

WWD



Cartier

WWD WEEKEND

FEBRUARY 2025



Designers'
Favorite
Museums

The 'Quiet'
Facelift

Jaw-Dropping
Jewels

Fantasy!
The allure of couture, spring 2025.

Dream Weavers

We all need to dream – especially these days – and for fans of fashion, there is no greater dream than the couture. Those three or four days in Paris of fantastical designs are the pinnacle of creativity – and proof that fashion can, indeed, at times approach the level of art.

The spring 2025 couture season was no exception, with collections by an alphabet of designers – Ashi Studio to Zuhair Murad, stopping by Chanel, Dior, Germanier, Elie Saab, Schiaparelli and Giambattista Valli along the way. Giorgio Armani celebrated the 20th anniversary of his Privé couture line with a collection that focused on his love of Japan, as well as of China, India, North Africa and Polynesia.

Chanel, awaiting the arrival of new creative director Matthieu Blazy in April, emphasized house founder Gabrielle “Coco” Chanel’s love of color. At Dior, Maria Grazia Chiuri showed her most romantic collection to date, while Elie Saab emphasized denim and Daniel Roseberry at Schiaparelli created uber-opulent hourglass shapes.

Beyond these, two major debuts occurred during the season. At Valentino, new creative director Alessandro Michele produced what WWD Weekend’s Paris bureau chief Joelle Diderich described as “couture for the metaverse era,” a wealth of references so vast that Michele left a stack of papers as thick as a dissertation on each attendee’s seat to describe them. Over at Jean Paul Gaultier, on the other hand, guest designer Ludovic de Saint Sernin left little to the imagination, envisioning a shipwreck where only sexy pirates, mermaids, sea monsters and sailors survived in barely there clothes.

The one thing all of these designs – from Armani’s Eastern embellishments to de Saint Sernin’s body-skimming styles – have in common is that they took literally months to create. The artistry of couture is the antithesis of fast fashion.

WWD Weekend, on the other hand, loves to move fast as our constant goal is to ensure our readers get the most up-to-date images and information out there. So after each show, style director Alex Badia would immediately reach out to the brands to request key looks for our cover shoot, which took place the day after the final couture shows of the season. Photographer Szilveszter Makó, model Aimee Byrne, along with Alex, gathered in a Paris studio three weeks ago and you can now enjoy the artistic results, both the photos and the designs.

But while couture has always been the pinnacle of fashion, there was a time when it was accessible to all via paper patterns that brands from Lanvin to Yves Saint Laurent would sell so women could create their own versions of couture at home. While many of these patterns have disappeared, WWD Weekend executive editor Booth Moore visits the Couture Pattern Museum in Santa Barbara, Calif., whose founder Cara Austine-Rademaker is determined to preserve as many as she can find.

Of course, the couture and Paris go hand in hand, so WWD Weekend also looks at a way even commoners can enjoy a feast meant for royalty thanks to Alain Ducasse, or the lucky can stay in the private apartment of one of the City of Light’s premier restaurants, La Tour d’Argent. Then there is the Palais Royal, which European beauty editor Jennifer Weil reveals is where beauty spots are popping up all over.

This issue, as always, has plenty more about art – from designers’ favorite museums to a new exhibit in London on the late Leigh Bowery and the Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Foundation in Milan; food; beauty (“quiet” facelift, anyone?), and fashion, all aimed to help you indulge, either in reality or just to fantasize.

So sit back, enjoy the issue and, above all:

Have fun.

JAMES FALLON
Chief Content Officer

Georges Hobeika haute couture satin duchesse coat and shoes (worn throughout). Chopard Haute Joaillerie collection necklaces, one featuring diamonds and an emerald set in 18-karat white gold and the second featuring diamonds set in 18-karat white gold.



ON THE COVER
Valentino haute couture tulle and velvet dress with ruffles and faille bow, crinoline and organza underskirt and brocade sandal mule.

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JOHN B. FAIRCHILD (1927-2015)

Fashion's Favorite Museums

During the recent menswear and couture shows in Europe, designers revealed some of their favorite cultural spots, including The Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia in Madrid, the Pinacoteca di Brera in Milan and Kawai Kanjiro's House in Kyoto.

BY MILES SOCHA, LILY TEMPLETON, JOELLE DIDERICH, SAMANTHA CONTI, RHONDA RICHFORD AND ALEX WYNNE

The Louvre's first fashion exhibition – titled “Louvre Couture: Art and Fashion – Statement Pieces” and on display through July 21 – highlights the fact that museums make marvelous mood boards, and provide inspiration galore.

WWD Weekend asked an array of designers during the recent menswear and couture shows in Europe to name their favorite museum in the world, revealing a mix of famous institutions and many lesser-known gems:

GIORGIO ARMANI

“There are two places that hold a special place in my heart. One is in my hometown of Milan. It is the Pinacoteca di Brera, built by Piermarini and located in the Palazzo di Brera, that also hosts the Botanical Garden, the Astronomical Observatory and the Academy of Fine Arts. It is home to masterpieces by great painters such as Caravaggio, Tintoretto, Raffaello, Mantegna and Piero della Francesca, as well as Hayez's iconic ‘The Kiss.’ The Pinacoteca and its treasures are my neighbors in an area that preserves the blend of aristocratic elegance and popular charm that is one of Milan's most enchanting qualities.

“Another museum I like very much is 21_21 Design Sight in Tokyo, envisioned by Issey Miyake and designed by Tadao Ando, the architect behind my Armani Teatro. I'm fascinated by the architecture of the museum, which is nestled into a wedge of earth, giving it a unique and striking character. It also hosts extraordinary design and art exhibitions, the kind that only the Japanese can come up with.”

MARIA GRAZIA CHIURI DIOR

“My favorite museum is the Galleria Nazionale di Arte Moderna in Rome. I remember I used to go there after school and I was so fascinated by the museum's iconic director Palma Bucarelli. My other favorite is the Brooklyn Museum in New York. It has been a formative place in my adult life and it continues to be.”

ANTHONY VACCARELLO SAINT LAURENT

“The MoMA in New York, because every time I go there, I'm always impressed by the exhibitions. In Paris, we have amazing museums, but somehow I rarely go to them because it's my city. In New York it's a way to become more aware of culture and exhibitions that I should see.”

NIGO KENZO

“Kawai Kanjiro's House. This is a really old, Japanese-style house, which has been transformed into a museum. I go there every time I'm in Kyoto. Kanjiro was a ceramic artist and I really like to see his atelier as it is.”

RICK OWENS

“Tate Modern, for the proportions of the rooms, the scale of the rooms, the materials, the way it was updated and modernized. I like the modern industrial proportions.”



The Pinacoteca di Brera art gallery.



Kawai Kanjiro's House.



Calico Museum of Textiles in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India.

GIAMBATTISTA VALLI

“I cannot decide between The Calico Museum of Textiles in Ahmedabad and Palazzo Massimo, The National Roman Museum. In my head, there is a constant conversation between the two.”

PETER COPPING LANVIN

“The V&A still does it for me every time. I was there not so long ago, and went through the plaster room and the British rooms. You know, the first thing you see when you go in is the Henry VIII writing casket. So it doesn't get much more amazing with that.”

BRUNELLO CUCINELLI

“There is no doubt about the beauty and uniqueness of the Louvre or the Uffizi but given my education and my affection for the classic Greek culture, I would say the National Museum in Athens.”

ALESSANDRO SARTORI ZEGNA

“The Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia in Madrid for Pablo Picasso's ‘Guernica.’”



Richard Serra “Torqued Ellipses” at Dia Beacon.

ALEXANDRE MATTIUSI

AMI PARIS

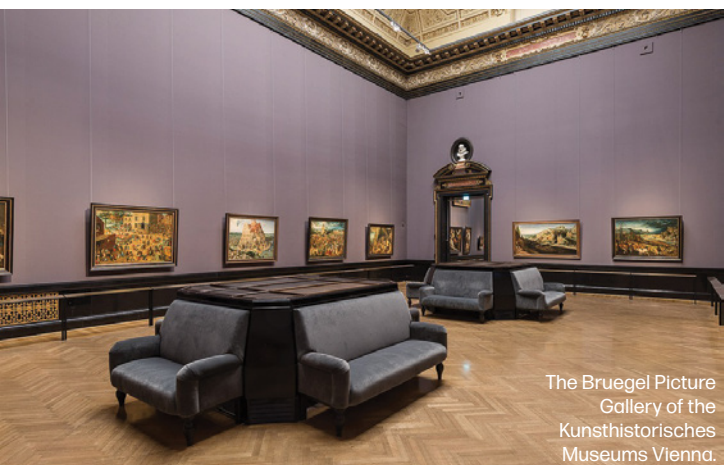
“The Dia Beacon. It's so big, so quiet. It's like two hours from New York by train. You arrive in this little village, you walk a little bit and you alight on this museum, which is so big. I've been there two or three times, and every time I'm nearly alone in the museum.”

NORBERT STUMPFL BRIONI

“The one I love the most is the Palazzo Altemps in Rome. It's a museum which is very stylish with Roman, Greek and Egyptian antiquities. The museum is next to Piazza Navona in a 15th-century palazzo. The rooms are not crowded and there are hardly any tourists who go there. A real gem in Rome.”

KIM JONES

“I'd have to be biased and say The Charleston Trust, because I'm the vice president – of course. It's a place of constant inspiration for me. My whole collection will go there and I'll build the Virginia Woolf Library there as well. I've been doing things with Sotheby's, with Bloomsbury as well. It's helping find pieces for the trust that they're looking for. Things come out of the woodwork if you talk about it and show it, so it helps.”

Leeum Samsung
Museum of Art in Seoul.The Bruegel Picture
Gallery of the
Kunsthistorisches
Museums Vienna.George Rickey's "Three squares"
art installation in Naoshima, Japan.**ADEJU THOMPSON** LAGOS SPACE PROGRAMME

"I would say my favorite museum is probably the V&A, because obviously I'm really into decorative arts. But also the Museum of Decorative Arts here in Paris, I was really obsessed with this. I love spaces where I can study the craftsmanship of clothes, things from the 18th century [and] 19th century. That really informs me. André Leon Talley talked about this idea of exposing yourself to things that you admire, and building a vocabulary from that, so I love to go to a lot of decorative museums that have a lot of furniture, textiles, paintings, just craftsmanship. I always find myself going to these sorts of museums, but any museum really to look at art, contemporary art. I'm generally just hungry to soak up beautiful things."

JUNG WOOK-JUN JUUN.J

He names Leeum Samsung Museum of Art as his favorite. Consisting of two parts, one dedicated to traditional Korean art and the other to contemporary art, it is located in the Hannam-dong area of Seoul. "It's so poetic," he adds.

MASSIMO GIORGETTI MSGM

"The Tate Modern in London. Every time I visit the city, I never miss the chance to go there on a Sunday morning, enjoy its architecture and soak in the energy of the area around it. It's a museum where there's always something amazing to see, like the 'Electric Dreams' exhibition, which explores tech art from the pre-internet era."

YUSUKE TAKAHASHI CFCL

The 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa in Japan because "it opened in the 2000s when I was a student, and I have visited it very regularly." He lauds the contribution to the development of Japanese contemporary art of the museum's director Yuko Hasegawa. "The content of 'Dancing With All: The Ecology of Empathy,' which she is currently curating, is also impressive, with a powerful display of works that are timely and attract visitors," he adds. Takahashi also recently designed uniforms for the institution's staff and docents.

KIKO KOSTADINOV

While Kiko Kostadinov mostly heads to galleries for his art fix these days, he says he enjoyed going to Tate Modern in his early days in London – "but I haven't committed to that in a while, you need a half-day," he admits – and also names the Bourse du Commerce.

KÉVIN GERMANIER

He cites the Musée Suisse de la Mode in Yverdon, thanks to its permanent collections spanning from the 18th century to the present day. It also houses the archives of Germanier's forerunner, Paris-based Swiss designer Robert Piguet, whose fashion house was also behind famed scent Fracas.

FENG CHEN WANG

Her favorite is the Saatchi Gallery. "It's congruent with what I love as well," she says. "Contemporary and creativity that starts from a young age."

GUILLAUME HENRY PATOU

"That's really complicated – I love them all, absolutely all; I'm an absolute museum fan. In Paris, there are so many that are a bit secret, which I love even more." The first two that came to mind were the Gustave Moreau museum in Paris and Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna in Austria's capital, home to the most important and largest collection of Dutch Flemish Renaissance artist Pieter Bruegel the Elder.

CHARLES JEFFREY

"My favorite museum – and it might sound a bit cliché – is the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. I just had so many amazing experiences as a young person traveling there." Another art-centric favorite for the London-based designer is the White Cube gallery, "a total gem" where he first discovered the work of Gilbert and George after moving to London in 2007.

VIKTOR & ROLF

Viktor Hosting and Rolf Snoeren, the design duo behind Viktor & Rolf, name Japan's "art islands" Teshima and Naoshima. "They were amazing, really fantastic," Snoeren says. "There are a few monumental works in the public space that are very impressive."

PAUL SMITH

In 2013, the designer was tapped to art direct an exhibition at Musée National Picasso, in Paris – and loved every minute. "They said they were looking for something very different to what has been done before in that museum or in any museum. What a humbling task and wonderful, amazing and quite overwhelming request."

PIERRE MAHÉO OFFICINE GÉNÉRALE

The Louvre. "I love the inside and the outside. It's so grandiose. Built three centuries ago, it's still standing and evokes such emotion."

VÉRONIQUE NICHANIAN HERMÈS

The Louvre and The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. "I was recently in Chicago and visited. Wow – I loved it."

JERRY LORENZO FEAR OF GOD

Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City, Mo. "My grandfather played in the Negro Leagues, so the museum is rich with family history," says Lorenzo whose grandfather, Lorenzo Manuel, was a pitcher for the Atlanta Black Crackers. Lorenzo also says Jackie Robinson started his career in the Negro Leagues, led the way for Black players in Major League Baseball and the U.S. Civil Rights movement.

YOHJI YAMAMOTO

"My favorite museum depends on who is showing there at any given time. I am busy, and because of the war [in Ukraine] it takes more than 15 hours to fly to Europe, which means I have to be very selective about which exhibitions I see."

SIMON HOLLOWAY DUNHILL

"The ones that feel special to me are the smaller-scale museums such as the Neue Galerie New York. It's a beautiful mansion, and it has a very narrow curation of pieces of the Wiener Vorstädte, including ones by Egon Schiller and Gustav Klimt. I also love the coffee shop, the book shop and the gift shop there.

"And in London, my absolute favorite museum is the Sir John Soane's Museum. Again, it's all filtered through the eye of a collector. His collection of antiquities and art is all housed in his original townhouse in London, and they give tours by candlelight. It's really an incredible experience and something very, very unique in the world."

MIHARA YASUHIRO MAISON MIHARA YASUHIRO

"The Whitney Museum in New York, because when I visited this museum, they had an exhibition that focused on contemporary art. When I was an art student in the late '80s and '90s, contemporary art was very present everywhere. That's why I love contemporary art."

GHERRARDO FELLONI ROGER VIVIER

"My favorite museum in the world is probably the archeological museum of Naples, because it's one of the most beautiful collections of marble and statues from the ancient world. When I see this museum, I say, 'Oh my god, it's beautiful, beautiful, beautiful.' There's a sense of beauty in the statues, but at the same time there's a sense of sadness. All this stuff was underground, forgotten for hundreds of years."

EMERIC TCHATCHOUA 3.PARADIS

"I think my favorite museum in the world is the Met, there are so many historical pieces you can see there as a fashion fanatic. I really enjoy discovering new stories every year about costume in the Met. There is also a gallery called Stems Gallery in Brussels that I love, they always show emerging artists, and it's totally in line with my aesthetic."





NO METEORITE DIAL THE SAME

The OMEGA Constellation collection has long been inspired by the precise movement of the stars. That stellar theme continues with a new range of models featuring distinctive dials created from meteorite. Thanks to the natural pattern found within this rare space material, every slice is unique, guaranteeing that no two dials will ever appear the same. This 28 mm stainless steel and 18K Sedna™ Gold version has been given a blue colour treatment, further enhancing the design with maximum impact.


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The Breakout Stars of Sundance 2025

The Sundance Film Festival, held in late January, once again brought independent film of all variations to Park City, Utah. Here, a look at some of the names to know from the festival. BY LEIGH NORDSTROM AND KRISTEN TAUER PHOTOGRAPHS BY LEXIE MORELAND

John Magaro

Sundance project “Omaha,” a quiet drama about a father on a mysterious road trip from Utah to Nebraska with his two young children and dog.

Notable past credits Magaro appears in “September 5,” and starred in 2023 breakout Sundance hit “Past Lives.”

Magaro leads Cole Webley’s feature debut “Omaha” as a young widowed dad of two children. The family has fallen on hard times, and at the start of the film, they are evicted from their home and set out on a roadtrip from Utah to Nebraska. Neither the kids nor the audience know why they’re headed there, but suspicion starts to creep in midway through the film.

“I think most fathers can relate to that feeling of being desperate and wanting to keep a good facade up to protect your children,” says Magaro, whose daughter is almost 5. “And then the nightmare of potentially losing your children – I mean, that’s most parents’ biggest fear. You can’t help but think of, god, what if I was in those shoes?”

Much of the film’s power is conveyed in the unspoken moments onscreen, as the trio stops to fly kites at the Bonneville Salt Flats, for lunch at a roadside fast-food restaurant, and at the zoo in Omaha.

“I like directors or writers who are willing to let silence tell the story,” Magaro says. “Where only the things that need to be said are said, and letting everything else play through the silences. I think that’s one of the most magical things about cinema.” – KRISTEN TAUER



Hailey Gates

Sundance project Gates is the writer and director of “Atropia,” starring Alia Shawkat, Callum Turner, Chloë Sevigny and Tim Heidecker. The movie, which is produced by Luca Guadagnino, is a feature adaptation of Gates’ 2019 short film “Shako Mako,” which was part of Miu Miu’s “Women’s Tales” film program.

Notable past credits As an actor, Gates has appeared in films like “Challengers” – which is how she connected with Guadagnino – and “Uncut Gems.” She hosted the Viceland series “States of Undress,” which examined fashion in various countries like Pakistan and Venezuela.

Gates and Shawkat, who is Iraqi, have long been friends, and after doing the short together were both in “frustrated moments in our artistic lives” when they decided to pursue a feature-length version.

“We went out to the desert. [Alia] was trying to make a television show about her family because her dad owned a strip club, and I was like, ‘let’s just go shoot something.’ So we went out there with a friend, a camera and sound, and we shot two days and we made this little thing and we sort of looked at each other. We were like, ‘Why aren’t we doing this? Why aren’t we making something together?’” Gates recalls.

Shortly after, while on the set of “Challengers,” Guadagnino challenged her to write a script and send it to him.

“I hope it makes people laugh. I hope it makes them think,” Gates says. “I hope it is a portrait of how flimsy the American Empire is.”

– LEIGH NORDSTROM

Stephanie Sukanami

Sundance project “Opus,” the A24 thriller from writer/director Mark Anthony Green starring Ayo Edebiri, John Malkovich, Juliette Lewis and more. After premiering at Sundance, the movie comes out in theaters March 14.

Notable past credits Sukanami, known online as @steph_shep, first rose to fame as Kim Kardashian’s assistant, eventually becoming chief operating officer of Kardashian West Brands. An environmental activist, she founded a “climate club” called Future Earth and has worked with organizations in the space including Al Gore’s The Climate Reality Project. Sukanami and Green first met at San Vicente Bungalows back in 2019 through a mutual friend, and connected over their Midwestern roots – he’s from Kansas City, Mo., and she’s from Ontario, Ohio.

“It was my first meeting with someone about a potential role,” she recalls. Green explained his vision for “Opus” and told her about a potential part for her, but she tried not to get her hopes up.

Within a few weeks of sending in her audition tape, Sukanami was touching down in Santa Fe, New Mexico, to begin filming.

“Leading up to it I was very nervous just because it was my first feature film and my first experience shooting something like this,” she says. “But for some reason, the second I got there, I was like ‘I’m OK. This is good.’ I really want to attribute this to Santa Fe – the energy in Santa Fe is so magical and special and I fell in love with the city. I’m so grateful we got to shoot there because there is something very grounding and calming about Santa Fe.” – L.N.





GUCCI

Fall Winter 2025 Fashion Show
Tuesday, February 25, 2025 at 3 p.m.
Superstudio Maxi, Via Moncuoco 35, Milan

Tonatiuh

Sundance project “Kiss of the Spider Woman,” from “Chicago” writer and “Dreamgirls” director Bill Condon, is a screen adaptation of the Terrence McNally theater production, which in turn was based on the 1976 novel by Manuel Puig. The film stars Tonatiuh alongside Jennifer Lopez and Diego Luna.

Notable past credits The actor, who goes by just his first name, was recently seen in the Netflix holiday season thriller “Carry On.”

“Kiss of the Spider Woman” is set in an Argentinian prison in the early ‘80s, following Molina, played by Tonatiuh, a gay hairdresser serving a sentence for corrupting a minor.

“Molina, one of the characters I play, he felt like a loser in life, and he’s living in an authoritarian government that wrongfully imprisoned him, which is a metaphor for the imprisonment that he feels inside of his own body and inside of his own culture. And that was a lot of my lived experience,” Tonatiuh says.

Born and raised in Los Angeles, Tonatiuh got to live out his “secret dream” of musical theater during the film’s three-plus-month shoot in New York. Many of the film’s dancers are Broadway performers, and in his spare time he’d get to go watch their shows.

“I’m a theater nerd. That’s what I grew up on,” he says. “And also working with the legends, literally doing musical numbers with Jennifer Lopez and Diego Luna and working with Bill f-king Condon...the theater nerd in me really just was coming alive.” — L.N.



Russell Tovey

Sundance project “Plainclothes,” a drama about an undercover cop, played by Tom Blyth, who falls in love with one of his targets.

Notable past credits Tovey starred as John O’Shea in “Feud: Capote vs. The Swans.” Other projects include “American Horror Story: NYC” and the HBO series “Looking.”

“I’ve always been drawn to familial stories,” says Tovey of “Plainclothes,” directed and written by first-time feature filmmaker Carmen Emmi. “This film feels very domestic. It’s huge for emotions, but it’s simple: it’s two people meeting.”

Set in the ‘90s, “Plainclothes” is about an undercover cop in Syracuse, N.Y., who entraps gay men at a mall. But when the cop meets Tovey’s character Andrew, it’s love – and lust – at first sight. Neither men are publicly out about their sexuality, and the situation is further complicated; Andrew is married with children. Tovey describes the film’s premise as “kind of a tricky romance; a coming-of-age romance.”

Although a period piece, Tovey nods to the importance of continuing to tell queer stories onscreen, especially as LGBTQIA+ rights are under attack. “To have visibility, to be something that people can cling to, can be educated by, can understand, can feel empathy for...,” he says, “elevating these movies is incredibly important.” — K.T.

Katarina Zhu

Sundance project Zhu wrote, directed, and stars in “Bunnylovr,” an intimate drama costarring her former New York University classmate and close friend Rachel Sennott.

Notable past credits Zhu earned her BFA in acting from NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts in 2018.

In her first feature film “Bunnylovr,” Zhu stars as a cam girl who receives an unusual gift from an online client: a white rabbit. Offline, the girl reconnects with her dying father, as she navigates the various complicated relationships in her life. Sennott, who helped produce the film, stars as the girl’s artist best friend.

“I was interested in exploring that space you’re in when you’re really heartbroken and you’re so much more willing to do things that you might not normally do,” Zhu says. “Because you feel so vulnerable, and you’re seeking validation and seeking to fill a void. And so you might, you know, accept a bunny from a stranger online,” she adds. “And from there it sort of became this more holistic exploration of a young woman and her relationship with the men in her life, and her trying to find a sense of direction and purpose and claim agency for herself.” — K.T.



CANALI

Inner Beauty

The Baron Esterhazy Rants About Tech, Travel and TMI

The Hungarian noble on the things that continue to get under his skin.

BY LOUIS J. ESTERHAZY

Editor's note: *The Hungarian Countess Louise J. Esterhazy was a revered – and feared – chronicler of the highs – and generally lows – of fashion, society, culture and more. Over the course of several decades (although she never really counted and firmly avoided any reference to her age), the Countess penned her missives from her pied-à-terres in Manhattan, Nantucket, Paris, London and Gstaad, as well as wherever her travels took her, from California to Morocco.*

And it seems the Esterhazy clan by nature is filled with strong opinions, because WWD Weekend has now been contacted by the Countess' long-lost nephew, the Baron Louis J. Esterhazy, who has written from Europe to express how numerous elements of modern life are irksome to the point of rage.

It's surely a truism that older folk like to rant about unimportant stuff that gets under their skin – or is it just me? About a decade ago, a couple of my offspring, tired of hearing their old man moan about irrelevant irks, encouraged me to take to what was then Twitter, so I could, like Typhon in Greek mythology, hurl my epithets at the sea. It quickly proved pointless when I struggled to reach over a few score followers and quite evidently, no one cared.

But now, I have you dear WWD Weekend reader, and I wonder how many of my little irritants will have you quietly smirking and thinking, “Yes indeed, that can be really annoying.”

I am surely not alone when I yell down the telephone, “Well, clearly my call is not that important to you, otherwise you wouldn't have left me on hold, being waterboarded by infernal Muzak for the last 23 minutes.”

And while industry regulators are literally in existence to care about us customers, do they really believe that we listen to, read, understand or remotely absorb the ludicrous disclaimers produced at the end of all pharma or financial product ads? If you really want your head to spin, you can do much worse than listen to the verbal soup delivered at warp-speed that end all Portuguese financial product advertisements. Walt Disney himself could not have contrived a better (or faster) voice for one of his unlikely talking animals. Daffy Duck makes more sense.

We are oft told that a well-meaning corporate has invested in the latest technology “in order to enhance the customer experience.” That is now “the experience,” which requires one to undertake all the work that was once the responsibility of a keen employee, with a career ambition perhaps or maybe a family to support. Today, my parents' generation would be stranded at home, probably staring at the wall as they would be utterly baffled as to how to book a flight or hotel room, having always relied entirely on a cheery travel agent or willing member of staff helpfully at the end of a telephone. These days, even if they did get as far as buying the air ticket, the wretched self check-in and baggage labeling process would floor them. Increasingly, they would struggle to eat in a restaurant or be entertained at home, because downloading QR codes, entering user IDs and passwords can be the norm for something as mundane as reviewing a menu or firing up a movie from a streaming service. Even the old friendly face behind the counter in the local burger joint is now a silently glowing screen.

When one does come face-to-face with an eatery team member (aka a waiter), one is instantaneously required to be on a first-name basis following the strangely dispassionate and anodyne introduction, which seems unfairly asymmetrical to the seated guest. I have a friend who, following the “Hi, my name is Colin, and I'll be your wait-person this evening,” makes the whole table of his co-guests stand up, introduce themselves by their first name and decorously shake Colin warmly by the hand. Give it a go. It's only fair, no?

While on the subject of restaurants, the current fad of small plate menus and sharing plates can infuriate. A hospitality insider tells me they materially increase the establishment's profit margin, as we all know the person who doesn't like to share (er, OK, me!) or places the order for the “grilled sweetbreads with pig's trotter,” knowing the dish will categorically not be partook by anyone else at the table. The result apparently is inevitable over-ordering compared to the traditional linear approach of “each to their own,” literally.

Alice Brady and Adolphe Menjou in “Gold Diggers of 1935.”



The celebrated “chef's table” is another clever, bottom-line booster. Here's the idea: Carve out some beastly, cramped space inside the kitchen where, in days gone by, customers were prohibited. Then charge the poor suckers a hefty premium to watch the action (branding it “theater”), get to listen to the shouts, cursing and abuse and share in the heat, steam and sweat and then, return home, relishing in the smell of fried squid in one's hair and on one's clothes. And then you get to brag about it to one's friends. Crafty, eh?

Some people think it cool to import the restaurant culture into the privacy of the home. Nothing at all wrong with hiring a caterer to do the thing that you might not enjoy or are, admit it, just no damned good at. But, along the lines of the “chef's table,” the cook behind the old “green baize door” has now become a performance artist, too, frequently being wheeled out to the assembled guests, encouraged to interrupt all conversation and launch into an all-too-detailed blow-by-blow, ingredient-by-ingredient description of what one is about to eat...only to be repeated before each and every course. And then the guests are expected to applause.

Seriously? I am often tempted to stand up and present said chef with a huge bouquet of flowers, as if to the prima ballerina at the final curtain call at Lincoln Center.

Talking of having to listen involuntarily to people mouthing off on subjects that should be banned, the recitation of a prior night's dream has to be the worst. The German wife (aka the GeneralQuartierMeister), after decades of marriage still believes I will take an interest in her nonsensical ramblings, which apparently constitute her dreams. She follows me from room to room recounting some tale of utter gibberish, before I have even had my first cup of coffee. It's cruel, but she seems to think it funny, watching me lock myself into the bathroom and turn on the faucet to drown out her wittering. One day, I might reach for a pair of scissors. Yes, you read my confession here.

Of course, that's if I can find the wretched scissors, because these days they are deployed on a quotidian basis – simply to open something as mundane as a pack

of bacon. Sometimes I think I should start a finger-gym for oldies. When the packaging politely demands you “Peel here,” I know without trying that my poor digits won't get the required purchase, let alone have the power to pull and separate the vacuum-packed seal. It really shouldn't take a chainsaw to access a packet of my beloved Polish kabanosy, should it?

And don't get me started on Millennials and their backpacks. We recently attempted to enjoy the brilliant Vincent van Gogh exhibition at London's National Gallery. I could just about tolerate the teeming crowd, but not the backpacks. What do these people carry in them? They all look as if they were heading off for a weekend's camping in Devon. We all know they carry copious amounts of water; multiple liter bottles crammed into webbed side pockets... as if the camping trip is a Special Forces expedition set in the Mojave Desert and they are unlikely to come across another water source for a week. But because these backpacks swell the individual's regular girth two or three times over, they unwittingly swing round, obviously knocking me over like a bowling pin. After the third take-down, I had to flee the gallery for my life. I will do a lot for culture, but not be wheeled out on a gurney.

And lastly, a new gripe that I discovered only recently and can really only develop with the onset of meaningful age. It's that moment when you are finally required to call a financial services provider that has been inactive and dormant for years, if not decades. In my case, this was a long-past pension provider I had not spoken to for nearly 30 years. And then come the security questions.

“What is the name of your first pet”. OMG, I thought... would have I given the name of one of my parent's dogs, that goldfish I had at age 8, the parrot my mad sister gave me when I was in my 20s. I failed six animal names in a row.

Next: “What is your favorite place?” I thought hard. We were just married when I set up this account, utterly childless and irresponsible party animals. With futility, I reeled out the names of a couple of favorite night clubs and bars we used to haunt. And, again, failed.

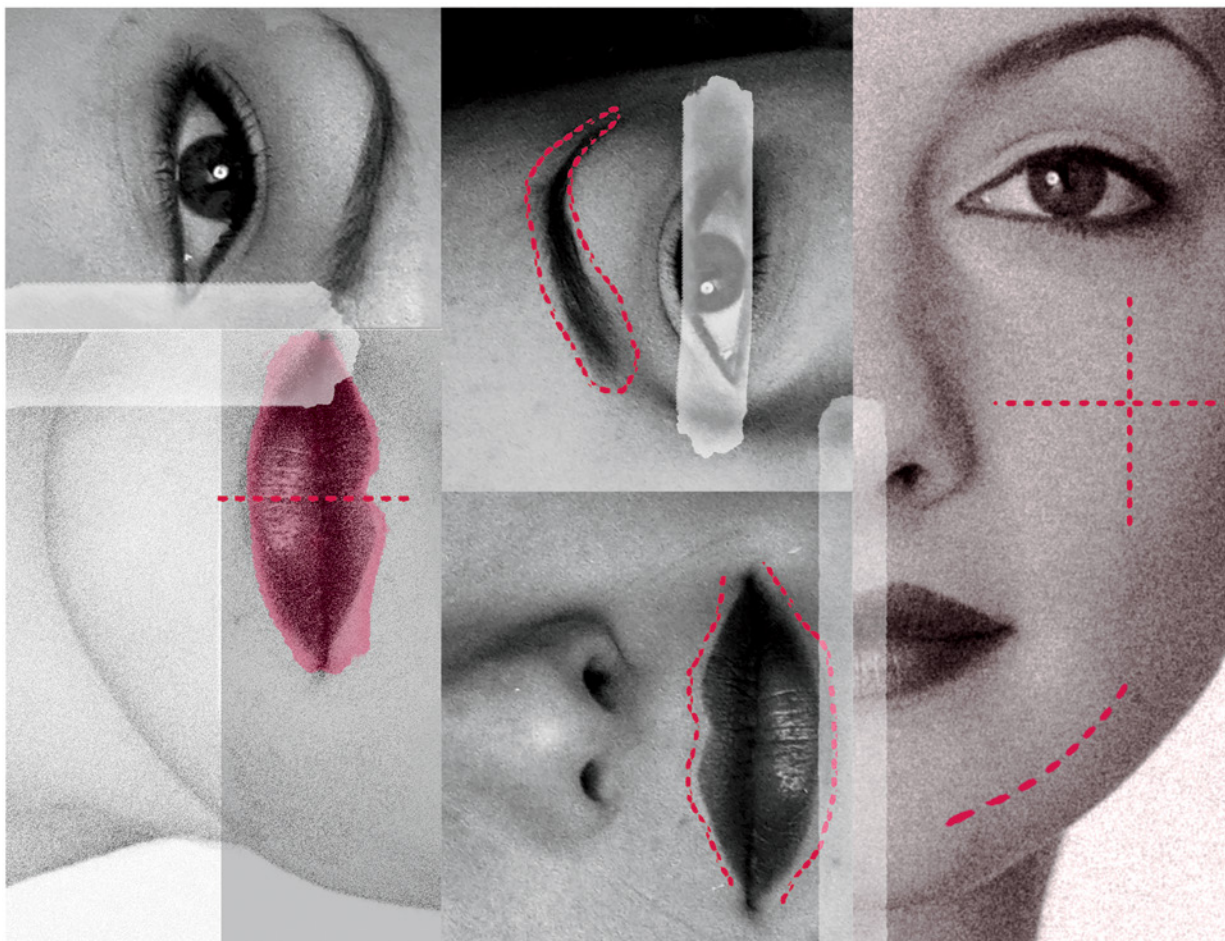
Whatever happened to your mother's maiden name? Rant over. And man, do I feel better!



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The ‘Quiet Facelift’ Boom

Polished techniques for an undetectable look, celebrity openness and – you guessed it – Ozempic are some of the factors driving an uptick in the number of people taking the plunge.

BY KATHRYN HOPKINS

Just the mention of a facelift used to evoke images of tightly pulled skin and a permanently shocked expression.

These days, though, the increasing number of celebrities looking like they have been drinking from the fountain of youth indicate that techniques have evolved to give an undetectable, but “refreshed” look.

That, combined with the explosion of weight loss drugs on the market, has led to a spike in demand for the surgery despite the eye-watering cost, which can run from tens of thousands of dollars up to hundreds of thousands for top surgeons on both coasts – some of whom have trademarked their techniques. Think: Ponytail Facelift, the signature procedure of L.A. plastic surgeon Dr. Chia Chi Ka.

“Cost is pretty variable and depends on several things including where you are geographically,” says Dr. Prem Tripathi, a facial plastic surgeon in the San Francisco Bay Area. “I’ve seen facelifts as low as \$15,000 and as high as \$300,000, depending on the location.”

According to the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery’s most recent data, the number of facelifts increased 8 percent year-over-year in 2023, outpacing the previous 8 percent growth rate that took place over a three-year time frame from 2019 to 2022.

“We are in a ‘quiet’ facelift era, where patients are opting for deep-plane face and neck lifts earlier and temporarily stepping out of the spotlight for one to two months,” says facial plastic surgeon Dr. Akshay Sanan, who operates in the Boston area. “Advances in deep-plane facelift and neck lift techniques have enhanced precision and reduced recovery time. The focus is now on creating subtle yet meaningful, natural results.”

At the same time, while some celebrities have kept silent on what procedures they’ve had, others (Catt Sadler, Marc Jacobs and Caroline Stanbury among them) have started to be more open about having facelifts.

“More people are seeking out facelifts because it’s become a more socially accepted procedure than it used to be,” notes Dr. Rukmini Rednam, a plastic surgeon operating in Houston. “Some celebrities have been more open about it while others haven’t. The average person notices those in the public eye looking younger, with the obvious reason being facial rejuvenation.”

From the early 2000s to just before the COVID-19 lockdown, Botox and filler were the go-to treatments in cosmetics. But during the pandemic more people started going under the knife, driven in part by constantly looking at themselves in Zoom meetings (coupled with the fact that patients could keep their recoveries private during lockdown).

The trend has only intensified despite society opening back up.

“There was a bit of a pendulum where it went very far over to non-surgical solutions and everybody was looking to avoid surgery, and the Joan Rivers of the world kind of gave facelifts a bad name,” says Dr. Cory Goldberg, a Toronto-based plastic surgeon. “The past five years has seen a shift in that mentality as the sort of really overdone, overfilled look has played out, and people recognize that the non-surgical solution isn’t really giving them what they want. Through the pandemic, there was a shift of people interested in facelifts, neck lifts and facial rejuvenation surgery and that’s increased even more since the end of the pandemic.”

As for the weight loss factor, Dr. Daniel Gould, a plastic surgeon in Beverly Hills, tells WWD Weekend that around 30 to 40 percent of his patients take GLP-1s.

“Patients undergo not just deflation, but also skin quality changes and other structural changes with the use of these medications. It’s really fueling face surgery, because if you lose even 30 to 40 pounds on these medications, it makes a significant difference,” he said.

“These patients need a multipronged approach. It’s not just a face lift. We’re adding fat back in. I’m using topical medications with vitamin A, but we’re also rejuvenating the skin in other ways, with CO2 lasers, radio frequency and micro-needling.”

TikTok, which was shuttered in the U.S. last month only to reappear 12 hours later, also played a part in demand, especially in terms of trends.

Dr. Jason B. Diamond, a Beverly Hills celebrity facial plastic surgeon with his own skin care brand Metacine, has been performing deep-plane facelifts since the ‘90s and over the past few years has seen a surge in patients asking for this surgery.

“In this world in particular, there’s a lot of buzzwords that go viral and gain popularity, and they pop up and they go down, and they pop and they heat up and they die down,” he says. “From 2000 into probably 2010 every single facelift consult I did, I spent that entire hour talking about the deep-plane facelift, why I thought it was best, what the differences are. Then after several years of developing my reputation, eventually people just came in and said, ‘Doc, I don’t even care. Just do what you think is best.’ In 2021 I’d say, I started hearing the term pop up. I think some people marketed on social media made the term go viral. Now every single person says, ‘can we do the deep-plane facelift?’”

His version involves a skin elevation and dissection of the

underlying facial tissue and muscle. “Once the muscle layer is mobilized or freed from its surrounding structures, it is then re-suspended upward towards the top of the ear. This addresses the deeper structures of the face, tightening and lifting the SMAS layer, without pulling only the skin. This allows a more comprehensive lift via all structures, so that the skin does not look too pulled. I want a comprehensive, natural result for my patients. The excess skin is then re-draped and trimmed, and the incision is closed.”

But he cautions that just because people ask for a certain type of procedure, it doesn’t mean it’s appropriate. “There’s no one solution for everybody. There’s no one magic way to do it. It’s an artistic endeavor. It’s a matter of doing what’s best for that person. It’s not a recipe like you’re cooking chicken parmesan; it’s the same every time. It’s not like that. And so there’s a million modifications, and we continue to hone our techniques, and we continue to modify based on what we’re seeing over long periods of time, to make these procedures perfect.”

As for the age range of people seeking a facelift, New York-based plastic surgeon Dr. Adam Kolker is seeing more patients in their early 50s and some begin the conversation in their mid-to-late 40s.

Still, despite speculation on social media that celebrities as young as in their 20s are getting facelifts, he says this is rare.

“You have to be really thoughtful about the benefits and the risks of any procedure, as there is no treatment that is completely risk-free. Even nonsurgical treatments, including injectable fillers, have potential drawbacks, and in certain scenarios surgery may be both more effective and safer,” he says.

“The early signs of facial aging may become manifest in the 30s and 40s, but the collective decision between patient and surgeon to do a facelift is not necessarily related to how severe the problem is, but rather how the individual perceives it.”

For those not wanting surgery, Gabby Garritano, founder and chief executive officer of medical spa Ject, offers a multiple-pronged approach to give clients a non-surgical lifted look.

“It’s not just how do we lift the skin and tighten the skin, but it’s really looking at the face and even the neck as well, and treating it holistically. It’s usually done with a combination of wrinkle reducers or Botox injections. With Botox, when you’re treating the lower face, we have muscles that are acting as depressors, like the platysma muscle, the mentalis, the DAO muscles, so those muscles are pulling down on the face and when we inject Botox into those areas, we get kind of the reverse effect, where we see a lift in the mid-face. That’s a really nice starting place for people,” she says.

“One thing about surgery is you really can’t go back from surgery. For patients that are like, ‘I’m just going to jump in and get a facelift,’ and they haven’t even tried injectables or even some of the modalities that we have with our lasers and micro-needling, with radio frequencies, CO2 lasers, things like that, why don’t you just spend a year and try some of the non-surgical techniques?”

Dr. Saami Khalifian, a cosmetic dermatologist and surgeon based in San Diego, also stresses that a facelift doesn’t necessarily mean that you won’t still need additional non-surgical procedures.

“When people get facelifts, the idea that they will no longer do Botox or filler or laser is inaccurate. Like, if you spent \$100,000 on a facelift, the notion that you’re not going to protect that investment with like medical grade skin care, with Botox, with simulators, with laser, is just not correct. And so that’s one of the things that I often will tell patients is the chances of you needing to do additional things after the facelift are pretty high.”

A MODERN, HISTORICAL MASHUP

FASHION CITY: DUBLIN

The capital of Ireland emerges as a unique fashion capital with a rich heritage and modern flair.



began to develop a more distinct fashion identity. This era saw the emergence of boutiques and independent designers who contributed to a growing fashion-conscious public. The fashion scene during these decades was significantly influenced by music, film and cultural shifts – echoing global movements.

Notable designers from Dublin include Sybil Connolly, a pioneering haute couture designer known for revitalizing Irish linen in the 1950s. Her designs were seen on celebrities including Jacqueline Kennedy. Paul Costelloe, while London-based, also hails from Dublin “and has significantly influenced the fashion scene with his elegant and innovative designs often showcased at London Fashion Week,” according to Badia who added that another significant contemporary designer, Louise Kennedy, is known for sophisticated and timeless designs that blend modern couture and a high level of craftsmanship.

Other notables include hat designer Philip Treacy, London-

based but hailing from Ahascragh. His hats have fetched four-figure sums. Also of note is Simone Rocha, a designer who trained at the National College of Art and Design in Dublin, and whose father is fashion designer John Rocha.

CURRENT FASHION TRENDS IN DUBLIN

Recently, Dublin's fashion has embraced both global trends and local inspiration. The current trends reflect a move towards sustainable and ethical fashion, with local designers and shops promoting eco-friendly materials and production methods. “There's also a noticeable trend toward streetwear and casual chic, influenced by Dublin's youthful and vibrant population – such amazing energy,” Badia said.

Dublin's street style reflects the city's focus on strong individual expression. “Walk through the cobbled streets of Temple Bar or the bustling alleys of Grafton Street and you're met with an eclectic mix of styles from punk-inspired looks and vintage ensembles, to cutting-edge haute couture,” said Badia. “This diversity is celebrated in Dublin, and even encouraged, and comes through various fashion events and festivals that spotlight both Irish designers and international trends.”

One of the pillars that also makes Dublin's fashion uniquely appealing is its deep-rooted connection to its country's heritage. Traditional Irish textiles, like linen and tweed, are reimagined by local designers who infuse contemporary aesthetics into age-old craftsmanship.

As reported by WWD, at her fall 2024 ready-to-wear collection debut, Róisín Pierce presented “an achingly romantic collection



DUBLIN, the capital city of Ireland, may not traditionally be listed among global fashion capitals such as Paris or Milan, but for those in the know, the city's rich history and vibrant contemporary scene make it a noteworthy player in today's fashion industry.

Alex Badia, style director of WWD, cites Dublin's roots in a fashion scene “that blends tradition, individuality and a forward-thinking ethos of Irish designers,” for its status as a fashion city.

Dublin's fashion history dates back centuries, with craftsmanship and textile production playing a significant role. The city was known for wool and linen as far back as the 19th century. In the 20th century, Dublin saw a rise in tailors and dressmakers setting up shops. The production of Irish tweed and lace was a defining factor in Dublin's contribution to fashion during this time.

The 1950s and 1960s marked a burgeoning period where Dublin



“WALK THROUGH THE COBBLED STREETS OF TEMPLE BAR OR THE BUSTLING ALLEYS OF GRAFTON STREET AND YOU’RE MET WITH AN ECLECTIC MIX OF STYLES FROM PUNK-INSPIRED LOOKS, AND VINTAGE ENSEMBLES, TO CUTTING-EDGE HAUTE COUTURE.” —Alex Badia



◀◀ Philip Treacy Spring 2013 millinery presentation, London.

◀ Paul Costelloe fall 1981 Ready to Wear collection advance.

▼ Designer Sybil Connelly fall 1978 collection for the Ireland’s Children Charity in Washington, D.C.

▲ Róisín Pierce with models in her collection at the LVMH Prize Finalist presentation on June 2, 2022.

of nearly all-white, intensely handcrafted lace looks that were some of the most original things to come down a runway this season.”

Pierce said the collection “is about hope, love, the narrative we created about a girl that fell from a star, and the idea she would heal the Earth and the different versions of how she would appear.” Pierce was a finalist for the 2022 LVMH Prize for her exploration of traditional Irish craft.

Dublin’s unique blend of historical influences and contemporary fashion movements makes it an exciting place for any fashion enthusiast. Badia said Dublin’s fashion scene is a vibrant tableau of history meshed with contemporary boldness. Unlike other cities where high fashion often floats in a bubble separate from the day-to-day fashion of its streets, Badia said Dublin’s style scene “exudes a more approachable vibe.”

This accessibility is the cornerstone of Dublin’s fashion identity, making it distinct within the global tapestry of style capitals.

Dublin’s smaller scale compared to larger fashion capitals adds to its charm. The fashion community here is tightly knit, promoting a sense of camaraderie and support among up-and-coming designers and established brands. Dublin may not boast the size or the flamboyant reputation of other fashion capitals, but it stands out for its heartfelt connection to Irish tradition, its celebration of diversity and individuality, and its commitment to sustainability.

“Together, these elements create a compelling, unique fashion narrative that Dublin proudly showcases to the world, one innovative design at a time. In these ways and more, Dublin does not just follow global fashion trends – it sets them,” Badia said. ■



DISCOVER LUXURY AT THE BICESTER COLLECTION'S KILDARE VILLAGE A LUXURIOUS SHOPPING OASIS AMIDST KILDARE'S HISTORIC LANDSCAPES AND GOURMET DELIGHTS

SET IN THE HEART of county Kildare is one of the wealthiest catchments in the country. Kildare Village is near the edge of Kildare town – adjacent to the beautiful ruins of the thirteenth-century Grey Abbey, which is a magical addition to the village.

The region is famed for its tradition in thoroughbred horse breeding and racing. The Village is five minutes from the Irish National Stud and The Curragh Racecourse, home to the Irish Derby, and 25 minutes from the five-star K Club Hotel and its award-winning golf courses and is located an hour outside central Dublin.

Kildare Village is also a luxury shopper’s dream come true. The Village is home to 120 boutiques including Armani, Louise Kennedy and Mulberry. The design of Kildare

Village, as individual boutique stores facing an open-air, landscaped, and pedestrianised boulevard, is inspired by the ambience and scale of the region’s stables and stud farms, creating a spacious and tranquil setting

Kildare Village offers luxury shoppers a unique and immersive retail experience and is a must-visit when in Ireland. You can expect a combination of luxury shopping, exclusive services, and engaging events – all curated to create a memorable experience for guests. Food and beverage are of utmost importance and you can choose from the very best International and local eateries from a wide variety of cuisines all prepared with the freshest ingredients in beautiful surroundings.

Dunne & Crescenzi’s modern

restaurant, for example, offers a quintessentially Italian menu. Asian gastronomy from Saba, which flies fresh herbs and vegetables directly from Bangkok once a week. Additionally, Sprout & Co has added a healthy mix to the Village with their organic farm to fork approach which sources from local establishments. Ireland’s hottest pizza restaurant, Mani, has just opened its only outpost outside of Dublin in the Village with its famous Carbonara Pizza a firm favourite.

What also sets Kildare Village apart is how it blends fashion, culture, music and art. Through its collaborations and pop-ups, there is always something new and exciting to see and experience. It’s a luxury destination that makes you want to come back, again and again. ■

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



High Beauty

From Dior's latest L'Or de Vie serum to Isamaya Ffrench's high-art take on – yes – dissolving makeup wipes, WWD Weekend rounds up seven ultra-luxury beauty launches to splurge on (or at least marvel at).

BY NOOR LOBAD

Guerlain Masterstroke Pêche Mirage by Charles Pétillon \$33,600

While Guerlain's signature Bee Bottle is widely regarded as a work of art in itself, the French beauty house sought to crank up the craftsmanship to inaugurate its new Pêche Mirage fragrance. Partnering with mixed media artist Charles Pétillon – best known for his white-balloon art installations – the brand has introduced a collector's edition bottle of the peach- and leather-infused scent. Only 20 were produced by Pétillon, who fashioned his signature white balloons, this time out of clay, to envelop each bottle in an outsized, cloud-like mass.



Dior L'Or de Vie Le Serum \$1,700

With its reformulated and revamped L'Or de Vie range, Dior is looking to ramp up its skin longevity game. Powered by what the house has coined "Golden Drop Life Technology," the new L'Or de Vie Le Serum features an antioxidant- and sap-rich formula, which took more than 600 hours of formulating and nearly 100 trials to perfect. The result is an offering that aims to increase natural levels of NAD+, which is purported to boost cellular metabolism while decreasing inflammation.

Eighth Day The Night Cream Treatment \$450

Eighth Day, the luxury skin care line founded by skin cancer surgeon Dr. Antony Nakhla, has added an eighth product to its range. Aiming to address skin tone and texture concerns, the brand's Night Cream Treatment taps RetinalXR, which is said to be more than twice as potent as over-the-counter retinol, as well as a patent-pending plasma technology featuring 24 peptides and amino acids, which work to regenerate skin cells.



Isamaya x Conserving Beauty Cleansing Cloths \$145

Who said makeup wipes can't be chic? Makeup artist and beauty founder Isamaya Ffrench joined forces with water-free skin care brand Conserving Beauty to introduce a serum-infused Hyaluronic Cleansing + Conditioning Cloth meant to offer both function and style. Housed in a sleek aluminum canister aligning with Ffrench's signature metallic codes, the water-dissolving wipes – which come in a pack of 140 – can be used to prime the skin before makeup application or to remove makeup after wear.



Omorovicza Blue Diamond Super Serum \$445

Budapest-born Omorovicza has introduced a new, \$445 serum meant to boost the presence of moisturizing nucleotide adenosine triphosphate to slow the appearance of skin aging. The key ingredients? Diamond peptides; stem cells derived from hollyhock flowers; a biotech-developed hyaluronic acid complex, and, of course, the brand's signature touch: mineral-rich water from Budapest's thermal springs.



Celine Beauté Le Rouge Celine \$75

After launching into makeup with its first Rouge Triomphe lipstick last fall, Celine has added 14 additional shades to the satin-finish line, which initially debuted with just one red hue. At \$75 apiece, the lipsticks are significantly pricier than Celine's high-fashion counterparts in the makeup category, including Dior, YSL Beauté, Chanel and Prada. Designed by creative director Hedi Slimane himself, each bullet comes in a refillable, gold metal tube and taps hydrating squalane and beeswax.



La Prairie Platinum Rare Haute-Rejuvenation Mask \$1,775

"Needle-free skin rejuvenation" is the promise fueling La Prairie's latest Platinum Haute-Rejuvenation Mask. The two-step treatment first involves a serum, encased in single-dose vials in an effort to maximize the potency of its hyaluronic acid and collagen, followed by a night cream. Coming in a diamond-inspired jar, the cream purports to seal the serum's actives, while adding a moisture-boosting dose of ceramides to improve skin barrier strength over time.





FOUR SEASONS

SEE YOURSELF *SEASIDE*

FOUR SEASONS RESORT TAMARINDO, MÉXICO



The Day-to-night Spring Dress Shopping List

Double dare to dress up and dress down the most versatile frocks of the season. BY ADAM MANSUROGLU

Oliver Peoples Roger Federer R-7 sunglasses \$390



Lizzie Fortunato organic hoops in silver and forest \$150



Patrick Ta Major Headlines Double-Take Crème and Powder Blush Duo in She Left Me on Red \$38



DAY

Sequins go sporty in this eye-catching daytime ensemble that allows for ease in movement without sacrificing your style.

A.L.C. Danielle sequin embellished midi dress \$695



Jacquemus Les Boucles Perlina Circle Barbell earrings \$390



Chanel Jeux De Lumières Multi-Use eye shadow and highlighter palette \$88

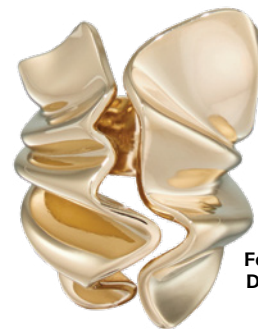


NIGHT

Unlock your inner goddess of the night and let your sequins shine with a sun-kissed glow, gilded jewelry and accessories of complimentary textures.



Tom Ford Beauty Soleil lip blush clutch size \$35



Ferragamo Drape ring \$570

Tory Burch Patent Coated cotton anorak \$798



Stella McCartney Stella Ryder shoulder bag \$1,650



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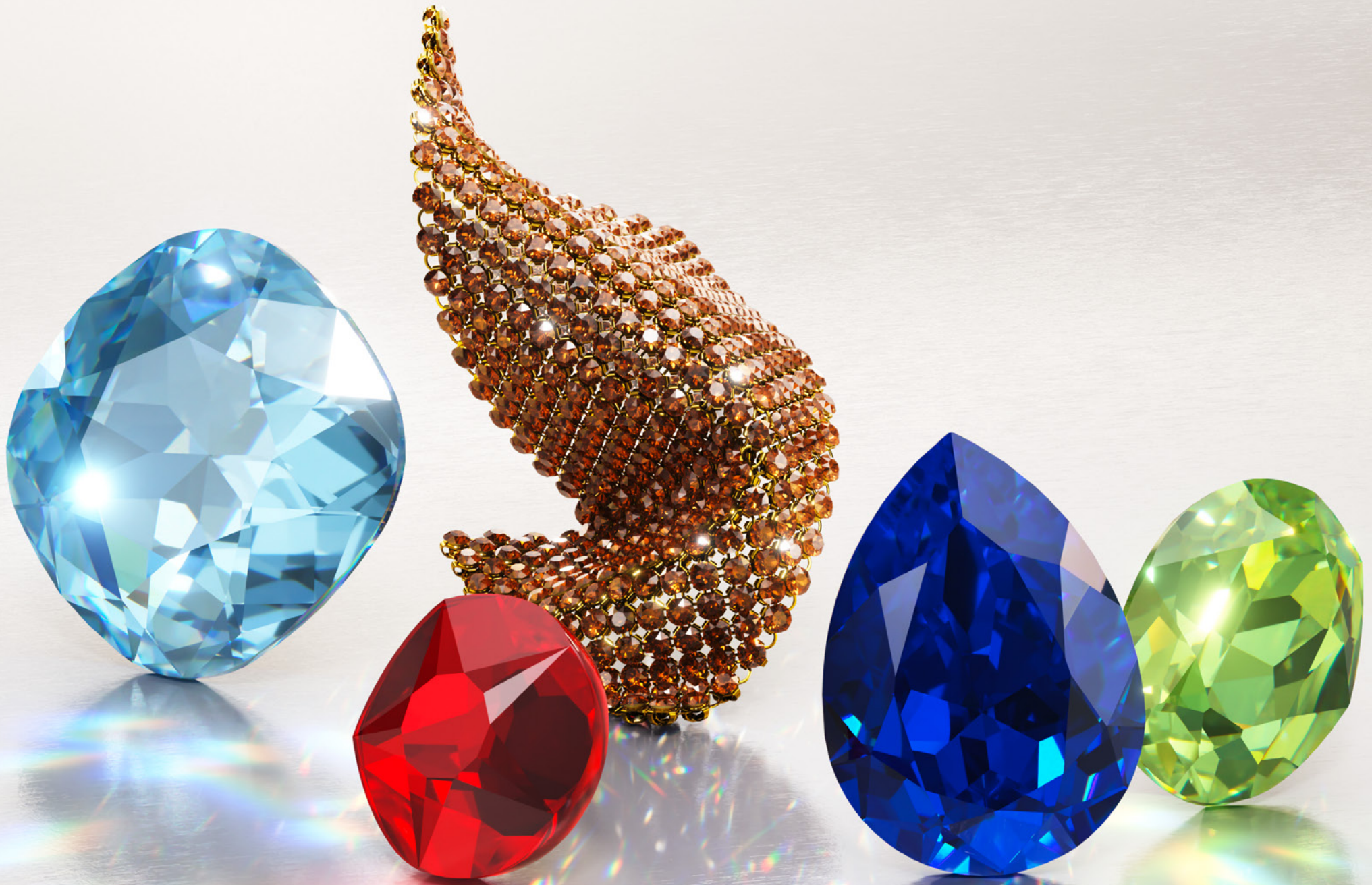
The spring high jewelry collections focused on craftsmanship and potential family heirlooms more than ever – and for those who want to indulge, they can be assured that each piece is unique.

Photographs by **Andrés Jaña**
Styled by **Alex Badia**
Prop styling by **Selena Liu**



Mellerio Pierreries necklace, milky aquamarines, topaz and apatite.

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David Yurman high jewelry linear drop earrings in 18-karat white gold with yellow beryl and diamonds. Panthere de Cartier bracelet in 18-karat white gold with onyx, emeralds and diamonds.



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- MAR 19** SJ Sustainability Summit / **NYC**
- MAY 7-8** WWD Beauty CEO Summit / **NYC**
- JUN 2** FN 80th Anniversary / **NYC**
- JUN 5-6** SXSW London / **LONDON**
- SEP** FMG Women In Power Forum / **NYC**
- SEP** Beauty Inc Power Brands Celebration / **NYC**
- SEP 25** SJ Fall Summit / **NYC**
- OCT** WWD LA Beauty Forum / **LA**
- OCT 28-29** WWD Apparel & Retail CEO Summit & WWD Honors / **NYC**
- NOV** WWD Fashion Loves Food Gala / **MILAN**
- NOV** SJ Sustainability LA / **LA**
- DEC 3** Footwear News Achievement Awards / **NYC**
- DEC 11** Beauty Inc Awards / **NYC**

ALL DATES AND DETAILS SUBJECT TO CHANGE



Jean Schlumberger by Tiffany bracelet in yellow gold with light blue enamel and diamonds. Tiffany & Co. Schlumberger Stitches ring in gold and platinum with diamonds. De Beers Paris Prong diamond necklace in white gold.





Bulgari Parentesi high jewelry necklace in white gold with pavé diamonds.



Chopard Haute Joaillerie collection necklace featuring yellow diamonds, orange diamonds, black diamonds and brown diamonds set in 18-karat yellow gold.

Van Cleef & Arpels "Flower" clip featuring emerald and diamonds set in platinum in 18-karat white gold and yellow gold and "Boogie-woogie" bracelet featuring diamonds set in 18-karat rose gold and white gold. Chanel High Jewelry Comete Aubazine ring in 18-karat pink gold, platinum, diamonds and pink sapphires.

Senior market editor,
Accessories: **Thomas Waller**



Mood Board

British Jewelry House David Morris

The second and third generations of the British house talk about being part of a jewelry dynasty, getting a brilliant start and creating jewels made to be passed down the line. BY LILY TEMPLETON

At David Morris, being “the London jeweler” is a family affair that began in the 1950s, when the paterfamilias began his apprenticeship with a leading jeweler in the British capital’s famed Hatton Garden district.

The Swinging ‘60s makes for the perfect script plot line for a glamorous biopic. Within a year of opening his own jewelry business in 1962, David Morris had won the De Beers Diamonds International Award with his then-design partner, then netted a second one the following year.

His firm became linked with “The Firm,” aka the British royal family, when Queen Elizabeth II ordered a silver Welsh dragon to adorn the hood of the legendary Aston Martin she gave the-then Prince Charles for his 21st birthday.

By the mid-1960s, David Morris designs were seen on royalty as much as the red carpet, on “It” girls about town and “Bond girls” on the silver screen. A heart-shaped necklace for Elizabeth Taylor, the Miss Universe crown still used today, an all-gold Jelly Bean machine and a diamond-decked Barbie doll cemented expanded his reach far beyond London durably.

And the sequel David Morris’ son Jeremy Morris has been writing since he took over the business and creative wheel in 2003 is no less glamorous.

The current chief executive officer and creative director credits his nous for entrepreneurship to his maternal grandfather, who ran a dozen-strong group of hairdressers in South London and went on to manufacture wigs for the wax museum Madame Tussauds. Where he gets his creative side goes without saying.

There are perhaps fewer royals and A-listers spotted at the Bond Street boutique – one of two flagships and 10 doors around the world – these days, but its designs continue to charm with an ever-growing creative range that spans the florals and hearts of the founder, blended with a more angular, abstract direction as of late.

Some things haven’t changed: the British jeweler continues to sell to Londoners, as in his parents’ time, and to families, who come back to add to their heirlooms or even rework previous pieces as creations for a new generations. Others have evolved: Londoners are an even more cosmopolitan bunch than ever before, with roots that spread far beyond the confines of the British capital.

Not that being an independent house has been all smooth sailing. “Many rounds in the ring, battered and bruised for sure,” the CEO says. But now, things are fully shipshape: In 2024, he bought back the stakes held by outside investors, returning the company to its fully family-owned status once more.

Founder David Morris and his wife Suzette have taken a step back but remain “very much involved in their own way,” says Cecily Morris, the third generation of the family and brand content manager.

And the next generation has already stepped up to the plate. In addition to Cecily, there are also sister Phoebe Morris, special projects coordinator, and younger brother Dylan.

For now, he is learning the ropes by accompanying their father to visit stone dealers – and listens in as his father and sister tell WWD Weekend about the best way to negotiate and why real estate is like jewelry.



Jeremy Morris and Cecily Morris, standing in front of the jeweler’s New Bond Street flagship in London.

WWD Weekend: What does it mean to be part of a jewelry dynasty?

Jeremy Morris: I never think about it, really. Cecily thinks about it more, [saying] she wants to continue and that it’s important the business stays within the family. She feels the weight of responsibility [while] I’ve been more bailing the water out of the bottom of the boat for the last 40 years, too busy to think about the historic dynasty. (Laughs.)

Cecily Morris: There was no expectation of me staying or continuing the legacy, but it felt like a natural fit. [Once I started] it just didn’t feel like there was anything more important than being here and doing what we are doing.

WWD Weekend: Did you consider other careers?

J.M.: I wanted to be a drummer in a post-punk band. I would have fitted in nicely with The Cure or Joy Division. That was the dream at 20. In my 30s, I was also very good at property but for me, property is just like making jewelry. You find a rough stone, then you polish it, put it into a nice setting and that’s something I have done constantly throughout my life: buy properties, renovate them, live in them, then get bored and move on.

C.M.: In your 40s, you wanted to go into art dealing. I studied photography at university and thought I was going to work in galleries [as] a curator or something. ▶



“I’ve brought together exceptional diamonds, Paraiba tourmalines and blue spinels to create the Aquissima necklace, a bold yet elegant masterpiece.”

"An artful eye runs in the family. The striking dragon statues were inherited from my grandfather, Mick," says Jeremy Morris. "Eastern culture has influenced our designs through the decades, such as the Lotus necklace, pictured here in gouache." A collage from the "The World of David Morris: The London Jeweler" book published in 2024.



WWD Weekend: How did you get your start in the company?

C.M.: I started just working on the front desk, opening the doors, answering the phones, helping out with some sales. I was meant to be here for two weeks, but it felt like a natural fit once I stepped through the door and I fell in love with all the jewelry. While I had grown up around it, it was not the same as being physically working with it.

J.M.: My dad used to take me [to the workshop] during my school holidays. I would hang around, do mockups on plasticine and mill out pennies.

After I came out of school, I did a year's foundation course [in art], which I was enjoying. Then I wondered what to do next and tried my hand at jewelry. It was quite nice and interesting, and the acceleration process is pretty rapid [when you grew up in it] so that at 22 or 23, I had already reached a certain level compared to my peers, who were just starting their first jobs.

WWD Weekend: What are the most important lessons you learned?

J.M.: You have to know when you stand up and start to put your coat on. That's the starting point of negotiating. That's usually the motivation that most people need. That's something I learned from my clients; [they] taught me how to negotiate with people.

The most valuable lesson, really, is that if you really want to get a good deal, the main thing is the quality of the stones. It's less about the price and more about what you're buying. What I'm looking for is the best that you can buy in the market at that time so that when I make the jewelry, everyone goes "that's unbelievable."

[Another lesson is about] having an eye – how you buy, what you buy and how you put it together. My dad is, funnily enough, color blind. So how he

managed in the jewelry trade for 50 years, I have no idea. But he did. My mother has great taste and she encouraged him.

I believe in the asset enormously. I know the rarity of it, and I also know that it all sells at some point – sometimes it takes 10 years. We sold a bracelet the other day, an absolutely beautiful diamond bracelet [with] nothing wrong with it at all, that had spent 15 years here. Other things come in and two weeks later, they're sold.

WWD Weekend: What inspires the jewelry creations of the house?

J.M.: I love art, travel and nature. The financial aspect has always come secondary to me – it's the passion I have for stones that truly inspires me.

C.M.: From an outside perspective, I feel that [Jeremy Morris] is heavily influenced by friends from a range of field – artists, architects,

photographers, creative people – and fashion, although not the [cycle of] trends.

WWD Weekend: Is there a collection or a piece that resonates with you the most?

J.M.: There's a cuff we are just finishing off. I'm waiting for the stone to come back from the GIA – an 11-carat D flawless oval-shaped diamond – so I can put it in the center of around 100 carats of baguettes on a flexible design that is then smothered in unbelievable vivid colored diamonds in blues, pinks and greens, some unlike anything you've seen before. This thing is absolutely world class so I'm super excited about this.

C.M.: I really love Paraiba tourmalines so mine would be the Starburst cuff, which features sapphires and Paraiba. I still feel like that is a showstopper and I'm shocked that it hasn't sold yet – but I'm sure it will very soon.

WWD Weekend: What's your advice on how a modern customer should be wearing their jewelry in their day-to-day life?

C.M.: You want to wear something that you'll wear forever and pieces you'll want to pass down to your daughters, your granddaughters. We want our jewelry to last forever and be with these families forever. We are a family company and we are selling our jewelry to families as well. ■

The Starburst sapphire, Paraiba tourmaline and white diamond bangle, 2024. It is one of Cecily Morris' favorite designs.

A collection of cabochon emeralds, set out and ready to be mounted at David Morris.



"Backgammon is one of my favorite games, so I commissioned this ceramic board from artist Alma Berron for my Mykonos home."



"Spinel's can be incredibly versatile," says David Morris. "I have used some incredible cobalt blue [ones] as accent colors in the Fragilis and Purpura rings from the Mystic Cove high jewelry collection."



"I have an immense love for pink diamonds. In my eyes, small pink diamonds from the [now-exhausted] Argyle mine are the most valuable and beautiful diamonds in the world."



Preparatory gouaché for the Monsoon necklace, a piece six months in the making that conceals tiny white gold hinges to ensure flexibility.



A rare peek in the gemstone safe at David Morris, which Jeremy Morris considers is "home to some of the world's most extraordinary stones."



Fergus Greer,
"Leigh Bowery
Session 3 Look 14,"
August 1990.

The Story of Leigh Bowery, A London Punk Legend

The 6-foot, 1-inch performance artist is being recognized with an exhibition at the Tate Modern.

BY HIKMAT MOHAMMED

If '80s London subcultures – punk, New Romantics, Goth, and the Blitz Kids – were placed in a blender, the outcome would look something like Leigh Bowery, the colorfully eccentric and provocative performance artist and club promoter who died 30 years ago.

He cofounded the club Taboo at Maximus in Leicester Square in 1985 and even though it only lasted 18 months, the spot drew an A-list crowd that included the likes of Boy George, George Michael, John Galliano and Lucian Freud dancing on its sticky floors.

Bowery's party costumes and body of work across fashion, music and performance is being recognized in an exhibition at the Tate Modern that will open on Feb. 27. The show looks at him through the lens of his fashion creations, art and a collection of photographs and videos taken by Nick Knight, Peter Doig, Fergus Greer and Baillie Walsh.

His towering 6-foot-1 inch build is also captured in a nude portrait by Freud.

Larger Than Life

The exhibition makes space for his larger-than-life ideas that have served as a source of inspiration for designers such as Lee Alexander McQueen, Vivienne Westwood,

Rick Owens and Rei Kawakubo, although none of their designs are on display.

"A whole other show just about Leigh's influence could be done, but it was important to treat him like we would any other artist at the Tate by focusing on their work," says Fiontán Moran, assistant curator at the Tate Modern.

Bowery pushed boundaries, made friends and lost them, and captured the attention of London during the era of Margaret Thatcher, protests and the AIDS epidemic. He died at age 33 on New Year's Eve in 1994 from an AIDS-related illness at Middlesex Hospital in Westminster.

"He was a figure who contributed a great deal to the creative life of the city and created works and explored ideas that continue to have relevance in terms of what the body means to society, or what club culture means rather than just a frivolous activity – within those spaces, a lot of generative ideas around art making and fashion design were emerging. Leigh crosses over through so many disciplines," says Moran.

The Australian-born artist migrated to London in 1980 at the age of 19 in hopes of becoming part of the punk fashion movement. He had studied fashion design at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in his home country. ▶

Fergus Greer, "Leigh Bowery Session 8 Look 38," June 1994.



Polaroid portrait of Leigh Bowery, 1986.

Fergus Greer, "Leigh Bowery Session 1 Look 2," 1988.



Fergus Greer, "Leigh Bowery Session 4 Look 17," August 1991.

a five-day performance. The high profile gallery represented Gerhard Richter and had previously exhibited self portraits of Andy Warhol.

At the gallery Bowery installed himself in front of a two-way mirror, where all he could see was his own reflection, and wore a different look each day made with help of Mr. Pearl, the English corset couturier, who had remade all of Bowery's clothes from the mid-'80s because they were all dirty.

"His presence was always impressive and complex, threatening, comic, quiet, polite, intelligent and aware," d'Offay remembers.

"Leigh responded immediately to the idea of a performance in the gallery, he was easy to work with, very professional and practical - almost a surprise as he was then by far the youngest artist we had worked with to date," he added.

Lorcan O'Neill, who was a director at the Anthony d'Offay Gallery in the '80s said that word about the show spread without much publicity.

"People stood, leaned against the wall, sat on the floor, came with children or pets or their bags of shopping. There were students, night-clubbers, businessmen and office workers, artists and writers," he recalls.

The Anthony d'Offay Gallery represented a major imprimatur for Bowery, taking him from a personality to an artist.

After his performance, Freud came calling and this was one of the few instances that kicked in the nerves for the overly confident and eccentric Bowery.

In a piece for the British art magazine *Modern Painters*, he recalls being "nervous about my naked body" because he weighed between 16 and 17 stone, or about 225 to 240 pounds.

Freud painted Bowery over the course of four years, which resulted in three paintings, and in that time Bowery let his mischievous characteristics get the best of him

"Punk suggested a way of thinking about clothing that wasn't just about practicality, but was actually about communicating an ideology in some ways, and also something that was resistant to mainstream society," says Moran.

Bowery's fashion stint was successful, short-lived and caused an uproar. He showed designs of frayed edges and distressed fabrics in New York and Tokyo with his friend Rachel Auburn in 1983 that are featured in the first room of the exhibition titled "Home/Getting Ready."

The *Evening Standard* newspaper reported on the upheaval, writing that "screams were heard on the subway last week, not another mugging, but a couple of young British designers."

In New York, their collections were briefly picked up by Bloomingdale's and Macy's.

"He very quickly realized he didn't really want to deal with the mass production and the realities of being a fashion designer," says Moran, adding that it was around this time that he befriended the choreographer Michael Clark.

Bowery would go on to create costumes with free rein for Clark's productions and sometimes even starred in them.

These helped inform his foray into performance art but one costume for Clark's "Mmm...", a production based on birth and rebirth, would be the demise of his working relationship with the choreographer.

Bowery had created two blobby looks for the show and one of the costumes had the phrase "I'm a c-" printed on it, which Clark disagreed with.

"Sometimes Leigh would appear on stage wearing the controversial costume instead," says Moran.

Bowery didn't stop there to enrage.

He would pierce his cheeks with safety pins to fasten

on fake lips; roam the streets of London in drab clothing, bad wigs and high heels to continually subvert the idea of normality, and at an AIDS benefit in 1994 at The Fridge, a club in Brixton, the police had to get involved.

Bowery had been experimenting with enemas to create a human fountain - during his performance he wasn't able to get onto the floor properly so instead he bent over and sprayed the front row with liquids from his anus.

A woman from the audience complained to the authorities and Bowery was temporarily banned from various London clubs.

"Apparently it was the first time his friend said that they seemed to be genuinely worried for him," says Moran.

The artist dedicated his whole life to performance and London was his stage for experimentation. He wanted to connect with historical figures such as the dandies of the early 20th century and '60s through his fleshy body.

Sue Tilley, author of the republished book "Leigh Bowery: The Life and Times of an Icon" (Thames & Hudson) from 1997 remembers the exact moment she met Bowery - it was in 1981 at the Cha Cha Club, where he was wearing cropped baggy trousers with braces, an orange checked shirt with little star studs on the front and hair that was shaved at the sides and long on top.

Bowery's instinct to evoke emotion was all natural, says Tilley.

"He was very good at encouraging people to do things - anything good and exciting that's happened in my life, I can put down to his influence. He introduced me to people and even though he's dead, it still happens like that. I know that things happen because of him," she adds, describing his star power as something that he was born with that pulled people in.

As interest in Bowery grew within creative circles, the Anthony d'Offay Gallery in London invited him to stage

by entertaining the artist with his sexual escapades. He also would add small touches of paint to Freud's portraits without him knowing and even stole two unfinished paintings that were returned after his death.

When Freud's show opened at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1993, the artist did not attend, but Bowery inaugurated the showcase by arriving in a burgundy Kaiser helmet and a voluminous floral Paul McCann gown with a matching gimp mask - a look that can easily be spotted on the runaways of Richard Quinn or on Kim Kardashian when she made her Met Gala debut in 2013 with a Givenchy roses dress.

The Freud portrait was another turning point for Bowery.

"It changed Leigh's life and introduced a whole another world. He was always trying to learn and find new things out," says Tilley.

Bowery's spirit remains an integral part of London's buzz, which in recent years has dwindled due to everything from political instability to the high cost of living in the British capital. His creations went against the grain 30 years ago, but he remains a part of London's queer roots and creative foundation.

The exhibition at the Tate Modern is a reminder of his color and presence. "A lot of people associate him with fashion or club culture, or just see him as just maybe one note, but he was someone who questioned sexuality and explored the body and taboo ideas that society [is so afraid to]," says Moran.

He was the life of the city, says Tilley. "I always say to people, 'go out, go to nightclubs, get drunk and meet people.' That is how I met all my friends and all the things that happened in my life is because of that," she adds.

Moran and Tilley both hope that the exhibition will help reincarnate some of that fearless attitude the city once had. ■

Preserving Fashion Piece by Piece

The Couture Pattern Museum in Santa Barbara, Calif., is dedicated to paper sewing patterns licensed for home sewers by golden age couturiers – and to digitizing the fashion blueprints piece by piece.

BY **BOOTH MOORE**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **SARAH PRINCE**

On the third floor of a Spanish-style office building in Santa Barbara, Calif., Cara Austine-Rademaker is spotlighting a little-appreciated aspect of fashion history that had a big impact.

The Couture Pattern Museum is dedicated to preserving the paper sewing patterns women used to make French fashion at home for a fraction of the cost, from Jeanne Lanvin's 1921 "new summer clothes" made for and modeled by actress Mary Pickford, to Yves Saint Laurent's famed 1965 Mondrian shift dress.

"Besides the feminine culture that these patterns represent, there's also the couture culture that's captured in these patterns," Austine-Rademaker says of turning her collecting passion into a museum in 2022. "A lot of museums are just glorifying the end piece. But how long is that going to last? In 200 or 300 years, cloth decays. Even now, museums will very rarely lend out their clothes because they're so fragile. We're seeing them already making and displaying reproductions," she says of how patterns can be educational tools.

Dressmaking periodicals began to flourish in the 1850s with the rise of the home sewing machine, and tissue pattern production became its own mass market industry in the 1860s, according to the 2014 book "A History of the Paper Pattern Industry" (Bloomsbury) by Joy Spanabel Emery.

By the 1920s, French couturiers including Lanvin, Chanel, Vionnet and others were licensing their patterns to McCall's, one of a handful of publishers that would dominate the pattern market as it began featuring more named designer fashions.

Couture Pattern Museum founder
Cara Austine-Rademaker.



Couture patterns had their heyday in the post-World War II era, when French maisons roared back to life following Dior's New Look, and Vogue entered into licensing agreements for the use of original couture toiles for its Vogue Patterns Paris Couturier Line, which even included woven cloth labels in the pattern envelopes.

Sold for \$1.50 to \$3.50 at the time, couture patterns were available through magazines and newspapers, and they could be bought at department stores, where home sewers could also purchase fabric to whip up a dress like Audrey Hepburn's in the span of a weekend.

"They democratized couture because millions of women participated in this culture from around the globe," Austine-Rademaker says.

While the University of Rhode Island's Commercial Pattern Archive has 55,000 scanned images from 61,000 commercially produced patterns dating back to 1847, they only picture the garments, envelopes and schematics, not the individual pattern pieces. The Couture Pattern

Museum is believed to be the only institution dedicated solely to patterns and digitizing them piece by piece.

"There is definitely value in collecting them, because they are an important part of creating and producing fashions. You can understand how designers represented the body by looking at how patterns created clothes that shape the body in certain ways," says fashion historian Valerie Steele. "For example, when avant-garde couturiers like Paul Poiret were inspired by Japanese kimonos, he learned to make patterns that created flat shapes around the body, thus freeing it, in contrast to Western patterns that shaped the body by cinching the waist, exaggerating the bust and hips."

Since she started collecting more than 20 years ago, Austine-Rademaker has amassed 2,000 patterns, from Poirets to Duchess of Windsor designs she sold under her name, as well as corresponding vintage clothing, her own reproductions sewn from the patterns, counter books, historical magazines and ephemera. ▶

Her small museum has a portion of the collection on display, rotating exhibitions, programs and classes. Memberships range from \$5 a month to \$299 for those who want access online to the database of 320 patterns she has digitized herself. (Those members must sign a legal waiver agreeing they are not going to duplicate or sell the patterns, some of which are still copyrighted.)

She's attracted visitors from as far away as Europe, and hosted events with fashion authors and designers, including Ralph Rucci, who participated in a recent talk about Balenciaga and has donated patterns by Halston and Bobby Breslau.

"Cara's idea is totally original, a museum dedicated to just patterns," says Rucci, who lost his own patterns when he sold his company. "It's extraordinary when you are able to see an incredible technical original pattern when it's in its flat state. You envision how it's transformed. It's an education within an education when museums have patterns."

"Some patterns have 40 pieces, and they're so delicate because they're printed on tissue, they're really only printed for one time use," Austine-Rademaker says of the digitization process, which is done using a proprietary method. "And so I have to be very, very careful to be able to upload that information accurately and capture it accurately. Each one takes over an hour to digitize."

A first generation Korean American immigrant, her interest in fashion and how it's made was a reaction to a difficult, impoverished childhood, she says. Adopted from South Korea at age 4, she worked a family farm in Iowa as a young girl before running away from home, attending community college where she majored in finance, and making her way to Los Angeles to work at Met Life in an actuarial position.

While in college, she'd discovered designer patterns as a way into the exclusive world of fashion and, being an avid sewer, thought if she could improve her skills, she could wear designer clothing, too.

Austine-Rademaker started collecting from eBay and Etsy, estate sales and vintage stores and elderly patients she met when her career detoured into nursing.

Today, vintage couture patterns (if you can find them) can sell for \$1,600 to \$1,800, she says, "because they have become more like works on paper. And the final piece you can almost see as the oil painting. But to get to that oil painting, the artist has to go through sketches or renditions and outlines. With patterns, not only do we have architectural plans of these designs, but also the instruction."

Her museum tour starts with an explainer about the process of couture, told using an original Givenchy "slow curve" dress toile pinned to a dress form. She discusses

how couture patterns are special, made from toiles that take into account the drape of a fabric and the shape of the body before they are unpinned and laid out on a flat surface to make a paper pattern.

Among her holdings, the oldest is the 1921 Lanvin couture pattern of Pickford's summer clothes published by the Home Pattern Company started in 1905 by Condé Nast, which appeared in Ladies Home Journal magazine. "He was testing the idea and when he started to see the monetization, especially after the war, he was motivated to sign a contract with the Chambre Syndicale," she says of Nast's vision to grow the Vogue pattern business.

The museum has a 1956 McCall's Givenchy pattern for a dusty rose organza dress which Audrey Hepburn was photographed wearing during a night out in Las Vegas with Frank Sinatra, alongside the one Austine-Rademaker made for herself using the pattern. She documented the process stitch by stitch on the museum's blog.

One of her rarer items is a Norman Norell Women's Illustrated pattern for Queen Elizabeth II's 1953 velvet with ermine trim Coronation cape, which unbelievably was sold to the mass market.

Her holdings also include several patterns by Madame Grès, one of the most prolific designers when it came to releasing patterns, and a reconstructed 1957 Madame Grès dress.

"At the end of her career, all of her archives are basically destroyed. She couldn't afford rent anymore, and so one of the things these patterns capture is the archives of

some of these designers that don't have them," Austine-Rademaker says.

Patterns would hit the mass market at the same time as the originals did, sometimes faster, and would also have a longer shelf-life if they were popular designs, she explains.

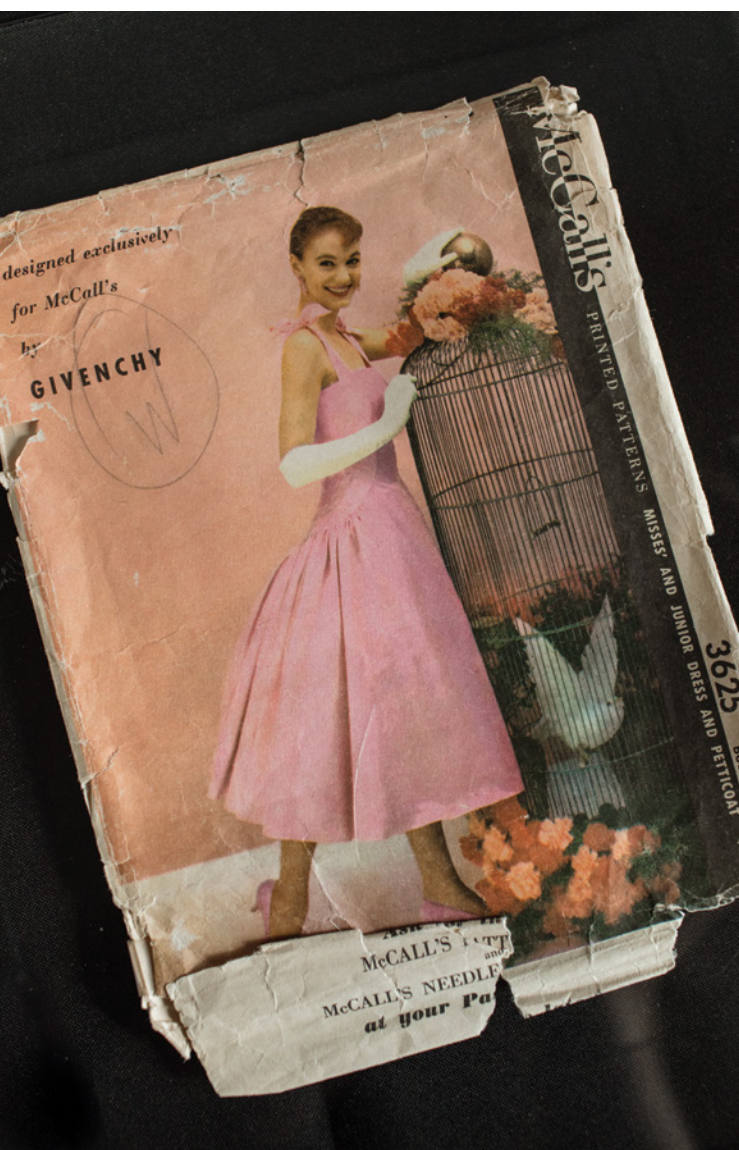
"Sewing was such a part of American culture that Schiaparelli came to America to judge competitions that were kind of a precursor to 'Project Runway,'" Austine-Rademaker says of the events sponsored by the sewing machine company Singer, fabric companies and department stores.

Her collection largely ends around the 1970s when many women stopped making their clothes due to readily available, affordable ready-to-wear options. Today, there are no couture patterns being sold, although some rtw designers do still sell patterns, including Badgley Mischka and Rachel Comey. Rick Owens just released one digitally through ShowStudio in December.

She's wondered about moving the museum to a big city, but in Santa Barbara, she's had an enthusiastic response from locals who are hungry for fashion, and those willing to travel to see it.

Her collection is kept in a temperature controlled storage facility outside the area's wildfire zone.

"Look what happened in Los Angeles," she says of the recent fires. "With global disruption and climate change, at least digitally, stored in the cloud, these patterns, if anything ever happened to them, there's still a history that they existed." ■



Clockwise from left: A 1956 Givenchy for McCall's couture dress pattern; a Jeanne Lanvin-Castillo Vogue Paris Original couture dress pattern; Norman Norell Women's Illustrated pattern for Queen Elizabeth II's 1953 velvet Coronation cape; Austine-Rademaker in front of dress forms at her museum.

FANTASY!



What's not to dream – especially when it comes to this spring's couture?

Photographs by **Szilveszter Makó** Styled by **Alex Badia**

Chanel haute couture sequined tweed peplum jacket and Bermuda shorts painted with white, embellished with taffeta floral braid and jeweled buttons, velvet and gold metal belt, and satin and velvet heeled sandals. Chanel High Jewelry Lion Solaire de Chanel earrings in 18-karat white gold with diamonds.



OPPOSITE PAGE: Valentino haute couture shantung gazar jacket and ruffled skirt, organza blouse embroidered with feathers, felt hat with feathers, lace tights, peau de soie sash and Big Bow velvet sandal.

Rahul Mishra couture velvet "The Ravens' Escapade" dress with bird embroideries under a mounted, framed corset hand-embroidered in silk.





Giambattista Valli haute couture silk faille "Pouf" dress.



Stéphane Rolland
haute couture crepe
dress embroidered
with ivory feathers.





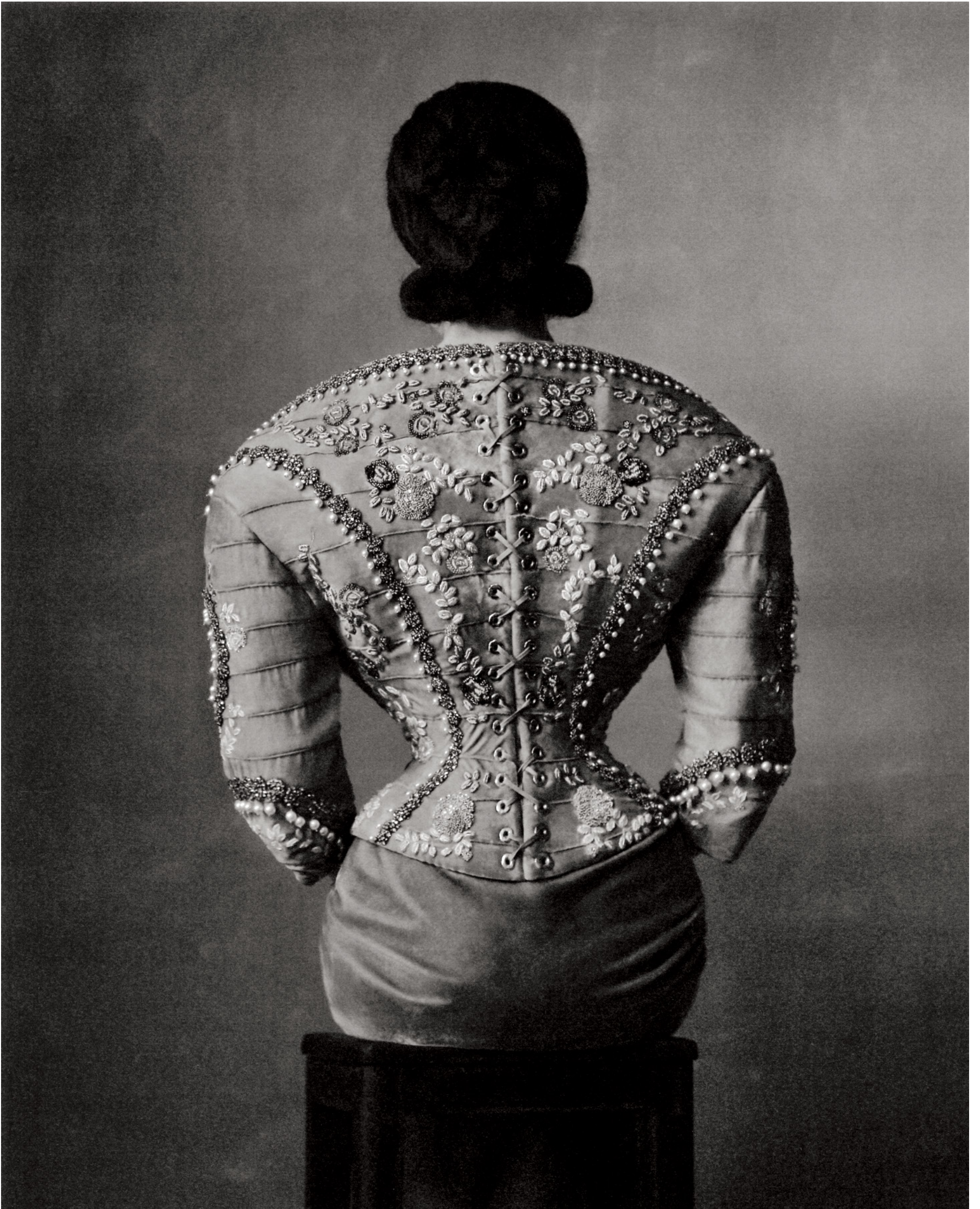
Schiaparelli haute couture off-the-shoulder jacket in stripes of velvet embroidery with rhinestones and pearls, and velvet column skirt. Tiffany & Co.'s Jean Schlumberger by Tiffany pearl twist necklace in 18-karat yellow gold and platinum with South Sea white pearls and diamonds.

Jean Paul Gaultier haute
couture by Ludovic de Saint
Sernin spotted double-face
marabou feather "ermine" stole.



Dior haute couture long Cigale tulle dress embroidered with floral guipure, antique mesh and matching pendants.





Schiaparelli haute couture off-the-shoulder jacket in stripes of velvet embroidery with rhinestones and pearls, and velvet column skirt.



Ashi Studio haute couture feather and lamb skin jacket with matching artisanally crafted poodle.

Germanier haute couture sequin bustier with upcycled skirt embroidered with metalloïd feathers. Elie Saab haute couture shoes.



Hair by **Pierpaolo Lai**; Makeup by **Luciano Chiarello**; Model: **Aimee Byrne at Girl Management**; Set design by **Pierre-Alexandre Fillaire**; Women's fashion market editor: **Emily Mercer**; Senior fashion market, accessories: **Thomas Waller**; Fashion assistant: **Annelise Lombard-Platet**; Production by **Siyam Chen**; Casting by **Jussi Vuorenlehto**

Haute Books

A reading list inspired by the recent collections in Paris, and a few others. BY GRÁINNE O'HARA BELLUOMO



Chanel

As a species, we crave resolution. A cliffhanger is all well and good, but we ultimately want to find out what happens. Still, sometimes, the anticipatory period provides ample intrigue – or angst – of its own. Those “what happens next” tingles have been emanating from the Rue Cambon for some time, as the fashion world awaits the beginning of the Matthieu Blazy era at Chanel. For spring, on the clothing level, the brand’s design team made the most of the interregnum with charming reworkings of recognizable house codes. Meanwhile, on the meta level, the wait for Blazy continues.

The book: Samuel Beckett’s “Waiting for Godot” presents a heel-cooling period far darker and more absurd than the time lag before Blazy’s arrival. But it makes for a good literary complement for those who appreciate that, whether in modernist theater or in fashion, sometimes the wait itself is plenty captivating.



Valentino

A vaunted institution seeking a new leader. A dramatic mise-en-scène suggesting both religious pomp and psychological chess match. Rome. Alessandro Michele’s first couture turn for Valentino ticked every box on this checklist.

The book: Ticking the same boxes: Robert Harris’ papal potboiler “Conclave.” Michele’s cinematic staging might be more of a callback to the novel’s unexpectedly viral best-picture nominee adaptation. Still, Harris’ original tome provides plenty of melodrama within the narrative of what happens when a major institution (whether the Catholic Church or Maison Valentino) finds itself in need of a bold new direction. On the runway, there were ample demonstrations of what one might call ecclesiastical chic. And what is Valentino’s signature house color if not a vogue on Cardinal Red? Michele worked it with verve, including in one big-sleeve moiré number with a hint of a lace petticoat.



Willy Chavarria

One of the January shows’ biggest capital M-moments in Paris came not during couture but in the men’s fall shows. Willy Chavarria took the American Cathedral by storm, bringing with him an array of chicano-inspired clothes and a potent political message. The lineup presented a sartorial demonstration of the designer’s world view – one driven by a genuine spirit of inclusivity. On the soundtrack during his curtain-call: Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde’s pulpit plea for compassion issued to President Donald Trump a few days prior. The marriage of the political and the religious was dramatic, as singer Dorian Wood opened the proceedings in a striking red gown, setting up a compelling theatrical experience.

The book: See above. Again, drama, politics, Catholic fashion and (spoiler alert) a side of gender play? Move aside, Virginia Woolf. Sit down, F. Scott Fitzgerald. Richard Harris is the fashion world’s new literary touchstone.



Germanier

Beading and bangles were on full display in Kevin Germanier’s colorful, exuberant spring couture show. Its over-the-top racy glam called to mind one of the 20th century’s great celeb-designer partnerships: Cher and Bob Mackie.

The book: After taking in Germanier’s joie de vivre, why not settle in with “Cher: The Memoir, Part One” for a “from the horse’s mouth” look into the life of the glitz-loving living legend? Of course, a presence as titanic as Cher’s cannot be contained in a single volume. “Part One” culminates with her meeting Sonny Bono, meaning that the Mackie era looms on the horizon. Still, there’s plenty of value in some origin story context for the woman of a thousand headdresses.



Viktor & Rolf

You know the old saying: The definition of insanity is repeating the same thing over and over and expecting different results. Sometimes, though, repetition leads to a brand of madness so deftly rendered that it tips over into something else; it’s a fine line between crazy and genius, after all. Such was the case at Viktor Horsting and Rolf Snoeren’s Viktor & Rolf. Twenty-four iterations of the same basic pieces – beige trench, white shirt, navy pants, narrated in old-school haute French monotone – distorted repetition à la “Groundhog Day,” only with the designers’ cerebral artiness on display.

The book: For those looking for an intellectual take on a time loop, Solvej Balle’s recently released “On the Calculation of Volume” might be the answer. Balle’s seven-volume chronicle of one librarian’s perpetually repeating day puts a heady new spin on the (fittingly) oft-revisited trope of being stuck in an eternal cycle.



Armani Privé

Giorgio Armani celebrated his couture’s 25th anniversary by exploring a grand elemental presence: light. Titled “Lumières,” the show was all shimmer and sheen, its haute gloss resonating throughout the silver-and-black lineup. After seeing light translated so effectively on the runway, some might walk away with a yen for a deeper understanding.

The book: In “QED: The Strange Theory of Light and Matter” by Richard Feynman, the author translates his lectures on quantum mechanics into layman-ese that offers just enough quotable physics insight to impress mightily at a cocktail party. Let there be light, indeed.



Schiaparelli

Daniel Roseberry approached spring 2025 with the attitude that everything old can be new again. His Schiaparelli drew from the 1930s for rare languid moments and, more often, from the hyper-structured 1950s, for ornate constructions and impressively rendered feats of waist-cinching engineering. Still, it had an air of the fresh and the modern – old practices for the new world.

The book: Employing traditional structures to modernist ends? Paging Edna St. Vincent Millay, whose “Collected Sonnets” played in the Petrarchan sandbox while exploring contemporary themes in her sonnets.



Dior

For her spring 2025 couture, Maria Grazia Chiuri offered a rather uncharacteristically deconstructed vision: panier skirts stripped down to their structural frames; ribbons of tattered tulle; spiny feathered headpieces. The effect was an artful take on a fairy-tale princess who had a run-in with a set of shears. The show notes made apt reference to the notion of poetic punk.

The book: Dior aficionados moved by Romanticism with a Gothic edge might consider Silvina Ocampo’s “Thus Were Their Faces,” a collection of short stories from the celebrated Argentine writer and artist. Jorge Luis Borges called Ocampo “one of the greatest poets in the Spanish language,” while the judges for Argentina’s National Prize for Literature deemed her work “too cruel” to be feted. It doesn’t get more poetic punk than that.



Jean Paul Gaultier

Ludovic de Saint Sernin, the latest of Gaultier’s line of guest designers, titled his couture turn “Le Naufrage,” or, for those not up on their Duolingo lessons, “Shipwreck.” He delivered on that promise with a side of what he deemed “slutty, but classy.” So, nautical disaster – but make it sexy.

The book: Where better to turn after such sultry seafaring than that sweeping tale of maritime travel gone awry, Homer’s “The Odyssey?” The epic travelog features not one boat wreck but two, and enough sirens and seductive island-dwelling nymphs to scratch the itch for a little naughty stuff.



Marc Jacobs

Though not part of the Parisian couture calendar, Marc Jacobs showed in New York the Monday before New York Fashion Week, presenting a collection of capital-F Fashion with an offbeat haute aura. In his show notes, Jacobs wrote with emotion about “Courage,” saying that “with precious freedom we dream and imagine without limitation...not to escape from reality but to help navigate, understand and confront it.”

The book: Jacobs worked that notion with a hint of surrealism, so it pairs well with Leonora Carrington’s “The Hearing Trumpet,” the surrealist masterpiece that follows a hearing-impaired 92-year-old woman who finds herself wrapped up in a bonkers adventure that features a self-improvement cult, a cross-dressing medieval abbess and the goddess Venus herself. Eccentric maximalism at its finest – and artistically bravest.

Timeless Appeal

Classic watches are, by definition, timeless. Their design codes remain rooted in simplicity, elegance and functionality, featuring clean dials, slim cases and minimal complications. With an understated charm, classic watch designs are experiencing a resurgence, offering a counterbalance to the trend of overly complicated and high-tech timepieces, with a versatile appeal for watch enthusiasts who appreciate a minimalist aesthetic.

BY LUIS CAMPUZANO

Tag Heuer Carrera Chronograph in 18-karat gold case.



Hermès Cape Cod in a steel case and a natural Barenia double strap.



Piaget Polo 79 in 18-karat gold.



Jaeger-LeCoultre Reverso Tribute Chronograph in 18-karat pink gold.



Cartier Panthere de Cartier watch, mini model, in 18-karat yellow gold.



Vacheron Constantin Historiques 222 in stainless steel.



Patek Philippe Ref. 5738R Golden Ellipse in rose gold with ebony black sunburst with gold applied hour markers, featuring an ultrathin, self-winding mechanical movement.



IWC Portofino, circa 1984, in 18-karat yellow gold.



Omega Speedmaster Moonwatch in a two-tone panda dial.



Keeping the Conversation With Artists Alive

A leading contemporary art collector, Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo's namesake foundation marks its 30th anniversary in 2025 with its first exhibit in the U.S. and more in Italy and Spain.

BY LUISA ZARGANI

The energy Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo emanates is quite unique – and contagious. When she starts describing the plans to mark the 30th anniversary of the foundation that bears her name, one feels like there's no time to waste – as if it were really urgent to join her on the whirlwind tour of exhibitions earmarked for the year. There is absolutely no sense of academic snobbery or being patronizing in her words, but rather an ebullient, joyful and sincere passion for contemporary art and curiosity about the world and all the artworks it has to offer. After all, she has worked on supporting young artists for years.

She is a collector of contemporary artworks, numbering around 1,500, from the likes of Anish Kapoor, Maurizio Cattelan, Damien Hirst and Sarah Lucas, to Charles Ray, Cindy Sherman and Adrián Villar Rojas, to name a few. At the same time, she collects costume jewelry, totaling about 1,000 pieces, and photographs – about 3,000 of them.

Not surprisingly, Sandretto Re Rebaudengo hails from a family of collectors since her mother collected porcelain, and her father, who owned a plastic-injection company, assembled historical plastic objects dating back to the late 19th century.

Inspired in London

Sandretto Re Rebaudengo credits a trip to London in 1992 for her passion for collecting artworks, and “the exhibitions in the galleries, meeting the gallery owners and, especially, the visits to artists in their studios. I will forever remember the morning spent in the studio of Anish Kapoor, among his extraordinary sculptures: that memory for me has the value of an imprinting, it determined the way I have since then chosen and collected artworks. Even today, my collection is founded on the dialogue with the artists and the in-depth knowledge of their research.”

Three years later, she established the Fondazione Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Turin, her hometown.

“Initially, I gave the collection an articulated structure based on Italian art, photography, women's art and the British and California scenes. This systematic approach comes from my own education, the university studies in economics, and the entrepreneurial tradition of my family. In time, that grid loosened in favor of a wider range of interests, impacted by the course of art itself and the clear expansion of the art audience, increasingly open and global,” she says.

The foundation, a nonprofit institution, has allowed her “to transform a private passion in a more open dimension, publicly committed.”

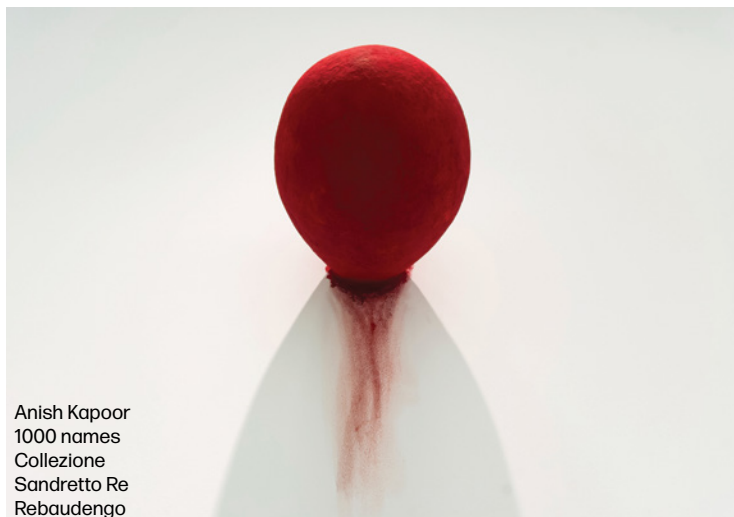
So far, Sandretto Re Rebaudengo has made a point of marking every decade with a major exhibition dedicated to the works bought through the years, from “Bidibidobidiboo” in 2005 to “Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue” in 2015. She teases that the next exhibit at the end of October “will be a surprise.”

Each exhibition “reaffirms the reasons that led me to start the collection. Art has taught me to be curious, never to be afraid of opinions that are different from mine, and to face the beauty and the dizziness that every new and complex thought brings.”

She aims to mark the anniversary “the same way we celebrate a person's birthday, because the Fondazione is a space that is made alive by people,” the artists, the team,



Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo



Anish Kapoor
1000 names
Collezione
Sandretto Re
Rebaudengo



Silent Studio,
Mark Manders,
Fondazione
Sandretto Re
Rebaudengo,
2024-25.

the children who attend its classes and the visitors.

On April 8, she will stage three solo exhibitions “reflecting our vocation to research and the attention to young talents,” with the works of Teresa Solar Abboud, Jem Perucchini and Marwa Arsanios. These highlight the relations the foundation has developed over the years with international institutions such as the Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo in Madrid and the MACBA in Barcelona. Perucchini's exhibit will continue at the CAAC – Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo in Seville, Spain. Arsanios' exhibit reflects the foundation's commitment to gender equity and will move on to Artium, the Museum of Contemporary Art of the Basque Country, in Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain.

In June, an exhibit will be dedicated to Alessandra Ferrini.

Asked what strikes her and attracts her the most to a specific artist, Sandretto Re Rebaudengo says it is the ability “to interpret and reflect the complexity of our times with innovative or traditional visual languages: a video generated from an algorithm, a painting, a sculpture, a drawing.”

Art, she continues, “offers us new ways to see the world, allowing us to explore themes, issues and emergencies from different perspectives, enriching our understanding of reality. I love artists who know how to pose questions, create connections, experiment and open new ways of thinking, challenging conventions. Art is a process in continuous evolution and what interests me the most is to accompany artists in their path, supporting them in their growth and in the realization of their ideas.”

In fact, training has always been key for Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, who has been teaching for years the course “The art professions. Strategy of foundations” at Milan's IULM University. “Involving children and youngsters is surely one of our main objectives. Seeing them participate to our laboratories, listening to their questions and



Palazzo Re Rebaudengo
in Guarene, Italy.

following the thread of their thoughts is surely one of the greatest satisfactions in my work,” she says.

Helping Young Curators

To wit, she established the Young Curators Residency Programme in 2007, and Campo, initiated in 2012 and aimed at aspiring Italian curators. The former helps three young curators every year develop their expertise and promotes Italian contemporary art abroad, which leads to staging an exhibition of Italian artists selected by the curators during their residency in Italy.

This year, the exhibition will be presented in May at Palazzo Re Rebaudengo in Guarene, near the Piedmontese town of Cuneo. The restored 18th-century building houses the contemporary art museum of the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo. Here and in Turin, in the second half of the year, she is planning two exhibitions of the Collezione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, and a book on the history of the foundation. The celebrations in Turin will also take place during Artissima, a point of reference for artists and collectors from all over the world, which this year will run Oct. 31 to Nov. 2. ▶



Fundación Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Madrid, "When the Lambs Rise Up Against the Bird of Prey" by Precious Okoyomon.



Parco d'Arte in Guarene, Italy.



The project by Korean artist dancer and choreographer Eun-Me Ahn: Pinky Pinky "Good."

First U.S. Exhibit

This year also marks the first exhibition of her collection in the U.S.

"Through Their Eyes: Selections From the Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Collection," on view Jan. 26 to June 22 at the Manetti Shrem Museum of Art, University of California Davis, shines the light on 30 groundbreaking women artists, from Giulia Andreani, Vanessa Beecroft, and Nan Goldin to Barbara Kruger, Wangari Mathenge, Danielle Mckinney, Tracey Moffatt and Cindy Sherman, to name a few. The exhibit "underscores our commitment in enhancing the women's creativity and perspective in

contemporary art," says Sandretto Re Rebaudengo.

Responding to a question about the Italian artistic landscape, she believes that "Italy has a vivacious artistic scene, with many talents and institutions that work to promote contemporary art." That said, she sees "margins for growth: a bigger support of artists, more investments in institutions and a stronger dialogue between private and public are necessary."

For sure, there is no stopping Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, who bought the island of San Giacomo in Paludo in the Venice lagoon to house another venue for her namesake foundation. "We hope to complete the works by 2026," she says, adding this fulfills a long-held wish to have a location in Venice. "When my husband and I discovered the island of San Giacomo we immediately realized that it was the perfect place. This small strip of land in the midst of the lagoon weaves old stories and is a precious natural environment. For the past three years, the island has become for me the outpost of dreams," she muses.

The restoration work needs to respect the history and the value of the location, abandoned for 60 years, as well as its ecosystem, she says. Through centuries, pilgrims stopped at the monastery there, and then the island became a vineyard, a vegetable garden and eventually a fortified military site. "Our project is to transform it into a garden, to restore the crumbling buildings, the former powder magazines, recovering them as exhibition spaces. Here the Fondazione will organize exhibitions, performances, artistic residences, conferences, live shows, involving art, architecture, music, cinema, theater and dance," she says.

The island of San Giacomo will be entirely self-sufficient in terms of energy, an eco-sustainable center which will allow the discussion, through art, of "the crucial issues of climate change and environment."

On the island last year, during the 60th Venice Art Biennale, the foundation presented a project by Korean artist dancer and choreographer Eun-Me Ahn called "Pinky Pinky 'Good,'" "a collective and transformative ritual for blessing, inspired by Korean shamanic tradition and conceived especially" for the island, "hence honoring its new existence as a location for contemporary art," she remarks.

Sandretto Re Rebaudengo also inaugurated the Parco d'Arte in 2019, the foundation's permanent open-air installation of sculptures and installations by international artists on the San Licerio hill in Guarene. In May and September, it will see the arrival of two new works of art.

"This is a project I really love and that I have strongly wanted. The intention was to join contemporary art with an extraordinary landscape, the beauty of the Piedmontese hills of Roero, a UNESCO patrimony. We started with installing sculptures from my collection and now we commission expansive site-specific works in communication with the natural environment."

Access is free and the immersive experience "offers an opportunity to connect with nature walking through the artworks, the Nebbiolo vineyards, the willow trees, cypresses and oaks. The path within the park is conceived to offer a variety of walks and views, allowing visitors to explore the installations from different perspectives," she remarks.

Fashion and Art

Asked to comment on the strengthening connection between fashion brands and art, she believes this is "interesting and positive. These two worlds share a strong creative dimension, the ability to interpret the present and to imagine the future."

The collaborations have led to collections, exhibitions and cultural projects "that enrich the global artistic landscape. This synergy offers artists new platforms of visibility and allows fashion to explore deeper conceptual dimensions. I think, for example, of collaborations such as Louis Vuitton with Takashi Murakami."

The foundation, she continues, has "always believed in the importance of the support of contemporary art also through synergies with other cultural sectors." What is essential, however, is that the relationship between fashion and art not be limited to an aesthetic or commercial operation. "It should be an opportunity for an authentic conversation that could generate new narrations," she adds.

To this end, the foundation's project ArtCollab is based precisely on these assumptions. "What makes it special is also its nonprofit nature: the proceeds of the collaborations are reinvested in the support of contemporary art and in the educational activities of the Fondazione, in addition to supporting other philanthropic initiatives."

Examples of these collaborations include that between Paul Kneale and Nicholas Kirkwood on the "realization of extraordinary footwear," and limited-edition sweaters stemming from the exchange between Michael Armitage and Stella Jean. "Every collaboration is a meeting of ideas, of sensibility and savoir-faire, and every piece created brings with it a story to be told. At a time of increasing crosspollination of disciplines, ArtCollab represents for us a way to strengthen the connection between art and applied creativity, supporting at the same time an ethical and sustainable vision of the cultural production."

On a personal level, Sandretto Re Rebaudengo considers "fashion a form of art, a language through which one can express one's identity, reflect the times and creatively experiment. As with contemporary art, also in fashion I appreciate the ability to innovate, break the schemes in a conversation with society."

In particular, she seeks "style, a personal style that can communicate how I am to the outside, what I think and what I love. I pay a lot of attention in the choice of clothes, colors, and shoes. But it's especially the light of the artificial stones of my costume jewelry, the American bijoux that I have been collecting for a long time, that express my personality. Before leaving home, every morning, I never forget to pin a luminous brooch on the jacket or to wear a colorful and joyful necklace on a dress."

On what she believes differentiates her foundation from others, she says she created it "imagining it as a hospitable place, an open venue, an agorà. We try to attract as many people as possible to art. I am convinced that contemporary art should not only be looked at and admired but understood and lived, and it is for this that the Fondazione exists, to always keep the conversation between artists and visitors alive and constant." ■

She points out that, further contributing to the importance of Turin as a key contemporary art hub, at the end of November the city will host the yearly conference of CIMAM, the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art, and the event will take place at the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, with Fondazione Torino Musei and the Rivoli Castle.

Her international vision led her to create La Fundación Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Madrid in January 2017. Why Madrid?

"I love Spain so much, I consider it my second mother country. In Spain I have many friends and I am fascinated by its culture and its people. Madrid is a great global capital and a bridge with Latin America, a continent that is increasingly important in the contemporary artistic scene," she explains. "It is an open and nomadic institution. We started by building solid relations with the community, staging solo exhibitions in always different venues, extraordinary spaces, little-known and unexpected where we present young influential artists in Spain for the first time."

The Fundación Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Madrid is currently staging a solo exhibit at the Pabellón de los Hexágonos, at the city's Casa de Campo, of works never seen before by young French artist Pol Taburet, who hails from Guadalupe. On June 3, it will inaugurate the collective exhibition of the sixth edition of the Young Curator Residency Programme Madrid in the Nadie Nunca Nada No training center in the Spanish city.

"The sites of the Fondazione are inhabited places, where an exhibition, a video, an installation, a painting become part of our days as sources of inspiration and thought. Places where you learn, invent, experiment and talk," she says.

plats du jour

Dine Like French Royalty

The Grand Banquet offers an immersive experience of the royal feasts of France's 18th century – with a seasonal menu by Michelin-starred Alain Ducasse for today's exacting epicureans. BY LILY TEMPLETON



The staff is in period-appropriate outfits.



The Thanksgiving edition of The Grand Banquet.

Picture this: as your carriage rolls along in the late afternoon, the Château de Versailles comes into view.

A modest hunting lodge under King Louis XIII, the architectural crown jewel of France's royalty has been greatly expanded and embellished since his successor Louis XIV, also known as the Sun King, came into full power in 1661.

But there isn't much time to admire its facades turning golden with the sunset or the expansive gardens as you pull up to the side of the royal complex, where stands a fine building designed by the Sun King's favorite architect in 1681.

After alighting, a name – one discovered in a wax-sealed envelope upon entrance – is announced by the liveried butler as you are ushered into the Salon d'Audience reception room bathed in flickering candlelight.

Except that you aren't in the early 1700s and it's not ministers of the French kings' courts or the intellectual elite of the Age of Enlightenment who await inside this building appointed in the grandest 18th-century style and filled with precious antiques.



A dish of celery with horseradish and crystal caviar served during one of the banquets.

It's over three centuries later and you're here for The Grand Banquet, an immersive experience imagined by Michelin-starred chef Alain Ducasse at Airelles Château de Versailles, Le Grand Contrôle, a sumptuous 13-key hotel that opened in 2021 and the only one set in the boundaries of the palace.

Paramount at Le Grand Contrôle is the culinary experience, helmed by Ducasse, the only chef to tally 21 Michelin stars across his constellation of establishments around the world.

While the dinners of the Sun King were more spectacle than meal for anyone but the direct royal family – the court watched the proceedings from seats, if they were lucky, or stood throughout – this feast is squarely for today's epicureans.

For Ducasse, the throughline of The Grand Banquet is answering one question: "What and how would the royal court eat today?"

Forget recreating dishes eaten three centuries ago. "We rather invent a contemporary version of the ancient royal dinners: how they would have evolved along the time until today," he tells WWD Weekend.

"Our menu is built on the same structure than the ancient one – with eight services including 'Relevé' [a fish or meat dish], 'Röst' [a poultry-based or feathered game roast], 'Entremets' [or sweets and desserts]," he continues. "But culinary techniques and tastes are quite modern, with exceptional, seasonal produce."

Further building the ambience are candlelit crystal chandeliers, dramatic floral arrangements and tables set with 18th-century tableware in the painstakingly restored salons that overlook the gardens of Versailles.

The flow of canapés and cheese gougères and Champagne served by the carafe is interrupted only by the shout of "Au couvert du roi," (or "to the king's table," in English). Guests are then led to their tables before a ballet of domed dishes begins, each revealing tantalizing fare.

At Thanksgiving, that meant butternut and Paris mushroom tours, a stuffed turkey with mashed chestnuts and the pecan pie, all given that Ducasse touch.

For spring, the kitchens will be working with langoustines, fennel, green asparagus and milk-fed lamb, among other seasonal produce. And no meal is complete without a touch of chocolate from Ducasse's famed workshop.

Congruent with today's clientele, the menu can be paired with either nonalcoholic beverages for 430 euros, while sampling wines and Champagne will set visitors back 620 euros.

Punctuating the dinner are artistic performances that



Le Grand Contrôle has views on the Versailles Orangerie.

include the description of dishes peppered with facts about royal habits, produce or historical anecdotes.

Did you know that green peas were Louis XIV's favorite vegetable and that courtesans would hide them everywhere on their person so they could offer them to the king? Or that the "service à la française," or French-style service of dishes made to be shared and placed simultaneously on the table, was invented by Louis XV?

While the historical element looms large by virtue of the setting and offers a novel twist on Michelin-starred fine dining, it should only be seen as cultural condiment.

"We are not doing a historical reconstitution," says the hotel's general manager Julien Révah. "What we want to do here is offer an experience that transports clients to the 18th century, not just offer magnificent rooms or fine dining, and excel in the experience."

In addition to Ducasse's culinary mastery, offering a cohesive experience that encompasses the liveried staff in period costumes and the ceremonial is part and parcel of the success of the banquet, according to Révah.

"Imagine for one second this kind of experience with maître d' and waiters in black [contemporary suiting] attire – it wouldn't fit and would look ridiculous," he says. "Offering a moment as it was lived in the 18th century is like watching classical theater. What you might find jarring is anachronistic elements."

With 80 percent of hotel guests availing themselves of the dinner – banquet or nightly feast – Révah said it had become a must-do that is integral to the experience of the hotel.

Since it launched in 2024, some guests have attended two out of the four sessions offered so far. Serving as the introduction to the seasonal menu, the next session is slated for three evenings starting March 21.

The aim is also to draw a new clientele, one who isn't necessarily going to spend a night (or several) in the rooms and suites overlooking the Orangerie of Versailles, Révah said. Currently, the proportion of nonresidents sits between 20 and 30 percent, a share he hopes to grow as word of the experience spreads.

"The goal is to turn Le Grand Contrôle into a place where something different is happening and worth making the detour," the hotel executive says.

We Are Ona to Open Its Doors in NYC

Chef Luca Pronzato's culinary and culture studio produces bespoke dining experiences for Chanel, Gucci and Valentino, among others.

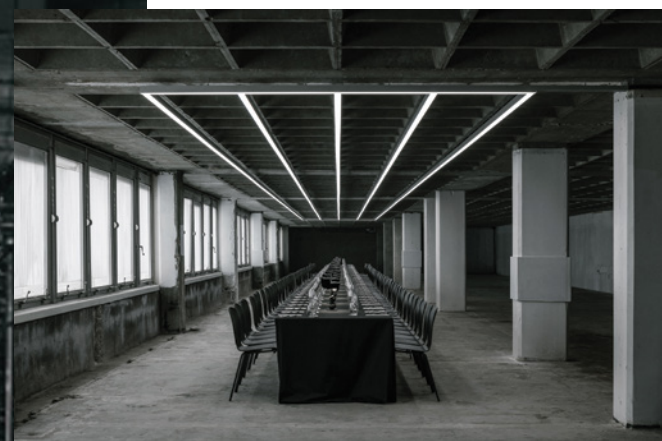
BY RHONDA RICHFORD



Luca Pronzato



We Are Ona x
Carla Sozzani
Foundation



We Are Ona
x Carsten
Holler

In Paris' constantly evolving culinary scene, dining in an abandoned train station or a grand Haussmann apartment are some of the city's most coveted invitations, thanks to We Are Ona.

Who, exactly, is Ona? It's the Catalan-derived name of the Parisian group behind stylish pop-ups with powerhouse chefs, including brutalist cuisine pioneer Carsten Holler, and fashion brands such as Chanel, Gucci, Jacquemus, Saint Laurent and Valentino.

The group was started by chef Luca Pronzato, who cut his culinary teeth at the legendary Noma restaurant in Copenhagen.

Striking out on his own, he wanted to create more than a restaurant and imagined a full-service food studio for brands, with a staff of architects, designers and culinary directors to create immersive eating experiences.

"We like to really adapt to the universe of a brand and create a brand experience and connect to things in the food world, the culinary world," Pronzato says.

"We felt that the industry needed something that was really focusing on experiences and really specialized in culinary experiences, that can go beyond the traditional restaurant model," he adds. "We really wanted to create a fusion between the hospitality and the event world."

Now Ona will open a food lab in New York City on March 1, along with an office, to expand in the U.S. market. The new outpost follows offices in London and Milan, after its Paris headquarters. Ona means "wave," and he's now sending ripples out across the world.

After that, during Paris Fashion Week, the team is partnering with design duo Willo Perron and Brian Roettinger. They are the founders of the Los Angeles-based visual design house behind Rihanna's Super Bowl halftime performance, and have worked with other music artists including Sam Smith and Kesha on stage experiences, as well as fashion show sets for Rihanna's Fenty, Alexander Wang, Chanel shows in Manchester and Shenzhen, and retail for brands including Skims and Cartier.

The pop-up is set to run March 2 to 6.

They will also organize a series of dinners for Alaïa during the Paris Fashion Week, curated by creative director Pieter Mulier.

Usually set around a grand communal table, We Are Ona's style adapts to the space: a monochrome palette underneath fluorescent lighting for Carsten Holler's brutalist vision in an abandoned train station; a table made out of black slate and scaffolding with cinder block seating for NYC Art and Design week, or light wood topped with delicate tulips, freesias and gerbera daisies to christen the future location of Carla Sozzani's foundation in Milan.

Food as its own art has often been an afterthought for fashion, and Pronzato set out to change that perception. "But for us, the culinary experience is an addition to all the details, an addition of different, talented people."

They're immersed in the art world, too, coordinating events at Art Basel Hong Kong, Salone del Mobile in Milan and Miami Design Week, and have collaborated with artists including Crosby Studios founder Harry Nuriev.

The Ona team takes on everything from the art direction to the set design. "There is big love for the creative world, and we always wanted to put ourselves in the middle of the with a culinary point of view, and what a brand wants to create for their clients, the press, their celebrities – to really create a memorable experience thanks to the culinary offering," he says.

"We always try to understand what the brands want to showcase, whether it's the collection or a project or the moment."

They look at the cultural history of a location as well as the collection. "You want to keep the stories different when you go to Marseille or to Manchester. You really want to create something that respects the time and place, and also respects what the brand presents," he says. "So it's really a conversation and we do want to create a moment for them."

Allowing the public access to usually rarefied spaces and events is part of Pronzato's vision to build community through culinary experiences. That's why they seek out unusual locations, such as the abandoned train station in the north of Paris. He revels in finding secret, hidden or unused spots.

"We kind of push doors. We really love the history of cities, so we always are trying to find exclusive locations, these incredible locations that are not really available to the public."

The company has been doing events in the U.S., including in New York and Miami during design weeks or Art Basel. With the fashion and art chops, Pronzato wants We Are Ona to accompany its clients in the U.S. in a larger way. They also produce events in Hong Kong.

"Food is an incredible emotional way to connect with your audience, because you want to create memories. And the great thing with food is – and it's pretty primary what I say – but people love to eat, and it reflects on how they love to eat or enjoy an experience."

"It's an incredible way for brands to connect with their audience, and for the audience to get closer to the brand," he adds.

While fashion brand experiences are private, the company does public pop-ups, too. The group will partner with Matter+Shape trade show, taking over the Jardin des Tuileries during the event that coincides with Paris Fashion Week. Tables are available upon reservation.

It's something more than a meal, it's a once-in-a-lifetime experience, he says, adding: "It's really important for us to create a memory."

On Top of Paris in La Tour D'Argent's Private Apartment

The Michelin-starred restaurant restored a family apartment to welcome guests, with a panoramic view of the newly reopened Notre-Dame cathedral. BY RHONDA RICHFORD



Inside the Augusta apartment overlooking Paris.

As Paris' Notre-Dame cathedral has risen from the ashes, La Tour d'Argent is poised to offer the most expansive view of the city's landmark.

Called the Augusta Apartment, the 1,500-square-foot space is perched atop the legendary restaurant and boasts expansive views over the Seine and the famous cathedral.

It's named after Augusta Burdel, grandmother of current Groupe La Tour d'Argent president André Terrail, and was a family residence in its past incarnation. The apartment is filled with personal photos and artworks that nod to the restaurant's history.

"I decorated very much like if it was my own apartment. It's a mix of very much a Parisian Haussmann style with Scandinavian atmosphere," says Terrail, whose own mother is from Finland.

Now guests are welcome to make it a home-away-from-home while they are staying in the City of Light, or even for staycations for locals who want to stay over after a languid meal.

La Tour d'Argent underwent an 18-month revamp itself in 2023, completely rebuilding the top floors. Paris' oldest restaurant has been serving diners since 1582, and once its doors reopened, it quickly reestablished itself as a culinary landmark in the city's ever-shifting gastronomic scene.

The apartment was designed by architect Franklin Azzi with panoramic views, a marble bathroom and a Finnish sauna with another church view. Noémi Langlois-Meurinne oversaw the interiors, with classic chevron wood floors and a velvet couch in a sunset shade that imbue the space with warmth.

A custom glazed ceramic piece from Maximilian Pellet was created in an Art Deco style to symbolize the meeting of Terrail's grandparents in the 1920s. He commissioned the piece especially for the apartment to pay homage to the family's roots.

Next to the open kitchen, where restaurant chefs can prepare an in-suite meal for guests, is a dining table that seats 12. Guests can enjoy a private meal, or host dinner parties for their friends.

The family's history in hotels – his grandfather owned the Georges V, San Régis and Monte Cristo hotels, among others – gives Terrail a unique perspective on the city's current where-to-stay landscape. The Augusta's singularity, history and pedigree make the apartment unique in the ever-more crowded hospitality space, particularly with fashion brands entering the fray, he believes.

"The hotel offering in Paris is astonishing; all the new five-star hotels opening have really brought up the level very, very high. But you can definitely feel today that some customers want to live something a little bit different than the big hotels."

One extravagant touch is an 18,000-euro custom mattress from Maison Treca that promises a deep slumber, atop a hand-stitched Tour d'Argent insignia. It's the only one of its kind in the world.

Even boutique hotels can have dozens of rooms, he notes. "We have only one. So, when we have a customer, he's our friend, and he's the only one we're going to think about. We can cater to their needs, and we can respond in some very innovative ways."

A rooftop Champagne toast at midnight is not out of the question, for example. They'll do their best to fill even the most unique request, he says.

Most guests have an historical affinity for the restaurant, and many want to hear his own story.

"Sometimes they want to spend time with me," says Terrail, revealing the level of personal service he is willing



A view of the kitchen inside the private apartment atop La Tour d'Argent.

to provide. "It's a little bit like Disneyland. You know, if you go to Disneyland, you want to meet Mickey Mouse? Well, I guess I'm that guy."

But he revels in the personal touch. "The really fun thing about this apartment is we have one customer, and we can really tailor anything to those customers. It's very different in a hotel where you have many guests at times," he says.

"I enjoy it when I come to the apartment sometimes just to say, 'Hi.' I feel like I'm visiting some friends."

Despite the hundreds of years of history and a Michelin star, Terrail says they skip the snobbery and aim to create fun, welcoming and laid-back experiences.

Those include a chance to cook with head chef Yannick Franques, a wine tasting class with head sommelier Victor Gonzalez or whipping up some sweets with head pastry chef Mourad Timish.

Guests can perfect their skills making cocktails with the head bartender, swirling coffee with latte art with the head barista or making bread and croissants with the head baker.

The latter experiences on offer take place in its own surrounding shops, what Terrail calls La Tour's "Little Village." The family has established a more casual bistro next door, a bakery, and épicerie on the block.

"The whole package helps you dive into La Tour d'Argent's atmosphere. We've created a whole world that is very fun for us," he says.

It's part of the brand's extended universe, which Terrail hopes to continue to develop, with a focus on being a neighborhood destination for artisanal food shopping for the high-end clientele that lives in the surrounding area. He imagines a cheese shop next.

The restaurant's 300,000-bottle wine and cognac cellar is still under construction, and will reopen in the spring for private tours. For now, guests can taste bottles from the 1800s, or the staff can arrange tours outside of Paris, including a day in Champagne at Maison Roederer in Reims, or in Cognac with Maison Camus.

In the apartment, a bottle of Camus is always open, Terrail adds.

Terrail also created a signature scent for the apartment with nose Clémence Besse. It infuses the candles as well as the custom beauty and skin care products available. The products' label is a photo of his grandfather, adding another family-oriented detail. A branded puzzle is another piece on offer.

"The apartment, from the business point of view, extends the brand universe into lifestyle," Terrail says.

After four-and-a-half years of planning and construction, Terrail says they still have not arrived at the finished product – not that they ever will. "It's never finished. We're still working on it, still adjusting it, very much like you would do in your own apartment."

With the iconic Notre Dame cathedral now reopened, La Tour d'Argent has a new perspective, and the restaurant has reasserted its special ties with the church. The restaurant recently held a dinner for the Friends of Notre-Dame de Paris organization, hosted by the Archbishops of New York and Paris, as well as events to celebrate the project's architects.

"We were worried that probably customers would give up on us, in a sense, because we didn't have Notre Dame. And on the contrary, it has actually created a new focus around Notre Dame, which for us is amazing," he says.

The apartment is available for 1,800 euros a night, and experiences start at 2,800 euros.

The Remarkable Life of Fornasetti's Muse

In her heyday, Lina Cavalieri was heralded as the most beautiful woman in the world – a superstar of the Belle Epoque whose legacy is kept alive by a Milan-based, family-run design firm that fell in love with her face. **BY SOFIA CELESTE**

Edwardian-era opera singer Lina Cavalieri is one of the most ubiquitous faces in design, made so in the contemporary age by Milan-based decor firm Fornasetti. Its heir, artist Barnaba Fornasetti, admits, however, that few people ask about the face that has adorned many of the family firm's plates and other objects for the past 70-plus years.

"She has an incredible story," he says.

Indeed, a closer look into that story depicts the opera singer and actress as the superstar of her day. A global name before television, she was perhaps the first singer to have a perfume made for her and to endorse beauty brands like Palmolive and Gellé Frères.

The Roman-born performer made her big stage debut at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples in Giacomo Puccini's "Bohème" in 1900. She went on to interpret opera's most famous female protagonists: Manon, Thaïs, Floria Tosca and Violetta from "La Traviata."

For much of the Belle Epoque, her angelic voice echoed through the halls of the Paris Opera, Covent Garden in London and the Italian theater of St. Petersburg. In the latter, she serenaded the last of the Romanovs and later witnessed the dawn of the Russian Revolution. At the old Metropolitan in New York, she was passionately embraced by costar Enrico Caruso in a scene from "Fedora," her first on-stage kiss, she writes in her autobiography "Le mie verità [My truths]," compiled in the late 1930s.

During her heyday she was considered the "most beautiful woman in the world" and, heralded for her porcelain skin and doll-like features, she was dubbed "the ultimate proof of Venus on earth" by Italian poet and playboy Gabriele D'Annunzio.

One of the very first to capture her was Italian portrait artist Giovanni Boldini, a proponent of the Tuscan Macchiaioli art movement and contemporary of Edgar Degas.

She captivated and was courted by a long list of men in her younger years and even became a princess through her first marriage to Russian prince Aleksandr "Sascha" Vladimirovič Barjatinskij in 1899. After realizing that the Russian court was not conducive to her ambitions as a performer, she later traveled to the U.S. and married American heir and Astor family member Robert W. Chanler. That marriage was followed by one to French actor and tenor Lucien Muratore and then to opera singer and race car driver Giuseppe Campari.

With just two relatives on record alive today, her superstar history would all but have been forgotten if Piero Fornasetti hadn't felt a cosmic connection with her face whilst flipping through a 19th-century magazine in the early 1950s. It was then that he began working on what would later become his most famous and iconic series: Tema e Variazioni (Theme and Variations).

Barnaba Fornasetti has over the years been a catalyst in artistically spreading Lina's beauty in the modern age. At Milan Design Week in April, he will present the next extension of "Tema e Variazioni," which will include wall and desk clocks and a set of eight plates adorned with Lina's soulful gaze.

Like many superstars, Cavalieri's personal history was punctuated with struggle. She was born in 1875 on Christmas Day in Rome's Trastevere neighborhood into hard times. "In every human activity, there is nothing harder than the beginning," she wrote in her autobiography.

Her father Fiorindo lost his job as an assistant to an architect after his boss made advances to her mother Teonilla, who refused him. Forced to go to work and help support her family, Lina took odd jobs as a seamstress and later as a florist to make ends meet. Eventually she was mentored by a music teacher, who, author Franco Di Tizio says, abused and impregnated her. She secretly gave birth to her son Alessandro in 1892, though she continued to care for him, never mentioning in her writings who his real father was.

Di Tizio, a doctor by vocation, first came into contact with Cavalieri's story through the widely popularized 1955 film "The Most Beautiful Woman in the World" starring Dolce Vita actress Gina Lollobrigida. He lives in the seaside town of Francavilla, in the Abruzzo region, and is

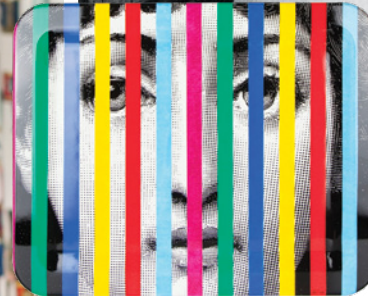
Portrait of the opera singer Lina Cavalieri (1874-1944). Below: Lina Cavalieri depicted in Fornasetti's famous and iconic series: Tema e Variazioni (Theme and Variations) collection.



Barnaba Fornasetti poses with the Lux Gstaad chair emblazoned with Lina Fornasetti's image.



Piero Fornasetti posed with the Occhi tray.



In her memoirs, she leaves the future with valid advice that resonates in the world today. Of relationships, she says, above love and passion, affection is tantamount

to respect and comprehension. "Affection is made of memories, while love is made of violent sensations. Affection that increases with the passing of the years and does not undergo the ups and downs to which love is vulnerable."

Nearly a century later, Lina's humor also still resonates. Of Italian men, she warns female readers: "The Italian man is a dreamer, a poet, intelligent, jealous, exhibitionist. He loves family and his children but is a relentless hunter of sensations."

Today, in the hills of Florence to the south side of the Arno river bank, lies the last place Lina lived in and where she met her death. Di Tizio and Fornasetti both describe her death as a fluke accident despite rumors she was once a German spy. In 1944, while evacuating during a blitz, she went back to her home to save mementos and pieces of jewelry when the corner of her hillside was bombed by U.S. forces. At Villa Torre Al Pino, which lies halfway up a narrow country road called Via Suor Maria Celeste, a visitor rings a few buzzers of the condominium building that was once her home, in hopes that someone might know they are living in the last residence of a bygone legend. Sadly, nobody in the building seems to know who she is or was.

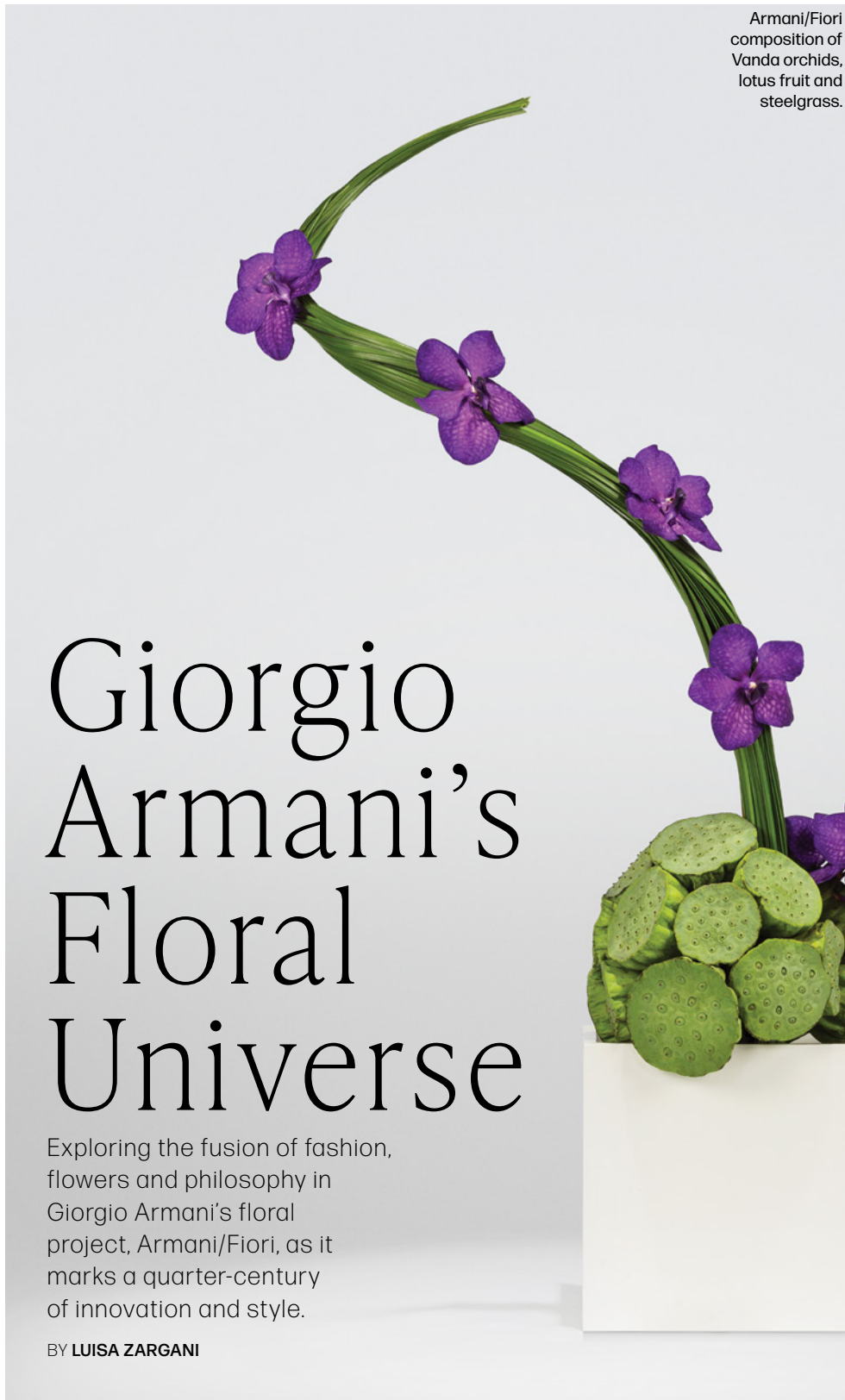
Looking ahead, Barnaba Fornasetti says his main task is to make sure Cavalieri's image continues to evolve as her face continues to fuel a creative concept linked to current events. Cavalieri's face has been transformed by Fornasetti into 400 variations over the years, such as the Anonymous mask, the crown for Elizabeth II's jubilee or the evolution of Lina into a male.

"We are talking about Fornasetti's most enduring theme. What inspires Fornasetti's loyalty and unleashes this inexhaustible creativity are her golden proportions – like those of a Greek statue, and her enigmatic expression, which is similar to that of the Mona Lisa."

The most beautiful thing about Lina, Di Tizio reflects, is her life story. "She was able to take the high road and it's important to remember that she came from nothing and rose to be known as the most beautiful woman in the world, charting the best life for herself."

Oretta, speaking from her home in Rome, brushes off highly romanticized renditions of her aunt's life that pale in comparison to who she was and what she really accomplished.

"There are a lot of tall tales out there about my aunt. That movie with Gina Lollobrigida doesn't do her justice. It's probably time for a new movie. A real one."



Armani/Fiori composition of Vanda orchids, lotus fruit and steelgrass.



An Armani/Fiori display at the opening event of La Scala in 2021.

Giorgio Armani's Floral Universe

Exploring the fusion of fashion, flowers and philosophy in Giorgio Armani's floral project, Armani/Fiori, as it marks a quarter-century of innovation and style.

BY LUISA ZARGANI



Armani/Fiori orchids and silver coconut leaves.

"Flowers should never wilt," believes Giorgio Armani.

That is only one of the designer's soundbites on the topic of flowers, around which he has built a brand and a business, Armani/Fiori, established in 2000 with the opening of the Armani/Manzoni 31 store in Milan and also present in Dubai, Kuwait City and Hong Kong.

Celebrating 25 years of Armani/Fiori, one of several anniversaries for the designer this year – from the establishment 50 years ago of his namesake company to 20 years of his Privé couture line – WWD Weekend explores the extension of his vision and style through his own words and those of Nicola Munaretto, head of Armani/Fiori since 2005.

Armani's style and a specific aesthetic are consistent and cohesive across the board, from his fashion to his furniture and interior designs and to the flower arrangements. Flowers, he says, suggest harmony. "A harmony of shapes and colors, but also of nature and culture, of wild beauty and creativity," the designer writes in "Armani Fiori," a book dedicated to this project and published by Rizzoli in 2023.

"Working with flowers, or around flowers, is exciting, for the creativity and vitality of nature shines through in all its glory, in turn inspiring human creativity. I like the idea of disciplining the exuberance of botany, yet allowing that exuberance to take hold of me. It is always a dialogue, enriching and full of surprises."

He admits that "when you think of Armani, you don't think of flowers first and foremost, and this is probably not wrong. In my view, flowers are an acquired taste, an achievement of adulthood. I have vivid memories of the fields of flowers in which we played as children, and clear images of the sense of awe that the blossoms created in all of us, marking the rhythm of the passing seasons with their colors and scents."

His style was for years informed by rigor, so much so

that early on in his career, he "rejected color as a facile and stereotyped notion of femininity, which included floral prints," working with neutral colors – the "greige" beige and gray blend he became famous for – and with more masculine and geometric designs.

When he started traveling, he discovered that flowers were "a welcome novelty," as was color, recalling how one summer in the Sicilian island of Pantelleria, where he's long owned a home, the inflorescence of a colorful cactus against the dry landscape suggested that he should "explore a softer, even more frivolous expression" of his style, as "rigor and frivolity do not exclude each other in any way."

Armani then started exploring floral compositions to redesign his homes and as part of the development of a lifestyle concept. The arrangements are paired in the book with his gowns and his furniture and the accordance is seamless.

Flowers have become a staple in his home and in his studio, but also in the environments he creates. He reveals a penchant for the lotus flower, and for orchids, described as "so mysterious."

Given his belief that his "most pronounced character trait" is marked by the duality between rigor and sentiment, reason and passion, he says he feels "a strong affinity with the Japanese way of approaching nature, of mastering its apparent chaos," referring to the influence ikebana, the art of arranging flowers in abstract compositions, has on him.

"I love streamlined, extremely sharp lines and shapes: compositions where the types of flowers and greenery are limited, reaching the maximum abstraction of only one type of flower and only one type of green. And I like geometry: both in the cuts of the leaves and in the vases, which always have regular shapes such as cubes and spheres, with asymmetries that make everything so

moving and elegant, so vibrant and pure," he states.

The scent of flowers is what strikes the designer more, since they trigger memories – roses, for example, remind him of his childhood in Piacenza during the month of May.

Here, Munaretto reveals how the floral compositions pass Armani's test and how Armani/Fiori is becoming even more international:

WWD Weekend: I read in the book that, not surprisingly, harmony is a requirement for Giorgio Armani also in the case of the floral arrangements. How do you achieve this?

Nicola Munaretto: Harmony is a key element in floral compositions, achieved through the simplicity of forms and the combination of natural elements that seamlessly blend with design objects.

WWD Weekend: I know the designer requires his stores to be sprayed with his favorite scents, I believe one of his Privé fragrances. Could you tell me how he views the scent of flowers and how you accommodate this with your own visual arrangements?

N.M.: For Armani/Fiori, Mr. Armani has always insisted that stores be infused with an intense and distinctive fragrance, Bois d'Encens available in a Privé fragrance but also as a room fragrance from Armani/Casa. However, when it comes to the scent of flowers, he has never imposed specific requirements – his focus remains primarily on the aesthetics of the compositions and the careful selection of blooms. That said, he deeply appreciates the evocative power of floral scents, which have the ability to awaken memories and stir emotions. The fragrance of peonies and jasmine, for example, is particularly dear to him and surrounds the garden of his Broni residence. ▶



An Armani/Fiori composition of cymbidium and typha on lacquered wood cube.



Here and below: Armani/Casa Tokyo chair and other furniture by Armani/Casa and Armani/Fiori chrysanthemums and golden coconut leaves.



Armani/Fiori in Milan.



WWD Weekend: On a personal note, how did you start your profession?

N.M.: I grew up in a family of florists, learning the craft from a young age. Meanwhile, I pursued a degree in economics, and later, after a period of working in my family's business, I had the opportunity to embark on this experience with Armani/Fiori.

WWD Weekend: How did you begin working with Armani/Fiori? What were the main guidelines you were given?

N.M.: I started in 2005 as the store manager of Armani/Fiori Manzoni. At that time, the store had already been open for five years and had a well-defined identity. The greatest challenge for me was embracing an established style while adapting my skills and expertise to a new creative vision.

WWD Weekend: How has Armani/Fiori changed over the years?

N.M.: Over time, Armani/Fiori has grown from a floral corner in Via Manzoni into a fully fledged business, with boutiques in prestigious locations worldwide. Beyond retail, it has also expanded into floral arrangements for major events, further establishing its presence in the luxury space.

WWD Weekend: Who are the main customers of Armani/Fiori? What are they looking for?

N.M.: Armani/Fiori caters to a diverse clientele – those looking to gift or acquire a floral composition for their home, individuals planning events, luxury hotels seeking floral designs for their spaces, as well as restaurants, private studios and high-end boutiques wanting to enhance their interiors with our arrangements. All of our establishments, such as the restaurants or the Armani/Hotels around the world, are adorned with Armani/Fiori arrangements.

WWD Weekend: In the book, the floral arrangements are shown next to Mr. Armani's garments. Can you tell us how the two categories interact? And how they interact with Armani/Casa?

N.M.: Floral compositions are often influenced by the trends of our fashion collections, with the color palettes of the flowers echoing each show's theme. Likewise, floral themes frequently appear in prints and patterns within the collections, creating a dynamic interplay between fashion and nature. The connection with Armani/Casa is equally important – floral elements complete the living environment, harmonizing with the aesthetic of the furnishings. Armani/Casa fabric and wall-covering prints frequently incorporate natural motifs such as leaves and flowers, reflecting the brand's signature style. Similarly, the vases and decorative objects of Armani/Fiori follow the same design principles of Armani/Casa, characterized by refined forms and understated elegance.

WWD Weekend: Oriental touches are frequent in the Armani collections and I gather they are recurrent in the floral arrangements, too. What can you tell us about this?

N.M.: The aesthetic of Armani/Fiori is deeply inspired by Eastern influences, particularly from Japan – a country that has long fascinated Mr. Armani. The use of geometrically arranged leaves and the essentiality of the compositions are undoubtedly reminiscent of Japanese artistry.

WWD Weekend: Are there certain flowers that are absolutely never employed? If so, why?

N.M.: There are no flowers that are strictly excluded – it always depends on how they are incorporated into the arrangement. However, certain flowers and natural elements are favored due to their significance to Mr. Armani, such as orchids, lotus flowers, peonies and bamboo, which are often central to our designs. From my experience, I know he does not favor yellow flowers in general.

WWD Weekend: Are you working on any particular arrangement that you can discuss?

N.M.: We are expanding our retail presence with the opening of new boutiques, ensuring that our floral compositions become accessible to an even wider international audience. We are currently working on opening a temporary shop within Selfridges and are developing other plans in Asia. ■



Client Bedroom – For optimal rest, it is best to sleep with your head to the south, according to Vastu.



Sara Bengur and Sonya Bekkerman



Vastu Puja Yantra

Realigning Spaces With Vastu Puja Practice

Interior designer Sara Bengur and spiritual practitioner Sonya Bekkerman ensure the home is aligned with nature and the cardinal directions to promote a happier and healthier home.

BY EMILY BURNS

For interior designer Sara Bengur and spiritual practitioner Sonya Bekkerman, wellness begins in the home.

Bengur is an award-winning designer who has been working with clients since founding her studio in 1993. In her practice, Bengur combines aesthetics and wellness to create a happier and healthier home.

Now, she is taking her wellness approach a step further by offering a new service to clients known as Vastu, an ancient Vedic science that she is certified in. It focuses on designing a space to be aligned with the forces of nature – Feng Shui later evolved from this science. For this practice, Bengur also works with Bekkerman, an art consultant and spiritual practitioner, trained in the ritual of Puja. Together, they have pioneered the Vastu Puja practice, ranging in price depending on the project, focused on clearing blockages in the home and bringing in peace. This month, the duo are heading to India, where they frequently visit and study together, to deepen their practice.

“I started studying with [a Vastu teacher] about eight years ago, and it was really exciting, because it was taking this desire I had already to create a healing environment for my clients but with a real ancient practice,” Bengur says, emphasizing Vastu dates back 8,000 to 10,000 years.

Vastu ensures the home is in alignment with each cardinal direction and employs sacred geometric shapes called Yantras that are placed throughout certain parts of the home to accomplish specific goals. It can be employed in any space, whether it be home, office, building, etc.

“It’s a little bit like acupuncture for the home....[Vastu] helps to alleviate blockages [in a space],” Bengur says. “Each is based on the cardinal directions, and each direction has to do with a different part of your life, whether it’s career, love, health, relationships.”

Each cardinal direction is associated with an element and aspects of one’s life. Specifically, Southwest is associated with earth, Southeast with fire, Northwest with air and Northeast with water. Bengur also has a line of five room sprays that each align with one of the five elements.

“What I love about this practice is that it begs the question, ‘How do physical spaces impact mental, emotional, spiritual health?’” Bekkerman says.

Through their practice, Bengur and Bekkerman work to ensure that the client’s space is aligned with these principles. Clients will start with a consultation through which they will share their floor plan and any goals or struggles in their life. From there, Bengur and Bekkerman create a plan of reconfiguring the space as needed and

placing the geometric shapes at key points throughout the space to harness the energy.

“What this methodology, does, is it really brings you closer to peace because it aligns your environment. When your environment is aligned, you are then supported in every aspect of your life, and energy begins to flow in ways that you couldn’t imagine prior,” Bekkerman says. “The best part is you can believe it or not believe it. It works without your belief.”

In addition, to complete the process an altar is created in the home where the client is able to express their intentions going forward.

“We ask them to write their intentions on a piece of paper, and then we ask if they want to share the intentions with us, or if they’d rather keep it private,” Bengur says, “Honestly, sometimes based on the floor plan, we can already tell what they need. [For example,] Northeast is the water element, so if there’s a stove in the water element, that could be creating tension.”

Along with the Vastu design principles, Bekkerman also brings in her expertise of the Puja practice. Puja is a ritual that includes Vedic mantras, offerings and chants with an emphasis on, like Vastu, aligning with the elements of nature in order to evoke joy and peace. The combination of Vastu, Puja and interior design expertise is what Bekkerman and Bengur say makes this practice unique.

“The Vastu, the floor plan and the Puja all help bring [what the client needs] into focus in a way that’s extremely healthy, positive and supportive,” Bekkerman says.

According to the duo, it’s the clients’ results that best showcase the efficacy of this practice. They’ve seen a duo of rambunctious cats calm down and sit together in the midst of the practice, and they’ve seen couples rekindle romance following a few adjustments. Bekkerman herself found she was able to enjoy sitting and working at her desk after Bengur advised her to adjust its placement – per Bengur, creative workers’ desks should face east, while more technical workers should face north for optimal flow.

Furthermore, while the above process represents the general process for Vastu Puja, each client’s journey is unique and more complex. However, Bengur has some general do’s and don’t’s. She recommends not having anything heavy in the center of a space to ensure energy is flowing at the heart of the home, and avoiding cluttered storage under the bed that could block restful energy. Lastly, for optimal sleep, she recommends having your head facing south.



Client Desk – For technical work, desks should face north, and for creative work, desks should face east, according to Vastu.



Bekkerman preparing for a Puja.

Client bedroom photograph by Jonny Vallant; Yantra by Sri Sakthi Amma Narayanan; Client desk by Richard Powers

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Shoe Maestro

When the French *couture* reopened its doors 80 years ago, names like Balenciaga, Chanel and Christian Dior (with his controversial “New Look”) helped spark high fashion’s comeback.

In their midst was Roger Vivier, who rose to notoriety for a platform evening shoe he designed for Elsa Schiaparelli in the 1930s. But Vivier’s trajectory as the “Fabergé of shoes” really took off from 1937, when he opened his first boutique on the Rue Royale in Paris.

He left Paris during the war, opened a hat shop in New York, and designed for Delman shoes and retailer Bergdorf Goodman before returning to France after the end of World War II. From 1953 to 1963, he designed for the House of Dior under the Christian Dior-Delman label. He also would come to create innovative designs for Yves Saint Laurent, Jean Patou, Nina Ricci and Guy Larouche, alongside his namesake brand.

Vivier, who died in 1989, also over the years would design custom shoes that would be worn by royals - he designed Queen Elizabeth II’s coronation shoes - and a fan base that included Josephine Baker, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Elizabeth Taylor, Marlene Dietrich, socialites Babe Paley and Gloria Guinness, and a long list of Hollywood A-listers and influencers.

Over the course of his career Vivier would change and challenge the shoe industry with styles ranging from high heels, a favorite, to squared-toed shoe shapes, and elaborately embroidered artisan silhouettes. His “Belle Vivier,” a square-heeled pump with a gold metal buckle designed for Saint Laurent’s legendary Mondrian collection in 1965, transcended ‘60s Mod style and remains one of fashion’s most iconic shoes 60 years later. — *Tonya Blazio-Licorish*



Roger Vivier with a selection of his shoe designs at home in Toulouse, France, on Sept. 27, 1984.

Photograph by Guy Marineau