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VITA



The *June* Issue

INSIDE *the* ISSUE

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FASHION *Despite* time-based tech, *traditional* watches are **still ticking**

WELLNESS How to **leave the device behind** and *embrace* a digital detox

BEAUTY Our top **travel beauty tips** to make packing *a cinch*

WINE Father's Day is a *good* time for *fine sips* with a **paternal twist**

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BETTER STARTS NOW



PHOTO: VIVIAN KLEIN

Editor's DESK

A Note From Noa

Welcome to the June issue of *VITA*! There's a lot going on in this pages, as we celebrate the start of summer (read: travel season; see page 7 for our top beauty travel tips), tonnes of new retail openings (Knix, Mejuri and Poppy Barley, to name a few) and, of course, dads! This Father's Day, we're recommending some sensational sips with a paternal twist (page 11)—give them a try and let us know what you think. We're also talking boudoir photography (as you can see, I recently did a session myself—and loved it), traditional timepieces, technology detox and RV adventures. My personal pick for this month: this Leah Alexandra Palm Pendant (\$455) to celebrate the opening of the brand's new Mount Pleasant headquarters.

Noa Nichol EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



We love Deanna Woo for introducing us to different foods, secret dining spots and the best eats in the Lower Mainland, and around the world.

Deanna Woo
@DEANNAWOO



Hi Deanna! Where does your great love of food come from? Travelling! Growing up I had the opportunity to travel with my parents and that opened my eyes to different types of cuisines. As I got older I found a passion documenting my experiences and showcasing unique dining spots locally and around the world.

How did you get into food blogging? I started roughly seven years ago. I used to love finding new local gems and hole-in-the wall spots and taking photos with my phone. My mom bought me a camera for my birthday and I started using that to take all my photos. It truly was a hobby at first but it's grown to be so much more. For me, making content is storytelling. The food is a huge, integral part of the story, but I love meeting restaurant owners and staff and hearing their stories/asking questions. A lot of the people I've met through media events or tastings have become my friends and it's amazing to support them. I also love when people (followers, who I also consider friends) message me to ask for recommendations or to comment on places I've gone to. I love that "connectivity" part of social media. Also, fun fact: I was extremely shy growing up. It really wasn't until I started doing social media that I became more outgoing.



How do you use your platform to impact those who follow you? I love engaging with everyone. I love when they comment on my posts or DM me to ask for suggestions. For me it's important to post daily but it's even more important to take some time in the day to respond. I continuously do a lot of research to look at what new restaurants are opening or updating my list of favourite eats in various areas/cuisines so that when people ask me for recommendations I have sort of an updated "Deanna Yelp" list to share with them. I also love supporting local food events and local restaurants. There's so many wonderful hidden gems that are mom-and-pop shops that I think deserve so much love. It's amazing how posting a video on social media can help these businesses gain customers and traction. It's really rewarding.

Is there anything you absolutely will not eat? I'm not a huge lamb person. Other than that I'm pretty flexible when it comes to food.

What's your personal style mantra? Wear stretchy clothes! Just kidding. Being a predominantly food "influencer" or "content creator" requires me to eat a lot of food, basically seven days a week. However, I really try to live a balanced lifestyle. I work out on average five times a week and I try to eat healthier during the workday (yes, I also work a nine-to-five) so that I can indulge during dinner. It's all about moderation! And I've also been trying to drink a lot more water ... sometimes I forget.



Any fashion/beauty tips to stay looking good (and stain-free!) while eating a messy meal? I can't help here ... I'm the girl who will wear white to a super-saucy pasta dinner or hot pot. I can't help but stain my clothes!

What's a dream dish you'd like to try, or a dream food destination you'd like to travel to? Italy is on my bucket list for this year. I want all the pasta and carbs ... yum!

What's coming up for you next? I'm on TikTok and Instagram and I'm so used to short-form videos but it would be nice to explore YouTube. I have one video up from the Richmond Night Market (three years ago) so that's been quite a long hiatus. We will see! v

THE MAKING OF THE BRITISH COLUMBIA

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VITA X LONGINES

Longines Conquest

Where Style Meets Precision

Longines, the Swiss watchmaking brand founded in 1832, embodies performance, precision, and style. With a history spanning over almost two centuries, Longines' unwavering commitment to craftsmanship, sports timing and elegance is showcased through their timeless timepieces.

In 1878, Longines entered precision sports timekeeping with the delivery of their first chronograph, developing timepieces that accurately indicated a tenth, hundredth and millionth of a second. Longines has timed some of the greatest sports, keeping records in equestrian, alpine skiing and track and field.

In 1954, Longines launched the first Conquest timepiece. The collection celebrates the spirit of all those who have dared to push further in their quest for new horizons. Longines has just launched eleven new Conquest watches, a redesign inspired by the first 1954 timepiece.

The new Conquest models are available in 34 mm and 41 mm. A fusion of performance and elegance, the Conquest case back reveals the technical features and movements within.

The 34 mm timepiece is available with a sunray dial in silver, brown, green, blue or mother-of-pearl. The blue, green and mother-of-pearl models feature diamonds on the hour markers.

The 41 mm stainless-steel case is available with a sunray dial in silver, brown, blue, green and black.

Shop the Longines Conquest timepieces (starting at \$2,600 CAD) online at Longines.ca.



Wrist Takers

Despite time-based tech, traditional watches are still ticking—here's why

BY ALEESHA HARRIS

Why wear a watch? It's a question that seems particularly appropriate to ask given the plethora of timekeeping devices on offer today. From smartphones to fitness-tracking devices to car-instrument panels to tablets—time is everywhere.

In spite of this availability, the world's watch market is growing. Global sales for the category were valued at US\$71.1 billion in 2022, with a projected growth to US\$96.8 billion by 2028, according to a report from IMARC Group. It's a level of success that comes as no surprise to Adrian Bosshard, CEO of the Swiss luxury watch brand Rado.

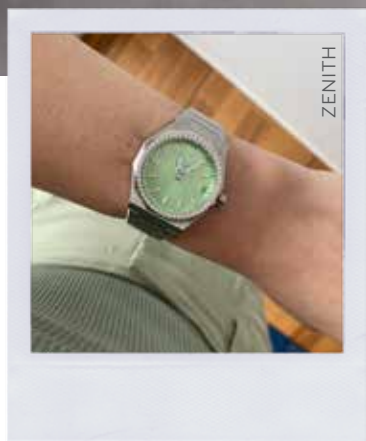
"Watches are much more than just an object from which you can read the time. They are a piece of art on your wrist and a personal statement," he says, adding that a timepiece is also often an emotional tie to a milestone, memory or family connection. "To give you an example from my personal life, I received, in March 1991, a Rado Integral as a wedding present from my wife. I wear the watch to this day as a reminder of my wedding. And I am happy to say that my wife is still by my side."

A quality wristwatch, Bosshard summarizes, can be a "companion for life." A personal timepiece, Matthias Breschan, CEO of the Swiss watch brand Longines, points out, can also signal an aspect of one's personality: "A watch is often seen as a symbol, an emotion, rather than a practical object—for example, wearing a Longines Spirit Flyback does not make you a pilot, but it does convey a sporty and dynamic image of yourself."

With wearing a watch being less about the telling of time and more about a person's individual interests or values, companies have looked to unique exterior designs in order to further endear the accessory to modern consumers. "Our customers are looking for a watch with refined aesthetics, accuracy and reliability," Breschan summarizes of the must-have elements of a modern wristwatch.

Design elements such as boldly coloured dials, intricate enamel elements, quick-change mechanisms for interchanging straps and sparkling diamonds are just a few of the ways in which watch brands are looking to enhance the overall appeal of timepieces. These so-called "statement watches" add an enhanced aspect of jewelry or decoration to the category that's proving to be of interest to consumers, according to Julien Tornare, CEO of the Swiss watch brand Zenith.

The company recently revamped an iconic silhouette within its collection with the release of the Defy Skyline, which sees a new "unisex" 36-millimetre case size available with a selection of pastel-hued patterned dials and the option of a diamond-set faceted bezel. "Even before COVID, we saw more colours coming back. Rainbows with diamond settings, or it could be dials. We felt like there were more and more colours, and people were there to wear watches with colours," Tornare says of the desire to wear bolder hues and embellished designs. "Watches, for some time, were missing colours. And now it's coming back—a lot."



"Watches are much more than just an object from which you can read the time. They are a piece of art on your wrist and a personal statement"



Zenith has plans to release more colourful watch creations later this year, as the brand looks to further entice new, younger customers to wear its watch designs. "People like colours, we've seen that," Tornare says, noting that more-conservative shades still outsell their colourful counterparts—for now. "In terms of image, perception, dynamism of the brand, it's very important to bring colours." But, accurate time-telling remains a critical aspect of a watch, and interior upgrades are better allowing mechanical watches to coincide with the omnipresent technological devices of today.

"We have recently modified some components of our movements to be made of non-magnetic material. This allows us to make our watches 10 times more anti-magnetic than the ISO 764 standard," Breschan explains of the thing that allows for Longines movements to be less disturbed by magnetic disruption from devices such as cellphones. "Because of the materials they have always been made of, mechanical watches are susceptible to magnetism, which affects their accuracy. And magnetic forces are everywhere in our modern world."

The precision and endurance of automatic timepieces—those that don't require a battery for a power source but are, rather, powered by an internal spring—has also been improved by advancements in calibre design. The new-generation Air-King from Rolex features a calibre 3230 movement, which was first released in 2020, that centres on advancements in elements such as resistance to magnetic fields thanks to a nickel-phosphorus material, improved precision and a boosted power reserve that totals approximately 70 hours.

Watch models that merge technological aspects with timeless wristwatch aesthetic elements are also proving popular with consumers, according to Zahra Hemraj, director of marketing at Citizen Watch Canada. "This year we announced our new CZ Smart with YouQ," she says, calling the design a "smarter" smartwatch. "This is our new smartwatch, and the YouQ app combines AI models built with IBM Watson Studio and research pioneered by NASA Ames Research Center to deliver a 24-hour forecast and hourly power score—a highly personalized indicator of your cognitive and physical energy."

Many Citizen models also boast "advanced functionality" features such as radio-control, atomic or satellite-wave GPS timekeeping, an altimeter and more, Hemraj notes. The various evolutions of timepieces not only help to answer the question of the relevance of wristwatches today, but also aim to secure their place in the future.

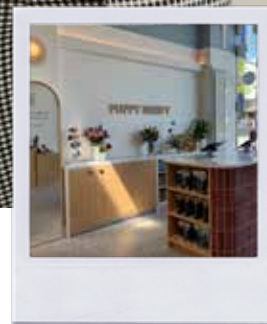
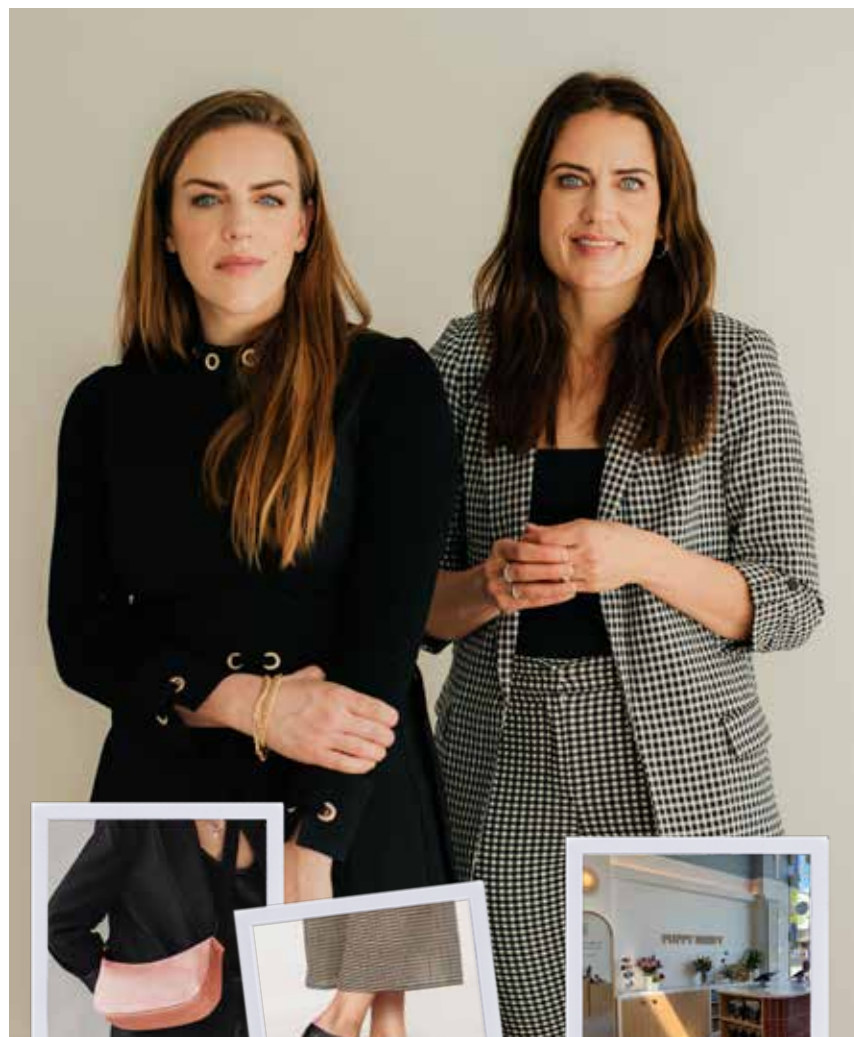
"Watches not only have a place in the digital world, but rather a permanent place in the world, in general," Hemraj says. "They are 'timeless.'" ▽

Hot Shops

Vancouver's latest and greatest retailers

LEAH ALEXANDRA

When Leah Belford posted early photos of her new jewelry HQ on social, followers wondered if she'd opened shop in L.A. More like ... Mount Pleasant but, with palms lining the flagship, we understand the confusion. The new Leah Alexandra space is gorgeous—a “dream space,” says Belford, complete with an area for marketing, design and production staff and a retail side including the brand's famous Spark Studio, where customers can get welded with permanent bracelets, necklaces and anklets. Also in store: a range of jewelry and one-of-a-kind pieces you won't find online. Designed by Marcela Trejo, the abundant natural light, curved plaster walls, natural-stone displays and ceramics by Marion Selma Gamba make this boutique the perfect backdrop to try on all the bling—including the new Palm Pendant (\$455), inspired by the trees outside. **75 W. 7th Ave., 604-771-0645. Leahalexandra.com** NOA NICHOL



POPPY BARLEY

What started as an e-commerce business has grown into several brick-and-mortar stores, with the latest planting roots on West 4th Avenue. Poppy Barley was founded as a made-to-measure shoe company that valued comfort and style and refused to compromise on caring for people and the planet by sisters Justine and Kendall Barber in 2012. “We wanted ... to make shoes for women too busy taking on the world to have sore feet,” the sisters say. “[We] equally consider our employees and production partners, the community and the

environment when making decisions. We're not just talking the talk.” Poppy Barley has a group of cult classics that tend to be a hit in most, if not all, markets, like the Two Point Five Ankle Boot and the Heeled Mule, as well as the Daily Loafer. Indeed, the brand is always looking for inspiration for new designs that stay true to functionality and comfort without sacrificing style—like a limited-edition, western-inspired style called the West End Boot, which will be in stores this month. **2144 W. 4th Ave., 1-888-404-5161. Poppybarley.com** BRIANNA MCCUTCHEON

MEJURI

West Van, get ready to shine! Mejuri has opened its second Lower Mainland store in Park Royal, in a light-filled space that opens directly onto Main Street. Shop the necklace wall, product displays and bespoke elements, all of which create a sense of empowerment to style oneself, veering even further from the archaic feeling of jewelry stores where everything is hidden behind glass. The non-traditional window and in-store displays feature oversized, playful, large-scale representations of the brand's popular rings and the interior boasts such iconic Mejuri elements as arched mirrors, neutral tones and a pistachio-hued piercing studio, for a pop of colour. Not sure what you're seeking? A stylist will ask a series of friendly questions to pair you with the right piece at the right price point. Can't see that item that you spotted online? Staff can help you order it in store. Now that's service with a sparkle! **925 Main St. Unit H3, West Vancouver, 778-907-7121. Mejuri.com** NOA NICHOL



KIN CULTURE

While Vancouver may offer an abundance of ways to sweat, movement leaders Rich Poole and Sean Collins saw space for a more-holistic approach to exercise. Recognizing their privilege as men in the industry, Poole's and Collins' focus is on the aspects of fitness that get overlooked, namely, one's emotional well-being. Kin Culture, which started as outdoor classes and run clubs, now has a permanent home on West 4th Avenue, in a modern space with concrete floors, gender-neutral amenities and high-tech equipment. All classes are suited to those who prefer to work out barefoot; while this may feel foreign initially, going without shoes can help improve your balance and foot strength. Whether you opt for footwear on or off, one thing is certain: it's hats off for a fitness studio that's setting a new standard. **1847 W. 4th Ave., 604-860-5882. Kinculture.ca** VICKI DUONG



KNIX

Knix, which, over the last decade, has expanded its range of leakproof undies to shapewear, sleep, swim and athletic gear, has opened a new store on Robson. The walls showcase the brand's famous wireless bras and varying levels of leak-protection underwear with drawers below so you can shop by size with ease. Not sure what style or size is for you? Staff is armed with the knowledge needed to accurately measure your size and recommend products. Consider your body hang-ups nixed here. **1150 Robson St., 778-486-6060. Knix.ca** VICKI DUONG

LOEWE PERFUME

Loewe has brought its perfumed offerings—fragrances for people and spaces—to Vancouver. Until July 16, visit the circular (five metres in diameter) pop-up just inside Holt Renfrew's Granville Street entrance to explore the Spanish brand's scent collection, which is comprised of 12 olfactory plant portraits inspired by the raw and authentic essences of flowers, plants and herbs. Whether they're for wearing (eau de parfums), burning (candles) or spraying throughout your home or office, these are some of the most unique and exquisite smells we have ever sniffed. From oregano to honeysuckle, cucumber to beetroot, ivy to tomato leaves, you'll want to take long and lingering whiffs of every single one of these creations before (or while) consulting with a well-versed pop-up attendant to discover those that perfectly speak to (and, as per the brand's main objective, wholly embody) you. Beyond EDPs, scented candles in various shapes and sizes (including all-wax candleholders, right down to the base) and home fragrances, the space showcases Loewe Perfume's bath products (soap on a rope, two kinds) and utterly giftable candle accessories, like snuffers and wick trimmers. Go, before this pop-up burns out. **737 Dunsmuir St., 604-681-3121. Perfumesloewe.com** NOA NICHOL



Made for Men

Clarins' new range is about more than just a close shave (but that, too)

BY NOA NICHOL

Barbers, it turns out, have secrets, and, in making new products for men, Clarins set out to uncover them. In speaking to and collaborating with master barbers like Samy Zerouali in Paris, Justin Carr in London and Lord Jack Knife in Norway, the brand unlocked expertise around skincare and shaving and put those insights directly into its latest release of ClarinsMen products.

"[These] renowned international master barbers ... have tested our products on their clients and developed professional routines [with them]," confirms Clarins senior director of education Marie-Claude Côté, adding that the new offerings are additions to Clarins' existing men's range, including the bestselling Active Face Wash and Super Moisture Gel, and the award-winning Energizing Gel. "As always, our skincare expertise enabled us to create effective formulas with plant extracts and incredibly light textures, to make shaving a real pleasure."

Among the newness: ClarinsMen Smooth Shave Foaming Gel, After Shave Soothing Gel, After Shave Soothing Toner and Shave + Beard Oil. And the tailor-made routines? "For a close daily shave, shave in the direction of hair growth, then across with the oil or Smooth Shave Foaming Gel," says Côté. "For a short beard, once or twice a week, trim your beard with a clipper and shave the contour with the oil. For a long beard, every day comb your beard, shave the contours with a manual razor using the oil or Smooth Shave Foaming Gel, and then groom and soften the beard with the oil."

Ingredients-wise, the products include organic black currant bud extract, organic bison grass extract and gymnema extract. "Black currant bud extract helps to limit the release of inflammatory mediators to soothe the skin. It is often used in traditional medicine as an infusion to treat rheumatism, and also in gemmotherapy for its anti-inflammatory properties," Côté says. "Bison grass and gymnema extract provide the energy the skin needs."

Other powerful ingredients include: purslane, which is rich in omega-3 fatty acids to soothe razor burn and calm irritations; galanga, which stimulates cutaneous exchanges and fights free radicals; and red ginseng extract to energize and stimulate men's skin. And, yes, the products are specially made for male skin.

"Clarins studied the differences between men's and women's skin, identified plant extracts adapted to the physiology of men's skin and designed textures suited to this group of users," says Côté. "Men's skin, like women's skin, is a hormone-dependent organ. All its structural, physiological and functional characteristics are linked to the strong presence of hormones in men. In fact, testosterone levels are 10 times higher in men than women, which explains the many differences in their skin."

Because of its specific structure and physiology, she says that men's skin ages differently from women's skin: it's thicker and more resistant, and thus ages more slowly. However, aging is also more dramatic, with more-pronounced slackening and deeper wrinkles. Clarins research reveals that men's skin uses more energy; skin cells renew themselves faster, and men's skin needs more energy to function optimally. Additionally, as revealed by further research, the impact a super-busy life can have on mitochondria, or skin cells' "energy-producing factories" that help support proper cell functions. The consequences of this happening become visible: loss of radiance, signs of fatigue and premature skin aging.

"Besides, men often have different habits and lifestyles to women, which means signs of aging are often more visible: bad sun protection, smoking, an unbalanced diet and shaving are all factors that encourage more-marked skin aging, with deep lines and furrows on areas of particularly exposed, unprotected skin," adds Côté.

When asked why men ought to better embrace skincare these days, she says, "To help men feel good, there's nothing like having energizing, healthy looking skin. Skin that is toned, hydrated and supple. To help men feel even better, they can protect their skin from external aggressions, especially pollution. And, finally, to feel ultimately irresistible, ideally, men want to have an eye area that looks



LAURENT DUVERNAY-TARDIF, PROFESSIONAL ATHLETE & CLARINSMEN AMBASSADOR



rested, full of life and a smooth eye contour, without puffiness or dark circles."

One man who is a big fan of these new products, and encourages all men to adopt a daily skincare routine, is Laurent Duvernay-Tardif, whose demanding schedule includes playing professional football and advancing his medical career. "For me skincare is my little moment to take care of myself," he says. "We're always bombarded by emails, texts ... when I'm in front of my mirror in the morning I try to put my phone away for five minutes. It doesn't take a lot of time, but it means I start my day better."

Among other things, Duvernay-Tardif loves the ClarinsMen products for their "mattifying effect that you don't get sometimes with other brands. It suits me really well. I sweat a lot and I'm really active, so I want something that hydrates me without that shiny or glowy feeling. The ClarinsMen Energizing Gel for me is one of the best products; I use it every day."

Something that really pleases him is seeing more men, including his teammates, becoming passionate about skincare, which he calls "a form of health" and "a good thing for humans to do in general."

"When I first got into the NFL you would never see somebody carrying a little kit bag into the showers, and now half the team has their bag, and they're not using the three-in-one soap, either," he says with a laugh. "The stigma around men's skincare is definitely evolving and changing; for a long time skincare was perceived as feminine. If a guy like me can talk about it, it can create that bridge. That's a really good thing." Clarins.ca

Male Order

With both new and existing products in the ClarinsMen range, men have everything they need to take care of their skin day after day, with a complete skincare routine that is easy and quick to carry out. In a nutshell, it is highly performing—just like them.

- 1. CLEANSE, EXFOLIATE:**
For clean, healthy skin
- 2. FOCUS ON SHAVING:**
Use products adapted to your facial hair type
- 3. REINFORCE THE SKIN:**
Hydrate, energize and reduce signs of aging
- 4. INVIGORATE, TONE:**
Start the day with an invigorating shower and shampoo product

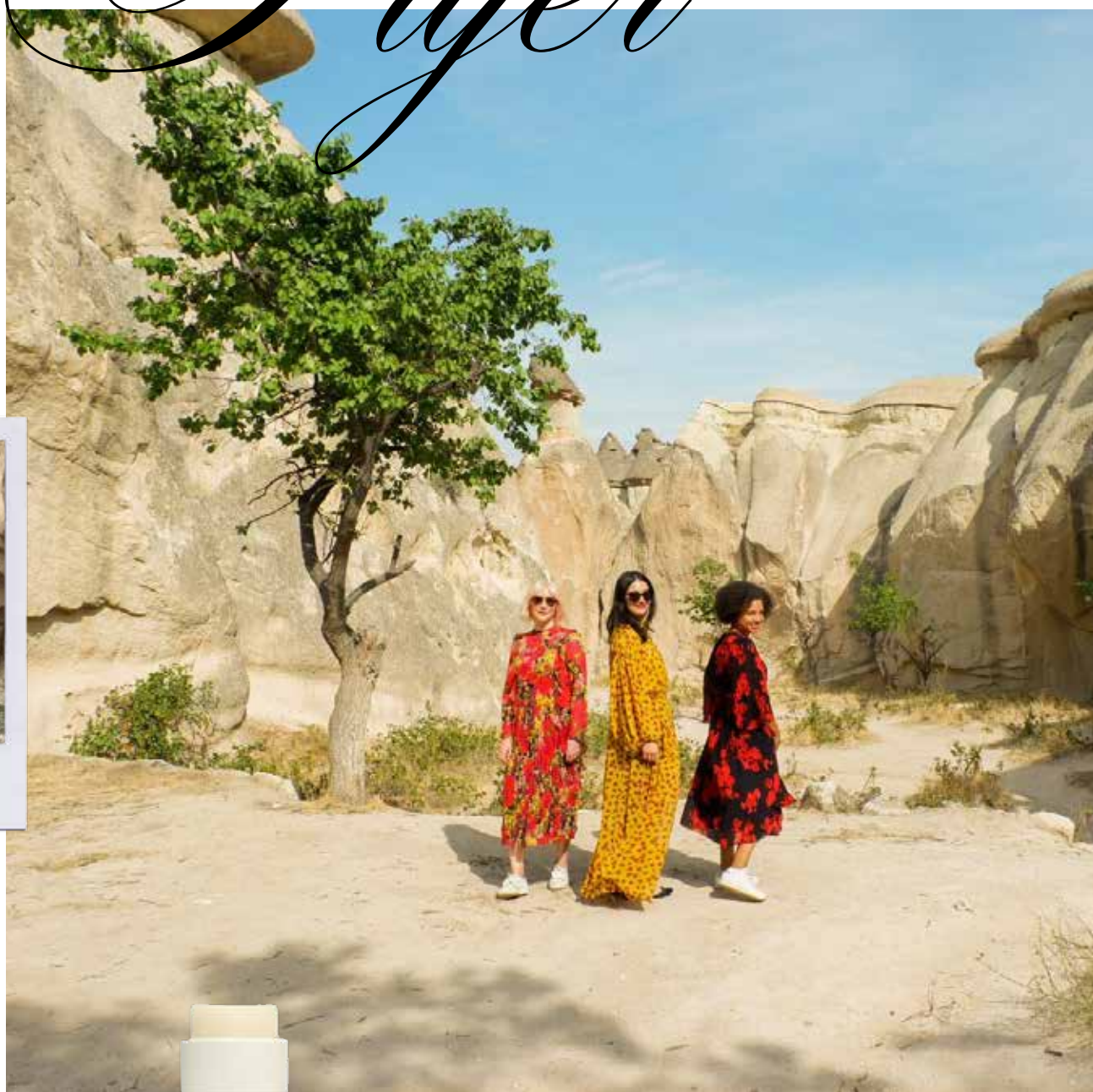
Pro tip: Regardless what product is being applied, avoid pulling or rubbing skin (which can cause skin tissues to stretch). Gentle application helps preserve skin's elasticity and firmness qualities.

Frequent Flyer

Jetting off for vacay?
These travel beauty tips will
make packing a cinch

BY INGRIE WILLIAMS &
EMILY MACCULLOCH
@T.ZONEBEAUTY

As beauty editors, we've been super fortunate to visit some next-level places for work. From the hammams of Turkey to the snow-capped Swiss Alps and the Saguaro-laden deserts of Arizona, we know that visiting a new locale is the ultimate mood-booster. But packing for your getaway? That's not as fun, especially if you're attempting carry-on. Trying to downsize your entire beauty routine to fit in that tiny plastic baggie, frankly, sucks. Throughout the years, we've figured out how to cheat the system and, with our top tricks, you, too, can learn to pack the ultimate beauty travel bag with ease.



Stick With It

Choosing waterless skincare that comes in a solid stick or bar format streamlines packing and eliminates the spill factor. Our high-performing crew includes Oceanly's Phyto-Cleanse Oil-to-Milk Cleanser (\$20) and Shiseido's Clear Sunscreen Stick SPF 50+ (\$40), plus a new addition from Ember Wellness. The Sculpt & Glow Bar (\$29) is a multi-use innovation that merges the benefits of gua sha with hydrating and radiance-boosting results. The contoured bar, which gently softens with the warmth from your hands, is loaded with softening shea butter, antioxidant grape seed oil and ethically sourced mica. It de-puffs, nourishes and imparts subtle luminosity—what more could you ask for from a travel buddy?

Join the Capsule Club

From anti-aging serums to on-the-go foundations, capsules are the next big thing in beauty. Not only do they drastically help you cut down on space in your carry-on, but we love that each capsule offers up the perfect one-time application in a chic little parcel. One of the OG capsules that catapulted the trend (and we still can't live without them) are Elizabeth Arden's Retinol Capsules (\$119), and we've recently added RoC's Multi Correxion Serum Capsules (\$49) into our travel rotation as they're rich in hyaluronic acid—a must to rehydrate post-plane. For makeup, skip packing a hefty bottle of foundation and try Clarins' new Milky Boost Capsules (\$38): a light-coverage foundation that comes in six shades of glow-boosting goodness.

Practice Cabin Care

Along with water and all the snacks, our in-flight essentials include beauty boosters to counteract the effects of arid cabin air. To arrive looking well-rested, we'll dab on an eye cream and place Omy Laboratoires Reusable Eye Patches (\$20) on top. The thin layer of silicone acts like a mini shield against moisture loss and enhances the plumping efforts of an eye product. A calming mist is also a must-have. Available in a TSA-friendly size, the Tower 28 S.O.S. Daily Rescue Facial Spray (\$16) contains hypochlorous acid, which has anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties to reduce redness and irritation. And we're not above slapping on a nourishing sheet mask mid-flight either!

Makeup Made Easy

No matter where you're headed, packing makeup is easy when you can stack a few pots of double-duty players. We recently asked Trinny Woodall, beauty pro and founder of Trinny London, about her dream travel makeup stack when suitcase space is tight. "I would definitely include concealer and a Lip2Cheek shade that can go anywhere, like Veebee (\$46), because it's a beautiful neutral," says Woodall. "I would also add something shimmery for the eye, like Wisdom (\$32), and a pop of colour for the lips—and I'm all set." v



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Step *Away* From the Smartphone

How to leave the device behind and embrace a digital detox

BY LARA CERONI

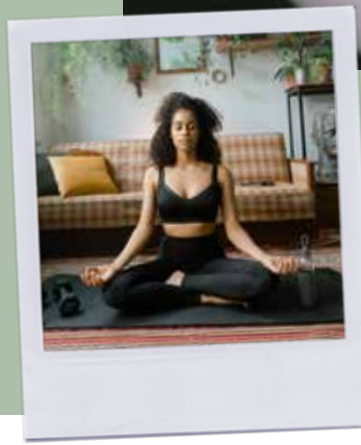
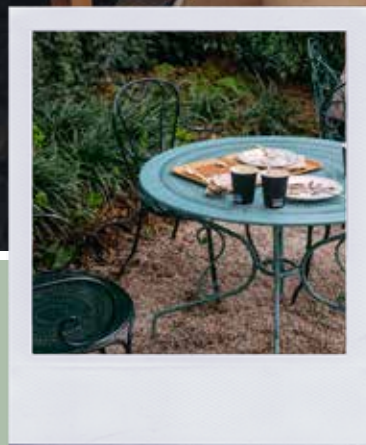
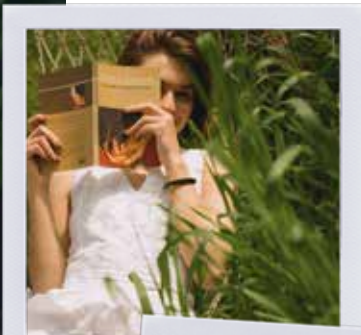
Being plugged in is the norm. Connected and immersed in the digital world is a part of our everyday lives: some of us work from home, chat with our families over video, pay our bills and track our spending online. We like socializing on social media and staying connected with friends over messenger apps or sharing photos and videos of life moments and funny memes.

In fact, Canada is one of the most connected countries in the world, with 36.23 million Internet users, meaning the “net” penetration in Canada is 93.8 per cent of the population. At the start of 2023, there were 33.1 million social media users in the country, with Canadians spending almost seven hours on the web daily. While that statistic feels staggering when you crunch the numbers, staying connected has become part of the cultural zeitgeist. In many ways, most of us need screen time—but it’s very easy to overdo it. According to a report published by Google, it seems Canadians are getting increasingly addicted to their mobile devices; more than 80 per cent of survey responders said they don’t leave home without their mobile device and 35 per cent said they have become so reliant on mobile connectivity, they would give up TV before having to part with their smartphone.

Unsurprisingly, all of this connectivity comes at a cost. Instagram is considered the worst social media platform for mental health and well-being, associated with high levels of anxiety, depression, bullying or FOMO, the “fear of missing out.” And the other social platforms don’t precisely fare all that better, either. Check your feed on Twitter, and you are instantaneously bombarded with ill-information, all procured at such visceral speeds that our brains cannot process the overload. Existing in a social space can set unrealistic expectations and create feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem, making us feel like we aren’t good enough or that we have to workshop our authentic selves to appear more desirable, pithy or exciting to the masses online, many of whom we barely know. It becomes a vicious loop of seeking acceptance in a world built on filters and character counts. While at its core social media is a powerful connection tool that has changed how people interact, mindless scrolling is not the best habit for our collective psychology. The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto noted that teenagers who use social media for more than two hours daily are considerably more likely to rate their mental health as fair or poor than occasional users.

This behaviour was heightened during the COVID-19 pandemic, which confined people to their homes. Binging on digital and social interactions not only killed some time, but it became a source of current lockdown news and a moment of reprieve. It helped us and didn’t help us. Dr. Amber Cohen, clinical psychologist and director of The Cohen Clinic in Toronto, says that, by design, our smartphones are addictive. “Big business has designed technology in a way to get us hooked. We get a dopamine release in our brain when we pick up our phone or log into our social media accounts,” she says. “Using social apps is priming our psychology into thinking we are rewarding ourselves every time we pick up our device, which can be dangerous to our mental health.”

She goes on to say that many people start to feel trapped in their use of technology and find it hard to break the cycle to engage in more fulfilling activities. “Research shows us that we take the path of least resistance—it’s much easier to binge-watch a show versus go out on a nature walk,” she says. “We may know that engaging in an activity that brings us joy is more fulfilling, but tapping into the energy and motivation to do so becomes tricky when technology is so easy to engage with.”



“Just about anyone can benefit from a digital break. It all comes down to whether your online time makes you feel more connected or less”



Just about anyone can benefit from a digital break. It all comes down to whether your online time makes you feel more connected or less. When met with patients who subscribe to the dependency of existing in the online world, Dr. Cohen encourages people to consider a digital detox: making the mindful decision to intentionally take a time out from using electronic devices—either entirely for a short duration or sporadically throughout the day. Fitness regimens and cleanses aren’t the only way to detox your system. In today’s digital age, your mental health also deserves a break from its stressors.

“While people may get some forms of connection using these platforms, they are still often using it in the isolation of their home,” she says. “People miss out on all the essential nuances of human connection that happen when we are together in person. There is also the comparison thinking that happens when we exclusively see others’ highlight reels and none of their difficult moments—all of this can negatively impact our moods and perspectives of the world.”

Dr. Cohen believes you can still use technology, but not at the cost of engaging in other activities that spark joy and passion. Detoxing from digital is about finding that balance: replace your digital use with other activities you derive happiness from, whether reading a book, being in nature or engaging in physical activities. “Create pockets of time where you engage with technology and then put it away when the allotted time is over,” she says. Also big? Reviewing who and what you follow on social media and remove accounts that are not serving your happiness, along with muting the nonstop notifications we get on the daily. “By muting notifications, you will only feel compelled to check the technology when you want to, not when you are called to.” If these strategies fail, and you feel like your mental health is being negatively impacted, Dr. Cohen says it’s important to consider seeing assistance from someone trained to help. “Engaging in therapy can help process your feelings and create coping strategies that are uniquely effective for you.”

In a world where we “go live” for everything, it’s easy to romanticize the idea of going dark online. Celebrities do it, too. Ed Sheeran has announced (multiple times) when he takes a break from Instagram, and so have Demi Lovato, Chrissy Teigen and Taylor Swift—women who have received an unwarranted share of critique and criticism from strangers hiding behind their screens. Taking a break from digital and returning to your pre-technology roots can sound revolutionary, even ballsy, but, in reality, it’s less about glamorizing the novelty and more about recognizing what you need for yourself and no one else.

Deactivating your social media accounts and deleting the apps from your phone can be a few days, weeks, months or a lifetime. The choice is yours. “Learn that you can survive without having to check your device,” says Cohen. “As you practise this, the urgency you feel will reduce over time, which opens the door for you to embrace the other things in your life that bring you contentment and satisfaction.” V

Photo Bomb

Boudoir photography seems to be trending, but how has the experience evolved?

BY JILL VON SPRECKEN

A jaw-dropping outfit. Flashbulbs popping. A photographer capturing every curve and angle. Sounds like a day in the life of a celebrity—or any of the growing number of people who have indulged in a boudoir session.

“It was originally a gift for my husband, but became a gift for myself,” says Debbie Gardiner, a North Vancouver-based substitute teacher and mother of two. “I came out of it feeling confident and sexy.” Although she was nervous before the shoot, Debbie said she quickly relaxed and had fun with the guidance of the photographer—and a mimosa.

“Boudoir photography allows people to capture their confidence, sensuality and self-expression in a powerful and empowering way,” says Dave Abreu, owner and lead photographer at Parlour Boudoir in Toronto. “It’s a beautiful way to capture and cherish moments of self-expression and empowerment.”

This particular mode of self-expression is steadily gaining popularity, with many boudoir photographers adding on the service due to customer demand. In Vancouver, photographer Jennifer Williams and makeup artist Kelly Trerise are the women behind Gloss Boudoir Studio. “We started Gloss as a way to reach more people,” explains Trerise. “Beforehand, it was just the two of us, and we couldn’t shoot as many clients as were requesting to shoot with us.” As far as clientele, they say they get a “huge range” that includes women of all ages, and non-binary sessions with trans women.

It’s difficult to pin down the reasons behind boudoir’s meteoric rise in popularity, but Trerise suggests larger cultural changes may contribute. “For many years, showing your skin or being a sexual being was frowned upon. And we really are coming into this new movement of women taking that back and being who they want to be.”

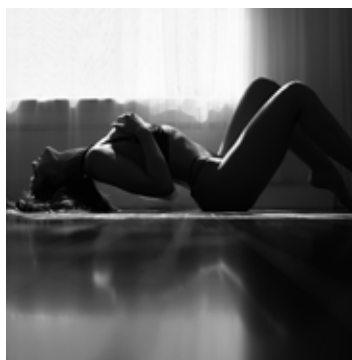
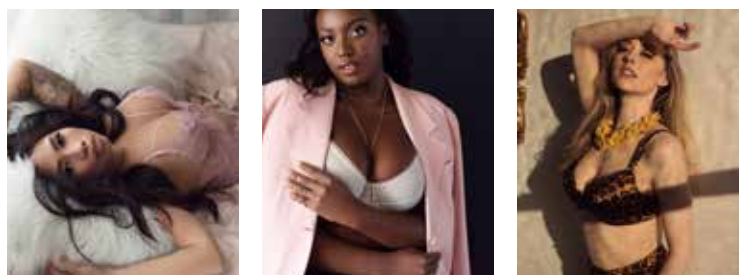
Changes in the ways we interact may also play a part. “With the rise of social media there has been a shift in societal standards of beauty and a growing emphasis on self-love, body positivity and empowerment,” says Abreu. It’s his belief that the ease with which we now share photos and experiences creates a ripple effect. Boudoir photography “resonates with many individuals seeking a positive and affirming experience,” he says.

Photographers describe boudoir sessions as a safe space for clients to empower themselves and build confidence—but also as a slice of luxury or escape from the everyday. Many studios have professional makeup artists—plus a good playlist, lots of encouragement from the photographer and a few costume changes ensure their clients feel like a bombshell.

Artist and content creator Kaitlin Hargreaves recently did a boudoir session as a wedding-slash-birthday gift for her husband. “I actually felt super-sexy during the photoshoot, which surprised me a little,” she says. “I expected to see the photos and love them, but didn’t realize how empowering and confidence-boosting



PHOTO: STACEY FIRTH



PHOTOS: GLOSS BOUDOIR STUDIO

Photos for *All*

BY NOA NICHOL



An important piece of the modern boudoir puzzle is inclusivity, and no one knows that better than Stephanie Tostowaryk of Toastography Boutique Boudoir in Edmonton, where the focus is firmly on “empowering portraiture through boudoir and glamour for all body types and genders.” One of Tostowaryk’s aims is to clear up a common misconception around the practice, “that boudoir is about wearing lingerie or nothing at all. But what makes a person attractive is being true to who they are and what makes them comfortable and confident. We want to showcase authentic portraits that relate to who a person is, not turn them into someone else.”

Boudoir, she says, is a relatively young genre—one that started as a gift in “traditional marriages” from wife to husband.

“Because of this, boudoir through the years has had a heavy focus on cis female clientele,” Tostowaryk explains. “Only over the last few years has the inclusive changes of allowing cis men, trans men and women, non-binary and others to enjoy the experience. As well, with the recent surge in body positivity we are seeing an increase in all body shapes and sizes.”

Whether you’re skinny with no curves or plus-size with all curves, “everyone deserves the chance to challenge their insecurities and empower themselves,” Tostowaryk says, adding that, when it comes to hair and makeup, inclusivity can play a big role on whether someone feels comfortable booking. “Hair and makeup requirements can be different for many races and genders, so finding a photographer team that has experience or understanding of your needs is an important part.”

These days, she’s delighted to see many walks of life stepping into her studio. “Boudoir photography is for anyone who wants to challenge their personal insecurities, celebrate themselves in aging and changing bodies, [or is] seeking personal empowerment, struggling to regain self after divorce or separation—or just as a reminder of how beautiful you are.” Toastography.ca

doing the actual shoot would be.”

Hargreaves also has a unique outsider’s perspective, since she’s been the makeup artist on many boudoir shoots. “Over the years of being involved ... I’ve heard women say they’ve never felt so beautiful, or they never imagined they could look like that. That they’re so happy they did it. Having now done it myself, I understand that feeling.”

Boudoir can go beyond just feeling sexy, as Shawna Coates, owner of Tease Boudoir in Calgary explains. “We have quite a few clients who come in and they’re recovering from emotional and physical trauma. We’ll actually get some referrals from therapists to help them heal,” she says. “Women come in to celebrate weight loss. They come in because they want to accept their body as it is. Sometimes women come in because they have cancer and they’re getting mastectomy, and they want to document their body before and after surgery.” She recently had a client that had tremors and difficulties moving due to MS and Parkinson’s. “If she can do a boudoir session, anyone can,” Coates says.

Even if your reasons for trying boudoir aren’t as profound as documenting a cancer journey, there’s a lot to be gained by getting vulnerable with yourself and the camera. “It’s really important for people to be able to look at themselves and see themselves how others see them,” says Trerise. “We don’t look at someone else and stare at their cellulite. You see the glow in their eyes, their personality, their vivaciousness, their fun energy. That’s what we try to capture.”

In the end, it’s meant to be fun, whether it’s a gift for themselves or someone else—or both. “I always joke with my clients that they’re coming in to give a gift to their other half,” says Coates. “But really, it’s just for you, right?” V

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Find Your *Wildhood*

Drive, disconnect and discover the healing powers of nature via RV

BY JULIA DUMBRELL

Driving his recreational vehicle to his favourite campsite in Algonquin, Ontario, self-proclaimed “weekend getaway aficionado” Robert Anzit feels a sense of freedom others in the RV community know well. He becomes more in touch with his “Wildhood”—an urge, a force, a feeling we all possess but too often put off or push down. In fact, the aim of the latest iteration of the not-for-profit organization Go RVing Canada’s annual (since 2015) Wildhood campaign, this year dubbed “You Are Out There,” is to remind all Canucks to free themselves from the pressure to conform and focus on their inner-child desire by venturing off the beaten path via RV travel.

Anzit is keenly aware of the dwindling bars of service on his cellphone as he drives steadily toward his home-away-from-home for the long weekend. Unless he puts a quarter in a payphone (yes, they still exist in 2023), the next three days will leave the St. Catharines, Ontario-based freelance commercial photographer to himself, his partner and the outdoor activities they love the most, all thanks to his trusty RV.

“I think the first time I really felt a deep connection to nature or ‘found my Wildhood’ while RVing was my first time in Algonquin with my wife. I felt so connected to nature and re-energized because I didn’t have anything to do besides being surrounded by trees and water, taking the canoe out or going fishing—all the things that people take for granted,” says Anzit. “There is so much nature so close to home [in Canada] that you can get outside every day for the whole year if you really wanted to. To connect and feel closer to something that’s so free, is, well, so freeing.”

Indeed, going “off the grid” has become more important than ever before. Many of us realized the importance of connecting with nature during the pandemic, as it gave us a renewed appreciation for alleviating some of the pressures of daily life. But, conversely, in being constantly connected to our electronic devices and social media, Go RVing Canada has also seen a reversal of what Canadians learned during the last few years. RVing offers an ideal opportunity to take back control of our time and get our energy back—to be the best versions of ourselves in our regular lives because You Are Out There.



As an experienced RVer, Anzit’s best tip for being prepared for an RV trip is to plan ahead. “Make a list of things that you might need and the things that you really need for that trip, then cut it down. My wife and I will plan a list and look at it twice to see if the list is the right fit for what we’re doing. It’s super important to have that list and say, ‘What do I actually need and what do I need to support my RV trip?’”

Go RVing Canada recommends bringing, beyond the obvious necessities like clothing and emergency safety items, a good flashlight, simple meals and a deck of cards—only the things you’ll really need to disconnect. Bringing just the essentials helps Anzit eliminate any unnecessary distractions from his weekend getaway, allowing him to connect with his Wildhood.

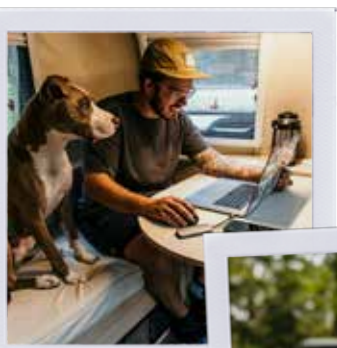
Just as important as what you pack is the RV you pick. Through its online RV Starter Toolkit, Go RVing Canada emphasizes that the right RV should reflect how you want to explore. For Anzit, that means an RV for all-terrain, with space for his gear. He uses RV trips as opportunities to engage in his favourite activities—paddle boarding, surfing, mountain biking and rock climbing—so he needs space in his vehicle for that equipment. Other explorers may gravitate toward a small and sleek RV to encourage spontaneous weekend getaways, a luxurious RV for glamping or a vehicle with space for the whole family.

“The most important thing is to find an RV that suits your lifestyle and needs, whether that be towability or being small so you can go off-grid,” he says. “It’s super important that the RV you pick fits your lifestyle because it makes RVing and the transition into RVing even easier. The type of RV you pick should reflect how you want to explore the world with it.”

One of the best parts about RVing is the incredible sense of community it fosters, and the support and encouragement available within that group. “Everyone is so open to telling you how to explore new places, how to save money, how to go the longest distance at the cheapest cost,” Anzit describes. “It’s so cool to be in this community because there’s so much to learn and there’s so much to explore by meeting people and hearing their stories.”

Returning home from his trip, Anzit feels completely re-energized. Each getaway, he says, inspires him to log off and take the time to connect with nature and his favourite outdoor activities, giving him more motivation in his regular life. Having found his Wildhood, he knows the next opportunity to connect with himself and what matters the most is only an RV trip away.

“I appreciate RVing more and more because it gives me the freedom to slow my life down, and that’s very hard for a lot of people right now. Being in the hustle and bustle of work, you’re always on the go,” he says. “But being able to go RVing slows time back down so I can take back control. And that’s a great feeling.” To learn more about the RV lifestyle and how to find your Wildhood, visit GoRVing.ca.



PHOTOS: ROE ANZIT PHOTOGRAPHY

“RVing opened a lot of doors for people to escape their house and to escape feeling trapped to get back into nature. The pandemic also gave people a different perspective of exploring close to home because we couldn’t travel [far] away from home. I think RVing gave people a new sense of life and hope,” Anzit agrees, adding that he and his wife “really enjoy being able to disconnect. ... It’s nice to log off and find a campsite that makes you slow down. That really makes you appreciate why RVing is so important in people’s lives.”

Of course, disconnecting via an RV trip means ensuring you pack and take with you all the essentials you’ll need once you arrive at your destination—especially if it’s somewhere very remote, without amenities nearby. Anzit believes, “being overly prepared can really benefit your trip. Learning about RVing and exploring the resources and articles on GoRVing.ca is a great starting point for helping you figure out where you want to go, how to pack your RV or what you might need for your first trip.”

Raise a Glass to *Dad!*

Father's Day is the perfect time to experience fine sips with a paternal twist

BY NOA NICHOL



ZUCCARDI

Austin Hope

With daughters of his own, winemaker Austin Hope continues to create the Treana line of wines in honour of his dad, Chuck. "When our family arrived in Paso Robles, it was a rural, grain-farming community. There were very few grapevines and even fewer wineries. Treana was but a dream yet to come to fruition: a dream of a world-class wine able to compete on the world stage, and yet approachable enough for all to enjoy."

Hopefamilywines.com

Zuccardi

Alberto Zuccardi started planting grapes in 1963; eventually, his son, Jose, took over the winery and made it the success it is today: namely, one of most prominent wineries in Argentina. Now, Alberto's grandson, Sebastian, is leading the winery to ensure it continues to be premium and ecological. Jose and Sebastian work together still, daily, at the winery to ensure its success. Zuccardiwines.com

Brumont

Third-generation farmer Alain Brumont credits his dad for making him a winemaker: "My father owned Château Bouscassé. At the age of 16 he made me leave school and work for him." Brumont took over Bouscassé in 1979 and bought the abandoned Château Montus in 1980. There were no vines, so he planted 18 hectares. Now, his son Antoine is set to take over the family business. Brumont.fr



BRUMONT



HOPE FAMILY



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Dillon's: The Professor's Negroni

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