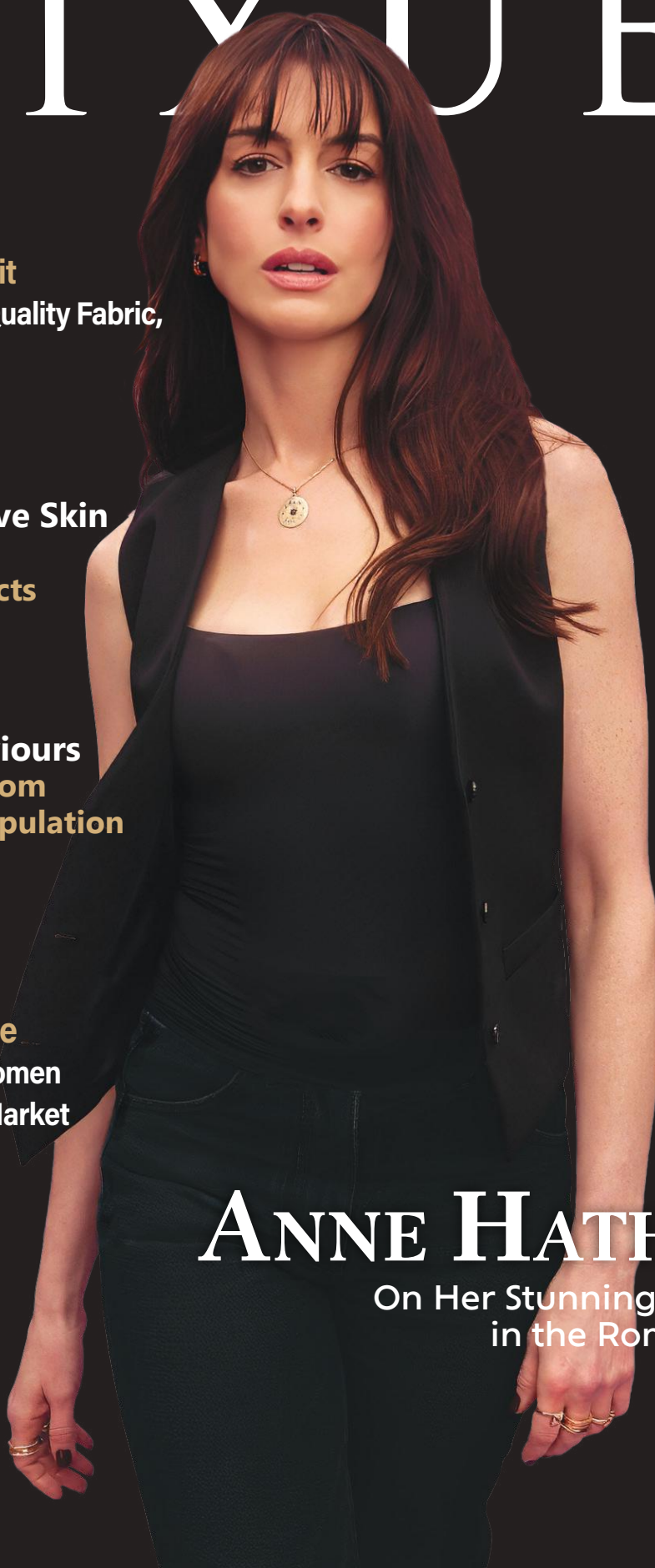


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Fall 2024

The Perfect Power Suit

Embrace Tailored Fit, Quality Fabric,
and Neutral Tones

Brands for Sensitive Skin

Choose Non-Toxic,
Eco-Friendly Products

Gaslighting Behaviours

Liberate Yourself from
Psychological Manipulation
and Control

Investing In Elegance

Celebrate Visionary Women
Shaping The Fine Art Market

ANNE HATHAWAY

On Her Stunning Performance
in the Romantic Drama
"Idea of You"



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BOTANICAL FACIAL CLEANSER



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**SHEA + OLIVE
BODY & HAIR OIL**



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CASTOR OIL

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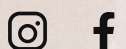
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Preparing Your Skin for Fall



Photo courtesy of Elixuer Magazine

Hello!

Our skin undergoes a significant transition with the change in weather, from humid and warm to dry and chilly, which can leave skin feeling parched, sensitive, and needing extra care. Preparing your skin for fall is essential to maintain a healthy, radiant complexion throughout the season.

Switch to a Hydrating Cleanser

As the air becomes drier, avoiding harsh cleansers that strip the skin of its natural oils is crucial. Opt for a gentle, hydrating cleanser that removes impurities without disrupting your skin's moisture barrier. Look for ingredients like glycerin or hyaluronic acid, which help to retain moisture and keep your skin soft and supple.

Incorporate a Richer Moisturizer

Fall calls for switching from lightweight lotions to more prosperous, emollient moisturizers. These help to create a

protective barrier against the harsh elements and lock in moisture. Ingredients like shea butter, ceramides, and squalane are excellent choices for nourishing and hydrating the skin during cooler months. If your skin tends to be dry, consider layering a hydrating serum underneath your moisturizer for an extra boost of hydration.

Don't Forget to Exfoliate

With the change in seasons, your skin's natural cell turnover can slow down, leading to a dull complexion. Regular exfoliation helps to remove dead skin cells, allowing your moisturizer to penetrate more effectively and leaving your skin looking fresh and radiant. However, choosing a gentle exfoliant is essential to avoid irritation, especially as your skin may become more sensitive in the fall.

Continue Using Sunscreen

Just because summer is over doesn't mean you can put away sunscreen. UV rays are still a threat during the fall, even on cloudy days. Protecting your skin from sun damage is a year-round commitment,

so apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 30 daily.

Add a Humidifier to Your Routine

Indoor heating systems can sap moisture from the air, leading to dry, dehydrated skin. Using a humidifier at night helps replenish the air's moisture, keeping your skin hydrated while you sleep. This small addition to your routine can make a significant difference in maintaining your skin's moisture levels throughout the season.

Pay Attention to Your Diet

What you eat can also impact the health of your skin. As the season changes, incorporate foods rich in antioxidants, vitamins, and omega-3 fatty acids, such as berries, nuts, and fish. These nutrients help to protect your skin from environmental stressors and keep it looking healthy and vibrant.

Treat Yourself to a Mask

Treating your skin with a hydrating mask once or twice a week can provide extra moisture and nourishment. Look for masks with ingredients like honey, aloe vera, or avocado, known for their soothing and hydrating properties.

Finally, by making a few adjustments, you can protect your skin from the drying effects of the cooler weather and keep it looking its best. One of the keys to beautiful skin is consistency—so embrace these seasonal changes and give your skin the care it deserves this fall.

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PURE + SIMPLE

Pure + Simple is an all-natural skincare and wellness spa for customers seeking products and services that are consistent with their healthy natural lifestyle.

What we put on our skin is absorbed into our bodies' circulatory system, meaning it can contribute or detract our overall health. Beauty is a result of good health; that's why we only carry skincare brands that have safe + natural ingredients. Every product you see on our shelves is free of harmful ingredients like parabens, petrochemicals, silicones, phthalates, sulfates, or synthetic fragrances + dyes.



Holistic Vanity Nigella Oil



Holistic Vanity Hyaluronic + Protein Ultra Serum

Minimalist Face Lift Serum Plus



ANNE HATHAWAY

On Her Stunning Performance in the Romantic Drama "*Idea of You*"

by Dave Gordon

A

Anne Hathaway's latest film is an age-gap romance that she says will make women 'ooh' and 'ahh'. She stars as Solène, opposite Nicholas Galitzine (Hayes Campbell), in the new Amazon Original, *Idea of You*. The story begins when art gallery owner Solène, a 40-year-old single mother, is chaperoning her teenage daughter's trip to Coachella, and buds an unexpected love affair with twenty-something Campbell, the British lead singer of boy band August Moon. The two become arm-in-arm jet-setters, while chased by paparazzi, and stay in presidential suites in dreamy locales, making the film a made-for-Hollywood fairy tale romance. The film is based on the Robinne Lee novel of the same name.

The project is the latest in a long string of motion pictures, over her quarter-century career. Hathaway's Hollywood breakthrough came in 2001 with the Disney film "The Princess Diaries," where she played teenager Mia Thermopolis, who discovers she is heir to a European throne. Opposite Julie Andrews ("Sound of Music"), this role catapulted her into the spotlight, paving the way for her as a Hollywood leading actress.

Photos courtesy of Anne Hathaway

She showcased her range by taking on roles in films such as "Brokeback Mountain" (2005), and "The Devil Wears Prada" (2006), a comedy-drama set in the fashion industry, starring opposite Meryl Streep and Emily Blunt.

Her roles have spanned various genres including science fiction, with "Interstellar" (2014); heist comedy in "Ocean's 8" (2018), where she played an actress; and the comedy, "The Hustle" (2019), where she played a con artist. Beyond her work in film, Hathaway has also made her mark in the realm of voice acting, in animated television and films. In 2005, she voiced the character Red Pucket in "Hoodwinked." In 2010, she won an Emmy for her voice work in TV's *The Simpsons*.

A year later, she lent her voice in "Rio" and its sequel "Rio 2" (2014). In 2013, she again lent her voice, this time both literally and figuratively, to narrate "Girl Rising," a documentary film by CNN that highlighted the journeys of seven girls from different parts of the world, as they faced various challenges in pursuit of their aspirations. *Elixuer* was honoured to speak to the 41-year-old actress about her most recent film, *Idea of You*, a movie that she also produced.

What attracted you to the *Idea of You* script?

I loved Solène as a character. I thought she was so sweet, with a sharp sense of humour. I thought that was a really incredible combo. I loved the stage of life she's at, where she's experienced a really bad trauma to her trust, and she's right at that place where she could become bitter, and kind of negative about love, and then the most unexpected thing happens to her – she finds someone unexpectedly. I just love the idea of these two people, the idea that it's the last thing either of them expect, but they become the one thing each other needs. I thought that was really beautiful.

Can you speak to the concept of the film?

I think that it's really exciting when someone finds someone they can be intimate with – and intimacy is not just meaning physical intimacy. You can find someone to be intimate with your trust. I think that watching two people who have both had their trust taken advantage of, discover that they can be safe and be intimate in that way with each other – in addition to being able to explore pleasure and friendship and humor, all those really yummy things, those really romantic things. It got me really excited. It's a great time to figure out if you have another gear.

The film is about a singer in a boy band, and I'm wondering if there were any artists or boy bands you were obsessed with?

I had artists I was obsessed with. I haven't become obsessed with a boy band – yet. It could happen. I do like BTS (Bangtan Boys). I was very into aggressively-talented, female singer-songwriters: Fiona Apple, Tori Amos, Ani DiFranco, Alanis Morissette. (I also like) Otis Redding, and Slipknot.



How did your perception of love change after making this film?

I think it's going to be unique to everybody. I think the part I feel changed by, because I experienced it in my life, it's horrible when somebody abuses your trust. It's really terrible. It's really hard to recover from, and can take a really long time. But if the opportunity presents itself, take it with both hands and don't look back. I love seeing a character heal from a trust trauma.

Why should people see the movie?

It's a wonderful movie about love, trust, intimacy, pleasure, and fun, silliness, and music. There are fun concert sequences, great clothes, and an abundance of British charm.

Also, one of the things I want to put out there is that we obviously screened this movie for test audiences, and people really, really love it. But women, especially women over the age of 35, are having an intense emotional reaction to the movie. There is something about this movie that is touching something very deep inside of us. I think, perhaps, it's a fear we've internalized that we are going to disappear while we are still alive. This movie says, "No, thank you," to that entire narrative.

It's a different kind of wish-fulfillment. The wish isn't, "Oh, I want to be a princess, or work at this company." The wish is, "I want to exist and I want to feel loved." I think that's a great reason to see the movie. Also, the art is amazing; I forgot to mention that.

What were the most fun scenes to do, or can you tell me about something fun that happened on set?

We had a lot of fun. The characters had "bounce" together. So, we had cycles side-by-side, through this path. And the thing they didn't tell us was there was only one spot you could actually cycle through, and the other spot you'd fall off your bike. So, naturally, Nicholas stayed up, and I 'ate' it. It went from that, to jumping in the freezing cold ocean, while trying to sell that we were in the middle of France. Then, our characters got frisky on a beach. That was our first day – we did all of that in swimsuits.

So, with that, you can either lean in, and laugh, or resist. This job was a joy. There was so much laughter. We needed that, because our characters experience some intense emotions, so we needed to be all in with each other – our director, our cinematographer, with every department – in order to tell a story that, to me, was a "feel everything" movie.

At a certain point in filming, energy starts to lag and you want to pick up people's spirits, to remind them we are making this thing together. We were improvising a dance with our camera operators, who were jumping on the bed with us.

So, we called the crew together and played the song (Wang Chung) "Dance Hall Days." None of us knew what was happening next, and we had to be really present with each other to this really great song. And it was just such a wonderful time. The rest of the shoot flew by, because everyone had a spring in their step when they realized we were making something that was full of joy, fun, silliness, and emotion. That was a special day.

What are your favourite romantic movies?

I like my romance to be a little surreal. I also like things that are delightful and bring you along for the ride. One of my favourite movies is *Pretty Woman*. I also loved *It Happened One Night*. But I think *Moonstruck* might be my favourite romantic movie. I like things that are heightened but extravagant in their desire for beauty. ♦

"I live my life with love. I live my life with compassion. I live my life hoping the best for absolutely everyone, no matter how they feel about me. And when you live that way, it's amazing how beautiful every day can be."

- Anne Hathaway



Jezz Dazzle Accessories

The Jezz Dazzle collection includes handcrafted beaded jewelries made from agate gemstones! All fashionable Jewelry comes in a 100% cotton bag with an up-lifting message: 'Live, Love'.



Jessica Garibaldi



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Finding the Perfect Fit: Makeup Options for Sensitive Skin

by Jennifer Williams

Choosing makeup for sensitive skin requires careful consideration, as the wrong products can cause irritation, redness, or breakouts, so it's crucial to select makeup formulated for sensitive skin to maintain a healthy complexion.

Focus on products with gentle ingredients, and avoid potential irritants like fragrances, parabens, sulphates, and artificial dyes, as these additives can trigger severe and adverse allergic reactions. Always patch-test new products on a small area, such as behind your ear, to ensure they're safe for your skin.

Recommended Brands and Products for Sensitive Skin

BareMinerals

BareMinerals Original Foundation is known for its mineral-based formula. The foundation offers buildable coverage without irritating sensitive skin and is an excellent option for lightweight yet practical solutions.

ILIA

ILIA Super Serum Skin Tint SPF 40 is a clean beauty brand. Their serum-like foundation provides a lightweight, dewy finish, offering hydration and sun protection with minimal skin-irritating ingredients.

Clinique

Clinique Moisture Surge Hydrating Foundation is allergy-tested, perfect for dry, sensitive skin. The Clinique brand has a long and reputable history of producing dermatologist-approved products.

La Roche-Posay

La Roche-Posay Toleriane Teint Foundation is a French pharmacy favourite. This lightweight foundation is primarily designed for sensitive skin and provides excellent coverage without clogging pores or causing irritation.

Avène

Avène Couvrance Compact Foundation Cream is a fantastic option for sensitive skin. It offers high coverage with a natural finish and includes Avène's signature thermal spring water to soothe the skin.

Neutrogena

Neutrogena Healthy Skin Liquid Makeup is affordable and practical. Their oil-free, hypoallergenic foundation contains antioxidants to improve skin health while offering medium coverage.

Vichy

Vichy Dermablend Covermatte Compact Powder Foundation has ingredients for acne-prone and sensitive skin. The non-comedogenic powder foundation provides long-lasting coverage and helps control oil without irritating.

Additional Tips to Care for Sensitive Skin

Start with a minimal amount, apply makeup sparingly initially, and gradually build up to your desired coverage as it helps avoid overwhelmingly sensitive skin. Clean your brushes regularly, as dirty brushes can harbour bacteria and irritate sensitive skin. Wash and clean your sponges frequently to prevent buildup.

Maintain a gentle skincare routine for healthy and susceptible skin. Use a gentle cleanser, hydrating moisturizer, and sunscreen daily to protect your skin's barrier. Select mineral makeup such as powders, which are often less irritating and provide a natural, breathable finish. They also tend to have fewer ingredients that can cause breakouts or allergic reactions. Apply a mild, soap-free cleanser to remove dirt, oil, and makeup without stripping the skin's natural oils. After cleansing, apply a gentle moisturizer to keep your skin hydrated and maintain its protective barrier. Recommended product: Vanicream Moisturizing Cream.

Soothe irritated skin with a calming toner to balance your skin's pH levels and reduce redness. Choose an alcohol-free formula with soothing ingredients like chamomile or aloe vera. Recommended product: La Roche-Posay Thermal Spring Water.

Incorporate a gentle exfoliator once or twice a week to remove dead skin cells and prevent clogged pores without irritating them. Choose products with natural enzymes or fruit acids. Recommended product: Paula's Choice Skin Perfecting 2% BHA Liquid Exfoliant.

Utilize a fragrance-free makeup primer designed for sensitive skin to create a smooth, even base before applying makeup, helping it last longer without irritating your skin. Recommended product: Tatcha The Silk Canvas Protective Primer. Ultimately, the right products can enhance natural beauty while keeping your skin healthy and calm. Make an effort to implement a straightforward but consistent daily skincare regimen designed for sensitive skin to ensure your complexion stays radiant and irritation-free. ♦

Clean Beauty Brands by Black Women

by Aaron Levinson

Shopping for beauty and skincare products can be time consuming. Finding the right brand that works with your skin tone that is free from harmful ingredients can be challenging. Nevertheless, several innovative brands prioritize high-quality ingredients that are safe for you and the planet.

These clean beauty products are free from carcinogens and other ingredients that can increase cancer risk. Switching to clean beauty products can benefit your skin in the long run. These products utilize safe ingredients and plant-based oils to benefit the skin.

Moreso, if you are looking to support clean beauty brands owned by Black women, here's a roundup of a few whose products have been tested to be free from harmful ingredients and are effective to use.

Hanahana Beauty

The secret to radiant skin lies with shea butter. Founded in Chicago, the brand has always used naturally sourced ingredients in all its products. Its shea butter-based products are directly sourced from Tamale in Ghana. Enriched with soothing scents of Lavender Vanilla, this butter is guaranteed to moisturize and rejuvenate the skin. Simply massage the Lavender Vanilla Shea body butter into your skin after showering and reapply when needed.

Eadem Milk Marvel Dark Spot Serum

Eadem's Smart Melanin dark spot serum is an excellent way to clear fading dark spots. Pimples, inflammation, and bug bites can leave visible dark spots that take months to fade. Eadem's Milk Marvel Smart Melanin serum dramatically reduces them. It evens out the skin without changing the enzymes that control melanin production. It also preserves your natural skin tone and combats discoloration, thanks to its serum infused with Vitamin C and niacinamide.

Fenty Skin Cookies N Clean Whipped Clay Pore Detox Face Mask

The Cookies N Clean Detox Face Mask can revitalize your complexion, clearing out pores and dirt. It leaves the skin soft, smooth, and conditioned and extracts oils and other impurities.



The face mask has been tested on all skin types and is fragrance-free. When applying it, the encapsulated earth charcoal bursts upon massaging the mask into the skin and mixes into clay.

Adwoa Beauty Leave-in Conditioner

Richly formulated to strengthen all textured hair types without drying out your hair, the Adwoa leave-in conditioner moisturizes, detangles, and softens your hair without weighing it down. The conditioner suits all hair types and combines natural ingredients like Kalahari melon, red raspberry, and strawberry seed oils. The natural ingredients work collaboratively to hydrate, improve shine, and nourish dry scalps.



Ami Cole Lip Treatment Oil

The natural conditioning lip oil gloss treatment oil nourishes and protects your lips. Enriched with ingredients like Baobab seed extract and Hyaluronic acid, it offers deep hydration with a non-sticky gloss finish. You can finally get rid of dry, chapped, and cracked lips within minutes and keep your shine on.



UnSun Mineral Tinted Face Sunscreen

Protect your gorgeous skin from the sun's harmful rays with this mineral-tinted sunscreen. Its silky-smooth matte finish provides everyday protection from the sun with just the right amount of tint. The UVA/UVB Broad Spectrum 30 SPF is water-resistant for up to 80 minutes. All UnSun's products are vegan and cruelty-free.

HyperSkin Brightening Dark Spot Serum

The HyperSkin vitamin C serum fights hyperpigmentation and signs of aging. Equipped with a variety of ingredients like vitamin C combined with bearberry, licorice, and kojic acid, it removes stubborn acne scars and sun damage. Anti-inflammatory ingredients like turmeric and salicylic acid work collaboratively to heal and prevent future breakouts.



Elixuer

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ROSEN Acne Skincare Products

After grappling with acne-prone skin, founder Jamika Martin wanted to shake up the acne skincare space. Frustrated by the lack of clean products that worked, she took matters into her own hands by establishing ROSEN. The brand has a variety of products to fight breakouts, bumps, and dark spots. Many have experienced proven results by trying ROSEN's product offering, which includes cleansers, toners, earth masks, scrubs, soaps, and moisturizers.



Bread Beauty Supply

With a plethora of hair care products, Bread is your one-stop solution for silky smooth hair. The brand's hair oil to-go is like a lip gloss for your hair. The silicone-free oil blend is ideal for daily use and is enriched with Kakadu plum to make your curls feel soft, smooth, and glossy. When styling, apply a few drops of the hair oil from the mid-lengths to the ends. Alternatively, you can apply it to wet hair after a wash or between washes to boost shine.

Liha Orinrin Cleansing Balm

The Orinrin cleansing balm is the perfect daily cleanser. It is ideal for anyone with a combination of dry skin. Loaded with various natural plant-based ingredients like Mango seed butter, Cacao seed butter, and sunflower seed oil, it hydrates and replenishes dry, rough, and cracked skin instantaneously. ♦



Fall 2020

Give yourself permission.
Relax, Revive & Rejuvenate.

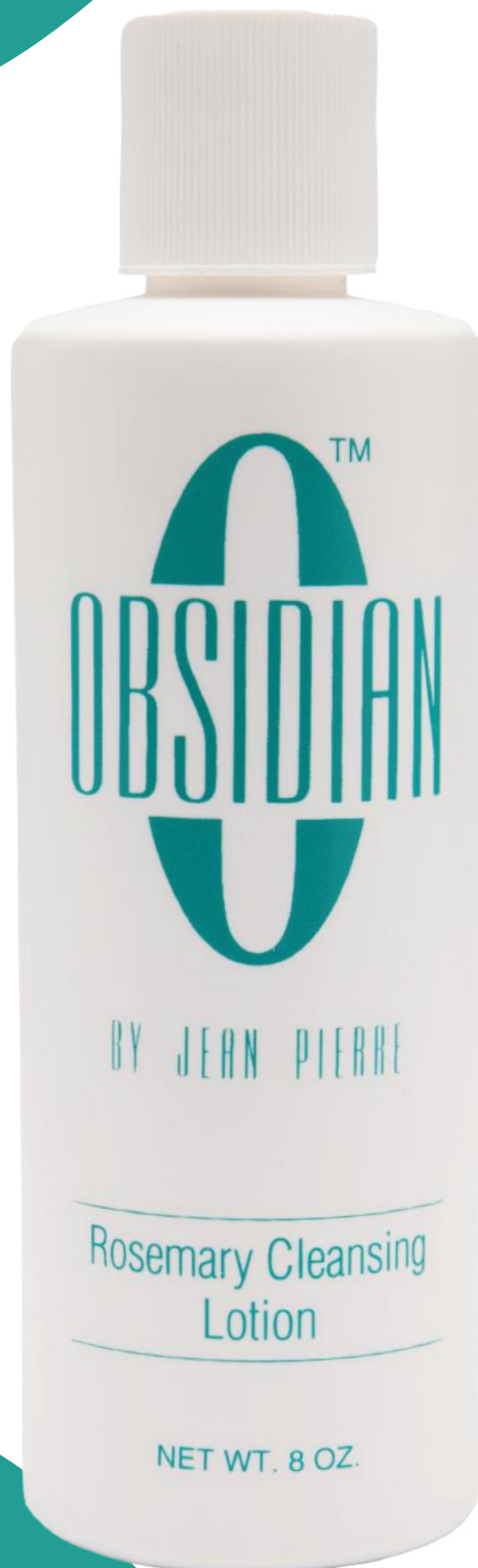


Obsidian Skincare, named after the inky volcanic glass that reflects a kaleidoscope of colours, celebrates the beauty of Black skin. Jean Pierre's innovative, gentle, and naturally sourced products are perfect for all skin types, with proven results and a loyal roster of high-profile clients from the Toronto Argonauts, Blue Jays, and Raptors.



Total Facial Cleanser

This purifying cleanser formulated for normal to oily skin contains Na PCA, fresh lemon juice, mink oil, and wheat germ oil. It removes surface dirt and grime while restoring oily skin to a more balanced state.



Rosemary Cleansing Lotion

Formulated for the dry to sensitive skin, this cleanser is enriched with herbal extracts which pamper and smooth the delicate cellular tissue as it cleans.

Spread over face and neck, massage in gently with a circular motion to remove all make-up and surface dirt.

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Photo courtesy of Joella Hogan

Joella Hogan

Using Soaps to Tell Indigenous Stories

by Stephanie Hawkins

Joella Hogan is the founder of The Yukon Soaps Company (YSC), which makes unique, handcrafted products like soaps, shampoo bars, and essential oil blends, using Indigenous ingredients while infusing the Yukon spirit into them.

Additionally, she is also a fierce advocate, learner, and community builder. For over a decade, she has been creating spaces and opportunities for growth and has a passion for her business and helping others. She continues to amplify Indigenous voices through art, language, culture, and lived experiences.

While YSC is still a small business, Hogan is big on growing cultural strengths and community. Her business, located in downtown Mayo, Yukon, serves as a community hub; enabling the company to host skill development workshops, language learning, and provide employment opportunities for the community. For her efforts, she has won innovation grants to support her dreams. She spoke with *Elixuer* about community, her company, and the importance of helping others.

Can you talk about the connections with nature and Indigenous communities, and how you nurture these relationships?

For many generations, there has been a disconnection of Indigenous peoples from the land, and we are trying to rebuild. Throughout the different work that I do, it's all about connecting people — to each other, to the land, to culture, to language.

As I was growing The Yukon Soaps Company, I saw an opportunity to provide more connections to people and nature. I thought about our language, which is hard to learn. The elders say that you have to use it or you'll lose it, so I make sure that it's also reflected in all aspects of my business. Our values, culture, and teachings are a part of my HR policies, and our packaging.

What would you like people to know about using natural ingredients in their self-care regimens?

The new soap line was all about the plants that are good for us and our skin, but I also wanted to focus on sustainability. As the business and demand grows, I don't want to create products that create sustainability

issues, such as overharvesting. I want to make sure that the plants we're using in our products are resilient, abundant, and have a fast growing season.

How does YSC aim to be sustainable in its production and packaging?

My target customer group is Yukoners, but there's a demand from Southern Canada, as well as North America generally. I made a big switch six or seven years ago to get rid of as much plastic packaging as possible, and we shifted to glass. The challenging part now is glass is expensive to mail. I'm importing bottles to Yukon, creating the packaging, sending them back out, so, essentially, paying shipping twice. Sadly, glass is not recyclable up here anymore.

We thought about switching back to plastic because technology has changed. I am looking at other options such as bamboo, hemp, and cardboard. There's much to consider, as we want our products to hold up to travel, but also be at a price that customers will pay.

How has your use of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun beadwork by Northern Tutchone women in your products

resonated with customers?

I learned that people weren't just buying soap — they're buying the story. There's a deep respect, fascination, and interest in Canada's Northern and Indigenous peoples. I was trying to think how to tell these stories. When talking with a friend of mine, she mentioned beadwork, because what I do is also promoting our traditional crafts and skills. I thought, "Yes, this is absolutely the way." I print it on dissolvable paper, and then embed it onto the soap.

As you wash with the soap, it will actually disappear or dissolve. This way, there aren't any physical beads going down your drain. People often worry about ruining the beadwork, but it's not actual beads. [It's] just an image. This product has allowed me to uplift and amplify the Indigenous women in my community, so that it's never just about my product, but about opportunities to share. The artists and work that I feature range from new young artists all the way to my great grandma. There is so much that makes our community happen, and so much of it is by our women and their skills with our craft. ♦

Elevate Your Bathing Experience with the Aromatherapy Magic of Essential Oils

by Robyn Karmazyn

Many of us adults think of having a bath as a way of unwinding and relaxing after a long day. There is nothing quite like a warm bath to melt your troubles away and, perhaps, even to meditate. Some people even enjoy a glass of wine, bubbles, music, or other accompaniments to their bath to make it feel even more luxurious.

But there are in fact different moods you can set for yourself with a bath. In particular, another effective way to heighten and elevate your bathing experience is with the aromatherapy magic of essential oils. Depending on what “type” of bath you want to have, there are different essential oils to complement your experience.

The relaxation bath

Arguably, the most cliché type of bath is the one in which we have to unwind. Perhaps you had a hard day at work, or your kids were overly energetic, and they’ve finally gone to bed, or you just need to be alone after a fun – but rowdy – night out. In this event, essential oils like lavender, chamomile, and frankincense are the right choices to let your mind wander, and your body melt into relaxation mode. Couple this with wine or a cup of tea on a bathtub tray, and you’ve got yourself the ultimate bath experience. Most importantly, keep your phone and tablet from encroaching on your relaxation (grab a book instead if you want an activity.)

The uplifting bath

You may not have thought of taking a bath to help energize yourself before a big night out, but some essential oils like rosemary, thyme, and lemon can give you a boost. Just like a dip in a pool or a nice hot shower can lift your spirits and act as an alternative to caffeine, so too can a bath. Just pair with your favourite upbeat music, try some bubble bath or a bath bomb, and perhaps even give yourself a pedicure while you’re at it. Remember that you don’t have to be particularly “girly” or even a woman, anymore, to admit or consider you enjoy these. (Grab a pumice stone and some moisturizer for your legs and feet... nail polish is optional).

The muscle-soothing bath

Whether you’re an athlete, a hardworking parent, you have a physically-taxing job, or you just have to be on your feet all day, baths also work wonderfully to help soothe achy muscles. Essential oils that complement this experience are lavender, lemongrass, and marjoram. Meanwhile, rose works effectively with its antioxidants to help moisturize and heal skin. When it comes to soothing your muscles and skin, think of complementing this bath with your stereotypical cucumbers on the eyes, classical music, and any other tactic that will encourage you to relax your body.



Tips and tricks when bathing with essential oils

Perhaps most important to keep in mind when bathing with essential oils is to combine them with an agent before adding them to the water. According to Good Housekeeping, combining whichever essential oils you choose (approximately 3 to 12 drops) with a tablespoon of “carrier” oil, such as coconut, jojoba, olive, or sunflower oil — and only after you’ve added the water to the bath — will keep them from adhering directly to your skin and causing irritation.

Experts also emphasize being extra-careful in the bathtub if you are using oils. To help keep it from getting too slippery, use baking soda and/or castile soap after you are finished bathing. According to Healthline, you should also perform a ‘patch test’ with essential oils before bathing, to check for allergic reactions; as well as avoid using if pregnant, or your skin is already irritated or inflamed (or you have any cuts or scratches).

Why baths are bubbling up

For some reason, once we reach a certain age in our childhood, most of us tend to graduate from baths to showers. Many of us never go back, but bath culture has grown significantly, and there’s good reason why. Baths not only help you calm down after a hectic day, or soothe your muscles when you’ve pushed your body a bit too far, they can also energize you; they are multifaceted. And essential oils, with their aromatherapy magic, help add to the variety and elevate your bathing experience. Whether you’re already a bath lover or just starting to consider the idea of baths, consider adding essential oils. ♦



VANITY COUTURE





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HOW TO FIND THE PERFECT POWER SUIT

by Arnav Khosla

A well-fit tailored suit is an excellent option for most formal occasions, whether it be a wedding, an anniversary, or a celebration of life. Finding the perfect suit can be a challenging task, especially for those who are not as familiar with shopping for formalwear.

For this reason, we've compiled a list of key factors to consider when shopping for the perfect suit.



Fabric

One of the most important factors to consider when shopping for a suit is the fabric that is used in the construction of the suit. Many fabrics are available when it comes to suits, including wool, linen, and silk. With that being said, suits made out of 100 per cent wool are the golden standard for this formalwear, as wool is an expensive material that depicts a high quality look. A lightweight wool suit is an excellent addition to your wardrobe, as it can be worn year round, since the fabric is quite breathable and has excellent moisture-wicking properties.

Cost

Finding the perfect suit can be a daunting task for some, as many suits carry a high price and can be intimidating for those who are newer to shopping for formalwear. However, it is very possible to find the suit of your dreams at a reasonable cost. Most suits will range from \$200 and can go all the way up to \$5000 or more. With that being said, the cost is not indicative of how well the suit will look on you, so you can easily get away with wearing an affordable suit that will still make you feel like a million dollar man.





Fit

Finding a suit that fits you correctly is the most important factor when shopping for a suit.

First, be sure to check that the seams of the jacket's shoulders line up with your own. This is crucial to check, as tailoring a suit jacket's shoulder is very difficult and should be avoided if possible, whereas tailoring the length of the trousers is a much easier task.

Next, check how the suit jacket fits over your chest. You will have to take measurements of your chest size and ensure that the suit jacket drapes nicely over your chest and does not have too much excess space.

The length of the jacket and sleeves will be dependent on your height, but overall, the suit jacket's sleeves should go to about your wrists, and the back of the jacket should drape nicely over your rear end, but not any longer than this.

The lapels on a suit are the fabric that is found below the collar. There are three different types of lapel styles, including notch, peak, and shawl. Notch will be the most common option you come across, and is the most versatile and timeless of the three. The latter two options are reserved for more formal occasions.

You will also have to decide whether your suit jacket includes a front pocket or not, as well as the style of the vents, which are the slits at the back of the jacket that allow for better movement and breathability.

Lastly, the trousers should fit well around the waist and hips, and fall nicely over the thighs, with the option to have the pants tapered in closer to the ankles for a more sleek look. The length of the trousers should cut off right before they hit your shoe, or if you prefer to have more length, you can opt for a 'break' that allows for the fabric of the trousers to fold just over the shoe.

Accessories

The accessories you choose to pair with your suit can easily make or break your look. Decide whether you want to wear a tie, a bow-tie, or no tie at all. If you wear a tie, you can pair it with a matching handkerchief to tuck into your suit jacket pocket. Other accessories include cufflinks and any minimal jewelry that may complement the suit, like a watch or necklace.

For shoes, you can choose between lace-ups or loafers, with the most popular colors being black or brown. Ensuring you choose a nice leather belt that will match your footwear is crucial to tying the whole look together. For example, if your dress shoes are brown leather, make sure your belt is the same color. For socks, you can choose to show some personality with something patterned and colorful or go classic with plain black dress socks.

If you plan on shopping for a suit in the coming days, be sure to consider these tips we have compiled for you to help you find your perfect suit. Dressing to the nines in a well-fitting suit can convey confidence and power, and will help you feel like your best self. ♦



ECO-FRIENDLY TRENDS

by Jackie Marson

When we hear the word “trend”, we tend to think of a new style of jeans or the latest pair of Nike sneakers. However, we rarely consider the reasons why we jump on a trend. Often, there isn’t a reason, aside from keeping up with the Joneses.

Our mindless shopping habits have led to a collective rise in consumerism, which some argue has spiraled out of control. It’s become impossible for anybody to keep up with new trends as they emerge seemingly every week.

Luckily, some people have woken up to the impact of their bad habits, and their shared love for the planet may be enough to break their shopping addictions entirely. With some becoming environmentally conscious and others affected by inflation, the general consensus is that over-consumption is no longer an option.

Brands have taken this information and used it to predict their own consumer needs, leading to the creation of a variety of eco-friendly products that are not only reusable but also encourage fewer purchases, helping us save more money in the long run.

If you care about the planet and love trends, but don’t want to fall victim to consumerism, try these four eco-friendly tips this Fall.

Cut Consumerism

The emergence of digital marketing has drastically altered our purchasing behaviours. Social media influencers and targeted ads compel us to make unnecessary purchases with every scroll. Think about the last few times you made a purchase – did you really need that bag? Was it necessary to buy yet another gadget off Amazon?

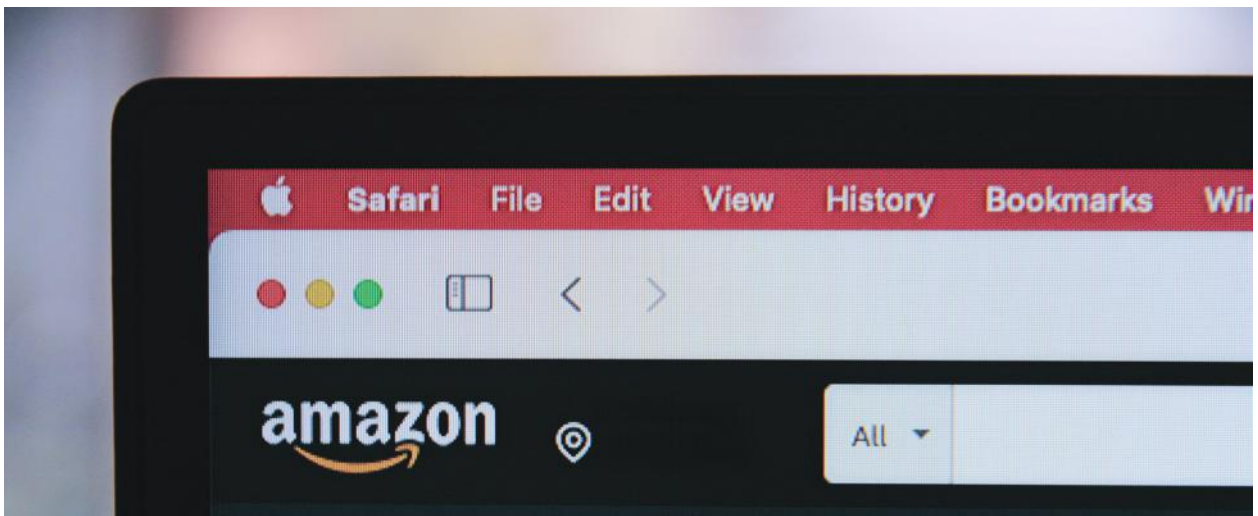
Consumerism has led to excessive waste and pollution on our planet, with a large portion coming from the plastics used to package the goods we buy.

By consuming less, we not only help the planet, but we also help grow our bank accounts.

Swap or Rent

Occasionally, you may have an event to attend that requires you to wear something that you don’t own. Perhaps it’s a country music concert and you need a pair of cowboy boots, or maybe you are invited to a wedding, yet you don’t own a fancy dress.

In these cases, your first phone call should be to close friends or family. Swapping items is more sustainable than shopping. Let them know that they can borrow anything of yours the next time they need it, in exchange for borrowing theirs. Usually, someone in your social circle will have just what you need. If there’s no such luck, consider a clothing rental company like Rent the Runway, where you can access a new outfit, without the commitment of a purchase.



Pro Tip: The next time you feel the urge to make a purchase, write down the item on your wishlist and wait a week or two before revisiting the list. By then, you are less likely to feel that sense of urgency. Creating distance between the product and yourself curbs the impulse to purchase in the moment.



Reuse

We forget that every product we use contributes to our waste, but there are many eco-friendly alternatives that can help mitigate this.

Personal Care and Hygiene:

Over 4 million plastic toothbrushes end up in landfill or in the sea. Opt for a bamboo toothbrush like Plantish which are made from 100 per cent compostable bamboo, and the bristles are made from bio-based nylon.

Makeup wipes and cotton pads are other examples of everyday waste. Instead of purchasing new ones each time you run out, try The Earthling Co. Reusable makeup rounds, which you can wash after each use. Made of 98 per cent bamboo and 2 per cent cotton, these rounds are compostable and long-lasting.

Similarly, instead of purchasing feminine hygiene products, consider using a Diva Cup that you can clean and reuse. Disposable feminine hygiene products disrupt our ecosystem and bodies with chemicals, dyes, and plastics, but Diva Cups are a great way to have zero waste.

Shopping

When shopping for clothes, choose organic cotton or recycled fabrics clothing, or give thrift shopping a try. Not only is thrifting more sustainable, but you're less likely to show up in the same outfit as someone else at your next dinner party.

Kitchen Staples

Food waste is one of the largest contributors to landfills globally, so if we reduce the amount of food we waste, we help our planet, and our bellies. Opt for Food Huggers instead of single use plastic wrap to keep leftover food and produce fresh for longer.

Make the Switch to Papaya Reusable Paper Towels. Most rags and sponges breed bacteria, and smell after just a few uses. Papaya's reusable paper towels are not only antibacterial, but they are a cheaper and more sustainable alternative to paper towels. ♦



Reitmans



Reitmans



HOW TO FIND AND STYLE YOUR PERFECT COORDINATED OUTFIT SET

by Shirley Graham

The coordinated outfit set is a fashionable trend, offering an effortlessly chic solution for everyday wear and special occasions. A coordinated set, often called a co-ord set, typically consists of a top and bottom (or a dress and jacket) designed to match, ensuring a seamless, polished look. Here's a simple guide to help you find and style your perfect coordinated outfit set.

Identify Your Style

Before diving into the world of co-ords, it's essential to understand your style. Are you drawn to bold, vibrant patterns, or do you prefer subtle, minimalist designs? Take a moment to reflect on your wardrobe staples and the outfits that make you feel most confident, to help you narrow down the styles and colours that resonate with you.

Choose the Right Fit

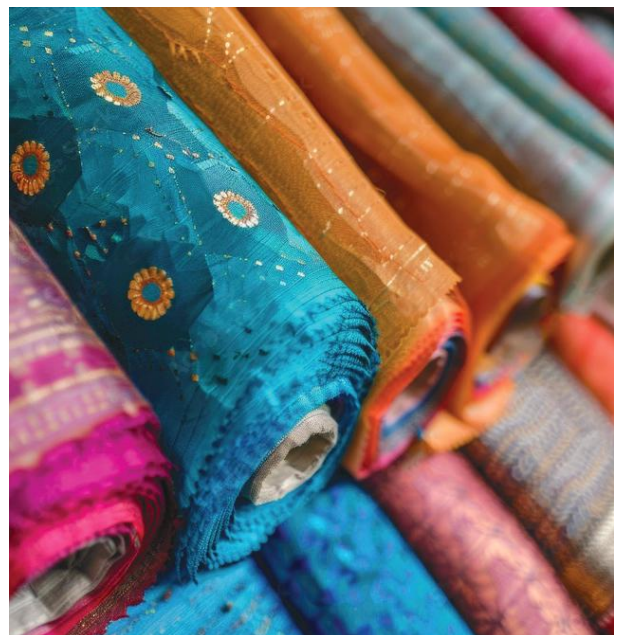
Fit is crucial when it comes to coordinated sets. Ensure that both pieces complement your body shape. For example, if you have a pear-shaped figure, opt for a set with a structured top and a flowy bottom to balance your silhouette. On the other hand, if you have an hourglass figure, a fitted set that accentuates your waist might be more flattering.

Play with Patterns and Textures

Co-ord sets are available in many patterns and textures, from floral prints and geometric designs to rich velvets and breezy linens. Experiment with different patterns to find what suits you best. If you're new to patterns, start with classic stripes or checks, which are versatile and timeless. For those who love to make a statement, bold floral or animal prints can add a touch of drama to your outfit.

Consider the Occasion

The occasion plays a significant role in selecting the perfect coordinated set. A cotton or linen set in pastel hues for a casual day out can keep you comfortable and stylish. A satin or silk set in jewel tones or metallics can elevate your look for a more formal event. Always remember the setting to ensure your outfit is appropriate and enhances your overall appearance.



Accessorize Wisely

Accessories can make or break your coordinated outfit. Since co-ord sets already offer a cohesive look, opt for accessories that complement rather than compete with your outfit. Simple jewelry, such as stud earrings or a delicate necklace, can add a touch of elegance without overwhelming your look. A classic handbag and chic shoes can complete your ensemble beautifully.

Layer with Confidence

Layering can add depth and dimension to your coordinated set. A tailored blazer or a stylish cardigan can keep you warm and enhance your outfit's sophistication. Consider layering with a denim jacket or an oversized sweater for a casual look.

Experiment with Mix and Match

One of the significant advantages of coordinated sets is their versatility. Don't be afraid to mix and match the pieces with other items in your wardrobe. Pair the top with a different skirt or jeans, or wear the bottom with a contrasting blouse. It allows you to create multiple looks from a single set, maximizing your wardrobe's potential.

Confidence is Key

Ultimately, the key to rocking a coordinated outfit set is confidence. Wear your chosen set with pride, and let your personality shine through. When you feel good in what you're wearing, it shows, and that confidence is the most stylish accessory you can have.

Mind the Season

Seasonality plays a significant role in choosing the perfect coordinated set. In warmer months, opt for lightweight fabrics like cotton, linen, or chiffon to stay calm and comfortable. Look for bright-coloured sets or floral patterns that reflect the sunny vibe. For colder seasons, choose heavier fabrics like wool, velvet, or knitwear in more affluent, darker tones. Layering with coats, scarves, and boots can also enhance your look while keeping you warm.

Consider Your Lifestyle

Your lifestyle should influence your choice of co-ord sets. If your days have many activities, from work meetings to casual dinners, look for versatile sets that can transition easily from day to night. Wrinkle-resistant fabrics and comfortable fits are essential for on-the-go lifestyles. If you frequently attend formal events, invest in more sophisticated co-ord sets that offer a polished and professional appearance.

So, embrace the co-ord trend, and enjoy the ease and elegance it brings to your wardrobe. ♦



The Best Picks Under \$75

by Jessica Gardner

Fall is nearly upon us, and to celebrate the season, *Elixuer* magazine has curated a list of the best gifts under \$75 to give this Fall. From kitchen appliances, to décor, to tech, these unique gifts suit everyone from children to seniors, so you can find something fun and exciting for everyone in your buying pool. These selections are great for birthdays, anniversaries, and weddings. They also make great host gifts for all those barbecues you are sure to be invited to.

MLB Ballpark Scratch-Off Poster

For the baseball enthusiast in your life (young or old), this poster of all Major League Baseball parks is sure to please. The poster features a scratch-off picture, of every major park in the US and Canada that you can scratch off to reveal the picture once you've visited. Keep track of your baseball journey with this 24" by 16" (61 cm by 40 cm) poster that comes complete with its own metal scratcher. Retail for \$49.99 at Amazon.



<https://www.amazon.ca>

Birth Month Flower Ring Tray

Customized to the end-user, this unique gift is great for a birthday as it features flowers of the individual's birth month. Its floral design makes it a beautiful display piece all on its own, but it is also useful as a jewellery tray. This thoughtful gift is created by Tulianna and Alejandra Garces, and retails for \$61.00.

Mosser Glass Jade 3-Piece Mixing Bowl Set

These elegant mixing bowls make a perfect addition to any kitchen. Not only are they beautiful, but their craftsmanship is top-notch as well. This stunning set is made in the last hand-pressed glass factory in the United States. Available from Amazon or Walmart, and priced reasonably at just \$69.00.

Generic Sterling Silver Money Clip

This sterling silver, pocket-sized money clip is perfect for keeping your valuables close at hand on your next outing. Whether for a groomsman gift, a birthday, or 'just because', this dazzling money clip is sure to impress. You can purchase it at Amazon for just \$58.73.

Cuisinart Ice-21 Ice Cream Maker

This handy kitchen appliance is a great gift for the whole family! Who doesn't love ice cream? Prepare to beat the heat with this handy device that makes creamy, delicious ice cream at a fraction of the cost of most machines. It is currently available from Amazon for just \$70.00.



<https://www.amazon.ca>

Crate and Barrel Ice Mold/Wine Bottle Chiller

This practical ice mold makes a great host/hostess gift. Especially for those who love to throw wine and cheese parties! The intuitive design helps keep the ice mold cold for up to six hours, and even catches the ice melt. Feeling creative? Throw in some dried flowers, berries or mint leaves before you freeze, for some added flair. Available at Crate and Barrel for \$59.95.



<https://www.urbanoutfitters.com/en-ca/shop/velvet-midi-round-throw-pillow>

Velvet Midi Round Throw Pillow

These stylish throw pillows come in an assortment of colours and make an excellent gift. They add a gorgeous pop of colour to your bedroom or living room. Made of cotton velvet, these soft, supple pillows feel so indulgent, you'd never guess they were under \$75. Exclusively available at Urban Outfitters, they are currently on sale for \$44.00.

Liquid Motion Lamp

This sleek, modernized version of the classic Lava Lamp comes in blue or purple and adds a sense of whimsy to any décor. Makes a great gift for a child or teen! Currently, on sale for \$39.00 at Urban Outfitters.

Kid's Light Pad

The perfect gift for your budding artist! This light pad can be used for art or sensory play, and features 3 lighting modes and a USB charger. Available from Deserres for \$54.99.



<https://www.indigo.ca/>

Totable Picnic Blanket

The perfect gift for outdoor enthusiasts. This cute portable picnic blanket is easy to clean, compact, and loads of fun. When not in use, it folds into a wearable tote and includes a zippered pocket and Velcro closure. Made of quilted polyester, and machine-washable. Available exclusively at Indigo, currently on sale for \$18.00.



<https://www.canadiantire.ca>

Bluehive Wireless Charging Pad

This clever device does double-duty, acting as a charging station with a built-in LED lamp. Compatible with all Qi enabled devices. The device is fast-charging and also includes a USB charging port for devices not equipped with Qi technology. Available in black or silver at Canadian Tire for \$39.99. ♦

Valeria Lipovetsky

On being a Beauty Influencer

by Pragya Bisen

With a degree in nutrition, Valeria began her YouTube channel talking about health and well-being, but became a quick hit on such a saturated platform. Over the years, she's accumulated five million followers across multiple platforms.

Talking about beauty, wellness, and motherhood, Valeria received 104 million views for her pregnancy transformation video; three million for her birthing vlog; over a million for "Eight Instant Ways to Look More Attractive", and half-million for "10 Weight Loss Mistakes".

This required a team, which is Valeria Inc.—a media company working directly with clients and agencies, and her latest venture is an e-commerce operation that touts her fashion, jewellery, and accessory brand, Verie.



Photo courtesy of Valeria Lipovetsky

How did you begin your modeling career?

When I was 14, I used to live in Israel and there was a contest. My mother encouraged me to apply, but I wanted to work at McDonald's. So the deal I made with my mother was, if I didn't win, she'd take me to McDonald's to get a job.

Mom drove me from Be'er Sheva to Tel Aviv (an hour and a quarter away), and I participated and won first place.

How has your career as a model and influencer impacted your life?

I used to be an introvert, but my mom believed in me. Living by myself in Paris and London gave me independence, and that's when life went from being a regular teenager, to achieving fame in the modeling industry. I met my husband when I was 20 and got married at 21, stepping away to start a family.

I started doing YouTube when I was 26, and quickly went from being an introvert to communicating with millions.

I had to gain confidence on camera, learn how to be a better businessperson now that I'm operating multiple businesses.

Becoming an influencer gave me an accelerated business education.

What do you think of the fashion industry?

Fashion is evolving and is now inclusive. The industry is at a point where inclusivity is breaking down barriers. Also, fashion now is very tied to practicality, instead of trying to achieve beauty. It is more accessible for everyone, and a lot of brands are focussing on the sustainability factor.

How would you describe your fashion style?

It's elegant, versatile, practical, and timeless. I am a big believer in investing in handbags and shoes. Specifically bags, because these are items that don't wear out, and we can use them for a very long time. The great thing is that what I wear online, people buy that and wear it the way I do. Then I can take an article of clothing, an outfit, and wear it in multiple ways.

What are some of today's biggest challenges as an entrepreneur and businesswoman?

Finding the balance between work and family, and well-being and fitness. Scheduling is a challenge, and managing time — especially quality time with family — and developing, sustaining,

and maintaining the business.

I'm in the middle-age range of many influencers and finding myself in a position where I can still appeal to all demographics and stay authentic is another challenge.

You have a new line of branded jewellery and apparel — an e-commerce company called Verie. How has that been going?

It is a separate organizational structure. We just hired a senior VP/general manager who comes with 20 years of e-commerce experience. Along with the CEO of my media company, Valeria Inc., that person is running the e-commerce. We have ready-to-wear coming down the pipe in a month or two.

As a mother of three and with a hectic lifestyle, how do you manage to stay in shape?

I have a personal trainer, and a supportive family. I'm committed to my workouts, regardless of how busy my day gets and maintain a realistic balance in my diet when I'm travelling or between meetings, photoshoots, and phone calls. ♦



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Photo courtesy of Megha Sandhu

Megha Sandhu

Star of “Pretty Hard Cases” and “Arranged Marriage”

by Jackie Marson

Montreal-raised Megha Sandhu is best known for her CBC - TV Series “Pretty Hard Cases” and “Arranged Marriage”, a dark satire about a South Asian girl ambushed by her parents with an arranged marriage.

The actress, who has also worked on the television series *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds*, *Hudson & Rex*, and *Painkiller*.

She spoke to *Elixuer* about how she first caught the performance bug and the value of South Asian representation.

Did you always know you wanted to be an actress?

Ever since I was a child, acting was always something I wanted to be involved in. Whenever my grandma would visit us from India, I would perform for her non-stop. I felt a need to express myself artistically. Before I knew it, I was in high school, joining the drama club. We performed “To Kill a Mockingbird” and I played the role of Atticus Finch. This was the first time I thought about how much joy acting brought me. But I grew up in a South Asian household where education was — and still is — of paramount importance.

I was told to go to medical school and become a doctor. My parents wanted me to follow in my mother’s footsteps. It was a constant battle between trying to fit the mold of the person my parents thought I was to become, and the person that I actually wanted to become. Ironically, this situation was very similar to my character Kami’s story in “Arranged Marriage”. After being pressured to complete a bachelor’s degree in behavioral neuroscience, I finally told my parents that I was going to pursue acting full-time.

What drew you to this specific project, “Arranged Marriage”?

Thankfully, now more South Asian stories are being told, but at the time, I hadn’t read a script like it before. South Asians were always somehow painted as the “evil people” in some sort of cautionary tale, or they were simply a feel-good ethnic. After speaking with my director, Anoop Rangi, I began to understand that this

script was neither of those genres. It’s his unique perception. It was the first script showcasing South Asians in a way that felt so authentic, yet comedic. While I’ve never been through an arranged marriage myself, I know a lot of South Asian women who have. And in a lot of ways, I related to Kami’s character.

Although my struggle wasn’t relationship-focused, I still had to decide whether to respect and trust my parent’s vision for me by taking the medical school route, or taking control of my future and following my dreams. There were a lot of parallels I drew from Kami’s character and my own life because both were heavily influenced by South Asian culture and our parents.

What was the experience like starring in your first movie?

It was a blast! When an actor begins their journey, there is less pressure to please the press, media, and other agents. You just show up as yourself. It was such a blessing to work on a film like this, with such great people, and tell a South Asian story from such a unique perspective. For me, it was loads of fun. I never once thought about, “Oh, how are people going to perceive this?” I was so invested in Kami’s character and her journey.

Does your bachelor’s degree in behavioral neuroscience inform your acting process?

Yes and no. I would never say that I just walked into this field like it’s easy. This field deserves respect for the commitment

and hard work that actors and artists put into it. But I will say that my academic background - being as rigorous as it was - helped prepare me for the amount of work that acting requires. People have this perception that acting is easy and very glamorous, but that’s not the case.

I also think that my degree in studying human behavior allowed me to understand other human beings and question motives. I think the best actors can do that well. I’m still learning about myself, constantly, and about the world around me, but yes, I think it ultimately did help.

What are you looking forward to next in your career?

Working and putting in as much of my time that I can into roles that I get. This industry is very unpredictable at times. I’m quite fortunate in that sense to be working right now.

I’m looking to continue to expand my art, continue to learn, and also to meet new people on the different projects I have in the works. I can’t say what they are, but it’s an exciting time, especially for South Asian artists, because we’re finally getting to represent our stories on TV and film.

That’s what I’m most excited for: to tell our stories in the most authentic way possible, and to be a role model for other brown women because growing up, I did not have that, and I know how important it is. ♦

Identifying Gaslighting Behaviours: Shining Light on Psychological Manipulation

by Jennifer Williams

What is Gaslighting?

Gaslighting is a term that originated from the 1938 play "Gas Light" and its film adaptations, wherein a husband manipulates his wife into

questioning her reality. This insidious form of psychological abuse has since permeated various romantic partnerships, interpersonal relationships, family connections, workplaces, and even societal dynamics.

It involves subtle and often persistent tactics the gaslighter employs to gain

control and power over the victim. Gaslighting undermines an individual's sense of reality, leaving them feeling confused, doubting their perceptions, and ultimately disempowered. Identifying gaslighting behaviours is crucial for safeguarding one's mental well-being and fostering healthier relationships.

Common Gaslighting Behaviours

Gaslighters often deny their actions or previous statements, even when evidence suggests otherwise. They may contradict the victim's memories or perceptions, causing confusion and self-doubt. These players downplay the victim's emotions, dismissing their concerns as irrational or oversensitive. Phrases like "You're too sensitive" or "You're overreacting" invalidate the victim's feelings, further eroding their confidence.

Gaslighters project their flaws, insecurities, or wrongdoing onto the victim. By accusing the victim of their behaviour, they deflect accountability and manipulate the victim into feeling guilty or inadequate. Individuals engaging in gaslighting often withhold information or selectively disclose facts to manipulate perceptions and control the narrative. Consequently, this tactic can leave the victim feeling uninformed and reliant on the manipulator for validation. By controlling the victim's social interactions, the gaslighter reinforces their influence and diminishes external perspectives that could challenge their tactics. They may isolate the victim from friends, family, or support networks, making them more susceptible to manipulation.

Gaslighting by Proxy

In some cases, gaslighters enlist allies or third parties to reinforce their manipulation. These individuals may unknowingly or knowingly participate in gaslighting actions, further isolating the victim and distorting their reality. Over time, the victim's self-esteem becomes undermined as criticism, belittling, or mockery become commonplace. Employing intermittent reinforcement, individuals alternate between criticism and praise, leaving the victim seeking validation and perpetuating the cycle of manipulation. Victims may feel responsible for the gaslighter's emotions or actions through manipulation, using phrases like, "If you cared about me, you would..." to elicit compliance.

Reality becomes distorted through rewriting history, or the fabrication of events to fit a specific narrative, leaving the victim questioning their memory and perception. Emotional manipulation enforces compliance, with threats to withhold affection, resources, or support, reinforcing feelings of guilt and dependency. Initially, showering the victim with love, affection, and attention establishes trust and dependency, later justifying controlling or abusive behaviour.

Recognizing Gaslighting

Identifying gaslighting actions can be challenging, especially in the early stages of a relationship when manipulation is subtle. However, there are key indicators that can help individuals recognize gaslighting: Trust your instincts if something feels off or contradictory. Gaslighting sometimes creates a sense of unease or confusion. Document interactions and keep a record of conversations, messages, or incidents that leave you feeling manipulated or doubting yourself. This documentation can provide clarity and validation of your experiences.

Seek external perspectives and confide in trusted friends, family members, or mental health professionals. External perspectives can offer clarity and support, counteracting the gaslighter's attempts to isolate you. Notice patterns and pay attention to recurring conducts or themes in the relationship. Gaslighting typically follows a pattern of manipulation, escalation, and control. Reflect on your emotions, beliefs, and boundaries. Gaslighting thrives on self-doubt, so cultivating self-awareness and self-confidence is essential for resilience.

Confronting Gaslighting

Confronting gaslighting behaviours can be daunting, but it is a crucial step toward reclaiming autonomy and setting boundaries in relationships. Assertive communication will clearly express your feelings and concerns, using "I" statements. Avoid arguing or defending your reality, as this can escalate manipulation tactics. Set and establish clear boundaries regarding acceptable behaviour and communication. Communicate these boundaries assertively and enforce them consistently. Seek support, and contact trusted individuals or seek professional counselling to process your experiences and develop coping strategies. If gaslighting persists despite efforts to address it, prioritize your well-being and consider ending the relationship. No one deserves to endure psychological abuse.

Ultimately, fostering healthier relationships begins with recognizing and rejecting manipulation, from anyone, in all its forms. ♦

Strategies For Making New Friends as an Adult

by Janet Bennett-Cox

Loneliness can be daunting, and can lead to debilitating stress and anxiety as we age. As young people, making friends was effortless, but as adults, we get more set in our ways, friends retire, move away, or die, making it more challenging to make friends. Forming friendships in adulthood is key to longevity and happiness. In this article, I will suggest several strategies for making new friends as an adult.

"According to a study of over 2,000 adults conducted in 2021, 12% of participants indicated that they didn't have any close friends, and 17% reported feeling dissatisfied with their number of friends".

Expanding your social circle allows you to forge impactful connections in adulthood. Often, the best connections we make are through introductions from mutual friends. It's beneficial to leverage current networks, most likely from work. If you are invited to an event, accept and try to engage in conversations about their lives outside of the workplace. Be genuine; people like to talk about their families and their interests, and this offers opportunities to initiate casual friendships.

Another unique opportunity to make friends in adulthood is to join professional associations where there are opportunities to join networking groups, or attend conferences and meet-ups. Attend in-person events instead of myriad Zoom meetings. At these sessions, people of like minds discuss career growth and professional interests, and connections forged can lead to fruitful friendships. These events provide a structured way to meet new people and engage in shared activities.

If retired, taking a hobby-related class like wine tasting, hiking, gardening, or photography, or attending game nights, provides an ideal setting to build camaraderie and potentially make new friends. Activities like cooking classes, writing or book clubs, poetry reading, crafting groups, or sports clubs like hockey, golf, or pickleball (which seems to be the latest craze amongst adults), make it easy to connect with other adults who share similar interests. People tend to be more relaxed during these activities, making it so much easier to strike up conversations and initiate new friendships.

In this ever-expanding digital age, social media is a haven for finding / re-establishing lost connections. Often, a simple post to a familiar name can connect you with a whole new social circle where friendships are rekindled. There is a

plethora of platforms online to reconnect with old friends or make new ones. Social media networks, like Facebook, X, LinkedIn, Bumble BFF, or any of the many dating sites, provide opportunities to meet people, but caution must be taken, especially on some dating sites where predators lurk. Engaging regularly in these social communities can often lead to virtual relationships transforming into real-world friendships.

Volunteering or providing community service at your local charity not only addresses a social concern, but is a fantastic way to meet people with similar values. People who volunteer have 'big' hearts and generous spirits, be it at a local food bank, hospital, or women's or animal shelter. Shared experiences, working for a cause like tree planting or environmental clean-up, or participating in civic activities, can be the base of strong, future friendships, as these people are often gregarious and easy to befriend. Prof. Catherine Haslam, a clinical psychologist at the University of Queensland, says, *"group-based connections like friendship networks, community and interest groups and clubs, play a particularly important role in supporting us ... and helping us cope with the challenges and adversities life throws our way."*

If you attend events, but have not developed a social mindset, you could be 'alone in the crowd.' A social mindset requires you to be open to possibilities. A smile works wonders, as does body language that suggests you are approachable, and making eye contact, which expresses a willingness to engage.

For women today, it often means that you may have to take the initiative in some social situations, depending on the friendship you wish to develop. You may want to be the first to suggest grabbing a coffee, or attending an event such as a street festival or a lecture. Rewarding interactions often start by overcoming crippling feelings of intimidation. It is critical, in your search for friendship, to have clear intentions on the friendship you are trying to cultivate. Are you looking for a few quality friends, or a group of friends with whom you can meet consistently? As adults, we want honest relationships where we can be our authentic selves.

We may believe it's success and wealth that drive happiness, but research shows relationships make up 70 per cent of personal happiness. We are more likely to choose our friends more carefully as adults, and that is a good thing, since true friendships can help us relieve stress, combat loneliness, keep us mentally fit, and contribute to our longevity. ♦

The Master Key to Healthy Relationships

by CJ Calvert



Photo courtesy of CJ Calvert

Think about what brings you the greatest joy or the deepest sorrow, and there's a chance that it's wrapped around the relationships in your life. If you're married or in a long-term relationship, you must understand that your success in the relationship is a choice. Your success in the relationship is a skill. If you want to know how to make a relationship work, look at those who have vibrant, passionate relationships. Every union faces its own unique problems. Deciding to be the best partner for your spouse starts with understanding what you both need from the relationship.

First, recognize that every relationship has an invisible "Love Bank Account," into which you make deposits or withdrawals. Every time you do something your partner likes, it's a deposit; every time you hurt their feelings or let them down, it's a withdrawal. If you build it up with many deposits, your relationship can more easily withstand the occasional withdrawal, as your partner will be more likely to be forgiving and understanding. However, if you've been a jerk for weeks, months, or even years, and even the smallest withdrawal will send it into overdraft – and your partner into a rage. The key is to make as many deposits as often as possible. You need to really understand what constitutes a deposit for your partner.

The language of love has dialects. Though English is spoken around the world, Canadians may have a difficult time understanding Brits or Aussies. In a similar vein, you may be acting in a way that you feel is loving towards your partner, but they may not get your message. In his book *The Five Love Languages*, author Gary Chapman describes each of these love languages:

"The quality of your life is the quality of your relationships."
- Tony Robbins

Words of Affirmation: This means saying nice things to your partner, such as "I love you" or "I'm proud of you."

Acts of Service: This refers to doing nice things, like cleaning the house or picking your partner up at the airport late at night.

Receiving Gifts: This signifies that while you were away from your partner, you were thinking of them. It could be a single rose left on their desk at work. The price of the gift is not (usually) important; it could be a \$5 fridge magnet or a book that you thought they'd enjoy.

Quality Time: This doesn't have to be an expensive date; it can simply be sitting on the couch together watching a movie. It could be going for a walk or staying up after the kids are in bed to chat about the day.

Physical Touch: Not restricted to sex. It includes hugging, holding hands, spooning in bed, or even wrestling or tickling.

An engineer tried being more romantic. He wrote out a romantic note (words of affirmation) and bought roses (receiving gifts). He left them on the kitchen counter for his wife when she came home. She eventually walked through the door, walked upstairs to his office and gave him a kiss hello – not the reaction he was expecting. He asked her if she had seen what he'd done downstairs in the kitchen, and she replied that she hadn't and walked back downstairs to investigate. After a moment, he heard her call out with glee. She ran back upstairs, threw her arms around him in an embrace, and proclaimed, "You took out the garbage!" Not surprisingly, the engineer was a little stunned.

He thought he knew how to romance his wife without realizing that her idea of romance was different from his. It turns out that acts of service was her love language, not gifts or words of affirmation. So he started taking out the garbage regularly.

You understand what your partner's love language is. A question to ask your partner is, "What have I done in the past that has made you feel the most loved?" Whatever the answer, make a note of it, and do that as often as possible. If they say, "When you took me to Hawaii for our honeymoon," it's not realistic to do that on a weekly basis. The danger is that they will mention activities that you might think are pointless or unenjoyable. If your spouse says, "I like to talk at the end of the day," then schedule time to talk. If they say, "When we watch the game," do more of that. Maybe they say they love you when you play with the kids, leave a romantic note on their pillow, hold their hand while walking in the mall, or buy them their favourite perfume. Whatever it is, do more of it, do it consistently, and never stop doing it.

On a final note, understand how and when you feel the most loved. Take time to identify those things that fill your "Love Bank Account" and have a conversation with your partner about what moves your needle. You may wish to go first, and spend a week of being loving with no strings attached. Sweep them off their feet first, and you'll be surprised at how open they'll be to reciprocating. ♦

LORI MORRIS®

Luxury Legacy



Everywhere you look is a beckoning invitation to engage and enjoy. Sit at the fully equipped bar, upholstered in sumptuous green leather topped in a pale blue marble with toffee accents counter.

Every imaginable high-tech appliance is cleverly integrated into the custom cabinetry, with a view of the temperature-controlled wine room with a floor-to-ceiling humidifier and adjacent cheese and meat tasting room.

Display plays as much a priority as storage to create an authentic experience rooted in their beloved Italian traditions. Lower ceilings, too often ignored, are met head on by Lori and become a deco-inspired design feature clad in a wood and pale blue millwork with matching chevron wood floors infusing a casual warmth.



LORI MORRIS®

Luxury Legacy

About Lori Morris

For thirty-six years, Lori Morris has been reinventing the standard in interior design. A creative tour-de-force that embraces a forward-thinking philosophy, Lori Morris delivers original designs and an unparalleled luxury experience for our clients.

Lori Morris challenges the boundaries of traditional design firms. Transforming the ultimate design dreams into a fully finished space, the LMD process creates a truly original work of art.

Every Lori Morris creation is an original painting, a vision that transcends mainstream rules of interior design resulting in a style with a sophisticated, avant-grade edge and a finely tune approach.

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LORI MORRIS®

Amenities are customized to fulfill the client's requirements, and are intended to facilitate the outdoor amenities with a sauna, steam shower, and separate water closet. The space is made complete with the personalized 'glam' area, including a custom makeup vanity with recessed lighting and hair washing chair and plenty of storage space.

LORI MORRIS®

The theatre was designed for this movie-lover family to be plush, lush, and edgy with an art deco vibe as a nod to old Hollywood. Upholstered paneled walls with millwork designs play a glamorous foil to the rich chocolate custom cabinetry, gold accents, and oversized chocolate velvet seating.

A bar and fridge are cleverly hidden for storing the family's favourite drinks and snacks, with plenty of additional storage and counter space for popcorn bowls and serving trays.



LUXURY TRAVEL SUITCASES FOR THE DISCERNING TRAVELLER

by Nigel Shane

The winter clothes are packed away. Maybe the sweaters and flannels are being dry-cleaned. The summer shorts and linens are out, applying SPF is part of the morning routine, and the search is on for the vacation destination.

One of the aspects of travelling, often not thought about until the last minute, is luggage. Which works best: a weekender, a duffel bag, a carry-on, or some combination of these and the traditional suitcase? While luggage is not something that is purchased often, it is an important part of the travel experience.

The choice of luggage not only serves of utility, but is also an expression of style. For some, it is an extension of their identity, and it can be used to attract others in signalling their interests, and even values. Luxury travel suitcases can provide a statement by offering high-quality materials and innovative design and features.

The options for luggage vary. However, this list of luxury options meets the requirements for sophistication, innovation, and prestige.

1 Rimowa: This option is one of the most recognizable options in high-end luggage. With its distinctive grooved exterior, Rimowa has provided high-quality and innovative luggage since 1898. Over the one hundred-plus years, it has stayed true to its focus on “expert travellers need expert travel solutions.”

Rimowa has stayed relevant to travellers and kept in style by staying in touch with their tastes as they change and evolve. Its first cases were crafted from wood, which was later offered in aluminum, to now providing polycarbonate cases in orange and pink. Rimowa has also collaborated with other brands like Supreme and Aimé Leon Dore, which identifies it as a leader in the luxury luggage category.

With multiple options to start with the brand, ranging from card holders, phone cases, and backpacks, the classic suitcase remains the top option that will last a lifetime.



2 TUMI: When considering premium luggage, TUMI is one of the most iconic brands that come to mind. TUMI's use of ballistic nylon makes it stand out, and allows it to claim its space in the luxury luggage segment, as a symbol of durability with superior quality and modern design. It is these characteristics that have enabled TUMI to expand its recognition, to the sophisticated leisure traveller.

TUMI's collections have evolved to include materials like Tegriss, which increases the strength of the luggage, but not the weight. TUMI's commitment to innovation started with its TUMI Tracer technology, which helps ensure the authenticity of the product, to now include USB charging capability in its collections.

Partnerships with others include a past collection with Missoni and a launch with McLaren. These collaborations reinforce TUMI's luxury position, attracting a sophisticated and varied clientele.

There are different entry points to experience TUMI, beginning with small leather goods, messenger bags, and travel accessories. Yet, the Alpha collection is for those in search of luggage that makes a bold statement.



3 Globe-Trotter: Since 1897, Globe-Trotter has been identified as one of the most distinguished brands in luggage. It is recognized for its ability to offer an interpretation of traditional design while maintaining its rich heritage and superior craftsmanship. Globe-Trotter has been seen as a top choice when it comes to elegance.

Initially using vulcanized fiberboard for its lightness and durability, the brand has refined its materials and designs. With a brand like Globe-Trotter, it was no surprise when they introduced luggage made from carbon fibre. They have also extended their offerings into the home category.

Globe-Trotter's partnerships with the 007 James Bond franchise, the Aston Martin Aramco F1® Team and GOLF le FLEUR, demonstrate its ability to recognize current trends and build relationships with new customers. Deciding on how to invest in Globe-Trotter can begin with miniature cases, and jewellery boxes, and can get to large suitcases, which remain the hallmark of those seeking high-quality, premium luggage. ♦



INVESTING IN ELEGANCE: WOMEN SHAPING THE WORLD IN FINE ART COLLECTING

by Tyler Geis

We often forget the impact women have had on the world of fine art collecting. Women have been championing the artistic vision of the artists around them for a while now. This is a fact that dates back to the ancient times of the Egyptians,

and goes all the way up to the modern era, as some of the co-founders of the most famous art museums around the world are indeed women. Places like the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of Modern Art were founded by the likes of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller and Isabella Stewart Gardner.

Forbes reported in late 2023 that more wealthy women spent more on art than men did. Moving forward to 2024, the art-collecting industry is feeling more and more like it is governed by women from diverse backgrounds across the globe.

Let's start in China, specifically Hong Kong, with Queenie Rosita Law, a 36-year-old art collector. She's the founder and director of Q Contemporary, a gallery that opened in Budapest. However, she is now plotting to open another gallery, called Double Q, a gallery specifically meant to shine a brighter spotlight on overlooked artists in Hong Kong.

Jumping from China over to South Korea is where we find Lee Soyoung in Seoul. She is highly educated, with degrees in art history and art education. She has written multiple books on everything that comes with art collecting. Lastly, Soyoung is behind numerous art institutes for children and the general public.

Victoria Justice is a name in the art world that bounces from coast to coast in the United States. Either in New York City or Palo Alto, Justice has had her hand in many different art projects within the industry in America. She sits on the board at the Brooklyn Museum and is a co-chair of the Black Trustee Alliance for Art Museums. Justice's main focus throughout her career is to support artists of colour and their endeavors.

Pamela Joyner has become a standout name in art collecting, due to her acquisition of a Mark Bradford piece she purchased back in 2017. Since then, her collections have bounced around all over the U.S. Her exhibits have taken place in major cities like Baltimore, Chicago, Durham, and many more. Her focus is on abstract African-American art.

Makgati Molebatsi is a South African collector based in Johannesburg. She currently holds the title of Fine Arts Specialist at Aspire Art. Like all the women on this list, Molebatsi's interest began the more she studied art on a

regular basis outside of her day job, thus leading her to jump ship from the corporate world and into the life of working in an art gallery and auction. 2019 saw the launch of an art fair that she and some colleagues titled Latitudes, an event that was unfortunately short-lived, due to Cape Town taking most of the spotlight of South Africa's art scene.

Catherine Petitgas is known by many for her support of Latin American artists and their works. Petitgas now lives in London, but she spent some time in Mexico City in the 1980s; it was there that she got the art bug. This did not become a passion of hers to be a collector, but more of a call-to-action to promote contemporary artists and have their work displayed. She's been doing this for nearly three decades now.

Finally, there is Komal Shah. Originally from India, but now based in California, Shah feels like more of a philanthropist than just an average art collector. With her ties to figures in the tech industry, she comes to the table with a cheque book to help spotlight many different artists at once. Shah is a trustee for the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Her causes align strongly with those of female artists, as she sits on the board of the Feminist Majority Foundation. Komal Shah sits on many boards for different organizations, but one that stands out a lot is the Stanford Arts Advisory Council. She's a graduate of Stanford University, and with her spot on the board, she was able to launch a series of events that bring together the worlds of art and technology, titled Artists of the Future.

The patronage of these women mentioned above may not make front-page news or elevate them to high celebrity status, but that's not the point. Their contribution to putting a spotlight on artists from all different backgrounds propels art for generations to come. The history of art is always being studied -- from eras that date back centuries ago, to just a few decades prior to current times -- and it must be noted that women helped create it. ♦

THE FACTS OF LUXURY VACATIONS

by The Elixuer Team

89% Households with annual earnings of at least \$125,000 spent \$67.5 billion on 40 million vacations.

Millennials' Top 3 U.S. dream destinations

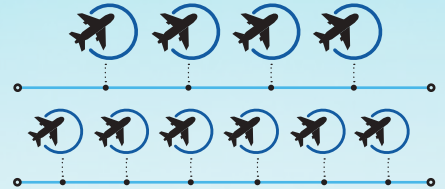
MILLENNIALS' TOP 48% INTERNATIONAL DREAM DESTINATIONS



1/3 of luxury vacationers base their trips primarily on social media posts and online reviews.

Approximately 48% of high-end customers take four trips a year on average.

20% travel more than four times.



76% OF LUXURY VACATIONERS PREFER TO FOCUS ON MAKING MEMORIES RATHER THAN PURCHASING ITEMS.



LUXURY VACATIONERS

THE LONGER THE FLIGHT, THE MORE LUXURY VACATIONERS DESIRE A HIGHER COMFORT LEVEL

60% Short-Haul Trip

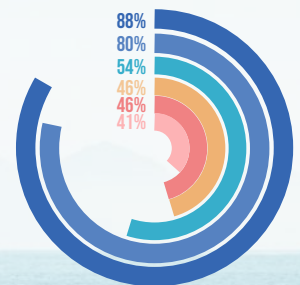


75% Long-Haul Trip

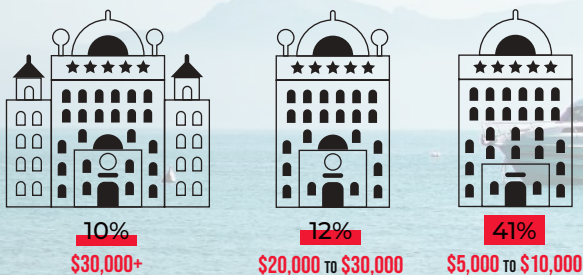


LUXURY CUSTOMER COSTS BREAK DOWN AS FOLLOWS:

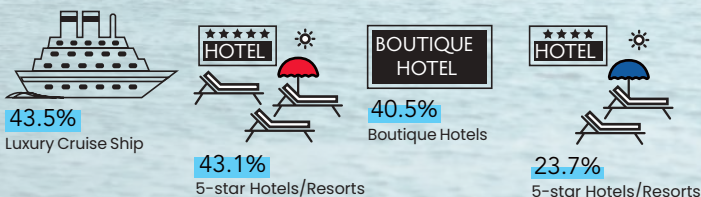
- ACCOMMODATIONS
- PERSONALIZATION OF SERVICE
- EXCLUSIVE ACCESS
- GASTRONOMIC EXPERIENCE
- SECLUSION/PRIVACY
- AIRLIFT ROUTES



REGARDLESS OF THE LENGTH OF STAY, THE AVERAGE PRICE PAID BY LUXURY VACATIONER IN USD:

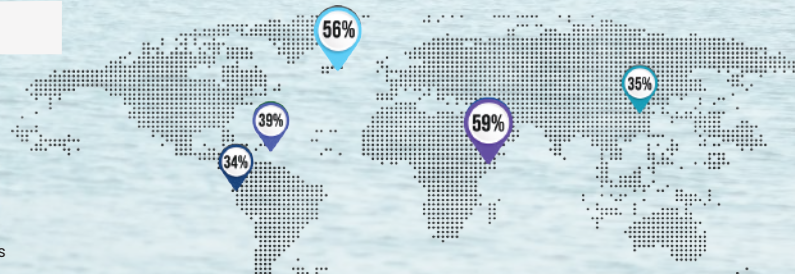


MOST POPULAR ACCOMMODATION CHOICES OF LUXURY TRAVEL CLIENTS IN THE U.S. (2014)



LUXURY SPOTS WITH THE LARGEST GROWTH IN TRAVEL WORLDWIDE (2016):

KENYA ICELAND SAINT MARTIN CHINA ECUADOR



A DIVE INTO LUXURY BRANDS' RELUCTANCE TO SELL ONLINE

by Lauren Schwartz

The world of luxury shopping is a complicated one. Luxury brands often operate differently in comparison to more common brands, and decisions regarding sales are unique to their part of the industry.



In particular, selling products online is a very new trend among luxury brands. In the past, most brands refused outright to sell online, claiming that it compromised the integrity of their brand and the experience that they offer. However, things are changing, and while it is still difficult to replicate the in-person shopping experience, many luxury brands are finally considering the benefits of e-commerce.

Preserving the Luxury Experience

The luxury brand experience is built around the desire for exclusivity, and the narrative that a brand creates around its own history. These cornerstone elements determine much of a luxury brand's business strategy which, unlike more common brands, often prioritize things other than sales and size of consumer base. Rather, the goal of a luxury brand is to preserve its image, its exclusivity, and the experience that shopping with them provides.

Primarily, this has been done through in-person sales. Every customer experience is finely curated to the individual, with brands often using a tiered system to allow sales associates to control who gets access to certain products. While all clients are treated very well, pre-existing and VIP clients are often purposefully given priority to ensure their loyalty.

Additionally, luxury clients often value things that are more easily offered in-person. This includes attentive salespeople who work to create long-term, personal relationships with clientele, exclusive treatment, a calm and private or semi-private shopping atmosphere and, of course, a guarantee in a high level of confidence around making large purchases.

Pre-COVID-19 Business Model

Pre-COVID-19, it was incredibly uncommon for luxury brands to sell online, and if they did, they only offered a small portion of their product lines. The most common products to be sold online were cosmetics and fragrances through distributors like Sephora, with some brands offering a very limited selection of accessories online as well. Fashion, on the other hand, was very rare to find online. For the brands who did sell online, they only did so if it made sense for their business model.

The way most business models worked, ready-to-wear and casual fashion were used as a way to market a brand's other goods, while couture was only ever available in-store. This way, consumers could get a taste of the most affordable options a luxury brand offered, while also making it very clear that more luxurious goods were for a more esteemed clientele than those who shopped online.

In the second edition of "The Luxury Strategy: Break the Rules of Marketing to Build Luxury Brands" by Jean-Noël Kapferer and Vincent Bastien, released in 2012, it contains a section on e-commerce. Essentially, the book emphasizes the exclusivity that luxury brands offer, pushing brands to gatekeep their services for their preferred clientele, and to make obtaining luxury goods difficult. This can help weed out those considered unsavory, as making products hard to buy isn't difficult for VIPs, considering high profile clients often have things sent to them without needing to request it anyway. The book also tells readers to "sell marginally on the internet". At the time, e-commerce was seen as a way to cheapen a brand, both in terms of brand image, and the actual value of products.

Post-COVID-19 Business Model

COVID-19 however, changed everything. Suddenly, stores were closed, and many businesses were forced to move online. Some luxury brands fought hard against this shift, citing their desire to retain the in-person experiences they'd been known to offer, while others finally began to embrace the idea of e-commerce. Certain brands partnered with companies like Net-a-Porter, Harrods, and Farfetch to bring their ready-to-wear lines and accessories to a wider audience, as well as to meet their existing clients where they were.

From a broader perspective, this shift may be sticking around for the long term. The face of the luxury shopper is getting younger, and most millennial and Gen Z clients prefer to shop online. Moreover, many young people base their loyalty to a brand on their online experience, which means that luxury brands are being forced to improve their online presence and website usability.

With all of that being said, the in-person shopping experience isn't going away any time soon. Most brands still reserve their more exclusive and expensive products for in-store only, with certain products only being available by invitation. Also, luxury brands pride themselves on their ability to work with clientele to create the best experience possible, and the high level of curation into client visits that luxury brands are known for can really only be achieved in person. ♦



Photo courtesy of Chantal Nchako

Chantal Nchako

Conceptualizing Custom-Made Shoes

by Shweta Gandhi

Chantal Nchako is carving a niche for herself with her vegan and cruelty-free shoe brand, Choobiz. Founded in 2007, each shoe is handcrafted by Italian artisans in Le Marche, Italy.

Every pair of shoes is designed using Italian leather, vegan leather, suede, organic canvas, special materials, prints, and limited-edition textiles. Nchako conceptualizes each design with her mother.

Nchako, who's an actor in the New York theatre scene, on television and in feature films, created Choobiz to represent her philosophy of living in the moment and for one's purpose. She chatted with *Elixuer* about her creation process, and what's in store for her luxury shoe brand.

What inspired you to create a luxury vegan shoe brand?

I wanted to create a shoe line that connected to my African heritage, my love for Italy, and my lifestyle.

Tell us more about how each shoe is and handcrafted in Italy.

Skilled artisans create each pair with quality, precision, and unique design features. Each shoe is carefully customized and handcrafted. This takes time, from the designing of the shoe to the curating of the materials, to ensuring that each shoe retains a consistent finish.

How many hours would it take a craftsman to hand-make a pair of shoes, like the Choobiz plain luxe sandal?

Each Choobiz shoe is made to order in about two weeks. We use vegan leather and incorporate a porcelain heel, ensuring each detail reflects our commitment to elegance and exclusivity.

What does Choobiz symbolize?

Choobiz symbolizes my persona with creativity and professional identity. It combines "Choo," a nickname my mother calls me, with "showbiz." When I graduated from college, my brother helped me craft the name.

What makes a pair of Choobiz unique?

What makes each shoe unique is their accessibility and commitment to quality. I chose vegan leather to ensure they're inclusive and sustainable. With two styles launched, I plan to grow the collection. Choobiz is exclusive, and I take pride in its comfort, versatility, and durability.

What does your design and ideation process look like?

My design and ideation process isn't fixed; it varies. My mother is my partner in everything I do, and I highly value her opinion.

When an idea strikes, I often consult her first. Together, we verbalize the concept, and her sketching skills usually bring the exact model I envision to life.

Are you working on any new designs right now?

I'm developing a children's shoe design, inspired by a memory from Cameroon. As a child, my feet grew quickly, and while waiting for shoes ordered from the US, my mother created "peep toe sneakers" by cutting holes in the toes of my old sneakers and drawing on them. Initially embarrassed, I was pleasantly surprised by the positive reactions from classmates.

This experience sparked the idea for the Choobiz shoe line, and I'm excited to bring this innovation to our new children's line.

When it comes to style, who or what inspires you?

I find inspiration in the elegance of old Hollywood and the flair of the Elizabethan era. Icons like Audrey Hepburn, Diana Ross, and Elizabeth Taylor have greatly influenced my taste. Plus, my mom, who's a fashionista, has always been a source of inspiration — I loved watching her get dressed and apply makeup when I was growing up.

As a woman entrepreneur, what are some challenges you've faced in your journey?

I've encountered challenges because people sometimes struggle to place me neatly into one category, due to my diverse background and heritage. I speak French, English, and Italian fluently, and I have a background in equestrianism and skiing.

I'm also passionate about Shakespeare and proud of my African heritage. These added interests and skills have occasionally led to misunderstandings, once people discover the breadth and depth of what I bring to the table. ♦

SeaGarden

BEACH RESORT

GREAT FOOD • FRIENDLY PEOPLE • FAMILY FUN



AUTHENTIC
JAMAICAN
ALL-INCLUSIVE VACATIONS



WELCOME HOME • FAMILY FUN • SAY "I DO"

SeaGarden Beach Resort is a tranquil oasis that creates an authentic Jamaican experience for you. Whether travelling for business or pleasure, here, the tradition of warm Jamaican hospitality charms you at each encounter. Cozy up in a gazebo on the edge of the horizon while gazing at endless views of the Caribbean Sea. This, coupled with lush tropical greenery, makes SeaGarden Beach Resort the ideal place to relax and enjoy Jamaica at its best.

Welcome Home

Ideally situated in Montego Bay, Jamaica's tourist capital, across from our picturesque private beach club and amidst lush tropical gardens is our 204-room, boutique-style resort. This Jamaican family-owned and -operated all-inclusive resort welcomes guests with family warmth and friendliness that defines everything we do. Guest rooms at SeaGarden Beach Resort are infused with charm and are designed to convey traditional Jamaican hospitality. Each unique area is meticulously planned to meet the diverse needs of SeaGarden's guests. Whether travelling alone, as a couple, or family, an eclectic array of accommodation categories are available. Regardless of your selection, warm tones engulf you upon arrival as you take refuge in your home away from home.

Family Fun

There's so much to do on and off property, whether you're here for relaxation, recreation, or business. Montego Bay is known for its rich history and culture, so get out and explore on a guided tour. SeaGarden Beach Resort provides a full-range of exciting activities, organized by our amazing team of entertainers, for you to choose from. With engaging nighttime and daytime activities, SeaGarden's all-inclusive resort makes it easy to enjoy our traditional Jamaican culture without ever needing to spend more!

Say "I Do"

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Photo courtesy of Alli Walker

Alli Walker

Country Music Singer-Songwriter

by Aun Abbott

Having recently been nominated at the 2024 Canadian Country Music Awards for Female Artist of the Year, Alli Walker is showing the world what it looks like when hard work pays off. After years of releasing her music independently, and going viral on social media, she finally signed her first record deal with RECORDS Nashville in March 2024.

Inspired by Taylor Swift to embark on a career in country music, Walker moved from Prince Edward Island to Toronto to pursue her dream of becoming a successful country music artist at the age of 19. After a decade-long commitment to producing, writing, and performing on stage, she launched her first album, *The Basement Sessions: What I've Learned So Far*, which landed on iTunes' Top 10 country chart.

Elixuer had the chance to chat with Walker about *The Basement Sessions* and about her 2021 single "Country Music."

You have described your debut album *The Basement Sessions* as "mindful music." Please expand on this phrase, and tell us what are some key takeaways for your listeners?

My first album is called *The Basement Sessions: What I've Learned So Far* because it really was what I'd learned so far, and I coined the terms "mindful music" and "conscious country" because I was talking about terms like mental health and bullying, and just discovering myself through my twenties.

I was just writing songs for myself to use as therapy and a release. Then I was like, "Let's just put these songs out and see if anybody else might need these types of songs, to maybe help them feel heard or less alone in what they're going through."

So, I ended up just putting them out. [My husband and I] recorded them in our basement, literally, and the response was awesome.

I think the cool thing is it really opened the conversation with my audience and my fans to a level where we're almost friends, and we can just be more open and honest with each other.

How would you say your new single "Country Music" has set a new direction for your music?

"Country Music" was written with Dustin Bird and Brian John Harwood during the pandemic. We were writing a bunch of songs, and I had come up with the concept about writing a song based on the songs that we were influenced by and grew up on. We put 13 country music references, song titles, and some of our favorite names in the country world weaved into the storyline of the song. So, it's kind of like a treasure hunt of references while you're listening to the song.

If you did grow up on country music, it will make you have that nostalgic feeling of maybe what you felt when you heard these songs for the first time growing up. And if you don't know country music, it's almost like an introduction to country music.

As an artist, would you say that the creative process involves sharing the innermost parts of your being to the world?

Absolutely. I spent a lot of years just writing songs that I thought would do well on radio or that people would like, and I don't think that was very productive because you were kind of just writing about what

everybody else has already written about. So, it wasn't until I started writing what was actually going on in my life, and what I needed to release from my soul, that it actually hit home with a lot of people. So that's been my motto ever since: to really just exude what's going on in my life, or what I've learned about myself, or what I'm struggling with, in song form.

What are the biggest sources of inspiration for you as a songwriter?

Lately, I get inspiration from songs more than I get obsessed with a single artist. I love a great song. I love a song that has a beginning, middle, and [an] end, and it's a full storyline and takes you on a journey. When I was younger, I would listen to Canadians like Avril Lavigne and Sum 41, and bands in the rock world.

Then I'd listen to country artists like Keith Urban, Alan Jackson, Brooks & Dunn, Martina McBride, and then Taylor Swift came out and I absolutely was obsessed with [her]. She definitely gave me the inspiration and push to do this for a career. I also loved the pop world — Demi Lovato, the Jonas Brothers, and Justin Bieber. I can get inspiration from literally anywhere. ♦

Cheryl Sutherland

Inspiring Impactful Change

by Gladys Christian

Through PleaseNotes, Cheryl Sutherland is on a mission to spread the message of mindset growth and human potential.

Partnering with companies such as Wonder Women Tech, WeWork, The Women's Leadership Intensive, Freshbooks, Badassery Magazine, the Durham District School Board, and a host of others, the women's empowerment expert, author and entrepreneur, through her positive affirmation products and workshops, has inspired many to forge ahead in their life's journey through decisive actions.

PleaseNotes' accomplishments has earned it features in top publications like Forbes, Huffington Post, Fast Company, American Express OPEN Forum, Thrive Global, Youngry, Hello Giggles, and InStyle Magazine.

Photo courtesy of Cheryl Sutherland

Who is Cheryl Sutherland? Let's get to know you better.

Cheryl Sutherland is a Transformational Speaker, Business Strategist and Founder of PleaseNotes, a for-purpose company of affirmation-filled products. I felt restless and underwhelmed at my 9-to-5. After spending over 2000+ hours in learning and facilitating personal development, coaching, and reigniting my inner creativity, I created a company that inspires women to step into their own power by building confidence, clarity, and creativity.

What's the inspiration behind PleaseNotes? What's the story?

We started the company with one item, the PleaseNotes Sticky Note, and fully launched the brand with a successful Kickstarter campaign. Since then, PleaseNotes has expanded to include a suite of products that cater to customers worldwide, including Spain, the UK, Canada, Latin America, and Asia.

We have been endorsed by renowned changemakers Les Brown and Monique Coleman with the words, "This is a gift, this is special and extraordinary and deserves to be shared with the world."

What does the name PleaseNotes connote or imply? Plus, what are some of the products you carry?

PleaseNotes is a soft request that comes when writing to 'look at this, it's important.' I want people to take the time to look at this soft request to love themselves just a little more. Some of our top products include: The Guided Gratitude Journal, The Guided Clarity Journal, The Manifestation Planner, The Incision Notebook, Jotter Notebooks, Affirmation Cards, and of course, the original PleaseNotes Affirmation Based Sticky Notes.

Can you tell us about the workshops you run?

The Journal Your Way to Clarity workshop is designed to support individuals who want to learn how to find your answers by looking internally. The Clear and Confident Course offers a journey of self-discovery aimed at realigning individuals with their unique paths. The Create Clarity in Your Calling Bundle is crafted to assist individuals in overcoming Imposter Syndrome in their professional pursuits. And the Journal Your Way Wealthy Workshop is designed to harness the power of journaling and fostering financial abundance.

As a Black woman entrepreneur, what are some of the challenges you've faced and overcame?

As a Black woman entrepreneur, navigating the business landscape has indeed presented its share of challenges. One significant obstacle has been the

prevalence of systemic biases and stereotypes that can hinder opportunities for advancement and recognition. By fostering strong networks of support, seeking out mentorship opportunities, and leveraging my unique perspective and experiences, I've been able to overcome many hurdles along the way.

What's your specific product that has stood out from the rest, and why?

One of our top-selling products has been the Manifestation Planner. Our clients have consistently reported positive experiences and are often returning as repeat customers. Additionally, we've received favorable feedback from corporate buyers who have embraced our offerings.

What are your future goals and aspirations for PleaseNotes?

This year, my team and I are diligently working to secure additional speaking opportunities to bolster the growth of PleaseNotes. We also aim to expand the availability of the products in additional retail stores. I'm also really excited about some of our upcoming vendor markets, including the One-of-a-Kind Show in Toronto. As Cheryl Sutherland, my number one legacy is inspiring other entrepreneurs, particularly women and people of colour, to fearlessly pursue their dreams and break barriers in the business world. ♦



Photo courtesy of Nathalie Kelley

Nathalie Kelley

Promoting Indigenous “Tech”

by Dave Gordon

Nathalie Kelley has enchanted audiences with her range of roles, and now using her voice to promote ancient technologies that could better the environment.

The Peruvian-Australian actress had a breakout role as Neela in the 2006 film *Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift*. In 2010, she starred as the love interest in the Bruno Mars' video "Just the Way You Are". She secured a recurring role in the crime drama *Body of Proof*, and played Sybil in the final season of *The Vampire Diaries*. Her role as Cristal in the *Dynasty* reboot in 2017 showcased her talent in a prime-time soap opera. In 2020, she played the lead role of Noa Hamilton in *The Baker and the Beauty*, hitting #1 on Netflix in America, the week of its release.

She has a social media following of 1.5 million, and recently spoke in Toronto, at the Collision conference, on planet stewardship.

What creative projects are you working on?

I'm working on a science fiction story about a world in which modern technology is hurting us, and the world has to rely on ancestral knowledge and Indigenous skillsets to survive. That story is not a dystopian future. This post-apocalyptic world is a much better world than we're living in today. Climate change has been averted. Relationships have been restored between humans and other living beings. What matters? Clean water, food. There are corporations ordering people to cut down trees, or put mercury in the water to get out gold to make iPhones. No! People are concerned again with what matters. And these technologies bring us closer to nature, instead of taking them away from nature.

What did you speak about at Collision?

I spoke on behalf of technologies that have been overlooked by Western history, culture and science. Technologies have existed on this continent and around the world, for over 30,000 years, that involve ways of growing food, and clean water, constructing communities, that are primarily borne out of intimacy with all living beings. We should desperately consider alternatives to high tech, calling this local traditional ecological knowledge “Lo-TEK,” and serve as an antidote to the destruction that high technology has on our planet.

What's an example of Lo-TEK?

Terra Preta, Portuguese for Black Earth, is the fertile soil on which the Amazon rainforest was growing. We think the Amazon rainforest is a pristine bit, untouched by man, that humans just happen to stumble upon? But there were parts built by engineers, created by people using technology, over thousands of years, to create the world's most sophisticated

carbon capture. It also is home to the most biodiversity on the planet. It is a supermarket of pharmacy, with 96 per cent of all medicines today coming from tropical forests. If you look at things like Machu Picchu, the cities that my ancestors the Incas built, were incredibly sophisticated engineering, to move water long distances to irrigate lands, to build topsoil with the agricultural techniques and feed tens of millions of people, without a drop of chemical fertilizer or glyphosate, or any of the things that industrial agriculture tells us we need now.

We have technology to clean water, through bio-remediation, using plants, and mycoremediation, through the use of fungi. Ancestral knowledge is being erased, being ignored. Indigenous technologies were born out of a different value system, and cannot be co-opted by corporations and monetized. They see technology as tools for collaboration between humans and the natural world, in order to increase biodiversity, in order to make life prosperous and abundant for all living beings. The world desperately needs to return back to these values, rather than looking at these things as resources to be plundered.

Can you offer another example?

The use of fire to regenerate a forest, or a piece of land, or grasslands, and prevent future wildfires. A huge problem with the wildfires we're seeing all over the world... those places had Indigenous people that yearly were going through that land and meticulously and methodically practicing small burns, to ensure that they burn off all the brush, all the kindling, anything that could provoke a huge wildfire.

The ash left behind will actually feed and fertilize the soil, causing the landscape to grow even more lush and biodiverse, inviting more wildlife, thereby helping Indigenous people by making hunting more bountiful. So it was a full, complete system. ♦

Why Water is Vital for Good Health- 6 Benefits of Drinking Water

by Aaron Levinson



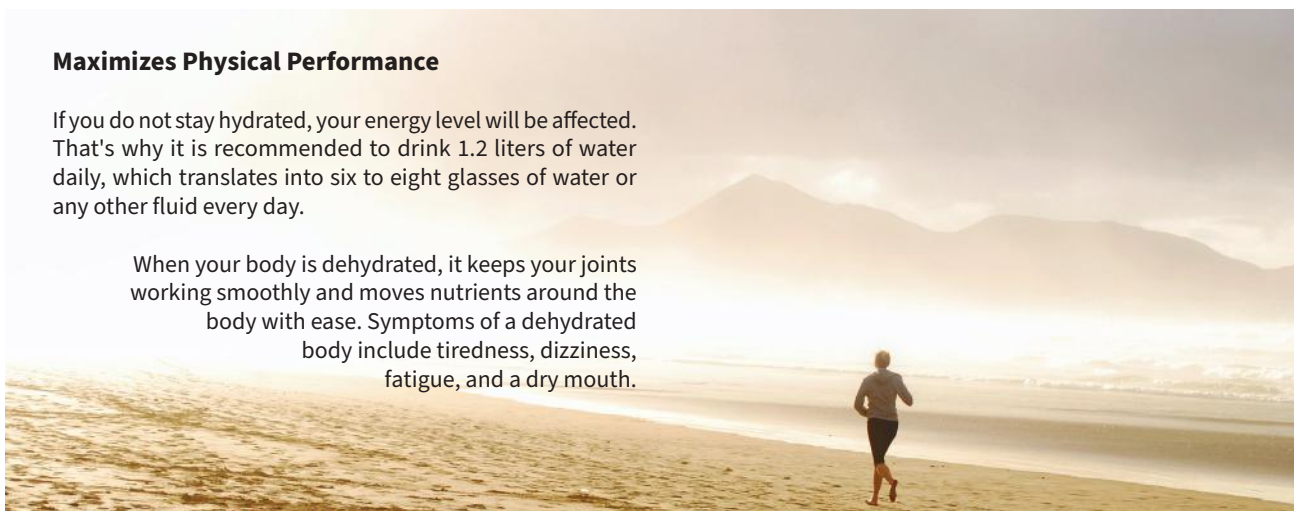
It is a question that has puzzled many: “How much water should we be drinking every day?” Granted, we do not necessarily feel thirsty all the time; that is especially relevant if we do not live in a tropical country. When symptoms of dehydration occur, they can initially be hard to spot; nevertheless, over time, they can take a toll on the mind and body.

So, are there really any benefits to drinking water? If you are in doubt, consider six benefits of drinking water to keep you hydrated and support your physical and mental health.

Maximizes Physical Performance

If you do not stay hydrated, your energy level will be affected. That's why it is recommended to drink 1.2 liters of water daily, which translates into six to eight glasses of water or any other fluid every day.

When your body is dehydrated, it keeps your joints working smoothly and moves nutrients around the body with ease. Symptoms of a dehydrated body include tiredness, dizziness, fatigue, and a dry mouth.



Prevents Hangovers

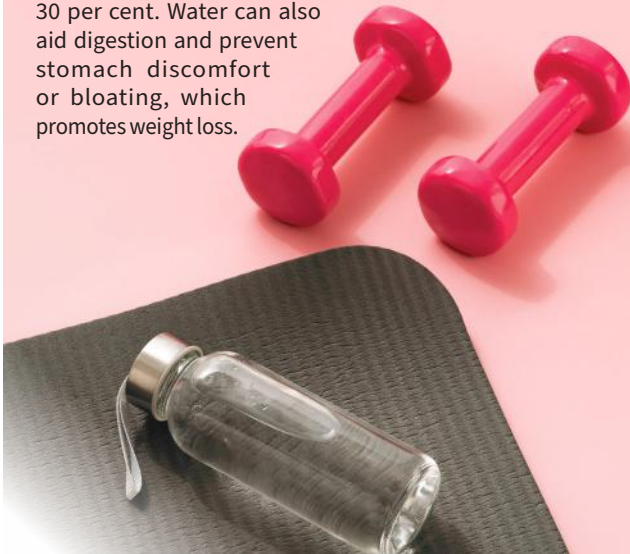
A hangover is an unpleasant symptom that occurs when you drink too much alcohol. Even though symptoms of a hangover can disappear within 24 hours, water relieves it faster. A smart way to reduce the symptoms of a hangover is to drink a glass of water between drinks and have at least one big glass before going to bed.



Can Aid in Weight Loss

Water can help you burn more calories, that is especially relevant if you are trying to lose weight. Water aids the digestive system, it prevents constipation, flushes toxins from the body, and promotes good kidney function.

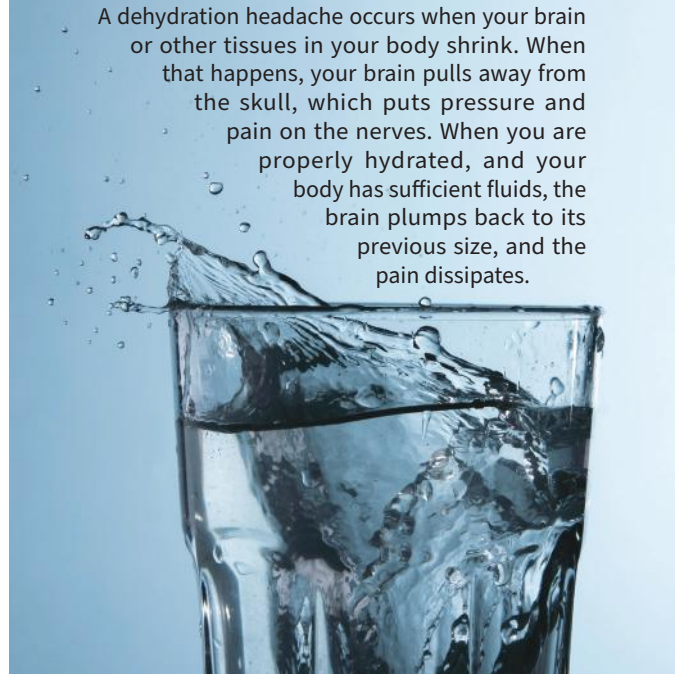
A study published in 2003 found that switching from drinking cold water to hot water could increase weight loss remarkably. 500 ml of water before a meal increases metabolism by 30 per cent. Water can also aid digestion and prevent stomach discomfort or bloating, which promotes weight loss.



Prevents Headaches

When your body is deprived of water, it can cause headaches that are hard to relieve. Research shows that headaches are the most common symptom of dehydration. While water might not solve headaches, it can help prevent and fight them.

A dehydration headache occurs when your brain or other tissues in your body shrink. When that happens, your brain pulls away from the skull, which puts pressure and pain on the nerves. When you are properly hydrated, and your body has sufficient fluids, the brain plumps back to its previous size, and the pain dissipates.



Treats Kidney Stones

Drinking a sufficient amount of water can flush out toxins and kidney stones from the body. A kidney stone is made of tiny crystals, which can block the flow of urine and cause infection, kidney damage, and even failure. When you drink enough water, you increase the volume of urine passing through the kidneys. This dilutes the concentration of minerals, so they crystallize less and do not form clumps.

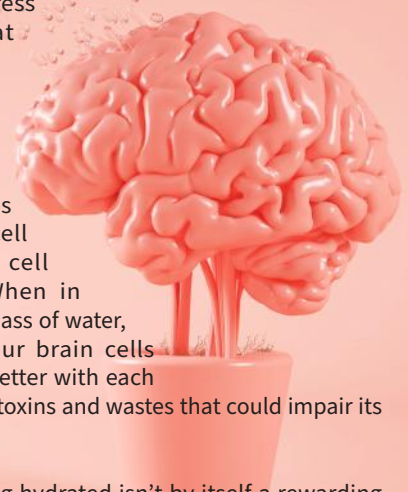


Boosts Brain Function

Water plays a pivotal role in boosting the functions of the brain. For starters, it helps the brain produce neurotransmitters and hormones, which lowers the level of cortisol in the body. Cortisol is a stress hormone that optimizes the blood sugar level and repairs body tissue.

It also promotes overall brain cell function and cell production. When in doubt, have a glass of water, it will help your brain cells communicate better with each other and clear toxins and wastes that could impair its function.

Although staying hydrated isn't by itself a rewarding experience, nothing beats the blissful feeling of a cold glass of water on a hot summer's day. Regardless of what you are drinking, satiation is a satisfying experience! ♦



Hair Care Products to Avoid During Pregnancy

by Jennifer M. Williams

Pregnancy is a special time in a woman's life, when she needs to pay extra attention to her health and overall well-being. It includes being mindful of the products she uses, including hair care products. While most hair care products are safe for use during pregnancy, some contain ingredients that can potentially harm the developing fetus. This blog discusses various hair care products to avoid during pregnancy, to help expectant mothers make informed choices for their hair care routines.

Hair Dyes with Harmful Chemicals

Many hair dyes contain chemicals -- such as ammonia, peroxide, and PPD (p-Phenylenediamine) -- that are absorbed through the scalp and into the bloodstream. While research on the safety of hair dye during pregnancy is limited, avoiding it during the first trimester when the baby's organs are forming is advisable. Opt for ammonia-free and natural hair dyes if you must colour your hair, in a well-ventilated area.



Chemical Hair-Straightening Treatments

Chemical hair-straightening treatments like keratin contain formaldehyde or other harsh chemicals that can pose risks during pregnancy; the fumes emitted during the treatment can be harmful when inhaled. Consider using heat-free methods to straighten your hair, like using a flat iron on a low setting or choose a safer alternative, like a blowout.

Hair Relaxers

Hair relaxers contain strong chemicals, like sodium hydroxide or calcium hydroxide, that penetrate the scalp and potentially affect the fetus. These chemicals sometimes cause scalp irritation and discomfort. Instead, embrace your natural hair texture during pregnancy, or explore non-chemical alternatives for managing your hair.

High-Intensity Scalp Treatments

Avoid scalp treatments that cause intense tingling, or with strong menthol or salicylic acid. These ingredients can be absorbed through the scalp and may lead to adverse reactions. Opt for gentler, natural scalp treatments that won't irritate your skin.

Hair Spray with High VOCs

Hair sprays that contain high levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) release harmful fumes into the air, potentially affecting

indoor air quality. It is best to use hair sprays labelled "low VOC" or "VOC-free" -- to minimize exposure to potentially harmful chemicals.

Hair Loss and Regrowth Products with Minoxidil

Some hair loss and regrowth products contain minoxidil, an FDA-approved medication for hair loss. While minoxidil is safe when used as directed, it's advisable to consult with your healthcare provider before using such products during pregnancy, for guidance based on your specific condition.

Retinoid-based Shampoos

This product is commonly used for its anti-aging and acne-fighting properties and has potential risks to the developing fetus. Retinoids, derivatives of Vitamin A, can lead to congenital disabilities and other complications if absorbed through the scalp and into the bloodstream.

Phthalates

Phthalates originate from chemicals commonly used as plasticizers and are found in many hair care products. The ingredients can disrupt endocrine function and various reproductive and developmental issues. Pregnant women must carefully read labels and choose phthalate-free hair care products to minimize exposure.

Parabens

Parabens are a preservative in many hair care products. These chemicals can mimic estrogen and disrupt hormonal balance, which may affect fetal development and increase the risk of developmental and reproductive issues. Parabens are readily absorbed through the skin and can accumulate in the body, posing a potential threat to both the mother and the unborn child.

Strong Fragrance Hair Products

Hair products with strong fragrances may trigger nausea or odour sensitivity, which are typical pregnancy symptoms. Consider fragrance-free or lightly-scented hair care products to prevent discomfort.

Embrace a more natural and gentle approach to hair care during this time, and remember that your well-being is the top priority. ♦

12 Science-Based Ways to Reduce Cravings

by Jerri Lyons

Food cravings resemble an intense desire to immediately consume a specific substance. They can strike at any time of the day and can be triggered by even a faint fragrance of a particular ingredient. Cravings are extremely common, and typically encourage individuals to desire processed foods that are high in sugar, salt, and unhealthy fats. As

these elements are tasty, they are easy to eat, but ultimately increase adverse health effects on the consumer. While munching on a salty snack or savory sweet on occasion is relatively harmless, one must enforce strong boundaries around their eating patterns to prevent unhealthy habits. Since cravings bring a person only temporary satisfaction, here are twelve scientifically proven solutions to prevent your belly from ruling your body.

Put Your Cravings to Sleep

Individuals who sleep less than seven hours per night are at an increased risk of making poor nutritional choices, as they tend to seek energy through substances that are higher in calories. Even one night of poor sleep can elevate a person's ghrelin levels, which is a hormone that tells your brain that it's hungry. Poor sleeping patterns also affect the way an individual's brain responds to the sight (or thought) of food, leading to an increased likelihood of overeating. If you want to watch your waistline, try sleeping for a minimum of 7-8 hours per night.

Quench your Thirst

Water is vital to our health, and staying hydrated helps bring nutrients to cells, excrete waste, protect joints and organs, and maintain body temperature. Drinking more water has been known to reduce cravings and aid in weight loss, as it suppresses your appetite and boosts your metabolism. As such, the recommended dosage for adults is between 2.7 and 3.7 liters per day. Fill up with water and wash the cravings away.

Consider Carbs

It's unwise to completely eliminate carbohydrates from your diet, as they help to fuel your brain, kidneys, heart muscles, and central nervous system. Their bulk and fiber content also helps manage weight control by filling you up with fewer calories, ultimately dissuading you from grabbing an after-dinner treat.

Slim Down on Stressors

Stress is known to induce cravings; when high levels of cortisol are released into the body, one's desire for high-calorie comfort foods skyrockets. When the body is stressed, it stores digested food as fat, which often leads to weight gain. While life is unpredictable, there are several efficient methods to help subdue stress, including journalling, meditation, and talk therapy. Such techniques also provide durable solutions to help cope with life's ups and downs.

Out of Sight, Out of Mind

As it can be hard to resist temptation, try placing unhealthy foods that you crave in hard-to-reach places.

Pack-on Protein

A lack of protein in one's diet can cause a person to feel weak, tired, and moody. Low protein levels often manifest as sugar cravings, as the body attempts to sustain healthy blood sugar levels. Rather than resorting to a quick fix (like a chocolate bar or a soda), try grabbing a protein shake, a cup of unbuttered popcorn, or a handful of nuts (like almonds) to restrain your urge. Such snacks are convenient (in that they do not require much effort to prepare), and also provide higher nutritional benefits, with little or no sugar.

Carry Chewing Gum

Chewing on gum can help reduce cravings and suppress one's appetite, as it simultaneously keeps your mouth and mind occupied.

Portion Control

By allowing yourself to enjoy the foods you love (in modest doses), you reduce the risk of binge-eating, while also controlling your cravings. In addition, once you begin portioning your favourite foods, you will likely feel satisfied with smaller servings.

Endorphins Overeating

Exercise provides both short- and long-term effects on an individual's appetite, with even one session of high-intensity interval training reducing the desire for high-calorie foods. A simple thirty-minute walk will allow your brain to release endorphins (known as the 'happy chemical') – as such, a fickle energy boost is no longer necessary.

Reputable Rewards

It is easy to want to reward one's self after a hard day's work. However, rather than resorting to tempting treats when settling in for the evening, try seeking alternative ways of satisfying yourself. Some healthier solutions include taking a bath, reading a book, watching a movie, or visiting a friend.

Destructive Dieting

Deliberately postponing eating can result in serious consequences – not only does your stomach shrink, but your blood sugar levels drop, and your body will crave high-energy foods (containing heavy volumes of sugar or salt) to return these levels to normal. However, when your blood sugar levels are stable, you are less likely to crave a 'quick fix'. ♦

Improve Your Well-Being With Practical Strength Training Exercises

by Rob Shapiro

It's not unusual for people to feel more relaxed and confident post-workout. A regular workout routine can boost your self-esteem and may lower depression and anxiety, contributing greatly to your general well-being.

Strength training, also called weight training or resistance training, is no exception. Adopting a practical strength training routine can improve your well-being and make you feel more alert, strong, and ready to tackle anything that comes your way.



What is Strength Training?

Strength training is a type of exercise that can improve one's strength and endurance. A wide range of exercises, like deadlifts and yoga, fall under this category. These exercises cause your muscle mass to grow by contracting against a force of resistance, such as your body weight, a medicine ball, or dumbbells, to name a few.

Strength Train to Boost Your Confidence and Lower Anxiety

Most people feel accomplished after completing a workout built around strength training exercises, and might even be less concerned with simply dropping pounds. This is in addition to the other health benefits of strength training, such as feeling energized, less achy, and stronger. Many can also experience less anxiety, and it is one method to combat depression and other mental health issues.

6 Strength Training Exercises to Improve Well-Being

Try these strength training exercises if your goal is to look and feel better. Each is practical, and most people can do them with a low risk of injury.

1. Pull-ups

Most people know what a pull-up is or have tried to do one, but many don't do it properly or understand its positive impact on their well-being. This upper-body exercise uses several muscles in the arms and back, but its true power lies in the fact that most people do not believe they can do it.

Practicing pull-ups by starting with assisted pull-ups (which means using a partner or assisted pull-up machine) can get you doing them on your own in no time, and this accomplishment will fill you with newfound confidence and more self-esteem.

2. Glute Bridges

Feeling good about your body is one path to improving your health and happiness. The muscles in your buttocks are called glutes, and strengthening them can reduce the likelihood of certain injuries and lower back pain.

Glute bridges are an exercise where you lay on your back on a mat, squeeze your butt cheeks together, and then lift your rear until you are in a bridge position. Then, lower yourself and release and repeat the exercise. By successfully working your glutes, you can feel more eager and confident to work out for longer.

3. Walking lunges

Walking lunges work your glutes and legs. By strengthening these muscles, walking, running, and playing many sports becomes easier. Lunges can be done with or without weights like dumbbells or kettlebells.

This simple strength-training exercise is good for most adults, seniors, or those with limited mobility. It can make you break a sweat without over-exerting yourself, and you can even do it at home before you leave for work. Doing so can make you feel more self-assured and improve your mood throughout the day.

4. Squats

A squat is a popular strength exercise in which you lower your hips from standing, and lift back up. This is a great way to exercise your hips and knees. You can do this in your living room and use a chair if you need help.

Squats can help tone and strengthen your muscles while providing some much-needed stress relief.

5. Yoga

Who doesn't love yoga? Yoga is a discipline that involves physical, spiritual, and mental practices that can be traced back to ancient India. Not only are many yoga poses considered to be legitimate strength training exercises, but they can clear one's mind and help reduce stress. It's a calm and gentle way to exercise, and enhance your well-being.

Yoga poses that can be part of your practical strength training routine include plank pose, dolphin pose, malasana, tree pose, and chair pose.

6. Swimming

Swimming might be the best strength training exercise. It builds strength and is an intense cardio workout, even if you're only doing light laps. Swimming is also a great way to cool down, reset from a hectic day, and feel more alert.

Starting or ending your day with a swim can be a real game-changer for your well-being and mental health.



Introduce Strength Training to your Well-Being

Start a daily strength training routine as part of your commitment to your well-being, and experience positive results. Not only will your body be stronger and limber, but you'll feel more relaxed and might even notice that you have a more positive mood.

Ultimately, everyone who can do strength training should adopt a routine to enhance their health and well-being. ♦



Photo courtesy of Kim Thúy

Kim Thúy

Breaking language barriers, and connecting culture

by Hermione Ruan

Aclaimed Vietnamese-Canadian author Kim Thúy lived many lives as a translator, restaurateur, and lawyer before embarking on the journey of a writer. She earned a bachelor's degree in linguistics and translation from Université de Montréal in 1990, and her knowledge of different languages offers a unique perspective on life, and the stories she tells.

Having found roots in Montréal via Malaysia during the Vietnamese refugee crisis of the 1970s, Thúy has written a number of semiautobiographical works, including her debut 2010 novel *Ru*, a poetic tale told in vignette form, for which she received the Governor General's Award for French-language fiction in 2010. Her most recent book, *Em*, explores the profoundness of love.

Thúy took some time out of her busy schedule to speak with *Elixuer* about her work as a writer, her most recent book, and the power of language.

As someone who is multilingual, how does that affect your writing as you use words and phrases from different languages in a single text?

One feeds the other. Yes, translation exists, but each language carries a culture. It's not so much about the words, but the culture behind it that we can't translate.

In Vietnamese, there're many forms of the verb "to love." You have the word for the love for your parents, another for the love between spouses, another for cakes, and friends, and a dog, for example. One word for passionate love. We don't have that in French or English, so how can you translate that?

When I write the word *aimer* in French, I know the nuances — more than just the word *aimer* — so I would add the adverb *amoureusement*. *Aimer amoureusement* means "love passionately." If I didn't know the word in Vietnamese, I would not have seen the nuances in French to add that *amoureusement*.

What do you find about your writing that resonates most with readers and critics?

I think each person would read the

book differently. For example, *Ru* here in Québec is read like a mirror, reflecting the Québécois who welcomed us. In Italy, they thought that it was the voice of an immigrant that the reader wanted to hear. Romanians and Vietnamese share a Communist past, so that spoke to them. Then in Spain, surprisingly, it was women's issues or heroism.

I think maybe because it's so simple, like plain yogurt, to which you can add anything to make it taste good, but it's actually what you add to it that makes it good! I think I'm just plain yogurt, and the reader would add their own experience.

Before you pursued writing, you were a restaurateur in Montréal, and you published a cookbook. Do you see any parallels between writing and cooking?

Cooking is about finding the balance between the ingredients, and writing is finding that balance between the words. I am a word lover. When you love words, you want all of them out there, right? You have to find the rhythm, the musicality of those words together, and the balance between them. We can love sugar, but if we put too much sugar, then we can feel sick.

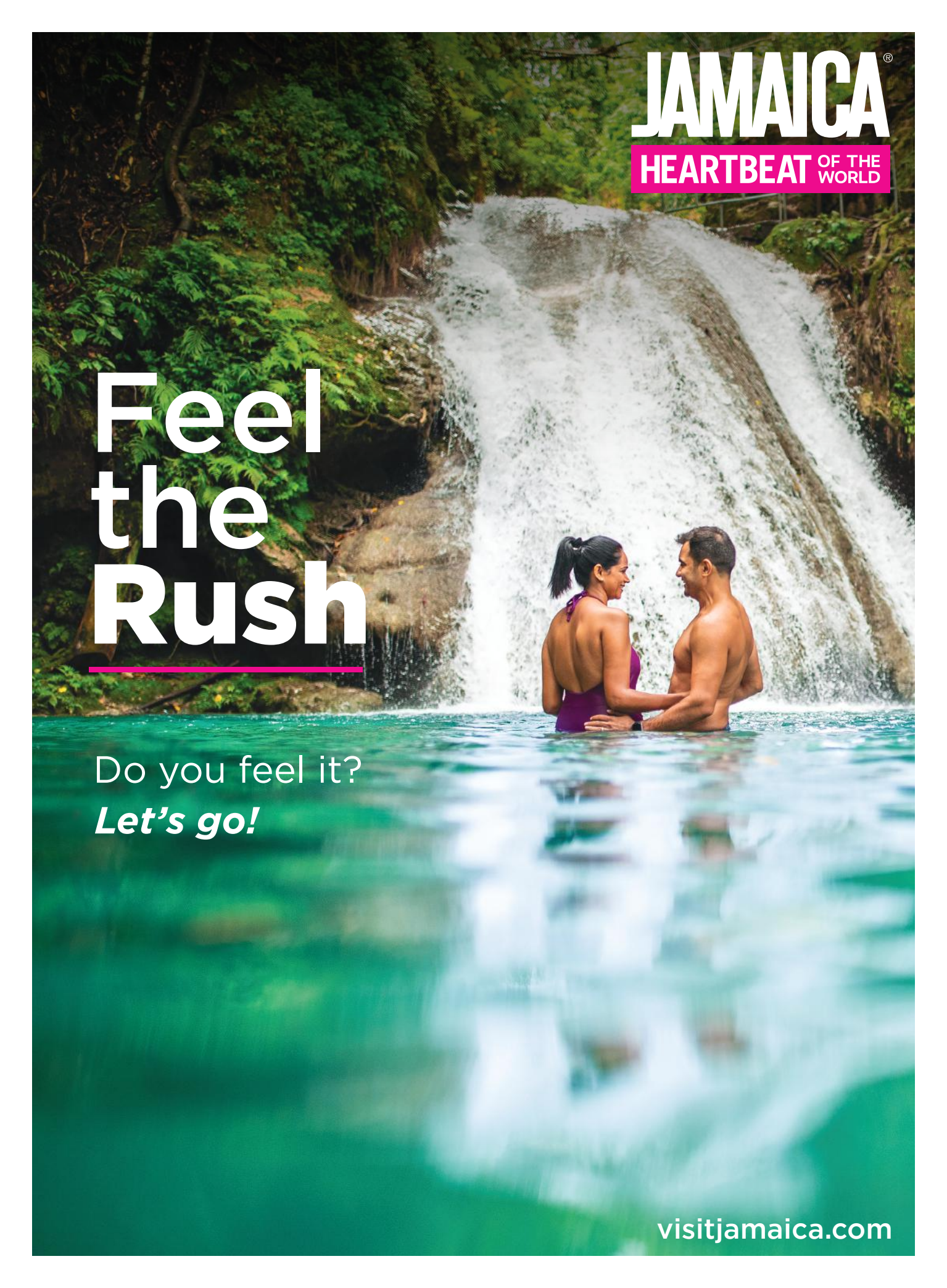
The balance to find is delicate. I think a great meal is a meal that you can say that you are blessed that you get to eat such a great dish, and a book is the same thing.

Can you tell us about your most recent book, *Em*? What is the meaning behind the title?

In Vietnamese, we don't have personal pronouns. *Em* means a younger brother or a younger sister, and it came to me because Ocean Vuong's book of poetry — the first one — got published here in Québec. The publisher wrote to me and asked me to write the foreword. I told him that I don't know how to write forewords.

It was two in the morning when he sent it to me. He said, "Well, whatever. Enjoy. Read it. You don't have to do anything." I read it. I cried the whole night. I didn't go to bed. I wrote the foreword right away, and I started with "*Em*" because he's much younger than me. I couldn't bring myself to call him Ocean because we're both Vietnamese, and I was sure that he has a Vietnamese name as well. Right away, I felt like I was the aunt or the big sister.

Em is so nice. You feel protected when you're being called *em*. And *aime* in French is the imperative form for the verb "to love" — *aimer*. ♦

A romantic couple stands waist-deep in a crystal-clear turquoise pool at the base of a cascading waterfall. The woman, with her hair in a ponytail and wearing a purple swimsuit, and the man, shirtless, are facing each other and smiling. The waterfall is surrounded by dense, vibrant green tropical foliage. The scene is captured in a cinematic style with soft lighting.

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