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Winter 2024

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EDITOR'S *letter*

I always labour over these notes and I write them last, much to the annoyance of the design team. I don't know why. It's a simple enough task; sell the tease of the magazine's content, sum up a few key takeaways that might elevate this issue above others beside it on the shelf, while weaving in a personal anecdote or two. I can spout personal anecdotes all day long. I can probably share a personal anecdote about personal anecdotes. It's the summing up I have trouble with. I was listening to the keynote presentations from the latest Journey to Excellence and I wrote down enough notes to fill one of those little Moleskin notebooks that were all the rage a few years ago. Reciting all of my takeaways does no good for anyone. It also seems kind of trite to sum up the 30-career journey of someone like June McCabe and her foray to the highest levels of New Zealand business. Or someone like Hannah McQueen who not only worked with Auckland University to design her own calculus formula in order to pay off her mortgage faster and since then has gone on to help over 15,000 clients get a handle on their finances. Or someone like Kristen Lunman who helped pioneer access to international share investments for New Zealanders and is now helping to drive a powerhouse of women leaders. Or someone like Laurent Silvestre who after his own incredible personal and business journey is helping to reshape what leadership is. I mean, where do I begin? I think also, that these inspiring stories are a part of the DNA of M2woman and what I enjoy covering the most. But they are so different. And that's kind of the beauty of it. Different people will find different nuggets in different aspects of different stories at different times depending on what situation you find yourself in - the hurdles, failures or successes, and wins. And it is important to cover the failures as well as the successes because that is reality. If I had to sum it up, I'm pretty sure that regardless of where you are in life, whatever the hurdles you are facing or the goals you are driving towards, you will find inspiration in this issue. I also checked in case you had started wondering where to buy a Moleskin notebook from. Smith & Caughey's has a decent range of sizes and colours including the classic black hard-cover pocket ruled notebook. Grab one of those and a pair of Trumans & Knuefermann Ankle Boots from Knueferman, and you will be able to extract insights from the universe like a modern-day existentialist warrior - that's my personal theory anyway.

Héloïse Garrity, Editor

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UP TO DATE

We keep you in the know in the world of design, fashion, and entertainment.

It's not often the events of real life conspire to make a TV show release early. But in the case of *Emily In Paris* on Netflix shooting schedules had to be pushed forward so a certain little sporting event wouldn't get in the way of filming. Seasons normally begin in December, but to accommodate the Olympic Games being hosted in Paris this year the schedule has been pushed forward to the first episodes being dropped in August and part two releasing in September.

Executive producer and director Andrew Fleming tells Tudum, "We're getting a different textural feel of Paris. It was fun to think about the city in a different way for scenes that are more dramatically oriented, and to see Paris not all sunny and flowery but to see it a little gray and cozier and people in coats and dark skies. It's just as beautiful during the winter, if not more so."

THE OLYMPIC TRAVEL MARATHON

Emily is also touring from the French Alps to the piazzas of Rome, which gives us the itch to turn on roaming data, and explore ourselves. Here's our topic French picks once you leave the capital, romance and drama not included.



Domenic Mosqueira / Red Bull Content Pool



TEAHUPO'O

The true beauty of France is that while we celebrate our Winter issue of M2woman here in New Zealand, France is bursting into full summer bloom. The only problem with travelling there at the moment is going to be the waves of tourists there for the Olympics. While most of it takes place within the heart of Paris some events take place much much further away. In fact (while we talk about waves) the furthest flung venue for the Olympics is Teahupo'o located at the southern tip of Tahiti. This Surf venue breaks the world record for furthest placed venue from host city, and for good reason. When you want world class surf, you don't go to France, you go to French Polynesia. The best way to get to the village is by boat. Take the Teahupoo Olympic Wave Journey for a well rounded experience of waterfalls, coral reef snorkeling, and a quick lunch on a sandbar. You know, Tahiti stuff.

NICE

Nice has attracted artists for centuries and it's easy to see why. It's gorgeous sitting on the French Riviera and attached to the Mediterranean. Take a cruise along the Mediterranean coastline and then come back and keep the theme going with a Med flavoured pizza at Les Amoureux which some consider the best pizza in the city. Old Town gives a glimpse into how the city used to be, with tight narrow streets lots of cozy little restaurants, and plenty of open air markets. There's a nook for you somewhere here. Enjoy the coast along the 7km long Promenade des Anglais, otherwise known as the prom by the locals. This was made by British aristocrats who wanted to promenade along the coast in a dignified fashion. The British hotel names along it's route still bare witness to this legacy. Nice will be hosting the football during the Olympics.

BORDEAUX

Just a 2 hour train ride from Paris Bordeaux offers a gateway to wine country. Get a taste for the place by taking a wine tour through UNESCO World Heritage-listed St-Emilion or Medoc. Once you're back in town check out the incredible architecture of The Place de la Bourse finished in 1775 along the river Garonne. You now get twice the view with one of the newest landmarks, The "Miroir d'Eau", a gigantic water mirror that perfectly reflects the landmarks that surround it. It's thought to be the biggest of it's kind. Afterward appreciate french cuisine with Arcada, an unassuming backstreet bistro with the worlds worst kept secret, a Michelin star. While you're here you may as well catch a few of the olympic football games happening. Or perhaps an art gallery or two instead.



LADY JOUR NUIT WATCH

33-mm case in white gold, diamonds. Dial in aventurine glass, mother-of-pearl, white gold, yellow gold, diamonds. Self-winding mechanical movement featuring a Day/Night module. Self-interchangeable alligator leather bracelet

AWED BY THE STARS

At the recent Watches & Wonders 2024 Van Cleef & Arpels celebrated the spectacle of the stars with two new editions of their Lady Arpels Jour Nuit watch, first introduced in 2008. The two new models come in 33 and 38mm models and took three years to design and build. The main draw of the piece is a 24 hour disc in the center of the watch spinning over the course of the day. During the day the aventurine glass face portrays the sun in snow-set yellow sapphires or guilloché yellow gold. At night the moon and stars are represented in diamond-set white gold.

Forging aventurine glass is quite a process and take well over a month from start to finish, including a gruelling heating process, cooling, smashing, and then precisely cutting thin layers with exact uniformity in hue and glitter.

To complete the piece the horizon is made from mother-of-pearl. On the back of the watch on top of the sapphire crystal protecting the movement is a fairy made of an enamel decal admiring the view.

LADY ARPELS JOUR NUIT WATCH

38-mm case in white gold, diamonds. Dial in aventurine glass, mother-of-pearl, white gold, yellow gold, diamonds, yellow sapphires. Self-winding mechanical movement featuring a Day/Night module. Self-interchangeable alligator leather bracelet



UNIVERSAL ACCLAIM

The critically acclaimed Chinese Sci-fi that people have literally been dying to make has finally arrived for western audiences via Netflix. While the story is almost too big to truly fit the TV format satisfyingly, one part everybody can agree on is the performances of the stellar cast.



Jess Hong in particular has been a critical darling for her performance. She's a kiwi who's had small parts in a few shows before now, but now finds herself hanging with the Game of Thrones alumni and a bevy of others. We picked her brain on how the experience has been.

Tell us a bit about your audition process and how you were cast as Jin.

I'm from New Zealand, and I first auditioned with a self-tape and I sent it away. At the time it was just an untitled project. Then through Zoom auditions, meetings with the producers, and chemistry reads over about three months,

I was finally cast. And then finally I found out what the show was, and I flew over here to London.

Were you familiar with the book trilogy the series is based on before you were cast?

No, but as soon as I found out what it was, I went and I downloaded all the books on Kindle.

Apart from reading the books, how did you prep for this role?

Because I am not a scientist, I wanted to delve into the world of physics as much as possible, but in a way that was fun

for me and made me excited about it. I listened to podcasts, especially one called "The Infinite Monkey Cage" by Professor Brian Cox and Robin Ince. It provides an entertaining way into science. I listened to a bunch of TED Talks, read books, and learned about string theory. I learned about anything I could that made me feel really passionate about the subject.

What was it like working with the showrunners David Benioff, D.B. Weiss, and Alexander Woo.

I first met them on Zoom in a little town in New Zealand. I was quite nervous to meet them, but they're actually really chill



Have you had any discussions with them, or conversations, about balancing staying true to the books while also expanding this story for the screen?

They've stayed true to certain parts. The narrative of the first book runs through the show, but they've also pulled characters from other books. For instance, my character's actually from the third book, but she appears and plays the game as if she's this other character. I think that they quietly make sure from the back that everything's going how it needs to go, but they let you otherwise do things how you feel needs to be done, they let you follow your instincts, so it's been really great.

What was it like getting to work with the Eiza González, Alex Sharp, John Bradley, and Jovan Adepo?

Everyone was really really cool to work with. We actually didn't get to hang out together as a group so much because we're usually split off. But in the scenes when we're all together, I'd get really excited. We'd see each other, we'd hang out, chat, and everyone's so funny and so different as well. I feel like our combined energies are really chaotic. Everyone's really cool and talented, and I learned so much from them.

dudes, and very sweet. They've been on set every day from the beginning, and it's such a relief to know that the people who wrote the show are there, because you could go and chat to them if you had any questions. It's been really awesome working with them, they're very open to suggestions, to collaboration. They trust in actors to have an opinion, and to be able to craft the character themselves. They're not controlling in that way, they're really cool.



FIGHTING WITH HEART

Olga Kharlan is indisputably one of the biggest names in fencing, and a hero in Ukraine's young post soviet sporting world. She's been Women's number #1 ranked player across five years and is a four-time individual women's world sabre champion, and a four-time Olympic medalist.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MYKYTA ZAVILINSKYI / RED BULL CONTENT POOL

She's hoping to add another olympic medal to her wall at the Olympics in Paris currently getting underway. This was almost entirely dashed late last year when she faced off against Russian fencer Anna Smirnova who was competing as an independent neutral athlete at the world championships in Milan. Kharlan handily beat Smirnova 15-7. At the conclusion of the round Smirnova offered her hand, Kharlan instead offered Smirnova the tip of her sabre, pointing it at her before leaving. Kharlan stayed sitting in a chair in protest of the black card move for 50 minutes.

The black card applied to Kharlan would mean her chances of getting to the Olympics would be entirely scuttled as she would no longer be able to compete for points.



"I did not want to shake hands with this athlete, and I acted with my heart. So when I heard that they wanted to disqualify me it killed me so much that I was screaming in pain." she said on Instagram.

The International Fencing Federation later reversed its decision. But if that wasn't enough The International Olympic Committee (IOC) sent a special invitation in case this speed bump meant she couldn't gather the points.

The president of the IOC, Thomas Bach reached out. "As a fellow fencer, it is impossible for me to imagine how you feel at this moment," he said. "The war against your country, the suffering of the people in Ukraine ... all this is a roller coaster of emotions and feelings. It is admirable how you are managing this incredibly difficult situation, and I would like to express my full support for you."

Sometimes the weight of the world is truly on your shoulders, and the weight of it can crush even the most egalitarian ideals of sportsmanship. Sometimes all you have left is your heart.



BUYING THE FINAL FRONTIER

WORDS BY PHILIP BALL

Outer space was supposed to belong to all humankind. Should we surrender it to anyone who can pay up?

SpaceX launched a Tesla roadster into space during a 2018 demonstration flight of the Falcon Heavy rocket. Crass? Inspiring? Both? [Credit: SpaceX]

Hands up: Who thought it was cool that Captain James T. Kirk (aka Canadian actor William Shatner) got to go into space for real at the age of 90—and, at the same time, thought the flight itself was a ghastly PR exercise for Jeff Bezos's Blue Origin space business?

Hands up: Who feels awed watching Elon Musk's Falcon 9 rockets land on floating drone ships at sea—and simultaneously horrified at the plans of the world's richest person to use such technology to commercialize space and allegedly to build private colonies on Mars?

I know I'm not alone in struggling with such cognitive dissonance after moments like the Shatner flight. "I hated it on one level and thought it was cool on the other," says planetary scientist Carolyn Porco, a visiting scholar at the University of California, Berkeley. Mark McCaughrean, senior adviser for science and exploration at the European Space Agency, admits that sometimes he refuses to watch feats of virtuoso spacefaring from the new space barons, lest he get sucked in by their superficial glamour. It is not just sour grapes about the cool things they get to do with their wealth. It's about the scientific, social, and philosophical implications of what they are doing and how they are doing it.

Many of us grew up on the excitement and allure of space, inspired by Captain Kirk's mission "to boldly go where no man has gone before" and by NASA's heroic Apollo moon landings. We were taught to anticipate lunar bases, gigantic rotating space stations, and settlements on Mars. Later, even when we came to recognize that the Apollo program was a product of Cold War belligerence, we didn't want to lose those childhood dreams of breaking free from Earth's gravity and voyaging to the stars. Nor should we: The person who is indifferent to the sublime wonders of the cosmos is blind to a crucial part of the mystery of the human condition.

The new space race pursued by the likes of Bezos, Musk, and Virgin's Richard Branson

taps into that same thirst for inspiration and transcendence. Their companies are pushing the limits of technology in remarkable ways. At the same time, there is something deeply unsettling about the space barons' capitalist swagger. They measure the grandeur of space in terms of dollars and Bitcoin. They look out into the cosmic expanse and see another frontier for business expansion, ripe for profit-making colonies, mining operations, and satellite swarms.

This is where the dissonance kicks in. A deep tension exists between the notions of space as a place of wonder and as a resource. Our yearnings for what space represents are being exploited to justify vanity projects that risk undermining a genuine fascination and respect for the universe beyond our planet.

Perhaps, you might say, we shouldn't be put off by the braggadocio, mistreatment of staff, tax dodging, and all-around smugness of the space tycoons. We aren't meant to like them; it's all part of their performative "hubristic genius" shtick. "You might not like them, but we need them!" the argument goes. Well, let's consider the reality behind some of the popular ways people defend the space barons.

"These companies are developing useful technology for serious space science."

A popular idea is that companies like Blue Origin and Musk's SpaceX will advance space technology by being more ambitious and flexible than purely state-driven efforts. NASA or other public agencies provide funding and set the overall goals; then the private companies can figure out the best way to achieve them. Such public-private collaborations have had some notable successes—most recently in the development of Covid vaccines. The payoff of this approach for space science is by no means obvious, however.

The low-cost, reusable rockets that SpaceX has developed with the support of government contracts make a big difference in your budget if your payload is cheap, McCaughrean notes. Not coincidentally, cheap payloads are the kinds of things Musk is interested in, like the assembly-line internet satellites of his Starlink project. Or like human beings, "so

cheap that they'll pay for themselves to go," McCaughrean says. But big scientific payloads like the James Webb Space Telescope are not cheap at all. The priority for them is the most reliable rocket, and even a major cut in launch costs won't have much effect, proportionally speaking, on the bottom line.

Neither is it obvious that the money NASA has given to Musk and company could not have been equally well used by a public agency that was similarly set loose to innovate. "The U.S. is giving massive government grants to Musk and Bezos," says Mary-Jane Rubenstein of Wesleyan University, author of *Astrotopia: The Dangerous Religion of the Corporate Space Race*. "Why not not? It's that Reagan-ish thinking that if you let the wealthiest pursue whatever they want to, eventually it will benefit everyone else."

"OK, but it doesn't do any harm to serious space science."

Anyone who thinks that Musk's priorities align neatly with the needs of space science should ask astronomers what they think of his 1,500 or so active Starlink satellites that are now obstructing the view of telescopes with bright streaks and raising concerns about radio-signal interference. Starlink has filed plans to launch up to 42,000 satellites in all—about five times the total number currently orbiting Earth—and competing services like Amazon's Project Kuiper plan to add thousands more. There are already 1,600 close encounters in space (within 1 kilometer) a week from Musk's satellites, risking collisions that could strew debris in low Earth orbit.

"There was a time when I was enthusiastic about commercial space because I saw it as a possible way we could conduct more science," Porco says. She now concludes that this is not the way it will work. "When you put science, and the way science needs to be conducted, up against commercial interests, the two make very bad bedfellows."

From the start, human spaceflight has tapped into familiar old narratives of expansion, entitlement, and conquest.

The ostentatiousness of private spaceflight could also tar the public perception of space exploration as a whole. It would be foolish of

space researchers and advocates to suppose that the rest of humankind—beset with disease, poverty, climate change, and political oppression—shares their positive feelings for the value of the enterprise. “The danger with all of this is that we look so detached, so removed from reality, that people say, ‘You’re all just lunatic fantasists. Why should we give you any money?’” says McCaughrean.

“Commercial space ventures provide inspiration.”

One of the most disturbing aspects of the private space race is how readily its capitalistic impulse can exploit the romantic fantasies of voyage and discovery that have always impelled human spaceflight. Even as Bezos has created an earthly empire worth more than the GDP of Spain—an empire that has exempted itself from the normal rules of commerce—he beguiles us with false promises of democratic travel to other worlds.

In reality, the story that the entrepreneurs are selling intensifies a disturbing antidemocratic aspect to spaceflight. From the start, human spaceflight has tapped into old religious and nationalistic narratives of expansion, entitlement, and conquest, as Rubenstein’s book explains. For example, a 1986 “vision statement” by the U.S. National Commission on Space, whose members included Neil Armstrong, declared that “the promise of virgin lands and the opportunity to live in freedom brought our ancestors to the shores of North America,” making it clear which subsection of the U.S. population it was addressing.

“The settlement of North America and other continents was a prelude to humanity’s greater challenge: the space frontier,” the report continued. That sentiment is alive and well among today’s space barons. Musk enthusiastically shared a 1960s artwork depicting space exploration as a violent, colonialist Noah’s ark fantasy.

If you buy into the notion that human settlement of space is part of our (a very selective “our”) manifest destiny, then perhaps the commercialization of spaceflight and proposals to mine asteroids for profit

create no discomfort. But for many scientists and space enthusiasts, efforts to privatize the solar system hijack our well-founded sense of awe about space. “The commercial space people have hacked for profiteering reasons those feelings of exaltation we all feel at the thought of space travel,” Porco says. “What better hack could there be but to send Captain Kirk into space?”

“We need to get into space to survive, and these guys are taking the first steps.”

Shatner returned shaken from his Blue Origin flight. The voyages of the starship Enterprise were meant to be mythic, not realistic: Its cosmos was full of adventure as well as hazard and positively teeming with life. That’s not what Shatner found in space. Instead, he spoke of how the beautiful blue of Earth’s atmosphere vanished in an instant as he ascended. “You’re looking into blackness . . . there’s the blue down there, and the black up there.” At that moment, he realized a basic truth about space: “This is life, and that’s death.”

“The moment he got out there, he woke up,” Rubenstein says. Shatner’s comments weren’t exactly on message for the planetary-settlement crowd, she notes: “The tension between the optics and the text of the revelation grew so intense that Bezos interrupted Shatner to pop the cork off a bottle of champagne.”

As Shatner recognized, space is not filled with bountiful islands that we can reach if only we have the resolve and the technology to cross the forbidding ocean. It is a place of unrelenting emptiness, terror, and peril. It’s hard to swallow Musk’s pitch of Mars as a safeguard for human survival when we don’t yet know if we can get anyone there at all, much less enable them to stay alive self-sufficiently. Musk’s recent actions as the owner of Twitter—showing an evident love of chaos, a casual disregard for the well-being of his employees, and an apparent indifference to notions of the public good—make it hard to imagine entrusting your life to him on another planet.

“People get so wrapped up in wish-

fulfilment fantasies about living on Mars that they lose context completely, as if you can just fly away and leave all our troubles behind,” McCaughrean says. “It doesn’t solve any problems by going to Mars.” For the goal of survival, we would be much smarter using our knowledge and resources to keep Earth habitable in the face of the inadvertent geoengineering we are already conducting here.

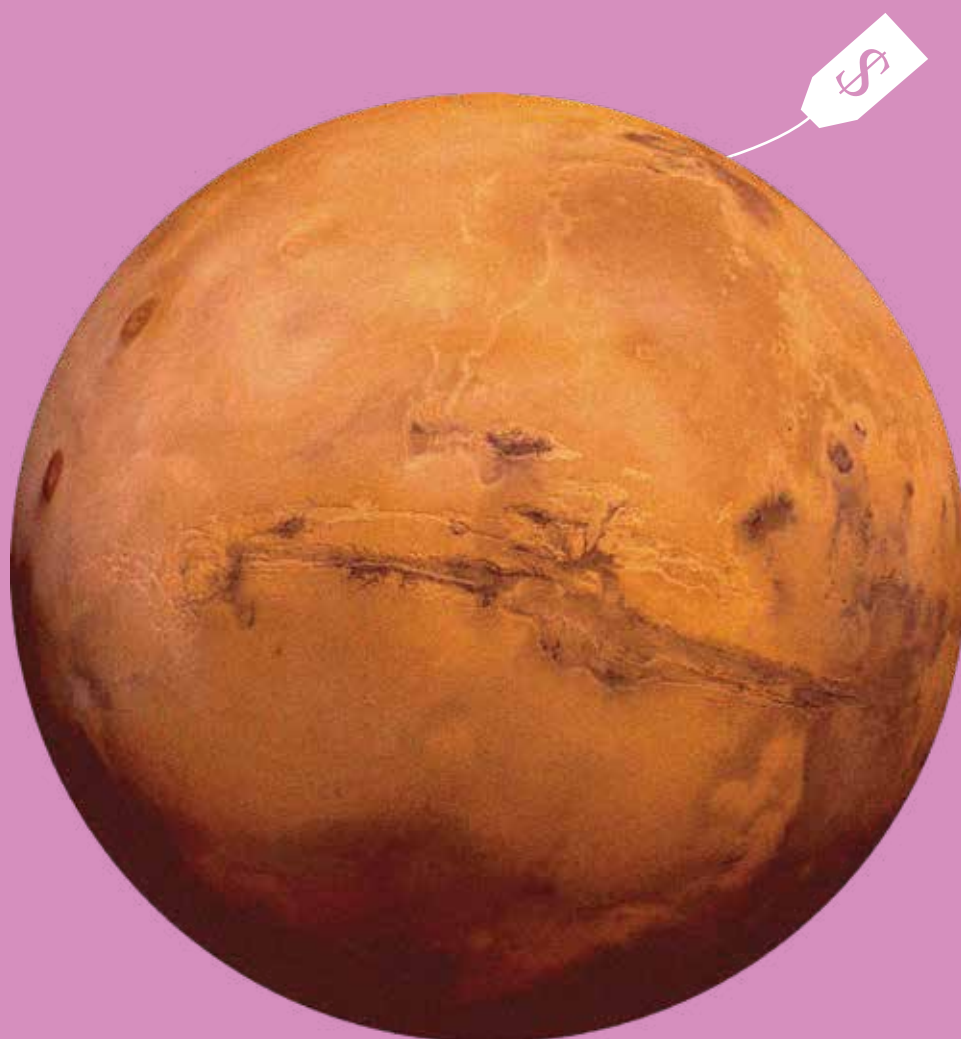
What is frustrating about the efforts of the space barons is that they contrast clever feats of engineering with impoverished acts of imagination. Hidden behind their lofty language and populist promises, Rubenstein says, lies a banal rationale: “If we want to keep living as we do, the only thing we can do is find some other place to exploit.”

Space agencies in the United States, Europe, China, Canada, Japan, India, and elsewhere are showing different ways to establish an uplifting, shared presence in space—without business, and without people. The James Webb Space Telescope, now orbiting the sun a million miles from Earth, is opening the most powerful eye on the cosmos we’ve ever had. NASA’s Artemis I mission has recaptured some of the Apollo-era sense of collective adventure, reframed in a modern, more collaborative context. Robotic missions will soon fly over the hydrocarbon dunes of Titan and investigate the ice-covered oceans of Europa.

We might plausibly extend that approach to an international, crewed research base on the moon. But we don’t need space tourism and private industry to get it. This doesn’t mean that big commercial ventures should be banned. But we should be more clear-eyed about their motives and priorities and consider how much we want their already ubiquitous presence in our lives to expand into the heavens too, with barely any regulation to constrain them.

Even if you feel in your marrow that our human destiny lies in the stars, you might want to look closely at what the space billionaires have done down here. Then ask yourself whether they are the best people to take us up there.

“People get so wrapped up in wish-fulfilment fantasies about living on Mars that they lose context completely, as if you can just fly away and leave all our troubles behind. It doesn’t solve any problems by going to Mars.”



SYDNEY SWEENEY IS CERTAINLY THE FULL PACKAGE

Sydney Sweeney is certainly a lot of things.

A phenomenal actor, for starters. Charismatic, caring and kind—her gentle character shines through in any interview she’s in. Naturally beautiful. A fashion icon. A calming aura about her. Warm, highly-driven and a bundle of high-energy, like a battery. Whenever you see her walk a red carpet, or grace an interview she’s poised, soft-spoken, so articulate. She’s had a monumental rise to fame over the last couple of years with an elegant classic Hollywood style, often branded ‘an old-school movie star’ or ‘Gen-Z’s answer to Marilyn Munroe.’

WORDS BY JAMIE TROWER



SYDNEY, AU - December 18, 2023 - Special Screening of Sony Pictures' ANYONE BUT YOU at Hoyts Entertainment Quarter, Moore Park, Australia. Photography by Scott Ehler



Sydney Sweeney and Glen Powell star in *ANYONE BUT YOU*. Photography by Eddy Chen. © 2023 CTMG, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

The unique and cool thing about Sydney Sweeney that certainly sets her apart from the rest is her gift of playing the radiant young woman—bright-eyed. You can feel it oozing off her as she performs in one of her roles. Like as Cassie in *Euphoria*, or Olivia in *The White Lotus*. Sydney Sweeney is certainly the full package.

Born in 1997 in Spokane, Washington to a criminal defence lawyer and hospitality professional, Sydney grew up eight kilometres east of the Washington border in northern Idaho. Her family home was a cabin by a lake, away from any noisy inner-city hubbub. The small picturesque town was two streets long with a church, three bars and a small supermarket. Everyone knew everyone.

‘What’s so beautiful about the Pacific-Northwest is everything that you can do outdoors,’ Sweeney told *Travel + Leisure* at the start of this year.

Her parents encouraged her to follow her passions and faith in God, and ‘fall in love with as many things as possible’. She was quite shy and reserved, uncomfortable with her body and actively avoided doing anything that’d draw attention to her, like school plays or public speaking. So even the

notion that she would one day be one of the hottest stars in Hollywood would’ve been a wild idea at this early stage in her life.

Back home at the cabin on weekends and after school, though, she used her imagination to create whole imaginary worlds. Reportedly, she regularly imagined herself as a secret agent, or a princess

“My mum, my dad, my brother and I were in a regular one-bedroom hotel room for nine months.”

cheetah, or a teacher instructing a class of her ‘insect students’.

As well as being an avid learner (she attended Saint George’s private school through her childhood), she loved the beauty of the outdoors, which turned bitterly cold and snowy in the winter and then hot and toasty in the summer. With the wonderful outdoors at her fingertips,

Sweeney’s list of hobbies grew and grew. She loved playing sports. Football, skiing, baseball, golf, and dancing ballet, to name but a few. Even more dangerous things like MMA and wakeboarding...

‘I think I was 11 or 12, I got in a wakeboarding accident and the board came up, sliced my face and I have a scar. I had to get a bunch of stitches,’ Sweeney told *Sean Evans* on *Hot Ones* in January this year. Ouch!

Sydney’s first taste of acting came in 2009 (after healing from the wakeboard incident) when a small-indie-comedy-zombie movie, *ZMD: Zombies of Mass Destruction*, was set to film in her hometown and hold auditions. She begged and begged and begged her parents to allow her to audition for it. After some resistance from her parents, the young Sydney wrote up a five-year business plan to present via Microsoft Powerpoint 2008. Ahhh, the good ol’ days.

‘They were like: “fine, let’s let her audition, and maybe she’ll be quiet,”’ Sweeney reminisced to *C Magazine*’s Rob Haskell.

The audition, as you can only guess, went without a hitch and she landed the non-speaking role of Lisa. Young Sydney had



Sydney Sweeney and Glen Powell star in *ANYONE BUT YOU*. Photography by Eddy Chen. © 2023 CTMG, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

caught the acting bug then, and spent months and months to secure more auditions for herself trying to make her dreams come true. It's interesting to add that Sydney was never obsessed with film and rarely watched TV. Acting was a natural thing to her, sort of like a life-force she found in her soul.

So she went searching for more. Calls started coming in from LA. More audition offers than you can wag a stick at. Before long her parents were driving 19 hours to-and-from California. She didn't give up on her schooling or hobbies whilst pursuing her calling. She was still keeping on top of her school work, getting straight-A's and even had become the president of the robotics club. She even taught herself Russian, for which she is fluent. Reportedly she identifies herself 'as a bit of a nerd'.

The road to Cali did take its toll, however. 'My mum, my dad, my brother and I were in a regular one-bedroom hotel room for nine months.' My heart truly aches (and breaks) thinking about the cost of petrol. Their hearts must have ached too, as they decided—when Sydney turned 13—to move themselves from Idaho to Cali (probably to save on travel costs).

Having openly admitted her life wasn't always spent living the big Hollywood dream, she joked to Associated Press in 2022 that her family were 'the poor version of *The Suite Life of Zack and Cody*.'

'There were many, many years where I got told "No" endlessly. I got told I wasn't good enough, I would never make it, I wasn't pretty enough—all the time.'

Reportedly, it took 100 auditions in LA and heaps of meetings with possible agents for Sydney to land her first roles as minor characters in shows such as *90210*, *Criminal Minds* and *Grey's Anatomy*.

It was in 2011, just starting up her career, she was nominated for her first set of Young Artist awards—for the short film, *Takeo*, and the TV series, *Chase*. Success was already heading her way.

Her first break-out role came in Netflix's comedy-drama, *Everything Sucks!* which filmed in 2017 and hit the screens in 2018. That year was an important year for Sweeney, as the world became obsessed with the young star. In the series, Sweeney played Emaline Addario, a junior student in the fictional Boring High School drama club with a flair for the arts. Sydney took great inspiration from a certain early-2000's pop-icon, Gwen Stefani.

'Emaline is an overdramatic, insecure teenage girl,' Sweeney told *Hollywood Life* in 2018. 'She's always the type of girl who will get up on top of the tables to start doing Shakespearean monologues so that she can get people to look her way and get people's attention. She doesn't know who she is yet.'

After *Everything Sucks!* came the call for HBO's psychological-thriller, *Sharp Objects*, in which she played Amy Adams' character's teenage roommate at a psychiatric hospital, and then the martyred child bride Eden Blaine in season two of Margret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*.

'I was filming the shows at the same time,' Sydney continued. 'During the week, I'd be filming *Everything Sucks!* and then I'd take a red-eye to either LA or Atlanta and would go finish up filming for *Sharp Objects*. It was night and day since my characters were so completely different.'

The world was starting to get word of Sweeney and her natural acting talents, and they wanted more of it. It'd be remiss not to mention that in 2018 Hollywood (ironically) came calling with the



character of Diane ‘Snake’ Lake, one of Charles Manson’s groupies at Spahn Ranch, in Quentin Tarantino’s *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*.

‘It was so much fun,’ Sweeney told *Build Series* in 2019 while working on the Tarantino film. ‘Ya know when you have that bucket-list of all the people you wish to one day work with and then you just cross them all off on the exact same day. It was a surreal experience. I learnt so much.’

In the same interview, she was asked if she’d attended the infamous premiere at the Cannes Film Festival where Tarantino and the main cast received a seven minute (slightly awkward) standing ovation.

‘I was filming *Euphoria*,’ she replied to the interviewer. ‘I really wanted to be there but I was still filming.’

Ah yes, *Euphoria*! If you haven’t seen *Euphoria*, what rock have you been living under? Starring the likes of Zendaya, Maud Apatow and Jacob Elordi, to name a few, the first season was the second-most watched HBO series of all time (sitting closely behind *Game of Thrones*, until it was dethroned by *House of the Dragon*), and the second series had earth-shattering viewer numbers too.

Euphoria follows high schoolers in the fictional town of East Highland, California, who seek hope while balancing the strains of love, loss, sex, and addiction.

Though Sydney was very much a working actor at that stage, *Euphoria* made her a household name. It’s interesting to note that she initially turned down the role of Cassie at the beginning, however, as it contained

nudity, which she wasn’t comfortable with. Reportedly, Sydney has always had issues with her body. It was in stepping out of her comfort zone whilst playing Cassie that she became empowered in herself, not letting any of the haters win on how they perceived her body. In turn, Sydney playing the role of Cassie in *Euphoria* allowed her to shine a light on body positivity and feminism in the industry. She very strongly maintains the view on embracing her body and feeling empowered in her skin, challenging the narrative around objectification, adding a layer of depth to her public persona.

‘Cassie truly is a dream to play,’ Sydney told Josh Horowitz on Apple’s *Happy, Sad, Confused* podcast, ‘and as an actor I’m so fortunate that I’ve had a character like her at such a young age. Of course, I wanna keep living her crazy. I love it!’

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“To never put a limit to what their capabilities are because they’re female, or their age, or their background. I’m a big advocate for making sure everybody’s voice is heard.”

Sydney’s character, Cassie Howard had so much to unpack for her to sink her teeth into. Howard is portrayed as a beautiful bombshell from a broken home. In the first season, Sweeney portrays her as this sweet and nice girl who constantly makes wrong decisions. In the second season, all-hell-breaks-loose and the character really goes into a downward spiral. The scene in the spa—if you know you know.

If you haven’t seen this cultural phenomenon, you must watch it! Sweeney’s performance earned her critical acclaim and a 2022 Primetime Emmy Award nomination for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Drama Series, plus more accolades which are far too long to list.

‘[In Euphoria] we’re playing characters that mean so much to people,’ Sweeney

said on Happy, Sad, Confused. ‘It’s the longest production I’ve worked on. Each season takes eight-to-10 months to film. So I’ve been able to build relationships with people and have almost like a family. Like Maud [Apatow] is my best friend, she’s like my actual sister. I feel so lucky to have something like that in this industry.’

Alongside her rise-to-fame in Euphoria, Sydney also played to her strengths and took a step into the unknown by co-founding her own production company, Fifty-Fifty Films, alongside Canadian Jean-Marc Vallée and Nathan Ross’ Crazyrose and Endeavor Content. The other founder is her now fiancée, Jonathan Davino.

The premise of the production company is to allow equal opportunities in fields traditionally less accessible to many.



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Whether the writers are female, male, non-binary, from a different background, or are of a certain age, Sweeney emphasises that their voices deserve to be heard.

'Being able to make a dream of theirs that they didn't think was possible for years and years happen, is amazing,' Sweeney said to Grazia. 'To never put a limit to what their capabilities are because they're female, or their age, or their background. I'm a big advocate for making sure everybody's voice is heard.'

In 2021, another big part crossed her desk. Coming off the back of *Euphoria*, everyone wanted a slice of Sweeney. It was a part written by American writer, producer and actor Mike White. The HBO series, *The White Lotus*, fit Sydney's acting style to a T and really allowed her to show off her acting chops.

The first season of *The White Lotus*, in which Sydney played Olivia Mossbacher, was set at an exclusive Hawaiian resort, and explored the numerous goings-on of the guests. Sydney's character is that of a fiery, spoiled college student, brimming with teenage angst who is on holiday with her family. Olivia's mother, Nicole (played by Connie Britton) is the CFO of a search engine company, and her father, Mark (played by Steve Zahn) has a mysterious illness. Hilarious calamity at its finest.

In finding her character, Sydney said to Mara Webster of In Creative Company, that she needed to find the balance between caring and not caring. Sweeney listened to hundreds of podcasts that Mike White recommended to her to find the 'funny in the natural'. She also found her character of Olivia through just hanging out with the others on set. Her natural kindness went a long way here (most probably learnt, in turn) from her time on *Euphoria* where she really made a family of actors. She's been quoted as saying that she thinks that Jennifer Coolidge is one of the funniest people alive, purely from spending so much time with her onset and getting to bond

with the other actors. I mean, Jennifer Coolidge does seem ridiculously funny.

'I think we got to build a more comfortable environment,' she said to Mara. 'I think, as an actor, you feel safer exploring different avenues as your art. Being at a very safe camp is a great feeling.'

Being so comfortable and confident in her art then allowed her to explore the character more deeply. She was awarded a nomination for a Primetime Emmy Award for that role.

It's crazy to think that even before the age of 30, Sydney had really made a name for herself as an actor being part of two of the biggest shows in HBO history.

In an interview with *Variety* last year, she said to Kinley Franklin that between *The White Lotus* and *Euphoria*, she definitely has a favourite.

'Olivia is a fun, snarky character,' Sweeney said. 'But Cassie challenges me in so many different ways because she is such a character. As an actor, that's so much fun to play because you go to these places you may never have gone to before.'

So as Sydney's name is becoming the biggest in Hollywood (on both TV and cinema screens), her resume continues to get busier and busier with more and more amazing projects. Yes she's an amazing actor who can lighten up the screen with her talent and acting range, but she's also a genuinely giving, good-hearted human.

'I recently paid off my mum's mortgage,' the star revealed to *WhoWhatWear* earlier this year, adding how taking care of her parents 'was a really big thing for [her] to be able to do.' She also brought back her great-grandmother's house from developers for her grandmother. Cute!

During the Christmas period of the Covid-19 pandemic, Sydney even donated \$48,000 to local restaurants in her Sponake hometown and meals to feed the homeless.

'I hope I'm able to provide a little holiday relief for both the restaurants, who are really struggling right now, and the homeless, who will be facing a really, really tough winter,' Sweeney said. 'And even if it's just a little, I hope that others can find their own way to give back, too.'

Coming hot off the back of *The White Lotus*, Sweeney's work-load continued to grow. She was placed on *Time's* Next 100 list, became a beauty ambassador for both Armani Beauty and Lineage, starred in music videos for The Rolling Stones, was selected for *Forbes* lists and starred in three blockbuster hits, *Anyone But You* and *Immaculate*, both produced by her own Fifty-Fifty Film, and *Madame Web* alongside Dakota Johnson.

Immaculate, especially, allowed Sweeney's ability to easily get into the skin of complex characters and deliver fabulously. She had actually auditioned for the film in 2014, but bought the rights and produced it through her own company to enforce some serious girl-power.

Sweeney is now shifting gears a bit more, set to star in the future as American professional boxer, Chrissy Martin. The biopic film, directed by David Michôd, will tell of the true story of Martin's rise to become America's most well known female boxer in the 1990's.

And who knows...maybe a visit back to *The White Lotus* or *Euphoria* Season Three?

Looking at the journey this young, intelligent woman has made over her vast career, one thing is for certain: she's got what it takes to do anything. What next? I can hear you asking. 'I've always wanted to do a period piece,' she said to *S* magazine. 'I love character pieces that people don't see me as. I'm just looking for things in which I can kind of be unrecognizable.'

Given the impact Sydney Sweeney has already made in Hollywood, being the full package, she'll be impossible to miss.



Marion Curtis / StarPix for Sony Pictures



PETITE POWER

Meet Redan, the underdog slow fashion label that's tailoring dreams for those of us who've been perpetually overlooked by the statuesque standards of the fashion industry—yes, the petite powerhouses.

PHOTOGRAPHER SASHA FREEMIND @SASHAFREEMIND
MODEL REBECA LA HAINE @REBECALAHAIN

Finding pants when you're 5'4" or under usually involves a tragic shuffle between the children's section and praying to the fashion gods for a miracle. That is, until Redan appeared like a fairy godmother with a tape measure, waving its eco-friendly wand and turning pumpkin-sized woes into perfectly tailored chariots.

Their Cotton Supersoft Movement Pant in angelic white, retailing at a devilishly clever \$84.99 NZD, promises ZERO transparency. That's right, you can now perform high-kicks at the bus stop without becoming the neighborhood peep show.

And then, there's the Classic Corporate Pant, a masterpiece in both midnight black and ghostly white for \$89.99 NZD. With a relaxed fit and four cavernous pockets, these pants laugh in the face of tiny, useless pockets that can barely store a coin.

Redan's commitment to slow fashion is like a tortoise in a race against rabid, fast-fashion hares. They champion small-batch production that reduces waste and insist on using materials that are kinder to our planet. It's like they're knitting with one hand and giving fast fashion the middle finger with the other.

Future plans? They're broadening their size range because inclusivity should be more than just a buzzword—it should be as standard as having buttons on shirts. It's a novel concept that seems to suggest fashion should actually fit the people who wear it. Groundbreaking, right?

So, for all you petite folks who've been fashion's forgotten few, Redan is here, proving good things come in small packages.

redanthebrand.com

Margot Robbie wore a black iridescent silk velvet jacket adorned with feathers with a matching skirt, look 22, from the Métiers d'art 2023/24 collection. CHANEL bag and shoes. CHANEL makeup. CHANEL Fine Jewellery: "Coco Crush" earrings and rings in 18K yellow gold

CHANEL STREET

We're plunging into winter and leaving the award season long way behind us. But let us take a moment to appreciate the best Chanel's brand ambassadors had to offer us at the Hollywood Hotel's Polo Lounge for the Annual Pre-Oscar dinner hosted by Chanel and Charles Finch.



Opposite: Lily-Rose DEPP, CHANEL Ambassador and actress wore a pink broderie anglaise bustier with a multicolor tweed skirt, look 9, from the CHANEL Haute Couture Fall-Winter 2021/22 collection. CHANEL bag and shoes. CHANEL makeup. CHANEL Fine Jewelry: "Camélia Précieux" necklace and ring in 18k white gold and diamonds and "Ruban earrings" in 18K white gold and diamonds

Left: Actress Leslie MANN wore a black glittered guipure skirt, look 60, from the Spring-Summer 2024 Ready-to-Wear collection and a CHANEL black silk blouse. CHANEL bag and shoes. CHANEL makeup. CHANEL Fine Jewelry: "Coco Crush" earrings and rings in 18K yellow gold



Right: Actress Alexandra SHIPP wore a pink, navy and white fantasy tweed jacket, look 29, from the Spring-Summer 2024 Ready-to-Wear collection. CHANEL bag and shoes. CHANEL makeup







Left: Actress and writer Kerry WASHINGTON wore a black and white cotton jersey ribbed top with a black and red leather skirt, look 42, from the Spring-Summer 2024 Ready-to-Wear collection. CHANEL accessories, bag and shoes. CHANEL makeup.

Below: Havana ROSE-LIU, CHANEL Ambassador and actress wore a white glittered cotton guipure jacket and skirt, look 49, from the Spring-Summer 2024 Ready-to-Wear collection. CHANEL bag and shoes. CHANEL makeup.

CHANEL Fine Jewellery: "Comète" earrings and "Plume" ring in 18K white gold and diamonds and "Comète" ear cuff in 18K white gold, diamonds, and cultured pearls



Opposite: Kristen STEWART, CHANEL Ambassador and actress wore a black embroidered silk organza blouse and white cotton canvas shorts, look 47, from the Spring-Summer 2024 Ready-to-Wear collection. CHANEL shoes. CHANEL makeup.

Right: Actress and Academy Award nominee for "Actress in a Supporting Role" for "Barbie," America FERRERA wore a black silk blouse from the Spring-Summer 2024 Ready-to-Wear collection and CHANEL black wool pants. CHANEL bag and shoes. CHANEL makeup. CHANEL Fine Jewellery:

"Coco Crush" cuff, earrings and rings in 18K yellow gold



ZENDAYA: THE ONE WOMAN SHOW

Bulgari Global Ambassador, Zendaya shines in a magnificent Bulgari High Jewellery necklace, while attending the *Dune: Part Two* Red Carpet Premiere in London.

MILAN, ITALY

At the Milan photocall for the *Challengers* release Zendaya chose for the day a white gold B.zero1 look, while for the premiere she wore a Cabochon parure paired with High Jewellery earrings. Afterwards she attended the “Che Tempo Che Fa” TV show.



336970

Earrings Corona White Gold 750 18K 3,3 grs 2
Round Mounted Diamond Gia 0,90 cts



351394

Bracelet B.zero1 White Gold 750 18K 31,5 grs 90
Round Mounted Setting Pavé 1,41 cts



361174

Ring B.zero1 White Gold 750 18K 10,0 grs 112
Round Mounted Setting Pavé 1,63 cts





269024

High Jewellery earrings in white gold with 2 oval diamonds (1,50 ct), 40 fancy step cut diamonds (1,50 ct), and pavé-set diamonds (0,69 ct)



267683

High Jewellery bracelet in white gold with 8 pear diamonds (5,84 ct), 17 round brilliant-cut diamonds (5,09 ct), round brilliant-cut diamonds and pavé-set diamonds (13,28 ct)



270659

High Jewellery ring in white gold with 1 oval diamond (3,01 ct), 20 fancy shape step cut diamonds (2,66 ct) and pavé-set diamonds (2,89 ct)



LONDON, UK

While attending the Challengers premiere in London Zendaya chose a High Jewellery bracelet paired with diamond High Jewellery earrings and a ring for the occasion.





357940

Bvlgari-Bvlgari white gold earrings set with diamonds



357844

B.zero1 white gold bracelet set with diamonds



356313

B.zero1 white gold bracelet



359698

B.zero1 white gold three-band ring set with diamonds

ROME, ITALY

For the Rome photocall Zendaya chose a white gold B.zero1 look, while for the premiere she wore a stunning High Jewellery Serpenti necklace paired with High Jewellery earrings and multiple Serpenti Viper rings. The snake necklace has got to be our favourite piece in the collection.



273574

High Jewellery Serpenti rose gold necklace set with mother of pearl elements and diamonds



272514

High Jewellery platinum earrings set with diamonds



345226

Serpenti Viper white gold double coil ring set with diamonds



PARIS, FRANCE

While attending the "Challengers" Paris Photocall at Maison de l'Amérique Latine and before attending the Challengers Premiere Zendaya chose for the day a Bulgari Cabochon ring paired with a B.zero1 ring and earrings, while for the premiere she wore a stunning High Jewellery necklace paired with High Jewellery rings and earrings.



357914

B.zero1 4-Band Yellow Gold Ring 750 18K 15,3 grs
108 Round Mounted Setting Pave 0,57 cts



361232

Bulgari Cabochon Yellow Gold Ring 750 18K



357918

B.zero1 Yellow Gold Earrings 750 18K 10,0 grs
132 Round Mounted Setting Pave 0,27 cts



269149

High Jewellery earrings in platinum with 2 square emerald-cut diamonds (6,09 ct)



268529

High Jewellery necklace in platinum with 1 pear diamond (5,07 ct), 16 marquise diamonds (11,32 ct), 124 fancy shape diamonds (15,96 ct), 1 round brilliant-cut diamond and pavé-set diamonds (3,33 ct)



271023

High Jewellery ring in white gold with 1 oval diamond (3,01 ct), 20 fancy shape step cut diamonds (2,03 ct), and pavé-set diamonds (2,73 ct)





358079

Serpenti white gold ring set with diamonds and emeralds

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

At the Challengers premiere in Sydney Zendaya chose a pair of High Jewellery earrings and maintained the snake theme from Rome with a Serpenti ring for the occasion.



271915

High Jewellery white gold earrings set with diamonds



Image Credit: Getty



273191

High Jewellery earrings in rose gold with emeralds and diamonds (one earring from the set worn)



270950

High Jewellery earrings in yellow gold with emeralds (one earring from the set worn)



273673

High Jewellery ring in yellow gold with emeralds and diamonds

NEW YORK, UNITED STATES

Apart from doing facetime for her latest movie Zendaya also found time to hit the Met Gala in New York. She wore a stunning selection of pieces. Not content for just one entrance she arrived twice, each time in a completely different look. Because travelling the world isn't exhausting enough.



272819

High Jewellery earrings in platinum with diamonds



272601

High Jewellery ring in platinum with diamonds





BEAUTY

GLAZE PHASE

Simulate the curiously flushed effect
with this winter's edit.

BEAUTY BY SOPHIE CHUNG | IMAGE BY SISLEY

BEAUTY HOTLIST

HEAD OVER HEELS

A dozen of the most new and noteworthy to be cooler than the weather.

1

BERRY RICH

Woody and spicy with a lick of lychee, the incomparable gourmand **Ashley & Co** Washup All-over in Bonberry, \$40, is back with a vengeance.

2

24K MAGIC

Playing with the effects of light, **Guerlain** Orchidée Impériale Gold Nobile The Serum, \$1350, amplifies visible rejuvenation by emulating the behaviours of youthful cells.

3

CRUSH ON YOU

The limited edition **ghd** Colour Crush collection is giving main character energy. From cyber lime to elemental blue, apricot crush and the it-colour of the year, radiant red, there's a vibrant hue to spice up your life.

4

SKIN SAVIOUR

Microbiome-compatible for ultimate regenerative properties, **Dermaiduals** Oleogel S, \$75, is rich in phosphatidylserine to provide true skin protection this winter.

5

CARE WITH COMPASSION

Adding to the covetable lineup of **Aēsop** Aromatique Hand Balms is Eleos, \$49, a herbaceous blend of cedar atlas, patchouli and clove bud for weather-weary hands.

6

VITAL LOCK

Focusing on reduced density, greying and diminished vitality of ageing hair, **Sisley** Fortifying and Densifying Shampoo, \$125, increases the protein content in thinning hair for a fuller effect.

7

A-GAME

Potent yet gentle, **Elizabeth Arden** Retinol + HPR Ceramide Capsules Rapid Skin Renewing Serum, 60 piece, \$169, delivers a next-generation retinoid that can be used during the day, without irritation.

8

TIME DEFIER

The ultimate anti-wrinkle solution, **Emma Lewisham** Supernatural Vitale Elixir, \$158, inhibits muscle contractions and provides an instant filling effect - it's botox without the needles.

9

TWO TRICKY

A creamy shadow on one end and a powder definer on the other, **Clinique** High Impact Shadow Play Shadow + Definer, \$69, allows for quick and easy eye looks wherever, whenever.

10

NOCTURNAL NUTRIENTS

Enriched with a blend of organic oils like argan, chia seed, rosehip and jojoba, **Biome** Perfecting Oil, \$129, includes granactive retinoid to increase the turnover of skin cells and reduce poresize.

11

GET NAKED

Elemis Pro-Collagen Naked Cleansing Balm, \$116, is a fragrance-free version of the best-selling iconic cleanser to provide the same at-home spa experience without causing irritation.

12

WINTER ANTIDOTE

Utilising homegrown ingredients such as mamaku and red seaweed, **Milou** Plump Me Up Hyaluronic Acid, \$69, soothes inflammation and irritation to calm and hydrate reactive skin.



.1



.2



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.9



.12

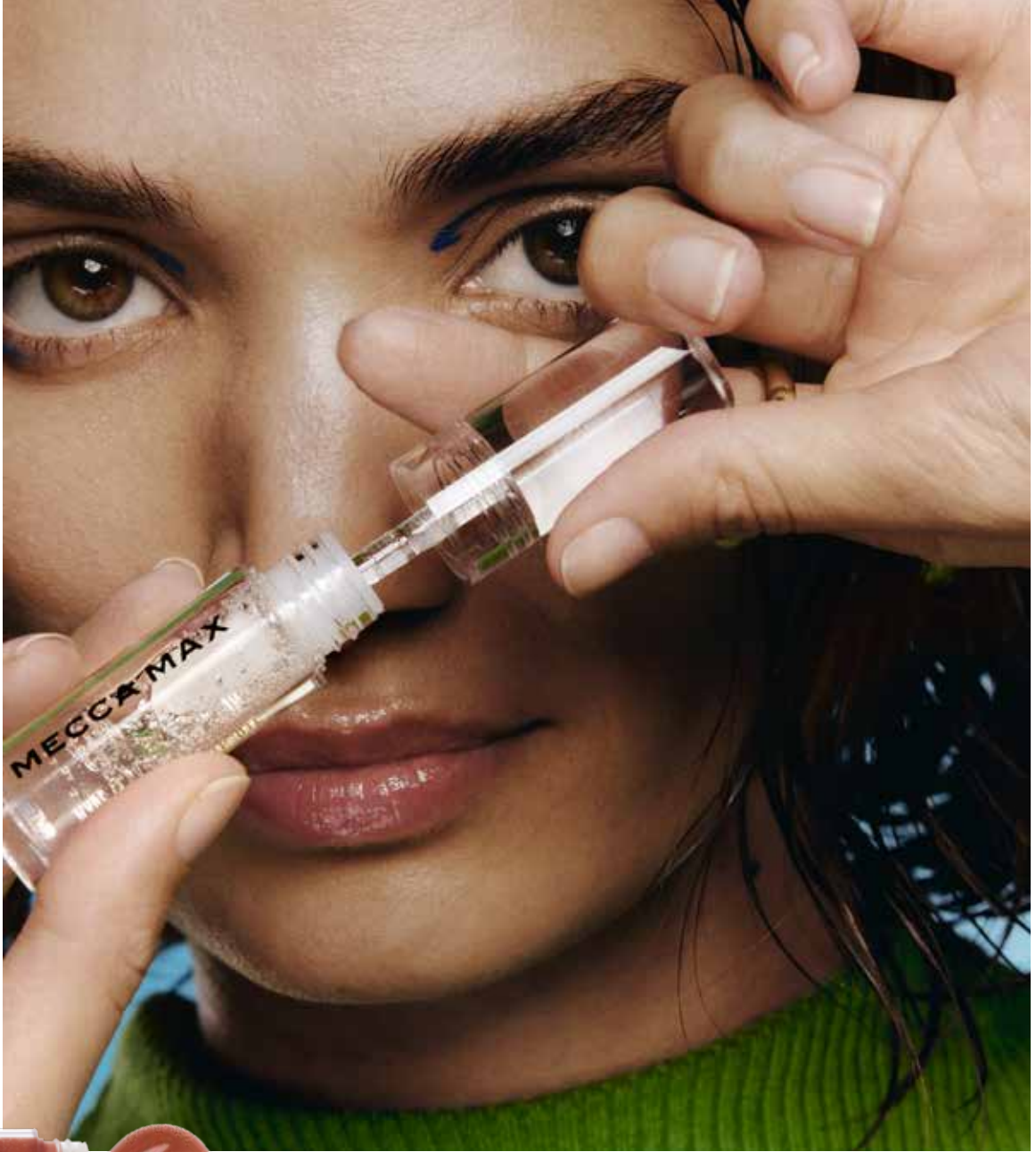


.10



.11

BEAUTY SPOT



Look and feel youthful with playful creations and the next gen skin care.

SLICK LIPS

The era of thick and sticky lip glosses are no more - a swipe of sheer and shiny oils have entered the space. **TooFaced** Kissing Jelly Lip Oil Gloss, \$43, are candy scented oil-gloss hybrids for a sweet treat that calls for kisses. A honey gold shimmer with a pearlescent finish, **Gisou** Honey Infused Shimmer Lip Oil, \$53, amplifies the sparkle factor. A snack-sized lip oil for the teeniest of handbags, **Mecca Max** Glaze Phase Lip Oil, \$15, comes in four sheer shades to swipe on the shine. To add some plumping action, **Huda Beauty** Faux Filler Gloss, \$33, provides the ultimate high-shine glass-like finish for the juiciest pout.





GLAZED CRAZE

Channel the Y2K trend with a dose of creativity to your facebeat. **Rare Beauty** Soft Pinch Luminous Powder Blush, \$50, is the perfect 2-in-1 highlighting blush packed with pearls for a soft and radiant dimension. A gel-cream hybrid with hydrating ingredients, **bareMinerals** Complexion Rescue Bronzer, \$52, combines rosy hues with a luminous warm base to create a translucent glow. Add pizzazz to your eye look with the pigment-rich **Mecca Max** Zoom Zip Liner Liquid, \$25, to make a statement. Easy to blend with a dewy finish, **Revlon** Gel Serum Blush, \$31, gives the cheeks a healthy looking flush of colour. A cream-to-powder formula with a velvety-soft finish, the **Jane Iredale** ColourLuxe Shadow Stick, \$54, has a built-in sharpener to define the eyes with precision.



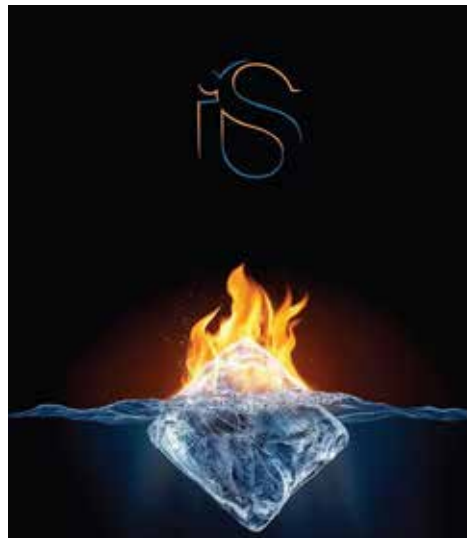
INDULGENT CARE

In modern-day living, we all suffer from muscle tension from sitting too long, exercising excessively or travelling afar. To unwind the tightly wound, **kit** Gua Sha Body Tool, \$53, boosts circulation and promotes lymphatic drainage. For better slip while massaging, **Sans[ceuticals]** Activator 7 Body + Hair + Face Oil, \$79, includes vitamins A, E, and lipo-C for optimal efficacy in collagen production and antioxidant protection. For the ultimate indulgence, blend the oil with the **Tronque** Firming Butter, \$130; a ceramide-rich velvety soufflé to supercharge skin hydration.

SKIN ESSENTIALS

Stave off unwanted dehydration with these new and noteworthy skincare essentials. Add the **Aēsop** Immaculate Facial Tonic, \$73, to your ritual to gently exfoliate the skin as a prep step. A winter must-have to reduce TEWL, **Ultraceuticals** Ultra B2 Hydrating Serum, \$131, includes panthenol, niacinamide and three forms of hyaluronic acid to reach all epidermis layers. To brighten and tighten tired eyes, **Shiseido** Vital Perfection Uplifting & Firming Express Eye Mask, \$118.40, covers a broad area on the face to reduce the look of fatigue and wrinkles.

Breathe new life into dull skin with the **Aspect** Cryo-Energising Mask, \$123; an intensely rejuvenating, cooling and uplifting cream mask with snow mushroom and glacial clay to support skin glow.



RED CARPET READY

Saint Beauty now offers the world-renowned **iS Clinical** Fire & Ice Facial, a go-to for celebrities before a red carpet event due to its instant results with no downtime. A 60-minute customised treatment that targets specific skin concerns, the facial smooths the skin via a heating glycolic peel to reduce fine lines and wrinkles, followed by a rejuvenating masque with cooling ice globes.



STEALTH HEALTH

With modern diets lacking in nutrients and disrupting our digestive health, it's crucial that we support our bodies with supplements. Packed with superfoods and fermented fruits and vegetables to support the growth of good bacteria in your gut, **Jeuneora** Greens+ Super Powder, \$74, helps with indigestion and bloating. **The Beauty Chef** Plumpers Collagen Chewables, \$49, makes for a tasty treat that works on skin hydration and elasticity while you're on the go. Derived from a wild-type algae strain, **SIMKA** Alpha Omega-3, \$99, offers the most concentrated form of 99% DHA + EPA in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way.

ON THE GLOW

Complexion makeup has evolved to be the final step in a typical skincare system. **Anastasia Beverly Hills** has launched their first ever BB cream in a pocket-friendly stick - the new Beauty Balm Serum Boosted Skin Tint, \$85, delivers a seamless hydrating formula with light coverage and a natural finish. Boasting a high coverage radiant matte finish, **Sisley Phyto-Teint Perfection Foundation**, \$165, blurs, smoothes and refines the skin over time. A multi-use clickable pen with 24H wear, **Smashbox Halo Healthy Glow 4-in-1 Perfecting Pen Concealer**, \$54, conceals, highlights, contours and corrects without creasing, caking or settling into fine lines.



OLFACTORY PRESENCE

Juicy pear and powdery violet leaf meet in **Issey Miyake L'Eau D'Issey Solar Violet**, EDT Intense, 50ml, \$167, to create an aquatic creation that is modern, graceful and silky. A sensual floral musk perfume, the dry down of cedarwood, patchouli and tonka bean in **Narciso Rodriguez For Her Musk Nude**, EDP, 50ml, \$186, caresses the skin with a tender warmth like that of the sun. From zesty top notes of bergamot and sweet orange, **Arithmos Floral Dancer**, \$78, opens into a heart of gardenia, violet, rose, ylang ylang and tuberose for a delicate day time fragrance. For a gourmand fragrance to engulf the room in a heady delight of sweetness, **Kayali Vanilla Rock Candy Sugar 42**, EDP, 50ml, \$171, is a candy-like explosion of vanilla, candied pear, marshmallow, jasmine and caramel on a bed of warm and woody notes.





DEMOCRACY OF BEAUTY

As the co-founder of iconic beauty brands MONDAY Haircare, Osāna Naturals and Châlon Paris, Jaimee Lupton has shaken the market and made a name for herself both here and overseas. MONDAY is available in 37 countries and is now considered New Zealand's biggest beauty brand ever. Recently she and her partner ZURU co-founder Nick Mowbray also welcomed a new baby into the world, but this hasn't put the breaks on her latest venture Châlon Paris. We sat down with Lupton to pick her brain over the challenges she's faced, how the beauty world is evolving, and the advice she has for other entrepreneurs following in her path.

INTERVIEW BY ISAAC TAYLOR

What inspired you to start Châlon Paris, did you see a gap in the market?

I saw a lack of luxuriously fragranced hand and body care available in a mass setting and wanted to make beautifully scented, stylishly packaged products both accessible and attainable. As I saw with MONDAY, gone are the days where premium formulas and packaging were reserved only for luxury, niche brands. Châlon not only looks beautiful, but we've worked hard to ensure it includes high-quality, functional ingredients such as hyaluronic acid, along with sustainably sourced fragrance and essential oils.

What does democratising beauty mean to you?

"Exclusivity" used to be the buzzword in beauty, but being "exclusive" means someone is always left out. There's much more of an understanding these days that beauty isn't just reserved for one group of people: it's for everyone. To me, democratising beauty means not only ensuring everyone feels seen and represented, but also making products readily available and accessible in a mass setting.

Has motherhood changed your perspective on things?

Definitely. It took us a lot to get here and to have Noa with us, so I'm more focused on how I spend my time when it's not with her. It's also solidified my commitment to loving what I do and being passionate about it. If I have to be spending time away from Noa, I want to be sure it's doing something I love that's going to bring me fulfilment and purpose. I'm lucky to have that. I'm proud to be raising a daughter and a future young woman in this world: I want to show her that whatever dad can do, mum can do too, and that she's just as capable as her male counterparts.

What was your process for evaluating market potential for this?

When it comes to market potential specifically, we spend a lot of time looking at data and emerging trends, and considering the gap in the market, or what we call the “white space”. In part thanks to the proven success of MONDAY—we’re now in almost 40 countries and 65,000 doors with 100 of the world’s biggest retailers—we have been able to have conversations with our retail partners where we’re filling a gap for them in their offering that we’re confident consumers are looking for, but aren’t currently finding at mass.

What are the big trends in the beauty industry at the moment?

We’re seeing the ‘skinfication’ of categories like haircare and bodycare, whereby the same focus that we have for skincare is expanding into other categories. So you’ll see ingredients such as hyaluronic acid, vitamin C and retinol appearing in body care products, as people become more conscious of expanding their beauty routines and their idea of beauty being more head-to-toe. Châlon’s formulas contain hyaluronic acid at an active level, as we identified it early on as one of those skincare ingredients that is incredibly hydrating and beneficial for the rest of the body, too.

You have a huge business profile, does that bring a certain pressure with it every time you spin up a new venture?

I think it does. I try not to let that pressure come from external sources though: often the internal pressure you put on yourself is enough! Of course you want something you and your team have worked hard on to be a success, but that’s never a sure thing. Success also looks different from brand to brand, and one person’s idea of success might be totally different to another’s. You have to be content in your own work and your own version of success.

My ideas of success and purpose have shifted over time, and our fertility struggles especially gave me a new perspective on what that looks like. Our first daughter Gingernut was born perfect, but still, in 2022 and I connected with a lot of people around that time who unfortunately shared in that experience. I decided while I was pregnant with our second daughter that I wanted to help those on their fertility journey, as Gingernut’s legacy. Our

charity Gingernut’s Angels was established earlier this year, whereby we’ll be making grants to those who require financial support for fertility treatments such as IVF. It’s given me a huge sense of purpose to think there could be children born all over New Zealand as part of our daughter’s legacy.

Your brands are all over the world, what’s the benefit of operating out of little old New Zealand?

We’re a global business with offices in Sydney, Auckland, Los Angeles, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Ho Chi Minh City, Hong Kong, Copenhagen, Chicago and Ontario (just to name a few)



and my partner Nick and I spend a lot of time travelling to visit our teams and to meet with other stakeholders. Being a global business means hiring people who are experts at what they do, no matter where they are. That said, having a base in New Zealand means we get to spend time with family and friends on the rare occasions we’re not working, which does help when you’re running your own businesses and don’t have a lot of downtime.

New Zealand tends to be quite reserved when it comes to success, do you think the Tall Poppy syndrome holds us back?

I’ve found that it does on the way up, but once you get to a certain level of “success” it stops. Perhaps that’s down to people feeling as though you need to prove yourself. That said, New Zealand is a small place filled with genuinely kind people, and I think once people realise what you’re trying to achieve they’re generous with their support. Sometimes it’s about humanising the person behind the idea or business.

Can you talk about some of the hurdles you’ve had to face on your entrepreneurial journey?

Self-doubt would be a big one for me. I had a strong brand and marketing background when I started MONDAY, and was lucky to be surrounded by experts who knew things I didn’t. My partner, Nick, is an incredible businessperson, and I like to say I went to the University of Nick Mowbray! That said, I doubted myself a lot and felt out of my depth often. It gets better with time, but it’s a part of building a business and I think is something a lot of entrepreneurs deal with that doesn’t get spoken about often.

What advice do you have for other entrepreneurs looking to get a brand going with a global footprint? If you don’t want to give away all your secrets I understand.

The advice I give is just to get started. Of course it’s important to have goals and a strong idea of what success looks like for you and your business, but thinking about a global footprint when starting from scratch can feel intimidating and overwhelming. Just start with where you are and what you have, and you will work things out as you go. You’ll make mistakes as you go and feel out of your depth a lot of the time, but that’s all part of the process. Keeping your eye on your North Star will help.

Also, seek out people who have already found success, who are living what you’re trying to do, and ask them about the process. You’ll be surprised how many people are happy to talk about their industry and how they got where they are today. I’m a big believer in this, and to this day am constantly speaking to other female beauty founders (Anna Lahey of Vida Glow and Ava Matthews of Ultra Violette have been especially invaluable). We support each other and bounce ideas off each other for the others’ insights.

“Just start with where you are and what you have, and you will work things out as you go. You’ll make mistakes as you go and feel out of your depth a lot of the time, but that’s all part of the process.”





Living

COLOUR MATCH:

Resene Half Hammerhead
Colour code: B54-026-268
A nebulous slate and blue
grey, urbane in style.



The Versailles Mummy Gold Gilt Chair screams opulence, with its rich upholstery and intricate carvings, as if it were plucked straight from a Bridgerton drawing room. Pair it with a minimalist backdrop to let the chair shine, much like how a Featherington might let her latest scandalous accessory take centre stage.



‘A feigned swoon. Chapter six I believe? We ought to up our game.’

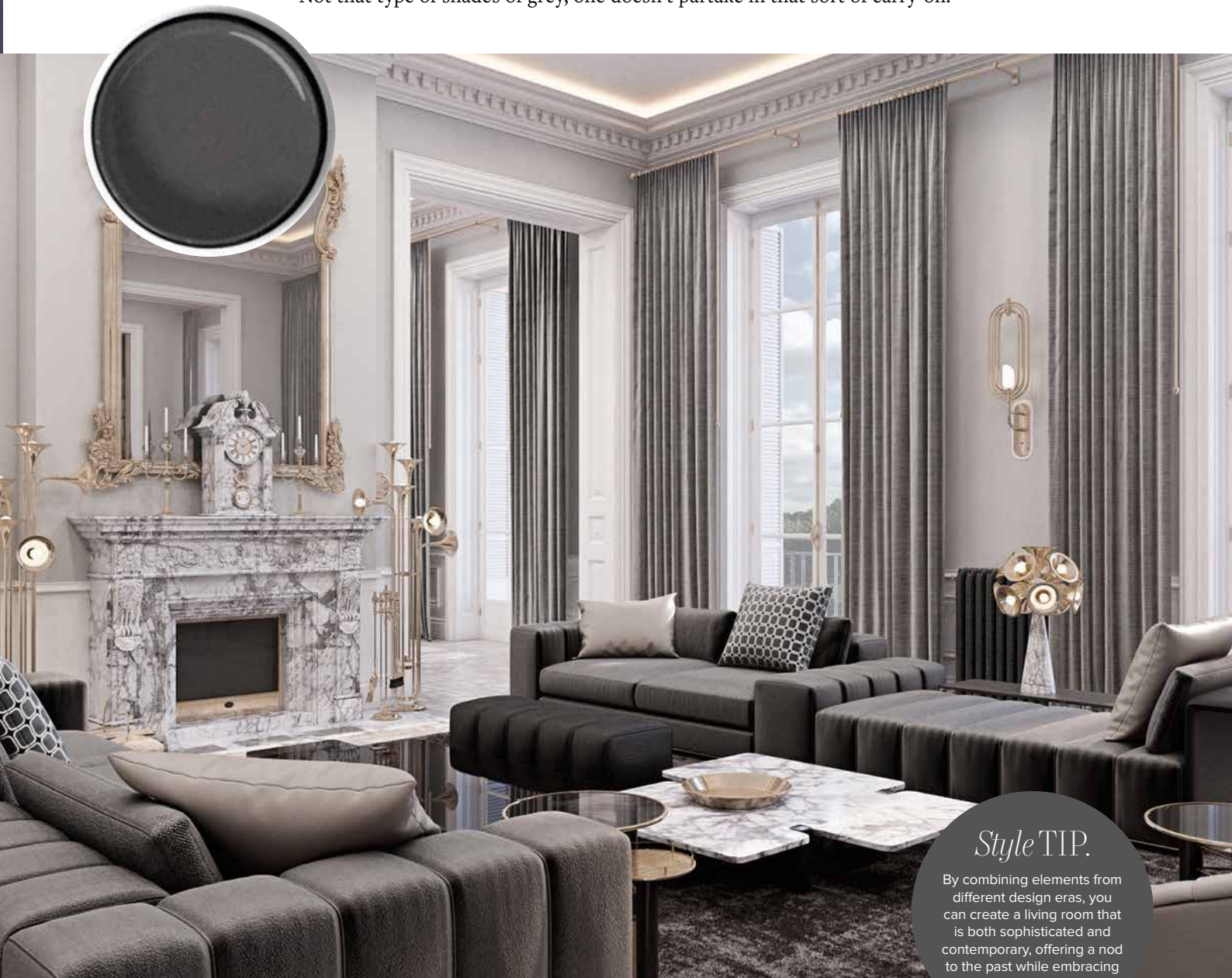
Simon Basset - S1E3

THE OTHER HALF

Bridgerton is a lesson in excess. Season 1 alone had 7,500 clothing items custom made for its eight episodes. All of these created a colour harmony that made every frame a painting. Individual families and homes also carried a colour motif that not only told the viewer subconsciously which house they were, but also tell you a little about the family themselves. What do our homes say about us? Is it a stark white art gallery, or a warm cozy mess. It's time to start living with intent.

A HINT OF SUBTLETY, MY DEAR

Just because you and your family are navigating the upper limits of Regency-era high society with apt superiority, it doesn't mean that you need to be all showy about it. Inject some nuance into your life with some shades of grey. Not that type of shades of grey, one doesn't partake in that sort of carry-on.



Style TIP.

By combining elements from different design eras, you can create a living room that is both sophisticated and contemporary, offering a nod to the past while embracing the present.

In this elegantly appointed living room, the sophisticated charm of the Regency era seamlessly blends with mid-century modern design, creating a space that is both timeless and contemporary. The intricate moldings and grand drapery evoke Bridgerton opulence, while the Botti table and floor lamps add a modern twist with their unique, trumpet-like design inspired by jazz musician Chris Botti.

To achieve this balanced look in your own home, mix classic elements like ornate mirrors and luxurious drapes with sleek modern furniture and statement lighting. Incorporate high-quality materials such as marble, brass, and plush fabrics for a luxurious feel. Stick to a neutral color palette with gold and brass accents, and add texture through velvet cushions, marble tables, and silk drapes. Create focal points with striking features like a marble fireplace and statement lighting, and personalize the space with art and decorative objects that reflect your style.

Colour match: Resene Chain Gang

BLUE MOON

Turn your bathroom into a serene escape with some coastal retreat inspired hues.

‘I have all
that I want
just here.’

Daphne Bridgerton – S1E6



Style TIP.

Finish with natural touches, such as a woven basket and a vase of fresh flowers, to add warmth and a personal touch.

To recreate this look in your own home, start with a calming color palette and channel that timeless Bridgerton elegance with a classic pedestal sink and clawfoot tub, perfect for soaking away the day's gossip. But don't stop there—add some personality with patterned tiles that make a statement without upstaging the room. The Melville Mix tiles bring a contemporary twist that feels just as comfortable in 2024 as it might have in 1824.

Colour match: Resene Whirlwind.

GOLD DIGGER

You might not be of royal blood but that doesn't mean that you can't detail like a countess.

'I have always thought that an appreciation of the arts is what lifts us beyond mere animals.'

Daphne Bridgerton – S1E3



Style TIP.

Opt for a monochromatic color scheme with pops of contrast and gold to create a cohesive, striking ambiance.

To capture this look in your own home, start with statement pieces like this intricately designed settee, upholstered in deep, rich hues that add a touch of drama. Pair it with luxurious accessories like the lavish throw pillows that practically whisper secrets of old-world charm. The pièce de résistance is Covet House's Nymph Chandelier - a modern marvel that adds just the right amount of sparkle, as if the room itself is preparing for the social season. This bold lighting choice anchors the room and adds a contemporary twist to the otherwise historical aesthetic. Don't forget the finishing touches and accessorize with a mix of vintage and modern pieces, like the sleek golden coffee table that's perfect for perching your latest read—or perhaps a glass of bubbly.

Colour match: Resene Ruck N Maul.

PASTEL WITH ENVY

Unleash your inner Featherington with some pastel green charm.



Style TIP.

Stick to a neutral color palette with soft greens and gold accents to keep the vibe cohesive and elegant. Add texture with velvet drapes and a plush stool that practically begs you to sit down and plot your next high-society move.

In this look, an intricately carved paneling and the sophisticated Portobello Parade Park Green wallpaper by Divine Savages transport you straight into the heart of Bridgerton's grand interiors. Meanwhile, the vintage writing desk, with its rich wood tones and detailed inlays, could easily have been the very spot where Lady Danbury drafts her sharp-witted retorts. To steal this look, start by embracing traditional elements like ornamental moldings and luxurious wallpaper. Opt for furniture pieces that flaunt intricate details and rich finishes to sprinkle in some historical charm. Then, toss in modern touches like the sleek wall sconce and that fabulous chandelier to keep things feeling fresh and current.

Colour match: Resene Permanent Green

SPILL THE TEA

Like A Bridgerton



Once you've decided your interiors, it's time to add the final flourishes. Williams Sonoma teamed up with Netflix to create a limited run collection of tableware worthy of Queen Charlotte herself. Perfect for high tea and dramatically clattering when an unseemly gentleman visits outside of hours.

1. Bridgerton Floral Tea Pot, \$69.95. 2. Bridgerton Floral Teacup & Saucer, Set of 2, 49.95. 3. Glass Pedestals, \$39.95 - \$59.95. 4. Bridgerton Mixed Dessert Plates, Set of 4, \$59.95. 5. Bridgerton Napkins, Set of 4, \$49.95, [williams-sonoma.com](https://www.williams-sonoma.com). 6. Fortessa Arezzo Flatware Sets, Brushed Gold, 64.95. 7. Gold Rim Champagne Coupe Glasses, Set of 4, \$79.95. 8. Pillivuyt Plisse Gold Porcelain Dinnerware Collection, \$79.95 - \$169.95. 9. Pillivuyt Plisse Porcelain Dinnerware Collection, \$17.95 - \$139.95. Bridgerton Table Runner, \$69.95.



A PALESTINIAN WOMAN EMBRACES THE BODY OF HER NIECE

Photography by Mohammed Salem, Palestine, Reuters

At the outset of the Israel-Hamas war, Israel instructed Gazans to evacuate to the south for their safety. Yet, according to reports from The Guardian and Al Jazeera, Israeli airstrikes heavily bombarded Khan Younis in southern Gaza from mid-October. Many of those killed were families who had left Gaza City days earlier. By the end of 2023, Palestinian women and children accounted for more than two-thirds of the death toll in Gaza, according to OHCHR. The photographer describes this photo, taken just days after his own wife gave birth, as a "powerful and sad moment that sums up the broader sense of what was happening in the Gaza Strip".

WHAT A THOUSAND WORDS CAN'T SAY

Usually these images feel like a celebration of the individual stories unspooling across the world, a sliver of someone's life captured and memorialised. This year that feels somewhat trite as the winning image from the 2024 World Press Photo Contest comes from Reuters photojournalist Mohammed Salem, a Palestinian reporter in the thick of events that are currently tearing the world in two.

His image captures Inas Abu Maamar cradling the body of her niece Saly (5) who was killed, along with four other family members, when an Israeli missile struck their home in Gaza in October. The judges of the image also noted that this subject matter won Mohammed Salem in this same competition over a decade ago. His last image taken in 2009 featured a shot of White phosphorous being exploded in an urban area as they once again came to blows with Hamas. This is banned under international law.

The circularity of this conflict is a misery factory, and it is Palestine's only export. We have to see these images and learn from them. We have to try something different.



THE TWO WALLS

Photography by Alejandro Cegarra, Venezuela, The New York Times/Bloomberg

Since 2019, Mexico has transformed from a country that welcomed migrants and asylum seekers at its southern border to one that enforces strict immigration policies very similar to those of the United States. Immigration and foreign policies implemented by different US administrations, COVID-19 protocols, and political and economic turmoil across Central and South America contribute to the ongoing crisis at Mexico's borders. These factors expose migrant families to violence, corruption, and precarious conditions in border towns. Informed by his own experience of migrating from his home in Venezuela to Mexico in 2017, photographer Alejandro Cegarra initiated this project in 2018 to document the plight of these deeply vulnerable migrant communities and highlight, with respect and sensitivity, their resilience.



THE ESCAPE

Photography by Zied Ben Romdhane, Magnum Photos, Arab Fund for Arts and Culture, AIM LAB
Tunisia's 2011 revolution, which catalyzed the "Arab Spring", instilled hope in Tunisians aspiring to democracy, social justice, and freedom of expression. However, the subsequent decade witnessed political instability, persistent economic crises, and social inequality, impacting young people especially. More than 40% of Tunisia's population is aged 15–34, with unemployment of youth under 24 at around 40%. This project explores the lives of young Tunisians and aims to contribute to discussion on including them in a better future.



LOOKING FOR SATYRUS

Photography by Rena Effendi, VII Photo, National Geographic Society

The *Satyrus effendi* is a rare butterfly species named after Rustam Effendi, a Soviet Azerbaijani entomologist and the photographer's father. Rustam Effendi collected tens of thousands of butterflies in his lifetime, traveling across what is now the contested borderlands between Armenia and Azerbaijan to hunt and collect specimens. His death in 1991 coincided with the beginning of decades of conflict over the mountainous Nagorno-Karabakh region. The photographer retraces her father's footsteps for this project, traversing the now war-torn region in search of *Satyrus effendi*, which flies along the spine of the Zangezur ridge, between two countries in conflict. In her pursuit, Effendi met people on both sides of the frontline, who helped her along the way, proving that humanity prevails even in places ravaged by war.



WAR IS PERSONAL

Photography by Julia Kochetova

Amidst tens of thousands of civilian and military casualties and an effective stalemate that has lasted for months, there are no signs of peace on the horizon for Russia's war in Ukraine. While news media updates its audience with statistics and maps, and international attention drifts elsewhere, the photographer has created a personal website that brings together photojournalism with the personal documentary style of a diary to show the world what it is like to live with war as an everyday reality.



I AM STILL WITH YOU

Photography by Wang Naigong

This project is a private visual record that aims to explore the concept of family photos. In close collaboration with the family, the photographer tells the story of Jiuer, a young mother of three in northern China who gains more understanding and appreciation for life in her final years after being diagnosed with cancer. Before her surgery, Jiuer invited the photographer to take some family photos, and later, when her condition deteriorated, asked her to record the time she spent with her children.



RED SKIES, GREEN WATERS

Photography by Adriana Loureiro Fernandez, for The New York Times

Around the turn of this century, oil-rich Venezuela was prosperous, but its fortunes declined following plummeting oil prices, economic mismanagement, sanctions, and political instability. Oil spills from obsolete infrastructure and methane produced by the refining process ravage the environment. In the meantime, nearly 82% of Venezuelans live in poverty, according to the OHCHR. This story eloquently portrays the harmful impacts of industry on both the environment and the social fabric of Venezuela.

Adriana Loureiro Fernandez made these images on assignment for The New York Times, in collaboration with Isayen Herrera and Sheyla Urdaneta.



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A QUEBEC FIRE CREW

© Charles-Frédéric Ouellet, for The Globe and Mail, CALQ

Theo Dagnaud scans the horizon to ensure that firefighter patrols have left, and he can mark the area as “controlled”. Quebec, Canada, 13 July 2023.

Fueled by high temperatures and dry conditions, gigantic summer forest fires swept across Canada in 2023, affecting all 13 provinces and territories, especially northern parts of Quebec. The record-breaking fire season began early and ended late, burning nearly three times more land than usual.

The jury felt that the iconic composition of this single image – reminiscent of a monument – stands as a powerful symbol of our losing battle against climate change, and a metaphor for our collective arrogance in the face of the crisis.



NO MAN'S LAND

© Daniel Chatard

Germany positions itself as a leader in the transition towards renewable energy by 2030, yet remains heavily dependent on coal for energy production. In the Rhineland, forests have been cleared and villages demolished since the 1970s to make way for the Hambach and Garzweiler open-pit coal mines. In 2012, activists began occupying parts of Hambach Forest and later the village of Lützerath to resist these measures, managing by 2023 to save a remainder of the forest and five of six such villages scheduled for destruction.

An aerial photograph of four people on surfboards in clear, turquoise water. The surfboards are yellow, orange, white, and light blue. The water is vibrant and shows some ripples and shadows from the surfers.

HAWAII

IT'S GOT EVERYTHING
FOR EVERYONE

WORDS BY CY SINDERSON

There are some holiday destinations where you go once to lie on a beach and recharge your jaded batteries. These destinations are terrific for working on the tan, maybe dipping in the pool and snorkelling in the lagoon – but that's about it. There's not a lot else to do except drink cocktails in the bar until it's time to go home again. Then there are other holiday destinations which have all that – and then some!

O‘ahu

This is where your adventure will likely start. Home of Honolulu and the airport, O‘ahu is often the only island travellers see of Hawai‘i . Which is great for first time visitors as O‘ahu has everything you could ever want from a holiday destination with plenty of bars, shops, every kind of restaurant and, of course, the legendary Waikiki beach...

Surf’s up

If you’re already a surfer then you won’t need to be told how good Hawai‘i is for surfing as you’ve probably already spent years dreaming of busting out your board on the beaches of O‘ahu , Maui and Kaua‘i – as



Above: Rooftop venue at Waikiki, Oahu. *Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) / Aria Studios*

Below: Waikiki Beach, Oahu. *Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) / Ben Ono*



they have long been known as some of the best in the world. On the other hand, if you’re a grommet then what better place to learn than at the spiritual home of surfing?

On the southwest, or leeward side, of O‘ahu the waves are much more gentle than on the north and east making it the perfect zone to get started on possibly the most addictive sport ever invented. You can even sign up for a school as you’ll see several of them dotted all along the west side beaches of O‘ahu.

Left: Waikiki Beach with Leahi (Diamond Head) in the background. *Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) / Vincent Lim*



Hawai‘is Got It All

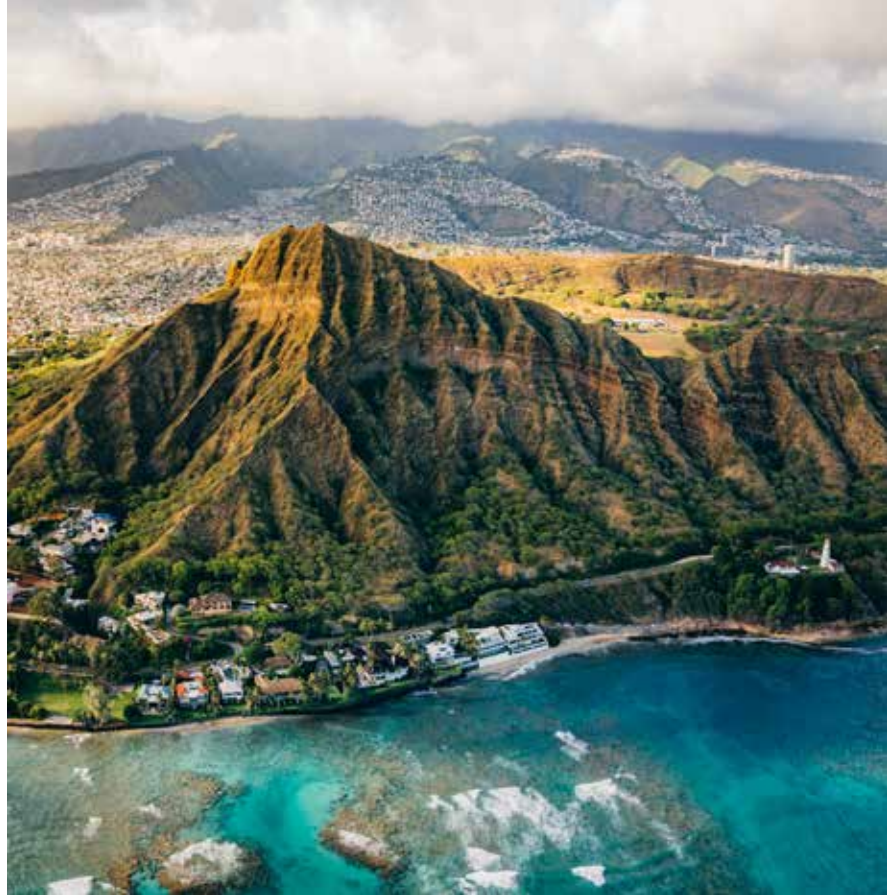
Hawai‘i is the ultimate example of glamping – where you can go on an exotic holiday to get away from it all, yet still take everything you love about city living with you! For a start, wherever you go here, there are pristine beaches and a welcoming sea – it ranges from 25 to 29 degrees year-round – for you to swim in. Then there are all the activities; whale-watching, hiking, shopping, surfing, bar-hopping, or just straight-out hardcore partying – whatever you feel like doing and whenever you feel doing like it – it’s all available just about anywhere you go on the islands. As a US state Hawai‘i has all the best bits of America yet it still also has those familiar heavy Polynesian and Asian cultural influences which make it like a home away from home for us Kiwis. Getting to Hawai‘i couldn’t be easier as Air New Zealand flies non-stop from Auckland to Honolulu all year round, with domestic connections available across Air New Zealand serviced airports.

You can also choose whether to hang out alongside heaps of fellow tourists or get away from it all as Hawai‘i, like New Zealand and many of our Pacific neighbours, is actually a collection of many islands. So you can either stick around on O‘ahu to enjoy the smorgasbord of entertainment options there or strike out to some of the neighbour islands which each have their own different personality. The easiest way to get around the different islands is by air with Hawaiian Airlines.

Diamond Head

Lest we forget, all of Hawai'i is a result of volcanic eruptions all along the Pacific Ring of Fire – which includes us here in New Zealand too. The whole chain of Hawaiian islands was created by movements of the Pacific tectonic plate over millions of years and evidence of this is everywhere including dormant craters. Diamond Head is one such giant crater and is conveniently placed right next to Waikiki Beach for you to discover. A simple hike will have you on the rim where you can see pretty much all of O'ahu .

Before you leave, O'ahu must-sees include Pearl Harbour; the Kualoa Ranch where a heap of Hollywood movies and TV shows are made; and to enjoy the 'Pineapple Experience' at the Dole Plantation.



Above: Afternoon shadows on Leahi (aka Diamond Head), Waikiki, Oahu. *Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) / Vincent Lim*



Waimea Canyon Lookout, Kauai. *Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) / Ben Ono*

Kaua'i

Kaua'i – or the 'Garden Island' – is one of the more picturesque islands in the archipelago. Complete with soaring mountains, jagged cliffs and cascading waterfalls Kaua'i is definitely worth a hike or three. But, if you're not feeling so energetic, you can always enjoy it all from the air. Wings over Kaua'i cover the vast Waimea Canyon, the "Grand Canyon of the Pacific" as well as the famous Nāpali Coastline – all with expert commentary.

Maui

Once you've had a decent crack at everything O'ahu has to offer, it's time to jump on over to Maui. Known for a more relaxed vibe, Maui still has the pristine beaches and kickass surf of O'ahu . But Maui also has many fantastic unique features without the throng of Honolulu. If you love nature then Maui is the ideal place to watch humpback whales as the waters off the island are where they come every year to mate, give birth, and raise their young. You can see them at the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary where the sightseeing tour operators can even guarantee your sighting.



Hikers walking along Hosmer Grove Trail, Haleakala National Park, Maui. *Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) / Mathieu Duchier*

For an even closer encounter with nature check out Teralani Sailing Adventures. They offer a range of snorkel tours, sunset sails, whale watch tours and dolphin cruises where you can get up close and personal with all sorts of magnificent marine life from the comfort of Hawai'i's toasty warm waters.

Maui is also home to the somewhat bizarrely named Gilligan's Island Lū'au which is a great place to experience authentic Hawaiian Polynesian culture through storytelling, audience participation and performance. Their lū'au is a lot smaller than others you'll encounter around the traps so it'll pay to book earlier as their shows sell out quickly.

Hawai'i Island (Big Island)

As the nickname suggests; Hawai'i Island or 'Big Island' really is big by Hawaiian standards! So don't try to race through too much in too short a time when you come here. Unlike O'ahu, there is a distinct lack of high-rise buildings here and a much more chilled vibe. That makes the Big Island one of the best places to bust out your hiking shoes or mountain bike to explore the multitude of trails that crisscross the island. Plus, if you're any sort of volcanologist, this is also home to the Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, one of the most popular attractions in all of Hawai'i.



Above: The royal grounds of Puuhonua o Honaunau. *Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) / Heather Goodman*

Top Right: Thurston Lava Tube, Nahuku Lava Tube, Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. *Island of Hawaii Visitors Bureau (IHVB) / Kirk Lee Aeder*

Right: Waianuenue (Rainbow Falls). *Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) / Ben Ono*



As you can see, Hawai'i is one of the premium holiday destinations in the world – so be prepared to share it with lots of tourists – especially if you only go as far as O'ahu. Remember Hawai'i is a US state so their dollar is the currency here and their custom of tipping is also expected in restaurants (15-20% of the bill), bars (\$1 per drink) and taxis/Uber's (10-15%). And don't forget to tip the hotel porters (\$1-\$2 per bag), housekeeping and tour guides too.

The best thing about Hawai'i is that it doesn't matter what kind of holiday you're after – or even if you change your mind halfway through! – you're guaranteed to have exactly the experience you need. It's the safest bet you can make.



Tiki Tacky

No trip to Hawai'i is complete without a visit to at least one Tiki bar. The delightfully kitsch brainchild of the wonderfully eccentric Don the Beachcomber, tiki bars are a vestige of a different time before global travel when the exotic Polynesian culture of far-away distant lands was the very antithesis of buttoned-down suburbia of 1950s America. Back then John and Jane Doe couldn't get enough of Hawaiian ukeleles, hula dancing and wacky cocktails served in carved tumblers. And you can get your fix too at a variety of tiki bars all over Hawai'i – with an absolute classic in Tahiti Nui, located in Hanalei on Kaua'i's north shore.



Sea turtle & snorkeling , Hawai'i, Uncruise

HAWAI'I has it
all for **YOU.**

The HAWAIIANTM ISLANDS

Wonderful Waikiki

With breath taking views and just steps away from the famous Waikiki beach you can sit back, relax and work on your tan!

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A VOYAGE THROUGH TIME: DISCOVERING FRANCE ON THE MAJESTIC MADELEINE

When envisioning a trip to France, the alluring grandeur of Paris often dominates the imagination. And for good reason—with its timeless monuments like Notre-Dame de Paris, activities such as wine tasting under the Eiffel Tower, and endlessly iconic fashion, Paris holds a well-deserved reputation as a pinnacle of cultural richness and romantic attraction.

WORDS AND IMAGES BY TAYLAH SINCLAIR



But for seasoned travellers who have no intent on following the masses, there's a new trend on the rise: all-inclusive, minimalistic travel. This approach strips away the excess, focusing on simplicity and authenticity, offering essentials that enhance the travel experience without overshadowing the destination itself. And the good news is, there's a side of France that has barely been touched by tourism, waiting to be rediscovered. Here, travellers can explore quaint villages, hidden vineyards, and pristine landscapes, all while enjoying the convenience and ease of an all-inclusive package tailored to immerse them deeply in the local culture and environment.

CroisiEurope has a unique blend of minimalism and comprehensive service, catering to those seeking both adventure and tranquillity away from the typical tourist trails. It is one of the most bespoke ways to see France, while still getting to enjoy the luxury of top-tier French cuisine, chef-chosen wines and cocktails, and exploration of rich French history.

CroisiEurope's Madeleine offers intimate itineraries that meander through France's lesser-known waterways, providing exclusive access to off-the-beaten-path towns and landscapes. The emphasis on local culture extends beyond dining onboard, to include expert-led tours and curated experiences, ensuring that guests not only see France but truly experience its heart and soul. This blend of personalised attention and carefully crafted journeys makes the Madeleine an ideal choice for discerning travellers looking to delve deep into the authentic and untouched parts of France.

The Madeleine starts in the quaint city of Strasbourg, where your journey begins with a cocktail in hand on arrival, a small handful of guests, and greeting from the warm crew. From setting foot on the barge, it's a promise of a home away from home. Unlike its larger cousins, boasting room for close to 180 passengers,

Madeleine's intimacy is accentuated by its 11 twin room cabins, making each guest's experience personalised and cosy.

From day one, CroisiEurope's promise of an "end-to-end service" is palpable. Luggage is quickly taken to cabins, leaving guests free to explore the elegantly appointed barge and mingle. The ambiance on board is one of relaxed luxury, where every detail—from the plush furnishings to the tasteful decor—has been carefully curated to enhance the travel experience.

The first activity is one you don't have to wait long for—a separate glass boat tour of the Strasbourg Canals. This excursion begins almost immediately, offering a serene glide through the historic heart of the city. You'll pass through the charming district of 'Petite France', renowned for its half-timbered houses and intricate baroque architecture. The reflections of these iconic structures create a picturesque tableau for the first evening. And the tour doesn't stop at visuals; it also takes you past the imposing Parliament House, a symbolic feature of Europe. Along the way, a knowledgeable guide provides rich narratives that bring the history of Strasbourg to life, setting the tone for the adventures to come.

Returning to the barge, the evening unfolds with champagne and introductions—a chance to meet the crew more personally. Dinner is lavish to say the least. Plates laden with French cuisine, each course a story told through taste and tradition by the cruise's well-acquainted chef. The cruise provides the full experience, with carefully selected French wine to accompany the three to four-course meals provided by the chef on board at lunch and dinner each day. The French cuisine on board was all curated from scratch—a unique blend of local flavours from duck with red wine to John Dory, a delicacy for many Kiwis. Lunch was accompanied by an assortment of French cheeses—each day something new. And for the sweet tooths, each meal was topped off with a delicate dessert. Think crème brûlée, chocolate mousse, and giant macarons.



The cruise offers a seating area and bar for relaxing, a dining area, outdoor spa, immaculate views from the upper deck, and private bathrooms in the cabins. All this to totally submit to gliding through ancient canals under the pastel hues of French sunset each evening, which in turn become a ritual—cocktail hour after a day of explorations into local culture.

Each morning, the Madeleine stirs to the start of engines and the smell of daily buffet-style breakfast, then presents the chance to disembark and follow alongside the Madeleine by bike or on foot along the leafy towpaths. Each few kilometres introduces new locks of the French canals, a marvel of man-made engineering and a testament to the enduring heritage of France's waterways (best seen in person). The pace is leisurely; the scenery, a canvas of lush greens and vibrant earth tones. If travelling in spring you encounter stretches of wildflowers as you traverse the paths alongside the Madeleine, all bright hues of yellow and green. These moments of tranquillity are punctuated by quaint villages and more historic locks that appear along the route, each offering a glimpse into the local way of life. This daily opportunity to connect with the countryside not only invigorates the body but also enriches the soul, making each day's journey as rewarding as the destinations.



Journeying into the heart of Alsace's traditions begins with a visit to the Meteor Brewery, one of the oldest operating breweries in France. Here, you can delve into the intricate processes of beer making, from the careful selection of hops to the art of fermentation. The brewery tour not only offers a chance to witness the blend of traditional techniques and modern innovations firsthand but also includes tastings of their renowned brews, each with its own distinct flavour profile.

Following the brewery experience, the day continues at the Maison Du Kochersberg, a museum established in the 1980s to preserve the rich local heritage and intended to make visitors reminisce and long for the past. It's a chance to dive deeper into the cultural fashion and historical tapestry of the region—with real Alsatian headdresses and uniforms from the 20th century on display. This historic site offers a portrayal of Alsace's past, showcasing artefacts, photographs, and exhibits that narrate the evolution of the area through the ages. Here you can gain insight into how historical events have shaped the local lifestyle and cultural expressions, offering a multifaceted understanding of Alsace.

Life aboard the Madeleine offers a blend of tranquil mornings and busy afternoons, providing an ideal balance between relaxation and exploration. One of the highlights is a tour of the Château du Haut-Barr, a medieval castle nicknamed "The Eye of Alsace". Perched atop Severn's highest point, this historical landmark offers panoramic views that are nothing short

of breathtaking. The vantage point allows you to gaze across vast expanses of the region, embracing the natural beauty and serene landscapes of Alsace.

Not only are the views spectacular, but Château du Haut-Barr also serves as the perfect backdrop for reflection. Nearby, a short walk leads you to a 19th-century telegraph tower, adding another layer to your historical exploration. This tower, once part of a larger communication network, stands as a testament to the technological advancements since the 1800s. The proximity of rich history, combined with the peaceful surroundings, enriches your experience, blending educational discovery with the calming influences of nature. This setting invites both contemplation and a deeper appreciation of the historical narratives that have shaped this region.

Here in Saverne, guests are treated to a culinary showcase featuring the regional dish, Tarte Flambée, a local specialty. This treat is expertly paired with selections of exquisite local wines, enhancing the dining experience. During the day, amidst stalls brimming with fresh produce, fragrant cheeses, and artisanal breads, guests have the opportunity to interact with local farmers and craftspeople—the heart and soul of French

rural life. The charm of European markets offers a vibrant atmosphere that brings together the community's culinary and cultural traditions.

The day's walking tour takes you through historical sites such as the old nuns' convent and delves into the history behind General Leclerc, enriching our understanding of the region's cultural fabric. The narrative of General Leclerc, a prominent figure in the French resistance during World War II, adds a profound layer of historical significance.

Then, the tour of Saverne concludes just the way you might hope—with a leisurely local French coffee between guests. This provides a wonderful moment to reflect on the discoveries and connections made, encapsulating the essence of travel in Saverne.

Another highlight of the journey includes a visit to a renowned crystal factory, where the ancient art of glassmaking comes alive. Here, master craftspeople demonstrate their meticulous techniques, skillfully transforming raw materials into crystal pieces. You'll witness a fascinating blend of tradition and precision engineering, culminating in the creation of sparkling treasures that you can take home—each piece reflecting

some heritage and artistry of the region, making them perfect keepsakes or gifts.

And then one of the trip's most magical experiences—a candlelit dinner through the canal tunnels following a ride from one canal to another, via the Inclined Plane of St Louis Arzville. Another moment of peace and a novel experience at an amazing feat of engineering which lifts the barge up 45 metres. Why? To avoid 17 traditional locks and cutting the days navigation down to 5 minutes.

As the voyage on the Madeleine comes to a close, the experiences linger, testifying to the timeless allure of the French waterways and the intimate encounters that are only possible on a barge like the Madeleine.

CroisiEurope's 11 cabin barge cruises, also offer a 7-day boutique programme through the Oise Valley, Moselle, Alsace, Burgundy, and Provence with prices from \$4906 pp/share twin. A journey on the French canals is not just any trip; it's a unique reminder of the joys of slowing down and being in the moment.

To discover more about CroisiEurope and the wide selection of cruise options, visit croisieurope.co.nz



UNPRETENTIOUS STYLE WITH A CHEERY PUNCH

My earliest memories of a car are my mum's bright orange MINI. In the days before child seats the kids would rattle around in the back without a care. My eldest sister sat her driving test in that car. In those days it was 'one-and-done', a quick test and you had your full license at 15 years of age. She picked me up from school that same day - the first time I'd been scared in a car, but we made it home.

WORDS BY TIM WARREN PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAKE HOARE



MINI changed a lot in the intervening years, including moving to the stable ownership of BMW. Updating a classic is hard. When do you look to your legacy, when do you set a new future? This latest MINI is special - nothing else looks like it - except another MINI. Put aside the fabulous paint job and that unique shape. It's a car that makes you smile when you see it, and beam when you drive it. You can no longer hide the MINI's BMW underpinnings, with a steering wheel and control switches lifted from the parent company's range, as well as electronics, handling dynamics, and many great things. Still, this car has managed to keep a 'Charismatic Simplicity' with a distinct character that winks at you and whispers "MINI" everywhere you look. The round motif has been retained and extended, with rounded oblongs appearing for mirrors and the like.

The interior is unique, with a dash made from recycled materials into a functional, tactile material. The seats also use recycled components, and in fact a substantial percentage of the interior has come from reused materials. You wouldn't know it; they've just chosen great quality materials



that happen to have a lighter impact on the planet. Door handles and vents include a new chrome finish, handsome yet environmentally gentle. A full 95% of the interior can be recycled, and the battery is removable also for future recycling. There are many adorable details in this top-of-the-line 'Favoured' model, including a huge opening panoramic sunroof and too many features to list.

This 2024 MINI Countryman All4 John Cooper Works - Favoured (to give it the full title) surprises in many ways. Very much MINI, yet it gives you more space than you expect, more power than you thought, and delivers oodles of fun-factor. The main display is like nothing else I've ever seen. A huge round main dial offers a logical and highly interactive experience. It provides the best Apple CarPlay / Android Auto implementation I have seen - you don't feel you are moving from one system to another. Icons from your phone hover over the selectable wallpaper. And say "Hey MINI" and a cutesy Avatar pops into the screen and helps you manage your car. It might sound silly but I did not get sick of it, it was like my little friend hiding there to help. The seats are excellent: Comfortable, supportive, vegan-friendly, 100% leather-free. The back seat is spacious, and being a four-door car makes access easy. This car has a "do anything, go anywhere" feel - while it's not an off-roader, it has the safety and practicality of four-wheel drive.

The JCW or John Cooper Works version of any MINI is always meant to be a bit mental, fiery, and performance-oriented, and this is exactly that. Yes, it's got the layout of (dare I say), a medium-sized family car and the capacity to match, yet it's packing firepower. The engine is a 2.0-litre, 221 kW / 400 Nm unit, delivering 100kph in 5.4 s, but ignore all that; this is a MINI, and it goes like a stylish little bat out of hell. I took it through urban, rural and highway - and in all situations, it's smile-inducing; cornering hard and gobbling up the straights. The steering is taut and precise, and the handling is excellent.

It's a tough road for car manufacturers if you want to make an engaging yet efficient car. MINI straddles that with a green mode for efficiency, but most entertainingly, a go-kart mode that hollers at you when engaged, announcing you are in for a good time. The driver assistance features are great, and not too intrusive. I predominantly left them on, apart from when I was on the twisty roads. Let's highlight the excellent braking. It's no surprise when you look inside the 20-inch (!!) wheels. Behold some of the largest brake discs you'll ever see on a car of this size; they look like they belong on a BMW M2. You've never seen a MINI with wheels this big, but they integrate well visually and dynamically. Packing an unpretentious style with a cheery punch, the JCW Countryman is a pleasure to drive. MINI carries a cache that transcends buyer personas or any of that; carrying legacy and modernity it appeals to all.

Auckland MINI Garage
aucklandminigarage.co.nz

East Auckland MINI Garage
eastaucklandminigarage.co.nz



FIRST MATES LAST LAUGH

Judith Tabron's new restaurant on Westhaven Drive is a welcome addition to the Auckland scene. With Marina views and a unique location, it's nice to get out of the city for a breath of fresh air. A large restaurant with plenty of natural light, Tabron has fashioned a spot that nails smart casual with top-quality food yet a casual dining experience.

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY TIM WARREN

The famous Auckland restaurateur, who chefed Auckland's top spots before learning in England started her first spot Ramses in Newmarket and then set up the legendary Soul bar that anchored the viaduct in the early 2000s. She's brought her effortless style once again with a familiar yet fresh formula.

There is a strong seafood influence here, understandable as it's just meters from the water, yet the hungry of any persuasion will find something fantastic to choose from. A wide selection from starters and small plates to larger servings, in a style that takes simple sophistication from any cuisine it wishes. Everything we tried was simply delicious

yet unpretentious - yet the ceviche was the standout! A Comprehensive wine list offers a few inspired pairings - be sure to ask the staff - they know what they're doing. To our excitement, there are one or two offerings we'd never seen before, an immediate attraction.

I first met Judith Tabron when I was 16 years old. As the still-at-school drummer in a jazz band with the one-day-to-famous Mark de Clive-Lowe on keys, we scored a regular gig at Judith's Ramses in Newmarket. I'd come from school, have a snack, swap a school uniform for Jazz formals, get dropped off by my dad, and then play till late. When you're still in school, that's a treasured memory. By far

the youngest of anyone in the restaurant, we were always treated impeccably. I didn't know much about restaurants in those days but it was clearly popular.

As I'm leaving Judith whispers, 'I'm trying to keep it on the down low. We're only scaling up'. Unlikely. It is going to become the go-to establishment very soon. Judith has an eye for what people want and need because, despite her efforts to stay below the radar with her new venture, it's clear that this will soon be a place for many long business lunches happening here, when it's off the 'down-low' of course.

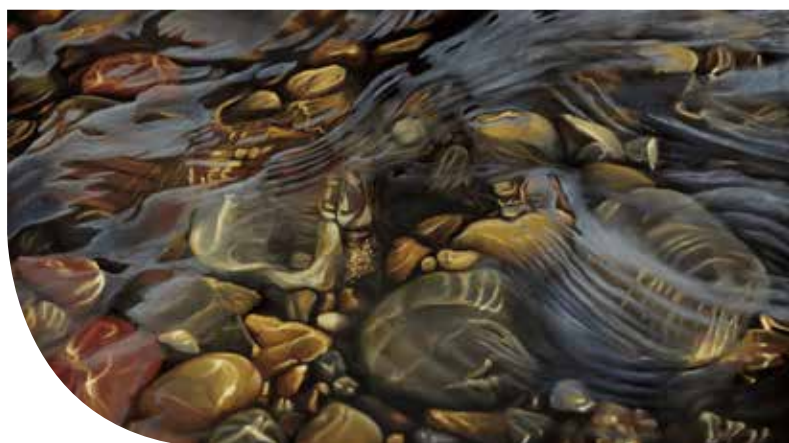
A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT

The Macallan Estate, nestled in the picturesque Highlands of Scotland, has been nurturing its 1.5-mile stretch of the River Spey for nearly 200 years. This river, meandering through the estate, is more than just a scenic backdrop—it's the lifeblood of The Macallan's whisky-making tradition. And now, it's the muse behind an exceptional whisky release, The Macallan Home Collection, River Spey

To capture the essence of the River Spey, The Macallan has collaborated with the photo-realist artist Michelle Lucking, who specialises in creating lifelike images using her fingers and natural pigmented pastels. Yes, you read that right—finger painting, but not the kind your kids bring home from school. Lucking's technique brings a tactile, almost tangible quality to her work, making her paintings of the River Spey feel as alive and dynamic as the river itself. Her earthy tones of umber, russet, and gold not only reflect the natural beauty of the Highlands but also resonate with the rich hues of the whisky inside.

The Macallan Home Collection, River Spey, is a sophisticated blend crafted from European oak sherry seasoned casks, American oak sherry seasoned casks, and refill casks. This meticulous combination results in a whisky that's as layered and nuanced as a Lucking painting.

On the nose, you're greeted with a harmonious bouquet of rich raisin and sultana, interwoven with warm notes of cinnamon, apple, and pear. Sweet oak and treacle sponge add a comforting, homey touch, while vanilla rounds off this aromatic ensemble.



Take a sip, and the journey continues. The palate is a velvety glide of butterscotch, introducing itself with the confidence of an old friend. Toasted oak provides a sturdy backbone, while decadent chocolate and spicy nutmeg playfully tease your taste buds. Just as you think you've savored it all, a hint of anise sneaks in, adding an unexpected twist.

The finish is medium in length, leaving you with a warm, lingering embrace of toasted oak and spice.

This whisky unfolds with each pour, each sniff, and each sip and is a wonderful tribute to its home.

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a black sweater, stands in a winery. She is smiling and holding a wine glass filled with white wine. The background shows large stainless steel wine barrels and other winery equipment. The lighting is warm and focused on the woman.

VINES

&

VISION

As the Winemaker for Spy Valley, Emily Gaspard-Clark has continued a legacy of innovative winemaking techniques and a deep respect for the terroir. In 2019, Emily's talents were recognised nationally when she clinched the prestigious title of Tonnellerie de Mercurey Young Winemaker of the Year. This accolade not only celebrated her skill but also heralded her as a leading voice of the next generation of winemakers. Today, Emily continues to influence the industry, not only by crafting award-winning wines but also by mentoring young talent through her involvement with the competition's committees both regionally and nationally.

Emily shares her approach to winemaking, her insights into the evolving landscape of wine production, and her vision for the future of Spy Valley and the wider wine community.

How did winning the Tonnellerie de Mercurey Young Winemaker of the Year award in 2019 influence your career trajectory?

The Tonnellerie de Mercurey Young Winemaker competition has opened many doors for me in the last few years. I have been very lucky, not just in winning the competition but also being involved with the committee both regionally and nationally to help other young winemakers grow their careers.

The competition helped me gain confidence and understand what my strengths and weaknesses were so I could continue to grow, I credit the competition with helping to accelerate my career here at Spy.

What was the catalyst for you to get into the industry?

Having always been interested in science, initially I was considering food science, until my dad took me along to a careers evening in my last year of high school and I found out about the Viticulture and Oenology course at Lincoln University. The practical and scientific aspects are really what drew me in and after completing my first few harvests I knew it was the right choice.

Can you describe how you balance the creative and scientific aspects of winemaking?

Ultimately, it comes down to taste and getting creative with what yeasts we use or how we handle certain parcels of grapes, but the science behind what we are doing is important to understanding how to get those great flavours and balance. What yeast brings what different character to a wine, what temperature is the optimum to ferment at, what level of acid and sugar will give us the wine that we are trying to create and what we need to do to ensure that the wine we are tasting and creating makes it to the consumer in a stable condition. All while having fun and being creative in the different techniques we use.

What do you find most rewarding about working with the diverse range of varieties at Spy Valley, and do you have a personal favourite to work with?

Every varietal is different and comes with its own fun challenges. It allows our team to play around with different winemaking techniques

and allows us to find out what works best with our fruit. I'm loving working with Gewurztraminer at the moment, it can be challenging to get the right balance of flavour, sugar, alcohol and bitterness. But my favourite varietal to work with changes all the time!

How do you incorporate sustainability practices into your winemaking process at Spy Valley, and what importance does this hold for you personally and professionally?

Our team is very passionate about sustainability from vineyard through to bottle. We try to cut back on power and water usage where we can and have regular sustainability initiatives that our team can work on.

Could you share a challenging moment or vintage you've experienced at Spy Valley and how you navigated it?

Every vintage has its own challenges, we are lucky now to have an experienced and hard-working team and we work together to ensure that we make it through vintage still smiling on the other side. It's all about teamwork and communication.

As someone who has had experience in various wine regions around the world, how do you think the Waihopai Valley's terroir uniquely influences the character of Spy Valley wines?

Brian and Jan Johnson were told that the land that is now the Spy Valley vineyard was too dry and hard to grow grapes on and look at us now 30 years on from the original plantings. Every different region around the world and every different climate brings its own unique character to the wines. For our vineyard, here in the Waihopai, we get plenty of minerality, some salinity and great ripeness. We have different terraces of clay and silt loam so that all our varieties are growing in the optimum spot – our Pinot Noir is sitting on the upper clay terraces, while our Sauvignon Blanc is down lower on the stonier soils. Due to our bony soils, we don't get the canopy size in our Sauvignon Blanc that they might get in parts of the Wairau Valley, hence we don't get the intense thiols and our Sauvignon from the Waihopai is a little more subdued and elegant.

Winning awards across multiple vintages, as seen with Spy Valley wines, indicates consistency in quality. What's your strategy to maintain and enhance this consistency year after year?

It is all about getting the best fruit into the winery. We are lucky at Spy to have had our Viticulturist Adam working at Spy for over 20 years, so he knows every block and how to treat each batch of fruit so that we get the best quality fruit arriving in the winery. Good quality fruit means it is much easier to make good quality wine. It is all about letting the fruit shine and building that understanding of what works best with which batches of fruit and work with the changing seasons to ensure we maintain that consistency. Our team in the winery, in turn, now also has experience with each batch of fruit we get so we know what works best with each of those parcels.

What has been the most surprising or unexpected aspect of your winemaking career thus far?

Vintage variation, I feel like before you enter the industry you don't realise how much work goes into ensuring that the wines are consistent year on year and how much harder that is to achieve when every year is so different.

What advice would you give to aspiring winemakers, especially women entering the field?

Be willing to take any opportunity offered to you. If you aren't finding a job exactly where you want to be, look further, and build your experience, but remember, it's important to have a full understanding of the process before taking the next step so don't rush it. For women, speak up, don't be afraid to share your ideas!

What is your go-to wine at the moment?

I've always been a huge Riesling and Chardonnay fan. Currently, I'm loving our 2017 Envoy Chardonnay.

What are some of your favourite food and wine pairings?

Riesling and dumplings, pinot and pizza or chardonnay and mushroom pasta!

What are your hopes for the future, both for Spy Valley and the wine industry as a whole?

I hope we as an industry can continue to improve the quality and sustainability of our wine and maintain Marlborough's position as a premium wine-producing region on a global scale. At Spy Valley, I hope that we continue to have fun and create great wines in a sustainable way.

M2WOMAN JOURNEY *to* EXCELLENCE

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31 MAY 2024 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In today's rapidly changing world, finding a moment of calm and clarity is invaluable. The recent M2woman Journey to Excellence event provided just that—an afternoon filled with thoughtful keynotes, engaging insights, and meaningful networking opportunities.

Our editorial director opened the event with a reflection on how far we've come since our first event in 2018. He noted the significant impact these events have had, from fostering critical conversations to influencing institutional approaches to metrics and ESG reporting. The Journey to Excellence has become an important platform for navigating the complexities of modern life.

This year's program covered a wide range of topics, from financial stability and leadership to personal development and technological advancements. Their discussions offered valuable perspectives on building resilience and stability in uncertain times, providing attendees with practical advice and inspiration.

The following recaps the key moments from the day, highlighting the main points from each keynote and panel discussion. Whether you joined us in person or are catching up afterwards, we invite you to explore the insights and lessons that emerged from this year's M2woman Journey to Excellence.



How to Lead A Multi-Generational Workforce

Laurent Sylvestre

Laurent Sylvestre's engaging mix of humour and heartfelt sincerity provided fresh insights into leading a multi-generational workforce, a topic that hits home in today's diverse workplaces.

Laurent's journey to founding The Human Perspective started on April 1, 2020. No, it wasn't an April Fool's joke—it was a mission with a serious purpose. "What I do is very simple," he explained. "I help individuals, executive teams, and organisations become the best version of themselves."

The core of Laurent's talk was about the richness of having up to five generations in the workplace. From Traditionalists to Gen Z, each generation brings unique perspectives and strengths. But instead of focusing on what sets these generations apart, Laurent emphasised the importance of finding what unites them.

To illustrate this, he conducted a quick, interactive survey to gauge the generational mix in the room. "Who is a Gen Z? Very brave of you. Millennials? Generation X? Baby Boomers? And do we have any Traditionalists today?" This exercise set the stage for exploring shared values and goals that transcend age.

Laurent's leadership model revolves around three intertwined aspects: leading the enterprise, leading others, and leading self. He delved into each aspect, highlighting the importance of balancing strategic knowledge, people management, and self-awareness. The first layer, "leading the enterprise," involves traditional skills like strategy, market navigation, and execution. The second layer, "leading others," focuses on motivating and engaging teams, fostering high performance, and building strong relationships.

But the most profound part of his model is "leading self." Laurent shared candidly about his personal struggles, from childhood depression to adjusting to life in New Zealand. "By the age of 11, I was 25 kgs heavier than an 11-year-old kid. I changed school and got bullied daily," he recounted. These experiences underscored the importance of self-leadership in achieving authentic and impactful leadership.

Laurent's emphasis on authenticity and vulnerability was particularly striking. He argued that true leadership comes from showing your authentic self and embracing vulnerability as a strength. "Being vulnerable is

not weak; it's strong," he stated. "In a world that often values toughness and perfection, being vulnerable allows us to connect on a human level."

He encouraged leaders to share more of themselves, even if it's just small steps. "You'll be surprised at how deeply you can connect with others and how it can transform your workplace," he said. Laurent shared how his own vulnerability and authenticity had helped him connect with his teams and foster a more inclusive and supportive work environment.

A key takeaway from Laurent's talk was the idea that every leader has a unique superpower. Instead of striving for perfection, he urged the audience to focus on discovering and leveraging their unique strengths. "We need to stop trying to be perfect and start trying to be purposeful," he emphasised. This approach not only fosters personal fulfilment but also drives better organisational outcomes.

Laurent wrapped up his keynote with a powerful call to action. Quoting Maya Angelou, he encouraged the audience to have the courage to change things and to start with themselves. "If not us, then who? If not now, then when?"

How to Build Personal & Team Resilience

Hannah McQueen

At the M2woman Journey to Excellence event, Hannah McQueen, the founder of Enable Me, took the stage to share her journey from financial frustration to helping thousands of Kiwis conquer their mortgages and build wealth. Her story is one of resilience, innovation, and a fair bit of Kiwi ingenuity.

It all started 18 years ago when Hannah, then a chartered accountant with a master's in tax and financial advising, faced the daunting task of paying off a \$350,000 mortgage. Like many of us, she felt stuck by the prospect of paying back over a million dollars to the bank. When her banker offered the standard advice—shorten the mortgage term or juggle floating interest rates—Hannah knew there had to be a better way.

Determined to crack the code, she turned to the Calculus Department at the University of Auckland. After six months of hard work and eight pages of calculations, Hannah developed a formula that would save her the full amount of her mortgage in interest costs. She patented this game-changing formula, which became the foundation of her company, Enable Me.

But it wasn't all smooth sailing. Before her big breakthrough, Hannah pitched a debt-reduction idea to her boss, only to be fired for presenting what was seen as a competing business plan. This setback turned out to be a blessing in disguise, propelling her to start Enable Me and help others achieve financial freedom.

Enable Me focuses on more than just numbers—it addresses the behaviours that drive financial success. Hannah shared how her initial

formula wasn't enough because of her own spending habits. By changing these behaviours, Enable Me has helped over 15,000 clients.

Hannah's keynote was filled with practical advice and personal stories. She talked about resilience, using metaphors like red lipstick, Mike Tyson, the mountain, and the mirror to illustrate how to face challenges head-on, seek advice from those who've been there, and stay self-aware.

One of the key principles she discussed was the Stockdale Paradox, named after Admiral James Stockdale, a prisoner of war during the Vietnam War. Stockdale survived eight years of torture and imprisonment by maintaining unwavering faith that he would prevail in the end, while also confronting the brutal facts of his current reality. Hannah emphasised that financial resilience requires a similar mindset: have faith in your financial goals, but be brutally honest about your current situation and the steps needed to improve it.

She also highlighted the importance of having a supportive team. Drawing from her experience training for the New York Marathon, Hannah explained how a running coach gave her the structure and accountability she needed to succeed—an analogy for achieving financial goals.

Her closing advice was especially empowering for women. Hannah urged the audience to balance kindness with cleverness and politeness with power. Her upcoming book, "Kill Your Mortgage and Sort Your Retirement," promises to be a practical guide for anyone looking to take control of their finances.







My Career Path To Becoming A Professional Director

June McCabe

June McCabe's keynote covered her extensive career journey, highlighting a pivotal moment in 1994 that set her on the path to governance. "It's about taking risks and seizing opportunities," she explained, underscoring the importance of being adaptable in an ever-changing world.

For those aspiring to governance roles, June recommended reading key texts like the IOD Four Pillar Handbook and "Fish Rots From The Head" by Bob Garrett. "Understanding organisational culture and risk is crucial," she emphasised. Governance, she noted, is not just about overseeing operations but understanding the underlying culture and identifying potential risks. Her words resonated with many in the room, eager to learn from her extensive experience.

June's story is deeply rooted in her upbringing in Kaitiaki, where she was raised by her grandmother. Surrounded by strong women, she learned the values of education and independence early on. "My Māori heritage shaped who I am," she shared, reflecting on a childhood devoid of racial barriers—a stark contrast to today's societal challenges. Her grandmother, a woman of immense strength and determination, played a pivotal role in her upbringing. "She was widowed at 38 and raised eight children and three grandchildren, including me," June recalled. This environment instilled in her a sense of resilience and self-reliance that would serve her well in her career. Education was a key focus in June's upbringing. Her grandmother was insistent on the

importance of education as a means of escaping the confines of their small community and achieving personal growth. "Education, education, education—it was the mantra then and it still is today," she said. This emphasis on learning paved the way for June's future success and shaped her belief in the power of education as a transformative tool.

June's grandmother, a pillar of strength and determination, instilled in her a sense of responsibility. "It's about doing the right thing," This principle has been a guiding force throughout her career, driving her to make meaningful contributions in every role she undertakes. Reflecting on her grandmother's influence, she noted, "She was my mentor and my inspiration. Watching her navigate life's

challenges with grace and strength taught me the importance of perseverance and responsibility.”

Describing herself as a “deep generalist,” June explained the value of having a broad range of experiences rather than following a linear career path. “It’s about being adaptable and taking opportunities as they come,” she advised. Her career, marked by diverse roles and responsibilities, is a testament to this philosophy. Rather than climbing a hierarchical ladder, June’s career has been characterised by a series of lateral moves that have enriched her skill set and broadened her perspective. “I’ve always been an ‘and-and-and’ person,” she said, referring to her multifaceted career.

June’s journey through various board positions—public, private, and not-for-profit—has taught her the importance of timing and context in decision-making. “Governance is about understanding the bigger picture and

making informed choices,” she noted, offering a glimpse into the strategic mindset required for such roles. Her experiences have underscored the significance of context and timing in governance, emphasising that the right decision at the wrong time can still lead to failure. “It’s all about context and timing,” she reiterated, “knowing when to act and when to hold back is crucial.”

Self-awareness, relentless self-belief, and curiosity are traits June holds dear. “Do the work and stay in the sweet spot of confidence,” she urged. June also highlighted the importance of curiosity, noting that a genuine interest in understanding how things work and why people behave the way they do has driven her throughout her career. “Curiosity keeps you engaged and motivated.”

June’s sense of intergenerational responsibility is particularly strong, especially towards the Māori community. “I want to make the world

a better place for future generations,” she said passionately. She spoke about the importance of intergenerational responsibility in her governance roles, emphasising that decisions made today should benefit future generations. “It’s about sustainability, food security, health and safety—all the things that ensure a better future,” she explained. This sense of duty extends to her work with Māori communities, where she strives to create opportunities and improve conditions for the next generation.

As she wrapped up her keynote, June reflected on her career, emphasising the importance of principles and the continuous quest for self-improvement. “Embrace opportunities and maintain self-awareness,” she encouraged, leaving the audience inspired and motivated. She shared that the journey of self-awareness and improvement is ongoing and that it’s important to stay true to oneself. “Who you are is the essence of your journey,” she said, “and it’s that authenticity that gets you in the room.”





Reskilling For An AI Future

Kristen Lunman

Kristen Lunman, who previously democratized access to global investments with Hatch, has now channelled her energy into PowrSuit—a global network for women and male allies and she shared some of this journey in her fireside chat. “We wake up every morning to give women the connections and the tools to define what leadership and career success is on their terms,” she shared.

Leaving Hatch, Kristen and her co-founder Natalie Ferguson realised a significant gender divide in investment habits. Men were not only investing more but also dominated their platform. This gender gap

sparked a profound journey into understanding the emotional baggage associated with money, risk, and societal narratives. “We spent an inordinate amount of time trying to get more women to invest,” Kristen explained.

Initially, the idea was to create a fund exclusively for companies led by women with diverse boards. However, the stark reality was that there were only 156 such companies worldwide. This revelation highlighted a larger problem. “Not every woman wants that top job for a huge array of reasons. What we do want is to take the biggest asset of our lives—our



PANEL DISCUSSION

Kristen Lunman opened the discussion by emphasising the importance of focusing on strengths rather than weaknesses. “If we could get every single person in this room optimised using their strengths every day, we’d solve the world’s problems,” she remarked. Lunman highlighted the inefficacy of dwelling on weaknesses, noting, “The best you will ever get at

your weaknesses is mediocre at best.”

Laurent Sylvestre shared his experience working with clients over the past four years and stressed the need for people to find ways to replenish their energy, especially after the psychological impact of COVID-19. Sylvestre advocated for leaders to foster resilience by acknowledging their team’s strengths and creating an environment where they can thrive.

Hannah McQueen provided a personal perspective on self-belief and honesty. She shared advice from her mother, “Make sure you get a seat at the table and don’t be afraid to sit alone.” Hannah also emphasised the importance of being brutally honest

careers—and succeed on our terms,” Kristen emphasised.

PowrSuit emerged from this understanding. It aims to provide women with the necessary tools and networks to achieve career success as they define it. Kristen and Natalie spent a year in research, uncovering that connections and practical behaviour change were critical to women’s success.

One of the key findings from their research was the importance of networking. Historically, networking opportunities were built around male-centric activities like golf courses or drinks after work, which didn’t always suit women. “Women have shallower networks because networking was never built on our terms,” Kristen noted. PowerSuit aims to change this by creating inclusive networking opportunities tailored to women’s needs.

The second critical tool identified was the concept of learning by doing. Practical behaviour change and skill development are at the core of PowerSuit’s mission. “Laurent spoke about it, of actually taking an action every single week. How can I learn a skill? How can I break it down to the smallest thing and effectively practice it week in and week out?” Kristen shared. This approach helps women develop critical leadership skills like communication and negotiation.

In discussing the evolving concept of leadership, Kristen highlighted the impact of COVID-19 on empathetic leadership. “Productivity went up, engagement with work went up, care for one another and trust in one another went up,” she observed. This shift towards empathy and

adaptability is redefining leadership in today’s world.

Kristen also touched on the role of AI in the workplace. While AI can handle repetitive tasks, it lacks the human qualities of care and adaptability. “AI has no ability to care. Ultimately, relationships are built on care. I care about you. I care that you’re around. I know that you’ve got my back,” Kristen said. This humanness and the ability to deal with ambiguity are qualities that will keep human leadership relevant.

Despite the challenges, Kristen remains optimistic. She believes in the power of diverse teams and perspectives to drive success. “Diverse teams and perspectives outperform on every single measure, be it brand reputation, customer success, engagement, employee retention,” she asserted.

Kristen’s vision for the future is one where her children will not have to deal with the same barriers she faced. “I’m optimistic that the world that I had a career in the first 20 years of my life is going to look very differently for my two children,” she said. She sees a future where individuality is embraced, and AI helps us eliminate the drudgery of repetitive tasks, allowing us to focus on more meaningful work.

Kristen’s parting advice to the audience was a powerful reminder of our shared experiences. “We are not alone. We’re all probably feeling and thinking and doing our best to get up every day and navigate this space. Just don’t do it alone. Be really open. Grab a friend, go out for coffee, talk about work,” she encouraged.



with oneself and recognising areas where help is needed. “If I don’t think I can do something, I’ll put my hand up to myself,” she stated.

The discussion also touched on the significance of cultural identity and heritage. June McCabe, reflecting on her Māori background, underscored the importance of being proud of one’s roots and overcoming societal boxes that limit potential. “You can’t be useful to others unless you love yourself first,” McCabe said, stressing the value of self-acceptance in contributing to the community.

The panelists agreed that modern businesses must serve the community to be truly successful. Hannah

suggested, “Any good business model serves the people.” She highlighted the feedback she receives from clients, emphasising the impact of her work on their lives. Sylvestre shared his journey of leaving the corporate world to start his own business, driven by a desire to help people and organisations be the best versions of themselves.

Kristen discussed the evolving relationship between businesses and communities, noting the increasing importance of sustainability and corporate social responsibility. She reflected on her experience in the startup space, where a strong mission and purpose drive commitment and resilience.

The panel concluded with practical advice for personal and professional growth. June encouraged attendees to learn from their mistakes and take risks.

Hannah urged the audience to recognise their strengths and work on being better, particularly in the face of harder conditions.

Kristen provided a practical networking tip, suggesting attendees ask three people to identify their strengths to gain insights into how they are valued by others.

Laurent challenged attendees to “connect deeper” with their teams and loved ones, emphasising the transformative power of meaningful connections.

SERIAL ENTREPRENEUR ANNA
MOWBRAY AND ZEIL

Disrupting the Job Marketplace

WRITTEN BY ALEXIA SANTAMARIA

Anna Mowbray is no stranger to success. Renowned for building and propelling the toy and consumer goods giant ZURU to global success, she has turned her attention to transforming the job marketplace with her latest venture, ZEIL, an AI-powered job-matching platform. In just nine months, this modern career app has begun to redefine job searching and career development, challenging industry titans like Seek and TradeMe.

But ZEIL is a lot more than just an app, it's a revolution in the employment sector, even being dubbed as 'Tinder for Jobs'. With its insurgent methodology, it cuts through the traditional way of searching for jobs, bringing a vibrant, bold approach to career progression. While online job websites have previously been all about screeds of black-and-white text filled with dull corporate speak, ZEIL is fun, engaging and intuitive, using imagery, swiping, and all the things we are so accustomed to from social media and modern app usage. It's dragging the job market kicking and screaming into 2024, instead of a digitised version of the old classified ads.

"We've built an experience that allows for value to be added on both sides of the equation," says Anna. "It's an emotionally engaging experience for the job seeker, and allows organisations to manifest their stories, drive brand equity, move job seekers intuitively through the pipeline - and utilise data to optimise their strategies in novel ways, which are still somehow familiar."

ZEIL is a mobile-first solution that prioritises anytime, anywhere applications and supports the 'always looking' mentality of a new generation (75% of Gen Z check their phone within three minutes of waking up and before saying good morning to anyone else) It also has the ease and convenience people have come to expect from apps - saved jobs and applications all in one place and an algorithm that works harder for candidates, delivering curated job feeds on demand.

And in only 9 months it's already enjoyed incredible success. In a market where Seek has been a giant for 26 years, ZEIL has already captured 15% of its job listings. It's more than a den, it's a rapid acquisition of market share, with 26% of TradeMe's and a remarkable 33% of LinkedIn's job listings. These numbers not only illustrate ZEIL's growth but also hint at a shift in how job seekers and companies interact.

But what has made Mowbray's approach so successful so fast? It's all about 'Insurgent methodology' - an approach characterised by agility, a predisposition to take risks, and a focus on innovation. "It's about

making problems smaller and manageable, enabling immediate action.” says Mowbray. This is in stark contrast to the ‘incumbent mindset’ often seen in established companies, where “processes are entrenched, change is slow, and problems can become magnified, leading to inaction.”

What truly sets ZEIL apart is its foundational belief in ownership and purpose without hierarchy. “Every team member is a custodian of the brand,” says Mowbray “And this approach has not only fostered an environment of collective accountability but has also bred huge innovation. Everyone in the company is so genuinely invested in its success and coming up with ideas to improve it.” Mowbray’s philosophy is simple yet radical: dispense with the governance, empower the ZEIL team, and prioritise customer obsession.

And while she is a staunch advocate for data-driven decisions, she also believes it’s imperative that the data doesn’t get you stuck in the mud, or in the past, and that you still let gut and innovation prevail. She contends that while understanding the past is crucial, the emphasis must be on pioneering breakthroughs. This forward-thinking mindset is encapsulated in ZEIL’s core strategy: innovate, test, fail fast, improve and evolve. This is not a business that shies away from missteps, it embraces them as stepping stones to success.

The ethos behind ZEIL is also a bold refutation of the Kiwi tendency towards modesty in ambition. “I really want to dismantle that ‘tall poppy syndrome’ that often stifles growth and brilliance,” says Mowbray. ZEIL’s trajectory has been nothing short of meteoric, and its aggressive expansion is a testament to the power of reimagining the possible.

Breaking into the employment industry with an insurgent mindset means that Mowbray views challenges as opportunities to act swiftly and decisively. This philosophy

has allowed ZEIL to catch the industry by surprise, employing unconventional tactics to outmaneuver long-established players. This is evident in the unique job opportunities it curates. For example, ZEIL offers positions like a camera assistant role with South Seas Spearo, providing more than just a job “It’s an adventure. ZEIL isn’t just a platform for job seekers, but a gateway to life-changing experiences and careers.”

For the innovators, the game-changers, and the visionaries, ZEIL stands as a powerful ally—a harbinger of a new era where the only rule is to redefine the rules. In Mowbray’s world, the insurgent’s path is not the road less travelled, it is the highway to success.

“Every team member is a custodian of the brand,” says Mowbray “And this approach has not only fostered an environment of collective accountability but has also bred huge





Power Moves

STEPHANIE SMITS O'CALLAGHAN'S IMPACT ON THE FUTURE OF EV CHARGING

Stephanie Smits O'Callaghan is not your typical tech entrepreneur. Armed with a First Class Honours Master's Degree in International Town Planning and Real Estate, she has transformed from an urban planner into a pioneering force in New Zealand's electric vehicle (EV) charging industry. As the co-founder of Hikotron, Stephanie is breaking new ground, pushing the boundaries of innovation, and championing sustainability in the automotive sector.

WORDS BY ROCHELLE MOFFITT

Stephanie's path to the tech world is both unique and inspiring. Her initial career in town planning saw her securing various consents and advocating for sustainable living. However, a passion for electric vehicles, sparked by her experiences driving an EV overseas, led her to identify a significant gap in New Zealand's EV charging market.

"Driving an electric car was a transformative experience," Stephanie recalls. "When my husband and I returned to New Zealand, we realized the potential to revolutionise EV charging here. That's how Hikotron was born."

Since its inception in 2020, Hikotron has swiftly established itself as a leader in the EV charging industry. With over 120 EV charge points installed and more than 12,000 charging sessions completed, the company is setting new standards for accessibility and convenience. Designed and built in Hamilton, New Zealand, Hikotron's technology epitomises local ingenuity and high-quality manufacturing.

"We're not just adopting technology, we're enhancing it," Stephanie explains. "By designing and building our chargers locally, we ensure they meet New Zealand's unique conditions and needs."

One of Hikotron's standout achievements is the introduction of contactless payment-enabled EV chargers, a first in New Zealand. Launched in Blenheim, this innovation simplifies the charging process, making it more accessible and encouraging the adoption of cleaner vehicles.

"Our goal is to make EV charging as seamless and straightforward as possible," Stephanie emphasizes. "The introduction of contactless payments is a significant step towards that goal."

Stephanie's role at Hikotron is as diverse as it is demanding. She balances responsibilities in accounts, marketing, customer support, business development, and more. Proudly wearing many hats, she navigates the



complexities of town planning, site assessments, legal matters, and investment management.

"From handling customer support to pitching for investments, each role is crucial to our success," Stephanie remarks. "Wearing many hats is incredibly fulfilling and keeps me engaged."

Stephanie's multifaceted leadership has been instrumental in driving Hikotron's success. Her ability to adapt and innovate has positioned the company at the forefront of New Zealand's EV charging infrastructure expansion.

Stephanie is not only a trailblazer in the EV industry but also a passionate advocate for women in tech and automotive fields. She actively participates in industry events, including being a panelist at the Everything

Electric show in Sydney, where she discussed the role of women in electric vehicles. Her involvement in podcasts such as This Climate Business, EV Quest, and All That's Tesla further highlights her thought leadership in the EV space.

"I'm immensely proud to be a woman in the startup and tech space," Stephanie states. "There's a huge opportunity to promote women in the automotive industry, and I'm dedicated to making that change. We need to ensure our marketing and dealership environments are inclusive and speak to everyone."

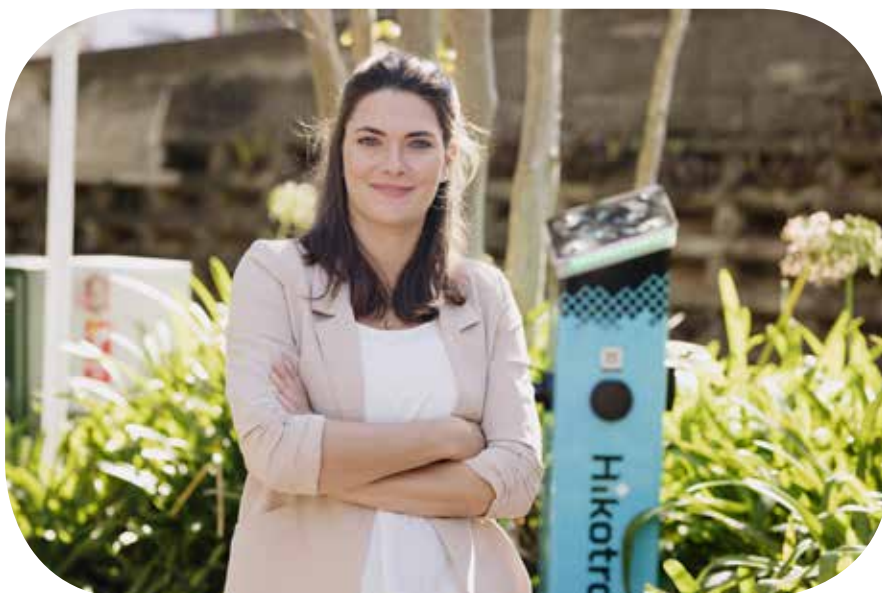
Hikotron's mission aligns with global sustainability goals, aiming to reduce carbon emissions and promote the use of electric vehicles. Their partnerships with local councils and companies like Mercury Energy underscore their commitment to expanding EV infrastructure and encouraging widespread adoption.

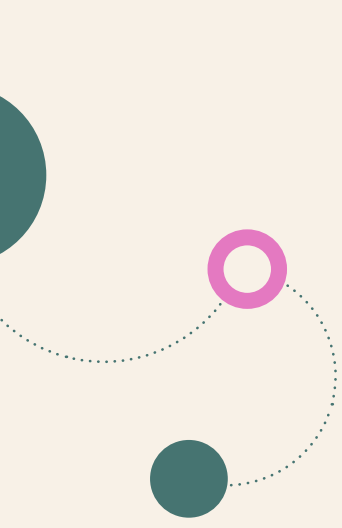
"We're poised for exponential growth as the EV market in New Zealand expands," says Stephanie. "Our focus on destination charging, where EVs charge while parked at places like sports grounds, town centers, and workplaces – is designed to integrate seamlessly into daily life, making the transition to electric vehicles easier for everyone."

Stephanie and her team at Hikotron have ambitious plans for the future. With a goal to build New Zealand's largest and most reliable EV charging network, they aim to install 500 chargers nationwide by 2026.

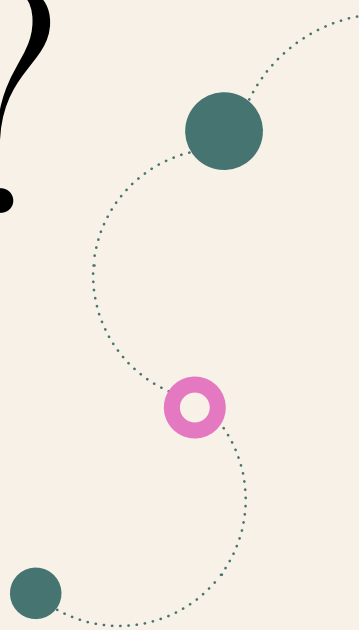
"Our vision is clear. We want to lead the charge in creating a sustainable future for New Zealand and beyond," Stephanie declares.

Stephanie's rise in the tech and automotive industries highlights the impact of vision, innovation, and resilience. As Hikotron continues to grow and shape the future of EV charging in New Zealand, Stephanie's leadership serves as an inspiring example of the power of women in tech and automotive fields.





What if We Designed Networking For Women?



A mere two hundred years ago, our world was much smaller. We generally stayed in one spot for life and maxed out at about 150 social connections. Life may have been hard, but it was also simple.

WORDS BY NATALIE FERGUSON AND KRISTEN LUNMAN

The Industrial Revolution created the need for wider collaboration and collaboration requires trust. Manufacturers had to trust shipping captains, investors had to trust business owners, and business partners had to trust each other. How do you build trust IRL? You join clubs and institutions and abide by a set of social rules regarding conduct and clothing.

Welcome to the early days of networking. During the 1900s, the customs of connecting evolved to become more exclusive. Golf courses, conferences, memberships and after-work drinks became a vital part of forming trusted relationships to make big business possible.

Oh, and all of it was conducted by men.

CLOSING CONNECTING THE GENDER LEADERSHIP GAP

These days, women make up half the workforce but we tend to stay stuck on the lower rungs. Why? Well, all the Dicks in the boardroom can probably explain. No, we're not talking about poor behaviour, we're talking about men names Richard, Rick and Dick. They outnumber women and other underrepresented groups by a landslide.

The reason there are so many Dicks? Because 80% of board roles are filled via networking. It's perhaps no coincidence that a very similar number - 83% - describes the number of Powrsuit members who rate their professional network as average to poor.

Think your work should speak for itself? You're missing the point. Networking was a solution to building trust between strangers. You don't network to show off, you do it to prove you're a sane, capable individual who other people will

enjoy working with. Mr Manufacturer wasn't questioning whether Mr Ship's Captain could drive a boat, he was checking whether he'd scarp off with his stuff.

If we want more women in positions of power and influence (which, by the way, we really do), there's only one way to do it: we need to connect our way up.

NETWORKING DESIGNED FOR WOMEN

Here's something no one ever mentions when they tell women to get out and 'press the flesh': the way we network doesn't work for us. We carry the bulk of the household load, we take on extra caregiving responsibilities, we pick up a majority of the non-promotable office work.

Quite frankly, Dick, we're too busy to pop out for a beer.

Thankfully, over generations of exclusion from formal institutions, we have developed an incredible superpower. Women are excellent at making connections very quickly. We've honed that ability so much that we've removed the need for long lunches and late nights (even if we still love them). Anyone who's been in a women's bathroom at 1 am knows what we mean. It takes only seconds for a group of strangers to share tampons and pledge life-long friendships.

MICRO-NETWORKING: MAKING IT EASY FOR WOMEN TO CONNECT

Organisations know the value of market intelligence; gathering data to understand customers, trends and behaviours. This is what enables a company to stay competitive. Networking is an obvious way to collect this information, so how do we create opportunities to do it? We build networking into work.

And in 2024, we have a world of new networking possibilities. The virtual world.

Almost a billion people have sweated over their LinkedIn profiles (or outsourced to Chat GPT). A decent portion of those people have then seen posts that equate B2B sales with marriage proposals and questioned why we bothered. But we digress. Women should be interacting on LinkedIn (yes, even you). We should be sharing knowledge, events and insights to build trust and reach people outside our immediate organisation. Time block 15 minutes a few times a week and write a post or comment that adds value to the world. It's that simple and incredibly effective.

And, instead of telling women to overcome the barriers to networking, we should build it into professional development. We talk about playing to our strengths; micro-networking plays to women's ability to quickly form connections.

That's why at Powrsuit, we build 15-minute networking blocks into our live events.

Participants go into breakout rooms with a handful of others to get hands-on with the information. It's short, stress-free, and it works. We've had tears, triumphs, and young leaders meeting senior execs that they'd never walk up to at an event. Now, that's a valuable connection.

Networking was designed to help men build trust while their wives looked after the household. That world is long gone for all but NFL kickers (and women who choose that lifestyle). Nowadays, we have the tools to design networking opportunities that work for all of us.

Let's start using them.





PROTECT YOUR POWER

Who's Holding the Power of Your Purse?

Stepping away from my career to become a full-time mum seemed like a great idea. The thought of not needing our nanny from 7 am to 7 pm and being there for my young kids felt like a dream opportunity, and I was lucky to be able to do this. I made this decision eight years ago at a high point in my career when I was making significant impacts in my industry and for my clients. It felt straightforward at the time.

WORDS BY ROCHELLE MOFFITT
PHOTOGRAPHER BY PRUE AJA

But reflecting on this decision, I wouldn't recommend it. Maintaining even minimal engagement in the corporate world is vital. It's about self-sufficiency, carving out your own path, and having the power to make choices. You can never predict what life has in store. For me, this was my second divorce and needing to support myself and my three children. This realisation struck me deeply, like a gut punch, when I listened to Indra Nooyi speak about "Economic Freedom" and the "Power of the Purse." Indra Nooyi, the former CEO of PepsiCo, is renowned for her leadership and advocacy for women's economic empowerment. She emphasised the importance of women maintaining their financial independence, saying, "Keep that economic power, the power of the purse. Stand on your own two feet." Her words did more than resonate, they shook me to my core.

To anyone considering a pause in their career journey, remember the critical importance of staying engaged and preserving your economic strength. It's fundamentally about the choices available to you. Choices that shape your life and determine the paths you're able to choose versus those you're forced to walk (or what sometimes feels like crawling).

Economic freedom is more than just financial security, it's about the power to make choices. Stepping away from a career often means sacrificing this power. Research shows that women who take a career break face significant financial setbacks. According to a study by the Center for American Progress, women who take just one year off lose 20% of their lifetime earnings. This loss compounds with each additional year away from the workforce.

For me, the implications were stark. Despite having a mortgage for 20 years, building equity, and consistently making payments over decades, I found myself unable to keep the mortgage after my divorce. Without my ex-husband's income, I didn't tick the necessary boxes for refinancing, even though I had a solid financial history. I had to get creative and seek help, a privilege not everyone has. This experience highlighted an often-overlooked consequence of stepping away from a career, the loss of financial independence can limit your ability to secure even basic needs like housing.

Maintaining an income isn't just about paying the bills, it's about preserving your ability to make choices. Financial independence means you can decide where to live, how to invest in your children's education, activities, and lives, and how to plan for your future without relying on someone else's income. It gives you

the freedom to leave unhealthy relationships (been there too), invest in personal growth, and explore new career opportunities, and live without a horrible lump in your throat.

Economic independence also provides a safety net against life's uncertainties. Divorce, illness, or a partner's job loss can drastically alter your financial situation. By maintaining some level of professional engagement, you safeguard against these risks. You ensure that you have the means to support yourself and your family, no matter what life throws your way.

Knowing and managing your finances is a crucial aspect of maintaining your economic power. It's essential to have a clear understanding of your financial situation and access to all relevant information. Don't leave it up to someone else, regardless of how things have been in the past. This is your sign to take control now.

Stay informed: Regularly review your financial statements and understand your income, expenses, assets, and liabilities.

Access matters: Ensure you have access to all your financial accounts and documents. Know where your money is and how it's being managed.

Make decisions: Be actively involved in financial decisions, whether it's about investments, savings, or day-to-day expenses.

Seek advice: Don't hesitate to consult a financial advisor if you need help understanding your finances or making informed decisions.

Get over yourself: Don't feel embarrassed to ask questions or change the status quo. You will feel worse in years to come if you don't have your finances in order.

RE-ENTERING THE WORKFORCE AFTER A SIGNIFICANT HIATUS IS CHALLENGING, BUT IT'S NOT INSURMOUNTABLE. HERE ARE SOME STEPS I FOUND HELPFUL:

Update your skills: The business world evolves rapidly, but the skills and experience you have are still valid. To help with confidence you can take courses or gain certifications that can help bridge the gap and make your re-entry smoother.

Network actively: Reconnect with old colleagues and attend industry events. Networking can open doors to opportunities that might not be advertised.

Start small: Don't be afraid to take on smaller projects or part-time work initially. It helps ease back into the professional environment without overwhelming yourself.

Seek support: Jump on LinkedIn, and join support groups or forums for professionals re-entering the workforce. Sharing experiences and tips can be incredibly motivating.

Believe in yourself: This is the most important thing you can do. You have valuable skills and experiences. No matter how much things have changed, you will be able to pick it up quickly. Don't doubt yourself, back yourself. Remember, your abilities and talents are still relevant and needed.

It's a numbers game: Re-entering the job market can be tough, and you may need to send out your CV multiple times before you get a response. Don't take it personally. Persistence is key. Fill your job pipeline and keep going. The right opportunity will come along.

BALANCING MOTHERHOOD AND A CAREER IS NO EASY FEAT, BUT IT IS POSSIBLE. EMBRACING THE DUAL ROLE REQUIRES:

Effective time management: Prioritise tasks and set realistic goals. Use tools like calendars and planners to keep track of responsibilities.

Self-care: Ensure you are also taking care of yourself. A well-rested and happy mum is more effective both at home and work.

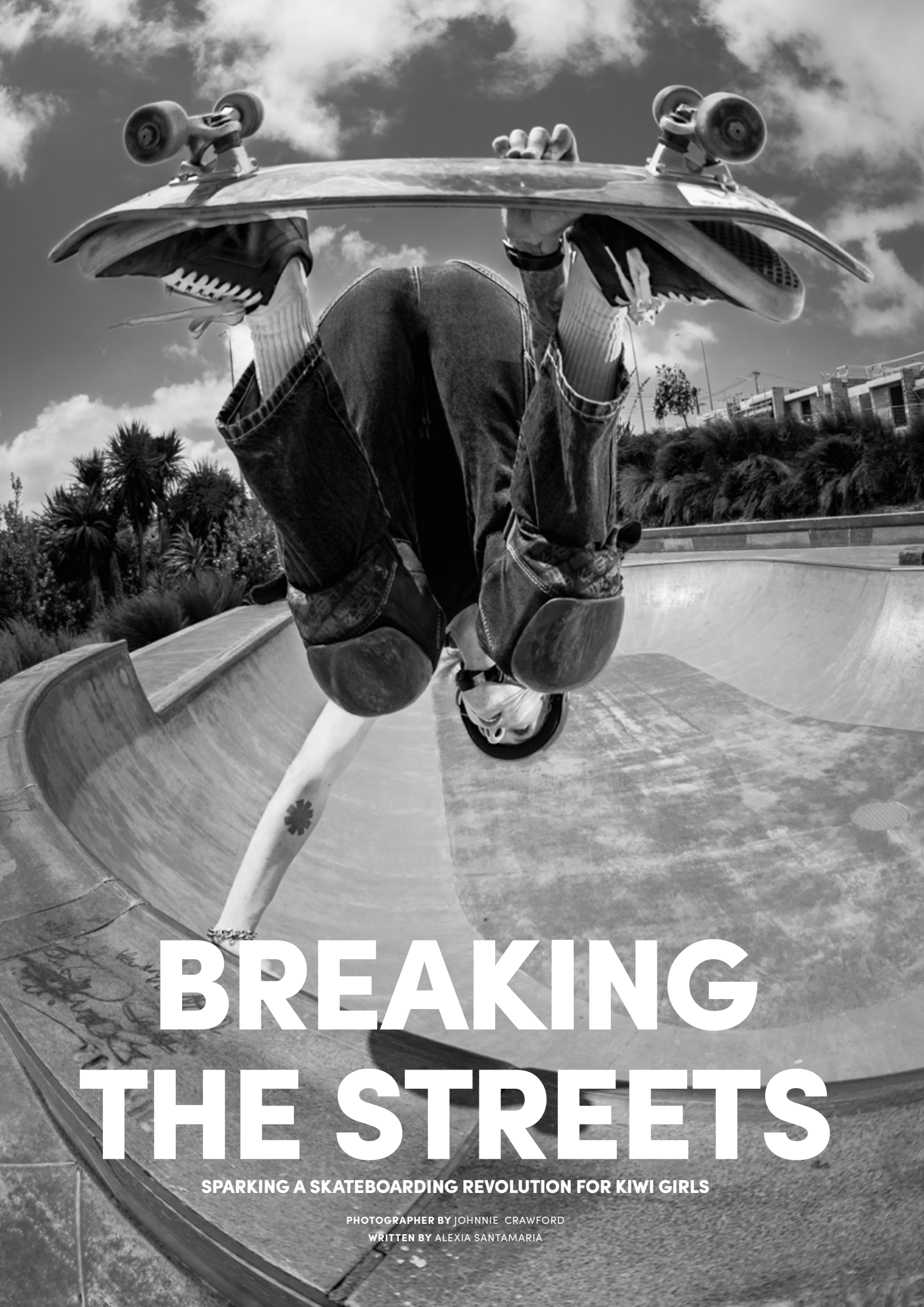
Open communication: Be honest with your family and employers about your needs and limitations. Setting boundaries helps maintain balance.

Create a village: Lean on your village to help you with your life. You will require additional help from friends and family or paid help. Don't hesitate to ask for support, and be ready to give back when you can. Building a supportive network is essential for managing both professional and personal responsibilities.

Stepping away from my career to focus on my family was a decision made with the best intentions. However, the importance of maintaining professional engagement cannot be overstated. Economic freedom is not just about financial independence, it's about having the power to make choices that shape your life. It gives you choices, time, and freedom.

To all the women considering a career pause or those already on one, remember, keep your professional identity alive. It will empower you to stand on your own two feet and navigate life's uncertainties with confidence, resilience, and the ability to make your own choices.

Your power lies in your ability to choose, don't ever give that up.



BREAKING THE STREETS

SPARKING A SKATEBOARDING REVOLUTION FOR KIWI GIRLS

PHOTOGRAPHER BY JOHNNIE CRAWFORD

WRITTEN BY ALEXIA SANTAMARIA

Amber Clyde never imagined that a random movie on a PlayStation portable would ignite a passion that would revolutionise women's skateboarding in New Zealand. As an only child, she had to entertain herself, but watching "Lords of Dog Town" at ten years old was a game-changer. "I was mesmerised," she recalls. Amber begged her parents for a skateboard, and soon she was practising tirelessly on her driveway. Facing intimidation at skateparks as the only girl, Amber's determination never waned.

Her journey took an unexpected turn when she became a mother at 18. Her daughter Ella, born in 2015, brought new responsibilities and challenges, including post-natal depression. Seeking a mental health boost, Amber returned to skateboarding. Empowered by motherhood, she felt stronger and more capable than ever. "After giving birth, I realised I was unstoppable," she says.

Amber's newfound confidence transformed her experience at the skatepark. One day, she noticed a young girl on the outskirts, intimidated just as she once was. Amber offered her help, and this simple act of kindness was the catalyst for Girls Skate NZ. "It was the best two hours ever, I just loved helping her like I wish someone had helped me. Soon she started bringing friends and before I knew it I was taking little classes!"

Even though it started with informal lessons, Girls Skate NZ has grown exponentially, hosting over 1000 girls through 350 classes in 2023 alone. Amber created a safe space for young women to learn, grow, and find confidence. "Skating often attracts kids who want camaraderie without the pressure of team sports," Amber explains. Her community supports a lot of neurodivergent kids, helping them transform from anxious beginners to confident skaters.

But Amber's impact goes way beyond skateboarding lessons. She provides a haven for girls facing tough home situations, offering them a place to escape and find joy. Her collaboration with Auckland Council, Sport NZ, and her role as a high-performance coach for Skateboarding New Zealand underscore her influence. Amber serves on the High-Performance Advisory Panel for Skateboarding New Zealand and is a proud board member. As a Hera Ambassador for Active Auckland's young girls and women initiative, her influence extends to promoting wellness and empowerment.

Amber's achievements are equally impressive. She secured 3rd place at Verticus 2024 and 4th place at Mangawhai Bowl Jam 2020. Her sponsorships from Vans NZ/Australia, Stem Distribution (Santa Cruz, Independent Trucks, Mob Grip, OJ Wheels), and Pit Viper highlight her standing in the skateboarding community.

Amber's vision extends to creating events tailored for girls, ensuring fair play among different age groups. Despite the challenges of single parenthood to her two daughters, her community rallied around her, supporting her in balancing her responsibilities.

Amber's ripple effect is undeniable. She's coaching girls like Jess Ready, who recently placed 17th in the world at an Olympic Qualifying event in Shanghai in May and is off to Budapest next month to hopefully qualify for the Paris Olympics 2024. "I was privileged enough to be able to go with Jess to Shanghai, and it was amazing to see her participate in an event of that calibre on the international stage."

Amber's next challenge is working with the Halberg Foundation to introduce disabled kids to skateboarding, proving that "anyone can skate." Her commitment to creating inclusive spaces makes her a true trailblazer. "It was amazing to recently work with some quite severely disabled kids recently - and see the delight in their eyes when we got them on a board. One boy just squealed the whole time with joy."

"I feel so lucky to have found something so meaningful to do with my life," Amber says, reflecting on her journey from a scared, anxious girl to a revolutionary force in women's skateboarding. "I can't wait to see what comes next."





THE AMBER EFFECT. EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION OF SKATERS

Amber Clyde's influence extends far beyond her personal achievements. The young women she's trained are now making their own waves in the skateboarding community. Here are just a few of their stories:

JESS READY

"I met Jess when she was around 8 years old. It's been amazing to watch her grow into such a confident and awesome young lady. She really is one of my best mates, and it's been an honour to witness and be a part of her journey," Amber shares. Jess Ready came to a Halloween Skate Jam as a beginner four years ago. She recently placed 17th in the world at the Olympic Qualifying event in Shanghai, with Amber by her side as her coach. Jess is off to Budapest next month to qualify for Paris 2024, and she's sponsored by major brands like Nike and Toy Machine. From a shy beginner to a top competitor, Jess's journey is a testament to her relentless dedication.

IGNACIA SAYEN MUÑOZ VARGAS

Iggy started as a beginner in skateboarding two years ago. "I met Ignacia when she was about 9 years old. She literally attended every single lesson each week, and is always passionate to learn and progress. One of the sweetest kids ever, but does airs out the bowl like the big boys!" Ignacia has won first place in the women's nationals park (2023) and other notable competitions. Recently, she travelled to Chile to train with Skate Chile and will compete at the World Skate Event in Italy. Ignacia's rapid rise showcases the transformative power of her dedication.

GRACE HEPBURN

"I met Grace when she was 8, and she has to be one of the most fearless and bravest people I've ever met. She kills all disciplines of skateboarding and is a powerhouse! It's so awesome to watch her grow and evolve as a skateboarder and a young girl," Amber says. At just ten years old, Grace Hepburn secured second place in the Women's Street National Champs. Her early success hints at a promising future in skateboarding.

POPPY WARD

Eleven-year-old Poppy Ward started skating a year ago and has since created Zombie Horse, a skate label that upcycles used gear. She's organising an event on June 22 to provide skate gear for kids in need, demonstrating an entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to community service. "I met Poppy just over a year ago at a lesson. She has to be one of the most empathetic and caring young girls I've ever met. She's always checking in on the other girls and making sure they're okay. She's so passionate about skateboarding it's amazing! She has been the driving force behind our upcoming event and she loves to get involved and help out wherever she can," Amber says.

YEVA BUTLER

Fourteen-year-old Yeva Butler is a rising star in the skateboarding world. "I met Yeva when she was seven years old. She was just always down at the park, bare feet and all! Always willing to try new tricks with full force and commitment. Me and Yeva often travel together for competitions and I love her just like my own daughters! We are best mates, and I'm so grateful for our relationship. She is absolutely incredible at skateboarding and is one of the most passionate people I've ever met. She's definitely one to keep an eye on," Amber shares. Yeva won first place in women's park at nationals in 2021 and 2022, and secured first place at Verticus in 2022, 2023, and 2024. Yeva also took first place at Bowlzilla in 2024 and 2022, and achieved third place at the Mangawhai Bowl Bash in 2024, where the first and second places went to Australian pro skaters. Competing overseas, Yeva placed third at the Rumble in Australia and is now gearing up to represent New Zealand at the World Skate Games in Italy. Sponsored by Santa Cruz, New Balance, and Independent Trucks, Yeva's impressive list of achievements in such a short time showcases her unstoppable drive and immense talent.

Amber Clyde's story and the success of her protégés exemplify the power of passion, perseverance, and the positive impact one individual can have on countless lives. Amber is not just making waves; she's creating a tidal wave of change in New Zealand's skateboarding scene.



3 Insights and Practical Advice from the GOOGLE DATA LEAK

The digital marketing community (especially the geeky ones) have been up in arms about a massive data leak that shows some of the workings of the Google Algorithm. The cynic in me thinks the data leak may have been a deliberate attempt by Google to change the narrative around the company; many marketers online were criticising Google after mixed outcomes from using AI Overviews, which was released a few weeks ago in the US (with plans to roll out globally).

Whatever the source of the leak and the reasons behind it, it does appear that Google has misled (or lied to) the search community about a number of ranking factors. Rather than going through the documents, I have detailed what I think are the 3 most significant takeaways from the leak:

Click Data & User Metrics—While Google has long claimed that clicks and dwell time (how long someone engages with your website/webpage) are not ranking factors, our own data has led us to believe that they are. The data leak, which involved a system called NavBoost, shows that Google likely does use click data to establish the relevance of a search result.

The main advice I would give to business owners about handling this is to continue (or start) focusing on things like meta titles and description tags and create high-quality content that fulfils the needs of your audience.

Google appears to use badClicks, goodClicks, lastLongestClicks and unsquashedClicks to measure great content and user experiences.

Links Matter—I thought that PageRank, Google's measure of a page's authority, was disestablished many years ago. However, it seems that PageRank is still very much alive and well.

In effect, that means that high-quality, relevant, and diverse links from third-party websites are still fundamental to good search engine rankings (Links can be seen as a 'vote' for your website. The more high-quality websites that vote for

your website, the higher Google perceives the popularity of your website).

My recommendation is to develop a strategy for obtaining links organically. This could involve unique data, white papers, commenting on newsworthy topics, or anything else that stimulates a website to link to yours.

Focus on brand building – According to Rand Fishkin, one of the first to be sent the leak, brand matters more than most:

“If there was one universal piece of advice I had for marketers seeking to broadly improve their organic search rankings and traffic, it would be: ‘Build a notable, popular, well-recognized brand in your space, outside of Google search.’”

This is something that I would advise to do, regardless of what we have recently learned. In my view, as we move to AI in search, brand building is going to become more and more important to gain traction through digital marketing. Having a recognisable, quotable, brand will impact both your search visibility and the likelihood of being featured in answers from LLMs like ChatGPT.

Much of this confirms what we already thought and helps validate our marketing and business model. It also reinforces that we should always take guidance from companies like Google with a pinch of salt and test things using our own data and experience.

On 29th May, a Google spokesperson released the following statement:

“We would caution against making inaccurate assumptions about Search based on out-of-context, outdated, or incomplete information. We've shared extensive information about how Search works and the types of factors that our systems weigh, while also working to protect the integrity of our results from manipulation.”

Whatever the truth, the best advice I can offer is to ensure that your website contains content that people want to consume in a way that is easy and intuitive for them to consume.



RICHARD CONWAY
FOUNDER & CEO OF
PURE SEO (PURESEO.CO.NZ)

Read his columns at M2WOMAN.COM

WHEN VOLUNTEERING BECOMES TOO MUCH?



New Zealand volunteering statistics show women take on the majority of volunteer work. For me, this raises the following questions:

Are we doing too much?

Does our service to others actually serve ourselves?

Is our focus on volunteering perpetuating current gender pay gap issues?

Whether it be in the household in taking on more of the family load, within industry associations or community boards, or simply volunteering in the workplace for 'non-promotable tasks' (being tasks unlikely to contribute to your career advancement) - volunteering can have significant consequences. Less visible, impactful and unpaid roles, if disproportionate in the overall picture of what we are doing, can certainly impact not only our career advancement but our financial position and on occasion, our health and mental wellbeing. Often, our volunteering can take over our day job.

I'm sure many of you will be able to relate to what I am talking about:

Assuming the family load.

Taking on the traditional 'office housework', including team management and administration of client files and projects, playing the support role.

Participation, on an unpaid basis, in community or industry groups or boards, in driving our passion for change for the benefit of others (which may include our children), with a focus on making a difference.

Volunteering, simply to get the job done; together with leading diversity, equity and inclusion and sustainability workplace initiatives. Why is it that these roles are primarily led by women?

Now I'm not suggesting we stop volunteering, as there are many valid reasons for making time

for a higher purpose including opportunities to try something new, skill development, resume building, networking and doing good by paying it forward. What I am suggesting however is that we mindfully test, on an ongoing basis, whether these volunteer roles continue to support our own success and wellbeing, without any guilt of this being a selfish consideration.

In my own governance role in supporting many groups, including community organisations, to function more effectively and in a healthy manner, I have come across many women who have given too much of themselves. Pouring hours into organisation's often with complex issues, serving communities with increasing demands, dealing with funding challenges and increased regulation while trying to work out the best course of action with little support or guidance. Their driver being to 'do good' in supporting communities or purposeful causes. The demands on their time however often exceeds their resources with the eventual overwhelm leading to questions around their value and the level of appreciation of their contribution. All taking a toll, not only on the individual, in respect of health, mental wellbeing and financial issues, together with the loss of other opportunities while they are being consumed by these roles, but often also on that person's family.

It is not unusual to also have a misguided sense of loyalty to our chosen cause or role hold us back, keeping us in difficult scenarios. Where we forget that loyalty does not mean forever.

We must consider ourselves in looking to serve others. In saying that of course I am also speaking to myself!

From my own reflections and experience, I do think it is important that before we volunteer for a role we:

-take some time to carefully consider the role before we accept. Being clear on what is driving our decision. It not enough to be simply in awe of a passionate, cause driven mission, role or opportunity to help.

- get clarity on matters including:

- what is involved?

-what are the expectations of the role?

-does the role actually serve us?

-regularly testing our volunteer roles to ensure they continue to serve us.

When did you last consider and test your current roles - maybe it's time?



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THE FUTURE OF YOUR CHILD'S FUTURE



Having recently gone through the admissions process for our daughter, I have a newfound appreciation of the myriad of information, details and questions that parents have to navigate when setting the path for their child's education. It's almost like you need a degree in education admissions to do it properly. ACG Schools has just the answer for this in the form of a clever, 24/7, culturally aware, and information-packed AI-driven admissions assistant named AI Rep.

Inspired Education, the leading provider of independent education in the world and ACG's parent organisation, has a focus on leveraging new technologies across its network of schools and this particular approach is a wonderful example of the power of new technology to provide important assistance during foundational moments and the way that families interact with schools during the crucial admissions process.

AI Rep, not only allows parents to look at the educational possibilities for their children in New Zealand, but across the wider Inspired Education network which features private schools all over the world including nations like Switzerland, Spain, Bahrain and Indonesia. And, AI Rep can break down a colossal matrix of course options; their pre-requisites and rollout opportunities across a swathe of different countries. These educational opportunities have always been there for parents everywhere, they just haven't been so easy to spot until now.

"AI Rep stands at the forefront of transforming how families engage with our schools, providing a tailored and efficient online admissions experience that aligns perfectly with our vision of delivering world-class education.

This industry-leading tool is a testament to our dedication to innovation and excellence in education, ensuring that our interactions with prospective families are as dynamic and personalized as those in person." Says Steve Axe, Chief Marketing Officer of Inspired Education.

Amongst the first to experience this innovation will be parents right here in New Zealand. As Kiwis have a global reputation for early adoption of new technology, local Inspired Education school ACG Tauranga was chosen as one of the five pilot schools to trial AI Rep alongside others in Europe and Southeast Asia.

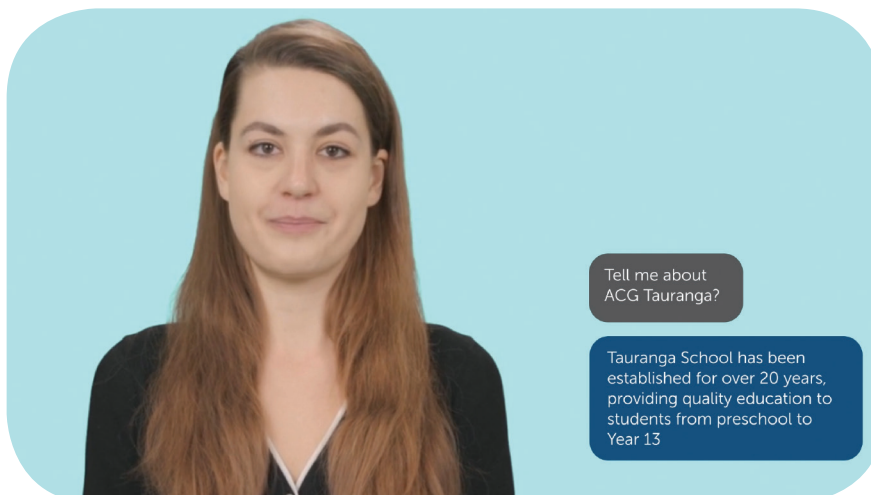
Though AI Rep will be running concurrently in other nations, the Kiwi version has been tailored to suit our unique cultural quirks – with the assistant even including local accents and avatars to help ease understanding. Available

24/7, AI Rep incorporates state-of-the-art AI technologies such as GenAI, Machine Learning, Automatic Speech Recognition, and Text-to-Speech compiled into an assistant service easily accessible by mobile. It can respond to either voice or text input and has been designed to provide comprehensive yet simple results promptly.

AI Rep is developed by Shiker, a UK-based boutique consulting firm specialising in leveraging technology for business transformation. "As the developer behind AI Rep, we are proud to introduce this revolutionary AI-driven admissions assistant for Inspired Education. AI Rep is a multimodal interactive AI bot which been designed to transform the admissions and enrolments process. The AI Rep has been created as a scalable platform and combines various tech components such as GenAI, Machine Learning, and Text-to-Speech, ensuring this tool stands at the forefront of AI-driven education-based innovations." Says Vikas Goel, Director of Shiker.

Despite its technological sophistication, AI Rep is designed to complement, not replace, human interactions. The ethos of Inspired Education places great value on personal touch, which remains central to the educational philosophy. AI Rep is crafted to interact naturally with users, providing a friendly and efficient interface through both voice and text inputs, ensuring that each engagement through the digital platforms is as personal and effective as in-person interactions. AI Rep is more than an education tool for parents to navigate their children's futures, it's an education for us all on how the awesome power of AI can be harnessed to serve us best.

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# The Processed Food Fight

Some researchers are targeting artificial foods as a leading public health problem. As with so many dietary issues, though, the evidence tells a more nuanced tale.

**WORDS BY AMOS ZEEBERG**

After decades of searching, many scientists believe they have finally pinned down the main problem with our modern diets—the factor driving ever-escalating rates of obesity, diabetes, heart disease and any number of other serious chronic conditions. The culprit isn't saturated fats, trans fats or some new killer fat you haven't of. It's not cholesterol, carbs or sugars; dairy, gluten or meat. It isn't a specific thing at all.

The problem, according to this increasingly popular argument, is that we're eating lots of ultra-processed food or UPF. Traditionally, people used limited processing techniques such as cooking and pickling to preserve food or to make it more pleasant to eat. Modern food companies transform food much more extensively through techniques such as extrusion and molding, adding lab-derived components including flavorings, emulsifiers and preservatives. They use this additional processing to make foods that are cheaper, longer-lasting and more convenient.

"There's a long, formal scientific definition, but it can be boiled down to this: If it's wrapped in plastic and has at least one ingredient that you wouldn't find in your kitchen, it's UPF," writes author and infectious disease doctor Chris van Tulleken in his recent, widely praised book, *Ultra-Processed People: The Science Behind Food That Isn't Food*. These ultra-processed foods have come to represent a major part of people's diets—a large majority in countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada. "We've started eating substances constructed from novel molecules and using processes never previously encountered in our evolutionary history, substances that can't really even be called 'food.'"

Many researchers and nutritionists say this shift has been a costly one. They point to a series of studies suggesting that ultra-processed food is a major driver of obesity, heart disease, cancer and even neurodegenerative conditions like Alzheimer's. As the scientific evidence accumulates, some countries have responded by adopting public health policies to try to decrease the amount of ultra-processed food that people eat. The message has entered the popular media in increasingly alarming reports. "Ultra-processed food isn't just bad for your health—it messes with your mind," reported *National Geographic* in November. "What makes ultra-processed foods so bad for your health?" probed *The Economist* in August.

Although there is good research raising concerns about ultra-processed food, we should be hesitant to declare it the primary scourge of the modern diet. The case against ultra-processed food isn't as solid as the headlines and public outcry would lead us to believe. The research connecting these processed foods to health problems has limitations, and there is contradictory evidence as well. This is a classic example of how research doesn't speak for itself: It must always be interpreted, by

people, in the context of other, often conflicting evidence. "Are there really studies that show that ultra-processed foods are unhealthy? It's pushing very weak data to make a case," says Gunter Kuhnle, a nutrition researcher at the University of Reading.

The field of nutrition has a long history of overreacting to contemporary research trends, and we risk making the same mistake now with processing. "We've had that issue in the past, as with low-fat recommendations" that later turned out to be counterproductive, says Duane Mellor, a dietitian at Aston University in England. "We've messed up too many times. We need to make smarter changes more carefully." The evidence on ultra-processed food, as is often the case in science, refuses to yield simple, black-or-white answers.

## The idea that distinctive modern foods cause distinctive modern health problems started gaining traction in the popular press and popular imagination.

The term "ultra-processed food" was introduced 15 years ago, when University of São Paulo physician, epidemiologist and nutritionist Carlos Monteiro published a short commentary in the journal *Public Health Nutrition* arguing that industrial foods were "hardly compatible with survival," and that "diets that include a lot of ultra-processed foods are intrinsically nutritionally unbalanced and intrinsically harmful to health."

Monteiro concluded by recommending the adoption of policies like those used to make alcohol and tobacco more expensive and less accessible. He and several colleagues soon created a food-categorization system called NOVA, with unprocessed or minimally processed food in group 1 and ultra-processed foods in group 3. (The system was later expanded to four groups.) UPFs were said to include a wide range of sweet, salty and fast foods such as soft drinks, chicken nuggets, ice cream, chips and cookies. It also encompassed products not usually thought of as junk food but made for convenience or with ingredients that are not used in home cooking, such as fruit yogurt, sliced bread, infant formula and breakfast cereal with low levels of added sugar.

Other researchers began using the NOVA categorization system to examine the potential health effects of ultra-processed food, comparing people who ate lots of ultra-processed food with those who ate more natural fare. A series of these studies found that UPFs were consistently associated with worse health outcomes.

A 2011 study in Guatemala found higher body-mass index and rates of obesity among people

who ate more highly processed foods—a 10 percentage point increase in consumption of processed food translated to a 4.3% increase in BMI. A 2019 study of a group in the U.S. found a connection between eating ultra-processed food and experiencing metabolic disturbances such as high blood sugar and high blood pressure, conditions that increase the risk of obesity, diabetes and heart disease.

As more studies emerged, the idea that distinctive modern foods cause distinctive modern health problems started gaining traction in the popular press and popular imagination—and among many physicians as well. "Ultra-processed food feeds into this idea that everything was better in the past," Kuhnle states. "On one side, you have the farmer going in the field. On the other side, you have smoking factories. And you can add that there is sort of this general distrust in people of science, of industry, of government."

But there is one key, well-known limitation of this kind of retrospective research: Correlation does not prove causation. In these studies, people who ate lots of ultra-processed food were usually in worse health—not much worse, as in the case of smoking, but somewhat worse. That could be interpreted to mean that ultra-processed foods cause health problems, but there are other factors, or confounders, that could also explain the correlation. People who eat lots of processed food might have unhealthier lifestyles overall, which could explain why they have worse outcomes. People who listen to public health advice about eating fresh foods might also choose to walk up stairs rather than use the elevator, an increase in physical activity that might well not show up in research surveys. Researchers try to correct for these confounders, but different categories of people are too complicated to be perfectly statistically measured and compared.

## A study of Spanish university students found that people who ate the most ultra-processed food were one-third more likely to develop depression over 10 years than people who ate the least.

Observational studies are also prone to an issue called reverse causality: Did diet soda make people gain weight, or did overweight people who wanted to shed some pounds start drinking diet soda? What's more, there are major questions about how well people remember what they eat and therefore how accurately they can report it in observational studies. Some researchers say this kind of evidence doesn't merit the boldface attention it often gets. "How this stuff gets published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*," says

psychologist and food researcher Peter Rogers, “that’s strange to me. That we’re not more concerned about the level of evidence.”

Some researchers have tried to get a better look at ultra-processed foods by running prospective studies, meaning that they gather a group of subjects, monitor their eating habits and lifestyles for some period, and compare their diets with their health outcomes, trying to correct for other factors besides diet. A 2019 French study that followed people for about seven years found that those who ate more ultra-processed food had a higher risk of mortality. For each 10% increase in the amount of UPF eaten, there was a 14% increase in the number of deaths, about half of which came from cancer and cardiovascular disease. A study of Spanish university students in the same year found that people who ate the most ultra-processed food were one-third more likely to develop depression over 10 years than people who ate the least.

Prospective studies can show how people change over time and help reduce the problems of reverse causality and poorly measured diets, but they don’t eliminate the core entanglement: People who follow the well-known advice to eat fresh foods are likely different in many complicated ways from those who hit the drive-thru. The great majority of the evidence against ultra-processed food is of a circumstantial variety. However, policymakers in a few countries decided the evidence was solid enough and began enacting measures to steer citizens away from UPF. “Ultra-processed foods and cardiometabolic health: public health policies to reduce consumption cannot wait,” wrote a group of researchers in the *British Medical Journal* recently.

There is one influential study that has gone beyond observational research to provide more concrete proof of how ultra-processed food affects people. In 2019, NIH researcher Kevin Hall and a group of colleagues published a paper based on an experiment in which they kept 20 subjects in a hospital setting, giving half of them a UPF-heavy diet for two weeks followed by a diet based on minimal processing for two weeks, allowing them to eat as much food as they wanted at each meal. The other half had the diet with minimal processing first.

The researchers carefully arranged the two diets to be equivalent in terms of nutrients, energy density fiber and other attributes; they differed only in the percentage of processing. While subjects were on the ultra-processed food diet, they ate about 500 more calories per day, and in just two weeks they gained 2 pounds. During the time they ate fresh foods, they lost 2 pounds. Finally, there was direct evidence that ultra-processed foods could push people toward obesity.

One paper, however, does not settle a complicated field. “It’s a very well-conducted study,” says Kuhnle. “But like all studies, there are limitations.”

For instance, the ultra-processed foods in the study didn’t have much fiber, so the researchers also gave people fiber supplements dissolved in water, but that may not be equivalent to eating fiber. Moreover, no single, small experiment could ever settle such a big nutritional question. “I’ve done studies of flavonols (compounds found in fruit, but also used in processing) with 20 or 50 people,” Kuhnle says. “The response was always, ‘That’s a single study.’ We need more studies to understand this.”

Hall readily acknowledges that this single, small study doesn’t provide a final verdict on ultra-processed food, partly because it didn’t represent real life. “It’s a very artificial environment, where we can completely take control over their food,” he says. He also points out that we can’t extrapolate life-long effects based on two weeks of data. “Of course, that (level of overeating) wouldn’t last forever,” he says.



Eating more ultra-processed foods such as cereals, dark or whole-grain breads and yogurts was associated with slightly lower odds of developing Type 2 diabetes.

Hall, like many other researchers, says the pressing question is to find what exactly is wrong with processed foods—that is, to identify the mechanism by which they seem to impact human health.

He has reanalyzed the data from the 2019 study and found some support for specific hypotheses that other researchers have advanced. Perhaps the problem with ultra-processed food is its energy density; or its texture, which may encourage people to eat too fast; or its alleged “hyper-palatability,” which is defined by specific combinations of sugar, salt and fat. Hall and his colleagues are now running a second, similar diet trial to try to both replicate the original finding and also to see if any of these hypotheses are borne out by the experiment. This kind of study is costly and takes about two years to run, in addition to the preparation and analysis.

Another challenge is that not all ultra-processed foods are alike. In many cases, they are not more energy-dense than whole foods. Fruit yogurt is generally less energy-dense than a homemade cookie, for instance, largely because the yogurt has more water. This is part of the problem with the concept of UPF. Frozen and canned vegetables are often classified as ultra-processed, but they are in general healthier than cookies and other homemade, carb-rich foods.

For many researchers, the ultra-processed food puzzle is not so puzzling. The problem with processed foods, they say, is well explained by guidance that mainstream nutritionists have been flogging for years. “A lot of ultra-

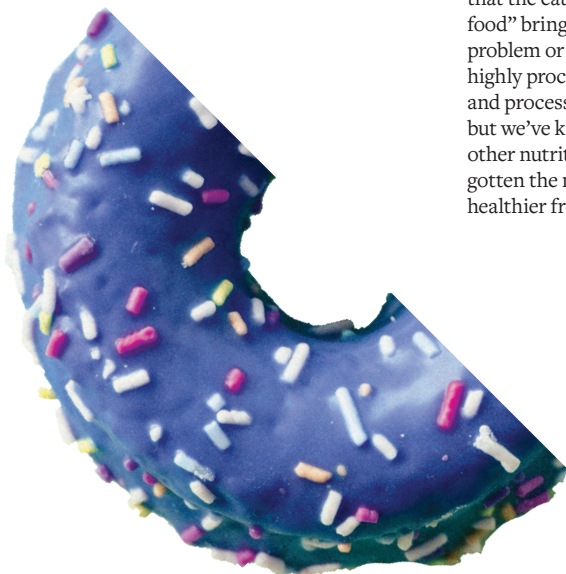
processed foods have high salt, fat and sugar levels,” says Kuhnle. “For most ultra-processed foods, we don’t really need the label. It’s already what we’d call junk food.”

Some recent research suggests that although there are junky, unhealthy types of ultra-processed food, there are other subcategories that aren’t so bad or that might even provide a benefit. A prospective study of about 200,000 people published in February 2023, found that eating more ultra-processed foods such as cereals, dark or whole-grain breads, yogurts and dairy desserts was associated with slightly lower odds of developing Type 2 diabetes. Another prospective study of about 270,000 people published in November 2023 found that people who ate more ultra-processed breads and cereals and plant-based meat alternatives had the same or slightly lower rates of multimorbidity (having two or more serious health conditions) than did those who ate less of them.

These studies are prone to the same kinds of confounders as other epidemiological research. It’s possible that people who have cereal for breakfast may live healthier lives in other, hard-to-measure ways. Still, they raise the question of whether ultra-processed foods comprise a monolithic category that should all be treated the same way, no matter what. When it comes to making real-life decisions about food, many nutrition experts draw lines between different types of ultra-processed food. “Soft drinks are banned in my house,” says Heinz Freisling, the senior author of the multimorbidity study. “But my daughter likes this cereal stuff. She eats it. I think it is possible that it can be part of a healthy diet.”

When Kevin Hall spends a day in his office, he usually brings in microwavable frozen lunches, even though they often contains additives to preserve flavors and textures through freezing and reheating. “It has lots of protein, lots of fiber, lots of legumes,” he says. “It’s an ultra-processed meal, but I think it’s healthy.”

These legitimate distinctions have sometimes



gotten lost in a trend of blaming health problems on the ultra-processed food bogeyman. “I think it’s a fashion. I see it in the titles: ultra-processed food is connected with cancer or heart disease,” says Francesco Visioli, who does research on food chemistry at the University of Padova. “I disagree with following the fashion, I disagree with riding the wave. In five years, people will say, ‘Whoa, slow down.’ Progress has to be slow.”

*We already have a long history of enacting nutrition policies prematurely and then scrambling them later when we get better evidence, sowing confusion, apathy and cynicism in many people’s minds.*

Concern over the reputed effects of ultra-processed foods has led to a well-intentioned yet possibly misguided push to do something forcefully and quickly about the issue. The dash to improve our health by condemning a new dietary villain should set off alarms: We already have a long history of enacting nutrition policies prematurely and then scrambling them later when we get better evidence, sowing confusion, apathy and cynicism in many people’s minds.

The research on ultra-processed food is picking up on something important, but it’s not clear that the category called “ultra-processed food” brings us closer to understanding the problem or ameliorating it. Some of those highly processed foods, such as sugary drinks and processed meats, can degrade health—but we’ve known that for years, through other nutrition research. Most people have gotten the message that they should be eating healthier fresh foods that they prepared



themselves, rather than unnatural stuff that comes out of a sealed bag bearing a long list of unpronounceable ingredients. To little avail.

In many countries, most of what people eat fits in NOVA’s “UPF” category. It is folly to go to war with the majority of our food; it’s also costly, unproductive and unfair to people without the means to buy and prepare fresh foods. “I don’t think I can overemphasize this. You might think ultra-processed foods are causing the problem, but ultra-processed food makes up 60% of the food supply,” says Kevin Hall, the researcher who provided the most widely touted evidence against ultra-processed foods. “It’s not like cigarettes and cancer, where nobody needs to smoke, and you could just ban cigarettes. People need to eat food. You can’t just ban 60% of the food supply, and you can’t just tax 60% of the food supply.”

Duane Mellor, a dietitian at Aston University in England, adds that policies against ultra-processed foods could backfire if they push people away from processed “gateway products” that help people to prepare healthy, mostly natural meals, such as shelf-stable salad dressings and soup-stock cubes.

We already have some good evidence about which foods are particularly bad, and further research will teach us more. The main goal for us now is to figure out how to make it easier for people to choose healthier options and avoid the true junk, a challenge that’s the same whether we call it “ultra-processed” or not. The better-processed foods can and should play a key role in replacing the dangerous stuff.

“I think there probably is a large set of healthy, ultra-processed foods that are already on the market,” says Hall. “We should make more of those, and increase the availability of those.”

This story is part of a series of OpenMind essays, podcasts and videos supported by a generous grant from the Pulitzer Center’s Truth Decay initiative.



# DOC EDGE FESTIVAL GUIDE

I just binged 3 seasons of Bridgerton back to back and it feels exactly like doing laps around a fast food drive-through. As such it's time to reconstitute my melted brain with some world expanding documentaries. Fortunately for me the Doc Edge Festival is upon us with a collection of 66 local and international films. Here's our quick guide on what to watch and where to watch it.



## Invisible Nation

If there's one country we need to be more clued up on, it's Taiwan as New Zealand too, in a less lethal way, is also held between the geopolitical forces of the U.S. and China. Invisible nation focuses on it's troubled past and uncertain future.

With unprecedented access to Taiwan's sitting head of state, director Hope investigates the election and tenure of Tsai Ing-wen, the first female president of Taiwan.

There will be a Q&A with director Vanessa Hope and producer Ted Hope following the screening on the 29th in Christchurch.

### DATES

Mon 24 Jun 8:30 PM  
/ Christchurch, Alice  
Cinema

Sat 29 Jun 6:00 PM  
/ Christchurch,  
Lumiere Cinemas  
Bernhardt

Tue 9 Jul 6:00 PM  
/ Auckland, The  
Capitol Cinema

Tue 9 Jul 6:00 PM  
/ Wellington, The  
Roxy Cinema 1



## War And Justice

On 24 February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. A short time later, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant against Vladimir Putin for alleged war crimes.

On 7 October 2023, Hamas committed a cruel massacre of Israeli civilians. Israel responded with the largest offensive on Gaza ever. The ICC Chief Prosecutor announced that he would prosecute any kind of war crimes on both sides. But what has come to pass?

Focusing on ICC Chief Prosecutors past and present, this film gives a complex legal process a face, and viewers will understand why wars of aggression can hardly be brought to justice when the major world powers - China, Russia, India and the United States - are unwilling to recognize the ICC as a global court.

There's a Q&A with director Michele Gentile following the screening on the 24th and 28th in Christchurch.

### DATES

Mon 24 Jun 6:30 PM / Christchurch, Alice  
Cinema

Fri 28 Jun 11:00 AM / Christchurch, Lumiere  
Cinemas Bernhardt

Sun 14 Jul 4:15 PM / Auckland, The Capitol  
Cinema

Sun 14 Jul 4:15 PM / Wellington, The Roxy  
Cinema 1

## Citizen Sleuth

If you're a true crime buff then this is a deep and fascinating look into the morality of this niche world.

The film follows Emily Nestor and her Mile Marker 181 podcast, as she conducts an amateur investigation into the death of Jaleayah Davis. It examines the ethics of the true crime genre through Emily's pursuits of her top suspects. With a growing audience of millions, the podcast becomes a hit, but as she probes deeper into the case, she's confronted with a new truth she struggles to tell her listeners. Told in real time over several years, the film chronicles the rise, fall and redemption of a podcaster in the new media language.

### DATES

Thu 20 Jun 8:15 PM /  
Christchurch, Hoyts  
Cinemas

Fri 28 Jun 3:30 PM /  
Christchurch, Alice  
Cinema

Fri 12 Jul 8:00 PM  
/ Auckland, The  
Capitol Cinema

Fri 12 Jul 8:00 PM /  
Wellington, The Roxy  
Cinema 1



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