting with oversized, slouched silhouettes. Light neutrals will provide a clean canvas for statement accessories – think D-frame sunglasses, square-toed flats and pendant necklaces.



Shoes, £310, Aeyde



Necklace, £200, Anni Lu



Scarf, £60, The White Company



CALVIN KLEIN COLLECTION




Blazer, £109.99, trousers, £79.99, both Mango

Shirt, £315, Matteau

GABRIELA HEARST



Trousers, £40, M&S



TORY BURCH UNMASKED

She's the poster girl of American fashion, but what lies behind the perfect facade, asks *Henrik Lischke*



Tory in her
New York atelier

READER, I HAVE a confession. I am a Tory Burch superfan. I'm not talking about the brand's Reva ballet flats or Romy tote, my fandom is for the woman herself. Spend even a fleeting moment in the orbit of this pillar of American fashion and you would understand the centrifugal force.

At first glance, Burch, 59, appears to be a postcard vision of the American dream – all apple pie and white picket fences – yet there's much more flickering beneath that polished surface, something that resists the too easy stereotype of the wealthy blonde. 'That version is so far from reality,' she says. We are in her New York office, on the same floor as the brand's atelier, at the end of a long corridor flanked with rails of samples, vintage pieces hanging on bookshelves, messily stacked books, fabric swatch binders and shoes. Burch is wearing dark cashmere, black shirt, grey trousers and practical wedges, a concession to recovery – her back is in a brace after surgery, following a wild water rafting injury.

She springs up to greet me with a hug. 'You look so chic,' she says – a line I should have delivered first. We are, disconcertingly, sporting the same hair – Upper East Side blonde bob with a side part – and it dawns on me that I look like an overcommitted fan. Even my outfit mirrors hers.

We have met backstage over the past few years and it is precisely those encounters that converted me. After her S/S '25 show in Brooklyn, I told her I loved her sunglasses and she replied with a wink that they hide a multitude of sins. But who is Tory Burch when the curtain falls? The other versions we never see backstage?

Turns out, there are quite a few. 'Not to sound schizophrenic, but I have so many

sides,' says the Gemini. 'So many different facets that I've kept pretty private over the years... I'm just more relaxed now.'

Her life has all the ingredients of a reality TV show – something, she says with a smile, she will never do. There is Tory Burch Business Force, presiding over her namesake label, founded in 2004, with an approximate annual revenue of \$1.8bn and more than 370 stores worldwide. There is Philanthropic Tory, steering the Tory Burch Foundation, offering grants and mentorship to female entrepreneurs. There's Cultural Leader Tory, on the boards of the Council of Fashion Designers of America and the Smithsonian Institution. And Domestic Tory, mother to three sons, twins Nick and Henry, 28, and Sawyer, 25, as well as six stepchildren – thanks to two of her three marriages, the third being to Pierre-Yves Roussel, chief executive of Tory Burch LLC since 2019. So far, her sons have stayed out of the business, while her two stepdaughters, Pookie and Izzie, and her brother work within it.

For Burch, the American Dream narrative fits neatly: successful, waspy, moneyed. What she has built as a brand architect, without formal training in fashion (she studied art history at the University of Pennsylvania) places her in rare company, a kind of female analogue to Ralph Lauren, for whom she once worked. But where Lauren fashioned his empire from modest beginnings, Burch is candid about a childhood of privilege, growing up with her three brothers in Valley Forge, Philadelphia, Quaker schooling and all, a life that already resembled the dream many spend decades pursuing.

But life has a way of complicating even the most polished story. Success demanded a firm boundary between her public and private worlds, 'like church and state. Because▶



From top left: Tory with her boys in Peru; a young Tory with her mum; in India; her parents, 'Buddy' and Reva



I had so many personal issues, I didn't want my kids to suffer from my career.' Her divorce in 2006 from J Christopher Burch played out noisily in public, prompting her to retreat further. Time has since taken the sting out of it. 'He told me it was a 10-year misunderstanding. So we're like best friends now and he's forgiven,' she laughs. For a long stretch, though, she was holding it together alone. 'I was a single mom. I had three babies and three step-daughters so being protective of my life was a necessity. It created this facade. Any time my personal life came up, I cut it off.'

In conversation, she is more forthcoming than you might expect. Designers at her level tend to keep the lid firmly locked on personal disclosure – not here. The conversation turns to divorce, then her upbringing, which was a cross between a Truman Capote novel and *Succession*, if the Roy children were raised on a farm. 'I'm happy to talk about it now because my kids are in their twenties, doing their own things and I can be more vulnerable and more real.'

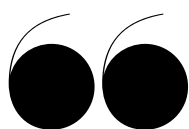
It's also a way of puncturing the idea that her picture perfect life – Upper East Side apartment, house in Southampton, retreat in Antigua that was the setting for a recent campaign – has been seamless. 'The idea of perfection is insane. When people come over [to my home], they think it's a reality show and can see that it's not perfect on any level. I helped raise six kids, so it was crazy, busy, beautiful, happy, messy, tough – all of it, like what we all go through. But I wasn't willing to live that out publicly.'

Her childhood equipped her with what she describes as 'grace under pressure'. When she speaks of her parents, she brightens. 'They taught me to believe in myself. That isn't always easy going through tough



TORY BURCH S/S '26

things, but having had that foundation has been really important,' she says. Her mother, Reva Robinson, now 92, remains, Burch's 'rock and my biggest advocate', an organic gardener long before it became fashionable and lifelong Reagan Republican who turned Democrat at 85 during Trump's first term as President. Burch's father, Ira Earl Robinson, known as Buddy, who died in 2007, cut a singular figure, impeccably dressed in pink trousers driving a tractor, pipe in hand, 'quirky', a man who dated widely – including Grace Kelly – before



I USED TO BE EMOTIONAL – THAT DOESN'T WORK



settling down, and who divided his time between needlepoint, auctions, a paper cup business and a kennel of 50 German shepherds. ‘I’m sure they worked hard in some way,’ she says, pausing. ‘My mom, for sure. My dad was a little more leisurely,’ she smiles. ‘I knew that I wanted a career but I don’t know how that came about. My parents were kind of entrepreneurial in their own right, but didn’t have the work ethic that I have.’

After graduating in 1988, Burch made the inevitable pilgrimage to New York,

landing first with fashion designer Zoran Ladicorbic, the Serbian-born minimalist who preferred his women stripped back. ‘He didn’t want me in make-up, wanted me in flats and told me to cut my hair short,’ she recalls. ‘He wanted me to look androgynous.’ It was an entry point into an industry far removed from the rhythms of the place she grew up, which she describes as ‘the middle of nowhere’. From there, she moved to *Harper’s Bazaar*, where she insists she was ‘the worst sittings assistant ever’, before finding her feet at Ralph Lauren, working across PR and copywriting, absorbing the mechanics of brand building from one of its great architects. A stint with Vera Wang followed, watching closely as Wang expanded beyond bridal, then a final chapter with Narciso Rodriguez at Loewe, of whom she still speaks with reverence. ‘I love Narciso. He’s a great friend. I spent a lot of time watching him perfect things, he’s a real craftsman,’ she says.

When the time came to strike out alone, it was Rodriguez, the designer of Carolyn Bessette-Kennedy’s wedding dress, she turned to, showing him her early ideas books. ‘I probably should have gone to Ralph Lauren as well,’ she reflects, though the omission hardly slowed her momentum. The opening of her first store in 2004, in Manhattan, landed in the middle of fashion week, in sub-zero temperatures, with no doors to speak of. Twenty-two years later and what started as a shop on Elizabeth Street turned into a global business, with her name above the doors. She says she learned early what it meant to meet resistance in the boardroom. ‘In the beginning, I was quite emotional and I soon realised that that doesn’t work. If you’re calm, say less, take it in and think before you answer, it’s very effective and much more powerful.’

Then, in 2019, Burch decided to step down as CEO, with her husband taking over, freeing her to focus fully on the creative side. Lockdown provided an unexpected moment to reassess. The result was what the industry has gleefully dubbed the ‘Torysance’, a recalibration before the brand risked drifting into something overly commercial and indistinct. ‘I was so proud of the company but not sure it was a personal reflection of where I thought it could be.’ What followed was another period of graft, refining design codes, even reworking the famed logo. ‘I don’t let things happen until they’re right,’ says the self-professed

perfectionist. ‘I can’t say it’s always a gift, my kids want to kill me,’ she laughs. But as a result, there is a renewed appetite for her work, with shoes ricocheting across TikTok and bags disappearing from shop floors. She remains a master of the sell-out accessory. Her explanation is disarmingly simple. ‘I think about how women live their lives and how I live mine. I’m an observer and I’m curious.’

Alongside it, a more idiosyncratic streak has emerged, turning her show into one of the highlights of New York Fashion Week. Punk-leaning tunes soundtrack her shows, there are barbed wire references and mice appear as unlikely muses. The clothes feel sharper than you’d expect. ‘Someone called the collection ‘freaky prep’ last night. I took it as a compliment,’ she says.

So, having met the Real Tory, what do I think? My post-interview notes offer fragments. ‘Not what you’d expect,’ ‘As fab as I wanted her to be’. And then, underlined: ‘funny’. We talk about her sons and the pull they have with girls courtesy of having a mother with name recognition, ‘It’s quite a flex,’ she says, laughing. There are stories of pranks played on her team, fun anecdotes from childhood and her love for tequila, as she’s off to Mexico the next day. By the end, I have my hair tied back, as if that might disguise the fact that my admiration remains entirely intact. If anything, I’m more of a fan now.



TORY BURCH S/S '20

WHAT MRS PRADA SERVED UP NEXT

Miu Miu's aprons were *the* big talking point on the spring/summer catwalks. *Emma Davidson* explores the rise of the hot pinny

LAST OCTOBER, ON the final day of Paris Fashion Week, Miuccia Prada rummaged in the annals of her mind – and, apparently, the kitchen cupboard – and sent a swathe of aprons down the runway. Across her new-season Miu Miu collection, multi-layered, everything-but-the-kitchen-sink looks were finished with frilled leather, chintzy floral and patched together crochet versions of the dinner lady staple. Naturally, the comment section went wild.

The loudest voices claimed Mrs P was playing into the Trad Wife trend, which encourages women towards traditional gender roles and subservience, foregoing their careers in favour of pushing out kids, scrubbing the house from top to bottom and having dinner on the table in time for their husband's return from work. The reality, however, was far more complex, with the collection acting more as a comment on the rise of this archaic ideology and the roles women are required to perform; less a manifesto for slamming your laptop shut, chucking it out of the window and swapping spreadsheets for sourdough. It's not about submission and it's definitely not cosplay. To be a woman is to perform, and that's what Miuccia is getting at here.

Pulling from uniforms is something fashion has always done – from Miuccia Prada and Martin Margiela to Demna Gvasalia, the industry has long lifted, reframed and sold back workwear and uniforms rooted in necessity to an audience

for whom they were never a requirement. It isn't new and Mrs P isn't the only one at it – this season, Veronica Leoni also dabbled in aprons at Calvin Klein, while Talia Byre debuted crisp cotton floor-length versions at her London show in February.

Still, as a working class woman myself, there's something undeniably strange about watching what my mum wears to work as a school cook reframed as a luxury object and sent down the runway with a four-figure price tag. The apron is not an abstract concept to me. It's real, it's functional and it's tied to labour that is often overlooked, underpaid and far, far removed from fashion's idea of glamour.

That said, I'm not mad about it. I love the almost perverse subversion of it all and actually find it pretty funny. The idea that wealthy people are being coaxed into spending a small fortune to ultimately resemble a dinner lady – a job they would more than likely turn their nose up at in real life – has a certain poetic justice. If

I had the funds to do so, I'd most certainly be dropping them on one, having formed a lifelong obsession with pinafores after joining the Rainbow Guides aged four. Seeing the likes of Paloma Elsesser and Chloë Sevigny step out in their own Miu Miu aprons sent me immediately heading to eBay in search of vintage numbers (although whether I could pull one off is another conversation entirely).

Because here's the thing: working class women are some of the most glamorous women out there. Not in the polished, quiet luxury sense, but in the effort they go to – hair coiffed, make-up done, pride in their appearance regardless of their circumstances. It's a kind of glamour that isn't always legible to the upper classes, or at least not in the way they're used to recognising. They see uniform, while I see intention. To me, the Miu Miu aprons conjures up the memory of Miss Foster – my primary school dinner lady, who never let the Baltic conditions of the playground get in the way of her gold doorknocker earrings, a slick of cerise lipstick and a heady cloud of perfume, and who I thought was the most fabulous person on the planet at the time.

Maybe that's the point. Not to romanticise the apron or strip it of its history, but to force it into a space where it can't be ignored. In the hands of Miuccia Prada, it becomes something loaded: a reminder that what fashion calls styling some women have always called getting ready for work. The real subversion isn't in putting an apron on the runway, but in recognising that the women who wore them first were already doing the work of dressing up, long before anyone thought to call it 'fashion.' If that means the fashion crowd are keen to drop a small fortune to look like the iconic dinner ladies I grew up with? I'm all for it.



Left: aprons hit the Miu Miu catwalk.
Below: Mrs P's inspo? Victoria Wood's iconic *Dinnerladies*



PHOTOS: GETTY, BBC



Pinny perfection, courtesy of Miu Miu



Leading fashion PR Daisy Hoppen delivers a masterclass in chic maternity dressing

PREGNANT — AND IMPECCABLY DRESSED

WORDS REBECCA LOWTHORPE

AT FIRST GLANCE, Daisy Hoppen is a contradiction. You could easily cast her as a children's book character – she'd make a great Pippi Longstocking – but the founder of communications agency DH-PR is a formidable fashion operator who has spent the last 12 years of her 20-year career being the person who London's most interesting brands find their way to.

Culture was never something Hoppen had to seek out. Her father is Michael

Hoppen, the celebrated photography gallerist; her grandmother, Stephanie Hoppen, a big noise in art circles, ran a gallery in Chelsea; her aunt is interiors guru Kelly Hoppen. Her sister Mimi is jewellery director of Dover Street Market. She grew up surrounded by people who took beautiful things seriously, so having a good eye was not optional.

When we speak, she is on holiday in Mallorca at a farmhouse in the hills, built by her grandmother's former boyfriend 45 years ago. There is no heating, no Wi-Fi, and it is, she says cheerfully, 'an absolute death trap for children – on the edge of a cliff'. At the time of shooting these pictures, she is eight weeks away from the birth of her second child and is spending her days at the beach 'like a whale' – which, clearly, she is not. She is 41, which the NHS, with its infinite charm, classifies as a geriatric mother. 'Isn't that disgusting?' she says. It is.

What makes Hoppen particularly remarkable is not just how she dresses through

pregnancy, but that she is doing it at all. She has been sick multiple times a day while running a business and with a toddler at home – Clementine, two and a half, 'a small French diva' courtesy of her French husband. 'There isn't really a time to have downtime in fashion,' she says, without a trace of panic. With her first pregnancy she worked until Friday and had Clementine on Monday. She intends to do the same this time around.

The question of how to dress through all of this – the meetings, the shows, the client events, the sheer relentlessness of it – has required considerable strategic thinking. The answer has been, largely, Comme des Garçons. 'They do really good egg-shaped coats and little crop jackets and it's very friendly on your body,' she says. 'The skirts all have elastic waistbands so you can wear them below the bump with a slightly oversized jumper and a little blazer.' Crucially, all of it is still wearable on the other side.

For the early months, when her body was changing, short coats became a primary tool



From left: Daisy in Comme des Garçons; CdG again; in Molly Goddard; H&M maternity jeans; and Ganni

– worn as dresses over knee-high black boots. ‘You don’t even look pregnant, which has been really nice,’ she says. A houndstooth CdG coat dress has been a particular workhorse for client events. Ganni – another long-standing client – has supplied ballet pumps and fluid pieces that move obligingly around her changing silhouette. Now, in the springtime heat, she’s been wearing voluminous shirts over pregnancy jeans – top tip: ‘H&M maternity jeans have come such a long way in the last 10 years. They’re pretty much the best for them.’ For shorts, she says Tekla does the job. For swimwear, she goes straight to Hunza G. ‘It’s probably the only swim brand that does the full stretch.’ Jewellery, she notes, has been surprisingly useful – ‘You can just chuck on a great necklace or a pair of earrings and it lifts a simple shirt brilliantly.’

As for footwear, she advises low-heeled, knee-high boots for winter – safe, stylish and elongating – or ballet pumps from Ganni or Simone Rocha, ‘statement but sensible’. She has been ruthlessly practical

– with a boy on the way, not everything can be a hand-me-down. Her top kidswear tips aside from the very spenny ‘Caramel – so, so nice’ is Mini Boden ‘absolutely brilliant’ and Asda for nursery tracksuit bottoms. As for beautiful baby muslins? ‘Forivor, a Welsh brand, gorgeously illustrated – they’ve stayed with Clementine for two and a half years.’

What she has quietly stepped away from is the body-conscious dressing that her Instagram algorithm is apparently very keen to suggest. ‘I’m probably not the kind of character who would do a jumper undone over a naked pregnancy tummy anyway,’ she says.

So, any weird cravings? She has been watching the spring runways with a particular hunger. ‘There were loads of amazing calf-length skirts, like kilts – with a waist,’ she says. ‘I’m really looking forward to great tailoring and buttons rather than elastic waistbands. Just being able to tie my own shoelaces again will be really nice.’





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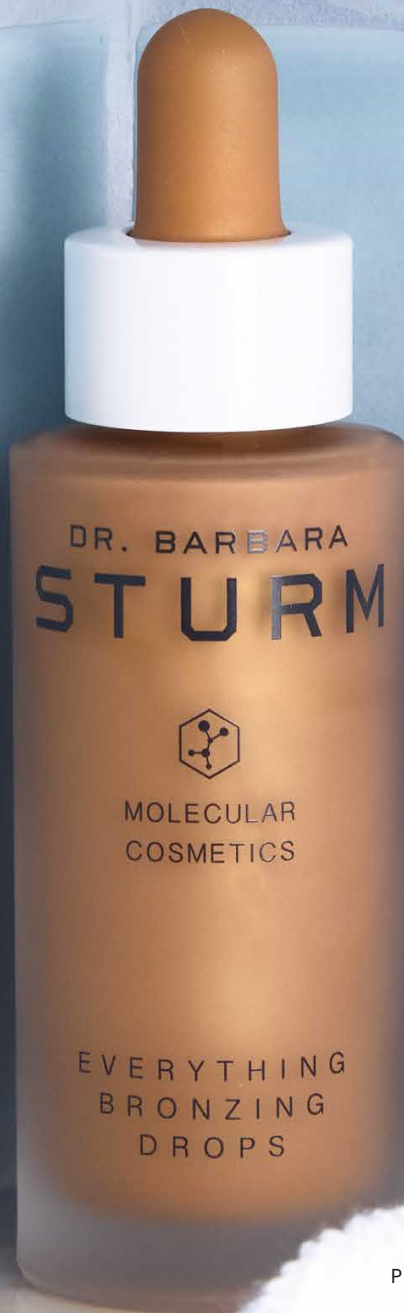

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PHOTOGRAPH **CAMERON BENSLEY**
STYLED BY **JULIA HARVEY**
EDITED BY **ANNIE VISCHER**

WITH THANKS TO SIX SENSES LONDON

SUMMER UP YOUR skin in two drops, with the latest addition to Dr Barbara Sturm's lauded skincare line. You get a natural sun-kissed finish on application, while antioxidant-rich botanicals, such as red clover and cocoa seed extract, brighten and smooth.

Dr Barbara Sturm Everything Bronzing Drops, £125



THINK PINK

Pink make-up is shedding its clichés and reeling in the cool girls

BOY BLUSH

Think Prince Harry fresh off the polo field and Jacob Elordi's wind-blushed Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*. 'Boy blush is everywhere right now,' says Sofia Tilbury, global artistry director at Charlotte Tilbury Beauty. 'The key is to layer multiple shades. I use a deep berry tone to sculpt and add that fresh, youthful flush with a purple-toned pink.' ▶



PHOTOGRAPHS **HOLLY BROOMHALL**
WORDS **ANNIE VISCHER**
MAKE-UP **SOFIA CASTIGLIONE USING**
CHARLOTTE TILBURY BEAUTY
BEAUTY DIRECTION **MOLLY HAYLOR**
STYLING **AMBER BACKHOUSE**



MILKSHAKE SHADOW

Take your shade cues from Nesquik strawberry milk mix and Angel Delight. 'Aim for an effortless wash of colour that enhances your eyes without overpowering them,' says Tilbury. 'Keep the edges diffused and pair with glowing skin and a glossy lip for a fresh, modern finish.'

THE BAMBI FILTER

Aware of the baby deer look yet? If not, it's time to get onboard. 'It's having a real moment,' says Tilbury. 'Focus on defining your eyes with soft, neutral shades of shadow and lots of mascara, before working soft, Pillow Talk shades of pink into contoured cheeks and a sculpted nude lip.' ▶



MODEL WEARS (OPENING PAGE) TOP, £175, WOLFORD; (RIGHT) DRESS, £138, REISS



FRENCH GIRL FUCHSIA

Channel couldn't-care-less-chic with this dressed down take on a bold lip (see right). 'Apply straight from the bullet for intensity,' says Tilbury. 'Blur the edges and keep the rest of your make-up minimal – it's confident, powerful and instantly elevates your entire look.'

PINKY PROMISE

Up the pretty factor with the palette of the season



MODEL: DANIELLE LASHLEY AT NEXT MODELS. MAKE-UP: SOFIA CASTIGLIONE AT CHARLOTTE TILBURY BEAUTY USING PILLOW TALK AND HOLLYWOOD FLAWLESS FILTER. HAIR: DAVID WADLOW. NAILS: EMMA WELSH AT SB COLLECTIVE. SHOOT PRODUCER: ANNA DEWHURST. PHOTOGRAPHER'S ASSISTANT: OLIVER FRANCIS. MAKE-UP ASSISTANT: LAURA COTGROVE. FASHION ASSISTANT: LIV BELLAMY. SHOOT PART-SPONSORED BY CHARLOTTE TILBURY BEAUTY. STILL LIFES: MARCO VITTUR

1. NAILBERRY Natural Nail Polish in Kindness, £17.
2. CHARLOTTE TILBURY Hollywood Flawless Filter, £40.
3. CHARLOTTE TILBURY Exagger-Eyes Easy Eyeshadow Stick, £27.
4. CHARLOTTE TILBURY Pillow Talk Blush Balm Lip Tint, £27.
5. CHARLOTTE TILBURY Unreal Blush Healthy Glow Stick in Pretty Glow, £32.
6. CHARLOTTE TILBURY Exagger-Eyes Volume Mascara, £28.
7. CHARLOTTE TILBURY Magic Cream, £54

THE NEW ROMANTICS

From delicate florals to soft, skin-like musks, meet the new fragrances made to tug on your heart strings

WORDS **RACHAEL MARTIN**
PHOTOGRAPH **AMY CURRELL**



LOVE LETTER
This one is inspired by an English rose garden. It's airy rather than powdery, and a burst of pink pepper adds spice. Maison Margiela Replica Up At Dawn EDT, £127 for 100ml

SOMETHING SWEET
Mellow, smooth and warm, this modern blend of mandarin, lavender and vanilla bean notes is the perfect day-date spritz. Phlur Honey Moon EDP, £99 for 50ml



DAY DREAMER
If you're a sucker for fig notes, this addition to the Chloé Atelier line will have you at hello. The bottle is a masterclass in old-money elegance. Chloé Atelier Des Fleurs Plage Du Figuier EDP, £231 for 150ml



FOR SUNDAYS

The olfactive equivalent of a cashmere jumper, you'll want to swathe yourself in this. A true comfort spritz. Prada Les Infusions De Santal Chai EDP, £150 for 100ml

LEADING LADY

A recognisable scent, now made to linger. It's a knock-out floral worthy of a romantically lit cocktail bar. Wear with your best silk slip. Dior J'adore Intense, £150 for 100ml

BOLD MOVE

A botanical hit of clary sage, peppermint and black pepper makes for a confidence-booster. Clean and sophisticated. Penhaligon's Bold Blend EDP, £220 for 100ml

NEW ROMANCE

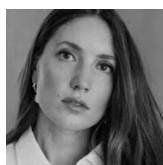
Leave it to Le Labo to layer up classic notes like violet and white tea leaves to deliver a new-gen classic. Le Labo Violette 30 EDP, £234 for 100ml



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Fast foot fixes for spring



ANNIE VISCHER,
HEAD OF
BEAUTY

SANDAL SEASON IS fast approaching and it's striking fear into those of us whose feet have spent the past six months happily hibernating. It takes me months to build up to baring my toes. I procrastinate with loafers then, when I'm just about ready to move on to mules, I tackle my heels.

Here's where I get to grips with a foot file. 'That's your step one,' says Margaret Dabbs, arguably the best-known podiatrist in the country. 'All the foot creams and moisturisers in the world won't work if you leave the hard dry skin there.' Dabbs advises filing before a bath or a shower, when your feet are dry. 'Aim for two minutes per foot,' she says. 'And then maintain that smooth finish by doing it weekly.'

Don't kid yourself that any old body lotion will work as a foot cream. 'The skin on your feet is 12 times thicker than the skin on your body, so it's important to use a specially made formula,' says Dabbs. Foot creams are usually dense and emollient-rich, meaning they form a protective layer that locks in moisture. Some are made with urea (to gently break down dead skin) and antibacterial botanicals such as tea tree, which combats athlete's foot, soothes cracked heels and helps get rid of the bacteria that makes feet smell.

Full-on toe exposure, whether by way of city smart flip-flops, à la The Row, pool-side Havaianas or a mid-week Pilates class minus grippy socks, is likely to make you think a pedicure is necessary, either in-salon or DIY. And while there are few things more relaxing than kicking back in one of those plush sofas with a good book while a trained professional works their magic, I struggle to set aside the time.

This year, I decided to up my DIY pedi game. My priority was locking down a set



Kate Moss knows a good pedicure

of polishes (base, colour and top coat) good and glossy enough to mimic a gel finish – no mean feat. 'I'm a big fan of using OPI Nail Envy as a base coat,' says nail pro to the stars (read: Sarah Pidgeon, Naomi Watts and Priyanka Chopra Jonas), Iram Shelton. 'It strengthens weak nails and prevents peeling, splitting and chipping.' And as for top coats? 'Essie Gel Couture,' says Shelton. 'It gives you that plump, high-shine, gel-like finish without the need for a UV lamp.'

For Shelton, proper prep is essential. 'Ditch scissors in favour of a pair of sharp clippers and trim straight across to avoid ingrown nails,' she says. 'Then soften the edges with a file, moving it in one direction rather than see-sawing it back and forth to prevent damage, and use a buffing file to gently smooth away ridges.'

As for colour combinations, I'm Kate Middleton levels of conservative. If I'm booking in, I ask for 'The Gel Bottle BIAB in Dolly (a milky pale pink) or OPI GelColour in Bubble Bath. They pop beautifully against a good fake tan. At home, I stick to pinks and occasionally indulge in a Chanel Rouge Noir moment, though I hear poppy reds are back in a big way for summer 2026.

ANNIE'S FOOT FINDS

SINGLE FILE

A hardy foot file made with crushed crystal technology, this sands off tough, dry skin in a few fluid strokes. It comes with four additional pads – replace as soon as the original starts to lack grit. **Margaret Dabbs London Professional Foot File [1], £30**

WELL HEELED

I've been using this essential-oil rich foot balm for years. It smooths without leaving any residue behind and smells beautiful. **This Works Perfect Heels Rescue Balm [2], £18**

POLISH UP

A taupe take on pink polish that looks as sophisticated as you'd expect. The pigment pay-off is impressive – two coats and you're done. **Hermès Nail Polish in Rose Tamié [3], £47**

FIRST BASE

For an intensive strengthening treatment, apply two coats to bare nails and reapply another coat daily for a week in the lead-up to your at-home pedicure. **OPI Nail Envy Nail Strengthen Treatment [4], £23**

FAUX GLOW

Ashley Graham gave me the best self-tan hack for hands and feet – a notoriously tricky area. Moisturise creases (knuckles and heels), then spritz on a fake tan mist and brush in with a kabuki-style brush. **Tan-Luxe The Water [5], £34**



PHOTO: GETTY



SALT SOAK

Mix a handful of these fragrant bath salts into the tub for a serious dose of R&R. **Santa Maria Novella Melograno Bath Salts, £41**

RAISE THE BAR

Loewe's decadant soap bar leaves skin soft and delicately scented with tomato leaves. **Loewe Solid Soap, £52**



TRÈS CHIC

The perfect pink-toned nude does exist – in VB's newest lipstick shade. **Victoria Beckham Beauty Posh Lip in 02, £37**



SHINE ON

A slicked-back hair essential, this conditions while ensuring flexible hold. **Oribe Supershine Smoothing Wax Stick, £45**



BODY NECTAR

A body oil designed to add radiance while scenting skin with basil and verben. **Officine Universelle Buly Huile Antique Andean Verbena and Ulu Basil, £52**



FINE BLEND

A heady hit of chestnut, vanilla and truffle housed in hand-blown glass and set atop cool black marble. **Bottega Almost Dawn EDP, £380 for 100ml**



NEXT LEVEL

A potent blend of antioxidants brightens and smooths in this serum version of the cult classic cream. **Sisley Black Rose Concentrate Serum, £198**

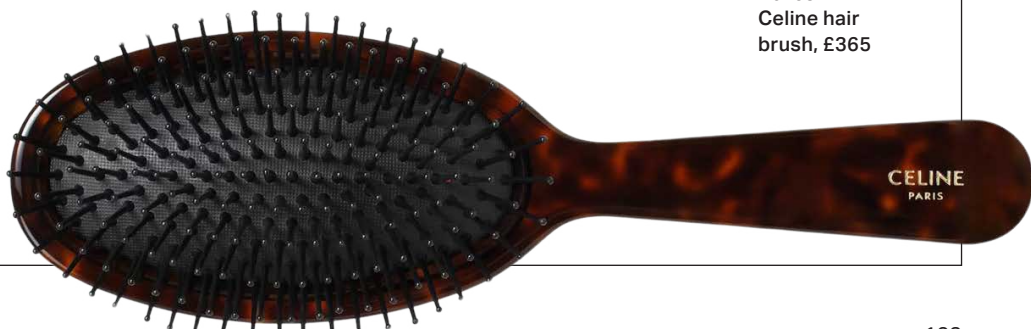
TROPHY BUYS

These dressing table status symbols justify the splurge

EDITED BY RACHAEL MARTIN

OLD MONEY

This brush – tortoiseshell and gold embossed – is the only correct way to undress Hollywood waves. **Celine hair brush, £365**



GRAZIA PROMOTION

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Board, £8, both
Wickes



Dining Set, £509,
Rowlinson Kyoto
at Wickes



THE OCCASIONAL, LOVELY WARM and sunny days of spring mean just one thing – it's time to start thinking about getting your garden summer hosting ready. How? Make your first stop Wickes as it has everything you need to create a stylish space, from tools to chic finishing touches including lights, furniture and barbecues, plus lots of great advice and inspiration too.

First think about zoning an area for eating and drinking. Decking is a great way to define a space. Check out the grooved softwood timber deck boards from Wickes. They use FSC® certified timber that's been pressure-treated to ensure a longer life, giving you a beautiful, rot-resistant finish that's ready for a summer of entertaining.

Got your structure done, time to soften the space. Frame your deck with a combination of raised beds and planters – Wickes has a wide variety of both. Fill them with plants in varying shades of green, and add an accent colour through foliage or flowering plants. Now add the extras that bring it all to life. Wickes offers a range of dining sets including this smart and sturdy Rowlinson Kyoto, made from long lasting eucalyptus. Get your marinated chicken wings cooking on the Ottimo 465 Dual Fuel 2-Burner BBQ, one of many grills and barbecues available at Wickes. Don't forget lighting, so you can carry on when the sun goes down. Portable table lamps such as the Eglo Manneria Touch Dinner table lamp, are a super-easy new way to add light to an outdoor table. Happy hosting!

Shop in store or online at wickes.co.uk

PROMOTION GRAZIA

Parasol, £679, Royce Ambassador at Wickes



Garden shades matt wood treatment in shade Willow, (5L), Was £42, now £35*, Cuprinol at Wickes



Rattan egg swing chair, £328, Charles Bentley at Wickes



Firepit, £80, Charles Bentley at Wickes



Large square planter, £16, Strata Riven at Wickes

Pro timber deck board, Was £14, now £9, Wickes



Rechargeable touch-dimmer LED table lamp, £25, Eglo Leonero at Wickes

COMPLETE YOUR SPACE

Once you've got your designated dining/entertaining zone, it's time to fill it with everything you need to relax, eat, drink and party



Bark Chippings, Was £12.50, now £8.50**, Wickes



Top Soil, (25L) 3 for £10, Wickes



Acacia sun lounger, £167, Charles Bentley at Wickes



Grill, £798, Charles Ottimo Searsmith at Wickes

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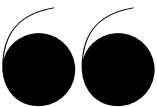
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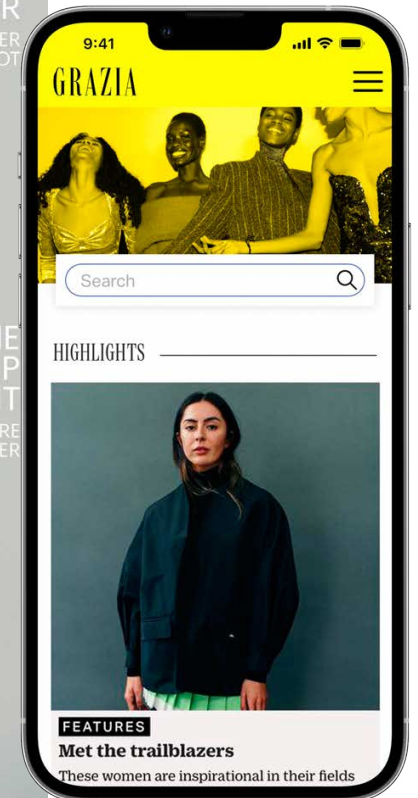
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GRAZIA LIFESTYLE

INTERIORS,
FOOD, TRAVEL
+ BOOKS



PHOTOGRAPH CAMERON BENSLEY
STYLED BY JULIA HARVEY
EDITED BY RACHEL LOOS



WITH THANKS TO SIX SENSES LONDON

HARKING BACK TO the brand's equestrian heritage, Hermès's beautifully coloured glasses from its spring/summer homeware collection are inspired by the bright shades of jockey silks. Hand-blown and hand-engraved by Italian master craftsmen, they are guaranteed to elevate any table.

Casaque glasses, £960 each, **Hermès**

AN INSIDERS' ATLAS OF COOL

Planning a city getaway? Here, four design experts share their hometown hotspots



STOCKHOLM

Liza Laserow Berglund, co-founder of Nordic Knots

TOP SHOPPING SPOTS... Stockholm has hidden gems for interiors. A favourite is Antikvariat Antiqua, a small antiques boutique. I also go to Jacksons, a design gallery known for Scandinavian design classics, and Galerie North, which focuses on Nordic furniture and decor.

FOODIE FAVOURITES... For coffee on weekends, I go to Tössebageriet, a classic Swedish *konditori* where you'll often find a well-dressed older couple reading the newspaper and sharing a pastry. Bar Nîmes is our family's favourite place for dinner. An intimate Italian corner restaurant with a warm atmosphere.

PERFECT VIEW... The view from Djurgården, looking back at the city, never gets old. The architectural details, the stillness of the water and the treetops feel like a scene from an ancient painting.

MY SECRET GEM... My go-to for vintage shopping is Broadway & Sons, where I always find the perfect jeans.

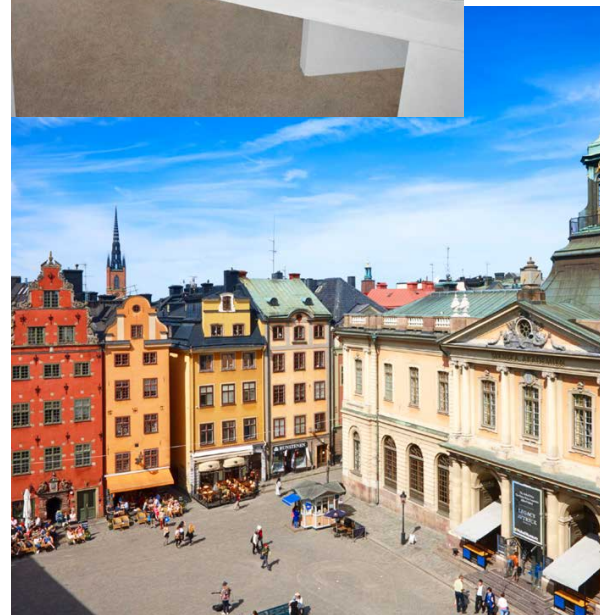
A BUILDING YOU HAVE TO SEE... Millesgården museum on Lidingö to admire Carl Milles's sculptures.

THE CULTURE FIX... A must-visit is the Nationalmuseum, Sweden's main museum for art and design. It has an incredible collection spanning centuries.

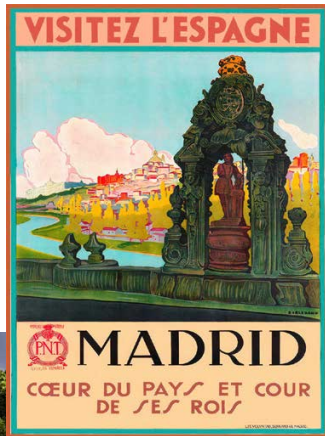
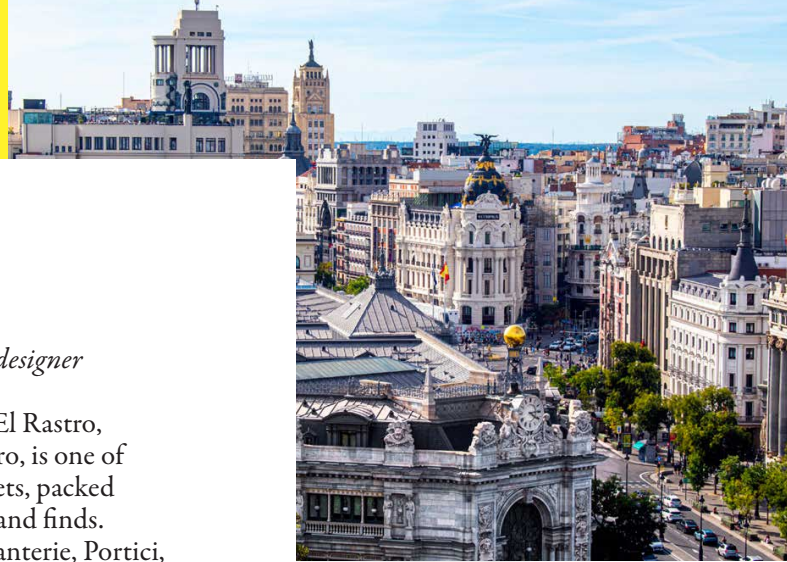
BEST TIME TO VISIT... May or September.



Millesgården (also above centre). Top left: Galerie North



From top: Liza; Stortorget square; Bar Nîmes



MADRID

Marta de La Rica, interior designer

TOP SHOPPING SPOTS... El Rastro, set around Plaza de Cascorro, is one of Madrid's most iconic markets, packed with antiques and secondhand finds. Favourites include La Brocanterie, Portici, El Jueves, Verde Gabán, Berenis and Le Secret. Also worth visiting are Galerías Piquer, Rue Vintage 74, La Oficial, Ana Lamata, Abbatte, González & González, Oteyza, Dragon Lector and Paperground.

FOODIE FAVOURITES... Breakfast is usually at El Galgo for great coffee and a relaxed atmosphere. For lunch, I take friends to Los 33 for its simple but exceptional Uruguayan cooking. Tramo, set in a former auto shop, feels genuinely unique. Sacha is a Parisian-style institution with one of the city's best terraces. For romance, Horcher is hard to beat, while Bar Cock remains a true Madrid classic.

PERFECT VIEW... After visiting the Temple of Debod, walk up Príncipe Pío hill for sweeping views of Casa de Campo, the Royal Palace and Almudena Cathedral.

MY SECRET GEM... Parque El Capricho, one of Madrid's most beautiful and romantic gardens.

A BUILDING YOU HAVE TO SEE... The Beti Jai Fronton, an 1894 court in Chamberí that has striking neo-Mudéjar elements.

THE CULTURE FIX... Must-visits are Galería Elvira González, Travesía Cuatro, Galería Belmonte, Colnaghi, Fundación Juan March and the Reina Sofía.

BEST TIME TO VISIT... May, when the weather is mild, terraces are lively and the city is perfect for long walks. ▶



Parque El Capricho. Below: Marta. Bottom: Palacio de Comunicaciones



From top: the cityscape; Galería Belmonte; Verde Gabán; Temple of Debod





SYDNEY

Tamsin Johnson, interior designer

TOP SHOPPING SPOTS... I spend a lot of time in Paddington, especially around William Street. Favourite boutiques include Lucy Folk, P Johnson and Poepke, with Ariel bookshop nearby. For homewares, visit Henry Wilson, Dinosaur Designs and Studio Gardener. Also stop by my antique showroom.

FOODIE FAVOURITES... Breakfast is at Cafe Cressida in Woollahra. Lunch might be Alimentari or the Bone Broth Bar. For friends, I love 10 William; for visitors, Clam Bar or Icebergs for the view. Dinner at Barons is always special. For drinks, Fred's is great for something quiet, or Paradise in Potts Point if you're after a more intimate setting. For a romantic sunset, Camp Cove is perfect.

PERFECT VIEW... The Hermitage Walk, looking back towards the city – my husband and I go weekly.

MY SECRET GEM.... Well, it won't be a secret if I tell you...

A BUILDING YOU HAVE TO SEE... The Sydney Opera House, of course – do the architectural tour.

THE CULTURE FIX... It has to be White Rabbit Gallery. The exhibitions are consistently brilliant, and they also do excellent dim sum.

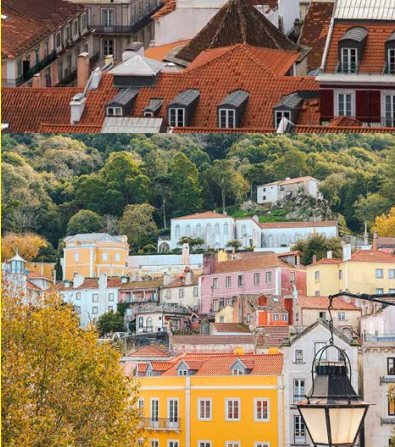
BEST TIME TO VISIT... September through to May. Sydney is at its best when the weather's warm, the harbour's sparkling and the beaches are alive.



PHOTOS: GETTY ALAMY, DEAN HEARNE, INSTAGRAM/GALERIE NORTH, BAR NINES, GALERIE/MONTE VERDE GABÁN, ANSON SMART, PUONINSONFEMME, THEBERGSBONDI, FURTHER_THER, RYOSHITHEBERGSBONDI, FURTHER_THER, RYOSHI



Left, from top: Tamsin; Sydney Opera House; Sydney Harbour. Right, from top: The Rocks; P Johnson; Icebergs at The Bergs Bondi



Tatjana and (above) Sintra old town and the Lisbon skyline



LISBON

Tatjana von Stein, designer

TOP SHOPPING SPOTS... I head straight to local makers, like Further Ther. A favourite walk is from Santos to Príncipe Real – it's full of independent shops, cafés and small restaurants.

FOODIE FAVOURITES... For coffee I head to Magnolia. For something a little different, grab a wild mushroom concoction at Mom Longevity Alchemists. Mezcal and tacos at Bodega Chafa. Dinner favourites are Da Noi and Skizzo – both seriously good, as is a delicious Japanese restaurant Ryoshi.

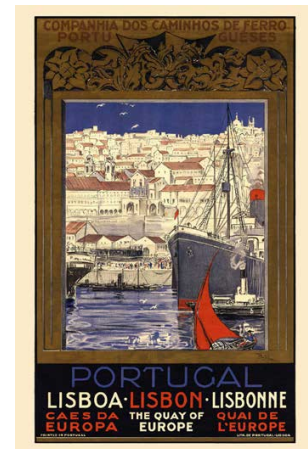
PERFECT VIEW... Anywhere slightly north of the centre, looking over rooftops towards the sea.

MY SECRET GEM... Insaciável, a tiny wine bar in Santos.

A BUILDING YOU HAVE TO SEE... There's no single one – the tiled facades across the city are incredible, especially in sunlight. The Gulbenkian Foundation garden is also worth visiting.

THE CULTURE FIX... I love visiting stone yards and tile makers, like Viúva Lamego, to see craftsmanship up close – it's a constant source of inspiration.

BEST TIME TO VISIT... Spring or autumn for the light and energy. Also August; some people say to skip it but it's kind of great. The city empties out as locals head to the coast, so everything feels calmer.



Dine at Ryoshi. Top: Further Ther. Left: Gulbenkian Foundation



DINING WITH THE STARS

Everyone wants a table at Jeremy King's restaurants. *Hattie Crisell* meets the man behind the magic

'INFLUENCERS THINK THEY'RE God's gift to restaurants,' says Jeremy King – and he should know. Over the last 45 years, he has created, co-owned and managed some of the most iconic restaurants in London, favoured by celebrities and the style set alike, including Le Caprice, The Ivy, J Sheekey, The Wolseley, The Delaunay, Brasserie Zédel, Colbert, Fischer's, Bellanger and Soutine. Currently, he has London's Arlington, The Park and the newly reopened Simpson's in the Strand.

They are all spectacular, but somehow also low-key; they are glamorous but always



Clockwise from left: Helena Bonham Carter, Keira Knightley, Kate Moss and Katy Perry are all clientele of King's. Top left: the King of restaurants himself



the energy of that, but I think it's very dangerous for the restaurant,' says King. He prefers things to be discreet. When he ran The Ivy in the '90s, it always had paparazzi outside so, 'I bought four very large, high-voltage torches and I'd tell them, "If you don't behave, the torches go on,"' he says. 'Then if they were hassling people, all their photos would be ruined by the bright light.'

During King's time at St James's Le Caprice, Princess Diana was a regular. King would sit her in a particular corner table, 'Because then nobody could get to her without being stopped. She could look out of the window and have a normal experience and she would feel good.' Later, he opened the Wolseley, where artist Lucian Freud had a similarly protected seat.

'But then other people think, "Oh, I want to be famous. I want to be sitting there,"' he adds. He doesn't love requests for special treatment and usually says no 'unless there's a really good reason,' he says. 'Often the people who demand a particular table are the least in need of that table.'

For most of us, even getting into a buzzy restaurant can seem impossible, with tables booked up for months. Don't give up – there's usually a way, confides King. 'Phoning is better than going online, because it's so easy for the computer to say no,' he says. 'But if it's really tricky to get a table, then even better is to turn up at the door. Present yourself and say, "Do you have a table for two if I let you have it back in an hour?" Often that will work.'

I wonder whether, having worked in London in the wild days of the '80s and '90s, King feels we've all got a bit boring. So many people now prioritise rest, exercise and hydration over the pleasures of a buttery dinner and a bottle of wine. He nods. '[The writer] Kingsley Amis said, "No pleasure is worth giving up for the sake of two more years in a geriatric home

classy. So while they look like great places to 'make content,' King would prefer that you restrain yourself to just enjoying the experience. 'Influencers create a lot of bad feeling. I've seen them come in with tripods and suitcases of clothes. I've seen one stand on a chair to take a photograph of his food. There's a sense of entitlement, which is being encouraged by a cult of narcissism.'

When he tells these offenders to leave, he says, they typically go online to sabotage the place with bad reviews. 'But I don't care.'

The thing is, King's restaurants can't help becoming fashionable. Simpson's is stunning, with a vaulted foyer, grand fireplaces and cosy, perfectly lit booths. As a doorwoman welcomes me through the beautiful revolving entrance, I can already imagine photographers gathering to snap celebrity guests.

'I can see that it can be attractive to feel



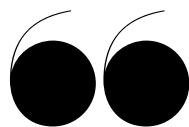
Alexa Chung and Obongjayar at Simpson's in the Strand (below)



in Weston-super-Mare." And against the background of wars going on in the world, you do think – why am I worried about a cigarette or a drink?'

As for keeping his customers happy, King believes that what makes a restaurant feel special is the detail you only subliminally notice. He asks a waiter to bring one of the wine glasses they use at Simpson's: it is elegantly curved and made of delicate glass. 'They break somewhat easily,' he says. 'It would be cheaper to use standard glasses – but if the wine comes out of this, it feels better and tastes better.'

The napkins have a buttonhole sewn into them, so you can neatly cover your shirt before you eat; if you would like condiments, they'll be brought over on a trolley and silver-spooned for you on to your plate. 'Nobody would have complained if we didn't do that,' says King, 'but people think, "Oh, that's nice," and they relax.' Every little thing is considered to make a customer feel they're in safe hands; often that means that less is more. 'The music shouldn't be loud, the service shouldn't be overbearing. Nothing should be crying out for attention,' says King. And that goes for the influencers, too.



INFLUENCERS
CREATE BAD
FEELING. THEY
COME IN WITH
TRIPODS

THE HOUSE THAT SALONE BUILT

Salone del Mobile is the world's most influential design fair. Here are this year's key takeaways...

WORDS **HENRIK LISCHKE**

FOR DESIGN AFICIONADOS, Milan Design Week – aka Salone del Mobile – is something of a pilgrimage. It is the most rarefied stage for contemporary furniture and design: a sprawling, city-wide exhibition of what is newest, most covetable and most exquisite. This is where the aesthetic temperature is set and ideas debut before trickling down.

Design, unlike fashion, resists the churn of seasons. It moves more slowly, and yet, within the palazzos, showrooms and installations, the direction of travel becomes clear. So, here are the ideas to pin to your home reno mood boards now, straight from the designers, curators, interior design studios and even fashion brands who joined this year's extravaganza.

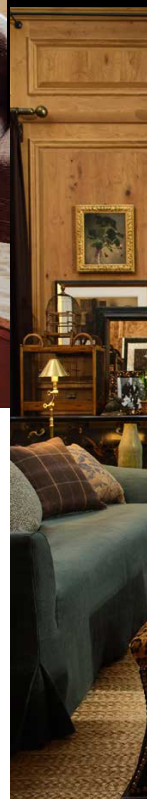


H&M HOME X KELLY WEARSTLER

ART DECO REVIVED

Louis Vuitton's Objets Nomades collection wasn't alone in drawing on the art deco movement. Bold geometric shapes surfaced everywhere, making a case for glamorous interiors 100 years on from its inception.

LOUIS VUITTON





HERMÈS

(NOT SO) HEAVY METAL

What's next after stainless steel kitchens? Hardware in every corner of the home. From Hermès's palladium homeware to steel dividers and coffee tables, metal brings cool contrast to cosy homes.



H&M HOME X KELLY WEARSTLER

STATUS LAMPS

H&M Home's collaboration with Kelly Wearstler featured delectable lamps at high street prices, while wellness brand Aesop launched lighting fixtures and Dior Maison lamps took cues from the New Look skirt. Elsewhere, rare vintage lights stole the show.



ISSEY MIYAKE

ORGANIC SHAPES

Soft organic shapes were seen at the Issey Miyake project, where paper 'logs' were upcycled into furniture, and at Chloé, where the iconic '70s tomato chair was resissued in partnership with Poltronova.



RALPH LAUREN

LET THERE BE LEOPARD

Ralph Lauren's new homeware collection, inspired by the designer's Bedford estate, features leopard-print stools, demonstrating that animal print, if used with restraint, earns the Milan stamp of approval.



INTERNI VENOSTA

'MEDICICORE'

Everyone in Milan went head-over-habitat for historic interiors, from a wood-drenched apartment by Osvaldo Borsani with a wall panelled fireplace cove to wooden daybeds at the Fendi Design Prize. Also of note: Renaissance-style tapestries telling the story of Gucci. Medievalcore is here to stay.

HIGH SHINE SEATING

A love seat, English arm roll or a tuxedo sofa are all perfectly fine, but if you want your sofa to speak up, go for a retro-futuristic lacquered piece. The best was seen in Giampiero Tagliaferri's new studio, created with gallerist Chiara Rusconi and curator Truls Blaasmo.



GIAMPIERO TAGLIAFERRI

THE LAST WORD

VANESSA KIRBY

Each issue, we ask people we admire to reveal their lasts, from books to box sets. Here, actor *Vanessa Kirby* shares hers...

The last book I read... *The Bee Sting* by Paul Murray. It's a big Irish family saga. I couldn't put it down – highly recommend.

The last song I listened to... All of Bad Bunny's songs.

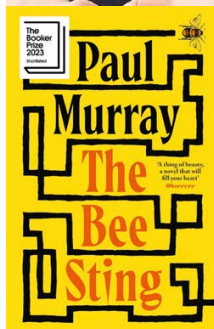
The last box set I binged... All seven seasons of *Mad Men*. I finished it and then I missed all the characters. When you spend so much time watching them, they feel like family. That series is flawless.

The last restaurant I ate in... Il Buco. That's the restaurant I love the most in New York City. It's so cosy and easy with gorgeous food.

The last party I went to.... My fiancé's 40th. We took all our friends to upstate New York for a few magical days. It's amazing getting out of the city and into the forest.

The last beauty product I used... Lancôme Génifique Ultimate Serum – I use it every single night – and Lancôme Teint Idole foundation stick. As a new parent, I have to rush out the door a lot of the time and it's so quick and easy to use.

The last item I bought for my home... was an air fryer. I'm a massive fan. It's not very cool but I'm a massive fan.



Vanessa loves a good read, her Lancôme serum and *Mad Men*



The last promise I made... To be on my phone less.

The last occasion I felt starstruck... Working with Mona Fastvold who is one of the best female directors in the world and I'm just starstruck by her work.

The last photo I took... An amazing meal my surrogate family made for me. They are my neighbours in NYC and one of them is an incredible cook – everything is always restaurant level.

The last thing people would guess about me... I'm messy! I don't notice mess – I simply don't see it.

The last great piece of advice I was given... Always have humility. Never get smug about anything because the next day, things can completely change.

PHOTO: DAVID ROEMER. VANESSA KIRBY IS A GLOBAL AMBASSADOR FOR LANCÔME

KIKO

MILANO

3D HYDRA LIP GLOSS

Ready to shine?
Reveal your smile in 3D
KIKO's No.1 gloss

GLOSS
UP
YOUR
LIFE!

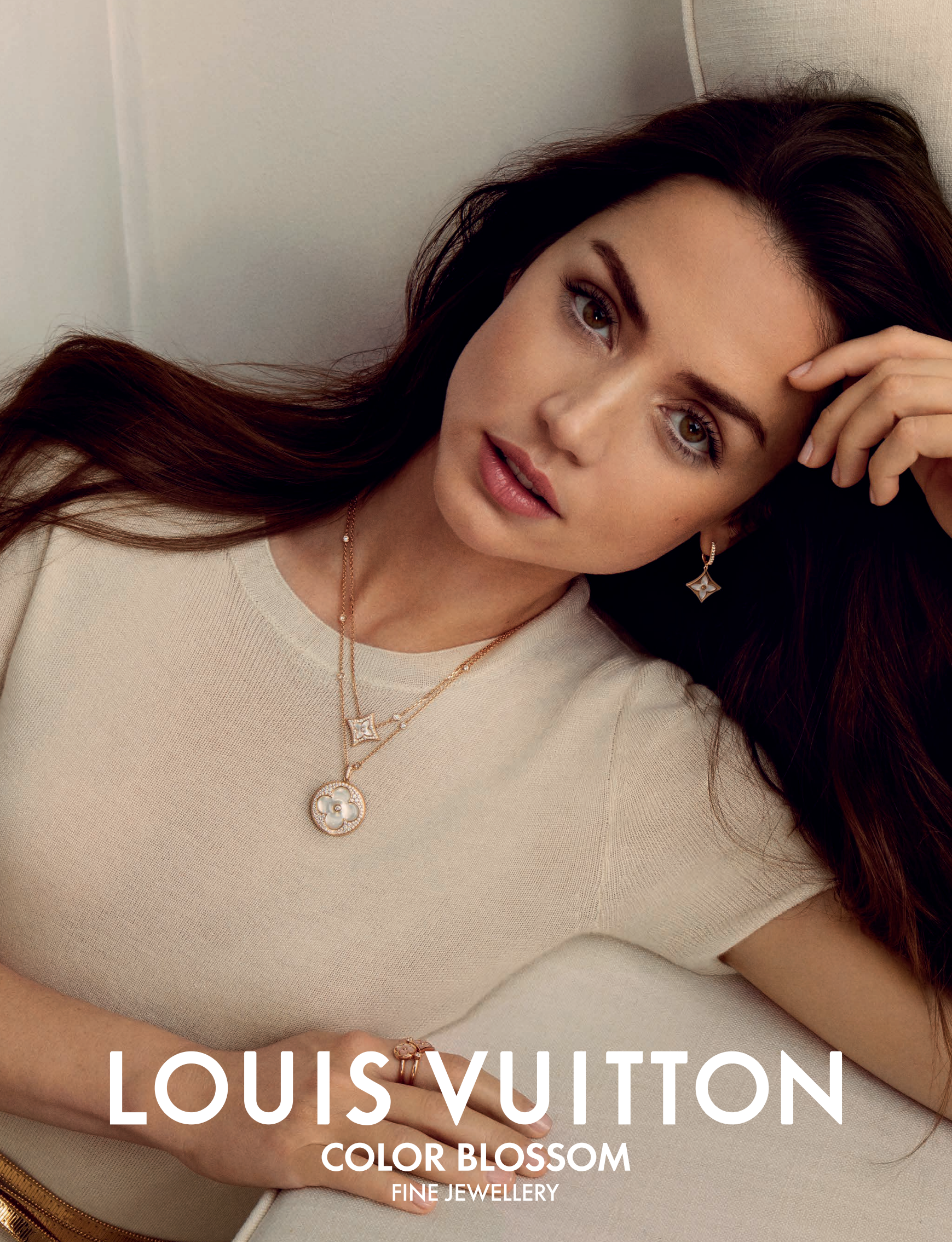
Emily wears shade 05



**Celebrating
a decade of:**

10H Hydration*
3D Legendary Shine
Zero stickiness
Next-gen glossiness

*Instrumental tests.



LOUIS VUITTON

COLOR BLOSSOM

FINE JEWELLERY