

A Times of India publication

Europe's No. 1 Style Magazine

GRAZIA

Easy Chic

Volume 14 Issue 11
February 2022

A NEW CHAPTER

MANUSHI CHHILLAR
FINDS HER FEET

ON OUR BEAUTY RADAR:

BITE-SIZED
MOMENTS OF
SELF-CARE



FASHION'S ROMANTIC MOOD

- LINGERIE MUST-HAVES ●
- HEART-SHAPED EXTRAS ●
- VALENTINE GIFTS FOR ALL ●

LOVE ON THE BRAIN

Decoding dating app
fatigue & toxic exes





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From the EDITOR'S DESK

After shaking off January and its third-wave blur, for some reason, it feels like the New Year started this February. Our cycles of viral upheaval may not have ended just yet, but 'normal, new-normal, unprecedented, uncertain' are words that we hope won't hold another year ransom.

Somehow, the actual context of living in the moment hasn't been any clearer until now; simply being present in the moment may be the kindest thing you can do for yourself – we're in a carpe diem situation. For now, we're using the shortest month of the year to jump headlong into all the things we planned for 2022.

This month, while fashion explores its romantic mood (don't miss our annual gift guide, hand-picked by the fashion team), we've also got love on the brain – we're decoding dating app fatigue and

toxic exes. And perhaps the only bits of pleasure that ring home are bite-size bits of self-care – treat, repair, energise, and refresh; micro-breaks and me-moments are the only essentials you need this month.

And starting her new chapter, too, this year is our cover girl Manushi Chhillar. Read on as she discusses her process towards becoming an actor, along with Arif Khan, India's only athlete at the Winter Olympics, who speaks about his journey from Baramulla to Beijing, and finally, director Shakun Batra takes on sex and relationships in his currently trending OTT offering.

Until next month,

Mehernaaz



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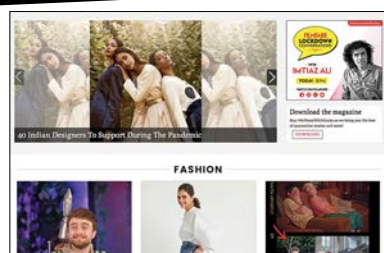


Photograph KEEGAN CRASTO



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Our website is our complementary arm, combining the best of what the magazine offers with its own flavour and take on current events around the world. Fashion news haute off the press, beauty product reviews, DIY hacks, and previews and reviews of the biggest dos around the country – we've got it all covered in easy reads.

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GRAZIA | BEAUTY



Why CAMILLE is the true style star of Emily in Paris

Camille and Emily are the two main characters in the hit French TV series 'Emily in Paris'. Camille is a fashion designer and Emily is a marketing executive. The article discusses their style and how they have become fashion icons.

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GRAZIA | BEAUTY



MUST HAVES

A list of recommended beauty products from various brands, including makeup, skincare, and hair care items.

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GRAZIA | FEATURE



THE GENTLE GIANTS

An article about elephants, their behavior, and their importance in the ecosystem. It mentions that elephants are the largest land animals and are known for their intelligence and social structure.

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The national edition of GRAZIA Indian Edition is not for sale outside India

Printed and published by Sunil Wuthoo for and on behalf of Worldwide Media Private Limited, The Times of India Building, Dr DN Road, Fort, Mumbai 400 001 and printed at Rajhans Enterprises, 134, 4th Main Road, Industrial Town, Rajajinagar, Bangalore 560 044

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Europe's No 1 Style Magazine

GRAZIA FEBRUARY 2022 VOLUME 14 ISSUE 11



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Foraying into acting has been a gruelling but rewarding experience for Manushi Chhillar. She believes

training for Miss World has given her the work ethic she needs to excel in her new, equally glamorous career.

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Dating has always been, and will always be, work. What's changed? We find out.

34 FALLING BACK

The pattern of going back to our toxic exes can push us into an endless loop of pain – three people give us a ringside view into their journeys.

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A borderless friendship united by poetry. Follow the journey of social media star Rupī Kaur's travelling book.

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While we often look in one direction for Valentine's Day gifting, it's time to abandon clichés. Our thoughtfully curated gift guide covers all the loves of your life – from your partner to BFFs and parents, or your number one priority – you.

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MANUSHI CHHILLAR is wearing a tassel and bead detailed dress, Yousef Al Jasmi, brass earrings, Anatina; crystal cuffs, both Isharya

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FASHION CHARTS

Your best buys in satores right now



**PRINTED DRESS,
MANGO, ₹4,990**

Channel your inner Twiggy with this optical printed mini dress. Add heaps of mascara, a pair of pointy toe flats, and hoop earrings to complete the 60s-style look.

1



2

**ANKLE STRAP PLATFORMS,
JIMMY CHOO, ₹ 64,543**

If style experts and Pinterest are to be believed, 2022 is the year for pearls. 'Pearlcore', as the aesthetic has come to be known, stresses that the pearl piece you choose to wear should be the centerpiece of the look, and we can't think of a better way to step into the trend than with these comfy platforms.

3

**BEADED
BRACELETS,
ROXANNE
ASSOULIN,
₹ 5,770**

The last couple of years have been tough, to say the least, and we often have to be reminded to be kind to ourselves and one another. Stack these on your wrist or gift them to your pals, either way they'll put a smile on your face.



4

**METALLIC JACKET,
VALENTINO, PRICE
ON REQUEST**

If you're in the market for that one statement piece that can literally elevate any look, we've found just the jacket to do the trick. It'll work with everything from jeans and a Tee to your fave sundress and even with a tailored jumpsuit.



5

**SCARF, DIOR,
PRICE ON REQUEST**

For bad hairdays and beyond, the skinny scarf has our vote. Use this multi-purpose scarf around your neck, on your wrist, as a headband or even as an accessory around your bag – there's no wrong way to style it.



6

**KNIT DRESS,
WOOLLEN
JUMPER, BAG,
BOOTS, ALL
LOUIS VUITTON,
ALL PRICES ON
REQUEST**

We're all about double-duty looks, so whether you choose to wear the knit and dress solo or layered masterfully together, either way it's going straight into our #OOTD inspo folder.

7

**MINI SKIRT.
RHODE,
₹ 33,207**

As temperatures begin to rise, we're slowly warming up to the idea of summer-ready separates. Ease into warm weather dressing with this printed mini. Add strappy sandals and an oversized white shirt to seal the deal.

8

**JACQUARD TROUSERS,
FENDI, ₹ 87,518**

Have yourself a cool 90s-style monogram moment with these flared trousers. We'll be styling our OG style with chunky sneakers, a printed logo crop top, and an Ariana Grande-style high ponytail – what about you?

9

**BRALETTE, ZARA,
₹ 2,990**

A lingerie drawer must-have – the lace bralette is a winner in our books for the sheer comfort and versatility it provides. Wear it peeking out of an oversized blazer or with a peek-a-boo sheer blouse.

10

**SHOULDER BAG,
VALENTINO, PRICE ON
REQUEST**

In celebration of the Lunar New Year, Valentino has launched a tiger-inspired capsule as a tribute to Chinese heritage. Understated yet bold, we can't wait to get our hands on this future classic. **LO**

BEAUTY CHARTS

The best winter hydrators on our radar right now

2



D'YOU IN MY DEFENCE,
₹ 3,500

If you're someone who uses a lot of actives in your skincare routine, then give this ceramide-based moisturiser a go. Its barrier-repairing formula will restore skin to its supple, healthy glory in no time. We love it even more because it's suitable to use all through the year, and it's absorbed in seconds, feeling almost like second skin.

4

LISÉN, ₹ 1,250 ONWARDS

This new skincare brand offers highly efficient science-based skincare solutions, designed especially for Indian skin. From their targeted Moving Forward Spot Corrector to the Supercharge++ Multi-solution Ampoule, each product works meticulously to improve skin health and clarity.



1

EKAVI GAMYA PURIFYING CREAM CLEANSER, ₹ 2,350

It's a great double-duty addition to your kit – it's apt not only for everyday use but also for removing make-up. The gentle yet effective formula ensures that natural oils aren't stripped off your skin, leaving it refreshed and polished but never dry and stretchy.



3

NOURISH MANTRA VEDIC ELIXIR FACIAL OIL, ₹ 1,900

It's a beautiful blend of eight skin-nourishing oils, like sweet almond, moringa, hemp, among others, bottled in sustainable packaging. Use it as the last step in your skincare regime to see improved firmness, lesser fine lines, and improved radiance in as little as four weeks.



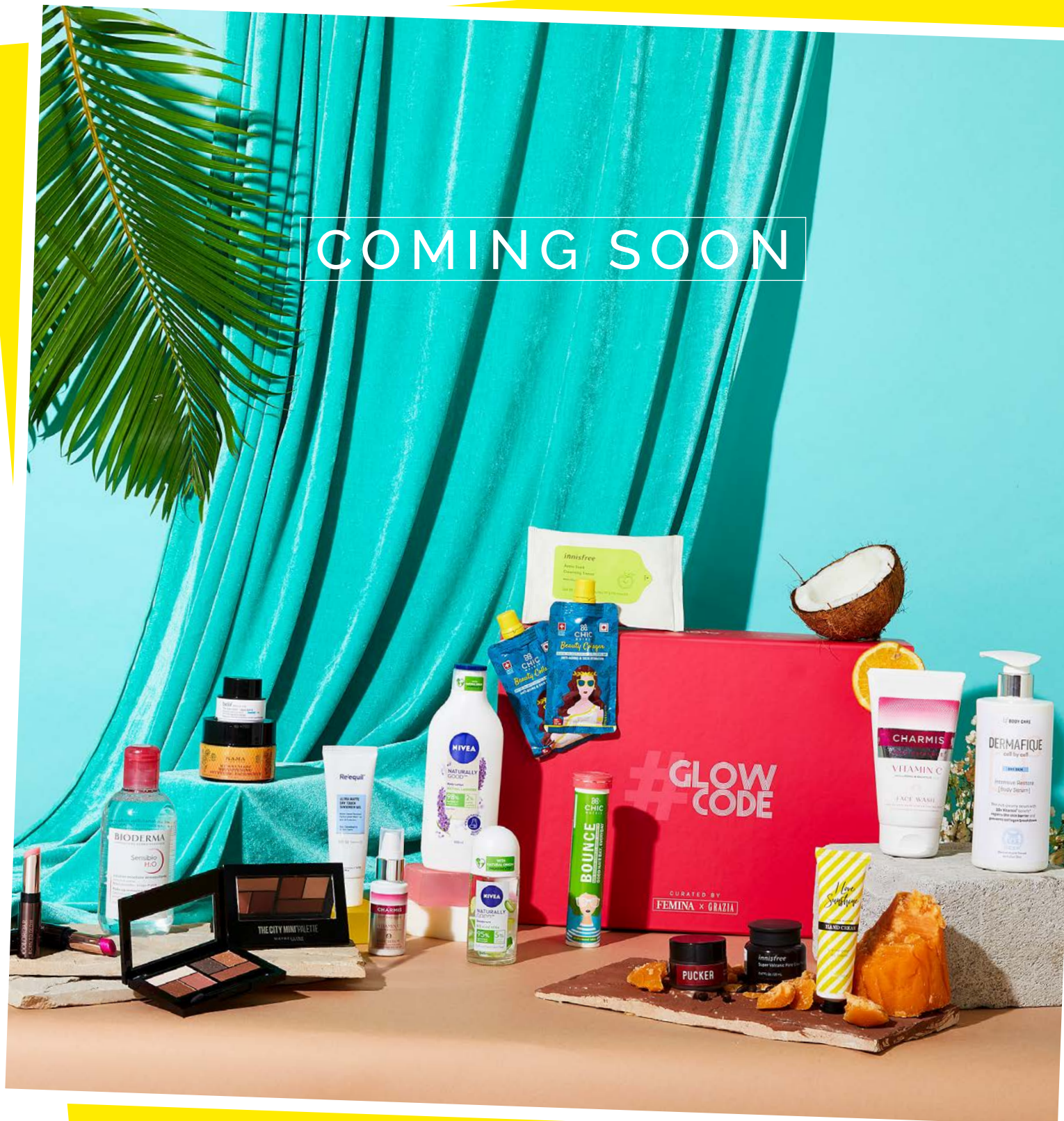
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SUGAR COSMETICS POWER CLAY MASK, ₹ 699

Your beloved clay masks now come in an easy-to-use, free retractable stick – probably the most convenient avatar you'll ever see them in. Available in five fun variants for every skin type, these kaolin-clay-rich masks will deep clean your pores, tighten skin and leave it squeaky clean and fresh in minutes. **IT**



COMING SOON



10 HOT STORIES

EVERYONE'S BEEN TALKING ABOUT

1

BRAVE NEW WORLD

Fashion brands are having a digital renaissance as they mark their entry into the Metaverse

Words **MEHERNAAZ DHONDY**

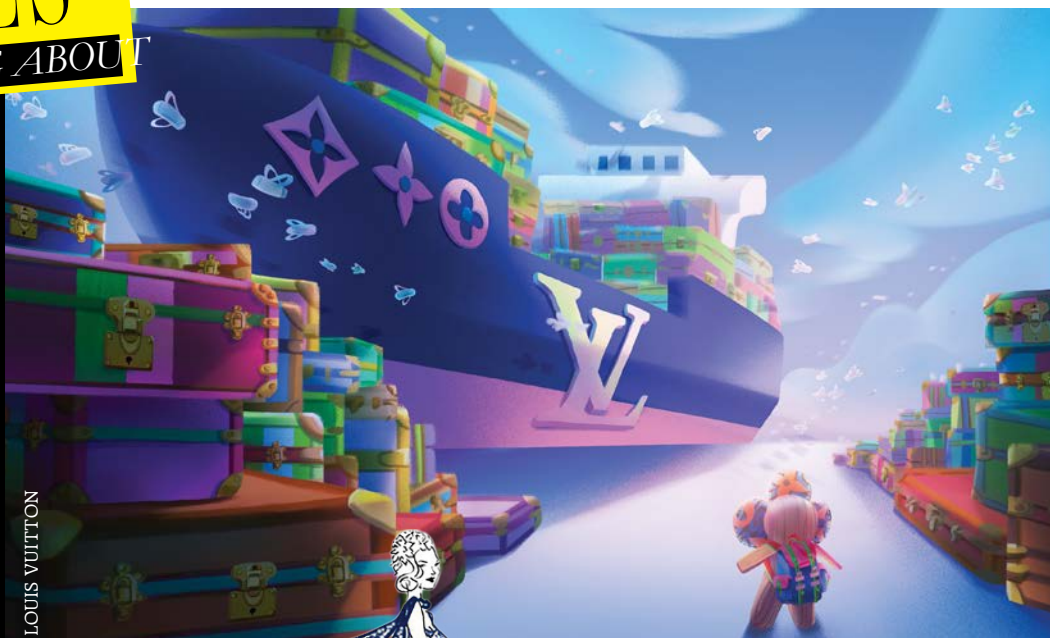
By now you're probably familiar with Vault, Gucci's concept store in the Metaverse. It's a place where vintage pre-owned Gucci pieces, handpicked by creative director Alessandro Michele and creations by emerging talent from around the world like Ahluwalia and Bianca Saunders share space with SuperGucci, an ultra-limited series of CryptoJanky NFTs and handmade ceramic sculptures via Gucci's latest collab with Superplastics. While Gucci has created a meeting point for its past, present, and future, it's clear that most brands are paving the way for infinite possibilities – Prada has teamed up with Adidas (the third installment in their ongoing collab) to launch an NFT art project in conjunction with digital artist Zach Lieberman. Luxury brands have been registering their presence at the Metaverse party this past year, steadily starting with gaming like Burberry with its NFT character for Mythical Games' multiplayer online game Blankos Block Party, to Louis Vuitton, which released Louis The Game, a digital adventure game packed with 30 NFTs created with the artist Beeple; last month even saw Barbie and Balmain step into the Metaverse. As Nike preps to sell virtual shoes online (even hiring designers for their virtual ventures and invest in a start-up metaverse sneaker company) – real money is being spent in a virtual universe, where real people are represented by digital variations – the Metaverse is here to stay – it's changing the way we interact with experiences as immersive as the real world.

Navigating this alternate virtual reality,

last year finally saw Indian labels hop onto the blockchain to connect with their audiences. Starting with Manish Malhotra and Raghavendra Rathore, they dropped NFTs on the WazirX NFT platform in collaboration with Lakmé Fashion Week x FDCI. "Rathore was the first designer to take his art and convert it into NFTs via exclusive blockchain technology; heritage and its celebration is the key differentiating factor that Rathore NFTs stand for," explains Vishakha Singh, VP, WazirX NFT marketplace. While Wikipedia's editors are still on the fence about classifying NFTs as art or not, after gaming and art, fashion has been increasingly engaging with it. "With India's growing internet penetration and given the fact that Gen Z in India is the largest in the world with a population of 472 million, NFTs have become a perfect tool to tap them. Brands can launch virtual closets, drop an

entire collection as NFTs or host fashion shows in the Metaverse, the possibilities are endless. The fashion industry can even use blockchain technology as part of their business strategy," says Singh.

Whether it's led by pandemic-induced excessive digital influence, the transition of traditional Indian fashion houses to the Metaverse (many of whom until 2020 didn't even retail exclusively on their respective digital platforms), is a new reality. "There is always an advantage of being the first mover in any new space – whether or not it will take off in the future is something that only time will tell," says Viraj Khanna, director at Anamika Khanna (also the designer's twin son), talking about the brand's pret label AK-OK's NFT drops. Needless to say, they sold out within minutes of going live. "It's going to be about rare collectibles. With thousands



LOUIS VUITTON

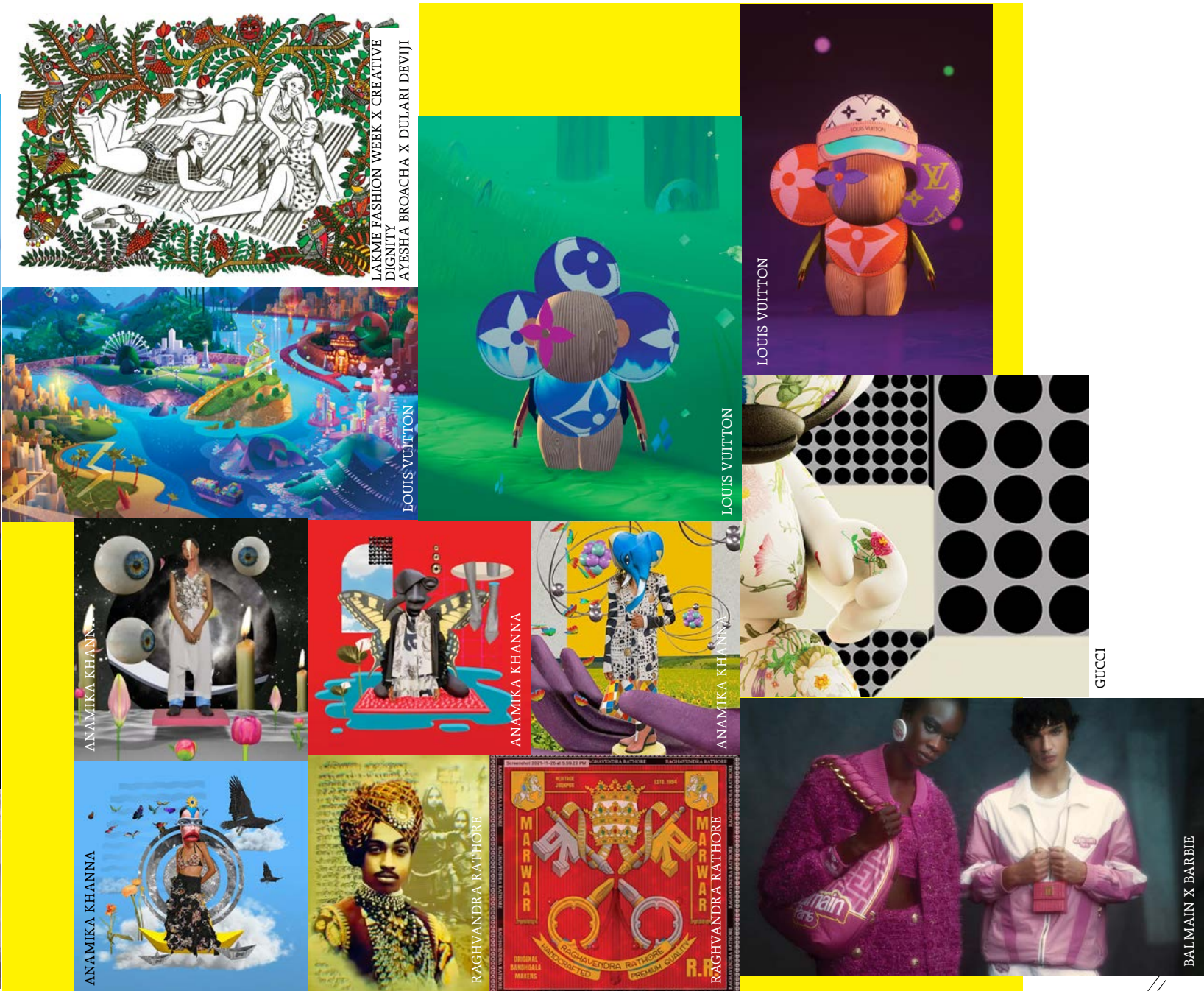


MANISH MALHOTRA

PANKAJ AND NIDHI

PANKAJ AND NIDHI

LAKME FASHION WEEK X
CREATIVE DIGNITY
DEEPTI NAIR & RUFSONA
CHITRAKAR



of NFTs now available everywhere, only the rarest ones are going to be of some value in the future. Some of our rare embroidery panels or outfit samples in the form of NFTs are some examples.” Khanna, also a visual artist, has tapped into the virtual world too – along with his solo show with Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai (slated to take place during the Mumbai Gallery Weekend), he’s launching three NFTs during the show available to the public through WazirX. Lakmé Fashion Week x FDCI also partnered with Creative Dignity, a volunteer-led movement working on the relief, rehabilitation, and rejuvenation within the craft sector to get artisans practicing age-old heritage arts and crafts to be part of this new medium. “Apart from the drops from headlining designers we also had five NFTs by artisans in collaboration with Creative Dignity,” explains Jaspreet Chandok, head at

RISE fashion and lifestyle, “Pankaj & Nidhi and Gaurav Gupta are lined up for drops next. Our job is to not just provide a platform for Indian designers but also create conversations and case studies on new technology available for the fashion community to adopt.”

One thing’s for certain, the appeal of digital fashion also lies in the fact that it reduces the impact on the environment since consumption happens only virtually, it’s therefore also allowed flexibility to be a lot more inclusive with its design and even sizing. Some brands offer this at prices that are at a fraction of their retail prices – like Ralph Lauren’s collection on uber-popular gaming platform Roblox, but then on the other end, Gucci also collaborated with Roblox to create a Gucci Garden where the Queen bee Dionysus sold digitally at a sky-high price. Another attraction is that

it has introduced a new revenue stream for fashion especially post-Covid and the devastation it brought to the industry in the last couple of years. “Financially speaking, for artists and other creators, NFTs act as an additional source of revenue. Moreover, they also guarantee a lifetime of royalty on every secondary sale. The NFT artist ends up making a lot more than what the actual worth of a particular NFT is,” says Singh. As we go to press, the first Indian wedding reception is reported to be taking place this month in the Metaverse (it’s a Hogwarts-themed digital reception at a virtual menu for this Tamil Nadu couple), avatars will be chosen, who can interact in a virtual environment that combines VR, AR, and video – all of this putting into place what we can define as the start of a culture of its own, a Metaculture of sorts. **LI**

MAKING THE CUT

Nothing says business casual better than an oversized blazer and bodysuit combo. Pick an inner with interesting cut-out details that can go from day to night with a few simple tweaks. The best part of this look? Trousers are optional.

One shoulder bodysuit, Alix NYC, ₹ 15,386 approx



Draped bodysuit, Zara, ₹ 2,590



Turtleneck bodysuit, L'Agence at www.net-a-porter.com, ₹ 29,810 approx



STELLA MCCARTNEY

2

HIT REFRESH

From #WFH to Zoom parties, here's everything to re-learn about waist-up dressing

SCHIAPARELLI



As a new wave of the pandemic hits globally, social gatherings have been temporarily put on the back burner, again. Whether we like it or not, we're back to conducting our office and personal lives from our bedrooms and sofas, via makeshift workstations. This time, though, we have the benefit of previous experience. What can we forget? What should we carry forward? Here's everything you need to know about curating an effective waist-up dressing wardrobe 2022 style. **1**



Personalised charm bracelet, Azga, ₹ 2,850 onwards



Enamel rings, Misho, ₹ 4,800 each



Charm necklace, Love Letter x Bhaane ₹ 7,500



Enamel bangle, Dior, price on request

Earrings, Fendi, price on request



TORY BURCH



CAROLINA HERRERA

BLING IT ON

For days when you just can't, jewellery will be your BFF. Throw on a choker necklace over your silk pyjama blouse or wear your old ratty Tee with a pair of XL earrings. Just add a quick swipe of lipstick, turn on your ring light, and log in to your day of meetings.



TOD'S



Spiral brooch,
Pearl Octopussy at
www.net-a-porter.com,
₹ 21,904 approx

IT'S ALL IN THE DETAILS

All the extra time you bought by ditching the commute to work should not be frittered away wondering what to wear. Pick a blank canvas (a plain white Tee or an LBD) and add on a bejewelled brooch or a detachable collar that will do the trick.



Ruffled leather collar,
Ganni,
₹ 15,881



Beaded brooch,
Olivia Dar, ₹ 3,500



Lace trimmed collar,
H&M, ₹ 490



Crystal brooch,
Gucci,
₹ 27,882 approx



VERSACE

POWER PUFF

In our two years of online gatherings we've learnt never to underestimate the power of the statement sleeve. Billowy, romantic, and eye-catching, your puff sleeve blouse or dress is a guaranteed conversation starter, online or IRL. **LO**



Poplin dress,
Malie, ₹ 17,000



BIBHU MOHAPATRA



PAUL & JOE

Linen dress,
Zimmermann,
₹ 46,470 approx



Cotton poplin blouse,
Rhode,
₹ 15,799 approx



Patchwork blouse,
Simone Rocha,
price on request



ULLA JOHNSON

Sreesha Shetty, founder and designer at Shop Lune, on the South Asian jewellery narrative

While 2021 was all about revenge shopping, 2022 is predicted to be the 'year of dopamine dressing'

— the newest internet buzzword, where the intention is to dress to boost your mood. With Instagram Reels gaining traction and more people scouring the world wide web for the next social trend, the jewellery industry is leaving ample room for experimentation and we're here for it.

If we rewind a bit, we'd be able to recount variations of dopamine dressing in the Roaring Twenties. An age of indulgence, the 1920s are remembered for the Great Gatsby-ish decadence. Coco Chanel transformed the way we wear jewellery, replete with long strands of fake pearls and gemstones, something she introduced to the world. She also introduced the Little Black Dress around that decade too. Additionally, fashion saw fur trims, metallic slip dresses, decadent headpieces, and drop-waist dresses, all part of the post-pandemic (the Spanish Flu) glory of the era.

In the years that followed, film and fashion collided, and a century later, we are contending with yet another pandemic, Covid-19. The tales of these two pandemics will go down in fashion history as defining periods of change.

In the realm of jewellery, we are currently seeing an upsurge of chunky pearl chokers, stacks of bangles (especially in India), layers of talisman, personal necklaces, and edgy piercings and ear-scapes. For the first time, trends are oscillating between minimal, intimate jewellery and maximalist jewellery. There are no rules right now, just a need for radical expression that's personal and meaningful. Jewellery as a model for individual expression and representation is what 2022 will bring and people will be more conscious about the brands they consume. We are already seeing a pattern with the new generation wanting to buy from independent, niche, and honest brands. Major corporations, the world over, are seeing a slump in sales for this very reason.

Jewellery has a deep cultural significance in



Lune is grounded in craft, community, womanhood and storytelling



South Asian women are now taking part in an expression of identity that's powerful

India. While we may consider it a symbol of wealth, there's no denying that, in status-driven societies, it is also a sign of oppression. It's going to take us a while to decolonise our views on jewellery, our history, our ancestry, and finally, our freedom.

I'm curious about the freedom urban independent India is experiencing with jewellery right now. Based on the statistics from the Shop Lune website itself, 97 per cent of women are buying jewellery for themselves simply by analysing data from our stores and e-commerce platform. The response on #LuneFine was tremendous and the personalisation of our medallion necklaces and rings saw a huge surge.

With radical freedom emerges a strong voice.



Personalisation is key when it comes to purchasing jewellery

This generation of women does not wait for jewellery to be gifted or passed down to them. They are gifting it to themselves as a token of self-love. Jewellery trends don't change as much as clothing trends do, so investing in jewellery is something women aren't afraid of right now. They pick pieces that mean something to them on an intimate level. From talismans to motifs that represent their cultural history, the hope is to find jewellery that expresses their style.

Women are seeking playful jewellery that blends with and complements their lifestyle. South Asians, in particular, don't want only those pieces of jewellery that have been in their family for generations. While jewellery has always been an emotional purchase, people are also buying it for individual expression.

Watching people around me wearing jewellery as part of their daily wear was where my love for it began. I have seen the men and women of my family wearing a signet ring, the women wearing simple 'goth' bangles or ear chains for their studs. Now, I'm eager to see how South Asian women and men experiment with jewellery. It's thrilling to see that we are developing our own voice here, one that hasn't been documented as widely as its Western counterpart.

The South Asian jewellery narrative is undeniably rich and I have no doubt that its evolution is going to be an exciting one ■



From the 'Onthego' tote bag to the 'Speedy', 'Loop', and 'Dauphine' models, the house's iconic designs now come in a monogram denim finish. The washed denim look is achieved through a jacquard weaving technique exclusively developed for this collection.



BLUE JEAN BABY

Iconic handbags are reimagined for 2022 in the most evocative fabric of all: Denim

The last two years has had us all riding waves of nostalgia. With fashion from the noughties resurrected all over the runways featuring impressive reimaginings, it was only a matter of time before the throwback trend filtered into accessories. Enter, Louis Vuitton, which has ushered in the New Year with a collection that's sure to unite loyal millennial brand enthusiasts with a Gen-Z client base. The brand has launched a fresh line to inject new life into the classic silhouettes of their most iconic handbags.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

During the mid-2000s, the maison launched a monogram denim line that helped define a specific era in modern handbag history. Now,


they're bringing it back, mixing unique materials and employing one-of-a-kind techniques for a 2022 take on the trend.

DESIGN DETAILS

The house's beloved designs are reworked in rich indigo hues, featuring a stonewashed effect and jacquard technique, bearing the unmistakable monogram motif – all in denim. No doubt a wardrobe staple, Louis Vuitton has often used this timeless fabric along with their iconic monogram to create classic collections. The toughness of denim is achieved through a weaving technique that also makes the fabric strong and ensures that the pattern won't fade over time. With its top stitched leather trim,

each model (one can pick from their 'Onthego' tote bag, the 'Speedy', the half-moon 'Loop' baguette handbag or the 'Dauphine' shoulder bag) is as beautiful on the inside as it is on the outside. The lining's fabric appears in negative, giving the impression that it is the reverse of the bag's exterior design.

COLOUR ME READY

With the bags and small leather goods available in the striking navy shade, the brand is also set to drop three newer models which will boast a pink colour way: The 'Nano Speedy', 'Zippy Wallet', and 'Micro Pochette Accessories'. 

10 HOT STORIES

Padded bra with removable straps, Marks & Spencer, ₹ 2,499



Bandeau bra, Skims, ₹ 3,650



Cotton briefs, Hunkemöller, ₹ 973



Mid waist sculpting briefs, Skims, ₹ 3,366



Lace detailed full briefs, Marks & Spencer, ₹ 499



Padded underwire bra, Hunkemöller, ₹ 1,295



When building an innerwear collection, we suggest starting with basic skin-tone styles that will go the distance. From wearing them out all day or under WFH wardrobes, cotton neutrals that prioritise a flattering fit and comfort will always have a spot in our top drawers.

SALVATORE FERRAGAMO

MIU MIU



5

UNDERNEATH IT ALL

From everyday basics to sexy, special occasion inners, and everything in between – we've got your lingerie needs covered

Satin trimmed triangle bra, Coco de Mer, ₹ 15,212



Satin trimmed tulle thong, Coco de Mer, ₹ 13,598



Tulle underwire bra, Agent Provocateur, ₹ 13,887 approx



Tulle thong, Agent Provocateur, ₹ 5,935



Lace briefs, Wacoal, ₹ 1,195



Lace bralette, Wacoal, ₹ 3,650



Whether you've pencilled in a date night at home with your partner or are dressing up for something special, black lacy underthings top the list. It's sexy, minimalist, and doesn't try too hard – no matter how daring the silhouette.

HONEY BIRDETTE



FENDI

Unlined bodysuit, **La Senza**, ₹ 5,650



Push up lace bodysuit, **H&M**, ₹ 2,299



DOJAKA



Silk blend chemise, **La Perla**, ₹ 58,051



RODARTE



Lace trimmed chemise, **Carine Gilson**, ₹ 37,882



Once solely reserved for being worn in the bedroom or under full looks, lacy bodysuits and silk camis are now making their out-of-the-house debut, peeping out from under a blazer – or even worn alone, if you're feeling daring.

Lace balconette bra, **Fleur du Mal** at www.farfetch.com, ₹ 18,509



Printed cotton bra, **Emilio Pucci**, ₹ 16,058



Tulle bandeau bra, **ID Sarrieri** at www.matchesfashion.com, ₹ 13,650



If you're planning to show a little skin or just looking for ways to refresh your lingerie collection, there's no denying the power of printed and lacy separates. Abandon the idea of sets and mix and match your patterns and textures to allow your innerwear to be the star of your look, because some underpinnings are so beautifully made they deserve to be shown off.

Floral print high-leg briefs, **Love Stories** at www.net-a-porter.com, ₹ 1,181



Tulle triangle bra, **Saint Laurent**, ₹ 21,430



Jacquard knit briefs, **Dodo Bar Or**, ₹ 14,212



Tulle and crepe briefs, **Calvin Klein**, ₹ 3,857

Cotton blend jersey bra, **Versace**, ₹ 5,071



Knit bra top, **Onitsuka Tiger**, ₹ 8,990



Soft cup triangle bra, **Tom Ford**, ₹ 14,516

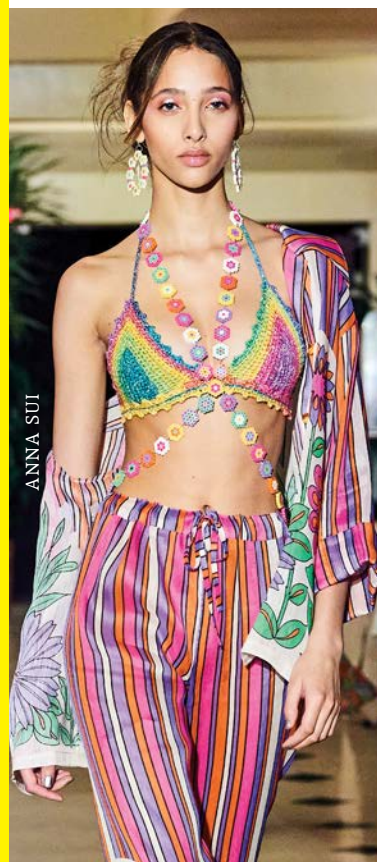


CHANEL



Your sports bra needs to be up for anything. It should be comfortable, breathable, and supportive while being versatile enough to wear out of the gym too. From an essential for your yoga class to errand runs and in-flight looks, pick a classic style that will do all the work for you.

ANNA SUI



6



Shakun Batra

Low Fidelity

Ahead of the release of his new film, filmmaker Shakun Batra talks about sex, relationships, and what it means to be in love

What if love isn't the rock we're told it is, but an expansive, tumultuous sea where all bets are off once the shore is out of sight? It is this question that has plagued Shakun Batra all his life and the only way to find solace, has been penning stories that question our ideas of love, fidelity, and everything in between. "It's the little things that drive me as a storyteller. Exploring the ambiguous crevices in human relationships helps me accept my experiences, and myself, better."

To Batra, love is a Ship of Theseus – the sum of volatile parts that keep changing

every second. "My experience with love has taught me that it isn't a singular emotion, but a vast spectrum of which romance is only a small, overemphasised part," he says "Even indifference is a part of it. It is what's left of love once the romance and affection evaporate." He believes every wedge of the spectrum is in itself, a story of aching beauty waiting to be told. "We need to tell richer stories that explore love over different stages; more 'Ijazzat's and 'When Harry Met Sally's."

FIDDLING WITH INFIDELITY

Batra's new film, *Gehraiyaan*, which stars Deepika Padukone, Siddhant Chaturvedi, Ananya Panday and Dhairya Karwa, and will stream on Amazon Prime Video, seeks to explore a notoriously complex aspect of love – fidelity. It chronicles the salacious clash of two marriages – one in a freefall towards its impending demise and the other rushing towards its 'too rosy to be true' fruition set in Tuscany. The characters are hurled into crisis of romantic faith when either half of the couples starts a tantalising affair behind their partners' backs. Batra believes "the dark caresses of someone else" has always been a popular temptation; it is just easier to hide it in plain sight today. "Clandestine adultery has been the cornerstone of human relationships since forever. What's new is that the conversations you have with your partner

A still from *Gehraiyaan*

don't need to be conversations at all, now that it's not always face-to-face. We essentially speak to hide." While the idea might seem a little too pessimistic, Batra believes it's simply scandalised out of proportion.

To him, enforced monogamy is the symptom of a decadent desire for possession. It turns something as warm and benign as locking lips into a reprehensible crime of passion and lovers, into sinners deserving of eternal damnation. "(Sexual) Infidelity doesn't always have to be such a sin. To some people, tying them down for the rest of their lives might be the worst possible sin a lover can commit. Sex and fidelity are often considered to be interconnected or worse, naturally cursed to be intertwined." The culprit, Batra believes, is our half-baked understanding of what sex is. "We are familiarised with infidelity, but in all the wrong ways. The hush-hush prejudice that surrounds sex and adultery keeps us from questioning them for ourselves."

The cure for this, he says, is helping audiences develop empathy. "I'm not looking to rationalise adultery through my stories because I don't think that's my job. All I want is to take audiences to a place where they see these characters as normal human beings, preferably themselves."

MODERN LOVE

One of the more peculiar rituals of 21st-century love is an ostentatious surrender of one's own self to the relationship. To Batra, it is an unfortunate misinterpretation of a larger, much more complex idea. "I detest the idea of finding yourself through love. Self-discovery is a process that should precede romantic love; there's no point to being a partner first and a person later."

Interlocked hands, hermetic rings, and padlocks on bridges are all, to Batra, reflective of the oxymoronic form love has come to take in modern popular culture. "Our stories portray love as a stringent commitment while it should be seen as a freeing experience. It is meant to be shared, not kept in little boxes in our back pockets." ■

HIGH END HYGGE

A lazy girl's guide to elevating your loungewear

While we've spent almost two years in variations of sweats and pyjamas, the current global situation indicates some return to normalcy. But are we completely ready to abandon our comfy homewear? Thanks to the fashion world's love affair with lounge-y essentials, there's an array of luxe details and simple styling techniques to elevate your loungewear from sofa to street in a few easy moves. Your trusty satin pjs can look seriously chic when paired with metallic heels, a statement bag, and a chunky necklace, keeping your comfort intact. **11**



Chain link necklace,
Michael Kors,
₹ 33,000



Sunglasses,
Balenciaga,
₹ 18,481 approx



Satin pyjama blouse,
Mango
₹ 2,990



Pyjama bottoms,
Mango,
₹ 2,990



VALENTINO



Jewelled bag
Dior
price on request

NANUSHKA



Enamel bangle,
Kate Spade,
₹ 6,990



Metal watch,
Fendi,
price on request



Slingback heels,
Zara,
₹ 4,590



Diamond earrings,
Chopard,
price on request



LONDON FASHION WEEK STREET STYLE



Artisans are educated in craft skill-sets at the foundation, promoting financial independence

8

A NEW IDENTITY

A collision of cultures and ethical work processes define the DNA of The Princess Dia Kumari Foundation Store. Princess Gauravi Kumari, the co-founder, highlights her multifaceted vision for the brand

The best ideas probably sprout from personal explorations, and in the case of Gauravi Kumari, her experiments with design laid the foundation for a conscious venture. “I was studying media at New York University and found myself back home in Jaipur for my final semester with the onset of the pandemic. My mother founded The Princess Dia Kumari Foundation in 2013 and I’ve spent most of my adolescent years accompanying her to this unique space that empowers local women, makes them financially independent, and teaches them various craftsmanship techniques. That summer, I began having my clothes made by the talent at the foundation. It then dawned on me that while Rajasthan had a bounty of skill, few brands were combining traditional techniques with contemporary design. I also wanted to give the community a wider reach,” she shares.



A patchwork jacket created using up-cycled fabric

After completing a short course in the fashion business, Gauravi enlisted the aesthetic proclivity of her friend, Claire Deroo, a jewellery designer based in Paris. Through an ongoing cultural exchange, the two founders concocted modern designs for the young consumer – bucket hats, vibrant patchwork jackets, and summery co-ord sets in block-printed fabrics. “Everything we create is an extension of our style. It’s important for me to highlight the makers of the garments and not treat this as a purely commercial platform. The idea of an online store is new to the artisans and it’s important to explain who we’re creating for. The idea of catering to a global consumer makes them very proud.”

THE MUSES

Inspiration ushered in manifold with the city itself becoming a burgeoning influence – heritage buildings, vibrant architecture, as well as the floral and geometric paintings found in the museum, have been integrated into the design language. Housed in the age-old Badal Mahal, a leisurely space created by Gauravi’s ancestors to foster art, craft, and music in Regal India, the artisans work peacefully in a courtyard overlooking



Princess Gauravi Kumari & Claire Deroo



Block printed co-ord sets and bucket hats



The sari is given a new age spin, paired with trendy crop tops

a lake under arched hand-painted ceilings. “We’re drawn to design in the most unanticipated manner. Last year, we came across this bold font on a truck parked near our workspace, we re-imagined this on our sloganned sweatshirts and commissioned a local artist, who specialises in this form, and translated his artwork into embroidery. The ladies who work with us are our favourite muses, the way they unabashedly mix colour and pattern in their daily garments is inspiring.”

FULL CIRCLE

A constant expansion and honing of skill sets is synonymous with the mission of the store. Master craftsmen from around the state are invited to carry out month-long workshops in hand dyeing, crochet, *gota-patti*, and *kota-doria* techniques. These methods in turn prove valuable for the artisans to create for their families back home. What started as an online space in the thick of the pandemic is slowly transforming into an immersive retail experience with a store set to open later this year. For the founders, preserving the intent of the brand is essential, “All the proceeds from the sales go to the foundation and I want to keep putting the narrative first and communicate that in every way possible.”



Arif Khan will participate in two events at the Games

9

*From the Valley to Beijing,
meet India's only hope at
the 2022 Winter Olympics*

In November of last year, 31-year-old Mohammad Arif Khan became the first athlete from the country to earn a quota place for the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics in the slalom event in alpine skiing. The achievement fulfilled a lifelong dream for the skier from Jammu and Kashmir.

A month later, Khan pushed the envelope even further, winning a quota place in giant slalom at a meet in Montenegro. The feat earned him a unique distinction of becoming the first Indian to win direct quota spots in two different Winter Olympics events.

As a child, Khan would play football and cricket, but there was no proper playground for him to test his skills. "Skiing was the only convenient sport for us," he says, adding that he first took up the sport at the age of four.

"Since my dad (Yasin Khan) owns a tour company-cum-ski equipment shop in Gulmarg,

I was always close to the sport," says Khan, who was born in the Goiwara area of Hajibal village, Tangmarg in north Kashmir's Baramulla district. "I remember an incident from 1994 when my dad and I had to trudge 500 metres to the ski shop as there was thick snow. My dad had groomed a small ski slope just outside the shop. We started (skiing) at around 9.30 am and went on for hours."

By the age of 10, Khan turned to competitive skiing and steadily rose the ladder. At 12, he bagged a gold medal in the slalom in his first appearance at the national championship. Khan then made his international debut for India when he was 16 at a junior international ski federation (FIS) event in Yomase, Japan. He finished 23rd in the giant slalom.

However, Khan informs us that the turning point in his career came in 2008. "I travelled to Europe for the first time that year for a short-term training programme. I went to Switzerland and when I saw their mountains, slopes, and infrastructure, I felt it was quite similar to what we have back home. That was the picking point for me as I thought if those guys could do the sport so well and continue with it, why can't we?"

MAKING A WAY

With skiing being an expensive sport, most of Khan's funding comes from his father, who poured his income from the ski equipment shop into his son's career. Khan also doubles up as a skiing instructor or a coach occasionally to make up for the shortfall.

"Skiing requires you to train on highly developed infrastructure, which we, unfortunately, don't have in the country. Till a few years ago, it was difficult to obtain corporate sponsorship. To add to it, there was very little support from the government. The civil issues in Jammu and Kashmir made it even more difficult. I was fortunate that JSW Sports took a chance on me. The Sports Ministry's Mission Olympic Cell (MOC) has also approved my inclusion in the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS)," he says.

Despite the decades of conflict that have mired Kashmir, Khan believes that the youth are hungry for success and require a boost of confidence now and then. "I have always been motivated to work hard and inspire the youth to engage in sports. I'd like to believe that my accomplishments will make an impact." **■**



Label ALERT

10



There's no better way to celebrate self-love than indulging in some retail therapy, and this month it comes in the form of fun-loving daily wear and demi-fine jewellery



IF YOU LOVE: Artsy fashion.

THEN YOU WILL LOVE: Drawn.

WHO: After spending almost a decade working in digital marketing, Rhea Bhattacharya decided to revisit her love for art in her mid-thirties. Reminiscing her love for sketching clothes during her school days she aspired to create a label that lent wardrobe classics a twist. Without any prior design experience and on the brink of the pandemic, she launched Drawn in 2020. An extension of her personal style, the label celebrates bold colours and vibrant prints while marrying functionality with style.

WHY: Alluding to the name, the brand routinely collaborates and commissions young artists and illustrators to create unique digital prints that translate into wearable art. The small-batch production ensures minimal fabric wastage and water usage and implements packaging that is biodegradable and recyclable.

WHERE: www.shopdrawn.com

PRICE RANGE: ₹ 3,800-8,900

WEAR: Give your regular white shirt a fun upgrade by sporting any of the airy pieces from the brand's current collection. Rock a print-on-print or play it down by tucking it into a high-waisted skirt or mom jeans.

IF YOU LOVE: Modern jewellery.

THEN YOU WILL LOVE: Juñisa.

WHO: Armed with a degree in communication design, Saru Garg channelled her love for product design into a jewellery label influenced by pop art and expressionism. Through pieces that are minimal and versatile, Juñisa offers luxe jewellery encrusted with lab-grown diamonds leading to accessible price points and an eco-friendly alternative to natural diamonds.

WHY: Quirky, geometric elements such as puzzle pieces, paper clips, and face motifs are realised in recycled brass and sterling silver that is treated to gold-plating while creating room for customisation. The label also plants a tree for every order placed as a means to pay it forward.

WHERE: www.junisa.shop

PRICE RANGE: ₹ 2,000-30,000

WEAR: Artistic and sculptural, these statement pieces can accentuate any outfit. Make the diamond paperclip choker your focal point by styling it with an off-shoulder blouse or a slinky camisole dress.



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worldwidemedia.in



CROWNING GLORY

Ruched blouse
and skirt set,
both
Aniket Satam,
₹ 15,000;
hoop earrings,
brass ring, both
Olio Stories,
₹ 8,800 and
₹ 4,500
respectively



From a historic Miss World victory to her latest Hindi release – Manushi Chhillar talks about fame, glory, and the process of becoming an actor

Photographs **KEEGAN CRASTO**
Fashion Director **PASHAM ALWANI**
Words **ANAND SINGH**

Cut-out jumpsuit,
Runaway at Frisky
₹ 7,490; metal
earrings, **Outhouse**,
₹ 15,500; circular ring,
Tribe Amrapali,
₹ 650; chain link
ring (part of a set);
Misho, ₹ 8,200

he moment her name was announced, English became a foreign language. The night of November 18, 2017, brought Manushi Chhillar a euphoric high only five other Indian women have experienced. “In my head, I was just this medical student who suddenly became Miss World; surreal is the only way to describe it. My life changed that night.” Chhillar credits her contention (and eventual victory) in the Miss World competition as her most pivotal coming-of-age experience. “I’ll always cherish the time I spent travelling with Miss World. I realise how rare it is for someone my age to have experienced all those things and I am very grateful for that.” She says.

To Chhillar, the victory was a purely professional one; the empyrean reward of months of hard work. “I always thought of Miss World as a wonderful platform that could get me great work, the kind I always dreamt of doing. Fame was never something I actively sought.” But fame did follow her triumph and with it, came the blinding spotlight. “It got overwhelming in the beginning because I had never paused to think what the victory would do to my life. I remember thinking ‘don’t they have enough pictures of me?’ It was only later that I began to see the attention for what it was – love.”

With time, Chhillar learned to accept, and even respect the attention she received. “I don’t think it’s scrutiny at all. It is just love and support, albeit the sheer quantity of it can get intimidating sometimes. Regardless, it feels amazing to have so many people celebrate you and your life’s greatest victory.”

A NEW START

Chhillar looks back on the culmination of her pageantry career with great fondness. “The

transition to acting began the moment I placed the crown on Vanessa’s (Miss World 2018) head. Since then, it has been a process of switching disciplines; from trying to become the best version of myself to moulding myself into new, often unfamiliar characters,” she says. Foraying into acting has been a gruelling but rewarding experience for Chhillar. She believes training for Miss World has given her the work ethic she needs to excel in her new, equally glamorous career. “It was a little difficult in the beginning, but then, what isn’t? I remember a time when pageantry felt incredibly intimidating to me. I put my head down, got to work, and adapted over time.”

Chhillar’s love for the performing arts dates back to her childhood, a time when it served a much more benign purpose in her life. “I remember being forced to take dance lessons because my mother thought I desperately needed to come out of my shell. After sulking through the first few classes, I realised it could help me express myself better. Before I knew it, dancing became a hobby that I genuinely enjoyed.” Acting, however, was still as foreign a dream to her as any. “I came from a different life. The goal was to finish college, get a degree, make a pit stop at Miss World, and then practice medicine like my parents.”

As fate would have it, Chhillar’s pit-stop led her to a crossroads that wasn’t originally a part of the plan. “The opportunity just manifested itself. The thought of becoming an actress intimidated me, but I knew I’d regret passing on the experience much more than I’d regret trying and failing. The fact that I’m so fond of it now is sheer luck,” she says “I think I can do this for the rest of my life if audiences and the industry are kind enough to me.”

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Chhillar’s first release, *Prithviraj*, is a period drama centered around the eponymous Maharaja’s romantic and martial exploits. What drew her to the project was its refreshing take on a tale as old as time. “I instantly fell in love with the script. It tells a familiar story from a new, innately human perspective. Our aim with the film is to help audiences understand the characters and the decisions they made at a crucial point in time. It focuses on exploring the humanity at the centre of these larger than life figures,” she says.

Chhillar believes *Prithviraj* is in more ways than one a dream debut for her. Aside from its all-star billing, the “intense but thoroughly enjoyable” experience of shooting the film has taught her a great deal about her newly adopted craft. “Working with people like Doctor Sahab (Dr. Chandraprakash Dwivedi), Akshay (Kumar) sir and Sanjay (Dutt) sir is a career highlight in itself. That, coupled with the intense prep that I had to go through for the song and action sequences, taught me more than film school ever could.”

As for her future in the industry, Chhillar continues to remain oblivious but hopeful. “I don’t know what lies ahead for me but I’m excited about it, to say the least. I think I’ll be okay as long as I continue to work with humility and sincerity. The two things on my agenda as of now are – learning more about the craft and through it, myself.” ■



This page: Tassel and bead detailed dress, **Yousef Al Jasmi**, price on request;
brass earrings, **Anatina**, ₹ 2,850

Facing page: Oversized blazer, **Manishii**, ₹ 16,000; sequinned shorts, **H&M**, ₹ 3,999; hoop earrings,
Radhika Agrawal, ₹ 2,900; crystal necklace, **Isharya**, ₹ 6,899; pendant necklace, **Anatina**, ₹ 2,250



Bralette, **Noble Swimwear**, ₹1,499; spiral woollen knit trousers, **Shivan & Narresh**, ₹ 58,950; beaten hoop earrings, **Valliyan by Nitya Arora**, ₹ 6,500; brass bangle, **H&M**, ₹ 3,499; stone cut bracelets, pebble bracelets all **Radhika Agrawal** ₹ 2,800 each and ₹ 3,800 each respectively





Sequinned gown, **Alina Anwar**, price on request; crystal earrings, **Radhika Agrawal**, ₹ 4,500; sculpted rings, **Anatina**, ₹ 1,850 each

Make-up **VARDAN NAYAK**

Hair **GABRIEL GEORGIU AT ANIMA CREATIVE MANAGEMENT**

Assisted by (Styling) **NISHTHA PARWANI, NAHID NAWAAZ**

Location and hospitality courtesy **LOHONO STAYS**

Aimless conversations on dating apps have led fatigued singles to question: Is finding love even worth the effort?

Words **BARRY RODGERS**



LOVE IT TO LEAVE IT

On an intensely cold night in the east end of London, Hitanshi Kamdar, a 23-year-old postgraduate student of Central Saint Martins, lined up for admission outside Nikki's Bar in Shoreditch, with her girlfriends. After each of them were asked to provide documentation for entry, they eased their way into a space that offers a mixture of soft touches, trash TV, and garish pops of colour. It's no wonder the creators cite Quentin Tarantino's films as a major source of inspiration for the decor. There's even a bed...that's right, a PVC-covered bed, if you're looking for a photo op.

Kamdar and her friends had signed up for a singles' mixer organised by Thursday,

a dating app where, as the name suggests, singles can only match and meet through the app on Thursdays. When the clock strikes midnight, users toggle an icon to indicate that they're ready to date that day. Then, for 24 hours, they can swipe and chat as on other dating sites. When Thursday becomes Friday, however, their matches are wiped, and the app locks. The implication is that there's no time to waste with chitchat; making a date is now or never.

To encourage IRL meetings, Thursday hosts events in London and New York, the two cities where the app has currently made inroads.

"I was looking for something different. I'm tired of swiping on the apps and engaging

in conversations that rarely lead to IRL meetings. For women like me, who are not all about hookups, it's easy to get jaded with modern dating. It seems that dating apps are just for one-night stands, FWB situations, and flings at best. I am usually left wondering: 'Is there a version of my swiping, matching, and messaging on the apps that can get help me get back to actual dating?'"

At the risk of sounding like one of those people who says "the problem with this generation is [insert gripe about technology]," Kamdar believes that the problem with her generation is very much related to technology. "Everyone is familiar with ghosting now. In fact, I have been guilty of ghosting men on the app, too. You

could be engrossed in what seems like a good conversation with someone for weeks, and suddenly there's radio silence. You could date someone for months and they could make the craven decision to ghost you. For some people, it could be a mutual sense that the relationship has no future. For others, ghosting can be demoralising. I think it all boils down to our fear of rejection," she says.

Psychologist Reema Gadve believes that people view ghosting as a way to protect another person's feelings because they feel honesty will hurt more than silence. "Most people on the apps don't want to hurt another's feelings. So, instead of having a conversation about why the equation isn't working, they ghost them. Most people believe that they are safeguarding someone's feelings by doing it. But it's a reflection of their own discomfort. But what most millennials and Gen Z-ers don't realise is that there's no bypassing discomfort when you're dealing with relationships," says Gadve.

THE GENDER CONSTRUCT

For Rahul Gopi, brand solutions and artist manager, Times Talent, dating apps have

trapped him in a never-ending vortex of disappointment. The gender-fluid creative informs me that navigating the potentially time-sucking dating world is tricky because society is split quite rigidly into man and woman, so he presents a conundrum to most people. "I don't pass as 'woman' (and nor do I want to), but I feel similarly alien in the role of 'man'. When we are boxed into such strict compartments, where gay men are attracted to 'men', straight men are attracted to 'women', people like myself slip between the cracks. Romance for most people, especially on the apps, is entirely reliant on genitals," he says.

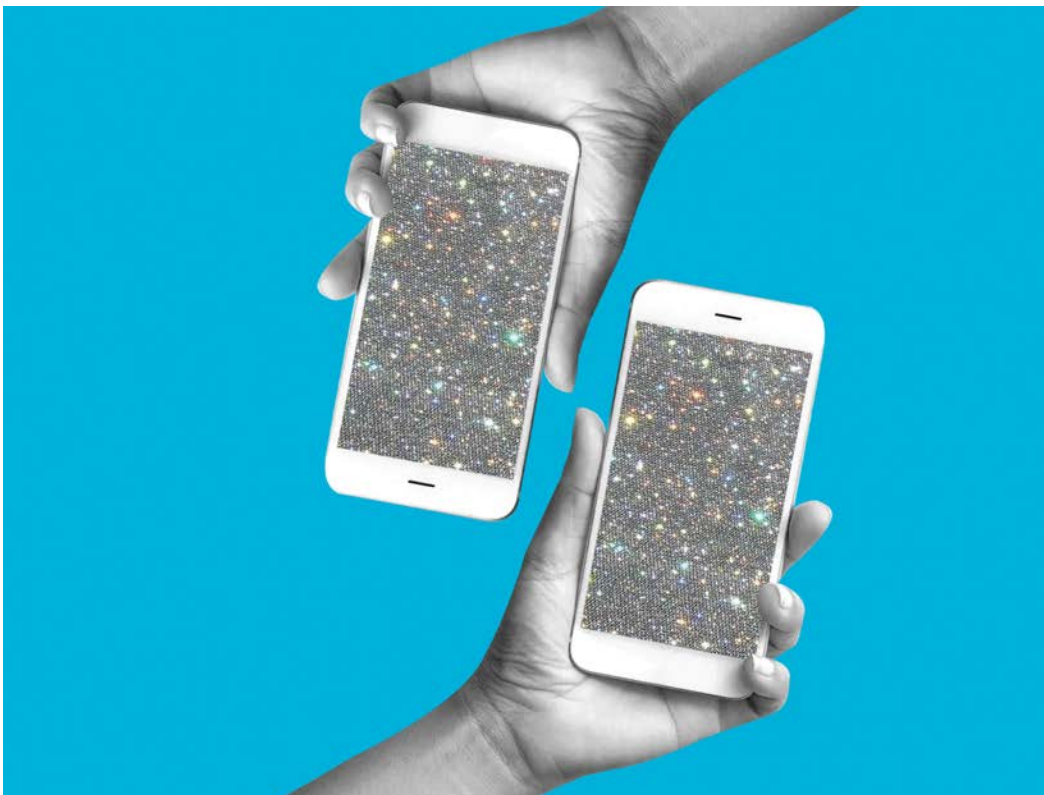
Gopi, who enjoys draping saris, tells me that the external part has been the most difficult, which to him makes sense – "I find

it difficult to convince people to respect my identity, but I believe that some people will. Gender, as with so many things in life, is like having a conversation; you come clean with your position, and others will theirs, or they will not. Both parts of this equation are important and dependent on each other," he adds.

MUM'S THE WORD

For Dr Aaertii Singh, a single mother living in Chandigarh, online dating has never been a consideration because she believes the apps are ruled by shallow morality and self-image. While she has never been closed to the idea of forging connections, Singh tells me it's not uncommon for single mothers to be approached by men who lie about being

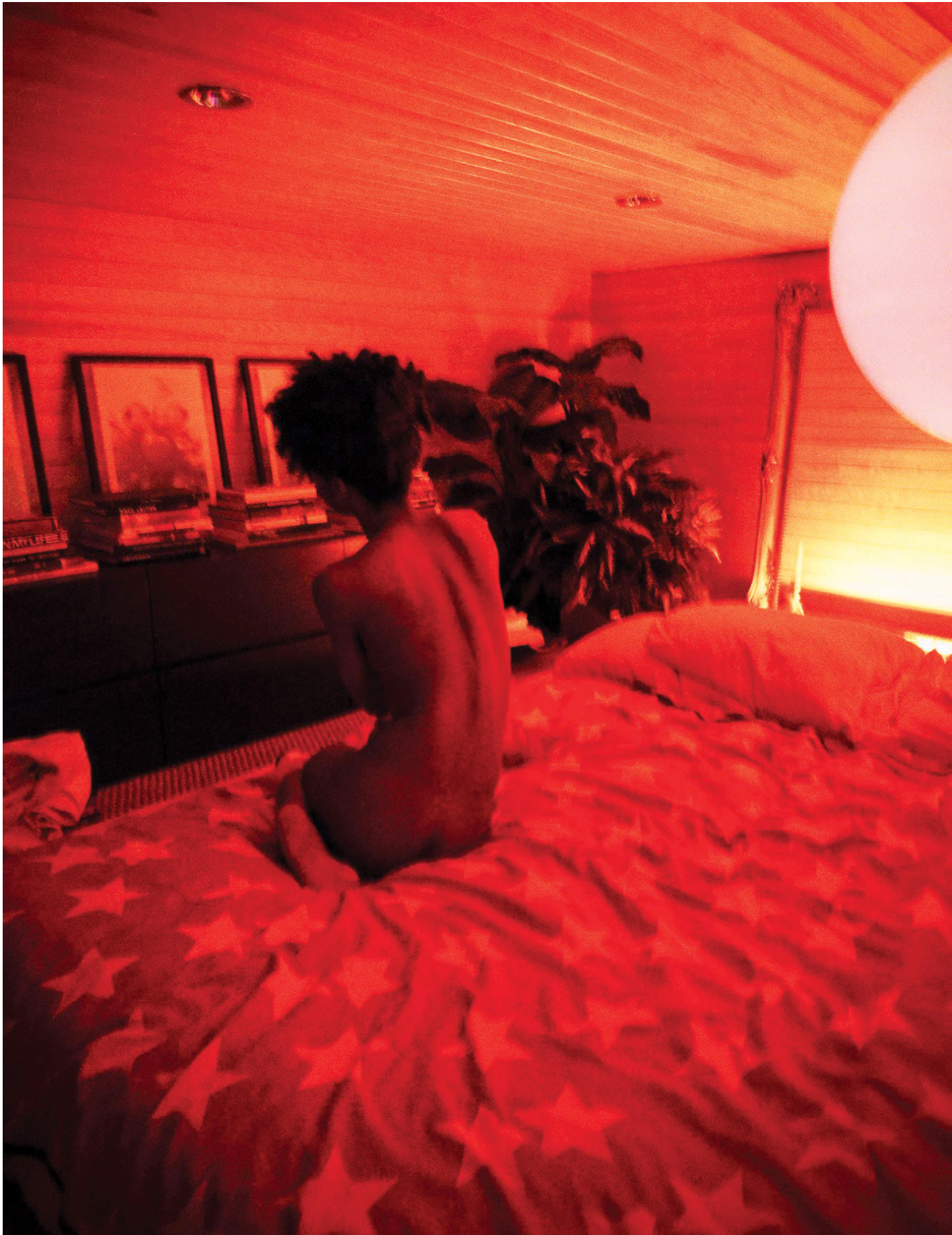
Whether you want to blame it on technology or the inability of our generation to commit to something long-term, we have to admit that dating has always been, and will always be, work. What's changed? More of the work now is not actually around the interaction that you have with a person, it's mostly to do with the selection process, and the process of self-presentation



comfortable dating someone with a child, only to bolt at the first sign of responsibility or commitment.

She is also of the opinion that our ideas of love are most often than not limited by slotting it into romance. "The commercialisation of love as a sellable emotion has also made it performative to a large degree. We don't always account for platonic relationships, friendship, loving oneself, as well and loving pets, or parents. Love encapsulates a gamut of emotions that run free and fluid, but we're always looking to shrink it into molds that we feel are right," she says.

Whether you want to blame it on technology or the inability of our generation to commit to something long-term, we have to admit that dating has always been, and will always be, work. What's changed? More of the work now is not actually around the interaction that you have with a person, it's mostly to do with the selection process, and the process of self-presentation. That does feel different than before. ■



FALLING BACK

The pattern of going back to our toxic exes can push us into an endless loop of pain – three people give us a ringside view into their journeys

Words **ARMAN KHAN**

In a narrow escarpment of a rugged valley along the central Deccan region, nearly a hundred kilometres away from Andhra Pradesh, Sunaina* met Kinshuk* in a rather awkward state: He was crouched over boulders. Both geologists by profession, it was perhaps the best and most predictable way they could've met.

"Just to see him examine minerals with the tip of his jaded pencil was cute enough for me," she says. "It was almost like seeing an adorable creature in their natural habitat."

The months that followed had all the makings of a fairy-tale love story straight out of a *Mills & Boon* paperback – dates that became special with every passing day, the way their little bedroom games would nourish them, and flowers, *flowers*.

"It took me a while to understand how deeply manipulative he was," recounts Sunaina. "He would bury me under gifts and for him, that was the license to not tell me anything at all about his life."

When Sunaina confronted Kinshuk, after a heated argument, he simply flung a burning pan at her in the kitchen, nearly causing a deep gash around her neck. Somehow, she'd expected this. The signs were always there – the mutedly aggressive behaviour in the restaurant when the order didn't come on time, or how the Indian cricket team losing a match would quite literally destabilise him.

The breakup was swift and clear. Then, came the lockdown. Not a "single day passed in the first month of the lockdown" when she didn't want him. It was certainly not the kind of yearning that would need Leonard Cohen's songs complementing it, but it was the kind that crushed her, made her doubt herself.

"When I eventually texted him, after a point of utmost desperation, I'd lost nearly 20 kgs," she says.

In a recent study conducted by the University of Missouri and published in the journal *Family Relations*, researchers concluded that patterns of breakup and renewal were linked to increased symptoms of psychological distress, indicating that the accumulation of relationship transitions can create added turmoil for individuals.

According to Jasdeep Mago, a neuropsychologist based in Mumbai, the way we navigate relationships is largely dependent on our earliest encounter with a relationship: Our parents.

"Empathy is both an innate trait and a learned one," she says. "The learned part of it comes from what we've seen as children. If that aspect was toxic, we first need to *acknowledge* that we are following a toxic pattern of going



"Starting it all over again is not easy. I saw it this way: My exes had accepted me when I was nothing. They had loved me for who I was. How could I not go back to them?"

back to something toxic repeatedly."

For Harshit*, an entrepreneur, going back to his ex who had cheated on him while they were living together, came from the idea that theirs was an "incomplete story" that needed closure.

"The intimacy with him was good," he says. "We had some of the best moments together.

There was also a lot of learning that came my way both during and after the relationship."

Another ex of Harshit's, who had the habit of ghosting him, had the most crushing influence on him. After they broke up, the ex's father passed away. And Harshit somehow ended up "feeling guilty" for not being there for him.

"I'd spiralled into alcoholism," he says. "I threw myself at him in every way possible. I'd drunk-call him nearly every second night. If it wasn't for my friends who helped me get out of it, I don't know where I'd be."

The prospect of a new relationship, for Harshit, is scary and heralds the beginning of a whole new set of anxieties. "Starting it all over again is not easy. I saw it this way: My exes had accepted me when I was nothing. They had loved me for who I was. How could I not go back to them?"

For Mahira*, going back to her physically abusive ex, purely came out of a lack of self-esteem she'd experienced as a child. "I just didn't think I was good enough for anyone," she says. "Here was a person who loved me, and I didn't want him to go."

To this day, Mahira can't muster up the courage to delete his pictures. "I realised much later that he always saw this relationship as an extended hookup. My feelings haven't faded to this day. They can't."

Mago, the neuropsychologist, believes that the most important thing to do for people who keep relapsing back to their toxic exes is for them to understand the worth of their own company.

"We encourage them to first spend some time alone by themselves," she says. "Understand yourself, process your emotions and don't jump into a new one. Don't take responsibility for things that were not your fault."

For Sunaina, what broke her pattern was when she finally bagged a job that respected her judgements and prioritised her sensibilities. "At the end of the day, no one can love you if they don't see yourself doing the same. Freedom is sweet, but the road to get there is not pretty. And that's okay."

(*names have been changed to protect anonymity.) ■



home body is the newest collection from Rupri Kaur

SISTERHOOD

A borderless friendship united by poetry. Follow the journey of social media star Rupri Kaur's travelling book

Words **POOJA SHAH**

“**W**hat a relief to discover that the aches I thought were mine alone are also felt by so many others” – page 136, *home body*.

This past year has been difficult for me. Between yet another

wedding postponement, cancelled bachelorette parties, loss of family members to Covid, and a surprising falling out with close friends, things have been rough. In these moments I find myself retreating and unable to fully communicate with those closest to me about the grief or sadness I may hold. But there's one thing

that has always been there for me – global sensation Rupi Kaur's poetry.

When I was going through my first heartbreak, I gravitated towards Kaur's 2015 anthology *Milk and Honey*.

"She is water; soft enough to offer life tough enough to drown it away," I would remind myself through tears.

I pre-ordered Kaur's *The Sun and Her Flowers* when I was trying to figure out my career aspirations and trying to make my own big-girl decisions.

"You do not just wake up and become the butterfly – growth is a process." This became my mantra.

At this stage, while I am trying to find my place in society while embracing change, *home body*, Kaur's most recent collection about the lessons she learned about love, loss, migration, and healing miraculously entered my life. And most uniquely.

Rather than being redundant, it is Kaur's distinctive emphasis on the self that firmly grounds her poems, along with her deeper exploration of heavier material – like depression, anxiety, and self-hate – that provide more substance to undergird her characteristically lavish and radical affirmations. A deeper vulnerability, coupled with her poems' famous but oft-ridiculed simplicity, creates an uncomplicated, powerful final product.

To celebrate the book and foster community among her readers, Kaur initiated a new project: The Sisterhood of the Traveling Book, an inaugural series where a personalised copy of *home body* travelled across the United States into the hands of pre-selected participants who were able to leave their unique marks on the same pages that Kaur spilled her soul. I was lucky enough to be one of seven participants (including Kaur) in this borderless friendship.

Right around Christmastime, I was the last 'sister' on this literary journey. When I received the book, it was covered with doodles, poems, notes, illustrations, and quotes by the other sisters who preceded me. Kaur's words validated each of our respective experiences, whether it was related to love, trauma, or family, and fostered a new relationship with each other despite never physically meeting. These women were strangers, yet I felt heard and recognised: They empathised with me in their unique ways. This was the exact objective Kaur was trying to reach.

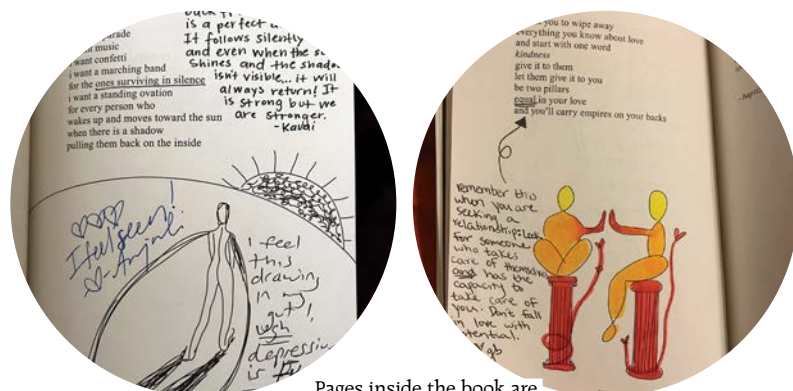
"With *home body*, I turned inwards to tackle the inner turmoil I was dealing with at the time. There's a whole chapter about my challenges with mental health, and how I've struggled to stay working within a system that wants all of me, which is the system that we will live and work under. I wrote this book as a way of documenting those struggles and walking myself back to where the love lives. For me, true success is inner peace, and *home body* is me starting the journey of finding it," she tells me.

Kaur notes that when she first started writing *home body*, she was broken and lost, but three years later, when it was completed, she felt more grounded.

As far as the initiative is concerned, there was no real selection process when looking for women to participate. Kaur chose participants from different states in the US in the hopes that there would be a diversity of personalities, backgrounds, and ultimately contributions to the book.

"It was completely random and it couldn't have turned out any

"With home body, I turned inwards to tackle the inner turmoil I was dealing with at the time. There's a whole chapter about my challenges with mental health, and how I've struggled to stay working within a system that wants all of me, which is the system that we will live and work under"




Pages inside the book are covered with notes and illustrations

better! The group of women that have laid their mark on this copy of the book are so special and fulfilled my dreams of what I intended for this initiative. I think they more than fulfilled it. I never expected it to become what it did."

When I got the original email inviting me to participate I was floored and in shock. I didn't know what to expect, but I did know that there was most certainly something I was going to gain from this. I read and re-read *home body* four times and I learned something new about myself each time, through the voices of the other sisters. There was this invisible solidarity that linked us through the power of storytelling. Community is a funny concept – we try so hard to fit into certain boxes, but might accidentally fall into another one.

"Stories transcend distance, space, and time," explains Kaur. "Stories are what help us survive and thrive. If we didn't have stories, how could we connect? I feel the same way when I flip through this book. As I go through it, the world starts to feel small, my heart starts to feel full, and I suddenly realise that I'm not alone. We're all having a human experience and that makes us more alike than we think."

For Kaur, 2022 means she will get back on the road to tour globally. She is also working on a longer, fourth collection of poetry and plans to continue the Sisterhood of Traveling Book series in the hopes that it will reach more states, and eventually more countries too. 

A FRESH START

*Ultra-soft knits, plaid dresses
and soft layers play
protagonists this season*

PHOTOGRAPHS **KAREL LOSENICKY**
STYLING **ANNA SGURA**





Bodysuit, mini shorts, tweed jacket,
necklace, leather boots,
all Saint Laurent By Anthony Vaccarello

Sleeveless woollen
sweater, **Purotatto**;
flannel skirt, **Max Mara**;
leather boots, **AGL**



Cotton blouse, Louis
Vuitton; flannel hooded
cape, Marina Rinaldi







Woollen dress, cardigan, both
Dior; leather boots, **Baldini**

Beauty tip: For the eye contour,
use Capture Totale Super Potent
Eye Serum, Anti-Aging And
Global Anti-Fatigue, **Dior**

The shoot was carried out at The
Natural Reserve Torbiere Del
Sebino, in Provaglio D'iseo, in
the Province Of Brescia

Silk and cotton shirt,
tartan trousers, braided
leather belt, all **Etro**;
woollen coat, felt hat, both
Marella

Hospitality and location
courtesy: Monastery Of
San Pietro in Lamosa, in
Provaglio D'iseo, in the
Province of Brescia





Wool pullover, **Manila Grace**
Beauty tip: soothe and reinforce
the skin with Defense Solution
Moisturizing Repairing Cream, ideal
for sensitive skin
(Dibi Face, In Institute)



Bodysuit, **Emilio Pucci**; woollen cardigan, **Twinset Milano**; buckle belt, **Gavazzeni**; calfskin boots, **AGL**

TOKENS OF LOVE

While we often look in one direction for Valentine's Day gifting, it's time to abandon clichés. Our thoughtfully curated gift guide covers all the loves of your life – from your partner to BFFs and parents, or your number one priority – you

Junior Fashion Stylist **NISHTHA PARWANI**

HER



Printed pyjama set,
Victoria's Secret, ₹ 5,628



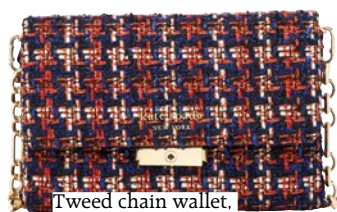
Teak jewellery box,
Cyahi, ₹ 1,999



Brass earrings,
Anatina, ₹ 3,950



'Lou Lou' tinted
sunglasses,
Saint Laurent,
price on request



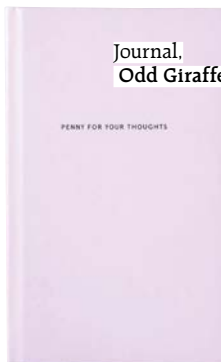
Tweed chain wallet,
Kate Spade, price on request



Mini heart rose box,
Fiorella, ₹ 12,000



Round chocolate
box, Ledor, ₹ 2,590



Journal,
Odd Giraffe, ₹ 599



Hair straightener,
Remington, ₹13,195



'London Peony & Blush
Suede' cologne, Jo Malone at
www.nykaa.com, ₹ 4,800



Crushed-oil infused gloss,
Bobbi Brown, ₹ 1,990

FOR HER

Whether you've been with your partner for a while or you're still in the honeymoon phase, chocolates and flowers are a fail-safe gift. Make your special girl feel extra loved this season with a cosy pyjama set – perfect for romantic movie nights in. Looking for something a bit more classic? A pair of earrings is a great way of showing your love. Add a personal touch by customising them with her initials for guaranteed brownie points.

FOR HIM

Gifting your partner something thoughtful, romantic, or sentimental is the key to an ideal present. From things that'll take his dressing game to another level to accessories that'll strike just the right chord — opt for a sleek pair of shades or a grooming kit that'll restock his daily essentials. If he loves gadgets, then a set of wireless earphones are a sure winner.



Cufflinks and keychain set, Hackett London at The Collective, ₹ 10,500



AirPods (3rd Generation), Apple, ₹ 18,500



'L.U.C XP' watch, Chopard, price on request



'Marmont' card holder, Gucci, price on request



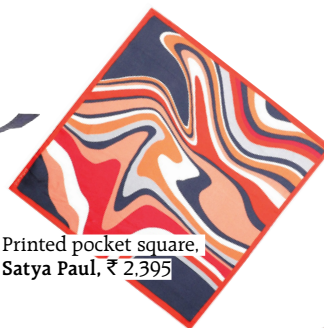
Acetate sunglasses, Rosvin Bugs, ₹ 4,490



Skincare gift box, Forest Essentials, ₹ 4,295



'Sauvage Elixir' spray, Christian Dior, price on request



Printed pocket square, Satya Paul, ₹ 2,395



'Greca' sneakers, Versace, price on request



Printed socks (pack of 3), American Eagle, ₹ 1,599



Leather belt, Hugo Boss, ₹ 5,300

HIM

FOR YOURSELF

Whether you've been thinking of investing in a luxury bag or want to up your fitness game, there's no better time than the present than to make 'you' a priority. Let your space exude calm and become a plant mommy with a simple subscription or get yourself a candle that looks as good as it smells. And while you're at it, why not level up your skin care? A *gua-sha* and eye mask are the best picks to give your skin the much-needed care it deserves.

SELF



Sports bra, Nike, ₹ 2,495



'Fendi First' bag, Fendi, price on request



Eye mask, Ilana, ₹ 270



Silk eye mask, The Minimal Co, ₹ 999



Trackpants, adidas Originals, ₹ 10,999



'Tambour Horizon Light Up', smart watch, Louis Vuitton, price on request



Gua-sha and face roller kit, Ras Luxury Oils, ₹ 4,180



Metallic phone case, Marc Jacobs at The Collective, ₹ 6,000



Single wick candle, Bath & Body Works, ₹ 1,499

'Dip Your Toes' plant subscription, Ugao, ₹ 2,249



PLANT LADY STARTER KIT

Looking to start your own at-home garden but haven't the slightest clue as to how to begin? Check out our top picks from nurseries to help you hone your green thumb:

- Coco Jungle – 'Aloe on a Wave' plant, ₹ 4,500
- Plant A Plant – The beginner package, ₹ 2,499
- Nurturing Green – DIY Flower Gardening Kit, ₹ 1,340
- My Bageecha – 'Fern Frenzy' moss frame, ₹ 3,850

FOR YOUR SIBLINGS

Despite your love-hate relationship with them, you can't disagree with the fact that they will always have your back. For your sibling, gift them their favourite pair of slides or a cute photo frame to cherish all your memories together. Splurge on a coffee maker to satisfy all their (and your) caffeine needs or an adult colouring book for the next time you get to spend some one-on-one time makes for a great gift too.



Crystal bracelet,
Swarovski, ₹ 6,590



Colouring book, **Secret Garden**
at www.amazon.in, ₹ 695

Knitted jumper,
Ralph Lauren,
price on request



Coffee maker,
Philips, ₹ 3,595



Keychain, Ladurée
₹ 4,157 approx



Steel frame, Ikea,
₹ 499



Instax Mini 9
polaroid camera,
Fujifilm, ₹ 5,530

Slides, adidas at
www.kickscrew.com,
₹ 11,575 approx



Assorted mini cookies,
Sweetish House Mafia,
₹ 1,325



FOR YOUR PARENTS

Shower some love for the people who've made you who you are. Get your parents a massage chair for a relaxing session or pick from a music box that will remind them of the good old days, a tea set for long, 4 pm chats or even, perhaps, an air purifier for all the times your mom asked you to clean your room (guilty as charged).



Cheese knife gift set, Fab India, ₹ 1,499



Assorted tea gift box, Tea Box, ₹ 2,899



Necktie and pocket square set, The Tie Hub, ₹ 3,000



Drop earrings, Sangeeta Boochra, ₹ 18,500



Glass coasters (pack of six), Ritu Kumar, ₹ 1,900



Burmese gift box, Burma Burma, ₹ 1,499



Portable digital music player, Carvaan, ₹ 6,190



Massage chair, JSB Healthcare, ₹ 1,20,000



Air Purifier, Dyson, ₹ 24,900



Wool and silk rug, Jaipur Rugs, ₹ 54,000



FAMILY

FOR YOUR BEST FRIEND

If you're looking to celebrate the most special people in your lives – BFFs who've been by your side through it all, we've got you covered. Mark your cherished bond by gifting them matching friendship lockets or a spa-kit for your next sleepover to remind your gal pal how much you care about her. If you're in a long distance friendship, then cute and innovative 'open-when' letters are perfect to let your friend know you're there for them no matter what. **16**



Printed mini dress,
Forever New, ₹ 7,800

Sheet mask
(pack of 2), Starskin
at Sephora, ₹1,100



Enamel necklace
(pack of 2),
H&M, ₹ 399



Spa kit, Tattava Spa,
₹ 999

'Open-when' letters,
Oye Happy, ₹ 1,340



Silk pillow cover,
Jaypore, ₹ 1,390



Gift card,
Forever 21, ₹ 500



LED Mirror, Tayha at
www.tatacliq.com, ₹ 2,200



Steel tumbler,
Starbucks, ₹ 1,900



Printed sticky notes,
June Shop, ₹ 299

FRIEND

ON THE STYLE RADAR

THE IT-BAG REIMAGINED

Alessandro Michele revisits the historic bamboo bag in the form of the new 'Gucci Bamboo 1947'

Gucci is one of the most relevant names in the fashion industry. Founded in 1927 in Italy by Guccio Gucci, the high fashion house has seen its fair share of feuds, controversies, and even a murder. And while *House Of Gucci* starring Lady Gaga and Adam Driver in pivotal roles helped highlight the history of the brand, we thoroughly enjoyed



the fashion on display in the movie. As Patrizia Reggiani, Gaga's character toted around archival handbags, one couldn't help but be in awe of them. And now Gucci's Alessandro Michele has taken inspiration from the iconic bamboo bag from the mid-90s and presented it through a contemporary lens in the form of the 'Gucci Bamboo 1947'.

With a rich history of its own, the original bamboo bag came into being in the post-war era in Italy when there was a dearth of raw materials. Trying to find an alternative for the same, Guccio Gucci and the enterprising artists under him chose to

use bamboo to create the handle of the purse and the rest, as they say, is history. The bag found itself in the spotlight and has since been seen on the arms of the Hollywood elite, making it extremely iconic. Michele's present-day interpretation of the bag comes in three assorted sizes, namely, medium, small, and mini and some extremely vibrant colourways which include solid colours as well as colourful patterns. To show the versatility of personalities the bag caters to, Gucci invited nine international artists and creators to be a part of digital collaboration and share their artistic vision of the bag in the form of paintings, illustrations, videos, and more.

THE NEW AGE BRIDE

In a first, designer Gaurav Gupta launches his bridal wear line



Designer Gaurav Gupta's name is bound to evoke images of fantastical realms, artistic interpretations pertaining to mythology and a whole lot more. The designer is known for his intellect and the ability to highlight designs that are contemporary and futuristic. After multiple accolades and dressing the best of the best,

Gupta has forayed into bridal wear with a full-blown bridal wear collection for the modern Indian bride. The new collection, called, Gaurav Gupta Bride features six unique bridal lehengas, the designs of which take inspiration from fantasia and nature and feature prismatic embroideries



depicting prancing deers and other distinctive creatures. With a blend of Art Nouveau in the form of intersecting lines and linear depictions and the Renaissance and the Indian heritage, each *lehenga* is a piece of art. Crafted with ornate *zardozi*, intricate pearl detailing and lush drapes made from velvet and silk, the *lehengas* come with delicate tulle veils. Speaking about the new collection, Gupta said, "Each *lehenga* is a multi-layered embroidered painting expressing different forms of fantasy. Explorative and layered embroideries breathe life into life-like peacocks that look as though they are in motion. We have an obsession with blending culture and art forms. Designs that are almost rhythmic so that the eye does not stop at one place, there is science hidden behind this art. It is an extreme couture process wherein we rework a single artwork multiple times which follows endless exploration and attention to detail."

LUXE MACHINA

Louis Vuitton has hit the reset button on its Tambour design and reintroduced it in an LED-embellished, light-up version

While Microsoft may have made the very first smartwatch back in 1994, it wasn't until 20215 when Apple launched the first iteration of its smart timepiece that things really took off for smartwatches. And ever since, this piece of tech has caught on like wildfire and carved a niche of its own. And now Louis Vuitton is marrying luxury with technology with the all-new Tambour Horizon Lightup. The French Maison's third generation connected watch is truly one of a kind because it offers unique customisation and personalisation. The watch features custom-made operating software, which is the only kind, besides Apple's own OS that is compatible with



iPhones. The curved sapphire glass, which acts as the watch's screen is reminiscent of an infinity pool and comes with three different watch faces and multiple built-in configurations to suit the wearer's mood and personality. And that is not all, you can even add your initials added to the watch in a

colour and typeface of your choosing. Available in three different finishes, namely, Polished Steel, Matte Black, and Matte Brown, the 24 LED lights behind the signature Louis Vuitton monogram ring activate to form a myriad of colours and glow-in-the-dark animations. The watch truly blends the world of art with innovation.

FUNCTIONALITY REIMAGINED

Dior and Birkenstock come together for the hottest collab of the season



It is raining collaborations and the one that truly caught us by surprise was in Paris, when Dior showcased its AW/22 menswear collection. While Kim Jones always adds a wow-factor to his collections, what really got everyone buzzing was when the models walked out on the runway wearing dove-grey Birkenstocks. Unexpected but extremely exciting, this is not Birkenstock's first brush with high fashion. The popular footwear brand has collaborated with Valentino, Jil Sander, and even Proenza Schuler before. The collaboration features Birkenstock's extremely functional 'Tokio' mules and 'Milano' sandals in a high fashion avatar in felt and suede options. However, as exciting as the new capsule collection is, it will not be available until June 2022 so you might just have to be a tad bit patient before you get your hands on them.

THE ANNIVERSARY EDIT

Michael Kors teams up with accessories brand, ASHYA to celebrate its 40th anniversary



It is not every day that a fashion house celebrates an event as big as their 40th anniversary. Started off by American designer, Michael Kors in 1981, the brand has grown leaps and bounds since its early days when it used to be a ready-to-wear label under the French house of Celine. Favoured by celebrities and desired by everyone, Michael Kors made a name for itself from scratch and for their 40th anniversary has decided to celebrate the milestone by collaborating with and young and emerging accessories brand, ASHYA. Helmed by American/Jamaican duo Ashley Simone and Moya Annece, the new collaboration between the two labels has resulted in two limited edition bags called the 'Moya Multi Bag' and the 'Ashley Bolo Bag'. In a way to nurture future talents, this collaboration is Michael Kors' way of giving back to the industry. The gender-neutral bags are designed in ASHYA's signature silhouettes and feature a custom print that incorporates the MK Signature logo print in a new pattern inspired by West African weaving techniques. "I began my business in New York City in 1981, and now I find it very exciting to be able to turn the spotlight on the next generation of designers working here in New York City," says Kors about the collaboration. **W**



JUST
ONE
THING



MOSCHINO

LOVE LINES

Once considered a 90s teeny-bopper accessory, heart-shaped extras are making a comeback



Rhodium plated choker, Swarovski, ₹ 18,000



Metal earrings, Valliyan by Nitya Arora, ₹ 6,500



Acetate sunglasses, Saint Laurent, ₹ 43,431 approx



Bucket hat, H&M, ₹ 990

IT TAKES TWO

Cosy, chic, and comfy: We're currently living in knit co-ord sets

**Easy
CHIC**



Cardigan,
Zara,
₹ 2,590

Super cosy with a humble 00s homage, a fitted, button down cardigan is the most versatile piece you can own. Wear yours as is or layered over a shirt – there's really no wrong way to style it.



Brass and stone earrings,
Zohra Jewellery,
₹ 6,600

Statement earrings are back, since we seem to be spending more time on Zoom lately. Give your hoop earrings a break and put on a pair of stone dangles instead to elevate your everyday looks.



Leather bag,
Mango,
₹ 3,590



Hand-held or slung over your shoulder, the XL hold-all is going nowhere. From being your plus one to brunch with the girls, it also works great for errand runs.



Tasselled belt,
Diwaah at
www.ajio.com,
₹ 699

While your trusty leather belt has served you well, it's time to mix it up a bit. A braided, tasselled belt manages to cinch the waist while looking bohemian at the same time. What's not to love?



Knit skirt,
Zara, ₹ 2,590

After months of sweats and trying to get back into the groove with jeans, we're switching it up with a stretchy knit skirt. The soft fabric and super forgiving silhouette have our vote.

Slowly turning into a wardrobe staple – strappy block heels are a classic in our book. Dress up a simple co-ord set or your fave printed sun dress with a neutral pair.



Ankle strap heels,
Rhea for Cai,
₹ 3,299

THE WAY WE WEAR...

THE MICRO MINI



1.



Printed wool knit,
Perfect Moment at
www.net-a-porter.com.
₹ 34,610 approx

+



Leather skirt,
H&M,
₹ 1,499



Knee-high boots,
RSVP at
www.nykaafashion.com.
₹ 2,990

+



Mini shoulder bag,
Dune London,
₹ 7,700

Reminiscent of the early aughts, micro-minis are making a 2022 comeback. From barely-there, low-rise pleated short skirts at Miu Miu to shimmering metallics at Versace, and tough leather at Missoni, the micro mini has taken over the S/S 2022 runways. For now, while sweats have been shed and the leggy silhouette continues to reign supreme, dress yours up with OTT knits and sheer bodysuits or pare down with midriff-baring cropped shirts. **1**



2.



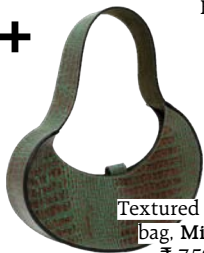
Cropped knit, Sir,
₹ 28,117 approx

+



Belted miniskirt, Balmain at
www.farfetch.com.
₹ 1,19,241 approx

+



Textured leather bag, Mistry,
₹ 7,500

+

Leather mules,
Steve Madden,
₹ 7,999

+



Wool socks,
Woollen Wear,
₹ 945

3.



MIU MIU



Textured blouse,
Proenza Schouler at
www.matchesfashion.com.
₹ 26,236 approx

+

Skirt, Mango,
₹ 2,990



+



Shoulder bag,
Miraggio,
₹ 2,999

+



Strappy sandals,
Charles & Keith,
₹ 6,999



Shoulder duster earrings,
Anaash, ₹ 4,250

CHICONOMICS

Great style picks, all *under ₹ 5,000*



1



2



3



4



5



6

- 1 Crossbody bag, **Miraggio**, ₹ 3,499
 2 Draped dress, **Zara**, ₹ 2,990
 3 Smocked blouse, **H&M**, ₹ 999
 4 Brass earrings, **Radhika Agrawal Jewels**, ₹ 3,700
 5 Wide knot headband, **Accessorize**, ₹ 1,495
 6 Beaded bracelets (pack of 5), **Forever New**, ₹ 1,000
 7 Printed cotton shorts, **Mango**, ₹ 1,990
 8 Pearl necklace, **INSXY at www.tanzire.co**, ₹ 4,399
 9 Lace appliqué flats, **Melissa**, ₹ 3,999



8



7



9

LOVE LOVE
LOVE

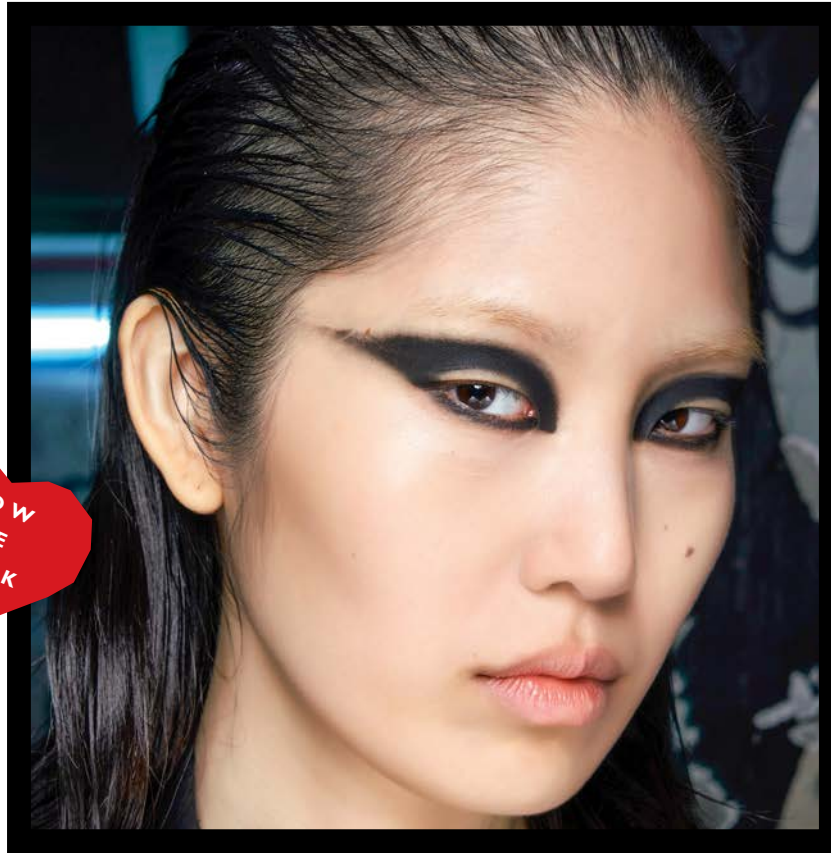
*A roomy beach tote that fits
all our essentials? Count us in*

'Peanut Woven Calf
Audrey' bag,
Michael Kors,
price on request



Junior Fashion Stylist NISHITHA PARWANI, Deputy Art Director RENU SHARMA TEWARY

BEAUTY



HOW
WE
WORK
IT

Photograph IMAXTREE.COM. Compiled by HENA DESAI

Where We Spotted It

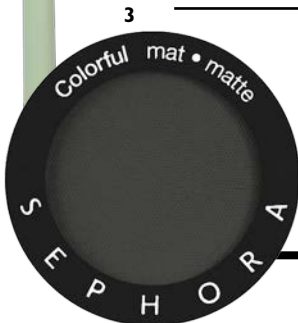
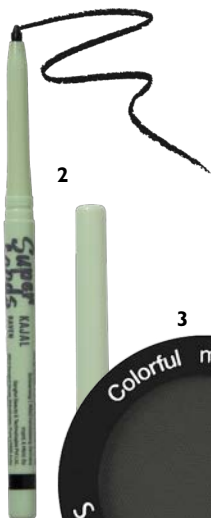
Rick Owen's SS/22 showcase

Why we love it

Yes, the smoky eye's a classic, but it's about time it gets a Gen Z-approved, 21st-century overhaul. Wear it for a hot V-Day date or even after. Rest assured, all eyes will be on you.

How to get it

1. Prep your lids with a primer or with a generous dab of concealer all over. This is important to make sure your lids don't get greasy anytime soon and the shadow holds shape. Go over the primer with a nude powder shadow.
2. Using a black pencil, draw on a semi-circle on the lids to outline the negative space. Using an angled shadow brush, pick up the blackest, mattes eyeshadow you can find and pat it all over, drawing an exaggerated wing as you go. Trace the same on the waterline too. Lightly blend this with a small, dense shadow brush – maintain the shape, but ensure you don't leave any harsh lines behind.
3. Reach for a Q-tip and neaten the edges. Run it especially along the wing to sharpen it. In case of mishaps and spill overs, use a fresh Q-tip to clean the negative space. Go over the lashes with a coat of mascara if you like.
4. Pair the eyes with light make-up on the rest of the face – pat on a lightweight foundation, skip the blush, but add some bronzer to define and accentuate your cheekbones. Finish the lips with a dab of tinted lip balm.



- 1 SUGAR Double Date Extreme Volume Mascara Duo, ₹ 799
 2 MyGlam Superfoods Kajal in 'Raven', ₹ 395
 3 Sephora Collection Colorful Mono Eye Shadow in 'Black Lace', ₹ 900
 4 asa Lip Balm, ₹ 890 5 Kay Beauty HD Liquid Concealer, ₹ 799
 6 Pixi Beauty H2o Skin Tint, ₹ 2,380
 7 Anastasia Beverly Hills Powder Bronzer in 'Rich Amber', ₹ 3,000



*Skincare-led pockets of
peace could be the secret
to all-day relaxation*

Words **HENA DESAI**

Photographs **KEEGAN CRASTO**

SNACK BREAK

In 2020, our lives changed. We found ourselves locked inside thanks to strange circumstances, and two years on, we still haven't left that life behind. As chaos ensued, one thing became clear: Everyone the world over was turning to skincare to find some semblance of comfort. When the pandemic began, it was all about elaborate masking and

10-step night routines, but now, a new term is surfacing – beauty snacking. What's this you ask? To put it plainly, they're micro skincare breaks you can take through the day, a quick 'me-moment' designed for a speedy, feel-good recharge. Since the at-home beauty boom is going nowhere, read on as we help you curate effective, bite-sized self-care routines to take you through the day.

A.M. 10 min

Step 1: Cleanse

A warm water bath sounds soothing in the morning, but research suggests that switching to cold water could be a great way to not only jolt your skin awake but also tighten pores and boost circulation for an instant glow. Try a powder cleanser in the mornings; it's as good as its liquid counterparts, but it'll do the job with gentle exfoliation and none of that stretchy dryness.

Step 2: Depuff

Pillow face is definitely a thing and if you're stuck with it, don't panic. Keep ice globes or rollers handy – freeze them overnight and roll them onto your face first thing the next day. Make sure you use a little oil or cream on your face for some slip (this prevents skin injuries or excessive pulling) and then use the globes in outward sweeping motions under the eyes, jawline, and cheekbones. From Jennifer Aniston to Hailey Bieber, dozens of A-listers swear by this quick fix. Massage for 2-3 minutes for best results. Wipe any residual oil with a soft cloth once you're done.

Step 3: Prep

Ten-step routines are exhausting, and honestly, you don't need them too, especially if you play it smart and invest in double-duty products. Reach for a hydrating vitamin C or a multi-correct serum, a blue-light protecting undereye cream, top it with a lightweight moisturiser and you'll be good to go.

Step 4: Protect

We can't stress this enough – you can never wear too much sunscreen. Doesn't matter if you're indoors or out, SPF is a must. Direct sunlight, rays through the window, and even blue light from your digital devices can speed up skin ageing, cause fine lines and intensify dark spots. Derms recommend using a sunscreen with at least 30 SPF, which can be reapplied every few hours. (If you're wearing make-up throughout the day, you can touch up your sun protection with a powder sunscreen).

IS Clinical
PerfectTint
Powder SPF
40, ₹ 7,700

Aminu The
Perfectionist Skin
Perfecting Serum,
₹ 2,450

Re'equil Ultra Matte Dry Touch
Sunscreen, ₹ 695

House Of
Beauty Ice
Globes,
₹ 3,329

Dr. Barbara
Sturm's
Enzyme
Cleanser,
₹ 6,360

Foreo Iris
Illuminating
Eye Massager,
₹ 12,900

Kama
Ayurveda
Pure Neroli
Water, ₹ 1,195

Quench

Mama Cica
Mud Dipping Sheet
Mask for Oil Control
and Clear Skin
Tightens pores and purifies skin

Quench
Botanics Mama
Cica Mud
Dipping Sheet
Mask, ₹ 149

AT NOON 12 min

Step 1: Refresh

Beating the afternoon slump is a challenge. But nothing like a quick, cool spritz of a face mist to wake you up again – reach for fresh waters like neroli or vetiver that will tone your face and lift your spirits all at once. Don't worry if you've got make-up on; these water-based mists will seep into the skin or evaporate without disturbing your work of art.

Step 2: Hydrate

Hot, sleepy afternoons may be the perfect time to slap on a sheet mask and give your skin some mid-day TLC. Pick one as per your concern – there are tons of options available ranging from brightening, soothing, tightening, and more – and leave it on your face for 8-10 minutes. Remove the mask and pat the excess on your skin. Pro tip: Don't throw the packet out just yet. Scoop out any remaining essence and rub it onto your hands and feet instead.

Step 3: Energise

Most of us stare at our screens for way too long, whether for work or just doomscrolling. But sunken, tired eyes need not be your signature look – now may be the perfect time to invest in nifty gadgets like an eye massager to relieve tension around this delicate area and to prevent the after-effects of digital fatigue. After all, a two-minute battery-operated massage can make you look more wide-eyed and alert than any concealer ever can.

AT NIGHT 15 min

Step 1: Cleanse

Just like brushing your teeth, cleaning twice a day is also a must. At night, try double-cleansing – start by fusing a cleansing balm or oil, followed by a creamy, gentle face wash. This is a non-negotiable, especially if you're the kind who wears make-up throughout the day. It's also recommended otherwise as it's a great way to deep clean your pores and get rid of all the dirt, grime, and acne-causing bacteria that could have accumulated through the day.

Step 2: Tone

You may feel like skipping this step, but don't – this in-between step is a great way to pack in an extra dose of actives, tighten pores, and balance your skin's pH levels. Always pick alcohol-free formulas so that you don't strip your skin dry or irritate sensitive skin types.

Step 3: Treat & Repair

As we rest, our skin automatically goes into repair mode, which is why it's ideal to put on any active-rich, targeted products as per your concerns at night. For a basic routine, you can start with a hydrating hyaluronic acid serum, spot-clearing niacinamide serum, and a lightweight salicylic acid-rich moisturiser. Those looking for some anti-ageing action can also sandwich a retinol-based treatment between the serums and moisturiser.



L'Oréal Paris
Revitalift Crystal
Gel Cream, ₹ 699

Plum
E-Luminence
Nourishing
Toning Water,
₹ 420



Kiehl's Ultra
Facial Cleanser,
₹ 750



CALM YOUR MIND

Step 1: Set The Mood

Aromatherapy is a great way to ensure that your space not only smells great but it also soothes and calms you as you work throughout the day. Get a diffuser with oils like sandalwood, lavender, or jasmine can boost concentration and promote well-being.


Step 2: CBD Oil

The pandemic has reduced most of us into sleepless balls of anxiety, and if you're part of the pack, consider trying CBD oil for destressing. These are all the rage right now as they rebalance your nervous system, rid you of aches and pains, and help you sleep. You can apply it to your temples topically or consume it as recommended by the brand's physicians, for the fastest effect. (Don't worry these won't get you high, the medical-grade oils are rid of all psychoactives.)

Step 3: Oil Massage

Not all of us have the luxury of booking weekly spa sessions, but you can DIY this easily. Generously apply body oil on your arms and legs, grab a massage tool like a Kansa wand and move it in alternating long and circular strokes along your body. This not only feels great but also boosts circulation, cuts cellulite, and instantly hydrates your skin. We recommend doing this at night to let the oil soak in for longer and using a hemp-based body oil again for maximum relaxation.

Step 4: Lavender Pillow Mist

When you hit the pillow after a long, hard day, make it special with a spritz of mist on your pillow. It's more than just a fancy addition to your nighttime routine — soothing scents go a long way in bettering your beauty sleep by helping you sleep faster and promoting uninterrupted, seamless rest. 

SoulTree
Organic Hemp
Seed Oil,
₹ 995



The Body
Shop French
Lavender
Pillow Mist,
₹ 1,695

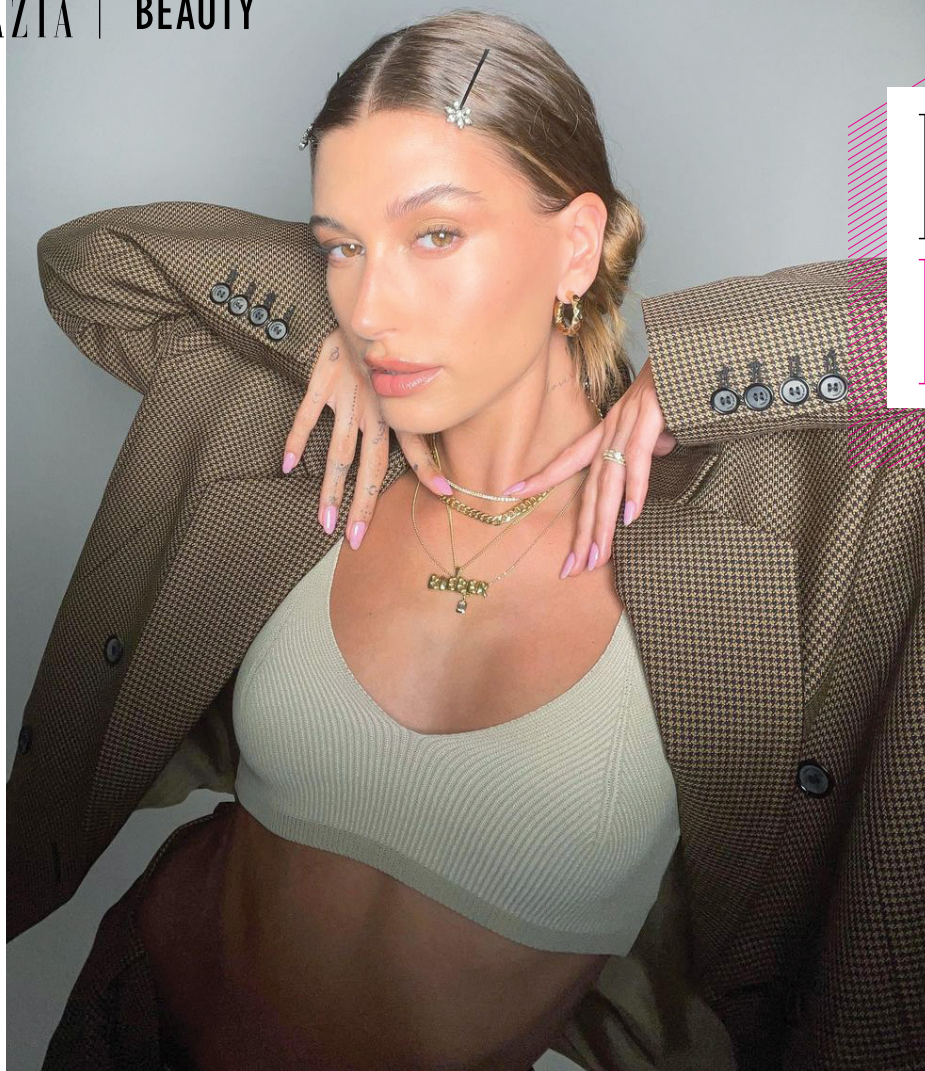


Blossom Kochhar
Aroma Magic
Sandalwood
Essential Oil, ₹ 750

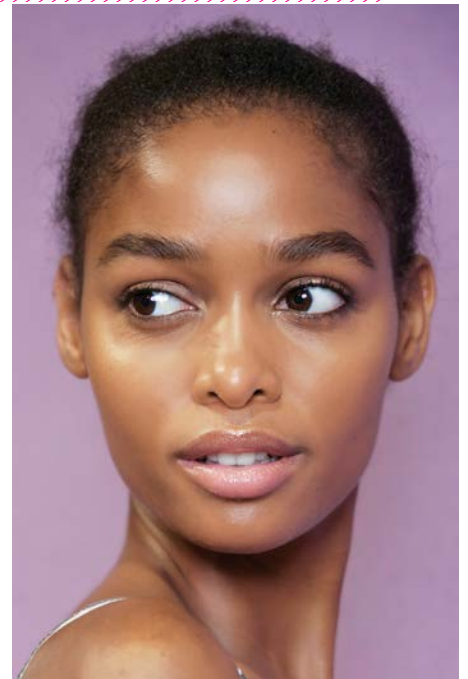


Awshad Full
Spectrum Vijaya
Oil Peppermint,
₹ 3,200





BEAUTY REPORTER



GO FOR G.L.O.W

2022's first viral skincare trends involve a dessert as inspiration (we're serious)

Ayummy, glossy, glazed donut so shiny, you can see your reflection in it – sounds like a dream, right? Now imagine having this same sheen on your skin. In the age of TikTok and Reels, of course, this has morphed into a skincare trend, 2022's latest rage – glazed donut skin.

Think of it as the updated dewy skin, popularised by none other than millennial skincare queen Hailey Bieber, who was one of the first ones to hop on to this trend and show it off on the 'Gram.

To get this glazed finish, one thing to keep in mind is to look for skincare products that aim to hydrate and nourish your skin to take it to an ultimate healthy stage. Always start off your skincare regime with the double cleansing method that incorporates an oil cleanser and

then a hydrating cleanser to prevent your skin from feeling dry or stripped. And when it comes to your face serum, the trick is to apply it on damp skin, as this will help soak in the product deeper into the skin.

At night, opt for an intense moisturiser to work on your skin overnight so that you can wake up to glossy, dewy skin. However, avoid it when you have any active breakouts. As ultimate hydration is the key to helping you get the look, apply a thin layer of facial oil over your moisturiser. Wrap up your regime with a diligent eye cream to prevent crow's feet, and a nourishing lip balm to tackle dry, chapped lips. Keep up with the regime diligently and you'll know it's paid off when you walk out with healthy, radiant, and mirror-like (or, should we say dessert-like) reflective skin.

PRODUCT RECOMMENDATIONS:



THE POWER OF TWO

Meet a new BB cream that doubles up as a skincare treatment

Here's a fun fact: BB creams were formulated initially to cover the redness and inflamed skin post harsh treatments like peels and microdermabrasion. Since then, they've come a long way. These miracle creams are now formulated to give you an airbrushed finish with their smoothing, blurring, and tinting effects.

The reason why these are so widely loved is that they're so lightweight; you never feel like you're wearing layers of make-up. They are interchangeably known as 'beauty balms' as they are less irritating to the skin and have a lightweight consistency that doesn't dry out the skin, which tends to be quite common with high coverage foundations. Being gentler and kinder to the skin, they pose as a great alternative to foundations. In fact, it is their ability to provide both skincare and make-up benefits that set them apart from their counterparts – foundations and concealers. With this hybrid quality, BB creams strive to prime and correct your uneven skin tone, pigmentation, and blemishes while hydrating your complexion for a natural-looking glow.

This do-it-all product has turned into a staple in everyone's make-up kit is because of its weightless texture feel and sheer coverage. It enhances your natural skin tone without making the make-up look cakey or uncomfortable. So, if you're someone more inclined to a minimalistic approach or want to streamline your

routine, you'll find BB creams as a major help.

If you're keen to try one yourself, get your hands on Dermafique's new Age Defying BB crème, powered with PhytoCellTec Technology. Their revolutionary formulation has pushed them to rise above run-of-the-mill options as their Plant Stem Cell technology also works to boost cellular activity and regenerate old cells, giving your skin a youthful-looking appearance. In short, it's a double-duty product that also works as a treatment for ageing skin. They are specifically made for the Indian skin and promise to banish uneven skin tone and pigmentation, but not just as a temporary solution. You'll notice a significant reduction of these issues from your skin within weeks of regular use. And after applying, it gives a lit-from-with glow while concealing your blemishes for clear and fresh skin.

It's safe to say this BB cream serves the best of both worlds – it delivers coverage while treating your skin with its anti-ageing properties. As they boost collagen production, which we tend to lose with growing age, it reduces skin sagging and signs of ageing like fine lines and wrinkles. Thanks to their cell regeneration power, this multitasking product also restores skin from environmental aggressors like damaging UV rays and pollution. So, if you're scouting for a formula best suited for mature skin, then this one's for you. **LI**





Why CAMILLE is the true style star of *Emily In Paris*

The *Emily in Paris* phenomenon is in session once again. Last year, it was the show that everybody loved to hate. A reported 58 million households tuned in to the series during its first month on Netflix – October 2020 – with viewers immediately railing against its cultural stereotypes and overly plucky characterisation of Parisian expat Emily Cooper. Now in its second season, the show seems to have already made itself a bona fide cult classic. Whether you chalk it up to a widespread desire for escapism or the chance to immerse yourself in the stylish world of costume designer Patricia Field (whose styling defined *Sex And The City*), there's no denying its mass appeal.

If you can't stand Emily herself, season two offers more in the way of character development of the women around her.

Are you a no-bullshit, smoke-in-the-office Sylvie, sass-laden former Pop Idol Mindy, or a Camille, with her pared-back chic and quick wit? Played by Camille Razat, she has emerged as the most likable character on the show, not to mention becoming a true style icon. In her first season two appearance she wears a statement

Balmain jacket, high-waisted Patou trousers and larger-than-life Zeus + Dione sunglasses, which prove a chic reprieve from the saccharine sweetness of Emily's ensembles. "It was one of my favourite looks," says Camille when *Grazia* catches up with her. "So fresh, young and powerful."

Patricia Field is an expert in sartorially defining female leads, a skill honed during her six-year stint as costume designer on *SATC*. Camille, meanwhile, brings over a decade of fashion experience, having modelled since she was 16 for brands such as Celine and Cartier. Now 27, she says, "What I love most is that I am allowed to introduce new designers to the team and shine a light on them, too." This season, she spotlights rising French designer and friend Alphonse Maîtrepierre, a former assistant to Jean Paul Gaultier – "He's a genius," she says – as well as Coperni and Patou: "I love Patou."

When it comes to beauty, Camille's on-screen looks are based, perhaps predictably, on the French girl aesthetic of effortless waves and minimal make-up. "That's the biggest misconception though," laughs Camille. "French women do put the effort into their hair, make-

up and fitness – they just don't talk about it as loudly as British or American women."

She insists French-girl beauty is a very personal thing and that, for her, it's about using just a few high-quality products in exactly the right way.

"I'm a real fan of L'Oréal Paris Age Perfect Cell Renew Midnight Serum. I massage it into my skin with a *gua sha* tool, which I find helps to lift and de-puff."

And make-up? "I love L'Oréal Paris Volume Million Lashes Balm Noir Mascara Brown, which makes my eyes look bigger and sexier. If I have an event in the evening and don't have time to change, I layer it up to make myself look edgier, a little rock'n'roll." And finally, her four non-negotiables are the Dyson Supersonic Hair Dryer, L'Oréal Paris Elvive Colour Protect Wonder Water, Byredo's Mojave Ghost fragrance, and Augustinus Bader's The Body Cream.

Camille and Emily Cooper might be rivals in a love triangle on-screen but, off it, she and Lily Collins "hit it off instantly," she says. Filming for the new season reunited Camille, Lily and Ashley Park – who plays nanny-turned-singer Mindy Chen – in the South of France. "We hadn't seen each other for a year and a half because of the pandemic," explains Camille. "We were so happy to be back shooting together." In a break from the romcom series rule book, the dynamics of female friendship take centre stage in *Emily In Paris*. "Friendship is not meant to be perfect," stresses Camille, "it demands work and resilience. That's what the show's all about." Fallibility, *c'est chic*. **W**

MUST-HAVES



Words ANNIE VISCHER

LOVE LOVE LOVE

This new line of nine red camellia-infused products make up Chanel's newest beauty line, a nod to the iconic No. 5 legacy, and a step towards sustainability in the chicest possible way

*N°1 De Chanel,
price on request*



Elephants are
important for the
regeneration of forests



THE GENTLE GIANTS

*In this deeply fascinating and inspiring personal journey, conservationist **Pamela Gale-Malhotra**, co-founder and trustee of the SAI sanctuary (the only private sanctuary in India, in Kodagu, Karnataka) recounts how she connected and communicated with elephants, both at a physical and spiritual level*

Back at the towering love-posts, I find it so poetically appropriate that the giants of the canopy are one of the main meeting and eating places for the gentle giants of SAI's forests – the elephants.

The river's bamboo-lined edge, as well as the abundance of jack, wild mango and other fruits promise them a banquet of delicacies, along with easy access to cool, clear water. And sure enough, the family herd has indeed been here, their huge footprints in the sandy soil evidence of where they have recently crossed the river to reach here, the prints being quite fresh.

More signs are the countless bamboo pieces snapped and bent along the river's bank. The area is right above the elephant crossing and in line with the same camera. So, the camera has captured plenty of elephants, too. I call this place the 'bamboo salad bar' because of the way the elephants eat here – the entire family group in a perfect line, heads and trunks buried in the bamboo, happily eating, with the rest of their bodies sticking out, tails swishing away as a youngster runs about in play, the whole scene reminiscent of a human family at a salad bar.

Another funny video captured two young tuskus getting ready to cross the river. The first hesitates to go in, like a reluctant human swimmer not wanting to get into the cold water. As the second tuskus's patience wears thin, he starts pushing the first – gently but firmly – into the water with his head and tusks, as if saying, 'Come on already! Move, would you?! Enough is enough!'

Besides camera trap photos and videos, Anil (my husband) and I have been very fortunate to have seen the elephants up close and personal on many occasions ourselves as well. They are such extraordinary beings and we owe them a lot for their help in reforesting the sanctuary grounds. While our reforestation efforts have certainly been fruitful, the reforestation by these elephants has been extremely important, since their travels through the grounds have sown seeds of different species of grasses and shrubs as well as those of the most important canopy trees – the living giants and other large trees whose ecosystem services of rain production and conservation, soil enrichment and carbon sequestration are so critical to us all.

Without elephants, the wetlands and meadows would not be so rich in biodiversity. Without elephants, the number of tree species here would be far less, too, the seeds of these trees carried, planted and fertilised by the elephants and their dung. While elephants have benefitted from our protection, we have benefitted far more from their presence here, both environmentally and spiritually.

This is one of the many reasons that I just love them. I love everything about them – their huge size, wonderful long trunk and enormous ears that even look a little bit like India. I love the way they flap their ears back and forth, which is one of Nature's ways of helping them cool themselves – as their ears are full of blood

Without elephants, the wetlands and meadows would not be so rich in biodiversity. Without elephants, the number of tree species here would be far less, too, the seeds of these trees carried, planted and fertilised by the elephants and their dung. While elephants have benefitted from our protection, we have benefitted far more from their presence here, both environmentally and spiritually

vessels, their continuous flapping helps to cool the blood in the ears, thereby cooling themselves.

They also have incredible hearing, their large funnel-shaped ears are able to hear storms that are between 160 to 240 kilometres (100 to 150 miles) away.

I love the way they communicate using a complex language of trumpet calls, roars, squeaks, chirps, snorts, cries and low frequency rolling rumbles that fall well below the threshold of human hearing. Called 'seismic communication', these sounds create vibrations or waves that travel through the earth and can be felt and understood by other elephants almost 16 kilometres (6 to 10 miles) away. The low

frequency vibrations are detected through their padded feet by a huge ball of fat called a 'digital cushion'.

The dozens of touch receptors in the elephant's foot feel the vibrations, sending a signal to the elephant's brain. These vibrations also travel through the elephant's skeleton directly to the ear, transforming what has been 'felt' into something that is now 'heard'.


Their trunks also add to this system of communication through the sense of touch. Elephants often put the tips of their trunk into the mouths of others to comfort and reassure one another, as well as to caress each other, sometimes hanging their trunks on one another or putting their heads close to each other in a tête-à-tête, these actions being signs of affection, love and care.

Not surprisingly, these trunks also provide elephants with an excellent sense of smell – one of the best in the animal kingdom – having more smell receptors on its tip than those of any other mammal.

They can detect water almost 20 kilometres (12 miles) away and are able to distinguish between different people just through testing the air for their scent.

The way they eat is also extraordinary, using the tip of their enormous trunk as a 'hand' to grab whatever it is they want to eat, either stripping off leaves from branches or grabbing large quantities of grass with amazing dexterity or swatting the grass on the ground to dislodge any dirt that may be clinging to it, before shovelling it into their huge mouths to swallow.

I love the way elephants walk at a slow measured pace and how extremely observant they are, noticing the slightest change around them. I have seen examples of this many times on videos caught on our camera traps. The elephants approaching the cameras immediately notice them, no matter how well camouflaged they may be, using their long trunks to investigate, sniffing around the cameras to determine just what kind of a strange thing I have put up there. And yet, not once have they purposely disturbed or damaged any of our cameras, thus demonstrating a remarkable degree of gentleness as well as faith in us and the safety they find within our sanctuary grounds.

(Excerpted with permission from From the Heart of Nature by Pamela Gale-Malhotra, published by Ebury Press) 

MONTH IN MONTH OUT

MOVIES, ART, BOOKS, AND MORE, HERE ARE OUR TOP PICKS OF THINGS THAT GOT US TALKING THIS MONTH

FAMILY AFFAIR

This debut author's book is designed to satisfy readers who prioritise questions over answers



Neel Patel

Writing from different perspectives is something author Neel Patel does naturally because he's been observing people his whole life. In his debut novel, *Tell Me How to Be* (published by Penguin Random House India), Akash, a gay songwriter in his 20s living in LA, returns to his hometown in Illinois in the wake of his father's death to help his mother, Renu, and brother, Bijal, sell his family home before Renu returns to London. Akash is the black sheep of the family, still deeply closeted and reeling from a failed relationship of his own. But he's not the only one keeping secrets. Renu is holding fast to a long-simmering love that she's told nobody about; and things are not as good as they seem for golden son Bijal. Alternating between Akash's and Renu's perspectives, the novel is an intimate story about race, sexuality, and the secrets that keep a family together, but also tear it apart.

"They say women can write men very well because society centres men, and women have been made to be constantly aware of them. As a queer person of colour, I have existed outside of society completely, and have been made to be aware of both

cisgender straight men and women my whole life, so writing through their perspectives, in addition to mine, feels possible," shares Patel.

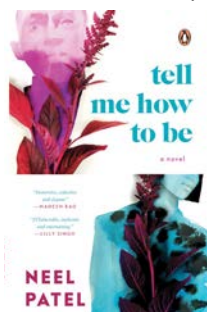
LIVES OF OTHERS

While flipping through the pages of the novel, it becomes clear that there's an inherent forgiveness in the two-narrator structure of this novel, recognising that people who've made life difficult for others are themselves labouring under the burdens of their own thwarted hopes. "The inner monologues of both Renu and Akash are about desire, isolation, regret, and longing, all of which are themes in the book," he says.

Like in his short fiction, Patel's facility with perspective, which seamlessly shifts between male and female voices and between straight and queer relationships, stands out. The key to his deft characterisation is his remarkable facility for dialogue, whether the commentary that unfurls in characters' minds or their conversational exchanges. "We all wear masks and take them on and off depending on our surroundings. Some of us never take them off. I think the novel aims to show how, in doing so, we sacrifice our own happiness for the sake of public approval. It isn't until we own our truth, and are no longer afraid of it, that we are truly free," he says.

Patel believes that ethnicity and sexuality have always been barriers for many people living in communities that don't accept them. "When you're not accepted by the world, you retreat

into a private space that only a few can penetrate, hiding your desires. Of course you're going to have regrets later, especially when the world around you changes, and you realise you were robbed of certain experiences because of the world's ignorance."



On the Bookshelf

1



The Middle Finger

Simon & Schuster India

Saikat Majumdar

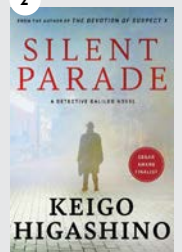
Set in the contemporary world, Majumdar explores questions around creative compromise, cultural privilege as well as cultural capital, class and entitlement, belongingness, sexuality, in a way that is not only timely but also timeless.

2

Silent Parade

Hachette India

Keigo Higashino



A popular young girl disappears without a trace, her skeletal remains discovered three years later in the ashes of a burned-out house. There's a suspect and compelling circumstantial evidence of his guilt, but no concrete proof.



Boys Don't Cry

Penguin Random House India

Meghna Pant

When Maneka Pataudi is arrested as the prime suspect for the murder of her ex-husband, she reveals a chilling tale of marital abuse and neglect. But is her confession the truth or a lie? Is she telling the story as a victim or a perpetrator? And, is it better for women to kill for love or be killed for it?

3

A Place in My Heart

Penguin Random House India

Anupama Chopra



National Award-winning author, journalist and film critic Anupama Chopra writes about fifty films, artistes and events that have left an indelible impression on her and shaped her twenty-five-year-long career.

4

SLOWING DOWN

This singer's new single is an ode to taking a step back and assessing our lives beyond the information flux we increasingly find ourselves in

When I put it to Ankur Tewari that his new single *Aahista* is the most Ankur Tewari song he's created – he lets out a bemused laugh. “I still don't know what people mean by that, it's something I'm still figuring out.”

If you were thoroughly in awe of the songs on *Gully Boy*, you have to partly thank Tewari, who worked on the album. Perhaps, he is right. The versatile musician can just as seamlessly switch from shaping the rap on the streets into something just as soulful – one that you might groove to in the middle of the night with the lights dimmed and the curtains drawn.

“The pandemic made me introspect,” he says. “*Aahista* is representative of something I aspire to do – because I don't end up taking things slowly. With so much information around us, you get burnt out.”

BEYOND IMPULSIVENESS

Tewari acknowledges that he has been in a rut of sorts, thanks to the pandemic. An outspoken artist, the social and political flux of Indian polity frequently informs his music. “It was



Ankur Tewari



only last year that I realised I was only writing protest songs,” he laughs. “So, I consciously wrote a love song last month, *Shehzaada Shehzaadi*.”

In many ways, *Aahista* also borders on a hope that Tewari has for the country's social fabric. He says that the discontent in India is at an all-time high and that one can only hope we go back to “easier times”.

“I didn't know why I was feeling this way,” says Tewari. “I was purely being reactive – which isn't entirely a bad thing because good music comes out of that process. But I had to find my bearings and reflect.”

The sense of time was also scrambled for Tewari in the pandemic – it was “being in a prison” and he was “consuming the same stuff”. So, working on *Aahista* became his way of “inhaling and exhaling slowly” through the song.

But this process meant being both a spectator and a participant in the new forces that are shaping music. From interpreting songs into 15-second Reels to weaving them into

NFTs and the maze that is crypto – Tewari regards the new way of consuming music with optimism.

“You can now release a 45-minute song and afford it too without worrying about buying more physical tape,” he says. “Technology can be freeing in that sense. Back in the day, the intro of a song itself would be an hour long. You'd hear classical compositions that stretch into hours.”

NFTs, blending sounds, or Reels – Tewari says that the future of music is safe in these unique sounds that freely experiment with form and craft. His recent work on the music of *Gehraiyaan* with Kabeer, OAFF, and Savera is emblematic of this new bend.

“From using classical piano melodies to blending atmospheric synths, you will see that even though the sounds (in *Gehraiyaan*) sound unique, they were always present,” he says. “In what context you can make and remake sound tells the whole story.”

With *Aahista*, Tewari has only come closer to a story that is entirely his own. **W**

PRESS PLAY

The tunes that deserve a place in your playlist



Je Suis la Pomme Rouge, Parekh & Singh

The dream-pop duo returns with their first original release since 2019. With a whimsical animated music video, the track pairs their lush atmospherics with elements of bossa nova, bright horns and playful flute lines.



Saviour, Noni-Mouse

Inspired by the effects of co-dependent relationships, the songwriting embodies intimacy, vulnerability or lack thereof in such relationships that we all come across at differing stages of our life.



The World is Your\$, Asa & 11 aka

Low-slung 808s and a brooding piano line serve as the backdrop for the pair's stream-of-consciousness-style ruminations on the pandemic, lost love, missed opportunities, and the ‘fake it till you make it’ mentality of their contemporaries.

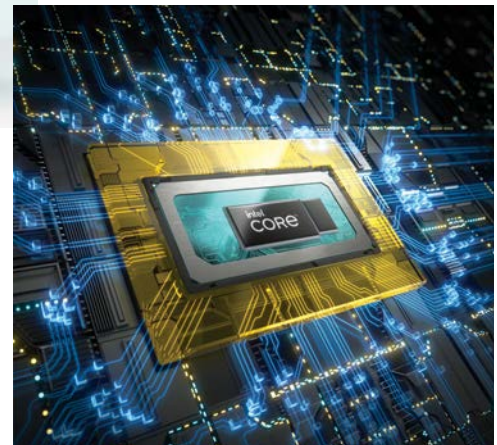


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BIG BYTE

All the tech we're crushing on this month



INTEL CORE I9-12900HK

Intel is taking back the crown of gaming with its new Intel Core i9-12900HK processor. Team Blue's latest flagship processor packs a novel 'performance hybrid' architecture with six performance cores and eight efficiency cores, designed to deliver class-leading performance. In addition, the new processors offer speed and the fastest storage options, Wi-Fi6e, and every creator's favourite, Thunderbolt 4. All this is built right into the CPU, so you don't have to worry about extra add-ons. The new 12th Gen Intel Core processor will be powering some of the most exciting laptops you'll want later this year.



**VIVO X70
PRO+**
₹ 79,990 (12GB
RAM + 256GB)

If camera performance is your top priority (and given our need for bathroom selfies, it probably is), the Vivo X70 Pro+ should be your best bet. It brings an industry-first Stabilisation Technology on all four rear cameras, along with an exclusive, customised imaging chip powered by in-built AI. It also comes with Zeiss T* coating, which reduces stray lights and ghosting effects for accurate colours, whether it's day or night. Finally, this gorgeous handset comes with a unique fluorite AG coating to ensure a smooth surface, which will keep it fingerprint-free.



PANASONIC NANOE X AIR-CONDITIONER
₹ 66,000 ONWARD

We have a sneaking suspicion that we're probably going to be indoors this summer as well. And if we are, clean air and a safe indoor environment will continue to be a top priority. To help with the cooling bit, we have a high-tech AC from Panasonic. Nanoe X's capability in eradicating viruses (including the novel coronavirus) and bacteria is a new alternative to ensuring the safety of our family and friends at home. The nanoe tech not only suppresses viruses and bacteria in the air, but it can also penetrate objects such as cloth, sofas, curtains, and furniture surfaces. It is also capable of eliminating solid odours and maintaining skin and hair moisture. What's not to love? **IT**

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