

THE KIT

The Canadian Style Special: Our country is home to some of the coolest fashion talent around. Let's celebrate it together

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The dreamers

As the creative forces behind fashion-label Horses Atelier, Claudia Dey and Heidi Sopinka make clothes that make women feel like the most wonderful version of themselves **PAGE 4**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JENNA MARIE WAKANI



Best closet in Canada

Inside a Montreal fashion phenom's ultra covetable wardrobe **PAGE 10**



The future of fashion

Gen Z trendsetters talk style, identity and inclusion **PAGE 8**



Step (very) lively

12 shoes to kick-start your spring wardrobe—for every budget **PAGE 11**

A photograph of a woman with long brown hair, wearing a white lace dress, standing in front of a wall of white roses. She has her arms raised and is smiling.

THE NEW FRAGRANCE FOR HER

Oscar de la Renta

BELLA BLANCA

A photograph of a bottle of Oscar de la Renta Bella Blanca fragrance. The bottle is white with a gold cap and a gold label that reads "Oscar de la Renta BELLA BLANCA".



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Building beauty

In a rugged landscape where European and American monoliths reign supreme, erecting a beauty brand from the ground up takes a lot of gumption. Yet that’s exactly what these Canadian labels are doing, carving a place for themselves through ethos and innovation. You can feel their passion (and their pluck) in every spritz, drop and dollop. A hand-blended herbal mist, a clever scrub-mask hybrid, a vanishing face oil, a blissful body butter, some sci-fi eye patches or an all-natural, all-chic bar soap: little luxuries that soothe and pamper while supporting local architects of change. What could be more beautiful? —Katherine Lalancette. Photography by Jeffrey Carlson

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: **DUCKISH** LAVENDER BODY BUTTER, \$15, DUCKISH.CA. **F. MILLER** TONING MIST, \$46, FMILL-ERSKINCARE.COM. **CARRIAGE 44** NO. 1 BIG SOAP, \$18, CARRIAGE44.CA. **FLAWLESS BY FRIDAY** MESMEREYES 3-DAY EYE MASK SYSTEM, \$26, FLAWLESSBYFRIDAY.COM. **POETIC BLEND** THE GHOST OIL, \$50, POETICBLEND.COM



Gilded Lily

Model Lily Aldridge is just as excited for the royal wedding as you are

BY VERONICA SAROLI

Lily Aldridge has recently walked off a plane, but her skin looks radiant. The reason—apart from, you know, being a model beloved by Jason Wu and Victoria’s Secret—is that she immediately tossed on a sheet mask from 111Skin after landing. “You do the gold one, and it just makes your skin really fresh and bright and tightens everything,” she exclaims. “I tell all my friends to get them, and now I see the masks on their Instagram stories.” We caught up with the ebullient 32-year-old model in Toronto, where she was attending a bash for the Jimmy Choo x Off-White shoe collection at Holt Renfrew, to chat shoes, skin tips and the royal wedding.

The Choo Off-White collection was inspired by Princess Diana. Are you a royal-watcher? “Of course. Princess Diana was such a modern princess; she was loved by everybody. My family is English, so I’ve always felt very British at heart. I follow the royal family on Instagram and Twitter. I’m going to get all my friends around to watch [the wedding in May]. I can’t wait to see what the queen wears. She always looks so amazing.”

What is your favourite shoe from the line? “I saw Rihanna had the white version of the Sarah boot on Instagram, which looked amazing. But that’s the thing about this collection: It’s so beautiful and magical. I think that’s so special and rare these days—to have something that still excites you and makes you want to buy it and look at it.”

You travel frequently. What are your beauty staples? “I’ve always been a big fan of cream from La Mer, especially for flying. It’s super hydrating, and your skin eats it up. I’m obsessed with the natural lip balm from Windsor Edwards and I send it to all my friends.”



111SKIN MASK, \$155, 111SKIN.COM. **OFF-WHITE X JIMMY CHOO** BOOT, \$1,895, HOLT RENFREW. **WINDSOR EDWARDS** LIP BALM, \$20, WINDSOR-EDWARDS.COM

Locals only

Want to support our homegrown fashion talent? Scoop up some wares this month at INLAND, Toronto’s premiere shopping event spotlighting Canadian designers. Here, three participating brands you’ll want on your radar



THIEF & BANDIT

From her downtown Halifax studio, Thief & Bandit’s founder, Amie Cunningham, embraces every facet of the slow fashion movement. After designing the botanical-inspired prints used on all her pieces, Cunningham employed silkscreen methods to print on organic jersey fabric. Plus, each item is made to order, so you’re getting as close to custom for a super-reasonable price.

THIEF & BANDIT TOP, \$113



PARTOEM

Everyone’s trying to get a piece of fashion’s uber-popular minimalist aesthetic, but Montreal’s Madeleine Beaulieu of handbag line Partoem is doing it with direction. Inspired by the clean lines of origami, Beaulieu constructs Italian vegetable-tanned leathers into ultra-durable pieces fastened without stitches or glue. The result? Handbags that are the very definition of seasonless.

PARTOEM BAG, \$585



CAMILLE CÔTÉ

Montreal’s Camille Côté is in the business of converting “not a hat person” people into full-on collectors. Eschewing the one-size-fits-all mentality of most milliners, Côté believes that chapeaus should be tailored to your head, just like clothing. Her ingenious design makes use of a discreet elastic band at the back of her ultra-chic pieces, ensuring a snug, personalized fit.

CAMILLE CÔTÉ HAT, \$118

The Kit will be at INLAND! Shop, meet designers and check out our The Kit x INLAND Lounge at the Queen Richmond Centre West (134 Peter St.) April 27-28. Admission is free.

THE KIT CONNECT CONFERENCE

APRIL 18 | THE GREAT HALL, 1087 QUEEN ST W

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FASHION,
BEAUTY, AND
NETWORKING



Piece of my heart



In our Two of Us series, we spotlight women who are in business together and friends, too—nice work, if you can get it. This week: Claudia Dey and Heidi Sopinka, all-around rebel creatives and the co-founders of dreamy Toronto fashion brand *Horses Atelier*

BY EDEN BOILEAU | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JENNA MARIE WAKANI

The union of Heidi Sopinka and Claudia Dey is a success story from any angle you view it. The Toronto writers, fashion designers, mothers and best friends make their living doing what they love, alongside their true loves: each other. They're living the dream because they've made staying true to that dream—and their intuition—the top priority in running their fashion label, *Horses Atelier*, which celebrates its fifth anniversary this year. Of course, there's also their sideline: writing novels. Sopinka's first novel, *The Dictionary of Animal Languages*, was released last month, and Dey's second novel, *Heartbreaker*, comes out in August. The pair's enviable situation is the payoff for, and a lesson in, putting your time and energy into your passion.

ON BEING FRIENDS AND BUSINESS PARTNERS

Heidi: We say it's psychic. Like I'll pull something out [to show Claudia] and Claudia will have already ordered it.

Claudia: And we push each other, too. It's like having that tennis partner for 60 years. We'll contend

collection. We're going back to our inspiration of jumpsuits. We've been a bit of a jumpsuit resource and we're bringing back a five-year anniversary of the first jumpsuit we ever made, plus a bunch of new styles that we're really excited about.

Claudia: Heidi and I have done something radical, which is that we've gone against all of the advice we've ever been given. The proven path is to produce volume, in terms of units, but also in terms of season and deliveries and drops and to do that with a showroom, to get into department stores, celebrity placement, throw money behind advertising and marketing. Heidi and I have done the

complete opposite. We've taken a pause on our wholesale business; we now sell through two channels: in the shop and online, and we've completely personalized the business that way, and it's thriving. We had a beautiful list of stockists but we decided that what we loved about this was really the customer that we have, and our customer is an autonomous thinker. She's independent; she doesn't dress according to trend or calendar. She lives outside of that.

Heidi: It's allowed us a lot of freedom in many ways. One is that we can make what we want to make when we want to make it. And we make small batch, more on-demand, based on what we want, what our woman wants to wear. We don't have to take notes from stockists or larger trends. We can make it really personal, which is why we began. We did have a big showroom and we did start to blow things up. We made big collections, and it just felt like it got away from us. Like making things to just be making new shapes, not shapes that we really believe in. We want to only be making the things that feel like they should be in the world.

Claudia: We didn't like being on the same calendar as The Gap. It felt like rapid fire and it felt completely consumptive. Like who needs to be thinking about pre-spring in November?

Heidi: We've made decisions, for instance, that we sew everything here, so it costs a lot more. And we pay the true value for things because we pay women what they should be paid to sew clothes. Like adult women that have free lives. That's a big decision for us. And it feels, for Claudia and me, like we wouldn't be able to do it if we didn't do that.



Heidi Sopinka (right) and Claudia Dey, friends for 25 years, met in a folklore class in university.

ON CLAUDIA (LEFT): HORSES ATELIER JACKET, \$425, SHIRT, \$375, PANTS, \$295. ON HEIDI: HORSES ATELIER JUMPSUIT, \$395. HORSESATELIER.COM

ON MAKING IT WORK

Claudia: We work fast and hard. We compress a lot into our days. We both did everything for the first few years. We were the ones going to the FedEx office, filling out all the customer's paperwork, hauling fabrics up four flights of stairs to my tiny attic...

Heidi: Wrapping every box and writing every note to every person, and just every single element.

Claudia: So it's incredible for us, five years in, to have this brilliant team [of five] around us and to have more space for the design. We try to work

four days a week because we have young families. But we both have other things, too. Heidi's novel just came out; I have a novel coming out in August, and that's something, the writing part of our lives, that we protect for ourselves and for each other.

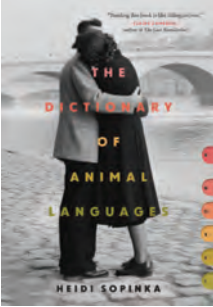
ON THE HORSES CUSTOMER

Claudia: She's the heart of everything we do. She wants clothing that will carry her through the rigours of her day, clothing that's beautiful, clothing that's ethically made. She cares about the quality of the sewing and she cares about where it was sewn and where the fabric was sourced. And we always return to this idea of autobiography. That it's like a private set of codes that she originates, that she finds the pieces that she needs to satisfy those codes. What's that quote we love? The woman who...

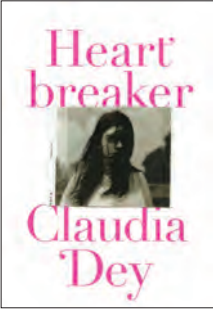
Heidi: Oh, dresses herself, knows herself.

Claudia: We always come back to that. It's another way of knowing yourself.

CHIC LIT



THE DICTIONARY OF ANIMAL LANGUAGES BY HEIDI SOPINKA, \$25, BOOKSTORES



HEARTBREAKER BY CLAUDIA DEY, \$23, BOOKSTORES IN AUGUST



“We’re married. I mean, we’re both married to other people, but we’re also married to each other.”

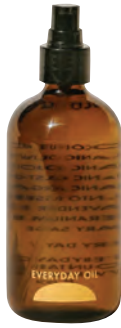
ON HEIDI (LEFT): HORSES ATELIER JUMPSUIT, \$395. ON CLAUDIA: HORSES ATELIER SHIRT, \$375, JUMPSUIT, \$325. HORSESATELIER.COM

a point to get to the better outcome. And frankly, the friendship only deepens the professional part because you have someone who you trust implicitly, someone who has your back. Heidi and I did wholesale and went to New York and stood in a freezing cold arena to be two Willy Lomans of fashion. Those are grim and sometimes gorgeous endeavours, like there are beautiful moments that occur, but it is as nakedly commercial as it gets. So you need your good dose of humanity with you, and we always provide that for each other.

ON HORSES ATELIER

Heidi: We're just getting ready to launch our spring

HEIDI'S FIVE FAVOURITE THINGS



“Mainstay blend body oil by Everyday Oil, because I am crazy about the scent.”

EVERYDAY OIL MAINSTAY BLEND, \$65 (237 ML), EASYTIGER-GOODS.COM



“The colour palette of *Fortnight Lingerie* is so nuanced, and I love how they speak to the architecture of undergarments.”

FORTNIGHT BRA, \$120, UNDERWEAR, \$63, FORTNIGHTLINGERIE.COM

“I got these boots on sale and they are a work of art. A work of art that can go dancing.”

MARYAM NASSIR ZADEH BOOTS, \$522, THEDESLYN.COM



“Our fieldsuit is my current uniform because you can roll out of bed and not remotely have to think about your pants.”

HORSES ATELIER JUMPSUIT, \$395, HORSESATELIER.COM



“Toronto Ink Company's oxidized blue ink because it comes from a piece of copper left in a petri dish for a few weeks that creates the most beautiful clear blue that looks like the sky.”

TORONTO INK COMPANY COPPER OXIDE INK, \$30, TORONTOINKCOMPANY.COM



CLAUDIA'S FIVE FAVOURITE THINGS



“Vermont Blonde from the Burdock Brewery to accompany a sultry summer evening bonfire.”

VERMONT BLONDE BEER, \$5, BURDOCKTO.COM



“A balm for our Canadian climate. Lovingly made by my aunt and uncle in Montreal.”

EARTH TO BODY SHARGAN BUTTER, \$25, NATURAL.CA



“For my inner rocker, to feather my hair, concert T-shirts from Mama Loves You Vintage.”

T-SHIRT, \$95, MAMALOVES-YOUVINTAGE.COM

“Burn, baby, burn—for a little magic.”

PALO SANTO WOOD INCENSE STICKS, \$10 (BUNDLE), DYNASTY (TORONTO)



“I have multiples of this and cannot leave the house without it.”

HOURLASS NO. 28 LIP TREATMENT OIL, \$52, SEPHORA.COM



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Rhapsody



Caroline Issa wears the new Birks Pétale™ collection
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16. Christian Roth, SQUINT EYEWEAR

15. Pas de Rouge, DAVIDS



melissa's musts

BV STYLE DIRECTOR
MELISSA EVANS-LEE
SHARES A FEW OF HER
FAVOURITE THINGS
FOR SPRING

1. Veronica Beard, TNT THE NEW TREND



2. Clare V., JUDITH & CHARLES



3. Biko, ANDREWS

VISIT
THE
"MELISSA'S MUSTS"
POP-UP
THIS APRIL
AT BV



4. LE CREUSET

4. Warning: Deliciousness ahead! Here's my riff on a recipe I recently found in *Food & Wine* (all ingredients from Pusateri's Fine Foods). Toss the following into Le Creuset casserole dish: One package of uncooked meatballs (roughly chopped), one package of dry pasta (I use penne or rigatoni), one jar of Pusateri's brand meat sauce, one large container of bocconcini cheese pearls, a sprinkle of oregano and red pepper flakes (both mandatory in my book!) and 2.5 cups of water. Cover with tin foil, cook for one hour at 400°. Mangia! 5. No question . . . really good salt takes you to delish places. This particular fleur de sel is infused with rose petals making it the perfect match for any chocolate desserts you might want to make for me. 6. I've always loved mustard yellow. The good news is that this bold (and confident) hue pairs beautifully with the hot colour of the season: lilac!

CENTER I am wearing: Shirt, GAP; DO+BE skirt, HONEY and booties, STUART WEITZMAN

1. Don't forget that the big trend this season is print on print. I'm thinking: these wide-legged trousers paired with a floral blouse (picking up the colour of the stripe). Alternatively, a sexy blazer in a hot hue (see #8). 2. Truth be told, I prefer never to carry anything (enter hubby stage right with a pocket for my lipstick) but when that won't fly (most days), this pretty petal-adorned clutch is something I can easily handle. 3. Hoop there it is! I love gold hoop earrings so much (I wear a pair my hubby bought me in Hawaii a few years back almost every day). Not that I'd ever say "aloha" to those, but I wouldn't mind lending an ear to these as well.



14. Saloni, TNT THE NEW TREND



13. JUDITH & CHARLES



5. SAL de IBIZA, BELLE DE PROVENCE



"I have so many faves at Tabulé Middle Eastern Cuisine including this hallüm salad (baby arugula, onions and seared hallüm cheese tossed with pomegranate dressing). I usually add chicken breast and I always get labni (Lebanese yogurt cheese mixed with garlic and za'atar) on the side."



12. Bluebella, RÉVE ROUGE



6. Jane Plus One, MENDOCINO



7. Leaves of Trees, PINK TARTAN



11. Christian Louboutin, DAVIDS



10. Roberto Festa, DAVIDS



9. JUDITH & CHARLES



LEFT: I am wearing: Balmain shirt, TNT THE NEW TREND and Levi's skirt, PINK TARTAN 7. Cruelty-free, high-quality, small batch natural products. Say no more. 8. Smythe always creates the most perfect closet staples, all flawless in their design and all tailored taking inspiration from traditional menswear. 9. This one has real charm and personality so much so, I literally stopped in my tracks when I saw it. 10. Anything with a remotely 70s feel is of course "groovy" in my book. 11. Talk about painting the town red. I'd clutch this one and never let it go! 12. Intimate apparel, indeed! 13. Trust me; I've done the heavy lifting here! This is the season's BEST LBD. 14. That colour! That print! The overall vibe! What can I say other than . . . get in my closet! 15. For those days when I need to get from A to B quickly (but still stylishly). 16. These definitely have their place in the sun! Love the shape . . . so different from anything I already own.



8. Smythe, TNT THE NEW TREND

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THE KIT X BAYVIEW VILLAGE



1



2

1 “Pretty (and sexy!) lingerie is the name of the game at BV’s new kid on the block, Rêve Rouge, but you can also find stunning swimwear.”

SEAFOLLY BIKINI, **FASHION CARE** SWIMWEAR AND YOGA AND FITNESS GEAR WASH, **RÊVE ROUGE**

2 “Considering I literally stopped dead in my tracks when I saw this, I’d say this bag falls into the showstopper category.”

SANDRO FERRONE HANDBAG, **SANDRO**

3 “I love cooking in the spring: sun streaming, the scent of fresh herbs, and beautiful dishware—anything Le Creuset—set the stage for all the deliciousness to come.”

LE CREUSET COCOTTE & SALT AND PEPPER MILLS, **SAL DE IBIZA** FLEUR DE SEL, **BELLE DE PROVENCE**, **BOWLS**, **IRONWOOD GOURMET** CHARCUTERIE BOARD, **MENU**

4 “I always encourage people to embrace colour for spring, but I get that it’s easier said than done (I could lead the “black is the new black” fashion support group with all my dark clothing!). For those reticent about tiptoeing through tulip-hued pastels, this dress is a nice compromise.”

THEIA DRESS, **BRIAN BAILEY**



4

5 “Obviously I care whether the product works (these do!), but I’m just as passionate about what the packaging looks like. Just seeing these on my vanity each morning makes my day.”

BUTTER NAIL POLISH, **MOR** LIP BALMS, **BELLE DE PROVENCE**, **KEVIN MURPHY** BODY BUILDER, **HAIR RESORT**, **PLUMPING WASH**, **PLUMPING RINSE**, **PETROS** HAIR DESIGN, **AVEDA** PURE-FUME ROLLERBALL, **AVEDA**, **LA FLORENTINA** ROSE SOAP, **PAPYRUS**, **FAT AND THE MOON** FACE MIST, **RÊVE ROUGE**



Inside spring’s coolest pop-up shop

This month, Melissa Evans-Lee—Bayview Village’s super-chic style director—is curating a must-visit pop-up boutique stocked with the season’s most fabulous finds. Here, Melissa presents her highlights



8

6 “Between dry (reptilian!) skin and curly (frizzly!) hair, I’m not sure which beauty woe to address first. Thankfully, I know where to turn! Trust me: Slather marshmallow lotion on that bod, give your tresses ‘love’ and call me in the morning.”

LOTHANTIQUE LIQUID SOAP, **MOR** MARSHMALLOW LOTION, **WOLF** LEATHER JEWELLERY BOX, **BELLE DE PROVENCE**, **OLAPLEX** HAIR PERFECTOR, **DAVINES** SHAMPOO, **MOULDING CLAY**, **PETROS** HAIR DESIGN

7 “Gold studs, crystals and a gold link chain—these great details 100 per cent make this fashion story.”

STUART WEITZMAN SHOES, **GIANNI CHIARINI** HANDBAG, **BROWNS**, **VD AUSTRIAN** CLUTCH, **BRIAN BAILEY**

8 “The ultimate digestive aid, a one-way ticket to your happy place and something to get buzzed about—this trio of teas has you covered.”

DAVID’S TEA



9



12



7



10



11

9 “I love that lilac is the big colour of the year, and, of course, I still gravitate toward all shades of pink—which is thankfully still holding its own as a hot hue. All in all, spring is looking very pretty, indeed.”

NINE WEST SANDALS, **SANDRO FERRONE** BACKPACK, **SANDRO**

10 “A few things that help make a house a home: a bowl of fresh fruit, a beautifully scented candle, luxurious hand soap (lavender fields or freshly squeezed grapefruit juice, anyone?) and pretty William Morris art print placemats.”

BEEHIVE BOWL, **PIMPERNEL** PLACEMATS, **MENU**, **CHRISTIAN TORTU** CANDLE, **COMPAGNIE DE PROVENCE** LIQUID SOAP, **BELLE DE PROVENCE**

11 “Check, please! Checkered prints are where it’s at this season. I’m loving everything about this tailored, single-breasted, pretty-in-pink blazer—not the least of which, are its oversized pockets.”

SMYTHE BLAZER, **ANDREWS**

12 “You know what needs a good spring cleaning? My handbag! I love the idea of buying a few clutches to use as intended and/or to throw in my tote to keep things organized. Also—who couldn’t use a new pair of sunnies for spring?”

BANANA REPUBLIC CLUTCH, **BANANA REPUBLIC**, **SUNGLASSES**, **MENDOCINO**, **LONGCHAMP** WALLET, **ANDREWS**

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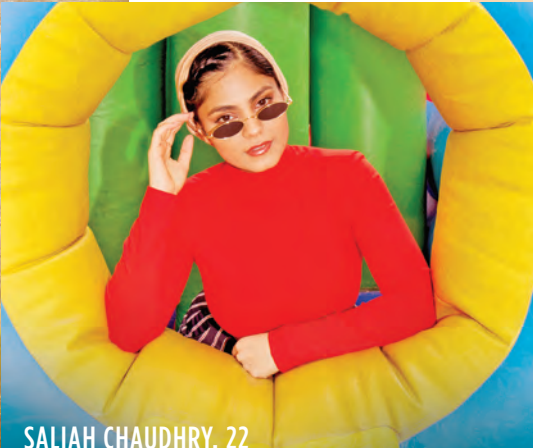
The new class

Much is made of the state of style in Canada, but the next generation of fashion pros, eagerly waiting in the wings, all have their sights set on one thing: a more inclusive, more diverse future. We asked a select few—students from Ryerson University’s fashion program—to reflect on the intersection where personal style and identity meet. Here, we learn that the kids are alright

BY JILLIAN VIEIRA | PHOTOGRAPHY BY MAYA FUHR



ANIKA CUTAJAR, 27
“As you get older, you get more comfortable with being unapologetic. My parents are both artists, so that’s something I was taught from a young age. In high school I didn’t want to wear Uggs or Lululemon pants. Now, people tend to notice my tattoos almost immediately. Hopefully it’s a little intimidating.”



SALIAH CHAUDHRY, 22
“In university, I learned why my scarf is important to me. It feels courageous to wear it and be okay with standing out a little bit. It’s something that makes me feel powerful. Being modest in a world where modesty isn’t appreciated, for me, is kind of rebellious, to be honest.”



BRONWYN MARSHALL, 23
“My style is more minimalistic, though with high impact. I’m drawn to structure, strong lines and sleek silhouettes. I’ve always been very tall, but I think my learning how to dress a taller body has progressed throughout the years. I still like to wear heels—I feel empowered by putting on heels and doing what I want.”

Emily White, 19

“I would hope when someone looks at me they would think I’m put together. I want to look like a chic boss bitch when I’m walking on the street. I’m very small in size, so I like to compensate by dressing really out there and making people know that I want to be seen, that I have a stance.”



SOPHIA RATEVOSIAN, 18
“When I moved to Toronto for school, I saw girls wearing boyish clothing and guys wearing nail polish, and I love that so much. I used to be super girly but now I’m opening up to a more androgynous look. The city has really influenced me that way. Even if I wake up with baggy under-eyes, I kind of like the grungy look.”



Claire Gray, 19

“In my late teens, I really got into the rock music scene. I started going to gigs and was inspired by all of the older, unapologetic punk girls out there. I was like, ‘Wow, I want to embody that.’ I shaved my head when I was 16. Sometimes people have to do a double-take, but I am not actually scary.”



CINDY JUN, 21
“I went to a really tiny high school and always thought I dressed well. Then I went to fashion school and everyone dressed amazing and I thought, ‘I need to stand out more.’ Being around so many fashion people, I feel a lot more adventurous in how I dress.”



MIA YAGUCHI-CHOW, 18
“I don’t feel restricted to a particular style or any gender norms. I don’t feel any pressures. A part of me is masculine, but being in a program that is 90 per cent female, I am now more comfortable with exploring the feminine side of my style.”



TOLEEN ABDULHAMID, 18
“My friends think my style is kind of vampy, like a vampire. I would say it’s slightly grungy but becoming a bit sweet. It’s really influenced by my dad: He’s a biker who listens to intense heavy metal music.”

Spring shopping list

Here (finally!) comes the sun. Put these items in your cart and proceed to checkout, stat

BY JILLIAN VIEIRA

THE PALETTE: PASTELS

Show your softer side in perfectly professional watercolour hues.



WINNERS TOP, \$50, WINNERS.CA.
SANDRO DRESS, \$295, SANDRO-PARIS.COM. REISS JUMPSUIT, \$490, REISS.COM. TED BAKER PANTS, \$329, TEDBAKER.COM

THE PIECE: THE TRENCH

Amp up the outerwear staple with unexpected elements, like mixed-media fabrications.



WILFRED COAT, \$298, ARITZIA.COM. THERMA KOTA COAT, \$3,485, THERMAKOTA.COM. COACH 1941 COAT, \$815, COACH.COM

THE PATTERN: PLAID

Carry over the winter staple with chic workwear-inspired silhouettes.



MAJE DRESS, \$475, MAJE.COM. JOSEPH TOP, \$1,220, JOSEPH-FASHION.COM. MASSIMO DUTTI PANTS, \$175, MASSIMODUTTI.COM

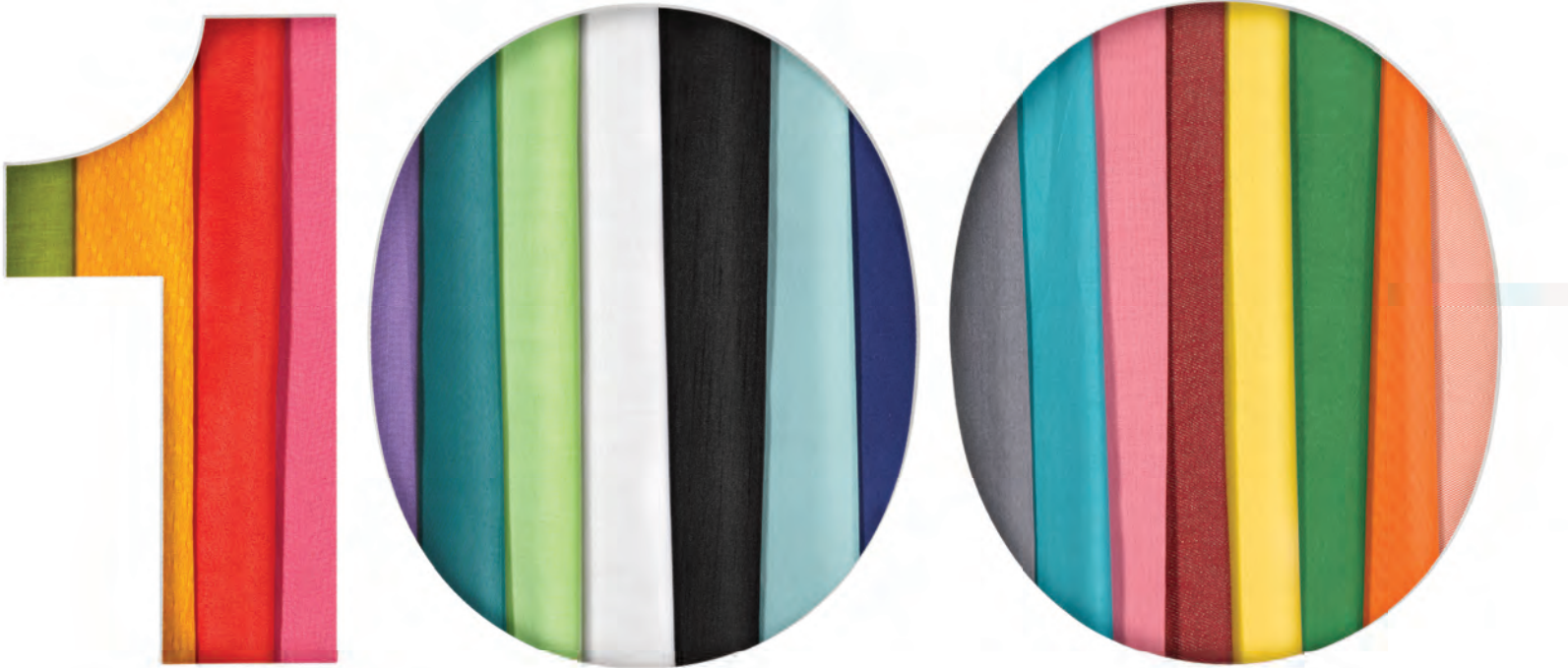


RALPH LAUREN

CARVEN

PHOTOGRAPHY: PETER STIGTER (RUNWAY)

🕊 Formulated to leave no white marks on 100 colours.
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Dove Invisible
Dry Spray antiperspirant



“I’d say my style is refined with an edge.”



Left: Marco de Vincenzo boots and an Hermès bag. Above: Hartling wears a Versace trench coat and Birks Salon jewels.

Let it shine

In our new series Best Closets in Canada, we peek inside the country’s most covetable wardrobes. First up, meet jewellery powerhouse Eva Hartling, who shares her penchant for all things bold

BY KATHERINE LALANCETTE | PHOTOGRAPHY BY GAËLLE LEROYER



Eva Hartling’s closet bears all the markings of a dream wardrobe. Vintage Chanel jacket? Check. Hermès Birkin bags? Check. Diamond sparklers? Check.

Of course, the latter should come as no surprise given that Hartling serves as vice president of Birks Brand and chief marketing officer of Birks Group Inc. Though she saves the flashier baubles for special occasions and insists she’s most comfortable in a sweatshirt and jeans, it’s clear the vivacious blonde loves to dress up.

Case in point: the Sacai sweatshirt she’s donning on this spring afternoon features a laced-up back, while her jeans are ripped Frame Denim stovepipes. “I like things that have a twist,” Hartling concedes, reclining on a mound of furry cushions in her Old Montreal



“Because jewellery is so intimate, I like pieces that remind me of a certain moment or person.”

condo. “I have a lot of black-tie events for work, for example, but I always try to break up the overly chic vibe with an unexpected touch.”

Whether that’s rhinestone-covered footwear (what she calls her “KiraKira boots”) or a Lucite leopard-print clutch, Hartling favours pieces that boast as much personality as she does. It’s hard to imagine she once ran in the very corporate circles of IBM and the Business Development Bank of Canada.

“Those were the suit years,” she recalls. “I had two closets: a weekend wardrobe and a weekday one. But even then, everyone would say, ‘Oh, you dress really fashionably for somebody who works in that type of field.’ To me, it was just a plain black suit.”

Since entering the glittering world of fine jewellery, Hartling has swapped the suits for more expressive

“Now, women buy their own luxury items. We like to pick out our own pieces and we have the money to do it.”



Hartling wears a velvet Alessandra Rich gown and Alaïa sandals.

ensembles, though she still appreciates the power of a good blazer. “Balmain is my go-to when I’ve got a big meeting and want to feel like a boss lady,” she says.

She’s been with Birks for eight years now and has spent much of her tenure orchestrating a complete revamp of the Canadian jeweller’s once dowdy image. “It takes a long time when you’re an old established brand to refresh yourself and send a message to customers that something has changed,” she explains.

The most significant overhaul Hartling has led pertains to the very definition of a jewellery store. She has sought to transform what was once thought of as the realm of men purchasing gifts for their wives into a playground for women wanting to treat themselves. A go-getter to be sure, she embodies the paradigm shift to a T. This is a woman who buys her own diamonds and designer handbags, thank you very much.

“Jewellery used to be about a man giving a little blue box to a woman. So the way we designed jewellery was based on that. The way we designed our stores was based on that. But now, women buy their own luxury items. We like to pick out our own pieces and we have the money to do it. That woman self-purchaser is the new customer.”

This means that to the usual array of anniversary bands and milestone presents have been added friendship bracelets and pieces meant to be personalized through stacking or engraving. The heavy wood counters behind which stoic salespeople once stood have been replaced by an airier, more approachable atmosphere.

When asked how these modern notions were initially received by her colleagues, Hartling erupts in a telling chuckle. “We had done research to back it up, so that helped, but there were men around the table who weren’t so comfortable with these ideas. One of them raised his hand right away and said, ‘But there’s a ceiling. She won’t spend above \$5,000.’ But the reality is some of our best customers are women buying for themselves. They’re buying beautiful diamond pieces and they’re coming in frequently.”

One such loyal patron is none other than the woman of the moment herself, Meghan Markle. The former actor began shopping at Birks when she relocated to Toronto to film *Suits* and has been photographed wearing several of the brand’s creations,

including a pair of dainty opal earrings spotted during the announcement of her engagement to Prince Harry.

“We knew that she had a lot of our pieces, but it wasn’t a big deal if she was out wearing them until news of the engagement broke,” Hartling says. “Those earrings really sent the world into a frenzy. They sold out, which rarely happens for us because of our price point. And then every piece she wore after that had the same effect.”

The fact that Markle, a woman who in every way symbolizes the renewal of the staunchly traditional monarchy, would choose to wear Birks speaks volumes. Much like the British Royal Family, the nearly 140-year-old institution is experiencing an exciting modernization of late, something largely attributable to one exuberantly-attired platinum force of nature.

“Balmain is my go-to when I’ve got a big meeting and want to feel like a boss lady.”



Spring shoe report

Put your best foot forward in the season's stand-out shoes

BY JILLIAN VIEIRA

1. THE SCULPTURAL HEEL

These museum-worthy heels prove that fashion *is* art.



JEFFREY CAMP-BELL, \$140, JEFFREYCAMP-BELLSHOES.COM



GRAY MATTERS, \$690, GRAYMATTERSNYC.COM



REJINA RYO, \$900, REJINAPYO.COM

2. THE CANDIED COLOURWAY

Lilac, cherry blossom and robin's egg blue are spring's sweetest hues.



AQUAZZURA, \$935, AQUAZZURA.COM



LE CHÂTEAU, \$70, LECHATEAU.COM



CHRISTOPHER KANE, \$750, CHRISTOPHERKANE.COM



3. THE SLINGBACK KITTEN HEEL

Turn to the totally walkable *and* chic kitten heel during office hours.



ZARA, \$46, ZARA.COM



STUART WEITZMAN, \$535, STUARTWEITZMAN.CA



GIANVITO ROSSI, \$960, GIANVIT-ROSSI.COM

4. THE COWBOY BOOT

Sport a pair of country kicks pumped up with major street-style appeal.



CALVIN KLEIN 205W39NYC, \$2,415, NET-A-PORTER.COM



COACH 1941, \$655, COACH.COM



TOPSHOP, \$145, TOPSHOP.COM

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@studio.aimee

Publisher, The Kit
Giorgina Bigioni

Project Director, Digital Media
Kelly Matthews

Direct advertising inquiries to:
Collab Director
Evie Begy, eb@thekit.ca

Collab Coordinator
Sarah Chan

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