Let there be light

Ethereal fashion for a holiday season like no other

GIFT GUIDE
Covetable presents pay it forward

DESIGN
Fashion accessories as home decor

ENTERTAINING
A multicultural spread of festive treats
NEW

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*For 80% of women. Satisfaction test – 110 women - 60 seconds after the 1st application.
CONTENTS
NOVEMBER 2020

04 EDITOR’S LETTER
06 CONTRIBUTORS

Omnibus
08 GO WITH THE FLOW
Costume-turned-fashion designer Sarah Gregg Millman creates dresses with a sense of drama.
PLUS The new face behind beauty at Burberry, Tiffany celebrates 50 years of its signature cuff and a decadent Cognac decanter from architect Frank Gehry.
12 PARTY FAVOURS
Nolan Bryant compiles a gift list of society tomes.

Essentials
13 THE ARTIST’S EYE
Makeup artists offer creative approaches to winter’s statement eye.
16 GIVE IT FORWARD
Tackle your holiday to-buy list with gift ideas that are covetable and charitable.
18 FASHION/BEAUTY
A shopping guide to classic leather pieces, special-edition fragrances and Bulgari’s latest watch.
19 DREAM COAT
Nathalie Atkinson recounts creating a custom topper inspired by the cult film Withnail and I.
20 INTO THE ARCHIVE
A survey of The Bay’s history illustrates the evolution of the department store experience.
22 DESIGN
Polaroid’s latest instant camera, Roche Bobois’s bold artist collaboration and the new look of candlesticks.
23 ALONE TIME
The luxury travel industry reimagines private ways to see the world in 2021.
26 FOOD/DRINK
Outfit your table with Fique + Clay’s artisanal wares. Plus, cookbooks for voracious bakers.

Features
28 NEW ROMANTIC
Ethereal fashion takes on a cozy spirit with gauzy fabrics, beautiful draping and knit layers.
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CARLYLE ROUTH
38 OUT OF THE CLOSET
Your favourite fall fashion pieces can be reimagined as artful home objects.
BY MATTHEW HAGUE
42 CUSTOMS MADE
A cross-Canada survey of pastry chefs captures the diverse ways we punctuate December dinners.
BY JULIE VAN ROSENDAAL
46 ART RESTART
As galleries pivot online, collectors discover a more transparent way to acquire work.
BY ADRIENNE MATEI
NEW TRADITIONS

If there’s one treat that captures my own cultural experience of Christmas, it’s the Italian panettone. For decades, I’ve watched them be exchanged in the checkout aisle, my family would stock up at a local delicatessen or, while visiting Rome, fill any surplus suitcase space with fancy cakes wrapped in yards of gauzy silk.

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CONTRIBUTORS

The magazine’s team shares the quiet rituals they’ll be enjoying this holiday season

I enjoy spending time with my family. My favourite activity during the holiday season is decorating my home to make it beautiful and welcoming.

I like to take some time for myself and do some holiday baking. I find the process and the scents very calming and therapeutic.

‘ During the holidays, I travel to Victoria, B.C., which is where I’m originally from. I love spending quality time connecting with my niece and seeing how she has grown and changed. It’s magical seeing little ones grow up.

Wintertime walks in the woods.

#BTS AT OUR FAVOURITE AT-HOME LOCATIONS

This issue’s photoshoots spotlight spaces that inspire design lovers on social media

Our cover story is set at Lune – follow along @lune1860 – an Italian revival style villa sitting on 88 acres of land in Goderich. Dating back to 1860, the property was acquired by artistic director Lisa Mok and her husband in 2018. They quickly set about remodelling it with celestial inspiration, paying design homage to the phases of the moon. Working with Toronto-based firm Studio Author, the pair transformed the estate into a special events space that evokes the magic of nocturnal celebrations.

“Life should be about gatherings and having amazing conversations,” says Mok. “I just feel like the nighttime really allows that to happen.”

In Toronto, photographer Riley Stewart and his partner, stylist James Reiger, opened up their 1945 home, which they’ve named The Wartime Bunker, to shoot our story about rethinking fashion accessories as home decor objects. “We started the Bunker’s Instagram page (@thewartimebunker) so our family back in Saskatchewan could see the renovation progress,” says Stewart. “When it was all complete, I thought it was a good idea to keep the account going.” – CAITLIN AGNEW

In Toronto, photographer Alana Patterson shot pastry chef Eric Ho. Based in Squamish, B.C., Patterson is currently working on a project called Hedge Fund, which examines wealth inequality and protectionism through images of shrubbery.

The magazine’s team shares the quiet rituals they’ll be enjoying this holiday season
LUNA ROSSA
CARBON
THE NEW FRAGRANCE
Go with the flow

Costume designer Sarah Millman finds a new audience with her billowing dresses for Local Woman.

Before COVID-19 hit, Sarah Gregg Millman had signed on to design a film produced by actor Jake Gyllenhaal. The Toronto-based stylist and costume designer was excited to work on the thriller Gilded Rage, starring Christoph Waltz and Lily Collins, but like many creatives in the film and television industry, saw her project’s start date pushed back by the pandemic and her calendar open up. That’s when she remembered the dresses.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10
the saddler’s spirit
After working behind the scenes for years, Millman had recently decided it was time to direct something herself. “It’s a feminist manifesto about three pregnant women alone in the woods,” she says. The piece, featuring women dancing like sirens through a forest, required identical gowns that would be easy to move in, feel romantic and have a 1970s vibe. Millman created the pieces herself and, as these things often go, they caught the eye of her friends. This past summer, with time to explore her passions off set, Local Woman was born.

The brand has become a favourite among Canada’s fashion and art crowd, selling out variations of the romantic gowns created for Millman’s film. Her customers connect with the focus on sustainability and slow fashion that are at the core of the brand. “I simply couldn’t live with myself if I was pumping out items that would end up in a landfill,” she says. She focuses on preorder, small-run collections, sewn in Toronto, with one style produced and released at a time.

Millman attended Cooper Union college in New York and graduated with a fine art degree from NSCAD. She pulls inspiration from her film background, her mother and natural elements, such as wild flowers and the horses of Nova Scotia’s Sable Island. The self-professed vintage hound expresses her love for digging up fashion history through her fabric sourcing. “I scour, stalk, lurk...” she says. “I make the rounds, and then I go into the crevices and try to find the thing nobody else wants, because it feels complicated or weird. I dust it off and just feel good.”

This method allows Millman to find fabrics that speak to her brand’s aesthetic, which is just as much about a mood as design. “I love that you can feel your body under yards of silk, and it becomes this sensual experience,” she says. “Or how a puffy cloud of sheer organza can make you feel empowered and bold in all of its see-through softness.”

Many artists and designers have found themselves on unexpected new paths this year, and Millman’s success with Local Woman is at the core of the disruption of her work. “If I’m honest with myself, I’ve wavered to do this for such a long time,” she says. “I’ve embraced it, and I think making comfortable, special dresses to elevate a mood is as worthy a cause as any.” — NADIA PIZZIMENTI

For more information, visit thelocalwoman.com.

BEAUTY

Two faced

British makeup artist Isamaya Ffrench is known for creating provocative imagery. She launched the platform Bazed Beauty and has collaborated with celebrities such as Bjork, Zendaya and Kylie Jenner, whose face Ffrench once painted with the help of an artificial intelligence system that sampled thousands of online images to define what “beauty” means now. The 30-year-old represents the industry’s next generation and its propensity to challenge the status quo (see the September 2018 cover of British Vogue where Ffrench gave Rihanna razor-thin brows). Now she’s been tapped to bring that subversive spirit to Burberry as its global beauty director.

Ffrench’s approach is in step with the ethos of the brand’s chief creative officer, Riccardo Tisci, who often navigates the tension between the classic and the avant-garde. “Something that Riccardo likes or maybe fascinates him is this duality that the British have, especially in relation to beauty and identity,” she says. “You can have this classic, minimalist, strong attitude and you can also have the mad eccentric, which is synonymous with British culture and style and punk.”

Since joining the brand in May, Ffrench has harnessed that mix in how she’s overseen some key product launches, including a six-shade sculpting, blush and highlighter palette, an upcoming mascara and the relaunch of Burberry Kisses lipstick, which have been reformulated to be easier to wear. “Especially in lockdown, it’s all about comfort and just feeling good,” she says. — CAITLIN AGNEW

OUTERWEAR

New standard

The icy hue and structural silhouette of Canada Goose’s Standard Expedition Parka is designed to turn heads, but it’s what you won’t necessarily notice about the coat that’s really innovative. “You think it’s really cool before you find out anything about its mission to be a lot more sustainable, and I find that an exciting combination,” says Woody Blackford, the brand’s executive vice president of product. Inspired by Canada Goose’s Expedition parka, a best-seller for over 20 years, the revamped version signals a new level of eco awareness at the company.

Compared to its predecessor, the Standard has lowered its carbon footprint by a third and requires nearly two-thirds less water to manufacture. The first step in creating it was deciding to work with undyed fabrics. “It was one of the single biggest things we could really do to reduce the impact,” says Blackford. “With traditional dying methods, you have to use a lot of water, have to heat that water up and have that water be full of dyes.” One hundred-per-cent recycled materials such as rip stop nylon adds new lightness to the piece while responsibly sourced and biodegradable goose down enhances its traceability.

The biggest news is that reclaimed fur makes its debut in Canada Goose’s collection for the first time. The brand has committed to ending the use of new fur by 2022. The detachable coyote trim is upcycled material that’s been removed, cleaned and repaired for reuse from previously loved Canada Goose parkas that have been returned to the brand. — INGRIE WILLIAMS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8
**Fluid design**

When we think of architect Frank Gehry, we tend to see his molten galleries and gravity-defying towers. Gehry’s sense of movement in design isn’t only applied to larger structures though. He’s also created melty Tiffany jewellery, modernist wiggle chairs and, now, the Masterpiece Hennessy XO decanter. The hand-crafted Cognac bottle celebrates the 150th anniversary of the French house’s headlining blend of 100 carefully chosen eaux-de-vie, first bottled in 1870 under the guidance of Maurice Hennessy.

The decanter, with its crinkly metallic cloak inspired by the river Charente that runs through the Cognac region, is unmistakeably Gehry. It’s also a tribute to the disruptively curvy XO Hennessy bottle first designed in 1947 by Gérald de Geoffre, the great-grandson of Maurice Hennessy, as well as an homage to the hand of the makers that have carefully distilled, aged and blended this Cognac for generations.

“The amount of personal care that goes into the XO reminded me of things I love, like the great sculptures of Ancient Greece that make you cry. They’re so beautiful and there’s a feeling that is transmitted from the human hand of centuries ago.”

Only 150 of Gehry’s decanters have been made and tracking one down in Canada this Christmas will be tricky. But a 150th Hennessy XO Anniversary Limited Edition by Frank Gehry bottle, which comes in a golden box imprinted with the architect’s signature, will be more widely available. — CHRISTINE SISMONDO

For more information, visit hennessy.com.

**JEWELLERY**

To the bone

The word “iconic” gets thrown around a lot these days, but in the case of Elsa Peretti’s Bone cuff, it’s almost an understatement. “She was the one who brought a totally new concept into the jewellery field, making things you want to touch and hold,” then-Vogue editor Diana Vreeland explained in a 1977 Newsweek story about Peretti’s influence on jewellery. First created around 1970, and initially worn by friends and fashion insiders such as Liz Minnelli, Grace Jones and Lauren Bacall, the original silver cuff is a sinuous artefact of a major cultural shift, complementing the body-conscious disco era but equally at ease with a sweater and jeans.

To mark the Bone cuff’s 50th anniversary this season, Tiffany & Co. has created precious limited editions for the holidays. They are inlaid with hand-carved and hand-set stones, such as black or green jade and turquoise. Each is shaped so the contours fit either the right or left wrist, like a dollop of liquid mercury that’s moulded to the body. Its elemental form sits at the intersection of industrial design, sculpture and armour. “I like objects to wear that you can put on a table as an art object,” Peretti once said.

As an adornment and status symbol, wrist cuffs date back to ancient civilizations. In contemporary culture, wide cuffs are a key feature of comic book hero Wonder Woman’s costume, who uses them to create a forcefield and repel bullets. In a well-timed full circle moment, actor Gal Gadot wears a bone cuff in the upcoming film Wonder Woman 1984, ensuring the piece maintains its iconic status for a new generation of women. — NATHALIE ATKINSON

**GIFTS**

What a doll

Have you met Vivienne? The quirky mascot of French luxury titan Louis Vuitton has been a collector’s item since her birth in 2017, but this season has seen the debut of a whole universe of accessories and other stylish trappings.

Named after the house’s signature VVN leather, Vivienne is a quirky embodiment of LV’s heritage. Her flower-shaped leather head is a nod to its collaboration with Japanese artist Takashi Murakami. Her luggage tag arms reference its connection to travel. And a mischievous four-petalled eye patch flicks to Vuitton’s monogram. She’s not just a pretty face, though, serving as a playful inspiration point for a variety of accessories, from keychains to snow globes to pochette bags.

Earlier in 2020, Vivienne’s floral coat was dyed in a shibori style of indigo and she carried a miniature carved surfboard. For fall, her form was made into necklace pendants featuring yellow and rose gold flowers that were decorated with pavé diamonds. Now, Vivienne is getting ready for the holidays as she’s reimagined in a collection that places her at the centre of a carnival. On passport cases, she rides the Ferris wheel. On makeup bags, she throws her hands up while going downhill on a roller coaster. In figurine form, she’s ready for action inside an enamel bumper car. Most decadently, she’s taking up residence in the Malle Maison Vivienne, a hard-sided trunk that opens into a house and comes with two Vivienne dolls and 22 pieces of miniature furniture. — RANDI BERGMAN

(From top) Elsa Peretti small Bone cuff in sterling silver with black jade, $3,750, in sterling silver with turquoise, $10,400, in 18 karat gold with green jade, $24,900, at Tiffany & Co. (tiffany.ca).

Malle Maison Vivienne, price on request at Louis Vuitton (louisvuitton.com).
With a lighter holiday social to-do list than usual, Nolan Bryant finds inspiration — and gift ideas — in this collection of lush and juicy books.

1. A WONDERFUL TIME
This 1975 title is the Holy Grail of cocktail table books and comes with a price tag that reflects the honour. Slim Aarons’s lush images capture the wildly social in their element: think Babe Paley poolside in Jamaica or C.Z. Guest at Villa Artemis in Palm Beach. 
*A Wonderful Time: An Intimate Portrait of the Good Life* by Slim Aarons, $1,900 through Kinsey Marable & Co. (kinsey.marable@gmail.com).

2. R.S.V.P.
This year marks the book’s 20th anniversary and it still stands up. Leave it to the late jet-setting fashion plate Nan Kempner to call on her coterie of social friends from around the globe to contribute sumptuous recipes and tips for rigorous entertaining.
*R.S.V.P.: Menus for Entertaining From People Who Really Know How* by Nan Kempner, $200 through Kinsey Marable & Co. (kinsey.marable@gmail.com).

3. HOW THEY DECORATED
One thing many have missed while in quarantine is visiting the homes of others (Zoom only lets you snoop so far, after all). Author P. Gaye Tapp’s book takes a deep dive into the rooms of some of society’s greatest figures and the decorators behind them.
*How They Decorated: Inspiration from Great Women of the Twentieth Century* by P. Gaye Tapp, $75 at bookstores and online (rizzolibookstore.com).

4. BALS
At over eight pounds, this book’s heft is fitting given the weight that the grand soireés chronicled within it have had on the history of society. It’s brimming with rare photographs from legendary costume parties, among them Truman Capote’s 1966 Black and White Ball.
*Bals: Legendary Balls of the Twentieth Century* by Nicholas Foulkes, $195 at bookstores and online (assouline.com).

5. CAFÉ SOCIETY
As much a read for history buffs as it is a scrapbook of the last great age of European high living, this book is perfect for those looking for visual sustenance. Thierry Coudert recounts the intrigue and impact generated by the era’s cosmopolitan socialites.
*Café Society: Socialites, Patrons, and Artists 1920-1960* by Thierry Coudert, $50 at bookstores and online (penguinrandomhouse.ca).

6. THE CHIFFON TRENCHES
A force in fashion, André Leon Talley’s tell-all offers an insider’s look into the industry excess of the 1980s and ‘90s. It was a time when business codes were rewritten and Talley burst through systemic barriers with a set of Louis Vuitton luggage in tow.
*The Chiffon Trenches: A Memoir* by André Leon Talley, $37 at bookstores and online (penguinrandomhouse.ca).

7. STUDIO 54
New York’s infamous nightclub was the backdrop to that fleeting moment when everyone from Doris Duke to Grace Jones collided on the dance floor. This book is the catalogue for a new exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario, scheduled to open Dec. 26.
*Studio 54: Night Magic* by Matthew Yokobosky, $53.95 at bookstores and online (rizzolibookstore.com).

8. FRIENDS AND ENEMIES
Lady Black doesn’t hold back as she charts her rise from humble beginnings to stratospheric heights and her subsequent fall from grace. This gossipy tale of fortunes won and lost even features an appendix listing Barbara Amiel’s allies and adversaries.
*Friends and Enemies: A Life in Vogue, Prison & Park Avenue* by Barbara Amiel, $29.95 at bookstores and online (pegasusbooks.com).
“In my work for fashion and beauty photo shoots and red-carpet makeup, I love layering shades and, naturally, my intention was the same on paper,” says Julie Cusson, Chanel’s national makeup artist for Canada. “I wanted the makeup result soft but strong at the same time, a kind of duality between demure and daring.” Cusson played with rose, plum and brown shades on the eyes. “Lips are bold because it’s something that I always feel is captivating,” she says. “And I added a touch of light on the cheekbones.”

**Ombre Première eyeshadow in Cuir Brun and Cuivre Rose, $50 each; Le Liner de Chanel liquid eyeliner in Rouge Noir, $45; La Palette Sourcils brow powder in Medium, $65; Rouge Allure lip colour in Pourpre d’Or, $60; Le Crayon Lèvres long-wear lip pencil in Rouge Noir, $37; Les Beiges Healthy Glow Sheer Highlighting Fluid in Pearly Glow, $60; Le Volume Ultra-Noir de Chanel mascara in Noir Intense, $43, all at Chanel beauty counters (chanel.com).**
“Black eyeliner is back for the fall/winter season in a big way,” says Ronnie Tremblay, who always brings an element of artistry to her makeup work. “Numerous designers used the product as the focus for their show’s beauty look.” The results varied from collection to collection, an approach Tremblay suggests you keep in mind during the holiday season. “Take a classic look but add an unexpected twist.” Here, she incorporated a winged element into a squared-off shape.

Dior Beauty Backstage Face & Body Foundation, $50; DiorSkin Mineral Nude Bronze Powder in Warm Sunrise, $58; Backstage Glow Face Palette, $55; On Stage Liner in Vinyl Black, $38; Addict Stellar Shine Lipstick in Diormoon, $46, all at Sephora (sephora.ca).
GO FOR GOLD
Runway presentations for labels such as Valentino, Miu Miu and Marc Jacobs offered their unique versions of a flared eyeliner shape in sleek black. But Robert Weir, who has contributed to Vogue Italia, Nylon and numerous other high-fashion titles, took a different approach when it came to enhancing his illustration. “I put a twist on it by doing the liner in gold, like we saw in shows for Lutz Huelle and The Blonds,” he says. “I used M.A.C’s Gold Pigment and Glitter to create the wing and the new Pat McGrath Mothership VIII Divine Rose II palette, taking artistic license with skin tone and contour.”

Pigment in Gold, $26; Glitter in Gold, $26, both at M.A.C Cosmetics (maccosmetics.ca). Pat McGrath Labs Mothership VIII Artistry Palette Divine Rose II Collection, $170 at Sephora (sephora.ca).
**IN FRAME**
Art by female artists represents just two per cent of works sold globally, something Mrkt Gallery is hoping to change with its online showcase of paintings, illustrations and prints exclusively by women. Fifteen per cent of the profits from holiday sales – including this dreamy vacation-inspired gouache by Toronto-based Sabina Fenn – will be donated to Black Artists’ Network Dialogue, a gallery that supports Black artists in Canada and beyond. El Fenn illustration by Sabina Fenn, $400 unframed or $450 framed through mrktgallery.com.

**FACE FIRST**
This luxurious treatment oil is comprised of 33 botanicals including Tuhka, a rare type of Brazil nut that minimizes skin damage from free radicals and is sourced alongside Conservation International and the Trio tribe of South Suriname. The partnership enables the local community to protect 235,000 hectares of the Amazon rainforest. Retailer The Detox Market plants a tree for every purchase, ensuring you’re doing your part for preservation, too. LXMI 33 Face Oil, $154 at The Detox Market (thedetoxmarket.ca).

**AU NATUREL**
Like its sister brand, Revel Cider, ibi’s wines use minimal zero sulphur and are fermented with Gueph, Ont’s natural microflora. Its holiday offering, an unfiltered Cabernet Franc, is the latest vintage to contribute to the brand’s commitment to fight systematic racism. Since the summer, $500 from every release has been donated to various organizations, and this bottle’s proceeds are earmarked for the Canadian Civil Liberties Association. ibi Wine Marisol Cabernet Franc, $30 through ibiwine.ca.

**WELL PLATED**
Fable’s artisan-crafted ceramic plates, bowls and stainless-steel cutlery are designed in Vancouver, ethically produced in Portugal and created with accessible pricing in mind. For every set sold, a meal is donated to youth in need through Mealshare. For the holiday season, a cool pebble grey hue has been added to the collection. Fable pasta bowls, $68/set of four through fablehome.co.

**GET FLOORED**
Twice every month, Mellah Projects auctions off a one-of-a-kind Moroccan rug on its Instagram feed, @mellah_, projects, with proceeds going to a variety of charities. Recipients have included Black Health Alliance and artist Bryan Espiritu’s popular Change for 100 initiative, which provides grocery gift cards to those in need. Look for special holiday-edition auctions on Dec. 1 and 15. Mellah Projects rug, starting at $250 through mellah.ca.

**SHOE IN**
Responsible design has always been central to the way Coolican & Company operates. Most recently, that has translated into its support for the Parkdale Land Trust, which advocates for sustainable, community-minded development in the Toronto neighbourhood that its employees call home. Twenty-five per cent of holiday sales from this brass shoehorn, which acts as an elegant decor item when not in use, will be donated to the organization. Coolican & Company Sorauren shoehorn with stand, $831 through coolicanandcompany.com.

**LIGHT BRIGHT**
High atop Los Angeles lies Flamingo Estate, a historic Spanish colonial manor that has recently been transformed into a haven for creatives and environmentalists, with a sprawling organic garden that has inspired a new range of products for mind, body and belly. In partnership with the National Forest Foundation and 1% for the Planet, the Estate will plant a tree for every product sold. Flamingo Estate set of three candles, US$120 through flamingoestate.la.

**IN FRAME**
Rosée Du Matin Ça va bien aller horizontal bar necklace, $650 at Maison Birks (maisonbirks.com).

**GIVE IT FORWARD**
Spread the love beyond your gift list with RANDI BERGMAN’s round up of presents with a philanthropic twist.

**BAG BOOST**
Goodee, a digital marketplace for responsibly made home and lifestyle goods, has collaborated with the United Nations’ Ethical Fashion Initiative on a stylish carryall – now available in a range of new colours. The textiles were handcrafted in Burkina Faso by a social co-operative and constructed into durable tote bags by Carliera, a fashion enterprise in Northern Italy that offers artisan training courses to asylum seekers and migrants. Bassi Market Tote, $199 through goodee.com.
Pre-order your personalized holiday gifting.

www.atelieronqueen.com
**IN BRIEF**

The luxury watch market is more diversified than ever, especially when it comes to precision pieces meant to be worn daily. Rome-based Bulgari’s Octo Finissimo range, which launched in 2014, stands out for a design that’s both discreet and architectural in a svelte silhouette. Its latest iteration is offered in satin-polished steel, which accentuates all of the timepiece’s distinctive sharp angles, while a lacquered black or blue dial reinforces its sporty spirit. From a technical perspective, this Octo model’s water resistance has been increased substantially to 100 metres thanks to a screw-down crown and a millimetre increase in thickness. It’s a worthy tradeoff for a watch that handsomely calibrates form and function.

— ANDREW SARDONE

Octo Finissimo Automatic Satin-Polished Steel 100M, $15,500 at Holt Renfrew in Toronto (bulgari.com).

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**SCENT SEASON**

This trio of fragrances will charm any perfume aficionado on your list.

**HISTORY REPEATING**

For those with a nostalgic spirit, Guerlain is reissuing a powdery floral that was originally composed in 1912. French for “crazy aroma,” Fol Arôme encapsulates the exuberance of the Belle Époque and its inverted heart bottle is limited to just 900 editions. Guerlain Fol Arôme, $900 at Holt Renfrew (guerlain.com).

**VENETIAN ESCAPE**

Valmont’s Storie Veneziane is an olfactory odyssey that travels through storied Venice via a collection of fragrances. In its latest chapter, it visits the Ridotto Casino and discovers a decadent scene that’s captured by notes of rum, Chantilly cream and vanilla. Valmont Storie Veneziane The Mica D’Oro I, from $430 through lamaisonvalmont.com.

**VOLUME UP**

Inspired by the spirit of the Italian fashion house, Valentino’s newest scent is meant to be worn loudly. Opening with citrusy notes, Voce Viva has a heart of white flowers and a mossy base. Its bottle riffs on the brand’s signature rockstud accessory motif. — CAITLIN AGNEW

Valentino Beauty Voce Viva, from $123 at major retailers (valentino.com).

**GOOD ANGLES**

Nanushka takes the season’s love of skin from top to toe.

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**LEATHER WEATHER**

Polished leather pieces are often a must for autumn wardrobes, and these slick picks are ready to carry you through a holiday season that will favour minimal ease over formal fuss. Budapest-based Nanushka doubles down on the look by pairing a buttery soft faux-leather coat with equally supple trousers. The quilted texture of a Bottega Veneta skirt makes it both a closet staple and a statement piece, and there’s equal standout subtlety to the puff sleeve detail and butterscotch hue of a Frame blouse. Toughen up a tailored look with Ganni’s panelled culottes or Alexandre Vauthier’s sharp shouldered blazer. Or go all in with Frankie Shop’s white pleather jumpsuit. Whether real or imitation, skin is definitely in.

— NADIA PIZZIMENTI

Ganni shorts, $640 at Ssense (ssense.com).


Alexandre Vauthier blazer, $4,555 through matchesfashion.com.

Frame shirt, $1,215 through matchesfashion.com.


— VOLUME UP
DREAM COAT

To claim a perfect gift, NATHALIE ATKINSON placed her long-held desire for a cinematic jacket in the hands of a team of creative women.

The process of creating the coat begins with measurements taken by an experienced tailor. In my case, that’s Joyce Gunhouse. By day, Gunhouse is the co-designer of made-in-Canada women’s label Comrags, whose clothes I’ve been wearing for years. We e-mail my particulars to Galer in the U.K., for an initial toile, the test garment that’s sewn up to ensure a perfect fit. Since I have no imminent London travel plans, Gunhouse graciously agrees to handle fittings when I have no imminent London travel plans, Gunhouse graciously agrees to handle fittings when

The revamped toile makes its way back to Toronto, but Gunhouse is still not quite satisfied with the shoulders. In a eureka moment, a seam is ripped apart to make a crucial adjustment that finally allows the coat to sit properly on my asymmetrical frame. I carefully fold and tuck the final edit into an envelope for its last journey across the pond. Almost a year after Peter made his generous offer, a hefty package arrives just in time for my birthday. Compared to the ghost version of a coat created for the film Withnail and I, the new version is a reproduction of the topper for more than 20 years, and prices an off-the-rack coat starting at £1,500. Now in her 70s, she has always taken

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INTO THE ARCHIVE

Since its incorporation in 1670, the Hudson’s Bay Company has grown from remote trading posts to a network of stores in big cities and small towns across the country. Its influence on our shopping habits really took hold in the 20th century with the acquisition of regional retailers. Cairns and Woodward’s out west, Montreal’s venerable Morgan’s, Freimans of Ottawa, and Simpsons, as well as value chains including Zellers and Fields. HBC marks its 350th anniversary in 2020 and NATHALIE ATKINSON was invited to dig through its in-house cache of artifacts that capture the department-store era of the company’s history. As we experience another major shift in how people shop for the holidays, these objects and images highlight the many ways retail therapy has changed.

DO IT YOURSELF

In the beginning, HBC carried fabric, not fashion, and support for home sewing continued into the 1970s. Co-produced with Vogue publisher Condé Nast, pattern flyers such as this 1929 example came out every two weeks across the country. Its pages tout the latest modes from Paris: frocks with shirring or box-pleats to sew up at home from wool poplin or printed crepe. “Vogue Patterns Cost a Few Cents More,” a tagline promises, “but the Difference is Style Insurance.”

LUXURY BY DESIGN

“Utterly sophisticated clothes that can trace their style origin back to Maggy Rouff, Patou, Alix, Mainbocher and Schiaparelli” is how The Globe put it when the St. Regis Room opened at the Toronto flagship in 1937. Though department stores played an important role in democratizing consumption, they also created exclusive fashion salons showcasing couturiers including Christian Dior and Givenchy. In 1971, when Margery Steele became the fashion director, the Room would become the first to introduce American labels, such as Geoffrey Beene, to Canada.

ONE-STOP SHOP

True to their name, department stores cemented their importance as destinations by encompassing a wide range of categories and services, especially during the 1950s economic boom. Larger stores had travel concierges, hair salons, gas stations and food halls. The basement-level food floor of the historic Woodward’s building in downtown Vancouver (seen here in 1954) was at one time the largest supermarket in North America. It imported exotic delicacies and kept staples stocked in quantities that reassured consumers of postwar plenty.

BUILDING MORALE

Retailers once cultivated employees for life. At HBC, the journey began with recruitment flyers and, once hired, associates were trained on the finer points of customer service with booklets containing dizzying facts. That kind of loyalty meant community building was at the centre of staff social life. Enhancing the connection were in-house publications such as the Bay Builder newsletter, produced for the downtown Vancouver store from 1934 to 1950. It solicited employee opinions on store policies, chronicled personal news and even had its own society columnist.
NEXT GENERATION
This 1960 photo of teen girls taking a beauty course at HBC's Victoria store presages the imminent Youthquake. A junior size category had appeared with the postwar baby boom, but by the rebellious mid-sixties teenagers no longer wanted to shop like their parents. The culture of consumption was about to change its focus to ever-cheaper and accessible options for young people. HBC's store lineup included several value chains that catered to modern adolescence, and gave rise to the department store's emerging nemesis: suburban malls.

MONEY TALKS
Throughout the Bay's history, currency shifted from the pelts and bartering of the early fur trade to aluminum HBC tokens with values based on Canada's new decimal monetary system. Charga-Plates, such as the one pictured here, sit on the timeline between promissory notes (which became cash) and today's credit-based economy. In the 1940s, in order to make the shopping experience more convenient, regular customers with charge accounts were issued a personalized embossed sheet-metal plate in a handsome leatherette sleeve. By the 1950s, they were obsolete.

PAPER CHASE
Gift shopping can be a tricky business, so in the 1950s tiny Fashion Chart cards “for his wallet” were introduced to help a man keep track of his wife's tastes and sizes. The retailer printed all manner of other ephemera, including artfully illustrated packaging and shopping bags, such as this Christmas tote with an image of its Calgary store. HBC often punched them up with slogans that ranged from the pithy “Your Friendly Store” (1940s) to mouthfuls including “Western Canada's Great Headquarters for anything obtainable to Eat, Drink, Wear or Use” (in the 1910s) and this dare, from 1980: “Ask Us for Anything...Almost.”

LUNCH SET
In the 1920s, department stores became social hubs by opening cafés and lunch counters. The Simpsons Toronto flagship boasted six restaurants, including a motor grill in the parking garage. The pinnacle was the Arcadian Court. The art deco dining hall boasted ceilings hung with Lalique chandeliers and soaring windows. In her novel, *The Blind Assassin*, Margaret Atwood sets a scene in “the rippling pastel space.” In 1934, when the book’s high-society luncheon takes place, the menu included consommé Julienne and baked nectarines with cookies (price: 20 cents).
**IN BRIEF**

**CANDY CRUSH**

Portuguese artist Joana Vasconcelos has presented work at the Venice Biennale, the Palace of Versailles and the Guggenheim museum in Bilbao, and her latest project for Roche Bobois is meant to turn your living room into an exuberant exhibition of its own. Bombom is a series of floating sofas in colorful stripes that evoke a bag of liquorice allsorts candies. The back rests that top each bold blob are modular, allowing you to change up components for different seating arrangements or uses. For the holiday season, Roche Bobois is releasing a series of equally audacious throw cushions printed with Vasconcelos’ original artwork. Together, they’re guaranteed to bring maximalist joy to your world. – A.S.

Bombom sofas, starting at $6,845, cushions, starting at $225 at Roche Bobois (roche-bobois.com).

**THE EDIT**

**MOOD IN WOOD**

Illuminate your holiday table with a forest of sculptural candlesticks

**RIGHT TURN**

Traditional lathe-turned pillars are given a Nordic simplicity by Sherbrooke, Quebec’s Julie Morissette and Jean-Philippe Bombardier. Their La Fabrique Déco line is one of many Canadian bougie options available through Simons’ Fabrique 1840 platform. La Fabrique Déco Scandinavian candlestick set, $142 at Simons (simons.ca).

**NICE CURVES**

To elevate festive spreads, Krista Ross creates beautifully textured wood cutting boards and serving utensils for The Woodman’s Daughter. Her candleholders include semicircular and angled options carved from handsome walnut and maple with metallic details. The Woodman’s Daughter Arches candleholder, $90, U candleholder, $80 through thewoodsmansdaughter.com.

**SHAPE SHIFT**

Portuguese chestnut wood is worked into contemporary silhouettes for Casa Cubista’s collection of holders. Curved, zig-zag and cylindrical shapes have the clean look of childhood blocks, making them perfect for building a sculptural composition.

– ANDREW SARDONE

Casa Cubista Bump candleholder, $82 at Saudade (saudadetoronto.com).

Over the past year, living in the now has become a global mantra. It’s serendipitous timing, then, that Polaroid launched its newest camera, the Polaroid Now, in 2020. “While other products may be designed to make specific tasks easier in life, a Polaroid camera’s job is to highlight and enjoy the life you’re already living,” says the company’s CEO, Oskar Smolokowski. The new camera brings a retro feel to picture taking and feeds an ongoing fascination with analog technology. “People will share the tangible Polaroid photo on social media,” says Smolokowski. “But after the Instagram story disappears, the photo lives permanently in their homes and lives.”

The new camera is engineered with an autofocus system for sharper photos, as well as other improvements such as a better ranging and metering system. Design-wise, the company looked to its classic OneStep camera from 1975 for inspiration. “Design is a huge part of Polaroid’s DNA and we’re very proud of the Polaroid Now being true to that original camera silhouette yet taking the design language and technology forward,” says Smolokowski.

Capturing memories aside, Polaroid has an impressive legacy of inspiring culture-shaping creativity. “One of the things we strongly believe at Polaroid is the power of bringing people together in the real world,” says Smolokowski. “With a Polaroid camera it happens around creativity and photography, obviously, but we hope to always continue this mission whether a Polaroid camera is present or not.”

– CAITLIN AGNEW

Polaroid Now camera, $140 through polaroid.com.

**SNAP TO IT**

To instantly capture holiday memories, Polaroid offers a camera that plays up retro imagery and design

**DESIGN**
Have you thought about your travel bubble yet? If we’re finally given the green light to satisfy a year’s worth of wanderlust, luxury travel’s new normal will be more intimate than ever before. “This year was a reset year for everyone,” says Albert Herrera, the senior vice president of partnerships at Virtuoso, a luxury travel agency network. “But there’s so much pent-up emotion for travel, which we think will lead to pent-up demand.”

“Industry experts expect people to travel more,” Herrera says. “But there’s also so much pent-up emotion for travel, which we think will lead to pent-up demand.” Industry experts expect people to travel less often, but to want every step of their journey to feel especially personal.

**SUITE LIFE**

“Giving people confidence that we’re able to provide a physically distanced atmosphere is first and foremost our priority,” says Nancy Munzar Kelly, the general manager at the Shangri-La Hotel Toronto. Just as important is the ability for guests to continue to connect with their destination, especially at urban hotels, which tourists typically book because they will be well situated to explore a city. With many local events, festivals and shows either cancelled or drastically scaled back, the Shangri-La is bringing urban experiences in house, allowing guests to book the hotel’s private screening room for NBA or NHL games, for instance. The property’s famous afternoon tea, typically hosted in the bustling street-level lobby, is now available via take-away for enjoyment in a suite. Demand for that sort of hands-on service is much higher than it was at this time last year. “Hotels are getting to know the guest preferences a lot more,” Herrera says.

**IN-FLIGHT ISOLATION**

One thing that can’t be controlled on a commercial flight is other passengers, so it’s safe to expect increased demand for business class pods and the private suites offered by airlines such as Emirates, Etihad and Singapore. The space and privacy provided by partitioned spaces offer peace of mind, and dedicated service from a limited number of flight crew can mean fewer social interactions.

Private charters are also seeing increased demand. Several luxury resorts and hotels, including Four Seasons Resort Lanai in Hawaii, Waldorf Astoria Los Cabos Pedregal in Mexico and SHA Wellness Clinic in Spain offer packages that include transportation via private aircraft. Stan Kuliavas, vice-president of sales and business development at Levaero Aviation, which sells private aircraft and owns the Toronto-based charter company Private Air, says the company has seen a spike in bookings. A lot of the business is coming from new customers, he says, or people who did it once a year, or once a few years ago, and are doing it more frequently now.

**RIVER ROUTES**

While many large cruise companies are cancelling sailings well into next year and some destinations such as the Cayman Islands are restricting cruise ships from their ports for the foreseeable future, it’s a different story for small-ship cruise operators. Bookings for river cruising are up 14 per cent for Virtuoso clients. And companies such as Riviera River Cruises have dropped single supplement fees and introduced a series of solo traveller itineraries.

“Since guests haven’t been able to travel for most of 2020, they are gravitating toward destinations they’ve been dreaming about,” says Navin Sawhney, the CEO for the Americas for luxury cruise company Ponant. “Whether that be sailing to the North Pole or to Tahiti or to Antarctica.” Ponant has operated 50 cruises with over 3,000 passengers since July. On board, social distancing is integral to the company’s protocols. “We have also redesigned our restaurant layouts and will only offer contactless à la carte dining options,” says Sawhney. “Your waitstaff will remain the same throughout the sailing as will your cabin steward.”

**CONTACTLESS CONNECTION**

“I think the world desperately needs experiences that elevate us out of the every day, and travellers still want genuine, human connections when exploring a destination,” says Belmond’s Filippi. For visits to Brazil’s Iguazu Falls National Park or the Mikhailovsky Theater in St. Petersburg, Belmond can organize before-hours access. At the Shangri-La Toronto, in-room wine tastings are hosted on-screen by a master sommelier. All year, agents at Virtuoso have helped clients move big trips for milestone celebrations and bucket list items to 2021. Herrera advises booking sooner rather than later, but to still have a plan B. 

Up-to-date details on travel restrictions are available through canada.ca. For more coronavirus information, visit theglobeandmail.com/canada/the-zero-canada-project/
Time stands still. Your mind expands. Suddenly everything makes sense. Every yard to the hole is yours.

YOUR BEST PERFORMANCE IS THE ONE AHEAD

TAG HEUER CONNECTED GOLF EDITION

TAG Heuer Boutique
Yorkdale Shopping Centre
416 792 7084
TO DOUGH LIST
What do you gift the home cook who thinks there’s nothing left to bake in 2020?

FLOUR POWER
Celebrated chef Marc Vetri, who trained in Italy, and his head baker, Claire Kopp McWilliams, guide devotees through a master class of over 80 recipes broken down into three easy-to-digest chapters: Mix, Shape and Bake, plus a bonus chapter on Vetri’s famous Panettone. Mastering Bread: The Art and Practice of Handmade Sourdough, Yeast Bread and Pastry by Marc Vetri, Claire Kopp McWilliams and David Joachim, $42.50 at bookstores and online (penguinrandomhouse.ca).

MIDEAST FEAST
In this impassioned culinary tour of Palestine’s kitchens and camps, told through the eyes of Ottolenghi’s executive chef Sami Tamimi, dive deep into classic Pita (Khubez), Sweet Tahini Rolls (Kubez el Tahineh) and Jerusalem Sesame Bread (Ka’ak al quds). Falastin: A Cookbook by Sami Tamimi and Tara Wigley, $45 at bookstores and online (penguinrandomhouse.ca).

CARB LOAD
For 20 years, chef Anna Olson has helped bakers master quick and yeasted loaves, cakes, cookies and pastries. Her latest book includes recipes for plenty of new classics including a mustard pretzel loaf and gluten-free potato bread. Mastering Bread: the Art and Practice of Handmade Sourdough, Yeast Bread and Pastry by Marc Vetri, Claire Kopp McWilliams and David Joachim, $42.50 at bookstores and online (penguinrandomhouse.ca).

NOVEMBER SURPRISE
It’s easy to have the impression that Beaujolais has a monopoly on young wine, given the region’s well-hyped nouveau release every November. Truth is, winemakers all over the world celebrate the end of the harvest by quaffing back vino novella and junger wein. One of the first in Canada to play around with the annual release is Dave Gillingham, founder of Domaine Darius in Ontario’s Prince Edward County. Like Beaujolais, he focuses his bottles on gamay. “People love it, since its lively, fresh and clean,” says Gillingham. In France, wineries race their nouveau to Paris, occasionally via hot air balloon or, even, elephant. That lighthearted spirit in the often-serious wine world is what nouveau is all about. “I did it more for fun than anything else,” says Gillingham. – CHRISTINE SISMONDO

Domaine Darius Nouveau, price on request through 416-831-9617.

ARTISAN QUALITY
Elevate your December dinner table with this line of Colombian-made housewares

Sandra Rojas-Chinni and Vanessa Yusuf couldn’t have known how important functional home decor was about to become when they launched their housewares line, Fique + Clay, in August of 2019. The objects that we use to eat, drink and live have to work overtime right now and their concept of refined basics is ideal for a home-bound lifestyle.

The Canadian-designed, Colombian-made brand has three product lines. First are pitchers, bowls and plates designed to elevate dinner tables with soft lines and soothing textures. Second is placemats, baskets and mats woven from natural fibres native to the Andean region. Finally, there are rugs made from fique fibre that’s a sensorial delight under bare feet. “I have always been drawn to natural materials and we found fique and clay are two essential resources that Colombia is known for in quality, craftsmanship and sustainability,” says Rojas-Chinni.

Born in Colombia, Rojas-Chinni moved to Canada as a teenager and eventually found herself creating covetable yet casual decor for Hudson’s Bay, Loblaws and Club Monaco’s lifestyle offshoot, Caban. She and Yusuf bring a similar sensibility to their line. Instead of designing collections by season, the duo tries to focus on an aesthetic that works year-round and transitions from room to room. “We believe in creating products that have a longer life, moving away from the fast-paced calendars of the fashion world,” says Rojas-Chinni. The brand sells directly via its website, and can also be found at select Eataly locations, Frankies Surf Club in Muskoka, Ont., Hopson Grace in Toronto or through Goop.com. – MARYAM SIDDIQI

For more information, visit fiqueandclay.com.
DISCOVER THE PERFECT GIFT
At The Distillery District this Holiday Season

PERFECT POUR
First fabricated in 1952, the HK pitcher is one of Henning Koppel’s most famous pieces. Spare but sensuous with an elegantly extended handle and exaggerated lip. This gleaming pitcher from the MASTERPIECES Collection will be a treasured piece in your home. Georg Jensen HK Pitcher, $425 through bergodesigns.ca.

CUFFED
This stunning hand-made 14K yellow gold cuff by Jenny Greco Jewellery is crafted in the Toronto Distillery District. Gold Hand Cuff, $2,800 through facebook.com/jennygrecojewellery.

FOREST BATHING
Add tranquility and colour to your home with this K. Taylor 6”x6” piece made from acrylic on stained birch pannel with resin. Cottage Scene, $135 through artagallery.ca.

SMALL BATCH BIG FLAVOUR

ZIP UP
This bomber in a classic design is made of high quality virgin wool with cashmere. Ribbed cuffs and zip pockets complete the sporty and comfortable look. Indro Wool/Cashmere Zip Up Bomber by Joop!, $998 through gotstyle.com.

GAME NIGHT
Keep warm this season with this limited-run cozy and stylish vintage full-zip sweater from ’47! Features the 1947 logo with the rare red font. Game night just got more stylish. Officially licensed by the NHL. Toronto Maple Leafs Vintage Jacket, $130 through thesportgallery.ca.

TIME TRAVEL
A classic WWII Kit Bag shape done in tan twill with vintage style felt appliqué patches and stencils. Inspired by the collection at the National Air Force Museum of Canada. Royal Canadian Air Force Kit Bag, $149 through redcanoebrands.com.

WINTER VILLAGE
Join us this holiday season at Toronto’s historic Distillery District and enjoy starlit canopies, a 50-foot Christmas Tree in Trinity Square and festive music throughout as part of our charming Winter Village experience from November 12 to March 31. All of your favourite Distillery District shops, galleries, and restaurants are open, offering a unique blend of specialty gifts, art, cuisine and fashion in our open-air, safe environment of pedestrian-only streets – perfect for holiday shopping! Many of the retailers at The Distillery District offer curbside pickup options and online shopping. The Distillery District is committed to offering guests a safe shopping experience and we follow all local and provincial public health guidelines. Happy holidays from our family to yours.

@DISTILLERYTO / THEDISTILLERYDISTRICT.COM
new romantic

As autumn turns to winter, ethereal fashion captures a desire for ease and escape

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CARLYLE ROUTH • STYLING BY NADIA PIZZIMENTI
SOFT POWER
IN CHECK
Upcycled wools from past collections are pieced together into Alexander McQueen’s dramatic frocks, combining a reverence for history with contemporary sustainability. Alexander McQueen dress, available through alexandermcqueen.com. Ottolinger earrings, available at Archives (archivestoronto.com).
THREAD WORKS
Following its tradition of combining demure and utilitarian elements, Sacai’s sheer slip is paired with tailored trousers.
Sacai blouse, pants, boots and earrings, available through sacai.jp.
DOUBLY DELICATE

GATHER ROUND
SHEER BRILLIANCE
A gauzy vintage find sparkles with the help of Area’s glittering headpiece.
Gloves, stylist’s own.
GOOD ANGLE

Makeup and hair by Sheri Stroh for Plutino Group. Styling assistant: Alex Petropoulakis. Photographed at Lune 1860 in Goderich, Ont. (lune1860.ca).
Out of the closet

During a season short on social occasions, autumn’s best fashion accessories do double duty as home decor

BY MATTHEW HAGUE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY RILEY STEWART
STYLING BY GEORGIA GROOM
PROP STYLING BY JAMES REIGER

The dining room at Turville Grange is lined with Sicilian scarves. A country manor in southeast England, it was the home of the late Princess Lee Radziwill, an interior decorator and Jacqueline Kennedy’s younger sister. The gossamer silk, covered in hand-painted pastel flowers, is delicate enough to wrap around the most regal of necks, yet it’s affixed to the walls like the world’s dreamiest wallpaper.

“Lee was pretty special,” says Colette van den Thillart, a Toronto-based interior designer and an acquaintance of Radziwill before she died in 2019. “She had amazing taste. I see [Turville Grange] posted on Instagram almost weekly.” Radziwill bought the property in 1966 and renovated it with the help of Italian architect Lorenzo Mongiardino. Over 50 years later, images of her home, often snapped by legendary photographer Horst P. Horst, still resonate because of their arresting sense of escape.
Ferm Living plant pots, available through cassonhardware.com.

Simone Rocha earrings, available at The Room at Hudson’s Bay (thebay.com).
Corey Moranis bangle, available at Fawn Boutique (shopfawn.com).

Bag, available at Fendi (fendi.com).
Benedetta Bruzziches clutch, available at WDLT117 (wdlt117.com).
Infusing fashion into your home like Radziwill did isn’t always as effortless as it should look. “I think it’s complicated, but I wouldn’t rule it out,” says van den Thillart. “Perhaps not your beige sweater – and antique kimonos have been framed and hung to the point of cliché – but many fashion items are, to me, nothing short of wearable art.” She points to designers such as Philip Colbert and Schiaparelli, whose pieces – Andy Warhol-inspired dresses, hats shaped like shoes – can be showcased in a living area like any canvas or sculpture.

Before investing thousands in a vintage surrealist accessory, the most logical, risk-free place to start experimenting with fashion-cum-decor might be a dressing room or walk-in wardrobe. “At home this summer, so hungry was I for travel and joy, that I hung my entire closet with summer caftans, dresses and kimonos,” says van den Thillart. “It created the feeling of a tented room, which was ever so cheering given all that we are facing right now.”

Fanning out into the rest of the home, there are no real limits beyond our own imaginations and how well the piece fits into its surroundings. “Even a toothbrush can look good sitting out on a counter, if it’s a nice, well-designed toothbrush,” says Clea Shearer, co-host of the Netflix show Get Organized with the Home Edit. “When you’re shopping, why not be selective and go for objects that you actually like to look at? When you have a product with a beautiful form, no matter its function, there’s no reason you can’t display it in your home.”

These days, when people have so few opportunities to dress up and go out, let alone experience new interiors beyond their own quarantine quarters, few things seem more whimsical, more diversionary than a space that is equal parts fashion statement and decor innovation. It’s never been more timely to outfit a room in a way that replicates the joy of being swathed in fine clothing and accessories.

High fashion and sumptuous interiors have a long, intertwined history. For 130 years, Maison Lesage, a Parisian embroidery atelier, has beaded couture garments for Chanel, Dior and other top design houses, while also embellishing luxurious drapery and upholstery for Europe’s most aristocratic salons and parlours. Likewise, Hermès, Louis Vuitton, Fendi and Gucci all focus on fashion but dabble in furniture and decor. “During art nouveau, architect and interior designer Henry van de Velde created dresses so his clients could match their rooms,” says Cameron Macdonell, an assistant professor at Ryerson University’s School of Interior Design. “There are similar examples of interiors and fashion influencing one another in the Arts & Crafts movement and art deco.”

Photographed at The Wartime Bunker in Toronto (@thewartimebunker on Instagram).
Though most bakers wouldn’t dream of attempting to make phyllo from scratch, pastry chef Selma Elbasi grew up rolling thinner-than-paper sheets by hand, using a wooden rolling pin, with her mother in Turkey. “It’s a cultural thing – when you’re young, you have to learn to make phyllo,” she says. After coming to Canada with her husband, Mahmut, in 2005 and opening a restaurant together, she decided to hone her pastry skills even further and returned to Turkey to train with chefs there for two months.

The Elbasi family owns one of the only phyllo sheeting machines in the country. It lives at Anatolia Turkish Cuisine, their popular corner spot in Calgary’s Crossroads Farmers’ Market. But Selma still occasionally rolls the phyllo by hand to make the flakiest baklava, börek and other pastries they have on offer year-round. Though even skilled chefs roll one sheet at a time, she has mastered rolling up to 16 delicate layers at once, buffered with cornstarch or wheat starch to keep them from sticking. Her baklava is stuffed with brilliant green pistachios imported from Turkey, and doused in syrup while they’re still hot.

Though the Islamic holidays Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha have passed this year, Elbasi will be producing more sweets for customers celebrating Christmas. It’s something they did back home in Kayseri. “Our city is mixed. They celebrate Ramadan and Eid with us, and we celebrate Christmas with them,” says Mahmut. “They’re your neighbours. They cook and bring food to you, and you cook for them. That’s what the holidays are about.”
“I’ve been trying to carve out my own traditions as an adult,” says chef Jennifer Crawford, who writes, teaches and creates unique culinary experiences at pop-up events. “There are so many lovely things about having anchors and traditions, and the fact that you can create your own any time is a really powerful idea. You can be the ancestor people a hundred years from now are referring to when they make that same thing.”

Crawford, a baker, writer and educator in Nova Scotia’s Annapolis Valley, won MasterChef Canada in 2019 and is known for the kinds of idyllic sweets so many of us seek out over the holidays. Last year, their holiday centrepiece was a croquembouche, a tower of cream puffs filled with juniper pastry cream and glued together with spun sugar. “I’ve never been that interested in putting up a tree. But a tree I can eat – I feel motivated to do that. It brings that holiday camp, to make something totally over the top, and inviting enough and huge enough that anyone can show up, and there’s enough for all.”

Five years ago, Crawford discovered that their dad, who passed away 20 years ago, had been raised Jewish for much of his childhood. Crawford came back to Nova Scotia and began to connect with people who knew him. “I get to learn and create all those traditional dishes now,” says Crawford, who plans to make sufganiyot – fried jelly doughnuts – for the first time this year. “Learning has become part of the holiday tradition, because things are always changing.”
Growing up in Jamaica, Lorraine Robinson was surrounded by bakers. Her mother and godmother baked for special occasions, such as weddings and birthdays, and enlisted her help to beat butter and sugar by hand with a big wooden spoon. “Mixers weren’t a big thing, so they used to call on the kids a lot,” says Robinson.

What was a big thing, particularly around Christmas, was Jamaican rum cake. She brought the techniques she learned from her godmother to her Brampton, Ont., bakery, Robinson’s Cakery. This year, she has had about 60 gallons of fruit, including raisins, currants, prunes, cherries, pineapple and citrus zest, soaking in port and rum since August in order to make over 300 cakes this holiday season.

At Christmastime, Robinson will grind the booze-soaked, plumped fruit, ensuring the finished cakes are dark and moist, with all the flavour but not the chunky texture some people find off-putting in a fruitcake. Her treats are heavily spiced with cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves, just a hint of ginger, vanilla, almond extract and rosewater, all bound together with a traditional pound cake batter. “It’s more fruit than flour,” she says, adding that baking takes three hours in the oven, with water to create a steamy environment, ensuring that the cakes don’t dry out. Once baked, they’re basted with more alcohol, and she sometimes makes a banana rum sauce to flambé over the top.

Robinson’s mother, Davina, still bakes alongside her at the bakery, where they also make sweet potato and coconut milk puddings and cupcakes in tropical flavours. “I don’t want to be a traditional baker, I want to stand out,” says Robinson. “Baking is a joy for me – creating things that bring other people joy.”
Pastry chef Eric Ho has been into baking since Grade 5, the year he requested an immersion blender for his birthday. “My family never baked. I didn’t have a grandmother to teach me,” he says. In 1988, the family moved to Richmond, B.C., and eventually he went on to become an engineer. But his love of baking remained, and after a 13-year career in engineering, Ho made the decision to train at the Pacific Institute of Culinary Arts eight years ago.

“My interest has always been in French-style pastry,” says Ho. “I spent so much time in France. I’d go four to five times a year for work.” And so his focus turned to traditional French-style pastries such as croissants, which he’s known for at his Little Fox Bakery in Richmond. They produce over 1,700 double-baked croissants every week; traditional almond, cheese and chocolate, but also croissants stuffed with bubble tea and pork floss, and a pineapple bun croissant in which the characteristic crumb topping is scattered between pastry layers before baking.

“Growing up in Hong Kong, we’d eat a lot of food during the holidays. People do take time off and celebrate, but they aren’t tradition-based celebrations,” he says, recalling plenty of buffets and celebratory cakes, particularly chocolate and Black Forest, and frozen Viennetta, those fancy layered boxed ice cream cakes that were mass-produced in the 1980s, in chocolate, vanilla and pistachio.

Ho has plans to create a Black Forest cake inspired by those childhood memories this holiday season, but he also caters to his customers’ desires with freshly baked Stollen, chocolate hazelnut logs, macaron trees and confections in popular flavours such as gingerbread and peppermint.

Being a professional baker is also about mastering other peoples’ culinary traditions.
his past summer, Toronto architect Shari Orenstein and creative agency rep Hesty Leibtag launched Curated on Instagram. The non-profit virtual art sale featured creators at various career stages, including painters Shelley Adler and Kris Knight, with works ranging in price from $250 to $5,000. Its goal was to help Canadian artists make ends meet through the pandemic, but it also allowed many novice art buyers access to a market that used to be quite opaque.

In the absence of fairs and gallery exhibitions, technology has stepped up to connect collectors — including those of us pondering a holiday purchase — to new work. “The pandemic has pushed for a broader, more egalitarian access to art,” says Wendy Chang, the director of Vancouver’s Rennie Collection. Her space has its own Instagram feed but it’s also one of many galleries now using virtual reality technology by the app Artland to show work in vivid detail, no matter where the viewer is.

“The atmosphere of an opening night contributes so much to how people engage with the work,” says Tobin Gibson, who operates Unit 17 gallery in Vancouver. In lieu of that in-person buzz, Gibson says virtual exhibitions provide more information, especially around cost, that encourages casual collectors to consider purchases with an immediacy lacking in the price-by-request format of many traditional shows.

Curated’s debut resulted in 50 of the 60 exhibited works being sold, and Orenstein and Leibtag are planning to hold social media-driven sales periodically through 2021. At a time when artists need patrons, it’s fortunately never been easier to become one.

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