



He proposed while strawberry picking. They married in her parents' garden. Inside the impeccably laid-back nuptials of beauty powerhouses Camille Katona and Timothy Tse. Plus: spring trends, perfect denim and mature skin makeup joy

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With a balance of warm and cool reflects, Excellence Crème Nudes delivers universally flattering colour for all hair tones. Enjoy 100% grey coverage with an ammonia-free formula.



Spring awakening

Consider the coming season's trend report your sign to shake off the wardrobe weight of winter, writes Jillian Vieira



CASABLANCA SALVATORE FERRAGAMO TORY BURCH CHRISTIAN DIOR

The Spring 2025 fashion season is shaping up to be one of complete sartorial renewal. The looks ahead embody power, practicality and an all-bets-are-off attitude, including the move to an undeniably masculine aesthetic, a starring role for a closet basic and a once-cloying palette finally earning the cool factor. Here, six standout styling directions for the months ahead.

Athleisure, hold the leisure

We know, we know: Hearing that 2010s-era portmanteau conjures memories of a trend—nay, movement—that unrelentingly gripped the culture. But this season's iteration is something entirely different: Designers swapped the eye-roll-y promise of barre-class-to-brunch dressing for actual athletic wear. All the ballet essentials—leotard, tights, wrap top and ribboned shoes included—came in hot at Ferragamo, while up-and-coming Paris brand Casablanca embraced a West Coast surfer vibe with nylon gym shorts worn low over a real rashguard. And, perhaps influenced by the house's recent-ish appointment of Lewis Hamilton as ambassador, Christian Dior showed a chic (and actually wearable?) racing suit, an ideal set for the track and streets alike.

THE STANDOUT MOMENT: TORY BURCH Despite our athletic aspirations, a simple dip in a Tory Burch sequinned mailot is a little more in our lane. Coupled with an airy cotton pant, it's a look that'll have a lot of legs (going-out outfit, anyone?) once the weather warms.

Unsweet pastels

The official palette of Sunday-best finery and baby showers, pastels are practically a spring imperative. And while the runways delivered plenty of sugary pieces, the most interesting options evaded the saccharine overtones for something a little more effortless and everyday. We loved the ultra-billowy flight suit cast in mega-muted cotton-candy pink at Alaïa, a butter-yellow floaty top broken up by baggy denim at Prabal Gurung, and the perfect shirtdress at Fendi in a diluted powder blue.

THE STANDOUT MOMENT: ERDEM A pistachio suit wasn't at the top of our spring shopping list until we saw this one at Erdem. The oversized, soft-hued two-piece looked prime for a modern workwear statement.



ALAÏA PRABAL GURUNG LOEWE ERDEM

Masc moment

Fashion's penchant for gender-bending dressing is often described as "menswear-inspired" or "borrowed from the boys." For spring, it's a total raid-your-guy's-closet situation. On one end, nods to '80s-era power suiting—broad-shouldered and baggy—came through at Saint Laurent; on the other, a '70s-style plaid blazer and leather cargos had one model looking like a David Bowie mash-up at Acne Studios. The throughline: Across the style spectrum, girls cosplaying as guys looked damn good. A very anything-you-can-do-to-can-do-better moment (but are any of us really surprised?).

THE STANDOUT MOMENT: RABANNE Endless layers of deliberately oversized, boyish staples at Rabanne—a striped long sleeve, crisp button-up, silver technical jacket and boxy blazer—are inspiring us to exclusively peruse the menswear section.



SAINTE LAURENT RABANNE ACNE STUDIOS BOTTEGA VENETA

Tank girls

Most of us have relegated the ribbed tank top to a lowly layering basic—but no longer. The humble piece made its main character debut, lending a palpably relaxed quality to pretty much anything it was paired with. At 16Arlington, for example, a sheer, chocolate-brown tank helped balance the weight of a suede bottom. In a prime example of transition dressing done right, Hermès showed a rich leather skirt and knee-high boots with a May-appropriate tank. Over at Ralph Lauren, a crisp white, high-neck version tucked into boldly belted linen slacks is exactly what you'd want to slip into the second you land in the French Riviera.

THE STANDOUT MOMENT: GUCCI Finally finding his groove at Gucci, designer Sabato de Sarno's gift to us this season was a tank-first outfit worth repeating: a fitted, deep-U-shaped version—trimmed in the house palette, of course—tucked into a slack pair of charcoal trousers.



HERMÈS GUCCI 16ARLINGTON RALPH LAUREN



ELIE SAAB ETRO PRADA DRIES VAN NOTEN

Statement necklaces

Did you experience this as a full-circle jump scare? Our apologies, dear reader, but statement necklaces are all the way back. It's not (exactly) what you think. Unlike the tired, inexplicably neon baubles of the "Party Rock Anthem" era, 2025 takes a more artful approach to scaled-up adornment. There were life-size sea treasures dangling from models' necks at Chloé, gilded matchsticks jutting out from a simple chain at Bottega Veneta and a seriously XL chain necklace at Valentino, an ideal way to get reacquainted with these epic jewellery proportions.

THE STANDOUT MOMENT: PRADA A string of supersized white beads approached ping-pong-ball dimensions at Prada. Go big or go home!

Tickle-trunk dressing

A haphazard approach to dressing emerged for spring, drawing on myriad decades and fashion philosophies. At Prada, an argyle sweater, pussy-bow blouse and BDSM-appropriate leather skirt all co-mingled in one confusing, but interesting mix. Over at Coperni, a Mad-Lib-worthy look included a vintage Mickey Mouse tee worn over a Hawaiian-print long sleeve, denim hot pants and mesh flats. And there was a clash of colour, pattern and, well, everything at Dries van Noten, where a 1980s-couch print blazer was paired with an orange lace bandeau and lemon terrycloth shorts. Like the wrong shoe theory, this could be a smart styling trick to try.

THE STANDOUT MOMENT: VERSACE What do a fitted polo, a silk paisley midi skirt and copper lucite heels have in common? Absolutely nothing, but somehow this kooky mix at Versace had us seriously considering the combination.



PRADA MIU MIU COPERNI VERSACE

Lucky finds

The Year of the Snake symbolizes transformation, rebirth and the promise of new beginnings. Ring it in with these Lunar New Year collectibles from Asian-owned brands

By Renée Tse



This luxe rejuvenating eye cream received the Lunar New Year treatment. Crafted in collaboration with renowned Chinese enamel artist Li Pei Qing, the design features intricate motifs inspired by the Chinese zodiac for 2025.

CLÉ DE PEAU BEAUTÉ EYE CONTOUR CREAM SUPRÊME, \$290. CLEDEPEAUBEUTE.COM



Reimagining the snake motif from its core zodiac collection, Vancouver-based jewellery designer Kara Yoo launched new silver and gold snake pendants as a nod to her family's Korean heritage. Wear it on a chain or hoop earrings as a lucky talisman.

KARA YOO PENDANT, \$115. KARAYOO.COM



Inspired by founder Tina Chen Craig's Chinese culture, U Beauty launched a new vibrant shade of its much-loved plumping lip treatment with peptides, shea butter and AHAs. The bold hibiscus hue and subtle gold shimmer makes for the perfect pop of colour.

U BEAUTY THE PLASMA LIP COMPOUND TINTED IN FORTUNE, \$93. UBEAUTY.COM



Take your handwritten notes and daily journaling to the next poetic level with this beautiful fountain pen. The Lunar New Year design is based on the Chinese legend of the Lady White Snake, who was punished for falling in love with a kind-hearted scholar; her spirit is believed to be trapped under the Leifeng Pagoda in Hangzhou's West Lake.

FERRIS WHEEL FOUNTAIN PEN, \$119. FERRISWHEELPRESS.CA



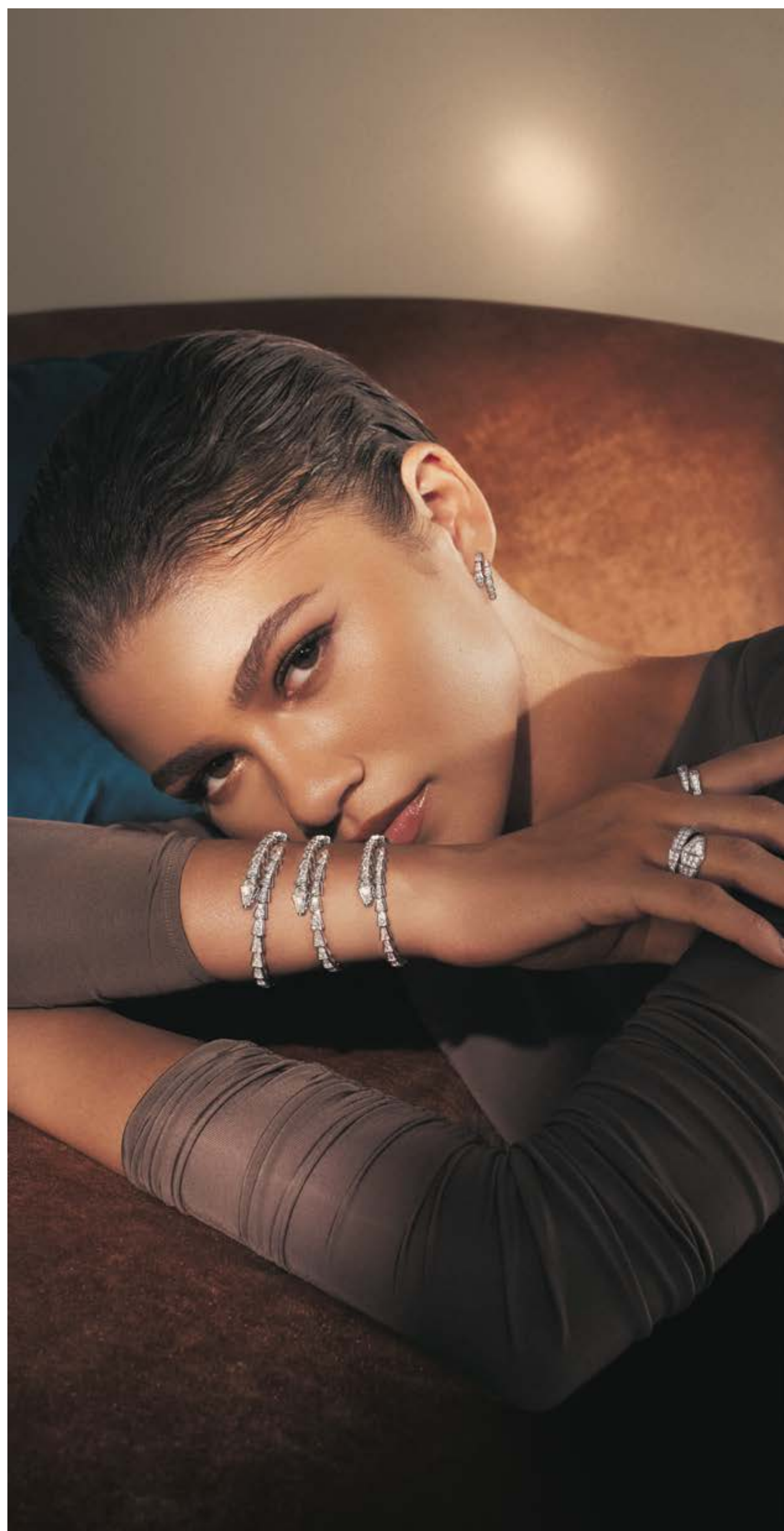
While traditional sweet rice pudding is enjoyed all year round, it's a popular dessert to gift and eat during the Lunar New Year season. Since its Chinese name is a homonym for "grow every year," it's considered good luck to enjoy this pudding with family for a prosperous year ahead.

HOLT RENFREW CLASSIC LUNAR NEW YEAR PUDDING, \$78. HOLTRENFREW.COM



Enter the new year looking healthy and glowy enough to attract good spirits with this beloved prepping serum from Korean brand Sulwhasoo. This year's special-edition bottle features gold snakeskin-inspired accents.

SULWHASOO FIRST CARE ACTIVATING SERUM, \$189. SEPHORA.CA



BVLGARI

ROMA 1884

BLOOR STREET WEST, YORKDALE SHOPPING CENTRE, HOLT RENFREW AT PACIFIC CENTRE

HAPPY EVER AFTER



COOL, RELAXED AND INTIMATE Camille Katona & Timothy Tse

Wedding Date: June 22, 2024

LOCATION: Camille and Timothy had their wedding ceremony in the backyard of her parents' Toronto home. "It's a concrete home on a ravine, which was the most perfect summer wedding backdrop," says Camille. They drove themselves to their reception venue, the East Room warehouse, a stylish studio space the couple loved for its bright and relaxed feel.

MEET CUTE: A decade ago, Camille and Timothy found love through their careers in the Canadian beauty industry. Camille—who co-founded beauty brand 19/99 with her business partner, Stephanie Spence, during the pandemic—and Timothy, who is the VP of finance at Performance Beauty Group, met while working at Bite Beauty. Camille was in marketing; Timothy was in finance. They got to know each other while packing products on the production line after hours. The couple started dating just as Camille was moving to New York for a two-year master's program at the Parsons School of Design. After school, she moved back to Toronto, and their relationship blossomed along with their careers. "Our connection has always felt seamless because we have shared the same interests since day 1: travelling, cooking, food and drink, music, dancing and continuously learning new things," says Camille. Tim proposed to Camille in 2023 on Canada Day while they were strawberry picking.

WEDDING VIBE: Camille incorporated yellow, her favourite colour, into her day; her billowy bouquet and pops of sunny florals added a joyful energy. "We wanted our reception to feel like a restaurant, so we kept details simple: white linens and plates, a family-style meal served on silver platters, and candles." The couple loves dancing, so music was a huge part of the night. "They had multiple acts including three DJs and a gypsy swing band."

THE FASHION: The couple was the very essence of modern chic. Tim wore a tailored black Maison Margiela suit, a perfect complement to Camille's sculptural two-piece wedding look by New York-based label Wiederhoeft. Camille paired the Wasp Corset with the Classic Skirt to create a cinched column gown. "I bought the first dress I tried on," she says. "I had an idea of what I wanted...and it had to be something that felt sleek but also referenced the past. I was going to be in New York for business, so I booked an appointment to try on some Wiederhoeft dresses and immediately fell in love. I loved that it was so versatile and can be worn again as separates. I plan to wear the corset at any opportunity because I feel amazing in it!" Camille accessorized with her mom's gold and pearl hoop earrings that her she had worn to her own wedding in the '80s. The finishing touch: sheer white gloves, which Camille recently re-wore to a Christmas party.

THE BEAUTY LOOK: Camille did her own makeup 19/99 products, an intensified version of her everyday look, with winged liner and a bold lip. "I chose the brown shade Barna for my liner and a bright red lip colour called Voros. I layered on more contour and highlight than I usual and patted my lip with our translucent setting powder to make the colour stay all night. My lipstick didn't even transfer during our kiss!"

Photography by Dzesika Devic

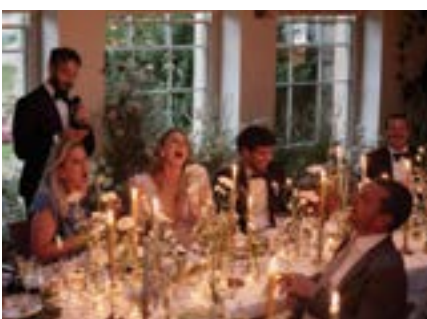
Camille bought the first dress she tried on: "I immediately fell in love."



For their wedding cake, Tim and Camille chose a black forest confection, accompanied by fresh strawberries and cream: "Tim proposed in a strawberry field, so it felt fitting," says Camille.



Ellie and Jeremy take a stroll, above, and at their reception, below. Ellie's dad, who has since passed away, walked her down the aisle: "That memory now holds an even deeper place in my heart—it's something that I'll cherish forever."



ROMANTIC, PASTORAL AND ELEGANT

Ellie Mae Waters & Jeremy Wood-Ross

Wedding Date: August 8, 2024

LOCATION: Ellie and Jeremy wanted to get married in the English countryside. They found their dream spot in Babington House, a historic Soho House estate built in 1705, located in the bucolic county of Somerset in southwest England. Set on 18 acres, it has 33 guest bedrooms spread across six buildings—the perfect spot to accommodate their 64 guests. "This was the only venue we visited, and as soon as we saw it, we knew it was the one," says Ellie. "It was the perfect setting for everything. Our vision was to create a memorable experience for our guests; we wanted them to feel relaxed and comfortable."

MEET CUTE: After designer Ellie started her fashion brand, Ellie Mae, in 2015, she needed a sales director—and a colleague recommended Jeremy. Impressed with his sales philosophy, she hired him. Six months later, they realized they liked each other and decided to try dating. "At first it was very secretive because we weren't sure where it would lead," Ellie recalls. "Fast-forward to today, and we've managed to live and work together without driving each other crazy, all while raising four very spoiled four-legged friends. Our relationship has always been about showing up for each other. We've faced some tough times and navigated life's ups and downs together, making sure to laugh along the way." Jeremy proposed to Ellie in 2023 over breakfast on the beach in Malibu.

THE WEDDING VIBE: The dreamy countryside surrounding Babington House inspired the mood of the three-day wedding event. The wedding day had a refined colour palette of green, blue and yellow, and the lush floral story was one of Ellie's favourite details. Originally, they planned to marry outdoors, but a forecast of rain necessitated a pivot inside, which resulted in transforming a grand indoor space into an enchanted garden. "The pairing of the flowers with vintage furniture gave it a timeless old-school charm," says Ellie.

THE FASHION: The couple chose to embrace classic style: Jeremy wore a bespoke tuxedo from Bode, and Ellie chose a spectacular curve-hugging pearl and floral embellished gown from Berta. The dress—which Jeremy says left him speechless as the bride walked down the aisle—took a while for Ellie to find. She tried on many, but nothing felt wow. "I had an appointment at White Toronto with owner Andrea who I had the most amazing experience with—she helped me find the one," says Ellie. "I ended up going to New York to the Berta store and found an older design I fell for. The plunging neckline and fitted silhouette hugged my shape perfectly, and I loved the juxtaposition of this bold, stylish dress against the romantic backdrop of the English countryside."

THE BEAUTY LOOK: Ellie kept her makeup natural. She wore her hair long and loose, which was a perfect match for her trailing tulle veil, an accessory she didn't think she would ever wear, but once she tried it on realized it was essential: "To add some edge to my style, I wore red nail polish on my fingers and toes."

Photography by Benjamin Wheeler

"Seeing each other for the first time as I walked down the aisle was such an emotional moment."

You are cordially invited to the weddings of three very stylish Canadian brides: beauty entrepreneur Camille Katona, fashion designer Ellie Mae Waters and PR pro Sydney Torgov

By Alison McGill



DOWNTOWN, CHIC, FOODIE FORWARD

Sydney Torgov & Chase Farbstien

Wedding Date: September 24, 2024

LOCATION: Sydney and Chase hosted their ceremony and reception at Toronto's Paris Paris, one of their favourite date-night spots. "We actually had one of our first dates at the restaurant's old location," says Sydney. "We loved it for our wedding because the restaurant itself is so beautiful and it didn't need a lot of 'zhuzing.' We swapped out a few things, bringing in colourful florals and a disco ball and specialty lighting to set the mood."

MEET CUTE: A mutual friend introduced Sydney to Chase at Osheaga in 2019. Though they stayed in touch post-festival, a busy work travel schedule kept Sydney out of town for long stretches at a time, which meant communication fizzled for a while. They picked up chatting again in 2020 and had their first date in Toronto playing frisbee in Dovercourt Park. "We had an instant spark on the day we met," recalls Sydney. "While it took some months to officially start dating, we were able to build the foundation of us. We're always on the same page and love doing things together." Chase popped the question last June at home on their dating anniversary.

THE WEDDING VIBE: The city-centric couple wanted to keep their celebration as local-feeling as possible and strove to have every detail of their day feel neighbourhood-y. Paris Paris is close to their home; their wedding photographer lives around the corner; and their florist, Emblem Florals, is just down the street. Food was an important focus of the day. Sydney raves about how the restaurant team created an unforgettable and indulgent eating experience. "We had a couple of custom drinks, a martini bar and served everything from a fresh seafood bar to fun bar snacks like sliders and skewers." The final treat? A late-night pizza delivery.

THE FASHION: Sydney and Chase both embraced an unfussy yet polished wedding style. Chase wore a steel-grey suit accented with a blue tie and pink pocket square. Sydney wore two dresses. The first was a minimalist strapless A-line gown from Moda Operandi. "I loved this gown for its simplicity and elegance—it fit the restaurant setting perfectly. It was perfect out of the box and didn't need one alteration!" Sydney's "dancing dress" was a poplin bubble Tularosa mini from Revolve. "I wore it with white flat Mary Janes from Reformation; they were an amazing gift from the brand, which was a PR client of mine at the time. I wanted to feel confident and classy for my day and I thought both these looks really complemented each other."

THE ACCESSORIES: The bride incorporated two "something borrowed" items into her looks. For the ceremony, Sydney wore a cathedral-length tulle and lace veil that belongs to her cousin. "She's my best friend, and her veil was a beautiful complement to the sheer bottom half of my dress." The pearl and diamond earrings she wore throughout the day belonged to her mother—a precious gift from Sydney's father.

Photography by Brittany Carmichael

"We had an instant spark on the day we met."



Sydney and Chase wanted vibrant florals to match their overall wedding mood: "White flowers were not the vibe!" Sydney says the couple's chuppah covering—made for Chase's sister's wedding—was one of her favourite details: "It was made of handkerchiefs that Chase's grandmother collected from all over the world that had either her initial 'R' on it or another delicate detail like an embroidered flower. Chase's mom had brought the handkerchiefs to a seamstress who created the chuppah covering by sewing them together."



Shine bright

The biggest trend in engagement rings? Modern elegance

There's a vibe shift happening in the sparkle space: While vintage engagement rings are definitely still in demand, engagement rings with a chic sleekness are taking the spotlight.

"This new modernism in engagement rings focuses on clean lines, refined designs and a sense of individuality," says Chau Lui, co-owner of Paris Jewellers and the brand's new sister line of fine jewellery, Celi. "We're moving beyond traditional styles, incorporating distinctive designs and gemstones that offer a unique touch. For many couples, modernism means choosing rings that reflect their journey, rather than following tradition."

Lui and her sister Trang Wong were inspired to launch Celi because they believe that jewellery is the

best way to celebrate life's biggest moments. Their focus is on creating designs embodying this new modernism. Fancy-shaped diamonds set simply are a favourite, with pears, ovals, emerald and radiant cuts.

In recent years, the trend of choosing a diamond alternative has become popular. Wong says that while classic diamonds will always be timeless, coloured gemstones offer a contemporary, trendy aesthetic.

"Coloured gemstones really reflect a personality," says Wong. "Rubies, emeralds, sapphires and morganite continue to be popular, and we're also loving some really distinctive stones like olive quartz, moss agate, rutillated quartz and moonstone. These bespoke stones are ideal for creating one-of-a-kind settings."



This pear-cut lab diamond is sleek and chic thanks to a minimalist yellow-gold setting.
MICHAEL HILL RING, \$3,499.
MICHAELHILL.CA



If you're looking for a bespoke ring, this one-of-a-kind elongated cushion cut sapphire is a stunning choice.
BLU BOHO RING, \$15,998.
BLUBOHO.COM



Thanks to Zendaya, the east-west setting is trending. It's the perfect partner for an oval-cut diamond.
VRAI RING, STARTING AT \$1,447.
VRAI.COM



Fancy cuts, sleek bezel settings and yellow gold embody the new modernism.
CELI RING, \$6,390.
SHOPCELI.COM



This 14-karat-white-gold ring features a lab-grown diamond in a curvy, unexpected setting.
PANDORA RING, \$2,350.
PANDORA.NET

Face forward

I learned to make my mature, winter-dry face glow with squelching layers of moisture, miraculously blurring products and tips from a top drag makeup artist

By Lynn Crosbie



to paint. I used the base coat Peters recommended for sheer, redness-reducing coverage: M.A.C's Strobe Dewy Skin Tint. I squeezed some into my palm and mixed it with a dime of moisturizer for one last shot of juice—yes, the succulence theme continues—and it went on smoothly, practically humming as it evened out my blighted complexion.

Next up was concealer, M.A.C's Studio Radiance 24HR Luminous Lift Concealer, applied lightly with a little heart-shaped sponge, beneath my eyes and over any residual reds.

Peters cautioned that deeper lines look more pronounced when cloaked in concealer and recommended Trinny London's Miracle Blur for the not-so-fine-line areas. When I tapped on this creamy, satin-soft corrector, these areas were noticeably, well, blurred. Actually, the lines appeared to vanish.

This triad corrected and perfected, or to return to the art metaphor, produced the equivalent of laying down the background, in this case a spotless tropical beach or surreal blonde-beige sky.

From here, Peters advised that powder can be applied judiciously, in the areas where it is most needed for polish and protection. Rather than smoothing it all over, garage-door style, I stuck to the oilier T-Zone and under the eyes (lightly!), as powder repels errant mascara and other smoky magic going on above. M.A.C's Blot Powder provided a nice lightweight finish.

My focus was complexion, but to define my features, Peters showed me how to pack eyeliner along the lash lines, using a slanted brush, and extend it, a look I paired with some creamy neutral eye shadow above. I "draped" on a cream blush, per the expert's advice—this technique involves drawing a C-shape from your temples to your cheekbones—and applied a bright red lip, using liner and gloss. I've always worn red lipstick, but against a pearlescent face, it is pure drama.

Thus, I rehomed the iguana, entering the new year with a dewy, clean slate. And I found that a well-tended, nicely made-up face really does lift up everything else, pulling focus away from shapeless puffer coats, salt-cured boots and dry, flyaway winter hair (which is another story).

The compliments flew like lizard kibble. At a party, an elegant lady inquired, sotto voce, "Have you had work done?" I was tempted to nod; it was a lot of work! But without labour, nothing prospers, said Sophocles, a dramatist who knew a little something about the power of a made-up face.

The tint went on smoothly, practically humming as it evened out my blighted complexion.



TRINNY LONDON MIRACLE BLUR, \$50, TRINNYLONDON.COM
E.L.F. POWER GRIP MATTE PRIMER, \$13, ELFCOSMETICS.COM
M.A.C STROBE DEWY SKIN TINT, \$49, MACCOSMETICS.COM

There is a giant iguana before me. She is rufous and scaly, and the more I strike her, the scarier she gets. The iguana is me, my weapon is a foundation brush, and the fear is real.

Right now it is deep winter: the cold is forbidding, punitive. It is the season of chapped lips and dry flesh. I am a mature-skinned mature lady, and not long ago, I was swiping on foundation when I noticed it was drifting, and creating a hideous pattern—like beige Ben Day dots on a ghostly white, uneven surface. The more I assaulted the circle, the more pronounced they became.

Instead of sensibly starting over, I added a pouf of powder and told myself that people's eyesight was uniformly poor. During the day, the makeup wandered further, exposing charred, red patches and gathering in cruel lines. Over lunch, at a nice, tragically well-lit restaurant, I was affrighted by the powder room mirror and decided it was time to leave the reptile farm for good.

I did my due diligence. There is much to read and many videos to watch. Some are crazy-boring; Do As I Do footage of index fingers slowly dragging various products around. Others are illuminating, like Cassandra Bankson's breezy skin rituals.

For expert-level, one-on-one advice, I cued up a FaceTime makeup lesson with Viktor Peters, a top Canadian editorial and drag makeup artist, whose own alter ego, Veruschka, is as beautiful as a living Renoir. Drag makeup is an art form I venerate; there are not enough tutorials in the world to explain the sorcery involved in transforming a face covered in Elmer's glue and blocks of colour into a look so polished and seductive.

Viktor told me he feels that makeup is far beyond an accessory, it is "transformative," and that applying it is a "meditative process" certain to improve one's confidence if done correctly.

He is strict about skin preparation. As with fine art, one's canvas must be carefully prepared before a drop of paint appears. This is essential to the smooth application of makeup, especially in winter since cold air causes the top layer of the skin to thicken, defensively, to prevent even more moisture loss.

"Start with a moisturized face and use SPF all winter," he advised, and yes, I admit it, I thought sun protection was a summer thing. Following his instructions, I cleansed, toned and very gently exfoliated my angered face, drying it as gently as a porcelain angel (I found Trinny London's ultrasoft T-Towels good for this). I applied serum, sunscreen—Peters recommends Ultra Violet's Queen Screen—and a rich moisturizer, specifically Bounce Back, Trinny London's heavy-duty peptide moisturizer.

I let each layer absorb as I went, and then it was prime time. I used e.Lf's Power Grip Primer, which comes in a few varieties that perform a different function (one hydrates, one evens skin tone and the other, a matte primer, reduces shine.) I used the latter all over.

When that had absorbed, my face felt soft and pliant and it was time

I was an indoors child: I loved reading books, watching movies, lazing about. My parents, worried my tiny muscles would atrophy, insisted on enrolling me in one physical activity per term. Ice-skating and team sports weren't a great fit, but I did enjoy gymnastics. I went to class after class, year after year, but still was unable to master even the most basic moves. The cartwheel. The handstand. Soaring over the vault seemed as obtainable as an invite from Jonathan Taylor Thomas to the school dance.

My lack of coordination and cardio endurance persisted into adulthood. While some fear public speaking, spiders or asking for a raise, I dread exercise. When I do get to the gym, any moments of joy or achievement quickly wane as I realize I have to keep exercising, every day, ideally, forever. This is hard with a time-intensive job and busy social life; adding my ADHD to the mix makes it seem impossible. This condition means I struggle with coordination, establishing routines, doing anything "boring," and sticking to things that don't pay off immediately.

The vagaries of middle age—buying my first house, a traumatic breakup, a brutal work schedule, endless chores, finding time to date—meant my goal to start working out in the gym in my new building moved to the new year, then the spring, then the fall. But as I slid deeper into my 40s, I knew I'd have to try again. I'd reached an embarrassing nadir, quickly becoming out of breath at even the tiniest incline. I was slow to get up, sometimes stiff. As my body cracked and popped and wheezed, I knew I couldn't put it off any longer.

Then, an offer to hit the gym with Olympian gymnast Félix Dolci landed in my inbox. He, too, has faced adversity over the years, including a fall during the 2024 Paris Olympics. I pondered how my failure to progress in one gym turned into a failure to persist in every other gym. Perhaps this was just the person to help me conquer my fear, overcome my seething workout resentment and kick off a new era of fitness.

As I entered the Laval Excellence gym where Dolci trains, I felt nervous but also surprisingly calmed by how familiar it felt: the smell of chalk, the primary-coloured equipment, the thump of bodies on mats. Dolci, a handsome sprite of a man, put me at ease with his jolly manner.

After a non-starter attempt at a handstand, during which I burst capillaries in my face from exertion, Dolci suggested we move onto the cartwheel.

The biggest issue people have when trying to cartwheel, I learned, is they're too timid; they don't push out their legs hard enough. The key, Dolci said, is you gotta commit. I sent my legs up and out, but rather than arcing through the sky gracefully like his, they truncated in an embarrassing hop. "Commit!" he said, smiling. "Just commit!" Despite feeling on the edge of tears, I wanted to commit. With each try, I kicked higher and higher, until I achieved



Game on

In the worst shape of my life, I decided to face my fitness fears and get back to exercising—with the help of an Olympic gymnast

By Briony Smith

work with zero evening plans...or excuses. The idea of going to the gym when I could be watching a true-crime show or cuddling my dog was torture. But then I thought of Dolci. "You have to persevere," he told me. "Don't ever give up. It sounds corny, but it is very true. If you never stop, you will get better."

I stood up. "Stop thinking and just go," I heard him say. "Believe in yourself."

I put on my runners and took the elevator down to my building's gym. "Sometimes you just have to put one foot in front of the other."

And I did. I spent 30 minutes plodding on the treadmill, pedalling on the bike and stretching on the floor. It was boring, yes, but I felt proud, like I'd achieved something. Something hard. Today, I will go back for another 30 minutes. Tomorrow, too, I hope. Maybe I'll try tennis this spring. And then, who knows where I'll be? Maybe I'll even learn how to do a cartwheel.

The idea of going to the gym when I could be cuddling my dog was torture.

the perfect cartwheel, my legs windmilling with ease as Dolci cheered me on, bystanders clapped and a marching band playing "When You Believe" burst through the door of the gym.

No, that didn't happen. I kept trying but I could not get my legs high enough. "You just have to keep going," Dolci said. "If you came back here tomorrow, you'd be somewhere else." I realized that, just by being in this gym, I already was somewhere else, somewhere new.

I asked Dolci how he deals with failure, especially since millions of people watched him fall vs. the two bystanders who witnessed my tumbles. "You cannot avoid failure. Even if you're really good at something, failure will come eventually," he said. "You have to acknowledge it. There is no perfect path."

But what if he isn't feeling it? "You can't deny that some days, you might not feel motivated or excited. But one of the things I do is stick to a routine: breakfast, morning training, afternoon training," he said. "It grounds me in the same path, so I know where I'm going. When you lack motivation, you need to anchor yourself to the routine and go back in the flow."

For instance, Dolci eats the same breakfast every day: two eggs and half an avocado plus water and coffee. Later, he's been focusing on his dental routine as well; he recently became an ambassador for Philips Sonicare (his picks are the Philips Sonicare DiamondClean Prestige 9900 brush and the Philips Sonicare Cordless Power Flosser 3000). I could relate; my own (successful!) 2024 resolution was to brush and floss more and go to the dentist regularly, which did indeed make me feel great.

A month later, I was sitting on the couch after watching a true-crime show or cuddling my dog was torture. But then I thought of Dolci. "You have to persevere," he told me. "Don't ever give up. It sounds corny, but it is very true. If you never stop, you will get better."

I stood up. "Stop thinking and just go," I heard him say. "Believe in yourself."

I put on my runners and took the elevator down to my building's gym. "Sometimes you just have to put one foot in front of the other."

And I did. I spent 30 minutes plodding on the treadmill, pedalling on the bike and stretching on the floor. It was boring, yes, but I felt proud, like I'd achieved something. Something hard. Today, I will go back for another 30 minutes. Tomorrow, too, I hope. Maybe I'll try tennis this spring. And then, who knows where I'll be? Maybe I'll even learn how to do a cartwheel.



Perfect fit

After entering my 40s with a wider waistline and a toddler, I decided to give up my leggings and hunt for jeans that actually made me feel good. A denim fairy godmother granted my wish

By Jennifer Berry

For as long as I can remember, I've avoided pants with a waistband and zipper. As a kid, I opted for overalls and sporty shorts. During my early 20s, I was a mini-dress-and-tights girly through and through. And as I've rounded the bend of 40, I've found myself mostly in leggings.

Sure, I've bought into denim crazes, like a \$300 pair of two-inch-rise Miss Sixty jeans that were so out of my university student budget, it made me nauseous, and the cropped kick flares of 2013 that had me elbowing strangers at J.Crew. But jeans, for the most part, aren't something I've gravitated toward. (I am a Taurus, and being uncomfortable for more than five seconds is punishable by law.)

I come by my denim allergy honestly: In our shared 31 years on the planet, I never once saw my late mom wear jeans. Always put together, the saucy Scottish lady stood around five feet tall with shoes on and dressed exclusively in relaxed, elastic-waist slacks. And along with our shared spicy temper, I inherited her apple body type, which consists of a rather round midsection atop a pair of slender gams.

My on-again-off-again relationship with denim changed again when my son, Oslo, arrived in fall 2021. After barely looking at any version of a trouser for a full calendar year thanks to COVID



Jennifer Berry finds her dream mid-rise, barrel-leg jeans at Over The Rainbow—a denim trend she'd feared wouldn't work with her body shape.

CITIZENS OF HUMANITY JEANS, \$398, RAINBOWJEANS.COM



Straight leg, no stretch, subtle bow-leg shape for extra curve: This Uniqlo x JW Anderson pair checked all the boxes.

UNIQLO JEANS, \$60, UNIQLO.COM

I felt cautiously optimistic and a little shy. I couldn't remember the last time I'd shopped for clothes in person, let alone uttered the numerical dimensions of my waist to another human.

lockdowns, and a spring/summer of being with child in maternity floral dresses, rompers and ribbed midi-dresses, I shocked myself by wanting to dust off my denim drawer when I gave birth and had some semblance of a waist again. And you know what's fun to do while breastfeeding at 2 a.m.? Online shop.

But, alas, the jeans that fit perfectly while I was nursing no longer do now that that dozy baby is a wild toddler and I've entered my 40s. Recently, I've played a lot of tricks on myself to forget about the denim drawer that seems to growl at me every time I put clothes on. I shimmy into old faithful dresses, mostly of the knit variety and paired with boots, while cheering myself on ("Remember dresses? You love them!"). I have some trousers that don't make me want to walk into the sea, like a silky, wide-leg navy pair I can still zip up. I also play the fun game "Don't Worry, You'll Be Able to Wear All Those Jeans Again Someday," which has no winners because waiting to lose a few pounds in order to fit into clothes is a special kind of torture.

As 2025 dawned, I knew it was time for a fresh start. I walked into Toronto's Over the Rainbow, a premium denim destination for 50 years, feeling cautiously optimistic and a little shy. I couldn't remember the last time I shopped for clothes in-person, let alone uttered the numerical dimensions of my waist to another human. But when my sales associate, Sarvi, who looks about Sofia Richie's age but has been fitting people at OTR for nearly 20 years, asked me what size I typically wear, I cleared my throat and confidently told her "31 or 32," without adding "I'm a 30 in some brands!"

on what fits and feels good." Jean shopping with a bonus therapy session—now that's a bargain.

My next stop was Uniqlo, to see if I could find an inexpensive pair I loved with the classic mall shopping experience—total solitude to try on jeans in the changeroom and an attendant nearby if I needed anything. I once again braved the dressing room with a teetering stack of denim I'd pulled, of all shapes and sizes, including a cool oversized jean jacket that gives designer for a whiff of the price.

Armed with the newfound confidence from my recent barrel-leg success, I first tried a pair of ink-blue straight-leg jeans with very little stretch and a whisper of a crop from the brand's collaboration with JW Anderson. I gave the other styles a shot, for research's sake—including a fun, exaggerated drapey wide-leg silhouette—but I felt it as soon as I put the first pair on. With a subtle bow leg that swerves in ever so slightly, giving the illusion of more space between the legs, they flatter in the same way my designer pair does and bestow my bottom half with a bit more curve than the lord gave it. In the right jeans, I kind of do have an apple-bottom bum?! Who the hell knew.

These new additions to my closet inspired me to do a full trouser inventory and finally part ways with a few pairs that have descended from aspirational to delusional. It was liberating! I'm not 29 anymore (I'm gaged or jean size) and I'm okay with that. I've gained so much that's good: a beautiful son, a career I'm proud of and the wisdom to not let a couple extra e lbs ruffle me like they once might have. I don't have time to care about such trivial things as numbers on tags—I've got new jeans to wear.

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