

THE KIT

Stylish Getaway Spotlight: Nostalgic glamour in L.A. or cutting-edge Vegas wellness? PAGE 2



Lean on me

BY KATHERINE LALANCETTE | PHOTOGRAPHY BY CARLYLE ROUTH | STYLING BY JACKIE McKEOWN

This Valentine's Day, we're celebrating two loves: the beauty of sisterhood and the jolt of excitement sparked by a new fashion season. In this issue, five groups of siblings reflect on their special bond while trying on spring's most joyful trends: bold colour blocking, dreamy pastels, the surprising versatility of zebra print.

Our spring style report continues with a deep dive into the return of minimalism (remember Carolyn Bessette-Kennedy's wedding dress? That's the look!), a report on the fascinating history of the polka dot (from Victorian England to *Pretty Woman*) and your guide to the coolest haircut of the season.

It's a season of boldness, adventure and warmth. Dare we say that fashion is fun again?



From left: Margot Robbie as Sharon Tate in *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*; L.A.'s iconic palms; the West Hollywood Edition's rooftop pool.

Golden city

An L.A. mini-break tinted with nostalgia sees Rani Sheen gazing upon the city's splendours



In a memorable scene from *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*, Sharon Tate, played by Margot Robbie, bounces sunnily down the street in a buoyant mini-skirt, circa 1969. She stops at the classic Fox Bruin Theatre, only to see her latest movie's poster out front—delighted by it, she cadges her way in to watch her own film for free. Bouncing sunnily around is pretty much all Robbie as Tate—who we know is headed to her doom at the hands of Charles Manson's unhinged hippie disciples—is tasked with doing in this film, which is up for an embarrassment of nominations at this weekend's Academy Awards. Robbie barely speaks; she just projects bubbling energy and looks fantastic, all swifty hair and tawny limbs. Quentin Tarantino's camera delights in lingering on her, causing us to remember her fondly even as she's alive and well in front of us.

In this respect, she's a little like L.A. itself. The storied city has a sepia-tinted glow burnished by a century of star-machinery, and in some ways, that's all we need it to be: a pretty vehicle for our own nostalgia, for a time we imagine to be more appealing than our current reality. Perhaps that's why a cast of recent pop culture phenoms have dedicated themselves to illuminating our fantasies about Los Angeles of the recent past.

Spotlighting the period a few years before Tarantino's "love letter to L.A.," *Echo in the Canyon* takes us into the joss-scented hillsides of Laurel Canyon in the mid-1960s, when "folk went electric." The documentary is hosted by Jakob Dylan, son of canyon-king Bob, who brings to life the stories of the Mamas and the Papas, the Beach Boys and the Byrds, painting them as culture disruptors who left their doors open and wafted in and out of one another's houses making music, love and history.

Taking us into the next chapter of L.A.'s pop culture history—the rock 'n' roll '70s—is one of the most book-clubbed releases of last year, *Daisy Jones and the Six*. It's an oral-history-style tale of a poor little talented rich girl who grows up in the hills above Sunset Boulevard and wanders down into its clubs, then careens toward superstardom and its drug-addled pitfalls. It's the ultimate swimsuit read, and I read it on the pool deck of the new West Hollywood Edition hotel, a stylish place to indulge your L.A. nostalgia without resorting to the dustier and tackier properties that abound. Perched by the rooftop infinity pool, surrounded by a living wall and an actual tree, I sip a kombucha

"wellness cocktail" and look over the sprawling, smoggy city all the way to the ocean. But if I turn north, I can gaze somewhat voyeuristically across to the houses dotting the hillside above the famous Sunset Strip—I choose one low-slung Spanish-style mansion and assign it as (the fictional) Daisy Jones's glamorous but lonely childhood home.

The Edition is the work of hotelier Ian Schragger, who is a New York City nightlife icon (ever heard of Studio 54?) but has deep roots in Los Angeles. As a college student in the late '60s and early '70s, he watched the strip transform from Rat Pack haunt (the hotel is built on the site of Frank Sinatra's former office) to counterculture epicentre, as the folks from the canyon gathered to play at Whisky A Go Go and the Roxy, then gave way to the proponents of the breezy "California sound." "The streets were filled with music, and people from all over the country were pouring into California to be a part of it," said Schragger ahead of the hotel's splashy opening party in November. He aimed to channel the rebellious, music-filled area of yore—there's a club, Sunset, tucked in the basement—but bring a new level of luxury to the now somewhat faded and gritty strip.

The hotel's blonde travertine-clad lobby with its Sterling Ruby ceiling installation is hidden, celebrity-mansion style, from the busy street by a thicket of indigenous foliage. In fact, vegetation is everywhere—the vegetable-forward restaurant, Ardor, is a veritable rainforest of potted plants. The rooms are

spare yet soft in tones of cream and sand, with freestanding Le Labo-stocked tubs. The subterranean spa is plush and cocooning, with curtained-off private lounging areas. Its menu hits all the right wellness notes for right now: sound bath meditation, Gua Sha treatments. During the Sticks and Stones massage, bamboo sticks are rolled across my knots and I'm slathered with CBD oil (a modern essential that '60s L.A. surely would have loved).

Fed, massaged and rested, I pull on my swingiest sundress and step out into the golden sunshine. I walk bouncily down Sunset Boulevard, searching for a movie cinema with my name on it.

Accommodation for Rani Sheen was provided by Edition Hotels. Edition Hotels did not review or approve this copy.

Pack and play



A canyon-hued seersucker one-piece perfect for unwinding in steam rooms and saunas.

HUNGA Z SWIMSUIT, \$220, NET-A-PORTER.COM



This travel diffuser will keep the spa vibes going in your hotel room, humidifying the desert air with essential oils.

AURIA TRAVEL ULTRASONIC DIFFUSER IN GOLD, \$60, INDIGO.CA



Whether you're folded in downward dog or simply sitting in a jacuzzi, a chic scrunchie is a must to keep hair out of the way.

LOEFFLER RANDALL SCRUNCHIE, \$59, SHOPBOP.COM



Make the Ayurvedic act of anointing oneself from head to toe a daily ritual with a sumptuous oil.

SAHAJAN RITUAL BODY OIL, \$55, THEBAY.COM



Peace and lazing in Las Vegas

Katherine Lalancette discovers the softer side of Sin City

You wouldn't think it but the sight of a half-size Eiffel Tower soaring across a replica of the Trevi fountain is strangely comforting. I've just landed in Las Vegas and already feel so removed from reality that I can't help but let go.

It's no wonder visitors are compelled to indulge their wildest whims here. How can there be any real repercussions when everything feels like make-believe? But aside from the partying, (when in pretend Rome!), I'm finding the escapist setting might also be suited to—brace yourself—relaxing. I've come to explore the city's emerging wellness scene—all the excess, no hangover.

I set my bag down at the Japanese-inspired Nobu hotel, the first hospitality outpost from the swanky restaurant empire. From there, it's a short walk to Silent Savasana, a yoga studio aboard the High Roller observation wheel, 550 feet in the air. I flow through sun salutations as a pink dusk falls over the Mojave desert.

The next two days are devoted to spa-ing. First up is Nobu Go, a virtual reality facial at Caesars Palace's Qua Baths & Spa. Goggles are placed over my eyes, displaying 3-D images of pristine beaches, followed by a brightening sequence of peel, mask and massage. I drift off the treatment bed and saunter to the baths, stopping by the "robe sauna" to keep mine toasty while I soak.

Next comes a body treatment at the Bellagio. Fittingly, the hotel famous for its dancing fountain makes water a pivotal part of its most singular service. AquaStretch is essentially an incredibly soothing sports massage in a private pool. The therapist stretches

my limbs as I float on my back. My ears fill with water, plunging me into a soundproof cocoon—I feel like I'm back in the womb.

The following day, I try the Red Flower Hammam Experience at the Cosmopolitan's Sahara Spa, which is modelled on one of the world's oldest cleansing rituals. I lie on a heated slab of marble while water is poured over my body to mimic the splashing of waves. My skin is scrubbed smooth then covered in a cloud of fragrant bubbles before I'm slicked head-to-toe in cardamom amber oil. In the lounge, I sip chai tea and will my pores to hold onto this voluptuous scent forever.

The final item on the agenda leaves me the most blissed out. During the Samadhi Enlightenment Massage—part sound bath, part massage—I take in the calming vibrations of the Himalayan singing bowls and witness every last shred of stress in my body cede to the powers of Ayurvedic touch. A little Chakra-balancing with stones and crystals is incorporated for good measure.

On my last morning, I nibble on a bagel with lox at Sadellet's, a pastel café seemingly plucked out of Paris but situated inside the Bellagio. I find myself hoping that what has happened in Vegas won't stay in Vegas, but will stick around long after I've left the land of make-believe.

Travel and accommodation for Katherine Lalancette were provided by the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority. The LVCVA did not review or approve this copy.

PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY IMAGES (VEGAS AND PALM TREES); SONY PICTURES (ROBBIE)

If you only buy one

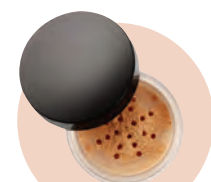
Beauty director Katherine Lalancette searches for the setting powder that leaves all others in the dust

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANIEL HARRISON

Once upon a time in Egypt, when pallor was a sign of privilege and a tan was associated with those who toiled in the hot North African sun, Cleopatra would dust her face with a pale powder made of crocodile dung. In a similar pursuit, the wealthy women of Ancient Rome, in flowing togas and lace-up sandals, turned to toxic white lead. Prized for their chalky coverage, lead-laden cosmetics stuck around for centuries, damaging users' skin and sometimes even poisoning them to death. Then came the European aristocrats who doused their wigs and faces in various flours (and again, lead), later followed by the flappers of the '20s who slipped gilded compacts from beaded clutches, powdering their nose after an upbeat Charleston.

For all its history, you'd think face powder would have been perfected by now. But while reptile droppings and deadly substances are thankfully things of the past, many formulas still yield a "sprinkled in icing sugar" finish. Cue the photos of badly blended silica bouncing back a camera flash under Nicole Kidman's baby-blues or on the side of Angelina Jolie's jaw. This was the work of professionals, you tell yourself. What chance do mere mortals stand?

In a quest for the perfect formula, the one that sets and mattifies while proving undetectable in any light, I dusted myself in every iteration imaginable. Translucent ones, tinted ones, even "banana" ones—I tried them all, noting staying power, finish and flash-friendliness. Here's what I found.



IF YOU'RE TACKLING UNDER-EYES

It's designed for one thing and one thing only—setting under-eye concealer—and boy does it do it well. Dark circles are brightened, fine lines are blurred and concealer stays put without ever creasing.

LAURA MERCIER SECRET BRIGHTENING POWDER FOR UNDER EYES, \$37, SEPHORA.CA



IF YOU LOVE A STEAL

Drugstore price, high-end performance. Six silky shades deliver covert oil absorption with a finish that's matte but never flat. Instead, skin looks and feels fresh and remains that way until you say so.

NYX COSMETICS CAN'T STOP WON'T STOP SETTING POWDER, \$12, NYXCOSMETICS.CA



IF YOU MEAN BUSINESS

Call it the type-A powder. An overachieving formula that sops up oil and guarantees 16 hours of transfer-resistant, smudge-free wear. No more getting foundation or body makeup on your clothes (or couch).

DERMABLEND LOOSE SETTING POWDER, \$36, DERMABLEND.CA



IF YOU HATE POWDER

The lightest one of the bunch, this talc-free powder feels weightless but successfully nixes shine and minimizes pores. Will it survive a wild night out? Probably not. But it's great for a natural, everyday look.

GLOSSIER WDWARD, \$27, GLOSSIER.COM



IF YOU ONLY BUY ONE SETTING POWDER, GO FOR...

You know how real-deal bakers always sift their flour? Well, this little jar is actually topped with a sifter, so its finely milled fairy dust (available in nine shades) is always airy. Rather than caking on top of makeup, it becomes one with it, making skin appear flawless yet full of life.

M.A.C STUDIO FIX SETTING POWDER, \$35, MACCOSMETICS.CA

THE KIT X NARS



Kiss on the lips

Your guide to the perfect lip colour for any Valentine's Day celebration



Night out dancing

Command the dance floor with a bold brick-toned lip that just won't quit. This satin-finish, full-coverage lipstick slicks on in one stroke and won't bleed or feather, leaving you to concentrate on your moves.

AUDACIOUS LIPSTICK IN MONA, \$43



Candlelit dinner

Wow the Valentine's crowd at your favourite fancy restaurant (and your date, of course) with a striking blue-red lip. This liquid lipstick feels weightless and will stay put through desert, smooches and beyond.

POWERMATTE LIP PIGMENT IN STARWOMAN, \$34



Boozy brunch

Daytime cocktails and croissants calls for a polished but laidback look. Go for a matte, dusty rose lip, courtesy of this long-lasting, non-drying, super-creamy chubby pencil.

VELVET MATTE LIP PENCIL IN DOLCE VITA, \$35



First date

Blind a new suitor with your sparkling personality—and your lipgloss. This rusty chestnut shade is warm and flattering, and the finish is dazzlingly shiny yet comfortable and nourishing.

LIP GLOSS IN ARAGON, \$32



Cozy night in

An intimate home-cooked meal suits a naturally gorgeous look. Swipe on this moisturizing balm with Monoi Hydrating Complex and a hint of peachy-golden tint for your most kissable lips ever.

AFTERGLOW LIP BALM IN ORGASM, \$37

This content was created by The Kit; Nars funded and approved it.

Lean on me

Five groups of stylish siblings—decked out in spring's loveliest trends—open up about the joy of sisterhood



NUNI AND NASTEHA

They're known as The Yusufs, a blogging duo with killer style and a bespoke jewellery line. But there's a lot more to Nasteha and Nuni's story than meets an Instagram scroll. The sisters were born in Somalia, the youngest girls in a family of eight children. In 1990, as the threat of war intensified, their father, who worked in government, left for Canada, while their mother stayed behind with the kids, thinking they'd be safe. "At first, [the rebels] were targeting government people, but then one day, we woke up and had to run. There were riots and people getting shot in front of us," recalls Nasteha.

Their mother managed to find people who could help. "She gave them everything she had and begged, 'Please, get us out of here,'" says Nasteha. The family hopped onto trucks and eventually made it to a refugee camp in Kenya, where they all shared a small tent. "I remember there being fires sometimes and we'd have to start again from scratch," says Nuni. It took two years, but they finally made contact with their father, who had presumed they were dead. He was later able to have them brought over to Canada.

"People always comment on how happy we are, and it's because we know what going through hardships is like," says Nasteha. Nuni agrees: "We're happy to be alive every single day." That zest for life is reflected in their effervescent shared wardrobe. "I used to always steal her clothes. Now we invest in pieces together," says Nuni. They do everything as a team, really, even raising their kids. "They're always together because we're always together!"

TREND // CROCHET Thanks to fashion's ongoing love affair with all things '70s, crochet is making a big comeback. But make no mistake, the look is so much more than macramé cover-ups. On the runways at Celine and Altuzarra, the trend was paired with real-world pieces like blazers and denim for the ultimate high-low mix. Follow suit.

ON NUNI (LEFT): SELF PORTRAIT DRESS, \$548, VSPCONSIGNMENT.COM; KAFTAN (VINTAGE), \$148, VSPCONSIGNMENT.COM; ON NASTEHA: NOUVEAU RICHE PRIVATE COLLECTION VINTAGE JACKET, PRICE UPON REQUEST



RIYA AND POONAM

"I grew up mainly as an only child and then at 11 years old, my parents sat me down and told me I'd be getting a little brother or sister," remembers Poonam. She admits feeling upset at first, not wanting to share the attention, but that changed when she met baby Riya. "The age gap is so big that I kind of took care of her when she was younger. I'm like a parent and a sister mixed into one," Poonam says. "She's a great big sister," Riya replies with a sweet smile. "If I need help with something, she gives me the best feedback. Like at school, if I have anxiety issues, she tells me to take deep breaths and remember that everything's going to be okay."

Riya looks up to her sister a lot. In grade three, she even dressed up as her for career day and announced she wanted to pursue a job in fashion, which Poonam was then studying at Ryerson. Now that Poonam works as an assistant art director at *The Kit*, what does Riya want to be when she grows up? "A graphic designer!" exclaims the eighth-grader. "She loves coming into the office and seeing what I do," says Poonam. But the admiration is clearly mutual. "I love how kind and caring she is with everyone around her," says the proud big sister. "She's just a good person to her core."

TREND // COLOUR BLOCKING The only rule to this season's brightest, boldest trend is that there are no rules. Designers like Brandon Maxwell and Simon Porte Jacquemus were all about the colour clash: creamsicle orange and fuchsia, peach with crimson. The key to nailing this rainbow bright look lies not just in the colour mix but in the layering: Mismatching pieces—athletic with sleek, dressy with off-duty—will maximize the impact.

ON RIYA (LEFT): DRIES VAN NOTEN POLO, \$328, VSPCONSIGNMENT.COM; JACQUEMUS OVERSHIRT, \$710, NORDSTROM.COM; VERSACE JEANS, \$198, VSPCONSIGNMENT.COM; SHOES AND SOCKS, STYLIST'S OWN; ON POONAM: DION LEE TRENCH, \$1,298, VSPCONSIGNMENT.COM; ORANGE TOP, STYLIST'S OWN; AKRIS CARDIGAN, \$178, VSPCONSIGNMENT.COM; RAG AND BONE PANTS, \$248, VSPCONSIGNMENT.COM; NIKE OFF WHITE SHOES, STYLISTS OWN

JOANNA, HANNAH AND REBEKAH

The Lees aren't just sisters, they're also business partners. In 2018, the three fashion enthusiasts and their mother launched at Toronto Seoul, a line of sustainable, vegan handbags and accessories handmade in Korea. "*Ai* means children in Korean," explains Joanna, the youngest sister. "We were all in a stage in our life where we wanted to do something together," says Hannah. "Rebekah and I had had our kids and Joanna had just graduated."

Hannah and Rebekah were 16 and 13 respectively when their younger sister was born. "It was so fun for us because it was like we were raising her, like we were playing dolls," says Rebekah. "She was always our baby. But working together is just amazing because of how grown-up she is. Sometimes we forget she's only 22!"

The trio is obviously tight-knit, which meant that when Rebekah recently moved to Korea to oversee production, adjusting to life apart wasn't easy. "It's bittersweet," says Hannah. "We needed someone there because we were going back and forth so often, but it was really hard. She's been in town for a few days now, and it's so amazing to have her back."

But despite the distance, the sisters always turn to each other for an honest opinion, even FaceTiming in changing rooms when debating a purchase. "We're very straightforward with each other, like 'You need a haircut' or 'What are you wearing?'" says Rebekah with a giggle. "But we know we mean well. Your friends aren't going to tell you. That's what sisters are for."

TREND // PASTEL There's something undeniably soothing about a toned-down, cool palette for spring. Muted, sorbet hues like pistachio and peach are best paired with equally sweet silhouettes—don't shy away from puff sleeves, ruffles and playful, voluminous shapes. This season, there's power in softness.

FROM TOP: ON JOANNA: NAYA REA DRESS, \$560, 100PERCENTSILKSHOP.COM; ON HANNAH: SIMONE ROCHA TOP, \$530, NORDSTROM.COM; AI TORONTO SEOUL HAIR CLIP, \$40 (SET OF 2), AI.TORONTOSEOUL.CA; ON REBEKAH: CÉCILE BAHNSON DRESS, \$1,495, NORDSTROM.COM; NOUVEAU RICHE PRIVATE COLLECTION COLLAR, PRICE UPON REQUEST



TAMARA AND JENNIFER

The first time Tamara Podemski was up for a big film, she brought her older sister along for the meeting. "Jen ended up getting cast as the lead," Tamara says with a laugh. "To be fair, that role was made for her." *Dance Me Outside* (1994) proved impactful in many ways, shining light on life on a First Nations reserve and giving the sisters their first taste of show business. (Tamara played a supporting part and youngest sister Sarah, who is currently shooting Syfy series *Resident Alien* in Vancouver, was an extra.)

They've been acting ever since, a passion that began in childhood when they'd write and perform plays for their friends and family. "Our intimate bond grew out of a pretty traumatic childhood home," says Tamara. "We really relied on each other to create safety."

Though they've sometimes gone after the same roles, the Podemskis are each other's biggest supporters. In fact, it's Jennifer who brings up Tamara's upcoming HBO series, *Run*, executive produced by *Fleabag* sensation Phoebe Waller-Bridge. "I have a lot to live up to," she says, turning to her younger sister. But it's another project Tamara seems most excited about. She's set to star in *Unsettled*, a dramatic series co-written and directed by none other than Jennifer. "Doing a table-read for Jen's show and looking around and seeing 16 Indigenous artists was incredible," she says. "I know change happens slowly, but it's happening."

TREND // BOLD FLORALS This spring, florals find a new mood. Oversized and set on a dark background, these blooms border on subversive. Embrace the maximalist feel and double up on the print—wallflowers need not apply.

ON TAMARA (LEFT): DRIES VAN NOTEN SHIRT, \$690, PANTS, \$820, NORDSTROM.COM; ROBERTA ANDERSON EARRINGS, TAMARA'S OWN; ON JENNIFER: ETRO JACKET, \$2,390, NORDSTROM.COM; LESLEY HAMPTON DRESS, \$410, LESLEYHAMPTON.COM; SAVAGE ROSE EARRINGS, JENNIFER'S OWN

GABRIELLE AND KERRI

"The earliest memories I have are of Kerri as a baby," says Gabrielle MacLellan, of her younger sister. "We're the only two girls in the family and we're both Virgos so we have a quiet closeness."

It comes as no surprise then that when Kerri left Nova Scotia for Toronto after graduating, it was only a matter of months before Gabrielle joined her with her husband. Kerri got a job as a nanny for Horses Atelier designers Heidi Sopinka and Claudia Dey, eventually helping out with the line. "I think I was their first employee," she says. Gabrielle soon followed suit and now serves as the brand's manager.

Along with their fondness for fashion, the sisters also share a deep love of music. Kerri is a keyboardist while Gabrielle plays the violin. They grew up in a large musical family—with 58 first cousins—and even lived next door to fiddler John Morris Rankin, who composed "Gabrielle's Jig" for the elder MacLellan girl. Incidentally, Kerri now plays in the celebrated indie pop band Always with Rankin's daughter Molly.

The self-described "Nova Scotia girls at heart" might be hundreds of kilometres away from the Maritime traditions of their youth, but it seems it's together that they feel most at home. "We've always lived pretty close to one another," notes Gabrielle. "It's really nice to have each other here; it makes a world of difference."

TREND // ZEBRA PRINT For spring, designers eschewed the typical leopard spots in favour of high-contrast zebra stripes. At Dries Van Noten, the pattern artfully clashed with polka dots and wallpaper florals, while at Sally Lapointe, models wore subdued, almost iridescent stripes from head-to-toe. For a sophisticated, modern take on the look, pair the classic black and white stripes with soft neutrals and opt for smaller-scale patterns for a look that's a little more abstract and uncontrived.

ON GABRIELLE (LEFT): HORSES ATELIER JACKET, \$395, SKIRT, \$345, BLOUSE, \$395, HORSESATELIER.COM; GUCCI SHOES, \$1,220, NORDSTROM.COM; ON KERRI: ATM SHIRT, \$189, SAKS.COM; HORSES ATELIER OVERALLS, \$395, HORSESATELIER.COM; DOC MARTENS SHOES, KERRI'S OWN



MAKEUP BY SUSANA HONG FOR PIM.CA USING LAURA MERCIER. HAIR BY KRISTEN KLONZ FOR PIM.CA USING JOICO AND DESIGN ME. MAKEUP ASSISTANT, ANNA GRACE

Kate Moss embodies the original minimalism at Calvin Klein Spring 1999.



JONATHAN SIRKHAÏ



TIBI



VICTORIA BECKHAM

ALEXANDER WANG



SIES MARJAN

The Spring 2020 take on the trend: clean, pared back, a little sporty.

Less is more, again

The return of '90s minimalism means a welcome streamlining of our wardrobes—and our lives. **Leanne Delap** explains

The dawn of 2020 sure feels like 1995. Somber, monochromatic palettes of black, white or grey; long, draped lines of fabric skimming the body; a crisp and clean layered silhouette that suggests volume. The overall effect is anonymous and androgynous. Like an icy sorbet, '90s-style minimalism is back for spring to reset our palates. A quarter of a century later, plain is in again.

The urge for minimalism in every aspect of our lives has been ramping up: In the past few years, we have purged our homes (and lives) of dead weight, finding joy in "less is more." After years of overconsumption, we have been steadily moving toward an ideal of buying fewer, better things—investment pieces that last.

Since Alessandro Michele was named creative director at Gucci in 2015, the predominant mood in fashion has been his maximalist fever dream. His vision for Gucci permeated the industry and pop culture, as he smashed exuberant styles and eras up against each other—Victoriana and Baroque with disco and logomania, wallpaper floral dresses piled on with gilded fanny packs. The Gucci look is a riot of colour and cleverly mismatched pattern, texture and embellishment. It is a lot.

Minimalism, by contrast, is the subtle exploration of structure and form, a paring down to reveal the excellent bones underneath the construction of a simple garment. It is about showcasing the dressmaker's arts: how fabric drapes on the body, how satin shimmers when cut on the bias.

Minimalism as a movement was coined by a group of painters in the 1960s—Donald Judd, John McCracken, Agnes Martin—who embraced what they called "the simple expression of complex thought." The concept spread to other disciplines, including fashion. It took root in Japan, and groundbreaking designers Rei Kawakubo for Commes des Garçons and Yohji Yamamoto left Tokyo for Paris in the 1980s, bringing their experimentation with form, baggy silhouettes, a preference for the colour black and non-traditional materials (PVC, Lycra, polyester) with them. By the 1990s, they were revered and had influenced a new generation of avant-garde designers, including European minimalists Jil Sander, Helmut Lang, Ann Demeulemeester and Martin Margiela. Simultaneously, over in New York, Calvin Klein, previously best

After years of overconsumption, we have been steadily moving towards an ideal of buying fewer, better things

known for jeans and underwear, was fomenting a revolution of sleekness in American sportswear.

In the '90s, the minimalist look became synonymous with three famous women. Kate Moss emerged as the ultimate waif who bridged minimalism and grunge. Gwyneth Paltrow's ironed hair and penchant for simple clothing on the street and on the red carpet made minimalism relatable. (Her 1998 film *Sliding Doors* couldn't be a more relevant mood board for the style of today.) The third evangelist of minimalism was Carolyn Bessette Kennedy, America's princess bride of John Jr., who had worked as a publicist for Klein at his height and who came to embody the effortless look. Her 1996 slip-dress wedding gown by Narciso Rodriguez belongs in a museum of minimalism.

This spirit was alive on the runways for Spring 2020. At Givenchy, Clare Waight Keller proposed oversized single-button black suiting updated with Bermuda shorts and masculine black slides, or a mid-calf black leather skirt paired with a streamlined pale violet bra. Proenza Schouler brought the volume with baggy dove grey suiting and pleated trousers. At The Row, where committed minimalists Ashley and Mary-Kate Olsen are also pop culture magpies, there were layered white knits over tanks, evoking pre-Millennial Calvin Klein, and oversized lapel-less black suiting.

Tom Ford presented a white suit with a mock turtleneck that throws back to '90s Helmut Lang. There were some great, updated takes on the slip dress, perhaps the single-most identifiable '90s item, at Sies Marjan and Jason Wu, and takes on the era's tube dresses at Bottega Veneta. Alexander Wang and Off-White chimed in on minimalism with an athletic twist; Off-White's version featured this spring's ubiquitous random cutouts to (tastefully) show some flesh. Even Michele introduced black into the Gucci palette this season, a first for him.

So how is this resurgence of simplicity different from its heyday 25 years ago? I started on the fashion beat as the 1995 shows played out across the runways of Europe and New York. Minimalism felt like a sharp punch to the gut: It made the excesses of the '80s seem downright gaudy. This was the future, something wholly new, sleek and impossibly chic. I was so green, in

experience, and with envy. This was before fast fashion: To get the look, you had to invest in the real pieces.

Not everyone was as enthralled as I was. The late *New York Times* fashion critic Amy Spindler wrote that "Minimalism is as noncommittal as fashion gets without leaving a body naked." Nonetheless, minimalism struck around for the better part of a decade.

The minimalist mood feels less like a revolution today, and more a hitting of the reset button after a period of sartorial overdose. That's because trends were more all-encompassing in the '90s, says Nicholas Mellamphy, owner of Toronto personal couture shopping service Cabine. "Fashion is more democratic now," he says. "[The fashion] bibles no longer tell us how we are supposed to dress. Trends are outdated, as the world becomes more aware of options."

A dedicated maximalist himself, Mellamphy nonetheless sees why there is a strong impulse for streamlining right now. Back in the day, he says, "fashion was a direct reaction to the state of the world. You can see why the end of the Reagan era brought crispness to design." He argues the instinct for minimalism now is more an internal reaction. "When you are overwhelmed, you need a blank slate."

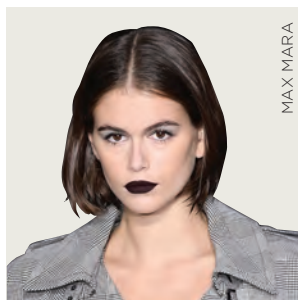
So will this spin back in time stick? For some—including me—minimalism never left the building. It is a style that doesn't go out of style. It's made up of pieces that are so nondescript, and generally so well-made, that they are endlessly re-wearable. Minimalism does not translate well to fast fashion. Sure, you can buy a plain suit from Zara, but when simple things are not constructed well they do not drape well. So "real" designer minimalist pieces retain their cachet, whatever the era. Luckily, we are living in the greatest resale era of all time, and a vintage 1998 Helmut Lang can still be yours, for a price.

Poring over the runway photos that embody this style has been soothing, like looking out over a calm meadow. Minimalism is the place where fashion goes to rest its eyes for a while. It will always be with us, but we should take pleasure in it—and invest—now, while so many designers are on this wavelength.

Chopped

The models have spoken: The '90s bob is the cut of the season

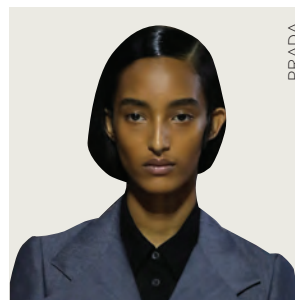
It was Kaia Gerber—who, ironically, wasn't alive in the '90s—who launched the throwback trend. Her cut (far left) read like a declaration of independence, setting her apart from her glamazon mother, Cindy Crawford, and draping her in a new aura of cool. Crisp, clean, uncomplicated, it was the hair worn by the heroines of the '90s: Winona Ryder, Christy Turlington, Nick Carter. Backstage at Givenchy, the man behind Gerber's transformation (well, Guido Palau held the scissors, but it was all Kaia: "If you don't do it, I'm going around the corner," she told him) snipped a few more centimetres off models' hair. Then there was Bella Hadid, who took the plunge between shows and emerged with freshly shorn locks at Burberry. Tempted to join the fun? Ask for blunt ends and practise your best model stare. —*Katherine Lalancette*



MAX MARA



GIVENCHY

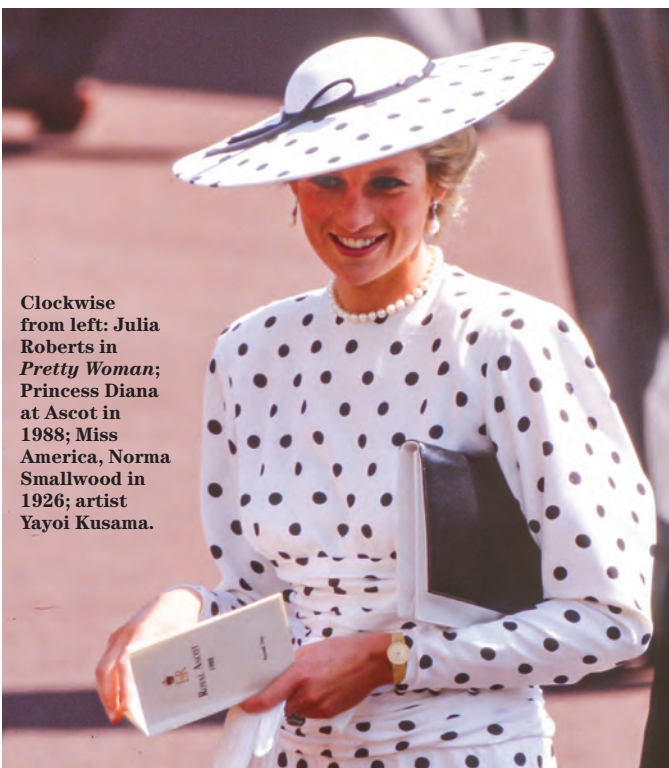


PRADA



SAINT LAURENT

PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY IMAGES



Clockwise from left: Julia Roberts in *Pretty Woman*; Princess Diana at Ascot in 1988; Miss America, Norma Smallwood in 1926; artist Yayoi Kusama.



Full circle

Fashion history expert Anya Georgijevic reveals the backstory behind the latest trends. This month: decoding the ever-popular polka dot



"Harvard won't be impressed that you aced History of Polka Dots," admonished Elle Woods's college counsellor in *Legally Blonde*. We all know how that turned out. The history of fashion's most playful print is rich enough to prove that Ms. Woods has mad research skills.

The beloved pattern is everywhere this spring, but it wasn't always in style. Dots of any kind were considered a bad omen in Medieval Europe, seen as a sign of a deadly plague, leprosy or smallpox. They were only used for adornment on the beauty end. In 16th- and 17th-century France, it became fashionable to stick small circles of black taffeta or velvet on one's face, to either hide blemishes or draw attention to one's preferred features. This practice was called patching or *moucheron* (French for "little fly").

It wasn't until the mid-19th century, when the aforementioned diseases were mostly eradicated, that the pattern began to emerge in clothing. Fabrics were described as dotted swiss (still used for material embellished with tiny dots), *quinconce* (a French word for the staggered layout of dots on the 5-side of a dice) and *thaleruffen* (a German term describing patterns of large *thaler* coins, up to 12 centimetres in diameter). One of the pattern's trailblazers was Beau Brummell, an English dandy who started a trend for dotted scarves among London's high society. But the term "polka dot" wasn't coined by Brummell. That was started by women's magazine *Godsey's Lady's Book* in 1857: "Scarf of muslin, for light summer wear, surrounded by a scalloped edge, embroidered in rows of round polka dots." So where did the name come from? Well, the mid-19th century saw the emergence of "polkomania," the

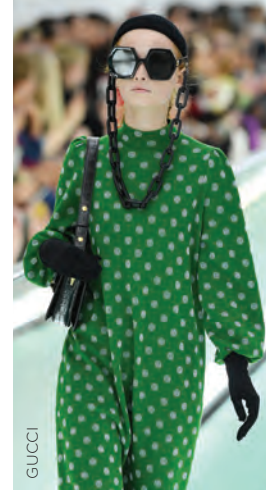
Bohemian folk music and dance craze, first in Paris and later in North America. Quick to cash in on the trend, marketers began to advertise seemingly random products with the polka theme, but it was the dotted fabric that stuck, adorning Victorian dresses in all their full-length glory.

The pattern had a glamorous reintroduction in 1926 when Miss America, Norma Smallwood, was photographed wearing a spotted swimsuit. Two years later, Disney introduced Minnie Mouse and her red polka-dot dress. The print continued to rule the 1930s, appearing on both day dresses and evening gowns. Then, in 1940, Frank Sinatra captured polka dots' romantic allure with his ballad "Polka Dots and Moonbeams." In the late 1940s, Christian Dior introduced his New Look, including dot-adorned, silhouette-defining dresses that became a symbol of post-war extravagance.

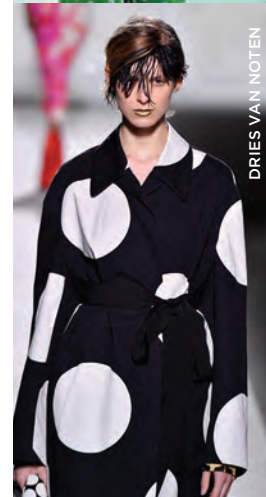
Once Dior was on board, everyone followed, and polka dots never fell out of fashion. They became a signature print for Comme des Garçons designer Rei Kawakubo and a lifelong obsession for fashion's favourite artist, Yayoi Kusama. Recent pop culture is littered with iconic polka-dot pop culture moments, from Princess Diana in her white and black dress with matching hat at Ascot, to Julia Roberts's demure brown and white frock in *Pretty Woman*, to Zoë Kravitz's mixed-dot Saint Laurent gown at last month's Golden Globes. This fashion season, polka dots dominated the collections once again: Dries Van Noten experimented with scale, Celine explored boho silhouettes and Gucci embraced polka dots' playful quality. It's a moment for Elle Woods's history books.



CELINE



GUCCI



DRIES VAN NOTEN

CONNECT THE DOTS

- STAUD TOP, \$350, MATCHESFASHION.COM
- MARA HOFFMAN SKIRT, \$427, NET-A-PORTER.COM
- H&M SWEATER, \$35, HM.COM
- COMME DES GARÇONS WALLET, \$485, SSENSE.COM
- MOTHER OF PEARL DRESS, \$854, MOTHEROFPEARL.CO.UK
- AQUAZZURA HEELS, \$474, MYTHERESA.COM

Your Spring 2020 accessory edit

The outfit-making trends you'll be wearing over and over again

BY RENEE TSE



GIVENCHY

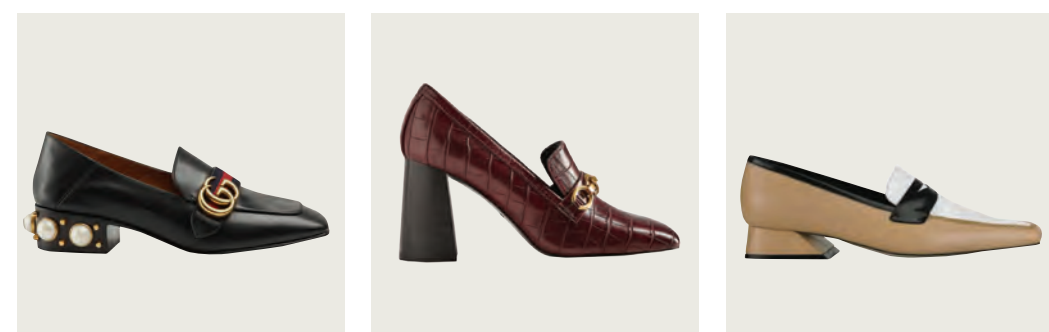


TINTED SUNGLASSES

Seen at: Givenchy, Anna Sui, Balmain
See the world through rose (and green and yellow) coloured glasses this spring with playful shades in a rainbow of hues.
MICHAEL KORS, \$135, MICHAELKORS.COM; PRADA, \$315, SSENSE.COM; GENTLE MONSTER, \$283, GENTLEMONSTER.COM.



LOUIS VUITTON



ELEVATED LOAFERS

Seen at: Louis Vuitton, Tory Burch, Loewe
It's the timeless style you love, but with some added flourishes. From pearl adorned, chunky heels to standout colour blocking, loafers are anything but boring this season.
GUCCI, \$1,430, GUCCI.COM; MANGO, \$120, MANGO.COM; YUUL YIE, \$490, THEBAY.COM



BOTTEGA VENETA



OVERSIZED SOFTIES

Seen at: Bottega Veneta, Hermès, Jacquemus
Move aside, mini bags. Come Spring 2020, super-sized carryalls will be taking back the spotlight. The key to nailing the trend is to opt for a bag with a slouchy, unstructured silhouette.
COACH, \$495, COACH.COM; BOTTEGA VENETA, \$6,860, BOTTEGAVENETA.COM; THE ROW, \$1,990, NET-A-PORTER.COM.

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Still radiant.”

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