

# VITA

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## GLENDALOUGH ROSE MARTINI RECIPE

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AND STIR UNTIL VERY COLD. STRAIN INTO A MARTINI  
GLASS AND GARNISH WITH A LEMON TWIST.  
ADD ROSE PETAL FOR AN EXTRA POP.

EDITOR'S DESK



A NOTE FROM NOA Happy (belated) New Year! Here at VITA, we've spent the looong month of January working to bring you this, the first issue of the year. And, it's a good one! Inside: the hidden reason bag charms are trending in 2025, the psychology behind the kinds of jewelry and colours of clothing you wear, the secret Vancouver building that's brimming with must-shop small businesses—and a tonne of new local eats, too. Enjoy!

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ISSUE 105

The Making of the British Columbia February 2025 Issue

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Hot Stops

Vancouver's latest and greatest openings

KOLM Vancouver's biggest sauna (it seats 50) awaits you at Kolm, where dim lights and terracotta walls set the ultimate calming vibe. The studio offers guided group classes with hot/cold cycles that are themed by need: relax, recover, reconnect. Some offerings include breathwork and live crystal bowl playing in the sauna before a plunge in one of four custom tubs set at a breathtaking 0-4 C. The Kolm ethos encourages you to embrace discomfort to reap the benefits, so we plunged for the recommended 2 full minutes (it

gets easier after the 30-second mark, promise) before popping back into the sauna, where our guide took essential oil requests for the next scented snowball she'd place on the hot rocks (lemongrass-lime, please). We left deeply rejuvenated and totally blissed out. Take note: some Kolm sessions are silent while others encourage socializing—like the After Hours, with dimmer lights and louder music—so be sure to pick the vibe that suits you best. #101 525 W. 8th Ave. Kolmkontrast.com

KATIE NANTON



ACTIVATE Coquitlam is levelling up its entertainment scene with the opening of Activate, an active gaming facility. This cutting-edge venue spans 9,756 square feet and houses 10 immersive game rooms, offering a thrilling mix of tech and teamwork. With viral games like Mega Grid, Strike and Laser, Activate brings gaming to life in a way that's interactive, physical and endlessly fun. Perfect for groups, Activate's games challenge you to strategize, co-operate and get moving—transforming a typical arcade visit into a full-body experience. With the added bonus of burning up to 750 calories in a single session, it's an exhilarating way to stay active while having a blast. #108 1090 Lougheed Hwy., Coquitlam. Playactivate.com/coquitlam NOA NICHOL



ADIDAS Looking to improve your run game? Venture no further than the Home of Sport, which is what Adidas has dubbed its futuristic 35,000-square-foot flagship on Robson and Burrard. The first of its kind in Canada, this new store features a Run Lab, where you can have your stride analyzed via advanced biometric tech to receive a shoe recommendation. Find fashionably functional runners—like the Stella McCartney Ultraboost 5 collab—alongside trail running options and more. Finish your fit with apparel and accessories before popping by the Made for You space to have a few of your products personalized with locally inspired designs. If running's not your thing, there's still a tonne to browse and buy—like a classic pair of streetwear-staple (and celeb-fave) Adidas Samba OG sneakers or a bold pair of Hello Kitty-emblazoned Adifom Stan Smith mules. 750 Burrard St. Adidas.ca KATIE NANTON

LOVE IN KITSILANO



MINI HEART STUDS
Melanie Auld Jewelry



RUFFLE LADY MISS
John Fluevog Shoes



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Lisa Gozlan



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# LIKE A CHARM

Bag charms offer a cool, customized update for your handbag—and emotional support, too?

Words by  
Aleesha Harris

*Micro bags, tiny teddy bears, lip gloss holders—the options for bag charms are seemingly endless.* Popularized in recent seasons by fashion brands like Miu Miu, Coach and Fendi, the idea of taking a maximalist, made-by-me approach to your otherwise-minimalist handbag is a major fashion moment.

“We’re definitely seeing some charms standing out in popularity, especially those from Hermès,” says Courtney Watkins, owner of Canadian designer resale company Mine & Yours. “The Hermès Orange Leather Bag Charm and the 2021 So Black Leather Rodeo PM Bag Charm are some examples of what has been very popular within our community.” And it’s not just about charms. According to Watkins, shoppers are also looking to add silk-twill scarves and even keychains to their precious purses.

While luxury fashion houses like Louis Vuitton and Hermès have long catered to the whimsy of adding petite accessories to their handbag designs—logo keychains and charm-laden chains are among the ongoing accessories

additions—the explosive popularity of bag charms on social media has prompted many more-affordable avenues to open up, too. Among brands offering treasured trinkets is a new Canadian company, Jane the Brand. Debuting with a lineup of tiny bags, fringe-decorated straps, faux-fur pom-poms (and even a mini replica of a Stanley mug) the company’s charms are all priced below \$50.

“Our goal is to keep the line accessible,” says founder Jane McFadden. “Charms are a great way to personalize any bag. They’re expressive, affordable and easy to swap out. They let one’s style shine through and showcase personality, adapt a bag’s look for seasons or trends and add sentimental touches.” The stylish startup plans to lean into other trending areas such as brooches, tech accessories and shoe charms in upcoming seasons.

Some social media-fueled trends can seem prohibitive due to price point. In contrast, the bag charm boom feels refreshingly inclusive. You don’t need a new bag to try it, any charm style will do (even DIY) and, thanks to the plethora of



Hermès Birkin bag adorned with String Ting charms



Louis Vuitton



Versace



Louis Vuitton

options available in stores and online at various prices, it can fit most budgets.

“Bag charms are like jewelry for your handbag—a little extra pop that tells the world who you are. Whether you’re adding a hit of colour, a hint of luxury or something quirky and fun, they’re an easy way to refresh your look without having to splurge on a whole new bag,” says String Ting founder and CEO Rachel Steed-Middleton. “Plus, they can start conversations—because who doesn’t love a good accessories moment?”

Known for its cute-and-quirky phone charms and straps, the U.K.-based brand jumped into the bag charm brigade with its Bag Tings in November 2023. “It felt like the perfect evolution—taking the playful spirit of our phone straps and giving handbags a little piece of the magic,” shares Steed-Middleton. The response, she adds, has been amazing. “Our community loves how effortlessly Bag Tings can refresh a classic bag or elevate something new and on-trend. They’re perfect for creating different vibes to match your mood, outfit or even an event.”

Some trends flash and fizzle. But the fashion insiders we asked noted the trend of adding accoutrements to your go-to handbag, tote bag, pouch or

backpack is set to stick around. “Personalization is here to stay,” Steed-Middleton says, noting there’s a charming, “curated chaos” to layering charms on your bag. “And people are leaning more into accessories that feel meaningful and unique. Bag charms are a timeless way to play with trends while keeping your look true to you.”

McFadden agrees, adding that charms play into our desire for individuality and versatility. “As fashion focuses on self-expression, charms will likely remain popular since they’re adaptable to trends without requiring a permanent change.”

Of course, the topic of bag charms wouldn’t be complete without a nod to a main originator of the accessorized bag movement: style icon Jane Birkin. “Accessorizing one’s bag with trinkets of all kinds is what Jane used to do with her Birkin bag,” explains McFadden. “Jane Birkin’s personal attachment to the bag was casual rather than reverent, and she often carried hers with a worn-in, ‘lived-in’ look that contrasted with the bag’s ultra-luxury appeal. Her legacy of effortless style, authenticity and the power of personal expression is truly the effect.”

And it lives on perfectly in our love of bag charms.

## Stylish Support

*The popularity of plush bag charms (even Ty Beanie Babies have become fair game) prompted us to wonder: could accessory add-ons be a source for emotional support? Before you go, “Ugh, unlikely ...” stick with us for a second.*

Emotional attachment—to people, animals, things—is a fundamental human need. Feeling connected, in some way, is an essential element of our well-being. When we posed the prospect of bag charms as a source of emotional support to a pro, she didn’t scoff at the idea. Rather, she supported the possibility that accessory accoutrements could add style and support.

“Objects can provide links to happy times or people that they love, it can remind us of these things that we want in our life, and so they can act almost as that safety net or security blanket,” says Caitlin Springate, a Vancouver-based psychotherapist who works via the virtual clinic Sereda Psychotherapy.

While it’s commonplace for a child to carry around a favourite teddy bear or blanket, Springate says the source of support for adults can be much more diverse: “As adults, we can have any type of object that maybe brings us back to that secure place.”

Of course, there’s also the fact that these bag charms allow adults to lean into plush elements that might otherwise be deemed too childlike to carry. “These charms, or even whether it’s a water bottle or a coffee mug or some object, it has a little less stigma to it than a blankie or stuffy,” she says. “Maybe this is a great way of being able to have that connection to a different type of object.”

Samantha Sito, a Vancouver-based fashion and beauty influencer, sees playful bag charms not just as a point of personalization, but also a way to push back against rigid ideas of how people should dress.

“We’re told so often that, as we grow older, we need to look or act or dress a certain way,” Sito says. “It almost feels healing and liberating that plush toys are trending in North America—considering this has very much been around in Asia—and becoming acceptable and normal to add to your outfits.”

The outward expression of who we are on the inside is, Sito points out, the overarching goal of personal style. And bag

charms play perfectly into that purpose: “They add a pop of personality and a nod to our inner child. Especially with fashion being a vehicle to outwardly express who we are, it’s nice to add a touch of fun to what we wear.”

In her own style repertoire, Sito employs a few plush bag charms. “I have the cute smiling cloud from Jane the Brand and a mini teddy bag charm. They go ... with my vintage Chanel.”

While undoubtedly a top trend in the world of fashion right now, employing bag charms as a source of emotional support is an idea that just might be here to stay. Emotional support objects are an upcoming field in psychotherapy, according to Springate. It’s an evolution of our understanding of how tactile elements such as weighted blankets can impact our overall mental health.

“Some of these objects can help people that are struggling, because it’s very common to have stress and anxiety,” she explains. “And if we can find ways to support people through these, I think that’s excellent.”

While not specifically tied to physical objects, Springate says the presence of spe-

cific pieces can tie into a theory she looks to regularly in her practice: grounding.



“I often talk to clients about doing these grounding techniques to take a break from their swirling thoughts and their overactive mind. What can they do to be a little more present and in the moment and get more mindful? Sometimes, that’s engaging your senses. So, looking at things in the room, or stomping your feet or even pushing your hands together—something to bring you back to that present moment with the senses. Having an object in play, whether it’s something you’re holding or squeezing or just looking at, I can see how that would be very much linked to that experience.”

# High Fashion

The low-down on shopping  
your way through downtown's Dominion Building

Words by  
Jill Von Sprecken



*Like attracts like. Which explains the phenomenon of the Dominion Building, a Beau-Arts heritage structure perched on the edge of Gastown. Inside, between the fourth and 14th floors, is a collection of retailers selling new and preowned fashion that ranges from true-blue vintage to luxurious resale. In short, it's a vertical retail hub.*

"It's a bit of a newer concept for Vancouver," says Randa Salloum, owner of Collective Will, located on the 14th floor. "You see stores like mine in other cities, like New York, Montreal. But Vancouver retail is predominantly store level, it's street front." Let's take it from the top.

## 14TH FLOOR: COLLECTIVE WILL

This jewel box of a shop carries a mix of old and new with a common theme: fashion with a capital F. The past treasure trove of items has included a Louis Vuitton leather-knit top alongside a Moschino couture My Little Pony T-shirt. The owner, Salloum, has also created her own limited-edition Reworked Collection that focuses on tailoring—keep your eyes peeled for future drops. Among the consignment are new pieces, such as Montserrat cowboy boots, jewelry from Vimeria and Laguna and scented essential oils from Sangre de Fruta. **Buzz 62. [Shopcollectivewill.com](http://Shopcollectivewill.com)**

swoon-worthy LBDs from Rumored. Local brands, like jeweler Wolf Circus and clothing maker Brunette the Label, are also represented, and have flirty items ripe for the picking. **Buzz 104. [Siista.com](http://Siista.com)**



Top: Collective Will Bottom: SIISTA

## 12TH FLOOR: SIISTA

Keyhole tops and lace knee-high socks. Caught your attention? Siista is your destination. This light and airy shop has bows and ruffles in spades, but it's not cutesy. Sexy is the vibe—firmly in the coquette-core realm—with pieces that stand out rather than blend in. There are plenty of independent designers on the racks: drapery tops from Belle the Label, gauzy hooded shirts from Geel and

## 9TH FLOOR: ONCE TWICE

Big event on the horizon? Try renting. It's easier on the wallet and saves closet space, too. With sizes ranging from XXS to 2X, finding a gem at Once Twice is simpler than anything else you can rent—take movies and cars, for instance. The rental period is four days (extensions are an option), and the brands run the gamut: slinky numbers by Silk Laundry, ruffles and lace by Zimmerman, lacy pieces by Self-Portrait and feminine florals and silks by Reformation. There's also a small selection of accessories, such as jewelry and bags, and products by Booby Tape (for those backless numbers). **Buzz 111. [Oncetwicehire.com](http://Oncetwicehire.com)**



Vintage

## 7TH FLOOR: LE CELLIER

Just like the wares at Le Cellier, this boutique is new to us, but has a history. Owner Elise Valfrey began selling luxury bags and accessories in France, and lucky for Vancouverites, she decided to continue her venture after relocating to the Lower Mainland. As expected, she adores luxury bags herself, so she made it her mission to uncover the true gems of the arm-candy world. She hopes to find pieces that are unique, rare and in surprisingly good condition. Chanel, Hermès, Louis Vuitton, Bottega Veneta, Fendi, Gucci and Loewe were all in attendance, last we checked. **Buzz 683. [Lecellier.co](http://Lecellier.co)**



Le Cellier

## 6TH FLOOR: THE FIND

Even if you're not in the market for a vintage Chanel bag or a Tiffany & Co. tennis bracelet, a few minutes in this boutique may change your mind. The shop is outfitted in whites and neutrals and studded with jewel-box tones: a blue-leather Marni bag here, a hot-pink Bottega Veneta purse there. And a dash of glitter—from sparkly Golden Goose sneakers to Hermès stud earrings. Investment pieces in more muted palettes, like black quilted bags by Chanel and brown monogrammed Louis Vuitton carry-alls, round out the offerings. **Buzz 136. [Thefindluxury.com](http://Thefindluxury.com)**

## BIG AL'S QUALITY VINTAGE AND PRELOVED GOODIES

A smaller, less chaotic version of the quintessential vintage store, but the racks are still lined with all the sequins, ruffles, tulle and leopard print that only true-blue vintage (an item between 20 and 99 years old) can deliver. Big Al herself, otherwise known as Alora Horn, personally curates the collection of clothing, bags, jewelry and footwear. She opened the store because her love of vintage—she calls it a "sift gift"—was getting out of hand. In an Instagram reel, she explains how she came to the conclusion to sell what she collected "because a lot of this isn't even in my size." That led to markets, and eventually her own shop. **Buzz 483. [Bigalsvintage.ca](http://Bigalsvintage.ca)**

## VINTIQUE

This is where preloved luxury items—like bags, watches and shoes—go to find their (new) forever homes. The whole gang's here: Chanel, Louis Vuitton, Celine, Hermès, Fendi, Dior. Rows of vintage watches are in attendance, too, like a pearl-studded Gruen number or a black-and-gold leather Gucci timepiece. And the shoes: slingback Chanel pumps set the tone, but don't be surprised if you spot a Givenchy sneaker. There's also jewelry—like crystal earrings by Dior—and a teeny-but-trendy selection of clothing. Clear your calendar: new items arrive Mondays. **Buzz 803. [Vintageconsignment.com](http://Vintageconsignment.com)**



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# Mixed METALS

Silver or gold? The psychology behind your jewelry of choice may surprise you

Words by Sara Harowitz

*I ripped open the box, my heart fluttering with the excitement that a package delivery always brings. But when I looked inside, my heart fell: I had ordered a necklace in gold, but the one staring back at me was silver.*

"I can do this!" I thought to myself. "I can be a silver girl!" I put the necklace on and styled it with a few other silver pieces that normally sit unworn in my jewelry box, and off I went to work. But all day I felt uncomfortable. I felt off. I felt like I was outside of myself. Somehow, the silver version of me didn't feel much like me at all.

As it turns out, there might be a psychological reason for this.

"We have these scripts that tell us who we are, or who we think we are—I am an x person; I am a person who x'—and we develop these over time as we develop our identities and our sense of selves," says Dr. Dion Terrelonge, a London-based psychologist who specializes in fashion. "Once you begin to wear something and it becomes part of your daily routine, it then becomes part of that script that you have for yourself."

Terrelonge, who always wears gold, says that it's normal for people (hello!) to feel weird when those identity beliefs—no matter how seemingly trivial—are challenged.

"Whenever we do something that contradicts that script that we hold in our mind for ourselves, it feels quite jarring and uncomfortable," she explains. "One of the most jarring things that we can experience as human beings is having our sense of self and our beliefs about ourselves disproved or questioned or contradicted in any way, big or small. It might make you feel a little bit off kilter and a bit like, 'I'm not sure if I feel comfortable in myself today, because I'm not represented in the way that I would normally represent myself.'"

But how do we begin to write these jewelry scripts in the first place? Why was I so convinced that I belonged in gold and not silver? According to Alicia Fusayama-Hudon, a wardrobe stylist based in Montreal who generally wears silver, part of what we're drawn to might come down to our skin tones.

"I find that people that have more bluish, purplish undertones—the metal that will suit them the most is silver," she says. "And people that have more golden, yellowish undertones will have gold be the best metal for them."

Even more powerful than that, though, is our perception of what each precious metal represents.

"Silver is colder, it has a bit more of that edgy vibe; it's mysterious. It makes



Above: Alicia Fusayama-Hudon  
Left: Dr. Dion Terrelonge

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me think of the night because the colour of the moon at night looks a bit silver," Fusayama-Hudon offers. "Whereas gold has always been associated with warmth. You think of the sun, something rich and abundant, a bit louder sometimes; it's very classy. So I think people identify with either one of the energies, and I think that's why it feels so personal."

Vancouver-based fashion influencer Lydia Okello shares a similar sentiment.

"Maybe because of the time I grew up in as an adolescent and young adult, silver always leaned more edgy and alternative, and gold felt very femme and classic, and softer, in a way," they reflect. "And I think that those associations still stick in my mind, even though I don't think they have the same cultural perception at this point."

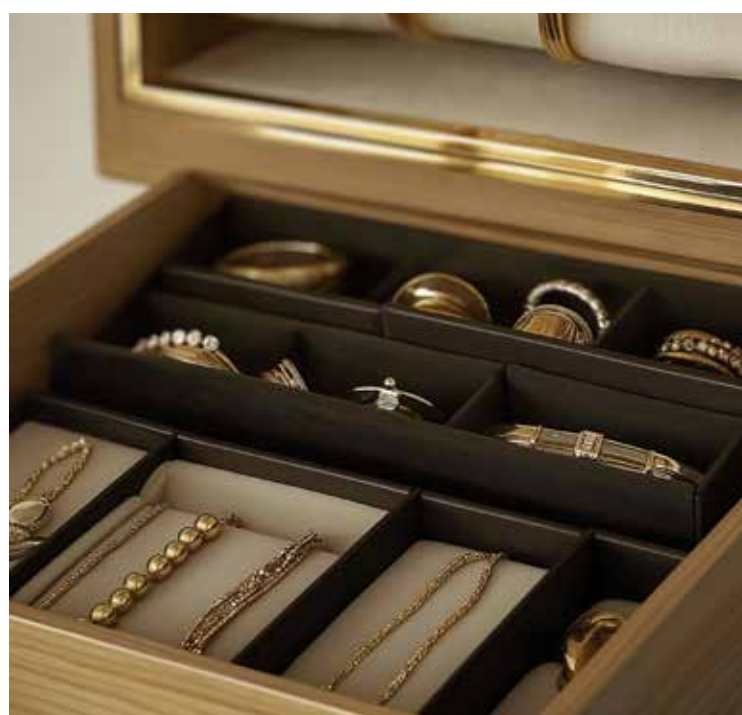
Okello attributes our emotional connection to jewelry as being rooted in

personal expression—even more so than the clothing we wear or even the way we style our hair.

"The thing that I love about jewelry is it's largely for adornment," they say. "A lot of things that we wear are for necessity. You need clothes because you're not allowed to be naked in public, and to protect yourself from the elements. You wear shoes because you want to protect your feet. But jewelry is such a personal expression."

Okello, who only wears silver, doesn't see that changing anytime soon (and on that point, I can certainly relate).

"It's so weird, because, technically, gold looks better against my skin, because my skin is a warm skin tone," they say. "So sometimes I'll hold up gold if I find something that I really like. And then I'm like, 'No, I just wish it was silver.' It just doesn't feel like me." ▽



LIVING IN

## COLOUR

Words by  
Jill Von Sprecken

The revival of an '80s trend helps people's true hues shine through

*At a clothing swap, my friend—a red-head—held a shirt up to her body and said, “This shade of beige makes me look dead.” It was true: her normally bright skin looked washed out and pallid. That’s colour analysis in a nutshell.*

This approach of determining a colour palette that complements a person’s skin tone and features isn’t new—but it’s currently trendy. Why the resurgence? It could be product and brand overwhelm. Or social media and regular Zoom calls. Rotem Bar Lev, a stylist and colour analyst in New York, thinks “people are investing in themselves much more. ... Fashion is more than just what you wear. It’s really your identity, and how you want to walk in the world.”

Even those unaware of TikTok trends likely have some knowledge of colour analysis. The practice rose to prominence in the 1980s, thanks to Carole Jackson’s book *Color Me Beautiful*, which was first published in 1973 and spent seven years on the *New York Times* bestseller list. It fell out of fashion in the '90s, when other trends took its place—but not before 13 million copies of the book were sold.

“A colour analysis result will give you everything, colour-wise, that is optimal for you to wear, head to toe,” says Carol Brailey, a colour analyst who specializes in virtual appointments. “That includes makeup, hair, clothing, accessories.”

In Jackson’s day there were four distinct seasons: spring, summer, fall, winter. Today, colour analysts often work with 12- and 16-season systems, for more personalized results. “I use the International Image Institute system,” says Brailey. “That can be up to 23 seasons ... but it could be more if somebody crosses between seasons.”

There are other approaches as well, such as Japanese and Korean. Yan Jin is the founder of Toronto-based Yan’s Powder Room, where she is an image consultant and colour specialist. Certified in both Korea and Canada, she describes the Korean method as “version three.” Jin explains that the Western approach came first, followed by Japanese, before being adopted—and adapted—in Korea.

Quite often, different disciplines of colour analysis yield different results. “It happens a lot,” Jin says. “Even in Korea, there’s a couple of different styles. To me, it’s all about the person. ... This person should stand out. They should be the focus, not the colour.”

At an in-person appointment, the client arrives barefaced with hair pulled



back, and is draped with various colour swatches for “a series of comparison between different shades, different deepness, different brightness, to understand your natural features,” says Bar Lev. “It’s actually helped me personally on days I don’t feel so confident, and I see that change in my face. Just with colours, as simple as that.”

Virtual appointments work differently. As Brailey explains, the client submits a suite of photos, some older and others taken specifically for the colour analysis. One of the benefits of analyzing virtually, Brailey explains, is that the analyst can take time with the images to ensure an accurate result—perhaps even more so than in-person. “I’ve met people who have received in-person colour analysis results that are extremely inaccurate,” she says.

Bar Lev does her analysis in person, but agrees virtual results can be spot-on. She has less faith, though, in colour analysis apps. “It’s not an actual [human] eye ... it’s AI,” she says. “It’s not someone professional looking at your pictures and understanding different shades.”

Following a colour analysis appointment, what should clients do with their beauty products or the contents of their closets? Bar Lev counsels a moderate approach when deciding what stays or goes. “Everybody asks, ‘So now I need to get rid of all the clothes that I have?’ No.”

Instead, colour analysis “allows awareness to come into our thinking process when we go shop.” If hues outside the optimal palette still appeal, keep wearing them.

Brailey has similar advice: “Wear what you love and have fun with it.” But, she adds, hair colour may be the most important result. “You could be framing three sides of your face with a hair colour that isn’t in your colour palette. There’s only so much your clothing can do.”

Jin recommends making time to discuss a particular beauty item. “Lipstick’s always a default in the session, because it’s the hardest product to decide [on],” she says. “Cheek colour is easier. Lip is tricky, because it’s a completely different look in the tube or on yourself.”

Once you’ve decided on that new shade of lipstick, she advises you also “match at least a couple items [in your home], like the sofas, walls, to your colour,” Jin says. “When you’re at home, you don’t wear makeup. So if the surrounding colours match you, you will be more happy.”

Like Jin, Brailey believes in the transformative power of finding your colours: “I’ve seen through colour analysis, and people implementing results, confidence built to the point where it’s changed lives,” she says. “Because when you’re feeling better and sparkly, that’s the vibration you’re giving off.”

Pop-up  
COLOUR

On February 15, *Collective Will*, in Vancouver’s Dominion Building, is partnering with *Nu’an Colour* for personalized 40-minute colour analysis appointments. Elisha Wang is a Korean-style image consultant, who can help you discover the hues that best suit you. With only eight spots starting at noon, you’ll need to direct message @nuan.colour on Instagram to book your appointment. You’ll leave with a colour card to keep on hand whenever you need it.

VITA X WALMART CANADA

## Your Best Year Starts Here

*As we enter a new year, the fitness trends we saw in 2024 continue to be top of mind—including Pilates (of course), run clubs, personalized workouts like HIIT and more.*

What better way to crush your “new year, new you” fitness goals than with new fits (think apparel essentials from Athletic Works, like cropped tanks, yoga pants, printed leggings, tees, shorts and sneakers), updated equipment like fitness mats and toning bars from Go Zone and wrist/ankle weight sets from Reebok,

plant-based protein powder and other sweat-worthy products from Walmart Canada, all at affordable prices?

And hey, while you’re maintaining your mental and physical health, it’s worth considering organizing your space, too. A neat space leads to higher productivity, meaning you are more likely to achieve the wellness you’ve set for yourselves. Here are some easy to manage tips to organize your space, in an affordable way, achievable from a quick visit to [walmart.ca](https://www.walmart.ca) or in-store!

**Chic Laundry Basket (\$11.97)**

Whether you’re trying to stay caught up on laundry or hide the piles of clothes you’re behind on, try incorporating a chic and clean-looking laundry bin to upgrade your space.

**Ramtuff 4-Level Plastic Shelving System (\$21.97)**

Make 2025 the year you’re able to locate specific items in your garage—or if you’re needing more space for pantry items, this four-level shelving unit is the perfect hack in your home.

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No matter the type of storage space, the size of the items you need to store, whether you require clear-walled or coloured boxes to hide your valuables, various Sterilite totes and baskets are up for the task!

**Neatfreak! Slim Clothes Hanger, Set of 30 (\$8.47)**

Declutter and reorganize your closet in 2025. From everyday basics to athleisure and sweat sets, a new set of matching hangers can do wonders for rejuvenating your wardrobe.

**Mainstays 92 PC Food Storage Container Set (\$14.97)**

Make meal prep a breeze, keep up with your healthy goals and organize your fridge from top to bottom!

**HomeTrends Decor Storage (\$14.97)**

Organizing your home doesn’t have to mean sacrificing style. This HomeTrends decor storage box is the sleek and stylish storage solution you need this year.



Ange and Joyce's wedding day was photographed by 515 Photo Co.

# MODERN Aisle

A new age of creative wedding dressing is seeing high fashion, creativity and authenticity besting tradition

Words by  
Alison McGill

*When Toronto-based makeup artist and hairstylist Veronica Chu and personal trainer Steve Parkhill became engaged last summer, they knew their wedding was going to be anything but expected, especially when it came to their attire.*

The stylish couple share a deep love for fashion and embraced an elevated version of their personal aesthetics for their intimate autumn celebration. That meant wearing chic, monochromatic looks in their signature shade, black.

The bride chose a bow-trimmed, halter neckline, tea-length gown complete with voluminous tulle skirting from Shushu/Tong. Chu paired her retro dress silhouette with Coperni platform pumps and put an oversize silk bow from Bode in her hair, which paired perfectly with the beauty look she created for herself: a sleek half updo, winged eyeliner, glowy cheeks and a neutral lip. Parkhill wore a sharp black suit with a white shirt from his favourite label, Wooyoungmi, finishing the look with an iconic pair of Tabi derby shoes from Maison Margiela.

“Steve and I rarely wear anything than all black and, for us, it was important to stay true to that on our wedding day,” Chu shares. “Our looks were an extension of us. Comfortable, fashion-forward and the truest expression of ourselves.”

This commitment to authenticity, showing up as yourself and eschewing tradition is precisely where weddings are at in 2025. The most important thing for couples getting married today is to plan a day rich in meaning; for many that starts not with a location or décor, but with fashion.

Vancouver-based designer Ou Ma, founder of bridal brand Ouma, says she has seen a recent shift in style choices from her clients, with brides prioritizing personal expression over traditional norms. “The formality of the wedding doesn’t play the most vital part anymore, with people leaning less toward dressing for the venue, for the parents or for tradition,” says Ma. “There is a deeper desire for wedding celebrations to feel more meaningful and aligned with who they are as people. There are no rules now for weddings and fashion.”

A deep appreciation of creative design and a desire to shatter societal norms of what people wear on their wedding day were at the top of the wedding mood board for interior designer Aleem Kassam and his husband, tech entrepreneur

Victor Kazakov. The couple’s spectacular three-day summer wedding event at Phantom Creek Estates in the Okanagan Valley was a celebration of love filled with luxury touches and artful details at every turn. The fashion was incredibly intentional and runway-worthy.

“The theme of the wedding and concepts we provided to our guests was Met Gala,” says Kassam. “The theme of the fashion gala changes annually, but we were channelling the meanings of this iconic event: self-expression, giving back to art and culture, inclusivity, fluidity and the opportunity to shine. Scale, drama and texture were the focus of our celebration and our wedding style.”

On the day of their wedding, the grooms each wore four custom couture outfits, and Kassam shares the three words that guided every fashion choice: transformative, fluid and reimagined. “As two gay men, we knew we would have to adapt our ideas and thoughts as to what a wedding meant or looked like for us. I’ve always dreamed of romantic, glamorous weddings and what they represent. We wanted to achieve that but take it to another and different level.”

Montreal designer Denis Gagnon created the ceremony, reception and dancing looks for Kassam and Kazakov (the fourth look for cake cutting was by Vancouver-based Eduardo Ramos, who



Aleem and Victor's wedding day was photographed by Hong Photography



## Toast to Love

Perfect wine pairings for Valentine's Day self-care

*Valentine's Day isn't just for couples—it's a celebration of love in all its forms, including self-love.* Whether you're pampering yourself solo or spending quality time with loved ones, these wine pairings are the perfect addition to your Valentine's Day activities. Let's uncork a little joy!



**BUBBLE BATH BLISS** Turn your bath into a luxurious escape with a glass of Jura Rum Cask Finish Whisky in hand. This smooth malt with tropical notes of guava, mango and coconut creates an exotic retreat in your tub. The warming touch of cinnamon spice adds a cosy finish, making it the ideal companion to your relaxing soak.



**FACE MASK RELAXATION** While your skin absorbs nourishing goodness, your palate can indulge, too. Pair this moment of self-care with Calafuria Rosé. Its fresh, citrusy bouquet of pink grapefruit and peach complements the rejuvenating vibes of a face mask. This elegant rosé, with its subtle floral notes, is like a spa treatment for your senses.



**MANI/PEDI PAMPERING** Pair your at-home nail session with the crisp and lively Road 13 Select Harvest Rosé. Its delicate aromas of rose petals and cherry blossom will enhance the soothing ritual of grooming. With notes of cherry juice and pear, it's as refreshing as a polished new look.



**JOURNALING AND REFLECTION** Writing down your thoughts pairs beautifully with a bold red like Mission Hill Family Estate Syrah Reserve. Its lush flavours of black fruit, pepper and chocolate mirror the depth of self-reflection, creating a contemplative yet indulgent experience.



**COSY MOVIE NIGHT** For a low-key evening on the couch, pair your favourite romantic flick with Prosecco Rosé by Josh Cellars. Its lively bubbles and flavors of red berries and citrus make it a playful companion for your movie marathon. Bonus: It's light enough to pair with popcorn or chocolate treats.



**STARGAZING OR EVENING WALK** Wrap up your day with an outdoor moment, pairing the adventure with Montus Prestige. This complex wine, with its layers of dark fruit and earthy notes, is perfect for reflecting under the stars or walking through a crisp evening.

the pair love for his fluid designs). Each of the avant-garde looks were brimming with incredible couture details, textures and fabrics: statement bows, billowy trains and corsets made from satin, silk and hand-embroidered lace. They chose to wear all white at first, but switched into black for the evening party. Each ensemble was comprised of multiple pieces that could be chicly restyled with additional separates to create a new look.

“What we wore truly represented us and our equal partnership,” Kassam says. “Our looks co-ordinated, but both of our personal aesthetics and characters were uniquely emulated.”

This sentiment is exactly what designer Nikki Wirthensohn Yassemi, creative director and founder Canadian brand Narces, aims to capture with every wedding look she designs. Though her fashion-forward customers have never been ones to seek a traditional wedding vibe, she reports that inquiries for unique, bespoke fashion have never been higher. The key factor driving these requests? A deep desire for genuine self-expression.

“I love to work with a client embracing their individuality, who wants to defy typical expectations and common trends and collaborate to create a specific personal vision by artistry,” Wirthensohn Yassemi says. “I love a body adorned with intention; so many people getting married now want to embrace the unexpected. This means wearing pieces that are unapologetically bold yet deeply intimate.”

Extending a dressing-intentionally invitation to guests adds another beautiful layer to the non-traditional wedding style narrative. When Angeli-que Bernabe and Joyce Cheung-Bernabe were planning their day, it was one full of colourful décor, lush and extravagant florals, vintage details and nods to their French and Chinese heritage. They each

had two looks, starting with exquisite Chinese wedding dresses for their tea ceremony, followed by dramatic white fits for the second part of their wedding celebration. Bernabe wore a ruffled tulle crop top, pleated palazzo pants and sweeping veil embroidered with bold hued florals; Cheung-Bernabe chose an architectural column gown with angular puffed sleeves and a plunging v-neckline. Wearing fashion that truly reflected them was their guiding principle—one they asked guests to embrace, too.



Veronica and Steve's wedding day was photographed by David Pike

“The theme of our wedding was Upstage the Brides; we encouraged guests to wear what made them feel comfortable and happy,” Bernabe says. “It was our way of celebrating their presence and the joy of having them in our lives.”

The brides’ guests wore every colour of the rainbow; there were sequins, satin, velvet and tulle in the mix. All of this sartorial greatness added to the energy of the day, making the celebration feel uniquely theirs. “My advice for couples is to always remember it’s your wedding and you don’t have to do something because others do it or because it is expected of them,” Cheung-Bernabe says. “If you like some traditional elements, keep those, but then refine and reinterpret them to ensure they feel comfortable and truly reflect you.” ▽



# Fresh Sheet

B.C.'s best new bites and sips

Words by  
Katie Nanton

**FUWA FUWA** With a fluffy texture and bounce all their own, Fuwa Fuwa's soufflé pancakes are destined to become your top brunch request. (The name itself means "fluffy" in Japanese, and the light-as-air effect is due to the meticulously whipped egg whites used in the batter.) Now open on Robson, the bright-yellow café serves up sweet and savoury plates you won't find anywhere else downtown. Choose from best-selling Classic Tiramisu, topped with fresh cream, berries and a dusting of cocoa (there's also a green-dusted matcha version) or a Bacon Eggs Benedict with creamy hollandaise (yes, served on a fluffy pancake). If croissants are more your thing, try their croffle—a croissant-waffle hybrid with either smoked salmon, ham and cheese or avocado. Order a handcrafted mango soda to sip, thank us later. **1510 Robson St.** [Fuwafuwapancakes.com](http://Fuwafuwapancakes.com)



**JOHNNIE WALKER LOUNGE @ PARQ CASINO** Make your private-party casino dreams come true at Parq Casino's new Johnnie Walker Lounge. To find the intimate 50-person space, make your way past the colourfully cha-ching-ing slot machines to the third floor. Inside, try your hand at games like blackjack, baccarat and poker with live dealers; tournament-style setups are available for more seasoned groups, as are instructional "how-to-play" sessions for beginners. Whether you're hosting a corporate event or a bachelorette party, keep your crew happy with signature JW cocktails, including a Johnnie Walker Black Old Fashioned and a Scottish Mule, and a snack menu featuring steamed bao buns, crispy chicken slider trios and charcuterie and dessert platters aplenty. **39 Smithe St.** [Parqvancouver.com](http://Parqvancouver.com)



## DANTE ITALIAN SANDWICH

The team behind Via Tevere Pizzeria only opened Dante's in December, but the little 16-seat sandwich shop on Robson is already drawing lineups—and it's worth the wait. As you sink your teeth into your freshly made sando, close your eyes and be transported to Tuscany—the Andrea Bocelli and *The Godfather* soundtrack playing overhead will help the fantasy play out. At Dante's, house-baked schiacciata bread (similar to focaccia) holds

together classic Italian meats, cheese and vegetables with that super-simple approach Italians do so well. Try the Grilled Monte Cristo, loaded with prosciutto cotto, provolone and sundried tomato spread, or the fresh Americano, thick with roast turkey, stracciatella cheese and a potato chip crunch. Sip a blood orange San Pellegrino, snag a pistachio cannoli to go and experience la dolce vita in the heart of downtown. **360 Robson St.** [Dantesandwich.com](http://Dantesandwich.com)



VITA X HALO TOP

# Indulgence, Reimagined

Why Halo Top is our new (year's) favourite treat

*Let's face it: dessert is the highlight of any day, but the guilt that sometimes comes with it? Not so much.* Meet Halo Top, the game-changer here to redefine indulgence for Canadians. With a perfect blend of creamy decadence and better-for-you ingredients, Halo Top proves that treating yourself doesn't mean sacrificing your goals.

## A SWEET TREAT WITHOUT THE COMPROMISES

Wave bye-bye to the age-old dilemma of choosing between flavour and nutrition. Kickstart your New Year goals with Halo Top—the ultimate companion to satisfy your sweet cravings while staying on track with what matters most. Halo Top is the perfect solution for anyone craving a scoop (or two) of ice cream that fits seamlessly into a balanced lifestyle. With 110 to 150 calories per serving, it's a dessert that lets you truly indulge—without the calorie overload.

**FLAVOURS THAT DELIGHT EVERY PALATE** What's an indulgent treat without a variety of mouthwatering flavours? Halo Top has you covered with an array of options that cater to every craving.

But it's not just about the calorie count! Halo Top is loaded with high-quality protein to help you feel fuller, longer. Whether you're tackling a mid-afternoon slump or winding down after dinner, this is one treat that works with your body, not against it. With just one-quarter of the sugar and one-eighth of the fat content that is found in other indulgent treats, you can enjoy that sweet, creamy goodness without the sugar rush—or crash.

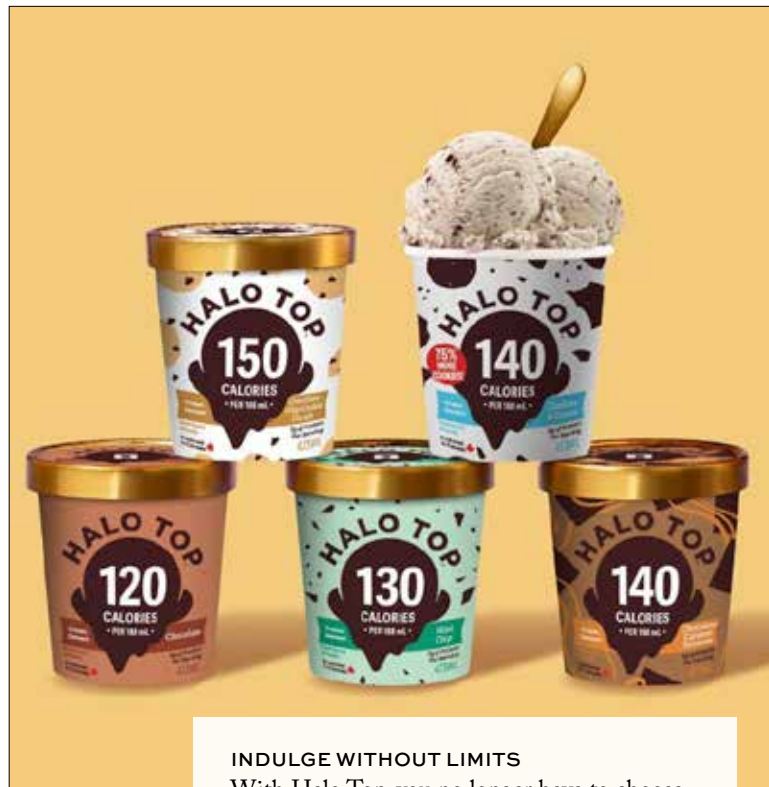
From classic faves like Strawberry and Chocolate to bold, gluten-free choices like Cookies & Cream (with 75 per cent more cookies!) and Sea Salt Caramel, there's a pint with your name on it.

## WHY HALO TOP SHOULD BE IN YOUR FREEZER

Here's a recap on why Halo Top is the ultimate dessert upgrade:

- **LOW CALORIE COUNT:** 110–150 calories per serving means you can indulge freely.
- **HIGH PROTEIN:** A satisfying treat that fuels your day with up to 8 grams of protein per serving and up to 20 grams of protein per pint!
- **LOWER SUGAR:** All the sweetness, none of the overload.
- **VARIETY OF FLAVOURS:** Classics and bold choices, with eight out of 11 dairy flavours being gluten-free.
- **WIDELY AVAILABLE:** Easy to find at grocery stores nationwide.

**ACCESSIBLE, DELICIOUS & GUILT-FREE** Halo Top isn't just about great taste and nutritional value—it's also about convenience. Found in B.C. at Walmart, Real Canadian Superstore, Save-On-Foods and more, Halo Top makes it easier than ever to pick up a pint (or a few) during your weekly grocery run. So whether you're planning a cozy night in or hosting a get-together with friends, you can bring the indulgence without the guilt.



## INDULGE WITHOUT LIMITS

With Halo Top, you no longer have to choose between your favourite dessert and your health goals. So grab a spoon, dig in and start the year off right with a better-for-you indulgence, where satisfaction meets smarter choices. That's Halo Top, indulgence reimagined! [Halotop.ca](http://Halotop.ca)

# GLOW GETTER

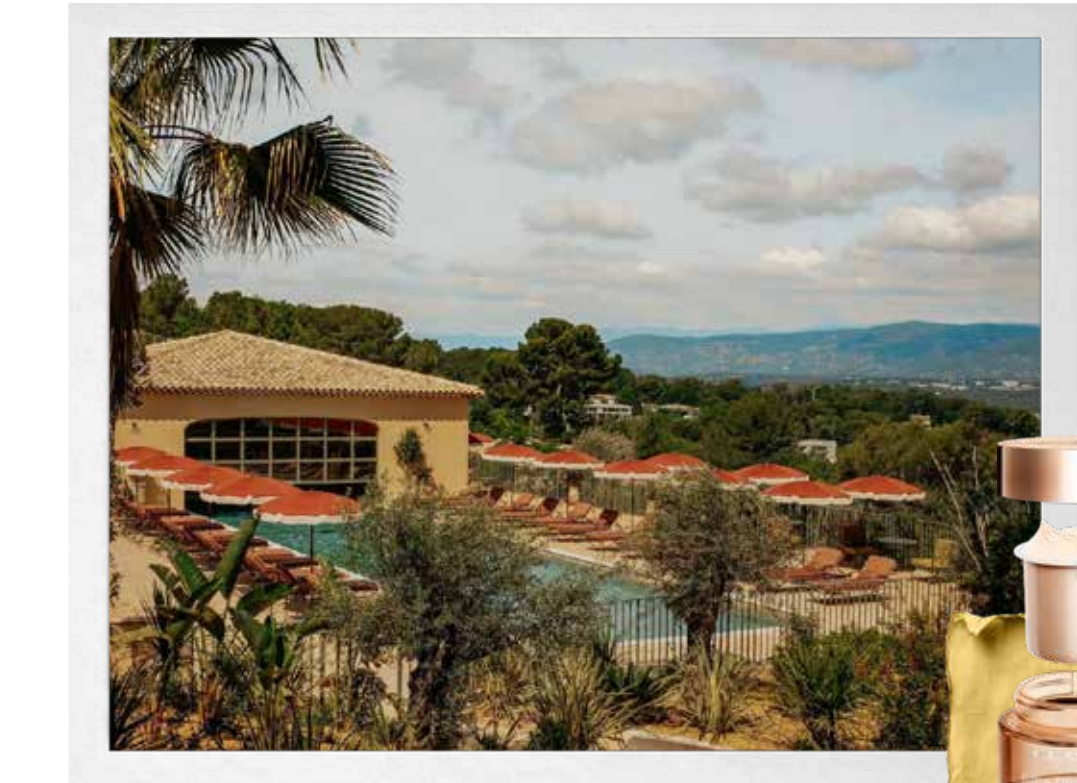
We went to France to find our best skin—but, thanks to Clarins Extra Firming, you don't have to

Words by  
Christina Armanious

Nestled in the sun-drenched landscape of the French Riviera, The Glow House at Le Mas Candille is more than just a luxurious retreat—it's an immersive experience in skincare, designed to showcase the transformative power of Clarins' Extra-Firming collagen range. On a mid-October press trip to the spa, which is surrounded by botanical gardens and the warm hues of terracotta, it felt as though the air itself was working to enhance my skin's natural radiance. But it was inside the treatment rooms, under the expert hands of Clarins' skincare specialists, that the true magic happened.

As I settled into a dark, cocoon-like treatment bed, the world beyond the spa blurred, giving way to a soothing ritual designed to awaken and replenish the skin. Over the course of 60 minutes, a series of expertly applied formulas, including Extra-Firming products, worked their way into my skin, each step building on the last to nourish, lift, and restore. The sensation was both invigorating and deeply relaxing—an immediate glow, followed by a sense of lasting renewal. It was more than just a treatment; it was a testament to the power of collagen preservation and Clarins' commitment to results-driven skincare.

Indeed, with Clarins' Extra-Firming collagen creams—one for day, one for night—a new era of skincare has arrived, with a laser focus on providing long-term results through collagen preservation. The collection promises radiant, resilient skin by helping to build and maintain the skin's natural "collagen bank," rather than merely replenishing lost collagen.



In Provence, The Glow House, designed by Hugo Toro, spans over 4,800 square feet on the French Riviera

Collagen, one of the most sought-after skincare ingredients, is essential for maintaining firmness and elasticity—but it can be difficult to harness effectively. Clarins' approach is rooted in scientific integrity, avoiding nutraceutical trends that lack substantive evidence. Instead, its formulas are designed to support natural collagen production while preserving existing reserves, ensuring lasting strength and resilience.

The magic behind Extra-Firming lies in its innovative [Collagen]<sup>3</sup> Technology—a powerhouse blend designed to support all three stages of collagen: protection, stimulation and preservation. This unique formulation features pecan tree extract to protect existing collagen fibres and defend against environmental damage, as well as mitracarpus extract to up firmness and reinforce the skin's natural support structure, and biomimetic collagen polypeptide,



which boosts the skin's own collagen synthesis, increasing reserves by up to 53 per cent. Bonus: sustainability is at the core of these innovations, with pecan tree extract sourced as a byproduct of the food industry, ensuring minimal waste while maximizing skin benefits.

Another boon: Extra-Firming is formulated to cater to a wide range of skin needs, with seven distinct textures making it ideal for women in their 40s—a time when collagen levels significantly decline. However, as collagen starts diminishing around age 25, experts recommend incorporating collagen-supporting skincare earlier. "The sooner, the better," advises Marie-Hélène Lair, Responsible Innovation Director at Clarins. "We adapt to the needs of all skin tones and types because everyone benefits from building these collagen reserves."

For instant gratification (because, who doesn't love that!), oat sugars provide an immediate lifting effect while deeper collagen-boosting benefits take effect within three to four weeks. "It's incredible to feel something right away," Lair notes. "That blend of immediate effect and long-term benefits sets Extra-Firming apart."

Also setting Clarins apart as a skincare brand is its holistic approach to beauty, which extends beyond its formulations to The Glow House; the stunning spa destination truly embodies the brand's dedication to wellness and natural beauty. Opened in July 2024 at the ultra-luxe Le Mas Candille hotel, The Glow House was reimaged by renowned architect Hugo Toro, blending eco-conscious design with Mediterranean tranquility.

"We are surrounded by glow," says Lair. "The raw materials outside, like the terracotta, reflect natural light beautifully, enhancing the skin's own luminosity. It's about the light from your body meeting the light around you, creating a long-term effect that improves mood and instills a sense of calm." (Turns out we were right about that Côte d'Azur air!)

Beyond the spa experience, Extra-Firming underscores Clarins' ongoing commitment to sustainable beauty. From refillable packaging to fully traceable, responsibly sourced ingredients, the brand ensures that every step of the process aligns with its environmental values. Ultimately, Extra-Firming is more than just skincare—it's a philosophy centred on preservation, resilience and radiance. Whether indulging in a transformative treatment at The Glow House or incorporating Extra-Firming into your daily routine, one thing remains clear: glowing skin is as much about care and intention as it is about science and innovation. **V**

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1. Sheltered from view and noise, the 25-meter indoor/outdoor pool opens onto the Mediterranean countryside, and overlooks Provence

2. The Glow House boasts three treatment rooms, each with its own terrace, as well as a double room for side-by-side treatments

# CLARINS

NEW  
**EXTRA-FIRMING**  
[COLLAGEN]<sup>3</sup> TECHNOLOGY\*

Visibly firmer skin  
in 7 days.\*\*

NOW REFILLABLE



CLARINS  
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[COLLAGEN]<sup>3</sup> TECHNOLOGY  
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Lift effect, wrinkle-smoothing day cream  
Toutes peaux - All skin types

**+53%**  
IN COLLAGEN  
RESERVES\*\*\*

\*Collagen polypeptide, mitracarpus extract, pecan tree extract. \*\*Consumer test - After using Extra-Firming Day cream All skin types: 109 women | Extra-Firming Night cream All skin types: 107 women. \*\*\*Ex vivo test carried out on photoaged skin explants, measurement of quantity of good quality and well-structured collagen.

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