



THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

OCTOBER 2021, ₹150

COSMOPOLITAN

MEET THE
DISRUPTORS

#TDL
2021

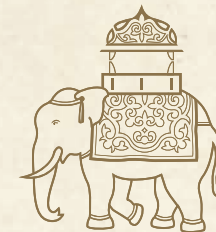
THE NAMES
TO KNOW
NOW

Actor,
Entrepreneur,
Powerhouse
**Katrina
Kaif**

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red trench,
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COSMOPOLITAN

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THE COVER LOOK!

Photographer: Tarun Vishwa; Styling: Zunaili Malik; Hair: Yianni Tsapatori at Faze Management; Make-Up: Maniasha at Faze Management; Trench, Aniket Satam; necklace, Misho Designs



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Editor's Letter

Welcome to the 25th Anniversary Issue of *Cosmopolitan* India—a milestone edition that marks a quarter-century of being one of India's most-loved and most-read women's magazines.

One of the most significant features in this issue is the *Cosmo* Disruptors List which, in many ways, holds the essence of what *Cosmo* has always stood for—fearlessness, energy, enthusiasm, and the courage to make your wildest dreams come true.

So what makes someone a Disruptor? The fact that they did things differently. A disruptor is a change-maker, a rule breaker. They are unafraid to chase their dreams, to stand out in a sea of 'same'. These are people with a powerful vision; who take ownership of their lives and careers; and also inspire others to believe in themselves.

The Disruptors in this 25th Anniversary Issue of *Cosmo* India are achievers from various fields—business, sports, film, arts... There's Aeronautical Engineer Sirisha Bandla who is the second-only, Indian-born woman to fly into space. There's Mithali Raj, Captain of the Indian Women's Cricket Team; Actor Neena Gupta who has shattered stereotypes and ageism; Zomato Feeding India's Ankit Kawatra who is trying to end hunger and food waste, and many more brilliant names... And when you read their remarkable stories, you'll discover that they have many qualities in common, including purpose and discipline. But if there is one thing they share, it is that each one of our Disruptors has a burning passion in their bellies—a passion for social change, for greater success, for a better world... And it is this fire that fuels them every day, that pushes them to get back up after falling. In the words of the incredibly successful entrepreneur, actor, Disruptor, and *Cosmo* coverstar Katrina Kaif, "If you want to succeed at anything, you must be entirely passionate about it...otherwise don't do it!".

Please join me in celebrating *Cosmo* India's big 25th birthday—we have come a long way, but at our core, we will always remain a magazine that aims to inspire and uplift you.

Until next month,

Nandini Bhalla

Nandini Bhalla,
Editor
nandini.bhalla@intoday.com
Follow me on Instagram: nandinibhalla

***"A disruptor is a
change-maker,
a rule-breaker."***

Z 6 II | TRUE MULTIMEDIA
POWERHOUSE



Image Courtesy: Vijay Eesam

UPGRADE TO THE FUTURE OF WEDDING VIDEOGRAPHY

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- Vijay Eesam | Z Ambassador

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COSMOPOLITAN UPFRONT

THE TOOLS AND INFO YOU NEED TO LIVE LIFE, VERSION 2.0

“Winning
at the Paris
Olympics is My
Priority Now”



Photographs: GETTY IMAGES.COM AND ADIDAS

Cosmo speaks to weightlifting
heavyweight **Mirabai Chanu**
about her recent victory at
Tokyo Olympics, what gives
her courage, and her
association with adidas.
By Meghna Sharma

Cosmo: Tell us a little about your childhood. When did you realise that you wanted to pursue weightlifting?

Mirabai Chanu: “I grew up in Nongpok Kakching, a small village about 30 kilometres from Imphal [Manipur]. I come from a very humble background. I am the youngest of three siblings, and my childhood was full of ups and downs.

As a child, I admired Kunjarani Devi—watching her weightlift so effortlessly inspired me to be like her. I realised my potential for the sport at the age of 12. I could lift more logs of wood than my brother, and my family recognised my strength and supported my decision to pursue weightlifting as a profession.”

C: What were the biggest obstacles that you had to overcome in order to realise your dream of representing India?

MC: “When I started out, there were

no weightlifting centres in my village. So I had to travel over 40 kilometres to get to the Khuman Lampak Sports Complex in Imphal. But my rebellious optimism helped me realise my dream ultimately.”

C: When it comes to weightlifting, what has changed since you started out?

MC: “In India, weightlifting has always been considered a male-centric sport, given the strength it demands. It has taken a lot of time and courage to change that perception. On the bright side, after

the Tokyo Olympics, people’s outlook towards this sport has changed significantly. And in the recent years, many young girls have taken up weightlifting, which makes me extremely happy.”

C: You have been representing India globally for many years now. What goes through your mind before a championship?

MC: “That I will do my best to win the tournament. And even if I lose, it will serve as an opportunity to learn something that will eventually help me improve my game.”



C: Competing at world championships can also take a toll mentally. How do you deal with it?

MC: “Winning and losing are a part of every sportsperson’s journey. And the right approach plays an important role in building mental strength. Whenever I am feeling low, I think of all my achievements and the love that I get from the people of India.”

C: How does it feel to be a part of adidas’ Impossible is Nothing campaign that honours athletes and sportspeople with a higher purpose?

MC: “It feels wonderful to be associated with a global brand like adidas, which has been a great force, backing and sponsoring many of the country’s renowned athletes. And I am delighted to be a part of adidas’ powerful roster of female athletes. Their support has instilled in me a strong belief in my ability to achieve my dreams. With adidas, my journey has been overwhelmingly encouraging and inspiring.”

“My childhood was full of ups and downs...but my rebellious optimism helped me realise my dream ultimately.”

C: Do you ever have moments of self-doubt?

MC: “To quote from adidas’ campaign: ‘Impossible Is Nothing’. If a person sets out to achieve their goals and maintains a positive outlook, then anything is possible.”

C: What gives you courage?

MC: “Making my parents, state, and country proud gives me the courage to fight any hurdles that come my way.”

C: You have many awards to your name...is there one that’s most special to you?

MC: “Each and every award and medal that I have won so far is very special to me. But winning a silver medal at the Tokyo Olympics was a surreal feeling. And I am working towards winning a gold in the Paris Olympics 2024.”

C: What are some of the changes you would like to see for women in sports?

MC: “The scenario has changed a lot since the time I chose this sport as my career. The society is more accepting of women’s participation in sports now. Besides, the number of women pursuing it as a career has also risen significantly, giving many others the confidence to take their aspirations more seriously. Global brands like adidas have also contributed to the cause significantly through their product offerings, which enable female body to move freely. The brand strongly believes that sports have the power to impact and change millions of lives.”

C: When not training, what do you like to do?

MC: “I love listening to music. I also like to travel and discovering new places.”

C: What’s on your bucket list?

MC: “Winning a gold medal at the Paris Olympics is my priority right now. I am also preparing for the World Championship in December this year, and the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games next year. I want to win all the prior tournaments and championships before the Paris Olympics to make my country proud again.”

C: What is your hope for the women of our country?

MC: “I see women breaking barriers to achieve their goals. With this optimistic attitude and belief in seizing possibilities, I feel women will be able to create an inclusive space for themselves in the near future.” ■

Okay, Friends, Let's Talk About Gaming

And how you are really,
really into it.

Do you consider yourself an actual gamer or just someone who likes video games?
12% I'm def a gamer.

88% It's more of a light hobby for me.

Where are you generally playing?
11% I have got a separate console.
89% On my phone or my computer!

What kind of games are you into? (Check all that apply.)

10% Life-simulation games.
20% Action-adventure games.
15% Party games.
25% Online competitive games.
30% Sports-based games.

Did you pick up gaming during the pandemic?

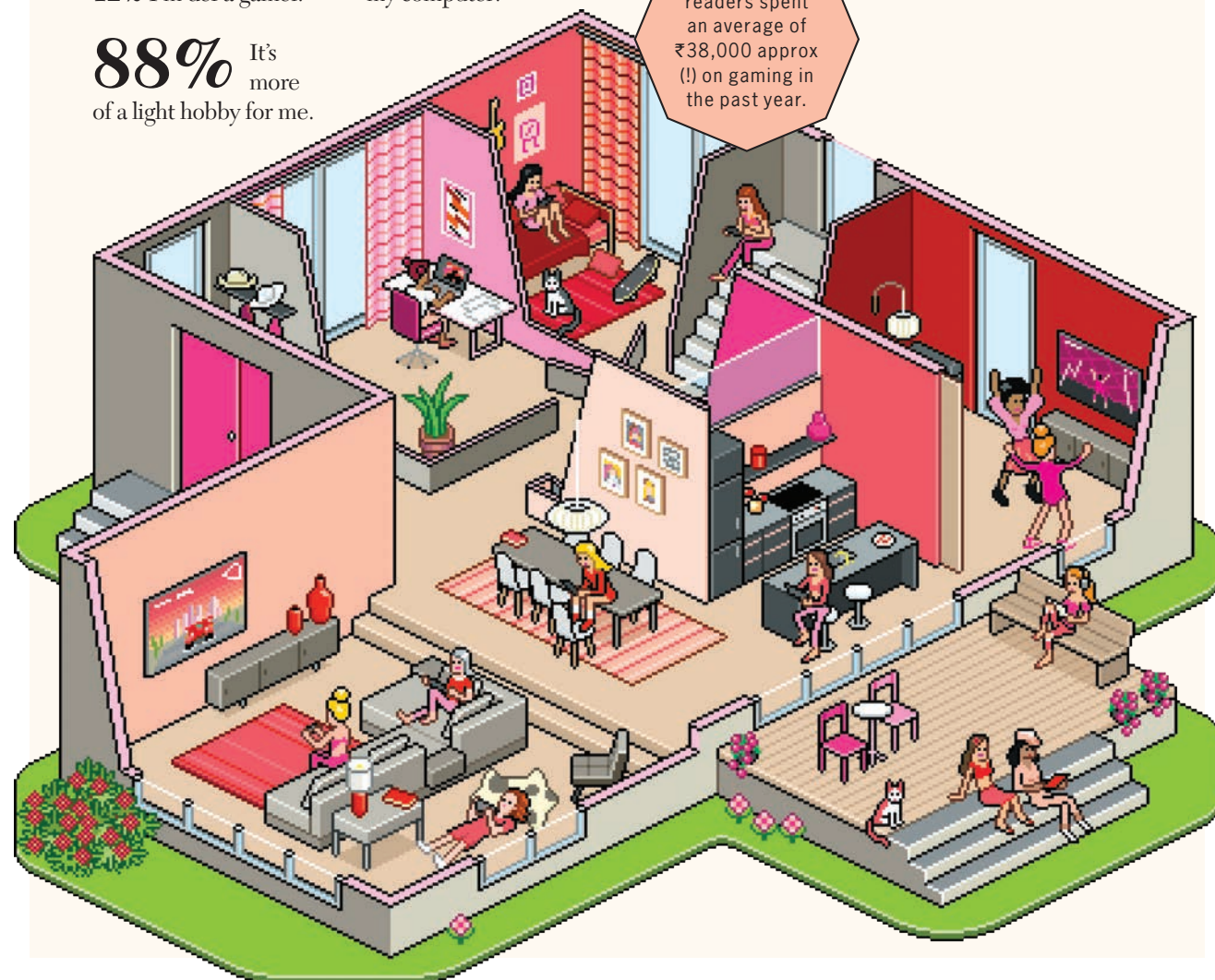
58% Nope, I have always been into it.
42% Yes.

Cosmo India readers spent an average of ₹38,000 approx (!) on gaming in the past year.

Are you pro or anti-cheat codes?
54% Pro! Sometimes you've gotta work smarter, not harder.
46% Anti. I want to earn my wins!

And...have you ever built your Sims a pool without ladders on purpose?
53% No, but now I want to.

47% Duh.



By: ANNABEL IWEGBUE; Illustration By: QUICKHONEY

Just a List of All the Juiciest Celeb Memoirs

1
THE MEANING OF MARIAH CAREY,
by Mariah Carey

Lots of scandalous bits, but the best part might be when she gets super real about her short but incredibly sensual affair with Derek Jeter. Truly, a moment.

2
GREENLIGHTS,
by Matthew McConaughey
Sooo, parts of this book are about Matthew's wet dreams. And if you want to hear him tell you all about them himself, please know he voices the audiobook version.

3
YOU DESERVE BETTER,
by Tyler Cameron
Yes, that Tyler, from *The Bachelorette*. Turns out, he's...shockingly insightful? And full of relationship advice? Who. Knew.

4
UNFINISHED,
by Priyanka Chopra Jonas
Her anecdotes about winning Miss World are fab, and you'll LOL at the time this icon sent a security guard to spy on Nick Jonas and her mom.

5
OPEN BOOK,
by Jessica Simpson
Surprise: Newlyweds was kinda fake. Not a surprise: Dating John Mayer is as bad as it sounds (or at least it was in 2006). *Adds to cart*

6
YOU GOT ANYTHING STRONGER?,
by Gabrielle Union
Come for the *Bring It On* nostalgia; stay for the takedown of racist practices in the entertainment industry.

7
MAKE IT NICE,
by Dorinda Medley
She cooks! She decorates! She has said *RHONY* showed only a "slice" of her life. Now, she is giving fans the whole thing. Kinda ominous? (But still juicy, of course.)

By: ELIZABETH ANN ENTENMAN; Photograph: GETTY IMAGES.COM



Photographic Evidence
That Will Convince
You to Buy an
**Oversized
Blazer**

SOME STRUCTURE
? CRAVING



SO *BIG*
The baggier you go,
the easier it is to wear
anything (bra tops, chunky
knits, dresses, turtlenecks)
underneath while still being
able to fully move your
arms. Truth.

Compiled By: MILONI THAKKER



Jacquard
When a pattern is woven
into fabric (impressive)
rather than printed on top
(kinda lazy, JK, JK).



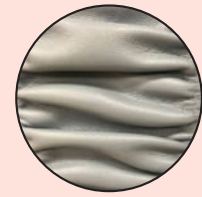
Brocade
A thick weave, usually
featuring florals. Marie
Antoinette was probs
a fan.



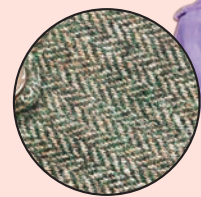
Pleated
If an accordion were
transformed into
clothing...like that.



Quilted
Patterned seams
(typically shaped into
squares or diamonds)
frame plush li'l pockets
of poly or down fill.



Smocked
Parallel stitching
that forms an
intricate design. It
also tends to have
lots of stretch, TG.



Tweed
Rough wool that's
often woven in plaid
or chevron patterns.

**Just a
List of
Fancy
Texture
Names**

...just in case you are
confused.

By: LAUREN ADHAV; Photograph: GETTYIMAGES.COM



Cardi
B knows all
about combining
ruched texture with a
trendy hue in one 'fit
to look luxe as
hell.

Cardi B



Ananya Panday

Make It Pop

A bright pair of slides works like a charm when you are looking to inject some fun into your basic look. You may think that classic shades like black and white are more versatile, but you'd be pleasantly surprised at just how easy it is to make a vivid pair work with almost everything in your closet.



Megan Fox

Walk In the Clouds

Sink your feet into a cushion-y, oversized pair like Hailey Bieber's. Available in fun shades and textures, this style is equal parts bold and chic. Plus, it'll give you a bit of a lift, minus the pain heeled pairs come with.



Hailey Bieber



Malaika Arora



Selena Gomez

Cosy Chic

Why punish your feet with tall, uncomfortable heels, when you can take your puffy, slip-on sandals from the bedroom to the street? Available in a host of colours, these bbs go well with basically errything.

Text By: SHAMBHAVI DUTTA; Photographs: GETTYIMAGES.COM

Workleisure

Working from home has given birth to a new style equation. Pairing *cazih* sandals with formalwear on top is not frowned upon anymore. And who better than Kendall Jenner to testify that.



Kendall Jenner



Kaia Gerber

Season Swap

Take a cue from Kaia Gerber and Gigi Hadid, and turn sandals into a year-round trend by pairing 'em with fuzzy socks. Monochrome, colour-block, or just chic neutrals...all permutations and combinations are a go.



Gigi Hadid

Strut Casually

Perfect for running errands or resting your feet in after a strenuous workout, pillowy, athletic slides look great and offer comfort to fatigued feet. Case in point: Malaika Arora and Disha Patani's logo-clad iterations.



Disha Patani

Lazy Gals Inc.

Once reserved for grocery runs, comfy slippers have had a stylish makeover. With A-listers giving their stamp of approval to this trend, it is time to stock up on bright sandals and fuzzy slip-ons. Here's all the inspo you need.



The Canvas of Hope

Cosmo shifts the focus on illustrators who are initiating conversations around mental health by using art to create awareness.

By Shambhavi Dutta

PRANITA KOCHAREKAR
@PRANITART

"As a child, I used to draw on the walls at home, as a mode of expression. My family encouraged me because they were all artists, too. However, a few years down the line, I experienced a burnout while working in the creative industry. There was little time and space for creativity, which led to disinterest...and later found my solace in therapy. Describing my emotions in words was tough, so I'd use visual analogies to convey pent-up feelings to my therapist. Finally, I understood the importance of professional and personal boundaries. Art instills the hope in me that someday it will nudge more people to get help professionally."



HARSHIT MANOCHA
@MOLABACHA

"Before the pandemic, I had already relocated to three different cities over the course of six years. Once COVID-19 struck, I returned to Delhi, my home. With a change in my environment, I could no longer vocalise my feelings, and 'art journaling' soon became my escape. I'd sit with my art supplies every morning and go Live on Instagram to share my journal entries...and how I felt. Post my session, people would reach out to me sharing snippets of what they had created alongside. This led to the birth of the Art Journaling Course. It is a 10-day course, with a batch of 15 people. We organise a quick, virtual get-together and share our feelings, while listening to each other with intent (a rule of utmost essence)."



TRY TO VIEW BULLYING FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE.

THE BULLY IS AN UNHAPPY, FRUSTRATED PERSON WHO WANTS TO HAVE CONTROL OVER YOUR FEELINGS SO THAT YOU FEEL AS BADLY AS THEY DO.



DON'T GIVE THEM THE SATISFACTION.

LEARN TO MANAGE STRESS

FINDING HEALTHY WAYS TO RELIEVE THE STRESS GENERATED BY BULLYING CAN MAKE YOU MORE RESILIENT SO YOU WON'T FEEL OVERWHELMED BY NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES.



EXERCISE, MEDITATION, POSITIVE SELF-TALK, MUSCLE RELAXATION, & BREATHING EXERCISES ARE ALL GOOD WAYS TO COPE WITH THE STRESS OF BULLYING.

DON'T BLAME YOURSELF

NO MATTER WHAT A BULLY SAYS OR DOES, YOU SHOULD NOT BE ASHAMED OF WHO YOU ARE OR WHAT YOU FEEL.



THE BULLY IS THE PERSON WITH THE PROBLEM, NOT YOU.

DON'T BEAT YOURSELF UP

DON'T MAKE A BULLYING INCIDENT WORSE BY DWELLING ON IT OR READING CYBERBULLYING MESSAGES OVER AND OVER.



INSTEAD, **DELETE** ANY MESSAGES AND **FOCUS** ON THE POSITIVE EXPERIENCES IN YOUR LIFE.

SPEND TIME DOING THINGS YOU ENJOY AND LOVE



THE MORE TIME YOU SPEND WITH ACTIVITIES THAT BRING YOU PLEASURE—SPORTS, HOBBIES, HANGING OUT WITH FRIENDS WHO DON'T PARTICIPATE IN BULLYING, FOR EXAMPLE—THE LESS SIGNIFICANCE BULLYING OR CYBERBULLYING WILL HAVE ON YOUR LIFE.



RAHIL
MOHSIN
@RAHIL
MOHSIN

"I draw comics not only for a living, but also as a way to cope. Art, for me, has always been a strong medium to convey my message. With uncertainty making its way into our lives in 2020, I started working on a collaboration with DLC Anxiety Worldwide Community. They wanted to share information related to mental health in the form of comics. While it was a tiny contribution, the effort, in hindsight, helped many arrive at a safe space. The inspiration for these comics came at a time when I was paranoid and living alone with my cat, Courage. And suddenly, sharing my life became relatable to many, and I ended up getting featured on WikiHow."

WHY ARE YOU SO SILENT?



MOUNICA TATA
@DOODLEODRAMA

"When creating art, my intention is not to entertain the audience. I want to share the most intimate part of myself. This way, we can have an open dialogue. Art is a wonderful medium to talk about issues because it transcends the barrier of language. Being able to translate my thoughts onto a canvas is indeed cathartic. I don't think we have enough conversations around mental health. They fade away after a while because we do not normalise them. My aim is to create a safe space and break down the narrative. I hope there comes a day when my art leads to a conversation at the dining table."



SONAKSHA IYENDER
@SONAKSHA

"For me, art began as a way to process and document my own mental health. Slowly, it meandered into every aspect of my life. I now work as a full-time illustrator and designer, and I am grateful for the opportunity. While art is work, it is also my escape. I paint on my sketchbook—sans any prompt or brief. It keeps me grounded and reminds me to pause for breath in a world which hasn't been easy to navigate. On certain days, when I can't bear to get out of bed, art has been a portal of sorts. It has transformed me because I would spend too much time isolating myself...and it helped me find my own people."



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Rock the Party

Your ultimate guide for all things festival and concert so that you are the ultimate star of the show.

SUEDE BOOTS, GLADIATORS, AND GRECIAN SANDALS WILL CARRY YOU THROUGH EVERY DANCE MOVE.

GO ALL OUT WITH SHADES, GLOVES, AND KITTEN EARS... YES, IT'S A HALLOWEEN HANGOVER

Alexa Chung

Dua Lipa

Vanessa Kirby

Miley Cyrus

Dua Lipa

Imy and Suki Waterhouse

Comfort Trumps All

You can either enjoy yourself or be obsessed with your look. Our hope? You'll choose the former. Seek inspiration à la Miley's look from the 2019 Glastonbury Festival: a white crop top with layers of necklaces and latex pants. Or throw on a kaftan over shorts and boots. You're sorted.

Sienna Miller

Compiled By: SHAMBHAVI DUTTA; Photographs: GETTYIMAGES.COM

Rihanna

Emily Ratajkowski

Romee Strijd

Cardi B

Gigi Hadid

Olivia Culpo

Shay Mitchell

Bella Thorne

Paris Hilton

Winnie Harlow

Kendall Jenner

The Cool Kids

High-octane neon shades will surely get you noticed in a crowd, but you don't want a sugar rush in neon pink! Pair a bright tone with cooling white, and layer separates for visual relief. Case in point: Gigi's jacket, with a pop of colour, comes together perfectly with a white top. Not fond of peppy tones? Go the other extreme with rock-chic black like Bella Thorne—complete with studded, thigh-high boots—or a powder blue dress like Kendall, which she wore to the 2019 Coachella Music Festival.



COSMOPOLITAN FAST GLAM

HOT BEAUTY, HOT FASHION, IT'S ALL HERE

Split Personality

Bag, Moschino,
price on request



Moschino's latest offering is a clever reimagination of the brand's classic Biker Jacket bag. By adding trench coat details to the mix, that they have created a new icon fit for your varying style moods.

Denim

High-waist jeans, Massimo Dutti, ₹4,999

Magic shaping straight-leg jeans, Marks & Spencer, ₹3,499

THE PANTS
It doesn't matter if you live and breathe fashion, or associate clothing with functionality, every single person owns at least one pair of jeans. And this season, all styles are trending: straight, skinny, boot-leg, mom jeans, wide-leg...whatever you think looks flattering on you. If you're on the hunt for an out-of-the-box pair, look for standout details like patchwork or prints, or opt for a drawstring version for a loungey vibe.

Diaries

If you can't resist the allure of the classic blue fabric, here are four key styles that should be a part of your autumn wardrobe.

Compiled By: Palak Valecha and Puneet Saini; Text By: Meghna Sharma

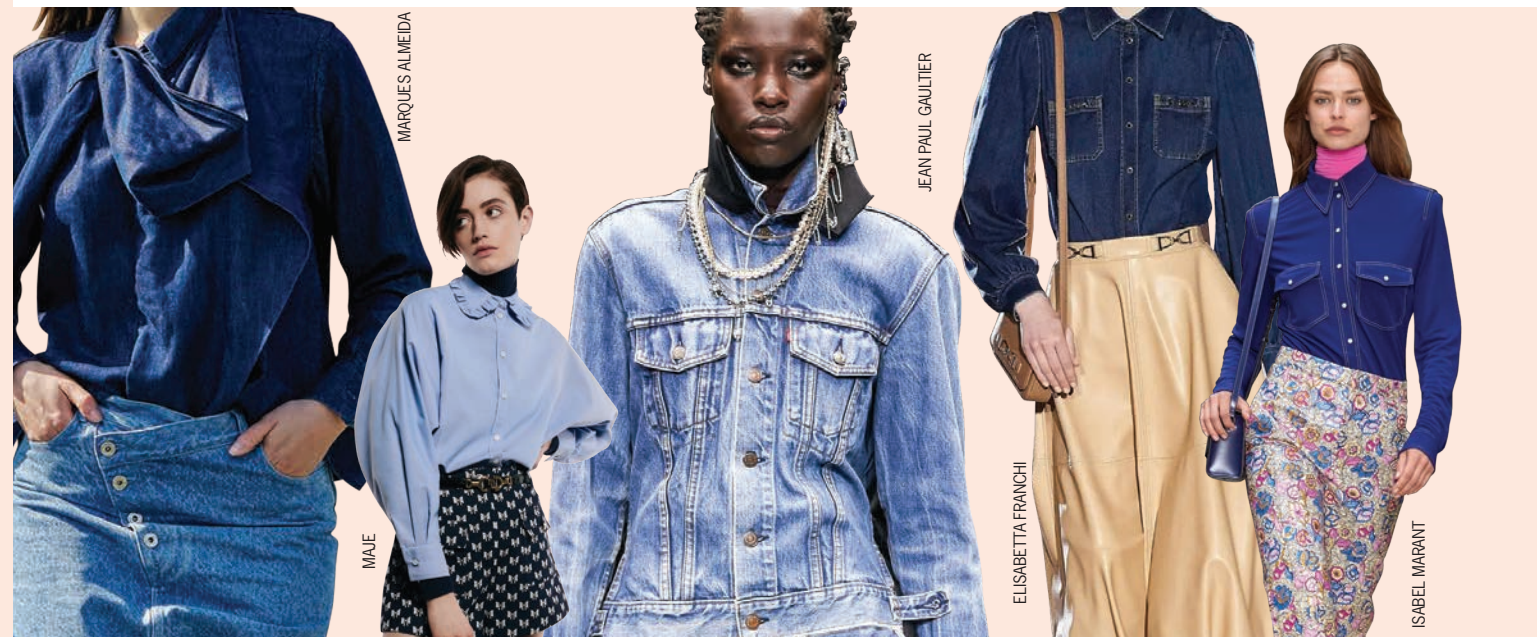
High-waist culottes, Mango, ₹2,990

La Greca Print Jeans, Versace, ₹1,02,700

Wide leg, low-waist jeans, H&M, ₹2,299

Amy Akish Wash Trousers, Superdry, ₹6,900

Bootcut D-Ebbey Jeans, Diesel, ₹15,339



Puff sleeve denim blouse, Mango, ₹3,590

Denim overshirt, Zara, ₹4,590

Denim shirt, H&M, ₹2,299

Peter Pan collar shirt, Marks & Spencer, ₹2,999



THE SHIRT

Now boasting an endless design spectrum—with details ranging from minimalist to over the top, and feminine to masculine—you can safely wear a denim shirt throughout the week without it seeming like a 'uniform', aka repetitive. Try contrasting your shirt with jeans or pants, or layer it over your favourite summer dress. A printed version can multitask as a shirt and a dress, while snug styles can be tucked into flared pants for maximum impact.

Trucker jacket in stone-washed denim, Diesel, ₹17,764



Blue denim jacket, Only, ₹2,699



Oversize denim jacket, Mango, ₹3,590



Denim jacket, Polo Ralph Lauren, ₹27,500



Cropped denim jacket, Zara, ₹2,585



Suede-trim denim jacket, Ralph Lauren, ₹58,851



Levi's X Xiuhtezcatl Trucker Jacket, Levi's, ₹6,905



Denim jacket with stretch, Marks & Spencer, ₹4,499



THE JACKET

The LBD of the outerwear realm, you can never go wrong with a denim jacket. This style is ageing as well as a fine wine, and we are here for it. From cropped, boxy styles to mid-length, trench-coat vibes and more, designers really let their creative juices take over when breathing new life into this style. We are especially crushing over details like large pockets, cuffing at the sleeves, vintage buttons et al.

THE DRESS

They were big in the noughties, and denim dresses are back with a fresh mood. The retro, button-down style—seen in a multitude of silhouettes—is a great pick for a casual outing, while the form-fitting versions demand a dinner date! The relaxed styles at Rachel Comey and Marques Almeida prove that this style can be as versatile as they come... leaving you with options galore for every mood and occasion.

Cotton denim shirt dress, H&M, ₹2,699



Tiered dress, Gap, ₹5,957



CAROLINA HERRERA

Blue denim shirt dress, Vero Moda, ₹3,399



Reversed panel denim dress, Freakins, ₹1,399



MARQUES ALMEIDA



Denim midi shirt dress, Marks & Spencer, ₹6,999



Denim shirt dress, Diesel, ₹25,379



RACHEL COMEY





Shop Local

Continuing our efforts to support homegrown labels, **Cosmo Editor Nandini Bhalla** shares her top picks to invest in, to help artisans and small businesses stay afloat during the pandemic.

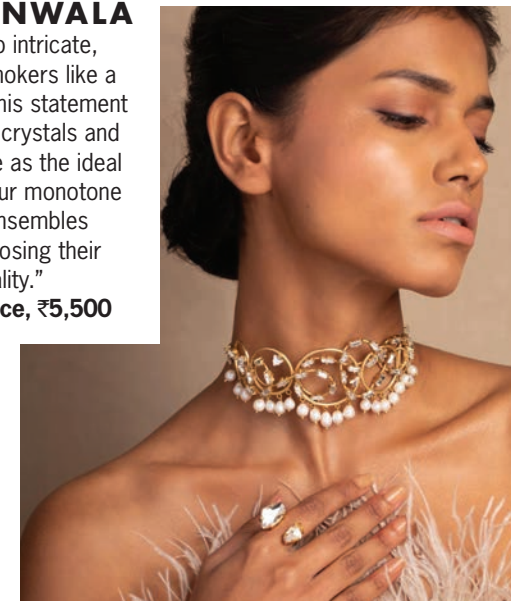


JEWELS BY SAKSHI JHUNJHUNWALA

"I am drawn to intricate, neck-hugging chokers like a moth to flame. This statement piece, featuring crystals and pearls, will serve as the ideal partner to let your monotone and muted ensembles shine without losing their individuality."

Malta Neckpiece, ₹5,500

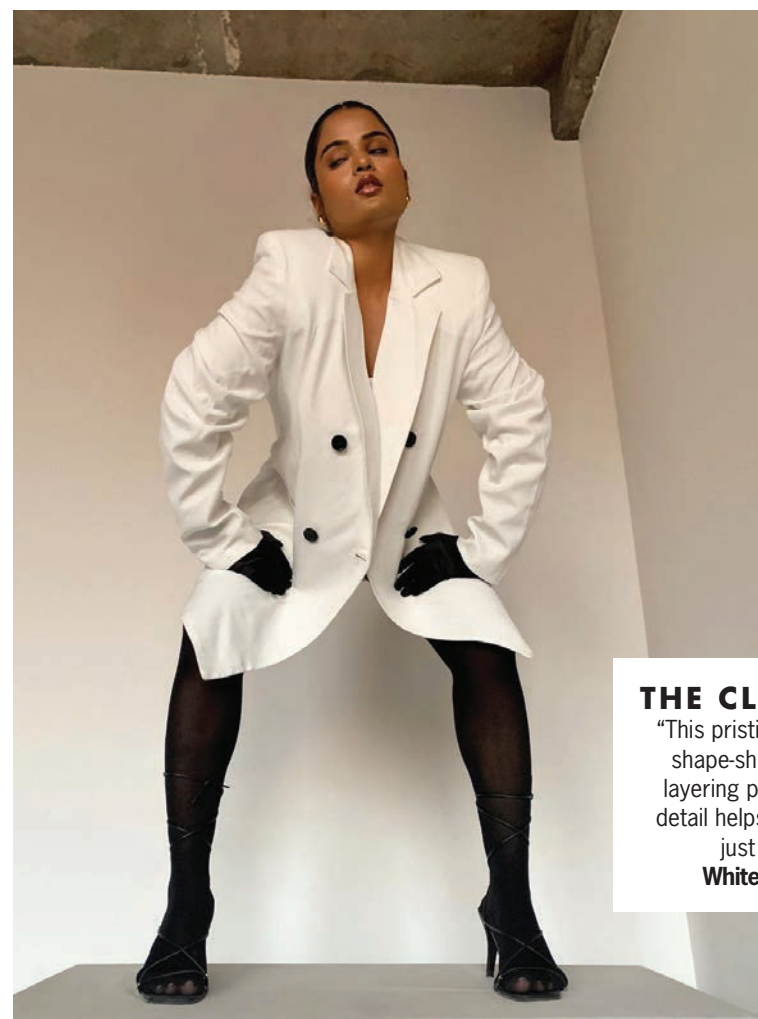
2



NAKHREWAALI

"This brand's creations are a blend of all my favourite things...these beautiful earrings are handcrafted out of sustainable, ethically-sourced materials and have a quirky quality to them. I can see myself wearing these with Indian and westernwear alike, to add an element of whimsy to my look."

**(Top) Kathi Ghoda Earrings, ₹2,500;
(left) Saanjh Earrings, ₹2,450**



3

THE CLOTHING FACTORY

"This pristine, oversized coat is a brilliant shape-shifter. It is not just an excellent layering piece, but the padded shoulder detail helps turn it into a structured dress just by buttoning things up."

White Oversized Coat, ₹2,990

SUNANDINI

"A little bit of brocade is all you need to make a simple garment stand out. And while this skirt and crop-top set might seem simple at first glance, the brocade detail on the blouse and sides of the skirt is a unique touch that'll help you stand out."

The Soulmate Set, ₹9,400



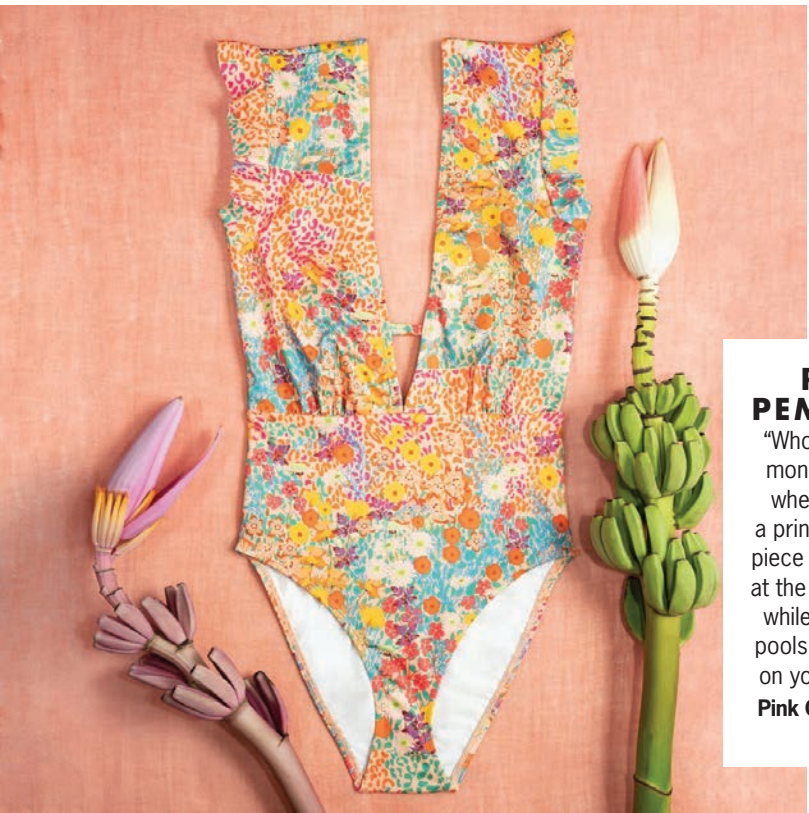
4

5

PASHA INDIA

“This label’s USP is its prints, often demonstrated with the help of contrasting hues and simple silhouettes. Exhibit A: this versatile jacket that will make for the perfect transition-weather piece. I would throw it over a white T-shirt and jeans for casual-luxe vibe.”

Persian Blue Jacket, ₹6,500



8

ROOPA PEMMARAJU

“Who wants a boring monotone swimsuit, when you can have a print party? I bet this piece will help you look at the bright side of life while you are chilling poolside or by the sea on your next holiday.”

Pink Garden Swimsuit, ₹20,658



9

Q IS BY ASHMEET

“This brand has a great selection of jewels, ranging from simple to baroque. But this shimmering pair of shoulder dusters is an absolute darling, because of its ability to instantly transform a look. It can lend itself beautifully to a cocktail dress, as it would to an ethnic set.”

Gold Dust Earrings, ₹2,400

6

JIHA

“We often underestimate the power of seemingly simple accessories. But I consider a neutral pair of slides as a hero piece in one’s wardrobe for its ability to team well with just about anything. Consider matching your entire outfit to this quintessential pair.”

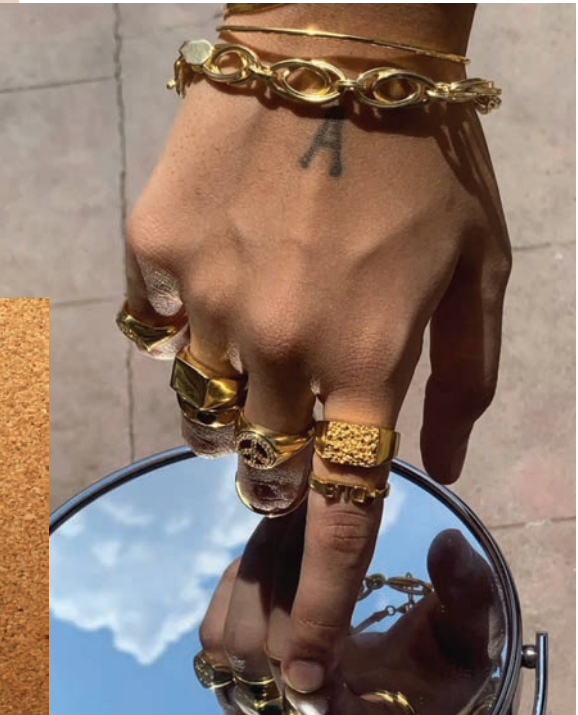
Double Band Square Toe Slide Sandal, ₹1,099



7



1



ANUSHKA JAIN JEWELLERY

“Minimal jewellery is having a major moment right now. And if you want to hop on the trend, then this brand offers a wide range of styles that are a minimalist’s dream come true. I am especially taken in by the safety pin earrings...they are everything chic.”

- 1. Anushka Jain Jewellery Rings, ₹1,900- ₹2,550
- 2. Anushka Jain Jewellery Glam Safety Pin Earrings, ₹2,550



2

Enter neutral territory with nude-toned slides that pair perfectly with a pop of nail lacquer

FOR MORE GREAT STORIES, VISIT COSMO.IN

10

A burst of flower appliqué is just what the soul needs to usher in all the happiness

VIDHI WADHWANI

“Think pink, when in doubt, is what Maggie Prescott declared in Funny Face, and I agree entirely. I adore the texture play and appliqué play on this outfit that promises to make you feel like a stylish bouquet. Plus, this delicious shade of pink holds just the right amount of ‘pop’.”

Floral appliqué gown, ₹21,000



11

THE DAPPER LADY

“While I’m all for grand gestures as far as style is concerned, you can never overlook the power of a well-tailored classic. Case in point: effortless, neutral pants-and-bustier sets that will serve you time and again in the years to come.”

- 1. Ivory Flared Joggers ₹7,290 and Ivory Knot Shirt, ₹4,590
- 2. Hazelnut Straight Leg Pants, ₹6,290 and Sage Tonal Bustier, ₹3,490
- 3. Jet Black Pleated Joggers, ₹5,990 and Jet Black Bustier, ₹2,990



12

TANN TRIM

“Delicate trinkets with a meaningful message can serve as such powerful, subconscious reminders... The glyph symbol on the pendant represents human beings’ curious nature and our desire to explore. And now that the world is opening up once again, this handcrafted piece (with 22-karat gold plating) is the ideal piece of jewellery to satiate one’s wanderlust.”

The Glyph Trinket, ₹1,390



14

A FINE STORY

“Winter and some bohemian fun seem like an unlikely pairing, but one so delightful... This bag, complete with pearls, cowrie shells, pompoms, and more, feels like it has travelled far and wide (must remember to take hotel recommendations from it!). Let’s just say this bag and I will be hanging out on my next vacay.”

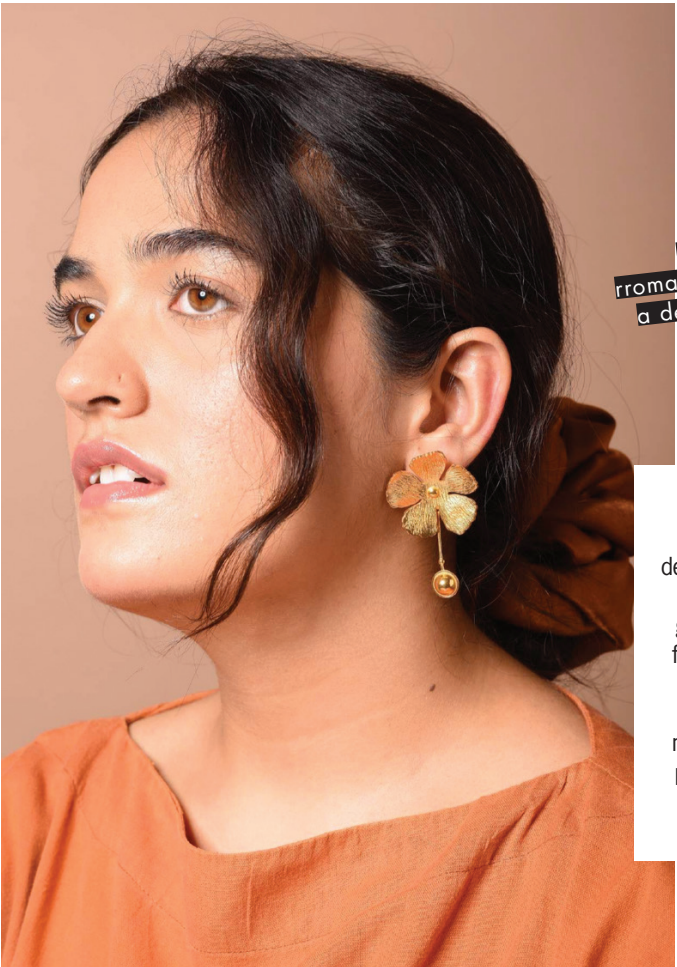
A Fine Story Sitara Brown Bag, ₹5,000

13

KEFI BY NIDA

“What do you get when you mix the changing weather with extra style props? A bright, printed shacket! Featuring super-relaxed fits, fun patterns, and sustainable fabrics, these pieces have the ability to brighten up your look, stat!”

- 1. Acid Shacket, ₹7,999
- 2. Martian Shacket, ₹7,999



Enter a blossoming romance with a delicate, floral piece

15

ANATINA

“This young brand is dedicated to celebrating womanhood in all its glory. And this pair of floral earrings depicts how women bloom once they set their minds to their goals... powerful and poetic.”

Gold Plated Floral Earrings, ₹2,900



16

PLEATS BY ARUNI

"The collared shirt has been my go-to for years, but when it's treated to intricate appliqué flowers, in soft pastel hues, I'm sold! This linen blouse-and-pants combo is a wonderful way to keep the spirit of spring alive throughout the year."

- 1. Orange Flower Set, ₹7,280
- 2. Purple Flower Shirt, ₹3,920



19

SWGT

"A hand-crocheted, cotton crop top is such a lovely way to bridge craft with fashion... This find is feminine yet youthful, and would work with as a beach vacay staple, or even as a layering essential over a sweater in colder months."

Flora Crocheted Top,
₹14,500



20

So what if you weren't good at math? Add geometric designs to your bijoux box

PRACHI GUPTA

"Abstract, geometric designs have a way of packing in the beauty and the brains in a look... This flower motif is equal parts edgy and beautiful, and the colour blue even represents the throat chakra! It's versatile enough to be worn year-round."

Prachi Gupta Statement Flower Earrings, ₹2,600



DUET LUXURY

"The future of humanity, many say, lies in saving the bees. Let this embellished, bee-clad version of a basic black belt serve as an important reminder to be mindful of your choices, to secure a better future for all of us."

Charcoal Vespa Belt, ₹15,000

17



FALL FOR IT



18

MOIRRA

"The most beautiful thing about this rich, handcrafted necklace with zari and mirror-work is not the way it looks, but how it smells! Yes, once you wear the choker, the flowers bloom, releasing the intoxicating fragrance of Motiya by homegrown fragrance brand, Boond."

Phoolon Ka Gehna Necklace,
₹3,500



21

SAND BY SHIRIN

"Continuing our year-long conversation on loungewear (how we were getting about without it earlier is anyone's guess!) is this fluid, easy-luxe set in a soft brown. The lightweight jersey fabric is stretchable and super-breathable. Plus, the neutral colour palette makes it easy to pair this set with vivid accessories (or even other separates in your wardrobe)."

- 1. Sand by Shirin Sand Skin Twisted Bandeau, ₹2,990
- 2. Sand Skin Pants, ₹3,990

Level Up with Lilac

This soothing shade has taken the AW/21-22 runways by storm, thanks to its easy-chic vibe and ability to mingle with other hues effortlessly.



TRICK

We love that lilac can be dressed up or down by adding a secondary shade to the mix. If you like a muted look, pair it with white, sea green, or pink. Or, add a bright and bold shade like yellow or purple to make a statement.

Compiled By: **MILONI THAKKER**

The Loafers' Lounge

This versatile shoe style is comfy enough for grocery runs and sophisticated enough for a partay.



TRICK

Elevate your work wardrobe with a scholarly pair of loafers in deep hues like burgundy or navy blue, and team them with your fave socks in vibrant colours or prints to add a quirky touch.



Charm Bracelet, Zara, ₹1,890

Classic Cuban Bracelet, Zillionaire, ₹18,000

Friedan Double Link Pearl Necklace, Isharya, ₹8,990

Bling, Bling Baby

Gleaming, jewelled accents to help you sparkle this season.



Crystal Choker Necklace, Mango, ₹2,390



Diamond stud earrings, Aster, ₹2,950

Capsule Diamond Earrings, Rose, ₹92,00



Stella necklace, Preto, ₹3,800



Stella Ceramic Watch, Fossil, ₹14,995



Small Bone Cuff, Tiffany & Co., ₹10,09,901



Mini Keishi Pearl Hoops, Misho, ₹8,850

Compiled By: MILONI THAKKER

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and planning advice for your Big Day.

5 Minutes with Kriti Kharbanda

We caught up with actor Kriti Kharbanda at the launch of Onitsuka Tiger's store at DLF Promenade, New Delhi, to discuss her personal style, causes she feels strongly about, and how she deals with trolls.

By Meghna Sharma

(This and facing page) Kriti Kharbanda at the new Onitsuka Tiger store at DLF Promenade, New Delhi

Cosmo: What is your personal style like?

Kriti Kharbanda: "I gravitate towards all things comfortable. I usually wear separates and pair them with statement accessories to add a hint of glamour."

C: How has your style evolved over the years?

KK: "Sometimes, I look at my photographs from a few years ago, and I am shocked at my choices. Having said that, I have become far kinder to myself in terms of what I wear and how I respond to the feedback I receive for my outfits. And now, I only wear styles that I feel comfortable in, versus opting for what's 'trending'."

C: Do you experiment with your style?

KK: "A lot more than I used to earlier. Until a few years ago, I would stick to safe, tried-and-tested looks, but now I enjoy wearing bold colours, prints, and patterns."

C: Who are your style icons?

KK: "Deepika Padukone and Julia Roberts. It has less to do with their fashion choices, and more about the confidence in their smile. Both of them can pull off anything that they wear because of the smile they have on all the time...it is infectious."

C: What do you love about Onitsuka Tiger?

KK: "Onitsuka Tiger is actually one of the first international brands I bought clothes from with my own money. I love the fluidity of their garments—they are both stylish and functional. Also, their sneakers are so, so comfortable."

C: Do you have any favourite picks from the brand?

KK: "Honestly, it is very hard to pick a favourite. I was obsessed with their Nippon Made collection, but I recently tried the P-TRAINER PRZM sneakers—inspired by Cinderella's glass slipper—and fell in love with them. It is such a fun interpretation that allows anyone to be the protagonist in any situation, without being limited to the stereotype. I won't trip and fall wearing these shoes and, even if I do, I won't need a Prince Charming to pick me up."

While I used to love the old fairytale, I know now that women are so much more than their looks—they are

independent, hardworking, and know how to hustle. Apart from that, I love the fact that this style is exclusive as there are only 300 pairs in the world, and I own one of them."

C: You have been working in the South Indian film industry for many years; what was it like making a transition to Bollywood?

KK: "I don't think there is any difference between Bollywood and the industry down South. When we travel around the world, we are seen as Indian actors, irrespective of which part of the country we come from. The only challenge I faced was in building my

"For someone who is not from the industry, it is very difficult to carve a niche for yourself."

confidence to feel like I belonged here. For someone who is not from the industry, it is very difficult to carve a niche for yourself...and even when you do so, you still feel a little out of place sometimes. I still have moments when I get anxious, but I am lucky to have a support system that keeps me going with their kindness."

C: What was your biggest learning from the pandemic?

KK: "To just live in the moment. I was someone who would always plan for the future and think about what's next, but now I feel like we should take one day at a time."

C: Are there any causes you feel strongly about?

KK: "Awareness about mental health...we need to talk more about it to help normalise the phenomenon. I was very impressed by the work that Deepika [Padukone] has done with her foundation [LiveLoveLaugh]. Mental health and overall well-being go hand in hand, and it is crucial to make children understand its importance from a young age—it will help reduce the stigma around it. Also, acceptance is key. It is important to build a circle of trust early on that encourages you to accept and therefore correct."

C: How do you maintain a balance between your personal and professional life?

KK: "It is tough to strike a healthy balance, but what works in my favour is that I don't put up an act for social media...I only act when I am paid to act. All the other times, I love being my true self."

C: How do you deal with trolls?

KK: "I honestly pay no attention to them, and that is the best way to deal with them."



Yes, We Are Entering a New Roaring '20s, And No, There Are No Flapper Dresses

Same name, same swanky soirée
vibes, *toootally* different look.

By Lauren Adhav

We are sure you have noticed, but things are getting real glitzy around here. We spent all of 2020 (and a majority of this year *crying emoji*) inside, but on IG and even IRL, folks are now happily ditching the sweats in favour of over-the-top glam when they do ~go out~. And no shade to the people of yore, but the current party isn't limited to just one aesthetic (we still love you though, art deco). There are sequins, sure, but also bold colours, mixed materials, daring skin-baring moments, big ol' ruffles, and hard-to-miss prints. Meaning, whatever you put on for your next (safe, responsible) evening in the town, it better make a statement. Cheers!



Elizabeth Baguette Quilted Bag, Behno, ₹33,302



Geordie Stilettos, Steve Madden, ₹12,999



Hope Halter-Neck Top, Aroka, ₹5,500



Photograph: ANUSHA MEHRA



D-Bianca Slip Dress, Diesel, ₹32,999

Marbled jacquard dress, Mango, ₹4,590



Cleopatra Necklace, Prerto, ₹5,000

FOR YOUR RICH ALTER EGO
Channel all the flair of Gatsby times—sans the dated, kinda costume-y get-ups—by putting on some can't-miss multicoloured gems. And hey, even if you are not headed anywhere fancy, who says you can't dress up?



Mismatched ombré earrings, The Line, ₹75,000

Sequined mini skirt, Zara, ₹2,990



Earrings, Giva, ₹3,000

Leather skirt, Tommy Hilfiger, ₹3,399

The Rihanna Dress, Deme by Gabriella, ₹15,500



Egg Bag with Chester Run Skein, Shivan & Narresh, ₹49,950



Sparkle Dot Shoe, Bottega Veneta, price on request



Sequined leggings, H&M, ₹7,999



Selena Blaze Bag, Mistry, ₹6,500

Hi, Have You Heard of Colour Therapy?

There is a reason you reach for that red shirt in your dresser.
(And a reason you don't.) **By Lauren Adhav**



colour, they shoot a signal to your brain that can trigger an emotional response. This is why wearing a bright shade can enhance your mood—kind of like how sitting by a sun lamp can help with seasonal affective disorder. What each tone makes you feel depends on where it sits on the rainbow spectrum (look to the right for a cheat sheet). Most of this comes from historical associations that originated way back—we are talking centuries ago—and are still super embedded in society today, says Dawnn Karen, a fashion psychologist at New York City's Fashion Institute of Technology. (And we do mean centuries ago: folks in ancient Egypt and Greece were already using various coloured stones, crystals, and dyes in

You don't need us to tell you that an outfit can be a whole mood—and that clothes can be a powerful form of self-expression. But what is even cooler is that the colours we wear can secretly work some magic on our emotional state. And our minds subconsciously know this, which is why we often gravitate towards specific shades at specific times. Like last week, when you were feeling stuck and (seemingly randomly) you chose that lime-hued top? Yeah, that might have been because your brain was craving a subtle serotonin hit from being around green and its fresh, rejuvenating vibes.

Spooky, we know! But it is also science: when mini receptors on your eyeballs take in a



Who knew emo dressing could be so bright and cheery?

healing rituals.) Of course, modern marketing and advertising firms have wielded the power of colour for a while too, using it to prompt certain responses or compel purchases (and now you know why car insurance logos are typically blue, evoking confidence and stability). Workplaces are in on it as well, painting their offices, say, violet to foster feelings of creativity.

But all this isn't just a sneaky way for businesses to sway your feelings. Colour therapy is having a major moment RN because designers—and the people who wear their clothes—have realised that anyone can get in on the action by intentionally choosing tones to wear. New Zealand-

spark imagination and spirituality. "It is about taking a small moment for yourself each morning to ask, 'How do I want to feel?' and then picking out something to put on that supports the feeling," says Chloé. Other designers, like New York-based Roxanne Assoulin and Tanya Taylor, have released colour therapy collections

of beaded bracelets and T-shirts, respectively. Now obviously, wearing specific colours isn't a replacement for actual mental health treatment. Instead, you can think of colour therapy as a simple method for temporarily improving your state of mind. The effect it can have on your mood—and the moods of those around you—is undeniable, says Dawnn. Case in point: during the pandemic, Dawnn had a physician client who was treating COVID-19 patients. To help the doctor lift her spirits during a devastating time, Dawnn suggested she start wearing yellow. The

Wearing your heart on your sleeve just got a whole new meaning.

result: both she and her patients reported feeling happier. All of which is to say that you may as well give colour therapy a try. At best, you will be more in tune with your emotions; at worst, you'll look amazing in that hot-pink dress. Not a bad scenario at all, right? ■

Wow, these hues can do a lot for you.

RED

WEAR IT FOR:
Passionate Vibes

Logo-print bucket hat, Superdry, ₹2,999

PINK

WEAR IT FOR:
Lots of Lively Energy

Titli Midi Dress, Ash & Eden, ₹2,999

YELLOW

WEAR IT FOR:
Happy, Joyful Feels

Tyche Sandals, Chalk Studio, ₹3,999

GREEN

WEAR IT FOR:
A Hopeful Mood

Como Top, Ookioh x Lisa Says Gah, price on request

BLUE

WEAR IT FOR:
A Sense of Calm

Danny Skirt, Angrakhaa, ₹2,500

PURPLE

WEAR IT FOR:
All the Creativity

Silver UV Protection Sunglasses, John Jacobs, ₹4,500

ORANGE

WEAR IT FOR:
Self-Assurance

Blanket stitch half sleeve T-shirt, Uniqlo, ₹1,290

BROWN

WEAR IT FOR:
A Wholesome, Warm Aura

Zelie Brown Bag, Edgability, ₹3,200

Illustrations by JADE PURPLE BROWN

fast glam

LAVANYA SHARMA, 20
 “I have added a hint of sunshine to my monochrome outfit with the help of this crop top, while the purple neckerchief complements the colour scheme.”

VAISHNAVI BALA, 24
 “My sunglasses are the MVP of this look. I like comfortable, oversized silhouettes and the rest of the look is simple and fuss-free.”

NISHA JOSHI, 24
 “I have styled these black, flared pants with a comfy vest, and added a brown harness to break the monotony.”

SU YING LIAO, 20
 “Can you ever go wrong with an oversized denim jacket and boots? The rectangular glasses and minimal jewellery add to the laidback vibe.”

KARISHMA SHARMA, 27
 “I have styled the pink halter top and dual toned jeans with sneakers in similar hues to keep the look bright and fun.”

ANUSHKA KAPOOR, 17
 “I have paired a graphic T-shirt with a tennis skirt, fishnet leggings, and retro glasses for a grunge-inspired look.”

RIMPY POPLI, 25
 “I have stuck to pastel hues to create a comfortable-yet-chic outfit. I love how the XXL, cat-eye sunglasses add a fun element to the look.”

AYNAB ZAIDI, 20
 “I like statement pieces like this pair of jeans, and I have kept the overall look fuss-free to let them stand out.”

By: MANVEEN GULANI

AN ELEGANT REVEAL

After a year of spending time with your loved ones, waist-up on Zoom—it's time to show what the rest of you looks like. What better than a cutesy peek-a-boo or keyhole details? The AW/21-22 runways showered us with a tonne of inspiration to tastefully flaunt cut-outs for a look that's strikingly feminine and artistically modern. Check out Christopher Esber's dainty slashes, Mugler's shoulder slash, Stella McCartney's bold cut-out iteration that we are rooting for, and Anamika Khanna's take on the midriff flossing trend that's now vying for classic status.



CHRISTOPHER ESBER



MUGLER



STELLA MCCARTNEY

TREND OF THE MONTH



ANAMIKA KHANNA



AGENTS OF CHANGE

Amit Aggarwal's latest ready-to-wear line, Catalyst, is inspired by creative individuals such as Aditi Singh (pole dancer), Ayushi Tyagi (textile designer and model), Tarini Sethi (artist, sculptor, and founder of the Irregulars Art Fair), Jyoti Ann Burrett (football player), Mukta Singh (painter), and Ishika Madaan (visual artist). The new prêt-à-porter collection features Amit's meticulous craftsmanship and structured silhouettes in raw, earthy tones like sage, olives, moss, ink blue, and charcoal. Comprising of 22 distinct styles in the form of jumpsuits, capes, jackets, dresses, and shirts—each one showcases intricate handweaving and gradient printing on signature metallic polymers.



All images are from the designer's latest collection

HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO STYLE

Homegrown label Limerick by Abirr n' Nanki is turning the spotlight onto the solar system with its upcoming Spring/Summer 2022 collection, Back To The Stars (here's your cue to hum the Coldplay song). It's a riot of colours, to say the least, on dresses, structured pantsuits, kaftans, playsuits, and yardage saris. The colour story is also inspired by the elements—air, water, earth, and fire—keeping things bright, cheerful, and altogether happy for the coming season.

WATCH OUT FOR



Styles from the Spring Summer 2022 range



Style News

THE NEWEST, LATEST, AND MOST TALKED-ABOUT FASHION STUFF

By Radhika Bhalla

GOOD TIMES

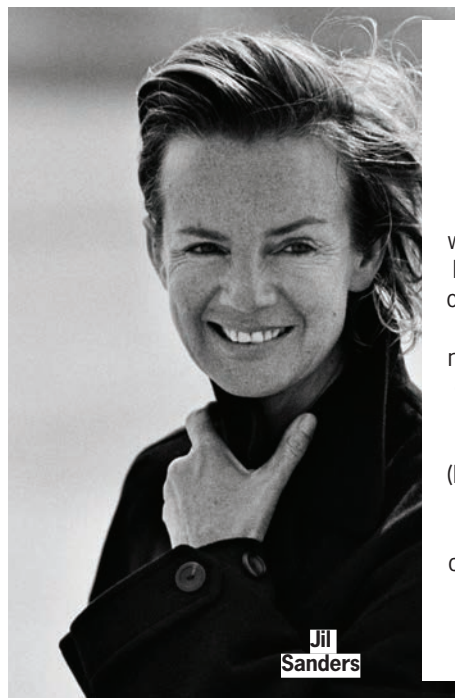
Benetton and Timex have collaborated to create an eco-conscious range of watches, called the Benetton Timewear collection. Each design features a battery that will only need to be changed once in 10 years, and straps made from natural cellulosic fibres that are vegan, sustainable, and 100% cruelty-free.

GET THIS!



All watches, Benetton x Timex, all prices on request





SNUG AS A BUG IN A RUG

When legendary designer Jil Sanders launched +J with Uniqlo in 2009, she answered our prayers to look stylish without freezing (thank her warm heart!). Now in Chapter 2 of her collaboration, the Autumn/Winter 2021 collection is modern and minimal, with fashion staples like cashmere coats, down jackets, sweaters, skirts, trousers, and bags in a range of shades (black, navy, graphite, khaki, and caramel among others). Match your look with your beau with a complementing range of tailored jackets, sweaters, shirts, and trousers for men. Perfect for twinning this winter!

WATCH OUT FOR

Styles from the Uniqlo +J range



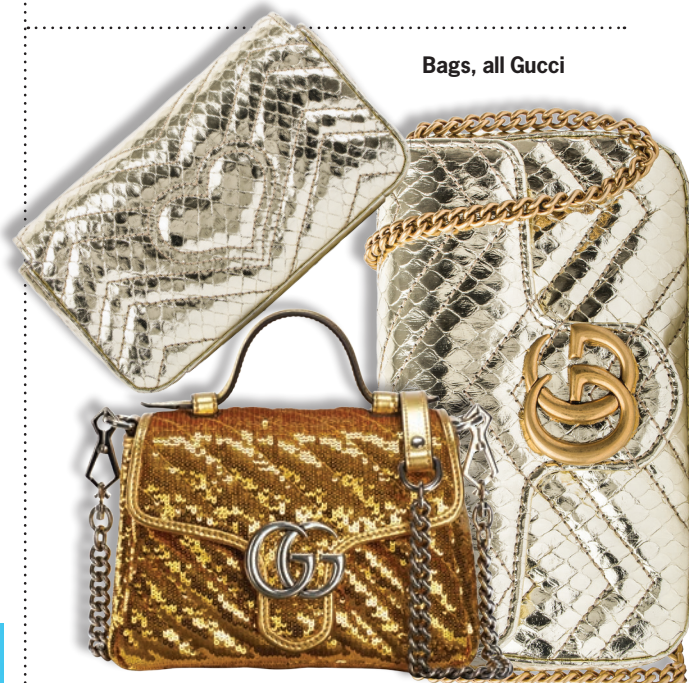
LANDMARK MOMENT

For its 30th anniversary, AIX Armani Exchange is releasing two exclusive watches: the 44mm stainless steel men's watch gift set and the 46mm black stainless steel, 3-hand men's watch. And in keeping with the ongoing trend of '90s redux, the styles feature the 1991 logo on the dial and caseback. We're also stoked that the gift set takes half the stress away from deciding what to buy for a special someone, especially as the set also comes with a necklace. Stylish and effortless, these watches work well to complete both day and night looks.



GET THIS!

Armani Exchange Stainless Steel Watch and Necklace Gift Set, ₹13,995



Bags, all Gucci

SHINE ON

If you've been craving the glitter and glam after a year of same-oldness, the new Diwali- and festive-ready collection of Marmont bags by Gucci will add the much-needed sparkle to your day! Creative Director Alessandro Michele's iconic design, that shot to cult fame instantaneously, has been treated to shades of rose and champagne in the Super Mini version, and gold, silver, and rose in Paillettes style...an upbeat way to be the brightest star in any gathering!



EDITOR'S PICK

SMALL PLEASURES

Jewellery label Outhouse has decided that good things should come in small packages this season, like their new Oh V Furbie bags that are crafted in patent, vegan leather. Featuring their iconic OH V monogram and detachable faux fur on the handle, the tiny companions are perfect for a bit of style indulgence. Team the accessory with a bracelet from the Charmes des Celeste Collection, in 22-karat gold-plating.

Personalised Bracelet, Outhouse, ₹12,000



Oh V Furbie Bag, Outhouse, ₹16,950

LABEL OF THE MONTH

FLUID IDENTITIES

No Grey Area's latest drop, 'Listen to the Lies' collection, is the perfect amalgamation of street-style and comfort. The modern, progressive fashion label came out with a sleek collection of ensembles and essentials like face-masks and mesh caps to help reimagine the idea of mixing and matching iterations. Their latest collection houses T-shirts with thought-provoking prints, well-fitted polos in contrasting hues, sweats, joggers, and bombers that incorporate athleisure sensibilities and distinctive resort wear with printed fluid satin shirts. No Grey Area recognises that identity is neither black nor white, but a spectrum of experiences, and style is a visual manifestation of where one stands on that spectrum.

Embroidered French terry sweatshirt, Third Eye, ₹8,500



Free Your Mind embroidered French Terry sweatshirt, ₹9,500





Jo Malone
English Oak
& Hazelnut
Cologne,
₹9,400/100ml

Match Your Scent to Your Wanderlust Mood

We break down the kind of fragrance you should be reaching out for depending on what's on your travel bucket list ATM. By Meghna Sharma



Forest
Essentials
Body
Mist in
Sandalwood
& Vetiver,
₹2,250

Little Forest

Ajmal Patchouli
Wood Cologne,
₹12,500/100ml



Tom Ford
Oud Wood
Intense EDP,
₹30,000/100ml



Craving some outdoor adventure time? Perhaps a lush forest trail or an invigorating hike? When you are out in the wild, it is best to blend in. Enter: woody scents with notes derived from bark, moss, resin, pine cones, grass, and more. Oud, vetiver, cedarwood, sandalwood, and patchouli are some of the notes you should be hunting for in a fragrance. Most woody scents are further enhanced with fruity, floral, or spicy notes to add a fun twist or an elegant touch to the juice. Pro tip: such perfumes are generally heady, so go easy on the spritzes.



Yves Saint
Laurent
Black
Opium EDT,
₹4,500/50ml



Lolita
Lempicka
Sweet Eau
De Parfum,
₹7,100/100ml



ALBERTA FERRETTI

If, like us, your plans to visit an exotic destination have been put on hold indefinitely, you can seek comfort in a scent that reminds one of warm summer nights. Cue: floral and gourmand notes that can make you smell irresistibly sexy. Look for scents with warm notes of vanilla, chocolate, or honey; or floral whiffs of rose, jasmine, and tuberose. Keep an eye out for grounding base notes of amber, patchouli, white wood, musk, or cashmeran, which add a sensual touch to any fragrance. Spray one of these bbs to get the temps soaring.



YUDASHKIN

So Hot!



Images: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Narciso Rodriguez
Fleur Musc For Her,
₹3,500/30ml





Marc Jacobs
Daisy Love
Spring EDT,
₹7,855/50ml
approx

Guerlain Aqua
Allegoria Flora
Salvaggia EDT,
₹6,625/75ml



ANNA SUI



Sunshine

There is something so inherently feminine about the endless lavender fields of Provence, the Rose Valley in Bulgaria, or the colourful tulip gardens of Keukenhof. And floral scents, formulated with handpicked ingredients, can whisk you away to one of these quintessential European destinations in a matter of few spritzes. If a floral 'fume' is too sweet for you, you can opt for a scent with fruity or spicy notes to balance the sweetness. Once you find a fragrance that works for you, spray some in your lingerie drawer as a reminder of the good times you have had in your favourite city every time you get dressed.

Elizabeth Arden
White Tea
Ginger Lily,
₹6,625/75ml



L'Occitane
en Provence
Verbena
Mandarin EDT,
₹4,900/100ml



Freshen Up!

Chopard
Happy Lemon
Dulci EDP,
₹10,000/100ml



Kayali Citrus
08 EDP,
₹10,300/100ml



ACNE STUDIOS

Nothing energises the body and mind more than a dip in the ocean. And you know what goes amazingly well with sun, sand, and blue-green waters? A tall citrusy drink that matches the refreshing vibe. But instead of rustling up a cocktail, consider making do with a fragrance with notes of tangy mandarin, juicy pear, or sparkling lemon that will, one hundred percent, add a spring to your step. ■

Just a List of
People
You'd
Disappoint
By Not
Using
SPF

This is the
face of
someone who
reapplied...
twice.

- 1 Your mom (she loves you!).
- 2 Siddharth Malhotra (he wants to love you!).
- 3 Every dermatologist within a five kilometre radius. You think they don't know? Oh, they know.
- 4 The hordes of product formulators who worked really hard to make an SPF you won't hate this time.
- 5 Also the moms of those product formulators whose hearts you'll shatter.
- 6 The melasma and acne scars on your face that are about to get waaay more noticeable.
- 7 Honestly, the sun itself.

By: CHLOE METZGER; Photograph: ANUSHKA MENON

Uh, Your Anti-Breakage Hair Products *Might* Be Making Damage Worse

Buckle up, buttercup—this is gonna melt your brain.



Once upon a time, I completely and utterly f*cked up my hair. In an innocent attempt to fix my curls after some intense heat styling, I began slathering them in every anti-breakage treatment I could find. Cut to two months later, dealing with hair so crispy that I had to enlist the help of experts (while crying, of course), who informed me that the very products I had been pouring my hopes/dreams/money into were actually adding

fuel to my damage fire. Yes, thank you, it was a lot. But now that I am safely on the other side—curls a-bouncin' again—I am here to help you avoid making the same mistake.

What Does 'Anti-Breakage' Really Mean?

If a hair product touts any tough-stuff lingo ('Fixes!', 'Restores!', 'Repairs!'), it is likely packed with proteins, which help strengthen damaged hair by filling in holes along the cuticle. Sounds great—and it is great!—unless you are unaware that...

That is exactly what happened to me—I had unknowingly turned my hair (and soul) into a fragile shell instead of reaching for the real key: hydration. "People think they need protein to fix their issues, when they usually need more moisture," explains US-based trichologist Audrey Sivasothy. (Think: you chugging a third iced-coffee when your body is really begging for water.)

The Easy-ish Fix
Rinse with a clarifying shampoo twice a month to strip the protein build-up, swap your products for moisture-rich formulas, and limit your protein treatments to just twice monthly. It will take time to restore ~the balance~, but after a month or two, your hair will return to its soft and shiny state—and, like me, you will be off spreading the good-hair gospel to all your friends.

Protein Overload = More Breakage

When you use these products 24/7, the protein quickly builds up and dries out your hair. "If you stretch a strand of dry hair and it snaps immediately, you have got too much protein," says US-based trichologist Gretchen Friebe.



Mask: Moroccanoil Intense Hydrating Mask, ₹2,700; **Clarifying shampoo:** L'Oréal Professionnel Serie Expert Pure Resource Shampoo, ₹635; **Conditioner/Treatment:** Pantene Open Hair Miracle Oil Replacement, ₹90; **Protein Treatment:** Earth Rhythm Restorative Hair Butter with Pea Protein, Murumuru Butter, and Rice Ferment, ₹569

Q: Are You Reusing Your Candle Votives?

Because you should be...



It's not 'goodbye'.
It's 'see you later'

And honestly, what better way to preserve that Diptyque investment? (No better way, as this photo right here proves.) YVW in advance for this trick that lets you clean and keep posh candle containers once their flames have too little wick left to flicker.

STEP 1 Peel any stickers you want to remove off your votive while gently boiling an inch or two of water in a saucepan.

STEP 2 Place the candle jar in its personal hot tub and turn down the heat a smidgen.

STEP 3 Wait patiently for all the wax to melt as you enjoy your bb's last scents.

STEP 4 Layer a few sheets of paper towel over your sink drain. When the wax is liquid-y, pour it over the towels, then pour a li'l of the hot water into the votive (oven mitts on, people!). Swish it around and dump out that waxy water over the paper towels.

STEP 5 Wipe down the now-empty inside of your container with some glass cleaner and more paper towels (or leftover fast-food napkins, if you have got 'em). Once they are cool, toss all the sink towels/napkins in the trash.

STEP 6 Fill your jar with pretty things like the living Pinterest board you are.

By: ASHLEY OERMAN; Photo Courtesy: HERLITTLELOVES.CO.UK



Smashbox
Precise Brow &
Liner Brush,
₹1,900

Anastasia
Beverly Hills
Eyebrow Brush
#7B, ₹2,000

Huda Beauty
Body Blur &
Glow Brush,
₹2,750

Bobbi Brown
Mini Conceal &
Set Brush,
₹5,600

Charlotte Tilbury
Powder Sculpt
Brush, ₹4,700

M.A.C 187
Synthetic
Duo Fibre
Face Brush,
₹4,900

Sigma Beauty
Mini
Shade Lid Brush,
₹2,990

NYX
Professional
Holographic
Halo Strobing
Micro Brush,
₹1,000

Too Faced
Mr. Perfect
Foundation
Brush,
₹3,300

Maybelline
New York
Master
Powder
Brush, ₹499

Master Strokes

Make-up is a form of art, and every artist—budding or seasoned—needs a set of professional tools to create a masterpiece.

Brushes can be carriers of bacteria, so it's important to wash them often. You can use Sigma Beauty's Express Brush Cleaning Mat, ₹2,500, with M.A.C's Brush Cleanser, ₹1,100, and spritz Perenne Makeup Disinfectant Mist, ₹900, to further sanitise them.



“Inner Peace Automatically Translates to Outer Radiance”

The actor and **brand ambassador of Colorbar** talks about her eponymous make-up curation, the importance of inner well-being, and what she is looking forward to in the future. **By Meghna Sharma**

Cosmo: What does ‘beauty’ mean to you?

Jacqueline Fernandez: “None of the stereotypical notions of beauty define the term for me. Real beauty shines the light on the best version of you...and helps you be who *you* really want to be. And I consistently strive to break away from conventional standards in order to achieve all that I want to and be who I want to.”

C: How important is inner well-being for you?

JF: “Very! No amount of treatments or products can rescue you when you are not feeling good from within. Inner peace automatically translates to outer radiance, and who doesn’t love that?”

C: Do you practice any self-care rituals?

JF: “It depends on my mood. Some days, I put on a face mask to unwind and blast some feel-good tunes; while on others, experimenting with make-up cheers me up.”

C: Do share the inspiration behind your make-up collection for Colorbar?

JF: “I have been fascinated by make-up from a young age. And as I grew older, this fascination transformed into an obsession, and I was always on the lookout for products that delivered. Being a part of the Colorbar family, I wanted to create a collection inspired by all of my wonderful experiences. So Samir Modi, Founder of Colorbar, the brand’s team, and I, travelled around the world to curate this incredible range that reflects all that I stand for...it is extremely close to my heart. What’s even more special is that this collection represents my love for animals, and just like

Photograph: ABHAY SINGH

everything by Colorbar, this range, too, is paraben- and cruelty-free.”

C: How long did it take for you to create the range?

JF: “A lot of hard work went into curating it, and the planning and execution took us about two years.”

C: Being a beauty aficionado, do you like to experiment with your look?

JF: “I do love shaking things up every once in a while. And, for that, I resort to bold, bright colours in make-up to help me stand out.”

C: And what’s your signature make-up look?

JF: “A dramatic eye flick paired with a bright red lipstick and voluminous lashes for a hint of drama.”

“As I grew older, my fascination with make-up transformed into an obsession.”

C: Tell us about the products you are currently obsessed with.

JF: “I am addicted to Colorbar’s Sinful Lipsticks from my collection—they are soft and feel so luxurious. Then the Glow With Love Highlighter is my go-to product for a sheer sheen. In skincare, I have been loving the Blue Light Defense range by Colorbar—given the amount of time I spend on my devices, I need these products to protect my skin.”

Photograph: TARAS TARAPORVALA



C: What’s your skincare regimen like?

JF: “I definitely believe that less is more. Glowing, youthful skin isn’t handed out on a platter, and I do have some personal beauty rules that I follow religiously. First, I always, *always* take off make-up before bed—sleeping with make-up on can lead to skin congestion, which can cause

breakouts...something I never want to go through again. And I never leave the home without SPF, and I reapply sunscreen every couple of hours.”

C: Do you lean towards clean, natural formulas or prefer science-backed options?

JF: “It is always a mix of both. Being a huge advocate of clean and cruelty-free products, I believe it is important for all of us to be conscious of this. At the same time, I also trust result-oriented, science-backed formulas to treat specific skin concerns.”

C: Do you have any favourite beauty tools?

JF: “There are so many new tools out there, but my favourite has to be the jade roller—it is so relaxing and soothing, and helps depuff my face instantly.”

C: What is the one thing you are looking forward to soon?

JF: “I am super-excited to travel again. I miss lounging by the beach...”



“Maskne is Real, Friends. Here’s How I Cured Mine”

Has the pandemic played havoc with your skin? Find out how to fix it...

By Lauren Balsamo

Let me start by saying that I am totally and completely aware that, in the grand scheme of things, this is a very small problem to be complaining about right now. But unlike the utter sh*tshow that the global pandemic has brought about, it is a problem that is relatively easy to fix. And, as a skin-obsessed beauty editor, I just need five minutes to talk/vent about it.

Is that okay?

So, maskne—and yes, that is the official name for the very common, very annoying form of acne that comes from wearing face masks—was something I dealt with constantly during the first low months of quarantine, back in 2020. Because, *duh*, I wore a mask absolutely everywhere outside my home (and still do). And because face coverings create a humid environment that traps sweat, oil, and bacteria on the skin, explains US-based dermatologist Dr Joshua Zeichner, “this can cause whiteheads, red bumps, and pustules.” But!

All of this, I learned, is actually pretty preventable and treatable if you know the right steps to take. Which, after reading these pages, you will. And my now-clear skin is proof.

1. Wear a 100 Percent Cotton Mask

Not only is cotton softer and less irritating on your skin than other rough fabrics like synthetic plastic (what N95 masks are made of), polyester, and denim, but it is also breathable, which means it will create less of a humid environment for breakouts to thrive, says Dr Joshua.

2. Wash It Every Time

Don’t Whine...it will only take a minute and is entirely worth it. A germ mask is doing your skin (and your health) zero favours. Dr Joshua recommends washing it with a gentle detergent that’s dye- and fragrance-free after every use, since those can get lodged in the fabric and cause breakouts when pressed against your skin for long periods of time.



All of this is actually pretty preventable if you know the right steps.

3. Keep Your Face Clean, Too

Specifically with a salicylic acid-infused cleanser. It is a beta hydroxy acid that effectively dissolves the excess oil, dirt, and dead skin cells that build up in pores and cause breakouts,

Photograph: GETTY IMAGES.COM

explains

Dr Joshua. Let the cleanser sit on your face for 30 seconds before washing it off so it has a chance to work its clarifying magic. If you are going to be working out in your mask, do a cleanse both immediately before and after putting it on. Sounds extra, but if you are sweating under that thing, your skin could really benefit from a pore-purging double shot.

4. Don’t Skip the Moisturiser

After you wash, be sure to apply on oil-free one with ingredients such as hyaluronic acid or glycerine. Skipping this means that your skin might churn out extra oil to overcompensate for a lack of hydration. And extra oil = more breakouts for you.

5. But Do Skip the Under-Mask Make-Up

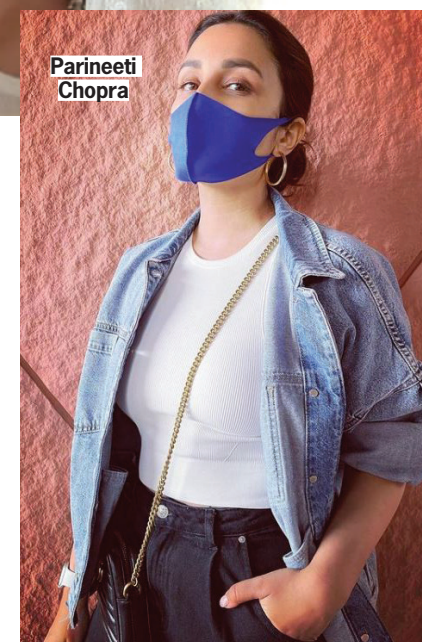
Sorry, but wearing foundation, or any make-up for that matter, under a mask is a hard no if you want to avoid spots. When make-up gets trapped against your skin like this, it is basically a one way ticket to clogged pores and breakouts. This is doubly true for people who aren’t super diligent about washing their masks—any

older make-up that is still stuck on the fabric also gets smooshed against your skin again and again. If you must wear foundation, try one that’s oil-free, non-comedogenic, and less likely to mess up your complexion.

6. Use Benzoyl Peroxide

Okay, so it is possible that you do all the right things and still break out. (Remember when I said I needed to vent? Yeah.) This is where a leave-on benzoyl peroxide product comes in. It is the best spot treatment for maskne, says Dr Joshua. “Benzoyl peroxide reduces inflammation, kills acne-causing bacteria, and helps open up pores, targeting all the main causes of angry pimples created by your mask.” Just keep in mind that while the twice-daily

treatment is effective, slathering on too much—or too-high a concentration—can end up irritating your skin even more. Your best bet is to head to the pharmacy and consult the person at the counter. They will likely recommend a five percent concentration. Go easy, follow the pharmacist’s advice and, if in doubt, consult your GP. ■



YOUR ANTI-MASKNE KIT



BREATHABLE MASK

Dr Barbara Sturm Nano-Silver Mask, ₹3,100 approx



SALICYLIC ACID CLEANSER

La Roche Posay Effaclar Medicated Gel Cleanser, ₹1,150



OIL-FREE MOISTURISER
Murad Clarifying Oil-Free Water Gel, ₹3,500

Beauty Scoop

WE BRING YOU THE LATEST GOSSIP, TRENDS, AND TIPS FROM THE WORLD OF BEAUTY!

SUMMER LONGING

Nothing can beat the cool ocean breeze on a warm, sunny day. And these refreshing scents will serve as a fragrant reminder of the season gone by with their energising notes.

(From top to bottom) Roger & Gallet Fleur de Figuier EDT, price on request; L'Occitane Verbena EDT, ₹4,900/100ml; Calvin Klein CK One Summer EDT, price on request; Dolce & Gabbana Light Blue Forever EDP, ₹7,200/100ml; Escada Summer Festival EDT, ₹8,700/100ml; Maison Margiela Replica Matcha Meditation EDT, ₹10,100/100ml



Image: NURIA SERRANO



STUCK ON BLUE

The backstage make-up maestros have a strong affinity towards this hue, and season after season, we are introduced to their creativity through a bevy of eye looks. For Autumn/Winter 21-22, shades of blue were seen in the form of artistic eye looks. While Altuzarra's 'third eye' on the forehead was definitely pointing towards OTT, the dotted pattern highlighting the eye at Kiko Kostadinov was a more wearable way to work this shade. For those who like to stick to classic styles, take cues from Versace's exaggerated winged liner or the blue-black smokey eyes at LBV.

Simply Nam Ultra-Soft, Comfort Wear Matte Lipstick in Shwetambari, ₹1,299

COLOUR CRUSH

Celebrity make-up artist Namrata Soni recently turned beauty entrepreneur with the launch of her brand Simply Nam. Offering a range of make-up cleansing towels, bio-cellulose sheet masks, and storage bags, the brand's latest drop is a collection of soft-matte lipsticks in shades ranging from nudes, to pinks and reds. The Ultra-Soft, Comfort Wear Matte Lipsticks glide on easily and leave a semi-matte, velvet-smooth finish. The formula also keeps lips hydrated and is perfect for all-day wear.

Namrata Soni

Simply Nam Ultra-Soft, Comfort Wear Matte Lipstick in Madhu, ₹1,299

ICE, ICE, BABY

We have seen many a beauty influencer across the globe use ice globes before make-up application. And the reason these cool massagers have amassed a cult following is because they can awaken and re-energise tired, dull skin. A quick massage with a chilled ice globe helps freeze out muscle tension, instantly de-puffing and tightening the skin—all of which helps make-up go on smoothly. You can even incorporate it in your self-care ritual, rolling these cooling wands all over your face for a healthy glow.

CIEL Pollution Detox Trio, ₹2,197



SKIN SAVIOUR

If your skin has been craving a good cleanse, try this Pollution Detox Trio by CIEL. A clean, homegrown brand, CIEL uses safe ingredients that work in tandem to target specific concerns. This trio includes a Cleanser, Tonic Mist, and Cream that helps reverse the harmful effects of pollution, removes impurities, and shields skin from free radicals.

Nykaa Facial Ice Globes, ₹3,600

Actor and entrepreneur Katrina Kaif on the power of perseverance, ambition, and why passion must fuel everything you want to achieve in life.

A PERENNIAL POWERHOUSE: KATRINA KAIF

Interview By: Nandini Bhalla;
Photographs: Tarun Vishwa;
Styling: Zunaili Malik



Trench, Aniket
Satam; necklace,
Misho



Structured top,
Amit Aggarwal;
pants, Bloni

During the covershoot for *Cosmo* India's 25th Anniversary issue, one of the first things I

noticed about actor, entrepreneur, and covergirl Katrina Kaif was her keen eye for every tiny detail... Katrina wasn't just there to play muse to the camera—she was actively involved in the lighting, in how the set came together, in how her body looked at every angle, the way a lock of hair framed her face...

It was later, when we met on a Zoom call for this interview, that I discovered some of the many layers that sit behind Katrina's immaculate (and somewhat unapproachable) exterior. The fact that even in the face of deep exhaustion, Katrina is an incredibly charming interviewee, with a distinct tinkle in her voice ("It's probably because of the delirium from being so tired right now," she

is almost as if your mind was constantly whirring, always active... And yet, on the surface, you seem so calm and composed...

Katrina Kaif: [Laughs] "Yeah, I think your description is pretty accurate... My mind operates incredibly fast, at an almost alarming speed. I have to constantly remind myself that other people's minds do not operate at that speed, and that I must give them time to really understand what I am trying to say.

But thinking so quickly has its pros and cons, and there are many downsides to it because it is important to take your time and to enjoy life... For me, that has been a significant discovery, to learn to stay in touch with my inner self through meditation... To find that place of stillness, that centre of calmness within myself. Because doing everything from the mind is great, but

of promotions for *Sooryavanshi*, and I think this is an exciting time for everyone because it is also about getting people back into the cinemas. It is so important to get that going for the entire film industry, you know, now that safety measures are in place, and vaccinations are in great numbers, and COVID-19 cases are under control... Now it is about the industry thriving, and that is what we have been focusing on. I think Rohit Shetty has really held on to put this film in the cinemas and we are all just counting down to the day..."

NB: Let's talk about the tremendous success of your beauty brand—Kay Beauty. The products are so good... I use them all the time! I'd like to go back to the very beginning...what prompted you to launch your own beauty label?

"There can be a lot of joy in being busy and doing many things. But I am the happiest when I am peaceful, centred, and grounded..."

laughs). That this is a woman with remarkable drive, an indelible spirit, and a mind that is razor-sharp and astute. Or that, and this comes almost without warning, there is a beautiful, compelling vulnerability to Katrina that makes her so likeable, you want to hug her.

Read on for excerpts from the interview, where the actor talks about her life, her dreams, and her passions—namely, Bollywood, her incredibly successful beauty brand Kay Beauty, and finding balance and joy.

Nandini Bhalla: One of the first things I noticed about you, during the *Cosmo* covershoot, was how present and involved you were. It

sometimes, you also just need to be in the moment and be able to enjoy it without thinking or planning for the next. What happens with constant mental activity is that you start thinking about the next thing, and are never truly present to enjoy what you have and what you already have achieved."

NB: I know you have been incredibly busy, the last couple of weeks...

KK: "Yes, there is a lot going on. These days, I am shooting a big action sequence for a Yashraj [Productions] film, and it has been extremely hectic but also so amazing... I am enjoying this film so much.

And, of course, I am in the middle

KK: "To be honest, make-up has been one of the greatest passions of my life! And whenever anyone asks me about Kay Beauty and its success, I always come back to this—if you want to be successful at anything, it has to be a passion...it cannot be just a business. And if you pour passion into any business, I think you will succeed. A lot of people don't know this, but I have done my own make-up for years—for my movies and songs. And, of course, I have also worked with some great make-up artists and picked up a tonne of tips and tricks from them. So I have gained the experience and knowledge about textures and consistencies; about colours and efficacy. Make-up was and is incredibly special to me. Some

girls like bags, some people like cars or coffee, or whatever...for me, it has always been make-up.

And so, when the opportunity came with Falguni [Nayar] and Nykaa to set up my own company, it felt like the biggest gift. Falguni is such a visionary...without her, I could not have done this; without her, it would have been just a dream that would have remained unfulfilled. And then there's our CEO Reena Chhabra as well...she is just ruthless in her pursuit of excellence when it comes to creating the perfect product. Like, I would sit with her and say, 'This is too thick or too thin or too oily or has silicone in it'. And Reena would come back with a whole lot of new products and say, 'Now try this!'. She would be at it, tirelessly.

And now, it brings me so much joy when girls come up to me saying that they love the Kay Beauty Kajal or Kay Beauty Lipstick...it makes me incredibly happy to hear that!

I get yelled at by my managers because they are like, 'Katrina, we know this is your passion and we know you love it, but it's also a business. Can you operate it like a business and work with invitations and budgets, etc?' But I just don't see those numbers, you know? I only feel the passion."

NB: A lot of people don't know how involved you are in creating the Kay Beauty collections...

KK: "I know exactly what I want, and I am very clear about the kind of formulation I want to put out there. Because I apply make-up on my own face, I know what it means when a product is the right consistency and formula. Of course, Reena is the expert who will go out there and make that happen. Without her, I can't do it. So it is a team effort. I remember when I wanted to launch the first Kay Beauty campaign, and it was going to be an expensive campaign... I told Falguni what I wanted to do, and she didn't even bat an eyelid because she saw that I was

coming from a place of passion, and that this was my vision, she just went with it. Both Reena and Falguni are equally enthusiastic about Kay Beauty, and we are here to build a business and a world of make-up that not only performs, but is also inclusive. I want Kay Beauty to be about different women who represent different things, which is why I am so passionate about representation in the brand campaigns. We are always featuring diverse people, and when I look at them, I can see that there's an aspect to them which I don't have. I know that I might have something else, but I don't have what they do, and I love being on Kay Beauty shoots because they are one of the most wholesome experiences that I have had in my life. Because I am surrounded by all these incredible girls and boys, with such great energy, and I see them for who they are. And in that moment, we are all a team—we are like a voice that's coming together to say something. It is just us expressing ourselves and not being restricted by how we are supposed to look or be. We have just come together to create something fun and that is such an incredible experience."

NB: How has your definition of beauty evolved over the years?

KK: "That's a very important question. I grew up thinking that there is just one kind of beauty—it was what you saw in the magazines, and if you didn't conform to that, then you didn't cut it. I used to be rather conscious about the way I looked because I felt like I didn't quite fit in. Today, people might find that admission a bit strange, but back then, I felt that there were things about my features that were not 'perfect'. I realise now that I was the one putting this pressure on myself.

And because I know what it was like to feel that way, I personally chose the girls for the Kay Beauty campaigns. I am not searching for people who look 'different', I just realise that each and every person in the world is unique.

There is no one type of beauty—no specific skin tone, or shape, or features...every single person is special and that is what I want to show. Because being confident about the way you look can be a tough thing, and it is such an important conversation for young women to have. For someone who might still be starting out, there can be such an inner struggle and sometimes, you just need to go out there and project yourself—be confident. That's why Kay Beauty is so much more than just a beauty company. We are trying to create a community; a haven where you feel comfortable. When it comes to the product, we focus on the quality and performance. There is absolutely no messing around with that. But when it comes to the community we are building, it is all about expression and about having fun and being heard and being seen."

NB: The movies, the company, the community...how do you manage to do it all?

KK: "Honestly, it has been tricky. When the Kay Beauty train took off, it added a lot of work to my day and how I spent my hours. I was not prepared for that, to be honest. And even today, finding balance is a major priority. It was and is a major shift in my life. I am lucky because my partners Falguni and Reena are equally passionate about the business, and they really know their game and their job. And that brings me satisfaction and relief because there is so much work and passion behind it.

But I won't mince my words—there's a tonne of hard work that has gone into building this beauty brand. A tonne of hard work! That's why I will say it again—if it is not a burning passion, don't do it. Because it requires that much of you to be in it."

NB: Would you say you are a perfectionist?

KK: "Yes, yes! Someone once told me—and I think it was Shah Rukh Khan—that 'Better is the undoer of good'.



Structured top,
Amit Aggarwal;
pants, Bloni



In other words, sometimes you have to know when to stop, because chasing perfection is also an exhausting process, which does not allow you to let the moment unfold organically.

Sometimes, you just need to let go. It is okay just to see how things turn out. Because I always have such a clear vision in my head, and I can be so persistent, that I don't leave room on either side.

I realised that I needed to be aware of this because I tend to strive so hard that I can be tough on those around me because I'm so tough on myself."

NB: What do people tend to get wrong about Katrina Kaif?

KK: "Probably the aloofness that we spoke about earlier... In reality, I am probably preoccupied with the thoughts in my head, likely stressing about something.

Deep down, like really deep, I have a strong Cancerian energy. You know how they can be: home-and-friends people, and also quite shy, retiring creatures who go into their shells? So Cancerians can have a very misunderstood exterior; it is just that they have to feel safe and protected to be able to reveal their true selves."

NB: The word 'ambitious' is still sometimes seen as a dirty word when it comes to women. What are your views on this?

KK: "I think that attitude is changing... Let me rephrase it, I think purpose in life is the most important thing for any individual because purpose feeds your soul. Whether it is a goal at work, or a hobby, or something you aspire to do in life, like climb a mountain or travel the world... Whatever that purpose or pursuit or ambition is—it is important, because without it, you'd be aimless.

But for me, what's important is

finding a balance between the pursuit of my dreams and being able to relax, to still be in the moment and allow myself to enjoy just being where I am.

It is wonderful to achieve your goals, but you should also be able to sit back and enjoy your successes instead of hopping onto the next thing, you know?"

NB: What brings you happiness... true happiness in life?



KK: "It's so important to actually know the answer to that. Happiness is when you are at peace and when you are centred.

Of course, there can be a lot of joy in being busy and doing many things. But I am the happiest when I am peaceful, centred, and grounded... when I am in the moment and not planning something or thinking about the future."

NB: What does success mean to you?

KK: "Success, to me, means working in an industry or a job that you are passionate about. When you feel fulfilled and look forward to going to

work everyday, that is success in its professional sense.

And being successful at life means finding the right balance between enjoying your life and having ambitions and goals."

NB: What is the greatest life lesson you have learned?

KK: "In life, I have learned never to depend on others for your happiness because they may or may not deliver.

I don't believe another person is responsible for your joys.

That sense of happiness has to come from within, it has to be held in your own hand. Life is going to throw all sorts of things at us. We are going to have ups and downs; good days and bad days. And while we can't always choose our experiences, we can choose our responses. And that is my endeavour, to hold that claim of happiness and contentment within me that is not based on the actions and responses of people around me.

In life, sometimes you will succeed and sometimes, you will fail. But the goal should always be to get back up on your feet and try again. There are days when I am incredibly stressed and will fail miserably at holding my centre and calm. And then I will say to myself at the end of the day, 'It's all right. We are only human'. But I will try and get back on that horse to remind myself that the intention is to always find that calm and peace, even in hectic moments. That's all we can do, right? Be clear with our intentions..." ■

Artwork Courtesy: Himanshu Agrawal; Hair: Yianni Tsapatori at Faze Management; Make-Up: Maniasha at Faze Management; Production: P. Productions; Fashion Assistants: Humaira Lakdawala and Sneham Choudhary; Fashion Intern: Vrushali Sonawane

We Know Your Secret Sex Fantasy, Do You?

Not that one. A *new* one. By Jill Hamilton

Photograph: GETTYIMAGES.COM; *Fine, not-so-secret sources: Tara Suwinatti Chaiporn, Assistant Professor, California State University at Fullerton; Shanyra Howard, Sex and Relationship expert; Janet Brito, AASECT-certified sex therapist

Look, it is cool if every time you need to get yourself over the edge, you return to that mental picture of being taken from behind while wearing a pair of boots and nothing else. (Don't lie!) It is only natural to put your fave on repeat. But given the Ground-hoggian hellscape of the past one year, wouldn't it be *kiind* of nice to mix things up? With something...even hotter, perhaps? Yes—yes, it would.

So it is lucky that you have us. Okay, fine, maybe not us, per se, but rather, US-based sex researcher Justin Lehmiller, and a group of other highly-informed secret sources* who know how to use your personality to devise an even hotter fantasy. Pick the description that fits you best, prepare for an *uncanny* amount of detail, and...you know what to do from there.

If there's something about a colour-coded system that really does it for you (and is it just us, or are those old-school three-ring binders super-hot?)...

YOUR FANTASY IS
An apartment meet-up with that cute guy you met at the coffee shop. It's 4:30pm, he's in a beanie (the slouchy one), and smells like vanilla as he slowly unhooks your power bra (the red one). Your curated seduction playlist is so good that afterwards, he asks you to send him the link. Yes, your life is a movie.

WHY
Very organised people tend to plan their fantasies down to every damn detail. You just like the world to seem orderly, even in your mind, theorises Justin.

If you are easily torqued by stress, or find sex to be a little anxiety-inducing...

YOUR FANTASY IS
You're straddling your lover, telling him to look but not touch. Villanelle from *Killing Eve* vibes abound (killer outfit included). Time zooms out, and spiritually, you are vibrating three feet off the ground.

WHY
Engaging in light BDSM and stepping into a character that's totally different from yourself is the perfect escape. Your alter ego isn't concerned about whether you remembered to turn off your straightener or pay that bill... just Sex Things.

You are the Ina Garten of Orgy Hosting, and all your guests are vying for your attention.

If you're a big-time people-pleaser and usually the one to say sorry (even when it's obviously the other person's fault)...

YOUR FANTASY IS
In the midst of sex, you bring out a magical new toy that completely blows your partner's mind (or, you know, their whatever). Afterwards, bae lies next to you speechless. Tears of gratitude on their end may or may not be involved.

WHY
Agreeable types tend to fantasise about things they think will make others happy (the five flavoured lubes sitting in your Amazon cart say hi). You might be into swinging, not because you're poly by nature, but because sharing equals caring, in your mind, per Justin's research.

If you are super sociable and out-going (hello!) and your greatest phobia is forgetting to respond to a single text...

YOUR FANTASY IS
You are the Ina Garten of Orgy Hosting, and all your guests are vying for your attention, which you are able to give to everyone equally. You have got special ~favours~ picked out to use on each one of them, because, well, you're thoughtful like that. A party platter, if you will.

WHY
Extroverts like to, obviously, "engage with the world," says Justin. Studies show they're into sensation-seeking behaviours, as well as also novelty and excitement. So thinking about something you've (probably) never done (enter: orgy) is super-appealing!

If you're on constant red-alert in relationships (or in situationships... actually, especially situationships), looking for hidden signs that they are Not. That. Into You...

YOUR FANTASY IS
You are tied up and waiting, completely on edge. Think *Fifty Shades*—as in, you've written a trilogy's worth of instructions that your highly enthusiastic partner has memorised for you. They know exactly how to play you and make you beg before they touch you again. They are just as desperate to feel you, but they're able...only just barely, though... to hold back

WHY
Research shows that people who need a lot of reassurance in their relationships (us, queens of the triple text) feel most turned on when their partners truly can't resist them. ■



What Does Lust Mean in New Relationships?

Is this the real deal, or just sexual chemistry...read on to find out.

Photograph: SAHIL BEHAL

Dating someone but can't figure out whether you are compatible or if it is just butt loads of sexual chemistry? As you read this, you might be asking yourself: 'What is the meaning of lust?' when trying to figure out whether you are feeling it hard, or falling in love. London-based, dating and relationship expert, Sarah Louise Ryan is here to explain the meaning of lust, talking us through six very obvious signs that feelings are full of lust and not love. Here is how to tell if you have got the real deal or not.

WHAT IS LUST? SIX SIGNS TO KNOW...

YOU WANT TO KNOW EVERYTHING AND ALL AT ONCE

If the person you are seeing is really meant to be your next significant other—then what is the rush? After all, good things come to those who wait. If it is lust, you will try to be all in—and fast—because you won't be able to wait to get your next fix of those neurotransmitters, dopamine, and serotonin as they are what make you feel really good.

If it is love, then you will be far more interested in a slow-burning romance rather than blowing off some steam together.

YOU STRUGGLE TO FIND COMMONALITY

The chemistry may seem to be bang on and will feel like friction, like it is electric and you just can't get enough of being in the throes of passion or talking about it. You will be addicted to the highs and focus any convo outside of the bedroom on how great your sex is.

Yet you can't find any other commonality, so the conversation just leads down the path to talking about your physical passion (and not much else).

YOU HAVE GOT DIFFERENT OUTLOOKS ON THE WORLD, BUT YOU THINK THAT IS OKAY

You like this person—they are attractive, you feel comfortable in their company, and you want to hang out all the time. The fact that you both have different outlooks on the world and your lifestyles are not quite the same doesn't matter, right? One of you might prefer a winter getaway to a stint in the sunshine, or maybe you both support different football teams—this is fine.

What we are talking about is getting down to the nitty-gritty of values, family orientation, your goals, ambitions, health, fitness, and inevitably what you both do to make the world a better place. If you find that there isn't any alignment and you are not on the same page about a lot of things, then quite frankly, you are looking at a whole lot of lust and not much else.

IT IS NOT A SEAMLESS CONNECTION, BUT IT IS EXCITING

Sometimes 'getting' each other feels a tad like swimming against a micro tide but you are okay with that. The chemistry is there, so you think that the compatibility might come in time. Well, it won't.

When you connect with someone right for you, you will go through the stages of falling in love which, of course, includes lust. But you will want more as you become attracted to their personality and want to attach to them and only them. Make sure you are falling hook, line, and sinker—not just sinking in lust.

YOU DON'T COMMUNICATE THE SAME WAY

If you both seem to be constantly seeking the attention of the other, not feeling satisfied or safe in the knowledge that this is it, then it is just lust. If it feels like clutching at straws for one or both of you, then you are not in it to win it for love.

Perhaps you find yourself feeling unsure where this is going, how the other person feels, or what on Earth is going on? The right person for you wants you to feel at ease because they want to feel at ease too.

EVERYTHING ELSE FALLS BY THE WAYSIDE

If you are attracted to someone and feel completely comfortable with dropping everything of significance around you, then it is

lust—and not set to be love. Things of significance can be anything from friends and family, to your hobbies, interests, and work.

Love comes from compatibility, and that is based on a deep understanding between the two of you of what is important, what keeps you ticking, and the knowledge that you are both in for a marathon, not a sex-induced sprint.

It is tough in the early days to identify the true meaning of lust, see the difference between chemistry and compatibility, and what it is exactly that sets the two apart. As long as you trust your gut, stay true to your values, and really know what you want in a relationship, you will find that only the people on the same page as you will stick around.

So, what is lust? In short, lust is just for right now, and we all know that when it comes to love, forever is a good word. ■

“Love comes from compatibility based on deep understanding...”

This Scary, Cultish Dating Trend Has Gone Mainstream

Yes, sometimes “too good to be true” is a very real thing.

By Taylor Andrews

(Additional Reporting by Lauren L’ amie)

Let’s say you met someone and they seem great. Like, everything-you’ve-been-manifesting-for-months great. Gives-you-more-compliments-than-you-get-in-the-bar-bathroom-line great. Makes-plans-to-bring-you-to-a-friend’s-wedding-in-five-months great. Never-leaves-you-on-read great. And it has only been a week! But before you start imagining sending out your own Save the Date, we have some news: all this greatness may be part of a manipulation strategy used by...actual cults. It is called love bombing, and it is a form of emotional abuse that happens when someone showers a partner with excessive

affection in an attempt to control them. The term was allegedly first coined by members of the Unification Church of the United States, a famous cult known as the Moonies. They love-bombed people to encourage them to join their fellowship. Experts

If they drop the word ‘soulmate’ after one or two dates, hi, yes, it could be time to run.

Photographs: ASHISH SHAH

say other famous cults like America’s NXIVM used a similar method to manufacture feelings of intense unity and loyalty in new recruits. And now it is possible that this type of behaviour has infiltrated your dating apps.

Obviously (and hopefully!), most people you meet online won’t go to cult-like extremes, but any love bomber’s goal is generally the same: to enhance their ego by gaining power over you or anyone they are pursuing, says New York-based psychotherapist Ami Kaplan. As you can probably guess, this is often a symptom of narcissistic personality disorder. Many love bombers have a lack of empathy for others, an inflated sense of self-worth, and a need for attention. They unearth other people’s deep-seated insecurities and exploit them. The confusing thing is that this is largely a subconscious behaviour, says Ami. Your dates aren’t necessarily setting out to manipulate you. And because love bombing is disguised as, well, real love, things can get extra tricky—before they get extra tough. Because once someone is interested/connected/has shared their deepest darkest secret, “a love bomber no longer has any use for their partner and will begin withdrawing from the relationship,” says California-based Lori Nixon Bethea, PhD, owner of Intentional Hearts Counseling Services at Oakhurst. At that point,

“they may hurl insults, make disparaging remarks, gaslight, and cause their partner to feel invalidated and devalued.” Okay, *phew*. Deep breaths.

This does “not” mean that you should fault yourself for wanting to feel loved and appreciated—and it is not always a red flag if someone compliments you or knows your Starbucks order by heart early on. It just means that you can proceed with a bit of caution—and keep the red flags at right

handy—while dating.

If you have just started seeing someone and are not sure whether they are love bombing you or just majorly crushing, have a convo with them and express how you feel. You can say something as simple as, ‘Hey, this seems to be moving pretty fast. Maybe we should discuss it or set some boundaries.’ If they respect that, great. If they get angry, the best course of action is simple: dump them, Unfollow them, and move on. ■

SIGNS YOU MAYBE IN A SNITCH

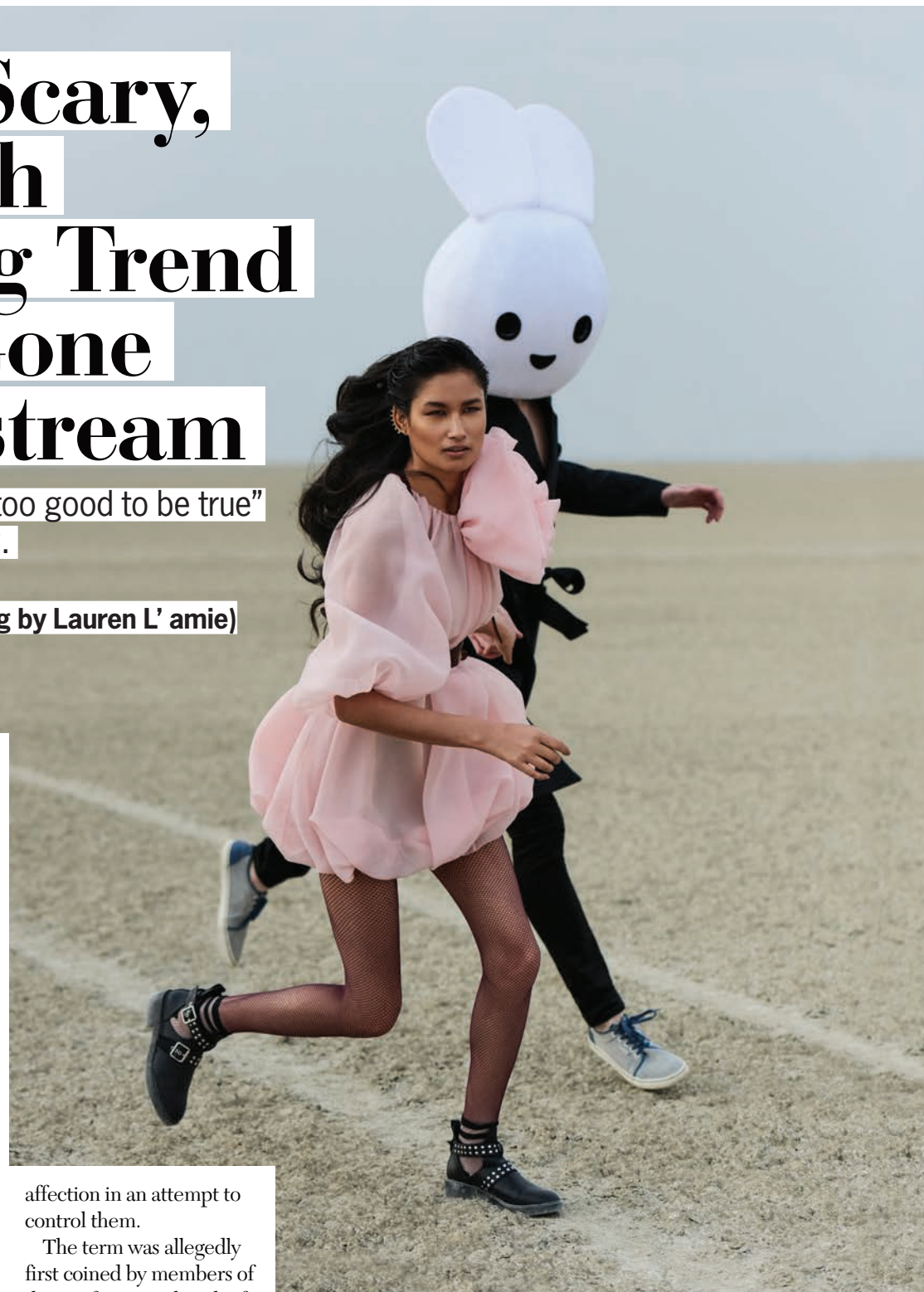
They spend lots and lots of money on you right away.

They make you feel guilty for wanting space or setting boundaries.

They want to know your whereabouts literally all the time—and not in a cute ‘checking in’ way.

Their feelings are really intense really fast.

They make plans very, very far in advance in an attempt to lock you in for the next few months.





Photographs: ANEEV RAO

Facing Commitment Issues In Your Relationship?

Finding fault with partners or reasons not to date them could be a fear of commitment. **By Emily Gulla**

Relationships can be complicated, and there are plenty of things that can affect how we behave in a relationship too, from our attachment style, to having a fear of abandonment, to having trouble committing to another person—aka commitment issues. If you find yourself constantly afraid of making things serious with partners, or you are dating someone who is distant and refusing to label things, it could be that commitment issues are at play.

Here is what you need to know about the signs of commitment issues, what causes them, and how to deal with it if you (or someone you are dating) has issues with commitment.

WHAT ARE COMMITMENT ISSUES?

Commitment issues generally refer to people who have difficulty or a fear of committing to a relationship. It doesn't necessarily mean that they don't want to be in the relationship at all, but that they have trouble fully committing to it.

UK-based psychotherapist and counsellor Katerina Georgiou explains, "Another word that could describe commitment issues is 'ambivalence'. It can feel like there is a part of you that wants to be in the situation, and another part that also wants to flee."

Having commitment issues can mean different things for different people. Some people might be afraid of the idea of being in a relationship forever, while others might have a fear that they will be abandoned, hurt, cheated on, or that they might cheat, Katerina explains.

Plus, "There can sometimes be a sense of the grass being greener," she adds. "You might think, 'Is this it? Is this the best/happiest I am going to feel? What if there's something better?'"

Commitment issues can also be linked to your attachment style in a relationship. People with an avoidant attachment style might like their own space and want to make sure it's not going to be invaded, explains UK-based sex and relationships therapist Cate Mackenzie.

Meanwhile, if someone has a disorganised attachment style, part of them might want to be involved, while another part of them doesn't, she adds, which can result in mixed messages.

HOW TO TELL IF SOMEONE YOU ARE DATING HAS COMMITMENT ISSUES?

Early on in a relationship, someone regularly cancelling, continually saying they will do something and then backing out, or not seeming fully present with you might all be signs that they are someone who struggles to commit, says Cate.

Katerina adds that 'breadcrumbing' (sending you flirty but ultimately non-committal messages) can also be a sign, as can hesitation around labelling the relationship. We are all familiar with people who refuse labels, but if you are unsure whether you are dating or if you are just friends with benefits or f*ck buddies, then it is time to open up the conversation. It is fine if you are both on the same page, but if they are not being clear with you about what they want, it might be that they struggle to commit.

HOW TO TELL IF YOU YOURSELF HAVE COMMITMENT ISSUES?

While you might be able to see the signs in a partner, it can sometimes be harder to recognise commitment issues in yourself.

Katerina suggests looking for patterns in who you date. "If you find yourself perpetually in a pattern of not committing, or finding fault with partners or reasons not to date them, or you are perpetually being drawn to people who are no good for you, consider whether this is a pattern or common denominator."

ARE COMMITMENT ISSUES CAUSED BY ANYTHING?

There are a range of different reasons why you or someone you are dating might have commitment issues, whether it is experiences in past relationships, deeper issues in childhood, or even films and TV.

While you might be able to see the signs in a partner, it can sometimes be harder to recognise commitment issues in yourself.

Katerina says that you might be scarred from a previous relationship, which has left you fearful of being hurt again (or “once bitten, twice shy”)—and it is totally understandable to want to protect yourself from being heartbroken again.

Struggling to commit might also be a result of having too high expectations when it comes to love, she adds. “We can be influenced by romantic narratives in film and media that show us an all-consuming love, so we hold out for that experience. Or we might see friends in the kinds of relationships we’d like to be in and wonder if we should hold out for that too,” says Katerina.

On a deeper level, sometimes commitment issues can be traced back to experiences in childhood, which is also when our attachment styles are usually formed.

“If you witnessed your own caregivers arguing a lot when you were growing up, or your parents divorced, or a parent died or left, you might grow to feel despondent and skeptical about committing to anybody,” Katerina explains.

However, seeing healthy relationships growing up can also contribute to having issues with commitment. “Having parents who are still together and seemingly happily married can create pressure for us to re-create the same,” Katerina adds, “or it can trigger despair that this is as good as it gets.”

Plus, more serious childhood and adulthood experiences like unprocessed trauma and anxiety can also play a part, as well as a fear of being overwhelmed in relationships, says Cate.

HOW TO DEAL WITH COMMITMENT ISSUES?

Katerina says that the first step to dealing with your commitment issues is to notice the common patterns you are getting into, and to try to pinpoint what it is that is holding you back, whether it is from your past or from your current fears.

If having commitment issues has become a bit of a habit, it can be



helpful to try to unlock it, and Katerina suggests almost debating your beliefs with yourself, either inside your head or out loud, or with a therapist or friend. “Get a trusted friend to play devil’s advocate to any of your arguments and counter arguments,” she suggests. “Sometimes thrashing things out like this can give clarity to what is going on. If things feel really difficult, seeking a therapist to support you to unpick some of this stuff can be helpful.”

Cate also recommends sharing your worries about commitment with the person you are dating. “Instead of acting out your fear by being late, for example, you can say, ‘I like you so much but it is making me feel a bit scared and I end up cancelling or being late’ etc,” she explains. “Learn how to set boundaries, so you feel clear on what you realistically can and can’t give or receive,” she adds, and communicate this with the other person.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE DATING SOMEONE WITH COMMITMENT ISSUES?

Dating someone who struggles to commit can be difficult, but Katerina suggests having the conversation about commitment and what you want from the relationship and from your own future earlier on, so you know whether you are on the same page. “Often what happens is we remain hesitant about asking those sorts of questions early on because we are vulnerable, but then we can find ourselves several months or even years in, and breaking-up at that stage is so much harder because we have invested so much,” she explains.

Cate suggests setting boundaries about the kind of commitment you want, and what you can and can not accept. However, doing this means you also need to be prepared to walk away if your expectations aren’t met.

WHERE TO FIND SUPPORT?

Talking to friends and family about how you are feeling can always be useful, says Katerina. But you might also choose to seek support from professionals, either through relationship therapy if you are in an established relationship with a partner, or therapy by yourself. ■

you, you, you

Healthy Food = Good Mood

In this edition of Fama Feel Good—our monthly series on mental health, in collaboration with ITC FIAMA—find out why it is important to consume a balanced and nutritious diet in order to feel good, stay mentally fit, and perform your best.

By Dr Prerna Kohli, Clinical Psychologist and Founder, MindTribe

“We all have different ways to cope with our negative feelings, like exercising, crying, journaling, etc. An underrated coping mechanism a lot of us engage in is eating foods that make us happy. You might have heard of students ‘stress eating’ during exams or people eating ice cream after a break-up. We feel like eating junk food such as pizzas or burgers make us ‘happy’, but true ‘happy foods’ come from a healthier place.

Unhealthy—sugary, salty, or fried—food are very appealing because they release very powerful pleasure hormones (dopamine) in our brain, which makes it difficult to quit them. They can be equally unhealthy for our body and mind, since we often feel quite guilty after eating them or get addicted to them. This defeats the entire purpose of coping with our negative feelings. Healthy foods such as dairy produce like cheese, yoghurt; fruits like bananas; nuts such as almonds and walnuts; eggs; and omega 3-rich fish like salmon and mackerel are known for boosting dopamine levels too.

Chocolates in particular are known to increase serotonin, which is a hormone that makes us less depressed. When one is menstruating, their brain’s serotonin level decreases, which makes them feel low or depressed. Hence, chocolate helps as it increases serotonin levels again and elevate mood. However, there are healthier alternatives to the standard milk chocolate, like dark chocolate (that has higher levels of cacao and less sugar in comparison) or foods high in protein like hummus, cheese, paneer, lentil, etc. I recommend the next time you have late night cravings, especially during your period, try and reach out to these



high protein foods instead. Start by stocking your refrigerator or snack cupboard with only healthier options. These alternatives are more sustainable and filling, plus they will aid in curtailing your cravings better.”

COSMO READERS HAVE SOME QUESTIONS FOR DR PRERNA, TOO

Q. Can certain foods put me in a bad mood?

Moods are certainly linked to our nutrition. Research shows that a diet high in trans fatty acids and low in omega 3 fatty acids can increase aggression and irritability. You must have heard of the term ‘hangry’ before. Being hungry is linked to aggression and people with poor diets (eating less or not eating nutritious meals) are also more prone to battling depression. So, if you have not been feeling your best mentally for a while, counselling may not be your only hope as changing your eating habits can help too.

Q. Is it possible to get addicted to comfort foods?

Yes, it is very possible, and it happens more often than you would think. Food addiction is just like any other addiction, and is related to our brain craving the chemicals we get from our comfort foods (like dopamine and serotonin). Comfort foods provide a temporary sense of calm and happiness. Foods high in sugar, fat, and salt tend to elevate mood very quickly, but also cause a higher level of addiction than healthier versions of comfort foods (like unprocessed meats, dairy, dark chocolate, and nuts). It is important to not eat comfort foods too often, because if our brain gets too used to them then nothing else excites it, making it difficult to eat healthy and function in a balanced manner. ■

How to Cope with Dating Burnout

Remember, dating is meant to be fun.

By Paisley Gilmour

DATING BURNOUT: WHAT TO DO?

If you have reached a point of dating burnout, what steps can you take?

Take a Break from Dating

“My advice is to take a break and then allow yourself to ease back in at your own pace,” says Logan. “Our mindset going into dates has a major effect on how we show up on the date, and how our match responds to us. Taking a step back gives you the time to focus on who you are, what you want, and how you would like to show up on your next date. It is a chance to slow down and invest in your mental health. Knowing who you are and what you want [allows] you to be more successful in dating and finding your next relationship.”

Be More Intentional

However, recent Hinge research also suggests a somewhat counterintuitive tip for avoiding burnout. “While your gut instinct may tell you to take a break if you are feeling burned out, the data tells a different story,” Logan says. “The best way to avoid dating burnout—and feel more satisfied with your matches—is to go after what you want. Be more intentional about who you would like to go out with, and send Likes to the people who interest you.”

Photographs: ANAI BHARUCHA

She explains the research shows that sending Likes makes users feel more in control, and those who send more Likes feel less burned out and more satisfied with their matches.

HOW TO START DATING AGAIN AFTER DATING BURNOUT?

Logan explains how to start enjoying the process again after taking a break. “Once you are ready to date again, be patient, and keep in mind that some of the best connections come from a slow burn rather than ‘the spark’. There is no set amount of time it takes to connect with someone, so do not get caught up in comparing [yourself with] others around you. The right relationship will unfold at the right time,” she says.

Take Control of Your Dating Life

“The more you feel in control of your dating life, and the more you believe that if you put in effort you will get the outcome you want—the less burned out you feel,” she says. A way to do this is to “go after what you want because it puts you in the driver’s seat of your dating life.”

Logan says Hinge has noticed a trend in how its most successful users operate—they are more intentional with their dating. “This means being thoughtful about who you are and staying true to yourself.”

Do Not Sit Around Waiting

“Be proactive,” Logan says. “Date the people you want to date, not just the people who want to date you. The best way to take control of your dating life and avoid dating burnout is to engage with others.”

“Burned out users send 45 percent fewer Likes per week than those who aren’t burned out,” she adds. “And people who send more Likes are more content with their matches than those who are more passive in their approach.”

HOW TO BE MORE INTENTIONAL IN YOUR DATING APPROACH?

1. Ask yourself about how you are engaging with other people on the app. How often are you logging in? Are you using your daily quota of Likes? Try sending Likes accompanied by some thoughtful comments. People really appreciate when you invest effort into getting to know them. (Avoid cliché questions like ‘How was your weekend?’)

2. Are you waiting too long to respond to a match? Sending messages as soon as possible also means you can avoid small talk.

Remember, great conversations are the foundation

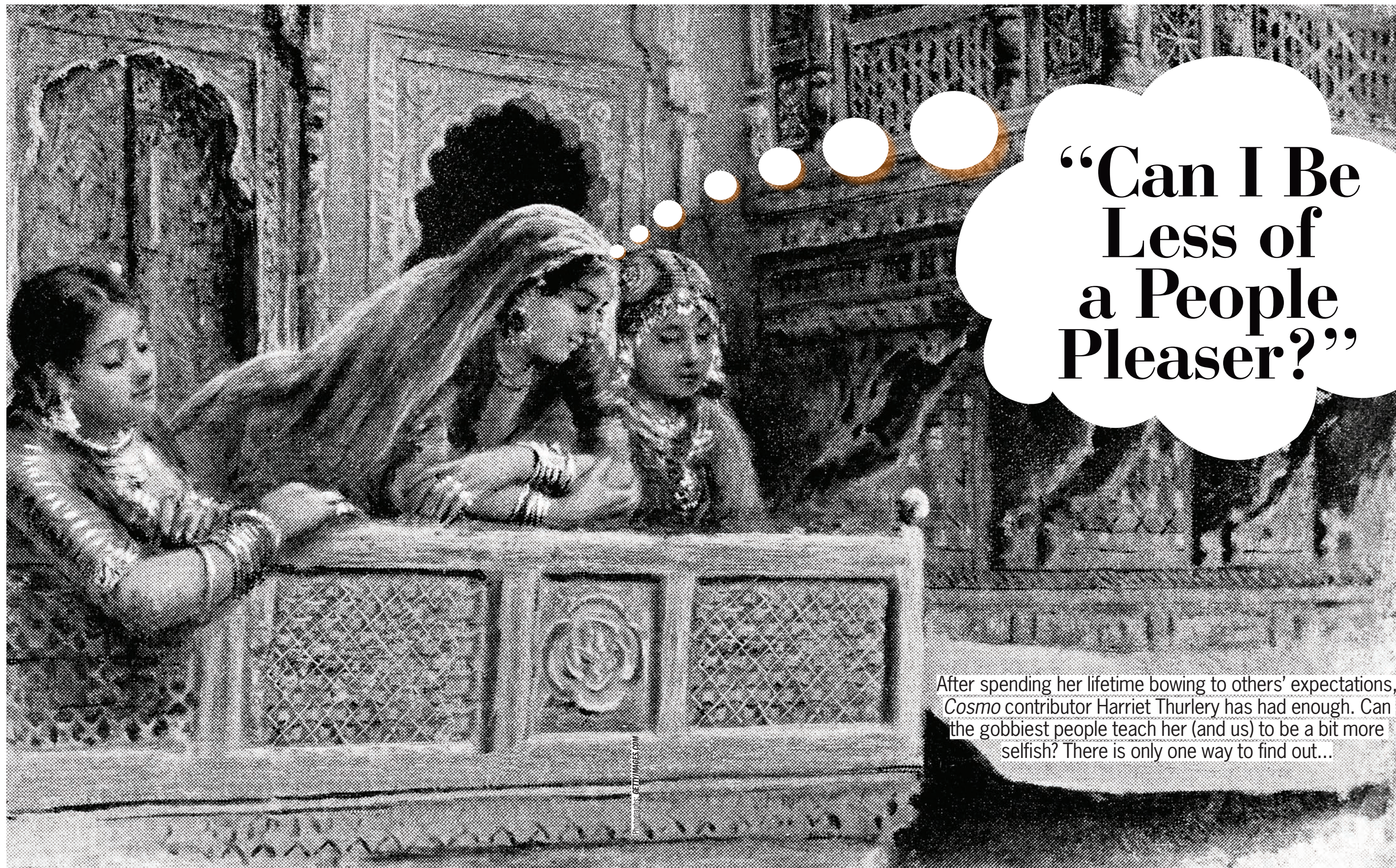
of great connections. Successful daters are responsive and keep the conversation going. “When you match with someone, you should send a message as soon as possible because it is crucial to build momentum early on,” Logan says. “In fact, your best chance at getting a response is within 24 hours of matching. Ask them questions to discover who they are beyond their profile.”

3. From Hinge’s research, they have found comments lead to more matches than Likes or just leaving an emoji. 71% of Hinge users say they are more successful at finding matches when they include a thoughtful comment to show they are interested. This little effort goes a long way. ■

“The best connections come from a slow burn rather than ‘the spark’.”

Ever get so fed up with dating and dating apps that you vow to pack it all in, for good? You are absolutely not alone. New research by dating app, Hinge UK, shows that 61 percent of the app’s users there feel overwhelmed and fatigued when it comes to dating. While in India, dating apps such as Tinder, Bumble, and Truly Madly witnessed a significant boost in activity during the pandemic, regular dating can lead to what has been termed as a ‘dating burnout.’

This feeling is completely normal, says San Francisco-based Logan Ury, Director of Relationship Science at Hinge. “Dating burnout can manifest itself in different ways for different people. You might feel hopeless and worry that there is nobody out there who is right for you. Or you might want to give up dating altogether.”



**“Can I Be
Less of
a People
Pleaser?”**

After spending her lifetime bowing to others' expectations, *Cosmo* contributor Harriet Thurlery has had enough. Can the gobbiest people teach her (and us) to be a bit more selfish? There is only one way to find out...

I take a seat on the wooden kitchen chair pointed out to me. The shiny black hairdresser's cape drapes over my shoulders like I am a superhero. The mirror balances on the kitchen worktop, angled a little too high so only my forehead is in view. Not ideal when you are getting your hair cut. Still, I trust the hairdresser, whose house my mum has brought me to. It is the first time I have met her, but I am foolishly optimistic that she can turn me into the model on the page I have torn out of a magazine.

I am 14—so this is 20 years ago. *Friends* is at its peak and layers are 'in'. My goodness, layers are in. I remain quiet as the hairdresser—I do not remember her name, or I have repressed it through trauma—snips, feathers, and ultimately massacres my mid-length brown hair. I have no idea what is going on because I can not see a darned thing—until, an hour later, she has finished and I am ushered towards the mirror for my first glance. I wanted 'The Rachel'. I got Worzel Gummidge.

"Is that okay, Harriet," she asks. "No" I think. "I hate what you have done. No-one will ever fancy me again. You have ruined my life." But instead: "Yes...great...loads better," tumbles out of my mouth. Mum pays—plus tip—and I bolt for the front door. And I have been pleasing other people, sometimes at my own expense, ever since.

I have stayed up late into the night...

...baking brownies I had promised to colleagues, even though I was exhausted; I have endured a five-hour dead-end date, knowing that I was not interested within the first five minutes; I have ordered french fries from the menu instead of a healthy side salad because everyone else at the table did; and I have refrained from giving my honest opinion about a film I have seen in case it is different to that of my friends. And to what end?

"Women say 'just' three to four times as much as men."

It's Harriet 0, No-One 1, really. "Pleasing other people all the time does no one any good," says London-based behavioural scientist and personality specialist Professor Philip Corr. "Doing things for others for fear we will be criticised or punished is not healthy or 'grown-up' behaviour. It is important to please oneself as well as others." The real question, though, is can I change, or am I wired this way? To find out, I look beyond similarly minded friends to those who could never be mistaken for people-pleasers. While I might not agree with their politics, or ever hold their celebrity status, can they teach me something about how to be more outspoken? I knew just the man to ask...

Journalist and presenter Piers Morgan has made a career out of saying...

...well, whatever the hell he likes. He has 7.9 million Twitter followers and admits he has a dog-with-a-bone personality. His latest book, *Wake Up*, is a controversial account of a "world that's going absolutely nuts"—his words—and, in it, he admits he has been called racist, sexist, homophobic, and more. On ITV's *Good Morning Britain*, millions tuned in every day to

see him rant and rave about everything from the government's handling of the pandemic to vegan sausage rolls. Until, that is, he stormed off set during a heated debate about Meghan Markle. He later told his online followers: "Freedom of speech is a hill I am happy to die on. I am off to spend more time with my opinions." Even *Cosmopolitan's* UK edition has been on the receiving end of his sharp tongue and no-holds-barred opinions regarding the people we choose to put on our covers. So, unsurprisingly, not everyone is on his page. I want to know: does he care about what people think of him and how his opinions impact others? "I've spent my life speaking my mind,"

Piers tells me on the phone. "Some people like me for it, others don't. What's the alternative? It is not speaking your mind. Then you do not give honest opinions about anything."

Professor Philip tells me "people-pleasers" come in five different types: the Family Pleaser, Reacting Pleaser, Management Pleaser, Defensive Pleaser, and Personality Pleaser. I fall into at least two of these categories (Reacting and Defensive, if you are interested); surely Piers has dipped his toe into at least one? "I don't think anyone could follow my daily trajectory and think my one burning desire is to please people" he says. "Nor do I have any desire to. I have got the skin of a thousand

rhinoceroses. I am very self-confident. I do not mind being trolled." But do I really want to be less like myself and more like someone with the skin of a thousand rhinos (even if my feet already aren't far off)? I turn to Philip for advice and ask whether 'people-pleasing' really is as negative a trait as some dearly think it is.

"There is an inverted U-curve relationship here, and at the extreme ends, this behaviour is seen as negative" he explains. "With little pleasing, the person is perceived as uncaring and perhaps hostile. At the other end, pleasing people will be seen as an 'easy touch' and lacking appropriate self-respect. There is a location in the middle, where pleasing

is appropriate and beneficial to the person doing it, and to the ones on the receiving end."

What Makes a People Pleaser?

The people pleasing I have been talking about—struggling to be assertive, fearing negative emotions, worrying about inconveniencing people—is not solely in my actions, but my language too, as was recently brought to my attention by UK-based *Loose Women* presenter and journalist Jane Moore. I should mention my day job is senior producer on the ITV daytime talk show, where I work alongside those who are not afraid to speak their minds. One day, we were getting ready to go live on air at 12.30pm but I had a question for Jane. I knocked on her dressing-room door. "Hello?" she called. "It is just Harriet," I replied politely. "Come in, just Harriet," she said, pointedly. Schooled—for a four-letter word.

Interestingly, California-based former Google exec Ellen Petry Leanne investigated the word 'just', having noticed that in emails, conversations, and meetings, women's use of it exceeded men, by around three to four times. Ellen wrote on the Woman 2.0 website: "It hit me that there was something about the word I didn't like. It was a 'permission' word—a warm-up to a request, an apology for interrupting, a shy knock on a door before asking, 'Can I get something I need from you?' Ellen realised this usage was not just about politeness, but that the word was often used as a form of subordination, deference, or self-effacement. "I realised that striking it from a phrase almost always clarified and strengthened the message." Ellen contacted her teammates and banned its use.

Perhaps there, another factor at play: my gender. Piers thinks so. "Women are naturally apologetic about demanding stuff, and I think that needs to change," he says. "Half the battle is exuding an air of self-



confidence about your own abilities.” With that in mind, I wanted to consult someone a little more like me. So I sought out 24-year-old, UK-based positive body-image spokesperson, plus-sized writer, and activist Honey Ross. She has successfully campaigned for #FreePeriods, securing approximately ₹15 crore from the UK government to support period poverty, and helped push a bill through parliament for further support of women’s rights. She also has two very successful parents (more on them later).

“I think, in our society, women have been conditioned to try and make themselves small in every way—shrinking our bodies, shrinking our opinions...anything to make ourselves more digestible!” She has a knee-jerk response: “Well, forget that! We think it’s easier to people-please,” she says. “But it is actually not. If you don’t speak your mind, the only person you are hurting is yourself. You are saying, ‘I prioritise someone else’s comfort over my own’.” As we get older, we attach so much of our identity to our own beliefs. We are very rigid and hold on to them. I think that is where a lot of people’s defensiveness comes from when people challenge their views!

So how does she feel when her views are opposed? “I don’t take it as a personal attack if somebody does not agree with me,” she explains. “Because I know that has everything to do with them and nothing to do with me.”

I think about my own reservations about giving my opinions first on films I have seen. Why don’t I simply put my head above the parapet and give my critique? If my opinion differs to my friends’, does it really matter? They may think I am dumb or have missed the point because I haven’t digested the movie in the same, seemingly superior way they have—but that’s their problem, not mine. I make a promise to myself: don’t do it again. And Honey has my back: “It is about getting to a point in



“Hello, how may I inconvenience myself today?”

yourself where you are like, ‘No, my opinion is valid’.”

If you’re one of Honey’s 57K-plus Instagram followers, you’ll know that, when it comes to being outspoken, she often lets her body do the talking—and it’s these images that can cause the most controversy. “A lot of the conversations I have around ‘fat phobia’ really get people riled, but that’s because our culture is so inherently fat-phobic. Seeing a fat body will instantly make them tense because it is not something they’ve been taught to consume. If I post an innocuous photo of me in lingerie that any of my gorgeous, thin friends would post, they’d just get ‘Yaas’. I do get a lot of that too, but I also get negativity.” I put myself in Honey’s shoes. Would I keep posting,

knowing cruel comments could be coming my way? “Of course, I question it,” Honey says. “I am human and I think, ‘Do I want to bring this attention into my life?’ But it comes back to that feeling: I know myself, I like myself, I like the things I post, and it is okay that other people don’t. That’s what is so nice about the Internet: you can keep scrolling; you don’t have to stick around on my page if it offends or upsets you.”

Both Honey and Piers hold their upbringings responsible for creating the outspoken and confident people they are today. Honey remembers, “I came up in my early twenties through such an amazing activist space. I feel really lucky that I had the privilege to hear so many opinions and be part of exciting

“If you don’t speak your mind, the only person you are hurting is yourself. You’re saying, ‘I prioritise someone else’s comfort over my own.’”

conversations.” Hardly surprising, given that she calls UK-based *Kick-Ass* screenwriter and producer Jane Goldman and television presenter Jonathan Ross mum and dad.

As for Piers: “I come from a family of very strong, opinionated women. That was the environment I grew up in. I got two brothers and a sister, and we were always encouraged to be vocal and speak our minds. Christmas lunch at our place is like World War III sometimes. I say that I am the least opinionated member of my family and I am only half-joking.”

A person’s individual relationship with people-pleasing is nuanced, based on how they move through the world. It is worth noting that Jonathan and Piers (and indeed myself) are operating from a privileged position, looking through a white, British lens. Women of colour, and Black women in particular, often have a fraught relationship with the concept—living in a society where any assertiveness, strength, or confidence they exhibit has to battle against stereotypes and micro-aggressions.

And while I was not discouraged from sharing my opinions, we were not the sit-around-the-dinner-table-and-debate-the-privatisation-of-the-rail-network kind of family. My dad is nothing of a people-pleaser, while my

mum—as the family peacekeeper—probably falls into all five of Professor Philip’s categories. I still do not think her selflessness is a negative trait, but she definitely made personal sacrifices. It’s thinking of this that makes me realise I am not sure I want to stop people-pleasing altogether. Nor do I want to see it as entirely a bad thing. As Professor Philip said, there are some positives to being one, if you find the right balance and nestle comfortably in that inverted U. However, Professor Philip, Honey Ross and—words I never thought I’d say—Piers Morgan have equipped me with some insight, which I have packed away into a mental toolkit.

While I may never be divisive, I am learning to be more assertive. I feel it’s important to tell you that I’m not a total pushover, and in my line of work—dealing with brilliant, opinionated, and vocal people every day on *Loose Women*—I can’t afford to be. But I do need to learn to let go of the guilt and get better at saying no, as long as it is balanced with personal integrity and feels authentic to me. But next time I get a dodgy haircut, I promise I will take a deep breath and be honest. I owe it to myself—and to Rachel Green. ■

THREE PIECES OF ADVICE I LEARNED

REFRAME WHAT IT MEANS TO BE ‘LIKED’

“The word ‘like’ is rather weak. There are far stronger words, such as ‘admire’, ‘aspire to’, ‘inspire’, and so on. Maybe you should want to be seen as ‘inspirational’ rather than ‘liked’.”

PROFESSOR PHILIP CORR

THINK OF WHAT MATTERS TO YOU

“Getting to a point where you can be outspoken is actually honouring your relationship with yourself. Take a breath and change the narrative before acting on a behaviour that you know will be some kind of betrayal. You have that power.”

HONEY ROSS

LEARN TO SAY NO

“Here’s the bottom line: you’ll never please everybody all the time. You may think you are pleasing people but you are pleasing some people. Ultimately, be true to yourself. I have learnt that there is nothing more powerful or satisfying than the simple word ‘no’. And don’t always feel the need to apologise. Just say, ‘I can’t do it.’”

PIERS MORGAN

BEHIND THE SCENES

Harriet Thurley

“Before I agreed to write this article, I texted the people who know me best. ‘Quick question: do you think I’m a people-pleaser?’ I had to know I was the woman for the job. What if someone read this and thought, ‘Harriet? A people-pleaser? Pah!’ In hindsight, the clues were there.”

Cosmo's Guide to Crypto

It's not you. It really IS confusing.
By Jessica Goodman



Your brain
computing
how long till
you are a
nouveau
riche

Collage by: ADAM HALE, The Daily Splice

Remember back in April when it seemed like literally everyone was buying that elusive thing called Dogecoin to screw over Wall Street and also make bank by getting in on cryptocurrency? But then...not everyone got rich, and some even lost, like, everything.

Still, it is not weird to be very, very intrigued by the idea of becoming a Bitcoin

says Massachusetts-based Primavera De Filippi, a faculty associate at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University. In some cases, there is a set, limited amount of a cryptocurrency in circulation (for example, there will only ever be 21 million Bitcoins in the world). In other

FYI, cryptocurrency's value isn't based on anything 'real'.

billionaire—even if you are unclear on how, *uh*, any of it actually works. That is why we are here to quell your FOMO with everything you need to know.

The crypto overlord is a computer. First, this kind of cash comes in the form of intangible digital units (aka you cannot physically touch them) often called tokens or coins. Unlike traditional paper money, they are not issued by a central bank; kinda like traditional paper money, there are lots of different currencies out there,

cases, like with Ethereum, there is no cap on how many coins can be created by a currency's 'bank.' Almost all crypto exchanges use their own version of something called blockchain software, which records who's buying and who's selling in a super-hard-to-hack way.

You cannot use it like IRL money. We are going to bet 30 Dogecoins that your local coffee shop does not accept crypto. But even if you did try to pay for your coffee with digital currency, it could take up to an

hour to go through because the computers using blockchain have to work really effing hard to process payments, according to San Francisco-based financial expert Humphrey Yang. *Oh*, and you would have to pay not-cheap processing fees. As newer forms of cryptocurrencies and updates to existing ones roll out, you might start to see speedier transaction times.

You should think of it as an investment. Like people who buy stock in buzzy new companies, many crypto investors snap up coins to (hopefully) make money over the (very) long term. The rewards could be major, but—but!—take note: Crypto is “extremely volatile,” says Primavera, mostly because its value is not based on anything, well, real. At least, not ‘real’ in the way stock values are based on how IRL businesses perform. A cryptocurrency's value is based solely on what people are willing to pay for it, in the hopes that it will become huge.

THREE CRYPTO BIGGIES

BITCOIN

The most famous kind has been around for 13 years; its price (at press time, ₹47,42,00 for one Bitcoin) is so high bc of its limited supply.

ETHEREUM

Founded in 2013, its blockchain works faster than Bitcoin's, so you can use it to buy non-fungible tokens, or NFTs, like digital art. One coin = roughly ₹3,10,000.

CARDANO

At just ₹172 per coin, this one claims to have the most energy-efficient blockchain in the game.

So basically, don't invest any money that you are not prepared to lose, says Humphrey. If you “do” have enough cash to take the risk, platforms like WazirX, Unocoin, CoinDCX, and Zebpay let you trade in crypto. Once you do, forget about it. Seriously. Do not touch those coins for at least five to 10 years. “The longer you hold it, the better chance it has of doing well,” says Humphrey. Partly because most investments work like that, and partly because experts think the crypto world will stabilise (read: become more valuable) over time.

It is also fine to just chill for now. Listen, if you can swing it, buying coins isn't a terrible idea (assuming you follow the rules on this page). But if it all seems way too adventurous for your bank account right now, you don't have to get stuck in that FOMO spiral. Even seasoned financial advisers aren't sure what the future of crypto could look like—it is all still pretty much the Wild West out there. If, instead, you want a solid, safer way to invest your cashola, put it into a type of retirement savings, and you will be just fine. ■



There is a New Wave of Nutritionists Who Aren't Into Weight Loss

Untwisting the tangled ways we think about food.

There are plenty of reasons that someone might hire a nutritionist: to turn vegan, to learn how to eat while pregnant, to get advice on the best ways to lose weight. That last one is one of the most popular, partially because nutrition professionals have messaged for decades that 'excess' weight can make people unhealthy and requires an eating plan (read: diet) to deal with.

But Texas-based Christyna Johnson, a registered dietician and nutritionist, and a growing number of her peers, argue that a one-smaller-size-fits-all blueprint for health does not work. Instead, they follow the Healthy at Every Size (HAES) philosophy, which supports intuitive eating and calls for medical professionals to stop judging patients' health based on weight,



quit 'prescribing' weight loss, and focus on other nutrition-adjacent issues that impact well-being—things like genetics, stress, and income levels, or a lack of access to doctors. As Christyna puts it, "There aren't enough blueberries to counteract these effects. Yet

it feels like the skill set of dieticians has been reduced to putting clients on a diet to lose weight."

HAES-aligned nutritionists are trying to get us to re-evaluate how we think about food, says New York-based Alissa Rumsey, registered dietitian and author

of *Unapologetic Eating*. She first gets at the roots of a client's eating behaviours—maybe they were raised in a no-junk-food house or taught that working out is the only way to justify carbs. Dismantling these beliefs, says Alissa, helps people learn to eat based on hunger and cravings rather than on strict rules or myths. Instead of creating meal plans, she teaches people about healthy eating based on how foods make them feel. "It is asking, what can I add to my day that will make me feel better?"

"People assume that intuitive eating means someone doesn't care about nutrition," Christyna says. "That is incorrect. There is very much an awareness of nutrition, but it comes after someone has made peace with food." Nutritionists like her also help clients find workouts they like, troubleshoot sleep habits, and practice stress relief.

Is the result of all this sometimes weight loss? Sure, says Christyna, but it is definitely not the goal. Adds Alissa: "Everybody has the right to pursue weight loss if they want to. I am just trying to show people there is another way to find health and happiness."

“**There aren't enough blueberries to counteract these effects.**”

By: KARA CUZZONE; Photograph: IRINA USOVA

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MEET THE DISRUPTORS

#TDL 2021 THE NAMES TO KNOW NOW

Creation and disruption go hand-in-hand, one not possible without the other. There have always been individuals who question the outdated, and through their determination, pave the way ahead for many. For *Cosmo's* 25th anniversary special, some of India's most inspiring names come together to influence change.

Interviews by: Aanchal Kataria and Simar Malhotra

Dress, Gauri
& Nainika;
boots, SaintG

Photographs: NEHA CHANDRANANT; Styling: ZUNALI MALIK; Hair and Make-Up: CHRISSELLE BAPTISTA; Production: P. PRODUCTIONS;
Fashion Assistants: JAISHREE CHHABRA and YASHIMA BABBAR; Fashion Intern: MILONI THAKKER

TANYA MANIKTALA Actor

24-year-old Tanya made her debut as the lead in Mira Nair's much-talked-about adaptation of *Suitable Boy*—a role that catapulted her to fame, almost instantly. In the days that followed, Tanya found herself gaining scores of fans, and two new releases—*Chutpah* and *Feels Like Ishq*. As many industry insiders have noted, this is an actor to keep an eye on. “Believing in myself, initially, was a big challenge—and my biggest hurdle,” says Tanya. “But I was blessed to be surrounded by loved ones who pushed me to go on, especially my sister. I have always abided by the rules, and the only one I have broken has been to follow my heart—that is, to quit a corporate job to become an actor.

Actors are sometimes put on pedestals, and people expect them to be a certain way. The focus is on being ‘the face’, but the human behind that exterior can get lost. Our job requires us to put ourselves out there for the world to see, and with it, comes both love and criticism. But you can’t hero-worship somebody when it pleases you and pull them apart when it doesn’t. I believe in kindness and knowing that we are all here doing the best that we can.

What defines me as a person is that I will always stand up for the things I believe in and that, in my opinion, is what is most important.”

ARJUN MATHUR

Actor

"I think people who don't follow the rules are often the ones who bring about change. If you keep doing the same thing as others and try to fit into the same mould, you won't ever be able to break the rhythm. It is when your uniqueness connects with a bunch of people, that change comes about. All my life, I have been a rule-breaker...you put a rule in front of me, and I want to break it!"

As an actor, I prefer to rely on emotions and experiences from my own life and share those with people through my work. I'd like my work to offer them a chance to either reflect upon their own life or connect with the character on an emotional level. I think it would be pompous of me to say that my work makes a difference. Having said that, I am mindful about selecting roles that reflect the realities of life and society. For instance, *Made In Heaven* touched many lives and created a difference. I know for a fact that it helped many people come to terms with their sexuality. In that sense, I think I could make a little bit of a difference through my work. I believe that people need to be driven by a desire to make a difference. We also need to create more diverse content because there is an audience for all kinds of stories.

My mother, who is no more, has been my greatest inspiration in life, and everything I do is to make her proud. I am also inspired by actors like Naseeruddin Shah and Irrfan Khan, who swam against the tide and earned a place for themselves. The journeys of people who stood their ground, no matter what, inspire me the most. Anyone being true to themselves is going to face hurdles. The only way to overcome that is to keep doing it. People will always doubt you and laugh at you but, eventually, when you succeed, they will be pleasantly surprised. Fear is the greatest enemy. Only our passion and zeal can make a difference in our lives and in the world."



Shirt, Dhruv Kapoor; coordinated set, Kanika Goyal; sneakers, Christian Louboutin

Photographs: NEHA CHANDRAKANT; Styling: ZUNALI MALIK; Hair and Make-Up: CHRISLE BAPTISTA; Production: P. PRODUCTIONS; Fashion Assistants: JAISHREE CHHABRA and YASHIMA BABBAR; Fashion Intern: MILONITHAKKER



ADARSH GOURAV

Actor

At just 27, Adarsh has shared a BAFTA nomination for Best Actor with Anthony Hopkins, Chadwick Boseman, and Mads Mikkelsen. *The White Tiger* fame actor is a trained classical singer. In fact, when his family moved from Jamshedpur to Mumbai, one of the major reasons for the shift was Adarsh's potential playback singing career—he had already appeared on *Jharkhand Idol* and similar contests aired on national television. After singing for Subash Ghai's *Black & White* and Ujjwal Singh's *Chal Chalein*, it was in 2007, while performing at Kala Ghoda Festival, that he was approached to consider acting and the seed was permanently sowed. Soon after, he was cast as young Shah Rukh Khan in *My Name Is Khan*. Coming from a family of academically-inclined individuals, Adarsh gives the credit for his success to his parents, who have not only been his biggest supporters, but also given him the freedom to choose his life path.

MITHALI RAJ

Captain, Indian Women's Cricket Team

Mithali Raj was a Bharatnatyam dancer, but to overcome her anxiety, her father enrolled her in a cricket camp with her brother. What followed gave India and the world one of their strongest batswomen. Captain of the India's Test and ODI women's national team, she is the highest-run scorer in women's international cricket, and has been instrumental in putting women's cricket on the map today. A Padma Shri awardee, Mithali has also been conferred the Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award, the greatest honour for a sportsperson in India. She is an ardent advocate for promoting cricket in the under-16 and under-14 categories so that exposure to the sport can be increased...



SIRISHA BANDLA

Aeronautical Engineer

Sirisha Bandla is the second-only, Indian-born woman to fly into space. Born in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, she is the Vice President of Government Affairs and Research Operations for Virgin Galactic, an American spaceflight company founded by Richard Branson. Sirisha was one among the five passengers, including billionaire Richard himself, to board Unity 22, a sub-orbital test spaceflight. Growing up, Sirisha's desire to become an astronaut was winnowed out because of her eyesight, but commercial aerospace let her live her dream unconventionally. As a woman of colour in the aerospace industry, she has spoken about how the journey can be lonely. But now when other women, especially from minority sections, are able to connect with and relate to her, she feels change has begun.

NAVYA NAVELI NANDA

Entrepreneur

Being the granddaughter of Amitabh Bachchan is the least of feathers in Navya Naveli Nanda's hat. Witnessing women around her be an indomitable part of the workforce kept Navya inspired and led her to co-found Aara Health, a woman-centric health-tech company that aims at providing confidential diagnoses in a safe manner. She has also founded Project Naveli, an NGO bringing about financial and educational emancipation to women.

An accomplished entrepreneur, she is now all set to seize the baton of her family business and take its legacy forward. With her personal endeavours, she is here to do her bit to solve issues related to women and bridge the gender gap in India.



NEENA GUPTA

Actor

Neena Gupta needs no introduction. A National Award-winning Bollywood actor and director, Neena has defied tradition throughout her life. From raising a child out of wedlock to relaunching her career at 50—she even proudly leveraged social media to ask for work. Neenaji (as she is fondly called) has never bowed to convention, and her autobiography *Sach Kahun Toh*, which released this year, chronicles both her personal and professional life including the conservative family dynamic she grew up in, which prompted her to rebel while adhering to her moral code. It also mentions her instances of getting typecast into vamp-ish, 'strong' characters because of her personal life, despite her talent.



Photographs: NEHA CHANDRAKANT. Styling: ZUNAALI MALIK. Hair and Make-Up: CHRISSELLE BAPTISTA. Production: P. PRODUCTIONS. Fashion Assistants: JAISHREE CHHADRA and YASHIMA BABBAR. Fashion Intern: MILONI THAKKER

Dress and knitwear, both H&M

MALEESHA KHARWA

Model

"I want to be a successful model someday, so that I can prove that you can be anything you want through hard work...even if you hail from a slum. Many people in India believe only light skin is beautiful, but I am proud of my skin colour and the fact that I am breaking stereotypes. I have always strived to be happy, even when I didn't have a proper home at times. There were days when my father wouldn't eat as there wasn't enough for us all and we had to try to sleep in unbearable heat. COVID-19 made it even harder for us to survive. But these conditions were what pushed me to work harder, so that I can make a better life for my family and myself. I just focused on my dreams of becoming a model and dancer, even as many around me tried to bring me down.

I guess one could say that I am radical, in the professional sense, since I am trying to change social norms and people's perception of beauty. I want to continue growing in life, and I feel proud when I look back and see how much I have achieved. One should never be afraid to pursue their dreams because even if you don't achieve them, their pursuit is what infuses life with adventure!"

RHEA MAZUMDAR SINGHAL

Founder and CEO,
Ecoware

“With Ecoware, we created a new packaging paradigm in India that recognised a natural, eco-friendly, and affordable alternative to commoditised single-use plastics.

I founded Ecoware when I was 27 and today, it is a market leader in the food packaging space. Our products are 100 percent natural, compostable, and biodegradable within 90 days. We only use local raw materials, thereby keeping our costs and carbon footprint low. We actively work with farmers to turn their agricultural residue, which is often burned leading to debilitating air pollution, into positive outcomes for both the farmer and the environment. We have built an industry that never existed before and, as a result, have created jobs for many blue-collared workers, of which 30 percent are women. Our factory workers benefit from stable financial security and over 4,000 individuals have been educated through Ecoware’s advocacy programmes on the health risks of plastic packaging. According to the United Nations, plastic packaging accounts for nearly half of all plastic waste globally, and much of it is thrown away within just a few minutes of its first use. Alarming, plastics are now entering our food systems as well! I believe that successful change-makers are purpose-driven, and where most of the world sees failures and problems, change-makers see solutions and opportunities. Our innovation at Ecoware has positively shaped lives, continues to alter the future, and create a new way of living, thinking, and doing business.”



Trench dress,
Rara Avis

Photographs: ANUBHAV SOOD; Styling: ZUNALI MALIK; Hair and Make-Up: ITIKA CHUGH;
Fashion Assistants: JAISHREE CHHABRA and YASHIMA BABBAR

Pantsuit,
Siddharth Bansal;
pumps, H&M;
earrings, Zariin



Photographs: ANUBHAV SOOD; Styling: ZUNALI MALIK; Hair and Make-Up: ITIKA CHUGH;
Fashion Assistants: JAISHREE CHHABRA and YASHIMA BABBAR

SALONI GAUR Comedian

“I was born and brought up in Bulandshahr, a small city in UP, where people barely know what a content creator does. I, however, managed to convince my mother not to force me to get a job at a bank, and that was one of the best decisions of my life. I like to create content on issues that are current and global. I always try to include a bit of satire and sarcasm in my videos, to add a personal touch. All the topics I discuss are very close to my heart. As a social satirist, you have to be vocal and honest. Authenticity and curiosity define me as a person as well as a comedian.

Perhaps, because of these qualities, people have called me a rule-breaker time and again. But I personally don’t identify as one. My only intention is to create entertaining and engaging content for my audience. People seem to love my avatars like Nazma Aapi and Pados Wali Aunti, which are women-centric and political satires that aim to raise awareness on important issues, with a pinch of humour. Content creation has given me many opportunities to express myself... I even got to work on my first show, *Uncommon Sense With Saloni*, on Sony Liv. I believe that humour can be a great agent for change. Everyone should have a sense of humour and not take life so seriously all the time. I never miss a chance to smile and if I can bring a smile to someone else’s face as well, then I am always up for it.”



KRITIKA KAMRA
Actor

Known for playing Arohi in the show *Kitni Mohabbat Hai* and for essaying the role of Sana Mir in the recent Amazon Original *Tandav*, Kritika Kamra is a seasoned actor. However, what makes her stand out apart from her cinematic journey is Cinnabar, an Instagram store she founded with her mother during the pandemic to support the livelihoods of Chanderi weavers. Hailing from Madhya Pradesh, Kritika witnessed the plight of the weavers when the national lockdown was announced—saris piled up, with no avenue to sell them—and decided to uplift them. The mother and daughter duo bought the saris from the weavers and sold them online. Kritika believes that charity is just a bandage and can go only so far. Concrete and tangible actions are required to truly stitch up and heal the wound.



POULOMI PAVINI SHUKLA
Lawyer

As a child, Poulomi often visited a Haridwar orphanage, interacting with children who had lost their families in the 2001 Bhuj earthquake. As she grew older and thought about her plans after school, she realised that those she had befriended at the orphanage didn't have the privilege to even think about higher education. A Supreme Court lawyer, Poulomi co-authored the book *Weakest on Earth: Orphans of India* in 2015 and filed a public interest litigation in 2018 advocating for reservations for orphan children. As a result, today 11 states and Union Territories have extended the Right to Education reservations to orphans, increased their financial allocations, and assisted in providing aid. Poulomi has been recognised for her seminal work through campaigning for the rights of orphan children.



JEHAN DARUVALA
Racing Driver

Jehan is an Indian motor-racer of the Formula Two championship. Jehan's love for speed was not a secret to anyone in his family. At 13, he took to go-karting and took it on later competitively. He went on to win Force India's 'One in a Billion' hunt and earned himself one of the three spots in their programme. In 2019, Jehan was drafted in Prema Racing's F3 team, winning two out of the four opening races. In 2020, at just 23, he became the first Indian to win an F2 race, winning the sprint race for UK-based team Carlin. He is currently a part of the prestigious Red Bull Junior Team—a driver development programme aimed at identifying future racers. Already an accomplished racer, Jehan dreams to be an F1 World Champion. Of course, in any competitive sport, winning is the most rewarding, but for Jehan, victory is sweeter knowing the willpower, hardwork, and physical and mental discipline that has gone into it.

Blouse and skirt, both Malie; denim jacket, Dhruv Kapoor; boots, H&M; earrings, Valliyan by Nitya Arora



PRAGYA KAPOOR
Environmentalism,
Film Producer,
and Founder, Ek Saath Foundation

“The work I do as a producer and as an environmentalist allows me to touch many lives at once. I am aware of the kind of influence films have in our country. As a producer, I always go by the principle of quality over quantity. The intention is to always remain honest with the stories we tell, and be true to the themes they stand for. The difference that a film can bring about is too intangible to infer, but we can certainly try our best. When it comes to being an environmentalist, on the other hand, the case is entirely different. Not only are the results more tangible, but the responsibility is also far greater as it impacts so many lives directly. For instance, during the first country-wide lockdown last year, we were able to reach out to thousands of families with rations and daily meals. And then there are times where both these distinct roles merge harmoniously. Like during the filming of *Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui*, I realised my dream of working with a zero-waste film set. Growing up, all I knew was that I wanted to empower myself and everyone else around me. No matter what you set out to do, you must be kind enough to look beyond your interests and be humble enough to acknowledge your limitations. I truly believe that being empathetic and inclusive goes a long way.”

Photographs: NEHA CHANDRAKANT; Styling: ZUNALI MALIK; Hair and Make-Up: CHRISSELLE BAPTISTA; Production: P. PRODUCTIONS; Fashion Assistants: JAISHREE CHABRA and YASHIMA BABBAR; Fashion Intern: MILONI THAKKER



DR TANAYA NARENDRA

Gynaecologist and Content Creator

“Aside from my role as a gynaecologist-in-training, I have a side hustle as an educator and content creator. As someone deeply passionate about sexual and reproductive health, I focus my content on body literacy and sex education to discuss topics that some people might find taboo. I am also in the middle of planning a healthcare start-up with fellow Oxford graduates, and also working on a book.

Being an outspoken woman on the Internet tends to bring with it a fair degree of hate, especially if you talk about sex. Unnecessary trolling, unsolicited d*ck pics, questions on morality, and personal attacks, are all part of the game. There is also, ironically, a lot of censoring from the online platforms that host sex education content too. But I wake up grateful to be able to connect with so many people, especially women, and help destigmatise sex. Having been brought up by very sex-positive doctor parents, conversations about our bodies was routine. So, the tenacity and passion in me existed almost by default. It is not considered acceptable for women in India to freely talk about menstruation, post pictures on their social media with sex toys, demonstrate how to use protection, or discuss breasts....anywhere. But I believe archaic rules need to be broken. As they say, ‘Well behaved women rarely make history.’”

Dress, Nor Black Nor White; pumps, Chalk Studio

Photographs: ANUBHAV SOOD; Styling: ZUNALI MALIK; Hair and Make-Up: ITIKA CHUGH; Fashion Assistants: JAISHREE CHHABRA and YASHIMA BABBAR



JUSTICE HIMA KOHLI, JUSTICE BELA M TRIVEDI, AND JUSTICE B V NAGARATHNA

Judges of Supreme Court of India

For the first time in the history of the Supreme Court of India, four female judges will be serving the court simultaneously—the highest number since its foundation.

The new appointment on September 1, 2021 of Justice Hima Kohli, Justice Bela M Trivedi, and Justice BV Nagarathna is a historic feat for gender representation and equality in the Indian legal system, which has otherwise been notorious for its lack of diversity.

Furthermore, Justice B V Nagarathna, who delivered the landmark judgment on the need to regulate electronic media and curb sensationalism, is set to become the first female Chief Justice of India in 2027. While Justice Kohli served as the first female Chief Justice of Telangana High Court, Justice Trivedi has previously served as a judge at the Gujarat High Court.

APARNA PUROHIT

Head of India Originals, Amazon Prime Video

If there is anyone who has been able to master the formula for successful Indian television storytelling, it is Aparna Purohit. In her 15 years of production journey, she has worked on some of the most universally-loved shows and films including *Mirzapur*, *CID*, *Fear Factor*, *Well Done Abba*, *Inside Edge*, *Made In Heaven*, and *Four More Shots Please!*... Aparna has helped shape the present Indian OTT narrative with her contribution. Making stories the pivot of everything at Amazon Originals India, she has strived to depict the vast diversity of the Indian cultural landscape, crafting narratives that might be hyperlocal but resonate even with a global audience.



PRIYANKA DAS RAJKAKATI

Aerospace Engineer
and Artist

“My parents are from rural Assam, but they crossed the first hurdle for me by pursuing excellent education themselves (my mother is a doctor and my father, an engineer), and then providing my brother and me with the same.

I have always been a curious and experimental soul, which demands a certain lack of fear and the ability to questioning authority. It was my own choice, for example, to shift to a different country, and study advanced science in a new language (while learning that language!).

I told myself that I could either stay in a protected cocoon, or go out there and learn something new. Sometimes, we need to challenge ourselves to discover ourselves.

Being an artist for the Moon Gallery Project has definitely been one of the highlights of my short career. My artwork for the project, titled Bhedadipika (which comes from Sanskrit meaning an illustration of duality), has been an opportunity for me to explore the fascinating concepts of duality, such as light vs darkness, miniscule vs astronomical vastness, digital vs analogue, and, of course, art vs science.

Being a woman in a somewhat male-dominated field or being in a different cultural environment, can impact your physical and emotional health. And even being an artist masquerading as an engineer comes with its own challenges. It then becomes important to be able to maintain the strength of your convictions.”



TRISHA PRABHU

Innovator and Founder,
ReThink

“Like many young people, I know what it is like to be cyberbullied. One day, my only friends decided they were 'done with me', and I became an easy target for cyberbullying. I received messages labelling me a terrorist, a monkey, and other hateful words.

I had been bullied before, but this was different as the harassment was digital, and I was viciously attacked.

One autumn day in 2013, I came home to read about a young Florida girl who had jumped off the town's water tower and died due to repeated cyberbullying. I knew then and there that I needed to do something to put an end to this.

Through many months of brain-science research and hypothesising, my award-winning invention ReThink was born, and currently we serve five million students in 1,500 schools across 134 countries.

ReThink is a universal solution that stops cyberbullying at the source before the damage is done. It works with all channels of text-based communication on mobile devices (texting, e-mailing, social media platforms, etc.). Each year, we lose too many young, promising people to cyberbullying, and knowing what they have endured, I have made it my mission to prevent it. I hope that a day will come that the Internet will support its users, rather than attack them. I call myself a rule-breaker in many ways because I decided to break the status quo and challenge the ineffective ways of addressing bullying. I am not afraid to stand up and speak my mind, even if that means I am the only girl or youngest person in the room. Because we can't wait for things to happen; we have to go out and do them ourselves.”



AMAAL MALLIK

Singer

You might not have heard of Amaal Mallik's name but if you aren't acquainted with his work, you are likely living under a rock! Having composed some of the biggest hits of Bollywood including *Sooraj Dooba Hai* from the movie *Roy* and songs of *MS Dhoni: The Untold Story*, Amaal began his musical career at the age of 16. Carrying forward his father's and grandfather's musical legacy, he has been trained in classical music, jazz, and rock from the Trinity College of Music, London. Amaal is unafraid to accept criticism about his craft, and encourages feedback from his fans so that he can perfect his craft. A traditionalist at heart, he believes it is acceptable to take longer to produce a quality song than to quickly produce one that is below average. The artist also prefers using live musical instruments in his songs, stating that the soul of a song comes to life only with the human touch.



SHRADHA SHARMA

Founder and CEO, YourStory

After her stint at leading media houses in the country, Shradha realised the lack of a platform that showcased the trailblazing work young entrepreneurs were doing. This prompted her to found YourStory, a media start-up that features entrepreneurial stories, accelerators, seed funders, and more. With flagship ventures HerStory and SocialStory, YourStory is a dedicated platform that highlights the narratives of over 40,000 business influencers. As its Founder and Chief Editor, Shradha has spearheaded the remarkable growth of YourStory and has contributed to the start-up boom in India by inspiring thousands of young minds to carve their own path.

CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI

Author and Activist

“As a writer, I focus on mythology, history, as well as contemporary novels. I also teach at the internationally-acclaimed creative writing programme at the University of Houston. I often hear from readers that books such as *Palace of Illusions* (about Draupadi), *Forest of Enchantments* (about Sita), and *The Last Queen* (about Maharani Jindan Kaur) have inspired them and given them courage to face their own challenges.

My activist work (through women's organisations such as Maitri in California and Daya in Texas) has helped women facing abuse start their lives afresh with hope. When I helped start Maitri to assist women facing domestic violence, we received death threats. But we were determined to continue our work and today, we have been able to positively transform the lives of hundreds of women.

I wish for publishers and critics to encourage writers who depict reality and suggest change in our societal structures. It will greatly help if the laws preventing violence against women are upheld strongly, and perpetrators punished for their crimes.

Having the courage to speak out against social problems, especially those that concern women, has been very important to me. Swami Vivekananda once said, ‘It is only by doing good to others that one does good to oneself’. This mantra has deeply enriched my life.”



SUPRIYA JOSHI

Content Creator,
Comedian,
and Writer

“I would like to believe that my voice has given a voice to many like me, who have felt alone and rejected. I believe in being my true self on social media, and that, in turn, has allowed people to be themselves too. In a world where people only show how wonderful their lives are on the Internet, I have presented my reality and proved that it is nothing to be ashamed of.

In the past, I used to find trolling and online bullying by strangers challenging, but I realised that the hatred and name-calling will never end, so I needed to make myself stronger. Now, it is just a part of my existence, and I have made my peace with. My sister Priyanka is my biggest motivator and her unconditional support and critique has helped me overcome hurdles, and made me a better person. I believe that rules are meant to be broken, but only after you know what they are. And that we, as a society and country, need to be inclusive. We need to provide a platform to people from all walks of life.

Our flaws are nothing to be embarrassed about, they only make us human. So, maintaining honesty in my work, without any pretense, is extremely important for me. Live your life with abandon and not by ideals set by society. You never know who needs to see you living your life with authenticity.”



Dress, Nor Black
Nor White; sneakers,
Christian Louboutin

Photographs: NEHA CHANDRAKANT; Styling: ZUNALI MALIK; Hair and Make-Up: CHRISSELLE BAPTISTA; Production: P. PRODUCTIONS;
Fashion Assistants: JAISHREE CHHADRA and YASHIMA BABBAR; Fashion Intern: MILONI THAKKER

PRATISHTHA DEVESHWAR SHARMA

Activist and Ambassador,
Beti Bachao Beti Padhao
Campaign

At 13, Pratishtha broke her spinal cord in a car accident, which left her paralysed from the chest down. Home-schooled thereafter, she remained undeterred in her quest for knowledge and graduated from Lady Shri Ram College for Women, New Delhi. She firmly believes that it was only through education that she could overcome her physical challenges. Pratishtha is an ardent activist for the differently-abled and her voice echoes the sentiments of thousands in India who continually face discrimination and suffer from a lack of resources. Pratishtha is also the ambassador of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao campaign. She is India's first-ever wheelchair-bound student to attend Oxford University, and while this is a thrilling achievement, it also reflects the plight of differently-abled and the dearth of opportunities for them in India. With her Masters in Public Policy, Pratishtha hopes to change the societal scenario and push for an equal playing field.



SHIVANI PODDAR

Co-Founder and CEO,
FabAlley and Indya

Shivani leads Gurugram-based, fashion start-ups FabAlley and Indya—both of which focus on empowering young women by encouraging them to embrace themselves through fashion. With these two verticals, she is building India's largest Direct-to-Consumer (D2C) fashion house. Building the company with bare minimum capital, Shivani avoided unnecessary expenses that venture-capital funded start-ups are notoriously known for. Living the standard nine-to-five corporate life in Mumbai, Shivani realised the dearth of options for young, professional women living on a tight salary. And so, Shivani began FabAlley with Tanvi Mallik in 2012, keeping the focus on trend-centric products. She has been instrumental in directing the company's growth with her financial and supply-chain acumen.



SEEMA ANAND

Author, Mythologist,
and Storyteller

"I specialise in the erotic literatures of ancient India, and particularly focus on women's narratives. The stories we tell and those we choose to silence, define us. They establish our identities and if we want to create real change, these stories need to be changed too.

When I began talking about the *Kama Sutra* 20 years ago, I didn't think I was breaking any rules. In my head, I was simply uncovering narratives that had been lost, accidentally, in the mists of time. I was told there is no such career as a 'storyteller' and that 'pleasure' was not a subject for polite society. I was also recently told that I couldn't speak at a Mahabharata conference because of my 'reputation', but I could send my notes for someone else to read out because my research was the best.

The taboos around female sexuality are so deep rooted, that women almost need permission to take ownership of their own pleasure. Reintroducing narratives, especially from our ancient texts, helps bring in awareness and validation to break these huge barriers. Hence, I am a narrative activist, and my battlefield is these stories, as I try to change the world one little story at a time... I am thrilled to receive messages from women (and men) of all ages saying that they have finally found answers, and the courage, to explore their own pleasure, despite the disapproval of society.

When you become 'too disruptive' for people's comfort, when you are no longer that 'fun' person who merely entertains, but demands space for change—that's when you are on the road to being a true change-maker.

We tend to correlate achievements with successes and goals. To me, a goal is the end of the journey, achievement is the ability to make that journey, no matter how hard things get."



Photographs: SARVANI PATEL



MASOOM MINAWALA

Content Creator and Entrepreneur

"I am passionate about putting Indian heritage and craft on the global map, and through my content on fashion and lifestyle, my focus has been to uplift and support homegrown brands. My entrepreneurial initiatives like #Empowher have also been directed towards guiding and helping female entrepreneurs to tap into their skills. The biggest impact I have made, however, is from my non-profit campaign #SupportIndianDesigners, that empowers women and encourages Indian handlooms and artifacts.

I believe in using my platform as a safe space to connect with my viewers, educate them, and learn from them as much as they learn from my experiences. Yes, I have made a few mistakes, but my audience helped me correct them with constructive criticism. I have grown to realise things the hard way but the one thing that's needed the most from the industry is responsibility and accountability.

I am a proud rule-breaker. I have seen some significant ups and downs in my professional life, including bearing the loss of my start-up at the age of 19. When I started as a content creator, there were many who said I would never be successful in a career of 'just taking photos'. Later, people declared that I wouldn't be able to run my business from another country while keeping it relevant to my Indian audience. I would love to show them my statistics today.

The mantra that I live by is a quote by Rumi, 'Live life as if everything is rigged in your favour'. This quote makes me believe that everything that happens to you is just a part of a journey that's only helping you in becoming the best version of yourself."

SHAILI CHOPRA

Founder, SheThePeople

An award-winning journalist, author, and entrepreneur, Shaili is a widely-respected journalist. She has interviewed business magnates such as Warren Buffet and Steve Ballmer and personalities such as Amartya Sen. In 2015, Shaili founded SheThePeople, India's largest online media platform for women-centric stories. Along with breaking news about the pioneering work of women entrepreneurs, doctors, artists, writers, and more, SheThePeople also hosts events and summits celebrating change-making female trailblazers. Her journalistic acumen and experience is the driving force behind this platform that reaches over 80 million women today. Shaili has been awarded Best Woman Entrepreneur of the Year by *Entrepreneur* India magazine, the Draper Hill Fellowship at Stanford University, and the Ram Nath Goeka Award for Excellence in Business Journalism, among many other accolades.



RANI RAMPAL

Captain, Indian Women's Hockey Team

The daughter of a domestic help and a cart-puller, Rani has shown that passion and determination are the only two resources you need to reach your goals. Needing a distraction and respite from her poverty-stricken life, Rani took to hockey as an escape. With no money to afford a uniform or a new stick, she began playing hockey with broken sticks. With support from her coach, at the age of 15, Rani became the youngest player in the women's national hockey team that participated in the World Cup. At 23, she became the captain of the Indian women's hockey team, led it to win a silver medal at the 2018 Asian Games, and reach the semi-finals at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Rani has been awarded the Arjuna Award and a Padma Shri recently for her unequalled contribution to the sport.



SAHAR MANSOOR

Founder and CEO, Bare Necessities

"When I returned to India after completing my studies, I felt overwhelmed with the overflowing trash situation. I was confronted by it every day and this got me thinking about the consequences of our garbage production. I could never wrap my head around the notion that plastic pollution is a by-product of life. And so, I challenged myself to upend the idea that consumption is synonymous with environmental damage and social exploitation. But first, I had to address my own waste management system. My solution was to live in a way that reflected the values I cared about... I needed to walk the talk. But, it was not easy because it was impossible to find products that didn't contain harmful chemicals or weren't packaged in plastic. In response to this, I decided to create a company that championed the values of zero-waste and ethical consumption.

And so, Bare Necessities was born in 2016. We produce zero-waste products, host educational workshops, and conduct sustainability consulting services to change the narrative on waste in India. I hope by doing so, I have made small contributions in helping reimagine a cleaner and more sustainable world.

I think it's my resilience, my can-do attitude, and my deep-seated desire to be part of the solution that makes me a change-maker. As George Bernard Shaw said, 'Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself.' This resonates with me because I have had my own share of hurdles which, I believe, I have tackled to the best of my ability."

Dress, Notebook; earrings, Anatina; pumps, Chalk Studio



Photographs: ANUBHAV SOOD; Styling: ZUNALI MALIK; Hair and Make-up: ITIKA CHUGH; Fashion Assistants: JAISHREE CHHABRA and YASHIMA BABBAR

CHAITSI AHUJA

Founder and CEO, Brown Living

"I am passionate about conscious consumption and reducing waste, as well as helping others do the same. I wanted to make this lifestyle change easily accessible to consumers, to help them reduce their individual impact on the planet... This led me to create Brown Living, India's first plastic- and chemical-free online marketplace for all things sustainable. My corporate experience of over seven years in business strategy, automation, technology integration, and experiential marketing definitely helped. I am trying to curate best practices and develop strategies for sustainability, both in business and everyday life, and am keen on exploring sustainable design, circular economy, and zero-waste living. My ambition is to leave the Earth better than I found it by making sustainable living mainstream.

Within two years of the launch, we have created jobs for over 1,050 artisans and 180 under-privileged people from rural tribes, who work in our plantations. We have also been collaborating with local government bodies to support self-help groups, artisans, and tribes to revive their craft and bring them to the forefront.

Among those who have deeply inspired me are Vandana Shiva, Greta Thunberg, Ratan Tata (a great example of running large-scale, triple bottom-line businesses), Jane Goodall, David Attenborough, and Yuval Noah Harari. I have learnt from their ways, especially when it comes to tackling the largest hurdle we face, which is changing human behaviour. It is one thing to enable a conversation or a transaction, and quite another to inspire people to actually use sustainable products and work on their consumption habits. I truly believe that the common good trumps self-interest. We urgently need to change our capitalistic mindsets and move away from over-consumption."

Slip dress and
jacket, both Pero



Photographs: NEHA CHANDRAKANT, Styling: ZUNALI MALIK, Hair and Make-Up: CHRISSELE BAPTISTA, Production: P. PRODUCTIONS,
Fashion Assistants: JAISHREE CHHABRA and YASHIMA BABBAR, Fashion Intern: MILONITHAKKER

BHUMI PEDNEKAR

Actor

From Toilet: Ek Prem Katha to Shubh Mangal Savdhaan and Sand Ki Aankh, Bhumi Pednekar is breaking down the patriarchy, one film at a time. Her filmography is a reflection of her personality—bold, unflinching, and unafraid—one that speaks strongly for women. At 15, Bhumi took an education loan and joined Whistling Woods to learn acting, but soon after, she was suspended because of poor attendance. It was then that she began working with Yash Raj Films as an assistant casting director and five years later, Bhumi finally got her cinematic break with Dum Laga ke Haisha. While making strides in her Bollywood career, Bhumi is also a climate champion and raises awareness on environmental conservation through her social media initiative, Climate Warrior.



AFROZ SHAH

Lawyer

Named the 'Champion of the Earth' by the United Nations, Afroz Shah is a lawyer known for leading the world's largest beach clean-up project in Mumbai. In 2015, Afroz, along with his 84-year-old neighbour, began cleaning up Versova beach. Within a few weeks, they were joined by a group of volunteers. Today, the Afroz Shah Foundation boasts a network of over 60,000 students and 70,000 volunteers, many of whom are Bollywood celebrities. The movement has helped clean up more than 60 million pounds of plastic waste from the beaches of Mumbai and the foundation has taught sustainable disposal practices to nearby dwellers. Afroz tackles waste management with his hands-on approach, presenting each clean-up as a date with the ocean.





DANISH SAIT

Comedian and Television Host

Indian Premier League's (IPL) only travelling comedian Danish Sait is an RJ, emcee, show host, actor, writer, and a social media influencer. While working with *Fever 104 FM*, he brought to life numerous fictional characters such as Asgar, Chacko, Nagesh, and Nograj on his show, and ensured that these characters grew across different kinds of media, including web-series, movies, and his IPL talk shows. A showman even while growing up, Danish took to mimicry at a young age. Today, he operates one of the most popular SoundCloud profiles of India with over 32 million plays, thanks to his prank calls that leave his audience in splits. His work in the entertainment industry has earned him the *Outlook* Social Media Award for 'Breakout Star of the Year', 'Best Master of Ceremonies for Corporate and Lifestyle Events', and the 'Best Debutant Actor' for his film *Humble Politician Nograj*, among others.



ANKIT KAWATRA

Founder, Zomato Feeding India

Ankit Kawatra is a man on a mission—to end hunger and food waste in the country. Listed in *Forbes'* 30 Under 30 and winner of the Young Leader Award from Queen Elizabeth II, Ankit founded Feeding India in 2014 after witnessing the exorbitant amount of food being wasted at weddings in a country where millions go to bed hungry. He later merged his venture with Zomato, which helps provide logistical and tech support and assists in liaising with restaurants. During the COVID-19 outbreak, when food banks went bust and existing sources of cooked food such as restaurants, weddings, and offices halted, Zomato Feeding India turned itself around and introduced the 'Feed the Daily Wager' project to support the thousands of daily wage workers who were left unemployed by the lockdown. They distributed over 6,00,000 bags of uncooked food that could sustain families for many weeks. "Good intent isn't always enough," Ankit says. "It must be coupled with problem-solving abilities."

Blazer (worn as dress), Two Point Two Studio; boots, Christian Louboutin; earrings, Valliyan by Nitya Arora

Photographs: NEHA CHANDRAKANT; Styling: ZUNALI MALIK; Hair and Make-Up: CHRISSELE BAPTISTA; Production: P. PRODUCTIONS; Fashion Assistants: JAISHREE CHHABRA and YASHIMA BABBAR; Fashion Intern: MILONI THAKKER



DEVIKA NARAIN

Wedding Designer

"Growing up in a family that was always looking for an excuse to celebrate was a blast! Now, I am finding excuses to bring people together and recreate the same happiness and spirit of celebrations. Weddings in India, up till recently, have revolved around impressing your guests. I wanted to curate weddings that were personal and mindfully-done. I spend my time trying to understand the psychology of spaces as well as ensure that the set-up gives back to society. We, at Devika Narain & Company, translate the personal aesthetics of the couple into the space, with sustainability and authenticity as our cornerstones. My expert team of creatives and architects help materialise the collective vision, making us a multi-disciplinary, spatial-experiential, design firm. I have championed the 'hundred-kilometre wedding' concept, where everything I source is from within a 100km radius of the venue, a small change that makes a wedding more sustainable. We also employ local artisans and small businesses, fuelling not just local economies, but also saving a lot of energy and decreasing the carbon footprint. When we evaluate the cost of a wedding, we rarely factor in the energy spent to transport props, water required to grow food, or the sheer amount of waste generated. While we may be far away from achieving a zero-waste or sustainable wedding, we are committed to taking baby steps in the direction. When you build spaces with heart, where the focus is on love, even wedding design can have a profound impact." ■

What Fahncy Splurge Item Are You to Your Very Core?

Alexa, play *Glamorous* by Fergie. On repeat. For the next several hours.

1. It is time for a Netflix binge. What are you diving into?

- a) *Bridgerton*. Again.
- b) To be honest, anything involving baking.
- c) The latest true-crime doc. Lights off, volume up.

2. You got a 'Sup?' from the fool who ghosted you. Your response?

- a) Um, no response. TYVM (Although I *do* have my read receipts on.)
- b) 'Sorry, who is this?'
- c) I blatantly call them out. No rest for the wicked!

3. You are moving into a sweet apartment next month. What is your packing MO?

- a) I am hiring a luxe moving company to come and take care of that.
- b) A little every day. I heard slow and steady wins the race.
- c) I will slay that the week before the move. I am still living here!

4. So, your hot date just called and they will be 20 minutes late. Whatcha gonna do?

So you are saying I can't be all of them?



- a) Call it off. I wait for no-one.
- b) Hover outside the resto, aimlessly cycling through IG, Facebook, and back. (Please get here soon.)
- c) Chill at the bar with a nice glass of wine. It happens.

5. LOL, and now said date has cancelled. You are...

- a) Not going to let this expensive mascara go to waste. Table for one, pls.
- b) Relieved. Now I have the

entire night to myself. Honestly, thank you.

- c) Bummed. But whatever, it is life! Who else is free?

6. Super random but quick: is the filtered water okay?

- a) I mean, if by 'filtered' you mean a glass of sparkling water with a lemon wedge, sure.
- b) It is more than fine!
- c) Wait, what is the difference?



MOSTLY As A DESIGNER HANDBAG

It is logical that someone who overuses 'chic,' demands r-e-s-p-e-c-t, and knows the importance of exclusivity is basically a human Birkin. This message is brought to you by science!



MOSTLY Bs SILK SHEETS

A natural homebody with a 9pm bedtime and enough discipline to brew French press coffee every morning, you make introverts everywhere proud—well, you would if you ever flexed.



MOSTLY Cs A PELOTON BIKE

Up with the sun and down for anything, you have got energy to burn on demand! An 11pm Beyoncé dance party on a Tuesday? Sure. You know time is money, so you can't spend it all on the couch.



By: KIM DOUNG; Photograph: ANUSHKA NADIA MENON

COSMOPOLITAN FASHION & BEAUTY

WHAT TO WEAR THIS VERY MINUTE



Dress, Saaksha & Kinni; jewellery, all Mrinalini Chandra

MARCHING TO HER OWN BEAT

Mrunal Thakur knows exactly what she wants. In a candid chat with *Cosmo*, the 29-year-old actor talks about her journey into showbiz, how she deals with criticism, and what brings her joy.

Photographs: Anubhav Sood

Styling: Hoorvi J Vallaya

Interview By: Simar Malhotra



Dress, Namrata Joshipura; earrings and rings, Karishma Joolry



Trench coat and wide-leg, sequined pants, both Rahul Mishra; jewellery, all Amaris by Purna Rajpal



Dress, Namrata Joshipura; earrings and rings, Karishma Joolry



Dress, Siddhartha Tytler; jewellery, all Karishma Joolry



Trench coat and wide-leg, sequined pants, both Rahul Mishra; jewellery, all Amaris by Perna Rajpal



Dress, RSR by
Riti Rahul Shah;
earrings, Amaris
by Perna
Rajpal; bracelet
and necklace;
both Zoya
Jewellery



Dress, Saaksha
& Kinni;
jewellery, all
Mrinalini
Chandra

Cosmo: How would the people closest to you describe you?

Mrunal Thakur: “In a single word, they would describe me as a ‘nutcase’. I’m the biggest entertainer amongst my friends and family, making them laugh with all my drama. It is different from what I used to be as a child. In fact, I think I am living my childhood now because I was reserved while growing up. Since I changed a lot of schools (11 to be exact), I mostly remained quiet to ensure I wasn’t called out or ragged.

I find that many artists have similar experiences. After a point we just decide not to deal with the nonsense others subject us to. Once we start owning our flaws, it frees us to express who we truly are.”

C: From dentistry to mass media and now acting, how did you identify your calling?

MT: “I was always fascinated by the camera, perhaps that is why the idea of being a crime journalist appealed to me. In college, I auditioned with a friend for a play—it was a challenge I couldn’t turn away—and bagged the role. I haven’t looked back since then. The perks of being an actor includes that you get to be any and everything. In *Batla House*, I played the role of a journalist. In an upcoming film, I’ll be essaying the role of a dentist, which is what my parents wanted me to be. Thanks to my job, I have been able to live the lives of different professionals.”

C: How has your journey been from regional cinema, TV shows to now Bollywood?

MT: “The transition from TV to films was not easy, with the biggest struggle being just getting an audition. Whenever I entered a room I would hear, ‘This is not meant for you’, and that if I was a big fish of a small pond, then I need not step into the ocean. But I did not want to look back and regret staying in my comfort zone...and not stepping out of it when I had a chance.

My aim is to reach a wider audience—the categories or tiers don’t

matter to me. I’ve done TV, a Hollywood film, Bollywood films, Marathi films, music videos, and worked Telugu cinema. I have a vision for myself that is not stereotyped by anything. I want to explore and foray into everything, without any geographical or language barriers.”

C: What have been some of the most significant moments in your life?

MT: “Doing *Love Soniya* not only opened doors to Bollywood for me, but also let me be a part of something that made a difference. Sharing the space with stalwarts like Rakeysh Om Prakash Mehra, Demi Moore, and Freida Pinto has been noteworthy.

But at times I also wanted to give up. Sometimes people try to take advantage of another’s vulnerabilities

“I want to explore and foray into everything, without any geographical or language barriers.”

and manipulate through intimidation. It is then that one has to establish the kind of treatment they are willing to accept—it is about reminding yourself why you started in the first place.”

C: How do you deal with criticism?

MT: “For me, the only people whose opinions matter are my parents’. I simply do not care about the validations of passing judgements. When I read negative comments about me, at least I know that people are thinking about me.”

C: How do pressures of conforming to certain physical standards affect you?

MT: “There are such unrealistic standards imposed on actors. One is

that of not repeating outfits—I believe in sustainability, and I won’t buy clothes to only wear them once in my life! We are expected to have flawless skin—how can that be possible when we work for 20 hours straight in absurd temperatures, and with layers of make-up on our face? Showcasing our authentic selves on social media platforms to tell people that we have the same kind of issues as them is really important.”

C: What do you think is your biggest weakness and your greatest strength?

MT: “My biggest weakness is that I am gullible. My strength is that I am not afraid of anyone or anything (except the 10 second pitch-dark period when I switch off the lights and sprint to my bed at night!).”

C: What gives you joy and what makes you sad?

MT: “I feel happy when I hear from people that a character I played has changed their lives in some way. Once I met a gynaecologist, who told me that the parents of a baby she had once delivered had named their baby after me.

Hearing about violence against women saddens me. Thanks to *Love Soniya*, I got the opportunity to meet survivors and learn about their traumas.”

C: What does self-care mean to you and how do you practice it?

MT: “Wherever I am, I need to have all my spices and *aachar* ready. Good food on a bad day can dramatically change your mood. Because our jobs are about living the lives of different characters and carrying their emotional baggage, I find that it is important to spend time with our families to understand who we really are as individuals.” ■

Make-Up: Shruti and Yashaswini;
Hair: Pushkin Bhasin; **Fashion Assistant:** Garima Yadav



BAZAAR ^{Harper's} INDIA

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fashion

Take Me Away



Crop top, leggings, shoulder bag, and ankle boots, all Dolce & Gabbana; Ghost 01 Sunglasses, Gentle Monster

With accessories assuming the lead roles, meet the season's brightest stars that will add punch to even the plainest outfits.

Styling: Kim Ji Hu; Photographs: Park Jong Ha



Coat, bag, and platform boots, all Prada; chrome top and leather shorts, both YOOX



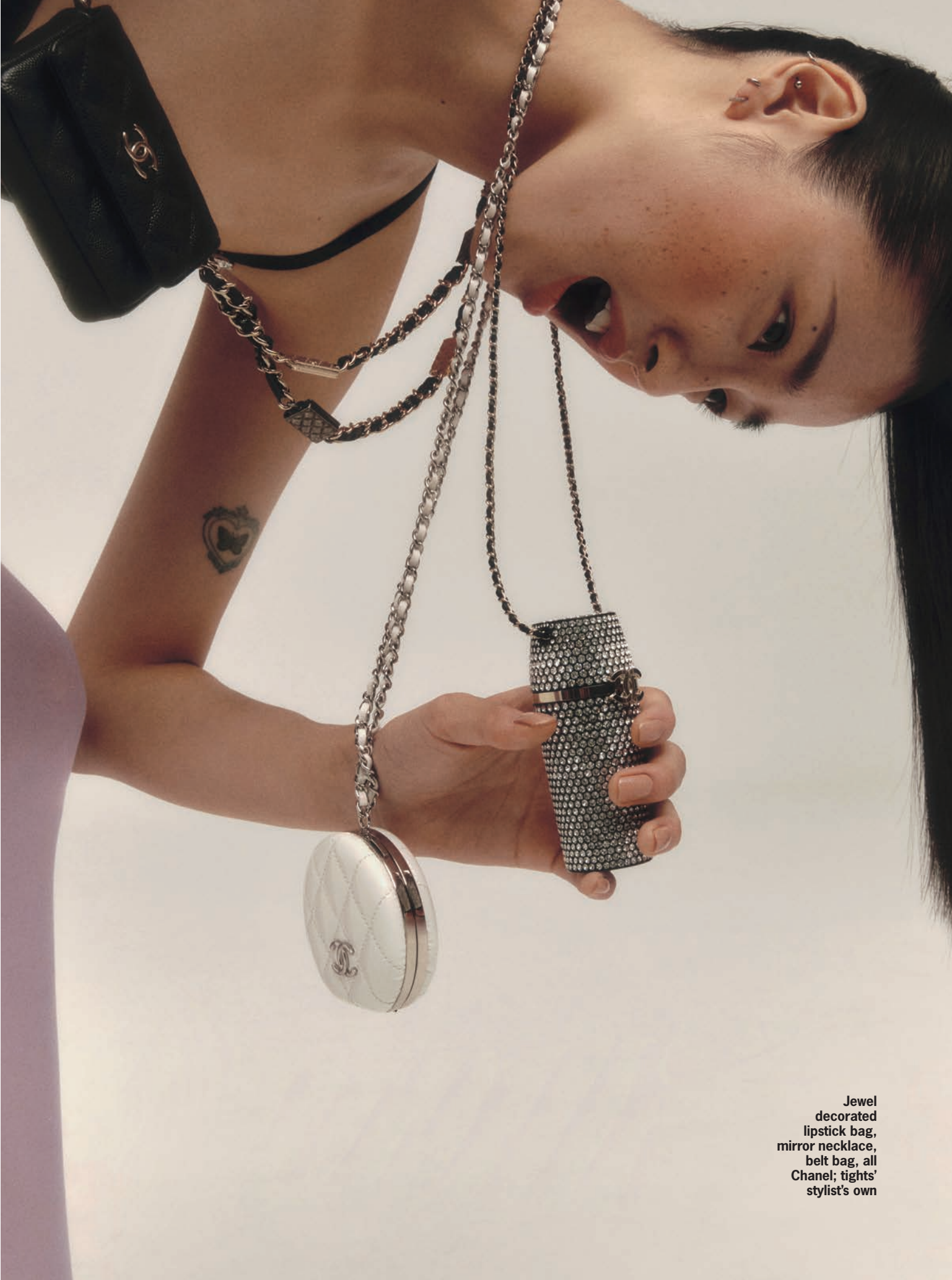
Turtleneck
sweater, Drill
Shorts, and
Garavani Atelier
03 Rose Edition
Rubber Boots, all
Valentino; bralette,
Marc
Jacobs; shoulder
bag, Alexander
McQueen



Pegaso Wool
Jumper, knitted
wool shorts, and
Pegaso bag, all
Etro; socks, and
1941 Metropolitan
Chelsea Boots,
both Coach



Sleeveless pencil dress with floating silk skirt, Studio; tote bag and Trifolio Mini Bag, all Salvatore Ferragamo; rubber-trimmed leather Chelsea boots, Loewe



Jewel decorated lipstick bag, mirror necklace, belt bag, all Chanel; tights' stylist's own

Brillant Charms
Piccadilly
Circus in box
calf, Brilliant
Charms Burger
Queen in box
calf, Brilliant
Charms Rue St
Honoré in box
calf, and
Brillant Charms Taxi
Driver in box calf, all
Delvaux





Leather jacket
with graphic
cuts, skirt, tights,
platform shoes,
and bag, all
Givenchy



Wool bodysuit and
shoulder bag, both
Tod's; chunky-knit
wool helmet and
faux fur knee
length boots, both
Miu Miu



Shoulder bag,
bustier shirt, and
skirt, all Daum;
shorts, YOOX;
Cannes Vase
Architettura
handbag, Louis
Vuitton; Krista
flats, Jimmy Choo

Top, Bluemarine;
shorts, Marc
Jacobs; chain belt,
Dior; bag, Gucci; F
Heel pump shoe,
Salvatore
Ferragamo



Model: Kim Si-in;
Make-Up: Lee Sook-
Kyung; Assistant:
Min Jun Kim



Rise and Shine

With everything from sequins to metallics and glitter trending at the moment, it is time to dust off your sparkling best and grab the spotlight.

Photographs: Madhu Yadav;

Styling and Creative Direction: Who Wore What When

Amethyst dress,
Nikhita Tandon,
₹45,000; turtleneck,
stylist's own; pumps,
Charles & Keith,
₹8,000; Gold Sassy
necklace, The Jewel
Factor, ₹2,100



Amethyst dress,
Nikhita Tandon,
₹45,000; turtleneck,
stylist's own; Gold
Sassy necklace, The
Jewel Factor, ₹2,100



Metallic moulded
dress, Amit Aggarwal,
price on request; pear
shaped lab grown
diamonds formed
flowers arranged in a
heart set earrings,
Vandals, price on
request



Hybrid Bow Blazer Dress,
Nikhil Kolhe, price on
request; detachable earrings,
₹6,300, Charm of Protection
Ring, ₹3,100, and Key of
Good Fortune Ring, ₹3,100,
all Opalina Jewellery



Crepe floral pantsuit,
₹38,500, Nikita
Mhaisalkar; Emerald
Green Monoco crystal
choker, ₹4,000, The
Jewel Factor; shoes,
Charles & Keith,
₹9,000



(This and right page)
Dual scratch and
stripe print sari dress,
Saaksha & Kinni,
₹22,000; Foolish Veau
Velours, Christian
Louboutin, price on
request; Chrysalis
Gunmetal Studs,
₹12,500, and Oh V
Furbie Bag, ₹16,950,
both Outhouse



Metallic gold draped gown, Gauri & Nainika, price on request; handcrafted zirconia bracelet, Swarovski, price on request; Precious stones bracelet, Diosa Paris, price on request



Hand-embroidered, lurex bodysuit, ₹13,900, and gradient gathered organza skirt, ₹18,500, both AKHL; stilettos, Lyn, ₹6,299



Model: Natasha Ramachandran; Make-Up: Pratiksha Nair; Hair: Kinjal Garg; Nail Artist: Oshin Lemos; Production: Studio Little Dumpling

Eyes On the Prize

This season, surrender to the beauty force, aka the eyeshadow. From dainty pastels to gorgeous glitter, there is room for all kinds of shades and finishes.

Photographs: Olga Rubio Dalmau; Hair and Make-Up: Nieves Elorduy; Styling: A Gracia; Text By: Meghna Sharma; Model: Alba Lackner

DREAMY LIDS

Pastel shadows bring with them an element of fantasy. Mint, rose, peach, buttercup... all of these hues represent summer, and look beautiful set against a minimal canvas. A monochromatic wash of colour on the lids is easy to cop and packs a punch. If you are feeling experimental, you can create a thin 'superhero mask' by extending the shadow across the bridge of the nose. But if that's too 'extra' for you, fuse two complementing shades to achieve a colour-blocked effect.

Blouse, Dolce & Gabbana; top, Ulla Johnson

WILD, WILD HAIR

It is worth noting that sleek locks are no longer trending on the beauty map. Sure, they are crucial to achieving a few classic styles, but pros have been gravitating towards natural, loose curls lately. While you can certainly create curls with the help of tools, if your hair's naturally curly, use a hydrating shampoo and curl cream, and let air work its magic on your locks.

(This and facing page) Top, Merlette; skirt, Max Mara; sneakers, Valentino

NO GLITTER, NO GLORY

Whoever said that you can only sparkle at night-time didn't quite know the power of gunmetal-hued eyeshadow infused with tiny specks of glitter. To make its presence felt, outline your upper and lower lids with a pigmented formula. You hold the freedom to create the shape of your choice—cut-crease, blunt wings, exaggerated cat-eye, etc. Finish this look with a coat of curling mascara and a hint of lip balm.



Head and facing
Blouse,
Zimmermann

LILAC LOVING

A pastel shade might sound delicate, but a muted lilac eyeshadow can look fierce if done right. This colour looks striking on pale skin tones, but medium to deep tones can flaunt it too, if they use a pigmented formula that pops on the eyes. Swipe some across the lids and power up with the help of mascara—don't hold back and coat up to really open up your eyes.



**THE NEW WAY
TO
COLOUR-BLOCK**

We know that creating the perfect union of two shades on your lids can be a stressful process. But what if we told you that you can achieve a look just as striking by inviting another feature to the party? Use a contrasting shade of blush to highlight your cheeks. Entrust a matte powder blush this duty—that's the only kind of finish that offers intense colour pay-off and yet leaves a soft, blurred effect.

Make-Up: Barbara Bonazza for Hanacure; **Hair:** Matteo Bartolini (@Freelancer) for Balmain Hair Couture; **Make-Up Assistant:** Carla Curoine; **Hair Assistant:** Paola Crudo (In collaboration with Ilenia Cirone)

Feast your eyes on the most-promising make-up trends of the season that hold the potential to turn into classics.

By Meghna Sharma

1 Bring Out Your Inner Artist

If you have become a bit of a recluse owing to the year we have all had, attention-grabbing abstract eyes will work as the perfect conversation starters. Pat McGrath worked her magic on the models at Anna Sui and filled in the negative space on the lids with thick, abstract lines in muted tones. The mishmash of colours at Giambattista Valli made our hearts flutter—the pros worked with shades of one family to accentuate the lids. While Versace and Off-White's bold strokes of a single colour proved to be the easiest way to get in on this trend.



HUDA Beauty Obsessions Eyeshadow Palette in Amethyst, ₹2,400



Lime Crime Venus XL Eyeshadow Palette, ₹5,500



Makeup Revolution Revolution x Rorxsaurus Colour Burst Eyeshadow Palette, ₹1,255

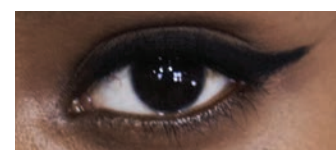
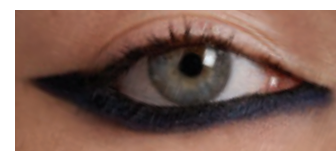


The AW/21-22 Beauty Trend Report

3

Less is More

...and we are here for this time-saving trend. Why should you have to put on layers and layers of make-up (no offence, IG beauty influencers), when a few good products can help you perfect your complexion? We recommend investing in a glow-boosting primer that lends a dewy finish and also blurs imperfections. Or, you can dust a little pressed powder or use a cushion foundation—depending on your skin type—for a sheer glow. If you like full coverage, mix a little bit of lightweight foundation with a few drops of facial oil to get the desired coverage + glow combo. Once the canvas is ready, you can let it be as is, or add some colour to your lips or lids.



Baby Cat Woman

Hear ye, hear ye! Eyeliner enthusiasts, we are happy to report some exciting developments in this area. If you are a fan of cat eyeliner, you can now use both upper and lower lids to flash them wings—alone or together (yes!). For those who do not have a steady hand, consider this your year because the 'half liner' (starting at the centre of the upper lid, ending in a blunt wing) is major this year. Plus, you can keep the wings thin, thick, or slightly-blurred. Enjoy this freedom while it lasts...er, we mean till the season, y'all.

M.A.C In Extreme Dimension 24Hr Kajal Eye Liner, ₹675



NYX Total Control Foundation, ₹1,299



Sugar Wingwoman Waterproof Microliner, ₹499



Smashbox Photo Finish Vitamin Glow Primer, ₹3,050



Chanel Les Beiges Healthy Glow Sheer Powder, price on request



Dior Capture Dreamskin Cushion Foundation, price on request



Dior Rouge Dior Limited Edition Lipstick in 999, price on request



4 Lip Action

First, the good news: all shades are A-okay to sport this AW/21-22. Colour families of nude, pink, plum, and burgundy were spotted on runways across the globe, but there was one clear winner... red. This iconic hue has never missed a season (trend-wise) in decades. Flattering on all skin tones owing to the many undertones available, a red lipstick's appeal is timeless. And this season was no different. The memo: pair a bold, red mouth with striking eyes (cut-crease eyeliner, cat-eyes, blunt wings, etc), and add rosy cheeks to the party for a glamorous finish.



5



Natural Tendencies

Carefully sculpted, drawn-on brows have taken a backseat this season. Working with the models' natural brow shape, backstage pros focused more on brushed-out arches, filling in only the sparse areas. This allowed the pros to get creative with eyeliner shapes, colours, and stick-ons, making the look appear less 'made-up'. Bring out your trusted spoolie to cop the trend, and use a brow soap or gel to help them stay in place.

Benefit
Foolproof
Brow
Powder,
₹2,450



Charlotte
Tilbury
Brow
Cheat,
₹2,900



Indulgeo
Essentials Brow
Bro, ₹900



BORA AKSU

8
Make
It Pop

We have rarely met an excessive eye look that we didn't love. In the past few seasons, lids have assumed a pivotal role, making them the centre of the make-up universe. And with so much riding on one feature, make-up pros delivered with a collection of jewelled looks. Coperni's crystal-loaded lids certainly deserve a spot in the make-up hall of fame, while Bora Aksu's butterfly wings on a bare face were a vibe. Burberry played it safe (in comparison) with star stickers and Courreges capitalised on the charm of pearls to highlight models' no-make-up skin. If you, too, want to get in on the trend, hunt for cool stick-on glitter and crystal patterns on [amazon.in](https://www.amazon.in) or [nykaa.com](https://www.nykaa.com), and if that's not your vibe, you can opt for sparkly eyeshadows.

Cool Kids Never Die

With the world of fashion going through a '90s hangover currently, it is only fair that you have make-up looks to match. Heavily-kohl'd eyes were spotted aplenty this season, but the new version of smokey lids, aka the semi-smokey style, is what we are most excited about. Spotted in blacks, blues, and purples, this style draws attention to your eyes, without seeming 'too much'. Also, if you are looking at skillfully blending different make-up eras, take cues from Chola, where the retro cat eyeliner was paired with a bold, '90s bold mouth. To prevent smudges, we would recommend sticking to long-wear pencils and powder shadows to recreate these looks.

6



Sephora Colorful
Mono Eyeshadow,
₹750



Maybelline New York The
Nudes Eyeshadow Palette,
₹905

Lash Hour

If we have learnt one thing from pro artists, it is that mascara holds the power to dramatically change your look. Whether you desire length, volume, or curl, mascaras can fulfil each one of these wishes with just a few coats. This season, we witnessed looks where mascara was worn alone and paired with an eyeliner, giving you the freedom to sport it how you deem fit. Pro tip: when loading up on mascara, wait for a few minutes before you apply the second (or third) coat to ensure your lashes don't get clumpy. Also, fix any boo-boos once the lashes have dried up, otherwise you risk smudges.

Too Faced
Better Than Sex
Mascara,
₹1,900



7



PAUL COSTELLOE



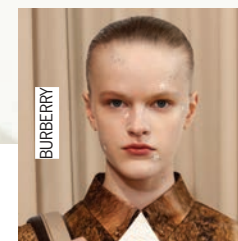
Etude House
Mirror Holic,
₹900



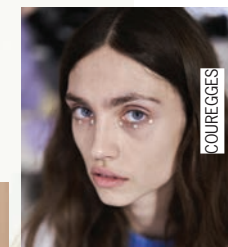
Stila Glitter &
Glow Liquid
Eyeshadow,
₹2,100



Lime Crime
Diamond
Dew Liquid
Eyeshadow,
₹1,900



BURBERRY



COURREGES



Juice Beauty Phyto-Pigments Flawless Serum Foundation, ₹4,800

Q I don't like wearing foundation as it feels too heavy on the skin, but do crave a sheer glow. How can I achieve the same?

A: We hear you. Thankfully, there are a tonne of products in the market that can help you fake luminous skin. You can try mixing a BB or CC cream with a lightweight facial oil to get your shine on. Or, you could even mix your favourite concealer with a few drops of serum and/or oil—it will cover up imperfections and also add glow. New-age foundations, however, are designed in a way that they not only offer buildable coverage, but also don't feel heavy on the skin. Like this one by Juice Beauty, which is a blend of foundation + age-defying serum that feels weightless, lends a flawless finish, and offers buildable coverage.

Q I used to have combination skin, but of late, it has become dry and looks very dull. How can I bring it back to life?

A: Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate. You need the holy trifecta of a serum, moisturiser, and oil to restore your skin's lost glory. Look for ingredients like hyaluronic acid (HA), glycerine, ceramides, aloe vera, and lactic acid that help nourish parched skin, smoothen texture, and also bring back glow. Your skin changes with time and weather, but a hydrating regimen is always a good idea. Apply an HA serum on damp skin, top it with a moisturiser, and seal the moisture with the help of a lightweight oil.



innisfree Jeju Cherry Blossom Jelly Cream, ₹1,700

Q Camel milk is trending as a haircare ingredient right now. What are its benefits?

A: Camel milk is extremely rich in Vitamin C, protein, and omega-3 essential fatty acids...all of which help nourish and moisturise dry, lifeless hair, and maintain its volume.

Products containing this ingredient are gentle to your locks and penetrate easily into your hair shaft, leaving it revitalised. If you want to try a few products, consider Faith and Patience's rather impressive range. It is India's first haircare brand that uses camel milk as a primary ingredient. Their roster includes shampoos and conditioners for various hair types and concerns.



(L-R) Faith and Patience Party Animal Volumizing Shampoo, Camel On Trend Treated Hair Shampoo, and Royal Camel Conditioning Shampoo, ₹1,100 each

By: MEGHNA SHARMA



12 Shades



Premium Matte Liquid Lipcolor

Greyon
produits de beauté

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LIQUID LIP GLOSS (4 SHADES) | LIP GLOSS STICK (4 SHADES) | LIP BALM (3 FLAVOURS) | MASCARA | EYELINER | KAJAL

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Beauty Expert

WE ANSWER A BUNCH OF YOUR BURNING BEAUTY QUESTIONS.

LUST LIST

PRETTY STUFF WE'VE GOT OUR EYES ON THIS MONTH!

By Meghna Sharma

Refresh your beauty cabinet with our top picks
Best Buys

FAE Beauty Brash Primer, ₹499

Perfect to prep lashes before mascara application, this formula works as a base coat that helps add length, volume, and hold for a fuller, fanned effect.

Morphe Jaclyn Hill Eyeshadow Palette, nykaa.com, ₹3,700

If you love dressing up your eyes, then you need to grab this iconic Morphe x Jaclyn Hill palette. Featuring 35 shades in multiple finishes, it promises to bring to life to all your attention-grabbing eye looks.

Guerlain L'Essentiel Pore Minimizer Shine-Control Primer, ₹6,275

This lightweight primer forms a protective barrier between the skin and make-up to create an ideal canvas. It also refines the skin's texture over time and protects it against pollution.

Schwarzkopf Professional Mad About Curls Butter Treatment, ₹1,125

Formulated specifically for curly and wavy hair types, this treatment boosts moisture, strengthens hair, and helps accentuate and maintain the natural pattern of your locks.

DHC Beauty Deep Cleansing Oil, ₹1,490

This cult product—enriched with rosemary and olive oils, and Vitamin E—breaks down impurities and leaves skin super-hydrated. You can use it alone to take off stubborn make-up or as the first step in your double-cleansing routine.

House of Beauty Hair Vitamins, ₹2,299

A combination of two key ingredients—biotin and anagain—these supplements help boost hair growth, and builds scalp health and muscle fibre.

MyGlamm 10% Niacinamide Clarifying Serum, ₹699

If you are looking for a skincare booster to balance the skin, even out the complexion, and reduce blemishes and redness, then give this gel-serum a try. The formula is enriched with 10% niacinamide along with nourishing moringa and tiger grass that work together to reward you with a glowing complexion.

Anastasia Beverly Hills Stick Cream Blush, ₹3,200
This stick makes it super-easy to achieve a rosy glow. The creamy formula glides effortlessly, while the attached brush helps blend the product, making it the perfect companion to spruce up your look on-the-go.

Laneige Lip Glow Balm in Gummy Bear, ₹690

This balm doesn't just smell yummy, it also instantly removes flakes, coats lips with a layer of moisture, improves texture, and plumps up your lips.

Shankara Soothing Lip Oil, ₹590

This tiny bottle houses an avocado oil- and beta carotene-rich formula that soothes and hydrates lips, and also provides sun protection. What we love about this product is that it comes with an amethyst gemstone roller-ball, which oxygenates lips and increases blood circulation.

Belif Nose Shine Boy Black Edition, ₹2,290

This gel-to-foam cleanser is created with natural scrubs containing charcoal, that help remove dead skin cells, blackheads, and whiteheads, thoroughly cleansing skin in just one wash.

UMA Pure Love Body Balm, ₹5,240 approx

An aromatic blend of neroli, bela, and geranium, this indulgent balm envelops your body with a thick layer of moisture and skin-plumping nutrition. Perfect for the cold weather, it melts onto skin and doesn't leave any greasy residue.

Bvlgari by Mary Katrantzou Omnia Floral EDP, ₹8,350/65ml

Designer Mary Katrantzou joined forces with Bvlgari to reinterpret the iconic Omnia bottle. The London-based Greek designer reimagined the flacon as a sculptural vase holding a maximalist flower bouquet, encompassing each note crafted by Master Perfumer Alberto Morillas. Omnia Floral is a vibrant fragrance, featuring an olfactive blend of mandarin, gardenia and fig leaves, that echoes the designer's maximalist style and creative vision.



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COSMOPOLITAN FOOD

AWAKEN YOUR INNER GOURMET CHEF

Just a list of
Things
That
Are
Surprisingly
Better
with
Ketchup

One thousand love
songs should be
written in your
honour, my pretty.



1
Eggs, obviously. But specifically, jammy soft-boiled eggs. It is the hot and cold for us.

2
Salt-and-vinegar potato chips, for a budget dip combo with more panache than chips and guacamole.

3
Actually, **any potato-based food**: fries (*duh*), hash browns, baked potatoes, mashed potatoes...etc.

4
A cherry tomato. The tangy notes of a sweet tomato and zesty 'chup *are* different. I won't die on this hill alone.

5
The burnt-est of broccoli, because it requires the perfect umami zing.

6
Macaroni and cheese. It is good; ketchup is good. Together, they are a masterful culinary mix.

7
The middle groove of a **crisp romaine leaf**. *Juicy Chomp*

8
Toasted sourdough. Spread it like jam, baby.

If You Are Not Putting Candy in Your Brownies, WYD?!

"Want to stay in tonight and do something weird?"



Chocolate, but not as you know it!



Listen, we are not here to judge how you acquired a surplus of fun-size bags of sweets, but I am here to tell you the best way to eat them. Behold: the monster of all brownie recipes.

1

Grease an 8-x-8-inch baking tin and preheat your oven to 180°C (356°F).

2

Prepare a box of brownie mix as per the instructions, but use three eggs.

3

Drop bite-size pieces of Crackle, 5 Star and/or Reese's Peanut Butter Cups into the mix.

4

Spread your batter mix into the tin. Then layer on M&Ms, KitKats or whatever else you can get your hands on.

5

Bake according to the brownie mix instructions, or for up to 50 minutes. Let the brownies cool, then top with gummy worms, obviously.

Words: ASHLEY OERMAN; Photograph: AARON DUBALL; *Haribo and Percy Pigs are equally acceptable

Please, Just Eat This Glorious Salad from Pepper Teigen

If summer were a food, it would be this one.



ICYMI, Los Angeles-based Pepper

Teigen, super-talented cook and very cool famous mom, has just blessed humankind with *The Pepper Thai Cookbook*, packed with recipes like this spicy, bacon-y delight. Serve it at a picnic or just scoop it into your mouth with chips whilst standing in front of your AC. Either way, you will love it!

THE RECIPE

1. In a wok or large skillet over medium-high heat, cook the bacon until it is very crisp (just how you like it), about 10 minutes. Take the crispy crisps out of the pan and set 'em aside.
2. Carefully pour out some of that bacon fat (not down the drain!) until about two tablespoons remain in the pan. Return it to the heat, add the shallots, and cook until they are nice 'n' soft, about three minutes.
3. Add the corn, stirring occasionally, till it begins to brown, or about six more minutes (TBH, this is going pretty fast, right?).
4. Mix in the tomatoes and chilis, remove the pan from the heat, and let it cool for a few mins before dumping it all in a large bowl.
5. Add the bacon, fish sauce, avocado, and cilantro, and squeeze those lime halves over the top. Gently toss this precious beauty to combine, then season with salt and pepper. Serve warm or at room temperature. Cry tears of happiness.

THE INGREDIENTS

- 4 to 6 slices of bacon, chopped
- 2 shallots, finely chopped
- 3 cups corn kernels, frozen or fresh (about 3 ears of corn)
- 1 cup halved cherry tomatoes
- 2 fresh bird's eye chilis (HOT!) or 1 serrano (a li'l less hot), minced
- 2 teaspoons fish sauce
- 1 avocado, chopped
- ½ cup cilantro leaves, chopped
- 1 lime, halved
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper



The only thing we're making till further notice

Adapted from the Pepper Thai Cookbook; Photographs by: JENNY HILTING

This DIY Vegan Ice-Cream Tastes Like a Million Bucks

Extra points for being cute and resourceful!



1. Gather as many (pre-peeled!) frozen bananas as your heart desires—or as many as your blender can handle without short-circuiting.
2. Blend on high with approximately one glug of your fave plant-based milk. For extra goodness, you can—and maybe should—add a couple of dates, chocolate bits, or a splash of vanilla extract to sweeten it up.
3. Hit pause every 20 seconds or so
4. ...load it with toppings RN. Think vegan caramel drizzle, mini pretzels, and chocolate chips.
5. If you truly want to go there: smoosh the ice cream between two (very) toasty toaster waffles lined with nut butter. A sammie star is born.



Your freezer is about to become 97 percent banana.

to make sure the consistency suits your palate (hint: for a soft-serve-ish texture, blend for longer). Once it does, freeze it in a food-storage container for a rainy day or...

4.

5.

By: SARAH WELDON; Food Stylist: SUE LI/HELLO ARTISTS; Blender: COURTESY SMEG

Five Things You Are Not Putting in Your Waffle Iron, But Should Be

Boldly going where no hangry person has gone before.

A similar waffle maker is available on [amazon.in](https://www.amazon.in) for ₹2,000



CINNAMON ROLL DOUGH

Look at the icing in those grooves. Now imagine how the little pockets of gooeyness will burst when you take a bi—oh, uh, are you good?

BROWNIE BATTER AND COOKIE DOUGH

We said what we said! Layer le batter on top of some pre-sliced cookie dough and close the iron for two-ish minutes. It is the fastest way to Frankenstein the luxe brownie your snacking self deserves.

EGGS

Breakfast can get boring, so why not crack an egg on your iron? Leave it open and cook until the yolk is set, then sandwich it between toast, a bagel, a hot dog bun, or whatever form of bread you prefer.

BRIE

Yeah, the whole wheel. Smoosh it in the iron for, like, less than a minute. Add a drizzle of honey or a swoosh of jam if the melty cheese demands it (it does).

A PIZZA SLICE

If you fold it in half and waffle it (yes, a verb), you will have the most joyful quasi-calzone. Zap it in the iron till it is ooooozing—in a good way.

By: SARAH WELDON; Photography by: TED + CHELSEA CAVANAUGH; Food Stylist: JEN BEAUCHESNE



Cancel Your Plans and Make This Sexy Breakfast Sando

Los Angeles-based Molly Baz, food genius, and author of *Cook This Book*, shows you the way.



Never met a meal
more worthy of
doing dishes

THE INGREDIENTS

(makes two: one for now; one for...um, also now)

- ¼ cup mayo
- Hot sauce (sriracha, habanero, Bhut Jolokia, etc.)
- ½ white onion, sliced into paper-thin rings
- Kosher salt
- 2 English muffins (or kaiser or brioche rolls)
- 2 large eggs
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 170 grams breakfast sausage (loose or links)
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 2 slices of processed cheese
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 handfuls arugula

THE RECIPE

1. Mix your mayo and hot sauce together till it tastes just right.
2. Toss half your onion slices in a bowl with a pinch of salt and a few dashes of straight hot sauce. Stir and let it pickle.
3. Lightly spread some of the mayo mixture on both sides of the English muffins.
4. Beat the eggs, then season 'em with salt and pepper.
5. Place your sausage on parchment paper (if using links, remove the casings first) and smash it into two ¼-inch-thick rounds.
6. Heat a skillet over medium heat and toast the muffins, cut sides down, until golden. Transfer to a plate.
7. Turn up the heat, add the veggie oil and sausage, then top with your remaining raw onions, season with salt, and cook until the patties are browned and crisp (about three to five minutes). Flip the patties over, turn off the heat, and place a slice of cheese on each one. Cover with a lid or baking sheet.
8. Add butter to a skillet over medium heat and scramble the eggs for about 30 seconds.
9. Slather more spicy mayo on each muffin half, then top with sausage, cooked onions, eggs, hot sauce, pickled onions, and arugula.

Photography By: CHELSEA CAVANAUGH; Food Stylist: SUE LI / HELLOARTISTS



for your eyes only!



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Eye Liner

Mascara

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📍
**Secrets of
Happiness...
FROM THE
MOST JOYFUL
Places On the**

We have all had a rough time of late, but why are some places rated happier to live in than others, and what can we learn from them? **Radhika Sanghani** meets the women living in the world's joy hotspots to find out.

PLANET

"I love the sense of adventure here"

St Ives has been voted the happiest place to live in the UK, by the Happy at Home Index 2020 by UK-based real estate portal, Rightmove. Laura Evans, 33, who works in digital marketing (as well as being a part-time professional mermaid) explains why...

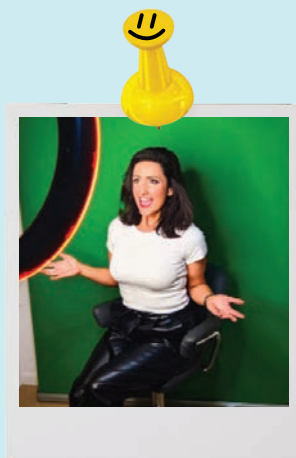
"Growing up, I was desperate to move to a big city. I went to London, but it chewed me up and spat me out. I came back here to convalesce with my family and found myself falling in love with St Ives. It was summer and I started swimming in the sea. I saw tourists flocking to the town and it was a reminder that people come here because it is so beautiful and there is so much to do. It made me realise I am very lucky.

We have stunning landscapes, walks, a sense of community, and a great art scene. There is something for everyone. Life here isn't day-in day-out joy, but it is hard not to be happy in such a gorgeous place. I swim throughout the year. It makes you feel like you have achieved something every day. You don't have to live by the sea—a few laps in the local pool have the same effect.

I occasionally dress up as a mermaid for fundraising and private events, which enables me to unleash my creativity. We all also pitch in with litter-picking here. It gets you outdoors and it is an altruistic act that I would recommend to everyone.

Growing up as a gay person, I was nervous there was very limited visibility for LGBTQIA+ people here. Cornwall can often be a step behind. But I have not had any problems. The main issue is the availability of housing. Those with second homes have overtaken the area, so being able to buy a place is really difficult, and in winter it is often a ghost town.

But I love the sense of adventure and discovery here. There is always somewhere to go, something to learn. The key to happiness is variety and being able to pursue what you love, and you can really do that here."



"People are upfront and say when they just want sex"

Zara Janjua, 35, is a TV presenter and writer living in London, said to be the city with most sexually-active women, by the Lazeeva Survey 2019.

"I moved to London two years ago—when it was named the world's most sexually-active city for women,* based on high levels of sexual satisfaction, easy access to contraception and sex toys, and its gender-equal society. It's partly why I moved here from Scotland. Lots of my friends there were getting married and having kids. I wanted to meet people with a similar lifestyle to me as a young, single professional.

London is full of single people. I am 35 and conscious of my biological clock, but I don't feel pressured. Instead, I'm having some fun and I love it. I've started dating men 10 to 12 years younger. They're more openly affectionate and it keeps things light.

It's easy to meet someone who wants a physically intimate relationship, but harder to find emotional intimacy. People are upfront and say they're looking for sex, and if you're not interested in just that, they'll move on. They ask for what they want, so I do too. I'm lucky the relationships I have now with men are really honest and respectful—even the casual ones."



"You would kiss 20 people in one day!"

Livia Arbache, 28, is a lawyer in São Paulo. Brazil has been voted the best country in the world for dating, by the 2016 US News and World Report.

"I think Brazilians are really open to new adventures. We like hugs, kisses, and dancing together.

There are so many ways to meet people here. We have carnivals, street parties, and amazing beaches. During carnivals, some kiss, like, 20 people in one day. It's crazy. We say, 'What you do in carnival stays in carnival.'

I normally meet the people I date in bars or at barbecues, or even at people's houses. I'd go to a friend's, order pizza, have some drinks, then everyone starts calling everyone and inviting them over. Suddenly you have a house full of people you don't know. It starts with a small reunion, then you are with a bunch of others having fun.

The other good thing in Brazil is that a woman can easily go and talk to a man in a bar and make the first move. You don't need to wait. It is not seen as unusual or negative. But often, the men come to talk to you first anyway. We like to dance, so often you start dancing, then a man comes up to you and you dance together.

Many of my friends date several men at once. I call it having a garden with lots of flowers and watering them all. Mine just has one flower at a time, and when it is dead, I will plant another. But I am quite unusual in only wanting to date one person.

Dating apps for me are strange, but in the pandemic, it has been

the only way. After chatting for a while, I will arrange to meet people for sunset walks. The downside is it is less safe here for women than in Europe. I never think about how to get home from a bar abroad, but here I feel afraid to walk the streets at night and never go alone.

But in Brazil, we are also more liberal. There is less expectation to go down a traditional route. I want a husband, two kids, and a dog, but when I am dating, I try to just see where it goes. We are more easy-going and don't feel a lot of pressure. It is best to not hurry too much and just enjoy it. The most important thing is to have fun."

"I always felt accepted"

Melania Cucca, 26, works at a second-hand shop in Barcelona, Spain, and the country has been voted the most LGBTQIA+ friendly in the world, by a joint survey between The Netherlands and Gallup, a US-based analytics and advisory company.

"I have lived in Barcelona almost all my life and it hasn't been without its challenges. I used to identify as bisexual, and then as 'bollera'—a slang word for lesbian that I prefer.

As a teenager, I felt I had to keep my sexuality secret, and when people found out about me and my first girlfriend, we were mocked.

However, when I grew older, everything got way better. My mum was always okay with it, and I have never faced any discrimination. At most, there can sometimes be a prejudice—I am a feminine person so people would assume that I am heterosexual or they would say, 'You don't really look gay.' But

overall, I have always felt pretty accepted living here.

We were one of the first countries to legalise gay marriage, and we have many Pride events. I know a lot of queer people, so I go to queer spaces. There is a really big LGBTQIA+ scene here—it is very commercial and politically involved. I feel part of a community, and I have a great circle of friends who are all really open and accepting.

I have always used dating apps, and they are really popular here, though I have been living with my partner for three-and-a-half

years now. Barcelona isn't perfect, and there is not a lot of protection for trans youth, but I do think it is a liberal city. I have learnt to surround myself with people who are really understanding."

BARCELONA



"You don't get kicked out of cafés for working"

Makeda Waterman, 37, lives in Edmonton (Alberta), Canada, and works as a marketing consultant. Canada has been voted the best country in the world to work from home, according to a 2021 survey by CircleLoop, a cloud based business phone system.

CANADA

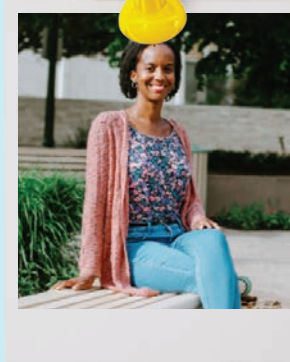
Long before the pandemic, companies embraced freelancers. Working from home is part of our culture. Around a third of our workforce here are contractors, and they can make double what employees do. As a result, the café scene is huge. In the US, people are often kicked out of cafés if they don't buy anything. That doesn't happen here. We also have beautiful libraries with really homey vibes where you see a lot of freelancers, students, and retired people co-working together.

I left the corporate world in 2016. The benefit of being a freelancer is that I can pick and choose who

I work with, and I have a lot of freedom without office politics.

The first two years that I was freelancing were still isolating. You can't speak to colleagues and most companies don't baby you. But I got creative, visiting family in Miami and Barbados to work

from their homes. I also make sure that I keep on developing my skills and do lots of online courses. And because so many people are going through the same thing, it means you can chat with those working with you in cafés or libraries and learn about different careers and paths than your own."



"Happiness is separate from success"

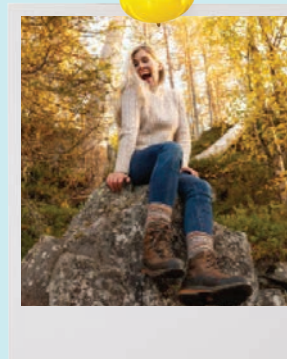
Finland has been voted the world's happiest place, according to the World Happiness Report, 2020. Varpu Rusila, 34, online coach and Founder of Her Finland, explains...

"We have a saying here that going outdoors is just a question of appropriate clothes. Our lifestyle is healthy and we are really in touch with nature; almost everyone goes skiing, hiking, and camping. It is also about enjoying the little things.

In our language, 'successful' relates to money and the external, and 'happiness' is internal. So from a Finnish point of view, happiness is completely separate to success. It is about embracing the now.

When I left a good salaried job in retail to follow my dream, setting up my own business to help people experience Finnish culture, everyone supported me, even my bosses. There isn't a social pressure here to have a 'successful' life. Finns are super modest, so we don't always promote ourselves. We have no celebrity culture—even the President has his coffee in the marketplace—and unlike in the UK, there isn't a strong sense of hierarchy. We always use people's first names instead of titles, and we are not so formal. Life here is fairly relaxed."

FINLAND



"I have never worked more than four days a week"

According to OECG Better Life Index, The Netherlands has the world's best work-life balance. Susanne Maris, 41, lives in The Hague with her husband and two children and runs a training company for academics.

"I have never officially worked more than four days a week, even when I was single and didn't have kids. You don't have to fight for it here, it is a very common, accepted choice—although of course many women can end up still working unpaid outside of those hours.

Companies I work with encourage employees to have a work-life balance, and it is often managers telling staff to take a break, and that they don't have to be at their computer nine-to-five. It is good but it comes with a downside: I work with ambitious women who still have a hard time getting everything done the way they want, especially in lockdown. Women set themselves high standards because of external pressures, and feel they need to give it their best every time. But compared to countries like the

UK, I think we still have it better. We have a decent maternity-leave system, and most companies I work with often say things to employees like, 'Just see what you can get done, we know you have kids.'

Unfortunately, we are still far away from true equality between men and women. We have a pay gap, and a man who works for four days with his one 'father's day' off is a hero, but the mum who has a 'mother's day' is not cool. What is great is that people here often cycle to and from work. It is part of the culture, and I think it is something people across the world could benefit from doing.

Work-life balance is something you can definitely improve. You just need to pay attention to it and be willing to make changes. It is about managing your own time."

NETHERLANDS



BEHIND THE SCENES

Radhika Sanghani

"It sounds so simple, but speaking to Livia in Brazil reminded me of the importance of good old-fashioned fun. I can often get caught up in the London rat race, but instead of putting pressure on myself, I want to focus on internal happiness like the Finns—and enjoy life like the Brazilians!"

The New Plant Mom's Guide to Not Killing Your Bbs

Trust the process.

LET'S FACE IT: There's probs a pretty high chance that your plants are dying a slow, tragic death RN, à la the final season of your favourite show. And hey, absolutely no judgment (also, same)—parenting is hard! Lucky for us, then, that these very easy, kinda genius tips from Christopher Satch (@Botanic Tonic), actual plant scientist and professor at the New York Botanical Garden, shall ease our weary minds and help our greenery thrive.



PRO TIP: Check on your plant every other day.

GIVE THEM LIGHT

If this is the only thing you read on this page, it will (probably) be enough. All—yes, all—plants must be as close to a window as possible. Sad windows with minimal sunlight mean you will need to stick with low-light plants. Only if your home has ample sunlight should you get bright-light plants. Got it? Great.

KEEP POTS UNPLUGGED

As in, they need good drainage, so get a pot that has both a li'l bootyhole and a tray. Also, be sure to re-pot your plant every year or two in a vessel that is one inch larger to give it fresh soil and room to grow.

WATER REALLY, REALLY WELL

Plants in hot, sunny windows need more

frequent waterings than those on sills facing brick walls, but the process is the same: (1) saturate the hell out of that soil until water comes out of the bottom, and (2) let it dry out completely before watering again.

SKIP MISTING

Except for orchids and other epiphytes (IYKYK), your houseplants don't need moist air. Excess water around their leaves just puts them at risk for moisture-loving fungi. Gross.

QUARANTINE FOR PESTS

When you spot the signs (peep our decoder on the right), move the plant far from others and spray it with insecticide (neem oil is too weak, BTW). Keep at it till the bugs are gone.

AND FINALLY...

May we recommend shopping for the types pictured above? Note tho: if you are buying a plant "only" for the 'Gram, do everyone a favour and just get a fake one, thanks.

ALSO, DO NOT OVER-WATER YOUR PLANTS!

If you are prone to doing so, get yourself a moisture metre. Or, a soil meter that will also tell you about the soil pH and sunlight levels.



Snake Plant
We love this hardy boy



Golden Pothos
The "ideal" beginner plant



Monstera Deliciosa
Is there anything more chic?



SPEAK HOUSEPLANT!

Here is what your leafy children are trying to say.

THEY ARE DROOPY...

► 'More light, pls!'

THEIR LEAVES HAVE YELLOW RINGS...

► 'Help me! I have got a fungus!'

THEIR LEAVES LOOK BURNT AND CRISPY...

► 'I am dealing with some pests.'

THEY GENERALLY LOOK SAD...

► 'Plop me in front of a window or re-pot me.'



By: SARAH WELDON; Photograph: TARUN VISHWA



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GET A SNEAK PEEK AT WHAT TO LOOK FORWARD TO... AND WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR! By Jai Madaan

Cosmo

It's time to turn to the heavens and indulge in some star gazing

Astro

Aquarius
20.01–18.02
~Hot Alert~ Things are about to get hella steamy in the bedroom for coupled-up Aquarians. Singles, too, might bump into their ‘lobster’ post the 20th. This month, your finances could be slow, so spend wisely and be extra careful before making long-term investments. Travel for work or leisure is on the cards. Minor health concerns could put a damper on your plans, so make sure you don’t over-exert yourself.

Pisces
19.02–20.03
Compromising is key to getting through all the transformations currently taking place on the love front. The cosmos might just pleasantly surprise all you singles not looking to mingle ATM. On the work front, your hard work might not get you the recognition you are expecting...but, on the bright side, you will experience stability in health. Indulge in self-care rituals to align your mind, body, and spirit.

Aries
21.03–19.04
Cosmic blessings ensure positive vibes at the workplace, with a few minor challenges that you will overcome easily. Be wise about your expenditure this month as money flow might be strained. Make the most of your time with your SO to avoid friction. Single Rams might face a dilemma in matters of the heart, which could be resolved with a li'l help from family and friends. Practise better time management to keep anxiety at bay.

Taurus
20.04–21.05
Brace yourself as disharmony may present itself, causing distrust between you and your close family and friends. Good communication and patience are key for amicably resolving issues. Singles Taureans could find a potential match this month. Don’t lose heart over financial constraints caused by the recent Mercury Retrograde. All is bright and sunny health-wise.

Gemini
21.05–20.06
Your tendency to drag your feet in your love life might lead to further issues...so don’t let problems fester. Single Geminis are more likely to focus their energies on themselves versus looking for a beau. Your professional life may seem challenging and slow, and financial speculations should be avoided currently. But cheer up as your health promises to be peachy.

Cancer
21.06–22.07
The planets ensure that both attached and single Cancerians get a lotta love this month. Work environment will remain stable, presenting you with opportunities to enhance your skills further. Remember to not rush and move towards your professional targets in a slow and steady manner. Minor health fluctuations can be tackled by focusing on mind-body balance.

Leo
23.07–22.08
You have got to be sensitive towards your SO’s needs to keep things harmonious, especially during the first week when small conflicts might arise. Pay attention to and nurture old relationships. That long overdue increment or promotion might just happen, giving you that extra boost of energy to deal with your hectic work schedule. But be cautious as an old ailment might resurface and require medical care.

Virgo
23.08–22.09
This month might just be the best month yet for you Earth bbs, with ample romance and sexiness. Singles could end up making bad decisions if not careful. Your finances look promising, and this seems to be the right time to start a venture as money will pour in from multiple sources. Good health will also add to your joie de vivre.

Libra
23.09–22.10
Don’t stress as your love rhythms dip by the end of the month, as this too shall pass. It takes time for old wounds to heal, but things will get back on track soon enough. Singles might not feel particularly enthusiastic about meeting someone new, but you do you and take as much time as you need to get back on the dating scene. Refrain from relying too much on your savings.

Scorpio
23.10–21.11
Work will keep you extremely busy and your love life might suffer as a result. Keep your professional aspirations separate from your personal matters, or it could result in conflict. Stay calm while dealing with obstacles at work and seek help from seniors, if required. Singles can cross paths with someone interesting, but know that it might not be a ‘together forever’ kind of situation.

Sagittarius
22.11–21.12
You will be surrounded with loved ones all through this month. Romance will thrive and singles might catch someone’s fancy towards the end of this month. Keep an eye out for lucrative professional opportunities, and you also have the astral go-ahead in case you want to launch your own venture. Do stick to your fitness and diet regimes for overall well-being.

Capricorn
22.12–19.01
We won’t blame you for being *lovestruck* this month as cosmic influences amplify your affections towards your SO. Single Capris, too, will go out of their way to form lasting bonds and meet the demands of a new relationship. Astral configurations predict money pouring in from unexpected sources. Financial speculations and investments can be profitable as well. Pay attention to what your body needs.

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