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PASSEÓA23 (detail)
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120 x 120 cm

HTSI

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2023

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PHOTOGRAPHS: ANNA HUIX, BILLAL TARIGHT, FELIX BRÜGGEMANN



GIORGIO ARMANI

OPENING SHOT

SUNDAY BEST

Portraits of Baptist churchgoers form part of a book exploring black cultural identities

Photographer Dario Calmese was at an Abyssinian Baptist Church service looking for hats to photograph when he first saw the vintage fashion collector Lana Turner. Struck by her style and poise, he decided to make Turner his sole subject instead. The resulting photographs, taken between 2012 and 2016, now form part of *As We See It*, a new book that brings together 30 artists, including Campbell Addy and Nadine Ijewere, who are interested in exploring different narratives around black cultural identities. For the series, Calmese styled and photographed Turner in her own collection of silk brocade gowns, vintage furs and leather gloves. By focusing on the cut of a trouser leg, the curve of the waist or the fall of a sleeve, Calmese evokes Dior's hyper-feminine midcentury New Look – working to “repopulate the landscape of black imagery and understanding that's been told to us”, he writes. **BAYA SIMONS**

As We See It: Artists Redefining Black Identity by Aida Amoako is published by Laurence King Publishing at £30

Right: *Amongst Friends No 29*, 2012, by Dario Calmese



CONTRIBUTORS



PETER ASPDEN

The former *FT* arts editor showed little interest in cars until he heard Bruce Springsteen sing: “All the redemption I can offer, girl, is beneath this dirty hood”, and suspected there was transcendence to be found in the turning of a steering wheel. Prompted by the sale of a historic Mercedes-Benz for a record €135mn last year, he secured access to the car maker’s “Holy Halls”, which contain an example of every car the company has ever produced.



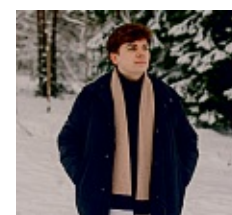
LAUREN INDVIK

Along with overseeing style coverage, the *FT*'s fashion editor also writes the Fashion Matters newsletter and a column for the paper's House & Home section. In this issue she selects the five new pieces of clothing she will be limiting herself to buying this year. “Writing the story made me realise how much I am over-consuming and what, to me, an ethical wardrobe looks like: one that sits within planetary boundaries and is kind to animals.”



ANNA HUIX

The photographer recently visited the Karakoram mountains in Pakistan for her first short documentary film about a group of girls using football to fight for gender equality. This week she captured Benjamin Pech and Ignasi Monreal, who are staging the ballet *La Bayadère* in Rome. “Around midday, everyone painting the set disappeared and I found them eating pasta and drinking wine in the pigment room. Such a beautiful Italian postcard!”



PETER FLUDE

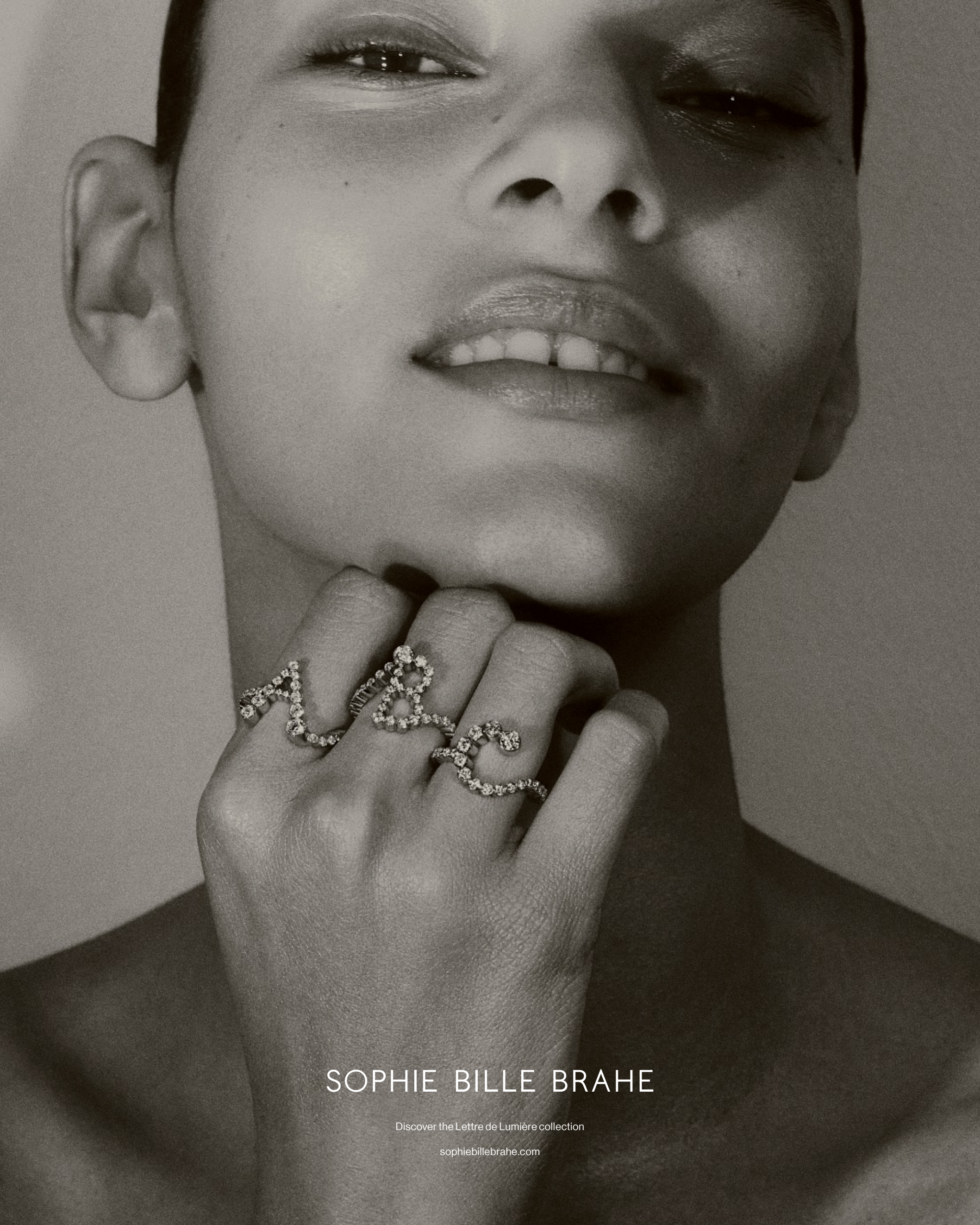
Flude first found his love of photography in the forests of Sweden as a child. He began by focusing his camera on places, but now captures people and their relationships with the environment. For this week's How To Spend It In... he shot artists Annie Morris and Idris Khan at an antiques market in Petworth. “I noticed some traditional Swedish furniture that was identical to some my grandmother had – it made the shoot particularly nostalgic,” he says.





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I first heard about the *Heilige Hallen* at the *FT Business of Luxury* summit last spring. In the aftermath of an historic auction at Sotheby's at which a 1955 Mercedes-Benz 300 SLR Uhlenhaut Coupé had gone for a record €135mn, the place was giddy with talk about the most expensive car ever sold. Even more exciting, the car, which had been put up for sale by Mercedes-Benz to raise money for a scholarship fund for research into environmental science and "decarbonisation", was one of two. The other prototype had been stored in one of a series of warehouses held by the car manufacturer around Stuttgart, a magical repository of every model Mercedes-Benz has made.

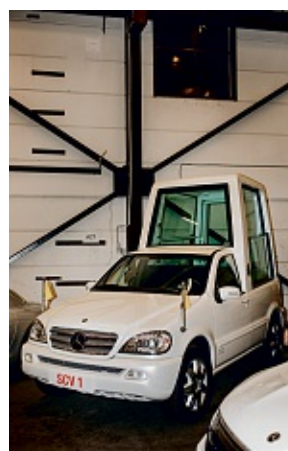
I immediately asked the Mercedes representative if we might be permitted a rare visit. The company keeps pretty schtum about its extraordinary collection, which includes everything from the Uhlenhaut Coupé to roadsters, F1 cars and the original 12-cylinder W125 vehicle driven by Rudolf Caracciola to break the world-speed record on a public road in January 1938.

Peter Aspden visited late last year to get the grand tour and drive a couple of the archived motors. Standing among the stacked matchbox-style supercar containers, he likens the experience to being granted a solitary moment to admire the Sistine Chapel (page 38). For me, it's the curios that really make the visit special: yes, the halls contain such wonders as the beige automobile driven in 1984 by a then-unknown Ayrton Senna, but I am more tickled by the discovery of a trio of Popemobiles in a corner, including the 2002 ML 430, with raised roof, that carried Pope John Paul II.

After so many petrol fumes, we need some greenery. Clare Coulson looks at the ongoing trend for indoor plants that took off in 2020 but has shown no sign of slowing since (page 34). I spent last weekend foraging around London trying to boost my green credentials – although I'm more a fan of ferns and orchids than of the big blousy bananas, monstera and philodendrons that make up the current jungle craze. On which note, I have long fought a losing battle

to nurture orchids beyond a few weeks of survival, but two have been quite happily reflowering of late. Buoyed, I've since added to my orchid collection with moth and jewel varieties. No doubt such hubris will come to haunt me: the little feckers will surely die instantly.

Lastly, how many new pieces of clothing do you purchase in a year? For many *FT* subscribers, it seems the



Top left: Henstead Exotic Garden in Suffolk (page 34). Top right: PDPAOLA Super Nova earrings, £90 (page 29). Above: *FT* fashion editor Lauren Indvik (page 36). Left: the 2002 Mercedes-Benz ML 430 "Popemobile" modified for Pope John Paul II (page 38)

answer is very few. Since I have been at the paper, readers have delighted in telling me about their frugal habits, their ancient overcoats and the shoes they diligently resole every year. It turns out these careful types are very much in fashion. According to the Hot Or Cool Institute, a Berlin-based think tank, in order to limit global temperatures from rising we should be buying no more than five new garments a year. It's an idea that chimes with the "buy less, buy better" maxim championed by Vivienne Westwood, the designer and environmental campaigner who died in late December, and it seems especially pertinent in 2023.

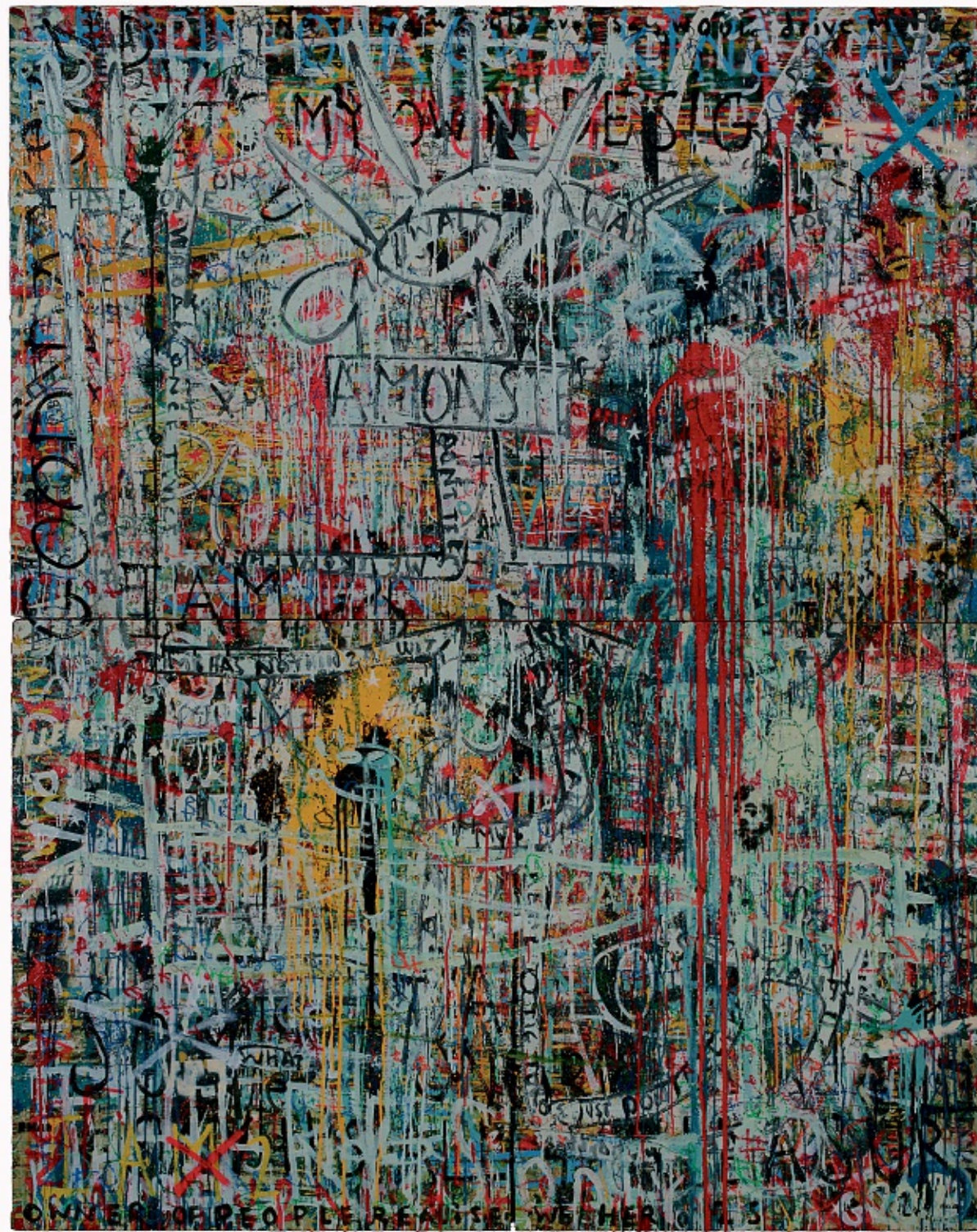
Lauren Indvik, the *FT's* fashion editor, has happily signed up to take the challenge. In "My low-buy wardrobe" (page 36) she writes about her commitment to shop judiciously. As well as suggesting brands that offer ethical choices, she's also compiled a list of the more versatile pieces she plans to incorporate into her wardrobe this year.

Shamefully, it's too late for me to sign up to the low-buy wardrobe: I've already hit the five-item threshold and it's only February. That said, I do try to shop from brands where the supply chain is more accountable. And unless the moths get to them first, each piece of clothing is considered a forever piece. But, try as I might, I can't resist the occasional splurge of retail therapy. Shopping is still a lot of fun. Maybe the solution is a barter system? We can share a mutual clothing fund. You can keep your threadbare coat and sweaters, and I'll use your quota to buy some silly shoes. ■HTSI

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Neale Howells, *Its My Own Design*, 2001/2022
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Frédéric Panaïotis

The chef de cave of Ruinart champagne loves free-diving, Blue Note jazz and Berluti jackets

INTERVIEW BY ALICE LASCELLES
PHOTOGRAPHY BY LUCAS LEHMANN

Above: Frédéric Panaïotis at home in Reims



A LITTLE GLASS OF
VEP CHARTREUSE TASTES
LIKE ETERNITY



Above centre: Piet Hein Eek recycled wood boxes for Ruinart Blanc de Blancs. Above right: cacti and a succulent with his De Beers bracelet. Above: a 36-month Parmigiano cheese and Microplane grater. Right: his sitting room with (on wall) *Happy Days* by Robert Pelles



MY PERSONAL STYLE SIGNIFIER is a simple little bracelet given to me by De Beers when I did a tasting for them in London, which never leaves my wrist. It's a black- and white-gold coin strung on a black thread, with a tiny diamond encapsulated in it – it feels hard to get at, which I like.

THE LAST THING I BOUGHT AND LOVED was *Sunday at the Village Vanguard* by the Bill Evans Trio on vinyl, at a vintage book and record store in Reims.

THE PLACE THAT MEANS A LOT TO ME are the chalk *crayères* where we cellar our champagne in Reims. When you are in them, 30m underground, you feel totally out of this world – it's quiet, it's dark, you can smell the humid chalk. I close my eyes and think back to a time, centuries ago, when people were digging out the chalk by hand, or even further back, 70 million years, to a time when they were under the ocean. It's like being in a time machine.

THE BEST SOUVENIR I'VE BROUGHT HOME is a little Day of the Dead diorama I bought when I was on vacation in Tulum. I am really interested in how Mexicans look at death. The way they do it is more joyful; there's more colour. It's a way of coming together, rather than a lamentation.

THE THING I COULDN'T DO WITHOUT is my morning coffee – two shots of Arpeggio Nespresso. If I don't have that, I'm grumpy.

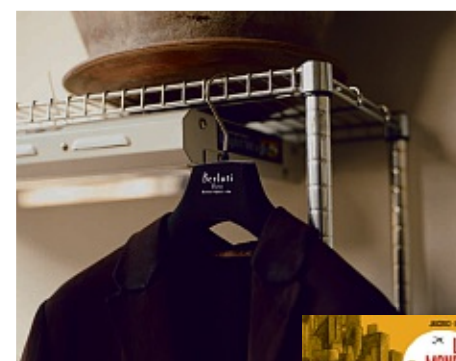
THE BEST BOOK I'VE READ IN THE PAST YEAR is a graphic novel called *Le Monde sans Fin*, which is about the finite resources of the earth. Written by the engineer and climate expert Jean-Marc Jancovici and illustrator Christophe Blain, it highlights what impact our life has on the planet and what we should do to reduce our impact personally and globally. Honestly, you read it and you question yourself. After I read it I bought copies for my 27-year-old daughter and everyone in the Ruinart management team.

THE PODCAST I'M LISTENING TO is *59 Rue des Archives* on the French radio station TSF Jazz. In each episode a group of three presenters tell the story of a jazz musician, or an album or a period in jazz. It's very cool. I like to listen to it while I'm cooking Sunday lunch.

MY STYLE ICON is the French actor Jean Dujardin – he has what I'd call *chic decontracté*. He's always well-dressed but not ostentatiously.

THE BEST GIFT I'VE GIVEN RECENTLY is a leather-bound notebook I gave to my mum, who is 92, so she can record her life and her memories. There are a few things I would like to learn from her but it's probably easier for her to write it all down than to speak about it.

AND THE BEST GIFT I'VE RECEIVED is a beautiful painting by my fiancée Vineta. It's an abstract oil on canvas in different shades



Above: his Berluti jacket. Right: the best book he has read in the past year



of blue. I like to think it's me free-diving, but it could be other things. It hangs at the end of my bed so it's the last thing I see when I go to sleep and the first thing I see when I wake up.

THE LAST MUSIC I BOUGHT was "Dig Dis" by jazz saxophonist Hank Mobley – I love jazz from that '50s and '60s Blue Note era.

I HAVE A COLLECTION OF succulents – I've owned as many as 80 at one time. I like them because they are like cats – they need care but they don't need care. The flowers they produce sometimes only last one night because they take so much energy to produce. I have an *Aloe polyphylla* (spiral aloe) that is 50cm across – it's like a fractal picture. They take years to grow to that size.

IN MY FRIDGE YOU'LL ALWAYS FIND champagne, obviously. Parmesan for risotto. And lots of Japanese condiments – soy, ponzu and mirin.

I'VE RECENTLY DISCOVERED Croatia. I stayed at an amazing place in Jelsa, on the island of Hvar, called Plage Cachée – it's just five beautiful tents in a very secluded place on the rocky coastline, right next to the Adriatic sea. To get there you have to drive several kilometres down a long dirt road. You prepare all the food yourself, at this little outside kitchen next to the water. We cooked very simply; tomatoes and basil from the garden, olive oil and wines from the local market. You swim, read, contemplate nature. *myhvar.net*

THE LAST ITEM OF CLOTHING I ADDED TO MY WARDROBE was a beautiful chocolate-coloured Berluti jacket in cotton – the cut of their jackets is always incredible.

AN INDULGENCE I WOULD NEVER FORGO is a little glass of VEP Chartreuse [exceptionally long-aged Chartreuse] after a meal. It tastes like eternity. I'm in a group called Les Amis de Chartreuse with some chefs and champagne growers like Frédéric Savart, Rodolphe Péters and Alexandre Chartogne, and once a year we have lunch and open some special stuff. We even have a WhatsApp group to share our discoveries.

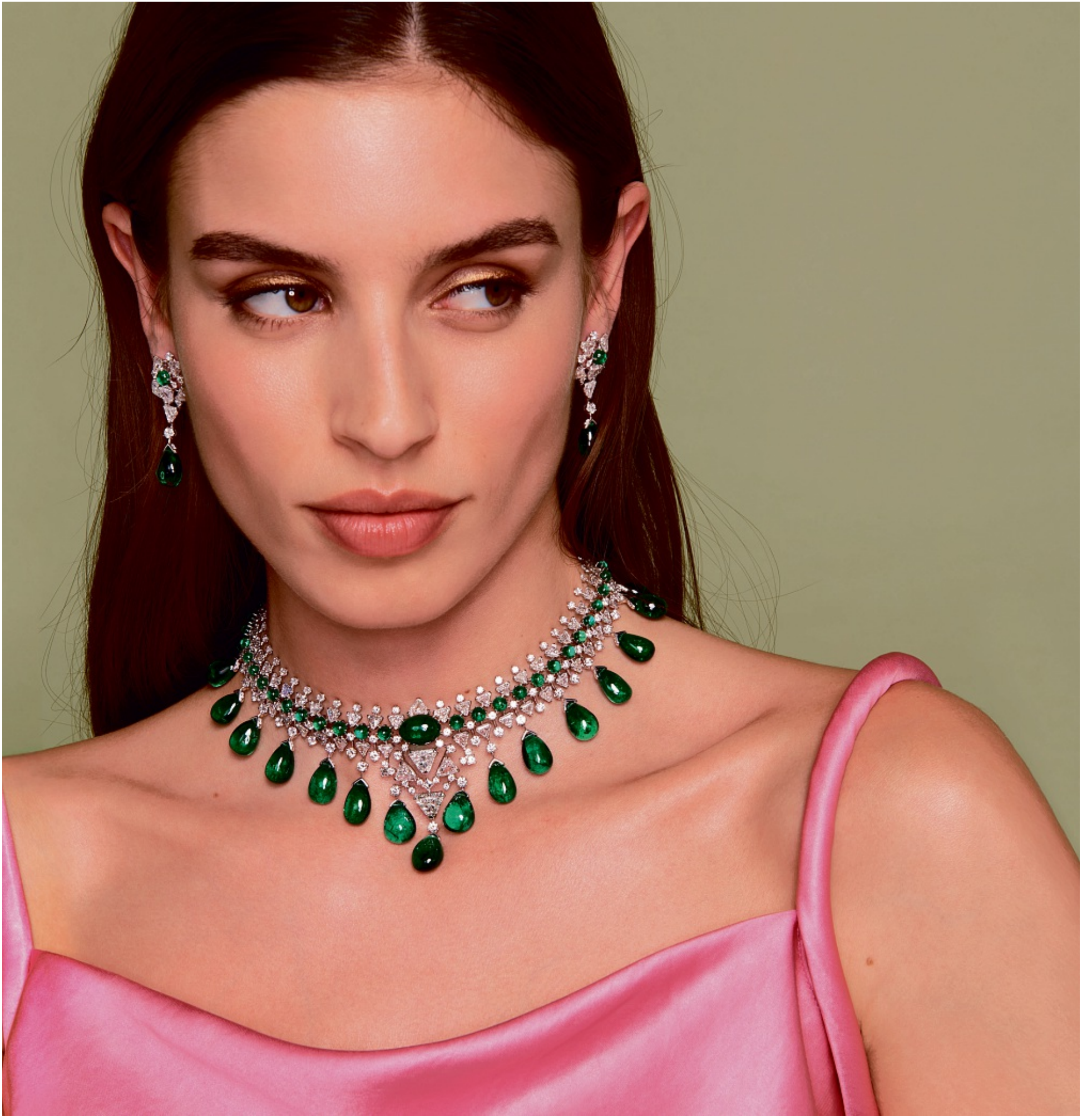
AN OBJECT I WOULD NEVER PART WITH is a pair of free-diving fins given to me by my fiancée. They're by the Greek company Alchemy and are extremely light and very comfortable. My favourite place to dive is Dahab in Egypt, in the Red Sea. It's like meditation in the water. ■ HTSI



ART DIR: PAUL MARCIANO PH: VICOOLYA & SAIDA © GUESS?, INC., 2023

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Right: *Keg Party Casanova*, 2021, by Karyn Lyons



ART

NEW ROMANCE

Contemporary painters are embracing modern love. *Louis Wise* couples up

The art of Karyn Lyons takes us back to a horribly familiar place. In the *New Yorker's* paintings, teenage girls embrace boys, or even ghosts, or sit longing in their bedrooms for love. Luscious and mysterious, sinister and romantic, these pictures are exorcisms of desire – of those days when all you could do was sit by the phone and hope you didn't miss the call.

"It's taken me this long to look back on those moments without shame or embarrassment or guilt," admits Lyons, now in her fifties. "I'm even embracing, now, the power those moments had. It's taken me a long time not to say: 'Oh, *God*. Remember that keg party?'"

Lyons is just one artist exploring ideas of love, intimacy and romance. Doron Langberg, about to take over Victoria Miro's booth at this month's Frieze LA, has become a star with his rich, frank depictions of queer relationships, as has Brooklyn-based Jenna Gribbon, who often paints her wife. Xinyi Cheng's pairings interact in starkly tonal landscapes, while

GaHee Park plays a more surrealist game.

"IT'S TAKEN ME THIS LONG TO LOOK BACK WITHOUT SHAME"

"I drew a lot as a child, and I was interested in images of the body and sexuality," says Seoul-born,

Montreal-based Park, who has a solo show at Tokyo's Galerie Perrotin until 25 February (paintings from \$35,000). "I'd make drawings of couples kissing and touching, or of fragmented body parts, then I would glue the drawings between two sheets of blank paper so adults didn't see them... I guess it's common, kids with Catholic upbringings, such as myself, getting naughty." It was entirely natural from an artist's perspective too. "Love and sexuality are sources of very strong and primitive emotions – they have been inspiring artworks for centuries."

Yet they've not been as prevalent recently as you might expect. For one thing, it's a minefield getting it right. "Love, sex and intimacy are fraught with all kinds of social and political issues," says Park. "If a contemporary artist were to ignore them and paint a simple scene of sex, the

PHOTOGRAPH: TURN GALLERY



intention may seem kitschy or a cop-out.” They can also not fit into current thinking, says Katerina Gregos, artistic director of the National Museum of Contemporary Art in Athens. In a show she has curated there, *Modern Love (or Love in the Age of Cold Intimacies)*, on until 28 May, artists explore the topic in the age of the internet.

“Today, issues of love mostly reside in the domain of commercial culture, in soap operas and romantic novellas,” says Gregos. “The art world is preoccupied with appearing serious and intellectually sophisticated – as if love does not merit serious intellectual interrogation.”

Langberg agrees. “Things that are beautiful and effeminate and sensitive, and are about feelings and desires, are kind of looked down on,” says the Israeli-born, Brooklyn-based painter. “For years, I really tried to fight against it – like it’s schmaltzy or kitschy. It’s uncool. But I think that the response to my work began to transform once I really leaned into it.”

LANGBERG HAS, IN FACT, gained huge traction for his often highly explicit portrayals of lovers and friends, with prices for his last show in London reaching \$80,000. Both this subject matter and his way of painting are “kind of indulgent and romantic”, he admits (he is fond of exuberant colours, with a special thing for

the rainbow palette). “It’s something I think about a lot when I wonder, ‘Is this too cheesy?’ Would it be less cheesy if it was an austere rectangle on top of another? Maybe. But is it worth it?”

Often the reaction to such works is visceral. “I had a studio visit the other day from a middle-aged man,” says Lyons. “He saw a picture and said, ‘I can feel how that felt.’ It was a couple embracing. That was the

“THINGS ABOUT DESIRES ARE LOOKED DOWN UPON”

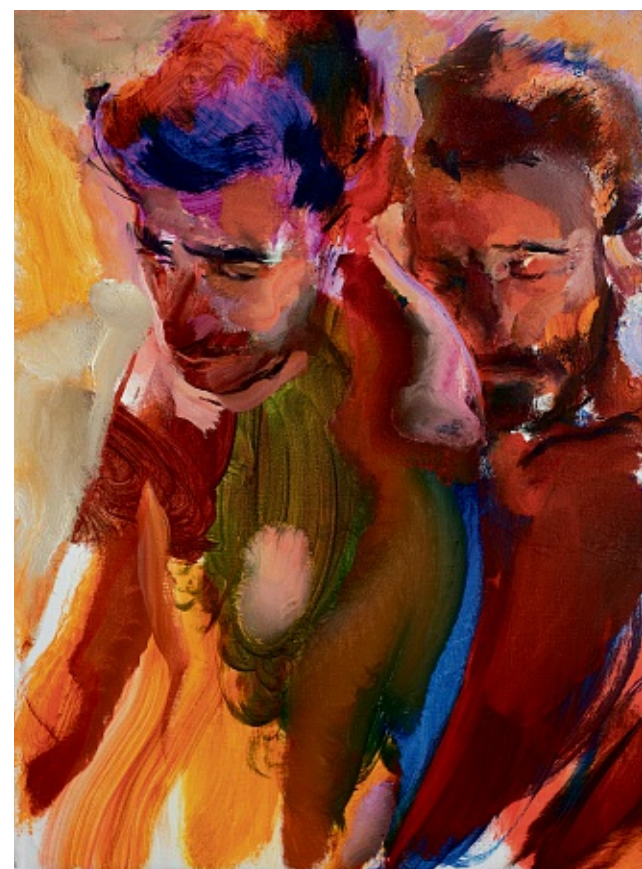
best thing anyone could say.” Similarly, a collector once told Langberg that his works felt “real”. “To me, that’s the most worthwhile endeavour,” he says. “I’m not that interested in creating something that exists in an ivory tower that very few people can relate to... I’m as basic as anyone else!”

Langberg always paints people from his life, but doesn’t want to be too specific on details. Xinyi Cheng tends to do the same because “I think I have a fair amount of understanding of how they would talk, how they would move their bodies, and what even the tiniest frown could possibly mean,” says the Wuhan-born painter, who just had a solo show at New York’s Matthew Marks.

The first painting she made exploring intimacy dates from 10 years ago, when she was a student in Baltimore. Two friends of hers who were dating told her they’d just got a haircut. “They meant that they went to the barbershop together, but in my head I imagined a picture of them, being naked and cutting each other’s hair,” says Cheng, who promptly painted it. “Since then, I have painted different intimate situations.”

She has mixed feelings about romance, though. “It’s kind of old-fashioned,” she levels. To her, there isn’t an exact translation of it in Chinese. However, even she can’t deny that it has influenced some of her paintings – and her life. “At moments, when I have a walk with my lover by the Seine at sunset, the idea of romance is still very present.” ■ HTSI

Above left: *The Haircut*, 2014, by Doron Langberg. Left: *Couple in a Field*, 2022, by GaHee Park. Below: *Friends*, 2022, by Doron Langberg



PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF XINYI CHENG AND MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY, NEW YORK. © DORON LANGBERG/ COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND VICTORIA MIRO. ERIC RUBIN/COURTESY OF GAHEE PARK AND PERROTIN

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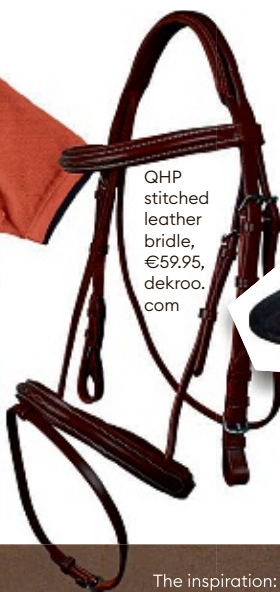
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QHP stitched leather bridle, €59.95, dekroo.com



CHARLES OWEN velvet riding helmet, £279

HERMÈS poly-mix and leather Swing Shabbelly jacket, £2,620



DEVOUCOUX leather Biarritz S saddle, from £3,950



The inspiration: *The Stallion*, 2018, by Axelle Costerousse



COLVILLE wool blanket, €450



SHOPPING

HORSE AROUND

Join the pony club this season, says *Aylin Bayhan*

POLO RALPH LAUREN wool pleated trousers, £245



DIOR wool and silk Brandenburg jacket, £4,200



SAPHIR Étalon Noir leather balm, €19.60, toutbrico.com



LOUIS VUITTON cashmere Sporty High Neck double-face cape, €3,800



LORO PIANA silk and cashmere poncho, £1,670



NEEM LONDON recycled nylon-mix shirt, £139



DURAZZI MILANO leather riding boots, €1,450, moteur-shopping.com



PDPAOLA gold-plated-silver Super Nova earrings, £90



TACKVILLE rubber horse race whip, £7.95



LEMIEUX horse hair and wood Heritage Dapple horse brush, £24.95



WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

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G SUEN STUDIO
WHITE-GOLD,
YELLOW-GOLD
TITANIUM, DIAMOND,
SAPPHIRE AND
PARAIBA MIDNIGHT
MAGNOLIA RING, POA

JEWELLERY

TO INFINITY AND BEYOND

From Nasa aerogel to VR design, technological innovations are liberating jewellery, says *Vivienne Becker*

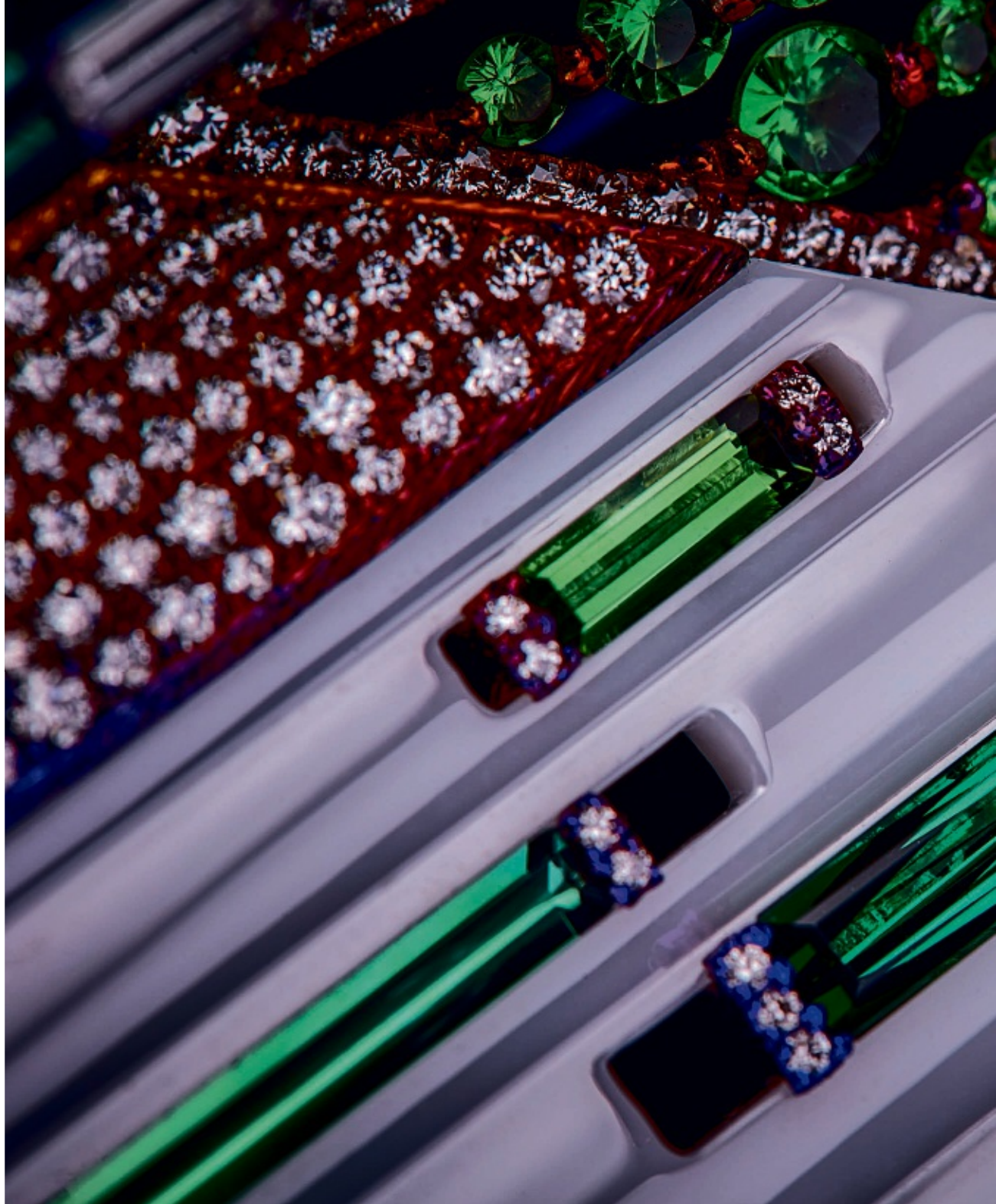
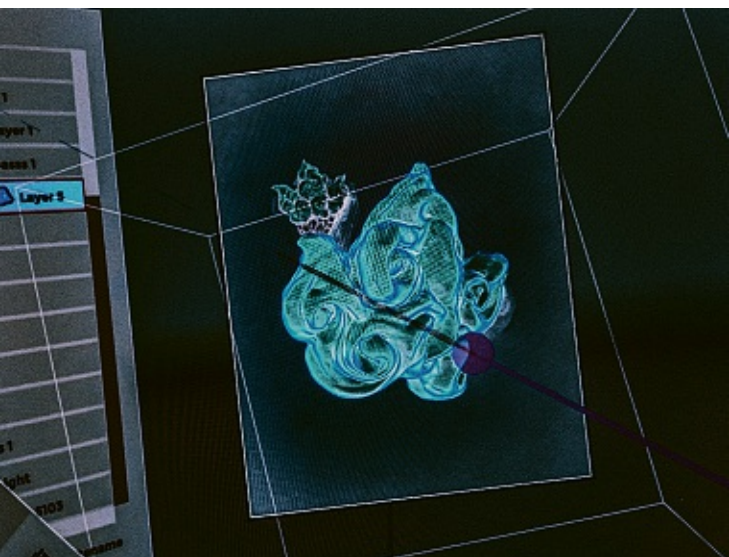
In an industry as ancient and deeply traditional as jewellery, change is anathema. Yet new and thrillingly high-tech innovations and space-age materials are radically transforming the look, feel and creative expressions of the jewel. Technical wizardry is liberating design, stimulating artistry, building previously unimaginable structures and revolutionising the jewellery universe.

Titanium, strong as steel and only 60 per cent denser than aluminium, with an ability to take on a spectrum of sensational colours, has brought unprecedented volume to jewels, particularly to earrings and brooches where weight is an issue. Identified in the 18th century, titanium was used in the US aerospace programme in the '50s, and made a brief appearance in '70s studio or "craft" jewellery, before becoming mainstream in the '90s.

Today, titanium is increasingly appearing in high jewellery, as in De Beers' The Alchemist of Light collection, injecting colour, texture and movement into diamond jewellery – with the help of aluminium, which is similarly light and subversively un-jewel-like. "This is the most creatively and technically ambitious collection we have ever conceived and crafted," says CEO Celine Assimon. Fabio Salini uses aluminium and diamonds to create his Helix earrings, pioneering a "torsion" technique



Above: BOGHOSSIAN white-gold, diamond and emerald Merveilles Icicle earrings, POA. Below: the virtual reality design process at G SUEN Studio



to twist and sculpt the material. "It is both mechanical engineering and a more artistic way to master the metal," he says.

Even more industrial is the velvety-black carbon fibre that Salini tames for other designs, while in Rome, the brilliant mosaicist Maurizio Fioravanti, of Vamgard, uses carbon fibre to turn micro-mosaics into light, contemporary works of art.

In Vienna, the alchemist jeweller Thomas Hauser of Atelier Allure spent a year exploring how to master Niellium, a tough, precious alloy that is mystically black. He sculpts Niellium into his Choreutai series of 12 rings, and adds black diamonds to his five Massive Champagne rings. Hauser talks of the "beauty of shadows", seeing Niellium as a "magnificent antithesis to the light, reflections and refractions" that play a central role in jewellery.

Indian husband-and-wife duo Rahul and Roshni Jhaveri of Studio Renn use concrete in their designs. For their Strangler ring, a wriggling organic line of diamonds appears to be growing through the concrete, a study in atrophy and a reference to the urban environment of Mumbai, where they live and work. The concrete is surface-treated with acid,

which they allow to do its work, handing over creative control to the environment.

Ceramic is another material that has been refined and improved to reach technical and creative sophistication. A style signature of New York-based designer-jeweller James de Givenchy, it injects jewellery with colour, texture and modernity. Meanwhile, in Hong Kong, Wallace Chan, the master craftsman renowned for his technical virtuosity (including his work in titanium) has taken ceramics to a new level

CHAN'S PORCELAIN IS FIVE TIMES HARDER THAN STEEL

with his unbreakable porcelain. Launched in 2018 after seven years of research and development, Chan's porcelain is five times harder than steel, possesses a lustrous sheen and rich milky-opaque colours. The idea, he says, came from a childhood memory of a treasured porcelain spoon that slipped from his hand and shattered. Chan sculpts the porcelain into voluptuous organic shapes, embedded with gemstones set into titanium structures. It is, he says, both rooted in Chinese culture and resolutely contemporary.

"Innovation is about being open-minded," says Claire Choisine, the creative director of Boucheron. "It is simply a tool,



FABIO SALINI ALUMINIUM AND DIAMOND SPIRALE EARRINGS, POA

Top: WALLACE CHAN titanium, diamond, tourmaline, tsavorite garnet, pearl and Wallace Chan Porcelain Time Travel brooch, POA. Below: STUDIO RENN gold, acid-treated concrete and diamond Strangler ring, \$9,000





Left and above: BOUCHERON white-gold, silver, diamond, pearl and mother-of-pearl Oursin Diamant necklace, POA. Pink-gold, titanium, spessartite garnet and orange garnet Rose d'Équateur Fleur Eternelle ring, POA

to produce a vision of a mermaid's tail and adding depth and lushness to ocean-themed creations. For the Galons Dior collection, the house's creative director of jewellery, Victoire de Castellane, was able to replicate the effect of braided fabric, a signature couture detail, by mixing a multitude of different settings, cuts and shapes of gems. After extensive research, the ateliers created settings with jaunty angles, staggered lines, zigzags or serpentine, giving the impression of patterns and textures, all twisting together in joyful, disordered movement.

Finally, there's a futuristic element to today's fast-moving jewellery innovations. London-based designer Garry Suen, working with his business partner Jing Zhao, uses virtual reality to "dive deeper" by stepping into their jewels. "VR allows us to take a 2D sketch or painting to a realistic 3D model, which makes the jewel come alive at an early stage of the creation process," Zhao explains. "We can magnify the images such that a 1mm detail becomes a 3m-tall object, and use it to optimise the design. They come alive beyond anything that can be achieved on a regular screen."

Meanwhile, Oktaaf, a new, Madrid-based jewellery brand established by Belgian internet entrepreneur Karel de Beule and Spanish designer Ainoa Corres, has created a pair of cufflinks using AI. The 2001 Bolts and Nuts are designed around two titanium screws from Apollo 15, and are inspired by Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*. De Beule, who has an engineering degree in AI, and Corres researched AI technologies and found a laboratory in Russia willing to take on the challenge. Corres submitted a creative mood board, which was then adapted so that the machine began to "dream up shapes". It took seven months of work, including the interpretation of the chosen design by Corres, and crafting and hand-finishing the cufflinks. It is the perfect expression of a now historic sci-fi drama and futuristic technology. Or as Suen says: "A bridge between tradition and innovation, connecting the past not only with the latest technologies but with the future." ■HTSI

"IT'S ABOUT PROBLEM-SOLVING, BUT WITH BEAUTY IN MIND"

head of CAD and workshop manager at Graff tells me, in the hands of skilled designers, it's a tool to enhance creativity, not to replace it, and is particularly invaluable in the miniaturisation of mechanical elements. "In a complex necklace that has to follow the contours of the neck, for example, every component has a joint, which has to be strong and uniform. This is almost impossible to achieve to the same degree by hand."

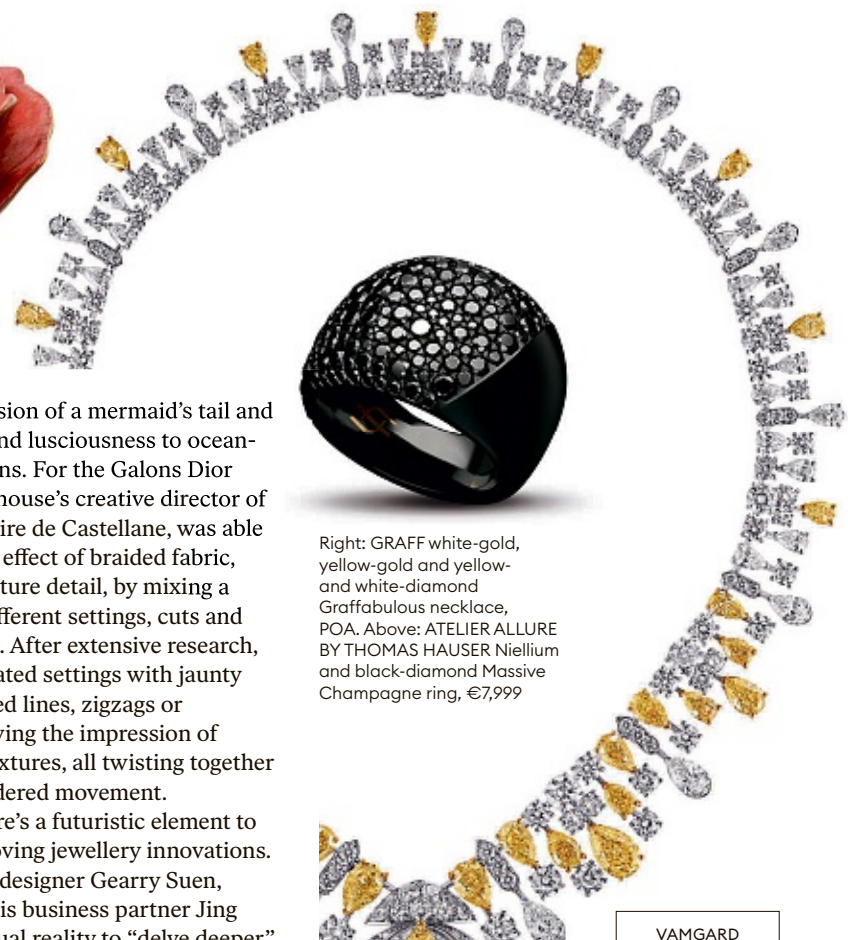
For Graff's high jewellery, CAD is used in conjunction with traditional techniques. From a handpainted gouache design, the layout of stones is then digitised by an ultra-high-res scanner. The components for mounting and articulations are then 3D-printed in a special resin with a high wax content, and cast using the age-old lost-wax method. Sherry emphasises that CAD requires both aesthetic and technical prowess, and Graff trains experienced diamond mounters to use the software, often for years. "It is about problem-solving, but always with beauty in mind."

PROBLEM-SOLVING IS WHAT drives Boghossian and its Hong Kong-based creative director, Edmond Chin, to devise its ingenious signature gem-setting techniques. Chin's aim is to achieve lightness and fluidity and minimise metal to the point of invisibility. In Merveilles, intended as a modern evolution of pavé-setting, stones are held back to back with no visible means of support, kept in place on a hidden internal structure and by the tension of their positioning. The effect is a scintillating unbroken stream of diamond light.

Gem-setting techniques, especially, continue to be refined in order to bring a sense of movement to classic set jewels. In its Ondes et Merveilles high-jewellery collection, Chaumet introduced "scale-setting" for diamonds, overlapping stones



OKTAAF GOLD, SILVER AND ENAMEL 2001 BOLTS AND NUTS CUFFLINKS, \$27,500



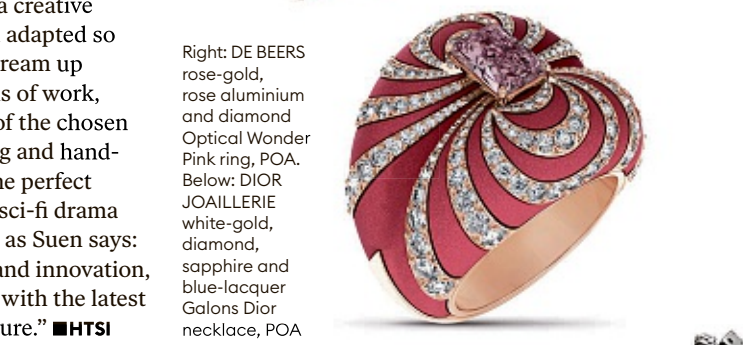
Right: GRAFF white-gold, yellow-gold and yellow- and white-diamond Graffabulous necklace, POA. Above: ATELIER ALLURE BY THOMAS HAUSER Niellium and black-diamond Massive Champagne ring, €7,999



VAMGARD BY MAURIZIO FIORAVANTI CARBON-FIBRE, DIAMOND AND MICRO MOSAIC EAR PENDANTS, \$90,000



Right: DE BEERS rose-gold, rose aluminium and diamond Optical Wonder Pink ring, POA. Below: DIOR JOAILLERIE white-gold, diamond, sapphire and blue-lacquer Galons Dior necklace, POA



PHOTOGRAPHS: © ATELIER ALLURE. COURTESY WALLACE CHAN. MICKEY BARDAVA



Yayoi Kusama



Creating infinity

LOUIS VUITTON

PHILODENDRON SCANDENS, £89, CONSERVATORY ARCHIVES.CO.UK

9



James Wong's indoor garden in London. Below: the exotic garden at Great Dixter



When landscape designer Alexandra Noble and planting designer Nigel Dunnett were tasked with creating the scene for Zimmermann's SS23 fashion show in Paris, the brief was to recreate the strange, slightly surreal primitive landscapes of a Henri Rousseau painting. They surrounded the Petit Palais' Beaux Arts courtyard garden by layering varieties of lush palms and glossy shrubs; frangipani and schefflera, punctuated with the long shaggy foliage of *Parkinsonia aculeata* (the Jerusalem Thorn) and *Acacia stenophylla* (the shoestring acacia), whose hazy foliage dropped down either side of the runway. "For a while these kinds of exotic plants were quite unfashionable," says Noble. "But it creates such an incredible effect when you have them en masse. It's an out-there, maximal aesthetic."

The effect signalled a new enthusiasm for exotic plants that, while once prized for their bold blooms, are now being celebrated for their foliage,

"IT'S AN OUT-THERE, MAXIMAL AESTHETIC"

GARDENS

WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE

The maximalist exotic foliage trend is in full bloom, says *Clare Coulson*

shades of green and texture contrasts. Searches on the Royal Horticultural Society's website for tropical and subtropical plants have more than doubled over the past year, while queries directed to the RHS Advisory team suggest a trend towards large-leafed houseplants such as monstera, philodendrons and alocasia. Such large statement plants "add an instant, luscious impact", says Green Rooms Market co-founder Jemma Charman. The pop-up plant market launched in London in 2018 but now holds regular events in Bristol and



Right: Zimmermann SS23 in Paris. Below: *Landscape with Monkeys*, 1908, by Henri Rousseau



PHOTOGRAPH: ALAMY (2); COURTESY ATELIERS JEAN NOUVEL; GARDEN CITY: SUPERGREEN BUILDINGS, URBAN SKYSCAPES AND THE NEW PLANTED SPACE BY ANNA YUDINA, PUBLISHED BY THAMES & HUDSON, £40. © BARNES FOUNDATION/BRIDGEMAN IMAGES, FERGUS GARRETT, GETTY IMAGES (2); PETER WHITE/GETTY IMAGES © RBG KEW.

Margate. This year it is expanding into Manchester and Edinburgh.

This appetite began with the houseplant boom, but was turbo-charged during the pandemic. And enthusiasts have progressed to increasingly immersive plants. It's a shift that is echoed in architecture too, as public and private buildings are increasingly finding room for plants – none more so than biophilic apartment blocks such as Jean Nouvel and Takis Sophocleous Architects' Tower 25 in Cyprus, which is chronicled along with other plant-centred spaces in a new paperback edition of *Garden City* (Thames & Hudson).

At Architectural Plants – one of a few go-to nurseries for instant-impact specimens – sales of exotic large-leaved plants or those with a jungle look are up around 25 per cent over the past year. Owner Guy Watts has noted a particular interest in more unusual varieties, such as the Jurassic-looking *Pseudopanax lessonii* "Tuatara" – a gangly looking tree with narrow serrated black leaves.

This "otherness" is exactly the attraction. Andrew Brogan, who spent 20 years creating the Henstead Exotic Garden in Suffolk, first spotted a trachycarpus palm in an article in the early '90s, fuelling a

lifelong obsession. Having grown up in London with no garden, he was instantly thrilled. "I wanted to create my own world, another world," says Brogan, who sells plants from his garden nursery as well as at country shows. His backyard jungle immerses visitors in a lush tropical forest of hardy palms, dwarf fan palms and bananas, as well as tree ferns, great leaved magnolias and enormous bamboos (*Phyllostachys vivax*, which has probably the biggest canes in the UK).

IT'S THE SAME STORY at the exotic garden at Great Dixter, the Arts and Crafts house in Sussex. Here, head gardener Fergus Garrett sometimes gets visitors to crouch down under the sturdy ancient beams of the adjoining cow barn and gaze out at the verdant jungle he has created from a child's height. From all angles, foliage leans in and envelops you; the glaucous, finely toothed leaves of *Melianthus major*, strappy grasses and glossy *Fatsia japonica* each contrast with their neighbours. Lower down, the shield-shaped leaves of colocasia hang over the paths, forcing explorers to push past.

Originally a rose garden designed by Edwin Lutyens in 1910, this past summer

"THE GARDEN TRANSPORTS YOU TO ANOTHER WORLD"

it was the best it's ever been, he says. "It's extraordinarily peaceful, and a restful, spiritual place because you are completely immersed. It transports you to another world – a garden for me is all about fantasy." But these transporting spaces don't need to be of epic proportions. In Tokyo, creatives at botanical designer Tsubaki curate miniature verdant worlds lush with arching ferns and grasses cocooned in mosses – such as supersized *kokedama* (balls of soil covered in moss).

Botanist James Wong, who has recently launched his own indoor gardening course on Create Academy, makes similar worlds at home in London. "Creating indoor gardens is an exercise in control; while you are nurturing these little spaces, you are escaping to an environment over which you have total and complete dominion. The more nature is under threat, the more we are likely to want to escape to it on our own terms." ■ HTSI

How to plant it

10 PLANTS TO CREATE YOUR OWN JUNGLE

1. MONSTERA
2. TRACHYCARPUS PALM
3. CHINESE TIMBER BAMBOO (*PHYLLOSTACHYS VIVAX*)
4. BANANA PLANTS
5. COLOCASIA
6. HOUPANA (*PSEUDOPANAX LESSONII* "TUATARA")
7. CHINESE RICE-PAPER PLANT (*TETRAPANAX PAPHYRIFER* "REX")
8. PAPERPLANT (*FATSIA JAPONICA*)
9. PHILODENDRONS
10. ALOCASIA

HOW TO NURTURE IT
Planta. Log your plants into this app and it will let you know how best to look after them – from notifications as to when to water, feed, mist and clean them, to where to position them.

ALOCASIA ZEBRINA, £29, CONSERVATORY ARCHIVES.CO.UK



Left: Henstead Exotic Garden in Suffolk. Top right: Tower 25 in Cyprus by Jean Nouvel and Takis Sophocleous Architects



Above: Lauren Indvik wears ANOTHER TOMORROW sweater, £617. THE ROW trousers and second-hand belt. Below: Indvik (with her dog Piper) wears GABRIELA HEARST wool trench coat. Second-hand HERMÈS cashmere scarf (bought via therealreal.com). LOEWE boots. Unless otherwise stated, all items author's own

My LOW-BUY WARDROBE

To combat climate change, experts advise we purchase no more than five new items a year. *FT* fashion editor *Lauren Indvik* takes the challenge

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LILY BERTRAND-WEBB



What, precisely, does an “ethical” wardrobe look like? My own attempts to assemble one have been nebulous at best. Like many, I’ve taken up the sustainable fashion movement’s call to “buy less, buy better”, cutting my clothing consumption by more than 75 per cent and doing away with leather (part of a concurrent shift to a vegan diet). But is it enough?

According to research from the Hot Or Cool Institute, a Berlin-based think tank studying the intersection of sustainability and society, it’s not even close to enough. To limit global temperatures from rising more than 1.5C above pre-industrial levels – and thus mitigate the worst impacts of climate change – we need to cut the annual carbon emissions generated by our wardrobes to 128.7kg. In the UK, that means we should be buying no more than nine new garments a year. In other parts of the G20, where the average emissions generated by a single garment is higher, the number of garments is five. That will require a significant lifestyle shift, since the average UK shopper is

on track to buy 27 new items a year by 2030. Last year I bought 20 new things, which didn’t feel like a lot until I tallied it all up. It is at least an improvement on 2014, when, at the peak of the designer collaboration craze and my own particular enthrallment with Jenna Lyons’s J Crew, I bought 82 new pieces of clothing, shoes and accessories in a single year – and still managed to feel badly dressed. (When you buy 82 things in a single year, you don’t spend much time thinking about what you’re acquiring.)

The Hot Or Cool Institute’s study proposes a “sufficiency” wardrobe of 74 pieces, making up about 20 outfits: six for work, three for home, five for working out and sports, two for festive occasions and four for the great outdoors. Given that 70 per cent of garments hanging in our wardrobes are “passive” – ie never or only rarely worn – this seems like a perfectly workable number. Consider, too, that the average French wardrobe in the 1960s was made up of about 40 garments, and didn’t require wall-to-wall or walk-in closets to house everything (something I’m thinking about as I mock up joinery for my house).

“We’re not really asking people to go back to the ’70s or ’60s,” says Luca Coscieme, one of the study’s authors. “Even if people [returned to the volumes they were buying] in 2010 it would make a big difference... we’ve doubled [the amount] we’re buying in that time.”

Given what’s at stake, reducing our fashion purchases is not a big ask. Fail to keep temperatures from rising above the 1.5-degree mark by 2030, and we’ll be pushed past environmental tipping points from which there is no return. Cities will flood, Australia’s Great Barrier Reef will largely die off and an estimated 100 million people could be thrown into poverty.

There are other ways we can reduce the footprint of our wardrobes too, such as washing our clothing less often

THE AVERAGE UK SHOPPER IS ON TRACK TO BUY 27 ITEMS A YEAR BY 2030



and at lower temperatures, buying second-hand (the study does not put a suggested cap on second-hand purchases) and extending the lifetime of our items to eight years and nine months instead of the study's baseline of eight years, which is where services like The Restory come in. But none of these actions rival the impact of buying less.

In that spirit, I'll be limiting myself to five new things and four second-hand. And, in line with my diet, almost all will be plant-based.

The upside of being in my mid-30s and having dropped not-insignificant sums on wardrobe staples over the past decade – a heavy winter coat from Prada, a Khaite trench roomy enough to accommodate an oversized jumper, straight-leg jeans I took to the tailor so I'd never want for another pair – means that the gaps are few. But there are gaps. Some, such as an office-appropriate dress lightweight enough to cater for the hotter summers we're having in London, will be a priority if I can't find something second-hand. Others will need to wait until 2024. ■HTSI

Above left: GABRIELA HEARST cotton-blend Andy dress, £857, [matchesfashion.com](https://www.matchesfashion.com). PACO RABANNE brass and aluminium chain-link bracelet, £310, [mytheresa.com](https://www.mytheresa.com). Above: vintage Fair Isle jumper (bought at Chiswick flea market). RACHEL COMEY cotton trousers. FALKE Cosy Wool socks, £18. LOEWE boots. Top right: MARGARET HOWELL silk shirt. THE ROW wool trousers and second-hand belt. Vintage HERMÈS silk scarf (bought via [vestiairecollective.com](https://www.vestiairecollective.com))

Less is more

THE BARE-ESSENTIALS SHOPPING LIST



WINTER JUMPER

I've pledged to buy garments made only of plant-based fibres, but I'd make an exception for this swaddling, creamy wool jumper from New York-based Another Tomorrow. The brand sourced the wool from Nan Bray of White Gum Wool, an Australian sheep farmer who allows her flock to live out their full lives instead of sending them to slaughter when their wool production declines (usually at five to six years old, when they would otherwise live for about 12 years).

Another Tomorrow funnel-neck sweater, £617



THIN BLACK TURTLENECK

In the colder months, I wear a black cashmere turtleneck almost every day – and the two Burberry versions I've had for the past few years are now seriously worn under the arms. I expect I'll get a few more years out of them, but I'll be looking out for a replacement in a heavyweight cotton – Margaret Howell makes good ones. *Margaret Howell high-neck cotton jersey, £145*



NAVY BLAZER

Four years ago, I lost a beloved navy wool-silk blazer from Paul Smith that I wore four days a week or more. I've felt its absence ever since. The company's bespoke team has sourced the original pattern for me, so this year I'll have a copy made in linen or another plant-based fibre – which I'll be able to afford because I'll be buying fewer things. [paulsmith.com/uk/info/bespoke-tailoring](https://www.paulsmith.com/uk/info/bespoke-tailoring)



LIGHTWEIGHT SUMMER DRESS

I found myself with little to wear during the UK's record-setting heatwave and a work trip to Sicily last summer. This airy dress for the office and work dinners would be very welcome. *Rachel Comey silk Lasha dress, £969, [smallable.com](https://www.smallable.com)*



FISHERMAN SANDAL

As much as I relish my Tevas, some days call for something a little more formal. John Lewis released an OK-looking vegan fisherman sandal last year; I am hoping the retailer produces a similar pair soon. I'm also keeping my eye out for a second-hand version of The Row's fisherman sandal (£515, [vestiairecollective.com](https://www.vestiairecollective.com)) or one of Church's (above, £290, [vestiairecollective.com](https://www.vestiairecollective.com)).





INSIDE THE HOLY HALLS

Last year Mercedes-Benz shattered the record for the most expensive car ever sold with a €135mn gem that had been stashed away in its warehouse. What else is hidden there?

Peter Aspden visits the Heilige Hallen

Photography by *Felix Brüggemann*

Inside the Mercedes Heilige Hallen with (on front row, from left) a Mercedes 300 SL roadster, a 300 SE and a special armoured 350 SEL

I WAS ONCE ALLOWED FIVE MINUTES ON MY OWN IN THE SISTINE CHAPEL. THIS ROOM RECALLS A SIMILAR SENSATION



Left: a Mercedes-Benz bumper car. Bottom left: a 1955 Mercedes 300 SL "Gullwing" Coupé. Below right: Mercedes-Benz CEO Ola Källenius sits on the all-electric EQXX Concept. Far right: a 1970 experimental Mercedes-Benz C 111-II

I'd like to open this evening's auction at €50mn." The words spoken by Sotheby's auctioneer Oliver Barker to commence last May's high-octane sale in a Stuttgart museum fell on the ears of an invitation-only audience that was evidently braced for something special to happen.

On offer: a 1955 Mercedes-Benz 300 SLR Uhlenhaut Coupé, revered by motoring enthusiasts for its beauty, prized by collectors for its rarity, as one of only two such prototypes manufactured by the company; €50mn already broke the record for the highest amount previously fetched by an automobile, a 1962 Ferrari 250 GTO in 2018. This was an eye-watering opening. But it was anything but over-optimistic.

The audience was in the mood. They pushed the price up swiftly through the €70mn, €80mn, €90mn barriers.

There were gasps when the €100mn mark was passed. But on they went, until Barker, the chairman of Sotheby's Europe, finally brought the hammer down at €135mn.

Barker, a man used to the heady confluence of big money and beautiful art, recalls the surreal mood of the auction, which was held at the Mercedes-Benz Museum in the company's home town. "We were like extras in some Bond movie scene, in which very, very few people knew what was going on, and fewer still were even allowed in the room," he says. "It was an incredible result."

The identity of the buyer remained secret, as would that of the seller in normal circumstances. But this was different. The car was put up for sale by Mercedes-Benz itself, in order to raise money for a scholarship fund for research into environmental science and "decarbonisation". The company also owns the other prototype, named after its creator and chief engineer, Rudolf Uhlenhaut, which will remain on display in the museum, a Guggenheim-like, spiralling 2006 edifice built outside the company's main plant.

Since its beginnings at the start of the last century, Mercedes-Benz has made it a goal to keep at least one example of every model of automobile it has ever produced. And so the sale of the Uhlenhaut begged the question: what else was squirrelled away? And how much could it be worth? The answers are, respectively, locked in warehouses scattered around Stuttgart; and no one really knows. These low-rise buildings are studiously inconspicuous and unrecognised by all but a few. To those in the know they go by the name of the "Heilige Hallen" (or "Holy Halls"). And it's vanishingly rare for members of the public to see inside them.

And yet, on a first visit to one of the three halls I am allowed to see, one pleasant day in late autumn, so taken am I by the banality of

its exterior that I am prompted to snap a quick picture of it as an aide-mémoire. I'm immediately, and politely, asked by one of the Mercedes team to delete the picture. There is no obvious indication of heavy-handed security, but an air of circumspection is constantly present.

Once inside, I'm confronted by four gleaming sports cars from the 300 SL Roadster series pointed straight towards me. Unusually, they are for sale, says my guide Peter Becker, for "somewhere between €1.8mn and €1.9mn each". (He tells me this as a jokey pitch; alarmingly, my first thought is that it is quite good value next to the price paid for the Uhlenhaut to which they are related.) Although the holy halls are not in any way intended as a showroom, he tells me that "very selected vehicles, from time to time" are offered to interested parties. The open-topped Roadster is much sought after: just 1,858 models were manufactured in the years of their production, 1957-63, and it still looks timelessly stunning.

The hall, otherwise, is simultaneously as architecturally underwhelming as a municipal car park and radiant with history and loveliness. It has a disorienting effect. Most of the halls are separated according to classification – sports cars, prewar models, etc – but in this one they are all crammed together, in a chaotic surfeit of visual richness. I was once allowed five minutes on my own in the Sistine Chapel, and this room recalls a similar sensation of wanting to look in detail at everything around me, but also to stand in the middle and spin my head very fast to embrace the total effect.

As the weather has co-operated (most of the cars are not allowed out in overly damp conditions), I get the chance to have a short drive in two cars: a 1955 300 SL "Gullwing" Coupé and a 1971 600 Series "Grand Mercedes". Some yin and yang here: a gorgeous, head-turning sports car and a luxury liner of a supercar.

I'm feeling the need for speed, and hop into the coupé first. The "hop" takes me about a minute and a half. The gullwing design, in which the doors are opened from bottom to top, was not, as many think, a sales gimmick but a necessity, in order for the car to incorporate its lightweight frame. It looks remarkable, but it's not great news if you are 6ft 4in and climbing into the driving seat.

"Be careful with the brakes," advises Merlin the mechanic, a little vaguely, at the last minute, which I take to mean they're sensitive. I trundle out into a main road and drive for a few hundred metres. As I go into second gear, I rev the engine, which responds not with a roar or a rasp but a mellifluous concentration of musical notes, not unlike a Beach Boys harmony. I am concentrating too hard on the road to notice if anyone's head is turning, but there is plenty happening in my own viscera.

I approach a roundabout and squeeze gently on the footbrake; nothing happens. Another squeeze – still barely





“THE STEERING WHEEL COSTS €750,000 TO MAKE,” SAYS A MEMBER OF THE TEAM. I PLACE IT DOWN GENTLY

a sign of the car slowing down. I press hard and long, and finally I begin to come to a stop. It turns out the brake is not oversensitive, but the opposite. I have never driven a car with drum brakes before, and the lesson is bracing. I spend the rest of the journey in a mode best described as fearful cruising, allowing such absurdly large distances between me and the car in front that I am worried I will be stopped by the police for eccentric behaviour.

The Mercedes brand, I am reminded by Marcus Breitschwerdt, head of the company’s heritage division, was announced for the first time on a sports car, the 35hp, which achieved immediate racing success in the first years of the 20th century.

Breitschwerdt joined the company more than 30 years ago, has done stints as CEO of Mercedes-Benz UK and Canada, and was placed in charge of heritage last year. His passion for his new subject appears all-consuming: last year he drove a 1904 Mercedes-Simplex 28/32hp, one of the most famous of all early cars, at the London to Brighton Veteran Car Run. When I ask him how it felt, he half-closes his eyes and replies, “It gives you an unbelievable feeling of happiness, but also of modesty, sitting in something that was built all those years ago to be a thing of perfection.”

The history of the company’s most notable racers is all here in the motorsport hall: in a series of life-sized Matchbox-type cubicles, piled on top of each other, each containing a separate car. There’s also the sleek fleet of Silver Arrows that dominated racing in the prewar period.

The silver colour was no intentional design feature: it emerged when paint was stripped off the cars to reduce their weight. Here is the model driven to victory in the French Grand Prix of 4 July 1954 by Juan Manuel Fangio, at an average speed of more than 186kmph. On the same day, the German football team beat the much-fancied Hungarians in the World Cup in the “Miracle of Bern”. A similarly supernatural label was applied to Fangio’s win, acclaimed as the “Miracle of Reims”. The coincidence of the double victory heralded the triumphant return of Germany to the world’s sporting stage after the war.

We walk past another streamlined beauty, the W125 12-cylinder car that was driven in January 1938 by Rudolf Caracciola to break the world speed record on public roads,

Right: historic Mercedes-Benz racing cars in the motorsport hall. Bottom: a 1988 Sauber-Mercedes C9 Group C racing car. Far left: a Mercedes-Benz SSKL Avus racing car in front of four Formula 1 cars



reaching 432.7kmph. Just hours after the record drive, a rival driver, Bernd Rosemeyer, was killed in an accident after his Auto Union car was caught by a gust of wind and veered off the road. There are drivers’ photographs hung like icons all around this part of the halls.

We stop in the Formula 1 section, where I study the car used by Valtteri Bottas in the 2021 World Championship. I am handed the steering wheel from the car, festooned with a variety of colourful buttons. This is the part of the car that despondent drivers beat their hands or heads against in the face of lucklessness. It is surprisingly heavy. “Yes, and it costs €750,000 to make,” responds another member of the team neutrally. I place it down gently.

On our way out, there is an unremarkable beige car with “SENNA” written crudely on the windscreen. It comes from a race held in 1984 to commemorate the reopening of the Nürburgring, in which 20 drivers raced in identical cars. The race was won by the little-known 24-year-old Ayrton Senna.

My second Mercedes drive, with the 600 series, could not be more different from the first. Comfort is the watchword: the model was lauded at its 1963 launch for its luxuriousness: air suspension, power brakes, central locking and an electronic heating system. I am warned not to put my fingers anywhere foolish when the hydraulic boot closes. Otherwise? There is much shaking of heads.

Merlin rides with me and points to an array of interior features, the most memorable of which is the dashboard made from Brazilian rosewood. I am too relaxed to take in most of the information. The purr of this car’s engine could be the soundtrack of the postwar German economic miracle. The 600 was customisable for individual tastes and was among the first cars to offer extras such as telephones, TVs and on-board bars. Among its drivers were Elvis Presley, Elizabeth Taylor and Coco Chanel.

Back in the halls, we stroll through the sections devoted to luxury and specially commissioned vehicles. There are six Popemobiles in the company collection, three of them based here: the conventional-looking models made for Popes John XXIII and Paul VI, and the 2002 ML 430, with the raised roof, for Pope John Paul II, who disliked the “undignified” sobriquet given to the vehicle.

On a more worldly level, there is the handsome 1930 car built for the Maharaja of Kashmir, all subdued creams and soft greys, with elegant wooden decking on the step-plate, commissioned so that he could be chauffeured to his private yacht. It is a conspicuous piece of decadence in this unlikely venue that, notwithstanding the magnificence of its contents, also exudes pragmatism. The holy halls were established from “humble beginnings”, says Breitschwerdt. “This was a poor area. We didn’t throw anything away.”

He says that three imperatives have driven the collection: to document the history of Mercedes-Benz; to tell that story to the outside world; and to help “calibrate the character of the company” internally, by studying its past. “Heritage. Is. Future,” he says slowly. “That doesn’t mean you do the same things again and again. It is about keeping the same spirit alive.”

It’s a sentiment echoed by the company’s CEO Ola Källenius, who joins us at the end of the tour. He talks about the need to respond to the two important trends facing the industry – digitalisation and non-carbonisation – in a way that is true to the company’s values. It doesn’t sound very romantic, I say. He shows me one of the newest cars in the collection, a Maybach S-Class, and points to the dashboard. “Here we have a very beautiful OLED screen. It is the most expensive, most high-resolution screen you can buy. Is that romantic? Maybe not. But we haven’t done it without love, like some brands who take an iPad and stick it on the dashboard. Yes, we will go digital, we will go electric. But we will never lose the luxury touch.”

For now, there are no plans to replicate last year’s spectacular sale other than on a very occasional basis. It is also not intended to give more public access to the halls, although Breitschwerdt points out that cars continue to travel to shows and classic races. “They are not here to be hidden,” he says determinedly. “We take them out. And we keep them running.” ■HTSI



Artist Ignasi Monreal (left) and dancer Benjamin Pech at the Laboratorio di Scenografia of the Teatro dell'Opera in Rome. Above far right: a handpainted board with pictures of past productions



La Bayadère



re boys



In their restaging of the Bolshoi classic, dancer Benjamin Pech and artist Ignasi Monreal have created the perfect pas de deux, says *Maria Shollenbarger*

Photography by *Anna Huix*

The Laboratorio di Scenografia of the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma is, rather counter-intuitively, not part of the theatre it serves. Nor is it even adjacent to it. In fact, you have to walk about half an hour across town to find the theatre's set-design atelier in a massive warehouse, overlooking the Circus Maximus, where artists have been creating sets by hand for several generations.

When French ballet dancer Benjamin Pech and Spanish artist Ignasi Monreal met four years ago in Rome, both having recently moved to the city, neither imagined their relationship would spark a professional collaboration – let alone one that would see them passing weeks on end in the light-saturated reaches of the historic Laboratorio's upper floors. But all throughout this winter, they've been doing just that: masterminding a fever dream of a set for Pech's virtuoso production of the 19th-century Bolshoi masterpiece *La Bayadère* (*The Temple Dancer*). Long an aspiration of his to stage, it will be performed across several days at the end of this month.

In 2016, Pech relocated from Paris, where he had been an *étoile* in the *corps de ballet* since 2005, to assume an associate artistic director role at the Opera di Roma

(where he also performs). Monreal, a painter and illustrator, was commuting between Rome and Lisbon after several years in London, making private commissions and working on a consulting basis for Gucci. He and Pech met at a party at La Posta Vecchia, the lush seaside hotel in Lazio – though fate (or maybe just the Eternal City’s small social circles) had already conspired to put each on the other’s radar. Pech took Monreal to a production of Prokofiev’s *L’Angelo di Fuoco* (*The Fiery Angel*) for their first date. Monreal, who’d never been to the Teatro, loved it. “From the beginning it was kind of a threesome with the theatre!” Pech laughs.

It was Pech who first suggested, albeit obliquely, the artistic collaboration idea in 2021. “I was doing *Swan Lake* outdoors in the Circus Maximus,” he says, gesturing to the huge windows at one end of the atelier, which overlook the field in which the ancient Roman stadium stands. “There was no system for changing sets, and I was struggling with what to do to make some magic, but what we did have was this big projection screen as a backdrop. I thought, ‘Maybe we can find a photo of a lake to put up there,’” Pech says, grinning. “Essentially I decided to manipulate Ignasi a little bit. I showed him what might be projected up there.”

Monreal laughs at the memory. “It was like a photo from a Google search for ‘lake’. Very Disney. I said, ‘No, no, no, this isn’t possible.’” Pech interjects. “I was pretty sure his reaction would be to say, ‘Let me try something.’”

Monreal proposed an animated landscape created from a series of iPad paintings he made, which shifted and evolved subtly with the music and the storyline. “The big change for me was the different intention,” Monreal says. “What I was doing was totally in service to the dancers, and the music.” It was a hit.

Which brings us to this sunny winter in the atelier – and to *La Bayadère*. “This is completely opposite to how the Circus Maximus staging was done,” Monreal says. Adds Pech: “It was also a deliberate decision to do everything very old-style, with everything made and painted by hand.” Access to the Laboratorio heavily influenced this decision. “These old-world traditions



Left: work in progress on the opium poppies for Act Three of *La Bayadère*. Below: Pech moved to Rome in 2016. Bottom left: painter and illustrator Monreal. Bottom: detail of the poppies in Act Three. Right: technicians hang a handpainted column designed for the wings



“I’M CONSTANTLY FEELING AROUND FOR THE LIMITS OF THIS SANDBOX I’M PLAYING IN”

were invented here 500 years ago,” Monreal says. “The artisans [and their counterparts in Milan] are the only people in Italy, maybe in Europe, still working this way.” He produces sketches and paintings on the iPad; the Laboratorio’s team, led by its director Danilo Mancini, reproduces them on a large scale.

It had been some time, however, since a set had been created and built in its entirety. “They’d been focused on restoring older sets,” Monreal says of the nearly 1,000 examples in storage on site. “So they were really excited about the idea of doing something from scratch.” Designs were presented to Opera di Roma superintendent Francesco Giambrone. “He was very taken by Ignasi’s ideas, his universe,” says Pech. Both, however, credit Mancini’s conviction and commitment to the project, “which was a lot of work and cost a lot of money”, in getting it over the line.

Monreal enumerates the joys of collaborating on site. “I’m constantly feeling around for the limits of this sandbox I’m playing in,” he says. Then there’s the history and energy of the building. “It feels like you’re in another time. When the light pours in, it’s just magical.”

He takes me to see the paint-mixing room, its rows of powder pigments piled high in bins like spices in a souk, with formulations that haven’t changed in more than 100 years. We ascend a rickety ladder to walk along a narrow causeway suspended high above the floor, which is covered in vast canvases in various stages of painted completion. “If I have any true talent, it’s as a painter,” he says. “But this was something of an Achilles heel, because the colours change a lot as they dry.” In response, he assesses the 9m-tall bright-yellow curtains (and the great oversized poppies for one of the final scenes) from above to gauge the final contrast. The tools of the trade used to make them remain largely unchanged in generations:

brushes as tall as brooms are expertly wielded like mops in reverse, the Laboratorio artists dragging out straight lines of colour with seeming effortlessness.

The technical aspects of set design posed further revelations and challenges – and not just artistic ones. “We almost never fight in our relationship. In the Laboratorio...” Pech

laughs. Says Monreal: “He’s the most difficult client I’ve ever had. I normally charge for changes, and I’ve made over 120 variations of this.”

Pech’s vision, however, remains constant: “I have the dance entirely mapped out. Ignasi doesn’t see it, but the whole thing is in my head. You have to find the balance between the set, its placement, the energy of the ballet.”

La Bayadère, the ballet Rudolf Nureyev performed in Paris before defecting to the west in 1961, and the last he staged before his death in 1993, is in itself a loaded enterprise for Pech. He has danced every part, and studied the many variations of what he describes as “probably the most restaged of ballets”. “I grew up in this ballet,” he says. “It’s a real legacy. And I knew Ignasi was the right person to capture the grandiosity of *La Bayadère*.” ■HTSI

La Bayadère is showing at the Teatro dell’Opera di Roma from 25 February to 2 March; operaroma.it







The Jean Prouvé daybed in the living room. Right: Smith (right) and Faulstick in their garden with their dogs (from left) William and Rupert

GOLDEN STATE

Antiques dealer Cameron Smith's Pasadena home, shared with his design consultant husband PJ Faulstick, distills the same quiet aesthetic he's honed at Galerie Half. By *Jacoba Urist*

Photography by *Billal Taright*
Styling by *Colin King*



When the gate clicks open to the home of antiques dealer Cameron Smith and design consultant PJ Faulstick, regional vertigo takes hold. A pair of 100-year-old olive trees anchor a rustic garden reminiscent of a Tuscan hillside. Birds alight on a 17th-century French feed trough repurposed as a water feature, and reclaimed brick pavers lead the way underfoot. Hovering on the horizon behind a revived 1928 Spanish colonial house are the San Gabriel Mountains.

It's a Californian postcard image but the pair's home in Pasadena, a city of craftsman bungalows and canopied roads, is only 11 miles from the grit and glamour of downtown Los Angeles. "In the mornings, it's fantastic. It's like *Wuthering Heights*. The weather is completely different here, despite the close proximity," says Smith, whose flawless eye draws design buyers and A-list celebrities to his West Hollywood outpost Galerie Half. The gallery space and store opened in 2009 on Melrose Avenue, offering a trove of European vintage



The living room, with its midcentury Ib Kofod-Larsen Seal chairs and antique Bibikabad rug. On the wall (from left) are *Bureaucrat with Muted Tones*, 2008, by British artist Charlie Hammond; a 1940s Japanese “tramp art” iron circle; a 1953 Serge Mouille scone; and a 1931 portrait by Swedish artist Owe Zerge. On the hearth is a Rick Owens bronze swan-neck vase. Top far right: the hallway – to the left of the staircase is an 18th-century Swedish pedestal; a 1930s French gilt-iron light fixture hangs from the ceiling



THE HOUSE HAD GOOD BONE STRUCTURE BUT REQUIRED AN OVERHAUL

and midcentury masterpieces, sourced through Smith's globetrotting expeditions. But here, eclectic finds – 18th-century silver-leaf mirrors, ceremonial Congolese masks and Herb Ritts photography – are composed with minimalist restraint.

The couple had “lived off Mulholland in a midcentury house for eight years” before searching for a larger property in 2018. LA's cut-throat real-estate market put paid to owning a home close to Galerie Half and the net was cast wider. “Pasadena was not on our radar,” Smith says, recalling how the property's charm and ample proportions sealed the deal. Architecturally, the house had good bone structure but also required an extensive overhaul, and the pair's close friends, Kathleen and Tommy Clements of LA-based mother-and-son studio Clements Design, were commissioned to oversee the project. The duo have a client list that includes Kris and Kendall Jenner, Bruno Mars and Jennifer Lawrence.

Their vision, which took three-and-a-half years to complete (Smith and Faulstick finally moved in in 2021), honours the home's intrinsic character while injecting some West Coast verve. Detailing was key and in the foyer, a space originally punctuated by predictable majolica patterns, salvaged Belgian cement school tiles segue into oak flooring on the central staircase, creating a clean, serene backdrop. “The Clements opened up everything,” says Faulstick, gesturing towards the large skylight above the stairwell. In the bright, clear California daylight, it forms a James Turrell-esque blue oculus overhead.

We veer left off the entry hall into the dining room. Framed by an arched silhouette, it is accented by hand-crafted George Nakashima woodwork surmounted by a graphite and poppy-seed monochrome by Danish artist Rasmus Rosengaard. Smith found the piece “travelling through the internet” and crated it for several years, along with numerous objets awaiting the home's completion. “What we loved about Cameron and PJ's instinct is that they err on the side of simplicity,” says Tommy Clements. “Having this calm backdrop allowed these phenomenal pieces to shine. On paper, the list of things in their home



“THE HOUSE STILL HAS THE INITIAL ENERGY WE WERE ATTRACTED TO WHEN WE FIRST SAW IT”



seem like they wouldn't jive, but when they were installed together, they felt natural and beautiful – thrilling.”

Throughout, the exterior stucco walls and arches remain true to the history of the house, yet by softening the edges of surfaces the look recalls the adobe houses of Santa Fe where Smith spent childhood summers. Smith's mother went to boarding school at the local Bishop's Lodge, now a ranch resort, and, following in his parents' footsteps, he and Faulstick were married at the same Santa Fe Centre of Peace and Justice.

“It does sometimes feel like an adobe house – that was the inspiration we gave Kathleen and Tommy,” says Smith, pointing to an early polychrome vessel from the Acoma Pueblo tribe of New Mexico as we enter the living room, a memento that his father gave his mother around 1969 – and one of numerous Native American sculptures and ceramics that belonged to his parents dotted around the room. “My dad was amazing. He was a police chief in Fort Collins, Colorado – a very tall, rugged man who was almost delicate in his approach,” he says.

That chord of delicate and rugged resonates as we survey the room, in the fine proportions of the original midcentury Ib Kofod-Larsen Seal chairs that flank the fireplace; the earthy tone of the Jean Prouvé daybed well positioned by a window; the Clements' custom linen sofa resting upon a well-worn Persian Bibikabad rug; and the contemporary, black Axel Vervoordt low table in one corner upon which sits a carved Bamana Jonyeleni figure from the 1930s.

“My mom freaks out when she comes in here. It makes her so proud, especially the kachina dolls and Navajo and tribal elements,” Smith says of the ensemble. The couple's preferences for art are equally refined: some unexpected but all obtained as part of Smith's relish for the hunt, including a full-length oil portrait of a young boy by Owe Zerge, which is mounted close to the fireplace, and a 2004 Collier Schorr photograph of pure, adolescent fantasy situated beside the bookcase. “I had a folder of things I loved more for us than I did for Galerie Half,” says Smith of the curation. “I knew that if the pieces went to the showroom, they would be gone in a week and I would never see them again.”

Smith is an inveterate virtual collector. “I do all the buying for Galerie Half and I can tell the no-nos online,” he explains. “I've learnt my lessons. I don't have bad luck any more.” The Clements – and this is undoubtedly where their close bond with their client manifested – put the guardrails in place for the vision. As Smith recalls, “They definitely kiboshed some of the items I shared in my folder, so they went to the gallery.”

Upstairs, the views from the windows create focal points amid the quiet decor. “At night-time, even when we



Above: Walter Lamb chairs outside the house. Left: Pierre Jeanneret counter stools in the kitchen. On the counter is a 1940s Zulu serving platter. Bottom left: the bedroom features an early-18th-century Gustavian bench (at foot of bed) and, by the window, a 1960 teak student desk by Pierre Jeanneret and oak and cashmere stool by Green River Project

had my birthday party, everyone hangs out in here,” Smith says of their bedroom suite, which continues the home's airy palette of wood tones and crisp, white walls offset by one-of-a-kind furnishings and antiques. A hand-carved early-18th-century Gustavian bench anchors the couple's bed, while matching Pierre Guariche sconces illuminate a curved headboard. A 1930s sheepskin loveseat is the picture of sumptuous repose atop an age-old Tabriz floor covering. The capstone: an anonymous, sculptural piece that was bought in Paris from an owner who had cherished it since the early 1970s.

Unsurprisingly, most visitors migrate to what the couple call “the perch”: an enclosed balcony leading off the suite, which is overlooked by a dark beamed ceiling and furnished with Japanese teak chairs and a raw-edged 16th-century stone-slab table – a veritable indoor-outdoor *mise en scène*. “The house still

has the initial energy we were attracted to when we first saw it. To me, it still feels like a Spanish house, but one that Allie, the previous owner, would've been proud of,” says Smith of the bond that was struck with the former owner, a now-deceased physician who raised a family at the house. “We didn't want to piss her off,” adds Faulstick, “and honestly, we want her energy to stay here.”

In temperate southern California, alfresco spaces function as additional rooms and the landscape grounds, created by LA designer Scott Shrader, are no exception. “My job is to bring the interior outdoors,” he says of his design, where the dining terrace is shaded by a modern steel, willow-covered trellis of whimsical romance. A set of bleached Jeanneret chairs, a 17th-century marble sink and Allie's pink-rose bushes, carefully preserved in the renovation, add to the sense of tranquillity.

We are suspended, on the outskirts of LA, far from the madding crowd. “I kept bugging Scott about the big 18th- and 19th-century olive vessels he put out here, asking, ‘What are you going to put in them?’” recalls Smith. “He responded, ‘Absolutely nothing.’” It is precisely this sense of easy restraint that remains with me as I take my leave, the gate closing behind me. ■HTSI



A George Nakashima dining table and chairs on an antique Malayer rug

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Above: The Parlour at Naomi Wellington's bar Lola Rouge. Top right: Le Grand Mazarin in Paris



of calm" close to the Seine; but our money, and the buzz, is on Le Grand Mazarin being anything but quiet. Martin Brudnizki has overseen the decor in the 50 rooms and 11 suites and throughout the property, which features an all-day restaurant, two bars and an indoor pool. Think lots of colour, texture and passementerie details. maisonspariente.com, from €680

TRAVEL NEWS

Hello city

Urban addresses to bookmark, from LA to Park Lane

WORDS BY MARIA SHOLLENBARGER

That New Zealand has a corner on luxury-lodge experiences is virtually an axiom of travel. City hotels, on the other hand, have not historically been the country's strong suit. The Singapore-based Naomi brand helped shift that perception when it opened its first international property in Auckland in 2018. A very groovy new address on Cuba Street in the heart of Wellington opened in November. "Flamboyant" barely begins to cover it – wallpapers are black and white striped courtesy of Icon Radford, contrasting with multicoloured carpets. But there's joy in the mix, and Lola Rouge, the bar and restaurant, has earned kudos nationally for its innovative cocktails. naumihotels.com, from NZ\$599 (about £314)

PALISOCIETY COMES TO WEST HOLLYWOOD Palisociety founder Avi Brosh has been operating the space between a cool California hotel and a cool California bungalow since opening his first Palihouse hotel in 2008. In the ensuing years (and 10 further properties), it has continued to win him fans of laidback environments with rooms that don't cost the earth. Palihouse West Hollywood has just welcomed its first guests to West 3rd Street, a block or two off La Cienega (surrounded by upscale taquerias, organic bakeries, natural wine bars and SoulCycle studios). The signature design – eclectic and vintage-leaning with lots of natural light – is in evidence, along with two restaurants and a lovely courtyard garden and pool with its own dedicated café. palisociety.com, from \$295

BULGARI TAKES TOKYO Bulgari Hotels & Resorts is stirring up buzz in Rome, where the brand's longtime collaborators, architects Antonio Citterio and Patricia Viel, are putting the finishing

touches to their renovation of a rationalist landmark on the Piazza Augusto Imperatore (chuck a stone this way, you'll hit the Ara Pacis; that way, the Mausoleum of Augustus); and all signs point to the Roman jewellery house's hotel being a winner when it eventually opens this summer. But first comes the Bulgari Hotel Tokyo, an altogether different proposition. Its 98 rooms occupy the top several floors of a new 240m super-tower in the Yaesu district (the master Bulgari Suite will boast bird's-eye panoramas from the 45th storey). Expect the usual Bulgari suspects: Il Bar, Il Ristorante and a 16,000sq ft spa with a 25m pool. With its proximity to Tokyo Station, Ginza and the Imperial Palace grounds, the location, like those of all Bulgari's other hotels, is first-rate. bulgari.com, from ¥200,000 (about £1,246)

THE MARAIS' NEW MAISON

The French micro-brand Maisons Pariente has made a name for itself with a clutch of just three hotels. Each is totally unique, but all are quintessentially French, from Lou Pinet in St Tropez (run by the Pariente as of 2017) to Le Coucou, the Trois Vallées stunner with interiors by Pierre Yovanovitch, via the elegant Crillon Le Brave resort, a forever Provence favourite. Now the Parientes are taking on Paris: Le Grand Mazarin, their fourth property, will open on the Rue des Archives, in the heart of the Marais, in April. It aspires to be an "oasis

PARK LANE'S GRANDE DAME, REBORN

In 2023, though, it seems most of the action will be in London. Beyond Hong Kong-based Peninsula Hotels opening its long-awaited Belgravia address this year, Mandarin Oriental expanding to a second location in Hanover Square and Raffles commandeering the Old War Office (the branded residences and hotel will both open in spring), there is a whole new Dorchester to be enjoyed. The grande dame of Park Lane (c1931) never closed during its rolling renovation; for months

AFTERNOON TEA WILL BE SERVED AMID A NEW ART COLLECTION

Pierre-Yves Rochon was working his magic in the rooms, suites and throughout the all-new Promenade (afternoon tea still served, amid a new contemporary art collection). Martin Brudnizki has lent a hand here too, overhauling the original bar, whose terrace overlooks Hyde Park and whose walls are hung with gorgeous Beatons. The magic trifecta – Alain Ducasse at the Dorchester, China Tang and the hotel's own Grill – are still around, and still fabulous. dorchestercollection.com, from £735 ■HTSI

© @mariashollenbarger

THE ARTISTS' BAR AT THE DORCHESTER



Above centre: Palihouse West Hollywood and (above) its pool lounge

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The way that smart lighting can transform a home into an array of beautifully illuminated stages is hard to appreciate until you've taken the plunge. Forest-tinged utility rooms, living rooms in party mode and bedrooms with simulated candlelight are all a couple of taps away, and adjustable on a whim. WiZ lights come from the same company – Signify – that produces the market-dominating Philips Hue range, but they're pitched at smart lighting newbies: easier to set up, a cinch to control, but with huge flexibility.

IT CAN DOUBLE AS A SOOTHING NIGHTLIGHT FOR KIDS

The main advantage of WiZ over some other brands – including Hue – is that they don't need a dedicated hub; set-up just requires you to enter your WiFi password into a smartphone app. Thereafter, you're given granular control over any WiZ lights in your home: their colour (static or dynamic), automation (on/off times, or perhaps gentle fades over the course of a day) and scenes, where favourite combinations of colour and brightness can be recalled quickly and easily.

The WiZ range includes spots, bars, string lights and bulbs, but I was particularly taken with this mobile portable light, an attractive and handy piece of kit that can double as a soothing nightlight for kids, a dazzling garage illuminator, a centrepiece of a garden dining table and so on. I ended up buying two to use as dimmable bedside lamps; you can swipe the top panel to adjust brightness, or tap to turn on and off without ever having to reach for a smartphone.

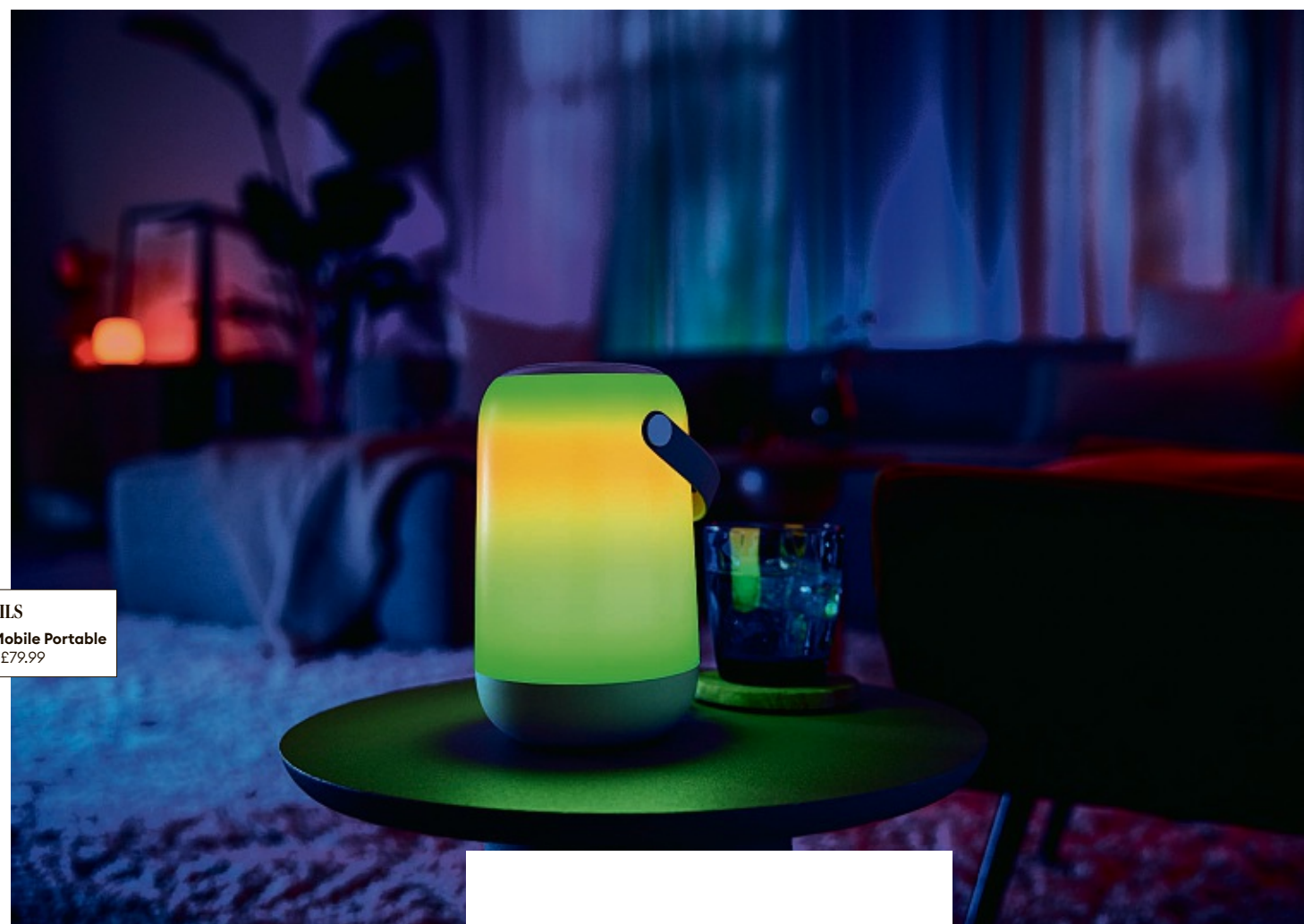
When you do venture into the newest version of the WiZ app, however, there's an innovation I hadn't seen before called SpaceSense: by sensing tiny disruptions in the WiFi signal, two or more WiZ lights can tell when you are in a room, automatically turn on when you arrive and turn off

DETAILS

WiZ Mobile Portable Light £79.99

again shortly after you're gone. No additional sensors needed. The crowning glory is the interoperability with Amazon Alexa, Google Home and Matter, which means connectivity with Apple's HomeKit framework. It just remains for me to welcome you to your new role of domestic lighting designer. ■HTSI

@rhodri



GADGETS

See the light

How to create the perfect bedroom ambience

WORDS BY RHODRI MARSDEN



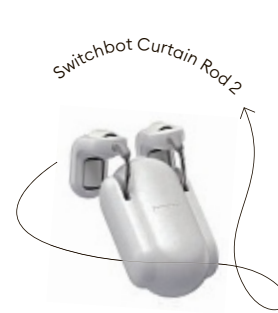
NOT A DRY EYE

In winter, low indoor humidity can be a silent menace; levels can drop to below 30 per cent, and watery eyes and scratchy throats abound. Swiss brand Stadler Form – which, touchingly, gives human names to their products – presents Karl and Karl Big, two energy-efficient humidifiers that deal with the problem consummately. Karl Big has an 11-litre tank and handles rooms as large as 150sq m, while Karl packs about two-thirds of the punch of his brother. They are adjustable via the panel or an app, and their power settings range from one (virtually silent, perfect for overnight operation) to Turbo (boosts humidity levels fast). Unusually for humidifiers, they look great. *Stadler Form Karl*, \$249, and *Karl Big*, \$379



GOT YOU COVERED

Regulating your overnight temperature generally means sticking a leg out or donning bedsocks. EightSleep's system is much smarter and consists of an Active Grid mattress cover that silently moves cooled (or warmed) water underneath you, maintaining an optimum temperature. The hard work is done by a hub that sits nearby and transfers water from its internal tank as necessary. Over a few nights it assesses your thermal needs and lets you set different temperatures for each side of the bed. Data flows as freely as the water; movement, heart and respiratory rates combine to give a detailed picture of sleep health, all accessible via the app. *EightSleep Pod 3 Cover*, £2,195 (double) to £2,495 (super king)



QUICK ON THE DRAW

Civilisation has, thus far, coped admirably without automated curtains, but there are many reasons – security, accessibility, sheer laziness – why they're a great idea. Switchbot makes two models (Curtain and Curtain Rod 2) to cover most domestic curtain set-ups, but the concept is the same: place the device on the rail between the first and second hooks, and on cue (an app tap, a voice command, a programmed schedule or a manual tug) the motor draws the curtain shut. Or open. (NB: if your window has two curtains, you need two devices.) They run for eight months on one charge, but a pair of solar panels (£20 each) can be attached if you resent messing about with a USB cable. *Switchbot Curtain Rod 2*, £85



WALL OF SOUND

Cables are the scourge of the audio enthusiast. Serious set-ups require an abundance of them, but hiding them is a pain. This E120 wall-mounted panel isn't the simplest solution, but it's hugely effective: by running cables behind the wall and ceiling you achieve a seamless merging of sound and space. The panel comes complete with a back box and frame, and can be coupled with discreetly positioned ceiling speakers (Qi 65CBs were used in testing – £119 the pair), or any other passive speaker. It has built-in DAB+ and FM radio, Bluetooth, Aux and optical inputs for connecting TVs, tablets or phones, making it the perfect audio hub for your bedroom. (Or bathroom; it comes with a waterproof remote.) *Q Acoustics E120*, £42



'Plus qu'hier, Moins que demain' (I love you more than yesterday, Less than tomorrow), a gold, ruby and diamond-set pendant. £4,000



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'You captured my heart', a gold, ruby and diamond-set pendant in the form of a heart caught in a mousetrap. £5,250

Love Tokens for Valentine's Day



A forget-me-not brooch set with sapphires, the label reading 'Ne M'oubliez pas', by Van Cleef and Arpels. Paris, c.1950. £15,000



A gold and enamelled 'Ace of Hearts' pendant. £2,750



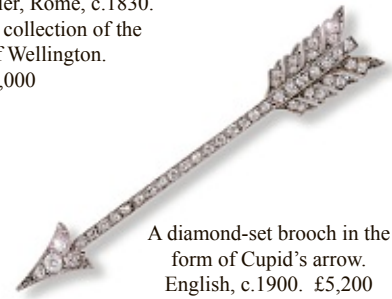
A four-colour gold and gem-set bowenite frame by Carl Fabergé. St. Petersburg, c.1900. £85,000



'The Punishment of Cupid' engraved on sardonyx by Giovanni Pichler, Rome, c.1830. Formerly in the collection of the 2nd Duke of Wellington. £65,000



A pair of star sapphire and ruby earrings mounted in gold. £5,700



A diamond-set brooch in the form of Cupid's arrow. English, c.1900. £5,200



A pair of gold mounted multi-gem cabochon cufflinks. £3,600



A gold, enamelled and gem-set brooch spelling 'Requedo' ('Memento', and thereby 'Remember') by Lucien Falize. Paris, c.1880. £20,000



A pair of gold camelia head earclips centred with a diamond, by Cartier. Paris, c.1960. £18,000



A platinum, sapphire and diamond ring. French, c.1930. £15,000



A gold openwork target brooch, the coral heart pierced with a diamond-set arrow, by Cartier. French, c.1960. £10,800



A citrine and amethyst-set pansy brooch, translating as 'Pensée' in French, symbolising 'Think of the giver'. English, c.1900. £15,000



An 'Apple of my Eye' ring set with diamonds and centred with chrysoprase. £6,000



An Art Deco platinum and diamond bracelet, c.1925. £38,000



A diamond and natural pearl pendant by Carl Fabergé, c.1900. £50,400



A twin heart moonstone and diamond-set ring. English, c.1900. £4,850



A gold and sapphire pendant featuring a young maiden beneath a rose bower, by John Paul Cooper. English, 1925. £13,500



A sapphire and diamond-set stickpin in the form of a vase, by Henri Lavabre. Paris, c.1920. £2,000



A ruby and diamond-set intertwined hearts ring. £6,250



A gold, amethyst and diamond-set ring. French c.1910. £7,800



A gold and gem-set equine stick pin by Paul Robin. Paris, c.1890. £2,300



A silver pendant locket set with turquoise bound by stylised rosebuds, by Liberty & Co. London, c.1900. £5,750

All shown life size

WORDS BY JESSICA BERESFORD

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from the bush at certain times of the day or night, and the store to me is reminiscent of being there. I want people's senses to be heightened when they come in."

Inside, apothecary-style shelves house ceramic and glass bottles in various shapes and gem-coloured tones. A large walnut table in the centre of the shop functions as Witehira's bottling counter, where she combines ingredients sourced from ethical producers around the world.

Despite her classical schooling in Provence's Grasse, Witehira takes a non-traditional approach to her fragrances (from NZ\$265 for 50ml, about £140) – one informed by her childhood spent among New Zealand's aromatic plants. Opia, for example, is made up of mid- and base-notes only, including Australian sandalwood, labdanum absolute and Virginian cedarwood. "It doesn't have the usual top notes in it so it doesn't have a loud, volatile effect when you first smell it," says

"THE SCENT IS A CELEBRATION OF LIFE BUT ALSO OF DECAY"

Witehira. "It hums off the skin, like a whisper." Pūrotu Rose, meanwhile, was inspired by her great-grandfather's *tangi* (funeral): the roses that adorned the tables at the *whare kai* (dining hall), the sweat beading down her cousins' backs as they shovelled the earth, and the smoke from the *hangi*, a traditional Māori meal cooked in the ground. "This is a celebration of his life but also of the decay," adds Witehira. "It's a very polarising fragrance." Others, such as Tobacco Nights, are more conventional, with herbaceous and leathery notes.

These fragrances can be decanted into "Heirloom" perfume bottles with old-fashioned vials and stoppers made in collaboration with local glassblowers, or

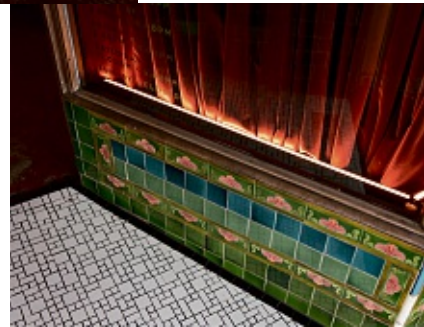
clay and porcelain vessels by ceramicist Kirsten Dryburgh. Another glassblower, Matthew Hall, creates the vessels for Curionoir's signature candles (from about £50), which have a cult following and are sold at retailers including Liberty and Browns in London and Ssense in Toronto.

It's Witehira's ability to trust her senses that has made this small fragrance business based at the bottom of the world a global success. She releases a new fragrance only every couple of years, and bats away most who approach her to collaborate or propose expansion. "I think some people feel pressured – that they need to do new things," she says. "You shouldn't have to conform to those laws.

"My focus is really connecting with my own culture," adds Witehira. She is currently studying *te reo* (Māori language), and she's also been experimenting with native *rakau* (plants), distilling them at home. "I haven't used any [native plants] for our perfumes yet because I have a deeper connection to them... and I refuse to tokenise my culture by just adding a Māori plant into something to make it 'Māori'. But something will happen one day." ■HTSI



Above: Tiffany Witehira in Curionoir. Left: the sampling bottles with glass stoppers. Below: the shop window's velvet curtains



PORCELAIN BOTTLE FROM THE SHAPES COLLECTION



HANDBLOWN GLASS PARFUM BOTTLE



Below: candles and fragrances packaged in porcelain, clay and handblown glass bottles





Above: cocktails at La Bárbara speakeasy. Bottom: Café Unido coffee bar

CAFÉ UNIDO GEISHA COFFEE



DRINKING

Spirit of Panama

Alice Lascelles soaks it all up in the city of rum, seco, cocktails and coffee

There is a moment as you drive out of Panama City on the Pan-American Highway when the city seems to cleave in two. To the right, along the Pacific shoreline, is the ruined splendour of the old town, a flaking jumble of Spanish colonial buildings the colours of Neapolitan ice cream. To the left, along the Costa del Este, modern tower blocks thrust up into the sky, glinting with the soft lighting of myriad penthouse suites. Screw up your eyes and for a moment it could almost be Miami.

Panama City may be a city of contrasts, but it's one bound by sugar-cane spirits: from the glitziest club to the simplest roadside pit-stop, everybody drinks rum or its humbler cousin seco, a grassy white spirit distilled from fresh sugar cane juice.

The real power-player in this market is the family-owned distiller Varela Hermanos, founded in 1908 by a Spanish immigrant. Its brands Ron Abuelo and Seco Herrerano are today as much part of the scenery as Wray & Nephew in Jamaica, or Campari in Milan. Ron Abuelo is distilled from 100 per cent estate-grown sugar cane in the "Spanish style", which means it's distilled in long, tall column stills that tend to produce a spirit that's lighter, more dry and less fruity than Caribbean pot still rum.

Long-ageing in oak casks – accelerated by Panama's hot and humid climate – adds layers of prune, roasted coffee, nuts and melted chocolate; the rums are sweet, but not overpowering, with an elegant silkiness.

I paid a visit to the distillery to taste its new release, Ron Abuelo Three Angels (£59.99 from Hedonism, Master of Malt or Duty Free) – a rich mahogany rum blended exclusively from casks in the top row of the warehouse, where evaporation (also known as the "angel's share") is at its most intense. Its concentrated notes of soft leather, sweet spices, espresso and maple pecan are prime for a digestif. And it lands at a time when the international market is increasingly thirsty for more *recherché* sipping rums.

Panamanians know how to party, and one rite of passage is a trip on one of the *chivas*, or party buses, that tour the streets complete with disco lights, rum-and-mixer drinks and DJ. There is also a side to the

Right: neighbourhood restaurant Maito



nightlife here that is a little more chic. In a handsome old townhouse in the Casco Viejo (Old Town), behind doors the colour of lapis lazuli, is La Bárbara, a speakeasy behind a hair salon. Under high ceilings hung with lampshades made of rattan and dried palm leaves, we drank cocktails with a touch of tiki: fragrant Mai Tais, Jamaican Sours spiked with bitters and seco highballs with pineapple, soda and mandarin syrup. On another sweltering evening, we had drinks in the Pedro Mandinga Rum Bar, where raffia furniture, palms and spinning fans meet a list of more than 50 rums from the Caribbean and Central and South America.

I happened to be at the popular neighbourhood restaurant Maito (drinking a Panamanian rum and coffee Old Fashioned) the night they discovered they'd been voted number six in Latin America's 50 best restaurants for their tongue-twisting fusion of Asian, Creole and Afro-Antillean cuisine. But my favourite restaurant was Intimo, a black-lacquered 28-seater that puts modern spins on traditional Panamanian cooking, which is a melting pot of African, Spanish and Native American influences. Chef Carlos Alba served us crab fritters; citrusy tuna ceviche; black beans, white cheese and fermented watermelon; and almond-scented oatmeal with coffee ice cream. I tried a rum "Negroni" made with Ron Abuelo Two Oaks and a bittersweet Creole orange twist, and Panama's answer to the rum and coke, the pintao or "splash", which sees rum served long with sparkling water and just a dash of cola. There was also a non-alcoholic cooler made with the tangy red juice of the tree tomato, a cousin of the persimmon and passion fruit.

The unrelentingly humid city is awash with things to quench your thirst. Street vendors sell slushy raspados made with ice shaved from giant blocks and topped with syrups, condensed milk and pineapple and sweet-and-sour tamarind. Another speciality is chicheme: a milkshake-like drink studded with sweet little corn kernels that's a bit of an acquired taste.

THE CITY IS AWASH WITH THINGS TO QUENCH YOUR THIRST

Panama's coffee scene has also blossomed in the past few years, partly because it's now a leading grower of Geisha – a perfumed Ethiopian coffee variety that's one of the dearest in the

world. "When coffee tasters first tried it, they were convinced the grinders must have had perfume on their hands," says Benito Bermudez of Café Unido, one of Panama City's top coffee bars. "It has delicate notes of jasmine, peach and lemongrass and a finish that's quite sweet, like brown sugar-cane juice." At Café Unido, I tasted a washed Geisha made with beans from Elida Estate that had aromas of jasmine, maple and fragrant tea, as well as a "natural" Geisha from Don Pachi estate (made from beans that have been dried with the surrounding fruit or "coffee cherry"), which is more bitter and deeply flavoured, with notes of black cherry, mushroom and prune.

Whatever your poison – rum, coffee, cocktails or juice – Panama has an answer. ■HTSI

Alice Lascelles travelled as a guest of Ron Abuelo @alichelascelles



THE VARELA HERMANOS CELLARS

VARELA HERMANOS SECO HERRERANO, €13.50, BEBEVINO.ES



WHERE TO DRINK

- Café Unido** cafeunido.com
- Intimo Restaurant** intimorestaurante.com
- La Bárbara** Calle 10 and Avenida B, Casco Viejo, Panama City (+507-6399 8854)
- Maito** maitopanama.com
- Pedro Mandinga Rum Bar** pedromandinga.com
- Ron Abuelo Hacienda Ttour** ronabuelo.com

WHERE TO STAY

- Hotel La Compañía** in the old quarter is a recent addition to Hyatt's Unbound Collection (and its first hotel in Central America). Arrayed around a lush courtyard, adjoining the crumbling ruins of a neighbouring 18th-century church, it has a rooftop pool and smart lobby bar. hyatt.com
- Sofitel Legend Casco Viejo** is a great white wedding cake on the waterfront with palm-filled terraces, spa treatments and sweeping views. sofitel-legend-panama.com



Right: owner Max Wigram and chef Margot Henderson at The Three Horseshoes in Batcombe. Left: Henderson's beef-shin stew

Think of a country village pub and most people know what it's supposed to be," says former gallerist and investor Max Wigram. "Low ceilings, wooden bar, open fire." It's a vision of cosiness once epitomised by his local The Three Horseshoes in Batcombe, Somerset, a part of the country he's been coming to with his wife, designer Phoebe Philo, and family for 25 years. "The pub was falling to pieces. But you could get a pint of local beer and pork pies with amazing chutney. I loved it."

Despite having no particular wish to own a pub, Wigram told the former landlord that if he was ever thinking about selling, he should call him. Better than The Three Horseshoes, which sits between a 15th-century church and acres of meadows and woodland, be redeveloped as flats. Then came the pandemic. Wigram got the call. And for the past two-and-a-half years, he's been restoring the inn as a luxurious pub with rooms, due to open in March.

Biggest among its attractions will be the food, which is being overseen by chef Margot Henderson of London's acclaimed Rochelle Canteen. "I love eating Margot's food," says Wigram of why he wanted the indomitable New Zealand-born chef onboard. "And I've eaten quite a lot. We go back." Thirty-five years back, to be precise. The two met when Henderson was working at 192 in Notting Hill. (That was before she moved to First Floor Restaurant, The Quality Chop House and The Eagle in Clerkenwell, met her husband Fergus, they opened the French House dining room and two years later in 1994, he left to start St John). Wigram lived around the corner and was a 192 regular.

When Wigram approached Henderson about joining The Three Horseshoes, she was looking for a new project; her catering firm Arnold & Henderson, which she runs with Melanie Arnold and whose clients include Paul Smith, Keira Knightley and the gallerist Sadie Coles, was scaling back. "I've always had fantasies about opening a pub in the countryside," she admits. "But pubs are difficult. They're often falling to bits. You think, 'Oh my God, I can't do this.' So when somebody like Max takes that work on, it's reassuring." It also helped that Henderson had been coming to this part of Somerset for years and felt a connection. That the area was already a foodie destination, via visitors to Bruton, made it a bigger draw. "It's the most exciting

BATCOMBE,
SOMERSET

EATING

The inn crowd

With The Three Horseshoes, Margot Henderson and Max Wigram are opening the most hotly anticipated pub of the year. *Ajesh Patalay gets a first taste*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY EMMA LEWIS

delicious". To follow is charcuterie (and later cheese) from Westcombe Dairy, bread from Landrace Bakery and salad leaves from Charles Dowding's no-dig garden in Homeacres, which are tossed in an "almost drinkable" (and very lovely) dressing that Henderson and head chef Nye Smith (formerly of Rochelle Canteen and Moro) have only just perfected. "I love strong dressings," Henderson says, "but I'm thinking something gentler, more family here." This one contains Dijon mustard, buttermilk, cider and white-wine vinegar, lemon juice and extra virgin olive oil.

The pub is partly a construction site when I visit. But I already get a sense of the transformation under way. The main room, which used to be a separate bar and gloomy parlour, has been opened up into a light-filled space with a wood-burning stove in the middle. The original inglenook fireplace at the far end is still intact, while the green carpets and concrete floor have been ripped up to reveal the original flagstones.

UPSTAIRS, FIVE SPACIOUS BEDROOMS designed with Frances Penn (who also collaborates with her father David Mlinaric) are being installed. Meanwhile the English country garden designed by Libby Russell – a Batcombe resident of 23 years – promises a mix of roses, wildflowers and herbs with an expansive lawn that frames the pub's staggering views of the neighbouring church tower and stone walls.

The changing menus are a work in progress. But it's fun to hear Henderson mulling over the possibilities. "I actually think boiled eggs would be nice. Potted meats. Toasted sandwiches," she says of the bar snacks. "Kippers for lunch," she beams. "Lots of beautiful beef. Vibrant watercress soup. Pork chops. Tarte tatin. Oh, that's a bit French, isn't it? Well, caramelised apple tart.

"We were just talking about pies," she continues, so I ask what constitutes the perfect pie. "Well, it's about

area," she continues of the local produce. "Everyone's got a Tamworth or a bed of asparagus they want to sell."

A preview lunch at the pub kicks off with Wilding cider from Westfield Farm in north Somerset, which Wigram notes approvingly "smells truly



THE THREE
HORSESHOES

braising, obviously. Say it was guinea fowl – a lot of things like trotters help for unctuousness. And the thickness of the pastry – with suet you don't want it too thin because then it's just a crisp lid. We were discussing having a bone in the middle to bring the lid up. And to make it specific to the Three Horseshoes, maybe three horseshoes on top. Oooh, we've gone too far now!" she roars with laughter.

It's the perfect cue for today's main event: a pot of Margot's beef-shin stew with buttery mash and purple sprouting broccoli, and a bottle of Clos La Coutale 2020 Cahors from The Cellarhand in Bruton. It's the kind of hearty, boozy meal that beckons you to the pub even on the glummiest day.

With building work almost done, Wigram allows himself a moment of sentimentality.

His father, property developer Antony Wigram, owned a couple of pubs in London. "Dad and I used to go to antique shops and buy pictures for the pubs," he recalls. Lately, he's been doing the same here, picking out still lifes ("pictures of boiled eggs, lemons, garlic") and portraits. "I can't wait to bring my father," he says.

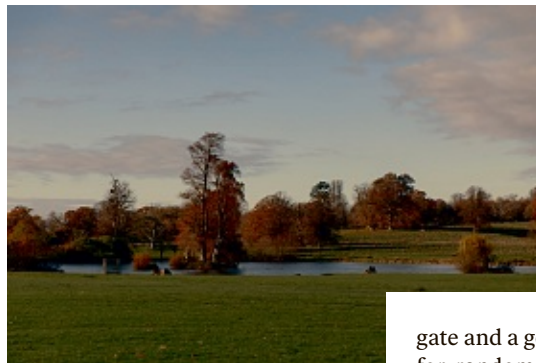
He isn't the only one. The residents of Batcombe are apparently itching to get in after months of making do with drinks in the village hall and the occasional food van. "I can't wait to see the bar," chimes in Henderson of the soon-to-be-extended counter. "And to have a gin and tonic," she adds. Let's call that cook's treat. ■HTSI

Instagram: @ajesh34

HOW TO SPEND IT IN...



Left: Annie Morris, Idris Khan and Pencil the dog outside Petworth Antiques Market (right). Below: the 700-acre deer park at Petworth House



“MOST STOMPS START OR FINISH AT A PUB”

ROAST COD AT THE HALF MOON KIRDFORD



gate and a gothic bench. Petworth Antiques Market is great for random pieces of furniture, antique children's books, Lloyd Loom wicker furniture, ceramics and jewellery for our daughter. We also love Austens hardware store, which has everything we could ever need – paints, presents for the kids and all the supplies required for the five-day electricity blackout we experienced when we first moved here. And there's a lovely florist called Spriggs with panelled walls painted in the most fantastic bright, glossy colours.

While in town, we usually pick up ingredients for a Sunday hog roast from The Hungry Guest, a deli and butcher. It also has the best coffee and cheese. On the way home we'll stop at Charlie's Farm Shop, where you can fill your own bottles with milk and get frozen Yorkshire puddings.

Petworth is surrounded by great little towns and villages waiting to be discovered. We often visit Midhurst Antique and Collectors Fair and Spencer Swaffer Antiques in Arundel, where we go for more traditional and folk art pieces, then head to Arundel Castle, which is magnificent. Amberley Castle, a hotel and restaurant in a 900-year-old crenellated manor house, makes a fantastic stop-off.

Much of our time is spent going for long walks. One favourite begins in the 700-acre deer park and Capability Brown-designed gardens that surround Petworth House – a 17th-century baroque-style mansion filled with Turners – three miles across marshland to the village of Duncton. Most stomps start or finish at a pub. There's The Half Moon in Kirdford, which does the most amazing cauliflower cheese; Badgers is very sweet; The Noah's Ark, right on the cricket green in Lurgashall, is a classic English boozer; and we like The Black Horse Inn in Byworth for drinks. We often walk from our village into Petworth via The Welldiggers Arms.

We've lived in the same house in Islington for more than a decade. We hate change, so shifting our lives towards Petworth has been a huge deal for us. Being here, we're surrounded by wild garlic, bluebell forests, daffodils and, come summer, incredible walls of bright pink rhododendrons. Noticing those fleeting moments in nature has sparked a creative shift. We're two very distinct artists, but as soon as we arrived here we both began making new work.

Recently, we've been working on a joint exhibition at Newlands House Gallery, a beautiful 18th-century townhouse in Petworth, featuring some of the sculptures, watercolours and wall drawings we've been inspired to create since living here. It's a space – and a show – with a domesticated feel. There'll be tapestries and decorated armchairs, and we're even painting the walls the same colours as our cottage. For us, it's a chance to engage with the local community and to welcome them into our world. ■HTSI
Two Worlds Entwined: Annie Morris and Idris Khan is at Newlands House Gallery, Petworth, from 11 February to 7 May

WEST SUSSEX

Artists Annie Morris and Idris Khan on finding inspiration – and antiques – in the South Downs

INTERVIEW BY AIMEE FARRELL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER FLUDE

We landed in West Sussex purely by chance. In 2021, we decided to leave London, and found a barn to rent near Petworth, on the South Downs, initially for a few weeks. But the moment we arrived, we fell for the place, and since finding an isolated pair of 18th-century workman's cottages, hidden in a forest between Petworth and Pulborough, we return most weekends. The light in and around Petworth is so magnificent, you can see why JMW Turner felt compelled to capture it so many times during the early 1800s. Very little has changed in the landscape since.

The longer we stay, the more we discover how many friends we have here – including the architect Adam Richards. Our cottage, which overlooks a trout fishing lake, was once home to the Mitford family. It's a project – we're now building a garden studio.

A trip here typically starts at The Horse Guards Inn, which sits on a hilltop right next to the church in the tiny village of Tillington. It's the friendliest, cosiest, most welcoming pub, and they have biscuits for our dog, Pencil. Saturday is often spent pottering around Petworth. It's a charming little market town, best known for its antiques. It feels untouched; most shops still close on Sundays. We've always loved antiques and flea markets – nothing in our house is new – so we couldn't have picked a more perfect place to live. A favourite dealer is John Bird, who we've been buying from for years – our kitchen table in London comes from there – as well as more recently, a wrought-iron garden



Above: a cobbled street in Petworth. Below: taking a walk in the grounds of Petworth House



RESTAURANTS & PUBS

Amberley Castle
amberleycastle.co.uk
The Angel Inn
angelinnpetworth.co.uk
The Half Moon Kirdford
halfmoonkirdford.co.uk
The Horse Guards Inn
thehorseguardsinn.co.uk
The Noah's Ark
noahsarkinn.co.uk
The Welldiggers Arms
thewelldiggersarms.co.uk

SITES & GALLERIES

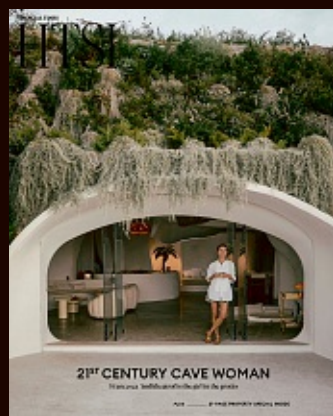
Arundel Castle
arundelcastle.org
Newlands House Gallery
newlandshouse.gallery
Petworth House & Park
nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/sussex/petworth

SHOPS

Austens Home Hardware
localhomehardware.co.uk/austens-petworth
Bear Petworth
bearpetworth.com
John Bird Antiques
johnbirdantiques.com
Petworth Antiques Market
petworthantiquesmarket.com
Spencer Swaffer Antiques
spencerswaffer.co.uk
Spriggs Florist
spriggsflorist.co.uk
Tallulah Fox
tallulahfox.co.uk

FOOD SHOPS

Charlie's Farm Shop
charliesfarmshop.co.uk
The Hungry Guest
thehungryguest.com



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