

THE KIT



Here comes the sun

Inside the issue: Honeymoon dressing, wedding trends and a very modern love story



KÉRASTASE

PARIS

FEELING YOURSELF

Hair fall is natural, but these confidence-boosting products are game changers



Here's a fact you'll probably never forget upon reading it: Between 50 to 100 strands of hair fall from your head Every. Single. Day. Hair fall can happen for a variety of reasons—including breakage and weakened roots, which can be the result of brushing, styling and more. Here's what's crucial to remember: This amount of hair fall is totally natural, but it's also still okay to wonder what you can do to strengthen and support your hair.

Enter iconic French brand Kérastase's beloved Genesis and brand-new Genesis Homme lines, two researched-backed ranges that have been clinically proven to reduce hair fall for both men

and women in six weeks of consistent use.

Formulated with super potent ingredients, like renewing ginger root and resilience-boosting edelweiss stem cells, the lines include an array of products that let you customize your own regimen, regardless of your lifestyle, hair type and degree of hair fall. The brand's goal is simple: They want you to not only feel confident and empowered, but also to remind you that you never have to be afraid of falling.

To put these products to the test, The Kit has teamed up with three Canadian content creators to try out the ranges and share their stories.



KÉRASTASE
GENESIS SÉRUM ANTI-
CHUTE FORTIFIANT,
\$80. [KERASTASE.CA](https://www.kerastase.ca)

PARALEGAL AND CONTENT
CREATOR MAUDE PION
(@ILESDEUX)

Who in your life empowers you to feel fearless and ready to take on the world?
“My husband. This will sound so cliché, but he’s my absolute best friend and he’s also my business partner. We do everything together and he always grounds me and hypes me when I need it.”

Which Genesis product was your favourite and why?
“The Genesis Anti-Breakage Fortifying Serum because everything starts with the root and it’s really important to take care of it. It helps soothe my scalp and even reduces hair shedding. I’ve always been afraid to use hair serums because they make my hair greasy, but the Genesis one doesn’t.”

How do you stay motivated and cope with the fear of failure?
“Motivation looks different every day, and so does doing our best. There are days where I feel like Wonder Woman and like nothing can stop me, and there are days when I’m totally burnt out. That’s why it’s really important to take the time to disconnect. We are always available for everyone through our phone and notifications—you have to take some days off. If I fail at something, it’s just a lesson learned. Everyone will make mistakes—we’re all just humans doing our best.”



KÉRASTASE GENESIS
DEFENSE THERMIQUE,
\$49. [KERASTASE.CA](https://www.kerastase.ca),



KÉRASTASE GENESIS
HOMME SÉRUM ANTI-
CHUTE FORTIFIANT,
\$80. [KERASTASE.CA](https://www.kerastase.ca)



PARENTS AND CONTENT CREATORS RINI
(@OWNITBABE) AND SHAUN FREY
(@OWNITDAD)

Were there any significant changes you noticed in your hair after becoming a parent?
Rini: “I went through a period of hair loss postpartum, which was difficult. My hair was always a big part of my identity, so I tried to address it right away. The Genesis range helped so much in regrowing my hair and getting my hair health back. Ever since I went through hair loss, I pay that much more attention to the products I use so I can make sure my hair is well taken care of and healthy.”
Kérastase Genesis is meant to create radiant, amazing hair and help make people feel their most confident. What does “never be afraid of falling” mean to you?
Rini: “It reminds me of the quote ‘fall down seven times, get up eight’—it’s resilience and self-love. That’s kind of what my hair

did postpartum. It all eventually came back; it just needed a little bit of care each day.”
Was there one product that stood out from the rest?
Rini: “I truly love them all, but if I had to pick, I would probably pick the Défense Thermique blow dry fluid. Since I use a lot of heat on my hair, this product is my go-to to protect it from heat damage, reduce breakage and protect against humidity. I find a lot of heat protectants can feel heavy on my hair—this one feels light, smells amazing and delivers great results

“Shaun loves the molding clay and is very excited about the Genesis Homme serum. He is a new Kérastase user but is already super happy with all the products and says that they make his hair feel really healthy. Since he is struggling with thinning hair, he’s looking forward to the long-term effects of the fortifying serum and thickness boosting spray.” *Continued on last page...*

LOVE *is in*

the
AIR

Weddings are back! Toast the season with dreamy dresses, delectable cakes and a very romantic big day, courtesy of Erin Leydon and Mitch Syer, newly hitched couple and two of Toronto's coolest image makers

By Alison McGill

Photography by Joel and Justyna Bedford

Erin Leydon and Mitch Syer have a very modern love story. In 2015, the Toronto photographers started following each other on Instagram. Then, on Erin's birthday, Mitch sent her a celebratory DM. Friendly chit-chat ensued, followed by a number exchange, and Erin invited Mitch to a photography show. "That was our first in-person meeting," says Erin. "After a spontaneous rendezvous in Sauble Beach, we started hanging out more often. We've been together ever since. Our relationship has always been very organic."

By 2020, Mitch was ready to propose. After a plan to pop the question in Palm Springs fell through, he came up with a brilliant new idea. That pandemic summer was quiet and creative—with work slowing down, Erin and Mitch were having fun taking photos of each other. One July evening, Mitch suggested that they wake up early the next day to catch the sunrise

and snap some portraits. Erin remembers it well. "We dressed up and headed to High Park, but Mitch was struggling to find the best moment, so he suggested that we drive to Cherry Beach," she recalls. "It was so busy with dog walkers, but we managed to find a quieter spot by the water. Mitch suggested that I start taking his picture. As I focused my eyes through the lens, he raised his hands up, holding a ring box in front of his face. Somehow, in that moment I shot a single photo of him and immediately started saying 'What?! What?!'" She laughs. "And then of course I said, 'Yes!'"

Erin and Mitch spent that summer and fall luxuriating in their engagement. (A newly stacked calendar of micro-wedding bookings also kept them busy at work.)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

TIFFANY HARDWEAR
TIFFANY & Co.

Summer of love

Whether you're planning a honeymoon or you're just in the mood to take a spectacular vacation, here are three magical getaways—and the dopamine-inducing outfits to match—to spark your wanderlust

By Renée Tse



HAWAII A paradise for all, majestic Hawaii has the natural beauty and nightlife to please adventurers, beach babes *and* city folk.
WHERE TO STAY: The Royal Hawaiian Hotel (a.k.a. the Pink Palace) on the famed Waikiki Beach.
WHAT TO DO: Island hop! Recline on the glorious beaches of main island Oahu, paddleboard on the turquoise waters at Lanikai Beach and sip frosty Mai Tais at Duke's, as you watch the sun set over the silky white sand.
WHAT TO PACK: A frothy tropical mini-dress and all the minty and pink accessories your heart desires.



BIRKENSTOCK
SANDALS, \$140,
ANTHROPOLOGIE.COM

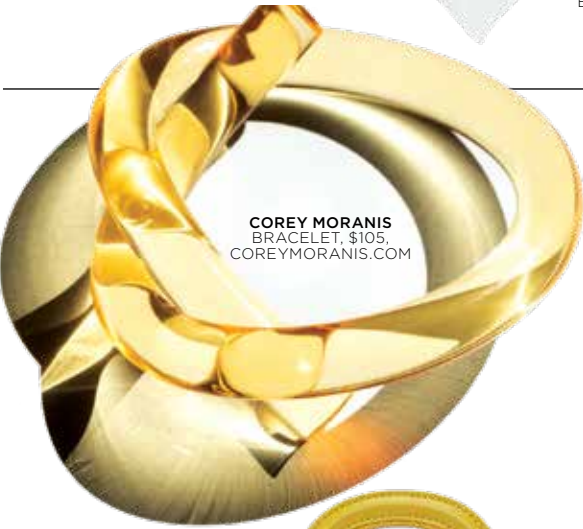
CHARO RUIZ DRESS, \$644,
NET-A-PORTER.COM

ARAKS
BRALETTE, \$185,
UNDERPANTS,
\$125, ARAKS.
COM

GLOW RECIPE
WATERMELON GLOW
SUNSCREEN, \$45,
SEPHORA.CA

BP SUNGLASSES, \$19,
NORDSTROM.CA

EUGENIA KIM
HAT, \$636,
EUGENIAKIM.COM



COREY MORANIS
BRACELET, \$105,
COREYMORANIS.COM



JACQUEMUS
SHIRT, \$600,
JACQUEMUS.COM



MARNI BAG, \$635,
SSENSE.COM



BOTTEGA VENETA HEELS,
\$1,458, MATCHESFASHION.COM



STAUD PANTS, \$501,
FARFETCH.COM



HERMÈS
HERMESISTIBLE
INFUSED CARE OIL IN
ROUGE AMARELLE,
\$69, HERMES.COM



KNIX BIKINI
TOP, \$65, BOTTOM,
\$60, KNIX.CA



ICELAND The ultimate bucket list destination. Enter an other-worldly landscape of black volcanic sand beaches, towering geometric basalt columns and ice-blue geothermal pools.
WHERE TO STAY: The Blue Lagoon Hotel with its famed mineral-rich hot springs.
WHAT TO DO: Hike around the ice caps at Sólheimajökull Glacier and Gullfoss and Skogafoss waterfalls. Stroll a quaint fishing village or take in capital city Reykjavik's hopping nightlife.
WHAT TO PACK: A holographic rain jacket, extra knit layers and sensible (but super cute) hiking boots.



CANADA GOOSE
SWEATER, \$395,
CANADAGOOSE.COM

HUNTER
BACKPACK, \$375,
HUNTERBOOTS.COM

ARITZIA
PANTS, \$98,
ARITZIA.COM



THERMA KOTA
JACKET, \$499,
THERMAKOTA.COM



LA ROCHE-POSAY
CICAPLAST BAUME B5
SOOTHING REPAIRING
BALM, \$17, SHOPPERS-
DRUGMART.CA



SWATCH X OMEGA WATCH,
\$320, SELECT SWATCH STORES



PALLADIUM BOOTS, \$140,
PALLADIUMBOOTS.CA



The power of a portrait

What's better than getting the perfect professional headshot? Keeping the feel-good vibes going with an alumni dinner, thought-provoking panel and fun shopping soirée.

Portraits With Impact, led by celebrity stylist Julianne Costigan and photographer Erin Leydon, offers Torontonians the opportunity to get professionally styled and photographed for a next-level headshot. Last month, Valentino Beauty and The Kit joined the shoot for a week full of empowerment and excitement.



The first-ever alumni dinner brought previous and upcoming portrait attendees together at Hotel X's New Fort Hall.



Portraits With Impact stylist and founder Julianne Costigan (second from left) and her team get ready for the Sip & Shop event at Silverline Studios, featuring Julianne's and The Kit's Canadian-focused, women-led fashion picks.



The Kit editor-in-chief and discussion moderator Laura deCarufel (far left) poses with panelists (from left): Portraits With Impact photographer Erin Leydon, stylist Julianne Costigan, Valentino Beauty marketing director Alaia Cavalié and president and CEO of S.G. Cunningham Georgia Cunningham.

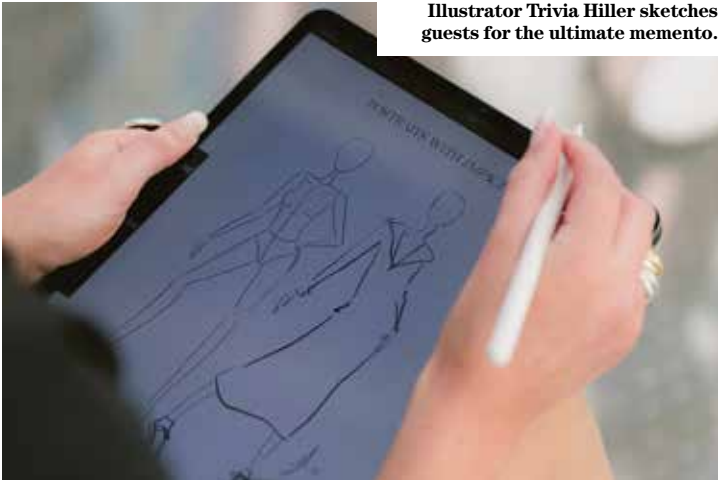


An exclusively female playlist spun by Bianca Lee keeps the energy high.

Sasha Simler, makeup artist for Valentino Beauty, gives guests the glam treatment.



Seventy guests connect and create memories over dinner and drinks.



Illustrator Trivia Hiller sketches guests for the ultimate memento.





From soft and subtle to an all-out statement, Valentino Beauty has a makeup look for everyone

LINDSAY SITTLER (@SITTLERHOME), MARKETER AND INTERIOR STYLIST

There's something empowering about having the perfect headshot—one that conveys confidence and professionalism. That's why Valentino Beauty, celebrity stylist Julianne Costigan and photographer Erin Leydon all teamed up for Portraits With Impact. With the new-to-Canada Valentino Beauty couture-clash makeup range—featuring a versatile assortment of shades and formulas that are designed to suit anyone and any look—subjects get the opportunity to experience pairing the unexpected. And whether the desired look is low-key, ultra-bold or somewhere in the middle, makeup artist for Valentino Beauty Sasha Simler has tips for embodying Valentino's signature DNA: Colour, Cool and Couture.

The Signature Look: COOL

For a style that Simler describes as “still traditional but playful,” it's all about defining features by adding a little more shape and colour. Start by bulking up brows with hair-like strokes, then contour the hollows of your cheeks with foundation that's one shade darker than your usual hue. “Buff it upwards toward the temple with an angled brush for a lifted and sculpted look,” says Simler.

Keep that sharpness going on lips with a well-defined pout. Simler recommends Rosso Valentino lipstick in a merlot or classic red. “The bullet has a nice point, so you can get a sharp lip line then fill it in after,” she says. To echo the vibe on eyes, use the Twin Liner's black side to create a winged flick. “Don't try to draw it all in one motion—work in small ticks to get that line,” says Simler. For a little fun, she likes to add the pink liner shade along the lower lashline before finishing it all off with soft blush and mascara.



VALENTINO BEAUTY BROW TRIO EYEBROW LINER (\$52), VALENTINO ROSSO VALENTINO REFILLABLE LIPSTICK IN 22R (\$73), VALENTINO BEAUTY TWIN LINER EYELINER (\$52)



CARLA SABATINO, FOUNDER OF EVOQUE DÉCOR



MAJA BEKIC, FOUNDER OF REDLINE WEALTH MANAGEMENT INC.



WENDI CAMPBELL, CEO OF THE FOOD BANK OF WATERLOO REGION



VALENTINO VERY VALENTINO 24 HOUR LIQUID FOUNDATION (\$80), VALENTINO ROSSO VALENTINO REFILLABLE LIPSTICK IN 106A (\$73), VALENTINO BEAUTY EYE2CHEEK BLUSH AND EYESHADOW IN 6 (\$65)

The Subtle Look: COLOUR

For an easy everyday look, Simler loves to use makeup to mimic a bitten lip and naturally flushed cheeks. But first, it starts with fresh, dewy skin. “I typically add foundation to the centre of the face, and then use my fingertips to melt it and blend outwards,” she says. “Those would be the most uneven areas of the skin, so essentially we want to create a healthy complexion, but not coverage.”

She recommends a hands-on approach to lips, too. Apply a warm-rose shade, like Rosso Valentino in 106A, and apply the bullet to only the middle of your lips. “You want to diffuse it with your fingertips so there's no harsh lines on the outer edge,” says Simler. To round out the look, sweep a coordinating powder on cheeks and lids before finishing with mascara and highlighter. “Because there are no contrasting tones, it creates a monochromatic look that keeps the subtleness,” says Simler. “It should almost look like it's lit from within.”



The Statement Look: COUTURE

Ready to turn up your beauty game? “Add a little artistic flair,” says Simler. She recommends applying a red-toned blush high on the cheekbone, where you'd typically place a shimmery highlighter. Wrap it up and around your eyebrow in a C shape and carry the hue inwards to the outer edge of your eyelid. “We don't always think that you can play with your blush, but it's a very cool and couture way to add an edge,” she says.

Build on the statement with negative space liner. “Use makeup remover with a Q-tip or small angled brush to take away the powder where you'd typically draw winged liner,” says Simler, who also suggests beefing up lashes with an extra bit of mascara. And because this look is all about more is more, have fun with a bold lip as well. Simler loves combining fuchsia along the outer edge with a softer pink on the inside, then blending with her finger. The bonus of a two-toned lip? “It gives the appearance of a super full lip,” she says.

CONTINUED FROM COVER

It brought us so much joy to see everyone we love having a blast together.

In early 2021, they started planning and discovered they had the same vision for their wedding: They wanted an elegant, intimate celebration that felt like them—nothing too expected or too over the top. For help, they enlisted über planner Lexi Haslam from Lexington & Co. Events. “We kept the theme super simple and easy—it was totally a reflection of our personal styles,” says Erin. “We wore black and white exclusively, but the rest of our day was full of vibrant colour. Our incredible florist, Rosalie, really brought that element.”

Erin’s dad, photographer and event designer Alph Leydon, also played a big role in the couple’s day. “He has a great eye, so it was important to me that he and my mom gave us the thumbs-up on all decisions,” says Erin. “He helped plan both of my sisters’ weddings, too!” Alyph actually found Erin’s wedding dress and attended every fitting with her.

And speaking of the dress: Erin chose a sparkly, fit and flare illusion dress from Pronovias, which she paired with a veil from Laura Jayne Accessories and crystal cluster earrings by Keren Wolf, all from White Toronto. Mitch wore a custom-made tuxedo from Garrison Bespoke.

The big day arrived on December 11, 2021. That morning, Erin and Mitch got ready in separate rooms at the historic Fairmont Royal York. They saw each other for the first time at their “first look” photo session at the hotel. “It was definitely more emotional than we expected it to be,” says Erin, with a smile. “My dress was a total surprise for Mitch, so it was exciting for both of us.” After experiencing it, Erin recommends having a formal moment for the couple to see each other before the hoopla officially kicks off: “It was wonderful to have that time together.”

The couple’s evening ceremony and reception was held at Bymark Toronto, a modern space they infused with warmth via hundreds of glowing candles and an earthy colour palette of deep red, plum, dusty pink and muted green tones. Post “I dos,” the couple and their guests toasted their newlywed status with bubbly served via a retro-fabulous champagne tower. “The tower was a non-negotiable detail for us,” says Erin. “From the moment we popped the bottles and started to pour, our party was full of cheers, laughing and smiling from everyone around us. It was the perfect kick-off to a night that was full of unscripted table sing-alongs throughout dinner.”

The party ramped up another notch with a cocktail lounge and dance floor, installed where their wedding ceremony took place. “Everybody let loose, danced and socialized,” says Erin. “New friendships were made that night between many of our guests. It brought us so much joy to see everyone we love having a blast together.”

Their epic wedding day was a beautiful chapter in the couple’s love story, one that they say is built on openness, communication and always being in sync with one another. “Erin is my best friend in every sense of the word,” says Mitch. “We fully understand what each of us needs from one another, and the sense of humour we share is something I’ll never tire of. We’re looking forward to our next set of adventures together.”

ERIN AND MITCH’S WEDDING DIRECTORY

As pro photographers specializing in weddings, Erin and Mitch have attended hundreds of great parties. When it was time to plan their own big day, they had a squad of Toronto’s finest tastemakers at their fingertips.

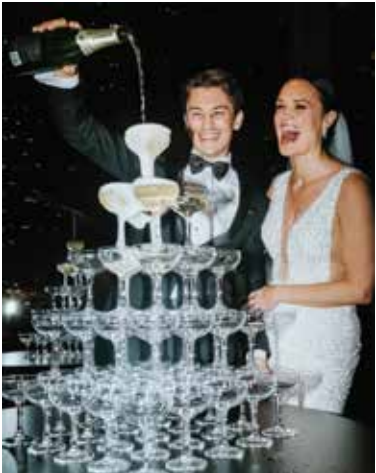
FLOWERS: *Rosalie Villanueva, RZY flowers* “She did a deep dive into both our Instagrams to see what we gravitated toward colour-wise and created a perfect mood board and palette for us,” says Erin. “The rest we left up to her—she absolutely killed it!”

CAKE: *Kwento* “We sent our cake artist, Shannon, a photo of Elvis and Priscilla Presley’s wedding cake as a reference. We loved what she created!”

PHOTOGRAPHY: *Joel & Justyna, also a husband-and-wife duo.* “It was a little different to be on the other side of the lens on a wedding day, but Joel and Justyna made it so comfortable for us. We put our full trust in them.”

After the ceremony, Erin changed into her second dress, a vintage Missoni.

Erin Leydon and Mitch Syer after saying their “I dos.” The creative florals added warmth to the minimalist venue.



PHOTOGRAPHY: JOEL & JUSTYNA, EXCEPT WITH GOLD COUCH (DANIEL NEUHAUS), WITH CAKE (WEDDING GUEST)

THE LOOK



MODERN GLAMOUR

Put a twist on tradition with pieces that seamlessly merge classic and cool



So charming! These pearl-core kitten-heel slingbacks have beautiful T-strap embellishments and bows. **BELLA BELLE SHOES**, \$613, bellabellshoes.com



The sweet and sparkly mini dress is shaking up bridal wear as one of this year’s biggest trends. **RETROFÊTE DRESS**, \$687, netaporter.com



Exquisite in its simplicity, a diamond eternity band is a beloved wedding ring choice for a reason. **TIFFANY & CO. EMBRACE RING**, \$7,700, tiffany.ca



This juice from the cult olfactory brand includes jasmine, moss and synthetic musk. **LE LABO ANOTHER 13 EAU DE PARFUM**, \$340 (100 ML), lelabofragrances.ca



Organic shapes are all the rage. These simple yet impactful earrings bring extra twinkle to the party. **JENNIFER BEHR EARRINGS**, \$340, jenniferbehr.com



Sweet escape

Why is our love affair with cake culture heating up?
By Alison McGill



An array of scrumptious slices, clockwise from top left: Artful sugar flowers created by Toronto's Alexandria Murray; one of Jenna Rae Cakes' show-stoppers in Winnipeg; a toile de Jouy-inspired cake by Toronto bakery Nadia and Co.

Cake is having a moment. The classic favourite steamrolled over trendier desserts—cupcakes, donuts, cake pops—to emerge as the pandemic's ultimate sweet treat, an indulgence that combines nostalgia, beauty and flat-out great flavour. "People love anything pretty that they can eat," says Alexandria Murray, a cake artist, pastry chef and

butter (as it were) of the business, "everyday cakes" have exploded in popularity. "People don't have to be celebrating something specific to grab one," says Rae. "We launched smaller snack cakes last year expressly because of this trend. We offer minis in an ever-changing menu of classic flavours like vanilla bean and creative ones like cotton candy. People love being able

Social media and all the baking shows we binged during lockdown have stoked our collective sweet obsession.

owner of Toronto's Finespun Cakes & Pastries, who became a global social media sensation due to her otherworldly confections. Murray suggests that fancy cakes, with their "layers of buttery, sugary goodness" are luxury lite: decadent enough to delight, affordable enough to be accessible. "So many of life's little luxuries—like travel and entertaining—were taken away from us, but we still had cake to celebrate with." On Instagram and YouTube, Murray shows how to bring that celebratory spirit to bakers' home kitchens via tutorials on artful piping techniques and crafting delicate sugar roses and ranunculus. Social media and all the baking shows we binged during lockdown has stoked our collective sweet obsession, says Jenna Hutchinson, the co-owner and head decorator of Winnipeg's Jenna Rae Cakes (her drip cakes and cotton candy confections are legendary). In fact, it was an episode of *Cake Boss* that inspired Rae and her twin sister, Ashley Kosowan, to launch their business eight years ago. In a full-circle moment, the pair recently starred as judges on the HGTV show *Wall of Bakers*. Rae says that while special occasion cakes remain the bread and

to try a little of everything without committing to a huge cake." In 2020, Rae and Kosowan launched their bestselling cookbook, *Jenna Rae Cakes and Sweet Treats* so they could bring their signature flavour to home kitchens. "Our book includes all the instruction you need to bake and decorate our signature cakes," says Rae. "It's allowed us to connect with fans who aren't close enough to our stores to be a part of milestones and memories." Of course, no cake discussion would be complete without paying homage to the most iconic confection of all: the wedding cake. Murray reports that in 2022 and beyond, couples are moving away from a general sweet table and back toward the tradition of having a show-stopping standalone cake. Trend-wise, Murray says that stacked, round tiers are the configuration of choice, with beautiful finishing details such as sugar flowers. Murray sees this as a yearning for timelessness over trends. "I look at cakes the same way I look at fashion and architecture. "There are some things that are always beautiful and won't feel dated five, 10 or 50 years from now. This is where we're at in wedding cakes. I'm a huge fan."



Sweet inspiration courtesy of Winnipeg's Jenna Rae Cakes. \$35, INDIGO.CA



BEST DRESSED GUEST

Consider your summer wedding wardrobe sorted



GARDEN PARTY
HILARY MACMILLAN
DRESS, \$395,
HILARYMACMILLAN.COM



SUNDAY LUNCHEON
COS DRESS, \$150,
COSSTORES.COM



FORMAL AFFAIR
JENNY PACKHAM
DRESS, \$5,988,
FARFETCH.COM



DESTINATION NUPTIALS
TED BAKER JUMPSUIT,
\$420, TEDBAKER.COM

THE KIT X PHILIPS

HOW TO GET THE PERFECT WEDDING DAY SMILE



PHILIPS SONICARE CORDLESS POWER FLOSSER 3000, \$99.99, PHILIPS.CA

Your smile—it's the must-have wedding accessory for every bride, groom and guest

Wedding season has arrived, and now is the time we all start thinking about those little things needed to prep for the big day. If you're getting married, that means treating yourself to all of the special details to feel your best from fresh highlights to mani-pedis and spa treatments. If you're a guest, it means shopping for some chic new looks for all your wedding RSVPs. And, as we know, you're never fully dressed without a smile, so a bright and healthy one is the ultimate way to accessorize your look.

Putting your best smile forward has never been easier thanks to Philips Sonicare. With their latest innovative oral care tools you can always get it right, whether it's your wedding day, your bestie's bridal shower, or every other day.

Your Wedding Day Prep Routine

The #1 rule to get your smile photo ready is flossing, of course. This is crucial to ensure that your pearly whites are ready for those close-up shots of you and your partner. Flossing is a pain, we get it. But with the new Philips Sonicare Cordless Power Flosser, you have an easy and more effective way to floss. It's a game changer for plaque removal, helping make your smile look brighter by removing up to 99.9 per cent of plaque with its innovative Quad Stream technology. The unique X-shaped nozzle creates four streams, covering more area and requiring less technique than manual floss, allowing you to reach every nook and cranny with ease for a fast and effective clean. The best part? Its cordless design makes it the perfect fit for your on-the-go toiletry bag.



PHILIPS SONICARE 9900 PRESTIGE \$499.99, PHILIPS.CA

Of course, your routine wouldn't be complete without the perfect toothbrush, and we're not talking about your average brush. Powered by AI, the Philips Sonicare 9900 Prestige works with the redesigned Philips Sonicare app to provide real-time feedback and personalized recos to help you build a better oral health regime, and with its Premium A3 All-In-One brush head, you are getting Philips's best ever plaque removal, whitening and gum care benefits in one, erasing almost 100% of staining in just two days of use.

With these tools in your daily routine, your smile will shine through for every photo. Never scramble to brighten your smile the week before the big day or think about skipping the red wine again!

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THE KIT

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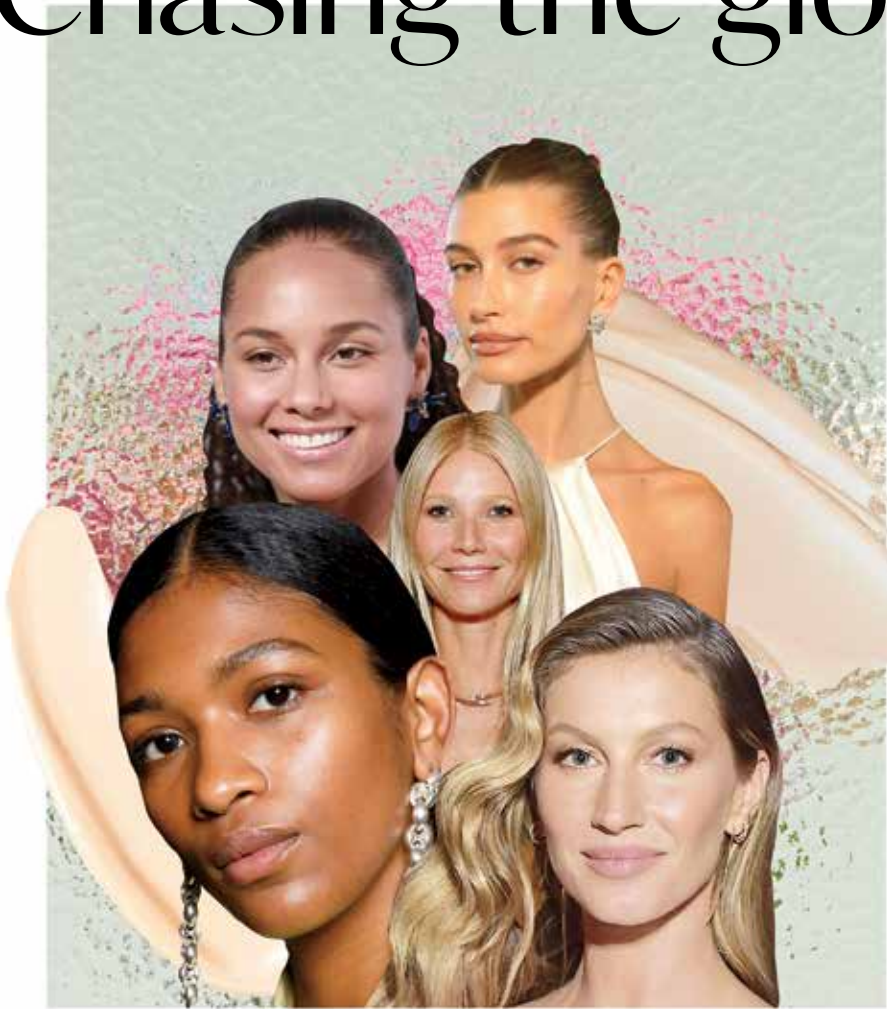
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Chasing the glow



Welcome to the new age of enlightenment, where a cheekbone can’t ever glare enough. Katherine Lalancette shines a light on how radiance became a veritable status symbol

In 2001, Revlon ran a commercial unlike any other it had aired before. For the first time in more than a decade, there was no bouncy-haired Cindy Crawford to be found, no bubbly delivery of lines to the camera. Instead, the model was relatively unknown and sat on the ground in a vaguely yogic pose, rumpled locks loosely gathered in a pony. “Capture the light,” a voiceover cooed.

The ad was for a new range called Skinlights, a revolution in the drugstore space at the time. Sheer, shimmering fluids formulated to enhance, not cover. *The Wall Street Journal* called it “a tricky product to market because it is unlike traditional makeup in the effect it creates. It requires getting women to use makeup differently.”

It’s almost hard now to imagine a time when brighter didn’t mean better and highlighters were items solely sold at Staples—not Sephora. “Everything back then was powder: powdered foundation, powdered blush, powdered shadow,” recalls Carmindy Bowyer. “It was all about that total dusted, matte look.”

If you watched TV in the early 2000s, you might remember Bowyer as the makeup artist on TLC’s popular makeover show *What Not to Wear*. After getting their wardrobes overhauled, participants would sit in her chair to learn the secrets to her “five-minute face,” the key step involving topping cheekbones with something reflective, often shimmery shadow in the early seasons.

The war on shine was slowly ending. “You started to see a break from the matte,” says Bowyer, “and glowy, healthier skin became more of a trend.”

In the treatment room, Ole Henriksen had always sought to make skin more luminous. His long-time client, actor Laura Dern, referred to it as the “Ole glow,” a term she coined upon observing her post-facial gleam. But sometime in the early 2000s, the Danish facialist noticed the look gaining traction outside the spa, too.

“There was a shift,” he says. “Fashion moved in the direction of a woman who is sophisticated-looking, but you can also tell she’s sporty and relaxed in her own skin. Women could feel free and more expressive, and they wanted their skin to reflect that.”

We may not realize it, but our aesthetic pursuits often serve as cultural mirrors that way, says makeup historian Sara Long. It goes all the way back to the Ancient Egyptians, who rubbed red ochre on their cheeks. “Mostly, it’s had to do with acquiring a mate.” That’s why, for millennia, in many parts of the world, a rosy flush has been deemed desirable, symbolizing health and fertility—attributes of significance when selecting a partner.

But the glowing skin trend of the early aughts seemed to go beyond some primal impulse to procreate. Sure, it connoted health and vitality, but this was a different brand of health.

“If you think about the ’90s, it was all about that heroin chic,” says makeup artist Rose-Marie Swift. Models with ashen faces and dark circles who seemed to subsist on a diet of Marlboros and Moët. “But then, celebrities started getting very in tune with their bodies and working out more. That vivaciousness was really in style, and so everybody started listening to celebrities talk about their green juicing, their fasting, their salads and their organic meal delivery service.”

Enter the dawn of wellness. Suddenly, it wasn’t so cool anymore to stay up all night partying or wear yesterday’s smudged liner. People wanted to look rested and thriving. They wanted to glow.

Swift bottled up the zeitgeist with a little something she called Living Luminizer, a pearlescent balm infused with organic coconut oil that’s since reached cult status. She likes to joke that it was “tested on angels,” as during development, she’d sample prototypes on models, including the be-winged stars at Victoria’s Secret.

“The girls all went crazy for it,” says Swift. It made their skin look kind of wet and, well, angelic, but not made-up. When she used it on the fresh-faced models in the J.Crew catalog, subscribers called customer service asking, “What’s that glow?”

Our quest for illumination only grew from there. In the 2010s, it was all about “glass skin,” an ideal made popular by K-beauty imports like essences and cushion compacts. We’ve since yearned to look like dewy dumplings, dolphins and glazed donuts—phrases respectively popularized by makeup artists Nam Vo and Mary Phillips, and model Hailey Bieber. In a 2021 report, Pinterest noted searches for “how to get naturally glowing skin” had quadrupled year over year.

But like, what even is glowing skin? The concept feels nearly metaphysical. You can’t pinpoint it the way you can a wrinkle or pimple. It’s not even something you really learn about when training to become a dermatologist, says Dr. Renita Ahluwalia.

“The phrase ‘glowing skin’ is not a medical term. But what people usually mean by it is that they want skin that looks hydrated and refreshed. They want skin that’s free of brown spots and red spots, they want skin that’s free of blemishes or thinning.” In other words, they want perfect skin.

In a 2020 survey on the trillion-dollar wellness industry, consulting firm McKinsey broke down what the concept meant to consumers. Most respondents defined it as improved health, sleep and nutrition, attention to mindfulness and, interestingly, a “better appearance.”

The researchers related the latter to “wellness-oriented” apparel—a.k.a. athleisure—as well as skincare, supplements and nonsurgical aesthetic procedures. Because, you know, what says “I meditate and oil pull” better than Lululemon leggings and a smooth, sparkling visage?

“It sends a very powerful message that someone has their life together,” says Long, likening it to the “That girl” phenomenon on TikTok. Videos bearing the hashtag show women rising at dawn to journal, exercise, eat chia pudding and slap on a sheet mask. “It’s a subliminal message of luxury, in a sense. It says you carve out the time to take care of yourself, but not everyone can do that.”

In the Middle Ages and Renaissance, a powdered face signalled privilege. It meant you didn’t have to break a sweat to make a living. Now, in the age of bio-hacking and Barry’s Bootcamp, where health is wealth and self-care is status, a dewy epidermis is proof positive that one is on a constant quest to “live their best life.”

Call it radiance turned righteousness. “Lit from within” as the marketing copy goes. But the issue with that is whenever a pimple or wrinkle rears its head, we feel like we’re somehow failing.

“I always feel really bad when patients come in and are like, ‘I’m doing everything right and I still have this skin problem,’” says Ahluwalia. “Because sometimes, even if you do everything right, there are things that are out of your control.”

Facts: Pimples happen and humans have pores. As the skin acceptance hashtag goes #normalizeskintexture. But there are ways to boost radiance without obsessing over every square millimetre of our face. “I’m 70 and I love my expression lines because I feel like that’s a normal journey of life,” says Henriksen. “A lived-in face, but a healthy-looking face.”

It really comes down to skin’s ability to bounce back light, something in-office procedures like peels and lasers can help with, says Ahluwalia, as can a regimen incorporating proper hydration, sunscreen, chemical exfoliation and retinol. (Just don’t overdo it with the last two or you’ll risk disrupting your skin barrier.) She and Henriksen also tout the brightening powers of topical vitamin C. And, you know, a little highlighter on the cheekbones never hurt anyone.

“It’s just nice to see that things have moved away from mattification, because mattification is dull, and who wants to be dull?” asks Henriksen. “Why not glow through life?”

FACE FIRST

In our Shop Smart series, our team sets out to find the very best of everything. This time around, executive editor Rani Sheen searches for the retinol serum that does it all: plumping, smoothing and clearing skin without making it red and flaky. And the winners are...



Top marks: RoC
These little capsules work hard for the money. They’re biodegradable and keep each dose fresh, containing enough product for the whole face, neck and upper chest. I add moisturizer overtop and wake up with zero irritation and a kind of calm, clear glow. Things only get smoother over time. I’ve started counting the capsules left to make sure I don’t run out.
ROC RETINOL CORREXION CAPSULES, \$44, SHOPPERSDRUGMART.CA

Fancy treat: Dr. Lara Devgan
Brought to you by the highly regarded Manhattan plastic surgeon Dr. Lara Devgan, this serum is as luxe as it gets. After using it at night, my skin looked great the next day and even better the next. Redness was minimized, a freshness continued to compound, and it also helped a couple breakouts heal fast. I swear a dark spot has lightened as well. There is sticker shock, to be sure, but I’m in love.
DR. LARA DEVGAN RETINOL + BAKUCHIOL SERUM 2.5%, \$420, SSENSE.COM

Real steal: Neutrogena
With 0.5 per cent pure retinol, this drugstore hero doesn’t skimp on its star ingredient. A clear serum that absorbs easily and leaves a slight sheen, it contains emollients like tocopheryl acetate (vitamin E) and bisabolol (a component of soothing chamomile), which is perhaps why it caused no irritation; in fact it left my skin looking brighter and calmer after each use.
NEUTROGENA RAPID WRINKLE REPAIR SERUM, \$40, WALMART.CA

Zit zapper: Dr. Dennis Gross
If bumps and breakouts are your bugbear along with lines and wrinkles, this one-stop smoothing serum is a hard-working option. It contains a laundry list of coveted ingredients: anti-inflammatory bakuchiol, exfoliators like mandelic, salicylic and lactic acids, and a host of antioxidants. There’s also hydrating squalane and hyaluronic acid to prevent flaking.
DR. DENNIS GROSS TEXTURE RENEWAL SERUM, \$95, SEPHORA.CA

Dream team: Dermalogica
You really do want to use a good buffering moisturizer when you’re using retinol, and Dermalogica thoughtfully includes one with its Overnight Retinol Repair. The formula has a potent 0.5 per cent retinol (microencapsulated, for enhanced penetration), but I experienced no irritation, only a gradually increasing brightness and bounciness in my face.
DERMALOGICA OVERNIGHT RETINOL REPAIR, \$126, SEPHORA.CA

TORONTO-BASED
FASHION AND BEAUTY
CREATOR CHER BAI
(@CHERMYCLOSET)

What empowers you to feel confident every day?

"If I have a good hair and skin day, I feel like I can take on the world. It provides an instant confidence boost. I definitely have some down times, too. But I learned not to be so hard on myself and treat myself here and there. If you feel good, you feel confident."



Which Genesis product was your favourite and why?

"I love the Genesis Anti-Breakage Fortifying Serum. It has made a huge difference in my hair growth, as well as reduced breakage. It smells amazing, too! It's now part of my everyday hair care routine. It's hands-down my favourite product from the Genesis line. I love how the texture isn't sticky, and it gets absorbed into my hair really fast."



What did you like most about the range?

"I love the signature Genesis scent. It always leaves my hair smelling extra good—like I just walked out of a hair salon. I love that it hydrates and protects my hair from breakage."



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