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Summer of love

We've rounded up the most stylish warm-weather essentials—manis, sunnies, besties—so you can wring maximum joy out of the next six weeks
Plus: How to love your vagina **PAGE 6**

ALL PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY BY LUIS MORA

Jade Lee Hoy, creative space maker/set designer and
Dre Ngozi, DJ/artist/health practitioner

Two of us
Is there anything more pure than the love between friends? In this issue, we celebrate four sweet Toronto twosomes

JADE LEE HOY, 33, AND DRE NGOZI, 32; FRIENDS FOR SEVEN YEARS

ON BEING CREATIVE PARTNERS
Dre: “Jade is the visual one. She’ll come at you with the craziest ideas. I’m the practical one, but I always trust her vision—she finds a way to manifest her imagination. I’ve always admired where her brain can go.”
Jade: “Everything she does is intentional. I’ve learned from that because I’m very reactive, so it’s been helpful to have a friend that takes you to that deeper level. We create in very opposite ways, but

it works. We’re taking up similar space, but always adding to the equation.”
ON A TRIP THAT BROUGHT THEM CLOSER
Jade: “We went to India for a month in 2012 and were on a 37-hour sleeper train from Kerala to Rajasthan. We had a five-hour layover in this random train station at night, and it was freezing cold. We huddled up together in our scarves and I remember thinking that I couldn’t do this with any other human.”
Dre: “We were shaking and thought ‘We might die here, but it’s okay.’”
ON COSMIC CONNECTION
Dre: “We have an unspoken synergy—we can speak without speaking and go on energy and intuition. We were probably related in a past life.”
Jade: “In terms of knowing when we need space, we don’t have to talk through those things as much I do in other friendships. We always recognize that the other person has the potential to shift, and that’s really beautiful.” —**Jillian Vieira**

Giving up the ghost
Is it possible break up with a friend without also breaking her heart?

BY KATHRYN HUDSON

As I was riding the subway to work one morning, a folded piece of paper dropped into my lap from the canopy of standing commuters. I looked up and saw a ghost from my youth. The woman smiled at me before getting off, disappearing into the wake of passengers. Her features were leaner, more tan, but her blue eyes were instantly familiar. I don’t remember much about my childhood, but I remember crying face down on the couch the day my best friend, Melanie, and I had a friendship-ending fight. We hadn’t spoken in over 20 years and I still thought about her. I unfolded the note. “Is it you?” it read. I felt confused and alone. Why didn’t she stop? And why, after two decades had passed, was I upset? Friendships end for untold reasons: communication falls apart, the distance between you becomes too great. The cause of the split is often forgotten, but the pain is what we can’t shake. Studies have shown that social rejection is processed by the body in the same way as a physical injury. In fact, you can actually treat the pain with Tylenol. But our culture—built around watching tearful *Bachelor* confessional booths and decoding Taylor Swift diss lyrics—glorifies an explosive approach to ending relationships. We are taught to speak rather than listen. “I just need you to know how I feel” could be the motto of a generation; it likely would be if it made for a more tidy hashtag. But perhaps there is a kinder, subtler

approach to phasing out a friend: a gradual eclipse that can kindly spare us from the kind of face-down couch crying that leaves a scar. “Gently ghosting is like letting out a little bit of line, until the roll is all unspooled,” said Ottawa-based Amanda Biedel, 38, while remembering how she ended a decade-long friendship that had become suffocating. “My emails got shorter and the intervals got longer.” Her close friend had moved across the country only to find herself isolated and in the midst of a divorce. Biedel tried to support her through late-night calls and visits, but it was a draining time for both of them. “She needed someone closer. It’s like I was her temporary lifeline while she built up her in-person network,” she explains. Biedel started to slowly step back, calling and texting less. “I’m not a very confrontational person—I’ve never had those screaming TV drama relationships,” she says. “Besides, I don’t think it would have been possible to talk about it. Everything was always a slight against her. I was always afraid to say anything negative because I thought she might take it badly. I didn’t want to make her life harder.” Since ending her friendship, Biedel admits to “checking in” (a charming recast of run-of-the-mill creeping) on Facebook. As we talk, she logs on to read their last messages to each other. She pauses. “Huh. She unfriended me... Maybe she feels way more negatively about this than I thought.” Shelley Adams, 37, is aghast by the mere mention of ghosting. She never shies away from debate, or even argument, in the name of clarity. “Anytime you leave someone without a full picture of what went on, they don’t have the opportunity to grow,” she says firmly. “I don’t think that’s kinder.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



SUMMER HOT LIST HIKE LIKE A LOCAL IN VANCOUVER
“Hiking is my favourite thing to do in my city—it’s the best way to unplug. I prefer trails that are a little off-the-beaten path: overlooking Howe Sound and along the Sea-to-Sky Highway in Squamish. It’s difficult to pinpoint one hike in particular as my favourite because each one has something uniquely special, whether it’s a waterfall, a glacier lake or a picturesque view of the ocean.” —**Lindsay Clarke, multidisciplinary creative**



GET THE LOOK
The new ombré mani

Cotton-candy sunsets and melty ice cream come together in this playful gradient design dreamed up by Rita Remark, Essie's global lead educator. "For modern appeal, try switching up the colour combos on each nail and adding a hit of metallic at the base," suggests Remark. "Not every nail needs to be the same. Just do whatever makes you feel happy!"

POLISH PICKS: **ESSIE** GEL COUTURE POLISH IN AVANT-GARMENT, \$14, EMPOWER MINT LILACISM, TART DECO AND FRENCH AFFAIR, \$10 EACH, DRUGSTORES AND SALONS.

“Not every nail needs to be the same. Just do whatever makes you feel happy!”



SUMMER HOT LIST LOBSTER LIKE A LOCAL IN HALIFAX
“There’s nothing like the Shore Club for a true Maritimer experience. About a 40-minute drive from Halifax, this South Shore hidden gem has been serving up no-frills lobster suppers to the locals and the occasional celeb (I’ve spotted Mariah Carey’s photo at the entrance!) for more than 80 years. If you hit it up on a Saturday night, make sure you stick around after dinner to party with artists like Matt Mays and the Mellotones.”
—Emily MacCulloch, writer

LISA CORBO, 58, AND SOFIA CORBO, 25; MOTHER AND DAUGHTER, FRIENDS FOR 25 YEARS

ON THEIR RELATIONSHIP
Sofia: “Growing up, my friends had different relationships with their parents, but I never felt a hesitation about telling my mom anything. She always guided me in the best way she knew possible without telling me what to do—I think that’s rare from a parent.”
Lisa: “We became friends by default. I tried to not be the parent that would judge her; I tried to be a girl-friend that would guide her. That’s the way my mother was with me.”

ON THEIR FAVOURITE WAYS TO UNWIND
Sofia: “Travelling is a big part of our time together and we take time to do things together that aren’t necessarily work-related, like going to Colette in Paris before it closed. Or I took her to Glossier when they first opened.”
Lisa: “Oh, that was life changing! Or we’ll do little things like getting our nails done so we can actually just vent about life and nothing to about work or family.”

ON LEARNING FROM ONE ANOTHER
Lisa: “What I like about Sofia is that she’s not a follower. I’ve realized as we’ve gotten closer that she doesn’t try to be someone else, and I can’t say that about a lot of girls or even women my age.”
Sofia: “My mom confronts things head on, and I really admire that about her spirit. I’m not that ballsy, so to have someone around that pushes you to think that way is important to me.”
—Jillian Vieira



Lisa Corbo, co-owner of GeorgeC boutique and founder of Lisa Corbo Design, and Sofia Corbo, womenswear buyer for GeorgeC Toronto and senior operations coordinator of Lisa Corbo Design

WEEKEND READY
Going away or planning to stay? Two looks to beat the heat

Keeping cool at the cottage
Live out long dock days in a slip-on-slip-off skirt (the water is calling, after all). Accented with dainty extras, your look says “I’ll take an ice-cold rosé, SVP.”

FROM TOP: **MEJURI** NECKLACE, \$126, MEJURI.COM. **ZIMMERMAN** BIKINI TOP, \$380 (INCLUDES BOTTOMS), ZIMMERMANWEAR.COM. **TOPSHOP** SKIRT, \$50, TOPSHOP.COM. **ONIA** BEACH BLANKET, \$99, ONIA.COM. **MANSUR GAVRIEL** BAG, \$1,170, MANSURGAVRIEL.COM. **KENDALL + KYLIE** SHOES, \$158, SPORTINGLIFE.CA



Toughing it out in town
Embrace chic, lightweight cottons and a bralette-only policy. That, or park yourself in an air conditioned museum (for art’s sake, of course).

FROM TOP: **BONLOOK** SUNGLASSES, \$75, BONLOOK.COM. **COS** TOP, \$115, COS.COM. **FORTNIGHT** BRALETTE, \$78, FORTNIGHTLINGERIE.COM. **TORY SPORT** PANTS, \$180, TORYSPORT.COM. **TIBI** BAG, \$1,190, TIBI.COM. **MICHAEL MICHAEL KORS** SHOES, \$158, MICHAELKORS.CA





Jubilee Pridham, sommelier and Lorein Codiamat, bartender

JUBILEE PRIDHAM, 28, AND LOREIN CODIAMAT, 27; FRIENDS FOR FIVE YEARS

ON THEIR MUTUAL ADMIRATION
Jubilee: “Lorein is super confident, and I love that about her. In this day and age, it’s really easy not to be. She’s also such a good support system whether things are good or not so good.”

Lorein: “And that’s what I admire about Jubilee: even if she’s having a really bad day, she takes a moment and is appreciative of where her life is and what she’s blessed with. It’s something we lose track of, but she always finds some beauty in the worst times.”

ON RESPECT
Lorein: “Friendship is just as important as relationships with a parent or a partner. So you should go to a friendship the way you go to a partner: be incredibly supportive, patient and understanding.”

Jubilee: “It’s about being real. And doing your best for the other person and not trying to half-ass anything.”

ON THE IDEAL SUMMER DAY SPENT TOGETHER
Lorein: “We love going to Toronto Island and drinking so much sparkling wine.”

Jubilee: “Food and wine are for sure our top priority. Some sunlight, some wine and snacks and a breeze.”
—Jillian Vieira

SO SHADY

Summer is too short for neutral frames. Scoop up some sorbet-hued styles instead



WARBY PARKER, \$150, WARBYPARKER.COM. BOLON, \$140, CLEARLY.CA. IZIPIZI, \$60, IZIPIZI.COM. BAILEY NELSON, \$175, BAILEYNELSON.COM. SHADY LADY, \$55, NORDSTROM.COM



Orange is the new pink

A contemporary take on cocktail season

While we'll always have a soft spot for rosé, this summer, we're craving something different in our glass, and that something is orange. Think Italian bitters swirled with bubbles in the form a refreshing Aperol spritz, a.k.a. the new patio drink par excellence. If you're more classically inclined, you'll be pleased to know Aperol's older sibling, Campari, is also experiencing a resurgence, with Negroni bars popping up in many Canadian cities. Feeling a little bold? Let a funky orange wine (that's white wine matured with the grape skins on for more tannins and texture) bewilder your taste buds. Or perhaps you might be tempted by an ice-cold sour beer laced with juicy notes of citrus or stone fruit. For the brunch-goers, consider swapping the traditional mimosa for a Bellini, a cocktail comprising of prosecco and peach purée, which originated in Harry's Bar, a Venetian haunt frequented by Ernest Hemingway and Charlie Chaplin. Whatever your orange drink of choice, here's to toasting the sunshine all season long. —Katherine Lalancette

DRINK PICK: THE CLASSIC NEGRONI, EQUAL PARTS GIN, VERMOUTH ROSSO AND CAMPARI (PLUS ESSENTIAL ORANGE SLICE)



SUMMER HOT LIST VEGETATE LIKE A LOCAL IN TORONTO
“My favourite place in the city is Allan Gardens Conservatory on a weekday. The bike ride over there from the west end is so fun. I love tropical environments, and since we obviously don’t have that in Toronto, Allan Gardens is a little escape for me. I always do the full round, even though I’ve been multiple times, and then settle down with a book for an hour or two.”—Sandrine Somé, digital content producer

THE KIT X M•A•C



M•A•C ARTIST OF THE MONTH
Shengting Xiao
@shengtingx_makeup, M•A•C Artist at M•A•C Coquitlam in Vancouver, creates bold lip looks from classic to out of this world

One Love

Shengting loves how makeup can bring people together

What is your beauty philosophy?
“Makeup is an art form, and art for me is about expressing who you are and ideas you believe in. There is no right or wrong in makeup because we all have a different perspective on what we like. The beauty of makeup is it’s for everyone.”

What do you love about working with M•A•C? “I love how this job gives me the opportunity to know so many different people; there are so many talented artists working at M•A•C, and they inspire me as an artist and as a person. Same as all my customers—I feel so rewarded when someone tells me I made their day, because that’s when I know what I’m doing is sharing the love of makeup to inspire people. It’s amazing how M•A•C connects us all together through makeup.”

GLOSSY GLAMOUR

Inspiration: “The ‘90s nude lip.”
Get the look: Apply M•A•C Lip Pencil in Stripdown all over lips. Line lips with Lip Pencil in Chestnut. Apply Lipstick in Aloof in the centre of the lip and blend into the Chestnut liner. Add a touch of Cremesheen Glass in Boy Bait to the centre of the lip to add shine and volume.



TROPICAL PUNCH

Inspiration: “Vacation—the perfect time to try a pop of colour, take on a bright red.”
Get the Look: Line lips with M•A•C Pro Longwear Lip Pencil in High Energy. Apply Lipstick in Moxie all over the lip except the centre. Add Lipstick in Proud to Be Canadian to the centre of the lip and blend for an ombré effect.



CORAL STARBURST

Inspiration: “The K-Pop gradient with a soft metallic sheen.”
Get the Look: Gently pat M•A•C Oh, Sweetie Lipcolour in Banana Muffins all over the lip with fingers. Then tap in Oh, Sweetie Lipcolour in Creamy Peach Pie to the centre of the lip. Use Brush 228S to apply Liptensity Lipstick in Fireworks to the inner rim of the lip.



ACROSS THE UNIVERSE

Inspiration: “A star-filled galaxy in outer space.”
Get the Look: Use M•A•C Liptensity Lip Pencil in Stallion to line the lips. Fill in completely with Aaliyah Collection Lipstick in Street Thing. Mix together Glitter in Iridescent White and Lavender Hologram before patting onto the lip with fingers.



EXPERT TOOL KIT



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: M•A•C COSMETICS CREMESHEEN GLASS IN BOY BAIT, \$24, LIP PENCIL IN CHESTNUT, \$22, PREP + PRIME FIX +, \$30, STUDIO FIX FLUID IN NC25, \$35, EXTRA DIMENSION BLUSH IN SWEETS FOR MY SWEET, \$33, NEXT TO NOTHING PRESSED POWDER IN DARK PLUS, \$34. AVAILABLE AT ALL M•A•C LOCATIONS AND MACCOSMETICS.CA

LILY SNOWDEN-FINE, 20, AND ERYN LOUGHEED, 21; FRIENDS FOR 3 YEARS

ON THEIR CREATIVE COLLABORATIONS

Eryn: “We love vintage shopping and doing art. We’ve started doing collaborative drawings, which is fun.”
Lily: “We went to New York together and while we were on the plane, we started doing these drawings in Eryn’s sketchbook. Our styles are really different so we didn’t know how well it would work, but it did. We riff off each other.”

ON THE TRAVEL TEST

Lily: “We’d been to Montreal and the really long bus ride was a bonding moment, but on our trip to New York, we explored together the entire week. It was a break where we could do all the things we liked without having to work. It was a really nice moment to realize that we just get along so well, not just because we’re in the same school program. Not that I was doubting it, but it’s nice to do something like travel that could ruin a friendship and know that it didn’t.”

ON UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT

Lily: “I feel good around Eryn. She’s always a positive light. She understands where I’m coming from and who I am, so when I’m talking to her, I’m not thinking about my words.”

Eryn: “She makes me laugh harder than anyone else. I feel like any of my moods, I want her around. Any stage, any moment, any feeling, I’m good with Lily you being there.”

—Jillian Vieira



Lily Snowden-Fine and Eryn Lougheed, both students and illustrators



A book for every beach

Sweet summer reads to savour on Canada’s many stunning shores

The book: *VOX* by Christina Dalcher (August release; \$26)
The beach: Patricia Beach, Manitoba

The synopsis: This feminist read à la Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* calls for a quiet space of reflection like Patricia Beach. In Dalcher’s futuristic novel, the women have been denied the right to communicate and speak their truth—they’re limited to 100 words a day. The novel’s female protagonist, Dr. Jean McClellan, rises against these oppressive forces in a pursuit to reclaim her voice so that all women, including her daughter, may finally be heard.

The book: *Summer Cannibals* by Melanie Hobson (August release; \$14)
The beach: Sandbanks Beach, Ontario

The synopsis: There’s no better place than Sandbanks to kick back under a sun umbrella and indulge in this Canadian novel set on the shores of Lake Ontario. Don’t let the serene setting fool you, though—this summer read is full of secrecy, betrayal and vengeance. When three adult sisters George, Jax and Pippa are called to their family home, what is supposed to be a supportive family gathering for pregnant and ill Pippa quickly goes awry.

The book: *Tell Me Lies* by Carola Lovering (\$26)
The beach: Cox Bay, British Columbia

The synopsis: Like the sight of the moody pink sky over Cox Bay at sundown, this chillingly seductive read is sure to give you goosebumps. When protagonist Lucy Albright moves to California for college in search of a fresh start and falls for mysterious bad boy Stephen DeMarco, a twisted love story commences. Stephen’s vision of Lucy gives her something to grip onto—something no one else has seen in her—and she’s not willing to let go, but Stephen is keeping a dark secret and Lucy knows it. In this debut novel, Lovering explores the dangers of turning a blind eye under the guise of love.

The book: *The Kiss Quotient* by Helen Hoang (\$15)
The beach: Cedar Beach, Prince Edward Island

The synopsis: A charming setting like Cedar Beach constitutes the perfect backdrop for this equally charming read. Hoang combines the romance of Nicholas Sparks novels with the sexiness of *Fifty Shades* in this captivating story about a 30-year-old algorithmic genius with Asperger’s, Stella, who enlists the help of a handsome escort to teach her first-hand about all things sex. He checks off all of her boxes—from foreplay to missionary and beyond. But when Stella suddenly begins to fall for her sexy teacher outside of the bedroom, she learns the most important lesson of all: the beauty of falling freely and illogically in love.

The book: *When Life Gives You Lululemons* by Lauren Weisberger (\$27)
The beach: Parlee Beach, New Brunswick

The synopsis: Set in Connecticut, this is the perfect chick lit gem to cozy up to on Parlee Beach, where the clear waters and surrounding greenery give off a similar New England feel. Now an image consultant to the stars, Emily Charlton, former assistant to Runway editor Miranda Priestly, makes her grand return in this witty sequel to *The Devil Wears Prada*. While Emily doesn’t “do” the suburbs, a recent decline in celebrity clientele takes her there, where she attempts to redeem her career by restoring the image of a former super-model arrested for a DUI. You’re in for a good time.

Giving up the ghost

CONTINUED FROM COVER

While staging a painful conversation could be cast as be noble—even loving—how often is that goal actually met? Ten years ago, Adams felt her former roommate pulling away. “She tried to ghost me, and I pushed for an explanation about what was going on,” she explains. “She said we just didn’t have anything in common anymore. Being broken up with felt like a really hard judgment from someone who I had known for a long time.” When I ask if going through the awkward motions of that conversation helped—because even respectful breakups are about as fun to sit through as a double showing of *Transformers*—she shakes her head. “I felt unheard in that circumstance, as I think most people do in confrontation. Mid-conversation she blocked me on Facebook and I just felt like, ‘Are you kidding me?’ I taught you how to drive a car.”

Shared history can create bonds that feel stronger than steel. But as we get older, the ties that held together childhood friendships rust away. We no longer sit next to each other in social sciences. We don’t live on the same street. We don’t have long, empty evenings to fill with longer phone chats. Instead, we are left with echoing questions few of us want to answer: Do we have anything in common anymore? Do I have the energy to fight for this? So while the pain of a breakup may stem partly from the loss of the relationship itself, it’s also rooted in the more

the door remains open. One day, you tell yourself, you can pick up the phone and pretend the split never happened. One day, you will see her on the subway and drop a note in her lap and she will remember only the laughs.

But daydreams often hold false promise. A few weeks before Laura Mueller’s destination wedding, her friend of almost 20 years emailed to tell her she could no longer attend. She was too broke, she said. The excuse felt thin when Mueller, 35, instead saw pictures of her vacationing friend popping up all over her social media feed. Her heartbreak quickly bubbled into bitterness. “I didn’t want to be her friend until she apologized.... But then I lost my chance.”

Years later, Mueller received an email from the friend who was at a treatment facility for anorexia, as well as drug and alcohol addiction. “I need to apologize for the way I’ve treated you,” read the note. “I hope you can forgive me.” Mueller’s stomach dropped. “We talked all the time back then, but I didn’t realize there was anything more going on than what every 25-year-old is going through,” explains Mueller.

She responded to the email, but was met with silence.

Mueller later learned that her friend had died. “I wish I knew what happened to her,” she says, pausing to steady her voice. “A song came on the radio the other day that reminded me of her and I burst into tears. There were jokes between us that no one else will ever understand. It’s hard to distinguish between guilt and grief at this point.... I was so offended that she wasn’t supporting me, but I had blinders on to what she was going through.”

The last time Tamara saw her maid of honour was on her wedding day.

Regret has a way of seeping in as wounds close.

I should have stopped Melanie in the subway that day. I shouldn’t have stayed glued to my seat, pining over pride. I should have acted.

I still could. I could look her up on Facebook or track her down through other old friends. I am curious—but I fear answers I’m not ready to hear. I fear effort and failure. I fear closure.

The simple truth is that if we could master the insight and compassion required to break up without also breaking hearts, we would never have to in the first place. That’s the painful realization every woman I spoke to grapples with: her relationship failed because she wasn’t able to empathize with her friend.

We fail, time and time again, to rise up beyond our own paranoia and discomfort to address the small frictions that eventually rot relationships, turning soulmates into strangers. We are left haunted by the ghost of the simplest questions left unasked, the ones that could perhaps have saved the friendship: “Are you okay? Are we?”

BODY LANGUAGE

Pair the season’s dainty straps and abridged hemlines with soft, buttery skin from head to toe



Squeeze a little luxury into your daily routine with a decadent Mediterranean-inspired shower gel. **ACQUA DI PARMA** CHINOTI TO DI LIGURIA SHOWER GEL, \$39, HOLTRENFREW.COM



Aquatic notes of water lily and driftwood transform your bathwater into a beachy getaway. **THYMES** AQUA CORALLINE BATH SALTS, \$7, INDIGO.CA



No more waiting for your lotion to sink in so you can get dressed! This fun foam is light as air. **LOCCITANE** CITRUS VERBENA MOISTURIZING BODY FOAM, \$34, LOCCITANE.CA



A sea kelp and sambac-scented oil captures the magic of mermaids and leaves limbs glistening. **RODIN** OLIO LUSO MERMAID LUXURY BODY OIL, \$124, NORDSTROM.COM



Get a free sample of the Dove Exfoliating Body Polish here: topbox.ca/free-sample

Enriched with moisturizing cream, this polish nourishes as it buffs for supreme smoothness. **DOVE** EXFOLIATING BODY POLISH CRUSHED MACADAMIA & RICE MILK, \$6, DOVE.CA



Head to thekit.ca to find out how to recreate these nail looks

GET THE LOOK

The rainbow pedicure

A rainbow of pastel toes peeking out of your slides makes for the sweetest of pedis. “It’s light-hearted and perfect for summer,” says Remark. “As long as the colours coordinate, you’ll have a cohesive look.”

POLISH PICKS: **ESSIE** GEL CULTURE POLISH IN AVANT-GARMENT, \$17; TART DECOR FRENCH AFFAIR EMPOWER MINT AND BLANC, \$10 EACH, DRUGSTORES AND SALONS



SUMMER HOT LIST COCKTAIL LIKE A LOCAL IN MONTREAL

“Being of Trinidadian descent, I love to soak up all the good vibes, sunshine and flavours that can transport me all the way back to the islands without having to leave the city. Lloydie’s, a charming Caribbean-style restaurant, is one of my top spots to visit. I love their authentic West Indian food and colourful space. And when I want to bask in the rays, I hang out on their newly installed terrace saying ‘out, mere!’ to another tropical cocktail.”—Candice Pantin, photographer

MANICURES: RITA REMARK FOR ESSIE; MAKEUP: ASHLEY READINGS FOR PLUTING GROUP; ART DIRECTION: CELIA DI MINNO (WANTED) (AND BOOTS); BEAUTY DIRECTOR: KATHLEEN LACANCE (THE WINTER); ADRIANA MONACHINO (BOOTS)

GET THE LOOK

The modern moon mani

Sprinkle on the fun with a trifecta of nail trends: negative spaces, half-moons and alternating shade pairings. “It keeps things graphic and more interesting,” says Remark. A coordinating two-toned pout is the metaphorical cherry on top.

POLISH PICKS: **ESSIE** FRENCH AFFAIR AND CARPI, \$10 EACH, DRUGSTORES AND SALONS



Full frontal

Beautiful, intriguing, mysterious... The vagina often remains an enigma, even to those who have one. We journey down south to demystify its secrets and celebrate its wonders

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LUIS MORA



Asking for a friend

We asked women's health specialist Dr. Kymm Feldman some of the most Googled vagina questions. Here, the lowdown on the down below

Will aging affect my vagina?

"With menopause, once the regular estrogen that normally lubricates and supplies the vagina decreases, the vagina becomes much more dry and much less lubricated. You can get irritation of the vagina because of that. Sex can become more uncomfortable and it can be more difficult to achieve orgasm. There are lots of commercial lubricants that can help, but if it's bad enough, there

are topical hormones like creams that you can use to improve elasticity and lubrication. We tend to not use the oral hormone replacement as much anymore—particularly not for that. It would be a sort of local estrogen therapy."

What can women do to increase their natural lubrication?

"Hydration, for sure. So, the more water you drink, the wetter all of your bodily fluids will be—or, I shouldn't just say water, but fluid. Aside from things with caffeine because they actually cause you to pee, so they are less hydrating. In a sex situation, the more people are relaxed and their muscles are relaxed, the more likely they are to lubricate."

Can you tighten your vagina if it has stretched after childbirth?

"You can, non-cosmetically, by doing Kegel exercises. Kegel exercises work

on the pelvic floor to strengthen it. It's pretty much like the same muscles you use when you're peeing and you want to stop. It's actually harder to do than you would think, but you can practice that way to target which muscles it is exactly. Sometimes Pilates targets those muscles as well, and doing Kegel exercises can tighten those muscles and also help repair the abdominal muscles after a pregnancy—especially the inner abdominal muscles. If people really need extra help with it, there are vaginal physiotherapists that do internal work that can help you target those muscles if it's really a problem. Kegels are like

triceps so that I have definition and tone in my upper arms, I'm going to have to work for six months doing exercises regularly, and if I want to keep the tone once I get it, I have to keep it up. People do a few squeezes per day, or a few squeezes for a while and feel like "Okay, where's the tone in my vagina?" To do Kegels right is a lot more technique than you would imagine. It's not just pulling on those muscles, it's pulling on them sort of up and in and holding for a certain length of time."

Why does my vagina smell like fish?

"First of all there is a certain amount of bacteria in the vagina—healthy bacteria—and things like sweating in the genital area and having lots of curves and hard-to-wash areas where bacteria can get

trapped, that's one of the reasons there's sometimes an odour. People experience an odour sometimes also just from urine being wiped. It's really common for people to be like 'Hey! I think my vagina smells,' but if they look into it, it's actually closer to their bum that smells just from wiping or whatever. Discharge itself doesn't or shouldn't actually have a smell. Some people have more of a fishy odour and that can be due to an infection called bacterial vaginosis, which isn't a sexually transmitted infection necessarily but it's just sort of an overgrowth of the normal bacteria that's treatable by antibiotics. So, if there's really a strong, fishy smell that's persistent then that is worth seeing your doctor about. It's really just a hygiene thing and it's a tough-to-wash area. Generally speaking, right after we shower, most people don't have fishy-smelling vaginas."

Can what you eat affect the smell of your vagina?

"Yeah, sure. When we eat lots of curry, we sweat lots of curry. In that way, certain strong spices go throughout our bodies, go throughout our pores. To some extent, there may be an odour secreted in our fluids, but I'm not sure it's strong enough to be appreciable."

What is proper vagina care?

"No douching. Douching takes away that healthy bacteria and you need that healthy bacteria in order to prevent infections like yeast and bacterial vaginosis. As far as washing, soap is fine, but soap externally. You don't want to put anything up and in if you can help it. Washing externally should do the trick. Don't forget to get in the creases if you're really ambitious [laughs]."

Somewhere in the middle

Nearly a decade after undergoing vaginoplasty, Jillian Page says she still feels "in between" genders

God didn't know whether to make me a boy or a girl, so He left me in-between. That's what I figured as a child back in the black-and-white six-channel world of the 1950s. I didn't understand it. I lived a sheltered life in a strict Christian foster home, where the money earned for keeping me paid the mortgage. I didn't dare openly express the idea that I suspected I wasn't all boy, that maybe I should have been a girl. But I wasn't overly concerned about it, perhaps because I had some pretty big hurts to deal with: missing my real parents and the love they should have been giving me, and feeling that I was little more than a commodity in the foster care system.

Fast-forward to today, almost 10 years after starting hormone therapy and having vaginoplasty in my mid-50s, and while the spiritual explanation has evolved—I believe I'm essentially a spirit in the material world—I'm still somewhat "in-between" in terms of terrestrial gender. That's why I think the word "transitioning" doesn't really apply in my case. It was more about affirming a feminine nature I had first recognized as a child, and finally reclaiming my body and outward presentation accordingly. But before I could do that, I had to jump through a lot of hoops. I had to see a shrink and a sociologist and go through an official transition period that involved living the dream *en femme* 24/7 for a year to prove that it wasn't just a passing phase. Then I saw an endocrinologist and after that came the surgery. I never had any doubts or fears. My children were grown up and they were accepting. I only wish I could have done it sooner, but I grew up in a time when

people led really sheltered existences. We didn't know about such things; we just didn't have a clue.

I was so happy when I finally did it. I was just happy to get rid of "it." It was like "good riddance!" It hurt for a few days afterward, but it wasn't actually that painful. I went back to work eight weeks later. After the surgery, I was given a set of dilators I have to use once a week for the rest of my life, essentially. It keeps the vagina open because the body wants to heal itself, it wants to close that area. There's also a lot of risk associated with the surgery. You can have bleeding in there or cuts. Some people have adverse reactions or experience vaginal prolapse, which is when the vagina collapses. I

was lucky everything turned out so great.

My first relationship after the surgery was with a man, and it was nice to have intercourse with him and enjoy my vagina. I'm in a relationship with a woman now and it's not quite the same. After a while, it just becomes a normal part of your body, like it was always there. It's like if somebody gets their nose done or has a face lift, they're about affirming a feminine nature I had first recognized as a child, and finally reclaiming my body and outward presentation accordingly. But before I could do that, I had to jump through a lot of hoops. I had to see a shrink and a sociologist and go through an official transition period that involved living the dream *en femme* 24/7 for a year to prove that it wasn't just a passing phase. Then I saw an endocrinologist and after that came the surgery. I never had any doubts or fears. My children were grown up and they were accepting. I only wish I could have done it sooner, but I grew up in a time when

making themselves feel better because they're sprucing up their body, which is what I did. I spruced it up. But even though I'm recognized as a woman now and that's what it says on my newly issued birth certificate, I still am what I was inside. I'm officially a woman, but I obviously haven't had some of the typical female experiences that bond all girls and young women. *C'est la vie*. My experience has given me unique insights into two genders, but I still find myself walking a middle path alone sometimes.—As told to Katherine Lalancette

Oral agreement

In a post-DJ-Khaled world, Canadian journalist and feminist activist Liz Plank makes a case for mandatory cunnilingus

Explaining why women are entitled to oral sex is like explaining why water is wet—pun entirely intended. It might feel like a personal issue that should be discussed in private, but in light of recent events, I have been given no choice but to air this case in public. In a newly resurfaced *Breakfast Club* interview, DJ Khaled inadvertently reopened Pandora's box about, well, eating the box. During the exchange, he not only enthusiastically acknowledges, but also justifies never going down on his wife because he's "the king." A noteworthy moment is when Khaled fails to notice any glaring inconsistencies with the fact that he refuses to go tongue-fu diving but expects her to because there are "different standards for men." It got the entire internet debating one of the most burning questions of our time: Can a man refuse to go down on a woman and still be someone we all don't collectively shame into oblivion? Judging by the Twitter reactions to his comments, the answer is a pretty strong and resounding no. Yet, after I published an Instagram post about it, a flood of women revealed the frustrating slew of unimaginative justifications they had received from men who refused to go down on them, which ranged from complaining about the odious totally natural smell of a woman's vagina to being worried their female partner would enjoy it too much. Because I like to take things to the extreme, it led me to ask the obvious question: Should pleasuring a woman orally be optional for men?

CALL ME BY ANOTHER NAME

Going down on a woman is not just a great way to spend an afternoon, it's one of the most effective ways to make a woman climax. And given the so-called gender orgasm gap, that's a big deal. I say so-called because #NotAllWomen have

trouble achieving orgasm. Only one group of women do: the ones who sleep with men. Heterosexual women have by far the fewest orgasms than any other demographic. This is completely abnormal. Imagine if the situation was reversed. There would be angry men with lube-filled canons in the streets. The thing is, contrary to popular belief, getting a woman to reach orgasm is not that hard. One recent study that looked at 52,000 adults found that 80 per cent of straight women and 91 per cent of lesbian women can reach orgasm through a golden trio of genital stimulation, deep kissing and oral sex, this despite the one in three men involved in the study (falsely) believing that intercourse is the most effective path to orgasm for their female partner. Why do people still believe this crap?

LESS TALK ABOUT THE ORGASM GAP, MORE TALK ABOUT THE ORAL SEX GAP

A recent Canadian study on heterosexual couples found that women were twice as likely to give but not receive oral sex. And although men were more likely to receive rather than give, they reported liking going down on a woman twice as much as women reported liking going down on a man. So men enjoy giving oral sex more than women do, but they don't always volunteer to do it. The solution to levelling the orgasm playing field seems obvious: Men should be giving more than they receive. They don't require oral sex to achieve orgasms, while the vast majority of women do, and yet women are the ones doling out blow jobs like free Kind bars at a tech conference. This is why I'm not even calling for an end to the gender gap in oral sex, I'm calling for a full reversal of it. You heard me. The only way to guarantee the change we want to see in the world is for men to go down south more often than women do. DJ Khaled was right, or: there are different



standards for men and women. As Ian Kerner the author of the perfectly titled book *She Comes First: The Thinking Man's Guide to Pleasuring a Woman*, puts it "When it comes to pleasuring women and conversing in the language of love, cunnilingus should be every man's native tongue."

BETTER SEX FOR ALL

To be clear, just because getting oral sex doesn't mean orgasms have to be. One can have a rich and full sex life without necessarily achieving orgasm. I practically never did in my 20s, and I turned out just fine! I'm also not advocating for anyone to do anything they don't want to do in bed. In fact, that's the last thing I want. What I'm advocating for is a change in

UNDERNEATH IT ALL

Pretty little things (and period-practical panties) to fill your underwear drawer



AERIE, \$16, AE.COM. LORETTE, \$75, LORETTELINGERIE.COM. SOKOLOFF, \$26, SOKOLOFFLINGERIE.COM. FLEUR DU MAL, \$76, FLEURDUMAL.COM. KIKI DE MONTPARNASSE, \$150, NET-A-PORTER.COM

A return to form

Two new non-surgical procedures are like laser for your vagina. Isabella Day*, 62, tried them

About 10 years ago, my vagina started to feel like it belonged to someone else. Usually, walking around, living your life, you're not aware of your vagina at all, but I felt a heaviness, an awareness that might be similar to how a guy feels, like things weren't all tucked up neatly inside even though they were. I talked to my family doctor and gynecologist, who told me the sensation could be a symptom of menopause or possibly pelvic congestion syndrome, but they couldn't say for sure. I tried everything to get relief: hormone therapy, vaginal tablets, pelvic physiotherapy. Nothing worked. For a decade, I just suffered with it.

Then earlier this summer, I heard about two intriguing new vaginal procedures. The first, the Ultra Femme 360, bills itself as the shortest non-invasive laser treatment for vaginal tightening. The second, BTL Emsella, was created primarily as a solution for incontinence—it uses patented technology to deeply stimulate the pelvic floor muscles and restore neuromuscular control. The procedures are often performed in tandem and the promise is that you'll start feeling better almost immediately with final improvements expected within six to eight weeks. There is no surgery, no anaesthesia and

no downtime. Within 12 hours of hearing about the procedures, I called TMB Cosmetic Surgery (the clinic founded by well-respected Toronto cosmetic plastic surgeon Dr. Trevor Born), and signed up for a three-week program: three sessions of Ultra Femme 360 and six of Emsella.

Before my first appointment, I felt so hopeful. At the clinic, I met with nurse Yolanda Balatbat, who walked me through the process step-by-step. I started with Ultra Femme 360, which Balatbat described as being similar to laser treatments for the face. The device uses radiofrequency on the vagina and vulva to damage the collagen and elastic fibres—when they regrow, the vaginal wall is thicker, lubrication is improved and everything is tighter. I got undressed, lay down and Balatbat got to work. I would liken the experience to a pelvic ultrasound—it was uncomfortable at first, but there was no significant pain. I spent the 30-minute session responding to emails.

Then I got dressed and started the second phase: 30 minutes of sitting on the vibrating Emsella chair. When I first sat down, I felt like I was going to jump off—the focused electromagnetic technology is equivalent to doing 12,000 Kegels in 28 minutes! After a few minutes, though,

I was relaxing while reading a magazine. It was very civilized.

Right after my first session, I felt really good. It had worked! Over the next few weeks, my symptoms started to abate—when they did come back, it was less frequently and the sensation was duller. Now, with my treatments done, I'm happy to report that I feel much better—I'm not 100 per cent, but I definitely have relief. I'm also hopeful that as more time passes, the ongoing effects of the treatment will continue to lesson my symptoms. Most importantly, I feel more like myself. "Name has been changed."



THREE SESSIONS OF THE ULTRA FEMME 360 AND SIX SESSIONS OF BTL Emsella COSTS APPROXIMATELY \$6,000 AT TMB COSMETIC SURGERY IN TORONTO. TMBCOSMETICSURGERY.COM.



I feel pretty

These luxe goodies seek to take pubic grooming from tedious chore to indulgent pamper sesh. Five Kit staffers gave them a whirl

1. "For me, bikini waxes are the same as taxes and flip-flops—essential yet awful. My skin is so sensitive that I've become used to post-treatment inflammation. Enter this soothing formula stacked with salicylic acid and aloe vera. Post-wax, my skin is as smooth as George Clooney's repartee."—Laura deCarufel, editor-in-chief

SASS INTIMATE PERFECT SKIN CONCENTRATE, \$17, WEARESASS.COM

2. "After enduring painful Brazilians for years, I returned to good ol' shaving and never looked back, but my after-grooming ritual has long consisted of hoping for the best. Not anymore. Since trying this calming blend of oils, my spoiled

lady parts have never felt smoother."—Jennifer Berry, digital editor

LADY SUITE LADY BUSINESS OIL, \$60, LADYSUITEBEAUTY.COM

3. "A good part of my intimates product shame went out the window when I admired Fur Oil's minimalist packaging. But the melange of oils didn't just proudly sit on my vanity, it softened my hair and skin and kept pesky ingrowns at bay, just like a leave-in conditioner for my lady bits."—Jillian Vieira, fashion director

FUR FUR OIL, \$37, FURYOU.COM

4. "I don't usually use products designed for 'that area,' but this set has me converted. It includes a pre-shave oil and

after-care balm, but the standout is the heavenly scented, delectably frothy shaving cream. Even my husband asked if he could use it!"—Celia Di Minno, art director

DEO DOC START-KIT 3-STEP SHAVING, \$74, DEODOC.COM

5. "A down there luminizer seemed silly to me, but why? Are cheekbones somehow more worthy of radiance? Am I prejudiced against my own vagina? Existential musings aside, I smoothed on the lotion and marveled at its subtle (read barely detectable) glow. Things just looked silkier. I'm saving this for 'special occasions.'"—Katherine Lalancette, beauty director

THE PERFECT V SHADES OF V, \$56, THEPERFECTV.COM

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