

# THE KIT

*Shop Canada: Hot Toronto denim, cool  
homegrown bags, inside stylish Montreal*

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## What is the future of Canadian fashion?

Our super-candid round table with eight of the industry's  
most boundary-pushing leaders **PAGE 4**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LUIS MORA



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## GET THE LOOK

# GUILTY PLEASURE

A glimmering new NARS Orgasm collection has our hearts racing

When we first laid eyes on NARS Orgasm—the now-legendary peachy-pink powder, with its subtle golden shimmer and slightly naughty name—it was lust at first blush.

“I never anticipated its success,” says makeup artist extraordinaire François Nars of the original Orgasm, launched in 1999. “Looking back, I think the combination of the name and the shade made it so popular.

I actually first created the name, then the shade—I wanted something shocking.” Twenty years (and too many beauty awards to count) later, the universally flattering NARS Orgasm is complemented with an equally dazzling limited-edition, four-piece collection. Follow our step-by-step guide to get the look (or better yet, just apply as your heart desires).

### APRÈS-GLOW

For the ultimate in sheer, dewy radiance, place a drop or two of Orgasm Liquid Highlighter into your palm, then use your fingertips to apply it onto the apples of your cheeks, blending up and back into your temples. Not only does the peachy-pink shade look gorgeous on all skin tones, but the highlighter is also super versatile: stroke it onto naked skin for a woke-up-like-this luminosity, or use it over any blush you fancy.

NARS ORGASM LIQUID HIGHLIGHTER, \$38, NARS.CA

### FIRST BLOOM

What could be better than Orgasm blush? An XXL oversized version of the classic cheek colour. Or go one step further with a twosome (or threesome) of creamy shades from the Endless Orgasm Palette. For a sun-kissed effect, mix the classic peachy-pink Orgasm with bronze-y Orgasm Fever on the back of your hand, apply to the apples of your cheek with your fingertips, and blend upward to your cheekbones. Finish with a touch of Deep Orgasm for an extra-rosy flush.

NARS OVERSIZED ORGASM BLUSH, \$52, NARS.CA

### BEDROOM EYES

Go as sweet or sultry as you want with your look using the Endless Orgasm Palette. The six satin-cream pigments, designed for eyes, cheeks and lips, are made to play well together. Mix soft shades like Super Orgasm (iridescent pink with golden shimmer) and Orgasm (metallic rose gold) and apply onto your lids with your fingertips for a delicate wash. Or build the intensity with vivid hues like Deep Orgasm (metallic mauve), concentrating the boldest pigments in the crease, particularly near the outer corner, leaving the centre of the lid less dressed.

NARS ENDLESS ORGASM PALETTE, \$62, NARS.CA

### KISS AND TELL

For a kissable lip look, finish with the nourishing Orgasm Oil-Infused Lip Tint. Made with pomegranate extract and raspberry seed oil, the gloss keeps your lips hydrated and irresistibly soft. To build up the colour, lightly tap your favourite satin-cream shade from the Endless Orgasm Palette onto your lips, concentrating it on the middle of the lower lip—the poutiest part. Then, to amp up the intensity, press a little Orgasm Ecstasy (pearlescent champagne) onto the same spot.

NARS ORGASM OIL-INFUSED LIP TINT, \$34, NARS.CA





# Clear winner

Toronto's Aurora James has hit the big time with sustainable accessories

BY LIZ GUBER | PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARIAH HAMILTON



BROTHER VELLIES, \$1,340, BROTHERVERELLIES.COM

Aurora James is having a great year. The Toronto designer dressed Nicki Minaj in a custom pair of lace-up, Swarovski-covered sandals from her brand, Brother Vellies, for this month's Met Gala—and attended the star-studded fashion party herself, posing on the museum steps in woven stilettos decorated with springbok fur. And that's on top of taking home the International Designer of the Year award at the 2019 Canadian Arts and Fashion Awards.

James is now headquartered in New York, but she spends a lot of time in Africa, where her accessory line is made. James's brand is all about mindful manufacturing. One of her goals is to preserve artisanal jobs in Morocco, Kenya, Ethiopia and beyond. Brother Vellies's denim slides are made using jeans that have been diverted from landfills and the vegetable-dyed leather is largely a byproduct of the food industry. While sustainability makes up the core of James's brand, there has always been a push for truly eye-catching design, like the PVC and leather top-handle bag with furry clutch shown here. "My offering mirrors my customer," says James. "There is a core base to the brand DNA, and then there are fanciful sparks of fun along the way."

Past recipients of CAFAs International Designer award have included Erdem and Jason Wu. But this year's nod to a woman-led company that stands for style and substance feels especially exciting. "Canada is the country that gave life to me and shaped me as a humanitarian and artist, so being honoured in this way at home is really a dream come true," says James. "I couldn't be more proud." —Liz Guber

## Homegrown handbags

Tuck your essentials—whether that's lipstick or lunch—into a super-chic bag from a local label



Montreal-based Partoem was founded by Madeleine Beaulieu in 2017. Beaulieu's perennial inspiration? Origami, as evidenced by the bags' tucked and folded details. Bonus points for the vibrant colours. **PARTOEM**, \$500, PARTOEM.CA



Ai Toronto Seoul was founded by Hannah Kim, her mom and her two sisters. The family-run line uses entirely vegan leather for its bags, which are made in Seoul. **AI TORONTO SEOUL**, \$150, AITORNTOSEOUL.CA



Molly Spittal's The Stowe is known for stripped-down bags that swap frills for bold silhouettes and eye-catching hues. Each bag is designed by Spittal in her Montreal studio and made in Spain. **THE STOWE**, \$250, THESTOWE.COM



Azure Lazuli's sculptural, minimal bags resemble modern architecture—and that's no accident. Brand founder Ashley Phillips is a Toronto architect. Each bag is made by hand without the use of machinery. **AZURE LAZULI**, \$2,205, AZURELAZULI.COM



Stephanie Sonya Ibbitson has been crafting her edgy belt-bags and bucket totes since 2014. Each piece is made by hand in Vancouver using leather that has been meticulously selected by the designer. **SONYA LEE**, \$398, SONYALEE.CO



# UNWIND TIME

## BLOORYORKVILLE

From fashion, food, wellness to culture, it's always #BYTIME





**THE CHAMPION**  
Sylvia Mantella, philanthropist, chief marketing officer of the Mantella Corporation, dedicated supporter and client of Canadian designers. Wearing Mikhael Kate dress

AWARENESS AND ACCESS

How much awareness is there in Canada about Canadian designers? Do you think Canadians want to buy local fashion?

**Judith Maria Bradley:** “I’ve always wondered why people in this country don’t know the names of their designers.”

**Bojana Sentaler:** “I’ve definitely seen a change in the last couple of years. Ten years ago when I founded Sentaler, people didn’t even know Canada had fashion designers. Now we have some clients who won’t wear anything *but* Canadian. One particular client said she got rid of everything in her closet and she’s only replacing her wardrobe with Canadian designers. I think the change has to do with events like CAFA [Canadian Arts & Fashion Awards] and TV shows like *Stitched*. And when Sophie Grégoire Trudeau appeared in *Vogue* wearing Canadian, people were like, ‘Oh, Canada and fashion—those two words can be in one sentence.’ Meghan Markle has also made it a point to wear Canadian—she’s helped the world see that we have great fashion designers.”

**Sylvia Mantella:** “I think the awareness has grown, but the key now is access. How do you access Canadian brands? Everyone these days lives very busy lives—I’m always going a thousand miles an hour—so making access easy for people is essential.”



**THE CHANGE-MAKER**  
Océane Stanislas, buyer at department store Simons. Wearing Marie-Ève Lecavallier pour Simons suit

**Océane Stanislas:** “If I present options to a woman and say, ‘This is from Canada and this is the story behind the designer and where it’s made, and then over here, this is an international designer that you know very well,’ she’ll always go for the Canadian. Always. There is a pride in being aware now. We’re in the era of awareness, so if you can tell a story about what you’re wearing to your friends,

you’re ahead of the game.”  
**Dani Roche:** “Social media is a huge part of that. People want to be the first to know about a designer so they can share that knowledge with their friends. I think social also holds people accountable when it comes to the influencer space as well—tagging an independent Canadian designer versus tagging Zara speaks volumes without saying anything. It makes you look really cool that you’re discovering something other people don’t know about yet.”

**Océane Stanislas:** “Storytelling is key, but traditional storytelling, like marketing, is so expensive. How do you tell your story if something like a look-book costs you five or six figures every time you do it?”

**Bojana Sentaler:** “Designers that don’t have access to lots of financial resources are forced to find a way to be creative to stand out.”

**Sylvia Mantella:** “A very good friend of mine, [designer] Mikhael Kale went to Paris Fashion Week. He couldn’t afford a showroom, and he certainly couldn’t afford to [host] a runway show, so he brought his collection down in his luggage, rented an Airbnb [to show the clothes] and asked his boyfriend’s sister to be his fit model. He reached out to buyers and retailers, and while a few people came, he just couldn’t get enough of a buzz. So he got creative: He fitted seven or eight people in his clothes and right before the *Comme des Garçons* show, he lined all his people up in front of the venue. The collection was very unique, edgy and colourful, and the press went crazy. Every magazine picked it up, and he ended up going viral. The press want something fresh, too. *Vogue* is reaching out to smaller designers, trying to find that new talent, trying to be first.”

**Sage Paul:** “Social media is an important part of the discovery. It’s one of the reasons I’m able to be here. There’s an entire community of designers who are selling completely differently and producing completely differently than before. A jewellery designer, Tania Larsson, from the Northwest Territories was just featured in *British Vogue*. That’s the power of social media—you don’t need that bridge to the industry to connect you to audiences anymore. The audiences are right there.”

**Vicky Milner:** “Social has been a huge part of awareness for CAFA, too. One of the best parts of the event is when everyone comes dressed incredibly in Canadian and tags the brands—through that, you can see a diverse, dynamic collection of Canadian fashion. We’ve got crazy beautiful ball gowns, edgier pieces, great jewellery. It sends a message right out to the universe, and I love that. Once people discover brands, they fall in love with them.”

**Sarah Jay:** “Social media has so many positives: It’s democratizing our industry, and it may even be democratizing the world. But there’s another side to it—we need to resist the urge to consume a new outfit for the feed. Last year, Bronwyn Seier, who won the Simons Fashion Design Student award at CAFA, did her thesis on the impact of social media on fashion. She focused on the habit of posting an outfit, wearing it once and feeling the need to wear something different for another photo. Once we’re

photographed in the look, the look is over.”

**Océane Stanislas:** “That attitude is totally there and it totally contradicts the idea of sustainability. I think we need people to make a point by wearing the same clothes in different posts, even possibly calling out that they’re doing that. Like, ‘I’m wearing this again, I’ve had it in my closet for five years and I love it.’ I hope this is the new revolution.”



**THE PHENOM**  
Judith Maria Bradley, model, actress and social media star. Wearing Rock ‘N Karma suit

DIVERSITY AND SUSTAINABILITY  
How do you define the Canadian fashion identity? How is it evolving?

**Judith Maria Bradley:** “There’s a gentle, humble simplicity that comes out of our designers. It comes from a country that is young and polite. Some people think of it as insecurity, but I don’t.”

**Sarah Jay:** “I think our identity is our diversity—it’s our strength and it’s also becoming our aesthetic. I really think the whole world is represented in our country. Fashion is an inherently international art. Fashion connects you to all the other parts in the world, and we have to be proud of that.”

**Sylvia Mantella:** “We were actually just having this conversation at lunch and my question to the ladies was, ‘When you think of an identity for Paris, what comes to mind?’ Everyone has a very specific identity in mind. For Canada, I think diversity is our identity, too. I travel so much, and when I land back in Toronto, it’s always so great to be home.”

**Sage Paul:** “I think we’re lucky because we’re based in Toronto and we see diversity all the time. If you go to Saskatoon, you’re not going to see that diversity at all. I hope that’s changing, but there’s a lot more to do. We have to keep on practising that diversity for it to happen across Canada.”

**Dani Roche:** “I also think it’s important to have a greater understanding of why diversity is important. Speaking from my own experiences, sometimes I fear that I get chosen for things to satisfy a check mark on a box, a kind of

HAIR AND MAKEUP: BRITTANY SINCLAIR/PM; PHOTOGRAPHY: RENATA KAVEH (ASHCROFT), ANOUK LESSARD (SAINT PIERRE)



**THE SENSATION**  
Designer of outerwear brand Sentaler, which counts stars such as Meghan Markle among its clients. Wearing Bojana Sentaler blouse



**THE FIGHTER**  
Sarah Jay, stylist, activist and creative director of sustainability non-profit Fashion Takes Action. Wearing Three-ThreeFourSeven blouse and Ashley Winnipeg-Tonkin ring

funding can be very stressful.”

**Sage Paul:** “We definitely need that infrastructure and support for designers, specifically where those resources are provided. I come from an arts background, so I know the support that is given for artists and musicians—there’s a lot of it. Musicians can apply for funding to research

tokenism. [Sage] said it perfectly: We live in this reality of Toronto being a very diverse city and Canada being representative of so many different people, but we also need to understand what our core values are and why we believe they should be globalized. That’s ultimately why we’re pushing for this change in representation.”

**Judith Maria Bradley:** “I agree that diversity is essential, and I don’t want it to be a buzzword. I started modelling only a few years ago, and I don’t like it when my age becomes the tokeny thing about me, like I’m the token senior. I want to be chosen because of my personality and what I bring to the shoot.”

**Vicky Milner:** “Diversity needs to be a priority in the boardrooms, from making decisions about retail, advertising campaigns, hiring models. Everyone has to come together to acknowledge that this should be the new normal everywhere, not just in a big city.”

UNITY AND COLLABORATION  
What needs to happen for Canadian fashion to move forward?

**Bojana Sentaler:** “From a designer point of view, I think we need to unite not compete with each other. It’s difficult to make it on your own. If Canadian designers come together, we could possibly create international organizations that can get us known around the world because we have more know-how and more resources.”

**Sarah Jay:** “Sustainability, as well, is best achieved together. When we get together, share solutions and lift each other up, everything gets better.”

**Dani Roche:** “Collaboration is totally key. I struggle with how small Canadian designers can find a marketing budget. I think there’s a divide between industries, but the more that people who work in fashion can merge with people who work in design or with photographers to form working relationships, the more collaborators you have to tap into to help build your brand. It will feel more manageable for smaller designers and less isolated in your budget.”

**Océane Stanislas:** “The industry also needs more support from the retail industry and to collaborate more with designers, like [Simons] just did with Marie-Eve [Lecavallier, a Montreal designer with whom the department store created a capsule collection]. The message should be, ‘You can’t produce a collection because you don’t have the money, so we’re going to produce it for you—and allow you to just be the creative, amazing person that you are to your full extent. We’re going to pay you for your work and we’re going to produce your collection.’ For newer brands, production is often the hardest part to figure out how to get the money—there’s not much public funding, and being tied to private



**THE LEADER**  
Sage Paul, designer and founding member and artistic director of Toronto’s Indigenous Fashion Week. Wearing Raining Fox Beads earrings

Stores are required to play X percentage of Canadian content, so they’re really encouraging Canadian content. We need something similar for designers: more government funding, more retailer support, rules that sponsors are required to have X amount of Canadian content. Then hopefully, there wouldn’t be as much competition because designers really struggle with that. It becomes trying to be that one person at Simons, something that’s more trendy as opposed to focusing on that story you want to tell through your collection and creating something that is really meaningful.”

**Bojana Sentaler:** “You’re right—Canada doesn’t consider fashion as art; that’s why there is little to no funding in fashion. On the retailer front, first it’s hard for a designer to get into a major retailer, but once you’re in there, it’s so much about marketing dollars. I always thought that stores should subsidize the marketing dollars to Canadian designers because you’re competing with big houses who can have \$20,000 or \$30,000 for their marketing budgets. That money is used to help promote the brand’s gifts with purchase, to host trunk shows, to feature designers on the retailer’s social media platforms. We continue to see Italian brands being featured, but for a Canadian brand to be featured you have to pay. So perhaps Canadian retailers can subsidize those dollars to Canadian fashion designers. It would also help with the sales because just because you’re in one year doesn’t mean you’ll stay there—your clothing has to sell.”

**Océane Stanislas:** “At Simons, we have more of a partnership mentality, especially for some of our Canadian designers. If you have a season that is selling less because you took a risk creatively, and people are not ready to respond, we’re not going to ditch you next season. We build relationships with the brands we have. We do two campaigns for designers per year, and I do the same for the merchandising. We feature international and Canadian designers together because for me that’s how they shine the most—when you show that Canadians are just as strong as the international designers.”

**Judith Maria Bradley:** “I absolutely feel that Canada is going to trend pretty soon—it’s just about ready to. You know everything has started to change, everything feels a little bit different. I think people are getting a little bit more positive about their own country. It’s a young country. I refer to it as a



**THE DISRUPTER**  
Dani Roche, creative director and founder of marketing and design agency Kastor & Pollux. Wearing Kathryn Bowen blouse

and develop their album and then also get support for marketing.

teenager with car keys and a case of beer. It really feels like it’s changing. It’s really quite wonderful.”

**Sylvia Mantella:** “There’s an expression, ‘A movement can’t happen sitting down.’ This is a great example of creating a movement where we’re all sitting here focused on what needs to change. To your point, Judith, you’re right, we are a young country and there is a lot of movement happening right now. We just have to keep supporting it. I know I will; I know everyone in this room will.”



**THE VISIONARY**  
Vicky Milner, president and co-founder of the Canadian Arts & Fashion Awards, an annual showcase of homegrown talent. Wearing Tara Rivas suit and Rita Tesolin earrings


and how layered it is with so many different champions and different areas of the industry, the further ahead we’re going to be. I think we’re definitely riding that wave right now. People are picking up the torches to light the way.”

**STYLISH GROUP, STYLISH SPACE**  
*We shot this story at the glamorous St. Regis Toronto, the most stylish new hotel in the city. It was the perfect place for this conversation: intimate, modern and very chic. Visit thekit.ca for all of our behind-the-scenes snaps.*

CREATIVE COMMUNITY

We asked 10 more talented women working in the fashion industry: What needs to change in order for Canadian fashion to move forward?

**Mackenzie Yeates**  
Co-founder and creative director at Kotn



**Hayley Elsaesser**  
Designer



“To define a national style, brands need to take ownership of their Canadian origins. We’re not going to get anywhere by replicating other brands from other countries. We also need to be vocal about what defines us as Canadians. For Kotn, it isn’t about lumberjack shirts and puffer jackets. The fact that [our team is] half Canadian, half Egyptian is the most Canadian thing we could be.”

“It comes down to giving Canadian brands and designers the same level of credence we do to international fashion houses. It’s about support: the media, the buying public, Canadian celebrities, large retailers doing business in Canada. We need to look within and understand we have a unique Canadian culture and a perspective of our own. We don’t need validation from what the American or European markets tell us is fashionable. We can create our own narrative.”

**Jenny Bird**  
Jewellery designer



**Susan Langdon**  
Executive director of the Toronto Fashion Incubator



“I believe Canadian fashion is in fast-forward. To maintain this acceleration, Canadian brands need to continue to think and act globally. Brand visibility has never been higher, and international connections have never been easier to make. It doesn’t serve us to only stay within our borders—we can be proudly based here, while reaping the prosperity of the global economies.”

“I used to say our industry needs access to big cash, but that changed after our recent London Fashion Week showcase of eight Canadian designers. After the event, a major U.K. retailer told me, ‘That was lovely, but I need to tell you: Not one of your designers asked what company I was with or asked me for an appointment.’ Can you imagine missing out on that opportunity? Everyone needs to change the attitude of ‘I’m not good enough.’ We are good enough, and if you don’t take a chance, you’ll never win.”

**Mani Jassal**  
Designer



**Nina Dharey**  
Designer, House of Nonie



“We need to recognize the diversity in Canada and the different types of fashion that exist because of it. Canadian fashion is as diverse as the people, but in most cases you see only one type of fashion: European. It’s important to support designers who put their cultural identity into their clothing. For example, there are Canadian brides who don’t wear the white wedding dress. I encourage people to think, ‘What is it I’m not seeing?’ And often the answer is diversity.”

“The Canadian market is very saturated with big labels from the U.S. and Europe. The support of Canadian labels still feels very forced. Consumers here don’t have much access to local talent unless it’s a special event or trunk show. There’s hardly any knowledge of Canadian brands unless they make it big and are selling internationally. I believe if we support our own talent in the media and all Canadian stores are required to sell a certain amount of Canadian talent, it will show the world how powerful and united Canada is.”

**Marie Saint Pierre**  
Designer, Maison Marie Saint Pierre



**Corrine Anestopoulos**  
Creative director and founder of Biko jewellery



“One of many challenges my label faces today is that there is little left of the fashion infrastructure—sourcing and manufacturing [used to be] more easily available in cities like Montreal and Toronto. Building a 360-degree luxury business is challenging. I’m thankful to organizations like Cabinet Éphémère or CAFA for highlighting Canadian talent. They give us the opportunity to bring the industry together, from creatives to celebrities, retailer and consumer, while engaging in real and relevant discussions.”

“A governing body needs to be created that unifies the industry and provides access to government grants. Canadian fashion should establish a voice on the international stage and invest in key markets to support the industry’s growth on a global scale. I also think it’s important for organizations such as Toronto Fashion Week and the Canadian Arts and Fashion Awards to continue to exist, and not-for-profit work spaces like LaunchPad and Toronto Fashion Incubator to be accessible to the creative community.”

**Mel Ashcroft**  
Co-founder of The Collections agency



**Robin Kay**  
Canadian fashion ambassador



“This industry doesn’t need to change. The government policy framework within which the business of fashion exists needs to be created. We’re the only country in the world not fully recognizing fashion as a business. While building Toronto Fashion Week, the lack of government infrastructure was apparent, leading me to coin the phrase ‘orphan industry’ to describe our isolated disconnect from government. The fashion industry needs to be recognized as a pillar of culture and commerce in Canada.”





# A fresh approach

It’s more important than ever to know where and by whom our things are made. Here, we get acquainted with Toronto denim entrepreneur Tahnee Lloyd-Smith

BY LIZ GUBER | PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARIAH HAMILTON

According to Tahnee Lloyd-Smith, “The world doesn’t need another pair of jeans.” It’s an unlikely statement coming from a founder of a denim brand, but it’s why in 2018 Lloyd-Smith launched Pretty Denim, a line of sophisticated jeans, tops and jackets that’s decidedly different. “There was a hole in the market for clean, focused and tailored denim,” says the stylist turned entrepreneur. “It’s a higher-end, really crisp line.” To that end, Lloyd-Smith has carved out her niche in the denim space with thoughtfully designed clothing that hits the right balance of dressy and practical. She’s faced some major challenges to get here, but she wouldn’t have it any other way.



**Morning routine:** “I’m up at 8, I have a coffee and I ease into my day. Some call it meditation, I just call it hanging out with myself. Because once my day’s started, I’m working, my head’s down. By 10, I’m in it.”

**Work uniform:** “I’m extraordinarily minimal in how I dress. I probably own 14 white T-shirts. And six grey T-shirts.”

**Lunch order:** “I don’t really eat lunch. I can drink one coffee in the course of an entire day. I’m always reheating my coffee on the stove.

And I am a weed smoker. I will occasionally smoke during the day.”

**Job perks:** “I love it when the clothing samples come in. I touch everything and I take them everywhere I go. It is not surprising to see me with a bag of samples in a coffee shop.”

**Inspiration points:** “I’m inappropriately obsessed with people, how they move through space and how they connect with one another when no one is watching. I design for characters who might wear my clothes.”

**Work/life balance:** “We live in a world where it’s like, you work for eight-plus hours. I’m like, why don’t you hyper-focus for four or five hours and get everything done—then maybe I’ll go for a run. And I generally don’t work on Fridays. We

have a cottage that we go to in the summertime, so all the real work has to get done by Thursday. That has eliminated a lot of guilt.”

**Personal investment:** “I do not pay myself. We make enough to run the business and every cent we make, we put it right back into creating a stronger brand. In reality, if you break even in the first three years, you’re laughing. I’m very lucky to have a successful husband who is my business partner. Every week, we have a meeting at his office and go through all the financials. I don’t want people to think it’s a hobby—‘Oh, she’s got a wealthy husband and she makes jeans.’ If a woman has a fashion business it’s automatically a hobby. It’s a double standard.”

**Triumphant moment:** “It was when I got the first order that wasn’t a friend or family member (your friends and family barely buy from you, by the way). I thought, ‘Okay, at least one person is into this.’”

**Biggest challenge:** “I had a relationship failure with my former business partner, and it was monumental. Honestly, my greatest failure wasn’t, ‘Oh, the buttons didn’t arrive,’ it was this lack of camaraderie with another woman. It made me realize that women aren’t always nice to one another. It has taught me to be a supporter.”

**Surprising hit:** “We have this sequined pant, and though we haven’t sold a ton of them, we’ve surprisingly sold a lot of them to older, 60-plus women.”

**Bestseller:** “Our top seller is our Gary [striped button-up] top. And our cross-over jean is very popular. Our bomber jackets are almost sold out.”

**Pride and joy:** “The Betty top. So much thought and technical workmanship went into that collar for it to stand the way it does. It’s exactly what I dreamed of.”

Tahnee Lloyd-Smith in her Toronto atelier. Right: pieces from her Spring 2019 collection.



## THE KIT X MICHAEL KORS

# COLOUR MY WORLD

MICHAEL Michael Kors is offering a rainbow of stylish pieces this summer

Show your true colours this summer with #MKGO Rainbow, a joyful capsule collection from MICHAEL Michael Kors to celebrate Pride Month and the LGBTQ+ movement. A kaleidoscope of vibrant hues—poppy red, grass green, sunny yellow and ultraviolet—are splashed on classic separates, graphic extras and the brand’s quintessential logo accessories. The result: vivacious, fun additions to your warm-weather wardrobe. Read on for our top picks.

**1. SUPER STRIPES** This rainbow-striped crewneck top—crafted in super-soft knit fabric—pairs perfectly with a pleated midi skirt for 9-to-5 wear, or throwback acid-wash denim for casual weekend outings. Rainbow Stretch-Viscose Short-Sleeve Sweater, MICHAEL Michael Kors, \$165

**2. SPARKLE NATION** Step out proudly in this twinkling statement dress. Between its rows of shimmering sequins and easy T-shirt shape (hello, dancefloor!), this piece is a guaranteed all-eyes-on-you moment. Rainbow Sequined Cotton-Jersey T-Shirt Dress, MICHAEL Michael Kors, \$295

**3. DARING DENIM** Take a pair of on-trend, straight-leg white jeans, apply some distressing with a hint of technicolour underlay and you’ve got yourself summer’s coolest take on denim. Rainbow Sequined Distressed Jeans, MICHAEL Michael Kors, \$195

**4. STYLISH SNEAKS** With street style sensibility in spades, this ultra-versatile slip-on sneaker gets the festive treatment with bold leather detailing. The sleek silhouette adds instant impact to any minimal look. Dylan Rainbow Leather Slip-on Sneaker, MICHAEL Michael Kors, \$158

**5. CHIC CROSSBODY** The Mercer handbag leaps to the next level with bright piping on its chic accordion panels. With both a practical crossbody strap and polished top handle, it’s a beautiful carry-everywhere handbag. Mercer Medium Rainbow-Trim Leather Accordion Crossbody Bag, MICHAEL Michael Kors, \$348, all items available at michaelkors.ca







Bota Bota spa serves up postcard views.



Watery pleasures at Spa William Gray.



Vegetarian hot spot LOV.

# A wellness escape in Montreal

Toronto transplant Katherine Lalancette brushes up on *l'art de vivre* in her hometown

There's a distinct way people react when you tell them you're from Montreal. Their tone turns wistful, they sigh a heartfelt "I loooove Montreal" and wax poetic about the city's "European flair"—the slower pace, the later nights, the *dépanneur* wine.

I for one never understood what the fuss was about—until I moved to Toronto. One of the most startling discoveries I made upon relocating (aside from the absence of wine in corner stores) was the absence of the lunch hour. To be in Montreal at noon is to witness a mass exodus of people headed to share a meal with friends. In Toronto, eating lunch is a thing you do while cleaning out your inbox.

Don't get me wrong: I find the big, bustling 6ix exhilarating, but it can be overwhelming for a *Québécoise* hedonist. How fitting, then, that just over a year after my move, I'm flying back to *la métropole* to write about its emerging status as a wellness destination. Let the self-care begin.

## THE SPAS

When Montrealers talk about spas, they're usually referring to thermal water circuits, i.e., Scandinavian-style cycles of hot, cold and rest. It's become something of a routine activity in the city. Bored on a Sunday? Go to the spa! Rough day at work? Go to the spa! (Several offer discounted evening rates.)

The first one I visit is conveniently located in the basement of my hotel. I part the thick steam of Spa William Gray's hammam and saunter to the herbal sauna, where sprigs of lavender permeate the hot air. A thrilling chill climbs up my spine in the cold room and my lungs fill with the sea-like air of the salt cave.

Next, I move on to the *pièce de résistance*, the William Gray Signature Treatment. This is no casual Tuesday night spa experience. The 100-minute journey begins on a bed of warm quartz pebbles that mould themselves to your body. Then comes multiple courses of massage, ranging from acupressure to an Ayurvedic wand, followed by a full facial. It's downright decadent.

Speaking of decadence, there's a French word for when you've passed the point of hunger but keep eating because something is simply too delicious: *gourmandise*. That's how I feel the next morning as I walk into Bota Bota. Housed in a tugboat, this trendy spot serves up postcard views of Old Montreal and an indoor-outdoor thermal experience. Gaze upon iconic Silo 5 as you sink into a jacuzzi, laze in a hammock with a book or just doze off. Or, like me, get another massage. This time, a therapist pours piping hot oil on my skin before melting any hint of muscle tension. I emerge slippery and smiling and decide to have another go at the water circuit. Pure *gourmandise*.

## THE ART

Now that my body's relaxed, it's time to tackle my mind. And this being Montreal, even the therapy is chic. Welcome to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, the first museum to boast a scientific advisory committee dedicated to studying the wellness effects of going to the museum, which are said to be comparable to physical exercise. (I don't know about you, but I'd much rather drool over the Mugler archives—the museum's current headlining exhibit—than submit to some torturous boot camp.)

Research shows looking at art can be beneficial for a range of conditions, from anxiety and depression, to diabetes and cancer. The MMFA even introduced a groundbreaking program last year that allows physicians to prescribe visits to the museum to treat stress, depression or chronic illness. Patrons simply have to show a doctor's note to gain free admission.

Back in the Old Port, there's another kind of art therapy brewing; a new immersive show dreamed up by Cirque du Soleil founder Guy Laliberté. *Through the Echoes* will run until the end of September at PY1, a temporary pyramid-shaped venue set against the historic Clock Tower. Blending 360-degree projections, special effects and an original soundtrack featuring unearthed musings from late philosopher Alan Watts, the performerless show aims to generate emotion and foster connections with the self and others. We're encouraged to move through the space taking in the many sights and sounds, making everyone's experience entirely unique.

## THE FOOD

With its stringy poutines and warm, doughy bagels (if anyone's asking, my favourites are Chez Claudette and St-Viateur, respectively), Montreal's famed food scene can seem to clash with the wellness movement. But don't be fooled; fresh, healthy options abound.

Among them is Mandy's, a small salad bar turned empire now counting seven locations and a pretty pink food truck. In sisters Mandy and Rebecca Wolfe's expert hands, bowls and salads are elevated to mouth-watering feasts (their tamari dressing is the stuff of legend).

At LOV, a vegetarian hot spot set to open a Toronto outpost, the vegan take on a Big Mac is mind-blowing, as is the zippy Asian slaw.

For something even more special, make your way to Robin des Bois [Robin Hood], a not-for-profit restaurant benefiting local charities. Savour the famous dahl soup or housemade BBQ tempeh, then stop by the "release room," a space for shattering plates and relieving stress. (Founder Judy Servay got the idea following a bad breakup.)

After the greens and legumes, seek out "balance" at Un Po' Di Più, a buzzy ode to the art of *aperitivo*. I meet up with an old friend and find a perch at the stately curved bar. We share stories and an antipasti tower (three tiers of cheese, charcuterie and duck liver crostini), washing both down with expertly mixed Negronis. Because we're in Montreal, after all, and here, self-care is best served with a hearty side of indulgence.

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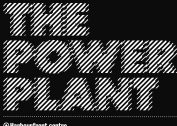
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