

# HTSI

11 MAY  
2024

RISE UP  
STRONG LOOKS FOR SUNNIER DAYS



PLUS

MY LIFE WITH YVES KLEIN  
TOP TECH FOR VINYL LOVERS  
GREG CHAIT TALKS TASTE  
ON SAFARI WITH SWAROVSKI'S  
SUPER-BINOCULARS

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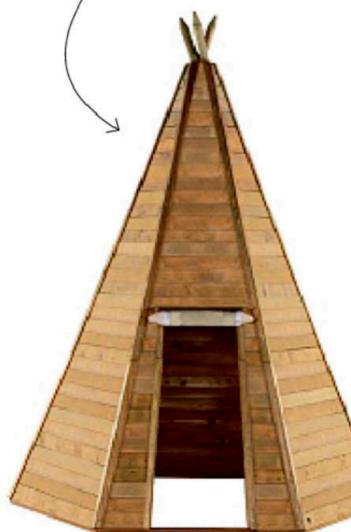
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# OPENING SHOT



## THE FAMILY ALBUM

Lydia Goldblatt's lyrical pictures capture the *fugue* of domestic life

Lydia Goldblatt's photographs are intimately tied to her own life. Her first book, *Still Here*, captured her father's final days. When Goldblatt became a parent, a change that coincided with the loss of her mother, she turned once again to her Hasselblad. "I wanted to be honest about what I was struggling with," she says of the emotions with which she wrangled. "About the feelings of claustrophobia and rage, as much as intimacy and love."

Over four years, she immortalised the stacks of Tupperware, rumpled picnic blankets and young bodies asleep on tables, wrapped in blankets and dotted with red

chickenpox spots that characterised her family life. Working with medium-format film, she didn't develop the photographs for months, finding that something in "the unknown of this felt right". The resulting photographs will be exhibited by Robert Morat Galerie at Photo London and compiled in a new book, titled *Fugue*. With publication, she transforms her story "of loss and abundance" into "something precious that you can hold". **MARION WILLINGHAM**

*Photo London* is at Somerset House, London WC2, from 16 to 19 May. *Fugue* is published by GOST Books at £45

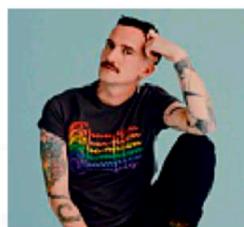
Above: untitled images from *Fugue*, by Lydia Goldblatt

## CONTRIBUTORS



ERICA JAMES

The British author has written 25 internationally bestselling novels. Her latest, *An Ideal Husband*, explores the unexpected breakdown of a marriage. A keen gardener and F1 motor racing enthusiast, she's also obsessed with doll's houses, about which she writes in this issue. "I find the world of miniatures so enchanting. I'm currently looking for a new 12th-scale house to do up, because as all doll's-house lovers know, there's always room for one more."



RYAN PFLUGER

The photographer lives in LA where he's shot countless stars, from Paul Mescal to Jamie Lee Curtis. In 2022 he published his first photobook, *Holding Space*, which told the stories of 100 interracial queer couples in the US. For this week's Aesthete column he shot designer Greg Chait, founder of The Elder Statesman. "It was great to connect with Greg again as I photographed him about 10 years ago and, I must say, he still makes the best socks."



ROTRAUT KLEIN-MOQUAY

The German-French visual artist, who goes by her mononym Rotraut, is best known for her abstract paintings and monumental, colourful sculptures. She met the artist Yves Klein in 1957 in Nice and became his wife, model, muse and collaborator – the two worked together on his renowned *Anthropométries* series – until his death in 1962. As a major New York retrospective draws the crowds, she reflects on her life with him and why his work is still so spellbinding.



RYAN LOWRY

The New York-based photographer started out shooting punk gigs and the skate scene in Chicago, and now works for clients and publications such as *Apartmento*, *Hermès* and *MoMA*. For this week's *HTSI* he shot the Brooklyn home of jewellery designer Ippolita Rostagno. "I want to capture the way someone lives, not just the spaces and the stuff they have," he says. "To me, that's what makes these stories."

# RICHARD MILLE



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# A Racing Machine On The Wrist

## EDITOR'S LETTER

# HTSI

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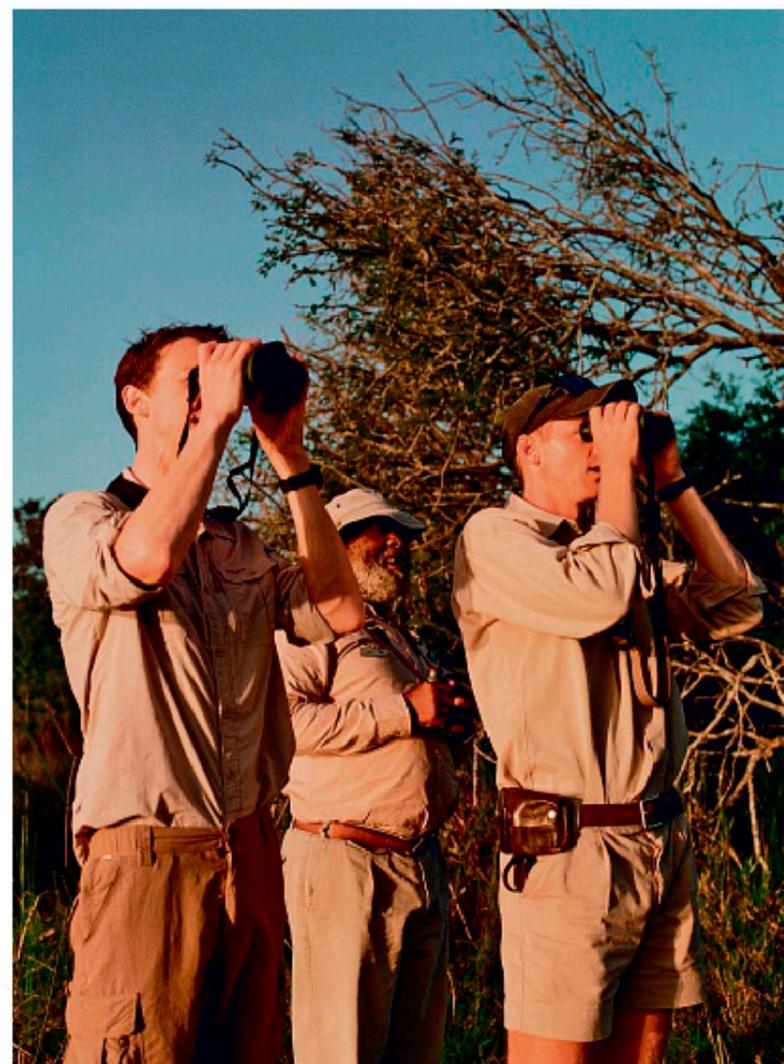
ow would you hope your partner might talk about you? It was the first thing that struck me when reading the artist known as

Rotraut describing her feelings for Yves Klein. "For me he was on the top of the mountain," she says of her late husband, who is currently the focus of a retrospective in New York. "I thought he was just divine; the best, the highest... Between us there was a kind of oneness: we could not speak but we'd understand things at the same time or think the same thing."

Not bad, eh? Especially, considering the artist died, aged only 34, in 1962. Rotraut was not the only one captivated by the artist's presence. And the new show at Lévy Gorvy Dayan gallery is a timely reminder of the febrile energy abundant in his work (page 23).

At a time of such free-flowing scrutiny and retrospection, it's cheering to read something in which someone is fangirling so hard. The same theme echoes in this week's Double Act with Mafalda von Hessen and Rolf Sachs, two artists who, for the past 10 years, have also been a couple (page 34). Here again, they are spurred on by one another, although their shared appreciation is decidedly more low-key: "In the evening I always show Rolf my work," says von Hessen, "and he laughs because I always say the same thing: 'It's getting there.'"

Have you heard of 24 Hours of Lemons? The rally (inspired by Le Mans) was founded nearly 20 years ago, takes place on various tracks and courses across the US and is raced in cars that can cost no more than \$500. Part car-nerd convention, part Wacky Races, the rallies have united a community dedicated to championing the underdog



Above: Fergus Scholes (left) on his AI-assisted birdwatching safari (page 44)

and unearthing vehicles destined for the knacker's yard. Earlier this year, Adam Lashinsky headed to Jank of the West to meet some of the key players (page 54). As observed by Ewan Benefield, a Lemons regular: "It's the cheapest way of getting the most time on a real racetrack." Even more fun when there are absolutely zero stakes at play.

## IT'S CHEERING TO READ ABOUT SOMEONE FANGIRLING SO HARD

There is a tendency to think that technological advances that render human skills redundant are a bad thing. But, as Fergus Scholes discovered on a safari at Phinda Mountain Lodge, South Africa, sometimes a bit of AI can still make even the most analogue adventures sing (page 44). On his trip, he got to trial the Swarovski Optik AX Visio, the world's first AI-supported

binoculars, programmed to cross-check and help identify a database of more than 8,000 birds. Over three days, Fergus was able to identify more than 60 species (plus some zebras) simply by looking in the right direction and pressing a button in which the potential match would appear on a heads-up display. Is it cheating, you ask, not to have to do the paperwork that comes with old-school ornithology? Don't worry: there were still plenty of others that needed further study – as yet, Fergus has no plans to pack his bird compendiums away. ■ HTSI

@jellison22

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WHEN I NEED TO FEEL INSPIRED, I DRIVE NORTH

**THE LAST THING I BOUGHT AND LOVED** was a television. Wall-mounted TVs drive me crazy in terms of interior design, so I bought a portable Samsung Serif. You can move it around your house or hide it. I also love my new set of cheese knives with wooden handles from a little shop called Tortoise General Store. I even like the boxes, which I keep them in. I keep everything, but I don't buy a lot. *Morinoki cheese knives, from \$50; [shop.tortoisegeneralstore.com](http://shop.tortoisegeneralstore.com). Samsung The Serif, from £899; [samsung.com](http://samsung.com)*

**THE BEST SOUVENIR I'VE BROUGHT HOME** is balsamic vinegar. When I was working in Italy for the first time, I went through the city of Modena. The artisanal balsamic vinegar from there is insane. A couple of favourites I can get at home are Giuseppe Giusti and La Vecchia Dispensa.

**THE BEST BOOK I'VE READ IN THE PAST YEAR** is *Barbarian Days* by William Finnegan – he's a writer for *The New Yorker* and this book is about his relationship to surfing. I've read it about five times; it's so beautiful. They're making it into a film; one of my neighbours, Stephen Gaghan, wrote the screenplay.

**I'M IN A BOOK CLUB** that was started by my friend Nikolai Haas – one of the Haas Brothers artist duo. We're all dads and it's a bit like a self-help group. Recently we read *The Three-Body Problem* by Chinese novelist Cixin Liu, about a civilisation on another planet that picks up our radio waves. It blew my mind.

**I DON'T LISTEN TO PODCASTS**, but I do listen to stand-up comedy, mostly on the hour-long commute from my home to my factory. My go-tos are Eddie Murphy's *Delirious and Raw* shows from the '80s. They're hilarious. Very few people remember just how big Eddie Murphy was – larger than life and so talented.

**MY STYLE ICONS** are two buddies of mine: PC Valmorbida and Theo Niarchos,

# Greg Chait

The founder of cashmere brand The Elder Statesman has a soft spot for surfboards, serious hi-fi and his 1964 Chevy Impala

INTERVIEW BY VICTORIA WOODCOCK  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY RYAN PFLUGER

MORINOKI CHEESE KNIVES, FROM \$50



Top: Greg Chait wears a custom coat by Husbands Paris at his home in Malibu. Top right: an old splatter-dyed The Elder Statesman sweater. Far left: recent reads on vintage coffee tables

**MY PERSONAL STYLE SIGNIFIER** is minimalism. I wear the same thing every day: a pair of Dries Van Noten trousers or Levi's 501s, vintage T-shirts and Elder Statesman sweaters. Quality things look better and better as you wear them. They start taking on a bit of soul. I do wear colour – definitely on my socks – and I'm constantly mending things. I have a really good darning person, Aliana Mt, who is a full-blown artist.

**A PLACE THAT MEANS A LOT TO ME** is the Four Corners, where Colorado, Utah, New Mexico and Arizona meet in the high desert above Lake Powell. I feel really high energy there. Paradise Cove in Malibu, where I live, is also very special. I'm a surfer and the beach is fantastic. It's like its own little highway, connecting four neighbourhoods. Everybody knows each other; it's been an amazing place to raise my daughter, Dorothy, who's now 14.



# THE AESTHETE



who are both in the art world. PC's style is low-key but super-elegant, whether he's in fancy dress or hiking. It's just natural.

**THE BEST GIFT I'VE RECEIVED** is an Ayon Audio hi-fi from my dad. He's a bit of an audiophile and this is serious hi-fi, unbelievable technology, from an Austrian company. I have the Orion II vacuum-tube amplifier and CD-player/preamp. I play digital files and records, but right now I'm in a CD phase – having a tube technology CD player is extremely niche. *Ayon Audio Orion II*, \$3,910, [ayonaudio.com](http://ayonaudio.com)

driving around LA magical for her. It feels like you're time travelling.

**THE GROOMING STAPLE I'M NEVER WITHOUT** is unscented lotion, and that's all I use – on my face, body and hair. There are quite a few I like; currently I'm using Embryolisse, but as long as the ingredients are natural, I'm open. *Embryolisse Lait-Crème Fluide*, £30.99 for 500ml, [sephora.co.uk](http://sephora.co.uk)

**MY FAVOURITE ROOM IN MY HOUSE** is my bedroom. My friend Dean Levin made me a bed that is pretty outrageous. The base was made with a surfboard planer; it has an organic feel to it, but it's also precise and refined. The one time I asked a question on my personal Instagram was, "What's your favourite sheet company?" I had about 200 people weigh in on it. My assistant and I created a study of different sheets at different price points: the best ones were Sferra's Ginza line and Tekla. It's a highly controversial topic.

LA VECCHIA DISPENSA BALSAMIC VINEGAR



**THE LAST MUSIC I BOUGHT** was "Paid In Full" by Eric B & Rakim. I like older hip-hop because anything early has something pure about it; people were making stuff up and we didn't have social media, so the sound was particular to that area. It brings me back to a place and time.

**I HAVE A COLLECTION** of surfboards – mostly from Kyle Albers, a shaper who owns Deepest Reaches. I surf a board called a Megafish, and I have one pretty famous – like, locally famous – surfboard, which is 9ft long in full-on colours. I probably have a few too many, which I feel guilty about, but I've asked Mollusk Surf Shop to give some away to kids who can't afford to get a good one.

**IN MY FRIDGE YOU'LL ALWAYS FIND** French butter by Rodolphe Le Meunier, as well as hard cheeses, red wine, prosciutto and Harry's Berries strawberries if they're around. I like tiny grocers where you can chat to the people who source everything; I go to McCall's Meat & Fish Co.

**I'VE RECENTLY REDISCOVERED** a breathing technique that was taught to me by a friend I've been seeing for 20 years. It can take you to almost psychedelic places and shake anything off – even if only for a little bit.

**THE THING THAT I COULDN'T DO WITHOUT** is my chef's knife. It's Japanese: a hand-forged Aogami Super Gyuto by a maker called Enso. I couldn't live without one very good knife.

**AN INDULGENCE I WOULD NEVER FORGO** is private Pilates training, something I've got into in the past couple of years. I go to Pam Johnson, who has a studio downtown near my factory – The Bridge Mind Body Movement – and it has made me much stronger and less injury-prone. I'm not worried about ageing, but you might as well do it with grace.

**THE LAST ITEM OF CLOTHING THAT I ADDED TO MY WARDROBE** was a trench coat made by Paris tailor Husbands. I've had a lot of fun making suits with them, and this coat is made from the same fabric as our woven blankets. It's unbelievable. I'm very into blankets. We need them in LA because nobody has winter coats.

**I'D HAVE A HARD TIME LETTING GO** of my 1964 Chevy Impala. I bought it 11 years ago when my daughter was little; I thought I might as well make the experience of

**MY WELLBEING GURU** is Dane Ensley, who owns Reconstruction Unlimited, a service that helps you find the right therapist, psychologist, nutritionist or whoever. It's like the Raya of wellbeing. Working with them has changed my life. They've matched me up with a few people; you can build a little army.

**MY FAVOURITE APP** is Surfline. It shows you the surf live, so at work you can be like, "Oh my God, I have to leave right now! I have something very important to do!" I also use an exercise app called Sweat Deck. It's not the most flashy app – you go through a deck of cards and each one has an exercise on it – but it's the most effective I've tried.

**IN ANOTHER LIFE**, I would have been a chef. I've had a lot of lives: first interning for Whitney Houston, then in the mailroom at a talent management company. I almost went to culinary school, and, in a way, cooking is similar to what I'm doing now: using really great ingredients, making stuff by hand. I like the high-impact nature of a day, with things potentially going wrong. At home, I cook a lot of meat – I have a funny old grill – and I'm weirdly good at French toast.

**WHEN I NEED TO FEEL INSPIRED**, I drive north. I just meander with no particular destination. When I first started doing it, I ended up at Esalen Institute, a non-profit retreat founded in Big Sur in the '60s. So many people talk about that drive up the coast, but it's not overrated. The sunsets last forever.

**THE BEST BIT OF ADVICE I'VE EVER RECEIVED** was from my first mentor – movie producer Beau Flynn; he did *Requiem for a Dream* – who said: "Sometimes the best, most elegant thing to do in a situation is to walk away." ■HTSI

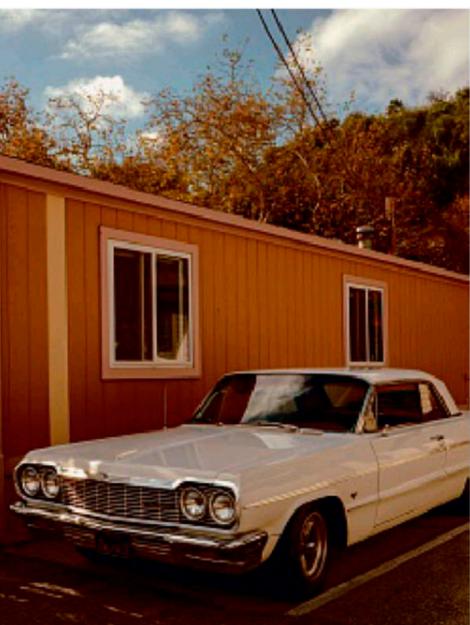


Top left: his Ayon Audio Orion II hi-fi, \$3,910. Above: his surfboards include (far left) one with his grandmother's artwork and (far right) his Deepest Reaches board. Left: Chait with his Ayon Audio Orion II hi-fi

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HAVING A TUBE TECHNOLOGY CD PLAYER IS EXTREMELY NICHE



Above: his 1964 Chevy Impala. Above right: (on board) his Morinoki knives with Rodolphe Le Meunier butter and a Haas Brothers salt cellar; the knife on the table is his Enso one. Right: The Elder Statesman cushions and blankets in his living room





NUDO COLLECTION

Pomellato

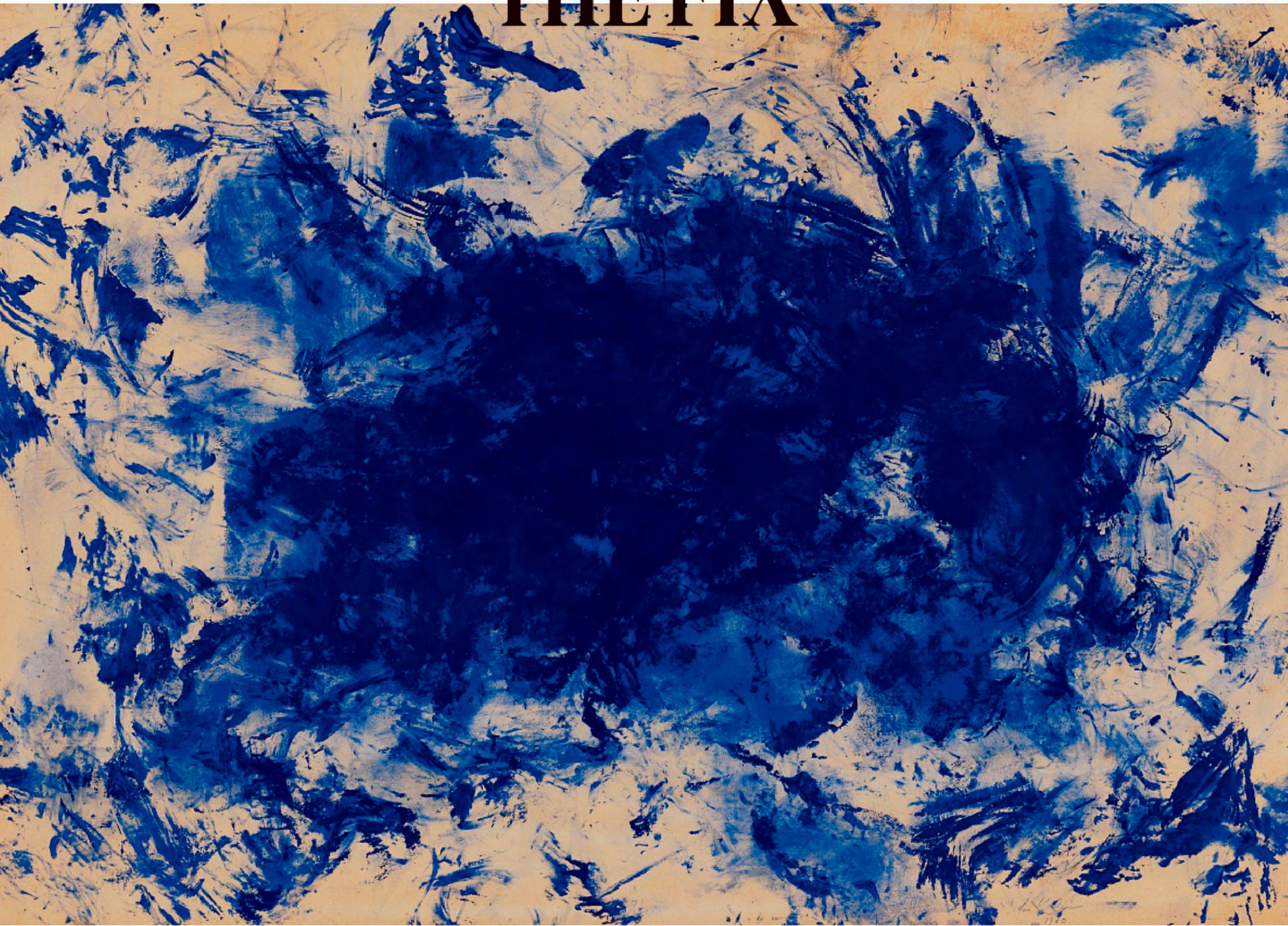
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*Domaine Clarence Dillon*

CHATEAU HAUT-BRION - CHATEAU QUINTUS - CHATEAU LA MISSION HAUT-BRION  
RESTAURANT LE CLARENCE - CLARENDELLE - LA CAVE DU CHATEAU

# THE FIX



VISUAL ARTS

## MY HUSBAND, YVES KLEIN

As an exhibition by the legendary artist draws the crowds in New York, his widow *Rotraut* reflects on why his work still holds us in his thrall

Top: *Anthropométrie sans titre (ANT 83)*, 1960, by Yves Klein. Right: *Rotraut* in New York in 1961

I was walking past a gallery in Düsseldorf in 1957 when I saw a blue monochrome painting in the window. I stopped and just stood in front of it. I was deeply touched by the way the artist could evoke something immaterial, spiritual, through colour. It took me into the sky and made me think of our galaxy, of where we are in the universe.

It wasn't until a year later that I met the artist who painted it. I was working in Nice, France, as an au pair for the artist Arman and his family. One night, when he and his wife were out, I heard somebody at the front door saying that he was Yves Klein and that he wished to see Arman. Having seen the show in Düsseldorf, I admired him. I had imagined what he might be like, what his spirit would be like and how he would look. But I didn't let him in. I knew I shouldn't let anybody in. I told him to come back the next day. When he returned, I saw a beautiful man with a charming smile and a beautiful presence. He touched my heart.





Above: *Anthropométrie sans titre (ANT 43)*, c1960

Later on, he asked me to see his studio in Haut-de-Cagnes. He was working on a monochrome. I sat and watched him paint; he would come over to talk to me and then go back to painting. We listened to music. I think he saw me as understanding him. I had a good grounding through my brother, Günther Uecker, who was one of the three founders of the Zero group, a collective of artists who were interested in light and motion.

Before me, the women around Yves would often say, "Oh, that blue you always do", a little mocking and a little admiring. They didn't really understand how important he was as an artist. For me he was on the top of the mountain. I thought he was just divine – the best, the highest. I had a huge respect for him. Between us there was a kind of oneness, an osmosis. We could not speak but we'd understand things at the same time or think the same thing. It was just very easy. I had four years of living with him before he died in 1962, aged 34, but I feel it was a life of a hundred years because it was so full, so rich.

Yves was a very disciplined man. I think it came from his judo education in Japan. He



taught me to position my shoes together and in one place, so you don't go to bed and just throw your shoes. You hold on to some discipline, to a little order. He had a reputation for doing things repeatedly

because he wanted to find perfection. Being with Yves was like when you go to the theatre and a really good actor enters the scene but doesn't do anything, he's just there. You feel this presence. It came from his understanding of the immaterial: what the body can express without doing too much. It's a kind of spirituality.

When he worked, Yves would play symphonies by Mozart, Beethoven and Wagner. It was almost like a ceremony, when the models were covered in blue paint and working with him on the floor. Sometimes I see the music in the paintings,

like in *ANT 77*, with its movement from side to side, almost to the movement of the music being played.

Experiencing his *Monotone Symphony* for the first time in 1958 was an emotional event for me. It's an orchestral performance of a single chord, D-major, for 20 minutes, followed by 20 minutes of silence. What I heard was so powerful that I wished I could hear it again and again. And when you hear the silence after the music, you really notice how rich, how full silence can

be. You need this time to get the resonance of the symphony, to relive it. It's so special. And people feel it, they don't try to get up and leave. They are very respectful. It will be wonderful to listen to it again in New York for this new exhibition. There's always something so spiritual about the experience.

I hope that a new generation will be happy to see the exhibition: it's going to be extraordinary to view all the different pieces

but I don't want to reveal the details of the work. It is up to visitors to discover. You need to be with them to feel their presence. That's when you feel it in your heart. It goes beyond thinking, beyond the brain. It's so important, I think, to define the feelings you get from each piece. Don't go off and just look at the pictures one after the other. That doesn't do anything to you. You need time. It's like a person: if you want to feel a person's presence, what she's really like, you have to spend some time with her. To feel what kind of person she is. ■HTSI AS TOLD TO BAYA SIMONS *Yves Klein and the Tangible World is at Lévy Gorvy Dayan until 25 May, [levygorvydayan.com](http://levygorvydayan.com)*

Above: Rotraut and Klein in 1962. Bottom left: the couple's wedding in Paris in 1962. Below: *Peinture de feu couleur sans titre (FC 3)*, c1962, by Yves Klein



THE MAKING OF A WORK FROM THE ANTHROPOMÉTRIE SERIES





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LOUIS VUITTON Pur Oud perfume, £1,350 for 100ml

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PHOTOGRAPH: AXEL VERVOORDT; PORTRAITS OF INTERIORS (ELANMARION, 2019); FORBWORD BY AXEL VERVOORDT; TEXT BY MICHAËLA MESGARDNER; AFTERWORD BY BORIS VERVOORDT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY LAZIZ HAMANI

# WHO SAYS WEALTH MANAGEMENT IS JUST ABOUT MONEY?

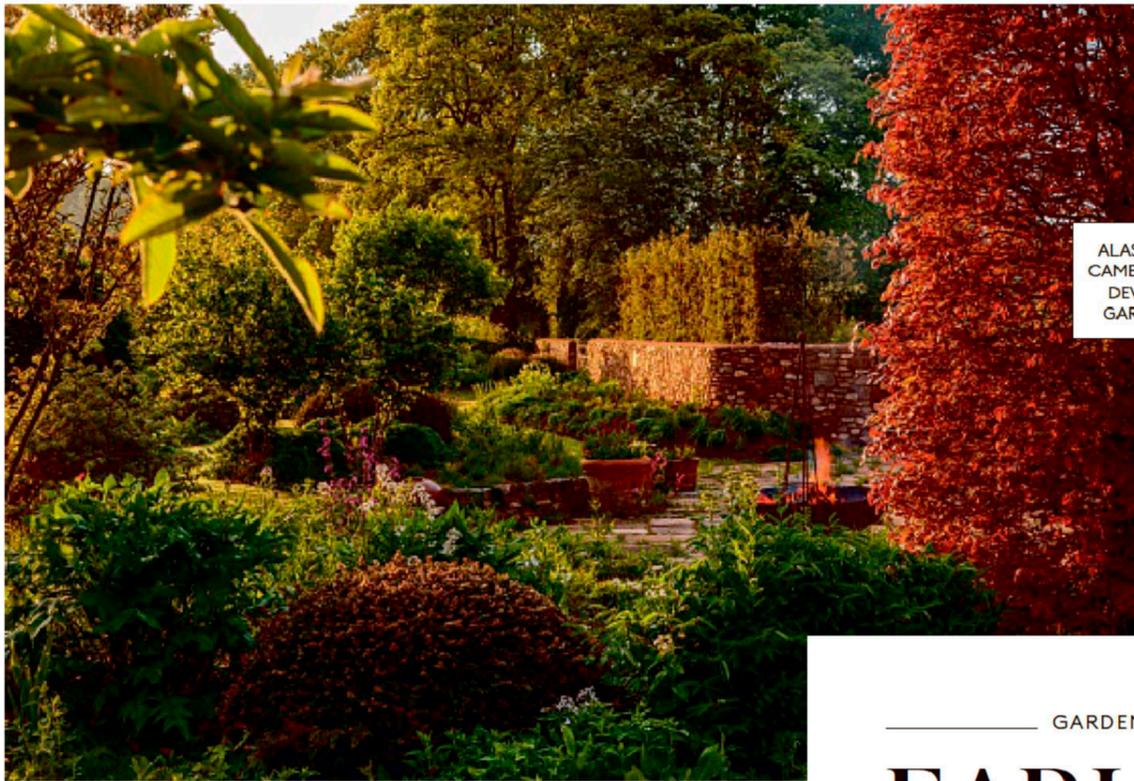
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ALASDAIR CAMERON'S DEVON GARDEN



GARDENS

# EARLY BLOOMERS

Child-friendly gardens are a vital tool in the green time vs screen time battle, says *Clare Coulson*

Later this month, amidst the transportive gardens at the Chelsea Flower Show, there will be an altogether different proposition – a garden designed by children, for children. Created by students from Sullivan Primary School in London's Parsons Green, who have worked alongside garden designer Harry Holding, the No Adults Allowed garden is a glimpse of what child-led design can be. "A dream children's garden is one that enlivens the senses and captures the imagination," says Holding. "They are blessed with vivid imaginations and a garden should allow for opportunities where they can create imagined worlds." For the children tasked with designing this garden, that has meant a shady woodland, flower-filled mini-meadows and a wetland with oversized bog plants – set around a handbuilt den. Among some of their more outlandish wants? Ghoulish carnivorous plants.

For Holding, creating a child-centric garden is straightforward: a space for a hideout, trees to climb, water, bug hotels and multilayered sensory planting that will all help to bring in wildlife. "There's nothing more tactile and awe-inspiring than minimally processed raw materials such as stone, timber and water," he says of his aim to foster a deep love of gardening from a young age.

The garden highlights a pressing modern dilemma as the battle between screen time and green time intensifies. Immersion in nature feels more crucial than

ever given the increase in mental-health issues in children, including anxiety, depression, eating disorders and other psychological problems. Earlier this year, NHS data revealed an alarming 53 per cent spike in emergency mental-health referrals in children. Being in green spaces releases serotonin and reduces cortisol, abetting a feeling of wellbeing and elevating mood.

Encouraging children into nature – and involving them in gardens – is a key facet of the vision at the Royal Horticultural Society. Last year at Chelsea, Holding cut his teeth with an immersive, foraging garden for School Food Matters. Like many of the show's community-focused designs, it was funded by Project Giving Back (between 2022 and 2026 the charity will fund 60

**"A GARDEN SHOULD LET CHILDREN CREATE IMAGINED WORLDS"**

gardens) and relocated to two schools: the Alec Reed Academy Primary School in Ealing and The Beacon CE Primary School in Liverpool. At the same show, Tom Massey previewed his playful,

insect-focused garden for The Royal Entomological Society Garden, with its colourful domed "lab". The garden is opening this summer in Stratford Cross as the focal point for the charity's new education programme for schools, which aims to ignite an interest in insects.

The trend has garnered royal approval, mostly notably from the Princess of Wales, who collaborated with landscape architects Andrée Davies and Adam White on the RHS Back to Nature Garden in 2019, where children could explore a woodland filled with deadwood, rope swings, a paddling stream and a giant elevated "nest". The idea of creative and natural play spaces was central to the ethos of the garden – an astounding 90 per cent of our adult brains are developed before the age of five.

A giant timber nest and woodland may feel a little regal for the regular urban back garden, but the principles can translate. Space permitting, planting a small grove of woodland trees (birch casts beautiful dappled shade) can be a quick and cheap way to create a similar play zone. Beneath them, mini stumperies (made from unwanted tree roots and logs) or ferneries will conjure a wild Jurassic playground. A makeshift den can be knocked together with hazel poles or sticks. Or, if you want to invest in something beautiful and bespoke, Judith Needham's woven willow onion-shaped den (£725, [judithneedham.co.uk](http://judithneedham.co.uk)) or the smaller Podkin (£550) can be used indoor and out.

For some designers a lawn is an important element of an adaptable scheme. "A child-friendly garden doesn't need to look designed for children," says garden designer Alasdair Cameron. "But they want to be able to play games and often that's on grass. They also love something as simple as a path snaking through and being able to run around different areas." In his own Devon garden, transformed from a farm and surrounding pasture, a series of bucolic garden spaces with lawns overlooked by topiary has been a hit with his three children.



Left: the School Food Matters Garden at Alec Reed Academy in Ealing, London. Right: a school wildlife garden in Surrey by Pollyanna Wilkinson

Den pals

CHILDREN'S GARDEN GEAR



PLUM Grand Wooden Teepee Hideaway, £699.99, [johnlewis.com](http://johnlewis.com)



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DAYLESFORD Courgette Growing Kit, £8



IKEA Lömsk swivel armchair, £79



NATIONAL TRUST children's Frog Kneelo garden kneeler, £15.49, [burgonandball.com](http://burgonandball.com)



NATIONAL TRUST children's fork and trowel set, £9.99, [burgonandball.com](http://burgonandball.com)



DAYLESFORD children's rake, shovel and spade set, £12



PLUM Discovery Woodland Treehouse, £569.99, [johnlewis.com](http://johnlewis.com)



"When the topiary was first planted they used to love jumping over it, and as it got bigger it was great for hiding behind. They used to play this game called Around the World around it."

AS THE GARDEN IS INCREASINGLY viewed as an additional "living space", designers are finding that clients come to them with a checklist of features they want to incorporate. According to garden designer Pollyanna Wilkinson, that nearly always includes a trampoline. She sinks them into the ground so they become less of a glaring focal point. She has also immersed them in a concealed zone in the garden with a living willow wall so that they are discovered rather than presented as the prime view.

"Water features are inviting for play too," she says, advising using troughs or basins set at child height to ensure they are accessible. But she warns not to go too far. "One of the biggest mistakes I see with clients is designing the garden around the children because it's a bit short-termist." Instead, she says, think about how a space can evolve: a woodland area with logs to perch on and play with can later evolve into

**"A CHILD-FRIENDLY GARDEN DOESN'T NEED TO LOOK DESIGNED FOR CHILDREN"**

a seating area with chairs and a fire pit for teens. Arguably the most radical – and future-proof ideas – come from California (where droughts are long and persistent, and lawns that would need irrigation are ethically out of the question). Here, landscape architect David Godshall of Terremoto studio gets creative when clients are keen to incorporate play structures in their gardens. For journalist Andrew Romano and his family, he created a deconstructed frame-fort on the steep slope beneath their modernist 1936 house in Los Angeles. Hanging ropes, balance beams, platforms, rope scramble nets, log walkways and a slide form a Jenga-style construction amongst trees and ferns, grasses and tactile shrubs.

In many of their projects, however, Godshall and his team dispense with structure altogether. "There's a pedagogical school of thought called Loose Parts, which asserts children should be given wood, stones, sticks and so on, so they have the ability to make their own toys, structures or

creations," he explains. His projects often feature sinuous paths winding through tactile plants, raised beds or planters (the perfect height for children to play at), boulders, and logs laid out as stepping stones with driftwood, dipping pools and baths. His plant palette is typically Californian (and often native), and leans towards super-sized specimens (including giant cacti, prickly pear, yucca and agave) that create an otherworldly, jungle-like environment. But soft and fragrant plants are equally important. Outside their home studio, they've planted *Artemisia californica* (California sagebrush), *Tagetes lemmonii* (mountain marigold), *Lepechinia fragrans* (fragrant pitcher sage) and *Salvia apiana* (white sage). "My eight-year old son Wolfgang is a birder and hangs out by our *Atriplex lentiformis* [saltbush]," Godshall says. "He knows that over the course of a day, thousands of birds will move through it. He enjoys identifying them."

But less is generally more. "If you build a wild, living garden that attracts wildlife, build in lots of nooks and crannies to explore and have a water source they can control," he says in conclusion, "a child will make their own way in a garden." ■HTSI

Above: edible beds and native plants in a garden in Echo Park, Los Angeles, by Terremoto Studio

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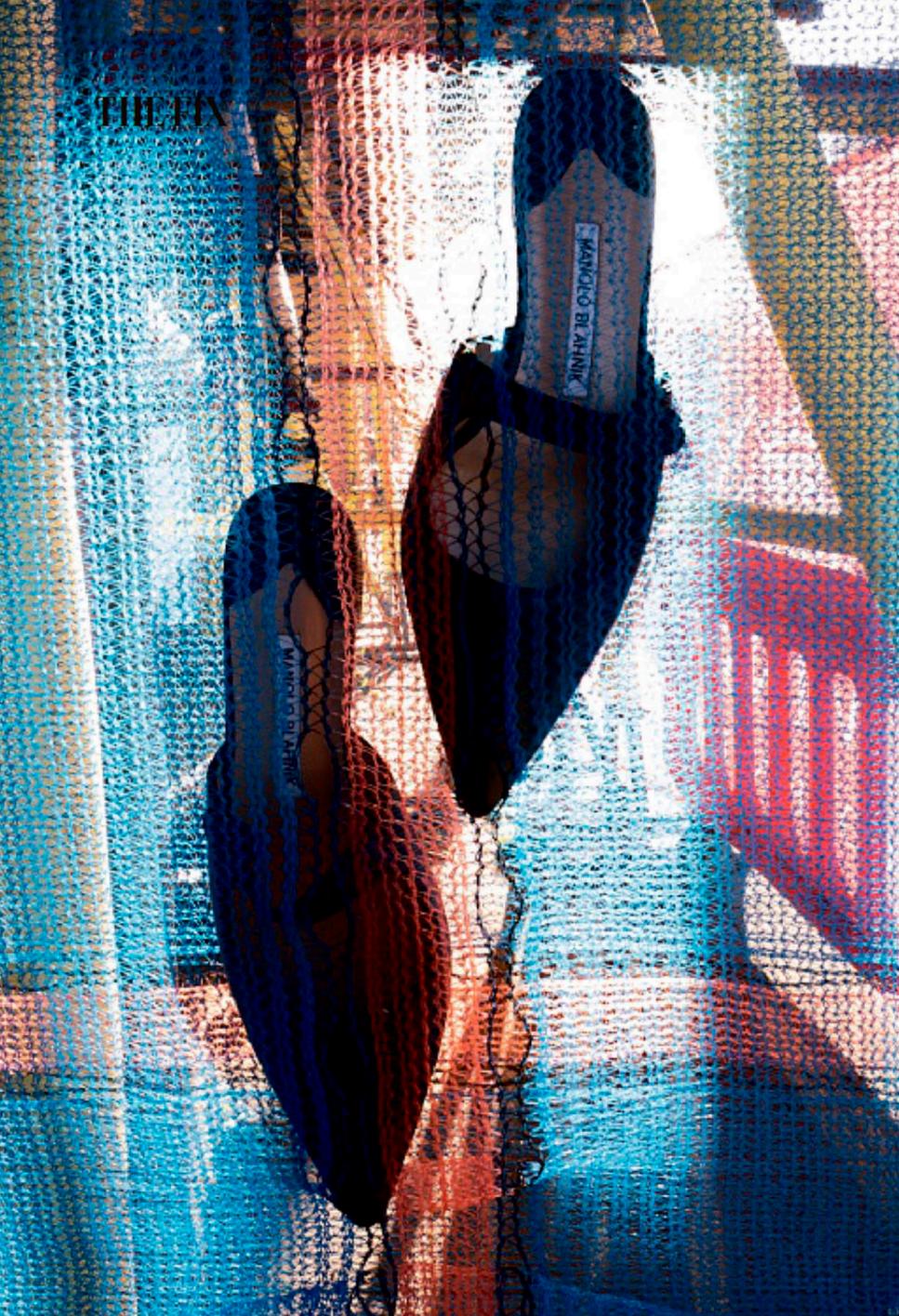


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TREND

## POINT THE WAY

You won't make a false step in a razor-sharp shoe, says *Sara Semic*

PHOTOGRAPHY AND STYLING BY **AYLIN BAYHAN**

Clockwise from top far left: MANOLO BLAHNIK leather Camparimu flats, £545. DRIES VAN NOTEN cotton, viscose and leather shoes, £525. SAINT LAURENT BY ANTHONY VACCARELLO leather Nour skipper shoes, £735. JIMMY CHOO patent leather and crystal Saeda 85 shoes, £875. AEYDE leather Fedora flats, £295. NENSI DOJAKA tulle and leather shoes, €990. GUCCI patent leather slingback shoes, £790

After years of bulbous footwear dominating the catwalk, the pointy shoe is staging a comeback. For Gucci's SS24 show, creative director Sabato De Sarno paired split-front pencil skirts and low-slung jeans with spiky slingbacks in bubblegum pink and oxblood. At Saint Laurent, vampish needlepoint stilettos peeked out from under safari jumpsuits, while Dries Van Noten styled tapered-toe check-print heels with graphic tube socks and preppy blazers.

"The trend of pointy shoes has definitely brought back some elegance," says London designer Nensi Dojaka, whose tulle pumps (£960, [ssense.com](http://ssense.com)) combine a razor-sharp tip with her signature cut-outs. Luisa Dames, founder of Berlin-based footwear and accessories label Aeyde, has also seen a significant increase in sales of her pointed-toe styles (from £270) in recent months, noting that their "polished" appeal chimes with the current appetite for smarter shoes. "We're seeing a return to the joys of dressing up," says Dames, "and pointy shoes, whether stiletto boots, pumps or Mary Jane flats, easily adapt from casual to formal settings."

Such shoes have long been a signifier of opulence: see Marie Antoinette, who paraded through Versailles in coquettish candy-striped pointy slippers, or Marilyn Monroe, who wore Ferragamo's four-inch Filetia and Viatica pumps both on and off set. "Shoes were a way of expressing status

and wealth, the wearer having no need to walk everywhere, and could therefore take on non-practical shapes," explains Helen Persson Swain, fashion historian and curator of *Shoes: Pleasure and Pain* at the Victoria and Albert Museum. The trend, she says, has been around since the ancient Egyptians, who wore sandals made of papyrus with toes chiselled to a point.

At their most impractical, during the craze for poulaines among noblemen in the late Middle Ages, toes were known even to reach lengths of up to 24 inches, stuffed

### TOES WERE KNOWN TO REACH LENGTHS OF 24 INCHES

with moss or wool to keep them erect. Women in the 17th and 18th centuries, with their long skirts, would have just had the sharp tip of the shoes visible, says Swain, "giving an impression of small feet, which was considered neat and feminine".

Though the fashion for crinolines has long since waned, our desire to pinch and squeeze our toes into infinitesimal points seems undimmed: see Martine Rose's AW24 show for her own poulaine-like spiky flats (£640). "I am a big fan of a pointed-toe shoe," says Sandra Choi, creative director of Jimmy Choo, which offers glamorous crystal and pearl-embellished pointy heels (from £750). "For a 5ft 2½in person, they elongate the leg and make you feel taller." As well as adding polish to an outfit, a sharp toe screams "assertiveness", she says: "It almost arrows you forward." ■HTSI

# “We have a wonderful harmony”

Love has sparked a new creative boom for artists Rolf Sachs and Mafalda von Hessen, says *Victoria Woodcock*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **TORVIOL JASHARI**

**I** love the word ‘oomph,’” says Rolf Sachs, sitting with his girlfriend, German princess and painter Mafalda von Hessen, in the living room of his St Moritz home. The creative polymath, best known for the playful design pieces he has produced since the mid-1980s, is using the word to sum up his creative practice. But the Alpine retreat also has oomph aplenty.

In the midst of the glitzy Swiss ski resort – where steel magnate Lakshmi Mittal, Moncler CEO Remo Ruffini and the Heineken family all have homes – Sachs has revived the stadium built for the 1928 Winter Olympic Games. Once used for watching ice hockey and figure skating, the long, low Bauhaus-style building is today a mash-up of modernist architecture and local sporting memorabilia: hockey sticks cover a stairwell; curling stones are tucked under a folksy bench; and vintage photographs featuring skaters, tobogganers and bobsledders line the halls.

In the mix are Sachs’s own designs: a 7m-long glass-topped dining table is filled with salt and neon text; above it, one of his *Pouring Lights*, from 2006, features an upturned fire bucket punctured with small holes; old school chairs are cast in resin; and the 2012 *Insepar-able* coffee table, constructed from two sledges, is one of a number of works inspired by the traditions of the surrounding Engadin Valley.

“My great-great grandfather came to St Moritz in 1900,” says Sachs, 68, whose family history spans



Left: Mafalda von Hessen and Rolf Sachs in St Moritz. Below left: the couple at home. Right: von Hessen's *Fenster im Olympia Stadion*, 2023, and *Fenster in Ardez*, 2023, in the living room of Villa Flor

generations of industrialists and inventors, makers of motorbikes, bicycles, cars – and several fortunes. But it is his father, Gunter Sachs, the late photographer, art collector and third husband to Brigitte Bardot, who is known for putting the ritz into St Moritz. He invigorated the Bobsleigh Club (whose historic track has a corner named in his honour) and founded the exclusive Dracula Club.

At a dinner at the vampire-themed members' club, I'm squeezed between Sachs and von Hessen – swept into the Euro-elite scene alongside guests including Sachs' childhood friends, his studio director and the flame-haired, pin-up-esque Betony Vernon, jeweller, author of *The Boudoir Bible* and a close friend of von Hessen. The group stands out from the crowd: a sea of dinner jackets, slinky dresses and plumped-up faces that move en masse from dinner table to disco – dancing to "Murder On the Dancefloor". A drop of enamel "blood" drips down my wine glass and Sachs pinches an ultra-skinny chip from my plate. He's instantly likeable; less jet-set playboy than his father, more jolly bon viveur.

Sachs and von Hessen have long moved in the same circles ("Our fathers were friends," says Sachs). Von Hessen's Alpine link stretches back to 1916. Her relative Ernest Louis, Grand Duke of Hesse, inherited Schloss Tarasp, an imposing, 11th-century castle to the north-east of St Moritz. Today, the castle is owned by the Swiss artist Not Vital and is open to the public.

The couple started seeing each other romantically 10 years ago. "When I heard he was divorced, I called him up," says von Hessen. At 58, the former model and style ambassador for Giorgio Armani is tall and willowy, wearing a Victorian-style blouse. Sachs, meanwhile, pairs his signature round-rimmed glasses with a characteristically bright and graphic jumper. They strike an unlikely couple. Yet, says Sachs, "we have a wonderful harmony."

"It's so wonderful to live with another artist," adds von Hessen, whose pink-walled Baroque home in Rome, Villa Polissena, is both her studio and their main base. "In the evening I always show Rolf my work – and he laughs because I always say the same thing: 'It's getting there.'"

Von Hessen studied painting in her 20s at New York University; "but I didn't like my figurative work so I applied my art to costume and theatre



"WHEN I HEARD HE WAS DIVORCED, I CALLED HIM UP"

stage design", she says. In 2015 she launched her own eponymous fashion label, partnering with Karl Lagerfeld's longtime right-hand man Eric Wright, but "stopped the business" during Covid-19. In the wake of the closure, she used painting to fill the "emptiness" she felt.

This winter, she held her first solo show at Villa Flor – a hotel in the Engadin village of S-chanf. The series explores her

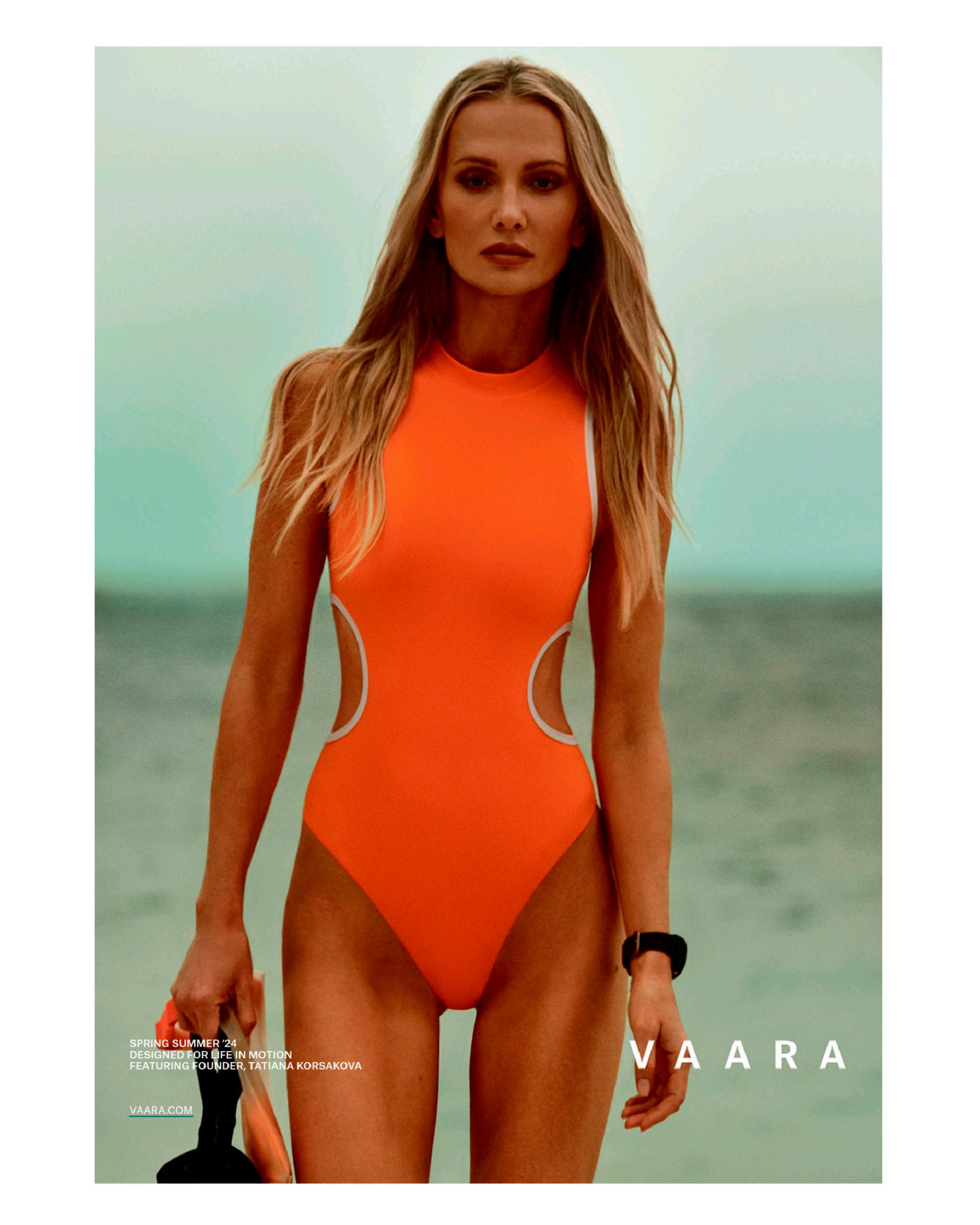
"connection with the mountains", homing in on interiors and wrought in thick, harmoniously coloured paint. She has followed her Swiss debut with a London solo, currently at JGM Gallery. Painting is part of "a totally new chapter", says von Hessen, who has four children from two of her three previous marriages. "Now my children are out of the house. I have the freedom to finally do what I want." Sachs agrees: "We're both free to work with a very clear head. It's also very lucky that [our practices] are polar opposites: Mafalda is super-academic whereas I'm more about the conceptual idea. We are very good critics of each other."

Sachs' work has always straddled the line between art and design, but "I've moved slowly more and more into the realm of art", he says. This renewed fervour has been channelled into a number of projects. Last October, a selling exhibition at Sotheby's London was dedicated to Sachs' new *Moving Stills*: photographs of everyday objects such as rolls of toilet paper. And in December, he opened a solo show at Stalla Madulain in a 500-year-old barn, which became part mini Sachs universe, part love letter to the area he grew up in. It was the first time he had shown paintings, abstract crumpled-then-uncrumpled canvases he calls *Defroissage*. "It's a little bit like showing yourself naked," he says, yet it's a discipline he plans to stick with.

Sachs is now working towards a major museum retrospective in 2025. But that doesn't stop the couple from being a central fixture of the increasingly bustling local scene. They zip around the valley in an instantly recognisable pair of wicker-basket-topped Fiat Pandas. "They're the best cars for driving on ice," says Sachs, who drives at some speed up the steep and circuitous mountain roads. The area's creative landscape is "the real soul" of St Moritz, says Sachs. "Not the fur coats, champagne and little dogs." ■ HTS | Mafalda von Hessen: *Looking In* is at JGM Gallery until 25 May; [jgmgallery.com](http://jgmgallery.com). [rolfsachs.com](http://rolfsachs.com)



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V A A R A

# Valley of the dolls

Novelist *Erica James* bought a miniature house for her grandchildren. Then she bought three more...

ILLUSTRATION BY DROR COHEN

**M**y earliest memory of a doll's house was when I was a small child back in the 1960s and I was given one made of plastic as a birthday present. Such was my giddy delight that I began dancing around it, only then to lose my balance and fall on top of it.

The house was ruined before I'd even had a chance to play with it. Was it that crushing disappointment that led to my nostalgic desire as an adult to right the wrong of my childhood clumsiness and own a properly crafted house that I could take better care of? Perhaps it was.

It was around the time of my 60th birthday a few years ago that I saw a second-hand doll's house in a shop window. Without a moment's hesitation I stepped inside the shop and bought ye-olde-Tudor-style house, kidding myself that I was buying it with my grandchildren in mind. What lies we tell ourselves! I somehow managed to squeeze the 3ft-wide house into my car and drove home with the same giddy delight I'd felt as that clumsy infant. But this time there was to be no reckless dancing, just painstaking care.

With the doll's house safely installed, I spent most evenings online browsing ways to furnish it. Before I knew it, I'd disappeared down a rabbit hole of all things 12th scale – wallpaper, furniture, pictures, crockery and kits to make intricately patterned needlepoint rugs. The prices of everything ranged from the very reasonable (made in China) to the eye-wateringly expensive but wholly justifiable as the exquisite items were handmade by supremely talented artisans. My first foray into experiencing the adrenaline-pumping thrill of an online auction was when I was bought a four-poster bed, followed quickly by a handpainted writing desk. Needless to say, bidding online is dangerous for one's bank account and a will of iron is required.

**BEFORE LONG I HAD DECORATED** ye-olde house, not in an authentically Tudor style, more a mish-mash of Victoriana, and I was looking for another house to satisfy my growing obsession. That's the thing about doll's houses: one is never enough. I soon found the perfect object of my desire on eBay. It arrived by special delivery a few days later and by then I already knew what I was going to do with it – the Georgian-style two-storey house would be a knick-knack shop on the ground floor with shabby-chic living accommodation above it. It became my favourite house to work on, and allowed me to give in to a growing weakness for miniature ceramics as well as teeny-tiny versions of the toys I loved as a child, such as Rupert Bear, Sooty and Sweep, and Noddy and Big Ears.

By now I'd discovered the joy (while my wallet screamed to be left in peace) of frequenting the Kensington Dollhouse

Festival in London, as well as the Miniatura show near Coventry. Artisan makers travel from all over the world to attend these shows, where they sell their mini works of art. It's only among the throng of doll's-house devotees that the true extent of "mini mania" can be appreciated. French, Spanish, Italian, Dutch, English, Ukrainian and Chinese are all spoken: the world of miniatures is a truly international one. And an addictive one.

I then spotted a cute little doll's house on eBay that was simply crying out for me to give it a good home. So, of course, I did and spent many happy hours painting, wallpapering, glueing and stitching in my attempt to turn the house into a cosy postwar cottage.

I see myself as very much an amateur in the doll's-house world, but I love doing what I do. It's both absorbing and relaxing, and crafting these uniquely miniature worlds gives me an outlet for my freakish need to control things. Instagram has introduced me to some wonderfully creative miniature makers, all of whom I admire immensely for

their inventive skills (which sadly I do not possess but can aspire to). I've made some lovely friends through this passion for doll's houses and a group of us travels together to the shows.

**THAT'S THE THING ABOUT DOLL'S HOUSES: ONE IS NEVER ENOUGH**

And if anyone is wondering about my poor deprived grandchildren, I did in fact buy a second-hand doll's house specially for their use. I restrained myself from redecorating or furnishing it expensively so that if anything was broken, there would be no tears shed – on my part, that is. Watching my granddaughter carefully rearranging the

furniture and chattering away to herself while she played with the house gave me so much pleasure, and I hope that when she's older she'll maybe follow in her grandmother's footsteps with a love of all things miniature. ■HTSI  
*An Ideal Husband* by Erica James is published by HarperCollins at £16.99

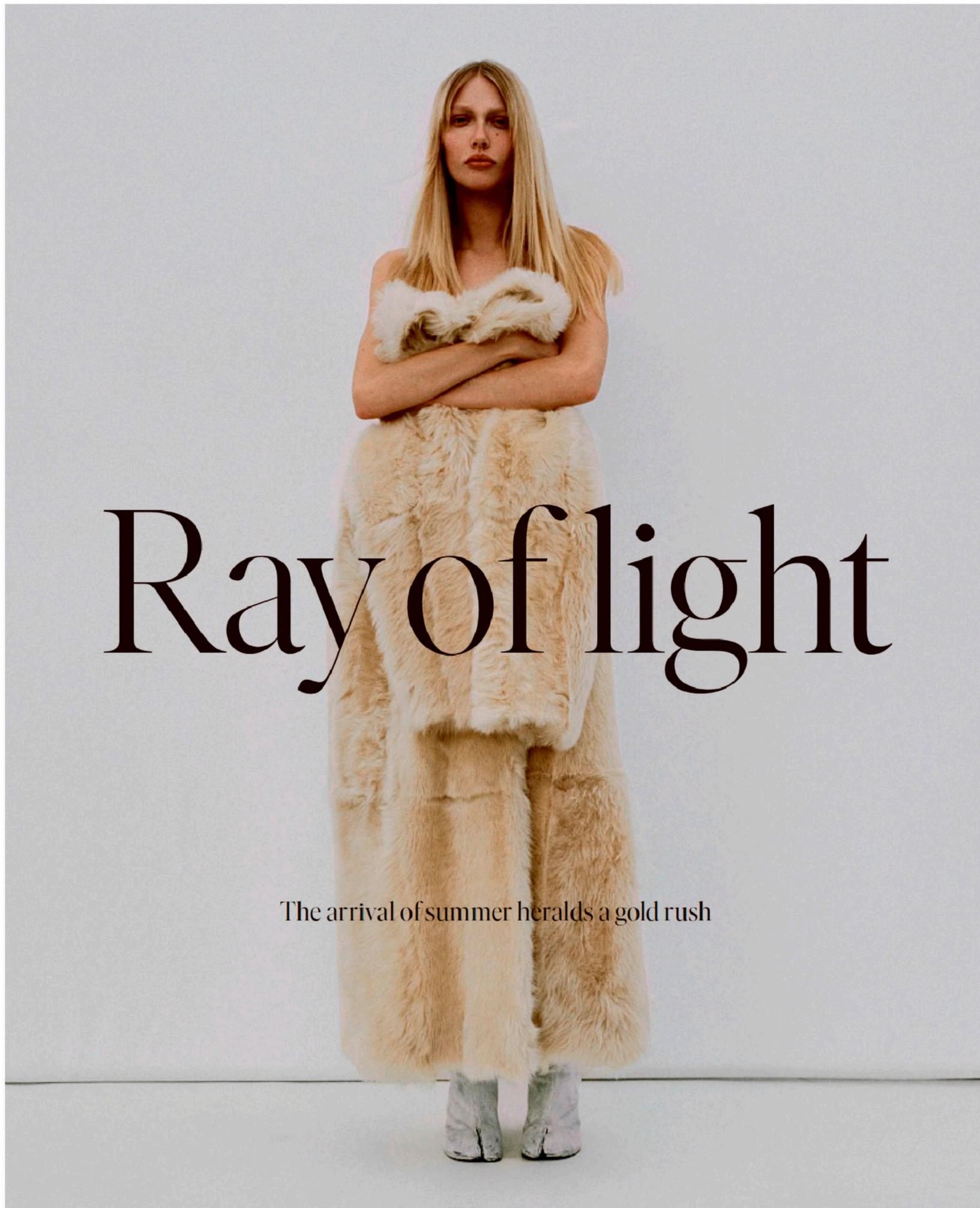




This page: MARNI  
wool pullover, €995,  
and waxed wool  
scarf, POA

Opposite page:  
TOTÊME faux  
shearling coat,  
£4,100. MAISON  
MARGIELA leather  
Bianchetto Tabi  
boots, £1,150

Photography by *Cathy Kasterine*  
Styling by *Camilla Nickerson*



# Ray of light

The arrival of summer heralds a gold rush

Model *Violet Hume*





This page: BOTTEGA VENETA cotton and linen handknit Intrecciato sweater, £15,000

Opposite page: GABRIELA HEARST cashmere Rona dress, £3,100,  
wool bra, £420, and wool Aris shorts (both just seen), £450



Above: TOTÊME faux shearling vest, £380. UNDERCOVER denim and tinsel trousers, \$1,720

Opposite page: THE ROW velvet-Lurex Louane dress, £5,310

Model, Violet Hume at Viva. Casting, Ben Grimes at Drive Represents. Hair, Jimmy Paul at Susan Price. Make-up, Dick Page at Bryant. Manicure, Yuko Tsuchihashi at Susan Price. Set design, Caz Slattery at CLM. Photographer's assistants, Ian Rutter, Nathan Martin. Digital operator, Creigh Lyndon. Stylist's assistant, Paget Millard. Tailor, Francisco Chaydez. Set design assistant, Sasha Veryovka. Production, AP Studio





# A BIRD'S AI VIEW

*Fergus Scholes* achieves a lifetime ambition on a safari in South Africa – with a little help from the world's first smart binoculars

Photography by *Carl van der Linde*

**T**he outstretched arm of our tracker gestures towards some treetops a few hundred yards away: his ability to spot the seemingly invisible is astounding. Luke, our guide, cuts the engine of the Land Cruiser and turns around: “Can you see? Just through that clearing to the left.”

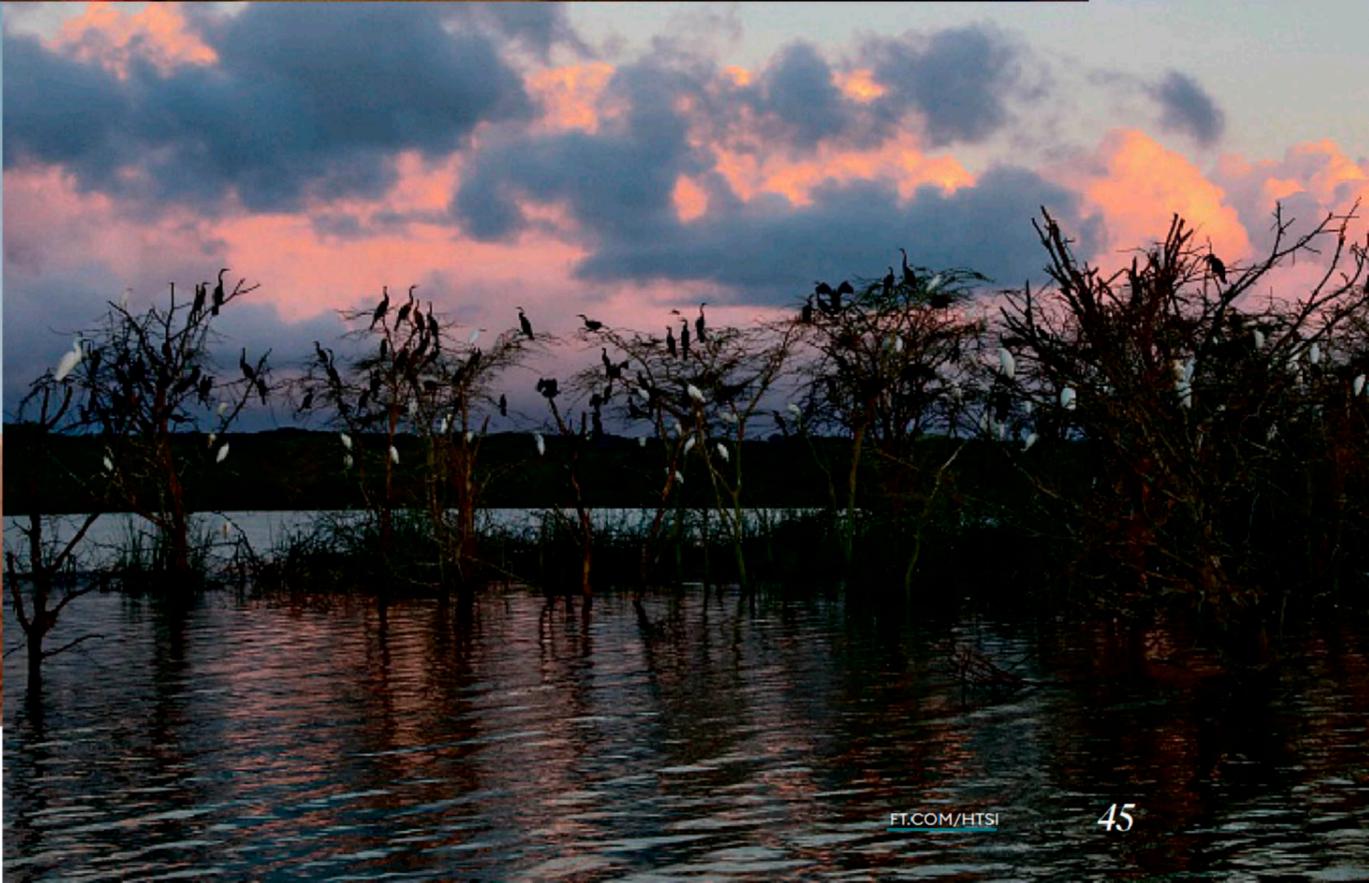
Following his direction through my binoculars, I pick out the majestic-looking bird: dark brown head with tufted crown, white breast and piercing yellow eyes. Luke fills me in: “Sometimes nicknamed the ‘leopard of the air’, it’s a martial eagle, with a wingspan of up to 2.5m, one of the world’s largest birds of prey, and the largest in Africa.” This apex predator remains on its perch for a precious few minutes, then suddenly takes flight and disappears into the distance.

I’ve come to andBeyond’s Phinda Mountain Lodge in eastern South Africa on a birdwatching safari. The lodge sits in an elevated position with views across Phinda Private Game Reserve’s 73,800 acres; its seven





Clockwise from top left: a pair of little bee-eater birds. The author using the Swarovski Optik AX Visio binoculars with a Zulu tracker. A flock of white-faced whistling ducks. A gulp of reed cormorants, egrets and African darters roost above the waters of the Mvubu dam. Josia, a tracker. Red-billed oxpeckers ride on a zebra. Consulting Ian Sinclair's *Sasol Birds of Southern Africa*



# 10 things to pack for a safari

BY FERGUS SCHOLES



## SWAROVSKI OPTIK AX VISIO

The world's first AI-enabled smart binoculars (10x32), with integrated identification for birds and animals wherever you are in the world at the click of a button. £3,820



## PENELOPE CHILVERS SUEDE HASTINGS CHUKKA BOOTS

Smart enough for dinner at the lodge yet comfortable and robust enough for walking safaris, these handmade calfskin boots are perfect one-stop footwear. £289



## PAMPEANO LEATHER BORDADO POLO BELT

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## FJÄLLRÄVEN GREENLAND SHOULDER BAG

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## FIELD NOTES EXPEDITION WATERPROOF NOTEBOOKS

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## CRAGHOPPERS NOSILIFE CARGO TROUSER III

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## CHARLES TYRWHITT LINEN SHIRT

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## TOAST COTTON ISLAND GINGHAM SCARF

A lightweight cotton scarf like this is wonderfully versatile to protect head or neck from the sun as well as adding some warmth when it's cool. £49



## COLUMBIA UNISEX SILVER RIDGE III BALL CAP

It's made from sweat-wicking material with velcro to adjust the fit and curved brim to protect from the sun. £25



Left: a waterbuck, a species of large antelope. Right: a pink-backed pelican. Far right: the author inspects a three-banded plover's eggs. Below: the andBeyond safari vehicle on a personalised birdwatching experience





## “A BRIGHT COLOUR FLASHES BY BEFORE PERCHING ON A SMALL BRANCH; IT’S A MALACHITE KINGFISHER”

ecosystems offer an unusually varied habitat, from lush greenery to open savannah. The foothills of the low-lying Lebombo mountains stretch 500 miles north into Mozambique, and the azure waters of the Indian Ocean lie just 20 miles east.

Most guests are here for the big game, but an impressive 436 bird species also makes the reserve a popular birding destination, so andBeyond’s specialist itinerary allows me to indulge a lifelong hobby.

**M**uch of our first morning is hijacked by my enthusiasm to identify every bird we see, which means we get no further than 200 yards from the lodge in the first hour. But in the afternoon, we head directly to the dry sand forest, which is home to unusual endemic species.

Surrounded by an elephant exclusion fence, we leave the vehicle and set out on foot – as strict protocol dictates, our guide leads from the front with a high-calibre rifle in hand. Orchids and lichen grow in profusion, and some of the Lebombo wattle trees are believed to date back over 1,000 years. The dense vegetation makes getting a good view of the birds more challenging, but we still spot plenty, including African green pigeons, the paradise flycatcher with its unmistakably long tail feathers, and the crested barbet. Then we’re treated to the endemic pink-throated twin-spot, a distinctive waxbill with a bright head and black chest with white spots. Extant in just a handful of other locations nearby, this is a favourite for many visiting birders.

My bird knowledge – largely limited to the British Isles – is of little help here in South Africa, so my guide has been invaluable. However, I’ve also been given access to the world’s first AI-supported binoculars, released this year, which enable me to make positive IDs myself. The Swarovski Optik AX Visio (£3,820) combines high-end optics (10x32) with bird identification software. You get the desired bird in your sights, and at the press of a button a suggested species appears on the heads-up display. Behind the scenes, the binoculars are cross-checking the image and GPS coordinates against Merlin Bird ID’s extensive database of more than 8,000 bird species (Merlin’s app is divided up into groups, allowing you to

download extra information on the species found in a given region; I installed the South Africa pack of 712 birds.)

Making our way in the vehicle once again, we come across zebra with red-billed oxpeckers picking ticks and parasites from their backs. A little further on, we glimpse a southern fiscal; a black-and-white shrike that also goes by the name of butcher bird due to its habit of impaling its prey on acacia thorns for later consumption. Then, as we pass a small water source, a bright colour flashes by before perching on a small branch; it’s a malachite kingfisher. Meanwhile, a three-banded plover moves busily along the water’s edge, foraging for insects. Luke then spots its nest, which is little more than a shallow depression on the beach containing two small grey mottled eggs.

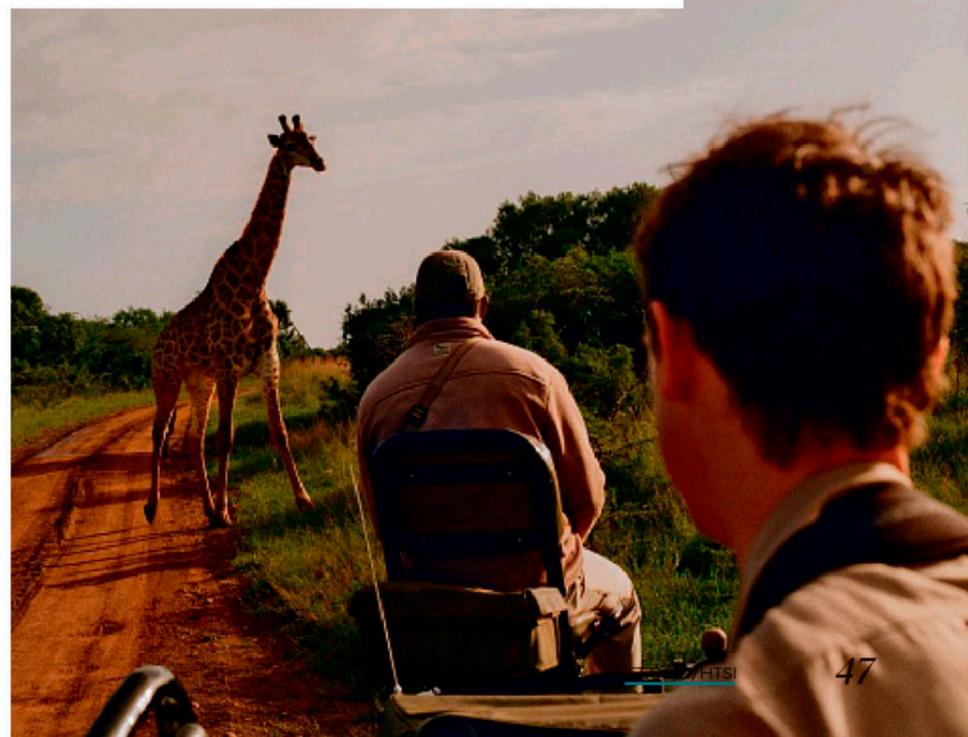
Over the course of three days, the binoculars help me correctly identify 68 species of bird. Although there are a few, around 30, with which the technology struggled. Sometimes the bird is too far away, or it is obscured by twigs, or the image was blurred – but more often than not, with a good, clear view, the binoculars do an impressive job of identification. Moreover, because a photo is saved with each press of the button, I have a comprehensive photographic diary for later scrutiny.

On my last day, as the sun drops low on the horizon, we stop at a clearing next to the waters of the Mvubu dam, which makes a sublime setting for sundowners. A handful of blue-cheeked bee-eaters flutter above the still waters, a flock of white-faced whistling ducks complete their final flyby, and the nearby hippos quieten their grunting for the night. Biltong and drinks polished off, we hop back in the vehicle and make our way under a starry night sky. Sitting back, I reflect on my first birding safari experience – spotting more than 100 bird species, taking in the big five along the way and myriad other wildlife, it’s been as rewarding a trip as I could have hoped for. ■HTSI

*Fergus Scholes travelled as a guest of andBeyond, on an abbreviated version of its nine-night Beyond Average Birding in South Africa experience, which costs from £9,200pp sharing. Includes internal flights, dedicated safari vehicle and specialist birding guide, accommodation, laundry, meals and drinks, [andbeyond.com](http://andbeyond.com). Guests will be able to book a pair of Swarovski Optik AX Visio binoculars from July, POA*



Above right: a crested barbet. Right: a giraffe crossing the vehicle’s path. Left: a blue-cheeked bee-eater. Far left: the author with Swarovski’s AI-supported binoculars





# An Italian in Brooklyn

Jewellery designer Ippolita Rostagno's New York brownstone is a beautifully layered exercise in "sparse abundance". By *Jill Krasny*. Photography by *Ryan Lowry*

Above: a sculptural sliding French door in iron and rock crystal designed by Rostagno and made by Philadelphia-based company Amuneal. In the background are "Frutta d'oro", a hand-carved wooden mirror frame by Daniele Nencioni, of Florence, and a Rivadossi chair, both from Artemest. Opposite: Ippolita Rostagno at home in Brooklyn. On the wall is a portrait of her and her daughter Maya by the German-born American artist Kiki Smith

When the din of Seventh Avenue falls silent and all you can hear are the pigeons, you know you have arrived at the 19th-century home of Italian jewellery designer Ippolita Rostagno. A jumble of worn sneakers

in the vestibule face the stoop with its tidy patio. Passing by, moneyed hipsters, drip coffee in hand, race toward the subway. This is gentrified Park Slope, not the storied slums of the late writer Pete Hamill, but all it takes is a stroll down Park Place to recapture that old-world feeling.

"I felt this was the only place I could live a more genteel existence in New York," says Rostagno, whose devotion to preserving Italian craftsmanship led her to co-found the online home-decor destination Artemest in 2015 with Italian entrepreneur Marco Credendino. Its first bricks and mortar gallery, Artemest Galleria, which she opened in 2022 on West 19th Street, offers a tantalising array of handmade pieces, sourced through the creative director's frequent expeditions abroad.

This month, as part of NYC Design Week, the galleria, which feels like a Milanese villa with its Venetian stucco and lime-finished walls, is opening a garden space. Those wandering outdoors will find furniture by Italy's Dante



ADRIAN PAINTER  
Kiki Smith



Kitchen cabinetry by Thomas Hinsdale Design with ER Butler & Co hardware and a Viking range and hood. The island is topped with Carrara marble, and the stools are by BassamFellows. Above right: Rostagno lives in a neighbourhood of Brooklyn brownstones



“IF YOU’RE IN THE CITY 24/7, THE DIN IS A LOT. COMING HOME, IT’S JUST: ‘AAAHHH..’”

Negro under lighting by Contardi, with other examples by DMG Fiesole and Forma & Cemento. More galleries are in the works, says Rostagno, who has taken a similarly studied approach to her four-storey brownstone home.

A youthful-looking 60 with curly black hair, Rostagno has lived on Park Place for 24 years. Initially, the designer rented an apartment on the third floor of one address, before taking the lower two floors of another house next door. In 2005, she decided to become a homeowner for real when her neighbour told her she was selling the bottom two floors of her brownstone. “If you’re in the city 24/7, the din is a lot,” says Rostagno. Brooklyn offers her a much-needed respite, as both her jewellery studio and Artemest Galleria are based in the city. “Coming home at night, it’s just aaahhh.”

**B**uilt in the late 1800s, the Italianate brownstone, which served as a boarding house in the 1950s, was carved up into separate apartments when Rostagno bought it. It was the victim of many poorly thought-out modifications. “There was nothing design-wise that was worth keeping,” recalls the local architect Alicia Balocco, whom Rostagno employed “to modernise everything” in 2005. She found “a mish-mosh of things, and everything needed to be redone – plumbing, electric...”

The space today looks contemporary, partly due to its loft-like openness and the steel-and-walnut bookshelves, which Rostagno designed and had built by cabinet-maker Benjamin Bajorek. The details honour the building’s original look while meeting the needs of the digital age. She bought the remaining floors in 2009 when her neighbour moved out, and there have been many updates since. Rostagno, who sees design in all its forms as art, is constantly changing the house. “The nicest layout is all open,” Rostagno says, striding toward the sunlit dining



## “BECAUSE I’M A CRAFT MANIAC, I WANTED TO INCLUDE AS MANY CRAFTY THINGS AS I COULD”

area, created by bumping the floor back 10 feet, and the rear garden. It’s a dreary New York winter day, but the garden looks strangely inviting.

Framed by a mature river birch and a linden tree, the space was overrun with Japanese knotweed, says Jesse Terzi, the principal of Brooklyn-based New Eco Landscapes, who spent about six weeks reviving the “old, overgrown garden” with a mix of native plants. In the spring, Rostagno plants lots of annuals, and in the summer the tropical plants come alive. A lifelong nature fanatic who grew up riding horses in the Tuscan countryside, Rostagno, her Italian husband, Leo Amato, 45, and their six-year-old son, Dante, spend a lot of their time outside. “Nine months a year, we have the doors open,” she says, eyeing the brick pizza oven below the trees. “It makes it feel like you’re outside even if you’re in.”

**T**hroughout, Rostagno has confidently layered in touches – Venetian plaster walls, glass candleholders and vintage yellow lamps – that reflect her Italian heritage and passion for all things handmade. Her American mother, a decorative painter who met her Italian husband while studying abroad in Florence, was “a maniacal museum-goer”, says Rostagno, so from a young age she and her older sister Ilaria “were living and breathing art”.

“Because I’m a craft maniac, I wanted to include as many crafty things as I could,” she says of her interior choices, inspecting a new-found chip on the ceramic-tile frieze by Italian artist Giovanni Vettori – one of many Rostagno commissions dotted throughout the living room. Behind us, an enormous Kiki Smith collage of Rostagno and her adult daughter, Maya, hangs above a sleek Cassina sofa found on Artemest.



As we climb the steel stairs, Rostagno explains the nightmare that ensued when the architect Robin Elmslie Osler, principal and creative director at Arcadis, began to renovate the upper floors. When they removed the original stairwell, which was “rickety and falling down”, the third floor collapsed. Never one to let good material go to waste, Rostagno saved an original wood beam and repurposed it into a low shelf that now sits in her bedroom. That shelf – along with the exquisite Murano glass chandelier by Striulli Vetri D’Arte, a vibrant acrylic portrait of Rostagno and Amato by Zoe Papini, and a hand-carved walnut armchair by Giuseppe Rivadossi – showcases her flair for intriguing material contrasts.

“Sparse abundance is my aesthetic,” she says matter of factly. “Few things, large spaces, pretty clean – but the details are very rich.” She pauses before the walk-in closet, a jewel-box space made all the more luxurious thanks to its hand-carved metal doors studded with lustrous rock crystal stones commissioned from Rostagno’s lapidarist in Bangkok. “This is very much part of my jewellery vocabulary,” the Ippolita founder says of the doors modelled after her Rock Candy bracelet. She plucks another piece from a stack on her dresser. “This is like a coral reef,” she says, admiringly, of her Reef bangle.

In the studio, the four skylights are the main attraction, but so is Rostagno’s covetable collection of contemporary art. “Things give back to the extent that you notice them,” she says of the pieces carefully arrayed to the left of her extra-long desk, “and the more you observe them, the more you tend to notice – and the more delight you can extract from them.” Deng Shiqing’s oil painting of a woman collapsed on the beach shows a sense of humour, while Zoe Papini’s monochromatic portrait of Dante pulls at your heart. A print by the English artist Harland Miller winks at an old book-buying habit.

Not surprisingly, Rostagno loves entertaining. For years, she’s been serving her dish of choice: braised short ribs in broth, with sautéed leeks and salsa verde. “It takes two days to prepare, but I love cooking it for my extended family, who ask for it regularly,” she says. Like the home she’s created for herself, it’s a speciality. ■HTSI

Above: two vintage Brazilian armchairs flank an antique mirror made from a reclaimed ship’s window. Right: custom ceramic tilework by Giovanni Vettori. Below: bookshelves by Brooklyn-based Ben Bajorek divide the living room from the parlour. Top right: Rostagno stands by the bespoke room divider modelled after her Rock Candy bracelet. Opposite: artworks in her home office









# “IT’S THE SINGLE MOST FUN THING I DO”

In America’s answer to Le Mans, the cars cost no more than \$500, the contestants are amateur and the mood is resolutely zany. *Adam Lashinsky* reports from 24 Hours of Lemons

**M**y first impression of the goofily named 24 Hours of Lemons race competition is the dead-serious din of automobiles roaring by at upwards of 100mph. I am standing behind a chain-link fence at the three-mile Thunderhill Raceway Park, just outside the northern California town of Willows. The scene is at once bucolic – the complex is surrounded by acres of pink-blossomed almond trees and lies between a pair of snow-peaked mountain ranges – and deafening. The air is filled with the persistent roar of speeding cars bereft of mufflers and the occasional pop of a backfiring engine.

Nevertheless, to call the vehicles whizzing past “race cars” is charitable at best. This exhibition is as amateur as can be. Here is a down-on-its-luck white Volkswagen Beetle, an ambitious spoiler rising from its rear and dark-

black eyeballs painted on its headlights. There is a brown coupé with a toy stuffed-leopard on its hood and a hand-drawn sign on its grill, pointing downward, that reads: “TOW”. An otherwise sporty number has a three-tiered wedding cake affixed to its top.

It’s at once a legitimate race and an exhibition of pure, zany, hobbyist joy. Everything about 24 Hours of Lemons is a wry play on the high-stakes world of race-car driving, including its name, a send-up of the French “grand prix of endurance racing”, the 24 Hours of Le Mans. Races are held throughout the year across the United States, and four-driver teams pay \$1,775 to enter. (A valid driver’s licence is the only requirement, though “whiners are not eligible to compete”, according to the rules.) Crucially, entrants must prove they’ve assembled their cars for no more than \$500. “Lemons is the cheapest way of getting the most time on a real racetrack,” says Ewan Benefield, a 20-year-old from the San Francisco Bay Area and Lemons regular. There are stakes at play, just not particularly high stakes. The two-day competition is broken down into three classes: A (cars with a prayer of winning), B (cars with a prayer of finishing), and C (cars with no prayer of finishing). The Class C winner gets the biggest cash prize, a princely \$600.

The race I’ve come to see on a sunny Saturday in early spring is called “Jank of the West 2024”. In addition to the different classes, there also are a handful of judged awards, including “Winner on Index of Effluency”, defined as the best performance of the worst car. But there aren’t any losers at 24 Hours of Lemons. “Everybody’s just here for the giggles,” Jay St Claire, an investor and contractor in Seattle, tells me. The organisers take safety seriously. All cars undergo a pre-race safety check, and drivers wear protective gear and are subject to various rules, including forced trips to an off-track “penalty box” for infractions such as driving off the course, making contact with another car and ignoring a yellow warning flag. Crashes

Top left: a 1963 Volvo 544 (centre) and a 1995 BMW 318ti (right) at a Lemons event. Top right: a 1970 Dodge Dart on a rally in Detroit, 2023. Left: competitors at Chuckwalla Raceway in Desert Center, California



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Clockwise from below left: Matthew Gebben with his Yugo GV in 2018. A Mercedes 190E on a rally in 2017. Lemons founder Jay Lamm in South Carolina. Repairs on a 1981 Rover 3500. A 1975 MG Midget on a rally in 2022. The Lemons Wedge team's custom car in 2020. A Mercedes 300D beside the USS Alabama in 2022. Above: teams help a 1981 Jaco Firetruck on a rally in 2021

happen – it's a car race – but precautions on the track are at least as important as all the fun gimmicks.

Lemons is the brainchild of Jay Lamm, a former automotive journalist who had become disenchanted with an amateur car-racing world that took itself far too seriously. "Historically, car racing was all about separating the heroes from the schlubs," he tells me. Lamm is 59, bald and preternaturally tanned. He is also my wife's cousin, which is how I came to know about his racing franchise. He started the business nearly 20 years ago and is something of a legend among car enthusiasts, a PT Barnum surrounded by acolytes who pay him for the privilege of performing.

It became increasingly clear to me that the hobby had been commercialised and made into a hierarchy that was all about money," he says. "I jokingly put together a street race where the cars couldn't cost more than \$500." That single race grew into a national series of closed-course competitions, concours and city-to-city rallies. Silliness aside, Lemons is an impressive business. The \$1,775 entrance fee, which includes up to four drivers, is its main revenue source. Lemons also charges for additional drivers and non-drivers in the pit crew. Tickets for spectators are available too, drivers pay an annual membership fee, and Lemons makes some money selling merchandise. Lamm thinks of it as "beer-league softball for people who are interested in car racing, not baseball". A sense of humour at Lemons is more important than the not-particularly-strict cost limit on the cars. Lamm's employees wear orange T-shirts that read: "This is our circus. These are our monkeys." An official sign on a racetrack fence says: "24 HOURS OF LEMONS: Racing for real people." The arbitrary nature

of the class assignment is part of the fun. Says Lamm: "We have a saying here: we pull the classes out of our asses."

His customers enjoy being in on the joke. Jay Morrison, the ringleader of a team that fields a 2002 Porsche Boxster, won't say how much his car cost beyond revealing "we paid bribes because it's a Porsche". Morrison works in sales for a technology consulting firm called Convergent. One of the things he likes most about Lemons is the way competing teams help each other out with inevitable breakdowns. "We're trying to keep each other in the race," he says. His team's car – "it's really four cars salvaged" – has been assigned to the A class and had been doing well until Morrison took his turn behind the wheel. "We were in the top 10 until I screwed it up," he says. "We have the car to win but not the talent."

One entry, made up of students at Sierra College, a community college at the edge of the foothills of the nearby Sierra Nevada mountain range, doesn't even seem to have a car to stay in the running. When I visit the Sierra College pit, the engine has been removed from their Mini Cooper, which has run only 17 laps that day. The students are investigating an electrical issue.

The college kids have been getting some help from a driver whose skill and resources are at the opposite end of the Lemons spectrum. Renae Lamb has been racing in Lemons events for seven years. She is the owner, with her father, of an automotive repair shop in Sacramento that specialises in high-end European models. Her entry, a 1983 Porsche 944, definitely cost more than \$500, especially because it has an upgraded engine under the hood (a certain amount of bribery at the qualification stage is part of the Lemons' tradition). Lamb is around cars all day for her job, but driving them on a racetrack is another thing altogether. "It is the single most fun thing I do," she says. "When you're out there, nothing matters."

The happy-go-lucky car nuts I have met at Thunderhill are the spiritual children and grandchildren of the auto-obsessed California teenagers described by Tom Wolfe in his essay *There Goes (VAROOM! VAROOM) That Kandy Colored (THPHHHHH!) Tangerine-Flake*



## EMPLOYEES WEAR T-SHIRTS THAT READ: "THIS IS OUR CIRCUS. THESE ARE OUR MONKEYS"

*Streamline Baby (RAHGHHHH!) Around the Bend (BRUMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM...)*. "They are freedom, style, sex, power, motion, colour – everything is right there," he wrote in *Esquire* in 1963. And while there isn't much sex in the air today, all the other qualities Wolfe observed 60 years ago are present in the paddock.

In the end, a Class A team from San Jose driving a 1998 BMW 318i places first among 99 total entrants, completing an impressive 330 laps. (Four unfortunate cars never made it around the track once.) A 1993 Mazda Miata from Santa Cruz won the B class, finishing fifth overall. The Class C honours went to a car older than many of the drivers on the course, a 1973 Chevy El Camino SS driven by a team from Sacramento.

Lemons is overwhelmingly male and equally middle-aged. But the kids from Sierra College more than represented the next generation. Their Notta Miata car made it back onto the course on Sunday. And one of its crew, a welding enthusiast named Erica Snow, earned the affection of multiple teams by wandering from pit to pit with her welder, offering much-needed mechanical assistance. This would never happen in Le Mans. ■HTSI



**BENNETT WINCH**

HANDMADE IN ENGLAND



# A case for smarter travel

THE TRIFOLD *by* BENNETT WINCH



*"Tri-fold garment carriers don't work"* – were the words delivered by our Savile Row neighbour at the beginning of this project. Our response, the Bennett Winch Trifold, is a step change in suit transportation – and now our neighbour's favourite bag.

*Waterproof Nylon outer*

*12oz cotton lining*

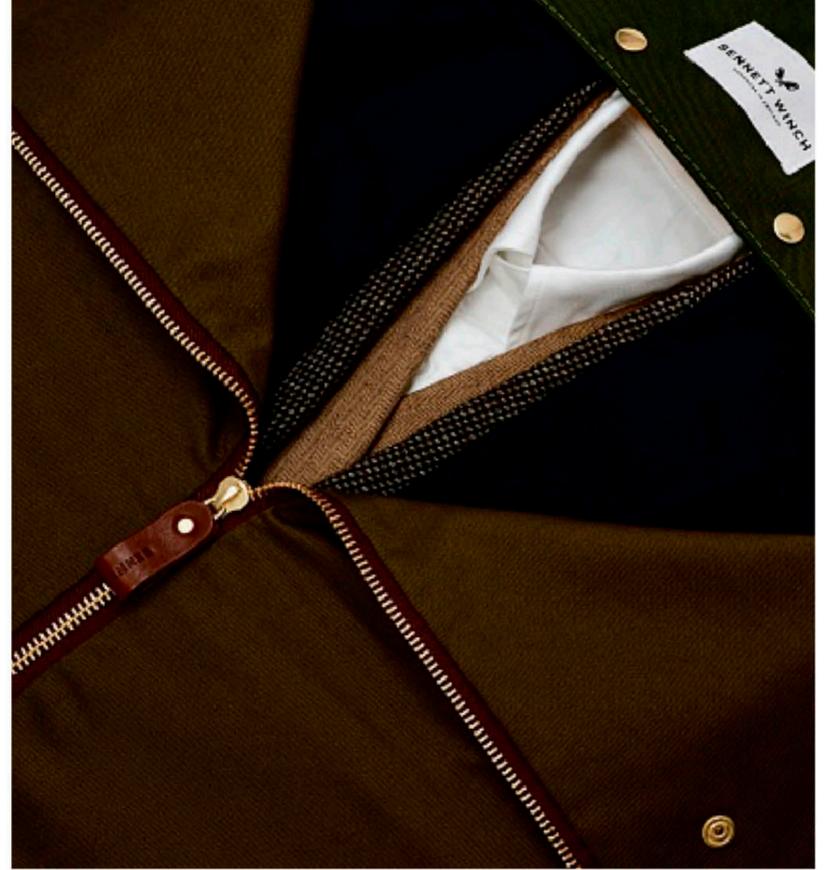
*Rear suitcase slip  
and accessories pocket*

*Solid brass hardware*

*Magnetic connectors*

*Tuscan leather trim*

*Military grade cotton webbing*



Handmade in England, the Bennett Winch Trifold is a full length suit bag that transforms into a lean carry with capacity for up to three suits. Held in place via a set of concealed magnets and a pair of Tuscan leather retaining straps, its open sided format alleviates hard creasing, while a military grade cotton webbing shoulder strap keeps your hands free for the journey ahead. Alternatively, a rear panel can be mounted over rolling luggage for the foreseeable concourse and doubles as a low profile pocket to stow an iPad, passports and the occasional speech. Whether on business overseas, on route to witness vows or on foot to see the tailor – the Bennett Winch Trifold, born on Savile Row, is the bag to suit the adventure.



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Given the venerated status of many vinyl collections, it's surprising how little thought is given to the question of where they should live.

Often they're slotted into a functional four-square shelving unit, their creased spines only readable when you tilt your head and squint. But a growing desire to give them beautiful homes has seen Norwegian craftsman Stian Herdal become a sought-after maker of cabinets and stands devoted to vinyl, turntables and hi-fi peripherals. "Music has always been a huge part of my life," he says. "I don't have a deep knowledge of amplifiers or speakers, but I love the vinyl format. And I like to make pieces that inspire people to, shall we say, hide the digital parts of their lives."

**"I LIKE TO INSPIRE PEOPLE TO HIDE THE DIGITAL PARTS"**

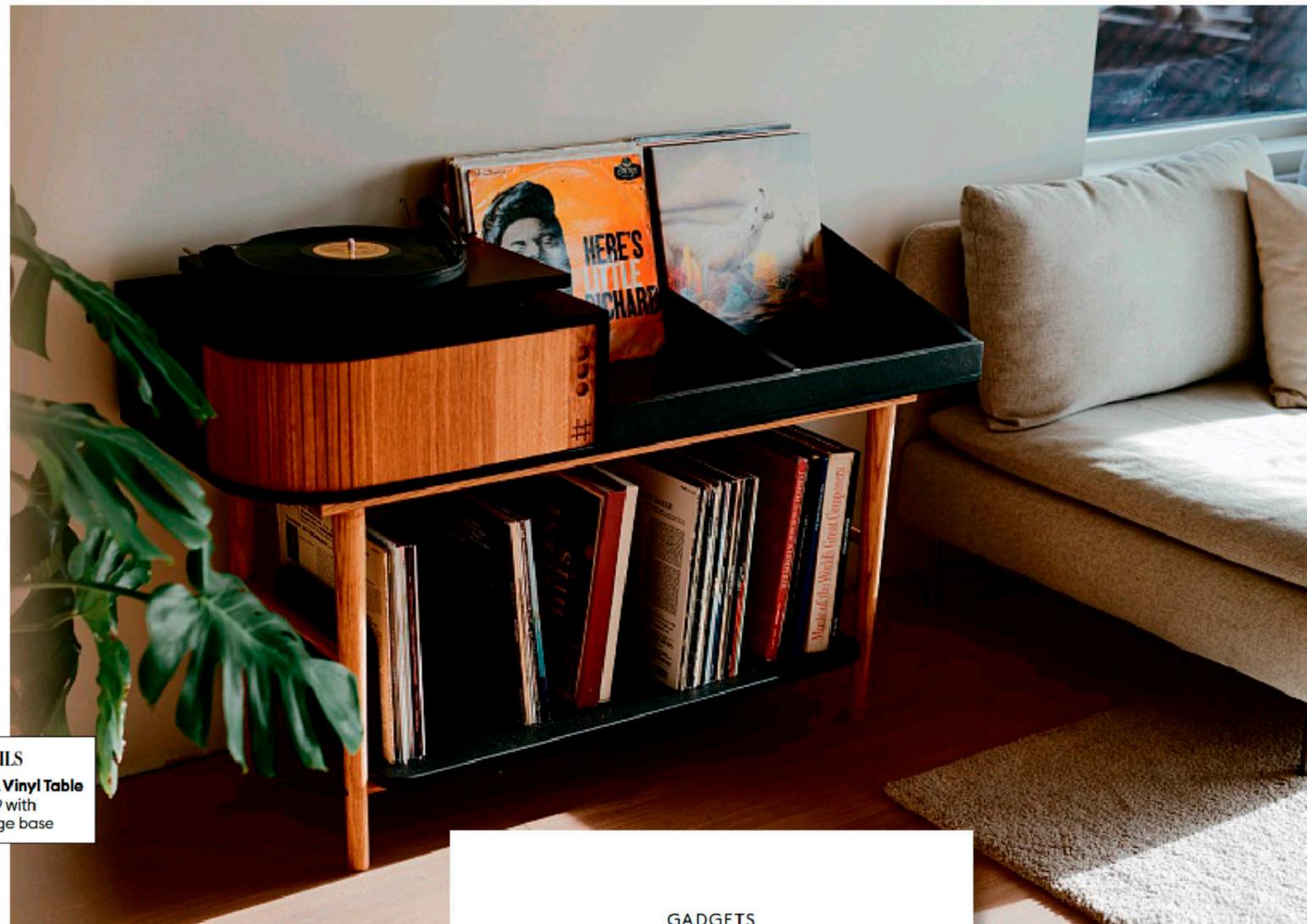
Now based in the city of Kristiansand, Herdal grew up in a woodworking family with the smell of wood shavings and Danish oil ever-present. He began as a hobbyist, making furniture he needed for his own home, but soon started receiving local commissions. In 2016 he made himself his first vinyl stand: a simple but beautiful X-frame with slots for each record. A web shop quickly gained traction, he designed and built larger pieces, and today his customers range from lawyers kitting out their offices to Hollywood celebrities who love his midcentury aesthetic, inspired by designers such as Niels Otto Møller and Torbjørn Afdal. His admirers include woodworking students who email him for advice; he happily sends them his plans and answers their questions.

This, his most recent design, has a plinth for the turntable, a sliding tambour door concealing the amp, a cable management system and space for

**DETAILS**  
**HRDL Vinyl Table**  
£1,649 with storage base

200 records. "They should hold their own as centrepieces in a room," he says of his work, "but also be timeless and understated. To some extent it represents the Norwegian way of going about things; you don't need to wave your arms and scream to make people notice you." ■HTSI

Instagram: @rhodri



GADGETS

## The vinyl countdown

Show your record collection a little TLC

WORDS BY RHODRI MARSDEN



**SMOOTH OPERATOR**

When you set your sights on making the best belt-drive turntable in the world, it can become an obsession. Mark Döhmann's quest was to isolate the Helix One from any vibrations that might ricochet through the system. Thus the platter of the Mk3 has suspension based on engineering you find in electron microscopes, the Swiss motor is custom-designed to suppress unpleasant resonances, and the clamp that holds your records to the turntable isolates any noise generated by the needle in the groove. The result is an almost supernatural machine, devoid of compromise, wholly dedicated to making records sound the best they possibly can. *Döhmann Helix One Mk3, £78,998, [absolutesounds.com](http://absolutesounds.com)*



**CLEAN MACHINE**

Anti-static brushes, cleaning solvents and lint-free cloths inevitably leave some kind of residue on the surface of the vinyl, which compromises sonic clarity to some degree. By contrast, ultrasonic techniques – the kind used in electronic and pharmaceutical industries – can give records a deep clean using sound waves sent through liquid. This two-piece kit comprises a six-litre tank with an adjustable thermostat and timer, and a motorised spindle that holds five long players. The spindle attaches to the side of the tank to keep the vinyl label clear of the water, and it rotates at 3rpm while the bubbles do their work: around half an hour at just under 30°C is recommended. *DK Ultrasonic vinyl record cleaner kit, £399.99*



**ACHTUNG ENO**

Brian Eno's Turntable, part record player, part acrylic sculpture with softly glowing LED lights, was produced in an edition of 50 back in 2021. "It sold out overnight," laughs gallerist Paul Stolper. "We got the numbers hopelessly wrong." Turntable II, now available in an edition of 150, has been updated in a number of ways, including a rounded plinth and a platter placed off centre to give the tonearm its own space. The shifting lights have been pre-programmed by Eno to include a random element. "A key aspect of his thinking is this idea of surrender," says Stolper. "It's programmed, but he doesn't know what it will do, so he's just as much the viewer as you or I." *Brian Eno Turntable II, 2024, £20,000, [paulstolper.com](http://paulstolper.com)*



**PREAMP IT UP**

Every turntable needs a preamp, but not many of them are milled from a solid block of aluminium, sit on an anti-vibration support stand and are engineered to last 30 years. HSE was founded in Zürich in 1987 by Robert Huber and is one of very few audio manufacturers to carry the "Swiss Made" mark, with all mechanical parts made within the country. Its products are generally bespoke items destined for recording studios (the most notable being Electric Lady in Greenwich Village, founded by Jimi Hendrix in 1968) but the launch of the Masterline 7 is a chance for discerning customers to experience some of that finesse at home. *HSE Masterline 7 phono preamplifier, £80,000, [absolutesounds.com](http://absolutesounds.com)*



Capture corner sofa w/ table, pouf & chaise lounge | Hive chair



## CAPTURE & HIVE

Capture design by Cane-line Design & Hive design by Foersom & Hiort-Lorenzen MDD

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WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS SCHALKX



Above: glassware and crockery at Hak Dei. Below: Taiwanese nylon bags

CAMEL VACUUM FLASK, ABOUT £28



## Hak Dei

USP  
A HAVEN OF NOSTALGIC HOMEWARE

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Shopping is a national sport in Hong Kong. Gleaming malls punctuate the city's skyline and smart boutiques line its narrow streets; virtually every design label of note lists a flagship outpost in the city.

But some shopkeepers still look to the classic rather than the Next Big Thing. "I love the timelessness of old designs," says Chau Chi Pang, owner of homeware concept store Hak Dei, which stocks everything from traditional bamboo steamer baskets (from HK\$50, about £5) to ceramic chopsticks (about £1.80). "The items I sell have been used for generations, but people these days don't always appreciate this kind of quality any more."

Chau opened Hak Dei near his home on Wai Chi Street in north-east Kowloon in 2016 after hitting a wall in his career as a magazine designer. "I wanted to open a local spot selling practical, everyday objects," Chau says. "Durable and simple, without extra frills. Many of them are still in production but have largely been forgotten about." For the concept, he decided to play with the aesthetic of Hong Kong's old-time grocery shops selling sundries and kitchenware. The name "Hak Dei", Cantonese for "black ground", refers to the rubber-tiled playground he overlooked from his original store.

Right: Chau Chi Pang, owner of Hak Dei. Below right: porcelain in the shop entrance



In 2019 Chau relocated to a redeveloped 1960s residential building on Kowloon's Shanghai Street, and now neighbours the same chock-a-block grocery stores he first took inspiration from. He kept his shop's shelves intentionally busy to mimic their appearance: almost every square inch of the space is packed with copper teapots (about £135), bamboo-handled ladles (about £8) and floral-patterned enamel plates (about £22).

Chau sources most of his wares from around Asia. There's glassware, both new and vintage, from Japan, including milky borosilicate cups and mugs by Fire-King Japan (from about £40). Sturdy metal toolboxes (from about £13) come from Osaka-based TOYO Steel, which has been around since the 1960s. Among his bestsellers are Chinese glass soup spoons (from about £1.40) and ceramic bowls with hand-painted rooster patterns (from about £4.50) of the type found in almost every Cantonese household. There are classic matchboxes from Thailand emblazoned with prints of folksy naga creatures (about £1), colourful plastic shopping bags from Taiwan (about £5.50) and the same white cotton red-lettered tea towels (about £1.20) you'll find in old-school restaurants around the city. Only a handful of local manufacturers have stood the test of

time: colourful jelly cups by long-standing Kowloon plasticware producer Star Industrial and thermos flasks by the 1940-founded Camel brand (from about £28) are some of the few wares still sporting the made-in-Hong-Kong label. Chau's passion for specialty coffee and outdoor adventures has also inspired a small corner of high-grade camping gear and coffee utensils, including yolk-yellow plastic boxes designed to transport eggs (about £4.60), leather water bags, portable pour-over kits, and LED lanterns by time-honoured brands such as Coleman, Stanley and Coghlan's. It's all part of Chau's effort to keep the nostalgia associated with Hong Kong's grocery stores alive. "The young people who come in to buy coffee or outdoor gear discover the classic kitchenware," Chau says. "And a lot of customers from the older generation end up going home with a modern coffee kit."

One elderly customer who has been a regular since the store's relocation visits like clockwork every Sunday to pick up new arrivals – whether a brass sake cup or a flashlight. "We call him 'Sunday old man'," Chau says. "It feels like he's my future self, which pushes me to keep searching for new items, to not disappoint him." ■ HTSI



Above: TOYO ST-350 two-level tool box, about £52

"THE ITEMS I SELL HAVE BEEN USED FOR GENERATIONS"



WOODEN SHELVES UPCYCLED FROM A SCHOOL LIBRARY

first set eyes on Sotheby's honorary chairman of wine, Serena Sutcliffe MW, at a tasting in 2013. She swept into a room full of dreary suits sporting a shocking-pink leather biker jacket and a razor-sharp white bob. I remember thinking: if this is what fine wine looks like, then I'm in.

"Oh gosh! I've still got that jacket! I usually just plonk it over some jeans," laughs the 78-year-old when we meet at the Sotheby's HQ on London's New Bond Street. She's here to host the launch of a new series of wine events organised by the asset management company Hundle, designed to entice more women into fine-wine drinking and collecting (tonight, for the record, she's sporting damson suede ankle boots, a zigzag kilt and a blood-red manicure).

Women do most of the wine-buying in western supermarkets, but they're underrepresented in wine's upper realms – Sotheby's estimates that just 10-15 per cent of its fine wine buyers are women. Sutcliffe knows what it is to be an outlier. When she joined the wine trade in the early 1970s women were "virtually invisible", she says. Undeterred, she went on to become the world's second female Master of Wine in 1976 (the first was Sarah Morphew Stephens MW). "There were a lot of patronising types around back then," says Sutcliffe briskly, "but I can't say it bothered me. Wine was what I was mad about, so I just stuck around till I got my MW."

Sutcliffe rose through the ranks, becoming worldwide head of Sotheby's Wine, a post she held for 25 years, during which time she launched the auction house's wine business in North America and the Far East. She chaired the Institute of the Masters of Wine and became the first British wine professional to receive the Légion d'Honneur. As honorary chairman, she still consults for Sotheby's wine department.

"I've met a lot of women with the natural ability but perhaps not the confidence," says Sutcliffe. "They often have a better sense of smell and taste – but are less fact-driven than men. They seem less interested in collecting – a word I rather dislike as it has connotations of hoarding. I like to think they buy wine less for prestige and more because they love it."

In a bid to attract a bigger female contingent, Sotheby and Hundle will both be hosting more wine events, cross-fertilising wine with fashion, fine art and jewellery (before she entered the wine trade Sutcliffe actually considered becoming a gemologist). Sotheby's says it's also intent on upping the number of women in private client roles.

The number of female wine buyers at Sotheby's peaked in 2022 when the pandemic was accelerating the growth of sales online, a development that Sutcliffe suggests allowed buyers to "research in privacy and peace, without being patronised". Sotheby's also saw a surge in the number of bidders under 40 during this time.

"You've now got so many different types of people coming into the fine-wine market – it's changed completely from that rather small world it was 40 or 50 years ago," says Sutcliffe. "Bordeaux and Burgundy are still fundamental – but you've also got some top Italian wines coming on. Some very top Californian and Australian too. I think



A RECENT FAVOURITE '83 CHÂTEAU MARGAUX

DRINKING

## Wine's original XX factor

Serena Sutcliffe, one of the first female Masters of Wine, talks to *Alice Lascelles* about her life in bottles



Serena Sutcliffe in a cellar in London, 1981

Italy in particular has the potential to go even further. I love the north-east of Italy, particularly for its whites. For the reds, I think it's a question of identifying the absolute right plots because it has such diversity of climate and soils – it's something they've already done in parts of Maremma in southern Tuscany."

**SUTCLIFFE DECLINES, MOST DIPLOMATICALLY,** to pick a favourite wine sale or bottle – but she waxes lyrical about a recent tasting of an '82 and '83 Château Margaux. "You want that great Margaux scent – very enchanting, quite different from the more solid black fruit and big nose of Pauillac. It's got to unfold in layers, and have depth and volume.

"A great wine must have character and personality," she adds. "It must sing to you – and they do. When you hit one that is really on song, it doesn't get better than that."

When Sutcliffe's not drinking wine, she loves aquavit: "It's my Achilles heel, I absolutely adore it. We have it at special times like Christmas, or if the weather is ghastly. And you've got to eat herrings with it."

If you're just beginning in wine, she advises "start by buying single bottles, here, there and everywhere. And once you've found a wine you like, buy a case – because forming a relationship with a young vintage and seeing how it evolves over time is one of the most riveting things.

"And don't be intimidated by it. Order the wine or the grape variety or region you don't know – that's what I always do. Because there's actually nothing less frightening than wine. It's really frightfully docile." ■ **HTSI** For more information on Hundle's future Women & Wine events, contact [ederusset@hundle.co](mailto:ederusset@hundle.co) @alicelascelles

### Three more grape names to know



**BO HEUNG**  
Private client director Asia at Justerini & Brooks (Hong Kong)

As head of J&B's Hong Kong division, Heung has amassed a strong base of female clients whom she advises on cellar management, as well as offering valuing and brokering services. Many start their journey with storied Bordeaux first growths such as Lafite, she says, "but now they're looking to other exciting regions, such as Burgundy, Germany or the Jura". Her aim is to educate clients not to be "label drinkers" who are simply swayed by big names – she enjoys organising blind tastings, for example, of the same grape from a variety of different regions. [justerinis.com](http://justerinis.com)



**LAURA TAYLOR**  
Fine wine advisor at Private Cellar (UK)

After seven years at Corney & Barrow, Taylor co-founded Private Cellar in 2005, an independent wine merchant offering everything from by-the-bottle sales through to full-blown portfolio management. As well as advising clients on their collections, Taylor runs a Women In Wine club that convenes online every two months for a tasting of a specially curated case. She also regularly hosts female-friendly (but not women-only) tastings and dinners with visiting producers. "Some of our members are already confident with wine, while others are new to it," she says. "Either way, we find it's often the women who ask the most interesting questions!" [privatecellar.co.uk](http://privatecellar.co.uk)

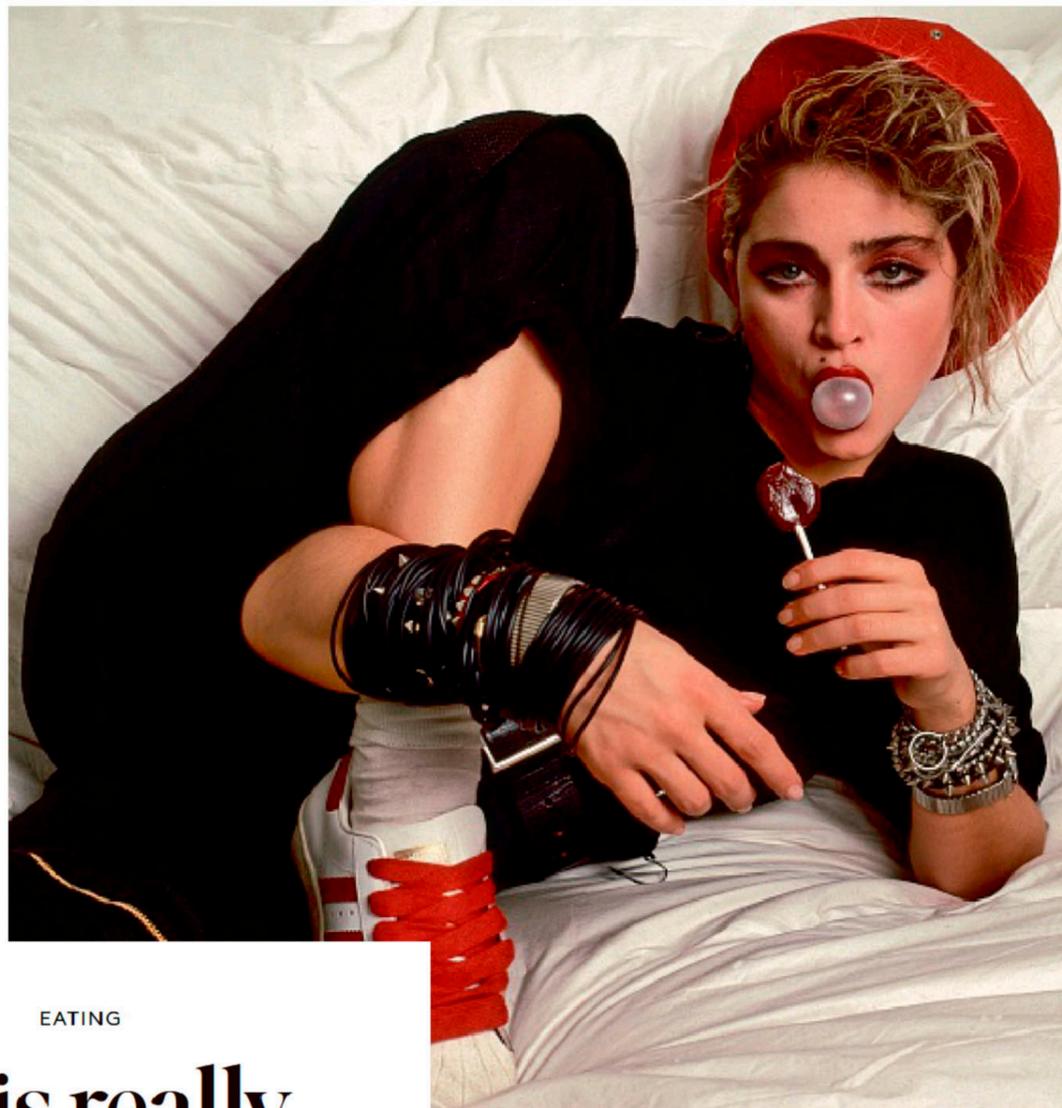


**VICTORIA JAMES**  
Sommelier and beverage director at Cote and co-founder of Cote Wine Club (US)

As drinks director of the vibe-y restaurant group Cote (NYC, Miami and, soon, Singapore), James has put a rocket up the fine-wine scene – and her Cote Wine Club approaches fine wine with the same mix of style and attitude. Members receive monthly wine selections with food-matching advice ("think Pierre Gimonnet's blanc de blancs with his grandmother's gougères recipe!") as well as invites to winemaker dinners, BYOB lunches and tutored tastings. The fact that women have long been excluded from wine's inner sanctum, she says, means "they are now entering the world with fresh eyes and opinions – they're really going above and beyond to see what the next new market trends and hip producers might be." [cotewineclub.com](http://cotewineclub.com)



FENDI x CHUPA CHUPS LEATHER LOLLIPOP HOLDER NECKLACE, £520



EATING

## This really sucks

The lollipop is back, says *Ajesh Patalay*

If anyone was under the illusion that lollipops were just for kids, Fendi artistic director Kim Jones is here to disabuse them. Alongside the Aran knitwear, mink and shearling that featured in the brand's AW24 show, the designer included a series of Chupa Chups lollipop holders, worn as necklaces and looped around bags. Constructed from the brand's signature Selleria leather, these luxurious baubles were ridiculous but fun. They did what any quirky accessory on the runway is meant to – generate publicity and consumer desire.

The holders also marked the latest coup for the Spanish lollipop maker, which was founded in 1958 and acquired by Italian Dutch company Perfetti Van Melle in 2006. The brand's logo was designed by Salvador Dalí and its lollies have been endorsed by the likes of Kate Moss, Madonna and the 1998 World Cup-winning French football team. The Chupa has always been a better class of lolly.

Chupa Chups' success reflects a wider boom in lollipops. While kids remain the primary market, US market research shows about a third of baby boomers and two-thirds of Gen Z and millennial consumers now purchase lollipops on a regular basis. Healthy sales owe in part to premium and speciality versions. Alongside classic fruit flavours such as apple, strawberry and orange, you can now suck on nine-million-Scoville "Toe of Satan" chilli lollipops ([flamethrowercandy.com](http://flamethrowercandy.com)); cosmopolitan and margarita alco-lollies (like those from hollysollies.co.uk) and functional suckers, such as those made by 8Greens, packed with spinach, kale and chlorella. Depending on their location, US consumers can also buy lollipops infused with CBD or THC.

Of course, lollies have long been cultural signifiers, from *Lolita* to *Kojak*, but on TikTok lollipops have become a prism for

a whole range of antics, from ASMR lickers to more wholesome #candymeup-pers to fans dancing along to lollipop anthems by Puerto Rican rapper Darell or J-pop boyband Lil League. It was on TikTok that I first discovered Amos music lollipops, which use bone conduction to enhance the experience of listening to tunes. Consuming one is like having a small transistor radio in your cheek that tastes of candy.

At the prestige end of the market, California-based Amborella Organics produces botanical lollipops in flavours such as strawberry and basil, vanilla and hibiscus and blood orange and elderflower. Each lolly contains an heirloom flower or herb on a seed-bearing stick; they were originally conceived to help kids develop an understanding of nature. Over time, however, the company has developed a following among 20- to 35+-year-olds who are drawn to its natural flavours and sustainable outlook. Companies like Google, Armani Beauty, Marc Jacobs and L'Oréal hand them out as gifts.

Amborella is about to launch a watermelon and chilli lime lollipop with the Frida Kahlo Corporation that grows into a Mexican thumb watermelon. "It's the experience, the nostalgia that transports people back to being a kid," says co-founder Taylor Clarke of their appeal. "Receiving one sparks happiness and joy." ■HTSI

@ajesh34

### YOU CAN NOW SUCK ON A NINE-MILLION-SCOVILLE "TOE OF SATAN"

Left: CHUPA CHUPS strawberry lollipop. Right, from left: AMOS music lollipop, from \$16.99 each. AMBORELLA ORGANICS blooming lollipop, £6 each. 8GREENS Super Greens lollipop, \$16 for 10. FLAMETHROWER CANDY Toe of Satan lollipop, \$7



# HOW TO SPEND IT IN...



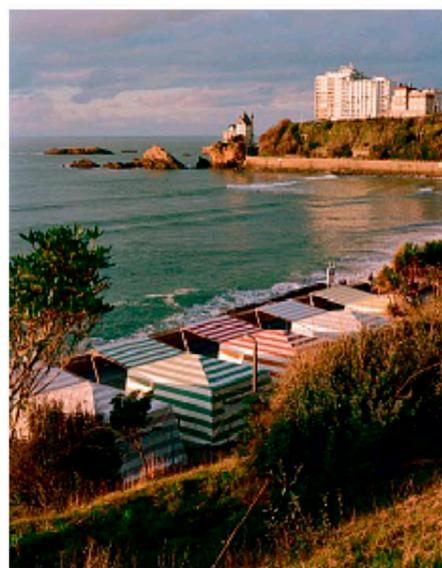
Above: Lucy Chadwick in Miremont tearoom (also pictured right). Below left: fresh anchovies and beurre noisette at De Puta Madre. Bottom centre: Chadwick outside at Miremont



**B**iarritz has a charm that connects directly to the sea. The waves reign supreme – stores have been known to close when they get too big. That lends an ease to life: everything is kept in perspective by the pull of the Atlantic. I first visited at the age of eight, with some family friends who have had a home here since the 1960s. Something about the place grabbed me and I convinced my family to begin an annual pilgrimage. I grew up in London, but every time my feet hit the land here I felt at home.

We decamped to Biarritz from New York in 2020. My husband [the hairstylist Duffy] was working in Paris when all the airports started to close. We had an apartment in Biarritz at the time and decided to meet there. What began as a temporary stay turned into a permanent move.

After more than a decade working as a gallerist in New York, I was keen to open a gallery somewhere that could foster a different kind of engagement. It had always surprised me that the contemporary art behemoth hadn't found its way to this corner of the world. In July 2021, I opened Champ Lacombe with no real understanding of what the reception would be like; very quickly I started getting regulars. My dream would be to have some fellow galleries here, as community helps to sustain and develop an audience long-term.



Right: Chadwick on the Côte des Basques. Below: Rocher de la Vierge headland. Below centre: beach cabins on the promenade



BIARRITZ IS TEMPERAMENTAL, WHICH YOU EITHER LOVE OR IT'S NOT FOR YOU

Biarritz is actually best in winter. The low-lying sun, dramatic sea and shift in pace after the summer means you can really enjoy the best of the region. I've also learnt its discretion. Biarritz is not somewhere that puts on a show or lends itself to airs and graces. It's temperamental, which you either love or it's not for you. I live in the centre of town, in the midst of the organised chaos, and a five-minute walk from our main gallery space (we have a second gallery 40 minutes inland, in Les Landes). Les Halles food market is my first stop every morning: Lobita serves the best coffee in town.

I also live opposite Miremont, one of the oldest regional tearooms founded in 1872. It's best on a rainy day when you can watch the storm over the sea from the main window. Make a stop at Maison Adam, founded in 1660 and known for the most addictive macarons – they're not the Ladurée variety but a chewier Basque style. It also makes a great regional classic, Gâteau Basque à la Cerise, a cherry pie. And don't miss Maison Arostéguy, the oldest family-owned delicatessen in France, with wall-to-wall jars of spices, teas and wines.

Michel Pujol, the vintage bookseller, is only open for a few hours a day, but it's worth catching him for piles of rare and fascinating finds. I also religiously visit Fadead Vintage for the best vintage Levi's outside the US. My favourite flea market is along the banks of the river in Bayonne every Friday. Watch a pelota game too – the local ball game is a rite of passage.

For restaurants, Chez Albert in the old fishing port is great for seafood. Café des Artistes is a classic bistro with delicious steak frites, run by close friends; Cheri Bibi has insanely fresh ingredients; and De Puta Madre, founded by the family behind the guesthouse Villa Magnan, is an essential visit when it opens in the summer. The latter is an extraordinary place to stay – a living, breathing theatre set, complete with resident donkey.

For most special occasions we congregate on the steps on the seafront at the Côte des Basques, where I have memories of family picnics that turned into community get-togethers. The best picnics are the simplest – fresh cheese, baguette, salad from Les Halles. After our summer gallery opening last year we had 35 pizzas delivered to the beach and laid them out on the concrete. Everyone grabbed a beer or went for a swim. We emerged to find people carrying a grand piano down the steps. The beach turned into a classical music festival – it was so magical and elemental. ■HTSI

## BIARRITZ

Gallerist Lucy Chadwick on the Gallic cool of her seaside home

INTERVIEW BY **ELLIE PITHERS**  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **NEIGE THÉBAULT**

### WHERE TO STAY

**Villa Magnan** [villamagnan.com](http://villamagnan.com)

### BARS & RESTAURANTS

**Café des Artistes**

[cafedesartistesbiarritz.com](http://cafedesartistesbiarritz.com)

**Cheri Bibi** [cheribibi Biarritz.com](http://cheribibi Biarritz.com)

**Chez Albert** [chezalbert64.fr](http://chezalbert64.fr)

**De Puta Madre**

[deputamadre-biarritz.com](http://deputamadre-biarritz.com)

**Les Halles de Biarritz**

[halles-biarritz.fr](http://halles-biarritz.fr)

**Maison Arostéguy**

[arosteguy.com](http://arosteguy.com)

**Miremont** 1B Place Georges

Clemenceau, 64200 Biarritz

### SHOPPING

**Fadead Vintage**

[@fadead.vintage](http://fadead.vintage)

**Les Halles de Biarritz**

[halles-biarritz.fr](http://halles-biarritz.fr)

**Maison Adam** [maisonadam.fr](http://maisonadam.fr)

**Michel Pujol** 1 Rue Champ

Lacombe, 64200 Biarritz

### CULTURE

**Galerie Champ Lacombe**

[champlacombe.fr](http://champlacombe.fr)

# LOEWE

Paula's Ibiza 2024  
Photographed by Gray Sorrenti

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[louisvuitton.com](http://louisvuitton.com)

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