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A full-page photograph of a coastal scene. In the foreground, white, frothy waves are crashing onto a light-colored sandy beach. The water transitions from white foam to a deep blue as it extends towards the horizon. In the distance, a low, brownish coastline or island is visible against a vast, clear, and vibrant blue sky. The overall mood is serene and natural.

DAISY MARC JACOBS



COSMOPOLITAN

RANDOM QUESTION OF THE MONTH
What song best describes your life right now?

CLAIRE HODGSON
Editor-in-Chief



Perfect Gentleman by the one and only Wyclef Jean. Because that's what I'm looking for (not because I'm a stripper).

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A Change Is Gonna Come by Sam Cooke. Basically me hoping I win the lottery. Every. Day.



Good As Hell by Lizzo – "If he don't love you any more, just walk your fine ass out the door." Those lyrics are filling me with sass right now!



Always On Time by Ja Rule featuring Ashanti. Well, I'm trying to be.

THIS PAGE: CLAIRE'S PHOTOGRAPH SARAH BRICK. HAIR AND MAKE-UP JOLANDA COETZER AT LHA REPRESENTS. USING URBAN DECAY AND SACHAJUAN. ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS AGATA PEC, ALAMY. COVER PHOTOGRAPH BERNARDO DORAL. COVER STYLING AMY BANNERMAN. HAIR EDUARDO PONCE. MAKE-UP STEVEN TABIMBA. NAILS QUISA FISA. PHOTOGRAPHER'S ASSISTANTS RYAN HACKETT/TUTU LEE. STYLING ASSISTANT ANGELA FUERTES. PRODUCTION MADRID: ASHA MARTINEZ. PRODUCTION LA: NELLY CASTILLO/JOAN PLA VENDETTE ENTERTAINMENT. WITH THANKS TO ADRIAN VAN DER HOEVEN. PARIS WEARS JACKET AND TROUSERS, BOTH PAMELLA ROLAND. EARRINGS, ATIKA. ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS ALAMY, LUCKY IF SHARP



From the editor

Working in media can be *intense*. Look to your left and you'll see a peer with an Instagram following four times the size of yours, and to the right, one who commits to every extracurricular opportunity going, juggling five freelance projects and networking in their spare time.

When I started in this industry, I found the confidence and ambition of others incredibly intimidating. While they seemed to find joy in attending every event and maximising every social-media moment, I couldn't think of anything worse. I panicked that by wanting to literally and metaphorically switch off when I left work, I was damaging my chances of success.

That was until, one day, I built up the courage to confide in a friend that I was worried I was falling behind. Could I ever get ahead as an introvert in a world filled with extroverts? Thankfully, she reassured me that the best thing I could do was work hard and be myself. So, I did.

Since then, I have realised two things. Firstly, that no one is 100% confident all the time. Even the biggest extrovert has their own insecurities and hang-ups. Our cover star, Paris Hilton, might seem like one of the biggest extroverts out there, with a career built around her 11.6 million Instagram followers and a history of pap-able outfits. But the original influencer explains on p72 that even she struggles with

trusting others and dealing with the competitive nature of celebrity.

Secondly, introversion is a strength. It can mean you're more sensitive to the feelings of others, more thoughtful, and more strategic as a result. Now, things I once saw as major weaknesses have become strengths. Don't believe me? Turn to p62 for our introvert's guide to thriving at work.

Whether it's your mum (p104), friends or significant other, surround yourself with the people who know you best. Because introvert or extrovert, it's who you really are that'll set you apart.

Claire ✕
CLAIRE HODGSON
Editor-in-Chief

Keep in touch by following me on Twitter @Claire_Hodge and Instagram @Claire_Hodge



EXCITING NEWS!

We've launched a podcast! *Cosmopolitan's All The Way With...* uncovers exactly what goes on in the love lives of people across the UK. It's smart, funny and built for nosy people, so find us on the usual podcast platforms or head to [Cosmopolitan.com/uk/allthewaywith](https://www.cosmopolitan.com/uk/allthewaywith)



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This month at COSMOPOLITAN



Sometimes it's baffling how we ever get a magazine out at all

Stars in her eyes

Beauty writer Kate got the scent of the hype-beasts story (page 98) while visiting a Huda Beauty pop-up shop in London. Here she is playing it ice-cool (as ever) with the beauty mogul herself.



Ladies in red

Team Cosmo are so in sync that moments like this are becoming a regular occurrence. Time to stop spending so much time with each other? Maybe?



Paris fashion week

What's that? People in magazines spend all their time parading around in designer garms actually intended for cover shoots with A-listers like Paris Hilton? We (and art editor Jessica in particular) resent that implication.



Ready to bounce

What these three don't know about getting into the coolest parties isn't worth knowing. On page 86 we catch up with the female guardians of Berlin's hottest clubs. Cross them at your peril!



Duel aspect

Features director Catriona became an elite matchmaker for a month (page 80) and tried to find executive editor Amy a husband. And obviously, for that reason, they had to BATTLE TO THE DEATH.

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Styles and substance

After a very long two years (seriously, what did we do with ourselves?), Harry Styles finally returned to music last year with his second solo album, *Fine Line*. If listening to it 5,000 times on loop wasn't enough (genuinely, check our Spotify), this is the month to hit repeat on his back catalogue once again. Why? Well, as if we need a reason, April sees Hazza hit arenas up and down the UK with his *Love On Tour* circuit. It's all based on his motto "Treat People With Kindness", so prepare to part with your negativity – and your cash.



A Quiet Place II: would you survive?

The second instalment of the silently sinister flick is here. But how long could you *really* last in complete silence? Well, let's see, shall we...?



UNTIL THE BITTER END

You're 'ard as nails, and quieter, plus you're resourceful. You make Bear Grylls look like Mary Berry. You've mastered the art of sneezing in silence so nothing can get you. Not even hay fever.

FIVE YEARS TOPS

Silence is no biggie to you; you've got a better internal monologue than Lizzie McGuire. But you do have weaknesses: a loud and deceptively crunchy breakfast will prove to be your downfall.

A SOLID INNINGS

You'll get through the early years, but putting you in the apocalypse is like putting Alan Carr on a sponsored silence. Eventually you'll sacrifice yourself for a joke that was just too good not to tell.

YOU'D BE THE FIRST TO GO

Hey, the important thing is you tried. But, let's be honest, you'd be gone in three to five working days. You're gobby and we love that about you. But silence, my friend, is just not your specialist subject.

Ask me anything

Q & A

Iain Stirling on *Love Island* secrets, girlfriend Laura Whitmore – and house-cleaning in the buff



The first thing you do every morning?

I feel terrible saying it, but I check my phone. Insta Stories: 40 minutes of my life I'll never get back.

What makes you happiest?

Putting something in my body, like food or drink. I don't mean another body part. Consumption-based, not sex-based.

Have you had any Love Island-style pampering – fake tan, teeth-whitening?

No. I am from Scotland and have all my own teeth, which makes me some sort of, like, royal.

You've said that you're happy your bulge has finally been getting the attention it deserves – has it developed an ego?

The *Daily Mail* put a picture up and [added]



a red circle around [my bulge]. I felt violated! I don't have a nickname for mine – that's the sort of thing that will get you arrested.

What's been your worst on-stage experience?

I was recording a show for CBBC. I was talking to an eight-year-old boy and told him he had a "f*cking great name" – [it was] something like Farquar, something really middle class, and I swore. At one point a six-year-old girl cried, "Mummy, can we go?"

How romantic are you?

I'm getting better. I like the idea of

being romantic because I think the older you get, things like giving presents and being romantic feels nice. As you begin to get older you start to appreciate making other people feel good.

What's the most romantic thing you've done for Laura (right)?

Last night was pretty sexy. I got in after a few drinks and drunkenly tidied the house. I've never had my partner look at me with such desire in my entire life. It was when I was

mopping up after a few tequilas and beers with my headphones in, just cleaning up. I had a pinny on and nothing else... (I may have made that last bit up.) I was absolutely off my face but I still managed it.

The biggest love lesson Love Island's taught you?

Genuinely, and I don't follow this enough myself, it's

"be honest". If you do something wrong, admit to it immediately. If you try to cover it up and lie about it, it will only become worse and the trust will be broken.

Are you and Laura the next Marvin and Rochelle?

Thanks for saying Marvin and Rochelle – I spoke to someone recently and they said Richard and Judy. We might become the next power couple, but the problem is Laura's very good – a very accomplished presenter – and I'm an idiot. I feel I'd be holding her back.

Iain's new stand-up tour, Failing Upwards, is on 6th March to 31st May



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The true story of Misbehaviour

The infamous 1970 Miss World competition gets the big-screen treatment this month in *Misbehaviour*. No idea what happened? Let us fill you in

Starring Keira Knightley and Gugu Mbatha-Raw, the film tells two stories: that of feminist activist Sally Alexander, who protested against the 1970 Miss World competition, and of Jennifer Hosten, the first-ever black woman to win the crown. Here's how all the events really played out...

1

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Created in 1951 by British entrepreneur and TV host Eric Morley (Rhys Ifans), the Miss World beauty pageant started life as Miss World Festival Bikini Girl at the Festival Of Britain summer fair.



2

VIEWING PLEASURE

The BBC first broadcast Miss World in 1959. The show secured funding from big businesses and became an annual viewing event throughout the '60s, reaching a peak of 24 million viewers in 1970.

5

FLOUR POWER

Protestors, including Sally Alexander (Keira Knightley) and Jo Robinson (Jessie Buckley), pelted Miss World host Bob Hope (Greg Kinnear) with flour, smoke and stink bombs and rotting fruit, calling the pageant a "cattle market".



4

PLANS FOR PROTEST

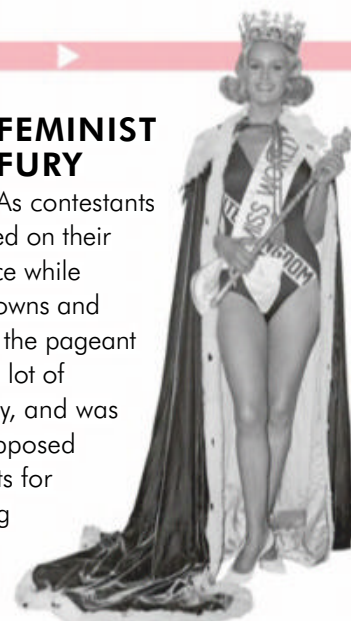
Feminist activists the Women's Liberation Movement decided to protest at 1970's Miss World at London's Royal Albert Hall, using the slogan "We're not beautiful, we're not ugly – we're angry".



3

FEMINIST FURY

As contestants were judged on their appearance while wearing gowns and swimwear, the pageant attracted a lot of controversy, and was publicly opposed by feminists for demeaning women. Fair.



6

HISTORY IS MADE

Grenadian Jennifer Hosten (Gugu Mbatha-Raw) became the first black woman to be crowned Miss World. Hosten (right) later said that the contest offered her more opportunities to travel, study and work than she may otherwise have had access to.



7

THE END OF AN ERA

The BBC stopped broadcasting Miss World in 1980, and when Eric Morley died in 2000, his wife, Julia (Keeley Hawes), took over as CEO. Julia (right) added a charity element, Beauty With A Purpose, to the competition.



8

BRAINS & BEAUTY

The controversial pageant still exists (Priyanka Chopra, right, won in 2000), but contestants are now judged on their charitable work too, not just their looks.



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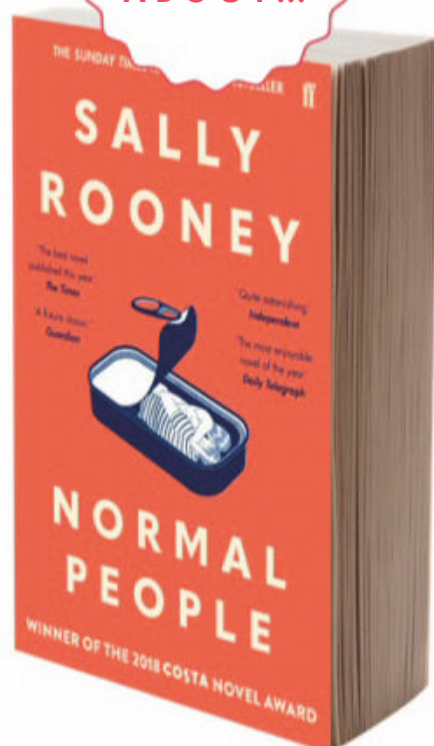
Book to blockbuster



Adaptations of some of our favourite reads are hitting screens this year.

Get ahead now...

**MOST
EXCITED
ABOUT...**



NORMAL PEOPLE

by Sally Rooney

What? It's no surprise that Rooney's Booker-prize-nominated second novel – about the relationship between school friends Marianne and Connell – is coming to a screen near you soon. Copies were virtually glued to hipsters' hands when it was published in 2018.

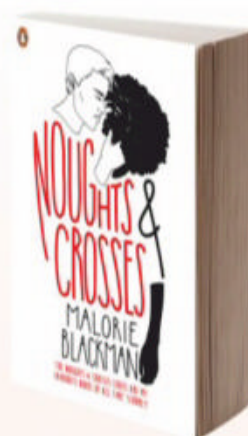
Who's in it? Daisy Edgar-Jones plays Marianne, while Paul Mescal is Connell.

What you'll say: "She puts down on paper what a generation of disenfranchised, broke young women are thinking and feeling."

What not to say: "Erm, why doesn't she use speech marks?"

On BBC Three from late spring

MORE ADAPTATIONS INCOMING



NOUGHTS & CROSSES

by Malorie Blackman

What? Set in a reimagined present-day Britain, it follows Sephy, who is a "cross", a member of the black ruling class, and Callum, a "nought", from the white underclass. They fall in love, and their relationship splinters society.

Who's in it? Masali Baduza as Sephy and longtime Blackman fan Stormzy.

What you'll say: "Why has it taken so long for these childhood-defining books to reach the screen?"

What not to say: "I'm only tuning in for Stormzy."

On BBC One this spring



NINE PERFECT STRANGERS

by Liane Moriarty

What? She's the author behind *Big Little Lies*, the HBO smash starring Reese Witherspoon and Nicole Kidman. Now, the latter is starring in this adaptation of Moriarty's 2018 book, about nine city dwellers who meet at a wellness retreat.

Who's in it? Nicole, plus Melissa McCarthy as one of the strangers.

What you'll say: "It's a cynical take on our quest for self-improvement."

What not to say: "Where's Reese?"

On Sky Atlantic this autumn



THE LUMINARIES

by Eleanor Catton

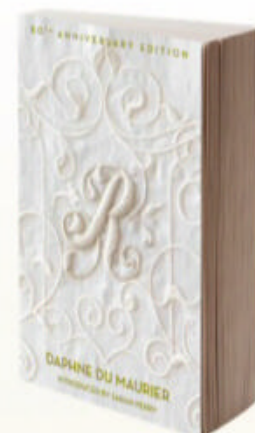
What? This 2013 epic tells the story of Anna Wetherell, who travels to the west coast of New Zealand's South Island during the 1860s gold rush and meets the radiant Emery Staines. Catton's also written the six-part TV adaptation.

Who's in it? Himesh Patel (of *Yesterday* fame) and Eve Hewson.

What you'll say: "You know she was the youngest ever Booker Prize winner."

What not to say: "Oh, I loved Patel in *EastEnders*."

On BBC Two this spring



REBECCA

by Daphne du Maurier

What? You know the one – the gothic 1938 classic is about a woman who becomes obsessed with her husband's first wife, who died in a sailing incident. The last big-screen adaptation was in 1940, so it's ripe for a remake.

Who's in it? *Call Me By Your Name* Adonis Armie Hammer, plus Lily James and Keeley Hawes.

What you'll say: "Two women pitted against each other while a man stands by: a tale as old as time."

What not to say: "Rebecca who?"

On Netflix this year

How not to lose a guy in 10 days

Drag queen **Courtney Act** is all set to jump back into dating, and knows just what to stream on NOW TV to get sparks flying...

Break out the florals and get your cleaning gear out – spring has sprung! But while you can't pack away the thermals just yet, it's nice to know the days are getting longer. That's more daylight for dates, I say.

As a boy who sometimes looks like a glamorous girl, I tend to attract the attention of men whose sexuality is a little more fluid or exploratory, leaning towards the straight-identifying end of the spectrum. I've found more than once that those at the beginning of their sexuality journey aren't always looking for the same things I am, leaving me high and, ahem, dry.

But I love watching the world change and seeing people

embrace fluidity. I've had boyfriends who were bi, pan, straight and gay, and I've dated a polyamorous married couple with a kid. It's a brave new world where people are embracing facets of their sexuality that in decades gone by would have lain repressed.

My perfect date? A movie night. I like watching something scary so we can cling to each other for emotional support. *Pet Sematary*, based on the Stephen King novel and full of creepy happenings, looks just the ticket – stream it on NOW TV.

If you want something a little lighter for a sofa session, how about *Absolutely Fabulous*? It's an oldie but a total goodie,

and I'll never get tired of Patsy and Eddie; they're like old friends. With all five series available to stream on NOW TV, that's plenty to keep you going for the next month.

Although I'm looking for love, I'm still not keen on the idea of children. One thing that's bound to make me feel better about not being able to grow a baby inside me (notwithstanding future medical advancements) is *Breeders*, a hilarious comedy

series about the trials of parenthood, streaming weekly in March on NOW TV. I'll stick to pot plants as children for now; that and procuring a lover with whom I can enjoy the glossy green foliage of said plant babies.

Before, I liked my men like I liked my coffee – incapable of loving me back. But I'm changing my order for 2020. Now, I'm all about emotionally available and intelligent beaus with a love of horticulture.



COURTNEY'S CAN'T-MISS BOX SETS

30 Rock

I've had a meeting in the 30 Rock building; it wasn't as fun as the show. I want to be Liz Lemon, but I know I'm Jenna Maroney. Stream every episode Sky Comedy



Downton Abbey

I've never seen this, but I feel it will help me to assimilate into UK culture, so I'll give it a jolly good crack. Also, Maggie Smith! Stream every episode



The Righteous Gemstones

This new comedy drama heads into the sometimes hypocritical world of televangelists. Stream every episode Sky Comedy



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The Nickelodeon HALL OF FAME

It's 24 years since *Kenan & Kel* first aired on Nickelodeon. But while Kenan returns in *Trolls World Tour* this month, what's happened to your other teen idols?



Still a comedy legend

COMEDY KINGS

Orange soda, anyone? Kenan (above, right) and Kel were the inseparable BFFs we all loved. After wrapping the fourth season in 2000, Kenan continued in comedy, joining *Saturday Night Live* in 2003 before appearing in *Snakes On A Plane* and *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*. Meanwhile, Kel tried his hand at *Dancing With The Stars* last year, before revealing on Instagram that he's become a youth pastor in an unlikely career move. Talk about a man of many talents.



FROM SABRINA TO SITCOM

Melissa Joan Hart shot to fame playing the title character in *Clarissa Explains It All*, tackling coming-of-age issues with sass and sarcasm, but it was her role as *Sabrina The Teenage Witch* (1996-2003) that turned her into a household name. Since then, she's starred in sitcom *Melissa & Joey*, a host of Christmas movies and, most recently, the Netflix comedy series *No Good Nick*. Netflix launched *The Chilling Adventures Of Sabrina* in 2018, but sadly the OG witch (now 43) didn't return.



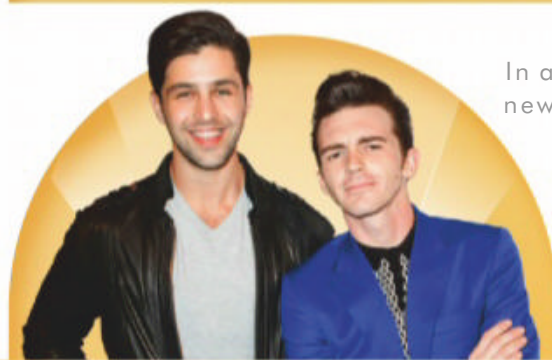
TWINCEPTION

Starring as twins with very different lives in *Sister, Sister* (1994-1999), real-life twins Tia and Tamera Mowry continued as a work duo, writing book series *Twintuition* and landing their own reality-TV show, *Tia & Tamera*, which ended in 2013. They've since gone their separate ways: Tamera (right) co-hosts US talk show *The Real* and Tia presents a cooking show, *Tia Mowry At Home*. While rumours of a *Sister, Sister* reboot have fizzled, Tia still says "never say never". *Keeping everything crossed*



SHE'S THE (A)MAN(DA)

Catapulted into the spotlight aged 13, as the host of comedy sketch series *The Amanda Show*, Amanda Bynes went on to have success on the big screen in *She's The Man*, *Hairspray* and *Easy A*. Bynes then took an indefinite hiatus from acting in 2010 (and hasn't appeared in anything since), and endured a public battle with addiction and depression. The 33-year-old dramatically returned in 2018 with a *Paper* magazine cover where she spoke candidly about her breakdown.



In a Sweet new series

BESTIES TO NEMESSES?

Classmates-turned-stepbrothers Drake and Josh, one a guitar-playing ladies' man and the other an Oprah-loving straight-A student, graced our screens from 2004 to 2007. Riding the Drake and Josh wave into the 2020s, both are now 33 years old and Josh Peck (above, left) is a YouTuber and podcaster, while Drake Bell is pursuing his music career. After a brief rift in 2017 when Drake wasn't invited to Josh's wedding, the two later made up at that year's VMAs.



ZOEY 2020

Britney's little sister Jamie Lynn Spears stole our hearts as the titular California boarding-school student in *Zoey 101*, which ran for four seasons until 2008. Jamie then turned her hand to country music – releasing one solitary EP, *The Journey*. Switching back to acting, Jamie is set to appear in Netflix's upcoming romance drama series *Sweet Magnolias* in possibly the most anticipated resurrection since Jesus Christ himself. Maybe...

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empties

USING UP

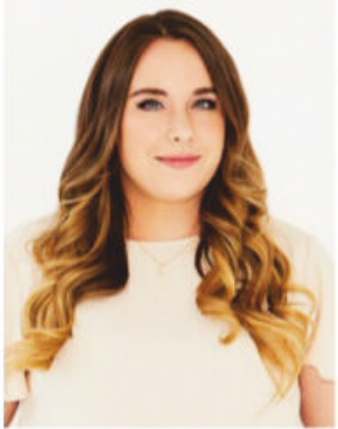
CHARLOTTE TILBURY INSTANT EYE PALETTE IN PILLOW TALK, £60

This palette's the only thing that has got me through a dreary start to the year. With 12 shades in a mix of stunning rosy neutrals, it's been wearable enough to use almost every day (and night) – despite the fact that up until now, my only evening plans have revolved around staying in and watching old episodes of *The OC*. At least Summer would be proud of my pink glossy eyes.

USING NEXT

NARS AFTERGLOW EYESHADOW PALETTE, £56

This Nars palette immediately turned my head – I mean, just look at it. The shadows are intense (both in colour and pigment pay-off), plus with a mix of matte, satin, shimmer and bold metallic formulas, it's finally worth making plans to go out-out, just so you can show them off.



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Beauty lab

Spring perfumes

Each month, our beauty team tests the newest products to see what reigns supreme. Here, **Laura Capon** sniffs out this season's freshest scents



Escentric Molecules Molecule 05 EDT, £79 (100ml)* The brand that brought skin scents to the masses has ventured into summer fragrances, using just one note to encapsulate sunshine. It melted into my wrist leaving behind the warmth, subtlety and freshness of an August Mediterranean breeze. Impressive considering I'm writing this in an office in the middle of February.

For the
team's favourite
fragrances, go to
[Cosmopolitan.com/
uk/perfume](https://www.cosmopolitan.com/uk/perfume)

Britney Spears Glitter Fantasy EDT, £21.50 (30ml)

Jonathan Van Ness voice
Can you believe it's 15 years since Britney first released Fantasy? Bear with the 18th version because, like Britney, it's a complicated soul. At first it's pure sugary fruit, but as it dries down, the "alluring musks" come out, and with them an urgent desire to dance provocatively with an albino python. Someone get MTV on the phone immediately.



Marc Jacobs Daisy Eau So Fresh Daze EDT, £75 (75ml)

There are two types of people: those who go wild for peach scents and those who think Too Faced should go to prison for scenting an entire make-up line with a stone fruit. If you fall into the former camp, the copious peach notes packed into this fragrance will fill you with deep joy. If you fall into the latter, well...



The scent surgery

Fragrance expert **Thomas Dunckley** gives us an olfactory masterclass

1

MAKE IT LAST

If your perfume's disappeared by noon, it might be down to the ingredients. "Some notes take longer to evaporate from the skin, but citrus materials are more volatile and tend to vanish quicker," explains Dunckley. Fan of fresh, summer scents? Layer them with matching body lotions to eke them out.

2

STORE IT RIGHT

Stored correctly, your perfumes should last longer than most of your romantic relationships (no shade intended). "Keep fragrances somewhere dry, cool and away from sunlight," advises Dunckley.

3

SHOP LIKE A PRO

"It's a total misconception that cheap perfumes are bad," says Dunckley. If you're on a budget, he recommends The Body Shop for high-quality, beautiful scents. However, if you're feeling boujee, he reckons you can't beat Chanel or Frédéric Malle.

4

FIND YOUR SIGNATURE

Stuck in a perfume rut? Dunckley's got the answer. The Perfume Society website has a "Find A Fragrance" service[†] where you type in a scent you love and it recommends a host of new finds for you to try.

EDITOR'S PICK

Coach Dreams EDP, £69 (90ml) Inspired by a sunny Californian road trip, Dreams starts off fruitily with juicy pear and bitter orange, but transforms into a floral bouquet bursting with gardenia and cactus flower. Far sweeter than my own memory of driving in America – white knuckles, sweaty palms and several near-death experiences.

♥
**COSMOPOLITAN
LOVES
2020**

Maison Margiela Replica Springtime In A Park EDT, £96 (100ml)

When I picture my local park, I think of strewn black plastic bags, empty vodka bottles and intimidating 14-year-olds. However, when I smell this, I'm transported to a green space straight out of *Mary Poppins* – spectacularly clean, blooming with flowers and full of happy, fictitious children who spontaneously burst into song. Should come with a picnic hamper.

Zara Emotions By Jo Loves Amalfi Sunray EDT, £15.99 (40ml)

Jo Malone, yes, THE Jo Malone, has launched a collection with Zara. My favourite, Amalfi Sunray, is more of a summer scent, but my page, my rules. It's meant to evoke the Italian Riviera and nothing (apart from *The Lizzie McGuire* Movie) has made me want to book a plane ticket more.

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Hot right now

Don't mind us, just showering you with April's greatest beauty launches



1 Dior Capture Totale C.E.L.L. Energy Super Potent Serum, £149 Contains a next-gen hyaluronic acid for uber-hydration.

2 Wishful Yo Glow Enzyme Scrub, £34* Huda's skincare line is here and this enzyme scrub is top of our list.

3 Gucci Beauty Rouge À Lèvres Gothique in Victoriana Blue, £38 Gucci reinvents metallic lips from the graves of *Sabrina The Teenage Witch's* aunties.

4 Paula's Choice 0.3% Retinol + 2% Bakuchiol Treatment, £53† Fine lines be gone, thanks to this wonder product.

5 Laura Mercier Face Illuminator in Affection, £34.50 Wondering if you need another highlighter? Fact: the glow saves on your electricity bill.‡

6 Redken Color Extend Brownlights Shampoo, £18.95 Because why should blondes get all the toning shampoos?

7 Givenchy Teint Couture City Balm, £43 Leaves skin oh-so flawless while feeling lighter than a silk slip dress.

8 Sunday Riley Ice Ceramide Moisturizing Cream, £60 Dry, irritated, sensitive... can this save my personality as well as my skin?

9 Maybelline Cheek Heat in Nude Burn, £8.99 Dull winter skin? Resurrect it with this gel-cream blush.

10 E.L.F. Liquid Glitter Eyeshadow in Ocean Eyes, £5** The doe-footed applicator gives artfully sparkled lids with zero effort.

WORDS LAURA CAPON, KATE PASOLA. PHOTOGRAPH AGATA PEC. *FOR 100ML; £18 FOR 40ML, AVAILABLE AT SHOPHUBABEAUTY.COM AND CULTBEAUTY.COM. †AVAILABLE FROM 31ST MARCH. ‡NOT SCIENTIFICALLY VERIFIED. **AVAILABLE AT ELFCOSMETICS.CO.UK NOW AND SUPERDRUG FROM APRIL



Your
360°
guide to

getting rid of facial



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hair

(by someone who's tried it all)

Words VICTORIA JOWETT

Let's be clear: there is nothing wrong with facial hair, we all have it. But if you're a little paranoid about the "peach fuzz", there are a lot of options out there – and I should know. As a beauty director with a stubbornly hairy face (and no, I'm not embarrassed to admit it), I've learned a few things over my years of tweezing, waxing and, yes, lasering, which I'm going to pass on to you right now...

WHAT CAUSES IT?

First things first, facial hair comes in all shapes, sizes, colours and densities. From the super-fine fuzz on your cheeks to the darker fluff that forms along your hairline and sideburns. Not forgetting the thicker, coarser, prickly hairs that can crop up around your chin and neck causing mass panic when faced with a hotel magnifying mirror. Before you start de-furring, it's important to consider what's causing it, so I quizzed a leading expert, Dr Stefanie Williams – a dermatologist and medical director at specialist skin clinic Eudelo – to find out what the most common causes of excess facial hair are. Listen up.



Ethnicity & genetics

"Sometimes, it simply runs in families or certain ethnicities," explains Dr Williams.

"Women of Mediterranean, South Asian and Middle Eastern heritage, for example, may be more likely to have an excess of facial hair." That being said, it's still worth seeing your GP in case there are other underlying causes.



Cushing's disease

"Although very uncommon, another reason for excess facial hair may be Cushing's disease (this is where the body over-produces the hormone cortisol) or other adrenal gland disorders." If you're concerned, book an appointment with your GP who can give you a blood test and diagnose any symptoms.



Hormonal imbalance

"Both men and women have male hormones. However, in women, if the balance between [male and female] hormones becomes disturbed, the consequence can be an increase in facial hair," says Dr Williams. Which is why women who suffer with polycystic ovary syndrome are more prone to it. >



How to deal with it



WHAT	THE VERDICT	WORKS FOR	AVOID IF
HAIR REMOVAL CREAM 	I've been removing my upper lip hair since I was 14 years old, after raiding my mum's beauty cupboard and finding her Veet. The pros of removal cream are that it's quick, painless and gets rid of every last hair. The cons? It breaks down hair using alkaline chemicals, which, despite being skin-safe, can cause irritation, depending on how sensitive your skin is. So without wanting to sound like your mum, please, <i>please</i> do a patch test first.	 Most effective on smaller areas of fine hair.	You have any active breakouts, or your skin is prone to redness and sensitivity.
WAXING 	Waxing's best done by a professional, as salons can select the gentlest formulas for the face, but it's efficient – one tug of the strip and you can kiss goodbye to those Elvis-style sideburns for up to three weeks. But, as the wax has direct contact with the skin, it can lead to irritation if you're sensitive. And some hairs just don't seem to want to come out, so instead of being pulled clean from the follicle, they snap, which can lead to ingrowers. Ouch.	 Hairs longer than 3mm, brows, upper lip, sideburns.	You have sensitive, acne-prone skin or suffer from rosacea.
THREADING & TWEEZING 	Threading and tweezing are actually quite similar when it comes to the mechanics of hair removal – both grab onto hairs and pull them out from the follicle in one swift motion. While we've all heard the myth "if you pluck one hair, 10 will grow back in its place", that's just not true. What is true is that, like waxing, threading and tweezing can sometimes lead to broken hairs but, as there's minimal skin contact, they're less likely to irritate.	 Peach fuzz, brows, upper lip, chin hair.	You're looking to remove a larger patch of hair, or if the hairs are shorter than 2mm.
SHAVING 	Whether it's a single-blade facial razor, a battery-operated shaver or a professional dermaplaning treatment, I'm a fan of shaving – it's probably the easiest, most pain-free option of all. But it's not without its issues. Regrowth happens quickly, and because hair is cut off at the surface, it regrows blunt, not tapered, so it can appear thicker. You've also got to be super-careful to avoid those annoying cuts, and keep blades clean to avoid follicle infections.	 Any hair type at all – thick or fine.	You have sensitive, acne-prone skin or suffer from rosacea.
LASER HAIR REMOVAL 	Laser hair removal is the only treatment I've found for minimised growth that lasts. It takes four to six sessions to see a significant difference, but it doesn't work for every skin tone or hair colour. "[It targets] the dark pigments in the hair, so the better the contrast between the hair and the skin (eg dark hair on fair skin), the better the outcome," explains Dr Williams. Oh, and it's not permanent: "Maintenance sessions are expected," Dr Williams adds.	 Dark hairs, particularly those that are thick and coarse.	Certain types of laser hair removal are unsuitable for deeper skin tones, so book a consultation first.
ELECTROLYSIS 	Electrolysis is currently the only method that permanently gets rid of hair, but it's not a walk in the park. "A fine needle is inserted into each hair follicle. It then emits an electric current to damage the follicle," explains Dr Williams. You'll need two to three treatments to stop growth, and it can be painful (you're having a needle repeatedly inserted into your face, after all). Only book in with an experienced therapist who has great recommendations.	 All skin tones and hair colours.	You have a larger area of hair to remove – this is only suitable for small clusters of hairs. ♦





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My life in beauty

From mascara to faux freckles... **Maya Jama** on the beauty essentials she'd never be without



Maybelline Lash Sensational Mascara, £8.99

"One of the cheapest products in my make-up bag, and one of the best. It will always be my favourite mascara."



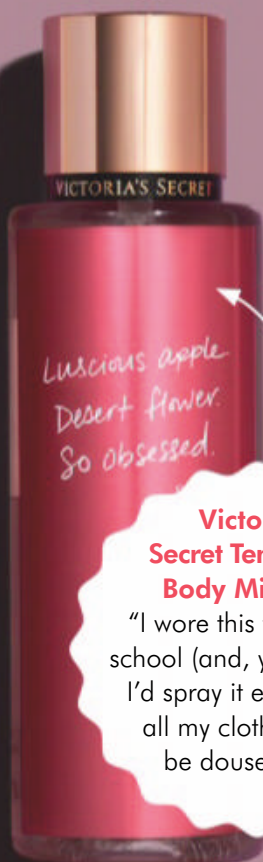
St Ives Fresh Skin Apricot Scrub, £4.19

"As a teen I was obsessed with this scrub – I mean, who wasn't? Looking back though, I definitely went way too hard with it."



Victoria's Secret Temptation Body Mist, £15

"I wore this throughout school (and, yes, college). I'd spray it everywhere, all my clothes would be doused in it."



MAC Studio Fix Concealer, £17.50

"Concealer is my saviour, it's my go-to for no-make-up make-up as I don't wear foundation, so I always apply this to cover up tired eyes."



Aussie Shine On Hair Serum, £4.99

"If I'm leaving my hair to dry naturally, I run a little oil through the mid-lengths and ends. It helps take away the fluff and gives great shine."



Freck Faux Freckle Cosmetics, £17*

"If I'm wearing a lot of make-up I add fake freckles to give the illusion of bare skin. I've got about three naturally but make out it's over 20."



Nair Nourish Upper Lip Kit, £2.77

"I used to be like 'Who uses hair-removal cream!?' But now I always do on my upper lip, as waxing makes me red and sore."



Barry M On Point Waterproof Precision Eyeliner, £4.59

"Liquid liner was a big thing in my school, but I had to spend hours trying to get it right. I still use the same one."





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move

STRETCH YOUR BODY AND YOUR MIND



Can you really target period pain?

Ever paced around Boots in a panic because the period-targeting pain relief is out of stock? If yes, we have welcome news: those pink boxes are little more than marketing. "The drugs are usually the same – the original brand is equally good for period pain," says Jamie Urquhart, superintendent pharmacist at Now Patient. He suggests ibuprofen or aspirin (over paracetamol), or Femina Ultra if your cramps are really bad as it contains naproxen, which is anti-inflammatory. Sweet relief.



Do you really supplement

More of us are by ingesting supplements in the UK than ever before but are they helping



Psst...

Don't forget to consider consulting a doctor or pharmacist before you start taking a supplement.



need a for that?

more harm than good? Amelia Jean Jones investigates

Fruity gums that make your hair shine, fizzy tablets that stop a cold in its tracks and moreish syrups to boost energy when you're burnt out... these days, supermarket supplement aisles look more like wellness sweet shops.

It's a market that's booming. According to research,* 59% of Brits took vitamins, minerals and supplements in 2018, with 38% of women likely to pop a pill every day.

But do we really need them? Or are we pouring our money into something that, at best, is simply a placebo and, at worst, is actually harming us? Most experts agree that if you already have enough of a nutrient in your body, taking extra via supplements cannot add any health benefits. And a US study† estimated that 23,000 patients a year attended accident and emergency departments after suffering adverse events related to dietary supplements between 2004 and 2013 – with one in four being young adults aged 20 to 34. Plus, supplements aren't as strictly regulated as medicines, meaning "a product only has to contain a tiny amount of a certain ingredient to make a health claim about it," explains Simon White, chief nutritional scientist at supplement brand Lyma. "The rest of the ingredients can be cheap, and contain harmful fillers to bulk out the product." More worryingly, they can also clash with prescribed medicines. But surely a £442 million UK market isn't built on nothing? Are there times when you *should* pop a pill? We spoke to the experts to get the lowdown on the most common ailments, supplements, and more. >



For... vegans

The supplement:

VITAMIN B12

"Needed for nerve-tissue health, brain function and the production of red blood cells, vitamin B12 is one of the only supplements that is essential for vegans as it's only available from animal products," explains Dr Emma Derbyshire, a registered public health nutritionist.

Need-to-know:

"If you've been prescribed acid-reflux medication, like lansoprazole, be wary," says Dr Derbyshire. "It can block the absorption of vitamins like B12 by reducing the amount of acid that is needed to absorb them." Taking medicines like these has been linked to a 65% increased chance of B12 deficiency.[‡]

Stock up:

If you need to take B12 and antacids, take a liquid B12 supplement that is absorbed rather than digested in the stomach. Try **Solgar Liquid B12 2000µg With B-Complex** (£14.49, Solgar.co.uk).



For... the always tired

The supplement:

IRON

It's what made Popeye so strong, and is essential for blood production. A deficiency can lead to health problems, including anaemia and fatigue. "While female athletes and pregnant women are particularly at risk, iron levels fluctuate

with your usual menstrual cycle and those with a heavy flow might need a monthly boost to keep themselves topped up," says Simon White.

Need-to-know:

If you have a nutritionally balanced diet, full of iron-rich leafy greens and red meat, it's unlikely you'll need a supp. Women need 14.8mg of iron a day – but if you have heavy periods, you may need more.

"Iron is a fat-soluble mineral, meaning that if you take too much it can build up in your system and cause constipation, vomiting and stomach pain," White explains. In extreme cases, it can damage

organs and may increase the risk of diabetes, heart attack and cancer. Stick to the dose recommended by your GP or pharmacist and you're unlikely to overload. What's more, when iron is combined with some antibiotics or types of malaria medication, the amount of both that can be absorbed into the body is reduced.

Stock up:

BetterYou Iron Oral Spray (£9.95, Lloydspharmacy.com) is a novel form of iron that boosts absorption while side-stepping the tummy ache some iron supplements can cause, but don't take it unless your doctor recommends it.



For... gym bunnies

The supplement:

POTASSIUM

Yep, the one in bananas. You should already get enough in your diet to support your blood pressure, bone and muscle strength and heart health, and regulate your fluid balance. You might need more if you've had sickness, tummy troubles, or if you're sweating it out regularly in the gym.

Need-to-know:

"If you're a regular user of ibuprofen or anxiety-controlling beta-blockers, be careful taking potassium," says Alistair Murray, lead pharmacist at Echo. These drugs cause the body to retain potassium, meaning levels can rise too steeply. Too much potassium can cause your heart to beat irregularly.

Stock up:

Got the OK from your GP? **MyVitamins Electrolyte Plus (£9.99, Myvitamins.com)** has potassium, chloride, magnesium, calcium and sodium to keep you hydrated.



For... the forever sick

The supplement:

VITAMIN C

The body can't produce vitamin C, so we need to get it from our diet. It's touted as a cold cure, but the expert verdict is mixed. There's little evidence to say it can prevent a cold, but it may help shorten the duration.

Need-to-know:

Adults aged 19 to 64 need 40mg of vitamin C a day so a single serving of orange juice or broccoli is enough to hit your RDA. "Supplementing more than that through the winter can be pro-inflammatory, potentially causing diarrhoea and making you feel worse," explains Professor Greg Whyte, director at London's Centre For Health & Human Performance. Fizzy vitamin C tablets can contain up to 1/6 of your RDA of salt, while some contain caffeine.

Stock up:

Try **Fast-C With Bio-Quercetin Phytosome (£25, Victoriahealth.com)**. This formula is alkalising, so it's gentler on your stomach.



For... when you're down

The supplement:

ST JOHN'S WORT

SJW is a low-level, natural alternative to standard antidepressants. Research suggests it can increase the activity of feel-good brain chemicals like serotonin.

Need-to-know:

This plant-based remedy can play havoc with prescribed medications, including the contraceptive pill, sleeping pills and, ironically, anti-depressants. Steer clear until you've spoken to a doctor or pharmacist.

Stock up:

On vitamin D. Studies have shown links between low levels of the sunshine vitamin and depression. And a spokesperson from Public Health England has advised that UK residents may not get enough vitamin D from sunlight (and diet) in winter, so should consider a supplement. Vitamin D comes without the drawbacks of SJW, but the NHS advises taking no more than 1,000mg daily – and be particularly cautious if you're pregnant, breastfeeding or under 18.



Vitamin tips

1

When visiting your GP or pharmacist bring a list of all the dietary supplements and medications you take, including the dosages and how often you take them. Some people find it easier to bring all their supplements and medications along in a sandwich bag.

2

Should your levels of the vitamins you're supplementing return to normal, review them with your doctor or pharmacist and, if advised, stop taking them. Always tell them if your health status has changed through illness, pregnancy or breastfeeding.

3

You get what you pay for. Cheap supplements might contain small amounts or low-quality ingredients – or both. A cheaper 100mg vitamin C tablet may have lower-quality vitamin C in than a more expensive one of the same weight.

4

Try to take any medication at least two hours before or after supplements to avoid negative interactions. Take your vitamins and minerals with food, but take herbal supplements away from food for optimal absorption. ♦

Life in my body... with vitiligo

Natalie Ambersley, 37, an executive assistant from London, talks about living with the skin-pigmentation condition



Appearing on Victoria Derbyshire's TV Show

would work, and it gave me an increased risk of skin cancer. The appointments were quite disruptive too – twice a week for a year – but I wanted to try it. Three months in, I began to get my natural skin colour back, and after a year, I finished the treatment. I still had vitiligo, but I was now 30% affected, rather than 75%.

That was seven years ago, and although the patches are starting to return I won't go back to treatment. A few years ago I was invited on a TV show to talk about my condition. At first I was adamant that I couldn't do it, but eventually I came round to the idea and that was a turning point. After the programme aired, people started to send me supportive messages and I had the realisation that it was OK.

Now, I feel liberated. I look down at my legs and think I'd be horrified if I woke up and my vitiligo wasn't there; it would be like I had erased something that made me who I am. I'm proud to have a skin condition I now love. For support, contact The Vitiligo Society; Vitigosociety.org

When I was three, I developed a small white patch on the back of my hand. Back then, vitiligo (a condition where pigment is lost from the skin) wasn't well known, so when my parents took me to the doctor, they were just told to keep an eye on it. By the time I was five, and had my vitiligo diagnosed, 75% of my body was covered in white patches. I was too young to know what was

going on, but my parents were worried and tried to find treatment for me. I was in and out of hospital a lot – it became like a second home. By the time I was 12, I'd been through so many rounds of tablets, creams and homeopathy that I felt like a guinea pig. I told my parents I wanted to stop, and they were so supportive.

In my teenage years, though, I grew more uncomfortable. It seemed like I was the

only person in the world with this condition. When we had swimming lessons at school, I'd forge letters from my mum so I didn't have to go. On holiday with friends in Spain, I'd be boiling in thick tights and a blazer. If someone stared at me, I'd immediately cover up more.

When I turned 30 I decided to try treatment

again. I'd heard of something called UVB narrowband therapy, where you stand in a booth emitting UVB light to try to help your skin repigment. There was only a 50-50 chance it

WHAT HELPS NATALIE

1 Put yourself first
I was so busy worrying about what people thought that I missed out on a lot. But I was the only one suffering, and once I realised that, I started living my life.

2 Use social media
Seeing yourself represented helps to remind you you're not alone, and that you're part of something positive. I like @livingdappled and @vitiligo_and_me on Instagram.

3 Talk to others
There were times when I had questions and I would DM people on Instagram for guidance. Connecting with others who understood how I felt made such a huge difference.

Vote now for your favourite influencer!

The shortlist is in for the Cosmopolitan Influencer Awards, in association with Pandora. All you need to do? Tell us who you want to win!

Last month we gave you the opportunity to tell us who you think is the brightest new star of social media, as nominations for our "Best Newcomer" category at the forthcoming Cosmopolitan Influencer Awards, in association with Pandora, were open for business.

We've taken in all your suggestions and now the shortlist of five is ready. Head over to [Cosmopolitan.com/uk/influencerawards2020](https://www.cosmopolitan.com/uk/influencerawards2020) and vote for your favourite, from 10am on Monday 2nd March until 10am on Friday 27th March, when voting closes.

Not only will you get to have your say about who wins on the night, but you'll also have the chance to be entered into a competition for one "fanfluencer" and a friend to attend the awards on Tuesday 12th May and spend the evening in a luxurious London hotel. Terms and conditions apply.*

So... what are you waiting for?

It's time to get voting!

★ FANCY A NIGHT LIVING THE INFLUENCER LIFESTYLE?

Head to [Cosmopolitan.com/uk/influencerawards2020](https://www.cosmopolitan.com/uk/influencerawards2020) to find out how you could bag an invite to our party and spend a night in a luxury hotel*



**COSMOPOLITAN
INFLUENCER
AWARDS
2020
WITH
PANDORA**

*TERMS AND CONDITIONS: Best Newcomer Award, The Cosmopolitan Influencer Awards 2020 in association with Pandora. Voting opens at 10am on Monday 2nd March and closes at 10am on Friday 27th March 2020. Incorrect votes and votes received after the closing date will not be considered. The nominations with the most votes will be shortlisted for the award by our Cosmopolitan judges and editors. By placing a vote, voters have the opportunity to opt in to enter our competition to win a night's stay in London for two people and two tickets to the Cosmopolitan Influencer Awards 2020, taking place on Tuesday 12th May 2020. This competition is open to UK residents aged 18 years and over. No purchase necessary. Only one entry per person. Hearst's decision is final in every situation. For full terms and conditions, visit [Cosmopolitan.com/uk/influencerawards2020](https://www.cosmopolitan.com/uk/influencerawards2020).

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(*AKA people who are lazy but also want to eat healthily)

Say bye to burnt toast and dry breakfast bars with these easy recipes by Annie Morris from cereal company Spoon



VEGGIE FRITTATA

Serves	Cals	Sat fat	Sugar
2	202	2g	7g

Ingredients: 1 leek, 300g tomatoes, 150g mushrooms, 1 fresh red chilli, 4 eggs, handful of basil leaves.
Method: Preheat the oven to 200°C and chop the leek, tomatoes, mushrooms and chilli as desired and set aside. Add 1 tbsp of oil to a large ovenproof pan at a medium to high heat. Whisk the eggs in a bowl and season. Fry the rest of the ingredients for 5 to 10 minutes. Pour the eggs over the top of the fried veggies, creating an even layer across the pan. Place the pan in the oven and bake for 20 minutes. Take out of the oven and leave to cool for 10-15 minutes before removing from the pan with a spatula. Slice into quarters and place into an airtight container, then pop in the fridge overnight.



SUMMER BERRY MUESLI

Serves	Cals	Sat fat	Sugar
1	507	3.5g	26g

Ingredients: 50g oats, 100ml coconut yoghurt, 100ml water, generous squeeze of lime juice, ¼ tsp vanilla extract.
Toppings: Blueberries, freeze-dried berries, toasted flaked almonds, maple syrup to taste.
Method: Mix all the ingredients together (aside from the toppings) and put them into an airtight container, then refrigerate them overnight – or for at least four hours. In the morning, pop the mixture into a bowl and add your toppings – as much as you like of each. It's worth investing in some (watertight) jars or containers for this – they'll save your breakfast from leaking all over your bag and ruining your stuff... and your entire day.



BEETROOT FETA MUFFINS

Makes	Cals	Sat fat	Sugar
12	177	2.3g	1.9g

Ingredients: ½ red onion (chopped), 80ml olive oil, 220g spelt flour, 2 tsp cumin seeds, 1 tsp baking powder, 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda, 150ml milk, 200g beetroot (peeled and roughly grated), 50g cooked chickpeas, handful of watercress (chopped), 100g feta cheese.
Method: Preheat the oven to 200°C and grease a 12-hole muffin tin. Fry the onion in a splash of olive oil until soft. Remove from heat. In a large bowl, place the flour, cumin, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda and a pinch of salt and mix. Add the milk, the remaining olive oil and beetroot and whisk to form a sticky dough. Stir in the chickpeas and watercress, and spoon the mixture into the muffin tin. Crumble the feta on top.



BANANA AND COFFEE LOAF

Serves	Cals	Sat fat	Sugar
12	215	3g	12g

Ingredients: 2 bananas, 100g coconut or buckwheat flour, 100g ground almonds, 20g sunflower seeds, 75g pecan nuts (roughly chopped), 1 ½ tsp ground cinnamon, ¼ tsp vanilla bean powder (or extract), 1 tsp baking powder, ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda, 2 tsp instant coffee, 3 large eggs, 125ml pure maple syrup, 60ml olive oil.
Method: Preheat the oven to 180°C, and grease a loaf tin. Peel and mash the bananas in a bowl. In a separate bowl, combine the flour, almonds, sunflower seeds, 60g of pecans,

cinnamon, vanilla bean powder, baking powder and bicarbonate of soda. In another bowl, dissolve the coffee in 1 tsp of boiling water, then whisk in the eggs, syrup and oil. Pour this into the dry mixture and gently mix. Add in the banana. If the batter is too wet, add a little flour; if it's too dry, drizzle in some more oil. Spoon the mixture into your tin. Top the loaf with the rest of the pecans and bake for 20-25 minutes, until you can insert a knife and it comes out clean. Allow to cool in the tin for 10 minutes, then move to a wire rack. Serve with yoghurt or on its own with a cup of coffee.

Want more breakfast ideas? Nutritionists share what they eat at [Cosmopolitan.com/uk/healthybreakfast](https://www.cosmopolitan.com/uk/healthybreakfast)

How to nail the perfect downward dog

It's a yoga classic, but are you doing it right? Yeh Yoga founder Emily Harding explains how to get down...

YOUR STARTING POSITION

Begin in a high plank, with your hands shoulder-width and feet hip-width apart, heels pushing back.

From here, keep your hands and feet exactly where they are, and start to lift your hips up and backwards towards the sky, sending your chest towards your thighs.

YOUR NECK AND GAZE

Tuck your chin down towards your chest to lengthen the neck. Look towards your belly-button or, if that's too intense, move your gaze down to your knees. Draw your shoulders away from your ears, so you're not scrunching up your neck. Don't strain your head through your arms – this will only create tension in the neck and shoulders.

YOUR ARMS

Ensure your arms are straight, strong and in line with your ears (your ears should be between your upper arms). Twist your elbows inwards towards the floor, which rotates the shoulders out to stretch the back.

YOUR HIPS

Lift them up and direct your chest towards your thighs – this opens up the shoulders and chest. Keep your pelvis neutral, it shouldn't vigorously tilt one way or another. Pushing your bum up and away from you slightly should keep your hips in the right position.

YOUR LEGS

The legs need to be hip-width apart, and lengthen down in a straight line behind you. Imagine pushing your heels towards the floor, but don't worry if they don't get there. Squeeze the front of your legs to activate your quads and lift your kneecaps. You're trying to find length through the back of your knees. If you have tight hamstrings, keep a soft bend in the knee. This can also help straighten your back if you find that it's rounding.

YOUR HANDS

Keep them shoulder-width apart, with the fingers spread as wide you can and your middle fingers pointing forwards. Your wrists shouldn't hurt; if they do, make sure your hands are facing forwards and you're not just driving the base of your palm into the mat. Press firmly down between your index finger and thumb to stop you slipping and take the weight away from your wrists.

YOUR FEET

The outer edges of your feet should run parallel, which will make you very slightly pigeon-toed and help to engage the front of your legs. Grip the ground firmly with all 10 toes; it should feel like you're trying to pull your mat apart.

FYI, try to prioritise finding a straighter back over straight legs.

Try before you train... yoga mats

Team Cosmo bends over backwards to find you the best ones



YogaMatters Eco Everyday Rise Yoga Mat, £45

It's super-light and easy to carry tucked under my arm (although it would be easier if it had a carry strap), but that came with drawback for me: as it was so thin, I felt it didn't offer much cushioning, and during some moves the floor felt too hard beneath my (admittedly) sensitive knees. But it gripped well and didn't budge through an hour-long session, plus I loved the pretty, understated design.

Catriona Features Director



Liforme Purple Earth Yoga Mat, £100

If, like me, you love yoga but find holding positions hard (hi, sweaty palms), this is the mat for you. It feels rubbery, grips the floor tightly and is so well-cushioned you could probably nap on it. The design helps with nailing alignment too, making you feel 107% more pro. It's heavy, but worth it (for the chance of a mid-child's-pose doze alone).

Steph Deputy Chief Sub-Editor



Manduka Prolite Long & Wide Yoga Mat, £90

Transporting this mat around is no issue due to it being so lightweight, but it is bulkier than others because of its ultra-long length. Being 5ft 10in, this is a feature I loved, especially during the pesky plank pose. It has great grip, too – there was no fidgeting around, desperately trying to keep my sweaty hands firmly on the mat – but I would say it's on the thinner side and has the potential for sore knees.

Sophie Bookings Editor



Nike Training Mat 2.0, £53.95

This is the most weightless mat I've ever used – and this is coming from someone who purchases an excessive number of the things and travels heavy. It's the perfect length for any pose, and if you have trouble with your knees, like me, or suffer from back problems then this is a foamy treat. An even stronger grip would have been the icing on the cake.

Khadra Fashion Cupboard Intern



Jade Yoga Voyager Yoga Mat, £36.75

I love doing hot yoga, but my hands get sweatier than a pair of leather trousers after a good night out. I hate the messiness of chalk and it always means a big clean-up after class, which tends to undo my zen. The Voyager stops any slipping about and has really improved my posture. It's so grippy it's as if the whole mat is coated in chalk. It's also really lightweight and rolls up small, making it easy to take anywhere and everywhere.

Amy Fashion Director



Sweaty Betty Super Grip Yoga Mat, £65

As well as providing good grip, this mat felt really durable, so it would be great for any adventurous yogis (mountaintop headstands, anyone?). However, this does mean it's less squashy than I'd usually like, causing my knees to give in at the first sign of a low lunge. Anything for the perfect outdoor Insta shot, though – right?

Emily Features Intern

PRICES TO PUT A SPRING IN YOUR STEP

£25

Denim Jumpsuit

Mini Dress

£16

£14

Trainers

£15

Block Heels

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style

Friendship never ends

More '90s than "The Rachel", tiny bags and your Leonardo DiCaprio poster, friendship bracelets are back in a BIG way. Wear as few or as many as you want, and if you break up with your BFF, just pop it in the bin. Though we really hope that doesn't happen because, in the words of a very famous poet,* "A day without a friend is like a pot without a single drop of honey left inside."

Left, top to bottom: "Mad Love", around £34, Roxanne Assoulin. Diamante, £55, Pandora. Braided, £12, Urban Outfitters. Beaded, £35, Anni Lu. Gold, £97, Nominations. Zigzag, £5, KnotalotUK at Etsy. Ceramic, £12, Urban Outfitters. "Love", around £113, Roxanne Assoulin.
Right, top to bottom: "No Bad Days", around £34, Roxanne Assoulin. Gold star, £20, Estella Bartlett. "BFF", £7.92, OutOfOfficeDesigns at Etsy. Daisy beaded, around £34, Roxanne Assoulin. Gold, £39, Merci Maman. Pearl rainbow, £36, Anni Lu. Zigzag, £5, KnotalotUK at Etsy

*WINNIE THE POOH. WORDS AMY BANNERMAN. PHOTOGRAPH ABBIE RODEN. STYLING MADDY ALFORD. MODELS SONIA RUPRAH, SOPHIE LEEN. NAILS NON-TOXIC NAIL. WITH THANKS TO STILL LONDON, STILL-LONDON.COM



Best DRESSED guest

Unsure what constitutes “smart casual”? Or “cocktail” (aside from accessorising with a mojito)? Let Olivia Smith (@asos_olive) take the “say what?” out of wedding-guest style

Styling MADDY ALFORD
& OLIVIA SMITH

Photographs MICK DE LINT

Dress, £39; bag (just seen), £25, both Topshop. Chain necklace, £22, Accessorize. Other necklaces and rings, Olivia's own. Sandals, £70, Vagabond

The beach wedding

Think outside the kaftan box – a gingham midi dress is just as summery. And flat sandals only please (safety first, kids)



- 1 Dress, £139.99, H&M 2 Bag, £39.99, Mango 3 Dress, £40, V By Very 4 Ring, £45, Albert Coll 5 Hair slides, £12 for three, Accessorize 6 Dress, £45, Urban Outfitters 7 Bag, £35, V By Very 8 Dress, £110, Hush 9 Sandals, £145, Whistles 10 Dress, £95, Guess 11 Earrings, £45, Essentiel Antwerp 12 Sandals, £89, Hobbs 13 Bag, £79, Whistles 14 Dress, £79, Warehouse 15 Ring, £63, Albert Coll

The black-tie wedding

One notch lower than white tie on the formal scale, you'll still want a below-the-knee dress – plus beads, pearls or sequins



- 1 Earrings, £55, Essentiel Antwerp 2 Dress, £335, Rixo 3 Clutch, £110, Hobbs 4 Sandals, £22.40, Boohoo
 5 Mules, £49.99, Mango 6 Dress, £79.99, TK Maxx 7 Necklace, £119, Swarovski 8 Dress, £85, ASOS Design
 9 Earrings, £9, Accessorize 10 Dress, £85, Warehouse 11 Ring, £55, Pandora 12 Dress, £16, Boohoo 13 Dress, £48, Lipsy 14 Earrings, £80, Bimba Y Lola 15 Ring, £125, Pandora 16 Sandals, £185, Reiss 17 Clutch, £60, Dune

Dress,
£42, ASOS.
Small hoops,
£35, Scream
Pretty. Big
hoops,
around £52,
Luv AJ



Dress, £29,
Bershka. Earrings,
from top: £12,
Claire's; £15,
Accessorize;
around £33, Luv
AJ. Necklace,
around £157,
Hermina Athens.
Bag, £32,
Skinnydip. Shoes,
£120, Dune



The “cocktail” wedding

Essentially, this translates as “party”, so pick your fave LBD (or any cute above-the-knee dress) and go wild with accessories



- 1 Bag, £49.99, Mango 2 Dress, £59, Miss Selfridge 3 Dress, £215, Essentiel Antwerp 4 Shoes, £160, 8 By Yoox 5 Earrings, £68, Free People 6 Dress, £40, Nasty Gal 7 Dress, £45, Nasty Gal 8 Clutch, £29.99, Zara 9 Dress, £24, Boohoo 10 Dress, £45, Laura Ashley at Urban Outfitters 11 Necklace, £129, Swarovski 12 Mules, £45, River Island 13 Headband, £12, Arket 14 Earrings, £9, Accessorize 15 Dress, £69, Warehouse 16 Dress, £85, ASOS Design 17 Mules, £135, Reiss

The smart-casual wedding

Relaxed tailoring and easygoing dresses are both appropriate – just add pastel accessories and megawatt earrings



- 1 Bag, £17.99, Mango 2 Trousers, £25, ASOS 3 Blazer, £20, Primark 4 Sandals, £35, Miss Selfridge 5 Headband, £19.50, Oliver Bonas 6 Blazer, £59, Warehouse 7 Shorts, £15, Primark 8 Blazer, £119, Guess 9 Bag, £69.99, H&M 10 Sandals, £69.99, H&M 11 Shorts, £36, Warehouse 12 Sandals, £145, Whistles 13 Ring, £60, Pandora 14 Trousers, £69, Guess 15 Blazer, £295, Gerard Darel 16 Blazer, £35, ASOS 17 Earrings, £6, M&Co



Blazer, £99.99;
trousers, £79.99,
both H&M Studio.
Earrings, around
£95, Misho
Designs at Yoox.
Bag, £45, Charles
& Keith

Model Olivia
Smith; Instagram
@asos_olive. Hair
and make-up Lucy
Gibson at Frank
Agency, using
Charlotte Tilbury.
Photographer's
assistants Fraser
Thorne and Chris
Kennedy. Styling
assistant Simone
Williams

How to know when a trend is on its way out

Gather round to mourn the loss of... anything that falls into these categories

Yes, one moment neon cycling shorts and creepy little sunglasses will be THE thing you need to have immediately. But faster than you can say “I don’t actually have a bicycle”, they’re over. When you’re shopping in a trend-focused way, it’s helpful to keep in mind the ones that will stand the test of time – we’re talking years, not weeks. It’s good for your bank account *and* good for the planet. For now, though, here’s how to tell if something is in – or on its way out...

Your mum starts to notice it's A Thing.

So some matriarchs do “get it”, but most aren’t watching fashion shows or checking out what influencers wear. If they’ve noticed a trend, it’s likely not long for this world.

SHELF LIFE:
7 MONTHS

It's in kids' stores.

Sorry, children. You are our future, but your clothes are always a season or two behind. By the time a trend reaches a children’s shop it means it’s officially OVER.

SHELF LIFE:
6 MONTHS

DENIM IS (ALMOST) FOREVER

That boilersuit you’ve been eyeing? Snatch it up – yes, even on sale. Jean fads stick around for a *long* time, because they’re just so wearable. Slap five more years onto any of-the-moment denim trends.

COSMO'S OFFICIAL RANKING OF CURRENT TRENDS

In order of staying power...



1 GONNA BE HERE A WHILE

2 PUFF SLEEVES

3 ALICE BANDS

4 PRAIRIE DRESSES

5 NEON

SQUARE-TOE SHOES

Celebs start wearing the opposite thing.

If you find yourself contemplating purchasing teeny-tiny sunglasses but notice that famous people are now wearing giant face shields, best to leave those mini frames in the display case.

SHELF LIFE:
3 MONTHS (IF YOU'RE LUCKY)

There's an Instagram or Twitter account dedicated to it.

A trend with an "@ " has reached peak market saturation. Get in on it quickly or you'll look dated.

SHELF LIFE:
3 MONTHS, TOPS

It's turned into Halloween costume inspo.

If wearing said look will mean you get asked whether you've just woken up from a coma and entirely missed 31st October, then give it a swerve (until it's actually Halloween, obviously).

SHELF LIFE:
0 MONTHS – THIS WAS DONE YESTERDAY

BUT IF IT'S A BIKINI...

Swimsuits tend to have longer life spans (we don't know why this is true, it just is), and patterns and styles that may seem old in regular life – you know, when you're not submerged in water – still feel fresh in one- or two-piece form. Add another year onto beachwear that fits into any of these categories.

A QUICK NOTE ON COLOURS AND PATTERNS

Super-specific printed items, like a leopard midi skirt, have a shorter shelf life than animal print in general. So, if you're unsure, consider staying in the same family but mixing it up a bit – go for neon orange instead of hyper-trendy neon green, or a giraffe or tiger print instead of leopard. This will add two more years onto the life of your purchase.

6

CLASSICS THAT HAVE STOOD THE TEST OF TIME



NAVY BLAZER



WHITE SHIRT



LEVI'S 501s



RAY-BAN WAYFARERS



BLACK T-SHIRT



BRETON TOP



6

7

8

9

10

ANIMAL-PRINT EVERYTHING

TIE-DYE

SOCK-TRAINERS

MINI BAGS

"FUGLY" SHOES

ALMOST GONE

Bossy boots

(and trainers, and flats)

The very best work-appropriate shoes for chasing that promotion – or just the morning bus

Compiled by MADDY ALFORD



£89.99, Zara



£22, Boohoo



£34.99, Bonprix



£45, Simply Be

Ankle boots

Heeled boots add confidence on your strut to the coffee machine. Sunglasses indoors: optional.

If in doubt, just add more black leather



£105, Office



£179, Senso



£40, Dorothy Perkins



£110, Vagabond



£79.99, Mango



£119, Dr Martens at Schuh



Sleek flats

Save your sole(s) in stylish flats. These ones are so nice, you wouldn't dream of shoving them in your handbag and ditching for heels.

Cropped trousers and bare ankles fashion up your flats



£80, Dune London



£65, M&S Autograph



£79, John Lewis



£35, Head Over Heels



£35, V By Very



£175, LK Bennett



£99, Arket



£79.99, Mango



£129, Kurt Geiger London



£120, GH Bass & Co



£59.99, Mango



£89.99, John Lewis



£135, Arket



£49, Charles & Keith



£19.99, Bonprix



£125, Iris & Ink at The Outnet

Kitten heels

Keep it commute-friendly (but still on trend) with low heels. Purring to yourself: sure, why not?

Fashion proverb: white shoes for day, promotion on the way



£85, Dune London



£139, Kurt Geiger London



£39.99, Zara



£25, M&S



£159, Senso

Cool trainers

Lighten up casual Fridays with clean classics. Ideal for a happy-hour pint when you clock off, too.

Dazzling sneaks + dog + suiting = major fashion points



£75, Gola



£25, Miss Selfridge



£75, Saucony



£85, John Lewis



£60, Superga



£110, Jigsaw



£52, Vans at Schuh



£70, Lacoste at Schuh



£80, Converse



£70, Adidas at Schuh



£104.95, Nike

From battered to box-fresh

It's not chic turning up to the office in trainers that look like you completed an Ironman on your way in. Here, The Restory, an aftercare service for luxury fashion, explains how to keep them clean 365 days a year

★
Nike Air Force 1 '07,
£80, Schuh

1

Keep it simple

If, or when, they get muddy, use a damp cloth to wipe away any superficial dirt on the leather. Avoid using baby wipes on trainers, as these often contain lanolin or other lotions, which can do more harm than good.

2

Suede aid

For suede trainers, we recommend using a rubber brush specifically made for suede. This will not only help remove the dust and build-up that suede typically attracts, but will also revive the nap of the suede (technical term for the grain of the fabric).

3

Pearly whites

Use an old toothbrush to clean the sole, dipping it in soapy water – this will allow you to get deep into the sole markings. No toothpaste necessary.

4

Fill your boots (or trainers)

If they are wet from inevitable rain, stuff your trainers with a small towel or face cloth to help absorb moisture and retain shape. Then leave them to dry in a well-ventilated area – do not put them next to artificial heat, such as a radiator. Take the stuffing out after 24 hours to avoid them getting musty.

5

Canvas shoes in crisis?

Here's a genius cleaning hack from Cat Mom (@sarahtraceyy) on Twitter: "Rinse shoes, mix 1:1.5 of baking soda & detergent, scrub w toothbrush, let it sit for a while, rinse, put in washer, baby powder/dry."

6

Lather up those laces

The laces attract dust and dirt that is not as easy to simply wipe off. Remove to soak them in soapy warm water and, if white, add a little stain remover then put them in the washing machine. Be sure to iron the creases after.

7

Finishing touches

Once clean and dry, you can condition the leather by applying some Carnauba cream, which is a natural protective wax finish that will resist finger marks and scuffs. A little goes a long way – just ensure you buff with a clean cloth to avoid streak marks.

Do not use this on suede or nubuck.

8

Spray & put away

Store them well when they aren't being used – but ensure they're clean before you put them away; maybe use a shoe deodoriser or a dryer sheet for any lingering odours.

DEEP SCRATCHES AND SCUFFING

require expert colour and leather restoration. For more details, visit The-restory.com

**CLEAN-UP-QUICK KITS****GRENSON**

Pair Grenson's **William Green's Shoe Cleaning Tonic**, £13, with its **Polishing Cloth**, £3, to gently clean shoes.

**Liquiproof LABS**

Contains a protector, freshener, eco-cleaner, cloth and brush. **Shoe Care Kit**, £35, **Liquiproof LABS** at John Lewis

**TIMBERLAND**

Perfect for suede, nubuck and canvas trainers and can even be used on bags. **Dry Cleaning Kit**, £6, **Timberland**





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e a r n

WORK SMARTER, NOT HARDER



Get adaptable

You've heard of IQ (intelligence quotient) and EQ (emotional quotient), but how about AQ (adaptability quotient)? Coined by TED Talk speaker* Natalie Fratto, it's all about how flexible you are. No, we don't mean your ability to do the splits, but how open you are to change. "Regularly ask yourself and your colleagues, 'What would happen if...?'" says Fratto. "It trains your brain to prepare for a range of possible outcomes." Next up: TQ (tea-making quotient)?

WORDS JENNIFER SAVIN. PHOTOGRAPH RENDERED IN PLAY-DOH BY ELEANOR MACNAIR. *SEARCH "NATALIE FRATTO 3 WAYS TO MEASURE YOUR ADAPTABILITY - AND HOW TO IMPROVE IT" FOR MORE INFORMATION

An introvert's guide to thriving at work

Open-plan spaces, lean-in culture, shouty colleagues... sometimes it feels like offices are designed to help only extroverts succeed. But can you still kick ass in your career if you're an introvert? Of course, says Jessica Pan – you just need to know how...





I was 23 years old when I first discovered I was an introvert. I'd been working late every night, and one evening a co-worker came over to chat – and began discussing introverts and extroverts.

She had clocked something – I was staying late because of my introversion; after the office had emptied out, I was able to do my best work. I'd had no idea.

I'm not alone in this: a third to half of the population are thought to be introverts, yet society tends to favour extroverts. They are more likely to be chosen for leadership roles (even though there is no evidence they are better leaders), are better at self-promotion (leading to more recognition at work) and tend to have wider social circles (which leads to more opportunities and ideas). But this doesn't mean introverts are inferior. We are often self-starters and independent thinkers who are great at listening, observing and can concentrate on one task for hours at a time. We also tend to have big ideas and offer unique perspectives, which come from working alone.

Nonetheless, noisy, new-age, open-plan offices with constant interruptions and no quiet space can make being at work a nightmare for us. But you can thrive at work as an introvert – here's what I've learned...



IMPROVE YOUR SELF-PROMOTION SKILLS

It's tough, I get it, but reframe self-promotion as simply stating the facts, rather than bragging. Instead of opinion statements like "I'm an innovative designer", explain what you did and highlight the results with concrete numbers and facts. For example, "I was selected for X award, increased revenue by X amount and here are

a few examples of client feedback." That's not boasting – it's the truth. Remember: if you don't promote yourself, no one else will.



MAKE IT CLEAR WHEN YOU ARE IN THE ZONE

Wearing noise-cancelling headphones blocks out the chatter in a loud office, but also signals to others that you are concentrating on something



important, therefore limiting the likelihood of interruptions. You can also gently let people know when you are busy and don't want to be interrupted. A simple "I'd love to hear more – could we discuss it at 3pm?" conveys that you can be a team player and are more than happy to catch up – without sacrificing your productivity.



TRY TO WORK FROM HOME ONE DAY A WEEK

If you work in a more flexible, progressive office, having just one day to work from home could really make a difference to your mental health. Imagine: a day without having to be "on" all the time; without small talk, a crowded commute or constant interruptions. You'll also get SO much more done.



IMPROVE YOUR NETWORKING SKILLS

Yes, it's time to get your game face on for the sake of your career (and the rest of your life, tbh). A few basic pointers: networking gets easier the more you do it; don't expect every encounter to go perfectly; and, when in doubt,

use your introvert superpower: listening. Ask genuine questions and really pay attention to the answers – this will also take the focus off you. You'll be pleasantly surprised with what you find out and the connections you make – and you'll know a lot more about the person you've met than the average extrovert would. Also, it's easier if you arrive at events early, before the crowd feels impenetrable. And don't leave after 15 minutes – it takes a while for most people to warm up so, if you can, stay for at least an hour.



ADVOCATE FOR CREATIVE ALONE TIME

A recent study by scientists from the University At Buffalo in the US has shown that solitude can promote creativity, and this is especially true for introverts, who might find they freeze up in group brainstorming sessions, or don't want to publicly share their ideas. Introverts often excel at concentrating intensely for several hours at a time, so employers lose out on potentially amazing ideas by insisting on group work. In fact, research has consistently found that group brainstorming sessions yield fewer ideas than that of the same number of people who worked separately and then combined their ideas. Ahead of big meetings, ask if you can submit your ideas directly to the meeting leader and then go into the brainstorm.



PREPARE AND REHEARSE BEFORE BIG PRESENTATIONS

Here's an inescapable fact of life: most of us will have to speak publicly or give a presentation at work at some point in our careers. It's a great way to show off who we are, what we've been working on and our strengths. But, *ugh*, the anxiety. The fear of being in the spotlight may never go away but there are steps you can take to ease your nerves. If you have ample time to prepare, find an opportunity to rehearse in front of someone else (or better yet, a few people). This will allow you to experience many of your insecurities before the big presentation, which can help enormously on the day (even though the rehearsal will probably also be painful). By giving your talk a few times in front of others (ask a trusted friend), your confidence will grow. If you don't have someone with whom you feel comfortable sharing your presentation, it may be worth investing in a session with a speech coach.



KNOW YOURSELF

Figure out what makes you thrive. If you find that meeting new people, making cold calls and interacting with lots of

faces all day stresses you out, then it's probably best that you don't pursue a line of work that involves these tasks. While nearly every job will require some compromises, finding one that doesn't drain you or cause you to be in a frequent state of anxiety will transform your life. That might mean becoming a freelancer, changing vocations or merely switching to a smaller company, but whatever you decide, figure out what the ideal work environment and culture is for you. And also know that you can change the way things are. If you love your job, but find yourself frustrated by all the group work sessions, talk to your boss about allowing more time to work alone. If you speak up, you might be able to change the office for the better – for yourself and your fellow introverts. ♦

Sorry I'm Late, I Didn't Want To Come: An Introvert's Year Of Living Dangerously by Jessica Pan is out now in paperback

ARE YOU AN

INTROVERT?

If you answer "yes" to the majority of these questions, it's likely you lean more towards introversion than extroversion...

Do you prefer one-on-one conversations to talking in group settings?

After a few hours of socialising, do you feel drained and crave time alone to recharge?

Do you prefer to listen first and talk later at work meetings?

Are you a good listener and expect the same from others?

Do you prefer a few close friendships as opposed to many casual ones?

Do you feel energised after spending time alone?

Do you express yourself better in writing than speaking off the cuff?



How I got my job... as a theatre director

Miranda Cromwell, who co-directed the recent West End production of *Death Of A Salesman*, shares her secrets...

Your hobby can become your job

I found out I was dyslexic at college – it helped me realise that I learn in a different way. Throughout high school I'd do all the creative subjects – anything to stay as far from the traditional classroom as I could. I'm really drawn to making things with other people, rather than by myself, but as much as I enjoyed drama and the arts,

I didn't think there was any work in them. Even when I was studying performing arts [in Truro, Cornwall] I was selling double glazing in order to subsidise what I thought was a hobby. Back then I wasn't really aware of all the different jobs in theatre. The only way I thought I could make money from something I loved was to teach, so I went to an audition at the Bristol Old Vic theatre, to lead

their Young Company [ages five to 25].

Listen... but to the right people

In Bristol I became the director of the Young

"Finding a mentor is almost like making a friend"

Company. Early on, my students had suggested we put on a show and I was the one to organise and direct it. From there I began directing three to five shows a year – large productions with hundreds of people. One of the biggest lessons I learned was how to keep my own voice while also taking on advice. It's important to seek out feedback, but I used to listen to others' criticism so

much that I would change what I was doing and stop taking risks. Sometimes you just have to trust your gut and know that you're the expert on your own show. Now, if I get criticism, I ask myself, "Did I make the work for them? Are they the demographic of the audience?" If they are, then I take on the feedback. A 70-year-old reviewer isn't the right person to listen to if you made the show for teenagers.

Mentors are the same as friends

After eight years in Bristol I moved to London. My mum wasn't well, so I wanted to be closer to her, but I also felt I was ready to move on from youth theatre. It was like starting again from scratch. I sought out assistant director jobs, particularly with women I admired in the industry. Finding a mentor, I think, is almost the same as how you would make a friend – I would form a relationship with those who I was inspired by. I was in email contact with my mentors for years, making sure they knew I was keen to work with them while also emailing feedback when I went to see their shows. It was my work as an assistant that led to me being invited to co-direct *Death Of A Salesman* in the West End, which was the biggest production I've ever worked on.

TELL US A TINY BIT MORE...



What's your mantra?

Be kind, always. The pressure can be intense on a big production. I try not to let it escalate and allow time for fun.



What are you listening to?

I use audiobooks to research the lives of a play's characters. *The Warmth Of Other Suns*, by Isabel Wilkerson, really helped with *Death Of A Salesman*.



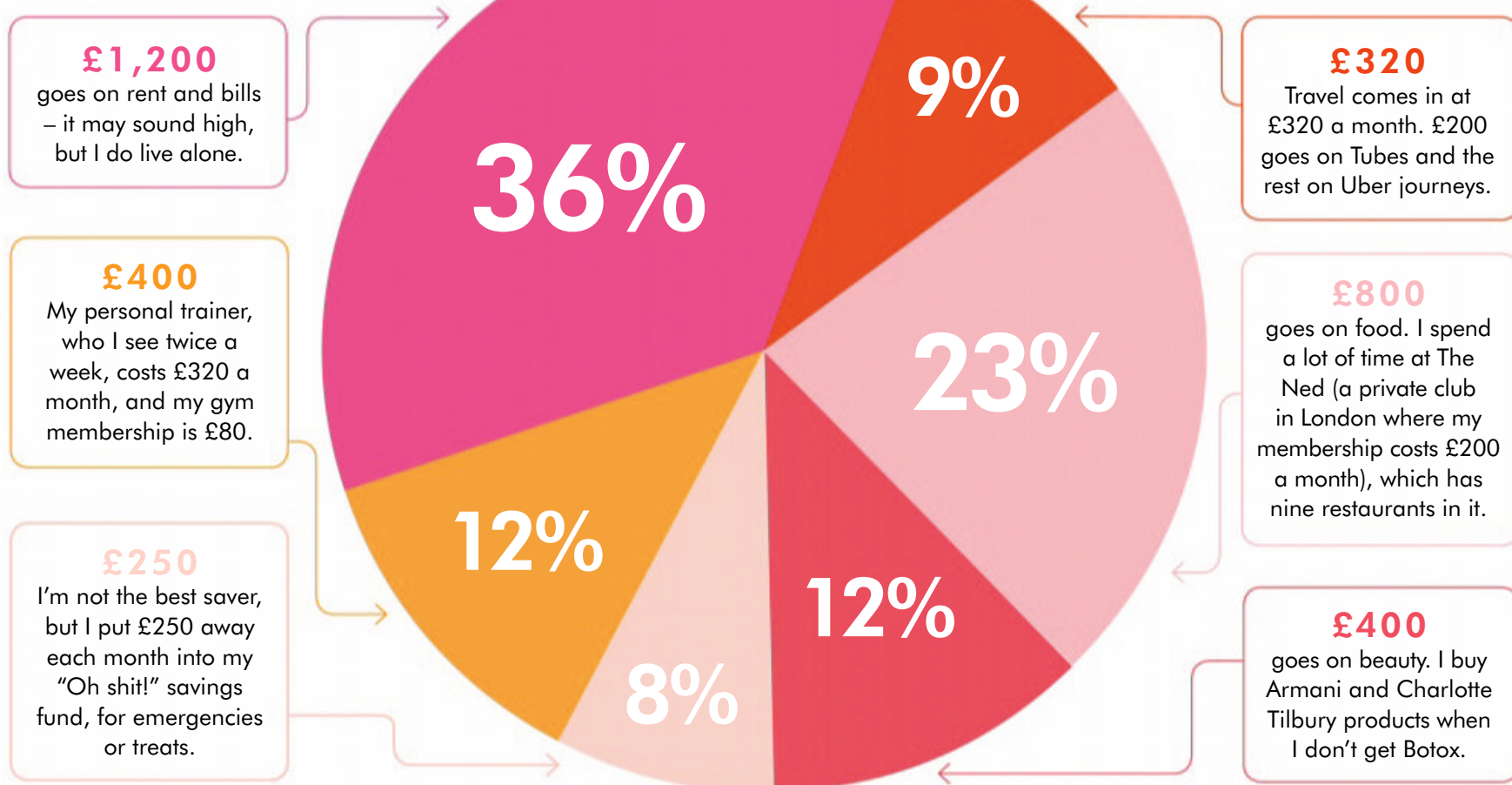
Where do you find inspiration?

Everywhere. As a director you need to find out how people think and speak, so I'll start conversations on the bus or stand in a queue listening to people chatting.

Spend it like a... city PA

She supports one of the country's biggest bankers, but how does 25-year-old Hannah,* PA to a CEO in London, manage her own budget?

WHERE THE MONEY GOES



ORGANISATIONAL WIZARD

You have to be thick-skinned and very flexible to do this job. Every boss I've had thinks I carry a magic wand... I deal with all aspects of their life, from managing their diary to buying their wife's birthday present. A Filofax and strong coffee are crucial.

BEST TO WORST BUYS

HELL YES

£2,000 on a Chanel tote bag. Dreamy.

HELL NO

£700 on a weekend away to Burnham Market, a village near the coast, for myself and someone that I now *definitely* wish I hadn't invited. It was basically a trip to Pointless-on-Sea.

As soon as I get my bonus, I put it into a savings account and use it to treat myself to holidays or designer gear throughout the year. I also have a credit card as a bit of a cushion too.

SWITCHING GEARS

Initially, I worked in sales at a car dealership. After a month, though, I told my boss I hated it but loved the company, and he made me his PA. Then, three years ago, I left to become PA to the CEO of a bank.

£55k

...IS MY ANNUAL SALARY
I also get a yearly bonus of around £10,000. Banking is definitely the industry to be a PA in if you're looking to earn big.

PARTY PEOPLE

It's not uncommon for the bill to reach £15,000 when I'm partying with the work lot (disclaimer: I don't pay any of this). Illicit substances are often floating around, too. When I'm out with the girls, I can spend between £200 and £600 in a high-end club.

Why I went into teach



ing



There aren't many jobs in which you get to make a real impact every single day or where you get instant, unfiltered feedback.

We spoke to four women about why they chose a career in the classroom and to find out more about school life – from the funny stories to the “whoa” moments ›



Shalina Patel

HISTORY TEACHER

Teaching, for me, is all about what I call the “whoa moments”. The other day, I was teaching a class about the Battle of Hastings in 1066. At the end of the lesson, I said to them that it was so significant because no one has conquered England since, and they all just went, “Whoa!” Those moments are so rewarding.

I went straight from completing my history degree into teaching training. I had volunteered as a teaching assistant while I was at university and I’d always really enjoyed it.

I’m especially committed to ensuring my students receive a diverse education. I teach them about feminism. Women can be invisible in textbooks, so it’s important to me that the students know about the women who were at the forefront of history.

Rob Lowe’s character in *The West Wing*, Sam Seaborn, gave this amazing speech about the importance of teachers. He said: “Education is the silver bullet. Education is everything.” I think education can change the world. It’s cheesy but true. That’s why we need really brilliant people in the profession.



Shalina Patel



Nassima Iggoute

Nassima Iggoute

SPANISH AND FRENCH TEACHER

I always thought I’d work in fashion, and I got a job as a bridal coordinator for Oscar de la Renta after university. But shortly after I started, I went on a trip to Uganda with my old school – it was working with a charity there for orphaned children. One day, I was asked if I wanted to teach the children the alphabet. It was scary, but I’d never felt anything like it before. When I got home, I decided to apply for teacher training – and I’ve never looked back.

I now teach at the same secondary school I went to myself. In a multicultural school, it’s nice for the students to see someone from a similar background. The minute they can relate to a teacher, something in them switches on.

The students can be very funny. Some of my Year 7s actually think I live in the school. I bumped into some of them in London’s Westfield shopping centre once and they were so shocked to see me in the outside world.

If you’re interested in teaching, I suggest getting some work experience: visit schools, observe lessons, speak to teachers. For me, it’s just the best job. When you teach a child something and they get it – that still blows my mind.

Claire Rowlinson

FRENCH AND MANDARIN TEACHER

After university, I travelled around the world, recruiting international students for different universities. But after six years, I wanted to settle in one place and I realised that the best part of my job was the interaction with young people, so I decided to train as a teacher.

The best moments in teaching are when you almost see a switch go on in a student's head. They forget all about trying to look cool and just want to find out more.

As I teach languages, the students seem to find it quite confusing that I'm from England. One day, we were talking about something in class and I said, "Back home..." A girl I've taught for three years asked if I was talking about back home in France. I'm from the Lake District.

This job is about so much more than just the subjects you teach, though. Hopefully, I'm developing inquisitive, open-minded, tolerant young people along the way.

You know how when you ask someone what their day was like, they often say, "Fine"? As a teacher, you never just say, "Today was fine." There's always something amazing that's happened, or a challenging behavioural situation, or a kid has said something really funny. Every day's different.

If you're inspired to learn more about a career in teaching and the training options available, search "Get Into Teaching"

Claire Rowlinson



Gabrielle Alexander

Gabrielle Alexander

HEAD OF MATHS AND YEAR 6

I worked in PR after leaving university, but I tutored a bit as well. I wanted a job with a real purpose, so I applied for teacher training. The first time I taught in a classroom, I realised, "This is where I fit."

When I was at primary school, I was in the bottom set for maths and it broke me, because I really love the subject. It was never something that came naturally to me and I think that's why I love teaching it now.

The best bit of the job is the children. They have no filter. You could be teaching a lesson about algebra and a child will put up their hand and say, "Miss, it's my auntie's birthday," and that will be it. They're so funny.

You can really make a difference in teaching. We're bringing up the next generation – people who could potentially find the cure for cancer or run the country. They need good role models. If you're going to work hard at something, why not choose something that could change a child's life? ♦





PARTY GIRL, PAPARAZZI QUEEN AND POP-CULTURE ICON – WHAT'S LIFE LIKE NOW

FOR PARIS HILTON? MARTHA HAYES STEPS INTO HER LA HOME TO FIND OUT ›

Photographs BERNARDO DORAL

PARIS HILTON

is perched on the banisters of her Beverly Hills mansion in a sparkly silver mini dress and matching stilettos, clutching a glass of champagne.

She's just come up with a new catchphrase, she announces, flicking her blonde hair to one side. "Sliving," she says. "Which is basically like 'slaying' and 'living.' So instead of 'killing it,' I'm 'sliving it'."

So far, so Paris. This is, after all, the woman who trademarked the phrase "That's hot" at the height of her fame in the addictive (and arguably groundbreaking) '00s reality show *The Simple Life*. In fact, when I arrive at the sprawling, gated home of the 'It'-girl-turned-entrepreneur, I feel like I'm stumbling into one of her house parties. The year could easily be 2004. Dance music blasts out of speakers into the luxurious open-plan lounge, and iconic portraits by David LaChapelle – the first photographer to shoot the great-granddaughter of the founder of Hilton Hotels – line the walls in opulent frames. And that's not all that's perfectly kitsch. There are large neon signs ("life is beautiful" reads one), a giant light-up Hello Kitty and five very distinctive prize pooches – Harajuku, Diamond Baby, Princess Paris Jr, Prince Hilton and Prince Baby Bear – all working the room.

"It's the best party house," smiles Hilton knowingly. She's not wrong. It's easy to forget this is just for the benefit of our photoshoot. From climbing the banisters to dangling her legs in the swimming pool after dark, Hilton's energy is almost superhuman. What's even more impressive is that, at 39 years old, she doesn't appear to have changed. The catchphrases, the miniature dogs, the silver dresses (who could >





forget the glitzy chain-mail number she wore to her 21st birthday bash that's been replicated ever since?) and the partying (which I can vouch for – I saw her at a Hollywood event the week before we meet) are all still going strong.

This may not make her a conventional “influencer” by today's standards, but there's no doubt Hilton was building her own brand – and capitalising on her enviable lifestyle – before we even had a word for it. “I was the first one to invent getting paid to party,” she says proudly, joining me in her home cinema after the shoot. “If I'm travelling, I love to optimise my time. Around 12 years ago I started making DJ-ing part of my career. Because if I'm gonna fly all the way to Dubai, I'd rather make the most of my trip by working in the day and then entertaining my fans at night.”

If Hilton sounds savvier than you'd expect, it's because there is a lot more to her than going out-out for a living. She might have become globally famous after appearing in a leaked sex tape (more on that later), but she now has a billion-dollar business empire with 19 product lines (from skincare to shoes) and 45 stores worldwide. She owns two beach clubs, completed her fifth stint DJ-ing at Ibiza super-club Amnesia last summer, and recently launched *Cooking With Paris* on YouTube and her 25th fragrance, *Electrify*. Hilton's perfume collection alone has sold over \$2.5 (£1.9) billion in 63 countries.

These are impressive figures for someone born into such privilege – she could probably have got away with not doing a day's work in her life. I wonder if Paris is still trying to prove herself to those who assume she's been handed everything. “I feel I have definitely proven myself,” she sighs, wrapping herself in a fleecy blanket after her dip in the pool. “For anyone who would say otherwise, they have no idea. I've worked so hard. My grandfather [Barron Hilton, who passed away last September] was someone I wanted to make proud and he was so proud of me carrying on the legacy but doing it my way.”

The first rule of business, she's learned, is making sure you have “the right team of people” around you. “Especially in Los Angeles, because it's very hard to trust people. I'm very lucky to have my parents watching out for me and not letting any weirdos get near me.” The Hiltons are a very close family. Paris is one of four siblings (including sister Nicky) and her parents have been together since her mum was 15. “My family always wanted me to want to do something with my life and to want to make them proud,” she explains. “I see a lot of people today who have never done anything and they're not happy with their lives because everything was just handed to them.”

“I'M SO PROUD OF KIM [KARDASHIAN] – SHE'S SWEET AND KIND AND BRILLIANT”

It's easy to assume Hilton wouldn't be very sympathetic towards today's influencers. But far from it. “I love that I was so ahead of my time and created this entire new genre and way of living life and making a living,” she explains. “Anyone with a phone can make their own brand. Whatever talents they have, they can use that platform to build a business. I feel very proud. Imitation is the highest form of flattery.”

Does that apply when people mimic her look? Kendall Jenner wore a custom-made LaBourjoisie dress to her 21st birthday party in 2016, which was practically a replica of the Julien Macdonald design Hilton wore to mark the same milestone. “I love seeing that look. I think every girl should wear that on their birthday. I think it's *the* birthday dress now. I love seeing it come to life again on different people. My

sister once wore it for Halloween.” What else does she think we wouldn't be wearing if it hadn't been for her? “Juicy Couture, Dior and LV monograms, camouflage print, Swarovski crystals,” she reels off. “Von Dutch hats are now back in style again, which is hilarious.”

Kim Kardashian arguably wouldn't be where she is today if it wasn't for her association with Hilton. Yes, before *Keeping Up With The Kardashians* launched in 2007 and made megastars out of the family, Kim appeared in *The Simple Life* as Hilton's stylist and friend.

Although the pair's friendship has reportedly had its ups and downs, Hilton says they have always been close. Still, it must have been satisfying when Kim went on record recently to credit Hilton as the secret to her success.

“We have conversations about it. She travelled the world with me and we have so many amazing memories,” says Hilton, citing sharing their first Ibiza experience in 2006. “What she's said is, ‘I really appreciate everything I've learned from you,’ and we just always talk [about] how proud of each other we are because we've known each other since we were little girls. She's sweet and kind and brilliant. I'm so proud of her and impressed with her becoming a lawyer; it's incredible that she's using her voice and her platform to help others.”

Although not as regularly in touch, Hilton insists she's also on good terms with Nicole Richie, her childhood friend and partner-in-crime on *The Simple Life*, which ran from 2003 to 2007 and saw the two socialites struggle to do low-paid jobs like working on a dairy farm or in a fast-food restaurant. In a recent interview with US news site *Deadline*, Hilton revealed, “Everything I've done before was me playing a character,” adding, “Sometimes it is annoying, people assuming I am the blonde airhead that I played on [*The Simple Life*].” >

“We laugh about it,” she tells me. “All the costumes last Halloween were people dressing up as us, so we were sending each other photos of different outfits people were wearing. The show is streaming in all these different places right now so everyone is rewatching it, which is awesome.” Rumours may be rife of a reboot, but there’s no money in the world that would persuade Hilton to get back into a pair of dirty overalls. “My schedule is just so insane,” she reasons. “I can’t imagine leaving my life and going to the middle of nowhere and doing that again. Plus the show is so timeless and iconic, you can’t remake that.” But isn’t there a plan to redo it with new people, I probe. “They asked me who I would recommend if I didn’t want to do it myself.” Who did she suggest? “I can’t tell! I’ve signed a confidentiality agreement.” So they *are* bringing it back? “I don’t know. I don’t think it’ll ever be what it was, but it will be fun to watch other people do it.”

Hilton’s love life has been a source of speculation and fascination since a sex tape in which she appears with her ex-boyfriend Rick Salomon was leaked in 2003 and later released as a DVD. Having weathered the storm of one of the earliest viral sex tapes, does Hilton have any advice, in our age of nude-photo scandals and social-media leaks, for protecting privacy? “I would say that none of these things are 100% secure so I wouldn’t have anything on there that’s private and that you wouldn’t want the world to see.”

Trust is, unsurprisingly, a big issue for Hilton. She’s had “a little bit” of therapy in the past, but implies she’s not able to properly take it up because “I don’t really trust anyone.” She’s been single for over a year now since ending her engagement to actor/model Chris Zylka and says this is the first time in her life she’s enjoyed being on her own. “It feels good to not have someone controlling me,” she explains. “With dating certain people, [there’s the risk of] not trusting them and the fear [that] if I go out of town they might do something to embarrass me. I feel lucky now to not have that fear because I’m independent.”

Was it a difficult decision to end the engagement? “No. It was the best decision I’ve ever made in my life. I just don’t think [he] was the right person and I feel like I’m an incredible woman and I deserve someone so amazing. It just didn’t feel right. I’ve worked way too hard to just give my life to someone. They have to be perfect.”

**“ENDING MY
ENGAGEMENT
WAS THE BEST
DECISION I’VE
EVER MADE”**

Whether it’s because of her protective family or her privileged life, there is something inherently youthful and curiously childlike about Paris Hilton. A real-life Peter Pan (but make it fashion); as if the rest of the world has grown up and moved on, but Hilton is still that 21-year-old in the chain-mail dress, frozen in time. I ask her if she feels old or young: “21 forever,” she murmurs.

“And I’m all natural. I feel so lucky that my mum always told me to stay out of the sun. I feel lucky I haven’t had to resort to what most people do in this town.”

Does she worry about getting older? “I don’t think about it.” In 2018 Netflix documentary *The American Meme*, which followed four reality stars including Hilton, she said her biggest fear was dying. “Death scares me because I don’t know what happens. I just don’t want it to be nothing because that would be so boring,” she says. “I’m trying to figure out a way – freezing myself or inventing the fountain-of-youth pill – so people could live forever, like that movie *Death Becomes Her*.”

She regularly visits “world-renowned psychics”. Has she ever been freaked out by what they’ve told her? “No, they



STYLING DANIELA GUTIÉRREZ. STYLING, PINK DRESS, AMY BANNERMAN. MAKE-UP STEVEN TABIMBA. HAIR EDUARDO PONCE. NAILS QUIZA FISA. PHOTOGRAPHER'S ASSISTANTS RYAN HACKETT/TUTU LEE. STYLING ASSISTANT ANGELA FUERTES. PRODUCTION MADRID: ASHA MARTINEZ.



PRODUCTION LA: NELLY CASTILLO/JOAN PLA VENDETTA ENTERTAINMENT. WITH THANKS TO ADRIAN VAN DER HOEVEN. ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS GETTY, ALAMY, MOVIE STILLS DB, BAUER GRIFFIN, TOP, ALICE & OLIVIA. BRIEFS, DEAD LOTUS COUTURE. SHOES, SOPHIA WEBSTER

always say the best things.” Such as? “When I was a baby, a psychic told my grandmother that I was going to be one of the most famous and photographed women in the world one day.” Fair enough. “Other psychics have said I’m related to Marilyn Monroe and things like that. My mom just did one of those 23andMe DNA kits and I am related to Marilyn Monroe and Queen Elizabeth. That’s what it said!”

Growing up in a dynasty like the Hiltons, she must have met some amazing people. Hilton looks nonplussed. Wasn’t her mum friends with Andy Warhol? “Yeah, my mum was friends with him and they would go out. I was one or two and I used to sit on his lap and draw. My nanny used to call me Star and he loved that. He’d always go, “This girl is a star.”

“I’ve met everyone, so no one has made me star-struck,” she muses. “Except Madonna. I was in London at an awards show and she tapped on my shoulder and said, ‘I’m with the same record label and I love *Stars Are Blind*; I love your music.’ I almost fainted. She’s been my idol since I was little. That was the only time I’ve ever been nervous over anyone.”

I’d almost forgotten about her stint as a pop star. Sadly we’ve run out of time because, true to form, Hilton has a party to go to – a dinner for Diddy’s 50th birthday, with the rest of the Hilton clan. If that’s not “sliving it,” I don’t know what is. ♦



PARIS'S NOT-SO-SIMPLE LIFE

Includes pop, cops, feuds and dudes (same, tbh...) 

February 2002

Juicy Couture tracksuits and Von Dutch trucker hats. Hilton’s looks are so iconic she could open a museum.

Of course, the most unforgettable of them all was the Julien Macdonald chain-mail dress she wore to her 21st birthday.



June 2003

Hilton appeared in early ’00s films such as *Zoolander*, but it was her starring role in leaked sex tape “1 Night In Paris” alongside ex-boyfriend Rick Salomon that skyrocketed her to fame. Ooh la la.

December 2003

– August 2007

Somehow, it’s been 17 years since *The Simple Life* first aired and heiresses Hilton and Nicole Richie – whose adoptive father is singer Lionel – were stripped of their cash and sent to live and work in the real world. The ultimate ’00s LOLs.



July 2004

After seven months together (and his-and-hers tattoos), Hilton and former Backstreet Boy Nick Carter parted ways. “Our relationship totally was based on distrust,” said Carter. “She didn’t trust me. I didn’t trust her.”



August 2006

When Hilton shared her self-titled debut album, some saw it as a joke. But the joke was on them when the record reached number six on the US Billboard charts and sold over 600,000 copies worldwide.



November 2006

Fourteen years later and we are still living in the midst of a Paris Hilton and Lindsay Lohan feud. In 2018, Hilton threw fresh shade at LiLo claiming she gatecrashed the now-legendary photo taken of her, Lohan and Britney Spears affectionately known as “The Holy Trinity” back in 2006.



August 2010

Only Hilton can make a mugshot look like a cover shoot, as proved here in 2010. She was first arrested in 2006, for driving under the influence, before subsequent arrests in 2007 and 2010. She’s been on good behaviour ever since.



August 2019

Kim Kardashian, whose friendship with Hilton goes way back to the mid-’00s, admitted that Hilton launched her career by taking her under her It-girl wing on red carpets and the Hollywood party circuit during a 2019 series of KUWTK. “I really would wanna do anything for her,” Kim told sister Khloé. “She literally gave me a career, and I totally acknowledge that.”



November 2019

Hilton and Chris Zylka were caught up in the Great Celebrity Engagement Movement of 2018, but after around two years and a \$2 million rock, she called it off. “I’m just really having my ‘me’ time,” she said. “It was [a] whirlwind romance.”



↗
Trainee
matchmaker
and writer:
Catriona
Innes



Are we in a DATING drought?

Well, one of these women is. The other? She's made it her mission to find her a match, by going on the pull with a professional matchmaker ›

Photographs
SARAH BRICK



Single
guinea pig:
Amy Grier

The walls are blood red, with mismatched frames housing black and white pictures of various men I don't recognise.

The floorboards are so trodden they're shiny, and the rugs – along with the waitresses' skirts – are tartan. From next door comes the boom of male laughter and, suddenly, these men come piling in, clad in novelty jumpers, to make their way through to the cigar terrace. One of them, I'm told, is a right-wing politician – I didn't look up in time. Another, a Hollywood actor who I'm much more upset not to spot. On our table sits a bottle of champagne, and – every now and then – these men make their way over to us, where Mairead Molloy, global director of Berkeley International, the elite matchmaking agency, pours them a glass and asks them about their lives.

It seems I've finally found the answer to the question "Where are all the men hiding?" The whole place is soaked in testosterone. Whether they're "good" men depends on your personal preferences (and politics), but considering Molloy has spent the past 16 years setting up high-net-worth individuals with each other, she'll have the perfect match in mind for each and every one of them.

When I moved to London, over a decade ago, I tried to become a professional matchmaker. I printed out my CV, wrote long covering letters detailing my "experience" and sent them off to various agencies. But, it turns out, setting up one couple (who split after three years) and chatting up people in clubs on behalf of my friends were not the qualifications they were looking for.

Even back then the idea of paying someone to find you a prospective suitor seemed straight out of *Pride And Prejudice*. Why part with your cash when you could meet

someone in a bar, get your mate to set you up or flirt with that hot person you see in work's communal kitchen area? Then Tinder came along, in 2012, and made those IRL connections seem dated. Why settle for whoever is in your current vicinity or friendship group when sitting in your pocket are millions of singles just waiting to speak to you? Two years after its launch, Tinder was boasting around a billion swipes per day. Then even more apps came along – both Bumble and Happn launched in 2014 – and before long there was one for every preference. Into beards? There's an app for that. Fancy a threesome? There's an app for that as well. Our preference for staying in and swiping was, according to some experts, behind the UK's failing nightclub scene, which has dipped in value by an estimated £200 million in the past five years.* (Netflix, an unstable economy and the booming wellness scene have also undoubtedly played their part.)

But, lately, the tide appears to be turning. *Cosmopolitan* research found that 70% of our readers would prefer to meet someone in real life, dating events increased by



Things are
looking up
if you live in
Nottingham



“YOU COULD SAY, ‘I WANT TO MEET SOMEONE IN LA,’ AND WE’D SET THAT UP”

400% between 2014 and 2018[†] and for matchmakers like Molloy, business is thriving. But what can we learn from a woman who charges upwards of £15,000 for her services? Does she really know the secret to finding love in a world so reliant on algorithms? I decided to go back to that old ambition of mine, and become a professional matchmaker to find out.

A HOT FRONT

“It’s all coming back now – bespoke, hand-holding dating,” says Molloy, smearing butter on toast, talking to me and peering at her email inbox all at the same time. It’s a few days later and we’re at Home House, a private members’ club in London. Despite having nine offices globally (and living in Cannes herself), Irish Molloy works, it seems, wherever there will be eligible singles. She blanches at the idea of being called a “matchmaker”; she’d prefer “relationship psychologist”

(she also works in the field and has a degree in psychology and a master’s in criminal law). She certainly has a way of eking out personal details – when I listen to our conversation on my Dictaphone a few days later, I realise it took just 10 minutes for me to let her in on some extremely personal details about my own life.

This is a huge part of her job. I’d imagined I’d spend the day rifling through profiles of people on a computer, pairing them together. But that’s not how it works. Molloy gets to know people quickly, her client base is made up of applications from the website, referrals and those who she actively seeks. Berkeley International tailors a package for each client, depending on their specific needs – for those willing to spend the big bucks, Molloy or one of her 20 global “ambassadors” will fly all across the world looking for their chosen match. “So I could ask you to find me Jack O’Connell and you could?” I ask, wondering if, for this feature (and my career), my husband might let me go on a date with him. “You have to be realistic,” Molloy says, dashing my hopes... but maybe saving my marriage. “We may not have that sort of person, or they may not be interested in you. But you could say, ‘I want to meet someone in LA in the film industry,’ and we could set that up for you.”

Once in LA or New York (or wherever you need her), Molloy will get herself into the right parties and “network.” “We once had a client who really wanted to meet a doctor from Harvard,” she tells me. “We flew out [to the US] and, for weeks, went to all the socials and set her up with 16 or so people. Naturally, I can say to someone, ‘Are you in a relationship?’ and find out, then hand them a card.”

Before taking anyone on as a client, there’s a brief phone consultation in which it’s decided if they’re “suitable” (more on that later), and then it’s a full-on interview. This takes place in clients’ homes, or in the Berkeley International offices, where we head next to grill Amy Grier, *Cosmopolitan*’s executive editor (and, not-as-awkward-as-it-sounds, my boss). We’re putting her on Berkeley’s books so I can see how it works. I’m jealous – Molloy is highly secretive as to who she looks after, but it’s a mixture of lawyers, business owners and celebrities... one client even hosts his dates on his private jet.

Over glasses of fizzy water, Molloy fires questions at Amy, in a process that’s more like a very intense job interview. Every now and then she shuts her eyes, as if mentally scrolling through faces in her head. “You’re always thinking of your clients,” she confirms later. “The minute someone walks in the room I have an idea in >



my mind as to who to set them up with.” Whoever it is, Amy will not see a picture of them. “I have no tolerance for online dating and how dismissive people can be; it’s disrespectful. You have to give people a chance.”

STORMY WEATHER

Our next appointment is at a plastic surgeon’s office. It’s here that we meet Dr Ghooobi⁺ to see how he’s getting on with his current match. He met his first wife through Molloy and, 10 years later, messy divorce behind him, he’s turned to her again. He beams at us and says he’s weeks away from proposing. Just as he’s divulging his plans, we are ambushed by a surprise visitor: a friend and client of his, who’s recently divorced and wants to find love. Molloy fires questions at her, but she soon mentions her ex, his name uttered as if it’s wrapped in gold. Molloy plainly says, “You’re still in love with him.” There’s some back and forth as the prospective client insists she isn’t. But Molloy is unconvinced. This could be good or bad, she says after we leave – perhaps starting something else will be what she needs to get over him... or it will help break her out of denial. She’ll still take her on as a client and see – after a few dates – what happens. Then it might be time for a tough conversation.

Because that’s another huge part of Molloy’s job – telling

people where they’re going wrong. After every date, both parties give feedback, and that informs the next date – in terms of both who they’re matched with, and how they behave. “Some people really appreciate being told what’s wrong with them,” she says. “It’s quantitative analysis – eventually after five, six, seven dates, you see the same themes coming up.” If these things are damaging, then it’s time to have a word. Similar bugbears come up again and again, across the board – people drinking too much on dates, inflated egos and something that’s enhanced in both online dating and a service like this: pickiness. “You can’t breed the perfect human,” she says. “And often my clients will think the more money they spend, the more they can lengthen their wish list... but even if we can present you with your ideal person on paper, we can’t provide chemistry. It’s the one thing money can’t buy.”

As for cash, I’m intrigued to know whether her clients demand their match earns a certain salary. “I don’t think salaries come into play too much for the men, maybe

3% will ask about it. For them, it’s about the laughter, the love, the look and feeling of belonging. But for women – and this may be controversial...” she says. “I think they like to feel secure. Not necessarily financially – women should be financially independent – but they do like to feel looked after, and money comes into that.”

**“IF YOU ACCEPT THAT
EVERYONE HAS
FLAWS, THEN YOU WILL
MEET SOMEONE”**

The way Molloy talks about love is practical and mature – she won't promise the world, and will put you in your place if you demand it. Love, she says, isn't about finding "the one," but instead someone who "feels like home." And she doesn't believe in fate. Even though she once, without knowing their relationship to each other, matched a divorced couple together... and they remarried. Or the time she set up a client with a woman he'd spotted on the street months before and fallen in love with. "If your wishlist isn't too long, you're a relatively normal human being and accept that everyone has flaws, then you will meet someone," she says. But Molloy wouldn't dream of attending any of her clients' weddings. "You don't invite your plumber to enjoy your bath, do you?" she cackles.

LIGHTNING STRIKES

I didn't fully understand what Molloy meant by "networking" until we headed to London's Boisdales Of Belgravia, a Scottish restaurant filled with men with booming voices and – judging by the menu – bursting wallets. Molloy hosts an annual Valentine's party here and it's where many of her clients hold their first dates.

The tartan everywhere reminds me of the dive bars I'd drink in as a teen in Scotland, but the clientele is entirely different. Instead of pallid stoners who need (at least) five black sambucas before they'll come over and chat to you, here, making conversation with strangers is the norm. Within 30 minutes of arrival, we've already spoken to a record producer weighed down by gold chains, and a white-haired movie producer. Both leave with Molloy's card clutched in their grip. I keep my eye out for matches for Amy but can't spot any – which doesn't matter, as Molloy has already decided what she needs. "Someone who will take the reigns – she's the editor of a very prominent magazine... she'll want someone alpha," she explains. I keep pressing for more on this; hoping that Molloy will present me with the perfect formula for love. But she doesn't have it. No one does.

What organisations like Berkeley International can provide is a buffer – a shiny one that protects you from all the crap that comes from dating. And lately that crap seems to be amplified. New terms for dating trends are defined every week ("to ghost" has even been added to the dictionary),

and pretty much everyone who is actively dating has a horror story to tell. In real life, "chatting someone up" has become almost non-existent, seen as a throwback to a pre-app time. With an agency like Berkeley, sure, you might go on a few dud dates, but to the degree of stilted conversation, not "they brought along their ex/tarantula/mate for a threesome". Not only does her team have a strong gut instinct for liars, they also ensure – via things like background checks, asking to see divorce papers, and house visits – that people are exactly who they say they are. The follow-ups after every date mean that no one gets ghosted – if they don't want to see you again, you'll know (and be told exactly why).

Matchmakers are nothing new – they've been around for centuries within most cultures. In Ancient Greece, some women would act as go-betweens, delivering telegrams between couples who wanted to marry (and offering their verdict on the prospective partners), while "miai" – a form of matchmaking created as part of 16th-century samurai classes – still exists in Japan today. But a new yearning for face-to-face contact, brought on by our ever-increasing reliance on technology, coupled with

us having an expert for all areas of our lives (PTs, life coaches, therapists) means it makes sense that they're now back in a big way. It's paying a professional to get the job done right. That's what Berkeley International offers – Molloy cultivates "grown-up dating" where people treat each other as adults, and with respect. Somewhere along the way we've lost that. But have we really reached the stage where we have to pay the equivalent of a house deposit to get it? ♦

The Matchmaker by Catriona Innes is out now



BEHIND THE SCENES

Catriona Innes

"When I asked Molloy who she'd match me with, she paused and said, 'Someone who, when you leave them, you say, "He's a really nice man." No one from London. Perhaps a farmer...' My husband is a Geordie who charms the majority of people he comes into contact with. He's not a farmer, though. Maybe I should persuade him to retrain?"

MAKE ME A MATCH...

Amy fills us in on her date

"After an intensive interview with the Berkeley International team, I waited eagerly for an email to tell me they'd found me a match.

Photos are not exchanged, just biographies (written for you by a professional), and the man is given the woman's phone number. My match is Thomas,[‡] a 43-year-old tech genius who's into art, speaks a few languages and loves food and drink as much as I do. He suggests meeting in the bar of a five-star hotel I've wanted to try for ages. It's actually really nice not knowing what someone looks like and being pleasantly surprised. Conversation flows easily, especially considering there's been almost no build-up. He's fascinating. Educated, highly cultured, well-travelled. Despite coming from different parts of the country, our values – friends, family, travel, work ethic, ambition – are aligned. He pokes fun at my overly specific drinks order, I poke fun at him continually bringing up politics on a first date. OK, so the chemistry isn't quite there on either side, but it's still one of the most enjoyable dates I've been on."



Would you get past these wo

Berlin's nightclub policies are some of the toughest in the world. Sarah



men?

**Meet the
world's
fiercest
bouncers**

Hurtes works the doors to find out why... ›

Photographs GENE GLOVER

It's 4pm on a Saturday afternoon. Clouds of weed surround me, the smoke catching in my throat. I've already been standing for an hour and I have around three more hours of waiting ahead of me. It could be longer

than that. I don't dare ask. By 7pm, as the sky turns pink, descending into night, everyone around me has fallen silent. We are united by one mission – the door in front of us. The silence is punctuated by a woman with an afro bob and purple lipstick ordering those closest to her to keep smiling or they'll be rejected. I am afraid that when we eventually get close to her, she will simply look us up and down and say “no”. That all this waiting is, ultimately, pointless. I'm in the queue for one of the world's hardest-to-get-into clubs. This woman is the bouncer who decides which of us succeeds and who goes home.

Party people

Two months later, it's 1am, and I'm standing in front of an iconic club, only this time I'm wearing a bullet-proof vest. The only way for me to find out the answer to that much-Googled question “how exactly do you get into Berlin's superclubs?” was to guard the doors myself.

When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989 it marked a new political beginning for

Germany. It also set off a chain of events that led to Berlin becoming the clubbing capital of Europe: the end of the divide between the East and the West created a new sound – and a new way to party – that brought everyone together. Week-long parties began to burgeon at full speed. Clubbing became a lifestyle, music a religion – and it garnered worldwide attention. Once The Wall fell, several East German businesses closed down, leading to soap factories and power plants being revamped into illegal clubs. Over the years these forbidden parties gave way to venues with permits – but many retained the grit that made them so special in the first place. Tourists flooded

to the city, and locals wanted to keep the atmosphere created sacred. Berlin's nightclub door policies got so strict that they became almost as famous as the clubs themselves.

“I began to lose all empathy. I started work pissed off”

Today, endless online forums detail what to say, what to wear and how to act in order to get in. The bouncers have become celebrities, with head doorman of the club

Berghain, Sven Marquardt, the man to impress (it's rumoured Berghain once turned away Britney Spears for wearing the wrong shoes). Yet Berghain is just one of a network of clubs with strict door policies, and although Marquardt and his male colleagues are the ones who dominate newspaper columns and documentaries, there's a group of women who wield just as much power. They're super-secretive and their world is hard to penetrate – it took over a month of club-hopping, day and night, to get to know them. Mostly I was shunned and told that journalists are not trusted until, with some persistence, a few party promoters took me aside to whisper their names



Bouncer Saskia has “no” tattooed on her palm



The dancefloor
in club Weekend



as if they were state secrets. There's Saskia, who has the word "no" tattooed on her left palm; Steffi-Lotta, the bouncer of club Kater Blau and founder of "market-village" Holzmarkt25, who prefers to be known as a "concierge" rather than a bouncer; Esther, known as "mutti" (mum), who once caught two underage boys climbing over the fence of her club and, instead of calling the police, called their mothers to come and pick them up. Then there's Eli, who I chat to while inside the club simply called ://aboutblank. It's a Monday afternoon and the club's 24-hour monthly queer party, Buttons, is still palpable in the musty air. She became a bouncer 10 years ago, after seeing a club

with an all-female door crew for the first time. "I wanted to be one of them," she says, running her hand through her cropped straw-coloured hair. "I started practising martial arts and then a friend told me about a position opening up." That was at ://aboutblank – once an illegal club, now one of Berlin's top destinations. It's also the club where Eli agrees to put me on shift, to see the work for myself. Eli is dubbed the club's "Ice Princess" – from her cold and tough door manner, which is, she admits, downright unfriendly at times. "Especially at the beginning when I wasn't too confident and sure if guests would accept me as a woman. I think sometimes I was acting too strict or arrogant. Now I'm softer."

"You welcome and take care of a lot more people than you send away," says Steffi-Lotta, who chats to me via a translator over a lemonade one day. She says this looking straight into my eyes without blinking – and I nod in agreement, knowing that her nickname (unprintable here) implies she's one of the strictest to get past in the city. Despite their reputations, all the women I meet are funny, friendly and caring, yet I know that they have also, at times, been impossible to get past. You just have to look at Saskia's tattooed palm to see that.

On shift

Taking my position at the exit doors of ://aboutblank (I have to watch closely to

ensure no one tries to sneak through them), I observe the queue that's next to it, trying to guess who will get that elusive "yes". Eli's off tonight, but in her place is Alina – whose T-shirt lists all the weight-lifting competitions she's participated in. She stands square on, in front of the queue, and to her right is a bulky, shaven-headed man who reports back to her if anything – or anyone – seems suspicious. The line is an eclectic mix: one man looks like Neo from *The Matrix*, while others have a dishevelled look akin to *Stranger Things*' Chief Hopper. One woman has a gigantic spider tattooed on her chest, dreads to the floor, and a leather cropped top and jeans. They all get in. The group of late-teen boys swaying in a fog of aftershave? Nope. The single guy with short yellow hair

and eyeliner? Yes. In my three-hour shift I watch as Alina fires questions at approaching punters. "German or English?" she demands. "How are you? Have you been here before? Do you know the name of tonight's party?" If the answer's yes, she says: "It's 13 Euros. You may enter one by one, but only when I tell you so." If it's a no, instead, a brief: "Not tonight." Why do people want in so badly? Why are they willing to queue for hours when getting in is far from guaranteed? It's because that sacred atmosphere is unlike anything most clubbers have experienced. Berlin's venues usually open their doors at midnight, and few people bother to show up before 2am. Party-goers are dressed for dancing for at least six hours straight, rather than to show off ›



Eli, AKA
"Ice Princess"

their outfits or pose for selfies. Those in high heels are often turned away – their footwear a sign that they don’t plan on dancing much. Most prepare for a night out in Berlin as if they are going on an expedition: donning trainers and putting hoodies in their backpacks. The parties can last anything from 12 hours to three days – thanks to licensing laws that don’t set a closing time. The sound systems are overpowering and sex is in the air: some places have hidden rooms where people can sneak off and do whatever they want. But in the legendary S&M KitKatClub, there’s no need for secret rooms – that’s what the dancefloors are for. Most people hold half-empty beer bottles, water or energy drinks – few down spirits. A desire to keep going as long as possible and a drinking culture that isn’t “who can get absolutely hammered quickest” means that clubbers are respectful. But one thing is not tolerated: photos. If you’re caught taking a picture, you’re thrown out within seconds. It’s so strictly prohibited that those at the door put stickers over people’s phone cameras.

It doesn’t take long for Alina to decide who gets in. Each of the women I spoke to unanimously agreed that they make decisions based

on one thing: their gut feeling. But this can be hard to explain. “You can’t tell guests, ‘So it’s my personal feeling [that] you’re not for the crowd, bye!’ but that’s really how it goes,” explains Saskia. Esther says she sometimes tests people by asking them to crack jokes about themselves. “I want to see if they can be self-deprecating,” she says. “I was always the biggest bitch to those I’d end up letting in, but I was super-friendly to the people I rejected. I’d say, ‘You’re looking too good for this place, this other club seems to suit your style more.’”

Learning to trust your gut instinct can be tough, and take years to master. Eli

“We keep the magic unbroken – and that has a cost”

used to experiment, letting in those who she had doubts about. “I’d almost always have to kick them back out again for being rude to the staff,” she says. “It would remind me to trust myself.” But mistakes happen. And if you’re turned away, the best thing you can do is handle it well. Saskia recalls rejecting a larger group who politely said, “We’re really unhappy as we’ve wanted to come

here for years. But thank you for considering us, have a nice night.” They then walked away calmly. Appreciating this, she chased after them, invited them in and bought them a round.

But for every group who walks away calmly, there’s another who thinks they can threaten their way inside. All the bouncers I spoke to have experienced violence – from the time that Esther was punched to Eli having to barricade herself and her staff inside while a mob hurled stones at them. Incidents like this are rare but the insults are endless. And no amount of training can prepare you for the impact of being called

a “bitch” (and much worse) night after night. Both Eli and Saskia scaled back their hours as a result. “I began to lose all empathy,” says Eli, “I started work pissed off.” Saskia found she was getting angrier in her daily life. Esther, at some points, was afraid to walk to the club, taking taxis to avoid being recognised. “It felt like the more I was at the door, the more bad situations occurred. I felt tired and empty.” She reflected on her life and wondered: “Was all I did ruin people’s fun?”

Sugar and spice

From the moment we are born, there’s an expectation placed firmly on women’s shoulders to be “nice.” To



Esther would reject people to keep the space safe

smile and laugh and toss our hair and ensure – above all – that we are “liked”. It’s so deeply ingrained that even these powerful women have felt it in their darkest moments. “It’s a societal problem,” says Esther, who realised that she had to be kinder to herself and that it’s OK for her to say “no”. It wasn’t something to be ashamed of, a reason to hide away in taxis, avoiding the glare of the customers who seethed at her. “As a woman, you’re constantly afraid to hurt others’ feelings, even when you’re insulted for no reason. I had to learn to look at myself in the mirror and like the person I was seeing.” According to her, being a bouncer has therefore been the most empowering experience of her life. This is echoed by Eli, who is proud of her evolution as a “gatekeeper of the party”. “You make rules to enable people to live their dreams, to create that safe, untouchable and powerful space,” says Esther. “We are in charge of keeping the magic unbroken, and sometimes that has a cost, it means rejecting a few people.” Steffi-Lotta’s desire has always been to create places where people could simply close their eyes and listen to the music, and not feel limited by their financial resources or daily constraints. “I think from a political perspective that’s very, very, very important.”

I think back to my time in that endless queue, our patience tested, and then the moment we were

eventually let in. All I could think, as I entered with a racing heart, was about losing control. I knew I could do it in a way I couldn’t back in the UK. When I lived in London, I’d don my tightest dress, drink too many vodkas and either fend off men’s constant advances – men who wouldn’t take no for an answer – or I’d say yes to a one-night stand, mainly for self-validation. Here, the sound system shakes my entire soul: disorientating, brutal and mind-blowing. The room is shaped like a Roman theatre where you can glide upstairs and feel those dancing below. The moonlight passes through the broken windows, giving shape to the statues and vines decorating the bricked walls. Then there’s the adult outdoor chill-out area where anything is permitted. The world outside becomes distant. I think of Esther’s comment: “The ones who make it past me are safe inside.” Perhaps these women are this strict simply so that you can be properly free. ♦



BEHIND THE SCENES

Sarah Hurtes

“I met the co-founder of the notorious sex-infused KitKatClub, Kirsten Krüger. We chatted inside for over four hours, where she ended up interviewing me – an off-the-record chat that I’ll cherish forever.”

Berlin’s most iconic clubs



BERGHAIN

Where: A huge Soviet-era power station.

Known for: Having an orgy room on the bottom floor.

What the forums say: “Listen for the beat, nod your head. Look at the building. Don’t make eye contact with the doormen until they speak to you. Show no fear.”

::/ABOUT BLANK

Where: A warren of different spaces now covered in graffiti with a huge garden and two dancefloors.

Known for: STAUB – a monthly event said to be one of Berlin’s best parties.

What the forums say: “Don’t get your phone out in the queue.”



KATER BLAU

Where: Located on the bank of the river Spree, it looks like a cross between an abandoned circus and the *Mad Max* set.

Known for: Its outdoor area – there’s a caravan, bungalow, bonfire and tents.

What the forums say: “Show up sober and keep your mouth shut in the queue.”



RENATE

Where: A large apartment building with separated flats once used as a brothel.

Known for: The House Of Red Doors – an all-day, all-night sex-themed party.

What the forums say: “Dress like you’re willing to participate in the debauchery that happens inside.”



SISYPHOS

Where: A former factory with a lake, an abandoned bus and a place for pizza.

Known for: Surprise DJ sets. You never know who’s going to play.

What the forums say: “Go on a Saturday afternoon because at night you can be stuck in line for hours.”





HOW
depress
stole my
orga



• sion

Loss of libido, sensation... and
sense of self. Antidepressants
are wreaking havoc on our sex
lives. But are we searching for
satisfaction in all the wrong places?
Kyle MacNeill investigates ›



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Photographs JOBE LAWRENSON

"Sorry, I take a while."

I'm coiled up in a ball, gripping at the duvet, holding it tightly so as to cover my naked body. A few minutes earlier my nudity with a stranger hadn't bothered me. But now, suddenly, it's making me feel vulnerable. We've been having sex for just over half an hour. I haven't orgasmed. And I know there is no chance that I will at any point soon. It's definitely time to call it a night. Yet as much as I want to, I can't ignore what has just happened. I have to say something.

"Don't worry about it," I add, the noise muffled by the pillow I'm hiding my face in. There's more I could say, perhaps *should* say, but none of it lends itself to sexy bedroom talk. Certainly not on a one-night stand. It's a lot easier to just close my eyes, delve into a deluge of darkness, and forget.

When I was first prescribed antidepressants, I wasn't thinking about my sex life. There were more important things to focus on. It was 2015, I was 19 and the Christmas holidays had just begun. I had also started to self-harm with anything I could get my hands on. Low mood, low energy, low interest in anything plagued me day and night. I listed my reality to my doctor in a monotone, telling him I'd tried counselling before – for OCD – and it hadn't worked. I wanted medication. He handed me a prescription and off I went.

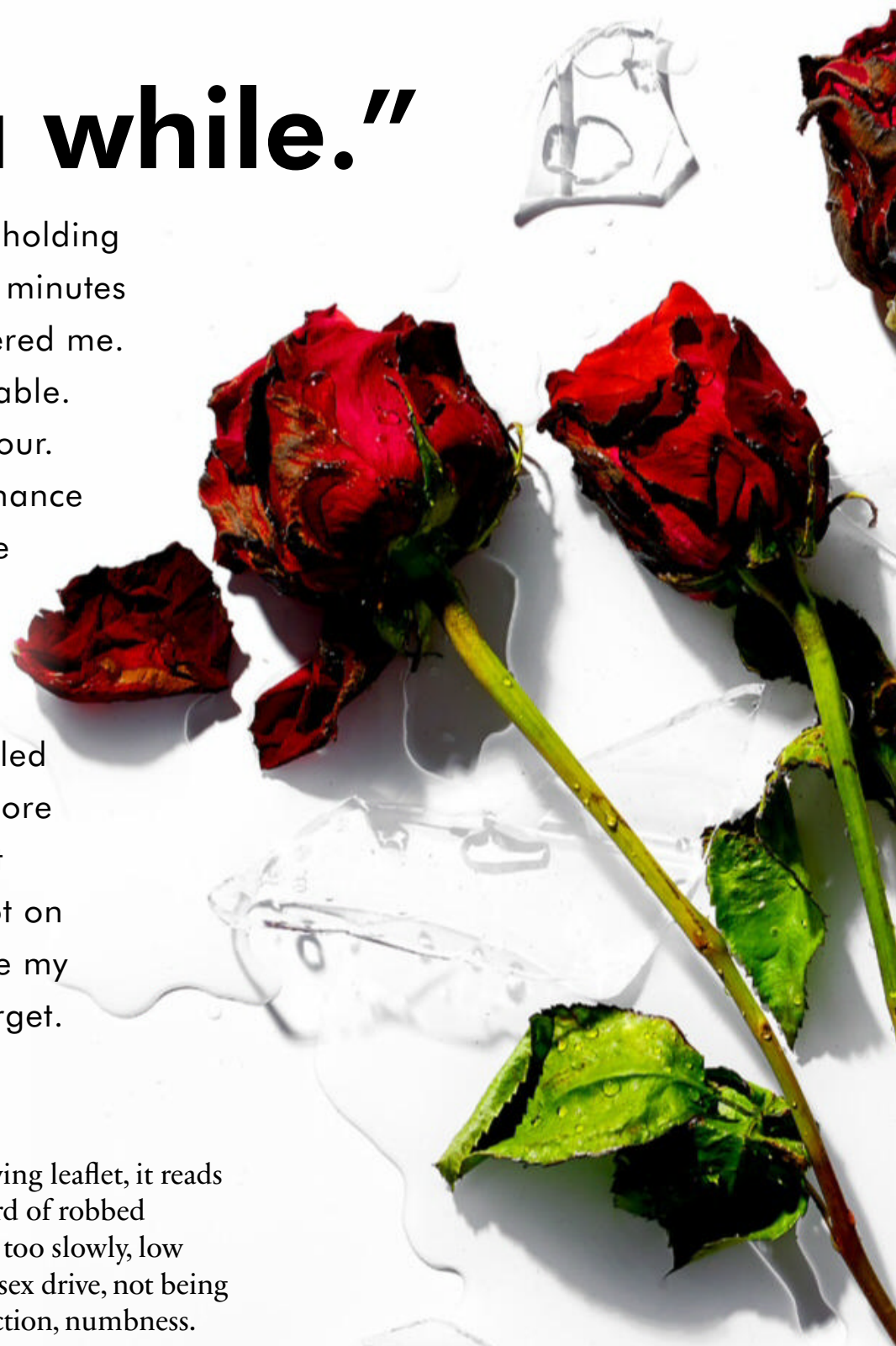
It was for citalopram, an SSRI (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor) antidepressant that's widely used in the UK. I didn't take anything in about the side effects – I only learned of them from a doctor back at university when I popped in to get a second opinion. Even then, they were mentioned casually. But looking back

at the accompanying leaflet, it reads like a smorgasbord of robbed orgasms: coming too slowly, low sex drive or high sex drive, not being able to get an erection, numbness. The small print goes on...

Not feeling myself

My penis was numb within hours of taking that first pill. I was ready to expect emotional numbness. I also knew it would take at least four weeks before I felt any positive effects... But I didn't expect to feel so much less down below.

The first time I had sex after taking the pills, a few weeks in, it was as if I was wearing half a packet of condoms (I wasn't even wearing one). Every thrust was desensitised; the awesome, toe-curling high of physical touch dulled to almost nothing. I didn't orgasm. I know that for women this isn't unusual, that this suddenly being





an issue for me seems a very particular, privileged type of complaint that could only come from a man. But it had never happened before. All my life I had an idea of who I should be and what sex should be – and the act not matching up to that terrified me.

Other side effects came on quickly, too – from hands so clammy you could wring them like a damp flannel to gurning as if I'd dropped two Es. These sensations were occasional and gradually went away as my body got used to the drug. But the SSRI sexual dysfunction (SSD) persisted. And it has persisted in various forms ever since. I've taken around 1,000 citalopram tablets in that time, and the words "Sorry, I take a while" have become a mainstay of my vocabulary. I still have some sensation, so there have been ways for me to be able to slowly reach orgasm. At other times, no matter how hard I am, or how hard my partner is working, it just doesn't happen. And the longer it takes, the more anxious I feel, the less concentrated I become... and then the orgasm slowly fades away.

Getting unlucky

When Dan,* 25, speaks to me about citalopram, he does so in staccato sentences, as if he's been suffering for so long he's tired of elaborating. "Weak, mute orgasms. Numbness in penis. Trouble maintaining erections," he says, listing his sexual side effects on his fingers, before moving on to the emotional impact. "I felt suicidal," he says simply. "Angry. Confused. Broken. Less than a man." Although he's able to get erections, the tip of his penis is "still numb". He's managed to move from what he rates as 0/10 sex to 2/10 sex, but is crushingly anxious. "I'm nervous but I've also largely accepted I'm a defect," he says, shrugging.

Online, men like Dan are easy to find. Disguising themselves under

usernames like "Nogasm", they flood onto forums such as Reddit, using the anonymity the keyboard provides to open up. I learn that having – and wanting – sex deems me "lucky" in the eyes of others. John,* who, like me, began taking SSRIs while at university, has found his libido has completely vanished. "I never fantasise about sex," he tells me. "It doesn't turn me on any more. It's like that 'spark' is totally lost from my brain; the rush of attraction and lust is gone pretty much completely."

Others experience weaker erections or total erectile dysfunction, changes in the intensity of an orgasm or less sensation. Just like the huge mixture of experiences reported online, sexual dysfunction associated with antidepressants varies considerably between studies, making it difficult

"I expected emotional numbness. I didn't expect to feel so much less down below"

to estimate the exact incidences or prevalence. That long leaflet I was given (which, let's face it, most people barely read) says sexual side effects are "common", happening to up to one in 10 people, but experts reckon it could be a lot more. One thing's for sure, it *is* happening – to men, women and non-binary people across the country. As to why, that's not 100% clear either, as sex is more than just a physical act, it's emotional too.

The symptoms of SSD can have a lasting impact, even if someone comes off the drug. It turns out that there's also PSSD: that's post-SSRI sexual dysfunction. It's exactly what it suggests: the same ill effects persisting after medication is stopped. It's under-researched, and it affects Dan – he >



only took pills for a matter of days, but two years on, symptoms remain.

For some, these sexual issues could be down to the depression itself, with SSRIs merely exacerbating the problem. Dr Juliet McGrattan, a health expert and former GP, says, “When you’re depressed, there are chemical changes and imbalances in the brain that make you stop enjoying things in life, and that includes sex. Sometimes patients would come to me concerned about a lack of sex drive and after exploration we would work out that depression was the underlying cause,” she explains. To truly separate which symptoms are caused by depression itself and what’s a side effect from the drugs, a large study would need to be conducted on adults who *don’t* suffer from

“Sex doesn’t have to be the traditional heterosexual penis-in-vagina way”

depression. Unfortunately, few of these have taken place. In addition, the effects and speed of the medication varies from person to person – so it could be positively impacting your mood, while still compromising your sexual function.

Coming off to come

There have been times when I’ve been holding my anaesthetised penis in my hand, desperate to

come, trying to finish myself, and I have questioned why I’m still taking citalopram. Feeling light-headed and horny, the temptation to quit the tablets entirely becomes all I can think about.

But this would not be a good idea for me. Taking citalopram didn’t just dramatically improve my life – it saved it. A period of depression had left me confined to my crumb-filled, sweat-stained bed, sleeping throughout the day and an insomniac during the night. Pleasures became pleasureless, emotional pain became physical self-harm. But finally, medication galvanised me.

Although SSRIs have faced some fierce criticism that debates how helpful they actually are, and much is still unknown about their workings (and even about depression itself), it’s clear that they *do* work, in some way, for most people. In 2018, the largest-ever review of antidepressant trials[†] (including some that weren’t SSRIs) showed that every single one of the 21 studied, including citalopram, worked better than a placebo.



THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BED

**Writer Amy Jones discusses
the impact of antidepressants
on her sex life...**

Citalopram both killed and saved my sex life. I started taking it five years ago, when I was simultaneously fizzing with anxiety and caught in a fog of depression. Sex just wasn't an option. I had no interest in anything, let alone something that would involve putting in effort or showing off the body my brain had convinced me was repulsive. It wasn't an option for my boyfriend (now my husband) either – mainly because he was worried about me, but also because I don't think a woman who mopes around the house without showering for days was his sexual fantasy. The citalopram helped me pull myself out of the fog and start taking an interest in things again. Showering, leaving the house, eating something other than cereal – and sex. I became very aware that it had been months since I'd had sex with the attractive man in bed next to me, and all of the desire and motivation I'd not felt over that time hit me at once. The problem was, the mind was willing but the body was taking a bit more persuasion.

Nothing was happening: I wasn't getting wet, orgasms were taking far longer than before and weren't as intense. I'd been having regular, easy orgasms since my mid-teens, so to suddenly not be able to have one even though I really wanted to was frustrating in every sense of the word. Thankfully, my husband is a patient man and I am as stubborn as a very horny mule. We kept at it, with the help of lube and vibrators, and gradually my body remembered how to enjoy itself. I'm still on citalopram and our sex life is as active and enjoyable as ever – but I'm lucky. I have friends who have found their sex drive non-existent, or who haven't been able to orgasm full stop. Antidepressants are brilliant, but we need to make people more aware of how this kind of medication can change such a huge part of their lives, and offer more support to cope with it.

**The To-Do List And Other Debacles
by Amy Jones is out now**

And with sex, over time, I've found things that work too. Without going into too much detail, there are other areas of my body that are just as sensitive, and sex doesn't always have to be the traditional penis-in-vagina way that heterosexual society fixates on. It's taken some adjusting, sure – not just for me, but for my current girlfriend and those before. I am aware that in the same way that my SSD impacts me, it has also impacted my partners. I'm less likely to initiate sex, which can be demoralising for them. Just as depression affects the people around you, SSD can also cause collateral damage.

Dr Lori Beth Bisbey, a sex and intimacy coach and psychologist, regularly sees couples who are experiencing SSD. Despite being happy in many other areas, they often feel the issue is ruining their relationship. It doesn't have to be this way. She says there are two key ways that partners can help. Firstly, they need to understand this isn't about their performance, or how attractive they are. Secondly, it's vital that they talk about it, and learn about the side effects in a compassionate way. Equally, the partner suffering from SSD should still initiate and find ways to be intimate and satisfy their other half. It's a balance that's vital to find. And communication is key.

Sexy talk

When it comes to sex, there are certain gendered stereotypes lodged deep in the back of so many of our minds. The aforementioned focus on penis-in-vagina. That men want it all the time. That we orgasm within seconds. That sex has to end in an orgasm. These ideas – and more – have remained since high school and are exacerbated by porn culture, so ingrained it can be hard to shake ourselves out of them. For men like myself, Dan and John, these preconceptions weigh us down, making us feel “less than” because

we don't fit into an ancient mould that's at odds with reality for most men today. And, in turn, our partners are told the same things, so when we don't initiate sex or reach orgasm, it can make them feel that there's something wrong with them, that they're doing something to cause this.

Of course, it's clear that, in general, straight men face the least problems in the world of sex. My issue of not being able to orgasm through penetrative sex is not out of the ordinary. Research conducted by Durex⁺ showed that almost 75% of women studied do not orgasm during sex, compared to 28% of men. This orgasm gap has only really come into public consciousness because we've started to talk about it. And as soon as I started opening up about my SSD, things became easier. Every partner I told was kind and we found a sex life that was enjoyable for all involved.

It also made me realise that somewhere along the way we've got it all wrong. Why do orgasms *have* to be the marker of successful sex? It was chasing them that made me anxious and afraid. But discussing it, and becoming able to enjoy sex in other ways has brought me hope – a hope that in the future I'll be able to lie in bed, never anxious, those painful memories of inadequacy as dim as mood lighting. One day, I'll get there. Even if it does take me a while. ♦



BEHIND THE SCENES

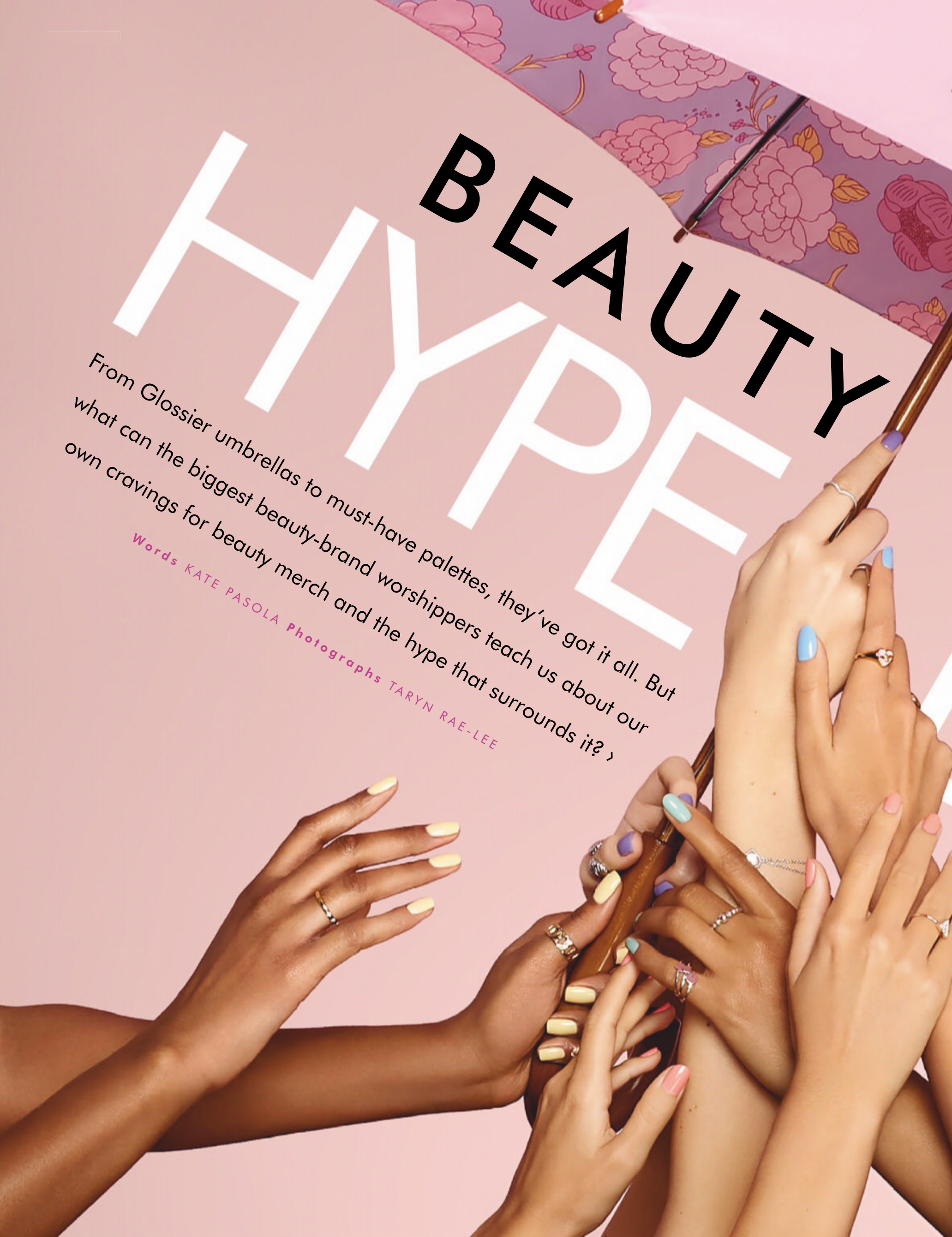
Kyle MacNeill

“Since I wrote this, the European Medicines Agency has recognised PSSD as a medical condition that can outlast the use of SSRIs. It's ace to see this being talked about, but it's made me more anxious of it happening to me, especially as I'm thinking of coming off my medication. But even if it does persist, I know I'm not alone.”

HYPE BEAUTY

From Glossier umbrellas to must-have palettes, they've got it all. But what can the biggest beauty-brand worshippers teach us about our own cravings for beauty merch and the hype that surrounds it? ›

Words KATE PASOLA Photographs TARYN RAE-LEE





AND THE BEEFAYS

Please reserve your judgement, because it does very much feel like, in this moment, the umbrella will fix my life.

It's first thing in the morning at the launch of Glossier's hotly anticipated London pop-up shop, and though the room is bursting with Britain's beauty *haut monde*, it's fair to say everyone present has lost any sense of professionalism (and, to an extent, their minds).

Grown women use their elbows to jab their way closer to CEO and founder Emily Weiss, who's in, y'know, casual attendance. I'm Augustus Gloop-ing my way round all of the photo opps (or "shareable moments", if you will), frenzied by the temporary shop's carnation-coloured sculptures and floral carpets. The champagne goes flat, unsipped, not because of the time of day (it isn't even 10am), but because we're all too busy drinking up the Glossier, Glossier, Glossier.

Meanwhile, 7,000 miles away in the Philippines, a 19-year-old called Jonas is in his bedroom, hammering the location tag for this very building, poised like a heist artist. He's ready to make his move.

I know I want the umbrella. It's the latest in Glossier's list of covetable merch offerings, following extremely limited releases of keyrings, water bottles, baseball caps and more at each of the brand's global pop-up shops in Miami, Seattle, Boston and beyond. That said, I sense I don't want the umbrella as much as some people – like the high-profile beauty journalist I see furtively pleading at the merchandise hatch, met with a polite refusal (they aren't yet on

sale and nobody's getting special treatment). It's not even raining.

For now, I snap a picture and post it to my Story. It's almost automatic, like genuflecting at an altar. It's at that moment that an Instagram DM rips me out of my daze: a reply to my Story, from Jonas, who until this moment I never knew existed.

"OMG!!!" it reads. "Is this for sale?"

Perhaps his slew of messages – which are strewn with emojis of shooting stars and desperate faces – strums my heartstrings. Or maybe I'm just excited about the status I feel in having been identified as an international Glossier correspondent. I take the bait. I fill him in.

The regret comes immediately and lasts for hours while he interrogates me further, with every exclamation mark another vibration in my pocket. "It's so cute! I really like to buy

"THE BRAND IS A HAPPY PILL. IT BOOSTS THE HAPPINESS HORMONES IN MY BODY"

Glossier stuff! I'll pay international shipping and any expenses at all!"

The pings keep coming.

"Is it limited stock only? Do you know someone who could buy it for me and ship it to me?!" In so many

words, he's asking me to name my price. "Were you able to source me one?" he asks. I breathe deeply. Then, minutes later, another notification. "OMG, please let me know!"

I snap. "Please stop! Just assume I'll let you know if I have good news."

He apologises, mortified – and that's when it occurs to me. This isn't actually about an umbrella at all.

UNLEASH THE BEASTS

To Jonas, bargaining with strangers for access to merchandise is run-of-the-mill behaviour. He's a hypebeast, after all. And where pop-star superfans queue outside arenas to meet their idols, hypebeasts queue online and outside shops, waiting to lay their hands on a new launch; be that the latest streetwear, a groundbreaking gadget or, in Jonas's case, make-up and beauty merch.

Hypebeasts are clever, tenacious and gasping for novelty. And if the object of their updated desire sells out, they'll often turn to resell apps like Depop and Ebay, or even strangers on Instagram who could be bribed to stick it in a bubble-wrap envelope.

They will stop at nothing.

The result? Besides mega-capitalistic mania, a total rewiring of beauty shopping as we know it.

According to his Instagram, Jonas doesn't even wear make-up. But he tells me that in his eyes, Glossier is



more than a brand. “It’s a happy pill that you need. It boosts my happiness hormones in my body.” Whether he uses it or not, Jonas tells me he owns every product the brand has ever launched, displaying them in his “vanity room,” “for cuteness purposes”.

It’s no mean feat, considering the brand doesn’t retail in or ship to the Philippines. Instead, he purchases online, having his wares delivered to family members and friends in the USA, and waits patiently for an opportunity to arise in which they’ll bring the products to the Philippines (or pays through the nose to have them shipped).

THE HYPE CYCLE

Yet the question remains: why would someone who doesn’t wear make-up be so motivated to mail Glossier products and merchandise across the world, no expenses spared? The answer is but a four-letter word: hype.

Hype-marketing is nothing new – the likes of Apple, Nike and Beyoncé have all teased devotees into submission using unexpected product drops, secretive marketing and cult-building behaviours for years. Cast your mind to hypothermic iPhone fanatics camping outside Apple stores, and the Beyhive’s ability to predict new albums through collective conspiracy theories.

It’s streetwear brand Supreme (and by extension the streetwear community) that is often credited for refining hype-marketing to the point of surgical precision. New Supreme products are dropped in-store weekly, in limited numbers, and to be warned of new product drops, customers must subscribe to a newsletter, the link to which is buried on the brand’s minimalist website. Order online and you’ll be lucky to even receive confirmation of your purchase. Cavalier and borderline thoughtless, Supreme’s marketing techniques read like the behaviour of a f*ckboy who sends “you up?” at midnight, but >

RINGS, PREVIOUS SPREAD, FROM TOP: HAND ONE (TOP), PANDORA (INDEX FINGER), CLARE’S (RING FINGER), BRACELET, OLIVIA BURTON; HAND TWO, OLIVIA BURTON (INDEX FINGER), DINNY HALL (RING FINGER, JUST SEEN); HAND THREE, CLARE’S; HAND FOUR, PANDORA (MIDDLE FINGER), ALL CLARE’S (LITTLE FINGER); HAND FIVE, ACCESSORIZE (JUST SEEN); HAND SIX, BY ALONA; HAND SEVEN (FAR LEFT), PANDORA; HAND EIGHT, OLIVIA BURTON. THIS PAGE: RINGS, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: HAND ONE (TOP), OLIVIA BURTON (THUMB), PANDORA (MIDDLE FINGER, JUST SEEN); HAND TWO, OLIVIA BURTON; HAND THREE AND HAND FOUR, ALL PANDORA

falls asleep before you arrive at his house. Unpredictable, unavailable – and because of that, utterly addictive.

You may have heard of the Supreme-branded brick (that's right, a red construction brick) that had fans queuing for hours and parting with £28 for the privilege. That Supreme could whip up such enthusiasm for possibly the dullest object imaginable feels almost like a joke, flexing their ability to sell, well, anything at all. That said, the butt of the joke is certainly not the hypebeasts who queued to nab the bricks – at peak hype, they were reselling them on Ebay for £750.

That's not to say, of course, that the sumptuous offerings of hyped brands like Glossier, Fenty, Jeffree Star or Pat McGrath are in any way comparable to a construction brick. But perhaps it helps to explain, in part, Jonas's commitment to collecting products, merchandise and even packaging from Glossier, like holy relics.

KEEPING UP APPEARANCES

But that devotion can get expensive. Melissa, a beauty enthusiast from North Carolina, began her love affair with Jeffree Star's eponymous cosmetics brand in 2016. She's a true collector; cleaning every palette after using it in order to keep it looking as pristine as possible. "When the Jeffree Star and Shane Dawson Conspiracy collaboration comes back out, I will have to get it again," she divulges. "It was so beautiful that I need one that's untouched."

Essex-based Patsy, 26, feels the same about her Fenty Beauty limited-edition "Dirty Thirty" Killawatt highlighter, released to celebrate Rihanna's 30th birthday. "I haven't used it, and never will!" she pledges. "I'm going to make sure my future kids know to bury me with [it] when I pass." Patsy wears a full-face of Fenty every day.

Melissa and Patsy have spent thousands of pounds on keeping up-to-date with their favourite

brands' many launches. I ask Melissa whether she feels like an addict. She replies, "Oh, absolutely, all the time." I'm shocked at her candour. "[It] kind of plays with your emotions," she explains, telling me she often wonders, "Am I sane or insane with this make-up thing?" Her words echo those of Jonas. "You don't know how many times I've said, 'Please, Glossier, stop releasing skincare – I'm going broke!'" He's semi-joking, but I worry it's irresponsible of me to laugh along.

Patsy's devotion to Fenty earned her a ticket to hang out with Rihanna at the 2016 Harvey Nichols Fenty Beauty launch, and she's been a committed

supporter since. "I devote a huge chunk of my time and my finances to supporting Rihanna and her lines," she tells me. "But I never see it as a task or inconvenience... When you love something and are passionate about it, it will never feel like work." She thinks Fenty Beauty launches are spaced far enough apart to allow fans to "build up finances", if necessary, and praises Fentybeauty.com's scheme in which customers can pay in monthly instalments.

But, along with the financial lurches hypebeasts face, there's also the emotional toll it takes. Melissa tells me it's "more of a frustration than a



MODELS PAIGE, MIRABEL, NADIA, NADINE M AND TOLU, ALL AT HIRED HANDS MODELS. NAILS MICHELLE CLASS AT STELLA CREATIVE, USING BIO SCULPTURE. MAKE-UP JOLANDA COETZER AT LHA REPRESENTS. PHOTOGRAPHER'S ASSISTANT MICHELLE MORGAN. FASHION ASSISTANT FEDERICA POLISE. NAILS ASSISTANT SASHA GODDARD. UMBRELLA, GLOSSIER (AVAILABLE UNTIL STOCKS LAST). "BEAST" MIRROR, ANASTASIA BEVERLY HILLS X ALYSSA EDWARDS.

depression” that she suffers when she can’t successfully buy new Jeffree Star launches due to websites crashing or high demand. It strikes me as odd that a hobby or passion could induce such fear and stress. And though she is aware of the deliberately limited availability of hyped products, she seems to feel a responsibility to at least try. “I’d feel too guilty,” Melissa tells me when I ask if she could ever opt out. “I feel such a personal bond with Jeffree’s brand.”

Patsy agrees when it comes to Fenty. “It may sound super-dramatic, but it really does trigger anxiety and worry, that it will sell out... But I must admit, 99.9% of the time I’m usually first in line to purchase,” she explains. “The thought of not owning a product, and potentially never being able to get it, is terrifying... But it’s only happened to me once so far in two years.”

Theresa Yee, senior beauty editor at trend forecasting agency WGSN,

their legs into lifestyle merch, and that the likes of Kylie Jenner and Huda have turned to skincare?

GOODBYE TO HYPE?

Five weeks later, and Jonas is very close to owning the umbrella. He paid over triple the original price to a seller in London, who posted it to a friend in Texas, who’ll bring it to him within a matter of months. I’m almost jealous of the satisfaction he’ll feel when it arrives at his doorstep. I thought my foray into the world of hypebeasts would be very different from my own relationship to beauty, but I learned that their fanaticism isn’t particularly rare; it’s just the far end of a spectrum we’re all occupying some part of.

Though hype culture is in full swing right now, Yee doesn’t think it will stick around for more than a year or so, heralding 2021 as “the end of more.” She predicts that we’ll begin to focus more on functional, result-driven and

high-performance products over novelty. “We’ll see a move away from hype products as consumers start to shift their mindset towards buying less, but better, as a way to save the planet.” After all, there’s a very real consequence of our addiction to newness.

The vast majority of make-

up packaging is still unrecyclable, and international shipping adds exorbitantly to carbon footprints.

Excess worship of a beauty-brand idol is a fun distraction from the difficulties of modern life – we all have our crutches and vices. But how far is too far? What innovations could we see if brands had breathing space to formulate something game-changing? And in what treasures could we indulge if we weren’t spending our overdrafts on identikit technicolour palettes? The beauty industry has proved its credentials in building hype – now let’s just hope it doesn’t fall for its creation. ♦

“THE THOUGHT OF NEVER OWNING A CERTAIN PRODUCT IS TERRIFYING”

cites a “see now, want now” attitude as being responsible for hypebeasts’ passionate shopping habits. “It’s the FOMO mindset kicking in.” She also thinks the rise of “clean-face beauty” could answer for beauty brands’ extra efforts in marketing make-up, and for their pivot to selling skincare and lifestyle items. Kardashian-esque cut-creases, razor-sharp contouring, painted brows and overlined lips, though still popular, are challenged by an emerging appreciation of make-up minimalism: dewy, clean lids, rosy cheekbones and lipbalm. To satisfy those consumers, is it any wonder that brands are stretching

THE FIGHT FOR HYPE

SOME OF BEAUTY HISTORY’S MOST ANTICIPATED LAUNCHES

Shane Dawson x Jeffree Star Conspiracy Palette

What’s better than one batch of YouTube drama to fuel a palette launch? Two, obviously. The pair reportedly sold over a million palettes in 30 minutes.



Pat McGrath x Star Wars

The mother of make-up joining forces with the equally hyped Star Wars franchise was big news – the Gilded Decadence Kit (left*) is now being sold on Ebay for heartbreakingly high prices. “I do feel a responsibility, now that we have this wonderful community, not to disappoint them,” McGrath told us.



Fenty Beauty Foundation

The Navy (RiRi’s fans) did not let her down when she launched Fenty Beauty, buying up her foundation in record time – especially in the darker shades, teaching the industry an important lesson.



BEHIND THE SCENES

Kate Pasola

“Cosmo’s own deputy beauty editor, Laura Capon, is a secret hypebeast. All the merch in the shoot was prised out of her stash for the day! I have no idea how she maintains her fandom for so many different brands. It’s inspirational.”

MOTHER LOVE

They've held our hands through thick and thin and been our biggest champions, but they may not always have agreed with our sartorial choices. We asked eight mothers what they've always wanted to see their daughters wear and these brave women agreed to let their mums style them...

Fashion Director AMY BANNERMAN

Photographer MATTHEW EADES



**CLARA
AMFO
& MUM
GRACE**

Grace: "I like my daughter to dress well; light make-up, not too much, bright colours, nice shapes and a good length. A full-on gown with beautiful bold colours – something designer maybe. She suits wine, gold, peach and red. I want her to be in the best clothes."

@claraamfo
@whatsappmama

Clara wears: Dress, £360, Badgley Mischka at The Outnet. Earrings, £15.99, Zara. Necklace, £95, Vintage Swarovski at Susan Caplan

**PAISLEY
GILMOUR &
MUM RUTH**

Ruth: "I would say that we went through various stages when Paisley was young... from those great big cord trousers constantly dragging on the floor until they frayed through to the punk stage with tartan trousers, safety pins, leopard-print-dyed mohawk hair and piercings. I would love to see her in something a bit more feminine and fitted than her usual style... '40s-inspired but with a little twist of quirkiness. Oh, and any colour except black!"

[@paisleygilmour](#)

Paisley wears: Cardigan, £59.99, Zara. Dress, £129, Ghost. Socks, her own. Shoes, £119, Dr Martens

**GEORGIA
COLLINS
& MUM
MADELEINE**



Madeleine (left, with granddaughter Edie): "I'd love to see George in something tailored, structured and classic. It could be a full-blown suit or just something elegant. It's difficult to dress someone who already has their own imitable style, though. I'm used to seeing her in jeans or loose floral dresses with heavy boots and chunky rings. The truth is, she looks amazing whatever she wears!"

[@georgialday](#)

Georgia wears: Jacket, £595; trousers, £395, both Joseph. Blouse, £280, Equipment. Earrings, £595, Vintage Givenchy at Susan Caplan. Necklaces, all her own

**CHARLOTTE
PATMORE
& MUM
KAREN**



Karen (right, with granddaughter Marina): "I've always been happy for Charlotte to dress in whatever way she wanted. I've thoroughly enjoyed watching her style evolve, and admire her ability to create fabulous looks on a small budget, often using second-hand clothes. I'd like to see Charlotte in something glamorous, expensive, luxury. She needs to look comfortable in the dress, but it has to be modern and edgy. I'd hate to see her in a regular gown – she needs something dramatic!"

[@voteforpatmore](#)

Charlotte wears: Top, £350; skirt, £365, both Paris Georgia at Style Odyssey. Shoes, £395, Sophia Webster

**CLARE
TREMBATH
& MUM
AMANDA**

Amanda: "I learned when Clare was six that it was best to let her get on with it, and I love the way she dresses. However, it'd be great to get rid of those Manchester United socks – which were leftover stock from a football camp (they do make me laugh though) – and smarten her up, as she can look amazing when she does dress up. I like her androgynous look and wouldn't change it, but I'd add a subtle feminine twist. High-waisted but loose wide-leg or straight trousers, maybe a simple fitted top. She never wears heels but if she did they'd need to make a statement. (I told her I'd put her in jodhpurs and a headscarf à la Princess Anne!)"

Clare wears: Jacket, £510, Paul & Joe. Top, £12.99; trousers, £79.99, both H&M





**PAULA
AKPAN
& MUM
THEODORA**

Theodora: "I loved those days when Paula was much younger and all I could think about was her next outfit and the different corn-row hairstyles I would get her auntie to do for her. I loved to see Paula in bright colours – hence some of her more interesting outfits when she was a toddler. I don't see her wear as much colour any more so getting to dress her now has brought back some of those beautiful memories."

[@paulaakpan](#)

Paula wears: Dress, £95.99, Zara. Earrings, £10, Accessorize. Other jewellery, her own. Mules, £129, Carvela

**EMMA LOW
& MUM
KAY**



Kay: "My immediate thought was colour, as Emma really suits colour but rarely wears it. As a child, I dressed Emma very traditionally so probably put her off for life! As soon as she picked her own clothes, there were no dresses in the mix. Firstly, there was her Avril Lavigne look – baggy jeans, crop tops and poker-straight blonde hair. The Myspace phase was next – hair dyed dark, way too much eyeliner and tops that were several sizes too small. I'd love to see her in something colourful and dressy!"

[@potyertitsawayluv](#)

Emma wears: Shirt, £530; trousers, £530, both Zimmermann. Earrings, £58, Luv AJ. Boots, £475, Joseph

**DOT
JONES &
MUM JENNY
DYSON**

Jenny: "There's not a day when Dot isn't in a tracksuit. Unless she's going to a party, in which case it's usually a tiny dress – like a hankie with straps, which she can get away with. She always looks fab, but I'd love to see what happens when I put her in something quite tomboy. It will be great to see her with natural hair and make-up and flat shoes... something chic!"

@pencilagency

Dot wears: Jacket, £630, Frame. Shirt, £30, Weekday. Jeans, £75, Levi's. Socks, her own. Earrings, £47, Luv AJ. Shoes, £129, Dr Martens

Hair Sven Bayerbach at Carol Hayes, using Kiehl's. Make-up Rebekah Lidstone at Frank Agency, using Barry M. Clara Amfo's hair Issac Poleon; and make-up Bernicia Boateng. Fashion assistants Nathalie Owen, Simone Williams. Photographer's assistants Josh Bryant, Aaron Gaiger



THAT WAS THEN

Turns out this lot have
always had good style –
hair very much included

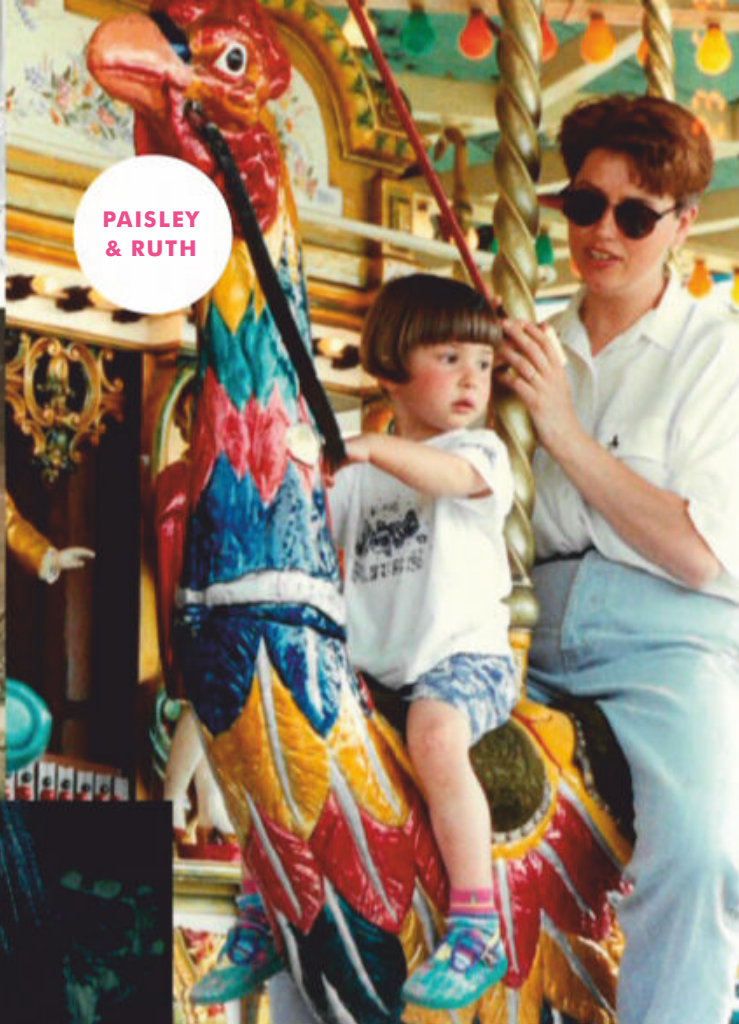
GEORGIA &
MADELEINE



CLARA
& GRACE



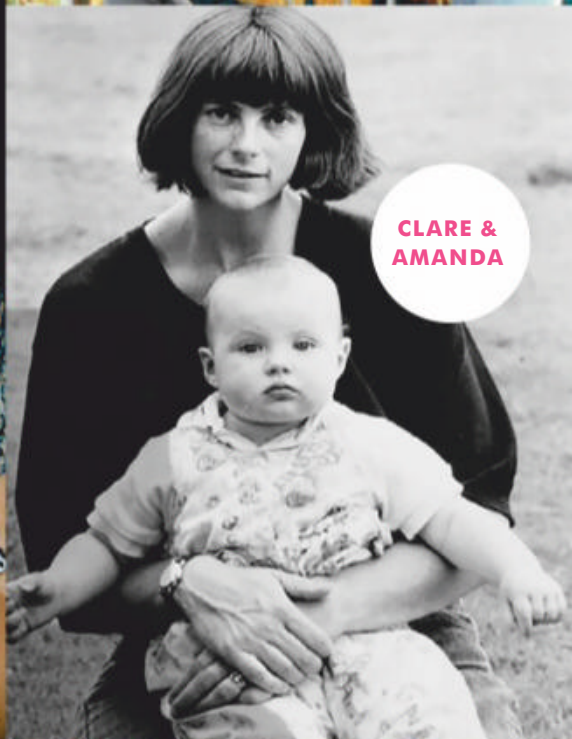
PAISLEY
& RUTH



CHARLOTTE
& KAREN



CLARE &
AMANDA



PAULA &
THEODORA



EMMA
& KAY



DOT
& JENNY





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Illustration by Timorous Beasties



I o v e

SINGLE? SETTLED? WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED



Is your partner marriage material?

With every spring wedding invite comes one question. No, not how much will the hen do cost you, but whether it's time to tie the knot yourself. Relationship counsellor Ammanda Major says if you're in an LTR, you should be able to recognise what you can agree to disagree on – and what you can't. Keeping your eggs in the fridge, that one family member who gets on your nerves, opposing political views, even Brexit: probably fine. How you manage money, if you want kids, and whether you keep in touch with exes: those are things you need to be aligned on. Unsure? It might be time for a big chat...

WORDS EMILY GULLA. PHOTOGRAPH LOUISA PARRY. RING DESIGNED BY BELLA MANTRA IN PREMIUM STERLING SILVER AND GOLD FINISHES, AVAILABLE AT BELLAMANTRA.COM. AMMANDA MAJOR IS A RELATIONSHIP COUNSELLOR AND SEX THERAPIST AT RELATE.ORG.UK. TO READ MORE, GO TO COSMOPOLITAN.COM/UK/MARRIAGEMATERIAL

First love

Each month, we send two former lovers on a date to see what happens

"I can't remember why we broke up"

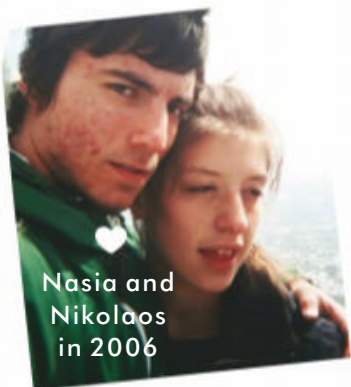
Nasia, 31, is an actor living in London

When I first saw Nikolaos I thought he was so cool. I loved how he dressed – like a skater boy with messy hair – and his knowledge of music and books impressed me. I grew up in Greece and we first met when we joined the same high-school drama class – I was 16, he was 17. We lived in the same area so started walking home together. We were friends but would always flirt, and one evening he made the first move to kiss me when we were looking out over views of Thessaloniki.

Even though it was the first time either of us had been in a relationship, Nikolaos was very romantic. I loved fairies and elves, so one day he came to my house when I was out and left a collection of fairy books and a cute letter as a surprise. That's when I knew I loved him.

We were carefree and adventurous, camping on Greek islands for days at a time without any electricity. We were young, though, and argued over silly things, like me hanging out with male friends. We eventually split after a year. I can't even remember the reason why now, as so much time has passed, but we both cried as we said goodbye. I moved to London in 2012, and five years later, Nikolaos did too. We'd stayed in vague contact on social media and he called me to say he'd moved, but our lives have remained separate.

Seeing Nikolaos on the date was awkward at first, but we warmed up and discussed our careers and other relationships. We reminisced about our time together, but in a friendly way. I don't think it's something we'd ever start again.



Nasia and Nikolaos in 2006



WOULD YOU SEE HIM AGAIN?

"I'd be happy to meet up, but just as friends. Our past relationship is still something that bonds us, so it would be nice to keep in touch."



“There’s still a connection between us”

→ **Nikolaos, 31**, is an actor living in London

“I’d just started at a new school when I met Nasia. I remember sitting with my friends during break time and seeing her walk past. She walked really confidently and that caught my attention. I thought she was attractive, but my interest grew as I got to know her. We both dreamed of becoming actors and bonded while working on plays at school.

We’d walk home after class together and every day we’d watch the sun set over the sea from the top of a hill. About a month after we’d met, I realised there was something romantic between us.

Nasia and I spent a lot of time together, going camping on beaches near where we lived and even working together at a summer camp for kids. But we’d argue a lot. When you’re young and immature, you get hurt by simple things that, in hindsight, weren’t a big deal. Eventually, I suggested breaking up because I felt like our relationship had run its course. At first, I thought it was the right decision, but then I started missing her.

On the date, we still had that natural connection. We just get each other. It wasn’t awkward. We had a laugh, she told me about her other boyfriends, and we spoke about our individual plans for the future. We’re definitely not bitter exes, but I do only try to remember the good parts of our relationship, rather than the bad.

*Want to be reunited with your first love?
Email us at first.love@cosmopolitan.co.uk*



WOULD YOU SEE HER AGAIN?

“Yes, as a friend – but I wouldn’t want to go on another date. I like how things are in my life right now and I don’t want to change anything.”

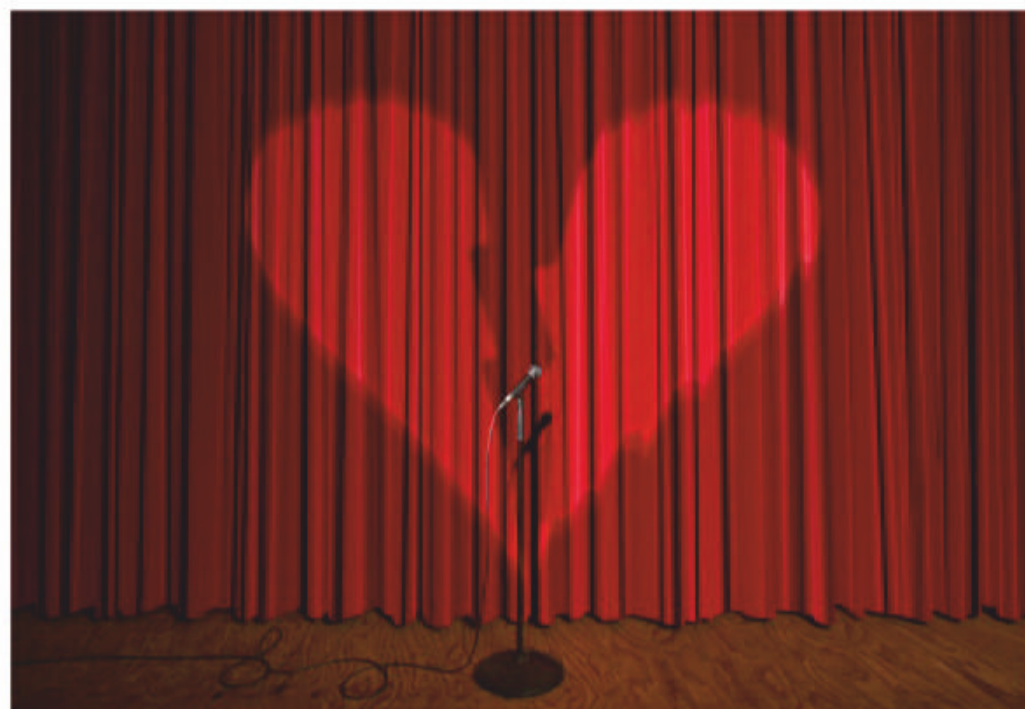
AS TOLD TO EMILY GULLA. PHOTOGRAPHS ANTONIO PETRONZIO. HAIR AND MAKE-UP JULIA WREN AT CAROL HAYES MANAGEMENT, USING KAT VON D AND T3 HAIR TOOLS. NIKOLAOS AND NASIA DINED AT DELAMINA, MARYLEBONE VILLAGE (MARYLEBONEVILLAGE.COM)

What I've learned about heartbreak from... performing comedy

Through making others laugh, stand-up **Rosie Wilby** was able to process her own pain

my big break-up took place in the unfurling moments of 2011. Just as the vapour trails of the New Year fireworks faded, my girlfriend of five years dumped me by email. It seemed so cold of her to sever the connection without a face-to-face post-mortem. "What the hell just happened?" I thought, stunned by this abrupt emotional punch in the guts.

That January evening, I was due to perform a comedy gig. I frantically tried to cancel it; I was a mess and couldn't see how I'd manage to stand on stage for an hour being funny. But the promoter convinced me that the crowd would be supportive – and they were right. It was one of the most raw, authentic performances I've ever given. There was a magical empathy in the room. When I suggested that I felt better once I'd corrected the spelling and punctuation in her



email, the audience erupted into a belly laugh. Heartache, I realised, is universal, and sharing my shock and sadness made me feel lighter. I couldn't stop smiling on the bus home. It was my first taste of the ways in which comedy could help me process feelings of rejection and upset.

When I got to the fifth anniversary of the break-up, I decided to revisit the dreaded email. Enough time had passed

to write a show exploring the funnier side of the whole thing. The result was *The Conscious Uncoupling*, ironically named after Gwyneth Paltrow's rather more amicable separation. I blended excerpts from the email with visits by three spoofy Dickensian ghosts, all played by me in a makeshift cloak. The ghost of my romantic past warned of the dangers of cherry-picking memories. "It's a bit like saying, 'Weren't

"Sharing my sadness made me feel a lot lighter"

the '90s great?' and neglecting to mention OJ Simpson, Bill Clinton and skinny eyebrows," I giggled onstage.

Through writing jokes, I learned that there was no way I was going to

move on when I was convinced she was "the one". In reality, the romance had been traumatic all along. She hadn't come out to her parents and I struggled with the invisibility that enforced. Hearing the audience laugh as I recalled the time she tried to make me feel better by saying that her parents enjoyed *Brokeback Mountain* ("It's hardly the most optimistic portrayal of gay relationships!") made me feel understood.

I felt buoyed by the empathetic responses of my audiences and realised that the biggest heartbreak of all had been staying in a situation that wasn't right for me. I'm now in a balanced relationship that feels both secure and sexy. I used to joke on stage about the confusing myriad uses of the word "love". I'd say, "I love chocolate and I love my girlfriend. One of those is an insatiable, obsessive craving... and the other is how I feel about my girlfriend," as if my partner was a boring salad. My new girlfriend, Suz, is that elusive menu option: chocolate salad. Having a job that allows me to create a constant dialogue about the big things, such as love, emotions and recovery, helped me to make a better choice this time around. *Rosie Wilby is the author of *Is Monogamy Dead?* and host of *The Breakup Monologues* podcast*

Worst dates ever!

Hey, we've all been there...

He turned up to a fancy restaurant wearing a tracksuit. Then as soon as the food arrived, he said he had to leave, for no reason, and dashed out the door.

NIRAN, 21

On our first date, two people he knew came over. Thinking they must be friends of his, I shook their hands to be polite. Then I spotted a £20 note on the floor. He was dealing drugs under the pub table.

MONTANA, 28

Our "cinema" date turned out to be us watching a film on his laptop in his broken Honda. He then tried to charge me £11.80 for the "ticket".

PRINCE, 21

A well-known darts player took me to a casino where I had to watch him sign autographs all night. He also said, "Who wants a stunning girlfriend that everyone's looking at? You're OK, aren't you?"

HARRIET,* 43

Upon hearing Trump discuss immigration on the restaurant's TV, my date said, "Good. They shouldn't be here if they're not here legally." He then spent 15 minutes slating Obama.

SANDRA, 22

After arriving 20 minutes late, he "accidentally" left his wallet in the car, before taking me to an expensive bar where he ordered the entire menu. I footed the bill myself and he promised he'd return the favour. I never heard from him again.

ELLEN, 27

He took his shoes off in the cinema and put his feet on the chair in front. They absolutely stank.

ABI, 21

I took a tumble in a skirt, ending up on the floor with my bum in the air, while my date fell into me. It was basically doggy style with the whole restaurant watching.

LOUISA,* 33



Got a dating nightmare to share? Email your tales of woe to WorstDatesEver@cosmopolitan.co.uk or Tweet, Insta or DM us @CosmopolitanUK using #CosmoWorstDates

Your sex dreams decoded

Does your sleep see you lusting after total strangers, colleagues and – eek – your ex? A dreams expert explains why...

Did you get up to some seriously filthy stuff last night while you were asleep? Nearly 10% of all dreams contain sexual content,* but if you're wondering why you did *that* with *them*, don't worry: sleep-sexing someone doesn't always mean you want to get down to it with them IRL. Dreams analyst Lauri Loewenberg says most sex dreams are more about what those individuals represent to you. Here, she explains what the unlikely subject is trying to tell you...

AN EX OR AN ENEMY

This is basically a nightmare – and a common one at that. But dreams that star you and an ex in a Christian-and-Anastasia-style tryst aren't a sign to reunite. "It's about what they used to represent to you," says Loewenberg. You might need to bring that energy into your current relationship. Single? Try dating in a new way. If it's someone you dislike, "Your subconscious is urging you to reconnect with them," says Loewenberg. "It's not good to carry around hate."

A TOTAL STRANGER

The "mystery love" storyline is probably the least awkward of the lot. And in a twist that'll crush hopeless romantics, it doesn't mean you're dreaming about someone who's out there waiting for you, says Loewenberg: "This is more about some aspect of yourself that you're trying to get to know." Imagining a wild night with someone unknown could represent a need to be more authoritative and assertive... like the kind of badass who'd have an X-rated encounter with a stranger.

A COLLEAGUE

You see them every day, so of course they intrude at night. But there's a distinction between sexing your boss in your dreams versus a junior, says Loewenberg. If you work for them, the dream is likely about a power struggle. Solve it by finding something to collaborate on. If you did NSFW things with someone you manage, think about what they represent to you. If it's an assistant who keeps your life in line, your brain may be telling you to get your shit together.

YOUR TEACHER

If it's the professor you've always drooled over in class, this might simply be a hot-for-your-teacher situation – in which case, lesson over, fantasy complete. But if it's someone you found legit scary or revolting (and not just because of their beige chinos), take note of the subject they taught you. "If it was English, maybe there's some need in your life for better communication," says Loewenberg. "If it was maths, it could be a call to get better at your finances."

A GROUP OF PEOPLE

While they might seem crazy fun, dream orgies are actually a red flag that you have a lot of distress in your life. Perhaps you're experiencing an overwhelming psychological situation that's manifesting as an overload of people and body parts, says Loewenberg. It's time to look for ways to Marie Kondo busy areas of your life (or at least put a few things on the back burner for a while). Cut back on happy hours for a bit, or maybe take a trip away to clear your head.

48%

of British people
confess to
having had a
sex dream†

40%

of women are
thought to have
had a sleep
orgasm‡

23%

of Brits have
had a sex
dream about a
colleague**

WORDS HANNAH SMOTHERS, CYAN TURAN. PHOTOGRAPH CLAYTON CUBITT. *ACCORDING TO A STUDY PUBLISHED IN AMERICAN ACADEMY OF SLEEP MEDICINE. †ACCORDING TO A BED SOS SURVEY. ‡ACCORDING TO ANNABELLE KNIGHT, SEX EXPERT FOR ONE CONDOMS. **ACCORDING TO A SURVEY CARRIED OUT BY YOUGov OMNIBUS AND YAHOO NEWS UK

Women's Health

Live

3-5 APRIL
BUSINESS DESIGN
CENTRE, LONDON

SCHEDULE HIGHLIGHTS

FRIDAY 3RD

11.25-12.10

**Science &
Nutrition Clinic**

Can you fight against
your genes?

12.00-12.45

Sweat Studio

Go for gold with
Jessica Ennis-Hill's
full-body sweat

15.45-16.30

Sweat Studio

The ultimate full-
body workout with
Gemma Atkinson
and Gorka Marquez

16.45-17.30

Yoga Studio

Jessica Olie's
signature flow

SATURDAY 4TH

10.30-11.15

Yoga Studio

Candlelit hip-hop
yoga

11.25-12.10

**Science &
Nutrition Clinic**

How to make
your hormones
work for you

13.15-14.00

Sweat Studio

Full-body dance
cardio with
Simone De La Rue

15.30-16.15

Yoga Studio

The power of
breath with
Richie Bostock

SUNDAY 5TH

10.15-11.00

**Science &
Nutrition Clinic**

Orgasm anxiety to
low body confidence:
overcome every sex
hurdle

10.15-11.00

Yoga Studio

Full moon flow with
Kirsty Gallagher

15.15-16.00

Beauty Stage

Acids: skincare's
hottest ingredient
explained

15.15-16.00

Sweat Studio

Turn up the
HIIT with Jillian
Michaels

TICKETS ON SALE NOW

WOMENSHEALTHLIVE.CO.UK

@WomensHealthUK #WHLive

My best sex ever was...

with the IT guy



"Talk digi
to me"

When her computer switched itself off, Lucy* found herself more than a little turned on...

I fancied Jay* as soon as I saw him stroll across my office floor, but for weeks I didn't know his name. He was so obviously good-looking that he seemed to have the whole building hypnotised – everyone simply referred to him as The Fit IT Guy. Thankfully my computer broke a lot. My team made fun of me and said I must have been intentionally finding ways to get him to come and fix it. I wasn't, but I did email Jay directly to ensure he was the one coming to my rescue every time.

One day, we'd been exchanging flirty emails when I asked him to lunch. The chemistry sizzled across the table in the work canteen, but I was wary of looking unprofessional. Instead, we swapped numbers and took

our flirting to WhatsApp. Despite our messages becoming more and more suggestive (sometimes he'd compliment what I'd been wearing earlier that day), when we saw each other in the office, it was strictly business. Until, one night, I was stuck working late and thought I'd go to the floor Jay was based on to see if he was still there. I found him at his desk – everyone else had gone home.

The tension had been building for weeks now and I couldn't stand it any longer, so I slowly sat on his lap and we kissed. I felt him get hard but knew we couldn't risk doing it in the office. It was a good thing we didn't – when we both left (me back home and Jay off to meet a friend), someone I'd said goodbye

to an hour earlier saw us and gave me a raised eyebrow. Later that night, I still couldn't get Jay out of my brain so I booty-called him. He rushed across London to my flat, and when I opened the door, he stepped inside, grabbed my waist and kissed me.

He was strong and when we finally made it to my bedroom, he threw me onto the bed and I watched him slowly take his clothes off, revealing his

sculpted abs. The blind was open, but after such a long build-up of secret flirting, we didn't care who saw. His body was beautiful, and I wanted to please him as much as he did me. I looked in his eyes as I took him in my mouth and caressed his balls. It turned me on to see him loving it. Then he flipped me over and entered me from behind.

After a few thrusts, he wrapped his arm around my waist and pulled our bodies closer together. It was so hot feeling his skin on mine as he went deeper inside me. We orgasmed within seconds of each other, collapsed and then lay in my bed for what felt like hours, spooning. In the morning, we left for work separately, not wanting to arouse suspicion. We got together a few more times, but once Jay left the company a couple of months later, we lost touch. Work was never quite as fun after that.

"After a long
build-up, we didn't
care who saw"

COSMOLiving

by COSMOPOLITAN



LIVING ROOM | BEDROOM | DINING ROOM | HOME OFFICE

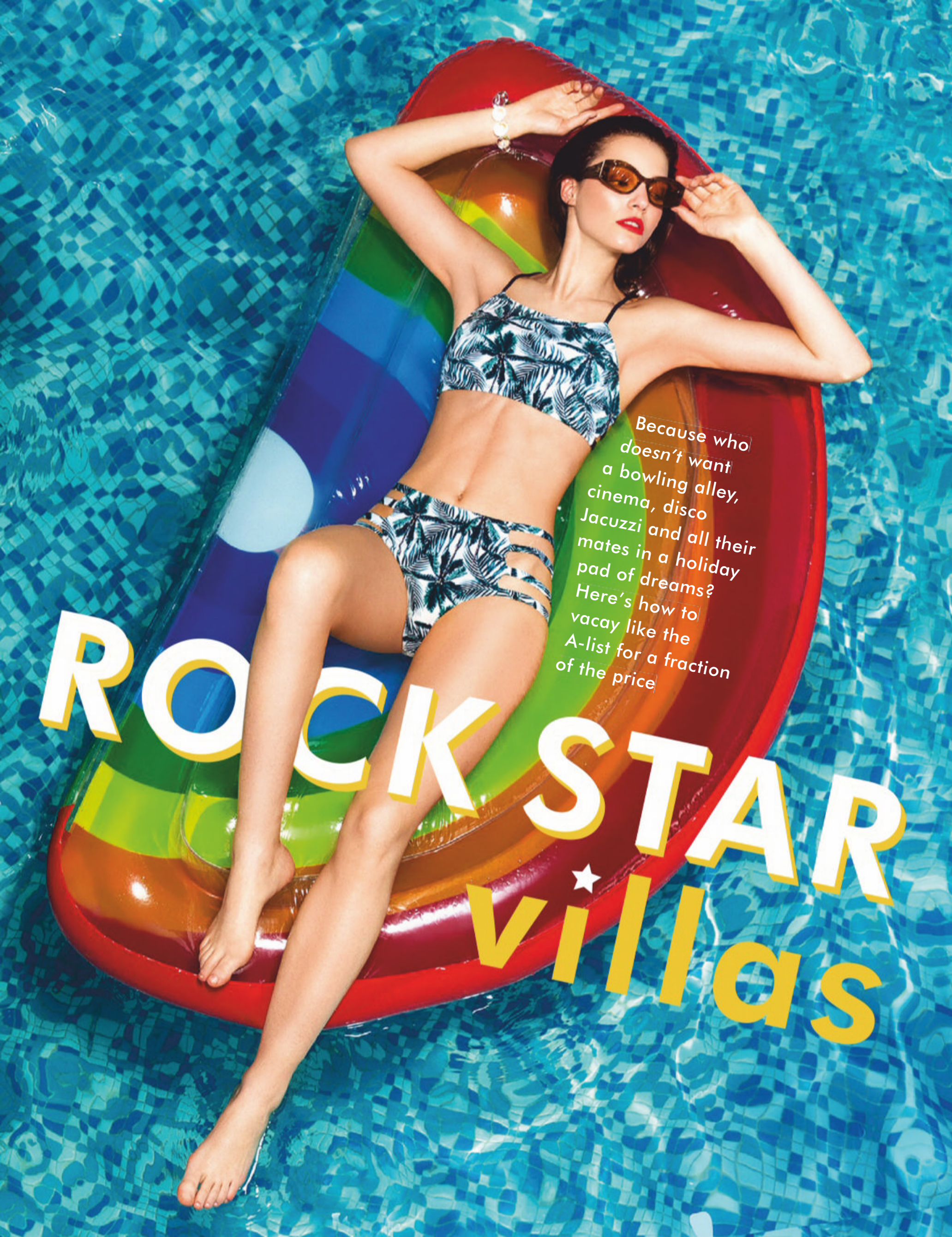
explore

BECAUSE LIFE'S ALL ABOUT THE 5-9

How to find a hen do house

For better or worse, hen do season will soon be upon us. If you're in charge of finding a party pad for your gang, hen do party planners at Henheaven.co.uk say you should start your search with the activities you want to do, rather than the location or number of guests. "If you're doing a school sports day and spa, city-centre accommodation might not work as well," says party planner Jessica Ball. "Consider what you'll be doing, then judge any accommodation by how you'll get back to the house afterwards." She also advises sorting your accommodation now to avoid paying peak prices for this summer. For the ultimate round-up of hen do houses, visit Cosmopolitan.com/uk/hen-party-houses.





Because who
doesn't want
a bowling alley,
cinema, disco
Jacuzzi and all their
mates in a holiday
pad of dreams?
Here's how to
vacay like the
A-list for a fraction
of the price

ROCK STAR villas

TOP VILLAS REUNION RESORT

ORLANDO,
FLORIDA

WHAT'S THE USP?

Though it's chandeliered and bedecked in Kardashian-esque marble and chrome, this Floridian palace really doesn't take itself too seriously. And, situated just a Cartier-earring's throw away from little-known touristic gem Walt Disney World, why on earth should it?

The pool area has a masterful mix of secluded zones and communal spaces, and the rooms range from brightly lit opulence to immersive novelty, meaning that this is an eclectic (yet chic) habitat that works perfectly for a large group who'd rather not spend every waking moment together.

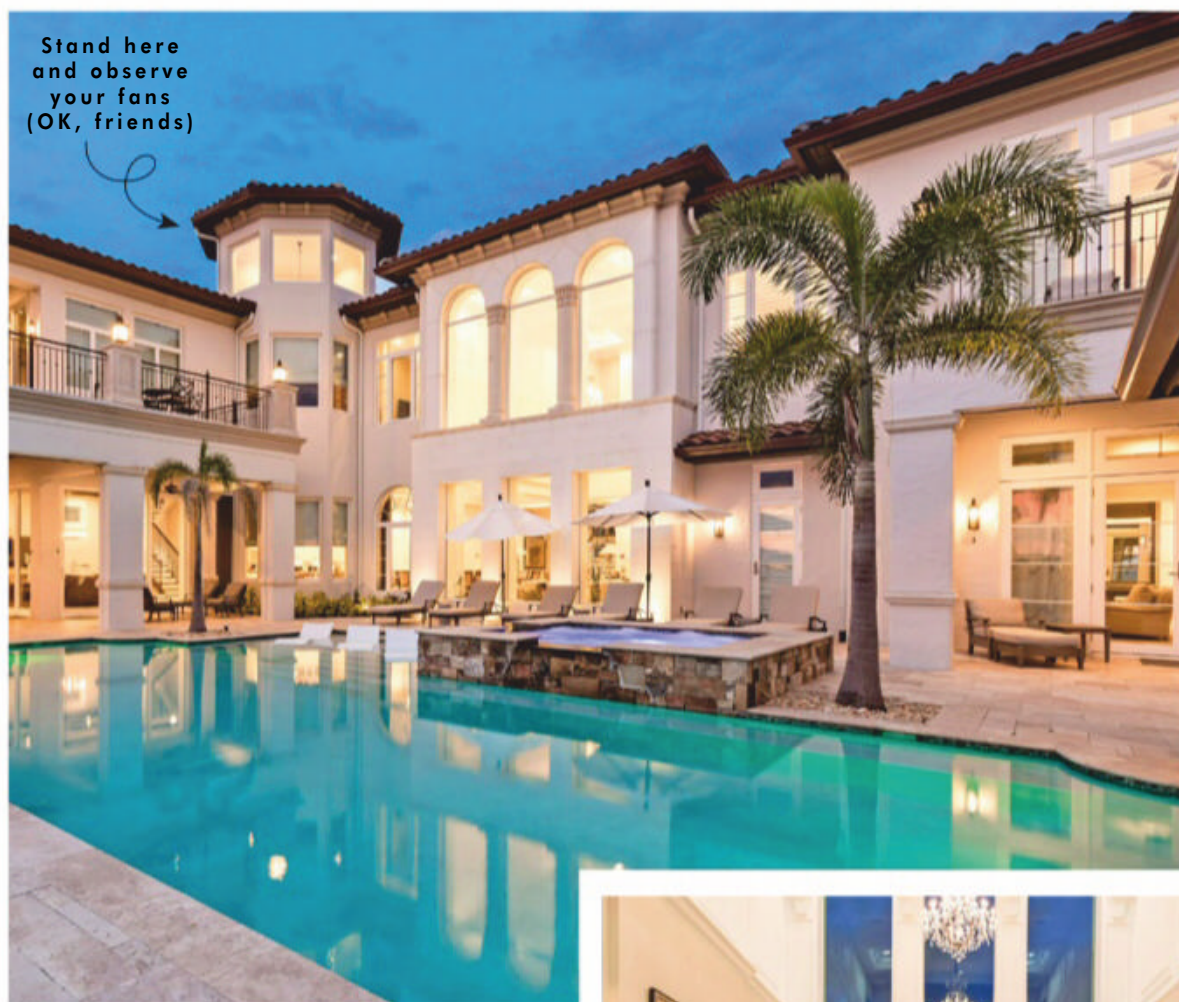
So while your second-tier friends hit the basement bowling alley, you can enjoy the ultra-civilised mahogany games room, complete with pool table, giant Scrabble board and cocktail area. While they're drinking fizz by the infinity pool, you can hire in a caterer to whip you up a dinner party of MIC proportions. Want a giant art-deco cinema with reclining chairs? Check. Want a five-star gym? How about an arcade? Your wish is totally this fairy-tale villa's command.

ANY HAVE-TO-DO HIGHLIGHTS?

Hire a yoga teacher for sunrise stretches on the beautiful balcony, throw a poolside barbecue and, if you don't quite make it over the fence to your neighbouring golf course, head downstairs for a life-size virtual simulation instead.

Difficult though it is to leave this villa, try to drag yourself away. Orlando is

Stand here
and observe
your fans
(OK, friends)



a gorgeous juxtaposition: nature's finest, along with the chance to window-shop the lives of the rich and famous... grab a doughnut brunch at dentistry saboteur The Glass Knife, take a boat tour in Winter Park to check out the celebrity lakeside mansions, or float across a patchwork of millionaire pools in a hot-air balloon. If you're feeling *really* adventurous, why not brave the alligator thickets in a glass-bottomed canoe? The perfect antidote to a busy day spent chasing Mickey through the Magic Kingdom.

AND HOW MANY MATES CAN I TAKE WITH ME?

With nine king-size beds, two queen-size, four doubles and three bunk beds, you can take a whopping 32 pals – the only problem is deciding between the



balconied master suites that spill out onto the poolside or the equally incredible *Harry Potter*-inspired chambers. The huge main kitchen (yes, there are numerous), with its borderline-hilarious storage and fridge space, is a dream to cook in (or for the caterers, should you hire them) – and with dining tables galore, plus an abundance of outdoor furniture, you won't be stuck for somewhere to

take a pew. During holiday season, the villa costs £4,190 per night, which ends up at £130 per head, but stay in low season and you could be paying just £90 each per night. And trust us – it's worth it. For more information, visit Thetopvillas.com >



So magical even
Potter's moved in



VILLA PUGLIESI

DUBROVNIK,
CROATIA

WHAT'S THE USP?

One word: luxury. An intoxicating mix of old and new, this beautiful 15th-century house used to be the summer residence of Dubrovnik's aristocrats and is a registered Croatian National Heritage monument.

It now sits behind high white walls and overlooks the aquamarine water of Zaton Bay, a quiet, stylish little seaside village about 20 minutes away from the bustle of Dubrovnik. We advise setting aside the

first hour of your stay here to simply run around each bedroom, the grounds, the pool, the huge terrace, the professional kitchen, the lemon grove (yes, you read that correctly) and the 16th-century chapel in the garden while squealing at your friends I CAN'T BELIEVE WE LIVE HERE NOW. The rooms are a mix of marble, glass and wood, some split into two levels with huge walk-in showers and sofas to retire to if you need to take stock of just how fabulous your life currently is. Soak up the rays by the pool in complete privacy or hike up and over the local cliff to find a secluded rope swing into the sea. This villa also comes alive at night, with beautiful lights illuminating glass walkways. Fill the booze fridge and head up onto the front rooftop terrace for sundowners. Then get a taxi into town for local wine-tasting at D'Vino Wine Bar in Dubrovnik Old Town (Dvino.net). You happen to be in the heart of Croatia's wine region so, really, it would be rude not to.

ANY HAVE-TO-DO HIGHLIGHTS?

Take a private boat tour with Adriatic Explore from the jetty downstairs for around £245



Sleep like a log AKA near lots of wood

all-in (Mycroatiacruise.com). This villa sits directly in front of the marina, so it basically feels like you're James Bond/part of the royal family and this is your own private yacht come to whisk you around in the only way there really is to travel when you live in a house this fabulous. See the coastline, the archipelagos and the sunset while attempting to take selfies with your crew without losing your phone overboard (harder than it sounds).

AND HOW MANY MATES CAN I TAKE WITH ME?

Well, it sleeps 12 comfortably – but there's extra space for two more if a couple of your pals see your Insta collateral and jump on the first flight out to join you. Prices in low season (when it's still gloriously warm) start at £11,364 for seven nights, which, for 14 people, works out at £811 each in total. Croatia Gems will sort everything for you and you'll have all the trappings of a five-star hotel, but in blissful privacy. What could be more rock star than that? For information on the villa, visit CroatiaGems.com/villa-pugliesi-zaton-bay-dubrovnik-riviera



So nice even the trees have lost their heads

CA'N
DALIA

IBIZA



WHAT'S THE USP?

It's hard to know where to start. The low-lit underground wellness room – complete with a disco Jacuzzi (lights that change colour), great sound system and sauna – was the thing we missed most after landing back in the UK. The next USP has to be the infinity pool, which was enormous and had all the views by day – hills, villages, sea – but was even more gorgeous lit up at night, when you could float and look at the stars.

ANY HAVE-TO-DO
HIGHLIGHTS?

Have a soak in the blue bathroom at least once, as it has a skylight above the tub for cloud-gazing. Also, put all your white wine and bubbly in the temperature-controlled wine fridge, laze around on the stunning Balinese white daybed by the pool and

cook up a feast on the barbecue in the immaculate outside kitchen (bigger than our indoor kitchen at home) with a table for 10. You're set high on a hill above San Carlos, yet the town is only a 10-minute stroll away through olive and almond groves. We loved places like Bar Anita for tapas and Las Dalias, a weekly (Saturday) hippy market, selling everything from handmade jewellery to those cool white cotton dresses you only seem to be able to buy on the White Isle. Don't miss Sunday lunch at Pikes, it's the best you'll ever taste, plus the vibe there is magical – go prepared to spend the afternoon, possibly evening, as DJs play by the pool and when things hot up it's hard to tear yourself away. Swim in the calm, warm sea by café Sunset

Ashram, then watch the sun go down with a chilled beer on the orange cliffs.

One of the best things we did was share the cost of a private yoga session. Booked through the villa, instructor Rachel Spain (@spainrachel) arrived one morning complete with mats and a joyful vibe and led us through an hour's lesson by the pool (from £90 per hour).

AND HOW MANY MATES
CAN I TAKE WITH ME?

Ten of you can have the time of your lives at this five-bedroom, four-bathroom, open-plan pad. Split between three luxurious en-suite doubles and two twin bedrooms, there's plenty of space for sprawling out and, if you want a bit of peace and quiet, some private balconies to chill on.

The villa can be rented for £8,550 per week (Cvillas.com), so that's £855 each per week. Grab an Easyjet flight to Ibiza (Easyjet.com), which start from around £50

return, and that's a rock-star trip for under a grand. >



TREGULLAND COTTAGE & BARN

CORNWALL

WHAT'S THE USP?

Pure, unspoiled relaxation. Nestled in the rolling green hills of a valley in north Cornwall, Tregulland is the place to go if you want to grab five (or 22) of your closest friends, unplug from the stress of city life and take a few deep breaths. Its location means a welcome and enforced lack of signal (there's Wi-Fi if you're desperate) and the property – which comprises three separate buildings, one of which is a giant heated indoor freshwater pool and steam room – really has everything you'll need, including 11 bedrooms, a hot tub, an at-home cinema room,



huge dining space and an outdoor barbecue. Its true USP, though, is the sheer charm of the place. Each bedroom has been designed with its own character and colour palette. The living spaces are huge and the grounds make it feel like you have your own stretch of countryside all to yourself. Whether you want to read your book tucked up in bed with sunlight pouring in from your own private terrace, fill a roll-top bath and soak for hours or have a local chef come and cater your own private dinner party while you kick up a storm in the games room – this place has got you covered.

ANY HAVE-TO-DO HIGHLIGHTS?

Grab a bottle of wine and do the treasure hunt in the grounds. Follow the clues that are hidden around the property and discover hidden streams, local wildlife and a giant slide while you're at it. We think it's probably meant for children, but can confirm that five thirtysomething women gave it a whirl and had a blast. This part of the UK is also home to some of the best local fresh produce (and food producers) you can get your hands on, and there's no better way to showcase it than by getting dinner cooked for you in the comfort of your (brand new) home. The

property manager, Bonny, can arrange everything from a three-course dinner party for 22, cooked by local chefs, to a picnic lunch, barbecue or Cornish cream tea in the garden. Arrived late on a Friday night? They'll put some homemade lasagnes in the oven for you. Oh, and if you feel like actually venturing out of the property (disclaimer: you really might not), go and grab some local seafood, Cornish fudge and ice cream at Trebarwith Strand, which is just a short drive away.

AND HOW MANY MATES CAN I TAKE WITH ME?

If you book both the barn and the cottage (which are next to each other on the same plot), then Tregulland sleeps a total of 22, making it perfect for big family celebrations, trips with friends or a combination of both. You can also book the properties separately



Headboard or
Bourbon biscuit?
We're into both



Four more A-list abodes

VILLA ANAVAYA, KOH SAMUI



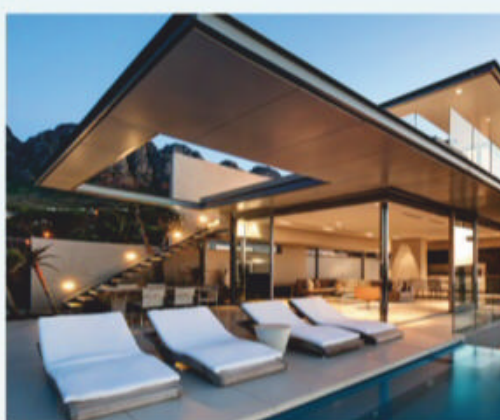
We're not sure what we love most about this villa. High on the list would be the cinema room, the L-shaped infinity pool, private gym, well-stocked bar and al-fresco sofas for hanging out beneath the stars. There are six contemporary bedrooms with terraces and standalone bathtubs, and forget self-catering – there's a private chef to whip up your favourite dishes. Living. The. Dream. From £1,256 per night, based on 12 friends sharing = £105 per person per night; TheLuxurySignature.com

VILLA AKRI, CRETE



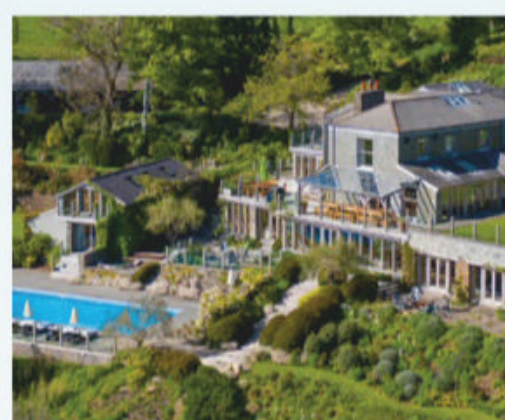
If you're looking for a chilled getaway with friends, you won't find a better spot than this spectacular Greek hideaway. Carved into cliffs, it houses four en-suite bedrooms, a barbecue and covered terrace for open-air dinners, roof terrace for ocean views, gym, infinity pool and hot tub (a great spot for late-night prosecco drinking). And Plaka Resort's restaurants, bars and shops are close by. From £4,499 per week, based on eight adults sharing = £562 per person per week; JamesVillas.co.uk

VILLA 008, CAPE TOWN



More inspired by this winter's *Love Island* villa than the contestants? Time to book a stylish pad in sunny Cape Town. Not only is Villa 008 strolling distance from Camps Bay, with its cool bars and restaurants, but you can see The Twelve Apostles mountain range and the Atlantic Ocean from your bed. There's also an infinity pool, state-of-the-art kitchen, a pantry that's restocked daily and a breakfast chef. From £8,382 per week, based on 12 sharing = £698 per person per week; MyPrivateVillas.com

VENNLANE HOUSE, DEVON



Vennlane House in the UK is as luxurious as any Euro mansion. You and up to 20 mates will feel like you've won the Lottery hanging out in the heated indoor pool or (slightly more chilly) outdoor pool, playing tennis on the grass court, watching movies in the cinema room or relaxing in the hot tub. Bonus points for the Moroccan hammam spa room, blue pool table and silver bath tubs. Rent the whole thing for a two-night weekend stay from £7,460 (20 sharing) = £373 each per person in total; Bighouseexperience.com ♦

4G-free
zone



(they each have their own kitchens and are fully self-contained) if your group's a little smaller. Prices for the entire lot start from £3,780 for a four-night midweek stay, so if there's 22 of you, that's just £172 per person. Not bad, eh? For more information, visit Tregullandandco.co.uk



WORDS AMY GRIER, AWANDA STATHAM, KATE PASOLA. MAIN PHOTOGRAPH SERGEY OUTRUSH. STYLIST ELENA DUDINA. HAIR AND MAKE-UP GALINA PANTELEVA (THE AGENT) (MAKE UP FOR MAC). HAIR FOR ORIBE. PHOTOGRAPHER'S ASSISTANT DENIS GORYSHEV. MODEL ANNA GRYZLOVA AT GRACE MODELS. STYLIST'S ASSISTANT POLINA GALKINA. PRODUCER ANASTASIA FRIDMAN. SWIMSUIT LARISSA MINATTO. BRACELET CHANEL. EYEWEAR MAX MARA. ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS HARRY LIM, FOTOMEDIA, GETTY IMAGES, BRETT SYMES

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HEALTH & BEAUTY EDIT

Look good, feel great

OPTEGRA

Wanna escape the pressure to look 'wow' – from perfect glossy locks, to fighting fine lines, to the dreaded beach-body ready?

Wait, this year, focus on what you look at instead!

One thing you can improve super-fast (literally in like, minutes) is how you see yourself and your world, by getting 20/20 vision.

If you wear glasses or contacts you know the frustrations oh too well.

Can't tell which is shampoo or conditioner in the shower? Can't see clearly to create the perfect cat flick? And reading this mag in dim light? Enough already!

Soooo, put all this behind you with laser eye surgery to give you HD vision.

Fancy a five-star hospital, a free consultation to see if you are even suitable, the UK's top eye surgeons who will advise you right from the very start, and the latest least-invasive technologies? Then check out Optegra.

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20/20 VISION

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cosmo advertisement

ESSENTIALS EDIT

Top tips this spring



THE SOHO JUICE CO

The Soho Juice Co make Great Taste award winning soft drinks infused with the spirit of central London's infamous cultural quarter. Think big flavours kept low in sugar and calories combined with eye catching design. Their original SOHO 'no fizz' cans and flavour combinations offer uniquely refreshing soft drinks. When it's party time, try mixing with your favourite spirits for some pretty sensational new drinks! Instagram – @sohodrinks

ELECTROFLYTES® HYDRATION FOR FLYING

The **new** 'must have' travel essential. More jet. No lag! Simply add a few drops of ElectroFlytes to your water bottle, juice or even champers, to improve cellular hydration by more than 74% when flying. Dehydration is one of the leading causes of jet lag. ElectroFlytes contains 70+ electrolytes and minerals in a highly absorbable ionic form. 100% organic, no calories, no flavours. 25ml bottle makes 10 litres!

Available through www.electroflytes.com, www.amazon.co.uk and onboard Etihad Airways. www.etihad.com Follow @electroflytes on Instagram.



LOOK YOUNGER LONGER REGENTIV SPECIALIST SERUM (WITH RETINOL)

This delicate and oh so effective serum for lines, wrinkles, crepey eyes and neck, vertical lip lines, sun damage and much more. Unique formulation of retinol palmitate, aloe vera, vitamin E, SPF, moisturiser – perfect to use twice daily. Four sizes from £29.95 to £149. To receive exclusive 10% reader discount apply code COSMO4 when ordering. www.regentiv.com or call 01923 212555 for advice or to order. Please see website for full range and special offers.



TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR STRESS INCONTINENCE TODAY

If you're one of the millions of women who suffer with stress incontinence, you'll be relieved to hear there's a tried and tested, NHS approved device that will help you put a stop to those embarrassing leaks for good. It's called a PelvicToner and it's clinically proven to help you strengthen your pelvic floor – putting you back in control. This low cost, beautifully simple, pelvic floor exerciser has already changed the lives of thousands of women. It is available direct from the manufacturer, or on prescription from your GP, and is supplied with everything you need to start exercising straight away. To find out more, or order a PelvicToner direct (no prescription needed) call 0117 974 3534 or visit www.pelvictoner.co.uk today.

BAEBROW

It's time to step up the game with HI ROLLER! - a highly concentrated blend of the most precious SUPER SEED extracts in one, sleek, skin care elixir. Super seeds are tiny food components that supply an extraordinary amount of replenishing nutrients: vitamins, soothing and plumping fatty acids, minerals such as magnesium and zinc, as well as cell protective antioxidants. The concept behind HI ROLLER is to deliver the most advanced, 100% natural skin nutrition system with strong anti-aging properties all encased in sleek Miron Glass. It's like having your morning smoothie, but also giving your skin some of that goodness. Get an exclusive 20% off yours at **BAEBROW.com** with code HICOSMO until 31/5/20. Follow us on IG/FB @baebrow because #BrowsAreEverything



FASHION EDIT

Sharpen up for the season



FOX IN GOWN

Since its inception in 2016, Fox in Gown has become a sought after contemporary label attracting women of all ages. Created by Bret Malish to inspire originality, fantasy and carefree beauty. This Austin, Texas label epitomises the cool, romantic, feminine aesthetic with hand dyed cottons, delicate prints and natural fibres. Expect to see maxi dresses, peasant tops and flirty skirts that are perfect for parties as well as more casual settings. By creating a dreamy collection as versatile and timeless as the women who wear it, Fox in Gown has continued to thrive. To place an order visit foxingown.com

Photographer: Mark Guerra

DRESSING YOUR INNER VIXEN SINCE 2012

Delayne Dixon is a luxe-alternative brand based out of Vancouver, Canada. All of our items are ethically handmade right here in our studio. We design with the punk-rock scene in mind with the use of bold metallics, faux fur and leather. Our clients aren't afraid to step out of societal standards and we strive to empower those independent women! Follow us for updates and new products!

delaynedixon.com

Insta: [@delaynedixon](https://www.instagram.com/delaynedixon)



AŠADY

ašady is an affordable luxury fashion brand inspired by Middle Eastern and Eastern European art. The brand focuses on classic cuts with bold colours and designs, creating a feminine, unique and empowering look. Their latest collection combines hard leathers and soft fabrics, representing the working woman who embodies the boss at work and nurturer at home. Visit danaasady.com and IG: [@dana.asady](https://www.instagram.com/dana.asady)



SHOEDOLLY

ShoeDolly present the perfect espadrille, ideal for any occasion from early morning coffee to summer evenings outdoors. Designed to be supremely comfortable and classically chic, they will soon be your most faithful summer shoe. Choose from a gorgeous selection of classic colours. With sling back or ankle ties. Handmade in Spain. Order online at www.shoedolly.com

cosmoadvertisement

ACCESSORIES EDIT

Look your best



MUSO CASA™

Tiara Fascinator by Muso Casa™. Muso Casa™ is a luxury fashion brand offering in-house designed fascinator headwear, premium cotton satin apparel, high street fashion jewellery, clutches, bags and footwear. The products are handcrafted by the designers with resources that are biodegradable, recyclable, 100% vegan and cruelty free.

Dress yourself up from head to toe with fashion from www.musocasa.com



TREEM

The True & Elegant Movement – TREEM – is a brand with a strong and passionate ambition. TREEM is dedicated to creating a design that evokes an inner strength, and empowers the wearer. Their sustainable and ethical jewellery is hand made in Sweden with full traceability. Their mission states, “When you live from a place of Truth and Elegance, you are aligned with your authentic self, you are stronger than ever and you are able to offer your full potential to the world.”

treem.com



PURO EDITIONS

Blaze your own irrepressible trail with PURO EDITIONS’ game-changing, vibrant range of healing gemstone bracelets and necklaces. Expertly crafted using peace jade, howlite, jasper stone, mother of pearl and more; mix, match and collect to create your very own personal PURO stack.

Puro Editions brings you the chicest wrists in the room with the clearest head to match. Mention CP10 for an exclusive 10% off your first order at puroeditions.co.uk

IG @puroeditions



CALIFORNIA LOVE

We have carefully curated a gallery of jewellery from California for you to explore and enjoy in the UK.

At the core of our brand is magnetic design by the female tribe. Our site features special gems from California designers such as Jennie Kwon, Nina Segal, Perez Bitan and Charlie and Marcelle as well as vintage pieces in our curio. We take pride in being a woman owned business and carrying beautiful, socially conscious items. Shop californialove.london and follow us on Instagram

@californialove.london

TREAT YOURSELF

This month's essentials



ROSE PAULINO

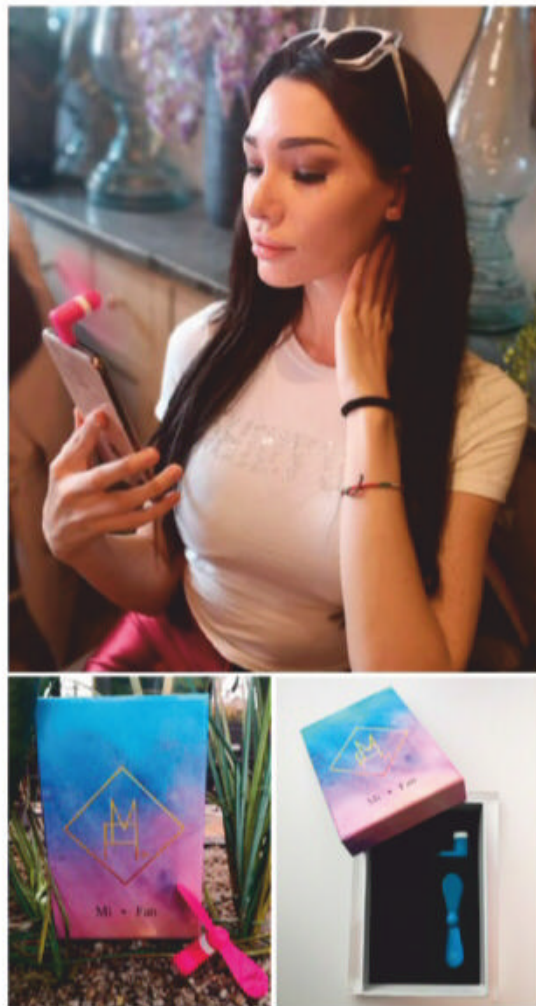
'Use your pain to create art' is a quote designer Rose Paulino abides by. The new active wear collection modelled by fashion model Carmen Carrera is inspired by the pain in her emotions and overcoming them. Pictured is the FLAME active wear set.

Available at www.rosepaulino.com

Make-up artist: Bianca Genis, Hair stylist: Sergio Paez, Photographer: Emily Snell.

MI-FAN

Mi-Fan is a sister owned brand by Sheree and Tamara Gordon providing fun and luxurious phone powered fans eliminating the need for batteries or charging through the simple insertion to your phone, whilst ensuring high quality and strong performance. Our fans are the perfect summer accessory for festivals, clubs or vacations allowing you to focus on having a great time and putting to rest the irritant of intense heat! Don't stay in the cooling past, join the cooling future! Discover more at www.mi-fan.co.uk and join us @mifanofficial on Instagram.



CRYSTSIVA

Crystsiva is a highly curated online boutique with a stunning range of crystal jewellery in unique collections, the Flora collection features jewellery celebrating the colours of spring, like Luxe Crystal Butterfly Tassel Earrings shown here.

To see more, visit crystsivacharms.com or follow @crystsivacharms on Instagram.

CODEX BEAUTY SKIN SUPERFOOD

If you are obsessed with clean ingredients, sustainable packaging and verified results then treat your skin to Codex Beauty Skin Superfood, a true multi-tasker that provides nourishment and moisture to your face, hands and body. Made with our unique BiaComplex™ herbal formula this lightweight textured cream helps treat dry, flaky or irritated skin leaving it silky smooth. Perfect for everyday use and ideal to keep in your handbag, backpack or suitcase. Available at www.alyaka.com and www.codexbeauty.com



one last thing...

Remember this?

MARCH
1990

*Pretty
Woman: so
good we
almost peed
our pants*

WE FELL FOR THIS PRETTY WOMAN

Originally planned as a gritty drama about drug addiction called \$3,000 – the amount Vivian (Julia Roberts) is paid by Edward (Richard Gere) – if *Pretty Woman* got made today, it would probably be more indie film than rose-tinted romcom. But we're forever grateful that this shoulder-pad-heavy Cinderella story, first released in the US in March 1990, made it. OK, so it turns prostitution into a fairy-tale romance, but *Pretty Woman* is still one of the most memorable Julia Roberts movies of all time, making her a star in Hollywood after a host of others, including Sandra Bullock and Sarah Jessica Parker, declined the role first. Big mistake. HUGE. (Well, for them anyway.)



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begin until I've taken
my Wellwoman."*

Tess Daly



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& wellwoman.com

* UK's No1 women's supplement brand. Source: Nielsen GB ScanTrack
Total Coverage Value and Unit Retail Sales 52 w/e 30 November 2019.
To verify contact Vitabiotics Ltd, 1 Apsley Way, London NW2 7HF.



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supports

