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LUPITA NYONG'O

THE FILM & FASHION
MOMENTS THAT
CHANGED HER LIFE

By **KIMBERLY DREW**

Photographs by

JACKIE NICKERSON



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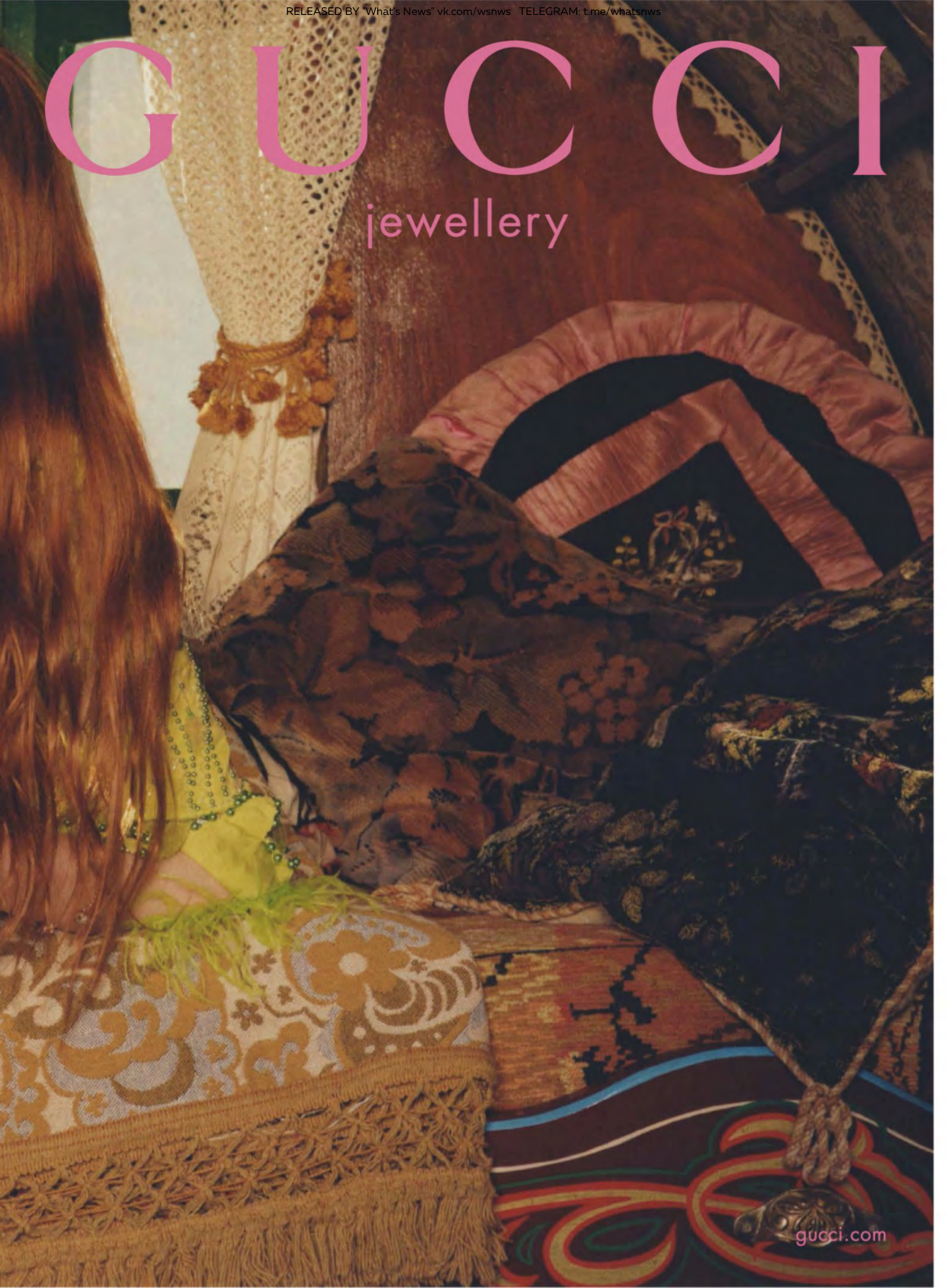


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BY KIMBERLY DREW
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JACKIE NICKERSON

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On the Cover



Lupita Nyong'o wears a gown by **Valentino**; earrings by **Tiffany & Co.** Hair products by **Vernon François**. Makeup by **Lancôme**. Hair by Vernon François. Makeup by Nick Barose. Manicure by Deborah Lippmann. Tailor, Maria Del Greco. Set design by Stefan Beckman. Styled by Samira Nasr. Photographed exclusively for V.F. by Jackie Nickerson in the gardens of the Pleasantdale Château, in West Orange, New Jersey. For details, go to VF.com/credits.

SUN BURN

What happened at SolarCity

\$5B → \$750M → 636

Tesla spent Taxpayers spent Jobs created

"GOODBYE MR. SUNSHINE," P. 106

DION PHOTOGRAPHED BY GILLIAN LAUB; GOWN BY RONALD VAN DER KEMP; FOR DETAILS, GO TO VF.COM/CREDITS

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Music King Princess is the crown jewel of a new wave of pop
Fairground Inside Louis Vuitton's luxe fantasyland for L.A.'s finest



“Karma’s going to make sure I come back as a lobster—I’ve cooked too many.”

DAVID CHANG, P. 124

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NYONG'O PHOTOGRAPHED BY JACKIE NICKERSON; CLOTHING BY 1 MONCLER PIERPAOLO PICCIOLI; EARRINGS BY IRENE NEUWIRTH; DICKINSON PHOTOGRAPHED BY ROSALINE SHAHNAVAZ; TRENCH COAT BY ALEXANDER McQUEEN; T-SHIRT BY CALVIN KLEIN UNDERWEAR. FOR DETAILS, GO TO VF.COM/CREDITS



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diamonds.

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frieze masters

Celebrating London's architecture: Sir John Soane's Museum. Photograph: Dan Tobin Smith.

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Contributors



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①
Kimberly
DREW

"Upon a Star," p. 46

"My favorite part of this process was when Lupita told me about her desire to guide her own narrative," says Drew, the New York-based curator, writer, and activist who profiled Lupita Nyong'o for this month's cover story. "I was impressed by how caring she is. She's a strong-willed and wise person."

②
Aatish
TASEER

"A Rake's Progress," p. 84

In his profile of Imran Khan, Pakistan's prime minister, Taseer found a cautionary, if familiar, tale. "What fascinated me most was his inability to resolve the push and pull of East and West," says Taseer, author of *The Twice-Born*. "I have dealt with that too. But to me, he is a symbol of how wrong the meeting of cultures can go."

③
Julian
LUCAS

"Dread's Rebellion," p. 92

Lucas, a writer and critic at work on a book about the simulation of American history, was impressed by the artist Dread Scott's plan for a reenactment of an 1811 slave uprising. "There's an untapped power in history's marginal might-have-beens," Lucas says, "and Scott is just the artist to release it."

④
Jackie
NICKERSON

"Upon a Star," p. 46

The photographer "wanted everyone on set to participate and use all our creative ideas to make something fresh and exciting" during her photo shoot with Lupita Nyong'o. "We had so much fun—especially with those crazy smoke bombs," says Nickerson.

⑤
Alex
MAJOLI

"Rock Legend," p. 82

The Gem Dior jewelry collection, designed by Victoire de Castellane, is "incredible at capturing light, even in darkness," says the Italian photographer. "And seeing how it is handcrafted relates to my experience crafting my exhibitions." Majoli's latest book, *Scene*, documents global protest and crisis alongside everyday moments.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRISTOPHER ALESSANDRINI (3), CARMEN CHAN (1), SPENCER HEYFRON/REDUX (2), COURTESY OF ALEX MAJOLI (5), COURTESY OF JACKIE NICKERSON (4)

Agenda / By Annabel Davidson

 @vanityfairlondon



Michael Kors Collection fringed canteen bag

Launch

Fringe Benefit

If the logo on this fabulously fringed canteen bag from Michael Kors Collection looks a little retro, it's with good reason. The monogram is a reworking of one he had been playing around with in his youth, rediscovered in an old sketch book. A fitting addition to the 1970s vibe seen in Kors' Fall 2019 collection. michaelkors.co.uk

Fashion

Fall Change

From a self-taught Korean blogger-turned-designer (Le 17 Septembre) to a rule-bending Barcelona-based handbag brand (The Sant), the new wave of Net-a-Porter's Vanguard designers has landed. All scouted through Instagram, each fledgling brand receives business mentorship, a stunning visual campaign, and is exclusive to the online retailer for the Autumn/Winter 2019 season. net-a-porter.com



The Vanguard, Net-a-Porter

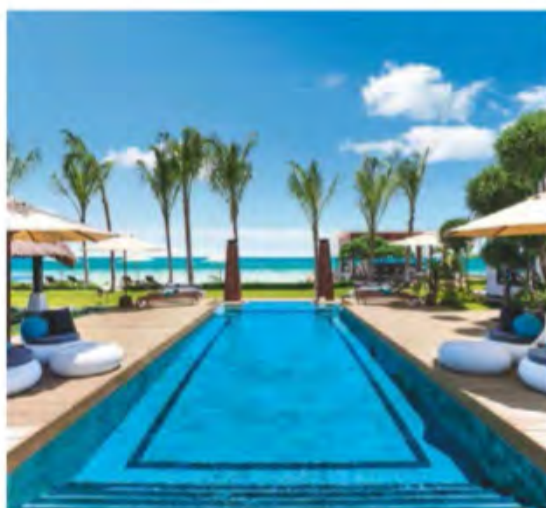


A Private Ocean Retreat at Jumeirah Vittaveli

Travel

Slide Away

It's the stuff of fantasy—your own private slide to deliver you directly into the intoxicatingly turquoise waters of the Maldives from the terrace of your villa. Except, it's reality. Luxury Maldivian resort Jumeirah Vittaveli's revamped Private Ocean Retreats all feature a 23m slide to take guests from sunbathing to sea in an (exhilarating) instant. With two bedrooms in each villa, there's no excuse to leave children at home—this is family fun in immensely luxurious style. Add to that the award-winning spa, restaurants, kids club and teen lounge, private boat to get you to and from the villa (should you ever want to leave) and the fact that Jumeirah Vittaveli is just a 20-minute boat ride from Malé airport, and this is one Indian Ocean retreat that will make you think twice about arriving *sans enfants*. Unless, of course, you'd rather a completely child-free holiday, in which case, they needn't know. jumeirah.com



Opening

A Room of One's Own

It has been over a year since Annabel's (the storied private members' club) reopened its doors, yet "have you been to the new Annabel's?" remains an oft-repeated question. Now, keen non-members (who are unable to persuade a member friend to host them) can access the club by hosting their own event in one of the building's nine private spaces, all decorated in inimitable, maximalist style. annabels.co.uk



The Silver Room at Annabel's



Prada Broadway jacket

Fashion

Larger than Life

Functional meets fabulous via Prada's new women's lifestyle collection: Prada Broadway. Oversized pockets, fuzzy furs in candy floss pink, chunky zips, pale turquoise knits and big hoodies are all designed to sit alongside the runway collections, exuding a wonderfully quirky, '90s-era utilitarianism. prada.com

Written in the *Stars*

It's been just six years since Lupita Nyong'o appeared in Steve McQueen's *12 Years a Slave*, and five and a half years since she won an Academy Award for her performance—her first role in a feature film. Since then, she has established herself as a lodestar in the firmament of contemporary cinema. She's worked with Ryan Coogler in *Black Panther*, Jordan Peele in *Us*, and J.J. Abrams in the final Star Wars trilogy, the last installment of which comes out in December. This fall, Lupita makes another debut, this time as an author. She has written a children's book, *Sulwe*, about a child "born the color of midnight." The book is close to her heart, she tells Kimberly Drew in our cover story; she was moved to write it after receiving a letter from a young girl who told her she had been about to buy a cream to lighten her skin when Lupita "appeared on the world map and saved me."

It isn't just young girls who look for affirmation in the culture. In this issue we publish our annual best-dressed list, an absorbing avenue to inspiration through image. We focus on style that augments personality, that conveys a sense of play, and I hope you will get lost as I do in the intricacies of our honorees' choices, the way a particular hat or hairstyle carries meaning for them, and presents them to the world. We are grateful for the opinions and excellent taste of Kimberly, Lisa Eisner, and Duro Olowu, who, along with our *V.F.* fashion team led by Samira Nasr and contributing editor Maggie Bullock, offered nominations and ideas. A trio of women add further notes of style and substance to this issue: Victoire de Castellane, a glass-ceiling breaker in her role as the longtime creative director of Dior Fine Jewelry; Mackenzie Davis, who looks equally at home swinging from scaffolding in couture and playing a machine fighter in this fall's *Terminator: Dark Fate*; and Lupita, of course, who, in Jackie Nickerson's mesmerizing



acid-floral portraits, takes on the twin powers of worldly and otherworldly.

As I think about these women, I feel a profound sense of gladness and relief at how varied our representations of power and ambition are becoming. This is the season of preliminary presidential politics, and last time around, there was room for just one type of woman at the top; now half a dozen are in the mix, different from one another in outlook and experience, representative of different regions, races, and generations. I don't know why it took so long—or no, I do: structural sexism and individual misogyny—but finally multiple women are running for president, and that will keep happening, and eventually one of them will win. And if you don't think structural sexism and individual misogyny are a thing, I refer you to Vanessa Grigoriadis's column on Jeffrey Epstein, whose abuse of girls suggests not only that he and his high-flying cohorts were perfectly comfortable in a world that allowed them to treat women like toys, but that they never expected to be held accountable for it. As a society, we haven't solved that problem. But we seem to be getting a little better at confronting it.

RADHIKA JONES, *Editor in Chief*

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Correspondence

“It was creating performance art out of one’s own aspirations.” —John Green, Washington, D.C.



Connecticut Convict



Your two August stories about the travails of hedge funder Chip Skowron and Purdue Pharma’s David Sackler were similar in that both were rewarded with big paydays for doing wrong [“Look Homeward, Hedgie,” by Chris Pomorski; “Bitter Pill,” by Bethany McLean]. Skowron, who served time for securities fraud, and Sackler, whose family rode a tidal wave of OxyContin profits to the *Forbes* World’s Richest List, both plead their cases in your pages—and both fail. Skowron, who now feels most comfortable in prison, albeit one that he leaves each night after visiting his former cellmates, might be the same old “Hedgie” if his neighbors in Greenwich had not cast him out socially. And Sackler, who is upset that his family is being blamed in part for the more than 400,000 U.S. opioid deaths over the past 20 years, feels angry and aggrieved by the situation in which he and his family find themselves. **A little advice to both: Look in the mirror.** You were complicit in the actions that brought you to the present. Be grateful that you still have the money to do as you please.

David Comden
Ventura,
California

Social

“The Idris Experience,”
by K. Austin Collins,
August 2019

OMG the new
@VanityFair has
@idrisElba on the
cover #swoon

@DebbieMonterrey

This must be a
cooking magazine
'cuz DAMN, look at
that dish. @idrisElba
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Just got my Vanity
Fair with that fine
specimen of a man
Idris Elba on the
cover. Nice read. But
did y'all read the
Receipts story?
Whitney coinage the
phrase people.
Wasn't that a fucking
crazy interview with
Diane Sawyer??
A great read in the
August issue.

@Jesusch22375337

Coming Soon

The Musso & Frank Grill, by
Michael Callahan,
out this month
from Story Farm

CORRECTION

On page 94 of
the September issue
 (“Screen Share”),
Caitriona Balfe’s
name was misspelled.

Paris Is Burning



Having lived a bit of the D.C. version of ballroom culture, I enjoy your revisiting of *Paris Is Burning* [“*Paris Is Burning* Is Back—And So Is Its Baggage,” by K. Austin Collins, VF.com]. It wasn’t so much about drag as it was creating performance art out of one’s own aspirations. In the NYC scene they would dress as rich New Yorkers or upper-middle-class kids. We had our versions: “White Woman From Chevy Chase” was a favorite, “Diplomat’s Daughter” another. I wonder if we ever stopped. As I drive today through tony D.C. neighborhoods, it seems the entire neighborhood of meticulously curated homes is performance art as an expression of people’s aspirations. Upper Northwest as a reenactment of *Paris Is Burning*. White women from Chevy Chase throwing shade.

John Green
Washington,
D.C.

90
YEARS
AGO



Photograph by
Edward
Steichen,
1928.

Greta Garbo, on the set of the film
A Woman of Affairs

Wrote V.F.: Garbo primped, complaining, “Oh, this terrible hair.” Steichen asked her to repeat the gesture. The result: a classic V.F. portrait (*October 1929 issue*)

PHOTOGRAPHS: FROM TOP, BY JONATHAN BECKER, © OFF WHITE PRODUCTIONS/EVERETT COLLECTION, FROM THE CONDE NAST ARCHIVE

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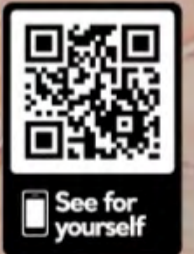
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Vanities

VANITAS VANITATUM



“

A lot of my family are quite performative, but I'm the only one who's managed to make a career out of it.”

—

Harris Dickinson, 23, the British leading man crossing the pond with Disney's *Maleficent: Mistress of Evil* and a *Kingsman* spin-off

➔

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

GROOMING BY JODY TAYLOR; FOR DETAILS, GO TO VF.COM/CREDITS

Clothing by **Hermès**;
hair products by **Kiehl's**; grooming products by **TOM FORD for Men**.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ROSALINE SHAHNAVAZ
STYLED BY URSULA LAKE

OCTOBER 2019

VANITY FAIR

31

Vanities / **Opening Act**

Harris Dickinson speaks with V.F.'s Britt Hennemuth.

Your first film was *Beach Rats*, a coming-out drama that was a breakout success at the Sundance Film Festival in 2017. How were you discovered?

I spent a lot of time in my mom's bedroom making self-tape auditions because the light was good. I was working in a hotel in London when I got the script, and I Skyped [filmmaker] Eliza Hittman from my childhood home. I have her to thank for my launch because you can't ask for more than what she gave on that film. She gets a text from me now and again with a little smiley face and an update.

What are your memories from your first trip to Sundance, that all-American film festival?

The three other, completely uninhibited actors in *Beach Rats* just walked over to Woody Harrelson, gave him some pizza, and innocently said, "Yo, big fan." I just wished I could be as open.

You played a gay character in your next film as well, a casting decision that met with some controversy.

As a straight man, do you feel the conversation on sexuality and casting has shifted within the last two years?

I'm not sure whether it's progressed or come to a sort of standstill. It's always

FAN MAIL



subjective, isn't it? There's only so much I can speak on it without it being opinions pushed on people and not a sort of general consensus.

You just wrapped *The King's Man*, a prequel to the popular British spy franchise. Your costars Ralph Fiennes and Aaron Taylor-Johnson have made the jump to the States' screens before you. Did they share any advice?

I picked up their work ethic, sustainability, and enjoyment of honing your craft in an industry that's so fickle and absurd.

How does your character, Conrad, fit into the *Kingsman* universe?

It's World War I and he's the son of Ralph Fiennes's character, the Duke of Oxford. The director, Matthew Vaughn, trusted me to play this character that's extremely unlike myself. He's a brave, young aspiring soldier, but that's all I can say.

And this month you enter the magical (and big-budgeted) world of Disney, in the *Maleficent* sequel. I imagine that was a leap from your earlier, smaller indies.

I had to approach it like any other project, but the extensiveness was incredible. I had my mom, sister, and nieces visit set since they're such fans of the original. "We want to meet Aurora [Elle Fanning]," they said. "We only came here for her, not for you." It was brilliant!

Did the acting bug run in your family?

I'm the youngest of four. A lot of my family are quite performative, but I'm the only one who's managed to make a career out of it.

What was it like to work with Elle Fanning and Angelina Jolie, two of Hollywood's biggest stars?

There's a real presence with Angelina, and it was a privilege to watch her—she's a force of nature. And it's hard to accept that Elle's only 21, because she's so poised. We had a great time learning the dance scene; we were high-fiving like a pair of kids when we finished.

Hunger Games In Whoopi Goldberg's *The Unqualified Hostess* (Rizzoli), the actor and entrepreneur offers a guide to entertaining for the practical maximalist. Here, she outlines her ideal dinner party

SOUNDTRACK
Soul Town channel on Sirius

HORS D'OEUVRES
Arancini, classic bruschetta, baked Gorgonzola bread with fig jam and basil

GUEST LIST
Gwen Verdon, Bob Fosse, Liliuokalani, Shaka Zulu, Queen Victoria, and I.M. Pei

CONVERSATION PIECE
"Nothing you are interested in talking about should be considered taboo. Unless it's your personal sex life. Nobody wants to hear about that."

DINNER
Sautéed potato gnocchi, shaved kale salad,* pan-roasted pork chop

DESSERT
Pear cake with cinnamon glaze

* "I would not be eating the kale salad but I know other people would like this." —WG

PAGE 32: ILLUSTRATIONS, TOP BY LAUREN TAMAKI; BOTTOM, BY SARAH MAYCOCK. PHOTOGRAPHS: FROM LEFT, FROM THE EVERETT COLLECTION; FROM THE JOHN SPRINGER COLLECTION/CORBIS/GETTY IMAGES; FROM PHOTO RESOURCE HAWAII/ALAMY; BY GARY GERSHOFF/GETTY IMAGES; FROM GL ARCHIVE/ALAMY; FROM POPPERFOTO/GETTY IMAGES; BY MICHAEL N. TODARO/FILMMAGIC; PAGE 33: PHOTOGRAPHS BY LIAM GOODMAN, STYLED BY KATRINA ROZEVILLE (COACH, DIOR, TODD SNYDER, VERA WANG). FOR DETAILS, GO TO VFCOM.COM/CREDITS

CHECK, PLEASE



Fall fashion lives somewhere in the grid of the Scottish highlands, *Chueless*, and the platonic ideal of a woodcutter



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[Moda Operandi]



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Dior jacket, £2,050.
[Dior New Bond Street]



LOCKED PROPER
Salvatore Ferragamo handbag,
£1,460. [ferragamo.com]



CHERRY BOMB
Manolo Blahnik slingbacks,
£655. [manoloblahnik.com]



NEED FOR TWEED
Coach 1941 coat,
price upon request.
[coach.com]



JIG OUT
Vera Wang trousers,
£700. [verawang.com]



PRETTY IN PLAID
Burberry Fresh Glow
Foundation,
£35. [burberry.com]



IN THE PINK
A look from Loewe Men's
fall 2019 collection.

BEL CANTO

Break out the cough drops and flick open the lorgnettes—the opera is getting a refresh



The 19th-century boom of classics, from Verdi's *Otello* to Puccini's *La Bohème*, may be known as the art form's golden age, but operas are having a modern moment. Hot off a summer that debuted *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* (Opera Theatre of Saint Louis), adapted from Charles Blow's memoir about growing up in segregated Louisiana, and the queer epic *Stonewall* (New York City Opera), the upcoming season includes world premieres of *Denis & Katya*, based on the social-media-centric story of two Russian teen runaways (Opera Philadelphia), and *The Lost Thing*, featuring a cast with varying physical abilities (London's Royal Opera). Of course, the classics still wield political relevance. *The Marriage of Figaro* is an opera buffa about overthrowing the upper classes. Verdi inspired rebellion. Beethoven's *Fidelio* celebrates human rights. So make like it's 1877. Phone off. Curtain up. —KEZIAH WEIR

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MAKEUP PRODUCTS BY DIOR BEAUTY; MAKEUP BY MARKPHONG TRAM; FOR DETAILS, GO TO VF.COM/CREDITS



"For me, the Italian maestros like **Antonioni**, **Fellini**, and **Pasolini** show how thoughts and beauty can be linked."

A resort 2020 look, right, in the **Orto Botanico**. "The garden is a treasure because it's in the heart of the city, but it's like being out of the world."



"The bottle represents the feeling of couture but at the same time a punk attitude." **Donna Born in Roma**, £110. [valentino.com]



"I loved the recent exhibition at **MAXXI** of **Paolo di Paolo**—so intimate and personal." **Anna Magnani**, below, photographed by di Paolo, 1955.

For Valentino creative director **Pierpaolo Piccioli**, Rome's cultural contradictions make for ripe inspiration

LOCAL TIME

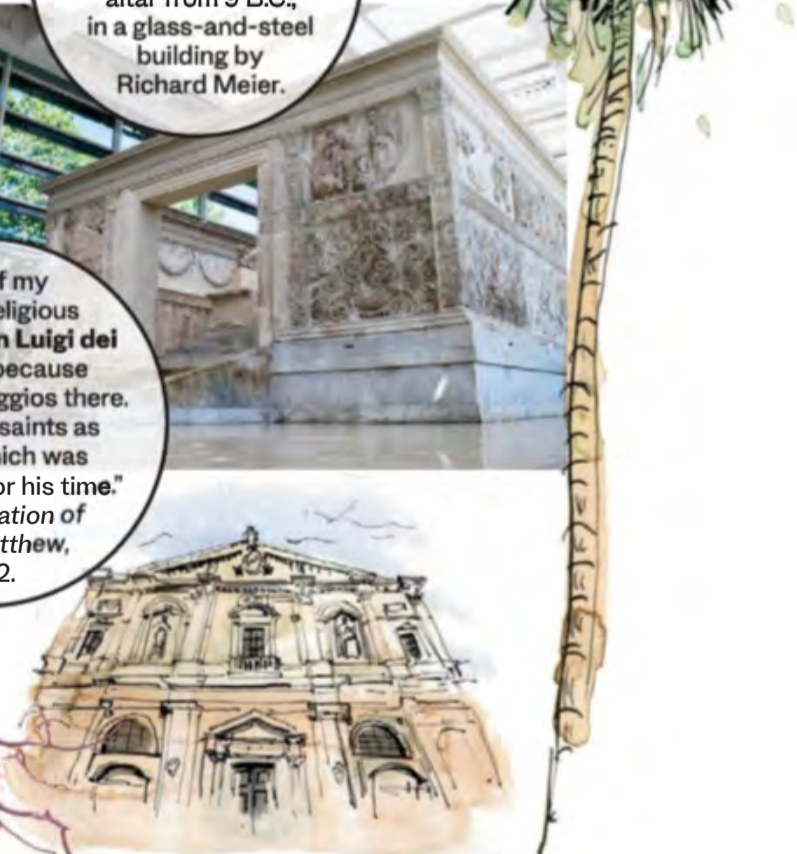
"That tension between high and low, pagan and Catholic—that's the feeling that Roma wants to deliver," Pierpaolo Piccioli says about his birthplace and that of Valentino, the nearly 60-year-old fashion house he has led since 2008 (he assumed sole creative control in 2016). The city's roots in duality—wolf-weaned twins Romulus and Remus are its mythic founders—live on for the designer, whether he's taking the train from seaside Nettuno while watching Fellini films on a laptop or putting forth *Born in Roma*, a his-and-hers scent fronted by models Anwar Hadid and Adut Akech. "She wears couture like it's a T-shirt," Piccioli says of Akech's "effortless elegance," which applies as handily to the man himself. "When you work in Rome, you can't compete with Caravaggio or Bernini, so you do what you can." —LAURA REGENSDORF



"In Roma, you never have the sense of the past as a source of nostalgia." **Ara Pacis**, a Roman altar from 9 B.C., in a glass-and-steel building by Richard Meier.



"One of my favorite religious spaces is **San Luigi dei Francesi** because of the Caravaggios there. He painted saints as people, which was outrageous for his time." *The Inspiration of Saint Matthew*, 1602.



PHOTOGRAPHS FROM ARCHIVIO FOTOGRAFICO PAOLO DI PAOLO (MAGNANI); BY EMILIA COCIZZI (ARA PACIS); FROM FINE ART IMAGES/HERITAGE IMAGES (CARAVAGGIO); BY NIRUT SAEIIM/EYEEM (CHERRY BLOSSOMS); KEVIN SHORRY/EYEEM (PALM TREE); ALL FROM GETTY IMAGES; BY INEZ & VINOODH (PICCIOLI); FROM JANUS FILMS/PHOTOFEST (L'AVVENTURA); FOR DETAILS, GO TO VF.COM/CREDITS

TALK OF THE TOWN

Calf's liver. Jellied consommé. A martini with a "sidecar" of the second pour on ice. Musso & Frank Grill has earned a devoted dinership serving such holdover classics, and this month, Hollywood's oldest restaurant marks its centennial—an achievement in a town of fickle fad dining. What's the grill's secret ingredient for success? Keith Richards might describe it best: "tradition." The waiters' red jackets match the leather booths at the family-owned institution, where legends past and present have sat: Fitzgerald, Faulkner, Garbo, and Tarantino, who featured Musso's in his recent film *Once Upon a Time...in Hollywood*. And to ring in its 100th birthday, *The Musso & Frank Grill* book—part guest book, part cookbook—by *V.F.* contributing editor Michael Callahan, is out this month. —BRITT HENNEMUTH

“
I always go into Musso & Frank with a sense of wonder and enjoyment. I know I am being welcomed into a great tradition and I am about to experience it anew. May Musso & Frank live forever!”
—Francis Ford Coppola

Clockwise from top: Paulette Goddard and Charlie Chaplin in the mid-1930s; diners circa 1950; Musso & Frank's signature martini is stirred, not shaken.



Screen Tests Two divisive best sellers get the Hollywood treatment

➔ Donna Tartt's tale of love and fakery, *The Goldfinch* (2013), may have won the Pulitzer Prize and sold over a million copies, but it was also deemed Not Art by certain highest-brow literary critics. Its twisty plot seems made for the big screen, where it lands this month from Warner Bros., starring Ansel Elgort and Nicole Kidman. Elsewhere on the stylistic spectrum, A.J. Finn's 2018 best-selling debut thriller, *The Woman in the Window*, gained a bleaker notoriety after allegations of deceit and plagiarism by the book's author. The Fox adaptation, starring Amy Adams, has hit its own speed bumps—following reshoots, the film's original fall release has been pushed to next year. —KEZIAH WEIR



CHANGE Agents

Proceeds from Gucci's most political new pieces benefit the brand's Chime for Change initiative, which, since its inception in 2013, has raised more than \$15 million in the service of women and girls worldwide. And for no money at all, one can pick up the second issue of Chime Zine, a galvanizing force for gender equality that's available at select Gucci stores and bookstores.



PAGE 36: PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALLISON SCHALLER (BOOKS), JOSEPHINE SCHIELE (T-SHIRTS); FROM SHUTTERSTOCK (MARTINI); PAGE 37: PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSEPHINE SCHIELE. FOR DETAILS, GO TO VF.COM/CREDIT



THE LIFE MELODIC

A chorus of new books delves into the minds of musicians, from rappers and rockers to indie-pop icons

1 *Year of the Monkey* by Patti Smith (Knopf)
“I could feel the gravitational pull of home, which when I’m home becomes the gravitational pull of somewhere else,” writes the author and musician in her lyrical retelling of one nomadic year.

2 *High School* by Sara and Tegan Quin (MCD)
In alternating chapters, the twins, band members and

queer activists, relive their entangled high school years.

3 *Hurricanes* by Rick Ross with Neil Martinez-Belkin (Hanover Square Press)
The rapper details coming of age in a financially depleted Florida community, his run-ins with the law, and how he made music—and money—out of personal strife.

4 *Janis: Her Life and Music* by Holly George-Warren (Simon & Schuster)

This gripping biography charts the brilliant and troubled blues singer, from life in small-town Texas to discovering Kerouac, San Francisco, and her own musical self.

5 *Horror Stories* by Liz Phair (Random House)
The onetime ’90s teen queen provides a backstage peek at her anxieties and triumphs over decades in the spotlight. “From

the beginning,” she writes, “my songs have been stories.”

6 *The Beautiful Ones* by Prince (Spiegel & Grau)
An intimate volume comprising previously unpublished photos of the singular performer and the unfinished memoir he was working on just before his death.

7 *Me* by Elton John (Henry Holt)
Following *Rocketman*, this summer’s critically

acclaimed biopic, the Elton show continues with the first and only autobiography from the outré glasses-loving Brit.

8 *Morning Glory on the Vine* by Joni Mitchell (HMH)
A collection of handwritten lyrics and happy-hued illustrations, created by Mitchell in 1971 for a few close friends, is publicly available for the first time.

—KEZIAH WEIR

SKIN DEEP

In the booming beauty game, the quest for the dream cream is driving creativity, in and out of the jar

Makeup is for the mercurial—the quick-change artists who swap their neon liner with every shift in weather or mood. But skin care stirs fidelity. At a time when optimized health is the greatest luxury, a radiant visage is the clearest indicator. Multistep routines and individual needs suggest there's no single fix, but whispers still swirl among Reddit beauty diehards about this fabled cream or that. Indiana Jones had an easier time finding the Holy Grail.

Even with a glut of competition, La Mer—that 1990s cause for devotion (and sticker shock)—still has its tribe. Now a new collaboration foretells next-gen fandom. Photographers Mario Sorrenti and his 18-year-old daughter, Gray—a rising phenom in the family trade—have created a salt-sprayed campaign for the cultish Crème de la Mer. In Spain and St. Barts, the two took turns on both sides of the lens, resulting in black-and-white shots, 16-mm footage, and custom jars. “I grew up in the ocean,” Gray says of their holidays, confessing that she also grew up dipping into her mother’s La Mer as a little girl. (It soothed her problematic skin.) It wasn’t hype but word-of-mouth praise at Zitomer, the iconic Upper East Side pharmacy, that turned them on to it decades ago, recalls Mario. “The most important thing is that the product works,” he says.

If a so-called “miracle broth” of potent fermented kelp is La Mer’s secret sauce, the proprietary stem-cell technology TFC8 is what powers Augustinus Bader,

ACE OF FACE



Macrene Actives
High Performance Face Cream, £276.
[macreneactives.com]



La Mer
Crème de la Mer by Sorrenti, £230.
[lamer.co.uk]



Augustinus Bader
The Rich Cream, £205.
[violetgrey.com]



Olay
Retinol24 Night Moisturizer, £23.
[olay.co.uk]



the German face-cream line that has much of Hollywood in thrall. (For those who can't get enough, a body cream launched in July via the beauty site Violet Grey.) “We joke around that we’re drug dealers, and technically we kind of are,” says the boutique’s founder, Cassandra Huysentruyt Grey, of the science-backed skin care, which young people have been springing for “like they used to invest in shoes.” The cost, she concedes, “is the only issue with recommending it all the time.”

Pairing efficacy with accessibility is what Olay aims to do with its Retinol24 moisturizer—easy on the wallet and on skin. Retinoids (the class of vitamin A derivatives used to treat acne and signs of aging by revving up cell turnover) can cause irritation, but this blend of retinol and retinyl propionate is gentle enough for daily use. While a prescription retinoid offers the most bang, says dermatologist Heidi Waldorf, M.D., “it doesn’t have to be all or nothing.”

Gray Sorrenti, captured by her father, Mario Sorrenti. The fashion photographers have partnered with La Mer on a new campaign.

Switching between the strong stuff and over-the-counter options can be a good balance.

For dermatologist Macrene Alexiades, M.D., Ph.D., hero ingredients come by the dozens. Her original skin-care debut—a multi-action cream with a natural-leaning ethos—kicked off the label 37 Actives. (Sienna Miller has cast her vote.) Ten years and six products later, she’s set to unveil Macrene Actives, a reformulation and refresh “to raise the bar even higher,” she says, citing DNA-repair enzymes and recyclable packaging. She’s growing feverfew and mint in Rhinebeck, New York, for future use in the line; olive extracts from her land in Greece are to follow. It’s a next-level doctor brand, she says: “health for the earth, for the human, for the skin.”

—LAURA REGENSDORF

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOSEPHINE SCHIELE (PRODUCTS); FOR DETAILS, GO TO VF.COM/CREDITS

EYES

Redefined

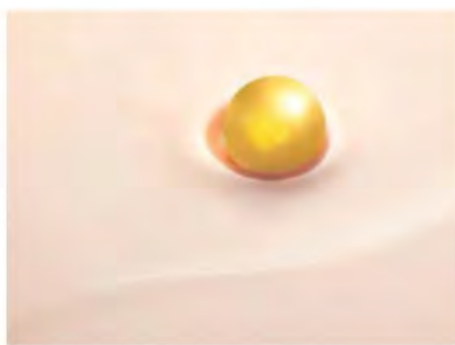
Meet La Prairie's latest magic potion: an eye-opening dual-formula serum that will transform delicate skin

Words by

JESSICA BURRELL

When it comes to innovation, few skin care brands lead the charge quite so elegantly as La Prairie. Utilising years of cutting-edge Swiss science, the focus of La Prairie's latest formulation is to "redefine the gaze". The skin surrounding eyes is the thinnest and most fragile on the face, meaning it is often the first to show signs of ageing. To counteract this, Skin Caviar Eye Lift is a serum that offers unique eye-opening effects, diminishing under-eye bags and puffiness, reducing the visibility of crow's feet and helping to redefine the eyebrow area. The secret behind these miraculous effects is a unique dual formulation; the serum contains one formula encapsulated in La Prairie's iconic caviar beads and one gel-cream emulsion. The two key active ingredients are La Prairie's Exclusive Cellular Complex and Caviar Premier, both of which utilise biotechnological research to re-energise skin cells and leave the entire eye area looking youthful and revived.

Launching August 12 (exclusively at Harrods from July 29); laprairie.co.uk



KEY BENEFITS

—
Redefines the entire eye contour

—
Visibly reduces the appearance of crow's feet

—
Lifts and tightens upper lids

—
Reduces the look of fine lines

—
Makes eyes appear more youthful

—
Minimises the look of under-eye bags



ROCK AND ROYAL “Being gay gave me more respect than I saw given to a lot of straight women in similar situations,” says **King Princess** about growing up around her father’s Brooklyn recording studio. “It eliminated that sexual nature in working with men,” adds the 20-year-old singer/songwriter/producer. Her acclaimed indie EP on Mark Ronson’s Zelig label led to this month’s release of her debut studio album, *Cheap Queen*, and a current U.S. headlining tour. Here, she discusses studios, sexuality, and sad songs. *By Lisa Robinson*

L.R.: You’re a native New Yorker. Why are you living in Los Angeles?
K.P.: New York is tough. Growing up there and taking the subway, I feel like I got all my tough shit out. Now I’m living and enjoying the sun.
What did you learn from being around your father’s studio?

Ten years ago, not a lot of women were producing themselves. They’d record a whole album, then come back with the edits from the label, and re-record everything all over again. It was startling to watch music get mutilated.

Is it true your great-great-grandfather Isidor Straus was a U.S. congressman

who was considered a hero when he died on the *Titanic*?

Yes, my great-great-grandparents were wealthy Jewish philanthropists who owned Macy’s, and they decided to take a luxury trip on the *Titanic*. They gave up their spots on the lifeboats to die together—so romantic.

How hard is it to maintain a personal life while you’re on tour? You used to date [actress] Amandla Stenberg—are you seeing anyone now?

I am dating someone now. The hardest part of juggling a relationship is allowing yourself to miss someone, and to know that missing someone is healthy. But I’ve found that type of pain informs my work. I’m getting better at accepting the reality that my life, in many ways, is transient.

Your real name is Mikaela Straus.

How did you get to be King Princess?

A friend of mine used to call me that, and it just felt right. I wasn’t fully formed into my genderqueer self at the time and couldn’t comprehend all the levels—but I am a King Princess. It’s very in-between and fluid.

What were your goals for this new album?

I wrote about 30 to 40 songs between my EP and this new record. What I was going for was something more evolved. I wanted something a step up, production-wise.

Do you ever just turn songwriting off?

I go through months where I’ll write so many songs, then get bored with myself and have nothing to say. So I’ll do anything outside of music—like comedy. Part of me just wants to be funny because my music is sad. I play songs for people, they tell me it makes them really sad, and I say, “Yeah, I was really sad when I wrote it.”

You used to be nervous to play live. Are you more comfortable now?

I kind of am, because I’m usually stoned. 🍑



1 Fashion fans lined Rodeo Drive to catch a glimpse of **Millie Bobby Brown**, **Hailee Steinfeld**, **Miranda Kerr**, and others arriving at **Louis Vuitton X**, an exhibition that spans 160 years of the French luxury house's archives.



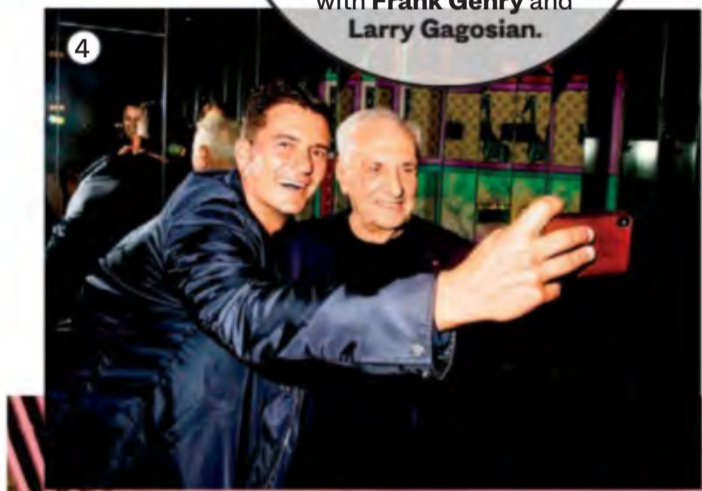
2 After taking in the exhibit, guests headed to the **John Lautner**-designed **Sheats-Goldstein house**, perched above Beverly Hills, for caviar and champagne. **Jaden Smith** boogied to the sounds of Saudi-born society DJ sisters **Simi & Haze**, while **Orlando Bloom** mingled with **Frank Gehry** and **Larry Gagosian**.



3 Six contemporary artists—**Jonas Wood**, **Sam Falls**, **Urs Fischer**, **Nicholas Hlobo**, **Tschabalala Self**, and **Alex Israel**—used the **Capucines bag** as a canvas to reimagine a new collection of the signature purses.

HOT TO HANDLE

From a roped-off Rodeo Drive to an after-party in an iconic home, Louis Vuitton created a luxe fantasyland for L.A.'s creative set
By Britt Hennemuth



1. Inside the Louis Vuitton X exhibition in Beverly Hills 2. **Laura Harrier** and **Alicia Vikander** 3. **Jennifer Connelly** 4. **Orlando Bloom** and **Frank Gehry** 5. An **Artycapucines bag** by **Alex Israel**. One of the decorative surfboard fins has a comb attached; the other a mirror 6. **Millie Bobby Brown** and **Delphine Arnault**, who hosted the evening with **Michael Burke** 7. Guests explore the immersive exhibition 8. The **Dolan twins**, **Ethan** and **Grayson**

Secrets and Lies

By Vanessa Grigoriadis

Dating the Monster

In rarefied New York circles, Jeffrey Epstein was the sociopath who proved the rule

Many moons ago, in the early 2000s, my friends spent a weekend in Southampton with a distinctive young blond who resembled Lady Gaga if Gaga were British. She was about 22 and said she was an interior designer, or a jewelry designer, or a motivational coach—I can't remember which, but in any case the job sounded semifake—and she lived in an apartment on the Upper East Side that her older boyfriend had given her, at least temporarily. He collected art, and they often attended auctions. He loved vegetarian food and playing unfamiliar concertos on his grand piano. As she strolled down Southampton's tree-lined streets, she was struck by their beauty and said she'd have to discuss getting a home there with her boyfriend. His name was Jeffrey Epstein.

Back then, as a cocky, petite, ink-stained wretch, I wasn't one of the young women in Manhattan whom Epstein and his friends approached for relationships, one-night stands, or abuse. But I was surrounded by a lot of them. They were always the most beautiful girls in the room, usually models or former models, with a slightly aloof *Stepford Wives* aura that masked a deeper vulnerability. Several names came up when they were around: Epstein, supermarket magnate Ron Burkle, film financier Steve Bing, and former president Bill Clinton, then in the prime of his postpresidential career and flying around on Epstein's jet, dubbed the Lolita Express, or Burkle's jet, dubbed Air Fuck One. (Clinton



has not been accused of wrongdoing.) The women were often blond—Epstein, in particular, liked patrician blonds with a bit of a baby face. At his home on the Upper East Side, he kept a photo of '80s soap star Morgan Fairchild, whom he called his ideal woman, though considering they were

both in their early 50s back then, she was far too old for him.

Beyond allegedly running a pedophile ring, Epstein, who hanged himself in August, epitomized the transactional nature of fin de siècle New York society, the sociopath who proved the rule. As hedge funds began

to create massive fortunes and the billionaire class outpaced entail and primogeniture, women like the one in Southampton were necessary accessories, and learning how to acquire them was part of many a high-level trader's skill set. There's a temptation to say that the world has always worked this way—ambitious, beautiful young women have often sought to climb rungs via powerful men, and powerful men have partly craved power in order to access beautiful women—but this era in New York was unique. A rapidly increasing workforce of women in black slip dresses, knee-high black boots, and flatironed hair had come to seek the *Sex and the City* lifestyle, not husbands—but with most of their professions (fashion, publicity, publishing) paying far less than men's, they were not averse to someone footing the bill.

Beautiful women also had currency in the city's "models and bottles" scene, as the post-9/11 era of downtown nightlife was called. Manhattan's legendary club scene of hip-hop stars, painters, and graffiti artists, where one gained entrée by virtue of one's art rather than the size of one's wallet, was going capitalist. A new nightclub formula had been devised: Ice buckets of Cristal and Cîroc bottles were set up at leather banquettes, alongside every kind of model—Victoria's Secret model, runway model, supermodel, "just-off-the-boat model"—and if you were a rich older guy who wanted to take a seat, it could cost up to \$10,000, though Puffy and Leo didn't pay a thing.

Like his billionaire friends, Epstein ran a highly compartmentalized life. "He'd say he was going somewhere for work, and then I'd see pictures in a British tabloid of him on a yacht with supermodels," says a woman who dated one of his close friends. The women of consenting age with whom Epstein became involved weren't gold diggers, per se—they were models, or Amy Winehouse's "Gucci bag crew" flying to Miami for free, or postcollegiate women who didn't care about a 30-year age difference. Some wanted to open a door to the world of private

planes and the global elite. In later years, he favored a different kind of Eastern European woman who was more expressly for sale. "There are almost as many people involved over 18 as under 18—it's not 50-50, but it's in that ballpark," says David Boies, the attorney for some of Epstein's accusers. He describes two different types of of-age women involved with Epstein. "There were women who were not underage, but usually in their younger 20s, who became part of what we're calling Epstein's sex-trafficking orbit—they'd either be trafficked or lent out, describe it as you will, to other people," he says. "Then there were young professional women of comparable age whom Epstein sort of dated, and then he

"He could
feel energy
very clearly....
Because he's
a sociopath,
he would
manipulate
that for his
own needs."

might or might not recommend them to other people." Young women like the one I came across in Southampton were presumably part of that second set. (She did not return messages for further comment.) Epstein's recommendations for these young women were romantic, or professional, or some uneasy mix of both; Charlie Rose, disgraced after sexual assault allegations, received suggestions for several assistants on his TV show from Epstein.

The women who dated Epstein, many of whom now have high-profile careers, didn't want to be identified in this article, some because they feel the press would mangle their relationships and describe them as prostitutes, not a reputation a professional woman can surmount. Some were getting something from Epstein—a trip on a private plane with Bill Clinton is not without value. But more often they were, to some degree, the commodities—tradable objects. That was part of the grift. Epstein traded men for acceptance, always trying to show other men how many important people he knew: politicians, billionaires, former Harvard president Larry Summers, top scientists. Women were another instrumentality. Everyone had their price.

Epstein's ex-girlfriends say he was quiet and charming, for the most part, Jay Gatsby in a monogrammed sweatshirt. He spent most of the day on speakerphone, and he liked them to listen in, rolling calls from financiers to heads of state. He did not drink or take drugs or smoke, and he didn't like to be around people who did. He practiced Iyengar yoga. He showered many times a day. He abhorred restaurants and ate whole grains, proteins, and leafy greens 30 years before the rest of America. He tied body to mind, physical self to mental aptitude; he believed in transhumanism and had a theory that if you had too much muscle mass, you wouldn't be as smart as you could be. He liked to sleep in 54-degree chill because he believed you'd get the most restful sleep at that temperature. "I was like, 'I'm fucking freezing. I'm going to die of hypothermia,'" says an ex-girlfriend.

He also had an instinct for what people wanted. "Jeffrey was brilliant in understanding how people felt," says the same ex-girlfriend. "He could feel energy very clearly. But I think because he's a sociopath, he would manipulate that for his own needs. The average human population just doesn't operate that way, and thank God."

The man who contributed to Epstein's riches, Les Wexner, the owner

of Victoria's Secret and the richest man in Ohio, for whom Epstein managed money and had some sort of deep emotional relationship, seemed as ill at ease as Epstein was forthright. Women who dined with Wexner found him awkward and without the gift of gab, which Epstein had in spades. A *Sports Illustrated* model says that in the 1990s, Epstein sent her, as a lark, to deliver Wexner's prenup at his office; the rumor was she went to Wexner's office, lay down on the table, and had him sign the prenup on her belly, but she says this isn't true. "Jeffrey told me to wear something sexy and that it would be a great practical joke, but when I got there, it was very uncomfortable, and Les was like, 'What are you doing here? Okay, I'll sign, and then you should go.'"

The longer these women dated Epstein, the stranger he became. A former girlfriend describes him as almost agoraphobic, with a fear of groups and a dislike of shaking people's hands; he preferred one-on-one relationships, which were more conducive to sharing secrets. Other than the trips he took on his private

a model on his arm," says the *Sports Illustrated* model. "He was emotionally infantile, stunted, without an inner world." She describes Epstein watching her brush her hair and asking, "Do you use a Mason Pearson brush?"—the expensive brush favored by stylists in the fashion industry. She said yes, and he responded, excitedly, that he did too. "He said, 'Oh, yes, they're the best.' He was like a little boy who got his cool toy. And then he'd collect people just like that hairbrush. It was so odd."

Epstein was always talking about how well connected he was: "He was a total starfucker," says a woman in his orbit. In his secret life he was grotesque, but in society he was thought of as a practical joker who enjoyed messing with those he regarded as lower on the food chain. The *Sports Illustrated* model describes meeting Donald Trump at one of Trump's parties in the penthouse of the Plaza hotel back then. Trump goaded Epstein for her number. "Jeffrey said he wouldn't give it to him, and he had to get it from me," she says. She finally gave it to him on another occasion, but he lost it.

Epstein always had a story to tell, even about his home. "He was obsessed with jewelry boxes and very detailed ornate designs—he told me the pope actually gave him artisans who teamed up with this one jewelry-box maker from Paris to make his dining room look like a giant version of the inside of a Parisian jewelry box," says an ex-girlfriend. Epstein also said that his friend Lynn Forester, now married to billionaire Evelyn de Rothschild, needed his financial help during her 1990s divorce from politician Andrew Stein, and that he had graciously floated her. "One hundred percent false," says a spokesperson for Forester. He claimed that the producers of *The Apprentice* had first approached him to make a show about a reclusive billionaire living an extravagant life, but he said no, and then introduced them to Trump. (A spokesperson for Mark Burnett denies this.)

Epstein liked having secrets and enjoyed the way those secrets kept people off-balance. "He always wanted to give the impression that he was an international man of mystery—'I control everyone and everything, I collect people, I own people, I can damage people,'" says an ex-girlfriend. One of the most mysterious parts of his life was his relationship with Ghislaine Maxwell, the favorite daughter of embezzling British press baron and rumored Mossad spy Robert Maxwell, who died when he fell, or was pushed, from his yacht, the *Lady Ghislaine*. Epstein told them the raven-haired A-lister Maxwell, who opened her Rolodex for him, was a former girlfriend who had fallen on hard times, and he had taken it upon himself to maintain her position in society; young women have since alleged that she was both part of the sex-trafficking ring, bringing underage girls to Epstein, and a sexual participant. "Ghislaine floated in and out of the house with the keys, and even though Jeffrey told me they didn't have a sexual relationship, she'd drop under her breath that she was sleeping in his bed from time to time," says an ex-girlfriend. A friend of Maxwell's says she used to joke about

A woman who *dated* Epstein says he *slept* with a *gun* in a holster on the side of the bed and was *always* playing "spy games."

plane, Epstein preferred to socialize at home, where he could control the food, the conversation, the temperature. In Manhattan he lived in a \$56 million town house that once housed the Birch Wathen prep school, with his initials emblazoned next to the door, and he hired a white-gloved butler to serve high tea. But underneath this pose lurked someone quite different. "He was so insecure—he had that outer-borough thing of always needing

"Trump called Jeffrey, trying to get it again, saying, 'She gave it to me! You know she gave it to me! You can give it to me now!' but Jeffrey wouldn't do it." She laughs. "Donald was such a joke to all of the models back then—we all knew he was bankrupt and had no game. I remember Jeffrey once saying he was going to be late to pick me up because he had to drop off food for Donald—he was at home crying under the covers."

keeping herself rail-thin because Epstein liked thin girls. “She said, ‘I do it the way Nazis did it with the Jews, the Auschwitz diet. I just don’t eat.’”

On the weekends in the 1990s, Maxwell would have her Rollerblades FedExed to Jeffrey’s island in the Caribbean, and she said that she got her helicopter pilot’s license so she could transport anyone she liked on her rig, *Air Ghislaine 2*, without pilots knowing who they were. Maxwell also said the island had been wired for video; the friend thought that she and Epstein were videotaping everyone on the island as an insurance policy, as blackmail. A source close to Maxwell says she spoke glibly and confidently about getting girls to sexually service Epstein, saying this was simply what he wanted, and describing the way she’d drive around to spas in Florida to recruit them. She would claim she had a phone job for them, “and you’ll make lots of money, meet everyone, and I’ll change your life.” The source continues, “Ghislaine was in love with Jeffrey the way she was in love with her father. She always thought if she just did one more thing for him, to please him, he would marry her.” Maxwell also told this woman about the young girls in Epstein’s life: “She said, ‘They’re nothing, these girls. They are trash.’”

Epstein’s perversions have revealed much more than one man’s sinister nature: He had a sprawling network of friends and acquaintances who may have participated in or simply overlooked his crimes. These women, however, say he saw himself as a savior of women, including Maxwell, and initiating them into his alternative lifestyle as a path forward in their lives. “One night after we were dating for six or seven months, he sat me down and presented what he wanted for a formal relationship going forward,” says one woman. He told her he had a very high sex drive, and like many rich men, dated several women at a time—this was the way of kings and queens. “It was all about how if I was less conventional and pedestrian, I could have this relationship with him. It was a whole spiel about



Epstein with Ghislaine Maxwell.

polyamory, and it made me really insecure—I wasn’t a girl who had high self-esteem or self-worth at that time. I didn’t think I could do an open relationship, and I also thought if I said I wouldn’t do it, he would still go out with me, but he didn’t.”

Soon she started to receive strange messages nearly every week. They had pictures of her in them, as she was going about her life. “I didn’t think that meant Jeffrey was pining for me and his life was ruined,” she says. “I just knew he had legions of people around him to do things like that.” Another woman who dated Epstein says he slept with a gun in a holster on the side of the bed and was always playing “spy games,” as she calls it. She thinks he tapped her phone after they broke up. She came home to her doorman saying he’d let a repairman in to fix her cable, even though she hadn’t requested service. “Then I had a weird sensation when I was talking to Jeffrey—he kept

looking me in the eye in a creepy way and quoting something I’d said about him earlier on the phone to a girlfriend,” she says. “I threw the phone out and cut off all contact with him.”

These women weren’t as powerless as the teenagers in Palm Beach, Florida, whom Epstein was paying a couple hundred dollars for massages that turned into sex. Nor were they sex slaves. And they largely weren’t afraid of Epstein back then. But his death has freaked them out. Before he hanged himself, one of them told me, “I think Jeffrey will either get sentenced to prison for life, or if he’s in prison, with all the people who don’t want him to reveal his secrets, he’s dead anyway.” ■

This article incorporates materials from web posts published on July 18 and August 12.

2019 BEST-DRESSED LIST

The *Black Panther* and
Us actor has spun
a dynamic career on her own terms—
and in rapid fashion.
Good thing the sky's the limit

UPON A STAR

By Kimberly Drew

Photographs by **JACKIE NICKERSON**

Styled by **SAMIRA NASR**



FULL BLOOM
Lupita Nyong'o in
the gardens of
the Pleasantdale
Château, in
West Orange,
New Jersey.

Set design by
Stefan Beckman.

Clothing by
Alexander McQueen;
earrings by
Irene Neuwirth.

Lupita Nyong'o glides into the restaurant at our appointed time, the picture of cool in a blue charmeuse jumpsuit with a camel-colored rain jacket draped over her arm. If diners are aware a star is among us, they don't betray it. After briefly casting about for a different table, then deciding the one we've got will do, she jumps directly, wholeheartedly, into the interview, clothes first.

"The gesture of my style is definitely my mom. I always thought she was very elegant, and she was always present with the way she put herself together without being pressured," says Nyong'o, citing her mother's ritual home manicure every Sunday night while the family watched television together. But she also looked up to her Aunt Amondi, her mother's sister, whose style tacked in the opposite direction: black leather jackets, a mohawk at one point, even the motorcycle to complete the look. "I kind of oscillated between the two. I find I love the elegant, the classic, the simple, but I also like the outrageous and the quirky and the almost accidental."

Nyong'o could almost be describing her career, except for the accidental part. The year started with the premiere of *Little Monsters*, a comedic Australian-American-British zombie flick, went right into the smash success of Jordan Peele's horror drama *Us*, in which she plays heroine Adelaide Wilson and her demonic doppelgänger Red, and will close out after she reprises her role as CGI alien Maz Kanata in *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker*. In between, the Oscar winner will publish a children's book, *Sulwe*, and she's *this close* to starting shoots on a television series based on Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*, which she is producing, with her *Black Panther* costar Danai Gurira

writing the script. So, Nyong'o radiates the energy of a girl next door, especially as she recalls how she role-modeled early fashion choices, but she also happens to be one of the most powerful Black women in film.

Though her family is from Kenya's Luo tribe, Lupita Amondi Nyong'o was born in Mexico City in 1983. Her first name is derived from the name Guadalupe—the Virgin Mary. Her father, Peter Anyang' Nyong'o, now a prominent Kenyan politician, and mother, Dorothy Ogada Nyong'o, had immigrated to Mexico shortly after Charles Nyong'o, her father's brother, was disappeared in 1980. Charles was never found; he was likely a target because of his opposition to the Moi presidency. The childhoods of Nyong'o and her five siblings would be marked by political pressures. They had to share their father with the rest of the community for the good of the fight, and lived in fear for his safety, particularly after the family returned to Kenya in 1984.

Migration would become the norm for the family, and home was a fraught concept for Nyong'o, who would only spend the first few months of her life in Mexico City before the family moved to New York City. When she was 16, her parents sent her to Taxco, Mexico, to learn Spanish at the Universidad Nacional

Clothing by
**1 Moncler Pierpaolo
Piccioli**; earrings
by Irene Neuwirth.



Clothing by **GUCCI**;
shoes by **Jimmy
Choo**; rings
by **Tiffany & Co.**



“She is able to tap into **raw energy and raw emotion,**” says Jordan Peele.

“Lupita the star is **distinctive and incomparable.**”

Autónoma de México’s Learning Center for Foreigners. In 2003, she enrolled in Hampshire College, in Amherst, Massachusetts, as an international student, immersing herself in African studies. “We were really deeply investigating and exploring and analyzing a lot of sociopolitical dynamics,” she says. “My enlightenment was my education, to really recognize that these things play out in cultural and social setups. They don’t play out theoretically.” After graduating, she entered the Yale School of Drama.

Nyong’o’s introduction to Hollywood came in the form of her stint as a production assistant on *The Constant Gardener*. Then, in her last year at Yale, Lupita landed an audition with director Steve McQueen for a role in *12 Years a Slave*, based on Solomon Northup’s real-life account of his kidnapping and enslavement on Edwin Epps’s Louisiana plantation. In the film, Nyong’o plays Patsey, a woman who was known to pick more than 500 pounds of cotton a day—twice the quota. Patsey was repeatedly raped by Epps and tortured by his jealous wife. The film’s most devastating scene depicts Epps (Michael Fassbender) brutalizing Patsey, after forcing Northup (Chiwetel Ejiofor) to whip her as well. It’s reminiscent of Denzel Washington’s turn as Private Silas Trip in the 1989 film *Glory*. Like Washington, Nyong’o won an Oscar for her performance, thrusting her into the public eye and kick-starting a rapid ascent. In her acceptance speech, Nyong’o, in a baby-blue Prada gown whose color she felt evoked Kenya, thanked Patsey, saying, “It doesn’t escape me for one moment that so much joy in my life is thanks to so much pain in someone else’s.”

“What struck me was her absolute readiness,” says Nyong’o’s *12 Years* costar Sarah Paulson, who played the abusive Mistress Epps. “Lupita was the personification of destiny. I also don’t think I had

ever seen a face filled with so much light—she is the definition of ‘lit from within.’”

Around the time the movie came out, she had been sleeping on a mattress on the floor of a New York apartment, too anxious about placelessness to spring for a bed frame, she told the *Bad Brown Aunties*, a podcast hosted by two fellow Hampshire alums. When she became the first Black African to win an Academy Award for acting, the accolade helped solidify her application for a green card.

It was heart-wrenching to learn several years later of other battles that Nyong’o had been taking on during that moment in her career. In a bone-chilling op-ed in the *New York Times*, Nyong’o recounted her run-ins with Harvey Weinstein. She wrote in vivid detail of narrowly escaping the producer’s grasp in the confines of his home, with his family in nearby rooms. After another creepy encounter, she vowed never to work with him. She also vowed to “never shut up about this kind of thing.”

Now, although she notes she is still limited to her own experiences and those that wend through the industry grapevine, Nyong’o says that in the nearly two years since, “there is definitely more of a sensitivity toward sexism, chauvinism, abuse,” and that many film sets often employ an “intimacy coach.”

“In the past, when it came to physical combat, there were always consultants on set, but when it came to intimacy there was never, ever somebody present to help actors navigate that. Now you have that, which I think is a great inclusion, and ensures that those kinds of abuses don’t happen.” She adds, “I think there’s also at times an oversensitivity, which I just think is the nature of the pendulum shifting, and it takes time to find the balance. I’m quite happy that there is that kind of extreme change, and hopefully we find equilibrium as we move forward.”

N yong’o has a reputation for keeping her private life private, though fans have desperately tried to dream-cast romantic relationships with Michael B. Jordan and Jared Leto. Crowd hope has more recently refocused on Janelle Monáe, though neither woman has publicly commented. When I ask how she handles curiosity about her love life, Nyong’o replies, “I feel like there’s parts of myself that I care to share and then there are parts that I don’t.”

In my mind’s eye, there’s a highlight reel of images and videos of her cuddled with friends and costars, but I wonder when it is part of the celebrity’s job description to have every relationship inventoried as “friend” or “lover.” And so I dig a bit deeper about maintaining control over her image. “I’m conscious of the danger of the intention to perpetuate a struggle without triumph,” she says.

What happens when we lose agency over our narratives? What does it mean to be one of Hollywood’s most powerful women, yet still be susceptible to headlines that compress your life into something digestible? There’s a thin line between your story being told and you being devoured. In 2017, Nyong’o made headlines because her hair was photoshopped for the U.K. cover of the Italian magazine *Grazia*. Nyong’o called the magazine out in an Instagram post, including photos of her unretouched image and a caption that stated, “Had I been consulted, I would have explained that I cannot support or condone the omission of what is my native heritage with the intention that they appreciate that there is still a very long way to go to combat the unconscious prejudice against black women’s complexion, hair style and texture.”

Nyong’o says she has learned to pick her battles—she says early in her life,



Dress by **Prada**;
earrings by **Irene
Neuwirth**.



Clothing by **Fendi**;
earrings by
Tiffany & Co.;
sunglasses by
Gentle Monster.



Dress by **Givenchy**;
necklace by
**BULGARI High
Jewelry**.

she fought “pettier” ones—but purpose clarifies itself, and her courage to speak out is innate. “I was born into a political family. My father was fighting for what he believed in,” says Nyong’o. “I think it was really just instilled in me that there are things in this world that are worth changing—part of living is about trying to transform the world into, you know...the world that we want to be a part of.”

For every project she takes on, Nyong’o relies on gut instinct to guide her. “As I prepare, I have to articulate to myself why I’m doing this. The secondary thing is definitely the people,” she says. “When I choose projects, I want to have faith that as an artist it will speak to a time when it is needed as much as it speaks to me at the time that I make it.”

“I really understood this with *Black Panther*, when we were making that movie in such a different political climate than the one in which it came out,” says Nyong’o. Ryan Coogler and Joe Robert Cole wrote the film while Obama was still president, but it came out one year into Trump. “Ryan was speaking to a future relevance that he could not have predicted.” Nyong’o signed on to the project on the strength of Coogler’s pitch alone, before a script existed. “Marvel won’t give you the script. Marvel won’t give you the scripts!” she emphasizes. “I read the script for the first time six weeks before we started shooting.”

Black Panther, which grossed \$1.347 billion in box offices across the globe, exploded conventional Hollywood’s (which is to say, white) notions of what an all-Black film could do commercially. More than that, “In *Black Panther*, I felt that the African experience was allowed to exist aspirationally,” says Nyong’o. “I think it’s more common in America to hear of the struggle of black people than it is to hear of the success. It’s more of a sensation to have a headline about a struggle, you know? ‘Lupita Shunned by People for Her Hair Texture.’ The struggle through having dark skin is clickbait. So when *Black Panther* came along...it was so refreshing to work on an African narrative that did not lead with the struggle of being African.”

Nyong’o has said her gut led her to take the role of Miss Caroline in this year’s *Little Monsters*, a quirky indie



Nyong'o signed on to *Black Panther* on the **strength of Coogler's pitch**



alone, before a script existed. **“Marvel won’t give you the scripts!”**



Clothing by
BALENCIAGA; boots
by **HUNTER**;
rings by **Tiffany & Co.**

“Lupita was the **personification of destiny**,” says Sarah Paulson. “I don’t think I had ever seen a face filled with so much light—she is the definition of **‘lit from within.’**”

horror-comedy. The magnet: Taylor Swift’s “Shake It Off” was in the script. So Nyong’o taught herself to play it on the ukulele, as director Abe Forsythe imagined for the role. She also immersed herself in the minutiae of being a kindergarten teacher, right down to creating lesson plans. “I love deep-diving into a character I’m playing,” says Nyong’o, emphasizing that children posed a particular challenge. “I would be so tired at the end of the day working with these kids. They’re unpredictable; they’ve got a lot of energy. It was a doozy. But I loved it. I loved every moment of it.”

Like Forsythe, director Jordan Peele wrote the mirroring characters of Adelaide and Red specifically for Nyong’o in his thriller *Us*. Part of her immersive prep work for that film was watching a list of horror films recommended by Peele. “They helped me and Jordan establish a shared cinematic language while shooting,” says Nyong’o. “Lupita is a performer who is able to tap into raw energy and raw emotion. She can delve into some really dark places and do so with complete emotional commitment, as we saw in *12 Years a Slave*. And in *Us*, I knew she was going to play characters that showed two sides of this primal darkness: one bubbling under the surface and the other bubbling over the surface,” says Peele, who says Nyong’o has a “Hitchcockian” star quality. “Lupita the star is distinctive and incomparable: There’s only one of her. So the notion of seeing two Lupitas on screen at the same time would automatically feel compelling—as well as alien and unnatural.”

Shortly after she wrapped *Black Panther*, Nyong’o had somewhat reluctantly begun work on her first book, *Sulwe*, which comes out this month. The idea came

from a speech Nyong’o gave in 2014, at the *Essence* Black Women in Hollywood brunch, about colorism. “I received a letter from a girl,” Nyong’o said to the audience, “and I’d like to share just a small part of it with you: ‘Dear Lupita,’ it reads, ‘I think you’re really lucky to be this black but yet this successful in Hollywood overnight. I was just about to buy Dencia’s Whitenicious cream to lighten my skin when you appeared on the world map and saved me.’”

Her words went viral at the time, and shortly came suggestions for a children’s book. But, says Nyong’o, “I just felt depleted. I was just like, I have nothing more to say. It’s all in the speech.” With time, and having felt the enormous potential of *Black Panther*, however, she returned to the idea. “*Black Panther* was the key I needed.”

The book centers on a little girl named Sulwe—Luo for “star”—who is bullied for being “the color of midnight,” an experience that mirrors Nyong’o’s own. “How could she, as dark as she was, have brightness in her?” Sulwe wonders to herself. The child’s dreamlike journey to self-discovery is complex and full of nuance, even in child-friendly prose. With illustrations by Vashti Harrison, the book is as beautiful as it is powerful.

And it’s another book that will serve as the basis for Nyong’o’s next project, which she is producing and starring in: the television adaptation of *Americanah*, which Nyong’o’s friend Gurira is adapting. Gurira worked with Nyong’o on *Panther* and also wrote the off-Broadway play *Eclipsed*, in which Nyong’o acted. “We’re so, so, so, so, so close to rolling the cameras. It’s really exciting to see that kind of labor of love actually come to fruition,” says Nyong’o, adding that Gurira is bringing “her tenacious passion and her perspective, her humor, her understanding of the stories and the worlds of *Americanah*.”

One has to wonder how she’s able to keep herself balanced with so many projects. For Nyong’o, there has to be a clear dismount from each project. “I found that it’s good to have that interim before I return to my quote-unquote ‘normal life.’” She insists on traveling to distant lands, or enrolling in Vipassana meditation retreats. “Finishing an intensive project is kind of like having a hangover, where you’re so used to a rigor of existence and then all of a sudden, there’s none,” she says. “I make the time because otherwise I wouldn’t survive.”

She also commands herself—and those in her inner circle—to embrace a sense of spontaneity. Back to that sky-blue Prada on that all-important career-altering evening in 2014, or rather, the day before: Nyong’o’s publicist thought a dress rehearsal could help ease everyone’s jitters. For most red carpet events, Nyong’o’s stylist Micaela Erlanger chooses a look, and then Vernon François and Nick Barose will work with Nyong’o on, respectively, the hair and makeup. But a dress rehearsal just felt too forced, maybe even a jinx. “To give me that kind of grandeur,” says Nyong’o, “would be crippling for me.”

And so, the morning of the Oscars ceremony, Nyong’o’s team walked in to dress her for the first time—the big time—but they were all a bundle of nerves. Nyong’o says she was blissed out from a massage that Alfre Woodard had gifted to her, but her team was “shaking. They were physically shaking, they were so nervous.” So Nyong’o turned on the stereo and blasted “Grown Woman.” “Beyoncé did the trick. We danced it off, we had a good laugh, and then we sat down.”

“You’ve got to let the oxygen in,” Nyong’o says. “I believe in enjoying the moment. It’s about the moment.” ■

Lupita Nyong’o explains her fashion evolution at VF.com.

HAIR BY VERNON FRANÇOIS; MAKEUP BY NICK BAROSE; MANICURE BY DEBORAH LIPPMANN; TAILOR, MARIA DEL GRECO; SPECIAL THANKS TO MCKINNON AND HARRIS; FOR DETAILS, GO TO VF.COM/CREDITS

Clothing and earring
by **Louis Vuitton**.

Throughout: Hair
products by **Vernon
François**; makeup
by **Lancôme**.





2019 BEST-DRESSED LIST

THE VIRTUOSOS

marc
JACOBS

OCCUPATION: Fashion designer.

HOME BASE: New York City. **HAPPIEST**

WEARING: Custom patent leather boots by Alessandro Michele and a suit “designed and cut perfectly by Ralph Fitzgerald,” the NYC-based tailor for Savile Row’s Huntsman, to “marry my husband, Char, this year.”

CURRENT OBSESSION: Nail art. Mei Kawajiri “paints each nail by hand... pure talent and passion.”

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Jacobs wears his own **GUCCI** suit, boots, and scarf and **Prada** shirt; sunglasses by **LOEWE**; hair products by **R+Co**; grooming products by **Marc Jacobs Beauty**.

PHOTOGRAPH BY  
GILLIAN LAUB

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*The* Vanity Fair  
*Best-Dressed*  
*List*

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In a year in which  
*camp was queen*  
and some 89 congresswomen  
*showed their might*  
in suffragette white,  
**we salute the standouts** who made us  
look—time and again—in *style*  
so **remarkable**, so **personal**,  
so flat-out **fabulous** that we  
are reminded:

*Clothes are never  
really just clothes*

*Interviews by* MAGGIE BULLOCK

**THE VIRTUOSOS**

*serge*  
**IBAKA**

**OCCUPATION:** Toronto Raptors center/forward. **HOME BASE:** Toronto, Barcelona, NYC. **HAPPIEST WEARING:** Custom suits during playoffs, "just walking into the arena with confidence." **STYLE ICON:** "My dad." **CURRENT OBSESSION:** Nick Fouquet chapeaux. "A nice hat can be very powerful." **TREND I DESPISE:** Big logos "just to show you wear expensive clothes." **FAVORITE DESIGNERS:** Valentino, Balmain.



**Lime Aide**  
In 2019, Kravitz rocked an array of highlighter-bright pants in citrus shades.

*zoë*  
**KRAVITZ**

**OCCUPATION:** Actor. **HOME BASE:** Brooklyn. **HAPPIEST WEARING:** Wedding dress, Paris, June 29, 2019. **CURRENT OBSESSION:** "Not being on my phone." **TREND I DESPISE:** "The one where everybody looks the same." **ITEMS I OVERUSE:** White tees, black pants. **OVERRATED:** Superhigh heels. **FAVE DESIGNERS:** Saint Laurent, Alexander Wang, Maryam Nassir Zadeh. **STYLE MOTTO:** "No fear."

**"Zendaya blows the roof off of how we imagine young stars dress. Her look is evolved, mature. You sense she's in complete control of her image."**

**-KIMBERLY DREW**  
Writer, activist, curator,  
2019 Best-Dressed List committee member



( **SOCIAL SKILLS** )

**Diane Keaton's** Insta feed puts the *icon* in *iconoclast*



**OCCUPATION:** Actor. **HOME BASE:** Los Angeles. **THE LOOK:** Architectural genius. Sharp tailoring, hats, belts in "black and black and white and white and black and white," as one caption goes. **SPOTTED:** Farmers marketing in Maison Margiela with Nancy Meyers.





*priyanka*  
**CHOPRA JONAS**

**OCCUPATION:** Actor. **HOME BASE:** L.A., NYC, Mumbai. **CURRENT OBSESSION:** Kitten heels. **TREND I DESPISE:** Supertight clothes. **TREASURED POSSESSION:** "My mangalsutra, the necklace a groom ties around the bride's neck." **FAVORITE DESIGNERS:** Chanel, Dior, The Row, Attico, Peter Do. **BURY ME IN:** Diamonds.

( NOT-SO-BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY )

In boyish bombers and snappy suits, **Rami Malek** masters the style spectrum, on duty and off



**OCCUPATION:** Actor. **HOME BASE:** L.A. **THE LOOK:** Mr. Robot's hoodie out; Dior Homme in. **ITEM I OVERUSE:** Valentino combat boots; "my father's vintage Dior and Lanvin ties." **TREND I DESPISE:** "Chunky spaceman shoes." **SEXY IS:** "Ultimately, whatever makes you feel most confident."

( HEAD OF THE CLASS )



Raised by his mother, **Veronica Farrish**, a hairstylist, Harris says hair "became a major part of my style identity."

*jeremy*  
**O. HARRIS**

**OCCUPATION:** Playwright, actor. **HOME BASE:** New Haven, Connecticut; "soon" Chinatown, NYC. **HAPPIEST WEARING:** "Insane" floor-length tartan skirt for callback to New York Theatre Workshop 2050 Artistic Fellowship. **ITEM I OVERUSE:** Brown Gucci horse bits, "perfect when you're running through a forest on 'shrooms and need to climb a fence." **POWER CENTER:** My Telfar bag "holds the keys to my entire universe."

**Throw Back**

References for his Met Gala coiffure: Snoop Dogg, Lil' Kim, Iceberg Slim, and "my little sister."

2019 BEST-DRESSED LIST

## THE VIRTUOSOS

*celine*  
DION

**DID YOU INHERIT YOUR SENSE OF STYLE?** “I have 13 siblings, and I was the last. I wore all their clothes. At Christmas, what do you think we received?” **SOCKS?** “Yeah. Clothing. My mom didn’t have money to buy it, so she made the clothes. She was very sensitive to the cut of the moment, if the pants were wide or narrow. She was paying attention.” **SOME SAY YOU HAVE 10,000 PAIRS OF SHOES...** “I’m not quite sure. But I’m building a new home in Las Vegas. I treated myself to a playground: two stories of archives for all my clothes, shoes, belts. I kept everything. So I’ll be able to count.” **YOUR CURRENT OBSESSION?** “RVDK. Every piece they do is one of a kind. And last time I went to Paris Fashion Week, Valentino blew my mind.” **FAVORITE PAST FASHION MOMENT?** “John Galliano, the backward white pantsuit [Oscars, 1999]. People thought, Is that a joke? What is she trying to say? I wasn’t trying to say anything. I’m just having a great time.”

~~~~~  
Dion wears her own **Ronald van der Kemp** gown and hat; hair products by **L’Oréal Paris**.

PHOTOGRAPH BY
GILLIAN LAUB





THE CLASSICS

mahershala
ALI

OCCUPATION: Actor. **HOME BASE:** L.A. **THE LOOK:** Über-elegant with a hint of rebellion. Stand-collar shirts; unexpected-hued suits; subtle, personal hints of jewelry. **THE TWIST:** Who can pull off wearing a black beanie—and winning two for two—at the Academy Awards? The new Blade, that’s who.



On Canvas
Joyner's current obsession? Statement blouses. "Wearing the same thing as everyone else dilutes a sense of individual style."

pamela
JOYNER

OCCUPATION: Cultural philanthropist, collector. **HOME BASE:** San Francisco; Sonoma, California. **TREND I DESPISE:** "Casual that devolves to sloppy." **STYLE ICONS:** Dorothy Dandridge, Katharine Hepburn, Madame de Pompadour: "women ahead of their time." **TREASURED POSSESSION:** "My art collection," by talents who "would not be denied despite incalculable obstacles." **STYLE MOTTO:** "Classic with a curated edge."

"Some things should never be messed with. Tuxedos are one. **Brad Pitt** is another. He should just make this his uniform, like the Rat Packers: *Pure movie star.*"

—LISA EISNER
Jewelry designer,
2019 Best-Dressed List committee member



gemma
CHAN

OCCUPATION: Actor. **HOME BASE:** London. **HAPPIEST WEARING:** "Cotton sundress, jelly shoes, and a bucketful of hermit crabs" as a child in Mallorca. **CURRENT OBSESSION:** Bum bags [Brit for *fanny pack*]. "I have eight on rotation." **ITEMS I OVERUSE:** Oversized denim jacket, vintage tees. **TREASURED POSSESSION:** Grandma's super-delicate cardigan: "I'm too scared to wear it." **STYLE ICON:** Cher from *Chueless*. **BURY ME IN:** "The fuchsia Valentino [right] I wore to the Oscars."



(336 HOURS IN CANNES)
 Fifteen epic looks **Elle Fanning** wore to one film festival



OCCUPATION: Actor.
HOME BASE: L.A.
HAPPIEST WEARING:
 A ribbon-covered '80s prom dress from L.A. vintage store Playclothes at her ballet-themed 21st-birthday party. "I was beaming all night sipping Champagne!"

CURRENT OBSESSION:
 Monochrome looks. "Love a twinset!" **TREND I DESPISE:** Peplums.
ITEM I OVERUSE:
 White dresses. **STYLE ICON:** "Samantha

Stephens from *Bewitched!*" **TREASURED POSSESSION:** Plaid jacket from London's Brick Lane market "magically turns every outfit into a winner."

OVERRATED: Skinny jeans. **WORST-DRESSED MOMENT:** Bedtime. "My sister thinks my pajamas are hideous." **LUCKY CHARM:** "For years I kept chicken

wishbones in my purse."
ON MEN'S STYLE:
 Persol shades; crewneck sweatshirts. "I want to see him before I see his clothes." **FAVORITE DESIGNERS:** "DON'T MAKE ME CHOOSE!" **BURY ME IN:** "Pink! A flower headdress would be nice."

2019 BEST-DRESSED LIST

THE CLASSICS



“Since that plunging Versace in 2000, **Jennifer Lopez** has proven that *sex appeal* is not the enemy of chic. She’s simply iconic.”

—KIMBERLY DREW



keanu
REEVES

OCCUPATION: Actor. **HOME BASE:** L.A. **SIGNATURE LOOK:** Polished with a hint of grunge. Streamlined suits, rock tees, Merrell boots, and black. So much black. **TIMELESS MOVE:** Best hair toss in the business. **SPOTTED:** Roaring down the streets of L.A. on a KRGT-1 by Arch, his own brand of motorcycle.

cicely
TYSON

OCCUPATION: Actor. **HOME BASE:** NYC. **TREND I DESPISE:** “Anything overdone.” **CURRENT OBSESSION:** Sleep. **STYLE ICON:** Audrey Hepburn. **WORST-DRESSED MOMENT:** “Any given day when I’m running around. My agent, early in my career, declared I ‘clean up well.’” **TREASURED POSSESSION:** Presidential Medal of Freedom “placed around my neck by President Obama.” **BURY ME IN:** “My wedding dress, worn when I married Miles Davis [in 1981].”



B Mine

Tyson is the first black actress to accept an Oscar wearing a dress by a black designer—her go-to, B Michael.



frank
OCEAN

OCCUPATION: Musician, enigma. **HOME BASE:** NYC, L.A. **THE LOOK:** Discreet high-end (Prada bucket hats, Balenciaga boots) meets utility (Mammut puffers). **SPOTTED:** Front row at Raf Simons’s fall 2019 menswear; defying “camp” at the Met Gala in a sleek black hoodie (selfie caption: “The valet wears Prada”). **STYLE BEYOND SELF:** Decor. A Michel Majerus painting hangs above his bed; a modular teal sofa by ’70s designer Pierre Paulin dominates the living room.

 HALL of FAME

chloë SEVIGNY

OCCUPATION: Actor. **HOME**

BASE: NYC. **HAPPIEST**

WEARING: Black Alber Elbaz
for YSL gown, Oscars 2000.

TREND I DESPISE: Xenophobia.

ITEM I OVERUSE: Mascara.

LUCKY CHARM: Deco onyx
and diamond cross ring

from Kentshire. **OVERRATED:**

Underwear. **STYLE ICONS:**

Catherine the Great, Joan of
Arc, Thérèse of Lisieux,
the Virgin Mary, Poison Ivy,
Bette Davis, Greta Garbo,
Marlene Dietrich, Thumbelina.

~~~~~  
Dress by **Miu Miu**; sandals by  
**Roger Vivier**; jewelry by **Chopard**.



2019 BEST-DRESSED LIST

## THE ORIGINALS

“Wear what the F you want,”  
says Billy Porter.  
*“Ain’t no rules.”*

*Billy*  
PORTER

**OCCUPATION:** “I’m a Renaissance bitch!” **HOME BASE:** NYC. **HAPPIEST WEARING:** Christian Siriano tuxedo gown at the 2019 Oscars. **TREND I DESPISE:** “The constant need for our culture to drag folks.” **CURRENT OBSESSION:** London. **ITEM I OVERUSE:** Hats. **STYLE ICONS:** Diana Ross, André Leon Talley. **TREASURED POSSESSION:** “My wedding ring.” **OVERRATED:** “The sneaker situation.” **WORST-DRESSED MOMENT:** “Taking out the trash.” **BEST QUALITY IN A PERSON’S STYLE:** “Proper fit and giving zero F’s.” **MOST POWERFUL THING ONE CAN WEAR:** “High heels!” **SEXIEST THING ONE CAN WEAR:** “High heels!” **BURY ME IN:** “Something that sets my soul free.”

Gown by **Christian Siriano**; parka by **Craig Green**; blazer [worn as turban] by **Dries Van Noten**; hair products by **R+Co**; grooming products by **La Prairie**.

PHOTOGRAPH BY  
DARIO CALMESE







**THE ORIGINALS**

*kehinde*  
**WILEY**

**OCCUPATION:** Artist. **HOME BASE:** NYC, Beijing; Dakar, Senegal. **HAPPIEST WEARING:** A chalk-line-print custom suit for the unveiling of his portrait of Barack Obama. **TREND I DESPISE:** Fast fashion “shows a disrespect for the ceremony surrounding clothing.” **ITEM I OVERUSE:** “Simple white Converse go with everything.” **FAVORITE DESIGNERS:** Amine Bendriouich, Sarah Diouf, Adebayo Oke-Lawal.



**World View**  
Wiley finds fabrics for his custom suits “exploring West African villages.”



*Tena*  
**WAITHE**

**OCCUPATION:** Creator, producer, writer, actor. **HOME BASE:** L.A. **THE LOOK:** Off duty: flawlessly cozy. On duty: bold statements spotlighting queer designers DVMN PIGEON, Stuzo Clothing, Pyer Moss. **OBSESSION:** For a sneakerhead raised in Michael Jordan-era Chicago? Air Jordans. **LUCKY CHARM:** Her “engagement sneakers.” **SPOTTED:** Scouring vintage rails for nonrock tees: Jodeci, SWV, Luther Vandross.

*b.*  
**ÅKERLUND**

**OCCUPATION:** Fashion activist, costume designer; co-owner, The Residency Experience. **HOME BASE:** L.A., Stockholm. **TREND I DESPISE:** “Overdone plastic surgery of 2019.” **ITEM I OVERUSE:** YSL platforms. **OVERRATED:** “The Birkin bag.” **BURY ME IN:** “One million Swarovski crystals and a fabulous hat.” **STYLE MOTTO:** “More is more, and go with your gut.”



*Jeanne*  
**GREENBERG ROHATYN**

**OCCUPATION:** Gallerist, Salon 94. **HOME BASE:** NYC. **CURRENT OBSESSION:** Black wool-lined Birkenstocks. **ITEM I OVERUSE:** Nike Air VaporMax X Off-White sneakers. “I’m into uniforms. Overused is good—buy two next time!” **TREASURED POSSESSION:** Karl Fritsch rings that “read as miniature sculptures.” **OVERRATED:** It bags. Her canvas tote bears “Sylvie Fleury’s missive, ‘Yes to All.’”





“Solange Knowles is an artist whose medium is *song*, but also *style*—which she understands and explores as a *radical art of presentation*.”

—DURO OLOWU

Fashion designer,  
2019 Best-Dressed List  
committee member

*THE TECHNICOLOR  
DREAM LIFE of*



*tyler,*  
**THE CREATOR**

**OCCUPATION:** Musician, designer. **HOME BASE:** L.A. **AKA:** Tyler Gregory Okonma. **THE LOOK:** Kaleidoscopic preppy on acid. **STAPLES:** Marni, Sunnei; tomato-print button-downs from his label, Golf Wang. **SPOTTED:** Facetiming with Solange at the French Open in a cotton-candy-pink sweater vest. **CATCH HIM NEXT:** At Dodger Stadium, hosting his eighth annual Camp Flog Gnaw Carnival this November.

( EVENING STAR )

In wide-leg velvet and bow-necked blouses,  
**Harry Styles** finds major mojo in his feminine side



**OCCUPATION:** Musician. **HOME BASE:** London. **THE LOOK:** Lounge-act louche. Touchable suits with low-cut tanks; Austin Powers prints; elaborate blouses; manly heels; significant hair mousse. **THE VIBE:** A little bit Mick, a little bit Elton. **GO-TO DESIGNERS:** Gucci, Saint Laurent. **SPOTTED:** At 6:15 a.m., wearing pink trousers, posing for selfies with 300-odd screaming fans at Tokyo's Haneda airport.

**Why the heeled boots, Harry?**  
*An overzealous fan once yanked his (lace-up) sneakers right off.*

**THE PROS**



*Haider*  
**ACKERMANN**

**OCCUPATION:** Fashion designer. **HOME BASE:** Paris; Antwerp, Belgium. **THE LOOK:** Fashion nomad. The Bogotá, Colombia-born Frenchman, son of a globe-trotting cartographer, loves silk scarves, drop-crotch trousers, and wire-rimmed glasses. **SPOTTED:** *Zhuzhing* muse Tilda Swinton's silvery armor at Cannes; posting up at Rome's La Posta Vecchia with old pals actor-designer Waris Ahluwalia and stylist Robert Rabensteiner.

( SOCIAL SKILLS )

Style star **Reni Folawiyo's** famed boutique is the go-to for Lagos luxury—just ask Danai and Lupita



**OCCUPATION:** Founder/CEO, Alara boutique. **HOME BASE:** Lagos, Nigeria. **CURRENT OBSESSION:** Magical '70s watches that "close up and become beautiful bracelets." **STYLE ICON:** Josephine Baker. **FAVORITE DESIGNERS:** Duro Olowu, Phoebe Philo, Kenneth Ize, J.W. Anderson. **BURY ME IN:** "Clothes are for living. Ask me to drinks after I just got a Valentino gown, I could turn up in that."

**PATTERN LANGUAGE**  
"Prints take me on an adventure"

**Rebecca de Ravenel** silk tiger print "brings back exotic childhood fairy tales."

**Valentino** '70s-inspired graphic recalls "the freedom to indulge on hot nights in Capri."



**LHD St. Tropez** textile "conjures happy summer days at my godmother's house."

**Valentino** leopard pants plus **Proenza Schouler** stripes "buzzes with the clash of the prints."

*Laure*  
**HÉRIARD DUBREUIL**

**OCCUPATION:** Founder/creative director, The Webster, LHD. **HOME BASE:** L.A. **TREASURED POSSESSION:** Wedding ring designed by husband Aaron Young. **LUCKY CHARM:** Aurélie Bidermann necklace with son's lucky number. **BURY ME IN:** "My husband's silk pajama shirt."

## anastasia BARBIERI

**OCCUPATION:** Fashion director, *Vogue Hommes International*; contributing editor, *Vogue Paris*. **HOME BASE:** Paris. **HAPPIEST WEARING:** "The elegance and sharpness of menswear." **TREND I DESPISE:** Bermuda shorts. **TREASURED POSSESSION:** YSL couture black safari tunic. **SEXIEST OF ALL:** A white tux. **FAVORITE DESIGNERS:** Dries Van Noten, The Row, Sartoria Giuliva.



**Man Up**

Barbieri lives in loafers—Gucci, Hermès—and men's "soft leather lace-ups" by Brioni.



## brunello CUCINELLI

**OCCUPATION:** Chairman and CEO, Brunello Cucinelli SpA. **HOME BASE:** Solomeo, Umbria, Italy. **TREND I DESPISE:** "What I like least is the color green." **STYLE ICON:** Gianni Agnelli, "icon of the Italian lifestyle." **TREASURED POSSESSION:** "My jackets." **GREAT STYLE IS:** "Bearing, poise, courtesy." **FAVORITE DESIGNER:** "There are many. I'll choose my master, Ralph Lauren." **BURY ME IN:** "A navy cashmere tuxedo."

"Few celebs look as chic in rolled-out-of-bed sweats as they do in red-carpet gowns. *Clothes simply become cool* when they're on **Rihanna**."

—LISA EISNER



**HALL of FAME**

## rei KAWAKUBO

**OCCUPATION:** Founder/creative director, Comme des Garçons. **HOME BASE:** Tokyo. **THE LOOK:** New World Order. Dark glasses, triangular bob, architectural all-black uniform. **SHE ALSO WEARS:** Azzedine Alaïa, Paul Harnden, Celine, Lewis Leathers, Nike. **SPOTTED:** Rarely, outside of work. (Her day runs 7:30 a.m. till "late.") **REVERED BY:** Junya, Marc, Miuccia.







## THE ENSEMBLES

*Dwyane*  
**WADE**

**OCCUPATION:** Entrepreneur, former NBA All-Star. **HOME BASE:** Miami, L.A. **HAPPIEST WEARING:** Double-breasted red Givenchy suit, no shirt, Way of Wade gold glitter sneakers “after my last game, my One Last Dance in Miami.” **CURRENT OBSESSION:** Retirement. **TREND I DESPISE:** Logomania. “Says a lot about a person’s confidence.” **ITEM I OVERUSE:** Fanny packs. “When we travel, I’m responsible for the travel documents.” **STYLE ICON:** James Bond could “stand out and blend in at the same time.” **LUCKY CHARM:** “Most recently, matching hearts chains I bought with my son Zion in Cannes.” **FAVORITE DESIGNERS:** Adrien Sauvage, Dsquared2, Tom Ford, Ralph Lauren, Pyer Moss. **OVERRATED:** Belts. “If your clothes fit, you do not need them.”

*gabrielle*  
**UNION**

**OCCUPATION:** Actor, producer. **HOME BASE:** Miami, L.A. **TREND I DESPISE:** Super-tiny purses. “Our phones are getting bigger, and no one’s leaving home without their Fenty lip gloss. We have stuff.” **STYLE ICON:** Justice in *Poetic Justice*—“forever.” **TREASURED POSSESSION:** Robes, slippers. “When Dwyane and I are wearing them and the kids are asleep.” **WORST-DRESSED MOMENT:** “When Kaavia James [11 months] has projectile vomited on me.” **FAVORITE DESIGNERS:** Miuccia Prada, Patrick Kelly, Pierpaolo Piccioli, Christopher John Rogers. **BURY ME IN:** “For starters, a full-bottom brief...” **STYLE MOTTO:** “But can I wear sneakers?”

Wade’s tuxedo by **DZOJCHEN**; necklace by **Jason of Beverly Hills**; necklace [worn as anklet] by **Monisha Melwani Jewelry**; grooming products by **Koh Gen Do**. Union’s dress and sandals by **Bottega Veneta**; earrings by **BULGARI**; hair products by **FLAWLESS by Gabrielle Union**; makeup products by **PAT McGRATH LABS**.

PHOTOGRAPH BY  
GILLIAN LAUB

**THE ENSEMBLES**

( THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN )

Chart-topping, designer-clad K-pop phenom **BTS**: hot *and* haute!



**V**  
**CURRENT OBSESSION:** "The British vintage look."

**Jungkook**  
**GREAT STYLE IS:** "Wearing anything you like, regardless of gender."

**RM**  
**ITEMS I OVERUSE:** "Hats, bangles, and watches."

**SUGA**  
**CURRENT OBSESSION:** "Accessories. So I designed a couple."

**Jin**  
**ITEM I OVERUSE:** "My handsome face."

**Jimin**  
**LUCKY CHARM:** "A two-dollar bill from my mother."

**j-hope**  
**STYLE ICONS:** "A\$AP Rocky, Pharrell Williams, Travis Scott."

**Mr. Pink**  
Momoa in Oscar-night velvet, replete with custom scrunchie.



*Jason MOMOA & Lisa BONET*

**OCCUPATION:** Artists. **HOME BASE:** L.A. **CURRENT OBSESSION:** LB: "Protecting my children's innocence." JM: "Ending plastic pollution, cleaning up our oceans." **ITEM I OVERUSE:** LB: Maggie's Organics wool socks. JM: Carhartts. **OVERRATED:** LB: High heels. JM: Ties. **STYLE ICONS:** LB: Frida Kahlo, Marchesa Casati. JM: Toshiro Mifune, Geronimo. **ON MEN'S STYLE:** LB: "Does it get any better than old ripped jeans and a white tee?" **STYLE MOTTO:** LB: "Always a bit of a rebel yell." JM: "Let it reflect your soul."

*rick OWENS & michèle LAMY*

**OCCUPATION:** ML: Cofounder, Rick Owens label. **HOME BASE:** "The dance floor." **HAPPIEST WEARING:** Comme des Garçons at Kawakubo-themed Met Gala. **SIGNATURE MOVE:** Eyeliner stripe on her forehead to "keep my brain balanced." **ITEM I OVERUSE:** "Rick's superthin tees in the color dust." **GOOD LUCK CHARMS:** "Gold teeth, rings on every finger, heavy bracelets." *Read Owens's Proust Questionnaire at VF.com.*





STYLED BY CALYANN BARNETT (WADE), THOMAS CHRISTOS KIKIS (UNION), SYDNEY LOPEZ AND PEPE MUÑOZ (DION), ANATOLI SMITH (PORTER); HAIR BY DEE AMORE MARTI (DION), LARRY SIMS (UNION); MAKEUP BY JUSTIN ST. CLAIR (DION), FIONA STILES (UNION); MANICURE BY ASHLIE JOHNSON (UNION); NAIL ART BY MEI KAWAJIRI (JACOBS); GROOMING BY MELISSA DEZARATE (JACOBS, PORTER); SHAWN JANIFER (WADE); TAILORS, ISA KRIEGSKOTTE (UNION AND WADE), TAYLOR SPONG (PORTER); SET DESIGN BY GIO MAVANADZE (PORTER); PRODUCED ON LOCATION BY PREISS CREATIVE (UNION AND WADE), STUDIO LOU (JACOBS); PHOTOGRAPHED AT THE COLOSSEUM AT CAESARS PALACE (DION); FOR DETAILS AND ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPH CREDITS, GO TO VF.COM/CREDITS

**SISTER ACT**  
*How to Hadid in two easy steps*

Step one:  
**Kicks**

The bigger,  
the better.

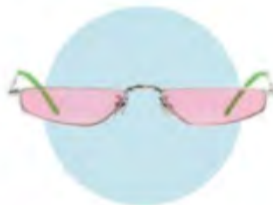


**FILA**  
Disruptor 2, £80.  
[fila.co.uk]



Step two:  
**Shades**

Very small,  
very '90s.



**Gentle Monster**  
Halo 02, £242.  
[gentlemonster.com]

*Bella & Gigi*  
**HADID**

**OCCUPATION:** Supermodels. **HOME BASE:** 35,000 feet. **THE LOOK:** BH: Carla Bruni, circa 1992. Mini purses, biker shorts, crop tops, slit-up-to-there gowns. GH: Bombshell sportif. Slip dresses, Doc Martens, inventive suits (here: artist Robert Nava for Heron Preston). **SPOTTED:** Fashion Week after-parties; bikini-clad girls trips.

*amal & george*  
**CLOONEY**

**OCCUPATION:** AC: Human rights lawyer. GC: Actor, producer.  
**HOME BASE:** Como, Italy. **THE LOOK:** AC: Power siren. Stop-sign-red Zac Posen day suits; Hollywood royalty Stella McCartney and Ralph & Russo gowns; *that hair*. GC: Mogul off duty. Moto jackets, regulation scruff, Armani tuxedos.  
**SPOTTED:** Be-caped at Buckingham Palace in vintage Jean-Louis Scherrer (below); dining with Barack and Michelle at Hotel Villa d'Este.



For more of our  
honorees' personal style gospel,  
visit VF.com.

( **SOCIAL SKILLS** )

The **Beckhams** know how to dress—and how to document it

**HOME BASE:** L.A. **FEED FRENZY:** Instagram offers *five* blue-checked views of la vie Beckham: David and Victoria's feeds, plus those of Brooklyn, 20; Romeo, 17; and Cruz, 14. **COMBINED FOLLOWERS:** 99.3 million. **SPOT THEM:** Mugging with #HarperSeven (age 8); front row at Mum's show; biking the Puglian countryside on family vacation.

From left: @romeobeckham; Harper Beckham; @cruzbeckham; @davidbeckham; @brooklynbeckham; @victoriabeckham





### Spotlight

# Rock Legend

Rough and rare gems become exquisite showstoppers in the hands of Dior's Victoire de Castellane

**Victoire de Castellane** doesn't play favorites. Of the countless pieces she has designed as the creative director of Dior Fine Jewelry for more than 20 years, there isn't a ring, earring, or necklace that she prefers over another. "I would love to have one of each color for each day of the week," she says of the designs, many of which she wears in rotation, in a dazzling

display of the art she's been creating since she first arrived at Dior, in Paris, over two decades ago. "To me, making jewelry is a language," she says. "It's my way of expressing myself in the world." Her vocabulary is one of playful imagination and vivid opulence, her designs an amalgam of organic textures reminiscent of sugar crystals, coral reefs, shards of

**ART OF STONE**

Victoire de Castellane, photographed at Palazzo Labia in Venice.

**Opposite:** sketches at a workspace inside the Dior Fine Jewelry atelier in Paris.





**ALL THAT GLITTERS**

(1) Earrings in yellow gold, diamonds, and emeralds in progress at the Paris atelier. (2) Gems alongside a sketch for earrings in white gold, diamonds, pink sapphires, and purple garnets. (3) A hand jewel in the making, of pink gold, diamonds, and spessartite garnets. (4) At the Gem Dior collection celebration in Venice, a model wears white gold rings with diamonds. (5) A white gold necklace with pink sapphire and diamonds. (6) Guests at the celebration marking Castellane's 20th anniversary, held at the Palazzo Labia.



She enjoys working as if she were “five years old, playing, but in a conscientious way.”

rime. Each piece is de Castellane’s interpretation of the world around her, which has changed radically since the beginning of her career at Chanel in 1984. “When I arrived,” she says, “all of the jewelry houses were not how I imagined.” The lack of women jewelry designers in 1980s Paris perplexed and motivated de Castellane. She had grown up studying the work of great early- to mid-century designers, such as Suzanne Belperron and Jeanne Toussaint, women who “created jewelry for women,” she explains. “I don’t know what happened in the ’60s and ’70s, but after that it was really a man’s world. And it was boring.”

Now beloved for her anything-but-boring creations, the French designer describes her process in almost primitive terms: Visions of future pieces “flash” in her head; details must be “caught;” she’s on a constant quest for “good stones.” She enjoys working as if she were “five years old, playing, but in a very conscientious way.” This effervescence is on full display in her latest and largest collection, Gem Dior (a phonetic riff on “J’aime Dior”): 99 pieces forged from a veritable treasure chest of emeralds, sapphires, diamonds, rubies, and semiprecious stones, including tanzanites and Paraíba tourmalines. In June, the collection was unveiled at a sumptuous presentation in Venice; within a day, many of the one-of-a-kind rings, earrings, necklaces, and watches had been sold or reserved, at prices reaching into the millions.

But the personal value of her collection is, she says, truly sentimental: “My father is my inspiration. It’s crazy, but I just realized this. He’s a real ’70s man, wearing rings and pennants on metal chains, and he has this Latin exuberance. He wears jewelry in this really free way, and I put this in the jewelry without knowing it consciously.” Part paternal panache, part elegant exuberance, the new collection is emblematic of de Castellane’s contributions to the rarified world of high jewelry: modern in design, timeless in appeal.

—MARY ALICE MILLER



5



After a hard-partying life as a cricket star and sex symbol, **Imran Khan** has transformed himself from revered sportsman into international statesman.

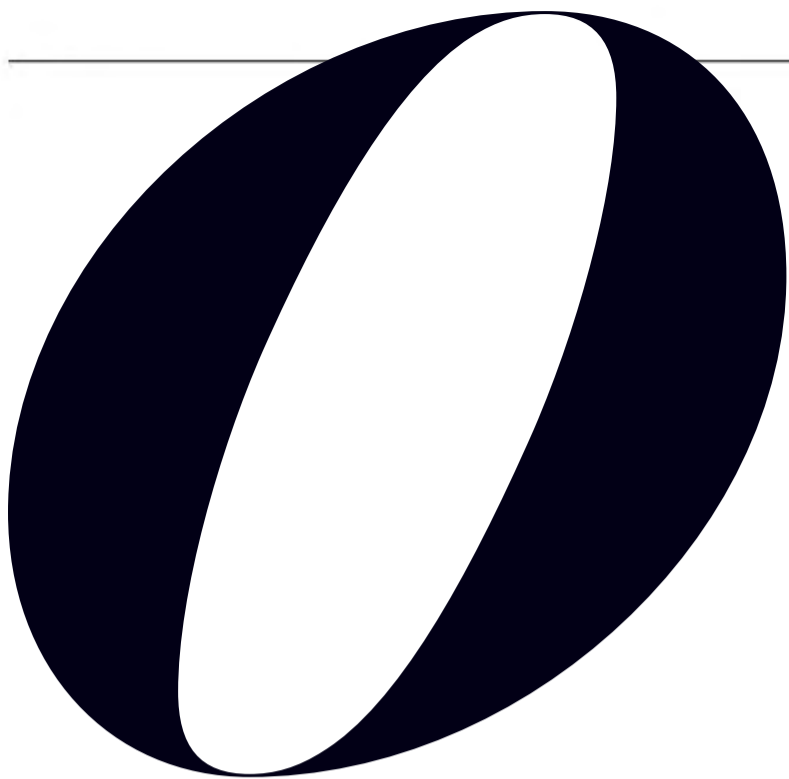
AATISH TASEER, who has known Khan since his days as a tabloid fixture, explores how an Oxford-educated playboy became the prime minister of Pakistan—and an outspoken critic of Western decadence



**DEFENDER OF  
THE FAITH**

Imran Khan in 2012, at his home in Islamabad. "The next time you come to Pakistan," he told friends, "I will be prime minister."

# A RAKE'S PROGRESS



One night the future first lady of Pakistan had a dream. Visions and prophecies were Bushra Maneka's stock and trade, for she was a female *pir*, or living saint. Known as Pinky Peerni to her admirers, Maneka's gift of clairvoyance had earned her a following well beyond her hometown of Pakpattan, a celebrated spiritual center 115 miles southwest of Lahore. In 2015, Maneka had added to her growing list of clients the man who was the object of her prophetic dream: Imran Khan, the legendary cricketer and most famous Pakistani alive. "Spiritual guides, or *pirs*," Khan writes in his autobiography, "are quite common in Pakistan. Millions of people, particularly in rural areas of the country, follow them, consulting them on everything from religious matters to sickness and family problems."

Khan was, if not a living saint, then certainly a living god. From the late 1970s, when my mother, a reporter in India, first interviewed him, to well into the 1990s, when he led the Pakistan team to a World Cup victory against England, he towered over the landscape of practically all those nations where the Union Jack had ever flown. Born in 1952 to an upper-middle-class family in Lahore, he had come of age at a time when cricket, the "gentleman's game" so intimately associated with the spread of the British Empire, was turning into a blood sport, imbued with the tensions of a newly awakened postcolonial world. "For teams like Pakistan, India, and the West Indies," Khan writes in his autobiography, "a battle to right colonial wrongs and assert our equality was played out on the cricket field every time we took on England."

Into this gladiatorial arena, shirt open, eyes bedroom-y, hair long and tousled, stepped Khan. He was one of those rare figures, like Muhammad Ali, who emerge once a generation on the frontier of sport, sex, and politics. "Imran may not have been the first player to enjoy his own cult following," writes his biographer Christopher Sandford, "but he was more or less single-handedly responsible for sexualizing what had hitherto been an austere, male-oriented activity patronized at the most devoted level by the obsessed or the disturbed."

Arrestingly handsome and Oxford-educated, albeit with a third-class degree, Khan found the doors of the British aristocracy thrown open to him. Mark Shand, the brother of Camilla Parker Bowles, now the Duchess of Cornwall, was among his best friends; he was seen out on the town with Jerry Hall and

Goldie Hawn; if his second wife, the television personality Reham Khan, is to be believed, he took part in a threesome with Grace Jones. The man who shunned the label of "playboy"—"I have never considered myself a sex symbol," he told my mother in 1983—nonetheless left a long line of Khan-quests from Bollywood to Hollywood, with a pit stop in Chelsea, where his flat, with its tented ceilings of gold silk, was one part harem, one part bordello. "He had a lot of women in his life," my uncle, Yousaf Salahuddin, one of Khan's best friends and a cultural institution in his own right, told me recently in Lahore, "because he was a very wanted man. In India, I have seen women from the age of just 6 to 60 going crazy over him." In 1995, at age 43, Khan married Jemima Goldsmith, the daughter of the tycoon Jimmy Goldsmith, who is said to have presciently remarked of his son-in-law, "He'll make an excellent first husband." As a teenager, I remember gaping over paparazzi photos of the newly wed couple, including some of them *in flagrante* on a balcony in Marbella. If the fascination with Khan's sexual prowess was fetishistic in Britain, it was edged with racial pride in Pakistan. As Mohsin Hamid, the country's most famous writer, told me in Lahore, "Imran Khan was a symbol of emancipatory virility."

In the mid-1990s, there was not a cloud on Khan's horizon. He had won the World Cup; he had married an alluring social beauty; he had, in memory of his mother, who died of cancer in 1985, opened Pakistan's first hospital dedicated to the treatment of that disease. It was a massive philanthropic gesture and the crowning achievement of a life showered with gifts. At that juncture, it might well have been asked what a clairvoyant from a small town in Pakistan had to offer Khan that he didn't already have.

The short answer is politics. In 1996, after years of turning down pleas from established politicians and military dictators eager to align themselves with his celebrity, Khan launched his own political party. In its first election, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, or PTI—which translates as the Movement for Justice—won zero seats in parliament. Five years later, Khan won one seat, his own. Even by 2013, with his personal popularity at an all-time high, the PTI won only 35 seats. For 20 years, he had been telling his friends and well-wishers that "the next time you come to Pakistan, I will be prime minister." But four elections had come and gone, two marriages had collapsed in their wake, and the quest of this aging playboy to be his country's premier was no nearer its end.

It was then, or not long after, that Bushra Maneka had her dream.

**TIGER'S LAIR**  
Khan, circa 1990. In Pakistan, his sexual conquests made him "a symbol of emancipatory virility."







Khan, like a real-world version of Stannis Baratheon desperately consulting the Red Woman in *Game of Thrones*, had begun to see Pinky for “spiritual guidance.” The clairvoyant’s usual fee for making the impossible possible, a senior media figure in Karachi told me on condition of anonymity, was great vats of cooked meat. These, he explained, over a Japanese meal, she fed to the *jinn*s she kept at her disposal.

“Jinns?” I asked, wondering if I had misheard.

“She has two jinns,” the media man said, serving me some more soba noodles.

Then he came to the surreal story that is on the lips of everyone in Pakistan, from senior diplomats and ministers to journalists and entertainers. Although Maneka has dismissed it as mere rumor, the story has attained the status of fable—a supernatural tale that seeks to illuminate a deeper truth. Once Maneka had her prophetic vision, the media veteran told me, no amount of cooked meat would suffice to fulfill Khan’s ambition. The voice in her dream was clear: If Imran Khan was to be prime minister, it was imperative he be married to the right woman—i.e., a member of Maneka’s own family.

In one version of this torrid tale, Maneka offered her sister to Khan. In another, it was her daughter. Either way, Khan demurred. Then Maneka went away to dream again. This time, however, she was no bystander to someone else’s vision. The voice in her head told her that she, Bushra Maneka, a married woman and a mother of five, was the wife Imran Khan needed. What Maneka now wanted from Khan was what every woman had ever wanted from him: She wanted *him*.

Khan had never set eyes on Maneka, for she consulted her followers from behind a veil. But this time, he acceded to her vision. The stars aligned and Maneka’s husband, a customs official, agreed to give her a divorce, praising Khan as a “disciple of our spiritual family.”

In February 2018, cricketer and clairvoyant were married in a private ceremony. Six months later, Imran Khan was elected prime minister of Pakistan, and Pinky Peerni, a character who would stretch the limits of Salman Rushdie’s imagination, was its first lady.

**O**n the burning hot morning in April when my flight landed at Allama Iqbal International Airport in Lahore, I asked a man with a thickly dyed mustache sitting next to me whether I needed to fill out an entry card. “This is Imran Khan’s Pakistan!” he responded enthusiastically. Khan had promised “a new Pakistan,” and presumably one feature of this utopia, my seatmate implied, is that nobody has to fill out tiresome paperwork anymore.

Khan, both as candidate and prime minister, sounds like populists everywhere, now inveighing against Westernized “dollar-addicted” elites, now promising to fix the problems of one of South Asia’s slowest-growing economies by bringing home magical amounts of black money squirreled away in foreign bank accounts. But as much as his rhetoric resembles that of other populists—from Narendra Modi next door in India, to Erdogan in Turkey and Bolsonaro in Brazil—there is one important difference: Khan is not of the people. If anything, he belongs to an elite even more glamorous and rarefied than the one he routinely attacks. As he said himself, in an article he wrote for *Arab News* in 2002, “I was smoothly moving to

becoming a *pukka brown sahib*”—a colonial term denoting a native more English than the English. “After all,” he added, “I had the right credentials in terms of school, university, and, above all, acceptability in the English aristocracy.” Unlike other populists in the developing world, Khan is a man guessing at the passions of people he does not actually represent. Like Trump or the Brexiteers, he underwent a Damascene conversion, which, as he wrote, caused him to turn his back on “brown *sahib* culture” and throw in his lot with the “real Pakistan.”

The man after whom the airport in Lahore is named was easily the single greatest influence in Khan’s transformation from louche fixture of the demimonde to political revolutionary. Sir Muhammad Iqbal, a poet and philosopher, died in 1938, a decade before the founding of Pakistan. But it was he who, in 1930, had first seriously made the case for why Muslims living in British India needed a homeland like Pakistan, where they could realize their “ethical and political ideal.” What seems to have struck Khan hardest about Iqbal’s philosophy was his idea of *khudi*, or selfhood, which Khan understood to mean “self-reliance, self-respect, self-confidence.” It was precisely what Pakistan needed, Khan thought, to banish the shame of colonial rule and to regain its sense of self. It would also, he believed, armor Pakistan against its own elites, whose “slavish” imitation of Western culture had instilled in them a “self-loathing that stemmed from an ingrained inferiority complex.”

Indeed, it is Khan’s extensive personal experience of what he now condemns as Western decadence that enables him to rail against it so authoritatively. “An emotion that he feels very strongly about is that we should stop feeling enslaved to the West mentally,” said Ali Zafar, Khan’s friend and Pakistan’s biggest pop star. “He feels that since he’s gone there—he’s been there and done that—he knows the West more than anybody else over here. He’s telling them, ‘Look, you’ve got to find your own space, your own identity, your own thing, your own culture, your own roots.’”

During the weeks I spent reporting this piece in Pakistan, I made repeated attempts to reach out to the prime minister, but his political handlers seemed alarmed at the prospect of resurrecting his past in the pages of a glossy magazine. In 2000, Khan, then married to Jemima, had been the subject of a profile in *Vanity Fair* that focused on his youthful escapades. When I spoke to Zulfi Bokhari, a frequenter of nightclubs from the London days who is now a junior minister in Khan’s government, he sought assurances that my piece would be positive; otherwise, he told me, it would be his ass on the line. A few days later, Bokhari WhatsApped me: “Unfortunately the PM has said he can’t do it right now. Perhaps in the near future.”

I first spoke with Khan at a party in London, when I was 25. At the time I was dating Ella Windsor, a minor member of the British royal family who was a family friend of the Goldsmiths. To see Khan out and about in London—the legend himself—was to understand how truly at home he was among the highest echelons of British society. The English upper classes adore cricket—it is one of the many coded ways in which their class system works—and the allure of the former captain of the Pakistani cricket team was still very real. The night we met, in late summer 2006, Khan had come to a party at a Chelsea studio overlooking the Moravian burial ground. On that balmy evening, surrounded by the silhouettes of plane trees, it was clear

that Khan, five years after 9/11, was in the throes of a religious and political transformation. I was researching my first book, *Stranger to History: A Son's Journey Through Islamic Lands*, and had only just returned from an eight-month trip through Syria, Yemen, Iran, and Pakistan. Khan's views, though alarming in their intensity, struck me as juvenile. He said he believed that suicide bombers, according to "the rules of the Geneva Convention," had the right to blow themselves up. Here, I remember feeling, was a man who had dealt so little in ideas that every idea he had now struck him as a good one.

The next time I met Khan was under dramatically altered circumstances. In December 2007, I was staying with my uncle Yousaf in his house in the old city of Lahore, when televisions across the country began to flash the news that Benazir Bhutto, the former prime minister, had been assassinated. It was deeply affecting, even for those who disliked Bhutto, to see this tarnished but enduring symbol of hope and democracy cut down so violently. Upon her death, Pakistan, battered by terror and military dictatorship, descended into paroxysms of grief. Into this atmosphere Khan arrived a few days later with a French girlfriend. He had been in Mumbai, staying at the house of a

doing more dips in the gym at 55 than I could do at 27, watching him fawned over by young and old men alike, was to feel myself in the company of a demigod. Alone with him, I was struck by that mixture of narcissism bordering on sociopathy that afflicts those who have been famous too long. His utter lack of emotion when it came to Bhutto—whom he had been at Oxford with, and had known most of his life—was startling. "Look at Benazir," he told me as we drove through Lahore one morning, past knots of mourners and protesters. "I mean, God really saved her." Then he began fulminating against Bhutto for having agreed to legitimize General Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan's military dictator, in return for the government dropping corruption charges against her.

"Imagine that," Khan said. "It's the most immoral thing you could have done. So this thing has come as a blessing for her."

"This thing?" I asked.

"Death," he said matter-of-factly. Then, with what sounded almost like envy, he added, "Benazir has become a martyr. She has become immortal."

Khan's inability to enter the grief of his country—even if he felt none for Bhutto—is an extension of his messianism, which

## Unlike other **populists**, Khan belongs to an elite even more **rarefied** than the one he attacks.

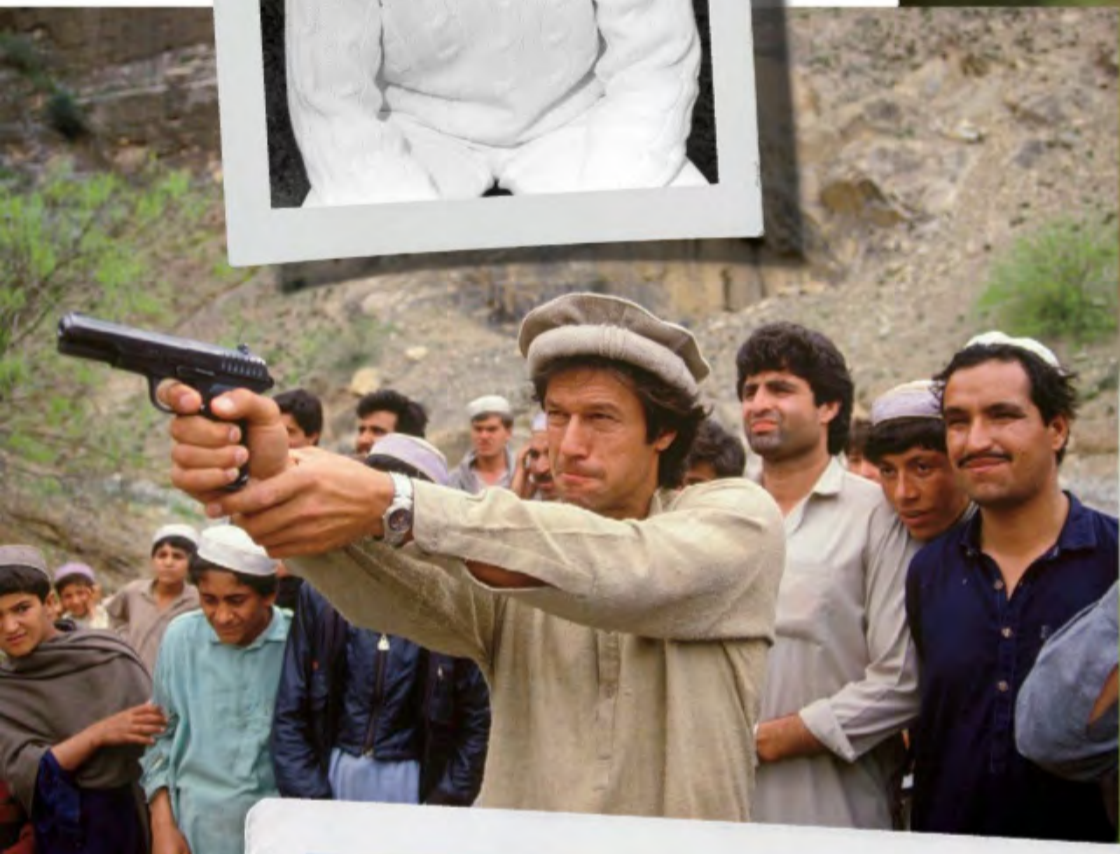
prominent socialite, where he had been photographed poolside in swimming trunks as his country was engulfed in trauma.

Khan has a commanding presence. He fills a room and has a tendency to speak at people, rather than to them; never was there a greater mansplainer. What he lacks in intelligence, however, he makes up for in intensity, vigor, and what feels almost like a kind of nobility. As Wasim Akram—Khan's protégé and his successor as captain of the Pakistan team—said to me in Karachi, "There are two types of people, the followers and the leaders. And he is definitely a leader. Not just in cricket—in general." To describe Khan as Im the Dim, as he has long been known in London circles, fails to capture what it feels like to be around him. "You might say he's a duffer; you might say he's a buffoon," his second wife, Reham, told me over lunch in London. "He doesn't have intelligence of economic principles. He doesn't have academic intelligence. But he's very street, so he figures you out." Like his coeval in the White House, Khan has been reading people all his life—on and off the field. This knowing quality, combined with the raw glamour of vintage fame, creates a palpable tension in his presence. The air bristles; oxygen levels crash. The line is taut, if no longer with sex appeal, then its closest substitute: massive celebrity.

I had been less aware of this when I first met Khan in London. But to see him two years later in the old city of Lahore,

prevents him from being in sympathy with any national drama in which he is not the key protagonist. But when the conversation turned to the elite whom Bhutto represented, another aspect of his character emerged. Khan, who had just returned from partying with Bollywood stars in Mumbai, began to speak without a shred of irony of the virtues of Victorianism. "Societies are strong," he told me, "when their elites are strong. If you look at Victorian England, you'll see that their elite was strong and moral. Our problem, both in India and Pakistan, is that our elites have decayed." He pointed to my father, who had recently joined Musharraf's government as a minister. Khan told me he feared that my father lacked "a moral anchor. He just sits there drinking his whiskeys, laughing at everything, putting everything down. He's cynical. Not at all like me: I am an optimist."

It is easy to view the contradiction between Khan's words and actions as hypocrisy. But to my mind, hypocrisy implies willful cynicism. This was different. It was as if Khan was unable to make a whole of the many people he had been—unable to find a moral system that could support the varied lives he had led. For his new self to live, it seemed, the old one had to be renounced. "This man has a Jekyll and Hyde problem," Hina Rabbani Khar, Pakistan's former foreign minister, explained to me in Lahore. "He is actually two people at the same time."



The distance between the “day-time Khan” and the “night-time Khan,” his biographer suggests, was something that people had noticed about him even in the 1980s, when he was playing county cricket in Britain. But what one can dismiss in a sportsman is harder to ignore in a politician—especially one who is as stern a moralist as Khan. “To the *Weekly Standard*,” writes Sandford, “he was the ‘Khan artist’ who continued to ‘inveigh against the West by day and enjoy its pleasures by night.’” In treating the West as nothing but a source of permissiveness and turning the East into a romantic symbol of purity, Khan provides a fascinating mirror of the cultural confusions and anxieties of our time. As Imaan Hazir, a human rights lawyer whose mother serves as a minister in Khan’s government, put it to me: “It’s quite common among Pakistanis that we dislike in others what we most dislike about ourselves.”

**P**olitics in Pakistan,” my father always said, “is a game of the appointed and the disappointed.”

He was referring to the fluctuating interplay of forces—now the all-powerful military, now the feudal chieftains who control large portions of the rural electorate—that make up the establishment in Pakistan. In 2008, it was my father who had been appointed, first as a minister under Musharraf, then as governor of Punjab. Before Khan became prime minister, he felt free to denounce any compromise that civilian leaders like my father might manage to broker with Musharraf. “Even if I’m alone, I would stand away,” he told me during our drive into Lahore. “See, what faith does is liberate you. *La illa il Allah*”—the Islamic testament of faith—“is a charter of freedom. What makes a human bigger than others is when he stands up against lies. And what destroys a human being are compromises.”

Today, 10 years on, my father is dead, assassinated by his own bodyguard in 2011 for his uncompromising defense of a Christian woman accused of blasphemy. Now it is Khan who has been appointed, presiding over a government in which there are no fewer than 10 Musharraf-era ministers.

The moral landscape of Pakistan is not always easy for outsiders to navigate. “All morality originates from religion,” Khan once asserted, but sometimes it can feel that religion in Pakistan is the source of dystopia, a world turned upside down. Last April, on the way to my uncle’s house in the old city, we passed walls plastered with posters of my father’s killer, Malik Mumtaz Qadri, under whose image are the words, “I am Mumtaz Qadri.” Through the distorting eye of faith, Qadri is a hero in Pakistan, with a shrine in his name, near the capital Islamabad.

Khan—or “Taliban Khan,” as he is sometimes referred to by his critics—has often seemed sympathetic to the religious extremism sweeping his country. The man who once invited the Taliban to open a political office in Pakistan days after a church bombing in Peshawar killed 81 people, and whose government has funded seminaries that have produced jihadis—including Mullah Omar, the founder of the Afghan Taliban—seems never to express the same violence of opinion for Islamic extremism as comes so easily to him when attacking the West. “Here he is, trying to play a very difficult game,”

Salman Rushdie said of Khan at a panel I chaired in Delhi in 2012. (Khan, the chief guest, had withdrawn in protest upon hearing that the author of *The Satanic Verses* would be present.) Khan, Rushdie said, was “placating the mullahs on one hand, cozying up to the army on the other, while trying to present himself to the West as the modernizing face of Pakistan.” He added acidly, “I’d concentrate on that, Imran. Try and keep those balls in the air. It’s not going to be easy.”

On social issues, Khan has certainly played to both sides. He fired one minister for speaking in bigoted ways about Hindus—a tiny minority in Pakistan—but dropped a leading member of his economic advisory council for belonging to a sect considered heretical. Khan’s supporters argue that he is merely being strategic in dealing with Islamic extremism. Once, on a flight to China, Ali Zafar asked Khan about his right-wing tilt. “It’s a very sensitive society toward certain issues,” the cricketer told the pop star. “You just can’t talk about those issues so openly, because you’re going to be penalized for it.” Khan assured Zafar that he knew what he was doing. “You know me,” he said. “I’m a liberal; I’ve got friends in India; I’ve got friends who are atheists. But you’ve got to be careful here.”

Earlier this year, when massive protests erupted in Pakistan after the acquittal of Asia Bibi, the Christian woman my father had died defending, Khan’s response was indeed calculated. His government initially gave the extremists plenty of rope with which to hang themselves, then cracked down hard on their leaders. “Look at the way he’s dealt with these bastard *maulvis*,” my uncle Yousaf told me.

“What did Imran do?” I asked.

“He threw them all in jail and beat some sense into them.”

My uncle—the grandson of Muhammad Iqbal, Khan’s political hero—was convalescing at home after a leg injury. We sat in a beautiful room with green silk upholstery and stained glass windows. One of Pakistan’s most famous actresses, Mehwish Hayat, leaned against a bolster, languidly smoking a cigarette. A vigorous man in his late 60s, Yousaf has known Khan since they were at Aitchison College together—Pakistan’s equivalent of Exeter. His faith in his friend is boundless. “I always knew he was a blessed child,” Yousaf said. “Whatever he sets out to achieve, he will achieve.” He initially tried to dissuade Khan from going into politics. “This just isn’t a decent man’s game,” he told him. Khan responded by quoting Iqbal, Yousaf’s own grandfather. “If no one is prepared to do it,” he added, “then who will do it?” But when I asked Yousaf about how strange it is that a man who started a family with someone as *mondaine* as Jemima Goldsmith is now married to a small-town spiritual guru, he became defensive. “What?” he said, as if surprised by my surprise. “What of it?”

If Khan’s personal life fascinates, it’s because it so closely reflects the moral and cultural schizophrenia of the society in which he operates. Like evangelicals in the United States, in whom a politicized faith conceals an uneasy relationship with modernity and temptation, Khan’s contradictions are not incidental; they are the key to who he is, and perhaps to what Pakistan is. Like other populists, Khan knows far better what he is against than what he is for. HIS CONTINUED ON PAGE 113

#### STICKY WICKET

Khan has played to both sides of what he calls the “competing cultural forces in my life.” **1.** As a young man in Pakistan, 1971. **2.** During a cricket match in England, 1981. **3.** With Pashtun tribesmen, 1995. **4.** With his son Sulaiman and wife Jemima after Princess Diana toured his hospital in Lahore, 1997.

# DREAD'S

IN 1811, SLAVES IN LOUISIANA STAGED THE LARGEST PLANTATION UPRISING IN U.S. HISTORY.

ARTIST **DREAD SCOTT** IS MOUNTING A PROVOCATIVE REENACTMENT TO ASK THE QUESTION: *WHAT IF THOSE REVOLUTIONARIES HAD SUCCEEDED?*

# REBELLION

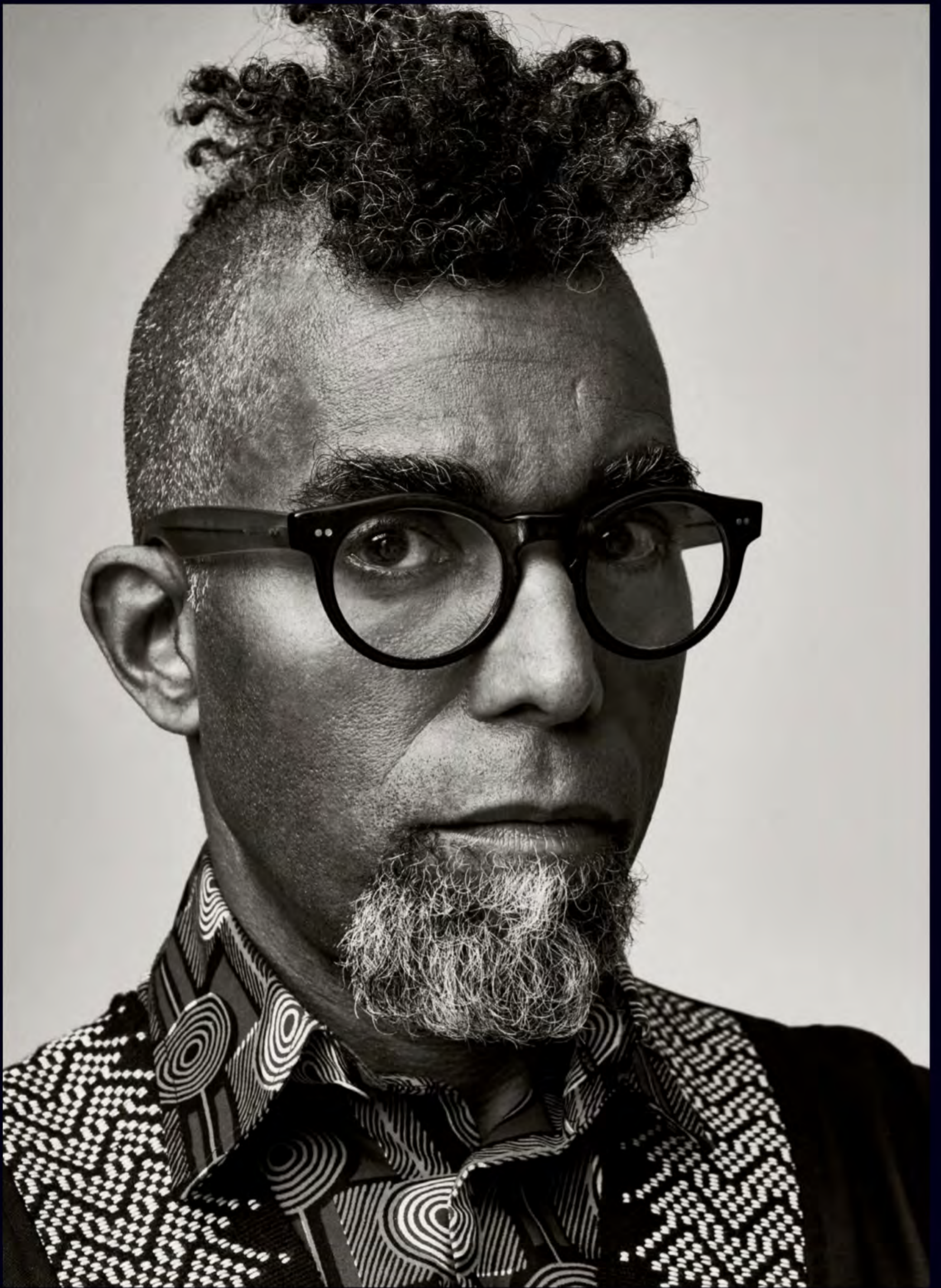
*By* JULIAN LUCAS

**O**n a cloudy March afternoon, I climbed a levee in Montz, Louisiana, with the artist Dread Scott. The wind was whipping, and muddy water streamed through an open dam into the Bonnet Carré Spillway. The area, once home to sprawling riverfront plantations, is now dedicated to wildlife and recreation. But the day we visited, its hiking trails, off-road-vehicle courses, and historic cemeteries were under water. The crowns of submerged cypresses swayed in the current; across the spillway, the sprawl of Shell's Norco oil refinery floated like a mirage. A sign on the barbed wire fence read, "No Trespassing, U.S. Government Property."

Bonnet Carré hardly resembles the decorous greenswards of Gettysburg or Lexington. But this November, once its waters recede, Scott will lead some 500 costumed rebels over the spillway on foot and horseback in a reenactment of America's largest-ever slave revolt. Chanting "On to New Orleans" and "Freedom or death," they will retrace the little-known German Coast uprising of 1811 in a 26-mile march east along the Mississippi River, brandishing axes, muskets,

**FREE THINKER**

Dread Scott, photographed in Brooklyn. The artist derives his professional name from the 1857 Dred Scott decision, which ruled that black people were not U.S. citizens.



blunderbusses, and cane knives as they cut an anachronistic swath through the nearby industrial towns.

With a budget of more than \$1 million, the event promises an arresting combination of scope and spontaneity—part Cecil B. DeMille extravaganza, part flash mob. Beating drums, waving banners, and singing warlike anthems in English and Creole, the rebels will grow in number as they proceed, trailed by spectators and the film crew of Ghanaian-born British video artist John Akomfrah. The next morning, after a day's march and a late-night skirmish with volunteer U.S. dragoons, the procession will arrive in New Orleans, assembling in historic Congo Square. There, joined by musicians, Scott's Army of the Enslaved will celebrate a victory that, although it never was, might have changed history's course.

**"The legacy of slavery,"** Dread Scott told me, "should be in the way and causing trouble." We were having coffee in the Brooklyn neighborhood where he lives with his wife, Jenny Polak, a fellow artist. Scott, unerringly polite but refreshingly profane, was brainstorming replacements for America's Confederate monuments. For New Orleans's Lee

Circle, where the rebel general's likeness came down in 2017, he suggested a giant statue of Toussaint Louverture, leader of the Haitian Revolution. Better still, Scott said, to leave Lee fallen in the street, blocking traffic for the next 15 years.

Scott, 54, is immediately convincing as canny rebel mastermind. Round spectacles and silvering frohawk plume accentuate his vaguely avian alertness—he is careful in conversation, but also quick, daring, and direct. Avowedly communist, Scott describes his work as "revolutionary art to propel history forward." Since the 1980s, his performances and installations have transformed familiar public spaces into assaultive mirrors of American injustice.

To protest the Patriot Act, he stocked public library shelves in Ithaca, New York, with "quarantined" books in Tyvek bags ostensibly sealed by the Department of Homeland Security. To condemn the fraud behind the 2008 financial crisis, he took to Wall Street with \$250 in cash and a Zippo lighter for a performance called *Money to Burn*, drawing amusement, derision, admonishment, and, ultimately, the NYPD.

For decades, police brutality has been central to Scott's art practice. His 1998 installation, *The Blue Wall of Violence*,

now on display at Space One Eleven in Birmingham, Alabama, consists of six silhouette targets with attached arm casts, each holding an innocuous object (a squeegee, a candy bar) that police shooters claimed to have mistaken for guns. Just in front of them, mechanized nightsticks intermittently strike a hollow coffin.

One of the most recognizable artworks of the Black Lives Matter era is the 2015 flag that Scott created in response to the killing of Walter Scott, fatally shot by a police officer during a routine traffic stop in South Carolina. Replicating a vintage banner from the NAACP's anti-lynching campaign, it updates the original—"A Man Was Lynched Yesterday"—with two words: "By Police." The next year, Scott raised the flag over New York's Jack Shainman Gallery amid protests over the killings of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile. Its frank declaration captured the moment's bitter mix of outrage, exhaustion, and resolve. In 2017, the flag was acquired by the Whitney Museum of American Art.

*Slave Rebellion Reenactment* is poised to be even more iconic. If it's just an "epic spectacle," Scott told me, "I'm good. If the people embodying this history have walked in the shoes of their ancestors, and thought about freedom and emancipation in new ways, that's enough." But in a state that has historically imprisoned more of its population than any other; a nation where today's family separations echo those at yesterday's slave auctions; and a world sleepwalking toward climate extinction, Scott also wants to revive the daring imagination of those who in January 1811 had, as he puts it, "the most radical vision of freedom on the North American continent."

**Before taking his** professional name—a one-letter subversion of the 1857 Dred Scott decision, which ruled that black people "had no rights which the white man was bound to respect"—Scott Tyler grew up in a middle-class Chicago family, playing Dungeons & Dragons and performing as a guitarist in a punk band, Fudge Tunnel. "I was fucking talentless," he said. But it didn't matter; it was punk. He was politicized early by the nuclear brinkmanship of the 1980s, the poverty and police repression endured by black communities on Chicago's South Side, and the sense of growing up in a society with no regard for his future.



**TRUE COLORS**  
Scott's 1988 Chicago artwork, *What Is the Proper Way to Display a US Flag?*, caused an uproar.

PAGE 94: ARTWORK © DREAD SCOTT. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST. PAGE 95: MAP BY JUSTIN PATRICK LONG. PAGES 96-97: ILLUSTRATIONS BY MONIKA GRIST-WERNER. COSTUME DESIGN BY ALISON L. PARKER (REENACTMENTS). ARTWORKS FROM THE COSTUME COUNCIL FUND (COSTUMES DE DIFFERENTS PAYS, 'NEGRES DE ST. DOMINGUE SE BATTANT AU BATON'), THE LOUISIANA STATE MUSEUM, NEW ORLEANS (LAVEAU), THE YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART, PAUL MELLON COLLECTION (SEAMSTRESSES, ST. KITTS, CARRIBEAN)





## TWO ROADS CONVERGE

This fall, costumed reenactors will retrace the route that rebel slaves took during the German Coast uprising of 1811. The projected path of the two-day march (yellow) will roughly follow the original (red); Scott's volunteers, possibly with spectators in tow, plan to continue on to New Orleans.

Scott likes to say that if Ronald Reagan made him a communist, Malcolm X and Chairman Mao made him a reader. Taking pictures at punk shows and learning to develop film in the darkroom of his father, a photographer, Scott discovered a visual talent that carried him to the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC). Though drawn to public art through the murals of Diego Rivera and Black Arts Movement painters like William Walker, Scott found an outlet for his burgeoning radicalism in performance art and installations.

As a 24-year-old student, he exhibited *What Is the Proper Way to Display a US Flag?* at SAIC, draping a five-foot American flag across the floor under a photomontage about patriotism and protest. In order to answer the title question in a ledger, visitors had to decide whether or not to stand on the flag. Commenters filled more than 400 pages. But words were insufficient to contain the breadth and intensity of the reaction. While some Vietnam veterans supported the work, many others picketed, chanting, "The flag and the artist, hang them both high!" Scott and his mother received death threats. A unanimous United States Senate proposed anti-desecration legislation—later

invalidated by a Supreme Court decision to which Scott was party—with specific reference to the artist's work. The president, George H.W. Bush, offered a short review that the artist now features on his website: "Disgraceful."

For Scott, the hateful responses served a didactic purpose. The work aimed to offend, but aggrieved nationalists were not his audience; he was speaking to the casually patriotic, those reflexively attached, he believes, to an ideology they failed to scrutinize. What worthwhile values could America's "sacred symbol" represent if opening it to criticism elicited racial slurs and threats of lynching?

The exhibition was also an expression of solidarity with victims of state power. (At the time of the show, Chicago's South Side was being terrorized by Jon Burge, commander of a police precinct where hundreds of false confessions were extracted through torture.) Defying a police department threat to bring felony charges against anyone who set foot on the flag, victims of law enforcement brutality wrote some of the most supportive comments. "If black people had not been willing to offend," the artist told reporters, "we'd still be slaves today."

**When Scott decided** to reenact a slave rebellion, he had Nat Turner and Denmark Vesey in mind. Like most Americans, he had never heard of the 1811 uprising that erupted on the young country's frontier. The rebellion united a multinational group of enslaved people from Louisiana, the French Caribbean, and West African polities like Asante and Kongo against shared oppression. This motley yet determined force drove east along the Mississippi toward New Orleans, then a walled territorial capital where blacks outnumbered whites, runaway Maroons and hostile Spaniards haunted the borderland bayous, and the French Creole citizenry distrusted their greenhorn American governor. Led by two Africans, Kook and Quamana, and an enslaved overseer from Saint Domingue named Charles Deslondes, the insurgents toppled plantations like dominoes; as whites fled en masse to the capital, they left their land defenseless. It cannot be proved that this force planned to abolish slavery, as had their Haitian predecessors. But the historian Vincent Brown, a Harvard scholar who has written extensively on slave rebellions, told me it would be "a dereliction of historical duty" not to imagine their unrecorded aims.

Armed planters and American dragoons massacred the rebels, driving those they couldn't capture or kill into the swamps. One year later, Louisiana joined the union, opening the Mississippi River Basin to a century of plantation slavery and genocidal conquest. By order of the governor, the rebels were tried and executed on the plantations they'd overthrown. Their decapitated heads were displayed on pikes along River Road.

Scott and I drove this route, beginning where the revolt first struck in present-day LaPlace in St. John the Baptist Parish. In 1811, the area was a mosaic of sugar plantations—long, narrow properties with mansions fronting the Mississippi and fields that stretched back to the bayous near Lake Pontchartrain. Now known as “cancer alley,” it is a patchwork of industrial towns known for poverty and pollution, where residents, many of whom are descendants of enslaved sugar workers, suffer from some of the highest rates of cancer in the country.

When Scott first visited the area, he didn't know what to expect. The drive from New Orleans passes over picturesque wetlands, but the towns are hardly daguerreotypes of the gallant South. We passed refinery drums, mobile homes beached on cinder blocks, and gated subdivisions. Our first stop was the city's only tribute to the rebellion—a single phrase (“major 1811 slave uprising organized here”) on a plaque commemorating the old Woodland Plantation, not far from a Domino's Pizza.

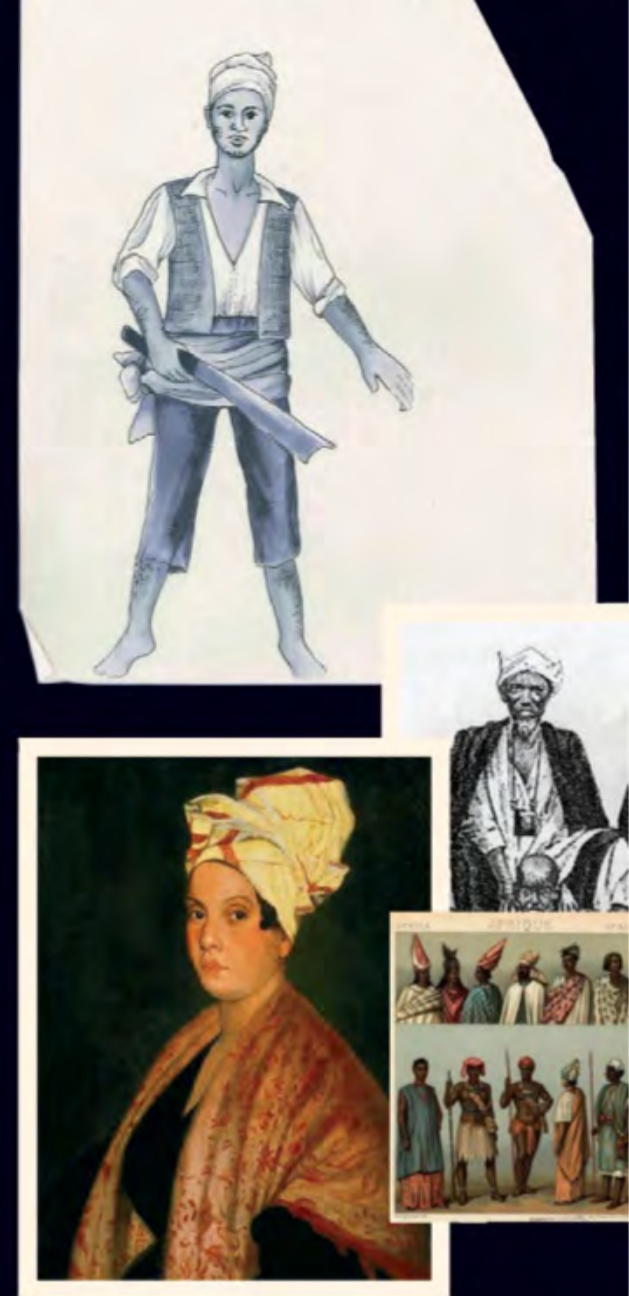
The few public reminders of the antebellum era take the form of tours at refurbished plantations. Visitors to estates like Destrehan, one of the plantations where the rebels were tried and executed, vicariously indulge in the sweet life of planter aristocrats. Destrehan does have a small exhibit acknowledging the uprising—arguably the most important event in the property's history—but it is housed in an outbuilding and omitted from the main tour. The focus is on period ambience, the furniture, clothes, and intimate passions of lordly patriarchs whom docents often refer to with avuncular affection. Mannequins, permanently engrossed in their domestic labors, are the most prominent representations of the enslaved. In 2015, domestic terrorist Dylann Roof took selfies with a similar display months before he shot nine black congregants at the Emanuel A.M.E. church in Charleston, South Carolina.

“Just imagine going to Auschwitz and hearing about the commandant and his difficulties,” Scott said as we passed the San Francisco Plantation, now a tourist attraction, in Garyville. “Nobody would accept that.” The big house sits squarely in the middle of an immense Marathon refinery. San Francisco, like many of the area's extant plantations, was renovated by big oil, and today its website advertises availability for weddings: “Imagine stepping back in time when sugarcane was king, and money didn't matter.”

If plantation tours screen the past behind a *cordon sanitaire*, Scott hopes the reenactment's route will highlight the disquieting continuity between Louisiana's plantation past and its petrochemical present. Downriver from LaPlace, we arrived in Norco, a company town largely developed by Royal Dutch Shell. In 1953, the oil giant displaced hundreds of black sharecroppers from their homes to clear the way for a refinery and a chemical plant. They were resettled on cheap land along the perimeter of the facility, a Louisiana Mordor of docks, drums, and catalytic cracking towers that dwarfs the surrounding residential blocks. Where captive laborers once boiled sugarcane under the lash, contemporary residents of “fenceline” communities endure noxious chemical emissions, deadly explosions, periodically unbreathable air, and declining real-estate prices. Surveying nearby houses and churches, Scott said that he'd like his work to communicate a message to residents: “The rebels of 1811 would have been fighting for people like you.”

**Some of them**, Scott hopes, will join him. *Slave Rebellion Reenactment* is not only an artwork but an experiment in social choreography. He envisions the march wending through work sites and residential neighborhoods like a parade, with onlookers invited to join, in the style of a New Orleans second line.

Many of the 1811 rebels were strangers, forced to organize in secret. Emulating their approach, Scott isn't specifically enlisting actors or hobbyists for his Army of the Enslaved—though he intends to pay every participant an honorarium. Instead, he has launched a clandestine recruitment process mirroring the original. His core cadre includes professors, poets, arts workers, and student activists. They will in turn canvass others, building a network that will fully **CONTINUED ON PAGE 112**



#### PERIOD PIECES

Clockwise from top: a costume sketch for November's march; an illustration from Colonel Frey's *Côte occidentale d'Afrique*; examples of Senegalese dress by Auguste Racinet, from *Le Costume Historique*; 19th century voodoo legend Marie Laveau by F. Schneider's painting after a painting by G. Catlin.





**COSTUME DRAMA**  
Clockwise from top center:  
reenactor Denise Frazier; cloth samples for a reenactor's regalia; a contemporary sketch of a marcher's attire; William Kay's *Seamstresses, St. Kitts, Carribean* [1798].



All year long, sewing circles have been finishing costumes in New Orleans.

**ROLE MODELS**

From left: reenactor Gianna Chachere; Labrousse's *Costumes de Différents Pays*, "Negres de St. Domingue se Battant au Bâton" [circa 1797]; reenactor Malcolm Suber.



# FUTURE

*Styled by SAMIRA NASR*

*Photographs by CASS BIRD*



# PERFECT



*An ADVENTURE  
on the STREETS of  
LOWER MANHATTAN  
with MACKENZIE DAVIS,  
HOLLYWOOD'S go-to  
APOCALYPTIC MUSE,  
in the SEASON'S most  
cutting-edge COUTURE*

*By Sonia Saraiya*

OCTOBER 2019



Dress by **Givenchy  
Haute Couture**; sandals  
by **Giuseppe Zanotti**.



Clothing and earrings  
by **Armani Privé**; hat by  
**Eric Javits**.

**Mackenzie Davis** is absolutely worried about the rise of the machines.

“Yes,” she says when I ask if, like her character, Grace, in the upcoming *Terminator: Dark Fate*, she is stressed out about artificial intelligence imminently exterminating humankind. She is emphatic but incredulous, as if she can’t believe I had to ask.

Davis had spent the day before vogueing around Lower Manhattan in this season’s most desirable couture. It threatened to thunderstorm the whole time and finally did overnight—drenching the terrace where we’re sitting on a Tuesday morning. There’s a nip in the air, so Davis is wearing a hotel-provided bathrobe. (She brought one for me too.) She shows me her two necklaces—one from her sister that reads KEN, short for Mackenzie, and an 1880s \$10 coin on a long chain, nicked from her boyfriend for the trip. “He’s like, old-school American,” says the Vancouver, British Columbia, native, who moved to the U.S. to study acting after university. “It really reminds me of that *Russian Doll* coin that she wears.”

Davis hates having her picture taken, but working with a female photographer made this less exacting. “I’ve done a few shoots recently that are just standing still and having the male photographer be like, ‘Open your mouth.’” She thrusts out a shoulder, pretending to pose, but her voice keeps the photographer’s nasal insistence. “Open your mouth. Okay, good. Chin down. Open your mouth.”

She unfolds again, and the scene is over. But her irritation isn’t, even if it’s couched in laughter.

“Just let me keep my mouth closed, you know?”

Anyway, the machines. She’s been worrying about AirPods lately. That the earbuds will just become smaller, until they’re a cochlear implant, or a microchip. She’s animated, talking through the scenarios. “And then you’ll just get cables”—she pauses, searching, and then her portent of doom comes out with laughter attached—“injected in your head! You’ll just get *cables* injected in your *head*.”

Winsome but bleak—that’s Mackenzie Davis. Over the course of her short career, dystopia has become an intimate part of Davis’s life. Before *Terminator*, there was *Blade Runner 2049*, where she played a hard-boiled sex worker in future Los Angeles. Before that there was her breakout in *Black Mirror*’s 2016



Clothing by  
**Valentino Haute  
Couture.**





Dress, boots, and hat by **Maison Margiela**  
Artisanal Designed  
by **John Galliano**;  
necklace by **Van Cleef**  
& **Arpels**.



Clothing by **CHANEL**  
Haute Couture.





episode "San Junipero," in which Davis and Gugu Mbatha-Raw played digital avatars falling in love in a spare near future. And before even that was Davis's turn as brilliant punk programmer Cameron Howe in AMC's *Halt and Catch Fire*. The series took place in the 1980s but commented on our current era of tech overlords while steeped in new wave hacker paranoia.

So the future-but-past has been where Davis thrives. She acknowledges the trend, though she says it seems far-fetched that casting directors would think of her while wondering to themselves who might fit that particularly narrow yet vague rubric.

"It looks like I have a real focus and interest in the '80s, and I imagine that if I unpacked the political ideas and cultural shifts that were going on, maybe that's true, there's a reason why I'm attracted to that," she says. "But I mean—who doesn't want to be in *Blade Runner*?"

Whatever the case, it is a niche with staying power in today's Hollywood, where intellectual property from the '80s still holds sway. Davis, a millennial, was born in the back half of the decade. But Hollywood keeps sending her back (or forward, to dark visions of the future as originally seen from the 1980s) anyway—and frequently, insistently, as a sensitive, vulnerable, defiant oracle, truth telling to the other characters, the audience, or anyone else who will listen.

Watching her in person and on-screen, it's not hard to see why. Slim, tall, and—especially when her hair's cut short—a little androgynous, Davis looks like the future—especially in contrast to the polyester and poofy hair of the '80s. When she's impassioned, conviction radiates from her, even as her wide eyes offer windows into her fears. She often looks like a woman who has seen too much, and her face is struggling to hold it all in, but something drives her to keep going too. If Davis showed up on your doorstep one day, holding a weapon and talking about Judgment Day, you'd believe her.

***Terminator: Dark Fate*** seeks to revive the franchise that began in 1984 with James Cameron and Gale Ann Hurd's apocalyptic romance *The Terminator*, a seminal piece of '80s action that Cameron conjured after a vision of a metal skeleton wreathed in flames came to him during a literal fever dream. The series peaked in 1991 with the

R-rated megahit *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* and then fell off into a strange twilight of spin-offs and timelines, culminating in 2015's ill-liked *Terminator: Genisys*. In 2017, Cameron retook creative control of the franchise as writer and producer.

Directed by Tim Miller, *Dark Fate* reunites Cameron, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Linda Hamilton for a film that is in the same timeline as the original two—except only kind of, because at the end of *Terminator 2*, Hamilton's Sarah Connor changed the future. The movie calls back to the potent core of the Terminator universe: humanity's fight to survive and the devastating technology that aims to annihilate it. The franchise has always pulsed with blood-and-chrome machismo, but the story's heart is a gooey, time-traveling romance. In a return to the series' feminist roots, *Dark Fate*'s humans are all women, and Grace is the first to be sent back in time in Terminator history. She's there to save a new character named Dani Ramos, played by Natalia Reyes. In the trailer's big fist-pump moment, Connor shows up, guns blazing, to rescue them from the new two-bodied Rev-9, played by Gabriel Luna.

"There were beautiful times shooting it where I was like, 'Is this an Andrea Arnold movie?'" Davis says. "This really *American Honey*-esque road movie of these three women traveling across great distances and learning about each other. I know that's not the pitch I'm supposed to use for *Terminator*, but it's what really appealed to me—and what's so special about the first two."

Grace is efficient, Davis says, laughing. "Focused. She's not, like, the comic relief." Though she's been enhanced, she's completely human, Davis says: "I'm sure everyone's going to love this analogy, but her cybernetic alterations—it's like having a boob job or something."

This is Davis's first foray into action, and she was unaccustomed to the training and physical toll of a day on set. Acting in short bursts—"You're just running somewhere and shouting a line"—threw off her sense of when a scene was working. She has a newfound appreciation for action heroes. "Bruce Willis is a *genius*," she says.

As a child, Davis liked theater for the attention—and the intimacy of a small group that sometimes got free pizza after school. Her parents, Lotte and John—who founded a hair-care company out of their basement a couple of years after she was born—supported her dream to

act, insisting only that she get a college education first. ("I've had a very easy road," Davis says.) As she grew as a performer, her focus shifted inward. "In a very selfish way," Davis says. "I just really like feeling emotion."

There were a few longer scenes in *Terminator: Dark Fate*, and Davis spent the shoot anticipating them: "Oh my God, we're going to talk in a hotel room all day long, I cannot wait."

The Terminator movies are always trying to outrun human history—human innovation, in the form of artificial intelligence, robotics, and Skynet. And it hasn't escaped Davis that 2019 is just a decade before the franchise's post-apocalyptic future, where beleaguered humans battle robots in a smoking nuclear wasteland. "We keep exploring the same themes over, and over, and over again, endlessly," Davis says. She loves science fiction, especially now that she's worked so much in the genre. But she wishes people engaged with its ideas a little more.

"It's so presumptuous and stupid that I want people to view movies as real cautionary tales," Davis adds. "But it is weird that we get so much entertainment out of these near-future disaster movies—and then don't learn anything."

She's cynical about humanity's ability to change, but she sees an upside to it too. As a woman in the film industry, she's made to constantly worry about her shelf life. We talk about other women in entertainment—like Hamilton ("such a queen," Davis says), who made headlines at Comic-Con for refusing to say some of Sarah Connor's scripted lines in *Dark Fate*, and Judi Dench, who this spring told an interviewer, "I take every job because I fear it will be my last." Davis has been mulling over what comes next for her, wondering if she needs to strike while the iron is hot. Then she gets some perspective.

"What does it matter?" she says. "The world is going to end in like 50 fucking years! Why don't you just go have fun, and don't worry about 'doing this correctly'?"

Davis has wound herself up again, and for a moment she's Grace, telling the present something it does not really want to hear, stricken by knowledge that is almost too difficult to bear. And then she settles down, and the future girl slips behind her façade, where she looks and acts just like everyone else.

"But I do care," she finishes, simply. "I don't know how to not care." ■



Dress, sandals, earrings,  
and veil and hat by  
**Dior Haute Couture.**

**Throughout:** hair  
products by **Living  
Proof**; makeup  
by **Bobbi Brown**; nail  
enamel by **CHANEL.**



**Elon Musk** promised that his \$5 billion gamble on solar energy would revolutionize the world. Instead it could bring down Tesla

# Goodbye Mr. Sunshine

by BETHANY McLEAN



**I**t was a Saturday night last March in Buffalo, and Dennis Scott was sitting at home. A stocky veteran with salt-and-pepper hair and a close-cropped beard, Scott had been laid off from Tesla's factory in Buffalo two months earlier as part of a global reduction in the company's workforce. Since then, he had taken to sending Elon Musk emails and point-blank tweets, describing the pain the layoffs were causing.

Ten days after Scott was let go, Musk had tweeted a goofy picture of himself posing with what looked like a machine

gun. Scott retweeted the image and called Musk a clown. "If I were CEO and someone told me my company wasn't working right," he explains, "I wouldn't be clowning around. I've got people counting on me for their livelihood."

Now, around 10 p.m., his phone rang. The call was from an unmarked number. Scott answered.

"It's the clown," the person at the other end informed him.

Scott, unfazed, figured that Musk must have gotten his number from the company. For the next 20 minutes, he recalls, he and his former employer had

a civil conversation. "When are you going to fix your company?" Scott asked.

Musk was pleasant but offered no specifics about the Buffalo plant. Scott continued to ask frank questions. "You took \$750 million from New York," he told Musk, referring to the taxpayer money that the state handed Tesla as part of its Buffalo Billion program to revitalize upstate New York. "You gave us hope that you were going to do something."

Musk's responses left Scott unimpressed. "Musk is a nice guy when you talk to him," he says. "But I think



he's full of shit. He'll tell you whatever you want to hear."

In public, Musk doesn't talk much about Tesla's factory in Buffalo—a place he once, in better times, dubbed Gigafactory 2. Gigafactory 1, of course, is Tesla's much-hyped futuristic electric car plant outside Reno. Gigafactory 2, which is shrouded in silence and secrets, was a controversial side venture: a high-stakes move to dominate America's growing market for solar energy. Tesla bought the factory's main tenant, SolarCity, for almost \$5 billion in 2016. The plan, in true Muskian hyperbole, was to turn the plant in Buffalo into what was billed as the largest manufacturing facility of its kind in the Western Hemisphere. SolarCity would build 10,000 solar panels per day and install them on homes and businesses across the country. In the process, it would create 5,000 jobs in an area that very much needed them. "This is one of the poorest cities in the country," Scott says. "You get a big company here, and it's a big deal."

From the outside, the sheer scale of the Buffalo plant sparkles with promise. At 1.2 million square feet, it stands at the point where the Buffalo River bends through the city. The building is gleaming white, as if to signify its freshness

amid a landscape of abandoned grain elevators and sprawling, desolate steel mills. The area around the factory is hardscrabble working class; until SolarCity was built, people only drove through it when the fierce wind off Lake Erie shut down the highway that residents take from the southern suburbs to downtown. Now three flags fly in front of the factory: those of the United States, New York State, and Tesla.

But three years after Tesla bought SolarCity, there are serious doubts as to whether the plant will ever fulfill its promises. The website CleanTechnica, which is mostly supportive of Musk, calls SolarCity "a disaster waiting to happen." A potentially costly lawsuit alleges that Tesla acquired SolarCity at the expense of its own shareholders. And former employees want to know what happened to the massive subsidy Tesla received. "New York State taxpayers deserved more from a \$750 million investment," a laid-off employee named Dale Witherell wrote to Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. "Tesla has done a tremendous job providing smoke and mirrors and empty promises to the area."

The controversy over SolarCity, which has dovetailed with questions about Musk's mountain of debt and

profit shortfalls, offers a window into the mind-set of America's most outlandish and unpredictable CEO. Musk's believers argue that the details of his ventures don't matter: It's the grand vision that counts. "The guy has a will to make stuff happen that is extraordinary," says someone who worked closely with Musk. "He willed Tesla to happen. And in willing a reality into existence, he might not stick to the facts." But in the case of SolarCity, Musk's penchant for making promises he can't deliver on turned out to matter a great deal—and could even pose a threat to his entire empire.

**W**hen Witherell got his job at the SolarCity plant last year, he was thrilled. He'd moved back to Buffalo, where his parents live, after a stint in Texas and a tough divorce. He has a disabled daughter, but even so, the job wasn't so much about the paycheck. "At some point push is going to come to shove in our world, and fossil fuel use is going to catch up with us," he says. "I believed in the product."

The plant, in fact, was a centerpiece of Governor Andrew Cuomo's grand plan to revitalize upstate New York. Buffalo's landscape offers a daily reminder of its past glory and present despair. The grain



elevators that Le Corbusier once called the “magnificent first fruits of the new age”—and which supplied the nation for half a century, before they were rendered irrelevant by the St. Lawrence Seaway—still loom over the horizon, too costly to demolish. The blackened shell of the warehouse at the old Bethlehem Steel complex, destroyed by fire a few years ago, punctuates the river like an angry exclamation point. Once one of the nation’s largest cities, Buffalo’s empty streets feel oddly discordant. “Here, if you have to sit through a traffic light even once, you have an aneurysm,” says Dave Robinson, an editor at the *Buffalo News*.

Now, under Cuomo’s plan, Buffalo’s massive steel plants would be replaced with the sun itself. In September 2014, the governor toured the SolarCity site. The smiles were big and the words were grand. The success of the plant, Cuomo proclaimed, was “of critical importance to the United States’ economic competitiveness and energy independence.”

SolarCity was founded by two of Musk’s cousins, Lyndon and Peter Rive, who grew up with him in South Africa. Musk, who put in \$10 million, was the largest shareholder and chairman of the board. The initial idea, the Rives explained, was not to be a manufacturer but rather to control the entire consumer experience of going solar, from sale to installation, thereby driving down costs. For a time, SolarCity was a hot stock, growing almost tenfold from its public offering in 2012 to its peak in early 2014.

As is common with Musk’s ventures, SolarCity professed to be focused on changing the world. “Everything was very motivational,” says a former executive. Some workers, taking the ethos to heart, sported SolarCity tattoos.

But the initial success of the company’s stock masked some difficult realities. SolarCity’s business model was to front the costs of installing solar panels and allow homeowners to pay over time, which created a constant need for cash. That required raising money from outside investors, often big banks, who were then entitled to the first chunk of

“  
In willing a  
reality into  
existence,” says  
a former insider,  
Musk “might  
not stick to the  
facts.”

the payments homeowners made—leaving SolarCity in a never-ending scramble to raise more debt. The real engineering that took place at SolarCity, in short, was financial, not environmental.

On the consumer side, SolarCity was plagued by complaints about misleading sales tactics and shoddy installations. As the problems mounted, some workers began to feel manipulated by the company’s talk about being a force for good in the world. “I turned a blind eye to a lot of the silliness because of the idealism,” says one former senior employee. “I don’t know when the Rubicon was crossed, but there were micro-crossings every day.”

By 2014, several insiders say, the board was also growing concerned. The company imported most of its solar panels from China, and it looked like demand would soon outpace supply. Because Musk had a reputation as a manufacturing genius, the board decided that SolarCity needed to start making its own panels—a huge shift in its business model. “Installing and selling solar has almost nothing to do with manufacturing,” says a former solar-industry executive. “It’s like a car dealer saying it’s going to make cars.”

In June 2014, SolarCity bought Silevo, a solar-panel manufacturer that had struck a deal with New York to build a factory in Buffalo. On a conference call, Musk boasted that the deal would enable SolarCity to install tens of gigawatts of panels every year—far beyond the company’s peak annual run rate of about one gigawatt. He spoke as if the technology were already proven. On its website, SolarCity predicted it would “achieve a breakthrough” in solar-power pricing thanks to “massive economies of scale.”

“It was shoot first and aim later,” says the former senior employee. “There was a lot of machismo going on: bigger, better, badder, faster.”

By the time Cuomo visited the site three months later, Silevo’s smallish deal had metastasized. The state promised to spend \$350 million to build a factory and another \$400 million on equipment specified by SolarCity. The company would get a 10-year lease on the facility—for just \$1 a year. In return, it promised to employ at least 1,460 people in “high-tech” jobs at the factory, hire another 2,000 to support the sale and installation of solar panels in New York, and help attract an additional 1,440 “support jobs” in the state. Once it achieved full production, the company pledged, it would spend some \$5 billion in New York over the following decade.

“It was sold as a perfect marriage,” says the former senior employee. “The area around the factory is terrible, and I remember thinking: Wow, we are going to save the town where steel was made.” Cuomo too was hooked. “He was enchanted with the idea of Elon Musk in Buffalo,” says a longtime lobbyist in Albany. “I think he actually thought Musk was the next Dalai Lama.”

**E**ven then, to those who looked closely, the cracks at SolarCity were becoming apparent. In 2014, key executives had started to leave. The Rives began to sell stock. SolarCity’s debt was soaring, and the yield on its bonds hit double digits, a sign that the market thought the company was in trouble. Goldman Sachs, one of Musk’s major bankers, called SolarCity the “worst positioned” company for capitalizing on future growth in the solar sector. One of the few things shoring up the company’s stock, according to a former investor, were the constant rumors that Musk was somehow going to bail it out.

In reality, the situation was even uglier than outsiders knew. As SolarCity struggled to raise money from institutional investors, it began offering individuals a chance to buy what it called Solar Bonds. (“Now you can get paid while driving the solar revolution,” the marketing material said.) But there were few takers—so other parts of the Musk empire took up the slack. According to the shareholder lawsuit, SpaceX acquired \$255 million of the bonds. Musk himself bought \$75 million

#### WHERE THE SUN DON'T SHINE

Tesla promised to create 1,460 jobs at its solar factory in Buffalo. It currently employs only 329.

of them, and the Rives acquired another \$38 million. To raise the cash, Musk borrowed against both Tesla and SolarCity stock, increasing his personal credit lines from \$85 million to \$475 million. He also used his own reputation to shore up the stock: In February 2016, when SolarCity stock plunged to its lowest level in three years, Musk bought \$10 million in shares. A week later, when the news became public, the stock soared by almost 25 percent.

At the same time, according to the shareholder lawsuit against Tesla, the company faced “significant liquidity concerns”—meaning it was running out of money. An accounting inquiry from the SEC noted that SolarCity was burning through cash—\$659 million in the first quarter of 2016 alone. That February, at a Tesla board meeting, Musk proposed a solution: Tesla, he said, should acquire SolarCity.

The board balked. But Musk kept pushing. Two weeks later, he proposed the acquisition again. Once again, the board said no.

It was a hopelessly conflicted situation. Musk owned more than 20 percent of both SolarCity and Tesla. His brother, Kimbal, served on both boards, as did several investors, including Antonio Gracias, a close friend of Musk’s. As a judge in the shareholder lawsuit ruled, it is “reasonably conceivable” that Musk effectively controlled the Tesla board when he pushed it to acquire SolarCity. (Tesla, which has dismissed the allegations in the lawsuit as false, insists that “all appropriate parties” recused themselves during the acquisition.)

At the time, Musk was still a heroic figure to many. As former Tesla board member Nancy Pfund once said, “He’s always been a master of the universe in my mind.” Even Tesla skeptics admit that the Model S, which was launched in 2012, will go down in history as an absolute classic, followed by the equally celebrated Model X in 2015. In those days, Tesla’s stock was trading at well over \$200 a share, giving it a market value of more than \$30 billion, a stunning figure for a company that hadn’t proven it could make money.

But over the years, many skeptics have come to see Musk’s stunts—from smoking pot during an interview to calling a diver who helped rescue kids trapped in a Thailand cave a “pedo guy”—as more unhinged than iconoclastic. One close observer of Musk recalls how he

promised, back in 2001, to give away half of his equity in PayPal—dividing it evenly between “the people that have worked hard to build the company” and “causes I believe make the world a better place.” But Musk never made good on the pledge, and the observer came to see the episode as “symbolic of Musk’s penchant for making grandiose statements that he either knows are not true at the time he makes them, or that he has no real intent of following through on.” Others see Musk’s promises as purposefully manipulative. “Musk has a habit of overstating Tesla’s operational capabilities and its prospects for profitability, especially when the company is preparing to raise capital, collect customer deposits, or secure regulatory benefits,” says Brian Horey of Aurelian Partners, an investment firm.

Now the brewing problems at SolarCity threatened to give skeptics real ammunition against Musk—unless those problems could be buried. In May 2016, the Tesla board finally agreed to acquire the company for almost \$5 billion, including the assumption of nearly \$3 billion in SolarCity debt. On a conference call on June 22, the day after the deal was publicly announced, Musk told analysts and investors that the company had “the best technology out there for high-efficiency, low-cost solar panels.” He didn’t say anything about the liquidity crisis at SolarCity. Nor did he mention something else that shareholders allege the Tesla board came to learn as it did its due diligence on SolarCity: The cost per watt of solar modules being produced in Buffalo was actually projected to be 20 cents *above* the rest of the industry.

On October 28, 2016, just before shareholders were set to vote on the acquisition

of SolarCity, Musk strode onto a platform erected on the set of *Desperate Housewives* at Universal Studios’ back lot in Los Angeles. He talked about the existential threat presented by global warming and the desperate need for sustainable energy. Then he gestured to a group of houses that had been set up around him. They might look normal, he said, but they actually featured a revolutionary new product called the Solar Roof—shingles that would last longer and cost less than a regular roof, even before factoring in electricity. Tesla expected production to begin the following summer.

The next month, shareholders approved Tesla’s acquisition of SolarCity. “Vote tally shows ~85% of unaffiliated shareholders in favor of the Tesla/SolarCity merger!” Musk tweeted. The deal doubled Tesla’s debt load, but it was good for Musk, who converted his stake in SolarCity into more than \$500 million in Tesla stock. By preventing SolarCity from collapsing, he also shored up his most valuable asset: investor faith in his own genius. If any piece of his empire had faltered—if Musk were shown to be fallible rather than superhuman—it would have cast doubt on the narrative that enables him to raise cheap capital for his money-losing enterprises.

“Thanks for believing,” Musk tweeted to his shareholders.

**T**hat October, as Musk was making his pitch about the Solar Roof, a former *Fortune* 500 executive was watching it online at a friend’s barbecue. The former executive, who had spent years researching solar technology, understood what it took to make the Solar Roof work—and he was confident that Musk hadn’t figured it out. “He spewed total BS,” says the executive, who asked not to be identified. “I was flabbergasted. I was convinced in the moment that the shingles were fake.”

Adopting the Twitter handle @TeslaCharts, the executive began drawing on his Ph.D. in science, and his background as a financial analyst, to share infographics that detailed Musk’s overreach. His follower count mushroomed, and he became a core member of a group of outspoken Tesla critics who go by the Twitter hashtag #TSLAQ—Tesla’s stock symbol followed by the Q that companies pick up when they are delisted due to bankruptcy.

“  
He spewed  
**total BS,**” says a  
solar expert who  
watched Musk’s  
presentation to  
investors. “I was  
**flabbergasted.**”



**NOT SO BRIGHT**

Governor Andrew Cuomo [top left] “actually thought Musk was the next Dalai Lama,” says an Albany lobbyist. SolarCity panels [top right] being installed in New Jersey, and the new Solar Roof [bottom] touted by Musk.



Many of them, in fact, were first drawn to Tesla by SolarCity, with its pile of debt and mountain of losses. “If it weren’t for SolarCity, #TSLAQ wouldn’t exist,” says @TeslaCharts. He points out that Musk faced a catch-22 of sorts: If he hadn’t bailed out SolarCity, his whole debt-laden empire might have cracked. Yet without the bailout, Tesla would be far more healthy. “When the history of Tesla is written,” he says, “the acquisition of SolarCity will be seen as the moment where the narrative took a decisive turn.”

Others shared @TeslaCharts’ suspicions about Solar Roof. Robinson, who covers SolarCity for the *Buffalo News*, had flown to Los Angeles for Musk’s presentation. Afterward, he asked an engineer for the company if the tiles Musk had pointed to were real. “Oh no,” the engineer replied. “These are dummies. We just popped them up here to show you.” Robinson wasn’t outraged—it made sense that Musk would show a prototype—but he took note of the contrast between the rhetoric and the reality. “They made it sound like they had figured out how to get it to work,” he says.

And Tesla continued to make it sound that way. In early 2018, the company announced that production of the Solar Roof had begun in Buffalo. That fall, Tesla told Bloomberg News it was “gearing up for tremendous growth in 2019. We have a product, we have the customers, we are just ramping it up to a point where it is sustainable.”

But a few months later, in its quarterly letter, Tesla confessed that the product wasn’t actually ready yet. “We continue to iterate,” the company wrote. In a legal filing, Tesla acknowledged that the much-hyped technology it had acquired from Silevo wasn’t all that it was cracked up to be. And last May, an investigation by Reuters revealed that most of the solar cells being produced in Buffalo were being sold overseas, not used in the Solar Roof, because demand was so low.



Customers who tried to purchase a Solar Roof took to Twitter to share their horror stories: Kevin Pereau, a California homeowner, said he paid a deposit of \$2,000 to have a Solar Roof installed more than two years ago—then never heard from the company again. He got his money back only after he started tweeting at Musk every single day.

Musk, meanwhile, is still making promises. Last March, he proclaimed that 2019 would be the “year of the Solar Roof.” In late July, he tweeted that Tesla is “hoping” to turn out 1,000 Solar Roofs a week by the end of the year. But even onetime believers have become doubters. The *MIT Technology Review*, which included the Solar Roof in its list of 10 “breakthrough technologies” in 2016, now calls it a “flop.” In a recent analyst note, JP Morgan warned that Solar Roof will be a “niche” product at best. Musk has “sustained a kind of Kabuki theater

in which the Solar Roof ramp is always imminent, but never here,” wrote investor John Engle, a #TSLAQ member.

Another #TSLAQ member, a Yale-trained lawyer and investment manager named Lawrence Fossi, made a discovery while combing through SolarCity’s financial statements. Without fanfare—and with no input from constituents—state officials had quietly issued a series of 10 amendments that watered down the requirements SolarCity must meet in exchange for the \$1 lease on the Buffalo factory. The 1,460 “high-tech” jobs at the factory became just plain old jobs, as did the 2,000 jobs to support solar sales and installation in New York. The agreement to employ 900 people at the factory within two years shrank to 500. And the timing for the additional jobs was extended to 10 years after the factory was completed—at which point the lease would also be expiring. CONTINUED ON PAGE 115

## Slave Revolt



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 96 assemble for the first time only a few weeks before the event; as he explained, “The less it is a Dread Scott project, the better.”

His ideal spectator is a commuter glimpsing the marchers from a car and thinking, “These people look like they’re getting free. Others, no doubt, will see something more provoking—black people with weapons. The reenactment will take place in a state where the majority of white voters in the 1990s supported former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke in his bids to become senator and governor. It will end in a city where in 2016, arsonists firebombed the Lamborghini of a contractor hired to remove Confederate statues.

Scott is quick to say that his march is a performance, not a protest. But he knows that in a post-Charlottesville America, he cannot assume that every spectator will appreciate the difference. The artist stressed that he is taking precautions to ensure the safety of participants, working to secure police protection and official permits from the parishes the reenactors will pass through. There will be animal-drawn wagons for weary marchers, medical staff standing by, and cameras following the procession. Before the event, town-hall outreach sessions will allow River Parish residents to voice objections. Scott is confident that the dangers can be minimized.

Nevertheless, we seem to live in a nation increasingly unable to discern the line between representation and reality, a country where police saw Tamir Rice, a 12-year-old black boy playing with a toy gun in Cleveland, and shot him to death. Can it be trusted to let hundreds of black marchers play-act one of the most deep-seated nightmares of the American imagination? “I’m more concerned if we don’t do this than if we do,” Scott told me. “Artwork is not going to prevent another Tamir Rice. But without art and activism talking about freedom and emancipation from white supremacy, the status quo that is grinding up people’s lives will continue.”

**Deslondes’s rebels** came from a myriad of African nations; Scott’s represent a similar diversity of organizations in New Orleans’s arts, activist, and academic communities. I met several of them for a costume fitting at Antenna, a nonprofit gallery and arts space

on St. Claude Avenue in the Bywater that is helping to sponsor the reenactment. The gathering had the casually energized atmosphere of a campaign office. Scott circled the room taking pictures, wearing an 1811 New Orleans team tee designed for the project’s Kickstarter campaign. (The bulk of the budget will be supplied by grants from philanthropic nonprofits including the Open Society Foundations, the MAP Fund, VIA Art Fund, and A Blade of Grass.) Someone remarked that the outfits, researched by Scott’s costumers at the nonprofit RicRack Nola, seemed too upmarket for the enslaved. Should they even be wearing shoes? Scott demurred. Enslaved people, he said, were the country’s most valuable asset class; if you drive a Mercedes, you’re not going to ruin its treads. “Besides,” he added for good measure, “I’m sure they picked up some nice swag at the plantations they pillaged.”

Denise Frazier, a Tulane music scholar and assistant director of the New Orleans Center for the Gulf South, posed with a machete in a red head wrap and blue-striped chintz dress. The rebellion’s community outreach director, Malcolm Suber—a veteran academic, labor activist, and national figure in the Take Em Down NOLA campaign against monuments to slaveholders and segregationists—stood like da Vinci’s Vitruvian Man for the seamstress. In another corner of the room sat Imani Jacqueline Brown, at the time director of programs at Antenna. She compared Scott’s rebellion to “a spark in the wind setting little fires across the city.” All year long, sewing circles have been finishing costumes; volunteers have included everyone from retired nurses to undergraduates at Xavier University of Louisiana, where Ron Bechet, an artist and professor, is teaching a course on the uprising.

One of the first people Scott sought out in the city was Leon Waters, a local historian, docent, and activist who is also something like the chief archivist of the 1811 revolt. A New Orleans native and firebrand community advocate, Waters, in 1996, helped research and publish *On to New Orleans!*, the first book on the uprising. He also established Hidden History, an alternative tour company that he conceived after encountering—and picketing—a “slave exchange restaurant” in the French Quarter, where patrons ate their gumbo under whips and chains.

Sick of the opportunists who treat black history as a “stolen commodity,” Waters began leading tours on the rebellion and organizing commemorative annual marches in public schools. Those processions stopped after Hurricane Katrina, but Waters hopes that Scott’s reenactment might revive interest. It would be a bright spot in what Waters considers a shameful record of public history in New Orleans, marred by romanticism and distortion. “We want a much more scientific story,” he told me. “A

story about our resistance and a story that we’re still resisting oppression today.”

**In many ways**, the black American story—and slavery in particular—has never been more visible. A wave of films, books, television shows, prominent artworks, and ever-grander public institutions testify to a heritage regained: Maryland’s 125-mile Harriet Tubman Scenic Byway; Montgomery, Alabama’s National Memorial for Peace and Justice; and a runaway trend of fugitive-slave novels, from Colson Whitehead’s award-winning *The Underground Railroad*—soon to be adapted for television by Barry Jenkins—to Ta-Nehisi Coates’s *The Water Dancer* and Esi Edugyan’s Man Booker Prize-nominated *Washington Black*. Slavery remembrance has swelled to the dimensions of a civic religion. In the ziggurat-like National Museum of African American History and Culture, iron ballast bars from slave ships are enshrined like fragments of the true cross, while the recently discovered wreck of the *Clotilda*—America’s last slave ship—has prompted hopes for an Africatown, Alabama, tourist site on the order of colonial Jamestown.

Are these stirrings of a consequential reckoning or empty remnants of the Obama era’s Pyrrhic cultural victory? All the commemoration in the world won’t stop police shootings, pay reparations for slavery, or free today’s fugitive families from ICE detention. Symbolic change is not only untethered from lasting political power but evanescent in itself, like the Harriet Tubman 20-dollar bill recently “postponed” by the Trump Treasury. If she did appear on this America’s currency, who’s to say it wouldn’t be meaningless? After all, what use is a black Smithsonian on the National Mall with a white nationalist in the Oval Office?

There is, of course, a chancy alchemy by which cultural recognition really can change political reality. In June, when a congressional committee met to discuss reparations for slavery, one witness was Coates, whose 2014 essay “The Case for Reparations” brought the question into the political mainstream. The bill they considered cited not only scholarship but “popular culture markers” as evidence of the widely felt need to make amends.

Dread Scott’s *Slave Rebellion Reenactment* embodies a similar impulse, but the change it envisions is less concerned with society’s top-down moral repair than its radical reconstitution. A chimerical combination of artwork, community organizing, and protest, it resurrects the past to further egalitarian change in the present. What’s singular is that it is neither a solemn penance for American slavery nor a premature commemoration of achieved racial justice. Instead, Scott asks us to look upon an Army of the Enslaved that marched for freedom—against the United States—and celebrate their victory. What else could we imagine if we could imagine that? ■

## Imran Khan



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 91 hatred of the “ruling elite,” to which he belongs, is the animating force behind his politics. He faults reformers, such as Turkey’s Kemal Atatürk and Iran’s Reza Shah Pahlavi, for falsely believing that “by imposing the outward manifestations of Westernization they could catapult their countries forward by decades.”

Khan may be right to critique a modernity so thin that it has come to be synonymous with the outward trappings of Western culture. But he is himself guilty of reducing the West to little more than permissiveness and materialism. When it comes to its indisputable achievements, such as democracy and the welfare state, Khan conveniently grafts them on to the history of Islam. “Democratic principles,” he writes, “were an inherent part of Islamic society during the golden age of Islam, from the passing of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and under the first four caliphs.”

Khan is not the first Islamic leader to insist that all good things flow from Islam and that all error is the fault of the West. But to do so is to end up with a political program that is by necessity negative, deriving its energy not from what it has to offer but from its virulent critique of late-stage capitalism. “The life that had come to Islam,” V.S. Naipaul wrote almost 40 years ago in *Among the Believers*, for which he traveled extensively in Pakistan, “had not come from within. It had come from outside events and circumstances, the spread of the universal civilization.” Khan’s repurposing of Iqbal serves in part as an inoculation against the West, and in part as a cudgel with which to beat Pakistan’s elite. But it does not amount to a serious reckoning with the power of the West, or with the limitations of one’s own society. As such, it cannot bring about the “cultural, intellectual, and moral renaissance” that Khan yearns for. Under his version of *khudi*, people genuflect toward Islam but quietly continue to lead secret Western lives.

**“Six grams?”** I asked Reham Khan in disbelief. “He couldn’t have been doing six grams a day. He would be dead, right?”

It was a bright blue day at the Ivy brasserie on Kensington High Street in London, and Khan’s ex-wife was wearing a black

polo-neck blouse and gold necklace. Their brief and calamitous marriage ended after only 10 months, with Reham writing an explosive tell-all book in which she accused Khan of everything from bisexuality and infidelity to a daily intake of cocaine large enough to kill a baby elephant.

“There would be three sachets in the drawer on a regular basis,” Reham insisted. “Within each sachet would be like three candy—you know, like in old times we used to have those twisted type candies.” She then went on to describe her ex-husband’s ecstasy consumption. “Half an ecstasy every night with the coke,” she said. “And before speeches, he would take a full ecstasy tablet.”

Reham’s book is too much an act of revenge to be taken at face value. But even as an exaggerated version of reality, it reflects Khan’s years in the political wilderness—a bleak, solitary time, confirmed by multiple sources, in which the aging celebrity turned to drugs out of loneliness and desperation. “That’s the dark side of his life,” one of Pakistan’s senior-most columnists told me. “He wanted to get rid of all these shady friends. Now I’m told that they’re not allowed to enter his house.” The columnist, who had grown up with Khan, recalls him as a troubled young man. On one occasion, Khan was riding pillion on a bike with the columnist’s younger brother, when he saw his father in a car with another woman. “Follow the car,” Khan said. “I want to kill the bastard.”

Khan is often compared to Trump, but the politician he most resembles is Bill Clinton. According to Reham’s book, Khan’s father, a civil engineer, was a womanizing drunk who beat his mother. And as a celebrity and politician, Khan was never averse to using his position to add to his sexual conquests. “He’s a nymphomaniac,” someone who has known Khan for years told me in a Lahore coffee shop. “At fund-raisers in America, one of his stooges used to walk behind him. Khan would take a picture with some woman, and if she was hot, he’d tell this guy, and that guy would come and say, ‘Madam, is it possible to meet afterward? What’s your number?’ He would just collect phone numbers.”

The conflation of virility with political power is as old as Islam itself; Khan likes to compare his pleasure seeking with that of Muhammad bin Qasim, the eighth-century conqueror of Sindh. But if the prophet himself, who displayed a healthy sexual appetite, made his example one that all men could follow, Khan is very much a law unto himself. In a society as repressed as Pakistan’s, where normal urges can turn corrosive, Khan makes no allowances for others to enjoy the pleasures in which he has indulged so conspicuously. As such, he

cannot escape the charge his former associate leveled against him: “He encapsulates all the double standards that Pakistan has.”

Indeed, Khan’s faith appears to be rooted more in superstition than in what we normally think of as religious faith. What he describes in his autobiography as “spiritual” experiences would be familiar to any parlor-room psychic—a *pir* telling his mother that he will go on to be a household name, a holy man who somehow knows how many sisters Khan has and what their names are. In practicing a form of Islam that flirts with *shirk*, or idolatry, Khan recently found himself the subject of a viral video, in which he is seen prostrating himself at the shrine of a Sufi mystic. (It is forbidden in Islam to prostrate oneself before anyone but Allah.) “His knowledge of Islam is extremely limited,” Reham told me. “With the magic thing, people will think less of him.”

A veteran journalist recently reported that Khan’s marriage to Maneka is in trouble, and a message making the rounds on WhatsApp alleges that she stormed out after she caught him exchanging sexts with a junior minister. In response, Khan issued a statement that he will stay with Maneka “until my last breath.” (As the saying goes, “Never believe a rumor until you hear it officially denied.”) The clairvoyant, wearing a white veil, issued a message of her own, one couched in the prophetic imperative employed by strongmen everywhere. “Only Imran Khan can bring change in Pakistan,” she said, “but change requires time.”

**During our drive** together in 2008, Khan spoke of how faith protected him from selling out his principles. Today, former supporters accuse him of the ultimate compromise. “He’s a stooge of the army,” a journalist in Islamabad told me. The journalist, who has known Khan for years, once counted himself among the cricketer’s greatest fans. “I consider myself to be that unlucky person who built a dream about an individual and saw it shattered before my eyes,” he said.

In 2013, after years of military rule, Pakistan finally achieved what it never had before: a peaceful transfer of power. These signs of a maturing democracy, however, posed a direct threat to the power of the military, which began, in the words of Husain Haqqani, Pakistan’s former ambassador to the United States, to develop the art of the “non-coup coup.” That, the journalist said, is “where the unholy alliance between Imran Khan and the establishment began.” The following year, Khan led what are called the *dharna* days—months of protest calling for the overthrow of Pakistan’s democratically elected government.

Farhan Virk, a young medical student, was there for the *dharna* days. One night,

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## Imran Khan

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in August 2014, there was a crackdown against the protesters. “In front of my eyes,” Virk told me via Skype, “the government was firing tear-gas shells and rubber bullets.” Most of the protesters managed to flee. “But Imran Khan, who was merely a cricketer, was still standing there,” Virk recalled. “I thought, if under these terrible conditions, he can remain here, then it really means something.” Finding himself “radicalized” by the crackdown, and by Khan’s display of personal courage, Virk became a *yuthiya*—one of the rabid Khan supporters, active on social media, who are roughly comparable to Trump’s army of internet trolls.

Whatever else can be said about Khan, he inspires hope the likes of which Pakistan has not known for a long time. Attiya Noon, an interior designer, was seven months pregnant when she went to see Khan speak at the Minar-e-Pakistan monument in 2011—widely regarded as the moment when Khan became a credible political choice. “Up until that point,” Noon said, “we had no hope in the system. We all felt that this guy means well, but he’s not going to get anywhere.” Noon recalls the rally as electrifying, with its songs and slogans and the *yuthiyas* with their faces painted in PTI greens and reds. In a country where politics had for so long been the preserve of a feudal class and the rural poor, this was a new kind of politics, with a new constituency located within a nascent urban middle class. “It was such a festive atmosphere,” Noon said. “There were people from all walks of life—society aunties, groups of boys and girls together. People were pressed on people, but there was no pushing, no shoving. Everyone was really respectful.” The event confirmed Noon as something of a Khan political groupie; ever since, she has followed him from rally to rally.

The zealous support of followers like Noon is both a source of Khan’s power and a comfort to the military. “From the generals’ point of view, things could not be better,” observed Haqqani, the former ambassador. “They have an ostensibly civilian government in place, which can get the blame for Pakistan’s myriad problems, while the generals run the government.” Khan has called out the army on its support of terrorist groups and was nothing short of statesmanlike earlier this year in calming tensions between India and Pakistan. In late July, Khan scored another coup during a White House meeting with Trump. The dynamic between the two philandering narcissists was positively electric. Trump called Khan a “great leader”—his highest praise—and offered to serve as a mediator

over the contested state of Kashmir. The remark set off a furor in India, which has since stripped Kashmir of its autonomy and flooded the region with troops, further escalating tensions.

The greatest challenge of Khan’s tenure, however, is whether he can find a way to get his debt-ridden country out of the doldrums of economic despair. As his government gets ready to accept a \$6 billion bailout from the I.M.F.—an organization to which, with characteristic imperiousness, Khan had refused to go “begging”—the only subject on anybody’s lips is the massive inflation on daily goods such as petrol, sugar, and butter that has accompanied a rupee in free fall. As I was leaving Islamabad, Khan was getting ready to sack his finance minister, part of a sweeping cabinet reshuffle.

**In an age** of majoritarian grievance, Khan has joined the pantheon of populist leaders around the world whom people look to as saviors. “These leaders,” Mohsin Hamid told me, “are the versions of ourselves we would like to believe in.” When I asked him about Khan’s future, the writer made what felt like a prescient remark. “The pattern we see again and again,” Hamid said, “is the rise of the charismatic leader who thinks he knows best—even better than the military—and then is undone by the military.”

In 1981, Naipaul wrote of Pakistan, “The state withered. But faith didn’t. Failure only led back to the faith.” Now, almost 40 years later, Imran Khan is once again making the case for a society founded on the principles of the Koran. But religion, far from being the solution to Pakistan’s problems, appears to be an impediment to a society struggling to make its peace with modern realities. The country that banned pornography in the name of faith also happens to be among its most voracious consumers; gay dating apps like Grindr flourish, but homosexuality is on paper punishable by death; Pakistan is dry, but behind closed doors its elite consume great quantities of alcohol and cocaine. In such a place, it is but a short step from distorted individual realities to a distorted collective one. To visit Pakistan is to inhabit an alternate reality; the great majority of people I spoke with, from Lahore drawing rooms to the street, believe that 9/11 was an American conspiracy. Imran Khan, with his experience of the world beyond, does not clarify reality in Pakistan, but rather adds to the fog with Jekyll and Hyde confusions of his own.

I asked Zafar, the pop star, about his friend’s internal contradictions. “I think the effort to understand and balance the East and West is a colossal challenge,” he said. The night before, Zafar had led me by the hand to a Buddha tree in his garden, from which a Chinese wind chime hung.

He struck the chime and asked me to listen to its reverberations. He wanted me, I suppose, to see that the key to understanding Khan lies in the spiritual journey he had undertaken—that it is in faith that the many people Khan had carried within him all his life would be subsumed.

In an important passage in his autobiography, Khan, in explaining his failure to adhere to the religion his mother wanted him to follow, writes that she “had no way of really comprehending the impact of the competing cultural forces in my life.” Like so many people who have lived across diverse cultures, Khan seems to have found no internal resolution to these competing forces. Instead, he decided to kill off the man he had been in the West. As someone who was once close to him told me, Khan has cut off all contact with members of the “old guard” after this “latest, very weird marriage.”

Submission—which is, of course, the literal meaning of “Islam”—is the word that Zafar uses to describe Bushra Maneka’s appeal for Khan. We were sitting in the pop star’s man cave, full of trophies and framed magazine covers. A sign on the wall read, “Old cowboys never die, they just smell that way.” Zafar brought up the one Khan trait that even his worst enemies don’t begrudge him: He never gives up. He recalled visiting Khan in the hospital in 2013, after his friend had fallen 20 feet during an election rally and injured his back. A TV in the room was broadcasting a cricket match, which Pakistan was losing badly. Bedridden, Khan flicked a cricket ball from hand to hand, as if reliving the anxiety of captaining the team. “We can win,” the man still known in Pakistan as *kaptaan* kept insisting, right up until the match’s final moment. “We can still win.” Khan exuded power and resolve; but, as Zafar said, even the most powerful men have a vulnerable side, “a child inside you, who is wanting to be nurtured and be taken care of.” That was what Maneka provided Khan, in the midst of his campaign to become prime minister.

“Imagine 22 years of struggle,” Zafar said, “and you’ve got this election coming. And if it’s not this, then you don’t know....” His voice trailed off. “I think she gave him that surety, which he needed, and also that warmth. I think he submitted himself to her.”

The last time the two men saw each other was at a fund-raiser. Onstage, Khan asked Zafar what he was doing with his life these days. “I’m studying Rumi,” the pop star said. “I’m digging deeper into the spiritual aspect of things. I’m swimming in that sea.”

“Let me tell you something,” replied the future prime minister of Pakistan, the man whom destiny had appointed once again to captain his country. “*This*—what you’re looking for—is the only thing there is.” ■

## Elon Musk



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 111 (Tesla argues that the company is now responsible for all 5,000 jobs, instead of being able to fulfill them through suppliers.) The governor's office declined to comment on who authorized the changes, and state officials have yet to provide any public explanation as to why they opted to let a big corporation like Tesla off the hook.

In fact, the Buffalo deal turned out to have been tainted by corruption from the very start. Just one day after Tesla finalized its acquisition of SolarCity, Preet Bharara, then the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced criminal charges against a handful of Cuomo staffers for rigging the construction bids for the Buffalo Billion program to favor the governor's campaign donors. The man tapped by Cuomo to oversee the taxpayer subsidies, as well as a leading donor who received a \$225 million contract to build out the Buffalo factory, were both convicted last year of conspiring to rig the bids.

Lyndon and Peter Rive have both left SolarCity, and the company's original business of installing solar roofs has all but evaporated. The company once controlled two-thirds of the residential market; now, according to the consulting firm Wood Mackenzie, its share is less than 7 percent. In the second quarter of this year, SolarCity installed only 29 megawatts of solar panels—far below the 10,000 megawatts in annual installations that Musk had promised. “Total implosion” is how one SolarCity insider describes it.

**Across the street** from the factory in Buffalo stands a small building that houses a coffee shop and an office space. Both were built to cater to the plant, says Robinson, the *Buffalo*

*News* editor. The coffee shop is surviving, but the office space is vacant. What few jobs do exist at SolarCity barely compete with the local grocery store. “For \$750 million, we’re getting jobs that pay \$2 an hour more than Aldi’s,” says Robinson.

In a statement to *Vanity Fair*, Tesla argues that its jobs in Buffalo are competitive, especially when benefits and equity are factored in. It says it has expanded its operations at the factory to include “some of our most innovative and pioneering products.” And it accuses the magazine of presenting a “one-sided view with cherry-picked sourcing aimed at feeding into the fear, uncertainty, and doubt being circulated about Tesla every day by those looking to gain from Tesla’s losses.”

But the level of secrecy surrounding the SolarCity plant may offer an additional indication of how bad things are. Tesla refused to allow me to take a tour, and former employees say a rare media event at the factory last fall was highly scripted. “They spent more time and resources trying to fabricate what people saw than they do making anything,” says Witherell, who worked there at the time. “They told employees to pretend we were busy.” A story aired last February by *News 4 Buffalo* described the shop floor as “torpid,” with idle employees milling about. “They say they are in ‘ramp up’ mode,” says Scott, the former employee. “But this isn’t even start-up mode. What company spends two and a half years starting up something they were already supposed to be the best at?”

Last April, not long after he placed his late-night call to Scott, Elon Musk finally paid his first-ever visit to Buffalo. There was no press release, no triumphant post on social media, no meeting with reporters. Local authorities were in the midst of performing the genuine engineering feat of dismantling what’s known as the “ice boom”—hundreds of steel pontoons, spanning over a mile and a half, that keep the massive amounts of ice on Lake Erie from floating down the Niagara River and jamming up hydropower turbines. After the visit, Musk continued his upbeat assessment of production. “We are looking forward to scaling up significantly through the balance of this year and into next,” he said.

Musk’s other proclamations in recent months have been far grander. He has

promised that by next year, Tesla will be producing self-driving cars—and deploying a fleet of 1 million robotaxis. He has claimed that Neuralink, his secretive start-up, has developed a “thread” that can be inserted into the human brain, merging our minds with artificial intelligence. And he is seeking approval to build an underground “hyperloop” that will whisk passengers between Washington, D.C., and Baltimore in 15 minutes.

When Tesla bought SolarCity, it said the deal would “add more than half a billion dollars in cash to Tesla’s balance sheet over the next three years.” But it appears to have had the opposite effect. “I think it’s a big source of the cash-flow deficit,” says one longtime analyst. “I think it is a big thorn inside of Tesla.” The company has paid back some of SolarCity’s debt, including the Solar Bonds owed to Musk and SpaceX. But this fall, another \$556 million is coming due. In a characteristic tweet, Musk once vowed he would “personally” repay the SolarCity debt if need be.

There may be another cost. By next April, Tesla is required to start paying an annual fine of \$41.2 million if it fails to employ 1,460 people at the Buffalo plant. Tesla says it currently has 636 employees statewide in New York, including 329 at the plant, and that it has invested almost \$400 million in New York. Engle, the TSLAQ member, argues that Tesla cannot afford to admit that SolarCity has been a fiasco, because doing so would open the company to significant liability in the ongoing lawsuit over the acquisition.

Officials in New York, meanwhile, appear to be taking belated steps to document what is really happening in Buffalo. Last spring, the state announced that it was auditing all of its high-tech programs, with a focus on Tesla. Everyone in Albany, says the longtime lobbyist, has accepted that the Buffalo plant is a “disaster”—a poster child for why government giveaways to big companies don’t work.

But the official who took credit for the deal with Tesla—the man who championed the company as a Rust Belt savior—stands by his decision to place his trust in Elon Musk. Governor Cuomo, who paid his own visit to Buffalo last spring, declared that he’s perfectly pleased with the progress at SolarCity. “They’re ahead of schedule,” he said. ■

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# The Vanity Fair Edit

## BEAT OUTDOOR GEAR



Be unique. Be exciting. Don't let your activewear hold you back. Beat Outdoor Gear offers multi-purpose activewear that reflects a sense of empowerment, creativity and movement. Pictured here is their Meg High Waist leggings. Visit [beatoutdoorgear.com](http://beatoutdoorgear.com) [IG] [@beatoutdoorgear](https://www.instagram.com/beatoutdoorgear)

## TAMAR KATE



Eco-friendly brand TAMAR KATE is designed and manufactured in Vancouver, Canada. Each piece is made from organic fabrics and is designed for a relaxed and effortlessly stylish fit. Pioneering slow fashion, TK is about things that last and maintains an uncompromising commitment to the highest standards both in fabric quality and craftsmanship. Their fabrics are not only good for you, but good for the planet. Visit [tamarkate.com](http://tamarkate.com) [IG] [@tamarkate](https://www.instagram.com/tamarkate)

## SEBASTIEN AMI



SEBASTIEN AMI generates an artistic approach of storytelling through textile selection and construction – creating timeless design with a traditional outlook of an heirloom. THE NORAGI TUXEDO SHIRT demonstrates the classic blend of formal European shirting with traditional Japanese workwear. Visit [sebastienami.com](http://sebastienami.com) [IG] [@sebastienami](https://www.instagram.com/sebastienami)

## MICHELE TARAS ART APPAREL



Michele Taras Art Apparel is limited edition, luxury athletic wear and Cocktail dresses inspired by art and designed for comfort. Michele Taras also creates hand-painted, one-of-a-kind pieces on up-cycled denim. Available by private order. MUAH : Lisa Arsenault. Visit [micheletaras.com](http://micheletaras.com) IG [@michele\\_taras](https://www.instagram.com/michele_taras)

## MARIN & MILOU



Immerse yourself in a world inspired by the maritime flair of the French Riviera and cosy, winter weekends in the Swiss Alps. Discover unusual pieces made of unique luxury designs with flattering styles and radiant colours rendering you the centre of attention at any event. Whether you're paying a visit to a ski lodge in St. Moritz or attending a cocktail party in Cannes, Marin & Milou are the first stop for the sophisticated jet-setter. Catch wanderlust at [marin-milou.com](http://marin-milou.com)

## JENAH ST.



High-performance vegan leather meets Italian luxury for a cleaner and cruelty-free industry. Jenah St. cultivates a "consume less, consume better" mindset with long-lasting and purposeful designs made in Italy with an Ecolabel certified material. Visit [jenah-st.com](http://jenah-st.com) [IG] [@jenah\\_st](https://www.instagram.com/jenah_st)

## GOREEA



Founded by Rodika Goreea, GOREEA is a women's ready to wear fashion brand. Strong, bold and feminine designs with sophisticated yet playful silhouettes that represent the European chic mixed with the Canadian urban style. Visit [goreeadesigns.com](http://goreeadesigns.com) [IG] [@goreeadesigns](https://www.instagram.com/goreeadesigns)

## DANIELLE FICHERA



DANIELLE FICHERA is a luxury collection of elevated destination wear designed to be worn anywhere. Ethically made in New York from sustainable materials, the line infuses wanderlust with easy sophistication. Danielle designs for her fellow travellers who believe in living fashionably both at home and abroad with a desire for high-quality, long-lasting garments. Visit [daniellefichera.com](http://daniellefichera.com) [IG] [@daniellefichera\\_official](https://www.instagram.com/daniellefichera_official)

## CHÀNTA



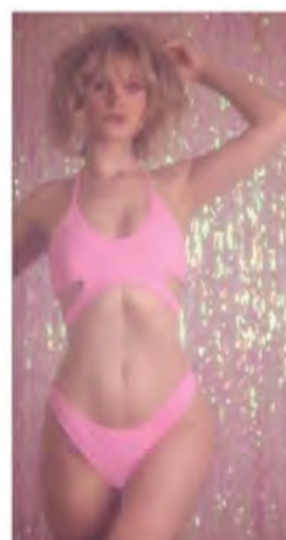
CHÀNTA celebrates conscious luxury and old savoir-faire. The excellence in craftsmanship translates into a collection of opulent handbags handcrafted in Italy. The architectural silhouettes are created to maintain relevance and quality over time. Visit [mychanta.com](http://mychanta.com) and follow on IG [@chanta.official](https://www.instagram.com/chanta.official)

## BRENNAB



The BrennaB bag is a clever handbag that can be worn four different ways; as a wristlet, clutch, hip clip, and mini satchel with the cuff used as a handle. Their bags are 100% leather with nickel free patented high-tech hardware. When your life is in your handbag, keep it close. Visit [brennab.com](http://brennab.com) to purchase and follow on IG [@brennabbag](https://www.instagram.com/brennabbag)

## NO SYMPATHY SWIM



No Sympathy Swim is a revolutionary swimwear brand dedicated to empowering women to make environmentally conscious purchases. Crafted from abandoned fishnets and plastics found in the world's oceans, these show stopping pieces were designed to inspire sustainability in the fashion industry. Visit [nosympathyswim.com](http://nosympathyswim.com) or follow IG [@nosympathyswim](https://www.instagram.com/nosympathyswim)

**HABUR**



HABUR was born with the vocation of fulfilling the ambitions to be different and prescient. It encourages you to freely, fashionably express yourself. "Happy Cashmere" is not only a concept but also a promise to your experience of grace. Follow them on IG [@haburcashmere](#) or visit [habur.co](#)



**MONDAME**



MONDAME boldly reinterprets the effortless Parisian look through a unisex and minimalist collection. Mixing street influences and finesse, Léakhéna Oum and Angélica Estrada play with contrasts between chic and urban, masculine and feminine : they break down dress codes and offer a sense of individuality. Visit [mondame.fr](#) or

follow on IG [@mondame\\_official](#)  
Photographer: Johanna Bensallem

**MONOSUIT**



Designed for women by a woman, this avant-garde brand of one-pieces has finally found a killer solution for the eternal dilemma of all jumpsuit lovers. Comfortable zippers on the back of the jumpsuit, which make a woman's life easy during her visit of a restroom. Visit [monosuit.com](#) (IG) [@monosuit](#)

**SENKO**



Emerging designer, Lesley Senkow of luxury brand, SENKO is definitely on the "ones to watch list" this season. Striking prints, bold silhouettes, and elevated classics are part of the brands core identity. Based in Vancouver, Canada and available

globally. Visit [senko.ca](#) and IG [@senkostudios](#)

**SOLOMON STREET**



Solomon Street is Australia's Poster Child of sustainable fashion. Supporting women to start their own business through micro-lending, hand-illustrated prints are the face of the Social Enterprise. Using natural fibres, the Australian-Made pieces are part of a low-waste business model. Visit [solomonstreet.com.au](#) or follow on IG [@solomonstreet](#)

**ANTONINIAS**



Antoninias is an ethical and sustainable resort brand that embraces the essence of the powerful woman, her purpose to be different and unique. All pieces in their collection are limited edition and their multi-garment approach supports the idea of an ever-shifting, fashion-conscious swimsuit.

Visit [antoninias.com](#) (IG) [@antoninias](#)

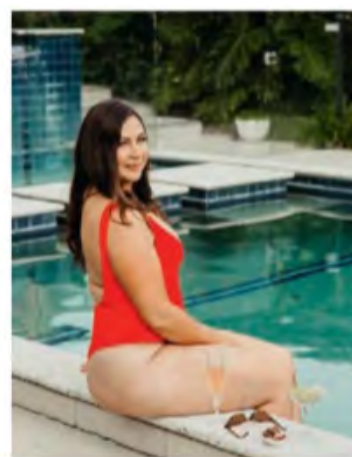
**MIYUKI STUDIOS**



MIYUKI STUDIOS is a Japanese clothing and home goods brand based in Los Angeles. The founder Miyuki Bowles brings antique kimonos to modern life, carrying over traditional techniques and fashions into contemporary luxuries. Every piece is a one-of-a-kind, true work of art.

Visit [miyukistudios.com](#) and follow on IG [@miyukistudios](#)

**SUMMER DREAMS SWIMWEAR**



Summer Dreams Swimwear is a boutique New Zealand brand creating affordable, high-end designs. Each piece is made to express the individuality of the woman who wears it. Designed by hand and limited edition, swimwear by Summer Dreams sets you apart.

Visit [summerdreamsswim.com](#) and follow on IG [@summerdreamsswimwear](#).

# The Vanity Fair Edit

## THE HOFF BRAND



HOFF wanted something outstanding, exclusive sneakers and they made it. Each sole incorporates unique images, characterising the brand. HOFF represents the new generation of unstoppable women. Find them in Anthropologie 131-141 King's Rd, London or discover the collection at [thehoffbrand.com](http://thehoffbrand.com)

## DIPTI MRINALINI



Dipti Mrinalini Label offers mindful clothing for the free-spirited dreamer. This unique brand has traversed the myriad hues of Indian fashion and has carved a cosy niche for itself. Discover everyday business casuals to dreamy outfits with lots of drama at [diptimrinalini.com](http://diptimrinalini.com) and follow on IG [@dmrinlabel](https://www.instagram.com/dmrinlabel)

## KARINE ALIPS



The brand has transformed nightwear by making it adaptable to all phases of the day – indoor wear becomes outwear with the addition of a simple accessory [bag or heels] to be the perfect outfit for dinner! The designer is inspired by vintage styles, creating elegant pieces in vibrant colours, natural silks and lace, all handmade in Italy. Be chic in seconds,

as now the pyjama never sleeps. Visit [karine-alips.com](http://karine-alips.com) and [@shopkarinealips](https://www.instagram.com/shopkarinealips) on IG. Photographer – Virgile Guinard.

## HERA CONCEPT



Hera Concept produces garments that fuse both contemporary and luxury aesthetics to create elevated yet affordable collections, using luxury wool from baby alpacas. Their slogan "Inner goddess in you" highlights that all women should feel powerful, influential and gorgeous like goddesses themselves. Visit [hera-concept.com](http://hera-concept.com) [IG] [@hera.concept](https://www.instagram.com/hera.concept)

## REZA NADIMI



Tehran based designer Reza Nadimi takes inspiration from the world surrounding him, he creates self-portraits using different fabrics as his canvas. The strength of his heritage and culture combined with the tremendous wealth of lineage forms the very unique base for his work. Visit [rezanadimi.com](http://rezanadimi.com) [IG] [@rezanadimi](https://www.instagram.com/rezanadimi)

## RICHMOND HILL SWIMWEAR



Richmond Hill Swimwear, a beach and resort clothing brand based in London, specialises in smart, slim fit, tailored shorts you can swim in. Their timeless design and classic colours will last a life time. Visit [richmondhillswimwear.com](http://richmondhillswimwear.com) or follow [@richmondhillswimwear](https://www.instagram.com/richmondhillswimwear) on IG.

## JUGU



Jugu produces fashion accessories made at the foot of the Himalayas by local minority women using their traditional techniques of shibori and batik with natural indigo dye. They support local sustainable development by encouraging the continuation of these handicrafts. The pieces are a blend of

traditional motifs and modern design giving them a chic and timeless quality. Visit [jugu.co.uk](http://jugu.co.uk) [IG] [@juguindigo](https://www.instagram.com/juguindigo)

## MARVIN NONIS UK



Vanity Fair introduces Marvin Nonis UK, this London based luxury fashion label brings many years of experience in Europe and the US, presenting time after time superb high-end fashion to the most discerning clients. This dynamic and charismatic designer loves to show his range, whether it is day wear, business wear or evening wear, his designs are full of exquisite details, sleek lines and superb use of colours and fabrics. Email [info@marvinnonis.co.uk](mailto:info@marvinnonis.co.uk) and visit [marvinnonis.co.uk](http://marvinnonis.co.uk)

## BORBOLETA



Borboleta Bag's are designed for stylish women with 'on the go' lifestyle. Their durable vegan leather bags are 30% lighter than normal leather, waterproof and have pockets and functions to make your life easier. Part of their profit helps fund breakfast and educational programs for

underprivileged students in Thailand. Visit [borboletabag.com](http://borboletabag.com) [IG] [@borboletabag](https://www.instagram.com/borboletabag)

## NOPESISTERS



NopeSisters boldly embroidered a 'mastectotee' based on their Mum's breast cancer scar. Each stitched design highlights social issues from personal experiences, while supporting matching

charities. These include sexual assault, period poverty, eating disorder, youth suicide and eco-crisis. Visit [nopesisters.com](http://nopesisters.com) or follow [@nopesistersclothing](https://www.instagram.com/nopesistersclothing) on IG.



# Opulent Jewels

**1. MEGAN WILSON JEWELRY** is a Texan brand which features handcrafted jewellery designed by Megan Wilson. Offering one of a kind necklaces, Megan's Jewelry is inspired by Earth's natural treasures. Visit [meganawilson.com](http://meganawilson.com) or follow on IG [@MeganWilsonJewelry](https://www.instagram.com/MeganWilsonJewelry) to find out more and to be one of the first to view their expansion into bracelets.

**2. AYU HOUSE** is an emerging Barcelona brand that's inspired by and made for thriving women. Its limited edition collections are handcrafted in Spain. They are sleek, divine, and suitable for any occasion. Be it a casual brunch date or an elegant day out at Royal Ascot. Shop the latest iconic collection at [ayuhouse.com](http://ayuhouse.com) and follow on IG & FB [@ayuhousejewelry](https://www.instagram.com/ayuhousejewelry)

**3. POLAR JEWELRY** is a sustainable Danish jewellery brand that designs striking jewellery pieces within curated collections. Founded by a Product Designer and Fine Artist, Polar's designs are a unique mix of free-flowing artistry and functionality. Shop at [polarjewelry.com](http://polarjewelry.com) and follow on IG [@Polarjewelry](https://www.instagram.com/Polarjewelry)

**4. MICHELLIA** is a premium fine jewellery brand committed to celebrating the unique beauty of every love story. Handcrafted with only the finest materials and gemstones, their jewellery balances modern and vintage aesthetics to bring unique individuals together and unforgettable moments to life. Visit at [michellia.com](http://michellia.com) or [@michelliafinejewelry](https://www.instagram.com/michelliafinejewelry) on IG.

**5. SONDR LONDON** was created by London born Shamim Vorajee. A brand aimed at creating jewellery inspired by life's journeys, experiences and adventures. The pieces are modern treasures designed to celebrate that everyone has a story to tell. Visit [sondr london.com](http://sondr london.com) or follow [sondr london](https://www.instagram.com/sondr london) on IG.

**6. Los Angeles based PRISCILLA FORD** designs each ring from her family's native Brazil to be unique and one of a kind. Ethically sourced and double dipped in yellow gold, the hottest celebrities have found her adjustable rings to be the perfect accessory. Visit [priscillaford.com](http://priscillaford.com) or follow on IG [@priscillaford](https://www.instagram.com/priscillaford)

**7. MAC AND RY JEWELRY** is handcrafted by designer Cindy in Southern California. The beautifully unique and classic designs are made with 14k gold fill, sterling silver and semiprecious stones. Available at selected US boutiques. Visit [macandryjewelry.com](http://macandryjewelry.com) or follow on IG [@macandryjewelry](https://www.instagram.com/macandryjewelry)

**8. AUDREY MILLIE ROSE** offers an exquisite range of stylish and contemporary jewellery. All handcrafted pieces are customisable and made in limited quantities or one of a kind. Every order is a gift that gives back, as a tree is planted in an area in need with each purchase. Shop online at [audreymillierose.com](http://audreymillierose.com) and follow on IG [@audreymillierose](https://www.instagram.com/audreymillierose)

**9. Contemporary and modern jewellery brand, BASS JEWELLERY**, offers minimalist and elegant designs perfect for everyday wear. The modern designs can be layered and paired to create an on-trend look. The jewellery is carefully crafted from quality materials such as 924 Sterling Silver and 14K gold filled. Shop online at [bassjewellery.com](http://bassjewellery.com) [IG] [@bassjewellery](https://www.instagram.com/bassjewellery)

**10. WICKEN JEWELLERY** is designed by Kim Mackay and hand crafted in New Zealand. The Wicken Jewellery collection is about Empowering your Inner Goddess. Wicken harnesses the symbols and knowledge of Wicca, combined with protective and positive crystals. The purpose is not only to adorn the body, but to inspire the soul and invigorate the spirit. Shop at [wicken.co.nz](http://wicken.co.nz) and follow on IG [@wickenjewellery](https://www.instagram.com/wickenjewellery)

**11. Our new favourite spiritual jewellery brand is California based SEVEN SAINTS.** Find Jewellery with meaning you won't want to take off like this gorgeous 'Abundance Lotus' necklace in 18k gold vermeil with Chrysoprase, which together symbolise purity, rebirth, joy and prosperity. Visit [sevensaints.life](http://sevensaints.life) or follow [sevensaintslife](https://www.instagram.com/sevensaintslife) on IG.

**12. PERUMEL** is a sustainable jewellery brand that offers classic yet modern designs, perfect for day-to-day style for women who seek to empower their image. Pictured is their surreal daisy design in pure silver thread and faceted yellow calcite stone, £950. Visit [perumel.com](http://perumel.com) and [@perumeljewelry](https://www.instagram.com/perumeljewelry) [IG].

**13. LOA** is a Montreal Artist who creates Beautiful and Timeless Pearls Jewelry. She works with Pearls all around the world. She can create custom pieces, simply let her know what you desire at [loa-boutique.com](http://loa-boutique.com) and follow on IG [@theloaboutique](https://www.instagram.com/theloaboutique)

**14. Just a few steps from the Santo Domingo Plaza in Cartagena, Colombia, you will find LUCY JEWELRY**, a store which is part of a XVII century mansion. An atmosphere where the refinement, innovation and cutting edge are combined in jewellery for its elegance and captivating originality. Visit [lucyjewelry.co](http://lucyjewelry.co) and follow on IG [@lucyjewelry](https://www.instagram.com/lucyjewelry)

**15. DANA BUSCH DESIGNS.** One-of-a-kind sculptural works of art for the body. Precious, semi-precious and rare materials are harmoniously combined and meticulously hand fabricated, guided by nature's beauty and Dr Busch's intuitive aesthetic. Visit [danabuschdesigns.com](http://danabuschdesigns.com) and also available at [medicinemangallery.com](http://medicinemangallery.com) [IG] [@danabuschdesigns](https://www.instagram.com/danabuschdesigns)



# Opulent Jewels



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**16. NILAI PARIS** is a French designer jewellery brand enhancing the 'mix and match' concept with grace and elegance. All pieces and designs are 24k gold-plated and natural semi-precious stones. Browse the collection at [nilai.fr](http://nilai.fr) and follow on IG [@NilaiParis](https://www.instagram.com/NilaiParis)

**17. RICCIARDI** designs minimalist, gold, diamond and turquoise jewels for any occasion. Raffaella Ricciardi created this socially conscious brand in 2019 with the purpose of conserving the ocean by donating a portion of proceeds. Shop her unique and timeless pieces at [ricciardijewelry.com](http://ricciardijewelry.com) or on IG at [@ricciardijewelry](https://www.instagram.com/ricciardijewelry)



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20



21

**18.** Pistachio flavour for me, please! Is your mouth watering yet? **ROSA VAN PARYS**'s playful "Gelato" necklace showcases an 11mm AAA Tahitian pearl resting on an 18k yellow Gold waffle cone, with dripping sauce in multi-colour Sapphires, Rubies, Tsavorites, Aquamarines, and a Ruby cherry on top! [Rosavanparys.com](http://Rosavanparys.com) [IG] [@shoprosavanparys](https://www.instagram.com/shoprosavanparys)

**19.** Introducing **DELICORA**. High quality, lightweight, delicate. Personal jewellery as unique as the woman who wears it – designed with simplicity and timeless style. Founder Sandra Martinelli creates every unique collection for all skin types using hypoallergenic 14k gold filled and sterling silver materials. From classic to bohemian to sophisticated styles, the collection includes a wide range of semi-precious stones intended to capture a woman's confidence, natural beauty and individual style. Visit [delicora.com](http://delicora.com) [IG] [@shopdelicora](https://www.instagram.com/shopdelicora)



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**20. RAUS REYKJAVÍK** is an emerging Icelandic jewellery brand made up of three women who create beautiful and unique designs with a feminine touch. They bring their art to life through noble metals and stones, inspired by their dramatic natural surroundings. Bespoke designs available. Visit [raus.is](http://raus.is) and follow on IG [@raus.reykjavik](https://www.instagram.com/raus.reykjavik)

**21.** At **TWINKLE LINKS**, kindness is queen. Featuring sleek and stylish jewellery designed in Toronto by Sally KY Leung, 10% of every sale goes directly to charities which empower women and children. Refreshed regularly, the collection turns heads and fill hearts. Visit [Twinklelinks.com](http://Twinklelinks.com) or [@twinklelinks](https://www.instagram.com/twinklelinks) on IG to spread a little sparkle of your own.



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**22.** Admired for their rarity and style, **QP JEWELLERS** promotes the organic beauty of natural gemstones with an exclusive collection of handcrafted jewellery. Explore the range of classic and contemporary designs at [qpjewellers.com](http://qpjewellers.com) and follow on IG [@qpjewellers](https://www.instagram.com/qpjewellers)

**23. ANNA FROVOLA** is a Russian Jewellery designer and gemologist, with a strong belief in the power of personality and personal energy, which translates in her designs. Anna believes there are no two identical women and there are no two identical stones. Each piece of jewellery has a unique, special meaning. Visit [annafrolovajewelry.com](http://annafrolovajewelry.com) [IG] [@by\\_anna\\_jewelry](https://www.instagram.com/by_anna_jewelry)



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**24.** Nicole de Gale lovingly creates charming collections for her luxury jewellery brand **NIKKIBIEDES**. Featuring one-of-a-kind pieces inspired by her Caribbean lifestyle, Founder Nicole has an affinity for natural freshwater pearls and semi-precious stones emanating a high-end island chic look for the day or night. For orders: [nicole@nikkibiedes.com](mailto:nicole@nikkibiedes.com) [IG] [@nikkibiedes](https://www.instagram.com/nikkibiedes)

**25. CAIMANA** is a jewellery and accessories brand designed by siblings Laura Turbay and Sergio Delgado. The duo works closely with indigenous artisans from Colombia to create handmade pieces that implement their ancestral weaving techniques into contemporary designs. Visit [caimana.co](http://caimana.co) and follow on IG [@caimanaofficial](https://www.instagram.com/caimanaofficial)



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**26. EMI CONNER JEWELRY** creates beautiful fine jewellery with love and light for the mindful woman. Each piece comes with a gemstone meaning full of positivity, that will give you a sense of hope, strength and inspiration to help you get through a difficult day. Shop the collection at [emiconner.com](http://emiconner.com) and follow on IG [@emiconnerjewelry](https://www.instagram.com/emiconnerjewelry)

**27. ESTEVANA**, by Mexican sisters and architects Estefania and Silvana Barrios, are sweet jewels that immerse the person who wears it into a world of sophistication and magic. By using a delicate design of 18k gold and precious stones, the pieces aim to produce an explosion of sensations, leaving you mesmerised. Timeless and fearless, Estevana is bound to become part of your life. Discover the full collection online at [estevana.com](http://estevana.com) and follow on IG [@estevanajewelry](https://www.instagram.com/estevanajewelry)

**28.** Los Angeles based designer, **NEELU**, creates trendy jewellery with natural, conflict-free diamonds and vibrant emeralds sourced from Brazil. Featured Balance Necklace has a hamsa hand with a sparkling, diamond border and lotus flower set in high grade, signature emeralds. Visit [neelufinejewels.com](http://neelufinejewels.com) and follow on IG [@NeeluFineJewels](https://www.instagram.com/NeeluFineJewels)

**29. FRANCES** was founded by Meredith Blacker Isacoff, a New York-based jewellery designer by passion and trade. She was inspired to create the timeless pieces she had been unable to find: sophisticated accessories with a touch of edge. Meredith founded Frances Curated in 2019, an edited collection of pieces from her favourite brands, which includes her eponymous line as well. Pictured is the 'Diamond Peace' necklace. Visit [FrancesCurated.com](http://FrancesCurated.com) [IG] [@FrancesCurated](https://www.instagram.com/FrancesCurated)

**30. NEGIARABANI** is a San Francisco brand with modern designs for modern girls and women. This sculptural statement necklace is light and opulent at the same time. Create your own unique necklace by picking your chain finishing, length as well as your choice of material! Shop on [negiarabani.com](http://negiarabani.com) and follow on IG [@negiarabanisf](https://www.instagram.com/negiarabanisf)

**31. SOLILOQUY JEWELRY** is designed and handcrafted by Boston-based artist Kerin Scales. She harnesses inspiration from her studies in literature, Irish heritage, and knowledge of myth and lore, and forges one of a kind symbolic tales told in metal and stone. [soliloquyjewelry.com](http://soliloquyjewelry.com) [IG] [@soliloquyjewelry](https://www.instagram.com/soliloquyjewelry)

**32. CHRISSY LIU JEWELRY** offers bold yet wearable jewellery. Her collections are carefully handcrafted with mixed sterling and gold metals and unique stones and textures. Shop her line and discover a one of a kind piece, to express your confidence. Use code 'VFUK' for a 10% off [exp. 01/01/2020]. Visit [chrissyliujewelry.com](http://chrissyliujewelry.com) [IG] [@chrissyliu](https://www.instagram.com/chrissyliu)

**33. PIERRE D'ALEXIS** presents its unique and entirely handcrafted ring 'Dragon Heart', a beautiful red spinel from Burma. Enhanced by two half-moon diamonds and mounted on white and red twisted golds [photo credit: David Fraga]. To find out more visit [pierrealexis.com](http://pierrealexis.com) or follow on IG [@pierre\\_d\\_alexis](https://www.instagram.com/pierre_d_alexis)

**34. ANKLITA's** avant-garde approach to ankle bracelets offers luxury anklets with a unique design to host interchangeable charms, made from sterling silver and 18 carat gold plated. Each charm signifies a different meaning, making your ankle chain individual and unique to you. Each chain has 3 charm stations allowing you to create your own bespoke anklet. Visit [anklita.com](http://anklita.com)

**35. KINDNESS GEMS**, a California-based brand, offers the perfect minimalist, bohemian look. This handcrafted statement ring features the finest 14k Gold and ethically sourced Indian Rubies. 20% of every purchase goes directly to charity. Visit [kindnessgems.com](http://kindnessgems.com) and IG [@kindnessgems](https://www.instagram.com/kindnessgems)

**36. SILJOURN** a Midwest woman's journey in life, silver and stone. Built by hand, forged and crafted from sterling and fine silver, embracing turquoise and gemstones inspired by southwest and antique design, one of a kind jewellery that has stood and will stand the passage of time. Visit [siljourn.com](http://siljourn.com) and [@Siljourn](https://www.instagram.com/Siljourn) [IG].

**37. AMY WELLS DESIGNS...** Amy Wells is an amazing designer from the southern United States with a passion for rustic gemstone jewellery that is incredibly unique with a boho-chic flair. To see her breathtaking designs visit [amywellsdesigns.com](http://amywellsdesigns.com)

**38. Kerie Tonkin** from **SOLDER** in the Adelaide Hills – Australia. Kerie designs and handmakes bespoke jewellery layered with a hidden memory. These Sterling Silver double loop earrings are architecturally inspired Visit [www.solder.net.au](http://www.solder.net.au) or follow IG [@solder\\_studio](https://www.instagram.com/solder_studio)

**39. PETRA TOTH** is a Slovak jeweller and designer. The new collection Flowers of Telgart is inspired by traditional folk embroidery from the territory located between 3 national parks and protected territories in Slovakia. To see more visit [petratoth.sk](http://petratoth.sk) and follow on IG [@petratothjewellery](https://www.instagram.com/petratothjewellery)

**40. From México to the world. LUZIA JEWELRY** presents feminine, fresh and exquisite pieces inspired by the special moments of life. This ruby ring is part of their 'Crear' collection, where you can customise your own piece of jewellery. Follow on IG [@Luziajewelry](https://www.instagram.com/Luziajewelry)

**41. JAG NEW YORK** is a high-end jewellery brand created by designer Roland Krainz. All jewellery is handcrafted specialising in one of a kind creations such as these cascading ruby sapphire earrings. To view more JAG New York collections, visit [Jagnewyork.com](http://Jagnewyork.com) or follow on IG [@Jagnewyork](https://www.instagram.com/Jagnewyork)

**42. PAULINE PESKOFF** is an award-winning jewellery designer based in Ontario, Canada, who creates meticulously hand-stitched designs that accentuate feminine energy and strength. This "Nebula" bracelet features Swarovski crystal center-stone and Japanese glass beads. Visit [paulinepeskoff.com](http://paulinepeskoff.com) and follow [@PaulinePeskoff](https://www.instagram.com/PaulinePeskoff) on IG

**43. BERGMAN JEWELS.** Designer Isabelle Bergman from Antwerp, the famous 'city of diamonds', designs colourful jewellery for women to express a special touch to their style. Isabelle uses exceptional semi-precious stones and high-quality diamonds processed in 18-carat gold. Visit [bergmanjewels.com](http://bergmanjewels.com) and follow on IG [@bergmanjewels](https://www.instagram.com/bergmanjewels)

**44. Jewellery pieces** created by designer Kristin Krull are anything but subdued. From gemstone statement necklaces to fun dangle earrings, **CAMBA JEWELRY** curates Boho-inspired jewellery that often features colourful tassels, prominent chains, and oversized semi-precious gems. The eclectic look adds diversity and texture in the most flawless way for today's modern woman. Visit Camba Jewelry on Etsy, [IG] [@camba\\_jewelry](https://www.instagram.com/camba_jewelry)

**45. VERTICESEDGE** creates a collection of bold and timeless pieces. Jewellery designer John Robertson is known for his impeccable craftsmanship. This design was inspired by a Berkeley shape algorithm. John creates exquisite and organic designs to give that outstanding look whatever the occasion. Visit [verticesedge.com](http://verticesedge.com) to view the full collection or email [contact@verticesedge.com](mailto:contact@verticesedge.com) with enquiries.



# Most Wanted

**1.** Natural, wildcrafted and vegan. This one versatile product will do it all. Cleanse, remove makeup and decrease the appearance of wrinkles with each application. The **LUNAH LIFE** 'Triple Threat' is an infusion of plant oils and botanicals, with each bottle containing a rose quartz crystal. Visit [lunahlife.com](http://lunahlife.com) for more or follow on IG [@Lunahlife](https://www.instagram.com/Lunahlife)

**2.** A **SWIVLIT** is an insulated, microwavable and leakproof flask, which keeps food hot or cold for up to 5 hours. It can even be used to slow cook delicious meals on the move. A Swivlit is the perfect gift for professionals, busy parents, students and gym-goers alike! Available in various colours at [swivlit.com](http://swivlit.com) and follow [@swivlit](https://www.instagram.com/swivlit) on IG.

**3.** **SA SANTÉ** is a new brand for feminine beauty, which produces artisanal small batch production of feminine moisturiser. Owner Michelle Han is a full time working mother who has teamed up with a world-renowned Beverly Hills OBGYN and expert herbalist, to create an innovative yet personal organic lotion that contains natural ingredients, that promote general feminine wellness. Discover more at [saante.com](http://saante.com) and [sa\\_sante](https://www.instagram.com/sa_sante) on IG.

**4.** **LIPSTUK** is the new, innovative lip tool to the beauty industry that helps to keep lipstick off your teeth and is easy to use. The tool has been specifically created to remove excess lipstick from inside your lips while the curved tip perfectly fits the lips for blending your favourite lip product. Dishwasher safe. Visit [lipstuk.com](http://lipstuk.com) and IG [@lovelipstuk](https://www.instagram.com/lovelipstuk)

**5.** **MARRO PRODUCTS** is a 100% natural, plant-derived product line offering aromatically-pleasing CBD + therapeutic terpene blends. Calm the mind and body for deep, rejuvenating sleep with this invigorating CBD blend that is infused with cinnamon bark essential oil for a pleasant taste. Be calm. Be still. Sleep well. Visit [marroproducts.com](http://marroproducts.com) and follow [@marroproducts](https://www.instagram.com/marroproducts) on IG.

**6.** Achieve the appearance of fuller, plumped lips, nourished with moisture from **TEOXANE**'s latest innovation: [3D] Lip, proven Shop now and get 20% off your order with the code VFOLIP [Exp. 1/12/19] at [www.teoxaneshop.com](http://www.teoxaneshop.com) – further details online. Follow on IG [#oneinabillion](https://www.instagram.com/oneinabillion) \*In-vivo test + Self assessment carried out on 22 volunteers by an independent laboratory [study 18E2449 – 2019].

**7.** **MAKING MINDFUL MANNA** presents its blueberry cashew granola. A delectable combination of dried blueberries and organic cashews mixed with nuts and seeds. We'll leave it to your taste buds to do the rest. Shop online at [makingmindfulmanna.com](http://makingmindfulmanna.com) or follow on IG [@makingmindfulmanna](https://www.instagram.com/makingmindfulmanna)

**8.** **SALLY BLAIR CERAMICS** produces contemporary ceramics vessels. Each piece is a canvas for a one-of-a-kind painting. Inspired by the Bauhaus, these architectural objects are aiming to blend art, life, and craft. Discover more at [sallyblairceramics.com](http://sallyblairceramics.com) and follow on IG [@sallyblairceramics](https://www.instagram.com/sallyblairceramics)

**9.** **SARAH CAPPS** is a contemporary abstract artist from Charlottesville, Virginia. She works in acrylic, oil and watercolour to convey her experience of bold visuals of colour, texture and form within music. The title of the painting showcased here is Pink Sunset. To see her work, visit [scapps.art](http://scapps.art) or IG [@shepaints.music](https://www.instagram.com/shepaints.music)

**10.** **303 FACE | BODY ORGANICS**. Allow your days to begin with the lovely scents of English rose and your evenings to end with the calming aromas of lavender. Herbal, organic skincare; built for self-care by 303 Face | Body. Visit [303facebodyorganics.com](http://303facebodyorganics.com)

**11.** **MY TIME MINERALS** is a luxury wellness and self-care brand, made by a scientist. This 'Recovery Island Holiday Soak' is perfect for body aches post work out, chronic back and joint pain management, muscle spasms and dehydration or if you just need a mid-week holiday. Suitable for all skin types. Shop their range of products [mytimeminerals.com](http://mytimeminerals.com) and follow on IG [@mytimeminerals](https://www.instagram.com/mytimeminerals)

**12.** We think this is the perfect gift for the one who always encourages you to follow your dreams. Meet the timeless allure of **RATTLESTICK**. Choose from the best in premium wet shave tools for the untamed man. Visit [rattlestick.ca/VF](http://rattlestick.ca/VF)

**13.** **CONGCONG WU** is a young international artist whose artworks has been exhibited worldwide in cities such as Sydney, London and Rome. Congcong's work brings a joyful and absurd aspect to humanity and the overlooked aspects of everyday life. She uses many different media, ranging from paint, ceramics, print to installation and digital media. Visit [congcongwu.com](http://congcongwu.com) or email [congcongwu05@gmail.com](mailto:congcongwu05@gmail.com) to see more of her unique artwork.

**14.** **YAYFOREARTH** is a zero waste business with an all purpose sensitive skin face moisturiser that was created by climate activist, Stevie Van Horn, to prove a product can support nature as well as our faces and bodies. Apply anytime to balance and calm the skin. Email [info@yayforearth.com](mailto:info@yayforearth.com) Website [yayforearth.com](http://yayforearth.com) Instagram [@stevieyaaaay](https://www.instagram.com/stevieyaaaay)

**15.** Artist **KARL J. KUERNER** [grandson of Andrew Wyeth's subjects Karl and Anna Kuerner] continues the artistic heritage of the celebrated "Brandywine Valley". Karl's lifelong mentorship with neighbours Andrew Wyeth and Carolyn Wyeth infused his artwork with the magic of the Brandywine Tradition. His highly sought after imaginative paintings are exhibited and collected worldwide. Look for Karl's feature in Glenn Holsten's American Masters Documentary "Wyeth". Visit [karlkuerner.com](http://karlkuerner.com)

**16.** **CAROLINE BORDIGNON** is a Canadian artist and composer based in the UK. Using her synaesthesia to create live artwork in concerts, she paints illustrious images of what music looks like. These are also available as clothing items of wearable music. Visit [carolinebordignon.com](http://carolinebordignon.com) [IG] [@caroline.a.bordignon](https://www.instagram.com/caroline.a.bordignon) or email [contact@carolinebordignon.com](mailto:contact@carolinebordignon.com) to buy or commission artwork.

**17.** **WHITE & GREEN** is a luxury, yet affordable bed linen brand that is changing the way the world sleeps. The softest organic cotton, master craftsmanship, and timeless designs- so you can experience the feeling of sleeping on clouds. Visit [whiteandgreenhome.com](http://whiteandgreenhome.com) and follow [@whiteandgreen](https://www.instagram.com/whiteandgreen) on IG.

**18. VALLEY MIST** founder and creator Jo is on a mission to reduce single use plastic within the cosmetic industry, built from the ground up as a sustainable business Valley Mist offers either 100% plastic free, reusable or refillable premium cosmetics and wellness products. Shown here the 2-in-1 Cleansing and Moisturising cream with Neroli and Rosehip oil. Visit [valleymist.co.uk](http://valleymist.co.uk) and [@myvalleymistmile](https://www.instagram.com/myvalleymistmile) on IG.

**19. DIIO** [dee-oh/dúo]; the Australian online gifting company you need to know! Offering playful and stylish gift hampers, as well as the option to design your own from their range. Featured here is "The Spice Grinder". Visit [diio.com.au](http://diio.com.au) [IG] [@diio.gifting](https://www.instagram.com/diio.gifting)

**20. LUXE HEAVENLY BODIES** is a clean beauty brand you don't want to miss. Formulated with natural, organic & botanical ingredients, with select bio-active peptides. Their Roses & Dew Drops is a sheer, light moisturiser that combines rose hydrosol, geranium, lavender & ylang ylang into a silky indulgent serum. Leaping Bunny Certified. Sensitive skin friendly! Shop online at [Lhbskin.com](http://Lhbskin.com) or follow on IG [@Lhbskin](https://www.instagram.com/Lhbskin)

**21. VITACLEAN.** Transform skin and hair with a Vitaclean Vitamin C shower head. It's the perfect solution to hard water as it softens water, neutralises chlorine and leaves skin and hair feeling soft and silky all whilst creating a spa-like aromatherapy effect! Visit [vitacleanhq.com](http://vitacleanhq.com) [IG] [@vitacleanhq](https://www.instagram.com/vitacleanhq)

**22. THE WOOD LIFE PROJECT** is a family-run lifestyle brand that aims to replace everyday plastic items in the home and workplace with innovative, beautifully designed, eco-friendly, British-made and British-sourced wooden products. Find out more at [thewoodlifeproject.com](http://thewoodlifeproject.com) or IG [thewoodlifeproject](https://www.instagram.com/thewoodlifeproject)

**23. FENTONS & CO's** candles should be an essential part of your home. They use sustainable coconut wax, handmade in London, producing a unique blend of woody, earthy, leathery and herbaceous scent profiles. Browse their four scented candle range at [fentonsandco.com](http://fentonsandco.com) and follow on IG [@fentonsandco](https://www.instagram.com/fentonsandco)

**24. MÈKA** offers a wide range of carefully sourced and expertly curated tea blends, from classics to speciality teas. High-quality whole leaf tea in biodegradable pyramid bags and eye-catching box design, making it the perfect gift as well. Shop at [meka.life](http://meka.life) or follow on IG [@mekalifeuk](https://www.instagram.com/mekalifeuk)

**25. SACINU** offers cufflink designs that you will not find anywhere else. They would like to provide something special, different and unique – not just standard. Creativity and the desire for something new is their motivation. Let them be your inspiration. Cufflink material 925 Sterling Silver. Visit [sacinu.de](http://sacinu.de) and IG [@sacinu.de](https://www.instagram.com/sacinu.de)

**26. SAYRA** is the first Moroccan house of authentic luxury inspired by local cultural wealth and ancestral know how. A collection of scented candles, based on Moroccan aromatic plants and composed of a paraffin-free vegetable soy wax and a natural cotton wick. Visit [sayrafusion.com](http://sayrafusion.com) and [@sayrafusion](https://www.instagram.com/sayrafusion) [IG].

**27. PI-RET** is the jewellery brand for women who love timeless pieces with a little twist. Designed with longevity in mind, their minimalist jewellery is made with the finest materials, specialising in pearls. To find out more visit [pi-ret.com](http://pi-ret.com) or follow on IG [@piretjewelry](https://www.instagram.com/piretjewelry)

**28. UPFRONT COSMETICS** was born out of a need for transparency in the cosmetics industry, committed to being transparent in what is in their products and how their products are made. Their solid shampoo bars are free from plastic packaging and each bar diverts up to three plastic bottles from the landfill. Leaping Bunny certified and free from sulfates, parabens and synthetic fragrances. Visit [upfrontcosmetics.ca](http://upfrontcosmetics.ca) and IG [@upfrontcosmetics](https://www.instagram.com/upfrontcosmetics)

**29.** Swedish artist **CAROLINE REXBORG** is creating art with a mission to empower people to recognize their own strength and power, hoping her paintings will cause self-reflection and in turn greater self-love and appreciation. For more, visit [carolinerexborg.com](http://carolinerexborg.com) [IG] [@artbycarolinerere](https://www.instagram.com/artbycarolinerere) or email [caroline.rexborg@gmail.com](mailto:caroline.rexborg@gmail.com) Pictured is "Prince/ess of light".

**30. DSCENT CANDLES** are formulated with essential organic oils and soy wax that's healthy for the environment. A lit candle not only aromatises your room and relaxes your environment, but it doubles as a therapeutic treatment that can moisturise dry skin. Spoil yourself the DScent way and visit [dscentcandles.com](http://dscentcandles.com) [IG] [@dscentcandles](https://www.instagram.com/dscentcandles)

**31. VOEU DU COEUR**, creates bespoke ring boxes from luxury Italian, French and British silk velvets. Manufactured in Europe, every box is completely artisan made, such as this ring box which has been hand embroidered with 185 pearls. They are more than simply a box and are designed to wow! Visit [voeu-du-coeur.com](http://voeu-du-coeur.com) or follow [@voeu\\_du\\_coeur](https://www.instagram.com/voeu_du_coeur) on IG.

**32.** American contemporary artist **RACHEL TRIBBLE's** award-winning dream-like paintings are recognised for their meditative quality as experiments in space, colour and light. To learn more visit [racheltribble.com](http://racheltribble.com) or email the studio at [hello@racheltribble.com](mailto:hello@racheltribble.com)

**33. COCORRINA** Moon & Star Pin Set – Wear them on your jacket, shorts, bag, anywhere you can dream of. The delicate 3D details make them unique and magical, and the golden finish so very bright and shiny, especially when it hits direct light. Visit [shop.cocorrina.com](http://shop.cocorrina.com) and follow on IG [@cocorrina.co](https://www.instagram.com/cocorrina.co)

**34.** A **MUK BARCELONA** phone case is a must-have. You can customise any case with your name, initials or a personal design or image. Muk Barcelona believes that your phone case is a fashion accessory. Visit [mukbarcelona.com](http://mukbarcelona.com) and follow on IG [@mukbarcelona](https://www.instagram.com/mukbarcelona)

**35. THE WOMAN WHOLE** is a self-love boutique specialising in luxurious crystal yoni eggs, organic yoni steams, massage tools, and resources that inspire a deep connection with your inner goddess! Visit [yoniegg.life](http://yoniegg.life) to discover more. Follow [@thewomanwhole](https://www.instagram.com/thewomanwhole) on IG.



## Proust Questionnaire

**David  
Chang**

The Momofuku chef/founder and host of Netflix's docuseries *Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner* chews on karma, patience, and dance lessons



**W**hat is your idea of perfect happiness? Good TV, good delivery, perfect AC. Literally doing nothing. **What is your greatest fear?** Figuratively doing nothing. **Which historical figure do you most identify with?** Admiral Yi Sun-sin. **Which living person do you most admire?** My wife, Grace. **What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?** My intense self-loathing. **What is the trait you most deplore in others?** Unwillingness to change. **What is your greatest extravagance?** Saltwater fly fishing—finding the most remote places to fish and the time to go. **What is your favorite journey?** Being a dad for the first time. **What do you consider the most overrated virtue?** Patience. **On what occasion do you lie?** When I tell myself or others that I'm going to work out. **What do you dislike most about your appearance?**

My head is too big; it's an inconvenience. **Which living person do you most despise?** Donald Trump. If your answer is not Donald Trump, you've answered this incorrectly. **Which words or phrases do you most overuse?** "Fuck" and "shit" and "fuckingshit." **What is your greatest regret?** Not doing better in school and not taking advantage of what I could have learned there...very closely followed by never learning to dance. **What or who is the greatest love of your life?** Work was my first love, but thankfully it's been replaced by my wife and son. **When and where were you happiest?** Knicks vs. Lakers at Madison Square Garden during Linsanity. **Which talent would you most like to have?** I wish I was great at basketball. Basically I wish I had the talent to be an Asian Zion Williamson. **What is your current state of mind?** Shit never gets easier. It just keeps getting harder and weirder. **If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?** Learning to appreciate what I have. **If you could change one thing about your family, what would it be?** I wish that immigrating to the States had been easier on my parents. **What do you consider your greatest achievement?** I'm still here. **If you were to**

**die and come back as a person or thing, what do you think it would be?** Karma's going to make sure I come back as a lobster—I've cooked too many. **If you could choose what to come back as, what would it be?** Bob Dylan. **What is your most treasured possession?** My passport. Having lost three, I know it's a nightmare to replace. **What do you regard as the lowest depth of misery?** Sitting at a desk job heading toward mediocrity. **Where would you like to live?** Wherever the weather suits my clothes. **What is your favorite occupation?** Wrought iron worker or a blacksmith. Jobs that will never be cool. **What is your most marked characteristic?** Unfortunately, a quick temper and a foul mouth. **What do you most value in your friends?** Honesty. **Who are your favorite writers?** David Foster Wallace, Ray Monk, David Halberstam, Kay Redfield Jamison, Anthony Bourdain. **Who is your favorite hero of fiction?** Sisyphus. **Who are your heroes in real life?** My mom. **What are your favorite names?** Aloysius. **What is it that you most dislike?** Formal wear and occasions that require it. **How would you like to die?** Doing something heroic. **What is your motto?** "Save something for the swim back."

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**LOUIS VUITTON**



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# VANITY FAIR

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*Water*  
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*Plus!*

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Victor Vescovo

**Pierre-Yves Cousteau**

Dr. Sylvia Earle

**Sir Ben Ainslie**

*and more...*



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**ROLEX**









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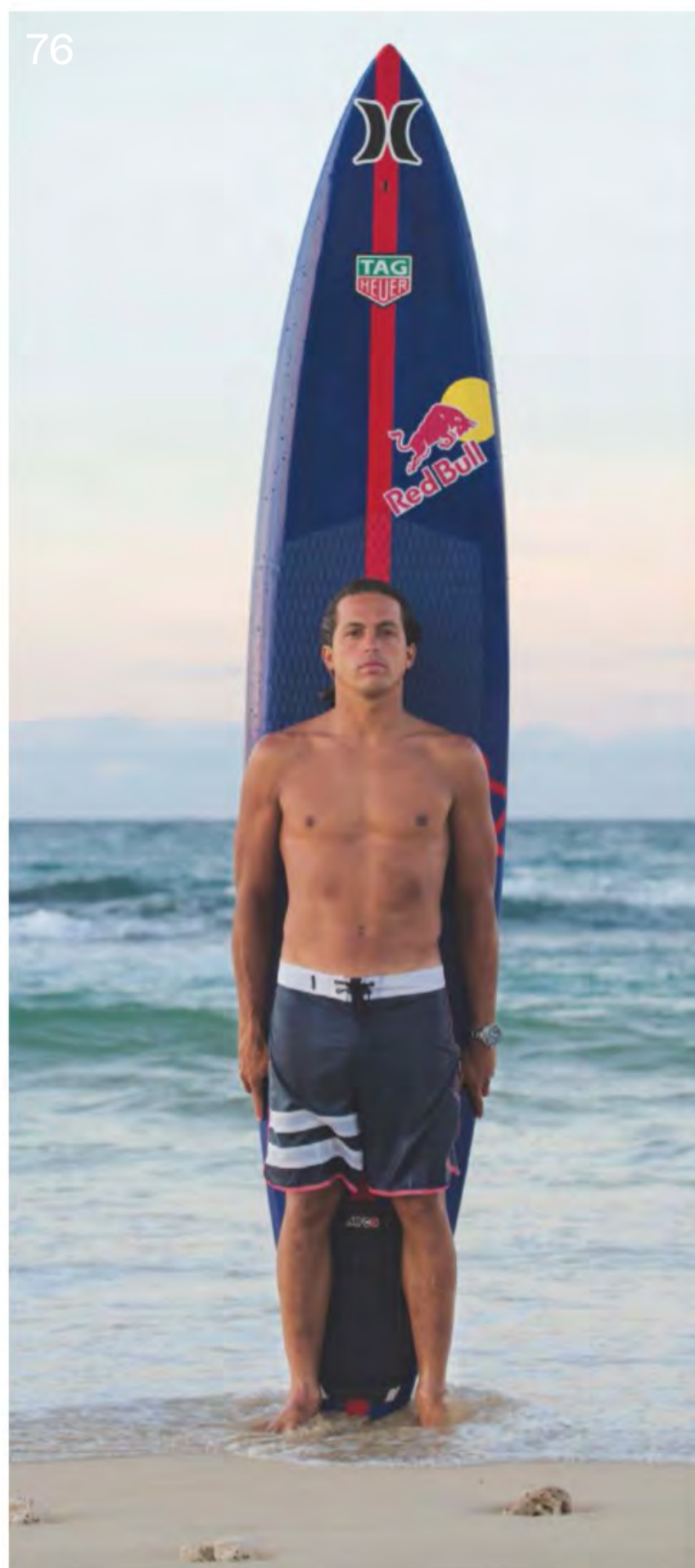
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Cover



Fabien Cousteau  
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**Benjamin Bechet**

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## Editor's Letter

# THE *Water* ISSUE

### Water is the enemy of mechanical watchmaking

but ever since the 1920s, when the far-sighted Hans Wilsdorf decided to publicise the water resistance of his Rolex watches by having one tested by cross-channel swimmer Mercedes Gleitz, watchmakers have been on a mission to create timepieces that do not, to misquote a famous advertising slogan, leak under pressure. As this issue of *Vanity Fair On Time* confirms, water obsesses the industry more than ever.

What started out as a way of overcoming a problem became an entire product sector, and some of the most desirable wristwatches on the market today are those that first vaunted their water-tightness back in the 1950s. They were launched to meet the needs of a new breed of underwater adventurers called Scuba Divers and in these pages we tell the stories behind the creation of some of today's best-loved dive watches that have their roots in the golden age of the "toolwatch": Rolex's Submariner, Omega's Seamaster, Jaeger LeCoultre's Memovox, Tudor's Black Bay and Blancpain's Fifty Fathoms et al.

The 1970s belonged to the grande-luxe water-resistant steel watches designed by Gérald Genta, and Dr. Jack Forster compares Genta's two great masterpieces: the Audemars Piguet Royal Oak, as it heads for its 50th birthday in 2022, and Patek Philippe's 43-year-old Nautilus. The latter was commissioned by Philippe Stern, the softly spoken genius who skippered Patek Philippe through the turbulent seas of the 1970s and 1980s to the clear



waters of the horological revival of the early 21st century. But, as well as captaining a metaphorical vessel, Stern was a champion yachtsman who competed frequently in regattas on Lake Geneva. Today many CEOs take after him, as Ming Liu finds in her account of watch bosses' love of water sports.

Indeed, to judge from the large number of yachting-specific watches that Tracey Llewellyn has uncovered, ocean racing would appear to be one of the industry's favourite pastimes. Bill Prince finds out that free-diving comes a close second. Later this year Panerai will be taking select clients to do some free-diving while another exclusive group of Paneristi will be training with the Italian Navy's Special Forces. If they want to know what they are in for, *Vanity Fair On Time* was granted exclusive access to the top-secret facility where this training takes place. Meanwhile our portfolio embraces life and watches 10,928 metres below the waves and high above the clouds on Alpine glaciers (after all, ice is just very cold water).

**NICHOLAS FOULKES**, *Editor*

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## Contributors



1—



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2



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3—

①

*Jonny*  
BEALBY

“Who Dares Swims”  
p. 68

Founder of award-winning travel specialist, Wild Frontiers, Jonny has adventure in his blood. Driving a motorbike around Africa, walking through India, Pakistan and Afghanistan and riding a horse along the Silk Road gave rise to three travel books, one Discovery Channel film, numerous articles and his adventure travel company Wild Frontiers. In these pages, Jonny adds an elite military string to his bow.

②

*Bill*  
PRINCE

“Depth and Breath”  
p. 54

Deputy Editor of British *GQ* since 1998, Bill Prince previously enjoyed an illustrious career in the music press, working on both *NME* and *Q* magazines. Overseeing *GQ*'s watch coverage and the annual *GQ Watch and Jewellery* supplement, he is no stranger to the intricacies of timepieces. For *The Water Issue*, Bill explores the superhuman world of free-divers and the watches they trust to measure those all-important minutes below the surface.

③

*Fred*  
S. MANDELBAUM

“A Brief History of Time”  
p. 62

Fred S. Mandelbaum, a.k.a. @watchfred, is a tech entrepreneur and avid collector of vintage chronographs with an Instagram following of more than 50,000. Having been approached by Breitling CEO Georges Kern, Fred now supports the brand's heritage research and advises on their historical re-editions. What better person to uncover the trade secrets of the Breitling SuperOcean?

④

*Benjamin*  
BECHET

“Water Portfolio”  
p. 79

A self-proclaimed “eclectic” photographer, Benjamin Bechet transitions seamlessly from portraits to big reports; from studio staging to culinary photography. Working extensively for the press and various NGOs, his photographs are published and exhibited in France and abroad. It was on home ground, or rather in home waters, that Benjamin shot cover star Fabien Cousteau—grandson of Aqua-Lung inventor Jacques Cousteau.

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# Stopwatch

ON TIME AUTUMN 2019



COURTESY OF CHOPARD (POSTER, ALPINE EAGLE)

**In 1980 Chopard launched the St. Moritz**, a steel watch that was—as this splendid period advertisement shows—as elegant as it was sporty. Designed by Karl-Friedrich Scheufele, then a young man at the beginning of his twenties, it was a departure for Chopard in that the maison only made gold timepieces in those days. Fast forward almost four decades and K-F’s son, Karl-Fritz Scheufele, a young man in his early twenties, comes across the watch on his father’s desk, wears it, loves it, and wants to relaunch it. His father says no. So, he turns to his grandfather, Karl Scheufele. Together they make a prototype which eventually convinces Karl-Friedrich... and the St. Moritz is reborn, only this time it is called the Alpine Eagle. Rather than St. Moritz, these days Karl-Friedrich has a chalet in Gstaad and the Alpine Eagle has clearly been designed with the Bernese Oberland in mind. On page 83, we see the Chopard Alpine Eagle in action on a Swiss glacier, but this is a watch equally at home in the lobby bar of the Gstaad Palace Hotel or on the dancefloor of the GreenGo. ■ N.F.

## Stopwatch **Auction Report**

By *Simon de Burton*

# TIME IS MONEY

Keeping watch on this season's sales



## *Positive* ALTITUDE

This Favre Leuba Bivouac 9000 (*above*) might not have been to hell and back—but it went as far as it's possible to go in the other direction (while remaining on Earth, at least). The titanium-cased tool watch with built-in altimeter was worn by climber Adrian Ballinger (*above*) when he summited Mount Everest in May 2018 and was one of few watches carried to the world's highest peak to have appeared at auction. Ballinger, one of the world's leading high altitude climbers and a veteran of more than half a dozen Everest ascents, donated the CHF7,500 (around £5,700) achieved for the watch by Antiquorum on May 12 to Nepal's Khumbu Climbing Centre which trains local people as mountain guides.



## WORTH A GAMBLE

A genteel way of bringing the casino to the people, the Little Monte Carlo—made in 1925—comprises a pocket watch case fitted with a miniature roulette wheel. Pushing the winding crown causes the central hand to spin before coming to rest at a random number, just like the real thing. The winning punter laid down €1,430 [c. £1,320] to secure it at Antiquorum's Monaco sale in July.

## Sennasational

This yellow gold Rolex Cosmograph (*below*) was a gift from the late Ayrton Senna to Angelo Parilla, the mentor, manager and friend who founded DAP (Di Angelo Parilla) Karts in 1970—and in whose karts Senna contested the World Championship from 1978 to 1982 before going on to become one of the greatest Formula One drivers of all time. Although the watch dates from 1989, the engraving on the caseback—"To Angelo from Ayrton, 1978"—refers to the year their partnership began. The unique piece fetched CHF 162,500 (c. £123,300) at Phillips Geneva on May 11, along with a signed visor from one of the Brazilian ace's race helmets.



**Above:** Senna during Master Karting at Bercy, 1993.  
**Below:** Senna dons his helmet at the San Marino Grand Prix, 1992



## Hero Watch JAEGER-LECOULTRE MEMOVOX POLARIS

Back in 1959, Jaeger-LeCoultre set a new standard in dive watch design with the creation of its Memovox Deep Sea—the first watch of its type to feature a mechanical alarm designed to remind the wearer of when it was time to return to the surface. Six years later, the watch was modified and improved to become the Memovox Polaris, which offered greater water resistance, a three-part caseback that gave the alarm a louder, more sonorous sound and a



trio of sealed crowns: one for setting the alarm, one for charging it and one for setting the time. Water resistant down to 200 metres and with a large-for-the-era 42mm case, the E859 Memovox Polaris (named after the Polaris missiles made famous during the Cold War) is a vintage watch that remains as practical to wear as it is good looking. Just 1,714 were produced from 1965 to 1970, although modern "tribute" models were launched in 2008.



JEROME PREVOST/TEMPSPORT/CORBIS/VCG VIA GETTY IMAGES (SENNA IN KART); PAUL-HENRI CAHIER/GETTY IMAGES (SENNA WITH HELMET); JOSH EDELSON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (BALLINGER); SHUTTERSTOCK (SEA WATER); GETTY IMAGES (FREE DIVER)

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## Stopwatch / Auction Report

By Simon de Burton



Soviet technician works on Sputnik 1, 1957

### IN THE (SPUT)NIK OF TIME

This white gold Vacheron Constantin (*above*), one of just 10 watches produced in 2007 to mark the 50th anniversary of the launch of Sputnik 1, sold for €84,500 (c. £78,000) when it crossed the block in Monaco in July. Featuring an open-worked dial topped with a miniature rendition of the Soviet satellite and its four antennae, the watch was originally sold through Vacheron Constantin's Moscow boutique—the only outlet where the model was made available. Sputnik 1 is credited with kicking off the Space Age, despite remaining in orbit for just three weeks before its trio of batteries went flat. Part of its extensive legacy includes the coining of the word “beatnik” by San Francisco journalist Herb Caen.



### Plane Sailing

➤ This nicely preserved Patek Philippe dress watch was presented to French naval aviator Henri-Laurent Daillière for his record-breaking seaplane flight when, between June 22 and 23, 1935, he travelled the 2,700 miles from Cherbourg to Ziguinchor in Senegal. Lieutenant Daillière, who was awarded the Légion d'Honneur at the young age of 28, subsequently died while flying a reconnaissance aircraft near Freetown, Sierra Leone, in October 1942. His watch sold for €9,100 (c. £8,400) in Monaco on July 16.



### RIGHT ON Q

A miniature table clock made by the celebrated 17th-century horologist Thomas Tompion sold for a gargantuan £1.93million when it crossed the block at Bonhams during the summer. The clock, which is 19.7cm in height, was made for Queen Mary II in 1693, and is known as the Q clock [for Queen] as it was paired with a larger campaign clock made for King William III [the K clock]. The last time it appeared at auction in 1993 it fetched £400,000.



### JUST DESERTS

➤ A 1971 Omega Speedmaster that was worn by outback adventurer Denis Bartell (*above*) when he walked 245 miles across Australia's fiery Simpson Desert in 1984 fetched £2,500 on July 20 at London auction house Watches of Knightsbridge, accompanied by a copy of correspondence and a photograph of Bartell wearing the watch at the end of his solo, unaided walk. Bartell, who was born in 1933, later walked right across Australia.

### FAMILY AFFAIR

➤ Values of vintage Vacheron Constantin watches are on the up following the sale of two examples for six-figure sums. In May, Phillips Geneva achieved a world record CHF740,000 (c. £625,000) for a 1940, cushion-cased minute repeater known as the “Don Pancho” (*right*) after its original owner, Francisco Martinez Llano. The watch remained in his family for more than 60 years before being restored by Vacheron Constantin's heritage department and offered for sale. Meanwhile, at its June auction in New York, Christie's drew \$356,250 (around £293,000) for a 1954 Vacheron minute repeater that had also been in single family ownership.



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## Stopwatch **Auction Report**

By *Simon de Burton*

### THE GODFATHER OF ALL WATCHES

The watch (*below right*) worn by the late Marlon Brando when he starred in Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* is expected to fetch a six-figure sum when it crosses the block at Phillips New York on December 10. The actor gave the 1972 Rolex GMT-Master to his daughter Petra in 1995; she subsequently gave it to her husband, Russel Fischer. It will be sold to raise money for a children's charity set up by the couple. At the same Game Changers sale, Phillips will offer a gold Day-Date given by Rolex to Jack Nicklaus in 1967. He wore it for every win of his career. Proceeds will go to the Nicklaus Children's Health Care Foundation.



### PERPETUAL MOTION

The new Phillips Perpetual boutique at the auction house's galleries in Berkeley Square promises to offer the finest collector's timepieces in custom-built surroundings, a space that will also serve as a venue for shows, exhibitions and the London base of Singer Reimagined—the watch brand formed through a collaboration with car restoration firm Singer Porsche.



### FLIGHT OF FANCY

An ultra-rare yellow gold version of Omega's Flightmaster professional pilot's watch soared to £32,798 when it crossed the block at Bonhams in Hong Kong this summer. Although more than 37,000 Flightmasters were made during the production run from 1969 through the early 1970s, it is believed that fewer than 200 featured yellow gold cases with matching bracelets. This example was sold complete with an extract from the Omega archives confirming that it was originally delivered to Italy in 1971.

### *That's the SPIRIT*



Back in the 1980s, Rolls-Royce owners who wanted to demonstrate their allegiance to the marque even when they weren't behind the wheel could buy a Corum watch with a case in the form of the distinctive radiator grille, complete with tiny Spirit of Ecstasy mascot. Although relatively few were made, three examples recently cropped up at auction—one at Watches of Knightsbridge on July 20 that was sold for £4,000 (complete with its rarely seen original packaging) and two more (*above*) that realised almost £10,000 between them at Bonhams in Hong Kong on June 12. The latter sale also included a 1960s decanter set housed in a box decorated with a miniature Rolls-Royce grille and full-sized door handles. It realised a Mini-like £1,600.



### AUCTION CALENDAR Autumn 2019

#### September

- 10 Bonhams, London
- 23 Fellows, Birmingham

#### October

- 1-15 Christie's, online
- 15 Fellows, Birmingham
- 16 Bonhams, New York
- 23 Gardiner Houlgate, Bath
- 27 Antiquorum, Hong Kong

#### November

- 9 Christie's, Geneva (Only Watch)
- 10 Antiquorum, Geneva
- 10 Christie's, Geneva
- 11 Christistie's, Geneva
- 15 Dr. Crott, Frankfurt
- 19 Bonhams, London
- 22 Christie's, online
- 23 Bonhams, Hong Kong
- 25 Christie's, Hong Kong
- 26 Christie's, online
- 26 Fellows, Birmingham

#### December

- 9 Fellows, Birmingham
- 10 Phillips, New York
- 11 Bonhams, London
- 11 Christie's, New York

### BUBBLE TROUBLE

Lest anyone believe that vintage watch prices can only keep on climbing, it's worth remembering that around 25 years ago, the Rolex Bubbleback was highly regarded as a blue-chip collectable with prices for the best examples sometimes reaching £20,000. Now, however, the profusion of horological knowledge and the huge choice of more interesting models that hold greater wrist appeal have put the puny, 32mm Bubbleback in the shade—a fact evinced when three examples were auctioned at Bonhams Hong Kong in June. One failed to find a buyer, and the other two made just £4,800 between them....



MARY ELLEN MARK (BRANDO); DAVID CAIRNS/EXPRESS/GETTY IMAGES (PILOTS); CLIFFORD COFFIN/CONDÉ NAST VIA GETTY IMAGES (MODEL WITH ROLLS-ROYCE); COURTESY OF BONHAMS (ROLEX BUBBLEBACK); DAVID CAIRNS/EXPRESS/GETTY IMAGES (PILOTS)



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THE ARTISAN OF EMOTIONS - SINCE 1860

# Stopwatch **Auction Report**

By *Simon de Burton*

Buy, Sell, Hold

# AUCTIONEERS' TOP TIPS

|                                                           | BUY                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                      | SELL                                                                            |                                                                                       | HOLD                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Laura Bishop</b><br>Fellows,<br>Birmingham             |  Rare Patek Philippes or vintage Rolex sports models                                   |    | Interesting military timepieces, especially those with intriguing provenance    |    | Vacheron Constantin—prices have dropped in recent years, but could be set to rise |
| <b>Geoffroy Ader</b><br>Auction Consultant,<br>Paris      |  Patek Philippe remains the most collectable despite the Rolex sports watch frenzy     |    | Rolex remains the number one seller, particularly vintage Daytonas              |    | Audemars Piguet until the museum opens next year, after which prices could rise   |
| <b>John Reardon</b><br>Senior Consultant,<br>New York     |  The rising star of the Patek Philippe Ellipse has arrived and prices are rising fast |    | Watches with aftermarket diamonds—non-factory modifications hurt value          |    | Grand Seiko models such as the SBGK005 are affordable, elegant and wearable       |
| <b>Julien Schaerer</b><br>Antiquorum,<br>Geneva           |  Modern complications, especially early Roger Dubuis and early FP Journe models      |  | Vintage Omega Speedmaster, Rolex sports models and Patek Philippe Nautilus      |  | Oversized, waterproof chronographs and complicated pocket watches                 |
| <b>Toby Sutton</b><br>Watches of Knightsbridge,<br>London |  Quality vintage models by well-known brands that have not seen recent price         |  | Watches that have increased in price by over 100 per cent price in recent years |  | Military-issued watches—expect to see a steady increase in value                  |
| <b>Adrian Hailwood</b><br>Dreweatts,<br>London            |  1940s chronographs: Patek Philippe, Vacheron Constantin, Audemars Piguet            |  | Manual-wind Rolex Daytonas—prices for all but the rarest are stalling           |  | High-end contemporary independents like Philippe Dufour and Kari Voutilainen      |
| <b>Stefan Muser</b><br>Dr. Crott,<br>Frankfurt            |  “Full sets” with a quality vintage watch: box, papers, unpolished with perfect dial |  | Low-quality vintage sport watches from third-rate companies                     |  | Heuer chronographs. They will come back                                           |

## POLE POSITION

The “Polarouter” wristwatch of the 1950s—created by Universal on behalf of Scandinavian airline SAS to commemorate the first flights from Copenhagen to Los Angeles via the North Pole—was the first commercially successful design penned by Gérald Genta, who went on to create legendary watches such as the Patek Philippe Nautilus and Audemars Piguet Royal Oak. This 1955 example (later re-named “Polerouter”) fetched a modest sum of £4,800 at Watches of Knightsbridge on July 20.



## Did you clock these two?

This rare two-and-a-half-foot high Omega clock mounted on a metal pole realised HK\$63,125 (£6,612) when it appeared for sale at Bonhams Hong Kong in June. Originally intended for use on a railway station platform, it was sold complete with a wooden-cased master clock to which it could be connected in order to maintain accuracy through electronic impulses.



## THE ONE AND ONLY

November will see the eighth edition of the biennial Only Watch charity auction that, since 2005, has raised more than CHF40million [around £33.8million] for research into Duchene muscular dystrophy and other neuromuscular diseases. This year, 50 watches will be offered, with four brands—MB&F and L’Epee and De Bethune and Urwerk—collaborating on projects. Other makers range from Armin Strom to Zenith and Audemars Piguet to Kari Voutilainen, with Patek Philippe, Jaeger-LeCoultre, Louis Vuitton and Ulysse Nardin. The sale will be staged by Christie’s at Four Seasons Hotel des Bergues in Geneva on November 9, prior to which all lots will be taken on a world tour. [onlywatch.com](http://onlywatch.com)



SERHIY HIPSKYY/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO (STATION CLOCK); COURTESY OF BONHAMS (OMEGA); WORLDPHOTOS/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO (OLD MAP); CHRISTIE'S IMAGES LTD. 2019 (VACHERON CONSTANTIN); COURTESY OF ONLY WATCH (ZENITH)

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## Stopwatch **News Report**

By Nazanin Lankarani

### THIS SPORTING LIFE

**Bamford London's** new Mayfair Sport continues to surf on its clients' love of the Bamford service watch. Fashionably sporty, this new iteration comes in an array of brightly coloured designs built around a steel core, with options for dial configuration, a rubber strap, a unique wickerway function and LumiNova indices, all priced at £350.

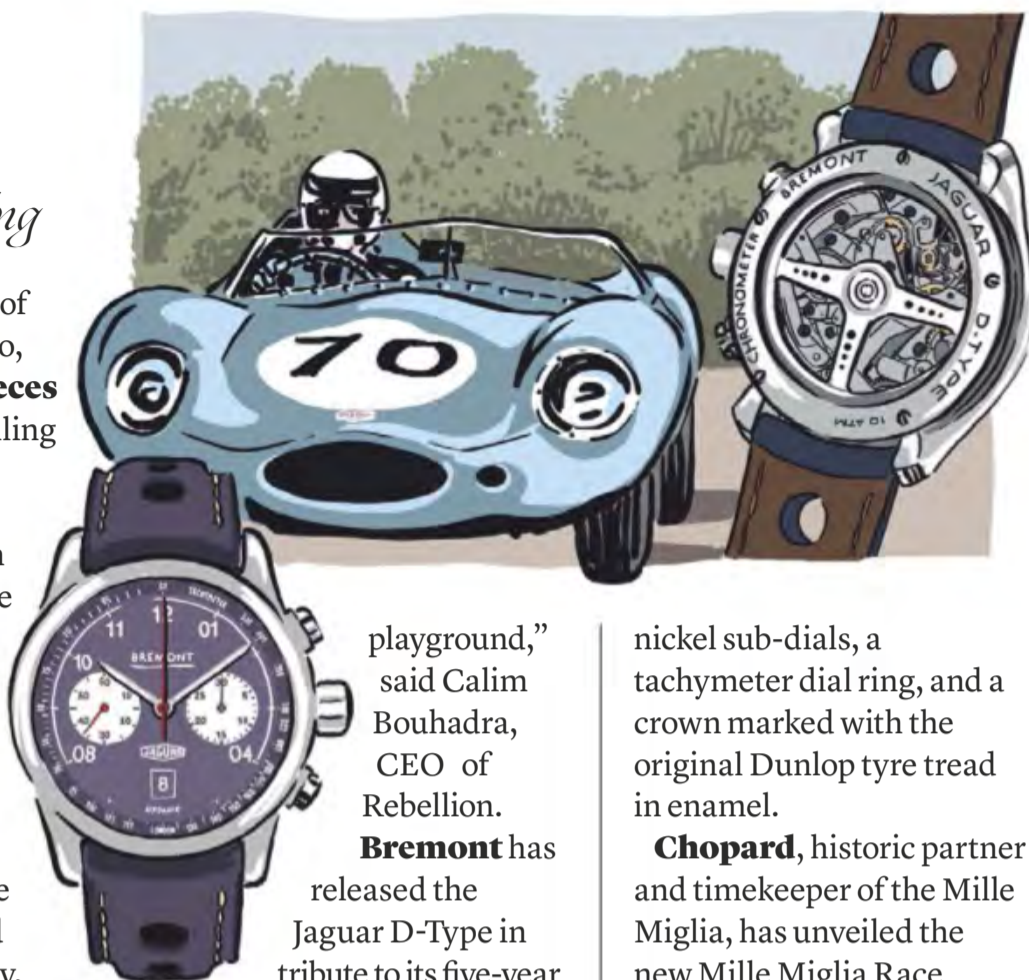
#### Official *Timekeepers*

**Bremont** was the official watch and timing partner of this year's TT Race on the Isle of Man, one of the last great challenges in motor sport, in which Peter Hickman, credited with being the fastest newcomer ever, won the opening RST Superbike race.

**Tudor** is the official timekeeper of the Rugby World Cup 2019 in Japan. This first Asian edition kicks off on September 20 in Tokyo, when the hosts take on Russia; the final will be contested on November 2.

#### Auto *Racing*

Barely off the circuit of Top Marques Monaco, **Rebellion Timepieces** took part in the gruelling 24 Hours of Le Mans with two unique "art-cars", coming in fourth and fifth in the LMP1 category. The Re-Volt Rebellion\* RocketByz timepiece, unveiled at Le Mans, was produced in collaboration with the hip-hop producer and street artist, Tomyboy, founder of RocketByz. "It is exciting and challenging for us to introduce this watch, our two art-cars and our new artistic branding in the motor sport



playground," said Calim Bouhadra, CEO of Rebellion. **Bremont** has released the Jaguar D-Type in tribute to its five-year collaboration with Jaguar. Limited to 300, the bi-compax chronograph has a dial inspired by the blue pantones of Jaguar's Ecurie Ecosse race team, brushed

nickel sub-dials, a tachymeter dial ring, and a crown marked with the original Dunlop tyre tread in enamel.

**Chopard**, historic partner and timekeeper of the Mille Miglia, has unveiled the new Mille Miglia Race Edition chronograph, the Mille Miglia GTS Power Control, and a third timepiece celebrating the centenary of the coachbuilder Zagato.

#### In *Portfolio*

**IWC Schaffhausen** has partnered with Cousteau Divers, a non-profit community of dive centres united to protect marine life by studying the effects of



climate change in ocean temperature. **IWC's** Aquatimer Chronograph Edition Jacques-Yves Cousteau paid tribute to the underwater filmmaker on what would have been his 100th birthday in 2010.

#### Aquatic *Partnerships*

The light-reflecting mother-of-pearl dial of **Breguet's** new Ladies Marine is designed to evoke "the waves of the sea" and celebrates the brand's partnership with the Race For Water Foundation.

**Panerai** plans to launch a collection of watches made with the sailcloth of the racing boats on the dial, in



partnership with Luna Rossa, the Italian America's Cup team.

**Frédérique Constant** pays homage to the Riva Club of France and the Roaring 1920s with its 188-piece automatic Runabout French Riviera. The collection, inspired by the design of the 1920s Riva boats, was unveiled at the Sportmer Riva Revival in June and will be sold exclusively in France.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY STUDIO NIPPOLDT; COURTESY OF BREMONT (JAGUAR D-TYPE)



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## Stopwatch **News Report**

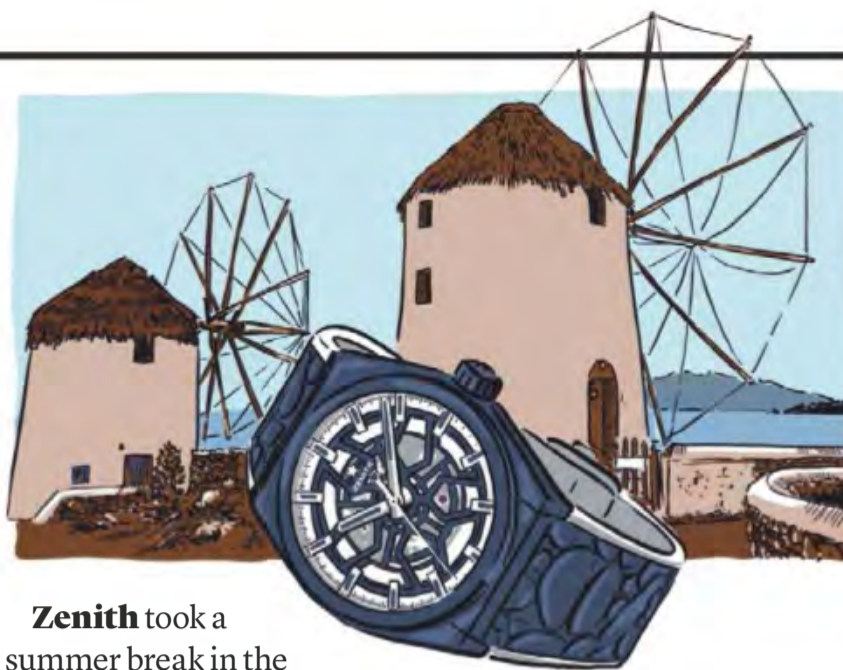
By Nazanin Lankarani

### GONE WITH THE WIND

Until the 1960s, a water source accessible through the cellar of the original **Zenith** manufacture in Le Locle supplied drinking water to an old-fashioned fountain that stood before the entrance of the building. Around the same time that Zenith launched the calibre 5011 K of its marine chronometers, the fountain was demolished. The underground water, still dripping from its source, became undrinkable. For a time, Zenith toyed with the idea of filtering it at source and bottling its own branded Zenith Water. But Swiss

cantonal authorities opposed the idea, and Zenith returned to making chronographs.

As a new eco-friendly era opens today, plans are being laid to stop the water from going to waste. By 2020, Zenith hopes to put into place a system to capture and filter the 400 litres of water that currently flow every hour, in order to supply its industrial washing machines and sanitary facilities. The plan would not only help to save water but would ensure a “greener future” for Zenith. The water fountain, in turn, is unlikely to be rebuilt.



**Zenith** took a summer break in the Greek isles. The Defy Classic Mykonos Edition, which launched in June, is made of ceramic in Aegean blue; the skeleton construction allows a view of the windmills of Mykonos on the sapphire caseback. Its movement is a remake of Zenith’s automatic Elite. Limited to 25, the Mykonos Edition is only available at Greek retailer GOFAS.

**Romain Jérôme’s** 10-piece ARRAW Marine collection of chronographs also features the blue of the Aegean Sea and the distinctive white windmills of Mykonos on the oscillating weight. All 10 pieces will be sold exclusively in Mykonos, at the Kessarlis shop in town and in the new village at Nammos Beach.

### Art & Collaborations



As sponsor of Art Basel in Miami Beach in December, **Audemars Piguet** will present a site-specific “sound” commission produced by Jana Winderen, at its VIP lounge designed by Fernando Mastrangelo.

**Carl Suchy & Söhne** has produced a new ad campaign for its Waltz Skeleton N°1 that revisits the era of Viennese Modernism. The campaign’s contemporary

images, the work of an artists’ collective known as SPILL, marry sinuous shapes inspired by the drawings of Egon Schiele with details derived from the work of architects, Josef Hoffmann and Adolf Loos.

**Tissot** and Renault Alpine have collaborated on the Alpine on Board Automatic, a new accessory made for the Alpine A110 car. With a special aluminium case inspired by the counters in the Berlinette of the 1960s and 70s, piston-shaped push-buttons and a perforated leather bracelet, the wristwatch can be fitted onto the supporting frame of the car’s multi-media screen. Also incorporating a “free hand system” is the Aikon Mercury by **Maurice Lacroix**, launching in October, that uses gravity to display time. When the wearer’s arm is down, the

hands face down as if pulled by gravity; when the arm is raised, the hands are positioned on the correct time.

**Christophe Claret** has collaborated with Vasyl Lomachenko, the Ukrainian featherweight champion a.k.a the “Picasso of Boxing” on the Loma, a mono-pusher chronograph, limited to 20 pieces.

**Franck Muller** and Regal Assets (the first company to hold a government-issued licence to trade cryptos in its deep-cold storage vault)



have launched the Encrypto, the world’s first collection of functional bitcoin watches, only available online.

**Vacherin Constantin** will be using blockchain technology (*left*) to combat counterfeiting and guarantee the authenticity of its Les Collectionneurs.

**Rado** has been licensed by Les Couleurs Suisse to use the famous modernist architect’s colour palette—the “Architectural Polychromy”—in its new collection (*above*): the True Thinline Les Couleurs Le Corbusier.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY STUDIO NIPPOLDT; FINNBOG PETURSSON (WINDEREN)



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## Stopwatch **News Report**

By Nazanin Lankarani

### AMBASSADORS & ANNIVERSARIES

Tom Brady, the New England Patriots' quarterback who was seen sporting a Portugieser Perpetual Calendar Edition "150 Years" at this year's Met Gala in New York, is now brand ambassador for **IWC Schaffhausen**.

Italian explorer and **Montblanc** ambassador, Alex Bellini, has been travelling down the world's top 10 most polluted rivers on a makeshift raft built out of rubbish. His journey to trace their route downriver began on the Ganges and was inspired by a 2018 German study that found that 80 per cent of all plastic in oceans arrives from just 10 rivers, accumulating at an annual rate of eight million tons, as estimated

by the U.N. Environment Assembly. By 2021, Bellini plans to have navigated the Yangtze, the Niger, the Mekong and the remaining six polluted rivers, before ending on the Great Pacific Ocean garbage patch, the world's largest accumulation of plastics located between Hawaii and California.

**Chopard** welcomed the Chinese actress Zhang Ziyi, acclaimed for her role in Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, as global ambassador at a dinner during the Cannes International Film Festival.

**Panerai** has named the National Geographic photographer and alpinist Jimmy Chin, winner of the 2019 Oscar for Best



Documentary for *Free Solo*, as brand ambassador. The documentary told the harrowing story of the mountain climber, Alex Honnold, and his ropeless ascent of El Capitan.

**Bremont's** new ambassador, mountaineer Nirmal "Nims" Purja MBE, the first Gurkha to join the elite Special Boat Service, is attempting to scale the world's 14 highest peaks in seven months, measuring himself against a record

that stands at seven years. Wearing his \$300 White diving watch on the mission, Nims is weighed down by 14 dials he carries on the climbs. Each will be integrated in a Bremont watch to be auctioned this autumn.

**Parmigiani Fleurier** has welcomed Amanda Lui, a Hong Kong-based businesswoman, as a friend of the brand. Liu is a great-granddaughter of the founder of KMB, Hong Kong's public transportation provider since 1933.

### Special Editions

**Louis Vuitton** celebrated the 10th anniversary of its Tambour Spin Time Air with the "ethereal" calibre LV88, developed by La Fabrique du Temps Louis Vuitton.

This month, **A. Lange & Söhne** marks the 25th anniversary of the Lange 1 with the Little Lange 1 Moon, limited to 25 pieces.

**Citizen** is celebrating 30 years of the Promaster with its new automatic Marine Super Titanium (waterproof to 200 metres) in line with its "Go Deeper" campaign.

On the 50th anniversary of the El Primero, **Zenith's**



50-piece limited-edition trilogy includes a reissue of the first 1969 El Primero, a Chronomaster El Primero, and a new Defy El Primero 21.

**Tudor's** "snowflake" hands have turned 50. First made in 1969 for reference 7016 and 7021 diving watches, they were deemed innovative because their

larger luminescent surface allowed for greater legibility under water. This year, the snowflakes were incorporated in Tudor's Black Bay and Pelagos models.

To mark the 75th anniversary of Allied troops disembarking on the beaches of Normandy, **Reservoir** has launched a three-piece Battlefield

collection. Each model is named after a famous Second World War episode.

Popeye, the spinach-eating, one-eyed sailor, has turned 90—a milestone celebrated by Bamford. "George has always loved Popeye and we thought the GMT with the port-hole type design would suit the character," the brand said. The **Bamford** Popeye GMT, limited to 50 pieces, is priced £1,500.

**Mondaine** licensed the design of the Swiss railway clock in 1986. Marking the 75th anniversary of its introduction, the Swiss Railways Classic watch will be sold in a boxed set with a history of the railway clock.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY STUDIO NIPPOLDT; MAURO TALAMONTI (MONTBLANC)

**Aurel Bacs ZENITH EL PRIMERO** by *Nicholas Foulkes*

Earlier this year I was speaking to a watch expert at a major auction house and he spoke of the “nuclear power” of Aurel Bacs. I like Aurel, he is good company, a great showman and a true lover of watches, but to hear a rival speak of him in that way is to understand his historical importance in the development of watch collecting during the 21st century.

He achieved the highest price for a wristwatch at auction when he sold Paul Newman’s Paul Newman Rolex Daytona (US\$17 million and change). Moreover, out of the top five wristwatches sold at auction, he brought the gavel down on four of them.

And even though he was not destined to sell the most expensive portable timepiece of all time, the fabled Patek Philippe Henry Graves Supercomplication pocket watch, he acted on behalf of the successful anonymous bidder securing this horological masterpiece for just shy of CHF23.25 million at the auction held by Sotheby’s in 2014.

With his lavish sales catalogues characterised by their lengthy lot essays and exigent photography, he has pioneered a new form of horological publishing: the coffee-table catalogue.

To see him at his best it is necessary to attend one of his auctions in his home town of Geneva, where twice a year the hotel La Réserve witnesses the construction of a temporary structure the size of an aircraft hangar to accommodate auctions that are part rock concert, part evangelical religious gathering. Seeing him in action (*right*), switching effortlessly between French, English, Italian and German, is like watching Roger Federer play tennis, or like listening to Valery Gergiev conducting Tchaikovsky; as he bats the bids back and forth around the room and raises



**Top:** Julien Tornare and Romain Marietta from Zenith at work with Aurel Bacs and Alexandre Ghotbi from Phillips on the one-off El Primero (*left*) to mark the model’s 50th anniversary

the emotional pitch of the bidders.

This autumn’s sale may be his most emotional yet as he auctions a watch of his own design. Only those in a coma can have failed to note that this is the 50th anniversary of the Zenith El Primero, the highly advanced, high-frequency, self-winding chronograph on which the



modern reputation of the marque is founded. Casting about for a suitable way of bringing this momentous year to its close, Zenith CEO Julien Tornare, in an inspired act of genius, invited Bacs to design and then sell the ultimate El Primero, a one-off timepiece that would stir the emotions of the collecting community and honour the legacy of what is arguably the most widely known watch movement.

The pressure of reworking what is, in effect, a monument in the watchmaking landscape and then being responsible for its sale to benefit a children’s cancer charity can only be imagined. I might have chosen a less public way in which to begin my career as a watch designer, but then I am not Aurel Bacs.

Although at the time of writing work is not complete, this unique lapis-lazuli dialled, reverse panda, platinum-cased version of the original A386 looks stunning. Based on his debut I hope that in the near future we can expect to see further examples in

His auctions are part rock concert, part *evangelical* religious gathering

more affordable executions of what I have the great satisfaction of being the first to call “the Aurel Bacs El Primero”.

As I mention, not everything is yet decided, for example there is some debate as to whether to offer the watch on a calfskin strap or a bracelet akin to the Gay Frères original (the latter is better obvs). However, one thing I do know for absolute certain is that—whatever strap it comes on—I will not be able to afford it.

*The Aurel Bacs Zenith El Primero will be auctioned on November 9-10, 2019 at La Réserve, Geneva, by Bacs himself*

## Stopwatch **News Report**

By Nazanin Lankarani

### MUSEUM SHOWS & EXHIBITIONS



**Bulgari, TAG Heuer, Hublot and Zenith** have banded together to partake in the first “LVMH Swiss Watch Manufactures” exhibition at Dubai’s Bulgari Hotel in January. While all four brands have confirmed their presence at Baselworld in April 2020, Stéphane Bianchi, president of the LVMH Watch Division said: “We remain very supportive and loyal to Baselworld and the Swiss watchmaking industry, however it was not possible for us to go 13 months without a global presentation of our products and brands.”

An exhibition dedicated to **Cartier** titled “Cartier, Crystallization of Time”

will open next month at Tokyo’s National Art Centre. The show explores **Cartier’s** unique know-how through sections titled “Colours and Material Transformation”, “Forms and Design” and “Universal Curiosity”. The Material Research Laboratory, run by designers Hiroshi Sugimoto and Tomoyuki Sakakida, is behind the show’s scenography and the unique viewing experience it offers using a “cyclical space” inspired by time.

Planet Omega, an exhibition that offers insight into **Omega’s** heritage since 1848, will be travelling through China this year. The show explores

Omega’s conquest of space, sports heritage, interest in oceans (*below*), and its James Bond legacy.

After Dubai in 2012, Munich in 2013, London in 2015, and New York in 2017, Singapore will host **Patek Philippe** and the fifth edition of its Watch Art Grand Exhibition for two weeks starting on September 28. Free of charge and open daily to the public at the Sands Theatre, the show offers insights into the watchmaking traditions of the

family-owned company through a larger-than-ever selection of 400 unique and historic timepieces.

“In Singapore’s bicentennial year, the Grand Exhibition underlines the importance of Singapore and Southeast Asia for Patek Philippe. These markets are not only significant when it comes to the number of collectors and enthusiasts based in the region, they also play a major role in building appreciation for the work of fine mechanical watch-making,” the Swiss brand said.



### **Tool Time: Water Pressure Tester** by Justin Koullapis of The Watch Club

There are three main types of watch pressure testing equipment. In the first, the watch is locked in a chamber filled with compressed air. As the pressure rises, a sensor detects the minuscule dimension that the watch gets squeezed and interprets the results as pressure-resistance.

The hydrostatic test sees the watch immersed in distilled water, and a screw applies huge force to the chamber. If the watch is leaky, then water enters. The fact that it’s so absolute (water either gets in or not) makes this test the gold standard, which is a little perverse because if it passes, well



and good, but if it fails, then you have a wet watch, and this has to be immediately stripped bare and serviced. Needless to say, this test is only performed on very sturdy dive watches.

The final type is the vacuum test—also a wet test, but without risk of water ingress. The watch is immersed, whereupon a vacuum is applied. The resulting low pressure compels any leaky spot to reveal itself by bubbles forming at that point. It has the advantage that not only does it show whether the watch is pressure-tight, but also pin-points the faulty spot.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY STUDIO NIPPOLDT

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Stopwatch **News Report**

By Nazanin Lankarani

**BOUTIQUE OPENINGS**



**Ulysse Nardin** will open a new

flagship store at 10 quai du Général-Guisan in Geneva later this month, decorated with images of a great white shark and other marine life to evoke “the sea, the sky and the horizon that separates them”.

To enhance the shopping experience of its clients, **Chopard** has reopened its London boutique on Bond Street, wholly refurbished as an elegant “family home”, in which a limited UK-only edition of its

ultra-thin L.U.C XPS 1860 Officer Royal Arms of England is available.

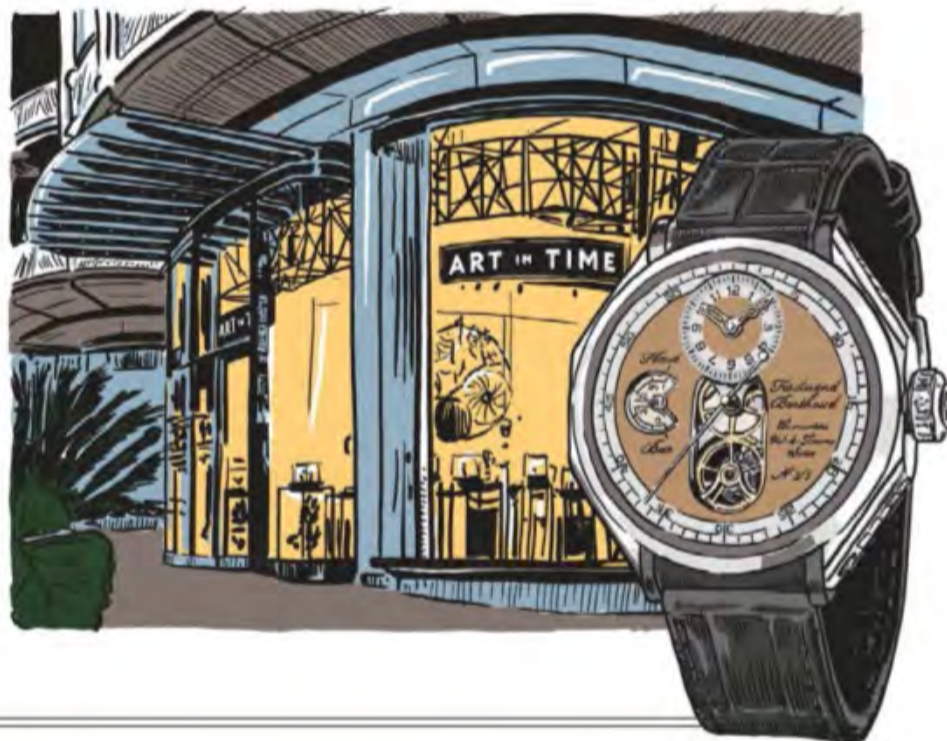
The new **Audemars Piguet** “House” has opened at 130 New Bond Street. Designed as a “home away from home”, it will serve as a private members’ club for loyal customers and faithful lovers of the Royal Oak and the Code 11.59. “Guests will be able to use the many spaces in a relaxed and informal way, invite friends for lunch, or organise business meetings... and there’s no obligation to buy a watch,”

said François-Henry Bennaïm, the chief executive of **Audemars Piguet**.

**Cartier**’s Old Bond Street boutique will reopen next month, becoming home to “many archive stories” and exclusive products. **Roger Dubuis** opened its first London boutique on Old Bond Street in July across the street from a new **Richard Mille** boutique.

**Vacheron Constantin** will open boutiques in Osaka at the Daimaru Shinsaibashi department store and another in Melbourne on Collins Street in November.

The “Art in Time” boutique, a “watchmaking gallery concept” has opened in the new “One Monte Carlo” complex in Monaco at the initiative of Karl-Friedrich Scheufele, co-president of **Chopard** and president of **La Chronométrique Ferdinand Berthoud**. The multi-brand shop brings together independent brands like **Greubel Forsey**, **Ressence**, **L’Épée**, **MB&F**, **Florian Schlumpf** and **Urwerk**, united by their shared values of “independence, originality and craftsmanship”.



**Modern Classic: Hublot Big Bang Unico Teak Italia Independent** by Nicholas Foulkes

Hublot may be a Swiss brand but it is acquiring a strong Italian accent. This year’s Classic Fusion Ferrari GT chronograph is shaping up to be one of the hits of 2019, its softened contours a departure from the familiar angularity of the customary case architecture. However, as this is *Vanity Fair*, *The Water Issue*, it seems more appropriate to focus on another Italian icon, Gianni Agnelli— ladykiller, tycoon, man of taste and, among his many talents, an accomplished yachtsman in whose honour his grandson Lapo Elkann designed the Hublot Big

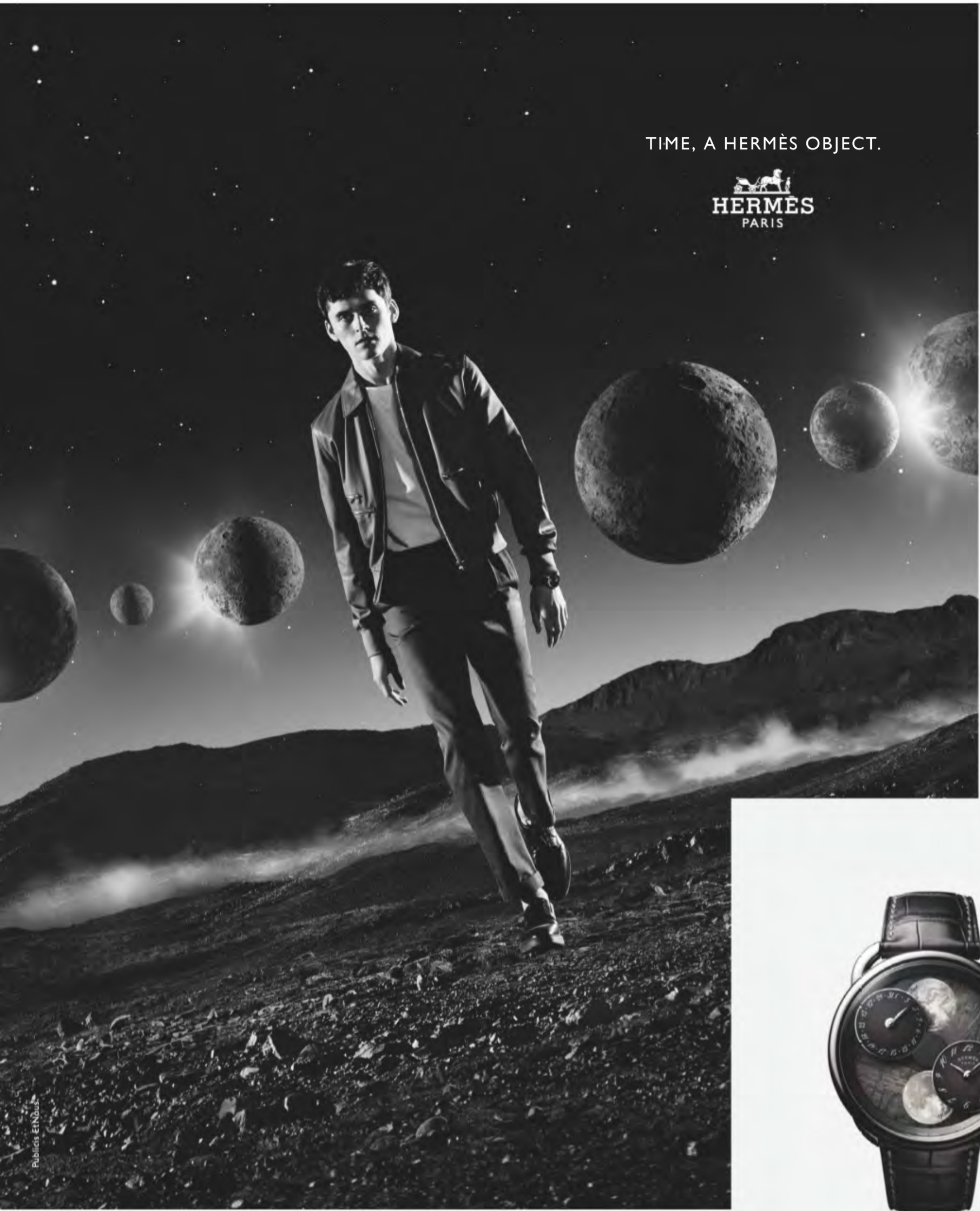


Bang Unico Teak Italia Independent. Inspired by L’Avvocato’s 1990s racing yacht, the mythical *Stealth*, on which Lapo and his brother John won the Fastnet Race in 2001, the watch uses advanced materials such as King Gold (a platinum and gold alloy) for the push-pieces (1) and Kevlar sailcloth for one of the two straps (2). A more traditional yachting material, teak wood, was used for a stunning bezel (3). Liberal use of the colour blue (4) alludes to the hue of the waters off Capri, where this watch was launched.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY STUDIO NIPPOLDT; COURTESY OF ULYSSE NARDIN (SHARK AND WATCH)

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**Case Study**  
By Nicholas Foulkes

**Plutocrat-ready** The elegant new Rolex Yacht-Master 42 taps into an aesthetic inspired by master mariners

Last year Rolex took to the skies with the reappearance of the GMT-Master “Pepsi” in Oystersteel. This year the brand turned its attention to water, with the launch of the Yacht-Master 42—a chunky white gold watch, with a 42mm diameter case, the now familiar black ceramic 60-minute bi-directional bezel, and the Oysterflex bracelet. Making its first appearance in a Yacht-Master, the watch is equipped with the 70-hour power reserve calibre 3235. As well as launching the new Yacht-Master, Rolex staged a small exhibition at the Baselworld fair to celebrate a model that is now over a quarter of a century old and was born out of an association with yachting that reaches back to the mid 20th century.

It was in 1958 that Rolex formed an alliance with the New York Yacht Club, instigator of the America’s Cup. Fast forward 61 years and Rolex is title sponsor of most of the important fixtures on the yachting calendar (the Rolex Sydney Hobart, Rolex Fastnet Race, Rolex Giraglia, the Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup et al). Rolex also announced that it would be the official timepiece of SailGP, a new series of races taking place in Sydney, San Francisco, New York, Cowes and Marseille. SailGP is intended to exploit the excitement of “foiling”, in which the hull lifts out of the water to increase speed.

A Yacht-Master is on the wrist of Sir Ben Ainslie (see page 80) just as a Rolex was on the wrist of the most famous mariner of modern times—Sir Francis Chichester, who circumnavigated the globe single-handedly over 226 days in 1966 and 1967. His watch got bashed



**Clockwise from left:** the latest Rolex Yacht-Master 42 in 18ct white gold; the New York Yacht Club; the first Yacht-Master, 1992; Hans Wilsdorf, the founder of Rolex who was obsessed with achieving marine chronometer levels of precision in a wristwatch

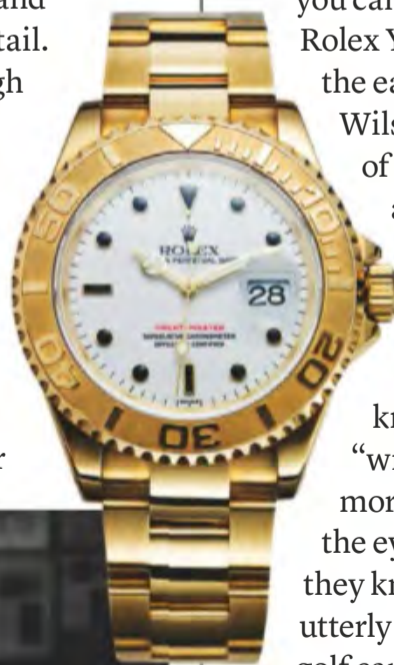
about but never stopped working. What’s more, it demonstrated versatility when, to celebrate his birthday Sir Francis slipped into his dinner jacket mid-Atlantic and enjoyed a champagne cocktail.

The hegemony of the High Seas extends on land too. Since partnering with the New York Yacht Club, the brand has signed up a dozen of the world’s top yacht spots, so whether you are sinking a gin with the commodore of the Royal Yacht Squadron in Cowes or

swapping suntan tips with Flavio Briatore at the Yacht Club Costa Smeralda, you do so on Rolex time.

But if you use a little imagination you can trace the bloodline of the Rolex Yacht-Master right back to the early 20th century. Hans Wilsdorf, the visionary founder of the brand, was obsessed, and I mean obsessed, with achieving marine chronometer levels of precision within the confines of what was then known pejoratively as a “wristlet” watch. This was more than ambitious: it was—in the eyes of people who believed they knew about these things—utterly ridiculous (like entering a golf cart into Formula 1). At the start of the last century, the wrist was considered no place for a watch.

Wilsdorf not only got his “golf cart” to the starting grid; he won the world championship when, on July 15, 1914,



© ALAIN COSTA (YACHT-MASTER IN WHITE GOLD); © DAN NERNEY/COURTESY OF NEW YORK YACHT CLUB (CLUB INTERIOR); © ROLEX/JEAN-DANIEL MEYER (FIRST YACHT-MASTER); © ROLEX (WILSDORF)

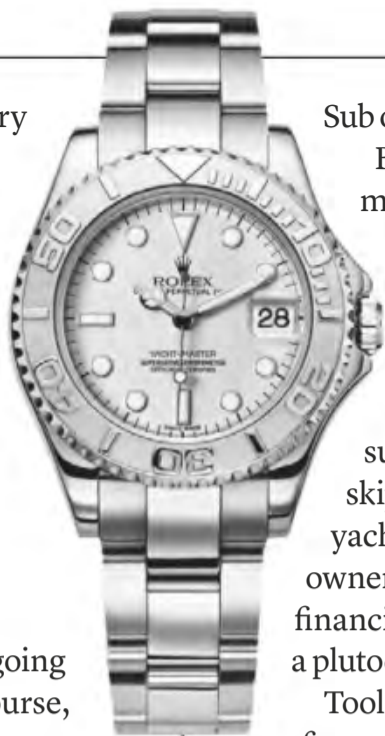
the first Class "A" Observatory Certificate was awarded to a wristwatch, namely a 25mm Rolex movement. Tested for 45 days and nights, in five different positions and at three different temperatures—the same criteria as any marine chronometer—Wilsdorf demonstrated that it was possible to miniaturise the performance of a full-size chronometer that an ocean-going vessel would use to plot its course, and attach it to the wrist of the wearer. The observatory-certified precision of the marine chronometer, a vital navigational instrument, could be found in a wristwatch for the first time.

Seen in this context, a yachting watch should have been the among the first Rolex watches to be launched and it is amazing to think that the brand waited until 1992 to issue one. Oyster, Perpetual, Datejust, Day-Date, GMT-Master, Submariner, Explorer... all these and more were launched during those amazingly fecund four and a half

With a solid gold bezel and 40mm case, *self-effacing* it was not... like most yachts

decades before Wilsdorf's death in 1960. After that came the Cosmograph Daytona in the early 1960s; but I will court controversy and suggest that at best the Cosmograph Daytona was only half-new as Rolex had made chronographs before. So one could argue that it was not until 1992, 32 years after the end of the Wilsdorf era, that Rolex gained a new model family: Yacht-Master.

It has been suggested that the Yacht-Master was in fact a design for an updated Submariner, which had been abandoned because it was too radical. This is certainly given circumstantial credence by the presence of the "Triplock" crown, cyclops date magnifier and crown guards. Certainly, in 1992, it made the



Sub of the same year look its age. But the Yacht-Master was much more than an updated Submariner. The latter was for underwater professionals and leisure divers. The Yacht-Master, as the name suggested, was aimed at the skipper/owner/master of a yacht; and given that yacht ownership is not for the financially faint of heart, this was a plutocrat-ready timepiece.

Tool watches normally required a few years to bed down before a gold version was offered, but the Yacht-Master made its debut in 18ct

Rolesium (steel and platinum) version—an incarnation of the watch which transformed the Yacht-Master into a true icon of "stealth wealth".

The case and bracelet were in steel, while the now famous Yacht-Master bezel was executed in platinum. As well as being a highly prized precious metal, platinum is famously hard-wearing, and as a white metal it is sometimes hard to distinguish from other white metals: in other words, not dissimilar to steel. With a textured platinum bezel on a steel watch, this was so understated that it was almost invisible.

I will leave the Yacht-Master II to be discussed by Tracey Llewellyn (*see page 46*) and return to the Yacht-Master of



**Clockwise from left:** Sir Francis Chichester in 1966; in Buckler's Hard in 1970; his Rolex. Inset, above: the 1999 Rolesium Yacht-Master

gold. The thing about yachts is you have to tie them up in a harbour and you look a bit daft turning up to dinner in a yachting cap and blazer, but the glint of the Yacht-Master solves the problem of fellow yacht owners recognising each other in civvies on dry land.

What set the Yacht-Master apart was the solid gold bezel with raised numerals and minute gradations that caressed the fingertips with a seductive braille-like tactility. It also appeared in a 39.5mm case, soon upgraded to 40mm, which in the early 1990s made it a behemoth. Self-effacing it was not... like most yachts.

I love gold so I naturally liked the Yacht-Master and it came as a complete surprise that I fell in love with the 1999

2015, which saw the model take a momentous step in developing its own identity. This was the year that Rolex presented the Oysterflex bracelet, which combines the ruggedness of a metal bracelet with the suppleness of an elastomer strap. Comprising two flexible metal blades over-moulded with high-performance black elastomer, it is at once sleek and strong.

The Oysterflex bracelet appeared on a new 40mm Everose gold Yacht-Master, which featured another first for the range: a "Cerachrom" bezel insert of high-performance, matt black ceramic, in effect creating an entirely new Yacht-Master aesthetic that is now built upon and reinforced by this year's Yacht-Master 42. ■



## Case Study

By Nicholas Foulkes

# Perfect Negative Respect bordering on reverence characterises the redesign of the stylish monochrome Chanel J12

Ask people the name of the genius behind the modern rise of Chanel from a classic couture and perfume house into a fashion megabrand and the majority is likely to answer Karl Lagerfeld, Chanel's late creative director of fashion. With his blockbuster runway shows and chronic neophilia, the pyrotechnically creative German did much to shape the Chanel we know today (he is probably the reason Miley Cyrus was wearing Chanel during her performance at Glastonbury this year).

But a few better-informed individuals might mention Chanel's late artistic director Jacques Helleu. Helleu was the man behind Chanel's image, responsible for those glossily chic advertisements that were more French than a baguette wearing a beret and waving the tricolor. Helleu was not an easy man but he was chic to the tips of his elegant fingers. His grandfather Paul César Helleu was the portrait painter of choice for the gratin of the Belle Epoque; his father Jean was a painter too, and also established the connection with Chanel, designing perfume bottles for the brand.

Only the passage of time will tell whose legacy was the most significant and it is hard to think of fashion funerals that have approached the splendour of the near state-level obsequies accorded to Karl Lagerfeld.

But while Lagerfeld was creative director of axiomatically evanescent fashion, Helleu worked on more enduring objects. In 1987 he designed *Première*—the dainty woman's watch which borrowed the leather and metal links of a Chanel handbag chain for its strap. Then, at the turn of the century, he designed the J12 for himself, its aquatic leanings implicit in the name borrowed from the class of racing



From left: The original J12 from 2000; former artistic director Jacques Helleu in a J12 yacht race; Helleu's original sketch of the J12

yacht—he was a keen yachtsman himself. This was a watch in Helleu's sleek polo-neck-wearing image, but its style resonated with women all around the world and became, it is fair to say, the first mainstream watch made from new generation ceramic. One saw, and continues to see, it everywhere—in glossy black and porcelain white—and yet almost 20 years of familiarity have bred only respect.

It is respect bordering on reverence that characterises the redesign of the J12 in this its 20th year. It is a relaunch of such subtlety that, had it not been heralded with much fanfare and flourish, I very much doubt anyone would have noticed. Most of the changes are microscopic: a fraction of a millimetre here, a handful of microns there, a barely perceptible change of font, the replacement of a flat surface with an ever-so-slightly curved one—they are alterations on an almost philatelic level. If nothing else, that this “redesign” comprises micro-adjustments

testifies to the brilliance of the original design by Jacques Helleu.

If changes are so imperceptible, are they worth making? Chanel's sage and bonhomous watch boss Nicolas Beau believes so; after all, this is watch-making, where an entire world is bound within an object 40mm across and a centimetre high. “Like any icon, at some point it has to evolve,” explains Beau. “If you look at watches that have been here forever—or you feel have been here forever—in fact they change slightly, every five, 10, 20 years, so that they are more adapted to modern times.”

But there was a strategic as well as aesthetic motivation too: a redesign was necessary to accommodate a new movement. Like many brands, Chanel was reliant on the Swatch Group for movements for its regular production. “We also wanted to be able to control our destiny in terms of movement,” says Beau. “We felt it was time to be independent and be able to follow our

path whatever happens.” Accordingly, Chanel took a share in movement maker Kenissi, described as the “industrial arm” of Rolex sub-brand Tudor, giving industry kremlinologists much to think about.

**B**eau chooses to downplay the commercial significance. “We have a lot of values in common and we said, okay, why not work together like this. We took a share of the company so that we could make sure that we are able to develop movements according to our needs. In this case, we worked on a movement designed by Kenissi on which we have changed a few parts including the design of the rotating mass.”

And this new calibre, visible through the crystal caseback, is immediately identifiable thanks to the hoop-like design of the tungsten rotor—so shaped as to be able to accommodate gem-setting on high jewellery models. The reshaped rotor, along with the all-ceramic caseback that replaces the steel of the original are the work of Arnaud Chastaingt, director of Chanel’s “watchmaking creation studio”. It is somehow characteristic that the most noticeable changes to the watch are concealed when the watch is on the wearer’s wrist.

“At first I wanted to change everything,” admits Chastaingt. “So in the first two months I changed everything. Then I quickly understood that Jacques Helleu had already made the revolution when he launched the watch. When I understood that, of course I had to keep the DNA of the original design. I knew then that my creative approach would be more the approach of the surgeon than the designer. And I knew, too, that I had to suppress my creative ego.”

So began four years of work that saw Chastaingt’s gimlet eye study every aspect of the watch. Forensic study of the numerals on the dial revealed minor inconsistencies that suggested Helleu had drawn them himself, inspired by the instruments on his vintage cars—he had a 1957 Bentley Continental and a 1958 Facel Vega HK 500. The number “3” in particular bothered Chastaingt “so I chose to re-work all the 12 numbers with a

typographer. It was a big job.” Moreover, in addition to changing shape, the numbers themselves are now ceramic and applied onto the dial.

Elsewhere Chastaingt played with scale; if the calibrated and rotating bezel now looks a little finer that is because the number of notches has increased from 30 to 40. If the notching has been increased by one third, then the crown has been reduced in size by an equal amount and sits more harmoniously within the two crown guards that swell from the case wall to embrace the winder. It is a considerable



**From top:** Arnaud Chastaingt, director of Chanel’s watchmaking creation studio and the latest J12 watch in ceramic and steel; the reverse of the new J12; the calibrated and rotating bezel scaled up by Chastaingt

## Bit by bit, technology is *catching up* with Jacques Helleu’s original 1990s vision

improvement: side by side, the earlier winder looks swollen and carbuncular. But these details do not reveal themselves with a cursory glance: they take a while to spot.

The hour and minute hands are now the same width with a dimensional adjustment of the luminescent areas, in black Super-LumiNova on the black J12 and in white on the white J12. The sense of a photographic negative is enhanced by the selection of white hands for the black watch and vice versa. “The white and black are the perfect negative,” says Chastaingt delightedly. “Jacques Helleu couldn’t do the perfect negative with the hands, for the simple reason that at that time black Super-LumiNova didn’t exist.”

In essence that is the nature of this redesign: bringing the J12 closer to the watch that Jacques Helleu wanted to make. In other words, bit by bit, technology is catching up with Helleu’s vision. He had the idea for the J12 in the early 1990s but lacked the technical means to bring it into being. As he later admitted, “No one was capable of giving me the shiny and resistant black that I needed. The practical feasibility only came later with this ceramic nearly as hard as diamond.”

But then Helleu had an uncanny knack of predicting the future and even knew how this redesign, a dozen years after his death, would be carried out. Speaking in an interview in 2003, he says watchmaking “taught me throughout the years to be even more rigorous and precise: a case or bracelet is successfully managed to a 100th, if not a 1,000th, of a millimetre.” It is a lesson that his successors at Chanel have learned well. ■

## Case Study

By Wei Koh

# Point Blancpain More than 60 years after their birth, the Fifty Fathoms and Air Command still fire on all cylinders

## BLANCPAIN FIFTY FATHOMS

Beyond their propensity for hipster facial hair, what do Osiris, Prometheus, Moses, and Jesus of Nazareth have in common? According to author Joseph Campbell, their lives are all examples of the monomyth—a single unifying archetypal narrative that he dubbed the “hero’s journey” in his 1949 work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. So influential was Campbell to filmmaker George Lucas, that the latter cites the monomyth as the structural underpinning of Luke Skywalker. But, when it comes to watches, there is one particular model whose narrative perfectly aligns with the “hero’s journey”—a watch worn by innumerable elite divers in navies the world over: the mythical Blancpain Fifty Fathoms.

Let’s examine the parallels. In Campbell’s monomyth the hero is compelled from a mundane existence towards his destiny. And this is almost precisely what happened when Swiss watchmaker Blancpain was tapped by military legend Bob Maloubier to create a purpose-built submersible timepiece to be used by France’s nascent elite diving unit, known as Les Nageurs Combat.

In the early 1950s, Maloubier had been tasked with creating the French equivalent of the US Navy Seals and it soon dawned on him that, for any elite diver, the most critical piece of equipment was his watch. After rejecting every commercially available model on the market, Maloubier went to Blancpain’s president Jean-Jacques Fiechter who, as an avid scuba diver himself, was keen to take up the challenge to create the ultimate dive watch. In 1953, the horological hero that was the Fifty Fathoms was born. It was characterised



**From top:** Bob Maloubier prepares for a dive; 1953 Fifty Fathoms; Maloubier’s false identity card from 1943; the new 2019 Fifty Fathoms Barakuda; Jean-Jacques Fiechter diving

by its massive luminous uni-directional rotating bezel which, when set at the start of the dive to the minute hand, would read elapsed time to provide a reading of remaining oxygen and mission duration.

From its relatively obscure roots, Blancpain’s Fifty Fathoms soon became legendary and was eventually used by everyone from the US Navy Seals to the West German Bundeswehr Kampfschwimmers. The other extraordinary thing about the Fifty Fathoms is that it was extrapolated into a seemingly infinite variety of versions for both military and recreational use, making Campbell’s

sobriquet, “hero with a thousand faces”, highly applicable to this watch.

Since 2007, Blancpain president Marc Hayek has done a spectacular job at tapping into this marvellous timepiece’s legacy while injecting it with new world materials such as a sapphire crystal bezel with luminous minute indexes—a first in high watchmaking—and even a ceramic case that perfectly mimics the look and feel of steel at a fraction of the weight and with far greater surface hardness.

In 2017 Hayek created what is my favourite vintage tribute to the Fifty Fathoms’ history: the Mil-Spec, a perfectly sized 40mm dive watch replete with luminous sapphire bezel and a tribute to the moisture indicator found on the dial of the military watches used by the US Navy Seals, among others. As an expression of his passion for the rare, obscure yet delightful timepiece that is the Fifty Fathoms, this year Hayek reached into the recesses of the Fifty Fathoms’ history to create two extraordinary and heroic special edition watches, both based on some of the most enigmatic Fifty Fathoms ever made.

## BLANCPAIN AIR COMMAND

Despite the very clear design similarities to the iconic model, the Air Command is not, strictly speaking, a Fifty Fathoms—it's not a dive watch but a pilots chronograph. Further, to call the Air Command a "military" watch brings with it some amount of controversy. While the Fifty Fathoms has an unabashed and inextricable link with the world's elite naval diving units, the Air Command's link to the US Air Force is shrouded in mystery.

The story goes that around 12 Air Command watches were produced by Blancpain in the '50s at the behest of US watch importer Allen Tornek and placed with USAAF pilots. However, for whatever reason, the Valjoux 222-powered Air Command never gained traction. Further, no one knows for sure the actual number of Air Command watches in existence. Marc Hayek, who has done extensive research on the subject, explains, "It's very, very rare and the belief is we are talking about tens of watches."

Hayek is well placed to know the history of this specific model. Sitting on his wrist as he speaks to both me and this tome's inimitable editor Nicholas Foulkes during our recent visit to Blancpain is the most perfect, mint condition example of the Air Command in existence. Incredibly, when I later posted side by side images of the vintage watch and the new re-issue on Instagram, viewers were perplexed as to which watch was which, as was I. Hayek laughed when I told him this, before explaining that "the idea was to come up with a watch that was incredibly faithful in appearance but was actually an example of the brand and the Swatch Group's most advanced technology."

Just to get this out of the way so we can get to the good stuff, the way you tell the old and new watch apart is as follows. The old one has the wide uneven pusher spacing that is the hallmark of the Valjoux 222, a thin crown, a domed plexiglass crystal, smaller Arabic markers and wider spacing between the tachymeter and the edge of the dial. The new watch has a thicker crown, the word "Flyback" on the dial (though both movements



**From left:** Blancpain 2012 X Fathoms; Blancpain Fifty Fathoms Bathyscaphe; Blancpain 2017 Mil-Spec. **Inset, below:** Blancpain Air Command 2019

perform this function), even pusher spacing and, amusingly, even darker markers on the dial, hands and bezel.

Adding to the difficulty of distinguishing modern from vintage is the fact that the new watch's case is just 0.5 mm larger than the original's 42mm, and Hayek and Blancpain have gone to great pains to recreate the lovely bezels on the thin, elegant, faceted lugs.

The new Air Command is powered by the F388B movement, an integrated automatic vertical clutch column wheel-operated chronograph movement. It beats at 5Hz or 36,000 vibrations, good for dividing time into tenth-of-a-second intervals.

### 50 FATHOMS BARAKUDA

Take one look at the Fifty Fathoms Barakuda and you'll hear the unmistakable bass refrain of Iron Butterfly's "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida", conjuring up images of big hair, muscle cars, platform boots and dancing naked in the rain at Woodstock, so strong is its late '60s Op art-inflected look. At the edge of each cream marker is a signal red section that creates a completely different dial expression. "The great thing about the Fifty Fathoms is that the more research we do, the more different and interesting iterations we discover, so vast was the impact of the watch in both the civil and military diving worlds," says Marc Hayek.

A case in point is, in the 1960s, the

German Bundesmarine ordered a series of Fifty Fathoms watches from a German dive supplier named Barakuda. The Barakuda watch was characterised by large rectangular luminous markers, each marker further divided into two tones with cream luminous material inboard and smaller red sections towards the perimeter of the dial (presumably to aid visibility). It featured sword-shaped hands and a unique bakelite bezel with a full 60-minute scale in luminous material. Currently, vintage Barakuda watches are trading for £33-40,000, such is its cult status.

For 2019, Hayek and Blancpain turned to this very special model to create a 500-piece limited edition. "It's the dial that has this very strong late '60s, early '70s iconography that we found so appealing," says Hayek.

As with the new Air Command, the limited edition Barakuda showcases Blancpain's and Swatch Group's technical innovation. Its movement is the reliable Calibre 1151, featuring automatic winding and a 100-hour power reserve, thanks to its twin-barrel design.

Finally, it comes on a tropical rubber strap similar to that found on the original watch.

Together, the Air Command and the Fifty Fathoms Barakuda serve as perfect reminders of Blancpain's halcyon past in the creation of military timepieces and are just two of the seemingly innumerable faces of the most heroic dive watch ever invented. ■



# RACING CLASSES

TRACEY LLEWELLYN charts watchmaking's famous links to the high seas. Image by PETER CROWTHER



**PANERAI**  
Submersible Luna  
Rossa 47mm

**TAG HEUER**  
Limited Edition  
Carrera Skipper  
for Hodinkee

**TISSOT**  
Sailing Touch

**T**he relationship between timekeeping and the ocean stretches back to the 18th century and the race to calculate longitude accurately while at sea—a problem that was eventually solved by John Harrison and his series of marine chronometers. The road to ocean supremacy was one of the greatest journeys of all time, but today, life at sea is as much about recreation and sport as it was once about world domination. As travel became more widespread after the Second World War, the interest in nautical sports grew, and with it the demand for wristwatches suitable for new environments. Gérald Genta and his followers created the beach-ready genre of practical, elegant “sports luxe” timepieces, but as the maritime lifestyle grew, so too did the call for related horological functions.

One of the most interesting and niche complications to appear was that of the regatta watch. Unlike in most other competitive races, visual and audible signals are given before the start of a race in a regatta, enabling the yachts to build speed and position themselves as close to the starting line as possible when the starting gun is fired. A regatta watch, therefore, is designed to provide the helmsman and crew with a precise representation of the countdown, which can be anywhere between three and 15 minutes.

One of the first brands to address the needs of competitive sailing was Heuer, which debuted its first water-resistant pocket watch over a century ago and created the first chronograph with tide indicators in 1950: the Maréograph. A partnership with manufacturer Aquastar in 1965 led to Heuer distributing the twin-branded Heuer Aquastar Régate, in which the countdown minutes are marked off via a series of five balls that change colour. It was this watch that commemorated Heuer’s first official sailing partnership in 1967 when it became the timekeeper and crew watch of double America’s Cup winner *Intrepid*.

By 1968, Heuer had introduced its own regatta watch, the Skipper. Made until the 1980s, there were several versions with different dials, cases, movements and model names, but the basic functions remained the same. Interest in these classic models soared in 2016 when a “Skipperera” (a Skipper in a Carrera case) sold at Fellows, in less than mint condition with an estimate of £400-600, for more than £20,000. Within a year, models in good condition were fetching £60,000, leading TAG Heuer to create a new, limited edition Carrera Skipper in 2017. The model sold out in record time.

## TOP PRIZE

The story of Heuer’s sailing evolution has already made mention of the pinnacle of competitive yachting that originated in 1851: the America’s Cup. Given its prestige and accompanying glamour, it is no surprise

**LOUIS VUITTON**  
Tambour Regatta  
Navy 44

**BREITLING**  
Exospace B55  
Yachting

**CORUM**  
Admiral AC-One  
45 Tides

**RICHARD MILLE**  
RM 60-01 Regatta  
Automatic Chronograph



that myriad watch brands have been involved with the race—now in its 36th edition—launching numerous watches in its name. The race involves a defending team racing against a challenger team and as it is now standard to have more than one challenger, there is a preliminary competition to decide on the final opposing team.

Since 1983, the main sponsor for this selection has been Louis Vuitton, with teams competing to take on the defender in the Louis Vuitton Challenger's Trophy. Since opening its Swiss watch manufacture in 2003, Louis Vuitton has introduced a range of timepieces linked to the regattas that bear its name, both in the form of its signature Tambour watch and patented Spin Time, each featuring the essential countdown function.

In the mid-Noughties, Girard-Perregaux teamed up with BMW Oracle Racing and introduced a number of celebratory timepieces including the Laureato USA 98, named after the team's new boat, the USA 98. This was a chronograph, produced in several versions, with a 10-minute regatta scale on the outer edge. While partnering with double Cup-winning team Alinghi, Audemars Piguet created the coveted Royal Oak Offshore Alinghi Polaris in 2005 and, in 2007, the Royal Oak Offshore Alinghi Team Chronograph, including a version that was the first timepiece with a case and bezel made from Forged Carbon®.

In 2012, TAG Heuer introduced the limited edition Aquaracer 500m Calibre 72 Countdown Automatic Chronograph 43mm, co-designed by America's Cup defenders, Oracle Team USA. Made for extreme conditions, it featured the official Team USA logo on the dial as well as an AC72 yacht on its caseback. Ulysse Nardin collaborated with Swedish challenger Artemis Racing Team in 2015, utilising the national and team colours of yellow

and blue on its limited edition Diver Chronograph Artemis Racing watch. Zenith increased its connections with Land Rover by becoming the Official Timing Partner of Land Rover BAR, Great Britain's challenger team in 2016, creating the El Primero 45mm Sport Land Rover BAR Edition chronograph to celebrate. British brand Bremont was Official Timing Partner for the Louis Vuitton America's Cup, as well as for Oracle Team USA in 2016, leading to the creation of its America's Cup collection.

The two watch brands currently competing for America's Cup success in 2021 are Panerai and Omega. Self-titled "King of the Sea" Panerai is a long-time sponsor of classic yacht regattas and even lays claim to its own classic Fife ketch *Eilean*. In 2017, the brand became the Official Watch of the defending Oracle Team USA, as well as of challenger Softbank Team Japan. For the latest edition of the Cup, it has joined forces with the Italian Luna Rossa, with the team wearing the Submersible Luna Rossa 47mm diving watch with a GMT function, but no countdown feature.

As with many of the brand's partnerships, Omega's connection with Emirates Team New Zealand (ETNZ) is long, dating back to 1995. The 35th edition of the America's Cup saw the brand launch two timepieces—the analogue/digital Speedmaster X-33 Regatta ETNZ Limited Edition with five-minute countdown, worn by the crew, as well as the Seamaster Planet Ocean ETNZ "Deep Black" Master Chronometer, which featured a diving scale that focuses on the race's 15-minute countdown.

## BEYOND THE CUP

Unsurprisingly, the maker of the original waterproof wristwatch, Rolex, has decades-long connections with the sea that include

**ROLEX**  
Yacht-Master II

**ALPINA**  
Sailing Yacht Timer  
AL-880LBG4V6

**OMEGA**  
Seamaster Planet  
Ocean 600M  
"Deep Black" GMT

**ULYSSE NARDIN**  
Marine Mega Yacht



partnerships with the world's most prestigious yacht clubs, as well as approximately 15 ocean contests, including the Fastnet.

Rolex's regatta watch, the opinion-dividing Yacht-Master II introduced in 2010, is a 44mm programmable flyback chronograph available in several different metals with a bright blue Cerachrom bezel. The countdown feature is shown via a red triangle-tipped hand on a scale of 10 to 0 in an arc that runs around three quarters of the dial's circumference. The watch also accounts for the varying lengths of regatta countdowns and can be programmed via the rotating bezel and winding crown.

For Corum, the Admiral's Cup inspired a watch family consisting of over 70 models in different sizes and metals. Launched in 1960, today's Admiral collection includes clever complications such as the Admiral AC-One 45 Tides with an indication showing when high and low tide will occur. For competitive sailors who need something more obvious, Alpina's Sailing Yachttimer Countdown has a 44mm steel case and black dial with clear numerals. A moving countdown window tracks the minutes before revealing a red "START" indicator.


Possibly the most technical mechanical sailing watch on the market is the Richard Mille RM 60-01 Regatta Automatic Chronograph. Mille has drawn on its experience as timing partner of Les Voiles de St. Barth to develop a timepiece with all the functions a crew on a racing yacht could want from the rotating bezel showing cardinal points to the flyback chronograph with central seconds counter and 30-minute countdown timer. And yachting hasn't been forgotten by the digital age, with brands from Casio to Garmin and Optimum Time jumping on board. Breitling's Exospace B55 Yachting is a strong and lightweight

connected chronograph with a countdown system that embraces audio, visual and vibrating indications. Powered by a COSC-certified, B55 SuperQuartz calibre, it can be synched to a smartphone. The Tissot Sailing Touch is also packed with features from tidal indicator to digital tachymeter.

## SHOW-BOATING

Beyond competitive yachting, there is another world enjoyed by fairweather sailors, where a watch is more a lifestyle choice than an essential tool—and many brands have created pieces to suit.

One of the most literal interpretations of a yacht in watch form was unveiled by Ulysse Nardin at the 2019 Miami Yacht Show. Like its namesake, the Marine Mega Yacht watch is both expensive and rare—only 30 will be made. The cage of its flying tourbillon takes the shape of a ship's propeller, while the textured enamel dial gives an impression of ocean waves. Hublot's partnership with founder of Italia Independent and Garage Italia Lapo Elkann, meanwhile, is a match made in heaven. With last year's Big Bang Unico Teak Italia Independent, Elkann looked to his grandfather Gianni Agnelli's yachts—*Azzurra*, *Agneta*, *Extra Beat*—to inspire a limited edition chronograph.

And, of course, the niche aesthetic heritage of yachting is a fecund source of inspiration for the applied arts, so if all that is called for is a breath of sea air, there's a flotilla of *métiers d'art* watches from makers such as Patek Philippe, Vacheron Constantin and Jaeger-LeCoultre that tip their hat to ocean life. A host of other brands have found inspiration in the craftsmanship of vessels, from Art Deco ocean liners to mid-century Riva Aquaramas and Chris-Craft speedboats. 

# #BORN TODARE

BLACK BAY  
**CHRONO S&G**



# TUDOR



When it comes to luxury stainless steel sports watches, there is no question that the two which were the first of their kind—the Audemars Piguet Royal Oak and the Patek Philippe Nautilus—defined the genre and continue to do so today. Remarkably, at their launch, both watches were considered enormous—perhaps even fatal—risks for both companies. Both watches, in their original material—stainless steel—and original design, have now become so extraordinarily difficult to find that to have one on your wrist has become the badge of a real horological insider

By JACK FORSTER

# AUDEMARS PIGUET Royal Oak



## ORIGINAL MOVEMENTS

At launch, the Royal Oak used the **CALIBRE 2121** (below), based on the Jaeger-LeCoultre 920—the thinnest full rotor self-winding movement in existence at the time—originally deployed by Audemars Piguet as the Calibre 2120. The first Nautilus model, Reference 3700/1, was launched with the **CALIBRE 28-255C** (above).



## CURRENT MOVEMENTS

The current stainless steel Patek Philippe Nautilus Reference 5711/1A uses the self-winding, in-house **CALIBRE 26-330 SC**—a very traditionally crafted movement, with the modern touch of a silicon balance spring. The Royal Oak “Jumbo” model uses the **CALIBRE 2121**—the exact same movement as in the very first Royal Oak in 1972.



## YEAR INTRODUCED

**ROYAL OAK, 1972; NAUTILUS, 1976.**

Audemars Piguet toyed with various possible names for the watch, but settled on “Royal Oak”—the nickname of the tree in which the future King Charles II hid following the Battle of Worcester, and of eight Royal Navy warships.

AP ARCHIVE (ROYAL OAK ADVERT); COURTESY OF THE ADVERTISING ARCHIVES (NAUTILUS ADVERT)

## HIGHEST COMPLICATION

The most complicated Patek Philippe Nautilus ever made is the 2018 Reference **5740** (*below, left*), the first Nautilus with a perpetual calendar grand complication. The most complex Royal Oak—featuring minute repeater, split-seconds chronograph, perpetual calendar, week indication, hours and minutes—was introduced in 1997: **THE ROYAL OAK GRANDE COMPLICATION** (*below, right*).



## DESIGNER

Both watches were designed by the Genevan industrial designer and artist, Gérald Genta (*above*). According to Genta, both designs were inspired by the nautical world—the Royal Oak by a **SCAPHANDER DIVING HELMET**, and the Nautilus by the **HINGED PORTHOLES** on luxury cruise ships.

COURTESY OF SOTHEBY'S (NAUTILUS REF. 3700; A SERIES ROYAL OAK)

# PATEK PHILIPPE Nautilus

## THE WAIT

In the last few years, the craze for stainless steel sports watches has resulted in years-long waiting lists for both the Royal Oak and the Nautilus—if you can even get your name on a list in the first place. In March, *The New York Times* reported that the wait for a stainless steel 5711 could be up to **EIGHT YEARS**. The wait for the Royal Oak is almost as severe—up to **FIVE YEARS** for the much-coveted Jumbo model.

## UNDER THE HAMMER

With just a few thousand examples in existence, the original Patek Philippe Nautilus Reference **3700** and Audemars Piguet's original **A** and **B**

Royal Oaks go for increasingly princely sums at auction. At a Sotheby's auction in Geneva last year, an A-Series Royal Oak sold for CHF 56,250 (**£43,183**). The Tiffany & Co. name on the dial can make an enormous price difference for both the Nautilus and the Royal Oak. At Sotheby's Hong Kong in April 2019, a Nautilus with a Tiffany dial went for an impressive HKD 2,500,000 (**£244,366**), setting a new world auction record for the 3700 reference in stainless steel.



# DEPTH AND Breath

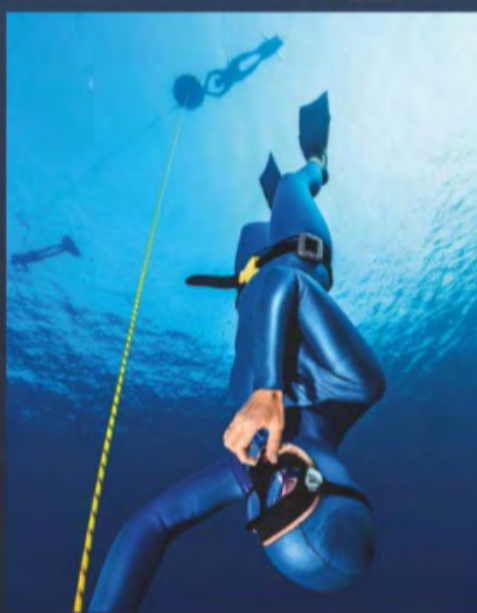
Swimming to the depths of the sea without oxygen goes against every instinct, yet the perilous sport of free-diving seems to encapsulate humankind at its most liberated. Small wonder watches are getting deep too

By BILL PRINCE

Were it to go only by its proper name, it's unlikely that any watch company would get terribly excited about competitive apnea. After all, set against the antics of the F1 track or the daring exploits of pilots (then and now), what chance might breath-holding have in enticing consumers to the counter?

But call it free-diving (broadly, six of the 15 or so disciplines of competitive apnea, stretching from motionless, face-down floating in a swimming pool to full-fat 100m-plus descents with or without "aids") and the ultimate test of sapiens' ability to withstand a lack of oxygen—not to mention quieten the fundamental survival instincts that kept humans away from the water's edge for millennia—appears to be a slam dunk for those looking to sell a superbly water-resistant wristwatch.

Of course, it helps that success at the highest level is largely genderless. TAG Heuer and Oris have both picked up on this: the former was one of the earliest entrants into the field with its sponsorship of World Champion Tanya Streeter in 2004, while the latter had Anna von Boetticher, the face of its Aquis Lady Diver timepiece, join the brand in 2013. No harm either that, rather like boxing, there are enough disciplines—dynamic apnea, constant weight without fins, free immersion—and intrepid individuals to keep records tumbling. (Unfortunately for advocates of traditionally powered wristwatches,



however, the current world double record holder and all-round rising star, New Zealander William Trubridge, is a Suunto ambassador.)

That success or failure in the competitive apnea arena is measured in minutes and seconds obviously

plays a major role in enticing watch brands' participation. But hyper-accurate timing underwater is surely beside the point. More powerful is the sport's proximity to the history of the wristwatch itself, from Hans Wilsdorf, the founder of Rolex/Tudor, marketing the first foolproof water-resistant "Oyster" case in 1926, to the flotilla of ISO 6425-rated submersibles derived thereafter, which is one of the more buoyant parts of the watch market.

No doubt with a nod to old Hans—and an eye on the brand's tag-line "Born to Dare"—earlier this year, Tudor ambassador David Beckham (*left*) chose to overcome a fear of open water by joining fellow ambassador and French world champion free-diver Morgan Bourc'his in a training session, during which both men were filmed sporting the handsome titanium Tudor Pelagos. "I like to feel uncomfortable in situations, because most of the time it brings the best out in me," the former England football captain said afterwards. "But I must admit this is one of the toughest challenges I've ever done. I now have a whole new perspective on free-diving."

For more rarefied brands, there's the chance to play up their watery supremacy in marine chronometers—those hyper-accurate mechanical clocks that guided ships before the advent of radiotelephony. To mark the launch of its new Diver Deep Dive series, one such pioneer of pinpoint

timing, Ulysse Nardin, signed fellow seaborne sensation Fred Buyle, a record free-diver turned underwater photographer now committed to documenting the frail ecosystem of the oceans, one (gargantuan) breath at a time. Meanwhile, Blancpain's Ocean Commitment conservation programme includes among its roll-call of sub-aquatic heroes Gianluca Genoni, a record-setter in static apnea and the pioneer of a new, motorised "no limits" free-dive discipline—the perfect gentleman to represent the brand's historic Fifty Fathoms dive watch.

So why free-diving? It's tempting to think that, from a watchmaker's point of view, it represents a readily transportable, non-polluting asset that relies on a minimum of kit (beyond vigilant back-up). But it also talks to a deeper need. In an industry where "no limits" generally refers to the boundless imagination of a creative team, and "risk" is merely its potential to misjudge the mood for "retro" or nominally "futuristic" designs, free-diving imports a tangible whiff of danger to a business that, above all else, requires an emotional engagement with its audience.

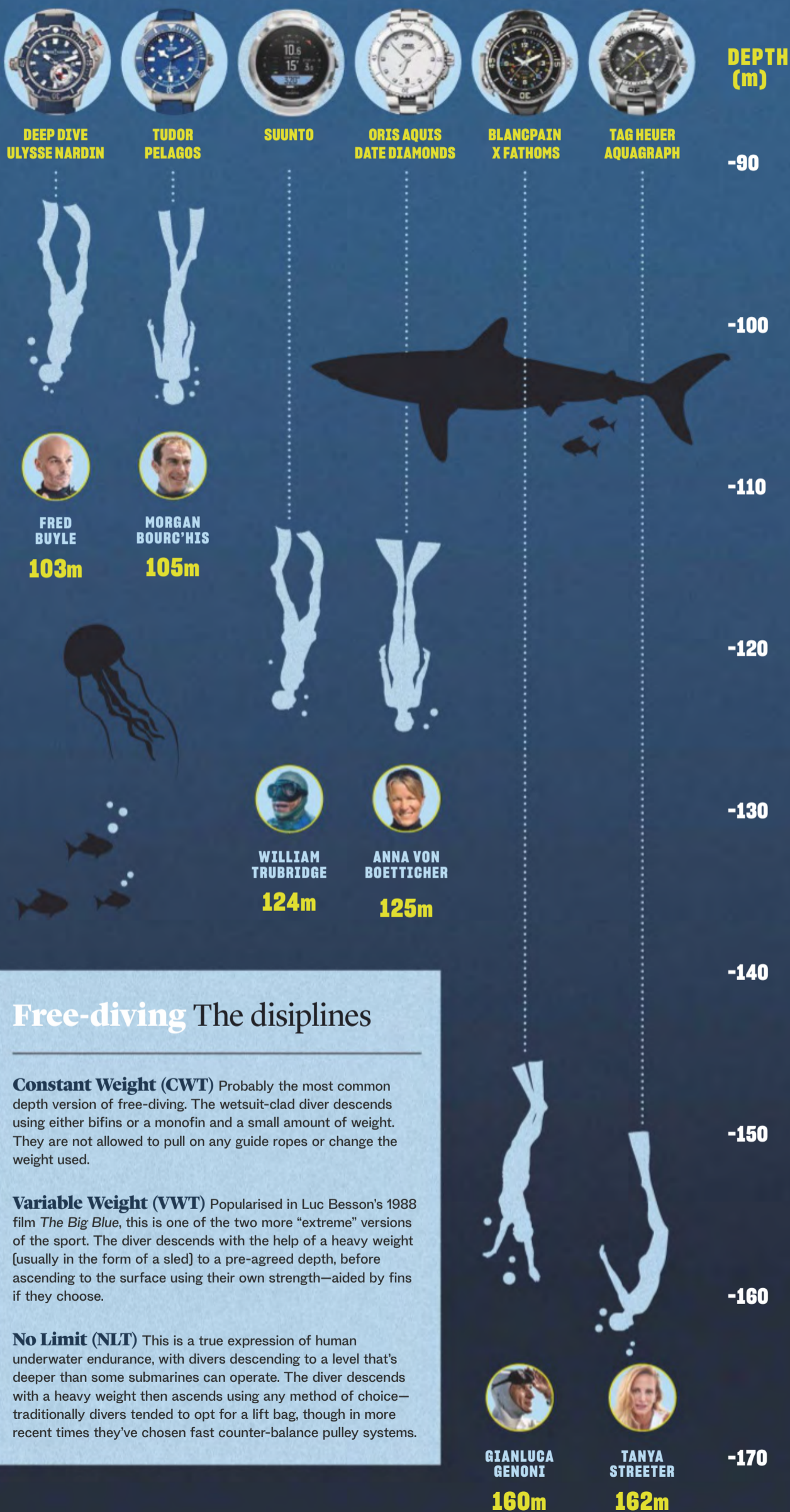
Whatever the motive (and in landlocked Switzerland, at least, it might well simply be the wish to avail oneself of the high seas on any pretext whatsoever), our current appetite to get below the waterline, coupled with a need to know the time while we're down there, is a powerful incentive for an industry more than capable of equipping us with the timepieces that can do so.

To this end, Officine Panerai recently offered purchasers of an especially limited-edition Submersible Chrono Guillaume Néry Edition the chance to rendezvous with its namesake French free-diving champion in the South Pacific. According to a spokesperson, all 15 watches—and their accompanying opportunity to join Néry below the waves—were snapped up immediately.

No wonder so many watch brands choose to align themselves with these watery wunderkinds. As a sport, as well as a practical means of highlighting all that unbreachable technology, free-diving continues to stand, or rather swim, apart. **N**

## TAKING THE PLUNGE

The incredible depths reached by free-divers—and their wristwatches



### Free-diving The disciplines

**Constant Weight (CWT)** Probably the most common depth version of free-diving. The wetsuit-clad diver descends using either bifins or a monofin and a small amount of weight. They are not allowed to pull on any guide ropes or change the weight used.

**Variable Weight (VWT)** Popularised in Luc Besson's 1988 film *The Big Blue*, this is one of the two more "extreme" versions of the sport. The diver descends with the help of a heavy weight (usually in the form of a sled) to a pre-agreed depth, before ascending to the surface using their own strength—aided by fins if they choose.

**No Limit (NLT)** This is a true expression of human underwater endurance, with divers descending to a level that's deeper than some submarines can operate. The diver descends with a heavy weight then ascends using any method of choice—traditionally divers tended to opt for a lift bag, though in more recent times they've chosen fast counter-balance pulley systems.

THE NATURE OF TIME



GS  
Grand Seiko

## Diving Watches



LUIS MARDEN/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC IMAGE COLLECTION (COUSTEAU, INDIAN OCEAN, 1956)

### *A Brief History of Time*

The history of the diving watch is relatively short. It was only in 1943—when Jacques Cousteau and Émile Gagnan developed a self-contained breathing device with a demand regulator—that diving’s restrictive cord to the surface was triumphantly cut

**Above:** French naval officer and underwater explorer Jacques Cousteau, often referred to as the “father of scuba diving”

*T*his single piece of equipment, which would come to be called the “Aqua-Lung” (a term coined by Cousteau for English-speaking countries), gave rise to modern scuba diving. Divers could now plunge deeper and stay longer than ever before, yet the question of how much longer remained imperative. Untold revelations awaited in the ocean’s mysterious depths—so long as underwater explorers could keep track of time. A new era of innovation in the field of diving timepieces swiftly ensued.

## Diving Watches

# Rolex Submariner

By NICHOLAS FOULKES

“No cables or hoses connect the Aqualunger to the upper world. No heavy armor weighs him down. Tanks strapped upon his back feed him compressed air in amounts carefully regulated to equalise the pressure within his body to the pressure of the sea without. In shallow water or in deep, he feels its weight upon him no more than do the fish that flicker shyly past him.” In October 1952, *National Geographic* introduced its readers to scuba diving.

Invented by Jacques Cousteau in 1943, the aqualung had revolutionised man’s relationship with the world under the waves. Prior to this, divers’ freedom underwater had been restricted either by the capacity of their lungs or by cumbersome diving suits.

By the beginning of the 1950s, aqualung diving had become something of a craze on the Côte d’Azur. One early enthusiast was Rene Jeanneret, the then marketing director of Rolex. A former advertising man, he had been made a director of Rolex in 1945 and was responsible for the brand’s glamorous and high-profile postwar image. He had a gift for understanding the zeitgeist, so his role soon extended beyond advertising watches to participating in their conception and creation.

Rolex did not have a scuba diving or aqualung specific timepiece in its repertoire; however, it had the technological know-how, the manufacturing capacity and the pedigree. Rolex’s record in waterproof horology was unique. Channel swimmer Mercedes Gleitze had famously worn a Rolex in the 1920s; the brand had supplied



**Above:** a Rolex advert featuring Jacques Cousteau.  
**Below from left:** Lord Louis Mountbatten in 1943; Lord Mountbatten’s Rolex Oyster Perpetual Bubbleback [Ref. 2940]

watches to the Italian naval outfitter Panerai during the 1930s; and during the war, Lord Mountbatten had been among the many servicemen to benefit from Rolex’s water resistance.

In the early 1950s, the underwater world captured the public imagination in the way that space travel would in the following decade. In the same year that *National Geographic* wrote about Commander Cousteau, diver and engineer Dimitri Rebikoff had published *L’Exploration Sous Marine*. Rebikoff was also a diving chum of Jeanneret and seemed the ideal person to test prototypes of a new watch that the latter was thinking of launching—under the name “Frogman”. Rolex founder Hans Wilsdorf agreed with everything but the name and greenlit the project. At a meeting of the board of Rolex in 1953, the criteria for what was then known as the “Pièce Rebikoff” were established.

At around the same time, Jeanneret hit upon what he thought was an appropriate name. The word “Oyster”, which

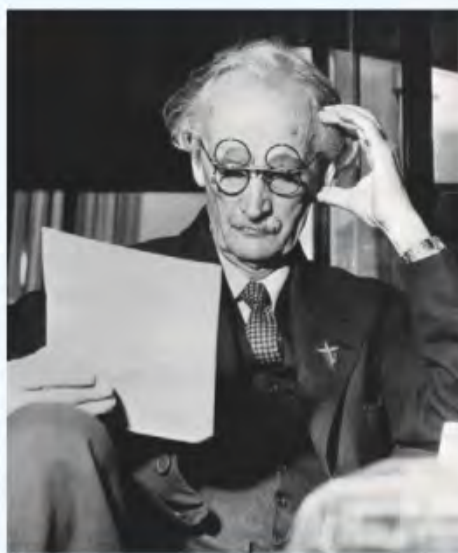
had hitherto adorned Rolex’s waterproof watches, was to be removed from the dial of this timepiece. The Pièce Rebikoff was to be much more than a watch made to resist the ingress of moisture; it was a watch designed for the world beneath the waves. It was to carry the name “Submariner”. A legend had been born.

After that, events moved apace. From June until October, Rebikoff and his team from the Institute for Deep Sea Research tested the watch exhaustively. It was a very busy summer; 132 dives were undertaken overall, at depths between 12 and 60 metres in waters ranging from a chilly 12°C to an almost tropical 28°C.

And, as Rebikoff’s tests were nearing their end, further impetus was added on September 30, 1953. In the waters off Naples the *Trieste*, a bathyscaphe captained by Swiss scientist and explorer Auguste Piccard—a crazy-haired friend of Einstein and the model for Hergé’s Professor Calculus in the Tintin books—dived to a depth of over 3,150 metres with a Rolex attached outside. Upon returning to the surface, Piccard telegraphed Geneva: “Watch perfectly resists dive 3,150 metres best wishes—Piccard.” Rebikoff was more expansive in his records, even reporting when one of the watches dropped onto the concrete quay. “Despite this very violent shock, the watch showed no sign of alteration to the precision of its running.” The only visible damage was a flake of luminous material falling from the minute hand.

Other than that, Rebikoff could find little to fault. After

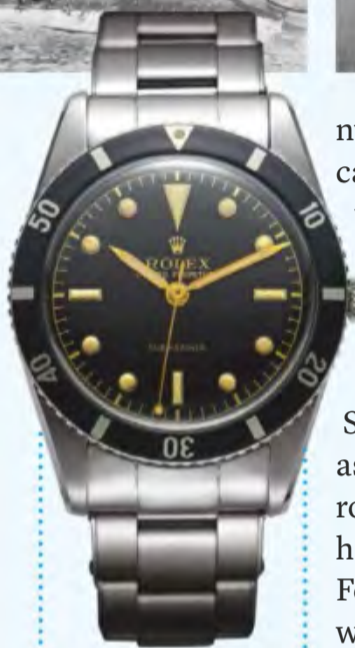




five months of testing, “in spite of the high degree of salt in Mediterranean waters, with tropical temperatures and humidity, no trace of corrosion could be detected”, he wrote. Nor could any trace of humidity be found inside, despite the fact that “several dives were performed with the winding crown pulled out, in the position for hand-setting”. In a final test, Rebikoff attached the watch to a wire and dropped it overboard “to a depth of 120 metres, double the maximum to which we are able to dive with independent compressed air equipment.”

After an hour, he hauled it up and found that no water had infiltrated the case. He could only report that the watch had “given entire satisfaction in diving conditions which were extremely tough” and “proved an indispensable accessory for all diving with independent equipment”.

By contrast, “all previous trials with watches of the best-known makes had shown the entry of water from the first dive, easily recognisable by the accumulation of condensation on the inside of the glass.” But one thing in particular impressed Rebikoff. “The exterior disc of the watch, designed to indicate the minutes elapsed, showed itself to be absolutely indispensable for controlling the individual diving time of each diver,” he wrote. “Apart from this, the revolving disc proved very valuable for a



number of uses outside diving: calculating average journey times by car, timing telephone conversations, timing photographic developments, timing cooking, etc.”

What gave the Rolex Submariner its character then, as now, was the calibrated rotating bezel, for which a patent had been applied during February 1953. Water-resistant watches had been around for a generation, but keeping an accurate account of time underwater, in order to avoid exceeding the time limits set for various depths and to time decompression stops, was difficult.

The simple act of breathing under the sort of pressures that occur at depth dissolves nitrogen into the blood. Should a diver return to the surface too rapidly, the nitrogen bubbles crowd the bloodstream,

causing muscle cramp and potentially blocking arteries. In the past, various methods of timekeeping were used, including discharging a firearm on the surface every 15 minutes to help divers keep track of time.

Now, with an easily legible bezel calibrated to 60 minutes, all that was required was to set the triangle on the bezel to the position of the minute hand and, as minutes elapsed, they could be read off easily.

“This safety device represents considerable progress in deep sea diving equipment,” wrote Rebikoff, and he was right.

Above all, the Submariner was dependable: functioning under circumstances that would have killed anyone wearing it. Within a few years, a Submariner had descended 10,916 metres into the Mariana Trench and, in 2012, James Cameron went back with a Rolex outside his sub. Today’s Deepsea model is waterproof to 3,900 metres; meanwhile, for most divers, recreational diving is limited to depths of 40 metres, making use of about one per cent of the watch’s true capability.

The popularity of the Submariner soon spread onto dry land and, even though 007 has seen many changes of watch over the years, its appearance in early James Bond films stoked a unique diving-suit-to-dinner-jacket image. It was an image that the brand harnessed in one of its advertisements from the late 1960s, depicting a male wrist, a crisp shirt cuff and a Rolex Submariner being fondled by a female hand. “We invented the Submariner to work perfectly 660 feet under the sea. It seems to work pretty well at any level,” ran the strap line. One wonders if it would have been so successful had it been called the Rolex Frogman instead.



**Above, clockwise from left:** Swiss physicist Auguste Piccard and his son, Jacques, standing on the top of the bathyscaphe Trieste, 1953; Piccard in 1952; the first Rolex Submariner, 1953. **Below:** James Cameron wearing the Rolex Deepsea Challenge 2012 [inset]



ULLSTEIN BILD/ULLSTEIN BILD VIA GETTY IMAGES (BATHYSCAPE); COURTESY OF ROLEX (SUBMARINER); KEYSTONE/GETTY IMAGES (PICCARD); ©ROLEX/JEAN-DANIEL MEYER (DEEPSEA)



## Diving Watches

# Jaeger-LeCoultre Polaris

By NICHOLAS FOULKES

The 1950s and '60s was the golden age of diving and the diving watch. It was a time when the undersea world emerged from millennia of mystery. Thanks to the advances in underwater filming and photography, millions of people were introduced to an exotic world beneath the waves, made familiar through cinema and the pages of *National Geographic*.

Meanwhile, an intrepid few donned their wetsuits, strapped on their aqualungs and descended into this mysterious realm. Of course, the risk was that, lost in contemplation of the wonders surrounding them, these masked and flippered visitors would overstay their welcome and run out of oxygen. This is why, right at the end of the decade in 1959, the storied manufacture in Le Sentier created the Memovox Deep Sea: a self-winding diving watch with an alarm. The idea had originated in the marque's U.S.

office, LeCoultre Watch Inc in New York, and its ramifications continue to affect the Maison 60 years later.

The Memovox Deep Sea was a perfect and purposeful distillation of the tool watch aesthetic and philosophy that had developed during the 1950s. The black bezel with inverted triangular markers and white numerals; rugged case construction that, as well as keeping water out, kept magnetic fields at bay; and a "Marine" (synthetic) strap.

Compared to Rolex, Blancpain, Omega and others, Jaeger-LeCoultre was a late arrival underwater but, during the 1960s, it made up for lost time with a tidal wave of diver-specific timekeepers called: Dolphin, Barracuda, Shark, Master Mariner and, somewhat



**Above right:** Jaeger-LeCoultre Polaris Date.  
**Near right:** 1963 Memovox Polaris.  
**Below, from left:** vintage Memovox Polaris II advert; vintage Master Mariner Deep Sea advert

perplexingly, Voguematic (presumably this watch was aimed at the fashion-conscious submariner). But the most famous of all was the Polaris.

Prototypes of the Memovox Polaris appeared in 1963 (left) but it still had elements of dress watch design about it, including elegant dauphine hands and applied numerals. It was not until 1968 that the Memovox Polaris, watertight to 200 metres thanks to a Piquerez Compressor System, appeared in what is, for most familiar collectors, its perfect expression: black dial with bold luminous indices, luminous hands and, of course, the inner rotating Memovox disc. The case was now 42mm in diameter (huge for the time) and this size benefited not just legibility but audibility too, with a triple caseback construction intended to stop the sound being muffled by the diver's wetsuit.

By the 1970s, Jaeger was sufficiently sure of its underwater credentials to use



COURTESY OF JAEGER-LE COULTRE

images of divers in its advertising, alongside the slogan “Horloger de la Marine”. And it was at the beginning of the '70s that the Memovox Polaris II made its debut. The redesign was so radical that it was almost an entirely new watch.

The case was now tonneau shaped, almost ovoid. Inside was a new calibre, Ref. 916, with a balance frequency of 28,800vph. One of a new generation of high-frequency automatic movements introduced by the manufacture from 1970, the calibre 916 boasted a considerable improvement on the 18,000vph of its predecessor, the calibre 825. To promote this technological enhancement, examples destined for the U.S. market carried the letters HPG (High Precision Guarantee).

But the 28,800vph (4Hz) soon seemed puny in the face of the standard 32,768Hz of quartz regulators, the ovoid design became dated and the Polaris faded from sight, not to be seen again until the next century.

In 2007, Jaeger-LeCoultre returned to the world beneath the waves in fine flamboyant style when it called a press conference off the coast of Hawaii to witness a model called the Master Compressor Diving GMT descend to a depth of 1,080 metres—secured to a deep-diving robot—and return to the surface. Then the following year, to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the legendary 1968 Polaris, the Memovox I reappeared as a limited edition.

Collectors were delighted. Jaeger’s human encyclopaedia and walking archive (it says something more corporate on his business card), Stéphane Belmont, takes up the story. “We made a steel limited edition of the 1968 model and one in platinum inspired by the 1965 model,” says Belmont.



**Above, clockwise from top left:** 1968 Master Mariner; 1969 Shark Diving Chronograph; 1969 Shark Diving Chronograph; 1959 Deep Sea. **Below, from left:** calibre 916; Memovox Polaris II 1970



It was to mark a spectacular rebirth of the Polaris, which would become more popular and sought after than at any time in its lively history.

“All of a sudden, collectors who could not get hold of an original were buying the reissue,” Belmont explains. The popularity of the reissue, in turn, boosted the vintage market. “We started to talk to collectors, and they made us aware of the rising interest in the watch.” Prices at auction jumped: “For a watch that you could get in 1999/2000 for maybe £1,500, people were paying £30,000, £40,000, £50,000. The re-edition sold

*“All of a sudden, collectors who could not get hold of an original were buying the reissue”*

very quickly and was a huge success,” he concludes.

The popularity of a 40-year-old design was not lost on management. At the time, there were numerous families of models—including two sports series, the Master Compressor and the AMVOX. Even within these ranges, functions and aesthetics varied broadly, with the diving series comprising, in effect, a range within a range. It was decided to focus these models into one coherent family of watches that paid tribute to a great classic.

Design teams got to work. It would not be easy, and it would not be quick but, in 2018—half a century after the “ultimate” Memovox made its debut—Jaeger-LeCoultre launched an entire collection called, of course, Polaris.

COURTESY OF JAEGER-LE COULTRE

## Diving Watches

# Breitling SuperOcean

By FRED S. MANDELBAUM

The invention of the aqualung in the 1940s made free swimming exploration of the depths of the oceans possible for everyone and a new category of watches was born: the dedicated diver's watch. Willy Breitling saw Deep Sea exploration as an exciting new segment to market his tool-watch designs, dreaming about scuba diving as "a new form of mass tourism".

Rotating bezels to track the remaining oxygen supply and time the depressurisation, highly legible dials with luminous material to remain readable in darkness, hour and minute hands designed so you can quickly tell them apart underwater: both Breitling 1957 SuperOcean models have the typical characteristics of a diver's tool watch. But Breitling also brought its unique design twist to the emerging market segment.

While many other diving watches have stark, functional designs, the Breitling SuperOcean Automatic Ref. 1004 (although rated for depths of 200m/600ft, in line with its competitors from the period) is a sublimely elegant watch. Applied dial indexes hovering above sunken radium are an intricate work of art, seemingly inspired by the playfulness of 1920s Art Deco, more Paris or Vienna ballroom than a frogman's instrument. The 39mm-wide rotating bezel is slim and concave, easy to grip with the gloved hands of your diving suit but adding to the watch's elegant profile. The broad arrow of the hour hand shows unique luminous inserts that make the shapes easily distinguishable from the sword-formed minute hand—both in the darkness of



underwater exploration and on the beaches of the Côte d'Azur.

The 1957 SuperOcean Ref. 807 Dive Chronograph shares the design language of the Automatic Ref. 1004 but follows Breitling's tradition of chronograph innovation, established in the late 19th century. It is the very first dedicated Divers Chrono, rated 20ATM or 200m/600ft like its Automatic sibling and powered by a 13 lignes Venus cal. 150—one of the thinnest chronograph calibres around at the time.

Another industry-first feature



**Clockwise from top left:** 1957 SuperOcean Ref. 807; vintage Breitling "in the submarine world" advert; 1957 SuperOcean Ref. 1004; vintage Breitling "dans le monde du silence" advert



introduced by the watch was the "Reverse Panda". To make the running seconds and the minute counter easily visible, Breitling chose to contrast them in white on matte black dials. Panda dials subsequently appeared on most 1960s chronograph designs.

A drastic departure from the playful elegance of the 1957 SuperOceans, the Ref. 2005 is a massive beast. The rotating bezels have a diameter of almost 43mm, the Mk1 dials are much simpler in design (Bauhaus follows Jugendstil), reduced to concentrate on easy readability. Anyone who sees these watches first notices that large "Diamond Tip" hand. Those unfamiliar with the SuperOcean Ref. 2005 will think it is a second hand, of course, but Willy Breitling was (characteristically) trying to revolutionise the way diver's watches were used. Oxygen reserve is calculated in minutes, not seconds, so Breitling designed a chronograph calibre—again made by Venus S.A.—to offer a large hand that would, at a glance, show elapsed dive time in minutes.

The missing second hand made it hard to be sure whether the watch was still running—the huge diamond tip creeps along too slowly to tell. But a diver's life depends on the tool on their wrist, so a window at six provides the vital confirmation—it's blank when the chronograph is stopped, filled with a large tritium dot when it's active and a small dot when it's paused. Unique, slightly quirky, very useful.

When Breitling, together with Heuer and Hamilton, launched (one of) the first automatic chronograph calibres, the cal. 11, they redesigned the SuperOcean

COURTESY OF BREITLING

again—it grew even more, now measuring 48mm in bezel diameter. No surprising new chronograph function was included this time. Combining the massive automatic movement with a 200m/600ft-rated case that sported an internal rotating bezel set by an external ring proved to be a highly complex task, developed and patented together with famed case-maker Ervin Piquerez.

Scuba diving may not have become the “huge mass market” envisioned by Willy Breitling in 1957 but diving watches are hugely popular—even if most owners don’t use them for their original purpose. The current SuperOcean Heritage II (which traces its design to the 1957 SuperOcean) is now



**Clockwise from top left:** 1965 SuperOcean Ref. 2005; Tommy Brady on his Waves Of Sustainability Expedition; 1970 SuperOcean Ref. 2105; SuperOcean Heritage II

Breitling’s bestselling watch.

The Automatic versions are powered by the Breitling B20 manufacture movement and are available in 42, 44 and 46mm, offering a power reserve of 70 hours. Chronographs are available in case diameters of 44 or 46mm, either with contrasting subdials and the 70-hour power reserve

manufacture Breitling B01 calibre, or the ETA-based calibre B13. All SuperOceans are chronometer-certified by the COSC and are rated waterproof to depths of 200m and all have uni-directional ceramic bezels.

Many of the design elements of the SuperOcean Heritage take cues from the 1957 icons, but add modern twists—watches that look good with beachwear and surfing, diving or dinner suits. The bezels lack the concave construction of the originals, but perhaps future versions will bring these back too.

## Tudor Black Bay

By KEN KESSLER

One of the most remarkable stories in the recent annals of the wristwatch is the renaissance of Tudor. Tudor was created by Rolex’s founder, Hans Wilsdorf, to serve as an economical option, ideal for, say, Rolex-wearing fathers to give to their sons.

This led to a bizarre situation in which Tudors were once sniffily regarded as “poor man’s Rolexes”, which is absurd; the watches were always made to Rolex standards, differing primarily in their movements. A savvy collector, cognisant of the implications and subtleties, would prefer an alternative analogy: Tudor is to Rolex as *grand cru* is to *premier cru*.



The Tudor trademark’s centenary is a mere seven years away, but it wasn’t until 1946 that Wilsdorf established it as a standalone brand called Montres



**From left:** 1961 Marine Nationale diver wearing a Tudor 7924; 1964 Tudor Oyster Prince Submariner USN 7928

Tudor SA. Given that the parent company was long established as the premier manufacturer of waterproof timepieces (releasing the earth-shattering Submariner in 1953/4), it was a natural move for Tudor to introduce its version soon after. The company’s Ref. 7922 replaced the predecessor’s manually wound movement with the Felsa-based self-winding 17-jewel calibre 390, produced by Fleurier Ebauche.

Movement and dial logo aside, there was no obscuring its relationship to the senior brand. Eventually, the casebacks would bear the engraving, “Original Oyster Case By Rolex Geneva”, which is akin to shouting it from the rooftops. With a pedigree

© TOMMYBRADY/COURTESY OF BREITLING (BRADY); © JOEL BRUN ECPAD DEFENSE

## Diving Watches

this pure and direct, Tudor's diving watches were not seen by those in the know as a poor man's anything. Instead, they were so robust and suited to the task that they found their way into many of the world's navies as standard issue, including those of Israel, France and the United States.

For the roots of the model that powered the current revival, one needs to turn back to 1958, when Tudor released the Ref. 7924. One of its distinguishing features was its oversized crown, while other details included all the hallmarks of the modern diving watch: rotating bezel to keep track of elapsed or remaining time during dives, superlative legibility, an inverted triangle at 12 for rapid indication of the right way up, "Mercedes"-style hour hand, and water-resistance to 200 metres.

This model evolved into the 7928, which added protective shoulders on either side of the winding crown, while later references, such as the 7016, acquired the brand's signature "snowflake" hands. For over 50 years, Tudor quietly produced its own Submariners, better known to the cognoscenti than the wider public.

With the explosion in global interest in mechanical watches which began in the late 1980s,



**Clockwise from right:** Tudor Black Bay Burgundy; Tudor Black Bay Blue; Tudor Black Bay P01; diver Jason Heaton wearing a Tudor Heritage Black Bay Blue in St. Maarten



**Above:** 1975 Tudor Oyster Prince Submariner Marine Nationale original Oyster caseback.  
**Left:** 1986 Marine Nationale divers wearing Tudor 9401

Tudor seemed to have disappeared. In fact, Rolex was biding its time and slowly, with the sort of deliberation one can only admire and envy, it rolled out the Tudor brand one country at a time. Then came the release that would completely transform the way the brand was perceived.

It started in 2012 with Tudor Heritage Black Bay, the watch fitted with the "big crown", in a case of 41mm and without the protective shoulders of the 7928, but with the later models' snowflake hands. First came the Black Bay Burgundy, joined in 2014 by the Black Bay Blue and a year later by the Black Bay Black; all of which contained ETA movements. The reaction on every level—retailers, press and customers—was overwhelming.

Tudor swiftly upped the ante by introducing its own in-house movement, with all three colours of Black Bays being fitted with the calibre MT5602 in 2016. It was Tudor's first mechanical movement developed, manufactured and assembled in-house, with a 70-hour power reserve and COSC chronometer certification.

Sustaining the Black Bay's success has been a steady flow of models in various sizes, versions in bronze and in steel and gold, chronographs, GMTs and, most recently, the P01, based on a prototype that never reached production. Tudor is now a brand that has waiting lists. One can only imagine how Hans Wilsdorf would react had he lived to see his "economy" brand enjoying unparalleled elevation in desirability and undeniable cool, all thanks to a diving model.

GISHANI RATNAYAKE/SWIMPRUF (ST. MAARTEN); © JOËL BRUN ECPAD DÉFENSE (DIVERS)

# Omega Seamaster

By ARTHUR TOUCHOT

Earlier this year, Omega announced that one of its watches had broken a record that had appeared invulnerable. Omega had sent three models of its latest Seamaster for a dive 10,928 metres below the ocean's surface, attached to the arm of *Limiting Factor*—a highly advanced submersible built for, and operated by, the explorer Victor Vescovo (see page 86).

The latest record means that Omega finds itself in the unique position of having made both of the watches that have travelled the furthest away from the surface of the Earth: the Speedmaster, worn by Buzz Aldrin on the moon in 1969, and the most recent (and yet to be commercialised) Seamaster, brought to the deepest point of the Mariana Trench by Vescovo's submersible. The previous record (of 10,916 metres) had been held since 1960 by the Rolex Deep Sea Special, following one of the earliest dives to that same trench.

Born in 1957, the Speedmaster and the Seamaster form two thirds of a collection of watches made for the professional market known to watch collectors as "the Holy Trinity". The set is completed by the Railmaster, a watch designed to withstand magnetic forces and reduce any ill effects on the watch's movement—a challenge that hasn't inspired the same quest for records as the Space Race or the exploration of the ocean's greatest depths.

Omega could not have imagined the incredible human achievements with which its

watches would later be associated, although the brand's original objective—to challenge its historical competitor, Rolex, on land, air and sea—was already immense.

The Omega Seamaster 300 Ref. CK2913 was not the company's first Seamaster. Another watch whose water resistance was deemed reasonable enough for the name had previously been launched in 1948 to commemorate the manufacture's 100th anniversary. The first of its name, made for civilians with technology developed and used by British sailors during the Second World War, the Seamaster would become Omega's longest-running series of any Omega wristwatch and inspire a recent limited edition series of the

original 1948 model, currently available in the manufacture's catalogue.

However, the new and improved Omega Seamaster 300 CK2913 was the first to be sold proudly to professional divers with



Above, from left: an early non-professional Omega Seamaster Ref. 2846, 1958; American Omega "Captain" advert



a guaranteed depth-rating of 200 metres, which made Omega competitive in one of the fastest growing markets for sports watches. Today's Instagram influencers would kill for the kind of popularity enjoyed back then by Jacques Cousteau (and other notable explorers) while commercial diving began taking off thanks, in great part, to Cousteau's invention of the twin-hose Aqua-Lung.

The watch's attractive and functional attributes—including its large "Broad Arrow" hands, rotating bezel and screw-on caseback with integrated O-ring gasket—combined with a highly reliable and precise automatic movement were extremely well received by professionals, and would later serve as a base for a superior military version issued to members of the British Army and Royal Navy, including the Special Air Service (SAS). Models made in that configuration are extremely rare—only a small batch of mil-spec Seamaster 300s was made between 1967 and 1970—and highly sought-after by watch collectors.

Meanwhile, Omega was busy developing its next great diving wristwatch, still aimed at

Left, from top: Omega Seamaster 300, 1957; Omega Seamaster 1000, 1971; Omega Seamaster 600 [The Ploprof], 1970

COURTESY OF OMEGA

## Diving Watches



professionals and presenting substantial improvements to lure them to the brand—this time with input from the elite diving team at the Compagnie Maritime d'Expertises (COMEX) in Marseille, France, as well as Jacques Cousteau himself.

Officially introduced to the market in 1971, the Seamaster 600 doubled the watch's depth-rating thanks to an unusual and instantly recognisable asymmetrical case design—not unlike the profile of a submarine—providing an impermeable seal and preventing the entry of helium gas. Rolex took a different approach to the challenge posed by deep diving by developing a helium-escape valve for its Submariner.

Also known as the “PloProf” (early reference books presented the watch with this quirky moniker, which comes from the conjunction of “*Plongeurs*” and “*Professionels*”), the Seamaster 600 is one of the most iconic divers ever made—it was famously enjoyed by Gianni Agnelli, the former chairman of Ferrari and Fiat and a man who was known for his design eye and superb sense of style.

The PloProf took Omega's diving watches in a very specific—and short-lived—direction, with depth-ratings increasing progressively with the introduction of the Seamaster

1000 and (much later) the 1200m. By now, it's likely that you won't need any help guessing the level of permeability of these watches.

For the growing legions of recreational divers (and desk divers), Omega continued to build on the strength of the Seamaster 300, sticking with the winning design of the original for the remainder of the series' production life—reassuringly traditional case shapes, standardised rotating bezels, and lots (and lots) of luminescent material.

The Seamaster earned a massive boost in popularity in 1995 following the release of *GoldenEye*, the first of eight movies featuring Omega's diving watch on James Bond's wrist. The franchise was also the springboard for the Seamaster Planet Ocean—one of Bond's favourite Omegas, based on the number of inclusions in the franchise—which has since spawned an entire collection, including a chronograph version



**From top:**  
Pierce Brosnan wears an Omega Seamaster as 007 in *GoldenEye*, 1995; 2019  
Omega Seamaster Planet Ocean Chronograph; Victor Vescovo with his submersible; Mariana Trench nautical map; Seamaster Planet Ocean Ultra Deep Professional



that caught the eye of another larger-than-life (and real) character who decided to treat himself with one after successfully ascending the highest point of every continent.

Vescovo's next challenge? Naturally, it's to dive to the deepest points in all five oceans. Hearing of this, Omega contacted the accomplished adventurer to make sure one of its watches would keep time on the lengthy trip to the Mariana Trench—one of five points Vescovo would be piloting *Limiting Factor* towards during his Five Deeps Expedition.

Keeping many of the Seamaster aesthetic codes alive—the Planet Ocean Ultra Deep Professional features “Broad Arrow” hands and Arabic numerals at 3, 6, 9 and 12 o'clock—Omega turned to the latest technology available to make sure its watch would survive the perilous trip, including using cut-offs from the submarine's titanium hull to create the watch's case, bezel body, and crown, while turning to ceramic for the bezel ring. Omega built three like it, testing them to simulated depth pressures of 15,000 metres, just in case.

Between 1957 and 2019, the depth reached by an Omega wristwatch before returning to the surface intact has increased by more than 10 kilometres. During that same time, the company's diving watches have remained largely unchanged in style and size—with one notable exception—making the myriad of microtechnological improvements introduced that much more impressive.

Vescovo's next and final dive of the Five Deeps Expedition is scheduled this September in the Arctic Ocean—a quick plunge at 5,450 metres. But should he ever find a trench deeper than the Mariana, Omega may well continue to break records. ■

KEITH HAMSHIRE/GETTY IMAGES (BROSNAN); DAMELYS MENDOZA (VESCOVO); ALAMY (MAP)



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# Who Dares Swims

Panerai executives aren't ones to shirk a challenge. They're even willing to spend a day training with Italy's elite military unit—the Navy Divers and Special Forces Command

By **JONNY BEALBY** Photographs by **GREG FUNNELL**



As the founder of one of Britain's leading adventure travel companies, I am no stranger to interesting experiences. In the past 12 months alone, I have cosied up to lowland gorillas in the jungles of the Democratic Republic of Congo, ridden with gauchos across the Argentine pampas and trekked through mountains in the Hindu Kush.

But when asked to spend a day being put through my paces by the Italian Navy's Special Forces, I paused. At the wrong side of 50, was that really a good idea?

Rarely one to shirk a challenge, I agreed of course, and a few weeks later found myself in a minibus with a small group of Panerai executives being driven through the town of La Spezia on Italy's western coast.

Panerai has a long history with the Italian military, designing and manufacturing nautical instruments, and in particular contact triggers for

mines and submersible navigation tools. By the early 1930s, Panerai was a leading contributor to Italy's nascent Special Forces.

As a natural harbour, La Spezia is home to one of Italy's main naval bases, a large commercial shipyard and an important industrial centre. Skirting the harbour, we passed huge container depots, warehouses and factories. On the eastern side of the bay we entered the zona militare, where we could look down into a harbour bristling with battleships, landing craft and Zodiac assault launches. As we went through the security checkpoint, a grey military helicopter swooped low over our heads. This was the Italian Pearl Harbour. I wondered if I'd made the right decision.

This feeling was in no way diminished on meeting Warrant Officer Zaia, our host for the day. A huge bull of a man, with hands like hams and

a half-smoked cigar protruding from his lips, he explained that, during the day, we'd be experiencing a number of activities including diving, an obstacle course, hand-to-hand combat and live firing. Feeling a little queasy after the drive (and, truth be told, a typically indulgent Italian evening), I consoled myself that at least we weren't going to be thrown from a plane.

First up, we were taken to the training water tank, given wetsuits and Aqua-Lungs and told to jump in. As the only one with any experience of diving,

I was sent to the bottom of the five-metre pool and shown how to connect pipes and use a bolt cutter; I was also guided through the principles of attaching limpet mines to the hull of an enemy ship.

I think the others were just pleased to survive.

Out of the water, we were told to change into military fatigues and move outside in preparation





### IN AT THE DEEP END

Jonny Bealby takes part in a training session with the Italian Navy's specialist commando frogmen, the Comsubin, as part of a brand experience for Panerai watches, in La Spezia, Italy, on June 14, 2019. *Opposite:* the limited edition Panerai Submersible Marina Militare Carbotech™— 47mm



**AQUA HEROICS**

Clockwise from left: Warrant Officer Zaia of the Marina Militare [the Italian navy] puts Jonny Bealby through his paces; an Italian Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal diver at work; an officer emerges from the tiny decompression chamber on board Anteo [A 5309]



for the next event. “Avanti, avanti,” cried Warrant Officer Zaia, on spotting me waiting patiently outside the changing rooms. No matter two women were changing in there. Having been told to wear swimming trunks under our trousers when we got dressed that morning, I now had no underwear... time to go “commando”!

Kitted out in combat gear, I was soon crawling under razor wire, vaulting unaided over a two-metre wall, swinging ape-like from a steel frame and using a rope to clamber over a five-metre wall. Halfway up the eight-metre rope, with the words of my wife—“don’t do anything stupid”—ringing in my ears, I decided I’d had enough and dropped on to the welcoming padded mat below. Not that



**WATCH OUT**

*Inset left:* the limited edition Panerai Submersible Marina Militare Carbotech™—47mm with technical Velcro bracelet supplied as a second strap. *Above:* the Panerai Submersible Marina Militare Carbotech™—47mm in action

it brought any peace. From here we were thrown immediately into hand-to-hand combat with Special Forces of the Marina Militare (Italian navy), learning moves I hope I will never need to use again. And from here, we headed to the live firing range.

**A**s a traveller, I have spent time in Afghanistan, where I fired an AK-47 with the Mujahideen. Here we were given an MP5 laser-sighted machine rifle and told to shoot at the head of a dummy positioned 40 metres away. “Double tap,” barked a Special Forces officer, pointing directly between his eyes. “Terrorists today often wear body armour... two shots between the eyes will always take them out.” This was huge fun, like a grown-up version of a fairground game, as targets popped up which we then dispatched. Having used the rifle, we were then given Glock pistols and told to do the same. It was easier than I thought it might be. Following lunch in the canteen, we

COURTESY OF PANERAI (PANERAI SUBMERSIBILE MARINA MILITARE CARBOTECHE)



### ACTION MEN

Clockwise from top left: An Italian Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal diver; a helmsman; a member of the Italian Navy Deep Diving team from *Anteo* (A 5309), a ship designed for specialist diving operations; on board a Zodiac Hurricane light-assault craft heading towards *Anteo*; an atmospheric diving suit



## HAVING BEEN TOLD TO WEAR SWIMMING TRUNKS UNDER OUR TROUSERS WHEN WE GOT DRESSED THAT MORNING, I NOW HAD NO UNDERWEAR... TIME TO GO “COMMANDO”!

boarded a Zodiac Hurricane light-assault craft and powered across the bay at 80km per hour (which is lightning-fast on water) to tour naval ship *Anteo* (A 5309)—a vessel designed to carry out diving operations. We walked along the narrow corridors and climbed the steep staircases, inhaling the ubiquitous smell of oil. Spending five minutes in the tiny decompression chamber was enough for me. That some officers will spend two weeks in there after carrying out operations at over 100 metres below sea level, seemed utterly inconceivable.

To conclude the exercise, we were shown around a small museum where the strangest looking machines were on display. About 10 metres in length and resembling huge black cucumbers,



### TIME MACHINE

Above: a human torpedo with Panerai control dials used for subterranean bomb deployment

these bizarre underwater motorbikes were ridden by the famous human torpedoes, whose sole objective was to attach a huge bomb under the hull of an enemy ship and get away if they could. Few did. Our group was delighted to hear that the ancient dials which controlled these beasts were of Panerai design.

As an adventure aficionado, my job enables me to have all manner of “once-in-a-lifetime” experiences but, without a doubt, my session with the Diving and Commando group of the Italian Navy ranks as one of my most memorable challenges. And *avanti, avanti*, as Warrant Officer Zaia might bark—it’s an experience open to those who purchase one of the 33 limited edition Panerai Submersible Marina Militare Carbotech™ watches. **■**

## Philippe Stern

The trimaran *Altaïr X*, pictured on Lake Geneva in 1979, in which the Patek Philippe patriarch (right) won the Bol d'Or Mirabaud a record seven times, earning the soubriquet "Roi du Lac".

**Inset:** the Patek Philippe Nautilus Ref. 5711/1A-011



# A BIGGER *Splash*

Sailing, diving, kitesurfing, spearfishing...For the world's overachieving luxury watch CEOs, clocking out of the office is when the real challenge begins

By MING LIU

What is it with watch executives and their sports? Perhaps it's the high-octane performance and perpetual motion, the competition and the hard-nosed drive to win. Whatever it is, many watch bosses are amateur athletes in their own right. Industry legend Jean-Claude Biver regularly cycles dozens of kilometres a day, Ulysse Nardin's Patrick Pruniaux recharges via punishing ski tours and, after a full-on season in Verbier, Bulgari's Jean-Christophe Babin and Piaget's Chabi Nouri swap their winter kit for water skis.

As high-energy, overachieving A-types, it's no surprise that one water sport alone just won't cut it for these executives. Pruniaux is an avid kitesurfer, but windsurfing was his first love thanks to his father, who, in the 1970s, brought back a windsurf board from the United States. Below the surface, the former Apple executive flits between scuba and free-diving, much preferring the latter: "It's less equipment and closer to mother nature." Oh, and spearfishing, too—though

Pruniaux admits he does less of the James Bond-esque sport these days owing to lack of practice. "It's not a sport you want to do recklessly," he says.

Nevertheless, despite Lake Geneva being on his doorstep, it's the sea—notably the South of France and the Mediterranean—that resonates most strongly with Pruniaux. "The light, the smell and feeling are so unique," he explains. "Sometimes I drive down from Geneva, which takes five hours. I can be extremely busy and concerned about work, but when I see the sea, about an hour before arriving, suddenly my mood changes. It's both exhilarating and relaxing."

Bremont's horological brothers, Nick and Giles English, are avid sailors, wakeboarders and surfers. "It's all boys' toys and good fun," says Giles. "It's a break from your day job and we are lucky to do it; it's a bit of adrenalin and escapism." Their ocean immersion started young, when their father built the 43ft sloop *Queen Bee*, and took them both out of school for six months to sail from England to Africa.

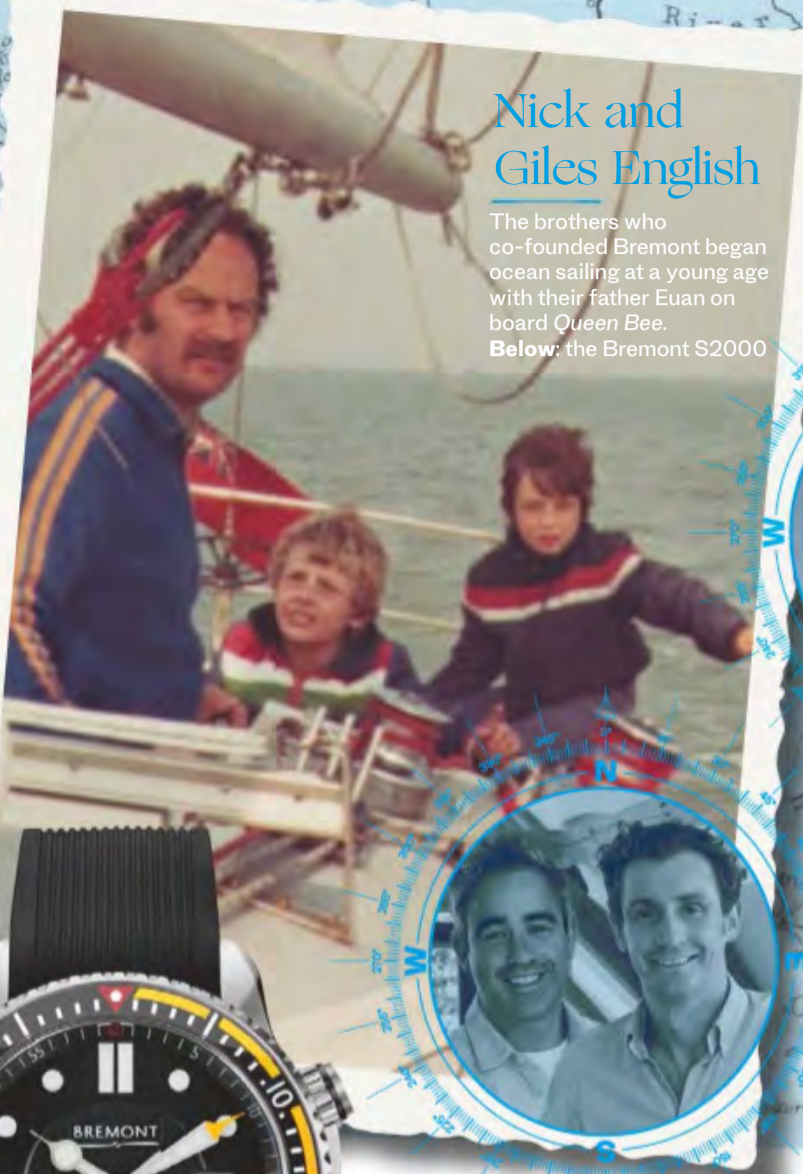
"I was about 12 at the time but I remember literally every

## Peter Harrison

The European CEO of Richard Mille owns four boats, including the ultra-high performance, 16-tonne, carbon-fibre Maxi 72 monohull *Sorcha* (right), which races in regattas around the world.  
**Below right:** the RM 11-03 Carbon TPT

## Nick and Giles English

The brothers who co-founded Bremont began ocean sailing at a young age with their father Euan on board *Queen Bee*.  
**Below:** the Bremont S2000



day,” says Giles, who was so taken by the big blue that he went on to study nautical engineering at university. It was on *Queen Bee*, strapped to a rope and with a special child-sized rig, that the brothers learnt to windsurf. As an adult, Nick went on to buy a place in Biarritz with his Canadian semi-professional windsurfer wife (she’s since hung up her board and now works at Bremont), while Giles has upped the ante with the scary-sounding Mako Slingshot, or what he calls “surfing without waves”—a special edition Bremont Slingshot can be found at their Mayfair boutique. “They go about 30 knots and it’s a bit of a smack when you fall off,” says Giles. “It’s quite a buzz.”

Yachting is a firm favourite with watch CEOs, particularly those whose offices overlook one of Switzerland’s numerous beautiful lakes. Echoing its position in the industry, Patek Philippe leads the charge: patriarch Philippe Stern was crowned “Roi du Lac” (King of Lake Geneva) multiple times for his record-holding wins in the Bol d’Or Mirabaud, a 123km inland lake regatta that runs from Geneva to Le Bouveret and back. After his first win in 1977, during a terrible thunderstorm, he took home the top gong six more times with his catamaran *Altair*—and a Nautilus on his wrist, naturally.

Karl-Friedrich Scheufele of Chopard keeps two boats: an open sailboat and a classic wooden Riva Super Aquarama from 1967 that “needs a lot of attention, patience and time”—right up Scheufele’s street. “I was never the type to get someone else to do all the work, I jump on the boat and just take off,” he explains. “I like to take care of the boat myself, come back and clean it. If I don’t have time to do that, it’s not the right

“But when I see the *sea*, my mood changes. It’s both EXHILARATING and relaxing”

attitude.” The best outings on the Riva, he says, are right after the office shuts, winding down in the middle of the lake with the setting sun, a glass of wine and a dip in the water. “It’s a huge privilege in Geneva.” And if time isn’t ticking, the sailboat is pushed out. “It’s both relaxing and challenging—you’re using only natural energy to pull you along.”

Peter Harrison, European CEO of Richard Mille and a diehard sailor, keeps a Tofinou 9.5 on Lake Geneva, one of four boats that he owns. “That sounds greedy, but it’s not,” he says apologetically. “They each perform different tasks and enable you to sail on different waves so it’s important.” A second 7m Tofinou is docked at the Isle of Wight, while a J/70 is based at the Monaco Yacht Club. Most headline grabbing is his ultra-high performance, 16-tonne, carbon-fibre Maxi 72 monohull *Sorcha*, which competes in regattas around the world.

Harrison agrees with his business counterparts that sailing is a form of escape—mental and physical. “You’ve got to focus

COURTESY OF ENGLISH FAMILY ARCHIVE (TRIO ON BOAT); COURTESY OF BREMONT (NICK AND GILES ENGLISH); RENAUD CORLOUER (MAX 72, HARRISON)

and concentrate. You can't drift off for a second because that's the difference between winning and losing. Plus the fresh air and just enjoying the moment," he says. When Harrison spoke to *Vanity Fair* he was preparing for the biennial Fastnet Race, a 608-nautical mile competition that runs from Cowes to Plymouth via Ireland.

But not all CEOs feel compelled to race. Omega's head honcho Raynald Aeschlimann takes a positively chic and relaxed approach. "Business is competitive enough," he says. "Sailing for me is about relaxation and enjoying nature." His ideal day at sea is "a good 15-knots wind and a blue sky... island-hopping on a large catamaran, with a lot of space and room to relax"—and a rubber-strap Omega Seamaster Diver 300M. Harrison found his true ocean calling as an 18-year-old windsurfer-cum-Harrods salesperson. "In those days it was quite civilised, and we closed at five o'clock. I could get back to my flat on the King's Road, get my windsurfer and be down on the south coast by six-thirty. You could windsurf until nine or ten o'clock at night in summer, then pack everything up, pub dinner on the way home and back in London by midnight."

**F**arly sea legs seem to be something of a theme among watch skipper CEOs. Hamilton's Sylvain Dolla grew up sailing a Hobie Cat in St. Tropez, and today can be spotted, twice a year, on a Hanse 345 in La Rochelle, sporting

a Hamilton Khaki Navy Scuba Auto. Nicola Andreatta of Roger Dubuis grew up on Lake Como, and, as soon as he got his driving licence, was up at 4am to windsurf in nearby Valmadrera. "You were going from stars to the shining sun," he remembers. "It was very poetic and an amazing sensation to windsurf in that kind of landscape. You feel so powerful being in charge. It's basically you against nature."

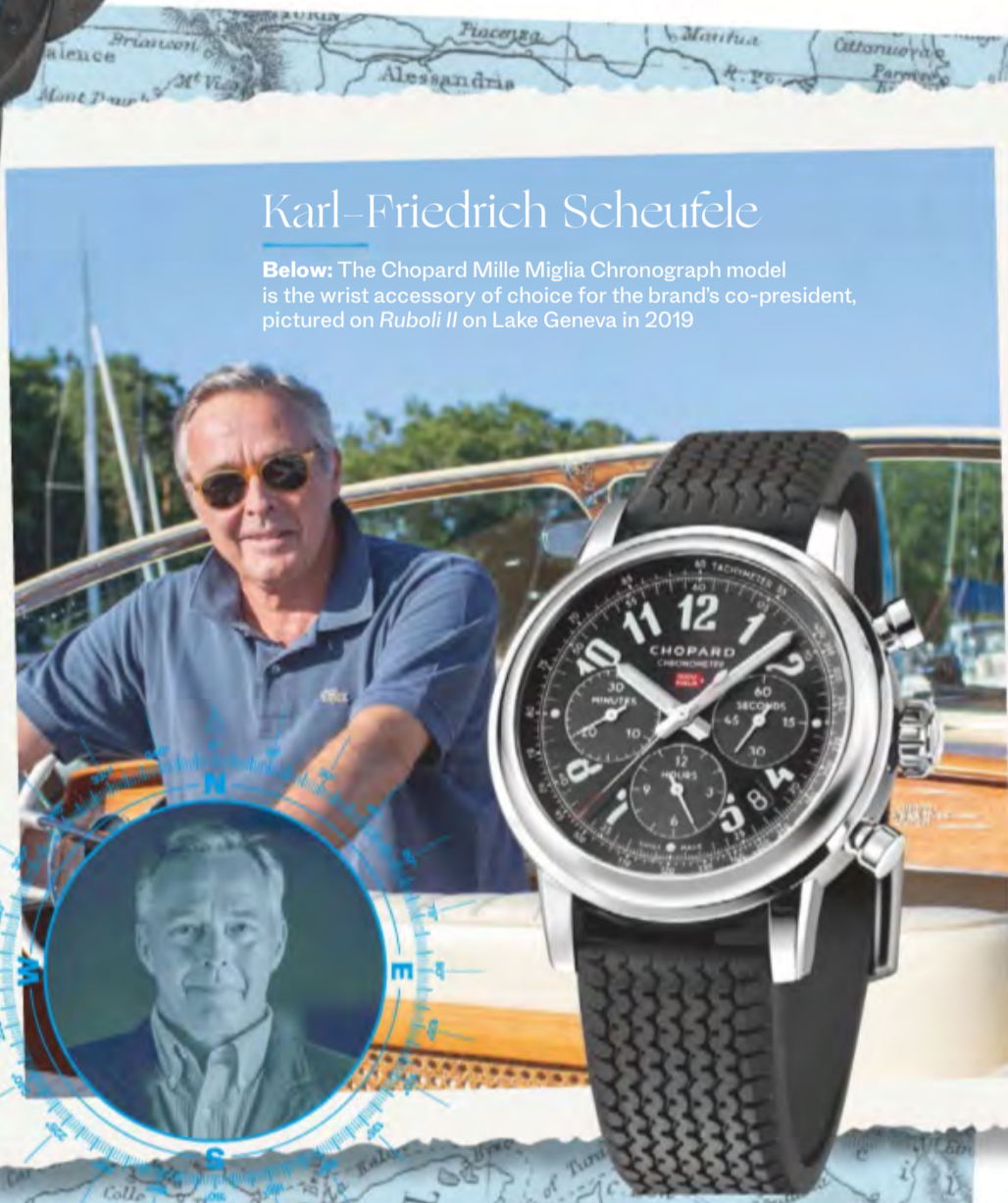
Andreatta is something of a water-sport junkie: he also sails, wakeboards, surfs and has his scuba certification. In the late 1990s he was part of a crew on a Swan 44, a 1973 Sparkman & Stephens-designed beauty which won three World Cups. Not satisfied, he joined the crew on a Swan 45, taking home another world championship in 2005. He concedes that Roger Dubuis is not linked particularly with aquatic sports: "But all these water sports I mention are generators of adrenalin. And Roger Dubuis is all about adrenalin and emotions. This is how I connect with the brand that I'm managing."

Sailing may be synonymous with Panerai—it even owns the gorgeous *Eilean*, a 1936 two-masted classic ketch lovingly restored in Tuscany—but for CEO Jean-Marc Pontroué, his aquatic sport of choice is waterskiing, and his watch of choice a rubber-strap Carbotech. "You have the impression of the freedom of winter skiing, but you're on the water. It's a highly demanding sport but, unlike winter skiing, it's simultaneously painful in the legs and arms. But once you are up, it's super fun." It can be pretty dangerous too, as Scheufele can personally attest. An adept waterskiier who only monoskied in his day ("I liked going into the curves and jumping the waves"), Scheufele has been left behind by the boat on more than one occasion: once by his father on Lake Geneva as dusk was setting in, and again in the warmer waters of Kuwait by a client "who



Jean-Marc Pontroué

**Inset above:** Fortunately for the watersport-loving Panerai CEO, the brand owns the stunning 1936 two-masted classic ketch, *Eilean*. For waterskiing, Pontroué wears the rubber-strap PAM960 Carbotech



Karl-Friedrich Scheufele

**Below:** The Chopard Mille Miglia Chronograph model is the wrist accessory of choice for the brand's co-president, pictured on *Ruboli II* on Lake Geneva in 2019

COURTESY OF PANERAI (PONTROUÉ, EILEAN)



## François Moreau

The CEO and founder of Reservoir is “manometer obsessed” following an incident when he ran out of air in 1986 in the French Caribbean. **Below:** the Reservoir Hydrosphere Blackfin

## Marc A. Hayek

The Blancpain President and CEO [right] on expedition Gombessa II, diving on the Fakarava atoll in French Polynesia. **Above:** the Blancpain Fifty Fathoms watch

didn't hear very well and somehow thought I was ready to go—but I wasn't. The rope was around my neck and I was being pulled by the boat. Thankfully someone saw me struggling.”

On a more Zen note, the simplicity of surfing is what speaks to Alain Marhic, founder and CEO of the 1970s-style French watch brand March L.A.B. Marhic took up surfing after a childhood of sailing, kitesurfing and windsurfing in Brittany. It was surfing's fuss-free ease that sealed it for him. “You basically have the surfboard in your car, one pair of board shorts or wet suit and that's it. You park the car, check the waves, open your boot and in five minutes you're in the water.” And his watch of choice? March L.A.B.'s chunky, diving-watch style Belza, launched earlier this year and water-resistant to 200m.

Speaking of diving, the aquatic sport naturally has its share of watch CEO fans. Hublot's Ricardo Guadalupe is fond of the Maldives (which he complements with bodysurfing in France's Arcachon and wakeboarding on Lake Geneva), as is Matthias Breschan of Rado, a Captain Cook on his wrist, whose favourite dive spot is also in the Maldives' Lhaviyani atoll. Meanwhile Marc A. Hayek has clocked more than 1,000 dives since starting as a precocious 12-year-old and today excels in closed-circuit rebreather diving for extended, “more discrete dives, racking up his dive numbers in Swiss lakes and rivers, the Med, Southeast Asia, the Maldives and the Caribbean.” But his all-time top spot is the diving mecca Tiputa Pass, in French Polynesia, swimming alongside dolphins, hammerhead sharks and manta rays, equipped, as always, with his Blancpain Fifty Fathoms to measure each and every second. Meanwhile, Georges Kern—who straps on his Breitling Superocean Héritage II Chronograph 44

Outerknown, which comes with a special upcycled NATO-style strap partly made from recovered fishing nets—likens diving to “flying in water”. For more than a decade, Kern has been drawn to the sport's sense of freedom and “compelling silence”, even if it is all-consuming, both physically and timewise. “Diving can be exhausting so it's best not to schedule anything afterwards,” he advises. “Rest, recover, and enjoy a great meal!”

The founder of French watchmaker Reservoir nearly died scuba diving with basic equipment in 1986 when, at 30m deep in the French Caribbean, near Guadeloupe, he ran out of air. But that hardly deterred François Moreau and he credits the experience for making him “manometer obsessed”, and which partly explains why his signature retrograde minute and jumping hour watches are so inspired by measuring instruments (cue his Hydrosphere Air Gauge diver with a super graphic and legible white dial). A fan of night and wreck diving (“I want to know what happened to the ship—and also like going inside and discovering the instruments”), his all-time favourite diving memory is the freshwater Yucatán Peninsula cenote caves in Mexico, famous for their stalactites and tree roots sprouting from rocks. Diving there is done by flashlight, which Moreau describes enticingly: “The purity of the water, quietness and clarity combined with the light—all blue and green shades—is absolutely poetic.”

But not all CEOs have to burn off steam in far-flung destinations with adrenalin-pumping aquatic adventures. For de Grisogono's Céline Assimon, the trusty pool inflatable works wonders. “I absolutely enjoy ‘me time’ on the unicorn float,” she says. “It's by far my favourite aquatic activity at the family house in Sorrento, Italy, and with friends in the Hamptons.” Enough said. ■



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*The Vanity Fair On Time*

# WANTHER

*Portfolio 2019*

## Kai Lenny BIG WAVE SURFER

*Photograph by* MORGAN MAASSEN

Primal, euphoric, addictive. Kai Lenny likens the draw to riding waves as taking on the ocean gods. "It requires every fibre of your body and mental awareness, and that involvement leads to pinnacle experiences that are almost indescribable," he says. "Time slows down and 10 seconds feels like minutes—it's a feeling that I know now I cannot live without." At this year's 19th annual World Surf League Awards, Lenny was declared the XXL Biggest Wave Winner for the gargantuan wall of water he rode at Jaws, Maui, Hawaii on November 26, 2018—an experience he shared with his trusty, resilient TAG Heuer Aquaracer. "I have such a friendship bond with my timepiece created by going through these big-wave experiences," says the multiple surfing and stand-up paddling champion. "I have put it through scenarios that I was surprised my body could even handle. As time passes, I feel my watch absorbs our experiences, so it really is a prized possession." The day before his prize-winning XXL ride, Lenny read the ocean-buoy data and used his TAG to calculate the precise time that the most colossal swell would come in. "While we were waiting for the break, I checked my watch and literally to the second this gigantic wave came in—the wave which would inevitably be the biggest ride of my life so far. Had my watch been off at all, I might have lost faith that it was ever coming and missed the most important ride I've ever had."—SARAH EDWORTHY

—  
Photographed in Maui, Hawaii on June 24, 2019 wearing a **TAG Heuer Aquaracer Calibre 16**





# Pierre-Yves Cousteau CONSERVATIONIST

Photograph by EVA KRUIPER

Legendarily a renaissance man in all things aquatic, the explorer and filmmaker Jacques Cousteau pioneered marine conservation—work, that his youngest son continues. Pierre-Yves has established the protection of sharks in the Bahamas, created a wildlife sanctuary in New Caledonia and recently rescued an entangled loggerhead turtle in Formentera. He finds time both a philosophical motivation and an intrusive yet vital consideration. Driven by Seneca's maxim—"If the greatness of our soul can surpass the narrowness of human wanting, a lot of time becomes available for our own exploration"—he is all too aware of his dangerous tendency to become mesmerised by the seascape. "As soon as I break the ocean surface, I lose track of time, absorbed in the beauty of the wildlife, and I often find myself suddenly realising I am running out of air." In tribute to his father, his favoured special watch is the first IWC Aquatimer Chronograph Edition Expedition Jacques-Yves Cousteau from 2004. —S.E.

Photographed in Formentera, Ibiza on July, 9, 2019, wearing an IWC Aquatimer Chronograph Edition "Expedition Jacques-Yves Cousteau"





## Fabien Cousteau AQUANAUT

Photograph by BÉNJAMIN BECHET

Risk, fear, adrenalin—and thinking on his flippers—are all part of the job for Fabien Cousteau. The grandson of Jacques Cousteau spent four months diving with Great Whites in Guadeloupe inside a shark-shaped mini-submarine—at one point finding himself stranded, his “shark” having broken down, during a night dive in the predators’ feeding zone. At dinner time. He also lived for a month in an underwater laboratory 63ft beneath the sea’s surface off the Florida Keys. As a member of seafaring royalty, Fabien is dedicated to continuing the legacy of his grandfather. Having learnt to scuba dive at the age of four while on board Cousteau’s research vessels, he is today an explorer, documentary filmmaker and marine conservationist: he set up the non-profit Fabien Cousteau Ocean Learning Centre in 2016. “We need to see the ocean as our planet’s life-support system,” he says. “I’ve been thousands of miles further than many humans have ever been, yet still see the negative impacts of human behaviour upon the beauty of the ocean.” That beauty, as he knows only too well, can be treacherous, which is why he needs a watch as “backup life-support”. His favourite is a vintage Seiko Divers’ Spring Drive SBDB001—the latest version of which is the SNR029 Prospex LX edition. “It’s something I can count on in potentially life and death scenarios,” he says. Today, he is wearing a Prospex Save the Ocean Divers SRPD21K1. Unsurprisingly, for the man who enjoys hanging out with Great Whites, Fabien is particularly fond of its little “white shark’s fin” next to the eight o’clock marker. “I’m always looking for a ‘clean’ uncluttered dial. I have split seconds to make decisions under water. I want to see everything clearly in all conditions,” he says. Quite. You wouldn’t want to bump noses with a ravenous Great White.—KATE QUILL

Photographed in Sanary-Sur-Mer on June 27, 2019 wearing a **Seiko Prospex Save the Ocean Divers SRPD21K1**



## Sir Ben Ainslie CBE COMPETITIVE SAILOR

Photograph by ADAM FUSSELL

For T.S. Eliot's J. Alfred Prufrock, it was coffee spoons; but for Sir Ben Ainslie, life has been measured out in Olympic medals and exceptional timepieces. In particular, Britain's four-time Olympic gold medallist nominates three Rolex watches he received for winning the World Sailor of the Year Award in 2002, 2008 and 2012. Ainslie describes the thrill of racing on the water as a "a mixture of intensity and release", and who can forget his nerve-shredding London 2012 medal race in Nothe Harbour off the coast at Weymouth, when he narrowly beat the Dane Jonas Høgh-Christensen to gold and became the first person to win medals in five different Olympic Games in sailing? As you would expect of one of the most successful sailors in Olympic history, Ainslie leans more towards the practical than the poetic. He appreciates his Rolex Deepsea as "a seriously impressive piece of engineering" and his Sky Dweller as a prized everyday watch that "in look, feel and functionality suits my lifestyle". His favourite timepiece from a sailing perspective is his Rolex Yacht-Master II: "To know that I could be racing in The Solent wearing a beautiful watch that I can actually use as a practical tool for the pre-start and the race itself is very special."—S.E.

Photographed at the Royal Yacht Squadron, Isle of Wight, on July 19, 2019 wearing a **Rolex Oyster Perpetual Sky Dweller in Oystersteel and white gold on an Oyster bracelet**





## Marcella Hansch FOUNDER OF PACIFIC GARBAGE SCREENING

*Photograph by* PETER RIGUAD

Time is of the essence to Marcella Hansch, who faces the mother of all deadlines: cleansing the oceans of plastic pollution before it is too late. The 32-year-old German architect began her not-for-profit company, Pacific Ocean Garbage, after developing the idea as part of her Master's thesis at Aachen University in 2013. She designed an enormous floating platform that filters plastic particles from water without harming marine life; the plastic collected is recycled into energy and fully degradable bioplastic. The concept isn't built yet, but Hansch hopes to have the first prototypes in action within a few years. Hansch was propelled into action during a scuba-diving trip in Cape Verde: "I realised that there was so much more plastic around than fish. The huge issues around ocean pollution touched me." She keeps track of her progress with an Oris Clean Ocean Limited Edition. The blessing of this "ecologically minded" brand underlines what she and her team have been working so hard for. "Creating awareness of what I fight for with a timepiece reflects how crucial time is and that we don't have much of it left to make things right." The partnership also reminds Hansch how quickly it is possible to galvanise an effective campaign. "I started as a single fighter with a huge vision; now we have an engaged team working to adapt the vision into feasible technology." From taking daily plastic-aware measures to attending beach clean-up events, Hansch believes it is important for every individual to take the time to realise they can make a difference.—KATE QUILL

Photographed on Usedom Beach, Germany on May 17, 2019 wearing an Oris Clean Ocean Limited Edition watch



## David Göttler ALPINIST

*Photograph by* SCANDERBEG SAUER

There is something apposite about the fact that David Göttler's first watch was "a classic old pocket watch on a chain I could clip to my trousers". The German alpinist, famed for his ability to scale the world's punishing, high-altitude 8,000m mountains, is happy to embrace the man-against-nature challenge in the spirit of a 19th-century Romantic, eschewing modern life-saving devices such as an oxygen cylinder. This year, Göttler climbed Everest without supplementary oxygen to a height of 8,650m, just 200m below the summit. Of the world's 14 such mountain challenges, Göttler has conquered five. He has a profound philosophical love of these otherworldly and treacherous environments, known bleakly in mountaineering parlance as "the death zone". "I love the endless scope for exploration—not only physical exploration, but exploration within oneself," Göttler reflects. "Time is all and nothing at the same time. It can heal and it can hurt. I try to embrace time as my companion." His companion during training is a digital sports watch to indicate altitude and "point me in the right direction". Otherwise, his favourite timepiece is the Alpine Eagle Watch from Chopard's new collection associated with the Eagle Wings Foundation, a multidisciplinary environmental project designed to raise awareness of the importance and fragility of Alpine biotopes. —K.Q.

Photographed at Glacier 3000, Switzerland on July 12, 2019 wearing a **Chopard Alpine Eagle watch in steel**



## Dr Sylvia Earle MARINE BIOLOGIST

Photograph by PHILIP SINDEN

Wikipedia will tell you that the Age of Discovery lasted from the 15th to the 17th century, when overseas exploration emerged as a powerful factor in European culture. But when it comes to undersea exploration, Dr Sylvia Earle argues that ours is “the greatest era of discovery about the nature of life in the sea”. If so, she is an aquanaut Columbus. “A watch was given to me in 1970 as part of the Tektite II project that Rolex helped to equip,” she says. “That watch became my most reliable ‘dive buddy’. It was a beautiful, practical, stainless steel instrument; my lifesaving piece of equipment.” On a dive about 10 years later, she saw a friend wearing a watch that seemed more appropriate “for meeting royalty”. She thought her friend had forgotten to change her watch. “Then I saw it was a Rolex—a beautiful watch that served as a rugged diving instrument but could also enhance black tie attire. I was smitten. The Rolex I am wearing has been introduced to numerous fish, whales, starfish and shrimp in the Arctic, Antarctic, Pacific, Atlantic and Indian Oceans and been my companion during all but the first of the 10 times that I have lived underwater. It has also been present at meetings with heads of state, scientific conferences, talks in schools...” Still diving at 83, Earle continues to be amazed by what she sees underwater and appalled by mankind’s effect on it. “It has taken 4.5 billion years for Earth to develop into a planet suitable for humankind and it has taken humankind four and a half decades to alter the temperature, chemistry and fabric of life in ways that threaten our continued existence. The Rolex on my wrist is a constant reminder of time on a practical, personal level but also on a grand scale. There is time—but no time to waste—to use the unprecedented knowledge now available to secure an enduring place for ourselves as a part of nature, not apart from it.”—NICHOLAS FOULKES

Photographed in the Mammals Gallery at the Natural History Museum, London on June 4, 2019 wearing a **Rolex Oyster Perpetual Datejust in Yellow Gold with President bracelet**





## Victor Vescovo UNDERSEA EXPLORER

Photograph by **DAMELYS MENDOZA**

After completing the “Explorer’s Grand Slam” by climbing the highest mountain on each of the world’s seven continents and skiing both Poles, the Dallas businessman and adventurer Victor Vescovo set himself the target of conquering the mirror image of those peaks, by becoming the first person to dive to the deepest point of the world’s oceans. Atlantic Ocean, tick; Southern Ocean, tick. And on April 28, 2019, Vescovo, 53, touched ground in his submersible, *Limiting Factor*, at the southern tip of the Mariana Trench in the Pacific—known as the Challenger Deep—setting a new record depth of 10,928 metres below sea-level. “I was drawn to the technical, organisational and logistical challenge of these missions,” he said, acknowledging his reliance on his Omega Seamaster timepieces in each operation. “I’ve worn my Omega Seamaster Planet Ocean Chronometer on every dive on the Five Deeps Expedition, to time the filling of my ballast tanks and help calculate my rate of descent. I also use it to set the master clock in the submersible—which I check constantly to ensure I execute my regular communications check—and to synchronise with the Omega worn on the surface by my dive master Patrick.” Three further Omega Seamaster Planet Ocean Ultra Deep timepieces made the dive: two attached to the submersible’s robotic arm, another to a lander. He jokes that in the submersible, as Einstein said, the passing of time is relative. “When you’re descending, a minute feels like three because you’re impatient to get to the mission area. When you’re on the bottom—working, exploring, mapping—a minute feels like 10 seconds. The older you get, the more you realise time is very precious and you can’t waste it on negative emotions or unproductive pursuits.” —S.E.

Photographed in Puerto Rico on July 16, 2019 wearing an **Omega Seamaster Planet Ocean 600m Co-Axial Master Chronometer Chronograph**



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*Watch*  
REPORT

BY NICHOLAS FOULKES

PRODUCTION BY HOLLY ROSS

*Photographs by* CHRIS TURNER *Set design by* ALIKI KIRMITSI





**TIME TRAVELLER**

*Clockwise from bottom left:* Raymond Weil Maestro “The Beatles Sgt Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band Limited Edition” Men’s Mechanical Movement; Bamford London GMT; Montblanc 1858 Automatic Limited Edition; Bell & Ross BR05 Blue Steel; Victorinox I.N.O.X Carbon Mechanical; Vacheron Constantin Patrimony Manual Royal Blue; A. Lange & Söhne Richard Lange Jumping Seconds; Tudor Black Bay Po1; TAG Heuer Autavia





**PEBBLE BEACH**

*Clockwise from bottom left:* Chaumet “Les Pierres de Rêve de Chaumet”; Hermès Arceau Ronde des Heures; Dior Watches La Mini D de Dior Tête de Mort; Louis Vuitton Conquêtes; Van Cleef & Arpels Perlée; Chanel Plume de Chanel; Richard Mille RM 37-01 Automatic Sucette







**MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE**  
*Clockwise from bottom left:* Hublot Big Bang Unico Golf Blue Carbon; Bulgari Daniel Roth Carillon Tourbillon Minute Repeater; Breguet Classique Tourbillon Extra-Plat Squelette 5395; Patek Philippe Men's Calatrava Weekly Calendar Ref. 5212A-001; Audemars Piguet Code 11.59 Perpetual Calendar





**ON THE ROCKS**

*Clockwise from bottom left: Harry Winston Kaleidoscope High Jewellery; Jaeger-LeCoultre Dazzling Rendez-Vous Moon; Piaget Limelight Gala watch; Rolex Day-Date 36; Chopard Red Carpet Collection; Graff Oval Fancy Vivid Yellow Diamond; Cartier Soreli Magnitude High Jewellery Collection*

**HOOK, LINE AND SINKER**

*Clockwise from bottom left:* Panerai PCYC Gold PAM01020; Bremont Jaguar D-Type; Blancpain Air Command Limited Edition; Girard-Perregaux Laureato Absolute Chronograph; Omega Speedmaster Apollo 11 50th Anniversary Limited Edition; IWC Portofino Chronograph; Breitling Premier Wheels & Waves Limited Edition; Chopard L.U.C Chrono Flyback with khaki dial; Carl Bucherer Heritage Bicompass Annual





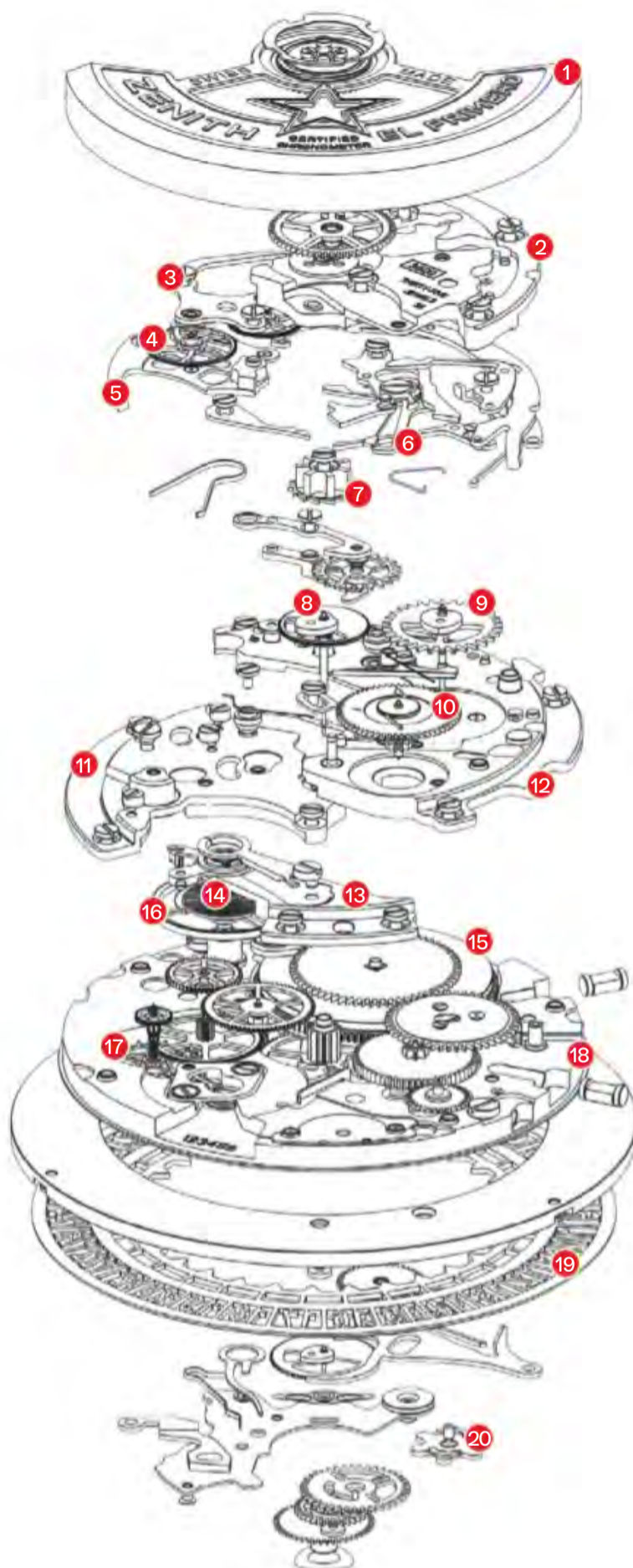
SCUBA GEAR FROM OCEAN & LEISURE.; OCEANLEISURE.CO.UK



## Exploded Watch

### Zenith CHRONOMASTER 2

Ahead of its time when it was launched 50 years ago, Zenith's famous 36,000vph El Primero calibre celebrates its first half century with what is being billed as an optimisation of "latest technologies and performance algorithms" (always a bit suspicious of algorithms but we will let that pass). What's new is improved power reserve (60 hours); an easily read tenth-of-a-second display on a scale with 100 graduations; a balance-stop device; a reversal of the crown sequence (the original was counterintuitive); improved column wheel; and an optimised lateral clutch that now includes two intermediate wheels—about time too. In other words; all good for the next 50 years.  
**NICHOLAS FOULKES**



1. Oscillating Weight
2. Chronograph Bridge
3. Lateral Clutch Wheel Bridge
4. Intermediate Double Wheel
5. Chronograph Clutch Lever
6. Brake-lever Synchroniser for Chronograph
7. Column Wheel
8. Second Counter
9. Minute Counter
10. Click Wheel
11. Gear Train Bridge
12. Barrel Bridge
13. Balance Bridge
14. Hairspring
15. Barrel
16. Balance Wheel
17. Escapement Wheel
18. Main Plate
19. Date Disc
20. Date Corrector

### Inside Story

Water resistance: **10 ATM**

Case dimension: **42mm**

Movement thickness: **12.75mm**



Movement components: **314**

Power reserve: **60 hours**

Movement frequency: **36,000vph**

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