

THE KIT

The Wish List Issue: Editor-tested beauty indulgences; stylish gifts that give back; head-to-toe fashion looks for every type of holiday fete



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Leading lady

Montreal actor Caroline Dhavernas showcases the glam possibilities of the winter white trend and talks work, women’s rights and wickedly dark lips

BY RANI SHEEN | PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEMMA WARREN

Caroline Dhavernas is drawn to complex, dark characters: an ER doctor who illegally helps patients die on their own terms (the second season of *Mary Kills People* comes out in January); an unhinged door-to-door cosmetics saleswoman (indie film *Easy Living* debuted at South by Southwest and is awaiting release in Canada); a psychologist and FBI consultant who romances a mass-murdering cannibal (in *Hannibal*, which ended in 2015). Dhavernas herself is significantly less intense but just as interesting and multi-faceted; she paints, draws and makes collages (“the older I get the more I need to do other creative things,” she says), and moonlights as a collaborator and muse for Quebec-based beauty brand Lise Watier—the blackened berry shade Caroline, which she selected and was named for her, is as dark as any of her characters. We caught up with her recently in Toronto for our glamorous holiday shoot.

***Mary Kills People* is about to start its second season on Global. Is it difficult to transition after such a strong debut?** “It’s tricky because you want to evolve the series, you want to see the characters change; you want it to be exciting so the viewers are still excited about watching the show. For season two the stakes were a lot higher.”

How has *Mary*’s character evolved for season two? “Last season she got in trouble with the law but kind of got away with it; now she’s back at it and getting deeper into the criminal world, which is exciting. She’s become a little darker, I guess because she got away with so much. There were so many grey zones in season one around who deserves to die, involving people who aren’t necessarily terminally ill but who want to die. She’s going even further, so the ethical debate is even more interesting.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

BEAUTY NOTE

A deep berry lip is a holiday classic (and a personal favourite of Caroline Dhavernas). This season, update it by blurring the edges with a Q-tip.

PROENZA SCHOULER
DRESS, \$3,615, HOLT
RENFREW. **CUCHARA**
EARRINGS, \$79,
CUCHARA.CA



All the pretty things
So much to love in this oceanic palette of fun, fanciful presents **PAGE 3**



Giving for good
Make an impact with your gift-buying dollars this season **PAGE 6**



BVLGARI
ROMA

B.zero1
BVLGARI.COM

YORKDALE SHOPPING CENTRE

MARC JACOBS

DECADENCE

EAU SO DECADENT



Kind of blue

A moody mix of gifts for the decorative arts aficionado who needs gold headphones and fireworks on her boots. (All of us?)

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HAMIN LEE



1. **ELA BAG**, \$395, [ELABYELA.COM](#). 2. **ROGER & GALLEY** VERVEINE UTOPIE EXTRAIT DE COLOGNE, \$80 (110 ML), [HUDSON'S BAY](#). 3. **OMOROVICZA** MIDNIGHT RADIANCE MASK, \$155, [OMOROVICZA.COM](#). 4. **VERNON FRANCIS** NOURISHING WATER HAIR MIST, \$24, [SEPHORA.CA](#). 5. **TED BAKER** SHOES, \$380, [TOWN SHOES](#). 6. **DRAKE GENERAL STORE** HAT, \$30, [DRAKEGENERALSTORE.COM](#). 7. **FENTY BEAUTY** STARLIT HYPER-GLITZ LIPSTICKS IN SCI-FLY AND SUPERMOON, \$24 EACH, [SEPHORA.CA](#). 8. **BEATS BY DRE X BALMAIN** WIRELESS HEADPHONES, \$755, [BALMAIN.COM](#). 9. **L'ORÉAL PARIS X BALMAIN** COLOR RICHELIPSTICK IN URBAN SAFARI AND BALMAIN INSTINCT, \$20 EACH, [LOREALPARIS.CA](#). 10. **AUTUMN** BY KARL LAGERFELD X KNAUSGAARD, \$27 BOOKSTORES. 11. **LITTLE FIRES EVERYWHERE** BY CELESTE NG, \$27, BOOKSTORES. 12. **OUT OF PRINT** NOVEL MATCHBOOK SET, \$8, [ANTHROPOLOGIE.COM](#). 13. **FUJI FILM** INSTAX MINI 9, \$100, [THE SOURCE](#). 14. **HAPPY SOUL** CRYSTAL CARDS GUIDANCE ORACLE DECK (IN POUCH), \$30, [HAPPYSOULTORONTO.CA](#).

ONE-MINUTE MIRACLE

Editor: Eden Boileau, managing editor
Problem: Overnight my skin dries out like the Sahara
Quick fix: Every year at this time I start waking up to parched, dull skin, no matter how rich my night cream. Not anymore! This decadent and luxurious “massage mask” leaves my face moisturized, happy and healthy like no other. For that price, it should. What’s in it, gold? Well, yes, plus South Sea pearls to illuminate, “black diamond” truffle to energize and green algae to firm and plump. The jewel in its crown is the massage stone, which you heat in water and glide over your face for a heavenly hot stone facial.

**ESTÉE LAUDER RE-
NUTRIV ULTIMATE DIA-
MOND TRANSFORMATIVE
THERMAL RITUAL MASK,
\$420, HUDSON'S BAY**



Party like a pro

Stylish entertaining tips from supermodel Molly Sims

BY VERONICA SAROLI

Born in Murray, Kentucky, Molly Sims exudes Southern hospitality and charm. She candidly calls her life a “happy mess,” and when she wades into discussing challenges she’s faced, she states, “I’m a girls’ girl to the bitter end,” and says she puts it all out in the open because there’s no use struggling alone. It’s easy to see how she’s amassed a gaggle of friends who come over for dinners that stretch leisurely into the late evening and feature refills of Cindy Crawford’s killer margaritas, the recipe for which is included in Sims’s new entertaining book, *Everyday Chic*. We caught up with the supermodel to get her tips on throwing a bash.

What did you want to achieve with *Everyday Chic*? “My inspiration was to show people that it’s not about having the perfect life; it’s about embracing the imperfect. And, you know, adding little chic touches along the way—using your grandmother’s china for takeout and serving Diet Coke in a wine glass. It’s all those little tips and tricks to make things that take a lot of effort look effortless.”

What is the easiest way to make a space look inviting if you're having people over? "Alcohol, music and food: You're done. I'm telling you, you don't even need candles—if you can get candles, it does help. And flowers—it doesn't need to be a \$250 centrepiece, just a little bit here and a little bit there. I think some people don't entertain because they get scared; one protein, one vegetable, one salad is all it takes. Don't overthink it."

Were you fond of entertaining when you started modeling? "I think I entertain now more, because as a model, I missed so many things—I missed weddings and funerals and dates and family. But the one thing I learned from living in Europe is that entertaining doesn't have to be planned: It was just, 'Hey, come over, bring a bottle of wine.' And I still have vinaigrette that my ex—a French guy, whom I love still to this day, Stefan—taught me how to do. You don't need a lot. It's your company; that's what it is."



EVERYDAY CHIC: MY SECRETS FOR ENTERTAINING, ORGANIZING, AND DECORATING AT HOME BY MOLLY SIMS. \$31 BOOKSTORES



Buon appetito!

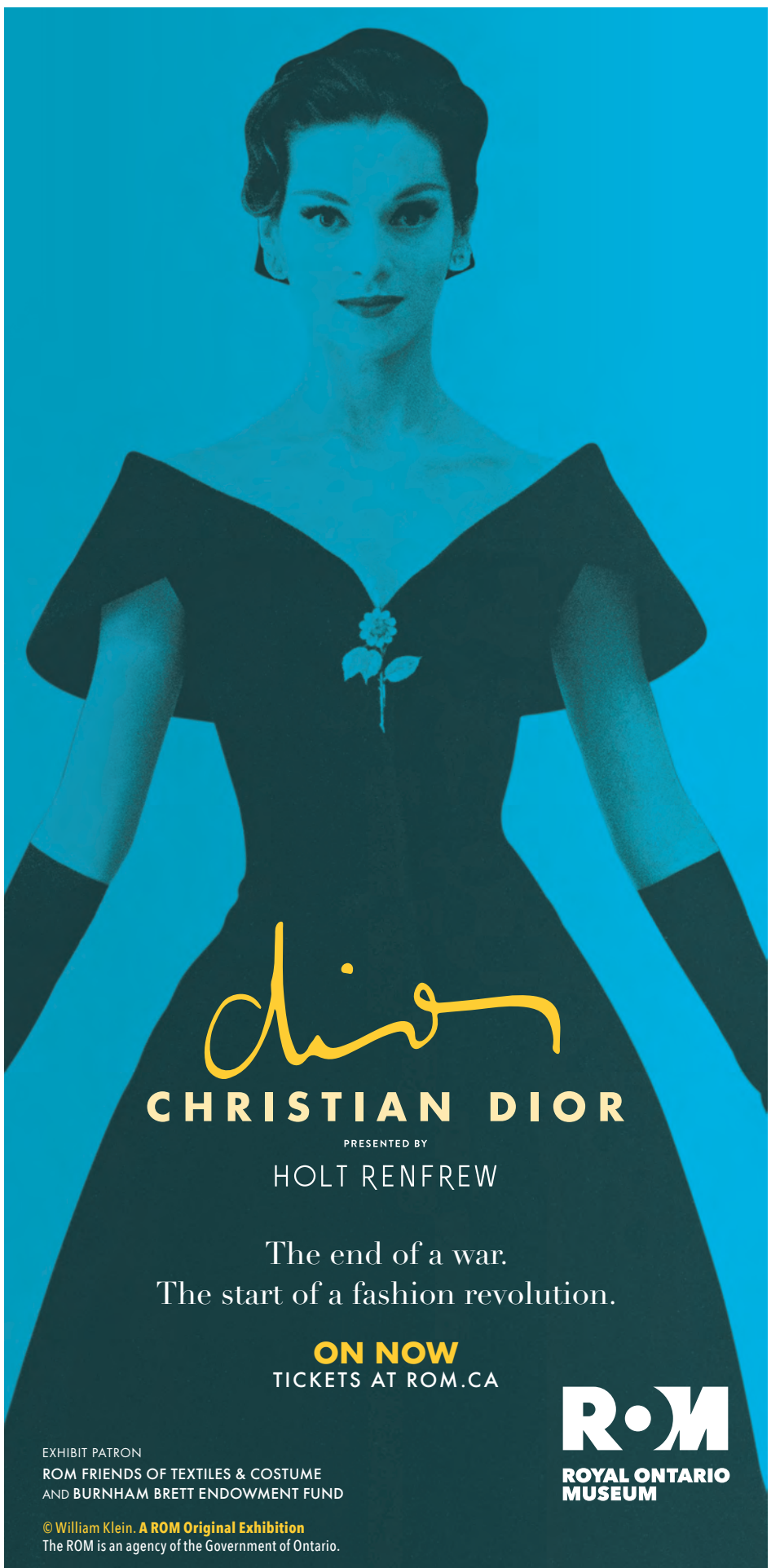
Are you in charge of the holiday meal this year? David Rocco, the Food Network personality and Barilla Pasta ambassador, stopped by our office to share his entertaining tips.

What's your favorite holiday spread? "My family is from Naples, so seafood is really big. Christmas Eve is like this crazy amount of food, from cod to stuffed calamari, and it's accompanied with pasta dishes. It's like a marathon of eating. And then we'll go and do our couple laps around the neighborhood and then go back at it! Then after midnight mass at, like, one o'clock, we'll do it all over again."

How do you entertain last-minute guests?

"In general, I have a lot of really good patés, cheeses and olives, that kind of easy spread. And then my go-to is pasta. It's an easy thing. I have memories of my parents going out and coming back with their friends, and they would have these midnight spaghetti-tatas. If you have your pantry essentials, like some olive oil, pasta and a tin of tuna, you can cook if people come in last minute."

What's your best holiday entertaining advice?
 "Preparation. A lot of the stuff can be chopped and ready to go. You may have to make a shopping list, just so you're not overwhelmed. If everything's organized, you can even ask your guests to help. It takes away a lot of the pressure and also makes it more collaborative and fun—as long as you have really good wine, you're golden."
 —*McKenzie Bohn*





BEAUTY NOTE
Accentuate a creamy suit with glowy, golden makeup: Add a drop of face oil to your foundation and dust gold pigment on your lids.

SMYTHE JACKET, \$695, PANTS, \$395, SHOPS-MYTHE.COM, JENNY BIRD EARRINGS, \$395, JENNY-BIRD.COM

Away from work, what do you do to wind down over the holidays? “We usually go to the country, to my parents’ place in Quebec, and the next day we go tobogganing on their property. It’s a ritual that I love because it’s nice to play outside like you did when you were kids, instead of just being inside and opening gifts all night long.”

Do you like to host dinner parties for friends at home in Montreal? “My friends are amazing cooks, so they’re usually the ones doing the cooking, even when it’s at my place. They just come with food and make it happen. It’s better than a restaurant!”

What will you be wearing to holiday parties this year? “I mostly do skirts and dresses for the holidays, but this season on my show I was wearing these very flowy, black, high-waisted Valentino pants that I thought were so beautiful. They opened my mind to making a bigger statement with pants. The first time I wore them with a black satin blouse, and the second time we did an Alexander Wang camisole with asymmetrical straps. I’m petite, so I really need a heel with them.”

Are you a big heel wearer? “I’m a stiletto girl. I love vintage shoes—I have a pair of purple velvet pumps that I think are from the ’50s; they’re my favourites. But when I wear heels at a party, I usually end the night with my heels in my hand.”

CAROLINE’S HOLIDAY WISH LIST



1. “I love a strong lip; I always have, and for the holidays a strong colour feels more festive. If I’m doing a dark lip, I’ll do something more subtle on the eyes, sometimes even without mascara.”
LISE WATIER ROUGE INTENSE SUPREME LIPSTICK IN SOPHIA, \$27, LISEWATIER.COM

2. “I like painting, so I’d wish for art materials: canvases and brushes. It’s something that will make me happy because I love to create.”
ARTIST’S LOFT NECESSITIES WATERCOLOUR PAN SET, \$9, MARSEILLE SPECIALTY BRUSH SET, \$13, MICHAELS.COM

3. “I love this golden pigment—it rests on my eyelashes like little spots of gold.”
LISE WATIER GLAM PIGMENT IN SUPERSTAR, \$28, LISEWATIER.COM

4. “Lingerie is always fun. I love Chantal Thomass because she makes bras for smaller cups, which is a rare thing, and also beautiful printed tights.”
CHANTAL THOMASS BRA, \$175, UNDERPANTS, \$91, FARFETCH.COM

Leading lady

Continued from cover

What are some of your favourite moments from the show? “We had amazing actors who came to do the deaths; they were some of the most beautiful moments we’ve had. They’re really the essence of the show. In one, the actress was very old and she was in the botanical gardens with her granddaughter. There was something about the connection that they had that was so beautiful, and she was talking about the author Anaïs Nin—we don’t very often see an elderly woman talking about sexuality before dying. I love it when TV breaks boundaries.”

There has been so much discussion lately about the way women are treated and harassed, even assaulted, in Hollywood. What has been your experience? “Yes, and it’s had a domino effect—a lot of people are falling in Quebec as well. It was about time. I think it’s good because it’s bringing victims together and showing them that they have the right and the strength to come out with their stories, so these things don’t happen again. [It’s an opportunity] for us to analyze what this aggression means, how it happens, what the victim’s psychology is, why people feel shame. It’s so important to talk about all of that, to make sure that kids know what it is.”

Have you experienced sexual harassment at work? “For sure. A couple of years ago, I was part of a jury for a film festival and the president of the jury slapped my ass in front of the whole committee. I had a big talk with him and told him ‘You can’t do that,’ and he was like, ‘Sorry, in my country women don’t mind,’ which I highly doubt. Two days later we were at the mayor’s office to talk about the festival and he snapped my bra. And when I was younger and doing sex scenes, the director said things that were completely out of line, especially to a 17-year-old.”

“We don’t very often see an elderly woman talking about sexuality before dying. I love it when TV breaks boundaries”



BEAUTY NOTE
Smudgy black liner applied all around the eye and extended out at the corners adds a sophisticated edge.

ANN TAYLOR JACKET, \$238, SKIRT, \$108, ANNTAYLOR.COM. UNIQLO TOP, \$30, UNIQLO, TORONTO

SHOT ON LOCATION AT BISHA HOTEL, TORONTO

Home for the holidays

The perfect outfit makes everything better, including a packed Christmas calendar. These three elevated looks—curated with all-Canadian fashion pieces—will see you through the festive season in style



VANCOUVER: OFFICE PARTY DRINKS AT ANNA LENA

Encourage your co-workers to toast the end of the year at this Kitsilano hot spot, which offers some of the country’s best cuisine, and—of particular importance at this time of year—some of its most creative cocktails. The Dutchess, a citrusy-sweet mix of gin, vanilla, lemon and peach foam, is guaranteed to delight.



- 1. Try the just-off-the-shoulder trend with this wear-with-everything top from Beaufille, the Toronto label designed by sisters Chloé and Parris Gordon. **BEAUFILLE** TOP, \$1,216, NETAPORTER.COM
- 2. Brighten any room with statement shine, courtesy of beloved Toronto brand Biko. **BIKO** EARRINGS, \$69, ILOVEBIKO.COM
- 3. Designed by rising Toronto jewellery star Katie Boyle, this ring is perfectly pretty on its own and also stacks beautifully. **KB THE LABEL** RING, \$210, KBTHELABEL.COM
- 4. Leather pants can go so wrong (so wrong), but this perfectly tailored pair,

- by Montreal label Judith & Charles, keeps the look polished, not punky. **JUDITH & CHARLES** PANTS, \$1,100, JUDITHANDCHARLES.COM
- 5. This textural piece, from Toronto belt geniuses Brave Leather, is surprisingly versatile. Inherently subversive, studs can be classy, too. **BRAVE LEATHER** BELT, \$120, BRAVELEATHER.COM
- 6. All hail the flats revolution, which has normalized wearing comfortable shoes for special occasions. (About time, no?) These shiny gold sneakers from Montreal brand Call It Spring kick up your look a notch or two. **CALL IT SPRING** SHOES, \$60, CALLITSPRING.COM

TORONTO: FAMILY BRUNCH AT CAFÉ CANCAN

Instagram dreams are made of this pastel pink bistro, but the millennial-bait decor belies a sophisticated menu of chic takes on classic French cuisine. Order the French picnic—a stacked spread of smoked salmon, charcuterie and cheese—but save room for the peanut putter eclair, piped with creamy peanut-buttery mousse.



- 1. This bracelet looks very “Oh, this? I found it in a Parisian vintage shop,” but it’s actually an amazingly affordable contemporary bangle from Montreal designer Caroline Néron. **CAROLINE NÉRON** BRACELET, \$115, CAROLINENERON.COM
- 2. Toronto-born, New-York-based Tanya Taylor shows how to transform the classic denim jacket into a statement piece: Just add furry embellishment. **TANYA TAYLOR** JACKET, \$995, TANYATAYLOR.COM
- 3. Winter florals—a must-try trend this season—look impossibly lovely in the hands of Montreal-educated, London-based Erdem Moralioglu. **ERDEM** DRESS, \$1,408, ERDEM.COM

- 4. Sometimes you want a subtle hint of sparkle. This lariat necklace from Toronto designer Dean Davidson is refined enough to wear every day. **DEAN DAVIDSON** NECKLACE, \$250, DEANDAVIDSON.COM
- 5. Aurora James, the Toronto-born designer of Brother Vellies, has become a design superstar in New York. These lace booties show why. **BROTHER VELLIES** BOOT, \$1,395, BROTHERVELLIES.COM
- 6. A black shoulder bag is a classic, but this one in an oxblood hue—from Montreal label Want Les Essentiels—is a dream. **WANT LES ESSENTIELS** BAG, \$925, WANTLES-ESSENTIELS.COM

MONTREAL: A NIGHT AT THE SYMPHONY

Save your most show-stopping gown for an evening performance at the world-class Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal. On December 5, the legendary Kent Nagano conducts an original violin concerto designed to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Canadian confederation.



- 1. Listen, you’re going to stand out. But when you’re wearing this lightweight gold velvet gown from Toronto designer Sid Neigum, you’ll want all eyes on you. **SID NEIGUM** DRESS, \$1,626, NETAPORTER.COM
- 2. Upgrade the action of tucking your hair behind your ear with glam, noticeable earrings from Birks, the Canadian jewellery powerhouse. **BIRKS** EARRINGS, \$1,295, MAISONBIRKS.COM
- 3. Montreal designer Lauren Klassen masterfully blends edgy cool and breezy elegance. This ring moves easily from the boardroom to the best seats in the house. **LAUREN KLASSEN** RING, \$550, LAURENKLASSEN.COM

- 4. Cozy up to the elements with this Mongolian-fur coat, designed by Kimberley Newport-Mimran of Pink Tartan. **PINK TARTAN** COAT, \$1,695, PINKTARTAN.CA
- 5. Stash your essentials—keys, phone, Bite Beauty lipstick—in this pretty, petal-topped clutch from Toronto brand Ela. **ELA** CLUTCH, \$425, ELABYELA.COM
- 6. Every woman needs a perfect black pump in her wardrobe. This one, from Aldo—the Montreal-based global mega brand—offers a leg-lengthening effect and a traditional ladylike shape. **ALDO** SHOES, \$95, ALDOSHOES.COM

THE KIT X MARSHALLS



Tee, snapped on the street in Toronto. Her top go-to holiday fashion piece? “Black boots. They should be a staple in every woman’s wardrobe.”

HAT, \$14.99, DRESS, \$49.99, BAG, \$99.99, GLOVES, \$24.99, BOOTS, \$179.99, ALL AVAILABLE AT MARSHALLS, MARSHALLS.CA. *STYLES ARE REPRESENTATIVE OF PRODUCT AVAILABLE IN STORES. STYLES VARY BY STORE.

Haute holiday

Master the art of holiday dressing with expert fashion tips from street style star Tee

What pieces should every woman have in her holiday wardrobe? “A cozy knit, an oversized scarf, and an LBD for those chic holiday parties.”

What do you look for when buying a holiday party dress? “Simplicity with a bit of edgy glamour!”

What’s the best way to transition an outfit from day to evening? “Change into a pair of statement heels to kick up your daytime look then add statement accessories and a bold red lip to complete it!”

What is the modern way to wear sparkle? “I like to wear sparkle as an accessory. So I would do a statement earring or necklace or even a pair of shimmery shoes.”

The holidays are packed with parties. What would you wear to these favourite holiday events?

- 1. Family brunch: “A black biker jacket, cozy sweater, black denim and black boots.”
- 2. Office party: “An LBD with a blazer, statement jewellery and fun heels.”
- 3. Swish cocktail soiree: “Winter white from head to toe: blazer, cami, trousers, and nude pumps.”

What is your #1 holiday styling tip? “The little black dress is a classic for a reason—it’s so versatile! You can wear it to work with a blazer, then switch it up with a great bag after work to hit the holiday party circuit.”

What do you find most exciting about shopping at Marshalls? “I love Marshalls because I can find surprising designers and brands that make my wallet sigh with relief. They also happen to have a great selection of fashion, footwear and home decor.”



Good deed gift guide

Tired of the consumerist trappings of the season? Follow the lead of two young Canadian activists and gift-wrap some good will this holiday

BY EDEN BOILEAU



This year, all Body Shop holiday gift sets help fund International Alert's Peace Play project, which provides safe places to play for Syrian refugee children in Lebanon. Enviro bonus: The gift set packages turn into games.

THE BODY SHOP X HOUSE OF HOLLAND LIMITED EDITION KISS ME CUBE LIP BUTTERS, \$20, THE BODY SHOP

Canadian brand the 7 Virtues sources its ingredients from war-ravaged countries, helping to establish sustainable, fair-trade income opportunities. Each of the seven colours in this line is named for a moment in women's history.

7 VIRTUES MATTE CRÈME VEGAN LIPSTICK IN SUFFRAGETTE RED, \$26, THE7VIRTUES.COM



Toronto brand Kotn makes wardrobe basics for men and women from 100 per cent Egyptian cotton that they source from farms they help fund. The brand is also working on building its second school in a rural farming area in Egypt.

KOTN SWEATSHIRT, \$75, KOTN.CA

All Lemlem clothing is crafted in partnership with female artisans in Kenya, Rwanda, Ethiopia and Madagascar, of fabric woven from locally sourced materials. The Lemlem foundation works to further maternal health and women's empowerment in Africa.

LEMLEM PANTS, \$275, LEMLEM.COM



Me to We now has chocolate and coffee! Each of three kinds of chocolate bars funds a different project: food, health or education; and the three varieties of coffee support clean water projects. You can track the impact of your donation to its project by entering its product code online.

ME TO WE MILK CHOCOLATE BAR, \$5, METOWE.COM



HANNAH, 14
If being a Me to We Ambassador, motivational speaker and youth activist weren't enough for a 14-year-old, Hannah Alper, topped that this October by releasing her first book, *Momentus: Small Acts, Big Change*. "Giving and giving back, whether it's time or things, has had a huge impact on my life. It's something that's become part of who I am," says Hannah. Of charitable giving, she says, "Every Me to We product has a different impact—education, food, water, healthcare or opportunity, and I choose a gift with an impact that is meaningful to the person I am gifting."

Badala employs artisans and sex-trafficking survivors in East Africa, Central America and India to make its line of jewellery, accessories and housewares.

BADALA PILLOW, \$25, BADALA.ORG



Montreal scarf brand Niminimi donates a third of the price of its 100 per cent silk, made-in-Italy scarves to either the charity associated with the scarf design or the charity of your choice.

NIMINIMI SCARF, \$300, NIMINIMI.CA



This Drops of Turquoise necklace, made by artisans in Delhi, comes from World Vision's online catalogue of jewellery, accessories and housewares handcrafted around the world and purchased for a fair price.

WORLD VISION NECKLACE, \$75, WORLDVISION.CA

All-women brand Kayu employs female weavers and artisans in the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia and ensures comfortable working conditions and a fair wage. Each handmade bag takes days to create.

KAYU CLUTCH, \$205, KAYUDESIGN.COM



These kite pins created by Canadian jewellery designer Jenny Bird are crafted by current or former refugees in seven countries for the Far and Wide Collective's Pin Project Kickstarter campaign, with all proceeds going to the artisans and maintaining the project. The pin is available in brass, silver and gold.

PIN PROJECT PIN IN BRASS, \$32, THEPINPROJECT.CO



ALICE, 15
Empowering girls to have confidence and the opportunities to succeed is what motivates 15-year-old Alice. She speaks on these issues for the projects she supports, including Plan International's Because I'm a Girl campaign and the Dove Self-Esteem Project. Of her plans to buy charitable presents this year, Alice says, "Putting meaning into gift-giving and not just treating it like some kind of market exchange will make me and hopefully my friends and family a lot happier." On her activism to date, she says, "It's helped me gain a larger perspective of what I'm able to do and not just focus on the very narrow things of my everyday life."

Funds from Plan International's Girl Power gift go to education, keeping girls out of early marriages and educating boys about gender equality. Choose the Gift of Hope that speaks to you: providing baby blankets, school supplies, medicine...

PLAN INTERNATIONAL GIRL POWER GIFT, \$100, PLANINTERNATIONAL.CA



LISE WATIER
Teint Velours

Velvet Matte Foundation

A FLAWLESS, EVEN & SOFTLY MATTE LOOKING SKIN

NEW



CAROLINE DHAVERNAS

Made to order

There are tons of beauty products out there, but how many can you customize to suit your heart’s desire? We found three brands that let you do you

CAITLIN KENNY,
DIGITAL EDITOR



EDEN BOILEAU,
MANAGING EDITOR



VERONICA SAROLI,
ASSISTANT EDITOR



Finding the perfect foundation is hard. Despite all the pointers in the world—Swatch along your jawline! Examine under natural light!—most of us end up with a makeup match that’s just okay. Such is the case for me, especially given my forehead-to-chin freckle density, rarely seen beyond pigtailed preteens.

Lancôme’s Le Teint Particulier custom foundation service recently rolled into Canada, so I was keen to see if a machine could succeed where I have failed. I booked a 30-minute appointment at Nordstrom, where beauty advisor Katie used a scanner to photograph three areas of my face. The device is sophisticated enough to detect if a dark spot or vein (or in my case, freckle) gets recorded, which would affect the colour assessment; you guessed it, this happened on my face, so we had to repeat the process before getting an accurate read. A tablet then assigned me a skin tone out of 8,000 options—a mix of four pigments that are the building blocks for every shade (I’m mostly white, with a splash of yellow and a few drops of red and black). Next, I chose from three levels of coverage and three of moisture, based on skin type (I went with medium and normal).

The clear-front dispenser squirted my one-in-72,000 fragrance- and oil-free formula into a tube that was ejected at about a third full, so we could test and make tweaks. As Katie painted swatches on my chin and forehead, I got ready to reassure her that it’s not her fault, I never get it quite right. But the lines blended seamlessly. The machine got back to work mixing, then Katie smoothed my custom label on the bottle and the finished mixture on my face for my most convincing complexion ever. Redness calmed, freckles strong.



LANCÔME LE TEINT PARTICULIER CUSTOM MADE FOUNDATION, \$110, NORDSTROM EATON CENTRE AND YORKDALE SHOPPING CENTRE

I love scented body lotions and oils and scrubs—sort of. Of the multitudes of fragranced body products out there, most smell fake to me, or overpoweringly strong, and almost always generic, as though there are only a handful of scents out there available for all brands to use.

“If only,” I used to think regularly, “I could pick my own smells for each of the products I use and control how much fragrance goes into them.”

So I popped into a downtown location of the Canadian essential-oil-peddling chain Escent, because I heard you could scent your own body oil there. Turns out you can scent your own almost anything: face serum, shampoo and conditioner, natural deodorant, salt scrub, the list goes on.

My friendly neighbourhood store manager, Chester, helped me wade through 75 essential oils (some single notes, some blends), which range from fruity to floral, woody to spicy (and also range in price from \$0.03 to \$2.25 per drop). You can choose your oils merely to suit your olfactory whims or by their aromatherapeutic properties to address what ails you, like arthritis, headaches or insomnia. I went with the warm, musky Sensuality blend of ylang ylang and patchouli, and Chester blended it into a rich organic body butter I chose to ward off the effects of the coming skin-bullying winter months.

I’ve already planned my next blend: a citrusy-vanilla hand and body lotion *par moi*. Just like that, my specifically scented dreams have come true.



ESCENTS SCENTLESS SHEA BODY BUTTER, \$10, ESCENTS.CA

“I love scented body lotions and oils and scrubs—sort of”


How often can you say that the cheese in your fridge is older than the perfume on your vanity? Let me answer that for you—not often, unless you’re me, coming to this odd realization while witnessing a Le Labo fragrance come together before my eyes, per the niche brand’s dogma that fresh is best. At some point, you’ve probably enjoyed a waft of one of Le Labo’s marquee juices, most likely warm, woody Santal 33, which is worn by fashionable men and women from New York to Paris to Tokyo.

I met blender Julian at the Le Labo counter at Nordstrom to check out how it works. I couldn’t adjust the composition itself—which came as a relief, since that’s a task I’d rather leave to a talented perfumer—so for me, the hardest part was picking a scent. Santal 33 is the most popular perfume at the counter, and it was also the one I was drawn to the most. For Julian, the biggest challenge is spilling, or botching a measurement and compromising the final product. He pulled out the vegan oils needed for the recipe from a hidden fridge, pointing out that it’s difficult to determine how long a mass perfume has been sitting in a warehouse or on a store shelf while the ingredients slowly degrade. Then he moved behind safety glass and got to work. He dispensed alcohol, then water, then the oils, stirred it all together and poured the mixture into a bottle, which he placed on a vibrating surface to blend and remove bubbles. The bottle and box then receive a customized label, and badaboom badabing, you’ve got a small-batch fragrance with your name on it or an adorable gift. The messaging is fair game, but it’s safe to say that what I put on the label wasn’t as good as what went on the one before mine: “liquid courage.”



LE LABO SANTAL 33 EAU DE PARFUM, \$205, NORDSTROM

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