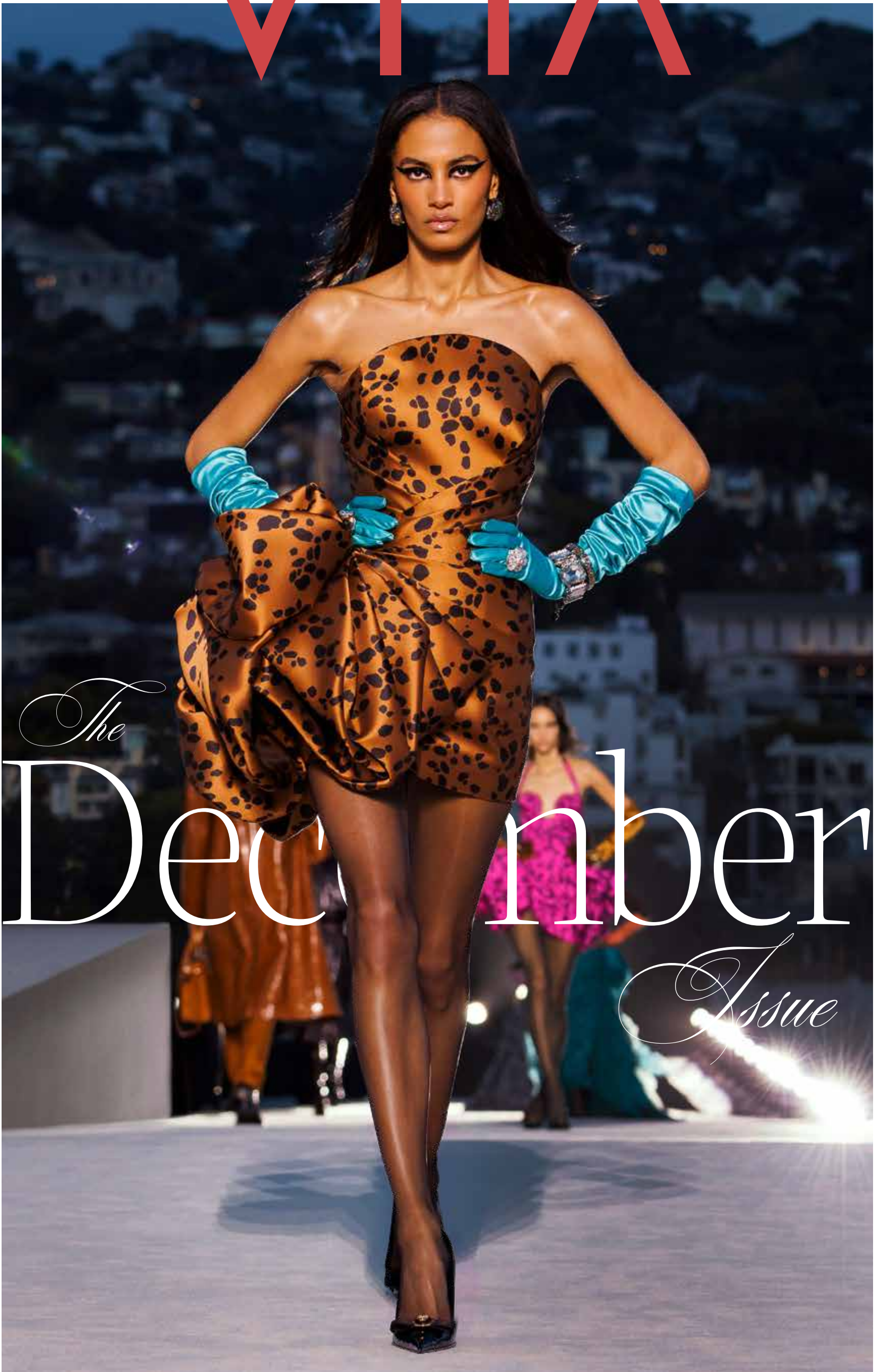


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VITA



INSIDE *the* ISSUE

HOLIDAY Count down to *Christmas* with a *luxe* advent calendar

DINING Local *farm-to-table* restaurants *adapt* to winter

SHOPPING *Gifts* to give, that give back

WINE *Six stellar* suggestions for gifting and hosting

TRAVEL *Quirky, cool, culinary* Cleveland



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Editor's DESK

A Note From Noa

I'm ready to embrace the comfort of the holiday season. While my mind remains on the many crises occurring around the world, I'm also feeling the fatigue of worrying about it all. You see, it's personal. With family in Israel, and a child in (now a heavily guarded) Jewish school, I've felt a lot of stress and anxiety in the last few weeks. While I won't turn away from what's happening (and you can read reporting I've done online), I also recognize the need to give myself some grace; feeling helpless all the time isn't healthy. That said, this issue of VITA is full of holiday cheer, from a very merry content creator to an advent calendar extravaganza to gifts that give back. Plus, we've kicked off our annual 35 Days of Giveaways extravaganza; visit us on Instagram @vitadailymedia for daily chances to win!

Noa Nichol EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Host, presenter and auctioneer, for more than two decades Fred Lee has been Vancouver's Man About Town. A tireless volunteer and fundraiser, he's a mentor to many and continues to give of his time and expertise to many organizations, including the Vancouver Chinatown Foundation. Oh, and it turns out, he absolutely loves the holidays!

Fred Lee

@FREDABOUTTOWN



Hi Fred! Tell us a bit about yourself to start.

I'm very lucky to hold a number of roles in the community, and take great pride in my work with each. I am the senior director of alumni engagement at UBC and a contributor for *Vancouver* magazine, *Boulevard* and others, sharing Metro Vancouver's A-list happenings, red-carpet parties, must-attend galas and fabulous fundraisers. I appear a number of radio and TV shows on similar topics, as well as food and lifestyle. My community building and volunteer work includes sitting on fundraising committees, hosting events, raising money as an auctioneer and acting as a mentor.

How do you use your platform to impact those who follow you?

I'm truly blessed to have the opportunity to amplify the work of so many in the community to help build a better world, from healthcare to the arts, diversity, equity and inclusion. It's gratifying to know that I can utilize my platform to make a real impact on people's lives.

What's your personal style/wellness mantra?

Stylish comfort. Personally, it's all about clothing and silhouettes that are timeless and can transcend seasons. Well-fitting wardrobe staples are essential to make you feel great, including a splendid suit, a classic tuxedo and a good pair of perfectly-fitting jeans. These will never fail you; having them in your wardrobe allows you to mix and match with a choice of accessories to keep things fresh and current.

O, Christmas! Are you a holly jolly junkie?

We love Christmas! My husband, Joshua, would celebrate sooner if he could but it usually starts after my birthday on November 17. We have 14 years of holiday celebrations, trees, baubles and other mementos packed in boxes in our garage, so each year we curate what comes out depending on what theme and colour schemes we're working with that holiday season. Holding onto heirlooms like baubles for the tree or other holiday decorations is actually one of my top tips for the holidays. Items like these are priceless and often passed down through generations, so don't let them go!



What are some of your favourite local festive activities?

From visits with friends and family to the Christmas parties, concerts, shows, galas, the Festival of Lights, the famous Christmas Market, The Nutcracker and more. We love all of it! We kick off the season with our annual holiday gathering, an open house for friends to come and enjoy a cup of cheer. Reds are always a bit of a risk when mingling, but a crisp white is always a great choice. A personal favourite of ours is Laughing Stock's 2021 Viognier. After the launch of our festivities with friends, my husband and I will, as we do every year, be spending time with family. We'll be travelling to Calgary to see Joshua's family, and then usher in Christmas with mine. Between the two visits, we'll also be heading to Maui to enjoy a few days of sun and sand!

What are your top holiday entertaining tips ... and sips?

Keep it simple so more time can be spent mixing and mingling with friends and family—versus in the kitchen prepping. I've actually partnered with Laughing Stock Vineyards to put together some of my top entertaining tips on how to "stock up" for the holidays. For example, I highly recommend investing in quality glassware you can use again and again. Meanwhile, for anyone concerned about "best etiquette" when it comes to serving drinks, it is absolutely OK to hold on to wines that guests bring that don't quite fit your menu for the evening. And, diversifying the wine you're offering to appeal to everyone is a sure-fire way to keep guests happy. As for our party staples: plenty of beautiful B.C. bubbles and local wine (Laughing Stock rich reds and crisp whites to accompany our holiday dishes), charcuterie boards of fine cheese and meats (Les Amis du Fromage is our go-to for beautiful boards) and holiday sweets (from Beaucoup Bakery, Thomas Haas and Thierry Patisserie).

"We need to support our local winegrowers, and I am encouraging everyone to buy B.C. wine this season, whether you're selecting a wine at a restaurant, entertaining at home or getting gifts to give"



What's your fave type of gift to give ... and how do you personally give back?

A beautiful bottle of wine and a bespoke candle are great host gifts. If you are invited for dinner, don't be shy to ask what the host is preparing. That way you can play the perfect party guest and find the perfect wine to pair with that delicious dish. Following the recent wildfires in the Okanagan Valley coupled with earlier extreme cold temperatures, the wine region has been severely impacted this past year, so the B.C. wine industry can definitely use some love. We need to support our local winegrowers, and I am encouraging everyone to buy B.C. wine this season, whether you're selecting a wine at a restaurant, entertaining at home or getting gifts to give. In terms of giving back, during the holidays Joshua and I like to support some of our favourite local charities like the Greater Vancouver Food Bank and the United Way, who are doing their best to ensure everyone enjoys the season. The holidays can be an expensive time of year, so if you can't afford to make a donation, the gift of time is just as valuable. As it gets colder and the festivities begin for some, many organizations are seeking volunteers to support their great work. If you have some time, please consider getting involved.

Christmas wish time: what is at the very top of your list?

Personal time. Joshua and I do our best every year, particularly around the holidays, to give ourselves some time for self-care, whether that's a trip away, sharing some wine together by the fire or a few hours of pampering at one of our favourite spas. Personal time with your loved ones really is priceless. ♡



THE MAKING OF THE BRITISH COLUMBIA

December Issue

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COUNTDOWN TO
CHRISTMAS

Holiday on the daily
 with our favourite advent calendars



Liquid Asset

Get to know this winter skincare hero before the temperature dips

BY EMILY MACCULLOCH & INGRIE WILLIAMS @T.ZONEBEAUTY

As much as we don't want to believe it, winter is here, which means dry, irritated and itchy skin is imminent. While some things in the beauty industry seem like a gimmick, updating your skincare routine for colder weather isn't one of them. But, instead of doing a complete overhaul on every step of our daily regimens, we've found there's one product we can add into our AM and PM priming sessions that makes a big impact: an essence (sometimes called a toner). Originating in Korea, these skincare VIPs are water-based liquids that are applied to cleansed skin and seriously amp up hydration. Here's the intel on essences—a.k.a. the secret sauce to any winter skincare routine.

THINK: FLUID FIRST

Layering isn't just the smartest approach to dressing for winter—it's also an effective way to fortify skin against the drying effects of cold weather and arid indoor heating. An essence acts like that all-important, form-fitting lightweight base layer you reach for first before piling on a hefty knit. Due to its watery texture, these formulas can easily trickle below the skin's barrier level, infusing the epidermis with much-needed hydration, while bringing other key ingredients along for the ride.

KNOW YOUR TYPE

To find a good essence match for your skin, learn to scan labels for the right ingredients. Hyaluronic acid is a superstar active that all skin types can benefit from. It's plumping, hydrating and lightweight, which means it won't be too heavy for even the oiliest of skin. When it comes to curbing breakouts, salicylic acid is a champion to help clear out clogged pores and combat inflammation. If your skin is on the dry side, look for a formula with ceramides, which are ultra-nourishing, strengthening and protective lipids found naturally in the skin. Lastly, if softening fine lines is your MO, choose an essence with peptides. These little amino acids



help to rebuild and repair damaged skin cells for a smoother complexion.

CREAM CONNECTION

Whether for brightening, soothing, clarifying or strengthening, an essence can add an array of benefits to your skincare routine. But every juice has its limits. To prevent major moisture loss and protect the outermost layer (which helps keep skin feeling supple, calm and all-around comfy), apply essence, serum and then face cream as a last un-skippable step.

Moisturizer is made to sit on the skin, forming an occlusive barrier that will trap hydration for longer periods. Every skin type can also consider switching to a heavier formula once winter hits, even our naturally oily complexions appreciate more-buttery or balm-like textures during colder months.

TIP: DON'T WASTE A DROP!

Skip the cotton pad, and splash essence into palms before pressing onto the face. ▽



Best for ...

- Oily Skin** Paula's Choice Skin Perfecting 2% BHA Liquid Exfoliant, \$49. [Sephora.com](https://www.sephora.com)
- Sensitive Skin** Dr. Andrew Weil for Origins Mega-Mushroom Relief & Resilience Soothing Treatment Lotion, \$56. [Origins.ca](https://www.origins.com)
- Dry Skin** Belif Moisturizing Bomb Toner, \$41. [Sephora.com](https://www.sephora.com)
- Mature Skin** Pixi Botanical Collagen Tonic, \$38. [Shoppersdrugmart.ca](https://www.shoppersdrugmart.ca)
- Normal Skin** Caudalie VinoPerfect Brightening Glycolic Essence, \$73. [Caudalie.com](https://www.caudalie.com)

Invest this holiday season



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LAUGHING STOCK VINEYARDS

Presents of Kind

BY ALEESHA HARRIS

Make this holiday season count with gifts that give back

In 2013, Holt Renfrew launched an in-store department called the H Project. Spearheaded by Alexandra Weston, the now-VP of brand and creative strategy, the space aimed to promote products and brands “helping to drive positive change within the industry.”

“H Project’s purpose is to connect customers with causes and communities to inspire a new generation of purposeful luxury that’s helping to drive positive change within the industry,” Weston says. “[It] provides a platform for these brands and their makers to support their products and tell the story behind them.”

The initial selection was driven by a single question: “If the fashion industry was so influential that it could cause such negative social and environmental impacts, then was it not possible to push that pendulum in the other direction and use that same influence to be a catalyst for good?”

A decade later, the assemblage of artisan offerings and sustainable brands has positioned Holt Renfrew as a leader in eco-conscious luxury with company-wide programs and commitments within the Holts Sustainable Edit, “science-based targets” within its corporate community investment strategy, a charity partner program with WWF-Canada and more.

The H Project offering has expanded to include 292 independent artisans and brands from more than 40 countries, representing 150-plus artisan communities, says Weston. Artisan partners are chosen for the aesthetic appeal of their products and positive impact that they carry. “With a decade of experience under our belt, we’re pretty good at knowing where to look and what questions to ask,” she says of the selection process. “The other way we find products is through partnerships with incredible organizations and people, like Obakki and Treana Peake, who dedicate their lives to creative positive impact by supporting artisan communities.”

Peake is the founder of the “purpose-led



lifestyle brand” and foundation Obakki, which works with thousands of artisan partners in countries like Uganda, Kenya and Mexico. The artisans earn fair compensation for their products and additional support offered with the goal of ensuring a sustainable working environment. Peake travels to each community to establish long-term connections with the makers, ensuring “sustainability, traceability and ethical production,” according to the brand. “Where all our product comes from, it’s not made in factories. It’s small batch, made by humans,” Peake has said of the curated artisan selection.

The idea of conscious consumerism—buying and using products with a mindful and intentional perspective—has increased recently. A March 2021 survey from Statista showed 46 per cent of Canadian shoppers said they purchased more “biodegradable and eco-friendly products,” with 49 per cent saying they supported and were eager to support companies and retailers offering more eco-friendly

options and perspectives.

“More and more, customers are making purchasing decisions based on a brand’s values,” Weston says. “This is amazing. And a lot of brands are making changes to their production and sourcing to align with those demands.”

With the goal of supporting makers closer to home, retailer Simons launched an initiative called Fabrique 1840 in 2018. The digital platform offers access to an ever-growing list of goods by Canadian designers and artisans. What started as 50 handpicked makers has grown to include more than 400 from “all four corners of the country” with goods spanning homewares and furniture, ceramics, accessories and even modern art.

“The motivation ... is to create a mutually beneficial ecosystem,” says Cecile Branco, director of vision, sustainable development and circular economy at Simons. “The road to Canadian economic success is rooted in co-operation and community. With the goal of supporting gifted

creators, we wish to ensure they can make a living from their craft and contribute to the local economy.”

It’s an effort that Branco says Canadian shoppers are stepping up to support. “The success of Fabrique 1840 relates to our customers’ interest in high-quality design and materials. This is the main reason we keep growing our Fabrique 1840 portfolio with creativity, quality, beauty and authenticity.”

As the interest in sustainable options grows, shoppers can expect to see a further evolution of the eco-conscious offering in stores. And, according to Weston, that evolution includes innovation.

“There is an incredible merging between fashion and science happening that is resulting in an explosion of innovative materials, ways of production, and circular concepts all aimed at minimizing the impacts of fashion and consumerism in general,” she says. “This is an exciting space we are hoping to support as we evolve.” ▾

HOME ACCESSORIES WITH PERSONALITY



Details
BY MR. K

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Searching for a gift that pays it forward? Look no further than these six products with ethical sourcing, fair-trade practices and philanthropic initiatives.

1 Cute, cosy and crafted in Canada, these adorable crocheted socks from the Quebec-based small artisan brand Les Petits Tousi (from \$43 at Simons.ca) offer handmade footwear options for newborns up to age 24 months.

2 This Women’s Asilah Cropped Sweater (\$225 at Kotn.com) from Canadian brand Kotn is even sweeter thanks to its organic cotton-responsibly sourced wool blend and ethical creation in Portugal.

3 Not your everyday advent calendar, this charity-linked creation from 24 Good Deeds (From \$24 at Donate.24gooddeeds.ca) sees a charitable project behind each “door” of the calendar that shows exactly where your donations are going to work.

4 Handmade in Oaxaca, Mexico by artisan Julio Martinez Diaz, this clay Liso Corazon Vase (\$135 at Obakki.com) is elegant and earthy—as well as eye-catching.

5 Give the gift of selfcare with this Lulum Bath and Body Oil (\$54 at Holtrenfrew.com) from the Indigenous-owned brand Skwalwen Botanicals, which features calendula and plantain to nourish and soften skin. Handcrafted in Canada, the brand’s small-batch offering ranges from bar soaps to soothing bath salts.

6 For the kids, meet this year’s Holiday Bear, hand-crafted by Nepalese artisans for Hazel Village and Holt Renfrew (\$65 at Holtrenfrew.com). Every bear provides hours of meaningful work for underserved communities. Plus, \$5 from each full-priced purchase will be donated to WWF-Canada’s Regenerate Canada plan to recover at-risk species, restore habitat across the country and fight climate change.

Merry Kitsmas

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Fuzzy Sweater KOTN \$225



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Fizzy Bath Salts
Beauty Bar \$28



Sequin Top and Skirt Set
The Latest Scoop \$148

Kitsmas time is here! Take a peek at some of these favourites found on West 4th Ave, then track them down at our holiday shopping event on Friday December 8th to Sunday December 10th. Whether you're on the hunt for great gifts, tasty treats, dazzling decor, or the perfect party outfit - you'll be able to find it on West 4th.

We'll also have bubbly and fun at participating stores, plus a festive photo set up with @thehappyphotobus and hot drinks at the Maple Plaza on Saturday December 9th from 11AM to 4PM. Be sure to also look out for our advent giveaways on Instagram, the KitsGiving campaign, and Kitsmas fun throughout the neighbourhood this December. Full details at shopwest4th.com

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WEST 4TH



SUTTON
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BOLD AT HEART

Small but Strong

To make a big impact, shop small businesses

BY JILL VON SPRECKEN

Built on larger-than-life ambitions and hustle, small businesses are much bigger than their name suggests. “It’s somebody’s dream. It’s somebody’s passion. It’s somebody’s love,” says Sarah Keast, co-founder of Crying Out Loud. The online shop curates care packages and gifts for all of life’s occasions—even the hard ones—thanks to the unique perspective of the four founders, all young widows. “You’re supporting someone’s dream, you’re supporting their family, and you’re keeping your local neighbourhood vibrant and unique,” she says.

Small businesses may be mighty, but these days they need support more than ever. Inflation, rising interest rates, high shipping tariffs and employee retention have business owners feeling like the deck is stacked against them. And navigating this new reality on the heels of the pandemic has led to widespread burnout. “The pandemic itself pushed us to our breaking point,” says Lexi Soukoreff, owner and creative director at Vancouver-based activewear brand Daub + Design. “We pushed forward and there are constantly new challenges. Everything from staffing, to inflation, to cost of living. We are all feeling it personally, but then as a business as a separate entity.”

The feeling is echoed by Brandy Mercredi, founder of sustainable clothing brand Franc. “All businesses I talked to, they all seem to be struggling in some fashion right now,” she says. “Small businesses just don’t have those deep pockets to be able to really withstand another difficult year. Or if you’re a business that did really well over the pandemic and you had to grow, to be able to scale back is also really difficult.”

In a moment of truth, some, including Soukoreff, have taken to social media to ask for support from their customers and followers. “What we saw in July, August, was people just kind of stopped spending. And that was very concerning. That was why we did the post.” But she wasn’t alone. “I was floored to see the response from so many other small business owners.”

Last spring, Mercredi also posted when the slowdown first began to tighten its grip. “Just been trying to be as transparent as possible about it,” she says. “So customers know, but also so other small businesses just don’t feel so alone.”



“A lot of small businesses are getting to this place, where there aren’t any chess moves left.

You’re like, OK, checkmate”

and-mortar shop on Toronto’s Danforth Avenue, moving to online only. “I feel like I ran out of chess moves,” says Keast. “Trying to figure out how to manage the cash flow and the people and the product, and all of that. And then it just got to a place that, and I think a lot of small businesses are getting to this place, where there aren’t any chess moves left. You’re like, OK, checkmate.”

There are ways we can help small businesses stay in the game. Number one, of course, is choosing to spend with them. But it’s not the only way, as Naomie Caron, founder and designer of Montreal-based Selfish Swimwear points out. “There’s so much noise on the Internet,” she says. “Resharing, reposting, commenting, tagging companies, telling the companies that you like what they do. All those little things that are not necessarily attached to the cost are making a big difference.” And it’s not just about feeding the algorithm. “Having a client say I love what you do, I’m so happy to support you. That just gives us the fuel to continue.”

Mercredi is in agreement. “Be a customer, be a connector, be a cheerleader or be a brand champion,” she says. “Connect a business with somebody else who might be able to shop or need to shop from there. Even commenting, sharing a post, liking on social media can go a long way for small business.” Although, spreading the word can take a digital or analog approach, as Keast explains. “Word-of-mouth marketing is the most powerful,” she says. “It’s organic, and it’s authentic.”

In the end, it’s not just about keeping your favourite retailer afloat—it’s much bigger than that. “I’m trying my best to make locally, to support the local economy, to employ people locally. To create something that’s going to last a long time, to not impact the environment,” says Caron. Plus, when you shop small, it’s a whole experience. “They’re going to remember names. They’re going to answer your emails,” says Duff. “They’re the ones that have the most care and the most knowledge, and really care about what they’re bringing to the world.”

There’s no mistaking the diversity and vibrancy small businesses bring to the spaces they inhabit. “It’s the backbone of society. We provide jobs and all of that, but also when you walk down the street and you see your community, you see a diversity in what’s being offered,” says Soukoreff. “We want to keep going. We love everyone ... I couldn’t ask for a better career and a better community.”



Sometimes an Instagram post isn’t enough. Allie Duff’s community-minded clothing company Pure Balanxed is an example of the fine line business owners navigate. The shift back to pre-pandemic spending patterns made it difficult to deal with other challenges—like inflation, and the cost of making clothing in Canada. In August 2022, she added her voice to the chorus asking for help on social media. “That went viral, which was amazing. It saved the business at the time,” she says. “But when I look back, it saved the business through people shopping on sale prices. So that’s not full costs, and that’s not making me any money.” Last summer, she made the difficult decision to close the business. “I just couldn’t see how things were going to get better.”

The owners of Crying Out Loud also know a little bit about closing doors. In their case, it was shuttering their bricks-



Shape Shifting

Body-enhancing undies have evolved,
but are they all to be celebrated?

BY AILEEN LALOR

Even back in Ancient Greece, women were wearing forms of shapewear to make their waists look tinier. The clothing evolved and became more elaborate—here a corset, there a bustle, everywhere a girdle—and was a mainstay until the 1960s, when women ditched the restrictive undies, labelling them “instruments of female torture.” Much underwear back then was predicated on being attractive to men—think of WonderBra’s “Hello Boys” campaign in 1994, billboards for which supposedly caused some guys to crash their cars.

Then along came Spanx, founded by Sara Blakely in the year 2000. “Spanx is synonymous with the word ‘shapewear’ because we’re the originators—we created and defined the category,” says Kiana Miree, chief merchandising officer. “When Spanx was created 23 years ago, its original ‘why’ was always to offer solutions that allowed women to celebrate their bodies, not modify them.” The brand started with undies you could wear under white pants so they weren’t see-through. Soon, the name was everywhere, being referenced on SNL and becoming one of Oprah’s favourite things.

A large stake in Spanx was bought for \$1.2 billion in 2021 (Sara Blakely continues to be executive chairwoman). These days, shapewear appears in many women’s wardrobes, and celebs like Lizzo and Kim Kardashian have developed their own brands—Yitty, for the former, and Skims, which was recently valued at \$4 billion, for the latter.

It’s also evolved, with more sizes, options that go under any kind of garment, products for thigh-chafing, period shapewear and pieces that are just much prettier or can even be worn as outerwear, like Knix’s butt-sculpting leggings or Aritzia’s “contour” line. “Over the last decade, shapewear has also moved from being something that we would hide



away that was almost embarrassing to be being trendy and cool, and people are incorporating it into their everyday outfits,” says Erin Treloar, health coach and founder of Raw Beauty.

The world and its culture and discourse in 2023 is quite different to the one in 2000, when Bridget Jones was recording her weight in her diary and Kate Moss was telling the world that nothing tastes as good as skinny feels.

“When I first started here almost five years ago, women came in with the expectation that they would buy shapewear that would make them look a size or two smaller,” says Dee Clarke, a fitter at Diane’s Lingerie. Many shapewear brands marketed themselves on making you look thinner and that’s definitely no longer the case—as Treloar says, “I’m very happy that the next generation won’t constantly be bombarded with messaging that they need to be thinner and they need to lose weight in such a direct way as we grew up with in the 1990s and early 2000s.” But in a body-positive world, what’s the goal now, and how is it being sold?

“Empowerment” is the word they’re using. It’s a little bit of marketing spiel; “Female empowerment is trendy right now,” points out Treloar. But she says there’s also something real behind it. “I think of Lizzo as being an empowering woman,” she says. “I even think Kim Kardashian in many ways is very empowering to females.”

Skims’ latest move has been to launch a nipple bra, which has an in-built nipple detail, “for a perky, bra-less look.” Those of us who spent our younger years mortified at the idea that anyone might even know we had nipples were mystified at this launch, but Rosie Mangiarotti, founder of Perkies, knows what’s up. Her first product was a sticky bra with replaceable adhesives. Next, she launched Perkies Petals, which were designed to hide your nipples. Then, about 18 months ago came Perkies Nips: nipple enhancers that can be positioned inside or outside your bra to make your nipples more prominent.

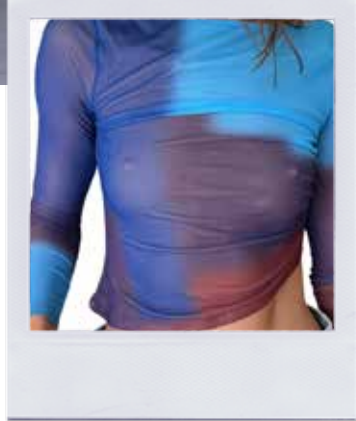
How did the brand evolve from making nipple covers to nipple enhancers? “It’s totally generational, because whenever I see women over 40 they’re like, ‘Why would you want that?’ Whereas there’s this whole free-the-nipple movement and this idea of women owning their sexuality,” Mangiarotti says. “It has put this emphasis on, you can do and wear whatever you want. And if you want to do it, shame on anyone for making you feel like you need to cover your nipple!”

Mangiarotti’s inspiration for creating the product was seeing Hailey Bieber at the Met Gala 2022. “Hailey came out in this gorgeous silk dress and her nipples were prominently showing, and I’m like, ‘damn, why don’t I look like that when I wear a silk dress?’” After launch, she quickly found that there was another market for her product: women who’d had treatment for breast cancer. One of the first retailers for the product was AnaOno, which makes bras for women who’ve had mastectomies; through that, Mangiarotti connected with many breast cancer survivors, one of whom told her, “You are empowering women because you’re giving them one more option.”

Does she see a market for selling these products to men? Not really; perhaps among trans men or runners who experience chafed nipples, but otherwise men don’t really have the goal of enhancing their nips (which, Mangiarotti points out, aren’t censored on Instagram like women’s are). Treloar muses: “Will there ever be shapewear for men? What if there was some sort of underwear that they put on that made their penises look bigger and gave them bigger muscles in their arms? There would never be that! That would never be a thing!”

As much as some women find shapewear and enhancements empowering, how far have we really progressed in the battle for body positivity? “I still feel like when I’m in the fitting room with women, they are fixated on that part of their body they dislike the most,” says Clarke. “We could get them into the most beautiful uplifting, supportive, gorgeous bra and they’ll still fixate on the pudge by their armpit, or on their stomach when their boobs look amazing.”

And while Treloar is very much on the “you-do-you” train, she cautions that shapewear isn’t completely unproblematic. “There’s still an underlying tone of ‘you need to be smoother, smaller, curvier in certain places and not so curvy in other places,’ and that has an impact,” she says. “I would never blame things like negative body image and eating disorders and mental health disorders on something as simple as shapewear. It doesn’t come down to one product or company and the messages that one company is giving, because there’s so much as a collective society that we need to work on and address.”



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The Beauty of Giving

Some Canadian cosmetic brands go beyond lip service when it comes to supporting charitable causes

BY AILEEN LALOR

Most big brands make a hoo-ha about all the charitable work they do—the corporate social responsibility where they periodically donate money to good causes, give their staff time off to volunteer, or even run their own foundations. That's all very laudable—even if they only do it for the tax breaks. But what about companies that are small, but choose to have a big impact in their own communities?

Mike Vivier's parents founded Vivier Skin in Montreal in 2000, and giving back was always part of the brand DNA. "My father was in pharmaceuticals and my mother worked in nursing in clinical research," he explains. "They devoted their lives to helping and giving back and raised us [with the idea that] that it was better to give than to take."

His company supports around 100 charitable organizations—some big, like the Elton John AIDS Foundation, but many that serve the local community, including Montreal's Dans La Rue, which supports unhoused people, and St. Mary's Hospital. There's a combination of hands-on volunteering from Vivier and his staff, and cash donations. Yet it was only a couple of years ago that Vivier Skin added a somewhat-hidden page about giving back to its website. "We've always done it, but it's not for exposure or recognition," Vivier explains. "We wanted to start sharing because we realized it would allow us to create a proper platform to do more." Coming up soon: Vivier merchandise with 100 per cent of profits going to charitable causes.

AG Care has also stayed somewhat schtum about its community work. "There's a history of be humble, be Canadian, just do the work," explains chief revenue officer Karla Cheon. Many people are familiar with One Girl Can, the charity established by AG founder Lotte Davis in 2008, which works to build schools in Africa. They're less familiar with the work the brand does in its Coquitlam community. Cheon says co-founders John and Lotte Davis have always believed that giving back is the reward for their success. "They really clearly and authentically believe that, of course a business wants to be profitable and successful, but it also has a responsibility to the community," she explains. To that end, the brand changed its name from AG Hair to AG Care in 2022, to reflect its care for the planet and the people who live on it.

Lotte Davis has now left AG Care to run One Girl Can full time, and the brand continues to support the organization by donating money from product sales to the tune of \$2.3 million and counting. But it's also championing a number of other causes, including the Coquitlam Food Bank, a Downtown Eastside women's shelter and YWCA Crabtree Corner. "We try to pick partners where we can have a meaningful impact—where you can see our work doing something," Cheon explains. "It's about narrowing in on partners where you can make inroads, giving time, talent and multiple other things, rather than cutting a cheque and moving on."



Sometimes there's a deeply personal reason for partnering with a specific charity—such as in the case of Hammam Spa/Céla Beauty founder Celine Tadrissi. "Look Good Feel Better is a charity we've worked with and that has been on our radar for years because one of our estheticians, Ashlie Styles, passed away [in her 30s] from cancer," she explains. "I remember visiting her in hospital and she had a care pack from Look Good Feel Better; they were arranging a wig, and it was one good experience for her in the horrible last few months of her life."

Tadrissi thought that as a smaller business she wouldn't be able to have much impact on the organization in terms of dollars, though she does donate a portion of gift-card sales each year, gives products as prizes at events like the annual



Mirror Ball, and so on. So she came up with a way to use the spa's professional expertise to make a difference. Her senior esthetician took an international certificate in aesthetic oncology: beauty treatments specifically for those undergoing or recovering from cancer treatment. Tadrissi is now working with local colleges and other spas on developing a program for their students, in consultation with Look Good Feel Better. "It covers contraindications and recommended treatments, but also some of the other skills related to working with someone who has an illness: the words you use and avoid, and your tone of voice." Starting in 2024, the spa will be opening its schedule once a month for cancer patients to book spa services with modified treatment protocols at no charge.

The communities served by charities benefit from brand partnerships, and customers get to feel good when they buy products from a company that does good. Another bonus of a business doing good work for a charity (apart from the warm-fuzzy feelings)? It instills incredible staff loyalty. Tadrissi has many team members who've been at her company since it was founded in 2005. Vivier says the majority of the team-building exercises they do as a company have a charitable component—groups will make up bags of treats for unhoused people or participate in toy drives for children undergoing palliative care. And Cheon says AG Care's philanthropic work is one of the things that attracted her to the business in the first place.

"The care feels genuine when you come in the building," she says. "We have more than one instance of a parent and child both working in AG Care. It's a rarity that you have such an affinity to a company that you want your loved ones to work there, too." ▾

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Frozen Food

How six farm-to-table restaurants adapt for winter

BY ALEXANDRA TURNER

As we enter December it's hard to imagine anything might be in season during such inhospitable cold. But according to the chefs of some of Vancouver's best farm-to-table restaurants there is plenty of produce to celebrate—and even some abundant seafood. In fact, eateries across the city make a point of celebrating seasonality; it's more environmentally friendly, and it's no secret that food tastes better when it's fresh. However, only the kitchens that also commit to locally grown or produced ingredients can call themselves farm-to-table. These six restaurants, almost all of which are vegetarian-friendly if not forward, are masters of adjusting to the seasons and making fresh produce fabulous. Here's how they adapt to winter.

BURDOCK & CO

Expect to find apples, beets, Brussels sprouts, cabbages, carrots, kale, leeks, onions and root vegetables on the menu at Michelin star-winning Burdock & Co this time of year. Potatoes, yams, winter squash and turnips bulk out the majority of the farm-to-table menu, with plenty of hearty greens and mushrooms. On the sweet side, expect "citrus and kiwi and exciting winter fruits that are being grown in B.C. now," says chef Andrea Carlson. Kiwis can be bought at farmers markets in the winter and root crops come from Hazelmere and North Arm Farm in Pemberton. "Mushroom season is happening right now as well and it's a bounty year, so load up on all the wild mushrooms." According to Carlson, deep winter means roots, so she creates a menu around that product. "We have also preserved other roots like ginger from farms this summer that we can use on the upcoming menu." She doesn't find winter any more difficult for menu planning, but does concede that it can be a bit less diverse. "We rely on preserved seeds, berries and fruits to add some diversity to the roots," she says.



FORAGE

Forage's menu changes week to week and month to month; depending on what's available at local farms, certain items are staples year-round while others are celebrations of hyper-seasonal produce. It makes menu planning more challenging for executive chef Craig Sung because the variety of local, seasonal ingredients are more limited compared to the other seasons. "This, however, presents an opportunity for us to really push our creativity and explore other ways to showcase our food," he says. "This means that we are planning far ahead of the winter season by pickling, fermenting and preserving produce from the spring and summer." He sources Brussels sprouts, butter potatoes and cabbage from North Arm Farm, and beets, squash and apples from Klippers Organics in Cawston. And, from Hannah Brook Farms in Burnaby, stinging nettle, winter salad mix and celery root. "Being a locally focused restaurant, we strive to feature dishes that highlight our local seasonal bounty," he says.

FABLE KITCHEN

Head chef Matthew Villamoran is a massive fan of fennel, hearty leafy greens like kale, Swiss chard and mustard greens, humble root vegetables like rutabaga and white turnips, and fruits like quince, apple and pear, most of which comes from Hannah Brook Farms. "Every season, along with the usual seasonal suspects, we try to showcase vegetables that are not always in the spotlight, like rutabaga," he says. "On our current dinner menu we have a cold rutabaga salad. The rutabaga is first heavily charred, roasted then chilled. It's served with a caramelized lemon vinaigrette, preserved lemon creme fraiche, fried sage and fresh thyme." He doesn't think winter menu planning is any harder with the right team around you. "No food is ever new," he shares. "We are always trying to find creative methods and new techniques to prepare vegetables for all seasons. When menu development rolls around the team has lots of discussions on what may be new and exciting to any individual."

FANNY BAY OYSTER BAR

Produce isn't the only thing that experiences seasons. Seafood is seasonal, too. Most farmed shellfish is in season during the fall and winter months, explains chef Tommy Shorthouse of Fanny Bay Oyster Bar, which considers itself "tide to table." During winter, farmed shellfish is harvested at night during low tides as the earth is tilted away from the sun. Oysters are usually at their finest and most flavourful October through December because they've fattened up on the summer algae and are preparing to go into hibernation during the cold months. "I'm very influenced by coastal regions around the world and adapt versions of those dishes using our West Coast seafood and making it the star," he says. Because of the versatility of the seafood, Shorthouse says the menu's largest changes are temperature, hot dishes for winter and more chilled options during the summer.

THE ACORN

Restaurateur Shira Blustein has opened two vegetarian restaurants, one of which is Michelin recommended. The Acorn creates vegan and gluten-free dishes from all locally sourced ingredients, utilizing every aspect in its zero-waste kitchen. Stems, skins, pits and scraps from the fruits and vegetables are repurposed into dishes like Allium, which features charred leek-top oil. There's also a daily rotating feature that contains fresh farmed and foraged ingredients. This winter, the menu heavily features mushrooms, root vegetables and stone fruit.

FARMER'S APPRENTICE

The menu at Farmer's Apprentice is a moving target, which is a large part of its appeal. The restaurant was among the first truly farm-to-table offerings in Vancouver and continues to adapt to the seasonal changes and creative whims of its chef, Alden Ong. Checking out the restaurant's Instagram is a good way to gauge what kinds of ingredients will be featured on the menu at any given time; sprouting cauliflower and quince are in season right now. Locally sourced meat and seafood are also on the menu, and ordering the family-style option promises seven courses of dishes such as dry aged yellowtail kingfish with saffron velouté or fish sauce caramel duck leg with five spice duck and pork sausage accompanied by taro puff, umeboshi plum sauce, water chestnut and daikon. **V**



Merry Libations

For gifting or hosting, these holiday sips will have you feeling positively *fa-la-la*



1. FREIXENET CORDÓN NEGRO:

Three grape varieties are used in the creation of the base wine for Freixenet Cordón Negro, making a light, modern, refreshing cava. Delicate aromas combining tones of green apple and pear, with light resonances of Mediterranean fruits (peach, melon, pineapple) over a base of citrus, all beautifully balanced by light toasty aromas. Freixenet.com

2. PENFOLDS GRANDFATHER RARE TAWNY:

As far back as 1915, an oak cask containing the finest blend of available Tawny material was set aside for the exclusive use of the Penfold family. This wine was known as The Grandfather. With each vintage varietal batches are selected for Grandfather; these are individually aged in seasoned old oak casks before being blended together at 14 years of age. This blend is then introduced into the Grandfather Solera: six stages designed to fully integrate all components, offering consistency and freshness with a final minimum average blended age of 20 years. The result: classical Penfolds fruitcake, liquorice and vanillin oak flavours with a sweet full and round mid-palate, and a finish that persists on and on. Penfolds.com

3. ROAD 13 ADVENT CALENDAR:

'Tis the season to say goodbye to stale chocolate, and instead be swept away by six or 12 surprise Road 13 wines.

Old favourites, new releases and special-occasion wines specifically curated for the season. Sip and savour with friends and family, or cellar away for another day. Road13vineyards.com

4. GRAHAM'S SELECTION PACK:

This perfect gift for a port-loving friend contains five delicious selections from Graham's. Pairing-wise, port and Christmas chocolate is a match made in heaven. For dark, intense chocolate flavours, we recommend the full-fruited Graham's Six Grapes or Late Bottled Vintage. Grahams-port.com

5. AMARO MONTENEGRO: Italy's most iconic amaro is created from the essence of more than 40 botanicals. Traditionally served neat or on the rocks, Montenegro has also become a favourite among world class bartenders for its versatility and adding a flavourful twist to modern cocktails. Amaromontenegro.com

6. DILLON'S CRANBERRY SMASH

2 oz. Dillon's Rye Whisky
2 oz. fresh cranberry juice
1 oz. Dillon's Rosemary & Clove syrup
1 oz. fresh lemon juice
Rosemary sprig or cranberries, for garnish

Put all ingredients into a cocktail shaker, add ice and shake for 10-15 seconds. Strain into an ice-filled rocks glass, garnish and enjoy. Dillons.ca

Festive Foodies

Vancouver food influencers dish on their fave holiday eats

BY ASHLEY HARRIS

Laura Ullock, @laura.ullock, is your ultimate source for discovering exciting activities and delectable culinary delights across the Lower Mainland. Her motto: "Food and fun are what life is all about!" During the holidays, Ullock's palate is drawn to anything eggnog-flavoured, apples and small plates. For a festive night out in Vancouver, she heads to the Reflections Winter Terrace at the Rosewood Hotel Georgia, where, last Christmas, "they let you put any drink you wanted in a Santa Cup. I went with their Scrooged Up cocktail with Grey Goose, mandarin juice, winter spices and chocolate foam." She adds, "I also love checking out what new items Starbucks brings out each year, and I look forward to tasting—and judging it. This year it's the new iced gingerbread oat chai!"

For Steph Wan, @stephwants, discovering new restaurants, savouring diverse cuisines and documenting special culinary moments is a passion. In fact, her love for restaurant spaces and the connections they create led her to open Okini in Kerrisdale with partner Kevin Lin. During the holidays, a large roast or whole fish followed by pecan butter tarts, chewy ginger molasses cookies, buttery shortbread cookies, chocolate truffles and "candy cane-sprinkled anything" tickles her festive fancy. "I always look forward to the chestnut tart from Thierry, the ridiculously cute holiday cream puffs from BETA5, stuffed Cornish hen from Okini and chestnut travel cake from Boulevard."



When it comes to holiday dining, her heritage influences her love for visually appealing dishes. "I'm Greek so we eat with our eyes, and I love all the creative presentations," she says. Her go-to holiday eatery is Glowbal. "They transform the restaurant with Christmas trees and twinkling holiday decorations, making it the perfect spot to take a cute holiday pic—and you get to enjoy some delicious food, too. Win-win!" Pro tip: order the Jingle Juice—a cocktail made of bourbon, maple-roasted apple, lime juice, ginger syrup, ginger beer and dehydrated apple—and the Japanese A5 Wagyu beef.

Clarissa Nuttall, @bitemevancouver, wears the hats of a food blogger, social media manager and photographer. For a festive night out in Vancouver, her top pick is Tocador, a Cuban restaurant on Main Street for creative cocktails (ask if the bartender will mix you one off-menu), patatas bravas and cauliflower tacos. "Every year they come up with fun drinks that are in the spirit of the holidays, but a constant is their delicious mulled wine, and I'm really eyeing the Lookin' Pine cocktail—I hear it comes in a cute Christmas mug!"



Laura Ullock
@LAURA.ULOCK



Steph Wan
@STEPHWANTS



Michael White & Kley Klemens
@JEWKARTA



Eleni Chountalos
@MUALENI



Clarissa Nuttall
@BITEMEVANCOUVER

Michael White and Kley Klemens are the foodie duo behind @jewkarta, your culinary guide to Vancouver's diverse food scene. Their journey began during the pandemic, as they aimed to support local restaurants affected by restrictions. Hailing from Indonesia, Klemens cherishes his mother's cooking, while White embraces Hannukah traditions ... and Chinese food.

"Neither of us grew up with typical North American holiday traditions, in my case because I'm Jewish and Kley's because he spent the first two decades of his life in Indonesia," White says. "I do love matzo ball soup, brisket and latkes, but I'm happier eating Chinese food, which became a custom among Jewish families because Chinese-owned restaurants used to be the only ones open on Christmas Day." He adds, "Kley grew up with a mother who, he says, was a better cook than most professional chefs. Her saksang—a typical North Sumatran pork dish cooked in the pig's own blood and a variety of rich spices, including andaliman, which is part of the Szechuan pepper family—was especially praised by his parents' extended families."

For a festive night out in Vancouver, their go-to spot, Song, serves up a signature oyster dish with nam jim sauce, that's "possibly the best one-bite/slurp dish in the city." Order it with a funky natural wine full of sediment and mouth-puckering acidity.

Initially sharing fashion and beauty tips, Eleni Chountalos, @muaeleni, is a Vancouver-based content creator whose focus shifted to food when pandemic restrictions limited her restaurant visits.



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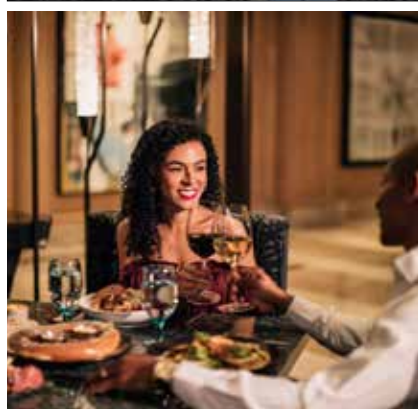
Midwest *Nice*

Quirky, cool and culinary, Cleveland is worth a visit

BY NOA NICHOL

HOTEL HEAVEN

For a comfy stay in Cleveland, look no further than the Ritz-Carlton. Located downtown, it makes walking to restaurants, activities and attractions easy. Many suites boast a view of Lake Erie, and all feature bathrooms stocked with Diptyque products (which can be purchased to take home, too). The hotel's restaurant, Turn, offers mouth-watering fare, including the aptly named Best Falafel Ever and a deeply delicious, chocolate-y Ritz-Carlton Cake. Staff members provide exceptional, thorough and friendly service, making this property the perfect place to call home during your time in CLE. Ritzcarlton.com



CIRCLE TIME

University Circle is home to the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. The former offers free admission to its permanent collection: artists like Dalí, Monet and Warhol. It's also kid friendly, with a hands-on art experience where littles can spin a pottery wheel, make a collage and create a self-portrait digitally, no cleanup required. Next door, the Museum of Natural History boasts dinosaur bones, resident critters (be sure to meet Meeko, an albino raccoon) and a planetarium offering shows throughout the day. Nearby (though not in University Circle), learn the story of the city through classic cars, election buttons and a working carousel at the Cleveland History Centre. We loved the Fashion After Dark exhibit, which let us explore the impact gaslight and early electricity had on clothing and fabric selection in the late 1800s.

MARKETS & MUSIC

Food is a focus in Cleveland, and nowhere is that more apparent than at the historic West Side Market. Open since 1912, find stuffed peppers, sprinkle doughnuts, bratwurst sandwiches, potato pancakes, spicy enchiladas, meatball subs, spring rolls, beef jerky, baklava and more from 100-plus vendors. For some inedible retail therapy, head to City Goods: seven dome-shaped hangars that house shops with products from small local businesses and makers. Browse vegan-leather bags, natural soaps and

salves, honey snacks and ... picnic tables for squirrels. Tip: the centre hangar is a cocktail bar serving up aviation-themed sips. And no visit to Cleveland is complete without time spent at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. Peer into glass cases filled with the personal items of rock royalty, listen to music's greatest hits at specially designated booths and try your own hand at greatness via interactive instrument stations—there's even a chance to design and print your own band stickers.



VITA X LONGINES

Deep Dive



Dive watches have always been popular amongst the world's top timepiece collectors and novices alike. But why? Most dive watches will never explore the dark depths of the ocean that they are built to withstand—they're more likely to be dropped in a pool or splashed on a beach. Yet, their enduring popularity is proof of concept. Why are they so coveted?

By definition, dive watches need to be water-resistant. The new Longines Legend Diver, with a 39 mm case, is water-resistant up to 30 bar, which is 300 metres. For context, Lake Ontario, at its deepest point, reaches just under 250 metres. Because of this extreme function, dive watches are engineered to perfection and solidly built.

Divers also require the time to be legible underwater, and therefore dive watches typically have a clean dial design. Available in either black or blue lacquer, the Legend Diver's face features elongated hour markers and raised numerals. Its rhodium-plated, polished arrow-hands are coated in Super-LumiNova®, which illuminates the dial after light exposure for increased visibility.

Solidly built? Check. Easy to read? Check. Clean design? Check. Diver or not, take the plunge. Shop the Longines Legend Diver (starting at \$3,900) at Longines.ca.

MUMMIES, MOVIES & MAGICK

There's no shortage of quirky in Cleveland. Mummies of the World, a never-before-seen collection now showing at Playhouse Square's Corner Gallery, includes preserved human and animal mummies from around the world (fascinating, but not for the squeamish). The Buckland Museum of Witchcraft & Magick houses items ranging from Ancient Egyptian ushabtis to artifacts from the Salem Witch trials; learn how to read tea leaves and take home a crystal ball from the gift shop. A Christmas Story House, dedicated to the iconic holiday film, spans several buildings that made up the movie set. Check out Ralphie's Red Ryder BB gun, the Parkers' leg lamp and other props; snap a photo with a replica pole (just don't stick your tongue on it). Last but not least, Coco's Selfie Space, spread over more than 25,000 square feet of space below the 5th Street Arcade, boasts at least 70 photo spots and countless photo ops, from a life-size Barbie box to a sky-diving simulator. There are costumes, props and ring lights to play with, too.



CHEF'S KISS

Boy, does Cleveland know good food. For breakfast, Addy's is a no-frills American diner tucked under the 5th Street Arcade, where the coffee is hot and the cheese omelette is an ooey-goey start to the day. At lunch, Larder's koji-cured pastrami is stupid good, as is its soft-and-chewy black-and-white cookie (trust us, get two). Slyman's is iconic; the corned beef sandwich is a monster, and worth the near-certain lineup. Guarino's is Cleveland's oldest restaurant; order the Italian wedding soup and a heaping plate of angel hair pasta with sauce. But the crown jewel of it all, in our opinion, is Cordelia: a bona fide "best new restaurant" where, no word of a lie, we ate the greatest meal of our lives (sorry, mom). The menu changes, sometimes daily, but to-die-for dishes we had included a sweet-smoky carrot muhammara with deep-fried soda crackers (a revelation!), creamy artichoke dip with crisp potato chips, melt-in-your-mouth pork belly with sarsaparilla beurre blanc and, to end it, house-made basil-mint ice cream with blueberry jam, topped with a rosé bubble granita and crispy meringue. An elevated Hawaiian shave ice, it was the perfect end to a perfect meal—and an awesome time in Cleveland. Thisiscleveland.com

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