

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

HOLIDAY 2025

# STYLE

magazine



## ALL EYES ON HER

Alex Porat is ready to be music's next pop virtuoso

A GUIDE TO TIMELY GIFTS • CREATIVE, FESTIVE HOSTING • MATTHIEU BLAZY'S PARIS DEBUT • 2026 ESCAPES





 *Loro Piana*

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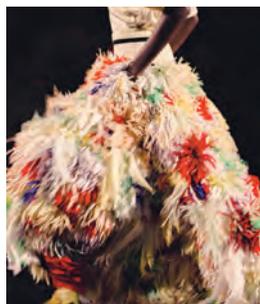
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# THE GLOBE AND MAIL\* STYLE magazine

### HOLIDAY 2025

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ANDREW SARDONE

**ART DIRECTOR**  
BENJAMIN MACDONALD

**FASHION EDITOR**  
NADIA PIZZIMENTI

**ART EDITOR**  
ODESSA PALOMA PARKER

**DIGITAL**  
**SENIOR STYLE EDITOR**  
HALEY STEINBERG

**PROGRAMMING EDITOR**  
LARA PINGUE

**DIGITAL PRESENTATION EDITOR**  
MACKENZIE LAD

**CONTRIBUTING EDITORS**  
NATHALIE ATKINSON, JEREMY FREED,  
BERNADETTE MORRA, MARYAM SIDDIQI

**CONTRIBUTORS**  
TED BELTON, MARK BINKS, CHAD BURTON,  
JORDAN GIANG, LEAH GUST, SHAE HOLT,  
MICHAEL KAZIK, ALEX LAWS, KRISTEN LIM TUNG,  
WENDY RORONG, CARLYLE ROUTH,  
MARC SANTOS, RACHELLE SIMONEAU,  
LAUREN TAMAKI, CHRISTOPHER WATERS,  
INGRIE WILLIAMS, ANDREA YU

**ADVERTISING**  
**CATEGORY MANAGER**  
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**PRINT LAYOUT SPECIALIST**  
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**LIFESTYLE EDITOR** JULIETTE LIE BAXTER  
**HEAD OF VISUALS** MATT FRENCH

#### GET IN TOUCH

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E-mail: advertising@globeandmail.com.  
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#### ON THE COVER

Photo by Carlyle Routh. Nina Ricci tweed mini dress, Yume Yume black nylon coat at WDLT117 (wdl117.com). Carole Tanenbaum Vintage Collection pearl drop earrings through caroletanenbaum.com.

PHOTOS BY MARK BINKS (VAN CLEEF & ARPELS BROOCH); DAVID KERR (CREATORS OF OBJECTS); CARLYLE ROUTH (ALEX PORAT); BALMAIN TWEED JACKET; MINI DRESS AT HOLT RENFREW; VINTAGE HAT; GLOVES AT NOUVEAU RICHE; VINTAGE; PEARL DROP EARRINGS AT TIFFANY & CO.;

# HardWear by Tiffany

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# EDITOR'S LETTER

The set for Chanel's latest show at Paris's Grand Palais was an otherworldly spectacle.



**W**alking into the Grand Palais for designer Matthieu Blazy's first turn as Chanel's creative director in October, his audience was immediately reminded of the power of big ideas – and of taking the time to execute them on an impressive scale. The celestial set (pictured left and in our feature, "Whole new world," **PAGE 34**) clearly took months to conceptualize and execute. The payoff – an immersive space that allowed the crowd to get lost in an imagined sartorial dialogue between Blazy and the house's founder, Gabrielle Chanel – was huge.

If there's one sentiment that's leading the creative world into 2026, it's a renewed sense of ambition coupled with an acknowledgment that bold plans don't come to fruition overnight. Our perpetual state of busyness can complicate these aspirations. The promise of the technology that facilitates our lives today is that it frees us up to invest in the things we feel passionate about, to be innovative and artistic and inspired. In reality, it often just carves out more hours to be distracted by technology itself. Whether it's the rise of single-use devices – "dumb" phones, film cameras or the video-game console on **PAGE 11** of this issue's gift guide – or travel destinations that provide opportunities for reflection (how Aman achieves its introspective brand of hospitality is on **PAGE 45**), ways to focus are a new luxury – scarce yet desired.

In this issue, we suggest you concentrate on enjoying a more generous approach to holiday entertaining ("Host with the most," **PAGE 38**). Instead of proposing shortcuts and hacks, our experts, including stylist Chad Burton, illustrate how getting lost in setting a festive scene can feel like a joy, not a chore. For the Personal Style column ("Matters of taste," **PAGE 46**), Nathalie Atkinson explains why cultivating preferences for everything from books to cookware is a worthwhile pursuit. And in her cover profile ("The surreal rise of Alex Porat," **PAGE 28**), Haley Steinberg captures how the musician's success is as much the result of years of persistence as racking up viral moments.

It's not easy to commit a decade to building a music career – or even clear your schedule to set a table. But hopefully, over the holidays, you find a second to enjoy an instance of complete creative satisfaction.

ANDREW  
SARDONE

Andrew Sardone  
Editorial Director

 **INSTAGRAM** For the latest style commentary and inspiration from The Globe and Mail, follow @GlobeStyle.

## BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE HOLIDAY 2025 ISSUE



### PEARL WISDOM

The styling brief for this issue's cover shoot with singer-songwriter Alex Porat was polka dots and pearls. But while this season's take on the former favours classic spots, the latest pearl jewellery is anything but traditional.

The **GOHAR WORLD** necklace on **PAGE 33** isn't made of pearls at all. Instead, it alternates porcelain eggs with spheres of black crystal quartz. Still, the New York-based label, founded by sisters Laila and Nadia Gohar, is unquestionably influencing how the style world sees pearls – and mother of pearl – as contemporary materials. Its entertaining accessories include opaline utensils from butter knives to swan-shaped spoons, while jewellery options favour irregular shapes in unexpected hues of milky green or black. For the ultimate example of old-meets-new, the embroidered lace coasters above are weighted with organic, freshwater orbs.



### GRAND FINALE

On Aug. 31, 42 years to the day of their debut show in Toronto, Judy Cornish and Joyce Gunhouse announced that Fall 2025 will be the final season for their label **COMRAGS**. "It was a wild idea, but we decided to take a chance, give it a go, and see what happened," their announcement noted, reflecting on that first presentation.

"Never could we have imagined that 42 years later we'd still be at it." Comrags stands out in Canadian fashion for its devoted customers and a styling consistency that allows those clients to build their wardrobes across decades. They understand that, despite Toronto's proximity to New York, building a sustainable fashion business in Canada can't be modelled on other markets. At **TGAM.CA/STYLEMAG** on Dec. 1, Nathalie Atkinson will report on the end of the Comrags era, and how its studio was a launchpad for generations of fashion entrepreneurs.



### RUNWAY INTEL

As we were assembling this issue, our team of fashion week correspondents was out reporting on the runway buzz in New York, London, Milan and Paris. From the Big Apple, Randi Bergman distilled the big catwalk trends down to balloon-like silhouettes and a spin on minimalism that embraced a light touch of colour. In London, Odessa Paloma Parker found a focus on collar details and statement knitwear. Elio Iannacci in Milan discovered a city still mourning the passing of Giorgio Armani, but a more upbeat spirit at the Black Carpet Awards, which celebrated BIPOC fashion creatives. And in Paris, Patricia Gajo Côté had her eye on the long list of designer debuts (Jonathan Anderson at Dior, Pierpaolo Piccioli at Balenciaga, Jack McCollough and Lazaro Hernandez at Loewe), as well as French fashion's consistent stars including the work of Hermès's Nadège Vanhée-Cybulski, pictured here.

PHOTOS: RACHELLE SIMONEAU (CHANEL), TED BELTON (COMRAGS), SUPPLIED PHOTOS: GOHAR WORLD, VIRGILE GUINARD/HERMÈS.



Hermès, drawing on your mind



GIFT GUIDE

## BIG WINS

What defined style in 2025? A shift to more personal fashion statements, growing fascination with objects that reveal how they've been crafted, and a once-elusive enthusiasm for buying Canadian changed the ways we lived and shopped. For our annual guide to inspired holiday presents, **ODESSA PALOMA PARKER** edits the year's notable trends, news and product debuts into a champion list of timely gifts

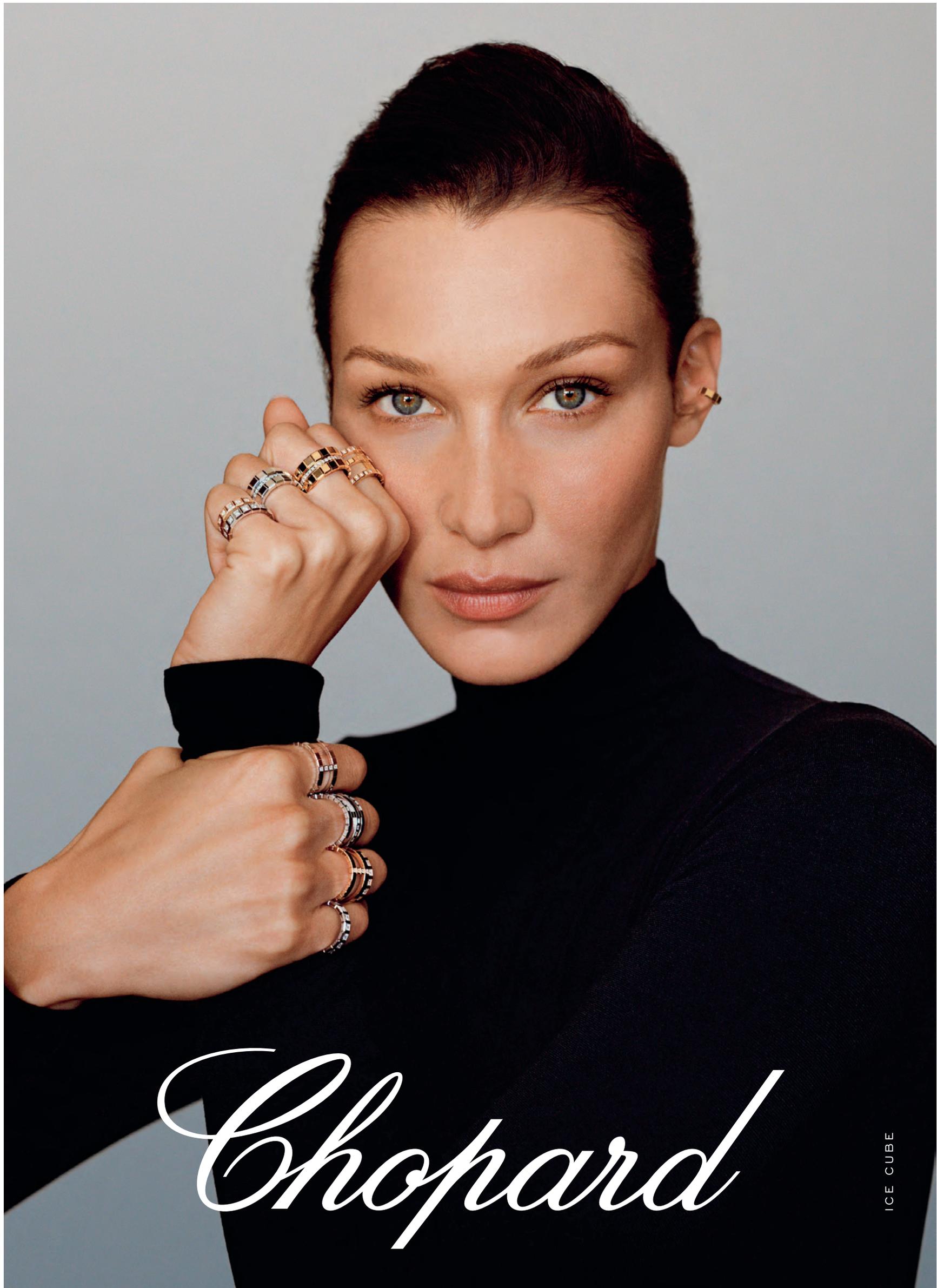


### PERFUME AS ART

Haitian-born, Montreal-based multidisciplinary artist Manuel Mathieu launched his fragrance house to much fanfare this fall, and not only because perfumer Juliette Karagueuzoglou, who has crafted scents for labels like Yves Saint Laurent and Giorgio Armani, collaborated on its initial collection. Mathieu carefully developed the organic form of his brand's bottle, a sculptural homage to the mountainous terrain of his homeland that makes each container a treasured object as much as a vessel for notes of bergamot, jasmine and Haitian vetiver. Île Noire Eau de Parfum, \$295/50ml through [manuelmathieuparfums.com](http://manuelmathieuparfums.com).

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **MARK BINKS**  
SETS AND PROP STYLING BY **KRISTEN LIM TUNG**

STYLING ASSISTANT: LEAH GUST



*Chopard*

ICE CUBE



**THE LABUBU EFFECT**

We've reached peak bag charm, adorning our totes with bits and baubles that are lifting them out of a quiet luxury lull. The best giftable options are individually minded. Less Labubu and more personal, these bag-bound characters can wink at one's favourite cocktail, act as a daily talisman or just add a whimsical pick-me-up to any purse. Loewe martini olives bag charm, \$750, Alexander McQueen flower bag charm, \$540, Martha Calvo Wish Me Luck bag charm, \$215 at Holt Renfrew ([holtrenfrew.com](http://holtrenfrew.com)).

**CANADIAN LUXURY**

Toronto's Golnar Ahmadian is part of a cohort of Canadians setting the tone for what designer fashion means today. For her brand Golshaah, she toys with beguiling proportions and *trompe l'oeil* elements that connect to the fashion world's long love affair with surrealism. Golshaah structured coat, \$580 through [golshaah.com](http://golshaah.com).



**CHANGE IS GOOD**

As fine jewellery consumers expect more from their investments and how often a piece can be adapted to one's wardrobe, the notion that wares can pull double duty is a big focus for Van Cleef & Arpels. This Flowerlace piece is both part of a pendant necklace and a clip that can be placed on necklines and lapels. Flowerlace clip pendant, \$33,600 at Van Cleef & Arpels ([vancleefarpels.com](http://vancleefarpels.com)).

**A MAKEUP MOMENT**

This fall, makeup artist and content creator Hung Vanngo, who grew up in Calgary, released his first makeup collection. In the award-winning array of powders, heavily pigmented palettes, precision liners and a hyaluronic acid-infused lipstick, Vanngo has met the needs of both his celebrity clients and online community. Hung Vanngo Color Story eyeshadow palette, \$72 at Sephora ([sephora.com](http://sephora.com)).





**TIME FOR COLOUR**

Fashion brands that cross over into serious watchmaking have begun to offer new styles that rely on pops of colour and embellishment as much as technical excellence.

At Chanel, years of development went into achieving the perfect dark denim hue for its J12 model's moody ceramic case.

Chanel J12 Bleu Watch Caliber 12.1, 38 mm, \$14,200 at Chanel (chanel.com).

**BEST IN BAGS**

Of all the accessories we photographed this year, Erdem's luscious Bloom bag with its curvaceous brass tulip handle felt the most momentous, and not just because it's the brand's first. After years of monotonous carryalls, its singular shape and ornate materiality signal that a new It-bag era of idiosyncratic purses is upon us.

Erdem Bloom bag, \$2,760 at Holt Renfrew (holtrenfrew.com).



**SINGULAR FOCUS**

ModRetro cracked the code when it came to devising a game console that speaks to a generation with divided attention fatigue and an interest in "dumb" phones and point-and-shoot cameras. The Chromatic, a nostalgic nod to the Game Boy, features the world's first "pixel-accurate" compatible cartridge system that can play both new games and classics.

Mod Retro Chromatic console, \$290 through modretro.com.

**ON THE WALL**

Ceramic artist Chloe Begg's latest works are part of a contemporary push for sculpture to be thought of as wall-friendly art and not reserved solely for tabletops or plinths. Begg's examples stand out with layers of material and unique glazes that play up depth and dimension.

Chloe Begg sculpture, \$450 through nintheditions.com.





**TRACK YOUR BAG**

Monos' latest luggage, launched in tandem with the release of a Brooklyn Coachworks Land Rover Defender 90 model, evokes the vehicle's shade in elevated Arles Blue. If the handsome hue isn't enough to make your luggage instantly identifiable on the airport carousel, apply a stash of stickers reflecting the cityscapes of tourist hotspots. Carry-On Pro Plus suitcase, \$415, destination stickers, \$30, at Monos (ca.monos.com).

**BEYOND HARDWARE**

Maha Alavi, the Tokyo-based Canadian industrial designer best known for creating splendidly tactile cabinet and wall hardware, has launched a line of vases that amplify intriguing imperfections. Alavi says the pieces are inspired by "the alchemy of molten metals" in a range of forms that "feel both ancient and otherworldly." Maha Alavi Studio Olio vase no. 1, \$628 through mahaalavi.com.



**SKINCARE'S NEW LANGUAGE**

"Anti-aging" is out, and "longevity" is in for beauty brands aiming to speak to customers in more positive terms. Guerlain's rich new formula, part of a line dedicated to unlocking the potent potential of the brand's Orchid Totum molecular extract, spotlights the staying power of the Vanda Coerulea orchid compared to other varieties of the species. Guerlain Orchidée Impériale cream, \$607 at Holt Renfrew (guerlain.com).

**THAT'S THE SPIRIT**

Tariff turmoil could have wreaked havoc on our home bars, but Baril Caché's award-winning sip has met the moment. Promising to take partakers back to the time of prohibition with its resolutely regional flavour, this crafted-in-Quebec whisky blends four types of grain: rye, barley, corn and wheat. Baril Caché Canadian Whisky, \$41.50/750ml at SAQ in Quebec (ungavaco.com).





# TUDOR



**BLACK BAY**

What is it that drives someone to greatness? To take on the unknown, venture into the unseen, and dare all? This is the spirit that gave birth to TUDOR. This is the spirit embodied by every TUDOR watch. Including the Black Bay, a 41mm-diameter stainless steel diving watch with a signature burgundy bezel and Master Chronometer certification by METAS. Some are born to follow. Others are born to dare.

**BORN TO  
DARE**

# ESSENTIALS

NEWS, INSIGHT & ACQUISITIONS

FEATURE

## NEW DEPTHS

The 2025 edition of Tiffany & Co.'s Blue Book collection dives into ocean treasures from the archive of Jean Schlumberger

The debut of Tiffany & Co.'s latest Blue Book collection was a six-month affair. In April, at the jeweller's Fifth Avenue Landmark flagship in New York City, its Sea of Wonder theme surfaced in a theatrical installation of shell-like flourishes and deep navy showcases. Taking inspiration from the work of French jewellery designer Jean Schlumberger, who often referenced seascapes in his work, Tiffany's chief artistic officer of jewellery and fine jewellery, Nathalie Verdeille, presented the first wave of the collection. It played on aquatic inspirations including ocean flora, seahorses, turtles, starfish, urchins and waves.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 »

Part of a mermaid-themed grouping in the Sea of Wonder fall release, this necklace is meant to capture ethereal movement through a sinuous mix of sapphires, diamonds and pearls.

SUPPLIED PHOTO: THOMAS MILEWSKI/TIFFANY & CO. STUDIO



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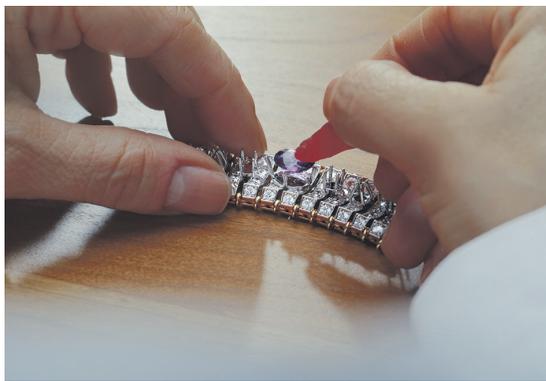
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[www.frederiqueconstant.ca](http://www.frederiqueconstant.ca)

# ESSENTIALS



Star stones in the collection include rubies that layer bold colour into the starfish jewels (above left). A seahorse brooch (above right) pays homage to a Jean Schlumberger design from 1968.



## » CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

In September, 40 more pieces were unveiled in Milan, with motifs including anchors and mermaids added to its bejewelled, nautical story. According to Victoria Reynolds, Tiffany & Co.'s chief gemologist and vice-president of diamond and gemstone acquisition, what unites it all are the stones themselves. "We unearthed the perfect gemstones to bring this undersea fantasy to life," she says. "The Wave chapter features blue cuprian elbaite tourmalines that echo the

glow of bioluminescence of the ocean, while the unenhanced emeralds from Zambia evoke vibrant underwater plants in Ocean Flora." Reynolds is particularly proud of the rubies used in the starfish pieces, highlighting how their saturated hue and clarity add a splash of fluorescence to the compositions of stones.

The depth of the Schlumberger archive and his own creative process are also important links. "He transformed realistic images into reinvented objects that were all his own and which he

expressed with fascinating complexity," Reynolds says. "Schlumberger gathered many memories of the sea from his frequent visits to Guadeloupe and his travels to Indonesia and the Antilles." The Seahorse elements are noteworthy for referencing brooches the designer created in 1968. "We reinterpreted these creatures with a contemporary twist by adorning them with fluted moonstones and an unexpected mix of coloured gemstones, including zircons and sapphires." – **ANDREW SARDONE**

For more, visit [tiffany.ca](http://tiffany.ca).

Jean Schlumberger's designs provide lots of source material for the 2025 Blue Book collection – and the fine jewellery world as a whole. Here, an abridged biography of the man, told via a selection of his more iconic brooches and clips

## ANCHORS AWAY

Jean Schlumberger began his jewellery career in the 1930s, after moving from the Alsace region of France to Paris in his 20s. Legendary fashion surrealist Elsa Schiaparelli asked Schlumberger to create buttons for her clothes and jewellery for her circus-themed couture show in 1938. The chessmen, locks and miniature hand mirrors played into Schiaparelli's love of surrealism. One year later, Schlumberger designed this Anchor Brooch in gold and platinum with pink sapphires, rubies and amethysts for his own collection.



## BOLD FACED NAMES

In 1941, Schlumberger created the Trophée de Vaillance brooch for Diana Vreeland when she was editor of Harper's Bazaar. Vreeland was so captivated by the piece, in platinum and gold with diamonds, rubies and amethysts, that she kept it on her bedside table. She was just one collector on his list of famous clients, which also included society legends Babe Paley and Bunny Mellon, and actor Elizabeth Taylor.



## MADE TO MOVE

The curled tentacles of the 1952 Sea Anemone brooch in gold and platinum with diamonds, rubies, and sapphires is a perfect example of the illusion of movement that is a Schlumberger signature. The wavy motion of starfish limbs, the fluttering of leaves in a gust of wind, and bird wings at rest or in flight were other nature motifs that the designer captured in precious metals and gems.



## SWEET SUCCESS

After serving in World War II, Schlumberger moved to New York and set up his own jewellery house. He joined Tiffany & Co. in 1956, the same year he designed this Two Fruits and Leaves brooch in gold and platinum with diamonds and rubies. John F. Kennedy bought one for his wife, Jackie, to mark the birth of their son, John Jr., and Robert Downey Jr. wore a similar version to the 2025 Academy Awards. – **BERNADETTE MORRA**



## SHOPPING

### Chanel thinks big for its new Canadian boutique

This month, Chanel unveils its largest Canadian store to date via a 988-square-metre boutique located at Holt Renfrew in Toronto's Yorkdale Shopping Centre. Designed by the house's long-time collaborator, architect Peter Marino, the space includes three accessory salons, a watches and fine jewellery boutique, footwear, ready to wear, and Canada's first "Chanel et Moi" space dedicated to care and repair services. The opening aligns with the in-store debut of Chanel's latest cruise collection, which is inspired by the dreamiest of Italian getaways, the Villa d'Este on Lake Como. Expect a sartorial offering for hot days, warm nights and the dance floor, starring a lightweight tweed suit adorned with multi-coloured sequins or a gelato-hued lamé jumper. Accessories include big bags, silk scarves, opera-length gloves and strings of pearls meant to be worn poolside. – **NADIA PIZZIMENTI**

For more, visit [chanel.com](http://chanel.com).





FINE JEWELLERY

## HIGH CONVERSION

A history with transformable baubles leads to the latest pieces in Van Cleef and Arpels' Alhambra collection

Few pieces of jewellery have the wide appeal of Van Cleef and Arpels' Alhambra designs. The iconic four-leaf clover motif transcends age. Fourteen-year-old Harper Beckham and 78-year-old Queen Camilla are both fans. The style also seems to go with just about anything. When Catherine, Princess of Wales, isn't topping off her evening wear with crown jewels from the royal vault, she often dons her own Alhambra necklace and earrings in pale mother-of-pearl. And in the hopes of gaining some good fortune, several pro baseball players have recently taken to wearing Alhambra pieces on game days, despite the risk of muddying them on a slide into home plate.

"Since 1968, the Alhambra motif has been Van Cleef & Arpels' symbol of luck," says global

president and CEO Catherine Rénier. Over the years, the selection has grown to include Magic Alhambra, which has clovers of different sizes in the same piece, Sweet Alhambra watches – named for their smaller charms – and a reversible Vintage Alhambra ring. Two new ring styles have been added this season: grey mother-of-pearl reversing to a diamond set in guilloché rose gold, and chalcedony swivelling to a diamond set in guilloché white gold.

In another big step for the collection, the Magic Alhambra necklace is now available in convertible styles, with a long necklace detaching to become a shorter necklace and bracelet. Transformable jewellery has been a specialty of the house since the 1924 creation of a bejewelled floral arrangement that could be detached from a long chain and worn as a brooch. That long-standing expertise was critical in the development of these new designs. Highly discreet English blade clasps ensure smooth transitions without compromising lightness and comfort, Renier says. The pieces are currently available in two versions – white and grey mother-of-pearl in rose gold, and white mother-of-pearl and chalcedony in white gold – but Renier promises more variations down the road. – **B.M.**

For more, visit [vancleefarpels.com](http://vancleefarpels.com).



INTEL

## Hotel confidential

Lauren Harwell Godfrey admits that some of her memories from the iconic Chateau Marmont hotel in Los Angeles may not be fit for print. "One night in particular, friends just kept showing up until it turned into an all-night dance party," she says. Harwell Godfrey also confesses to once swiping a room key tassel, which inspired her Privacy Please pendant in 18-karat yellow gold with hand-strung malachite beads and a diamond chevron cap. San Francisco-based Harwell Godfrey was an award-winning advertising art director before discovering her talent as a jewellery designer. Among her many achievements is a brooch created in partnership with Sotheby's in honour of the 2025 Met Gala, which celebrated the exhibition, Superfine: Tailoring Black Style. Capturing the theme of Black artistry and rebellion, the piece riffs on royal medals seen through an African diasporic lens and features a 10-carat fancy vivid blue diamond valued around US\$20-million. – **B.M.**

Lauren Harwell Godfrey Privacy Please pendant, US\$11,995 through [harwellgodfrey.com](http://harwellgodfrey.com).

TRENDING

## Playtime

Whimsy is taking over the jewellery world, with passions, hobbies and private jokes inspiring the purchase of lighthearted baubles



### TAKE A BOW

Anyone who struggles to put on a chain bracelet will love Leah Alexandra's permanent jewellery concept. At her Spark Studios in Vancouver and Toronto, a micro laser flash-welds a chain on for good (or until a scissors' snip releases the jump ring). Charm choices include a 14-karat gold vermeil farfalle inspired by her team's love of carbs and travel. Farfalle pendant, \$85 at Leah Alexandra ([leahalexandra.com](http://leahalexandra.com)).



### SNACK ATTACK

London designer Nadine Ghosn's hamburger rings have garnered international buzz. The meat, bun, melted cheese and condiments are crafted in 18-karat gold with diamonds, rubies and sapphires, and its black diamond caviar was added after the London designer saw a photo of how influencer Hailey Bieber garnishes her In-N-Out burger. Nadine Ghosn ring, US\$26,880 through [nadineghosn.com](http://nadineghosn.com).



### FEATHERED FRIENDS

Chopard's newest red carpet collection, presented at the Cannes Film Festival in May, celebrated artistic director Caroline Scheufele's love of animals. Included in its menagerie are pandas, penguins and these hoop earrings featuring colourful parrots in brilliant-cut rubies, sapphires, white and black diamonds with onyx cabochon eyes. Parrot earrings, price on request at Chopard ([chopard.com](http://chopard.com)).



### GAME ON

Anita Ko's name may be better known now that her brand's vice-president, Ines de Ramon, is dating Brad Pitt. But Los Angeles-based Ko has long been a Hollywood favourite, with Emma Stone and Sydney Sweeney among the stars spotted in her designs. Toy-like pieces such as this 18-karat gold pavé diamond whistle are perfect for layering. Anita Ko whistle pendant, US\$11,058 through [anitako.com](http://anitako.com).



### DOCUMENTS, PLEASE

While developing this passport pendant, Bluboho's Maggie Aurocco wanted to capture the Canadian pride she and her team are feeling. "It's more than a document, it's a symbol of where we come from, and what we stand for," the designer says. Stamped on the back of the 10-karat recycled gold charm with ruby accents: the word "eh." – **B.M.** Passport pendant, \$398 at Bluboho ([bluboho.com](http://bluboho.com)).

BEAUTY

## RAISING THE BAR

B.C.'s Sangre de Fruta marks a decade of botanically rich skin care

Ten years ago, Allison Audrey Weldon founded her small batch skin- and hair-care brand Sangre de Fruta. The name, which is Spanish for "blood of fruit," was inspired by the poetry of Pablo Neruda. "It epitomizes why using botanicals is so special, because they have their own life force that's not man-made or synthetic and cannot be duplicated," she says. Based on Bowen Island, B.C., Weldon is known for using natural and biodegradable ingredients that are thoughtfully sourced, including green cedar offcuts from the lumber industry in Ontario.

Come holiday season, one of the best ways to gift the collection's ritual-minded ethos is with Sangre de Fruta's boxed soap sets. "Our bars are popular because they're pretty to look at, last forever in the shower without going soft and create the perfect lather," Weldon says. Designed in

collaboration with British illustrator and artist Tabby Booth, 2025's limited-edition trio is hand-wrapped in artisanal paper baring Booth's mermaid motif. "My favourite thing in the world is to get in the ocean, so there was a natural connection," Weldon says. "Mermaids are a bit of a thing for me; I have one as a tattoo. They're mystical and strong."

Inside, each bar is blended with plant-based oils and deeply cleansing clays. Scents include the rose-meets-sandalwood complexity of Head of Roses and the warm woody-citrus of Garden of Earthly Delights. The spicy sweet Neroli Noir bar contains bitter orange, lavender and ylang-ylang oils with orange rind granules for gentle exfoliation.

For her next chapter, Weldon is dreaming up an expansion into fine fragrance. "I've been thinking about how we can bring what we're really good at into the perfume world," she says. "And also create an experience in our shop here with essential oil blends that are really special and beautiful."

— **INGRIE WILLIAMS**

Sangre de Fruta x Tabby Booth Three Sirens botanical bar soap set, \$94 through [sangredefruta.com](http://sangredefruta.com).



INTRODUCING

## BDK Parfums

Niche Parisian house BDK Parfums is celebrated for scents that conjure memorable moments in the City of Light. Founder David Benedek, who is also an artist, has family roots in scent and the city: his Romanian grandparents distributed Worth and Dior before starting Benlux, the landmark beauty and cosmetics department store across from the Louvre. Gris Charnel was BDK's first hit, a silvery fig-sandalwood accord riff on the cobbled walkways along the Seine. More recent creations like Vanille Caviar (a softly salted gourmand that explores the inky black of Pierre Soulages's paintings) and Impadia (which captures luminous summer sunsets through juicy mandarin and pear over sensual Turkish and Bulgarian rose absolute) have a similar sensibility. "Fragrance represents an emotion in a specific form," says Benedek, who retails BDK through Scentrique, Etiket and H Parfums in Canada.

— **NATHALIE ATKINSON**

For more, visit [bdkparfums.com](http://bdkparfums.com).



FRAGRANCE

## Spice of life

After over a century of synthetic vanilla dominating fragrance formulas, the real deal is making a comeback

Vanilla is trending but it isn't the cloying *pâtisserie* vanillin of yesteryear. Natural vanilla has little in common with what's most widely used in perfume, a synthetic first industrialized in 1874. "Real vanilla is balsamic, woody, raisiny, rich, complex and beloved," says historian and perfumer Mandy Aftel, who wrote *The Museum of Scent*. After saffron, vanilla is the most expensive spice in the world. It grows as an evergreen orchid with blossoms that must be pollinated by hand (one kilo of beans requires 600 flowers), hence its nickname as the "black gold" of perfumery. Sophisticated extraction and curing processes reveal vanilla's essence, which can express more than 400 different flavour and aroma components, from delicately salty, mineral facets to the earthy and aromatic.

For Aesop's new deconstructed amber, Above Us, Steorra, International Fragrance & Flavors perfumer Céline Barel wanted to avoid the typical gourmand take that dominates the market. To achieve a sleeker composition, she juxtaposes cool spice notes like cardamom and warm ones, including cinnamon. "Vanilla bean absolute offers a distinct aroma compared to vanillin, which is often associated with a sweet, powdery and edible scent," Barel says. "It adds complexity and depth, creating a skin-like feel that blends seamlessly with the wearer." There are also subtly animalic, boozy rum and even licorice nuances.

The dynamic tonalities of vanilla become more pronounced in unexpected accords. Atelier Materi's dark and spicy Vanille Carbone contrasts black pepper with a vanilla tincture that highlights its rich, leathery and spicy character. Oud and dark chocolate give the Mexican vanilla in Mancera Paris's XPLICIT Vanilla woody depth. In Ferragamo Sublime Leather, cocoa makes the savoury nuances more pronounced. For its centenary, Guerlain's intense variation Shalimar L'Essence offers the best of both worlds: it augments the heady ethyl vanillin at the heart of the scent with an organic Madagascan pod tincture. — **N.A.**

SHOP

## Gift-worthy flacons for under the tree



### SLOW BURN

This coolly refined leather orris fragrance, one of a quintet in Serge Lutens's Royaume des Lumières collection, is inspired by the *zurafâ* of Islam's medieval Golden Age — aesthetes who considered elegance a cultural ideal. Serge Lutens Zurafâ, \$595/100ml at Holt Renfrew ([sergelutens.com](http://sergelutens.com)).



### MANE SQUEEZE

The uplifting olfactory signature of Sisley's luxury hair-care line amassed such a cult following that — like Aveda, Oribe and Moroccan oil — the brand bottled its sparkling medley of amber and aromatic citrus as a stand-alone scent. Hair Rituel by Sisley Le Parfum, \$165/100ml at Holt Renfrew ([sisley-paris.ca](http://sisley-paris.ca)).



### GREEN THUMB

For Essential Parfums, the indie Parisian house that gives great perfumers creative carte blanche, Dominique Ropion has composed an iris both green and buttery soft with a textured effect that's more suede than velvet. Essential Parfums Velvet Iris, \$137/100ml at Etiket ([essentialparfums.com](http://essentialparfums.com)).



### INTO THE WOODS

Here, juniper, cypress and fir, and solemn Omani frankincense, give way to a warm, slightly chocolatey finish. Amouage's cologne is not of a dark rugged forest, it's wood that's polished to a gleam. Amouage Opus XVI Timber, \$395/100ml at Holt Renfrew and Etiket ([amouage.com](http://amouage.com)).



### STAR STRUCK

Swedish Byredo's cozy-fresh hit Blanche echoes in this unisex floral aldehyde, but this one is tinged with tangy, salted amber notes before the incense and coconut water dry down to a fluffy cloud of cashmere musk. — **N.A.** Byredo Alto Astral eau de parfum, \$310/50ml at Holt Renfrew ([byredo.com](http://byredo.com)).



# ESSENTIALS

MOOD BOARD

## ALL WRAPPED UP

The first rule of enjoying a long winter in Oslo is to embrace *friluftsliv*, the Scandinavian concept of year-round outdoor living. The second is owning a wardrobe of really great scarves. Loro Piana's Grande Unita style is a generously sized stole that is as versatile as it is luxurious. The vibrant colours offered in Burberry's iconic cashmere checks will have you wanting to don more than just one, while a Hermès double-faced option packs in multiple looks through contrasting hues on either side. Andersson Bell's wool tube scarf is delightfully detailed, featuring mismatched hardware, ribbing and raw edges. All coziness aside, it's those types of thoughtful touches that stand out, including the hand-stitched signature on a Ruslan Baginskiy scarf or Loewe's leather pocket. — **NADIA PIZZIMENTI**

Holzweiler



Issey Miyake



Norlha



1. Gingham shell scarf, \$1,376 at Maison Margiela ([maisonmargiela.com](http://maisonmargiela.com)).
2. Grande Unita cashmere scarf, \$940 at Loro Piana ([loropiana.com](http://loropiana.com)).
3. Andersson Bell wool tube scarf, \$115 at Ssense ([ssense.com](http://ssense.com)).
4. Ruslan Baginskiy embroidered wool scarf, \$315 at Ssense ([ssense.com](http://ssense.com)).
5. Dries Van Noten ribbed hooded scarf, \$623 through [farfetch.com](http://farfetch.com).
6. Contrast check cashmere scarves, \$890 each at Burberry ([burberry.com](http://burberry.com)).
7. Yves Salomon Mongolian shearling scarf, \$345 through [yves-salomon.com](http://yves-salomon.com).
8. Loewe wool and cashmere Anagram scarf, \$890 at Holt Renfrew ([holtrenfrew.com](http://holtrenfrew.com)).
9. Double-face cashmere stole, \$1,700 at Hermès ([hermes.com](http://hermes.com)).

PHOTOS BY NADIA PIZZIMENTI (OSLO); SUPPLIED PHOTOS: NET-A-PORTER (MARGIELA); HOLZWEILER; ISSEY MIYAKE; NORLHA; DRIES VAN NOTEN.



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WATCHES

## RIDE ON TIME

Tudor is among a growing list of Swiss watchmakers getting behind pro cycling

With a carbon composite case, an automatic movement that's accurate to a fraction of a second, and a tachymetre scale calibrated to clock the speed of a cyclist racing down a track, the Tudor Pelagos FXD might be the ultimate cycling accessory. Anyone wearing one at the Grand Prix Cycliste de Québec in September had a perfect opportunity to use it when Julian Alaphilippe, a rider on the Tudor Pro Cycling team, fended off an attack by four-time Tour de France champ, Tadej Pogačar, to win the race.

As the UCI Pro Tour's only North American stops, September's Grand Prix Cycliste Québec and Grand Prix Cycliste Montréal were milestones for the Swiss brand and Canadian cycling fans alike. Watches and professional sports have a long-standing association, but with the world's major sporting events dominated by the biggest names in watchmaking, others are increasingly staking their claim in niche events, from big-wave surfing to padel. After announcing its title sponsorship of the Tudor Pro



Julian Alaphilippe (right) won the Grand Prix Cycliste de Québec in September. He rides for the Tudor Pro team. The brand's Pelagos FXD model (above) is a lightweight timepiece created with cyclists in mind.



Cycling Team in 2022, Tudor has become one of its most high-profile boosters in North America.

"Having big brands like Tudor coming into the sport is really great for us," explains Tudor Pro Cycling rider Larry Warbasse. "It brings more attention and different eyeballs to what in the past has been an almost fringe sport, especially

in places like Canada and the U.S." A watch isn't a vital piece of gear for a pro cyclist, and every gram of equipment a rider carries has an impact on their performance. But thanks to endorsements like Tudor's, they seem destined to become a more common sight on the wrists of riders. — JEREMY FREED

For more, visit [tudorwatch.com](http://tudorwatch.com).

SMART INVESTMENT

## How do I shop for a mid-range watch?

There is a whole world of reliable, interesting, and (relatively) affordable timepieces to be found between the cheap-and-cheerful entry level and ostentatious high end. Three experts weigh in on what to look for

### FACE RECOGNITION

Aside from the name on the dial, the difference between a watch sold by a luxury brand and one from a reputable mid-tier maker can be incremental. "Big names can be tempting, but they aren't always where the value is," says Quaid Walker, the co-founder and CEO of online watch marketplace Bezel. "Mid-range shoppers often get more for their money by considering watchmakers with under-the-radar appeal."



Baltic

### TEST DRIVE

How a watch appears on a screen versus how it looks and feels on your wrist can be very different. "The real test is wrist time," says Kaz Mirza, the co-founder of review site *Two Broke Watch Snobs*, who advises trying on as many pieces as you can to get a feel for their real-world presence. "That first-hand impression helps you avoid ending up with a watch that feels clunky or underwhelming in daily wear."



Frederique Constant

### QUARTZ APPEAL

"Quartz movements are underrated," says Jason Gong, founder of watch enthusiast community Complecto. While connoisseurs tend to prefer watches with automatic or manual-wound mechanical movements over those with quartz (i.e., battery-powered) ones, that doesn't mean you can't get many years of enjoyment out of a quartz watch. Not only are quartz-powered watches less expensive, they're also far more accurate than their mechanical counterparts. "It's not about one being better, it's about whether you value the romance of mechanical artistry or the precision and ease of quartz," Gong says. — J.F.



Longines

JUST IN

## Camera ready

Aside from being expensive, complicated and covetable, mechanical watches and manual cameras rarely have that much in common. Leica's new ZM 11 and ZM 12 timepieces, however, are notable exceptions. Boasting the same blend of meticulous engineering and minimalist aesthetics that characterize Leica's cameras — including an innovative quick-set time feature activated by a red shutter button — they've had no trouble winning over shutterbugs and watch connoisseurs alike. Available in two sizes and four dial colours, the ZM 11 and ZM 12 succeed by combining the worlds of imagemaking and horology into one photogenic package. — J.F.

For more, visit [leica-camera.com](http://leica-camera.com).



SUPPLIED PHOTOS: TUDOR PRO CYCLING; JULIEN PAYETTE-TESSIER (TUDOR WATCH);

DESIGN

# CLARION CALLING

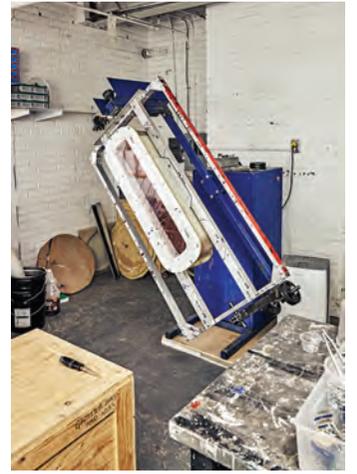
The duo behind Creators of Objects spin colourful resin into bold housewares

It was 2013, when design duo Joanne Byrne and Jonathan de Swaaf were working on a wall treatment for a restaurant, that they first experimented with resin. The pair, whose Toronto studio is known as Creators of Objects, constructed clear cherry blossom flowers to give the installation a 3-D effect.

A few years later, in 2016, Byrne and de Swaaf started exploring what else was possible with the material. “We were inspired by the sculpture artist Rachel Whiteread,” Byrne says. “She’s an incredible resin artist who does negative space castings.” They started with small objects, like Ghostwriter, solid resin books that poke fun at coffee table tomes that people rarely read, and eventually graduated to furniture pieces. The most notable is their Pop floating console, a wall-mounted table with a curved edge that evokes a giant sea glass pebble. Their Oort series (named after the celestial shell that surrounds our solar system) includes hollow, circular and square tables with rounded edges.

Creators of Objects makes everything in-house on the ground floor of an industrial factory in Toronto’s west end. To make the hollow products, small amounts of resin are poured inside a fibreglass mould, which is secured and rotated around multiple axes in a process called roto-casting. “It’s a way of casting things centrifugally, by pushing the material to the edges of the mould as it spins,” de Swaaf says. The technique mimics how some plastic gas canisters are made, but slower. Up to nine layers of resin are applied over 48 hours to give items form and structure, each layer taking about an hour to distribute and cure. The pieces are then sanded and polished for up to two days, revealing an ultra-glossy result. “There’s nothing as satisfying as that final polishing and cleaning of the piece,” Byrne says. “You finally see the gem that was in the rough.”

Each piece ends up looking a bit different, depending on how each layer cures. “They all have undulating interiors, so you get this beautiful light pattern that goes through them,” Byrne says.



To create their hollow Creators of Objects pieces, Jonathan de Swaaf and Joanne Byrne (top left) use a process called roto-casting, spinning multiple layers of colourful resin in a form (above).

The resulting rippled texture is reminiscent of water. “I like to call that the David Hockney effect,” Byrne says, referring to the British pop artist who famously captured the movement of waves in painted swimming pool scenes.

While these hollow items are Creators of Objects’ hallmarks, the duo make more solid pieces too, like the 180-pound foggy resin tabletop for their Ceres table. The prices of their furniture start at \$5,000, reflecting the time and care involved in manufacturing each piece to order. The pair plan to add outdoor furniture to their product line in 2026 (they’ll use a composite material since, as robust and weather-resistant as it looks, resin can’t be kept outside). But they’re most excited about venturing into the world of lighting, experimenting with the different ways that hollow forms can cast a glow. “Resin is kind of a natural lens,” de Swaaf says of their future ambitions. “It seems to be an obvious way to go.” — ANDREA YU



PHOTOS: DAVID KERR (CREATORS OF OBJECTS)

BOOKS

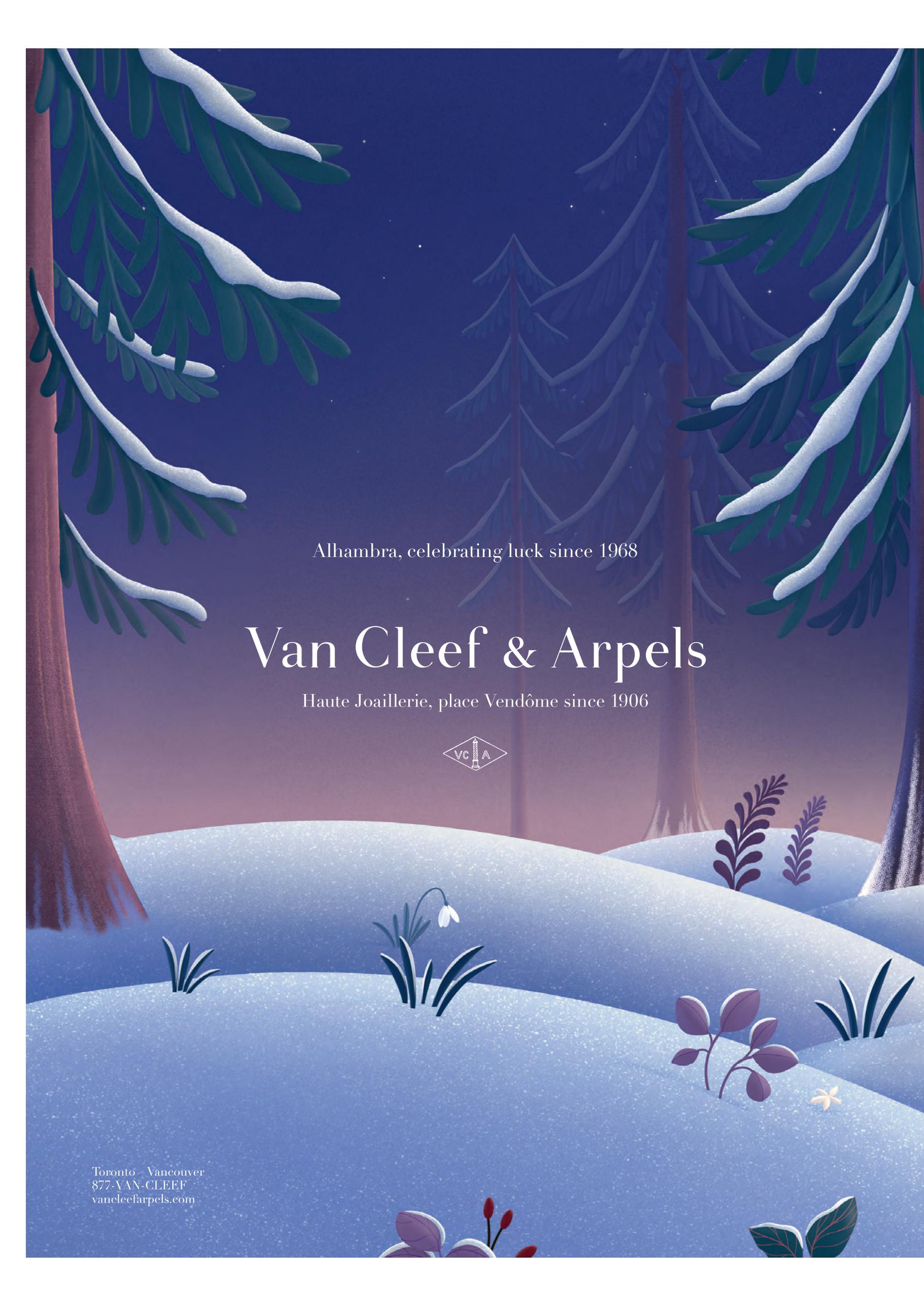
## A centenary look at Scandi design leader Svenskt Tenn

In 2024, Swedish design destination Svenskt Tenn began celebrating its 100th anniversary by releasing limited edition furniture and accessories referencing its catalogue of product sketches and fabric swatches. The milestone brought new attention to its historic collaborators, including architect and artist Josef Frank, and helped shift the perception of Scandinavian design, capturing how bold colour and pattern is essential to living well in northern landscapes. This year, Phaidon compiles much of that history and inspiration into its own 400-page compen-

dium that illustrates the exuberance of Nordic interiors. What’s most remarkable about the book is how it documents the consistency of the Svenskt Tenn aesthetic and how its sculptural lighting, colourful glassware, pewter knick-knacks and Frank’s whimsical botanical prints mix easily across eras. For the design lover on your holiday list, it’s a souvenir that speaks to the timelessness of living joyfully. — A.S.

*Svenskt Tenn: Interiors* by Nina Stritzler-Levine, \$115 at bookstores and online (phaidon.com).





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ART

## CREATIVE TERRITORY



During this fall's Yukon Art Prize weekend, the North's concentration of artistic talent comes into focus

The Yukon has one of the highest number of artists per capita in Canada. If that statistic doesn't confirm the territory's abundance of creative expression, then the scope of work included on the longlist for this year's Yukon Prize for Visual Arts will. Co-founded by wife-and-husband Julie Jai and David Trick, the award was first given out in 2021 and has continued biennially. In October, the programming in Whitehorse around the 2025 initiative included an exhibition of the six shortlisted artists at the Yukon Arts Centre, a lively art crawl and open studios, and a reverential and heartfelt awards ceremony. A show featuring the remaining longlisted artists continues at Arts Underground until Nov. 29.

Dawson City's Aubyn O'Grady won the \$20,000 award for her community-centric, interdisciplinary work focused on wrestling. But the contributions of the rest of the shortlisted nominees – Jane Isakson, Meshell Melvin, Randi Nelson, Jeneen Frei Njootli and Jackie Olson – were just as compelling and reflective of the dynamic breadth and remarkable energy of the territory.

"There's a gap between the talented artists who deserve to be known and art lovers in bigger city centres who don't know anything about Yukon art," says Jai about why she and Trick, both dedicated cultural philanthropists originally from Toronto, founded the prize. For the 2025 deliberations, the jury was composed of Jonathan Shaughnessy, the director of curatorial initiatives at the National Gallery of Canada, Sarah Moore Fillmore, CEO of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, and Dr. Heather Igloliorte, professor in the visual arts department at the University of Victoria.

In a panel discussion during the prize weekend, Jai touched on why the jurors come from outside of the region, noting how close-knit a community it is, which could make things a bit awkward. "We've been very lucky, because every time we've run the prize, we've asked what we considered to be the top people in the field – our dream team – and they've always said 'yes,'" she says of assembling the jury. "We're so fortunate, because I think the Yukon has its own kind of mystique and draw." – **ODESSA PALOMA PARKER**

Aubyn O'Grady (above) is the winner of the 2025 Yukon Prize for Visual Arts. The works of Jane Isakson (top) and Randi Nelson (above left) were part of a show of shortlisted nominees at the Yukon Arts Centre in Whitehorse.

### BEHIND THE WORK

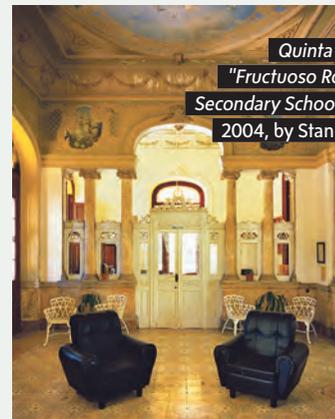
## Pløen by Linda Rotua Sormin

For her ambitious new solo exhibition at Toronto's Gardiner Museum, Bangkok-born, New York City-based sculptor and installation artist Linda Rotua Sormin invites visitors to sensorially navigate the narrative of her ancestry within the Batak people of Sumatra. Exploring this story via themes of colonialism, religious oppression, and diasporic identities, Sormin's immersive installation, *Uncertain Ground*, includes video and sound work, watercolour painting, digital fabrication and ceramics. One intriguing object, called *Pløen*, was crafted during an artist residency she completed at the European Ceramics Workcentre in the Netherlands. "*Pløen*" is a Thai word my mother taught me, which indicates the pleasurable state of being in the zone while doing hands-on repetitive labour," Sormin says. "Each gesture that brings this intricate form into existence is an embodied marking of human presence." Sormin added fragments of porcelain to imbue the sinewy sculpture with a colonialist tinge. She found the Delft blue and white pottery – which she broke and incorporated into the piece – at Dutch second-hand shops in the towns of Oisterwijk and Tilberg. – **O.P.P.**

*Uncertain Ground* continues until April 12.  
For more, visit [gardinermuseum.on.ca](http://gardinermuseum.on.ca).

### TO-DO LIST

## This season's must-see exhibitions across Canada



Quinta Rosario /  
"Fructuoso Rodríguez"  
Secondary School, Vedado,  
2004, by Stan Douglas.

### DEC. 5

Vancouver-based artist Stan Douglas, who was appointed to the Order of Canada in 2024, is the subject of a survey exhibition opening at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in Kleinburg, Ont. Bringing together five photographic series made during Douglas's four-decade-plus career, **TALES OF EMPIRE** examines the effects of global colonialism on populations and landscapes.

### JAN. 14

Craft Ontario in Toronto hosts **SLOW FURNITURE: RECENT WORK FROM THE STUDIO OF HEIDI EARNSHAW** as part of DesignTO's 2026 calendar of exhibitions. The Ontario-based studio, inspired by Shaker, Scandinavian and Japanese making, focuses on offering pieces created in an array of wood finishes.

### JAN. 17

Calgary-based interdisciplinary artist – and former Canada's Best Dressed list subject – Marigold Santos presents a new body of her evocative, narrative-driven work at Toronto's Patel Brown Gallery. **EPIPHYTIC ELUCIDATIONS** includes woven paper works with bronze elements, as well as figurative pieces crafted from wood, shells and brass.

### FEB. 6

**THE GREEN IDEAL: EMILY CARR AND THE IDEA OF NATURE** opens at the Vancouver Art Gallery, marking the debut of its largest show of the artist's work in over 20 years. In addition to highlighting Carr's own experience in understanding and connecting with nature through her paintings, the exhibition will address her representation of Indigenous subjects and emblematic locations, and the notion of sovereignty within these depictions.

### FEB. 21

As a newly commissioned installation opening at the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, **LAND BODIES, DECOMPOSING MASS** features an array of work by Ingrid Bjørnaali (Norway), Fabian Lanzmaier (Austria), Maria Simmons (Canada) and Simon Daniel Tegnander Wenzel (Norway). It's described as "a cross-Atlantic audio-visual collaboration that explores the embodiment and translation of peatland knowledge through blending physical engagement with digital interpretations." – **O.P.P.**

SUPPLIED PHOTOS: MIKE THOMAS (JANE ISAKSON, RANDI NELSON); STAN DOUGLAS (QUINTA ROSARIO/"FRUCTUOSO RODRIGUEZ" SECONDARY SCHOOL, VEDADO, 2004, CHROMOGENIC PRINT ON ALUMINIUM, 121.9 X 139.1 CM); COURTESY OF THE ARTIST; VICTORIA MIRO AND DAVID ZWIRNER; OLE AKHØJ (LINDA ROTUA SORMIN, PLOEN, 2021, GLAZED, HAND-BUILT CERAMIC, FOUND SHARDS, 28 X 21 X 18 INCHES).

An example of Dermapure's regenerative approach to aesthetics in action.  
This image is for illustrative purposes only, and does not show the specific treatment in this piece.



### Forget surface level fixes:

## These cutting-edge aesthetic treatments regenerate your skin on a cellular level

This is not exactly how I expected the afternoon to go. I'm lying on a comfortable treatment table at Dermapure Toronto Don Mills, a medspa and skin clinic in the city's north end, waiting for a facial, but the vibe is less spa, more med, which is actually reassuring. For one thing, my skin is slick with a pain relief gel and has been getting increasingly numb over the past 30 minutes.

I'm waiting for Dr. Fred Weksberg to pop in for a quick consult because my aesthetician, Marianne, wants to make sure that we're doing the right thing for my skin, which still breaks out with distressing regularity and, even more frustrating, has become prone to hyperpigmentation as I've gotten older.

Our initial plan was to go with a Clear + Brilliant treatment, which uses a non-ablative fractionated mini laser to improve skin texture and even out tone, but since I'm still holding onto my summer colour, she wants Dr. Weksberg to weigh in because the laser can exacerbate hyperpigmentation on tanned skin. At Dermapure, each clinic has medical supervision, with medical doctors delivering the treatments that require their expertise.

That is the last thing I want. I've struggled with acne since I was a teenager, but I became significantly more annoyed about it in my 30s (it just doesn't seem fair that I'm still breaking out), and especially when I started developing what I thought were scars after every pimple.

Only, it turns out my skin wasn't scarring at all. As Marianne and Dr. Weksberg explain, I've developed post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation (PIH), dark spots caused by excess melanin production after inflammation or injury. It's common in people with darker skin, and while it can fade on its own, that tends to take months or even years, and it may not ever disappear entirely. Clear + Brilliant can be a good option for this type of complaint, but



Dr. Jacky Lo is a general practitioner with a focus in aesthetic medicine at Dermapure Vancouver.

Dr. Weksberg is also concerned about my tan.

What's more, he recommends tackling the acne first. So, we settle on a new treatment plan: microneedling, a procedure that uses tiny, sterile needles to create microscopic holes in the top layer of your skin, which kickstarts its healing process, followed by exosome therapy, a topical treatment made from rose stem cells, which can amplify skin regeneration after microneedling or laser treatment.

Your typical day spa facial, this is not. Instead, Dermapure, which has clinics across

the country, works – among others – in a relatively new field of cosmetic intervention called regenerative aesthetics. Where traditional aesthetic treatments tend to stick to the surface of the skin, mitigating damage but unable to address the core causes of the problem, regenerative procedures “are about harnessing the body's natural ability to heal and repair itself,” says Dr. Jacky Lo, a general practitioner with a focus in aesthetic medicine at Dermapure Vancouver.

“It's essentially a category that includes a variety of treatments that can include injectable bio-stimulators, skin boosters, exosomes, polynucleotides, platelet rich plasma and different non-surgical skin tightening devices as well,” he says.

“Together, these treatments are not so much about changing who you are, but about strengthening the foundation of your skin so you can still continue to look like yourself, just a healthier and more resilient version.”

In the past, cosmetic procedures focused more on what Dr. Lo calls “chasing lines,” injecting filler to soften a crow's feet or smile lines. Today, dermatologists better understand the aging process, and especially that it happens on three different levels of our faces: our bones, fat and skin. This has allowed them to refine existing treatments, and develop a few new ones, that address skin complaints on a cellular level.

For example, exosomes are “communication molecules that our cells use,” he explains. “Basically, when we apply it topically, we're

telling ourselves to stimulate more collagen.” Over time, these treatments can result in firmer, more elastic skin, a reduction in fine lines and a natural glow, not to mention a reduction in scarring and hyperpigmentation.

Personalization is a key aspect of regenerative aesthetics, Dr. Lo notes. His first order of business with any new patient is a detailed consultation to determine what their concerns are, how much downtime (i.e., pain, swelling, sensitivity) they're willing to tolerate, how quickly they want to see results and what he thinks their skin needs the most. He also advises patients that they'll likely need a series of treatments, spaced several months apart, since they rely so heavily on stimulating collagen production.

Back in Toronto, the microneedling procedure takes about 45 minutes. Thanks to the numbing gel, the most I feel is a moderate sting as Marianne alternates between using a derma roller pen and applying the pleasantly cool exosome serum, so I'm a little surprised at how red and swollen my face is when we're done – but I was warned beforehand. The swelling is vastly reduced when I wake up the next morning, and the redness has mostly faded by a couple of days post-procedure. I'm under strict instructions to apply sunscreen, even as the days get shorter and gloomier, and to return in a few months for Clear + Brilliant to target my PIH.

I know it's far too soon to see results, but it feels like I'm on the way to skin that's mine, but better.

**Visit Dermapure to book your free skin consultation at the clinic of your choice.**

*The writer for this article was paid by the Globe Content Studio and the service was provided free by Dermapure for review purposes.*

# THE SURREAL RISE OF ALEX PORAT

In pearls and polka dots, Canada's latest pop export explains how she turned YouTube buzz into a burgeoning music career

BY HALEY STEINBERG

PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
CARLYLE ROUTHÉ

FASHION EDITOR  
NADIA PIZZIMENTI

## SEEING SPOTS

Alex Porat layers up with delicately embellished nails and Tiffany & Co.'s Titan ring. Rabanne lace dress at Holt Renfrew ([holtrenfrew.com](http://holtrenfrew.com)). Tahitian pearl ring in gold with diamonds at Tiffany & Co. ([tiffany.ca](http://tiffany.ca)). (In orb) Sportmax silk and lace trimmed dress at Max Mara ([sportmax.com](http://sportmax.com)). Vintage Comme des Garçons polka dot tights at Nouveau Riche Vintage ([nouveaurichevintage.ca](http://nouveaurichevintage.ca)).



For someone who grew up on the internet, Alex Porat has an easy, level confidence in real life. She came of age at a time when a grainy YouTube video could launch a 12-year-old kid from Stratford, Ont., to stratospheric fame, when a mom holding a digital camera was just as viable a route to celebrity as a studio-recorded mixtape. Following in the footsteps of Justin Bieber, Conan Gray, Alessia Cara and countless others, Porat started out on YouTube, posting covers of show tunes and Selena Gomez songs. And, like any good Gen-Zer, the 27-year-old singer-songwriter is still chronically online.

Porat has been winning airplay in Canada and beyond with her ridiculously catchy yet vulnerable pop songs about problematic guys, crushes, heartbreak and young love. She released her latest EP, *crushed!*, in June, and is spending the fall touring the new tracks across Canada and the U.S. (the situationship-inspired single, *Face Like Yours*, cracked number 15 on Billboard's Top 40 list). On social media, she posts a steady stream of cool-but-relatable-girl content: pre-show Get Ready With Me videos, outfits that blend early-2000s style with today's baggier silhouettes, snaps from studio sessions, clips from live shows.

Porat has joined a growing cohort of 20-something female pop stars who are dominating music streaming and wielding enormous cultural influence. At the apex of that group are global megastars like Sabrina Carpenter (with nearly 50 million Instagram followers), Olivia Rodrigo (39 million) and breakout Canadian singer Tate McRae (8 million and counting). When it comes to the business of being a modern musician, which is often as much about packaging and selling a personal brand as the music itself, it is young women who are leading the charge.

Born in Malaysia to a Chinese mother and Polish father, Porat and her family briefly lived in the U.S. before moving to Vancouver and, later, Toronto. As a kid, she performed at the Crystal Mall in Burnaby on weekends – a gig she kept up for years. The stage was in the food court of the Asian mall, and the young performer belted out pop diva hits by Whitney Houston, Celine Dion and Mariah Carey while mall-goers lunched on noodles and dim sum.

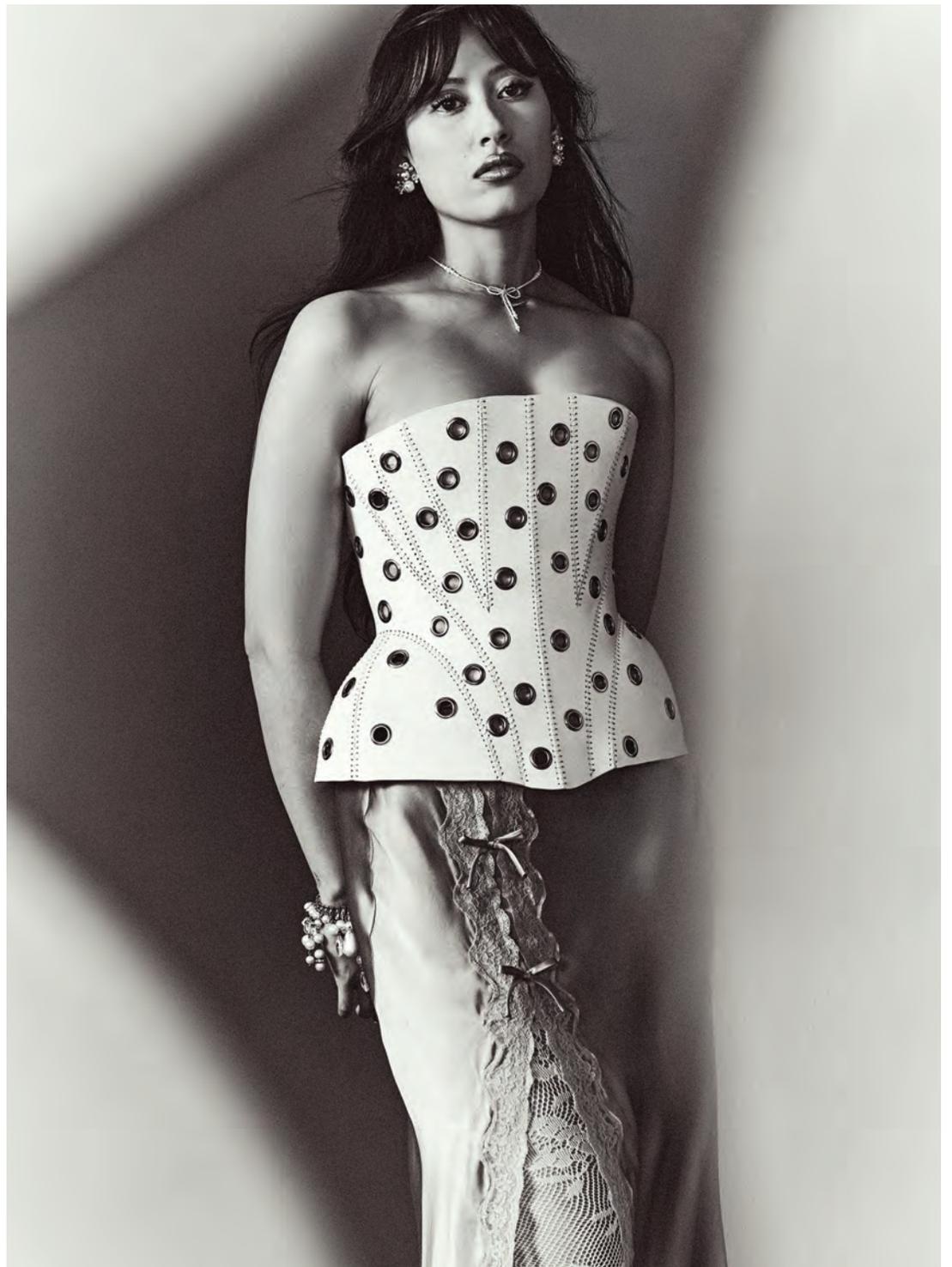
Growing up, Porat struggled with her mixed-race identity. "I thought I looked so weird as a kid," she told me when we met at Skyline Restaurant in Toronto's Parkdale neighbourhood in September. "You're just looking in the mirror and thinking, 'I don't look like anything that exists.'" That feeling of otherness extended to her early experiences in the entertainment industry, too. Porat would attend open casting calls, only to find that there weren't roles for mixed-race actors. "When you're going to a casting as a kid and you look a little Asian, they're like, 'Oh, well, the parents in this commercial are white,'" she says.

The rejections piled up, but Porat wasn't done trying. "I got really used to it," she says. "I was like, whatever, another [rejection], whatever." After high school, she briefly studied marketing in the hope that it would help her launch her music career before deciding to give music one last shot. When she was younger, she had started posting videos of her singing to YouTube with her mother's help, and she decided to double down on the platform. She followed a disciplined posting schedule and took cover requests from her followers, which grew with the success of a few viral videos. Today, she has 1.2-million subscribers on the platform.

It was through those videos that her manager, Laurie Lee Boutet, found her in 2019. Trawling YouTube for untapped talent, Boutet, who also manages Toronto rock band the Beaches, came across Porat's profile and was impressed by what she saw. She reached out, and the two met for coffee.

"Immediately, I just found her super captivating," Boutet says. "She's like that nice, cool girl in high school that you're like, 'You're not allowed to be that nice because you're so cool and beautiful.'"

Boutet chalks the success of Porat's music up to relatability. "It's very catchy, it's very fun, but I think



**FULL CIRCLE** A Savoie corset features unexpected details like a graphic array of grommets.

Savoie hand-stitched and grommeted leather corset through @atelier.savoie on Instagram. Love Shack Fancy silk slip skirt at Holt Renfrew (holtrenfrew.com). Pearl and crystal earrings, bracelet at Swarovski (swarovski.com). Carole Tanenbaum Vintage Collection bracelet, ring through caroletanenbaum.com. Agmes silver and pearl bracelet through agmesnyc.com.

she writes about stories of heartbreak or crushes that everyone goes through," she says. Part of Porat's appeal is also her natural sense of style. "Alex is super fashionable and has amazing taste," Boutet says. "She does a great job of styling herself."

For Porat, clothes are a way to empower herself when she's performing. "I realized somewhere in the last three years that I feel the most confident when I'm onstage," she says. To that end, she keeps a separate closet for show clothes – big boots, dance tights and more daring pieces like leather booty shorts and corset tops. The clothes aren't costumes; they're still her, just a slightly bolder version of her.

She often accessorizes the playful looks with a pink hair roller. Porat uses a roller to style her bangs, and after posting a photo of it on social media, fans began showing up to her shows wearing their own rollers. "It's become a silhouette for my fan club," she says.

As any independent artist will tell you, social media can be a double-edged sword: platforms like TikTok and Instagram grant musicians control over their own images and facilitate immediate, intimate relationships with fans. At the same time, self-promotion can be an all-consuming, tireless exercise. At one point during our interview, Porat pulled out her phone to show me a screenshot of

her Screen Time app, which had clocked 17 hours in a single day.

"Three hours on Instagram, one hour on e-mail, two hours on TikTok," she says, scanning the breakdown. "Wow. I'm like, 'That's not okay.'"

But for Porat, social media is still a net-positive in her life. "I think because I grew up using YouTube, I don't think of it as this toxic, terrifying thing," she says. "The opportunities are literally endless with social media."

Her October show at The Great Hall in Toronto was evidence of that. Porat took the stage in a cutout denim top, black hotpants and slouchy, knee-high leather boots. Her usually wavy hair was pin-straight in the mode of 2000s-era pop icons like Christina Aguilera and Avril Lavigne. The crowd was poked with pink hair rollers.

From the moment she stepped out, Porat was transformed from the quietly confident woman I'd met earlier into a crowd-commanding powerhouse pop entity. It was like she was performing for an audience of a couple hundred thousand instead of a couple hundred, infecting the room with her magnetic energy and punchy anthems about bad dudes and breakups. It was clear that she was having a blast. All she needed, it seemed, was a bigger stage. 🎤

**ON THE BAG**

A string of vintage pearls is on charm duty for this mod Prada look.

Double-breasted coat, handbag, leather boots at Prada ([prada.com](http://prada.com)). Pearl and diamond earrings at Tiffany & Co. ([tiffany.ca](http://tiffany.ca)). Carole Tanenbaum Vintage Collection pearl necklace (on bag) through [caroletanenbaum.com](http://caroletanenbaum.com).



**PRINT CLASH**  
Animal-like mottling and a sea of circles come together in an unexpected combo. Isabel Marant faux fur coat through [isabelmarant.com](http://isabelmarant.com). Polka dot printed button-up shirt, shorts, leather mules at Fendi ([fendi.com](http://fendi.com)). Beaufille earrings through [beaufille.com](http://beaufille.com).



**STEP OUT**

Eras are remixed with art deco strands and mid-century-coded opera gloves.

Silk dress, gloves, string of pearls, earrings at Chanel ([chanel.com](http://chanel.com)). Carole Tanenbaum Vintage Collection string of pearls through [caroletanenbaum.com](http://caroletanenbaum.com).





**HIGH CONTRAST**  
Baubles pop on  
a silhouette that's  
otherwise all black,  
from fingertip to toe.  
Beaufille gown with  
glove sleeves through  
beaufille.com. Gohar  
World porcelain  
egg necklace, earrings  
through gohar.world.

Makeup and hair  
by Jordan Giang.  
Manicure by Wendy Rorong  
for Sidia/Plutino Group.  
Photo assistant: Marc Santos.  
Styling assistant: Shae Holt.



# WHOLE NEW WORLD

Designer Matthieu Blazy's  
Spring 2026 debut charts  
the future for Chanel

BY **ANDREW SARDONE**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
**RACHELLE SIMONEAU**



Under the glass dome of Paris's Grand Palais, Chanel suspended a solar system of glowing orbs and twinkling stars.

When you're a brand as disciplined as Chanel, even changing the time of your runway show can be seen to signal a significant shift in direction.

For as long as fashion cognoscenti can remember, the 115-year-old French house has staged its fall and spring collections on the morning of the final Tuesday of fashion month – the calendar of presentations that winds its way through New York, London, Milan and Paris. That was not to be the case for designer Matthieu Blazy's spring 2026 debut as Chanel's creative director, however. The message leading up to the show on Oct. 6 was clear: move your dinner reservations; Chanel is showing on Monday night.



The audience was happy to oblige. In a season stacked with designer introductions, Blazy's first collection was, perhaps, the most anticipated. His arrival at Chanel was the subject of speculation for months before it was announced last December.

The 41-year-old French-Belgian creative began his career designing men's wear for Raf Simons before overseeing Maison Margiela's Artisanal collection. He worked with Phoebe Philo at Céline; Simons, again, at Calvin Klein; and took charge of Bottega Veneta's studio in 2021. At Bottega Veneta, his long list of

wins included coveted accessories created using the house's signature woven leather, working the material to look like textiles ranging from denim to flannel, and high-concept show sets.

The time shift of the Chanel show allowed Blazy to present his own dramatic take on the house's blockbuster scenography. During the day, the Grand Palais, Chanel's traditional show venue, is awash with natural light. In the evening, Blazy could fill its soaring greenhouse roof with a glowing solar system instead. A dark, resin-like floor of colourful nebulas and distant

The collection included subtle tweaks to traditional Chanel details including tweeds and floral embellishments.

galaxies reflected the suspended orbs, and as twilight dimmed outside, the room became a kind of planetarium, enveloping the audience in deep space.

"Chanel is about love. The birth of Modernity in fashion comes from a love story," noted Blazy in the show program. "This is what I find most beautiful. It has no time or space; this is an idea of freedom. The freedom worn and won by Gabrielle Chanel."

For the models that floated through Chanel's Grand Palais universe, that sense of freedom was expressed in styling that prioritized singular pieces coming together in an individualized way. That made the collection both easy and impossible to compare to the Chaneles that have come before.

There was everything a long-time client needs, though often loosened up and remixed. Oversized bags in brown and maroon evoked the shape of Chanel's classic flap but without any quilting or chain hardware. The texture of the tweed suits was lighter and, occasionally, sheer, with silhouettes ranging from boxy and oversized to rounded and sculpted, the plaids blown-up, shrunk down, beaded and shredded.

The colour palette was at times graphic black-and-white but, more often, fresh and vibrant, including a look that paired a tomato red maxi skirt with a cropped blue stripe dress shirt. The shirts, created in collaboration with another French luxury stalwart, Charvet, were the sleeper hits. While they link Blazy's collection to house founder Gabrielle Chanel and her love of adopting the clothing of the men in her life for herself, they accomplish it with more ease than ever before.

Newly installed creative directors were once rewarded for being reverential to the history of the houses they'd been charged with, while incrementally nudging customers toward an evolution seasoned with their own ideas. Today, the army of critics that dominates social media expects instant revolution and calibrates its opinions using an impossible matrix of pop culture, politics and algorithmic trends that are constantly in flux. Blazy, miraculously, met all of these often incongruous expectations.

The show's first look included a version of the 2.55 handbag, but its prim shape was scrunched and splayed open to reveal its burgundy leather lining. At the showroom the next day, it became clear that the inner structure of the bag allows its owner to form it into as imperfect a shape as they like. It's Blazy's homage to Gabrielle Chanel's belief that clothing is meant to be (and even look) worn, and one of many ways he connected Chanel's past, present and the surprises he has in store for its future. **5**



The final runway walk illustrated the more individual approach to styling, and hinted at a future focused on pieces that feel adaptable and personal.

# Host with the **most**

'Tis the season to get a little extra. Here, a cast of entertaining pros share the definitive overachiever's guide to holiday parties

PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
**MICHAEL KAZIK**





**STYLING ADVICE**

# Art of the table

Toronto Stylist Chad Burton is known for his bold approach to interiors, and we charged him with conceptualizing an eccentric lineup of tabletop, gift wrapping and holiday decor schemes. His table for two (because why shouldn't an intimate dinner be as festive as a bustling party) captures many of the year's notable entertaining trends. "I see a lot of creators making these wild and wonderful stacks and combinations and sculptures," he says of the setting's towers of dishware, textiles and organic elements. Layers of Ginori plates tease the multi-course meal to come while a Colours of Arley tablecloth and vintage tiger-striped napkins create their own feast for the eyes. In a pair of egg holders, Burton has nestled baby Chinese eggplants labelled with each diner's name. Even when you're making a big design statement, it's those little touches that your guests will remember.

**NO CHEATING**

## How to plate like a pro



If no one posts a photo of your Michelin-star-worthy holiday meal, did you even spend two days sweating over a hot stove cooking it? Earning social media accolades goes beyond delicious food. Dinner needs to look as stunning as it tastes. Louise Borins is the owner of Into the Kitchen, a company that brings clients into the inner sanctums of some of

Toronto's top restaurants (La Palma, DaiLo, Mamakas Taverna) for one-on-one workshops. She is also an enthusiastic home cook who has been entertaining with an over-the-top ethos for decades. "It makes people feel special that you've gone to the trouble of caring to make it look remarkable," she says of mastering the art of dinner plate composition. The charcuterie board has become an entertaining standard, and evolved to look

increasingly maximal over the years, but Borins takes a more thoughtful approach. "It's carefully placed, and there's lots of white space," she says, a mantra she carries into all her plating. "Less is more. When food is served on a platter, you want to give it air and not fill it up from end to end." Whether you serve your meal family-style or individually plated is up to you. Borins prefers a mix – a plated salad or soup, shared mains and either for dessert. She's fond of using a

restaurant kitchen staple, plastic bottles, to dispense dressings and sauces so they look "artfully done." And garnishes can make all the difference. Borins favours contrasting pops of colour, including pomegranate pips, chili flakes and sesame seeds, but the garnish must make sense with what you're serving. "Keep it integral to what you used in the dish," she says. That could mean sage for a turkey or cilantro clippings on a curry. – **ANDREA YU**

**BIG GIVE**

Wine columnist **CHRISTOPHER WATERS** offers his guide to the season's best #OTT bottles

**TRUE BRUT**



Bollinger Chef de Cave Denis Bunner continues to put terroir front and centre by selecting unique pinot noir-based sparkling wines for limited release. The current offering in Canada is Bollinger PN TX20, a beautifully balanced bubbly predominantly based on grapes from Tauxières, a village in Montagne de Reims. The creamy and refreshing Champagne complements the house's vintage-dated flagship, La Grande Année. But the real excitement is the consistent value for money character offered by Bollinger Special Cuvée Brut Champagne, a rich and rewarding wine with a deliciously satisfying honeyed richness. Bollinger Special Cuvée Brut Champagne, \$110 in British Columbia ([champagne-bollinger.com](http://champagne-bollinger.com)).

**ACROSS DECADES**



Forty Creek Master Blender Bill Ashburn is celebrating his storied career with the release of Chronology, a limited-run whisky that spans the first four decades of the Grimsby, Ont., distillery. It's the most ambitious release yet from the producer of the popular Double Barrel and Confederation Oak brands. The blend features selected barrels from 1992, 2000, 2014 and 2020, reflecting different grains and oak types that Ashburn says capture the essence of his decades of distilling. The result is a harmonious spirit suggesting chocolate, tobacco, cherry, citrus and peppery spice notes, with a seamless texture and lingering finish. Forty Creek Chronology Canadian Whisky, \$300 in Ontario ([fortycreekwhisky.com](http://fortycreekwhisky.com)).

**SWEET SUCCESS**



Thoughtful cask management allows Glenfiddich to produce a sophisticated portfolio of Speyside single malt Scotches with complex, unexpected characters. In this instance, Gran Reserva 21-Year-Old's maturation in former rum casks adds sweeter and spicier undertones to Glenfiddich's trademark apple orchard character. The mix of sweet and dried fruit aromas and flavours seem right at home for the holiday season, while a soft and sippable nature adds to the crowd-pleasing appeal. Expect a mix of rich toffee, fig and oak notes that are nicely balanced by leather and peppery spice on the lingering warm finish. Glenfiddich Gran Reserva 21-Year-Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky, \$355 in Alberta ([glenfiddich.com](http://glenfiddich.com)).

**AUSSIE RULES**



Australian red wine is coming back into the limelight, especially celebrated labels from established producers that prize restraint over power. The Henschke family started making shiraz from Mount Edelstone vineyard in the Barossa in 1952. They like the quality of the grapes so much, they purchased the vineyard in 1974. Today, like all Henschke's vineyards, the site is farmed using organic and biodynamic practices. That passionate approach behind the scenes contributes to the polished and perfumed character of a red wine that offers a beguiling mix of floral, dark fruit and spicy notes to savour. Drink now through 2040. Henschke Mount Edelstone Shiraz 2018, \$314 in Alberta ([henschke.com.au](http://henschke.com.au)).

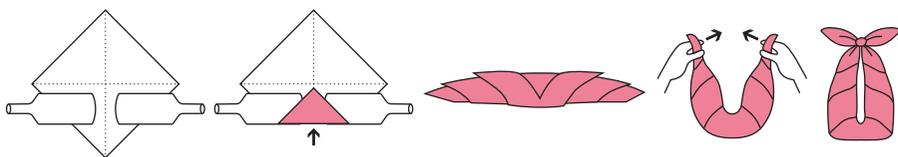
**OPPOSITE AND ABOVE:** Muller Van Severn Alu Chairs at Bonne Choice ([bonne-choice.com](http://bonne-choice.com)). Colours of Arley Blush & Bon Bon striped tablecloth through [coloursofarley.com](http://coloursofarley.com). Bangli floral tablecloth, Rowan placemat at V de V ([vdevmaison.com](http://vdevmaison.com)). Ginori 1735 Oriente Italiano dinnerware, Leopardo flatware set, Rialto flatware set, Michael Adam Vine brass candleholder set at William Ashley ([williamashley.com](http://williamashley.com)). Pink stripe linen coasters, eggplant cake stand, Persia salt and pepper shakers at Baa Baazaar ([baabaazaar.com](http://baabaazaar.com)). Gohar World lace coasters, Justine Menard wine glasses at River Crossing ([rivercrossingshop.com](http://rivercrossingshop.com)). Tapered dinner candles, tiger and leopard egg cups at Avenue Daughter ([avenuedaughter.com](http://avenuedaughter.com)). Blue vase, tiger-print napkins, candle chandelier, stylist's own.



STYLING ADVICE

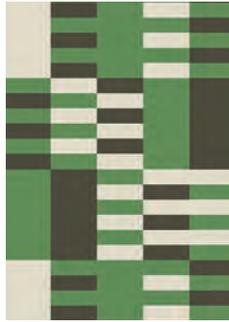
# That's a wrap

"I lived in South Korea for a few years and saw this style of wrapping used by older generations," Burton says about *Bojagi*. Using cloth in an artful way allows a present's packaging to become part of the gift. For the examples above, Burton relied on a wardrobe of designer silk scarves, but most textiles will do. "Any sort of scrap fabric in a beautiful texture or pattern would work." Burton looked to Pinterest tutorials for instruction on wrapping everything from a ball to a baguette, and the double wine bottle (far back) is probably the most straightforward option. "Lay the scarf out flat like a diamond," Burton says. "Place both bottles on their sides, bottom to bottom with a three-inch gap, about four inches above the bottom point of the scarf. Wrap the bottom point of the scarf over the two bottles and roll them both towards the top point of the scarf. Raise the bottles to stand next to each other and tie the ends of the scarf into a handle with a double knot."



BIG GIVE

Style writer **ODESSA PALOMA PARKER** assembles the most decadent of giftwrap options: designer leftovers from your latest wallpaper project



CHECK PLEASE

A piquant nod to Bauhaus artist Anni Albers's inimitable textiles, Farrow & Ball's punchy Check has a sense of vibrancy without being overwhelming. The legendary British decor brand, which celebrates its 80th anniversary next year, produces all its wallpaper by hand in small batches at its Dorset factory; and this graphic pattern is available in four colourways crafted using the company's exacting pigmentations from milder natty neutrals to fresh mixes of greens, blues and browns. Farrow & Ball Check wallpaper, \$345/10-metre roll at Farrow & Ball (farrow-ball.com).



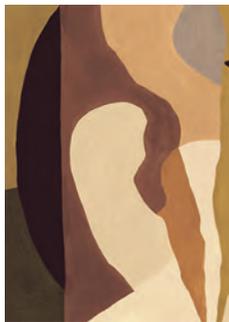
GIVE IT A SWIRL

Toronto-based multidisciplinary creative Gabrielle Lasporte originally created the Fluid Connectivité pattern as part of an interactive installation for the overnight cultural event Nuit Blanche in 2022; and it was also included in Lasporte's turn as guest designer during DesignTO in 2024. Now anyone can gaze at its hypnotic painterly lines thanks to Lasporte's new collection of wallpapers made with Canadian manufacturer Rollout. Her contributions to the label's array of artist-made patterns range from this psychedelic offering to batik motifs and florals. Gabrielle Lasporte wallpaper, price on request through rollout.ca.



FRUIT FLAVOURED

Kate Golding, the Newfoundland-based artist known for her endearing pen, brush and ink works, collaborates with Montreal's Wynil on a variety of wallpaper patterns. From sprightly blue jays on boughs to a rendering of the cheery houses seen in Newfoundland's Bonavista, Golding captures homegrown scenes that delight. Her figs pattern features a spray of the lush fruits surrounded by delicate leaves and evokes a sense of warmth and serenity just right for the season. Kate Golding Figs wallpaper, price on request through wynil.com.



ABSTRACT CONCEPT

NewWall, the female-lead Toronto-based company that boasts a wealth of wallpaper brands under its umbrella, offers a selection of fabulous designs by Barcelona's Tres Tintas. Made in Spain, its lush Abstract Mex pattern – available in tones from moody purples to peppy coral reef colours – is part of the 26-year-old brand's New Primitivism line. Its expertise in crafting artful wallcoverings draws from the three founding brothers' family legacy in the industry. Tres Tintas Abstract Mex wallpaper, \$675/five murals at NewWall (newwall.com).

NO CHEATING

## The person who has everything still loves a thoughtful gift



In the history of gift-giving, there have been some December doozies. After a four-year hunt to find the most beautiful ruby in the world, actor Richard Burton placed a ruby and diamond ring from Van Cleef & Arpels in Elizabeth Taylor's Christmas stocking in 1968. In 2008, Indian billionaire Anil Ambani bought his wife a \$62-million superyacht to

usher in the New Year. And in 2011, Angelina Jolie purchased a waterfall in northern California as a Christmas gift for her then-husband Brad Pitt.

"Oh, you shouldn't have," doesn't begin to capture the extravagance of these presents, but even with an endless budget, it can often feel impossible to track down a holiday gift that goes the extra mile. Elie Sassine, general manager at the W Toronto, has spent years working in luxury hotels. He and his team not only assist guests in purchasing important gifts, but they also arrange presents that frequent

and VIP guests (the kinds of people that really do have everything) receive on arrival.

"Everybody loves something personalized," Sassine says. He suggests monogramming the recipient's name or initials onto a present, which instantly proves that it wasn't an afterthought you ordered online yesterday. He's facilitated the engraving and embossing of everything from perfume bottles to leather bags, jewellery and champagne flutes.

Susy Fossati, director of the consultancy Avignon Etiquette, advises general spending

guidelines based on etiquette industry standards: a value of \$10 to \$20 for acquaintances, \$10 to \$30 for neighbours or colleagues and \$20 to \$50 for extended family members. As the relationship gets closer, the appropriate amount to spend increases – \$30 to \$75 for siblings and close friends and \$50 to \$200 for a spouse, parent or child. It's all relative, of course, but even if you skimp on or blow past Fossati's budget, there's one non-negotiable: always include a handwritten card. "A personal note adds warmth and meaning," Fossati says. – **A.Y.**

ABOVE: (Clockwise from top) Green and gold silk scarf at Chanel (chanel.com). Longchamp Les Artisans de Paris silk scarf at Holt Renfrew (holtrenfrew.com). FF Foulard silk twill scarf at Fendi (fendi.com). Ferragamo Anemone silk scarf at Holt Renfrew. Camails a Carreaux scarf 90 at Hermès (hermes.com).



**STYLING ADVICE**

# Bits and baubles

Beyond traditional ornaments, a holiday tree can become a showcase for all the things you love to collect. In the scheme above, Burton's personal cache of spent matchbooks and boxes creates an eclectic display. "I collect matches at restaurants I visit, especially on travels," he says. "The typography and colours of the boxes are always fun and unique." When deciding if a stash of objects will work, Burton's advice is simple: "Anything you collect that a ribbon could be tied onto and is of ornament size is fair game," he says. "I've used old dollhouse furniture, which has a very quirky, charming and retro quality." To complement the collectables, Burton suggests other vintage elements. "Mercury glass antique ornaments are so delicate and beautiful, and all those food ones you find are fun and charming," he says. "Pair them with multiples of a modern colour story or shape."

**BIG GIVE**

Fragrance expert **NATHALIE ATKINSON** selects the bougiest of bougie to treat your consummate host

**FASHION STATEMENT**

Designer Yves Saint Laurent's fashion stylings inspire YSL Le Vestiaire des Parfums, but new home fragrances in the *haute parfumerie* collection also reference notable places in their namesake's life. The scent 70 Paris embodies Saint Laurent's long-time private haven on the city's Left Bank, where the couturier took up residence in 1970. Its black-on-black styling recalls the avid collector's penchant for lacquer, louche Le Smoking tuxedos and famous Jean Dunand vases, while the spicy and woody black pepper and patchouli scent conjures the home's atmosphere of heady bohemian opulence. 70 Paris candle, \$135 at Holt Renfrew (yslbeauty.ca).



**REQUIRED READING**

Assouline, the purveyor of designer coffee table books that elevated the art of reading to a style brag, offers a new way to flash one's cultured bona fides. Among the luxury publisher's new Library Collection of literary accessories, including bookends and magnifying glasses, are scented candles that embody aspects of the reading lifestyle. The signature scent is Culture Lounge, a library candle redolent of lemon, rum and sandalwood, while Paper is the familiar, nostalgic, dusty-sweet of decaying pages. Culture Lounge candle, \$200 at Maison Lipari and Teatro Verde (assouline.com).



**CHRISTMAS SPECIAL**

Baccarat Rouge 540 remains perfumer Francis Kurkdjian's most notable elixir. Yet his holiday home fragrance also enjoys a cult following, not least because it comes out but once a year. Named for the French version of the German *O Tanenbaum* carol, Mon Beau Sapin's resinous seasonal scent has rich balsamic notes with a touch of cinnamon, capturing the air of a wintry forest walk. Eschew the standard jar for the limited-edition taper candles. The unexpectedly fragrant format makes decadent dinner party swag, and the trio is a (relative) steal. Mon Beau Sapin taper candles, \$70/set of three at Holt Renfrew (franciskurkdjian.com).



**ETERNAL FLAME**

Loewe's subtle botanical aromas housed in glazed terracotta vessels are a candle collector's stealth status symbol. The freshly picked scent of Tomato has made it the brand's covetable candle this season, but two new additions may unseat it. As the names suggest, Beeswax is an earthy, honeyed scent, while Palo Santo is smoky and mysterious. Known for its role in ancient cleansing rituals, its soft, citrusy pine aroma may have the best chance of ridding holiday gatherings of negative energy. Loewe Beeswax medium candle, \$380 at Holt Renfrew (holtrenfrew.com).



**NO CHEATING**

## Your next show-stopping arrangement might come from the produce aisle



Havelock, Ont.-based florist Beth Puttkemery of Smells Like Flowers finds inspiration for her creations at the grocery store, and not in the shelves of cellophane-wrapped poinsettias near the checkout. In the produce section, everything from cobs of corn to mushrooms and clusters of grapes are ripe for her tablescapes. This season, Puttkemery suggests a festive garland of bright red chilli peppers. "That's a big trend,

to have a garland of something that you can weave through your arrangement," she says. "Or you could put it at the bottom of an arrangement and just let it cascade over the table." Flowers still play a central role, of course. Both Puttkemery and Bowen Island, B.C.-based floral designer Hitomi Gilliam favour amaryllis. "It's really beautiful and statuesque," Gilliam says. "It has big blooms and lasts a

long time." The flowering bulb famously comes in a vibrant, holiday-appropriate red, but both florists agree that layering in complementary tones adds interest. Gilliam reaches for carnations and roses in rust and burgundy, while Puttkemery suggests adding even more amaryllis in a peachy hue. "Just really go all in on it," Puttkemery says. "To make things look more elevated, minimize the varieties you're using and just use a ton of them." For vessels, ditch clear, cylindrical vases and go for pottery, which Gilliam prefers since it hides stems and floating leaves. Puttkemery advocates

for an elegant compote bowl, a vase with a foot. Both suggest ditching the foam in favour of chicken wire instead, which can support an arrangement's structure by being balled up and placed in the base of a vase or formed into a tube for a tabletop garland. For more delicate garlands, Puttkemery suggests floral wire that can also be used to make classic wreaths that fit any decor style, which she likes to gift her hosts. She'll make a holiday wreath out of juniper, white pine and cedar, then add a group of foraged pinecones. "The more, the better," she says. —A.Y.

ILLUSTRATION BY SALINI PERERA.

# Beyond

● BUCKET LIST TRAVEL

## OFF THE RAILS

In Rome, designer Hugo Toro translates the style of luxury train travel into a chic hotel



Architect and interior designer Hugo Toro is pictured in the lobby bar of the Orient Express La Minerva in Rome.

**W**hen he began to reimagine Rome's Fonseca Palace hotel as the new Orient Express La Minerva, architect Hugo Toro knew he would break at least one rule. "I hate orchids. I don't understand when hotels put them everywhere," he says. "Orchids have just become this blanket statement for luxury that has lost its feeling."

Instead of following expected design codes for the first brick-and-mortar property of the luxury train brand, he leaned into his unapologetically eclectic aesthetic. He credits the look to his French and Mexican heritage, which surround him with colour, texture and a feel-good sense of place. "That's something that my mom was always trying to give us," he says.

At the Orient Express La Minerva, that feeling begins in the entrance to the hotel, which once welcomed notable writers such as Herman Melville, Stendhal and George Sand. A signature room scent imbued with notes of olive oil and amber wafts through the lobby bar, which sits under a striking vaulted glass ceiling. The space is the centrepiece of the hotel's 17th-century architecture, created by combining five separate buildings, and an oasis just steps from the frenzy of the Pantheon.

The Italian capital was a main source of inspiration for the hotel's design. "Something that I'm quite proud of is Roman people are really happy about the project because they feel that it's a hotel that belongs to Rome," Toro says. Rugs and wood flooring are patterned after the Pantheon's geometric ceiling, and custom marble bathroom sinks echo Rome's fountains. A marble statue of Minerva by 19th-century Italian sculptor Rinaldo Rinaldi presides over the main floor and is original to the building, as is the Olimpo ballroom.

Suites, however, echo the intimacy of a luxury sleeper train compartment. Tables and in-room bars are fashioned like steamer trunks in rich, dark woods and the bedding is courtesy of Rivolta Carmignani, the same linens used on Orient Express cars. In 2026, the brand will debut another hotel in Venice, the Palazzo Donà Giovannelli. It will be, of course, just a quick train journey away. — JULIETTE LIE BAXTER

Stays from €1,000/night through [orient-express.com](http://orient-express.com).



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## FIT FOR PURPOSE

Lojel's packing accessories are tailored to any type of trip

The quest to stay organized on the road is never-ending. Different bags require different components, and the goal is always to get more into your luggage. Enter Lojel's new packing system, Ordo. The five-piece Travel Packing Kit is designed for clothing, with diagonal zips that prevent fabric snags and allow travellers to find items without emptying the packs. The Compression Kit is designed for longer-haul travel. And the Everyday Kit is useful for electronics, accessories and toiletries. Add a wrist strap to the extra-small pouch and it doubles as a clutch for the beach. All bags from the Japanese brand are made of washable, recycled nylon and many of them include mesh inserts that ensure all your overpacking can breathe. — **MARYAM SIDDIQI**

For more, visit, [ca.lojel.com](http://ca.lojel.com).



## UP AND AWAY

Fairmont's first Japanese property offers endless views of sprawling Tokyo

Fairmont has joined the booming tourism scene in Japan with the opening of its first property in the country. Located in Minato City, a bustling area of Tokyo known for hosting dozens of international embassies and corporate headquarters (and just one stop from Haneda airport on the Tokyo Monorail), the Fairmont Tokyo offers travellers a modern twist on Japanese traditions. You'll definitely never need to turn on the TV. Corner suites offer jaw-dropping views of the city, the bay and Tokyo Tower. The reception area, lobby lounge and a casual brasserie called Kiln & Tonic are on the 35th floor. This space also includes an expansive outdoor patio, prime seating to catch the sunset. Fitness facilities, including an infinity pool, offer you similar access to the city's skyline. Along with an intimate sushi restaurant, café and yoshoku restaurant, the hotel houses two bars. Yoi to Yoi features highballs and craft sakes, while Off Record is a hidden listening bar, where a DJ spins and the mixologist serves up rare spirits. — **M.S.**

Stays from JPY100,000/night through [fairmont.com](http://fairmont.com).



## LOFTY AMBITION

Swiss elevates its top-tier seat with the debut of First Grand suites

The new look of first class on Swiss Air combines two suites into one self-contained pod, with enough room to use the space as a bedroom, an office, a meeting room or even a restaurant if you want to dine with your travel companions before tucking in for some sleep. Along with doubling the real estate normally allotted to each passenger, walls for the suites reach 1.8 metres high, offering a level of in-flight privacy that's still elusive in many premium cabins. First Grand suites are only bookable through the airline's first-class concierge service. They launch in 2026 on Airbus 350 aircraft flying the Zurich to Boston route before rolling out on new A350s and retrofitted A330s and Boeing 777s. — **M.S.**

For more, visit [swiss.com](http://swiss.com).

## NOW TRADING

House swapping is growing among luxury homeowners

A stay at a one-of-a-kind property offers the kind of privacy that's hard to come by in hotels, and more luxe options for house swapping are growing. France-based HomeExchange Collection is the format's largest platform. Since 2023, the service has seen a 500 per cent increase in membership and boasts more than 5,000 properties around the world including over 900 in Canada. Travellers sticking closer to home will find everything from a chic studio in Montreal to a Halifax space with ocean views. Ben Chimes, CEO and founding partner of Stilhavn Real Estate Services, is one Canadian who has hosted travellers at a secondary property listed on the site — a spacious vineyard-facing home in British Columbia's Okanagan Valley. "We liked that HomeExchange would allow us to 'trade' stays at our home during seasons we weren't using it, for family vacations elsewhere," he says. "We also felt that the platform would bring guests who would treat our home with more care as they also have homes on the platform, which has proved to be true." Along with access to the full portfolio of properties, subscribers can also receive points for use of their property in lieu of a reciprocal exchange, and one year of unlimited exchanges without restrictions. — **M.S.**

HomeExchange annual subscription, \$1,000 through [homeexchange.com](http://homeexchange.com).



SUPPLIED PHOTOS: NACASA & PARTNERS INC. (FAIRMONT); LOJEL; SWISS AIR; HOMEEXCHANGE.

# MODERN SANCTUARIES

As Aman expands its brand of hospitality in North America and the Caribbean, **Andrew Sardone** explains how it defines its take on luxury

**A**s far as destinations go, the skyscrapers of central Tokyo and the Utah desert are about as varied as you can get. But in both locales, Aman has managed to create two of the world's most coveted hotel reservations. Completely hidden from prying eyes – the Japan property discreetly nestled on the top six floors of the stealth-black Otemachi Tower; Amangiri burrowed into the sand of an alien landscape – they offer a guest experience that's impossible to qualify without the heights of hyperbole. Through a no-expense-spared embrace of local culture, they ensure Aman stands out in a luxury travel landscape that has become crowded and often tricky to define.

In the travel world, "luxury" is an endlessly relative term, covering the grand, gilded hotels of Europe and pavilion-pocked jungles in Thailand. For some travellers, it means complete privacy, for others a see-and-be-seen terrace above Fifth Avenue. Aman offers all these options (Aman Venice in a 16th-century palazzo on the Grand Canal; Amanpuri, the brand's first hotel in Phuket; its brooding and buzzy New York address) but its point of difference is more of a vibe than an amenity (though some guests definitely book the Aman Tokyo just to swim their morning laps in its penthouse pool). "Since acquiring Aman, I established the Aman Group with a clear long-term strategy to expand into both resort and urban destinations, while preserving the essence that defines the brand – privacy, peace, and exceptional design," says CEO and chairman Vlad Doronin, who has owned the company since 2014.

For Canadians, accessing this ethos is usually part of a far-flung adventure. Until recently, the brand's North American and Caribbean properties have been limited to the Utah and New York hotels, its first U.S. foray, Amangani in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and resorts in the Dominican Republic and Turks and Caicos. But starting in 2026, more closer options are on their way.

Amanvari, opening on the Sea of Cortez in the spring, will be the brand's first property in Mexico, housing only 18 rooms, suites and villas. Its first in the Bahamas, Amancaya, will cover 160 hectares on Exuma. In the U.S., a tower by Japanese architect Kengo Kuma that also houses 22 private residences is coming to Miami Beach's Faena District in 2027, while a similar hybrid property is also in the works in Beverly Hills, California.

"Aman's growth continues to be deliberate and strategic, centred on creating true sanctuaries," Doronin says. "Sanctuary" is perhaps the best way to describe Aman's take on refinement and how it's expressed in both remote and city locations. At Amangiri, you're cosseted by almost 400 hectares of rugged desert. Its architecture is low and discrete, creating sharp shadows in the midday sun and quiet corners to zone out in the evening starlight. Its decor, dining and experience programs all touch on elements of Navajo culture, including private tours of nearby Antelope Canyon and small gifts, like a dream catcher, left on your bed each night.

In Tokyo, the sense of hospitality is enhanced by similar turndown tokens including spicebush toothpicks or a *tenugui* patterned towel. Abundant personal space in the desert is one thing, but the amount of square footage guests enjoy in Tokyo is remarkable. From the soaring lobby with its Instagram-famous glowing lantern ceiling to its sprawling suites, the sense of privacy feels all but impossible in the dense Japanese capital.



Aman made its mark on luxury travel with a pair of diverse properties: Aman Tokyo (top left) and Amangiri in Utah (top right). Its latest growth includes Amancaya in the Bahamas (above) and Amanvari in Mexico (right). Its new brand, Janu, first opened in Tokyo (above middle), aiming to be an energetic counterpoint to Aman's laid-back spirit.



Tokyo is where the brand is diversifying its portfolio in another way, with the debut of its Janu offshoot (additional locations are already in the works for Dubai, Saudi Arabia, Montenegro and Turks and Caicos). "Janu upholds the same standards of service and design excellence, but with a more uplifting and playful spirit that celebrates connectedness," Doronin says. Located in Azabudai Hills, its own mini metropolis of swish boutiques, restaurants and apartments, the hotel occupies the first 13 floors of a residential tower. Its down-to-earth vantage point puts your suite at eye level with the city, drawing you out into the neighbourhood's lush parks and bustling outdoor squares. Its extensive restaurant lineup (from its modern Patisserie to Sumi, a theatrical, 13-seat live-grill experience) are as much social hubs for locals as hotel guests.

Not all privacy is lost, however. Janu guests and day visitors can check into one of two spa houses. These private suites come complete with outdoor terraces and a living room for a four-hour wellness retreat that can include *banya* and Hammam treatments. It's a decadent treat to add to your escape, no matter where you're staying – or how you define luxury. ☎

## ON LOCATION

### AMAN TOKYO

Chef Hiroyuki Musashi's eight-seat counter is the height of a locavore dining experience. He grows his own rice, brews his own sake and forms all the restaurant's rustic ceramic dishware. If spirits are more your speed, the hotel's polished bar staff are happy to talk you through a Japanese whisky tasting. Stays from \$2,900/night through [aman.com](http://aman.com).

### AMANGIRI

The Utah property is a hiker's dream, with marked trails to guide you through its vast hills and valleys. Take an evening stroll to Camp Sarika, a campus of tented accommodations and a restaurant with a terrace nestled into a rockface. Stays from \$6,960/night through [aman.com](http://aman.com).

### JANU TOKYO

Here, you're in the middle of Azabudai Hills' many attractions: the digital art space TeamLab Borderless is just an elevator ride away as are shops by Hermès and Cartier. Stays from \$1,510/night through [janu.com](http://janu.com).



## MATTERS OF TASTE

Algorithms dictate more and more of what we see and consume. Style, film and book columnist **Nathalie Atkinson** thinks it's time to reset how we develop our preferences

ILLUSTRATION BY **LAUREN TAMAKI**

**W**hether you're receiving a grand gift or office Secret Santa knick-knack, nothing makes you feel more seen and understood than realizing someone has noticed your personal taste. Taste, after all, is an elusive thing to even recognize in yourself. Lately, it's a word I'm hearing more. Following years of homogenous social media content – and alongside more considered consumption habits – we're developing a fatigue for anything indiscriminate.

It's time to have taste again. In the algorithm era, learning to define it, to trust it, is especially rewarding. It's the ultimate in confidence to declare, “*THIS* is what I like (and don't).” It's maybe not all that surprising that someone like me, who works in the cultural, critical realm, can articulate preferences on everything from stockpots (Dansk Kobenstyle) to pencils (Blackwing 602 firm). I probably cultivate and apply personal taste to more aspects of my life than the average person.

But everybody has a sense of taste. Children express preferences early via a favourite colour. As we age, taste is an awareness that needs to be fed, usually through a sense of curiosity about the good – and the bad. This maxim from fashion editor Diana Vreeland was part of my email signature for years: “A little bad taste is like a nice splash of paprika,” she wrote in her autobiography. “We all need a splash of bad taste – it's hearty, it's healthy, it's physical. I think we could

use more of it. No taste is what I'm against.”

I don't think I had discernible taste until I took that to heart and started trying on ideas and experiences for size, like educating your palate. I used to think taste involved some mysterious alchemy but now I understand that beauty and what I love tend to intersect through a cultural and historical lens. There's a correlation between my personal, literary and design leanings, but I'm not sure what they are matters as much as what they do. The cross-pollination between disciplines helps with metabolizing it all. Whether it's for my next read or a new chair, I browse expansively and shop wisely, while also sampling from other people's tastes (recommendations from writers whose own work I admire or decorating advice doled out by mavens like Rita Konig and Paula Sutton).

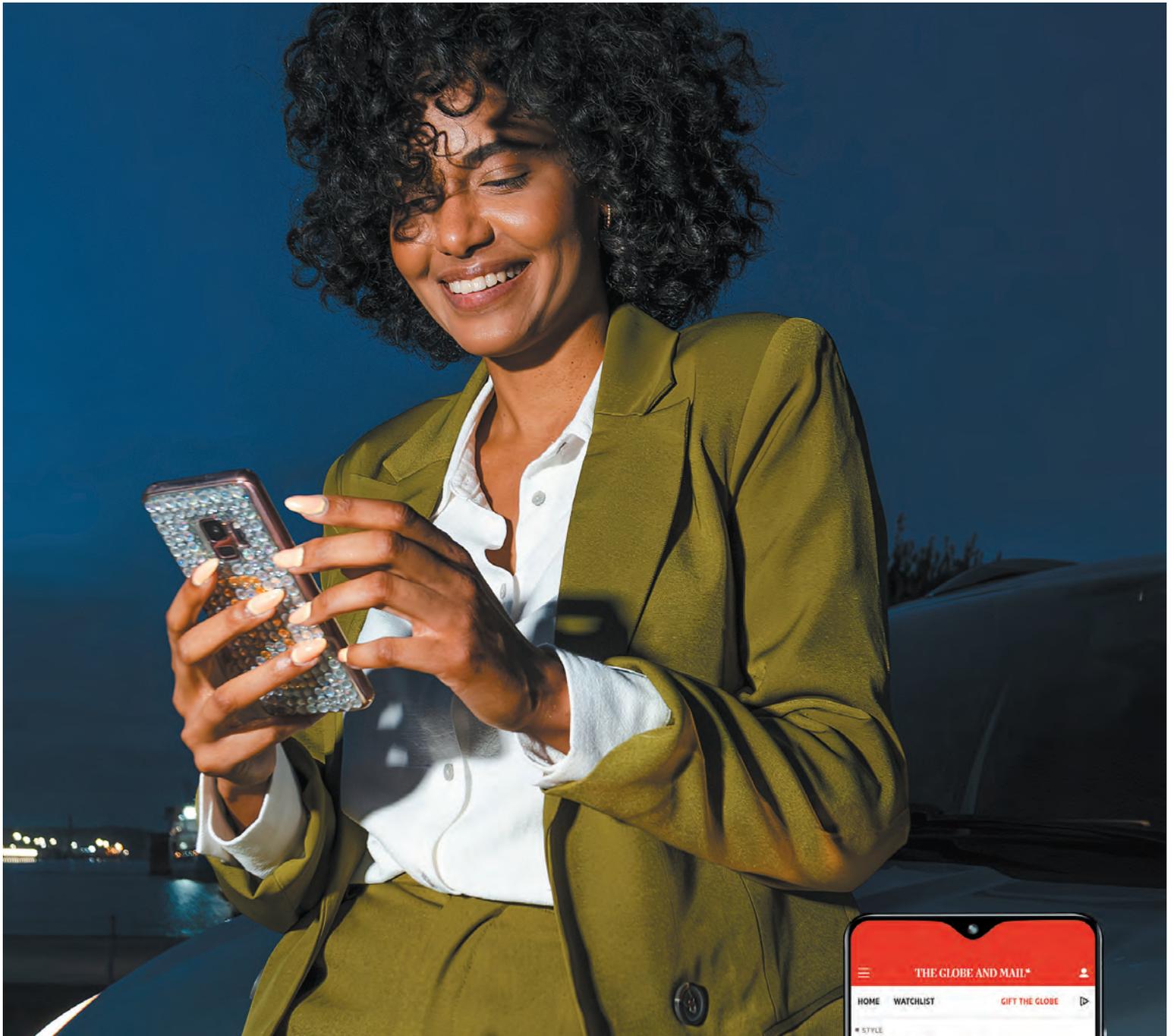
Until Meta curtailed Instagram's fully searchable hashtag feature, I spent a lot of time actively browsing art and design, following subject keywords on visuals that caught my eye, one leading into another like a nesting doll of discovery. Taste should be active like this. I'm suspicious of being passively shaped by the algorithms that already mediate our lives. I don't take viewing suggestions from Netflix, and I eschew the feedback loop tyranny of any “For You” page. Predictive content patterned on previous behaviour narrows and reaffirms, rather than expands, the opportunity to form taste.

Like Vreeland, these days I care less about

so-called “good taste” (which is really a socially constructed status anxiety about having the “right” taste) than about honing my own preferences. The dominance of understood “tasteful” brands (RH, The Row, celebrity book club picks) inhibits forming individual taste, because they're really about safety, the type of reassuring social currency afforded by owning an original Eames chair.

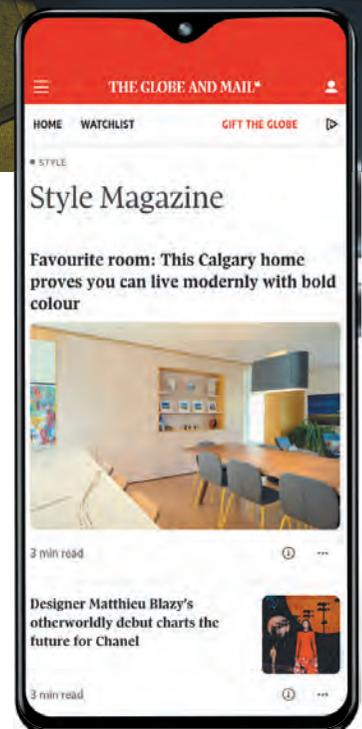
I read a few hundred books a year, yet any avid reader with a teetering TBR pile should naturally become more discerning over time. Honing expertise, even if it's only for yourself, is a thinking exercise, like discussing a book with friends or asking yourself after a museum exhibition, “What did I like, and why?” Give me the idiosyncratic answer any day.

Taste that never evolves is like being stuck with the most boring conversationalist at a cocktail party, someone who asks no questions because they lack curiosity. Inquisitiveness can also help you develop an ability for finding the redeeming qualities in just about anything. When I don't like something, I tend to investigate why. Call it an appetite for discovery, tempered by self-awareness. There's an omnivorous reading or browsing phase and a gathering of intel (my local library is usually involved). Knowing the story behind a clunky 1947 novel or a tufted vintage chenille bedspread usually helps me at least recognize and appreciate its qualities – even if it's still not to my taste. ☺



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