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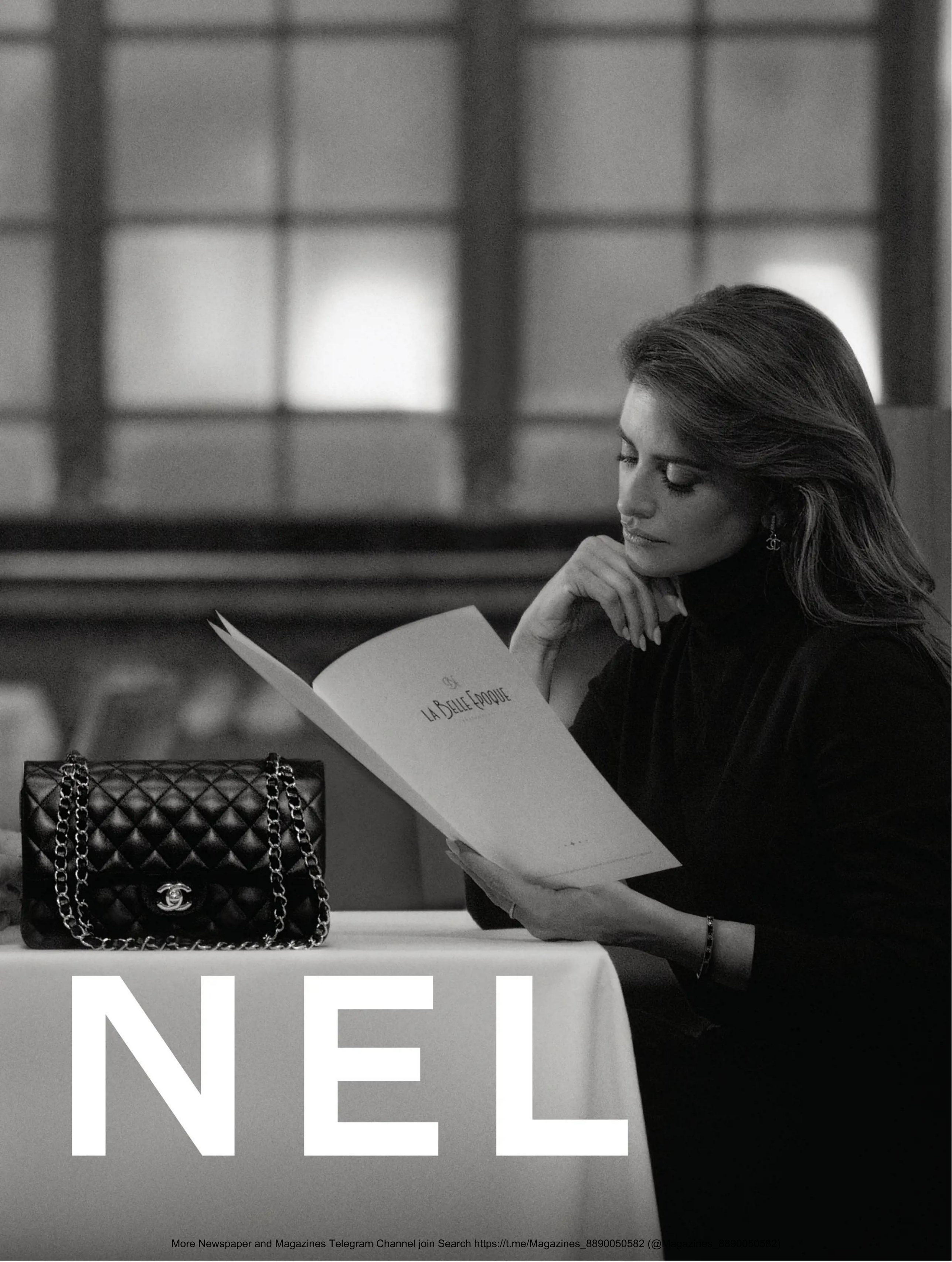

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Isamaya Ffrench

An invitation to dream.

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LITTLE SIMZ WEARS SHIRT, £940, MIU MIU. EARRINGS, LITTLE SIMZ'S OWN. PHOTOGRAPH: EKUA KING. STYLING: GEORGIA MEDLEY. HAIR: AMIRAH AJIKAWO. MAKE-UP: NIBRAS. NAILS: MICHELLE CLASS AT LMC WORLDWIDE. SET DESIGNER: JULIA DIAS. STYLIST'S ASSISTANT: SABRINA LEINA. TAILORING: CHLOE CAMMIDGE

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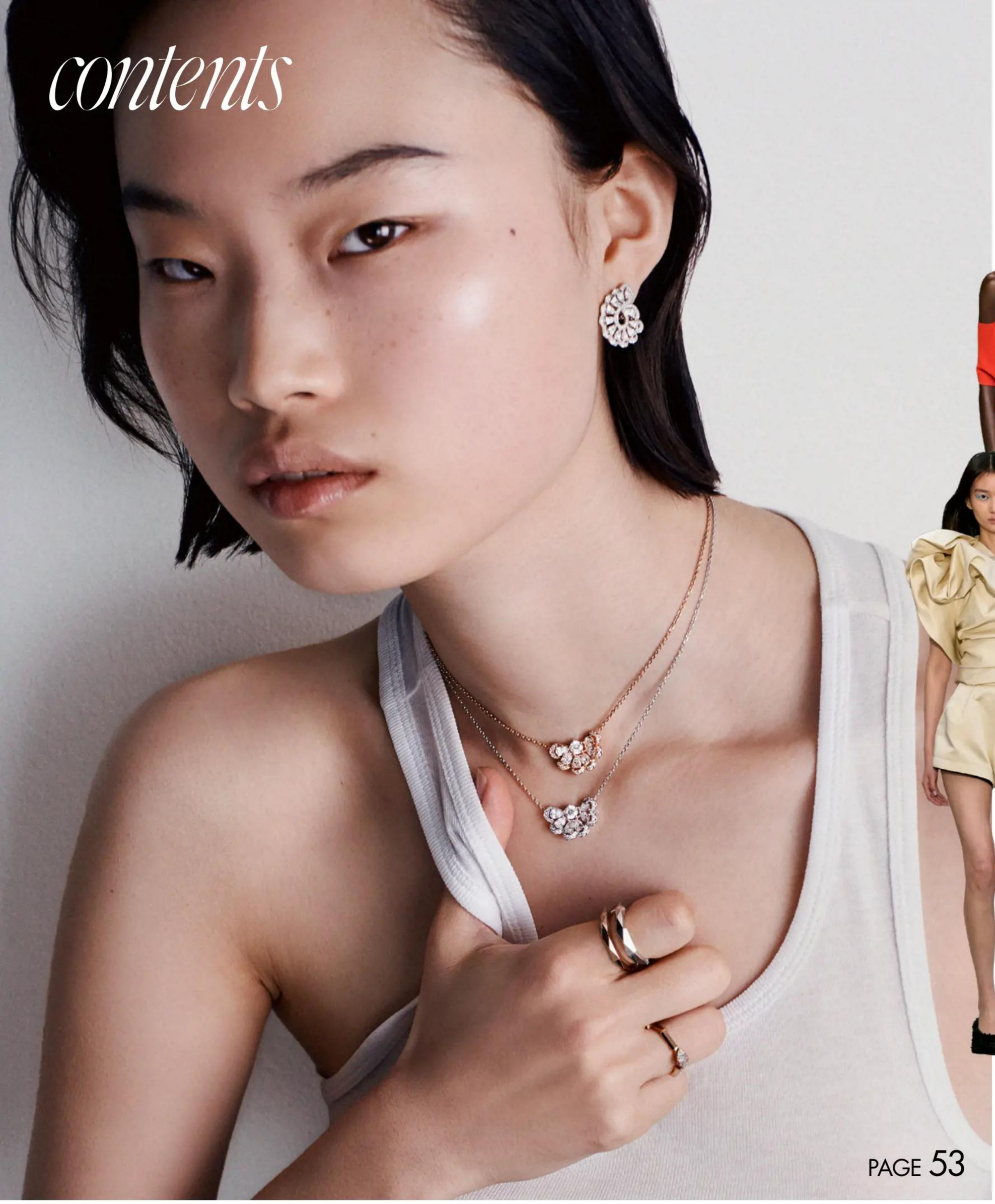

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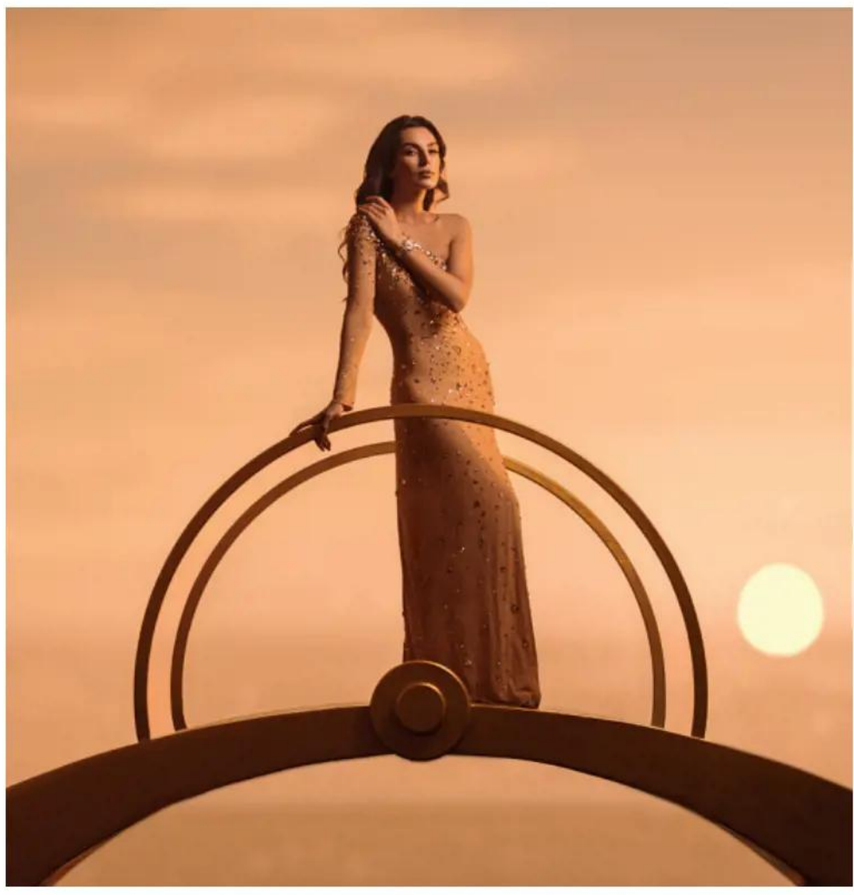

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editor's letter

I ENCOUNTERED A NEW TERM WHILE READING *The Guardian* recently: *vorfreude*, which is a German word describing the anticipation of joy. Research shows that the simple act of looking forward to something can reduce stress levels and promote a greater sense of happiness. *Vorfreude*. It doesn't exactly roll off the tongue but sums up this time of year so perfectly: when the clocks have finally changed and the Summer Fridays inch closer and you have a holiday, all booked, to count down the days to.

Vorfreude is also a fitting word to describe this issue, which we've packed with all the things we're looking forward to most this summer. Top of the list: our cover star Little Simz, who will be taking on the Pyramid stage for the first time at Glastonbury this summer. It will be a high in a year that has seen the Brit Award winner and *Top Boy* cast member walk the Miu Miu runway and release a critically acclaimed EP, *Drop 7*. She's leading a generation of women musicians achieving fame and dominating the charts on their own terms, independent of the record-label power structures of old. 'I've built everything brick by brick,' she tells Hattie Collins in her cover interview ('Quiet power', page 78.) 'I make music that represents a certain point in my life, and I let it go.'

LIVING JOY
TOP LEFT: THIS MONTH'S COVER STAR, THE UNSTOPPABLE LITTLE SIMZ

Letting go is the mood of the moment when two major wars, economic uncertainty and a climate crisis continue to define our new normal. Amid all of this, there is something to be said for exultant release. And it can come in many shapes and forms. For example, during the Paris couture shows, editors were delightfully surprised, and then moved to tears, at John Galliano's now legendary, and viral, Maison Margiela show. It was a collection that stopped the viewer in her tracks and compelled her to feel something. As Claudia Croft writes ('Flights of fancy', page 30), the dreamlike experience was a welcome reminder of fashion's power to offer up a portal to another world and an entirely new way of thinking and seeing – escapism at its best.

And then there is the joy to be found in the other kind of escapism: the great travel getaway. Too often, vacations become synonymous with self-optimisation, a reality that has birthed an entire economy of wellness retreats – holidays that are holidays in name only because they're filled with the very real work of becoming healthier, more mindful, more fit, less stressed; the list goes on. But as Naomi May argues on page 120 ('Have we reached peak retreat?'), sometimes the best way to achieve all those things is to put down the turmeric, take off the wearables and switch off.

To help you get started, we've put together our first ever ELLE travel awards (page 148), rounding up the most awe-inspiring locations to visit here in the UK and afar, and our first travel-inspired fashion edit ('The great escape', page 70) to give you plenty of ideas for what to pack and wear once you get there.

In the spirit of *vorfreude*, may the anticipation be just as delightful as the destination.

KENYA HUNT Editor-in-Chief

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contributors

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TESS McMILLAN

Since being scouted on Instagram in 2016, Tess McMillan has gone on to sweep the fashion world. When she's not modelling, you'll find her in her painting studio – which has no windows. 'Six uninterrupted hours in there, and you forget that you belong to the real world,' she says. 'It's my idea of escapism.' When it comes to the art forms that inspire her in her modelling work, silent-film stars are high on her list. 'It's how Clara Bow could say everything with a subtle parting of the lips and lifting of the eyebrows.' In this issue, Tess is featured in our main fashion collections story.

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TAMISON O'CONNOR

ELLE's new Fashion Features Director Tamison O'Connor has spent much of her journalism career covering the inner workings of the global fashion industry, working at *The Business of Fashion* for nearly seven years before joining ELLE. But of all the fashion destinations around the world she's visited, she still holds a soft spot for her home town, London, long a seedbed of creativity and design talent. This month, she sits down with Marco Capaldo, one of the fastest-rising stars of the city's fashion scene.

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ZARAH SULTANA

A crucial voice in politics today, Zarah Sultana is the Labour Member of Parliament for Coventry South. Her journey in politics began back in 2011, but she won her seat in 2019. Since then, she has continuously fought for better rights for marginalised communities. 'Politics is the business of hope… We have to be hopeful,' she says. In this month's issue, she explains why bullying of women MPs has come to a head – and why it won't stop her fighting for a better world.

PAGE 78

HATTIE COLLINS

A pioneer in the music industry, Hattie Collins was the music editor of *i-D* magazine and, since 2019, has been the host of Proud Radio on Apple Music 1. She has profiled everyone from Beyoncé and Adele to Rihanna. What inspires her the most? 'Music, life and amazing writers like Aniefiok Ekpoudom and Sylvia Patterson.' This month, for our cover story, she interviews Little Simz about her new album and headlining Glastonbury. Hattie's soundtrack of the summer is: 'Simz, and incoming albums from I Jordan, Cakes da Killa and Fletcher.'

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Flights of fancy

An epic fashion fantasy for the ages, John Galliano's Maison Margiela Artisanal show was a reminder of how powerful it can be to escape into unfettered creativity

WORDS BY CLAUDIA CROFT

AS THE FIRST FULL MOON OF THE YEAR REFLECTED ON THE RAIN-soaked pavements of Paris, the scene was set for one of the most memorable fashion moments of the decade. John Galliano was about to close the SS24 couture season with an era-defining Maison Margiela Artisanal show. It not only demonstrated his sublime talent but also transcended catwalk conventions, taking the idea of a fashion show as far into the realm of performance art as possible. More than a collection, it was a manifesto for the importance of creativity and self-expression, coming as it did in a season where real clothes and straightforward presentations took precedence over soaring fantasy.

A secret doorway under the Pont Alexandre III bridge became a portal to Galliano's alternative universe: a seedy, turn-of-the-century Parisian speakeasy strewn with the detritus of a riotous party. A cast of demi-monde characters that evoked a gas-lit era of bygone bohemia and deadly decadence strutted, scuttled, preened and posed their way through the venue under the genius movement direction of Pat Boguslawski. Models wore extreme hourglass silhouettes with padded hips, their waists acutely cinched by corsets, with merkins (pubic wigs) clearly visible beneath some sheer, bias-cut gowns. Their faces were painted by Pat McGrath to look like porcelain dolls, with hair piled into a fin de siècle frizz on top of their heads by Duffy; *WWD* described it as a Toulouse-Lautrec painting come to life.

Galliano had unleashed something – an energy so pure in its creative expression, so shocking (haute pubes!) that it took your breath away. The commitment to craft and the desire to produce moments that provoked an emotional response marked a significant vibe shift away from spreadsheets and It bags, shareholders and global growth plans. At a moment when the industry feels more commercially driven than ever, Galliano offered a tantalising alternative: here was an invitation to dream.

The appeal felt particularly poignant against the current backdrop: trust in politics and the goodness of human nature is at a low; women's rights are being rolled back; hate speech is on the rise. This immersive show offered a glimmer of hope. When ugliness and conformity reign, there is something brave in daring

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the moment

LOST IN COUTURE FROM LEFT: GWENDOLINE CHRISTIE WALKING THE 2024 MAISON MARGIELA COUTURE SHOW; LOOKS FROM BALENCIAGA AW24; DILARA FINDIKOGLU AW24; SHALOM HARLOW AT ALEXANDER McQUEEN SS99

to believe in beauty and celebrating an alternative life in which the outsider is the hero.

A few weeks later, at Paris Fashion Week, Balenciaga's Demna challenged showgoers to consider the role played by artistry and imagination within the fashion industry today. 'What seems truly rare and finite right now is actually creativity itself,' he said in a voice note sent out before his AW24 show. 'I believe that creativity has secretly become a new form of luxury.' He then set out to prove his point with a fully immersive catwalk experience, where the entire show space – floor, walls, ceiling – became a screen for a cacophony of AI-generated imagery, while the clothes wittily transformed everyday items such as bras and three-pack vests into grand creations. It was a masterpiece of staging, using the visual overload of AI-driven content to comment on relentless consumerism and demonstrate Demna's antidote.

It's not just megabrands with deep pockets that can cut through the noise. My stand-out autumn/winter 2024 show was Dilara Fındıkoğlu. Put together on a shoestring budget and staged in a disused church in Shoreditch, it was a visceral howl at the moon against toxic masculinity and a paean to the power of the feminine. With movement direction by Boguslawski (he of Margiela couture fame), the models inhabited their looks and owned their sexuality. You felt their power – and that was the point.

Alexander McQueen understood this, and it's why his work still resonates today. 'I know I'm provocative. You don't have to like it, but you have to acknowledge it,' he said. His shows always took you on a journey of the imagination – with darkness and light, wonder and shock equally present. He proved that beauty without the darkness is meaningless, and he also reflected the issues of the day back onto the audience, using the catwalk as a platform for discovery and discourse.

I remember Shalom Harlow being sprayed by robots for SS99 and, in that same show, amputee model Amiee Mullins walking on exquisitely carved prosthetic legs – the first time I'd seen a disabled model on the runway. Plato's Atlantis, his internet-breaking spring/summer 2010 collection (the final catwalk presentation before his death), prophesied fashion's digital era: it was the first to be live-streamed, but the clamour to hear Lady Gaga's exclusive soundtrack crashed the feed. With its theme of a future world in which ice caps would melt and humanity would need to evolve in order to survive, it also spoke to the climate emergency.

With their imaginative staging and glorious clothes, McQueen's shows were at once an escape from reality (armadillo shoes; dresses with gills) and a reflection of our times – the good, the bad and the ugly. He knew that fashion is at its most potent and powerful when it is about something.

One of the most profound catwalk moments I experienced was the Hussein Chalayan show in 2000, where a coffee table ingeniously transformed into a skirt. I'll never forget the sense of wonder when the model clipped it onto her belt and elegantly walked away. How did he do that? And why? Chalayan, a British-Cypriot designer who immigrated to the UK, was exploring migration and the idea of being able to take only what you could carry. It didn't make me want to wear a table, but it did inspire me to buy Chalayan's more accessible pieces, because I wanted to feel part of a brand that was so intellectually and visually stimulating.

That same urge exists today. Expect to see more Maison Margiela Tabi boots and Pat McGrath make-up palettes sold than ever before, as fans show their allegiance to the idea of the catwalk as a springboard to explore the joy of losing and finding yourself in fashion.

It's often dismissed as an art form, but Galliano, Fındıkoğlu, Demna and Chalayan showed that fashion can communicate complex emotions and nuanced messages; that it can be a medium for many forms of creativity, bringing together different genres of art and craft and galvanising a creative community around a moment and a look. If the industry at its most basic is about persuading us to buy things we don't need, these shows had added value. Fashion can be a carnival of creativity and a celebration of the imagination. That kind of freedom is life-affirming. □

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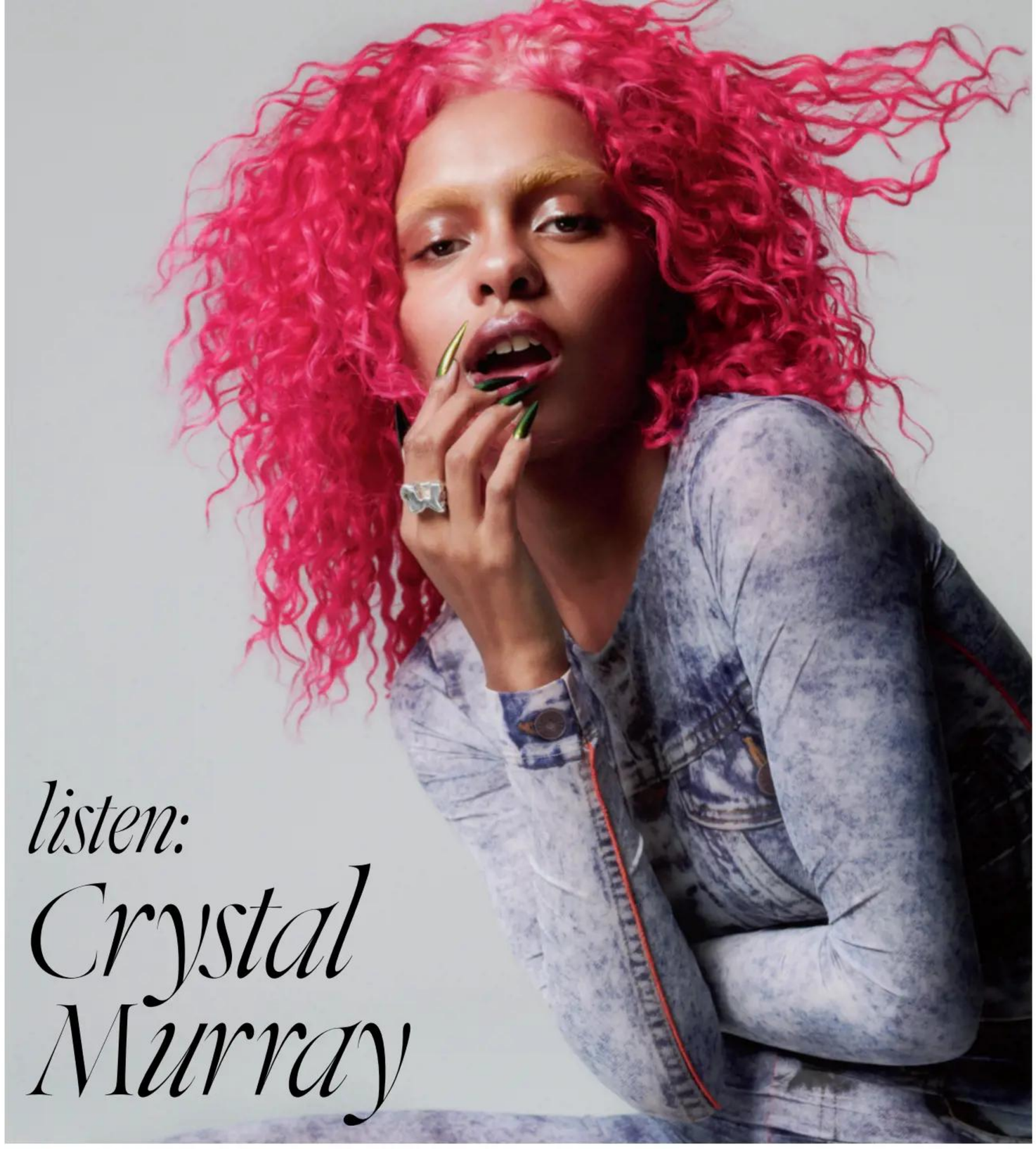

listen: Crystal Murray

Having reached Parisienne It-girl status at the age of 12 as part of French fashion collective Gucci Gang, the now 21-year-old is turning her innovative eye to music. Blending R&B, soul and high-energy club tracks, the scene-stealing singer is one to watch, with her debut album out 17 May.

eat: The Med

Spring signals a return to fresh Mediterranean cuisine. This month, David Carter – founder of east London's Manteca – will open the doors to Oma, a restaurant inspired by the Greek islands and the flavours of the Levant, while Morchella – the latest venture from the team behind Perilla – is a Clerkenwell wine bar offering full-flavoured small plates including Sicilian fish stew.

watch: Love Lies Bleeding

British director Rose Glass, who terrified us all with 'Saint Maud', is back with a new A24 release: 'Love Lies Bleeding', an electric love story. Reclusive gym manager Lou (Kristen Stewart) falls hard for Jackie (Katy O'Brian), an ambitious bodybuilder headed to Vegas in pursuit of a dream.

PHOTOGRAPHS: MELISSA DE ARAUJO, IMAXTREE, COURTESY OF A24

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buy: Cult trainer

Celine's new sporty shoe is simple in shape and timeless in style. Wear with an oversized sweater, à la Princess Di, on the Sunday coffee run, or pair with tailoring for a cool take on office dressing. This trainer's versatility knows no bounds.

Trainers, £790, CELINE

visit: Zanele Muholi, Tate Modern

Having documented South Africa's Black LGBTQIA+ community since the early 2000s, Zanele Muholi's major retrospective features over 260 photographs, capturing charged moments of love, intimacy, power and adversity. A true pioneer of photography, the acclaimed artist, born at the height of apartheid, prefers a label that reflects their political agenda: visual activist. Opens 6 June.

wear: Bubble hem skirts

Move over floor-skimming Y2K denim maxis; there's a new skirt in town. Full, bouncy hemlines were ubiquitous across the SS24 shows – case in point: the metallic mini-dresses of Dion Lee and Nicklas Skovgaard. Feben paired subversive prom dresses with smart shirting, while Altuzarra played with proportion and polka-dot print.

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Art school

Relish the fuss-free this season by looking to the clean lines and bold colours of the Bahaus movement. Designers leaned into the 20th-century German design school's legacy for spring/summer 2024, with saturated primary and monochrome hues sweeping the collections at Givenchy, Acne Studios, Chloé and Proenza Schouler. Whether you go head-to-toe Yves Klein blue or juxtapose a pop of crimson against sunshine-yellow suiting, pass up ornamentation for function and simplicity, and let your avant garde palette do the talking

WORDS BY TAMISON O'CONNOR

TOD'S
FERRAGAMO
JACQUEMUS
VICTORIA BECKHAM
AZ FACTORY
AKRIS
PROENZA SCHOULER
FERRAGAMO
FENDI
MIU MIU
AKRIS
MARNI
ELIE SAAB
ACNE STUDIOS
CHLOE
ACNE STUDIOS
TOD'S
SPORTMAX
AZ FACTORY
16ARLINGTON
ACNE STUDIOS
ISSEY MIYAKE
GIVENCHY
SHIATZY CHEN
AKRIS

PHOTOGRAPHS: IMAXTREE, GETTY IMAGES

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In conversation: Miranda July

Her new novel is a fierce coming-of-middle-age story, five years in the making. Here, the artist explains why she wrote the book for all women

INTERVIEW BY LUCY HUNTER FORD
PHOTOGRAPH BY ELIZABETH WEINBERG

I'M ONLY ON THE SECOND PAGE OF Miranda July's latest novel, *All Fours*, when I start highlighting: '...that funny little abandoned feeling one gets a million times a day in a domestic setting', she writes. Like a fan-girl, I read it aloud to her when we meet over Zoom, July speaking from the book-lined office in her new LA home. 'It's funny, you're not the first person to read that line to me,' she says, laughing. 'That's one of those things I wrote being like, I guess I'll just write that as if everyone knows what I mean, when, in fact, I'm pretty sure I'm the only one'.

July is *far* from being the only one. The multi-hyphenate creative has the extraordinary ability to distil near-universal female experiences into a single sentence, invariably underpinned with her trademark fearless vulnerability and searing wit. Unsurprisingly, she has a devoted following. Her artistic output is remarkably diverse: she's written bestselling short-story collections, directed and starred in a Cannes-award-winning feature and numerous other films, and her first solo art exhibition, 'Miranda July: New Society', is currently showing at Milan's Osservatorio.

If that wasn't enough, at 50, she has now written the definitive, albeit fictional, guide to the burn-it-all-down, radicalising and yet incomprehensibly ignored chapter of a woman's life that is the menopause. The book, her second novel, follows the journey of an unnamed forty-something semi-famous artist in a coming-of-middle-age story. Sound familiar? 'My best friend can read it and be like, wow, it's so weird how none of this happened and yet it's all

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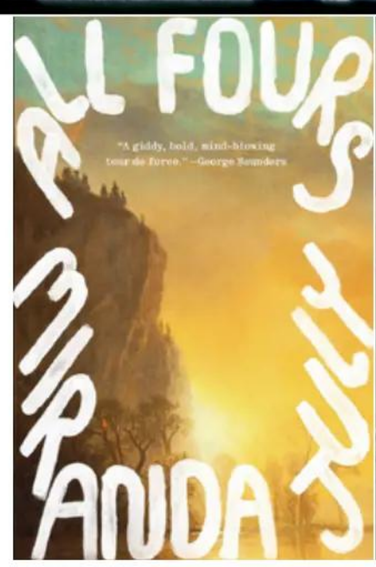

FORCE OF JULY LEFT: MIRANDA JULY. CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: WITH JOHN HAWKES IN *ME AND YOU AND EVERYONE WE KNOW* (2005); AN INSTALLATION AND A VIDEO STILL FROM HER NEW EXHIBITION IN MILAN; HER LATEST NOVEL, *ALL FOURS*

the truth. Some people will just be like, oh, well, it's her. I have this problem worse than any other writer because of the career that I've made, and maybe that's a tool to be used. I know it's fiction, but the fact that a lot of my audience has grown up alongside me, that's a useful thing to loan to the character.'

She wrote the novel over five years, as 'a companion to this important stretch of life that is super-mapless. There is the narrowest, most shadowy understanding of what my future – physically, sexually and intimately – as a mother, artist and woman, might look like. So I was like, oh! This is wide open, in ways that are depressing and exciting, because anything you discover that's not what you were told is electric. It's hiding in plain sight. Do all older women know the psychedelic state of this transformation period? Is that a given?'

She is aghast at the paucity of medical support, or information, that women are offered. 'Almost every week a friend texts me and says: "OK, so tell me everything. When I brought this up with my doctor, she said it would be fine and I didn't need to do anything unless I was suicidal." The whole medical system is built around men's bodies, which aren't as complex. It's not scientific; it's terrifying.'

Culturally, it's similarly uncharted territory. 'We need varied and different accounts. [We need] operas and movies. If this was something that happened in men's bodies, we'd have it from the Greeks. It would be seen as a man coming into his power… it would be the bedrock of our society.'

July describes writing the book not as a creative challenge, but as a calling. 'I've never made anything like this before. I did it to save my life, and to change my life, and it did.' And not just her own; she wrote it as a manifesto. 'I'd sit next to a woman at a party and it's like you're spies exchanging information. And each time something like that happened, I would go back to my computer and be like: I'm writing for *her* now. I had this very challenging but very ecstatic feeling through the whole time that all the women of the world were with me. I wasn't alone; this was for them.'

After finishing the book, July feels settled. She recently separated from the film-maker Mike Mills, whom she married in 2009, and moved into her own rental a few blocks away while they happily co-parent their 12-year-old son Hopper. She's just finished renovating, and proudly gives me a tour. 'I'm making everything how I want it. One reason that it makes me so happy is my child gets to see who I really am,' she tells me.

'It's a weird thing that the process to getting here is like you failed at something. That's not how Mike and I approached it. It was long, slow and kind of powerful. I really do feel hopeful that these relationship institutions could begin to evolve so that you could be a young woman and aspire to have long and short relationships, and a child, and have times when you live alone… but it's not just one "till death do us part", which is sort of completely insane.'

It shouldn't be the case, but a woman writing about the sometimes blisteringly explicit experience of ageing still feels courageous. 'It felt very risky. I felt like I was outing myself,' she agrees. 'Even just the basic level of: I look pretty youthful, I could probably get by for a bunch more years with people being vague about how old I was. But what reward am I forfeiting? This is what's happening in my body. All I could come up with was that maybe if I age gracefully, that is quietly, and just keep trying to look nice then I will be ignored less meanly than if I talk about it. I think I'll take my chances. This conversation with other women is actually what's going to sustain me in the second half of my life. That is a reward worth risking for.' □

'All Fours' is out 16 May, published by Canongate

PHOTOGRAPHS: VALENTINA SOMMARIVA, COURTESY: FONDAZIONE PRADA, PHOEBE SUDROW, COURTESY OF IFC CENTER, NEW YORK

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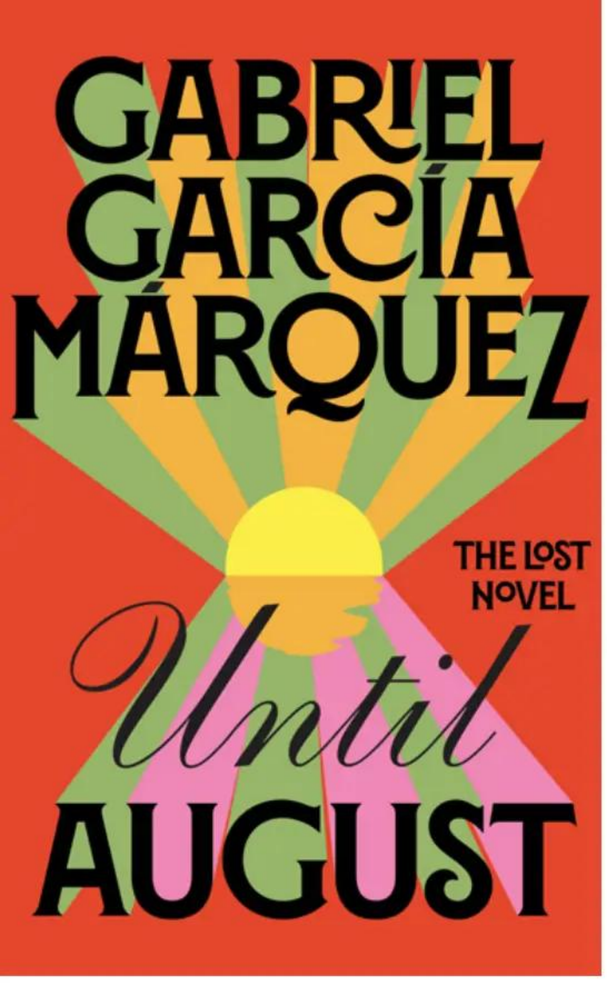
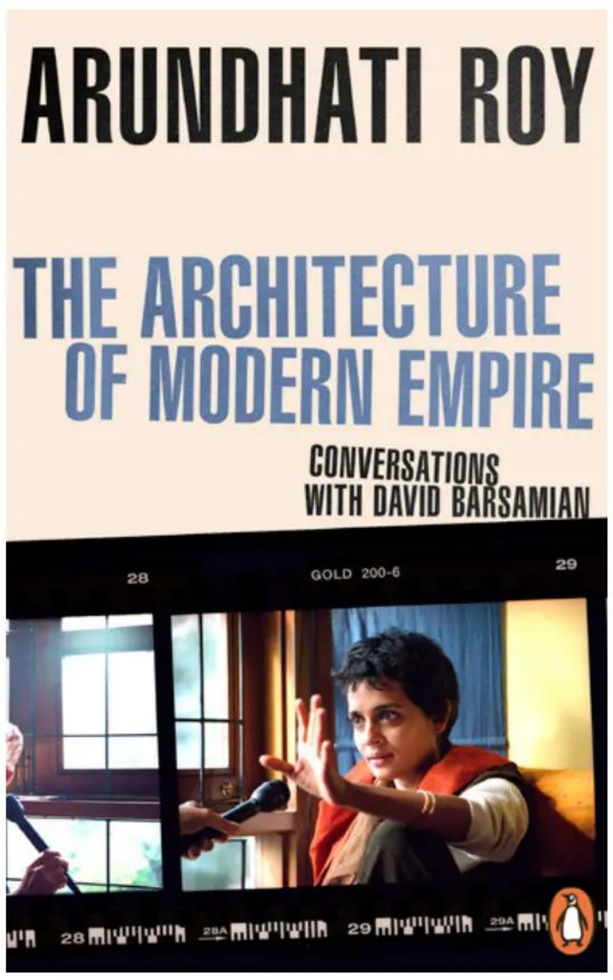


Turn the page

It's a bumper season for books. From must-reads to status stores, here's how to lose yourself in literature this summer

WORDS BY PANASHE NYADUNDU



The big sunny reads

Nothing ruins a trip like the wrong book – make room in your suitcase for ELLE's pick of the blockbuster pairings of the summer

FOR DESERTED BEACHES:
UNTIL AUGUST *by Gabriel García Márquez*
During her annual island retreat, Ana Magdalena Bach does the unexpected and takes a new lover for one night despite being happily married. This story examines love and regret.

FOR HISTORICAL SIGHTSEERS:
THE ARCHITECTURE OF MODERN EMPIRE *by Arundhati Roy*
If everything is feeling a bit hopeless, let Roy light the way with her literary craft and political convictions in this new book on justice and solidarity.

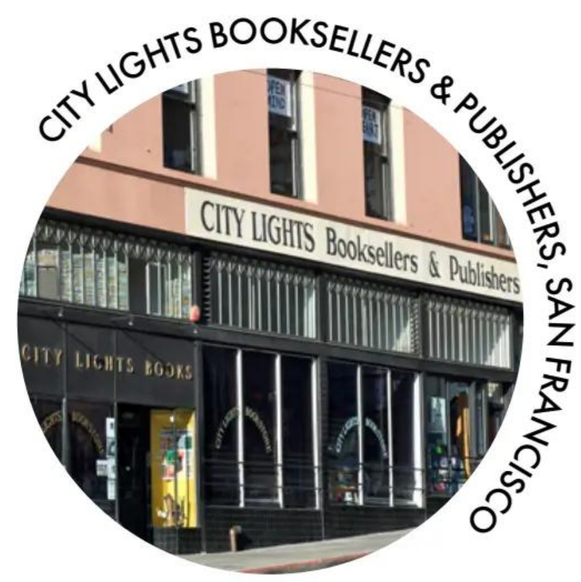
FOR GROUP FAMILY TRIPS:
PARADE *by Rachel Cusk*
How do we live with others? This kaleidoscopic tale, diving into multiple lives, shows how art, family and gender shape who we are and how we see the world. An enthralling read.

FOR COUNTRYSIDE ESCAPES:
ENLIGHTENMENT *by Sarah Perry*
Two improbable best friends, Thomas and Grace, unite over a love of the stars. With luminous prose and rich characters, you'll get lost in the pages.

DESTINATION BOOKSHOP

Leave your novels at home for an excuse to make dipping into a store part of your sight-seeing must-dos

SALTED BOOKS, LISBON



CITY LIGHTS BOOKSELLERS & PUBLISHERS, SAN FRANCISCO

HONESTY BOOKSHOP, HAY-ON-WYE, WALES

PHOTOGRAPHS: LAUREN GRANT, ALAMY

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1

2

3

4

CARRIED AWAY

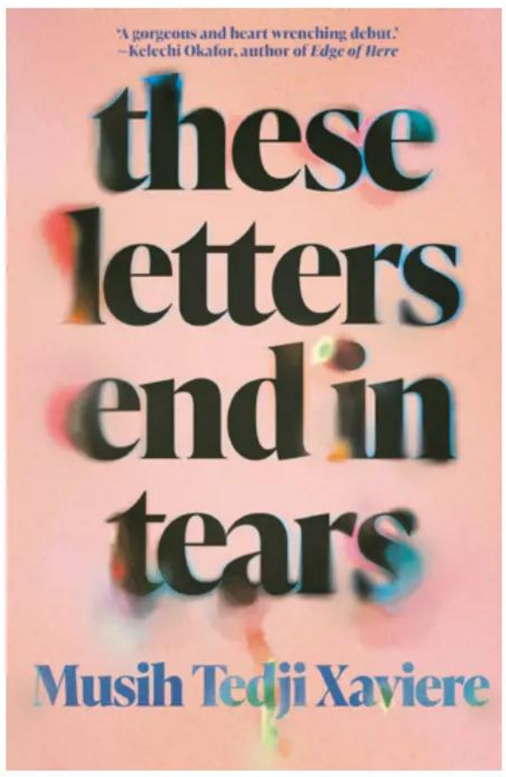
Bags to fill to the brim with summertime reading

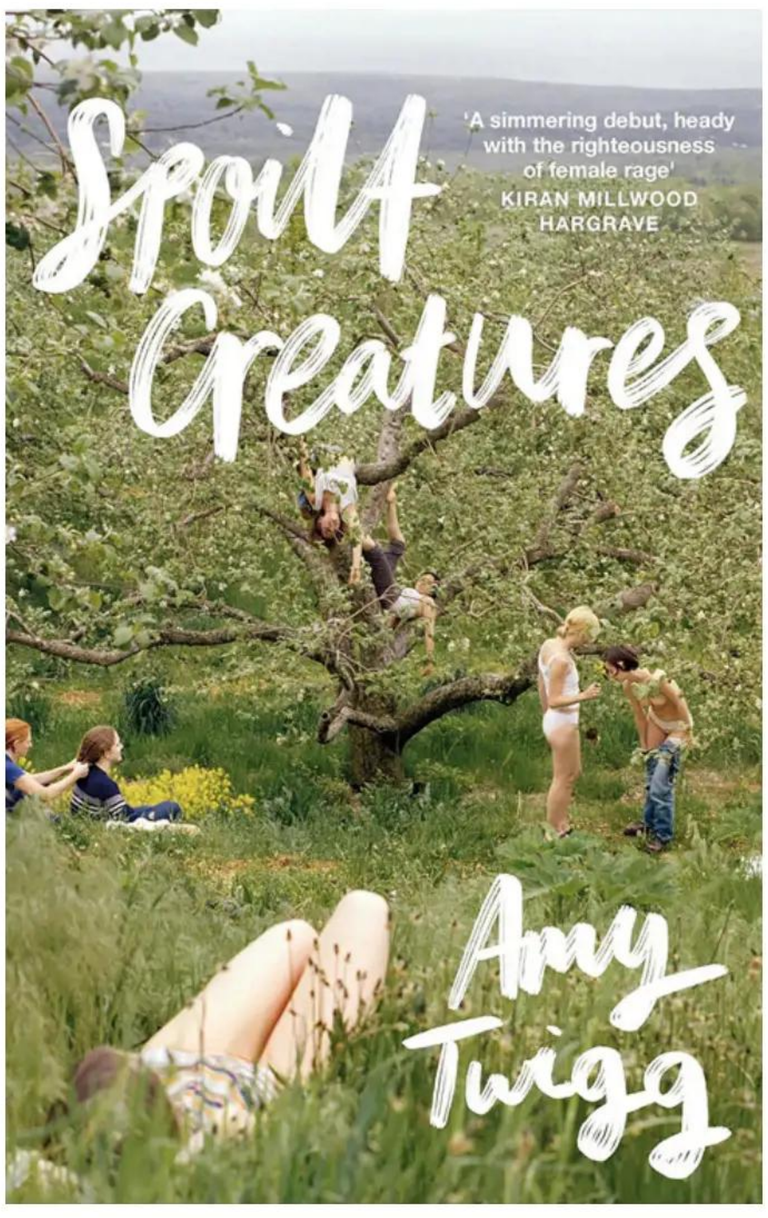
1 £24.95, THE LITERARY GIFT COMPANY
2 £10, DAUNT BOOKS
3 £10, V&A
4 £12.95, PENGUIN

Debut discoveries

Women's communes, queer love now and unrequited passion... these first novels deserve space on your bookshelf

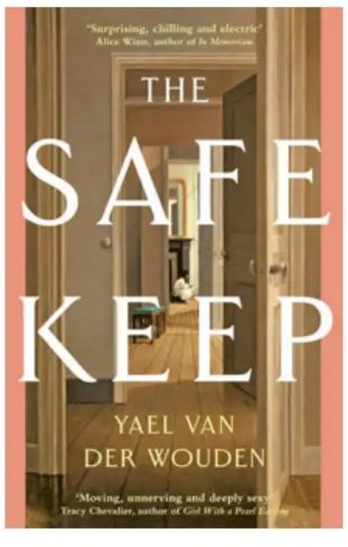
THESE LETTERS END IN TEARS *by Musih Tedji Xaviere*
A star-crossed lesbian modern love story of Bessem and Fatima who meet on a football field but are separated. Thirteen years later, follow the story of lost love. Gut-punching.





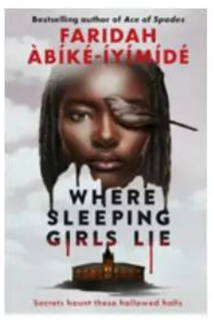
SPOILT CREATURES *by Amy Twigg*
This firecracker of a debut is about a secluded women's commune on a remote farm in Kent. Expect power struggles and explorations of female rage.

THE SAFEKEEP *by Yael van der Wouden*
Mesmerising and lyrical, this historical novel, set in 1961 follows Isabel whose quiet rural life is turned upside down by the arrival of her brother's new girlfriend Eva.



WHAT ARE YOU READING NEXT?

'I cannot stop thinking about *Blue Sisters* by Coco Mellors, a beautiful, messy, love- and grief-filled book. It is a breathtaking novel, and I found great comfort in reading it. This book is so expertly crafted, it moved me deeply and I think I'll reread it again soon.'
Liv Little, author of 'Rosewater'



'I'm not generally into young-adult books but Àbíké-Íyímídé's debut *Ace of Spades* is an exception – it was a pacy, intriguing page-turner that I breezed through. I'm therefore very much looking forward to her next mystery novel, *Where Sleeping Girls Lie*, and hopeful for the plot twists and red herrings we got from her first. Plus, she's a fellow British Nigerian author from Croydon – got to represent!'
Yomi Adegoke, author of 'The List'

'I'll be reading Lotte Jeffs' *This Love*, which has been called the queer *One Day*. *Memory Piece* by Lisa Ko highlights a trio of friends and is perfect for fans of *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow* by Gabrielle Zevin. Cosy crime is a reader's fave and (aunty) Paula Sutton serves us the genre with *The Potting Shed Murder*.'
Sharmaine Lovegrove, publisher at dialoguebooks.co.uk

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1 Dress, £2,080 **2** Dress, £1,510 **3** Shirt, £640 **4** Skirt, £1,325, all SUPER YAYA

STYLE

Introducing: Super Yaya

Meet Rym Beydoun, the designer celebrating West Africa with garments that are chock-full of colour and packed with personality

WORDS BY ENI SUBAIR

RYM BEYDOUN'S BRAND SUPER YAYA IS A LOVE LETTER TO West African culture. As a fourth-generation child of a Lebanese immigrant family, she spent her childhood painting by the sea in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, and rummaging through her parents' clothes to help them put outfits together. Even after a stint studying in London and a decade living in Beirut, her passion for the city where she was raised shines through in her vivid garments.

Beydoun launched her label in 2015 after graduating from Central Saint Martins, where she studied womenswear. Initially, she was a team of one, working tirelessly to grow her boot-strapped brand and even modelling the collections herself, taking selfies in the clothes she created. This approach only strengthened the fun, playful spirit of the brand she was building. And now cool girls such as Solange Knowles, Paloma Elsesser and Alexa Chung are wearing her creations.

Today the brand is embarking on its next chapter. After an injury in 2020 forced Beydoun to press pause on her business and take some time out, she's now relaunched the label with more structure in place, hiring a team of 20 to support her. But the essence of the work remains: an exploration of texture and a celebration of artistry.

Her clothes are as intricate as they are loud – think woven leather microskirts, T-shirt dresses with hand-shirred detailing and colourful, chequerboard-style ruched tops paired with tactile, poofy microskirts. Most of the work is done by hand, at the brand's atelier in Beirut, using fabrics dyed in Côte d'Ivoire. Even the name Super Yaya pays homage to her upbringing: 'Yaya' is a common unisex name in the region, while 'Super' is a nod to slogans used in African commerce and advertising.

'Fashion is a part of the lifestyle,' says Beydoun. 'People still buy fabrics and have them measured to their bodies. There's a couture sensibility.' This vision clearly plays out in the brand's new autumn/winter collection, titled 'Soyons Heureux' – or 'Let's be happy'. Inspired by her wedding, she wanted to design pieces that evoked joy amid such a troubling political climate. 'Despite everything, we can have reasons to be happy,' she says.

The clothes themselves are quintessential Super Yaya. Her signature 'Weave' mini has been reimagined in peach and white; halter-neck dresses and culottes are affixed with bows, while a ruched chartreuse top-and-skirt set embodies the lively spirit of the label.

'I wanted to keep working with wax prints and locally produced materials that are birthed from West African culture, such as bazin,' she notes. 'There's a freedom in not being dependent on a factory or an atelier.'

The designer plans to build up Super Yaya's made-to-order service, so her customers can commission bespoke creations. But fashion is only the beginning; Beydoun has ambitions to expand beyond ready-to-wear into new categories such as homeware and interiors. 'I don't want to stick to just making clothes,' she says. 'I see Super Yaya as a project – and the aim is to broaden everything.'

A PROFILE BY DESIGN
RIGHT: RYM BEYDOUN. TOP LEFT: WEARING PIECES FROM HER AW24 COLLECTION

PHOTOGRAPHS: ALICE NEALE, COURTESY OF SUPER YAYA

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Summertime soirées

From mood lighting to French fries served on silver platters, this is how to host the ultimate summer party, according to the fashion set. The decadence is in the detail

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

'Finding a unique venue isn't easy,' says Jack Bryant from production agency Bryant Projects, which has executed a range of starry events from Netflix's Baftas afterparty to our very own ELLE Style Awards. 'Sometimes, the best way to go about this is to step away from Google and search on the ground. When I started over 10 years ago, I used to cycle around the city looking for buildings or structures that could be adapted. Fashion parties require incredible lighting, as the content captured during the event is what lives on. Then, think about how guests will move, where they get their first drink, how they transition to dinner and where the highlights will be. We meticulously plan every step of the guest experience, from invitation to departure.'

PRIORITISE YOUR PLAYLIST

From Afrobeats to R&B, the right music sets the mood. Take the lead from the season's runway music and try a mixtape of Sade, as played at the AW24 Valentino show, or stick to a crowd-pleaser with Beyoncé's 'Ya Ya' on repeat.

LIVE OUT YOUR FLORAL FANTASY

'Decide on a significant place to focus the flowers rather than spreading them across the whole room. This will create magnificent floral backdrops for guests to take their picture in front of,' says Talena Lowther, head florist at JamJar Flowers. 'Think of ways to include the unexpected – a surprising little moment that gets the guests talking, such as interesting vessels, fruit and vegetable towers or a vine like cobaea that runs down the table'.

MAKE THE FOOD YOUR TALKING POINT

Whether it's a mountain of churned butter next to crisp baguettes, French fries served on silver platters or bowls of cherries tumbling across a table, have fun with your food. Want to be inspired? Follow Cellar Society's Bertie de Rougemont – he and his troupe of creative culinary artists have catered events for Balenciaga to Miu Miu.

DRINKS MUST BE CHILLED

Ditch the espresso martini and try a coffee negroni or Mexico City's most popular drink, a carajillo, made with espresso and Licor 43 and poured over ice. The caffeine will ensure your guests are partying until the early hours.

DRESS TO IMPRESS

'Now is the time to have some fun with your clothes,' says Tamison O'Connor, ELLE's Fashion Features Director. 'Lean into colour; break out the statement jewels; and don't shy away from a fun print. For those partying into the night, nothing says a good time quite like embellishment: metallic hues and sequin details are sure to sparkle during the balmy sunlit evenings.'

MAKE MAGIC MOMENTS

'For me, the best parties develop throughout the night, revealing the unexpected,' says Bryant. 'I love to add at least one surprise element to any event – this could be anything from a secret bar to a performance. While essentials like readily available drinks and great music are fundamental, it's the extras that transform a gathering from good to exceptional.'

WORDS: LENA DE CASPARIS. PHOTOGRAPHS: JAMES KELLY, JASON LLOYD EVANS

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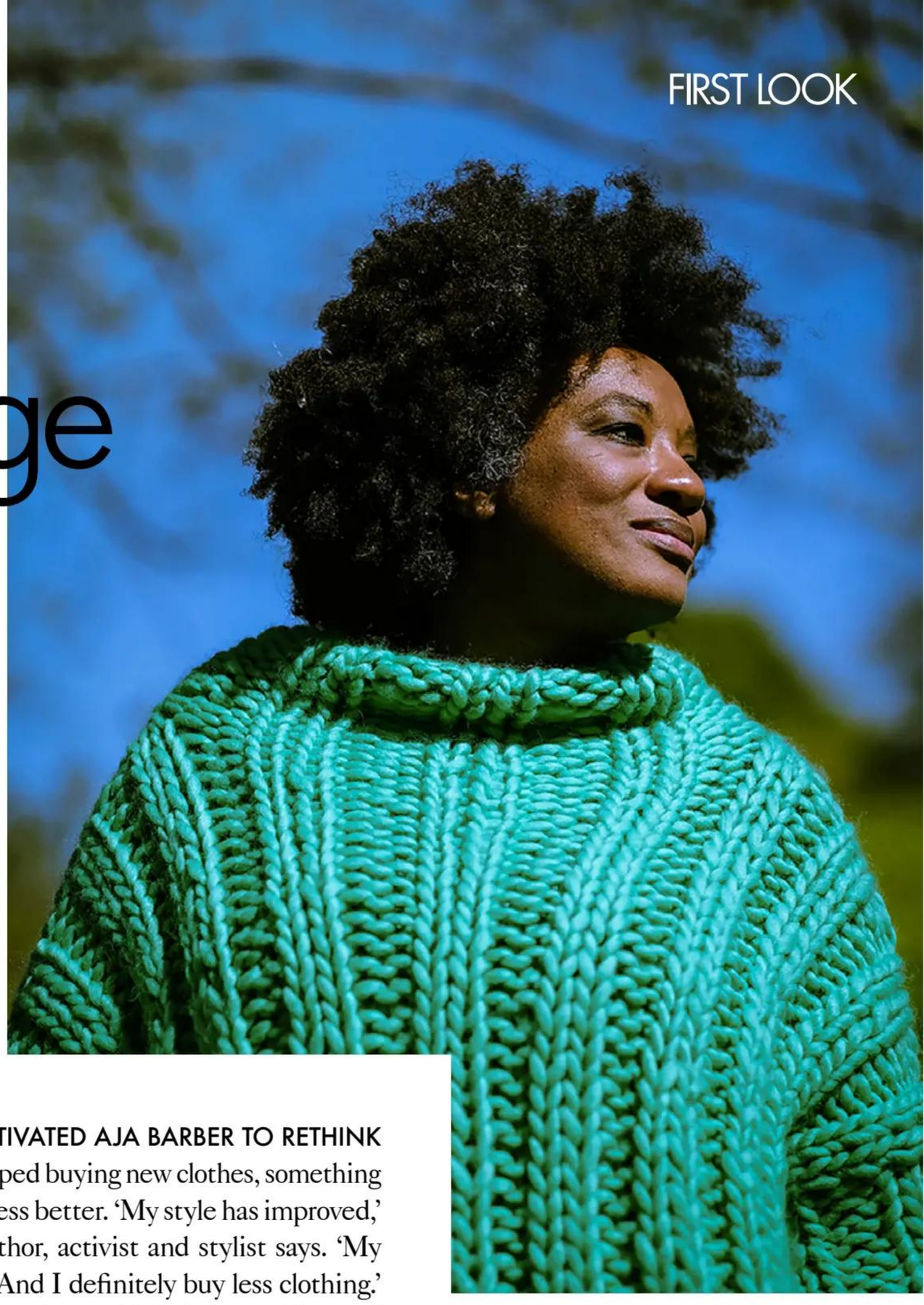
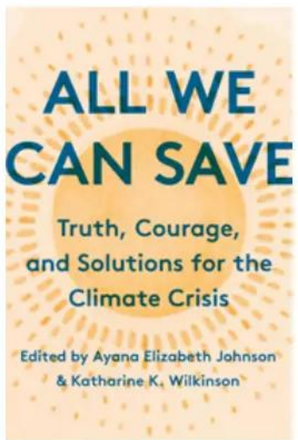
Threads of change

Introducing our new monthly column dedicated to the creatives, innovators and thought leaders who are pushing sustainability back to the top of fashion's agenda. To kick us off, author Aja Barber tells how she reshaped the way she consumed fashion – and why her wardrobe has never looked better

WORDS BY TAMISON O'CONNOR



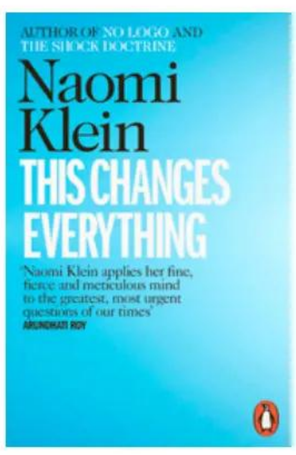
CONSUMED: THE NEED FOR COLLECTIVE CHANGE *by Aja Barber*



ALL WE CAN SAVE: TRUTH, COURAGE, AND SOLUTIONS FOR THE CLIMATE CRISIS *edited by Ayana Elizabeth Johnson and Katharine K Wilkinson*

BOOK EDIT

Aja's recommended reads



THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING *by Naomi Klein*

TO DIE FOR: IS FASHION WEARING OUT THE WORLD? *by Lucy Siegle*

PHOTOGRAPH: STEPHEN CUNNINGSWORTH

IT WAS THE CLIMATE CRISIS THAT MOTIVATED AJA BARBER TO RETHINK the way she shopped. But when she stopped buying new clothes, something unexpected happened: she began to dress better. 'My style has improved,' the American-born, London-based author, activist and stylist says. 'My wardrobe is better than it's ever been. And I definitely buy less clothing.'

There was a time, Barber recalls, when she was 'definitely participatory' in the consumption-driven system. About 15 years ago, the high street was her go-to and she didn't think about how much clothing she was buying. But as she learned more about the impact of her purchasing habits on the planet and the people who made her clothes, she changed her approach: she bought less and practically stopped buying new. Now, she says, her style is more thoughtful. And the clothes she buys are more special. She's patient, too, often waiting months to find what she's looking for on the resale market. On the rare occasion she does buy from a brand, it's from an ethical label (like those featured on this page).

Barber says clothes are too readily available. Thanks to Instagram and e-commerce, everything is just a click away. 'Everywhere you turn, there's a shopping opportunity.' It's a big shift from when she was growing up, she says. 'That [realisation] horrified me.'

Today, the vast majority of Barber's wardrobe is made up of second-hand pieces by her favourite designers, sourced on eBay or Vestiaire Collective; she's always on the lookout for anything from Dries Van Noten, Comme des Garçons or Junya Watanabe.

'When you give yourself certain parameters for how you buy and consume, it really forces you to think outside of the box and be a little bit more imaginative with what you're purchasing. And that can result in a really interesting shift in your personal style,' she says.

Barber's advice for those who want to shop more mindfully? 'Take a purposeful pause from buying clothes. Take a break from the apps. Let your brain reset,' she says, adding that unsubscribing from clothing brands' mailing lists is a good first step. 'We're in this place where everything moves so quickly, it's almost like a hamster wheel of consumption. We have to take a break, so we can start thinking about these systems differently.'

CLOTHING EDIT

Aja's picks

Jeans, £275, ELV DENIM

Dress, £170, LORA GENE

Sandals, £188, KKERELĒ

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The skinny-jean comeback

Are you ready to plunge into something a little tighter? The denim gods have spoken and the Noughties' most divisive trend is officially back. The models kicked it off, with Emily Ratajkowski, Bella Hadid and Lila Moss all seen on the street in skin-tight drainpipes. Then fashion's greatest arbiter, Miuccia Prada, weighed in, sending tighter-than-tight denim down Miu Miu's AW24 runway, teamed with office-appropriate loafers. Now, TikTok feeds are rapidly filling with content suggesting myriad ways to style the skinny for 2024 – with ballet flats, power blazers or tucked into cowboy boots, in case you were wondering. It seems there is truly no escaping them – it's time to embrace the spray-on style

WORDS BY NAOMI PIKE

PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES, IMAXTREE, ALAMY

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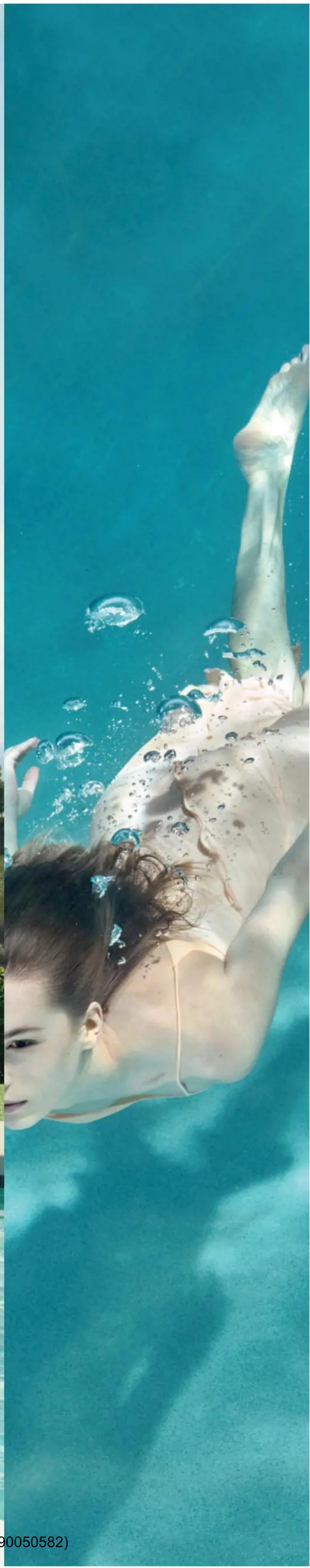
VICTORIA BECKHAM × MANGO



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Stack it up

Statement jewellery is taking the spotlight this season. Look to decadent drop pendants, multi-layered ear cuffs and mixed-metal rings to illuminate the Nineties-minimalism revival unfolding this summer. Wear with white vests, crisp cotton shirts and body-con dresses

Earrings and stacking rings (left and right), £90 each, all PANDORA.
Gold and diamond ring, £5,190, FOPE. Shirt, price on request, VALENTINO

PHOTOGRAPH: SILVIA DRAZ. STYLING: HOLLY GORST

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Right hand: gold and diamond bracelet, price on request, and matching ring, £8,650, both BULGARI. Left hand: gold and diamond rings (left), from £4,750, both BULGARI. Rose gold and diamond ring, £2,590, FOPE. Top, £780, PRADA. Bralette, price on request, VICTORIA BECKHAM

NEW IN

The finer details

Elevate your everyday with delicate gold and diamond jewellery. Pieces from Bulgari, Tiffany & Co and Cartier promise to deliver timeless elegance with minimal effort

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SILVIA DRAZ STYLED BY HOLLY GORST WORDS BY ENI SUBAIR

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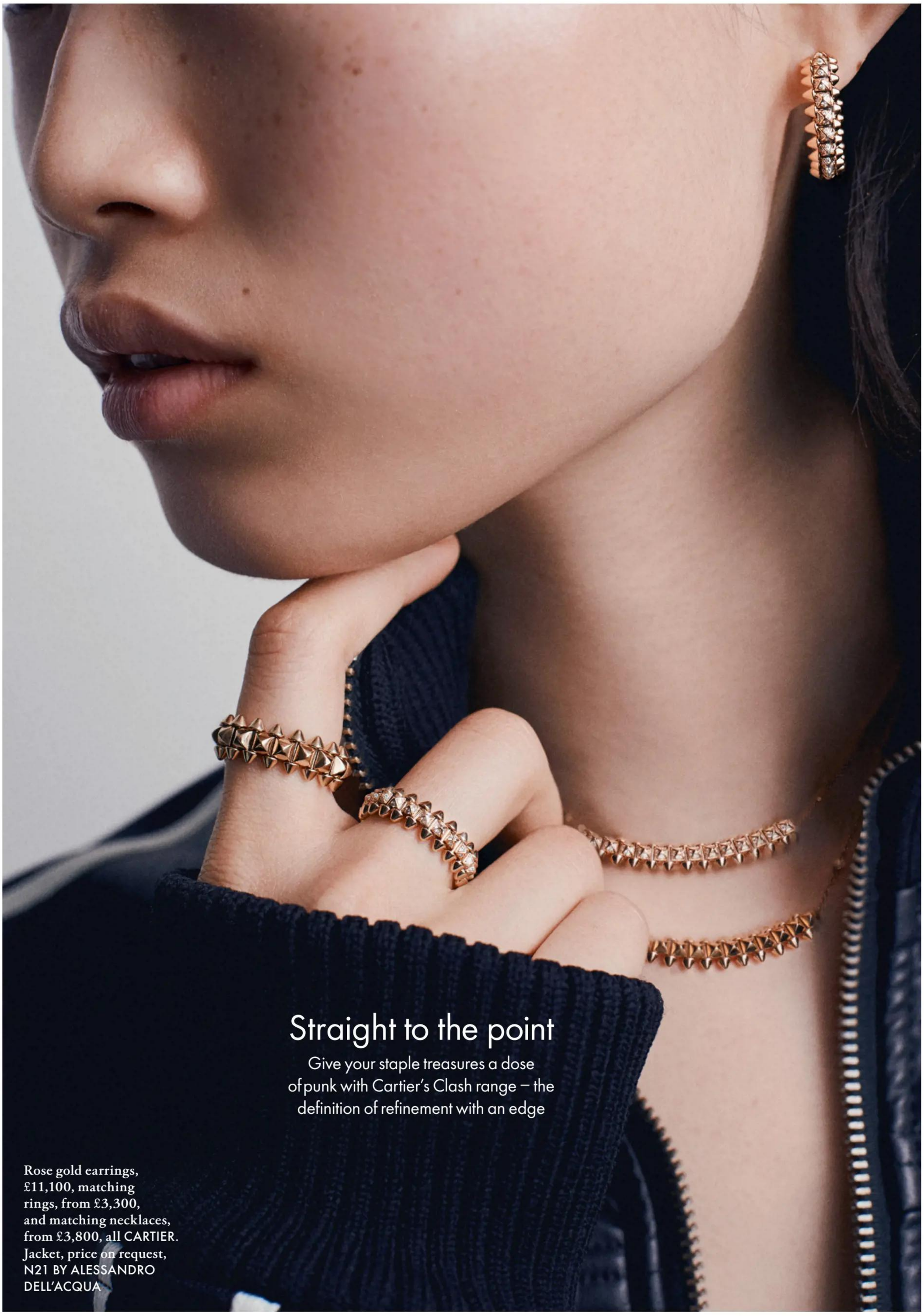

Straight to the point

Give your staple treasures a dose of punk with Cartier's Clash range – the definition of refinement with an edge

Rose gold earrings, £11,100, matching rings, from £3,300, and matching necklaces, from £3,800, all CARTIER. Jacket, price on request, N21 BY ALESSANDRO DELL'ACQUA

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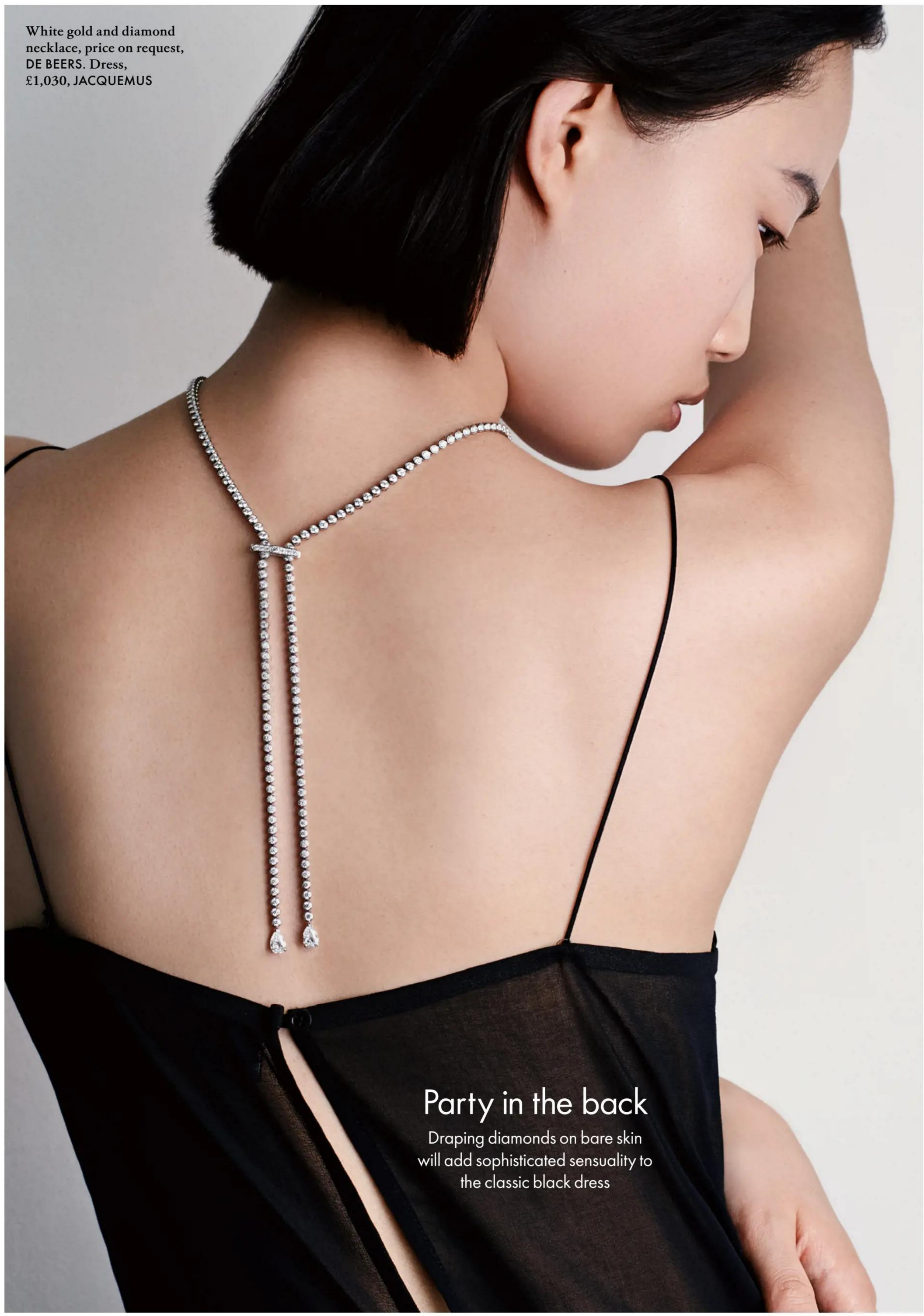

White gold and diamond necklace, price on request, DE BEERS. Dress, £1,030, JACQUEMUS

Party in the back

Draping diamonds on bare skin will add sophisticated sensuality to the classic black dress

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Twists and turns

A gently sculpted piece will lift any look. To make a subtle statement, reach for an intricate style such as Dior's ribbon-inspired piece

White gold and diamond necklace, price on request, and matching ring, £6,850, both DIOR JOAILLERIE. Ring (left), £195, GIOVANNI RASPINI. Bodysuit, £1,440, COURRÈGES

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The golden rule

Layering chunky gold chains is always a good idea – especially when you're wearing head-to-toe black

Gold and diamond earrings, £6,700, gold necklace, gold and diamond bracelet (left), both price on request, and gold bracelet, £6,975, all TIFFANY & CO. Coat, £3,205, bra, £615, and briefs (just seen), £395, all MICHAEL KORS COLLECTION

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White gold and diamond earrings and matching necklace, both price on request, DE BEERS. White gold and diamond ring, price on request, BULGARI. Jacket, £4,900, LOUIS VUITTON

More is more

Can't choose between the earrings and the necklace? Make a statement and go with both

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Playful proportions

Maximise the joy of a raw-hem puffball skirt with stacked bangles and an eye-catching ring

White gold and diamond ring, price on request, CHOPARD. White gold and diamond bracelets, from £8,350, and white gold bracelet, £4,520, all CHANEL FINE JEWELLERY. Top, £1,470, and skirt, £2,450, both MIU MIU

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White gold and diamond earrings, matching necklace, and rose gold and diamond necklace, all price on request, CHOPARD. White and rose gold ring (top), £3,000, and rose gold and diamond ring, £2,470, both GUCCI FINE JEWELLERY. Top, £175, STELLA McCARTNEY

HAIR: Chris Sweeney at One Represents. MAKE-UP AND NAILS: Nina Sagri, using Westman Atelier, Chanel Le Vernis in Ballerina and Chanel La Crème Main. STYLIST'S ASSISTANT: Jess Miller. MODEL: Wenli Zhao at Next Model Management

Vested interest

A plain white tank is a summer essential. Take it to the next level by mixing metals and layering delicate chains

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NEW IN

Cult status

Shopping for a new bag? Seek out pared-back shapes with statement hardware for styles that will never date. Splurge now: these chic picks from Celine, Prada and Louis Vuitton will see you through every season

PHOTOGRAPHS BY OTTO MASTERS STYLING BY HOLLY GORST WORDS BY NAOMI PIKE

Bag, £2,650, LOUIS VUITTON

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Blazer, £1,800, trousers, £1,500, necklace, £450, cuff, £1,990, bag, £1,550, and heels, £1,250, all GIORGIO ARMANI

Blackout

Boxy shapes in smooth leather help keep suiting sharp. Highlight subtle gold accents with co-ordinating chunky jewellery

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Jacket, £1,930, briefs, £600, skirt, £660, belt, £480, and bag, £2,600, all MIU MIU

True neutral

Beige is never bland when it's Miu Miu. Add depth to a head-to-toe look by experimenting with different textures and tones

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Jacket, £3,850, and jeans, £790, both CELINE PLEIN SOLEIL BY HEDI SLIMANE. Sunglasses, £440, and bag, £2,450, both CELINE BY HEDI SLIMANE

French fancy

Channel your inner Parisienne by dressing down Celine accessories with a butter-soft leather jacket and jeans

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Coat, £3,500, and bag, £4,400, both PRADA

Hold tight

Prada's Buckle bag is the new classic to keep close. ELLE's favourite? The immaculate bone-white iteration

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Jacket, £9,005, shorts, £4,700, belt, £3,170, and bag, £5,830, all CHANEL

HAIR: Yoshitaka Miyazaki, using Oribe. MAKE-UP: Jinny Kim, using Chanel Les Beiges Summer Spirit and Chanel Hydra Beauty Lip Serum. NAILS: Maddy Ayer,s using Qtcl Nail Care. STYLIST'S ASSISTANT: Jessica Miller. MODEL: Patrycja Piekarska at Elite Model Management

The long and short of it

A quilted Chanel bag never goes out of style. The reasons to love this elongated version go on and on

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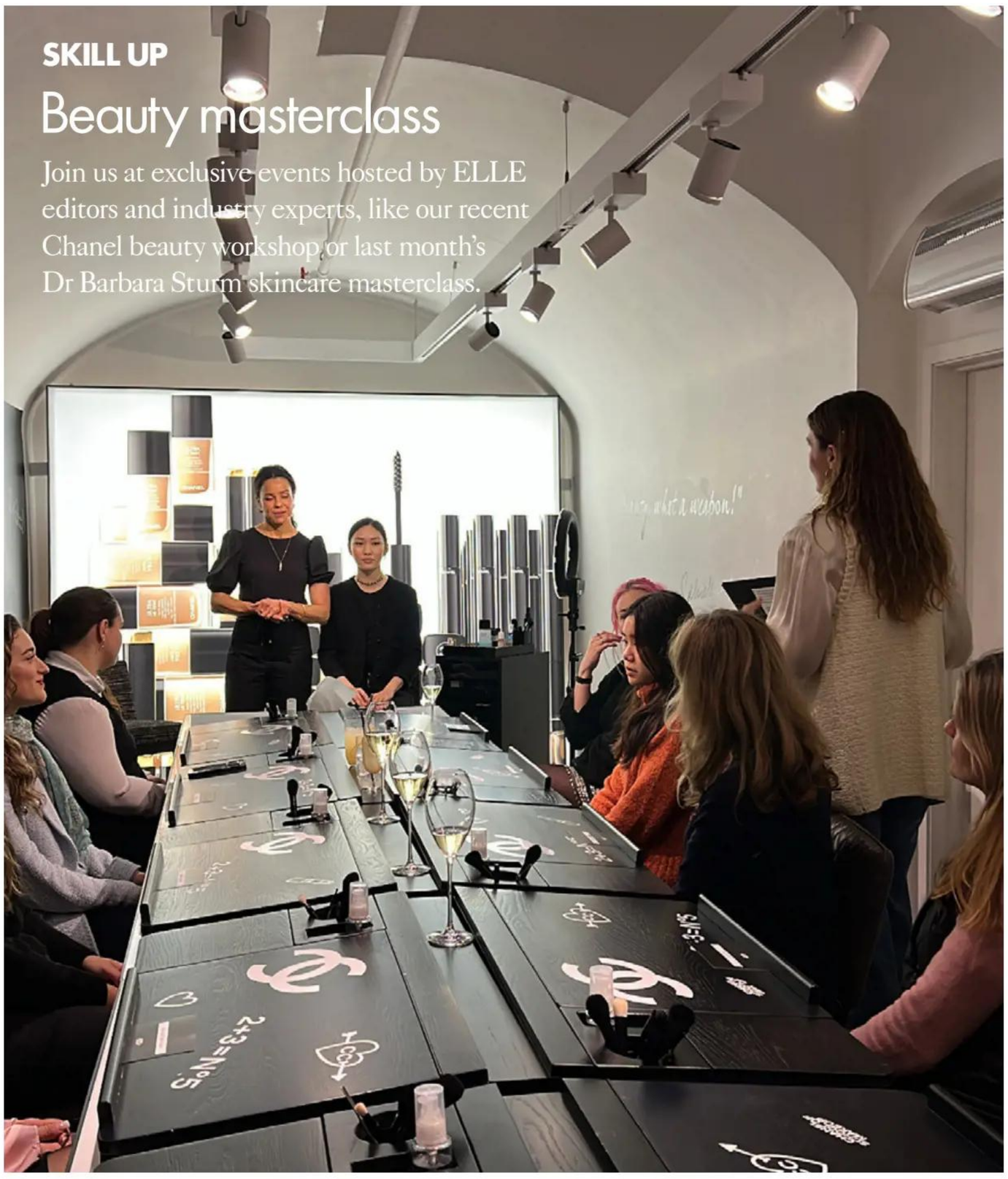


SKILL UP

Beauty masterclass

Join us at exclusive events hosted by ELLE editors and industry experts, like our recent Chanel beauty workshop or last month's Dr Barbara Sturm skincare masterclass.

SHOP LIKE AN EDITOR

Modern heirlooms

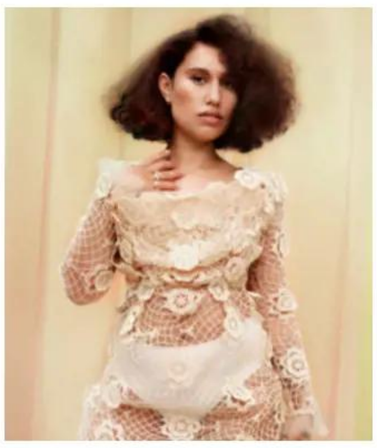
20% off

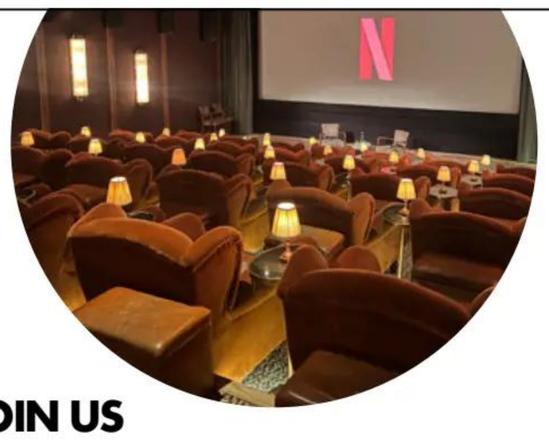
Collective members can claim 20% off Aligheri jewellery right now.

FIRST LOOK

Fashion yourself like a cover star

ELLE fashion editors break down iconic cover-shoot looks, including those worn by Raye and Little Simz, and offer up styling tips.





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PHOTOGRAPHS: CLAY GARDNER, SERENA BROWN, BRENDAN FREEMAN, EKUA KING

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The great escape

Planning a summer getaway? Take cues from the new season's destination shows. Whether it's Dior's Scottish retreat or Chanel's trip to the Côte d'Azur, these fashion-approved hot spots promise to delight

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La dolce vita

As Bulgari knows, there's nothing quite like dining alfresco in Rome on a warm summer's evening. When you bag an outdoor table at Dal Bolognese, dress up your look with heeled Nodaleto sandals and chunky gold jewellery – and don't forget the shades

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1 Skirt, £76, HOUSE OF SUNNY **2** Bag, £1,390, TOD'S **3** Kitten heels, £130, VAGABOND **4** Hair slide, £240, VERSACE **5** Top, £119, ALIGNE **6** Scarf, £175, DOLCE & GABBANA at MYTHERESA **7** Earrings, £50, ANNI LU at COGGLES **8** Necklace, £289, MICHAEL KORS COLLECTION **9** Dress, £150, REFORMATION **10** Sunglasses, £290, FENDI **11** Bow, £130, LELET NY at NET-A-PORTER **12** Bikini top, £125, WOLFORD **13** Dress, £560, JACQUEMUS **14** Gold and diamond earrings, £4,750, BULGARI **15** Necklace, £420, GIOVANNI RASPINI **16** Sandals, £550, NODALETO **17** Sunglasses, £280, MIU MIU **18** Top, £298, HOME OF HAI **19** Bag, £2,350, CHLOĒ **20** Trousers, £229, MAJE at SELFRIDGES

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Big-city break

Meet Balenciaga in Shanghai, where life moves at 100 miles an hour. To keep pace with the city that never sleeps, pair your denim with pointed Ganni flats: they'll see you through until closing at 44KW

1 Top, £550, LOEWE at NET-A-PORTER **2** Flats, £275, GANNI **3** Sunglasses, £350, BALENCIAGA at BROWNS **4** Pouch, £255, ISABEL MARANT **5** Jeans, £315, ELV DENIM **6** T-shirt, £380, GUCCI **7** Top, £295, CONNER IVES **8** Boots, £160, DUNE **9** Sunglasses, £376, PRADA at SELFRIDGES **10** Belt, £175, MARC CAIN **11** Bag, £89.99, MANGO **12** Hair clip, £145, CORRINA GOUTOS **13** Trainers, £120, ADIDAS **14** Jacket, £380, THE FRANKIE SHOP **15** Bandana, £15, LEVI'S **16** Necklace, £100, SHYLA **17** Skirt, £610, KHAITE **18**, Earrings, £48, EYLAND JEWELLERY **19** Sunglasses, £16.99, H&M **20** Skirt, £200, LOW CLASSIC

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Highland fling

For a countryside break, follow Dior to Perthshire. Pack cosy knits to layer under your trench for a walk around the sprawling gardens at Drummond Castle – and keep those cashmere socks and wellies at the ready

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1 Clips, £325, CELINE BY HEDI SLIMANE **2** Top, £395, JOSEPH **3** Earrings, £14, MARKS & SPENCER **4** Trainers, £595, LOEWE **5** Cap, £35, ALEX EAGLE **6** Scarf, £185, HERMĒS **7** Cardigan, £29.90, UNIQLO **8** Top, £385, HERNO **9** Belt, £59, WHISTLES **10** Sandals, £1,050, DIOR **11** Bag, £450, LOEWE **12** Shorts, £49, INTIMISSIMI **13** Socks, £22, TOAST **14** Necklace, £4,950, ANINE BING **15** Shirt, £100, WITH NOTHING UNDERNEATH **16** Skirt, £350, CAMILLA AND MARC **17** Boots, £130, HUNTER **18** Earrings, £90, PANDORA **19** Socks, £36, THE WHITE COMPANY **20** Trench-coat, £200, COS

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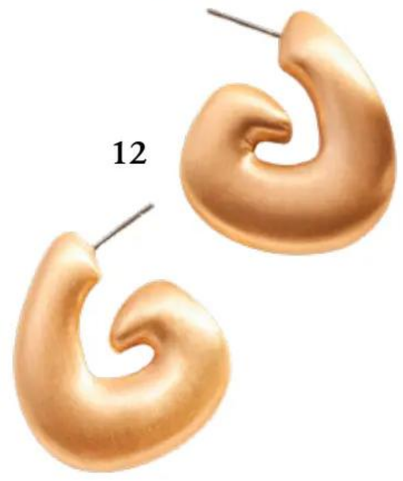
Riviera rendezvous

Make like Chanel and head to Marseille for a weekend of sunshine and seafood. Spend an afternoon lazing on Tuba Beach Club's candy-striped loungers before throwing a knitted polo and shorts over your bikini and hitting the bar for sunset aperitifs



1 Dress, £22.99, ZARA **2** Necklace, £67, CHANEL at SUSAN CAPLAN VINTAGE **3** Sunglasses, £275, NANUSHKA **4** T-shirt, £80, SAMSØE SAMSØE **5** Bikini, £99, TRIANGL **6** Necklace, £177, GIMAGUAS **7** Necklace, £29, &OTHER STORIES **8** Sandals, £75, JOHN LEWIS **9** Jumper, £269, POLO RALPH LAUREN **10** Shorts, £148, RAILS **11** Bag, £450, JW ANDERSON **12** Earrings, £38, ANTHROPOLOGIE **13** Belt, £2,300, GIORGIO ARMANI **14** Shorts, £180, FILIPPA K **15** Sunglasses, £330, BOTTEGA VENETA **16** Top, £225, WALES BONNER **17** Bikini, £160, REINA OLGA **18** Sandals, £205, ANCIENT GREEK SANDALS **19** Bag, £95, YMC **20** Shirt, £695, DRIES VAN NOTEN

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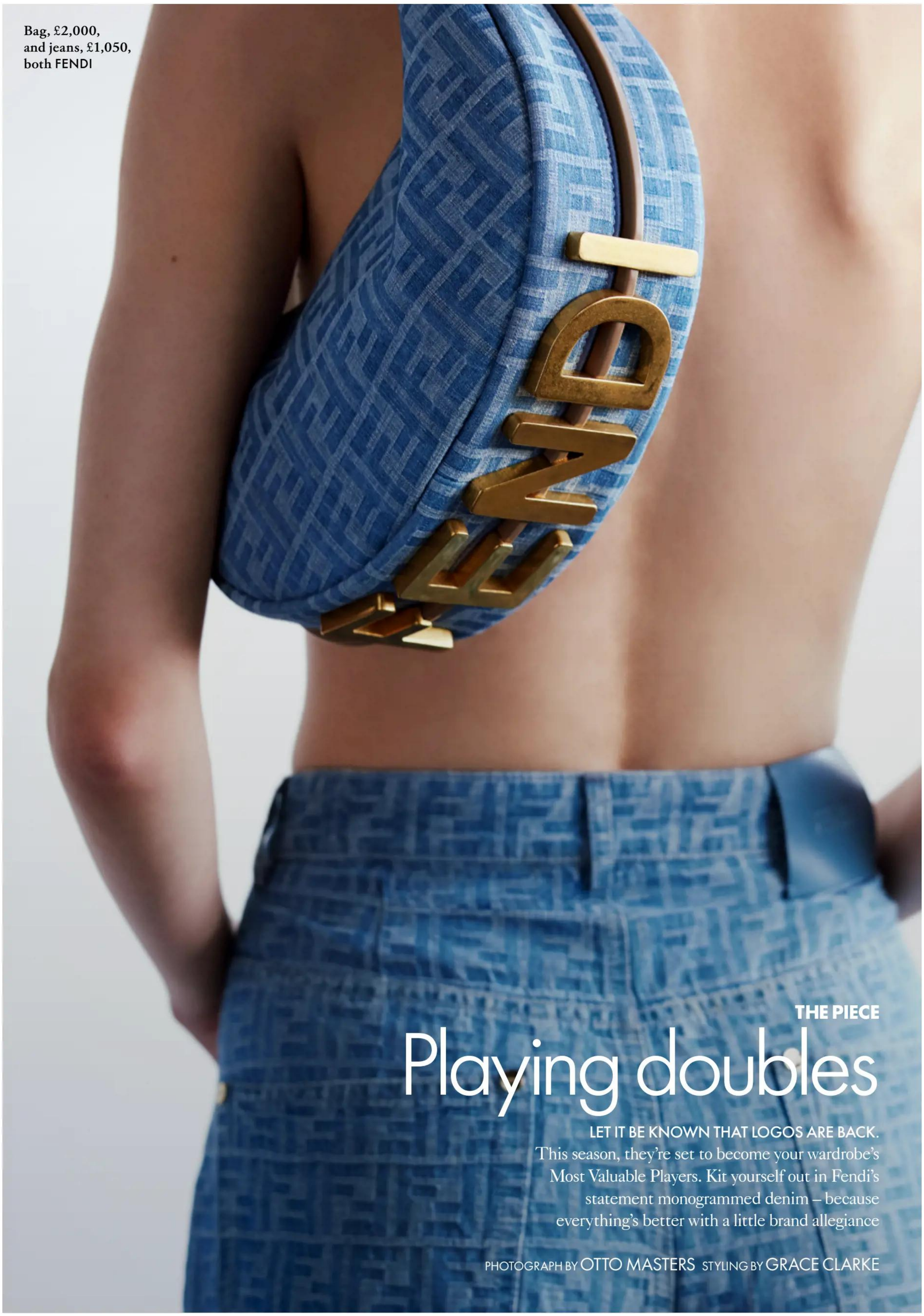

Bag, £2,000, and jeans, £1,050, both FENDI

THE PIECE

Playing doubles

LET IT BE KNOWN THAT LOGOS ARE BACK. This season, they're set to become your wardrobe's Most Valuable Players. Kit yourself out in Fendi's statement monogrammed denim – because everything's better with a little brand allegiance

PHOTOGRAPH BY OTTO MASTERS STYLING BY GRACE CLARKE

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FASHION + READS

ELLE

THIS MONTH IS ALL ABOUT GETTING AWAY FROM IT ALL… PERHAPS FOR YOU THAT MEANS A GLASS OF SOMETHING COLD BY THE SEA, OR MAYBE IT'S LOSING YOURSELF IN THE LYRICS OF A FAVOURITE SONG BY OUR COVER STAR LITTLE SIMZ. ALSO, MODEL TESS McMILLAN CHANNELS SPRING/SUMMER'S SULTRY NEW MOOD, WHILE 16ARLINGTON'S MARCO CAPALDO INVITES YOU INTO HIS GLAMOROUS WORLD

PHOTOGRAPH: EKUA KING

Little Simz wears jacket, price on request, KIKO KOSTADINOV. Skirt, £1,255, and trousers, £795, both CHOPOVA LOWENA

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QUIET POWER

FROM WALKING THE RUNWAY AT MIU MIU TO STORMING THE STAGE AT GLASTONBURY, THE SUMMER OF 2024 BELONGS TO LITTLE SIMZ. *HATTIE COLLINS* MEETS THE AWARD-WINNING RAPPER AT HER NORTH-LONDON OFFICE TO HEAR HOW THE INTROVERT IS COMING TO TERMS WITH HER BIGGEST MOMENT YET

PHOTOGRAPHS BY EKUA KING STYLING BY GEORGIA MEDLEY

Jacket, £5,200, top and skirt, both price on request, all MIU MIU. Earrings (worn throughout), Simz's own

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Jacket, £3,840, DAVID KOMA. Shirt, price on request, N21 BY ALESSANDRO DELL'ACQUA. Top, £255, AMI. Skirt, £1,290, BURBERRY. Jeans, £1,790, STELLA McCARTNEY. Boots, around £700, FIDAN NOVRUZOVA

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Top, £675, briefs, £600 each, and jeans, £900, all MIU MIU

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YOU WOULD NEVER KNOW THAT THE CHAOS OF CAMDEN TOWN is just moments away, the hawkers, hustlers, homeless and hipsters in constant kinetic transition with each other on the filthy, enthralling streets that Amy Winehouse once called home. Inside this 19th-century converted warehouse – with its softly smoking incense and exposed-brick walls drenched in the shifting sunlight of this warm spring day – it's as serene as its occupant, the musician Little Simz.

Simbiatu 'Simbi' Abisola Abiola Ajikawo didn't so much arrive as appear at her north-London office. One moment she's not here, the next she is, loping in alone, all 5' 10" of her, dressed in black boots, black bomber, Carhartt cargos and Seventh hoodie, her long dreads tucked under a plain New Era cap and a tranquil smile on her face, as she greets her PA, PR and me, her inquisitor for the next couple of hours.

As her 2021 Mercury Prize-winning album *Sometimes I Might Be Introvert* attested (see what she did there with the acronym?), Little Simz can be shy, yet she exudes a calm confidence. She's all 'Great to see you' and warm hugs, responding politely to enquiries about the vinyl on the coffee table – Prince's *Purple Rain*, Arlo Parks' *My Soft Machine* and Frank Ocean's highly covetable *Channel Orange* – and the art on the walls. One is an expressionist piece by the Nigerian painter and skater Olaolu Slawn, and another a joyous landscape painting of young people by her friend Kaiya Jaid.

'Erm, yeah, we've got the Mercury, the NMEs, Mobos, the Ivor Novellos…' Simz says softly of the battalion of trophies that guard the recess of one wall. And the Brit for Best New Artist, 2022? 'It's with my mum. Yeah, she's holding onto that one.' Who could forget Mummy Simz, foster carer and Nigerian single mother of three, and the true star of the Brit Awards 2022? 'This is all her doing.' We tilt our necks, contemplating the awards. They're very impressive, I observe. A soft murmur. 'I think they're just…' She motions her arms. '…in the space.' She pauses, changing tack as we head towards an expansive sofa. 'Sometimes I do catch myself looking at them and thinking, wow, once upon a time that was so empty, and it just keeps… filling up.'

There will be more to come. Since she released her first mixtape in 2010 at the age of 14, Simz's output has been almost pathologically prolific. A rapper first and foremost, she's dropped five albums (a sixth is on the way), four mixtapes and 11 EPs, which, between them, have earned 17 major awards and numerous nominations. That's two records every one year average, to paraphrase one of her heroes, Jay-Z. 'For as long as I can remember, I've always put out music. From Bandcamp to MySpace to Soundcloud, it's so instilled in me,' she insists, genuinely bewildered by observations that her work rate is rapacious. 'I've built everything brick by brick. I make music that represents a certain point in my life, and I let it go. I'm a consistent person, whether that's my friendships, my family or my work, so it's more a character thing, I think.'

Earlier this year she released her eleventh EP, *Drop 7*, an exuberant electronic offering with her college pal, the producer Jakwob. Unlike her albums, Simz's EPs don't tend to reflect on social ills, the self, the struggle. They're instead a reset, a celebration, a chance for Simz to simply spit. 'It's just whatever's being felt at the time in the studio. We were having a party, just us two, having fun.'

One thing is for certain; the record won't merely be good. Simz doesn't do average. There's a distinct spirit of excellence that cuts across her creative oeuvre. It's in her artfully articulate rhymes, the cut of her cargo pants, the trumpets that flare fantastically on the capricious 'Gorilla', it's in the beautiful lighting for videos such as 'Point and Kill', shot in Lagos, and her captivating, commanding stage presence. You see it in whatever Simz turns her attention to, whether acting (she returned to the screen in 2019 to play Shelley in the hit Netflix drama *Top Boy*), modelling (for Miu Miu AW24) or photography (she released the beautiful coffee-table tome *The *Book* last year). 'It's all storytelling,' she says of her ability to creatively shapeshift. 'I love the idea of telling stories in whatever capacity it might be.'

Simz has been compelled to create since the age of eight or nine, when her older sister played *The Miseducation Of Lauryn Hill*. 'As much as I loved music when I was young, I wasn't emotionally intelligent enough to understand how it can physically impact you; give you goosebumps, make you cry, make you laugh. I didn't get that until Lauryn, and then I started searching for it. How do I invoke that feeling in someone?' she asks.

She set about summoning those emotions, initially via St Mary's Youth Club, a few minutes from her home on Essex Road, and at the Anna Scher Theatre school. She also took herself to radio, ▷

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Shirt, £940, polo shirt (worn underneath), £740, jeans, £820, and belts, £480 each, all MIU MIU

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Jacket, £2,400, top, price on request, skirt, £1,240, and socks, £280, per pair, all MIU MIU. Brogues, £1,060, CHURCH'S X MIU MIU

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Jacket, £950, and trousers, £650, both SELASI. Boots, around £700, FIDAN NOVRUZOVA

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‘I WANT TO ENSURE THAT GIRLS WHO ARE LIKE ME – A BIT QUIRKY, A BIT TOMBOYISH – CAN SEE ME’

going up against the boys. At just 11 years old, she was on 1Xtra, rapping about the power of the pen. Where on earth did that conviction come from? ‘My sisters. The energy that surrounds me to allow me to have confidence was my family, because of the way they used to gas me up and make me feel like I am Jay-Z. I am Missy Elliott. That went a long way,’ she says. In 2010, she made her official debut with *Stratosphere*, the first of many releases.

Despite her compulsive productivity, Simz is acutely cognisant of the importance of work-life balance. She recently changed her routine in order to create more quiet. She now gets up at 6.30am and meditates, reads, looks out the window at the still-sleeping streets of her home in north-west London. ‘I find I’m not bombarded with the world yet – social media, messages, all that. When I first started doing it, I was mad bored. Like, where is everyone,’ she admits with a laugh. ‘Then I realised that was the point: it’s all me. I want to use that time, I really enjoy it.’ As the world wakes up, she eases herself into it, journaling, playing chess with a good friend, recording music and coming here, to this office that she’s had for nearly two years.

Downstairs there’s a gym, where her trainer, Keith, schools Simz in the full-contact combat sport Muay Thai. ‘It’s a fun way for me to keep fit and train for what I do. It’s very physical being on stage, touring, so this builds up stamina, endurance, all-round strength. I’m trying to get my physical form as top-tier as it can be.’

She’ll need it – next month Simz will perform at Glastonbury, her fourth time on the Farm but her first time playing the Pyramid: the penultimate act before Coldplay. When her manager told her the news, she was immediately ‘buzzing’ with excitement and ideas. She got her laptop out to watch sets by her peers in similar slots: Lizzo, Kendrick Lamar, Jay-Z and Stormzy, and began ‘planning my set list, what I’m gonna wear, what I want the show to feel like’.

It’s not only the Pyramid calling her name, but Miuccia Prada, too. In March, Simz found herself at Paris Fashion Week facing her first ever catwalk as a Miu Miu model. ‘Hands down the most terrifying thing I’ve ever done,’ she says, remembering her heart pounding as she stood backstage beside Kristin Scott Thomas and Gigi Hadid, trying to take in the instructions, trying to breathe. ‘They’re saying, “Go down here, take a right there, come back up, find the camera,” and I know I’m a performer – I was so happy they didn’t put me in no crazy wedges – but the minute you have to concentrate on your walk, it’s so techie,’ she says, putting her head in her hands. ‘It goes so quick, you come off buzzing. Credit to the models, too. It gave me perspective and made me really respect the art of it. It’s not easy.’

From Worthy Farm to walking for Miu Miu, it’s important to underscore that Simz has done this as an indie artist on her own label, first Age 101 and now Forever Living Originals, via a distribution deal with AWAL. She doesn’t have the weight of a major label or publisher to secure streaming playlists, Radio 1 airtime, Brit Award performances, ELLE covers, brand campaigns or festival stages. Simz has done this alone. She’s had to believe in herself, so others could too.

Initially, she didn’t have much of a choice. Labels liked her, but she didn’t quite look right. ‘It was always the same situation,’ she remembers, miming someone looking her up and down. ‘“Yeah, this is cool, but *this* is what’s selling” – which was less clothing. And that’s just never been my vibe. I’ve always made a point to not conform to the industry status quo of how women – especially in hip-hop – should dress to appeal to the male gaze. I want to ensure that young girls who are like me – a bit quirky, a bit tomboyish – can see me. But also, I can fling on a dress,’ – or a skirt like she has for today’s shoot – ‘and make it look sick. I want them to know that there’s options.’

The labels eventually came calling, especially after the success of the Mercury Prize-nominated 2019 album *Grey Area* – but she was determined in her decision not to sign, no matter how long it took. Success for Simz hasn’t exactly happened overnight: that Brit arrived 12 years after she dropped her first mixtape. She’s had to stand by and watch peers including Dave, Stormzy and Skepta soar. It must have been hard, sometimes, to keep going.

‘I have had those moments of “I’m out, I’m actually done”,’ she admits, contemplating her career. ‘So many people have let me down. But so many people have showed up, so equally, I’m blessed. I’ve had a strong [support] system, but there’s been times when it’s just been me, roughing it, doing whatever I need to do to try to make something pop, and it’s been hard, man. Really hard.’ When acclaim came, it wasn’t without struggle. ‘I made an album basically saying I’m an introvert, and then I got mad attention. ▷

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Jacket (just seen), around £505, ZOMER

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Coat, £1,750, JOSHUA EWUSIE. Boots, price on request, MM6 MAISON MARGIELA. HAIR: Amirah Ajikawo. MAKE-UP: Nibras. NAILS: Michelle Class at LMC Worldwide. SET DESIGNER: Julia Dias. STYLIST'S ASSISTANT: Sabrina Leina. TAILOR: Chloe Cammidge

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‘I MADE AN ALBUM ABOUT BEING AN INTROVERT AND THEN I GOT MAD ATTENTION. THAT WAS A WEIRD TIME’

So that was a weird time. An interesting, strange, bit of a challenging time to break through.’

And now, more success; here she is on the cover of ELLE. For years it wasn’t just difficult, but virtually impossible for a Black woman – particularly a Black British female musician – to regularly secure the cover of any magazine, let alone a fashion title. ‘I’m just so grateful to be living in a time when things like this can happen,’ Simz says. ‘There are so many women that have done the groundwork to allow me to be on the cover of ELLE. It’s not a me thing, it’s beyond that. People have been doing the graveyard shift so I could have this opportunity. Now, I wonder how I can make it easier for the next ones. There’s still a way to go, but I’m happy and grateful for how far we’ve come.’ Among her change-making predecessors, Simz names Viola Davis, Oprah Winfrey, Ms Dynamite, Missy Elliott, Lauryn and, of course, Joan Armatrading, the vastly underrated singer and guitarist who appeared with Simz at the 2023 Baftas to perform the redemptive ‘Heart On Fire’.

‘I heard Little Simz’s music on the radio and thought right away that she was a big talent,’ Armatrading told ELLE. ‘When she asked me to play guitar at the Baftas last year, it didn’t take me long to decide that I would say yes. The show was great, I loved it. She did a fantastic job and I had a fantastic time playing the guitar. What’s not to like?’

Simz recognises her own role in the lineage. She mentioned wanting to make it easier for the next generation; how does she hope to do that? ‘Allowing people to see me on the ground is super important, because I want people to feel like it’s in reach; I’m in reach; your dreams are in reach,’ she says. ‘I’m working out how I can be more present – going into schools and youth centres. I hope an experience like that might stay with a young person: I’m there, with them in this youth club, and tomorrow I might be walking the catwalk. I want people to see me and say, “Yeah, I could be doing that.”’

As a kid, Simz would race home from school, dump her bag and dash straight back out to St Mary’s, where she made music with other future Brit winners such as Inflo. How does she feel about the huge cuts across youth clubs and the arts in general? ‘It’s frustrating. I can’t imagine what my life might have been if I didn’t have that. It’s not like there’s that much to do in the environments we grow up in, so you end up on the road. Kids are creative by nature and trying to axe their creativity at such an early age is super-detrimental.’ It’s more than art for art’s sake, too. ‘Creativity is a way of life. When it’s tended to and nourished, you learn how to figure things out, how to make and create things, and that really helps you in your future. It’s not just about doing a painting.’

There’s a line on the track ‘Introvert’: ‘I’m not into politics but I know it’s dark times’. Is this still the case? ‘Not really, to be honest.’ She shifts about a little. Will she vote? ‘I’ll do what’s necessary for there to be good change but, I don’t know, I still have this stance of being young and feeling like [politicians] aren’t doing anything for me. But, ultimately, it’s about the next generation, so I’ll do what I can to help.’

What would Simz consider meaningful change? ‘My money would go towards mindfulness and teaching kids how to understand their bodies, their feelings, understand emotional intelligence. I think kids are just mad anxious. And I think social media plays a part in that so I would start with the mental wellbeing of young people. I would love to see that taught in schools. Journaling. Meditation. Small practices like that can go a long way.’

Mindfulness and introspection are, Simz says, absolutely key to all that she does. She recently turned 30 (she celebrated with friends and family at Sparrow in Mayfair, the sort of upscale Italian restaurant that doesn’t have prices on the menu) and, when I ask about future life goals, in keeping with her character, she doesn’t mention the usual awards, marriage, kids. Her ambitions are more interior than that. ‘What does future me look like?’ She takes time to consider. ‘It’ll be nice to feel at peace, firstly. I don’t want to lose my nut, you know?’ Why is that a fear? ‘One thing I’ve always been scared of is not having my feet on the ground. I don’t want to embarrass myself; I want to stay grounded and be happy, healthy, consistent, in my relationships, in my work. And I want to help as much as I can, and hopefully it’ll make a small difference.’ How about the world, this planet, which many feel is tipping upside down? ‘I actually feel hopeful,’ she says. ‘That’s why I talk about kids learning mindfulness, because this lot are going to take over. If they have these things instilled in them, it’s only going to be peace and harmony. I believe in people,’ she gestures to the office, towards Camden, London, the world. ‘I believe in us.’ □

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FOCAL POINT

NO NEED TO BANISH THE BLACK. THIS SEASON, WE'RE INJECTING NEUTRAL-TONED OUTFITS WITH THE UNEXPECTED: SCULPTED SHAPES, COQUETTISH CUT-OUTS AND A SWIPE OF PERIWINKLE SHADOW

PHOTOGRAPHS BY HASSE NIELSEN
STYLING BY AURELIA DONALDSON

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Coat, £2,170, SACAI. Heels, £685, CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN

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THIS PAGE Blazer, £1,935, DAVID KOMA. Bra, stylist's own. Skirt, £1,200, DOLCE & GABBANA.
OPPOSITE Dress, £1,795, SIMONE ROCHA. Dress (worn underneath), £215, WOLFORD. Heels, £780, CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN

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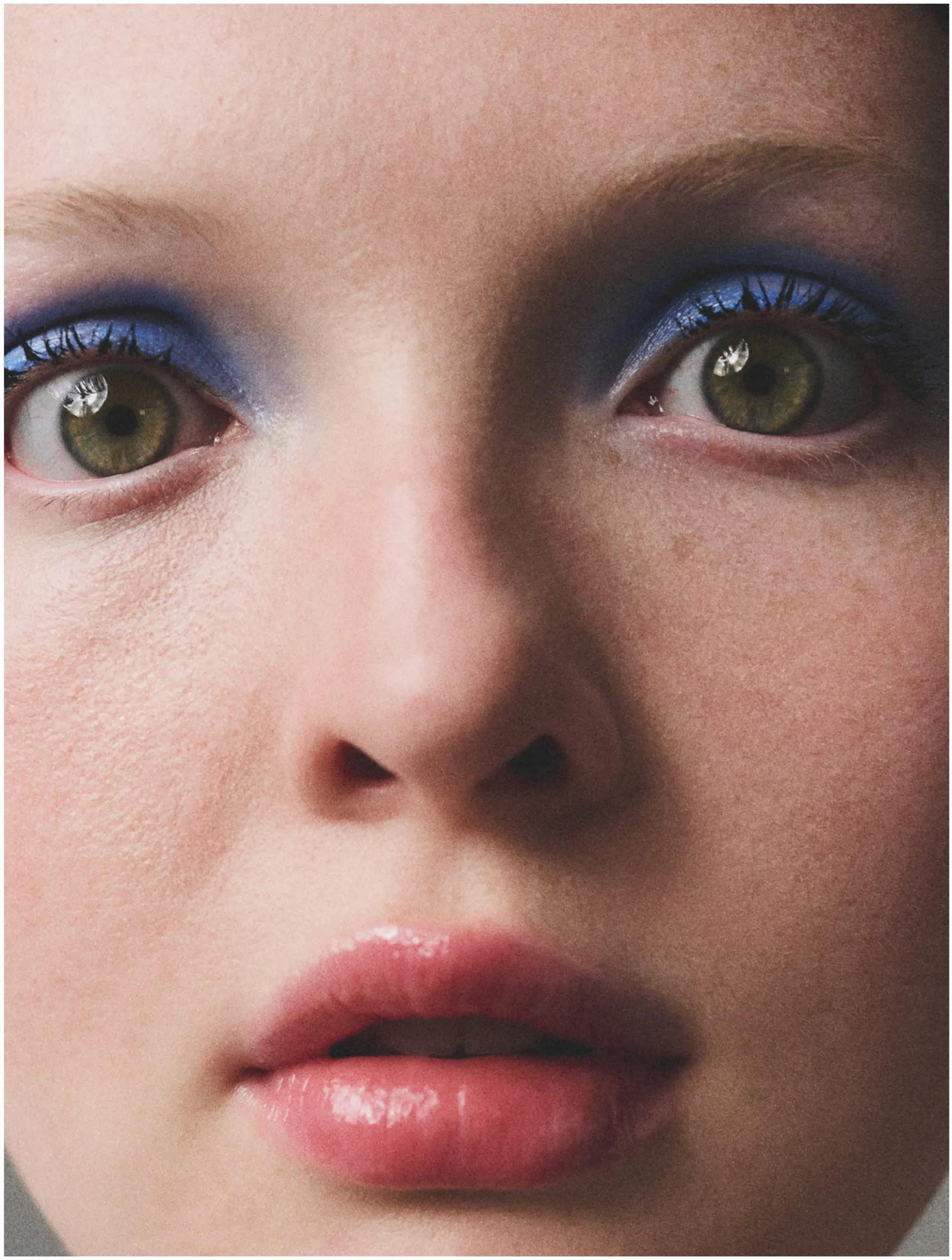

OPPOSITE Coat, £865, PHILOSOPHY DI LORENZO SERAFINI. Top (just seen), £48, COU COU INTIMATES.
Tights, price on request, BY FAR. Heels, £695, CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN

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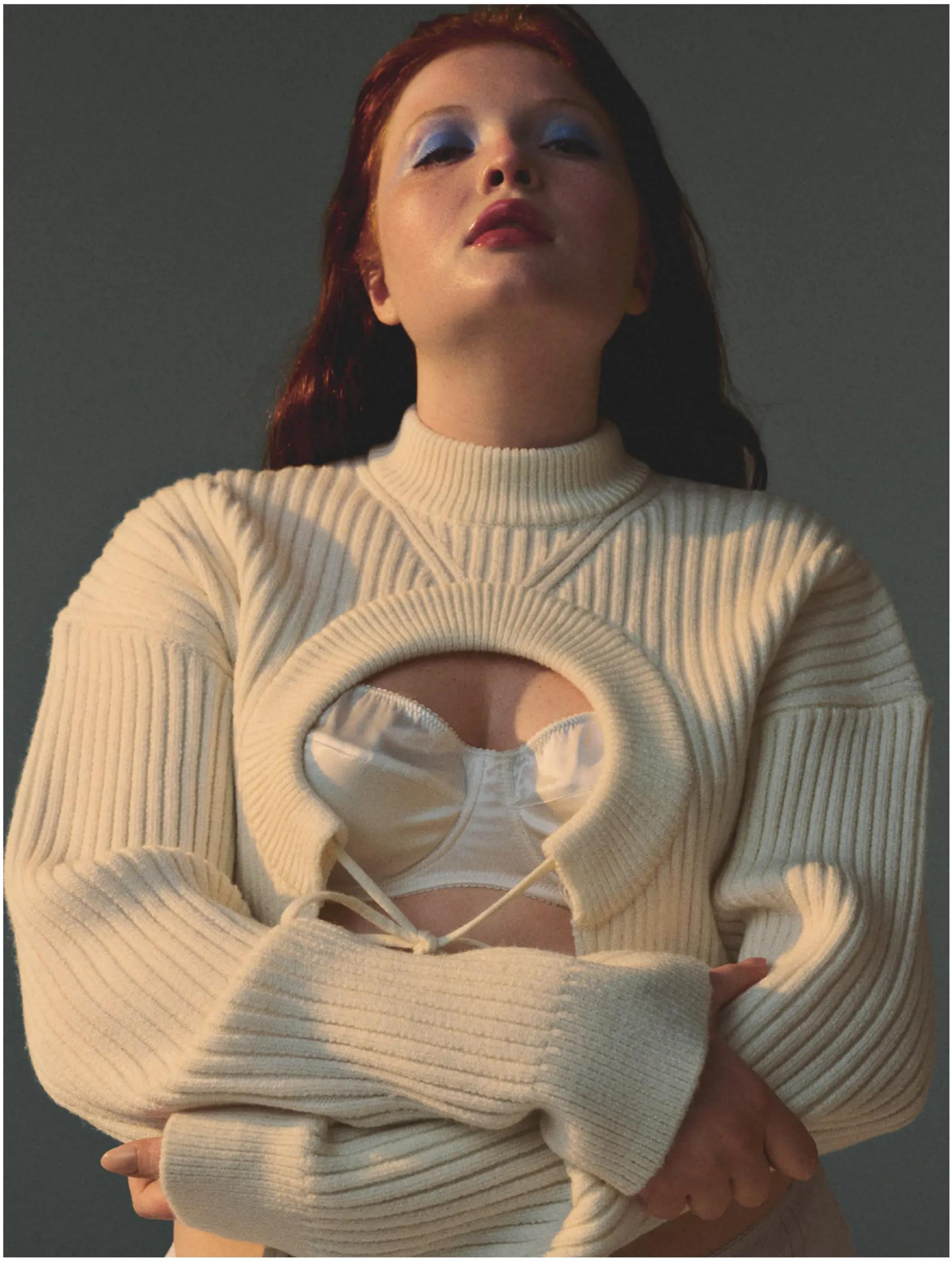

THIS PAGE Jumper, £495, DAVID KOMA. Bra, £245, DOLCE & GABBANA.
OPPOSITE Bra, £335, DOLCE & GABBANA. Skirt, £1,142, KAROLINE VITTO

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THIS PAGE Cardigan, £199, RALPH LAUREN. Bra, £245, DOLCE & GABBANA. Jumper (on floor), £750, CHET LO. OPPOSITE Dress, price on request, FEBEN. Bangle, £130, DAPHINE. Heels, £780, CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN. HAIR: Yoshitaka Miyazaki, using Oribe. MAKE-UP: Celia Evans, using Nars. NAILS: Robbie Tomkins at LMC Worldwide. TAILOR: Victoria Dolman Nash at Chapman Burrell. STYLIST'S ASSISTANT: Grace Clarke. MODEL: Tess McMillan at IMG Models

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Jacket, £1,300, and hat, £590, both CELINE BY HEDI SLIMANE. Shirt (just seen), £75, LEVI'S. Top (just seen), around £75, FALCONERI. Jeans, £115, GUESS. Ring, £2,390, ARTHUS BERTRAND. Boat shoes, £650, MIU MIU

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T-shirt, around £75, FALCONERI. Dungarees, £349, RALPH LAUREN. Necklace, price on request, FRED. Bandana, around £105, CALL IT BY YOUR NAME. Watch, £7,850, ROLEX. Moccasins, around £660, JM WESTON

CASUAL FRIDAY

From the return of the drainpipe to the extra-wide leg, denim has emerged as the season's biggest and most versatile style story. Ease into summer's relaxed state of mind with shapes that give you the freedom to move

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TOM SCHIRMACHER STYLING BY ANNE MARIE BROUILLET

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Jumper, £5,470, GUCCI.
Shirt, £75, LEVI'S. Jeans,
£219, RALPH LAUREN.
Slippers, £745, MIU MIU

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Gilet, £4,105, LOUIS VUITTON. Jacket and jeans, £74.99 each, H&M STUDIO

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Jacket, £3,150, and top, £890, both PRADA. Jeans, £35.99, MANGO. Glasses, £410, and boat shoes, £650, both MIU MIU. Watch, £7,850, ROLEX

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Jumper, £499, RALPH LAUREN. Jacket, £74.99, H&M STUDIO. Shorts, £135, GERARD DAREL. Sunglasses, £410, PRADA

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Jacket, £1,900, and top, £730, both DIOR. Fleece, £229.95, FREE PEOPLE. Shorts, £51, MOLLY BRACKEN. Belt, £450, CELINE BY HEDI SLIMANE

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Jacket, £120, LEVI'S. Top, £265, ISABEL MARANT. Jeans, £120, GUESS. Belt, £890, CELINE BY HEDI SLIMANE. Socks, £6, CALZEDONIA. Loafers, £835, LOUIS VUITTON. HAIR: Nelson. MAKE-UP: Tatsu Yamanaka. STYLIST'S ASSISTANT: Alisa Inyutkina. MODELS: Ivanka Smilenko at Next, Alina Bolotina at IMG Models, Nigina Sharipova at Oui Management and Stephanie Quezado at Premium Models

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Alva Claire wears 16Arlington throughout. Marco Capaldo wears his own clothes

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THE CULT OF 16ARLINGTON

THE GO-TO DESIGNER FOR A VIRAL RED-CARPET MOMENT, MARCO CAPALDO, THE BRAND'S CREATIVE DIRECTOR, IS AT THE CENTRE OF AN ADORING FASHION CROWD. REFLECTING ON THE JOURNEY, HE TELLS ELLE'S *TAMISON O'CONNOR* WHAT'S NEXT

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID VAIL STYLING BY GRACE CLARKE

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WALKING INTO MARCO CAPALDO'S HACKNEY STUDIO ON A RAINY Thursday morning, I brace myself for feathers, sequins and tinsel galore. After all, his brand 16Arlington is best known for marabou-trimmed party dresses and skin-tight, embellished numbers.

But Capaldo's office is more like an image out of an interior-design magazine: it's pared back – almost empty – and extremely tidy, the taupe concrete floors and white walls broken up by a neat row of sky-high cupboards behind a vast marble desk, a canvas evocative of a black Rothko painting hanging to its side. I can't help thinking about how my expectation and the reality mirror the nuanced contrasts that run through his brand: high-voltage glamour meets effortless cool. Loud and out there, yet simultaneously minimalist. I also can't help thinking he has very good taste.

Sitting down with Capaldo is like catching up with an old friend, even though we've never met before. It's easy to be drawn in by his affable, slightly shy demeanour. He greets me with a warm embrace, inviting me to sit on one of two Barcelona chairs (lovingly salvaged from a skip behind Harrods, he tells me) while he curls up on the other in his black tailored trousers, a black jumper slung casually over his white T-shirt. (He typically wears black, he says. It's one less thing to worry about.)

'I've always loved design, I've always loved beautiful things, whether it's art or architecture, books or furniture,' he tells me.

Right now, Capaldo really is the man of the hour, cementing his status as one of the brightest young talents on the London Fashion Week calendar. Fashion folk adore him: everyone from Hailey Bieber to Marina Abramović has been photographed in his clothes. Stores such as Harrods report his brand is among their top sellers – no mean feat for a six-year-old indie label, particularly in an industry that breaks more young designers than it makes.

It is now Capaldo's fifth season as the brand's sole creative director, after his partner in life and business Federica 'Kikka' Cavenati died suddenly in 2021, three years after the couple started 16Arlington together. It was a critical juncture both professionally and personally; the brand, he says, was born out of their shared love for design, women and one another. 'I can't emphasise it enough: it's something that wouldn't have happened if we didn't have each other,' he says. A picture of Cavenati sits on his desk today.

Starting a fashion label wasn't originally part of Capaldo's plan. Born to Italian parents, he grew up in London and went on to study at the UK campus of the esteemed Istituto Marangoni school of fashion. It was there that he met Cavenati – Italian born and bred – and the pair 'quite naively' started a brand. 'In hindsight, I think there's a lot of beauty in that naivety,' he muses. 'When you jump into something, not knowing all the highs and lows, you're almost fearless.'

From the outset, there was a duality that underpinned the essence of 16Arlington, he tells me: a brand helmed by a man and a woman; the interplay of minimalist and maximalist sensibilities; designs infused with both British and Italian influences. Above all, it was about creating pieces that made women feel like the best versions of themselves. 'More than a specific person, we design for an attitude,' he says. The aesthetic? 'Confidence. It's about clothes that fit and feel good.'

From the get-go, 16Arlington was a hit with celebrities and buyers alike. Poppy Lomax, head of buying at Harrods, puts it down to Capaldo's 'unique ability to blend the London-girl look with a touch of grunge, while still maintaining a sense of glamour and femininity'. She recalls an early meeting with Capaldo and Cavenati when 16Arlington was still in its infancy. 'Even then, I could sense there was an indescribable quality and uniqueness to the clothes that simply had to be experienced by trying them on.'

In fact, part of the magic of the pieces is in their wearability. Sure, tinsel skirts and feathered dresses don't scream 'walk the dog' or 'pop to the supermarket', but these are clothes that are meant to be worn, outfits designed for having a good time. Underneath the sex and the sizzle, there's a slight mischievousness to them. They are truly a lesson in putting the joy back in dressing up. ▷

‘IN HINDSIGHT, I THINK THERE'S A LOT OF BEAUTY IN NAIVETY. WHEN YOU JUMP INTO SOMETHING, YOU'RE ALMOST FEARLESS’

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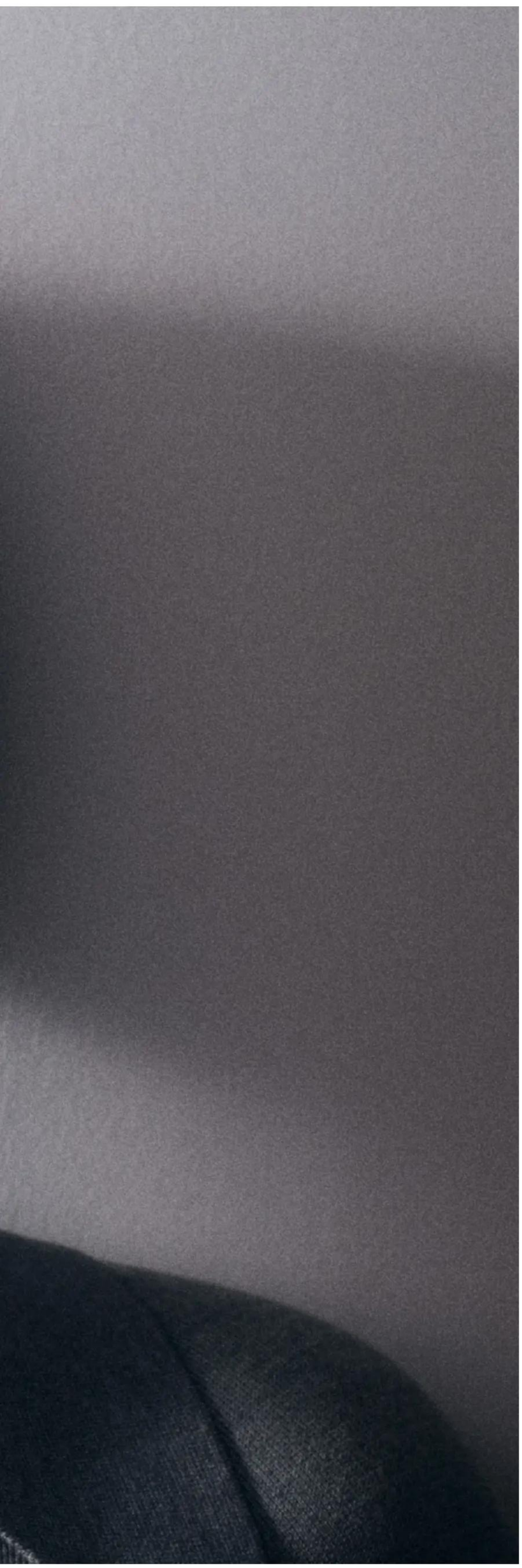

‘MARCO IS INTELLIGENT AND KNOWLEDGEABLE – HE CARRIES HIS TALENT WITH AN EASE AND PLAYFULNESS THAT ONLY THE TRULY SERIOUS CAN AFFORD’

This isn’t lost on Capaldo. Commercial may be a dirty word in fashion but, as he astutely points out: ‘Creatively, you have to propose a dream, but if that dream doesn’t resonate, then there’s no business… These clothes have to exist in the real world. They have to work for the person wearing them, not vice versa.’

It’s hard not to be taken with Capaldo’s clear affinity for the modern female sensibility, which has helped to draw a strong community of women around him and his brand: model Alva Claire and artist Rhea Dillon, author Otegha Uwagba and ELLE contributing editor Lynette Nylander, Adwoa Aboah, Paloma Elsesser, Shygirl, Jorja Smith… Even his team of 20 full-time staff is mostly female.

‘When I met Marco, I realised that so much of what I love about his brand can be found in his character, too,’ says Alexa Chung, who accompanied the designer to the Fashion Awards last year wearing 16Arlington. ‘He’s intelligent and knowledgeable, but is able to carry his talent with an ease and playfulness that only the truly serious can afford.’

Serious about his brand Capaldo certainly is. He appears to be always thinking three steps ahead, working to carefully balance his creativity with the needs of the business. It’s probably why he has managed to thrive at such a challenging time for young labels. The cost-of-living crisis is hitting brands, too, and with no outside investors, he has no financial safety net to fall back on. Meanwhile, many of the key stores that young creatives rely on for sales and exposure are struggling, with the traditional wholesale model that once underpinned the luxury industry in fast decline.

Yet Capaldo maintains a sense of practical optimism, hopeful that greener grass is just around the corner: ‘It’s about navigating this time in a really efficient way. As with many things in life, the only way to face a challenge is, unfortunately, to go straight through it.’

Right now, that means expanding collections to establish 16Arlington as a ready-to-wear brand with a full wardrobe offering. In its most recent show, plenty of sharp tailoring, cosy knits and boxy wool coats that would slip comfortably into any editor’s wardrobe featured among the mammoth shaggy jackets, glittering stoles and show-stopping tinsel numbers. Last year, Capaldo added menswear to the mix and broadened the accessories line. Its hero bag, the Kikka, pays tribute to the brand’s late co-founder.

‘For me, creating has been a kind of medicine,’ he says, reflecting on the past few years. ‘Building on something we started together, and continuing a legacy that I began with someone I loved.’ □

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MODEL: ALVA CLAIRE AT IMG LONDON. HAIR (MARCO): ADAM REED, USING ARKIVE HEADCARE. HAIR (ALVA): ZATESSHA BARBOUR AT LMC WORLDWIDE, USING COLOR WOW. MAKE-UP: PHOEBE WALTERS AT THE WALL GROUP, USING MERIT BEAUTY

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'THIS IS NOT WHAT A FUNCTIONING DEMOCRACY LOOKS LIKE'

FROM ENDURING HECKLING IN PARLIAMENT TO RECEIVING THE MOST ABUSE OF ANY MP ON SOCIAL MEDIA, IN HER OWN WORDS, ZARAH SULTANA SHARES THE REALITIES OF LIFE AS A WOMAN IN WESTMINSTER AND HOW SHE'S FIGHTING FOR CHANGE

AS TOLD TO SHANNON MAHANTY PHOTOGRAPH BY THOMAS DUFFIELD

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I'M A WOMAN, I'M YOUNG, I'M MUSLIM, I'm left wing. When people attack me, it's usually for one – or all – of those reasons. Ever since I got elected in 2019, I've received abuse and death threats. Some have been investigated by the police. When the parliamentary authorities discovered I am the most abused MP on social media, I was shocked, but not entirely surprised. There are 650 MPs; women and women of colour are disproportionately impacted, but for someone who's only been in the job four years and never had a front-bench position, the authorities found it alarming.

I'm not naive. When I got elected, I knew I would get targeted for my race and religion. Unfortunately, that seems to be a theme in public life. It's become a normalised part of my job. On a daily basis, I receive messages saying, 'Take your mob and go back home,' 'Typical P-word, you don't deserve to live in the UK,' 'Evil b*tch, your time will come,' 'Leave England to the English; go home.' There's a lot of, 'Go home to Pakistan; you need to be deported.' In a way, I'm used to it, but it still hurts so much.

Since 7 October [when Hamas attacked Israel], it's reached a new level. Whenever I've spoken up for a ceasefire in Gaza – which is supported by 66% of the British public [according to a February 2024 YouGov poll] – it generates a torrent of abuse. The sheer scale has taken me aback. Why am I being made to feel so bad about my race, religion and politics? At the same time, I also receive this outpouring of lovely, kind messages. They're much higher in volume, but it's the abuse that sticks. My therapist said our brains often process negativity as an existential threat. I'm on high alert, which takes up more of my brain space. Whereas the lovely, nice stuff, I move on from quicker.

I try to find a balance. I have to be resilient to deal with it, but I also need to take a step back when necessary. For me, that means spending time with family and friends. It's binging Netflix or going to the cinema. It's about going to spaces where I don't feel unsafe.

When I'm out in public, the vast majority of my experiences are overwhelmingly positive. I can't even begin to measure the number of kind people who come up to me. It's what keeps me going. But when I am on public transport, walking along a street or in a supermarket, and someone makes eye contact with me, I quickly think, *Does this person recognise me? Do they like me? Or do they not? If they don't like me, what could happen in this scenario?* That's what it feels like on a daily basis. I am mindful of which route I take and what public transport I use. It becomes a normal way of operating. The vitriol I have received online has made me hypervigilant offline, because at the end of the day, all it takes is one person. Two MPs have died in this role. Security is something everyone takes very seriously, because we all have the memories of Jo Cox and Sir David Amess.

I have a lone-worker device, which is available to all MPs. I use it to register where I am going and for how long. That information goes to a centralised system that is connected to the police. If I press the SOS button, I can be located instantly. There are strong security measures in place. Parliament has wellbeing services, too; I use them and strongly recommend them, but the ways in which MPs are treated is a microcosm of a wider issue. My Muslim constituents feel let down. In remarks to police chiefs in February, while outlining crackdowns on protests, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak claimed the country was descending into 'mob rule'. That same month, former home secretary Suella Braverman said Islamists are in charge of the country. And we have front pages that regularly scapegoat Muslims, trans people and migrants. Until that culture is challenged, until we address the fact that people in the highest office in this country attack our civil liberties and blame societal ills on marginalised people, all we're doing is tinkering around the edges. We need systemic change.

I think all political parties need to look at where we've failed women of colour. No workplace should normalise abuse. Frankly, I feel there's not much support from within the Labour Party, I just have to get on with it. It's disappointing. We have serious issues internally. In the Forde Report [Labour's report into allegations of bullying, racism and sexism in the Party], Diane Abbott was highlighted as someone who was being undermined and ridiculed within our own party structures. She's had to endure so much. This place has failed her. A Tory donor called for her to be shot and said looking at her makes him 'want to hate all Black women'. Hearing that repeatedly is the most vile experience I can imagine. But to have to listen to multiple people discuss it for the majority of a PMQs session [as happened to her in March], while she was denied the opportunity to speak was disgusting and dehumanising. I was sitting next to her. I felt horrible and helpless. That incident spoke to exactly what is wrong with this place. It is not what a functioning democracy looks like.

I was raging because Diane plays such a massive part in the story of young women like me, Apsana Begum [Labour MP for Poplar and Limehouse] and Bell Ribeiro-Addy [Labour MP for Streatham], who got elected in 2019. She was the first Black woman elected, so we've always seen Diane as a figurehead of the Labour movement. The place she has in our political

> 'I THINK WHAT GETS ME THROUGH IS MY FAITH AND SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER. I GREW UP BEING TOLD THAT WHEN YOU SEE AN INJUSTICE, YOU SPEAK UP, EVEN IF YOUR VOICE SHAKES'

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history is unparalleled. She has shown me solidarity from the day I was elected. Auntie Diane – she really is that for us! I worry women will be put off entering politics because of what they've seen happen to her. It sends a damaging message. The work I and others have to do is to convince people it's important we have a voice in parliament. We need more people from underrepresented backgrounds.

The vast majority of MPs are older, and they're generally men who come from a certain social background. Many of them see this young woman of colour, who isn't privately educated, who hasn't spent her twenties and thirties in law or the financial sector, and think, *Who is she to tell us we need to tax the rich, invest in our NHS, to not perpetuate racism and to have a foreign policy based on peace and justice?* I think that's how a lot of people – especially on the opposite benches – see me. They assume I will find myself out of place and they seek to reaffirm that idea. It's sad to see so many young women and people of colour leave politics early. I've never contemplated quitting, because there's just so much to do, but it can feel completely overwhelming at times.

I think what gets me through is my faith and speaking truth to power. I grew up being told that when you see an injustice, you speak up, even if your voice shakes – which mine sometimes does. There is a lot of solidarity in this place. That looks like regular tea and catch-ups, going into each other's offices and unpacking, sitting together in the chamber as you all think, *What the hell is going on here?* That sense of sisterhood carries me through. There are loads of us here who have each other's backs. I've known Bell Ribeiro-Addy the best part of a decade; we came up through the student movement together. Sometimes I ask Diane how she does it, and she just chuckles and says, 'We've gotta get through it.' There are a lot of little things that happen in a day that add up in a big way. Having conversations with the clerks and the canteen staff, catching someone's smile, goes a long way.

And when I'm not in parliament, I fill my cup in community spaces – volunteering at the food bank and knocking on doors in my constituency, Coventry South. Then I come to Westminster and I'm able to speak up for what I believe in. That's how you go forward. I know that when I'm in the chamber and I'm getting disproportionately heckled, that I'm also speaking to the people outside of parliament. It's knowing who you represent; that's my driving force.

I'm a person who was fundamentally shaped by the war on terror, the financial crisis, austerity, tripling tuition fees and gross inequality. I watched youth centres and libraries around me close down. I worked in retail for four years and my student debt was almost £50,000. I speak to people who are working and still relying on food banks. We have more food banks than McDonald's restaurants! For me, it's a moral duty to keep going as long as I can, until I see some kind of justice and equality restored in our society.

This job has awful lows and a side to it that is nasty and difficult, but it has really high highs, too. I get emails from people across the country, thanking me for speaking up on the issues they care about. You can't beat the highs of finding out that someone's been able to challenge the Department for Work and Pensions and get the right amount of benefits, which is going to make a massive difference to their lives. Or speaking up for a ceasefire and a Palestinian constituent thanking me and bringing me dates. We cried together; it left me speechless. That's where I find value in using these corridors of power to challenge the status quo.

As an MP, I see my role as bridging social movements and the Labour movement. Whatever we have won as a society hasn't come from the government saying it's the right thing to do. Women's right to vote, the NHS – it all comes from the grassroots campaigns, trade unions and communities. I'm lucky to be able to amplify the causes from those spaces. Right now, we face many crises: the damage of 14 years of austerity, the economic crisis, the environmental crisis. We have to keep fighting and organising and building.

I hope a Labour government is one that has ambitious policies and invests in our NHS, our schools and in our public sector. I hope it is one that uses its position in the international arena to advocate for justice and peace. That's a bold and ambitious future, but politics is the business of hope. We have to believe things can change. We have to try. □

A VOICE FOR CHANGE
CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: ZARAH SULTANA AT THE VIGIL FOR SARAH EVERARD IN PARLIAMENT SQUARE IN 2021; DIANE ABBOTT AT THE 'STAND WITH ABBOTT RALLY' IN MARCH; SULTANA IN PARLIAMENT

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HAVE WE REACHED PEAK RETREAT?

FROM BIOHACKING CAMPS TO POOLSIDE IVS, WELLNESS TOURISM IS BOOMING. BUT AMID ALL THE SELF-IMPROVEMENT AND TURMERIC SHOTS, DID WE FORGET HOW TO ENJOY A HOLIDAY?

WORDS BY NAOMI MAY PHOTOGRAPHS BY LIZ COLLINS

CLOSE YOUR EYES AND PICTURE THE SCENE. YOU'RE ON A SMALL, deserted beach in Spain and it smells like sunscreen, sweat and the Mediterranean Sea, which laps softly at your feet. Far away from the rattling reality of your everyday existence, you're lying on a towel damp with seawater while the sun kisses your face as you devour wilted books, pages crisped by the sun, and dig into seemingly endless bags of greasy, salty crisps. Your one and only hazy, sun-soaked aim is to revel in a slow and sleepy world far removed from your own, where you don't have to do anything other than top up your sunscreen, reach for a cocktail or turn the pages of your book. That, dear reader, is my dream – to spend delicious stretches of time doing absolutely zilch. In fact, there's a phrase for it in Italian: *dolce far niente*. The sweetness of doing nothing.

But something has happened to our beloved holidays, which ▷

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has seen the art of doing very little replaced by the art of doing absolutely everything.

I have friends who, while I perfected the art of getting nothing done in the sun, turned their attention to jam-packed, wellness-focused, activity-oriented breaks as we grew older and their bank balances healthier. One did a yoga retreat with her mum, after which she boasted about the weeks' worth of 6am starts she'd spent the price of a small car on. By 7am every day – the middle of the night, as far as my holidays are concerned – she was on her second yoga class, her first turmeric shot and my last nerve. She was meant to be on holiday. It didn't stop there. Another friend booked an artist's retreat in a château in the South of France, for which she shelled out an eye-watering sum only to spend the week partaking in 'bonding exercises' with other, in her own words, 'creatively stunted Londoners'. Another decided on a fitness retreat in Ibiza that incorporated six-hour stints of fitness in peak Balearic sunshine followed by a vegan, Paleo 'feast', the very idea of which I baulked at. It seemed the aim of these retreats was to 'get away' and also, paradoxically, very much have something to show for it at the end. At what point did we forget how to just… take a break? Whatever happened to the great 'drop and flop' nothing-cation of yesteryear? When did we start going on holiday to keep busy?

Salt-therapy retreats, laughter camps, crying breaks (yes, really) and colon-cleanse holidays – you name it, there's a retreat for it (even if the latter does sound more of a threat than a holiday). It has been estimated by global luxury-travel network Virtuoso that 94% of travellers are incorporating elements of self-care into their travels, and 59% are embarking on designated wellness getaways.

Among the new frontiers of the retreat realm are sexual-wellness retreats – coming to a social-media feed near you in summer 2024 – and biohacking getaways. Six Senses Ibiza recently teamed up with biotech company RoseBar to offer guests full diagnostic testing, while the home of the inaugural season of *The White Lotus*, the Four Seasons Resort in Maui, now administers treatments such as stem-cell and NAD+ (an anti-aging coenzyme) therapy through its partnership with Next Health. It's estimated that the industry of wellness tourism is expected to grow more than any other wellness sector and increase by 21% by 2025, at which point it would be worth $1.3 trillion (£1.1 trillion). Where once we parked ourselves on plastic deckchairs, umbrellas wedged into the sand beside us, to restore our burned-out brains, today we 'retreat'. The message, it would seem, is get away to get 'better'. Because time spent doing nothing – on a sun-dappled beach in Spain, for example – is time wasted.

As with most things in modern culture, the roots of this shift can be traced back to the pandemic. Its enforced isolation sharpened our senses to the rapid passing of time. A survey conducted in the UK revealed that more than 80% of participants felt their perception of time shifted during the last months of lockdown, while a nationwide Gov.uk survey from 2021 found that 80% of people aged over 18 wanted to change their lifestyle. If Covid taught us anything, it was that health trumps everything, which makes the sharp rise in wellness-focused tourism understandable. 'Since the pandemic, there's a general increased awareness around wellness. Travel companies have noticed this, and are capitalising upon it by offering people breaks that they claim will be a cure-all solution for whatever it is they're dealing with,' says travel psychologist Charlotte Russell.

'As someone who works for myself, it feels almost impossible to separate my work and personal life – they're inherently one. That makes it hard to completely switch off, which is where retreats come in as, for me, they marry work and rest perfectly,' says artist Venetia Berry, who also co-founded Sol Creative Retreats, which are designed to help women unlock creativity through yoga, painting, ceramics and cooking classes.

The allure of self-optimisation might entice many, but given that, according to the charity Mental Health UK, 91% of adults have experienced high or extreme levels of pressure or stress at some point in the past year, is it time we, ahem, retreated from the retreat and returned to the gentle getaways we used to love?

There is evidence that the tide might soon turn. Last year, Expedia predicted the rise of the 'nothing-cation' after finding that one in four of us feel in need of going on a holiday dedicated to recharging our batteries. Its research also showed that more than half (54%) of us associate doing nothing on a holiday with relaxation. Recently released data from TUI Blue seems to corroborate the idea that many of us are yearning for a return to fuss-free, faff-free breaks. The platform has established that there are five types of 'holidaymaker', the most common of which are those who identify as 'relaxers'.

Research from Advantage Travel Partnership, the UK's largest network of independent travel agents, has revealed a similar trend. The all-inclusive, the forebear of the 'drop and flop' holiday, remains its most popular type of break, accounting for 38% of the trips already booked this year. 'Despite shifts in the industry, where people might want to engage with their wellness more, our numbers do not indicate anything other than, in a lot of cases, people want to get away, talk to no one, sit on a beach and take in the sun,' says Julia Lo Bue-Said, CEO of Advantage Travel Partnership, before suggesting that outside of major UK cities, there appears to be little desire to embark on designated wellness retreats.

Culturally, the art of doing nothing is creeping back into our consciousness. Jenny Odell's 2019 book *How to do Nothing* was a *New York Times* bestseller and was named as one of the best books of the year by a cadre of publications, including *The New Yorker* and *Time*, and NPR. The book is a meditation on Odell's 'refusal to believe that our lives are instruments to be optimised'. In it, she writes, 'To do nothing is to hold yourself still so that you can perceive what is actually there.

'THE MOST RESTORATIVE THING A PERSON CAN DO FOR THEIR MIND, BODY AND SOUL IS OFTEN TO DO NOTHING'

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As Gordon Hempton, an acoustic ecologist who records natural soundscapes, puts it: "Silence is not the absence of something but the presence of everything."' One year after Odell's release came Annette Lavrijsen's offering, *Niksen: The Dutch Art of Doing Nothing*, which focuses on Niksen, the Dutch philosophy of 'doing nothing'.

The irony of these wellness-focused, be-your-best-self breaks is that often the most restorative thing a person can do for their mind, body and soul is to spend time doing nothing. 'Nobody books a retreat to rest, and I think that's the big misconception about them. If I'm going on a holiday, I need no pressure and no commitments,' says Kaiva Kaimins, 28, the founder of Dalston-based florist My Lady Garden and online educational platform Ladygarden World. 'If I were to book a retreat, I'd be booking it because I'd be wanting to dedicate time to a craft or pursuit or a new experience, or I'd be wanting to engage with people or be active, or whatever it might be. But I wouldn't be doing it to rest.' Instead, Kaimins' preference is for a beach holiday, the most recent of which she enjoyed in January in the mellow Mexican beach resort of Tulum, when she slept, swam, ate, drank and, in her own words, 'totally switched off from my manic day-to-day of running a business'. Kaimins' point is reiterated by further findings from Expedia, which found that more than half (61%) of Brits feel the pressure to book excursions or activities they don't want to do during their time off in order to bolster their social credentials.

Of course, that's not to say that there isn't a place for retreats in the world of travel. A retreat has the power to cater to the specific wants and desires of a smaller audience in a way that a generic beach holiday doesn't. Oya Retreats, which was founded in 2016 by Dr Stacie Graham, calls itself 'a holistic wellness experience for Black women and women of colour who want to commit to their healing and wellbeing journey.' Avolve Wellness, which was founded by Kelley Robertson in 2023, is a retreat designed specifically for neurodivergent people and their caregivers. Robertson was inspired to establish the retreats after struggling with the fact that, while on her favourite beachside 'nothing-cations', her neurodivergent son couldn't be left unaccompanied.

We might all be desperate for a detox, but once upon a time, before the age of poolside IVs and morning meditations, summer holidays existed as an escape in which, for a small sliver of time, we could exist in another place as a more relaxed version of ourselves. These were breaks that were about piercing our everyday routines with injections of sun, sea and sand, and feeling our tightly wound muscles collapse with relaxation. Because if there's one thing our quivering nervous systems don't require in order to reset themselves, it's pre-dawn Pilates, Paleo food and the expectation of doing absolutely anything at all. Then again, that's just us… □

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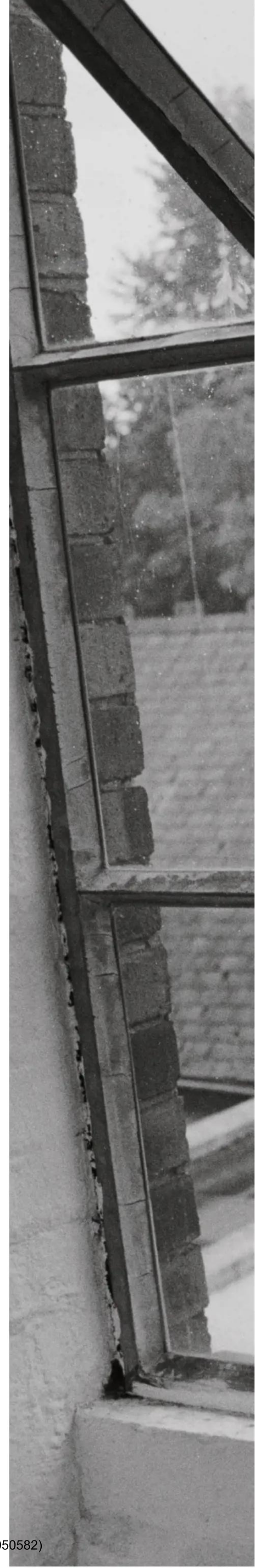
Lost in your 30s

WITH BABY SHOWERS BY DAY AND RAVES BY NIGHT, AND GROWING UP COLLIDING WITH GOING OUT, THE FOURTH DECADE IS HAVING A PERSONALITY CRISIS. *ZING TSJENG* REPORTS FROM THE MIDDLE-GROUND MINEFIELD

PHOTOGRAPH BY NICK DOREY



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YOUR 30s SURVIVAL GUIDE

Do you feel lost in uncertainty? Are you inexplicably stuck on life's conveyor belt? Is your mind melting with jumbled thoughts of burgeoning careers, possible kids and last night's chaos? Never fear: be encouraged, or simply feel less alone, by keeping these cultural companions close to hand

'BABY IS READY FOR VISITORS,' MY FRIEND Lily texts. My weekend is shaping up in a way that may be all too familiar for some people in their thirties: I'm meeting a newborn on the same day my other mates are planning to go to an all-night rave. I hoist my tote bag of pastries – a gift for the new mum – and ponder how surreal it all is. This is not how I imagined growing up.

You know that period between Christmas and New Year, when the world is holding its breath and waiting for life to restart? That's how I feel at 35. Call it 'Millennial betwixtmas', where people in their late twenties and thirties are trapped between the carefree younger years and looming adulthood. It's a disorienting state of affairs summed up in a viral TikTok by British comedian Ali Woods, which describes the confusion of having two distinct friendship groups in your thirties: one that monologues about house deposits and baby scans and another contemplating dramatic life decisions (getting into a throuple, doing ayahuasca, moving to Argentina – you get the gist). 'I have never related so much to something,' one viewer commented. 'What a ride [your] thirties are.'

'At 30, a lot of us thought we would have a checklist of life accomplishments,' Woods, who is currently prepping for his Edinburgh Fringe show *At the Moment*, tells me over email. 'For most people who follow me, that just isn't the case. So I guess a lot of us feel trapped between two options – to settle down, despite that sounding boring, or to continue living spontaneously, despite that sounding scary.'

If the transition from the yuletide season to a new year feels flush with melancholy, Millennial betwixtmas has the same whiff of ennui about it. I feel as if I'm in a holding pattern, stuck between my younger self and an as-yet-unseen future. 'It's a confusing headspin, watching a toddler on the swings while nursing a hazy hangover,' a single friend, also in her thirties, tells me. 'Some of your friends become so distant to you in this new phase, but then partying for your entire life also feels hollow.'

It's not just millennials who feel this way. 'I was born in 1998, and I definitely feel some of this,' muses Leanne Yau (@polyphiliablog), a LGBTQ+ and relationship educator who counts herself as a Zillennial, ie born between my generation and Gen Z. 'Among the few straight friends I have, I definitely feel a disconnect – they've progressed further on the relationship escalator, with cohabitation, marriage and kids. We're just having less and less in common, as our lives and lifestyles are really different now.'

Life coach Gemma Perlin provides counselling to many women in their late twenties and thirties who describe feeling inexplicably stuck on life's conveyer belt, watching their peers disappear into the distance. She points out that some sense of dislocation is normal, as this may be the first time that our lives truly begin to diverge from those of our friends. 'Everyone goes to university, if they want to; everyone starts working and renting – but now it feels like people are actually having totally different experiences. Even if you both live in London, your friends with kids may be having a totally different experience of the city to you.'

'I feel being in the middle is probably harder in some ways, because you're not committed to one option or the other,' Perlin adds. 'As humans, we're always looking for sameness – that's how we feel safe. It can be really discombobulating if you are in the middle of something. You don't know which tribe you're part of.'

For women, this disconnect can feel even more jarring and isolating. While we are living longer – life expectancy in the UK hovers at around 81, compared with 77 in the US – women are cursed to live under the shadow of their biological clock. The decision to have a child, one that men can easily put off until their forties (despite experts warning of a 'crisis' in male fertility), becomes fraught with tension for women in their late twenties and thirties. Social media, too, is a comparison minefield – you're just as likely to get FOMO from a mate's jaunt across South America as you are watching another friend lovingly document their toddler's first steps.

> 'THE DIVERSITY OF PATHS CAN ACTUALLY PRESENT AN ANXIETY IN ITSELF, BECAUSE WE THINK: "ARE WE MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE?"'

'When the period between being young and becoming more of an adult is extended, all the options that we have now – much more than our mothers and grandmothers in previous generations – opens up this space in which people take a lot of different paths,' explains existential therapist and author Eloise Skinner. 'The diversity of paths can actually present an anxiety in itself, because we think: "Are we making the right choice?"'

'Now that we don't have strong social structures telling us exactly what we should do, we have a lot more freedom. But with freedom, there's obviously also a huge amount of responsibility to choose the path that matters to you.'

That's not to say, of course, that society should turn the clock back on women's rights. (I, for one, believe my ennui would only worsen if I became a tradwife.) But my pensiveness is tinged with guilt – obviously, my options would look very different if I wasn't living a relatively privileged 21st-century existence in a developed country. In fact, I wouldn't have very many options at all – so why can't I decide what I want out of life?

Perlin reassures me that it's perfectly fine to rest in my not-knowingness. 'Society wants to know whether we want to

PHOTOGRAPHS: CHRIS BAKER/CHANNEL 4/DANCING LEDGE, ALAMY

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TO WATCH

BIG MOOD THE GREATEST LOVE STORIES ARE OFTEN PLATONIC: NICOLA COUGHLAN AND LYDIA WEST PLAY BEST FRIENDS TRYING TO KEEP THEIR CONNECTION IN THE FACE OF A MENTAL-HEALTH CRISIS. **ACTIVATE WHEN:** SHIT GETS REAL – BUT YOU NEED TO LAUGH.

THE WORST PERSON IN THE WORLD THIS OSCAR-NOMINATED NORDIC ROMCOM IS A MESSY, BRILLIANT ACCOUNT OF COMING INTO YOUR THIRTIES, FEATURING ALL THE NECESSARY CHANGES OF JOB, HAIR COLOUR AND PARTNER. **ACTIVATE WHEN:** YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHO YOU WANT TO BE WITH... OR WHO YOU WANT TO BE.

TO READ

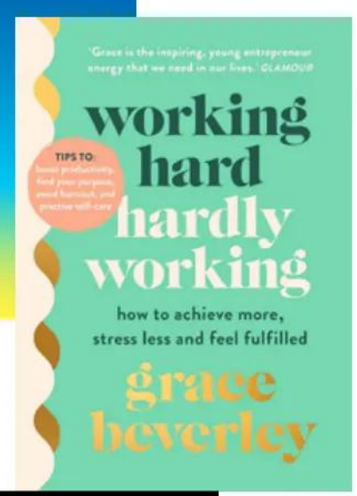
***OLIVE* BY EMMA GANNON** A BOOK FOR WHEN YOUR FRIENDS START GRAVITATING TOWARDS MARRIAGE AND MOTHERHOOD BUT NEITHER FEEL RIGHT FOR YOU, *OLIVE* IS ABOUT A WOMAN CARVING HER OWN PATH. **ACTIVATE WHEN:** YOU'RE DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY, AND THAT'S OK.

***AS YOUNG AS THIS* BY ROXY DUNN** FINDING HERSELF SINGLE AND DESPERATELY WANTING A BABY AT 34, MARGOT RECOUNTS HER LIFE THROUGH HER RELATIONSHIPS. **ACTIVATE WHEN:** YOU'RE IN A FERTILITY CONUNDRUM.

TO LISTEN

WORKING HARD, HARDLY WORKING GRACE BEVERLEY INTERVIEWS SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE TO EXPLORE NOT JUST HOW THEY 'MADE IT', BUT WHAT BALANCE AND FULFILLMENT LOOK LIKE NOW. **ACTIVATE WHEN:** YOU WANT A CAREER REBOOT.

'IT SUCKS TO BE 33' FROM *THE DAILY* IN THIS EPISODE OF *THE NYT*'S POPULAR NEWS PODCAST, JEANNA SMIALEK EXAMINES WHY HER FELLOW 'PEAK MILLENNIALS' – THE COHORT BORN IN 1990 AND 1991 – ARE FIGHTING TO GET AHEAD. **ACTIVATE WHEN:** YOU NEED HARD FACTS.



have kids and settle down, or if we're not interested in that. It doesn't really like the grey area,' she says. 'Give yourself permission to say, "I actually don't know what I want at the moment."'

Though Yau feels a pressure to settle down from her conservative parents, she has been able to navigate the siren call of the white-picket fence thanks to being polyamorous. 'Non-monogamy is all about flexibility and questioning things, and making sure that you're doing something because you want to,' she explains, 'not because you feel you should.'

These new modes of relationships might even point the way forward out of that glum betwixtmas feeling, argues anthropologist Roanne van Voorst, whose book *Six in a Bed* documents the changing trends in intimacy. With close to a quarter of Brits open to non-monogamy, according to a YouGov survey, you might still be able to sow your wild oats while married (with the consent of your partner, obviously). These days, you can even enjoy the security of cohabitation while being single by co-buying property with friends – something 44% of 18 to 24-year-olds would consider, according to a survey by Fairview New Homes. 'There are also women who have decided to raise children together without being in a romantic relationship,' van Voorst adds. 'We have this freedom to see which relationship pattern fits us and how we want to live.'

> 'FLUIDITY IS THE WORD. THEN IT NO LONGER BECOMES A CHOICE FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE, BUT A QUESTION OF RIGHT NOW'

'We're trained to believe either you [either] have a wild life or you have a very settled life,' she tells me. 'I know plenty of people who have families and relationships, and they love going to techno parties. They have poetry slams in their living rooms. I always find the mantra, "yes, you can have it all," very liberating, because it makes me realise that I can actually design my own life.'

Still can't shake the gloom? While it's easy to question your life choices when doomscrolling Instagram, Skinner explains it's only natural to feel sorrowful – even grief-stricken – by all the things you might never get to do. 'We have to let go of some possibilities in order to choose the path that we do want,' she acknowledges. The key, she adds, is blocking out the noise to determine exactly what that is. 'A lot of it is figuring out what you care about,' she says. 'If I were in isolation, and I wasn't looking at another person's life [on social media], what would I actually want for myself? What are my values? What are my priorities in life?'

The answers will differ from person to person. Yours might be to spend quality time with your family, in which case you probably should postpone your move to Australia. Perhaps you only feel truly alive while climbing the corporate ladder, so children might not figure in your plans right now. Whatever you decide, van Voorst adds, remember that nothing is set in stone (even kids go off to university one day, after all). 'Fluidity is the word,' she says. 'Allow yourself to see it in that way and it no longer becomes a choice for the rest of your life, but a question of, "What do I feel suits me best now?"'

And if you do still find your head spinning over the split in your friendship group, Woods has a good way of looking at it: 'The mad people are great for a party or holiday, and the settled ones are terrific for a Sunday roast or a lift. Ideal for me.' □

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He doesn't remember what you wore
Or where you went
He doesn't remember the day
(Or sometimes even the month)
But he remembers the perfume on his pillow
That lingered long after your early-morning
e x i t
When you thought you'd never see him again
But you did
And you do

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Face the future

ELLE's Future of Beauty Awards are back, with innovative launches and groundbreaking formulas worthy of your top shelf. Plus, the summertime scents to bring the sunshine, no matter the weather outside

WORDS: MEDINA AZALDIN. PHOTOGRAPH: IMAXTREE

SUSAN FANG SS24

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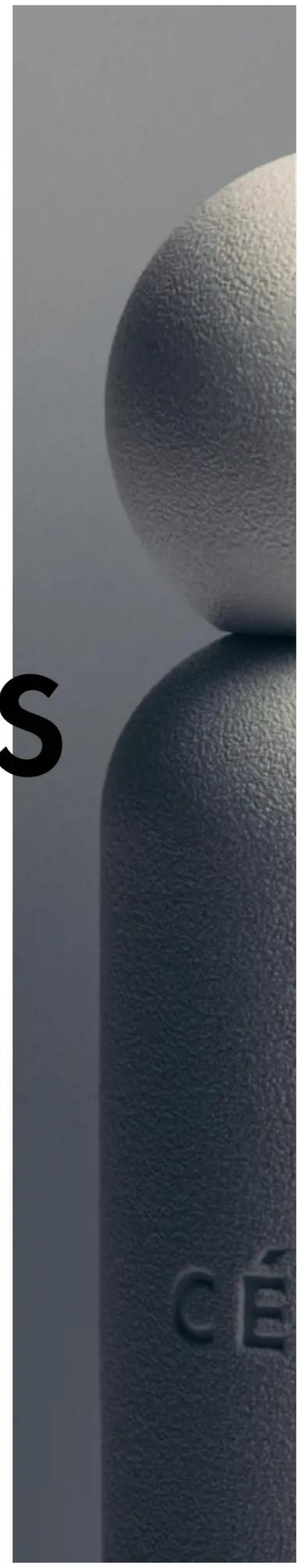
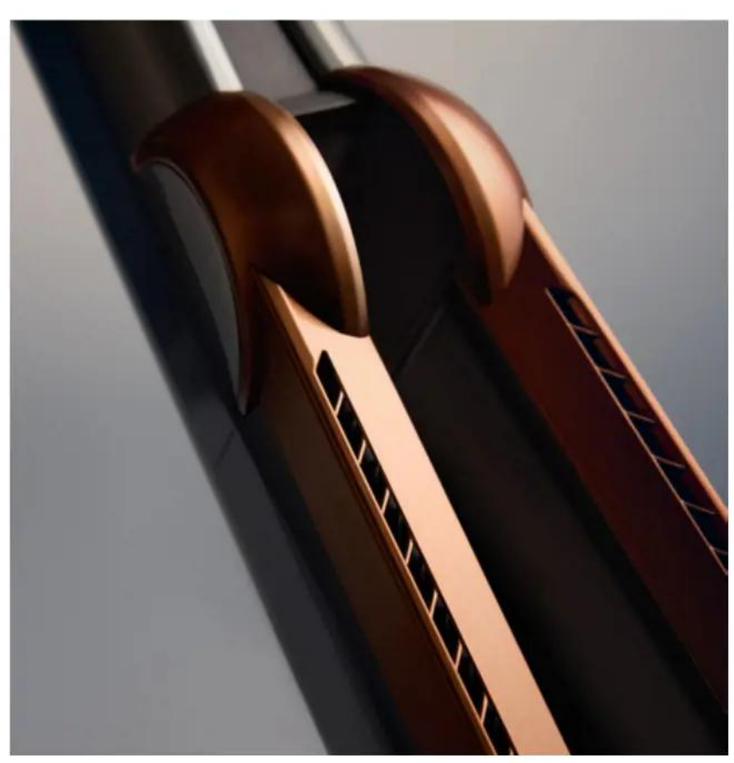
ELLE
FUTURE OF BEAUTY WINNER 2024



THE FUTURE OF BEAUTY AWARDS

WITH BRANDS TURNING TO A MIX OF AI AND BESPOKE FORMULAS, COMPETITION FOR THIS YEAR'S TOP SPOTS WAS HOTTER THAN EVER. TEAM ELLE HAVE TESTED THEIR WAY THROUGH THE NOISE TO BRING YOU 55 GAME-CHANGING PRODUCTS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PLUSIA ROMS



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BODY

BRINGING SKINCARE INGREDIENTS TO YOUR SHOWER ROUTINE, THESE TREATMENTS ARE AS EFFECTIVE AS THEY ARE SENSORIALLY PLEASING

1 THE WASH

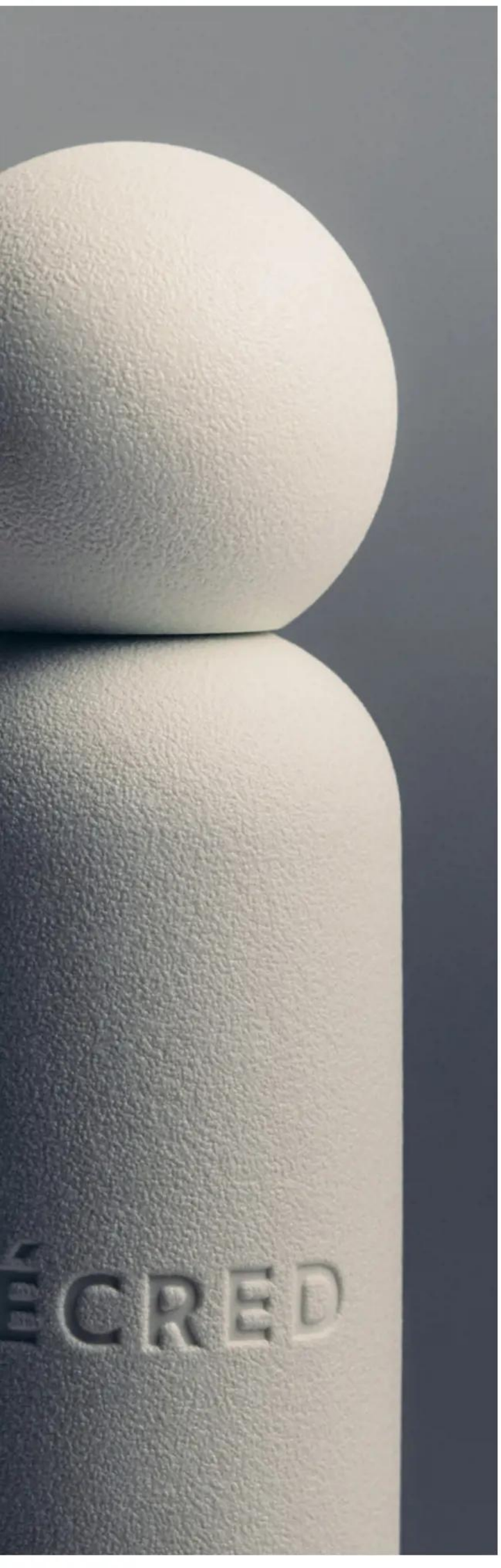
Byoma Hydrating Body Wash, £11.99

Harnessing the power of pH-balanced prebiotics, this body wash is the high-performance cleanser our bodies have been waiting for. The best part? It doesn't compromise on suds or scent.

2 THE SUNSCREEN

Dr Barbara Sturm Sun Cream Body SPF 30, £40

Beyond protecting your limbs from the damaging effects of UVA and UVB rays, this silky formula also contains prickly pear to calm inflammation and antioxidant-rich purslane for plumper, happier skin.



3 THE DEODORANT

Glossier Deodorant, £23

There's nothing fun, or luxe, about deodorant. But Glossier's refillable formula makes the idea quite pleasing with elevated scents (and an unscented version). Best of all, it lasts for months on end, justifying the price tag.

4 THE CREAM

Joonbyrd Sunday Sofa Body Butter, £62

This vanilla-scented body butter from dermatologist Dr Alexis Granite's brand is packed with niacinamide, hyaluronic acid and a natural retinol alternative – equal parts soul-soothing and skin-boosting.

5 THE TREATMENT

Naturium KP Body Scrub & Mask, £20

Battling skin texture and stubborn congestion? This innovative three-in-one lotion combines gentle physical exfoliants with AHAs, BHAs and PHAs, and can be used as a scrub or deep treatment mask.

6 THE NAIL PRODUCT

OPI Repair Mode, £29.90

Wear OPI's smart new keratin-bonding treatment under your weekly mani as protection or paint on naked nails to repair and restore over-worked talons to their former glossy glory in under a week.

7 THE SUPPLEMENT

Vida Glow De-Stress, £30

Expanding on founder Anna Lahey's science-backed range, these capsules contain a clever complex of ingredients designed to combat high cortisol, plus vitamin B3 and Vitamin C to support overall health.

8 THE TAN

Bondi Sands Technocolor Self-Tanning Foam, £19.99

This swift-acting self-tan determines your most flattering shade based on undertones, promising a seamless sunkissed colour that looks totally believable. Forget overly warm tinges and patchy finishes.

MAKE-UP

VIBRANT HUES AND ELEGANT TEXTURES TO TAKE YOU THROUGH WORK, PLAY AND BEYOND

9 THE FOUNDATION

Burberry Beyond Wear Perfecting Matte Foundation, £45

Burberry's new foundation features 'trench technology' that emulates the renowned qualities of its classic coat: breathable, water-resistant and lightweight.

10 THE SKIN TINT

Dcypher My Custom Drops, £35

Gone are the days of mediocre shade ranges: the foundations of the future are limitless. Not only does Dcypher's cutting-edge AI colour-matching technology cater to all skin tones, it also cuts excess production and reduces waste. ▷

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11 THE CONCEALER

Haus Labs Triclone Skin Tech Hydrating Concealer, £27
Infused with over 20 skincare ingredients, including patent-pending fermented arnica, this buildable concealer not only hides dark circles, but also de-puffs and brightens.

12 THE EYE COLOUR

About-Face Fluid Eye Paint, £16
Whether you prefer intricate designs or a jolt of liner, these vegan colours from Halsey's beauty brand deliver high-octane pigments, allowing you to play and experiment to your heart's content.

13 THE BROW PENCIL

Benefit Precisely, My Brow Detailer, £22.50
Possibly the thinnest brow sculptor we've ever used, this micro-detail pencil is ideal for creating believably fine, hair-like strokes – say goodbye to blocky brows.

14 THE DO-IT-ALL MASCARA

Lisa Eldridge Kitten Lash Mascara, £29
This inky mascara layers generously without clumping, while its micro bristles catch the tiniest of lashes. Plus, the formula withstands workouts, rainy days and, yes, a good ol' cry.

15 THE SUBTLE MASCARA

Refy Lash Sculpt, £20
The C-shaped, comb-like brush perfectly separates and lengthens individual eyelashes for an understated, lifted effect. A low-key option for those who prefer just a hint of definition.

16 THE LIPSTICK

Chanel Rouge Allure Velvet Nuit Blanche, £42
We defy you not to find a shade you love in Chanel's new lipstick wardrobe, ranging from fresh pinks to pillar-box reds. The luminous finish also offers an accessible take on the 1990s matte make-up trend.

17 THE MATTE LIPSTICK

Prada Monochrome Hyper Matte Lipstick, £40
These chic lipsticks use three pure-colour pigments (instead of the industry standard of up to 12) for maximum punch and wear comfortably, thanks to the skincare-infused formula.

18 THE BLUSHER

Milk Makeup Cooling Water Jelly Tint Blush, £22
Generously pigmented and playful, Milk's viral blush tint is a holiday essential, complete with a unique jelly texture and an instantly cooling effect. We'll be reaching for this handy stick all summer long.

19 THE SCULPTOR

Victoria Beckham Contour Stylus, £35
Contouring has never been so chic (or easy). This slim crayon blends like a dream and allows for subtle, targeted sculpting, while its cool tones are made for all skin colours. Plus, it doubles as a neutral eyeshadow.

20 THE POWDER

YSL All Hours Hyper Finish Powder, £45
Formulated with limetta, an antioxidant-packed citrus found in Yves Saint Laurent's Moroccan garden, this finely milled powder mattifies excess shine and works as both a foundation or to set your base.

21 THE PRIMER

Shiseido Revitalessence Skin Glow Primer, £39
Shiseido's silicone-free, niacinamide-infused prebiotic cream acts like a filter for the complexion, imbuing it with a lit-from-within radiance, reducing redness and blurring uneven patches.

22 THE LUMINISER

Dior Forever Glow Star Filter, £45
Sparkly when swatched, this goes on to create an ethereal glow with a silky texture that imparts ample hydration. Use it as a highlighter and primer, or mix into your foundation or moisturiser.

HAIR

STRONGER, SHINIER LENGTHS START WITH THESE NOURISHING TREATMENTS AND CLEVER TOOLS

23 THE SHAMPOO

K18 Peptide Prep Detox Shampoo, £39
Clarifying shampoos have a tendency to leave hair parched. Not here: K18's patented peptide prevents protein loss and reverses damage to maintain softness and vibrant colour, even as it effectively cleanses.

24 THE CONDITIONER

Kérastase Première Decalcifying Repairing Conditioner, £41.10
With a dual-power combo of citric acid and glycine, this nourishing conditioner neutralises dullness and combats damage, all in one glossing, high-shine formula.

25 THE STYLING PREP

Color Wow Money Mist, £29.50
A one-and-done leave-in conditioner packed with marine botanicals, it offers heat protection alongside strengthening, de-frizzing, hydrating and detangling benefits. Oh, and it leaves a mirror-like shine, too.

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26 THE VOLUMISER

Zara Hair Dry Texturizing Spray, £15.99

Bringing one of Britain's most celebrated hairstylists, Guido Palau, into our bathrooms, this truly is cool-girl hair in a can. Expect perfectly tousled runway volume, minus the tackiness of former versions.

27 THE SERUM

Tresemmé Lamellar Shine Cream Serum, £7

This inventive formula uses conditioning agents in 'micro sheets' (rather than spheres) to laminate the hair for a glossy finish that is noticeably softer to the touch, without weighing down fine strands.

28 THE MULTI-TASKER

Dyson Airstrait, £449.99

Blow dry and straighten your hair in one fell swoop. Dyson's handy tool uses hot air rather than heated plates to achieve sleek, high-shine results with minimal damage. Your morning routine just got simpler.

29 THE SCALP SAVIOUR

Charlotte Mensah Manketti Oil Salt Scrub, £60

Use once weekly and let the ultra-fine Ghanaian sea salt and Himalayan pink crystals lift excess oils and product residue, while a cocktail of hydrating plant oils helps to soothe irritated scalps.

30 THE HYDRATING TREATMENT

L'Oréal Paris Elvive Hydra Hyaluronic Acid Overnight Hydrating Cream, £12.99

Deeply nourishing yet pillow-friendly, this rinse-free cream nourishes lacklustre ends and tames frizz, without ever leaving your hair slick and heavy.

31 THE DAMAGE REPAIR

Living Proof Triple Bond Complex, £42

Reversing the effects of hair damage is no easy feat. Yet this 10-minute formula, developed with innovative technology, actually repairs broken bonds to combat split ends and dull locks.

32 THE CURL ENHANCER

Cécred Moisture Sealing Lotion, £37

A hard-working trio of wool-derived bioactive keratin, prebiotic ferment and honey repairs damaged hair while ensuring curls stay bouncy. If it's good enough for Queen Bey…

33 THE STYLING TOOL

Shark Flexstyle, £269.99

You'd be hard-pressed to find a more adaptable hair gadget than the lightweight Flexstyle. Complete with a wide range of attachments, it provides a salon-smooth wave and a voluminous blow-dry all in one place.

SKIN

FROM ESSENTIAL BASICS TO HARDWORKING ACTIVES WITH INNOVATIVE DELIVERY SYSTEMS, THESE FORMULAS PROMISE A HAPPIER, HEALTHIER COMPLEXION

34 THE MAKE-UP REMOVER

KraveBeauty Makeup Re-Wined Cleanser, £25

Both oily and dry skin types will appreciate this gentle cleanser, which transforms from jelly to oil to a milk and uses upcycled grapeseed oil to hydrate without clogging pores.

35 THE EVERYDAY CLEANSER

Reome Three Suns Cleanser, £55

A creamy, non-greasy balm packed with lab-derived biotech actives – to minimise overharvesting of natural ingredients and ensure top-notch skin compatibility – that soothes as it cleanses.

36 THE SUNSCREEN

Supergoop! Every Single Face Watery Lotion SPF 50, £29

Suitable for every skin type and tone, the new finish leaves no white cast, while its impressive pore-refining, barrier-strengthening and skin-hydrating merits mean it can be worn alone or mixed in with skincare.

37 THE HYDRATING SERUM

Dermalogica Pro-Collagen Banking Serum, £89

Topical collagen is generally too large to penetrate pores, so Dermalogica uses amino acids to encourage natural collagen production and preserve existing levels, leaving skin firmer for longer.

38 THE BESPOKE TREATMENT

Klira, from £49

This skincare innovation by consultant dermatologist Dr Emma Craythorne determines your unique 'Skinsize' to create your custom blend, featuring prescription-level actives in a base that works for you.

39 THE MOISTURISER

Estée Lauder Re-Nutriv Ultimate Diamond Transformative Brilliance Soft Creme, £160

With 15 years of research behind it, this plush cream improves barrier function, boosts collagen production and plumps up fine lines.

40 THE VITAMIN C

Ulé Le C-Bright Serum, £59

Shiseido-backed Ulé is giving sustainable skincare a chic update. Combining vertical-farming initiatives with natural ingredients, this high-performance line champions thoughtfully crafted products with lasting, glowing results. ▷

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41 THE BARRIER CARE

Drunk Elephant Bora Barrier Repair Cream, £62

Drunk Elephant's latest launch drenches dehydrated skin with six butter lipids, and a dose of copper antioxidants, zinc and rice extract to maintain it by protecting the skin barrier.

42 THE NIGHT CREAM

Sisley Phyto-Blanc La Nuit, £186

Harnessing the proven enzyme-boosting powers of marine algae, Sisley's moisturising cream helps to halt the progression of dark spots as you snooze for brighter days ahead.

43 THE PIGMENTATION FIGHTER

La Roche-Posay Mela B3 Serum, £48

This multi-tasking serum is clinically proven to reduce the appearance of dark spots, thanks to a blend of retinol, niacinamide and hyaluronic acid.

44. THE POST-TREATMENT SOS

Sarah Chapman R&R Glow, £95

Sarah Chapman's new Clinic line uses the exclusive TTS3 method to improve efficacy by 20 times – this recovery balm is made for fragile, reactive complexions.

45 THE MASK

Dr Jart+ Cicapair Sleepair Intensive Soothing Repair Mask, £38

Ideal for oily skin types, this refreshing gel uses centella asiatica extracts and peptides to provide instant comfort and promote long-term barrier resilience without clogging pores.

46 THE EYE TREATMENT

Lancôme Advanced Génifique Eye Cream, £53

Cheat a good night's sleep with this patented pre- and probiotic-infused formula, which works to combat dark circles and nourish the thin skin around the eyes, keeping fine lines at bay.

47 THE FACE TOOL

Lightinderm LED and Deep Tissue Massage Device, £400

With 10 years of research, 500 screenings, 12 clinical trials and 60 French dermatologists behind it, this gadget delivers some of the best LED results we've seen – and three minutes a day are all you need.

48. THE BLEMISH BUSTER

Fenty Skin Blemish Defeat'r BHA Spot-Targeting Gel, £21

Rather than asking acne-prone skin types to cut back on make-up, Fenty Skin developed a traceless spot treatment that sits flawlessly under foundation while protecting breakouts.

PRO PICKS

STANDOUT BUYS STRAIGHT FROM THE EXPERTS WHO KNOW BEAUTY BEST

49 KATHARINE MACKENZIE PATERSON, FACIALIST

Sculpta by Déesse Pro, £499

'Combining EMS (electrical muscle stimulation), radio frequency and red LED all in one handheld device, it can address multiple skin concerns, and provide an overall glow.'

50 ROSS KWAN, HAIRSTYLIST AND TRESEMMÉ AMBASSADOR

Hair by Sam McKnight Modern Hairspray, £24

'This flexible hairspray is also a heat protector – great for styles that require hot tools. It brushes out easily and has a high-shine finish.'

51 CHARLOTTE MENSAH, HAIRSTYLIST

Merit Flush Balm, £32

'I was blown away by the texture and how it gave me a glow alongside a beautiful, natural finish. Plus, the packaging is so luxurious.'

52 JESS HUNT, CREATIVE DIRECTOR AND CO-FOUNDER OF REFY

Philip Kingsley No Scent No Colour Duo, £54

'Formulated for Kingsley's wife to use during her cancer treatment, this nourishing, gentle cleanser is suitable for super-sensitive skin.'

53 DR EWOMA UKELEGHE, AESTHETIC DOCTOR

Topicals Slick Salve Mint Lip Balm, £12.92

'This is one of the best lip balms I've ever used – it actually works, thanks to a "cling on" formula that ensures long-lasting wear.'

54 EMMA DABIRI, AUTHOR

Emma Lewisham Supernatural Face Crème Riche, £90

'The consistency is a dream – my skin feels better immediately. It's packed with 23 actives and combines multiple weights of hyaluronic acid to boost the skin's moisture levels.'

55 MATA MARIĒLLE, MAKE-UP ARTIST

One/Size On 'Til Dawn Mattifying Waterproof Setting Spray, £30

This setting spray is one of the best I've ever used. A spritz will lock in your make-up so it won't move, and keep it looking flawless all day long. □

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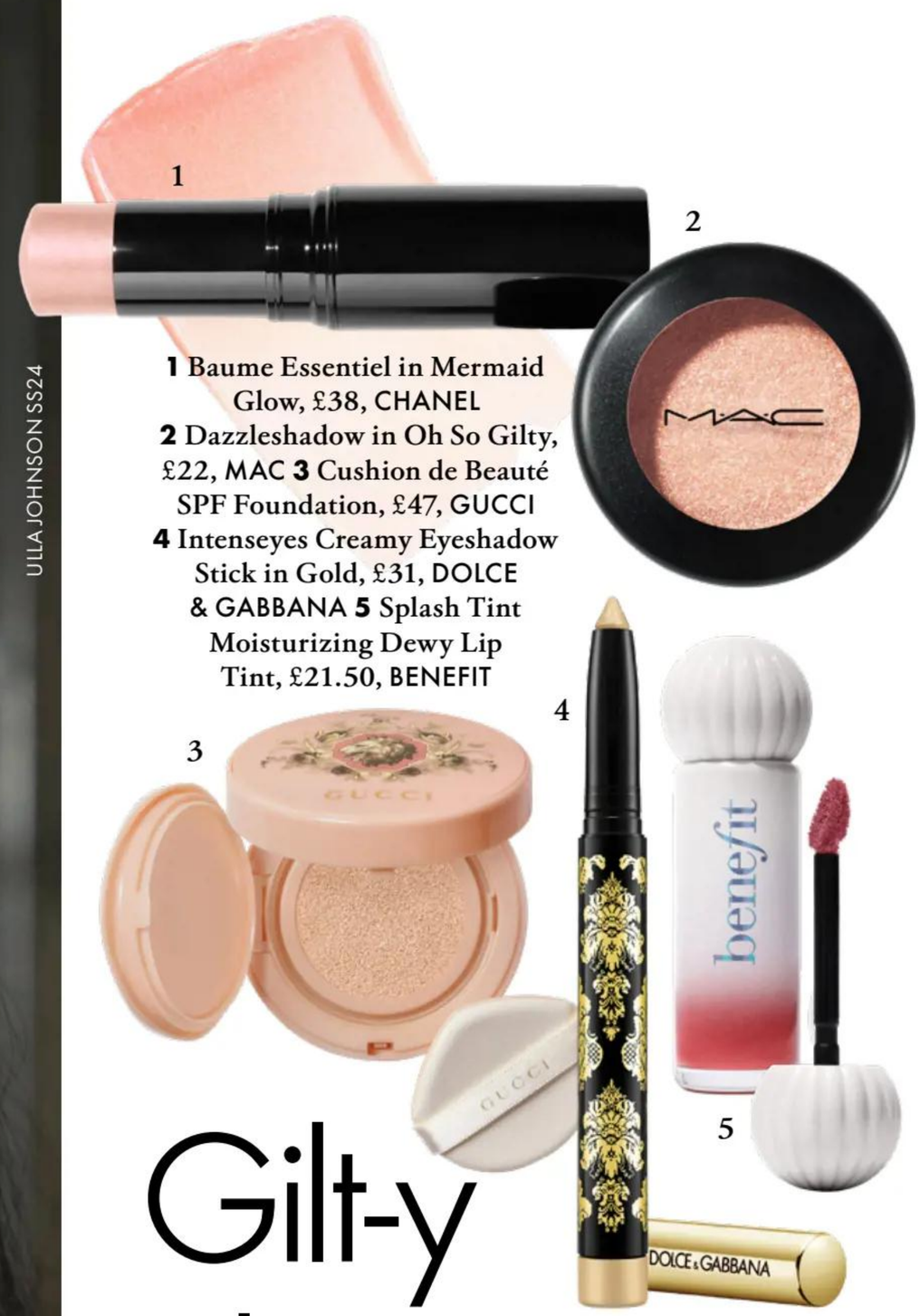
Radar

WORDS BY MEDINA AZALDIN

ULLA JOHNSON SS24



1 Baume Essentiel in Mermaid Glow, £38, CHANEL **2** Dazzleshadow in Oh So Gilty, £22, MAC **3** Cushion de Beauté SPF Foundation, £47, GUCCI **4** Intenseyes Creamy Eyeshadow Stick in Gold, £31, DOLCE & GABBANA **5** Splash Tint Moisturizing Dewy Lip Tint, £21.50, BENEFIT

Gilt-y pleasure

Swathes of gold work just as well in summer as they do at the Christmas party. This time around, give the look a fresh warm-weather update by opting for metallic sheens rather than glitter, and wear with a popsicle-stained lip, and luminous skin, as seen at Ulla Johnson SS24. Blend the eyeshadow with your fingertip for a nonchalant effect that takes you from the boardroom to after-hours.

Skin school

Streamline your skincare with sunscreen formulas that are packed with hydration and active ingredients promising a healthier complexion. L'Oréal Paris Bright Reveal Dark Spot UV Fluid SPF50+, £19.99, uses niacinamide to tackle pigmentation, while drier skin types will drink up Shiseido SPF50+ Face Sun Protection Cream, £36 – now even more resistant against sweat and water. For a one-and-done primer and day cream, try Origins Ginzing SPF30+ Daily Moisturizer, £34, which has caffeine and antioxidants to perk up tired skin.

1 Bright Reveal Dark Spot UV Fluid, £19.99, L'ORÉAL PARIS **2** Sun Protection Cream, £36, SHISEIDO **3** Ginzing Daily Moisturizer, £34, ORIGINS

Close to home

Bruton-based Commune shuns single-use plastic refill pouches for recyclable, visually pleasing bottles. The outdoorsy scent of geraniums and cypress in its body wash and creams are a nod to the bucolic Somerset countryside. From £37.

PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES, IMAXTREE

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Fashion scents
Get ready to smell the Acne Studios x Frédéric Malle perfume on every person you admire. With rosy and aldehydic notes, this takes the idea of a floral scent and elevates it. £200.

Page turners
For your reading list: *Ugly* by Anita Bhagwandas (Bonnier Books) and *Pixel Flesh* by Ellen Atlanta (Headline) are two new releases dissecting the dark side of beauty culture.

Seeing sunsets
Swap 'aura' nails for an ombré manicure in orange and yellow, as seen at Ahluwalia SS24.

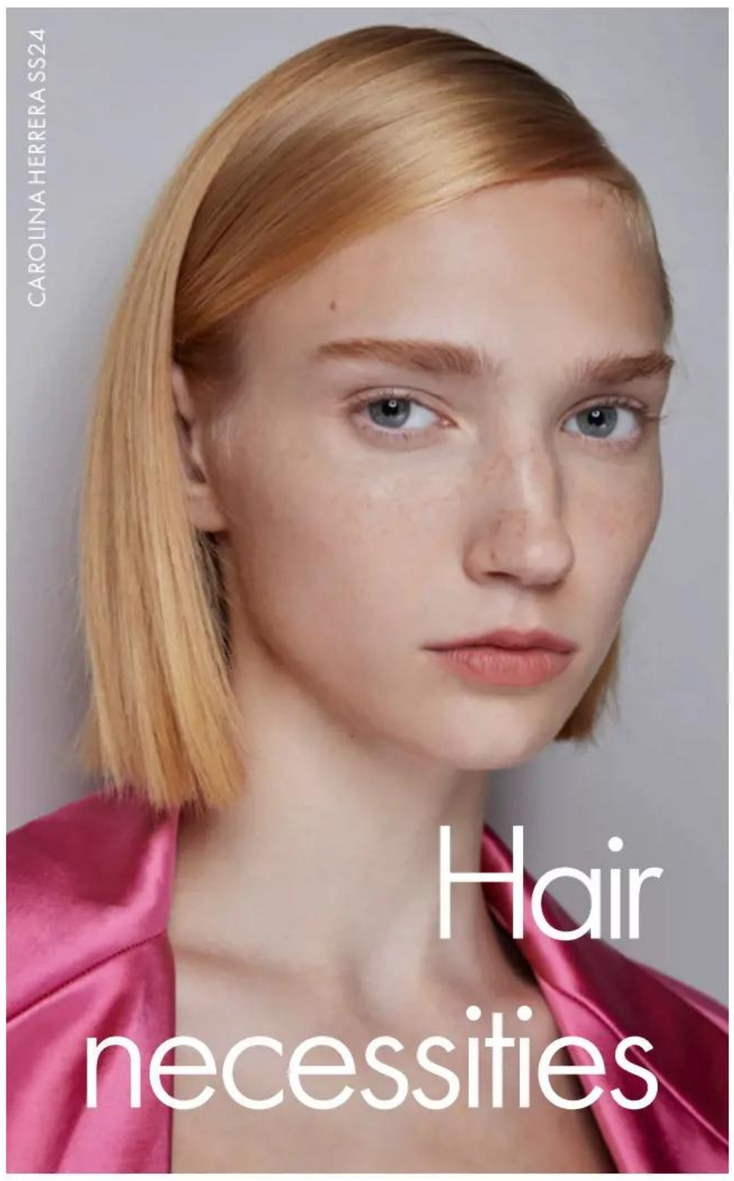
Beauty barometer

Our guide to the on-the-up products to try and off-the-wall trends to avoid

Stupid Cupid
Yet another body part we don't need to obsess over: clinics are reporting a rise in tweakments to define the Cupid's bow of the lip.

Bare lashes
Mascara was missing at AW24 shows but, IRL, nothing enlivens the face more than a swipe of it.

Lobs
Goodbye, long bobs. We're craving the dramatic impact of XXL lengths or an ultra-short chop, à la Zendaya on her *Dune* press tour.



Hair necessities

A glossy finish is key to elevating any cut or colour. Tresemmé Lamellar Shine Conditioner, £7, detangles (you feel the difference immediately in the shower), strengthens and leaves a shine using amino acids and ceramides. Kérastase's refillable Iconic Elixir, £58, now comes supercharged with French camellia extracts for nourishment, while Shea Moisture Intensive Hydration Leave-in Conditioner, £14.99, keeps curls defined, bouncy and stronger than ever.

Notes on notes

Summer's best home scents will transport you to far-flung locales. Trudon's Versailles candle, £98, is inspired by flowering gardens at the French palace, with notes of tuberose and blooming peonies, while Malin + Goetz's Bergamot Supercandle, £159, is a stroll through Italian citrus groves in a 780g vessel. For a gallop through the Texas plains from the comfort of your workspace, light Oribe's Desertland incense, £83, and let the smoky aroma of lavender and cedar take you there.

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The editors on… Summer perfume

The changing season means only one thing – it's out with the oud and in with the neroli. Here's how the ELLE editors will spritz their way through summer

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARIANA MALTONI

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Katie Withington: suntan scents

THE FIRST DAY OF THE YEAR THAT MY MISERABLE ALARM IS beaten to the task of waking me up by the sunshine streaming through the curtains, my perfume mood changes. A break in the clouds and cosy, fireplace-scented fragrances are swapped for those with more exotic notes, ones that can transport me long-haul to somewhere far away from my London life – think the sort of picturesque destination you'll find in ELLE Escapes.

Despite the shared sun, sea and sand moodboard, my summer-perfume wardrobe is surprisingly versatile. You'll find your quintessential beach notes, of course – nostalgic sun lotion, creamy coconuts, salty aquatics – but also sheer musk, light florals and sparkling bursts of citrus. With a collection of bottles inspired by locations ranging from the Greek Islands to the Southern Hemisphere, the scents that I return to are varied and imaginative. And, as I do during any other season, I rotate my fragrances depending on the occasion.

> The scents that I return to are varied and imaginative

For office days, I'll opt for something airy and sophisticated. Ouai's North Bondi and Memo Paris' Zante both have a breezy bergamot opening and base notes of musk and patchouli. On weekends, I revert to my gourmand heart. Maison Margiela Replica's aptly named Beach Walk laces that same citrus and musk base with sweet notes of coconut milk and pink pepper for the ultimate sugared treat. And if I am actually jet-setting, it's all in on the ylang-ylang and amber in Killian's Sunkissed Goddess. Because who doesn't want unlimited rays, even if it is only in olfactory form?

1 Sunkissed Goddess Eau de Parfum, £220, KILLIAN **2** Zante Eau de Parfum, £235, MEMO PARIS **3** North Bondi Eau de Parfum, £54, OUAI **4** Beach Walk Eau de Toilette, £120, MAISON MARGIELA REPLICA

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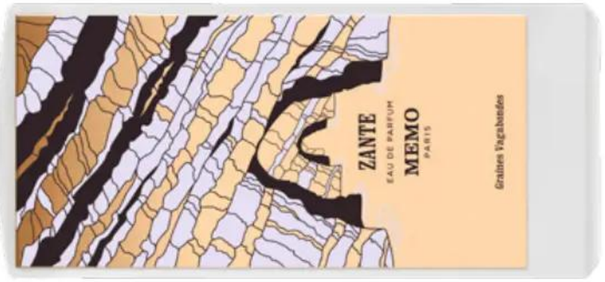

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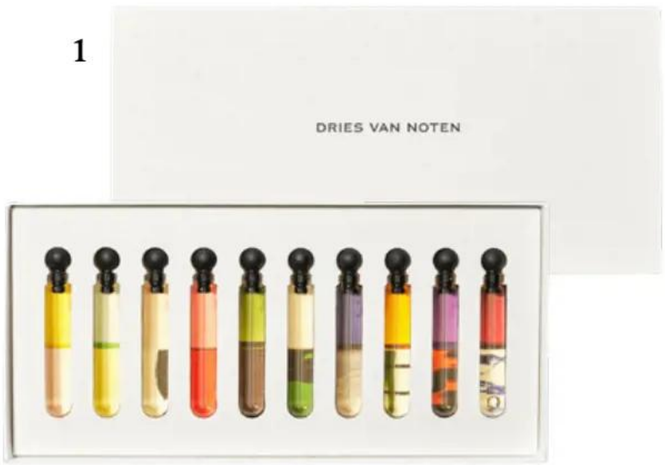

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1 Modepaleis Discovery Set, £53, DRIES VAN NOTEN **2** La Sélection Nomade, £117, BYREDO **3** Scent Library, PENHALIGON'S **4** Travel Spray And Refills, £200, CELINE

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Katy Young: travel-friendly spritzes

I LOVE THE IDEA OF A SIGNATURE SCENT, BUT I'VE NEVER FOUND 'the one'. I have, however, had a lot of fun looking for it. I've enjoyed dozens of flings with fragrances that I mix and match based on my mood on any given day, not to mention the ever-changing weather.

I am as fickle with my perfume as I am with my accessories – I have scarves, belts and hoop earrings on rotation – but my summer scents have all tended to come with a splash of neroli. The perfect fresh, hot-weather floral, it gives skin the kind of warmth that makes you want to nuzzle in, much like a good suntan lotion but without any of the stickiness.

Ultimately, it's your nose that should sniff out what you might enjoy wearing and, for me, there is no better time to experiment than the holiday season. Travelling is the ideal moment to try those cute perfume minis. Not just because they save essential packing space you can use for more shoes, but because they create the opportunity to welcome new fragrances into your life. How else will you be able to narrow down your favourites from those endless perfume collections by Prada, Celine and Dries Van Noten? A few nights away with some unexpected scents, the type you wouldn't normally go for, sometimes ends up in a lifelong love affair.

> Travelling is the ideal moment to try perfume minis

Every time a new collection launches, I get hold of the discovery box and tuck a few little bottles into my case whenever I'm on the road. That's how I discovered Rimbaud by Celine, Azure from Estée Lauder and Dries Van Noten's Raving Rose, all now permanent fixtures in my summer rotation, but not scents I would have committed to had I not spent time getting acquainted with them. You never know, a mini fragrance fling might end up with you finding the one. ▷

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Medina Azaldin: gentle colognes

AFTER YEARS SPENT LIVING IN MALAYSIA, AN EQUATORIAL country (read: all sun, all year round), I now revel in the annual closet switch-up, when cosy, fluffy knitwear gets packed away in favour of thigh-grazing hemlines, broderie anglaise and jute espadrilles. I take a similar approach to my beauty routine, swapping out full-coverage foundations for barely-there tints, and cocooning moisturisers for lightweight SPF.

Fragrance, despite being the finishing touch in my daily routine, proves to be a tricky category when it comes to transitioning from winter to summer. My scent choices are primarily led by a vibe rather than ambient temperature, and I often gravitate towards opulent spices and sandalwood: richer notes that linger for hours on end, making me smell, well, really good.

Still, these decadent perfumes can feel rather stifling on sunny June days, which is why I've found an alternative in cologne formulas. Splashy colognes have a reputation for featuring simpler, one-note scents such as lavender and citrus, but Jo Malone London proves that lighter compositions can be equally complex. Mimosa & Cardamom is deliciously warm and spicy (with better longevity than others in the range), yet it floats gently on the skin without overwhelming the senses. For cooler summer mornings, Santa Maria Novella's hazelnutty Lana is smooth and creamy without being cloying, with notes of milky figs and sandalwood. While Caudalie is better known for its excellent suncream and skincare, don't sleep on the brand's scented waters. Thé Des Vignes Eau Fraiche is all freshly laundered linens and long strolls through a breezy garden, expertly created by master perfumer Jacques Cavallier (the nose behind Louis Vuitton fragrances).

Colognes don't linger as long as their perfume counterparts due to a higher water content, but I have found that spraying on well-moisturised skin makes a big difference, as it gives the scent something to cling on to. Plus, Caudalie and Jo Malone are available in easily portable travel sizes, so you can take your favourites along for on-the-go top-ups.

1 Mimosa & Cardamom Cologne, £55 for 30ml, JO MALONE LONDON **2** Thé Des Vignes Eau Fraiche, £31, CAUDALIE **3** Lana Acqua di Colonia, £125, SANTA MARIA NOVELLA

1 Pink Me Up Eau de Parfum, £225, ATELIER DES ORS **2** Grand Soir Eau de Parfum, £185, MAISON FRANCIS KURKDJIAN **3** Lana Nanatopia Eau de Parfum, £160, BORNTOSTANDOUT

Dr Ewoma Ukeleghe: summer-evening scents

I'M ALWAYS ON THE LOOKOUT FOR A HIDDEN GEM, WHICH HAS led me down the rabbit hole of #perfumetok on social media, a treasure trove for discovering niche fragrances. I love the account @scoutdixonwest, whose eloquent reviews never fail to influence my purchases.

And, as I'm never without a spritz of perfume, I have made quite a few, and often change them according to my mood and what I'm trying to channel on any given day.

When I think of summer evenings, I picture warm, sweaty (but still chic) seduction. On my current rotation is Nanatopia by Borntostandout, which I discovered through TikTok. This one is for the gourmand lovers who want something elevated, with impressive projection; its notes of rum, banana and tonka bean make it a playful choice for a gathering with friends. If I could distil this fragrance into two words, they would be 'boozy banana'.

> In two words, this fragrance is 'boozy banana'

For dinner dates, I'm choosing Grand Soir by Maison Francis Kurkdjian, which I came across thanks to a patient of mine, who walked in smelling so expensive. The intoxicating scent of vanilla and amber creates a gorgeous sillage – people will smell you even before you strut into a room. If (and when) I'm on a girls' night in St Tropez, I'll reach for Pink Me Up by Atelier Des Ors, a sparkling blend of champagne, raspberry and iris that dries down to a spicy-rose scent. It's girly, flirty and decadent; perfect for pairing with a glass of bubbly. □

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Destination next

From a glimpse into the home of globetrotting Métier founder Melissa Morris to ELLE Escapes 2024, our all-new travel awards chosen by an esteemed panel of industry judges, this month we urge you to embrace the joy of escaping

PHOTOGRAPH BY VICKY GROUT

STYLING: GRACE CLARKE. HAIR AND MAKE-UP: TERRI CAPON

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The interior life of: Melissa Morris

The founder of cult accessories brand Métier takes ELLE on a tour of her artful, souvenir-filled home

WORDS BY KATIE O'MALLEY PHOTOGRAPHS BY VICKY GROUT
STYLING BY GRACE CLARKE

FOR SOMEONE WHO DESIGNS LUXURY LEATHER BAGS FOR women on the go, it's surprising to learn that Métier founder Melissa Morris is a self-described 'homebody'. 'I'm someone who needs to be at home,' she admits, noting that her favourite pastimes include cooking, and meeting friends at the pub. 'My flat is very minimal but warm, with lots of soft textures, candles and incense – a place you want to curl up inside.'

Finding comfort in small spaces is an art Morris learnt from her childhood growing up on the outskirts of Philadelphia. 'I'm the youngest of two so I got the smallest room, which I loved. It was my own little nook, and I developed a love of cosy corners,' she says, recalling covering her walls in milk adverts, as well as Nirvana and Pearl Jam posters. Her ceiling, meanwhile, was decorated with glow-in-the-dark stars. 'I used to jump on my bed and stick them on. My mum was terrified I'd hurt myself.'

Today, home is a ground-floor apartment in a three-storey building on a 'really beautiful and leafy' street in Notting Hill, which Morris moved into in August 2023. 'It has big windows and high ceilings,' she says, highlighting the flat's unusual U-shaped floorplan. Its location is within walking distance of her 'sanctuaries' – yoga studios Love Supreme Projects and Heartcore – as well as eateries such as Klear Labs and Straker's. 'When you become an entrepreneur, you either go off the rails or just get really into health,' she jokes of her devotion to wellness.

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A lover of neutrals (she's wearing vintage Levi's jeans and an oversized grey cashmere jumper), Morris kept most of her home white – except for one wall in the conservatory, which is painted a muted sky blue. Morris found the colour, which she likens to the Gotland Suede hue Métier launched last summer, in Paris' Le Marais neighbourhood, before locating its stockist in Marylebone's interiors haven Caravane. 'Even in the winter, when it's dark and grey, it feels a bit magical,' she says of the brightly lit, glass-roofed space.

Morris launched Métier in 2017 with the goal of making handcrafted, functional-yet-luxurious travel accessories, which are now carried by celebrities such as Katie Holmes, Nicole Kidman and Kate Middleton. Travel forms a fundamental part of the designer's interiors aesthetic, which is an amalgamation of vintage finds and holiday souvenirs. Her most treasured trinkets include a fish plate, bought in the south of France after a friend's wedding and hung up in an alcove, mismatched kitchen bowls from Oaxaca and Japan and a tapestry purchased in Puglia last year that hangs in her bedroom. 'That's what makes a house a home – when it doesn't look like it was created by an interior designer; rather, it's yours and individual.'

Committed to the idea that 'decorating should be a lifelong pursuit', she credits her astute eye for interiors to her love affair with sculpture and an appreciation for the icons of the design world, including the French architect Charlotte Perriand. A sculpture and business graduate of Atlanta's Emory University, Morris has amassed an inspiring collection of chairs over the years. Pierre Paulin's squiggle-shaped Tongue design, a Flag Halyard chair by Hans Wegner and baby-blue satellite seats sourced from Chelsea's Portuondo Gallery that 'look like they're from *2001: A Space Odyssey*' all sit proudly in her living room. 'Chairs are sculptural and make me think about how art can be useful,' Morris explains. ▷

SIMPLE PLEASURES
LEFT: MELISSA MORRIS. ABOVE: VINTAGE FURNITURE AND PRINTS IN THE LIVING ROOM. RIGHT: MORRIS IN HER KITCHEN

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INNER SANCTUM
RIGHT: THE BEDROOM. FAR RIGHT: MORRIS IN THE CONSERVATORY. BELOW: MORRIS'S JEWELLERY

Morris's appreciation of design also makes for an impressive assortment of vintage furniture, whether it's the heavy, asymmetric dark-brown wood bookshelf in her lounge or the thick black wooden slab kitchen table, purchased at the Marché aux Puces de Saint-Ouen in Paris. 'I love mixing brown and black,' she says of the colour contrast, noting that the chairs surrounding the piece are slim in width but still, above all, comfortable for guests. 'There's nothing worse than going to someone's house for dinner and sitting in an awkward chair.'

In addition to investing in art, whether it's pieces from the likes of Wolfgang Tillmans and Al Taylor or prints by Vivian Suter and Ruth Asawa, Morris believes a bed is one of the best purchases to splurge on. 'Sleep is so important,' she says, adding that her Savoir bed is topped with a headboard she created, which was inspired by a photo of Jane Birkin sitting in an old chair. 'My friend, the British interior designer Sophie Ashby, put me in touch with a contractor who made the headboard out of bouclé fabric after I sent him my sketches,' she says.

The pièce de résistance of Morris's home is, undoubtedly, her walk-in wardrobe, which houses cherished items such as her Michel Vivien Emerance boots, double-faced Céline cashmere cocoon coats and vintage finds from Rellik. Making up the room's eclectic mix of furniture is a dresser, also from the Marché aux Puces, a 'bizarre' tapestry chair and an antique mirror: 'I picked it up in 2006 when I lived in San Francisco. It has travelled the world with me.'

We can only imagine the interiors treasures Morris will acquire after a trip to Egypt with friends for her birthday, planned for later this year. 'I travel a lot but rarely for myself, so this will be fun.' □

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HAIR AND MAKE-UP: TERRI CAPON AT STELLA CREATIVE ARTISTS, USING ORIBE AND WESTMAN ATELIER

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ELLE escapes 2024

Long-haul luxe, a boat with a difference and a 300-year old mountain hideout – for ELLE's inaugural travel awards, we asked those in the know where they'll be laying down their towels this year. And the winners are...

Best for learning a new skill: Son Bunyola, Mallorca

'Opened last summer, Son Bunyola is a 27-bedroom luxury hotel that is owned by Richard Branson and is part of Virgin Limited Edition. Located on a 1,300-acre estate in Mallorca's stunning Tramuntana Mountains, the renovated mansion comes with inviting pools and three standalone villas, with four to five bedrooms in each. There is a spa utilising locally made Gaia Natural Products, two restaurants (Sa Tafona is opening in June) and a menu of free outdoor pursuits ranging from tennis and kayaking to perfume-making and painting classes.' *virginlimitededition.com/son-bunyola*

JENNY SOUTHAN

Meet the experts

Kenya Hunt
Editor-in-chief of ELLE UK

Jenny Southan
Founder and editor of Globetrender, the UK's leading travel-trend forecasting agency

Daisy Hoppen
Founder of fashion and lifestyle communications agency DH-PR

Ixta Belfrage
Chef and author of the bestselling cookbook *Flavour*

Kesang Ball,
Founder of Trippin, a global platform for today's traveller

Lena de Casparis,
Deputy editor and culture director of ELLE UK

Best UK break: Gleneagles Townhouse, Edinburgh

'The manor house Gleneagles, dating back to 1924 and set in acres of Scottish parkland, is the stuff of legend (Christian Dior staged a show there in 1955), so I'm excited to see the burgeoning of this hotel's city outpost. Maintaining all the glamour, this townhouse is the ultimate place to escape for the weekend. Rooms are ornately wallpapered and draped in heavy velvets with art deco finishes – and the beds are deliciously comfortable. You won't want to leave.' *gleneagles.com/townhouse*

KENYA HUNT

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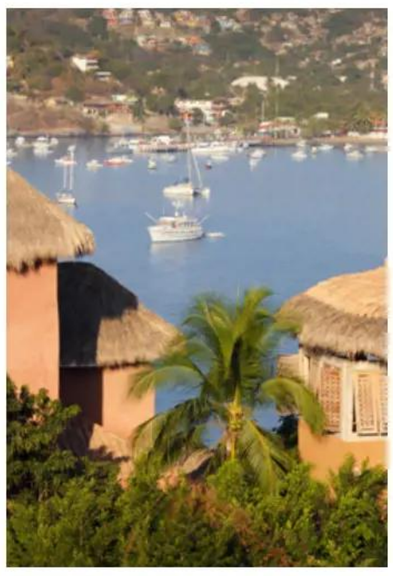
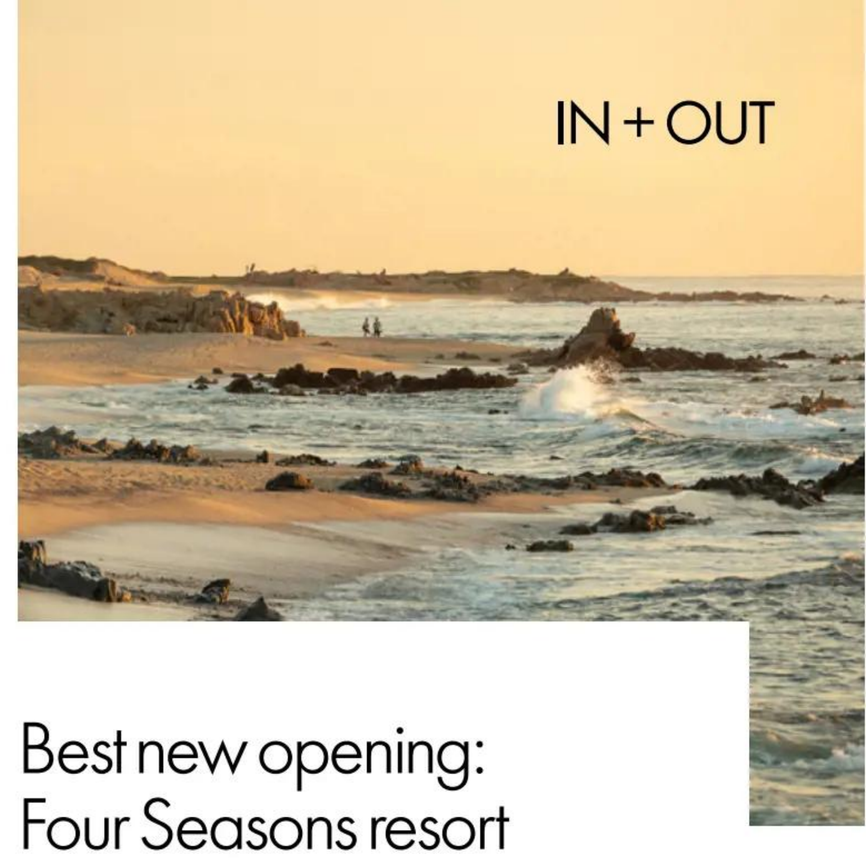


Best for going off the grid: Musa, Zihuatanejo, Mexico

'If you're looking to visit Mexico and want to steer away from the tourist traps, look no further than Musa. It's a melting pot of community, sustainability and creativity, and a stone's throw away from one of my favourite places on earth – Zihuatanejo. The pace of life here is sweet and your senses come alive. The peripheral sounds are the ocean waves, birdsong and the occasional crack of a cold beer. Visit and you're sure to return reborn.' *findmusa.mx*

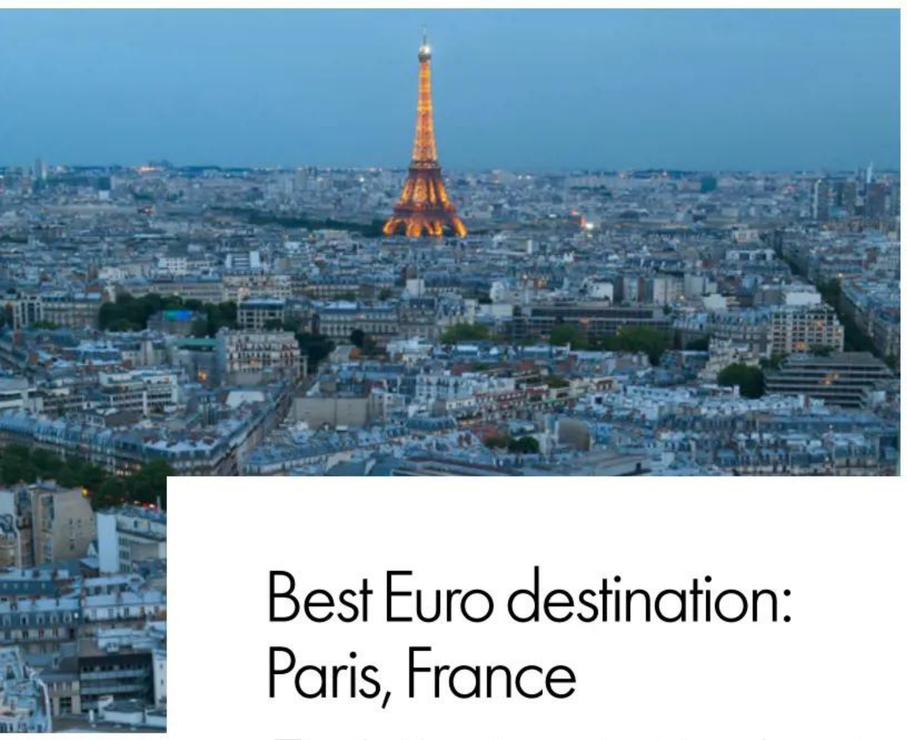
KESANG BALL



Best new opening: Four Seasons resort and residences, Cabo San Lucas, Mexico

'This new resort, which opened in May on the southern coast of Mexico's Baja peninsula, has 96 rooms, casitas, suites and villas, all looking out on the Sea of Cortez, where whales can be spotted between November and April. Facilities include three pools, three restaurants, five bars, the on-site El Taller Artisan Art Studio, a kids' club and the Baja 360-degree Adventure Centre, where you can take free-diving lessons near the beach.' *fourseasons.com/cabosanlucas*

JENNY SOUTHAN



Best Euro destination: Paris, France

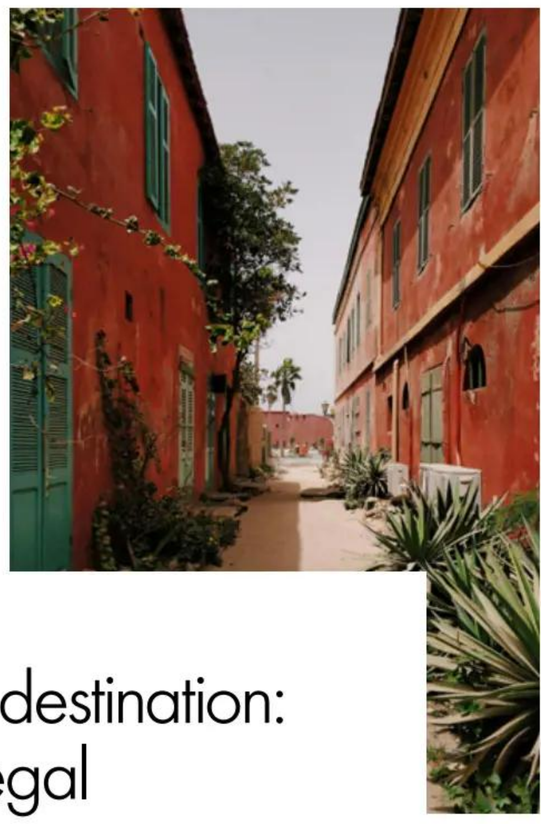
'The fashion-show schedules often take me to Paris and I'm never disappointed to be in this capital again – incredible morning pastries, galleries to inspire and the chicest women anywhere in the world. This summer, there's a whole new reason to head to the city: the 2024 Olympics will see Paris become a celebration of global sports ,and I can't wait to tune in to see all the athletes compete. When I'm visiting, I always try to eat at Parcelles, a cool modern bistro with one of the best wine lists I've found and a crowd that sets the buzz. See you there.'

KENYA HUNT

Best transport: Pivoine, A Belmond Boat, France

'I'm all about the journey, so I was excited to hear the team behind the lavish Venice Simplon-Orient-Express and Pullman trains has another luxurious mode of transport: a beautiful canal boat. The private villa-style vessel lets you slow down and explore the waterways of Camargue, in the South of France. Hosting up to eight guests, each boat features four double cabins with marble en-suite bathrooms, and an outdoor deck with a sun-drenched pool.' *belmond.com/boats/europe*

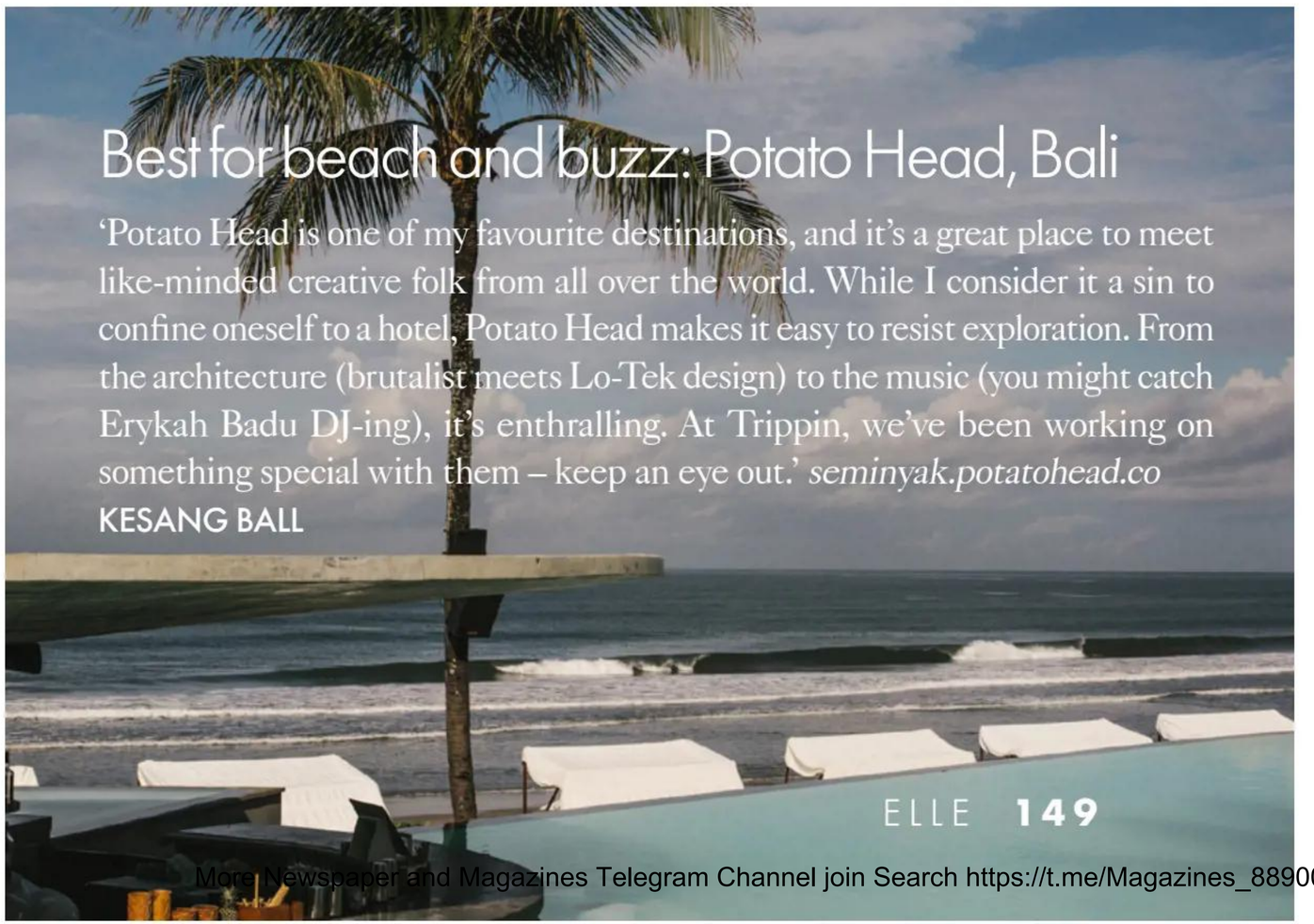
LENA DE CASPARIS



Best cultural destination: Dakar, Senegal

'After visiting Dakar last year for the Chanel Métiers d'art show, it became a must on my travel hit list. The city has an energy like no other, and it's filled with creativity and culture at every turn, with tailoring ateliers and fabric shops everywhere. Don't miss the Musée Théodore Monod d'Art Africain for a dose of local culture. Or head for Corniche Ouest or Yoff Beach and join the surfers. There really is something for everyone.'

KENYA HUNT ▷



Best for beach and buzz: Potato Head, Bali

'Potato Head is one of my favourite destinations, and it's a great place to meet like-minded creative folk from all over the world. While I consider it a sin to confine oneself to a hotel, Potato Head makes it easy to resist exploration. From the architecture (brutalist meets Lo-Tek design) to the music (you might catch Erykah Badu DJ-ing), it's enthralling. At Trippin, we've been working on something special with them – keep an eye out.' *seminyak.potatohead.co*

KESANG BALL

PHOTOGRAPHS: ALAMY, RICHARD JAMES TAYLOR, COURTESY OF FOUR SEASONS, TOMMASO_RIVA, ANTON LECOCK/UNSPLASH

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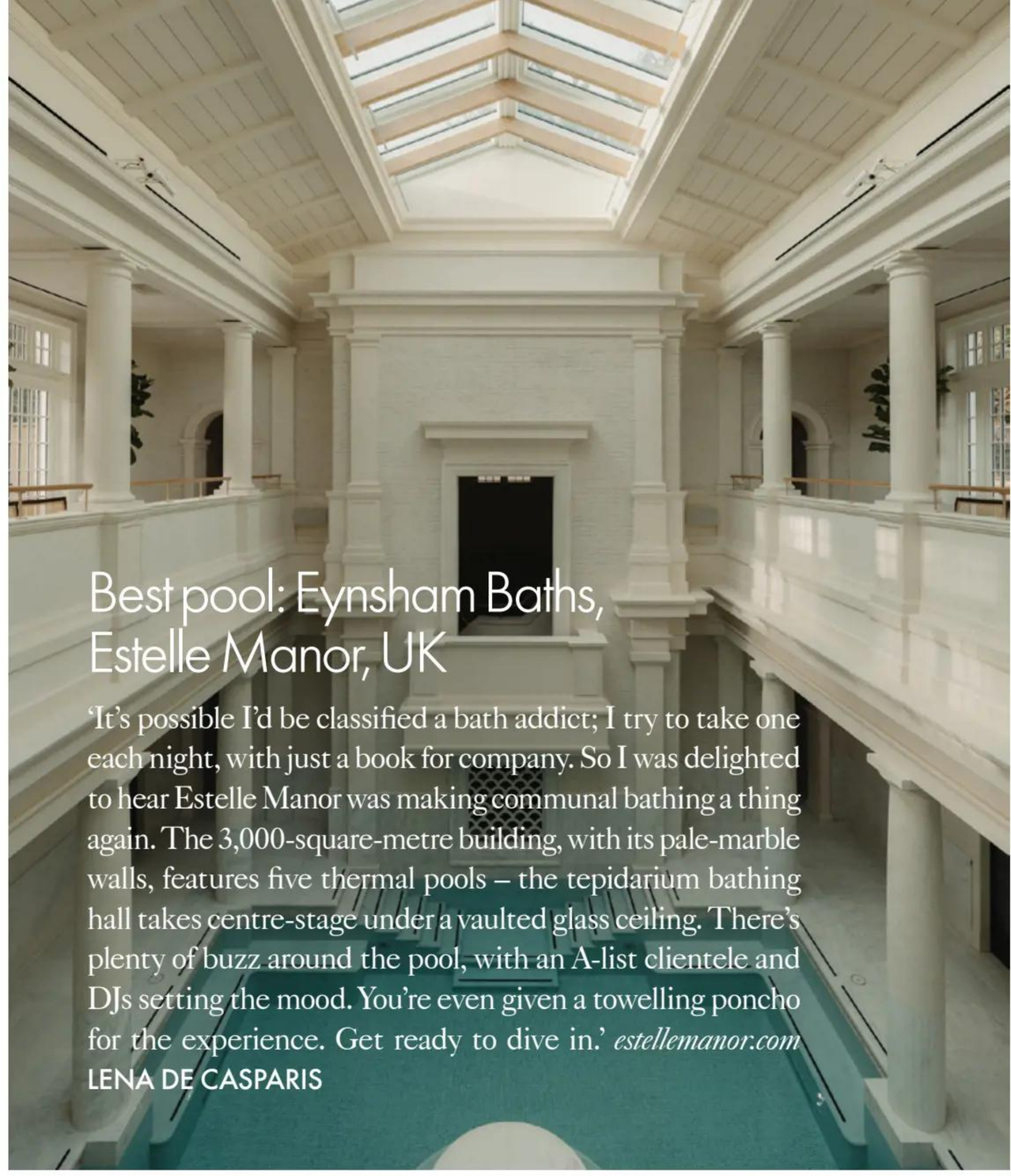
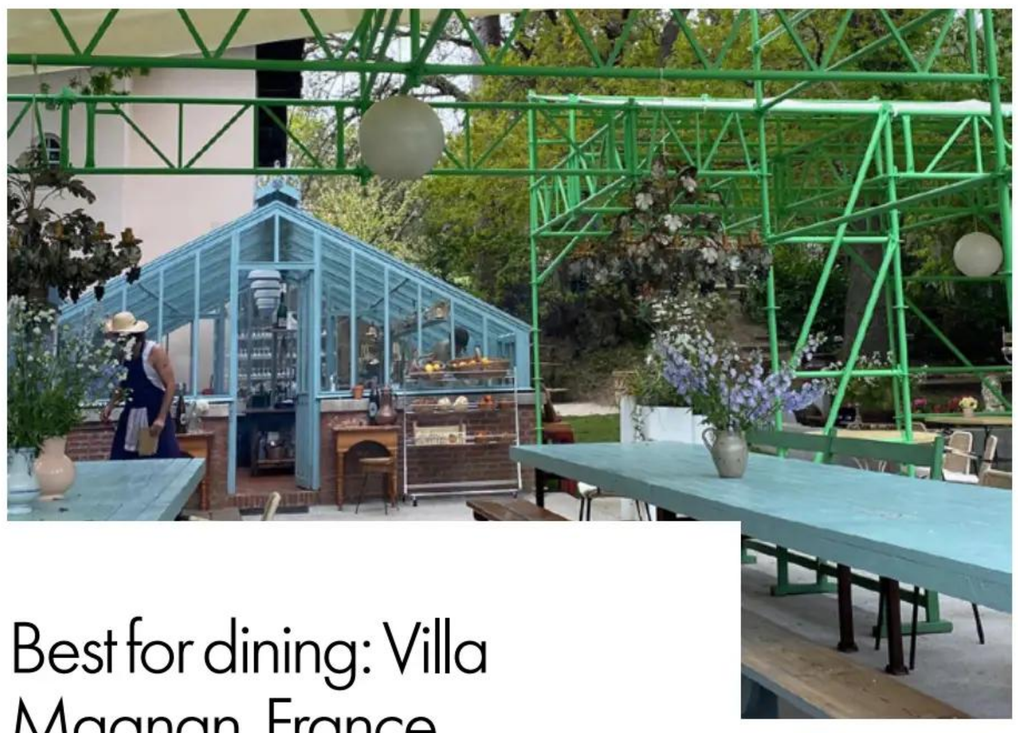
Best for mini breaks: Kip Hideaways, UK

'This is my go-to for a UK mini break, as new accommodation options are added all the time. Each property has a beautiful design story but is still comfortable and well priced. I have stayed all over the UK with Kip, from Norfolk to Sussex, Devon and Wales. My trip to Wales was special, as it was two weeks before I had my baby. We racked up serious step counts every day, taking long walks on the Pembrokeshire coastline.' *kiphideaways.com*
DAISY HOPPEN



Best pool: Eynsham Baths, Estelle Manor, UK

'It's possible I'd be classified a bath addict; I try to take one each night, with just a book for company. So I was delighted to hear Estelle Manor was making communal bathing a thing again. The 3,000-square-metre building, with its pale-marble walls, features five thermal pools – the tepidarium bathing hall takes centre-stage under a vaulted glass ceiling. There's plenty of buzz around the pool, with an A-list clientele and DJs setting the mood. You're even given a towelling poncho for the experience. Get ready to dive in.' *estellemanor.com*
LENA DE CASPARIS

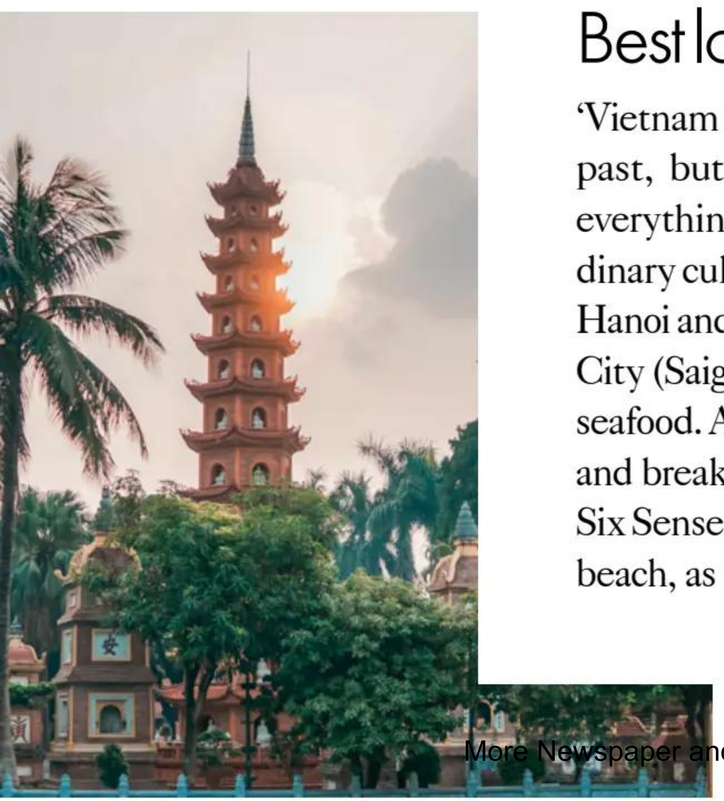


Best for dining: Villa Magnan, France

'Some meals I'll never forget, and the one I enjoyed in Biarritz – where we dined in a greenhouse surrounded by luscious gardens, with a menu of French delights from paté en croute to anchovies with butter – is among them. So when I heard a guesthouse was opening in the grounds this year, I ran to check in. The long-neglected art deco villa has been restored to perfection, with creativity seeping from every room, but it's dinner time when this place really comes to life.' *villamagnan.com*
LENA DE CASPARIS

Best for jungle exploring: Anavilhanas Jungle Lodge, Brazil

'This small jungle lodge on the banks of the Negro River overlooks the Anavilhanas archipelago. Here you'll find a balance of comfort, luxury and commitment to sustainability. It's designed in the most exquisite way, as the architecture of the buildings organically blend in with the surrounding jungle. There are two pools overlooking the river, a bar and library and an open-air restaurant serving Amazonian delicacies.' *en.anavilhanaslodge.com*
IXTA BELFRAGE



Best long-haul destination: Vietnam

'Vietnam may have been overlooked as a holiday destination in the past, but I had the most fabulous honeymoon there. It has everything, from phenomenal food, important history and extraordinary culture, to some incredible hotels, such as the Metropole in Hanoi and Six Senses in Con Dao. The street food in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) was superb, especially District 4, which had amazing seafood. At the Metropole in Hanoi I had probably the best coffee and breakfast pho you could ever eat. Then, for proper splendour, Six Senses on Con Dao can't be beaten: it has its own giant private beach, as well as infinity pools.' **DAISY HOPPEN**

Best for camping: Moat Farm, UK

'Confession: I'm not always a happy camper. I'm not sure if it's the faff of the gear or the shower blocks that put me off. But that all changed last summer, when I discovered this camping haven in Kent. Bell tents filled with the essentials are already constructed, and it has showers and a heated pool, plus a barn for cooking if the weather takes a turn.' *moatfarmkent.co.uk*
LENA DE CASPARIS

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Best for paradise: Rio Hostel, Colombia

'Nestled by the riverside in Colombia's Sierra Nevada, Rio Hostel is a jungle oasis. The region is renowned for being home to both Tayrona National Park and the Lost City Trek, adding to its allure. From private cabanas to budget-friendly dorms, the aim is an accessible stay in paradise – and the Caribbean coast is only 30 minutes away. The hostel also hosts Bonanza festival every year, an unforgettable four-day rave experience in the majestic Colombian jungle.' *riohostel.co*

KESANG BALL

Best city hotel: Red Tree House, Mexico City, Mexico

'The Red Tree House Hotel, set in a Spanish Revival-style mansion in Condesa, is beautiful. It's stylish in a mismatched sort of way and painted in sunset shades of red, orange and yellow. There is a central courtyard in which breakfast is served every morning.' *theredtreehouse.com*

IXTA BELFRAGE

Best for wellness: Casa Amoros, Spain

'A beautifully restored, 300-year-old stone finca in Spain's Costa Blanca, Casa Amoros is a new, 12-guest mountain hideout. Opened by co-owners Jenny Graham and Jenny Leigh Morris as an antidote to their own experiences of burnout, the property is also used for transformational wellness retreats.' *casaamoros.com*

JENNY SOUTHAN

Best for art lovers: Palazzo Bernardini Suites, Lecce, Italy

'Situated inside a renaissance palace, these suites are the perfect combination of timeless history and modern artistic touches. One of my favourite things about Palazzo Bernardini is the eclectic artwork that fills the rooms; from paintings that cover the walls to sculptures and plants. You can enjoy breakfast in the garden, which is home to some very old plants, including a wisteria that's still going strong after 100 years.' *palazzobernardini.it*

IXTA BELFRAGE

Best for families: Cretan Malia Park, Crete

'Possibly the perfect European family resort and a member of Design Hotels, Cretan Malia Park may not be new but it is a place you'll be tempted to return to. It's well priced and has a delicious array of restaurants – if you're inspired by the food, you can sign up for Greek cooking lessons that include harvesting produce from the on-site vegetable gardens. There is also a kids' club and a cat café, where children can feed their furry friends with food from the hotel shop. We also rate the boho beach bar and chic rooms.' *cretanmaliapark.gr*

JENNY SOUTHAN

Best for sustainability: The Newt, UK

'This is my favourite UK hotel, thanks in part to the incredible gardens and focus on seasonality: I always make time to spend a few days investigating the grounds. I particularly love the rooms nearer to the original house in the coach yards, as they have deliciously huge beds and warm fires, and while the food everywhere is exceptional, the garden café is the place for me.' *thenewtinsomerset.com*

DAISY HOPPEN □

PHOTOGRAPHS: ZION STONE, ERWAN HESRY/UNSPLASH, FELIPE CASTELLARI, GETTY IMAGES, ANH HOANG/UNSPLASH, ALAMY, ALVARO CRIVILLES TORTOSA, COURTESY OF VILLA MAGNAN

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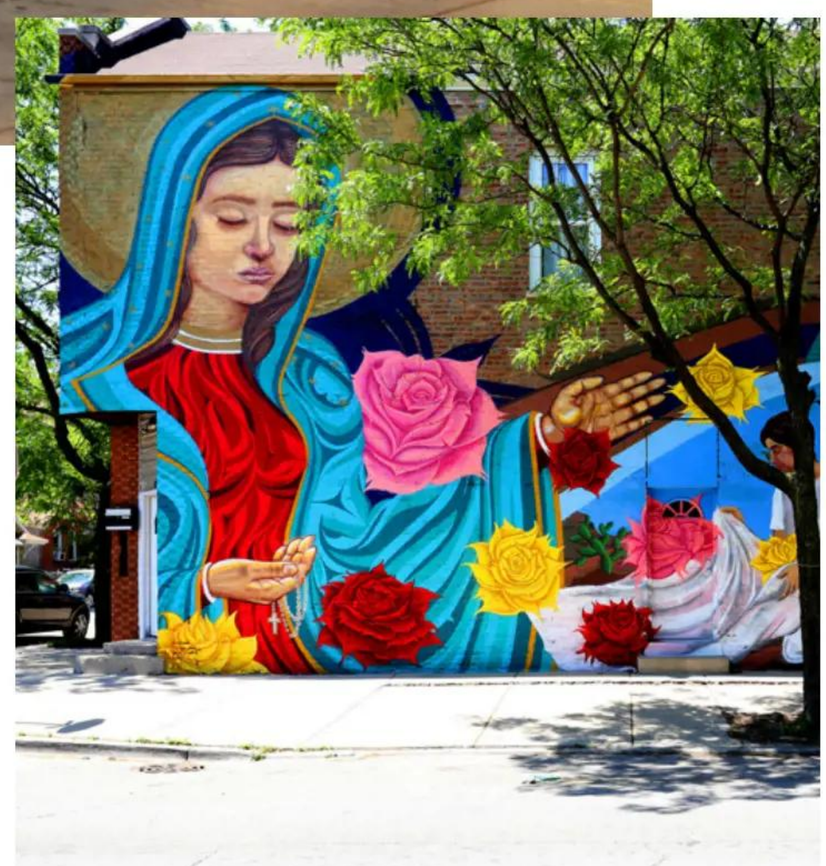
American dreams

Beyond the buzz of New York and glitz of Los Angeles, the United States is jam-packed with cities offering vibrant arts and exciting food scenes. Here are the places topping our travel list right now

Chicago

The Bear's Jeremy Allen White and Ayo Edebiri might have taken over billboards and red carpets everywhere in recent years, but Chicago was famed for its cuisine well before the hit HBO series came along. Ranging from Michelin restaurants to humble local dives, the city's options leave you spoilt for choice – and very full. If you love Italian, add Ummo, a new fine-dining destination, to your list. Street-food fans should head to Pilsen, a neighbourhood in the Lower West Side. Its Hispanic roots make for the best taquerias and margaritas; be sure to visit the National Museum of Mexican Art while you're in the area. Chicago's Architecture River Cruise is in every guidebook for a reason: you're treated to incredible views of the city, making it the best way to get to grips with its layout. Location is key if you're a first-timer, so stay at The Peninsula Hotel. Sitting on the Magnificent Mile in the commercial district, it has some iconic neighbours (Tiffany & Co and Saks Fifth Avenue, to name just two), as well as a half-Olympic-size pool on its top floor with views of the skyline. A sunrise dip before a day of sightseeing – what could be better? AMY BREWSTER



ABOVE: A MURAL IN THE PILSEN NEIGHBOURHOOD.
TOP: ANISH KAPOOR'S *CLOUD GATE* SCULPTURE IN CHICAGO'S MILLENNIUM PARK

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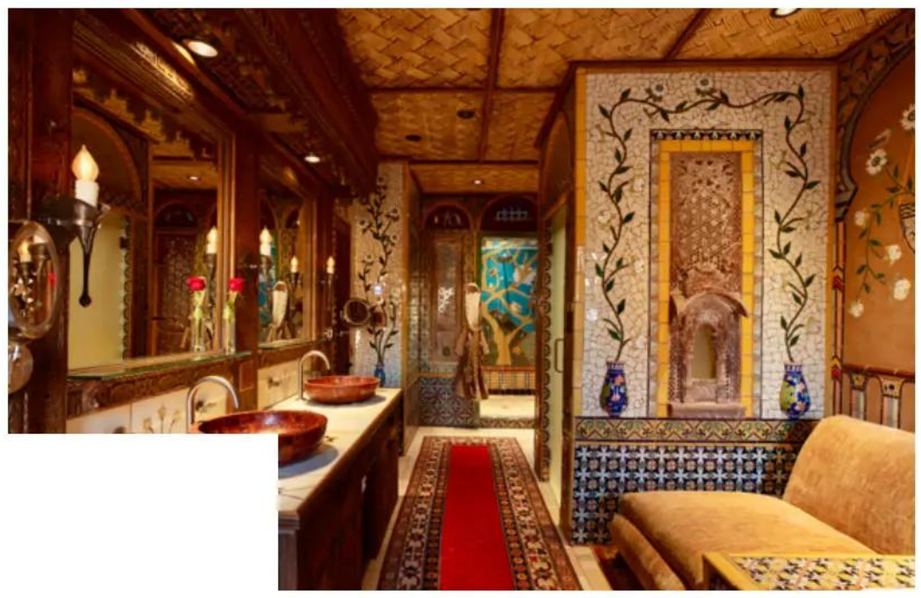
LEFT: LOVE, MAKOTO. BELOW: A RECORD PLAYER AT EATON DC

Washington, DC

In the year of the US election, few places will give you a power kick in the same way as the capital of America. But there is now another great reason to visit the District of Columbia: the breakout restaurant landscape. From classics at The Bazaar by José Andrés to Love, Makoto, a Japanese food hall complete with a sushi bar and sake tastings, and El Presidente, a lively new Mexican eatery with three varieties of guacamole (try the one with crab meat) – there's something for everyone. Don't skip openings such as famed hot spot Pastis and La' Shukran in Union Market, from Palestinian chef Michael Rafidi. When you've reached a point when you can't eat another thing, head to any of the city's free museums: our favourites are the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History and the National Museum of Women in the Arts. Then, check in at Eaton DC, which has Scandi-style interiors and is committed to grassroots social projects. Rooms have patterned rugs and record players, and the hotel also hosts film nights, screening documentaries promoting social change at its in-house cinema. Plus, it's just a 10-minute walk to the White House. LENA DE CASPARIS



ABOVE: THE INN OF THE FIVE GRACES. LEFT: THE GEORGIA O'KEEFFE MUSEUM IN SANTA FE

Santa Fe

You may already be browsing for tickets to New Mexico after seeing *Oppenheimer*; but inspiring culture is everywhere in Santa Fe – the city has more than 250 galleries. Make your first stop the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, housing nearly 150 paintings by the iconic artist. Next, head to Site, in the buzzy Railyard district. Designed by architect Greg Lynn, the exterior of this contemporary-arts hub is a masterpiece in itself. In August, don't miss the Indigenous Art Fair Contemporary, which celebrates present-day Native American works, and leave time for a trip to Meow Wolf's House of Eternal Return, an immersive-art experience with more than 70 rooms to explore. Recharge after a day of gallery-hopping at Radish & Rye, where the farm-to-table menu is complemented by at least 175 varieties of bourbon, rye and American single-malt whiskey. Stay at the Inn of the Five Graces, whose 24 luxurious rooms feature folklore-themed interiors. LDC

PHOTOGRAPHS: ALAMY, GETTY IMAGES, ©KATE RUSSELL, DAVID DWORKIND, ADRIAN GAUT

Palma

According to SkyScanner, the Mallorcan capital and cultural hot spot is this year's most-searched-for destination.

Festival fever

Whether you're heading to see Little Simz at Glastonbury (26-30 June) or booking a train ticket to the literary Hay Festival (23 May-2 June), the season is truly upon us.

Big Sur

Book your room now at Mankas, a cult Californian bolthole that reopens this autumn. The rustic retreat has 21 rooms overlooking coastal wilderness.

Barometer

Travel experiences to put on your wishlist – and the ones to avoid

Cannes

Biarritz, on France's west coast, offers a cooler itinerary of films at its Nouvelles Vagues festival and an altogether chicer holiday destination.

IRL passports

Forgetting your documents will soon be a thing of the past: Finland became the first country to start a six-month digital trial, with the Netherlands putting similar plans in motion.

Bring your own vibe

Ready for the ick? Hotel.com is reporting a 1090% increase in users including the term 'vibe' in their searches.

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BEAUTY EDIT

GLOW ON-THE-GO – DRIPPING GOLD EXPRESS SERUM

Introducing Dripping Gold's **Express** Serum, a revolutionary tanning solution that delivers a stunning bronzed glow in as little as one hour. Choose your desired intensity: wash off after just one hour for a light sun-kissed radiance, wait two hours for a beautifully medium tan, or indulge in a deeper golden hue by rinsing off after three hours. Even after showering, your tan continues to develop, revealing an even deeper and long-lasting result.

The Dripping Gold Express Tanning Serum is available in two shades: Medium, which offers a Golden Olive glow, and Dark, providing a Deep Golden colour. Achieve a gorgeous tan on the go with this versatile and quick-drying formula.

Experience the perfect blend of hydration and colour with their best-selling Serum format, now in a convenient express version.

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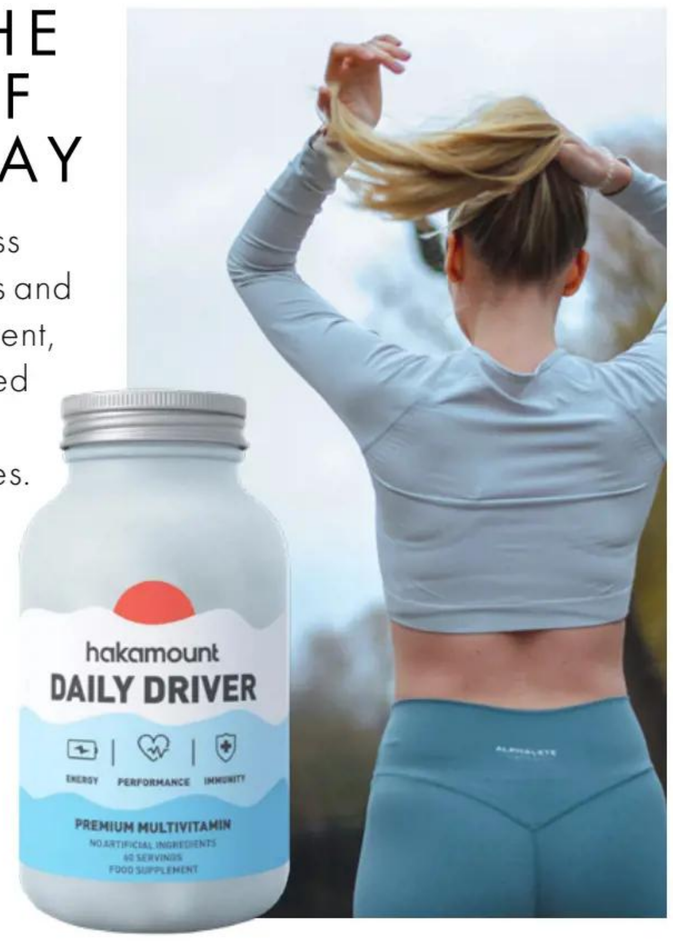

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BEAUTY EDIT

MAKING CONSCIOUS CHOICES KINDER TO ANIMALS

Interest in vegan beauty is at an all-time high after growing steadily over the last 10 years. Although it is predicted that the global vegan beauty market will be worth $25.3 billion by 2029, lots of people don't fully understand what vegan beauty is or why they should be looking out for it.

In 2023, The Vegan Society conducted a survey to discover whether people know about the animal-derived ingredients that might be lurking in their beauty products. Common animal-derived ingredients include beeswax, lanolin (sheep's wool), carmine (crushed beetles), gelatin (cow or pig bones, tendons or ligaments) and collagen (bones, skin, ligaments and tissues of cows). The survey found that only 30% of those surveyed knew what a 'vegan' label meant, which is a product that contains no animal products and has not been tested on animals.

The Vegan Society want to help people make conscious choices in their beauty routines that are kinder to animals. Their new campaign – Conscious Choices – aims to give you practical ways of showing compassion to animals in all areas of your life. Whether you're at the start of your vegan journey or an animal lover who wants to find out more, Conscious Choices is all about empowering you to choose health, hygiene and beauty products that are aligned with your values.

One way to start, is to learn about compassionate alternatives to products that are derived from or tested on animals. The society have launched the campaign with a short film, which is specifically focused on helping anyone who wants to make more ethical choices. In the film we hear co-founder of the vegan restaurant, Clean Kitchen Club and Made in Chelsea star, Verity Bowditch, as well as the founder of Root Minerals, a beauty brand registered as one of their Trademark holders. They talk about their journeys to veganism, the need for the industry to be more transparent about where – or from whom – their ingredients are sourced and share tips to empower animal-lovers to purchase products that reflect compassion to animals in all areas of their lives, beginning with cosmetics.

Commenting on the distinction between vegan and cruelty-free products, Verity Bowditch said: "Veganism goes way beyond the food you eat. Whether it's deodorants, make-up, haircare products or toothpaste even – there's a difference between vegan and cruelty-free. Just because a product isn't tested on animals doesn't mean it's fully vegan. I now know I'm making more conscious choices".

As part of the campaign, The Vegan Society has also developed a free downloadable shopper's guide to help you consciously choose cosmetics in a way that is kinder to animals, as well as tips, blogs and products to help you start your vegan journey. People wanting to make conscious choices should look for certified vegan labels – like the Vegan Trademark. A product registered with the Vegan Trademark has not been tested on animals by the company or on its behalf and does not contain any animal-based ingredients.

To celebrate the launch of the campaign, The Vegan Society are **giving away two Vegan Trademark beauty bundles worth up to £250.** To automatically enter the competition, take the short cosmetics quiz to test your knowledge and download the FREE guide by **scanning the QR code!** Terms and conditions apply.

For more information, follow the hashtag #ConsciousChoices on social media and find out more about the campaign at: vegansociety.com/elle/consciouschoices

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BEAUTY EDIT

DISCOVER TIMELESS BEAUTY ATHENA SKIN CARE CLINIC

Athena Aesthetics is a private skin care clinic based in Wickham, Hampshire.

It is led by founder, Hayley Bicknell who is a registered and prescribing Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP). We have a team of ANP's that specialise in a range of treatments including laser hair removal to anti-wrinkle and dermal fillers.

Our most popular treatments in recent months have been our skin rejuvenation procedures.

Dermatologists have developed many different procedures that can remove fine and deep lines, lighten unsightly pigmentation and encourage better skin cell health. These procedures help rejuvenate skin that have been worn by time and sun exposure with fewer side effects and far less recovery time than that required for surgical techniques such as facelifts. These include hyaluronic acid such as profhilo , polynucleotides, celluma light therapy, microneedling, topical medical skin care creams and many other treatments.

There has been a huge growth in popularity in non-invasive cosmetic procedures over recent years with the most current trend being in skin rejuvenation.

There are many procedures that we use to improve the integrity of the skin which can be used alone or in conjunction with other treatments as part of a package. **https://athenaskincareclinic.co.uk**

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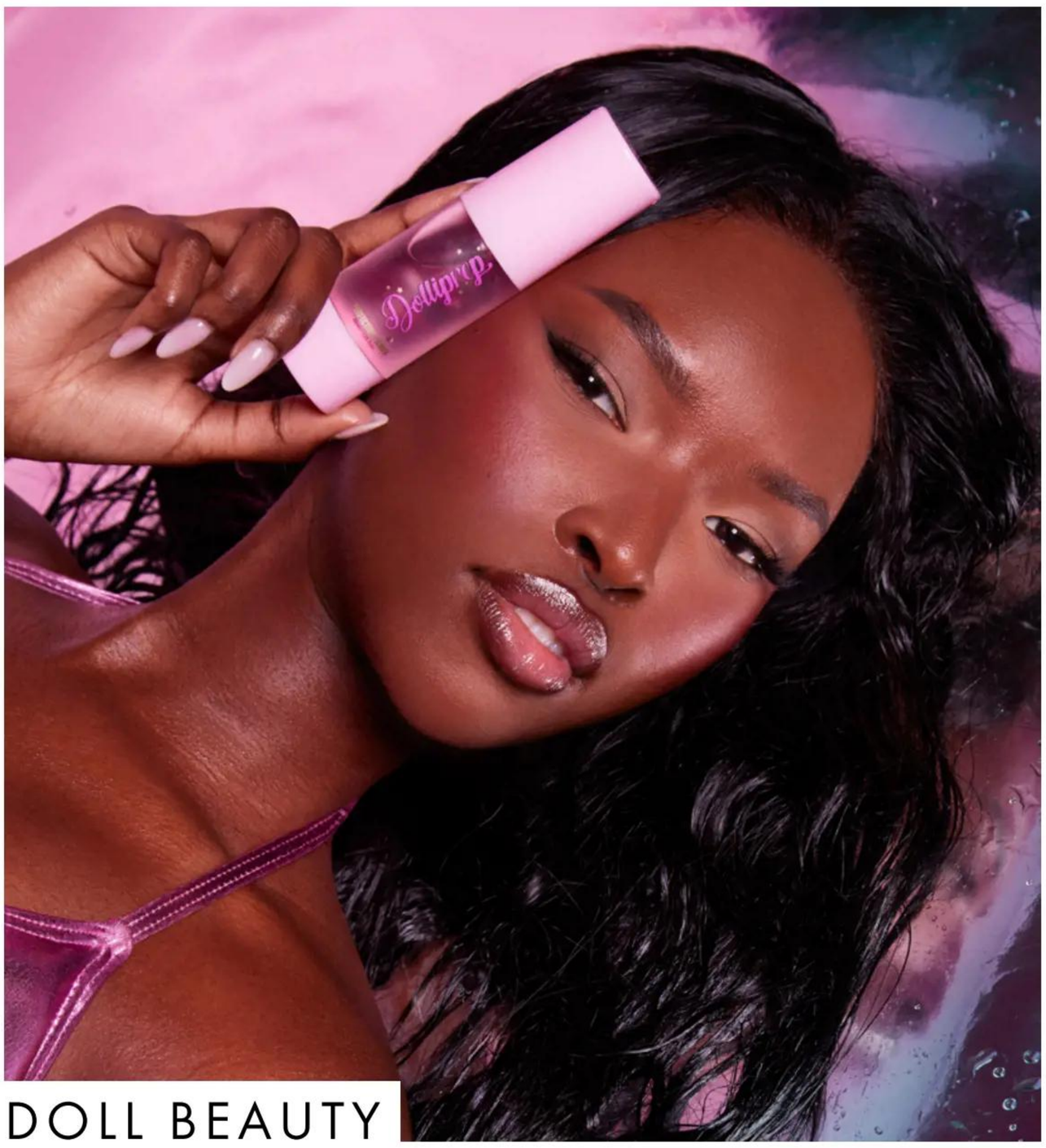

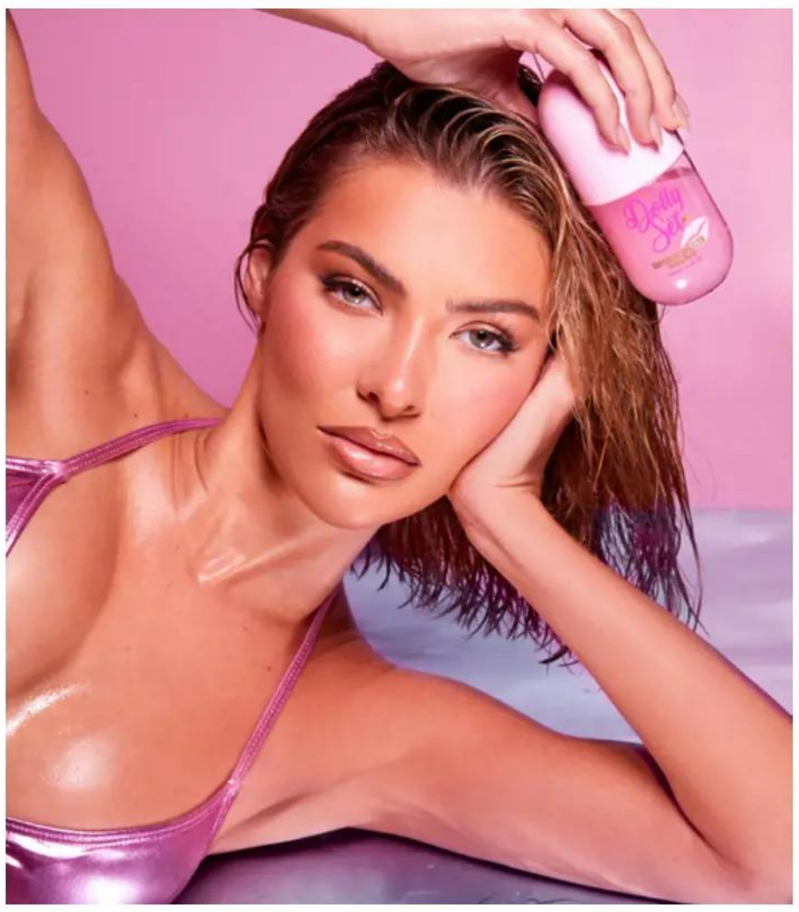

DOLL BEAUTY

Doll Beauty, a renowned name in the cosmetics industry, has unveiled its latest innovation: a setting spray and primer duo designed to elevate makeup application to new heights.

This dynamic duo combines advanced formulas to deliver flawless, long-lasting results that withstand the rigors of everyday wear. Dolly Set setting spray is a game-changer, boasting a lightweight, hydrating non-sticky formula that locks makeup in place for hours on end. It performs a protective barrier over the skin, shielding against environmental stressors while ensuring makeup stays put from morning until night, whether facing a busy day at the office or a night out on the town, this setting spray delivers unmatched staying power, leaving skin looking fresh and radiant without the need for touch-ups. Complementing the setting spray is their new primer; Dolly Prep that preps the skin for seamless makeup application. The silicone free, aloe water based solution not only smooths and hydrates the skin but also leaves a film which creates the perfect canvas between your skin and your base for the perfect makeup application making sure everything adheres and stays put whilst being applied with a cooling texture.

What sets Doll Prep and Dolly Set apart is their versatility and compatibility with all skin types, these products work harmoniously to enhance the longevity and vibrancy of any makeup look. The setting spray's generous mist ensures even distribution without cakiness or heaviness, while the primer's tacky formula ensures makeup stays put in the areas you place onto the skin, providing a smooth, even layer for your base. Moreover, these products are vegan and cruelty-free. Doll Beauty's new setting spray and primer duo is a must-have addition to any makeup lover.

Head to https://dollbeauty.com or follow the QR code and use discount code ELLEDOLLY for 20% off!

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ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

FASHION EDIT

LEO & UGO

Introducing Leo, the coveted handbag making waves in Parisian fashion circles.

Following its triumphant debut in a large size, the iconic Leo bag from Leo & Ugo now also comes in a chic mini version. Crafted in leather and canvas, this timeless accessory is perfectly sized for your daily adventures. Already a staple in Parisian wardrobes, it is available in four irresistible colors that will effortlessly elevate any outfit.

Do not miss out – snag yours before they are gone on www.leoetugo.fr

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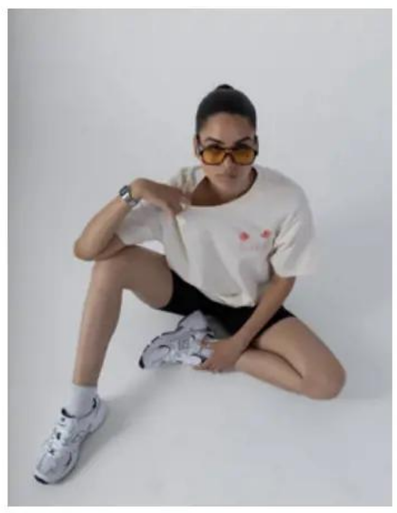

L.DROBE CLOTHING

L.DROBE is a unisex, aesthetic leisurewear brand designed with comfort in mind. The independent, female-led brand curate's collections that encapsulate positivity and self-care at the core, whilst having an aspirational feel. The comfy sweats are designed to be worn by anyone, anywhere.

The minimal designs are paired with classic colourways to help you build a timeless wardrobe and to encourage investing in staple items.

The brand focuses on intertwining sustainability throughout, using all eco-conscious packaging and producing a handful of garments made from organic cotton and recycled polyester.

Website: www.ldrobeclothing.com
Social: @l.drobe

Photography: Robin Priest

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FASHION EDIT

JHAY LAYSON'S ROYAL COLLECTIONS DURING LONDON FASHION WEEK

Jhay Layson, an international fashion designer based in Manila, Philippines, has showcased a regal range of designs for kids and teens. These designs were modeled by fresh faces featured in his Royal Collections during the special 10th anniversary of the House of Ikons, held at the Leonardo Royal Hotel Tower Bridge in London. Follow their instagram @jhay.layson and @hoifashionweeklondon

Aiden Jay Newby-Naismith, 9yo from Leeds, West Yorkshire, is actively involved in athletics and has recently contributed a poem to a book titled 'Once Upon A Dream,' set to be released in the UK. Passionate about the arts, he aspires to pursue his love for drawing and aims to continue nurturing his creative talents.

Savannah Sison Salonga, 10yo from Washington DC, USA, holds the title of Miss Worldwide International Princess VA. She showcases talents in singing, modeling, and martial arts. Passionate for soccer, she dreams of pursuing careers as a professional singer and soccer player.

Caterina Stasi, 12yo from Rome, Italy, is a budding model associated with two Italian modeling agencies. From a young age, she has been involved in theatre acting, cultivating a profound love for the artistry of makeup, travel, fashion, cinema, and theatre.

Elizabeth Bassien-Capsa, 12yo from St. Albans, England, has a passion for both dancing and modelling. She actively participates in a school dance performance and performs at the Sandpit Theatre. Elizabeth also excels in languages.

Alexander Pinney, 15yo from Chelmsford, England, is a lively young model who finds joy in canoeing as a sport and delights in playing Warhammer board games in his leisure time.

Asia-Leigh Hayles-Chin, 15yo fashion model and influencer from London. She has made waves across the globe, strutting her stuff on the most prestigious international runways and was the face of Nike's iconic back-to-school campaign.

Aaron John Antonio, 19yo from Romford, Essex, is emerging as a rugby star player at his school while harboring a passion for modeling. He adores the baroque suit made by Jhay Layson, finding its elegance and regal aura perfectly suited to his personality.

Tiara Faye Jover, 18yo from London, England, is a promising tennis athlete who has been featured in the Essex local magazine. Beyond sports, her versatility is evident in her love for music, modeling, and beauty, as she successfully manages her own lash business.

FACES OF JHAY LAYSON'S ROYAL COLLECTIONS: Aiden Jay Newby-Naismith, Savannah Sison Salonga, Caterina Stasi, Elizabeth Bassien-Capsa, Alexander Pinney, Asia-Leigh Hayles-Chin, Aaron John Antonio and Tiara Faye Jover | Event: House of Ikons, A Lady K Production | Designer: Jhay Layson | HMUA: Girls Meet Brush (Events) and Reychelle Mendiola (Photoshoots) | Casting Manager: Ninah Aguila | Images and London PR: Ram Eagle Photoworks @ram.eagle

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final word

My life in fashion: Francesca Hayward

The renowned principal dancer of The Royal Ballet on the allure of her classic style heroines and being brought to tears at the Maison Margiela Haute Couture SS24 show

WORDS BY ENI SUBAIR

WHEN THE LIGHTS WENT UP AT THE MAISON MARGIELA HAUTE COUTURE SS24 SHOW, EVERYONE HAD TEARS IN THEIR EYES. IT WAS LIKE THEATRE, NOT JUST FASHION. I WAS SITTING WITH STEPHEN JONES, AND HE WAS CHECKING THE HATS AS THEY WENT PAST ON THE RUNWAY. AND THEN CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN WAS BEHIND ME, CHECKING THE SHOES.

I STARTED READING FASHION MAGAZINES AT A YOUNG AGE. ONE OF THE FIRST WAS *ELLE GIRL*. MY GRANDMOTHER WOULD GIVE ME MAGAZINES WHEN SHE'D COME BACK FROM A TRIP TO LONDON, AS I GREW UP NEAR BRIGHTON.

MY GRANDMOTHER ALWAYS LOOKED SO CHIC. HER STYLE WAS SIMPLE; SHE'D TIE A SCARF AROUND HER NECK AND PUT ON A SLICK OF LIPSTICK. SHE TAUGHT ME THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD PIECE OF DENIM. ALTHOUGH I WAS BORN IN THE NINETIES, GRACE KELLY IN *REAR WINDOW* AND AUDREY HEPBURN ARE SOME OF MY INSPIRATIONS.

I'M NOT INTO STRETCH OR LYCRA WHEN OFF STAGE. I HAVE MUSCLY LEGS, SO I NEVER WANT ANYTHING TOO TIGHT. LEVI'S ARE MY GO-TO. RAEY IS GREAT TOO. IN THE STUDIO, I LIKE CLEAN LINES, SPORTY PIECES AND SIMPLICITY; MARTINE ROSE AND GRACE WALES BONNER REFLECT THAT.

THIS JUNE, I'LL BE PERFORMING IN THE FREDERICK ASHTON CELEBRATION AT THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE. I'M WORKING WITH LESLEY COLLIER, WHO WAS THE FIRST BALLERINA I EVER WATCHED ON TELEVISION.

BOARDING AT THE ROYAL BALLET SCHOOL WAS LIKE HAVING LOADS OF SISTERS. WHEN WE'D FINISH SCHOOL AND GO OUT, WE'D BORROW EACH OTHER'S CLOTHES. WHEN I WENT OUT I EXPERIMENTED, BUT I THINK IT MADE ME REALISE EVEN MORE I JUST LIKE TO DRESS CLASSICALLY.

I ADORE DESIGNER STEVE O SMITH'S VOLUMINOUS WORK. ALSO, TALIA BYRE WOULD INVITE ME TO HER STUDIO TO BORROW PIECES WHEN I FIRST BEGAN TO RECEIVE INVITATIONS TO FASHION EVENTS. AND SUPRIYA LELE IS A FRIEND OF MINE; I'M A HUGE FAN OF HER WORK.

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