

marie claire

AUSTRALIA

Anne Hathaway
**IS IN HER
POWER ERA**

(and we're here for
every minute of it)

Best face
FORWARD

Get your skin
back on track

**CLOTHES
ENCOUNTERS**

Six women share their
fashion evolution

**MY DAD
THE MONSTER**

'I put my parents
behind bars'

the **BIG**
style issue!

+259 The *NEW* rules of getting *DRESSED*
FRESH LOOKS FOR THE SEASON AHEAD







LOUIS VUITTON



POSSESSION & SIXTIE

Sydney - 84, King Street & Westfield Mall
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Piaget.com



PIAGET

Maison of *Extraleganza* since 1874

A photograph of a room with a patterned carpet, a floral armchair, and a mirror on the wall. The word "GUCCI" is overlaid in large white letters. The room has a light-colored wall with a dark wood baseboard and a dark wood mirror frame. The mirror reflects a pink wall and a floral armchair. The armchair in the foreground is upholstered in a floral fabric. The carpet has a dark red and black pattern.

GUCCI





IT'S WEEKEND TIME!



WEEKEND

MaxMara



Ariana Grande
SWAROVSKI



Erik Yvon coat,
\$12,550, and
jumpsuit,
\$4010; Christian
Louboutin
shoes, \$1475.

134



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COVER LOOK

Anne Hathaway wears
Balenciaga jacket and
Bulgari earrings and necklace.
Photographer Inez &
Vinoodh/Trunk Archive.
Stylist Beat Bolliger.
Hair Orlando Pita
for Orlo Salon.
Makeup Fulvia Farolfi
for Chanel.
Production VLM
Productions & Vinoodh.



Photography Tim Ashton/After Winter Agency

INITIO
PARFUMS PRIVÉS

LOUD FOR GRACE



CITY PERFUME



LITTLE WONDERS

Co-created with renowned stylist Harry Lambert (Emma Corrin, Harry Styles), Pandora's treated freshwater cultured baroque pearl frog pendants – from its Wonders collection – are handset in 14-carat gold plating and feature sparkling cubic zirconias.



Pandora
pendants,
\$329 each.



marie claire

Georgie McCourt

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where this magazine is published. We also acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the many nations across Australia,
and their continuing connection to land, language, culture and storytelling. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

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Welcome to our BLG style issue!

TUNE IN

Add the *marie claire* podcast *You're Gonna Want To Hear This* to your playlist, with must-listen episodes dropping every week.



Style can begin with a great coat, the perfect pair of pants or a red lipstick that transforms your whole face. Few things rival the confidence they can bring, but the older I get, the more I realise that style extends beyond what we wear, to reflect how we see ourselves and how we choose to be seen. That idea runs through every page of our September style issue.

Our cover star, actor Anne Hathaway, speaks candidly about ageing in the spotlight and the unexpected confidence she has found in her forties. Anne has five films out this year: sci-fi survival adventure *The End of Oak Street* hit screens this month, while the psychological thriller adaptation of Colleen Hoover's novel, *Verity*, is out in October. There's also third baby on the way. As you'll read

(from page 74), her perspective is refreshingly honest in an industry still obsessed with youth: getting older is not about becoming less visible, but discovering that the best is yet to come.

Elsewhere (from page 62), six remarkable women reveal how they found their personal style and what makes them feel most like themselves – and, no, it didn't happen overnight! Then (from page 68), writer Dilvin Yasa explores something even more personal: how, after being diagnosed with breast cancer, her wardrobe transformed from subdued navy and olive into a riot of colour and prints,

topped off with rhinestone sunglasses, coral lipstick and sparkly handbags.

From page 50, we look to the highest expression of fashion fantasy with our report on the autumn/winter 2026 haute couture presentations, where extraordinary craftsmanship reminds us of fashion's enduring ability to transport, provoke and inspire. And as this is our style issue, we're showcasing all the new-season trends you need to know, from page 108.

This month we also investigate the forces shaping women's lives beyond their wardrobes. From page 134, actor Aisha Dee shares her deeply personal journey with endometriosis, which affects

GEORGIE LOVES



- 1 Louis Vuitton blazer, \$9250.
- 2 Chanel bag, \$7920.
- 3 Dior shoes, \$1890.

about one in seven Australian women and girls, and yet diagnosis still takes an average of six to eight years. If you've experienced endometriosis, you'll know just how crippling the pain can be.

Elsewhere, we examine the booming and sometimes troubling business of "bump-fluencers" (from page 94); the emerging importance of the skin microbiome (from page 166); and what the world might look like had generations of powerful, knowledgeable women not been persecuted as witches (from page 86).

From page 90, you'll meet the incredible Jess Denham, whose extraordinary courage in speaking out led to both of her parents being imprisoned, with her father receiving the longest sentence ever handed to a sex offender in Australia. Her story will make you feel uncomfortable – and that's the point. Jess is a survivor, and I know you will feel the immense strength it took for her to break her silence. She's phenomenal.

One last thing. Yes, style can be expressed through a beautifully cut blazer or a chic pair of polka dot shoes (see my wish list, above!), but its real power lies in the confidence to know who we are, the courage to be seen and the conviction to speak up when it matters.

Georgie

BEAUTY PICKS



- 4 The Quick Flick Quick Lip 2-in-1 Double Sided Precision Lip Liner & Stain in Pink, \$20, at adorebeauty.com.au.
- 5 Dior Forever Glow Luminizer in Pink Strobe, \$102.

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Elizabeth Arden
eternal
AURA

THE **NEW** EAU DE PARFUM



Braided Beauty

Slouchy and chic, Louis Vuitton's latest Multipass handbag offers an eye-catching gold-toned braided chain, the house's Monogram canvas as a trim or main fabrication, and enough room to fit all your essentials. Louis Vuitton bag, \$3950.

CURATED BY

We've selected the best pieces, trends and events to light up your every day



These bronzers shout about their buttery blendability for good reason. A hybrid of hydrating ceramides and peptides allows them to glide seamlessly across the skin, adding soft-focus sun-kissed warmth.



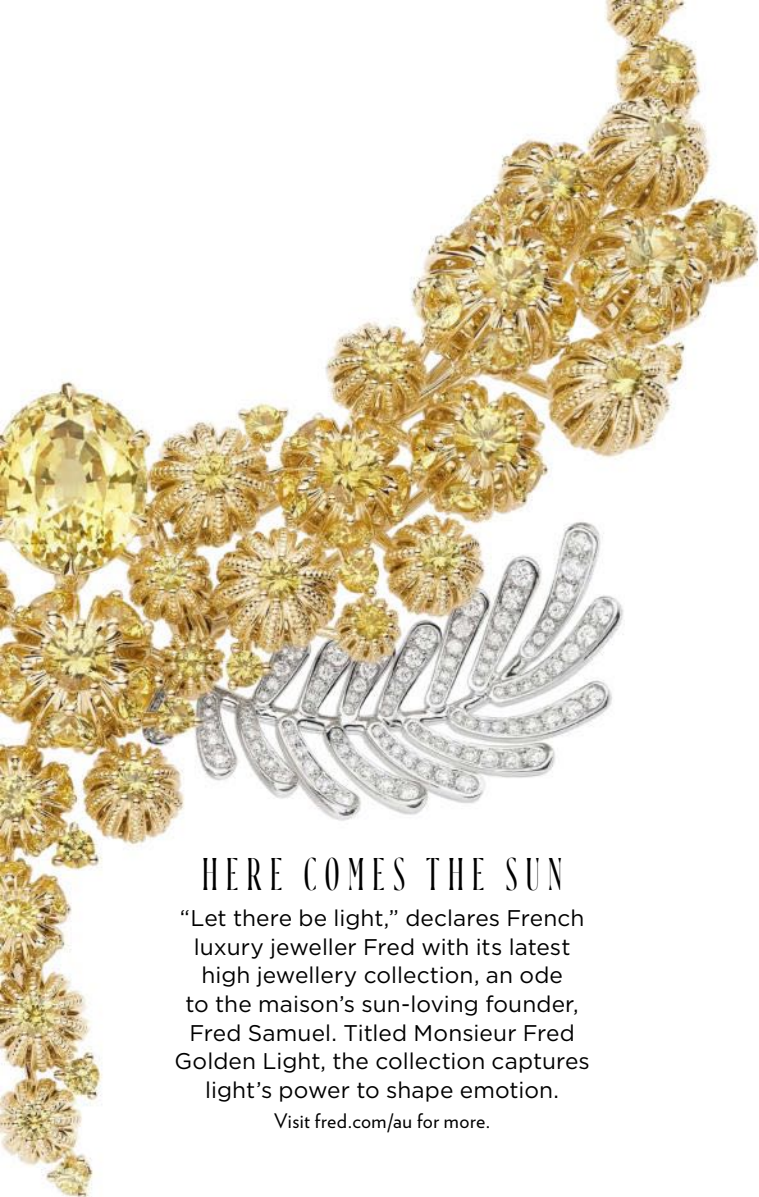
Summer Fridays
Bronzer Butter
Balm, \$53.



PERFECT FIT

Forget the idea of finding "the one." With its new denim campaign, Aje makes the case that great style isn't about a single perfect pair of jeans, but about finding the right piece for every mood, moment and occasion. Fronted by Lara Worthington (above), the campaign signals the start of the brand's long-term denim evolution, featuring sculptural silhouettes, premium fabrication and elevated craftsmanship.

Aje denim, from \$279.



HERE COMES THE SUN

"Let there be light," declares French luxury jeweller Fred with its latest high jewellery collection, an ode to the maison's sun-loving founder, Fred Samuel. Titled Monsieur Fred Golden Light, the collection captures light's power to shape emotion.

Visit fred.com/au for more.



The Artist's Way

Australia's biggest art fair, Sydney Contemporary, is back. From September 3 to 6, Carriageworks will host art from more than 100 galleries and 500 artists. Pop by to discover new talent or snag your next investment piece. Visit sydneycontemporary.com.au for more.

Left *Ngalunggirr miinggi (Healing spirit)* by Otis Hope Carey, 2020.

If you're reluctant to retire your spicy scents for spring, this luxurious gourmand deserves an extended stay in your rotation. Vanilla and tonka bean create a creamy base, while saffron adds brightness and bite.

Amouage Tonka Misfah Extrait de Parfum, 12ml, \$927.



POUR ME

A good drop doesn't need to come with a bad hangover. Australian winemaker French Bloom has created a range of non-alcoholic French sparkling wines crafted from organic chardonnay and pinot noir.

French Bloom alcohol-free wines, from \$49.95, aus.frenchbloom.com.



Carved with incredibly intricate detail, this Napoléon Bonaparte bust candle is a décor collector's dream.

Trudon Napoléon candle, \$279.

Happy Trails

Just an hour out of Sydney on NSW's Central Coast, between the bushland of Mount White and the banks of the Hawkesbury River, Grand Saddles is your perfect weekend hideaway. Complete with a day spa and a world-class restaurant, the luxury lodge offers an intimate villa-style retreat.

Visit grandsaddleslodge.com.au for more.



WARM WELCOME

Marrying warm musk with powdery iris, this second-skin scent is as exquisite as its lantern-inspired bottle and as buttery smooth as its saddle-stitched leather cap.

Hermès Musc Pallida EDP, 100ml, \$520.



Centre Stage

The new play by Suzie Miller (playwright behind *Prima Facie* and *RBG: Of Many, One*) tells the true story of the birth of the AFLW. *Strong Is the New Pretty* celebrates the women whose determination sparked a movement that went far beyond the football field.

Visit strongisthenewprettyplay.com.au for more.



CHLOÉ A/W 2026

ZIMMERMANN A/W 2026

GIVENCHY A/W 2026

Trend alert LACED UP

“No longer confined to delicate trims, lace is returning with full force. Draped, gathered and ruffled, it’s being reimagined in metallic finishes and bold, statement-making colours.”

– Naomi Smith, *marie claire* fashion director

Photography Launchmetrics Spotlight: Words Harriet Sim; Delaney Loane

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GEORGIE MCCOURT, editor

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Carry all

Perfect for your everyday essentials, Louis Vuitton's All in BB bucket bag can be worn open or flat, over the shoulder or crossbody, with the gold padlock paying tribute to the brand's iconic trunk heritage.

Louis Vuitton bags
(from top), \$5400,
and \$5800.

the LUXE LIST

No outfit is complete without the perfect accessory – or two.
Here, we spotlight the latest and greatest for spring

1



2



3



4



5



6



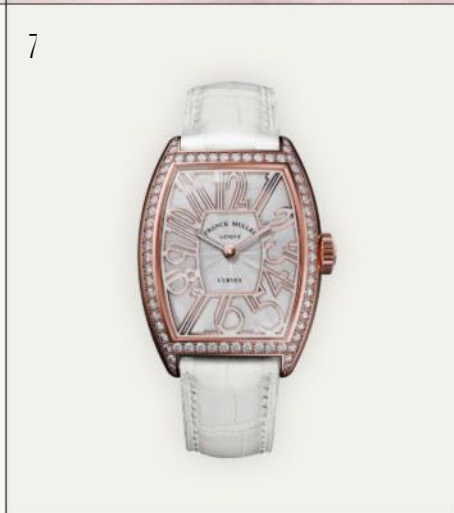
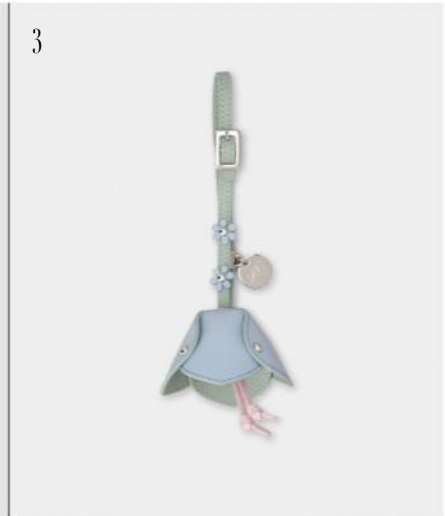
7



Spring break

Our sartorial inspiration comes from the garden this month, with pretty florals, tactile blooms and sparkling petals across bags, jewellery and sunglasses. Consider this your guide to a new-season wardrobe refresh.

1 Louis Vuitton sunglasses, \$1080. 2 Dior bag, \$6100. 3 Cartier earrings, \$42,100. 4 Roger Vivier brooch, \$2060.
5 Christian Louboutin bag charm, \$1165. 6 Prada pouch, \$2500. 7 Sarah & Sebastian necklace, \$1690.



Garden variety

Blossoms are your best friend this season. Let pinks and purples pop by pairing them with pastels and creams, and forget subtlety – this spring, we're going full bloom. Add the finishing touch with accessories that feature silver sparkles, like morning dew.

1 Prada shoes, \$1960. 2 Van Cleef & Arpels ring, \$36,400. 3 Roger Vivier bag charm, \$740. 4 Louis Vuitton trays, \$1380 each.
5 Dior jumper, \$5800. 6 Chanel bag, \$15,070. 7 Franck Muller watch, POA.



Dior shoes,
\$3400.

Petal pusher

You'll want to keep these Dior Byzance Garden heels well away from the veggie patch.

Made of hand-painted ceramic set with rhinestones, the precious perennial flower on the toe will never fade away, even when winter comes around again.

1

The key to dressing for the in-between days is clever layering. Go light, and play with pattern, colour and texture.

Ensure each layer works well on its own and as a team player, so you feel confident adding or shedding as needed.

PHOTOGRAPHY JEDD COONEY
STYLING RACHEL WAYMAN

FIT CHECK

It's warming up!
Here's how to put some
spring in your step



2

Experiment with geometric and organic shapes. The weather isn't playing by the rules, so why should you?

Opposite: H&M polo shirt, \$69.99, pants, \$99.99, bag, \$79.99, and bracelet, \$24.99; R.M. Williams shirt (underneath), \$349; Steve Madden shoes, \$159.95; Zara earrings, \$36; stylist's bracelets.

This page: Sandro top, \$425; Uniqlo x JW Anderson shirt (underneath), \$49.90; H&M skirt, \$139, and belt, \$99.99; Zara bag, \$149, earrings, \$36, and necklaces (sold as set), \$49.95.



3

An abbreviated blazer is the ultimate in trans-seasonal dressing for all occasions: pair one with jeans on the weekend, and go for an ultra-cropped version with matching pants for the office.

Above left: Zara jacket, \$149, pants, \$89.95, and necklace (bottom, sold as set), \$49.95; H&M shirt, \$119, earrings, \$34.99, necklace, \$24.99; Steve Madden shoes, \$159.95.

Above right: Sandro jacket, \$525; Orotton shirt, \$169; Henne jeans, \$229; Zara bag, \$109; H&M earrings, \$34.99, and necklaces (from top), \$24.99 each; Zara necklace (bottom, sold as set), \$49.95.

Opposite: Zara jacket, \$269; Maje top, \$215; Uniqlo jeans, \$59; Saba belt, \$149; Edward Meller shoes, \$259; Zara earrings, \$36.

4

The most covetable look of the season is a check tweed jacket and a great pair of jeans. Punctuate the look with bold pops of red as a symbol of brighter days to come.





5

Pastel pink is the ultimate colour for spring. A pretty blouse tucked into voluminous bermuda shorts is perfect for the first picnic of the season.

6

As the sunshine creeps back into our days it should creep back into your wardrobe too. Apply a dose of sartorial vitamin D via a lemon skirt, worn with summery shoes and sunglasses.



Opposite: H&M shirt, \$119, shorts, \$89.99, earrings, \$34.99, and necklaces, \$24.99 each.

This page: Uniqlo x JW Anderson shirt, \$49.90; Romy skirt, \$350; Sandro shoes, \$420; H&M sunglasses, \$27.99, bag, \$89.99, and bracelet (model's left hand), \$24.99; Zara earrings, \$36; stylist's bracelets.



7

A matching knit set is an elevated way to dress for spring, especially with a contrasting trim and pearls. An intentionally frayed jacket brings a bit of cool to a classic pencil skirt and blouse look.

Left, top: Maje top, \$440, and skirt, \$550; H&M earrings, \$34.99, and necklaces (from top), \$24.99 each; Zara necklace (bottom, sold as set), \$49.95.

Left: Zara jacket, \$389; Sandro top, \$525, and skirt, \$525; H&M earrings, \$34.99, and necklaces, \$24.99 each.

Opposite: Venroy trench coat, \$340; Uniqlo x JW Anderson shirt, \$49.90; Uniqlo top (underneath), \$24.90; Maje shorts, \$440; Steve Madden shoes, \$159.95; H&M earrings, \$34.99.

Stylist Rachel Wayman/The Artist Group.
Hair Travis Balcke/Saunders & Co.
Makeup Cherry Cheung/Vivien's Creative.
Model Angelina Cakuls/Priscillas.



8

Switch up your wintery pants-and-trench coat combo with a grown-up mini (try shorts) in the pattern of the year: polka dots.



COURTNEY ZHENG RESORT 2027

MIU MIU A/W 2026

TOM FORD PRE-FALL 2026

PENCIL SKIRT FOUR WAYS

Figure hugging and typically hemmed at the knee, the pencil skirt is a perennial office staple. This month we make the case for bringing it out of the boardroom and into everyday life. Got plans? Pencil in these looks



FASHION OBSESSIVE

Wear this suede wrap skirt low on the waist and tied at the side.

Add a silky shirt and punchy purple bag for impact, while keeping the accessories minimal, but not basic. (There's a difference.)

1 Zara jacket, \$105. 2 Chanel sunglasses, \$980.
3 Zimmermann top, \$250. 4 Brie Leon ring, \$169.
5 St. Agni skirt, \$629. 6 Christopher Esber bag, \$795. 7 Rebe shoes, \$395.



CORPORATE COOL

The pencil skirt will always have a place in the office. Bring it out of the '50s and into 2026 with a higher hemline and monochrome colour palette. An interesting shoe and on-trend sunnies complete the look.

1 Venroy jacket, \$280. 2 Avant Studio earrings, \$159. 3 Soda Shades sunglasses, \$329. 4 Reiss shirt, \$350. 5 SIR. belt, \$140, and 6 skirt, \$390. 7 Evity bag, \$199, at Strandbags. 8 Paris Georgia shoes, \$784, at Muse.



THE WEEKEND

A classic beige pencil skirt, when worn with a pair of leather thongs, a buttery leather bag and a bomber jacket, is a masterclass in elevated casual styling. No jewellery needed – unless it's an excellent watch.

1 Shona Joy jacket, \$360. 2 Omega watch, \$11450. 3 Dissh top, \$120. 4 Pave skirt, \$312. 5 Witchery bag, \$119. 6 Christopher Esber shoes, \$550.



THE CREATIVE

Indulge in texture by pairing a pencil skirt with a satisfyingly soft velvet jacket and leather kitten-heel boots. A cream pussy-bow blouse and flashes of gold will add an elevated vibe.

1 Cos blazer, \$255. 2 Amber Sceats earrings, \$159. 3 Zara shirt, \$76. 4 Dior belt, \$950. 5 Venroy skirt, \$240. 6 Louis Vuitton boots, \$3400. 7 Yu Mei bag, \$627.

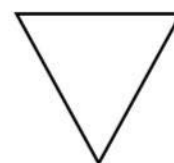


LOEWE A/W 2026

FIND YOUR FIT

FOR YOUR BODY SHAPE

Somewhere in between Daisy Dukes and a full pant lies the long short. Here's how to find your length



Inverted Triangle

Shorts that flare out instead of down are great if you want to add volume to your lower half. Keep it casual with a loose-fitting long-sleeved top and oversized anorak.

1 Orotan jacket, \$499. 2 Friends with Frank top, \$199. 3 A-Esque bag, \$800. 4 Amber Sceats ring, \$159. 5 Harris Tapper shorts, \$429. 6 Louis Vuitton sunglasses, \$765.



Column

Capris have been threatening a comeback for a while, and now that they're here, we can't get enough. Perfect for long legs, a black pair works well in a sporty look, complete with football sneakers and a coloured windbreaker.

1 Dissh pants, \$129.99. 2 Dior hair tie, \$680. 3 Sporty & Rich jacket, \$555, at Net-a-Porter. 4 Uniqlo socks, \$14.90. 5 Lioness top, \$69. 6 A.Emery shoes, \$280. 7 Longchamp bag, \$725.

Wear your shirt open over a white tee



Pear

Denim shorts that reach mid-thigh are universally flattering. We also consider denim a neutral, which gives you room to play with colours and prints in your accessories.

Any excuse for a splash of animal print

1 Jac + Jack shirt, \$380. 2 F+H Studios earrings, \$185. 3 Zara top, \$23.95. 4 H&M shoes, \$249. 5 Beare Park shorts, \$460. 6 Elka Collective bag, \$229.



Hourglass

Tailored bermuda shorts are an It-girl staple. Pair them with knee-high boots and a high-neck leather bomber for a runway-approved 'fit.



1 Mimco watch, \$229.95. 2 Matteau shirt, \$420. 3 Zara jacket, \$185. 4 Deadly Ponies bag, \$499. 5 Henne shorts, \$169. 6 Edie Collective boots, \$650.





EYE SPY

Each month,
marie claire spotlights
the team's most
covetable accessory.
This September,
we're going gaga
for goggle sunnies.

Opposite: 1 Loewe sunglasses, \$510. 2 Oron case, \$149. 3 Dior sunglasses, \$880. 4 Prada sunglasses, \$695. 5 JW Anderson chain, \$425, at Net-a-Porter. 6 Zimmermann sunglasses, \$475. 7 Celine sunglasses, \$820. 8 Louis Vuitton sunglasses, \$760. 9 Tod's case, \$730. 10 Ray-Ban sunglasses, \$259, at Sunglass Hut. 11 Le Specs sunglasses, \$90, and 12 chain, \$20. 13 Otra sunglasses, \$75. 14 Poppy Lissiman sunglasses, \$260. 15 Gucci sunglasses, \$675, at Sunglass Hut.



T H E

WORDS GEORGIE McCOURT

P
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E

New additions to the Collection N°5 Fine Jewellery line pay tribute to Chanel's origins in a modern and utterly wearable way



ew symbols belong to a house the way the number five belongs to Chanel. Gabrielle Chanel's favourite number became part of fashion history in 1921, when she selected the fifth formula presented by perfumer Ernest Beaux and introduced N°5 on the fifth day of the fifth month.

More than a century later, that numeral continues to travel elegantly through the house's fashion, beauty and jewellery. This year, the fine jewellery line Collection N°5 expands with four new creations in 18-carat beige gold and white gold, all set with diamonds. Together, they make a persuasive case for just how versatile one number can be.

The necklace is perhaps the most immediately seductive (and sits at the top of our wish list). A fine chain meets a sculptural five before extending into a long, fluid drop finished with a pear-shaped diamond. It's the sort of piece that renders everything else unnecessary. Then there are the earrings, which interpret the motif three ways.

White-gold diamond-set hoops suspend articulated N°5 pendants that move lightly beneath the ear. The same strong silhouette in beige gold feels warmer and softer, the polished metal lending the pavé diamonds a subtle glow. A third pair sits closer to the lobe, smooth, sculpted fives punctuated by round diamonds and framed by pear-shaped stones.

The balance between discretion and declaration is what makes Collection N°5 so covetable. From across a room, the number is instantly recognisable. Move closer and the real interest lies in the softened angles, immaculate surfaces and diamonds positioned to capture the light and dazzle.

Naturally, none of this apparent effortlessness is actually effortless. The collection's savoir faire is expressed through five recurring design codes. Diamonds trace the numeral like a fine ribbon of light. A brilliant-cut stone sits within its curve in a closed setting, part of the house's jewellery vocabulary since 1932. Articulated drops introduce movement, allowing the pieces to shift with the body. Bevelled edges are polished to a mirror finish, subtly recalling the

**Five speaks of luck ...
and the five senses
through which
beauty is experienced**



precise geometry of the N°5 bottle, while the interplay between pavé diamonds and uninterrupted gold gives each design its graphic clarity.

The new pieces also draw upon the N°5 High Jewellery collection created in 2021 to mark the fragrance's centenary. At its centre was the extraordinary 55.55 necklace, set with a 55.55-carat diamond and now held within the house's heritage collection. Its composition – a diamond line, the central five and a suspended drop – established a visual vocabulary that continues here, in jewellery intended for life rather than the display case.

The numeral has been made to feel both familiar and newly desirable. There is no attempt to disguise the five or make it overly abstract. Instead, its curves, corners and proportions are treated as legitimate design elements. In one piece, it is outlined in diamonds; in another, it appears in smooth, mirror-polished gold. Sometimes it hangs and moves; elsewhere it sits neatly on the skin.

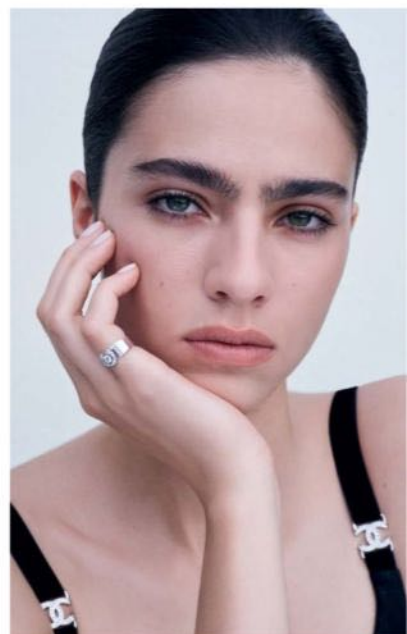
Five has never meant only one thing at Chanel. It speaks of luck and movement, of the five fingers of the hand, and the five senses through which beauty is experienced. It represents line and curve, discipline and freedom, precision and instinct – tensions Gabrielle Chanel understood better than most.

Above: Chanel earring (single) in 18k white gold and diamonds, \$8000, and necklace in 18k beige gold and diamonds, \$9150.

Left: Chanel earrings in 18k white gold and diamonds (on model), \$27,700.

Below: Chanel earrings in 18k beige gold and diamonds, \$11,250.

Right: Chanel ring in 18k white gold and diamonds, \$16,450.



PHARAOHS, PYRAMIDS



PRECIOUS STONES

Van Cleef & Arpels' new high jewellery collection is a love letter to Ancient Egypt and proof that Egyptomania is alive today

WORDS NICKY BRIGER

Opposite, from top left The Van Cleef & Arpels Fragment de beauté clip; Elizabeth Taylor as Cleopatra in 1963; the Van Cleef Esprit de l'univers necklace; and the mask of Tutankhamen.

This page, from left Van Cleef & Arpels' Fascinating Egypt High Jewellery collection on display in Paris; a ring engraved with the Van Cleef & Arpels monogram in hieroglyphics; and papyrus depicting Tutankhamen and his wife Ankhesenamun.



Few ancient civilisations continue to captivate us quite like Egypt. Maybe it's the pyramids (still standing, still confounding engineers) or the hieroglyphics that took centuries to decode. Perhaps it's the kohl-rimmed eyes, draped silhouettes and jewelled collars that continue to appear on the runway. Or Cleopatra herself, history's ultimate power dresser and an eternal muse, immortalised by Elizabeth Taylor in cinema's defining portrayal in 1963 and by Cher's iconic Bob Mackie-designed look in 1988. More than 3000 years after the pharaohs ruled the Nile, Ancient Egypt still exerts an irresistible pull on fashion and pop culture. From blockbuster movies to epic museum exhibitions, somehow this world remains as glamorous and fascinating as ever.

Van Cleef & Arpels certainly thinks so. The French maison has just unveiled Fascinating Egypt, a breathtaking high jewellery collection of 180 pieces, one of its most ambitious yet. It is a tribute not only to Ancient Egypt, but to the century-long dialogue the house has maintained with one of history's greatest civilisations.

But to truly understand the collection, you first need to understand Egyptomania, the cultural fascination with all things pharaonic that's swept the Western world for centuries. Ancient Rome erected Egyptian obelisks as symbols of imperial power. Napoleon's 1798 campaign included a team of scholars, scientists and artists as well as soldiers, leading to the first encyclopaedia of Egyptian civilisation. The Luxor Obelisk's arrival in Paris in 1836 had locals losing their minds. Giuseppe Verdi wrote the opera *Aida* in 1871. The Bangles had us all walking like Egyptians. Yet no moment rivalled the one in November 1922, when Howard Carter peered into Tutankhamen's tomb and, asked if he could see anything, famously replied:

"Yes, wonderful things". Gold, jewels, ceremonial objects, adorned statues: the discovery sparked a wave of Egyptomania that left its mark on Art Deco architecture, fashion and jewellery design for decades to come.

Back in Paris, Van Cleef & Arpels was paying attention. The maison responded almost immediately to Carter's find, creating a series of Egyptian-inspired jewels between 1923 and 1925: cuff bracelets depicting figures in profile, long necklaces in platinum and precious stones, brooches adorned with enigmatic symbols. Some of those original pieces survive in Van Cleef & Arpels' Patrimonial Collection today, which can be seen as part of a major exhibition at Vienna's Museum of Applied Arts (MAK), running until September 27.

The relationship deepened further in the 1930s and 1950s, when Egypt's royal family itself became Van Cleef & Arpels clients. The maison created a full jewellery set for the 1939 wedding of Princess Fawzia of Egypt to Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, then-Crown Prince of Iran: a diadem (crown), necklace and earrings fit for royalty. Princess Faiza of Egypt later acquired a spectacular collaret necklace in platinum, emeralds and diamonds, which she wore regularly to ceremonial occasions. These pieces are not merely historical footnotes; they form the backbone of Fascinating Egypt.



Above Diamond, gold and emerald earrings from Van Cleef & Arpels' Fascinating Egypt collection.

The maison has long wished to "present its own vision of this ancient heritage"

– Catherine Rénier, Van Cleef & Arpels president and CEO

JEWELLERY

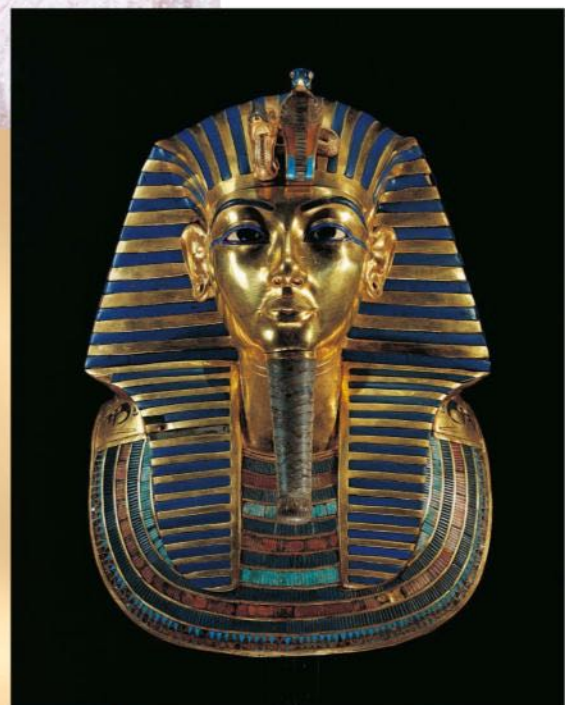
A century on, that same spirit of discovery animates the new collection. As Van Cleef & Arpels president and CEO Catherine Rénier puts it, the maison has long wished “to prolong the story and present its own vision of this ancient heritage”. Fascinating Egypt is exactly that: not a recreation of the past but a vivid, contemporary reimagining of it.

At its heart, the collection is a masterclass in gemstone sourcing. Years were spent assembling a palette inspired by Ancient Egypt’s symbolic colours: blue for the gods, green for vegetation, yellow for the sun, red for strength and black for fertile earth. A remarkable 28.08-carat Sri Lankan cabochon sapphire anchors the Esprit de l’univers necklace, while a 26.21-carat pink sapphire forms the centrepiece of the transformable Promesse souveraine set. Meanwhile, the Beauté légendaire necklace – a contemporary interpretation of the royal ceremonial breastplate – is crowned by a 10.02-carat Fancy Vivid Yellow diamond that glows like sunlight.

But while the stones are extraordinary, it’s the storytelling that truly sets Fascinating Egypt apart. This is Van Cleef & Arpels at its most poetic and playful. The Rivage égyptien necklace is set with 37 pear-shaped Zambian emeralds totalling 41.58 carats, evoking the fertile landscapes of the



Clockwise from above
The Van Cleef & Arpels
Beauté légendaire
necklace featuring
a 10.02-carat Fancy
Vivid Yellow diamond;
Elizabeth Taylor as
Cleopatra; the funeral
mask of Tutankhamen;
Van Cleef & Arpels’
Pharaon éternel and
Vénus égyptienne clips.



“Each chapter comes
to nourish the
history of the house”

– Catherine Rénier



Nile through representations of water, papyrus reeds and birds in flight. A trio of clips – Bénou mystérieux, Griffon mystérieux and Bastet mystérieuse – bring sacred Egyptian creatures to life as three-dimensional miniature sculptures using the maison's legendary Mystery Set technique. The Bénou mystérieux, inspired by the soul-bird of Ra associated with the sun and rebirth, is alive with spessartite garnet, spinel, turquoise, lapis lazuli and Mystery Set emeralds.

Muse éternelle and Pharaon sacré clips revive Van Cleef & Arpels' tradition of figurative jewels, depicting Cleopatra and a pharaoh in precious metals, diamonds, rubies, sapphires and emeralds. The Paysage secret bracelet, meanwhile, hides the phrase "Horizon of eternity" spelled out in hieroglyphics between its columns.

And on every piece across the collection, a bespoke hieroglyphic cartouche bearing the Van Cleef & Arpels monogram offers a thread connecting this contemporary saga to those first Egyptian-inspired creations made in Paris more than a century ago.

Among the most emotionally resonant pieces is the Princesse du Nil necklace, a reimagining of the 1929 collaret once owned by Princess Faiza of Egypt, featuring cascading Colombian emerald teardrops totalling 107.37 carats and seven white natural pearls. It is, in the truest sense, jewellery with a biography.

Fascinating Egypt follows a series of narrative-driven collections that have become a hallmark of Van Cleef & Arpels' creative vision: Treasure Island in 2024, inspired by Robert Louis Stevenson's adventure classic; Le Grand Tour in 2023, celebrating the aristocratic journeys of 18th- and 19th-century Europe; Legend of Diamonds in 2022, a two-chapter devotion to exceptional white diamonds; and Sous les Étoiles in 2021, an exploration of stars, galaxies

From top left

Outside the tomb of Tutankhamun in Egypt in 1922; the Van Cleef & Arpels Coiffe merveilleuse earrings in gold, lapis lazuli and diamonds; Cher in a Cleopatra-inspired design by Bob Mackie; and the Van Cleef & Arpels Muse éternelle clip, which depicts Cleopatra in gold and diamonds.

and the cosmos. Each collection is a world unto itself, and together they reveal something fundamental about the maison. At a time when so much of modern life is dominated by fast-paced technology, algorithms and AI, Van Cleef & Arpels continues to champion imagination, craftsmanship and storytelling as the ultimate luxury. As Rénier says, "Each chapter comes to nourish the history of the house." This isn't a brand chasing trends, but one building a future rooted firmly in the past.

There's one final twist. Reportedly, every piece was sold to VIP clients before the public launch, making this one of Van Cleef & Arpels' most successful collections to date, and proving that even after 3000 years, Ancient Egypt remains as fascinating to us as ever.

Van Cleef & Arpels High Jewelry x Masterpieces from the MAK Collection is on display at Vienna's MAK Museum until September 27.

Omega has added nine notable new stars to its most enduring women's watch collection, Constellation

STAYING POWER

WORDS MELISSA GAUDRON

While luxury watch brands race to outdo one another with complex mechanics and oversized statements, Omega is proving there's another route to desirability: perfect the piece, then make it irresistibly wearable.

Since the launch of the brand's now iconic Constellation Manhattan watch in 1982, its distinctive claws, integrated bracelet, slimline Roman numerals and statement diamonds have become recognisable house codes. This year, Omega has released nine new models in the Constellation collection, boasting some 20 individual design options that lean into the personal style of the modern woman, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. Instead of simply offering different metals, the brand plays with colour, texture and unexpected materials, creating watches that feel more like luxurious fashion accessories.

The standout is undoubtedly the 29mm Sedna Gold model, where a ring of diamonds frames an iron meteorite dial washed in warm rose-gold tones. Every meteorite slice carries a naturally unique crystalline pattern, meaning no two dials are identical (a detail collectors obsess over). Also incredibly striking is the Moonshine Gold edition, where the mother-of-pearl dial is engraved with a swirling Supernova motif that catches the light with every movement.

The dial colours bring their own personality. A patchouli blossom shade offers an unexpected earthy lilac, while celestial blue, blush rose and matcha green provide modern alternatives. For traditionalists, a two-tone steel and yellow-gold model with mother-of-pearl keeps things classic, and smaller 25mm versions tap into the growing return to more delicate, jewellery-sized watches.

The renewed fascination with Omega's Constellation isn't accidental. Vintage Manhattan timepieces are enjoying a resurgence among collectors and fashion insiders, fuelled by a broader appetite for high-end '80s design. But the Constellation's enduring appeal doesn't come from being the loudest watch in the room. It's due to the fact it continues to evolve with the women wearing it.



Omega's iconic Constellation collection is steeped in history and has been updated with modern colours, textures and materials.

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FEATURES



COUTURE CATCH-UP

Taking inspiration from fantastical masquerade balls and Salvador Dalí's surrealism, designer Elie Saab's couture outing was an exercise in Glamour with a capital G.

Our cover star Anne Hathaway is having a *moment*. In this month's fashion issue, see the best looks from the haute couture shows, meet style's new grown-up muse, and discover how a cancer diagnosis changed one writer's relationship with colour

GOING NUTS FALL FURTHER

WORDS ALEXANDRA ENGLISH

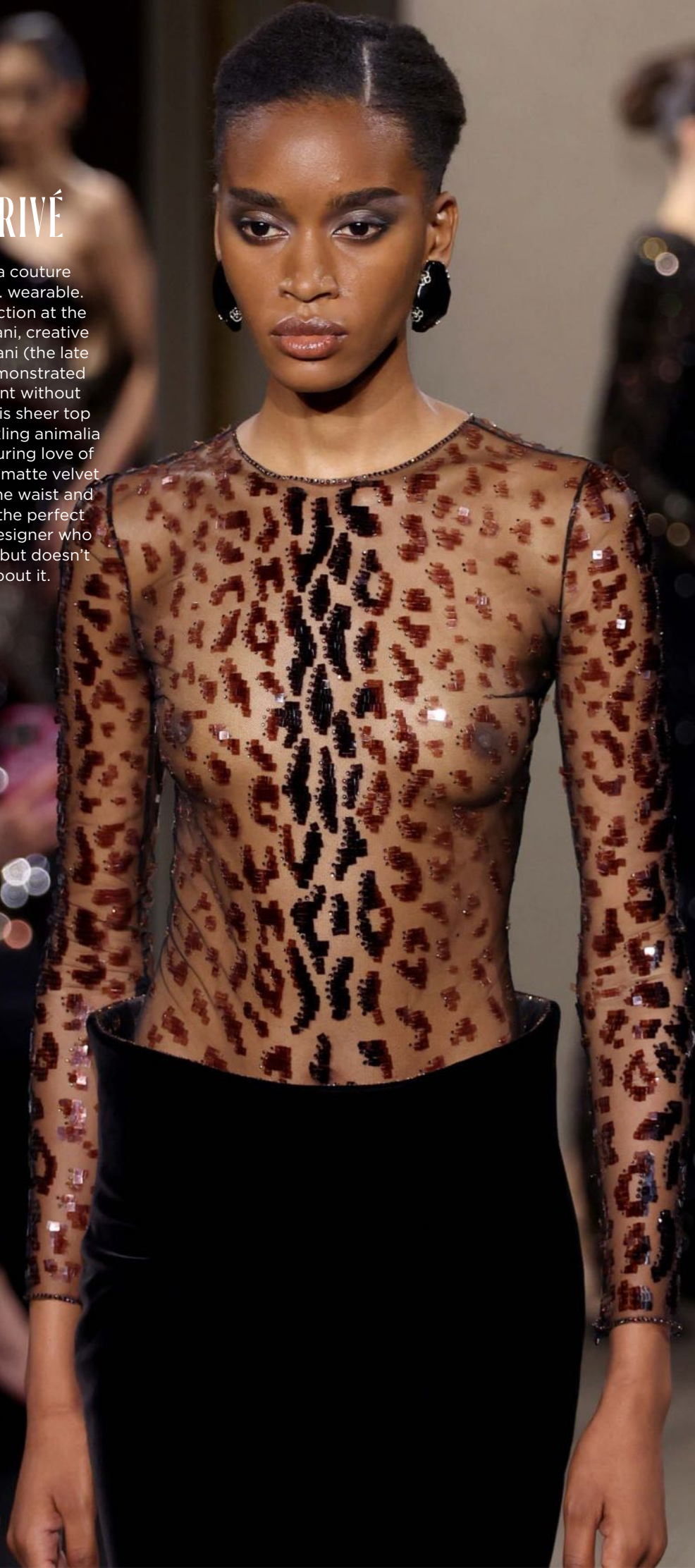
The designers of the autumn/winter 2026 couture collections went to whiplash-inducing extremes, from ultra-minimal to mind-bogglingly absurd



Chanel haute couture
autumn/winter 2026.

ARMANI PRIVÉ

Rarely do you see a couture collection that's so ... wearable. For her second collection at the helm of Giorgio Armani, creative director Silvana Armani (the late designer's niece) demonstrated her signature restraint without dulling the drama. This sheer top embellished with sparkling animalia nods to fashion's enduring love of animal print, while the matte velvet skirt that sits above the waist and drops to the floor is the perfect demonstration of a designer who *understands* couture but doesn't need to shout about it.





BALENCIAGA

Pierpaolo Piccioli's first couture collection for Balenciaga was an explosion of feathers, sequins and ultra-saturated colour. Models in wearable sculptures swanned down the steps of Cité universitaire de Paris in bubble boleros, poufy skirts and trapeze coats that appeared to defy the laws of tailoring – as well as the general consensus of how a coat should be worn. Rules pertaining to proportion, scale and reason were all thrown out, in the most brilliant way.



CHRISTIAN DIOR

Set in the Musée Rodin, that little pocket of fresh air in the middle of Paris, Jonathan Anderson's Christian Dior couture collection proved likewise refreshing. Gone were the hard edges of the iconic Bar suit; instead, models appeared in shimmering mercurial fabrications. Metallic and natural elements mingled in accoutrements you didn't know you needed, like an armadillo bag and a necklace sprouting flowers.

Christian Dior
haute couture
autumn/winter 2026.





FENDI

For her debut couture collection at Fendi, Maria Grazia Chiuri worked backwards. Where couturiers often start with an idea for an out-there shape and then choose the fabric to best realise their vision, Chiuri began with the material, letting the human body beneath the liquid silk fabrications determine the silhouette. The result is a collection that looks decidedly un-couture – but only to the untrained eye (or the eye trained in couture’s usual pomp and circumstance).



CHANEL

How to make tweed new for 2026? Pull on a thread and let it fall apart, according to fashion's internet boyfriend Matthieu Blazy. For his second Chanel couture collection, he tapped into fairytales and the fantastical nature of wearing couture, but brought them into reality. He was inspired by how everyday women wear his clothes, ensuring they could dress for the real world with a touch of magic.



JEAN PAUL GAULTIER

Dutch designer Duran Lantink is known for his topsy-turvy fashion, so it was no surprise that his first couture season as creative director at Jean Paul Gaultier was ... mind-bending? Mind-blowing? Mind-melting? Yes. His was a futuristic vision of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, realised through tulle pouring from tubular formations, bulbous velvety bodices and 3D-printed shapes that paid no mind to practicality. This is couture's new enfant terrible (complimentary).

SCHIAPARELLI

Emerging technology and centuries-old artisan techniques; the creepy unknown depths of the ocean and the scary unknown limitations of AI; the hyperreality of women's bodies and the surrealist tendencies of brand founder Elsa Schiaparelli - they all meet here in Daniel Roseberry's tension-filled couture collection. At once horrifying and awe-inducing, Roseberry's statement on where we've come from and where we're going shows that couture is about more than aesthetics.





TOM FORD A/W 2026

She's a lady

For autumn/winter 2026, a new muse emerges: mature women. Youthful pursuits take a backseat in favour of the people (and clothes) who have been there, done that and learnt a thing or two

WORDS NONI REGINATO

Almost three minutes into Tom Ford's autumn/winter 2026 show, a woman stalks onto the runway. The presentation is taking place in a stark white box of a room, and it's silent, save for a high-pitched, eye twitch-inducing hum, like feedback from a poorly connected speaker. As the woman plants one stiletto-heeled foot onto the carpet after the other, your eyes can't help but trail from her croc-embossed boots to her croc-embossed pencil skirt. Her bag – also croc-embossed – hangs from a leather-gloved hand as she slinks down the runway. Her silver bob is slicked back, and upon her nose rests a slimline pair of black sunglasses. She's magnetic: self-assured, sexy, you probably wouldn't want to cross her. She's also 58, but as if that matters.

The cast of models for Tom Ford's show skewed older – 61-year-old supermodel Kristen McMenamy walked, as did 55-year-old Jana Kapounová, 50-year-old Yasmin Warsame and a handful of mature male models – and for good reason. These were certainly not clothes for twenty-somethings. Centred on the idea of seduction, the collection sat somewhere on the spectrum between office siren and impeccably dressed madam. Pencil skirts clung to hips, heels were knife-sharp, and blazers were cut within an inch of their lives and worn atop sheer shirting. Slips of skin peeked out from low-slung trousers, revealing slivers of hips on both men and women, and in an unexpected turn, transparent raincoats and skirts exposed lace

underpinnings and sheer tights. The collection was pure sex, but there was hardly a hemline above the knee or a NSFW neckline in sight. Rather, this was a show about desire; about being a grown-up who knows who they are and what they want. And they plan to dress for it.

Tom Ford's sultry, seductive woman in midlife was not an isolated instance this season. Across the board it was as if creative directors at the helms of all the houses decided they'd had enough of trying to chase the dollars, eyeballs and clicks of a generation chronically online. Instead, from Givenchy to Chanel, designers set their sights on demographics closer to their own age and made an entire collection for them.

The past couple of years has seen this new muse simmer to the surface across pop culture, literature and now fashion too. But instead of this woman being a tired empty-nester who has lost interest in her husband and is generally bored with the mundaneness of her existence, she's having a damn good time. Or – at the very least – she's coming to terms with the fact she might have only lived half of her life, and if she wants things to be different in act two she ought to do something about it.

One of 2024's most talked about (and pontificated-on) films was *Babygirl*, the erotic thriller that saw Nicole Kidman play a high-powered businesswoman pursuing a torrid affair with her fairly charmless but strangely alluring intern, played by Harris Dickinson. It ignited all sorts of discussions about power dynamics



TOM FORD A/W 2026



GIVENCHY A/W 2026



CHANEL A/W 2026



FERRAGAMO A/W 2026

FERRAGAMO A/W 2026



and desire, and brought into the public consciousness the idea that – shock! – women in middle age want to feel sexy and wanted and, believe it or not, horny too. In the nearly two years since the film's release, those conversations have only become louder.

"I think many women [in midlife] become less interested in what they *should* want and more interested in what they *actually* want," says Dr Wendy Roncolato, a clinical psychologist and founder of Cloudberry Clinic in Sydney. "I also think many become less interested in proving themselves. They often have a clearer sense of what matters to them, what they're good at, and where they want to invest their time

"Women want their confidence back. They don't want to dress like their daughters"

– Marlene Mangioni, boutique owner

and energy." In her work, Roncolato counsels countless women through the transition into middle age, whether that's rediscovering who they are without children at home or rebuilding their lives after loss or divorce. "There isn't one midlife experience," she adds, "but what often changes is that there's less interest in living according to somebody else's script."

Josephine Eve, a Sydney-based personal stylist and wardrobe consultant, who works with women typically undergoing some sort of transition in their personal or professional lives, notices this shift among her clients too. "A lot of the women I work with have spent years looking after everyone else," she says. "Somewhere along the way they've stopped investing in themselves."

It's a tale as old as time: women shelving their own needs and desires in favour of everyone around them, only to wake up one day to a life that might be full but is barely their own. "The biggest thing I hear is, 'I just don't feel like myself anymore,'" Eve says. "I don't think clothes change who you are as a person, but they

can absolutely change how you feel about yourself."

Givenchy creative director Sarah Burton gave that sentiment airtime in her autumn/winter 2026 collection. The show notes described it as "a multifaceted mirror held up to the complexity of women's lives", which Burton translated via 56 looks that oscillated between androgynous and hyper-feminine, depending on how the Givenchy woman was feeling that day. Her tailoring expertise appeared in menswear-inspired suiting, all broad shoulders and pinstripes, but also in darted coats and starched-collared shirts worn in reverse. The sharp edges were tempered by weighty duchess satin, which Burton draped into fluid capes, dresses and tunic tops. And before it got too serious, she saturated the runway in leopard print, vermilion, cobalt blue and acid-bright yellow. These were the kind of clothes you couldn't wear half-heartedly. They demanded guts, confidence. If you saw them on a fifty-something woman striding through the CBD, they would make you think, "I'd like to be her."

"To me, women just want to have their confidence back. They don't want to dress like their daughters," notes Marlene Mangioni, owner of the multi-brand boutique 23Albert in Sydney. Her clients, who she says range in age from 40 to 70, come to her for direction at a time in their lives when they might be feeling lost, sartorially or otherwise. "Maybe their bodies have changed or they have no idea how to dress for their age," she says, "but the minute you put the right clothes on, their whole attitude changes. It gives you the ability to face whatever you are dealing with."

Whether you watch the fashion shows or not, seeing yourself – or at least your age – reflected back at you on a runway does more than just give you some inspiration for what you could wear to the office or your son's wedding. At the most basic level, it indicates that women in middle age are customers these houses see and *want*. When 50-year-old model Stephanie Cavalli opened Chanel's autumn/winter 2026 show in a rib-knit skirt suit, it made very clear who creative director Matthieu Blazy was designing for: a youthful spirit. And their age? Totally irrelevant.

TOM FORD A/W 2026



CHANEL A/W 2026



GIVENCHY A/W 2026



CHANEL A/W 2026



HOW I FOUND MY STYLE

For *marie claire*'s big fashion issue, we asked six well-dressed women to share the stories behind their signature style



Bell learnt to lean into her masculine, thoughtful and slightly kooky style.

KATE BELL

As a model, Kate Bell spent her life surrounded by beautiful clothes. Ironically, it left her unsure of how to dress herself until one piece of advice transformed her approach to dressing.



My mum had a big influence on helping me find my style. She owned exquisite evening shoes that she wore before she had us kids and she would freely give them up for dress-ups. She sewed and made groovy jeans and suits that she wore to art school. She always looks effortlessly stylish.

As a teen, I gravitated towards punk and new wave, and with Mum's help I recreated styles I'd seen in magazines. My creations were often a bit kooky. Mum also introduced me to op shopping, which we would do together. Second-hand clothing has always delighted me, often not even to purchase, but to see and feel. I try pieces on just to see how they look. When I started modelling, I became self-conscious of how I dressed. It was like there was suddenly a right and wrong way to dress, and I second-guessed myself for years. I still wore dramatic pieces when partying, but chose easy-to-understand clothes to go to work.

A stylist once told me to lean into the masculine.

This was the best piece of advice, as I'd never considered that way of self-expression before. I would describe my style as masculine, thoughtful and a little kooky. I like creating the shape I want, and I dress to communicate how I'm feeling. Some days that's a floor-length dress; other days it's track pants and a T-shirt.

Clothing, for me, is art. It makes me feel and think, and I use it to communicate. Some days I feel more feminine but mostly I'll be a bit "boy". I still enjoy wearing feminine pieces, but mostly I dress to my proportions and wear what feels right for me. I've become more confident in my own style and no longer second-guess myself the way I used to.



VIRGINIA JENKINS

Lawyer by day, fashion blogger by night, Virginia Jenkins is known for the endlessly chic yet low-effort outfits she shares on What Vee Wore.

The change in my relationship with clothes wasn't marked by a lightbulb moment or sudden epiphany, it was when I returned to work after my first stint of parental leave. Back then, private practice was still very much stilettos, pencil skirts and figure-hugging Cue dresses, and it was a rude awakening to discover my postpartum body couldn't comfortably wear much of the wardrobe I'd spent years building.

People talk about losing their style after becoming a parent. I don't think that's what happened to me. If anything, it made me reconsider the expectations I had for my wardrobe. I wanted clothes that still felt like me but were comfortable enough for my everyday routine with work and the kids.

I started documenting what I was wearing to work on my blog, *What Vee Wore*, and Instagram, @whatveewore. Making content started as a passion project, but it's been going strong for almost eight years. I get so much joy from connecting with my audience in my little corner of the internet and am driven by my passion for what I share. I also feel it's my civic duty to report back whenever I find something that fits my petite frame straight off the rack.

Good-quality basics occupy a big chunk of my wardrobe and, post-pandemic, there's been less of a line between my work clothes and my weekend clothes. I love pieces that can do double duty. I'm usually heading to work when I leave the house, so it's important that I look polished

enough for the office, but I like to think that my aesthetic isn't overly corporate or stuffy. My work outfits are elevated to match the office environment, but I've been able to achieve this while staying true to my personal style.

It has all continued to evolve over the years, and I think my audience has enjoyed evolving with me. Lately, I've been embracing a bit more personality in the way I dress – a pop of colour here, a different silhouette there. But, at its core, my style is still very classic. My three style words are comfortable, classic and elevated, and they provide great structure when I'm getting dressed.



Jenkins' looks expertly traverse an office environment and everyday life with her children.

“My three style words are comfortable, classic and elevated”

– Virginia Jenkins



ANTOINETTE LATTOUF

Last year, Antoinette Lattouf took the ABC to court to argue that it had unlawfully terminated her contract for posting in support of Palestine on social media. Clothing became her armour during the trial (and helped lead her to victory).



My first foray into fashion was pretty humble. I am one of seven children, and my parents came to Australia as refugees from Lebanon, so we often struggled to make ends meet. I was almost always wearing clothes from the thrift store or hand-me-downs from my three older sisters. My

earliest memory of fashion was my Year 6 graduation because Mum bought me a new skirt and blouse in mint green, and I was obsessed with it. Mint green is still one of my favourite colours, and who would have thought that I would become known for co-ordinated sets years later through a Federal Court trial?

During the trial, I was strategic about how I dressed: what I wore, how I wore it and the story each outfit told. I knew I would be filmed, papped, scrutinised and dissected. Women in the public eye always have been. Since tabloid outlets would inevitably write about my appearance, I decided to narrate that story myself by being proudly fashion conscious. I worked with

Katherine Rizk, a fellow Lebanese Australian and a stylist, whose pro-bono support opened doors. Together, we approached and were approached by fashion labels and designers with ties to the Levant (Lebanon, Syria and Palestine), as well as an emerging designer born and raised in Iran. I wanted to amplify people whose talent and generosity sat alongside family histories shaped by dispossession, by war, by the choices of power-hungry men who chose violence over humanity. I was, after all, fighting tooth and nail for my right to share a factual Human Rights Watch post about the use of starvation as a weapon of war in Gaza, so the synergy felt right. Values meeting values. Soon enough, people across social media were waiting for the next day of the trial to see what and who I was wearing.

I've always wanted my appearance to reflect the nuances of my personality, which can sometimes feel like opposing forces: feminine but fierce, unapologetically individual but not wanting my clothes to shout too loudly. Over the years, working in television, with four sisters whose wardrobes I still raid, and having two daughters who love fashion and aren't shy about sharing their praise and critiques, I feel like I've found my own [style].



Fashion became a political statement for Lattouf during her 2025 Federal Court trial.





MARIAH BURTON

For Mariah Burton, interior designer and the co-founder and director of Folk Studio, getting dressed is never an afterthought but an opportunity to tell a story.

Growing up, I was very aware that I looked different from many of my friends because I'm biracial. Fashion became my way of expressing myself and, in some ways, finding a sense of belonging. Clothing gave me confidence before I even knew how to articulate that feeling. I vividly remember spending Saturday mornings watching [the music video show] *Rage* and being completely captivated by ... not just the music but also the clothes. I was fascinated by the way people used fashion to tell a story. At home, I'd wrap bath towels around myself to make dresses and pretend I was walking a red carpet. Looking back, those moments were probably the beginning of my lifelong love affair with fashion.

As a child, I refused to wear dresses and lived in boots and knee-length shorts. Then, around the age of eight, I embraced a more feminine style. By the time I was a teenager, I was known among my friends as the best thrift shopper. I loved finding unique vintage pieces and putting together outfits that felt completely my own. I always wanted to be remembered for what I wore because fashion became a creative outlet for me, a way to express myself before I had any other medium.

It's funny because my parents have never been interested in fashion. I've never seen my mum wear a dress or even a pair of earrings; she has always prioritised comfort. Looking back, it's interesting that I gravitated towards fashion so naturally,

despite not living in a household that valued it.

When I turned 18, I started modelling and became immersed in the fashion world. For the first time, I could afford to buy clothes for myself. Initially, they were still almost entirely vintage finds and, looking back, I'm so grateful for that.

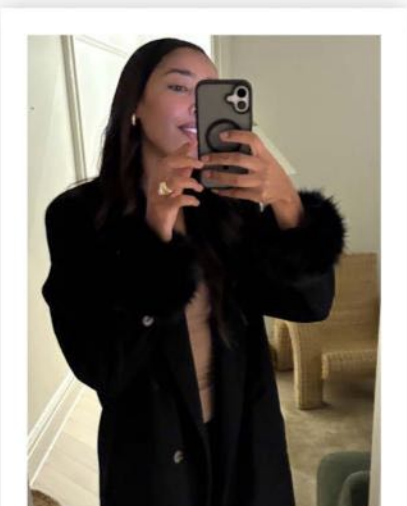
Today I'd say I have a very distinctive capsule wardrobe where almost everything works together. I gravitate towards rich browns with occasional pops of colour, rarely wear patterns, and almost never choose anything particularly form-fitting. Oversized, low-rise tailored trousers, oversized blazers, loafers and a beret are my winter uniform.



"I always wanted to be remembered for what I wore"

– Mariah Burton

Burton has created a capsule wardrobe around her distinct style.



Although I've worked in fashion for more than 20 years, I don't think I found my style until I moved to Sydney from London in my late thirties. Before this, I didn't have time to really find my style, and it was always about the practicalities of what felt good and was easy to put together.

Australia is the place where I feel the best in myself. Plus, you don't have to think about the practicalities of dressing like you would in the English climate. The weather means that, for most of the year, I can dress like it's summer, which is my comfort zone.

This resonates with my childhood growing up abroad. Some of my earliest memories of fashion are making outfits from my mum's sarongs when we lived in Cyprus. We moved around a lot because of my dad's work in the military, and I used to count down the days until my gran arrived with some clothes from the British high-street brand Tammy Girl. My mum bought all our clothes from charity shops, so anything new was a real treat.

Growing up, I was a bit of a tomboy. I stuck to wearing leggings and baggy T-shirts before entering a hippie stage marked by patchwork trousers, crochet and crushed velvet anything with Dr. Martens. I remember getting an award in sixth form for being both the best and worst dressed. In my late teens and twenties, I was taller and bigger than all my friends, so I dressed more self-consciously.

When I started going through perimenopause in my early forties, it really impacted the way I dressed. I felt like I'd lost control of my body. Suddenly I had this unmanageable, bloated belly that was uncomfortable and made all my clothes feel tight. I've always eaten well and exercised, but nothing would help. I started ordering things sometimes two sizes larger just so I would feel comfortable in that area. Natural fabrics and clothes that felt good on my skin helped enormously around this time, as well as wearing lots of big beach tees.

I'm much more comfortable in my own skin now, and I have the confidence to wear what makes me feel good rather than worrying about how it looks. I've found brands I trust and go back to again and again. I know what suits me now and how important it is to get a piece's fit right. I'm tall, and I find my clothes need to skim rather than cling. Simple T-shirts, well-cut denim and sweatshirts are my most valuable assets.

Personal style takes time to develop and is always evolving. Clothes should be fun, and the way you get to a place where you're happy is by playing with them, auditing your wardrobe and asking yourself: are you wearing them? Do they fit? Are they easy to style?



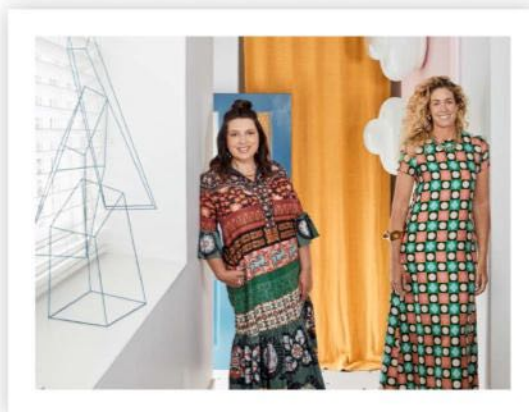
ANGIE SMITH

A relocation from London to Sydney cemented stylist Angie Smith's laidback style. But when she entered her forties and started going through perimenopause, everything changed.

Smith's personal style has had several evolutions over the years.



Pyke finds her fashion influenced by interior design and vice versa. Pictured (right) with fellow Arent & Pyke co-founder Juliette Arent Squadrito.



My grandmother was a seamstress by trade, and my mother made all her own clothes, so fashion was always something we actively participated in. We decided what we wanted to wear, chose fabrics and details together, and then brought it all to life. We even hand-embroidered some of our clothes. Looking back, that's where my appreciation for craftsmanship and beautiful textiles really began.

As a little girl, I was obsessed with everything matching. I had to have a ribbon in my hair that was the same colour as my dress and my shoes. Then I became a teenager and my mother despaired that I'd completely lost my sense of style when all I wanted to wear was black and things that were deliberately mismatched.

I feel like I'm still finding my style. Working in interiors, I'm constantly surrounded by beautiful textiles and unexpected colour combinations, and there's a real two-way conversation between fashion and interiors; one continually influences the other.

I might create a colour or texture combination in a home that inspires an outfit later, or discover something in fashion that finds its way into an interior.

My love of beautiful textiles has been a constant, but these days I'm drawn to bold blocks of colour and interesting silhouettes. Becoming a mum also made me appreciate clothes that feel effortless and comfortable, without losing that sense of personality.

Wherever I am, I want to be dressed as myself. It's easy to slip into wearing a version of yourself that suits the occasion or what you think is expected, but I always feel happiest when I'm not performing. The clothes feel better because they genuinely reflect who I am.

“There’s a real two-way conversation between fashion and interiors”

– Sarah-Jane Pyke

SARAH-JANE PYKE

Interior designer and co-founder of Arent & Pyke, Sarah-Jane Pyke explains why the secret to great style is becoming your own muse.





THE

A cancer diagnosis saw
Dilvin Yasa embark on an
unexpected sartorial journey
from neutral minimalist
to full-blown maximalist,
giving her a different C-word
to focus on: colour

WORD



This must be someone else's suitcase that I've opened up in my hotel room in Doha, Qatar. How else can I explain a bag filled with blinding yellow and tangerine dresses, chartreuse and mustard shirts, and a peacock jumpsuit that appears to be emitting its own light?

"It looks like the luggage of someone who's shot and stuffed half of Madagascar's wildlife!" I shout down the phone at my husband as I pace the room. "I'm probably going to appear on *Border Security*." It's only when I catch sight of my reflection – currently dressed as though auditioning for a presenter role on *Play School* – that I accept that this really is my reality. Not only do I have breast cancer, but the case is mine because I have taken to self-medicating in the strangest of ways: through eye-catching, life-affirming fashion.

It's hardly groundbreaking to reveal that how we dress can influence how others see us. Studies show, for example, that women who dress in more masculine business attire for job interviews are more likely to be hired for leadership roles in more male-dominated industries, such as banking and marketing (and that men find women who wear red more sexually attractive).

Dopamine dressing, the idea that you can strategically dress to boost your mood, isn't new either but what's new here – to me, at least – is that you're also likely to overhaul your wardrobe during a health crisis, so that you ultimately become someone you can no longer recognise – not in body, not in spirit and certainly not in your travel basics.

It made sense that I was wearing an olive dress the day my doctor called

to tell me I had breast cancer. It's not only my favourite colour, it's also a wardrobe staple in what was once a brief nod to colour in a sea of mostly navy and charcoal. Yet, as grief and panic settled in, so too did something unexpected: a desire to buy as many uncharacteristically loud garments and accessories as possible. Shopping may not make me *happy*, I told myself as I raced between appointments and scans, but these pieces will make me *happier*.

Subsequently, I loaded up on canary-yellow dresses with puffy sleeves and Elton-esque rhinestone sunglasses. I dialled up my usual lipstick choice of cherry red to a shade of coral not seen since the album covers of the '80s, and my once-understated earrings became a single-digit salute to subtlety (and, quite probably, good taste).

“Changing your look ... post-diagnosis
is a way for you to maintain control
and reassert your identity, which can
provide a sense of emotional comfort”

– Shakaila Forbes-Bell, fashion psychologist

On better days, I looked like a forty-something Iris Apfel and I patted myself on the back, but on others even I had to admit that I wasn't far off a look best described as “ethnic Big Bird”. Weird? Sure. But I noticed early on that my instinct to go bold or go home was working. Whenever I dressed “in costume” for an appointment with my surgeon or to meet with my geneticist, I felt significantly more cheerful than when I wore my usual pieces. Why? Ugh, it's a long story.

Fashion psychologist and author of *Big Dress Energy*, Shakaila Forbes-Bell, is no stranger to cancer, having sadly lost her sister to the illness eight years ago. “I think cancer is something that challenges your identity instantly and can make you feel almost powerless,” she says in response to my “please explain” email. “From a psychological standpoint, changing your look or paying closer attention to your aesthetics post-diagnosis is a way for you to maintain control and reassert your identity, which can provide a sense of emotional comfort and something positive for you to focus on.”

If you want to delve into the research of colour theory, there are all kinds of studies that show certain hues influence our emotions and our behaviour. Green for example, elicits feelings of peacefulness and calm, while our brains associate bright yellow with sunlight, a mental trick that stimulates the release of mood-boosting serotonin in the central nervous system. It doesn't even have to be clothing. Those who work in more colourful work environments tend to be more joyful than those who toil in drab spaces (side note: almost every medical receptionist I've met in the past year confirms this theory).

What's interesting here, however, is that the women I meet during our respective cancer adventures, whether stage one or stage four, haven't been digging into these studies; the bright pink woollen coats and loud, clashing patterns they're suddenly donning all come down to instinct – or so they tell me. For decades we have viewed camouflage as the ultimate in survival wear, but for many it seems the reality is an incredibly loud Camilla print.

Trawling through breast cancer sites, I search for something concrete



to back up my wardrobe overhaul but all I find is anecdotal evidence from cancer care professionals suggesting that as patients process their diagnosis and treatment, many gravitate towards bright, positive colours. Some say it's to actively counteract the emotional heaviness of their diagnosis, others say it distracts them from their symptoms and potential outcome. Yes and sure, but for me there is so much more to it. There's a decadent (and blinding) top layer of “look at the puppet”, a tried-and-true gimmick that distracts people while I perform the magical task of disappearing right before their very eyes (and I do disappear at times). To that we can add a base fortification layer, which serves as armour against all the “So, how are you really?” questions (if I don't dress like myself, it's easier to pretend I'm playing a role rather than starring in my own life).

Yet when I search my heart, I realise it's just that I have zero fucks left to give. Although my cancer was at the earliest stage and there was never a question of me not seeing in 2026 or beyond, I now have this bone-deep understanding that life is fragile and I want to spend whatever time I have left on this planet living how I want to live and dressing exactly how I want to dress, rather than dressing to fit into the life I've carefully designed for myself. Most days I'll return to my classics, but on low days – and anyone who's gone through this knows that there will always be good days and bad days – I reach for my Big Bird outfit, steel myself and quote the famous feathered creature: “Well, I'm not really leaving. I'm just going away.”

But I'll be back tomorrow. And I'll be in navy.



Opposite Dilvin Yasa in a serotonin-boosting puff-sleeved canary yellow number.

This page, from above Rhinestone-studded sunglasses and coral lipstick top off a fresh green look; and a bright fuchsia jacket and sparkly bag combo instantly spark joy.

FACIAL RECOGNITION

British television presenter and disability advocate Nikki Lilly opens up about how jumping on an innocuous online trend led to relentless cruelty when followers used AI to “fix” her face



Nikki Lilly is a model, charity campaigner, social media personality and presenter.

To join in on an online trend, I shared a photo of myself when I was younger followed by a photo of myself now. It was completely harmless, everyone was doing it, and I remember the post starting to go quite viral very quickly. The post was getting millions of views, and I went into the comments section because I like seeing what people are saying and replying. And I was just completely bombarded.

I've been on social media for more than a decade, and hate is never something that's OK or should be normalised, even though, unfortunately, it has become normalised online. But this felt different. The hate almost felt more passive-aggressive than direct because people genuinely seemed to think they were doing something positive. They were saying things like, “You're so beautiful,” but attaching it to AI-generated versions of me where my condition had been removed. It was like people had created this entirely different version of me and decided that was the version worthy of praise. It became a trend in itself. There were thousands and thousands of comments doing the exact same thing.

People had cropped my face to only show one side, or they were using AI to completely change my appearance by removing the side of my face affected by my condition and mirroring the other side instead. And people were commenting things like, “The potential” or “Look, I fixed it.” I was honestly gobsmacked.

I remember sitting with it for more than a week before I addressed it publicly because I didn't want to give people the satisfaction of reacting immediately. Often when people leave hateful comments online, [an instant reaction] is what they want. But at the same time, I also felt like I couldn't not address it because it had become such an epidemic in itself.

As someone with a facial difference, appearance and identity are incredibly complicated things. I was born with both sides of my face looking the same, but when my condition became active at six years old, my appearance changed drastically. [Lilly has arteriovenous malformation, known as AVM,

a congenital condition in which blood vessels form incorrectly causing facial swelling, seizures and chronic pain.] So all of my childhood photos before then look like a completely different person. When my face changed, I felt incredibly ostracised. I felt like I lost my sense of self and identity. My whole life became being stared at, being asked what had happened, feeling like a complete outsider. It was incredibly difficult, especially at such a young age.

I had to grieve my old appearance and what my life had once been. So much of my life since then has just been about trying to believe that I'm good enough – looking the way I do now – both for society and for myself.

For years, my appearance made me a recluse. I wouldn't leave the house, I was too scared to speak to people at school, my face completely shaped how I moved through the world and how others treated me. So for people to then use AI to create this alternative version of my face – this version of me that they thought looked "better" – felt incredibly cruel. It felt like they were shoving this alternative reality in my face. Like they were saying my potential had been wasted because of something completely outside of my control. And the strangest part was that so many people genuinely believed they were helping me. They thought they were doing me a favour. They were saying, "Look, I fixed it."

I just kept thinking, "What planet are you living on where you think I'm going to be grateful for that?" It was very dehumanising. It felt like someone was taking away my identity, my autonomy and my sense of self and basically saying it wasn't good enough. It just erased half of what my identity is.

Social media has always been a very complicated thing for me because, in many ways, it was also my lifeline. When I was diagnosed at six years old, I was in and out of the hospital constantly and barely at school. I had to stop doing so many of the things

"It frightens me how quickly people stop seeing the human behind the screen"

I loved because I was too unwell, and I became scared of interacting with people because of my appearance and the comments or stares I would get in public.

Social media became my safe haven. It gave me a connection to the outside world when I felt completely isolated. It allowed me to escape into other people's lives for 20 minutes and forget about being this very sick child. And when social media first started, it really did feel like a place where you could find community if you didn't have it in real life. But now it's easier than ever for people to anonymously comment abuse or harassment and face absolutely no consequences for it. People have become very brave online in ways they never would be in person.



Lilly addressed the hateful comments and AI images on her TikTok.

I know for a fact that most people who comment these things online would never say them to my face in real life. What frightens me most is how quickly people stop seeing the human being behind the screen.

When you use AI to alter somebody's appearance, you are erasing part of their identity. Whether we like it or not, our appearance forms part of who we are, our story, our experiences. And when someone decides that your real face isn't good enough and replaces it with something they deem more acceptable, that is incredibly damaging.

People don't put themselves in other people's shoes enough anymore. If thousands of people are all telling you in one singular moment that all the work you've done to accept yourself means nothing, that has an impact. It takes away from years of self-work and rebuilding confidence.

After this happened, I had to completely step away from social media for a while because I couldn't even interact with the positive comments without seeing all the AI edits and abuse mixed in. I'm lucky that I have a very strong support system around me. I've learnt that it's incredibly important to have a life and relationships outside of social media. If your whole world becomes online, then moments like that can completely consume you.

But I also think reclaiming your identity means refusing to let those people win. For me, that means continuing to speak about these issues, whether that's online, at the United Nations, while working with charities or simply existing visibly as I am.

The best way you can revolt against people like that is by showing them you are still living your life to the fullest – regardless. I'm not going to disappear because strangers on the internet decided my face wasn't good enough for them.



Balenciaga jacket;
Bvlgari necklace.



ALL ABOUT ANNE

PHOTOGRAPHY
INEZ & VINOODH

STYLING
BEAT BOLLIGER

WORDS
LEAH CHERNIKOFF

With five films out in 2026 alone, and a baby on the way, Anne Hathaway opens up about ambition, falling in public and finding her way forward

Anne Hathaway has given me a reading assignment. It's a letter the football player Gabriel Jesus, who plays for Arsenal, published in December in *The Players' Tribune* about his recovery from a devastating ACL injury that sidelined him for most of the year. Jesus writes about how fatherhood and being in the moment with his young children helped him get through the brutally long rehabilitation process and how he has come out on the other side feeling stronger and more grateful than he ever could have imagined. Hathaway and her family are big Arsenal fans. (She played football growing up.) The letter was passed around in their group chat, and she wants me to read it before we speak. There's something about the notion of being able to embrace all of life's thorniness and letting it inform, or even enhance, what you do that has deeply resonated with her.

"It's the idea of there being opportunity inside of every moment, even the ones that are challenging, that seem like a crisis," Hathaway tells me when we meet the next day. "I've been on this journey as an actress for the majority of my life now, and I always think about it as two parts, and the first part made no room for life." The first part, I gather, refers to her blinkers-on, rocket-ship ascent through Hollywood, becoming one of its most versatile actors, and navigating life as an extremely famous person

at an extremely young age. The second part involves parenthood, sobriety, a widening of the aperture to let more life in and be present for it. Now, she says, she has “entered a different place” and is “seeking harmony between the two”.

Hathaway is also talking about work-life balance, a concept that women actors were asked about for decades and their male counterparts never were. It's an idea that may have reached its apex (or nadir, depending on how you look at it) in 2013, when Sheryl Sandberg told every woman to lean in, that they could “have it all”, which mostly meant having a family and a full-throttle career and no time to feel adequate at any of it. For a while, everyone seemed to agree this was a good thing. It's a very millennial notion for a very millennial (maybe even the most millennial?) movie star to be contemplating, having just reprised her most millennial role, as plucky Andy Sachs, in *The Devil Wears Prada 2*.

Hathaway and I are ensconced in the back corner of a restaurant at New York's Mark Hotel. Earlier, she had glided into the restaurant in a black top, pants and sunglasses, her long, glossy hair down, looking – to me at least – unmistakably like the megastar she is. But as she sits across from me with her back to the rest of the room, no-one seems to notice until we get up to leave. Up close, her face is somehow even more exquisite. The wide-set, expressive eyes and full lips that telegraph so boldly on screen seem almost delicate at this distance.

She has made about 50 movies, some of them giant and blockbustery, some of them critically revered, and some of them – as she herself put it recently – “weird” or that “no-one saw”, like 2016's *Colossal*. One, 2012's *Les Misérables*, earned her an Oscar for Best Supporting Actress for her performance as Fantine.

Hathaway is now 43. She and her husband, producer Adam Shulman, have been married for 14 years and have two sons, aged six and 10. On June 20, she broke Instagram with a pregnancy announcement.

“Before, there was this focus that was really uncompromising and uninterrupted,” she says. “And I just can't tell you anymore what life is like without kids, but kids interrupt

you all the time.” Balance, she explains, is too fragile a concept. “My friends and I talk about it a lot, and we actually feel very defeated by the concept of balance. If the weight shifts in one direction, you then have to bounce it up on the other side, and we find that it winds us up as opposed to making us steady.” Harmony, Hathaway theorises, is more forgiving. “We're like, ‘We seek to harmonise our life.’”

It's been 20 years since she starred in the original *The Devil Wears Prada* as a “serious journalist” who takes a job at the glossy magazine *Runway*, despite her disdain for something so frivolous as fashion. The movie made her the patron saint of earnest millennial ambition, and Hathaway has returned to Andy Sachs at a time when both she and the culture have outgrown the fantasy of having it all.

The world of magazines that serves as a backdrop for the first *The Devil Wears Prada* is slick and glamorous. Editor-in-chief Miranda Priestly (played by Meryl Streep) has multiple assistants, and all of them are somehow dripping in Chanel and, naturally, Prada. This sequel is set in the current media landscape – one that I know from lived experience is starkly different from what it was in 2006. Andy Sachs has returned to *Runway* as the magazine's features editor (the role that usually oversees cover stories like this one).

“We needed police barriers and crowd control. Buses of fans turned up, paparazzi swarmed and, in one case, kept jumping in front of the camera ... Annie kept her cool but I was unnerved”

– Meryl Streep on the filming of *The Devil Wears Prada 2*

Filming was a spectacle. “Even though we were aware of the impact of the first film two decades ago, I think none of us were prepared for the ambush of both goodwill and avid attention that engulfed us,” says Streep. “We needed police barriers and crowd control. Buses of fans turned up, paparazzi swarmed and, in one case, kept jumping in front of the camera and the shot and got in a kerfuffle with crew. Annie kept her cool but I was unnerved.”

During one scene, Hathaway took a spill down some steps after a heel snapped. “I was aware that I was falling, I was aware that I was being photographed, and I was also aware that, like, so many people on the crew, their hearts had just jumped up into their throat, so I needed to get up quickly to make sure they knew I was OK,” she recalls. She jumped up immediately, with her arms outstretched like a gymnast finishing a routine, to let everyone know she was alright.





Hermès waistcoat;
Bvlgari bracelet

But privately she told director David Frankel, "Oh no. I'm news."

Hathaway has been that kind of famous – where a stumble, literal or not, makes headlines – for most of her life. She tells me about having a conversation with an actor she reveres who told her, "We've watched you grow up." Hathaway says, "I'd never thought about it like that. It's funny to have met people when you were a teenager and grown in plain sight."

Hathaway has come to lunch hungry. "Are you going to eat? Because I have to eat," she tells me. She has just come from a double workout of strength training and Pilates in preparation for Ron Howard's military epic *Alone at Dawn*. This followed almost two years of intensive dance training for *Mother Mary*, a David Lowery-directed A24 psychological thriller that came out in May, in which she plays a broken-down pop star opposite Michaela Coel as her erstwhile and resentful designer slash image maker.

Hathaway took dance classes when she was a kid, but it didn't come as naturally to her as acting or even singing. "I couldn't quite figure out why there was no advancement," she says. "At a certain point, the dancers jump, right? And I was going all the time, and I couldn't jump – in both senses of the word."

Even at that young age, Hathaway recalls assessing and recalibrating her future with a grown-up matter-of-factness. "I just remember having that conversation with myself and being like, 'OK, well, I don't think you'll ever be a dancer, and your singing's fine but I don't know that you're ever going to be a star vocalist.' So, I ruled out 'pop star' pretty early, but I found that acting kept opening to me." She adds, "I wasn't concerned that I couldn't keep up with Beyoncé, because she is Beyoncé." But then, for *Mother Mary*, Hathaway had to become Beyoncé – or someone like her. "It was really, really humbling to have to deal with the limitations that my body had always had, that I'd accepted as part of my identity, but now they were no longer acceptable."

So she pushed herself. "Maybe other people would have been able to do it in a shorter amount of time or not have to train as hard, but I knew that it would hurt so much more if I hadn't



Versace jacket and skirt; Wolford tights; Sermoneta gloves; Tom Ford shoes and bracelets.

just left it all on the floor. So at the end of it, I couldn't say, 'Well, yeah, I wish I'd done this better. I wish I'd done that better' ... I know I literally couldn't have worked harder." In the run-up to a key sequence in which her character dances, somewhat possessed, without music, Hathaway was dancing eight hours a day.

Mother Mary writer-director Lowery describes her as having "an attention to detail that is humbling. Sometimes I wouldn't see it until I was in the edit, looking at micro adjustments in tone and expression that were so specific that they revealed to me things that I was unaware of in my own writing." He adds, "A well-deployed half breath, a tremor in her lip or a minute fluctuation of her [eyelid] – she knows how to calibrate the entirety of herself, physically, emotionally to the scene at hand and to convey to the camera the breadth of feeling she's exhumed from it."

Frankel, who directed Hathaway in both *Prada* films, notes that she "really carried the heavy, heavy load".

"People graduate from high school and they send me their graduation announcements. People send me their wedding invitations. It's so very sweet"

"She's in every scene of this movie," he says, "so she really had to show up day after day, and she was tireless and uncomplaining and enthusiastic."

Her work ethic is uncompromising. Between *Mother Mary* and *Alone at Dawn*, she played Penelope in Christopher Nolan's *The Odyssey*, a set Matt Damon, who plays her husband, Odysseus, described as "harder than any other movie" he's ever done. Next up is the sci-fi flick *The End of Oak Street*, in which she fends off the dinosaurs attacking her neighbourhood; and later this year, she'll star with Dakota Johnson in the dark, twisted thriller *Verity*, as a bestselling author who is unable to write after an accident. *Princess Diaries 3* is also in the works.

Hers is an approach to work that kids today might call a "grindset" – a kind of macabre, fanatical hustle – but

considering Hathaway's age and the culture she grew up in, the earnestly optimistic ambition of the girlboss seems more apt. Hathaway and I are the same age, and the water we swam in encouraged us to climb the ladder, take a seat at the table, and smile the whole way through.

"I just knew from a young age that although I'm really lucky in so many ways and grew up with certain privileges, there wasn't, like, this big life that was just going to be handed to me," Hathaway says. "I've always just felt defined by my work ethic, because my skill set is what it is and I have to work with what I have, but how hard I can work is something that I can control. I never want to pull up short and feel like I could have worked harder. If I know I'm working hard, I can live with who I am."

In many ways, Hathaway is a perfect millennial avatar. Her mother was an actor who performed in regional theatre productions, and she knew early on that she wanted to follow in her footsteps. She grew up the middle child and only girl of three children in Millburn, New Jersey, close enough to New York that she could take the train to the city to go to auditions for commercials. "I would go to school and then I would get out at 2:22 and sprint to the train station," she recalls. Hathaway began doing that her freshman year in high school, while she was also performing with her town's local theatre, Paper

Mill Playhouse. At 16, she landed a role on a family TV drama, *Get Real*, and moved to Los Angeles. The next year, she booked the role of Princess Mia Thermopolis in *The Princess Diaries*, the other duckling-to-swan role that, along with Andy Sachs, is

a canonic cultural touchstone for a generation.

"I feel like I was, like, everybody's babysitter," Hathaway says. "And I was a child when I made *The Princess Diaries*. I was still a 22-year-old mess of a human when I made *The Devil Wears Prada*. And so we've grown up together, and I'm so happy for them and how their lives are unfolding. Like, [there's] this crazy thing where people graduate from high school and they send me their graduation announcements. People send me their wedding invitations. It's so very sweet. And I feel bad because I can never do anything with them; I'm not Taylor Swift-level organised."

A recent headline on Bloomberg declared that "burnout feminism" is replacing the "girlboss, lean-in era". There has been a collective reappraisal of our definition of and relationship to ambition. Now we're in the part where we realise the system was always rigged and maybe the kind of hustle that was so extolled was always a bit toxic.

And so Hathaway talks a lot about gratitude: for her children, for her work and for the Petrossian-caviar-egg concoction that arrives at our table,

even though it was never ordered. (When we reconnect briefly at a fashion show several weeks later, she tells me she's still thinking about that egg.)

Hathaway does mention her "short fuse" several times throughout our conversation, though, and the work she's had to do to extend it. When she talks about filming *The Devil Wears Prada 2* and really embracing that top-of-the-call-sheet role, she tells me, "You can't have a good time at a party if the hostess is stressed or she's letting her stress show." She continues, "I just decided that it wasn't fair for me to move through my life as a stressed person. I don't want my kids to be around it, I don't want my friends to be around it, I don't want strangers to be around it, I don't want people I work with to be around it. So I've done a lot of work to figure out how to metabolise differently, so I don't feel overwhelmed by all that's coming at me and that I'm participating in, but [instead] actually feel really excited by it."

Hathaway's eyes are intensely fixed as she tells me this. It's clear this is important to her, though from this brief close-up perspective I never got the impression that Hathaway ever behaved in a way that was perceptibly unsettling for anyone.

"Very often, conversations about ageing presume that the first part of life is the happiest and the most fulfilling, and I don't necessarily think that's true"

I have to do a little digging to find a clip from a 2012 press junket for *Les Misérables*, where an entertainment reporter named Kjersti Flaa asks Hathaway to sing her responses, and Hathaway is not really having it. She politely, if curtly, refuses, and when Flaa follows up with another question, Hathaway is dismissive. When the clip resurfaced, the outrage machine sprang into action. Hathaway sent Flaa an apology, which Flaa posted appreciatively about in a video tagged #cringe and #annehathaway.

"Cringe" is that crime for which millennials have been much maligned, for the great offence of ... parting our hair to the side? Tucking our shirts into skinny jeans? Being earnest? Gen Z has come of age in an era of middle-parted hair and a world on fire. It's understandable that one generation's earnestness is met with another's scepticism, but in that regard too, Hathaway seems to have been punished for it in an outsize way. "I'm a human being," she says, "but I think it's important ... there has been a change." She credits part of this change to her decision to stop drinking several years ago. ("It all just works better for me without it.") But there's also a change that comes with age. "I think that, very often, conversations about ageing presume that the first part of life is the happiest

and the most fulfilling, and I don't necessarily think that's true," says Hathaway. "I wasn't expecting to find another gear at 40."

I point out that, at 43, we are approaching the "ageing cliff" – an accelerated burst of ageing that occurs at 44, according to a 2024 study out of Stanford Medicine. Hathaway knows about it from reading Miranda July's *All Fours*. But does she think about it?

If Hathaway's friend group is focused on "harmony", mine is focused, at least some of the time, on our falling faces, and Hathaway's skin is as held up as a North Star. I try, for the group chat, to figure out what's going on there. She credits not drinking and Shiseido products (she's an ambassador); beyond that, she doesn't want to "discuss medical information".

Hathaway does offer this anecdote, however. "Some days you look in the mirror and you're just like, 'Not bad.'"

And some days you look in the mirror and you're like, 'What?' And I was having a 'What?' day [while on a family holiday]. And you know how you have your aspirational swimsuit that you keep around, just in case you have a good day? And then you

have your swimsuit that's got you no matter what? I accidentally packed the aspirational swimsuit, which I then had to wear on a 'What?' day. So, I'm ready to have this great day with my family, and I am going to be in front of strangers and people have phones ... But my family is waiting for me ... And then I looked again and I said [to myself], 'You are 43.' And looking at a 43-year-old body, I was like, 'Nice.' When I was expecting to see something I am not, I felt insecure. But when I looked at what it actually is, I was OK with it."

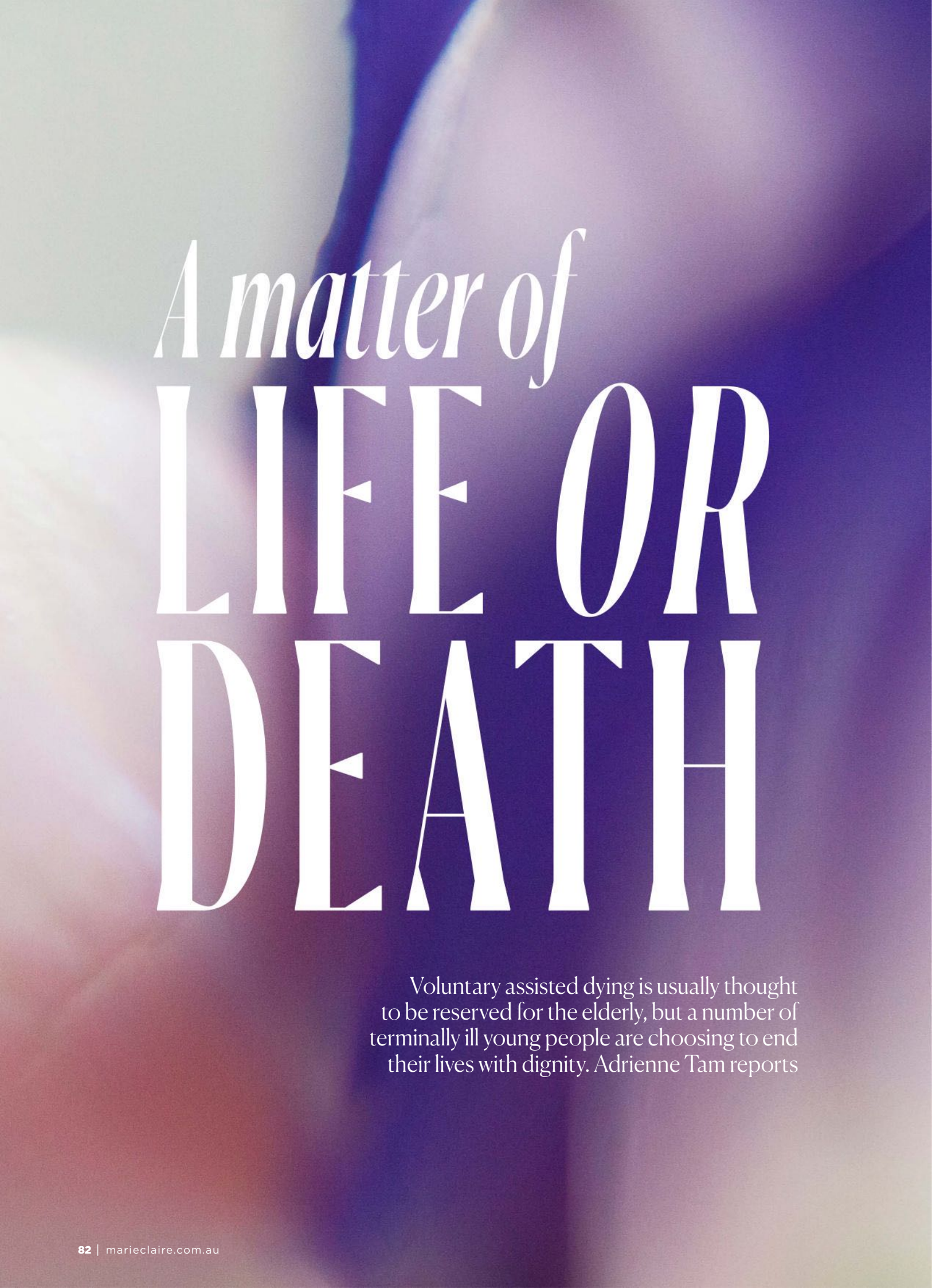
And, really, there isn't much other choice than to be OK with it all, even as it gets harder. Because it inevitably does as you get older, but that can be clarifying too. "I think you realise that worry should be reserved for the really big stuff."

The End of Oak Street is in cinemas now, and Verity is in cinemas from October 1.



Saint Laurent by
Anthony Vaccarello
jacket; Bvlgari
earrings.

Photographer
Inez & Vinoodh/
Trunk Archive.
Stylist Beat Bolliger.
Hair Orlando Pita
for Orlo Salon.
Makeup Fulvia
Farolfi for Chanel.
Manicure Gina
Eppolito for
Londontown.
Production VLM
Productions.



A matter of LIFE OR DEATH

Voluntary assisted dying is usually thought to be reserved for the elderly, but a number of terminally ill young people are choosing to end their lives with dignity. Adrienne Tam reports

“They are grateful to ... have some agency and control over the process of dying”

– Dr Clare Fellingham, WA director of VADANZ

On the days that Dr Clare Fellingham assists a person with dying, she wakes up early and tries to have a good breakfast, although she's never really hungry. She looks carefully through her wardrobe for the most appropriate attire: scrubs are too clinical, black is too maudlin, yellow is too happy. For older patients, who may have a more traditional concept of what their voluntary assisted dying (VAD) doctor should look like, she leans towards corporate clothing. For a young person, or someone more free-spirited or fun-loving, she will likely wear colour. Next, she puts on a specific set of earrings with little trees on them. They are symbolic of the circle of life: birth, growth, death and rebirth. They also represent strength and endurance.

Then Fellingham travels to the patient's location, normally a house, sometimes a hospital. She is never early and never late. She arrives ahead of time and sits in her car outside, waiting until it's the exact agreed moment. Time is a precious commodity, even when death is a choice. Perhaps especially then. When she enters, Fellingham greets whoever is there, usually close family and friends. She has one final private conversation with her patient about what is going to happen.

As with a birth plan, there is a profound relationship and strong level of trust between recipient and doctor. Fellingham, who is the Western Australia director

of the peak body Voluntary Assisted Dying Australia and New Zealand (VADANZ), does not use euphemisms – she talks about death in clear terms. She asks the patient if they are certain about why she is there, what is going to happen, and the finality and irreversibility of the process. This is in part to fulfill some of the core eligibility criteria for VAD – each patient must have decision-making capacity and be acting of their own free will, without pressure or coercion – but it's also about ensuring she can look them in the eyes, hold their hand and be satisfied within herself that this is what they've chosen.

“What is almost universal is that people are incredibly relieved the day has finally come,” says Fellingham. “Typically they are happy, I would say even joyous and elated, because they know that the relief of their suffering is imminent. They are grateful to be offered the opportunity to have some agency and control over the process of dying.”

When the patient is ready, they swallow a liquid medication. If they aren't able to ingest the medication on their own, or if they would prefer not to, Fellingham administers it directly via an intravenous line or feeding tube (in Victoria and South Australia, self-administration is the default legal policy). It doesn't take long for the person to lose consciousness, with a peaceful death following shortly after.

“The key thing to remember is that voluntary assisted dying is only available to people who are in the late stages of a life-limiting illness,” Fellingham says. One of VAD's eligibility criteria is that the recipient must be terminally ill, with death expected to occur within six to 12 months. They must also be suffering intolerably. “These are not people who are looking at a choice between living and dying; they're people who are making a decision between dying and *dying*.”

Voluntary assisted dying is legal in all Australian states except for the Northern Territory, although the NT government is currently drafting legislation. Since laws were introduced, first in Victoria in 2019, about 14,000 people in Australia have applied for assisted dying and there have been more than 7000 deaths using a VAD substance. Eligible applicants must be 18 years or older. The typical applicant is in their seventies, has terminal cancer and is receiving palliative care, with slightly more men than women choosing VAD. National charity Go Gentle Australia's 2026 *State of VAD* report reveals assisted dying increased by approximately 40 per cent nationwide in 2024-25, with the largest growth in Tasmania, followed by WA, South Australia and Queensland. VAD now accounts for about two per cent of all deaths nationally, including about five per cent of cancer deaths and one in three motor neurone disease deaths.

While the vast majority of applicants are 65 and older, about one per cent of applicants are under 40. This year saw a spate of news reports about young people choosing

“No-one should be forced to endure unbearable suffering when there is no hope of recovery”

– Annie Holland

assisted dying. Annaliese Holland inadvertently became an advocate for VAD when the 26-year-old South Australian's story was first reported on Triple J's Hack program in March. Annie (as she prefers to be called) has been living with autoimmune autonomic ganglionopathy since she was 18. It's a condition that causes the immune system to attack the autonomic nervous system, leaving her in agony with myriad health complications. While ticking items off her bucket list – she calls it her Fuck It List – Annie is also dedicating her remaining time to raising awareness of what end-of-life care looks like for young people. Annie's chosen day of death remains private. In June, she told her 50,000 Instagram followers (@annaliese_holland), “The truth is, I don't want to die. I want to live. But I don't want to suffer like this. That's why voluntary assisted dying matters so deeply to me. No-one should be forced to endure unbearable suffering when there is no hope of recovery.”

For the families of these young people, it is understandably difficult to process their decision. Annie described how when she told her dad, “I've had enough, I can't do this,” he initially thought she was giving up. He ultimately backed her decision to access VAD.

In the case of 25-year-old Spanish woman Noelia Castillo, getting her family on board was challenging until the end. According to *The Guardian*, Noelia had struggled with psychiatric illness as a teenager, and in late 2022 attempted suicide after being sexually assaulted. She became a paraplegic confined to a wheelchair and in constant pain. She secured permission to use Spain's euthanasia law to end her life, but her father opposed the decision. With the support of an ultra-conservative advocacy group, he argued that her mental state meant she could not consent to ending her life. For two years, Noelia fought her father in court until the European Court of Human Rights eventually

rejected her father's claims and she was granted VAD in March this year.

In contrast, support from WA resident Robbi Flynn's family was unwavering. Robbi was 33 when she chose voluntary assisted dying after suffering from terminal cancer, and she died in late October 2022. Fellingham, who was Robbi's VAD doctor, said she is one of her most memorable patients. “At that stage, she was the youngest person I'd cared for, and it was hugely confronting,” Fellingham says. She still catches up with Robbi's mum, Gina Sanderson, regularly.

“Robbi was neurodiverse, independent, strong and stubborn,” Gina says of her daughter. “She had a real passion for dogs. She was a dog trainer, and did a lot of advocacy work.” As special as Robbi was, Gina is determined to keep her memory realistic too. “Robbi said to me, ‘Don't forget after I die that I can't have this halo around me like I'm this amazing, perfect, wonderful human being, because I was also a pain in the arse,’” she adds, laughing.

Even though Robbi ultimately died the way she wanted – at home, with loved ones by her side – the road to get there was rocky. When Robbi enquired about VAD at the hospital she was in, she was told she needed to be moved to a different hospital to access it and that no assessments of Robbi's eligibility could be conducted on site. Robbi and Gina had not realised that the faith-based hospital, which was Robbi's local hospital with her trusted oncology team, might make things difficult in accessing assisted dying. Ultimately, she had to be transferred out of the hospital to a medical clinic twice to be assessed for VAD, and then a final time to go to her father's home to die. Since part of the criteria for VAD is to be in the very late stages of illness, those transfers were very complex and extremely uncomfortable for Robbi, given how sick she was, her neurodivergency, the equipment she was attached to, and the considerable weight she'd gained with the adenocarcinoma. She vomited several times and had severe trauma from the stress.

Circumstances remained challenging right up to her “death day”, with the hospital not allowing Robbi to leave with her intravenous access port. The psychological and physical strain of removing the port and getting a new

one implanted would have been terrible for her, so Gina did what many mothers would do: she stole the port. “Robbi was like, ‘What do we do?’ and I’m like, ‘I’m gonna organise our own ambulance, and, pardon the French, but we’re fucking off outta here, and we’re taking the port with us.’ She was like, ‘Yes! Go Mum!’”

Telehealth consultation would have helped Robbi tremendously, but Australia is the only country that criminalises the use of telehealth for the provision of legally available VAD services. This makes access to VAD for those living in remote, rural and regional areas incredibly hard, as they’re required to travel long distances, while exceptionally ill, to meet doctors in person. The Australian Medical Association, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, and other advocacy groups are actively lobbying for amendments to the criminal code. While the Labor Party supports making telehealth VAD available, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese opposed his party’s policy in July.

Another obstruction is gag clauses, which prohibit doctors from initiating discussion about VAD. “South Australia is currently the only state that still has this gag clause, which is very problematic,” says Dr Chloe Furst, the SA director of VADANZ. Victoria, which also had a gag order, only recently passed amendments to its legislation, which comes into effect later this year. “It means we cannot bring up voluntary assisted dying with our patients unless they raise it with us first,” adds Furst. “This is problematic because patients may not know that it is a legally valid option, or they might know that it’s legal and valid, but they might not know that they’re eligible. It’s further stigmatising VAD because it becomes the only part of healthcare that we can’t talk about in an open way.”

There’s also a lack of VAD doctors, in part due to the intensive amount of recording and monitoring that accompanies assisted dying to ensure every death is within the confines of the law. Go Gentle CEO Linda Swan says about half of those who undergo training do not go on to become VAD practitioners. “Voluntary assisted dying work is not easy,” Swan says. “Health practitioners genuinely care about these people. Sometimes they’ve been someone

they have cared for their whole life, and they’re following them through to the end. That takes an emotional toll. The vast majority of volunteer assisted dying is actually being delivered by a very small cohort of doctors who have the time and the energy and the capacity to do this on a regular basis ... The other thing that is undermining our workforce and our services is a pervasive stigma, even though VAD is probably one of the most socially accepted health reforms we’ve ever had. Statistics show that between 80 and 85 per cent of Australians support assisted dying.”

Furst, who is Annie Holland’s VAD doctor, says death is fundamentally the great equaliser. “Someone’s suffering is no more or less based on their age or their life experiences, and I would attest to that,” she declares. “I’ve supported people who have had no family and people with family. I’ve supported CEOs and I’ve supported people who are homeless. And, again, I would say that it is death that is the equaliser. There are differences that are important to every different individual. [But ultimately] people want that sense of connection at the end.”

On the last day of her life, Robbi had a few bites of her favourite tuna patties cooked by her brother, Jay. She reminded her mum that they hadn’t watched the animated movie *Encanto*, so they piled on the couch – Robbi; her friend, Cee; Gina; Jay; Robbi’s dad; and Gina’s husband, Andrew – to watch. About halfway through, she asked for the film to be paused and said, “Mum, can you ring the VAD people and ask them if they’ll come an hour later?” Thinking maybe she’d changed her mind, Gina said, “Are you OK? Are you starting to feel nervous about it all?” But Robbi replied, “No, I just don’t want to miss the end of the movie.”

Gina laughs now, remembering. “So that was her day. She felt relieved. She was jubilant. It was empowering for her to be offered the how and the when. She did her goodbyes, and then she was lying there and she looked around. It’s always a moment that makes me feel amazingly grateful and sad. She got the medication ... and she said, ‘Goodnight, Grammy’ – that’s me – ‘Goodnight, Da. Goodnight, Jay. Goodnight, Cee. Goodnight, Andrew.’ And then she died,” Gina’s voice shakes with emotion. “She was peaceful and ready, and for that I’ll be forever grateful. I got to be a part of that journey. I brought her into the world and I got to be part of the journey to see her out of the world. That’s a privilege.”

“80 to 85 per cent of Australians support assisted dying”

– Linda Swan, Go Gentle CEO

*practical
magic*



During the witch trials, tens of thousands of women were executed for behaving in ways that men couldn't understand. Lucianne Tonti makes the case for reclaiming witchcraft as an antidote to the patriarchy

in a large grey bowl beside my bed, I keep a collection of crystals: amethyst for dreams, rose quartz for love, clear quartz for manifestation and tourmaline to ward off negativity. I'll spend this winter-solstice in a class called Body Medicine, moving and breathing in unison with other women. Once a year, before my birthday, my numerologist, Jacqueline, tells me how the movement of the planets will impact my life in the year ahead.

To varying degrees, this interest in the occult and ritual is something I share with most of my friends. And we're certainly not alone. In the past several years, TikTok's WitchTok and its many diviners and spell-casters have amassed tens of billions of views. According to a recent Pew report, 30 per cent of Americans regularly engage with some esoteric practice including astrology, tarot cards and fortune telling. Experts say it's understandable that we're turning to magic and looking for answers in mysterious places. Times are uncertain, years of global political, economic and climate instability have

led to the erosion of trust in institutions, and research suggests that people reach for these practices seeking guidance, reassurance and the opportunity for self-reflection.

At the end of 2024, I drove from New York to Salem, Massachusetts, in search of some understanding of our collective desire for the mystical. I was convinced that ground-zero of the most famous witch trials in history would unearth something about the secrets of the universe and the ancient forces that have largely disappeared from modern life. It was the first stop on a journey that revealed a harsher truth about the way we live and the male-dominated, masculine-coded world we've become accustomed to existing in.

In one way, the experts were right: we are turning to the occult because of uncertain times. But what their explanation fails to account for is that our instinct to reach for witchcraft runs deeper and is more primal than mental health or light amusement. It goes to the core of how and why our political and economic systems are showing quite alarming cracks – from the frequency of once-in-a-generation extreme weather events to the wars sending financial markets into crisis. Both are products of a patriarchal order that sees the environment as a resource to exploit and other countries as territories to dominate. That patriarchal order was established and entrenched centuries ago as the world's industrialised and colonial powers expanded. What most of us don't realise is that the Industrial Revolution began at the end of the witch-hunts. Our current economic system was established on the back of a 300-year-long campaign that saw women stripped of their economic and social power. Ever since, we've lived in a world where feminine softness, beauty, creativity and intuition is undervalued. We're reaching for the occult because, somewhere in our bones, we know it represents a time when something else prevailed, when the world still felt enchanted.

The European witch-hunts spanned the 15th to 18th centuries and traversed countries and continents: Germany, Italy, France, Denmark-Norway, Scotland, England

and finally across the seas to the New English colonies. Records suggest as many as 100,000 people were tried for witchcraft, 80 per cent of them women. Out of fear of being maligned as a witch, people were forced to abandon their beliefs in supernatural forces, including that the natural world was animate and sacred and that human beings had an obligation to protect and nurture it.

When we take a wide lens, the list of things historical witches got in trouble for reads like a weekend away: friendship, dancing, wine (they called it sack), swimming, stargazing, forest bathing and weather watching. But there were bigger things, professions and social structures that were targeted, things that have a hidden, pervasive impact on modern life.

Take medical misogyny. Modern medicine's poor treatment of women – from under-researched chronic pain conditions to studies that reveal it takes longer for doctors to correctly diagnose women – has roots in the persecution of female healers by the witch-hunters who maligned their knowledge of herbs and the body as superstitious sorcery. They were aided by the church and academics who legislated to exclude women from universities and the training required to work as doctors. The effect of this was to remove women and their understanding of the body from the medical profession at a pivotal moment in history, when the principles that shaped modern medicine were being established alongside scientific advancements and discoveries that would accelerate across the next 200 years. This exclusion has manifested in two big ways. Firstly, for the entirety of modern medicine, women's healthcare has been based on what we know about men's bodies – women were largely excluded from medical trials until the 1990s. Secondly, in the hierarchy that places doctors above nurses and cures above care, modern medicine and its approach to health and wellness might look very different had the witch-hunters never targeted female healers who had the holistic knowledge to treat disease and the skills to administer care.

In her book, *All in Her Head: The Truth and Lies Early Medicine Taught*

Medical misogyny has roots in the persecution of female healers by the witch-hunters, who maligned their knowledge of herbs and the body as superstitious sorcery

Us About Women's Bodies and Why it Matters Today, Dr Elizabeth Comen

– a breast cancer specialist at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in Manhattan – asks: “What would medicine look like if all the female energy that was squeezed out and sidelined ... was allowed back in?”

The echoes of the witch-hunts reverberate through other fields and professions, too. Witch-hunters targeted spinsters, women who spun yarn to make money, devaluing their work and denigrating their economic independence as vulgar and dishonest. Now, centuries later, this work is still painfully undervalued; only 2 per cent of garment workers make a living wage.

Women who knew how to live off the land, who gardened and grew the food and fibre that fed and clothed their families, were also targeted. Their connection to the land was severed so food could be farmed for profit instead of subsistence. We are still living inside the problematic industrial food system that was born in its wake – a system that sees one in 11 people go hungry while, according to the United Nations, a third of the world's food is not being eaten. It's a system that serves up shiny packets of ultra-processed food that are low in nutrients but high in calories, that are addictive and bad for our health but somehow cheaper and more readily available than locally grown fresh fruit and vegetables.

In many ways, the final frontier for the witch-hunters was female friendship. Women's work was performed in groups, so they spent



Female friendships and gatherings were framed as Witches' Sabbats where the devil was present

days and hours talking and theorising, building knowledge about psychology, sociology, family life, heartache and love. Witch-hunters saw this intimacy as a threat to their authority and launched campaigns to undermine women's sociability. Female gatherings were framed as Witches' Sabbats where the devil was present and diabolical acts were performed. It became dangerous to have friends and, in the years that followed, women's lives went from intermingled and communal in the village to the isolation of the family home in the suburbs.

After Salem, I travelled to Scotland and England and the far north of Norway, visiting towns where witches were discovered, persecuted and burnt at the stake or hanged. What I learnt about enchantment had very little to do with the crystals by my bed or the ancient art of divination. Each place was geographically awesome, the landscapes wild and fiercely, eerily beautiful. What I learnt was that the witch-hunters were not just determined to destroy feminine power,

they were determined to dominate and destroy nature's power, too. To do this, they launched a steady campaign to demystify and disenchant the world, and across the West the belief in nature as sacred and magical that runs through our folklore and fairytales was abandoned. They left us believing that if something cannot be measured it does not exist, and that we were to stop wondering at the silence in the depths of a forest, the beauty of the ocean at sunrise or fireflies glowing white against the dark night sky.

Ultimately, what I learnt of enchantment, and why we all seem to be reaching for it now, is that it might just be the through line, the thing that brings us back to what matters: taking care of each other, taking care of the earth.



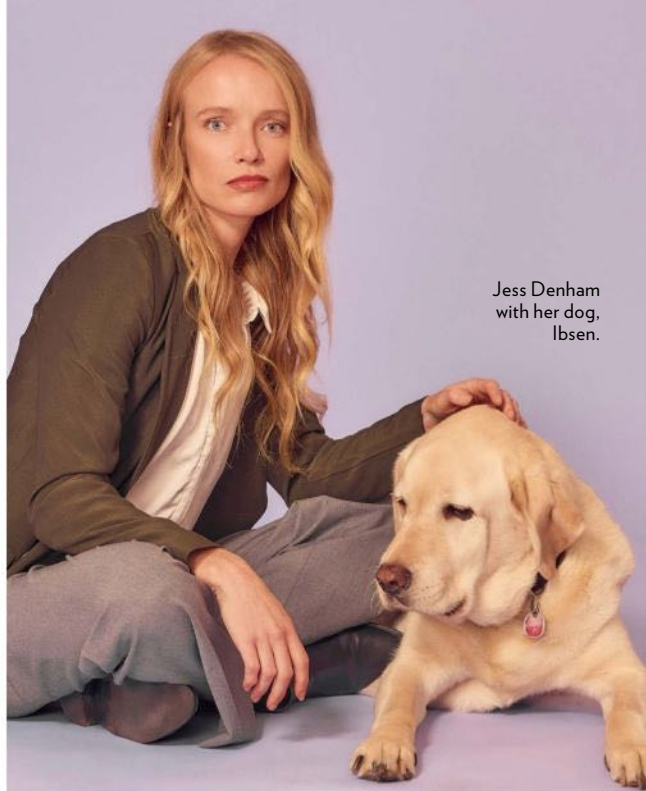
Good Witch: In Search of our Lost Feminine Power
by *Lucianne Tonti*
(Simon & Schuster, \$36.99) is out now.





OUT *OF THE* DARKNESS

By the time Jess Denham was 24, both of her parents were in jail for sexual abuse, with her father receiving the longest jail sentence ever handed out for child sex offending. A decade later, she has overcome the unimaginable to be a ray of hope for other survivors. She tells Nina Funnell her story



Jess Denham
with her dog,
Ibsen.

Jess Denham was 17 the first time she heard the word “paedophile”. It was December 2009. The athletics champion was at the World School Games in Doha, Qatar, representing Australia in the steeplechase event, an intense race that involves clearing hurdles and jumping over water pits for two kilometres.

Not only did Jess win the race, she also smashed the existing record. But it was a victory that would soon be overshadowed by a series of dark events.

Back at their hotel rooms, Jess heard her teammates complaining about a male official who had been inappropriately touching female athletes during sports massages in the athletes’ village. “One of the girls was really upset, saying how he was a paedophile,” remembers Jess, now 34. “I started to pick up that what he was doing was really serious. At the time though, for me, that [behaviour she was describing] was just normal.”

For more than a decade, Jess’ father, William “Rob” Gilfillan, had been sexually abusing her. “I was five years old the first time he raped me,” says Jess. “At that age, I didn’t know the word for it. During the abuse I would tell myself over and over that Mum would come to protect me.”

But that help would never arrive. Instead, Jess’ mother, Karen Gilfillan, committed the ultimate betrayal: not only was she aware of the sexual abuse happening under her roof, but she also *taught* Jess ways to sexually gratify her dad, saying, “Your father has his reasons for what he does.”

That grooming, coercion and betrayal left Jess utterly defenceless.

“I still didn’t ... understand how serious it was. I didn’t grasp that it was a crime”

As the years passed, Jess remained silent, terrified that if she told anyone, she would be killed. “I was also completely isolated,” she explains. “We lived on a large, remote property inland of Byron Bay and we didn’t have mobile phone reception.” The area is dense with tropical forest and roads are prone to flooding. “When it rained, we would be cut off from the outside world. Dad also wouldn’t allow many friends. I wasn’t allowed to do normal kid things. At sporting events he would keep me away from other athletes, so kids just thought I was weird.”

Teachers, too, were soon cut off. Jess’ parents removed her from mainstream education when she was in her early teens, homeschooling her instead. Not only did that make her more socially isolated but, she says, it also meant “I didn’t receive any education on consent, body safety or anything which might have helped me.”

That’s not to say Jess believes the onus should be on children to prevent sexual abuse, but body safety and consent education would have provided her with vital information. “That would have given me options,” she explains.

Instead, Jess’ parents controlled her entire world: they were her caregivers and teachers, and her father was her athletics coach. A former athlete himself, he would stop at nothing in the pursuit of athletic perfection.

And so, by the time Jess made it to the World School Games in Doha, she had little to no understanding of what constituted sexual abuse, let alone paedophilia. “I knew by that stage that things happening at home were not OK and not normal, but I still didn’t have the language to understand how serious it was. I didn’t grasp that it was a crime,” she says now. “Then, seeing how much [the masseuse’s behaviour] was impacting the other girls really hit me as a shock.”

Still, it was difficult to associate the word with her experience. “[The girls were talking about] somebody outside the family,” she says. “I thought maybe a ‘paedophile’ was an adult external to the family who takes advantage of kids.”

The trip was a critical turning point. “The anxiety of going back home knowing what was in store was too much,” she recalls. When she got home, Jess’ mental health rapidly declined, resulting in extended hospitalisation. There, she built trust with an experienced therapist and gradually revealed what was happening at home.

In 2011, Jess walked into Lismore Police Station to report her parents. There were 14 years of crimes for her to report, and her police statement took three months to complete. In response, her father fled to Papua New Guinea.

Five years later, after her father was extradited from Papua New Guinea, Jess’ mother and father stood trial in Sydney. William Gilfillan was found guilty of 73 offences against Jess and sentenced

“I have realised that telling my story matters. It raises awareness and empowers people, and that’s an important step. But ... I’m more than just a survivor”

to 48 years in jail: the longest jail sentence ever handed out for child sex offending in Australia. Jess’ mother was convicted of 13 offences and sentenced to 16 years in jail. Neither has ever expressed remorse or regret, or offered an apology for their sadistic crimes.

With her parents in prison, a 24-year-old Jess had a lot of living to catch up on. Due to homeschooling and the impacts of trauma, there were significant holes in her education. But Jess was determined. She put herself through Year 12 at TAFE, then completed a law degree, followed by an architecture degree.

She also earned her skydiving licence and has completed more than 100 solo skydives. “Every time I jump out of a plane and have to pull the cord, it’s a reminder to me that I can save my own life,” she says.

During this time, Jess’ parents repeatedly appealed their convictions. “I was terrified they would be let off on a technicality,” Jess says. Finally, in 2022, the High Court rejected their last appeal application, meaning all appeal options were exhausted.

While Jess had been determined to share her story with the world, as a lawyer she wanted to wait until all appeals were over and the path forward was clear. Now was her chance. But before she could speak, she encountered more red tape.

Her father was now facing additional sexual offence charges against two schoolgirls he taught in the 1980s, while working as a PE teacher in Victoria. This meant Jess was legally prevented from naming her father in any media until the “schoolgirl trial” was over.

But while Jess had to obey the prohibition, her parents took the opposite approach. In 2023, while imprisoned, they spoke out in a podcast, smearing Jess and insisting they were innocent. “I was being silenced all over again,” recalls Jess. “It echoed back to the abuse.”

Finally, in December last year, Jess’ father was found guilty of five offences against the two schoolgirls, and sentenced to an additional seven and a half years in jail, to be served concurrently with his existing 48-year sentence.

With that case resolved, Jess was at last free to speak. “I’m ready to roar,” she says.

Jess is bravely waiving her anonymity in order to campaign for better mental health supports, and for sexual assault counselling notes to be kept confidential. Her own counselling notes were shared with her offenders without her consent, something that is entirely legal. Even worse, boxes of her counselling notes were later shared with the media and used without Jess’ permission in the podcast featuring her parents.

A petition, Don’t Subpoena Our Support: Keep Counselling Confidential, has gained more than 14,100 signatures, and one state, Victoria, has already committed to law reform. The move has bolstered Jess and shown her that sharing her story has real impact.

“I have realised that telling my story matters. It raises awareness and empowers people, and that’s an important step,” she says. “But I keep reminding myself that I’m more than just a survivor. My lived experience cuts across a lot: sexual violence and family violence advocacy, over a decade trapped in the court system as a victim, cycling through institutions without any fundamental support, being re-traumatised and stigmatised by the media, and facing homelessness and isolation.

“One of the reasons why I studied law was to get into policy and reform,” she continues. “I want a seat at the table where the bigger conversations are happening. I think I bring something unique: a perspective that can speak to many of the pressing issues we face as a nation.”

Jess says that even though she has been let down by many systems, she is “not interested in pointing fingers”. Instead, “I’m interested in showing that it’s possible to still believe in working this out together.”

Of course, Jess still faces a long road to healing, but she says she is “less focused on revisiting that pain and more focused on the hope, strength and sense of safety I’ve been able to reclaim. On hard days, I lean into self-care and self-compassion rather than the pressure to always be moving forward,” she explains. “So much of that pressure comes from the belief that progress must be constant and linear, which can create anxiety in itself.

“Instead, I take a moment to reflect on why I do what I do and check in with how it feels in that moment. I remind myself that progress doesn’t always happen at the pace we expect, but being true to my purpose and long-term goals is what matters most,” she adds.

“Even on the hardest days, I find motivation in knowing my voice matters and can make a difference to others, and that also encourages me to take a moment to pause.”

If you or someone you know needs help with sexual, domestic or family violence, call Full Stop Australia on 1800 385 578 or visit fullstop.org.au. You can sign the Keep Counselling Confidential petition at megaphone.org.au



WELCOME TO THE WILD WORLD OF



You may have noticed in a new type of shopfront popping up in your local shopping strip: the boutique ultrasound clinic.

Known as souvenir scanning clinics, here pregnant women can marvel at the grey matter of their wombs as many times as they wish, rather than the standard once-a-trimester check-in at their hospital's overlit, sterile medical imaging suite. It's cosy here and, if desired, they can even pay for the clinic lights to commemoratively turn neon pink or electric blue, depending on the sex of their foetus. Some of these private scanning businesses offer their clients deluxe packages with twee names, such as "Key To My Gender", "Key To My Heart" and "Key To Get To Know Me" (which involves having a 30-minute session recorded onto a DVD for safekeeping and paired with the mother-to-be's choice of background music). Others sell plush-toy keepsakes that, when squeezed, play back the heartbeat recording of the foetus in question.

It all sounds lovely, but members of the Australian Sonographers Association (ASA) are wary of such businesses. "Anyone can buy an ultrasound machine, with little restriction for non-medical purposes," a spokesperson tells *marie claire*. "Our concerns about non-medical scans include the risk for patients to be misled into thinking these 'keepsake' scans provide medical assurance or diagnostic information. These scans should not be used to guide pregnancy care."



Opposite Gold Coast-based influencer Emilee Hembrow posts her bump (top) and her "rainbow baby" (bottom); Early View's scanning clinic in Sydney.

This page Sydney-based influencer Holly Kingston and husband Jimmy Nicholson announce their pregnancy on Instagram.

In a 2025 investigation into the boom of private ultrasound clinics, *The Age* found that "reassurance" ultrasounds can inadvertently lead to stillbirths, late-term abortions and incorrect foetal diagnoses, due to potential medical complications being missed. But despite their lack of credibility, these ultrasounds are having a moment online. The ASA attributes this to "social media, influencer marketing and a broader shift towards consumer-led and wellness-oriented healthcare". Questionable, sure. But Instagrammable? No doubt.

Pregnant influencers have flocked to souvenir scanning suites in droves. They record themselves gazing at their unborn babies on large flat screens, the view bookended by reed diffusers and pink vases. "We are aware that some private ultrasound clinics are working with influencers and content creators to promote ultrasound services," an ASA spokesperson tells *marie claire*. One such Sydney-based influencer broadcast to her 110,000 followers in a collaborative post with Early View, a boutique private scanning

business based in Sydney's south, that the souvenir scanning clinic was her "favourite place to visit when pregnant", alongside the hashtag #pregnantbeauty.

On Instagram and TikTok, influencers – or "bumpfluencers", rather – have laid claim to pregnancy. In short clips, they lather their bellies with "firming" oils, recommend chic maternity bras, tag their obstetricians in their pregnancy announcements, and make reels of their fertility journeys. Online, pregnancy appears a misty-eyed affair made cute, sentimental or slapstick depending on which influencer is talking, and what they are being paid to say.

Rachelle Chee, a midwife and lecturer based at CQUniversity, whose research focuses on maternity care, social media and women's experiences of pregnancy and birth, is sceptical as to just how authentic the show-and-tell of pregnancy on social media really is. "While it is essential for success that the influencer presents themselves as 'real', what we actually see is a highly curated representation of a persona, which is designed to engage interest," she says. "For most women, [pregnancy] is the most transformative experience of their life, and many experience it for the first time with little knowledge of the truth of the experience."

BUMP - FLUENCERS

When an influencer falls pregnant, brands see her as a walking billboard for some harmless, some questionable and some outright dangerous products. Madison Griffiths investigates



Above Just four months after influencer Brooklyn Larsen shared the death of her son on social media, a baby brand asked her for their product back.

Below Melbourne's Monash IVF offered influencer Tully Smyth a sponsored brand deal in 2023.

On Instagram, pregnancy doesn't look half bad. Draped in dappled light, pregnant influencers swear by cult companies' prettily packaged firming oils and lotions as they massage them into their luminous bellies. Some popular brands admit to reaching out to influencers when they spot a pregnancy announcement in the hopes that they'll share their products. Despite limited scientific evidence that stretch marks and other dermatological markers of pregnancy can be remedied with serums and creams, some firming oils and lotions – explicitly advertised to pregnant and postpartum consumers – sell out time and time again.

Dr Linda Martin, dermatologist at Melanoma Institute Australia, is familiar with expectant mothers being wooed by the empty promises cosmetic manufacturers make online when it comes to pregnancy-related skincare concerns. "It's hard for the consumer to know who to trust," she says. "On one hand, there isn't enough regulation around whether these products actually achieve these claims and whether they're even safe. On the other hand, women are being bombarded and told that nothing is safe. We are making women feel guilty for things that are not their fault. There's a real dichotomy in the messaging, which is really anxiety provoking. Most cosmetics cost between \$1 and \$5 for the bottle;

\$1 for ingredients and everything else is in the marketing. There isn't really 'magic' that is going to prevent stretch marks. The evidence is soft at best. A lot of it is just basic moisturiser."

Maternal anxiety is, after all, a reliable cash cow. It prompts expectant mothers to comb through social media ads with momentous urgency. Amid pregnancy-related fearmongering and conflicting advice, they are greeted by the sweet grins and smooth bellies of bumpfluencers, who promise them a pastoral snapshot of what's to come. At once, the body's greatest metamorphosis is neatly flattened to fit within a vertical aspect ratio.

For many women, pregnancy is a hard-won journey. Which is why, when Melbourne's Monash IVF dipped its toe into the online treasure trove of influencer-led advertising in 2023 by offering *Big Brother* star and influencer Tully Smyth a sponsored brand deal, many felt aggrieved. The company's decision to partner with Smyth in exchange for digital content sparked widespread debate about social media's role when it comes to promoting and "gifting" reproductive technologies. As a response, the federal watchdog warned that the use of social media influencers to advertise egg freezing may breach Australia's Health Practitioner Regulation National Law.

Dr Lynn Burmeister, medical director at Melbourne's No. 1 Fertility, is no stranger to content creation. She posts reels in which she struts towards the camera in candy-pink platforms and poses in her office in front of a neon sign that reads Fertility Queen. She

acknowledges the stories told on Instagram "rarely reflect the uncertainty, grief and complexity of fertility treatment" and, as such, never partners with influencers. "Instead of feeling supported, many patients report feeling overwhelmed, constantly on alert, and more anxious about their own journey when they spend too much time scrolling fertility content," Burmeister says. The emotional toll of infertility is often shoehorned into a 60-second teaser trailer for an often expensive and regularly fraught pursuit.

In September 2025, a rapid review of Australia's \$810 million dollar IVF industry was announced, and Monash University IVF expert Dr Karin Hammarberg is hopeful that it will "lead to more scrutiny of clinic marketing and advertising practices".

Amid novelty ultrasounds and baby buys, the maternity market naturally banks on the safe arrival of an influencer's newborn. But tragically, this is not always the case. In November 2024, 29-year-old Brooklyn Larsen – a Utah-based influencer – posted a heartbreaking carousel of greyscale photographs on Instagram. In them, she captured herself in a hospital bed alongside her husband, the grieving pair cradling their stillborn baby. "Our hearts are completely shattered. Our perfect little boy didn't make it," she announced. Her son's death amassed thousands of online reactions. And Larsen's pain was compounded in March the following year, when cult baby brand Happiest Baby, which had gifted Larsen a SNOO Smart Sleeper (a popular electronic bassinet) during her pregnancy, requested their product be returned. Without a baby to put in their crib and photograph, she was a business investment gone awry.

Then again, for Emilee Hembrow, a Gold Coast-based influencer with close to a million followers, Instagram was a safe haven after experiencing



From right Brisbane-based influencer Mindful Jess uses a foetal doppler machine, and shares a bundle of aesthetic baby products on her social media.



a stillbirth at 29 weeks. Hembrow leant fervidly on her followers. To this day, a story highlight detailing the loss of her son remains fixed to her page, labelled with a single emoji: a baby angel. “I then got pregnant quite quickly after that, and that pregnancy was completely different,” she tells *marie claire*. “I hid it offline until I was seven or eight months [pregnant], so nearly the whole pregnancy. I hid my bump, took photos in advance, stocked up on content I knew I had to produce, and wore baggy clothes. I kept it offline until the very end.”

Hembrow may have been able to conceal her bump, but the social media algorithms, of which she is inevitably a part, cannot be fooled. With sophisticated analytics tools, these platforms are able to track more than likes, shares and reposts. They can easily trace a pregnant woman’s “dwell time”, the brief window she spends lingering on a particular post. Among an onslaught of unsolicited advice, week-by-week foetal development posts and “must-have” product hauls, some of the most successful pregnancy content is the kind that lends itself to fear-based engagement.

On TikTok, videos of women cradling their stillborn children amass millions of likes. While raising awareness of perinatal loss online is an honourable mission, zeroing in on pregnant women and making them the recipients of such content ought to invite explanation from the tech giants that are banking – quite literally – on their engagement.

In their attempts to avoid the same fate, parents-to-be can be tempted by dubious at-home tools such as handheld foetal heart monitors that allow them to check their unborn baby whenever they like.

In August 2025, the advertisement and sale of these monitors was banned in Australia, with the Stillbirth Centre of Research Excellence

“While it is essential for success that the influencer presents themselves as ‘real’, what we see is a highly curated representation of a persona”

– Rachelle Chee, midwife and lecturer at CQUniversity



Above Dr Lynn Burmeister, from Melbourne’s No. 1 Fertility, refuses to create content with influencers.

warning the devices “may provide false reassurance that the baby is well and lead to a life-threatening delay in seeking appropriate care from maternity health care professionals”.

But just three months later, Brisbane-based influencer Mindful Jess published a reel in collaboration with BabyNera, a global maternal tech e-commerce brand and the creator of the HeartEcho foetal doppler. In it, Jess lathered her bump with gel before trailing the instrument across it. It was “one of my favourite ways of bonding with baby girl throughout my pregnancy”, she declared as she listened closely to the static resounding of her womb.

The ban may still be in effect in Australia, but the content is easily available. As recently as June, BabyNera’s Instagram featured a pregnant American influencer alongside the caption: “There’s something so special about those quiet moments spent connecting with your babies before they’re even here.”

Among the infinite scroll of pregnancy-related anxieties, bumpfluencers appear a tried-and-true source for mothers-to-be. They swear by oils and imaging devices, film themselves stuffing hospital bags with lavish items, spruik prenatal vitamins and promote the fleecy plush-toy that carries the sound of their baby’s heartbeat. They present an image of pregnancy that has others yearning. “The key to feeling 87.87 per cent less like a blob when preggaz: TAN THURSDAYS,” influencer Holly Kingston once wrote on Instagram in an advertisement for an Australian fake tan brand. Later, in an interview on the *Life Uncut* podcast, she stated candidly, “I’m going to say it right here. I hated being pregnant.” She attributed her discomfort partly to the social media pressure. In the business of creating life, sometimes it’s better to fake it. Even if others end up paying the price.

If this story has raised concerns, you can call Lifeline anytime on 13 11 14, or Red Nose Australia on 1300 308 307 for 24/7 grief and pregnancy support.

As Liane Moriarty returns to *Big Little Lies* with her first sequel, she reflects on revisiting a story that became a global phenomenon

WORDS HARRIET SIM

the big little life of *Liane* Moriarty



When Liane Moriarty sat down to write the long-awaited sequel to her bestselling novel *Big Little Lies* two years ago, she hit a roadblock. No matter how hard she tried, she couldn't get Nicole Kidman, Reese Witherspoon, Laura Dern or Meryl Streep out of her head.

A few things had changed since 2014, when Moriarty conjured the story of a group of school mums who become entangled in a homicide. *Big Little Lies*, which made *The New York Times* Best Seller list, was adapted in 2017 into a hit HBO series starring the aforementioned A-listers.

Suddenly, the world Moriarty had created from her home office in Sydney's North Shore was no longer hers. The setting shifted from Sydney to California, storylines were tweaked (no more Vegemite), and each actor brought their own interpretation to Moriarty's beloved characters. So when it came to writing the sequel, *Big Little Truths*, she had to find a way back to her original characters while also accounting for the versions audiences had come to know and love.

"It would be disingenuous to pretend the adaptation hasn't had an impact on this novel," Moriarty says. "Renata Klein was a minor character, but Laura Dern inhabited her so perfectly that there was no way I could write a sequel without her in it. The same with Mary Louise, who was played by Meryl Streep."

Big Little Lies isn't the first of Moriarty's novels to make the leap from page to screen, but it is her first to get a sequel. In 2021, the TV series adaptation of her 2018 novel, *Nine Perfect Strangers*, starred Nicole Kidman, Melissa McCarthy, Samara

Weaving and Asher Keddie; in 2024, her 2021 book, *Apples Never Fall*, became a miniseries with Alison Brie and the late Sam Neill; and in 2025, her 20-year-old novel, *The Last Anniversary*, was led on screen by Teresa Palmer and Danielle Macdonald.

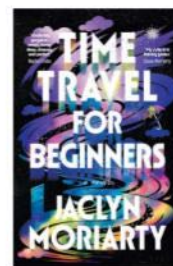
Big Little Truths picks up a decade after the first novel's homicide, when an anonymous package containing a severed

finger arrives at the local school. It's classic Moriarty: sharp, suspenseful and full of unexpected twists.

The other big change for Moriarty was the age of her characters. The first novel centred on young children; this time, they're teenagers. The timing was perfect, as Moriarty had originally drawn inspiration for *Big Little Lies* from her experience with young kids. Now that her own children, George and Anna, are in their teens, she found herself with a new source of inspiration. "I could tell that there'd be a wealth of material once I became a parent of teenagers," she says. "Watching my children and their friends grow up, there were some kids who became exactly who you imagined they would be, and then there were others who turned out to be the complete opposite. That gave me the freedom to think that the kids in *Big Little Lies* could turn out however I wanted them to be."

For Moriarty, writing the teenage versions of these children also offered a chance to reclaim them from their on-screen counterparts. "I love [these] teenagers because they're not complicated by the actors. I loved the way the actors played them, but at the moment they still feel like they're mine."

Big Little Truths by Liane Moriarty (Macmillan, \$34.99), is out August 25.



WHAT ARE YOU READING?

"*Time Travel for Beginners* by my sister Jaclyn Moriarty. I am filled with envy at her talent. I love time travel books, so the fact that my own sister has written one is extra special."

Hardie Grant, \$34.99, out now.



WHAT ARE YOU WATCHING?

"*The Boroughs* on Netflix. It's produced by the brothers who wrote *Stranger Things*, but it's for older people because it's set in a retirement community where all sorts of spooky things happen."



WHICH ALBUM DO YOU HAVE ON REPEAT?

"I love any album by Johnny Cash."



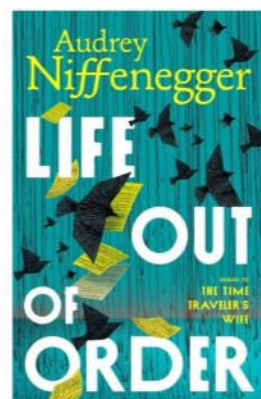
THE LAST PLAY YOU LOVED?

"*Prima Facie* by Suzie Miller."

Literary Lookbook

WORDS HARRIET SIM

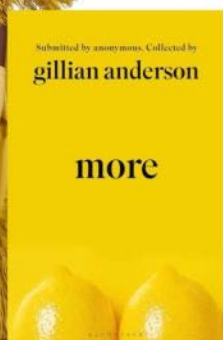
Books are the perfect fashion accessory, and these new reads are hot off the couture runway



LIFE OUT OF ORDER by Audrey Niffenegger

Following the global success of *The Time Traveler's Wife*, Audrey Niffenegger returns with the long-awaited sequel, *Life Out of Order*. The story follows Alba, a time traveller torn between two great loves: Zach, who lives in the present and can't follow her when she disappears, and Oliver, who can travel through time just like she can.

(Penguin, \$36.99). Out October 6.



MORE by Gillian Anderson

Following the global success of *Want*, *Sex Education*'s Gillian Anderson offers *More*, a new collection of anonymous erotic letters from women across the world. Continuing the conversation about women's sexual fantasies, *More* promises "more pleasure, more kink, more partners, more zest".

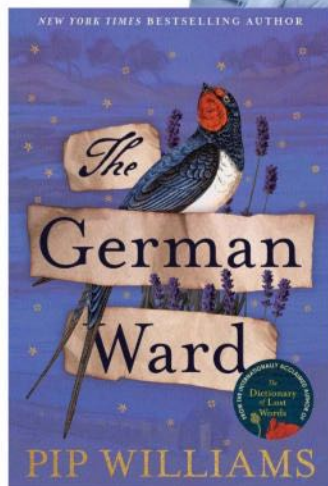
(Bloomsbury, \$32.99). Out September 8.



HOLLYWOOD, ENDING by John Green

When rising actors Kai Laramie and Juniper Castillo are cast in a highly anticipated Andy Warhol biopic, their careers and relationship begin to transform. *Hollywood, Ending* explores the thrill and pressure of sudden fame, examining the tension between public image and private life in a troubling attention economy.

(Penguin, \$34.99). Out September 22.

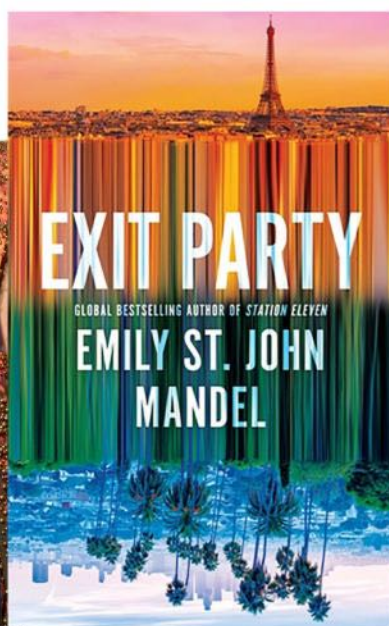


THE GERMAN WARD by Pip Williams

From the author of *The Dictionary of Lost Words* and *The Bookbinder of Jericho* comes *The German Ward*, a tale of forbidden love during World War II. In 1915 France, an English nurse and German doctor fall in love, their secret captured in drawings that resurface more than a century later.

(Simon & Schuster, \$34.99). Out September 29.

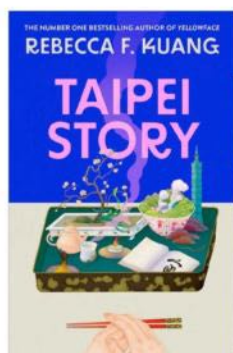




EXIT PARTY by Emily St. John Mandel

Set in 2031, America remains divided by war when hope arrives with the declaration of the Republic of California and the lifting of Los Angeles' curfew. The story follows Ari, newly released from prison, as she attends the city's celebrations, where a mysterious incident changes the course of her life.

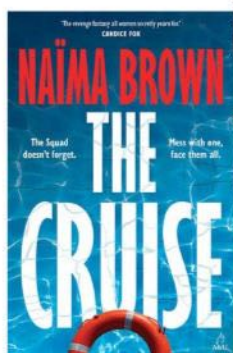
(Pan Macmillan, \$45). Out September 29.



TAIPEI STORY by R.F. Kuang

If you devoured *Yellowface*, add R.F. Kuang's latest novel, *Taipei Story*, to your list. Over one unforgettable summer in Taipei, Lily searches for connection with a culture she inherited but never fully understood. After personal loss upends her plans, she must reconsider family, identity and the meaning of home.

(HarperCollins, \$34.99). Out September 15.



THE CRUISE by Naïma Brown

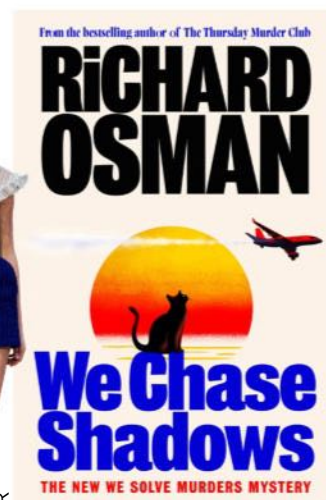
A revenge thriller with a reality-TV twist, *The Cruise* follows Bailey, a television producer whose past catches up with her when the man who hurt her in high school auditions for her show. With help from her friends, Bailey sets a plan in motion to deliver her own version of justice.

(Allen & Unwin, \$34.99). Out September 29.

WE CHASE SHADOWS by Richard Osman

Richard Osman returns with *We Chase Shadows*, the latest instalment in his popular *We Solve Murders* series. When a body is discovered at a private villa in the Italian hills, Amy, Rose and Steve are drawn into a new investigation that takes them across Italy, Barcelona and Palm Springs. The perfect read for those in need of some armchair travel.

(Penguin, \$34.99). Out September 1.



THE HOUSEKEEPER by Rose Tremain

Rose Tremain imagines the tale behind Daphne du Maurier's classic 1938 gothic novel *Rebecca*, about a young woman who marries a wealthy widower, before discovering that he and his household are haunted by the memory of his late first wife. In this story, when housekeeper Danni meets du Maurier at a Cornish mansion, their passionate affair becomes entwined with the making of one of the 20th century's most iconic novels.

(Penguin, \$34.99). Out September 22.



HAVING A MOMENT

JENNIFER ROBINSON

In a new documentary, *Silenced*, the lawyer puts the spotlight on what really happens after sexual assault survivors speak up

WORDS HARRIET SIM



On a Wednesday evening at Sydney's State Theatre, esteemed human rights lawyer Jennifer Robinson is standing before an upset crowd. Tonight marks the Australian premiere of *Silenced*, the new documentary she stars in, which exposes how defamation laws are being weaponised to stop women from speaking out about gender-based violence.

For the lawyer, the audience's collective outrage is a good sign. "In that room, there would have been survivors. Women came up to me crying after the screening and I know that they were crying because they recognised something of their own experience in the film," says Robinson, who has spent her career representing high-profile clients such as WikiLeaks founder Julian

Assange and actor Amber Heard, who she represented in the 2020 UK libel case brought by Johnny Depp against *The Sun* newspaper.

The film picks up in the wake of the 2017 #MeToo movement, which gained momentum after women in Hollywood began speaking out about sexual assault and harassment by film producer Harvey Weinstein, inspiring women around the world to share their own experiences of violence. In its aftermath came a surge in defamation cases brought against women who spoke out and the journalists who reported their stories.

Through several rare sit-down interviews – including with Heard, former Australian political staffer Brittany Higgins and Colombian journalist Catalina Ruiz-Navarro

– Robinson exposes the systemic flaws in the justice system. She argues that defamation lawsuits are being used as a tool of intimidation, making speaking out so financially, emotionally and professionally costly that many women decide it isn't worth the risk.

While defamation lawsuits have surged in the past decade, *Silenced* also shows that the tactic is far from new. In the film, archival footage traces a long history of legal action being used to intimidate and silence women, from the 1998 public fallout surrounding Monica Lewinsky to the landmark 2018 UK *Stocker v Stocker* case, in which Nicola Stocker was taken to court after writing in a Facebook post that her ex-husband had tried to strangle her. She eventually won her case in the UK Supreme Court, but only after years of litigation.

When the film premiered at Sundance earlier this year, Robinson says she was surprised by the number of people who admitted they'd been wrong about Amber Heard. "That was really important for me personally, having represented Amber," she says. "I hope the film causes people to think again about what they thought they knew about these high-profile cases, and to reflect on their attitudes towards women and the broader cultural conversations that will have informed [their] views."

Silenced is the screen adaptation of Robinson's 2022 book, *How Many More Women?*, which she co-authored with human rights barrister Keina Yoshida. Production company Stranger Than Fiction Films approached Robinson, and a team, including award-winning director Selina Miles, was soon assembled.

Defamation law isn't the easiest subject to bring to the screen, yet Miles makes it impossible to look away. Through intimate first-hand accounts, the documentary shows how the legal process can compound trauma long after the initial violence has ended. "I remember watching Amber Heard's defamation trial brought by her ex-husband and Brittany Higgins' aborted criminal trial in the Australian media, and feeling really unsettled and disturbed by the misogynistic coverage of those cases," Miles says.

"It wasn't until I read Jen's book that I understood that these high-profile cases are the tip of the iceberg, and that it's representative of a much larger problem that affects everyday women and countless people we don't see in the news."

For Robinson, bringing *Silenced* to audiences presented another challenge. "We were making a film about some of the most litigious men in the world, so the legal risks were massive," she says. "We were also asking women to reopen something that's deeply traumatic and also open themselves up to legal risk again by speaking, so I was very adamant that we ensured that in participating in the film,

"We were making a film about some of the most litigious men in the world, so the legal risks were massive"

all the women were protected. That didn't stop us being threatened with legal action when the film came out, so it goes to show [what] you come up against when you try to tell these stories."

While Robinson focused on legal protection, Miles ensured that each part of the filmmaking process was trauma-informed, creating a safe space on set for the women to share their stories. "If you're someone whose decision to speak about your experience of violence has led to legal action that has affected your life, to make the decision to sit down and go on record on a film is incredibly brave," says Miles. "We really wanted to create a safe environment for women to speak to us, not put them back on the stand by having excessive

infrastructure that reminded them of what it was like to turn up to court and be chased down by paparazzi."

The message of *Silenced* is best illustrated when Higgins explains that being cross-examined was almost as traumatic as the sexual assault. This is exactly

what Robinson wanted to get across. "Anyone who suggests [a woman] has lied because she didn't go to the police, they should go and be cross-examined by a police officer and see just how fun that is," she says. "The law is a perpetuation of the abuse."

Through these deeply personal accounts, *Silenced* gives audiences what is so often missing from the public discussion surrounding these cases: empathy for the women at their centre. It asks us to look critically at the headlines, challenge assumptions and reconsider the stories we thought we knew.

Silenced is in cinemas from September 3.



Left Jennifer Robinson in *Silenced*. **Below** Robinson (right) with her client, Amber Heard (centre), outside the Royal Courts of Justice in 2020.



WORDS HARRIET SIM

Indulge your eyes, ears and soul in this month's culture-defining moments



see **BOYZ II MEN TOUR**

These R'n'B icons are returning to Australia for a nostalgic tour, joined by hip-hop legends Salt-N-Pepa. Dance your heart out like you did in the early '90s to "End of the Road", "I'll Make Love To You" and "Motownphilly". The tour kicks off on November 26 in Perth before heading to Sydney, Geelong and Mount Cotton.

Visit frontiertouring.com for tickets and more information.



see **BLAK & BRIGHT WRITERS FESTIVAL**

Australia's First Nations literary festival returns to Naarm this spring, celebrating the diversity of First Nations storytelling through literature, poetry, performance and conversation. This largely free event features acclaimed voices including TV presenter and former AFL player Tony Armstrong, writer Tony Birch, poet Evelyn Araluen, novelist and actor Tasma Walton, and author and actor Brooke Blurton.

From September 3 to 6 at The Wheeler Centre. Visit blakandbright.com.au.

visit **SYDNEY FRINGE FESTIVAL**

NSW's biggest independent arts festival returns with a city-wide celebration of theatre, comedy, music, performance, visual art and everything in between. Taking over venues across the city, Fringe brings together emerging artists and experimental works for a month of boundary-pushing creativity.

From September 1 to 30. Visit sydneyfringe.com.





visit **BRISBANE FESTIVAL**

The lights are shining bright in Brisvegas this September as Queensland's biggest arts festival returns for three weeks of theatre, music, dance, circus and art. The program spans everything from public spectacles to intimate performances by local and international artists.

From September 4 to 26 across Brisbane. Visit brisbanefestival.com.au.



watch **THE GENTLEMEN**

Guy Ritchie's stylish crime series *The Gentlemen* returns for season two on Netflix, picking up after the Duke (Theo James) unexpectedly inherits a criminal empire. As his ambitions expand, he faces new threats from the world of international organised crime. If you love to watch rich people behaving badly, then catch up on season one before the next drops on September 3.



visit **DARWIN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**

Australia's Top End will be transformed into a cinematic hub as the Darwin International Film Festival returns to showcase a collection of new films and documentaries from Australia and around the world. Set against the backdrop of Darwin's tropical landscape, the festival combines screenings with filmmaker conversations and special experiences.

From September 10 to 20 at the Deckchair Cinema and venues across Darwin. Visit diff.net.au.



watch **THE DOG STARS**

Jacob Elordi takes the lead in Ridley Scott's post-apocalyptic thriller *The Dog Stars*, based on Peter Heller's acclaimed novel. Set in a world devastated by a pandemic, the film follows a pilot searching for hope and connection after years of isolation. With a cast including Josh Brolin, Margaret Qualley, Guy Pearce and Allison Janney, the film is one of the most anticipated releases of the year. It's in cinemas from August 27.

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From the latest local designs to standout styles from the international collections, our big fashion issue is sure to thrill. Plus, Aisha Dee as you've never seen her before

FASHION



Camilla and Marc
dress, \$750; Orotón
earrings, \$149.



PHOTOGRAPHY IVANA
MARTYN-ZYZNIKOW
STYLING JANA POKORNY

LOCAL HEROES

Australia and
New Zealand's top
designers have a clear
vision of the future:
strong silhouettes,
bold colour and
tactile texture for
the modern woman



Opposite: Maticevski dress, \$3950; Jimmy Choo shoes, \$1275; Alémais earrings, POA.

This page: Aje top, \$329, and shorts, \$279; Alémais shoes, and earrings, both POA; stylist's bra.



A. Emery dress, \$570,
and boots, \$750;
Oroton earrings, \$149.

Opposite: Beare Park
blazer (over shoulder),
\$1490, top, \$790, and
skirt, \$590; **A. Emery**
boots, \$750; **Oroton**
earrings, \$149.





Alémais top, \$390,
pants, \$390, hat, and
earrings, both POA.

Opposite: Esse
Studios dress, \$1250;
Oroton earrings, \$149.





Zimmermann dress,
\$2500; Orotan
earrings, \$149;
stylist's gloves.



Bianca Spender
jacket, \$795, top,
\$345, and skirt,
\$495; Orotón
earrings, \$149.

Opposite:
Christopher
Esber dress,
\$1595; **Alémais**
earrings, POA.









Opposite: Lee Mathews top, \$349, blazer (around waist), \$799, and shorts, \$599; Seed hat, POA; Jimmy Choo shoes, \$1275; Orotan earrings, \$149.

This page: Camilla and Marc dress, \$750. Jimmy Choo bag, \$3450; Orotan earrings, \$149.

Harris Tapper top,
\$689, and skirt, \$529;
Oroton earrings, \$149.

Opposite: Courtney
Zheng coat (over
shoulder), \$1500,
waistcoat (with
scarf), \$800, and
pants, \$800; Studio
Amelia shoes, \$695;
Oroton earrings, \$149.

Photographer
Ivana Martyn-
Zyznikow/DLM.
Stylist Jana Pokorny/
Kaz Kingdon.
Hair Bradwyn Jones/
Assembly Agency.
Makeup Kylie
O'Toole/Hart & Co.
Model Sophia
Gerakas/The Scouted.
Production Robyn
Fay-Perkins.







LADY OF THE LAKE

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and the sweetest of accessories

PHOTOGRAPHY
GRACE AHLBOM
STYLING
BIANCA RAGGI



Dior coat, \$12,500,
shoes, \$2700,
and bag, \$7800.



Dior jacket, \$8900,
blouse, \$2350, pants,
\$2800, boots, \$3100,
and bag, \$7200.

Opposite: Dior
cardigan, \$10,500,
blouse, \$2350, and
earrings, \$1000.







Opposite: Dior jacket, \$18,000, skirt, \$11,500, and bag, \$5900.

This page: Dior jacket, \$48,000, pants, \$2800, shoes, \$3100, and bag, \$5900.

Dior dress, \$62,000,
shoes, \$2700, and
bag, \$18,000.





Dior top, \$48,000,
skirt, \$51,000, and
bag, \$4500.

Opposite: Dior
jacket, \$16,000,
and earrings, \$1000.





Dior jacket, \$15,000,
top, \$19,500,
pants, \$2600,
and bag, \$5700.

Opposite: Dior
cardigan, \$10,500,
blouse, \$2350,
skirt, \$97,000,
and bag, \$5900.

Photographer Grace
Ahlbom/MAP Ltd.

Stylist Bianca Raggi/
MA + Group.

Hair Kim Rance/
MA + Group.

Makeup Sandrine
Cano/Artlist
Paris, New York.

Models Mali, Saar
and Athiec/Supreme
Management.





PHOTOGRAPHY TIM ASHTON
STYLING NAOMI SMITH
WORDS ALEXANDRA ENGLISH

SHE'S THE BOLD TYPE

Aisha Dee has grown up on our television screens, telling stories through her characters. Now, she wants to share her own



Gucci top, \$2580,
pants, \$2200, shoes,
\$1890, earrings, \$935,
necklace, \$800, and
bracelet, \$1600.



Erik Yvon coat, \$12,550.

Opposite: Erik Yvon
jumpsuit, \$4010;
Christian Louboutin
shoes, \$1475;
stylist's briefs.

W

Writing this profile with *The Bold Type* on in the background seemed like a good idea at first. But the sparkling, fizzy old-favourite series about working at a glossy women's magazine, much like this one, starring Aisha Dee, the subject of this article, quickly proves to be distractingly small-m meta. In case you need a refresh: Aisha, as Kat Edison, has worked her way up at *Scarlet* magazine from assistant to writer. In the opening scenes, we see her in a board meeting (with a very convincing American accent) pushing for a "lesbian Muslim artist" story not to be dropped. It's difficult to look away and get back to my assignment, which is a problem because – like the women at *Scarlet* – I also have a deadline.

Within seconds of seeing her on screen, it's clear Kat's here for a good time – sneaking champagne into the fashion cupboard to share with her co-worker besties – but she's also not here to mess around. She cares about women: their stories, their art, their plights in conflict zones across the world. She says what she thinks and refuses to be silent in the face of the patriarchy.

And within seconds of meeting Aisha Dee, it's clear she's the same.

The Australian actor, who first appeared on our screens in *The Saddle Club* in 2008 and had her breakout moment with *The Bold Type* in 2017, is – in a word – lovely. She's game to try every outfit our fashion director has hanging on the rack, even when she needs to leave in 10 minutes to catch a plane (check out the Louis Vuitton look for a study in how not to have airport anxiety); she pauses her interview when someone arrives at the studio ("Sorry, I just need to say hello"); and enthusiastically poses in front of the camera. The unanimous feedback after Aisha has headed off to her flight back to Los Angeles is: "She looks like a model!"

But Aisha isn't here for the fun of it, and she is not promoting a new film. She's here because she has a message. Aisha has endometriosis, meaning that for the past decade while she has been prolifically acting and making music, she's also been silently suffering with relentless





Miu Miu dress,
\$8300, and hat, \$1690.

Opposite: Prada
shirt, \$2950, skirt,
\$20,000, stockings,
\$1880, shoes, POA,
and cufflinks, \$1680.



chronic pain. The 32-year old says she's now in remission, which gives her the energy and perspective needed to speak out about the frustrations behind women's pain and how little is understood about our bodies.

Swisse Wellness recently tapped Aisha to be the brand's Women's Health campaign advocate, putting her face and message to a range of products that support women's health at every stage of life. Think supplements for vaginal health, PMS relief, and hormone and perimenopause support.

It's an alignment that feels incredibly natural, says Aisha. "Women deserve to live lives free from pain. Women deserve to be believed when they say they are in pain. Women deserve to be supported, and I think the way to do that is to start a collective conversation, and I love that Swisse is down to do that with me." (Swisse is indeed down to do that with her, with managing director Swati Prasad calling for people and businesses to head to wearehysterical.com.au to advocate for women's health initiatives.)

It's admirable that Aisha is using her platform to raise awareness of the often painful banality of being a woman. It's a vulnerable position to be in, letting the world know that you've been enduring debilitatingly painful periods, have been operated on over and over again, and have been in the depths of despair trying to find solutions only to come up empty-handed. To enter your medical history into the public record and be asked about it again and again in articles such as this. But Aisha knows this is the way to create change, to galvanise women and researchers and the medical industry until we are listened to, studied and our pain resolved.

In sharing her story, Aisha joins the ranks of a number of A-list women who are sick of staying quiet about women's health. Among them, Lena Dunham, Dolly Parton, Halsey, Chrissy Teigen and, closer to home, Bindi Irwin, who posted on Instagram in March to share that she'd had more than 50 endometriosis lesions cut from her body in the past three years.

"I recently listened to Lena Dunham's *Famesick* [a memoir about fame and chronic illness], and there were lots of things in it that felt so specific [to Lena], but I also had experienced very intimately," Aisha says. "It was really comforting for me. There's something really special about feeling community. I believe in hive-mind stuff. Women, we have this womb that is connected to all life and all living things; we are the creators of the universe – really, we're incredible. To me it makes sense that we're all coming to this collective decision that we've had enough, and that it's time for us to actually speak up and demand better for ourselves."

Like the women before her, Aisha has created an impressive amount of work while enduring chronic pain. Since *The Bold Type*, there has been the best-friend revenge movie *Sissy*, and the rom-com *Look Both Ways* with Lili Reinhart, both released in 2022. She also had starring roles in *Watching You*, the 2025 series about a woman trying to uncover the voyeur who's been watching her affair before they blow up her life; and *Safe Home*, an SBS series about a woman who starts working at a family violence centre. That one was particularly challenging, Aisha says, because she struggled to come out of character at the end of each day. "I started not being able to tell the difference between dreams and reality for a while," she says. "But I love that show, it's probably one of my favourites."

Then, of course, there was last year's *Apple Cider Vinegar*. It was about the cancer scammer Belle Gibson (played by Kaitlyn Dever, with an impressive Australian accent), but was also a commentary on how the line between wellness, social media and medicine can blur when women feel there's a gap in their health information and go looking for answers in dubious places.

Next up is a series that Aisha describes as "really gay", called *Overcompensating*. "It's been a long time since I've been able to be gay on television," she says. "I'm excited for people to be able to watch a really beautiful, fun, queer, joyful story. And I'm excited to take a nap," she adds, laughing.

One thing she's learnt from pain is to take rest more seriously. For now, that means "taking time in my own space, driving my shitty Honda Civic. I do a lot of visualisation, and also just being around loved ones, having cuddles, laying down, dilly-dallying. Those are my coping strategies."

"Women deserve to live lives free from pain. Women deserve to be believed when they say they are in pain"

But the truth is, she won't really rest until women are heard. "What feels important to me is to communicate that you know your body best, nobody knows it like you do, so trust yourself and advocate for yourself and know that there are medical professionals out there who want to advocate for you too. You might just need to look a little harder for them."

Visit wearehysterical.com.au for more details.



Gucci dress, \$6150, bralette, POA, shoes, \$1890, earrings, \$935, and bracelet, \$1600; stylist's briefs.

Louis Vuitton jacket,
\$6300, shirt, \$3750,
and skirt, \$4700;
Christian Louboutin
shoes, \$1475.

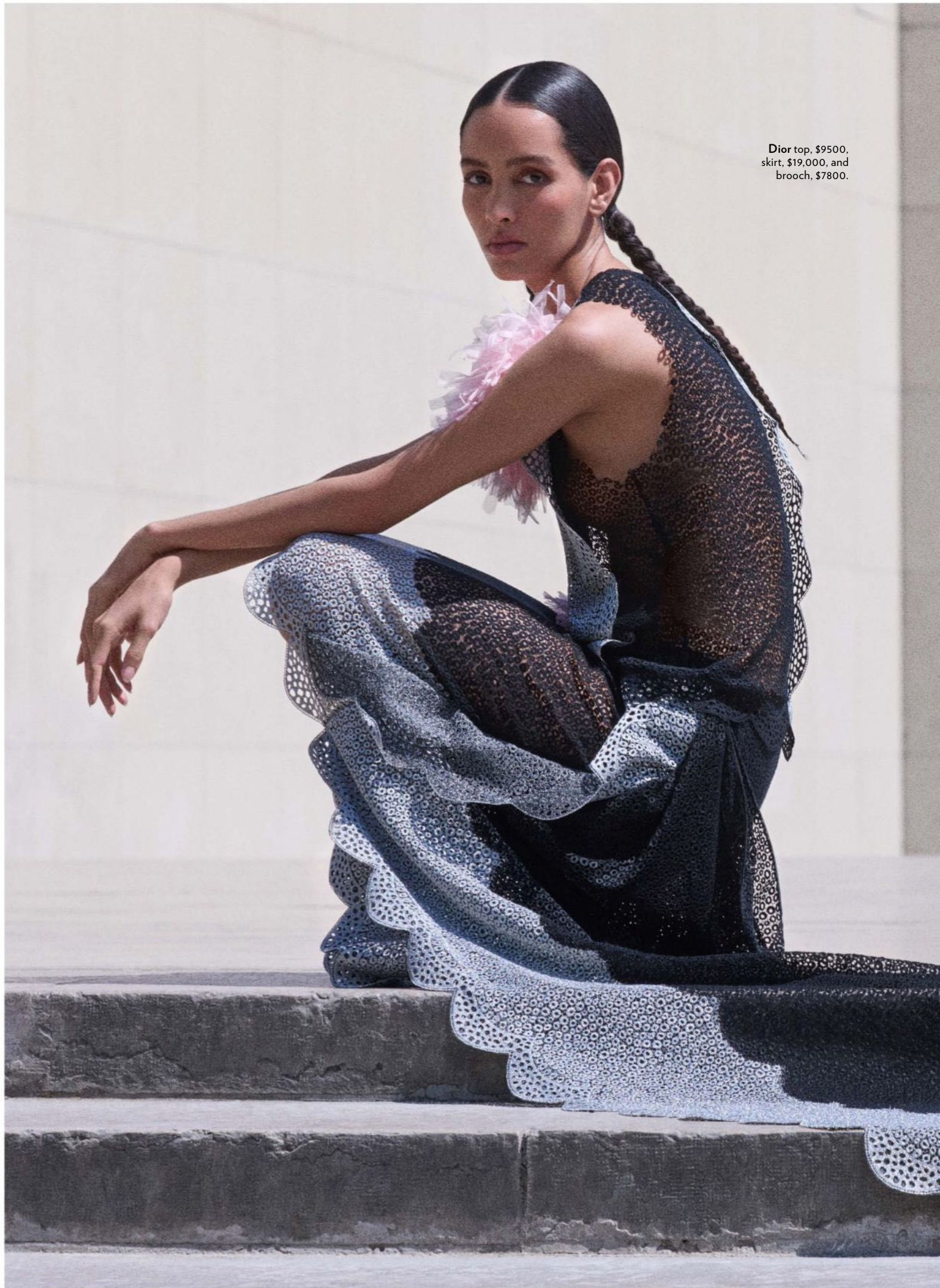
Opposite: Dior
top, \$5700, and
skirt, \$5300.





Photographer
Tim Ashton/After
Winter Agency.
Hair Laura Mazikana.
Makeup Cherry Cheung/
Vivien's Creative.
Manicure Kanitta
Choosuk/Saunders & Co.
Production Robyn
Fay-Perkins.

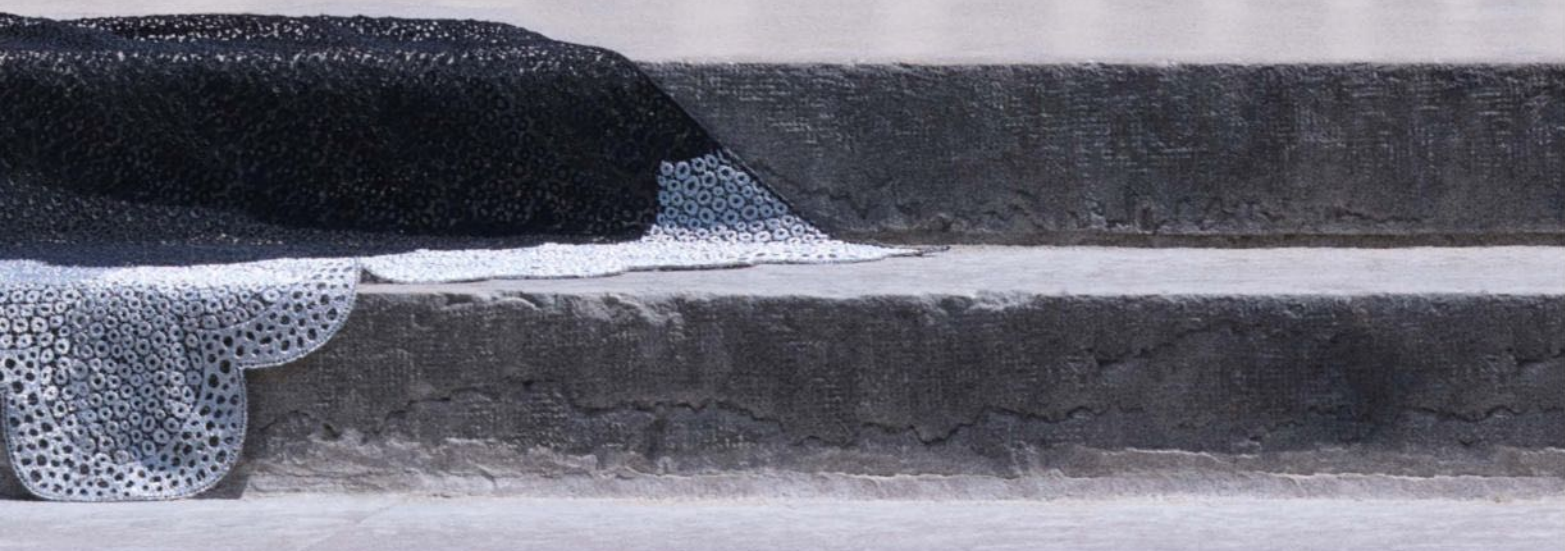
Dior top, \$9500,
skirt, \$19,000, and
brooch, \$7800.



VISUAL ARTS

Take note: the key looks for
autumn/winter 2026 are right here

PHOTOGRAPHY PELLE LANNEFORS
STYLING FLORENCE DELADRIÈRE





Louis Vuitton blazer,
\$9450, pants, \$3750,
beanie, \$960, and
earrings, \$6850.



Giorgio Armani
blazer, \$5700, jumper,
\$2750, top (underneath),
\$3300, pants, \$2750,
and belt, POA.



Opposite: Celine
coat, top, skirt, and
boots, all POA.

This page: Chanel
blazer, \$13,760,
shirt, \$6880, and
skirt (with belt),
\$10,410.





Fendi dress,
collar, socks,
and shoes,
all POA.

Hermès jumpsuit,
\$38,660, boots, \$5925,
and bag, POA.





Max Mara
coat, \$8385.



Chloé shirt, skirt, shoes
and necklace, all POA;
Doré Doré tights, POA;
Hermès hat, POA.

Photographer
Pelle Lannefors/
Oh, Me World.
Hair Sébastien
Le Corroller/
Airport Agency.

Makeup
Carole Hannah/
Airport Agency.

Production
Corinne Piton.

Model Eduarda Vieira/
Premium Models.

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*Based on market share value (value sales), SRI+ suntan care category, Supermarket, Convenience Store, Home Centre, Drug Store, Japan, 7/1/2021-6/30/2026



EDITOR SALLY HUNWICK

BEAUTY

Dior Paradise EDP,
100ml, \$580.



Photography courtesy Dior

Christian Dior's summer house in the South of France inspires the new Paradise eau de parfum. Also this month: meet Matière Première, a niche French fragrance brand that practises a farm-to-bottle mentality; and we travel to Thailand with Guerlain



the

new

glam
code

Bold beauty is back. Think saturated colours, shimmery textures and voluminous blowouts. Here, celebrated makeup artist Luciano Chiarello creates six striking looks inspired by the fearless beauty codes of the 1980s and '90s but with a modern twist

BIG COLOUR ►

Forget quiet luxury. Choose strong colours such as violet, lilac and turquoise in shapes that are less oval and more elongated. Add swathes of diagonal blush up to the temples that channel '80s excess, à la Boy George and Kate Bush. "Blue is the new classic to experiment with," Chiarello confirms. "It's less easy than grey or brown, but it's now available in so many finishes, from matte to super-satin and glittery."

Gucci trench coat and shoes.

◀ ALL EYES

Razor-sharp eyeliner – whether classic or graphic – becomes the star here, proving you don't need a full face to command attention. Paired with cool-toned lips that softly mute the natural colour, the effect feels equal parts '90s supermodel and modern minimalist. "[Eyeliner] immediately puts the gaze in the foreground and is enough on its own," Chiarello says. "I like the effect of almost erasing the mouth. If you 'cancel' the natural flush, you can then give it your favourite shape with an overline."

Alessandro Dell'Acqua top.



“I wanted to pay homage to the wealthy women of [the '80s and '90s], who didn't have to ask permission to show off”

▲ RICH-GIRL GLAMOUR

Big hair, bold lips and unapologetic confidence – this is power dressing for now! “I wanted to pay homage to the wealthy women of [the '80s and '90s], who didn't have to ask permission to show off their luxury with jewellery, hairstyles, accessories and obviously makeup,” says Chiarello. “It requires a lot of mascara, black pencil inside the waterline, and a smoky grey or blue shadow diffused up to the brow bone.”

Loewe dress; Gucci earrings.

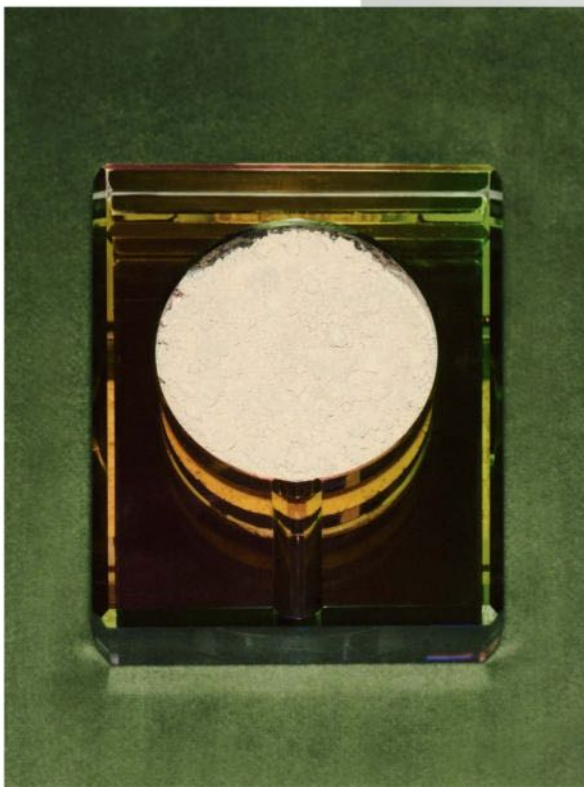
DOUBLE DRAMA ►

Who says you have to choose between a bold eye and a bold lip? This after-dark look happily ignores the old beauty rules. An oval-shaped smoky eye in anthracite and midnight blue delivers a softer, more contemporary take on classic club makeup, while a subtle shimmer catches the light without overpowering the face. The finishing flourish is a high-gloss scarlet lip that feels unapologetically glam.

Valentino coat and tights; **Loro Piana** shoes.

Below left: **Sisley** Phyto-Teint Poudre Libre.

Below right: **Byredo** Dysco Eyeshadow 5 Colours Palette.





**“The new nude
has copper
and bronze
reflections.
It works in the
day and at night”**



▲ METALLIC NUDE

Metallic makeup is the futuristic upgrade we didn't know we needed. “The new nude has copper and bronze reflections,” says Chiarello. “It works in the day and at night, making you stand out without doing too much.” This nude look, with metallic eyeshadow and eyes rimmed above and below with a copper-coloured eyeliner, is combined with a full coppery lip. Skip the blush and let the reflective textures do the talking.

The Attico dress.

Right, top: Armani Beauty Vertigo Lift Mascara.

Right, bottom: Dries Van Noten Lip Brush.



◀ **UNDONE BEAUTY**

Inspired by Kate Moss in her Calvin Klein heyday, this is beauty at its most undone: slicked-back wet hair, a smoky eye that's more black than grey and an understated lip. It's the barely there nude mouth that keeps everything feeling effortless, cool and chic. It's the beauty version of the perfect white T-shirt.

Miu Miu bra and boxer shorts; EFEK ring.

Styling Elisabetta Massari.
Hair Lorenzo Barcella/
Julian Watson Agency.
Makeup Luciano Chiarello/
Julian Watson Agency.
Manicure Elena Greco/Blend Mgmt.
Model Anick Chan/IMG Models.
Set design Giulia Munari.

Guerlain is a luxury beauty house with an impressive royal history. But don't assume it doesn't have its sights set squarely on the future

The art of scent

WORDS SALLY HUNWICK





If you want your brand to take off, having an empress cherish it as a wedding gift is a very good way to start. This is what happened to Pierre-François-Pascal Guerlain. Opening his store on Paris' famed Rue de Rivoli in 1828, the perfumer's success really started to peak in 1853, when he created a fragrance as a gift to commemorate the marriage of Empress Eugénie and Emperor Napoleon III.

The fragrance was Eau de Cologne Impériale and Guerlain housed it in a stunning (and now hugely famous) Bee Bottle. Eugénie had a fascination for craftsmanship and the arts, and impeccable taste. Truly the original influencer, her nod of approval very quickly made Guerlain wildly popular.

This act of gifting also earned Guerlain the prestigious title of Official Perfumer to His Majesty. "It opened the doors of all the royal courts in Europe and beyond," says Thierry Wasser, the maison's master perfumer. Guerlain went on to create fragrances for royalty all over Europe, including Queen Victoria, who reigned from 1837 until 1901.

Wasser is the house's fifth master perfumer, an impressively small lineup considering the brand has been around for almost 200 years. We are sitting together inside a spacious suite within the newly opened Ritz-Carlton, looking out at the Bangkok skyline. The conversation steers towards the balancing act a brand such as Guerlain must perform: that cord it needs to strike to keep its heritage alive, while maintaining relevance in an industry that thrives on the new. It's a concept Wasser lives daily. "For some people, heritage is a burden," he tells me. "For me, I look at it as a springboard." As luxury brands race to capture the attention of younger consumers, maintaining not only relevance but desirability is key. "What you need is to be aware," explains Wasser. "You don't sit on your heritage; you need presence. A lot of people miss being present in the moment."

It pays to lean into the moment because for a luxury brand such as Guerlain, it's a long game. Wasser has been with the maison since 2008, mentored by and eventually taking over from the legendary perfumer, Jean-Paul Guerlain. Monsieur Guerlain, who was at the helm for 60 years, was tutored by his grandfather, Jacques Guerlain, who was one of the great perfumers of his time, creating cult fragrances such as L'Heure Bleue in 1912 and Shalimar in 1925.

"I learnt from observing him," Wasser says of the friendship with Jean-Paul that has spanned decades. "There is a common thread between us: we are both curious, think like 12-year-old boys, and we are perfumers – both of us. The encounter was magic. I cherish it."

We are in Thailand for the launch of the maison's first large-scale exhibition of its Exceptional Creations. A long tradition of the house, each of these glittering pieces showcase the transformation of some of Guerlain's most iconic bottles – including that first Bee Bottle created for Empress Eugénie – into works of art. Over the years, the brand has collaborated with some of the world's most impressive

"I believe the love, the hope and the pride of people are in our bottles"

– Thierry Wasser, Guerlain's master perfumer

BEAUTY



artists and craftspeople, including jeweller Begüm Khan and the House of Matisse.

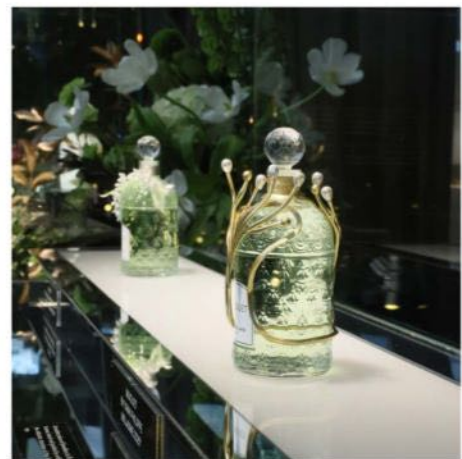
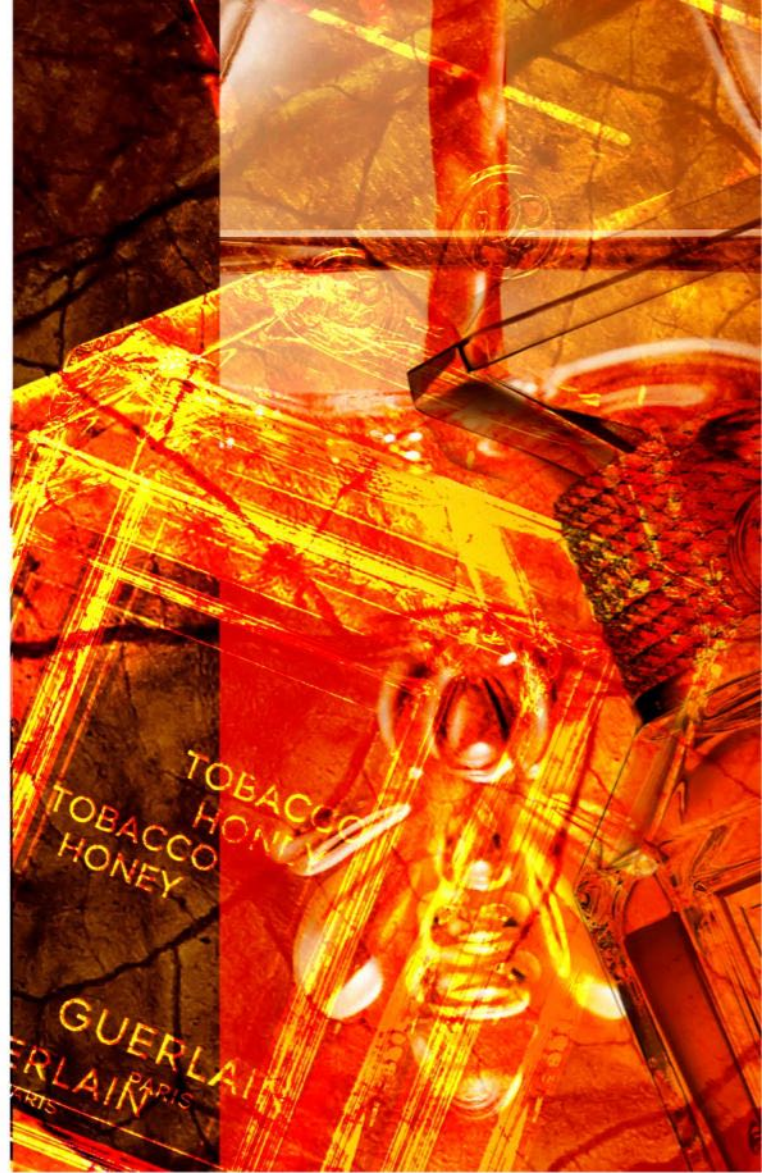
Honouring Guerlain's heritage, and reinterpreting it with the artist's vision, these one-of-a-kind creations blur the line between fragrance and art and are certainly incredible to witness. Drawing dignitaries, actors, press and influencers alike, the pieces were in Thailand to be revered and (if your bank balance allows) purchased.

Also on display was the house's L'Art & La Matière collection of luxury fragrances, which deftly honour the brand's heritage, while also showcasing its love of nature and the finest raw materials. Each fragrance is so distinct you could be forgiven for writing yourself a wish list. A tip: if you haven't smelt the warming sweet notes of Tobacco Honey you really should head to David Jones to do so. "For Tobacco Honey, it's the first time ever that we have real honey in a fragrance," explains Wasser, who was inspired both creatively by watching women add honey to their tea and technically by an engineer in the South of France.

From the rosewood communities in the Amazon, to farmers in South India, Wasser spends much of his time sourcing these raw materials firsthand. Those trips, he says, are among the most rewarding parts of his role. "Every time, we have to reassess the situation, and it's so cool," he says. "Sourcing is about 40 per cent of my job and I really do believe that it's the best part of my job. It is so enjoyable."

Intrepidness and curiosity are traits that Wasser seems to have in surplus. I have met him once before in Singapore, where he spoke about his love of raw materials, and the exploration and negotiations it can take to find the very best. "The humanity is at its best when you're sourcing," he says. "You have to understand the other person. You have to listen. You have to find a way to create something together." As well as the precious oils they extract from the raw materials, it is the relationships with the farmers and growers that also become part of Wasser's fragrances. "I believe the love, the hope and the pride of people are in our bottles," he says. "It sounds esoteric, but our fragrances are not just made, they are incarnated."

While many lovers of Guerlain might be buying in for the sheer decadence of the fragrances on offer, this sentiment of focusing on craftsmanship, the best nature has to offer, and the human custodians of it, feels modern. According to Ann Caroline Prazan, Guerlain's director of art, culture & heritage, that shift plays directly into the maison's strengths. "I think younger generations are very interested in the story and legacy of brands," she says when we meet at the exhibition in the ultra-modern One Bangkok. "They don't want fake history. They want sincerity." For Prazan, heritage and modernity are complementary. "The future of the brand needs to know the past," she explains. "Not to recreate it, but to reinterpret it."



"People want to be excited. They want their imagination to be stretched"

– Ann Caroline Prazan, Guerlain's director of art, culture & heritage



Opposite Thierry Wasser, Guerlain's master perfumer; and two bottles in the brand's Exceptional Creations display in Bangkok (below).

This page Three bottles from Guerlain's L'Art & La Matière collection of luxury fragrances; one of the first Bee Bottles from 1853; and a display in Guerlain's exhibition in Bangkok.



That philosophy was expressed admirably when Guerlain collaborated with New York street artist JonOne to create one of the house's exceptional pieces. Prazan explains that the artist selected the Bee Bottle as his canvas. "The symbol of Napoleon's bee mixed with a street artist from Brooklyn; everybody told me it was impossible," says Prazan. "I said, 'Let's do it and see what happens.'" The result was precisely the creative frisson she seeks. "I love when there is a bridge between the past and modernity," she says. "That tension makes something exciting." It's also a powerful way of introducing new audiences to the brand. Through partnerships with artists, museums and cultural institutions around the world, Prazan sees creativity as a way of keeping heritage breathing rather than relegated to history books.

Luxury itself, she believes, is undergoing a similar transformation. "I don't think luxury is about logos anymore," she says. "Luxury is timeless. It's savoir faire, storytelling, heritage and authenticity ... Guerlain is not a marketing world, it's a family name. The Guerlain family were genius, visionaries and [patrons] of the beauty and performance industries." Today's consumers want more than products, Prazan argues. They want experiences,

access and emotional connection. For example, at Guerlain's Paris store, which still stands on Rue de Rivoli, visitors can explore the maison's archives through immersive experiences that blend history with digital innovation. "People want to be excited," she says. "They want their imagination to be stretched."

This, of course, aligns closely with Wasser's own vision for the future. While he is reluctant to predict exactly what lies ahead, he believes Guerlain's greatest strength remains its ability to balance its past with a deep desire to move forward and continue creating. "You're not 200 years old by chance," he says. "It's because you believe."

And what does Wasser believe in? Surrounding himself with younger talent, such as perfumer Delphine Jelk, who has created much-loved Guerlain fragrances including Patchouli Paris in 2024 and Pêche Mirage last year. "I hired Delphine Jelk and today she's the creative director," Wasser says. "I think it is part of what is expected from me – not just to design fragrances – to have a vision for the future."

For Wasser, that vision means remaining curious, taking chances, continuing to evolve and never losing sight of where Guerlain began.



WORDS SALLY HUNWICK

The (eco)system reset

Irritation, dullness and chronic dehydration are all signs of a skin microbiome out of whack. An expert explains how to get back on track

For years, we have been focused on what active ingredients we can add to our skincare routine, from vitamin C and AHAs to retinoids. But experts are now saying that preserving our skin for the long term may depend less on what we put on it and more about what we preserve.

Sydney dermatologist Dr Bonnie Fergie has spent years treating skin concerns ranging from acne and rosacea to pigmentation and premature ageing. Increasingly, however, she has noticed a new subset of women coming through: the ones investing in treatments and active ingredients who still can't repair a complexion that looks dehydrated, dull or irritated.

"The skin still doesn't look healthy," says Fergie. "It might be filled or treated, but it can still be dehydrated and uneven. I wanted to focus on skin physiology and how to make skin function as well as possible." It prompted her to create Bon Elliot, a brand that at its heart has one of dermatology's fastest-growing areas of research: the skin microbiome.

The microbiome explained

The human microbiome is made up of trillions of microorganisms that live on and in the body, including bacteria, fungi, viruses and mites. Many of us are familiar with the gut microbiome, but our skin has an ecosystem all its own.

Research suggests these microbes, which live on the skin's surface, are vital in maintaining skin health. The microbiome acts as part of the skin's protective barrier, helping defend against harmful pathogens, regulating inflammation and supporting the immune system.

"The microbiome, the skin barrier and the skin's repair response all communicate with one another," says Fergie. "They work together, and the health of one affects the others."

HAPPY SKIN

Probiotic-dosed skincare can help support your skin's microbiome so it can calm down and function happily again.



From left: Bon Elliot Hydrating Performance Serum, \$220; Byoma Balancing Face Mist, \$25; Synergie Skin Dermiotic Pre-Serum Elixir Prebiotic/Postbiotic Microbiome Complex, \$79; SumaNurica Probiotic Energising Essence, \$129.

What unbalanced looks like

A healthy microbiome usually equals hydrated, resilient skin. But when that balance is disrupted, problems can emerge. "If you have an imbalance in the microbiome, you can see an imbalance in skin conditions as well," explains Fergie. The signs can be anything from dehydration and dullness to irritation and sensitivity. One of the biggest contributors? Modern skincare itself. Fergie believes many consumers are damaging their skin through the overuse of highly concentrated active ingredients.

"I see a lot of people using strong vitamin C, retinoids and exfoliating acids," she says. "For some skin types they can be incredibly irritating and can strip back the microbiome or impair the barrier."

The result of this can be a skin-irritating loop of fix and repair – "fix" the issue then repair the skin you've inadvertently damaged. "People become trapped in a skincare cycle," says Fergie. "They keep adding more products and more actives, but the skin never gets a chance to function properly."

"People often feel they need a 10-step routine when really they need [fewer] products that work together to support healthy skin"

– Bon Elliot founder Dr Bonnie Fergie

Why less can be more

Instead of aggressively targeting individual concerns, Fergie advocates a "fewer, better" approach to skincare. "I think skincare has become very confusing," she says. "People often feel they need a 10-step routine when really they need products that work together to support healthy skin."

That philosophy inspired Bon Elliot's Hydrating Performance Serum launch product, a microbiome-focused serum designed to support not only the skin barrier but also hydration and repair. Central to the formula is the brand's proprietary Ambr Complex, which combines prebiotics, probiotics, skin-identical ceramides and antioxidants.

"We found a positive selective restructuring of the microbiome," says Fergie. "At the same time, we saw improvements in hydration, elasticity and overall skin health."

A new focus

Science is gaining a better understanding of how the skin's microorganisms can influence everything from hydration and inflammation to ageing. "A healthy microbiome supports a healthy barrier, and a healthy barrier supports healthy skin," Fergie explains. "When you focus on those foundations, the complexion becomes more hydrated, resilient and balanced." Noted.

With our current obsession for achieving streamlined results and skin perfection, it's a good reminder that sometimes the best step we can take for our skin is stop fighting it. Do that, and we might just get the results we want after all.



All a blur

If you want to emulate the muted modern lip that's circulating right now, a blurred-lip product is a fast way to get there. We talk to makeup genius Peter Philips at Dior to find out how to master the K-Beauty-inspired look

WORDS SALLY HUNWICK

As creative and image director for Dior Makeup, Peter Philips has spent decades shaping the beauty conversations behind the world's most influential runways. And for Dior's latest lip launch, the focus has moved away from bold shine and graphic lines, and instead Philips is championing a softer, easy-wear approach to lipstick that's devoid of edges.

Inspired in part by Korean beauty and the growing appetite for effortless, lived-in makeup, the new Rouge Dior On Stage Matte and Ink Blur Matte lipstick collections offer a diffused finish that feels deeply modern but also highly wearable and comfortable. Philips tells *marie claire* why blur is the new matte, how Korean beauty changed how he thinks about lips, and why a bold matte lip can feel like an intellectual play.

Dior has described these new lipsticks as a “blurred matte” rather than a traditional matte. What’s the difference? Traditional matte lipstick can sometimes feel very flat and very graphic. What interested me about this formula is that it’s a luminous matte. It has a softness to it.

Can you explain the term “blur”? The blurring effect means the colour almost melts into the skin rather than sitting on top of it; there are no harsh lines or hard edges. If you have beautiful, luminous skin, the lipstick becomes part of that overall effect, and the luminosity continues throughout the face. That’s what feels modern to me. It’s not a cut-and-paste lip, it’s softer, more natural and much more wearable.

“[K-Beauty] inspired these formulas that allow you to build colour slowly and create a lip that feels integrated with the skin”

You mentioned K-Beauty as the inspiration. What have you learnt from Korean makeup techniques? Korean beauty has influenced the entire world, not only in skincare but also in makeup. I’ve spent a lot of time working in Korea with actors, models, magazines and, of course, with [Dior ambassador] Jisoo, so

I’ve had the opportunity to really observe how Korean women approach makeup. What fascinates me is that in the West we’re often very direct. We apply lipstick, liner or gloss and we’re done. In Korea, makeup is built up gradually; they approach lips almost the way we approach eye makeup. They shade, highlight, layer, soften edges and create dimension through subtle nuances. It’s a much more artistic way of applying lipstick. That philosophy inspired these formulas because they allow you to build colour slowly and create a lip that feels integrated with the skin.

How can we create the perfect blurred lip? The beauty of the Ink Blur formula is that it’s very forgiving. I like to apply a small amount of product to the centre of the lips first, then gently massage it outward using your finger. You can soften the edges with your fingertips, a cotton bud or a soft brush. The applicator was designed specifically for this technique. It delivers enough product without overwhelming the lips, allowing you to build colour gradually. You can stop there for a soft lip stain effect or continue layering for more intensity. That’s what I love about it. It can go from a subtle wash of colour to a classic statement lip.

“Even the deeper shades have a muted quality; they can be worn very softly or built up for more impact”

Why does the blurring effect feel so right in this moment? Because people don't want makeup to look overly perfect anymore. We're seeing a much softer beauty aesthetic. Makeup should enhance rather than dominate. The blurred lip fits perfectly within that philosophy because it looks effortless, even though there is still technique behind it. When you soften the edges and allow the colour to blend into the skin, the result feels more natural. It doesn't look messy, but it doesn't look overly constructed, either. That's a very contemporary approach to beauty.

Matte lips have a reputation for being drying. How did Dior overcome that challenge?

That's probably the biggest achievement of the formula. Historically, many matte lipsticks asked women to sacrifice comfort for performance. You accepted dryness because you loved the result. With these formulas, we wanted both. The texture feels lightweight and comfortable, almost like a lip balm, while still delivering long wear and a non-transfer finish. The blurring gels and polymers create flexibility and softness. That's why I don't really think of these as classic matte lipsticks – they're much more modern than that.

What inspired the shade range? I wanted the colours to feel approachable and effortless. Even the deeper shades have a muted quality; they can be worn very softly or built up for more impact. I didn't want shocking colours that would interrupt the concept. These are very easy-to-wear shades: rosewoods, peaches, nudes and, of course, the iconic Dior red, 999. They're shades that feel like a natural extension of your beauty rather than something separate from it.

You've had a long career in fashion. Are there any matte lip moments that still inspire you today? Absolutely. When I was studying fashion in Antwerp during the late eighties and early nineties, I was very influenced by Japanese designers and the emerging avant-garde fashion movement. I remember seeing women dressed in very graphic, conceptual clothing such as Comme des Garçons and Martin Margiela, wearing pale skin, strong brows and a matte

red lip. What fascinated me was that the red lip no longer looked seductive in the traditional sense. It looked intellectual. It looked powerful. That changed the way I thought about matte lipstick. It wasn't just about glamour anymore. It could communicate intelligence, strength and confidence.

What's your best professional tip for wearing matte lipstick?

Preparation. Whenever I'm doing makeup on a model or celebrity, I always start with lip care. I gently remove any dry skin and apply a generous layer of lip oil or lip balm – I love the Dior Addict Lip Glow Oil – before I begin the rest of the makeup. Then, just before lipstick application, I remove the excess product and apply the colour. It's a simple step, but it makes a huge difference to the final result.

What do you hope people feel the first time they wear one of these lipsticks?

I hope they're pleasantly surprised; these formulas are so soft, lightweight and easy to wear. I also hope they feel invited to play. The shades aren't intimidating, they're versatile, modern and adaptable. Ultimately, I want people to feel that these lipsticks fit naturally into their lives. They're beautiful, effortless and easy to wear and I think that's something everyone wants.



From left:
Dior Rouge Dior
On Stage Ink Blur
Matte in Grace and
Corolle, \$75 each;
Rouge Dior On
Stage Matte in Pink
D-Sire, Ambiguous
and Serum de
Rouge, \$75 each.



ERMANNO SCERVINO A/W 2026



MARIE ADAM-LEENAEERDT A/W 2026



AVAVAV A/W 2026



LANVIN A/W 2026



HODAKOVA A/W 2026



ROWA A/W 2026



ZIMMERMANN A/W 2026



UJOH A/W 2026



UJOH A/W 2026



Born and raised in Grasse in Provence, the birthplace of modern perfumery, Aurélien Guichard has fragrance in his DNA. Throughout his career as a perfumer, he has created fragrance for some of the world's most recognisable luxury houses, such as Dolce & Gabbana, Versace, Balenciaga and Narciso Rodriguez.

Yet it was the 2019 launch of his own fragrance house, Matiere Premiere, that allowed Guichard to fully realise his vision. Built on exceptional raw ingredients, the brand has become one of the fastest-growing names in luxury niche perfumery. Guichard is also one of the first perfumers to farm his own ingredients, cultivating organic roses, tuberose and lavandin in Grasse and pioneering the concept of “farmer to perfumer”.

Ahead of the launch of the brand's latest fragrance, Metal Lavender, *marie claire* sat down with Guichard to talk about the changing world of luxury, new methods and thinking, and why the future of fragrance begins in the field.

THE NEW NICHE

Having worked for some of the best-known luxury brands, seventh-generation scent-maker Aurélien Guichard has a paddock-to-perfume concept that is redefining modern luxury

You created fragrances for some of the world's biggest brands before launching Matiere Premiere. Why did you decide to start your own house? For 15 years I worked with fashion designers and creative people who were both artists and entrepreneurs. Then I decided I wanted to produce my own raw materials, particularly roses in Grasse, France, where I grew up. At first, Matiere Premiere didn't even exist as an idea. I simply wanted to preserve local know-how and reconnect with the world I grew up in – the perfumers, flower growers, pickers, grafters and artisans. The more I immersed myself in that world, the more I felt the fragrance industry wasn't paying enough tribute to what luxury truly is: the craftsmanship, expertise and the beauty of exceptional raw materials. That's what ultimately led me to create Matiere Premiere.

You're known as the first perfumer to also be a farmer. Why was that important to you?

When I planted my first 10,000 rose bushes in 2016, I became the first perfumer who was both a perfumer and a farmer. I realised that true luxury starts with access to extraordinary raw materials. By growing flowers myself, I could control every step of the process, from cultivation through to extraction and creation. Today we grow our own roses, tuberose and lavender organically in Grasse. Everything we produce is used exclusively for our fragrances. We don't buy additional flowers and we don't sell what we grow. It's entirely dedicated to our creations. For me, it's not a marketing story; it's the reality of what we do.

How does being so closely connected to the ingredients influence your creative process?

When I create for Matiere Premiere, I never start with a story or inspiration. I begin with a raw material. My goal is to transform an ingredient into a perfume while staying as faithful as possible to its natural texture. I don't want to hide it beneath layers of complexity. I want people to experience the beauty of that ingredient. Whether it's vanilla, rose, tuberose or lavender, the fragrance becomes an homage to the raw material itself.

Opposite:
Matiere Premiere
Metal Lavender
EDP, 100ml, \$449.

This page Aurélien
Guichard launched
the brand in 2019.

That's quite different from creating perfumes for designer brands. Completely different. When I work with designer brands, I create fragrances in service of their identity. Every house has its own DNA. For Matiere Premiere, the DNA is much simpler. We overdose one exceptional ingredient and build the fragrance around it. I try to create sophistication through simplicity. Traditionally, French perfumery associated sophistication with complexity. I prefer to find sophistication through clarity.

Matiere Premiere has become one of the fastest-growing niche fragrance brands in the world. Why do you think it's resonating with consumers?

Consumers today are incredibly informed. They appreciate authenticity, they appreciate quality, they appreciate transparency. When someone stops you in the street and asks what you're wearing, it's because the perfume is memorable. That's what people are looking for.

Your new eau de parfum, Metal Lavender, took more than two years to arrive. Why lavender?

Because lavender is one of Provence's most iconic ingredients, yet surprisingly few modern fragrances celebrate it. Many lavender perfumes feel traditional or nostalgic. I wanted to create something contemporary. Metal Lavender combines organic lavender that I grow myself with exceptional lavender from Haute-Provence. The metallic facet of the lavender inspired the name and gave me a way to reinterpret lavender through a modern lens. The fragrance is built with only 12 ingredients. It's minimalist, fresh and abstract. It smells like lavender but evolves into something almost musky and architectural.

"Many lavender perfumes feel traditional or nostalgic. I wanted to create something contemporary"

Fragrance lovers are increasingly experimenting with layering. What's your view?

I love it. I believe completely in freedom when it comes to perfume. Traditionally, luxury fragrance brands told consumers exactly how they should wear a scent. I prefer the opposite approach. If people want to layer fragrances and create something unique, that's fantastic. Ultimately, perfume is about expressing yourself. It should be enjoyable, personal and a little playful.



SILVER LININGS

Hannah Baxter was looking for love. In the process, she found an appreciation for her greying hair too

I always knew the greys would come for me. My mother, bless her, was fully salt-and-pepper by her late twenties, and my older sister's yelp is burrowed into my brain from when she spotted her first silver strand at 26. Not long after that, I joined the club, with my own smattering of greys on my head. *No problem*, I thought, before swiftly plucking them out and washing the evidence of my advancing age down the drain.

Three years later, during the height of pandemic anxiety, I pressed my 30-year-old face against the bathroom mirror to examine my scalp. *One, two, three, four ...* I counted the unwanted grey sprouts, armed with tweezers and a wide-open calendar to obsess

over them. My boyfriend at the time – who'd conveniently shaved his head bald – chuckled at my obvious stress, assuring me that you could barely see the hairs. I shut the door and continued my search for stragglers – a search that felt like a futile endeavour. Whenever I confronted a particularly unflattering photo of myself or caught my silver halo in harsh lighting, I winced ever so slightly.

I'm still young, I told myself as that seven-year relationship unravelled and another began a few months later. That one would end too, and to my surprise I found myself single and 35, with the type of silver power streak even my colourist gently agreed was more prominent than at our previous appointment. The hum of my occasional discomfort morphed into a rather loud roar, especially as I noticed that only a handful of my peers were starting to see greys. I caught myself mindlessly studying the heads of every woman who looked roughly my age on my morning commute, scanning for evidence that she, too, had a few errant sparkler strands and could commiserate.

My fixation persisted, despite otherwise feeling like the most fully realised version of myself for the first time in my life. My career was going well, I was living alone and thriving, and my friend group was flawless. But being single and approaching middle age meant that it wasn't just about me learning to find acceptance with my greys – it was about others accepting them.

Trying to date in the 2020s is already an odd experience. As someone new to the apps (Hinge, Raya and Tinder, *oh my*), I already felt out of touch with my surroundings, and struggling with such an obvious marker that I was on the climb to 40 left my confidence a little shaky. Suddenly, my appearance – which, as a beauty editor and human woman in the digital age, is already pretty top of mind – felt like an even more conspicuous form of social currency. My age and the photos I chose to post, along with my height, location and political views, became my stats and were placed, quite literally, in the palm of my potential suitor.

Even with my apprehension, I found myself in the middle of the New York dating scene. Scary, yes. But there are, believe it or not, a plethora of ridiculously attractive and interesting people in this city, and I began to fill my calendar with first dates, a handful of seconds and a very select few thirds: drinks; dinners; work nights spent out way too late. Did some people spot my silvery stands under the cloudy bar lights? A few did, yes – and to my delight, most of them had only glowing things to say. As it turns out, the whole “silver fox” moniker doesn't just apply to the George Clooney doppelgängers of the world, so much so that I even started showing up in my signature slicked-back bun, the style that puts my grey streak on full display. I got comments – not about my hair, though, but about how nice it was to see my whole face and neck. Where I saw flaws, the person sitting across from me saw something else, something beautiful.

That is not to say there were not terrible dates. I sat through some excruciatingly awkward small talk. I was ghosted. But if it was because they were turned off by the sight of a, quite frankly, hot woman with grey hair, they did not say. Even if they had, it wouldn't have mattered. After a few months of mostly great and good dates, I realised I was having fun, and I noticed that my attitude towards the ritual as a whole felt much more relaxed than I expected – it was easy even, like I had very little to lose. Yes, I was older, with a handful of fine lines around my eyes and a grey patch that even the most artfully placed highlights couldn't hide, but I was also seasoned, with a very low tolerance for games or mixed signal nonsense. I realised how much I liked this woman I was becoming – confident, happy and

Where I saw flaws, the person sitting across from me saw something else, something beautiful

relaxed – face-framing greys and all. If a date didn't go well, I could much more easily move on to the next without spending precious time and energy wondering why. It was the kind of self-acceptance I had been trying to find, a realisation I came to as I applied my weekly moisturising hair mask on a lazy Sunday. (My hair may be growing more salt-and-pepper by the day, but so help me that salt-and-pepper will be hydrated and glossy.) This meant more to me than any validation from a handsome stranger ever could. It just took me nearly two decades of dating to understand that.

Greys, as I have come to acknowledge them, are a marker of my experience. I am not 26 anymore, and my accomplishments – and my hair – are a reflection of that. My successes and failures are those of a woman learning to love herself more fully while also opening herself up to someone who would see me, whatever colour my hair, and find me just as attractive, just as interesting and just as worthy as my younger self. While my thrice-a-year blonde-colour appointments still stand, my mission is no longer to completely disguise the truth of my age, especially for the sake of someone else. Instead, I'm stepping out of the grey area to learn even more about who this latest version of myself is and what she desires for herself. And not for nothing, my boyfriend, who is seven years younger than I am, thinks that's attractive as hell.



Before updating her online dating profile, Hannah Baxter “always texted friends to ask, ‘Can you see my greys in this shot?’”

LEIGHTON

BEAUTY TALK



MEESTER

WORDS ALEXANDRA ENGLISH

Known for her impeccable comic timing and her penchant for playing out-of-reach rich girls, Leighton Meester has turned her attention to a fragrance for the every woman

A fragrance that claims to be scientifically proven to boost self-esteem? I'm going to need more than a spritz behind the ears; I'm going to need it hooked to my veins.

"Oh my god, me too!" agrees Leighton Meester, a little more enthusiastically than you'd expect of a prolific actor who's been in the spotlight since she was 13. "I need a boost, honestly, truly," she adds, laughing. It's serendipitous, then, that Meester is the global ambassador for Elizabeth Arden's first new fragrance in eight years, the Eternal Aura eau de parfum, which claims to do just that.

The actor has interrupted a family day of backyard swimming and barbecuing at home in California to speak with *marie claire* about the self-esteem-enhancing fragrance. On my screen, her bronde lob fringes her face in natural waves and her skin glows.

While Meester became famous for playing *Gossip Girl*'s rich headband-wearing mean girl, Blair Waldorf, she actually got her start as a model – she booked a Bruce Weber-lensed Ralph Lauren shoot when she was 11, and worked with Sofia Coppola on a prom-themed editorial shoot when she was 14. That love of fashion and beauty has stayed with her throughout her career, so a collaboration with a century-old beauty brand makes total sense.

"Working with Elizabeth Arden is such a dream," Meester says. "If I could think of any brand from childhood that I was aware of, it would be Elizabeth Arden; it's so iconic. It's such an empowering, exciting and, for me, nostalgic brand to work with."

In the name of journalistic integrity, I've doused myself in Eternal Aura before our interview, and as Meester speaks, she somehow transforms from A-list/Blair Waldorf/wife of my high-school celebrity crush (Adam Brody, in case you somehow missed it) into someone familiar, almost – dare I say – a friend. My self-esteem sure is boosted; I tell myself to rein it in.

So what does *she* love about this fragrance? Before agreeing to represent Eternal Aura, Meester says she needed to make sure she genuinely loved the scent. This ambassadorship is a passionate partnership. "The most important thing [in the beginning] was asking myself, 'Is this something that I would wear?'" she says. The answer was a resounding yes.

Eternal Aura, in its pink glass bottle with brushed-gold cap (its design taken from the wallpaper once found in Elizabeth Arden salons), is an olfactory journey from the opening zing of dragonfruit, pink pepper and golden pear intermingled with magnolia and peony to the soft landing in the form of sandalwood, musk and a hint of tonka bean. At the heart of Eternal Aura is an exclusive co-distillate of rose and ambrette; it'll make you rethink everything you thought you knew about amber fragrance.

"I appreciate really grounded, earthy scents, and Eternal Aura really has that, but if you'd asked me [when I first experienced it], I would have said it was floral," Meester says. "It's a really beautiful symphony of both. The earthy elements are really able to ground you, and then the floral is so classic and feminine and I find it really uplifting."

**"It's for the woman
who wants to get things
done and she wants
to feel good"**

A scent that can do both? It's like they've bottled the whole of a woman (we contain multitudes, etcetera). "Yes!" she agrees. "The feminine side, the grounded side; she wants to get things done and she wants to feel good."

But it was more than the scent that attracted her to the ambassadorship. "I really appreciated Elizabeth Arden's point of view and the philosophy behind the campaign," she says. At the heart of that philosophy: female confidence. "It's all about women taking control," Meester says.

Appropriately, Eternal Aura was created by two women: senior perfumer Natasha Côté-Mouzannar and master perfumer Anne Flipo, alongside IFF's Science of Wellness division. Their directive? To create a fragrance made with natural ingredients that are scientifically proven to enhance energy, self-esteem and happiness – everything a woman needs to make it through the day in 2026. It's an empowerment elixir: one spritz should have you feeling more radiant, confident and resilient.

Speaking of radiant, Meester's complexion is so glowy it's almost distracting. With a burst of confidence that can only have come from the pink and gold bottle sitting on my desk, I ask her to delay getting back to her family for a little longer to share her skincare tips. She sweetly obliges. "My skin has actually gotten a lot better, but I've always struggled with breakouts ever since I was a teenager, and

I think that was connected to the products I was using and my lifestyle," she says. "I'm not going to drive myself crazy and never eat sugar and never drink alcohol," she adds with a laugh. "Like, I have to live my life too, so every once in a while I gotta use concealer."

What revolutionised Meester's complexion was taking her skincare routine down a notch: a gentle foaming cleanser with essential oils, snail mucin ("it saved

my skin when I was working in Australia [on TV series *Good Cop/Bad Cop* in 2024]"), and thick moisturiser to combat the dry California desert heat. The non-negotiable: zinc sunscreen ("I almost never ever don't have sunscreen on my face except for when I'm sleeping").

"Having my routine really pared back means I can stick to it, because days are busy, life is busy, and also I travel a lot and I don't want to have a million products that I'm carrying," she says. On that note, she pulls out a plum Elizabeth Arden Eight Hour Cream Lip Protectant Stick. "This is so not a plug," she says, laughing, "but I literally have this stuff in my sleeve, even when I go out surfing. I have every colour."

A quick swipe of lip balm and a wave goodbye and Meester is headed out to her backyard to rejoin the summer fun, leaving a trail of Eternal Aura in her wake.



Elizabeth Arden Eternal Aura EDP, 100ml, \$148.



ASK SALLY

Our beauty director,
Sally Hunwick, answers
your questions

*Why is my foundation
making me look old?*

There is a sort of irony when the very thing designed to make our skin look more uniform, luminous and youthful starts to settle into fine lines and pores, and do the exact opposite of what we want it to do.

If you're feeling foundation-shy, you are certainly not alone. I have met many women who say they don't wear foundation any more because they feel it ages them. And to some degree they are not wrong.

Applied incorrectly, there is the chance you could end up with product that cakes, creases and sinks into pores. But there are ways to keep your foundation working for you all day long, and prepping your skin is key, even if your formula comes with hydrating ingredients.

It's something L'Oréal Paris global makeup artist Harold James recently reiterated to me. "Prepping the skin is the most important [step] if you want good makeup," he told me from Cannes Film Festival, where he had been applying makeup for A-listers such as Andie MacDowell, Eva Longoria and Gillian Anderson. "Starting with a good moisturiser [is important]."

Also key is application of foundation. "[I always] apply in thin layers," James says. "I do one thin layer first, and layer another on top of it. This will give you amazing, flawless skin. If you have some discolouration or spots, you can just come back afterwards with soft motions." It means you can have quite a lot of coverage but it will still look natural, he explains.

Then, as a last step, James locks the foundation down with a fixing spray. "I use the Infallible Setting Mist by L'Oréal Paris," he says. "When you do that, [makeup] stays immaculate for the whole night or the whole day."

Foundation formulations also count. First, work out what you are trying to achieve. Is it a matte finish? A glowing complexion? Do you want a natural skin-like look or a polished medium cover. Are you trying to even out the appearance of pigmentation or redness?

Estée Lauder has recently released its new Double Wear Stay-In-Place Longwear Matte Foundation. Ideal if you have oily or combination skin, this formulation offers

36 hours of oil control for a matte-looking complexion that literally lasts all day – and all night, if you need it to. The new formulation is more flexible, blendable and breathable, meaning you can start with fine layers and build on them as preferred.

Meanwhile, if you are after skin glow, Make Up For Ever has a new foundation designed to add radiance while perfecting skin tone and balancing out shine. It, too, is buildable and can go from a skin-like tint to a medium coverage that will melt into the skin, rather than sit on top, which is when cakiness can occur.

For a satin finish that won't disrupt sensitive skin, Tower 28's new foundation is designed to team up with the brand's much-loved concealer. Easy to apply, with the ability to even out skin tone, this gentle formula won't irritate or cause break-outs on problematic complexions.

If you still don't feel good about foundation, consider switching to a skin tint, which focuses on skin health with the bonus of improved skin uniformity. I like versions from RMS Beauty, Chantecaille and ILIA, which all boast clean ingredient lists. Or skip a base altogether. The key to great makeup is feeling good in your own skin after all.



- 1 Tower 28 Swipe Serum Foundation, \$59.
- 2 Make Up For Ever HD Skin Balancing & Perfecting Foundation, \$79.
- 3 Estée Lauder Double Wear Stay-In-Place Longwear Matte Foundation, \$85.
- 4 L'Oréal Paris True Match Nude Plumping Tinted Serum, \$44.99.
- 5 Chantecaille Just Skin Tinted Moisturiser SPF15*, \$115.
- 6 ILIA Beauty Super Serum Skin Tint SPF40*, \$79.
- 7 RMS Beauty SunCoverup Super Tint SPF50*, \$80.
- 8 L'Oréal Paris Infallible 3-Second Setting Mist, \$29.99. *Always read the label and follow the directions for use.

Seriously Good Skincare

Dermal
THERAPY



**MELT AWAY
THE DAY..**

◆ Deeply cleanses
without stripping
the skin

◆ Hydrates while
supporting the
skin barrier

◆ Leaves the skin
feeling soft and
nourished

◆ Packed with skin
loving ingredients:
Hyaluronic Acid, Ceramides,
Peptides & Antioxidants

Glow & Tell

marie claire's top picks of the latest products

WORDS BRIAR CLARK

THE ULTIMATE BEAUTY SLEEP

These evening skincare essentials require minimal effort but promise maximum results, all while you sleep.

Sweet dreams

You might be at rest, but that doesn't mean your skincare needs to be. Raeso's new sleep mask works on a three-phase time-release system that helps to repair the skin during its natural sleep cycle so that it feels plump when you wake.

1 Raeso Lunar Veil Chrono-Active Sleep Mask, \$149.

Smooth like silk

Spring clean your skincare routine and combat seasonal skin fatigue with this Scandinavian rowanberry water and butterfly pea flower extract-infused exfoliating toner, which works while you sleep. Come morning, discover a smoothed, refined and brighter complexion.

2 Ole Henriksen Silkfoliant Daily Tri-Acid Smoothing Toner, \$49.

How illuminating

Augustinus Bader targets dull skin with the brand's proprietary TFC8® technology and a synergistic blend of vitamin C and ergothioneine in this cutting-edge serum, providing an efficient and efficacious path to an illuminated complexion.

3 Augustinus Bader The Vitamin C Serum, \$595.

MINIMAL MAKEUP

Warmer weather means essential makeup only.

Great base

No-makeup makeup meets soft-glam sensibilities with



Fenty's flexible matte foundation. It promises transfer, crease and water-resistant longwear, as well as a featherweight feeling on skin.

4 Fenty Beauty Pro Filt'r Fluid Flex Foundation in 166N, \$72.

Light flush

A spring makeup bag isn't complete without a blush or two. Inspired by velatura painting techniques, Violette_FR Plume Blush gives skin a soft-focus, weightless flush. Worn alone or layered, the matte-finish shades produce a romantic diffusion of colour.

5 Violette_FR Plume Blush in Souvenir de Volubilis, \$56.

GOLDEN HOUR

Luxe up your morning routine with a revitalising body care and fragrance pairing.

Sunlight bottled

Capture the feeling of the final hours of sunlight on a spring day with this luminous scent. Coach Gold opens with sparkling fruity notes and elevated pink pepper to reveal the warmth of vanilla and almond blossom at its heart, leaving a golden amber trail in its wake.

6 Coach Gold Parfum, 90ml, \$214.

Take it off

This innovative formula contains hyaluronic acid, ceramides, collagen, peptides, and vitamins B5, C, E and F to treat skin. Hydrating, and barrier-supporting, skin is left cleansed but never stripped.

7 Dermal Therapy After-Hours Cleansing Balm, \$24.99.

EASY HAIR, DON'T CARE

Low maintenance is in, so prioritise a single haircare product that does the job of a multi-step routine.

Pick me up

This root-lifting refresher gives flat hair the boost it needs to look salon fresh with just a quick spritz. Adding a perfect-for-styling texture and grip that's also residue-free, it'll create the fuller-looking finish you've been seeking.

8 L'Oréal Paris Elvive Collagen Lifter Big Hair Day Refreshing Volume Spray, \$21.99.

NEW

BANGN BODY

Vanilla

COLLECTION

Comforting notes of
vanilla bean, tonka
bean, creamy
coconut, caramel
and pistachio.
A fresh take on
a timeless scent.

with
**SAMMY
ROBINSON**



1. VANILLA FIRMING CREAM CLEANSER
2. VANILLA JUMBO FIRMING LOTION

3. VANILLA FIRMING OIL
4. VANILLA FIRMING LOTION

Face-Approved Bodycare.

We believe your body deserves
face-level skincare. That's why
every formula is powered by
high-performance Australian
ingredients to visibly firm,
hydrate and nourish.



SPRING TRAINING

Speed up your skin's spring revival with these refresh requisites



Beloved by those chasing glass skin, this pore-refining sheet mask earned cult-favourite status for its almost reflective, radiant results.

Biodance Bio-Collagen Real Deep Mask, \$38 (for four).



This creamy serum teams smoothness-supporting niacinamide with melasyl, designed to promote a brighter, more even-looking complexion.

L'Oréal Paris Revitalift Laser Dark Spot Creamy-Serum, \$59.99.



Tired of stretch marks, scars or uneven skin? Create a hydrating twice-daily ritual with this blend of vitamins and nourishing oils.

Bio-Oil Skincare Oil, \$14.99 (for 60ml).



This day cream's rich texture glides over skin, with hyaluronic acid, creatine and co-enzyme Q10, helping to enhance skin and smooth wrinkles.

Nivea Q10 Anti-Wrinkle Extra Firming Day Cream SPF30, \$28. Always read the label and follow the directions for use.



CHRISTIAN DIOR HAUTE COUTURE A/W 2026



Ojar Solar Flair EDP, 100ml, \$375.

SOLAR POWER

Warm up your fragrance wardrobe with a sun-drenched scent. Crisp mandarin and pink peppercorn may greet your senses first, but it's the syrupy honey, creamy vanilla and sweet musk heart that will have the compliments rolling in.



CHANEL HAUTE COUTURE A/W 2026

TRY, BUY, LOVE.

WORDS
DELANEY LOANE



GILDED AGE

Hunting for a face tan that won't leave your skin streaky or dangerously close to orange? The pearlescent pigments in these golden drops give skin an instant dewy freshness, with a believable bronze glow visible in just one hour.

Dior Solar The Self-Tanning Drops, \$116.



SWEET ESCAPE

Reimagined with a dreamy vanilla scent, these versatile face and body formulas allow you to lock in supple, sweet-smelling skin. Layer the lotion over the oil or apply separately – either approach ensures a true sensory treat.

Bangn Body Firming Oil, \$68, and **Firming Lotion**, \$48.

MELTED BUTTER

Butter yellow has already secured its status as our wardrobe's new favourite neutral, and now Chanel's chic golden gloss has helped it claim the same title in makeup. The hue adds sunny warmth, working a treat as a lipstick topper or simply over your natural lip.



Chanel Rouge Coco Hydra Gloss in Fabuleuse, \$65.

Photography Launchmetrics Spotlight

STANDARD PROCEDURE

The right surgeon matters
just as much as the procedure

WHETHER IT'S A SUBTLE REFINEMENT OR A more significant change, deciding to undergo cosmetic surgery is a deeply personal choice. Yet before researching procedures, recovery times or desired outcomes, there is one decision that deserves your attention first: choosing the right surgeon.

In an age of social media recommendations, online reviews and before-and-after transformations, it can be difficult to distinguish what's meaningful information. With so much content available, prospective patients are left wondering what qualifications matter, which credentials to look for and how to identify a surgeon with the appropriate training and experience.

Taking the time to research your surgeon thoroughly is an important first step. Patients should verify qualifications, seek information from trusted, independent sources. One way to navigate this process is by looking for the Australian and New Zealand Board of Cosmetic Plastic Surgery (ANZBCPS) certification mark. This identifies registered specialist plastic surgeons who meet strict regulatory requirements for ongoing education and professional standards specific to cosmetic surgery.

While no cosmetic procedure is without risk, choosing a surgeon with recognised qualifications and a commitment to continuing professional development can help patients make more informed decisions about their care. Equally important is feeling comfortable asking questions during consultations and taking the time needed to consider all available information before proceeding.

Patients should also be wary of making decisions based solely on price, promotions or social media content. Cosmetic surgery is a medical procedure, and understanding the credentials, training and professional standards of your surgeon is vital.



For those considering cosmetic surgery, resources such as the Australian Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons' Making the Right Choices guide offer practical information to help patients understand what to expect before, during and after a procedure.

When it comes to cosmetic surgery, informed choices start with trusted information. Looking for the ANZBCPS certification mark can be an important step in identifying a registered specialist plastic surgeon who meets recognised professional standards in cosmetic surgery.

aestheticplasticsurgeons.org.au



Disclaimer: This article is for educational purposes. All surgeries carry risks. Results and outcomes of cosmetic surgery may differ between individuals and depend on multiple factors. It is always recommended to seek individual medical advice and/or a second opinion prior to committing to any surgical procedure.

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LIFESTYLE



The sun-soaked terrace of artist Clara Carvajal's home offers views of Mallorca's UNESCO World Heritage-listed Serra de Tramuntana mountain range.

This month we discover an artist's retreat within an 18th-century monastery on the Spanish island of Mallorca. Also this issue, *marie claire's* feature's editor shares all the details of her recent Euro summer trip, and we bring you the latest industry news



The church tower of
Valldemossa
Charterhouse.

Opposite The living
spaces are filled with
an eclectic mix of
art and furniture.

MALLORCA, SPAIN

MONASTIC



MEMORY

An artist's retreat within an 18th-century monastery in Mallorca blends art, history and landscape to create a truly unique home

Set within an 18th-century monastery in Mallorca's Serra de Tramuntana mountain range, artist Clara Carvajal's summer home is steeped in history, family memories and the quiet rhythms of island life.

The centuries-old retreat is one of 17 private residences featured in *Inside Mallorca* by photographer Ricardo Labougle. The book opens the doors to the homes of architects, artists, designers and other creative figures who have made the Mediterranean island their own, and captures the distinctive character, beauty and effortless elegance of life in Mallorca today.

More than a summer residence, Clara's home is a place of convergence. In the village of Valldemossa, the Charterhouse, as it is called, remains one of the island's most emblematic landmarks. To reach Clara's place, visitors pass through its central garden and along vaulted galleries that once connected the monks' private cells. Behind one of those doors lies a residence that has retained its character for more than two centuries.

The house is arranged across two floors, following the traditional layout of the monks' quarters. On the ground level, three adjoining rooms – a dining room, reading room and bedroom – continue to serve their original purposes, their simplicity setting the tone for the rest of the home. Upstairs, additional



Growing up within these ancient stone walls shaped Clara's understanding of time, memory and space



Left Clara Carvajal at work in her artist's retreat, where the austerity of the former monastery allows her art to be the focus.

Above One of Clara's own pieces, *The Displaced Hive*, dominates a wall in the living room. It features 25 woodcuts printed on Japanese Okawara paper.

Right Glimpses of Mallorca's Serra de Tramuntana mountain range from the dining room.





Left The home's position high in the mountains offers spectacular views of the surrounding area.

Below Clara's styling choices include books, sculptures and objets d'art from her travels.

living spaces open to sweeping views across the Tramuntana mountains.

Clara spent her childhood summers here, and growing up within these ancient stone walls shaped her understanding of time, memory and space. Her family's connection to Mallorca stretches back more than a century. During Barcelona's Semana Trágica of 1909, her great-great uncles fled the unrest and sought refuge on the island. They later acquired the apartment within the Charterhouse, which has remained in the family since then and is now Clara's retreat.

The Charterhouse carries layers of history that extend far beyond the personal. Composer Frédéric Chopin and writer George Sand spent the winter of 1838–39 here in a neighbouring cell. Their brief but intense stay produced some of Chopin's preludes and Sand's celebrated memoir, *A Winter in Mallorca*. That cultural legacy still permeates the building, lending weight to the silence of its stone corridors.

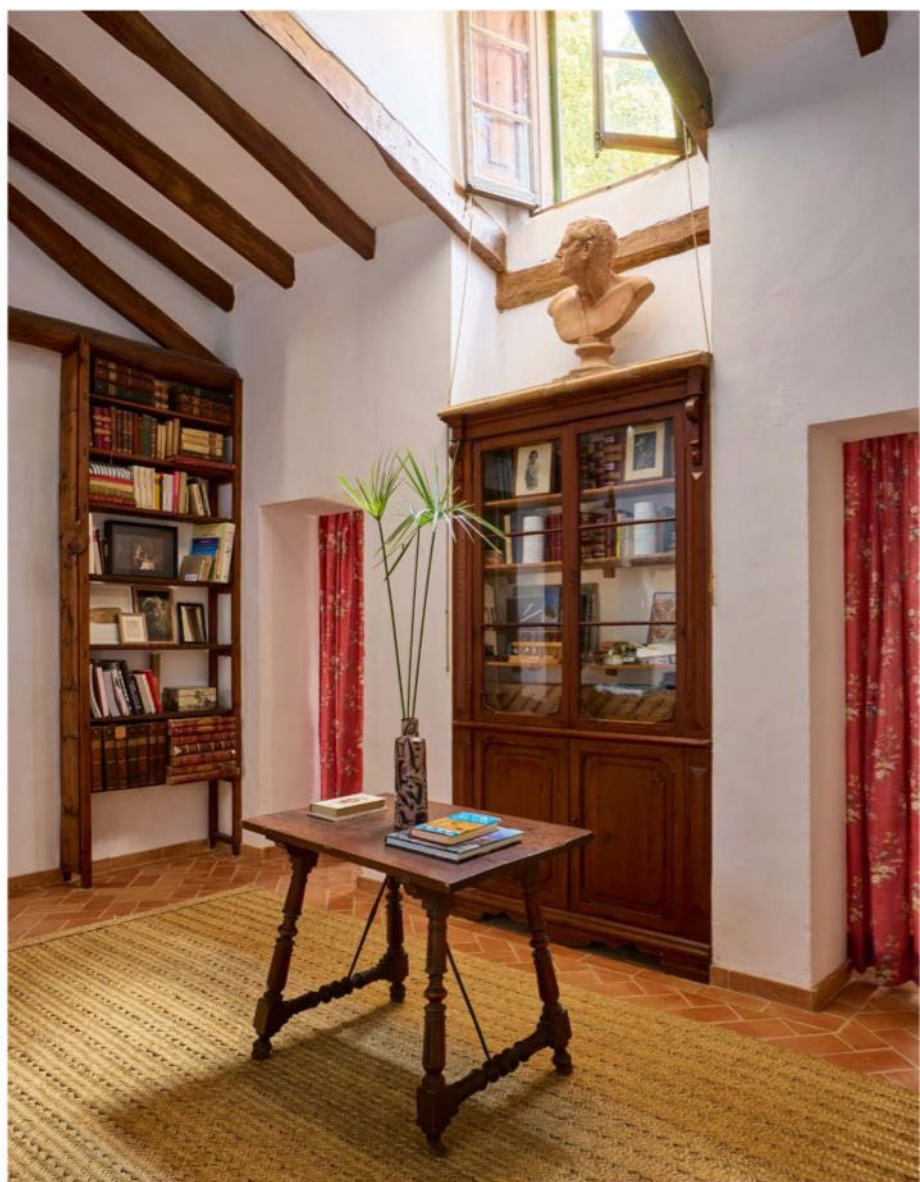
A visual artist whose practice encompasses sculpture, engraving and photography, Clara has hung several of her own works on the home's whitewashed walls. They sit alongside family portraits, drawings and objects collected during her travels, creating a deeply personal landscape in which art and memory coexist with ease.

Life in Valldemossa follows an unhurried rhythm. Clara spends her mornings in the studio, while afternoons often unfold on the terrace overlooking the mountains, where friends gather around the table. When time allows, she wanders through the village shops or drives to a nearby cove to swim in the Mediterranean.

The house brings together the monastic austerity of its architecture, the cultural echoes of Chopin and Sand, a family history shaped by refuge and continuity, and Clara's own presence as both artist and custodian. Within these walls, past and present remain in constant conversation, making this corner of the Charterhouse not simply a home, but a living fragment of Valldemossa's history.

This is an edited extract from Inside Mallorca by photographer Ricardo Labougle (Vendome Press, \$155). Out now.

Composer Frédéric Chopin and writer George Sand spent the winter of 1838–39 here



The bedroom draws together styling elements from several centuries, including the centrepiece four-poster bed.



1 Casa Blanco mirror, \$980. 2 Tom Dixon pendant light, \$1175 from Living Edge. 3 Rachel Donath dining chair, \$970. 4 Christine J. Atkins *Still Life* artwork, \$1190 from Kate Nixon.



Imbue your home with Mallorcan monastery vibes via earthy hues, rustic finishes and sculptures

5 McMullin dining table, \$2999.
6 Najaf Rugs rug, \$7500.
7 *Inside Mallorca* by Ricardo Labougle (Vendome Press), \$155. 8 Abask jug, \$250.
9 Toast blankets, from \$510.

10 Pottery Barn bed, \$3199.
11 Trudon candlestick, \$149 from David Jones. 12 Willow Pottery planter, \$65 from Toast.
13 &Tradition floor lamp, from \$1430 from Cult Design.
14 Città cushion cover, \$110.
15 Pottery Barn sculpture, \$149.



Left Stunned by the views on the train from Milan to Venice; Vernazza, in Italy's Cinque Terre; and passing through the French-Italian Alps by rail.



Sculptures in the The Niobe Room in Florence's Uffizi gallery. Above In the photo booth at the Tate Modern in London.

EUROVISIONS

Europe? In summer? Not particularly groundbreaking, but when you travel the continent by train, you are guaranteed to see much more than you bargained for

WORDS ALEXANDRA ENGLISH

Last year, I wrote a travel story for this very magazine essentially dissing anyone who went to Europe for the summer. I was *dismayed* at the sheer volume of unsolicited holiday pics on Instagram; I couldn't fathom why anyone would want to leave the coziness of winter for sweltering days trapped among sunburnt, capital-T Tourists; travelling in the shoulder-season was *the* travel hack I declared, rather smugly.

Well, dear reader, call me converted and give me a solo in the choir because after my first European summer, I am ready to sing its praises. While there is a lot to love about Seville in autumn (shade), Cefalù in spring (breeze) and London in winter (Christmas magic), visiting Europe in summer is like seeing the continent for the very first time. Which is exactly how I behave.

As my partner and I zigzag our way from London to Paris and down the length of Italy before hopping over to do the same across Spain and Portugal, we lean into being Tourists (although not as clueless or as in-the-way as the *regular* tourists – we're *cool* tourists). We take a spin on the London Eye, stomp up the Eiffel Tower, see every duomo Italy has to offer, sing like Lizzie McGuire at the Colosseum, get shivers in Pompeii, marvel at Gaudi's creations in Barcelona, shop at Mango and Zara in Madrid and watch Portugal play in the men's FIFA World Cup in Lisbon, where we also ride the iconic Tram 28 and run out of fingers counting how many *pastéis de nata* we scoff. We see every iconic work of art there is to see, and send a box of souvenirs home – twice.

To cram so much into a month-long trip, it could have been tempting to fly everywhere – because what's a one-hour flight among Schengen Area friends, right? I'll tell you what it is: a waste of time, and all you'll see is an endless rotation

of customs security belts and how many creative ways there are to number terminal gates.

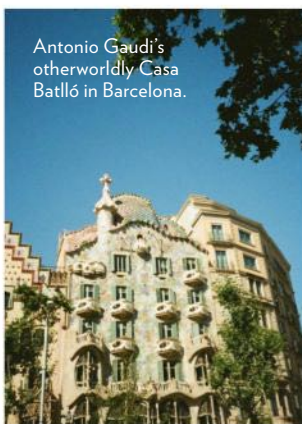
Instead, we travel by Eurail, securing first-class tickets for the duration of our trip. (We only fly twice, and only when we're desperate, like when we hit the Tyrrhenian Sea.) If my type B boyfriend were writing this article, he would tell you that you could wing it and book tickets as you go, but I prefer to have them all pre-booked and sitting in the Rail Planner app (and also printed in duplicate, a copy in each of our bags, just in case) weeks beforehand. With first-class tickets, we're guaranteed to sit together and there's space in the luggage rack for our suitcases. We're also greeted with a welcome drink and a snack, can recline on huge seats and have plenty of legroom. There are also charging ports within easy reach and a personal garbage bin (I'm not sure why this feels important to mention, but it does). It's all very *comfy*.

We tick off 10 cities in five countries in four weeks, but by travelling along the ground, we see far more than that. Rather than catching glimpses of England and France from overhead, on the twoish-hour Eurostar journey from London to Paris, our view changes from blocks of flats to countryside dotted with cottages before we plunge into darkness for about 20 minutes and try not to think too hard about being under the English Channel. When we pop back

to the surface, the countryside remains but the cottages have been replaced by distinctly French farmhouses and ramshackle-chic chateaux. *Très beau, oui oui.*

The eight-hour journey from Paris to Milan is truly majestic. To borrow from Alanis Morissette, I've got one hand in my packet of crisps and the other is holding a glass of wine as the horizon goes from flat to slightly rolling to outright mountainous, with snow caps and cloud coverage on peaks so tall you can't crane your neck enough

Antonio Gaudi's otherworldly Casa Batlló in Barcelona.





Left San Montano beach on the tiny island of Ischia, a ferry ride from Naples.
Right Complimentary wine in the first class train carriage.
Far right Rome's famous Colosseum.



to see them. The train crosses the French-Italian Alps – home to Europe's most famous peak, Mont Blanc – before entering the dramatic Susa Valley, where medieval buildings cling to one another on distant hilltops. We feel sorry for anyone seeing this from a bird's eye view, including the birds.

The route we take through Italy isn't particularly original, but it's beautiful. From Milan to Venice, we pass the Dolomites and Lake Garda in the distance and cross the four-kilometre causeway that connects the island to the mainland. There, we swap the train for water buses, and a missed stop happily lands us at the Biennale. From

Venice, we cross the Venetian plain and speed through the mountains to Florence, where we do easy day trips to Pisa and to pick at *fritto misto* while sipping on limoncello spritz in Vernazza. On the way from Florence to Rome, the houses look like piles and piles of terracotta tiles occasionally interrupted by vineyards. It's very tunnelly going through the Apennine foothills from Rome to Naples, and when we get there, we skip Capri for the tiny yet-to-be-Instagramified island of Ischia. The train from Barcelona to Madrid is three hours of flat landscape as you cross the Aragón; it's perfect book-reading and wine-drinking time. In the end, we swap the 10-hour overnight train ride from Madrid to Lisbon for an 85-minute morning flight. It's the only time I will concede that flying is a better option, given the duration

is so drastically different it means we get an extra day in Portugal – and that's a lot of *bifana*.

Our experience with the flight at the end just proves the train was the right choice for the rest of the trip. And these trains don't trundle along – they travel at ear-popping speeds. There's no excruciatingly lengthy passport control or customs to get through, and there's no moment when you think your bag might not have made it. You don't have to press a call button or stay seated; you can go to the bar carriage yourself. There's no turbulence. Even if the journey takes longer, it's worth it to save on all the faff and waiting around that surrounds air travel.

For all my superfluous slandering of people who love to summer in Europe, I have emerged on the other side one of its greatest fans (as long as you don't make me stand among the sweaty, sunburnt Tourists at a baggage carousel, wondering where my bag is).

What to bring

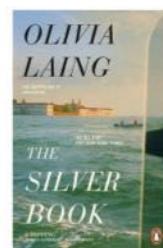


Beats Studio headphones, \$529.95.

HEADPHONES

Just because you're in a first class carriage doesn't mean it's quiet.

Bring your own headphones so you can drown out everyone who's not using theirs.



The Silver Book by Olivia Laing (Penguin, \$24.99). Out September 8.

A GOOD BOOK

Olivia Laing's new novel, *The Silver Book*, is set in 1970s Venice, but also traverses Rome and Florence. It's a beautiful story in itself, but extra meaningful when you've just been to the place you're reading about.



July Checked CaseSafe suitcase, \$445.

A STURDY SUITCASE

My July CaseSafe suitcase copped an absolute beating by being packed within an inch of its life and dragged along cobblestone streets for four weeks. I'm happy to report no signs of damage though. It's ready and waiting for our next trip.

Above Ruins in Pompeii, an easy day trip from Naples.
Below In Vernazza, a short trip from Florence.



The view from a waterbus in Venice, Italy.





LINGER LONGER IN... ... London

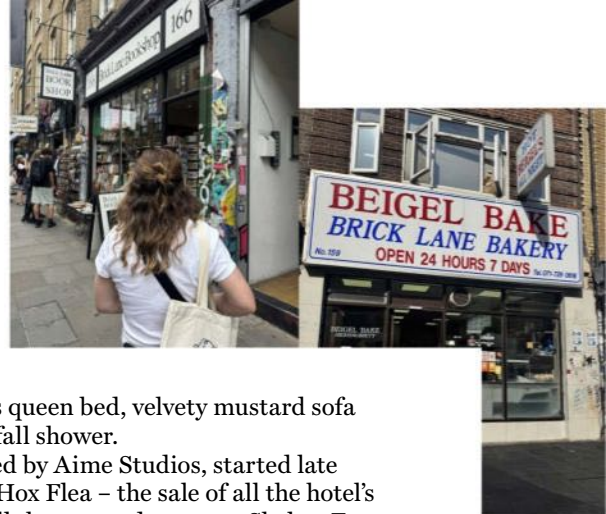
London, famously, isn't new. But even if you've been here plenty of times before, it still makes a great jumping off point for a European train journey. We stay for a week to recover from the jet lag and acclimatise to the heat, as we hadn't accounted for the temperature conversion that means 30°C in London is equivalent to 45°C at home.

After a full day of hitting all the touristy hotspots (read: trying to stay awake), we're desperate for something else to do that will stop us from sleeping for three days straight. This is where staying at The Hoxton Shoreditch comes to the rescue: The Hoxton hotel group recently joined the Dis-loyalty Collective, a travel and food membership that rewards never going to the same place twice by offering discounts for first-time visits, and free daily coffee at cafes all over the neighbourhood, ensuring you don't wind up with an accidental local. A barista or a bartender should never learn your order while you're on holiday – you're here to *escape* routine, not make a new one.

And so not only does exploring the city through the Dis-loyalty app keep us occupied until bed time, it's also an excellent way to explore a familiar city, with the app pointing us to newly opened bars and restaurants we wouldn't necessarily have known about otherwise.

In saying that, there's so much available within The Hoxton itself that you may not even need to leave if you're only staying a couple of nights. The hotel recently celebrated its 20th anniversary by undergoing an Anne Hathaway-movie-style makeover of all 210 of its rooms as well as introducing the new Cosy Up room category – a larger version of the Cosy room – which was indeed

It's not a visit to London without a stop at the Camden Markets (left), Brick Lane Bookshop (right) or the famous Beigel Bake Bakery.



extra cosy, with its queen bed, velvety mustard sofa and heavenly rainfall shower.

The redesign, led by Aime Studios, started late last year with the Hox Flea – the sale of all the hotel's old furnishings. All the proceeds went to Shelter From The Storm, an independent homeless shelter, which is important information for those who want to know their hotel not only looks good, but is also doing good.

Completed in January, the makeover has retained all the original hotel's industrial-chic charm that makes it *so* Shoreditch, while adding contemporary flourishes such as fun contemporary art and vintage furniture finds. Think: mid-century, dark wood and marble offset by colourful velvet, bouclé and just-right floral upholstery in the dining areas.

On the ground floor, Il Bambini Club is an all-day Italian restaurant that serves pizza and spritzes and is a great place to do some "research" before going to Italy (it's important to know whether your preferred spritz is an Aperol, Campari or limoncello). The buzzy foyer plays host to busy laptop workers and chilled holiday coffee drinkers; there's a photobooth near the lift, a mini market where you can shop the hotel's ceramics range, and the tricky-to-find-but-worth-it Peruvian rooftop bar, Llama Inn, which accepts the Dis-loyalty discount, of course.

Even without the Dis-loyalty app (which requires a membership fee), there's plenty to do in the area: going early to beat the line at the Instagram-famous Beigel Bake Brick Lane Bakery (not the one with the yellow sign; get salt beef with mustard and pickle); squeezing past the shelves of contemporary fiction not yet released in Australia at Brick Lane Bookshop; vintage shopping in the multi-level markets; a glass of wine in a classic English pub. The list is endless.

It turns out what's old can feel new again, after all.

Where to ...

EAT

Slayer: This pizzeria is all about New York-size slices in the heart of Notting Hill. Grab a slice to go (no-flop guaranteed) or dine in to add cocktails and dessert.

DRINK

Sager + Wilde: This Shoreditch wine bar is famous for democratising fine wine. No longer restricted to the realm of Michelin-starred restaurants, the wine here is served by chatty sommeliers (who likely wouldn't call themselves that) and paired with cheese toasties.



The Hoxton's Italian restaurant, Il Bambini Club. Left Beer, wine and crisps at a classic British pub.



... Paris

"We can't all be French." That's the opening line of a *Vanity Fair* article by Marisa Meltzer that I read on the train to Paris and it gets stuck in my head like an earworm. No, we certainly *can't* all be French, I think, when my attempts at looking French immediately fail. We can't all not-heat-style our hair and have perfectly imperfect waves cascade down our backs; we can't all look good makeup-free save for a bold red lip. Are breton tops even in right now? I blame the heatwave, but really, my surname is English so I never stood a chance at acquiring the insouciant *je ne sais quoi* of a Parisienne.

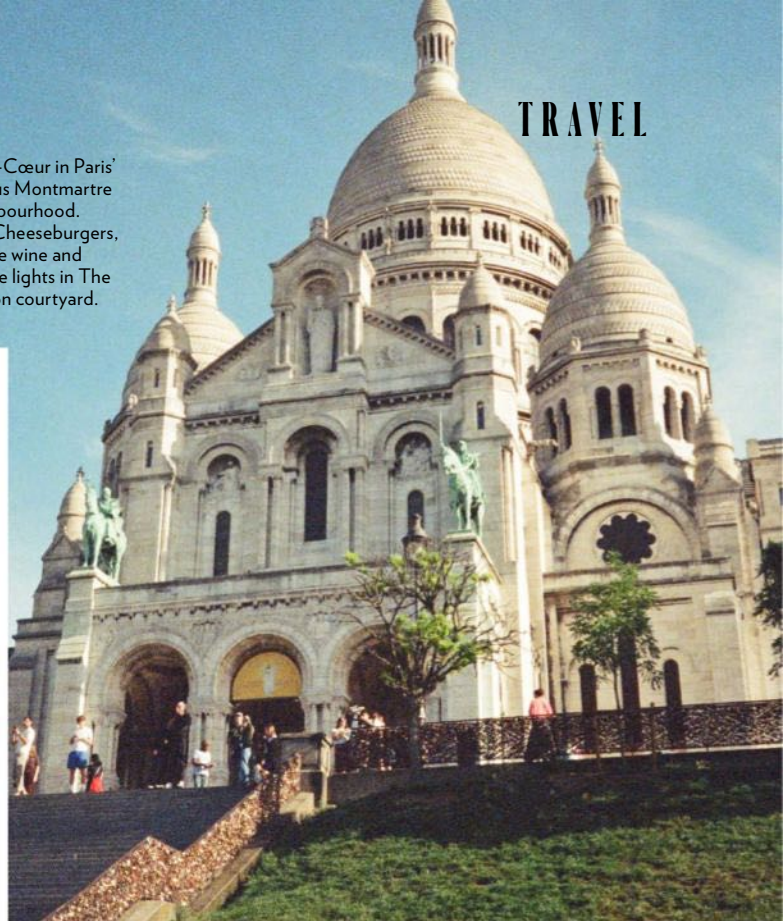
And so, instead, we embrace the *touristique fadeur* of everyone else on a European summer. We're following the well-trodden path of every tourist who's come before us: the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, Arc de Triomphe, Notre-Dame, and so on and so on. It's incredible and awe-inspiring and amazing of course: Paris never disappoints (we'll always have it, etcetera, etcetera). But it feels like we're missing something *special*, a bit of effervescence ... a touch of, well, how to explain it? *Je ne sais quoi*.

But then we get to our hotel, and there it is. The *thing*, the *fizz*, the *pièce de résistance*: the inner courtyard restaurant of The Hoxton Paris, Rivié, ambiantly lit so it seems to sparkle as dusk settles into evening.



Sacré-Cœur in Paris' famous Montmartre neighbourhood. Left Cheeseburgers, orange wine and twinkle lights in The Hoxton courtyard.

TRAVEL



There's a low hum as everyone speaks discreetly over drinks and steak frites, considerate of their neighbours. We order orange wine and cheeseburgers before

wandering to the pool area where little two-tops are scattered throughout the garden. Cocktails are being served here and it's a little rowdier: people are here before they slip into the night to continue elsewhere. There's also Jacques' Bar, which you get to by ascending a grand spiral staircase; and Planche, which the concierge tells us is "where the wine and cheese is". In other words, heaven.

We're staying at The Hoxton Paris specifically because we stayed at the Shoreditch location before this. Each hotel is so distinct and designed to suit its locale that there's nothing to overtly connect the two except for the name. The Hoxton Paris is the former 18th-century residence of Etienne Rivié, a counsellor to Louis XIV, and its more than 170 well-appointed rooms are designed in keeping with the building's character and quirks.

In our Cosy room, there's a bottle of Moët & Chandon waiting on ice. I'm not the biggest fan of "Mo-ay" at home, but this is *delicious*. Is it made differently here, or is it psychological?

The question remains unanswered and, for the rest of the trip, whenever we encounter something that we think is fine at home but are obsessed with in the moment (margarita pizza in Naples, prosciutto in Barcelona, Portuguese tarts in Lisbon), we refer to it as "The Moët Effect": is it better, or are we just on holiday?

Of course the answer is that it is better. Europe in summer just has that *je ne sais quoi*.

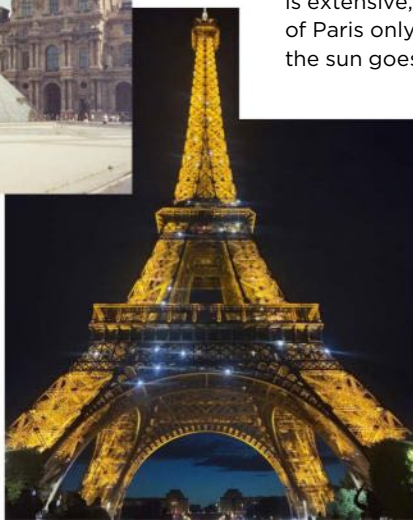
Where to ...

EAT

Neni: Do you have a very specific caving for Levantine street food with Russian, Moroccan, Spanish, German and Austrian influences? This family restaurant in the 10th serves meals to share on comfy lounges in front of artwork-covered walls.

DRINK

Bonnie: This bar prides itself on getting you to stay for just one more drink, so you should plan to do that from the outset. The cocktail list is extensive, and the views of Paris only get better as the sun goes down.



From top Rivié restaurant at The Hoxton; the Louvre museum; the Eiffel Tower at night.

... Lisbon

Any hotel that offers champagne upon check in at 11am is already going to get a good review from me, but Pousada de Lisboa – part of the Small Luxury Hotels of The World collection – really is something else. Bright yellow with white marble trim on the outside, chic and filled with artworks on loan from the Lisbon Museum on the inside, the hotel manages to pay homage to its past as a former royal residence while also being the height of modern luxury. Think indoor pool, sauna, gym, cafe and fine dining restaurant – but more on that later.

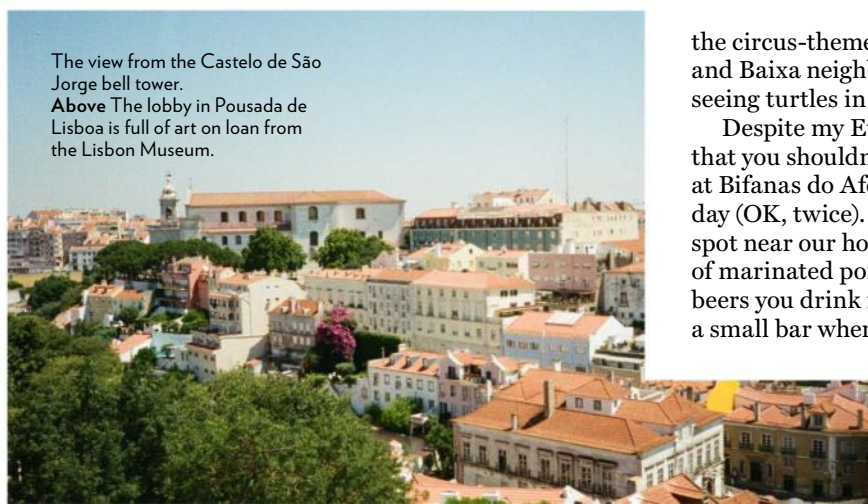
With 90 rooms and suites, Pousada de Lisboa occupies a portion of the symmetrical buildings that make a U shape around the Praça do Comércio (essentially the town square, and the site of many a momentous occasion, like the 1908 assassination of King Carlos I and the 2022 engagement of two of our friends). On one side, rooms look out to the Tagus River; on the other, some rooms can see the 8th-century Castelo de São Jorge at the top of the hill.

When the concierge guides us to our room, the Praça do Comércio Suite, it's clear he's building up to something. We spend a little while on the mechanics of the aircon control panel, how to twist the bath plug, dial reception by pressing 9 ... and then he finally guides us over to a set of sheer curtains. With a pause then a dramatic flourish, he sweeps the fabric to the side to reveal floor-to-ceiling doors opening to a balcony with uninterrupted views across the square to the river.



The view from the Castelo de São Jorge bell tower.

Above The lobby in Pousada de Lisboa is full of art on loan from the Lisbon Museum.



From top left On the iconic Tram 28; Praça do Comércio town square; at the 16th-century fortress, Torre de Belém, with a bag of tinned sardines; and the indoor pool at Pousada de Lisboa.



Where to ...

EAT

Mama's Restaurant: The chefs here put a Portuguese spin on French bistro, with fresh seafood, pizza and tapas. The grilled octopus is a must-try.

DRINK

Lumi: This rooftop bar perched on top of the five-star Luminares hotel in Bairro Alto offers cocktails, wine and share plates with a backdrop of panoramic views of Lisbon. Try to get the corner lounge on the terrace for views of Castelo de São Jorge.

The view is so stunning, I need to remember I'm still holding a champagne flute.

It's hard to leave this room with its high ceilings, wood panelling, king bed, separate dressing area and giant bathtub, so, for a while, we don't. We dip into the fruit basket, inhale a packet of *batatas fritas em azeite* (potato chips in olive oil), and I have a glass of wine in the bath.

Eventually we do drag ourselves away, because there are five things on our Lisbon list: eat *pastel de nata* (a flaky Portuguese tart filled with velvety, sweet egg custard and then burnt almost to a crisp), eat *bifana* (steak or marinated pork sandwiches – “hot porky love”, according to Anthony Bourdain), drink *ginjinha* (cherry liqueur), ride the iconic 1930s Tram 28, and take the outdoor Santa Justa Lift, which you can use instead of walking up a hill.

As it turns out, it's easy to tick off most of those things in one day, so the rest of our trip is full of surprises: a glass of wine in an old bell tower, vintage shopping,

the circus-themed sardine store, getting lost in the Alfama and Baixa neighbourhoods, finding rooftop bars and seeing turtles in the pond at Jardim da Praça do Império.

Despite my European Summer Manifesto declaring that you shouldn't become a regular on holiday, the *bifana* at Bifanas do Afonso is so “hot porky love” that we go every day (OK, twice). The cash-only, no-table, hole-in-the wall spot near our hotel has a huge, constantly simmering pan of marinated pork, steak cooked to order, and large cold beers you drink in the street. Another favourite is NaBOA, a small bar where the walls are plastered in typographic

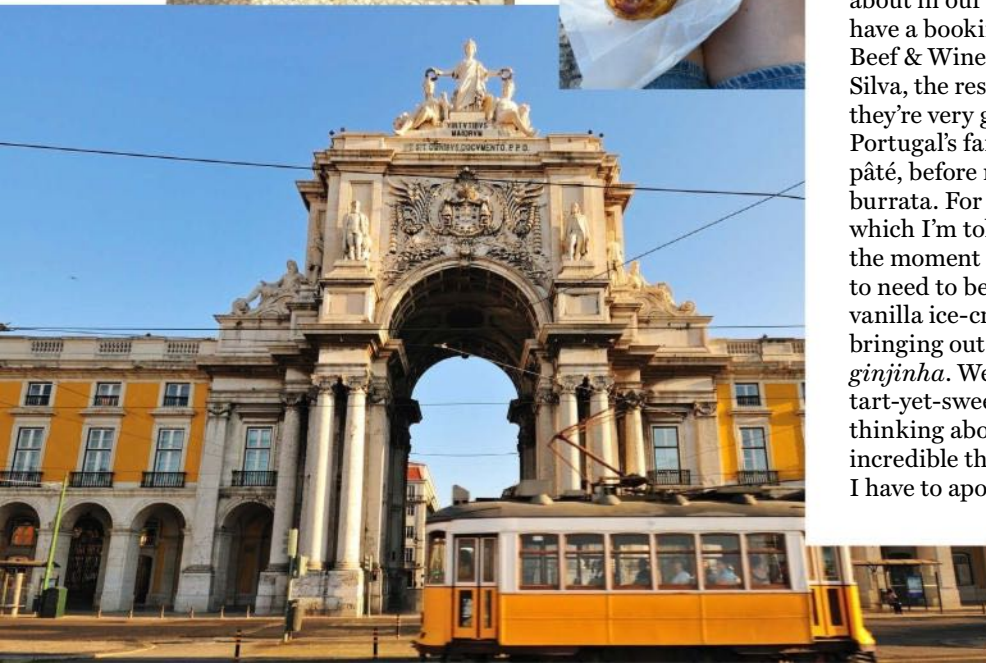


Lisbon is famous for the colourful tiles that cover its houses. **Left** Tickets to Torre da Igreja do Castelo de São Jorge, the highest bell tower in old Lisbon, includes a drink on arrival.

“The view is so stunning, I need to remember I’m still holding a champagne flute”



From left The *bifana* place we loved; taste testing *pastéis de nata* in Belém; the Rua Augusta Arch is part of the yellow U-shaped building formation with Pousada de Lisboa.



posters, the tables are small, the chairs are high, and the steak *bifana* is satisfyingly soggy.

Pastéis de nata are everywhere, but the Instagram-famous ones are in Belém, a 40-minute tram ride away at the fittingly named Pastéis de Belém (which is also what the tarts are called here; these ones are different because they’re made from a top-secret ancient recipe). By some miracle we arrive during a freak lull and go straight to the counter that surrounds the busy bakers. When we leave, the line is up the street. A little birdy (TikTok) had told us that the pink cafe next door, Manteigaria, was just as good, if not better. This cafe claims – a bit passive aggressively perhaps – to have “no secrets”, and also makes each batch where you can see them. Their recipe involves “eggs, milk, cinnamon and lemon, flour, butter, margarine and passion”. After a blind taste test of both tarts in the nearby park, we confirm they are nearly the same, with the Manteigaria coming out slightly on top for being less sweet (in taste and temperament). On days we don’t want to trek out to Belém, Fábrica da Nata near the hotel is so delicious that we go back for seconds before our coffee can go cold. Here, too, the making of the tarts is done in full view. (Because travel stories should also tell you what *not* to do: avoid the place next door. And while we’re on the subject, don’t bother with Time Out Market – it’s a tourist trap – and Pink Street is mostly stained black by now.)

A highlight of the stay is the final day of the entire trip, when we’re exhausted and sad. After the hotel buffet breakfast (read: more *pastéis de nata*), we go back and forth between the pool and the sauna, reading and lazing about in our room in our robes. For our final dinner, we have a booking on the terrace of the hotel’s restaurant, Rib Beef & Wine, directly downstairs. Helmed by chef Marcos Silva, the restaurant primarily serves meat, which means they’re very good at it. We start with Beirão sours (starring Portugal’s famous citrus liqueur) and bread with olive pâté, before moving onto slices of oxheart tomato and burrata. For the main event, it’s an A5 Wagyu ribeye, which I’m told is the highest grade of Japanese beef, and the moment it melts in my mouth, I believe it. We pretend to need to be talked into a skillet choc-chip cookie with vanilla ice-cream for dessert, and the staff surprise us by bringing out the only thing on our list we’re yet to tick off: *ginjinha*. We clink our glasses of red liquid and, as the tart-yet-sweet cherry flavour hits my tastebuds, I tear up thinking about how sad I am to be going home, about how incredible this month has been, and how, when I get back, I have to apologise to everyone for hating on Euro summer.

THE GOOD LIFE



FIRED UP

Tilda has quickly established itself as one of Sydney's most assured dining rooms, bringing woodfire cooking, serious wine credentials and a quietly luxurious atmosphere to the recently refurbished Sofitel Sydney Wentworth. The restaurant earned one hat in the 2025 *Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide* and three glasses in the Australian Wine List of the Year Awards 2025, cementing its place among the city's standout openings. Warm interiors set the scene for a menu shaped by seasonal produce, charcoal, smoke and flame.

Visit tilda.sydney for more details.

Sound Moves

Made for life in motion, Shokz OpenDots 2 earbuds' clip-on design stays comfy through workouts, commutes and workdays, while powerful dual drivers deliver clear, rich audio – without cutting you off from the world.

Shokz OpenDots 2 earbuds, \$339.



TIMELESS LEGACY

Heading to Bali? Oceanfront icon The Legian Seminyak remains a benchmark for understated Balinese luxury. Spacious suites, sweeping Indian Ocean views, Jaya Ibrahim's timeless design and intuitive service continue to draw generations of loyal guests, while The Club offers an even more private villa experience nearby.

Visit lhm-hotels.com/en for more.



SOFT LANDING

With sculptural lines, plush cushioning and velvet upholstery, Freedom's Aero sofa will bring contemporary comfort and understated elegance to any room.

Freedom three-seater sofa in Caramel, \$2999.



HEALTH MATTERS

For more than three decades, Jean Hailes has empowered Australian women and girls to make informed decisions about their wellbeing and create healthier futures for themselves and their families by bringing together leading experts, advocates and changemakers with trusted, evidence-based information.

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Australia's most

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WINTER

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+

The tile trends
designers
are embracing

ON SALE NOW

VIRGO SEASON

WORDS NATASHA WEBER @astrotash



This month, Virgos are energised, emboldened by confidence and deservedly flattered. There's a new intimacy in the air, so feel the love

August 23–September 22

VIRGO

After September 10, a glowing compliment arrives courtesy of Venus. But this is bigger than flattery. It reawakens your sense of self-worth and dares you to act on it. The same energy favours a short work trip, where a chance meeting could line your pockets. The new moon on the 11th lights up your sign, backing anything you're brave enough to begin, whether that's a new romance or the passion project sitting in your drafts. Then Chiron reverses into your intimacy zone on the 18th, where therapy or shadow work could clear the way to the closeness you have been longing for.

POWER DATES September 6, 11, 15

September 23–October 22

LIBRA

If money has been tight, Venus sweeping into your financial sector from September 10 will bring relief. Be careful, though: this lucrative influence can loosen your purse strings, so pair any feel-good splurge with some sensible spending. On the 23rd, the Sun kicks off your birthday season and a fresh 12-month cycle. How you celebrate and who you spend it with sets the tone for your year ahead, so choose both with intention. Then the full moon on the 27th sets your relationship zone alight. The night could end in tangled sheets or a slammed door, depending on whether you lead with desire or defensiveness.

POWER DATES September 11, 16, 23

October 23–November 21

SCORPIO

The month opens with a high-performance link between Jupiter and Saturn that hands you a cosmic cheat code for productivity. Use the first week to tackle your heaviest lifting or pitch an ambitious project while these planetary heavyweights have your back. On the 10th, Venus enters your sign, coaxing your inner flirt into the spotlight. Whether you're trading suggestive texts with a new crush or reigniting the sexual pilot light in your relationship, the vibe is playful. Save any high-stakes negotiations for the final day of September. That's when Mercury ensures your delivery is flawless and your terms are met.

POWER DATES September 10, 16, 28

November 22–December 21

SAGITTARIUS

You're dreaming of a getaway as the month begins, but budget constraints or a flaky travel buddy might keep you grounded. Patience is your power move until Mars arrives after the 28th, promising progress. A professional door swings open around the new moon on the 11th. Whether you're eyeing a leadership role or a side hustle in a new field, grab a golden opportunity without letting your inner critic intervene. September's stars also fuel your creativity; colour outside the lines by experimenting with audacious fashion choices or rewriting your business plan. Let your imagination lead and resist the urge to play it safe.

POWER DATES September 1, 16, 23

February 19–March 20

PISCES

Jupiter gives your wellness routine a second wind, especially if vegetables, water and exercise have been more theory than practice. Motivation returns, but Jupiter tends to overdo things, so resist the brutal gym crusades or detox diets with the nutritional value of a rice cracker. Aim for balance you can live with. When the sun shows up on the 23rd, your libido goes into overdrive. Single? There's zero shame in a little self-love, so make pleasure a priority. Then Mercury steps in to streamline your workflow. Perfect if you're upskilling, outsourcing online tasks to AI or banking new knowledge from a podcast.

POWER DATES September 1, 16, 23

May 21–June 20

GEMINI

Your secret weapon this month is the people in your corner. Early September introduces a seasoned expert, possibly through work or a friend, who is likely older than you. Their wisdom could fast-track whatever you've been trying to figure out alone. From September 11, Uranus turns retrograde in your sign, prompting you to rethink how you cultivate a life with greater freedom. That could mean leaving your nine-to-five for freelance work, downsizing your overheads or slashing exhausting personal commitments. Then the full moon on the 27th blooms in your hopes and wishes sector, delivering a dream you've nurtured into full, vibrant reality.

POWER DATES September 11, 29, 30

December 22–January 19

CAPRICORN

September prioritises your inner circle, making it the perfect month for a weekend away with your best friends. If you're staying put, your sixth sense is your most valuable asset, so trust that intuition because it could help you dodge a bad decision. From the 18th, Chiron's retrograde clears the air on a family drama you've long tiptoed around – better dealt with than left to fester. The full moon on the 27th initiates a conversation that's overdue, whether it's with your special someone, at work or with your online community. Speak your truth, but go in with a plan rather than an impulsive outpouring.

POWER DATES September 6, 18, 27

March 21–April 19

ARIES

The veil is thin for you this month, thanks to a rare alignment between Neptune and Pluto. If your intuition has always been attuned, expect it to start speaking with full sentences. If your sixth sense is more dormant, a visitation from a loved one who's crossed over could deliver the message you've been waiting for. From the 18th, Chiron returns to your sign for one last pass at an old wound or trauma. When you're ready, the right person to support your healing will appear. The full moon on the 27th closes the month with the spotlight squarely on you or your passion project.

POWER DATES September 16, 18, 27

June 21–July 22

CANCER

The Mars-Saturn alignment frees you from a commitment that's been burning you out. If work is the culprit, put your happiness first; it could lead you to scout greener career pastures. From the 11th, the new moon rewards organisation. Active on social media? A smart content strategy could expand your reach. Beyond your feed, any new project you map out with intention not guesswork will thrive. Come the 23rd, the sun warms your home zone, backing a living arrangement or property matter. You might also step up as family matriarch or honour your grandmother's legacy in some way.

POWER DATES September 1, 11, 27

January 20–February 18

AQUARIUS

Venus makes September golden for career-driven Aquarians. Your charisma is sky-high and your powers of persuasion are dangerous, so put yourself forward even if the job, pitch or opportunity scares you. Imposter syndrome begone! Your new motto is fake it until you make it. On the 16th, Neptune's rare angle to Pluto supports a striking appearance transformation. Go dramatic if you dare, because standing out has never been your problem. Come the 28th, Mars gets lusty in your partnership sector. That hunger could be for money, greater power in a work alliance, or pure desire with your beloved.

POWER DATES September 13, 16, 21

April 20–May 20

TAURUS

September clears the mental clutter, handing you a rare window to rewrite a narrative that's kept you stuck. Whether through therapy or a motivational course, you step into a fearless, I've-got-this mindset. Work-wise, if your job no longer fulfils you or you're ready to claim the promotion you've earned, Pluto reveals a creative solution. You could pitch a brand-new role or turn a side hustle into the main event. Chiron then leaves your sign on the 18th, lifting the burden you've been shouldering. The rest of the month feels lighter, with fun and spontaneity moving back to the top of your list.

POWER DATES September 10, 16, 18

July 23–August 22

LEO

The new moon on the 11th dangles a moneymaking opportunity. You're tempted to find the flaws, but resist writing it off before you've considered the hidden potential. On the 23rd, Jupiter's link to Neptune sweeps you into a celebration, whether that's a concert, an exhibition or a champagne toast to your own creative win. Then on the 28th, Mars charges into your sign with a surge of drive and grit. Used wisely, it takes you far; just resist acting on impulse. And should someone provoke you, speak your truth, though calm tenacity is what secures the outcome you want.

POWER DATES September 1, 23, 28

BEFORE YOU GO



Actor and writer Miranda Tapsell opens up about motherhood, guilty pleasures and baby powder

What's the title of your life's current chapter? "Go with the flow", "Figuring it out" or "Survival mode". I have two kids, so I've had to accept that I can't do things at the same pace that I used to. Sometimes I feel like I'm Sandra Bullock in *Bird Box*, walking around blindfolded and just trusting my instincts.

Do you have a guilty pleasure? Right now it's alone time. I can't even sit on the toilet without a knock on the door. I'm getting better at carving out that kind of time for myself, but it's hard.

What book are you currently reading? I'm listening to the audiobook version of *Fatesick* by Lena Dunham. She has reminded me that it's important to be strong and stand by your convictions, but you're also allowed to show your more vulnerable side.

"It's important to be strong and stand by your convictions, but you're also allowed to show your more vulnerable side"

When do you feel most like yourself? When I'm with my family in Darwin.

Describe your greatest fear... I have a lot. I had a dream that I had to go to the principal's office because my daughter threw the first punch, and it'll be because she was called something derogatory about being Aboriginal or being a girl. My husband always says, "Let's cross these bridges when we actually get to them." He's got the rational, calm head, whereas I'm bracing for an impact that hasn't happened yet.

What smell instantly transports you somewhere else? I don't use baby powder on my son, but there's this lotion that smells like baby powder and it reminds me of my grandmother. I love that smell.

What was your first job? McDonald's. I remember having coins thrown at me because a customer's change was short. I just burst into tears. It really showed me an ugly side to humanity. I would never be friends with people who treat service people like that.

Which podcast are you listening to? *Watch What Crappens* by Ben Mandelker and Ronnie Karam. Each episode, they break down different reality shows.

What is your beauty non-negotiable? Sunscreen and a Korean sheet mask.

Who is a woman in your life who has shaped you? My mum, Barbara. She was a very strict mum but she really does have a heart of gold. We've both learnt a lot from each other in helping me raise my children. My work is so on the fly, and my mum and dad are there, picking up [the kids] from daycare and preschool when I can't. My PSA is to stop telling women they can have it all because they can't; you need the village.

Stream the latest season of Tapsell's show, *Portrait Artist of the Year*, on ABC iView or watch it on ABC TV every Sunday at 7.30pm.

marie claire

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